

TWHBEA Holds Year End Meetings



Bill Stricklend, Wayne Dean, & Chris Bobo
Annual General Membership Meeting

Lewisburg, TN – The Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' and Exhibitors' Association held its annual general membership meeting on December 5, 2008. In his opening remarks, President David Pruett assured those gathered that TWHBEA would continue to seek new and innovative ways to promote the breed and to serve the membership. He stated that the Association was in the process of gathering the information necessary to develop short and long term goals. He also reported on the progress that had been made regarding the redesign of the TWHBEA web site, the iPeds upgrade, and the establishment of an e-newsletter for members. He assured everyone that the registry was still the core of TWHBEA and that the Association would continue to be a good steward of the breed.

Following the approval of the agenda and the approval of the minutes from the December 1, 2007 general membership meeting, Executive Director Stan Butt addressed the meeting. He began by individually recognizing each staff member and commending them for their hard work throughout the year. He stated that the Association was looking forward to a very productive year and urged the members to take part. He reminded those gathered that TWHBEA is an international member driven association that supports and

promotes every discipline of the breed. He related that fiscal responsibility and confidence had been restored to the Association and moved on to discuss the other successes of 2008. He touched on the World Versatility Show, National Futurity, Celebration Clinics, Celebration Trade Fair, European Championships, partnerships with Stolen Horse International and Mountain View Rescue, and working relationships with American Humane, AAEP, USDA, WHTA, and WHOA.

In the first standing committee report of the day, Administrative/Fiscal/Audit Vice President Mike Inman discussed the significant progress made toward restoring financial stability to the Association over the past year. He reminded those present that TWHBEA was basically insolvent at the same time last year and that serious consideration had been given to taking out a loan against the Association's building. He reported that all the forms for taking such a loan had now been thrown away and that the Association was now solvent. He explained that TWHBEA now had \$500,000 in unencumbered cash. He remarked that the Association's accounts payables, which were \$330,000 per day in 2007, were currently \$35,000 per day. He stated that TWHBEA had brought in \$3.9 million in 2008, \$800,000 less than in 2007. However, the Association spent \$1.7 million less than in 2007. He cautioned that there was still a ways to go before the Association reached the six months of reserves recommended for all non-profit organizations. He also discussed the need to eventually repair the damage to the building caused by contracting soil. In summary he stated that if the Association maintains its current level of fiscal discipline, it will be in a good position to take advantage if the economy turns around.

In her report, Breeders Vice President Dee Dee Sale discussed the accomplish-

ments of her committee over the past year. Those accomplishments include the iPeds upgrade, the recent membership survey, input into the Association's new web site, a reduction in transfer fees for geldings, a reduction in fees for duplicate registration papers, the ongoing color amnesty program, and TWHBEA's membership in the National Livestock Council. She discussed three new Breeders division subcommittees – one to examine altering registration fees, one to consider the issues surrounding the leasing of horses, and one to further delve into color issues. Turning to her committee's goals for 2009, she listed completing the iPeds premium upgrade, further work on the web site, research into equine genetics and technical advances, simplifying the registration process, increasing educational opportunities, and growing the registry and membership.

Enforcement Vice President Chris Bobo was absent from the meeting so Horse Shows Vice President Bill Stricklend provided the next report. He began by discussing the first steps that had been made on the way to making the National Futurity a true futurity. He reported that there were over 180 entries at the 2008 National Futurity and lauded the addition of the Yearling In-Hand Extended Gait class. Turning to the project of linking the Regional Futurities to the National Futurity, he discussed the ongoing challenges and assured everyone that TWHBEA's intent was to only help the Regionals. He also talked about the reinstatement of the Futurity Graduate Award and explained that for 2008, Futurity Horizon Awards would be presented to the Weanling Filly and Weanling Colt National Futurity Champions.

