

future of publishing

ahp news

member spotlights

AHP AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

PHOTO OF SARATOGA SPRINGS TOUR ATTENDEES DURING THE 2008 AHP SEMINAR - PHOTO COURTESY DANIEL K. LEW

AMERICAN HORSE PUBLICATIONS *FOR THE RECORD*

JUNE 2008



AHP FOR THE RECORD JUNE 2008 ISSUE

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As a former resident of Saratoga Springs, NY, I took a special pleasure in welcoming AHP members to the "Break from the Gate in 2008" seminar. Having been one of the squeakier wheels in urging the AHP board to consider Saratoga as a seminar location, I was thrilled to see my colleagues enjoying this beautiful town and all it has to offer. Many thanks to the volunteers, sponsors, Saratoga-area community members, and most especially to Chris Brune for her help in making this year's seminar AHP's best yet.

I've never been president of anything, so what does a president say in her inaugural column? For starters, you might not know that yours truly is AHP's first affiliate member (freelancer) to serve in this position. I'm honored and proud to represent the many AHP members who are independent writers, editors, photographers, artists, marketers, and others. Affiliate membership is AHP's fastest-growing membership category. Increasing numbers of freelancers are recognizing the value of professional development and networking through our vibrant and unique organization. Likewise, content and image buyers need reliable contributors whose material meets high standards of quality.

Job titles and career descriptions are pretty fluid in today's marketplace. A number of people in our industry juggle both staff positions and freelance projects. I'm a former editorial staffer who's currently freelance. Family obligations, workplace changes, and other issues may cause an individual to move in and out of staff positions and contracts or freelance projects several times during the course of a career. Remembering that we're all in business together,

and that we all presumably have the best interests of our horses and our audiences in mind, helps us to find common ground in our negotiations and dealings. At least it has for me.

I'll sign off by encouraging you to get involved with AHP. Come to a seminar (2009: New Orleans, June 25-27); serve on a committee; network with your colleagues. You'll find opportunities, solutions, and even some new friends. Got a question or a problem? Send an e-mail or pick up the phone and ask a colleague for help. AHP membership and seminar attendance are the best things I ever did for my career. I hope they can help you, too. Meanwhile, I'm a mouse-click away and ready to take your suggestions, kudos, and gripes:
jennifer@jenniferbryant.net.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bryant

AHP 2008-2009 President



JENNIFER AND MICHAEL BRYANT ATTENDING THE STUDENT AWARDS TOGA PARTY - PHOTO COURTESY DANIEL K. LEW

AHP MEMBER SPOTLIGHT STACY BEARSE



Stacy Bearse is the President and CEO of Blood-Horse Publications, overseeing *The Blood-Horse*, *The Horse*, Eclipse Press and Custom Publishing. Bearse began his career in a world very

different from that of Thoroughbred weeklies, equine health monthlies, books, e-newsletters and websites. Who says engineers can't write? He joined the publishing world in 1973 after becoming disenchanted with his first job as an electrical engineer. "I visited the placement office at Rutgers University. There, I discovered a posting for 'Associate Editor of MicroWaves' magazine. I applied, got the job and was hooked on publishing from day one."

Bearse has been at the helm of Blood-Horse Publications since 1990. He says equestrian publishing has changed considerably in just the last decade. "Ten years ago, we wrote to a hypothetical and homogenous 'target audience': one magazine fits all. Today, we entertain, educate and enlighten individuals, each of whom may have a preference for a different mix of media platforms." Bearse says it's not the "what," but the "how" that's changed. His company offers content in a multitude of formats, including news-alerts delivered to subscribers' mobile devices. "We do our best to prepare first-class content and deliver it through any platform—and with any timing or frequency—that might be embraced by our audience."

And that balancing act becomes a true art form in the current economy. "It's the classic double whammy: Revenues are soft while costs are rising to frightening levels." Bearse says both the credit crunch and rising

costs of energy are having a profound effect on their advertisers in the Thoroughbred industry. "One of our account executives recently returned from a field trip, and observed that farms weren't mowing paddocks anymore because of the cost of running the tractors." But, Bearse says cash-strapped advertisers aren't the only challenge. "Every step of the classic publishing process is sensitive to the price of fossil fuel. We are basically in the business of transporting paper from Canada, adding value to it by creating magazines using electric presses and binders, then reshipping the product using trains, planes, ships and trucks."

