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in lexington**

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AMERICAN HORSE PUBLICATIONS *FOR THE RECORD*
SEPTEMBER 2008



AHP FOR THE RECORD SEPTEMBER 2008 ISSUE

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JENNIFER BRYANT

At our June meeting in Saratoga Springs, NY, the AHP board members voted to change the timing of the other yearly board meeting from winter to fall. Much of the AHP seminar planning gets done at this meeting, and the AHP seminars have grown such that February to June just isn't much time for getting everything done without overloading our executive director, Chris Brune.

As a result, next month, we're headed to beautiful Lexington, KY (two equine Meccas in one year!), to convene at the hotel that will host AHP's 2010 seminar. Host hotels, their room blocks, meeting space, and other terms have to be hashed out and booked far in advance. So after preliminary scoping and site visits by Chris, a local board member, or both, we meet at the site about eighteen months in advance of the seminar date. The hotel staff gives us a tour, and we get the opportunity to sleep in the beds, eat in the restaurants, and generally experience the hotel to determine, as best we can, whether you will be happy staying there. Based on the strong positive response that the Saratoga Springs location elicited from 2008 seminar attendees, we thought it would be best if we could combine Lexington's equine charms with a

downtown seminar site. The hotel in Lexington is sited similarly to Saratoga's, with shops, art galleries, restaurants and more within easy walking distance.

Besides the board-meeting schedule change, another change we're considering is the institution of one or more special educational sessions to be offered the day before the regular AHP seminar begins. These might be longer, targeted sessions that could explore subjects of importance to AHP members in a detailed way that's not possible in the limited-time framework of a standard AHP seminar session. This concept, if approved, would debut at the 2009 AHP seminar in New Orleans. (And don't worry; we don't want things to be all work and no play, so we'd have to figure out a way to shoehorn in a fun local activity too.)

Would you be inclined to attend a pre-seminar session if it addressed a topic of importance to you and your business? What kinds of topics would make you want to sign up? Please send your thoughts and suggestions before October 15 so that we can be informed when we discuss the concept further at our fall board meeting. E-mail me (jennifer@jenniferbryant.net) or Chris (ahorsepubs@aol.com).



AHP MEMBER SPOTLIGHT LUA SOUTHARD



With nearly forty years in the equine industry, Equine Resources International CEO, Lua Oas Southard, took time from her busy schedule to share some insights with AHP's *For The Record*.

You've served the equine industry from several important posts for nearly forty years—helping launch Practical Horseman, serving as its publisher, as Director of Equine Marketing for Cowles and now as CEO of an international equine marketing and advertising agency. What drew you to the equine industry?

It's all in the genes! I come from a "horse" family. My father was a Master of the Foxhounds, my uncle was a whipper-in, and my cousin was one of the leading steeplechase jockeys. I grew up around horses going to fox hunts, races, hunt meets, horse shows and events. My first real job was as a part-time circulation assistant for an equine publication, *The Pennsylvania Horse*. That seemed to have set up my lifelong career in the equine industry.

How has the U.S. economy impacted ERI?

At first we, at ERI, didn't notice any impact from the economic problems. But this year we have been affected. One of our clients decided to suspend all advertising—despite our recommendations against it—after the first quarter of the year. Another of our clients just decided they couldn't afford to work with us anymore. That puts an agency like mine in a predicament because I still have staff to pay and all the other expenses associated with running a business. They say not to put all your eggs in one basket, but that's getting harder and harder to do.

As CEO of ERI, you have a unique perspective of both equestrian companies and equestrian publications. How would you describe the current state of the equine industry in the U.S.?

Just as in the "real" world, people in the equine industry seem to be tightening their belts. Horse people have long been known to do without just to make sure their horses have what they need. But now, the economy is affecting every level of horsemen and horsewomen. On the top level, for example, a rider might buy a new saddle each year. Now, instead, they are purchasing one every other year. People are leasing horses more often, rather than buying them, or joining together to go to shows, so they can save money on gas. Equestrian publications are having to wheel and deal as they compete for advertising dollars and work with individual advertisers to create packages that include publications and the internet.

Would you describe the current state of the European equine industry differently?

We don't have any European clients right now, so I'm

not as connected there as I have been in the past. I did just get back from a trip to Ireland and saw, first-hand, that Ireland's economy has really been moving up, especially within the last 20 years or so. Instead of the well-known, cute Irish bungalows or row houses, I saw an enormous amount of what I would call "McMansions" that look very new, many of which have pastures and barns for horses.

