



AHYA President's Corner

2016, AHYA President's Report to General Session



By Flora ElmColone
November 2016

Hi everyone, my name is Flora ElmColone and I am the new Arabian Horse Youth Association President. I'm so thrilled to be here in front of all of you today representing AHYA.

I am currently a senior at Santa Ynez Valley High School in Santa Ynez, California. Next year I will be attending college and I hope to double major in history and liberal studies. I plan on pursuing my Master's degree and teaching credentials, while of course continuing to ride and show Arabians all the way through.

My journey with the Arabian horse has been a constant in my life since before I can remember. I grew up on an Arabian horse farm and my mom, who's a trainer, had me on top of a horse before I could even walk. At the age of nine, I was surprised with a beautiful chestnut gelding named Psychic Power- my first very own horse. Power and I had an immediate connection. Growing up on a farm as an only child was lonely at times, but soon enough this horse became my best friend. We grew together, learned together, and spent most of our time together until he passed away when I was thirteen. Although it was devastating, I will always be grateful for the things he taught me, and I will always remember the day I brought him home, because from that moment on I became truly captivated by it all- the early horse show mornings, the countless hours spent in the barn, and of course, the amazing community I found. On my fourteenth birthday, I was surprised with my current mare Manno's Delight, and although making the switch from my peaceful quiet gelding to a spirited mare was difficult, MD and I have grown so much as a team in the past three years. We now compete in Country English Pleasure and Saddleseat Equitation, and are looking forward to the upcoming show season!

This is my fourth year here at AHA Convention and each year I look forward to it. Every year in September I begin counting down the days until I get to reunite with long-distance friends, hear incredible guest speakers, and learn as much as I can. In 2013, when I was in eighth grade, I became interested in getting involved with the Arabian Horse Youth Association. My mom and I did some research and made some calls and eventually we found out that there was no current Region 2 Director. So that year in March, I traveled to Denver as the youngest member on the youth board and represented my region. That was one of the best decisions of my life. I immediately fell in love with everything about the meeting- the people, the feeling of purpose, the discussions- even the van ride to the AHA Headquarters seemed like an exciting adventure. From this very first meeting, I knew that someday, in what then seemed like the very distant future, I wanted to be President of the Arabian Horse Youth Association. In 2015, I was elected AHYA Secretary, and I was fortunate enough to serve on

a talented and hardworking executive board who taught me so much. This past year at AHYA Convention in Oklahoma City, I achieved my dream and was elected 2016-2017 AHYA President. I would like to thank outgoing AHA President Cynthia Richardson for being the best role model in the past four years: I've been able to observe what it takes to make a good president and the effect you can have on people, and I will take that with me going forward into this next year. I feel so lucky to have spent four years with this organization, which has truly sculpted me into the person I am today, and gifted me with many experiences and memories I will carry with me forever.

In my years spent serving on the youth board, I've witnessed many Arabian Horse Youth Association Conventions, and every year I'm impressed. This year our theme was "Go for the Gold," inspired by the 2016 Summer Olympics. In the midst of the intense competition at Youth Nationals, the youth members who attended were able to engage in some fun games and trivia, and get to know other Arabian horse lovers from around the country. Our keynote speaker Kathie Hart gave an excellent speech on her history with Arabians. We also had guest speaker Gayle Lampe inspire us with her collection of motivational quotes. On behalf of the youth board, I would like to thank both Kathie Hart and Gayle Lampe for taking the time to come speak to us in Oklahoma City. At Convention we held committee meetings in which we gained some new membership, and elected our new AHYA Executive Board. Serving with me will be Kate Lewis from Region 11 as Vice President, Danika Overstreet from Region 5 as Secretary, and Tessa Kimbler from Region 6 as Treasurer. I'm looking forward to a productive and memorable year with these hardworking girls as well as the rest of our amazing youth board.

Youth Nationals is an event that creates unity, friendships, and an irreplaceable horse and rider bond while bringing together the best of the best. The atmosphere is always charged with excitement and anticipation, and for many people it is the highlight of their summer. Our theme of "Go for the Gold" fueled the desire to win, and those who did will never forget it. We continued our many successful fundraisers, such as the favored pink flamingos and the flying pigs contest. The flying pigs brought in a total of \$960, half of which went to four lucky winners, and half of which was kept for AHYA. The pink flamingo flocks got people in the congratulatory spirit and raised \$540. We also had a great turnout for the Parade of Regions golf cart parade, with everyone coming out to show pride and spirit for their region. Going along with our Olympic theme, each region represented a different summer Olympic sport. Region 5 won the contest with their rhythmic gymnastics themed golf cart. Throughout the week, we lead TAIL Tours with the help of Stacey Dunn, Cindy Howey, and Miss Debbie Himmel. The TAIL Tours were a great success and we were able to introduce over 120 adults and children to the beauty and diversity of our breed. The Hippology contest had a great turnout, with 44 participants, which brought in \$225. There were 68 raffle tickets sold at Youth Nationals for the AHYA golf cart raffle. Thank you to Dever Inc. for sponsoring this item again this year! Our Youth qualifier t-shirts brought in \$6,500. On behalf of the AHYA Board of Directors, we would like to give a huge thank you to Brenna Whitlock, AHA Youth and Family Programs Coordinator. She makes these fundraisers and activities possible with much hard work and dedication, and we are so grateful for her! We would also like to thank Miss Debbie Himmel, Youth Committee Chair, and Cindy Howey, Youth Committee Vice Chair, for all they do for us; as well as everyone else who has devoted their time to volunteering with AHYA!

