

2018 ACPS Annual Meeting, September 28-29, St. Louis, MO
Joanie Webster

“*Accolades*” to the ACPS Region VII team—Annie Balotti-Paleen, Laura Balding, Pattie Stalder, Gloria LaCroix and Harriet Entin—for the hours and days they put into planning and organizing a most worthwhile, educational and memorable 2018 Annual Meeting with sites in Wildwood, downtown St. Louis, Gray Summit and Weldon Springs, Missouri! We also thank Annie’s husband, Chris Paleen, who assisted in the meeting preparations and Banquet set-up. Attendees and guests began arriving on Thursday afternoon, checking into the Wildwood Hotel. That evening, Gloria LaCroix arranged a trip into downtown St. Louis for dinner and Irish music at the well-known, 75-year-old, Irish pub, “McGurks.”

We were off to a great start and ready to begin Friday with a 9:00 a.m. educational visit to the Purina Animal Nutrition Center in nearby Gray Summit, MO, arranged by Annie who has been happily-employed at the Center, (affectionately called “the farm,”), for twenty-years! Our red-carpet welcome came from Gretchen Riley, Customer Relations Manager. Within her excellent power-point presentation, she provided history of the Center as well as an overview of the 1,200-acre animal feed research farm, partnering with Land O’Lakes, Inc., benefitting 3,000 animals from a variety of species, cared for by 100 employees, whose goals are, through proper nutrition, to help animals reach their full potential. The rolling hills and green pastures are unsurpassed in their beauty and tranquility. Sadly, photography on the property and within the facilities was prohibited, but all of us will long remember our time well-spent at “the farm.”

A state-of-the-art bus drove us to our first stop on the campus—the horse unit—where we met Mike Jerina, Manager of Equine Research, who guides implementation and data collection for research projects studying growth development and exercise physiology of the horse. In turn, he introduced us to Dr. Robert Jacobs, PhD, one of two on-site veterinarians taking part in daily research and on call for emergencies.

What followed was a “live” treadmill demonstration by one of the “veteran” equines observed at the walk, trot and canter necessary for data collecting procedures—fascinating, how this equine “partner” knew precisely where his feet were in all gaits! One of the oldest equines still serving in equine research is a gelding, “Tractor,” who began his treadmill training as a yearling and as of this year, has been serving Purina feed research projects for 20 years. He obviously knows his job well and is still on call! Using data points resulting from his all-gaits expertise on the treadmill, Tractor helped the team develop 12 products currently on the market.

The Animal Nutrition Center also has a partnership with Budweiser and its world famous 8-horse Clydesdale hitch. The Clydesdales are exclusively fed Purina feeds and have contributed greatly to feed research. Lesser-known is the fact that “the hitch” often makes “surprise” donations of Purina feed delivered to equine rescue operations in various parts of the country.

The two men toured us through the equine barns and introduced us to twelve weanlings who are this year’s candidates for testing feeds while they were in utero, and forward. All of them are already on a waiting list for purchase as they are well-bred Quarter Horses, all by one of five stallions used last year in AI breedings of mares living on the farm.

In order to purchase one of these youngsters, the prospective, approved buyer pays only the stud fee to take ownership when the colt or filly reaches the adoptable age! Oh, as they greeted us through the rails of their paddock, those faces were adorable! Our final stop on the equine unit tour was in a barn with monitored “feeding stations.” Behind a “drop door,” beneath each stainless-steel feed box, was a complexity of data-gathering electronics—totally amazing!

Appealing box lunches awaited us upon our return to our Conference Center meeting room. During the lunch hour, Dr. Don Walsh, DVM, Founder of the Animal Health Foundation, spoke to us about the most recent developments in research for laminitis recognition and treatment. There is now a new and simplified “Oral Sugar Test” which will identify horses at risk for insulin-related laminitis. Five years of research have resulted in a simpler test for identifying insulin levels in horses and ponies. This is a less expensive test for the horse owner, requiring minimal coordination with his/her veterinarian. If you visit the Animal Health Organization

website, you will learn more about this most recent research and find out how you can donate to the ongoing AHF research: www.animalhealthfoundation.com.

A very full day at the Purina Animal Nutrition Center closed with an energized Q & A session “invited” by staff members, Mike Jerina and Dr. Robert Jacobs. As we departed late in the afternoon, we offered our sincere thanks to the two men and to our two-day hostess, Gretchen Riley, knowing we would see her again in our Conference Center meeting room for Saturday’s full day of ACPS meetings. Friday evening, meeting attendees gathered for a delicious dinner at a gourmet restaurant within walking distance of our hotel. Yum!

Saturday morning dawned with another day of sunshine and perfect temperatures. The Board of Governors meeting at the Purina Conference Center was called to order at 9:00 a.m. with a roll call requested by President Cathy Blackmon, confirming a quorum of Board of Governor members, including Region Chairs. On behalf of Marynell Eyles, in her absence, Suzanne Phelps, Falls Church, VA, assumed the position of Acting Secretary. For detailed recording of Saturday’s meetings, minutes are available on the www.acps.org website. Highlights of both the Board of Governors and General Membership meetings are included in the following:

Discussion was invited by Arbitration Committee Chair, Fonda Eigel, who addressed the need for the ACPS to develop permanent, consistent “registration” policies. The immediate goal of the Committee is to formulate firm policy for handling individual hardship registration cases.

Laura Balding gave notice of the death of Winston Sheppard, 96-years-old, longtime ACPS Treasurer and Founder, with Jim Lightbody, of the ACPS Foundation.