Has equine publishing evolved as you imagined?

I don't know that I actually imagined how equine publishing would evolve. I can tell you that the equine publishing industry has become more sophisticated, though it seems to follow the path of other special interest publications.

What do you believe to be the future of equine publishing? Have we entered the twilight of print?

I think one of the things that will save the equine publishing business is the fact that there are so many different disciplines of riding, so many different breeds of horses, and so many regional, state and national publications. It's like a cottage industry in so many respects. People like to see their names in print, have the need to promote their horses and businesses, and like to read their magazines. I know some magazines are really feeling the competition from the internet, but the people running those publications are smart enough to figure out how to get the best of both worlds. I don't believe we've entered the twilight of print; we still like to read our magazines and periodicals! Just don't forget about those youngsters coming along. We need to do everything we can to encourage them to read too—and just not online.

AHP NEWS

AHP CELEBRATES 40TH IN LEXINGTON IN 2010

Lexington, Kentucky has been selected as the site for AHP's 40th Anniversary Seminar in 2010. This will be AHP's sixth visit to Lexington since the association began in 1970, having held previous annual seminars in 1973, 1987, 1989, 1994, and 2004.

Not only will members be celebrating the association's 40th anniversary in 2010, but Lexington is also host to the FEI Alltech World Equestrian Games (WEG) scheduled for September 25 - October 10, 2010 at the Kentucky Horse Park. Held every four years, the WEG event is the world championships of the eight equestrian disciplines recognized by the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI). The Games have never before been held outside of Europe; nor have all eight disciplines ever previously been held together at a single site—both firsts that will be achieved in Lexington.



The Lexington Downtown Hotel has been chosen as seminar headquarters for the 2010 AHP seminar. The landmark hotel has begun an exciting transformation to change their brand to one of the most recognized names in hospitality, Hilton. Formerly the Radisson Plaza Hotel, the new name will be the Lexington Downtown Hotel and Conference Center. The hotel will undergo a \$13 million renovation in 2009 and emerge as a Hilton Brand hotel.

The hotel is located in downtown Lexington and will offer AHP members an affordable group rate of \$119 which includes complimentary airport shuttle service and complimentary wireless internet.

So mark your calendar for June 17-19, 2010 and plan to be a part of the celebration.

AHP BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO MEET IN OCTOBER

The AHP Board of Directors meets twice a year, once at the annual seminar and the second meeting was held in February until this year. The Board voted to move its mid-year meeting to October to allow more time for planning next year's AHP programs and seminar in New Orleans.

Traditionally, the Board meets at the hotel selected as the site of the following year's seminar therefore the meeting will be held at the Lexington Downtown Hotel in Lexington on October 22-23, 2008.

AHP members who live in the Lexington area who would like to join us for dinner on Thursday, October 23 should contact Chris at ahorsepubs@aol.com or 386-760-7743.

AHP MEMBER, LINDA CONNORS DIES

Affiliate Member, Linda Connors, 60, died September 12. A resident of Syracuse, New York, Linda was an AQHA restricted judge, U.S. Equestrian Federation judge in the hunter and equitation divisions, and she had taught judges' seminars for AQHA and other breed associations. She was the AQHA director for New York and New Jersey for more than 20 years before being elevated to honorary vice president.

In addition, Connors bred, sold and trained horses. She has produced state, national and world performance champions in AQHA.

She wrote for national publications, published a newsletter for professional horsemen, offered consultations for others on their equine businesses, appeared at speaking engagements, led seminars and clinics, and ran 10 horse shows each year. She authored, in part, a working hunter casebook for AQHA.

In 2005, Linda attended the AHP seminar in Seattle, Washington.

AHP NEW MEMBERS

NEW AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Bonnie Davis

Consulting, presentations, clinics, writing assignments

Two Horse Enterprises

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Bonnie has been a freelance writer for over 40 years. She is a clinician on horse camping and trail riding. She owns Two Horse Enterprises for trail riding, horse camping books, maps, etc. and www.weedfreefeed.com, an educational, informational web site for assisting equestrians in locating certified weed free feed for use on federal, state lands.

NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS

English Riding Supply

Manufacturer and wholesaler of english riding products

Contact: Amy Pembleton

520 Kane Street

Scranton, PA 18505

Phone: 866-569-1600

Fax: 866-569-1800

apembleton@englishridingsupply.com

www.englishridingsupply.com

English Riding Supply is a U.S. importer and manufacturer of more than 25 of the top brands in riding equipment and apparel, including Pessoa, Mountain Horse, Ovation and Veredus.

