

Reflections

AN EDITORIAL

For most of us in the continent, the show season is winding down. Seeing my own horses "fuzzing out" with winter fur, watching the thermometer go down, retrieving the electric blankets out of drawers...it's hard to imagine that some of you will be having horse shows well into November and maybe even after that. Be that as it may, Fall seems to be a time of reflection and recollection. Recouping the victories, the successes...or perhaps trying to bury less than satisfying experiences. Good or bad, it's time for many of us to put the past behind us and rest up for the future. There is something about rainy days and falling leaves that brings reflective moods upon me.

If all of us as Plantation enthusiasts sat down and looked back what has passed so far this year, how would we rate it as far as success or progress is concerned? Say, on a scale of "10." What has been accomplished...How Much has been accomplished...and How Well has it been accomplished. These are things I find myself thinking about these days.

Let's try to take stock of where we are as of today. We still have work to do and time to do it in...but I'd just like to pause for a bit and take stock of our situation. This has been a very full year and I don't think we'll see a letup yet. Really, we can't afford one now anyway.

January of this year found Walking Way readers still responding to the "Packet of Goodies" we published that presented soring in a very realistic and hard-hitting manner. Soring hasn't gone away. In fact, as we've mentioned several times, soring has invaded the Plantation ranks as well. Have we really dealt

with this disease of the industry or have we just paid vocal tribute to the fact that "It exists and isn't it awful?" The Walking Way has no intention of letting the subject slip away into obscurity which is what some people would like to see. It would give them the perfect atmosphere to continue their abuse in peace. We'll deal with soring but won't take up space to tackle it this month.

The February Walking Way printed a letter from the President of the Plantation Walking Horse Association of California (Joleen Palmer) to the President of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' & Exhibitors' Association of California (Paul Hughes) which communicated the first inklings that all was not well in California. Sometime over the winter, the Plantation people talked things over and decided that enough was enough. They no longer wished to be connected with the poor image of the Big Lick Show Horse. With a "Thanks, but no thanks," Plantation people proceeded to set up a separate show circuit that incorporated several invitations to show with other breeds that previously refused Walking Horse participation. The Walking Way followed the California Boycott closely and feels justified in saying that it looks to be a huge success. As the year rolled on, rumblings of the same nature were heard in other parts of the country. We wonder if the future will see similar boycotts in other places.

March heralded in the '85 show season. The Walking Way challenged its readers to make several decisions that would hopefully carry us through the show season, feeling good about ourselves and our breed. We urged readers to:

- 1) Be Informed
- 2) Be Involved
- 3) Be An Asset To The Breed
- 4) Show Clean
- 5) Resist Temptation
- 6) Be Tolerant
- 7) Think For Yourself

In looking back over the season, talking to people, reading letters and the news...I'm not sure that all of us were keeping some of these points in mind. That's why we've got maybe a little more work to do now than we would have been if people had been more thoughtful.

March also saw the emergence of a new level of awareness in the Plantation industry. A letter written by Lynn Dixon of Greenup, KY and a WHOA decision that defined the plantation show horse spurred great amounts of thought and mountains of response from the "purist" facet of our Plantation people. The new popularity of the Plantation Walking Horse brought about a realization that there is more than one kind of Plantation Horse. People had to make a decision as to what kind of horse they wanted to represent their type of Walking Horse. Was there room for both?

As the year rolled along, we've seen that there is, indeed, room for both kinds. While some had a difficult time accepting and dealing with the fact that there is a high-stepping and a low-stepping Plantation horse, the end of the show season is seeing a better understanding of the differences. Plantation horses are usually either being trained as Lite Shod or the heavier Plantation Shod. The TWHBEA has been kept hopping with rule changes and judge education. 1986 will show us how successful we've been.

April brought some reactions to an editorial printed in the March issue of the Voice magazine written by Sis Osborne of the TWHBEA. While some people agreed with the premise of her statements, others were shaken in their faith that TWHBEA had the Plantation people's best interests at heart. A letter from a reader was printed which flatly refuted some of Ms. Osborne's points concerning the "hate packets" (what we called "goodies"). Graphic descriptions of conditions in the reader's area pointed to the fact that oftentimes

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