Maureen Abel’s Equine Melanoma Report was read by Joanie Webster. The recent promising developments in Dr. Alain Theon/Dr. Carrie Finno’s UC Davis research encouraged Dr. Jill McNicol to call for “Passing the Hat,” allowing ACPS members present to make individual donations in support of the ongoing research. A motion was made for the ACPS to “match” all General Membership donations, received by November 15, 2018, (with an ACPS “cap” of \$2,500). Upon reading this article, if YOU, wish to join in by making a personal donation, please issue your check to the ACPS. At the bottom of the check, please add: “For Dr. Theon’s Equine Melanoma Research.” Mail your check no later than 15 November to ACPS Treasurer, Ms. Stephanie Fenton-Hickey, 518 E. Mays Road, Stockbridge, GA 30281.

Always enjoyed Regional Reports were given at the close of Saturday’s meetings.

2018-2019 Officers were announced: President, Cathy Blackmon; Vice President, Kate Denton; Vice President, Linda Haines; Treasurer, Stephanie Fenton-Hickey; Immediate Past President, Amy Plavin; Secretary, Marynell Eyles, (not a Board member).

As we left the Purina Nutritional Center in the late afternoon, Annie Palotti-Paleen guided a number of attendees for a visit to her “Duet Farm” in Union, MO.

Saturday night found us in our “glad rags,” driving to The Strathalbyn Club in Weldon Springs for the Annual Awards Banquet. Originally, the charming rustic clubhouse was a private residence, but was converted years ago as a meeting place to be enjoyed by local residents. Laura Carpenter Balding, a Strathalbyn Club member, and ACPS Past President of note, arranged for our cocktail hour and Awards Banquet to be held in its tranquil beautiful setting. We were delighted to have Laura’s mother, D. J. Moore, and Laura’s two sisters, Dorothy and Sophie, join us for the fun and festivities. Laura envisioned and featured an assortment of dessert cakes as table centerpieces, displayed on cake stands and decorated with porcelain Connemara ponies—grays and duns were quite prominent! Several cakes even featured carefully-crafted Irish cottages! At their places, everyone had the annually-prepared Awards Program listing all previous winners of “Hall of Fame” trophies. Also, at every place setting was an envelope holding two, “Connemara Morning,” black tea bags with Irish Cream Flavoring. Each envelope was decorated with a green shamrock and an individual photo of a famous Irish foundation stallion.

As is tradition, following dessert, current Awards Chairs, Marilyn Cheek and Sally Oxnard, introduced this year's "Hall of Fame" winners, presenting keeper trophies to those winners able to attend and the, large, multi-photo, "career" poster of each winning pony created annually by our talented ACPS member, Suzanne Antilla, New Fairfield, CT.

Joanie Webster was thrilled to dedicate a "replacement" Broodmare Trophy in memory of loved, appreciated, longtime ACPS member, Dr. Marian Molthan, MD, Phoenix, AZ. "Doc" was the donor of the original Broodmare Trophy 33 years ago! The stunning bronze sculpture was created by Maryland sculptor, (and former Connemara owner!), Ms. Jean Clagett. The first recipient of the new trophy is Susan McConnell's beloved mare, *Templebready Ruby!

At this moment it seems appropriate to say: "*We missed you in Missouri, Susan and Marynell,*" two of our most active and involved, contributing ACPS members!

2018 ACPS "Hall of Fame" Trophy Winners:

An Tostal Trophy: *Trout Ranch Malarkey*, owned by Ms. Beth Adams, 4.0 Farm, Stratham, NH. Ridden by Ms. Meagan Morrell, Stratham, NH.

***Tooreen Laddie Trophy:** **Montully Man*, owned by Ms. May Medley, Tullymor Farm, Fayetteville, GA

Camlin Trophy: *Ridgetop Cady O'Daly*, Owned by Alicia and Emily Daily, Cady O'Daly Farm, Goode, VA

Broodmare Trophy: **Templebready Ruby*, Owned by Ms. Susan McConnell, "Oakfields," Charlottesville, VA

Horse of the Year Trophy: *V.S.H. Devine Alexandra*, Connemara Halfbred, Owned by Susan Dudesik, Salmon, ID

Tre Awain Halfbred Trophy: *Cedar's Kiss Me Kate*, Daphne T. Bigelow, Lemont, IL

ACPS Crestwood Service Award: *Marilyn Cheek*, Sycamore Ridge Farm, Warrenton, VA

2018 ACPS Junior Scholarship Recipients:

Top Essay and Winner of \$200 Scholarship: Lilianna Giordano, 16, Hoschton, GA

Winners of \$100 Scholarships:

Riley Wiltison, 14, Oakland, MD

Summer Fraughnaugh, 13, Richmond, VA

Elenore Manning, 12, Skaneateles, NY

Alexandra Kondakov, 13, Culpepper, VA

Keeley Cooley, 17, Rapidan, VA

Stella Marsh, 13, East Hampton, CT

2018 Recipients of the ACPS Scholarship Applicants to the USEF:

Top Application and Winner of \$500 Scholarship, Julia Latham, 17, Sanbornton, NH

Runner-Up and Winner of \$250 Scholarship, Nora Goldfarb, 17, Franklin, TN

At evening's end, I believe *all of us* went home with wonderful "winnings" from the gratefully-donated, beautifully-displayed Silent Auction items, AND, it was Region V's stunning "Picnic basket"—a Yeti cooler packed with assorted "regional" items and foods, (including a stunning Celtic ground cover!), that won the coveted Regional Basket Trophy! The very attractive and objective "Basket Judge" was Mr. Todd Seely, fiancé of Trout Ranch Malarkey's rider, Meagan Morrell, Stratham, NH!

Thank you, *THANK YOU*, Region VII members for a fantastic weekend in September of 2018 as we shared camaraderie and a variety of accomplishments in accord with the ACPS goal to celebrate, preserve, and promote the Connemara pony!

