

Dear TWHBEA Member,

I have served as a Georgia Director on the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' & Exhibitors' Association for the past 6 years. I have served on the Executive Committee for the past three years. I am not able to represent you this year because TWHBEA's By-Laws prohibit a person from serving more than two three-year consecutive terms. *Jerrold Pedigo, through a loop hole in the by-laws, is now serving his 9<sup>th</sup> year in a row and will serve 11 years before his final term is over.* I have been asked by many Georgia members to explain why I have voted the way I have on the issues that have come before the Executive Board these past few years. Many have asked me why I have been working to change the current course that TWHBEA has taken this past year. I have decided to answer these questions and tell you why I have voted the way I did and why I have been disenfranchised with the current choices being made by those in charge at TWHBEA.

I have always worked from the sincere belief that TWHBEA was formed to preserve, promote and protect the smooth gaited horse with the wonderful disposition developed in the rural setting of Tennessee, the Tennessee Walking Horse. It has been my belief that the Association's second responsibility is to its members. Its responsibility is to educate, communicate and help each member promote and protect the Tennessee Walking Horse. Whether a member has one trail horse or an active breeding herd of 100 that member looks to the Association for keeping accurate records, education, communication and help with promotion. I hope many of you attended the Celebration Clinics which I *helped initiate* as an educational venue for all the Walking Horse enthusiasts that came to The Celebration. These continue to be a popular event for people coming to Shelbyville the last two weeks of August. I feel that the current course that the Association has been on has let the horse down and the members down.

I voted not to renew the contract with the National Horse Show Commission at the end of 2005, for two reasons. I felt that the Commission had been failing in the past few years to protect the Tennessee Walking Horse even though TWHBEA had been an equal 1/3 member and had been in charge for several years. The second reason was because it was reported by Jane Meredith who sat on the Board at TWHBEA and on the WHOA Board, that WHOA did not have the funds to pay their 1/3 portion of the financial commitment. I felt I would not be carrying out my fiduciary responsibility if I voted to enter into a contract having been informed that a third party could not financially carry their end of the load. I had no reason to doubt the report made by Mrs. Meredith. I later found out that Mrs. Meredith and Mr. Pedigo had made a bid to buy WHOA with Mrs. Martocci who was president of WHOA. This takeover buy out was prevented when a group of WHOA members found out about the attempted buy out and voted it down. As a sitting member of the TWHBEA Executive Committee I was never asked to vote for approval nor informed in an official capacity that this takeover was being attempted. Instead of going bankrupt, WHOA has picked up several valuable programs that TWHBEA's new HIO would not allow.

This attempt resulted in an atmosphere of distrust and wariness by the Walking Horse Trainers' Association who felt that TWHBEA had attempted a takeover bid leaving them with a minority position on the Commission Board. No plan or negotiation was put in place or attempted to keep the show results coming into the Association to be part of each horse's history. I asked at each EC meeting that this be addressed and currently no HIO show results except for TWHBEA's Academy, Futurity or other TWHBEA HIO sanctioned shows are recorded, *since SCCHS in the Fall of 2005. Last Fall I made a motion, which passed, that all show records be accepted from any HIO's. There were so many conditions and waivers put on the motion that no HIO submitted their show records. To my great sorrow the industry could not come together, put aside their differences and record the show history of our horses.* Today the only show records that TWHBEA allows to be part of a horse's pedigree and history is the TWHBEA HIO Sanctioned shows. This has made IPEDs, a very popular asset to members, incomplete. I held with the decision of TWHBEA to remain out of the Commission and draw up a Sanctioning Plan that would not compete with existing Commission sanctioned shows or existing USDA accredited HIO's. A tangible form of this plan was not presented as a fully drawn document 'til late in the spring of '06. When first presented to the Executive Committee it was presented as an idea and in Dec. of '05

at the Directors meeting near the end of the meeting an outline was handed out. When the full fledged document came out things started to unravel in my mind. A Super HIO funded by TWHBEA was presented which invited all existing HIO's to participate. If the HIO's did not sign up and come under the TWHBEA HIO's umbrella then they would go after these shows. TWHBEA funds would only be dispersed to those shows or HIO's signing up and coming under the aegis of the TWHBEA Sanctioned HIO. All of a sudden we went from only sanctioning a show if an emergency came up, to competing with other HIO's. This wasn't what I voted for nor did I have a voice in the change. Jerrold Pedigo, Jane Meredith and Craig Evans began to try to sell the program. Mr. Pedigo kept asking for advice on how to change the document, and kept insisting that no one had given him any additions or alterations. I spent many hours in conversations asking him to think over the consequences to the industry of such an abrupt, confrontational action. Cases of copies of the Sanctioning plan and the new TWHBEA rule book were printed up and handed out. In '06 no HIO signed on to the new plan and no amendments or changes were made to encourage participation. In January of '07 Donna Benefield's group, The Horse Protection Commission signed on and then the whole thing fell apart for me. Mrs. Benefield had held a long conversation with me last fall telling how the TWHBEA Sanctioning Plan-HIO would not work and how the Plan violated some of the USDA's own guidelines. She told me she had suggested changes to Jerrold and resented the fact that he insisted he hadn't gotten any comments from other HIO's. Yet in January of '07 she signed up and became the only HIO to do so. Immediately Craig Evans, the legal counsel for the HIO and a sitting member of the HIO Committee, said that all TWHBEA's existing programs violated the contract that TWHBEA's HIO had signed with Mrs. Benefield. By the way Mr. Evans, chairman of the TWHBEA HIOC, with HPC's DQPs checked the horses at the TWHBEA Futurity not the chairman, Donna Benefield. There have been a few newly formed HIO's to sign up.

