

NWHA Annual Meeting a Huge Success! 11-18-08

WOW! is the best way to describe the 2008 NWHA Annual Meeting! The excitement and enthusiasm were everywhere! From the Committee Meetings on Friday night, throughout the Annual Meeting on Saturday and until the last reveler exited the Annual Social on Saturday night – all our members enjoyed the camaraderie, the positive atmosphere and the fun of having time to visit with our friends - without any horses to feed!

Over 70 members attended and when asked why they gave up a horse show free weekend to come, they answered, “ We came to show our support for NWHA, its mission, and to offer input for the future of the organization.” Once again, it was obvious that NWHA members truly enjoy the friendships they develop within the organization.

The weekend started out with a Board Meeting and then great committee meetings. The Gait and Conformation Task Force, Youth Committee, Versatility Committee, Trail Committee, National Show Committee, Horse Show Development, and the Judges Committee all met throughout the evening. Reports from all the committees were extremely positive and what made the meetings truly productive was the sharing of ideas from our members for the growth and development of NWHA.

On Saturday, the excitement continued with the presentation of the 2008 Pegasus Award to Mrs. Sheryle Long. The Pegasus Award is sponsored by NWHA Member Steve Marshall and is awarded to an outstanding individual, nominated by the membership, who has made a significant personal contribution to the betterment of the organization. NWHA President Juana Grover stated, "Sheryle has worked as pro-bono legal counsel for NWHA since its inception 10 years ago. In addition to legal counsel, at my request when I took over as President of NWHA two and a half years ago, she took on additional roles of advisor and business consultant. She has traveled numerous times, at her own expense, to assist me in business and legal negotiations for NWHA, including the in-service of Executive Director Vizi. In short, she has been my arm of support during my tenure. No one is more deserving of this Pegasus Award than Sheryle Long."

The next highlight of the day came when the Phoenix Award was presented to President Juana Grover. The Phoenix Award is presented each year to an NWHA member who has demonstrated an extraordinary effort toward the betterment of the Walking horse, shown exceptional compassion for horses, has made an outstanding contribution to horses and to NWHA and who exemplifies the cause for which NWHA stands. The individual is nominated by the membership and the award was presented to Mrs. Grover by NWHA Legal Advisor, Sheryle Long. Mrs. Long stated, “Juana Grover is singularly responsible for the existence of NWHA today! She took the reins of an association besieged by a federal lawsuit, devastated by the resignation of two original members and leaders, and financially constrained. Working with a team she depended on, including members in decision making, using extraordinary leadership skills, and placing the horse and NWHA’s mission in the forefront, Juana led NWHA through the deepest mire of its

existence and into a new decade of endless possibilities. She IS the criteria for the Phoenix Award!”

Newly elected Board of Directors and Officers were sworn in as the 2009 NWA Leadership Team. New Board Members include: Adam Hall, Connie Holbrook, and Steve Rice. New Officers include Margaret Hershberger as vice president and Lori Snyder-Lowe as president. After Mrs. Lowe was sworn in she commented, “I am thrilled to have this opportunity to serve the members of NWA in a whole new venue. I am looking forward to continuing the momentum! I firmly believe that NWA has a very promising future and is the greatest organization with the greatest members in the entire horse industry. I feel honored to be a part of this outstanding group.” Mrs. Lowe concluded, “I ask that all members continue their efforts to promote NWA, to work together in a positive manner, to realize that what we have is the best thing out there and to never take NWA for granted!”

The Annual Luncheon Awards Ceremony exhibited beautiful wooden horse head trophies for the high point award winners. Members were so thrilled with the trophies that they didn’t want to uphold the “perpetual” status of them – they wanted to buy them and take them home to keep forever!! The High Point Committee, chaired by Board Member Steve Rice, is currently reviewing the possibility of selling the trophies.

The rest of the meeting consisted of various committee updates and of course, the Saturday Night Social! Great food, great friends and an awesome “Not So Silent” auction made the event a huge hit and enjoyed by all! Special thanks to Board Member Jimmy Black for organizing the very profitable auction!

Sunday was not really the end of the event; it was the beginning of our 11th year and a meeting of the 2009 Board of Directors. The directors were given a new meeting agenda format and spent the morning addressing business matters as well as informational items.

The Annual Meeting – it is not a horse show, it is not a horse auction, it is a road map. That’s right – a road map – drawn each year by our membership to give NWA direction in meeting its mission as Gaitkeeper of the naturally gaited Walking Horse. I invite you to travel with us in 2009. And next year? Be a map maker and come to the Annual Meeting!