Bearse says his company also spends a lot of time trying to understand where their audience and advertisers are headed in the next few years. Understanding how reader preferences and marketing challenges will evolve can make or break a publishing company. "For us to be successful, we need to stay a half-step ahead of those whom we serve."

As if the economically driven challenges aren't enough, recent equine deaths in the racing industry have added their own drama. "It's amazing how opinions can shift in just two minutes. I watched this year's Kentucky Derby with a group of fellow publishers. Before the race, they told me I was one lucky guy to work in such a fun field. After the race, they asked me how I could bear covering such a cruel and ugly sport. The Eight Bells tragedy and Big Brown's inexplicable performance in the Belmont remain mysteries. Both events have swayed public opinion in a very negative way. The sport lost fans. We lost subscribers. And Federal regulators are putting racing under a microscope."

Bearse, however, sees a positive side. "Although the ending was very sad, in my opinion the Barbaro saga did much to lift the image of racing. The compassion of the jock, who leapt out of the saddle to tend to Barbaro's injured limb. The ambulance ride to New Bolton. The expertise of medical professionals. The love of the owners. The devotion of the fans. It was a classic story of the warm interaction between man and beast."

Despite the changes and challenges, Bearse cites a simple mantra as the key to his company's success. "Hire really great people. Give them the freedom to make decisions. Celebrate our successful decisions and learn from our mistakes. Develop a culture of innovation, but do so while honoring past tradition."

When asked about the future of publishing, Bearse says that in most markets, print publications will become less important—some may even die. Some of the publishing world's "cash cows will dry up." He does offer publishers three "Future Rules."

- 1. Surround print publications with a wide array of digital products, rich in content and delivered with lightning speed. Drive reader activity between all of our products, encouraging individual readers to seek their own personal blend of information sources.*
- 2. The traditional print advertising model has been irrevocably altered. What worked yesterday will not work today. Don't "sell" pages. Don't sell advertising. Sell solutions. Understand your customer's business and provide multi-faceted solutions to individual marketing challenges.*
- 3. The future is all about the reader. Forget about "magazine circulation". This is a tiny piece of your potential business. Elevate the entire process to dizzying new heights. Rename it "Audience Development". Strive to develop a thousand new prospects every day. Once you learn how, this activity takes almost no ongoing investment. Qualify. Test. Market. Measure. Repeat the process. Constantly expand your customer universe. Maximize the lifetime cash potential of each individual. Sounds easy, doesn't it?*

AHP MEMBER SPOTLIGHT NANCY COLE



Nancy Cole, Publisher and Editor of Southern California's *The Equestrian News*, began her career in mainstream journalism. After working as a print reporter, she moved to broadcast news as one

of the first women on the air at KTAR in Phoenix, AZ. Over the next 30 years, Cole worked both sides of the desk, climbing the ladder to become the general manager of a sports radio station in Los Angeles. She was at this post when the late 1990s radio mergers cost Cole her job, but offered her the chance of a fresh start.

"Couldn't buy a radio station. But, I could return to my print roots...I took a good hard look at what I could do: write, market and promote." Cole searched for a niche opportunity that needed a newspaper. She identified the California equestrian marketplace. She said, at the time, California's multi-billion dollar equestrian industry had very few regional publications and no newspapers. In 2002, Cole approached the Los Angeles Equestrian Center and pitched the idea of the center having a newspaper. The center loved the idea, but they had little money for the project. "I proposed they get the first issue out the door and I'd find advertisers to offset their costs." It was an ambitious goal for anyone new to horses and the equestrian industry. "You might say my appearance on the equine front was a complete surprise to everybody, including me!"

*"What I find most encouraging about the equestrian marketplace is just how diverse and long-lived it is." As testament to the industry's vitality and merit, Cole sights her own experience. Since launching *The Equestrian News*, she has become both an avid horse rider and enthusiastic owner.*

By the end of the first year, however, the new paper had 5,000 subscribers. Today it has 20,000 subscribers and numerous drop-off points, including many local grocery stores in "green-belted, equestrian-friendly areas." Cole says *The Equestrian News* is still the only newspaper, as well as the only publication not driven by breed or event. The newspaper's lifestyle section and calendars pull their weight, though Cole says it's the news that drives the paper. "The primary story is the developers vs. the horse people, and we do a darn good job keeping our readers informed about city hall."