Reporting next, Marketing Vice President Joyce Moyer discussed several of the marketing initiatives that had taken place in 2008. Those initiatives included the National Park Service

partnership, National Youth Trails Day, and partnerships with Equestrian Land Conservation Resource, Leave No Trace, Southeastern Equestrian Trails Conference, Ohio Valley Equestrian Trails Conference, USLGE, Best of America by Horseback, Gaylord Opryland, and Stolen Horse International. She also reported on TWHBEA's presence at Equine Affaires in Ohio, Massachusetts, and California, and its sponsorship of the first Sound Horse Conference. She related that the clinics, seminars, and test rides at the Celebration had been successful and that TWHBEA was on track to be a gold level sponsor of the 2010 Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games. She said that her committee was making significant progress gaining access to a corporate insurance rate for TWHBEA members.

In his report, Owners/Exhibitors Vice President Darren Gray talked about the success of the 2008 Celebration Clinics. He gave a recap of the topics covered and reminded everyone that each of the clinicians had donated their time. He then recognized each of the winners in the GO! Gelding Program.

As part of the Owners/Exhibitors Committee report, Industry Development Coordinator Nicole Carswell stepped forward to report on the work of the International Committee. She discussed the success of the first ever TWHBEA managed European Championships and remarked on the popularity of the test rides given during the event. She reported that there had been an 83% increase in TWHBEA members in Germany in 2008. She stated that the European Youth Camp continued to grow and that a breed association was in the works in the Dominican Republic.

Performance Horse Vice President Connie Hess focused her report on the Academy and Youth Challenge programs. Both of these programs were held in cooperation with WHOA and both proved quite successful in 2008. She reported that the Youth Challenge program, which encourages kids to



Go! Gelding Award Winners

learn to canter, was being expanded to include flat shod horses. She also presented USDA compliance statistics for 2008, pointing out that the industry continues to achieve a 95% compliance rate. She closed by thanking Link and Rhea Ellen Webb for sharing 2008 WGC Santana's El Nino with the public.

Reporting for the Pleasure Horse Committee, Vice President Diane McMurtrey began by discussing several new and innovative programs that had been developed by her committee including a state chapter program, the Walking Horse Interactive Program (WHIP), Trail Riding Instructor Program (TRI), and the Gaited Experience. She then discussed the success of the 2008 World Versatility Show and congratulated those who had achieved Youth Superior and Adult Supreme Versatility Championships and those who had accumulated 1,000 hours in the Distance Program. She announced that the Host A Ride program had been reinstated for 2009 and that several new trails programs were in the works.

Training Vice President Jamie Hankins focused much of his report on the need for specially trained judges for the pleasure and versatility divisions. He stated that he had taken those concerns to the trainers and that there was agreement on this need. Turning to the Certified Riding Instructor Program, he related that the plan for 2009 was to

keep this program with the Trainers Committee.

In her report, Vice President Member At Large By Laws Debra Jack discussed the eight by law amendments that passed in 2008. She then reminded everyone that there was a short window of time in which to submit potential by law amendments for 2009.

Vice President Member At Large Christy Lantis, reporting for the Youth Committee, reported that, despite financial restrictions, TWHBEA had been able to maintain all its youth programs and had successfully funded all of the youth scholarships. She stated that All Youth Day at the Celebration had been the largest ever, with 271 kids participating in the judging contest. She related that, for the first time ever, Voice Magazine had employed a youth reporter for the Celebration. She also discussed plans to elect a TWHYA King and Queen at the 2009 World Versatility Show and the development of a TWHYA varsity letter program. She reported that a new program was up and running that enables kids in the U.S. to donate their used show clothes to kids in Europe. She closed by announcing that the 2009 National Youth Trails Day was scheduled for June 6.

Following the standing committee reports, Senior Vice President Bob Ramsbottom addressed the meeting. He discussed the smooth working relationship of the 2008 Executive



Christy Lantis & John T. Bobo

Committee. He discussed the hard work undertaken by the group and the accomplishments it had achieved.

Next on the agenda was the report on the results of the 2008 election. After that it was time for old and new business. As there was no old or new business to discuss, the meeting moved on to comments from the members.