Youth judging is a very important aspect of this association, inspiring kids to learn more about the Arabian horse and the Arabian show industry. It lets these participants understand what it takes to be a judge, and oftentimes ignites a passion that will lead them to become our future. The Youth Judging Contest was held in Tulsa, Oklahoma at U.S. Nationals and had 23 competing teams, 11 of which were AHA teams. The High Individual Overall of the contest was Bridget Stanton, from the AHA team of

Illinois. Bridget had the privilege of standing center ring amongst the Western judging panel during finals night at U.S. Nationals, and placed the same champion as the judges. Congratulations Bridget!

The youth are the future. Arabian Horse Youth Association is doing its part in improving that future, by helping to ignite a love for Arabians, and kindling that passion all the way through. The Arabian horse will take us far in life: to shows in different countries, events in different states; but beyond that, beyond the places we will visit or the experiences we will have; at the root of it—what drew me in from the beginning—is the community we will find. Today we are united here by one shared cause: a love for the Arabian horse. We all have the desire to make a difference, and when horse-loving, dedicated individuals become involved with AHYA, they will find that they can. When a young kid, who might be too shy or maybe doesn't know what they really want yet; when that eager child who looks at horses with stars in their eyes gets involved: they will find that this breed, this organization, and these people will guide their path and get them to exactly where they want to be. Just take it from someone who knows.

Let me introduce myself!

By Flora ElmColone

August 2016

Hi, my name is Flora ElmColone and I couldn't be more excited to be your new AHYA President!

I'm currently a senior at Santa Ynez High School in Santa Ynez, California. I'm applying to colleges this fall, and I hope to remain in California for school. I eventually want to get my Master's degree in education and become a credentialed history teacher! While, of course, continuing to ride the beautiful Arabian horses we all love so much.



My mom is a horse trainer and I grew up on a farm, so I've been riding my whole life. I competed in my first show at the age of seven in showmanship. I grew to love early horse show mornings: getting donuts from the show office, getting to put on sparkly eye makeup, and entering the show ring feeling invincible on my 15 hand gelding. This gelding was my first horse, and he taught me so many amazing lessons. I got Psychic Power +++// when I was nine years old, and we showed for three years in purebred hunter pleasure and equitation. When I was thirteen, Power passed away. It was sudden and unexpected and I was heartbroken.

On my fourteenth birthday, my parents surprised me with my current mare, Manno's Delight. Although making the transition from my sweet and gentle gelding to my sassy spirited mare was difficult, it taught me so much. It taught me the importance of adaptability and perspective, things which I still apply at every horse show. Every rider needs to be able to take change as it comes and be willing to adjust, as well as be able to realize that one incorrect lead or one messed up pattern isn't the end of the world.

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Showing Arabian horses teaches us so many valuable lessons. Not only does it teach us to be persistent and determined when we are striving for that blue ribbon, it also shows us the value of compassion and teaches us to be forgiving- to ourselves and to our horses. It teaches us to work hard for what we want, and to never stop dreaming. It teaches us the importance of respect and gratitude. It also gives us a special bond that is unforgettable. Your horse is not just a pet, they are your teammate, and oftentimes your best friend. That being said, remember to bring your buddy an extra carrot or scratch their necks a little longer next time you see them.

I've served on the AHYA Board since 2013, starting as Region 2 Youth Director, then Secretary, and now President. Being a part of AHYA has given me experiences and friendships I will cherish for a lifetime.

From staying up laughing and making memories in hotel rooms in Denver, to fundraising and advertising at Regional and National shows, I am so grateful for each and every second of time I've put into this organization. I encourage all of you to get involved, be it at the Club, Regional, or National level. If you're interested in fulfilling a position or learning about what that entails, feel free to contact your Regional Youth Director, Brenna Whitlock (AHA Youth and Family Programs Coordinator), or me. All of our contacts are listed on the AHYA website, and we'd be happy to answer any questions!

If you're apprehensive about joining AHYA because you think it might be boring, I can assure you it is anything but. Some of my best memories were made during AHYA board meetings, and it was at one of these meetings that I met some of my current best friends. The laughs will stay with you, and the feeling of accomplishment you get after participating in a discussion about the shows that we treasure so much is incomparable. If you're worried about the cost of traveling to AHYA meetings, don't worry! Most regions provide opportunities for you to fundraise to cover the cost of your ticket.