Cole admits the paper's broad coverage of news, event coverage, medical/health features and editorials can present challenges. Though, she attributes the paper's success to her well-groomed and dedicated team. "Today I have nearly twenty writers who are very well connected into their various interests and disciplines, and excited to have the opportunity to write. My job is much like an assignment desk editor. I assign the stories as they come in, and keep a few for myself." Cole says each issue grows larger with more and more news. "It is harder and harder to process it and turn it around in time for each issue, but somehow we do."

To help tackle the increasing news, the paper has contracted with an outside, telecommuting editor for the next few issues. "If there is one thing I have learned it's that the business model we all grew up with is changing. Our business is not brick and mortar, but lives in cyberspace. All of my contract people are connected only online, and many of them I've never met in person. It's not for everyone, but for publishing it's great!" As with most publications, the economy is another hurdle for *The Equestrian News*. Cole says she meets this obstacle with additional planning, a sharp eye, and by "running the paper a little tighter with our percentage of editorial versus advertising."

While she predicts a tough future for the big city papers, Cole believes niche publications will fare well. "As people grow older and stay healthier longer they have more and more free time and money to spend on their hobbies, and it behooves the industry to cater to them. There is no doubt that a great percent of editorial content currently in these print pubs will find its way onto the web, but these papers will remain to draw people to various sites, just like brick and mortar stores draw customers to their website for additional purchases."

UNITING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S HORSEPOWER
THE EQUESTRIAN NEWS

AHP NEWS

DANIEL K. LEW AWARDED 2008 AHP CHRIS BRUNE SPIRIT AWARD AT AHP SEMINAR



PHOTO COURTESY CHRISTY WEST

Daniel K. Lew, Assistant Editor at *California Horsetrader* was presented with the AHP Chris Brune Spirit Award during the annual AHP Awards Presentations in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Daniel has been a familiar face at AHP seminars for several years as the official AHP photographer at this event. He photographs the winners in the annual contest as well as takes innumerable shots throughout the three-day conference. Every year, members look forward to his musical review of the prior year's seminar which is shown at the Awards Banquet.

For the full story visit

www.americanhorsepubs.org/programs/daniel_k_lew.asp

AMERICAN HORSE PUBLICATIONS AWARDS EXCELLENCE IN EQUINE PUBLISHING

Saratoga Springs is known for horses, health and history, but in June 2008, it was also known as the site for the AHP annual seminar. One of the anticipated events during the AHP "Break from the Gate in 2008" Seminar was the annual awards presentations, which were held on Saturday, June 21. Held since 1974, the AHP Annual Awards Contest provides members with an opportunity to be recognized for excellence in equine publishing as well as professional critiques for improvement. The event opened with a reception sponsored by Dover Saddlery and was followed by the Awards Banquet co-sponsored by Quebecor World and Branch Smith Printing.

Participation in this year's contest represented 105 AHP members and 1,092 entries. Winners represent the industry's top publications, writers, photographers, graphic designers and e-publications.

For the full story visit

www.americanhorsepubs.org/programs/awards



PHOTO COURTESY DANIEL K. LEW

CENTERED RIDING PIONEER RECEIVES SEVENTH ANNUAL EQUINE INDUSTRY VISION AWARD

Pfizer Animal Health and American Horse Publications Honor the Legendary Sally Swift

Pfizer Animal Health and American Horse Publications presented Sally Swift with the seventh annual Equine Industry Vision Award at a ceremonial breakfast held during the AHP Break from the Gate in 2008 seminar in Saratoga Springs, NY. Established in 2002, the Equine Industry Vision Award was the first of its kind to showcase innovation and recognize ingenuity and service across the entire equine market.

At 95, Swift earned this honor for having a revolutionary impact on horseback riding worldwide in the twentieth century. Best known as the founder of the Centered Riding® method used by riders across all disciplines, Swift is a true visionary whose legendary work will continue to impact the equine world long beyond her years.

For the full story visit

www.americanhorsepubs.org/programs/equine_vision_award/

"I think this award means more to me than any other award I have received because of what the award represents. Since being home, I have relived this special award ceremony many times in my mind. I must say, I am extremely proud of this award!"

