

Amateur Corner

Written by the ARHA Amateur Committee.

Through these articles, the Amateur Committee hopes to inspire and encourage its members.. If anyone would like to see articles on a specific topic, please contact us:

www.americanranchhorse.net/file/amateur.htm

Leadership

By Nancee Ward

Many people are leaders and don't even know it. They inspire others to lead, and accomplish common goals with those they work with. Some aspire to and attempt to be leaders, but have not yet learned the skills necessary. Leadership is everywhere we live, work and play, and good leadership is a necessity when it comes to our charters, our association, our horsemanship and the direction our lives take. What is a leader to you?

To me, **Leaders:**

- make the easy thing hard and the hard thing easy in order to achieve the best;
- are confident and modest. Their job is not about self-glorification;
- are authentic...They know who they are. They walk their talk;
- are good listeners;
- are good at giving encouragement and they are never satisfied;
- make unexpected connections;
- provide direction;
- protect their people from danger but expose them to reality and learning opportunities;
- make change and stand for values that should not change;
- lead by example;
- don't place blame on others. They learn;
- look for and network with other leaders;

Ultimately, the job of a Leader...is to make more Leaders.

Robyn's Helpful Hints for New Members

By Robyn Wade

When you head out to the horse shows this spring, the most important thing to remember is HAVE FUN! Do not go to shows and worry about who is there; you are showing for yourself and for your horse. You put in all the hard work and time...show for you! Don't ever be afraid to ask how someone does something; they probably had to ask once, too! You can never stop learning, and there is something new to be learned every day.

Being familiar with ARHA rules and expectations is among the most important aspects of showing in ARHA. It will take time to learn the various rules, point systems, and how each class is judged. But becoming familiar with these expectations will help you avoid disappointments and encourage you to improve by having a positive show experience.

For new members, it helps to have a binder put together with everything you need to take with you to a show. Copies of ARHA registration papers, show bills, entry forms, and membership cards are a few things every member should have organized in their binder.

There are many reasons why we enjoy the ranch horse shows and one of the biggest reasons is the fact that so many members are helpful towards each other. It is something to truly sets the ARHA apart from other associations.

Pack a Smile!

By Kristen Smeenk

Wondering what to pack to go to your first ARHA competition? You have reviewed your rulebook, selected your classes from the showbill and mapped out directions to the arena. Now, to prepare yourself and your horse for the event...

ARHA is similar to other associations that you may show with throughout the year or in the past with a few exceptions. For yourself, bring neat and tidy working ranch-type clothing. Nothing dazzled in gems, just a nice long-sleeved western shirt, jeans, boots and a well shaped hat. It's as simple and basic as that. For your horse, neat and tidy with no polishes, excessive clipping or fancy show equipment required. Your tack should be clean and in good condition and plain working tack is more than acceptable. You and your horse should look as if you are prepared to go out to work cattle on the ranch, just a bit cleaner as you should be proud of yourself and your animal.

The most important thing you should pack is a SMILE; do not be afraid to introduce yourself to your fellow competitors. You will find that the ARHA atmosphere is very family oriented and the competitors and our judges are friendly and are there to help and support each other. As you compete in your classes, enjoy your time in the ring, do your very best and always remember everyone in there is already a winner.

Being a spectator is just as important as being a competitor. Watching how others perform can help you learn from not only their mistakes, but also their strengths as well. The best instruction is hands-on and there is no better place to learn than an ARHA show. And there is no better proving ground to test your skills than an ARHA show!

The common goal is to have fun and enjoy our animals while getting to show our "stuff". Get out there and experience all that the American Ranch Horse Association has to offer!

Overcoming Obstacles

By Becky Clark

Each of us has had to overcome obstacles to get to where we are today. I am no different. When it comes to showing horses, there are a few such obstacles I had to overcome or work with such as bad allergies and my asthma. I wondered at first if I was going to be able to achieve this goal that I had. With my friend's help, I began to work with her horse and I not only gained confidence, but I set goals to work toward that helped me succeed.

The first goal I'd ever set for last year was to be able to show in conformation. I worked at it a little at a time, one step at a time, until I was comfortable with a skill such as trotting the horse from one cone to another. Then I tackled the next step. I practiced how to properly square up and make my horse stand quietly through the class. It helped that I had a lot of positive encouragement and a very patient horse to work with.

I learned that if you want to do something bad enough, you can do it if you put your mind to it. Now, I am starting a new goal to get more fit for this year's show season, and be able to show in walk/trot classes. I

am confident that I can accomplish this goal as well. I had to take small steps one at a time, and little by little, I gained confidence and tried new challenges.

No matter what our goals are, or where we are in our skill set with horses, there will always be obstacles in our way. It's how we deal with them that distinguishes if we can overcome them or not. I know that we all strive to become better horsemen and horsewomen. Overcoming obstacles just make us stronger and we learn from them as long as we don't give up!

Breathe

By Bandy Russell

One of the most important things that you can do to be successful in any class is breathe. I know, that doesn't sound like that should be at the top of the list - but of course when you are ready to walk in that arena there isn't much else you should do. You have already trained, practiced, groomed, and memorized your pattern. Now it is your job to demonstrate your horsemanship skills to the max. Confidence. That is what you have to focus on. You are a team with your horse, so how can you show it off - confidence. But if you are worried about what you are going to do well, what you are going to falter on, what you think your horse will or won't do or who did what - then it will be very difficult to demonstrate your best with your horse.

Breathe. Focus on your breath, and the rest will come. Stop, right before you walk into that trail course - breathe. Take a nice deep breath - a huge one - close your eyes - and exhale.

Relax your body and your seat. With the next deep breath, straighten yourself up in the saddle, rear your shoulders back, keep that chin up for the rest of that class, and most importantly put a smile on your face that expresses your pride in the best that you have to ride. You will now be relaxed, your body language will be of confidence, and more importantly your actions of your horse will now have the same confidence. Reassure your other half often. When you come to that gate, stop, breathe, then reach down to open it and reassure your horse that you have an overwhelming amount of confidence that he will do everything right and should have no fear of any consequences. Lope to that L, stop, breathe. Check yourself - are you displaying the confidence in yourself that your horse can reflect? Set your horse up for success and complete the obstacle with an extra breath before moving on. Trot to your cow, stop, and breathe. Build your loop, have a soft seat, throw your rope, and breathe making sure to keep your smile and shoulders square. Lope to the last stop, no need to look down and change your frame to correct the headset - trust your horse - demonstrate the confidence that you have in him. Set up for the final stop, and breathe. Almost done, load and unload out of the trailer. Now you can be thrilled that whatever you did in that course, you did with confidence. You made your best and your worst obstacles look better because you focused on the integrity of your horsemanship skills and gave your horse the security and confidence to give his best. No matter the placing, you worked your personal best class with your horse - so breathe - and smile.