



Executive Board Member's Update

By Dave Nobbe



Heartland Horseman's Challenge 2016



(Left to right) Sandy Chatten – ADM Sponsor Representative, Bianca Massa – Contestant, Adam Richardson – Winner, Dennis Cappel – last year's winner and judge presenting the traveling trophy, Laurie French-Treber – Contestant, and Trent Scott – Runner up. Photo: Mane Event Promotions

The annual Illinois Horse Fair was held from March 4 through March 6 at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield, Illinois. The Horseman's Council of Illinois sponsors the Horse Fair. One of the high points of this year's fair was Governor Bruce Rauner's attendance at the rodeo on Friday night. The Governor wished everyone well and prayed for the welfare and safety of the rodeo contestants. The governor offered that he and his family have a ranch in Montana where he raises and rides horses. He said that all four of



Bianca Massa on I.M. Boomer. Photo: Mane Event Promotions

his kids were riders. It was great to see the governor spending time with some of the horse enthusiasts from our state.

Building on the success of last year's Heartland Horseman's Challenge, the event was held again this year using retired racehorses for the competition. Six horses were brought to the fairgrounds from the Vandalia

Correctional Facility where horses that are donated through the R.A.C.E. program at Fairmount Park are kept. The effort to bring the horses to the horse fair and take care of them while they were there was once again taken on by Lannie and Janice Brooks. Without their cooperation the event would not have been possible. The event was sponsored by Archer Daniels Midland as it was last year. The racing industry owes ADM a big debt of gratitude for recognizing the plight of retired race horses and sponsoring a contest that showcases the thoroughbred's ability to excel at one career and then learn a new way of life bringing joy and happiness to the human population in each career.

The contestants chosen were Adam Richardson, Bianca Massa, Trent Scott, and Laurie French-Treber. Adam lives near Nashville, Tennessee and has been training horses for most of his adult life. His goal in training is to help bridge the communication gap between horse and human. Bianca is from Litchfield, Illinois. She uses a multidisciplinary approach to training and believes every issue is fixable and every goal is attainable when you put in the time. Trent grew up in Southern Illinois and now



Trent Scott on Count on Silver. Photo: Mane Event Promotions

lives near Green Bay Wisconsin. Trent believes that basic dressage is the best foundation and building block for any training discipline. Laurie resides in Carlock, Illinois. She is able to wear many different hats when it comes to a riding discipline. Laurie's motto is "Take care of your horsemanship and your horsemanship will take care of you."

The six horses were brought in to round pens in the Coliseum Thursday evening. Each trainer observed the horses and then picked the horse he or she would train in the competition. The order in which the trainers picked their horses was determined by drawing straws. Adam was first, Trent second, Bianca third and Laurie fourth. Adam chose Racing Bran an 11-year-old bay gelding by Awesome Again out of Believe Big Bran by I Can't Believe. Racing Bran is a multiple stakes winner of \$464,000.00. From 37 starts he was first 12 times, second six and third five times. Trent chose Count on Silver a six-year-old bay gelding by Eurosilver out of Count Sequence by Forestry. Count on Silver retired with earnings of \$65,000. From 36 starts he had two wins, eight seconds and eight thirds. Bianca chose I.M. Boomer an 11-year-old chestnut gelding by Langfur out of Karen S. by Kris S. He was stakes placed with five wins from 32 starts with six seconds and five thirds. Laurie chose No Song N Dance an eight-year-old dark bay gelding by Pleasant Tap out of Kelli's Song by Dixieland Band. He won five of 29 starts, was second four times and placed three times.

After choosing their horses, the contestants were given one hour to work them Thursday evening. The next one-hour session was Friday morning followed by a Saturday afternoon session and the final evaluation by the judges was on

Sunday afternoon. Each trainer seemed to have his or her own unique style of training. All of the trainers appeared to be making good progress with their respective horses. The training sessions were open to the public and drew large audiences. On Friday the trainers were equipped with microphones and spoke to the audience about what they were doing with their horses and why.

On Sunday a number of obstacles were set up in the coliseum. The obstacles included a bridge, a tarp spread out on the ground, a water like obstacle, a tarp cut in to strips suspended above the horse's head that the horse had to walk through, a gate to be opened while mounted, a mailbox to open while mounted, a fence post to be pulled behind the horse as well as several other types of obstacle. The trainers were judged on their horse's ability to willingly negotiate the obstacles and general improvement over the course of the three-day event.

Though it was not an easy decision, the judges chose Adam Richardson as the winner with Trent Scott finishing second. Adam received a \$500 cash prize and will keep the Heartland

Horseman's Challenge Traveling Trophy for one year. His name will be added to the list of winners on the trophy. Trent received a \$250 cash prize.

Perhaps the best news regarding the Heartland Horseman's Challenge is that five of the six horses were adopted and went to good homes. As members of the racing community we all must do our part to see that the animals who make racing possible are given a fair shake when their racing careers have ended.



Laurie French-Treber on No Song N Dance. Photo: Mane Event Promotions



Adam Richardson on Racing Bran. Photo: Mane Event Promotions