Partrade Trading Company

Manufacturer/distributor of equestrian products

Contact: Jeremy Law

6538 Slabtown Road

Wilson, NC 27893

jeremy@360marketingsolutions.com

www.partrade.net

Founded in 1955, Partrade is a manufacturer and distributor of world-class Western and English riding supplies.

NEW STUDENT MEMBERS

Ashley Crawford

Western Michigan University

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ashley.crawford@ymail.com

Ashley is currently studying English Communications at Western Michigan University. Her goal is to write for The American Quarter Horse Journal or Western Horseman. She has an Associates of Science in Equine Science from University of Findlay and has been riding for 12 years.

SMALL BUT MIGHTY- FOR AND FROM SMALL PUBLISHERS ECONOMY WOES CREATE CHALLENGES FOR SMALL PUBLISHERS

BY: CHERYL ERPELDING, CEO OF RIDING'S PUBLICATIONS

Last month one of the small publishers called me and asked about the rising cost of her bind-in subscription postcard. My recommendation was to eliminate that cost altogether and put that subscription document right in her magazine. The reader can cut out the subscription info, put it in an envelope and send it in via snail mail. Alternatively, direct them to go to your website and get their subscription online.

Another way to save on costs is to tap in to your audience for editorial and photographic content. Many of your readers are great writers and photographers. Some of them will be happy to share with you their stories or photos without a fee.

We are facing lagging ad sales, too, and have been putting online the articles that we can't find room in our monthly magazine. Direct your readers to that section, create more traffic for your website. Let your advertisers know that you are getting traffic and it's a great time for them to get on the web and promote their businesses.

Cash flow is always king for small businesses. Be sure to stay on top of your accounts and don't hesitate to get creative. We just did a "buy three ads get one free" ad sale. We have done this before. It always generates a good response and brings in new customers. The customer must pay for the ads before we go to press and be sure you can afford such a good discount. If your profit margin is really slim do something that is closer to a discount you can afford.

Economic times like these often result in slow paying customers. An idea that has worked for us when working with unpaid accounts is the "Customers in Bad Standing" section of our website. We give them several chances to pay us. We call, e-mail, etc. Then we send a letter that states our accountant is requiring us to put them on this part of our website. Always blame the accountant even if you are the accountant. This letter works really well and usually gets us a payment. If they ignore the letter, they get listed on the website. That bad customer list is the most visited section of our website.

Let me know if you have a question, problem or good idea to share with the small publishers. If you'd like to write next month's column we welcome that too. Just let me know! cheryl@ridingmagazine.com

TALES FROM THE HOME OFFICE SOYLENT GREEN

BY: JEREMY W LAW, EDITOR

My eastern North Carolina home office is a sanctuary. It's moderately organized and offers a beautiful view of the hundreds of acres of lush, green farmland that surround our property. The giant, mature tobacco plants are now being harvested, and this year's soy and cotton crops are rapidly reaching maturity. I can hear the farm machines and the chatter of workers in the fields. It's a romantic soundtrack for my office work.

But there is a sinister dichotomy to many "green" things. Our relaxing, healthy life in the country is replete with our own organic garden; fresh, sweet water from a deep well, and plenty of firewood for the stove that heats our home during the winter. I'm not, however, fooled by the semantics of our "green," rural surroundings. Each season, many low-flying crop dusters visit our property and spray every acre around us. Each month, numerous tall machines straddle the crop rows, misting the plants with musky concoctions. Every time, the fragrant chemical clouds linger long after the planes and machines are gone.

So we're relaxed and sated with a meal of organic zucchini and venison. But, what toxins have leached into our drinking water, or settled on our garden. Our country living may help us avoid heart attacks, but may also let us develop a new kind of cancer. Perhaps I'm too cynical.

I see an inverted parallel in the publishing world. A myriad of equestrian magazines and catalogs cross my desk every week, and each month brings significant changes in the publications' page numbers, editorial-to-ad ratios, layout, size and references to digital media. The economy has stripped away any low-hanging revenue and many publications seem to be trying many new things to stay in the black.

While the farmland surrounding my home office appears innocuous while hiding a toxic side, the country's gloomy

economy offers equine publishing a bright, silver lining. Equine publishing is being forced into a life-affirming rejuvenation.

