

The Second Arabian Open Shows Championships is All New!

By Laura Mickelson, AOSC chair

The second Arabian Open Shows Championships (AOSC), created, sponsored, and run by the Minnesota Arabian Horse Association, was at a new place, on a new date and with a new show! The AOSC was held as part of a WSCA open show with some Arabian-only classes. Held at the Washington County Fairgrounds in Lake Elmo on September 9, 2007, the show drew 32 horses and 171 entries. Exhibitors showed their own horses out of their trailers in an Outdoor arena! New for 2007 were 5 additional championships, 2 Walk/Trot Championships and 3 additional age splits. Horses came from Wisconsin and a wide area of Minnesota proving that this concept has appeal outside of the local area. Everyone had a wonderful time and, after a chilly start, even the weather cooperated.

Judges were David Boggs for the AOSC classes and Linda Hagan Kvanbeck for the WSCA and the other Arabian classes. Both judges took the time to talk to exhibitors and help them improve their performance. This was much appreciated by all and may become a more formal element of the show in 2008. A special thanks to David for donating his time!

Exhibitors were thrilled with the qualifier ribbons and especially impressed with the rose garlands for champion and reserve. These garlands were designed by Anita Grant and Natalie Anderson and made by Anita! Horses qualified for the AOSC by competing in 3 unrated shows, including the other classes held on the same day. The unique garlands were similar to the ones given out at the Region 10 championship show and we had comparable Top 5 ribbons. Our main purpose is to showcase these wonderful Arabians trained and show by their amateur owners to quality judges in a Championship setting. We were disappointed that we didn't get more non-Arabians to the show, but will modify our promotional efforts for the 2008 show to try to change that. We really want to show the world what wonderful horses we have!

It was very gratifying to see the joy and excitement that these championships generated. MAHA is on the right track with programs like this and the reaction of the exhibitors proves it. We need to concentrate on what we have in common –the love of these magnificent Arabian horses and build a club that welcomes and appreciates the efforts of all members who share that love. Part of MAHA's efforts to connect to this wider world of Arabian owners is the calendar of open shows held in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, and in the Dakotas that have Arabian classes or are of interest to people showing Arabians that I have been creating and distributing for the last two years. This calendar is available on the MAHA (www.mnarabhorse.com) and the Region 10 web sites (www.region10arabians.com) and is also emailed to an ever-growing list of people in the 5 state area. The calendar also includes a list of Arabian-friendly open shows judges, as recommended by exhibitors. If you want to be added to this list, please email me at lauramickelson@aol.com.

Although we didn't have the promotional opportunities that being with the Steele County Free Fair offered, we did set out a small promotional area by the show office and most of the materials were taken although the tootsie rolls were the most popular item! The show looks to make a profit and this is due in great part to the generosity of our patrons, sponsors and, of course, the wonderful volunteers! A special thanks to David Boggs for Midwest Patronships and getting an additional patron and 6 class sponsorships in between judging classes!

I would like to thank the other AOSC Committee members, Natalie Anderson, Jane Boots, Anita Grant, Pat Forehand, and Kathy Zalusky for their hard work. Natalie was invaluable in the promotional aspects, helped with ribbons and worked in the office the day of the show. Anita in addition to making the garlands also served as photographer after the original photographer had to cancel. Special thanks to the show volunteers: Shirley Theede (awards and hospitality), Mike Theede (gate), Lisa Lewis (announcer), Toni Marie O'Daniel (show office) Brian Feuling (promotion, gate) Elaine Yungerberg (ring secretary), Ellen Larson (awards), Maria Costa (awards), and Christina Mattson (ring master). Thank you also to MAHA's president, Brian Feuling, for his support for the program in general and for his efforts with the promotional materials.

Finally I would like to thank our show patrons and sponsors without whom this show would simply not be possible.

We are already considering plans for the 2008 show! We need more people to work on the show committee so if you are interested, please contact me at lauramickelson@aol.com.

Thanks again to everyone who supported the show!