

LAHJA January E-News 2010

President's Message

by Marnye Langer

Welcome to the New Year! I don't know about the rest of you, but I can't believe it is another new year. As soon as I finished packing away all the holiday decorations, it was time to look at filling out entry blanks for the first shows of the year. Wow!

Okay, on to lots of exciting LAHJA news...

FREE! FREE! FREE!

When you join LAHJA this year you get one horse registration for free until April 15. If you've already registered your horse, you will receive a refund request in the mail in February. We want to encourage more members to sign up their horses and find themselves in contention for one of our year end awards.

The Board of Directors met early in January for the annual planning session, and we did a lot of work. Read through the E-News for highlights, and then be sure to review the 2010 LAHJA Rule Book for the actual rules. If you have questions, please contact the LAHJA office at: (818) 840-9337 or e-mail us at: info@lahja.org.

Be sure to read about our LAHJA members honored at the USHJA Annual Meeting in December. Congratulations go to Lisa Winn, Sandrine Seifert, Larry Langer, Susan Krieg, and Conner Daniels. Read on for details of their accomplishments.

A huge "Thank you" to outgoing board members Jim Hagman and David Ohringer. Although they've stepped down from board duties, both will still be involved with LAHJA. Jim is co-chairing the Hunter/Jumper/Equitation Committee with Sandrine Seifert, and David is reprising his role as the Banquet Chairman.

Speaking of the banquet, what a great evening all of us enjoyed. The banquet room at the Calabasas Country Club was festooned with gleaming platters and glittering vases, accented by spectacular tri-color championship ribbons. The only things outshining the awards were all the lovely girls in their party dresses.

Betsy Woods was honored with the President's Award, and Ali Ohringer won the LAHJA Horsemastership Scholarship. Read on for a full story about the top three Horsemastership winners.

Good luck with your show plans and enjoy your time with horses!

LAHJA Horsemastership Scholarship

Started four years ago, the LAHJA Horsemastership Scholarship seeks to encourage and reward junior members who seek to know more about horses and riding than performance in the show ring. Juniors compete in a three phase competition that involves a comprehensive stable management test, a written test, and a riding phase. This year the top three were separated by just a matter of a few points, and all three young ladies did a great job. Ali Ohringer took the top prize and a \$2,500 college scholarship, followed by Leah Gunn in a very close second (\$1,500 scholarship), and Rachel Sears in 3rd (\$1,000 scholarship). Young Eden Ritholz won the 11 & Under High Score Award.

First place and winner of the riding portion: Ali Ohringer

Sixteen-year-old Ali has been competing in the Horsemastership program since it began. She didn't place that first year. Determined to do better the next year, she took it as a challenge. "It gave me incentive to continue improving," she said. She spent the next year asking trainers questions and hanging around the barn to absorb as much knowledge as possible. She observed the vet and dentist in their work and got to see some interesting procedures. "It was amazing to watch," said Ali. Eventually, she learned so much that she started teaching other students what they needed to learn for the competition. She won the very next year and was second in 2008. "Thank you to everyone who runs the program," she said in her acceptance speech. "It's been amazing! It's nice to know I'll have a little financial support going into \$400,000 of education." Ali plans to go to medical school and eventually become a plastic surgeon. While she will probably not be able to participate in the LAHJA shows while at school, she plans to keep riding and compete on the collegiate circuit.

Second place and winner of the hands-on portion: Leah Gunn

"I'm very excited," said fifteen-year-old Leah of her second place finish. "It's all about the horse. Whether or not I got the award, the knowledge I walked away with was worth it." 2009 was Leah's second year in the competition, and last year she didn't place. Like Ali, she put her energies into making sure that didn't happen again. She read the U.S. Pony Club manual, which she found interesting, but she found the most valuable thing was to spend a lot of time with her horse. "I refuse to let anyone take care of my horse," she said, and she strongly feels that her daily hands-on experience with her horse made all the difference in winning the hands-on portion of the competition. During the test, she was asked to demonstrate several things, such as grooming and tacking up a horse. She was also asked to put on a piece of equipment she doesn't use, but she made her best guess and put it on correctly. She was also asked several questions, such as what she would do with horses during a fire. Leah plans to continue participating in the competition for as long as she can. She plans to go to an Ivy League college and will need all the scholarship money she can get. However, for her, it's not just about the prizes and accolades. "If I can take just one thing away with me, it's worth it," she says. "I would encourage anyone to do it. It's all about learning about the horse."