Sally Swift, 2008 Equine Industry Vision Award Winner
Quoted from Centered Riding newsletter.

AMERICAN HORSE PUBLICATIONS PRESENTS
2008 AHP CHAMPION AWARDS TO TWO PAST
PRESIDENTS AND FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS



TONY CHAMBLIN - PHOTO COURTESY DANIEL K. LEW

In 2007, American Horse Publications created the AHP Champion Award which is presented to individuals who are instrumental in the development and growth of the association. Collectively, the winners are known as the AHP Circle of Champions. Each recipient receives a commemorative pin, individual plaque, and their names honored online at the AHP web site.

The Executive Committee presented its recommendations for nominees at its February 2008 meeting, where the Board approved awarding the 2008 AHP Champion Award to the two individuals who were the only AHP Presidents who were elected to two terms and also served as AHP Executive Directors, Tony Chamblin and Ruth Brown.

For the full story visit

www.americanhorsepubs.org/programs/ahp_champion/

AMERICAN HORSE PUBLICATIONS PRESENTS 2008
AHP STUDENT AWARD TO BANA K. VARNON



PHOTO COURTESY DANIEL K. LEW

The 2008 Student Award Winner, Bana K. Varnon, a junior at the University of Texas at Austin is majoring in journalism, and was honored at this year's Student Award Night during the AHP seminar in Saratoga Springs. She received a \$1,000 cash award plus an all-expense trip to AHP's annual meeting and seminar held on June 19-21 in Saratoga Springs, New York.

For the full story visit

www.americanhorsepubs.org/students/student_award/

For the full awards program with descriptions of the winning entries (in PDF format): visit www.americanhorsepubs.org/programs/awards/

A graphic for the 2008 Annual Awards Program. At the top, it says "Break from the Gate in 2008" and "AHP SARATOGA" with a horse silhouette. Below is a photo of jockeys on horses with text overlays: "editorial content", "ad design", "illustration", "photography", "specialty classes", and "general excellence". At the bottom, it reads "2008 ANNUAL AWARDS PROGRAM" and "AWARDS BANQUET AND PRESENTATIONS JUNE 21, 2008 - SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK".

NEW 2008-2009 BOARD MEMBER PROFILES

PRESIDENT: JENNIFER BRYANT

Jennifer, of West Chester, PA, is the AHP board's inaugural affiliate member. She has been a full-time freelancer since 1998, during which time she has edited one magazine (*USDF Connection*), written or co-written three books (*Olympic Equestrian: A Century of International Horse Sport; A Gymnastic Riding System Using Mind, Body & Spirit; The USDF Guide to Dressage*), written numerous articles, and edited several books. (More information at www.jenniferbryant.net.) Jennifer is a former editor of *Dressage & CT* magazine and of the regional all-breed publication *Hoof Print*. She got her start editing management and HRD books for Pfeiffer & Co. A longtime dressage enthusiast and horse owner, Jennifer is a US Dressage Federation silver medalist.

FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT: KIMBERLY S. BROWN

Kim is Publisher and Editor of *The Horse: Your Guide To Equine Health Care*, a monthly all-breed, all-discipline equine health magazine, and she is a contributing editor to *The Blood-Horse*, a weekly Thoroughbred news magazine. Both publications are owned by Lexington, Ky.-based Blood-Horse Publications. Kim has been a member of AHP since 1980 (when she started at Blood-Horse), and she is a member of the AHP Executive Committee. Kim, who will be AHP President in 2010 for the organization's 40th anniversary, has a small farm in Central Kentucky where she lives with her husband, Ben, and a menagerie of critters. Their nest is emptying fast as Barbara is now living in Wyoming with her two horses and mule and working at a vet clinic,

and Beth is heading off to the University of Kentucky to study...JOURNALISM! Among the "family" still at home are the Miniature Horse geldings Hawk and Captain Jack, a Miniature Donkey named Molly, nine goats, 3 chickens, the Border Collies Star and Buck (not named for the coffee chain), Ben's Beagle/Basset cross Desdamona, and the cats Trent, Trevor, and Toby.

SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT: SANDY KUCHARSKI

Sandy was born with a passion for horses and got her first pony when she was six. As a youth, she gained experience through 4-H, riding western and hunt seat, and participating in Horse Bowl, judging and speech. She is currently a 4-H leader, on their county Horse Committee, and a board member of their local saddle association. She and her family own and board seven horses on their farm in Woodstock, IL. In 1995, she was able to combine her love of horses and journalism when she accepted the position of editor with *The Sentinel*, a mid-western regional horse publication. At that time, she also attended her first AHP seminar in Jackson Hole, WY. and was hooked. She met some of her "magazine idols" and found a brotherhood of equine journalists who were very open and willing to share knowledge (and a good time!).

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER: CHERYL ERPELDING

Cheryl is CEO of Riding's Publications, Inc. and started her publishing business in Dec. 1986. San Diego County Riding Magazine was an 8-page startup with a press run of 2,500 copies. She hand drew her logo, typeset and shot her printing plate

negatives with a graphics arts camera in her garage. Riding's Publications is now a million dollar plus company that publishes *California Riding Magazine*, (20-23,000 copies per month), *California Horseman's Directory*, *Sport Horse Stallion Directory* and provides design services for California's horse industry. She currently shows Riding Magazine's Hot Off The Press in the hunter division and also rides dressage.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER: BRIAN SOSBY

An award-winning writer based in Lexington, KY. Brian has been Editor of *EQUESTRIAN* magazine, the official magazine of American equestrian sport since 1937, for the past five years. Brian has covered both U.S. and international events, including the 2006 FEI World Equestrian Games in Germany, the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece, and the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event. His coverage of equestrian events, as well as feature articles, have been widely read by magazine and internet readers around the world. Brian's office is located in the bucolic Kentucky Horse Park.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: PAT TROWBRIDGE

Pat is Group Publisher at BowTie, Inc., publishers of *Horse Illustrated*, *Young Rider*, *Horses USA* and *Quarter Horses*. Pat began his publishing career with BowTie in 1996. During more than 10 years with BowTie, he has held the following positions; Advertising Sales Representative, Advertising Sales Manager, Advertising Director for Equine Publications, Group Advertising Director for Equine, Canine and Feline Publications, Group Publisher, and Director of Corporate Special Projects. Pat

became involved with American Horse Publications in 1998. In 2002, he was elected to the Board of Directors and serves as Immediate Past President. He was elected to the WETA Board of Directors beginning in June of 2007. Pat grew up riding horses on his family's small farm in Kansas. He now resides in Southern California.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CHRISTINE W. BRUNE

Chris has been an AHP member since the mid 70s when she was Editor of *Eastern/Western Quarter Horse Journal*. In 1992, she took on the role of Executive Director and holds the record of attending every seminar since her first one. Her family showed Quarter Horses, both regionally and nationally, for many years. Born in Plymouth, Massachusetts, she moved to Daytona Beach in 1994, where she lives with her two Miniature Schnauzers, Fritz and Dickie Boy. Officially one of AHP's old-timers, Chris has enjoyed watching the association's growth in numbers and services over the years and has made many long-lasting friendships.

DIRECTORS

LAUREN DAVIS BAKER

Lauren is owner, editor, and publisher of *Flying Changes* magazine, a northwest sporthorse magazine she began in 1993. Her mission is to serve as a resource for the local riding community by promoting northwest talent, businesses, and horses. A background in technical writing and marketing communications with Hewlett-Packard gave her a practical education in marketing, publishing, and customer service. Lauren especially enjoys writing

humor and relationship-oriented pieces for the publication, examining horse culture from new and interesting perspectives. Horse crazy since birth, Lauren enjoys dressage and trail riding with her boys, Nick and Napoleon.

SUMMER BEST

Summer enjoys several management roles at Florida Equine Publications in Ocala, where the company produces monthly issues of *The Florida Horse* and *Horse Capital Digest*, and daily issues of *Wire to Wire*. A past recipient of the AHP Student Award, Summer has worked as field editor for *The American Quarter Horse Journal*, Director of Marketing/magazine editor for Seminole Feed, and as owner/founder of SunHorse Publishing and Promotions. She is a sixth-generation native Floridian and graduate of the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications. Summer's farm, L'Estate, is home to competitive Quarter Horse and Thoroughbred hunter-types, some good ol' boy all-around horses, an occasional pony prospect, three happy barn cats, a small herd of black Angus cattle, and her favorite dog ever, "Delta," the Giant Schnauzer.

