

# Improvement is a Process

*“Patience is not the ability to wait but to keep a good attitude while waiting.” – Author Unknown*

Last year at this same time, in this same issue of *The Network*, I personally pledged a commitment to improve AMHA's My Morgan and Me and Open Competition programs. It had been brought to my attention there were several deficiencies in the programs and that some participants were rightly frustrated. So I'm back to give a brief update on the processes that have been implemented to make significant improvements. (*Hint: We're not done yet!*)

## MY MORGAN AND ME

- The My Morgan and Me award inventory (of those items shipped from the home office) was increased and is being maintained at appropriate levels so that upon submission of your accomplishment, you will be recognized and rewarded in an efficient and timely manner. Awards are being recorded and mailed within a business week of submission.
- If participants provided electronic or hard copy photos, we have made every attempt to promote their achievement on our Facebook page “Sharing Carrots.”
- If the Award Level achieved receives a t-shirt, sweatshirt or jacket, we now e-mail you the Marketplace certificate so you can customize the color and size required and have the award shipped directly to you. This has dramatically cut down on the time it takes for you to receive these particular award levels.
- Maintaining full transparency, we did have some repetitive problems with proper halter sizing but we hope we now have that ironed out!
- Program Coordinator Kristen Kelly has developed a new handout that incorporates not only the achievement level report form, but also basic information and a sample log for those that may desire a way to track hours. It is available online at [www.morganhorse.com/programs](http://www.morganhorse.com/programs).

We hope if you have additional questions, comments, or suggestions on how to manage and improve this program that you will reach out to us at the home office.

## OPEN COMPETITION

Summer is upon us and the 2019 open competition season has long been underway. While solving the logistics and customer service problems with the My Morgan and Me program were fairly simplistic and only required immediate implementation, the frustrations and challenges of the Open Competition Program have been much more complex. Rightly so!

This program deals with eight different disciplines and the previous attempt at a one size fits all mentality with the rules just wasn't realistic. Lesson learned.

Our software can only do so much. When reaching those limitations, manual, human labor is the only available option. So some of the divisions of this program can enter their results and BAM, the computer handles everything. Then, other divisions of this program face greater challenges. Now this is where the man hours can get excessively long and frustrating.

- Staff worked endlessly, but successfully to ensure the Open Competition results were calculated in a timely manner and we achieved that goal.

- Results were announced in time for recipients to register to attend convention and receive their recognition. Awards for those not attending the convention were mailed out the following week.
- The placings were increased from two placings per award to SIX placings per award.
- Medallions also were updated, announced, and awarded at the Convention in San Antonio, Texas.
- Coverage in the magazine was a little sooner than in comparison to the previous year but we can do better and will work toward that in the coming year.
- Most learned how to enter their show results through the online registry system easily enough but we are always happy to walk a participant through the process and assist.
- New for 2019 is a place to enter the “Judge” information. While this is not required for all divisions, it is extremely helpful for the Dressage Division. Questions about how to enter this information can be directed to the office.
- And as pledged, the Disciplines Committee spent HOURS upon HOURS reviewing the Guidelines in place as well as previous versions. They also consulted with members within each discipline of the program. Meetings were held where they fine tooth combed the rules line by line in hopes to post the 2019 Guidelines in a format that would be easily understandable while serving the best interest of each particular division.

Much volunteer and staff time was devoted to the improvement of this program. Both the staff and the Board of Directors understand the value of having our Morgan horses competing in all realms of equestrian sport. We know this program is important to the participants as well. All changes and updates that have been made have been done in good faith to improve this program for our members. While the number of members participating is relatively low, it does not diminish the commitment of either the participants or AMHA.

Honestly, it has been frustrating for AMHA (knowing how much time, blood, sweat, and sometimes tears have been devoted toward the improvement of this program) to see all the negative Facebook chatter and other such communications with the AMHA office. AMHA's standard policy is not to communicate or respond to Social Media chatter or discussion. Trying to respond to individual posts or other group posts is an ineffective way to communicate AMHA's official stance to our membership, so we do not attempt to do so. AMHA only uses their own personal Social Media sites to communicate and comment on issues facing our association and members.

Please remember that my pledge to improve this program still stands. We are not going to be able to go from a train wreck to a field of daisies with the snap of our fingers. This is a work in progress. This is going to take some time. This is going to require some PATIENCE and professionalism. We hope you will stop and reflect on this before condemning the sincerest of actions by volunteers and staff alike toward the development of this program into the PREMIER endeavor it can and should be. We are all working diligently to provide the service that both you and your Morgan horses deserve.

Sincerely,

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