Mark Matson, member from Ohio, took this opportunity to inform the Board of Directors and the membership that he was seriously considering filing charges against the Executive Committee because they had allegedly violated Tennessee State Law by not providing him with a requested Excel file containing the complete membership list for TWHBEA. He explained that he had requested the list and had received as Excel file with the Ohio membership list and tif file containing an incomplete list of members from elsewhere. He stated that, in addition to being prepared to file charges, he was calling on the Executive Committee to step down. Points of discussion surrounding this topic included TWHBEA's desire to protect the privacy of its members by not distributing the membership list in a format that can be manipulated such as an Excel file and various interpretations of the law governing a non-profit's obligation to provide its membership list to its members.

Matson also countered a statement made at the May 2008 Semi-Annual Board of Directors meeting that previous Executive Director Chuck Cadle had transferred funds out of the National Futurity account creating a deficit. Matson alleged that Cadle had

only transferred out what the National Futurity had netted in 2007. Inman countered, stating that according to the audit completed by Cook & Co. and signed off on by Cadle, the transfers out of the National Futurity account had created a deficit of \$12,000.

Outgoing Executive Committee Meeting

The 2008 TWHBEA Executive Committee met for the final time the morning of December 6th at breed headquarters in Lewisburg, Tennessee. After approving the agenda, the minutes from the previous Executive Committee meeting, and the financials for the period ending October 21, 2008, a motion was made to take the meeting into executive session. Upon returning from the executive session, Marketing Vice President Joyce Moyer discussed the need for TWHBEA to continue and expand its relationship with Best of America by Horseback.

Semi-Annual International Board of Directors Meeting

Lewisburg, TN – The TWHBEA held its semi-annual International Board of Directors meeting on December 6, 2008. Following the roll call, which revealed 84 directors present and thus a quorum, Executive Director Stan Butt stepped to the podium to recognize all newly elected directors. President David Pruett then administered the oath of office to the new directors. After the approval of the agenda and the approval of the minutes from the May 25, 2008 meeting of the International Board of Directors, President Pruett asked each Executive Committee member if they had anything to add to the standing committee reports provided at the general membership meeting held the previous day.

Vice President Member At Large By Laws Debra Jack stepped forward to address an issue raised by Mark Matson the previous day regarding the distribution of TWHBEA's membership list. She stated that she believed the issue had been resolved. She explained that, as a non-profit organization, TWHBEA was required

to provide the list to any member that made a reasonable request. She said that TWHBEA would provide an electronic copy, consisting of only names and addresses, in the form of an Excel file whenever a member submitted an official request form, which sets out all applicable statutes and rules. The member will be required to state the specific use to which the list will be put and to sign the form. Use of the list for any purpose other than that stated on the form will be punishable both by TWHBEA and by civil court.

Jack also introduced a recently passed Code of Conduct and Statement of Ethics that every TWHBEA committee member would now be required to sign. Fran Cole, Director from California, raised several concerns regarding this, stating that she felt it conflicted with a member's duty to follow their conscience.

Next on the agenda was the ratification of the actions of the Executive Committee since May 25, 2008. The ratification carried with three opposing votes.

Administrative/Fiscal/Audit Vice President Mike Inman was up next as he presented for approval the 2008-2009 proposed budget. Assumptions for the budget include a drop in membership from 13,772 to 12,164, a slight increase in transfers from 11,315 to 11,330, a decrease in registrations from 9,408 to 7,445, a drop in blood typing revenue from \$44,108 to \$24,000, a drop in DNA revenue from \$382,795 to \$297,000, and a drop in revenue from blood typing to DNA conversions from \$200,613 to \$62,500. Despite the projected decreases in revenue, the proposed budget foresees a net gain of \$28,000 based on expenses coming in below expected revenue. The proposed 2008-2009 budget was approved.

Attorney Chuck Cheek provided the next report. He recapped his work on the resolution of the Association's copyright lawsuit stating that he had been able to resolve the billing disputes

and that he had received confirmation from the National Walking Horse Association's council that they are complying with the court's order.