Third place and winner of the written portion: Rachael Sears

Like Ali, Rachael Sears has been competing in the Horsemastership program since it began. However, now that she is 18, this year was her last. The written portion of the competition changes every year, although some of the questions are similar from year to year. It covers everything from basic grooming to feeding and more advanced concepts like heart rates and care of ligaments. "It was a really challenging test," she said. "I really had to study." Did she think it was worth it? "Absolutely!" she replies. "I think it's so great LAHJA offers it." Although she does not know which school she will be attending yet, Rachael plans to study environmental sciences.

To help kids prepare for the competition, Sandrine Seifert led two workshops during the summer. These workshops were free to LAHJA members and gave participants a chance to go over all the material they would need to know for the written and hands-on portion. Many of the competitors reported that the workshops really helped them prepare for the actual competition.

Congratulations to everyone who participated in this challenging and educational program and we hope to see even more of you in 2010!

USHJA Special Winners

This year LAHJA was well represented at the USHJA Annual Meeting in Florida in early December. There are special awards given to members of USHJA Affiliate organizations, including LAHJA. We nominated Lisa Winn for the Riding Instructor category, Conner Daniels for the Junior category, Susan Krieg for the Amateur category, and Sandrine Seifert for the Trainer category. Not only did each of them win locally, but they were all honored on the national level. From among the various winners in each of the categories around the country, finalists are selected in each of the four regions. All four of LAHJA's local winners were honored as the Western Region winners above all others. This is a great honor to win in one category, but our LAHJA people are so outstanding, we won in all four categories! Next time you see Lisa, Conner, Susan, or Sandrine, be sure to congratulate them and thank them for representing our association so well.

In addition, LAHJA board member and past President Larry Langer was honored with the USHJA's Lifetime Achievement Award. He and Olympian Joe Fargis shared the limelight in an emotional tribute to each.

New for 2010

In order to win a year end award, riders must meet minimum criteria. In addition to the existing criteria, riders (or horses) must compete in at least five shows and win at least 25 points. (Part II, Sec. 3.c.) No longer can someone win a year end award by competing at only two or three shows. However, it doesn't take ten shows to be a champion. Many year end championships are won by going to six or seven shows. Consistency is the key, so sign up your horse (Free through April 15!) and you might be a year end champion!

High Point Awards have been re-named **Overall Rider Awards** to better reflect our goal of recognizing those riders who show excellence in at least two divisions, hunters and equitation, jumpers and equitation, or hunters and jumpers. Again, there are minimum criteria for winning one of the coveted tack trunks for champions and bridles for reserve champions. Riders must earn at least 40 points in at least two different divisions, and must compete in at least five shows in at least two different divisions. Please read this rule carefully as much has changed (Part II, Sec. 7).

New! New! New! Entry level riders can win a year end award in the new **Opportunity** section, which can be held at either A or B shows. **Modified Junior/ Amateur Hunters (3'3")** is our other new year end award category. **Amateur Owner Hunters:** In recognition of the new USEF Low Amateur Owner Hunter section (3'3"), LAHJA will count points from both the Low Amateur Owner Hunters (3'3") and the Amateur Owner Hunters (3'6") toward the Amateur Owner year end award. Please note that cross entry of the same horse in both sections (3'3" and 3'6") at the same show is not allowed per USEF rules. (Parts IX and X)

Point Calculations: Competitors will get full points for their placings in classes of five or more. If a class has three or four riders, the points will be reduced. Remember, many classes can be combined with a complementary class. For the exact point calculations, check the LAHJA Rule Book (Part II, Sec. 5).

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Welcome to the 2010 show season and another great year with LAHJA!