

Hello fellow MQHA members,

I hope this letter finds you in good spirits with the days getting longer and flowers starting to bloom! For me, the dry weather has meant we've been able to ride outside fairly regularly this spring and since I'm not recovering from knee surgery this year I've been having a lot of fun. There have been a number of exciting things going on with MQHA already in 2016 and some more that are just around the corner. I want to give you a recap and a preview so that you know what we're doing.

In February we held our annual convention and awards banquet at Tan-Tar-A. It was a great party! We started off with a reception on Friday night and youth bowling party. Saturday, in addition to our normal committee meetings, we had the privilege of hearing from the President (now past President) of AQHA, Dr Glen Blodgett. Dr Blodgett is the equine manager of the 6666 ranch in Guthrie, TX. His pictures from the ranch and explanation of the way they do things down there were very informative. In addition, he provided an update on current business and initiatives at AQHA. As always the awards banquet was a great chance to celebrate excellence in our organization, catch up with old friends and let the kids show us how to dance! If you weren't able to make I hope you will make plans to attend next year.

The last weekend in February we hosted the first ever Show Me Equine Summit at the NEC in Lake St Louis. The event included a competitive horse judging clinic, 8 event specific clinics, retail vendors and a colt starting competition. We had over 800 people attend the event. As this was our first time, we didn't know what to expect from an attendance standpoint, but I'm sure anyone that was there will tell you it was a great turnout. They were treated to great instruction, great entertainment and great shopping. Plans are underway to host this event again next year. I hope that you'll be able to attend and tell your friends...

The show season is already upon us, by the time you read this Ozark will have hosted two shows, March to The Arch 2016 will be in the books and one of the Heart of America Buckskin shows will have been completed. Our first MQHA show will be the Gateway Classic over Memorial Day weekend at the NEC. The Gateway Classic is a 6 judge show that ends on Sunday. On Monday, we hold a novice show. This year we are offering all breed adult and youth classes at that show. The all day fee for the novice show is just \$75 and includes your stall. It's a wonderful, inexpensive opportunity to get in the show pen, I hope you'll help me spread the word!

At the convention the amateur committee meeting focused on ways that we can make our shows more fun and inviting to people. They came up with a number of new initiatives. I have asked Jenean Kemp to chair that committee this year, here are some comments from her regarding some new things we will be doing:

Greetings,

If you were able to attend the Amateur membership meeting at convention, you know that we had a great brainstorming discussion about how to make our shows fun and increase attendance. Many suggestions were made, and the Amateur Committee is currently making plans to implement several of those suggestions.

The Gateway Classic and Gateway Novice shows will be here before we know it. If you don't have plans to attend, please reconsider. The Amateurs will provide a 'Welcome Wagon' service for exhibitors upon their arrival. Those exhibitors interested in participating in a Team Tournament at the Gateway Classic can do so at no cost. Winning team members will each receive a FREE stall at the Maple Leaf to be held June 25 & 26 in Lake St Louis at the NEC. In addition to random prize drawings for exhibitors, there will be a fundraising raffle to benefit the Amateurs so that we can continue to provide activities that make showing fun and increase attendance. More information on the raffle will be provided later.

To be successful, we will need participation from our members. Whether it is a monetary donation toward the purchase of the raffle item, donations for the random prize drawings, or a donation of your time, please make a commitment to help. It will be very much appreciated!

Regards,

MQHA Amateur Committee Members:

Jenean Kemp, chair

Allison Lee

Becky Wood

Whitney Unkefer

As you can see, there has been a lot going on, and there is a lot more to come!

Until next time,

Joe Eddy

MQHA President