DEAN JACOBSON

Dean, Publisher of the *Virginia Horse Journal*, has been a member of AHP since 1995, and a director of American Horse Publications since 2003. He has enjoyed horses as a trail rider, breeder and fox hunter. He and his wife founded the *Virginia Horse Journal* in 1995. Dean has been the President of the Virginia Horse Council and a member of the Virginia Horse Industry Board. He has conducted Virginia Equestrian Business Seminars which provided topics

including business planning, accounting, business law, advertising and promotion as well as business Internet site applications. As a director of AHP he has served on the Vision Award committee and been an AHP seminar session speaker.

CATHY LAWS

Cathy has been writing and editing for publication for more than 20 years. For 11 years she was the editor of *SPUR Magazine*, an award-winning national bi-monthly devoted to English equestrian sport. In 2000 she founded Equestrian Life, a content/shopping website that was acquired by the U.S. Equestrian Team. She has been with Gaithersburg, Maryland-based Equine Network as editorial director since 2001. Equine Network publishes *EQUUS*, *Practical Horseman*, *Horse & Rider* and *Dressage Today* magazines as well as several special publications, equine books and DVDs, and the websites EquiSearch.com and Equine.com. She grew up foxhunting, Pony Clubbing and showing hunters and now rides her Thoroughbred mare, Classical, whenever she gets a chance.

DIANE RICE

Diane feels blessed to be able to nurture her horse passion as the editor of *Appaloosa Journal*, the official publication of the Appaloosa Horse Club located in Moscow, Idaho. She started working for the ApHC fresh out of college in 1997 as assistant editor and took over the reins as editor in December 2004. She earned her bachelor's degree in agricultural journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she minored in animal science. She has five daughters: Kristin, Melanie, Lauren, Lyanne and

Annette; and 3 ½ grandchildren: Luciano, Keilyn, Jeffrey, and another due on Halloween 2008. Now that her youngest daughter is college-bound, Diane looks forward to spending her newly found free time indulging her horse passion (pleasure riding). She joined the AHP board in 2008.

PATTY TIBERG

With three decades of experience in the performance horse industry, Patty is the Associate Publisher for *Quarter Horse News*. Patty has been with Cowboy Publishing Group since 2000 when she joined the organization as the marketing director. A graduate of Texas A&M, Patty worked as the director of member services at the Horse Industry Alliance and served four years as a Board member for the Alabama Quarter Horse Association. In 2005, the Fort Worth Business Press honored her as one of the "Top 40 Under 40," a program that recognizes young community leaders. Patty is an active volunteer for several youth programs in her community. She serves on the Kennedy Center's Imagination Celebration Board of Directors and is a member of the fundraising committee for the Kinderfrog's School at Texas Christian University. Patty and her husband, Steven, have a 5-year-old son, Colby, and a 3-year-old daughter, Taylor.

NEW MEMBERS FOR 2008

To access contact information, visit the AHP online membership directory.

Publication Members

Midwest Horse Digest
The Score

Corporate Members

Figuerola Laboratories
Institute for Justice
Topika Images

Affiliate Members

Mercedes Clemons
Marsha Hayes
Robyn Volkening

Student Members

Katherine Beach

SMALL BUT MIGHTY SEMINAR: STAYING SOUND IN A TOUGH ECONOMY OR WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH THE TOUGH GET GOING

BY: DARLENE JACOBSON

The 40 or so attendees at the small publishers' seminar took a cold hard look at their business models and opened their minds to possibilities. The seminar, led by Cheryl Erpelding and Dean Jacobson, used a variation of the format of 45 great ideas in 45 minutes. There was a tremendous amount of talent in that room and Cheryl and Dean were mining for gold

We were from the four corners of the US and everywhere in between. However, geography notwithstanding, we were all dealing with the same issue - a tough economy. An enthusiastic discussion with everyone participating offered many great ideas, including cutting costs with changing paper quality, renegotiating with your printer, getting

sponsors for email blasts, spotlighting advertisers in emails, and repurposing editorial. We discussed the dilemma of raising rates in a shaky economy and the standard still holds true, better a small amount each year than a big hike every few years.