Following the approval of the election procedures, Nominating Committee Chairman Darren Gray presented his committee's slate of candidates. That slate included President David Pruett, Senior Vice President Robert Thomas, Administrative/Fiscal/Audit Vice President Mike Inman, Breeders Vice President Dee Dee Sale, Enforcement Vice President Rick Womack, Horse Shows Vice President Bill Stricklend, Marketing Vice President Kasey Kesselring, Owners/Exhibitors Vice President Kathy Zeis, Performance Horse Vice President Wayne Dean, Pleasure Horse Vice President Diane McMurtrey, Trainers Vice President Chris Bobo, Vice President Member At Large By Laws Debra Jack, and Vice President Member At Large Youth Christy Lantis. Nominations from the floor included Walt Chism for Senior Vice President and Mary Ellen Areaux for Breeders Vice President. A motion to elect the unopposed candidates by acclamation carried. Following brief speeches by the candidates for Senior Vice President and Breeders Vice President, the directors voted. Robert Thomas was elected Senior Vice President and Dee Dee Sale was elected Breeders Vice President.

Under old business Jack indicated that at the first meeting of the new Executive Committee she would motion to rescind the earlier motion to adopt a Code of Conduct and Statement of Ethics for committee members and that she would make a new motion to present that Code of Conduct and Statement of Ethics to the board for approval.

Under new business Jack made the following motion - The Executive Committee, any member thereof, or any Officer or Employee authorized thereby, shall be prohibited from placing any mortgage, lien, or encumbrance of any kind against the title to

the TWHBEA Headquarters property located at 231 Ellington Parkway, Lewisburg, Tennessee, for any amount or time, unless authorized by resolution of the full Board of Directors of the TWHBEA. If any Officer seeks to place a mortgage, lien, or encumbrance of any kind against the title to the TWHBEA Headquarters, that Officer shall present this request to the Executive Committee, and the Executive Committee must approve, by motion of 2/3 of the members of the Executive Committee entitled to vote on any motion, the request by formal motion. Upon approval of the motion by the Executive Committee, the authorized Officer shall cause to be published in the Voice Magazine, in three consecutive issues, and on the TWHBEA website, for the same period of time, notice of intention to place the mortgage, lien or encumbrance against the title to the TWHBEA Headquarters, setting out all the proposed terms and conditions of the mortgage, lien or encumbrance and a rationale for the request to place the mortgage, lien or encumbrance against the title to TWHBEA Headquarters. The Notice shall also include formal notice of a Special Vote of the Board of Directors to occur 15 days after the final publication in the Voice Magazine. After much discussion, this motion carried.

With no comments from the board, the motion was made to adjourn. It passed unanimously. The next meeting of the International Board of Directors will be held May 23, 2009 at 10 a.m. at TWHBEA headquarters in Lewisburg, Tennessee.

Incoming Executive Committee Meeting

TWHBEA's new Executive Committee held its first meeting the evening of December 6th. Following a welcome by President David Pruett, the Committee set the time and date for their next meeting - 9 a.m. on January 10, 2009. Member at Large By Laws Vice President Debra Jack then took the floor to make a series of motions. She first moved to rescind a motion that she made at the

morning Executive Committee meeting to adopt a Code of Conduct and Statement of Ethics for committee members. This motion carried unanimously. Her next motion stipulated that TWHBEA distribute for review via web and email the proposed Code of Conduct and Statement of Ethics for committee members with a note that comments and concerns be provided to TWHBEA no later than January 9, 2009. This motion also carried unanimously. Her final motion directed that the Executive Committee, on behalf of TWHBEA, look into presenting a small Tennessee Walking Horse to the Obama children as an inauguration gift. This motion carried unanimously.

Marketing Vice President Kasey Kesselring next requested direction regarding how to proceed with TWHBEA's relationship with Best of America by Horseback. Marketing Director Chris Coffey explained that no money had been budgeted for that purpose and former Marketing Vice President Joyce Moyer explained that the Marketing Committee had voted to expand TWHBEA's involvement with the show to include the sponsorship of two riders on the Best of America by Horseback Canada to Mexico ride. She also presented a contract drafted by Best of America by Horseback. In the end, concerns were raised about the proposed \$22,000 commitment and the Committee requested that Moyer continue to negotiate with the show.

The new Executive Committee then went into executive session for the remainder of the meeting.

-Sarah Gee



Kay Dennis, Darden Gladney, & Stan Butt