

COW COUNTRY QUARTER HORSE ASSOCIATION ATTAINS JUBILEE MILESTONE

By

Jan Alexander

Cow Country Quarter Horse Association was started in 1958 by Duke McRae and John Harstad as an avenue for marketing horses. This first group encompassed most of eastern Montana thus they named it "Cow Country" Quarter Horse Association. Marilyn Cunningham Fortune was the first secretary serving in that capacity until 1967. Ann McKinney then took the secretary's job and served ten years until 1977. Other members were Chet Larson, Joe Peila, Arlo Nansel, Paul Harbaugh, George Gauger, Walt and Ethelda Clark, Willard Snell, Bill McKinney, Bud and Bobbi Kramer and Darrel and Marion Hanson.

Their slogan was "All of Eastern Montana where the rivers run north." They sponsored many successful horse sales in Forsyth.

CCQHA members were invited to a meeting in Miles City with Dan Lockie. They helped him establish the Cow Capital Turf Club. He is still honored by the turf club with the Dan Lockie Memorial Derby.

In the early 1980s a group of interested Miles City people reactivated the CCQHA, serving under the same by-laws and name as the original group. The bank account which had been left on deposit in Hardin was closed and the funds were transferred to the reactivated club.

The first president of that group was Rodney Lee and he served for many years. Sandy Lee was the Newsletter publisher. The newsletter was typed on stencils and run off on a mimeograph machine. Other members and officers were Verdie and Patti Lavin, Ken and Jan Alexander, Wayne Morford and Jean Fleming Morford, Debbie and Steve Ferrin, Wes and Judy Tibbetts, Cliff and Marilyn Schantz, Dick and Amy Burgett, Buzz French, Gene LaRowe, Ray and Jane Rath, Jack and D'Ann Witcher, Ole Sherwood and Marvin, Norman and Norma Woodard, John and Rita Morford.

This group scheduled clinics and had the first Snaffle Bit Futurity, of which several were held. They also sponsored several AQHA-sanctioned horse shows and the Barrel'O'Fun barrel race futurities.

CCQHA then went inactive in 1989 and the club lay dormant until 1996 when it was raised again by some of the 1980s group. Rod Lee again assumed the presidency and Jan Alexander was appointed secretary and they served for several years. Debbie Ferrin assumed the treasurer's position, a post which she stills holds in 2009.

They served under the same by-laws and name as the prior groups and assumed the prior club's bank account. The Constitution and by-laws were updated in 2005 under the leadership of President Sandy Wilson, Vice-President Doug McLean and directors Bill McKinney, Ken Simmons and James Williams.

A questionnaire was handed to the group with ideas for activities. Foremost in most members' minds was a way to market horses. The first horse sale was held in 1999 with the tenth sale scheduled the 4th of September 2009. To enhance the sale, breeders' and sale horse futurities were started which will be September 3RD & 4TH this year.

The Ranch Horse Competition became too large to be held on sale day so it is held on a separate date, which this year is August 16TH. Contestants placing in the Ranch Horse Competition are eligible to compete at the NILE.

Other activities of this group have been clinics on horsemanship, cutting, and reining hiring some of the best known names in the horse business. They annually host the Eastern Montana Horse Show Circuit and currently host two shows over a weekend. The show this year is scheduled for June 27-28 in the Agra Center at the Fairgrounds.