We did not have enough time to explore each idea as much as I would have wished. Next year we hope to have more time for open discussions and exchanges of ideas. There was more "gold (ideas) in them thar hills," and we are going to dig for it in New Orleans.

There are a lot of great things about being a member of AHP, but the willingness to share ideas and help each other is the number one reason that keeps me a member. I can pick up the phone any time of the year and call a small magazine publisher or a national magazine publisher and ask for help. AHP members have saved me more time and money than I have ever paid in dues or seminar fees. As they say on TV - "I paid for the seminar with my MasterCard, but the experience was priceless."

TALES FROM THE HOME OFFICE

THE FUTURE OF PUBLISHING

BY: JEREMY W LAW, EDITOR

The current recession is a hot topic, whether discussed directly, or indirectly as part of a conversation about the rising cost of fuel, hay and feed; the war; the decrease in horse breeding, buying and show attendance, or the drop in sales of tack and rider apparel. We equestrian publications are pressing ahead to avoid being crushed between falling revenues and rising costs. What does the future hold for us? Thomas Woll of Cross River Publishing Consultants Inc., presented his response to this question during a session at the AHP seminar in Saratoga Springs. The highlights are worth reviewing, especially if you were unable to attend.

Woll's outlook was encouraging. He described the future as "awash in possibility." Woll said that things would be "smaller, faster, better, and at a lower price." He cited the growing affordability of consumer electronics, which will only increase the popularity of digital media and dictate the spectrum of dominant formats for publishers.

The "What"

According to Woll, the platform is changing from "horizontal" to "vertical." Consumers will not be found in broad audiences, but in niches. And—as evidenced by the sales of iTunes singles—they're not buying the whole pie anymore. They just want a few slices, and they want them immediately. These niche customers prefer content over format, which will need to be flexible. For example, top stories might be delivered in e-newsletters, as audio and video, and in a more distilled version sent to consumers' mobile

phones. Woll sees the trends in Japanese mobile phone "publishing" and advertising arriving soon in the United States. What it will mean is a potential proliferation of digital publications, lower sales, fewer retail outlets and fewer customers per publication. Woll believes an advantage to this is that we will have easier, faster, global access to the communities that want what we're selling. This includes faster feedback about our products and service—for better or worse. The community will also be key as consumer studies have shown people trust peer reviews and opinions to those of experts by a 6:1 margin. Today, more people read blogs than daily newspapers.

The "How"

Woll emphasizes that we need to use content to promote content—that the multiple formats we offer be connected and promote one another. We need to "market smaller" and "market interactively." Additionally, we need to track the return on investment of our new adaptable content: orders, inquiries, web site visits and sales, customer value and customer history. With the increased use of digital formats and communication, these numbers should only get easier to track. The ROI will grow when we focus on customer service combined with greater visibility, for example, with a website that is optimized to rank high in consumers' internet searches.

Woll says getting your content "out there" is as important as the content itself. Make your content supremely accessible and, instead of relying on expensive advertising, create your own buzz. Be personal with, and up-to-the-minute for your consumers. Find or create your community of consumers and give them several, immediate ways to purchase/consume your products. Remember: the

consumer wants your goods "smaller, faster, better and at a lower price."

More "How"

So, who will survive? According to Woll, it will be those who cater to the consumer and adjust their overhead to the changing marketplace. It seems simple enough, though I'm left wondering about the details. I agree that diversity in the form of multi-format digital media is part of our future, and that print will survive, though through a gentle decline. But the challenge for most equestrian publishers is that there is another layer of "how" to all of this.

Many publications don't have the software, hardware or resources to launch a digital content-blitz. For many publications, staffs are small and many people wear many hats. Even if a publication has a tech expert, can it afford to devote that person's time to creating a new web site and additional pages? Who will create/convert and update the content? If the work is outsourced, will it be affordable?

With less money to go around, both consumers and advertisers are looking for deals—if they're spending money at all. Meanwhile, the day-to-day publication business is growing more and more expensive. Like Woll, both of this month's Spotlight interviews extolled the benefits of niche marketing. AHP is a resource, brilliantly stocked with experience and knowledge like yours. I want to know what you think about the future, what you've tried that failed, and what you do now that works. Others want to know, too. Whether it's a short note or doctoral dissertation, drop me a line at jeremy@360marketingsolutions.com.