The Executive Committee members whose responsibilities covered member programs were told they could come to the TWHBEA HIO Committee and make a presentation to have their program exempted out of the HIO's contract violation. Pat Stout, Darren Gray and myself went to Jerrold Pedigo's office and made presentations to the HIO Committee existing of Jerrold Pedigo, Donna Benefield and Craig Evans. Horse Show Development, The Versatility Program, The GO! Program, and The Youth Medallion Program all asked to be available to all TWHBEA members regardless of HIO participation. The TWHBEA HIO denied the request except for one exception, The Versatility Program was exempted for 2007, and then starting in 2008 any member points could only be earned at a TWHBEA HIO sanctioned show. I felt betrayed by all the things I had been told up to this point and no longer had faith in some of my fellow Executive Board members. I did not understand how member programs, funded by members, developed by members, voted on by past Directors could suddenly be abolished and funding and participation considered illegal. All new shows that had signed up for help with the Horse Show Development program were immediately told that they were cut off from financial or administrative help. For Georgia this affected the Yatesville Show and the Carrollton Show. Members of TWHBEA could no longer benefit from any program that their dues and fees funded unless the shows they had participated in for years changed their HIO affiliation. Thankfully WHOA picked up the funding for The Youth Medallion Program and every Georgia show had a WHOA Youth Challenge Class added. As Georgia's Horse Show Chairman for GWHEA I have tried to offer administrative help for the Georgia shows that requested help. I worked the Carrollton Horse Show's entry office and trained the entry office volunteers of the new church group putting on the Monroe Horse Show. I have also volunteered to run the entry office at the Georgia Walking Horse Ladies Auxiliary Show.

**Without** TWHBEA's help this year, Georgia and the rest of the Tennessee Walking Horse industry has had a successful year with sound horses and good participation. TWHBEA has not taken out one ad in any publication promoting the Tennessee Walking Horse. The articles coming from TWHBEA that I have read about our Industry in the Tennessean have been the negative ones that have been made by the Executive Director Chuck Cadle insisting that there has been no improvements and that things are still status quo, he has also made statements that the only fair and equitable judging is from TWHBEA's certified judges. He has made no positive statements over the condition of the horses being presented for inspection or that judges were sending bad image horses out of the ring. At the beginning of 2007 TWHBEA had over \$1,000,000.00 in cash reserves, this money has been spent on an on-going law suit with NWHA, and on supporting the TWHBEA's

HIO. The money has not been spent on member programs or on maintaining TWHBEA assets. The fact is that with confidence in TWHBEA and what it stands for being down plus economic influences, foal registrations are down, transfers are down and membership has fallen from a one time high of almost 20,000 to 16,000. Revenues are down.

Mr. Cadle has said that the DNA conversion is costing money and was poorly planned and instituted. Sharon Brandon was retired after 44 years on the job and was not asked for her advice on how to handle any of the problems experienced in the conversion. I am not going to defend myself or my Committee on the DNA conversion. I know that I plainly told the Board of Directors that we were entering unknown waters and would address the difficulties and set backs as they came up. Every person on the Committee did a lot of research and did the best job that they could do, I am proud to have served with such a dedicated group. When Sharon Brandon retired April 1, 2007, Kristi Lane and then Nancy Green took over the Registry and therefore the conversion and have been in charge and in control since. I know that they would be willing to answer any questions that you might have about the status of your paper work or your parentage verification. This was a necessary evolution in our parentage verification system and the process will smooth out.

When a vote came up at the May '07 meeting to consider ending the TWHBEA-HIO there was much confusing legal advice from all the lawyers present. The lawyers who were there gave conflicting statements about what the Board could or could not do. What power members had or didn't have. If they were confused how do you think the rest of us felt? The discussion drug on and because it was a show night some Board members left. It was a very close vote. I believe that many who were there did not really understand the ramifications of what they were voting on and all the confusing legal statements didn't help. The conflict has changed from what is best for the horse to who is in power. Please think about who you want to be in charge. I want the members to be in charge telling what their needs are to promote and protect their horses. TWHBEA should be working for what members need and want. I want to sincerely believe that all sides want what is best for the horse and that the welfare of the horse is the single highest thing on everyone's agenda. Promoting the horse, protecting the history and accomplishments of the horse has been lost in the conflict. Educating and communicating with members is also being ignored. This attitude is being reflected in the financial situation that TWHBEA finds itself in.

Membership is down, revenues are down and I feel it is time to bring TWHBEA back on course. Please read the by-law changes and understand their repercussions before voting. Vote No, if you have any doubts or don't understand a by-law. I feel that a change needs to take place at TWHBEA. We need to go back to our original mission; Protect, Promote and Preserve the horse. Serve the membership by Communicating, Educating and Helping the members promote their horses.

I hope I have made my position clear but if you have any questions please contact me. Thank you for letting me represent you these past few years at TWHBEA. Next year I will see you in the show ring or walking through Georgia on Ziggy.

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