Most owners and riders will be happily "horse poor" for the rest of their lives; it would take a catastrophe to eliminate these consumers. Nevertheless, publishers have had to get creative to court and keep their share of the readers and advertisers. Except for the requisite, handful of boring advertisements, here's simply no more room for ineffective, wasted pages in any publication.

As our folio phoenix rises from the ashes, we're seeing smarter promotions, a better digital balance, higher-quality content and publications that are better equipped to serve horse-loving consumers. When the economy does improve, (any day now, right?) the sleeker, smarter, more efficient equine publications and their digital counterparts will be poised for even greater success.

I've promised myself to get our well water tested. And I'll order that test kit just as soon as I finish reading these great horse magazines that just arrived.



TECH TIPS HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

BY: JEREMY W LAW, EDITOR

As evidenced by the plastic Christmas trees appearing in select store displays, the holiday season is approaching. This seems to happen earlier every year. It sparks our awareness of the impending gift quest to be accompanied by the requisite joy, dread, financial fretting, etc. I'm here to help.

Though the following items live on the fringe of true technology, they may be just what you're looking to give to that most special of someones—you! Come on! You've been mostly good this year; don't you deserve a gift?

A favorite of mine are Nixie clocks. They can be purchased from a number of sites. A simple internet search will turn up more than you can shake a stick at. They are available in a myriad of configurations and using numerous types of the "Nixie" tubes. Filled with low-pressure neon, the cathode-illuminated tubes were first introduced in 1952 for use in voltmeters and frequency counters. Though production of the tubes ceased in the 1980s, enough remain in international warehouses to support their current revival. You can buy assembled clocks from several web sites, but clock kits, parts and enclosures are also available. Just Google "nixie clocks."



Are you tired of having to get up from your desk to toast a bagel or slice of ciabatta? Me neither, but what if your computer could take care of that, too. With the Drive Bay Toaster and the accompanying software you can toast that pop tart while surfing the web. I'm kidding—I know you work all the time. The Drive Bay Toaster fits into any 5 ¼" drive bay. It has a fan for ventilation, a crumb tray and a two-year warranty. If you've got \$30 to burn—or toast—just visit www.crazypc.com/other/misc/toast.htm.



This next gadget may seem a bit tame, but how cool to be able to brew your own fresh, hot coffee that you don't have to share. (Okay, you got me: I'm an only child.) The Zelco Brisk Brew Portable Coffee Pot uses a permanent mesh filter to brew 8 ounces of coffee in just minutes, and then neatly tucks away into your luggage or your desk drawer. Amazon.com has them for \$39. If I were you, I'd also get a small coffee grinder to ensure the freshest coffee, and the most irritated co-workers.



If burning yourself with the soldering iron while assembling your Nixie clock has worked up an appetite, just pull out your Notebook Portable Grill. Weighing in at about 8 pounds it's an easy carry and is actually lighter than the standard bag of charcoal. When you're done cooking up a feast for your friends, just fold it up and stash it back under your desk. Next time, I'd fire it up outside; those firemen looked pretty irritated. But at least they enjoyed your grilled chicken sandwiches. Check out the grill in the cooking section at

<http://www.aplusstore.com>.



Here's a must have: a glowing, plastic sheep that plugs into your USB drive. It's clearly marked with a radioactive logo and comes with removable goggles. As if dying from radiation poisoning, Seamour Sheep's light will go out when he's



tipped over. This molded incarnate of the underground comic star was only produced in a limited quantity, so I'd rush to grab this one. He's 6 inches tall and costs \$69—that's about 11 dollars per inch. Visit

<http://rotofugi.com/toyscart/pc/viewPrd.asp?idcategory=0&idproduct=2455> or just get "geek" tattooed on your forehead. Me? I'm going for the tattoo.



It's probably more useful than Seamour, though it doesn't glow. If you're tired of focusing on your own tragedies, it's time for the Gin and Tonic ice tray. Now you can inspire a "punny" conversation as your guests sip their gin and tonics with iceberg- and Titanic-shaped ice cubes. Each tray makes four ill-fated ocean liners and four icebergs. Fred and Friends at www.worldwidedfred.com also offers an ice tray that makes ice dentures. It's not your father's ice tray, but it is a little gross. Click on the "buy" tab to locate stores near you. But be warned, they sell a lot of other items that you don't need. No, no you don't.



So, don't forget, the holidays are right around the corner. When you get done building that Nixie clock, just write me for my mailing address. A shiny, red bow on the box would be nice, too.