

Youth Report: Convention 2011

There were many changes made at the AHA Convention this year, and I am happy to say that quite a few of them positively affect our youth members. First of all, I will give some information that was reported at convention, and then I will give a brief overview of the two resolutions that will affect youth members. I have also included the names of the judges announced for Youth Nationals 2012.

I will first pass along information that was given to us from Youth Nationals this year. I want to direct some of this information to the youth members that attend Youth Nationals. These are the activities and games that were down last year; Hippology, Novice Judging Contest, and the Poker Run. If you really enjoy any of these activities, make sure you participate next year! I know for sure that the Poker Run will only run one more year if there aren't more participants. We also talked about the Parade of Regions. There is discussion about possibly doing something different for all the regions. It was mentioned that the Parade of Regions isn't always fair, and it might be nice to do something that all regions can participate in equally. If you have any ideas or opinions, be sure to present them to your youth coordinators!

The youth report was given during the general session by Laura Killian. She stated that AHYA is working to reach out to other breed's youth, in an attempt to grow our youth population. She also gave some information from the AHYA convention. There were 83 delegates in attendance. Laura mentioned that Resolution 12 was passed by the AHYA board. She reported that there were 26 youth judging teams at US Nationals, including 4-H and FFA. Over \$10,000 in scholarship money was awarded to youth at Nationals. It was also reported at the convention that the AHA board has allocated \$25,000 to AHYA for membership growth and \$15,000 for youth advertisement. The Youth of the Year award is presented at the convention and this year the Youth of the Year is current AHYA Vice President, Hailey Harrington. She is from Rolling Hills Estates, CA and was the proponent of Resolution 12 (see below). The second runner-up for Youth of the Year was Alexandra Knode and the First Runner-up was Taylor Kraft.

Following are the two resolutions that will affect youth members. Resolution 1 – Redefining age limits for youth. There was much discussion in the sub-committee meetings and general session regarding this resolution. The purpose of this resolution is to allow youth exhibitors who currently age out (because they turn 18 after December 1), to continue showing throughout their senior year. Statistics were stated showing that youth exhibitors who age out during their senior year do not go on to show as an amateur in that year. The point was made that numbers were down at Youth Nationals this year, and this would be a great way to possibly bring numbers back up. Also, even though there will be much work that goes into changing the rule book and the structure of the classes, etc., this resolution ultimately affects the youth. Youth of the Year and AHYA Vice President, Hailey Harrington, spoke on behalf of this resolution. She explained that the youth are huge proponents of this bill, having drafted it themselves, and requested that we honor their wishes and vote on their behalf. In spite of the controversial nature of this resolution, it was unanimously approved. Resolution 12 – Hunter Seat Equitation Changes. This resolution was also drafted and approved by AHYA and applies to Hunt Seat Equitation Championship classes. It allows judges the option to request USEF/EC test #16 in a championship class. This test requires riders to switch mounts, which caused some controversy due to safety concerns. It was concluded that the judge will use his/her discretion when requesting this test and that exhibitors and their mounts should be "up for the challenge" if competing in a championship class. This resolution was also approved.

I feel that there were many great moments for AHYA at this convention. There were two resolutions that reflect the wishes of our youth membership that were approved and the AHA Board granted significant funds towards the growth of our youth membership. It is no easy task for our youth members to make changes at the AHA level, and I feel they have done a wonderful job representing themselves as the future of our beloved sport.

Judges for Youth Nationals

English/Saddle Seat

Leslie Conner

Patty Kent

Jack Thomas

Western/Reining/Trail

Grace Greenlee

Margo Smith Shallcross

Judy Wright

Hunt Seat/Working Hunter

Susan Ashe

Sarah Good

Dianne Grod

Hunter Pleasure/Show Hack/Showmanship

Scott Brumfield

Donnie Bullock

Duane Esser

Dressage

Ida Anderson Norris

Debbie Riehl-Rodriguez