

Alberta Donkey and Mule Club News, Oct. 2010

The 21st edition of Tees Longears Days got off to a smoky start due to the B.C. forest fires. Fortunately, the smoke thinned and the weather stayed cool and windless, perfect for showing.

We were pleased to welcome several new families of competitors from the south this year. They brought along some great looking mules and were very positive additions to the show.



Special guest Bonnie Shields, the well-known Tennessee Mule artist, now living in Idaho, joined us for the weekend, accompanied by her long time friend, Barb Melton from Whitehouse, Tennessee and Barbs' grand daughter, 10 year old Savannah Eller. Savannah had only started riding lessons this spring, but due to the generosity of club members, had a mount provided for her in the Jr. classes and later ended up riding a new friend's donkey. Savannah was also "baptized" into the world of equines with a "back door" dismount when the donkey she was riding bareback, moved suddenly to avoid another animal. Savannah jumped up smiling and continued to have a great time.



The ten member Drill team and cowboy polo teams performed daily, with enthusiastic response from the audiences both days.

As always, humor reigned supreme at Longears Days. A 1920's cowgirl, Disaster Donna (sister of Calamity Jane), tried to bribe returning judge Laverne Schmidt with what seemed to be a bottle of whisky in the Costume Class. She was penalized for her actions by being soundly defeated by a mule loaded down with stuffed animals and a fully dressed fireman on a "flaming" donkey.



With the absence of Ron Rust, our previous show clown, Russ Shandro stepped in to fill the gap. Russ sported a frizzy wig and scandalized the crowd by wearing boxer shorts that revealed bare cheeks, although there was some suspicion that the "cheeks" might have been made of rubber.



A resurrected class this year was the Walking Race, with separate divisions for mules and donkeys. Riders "raced" the length of the arena at a walk and had to circle if they broke stride. This provided another class that anyone could enter, regardless of their skill level.

After a delicious supper on Saturday night catered by Bob Ronnie, and listening to the harmonious tunes of Hugh Kelly and Mickey Kushnerik, Russ Finlay conducted his usual hilarious auction of the many items donated by club members to raise money for club activities. A portion of the funds raised will be sent to Babou Sallah, a young veterinary student with a mission to provide medical care and assistance to the many horses, donkeys [and a few rare mules] that are beasts of burden in his home country of Gambia, South Africa.



Special awards were presented to the top mule and donkey that best exemplified the spirit of Longears Days through participation, performance, and versatility. The top mule award went to Bob Leggette and Jesse from Innisfail, and the top donkey award to Donna Quick and Spider of Spruce Grove. The Junior award went to Maven Boddy of Forestberg, with honorable mention to Svannah Eller. Mini mule or donkey award went to Heather Shandro and Turbo of Vergreville. Turbo is a miniature mule that had been running loose with a young horse through the County of Strathcona terrorizing the country side. Rounded up by Animal Enforcement, Turbo ended up in the Tofield Auction Market where the auctioneer recognized Russ Shandro and said, "Russ, you have mules, don't you?" Russ replied that he did and the auctioneer shouted "Sold, \$100." Since then many people have recognized Turbo including our Tees Announcer, Russ Finlay, who was sure that he had sold him at least twice himself. The good news for Turbo is that he has now found a "forever" home where he received a "life altering" operation and now is a most well behaved and adorable character. We are looking forward to seeing Turbo pulling a cart next year, Heather!



The Tees Show was also a first for ribbon presenter, Ann Plum. "My volunteering jobs of ribbon presenter and photographer were a truly fun experience. All the contestants were so friendly and I was given a delightful insight into this marvelous breed of animals and the people that love them. The announcer was a great addition to the festivities and gave further liveliness to the various classes and activities including the auction. My husband and I and all those who were fortunate enough to attend the Saturday evening

meal were entertained by a great humanitarian auction followed by a home grown family musical time. All in all, an awesome time.”

Spectators, last year, Cam Fleury and his family of High River, AB. decided that this year they had to participate in the fun and thus returned with three of their mules. "I had a great time and would like to thank the Show Committee and all the sponsors. It's a good place for Alberta Donkey and Mule enthusiasts to showcase their animals and have some fun."

Driving instructor and spectator Cheryl Fotheringham had this to say about our show. “ This was my first opportunity to take part in the Tees Long Ears Days and having organized many equine related show and clinics, I was impressed with how smooth the show moved through the numerous classes. It was obvious how much organization had taken place previous to the show. The number and creativity to the classes made for great entertainment for the participants, the crowds and the officials.

Your clown provided entertainment throughout the day and his sense of humor provided laughter beyond belief. My stomach ached with his antics and of course his creative costumes were needless to say, revealing. You are lucky to have someone with that much energy and creativity. He certainly kept things moving and exciting.

Your announcer was great. He kept the show moving throughout the day and entertained us all with his hilarious commentary. His play by play dialogue was to say the least, hilarious. He was professional, funny and eloquent in his relay of information and in his continual dialogue with the audience.

The participants need to be commended for their role throughout the day. They were engaged and presented themselves and their equines in the best light. You could clearly see how much fun they were having in showcasing their skills and of course their beloved donkeys and mules. Your Drill was awesome and I was so impressed when I found out how little time you have had to practice before the show. Well done!

And this from Colleen Campbell, our very capable Show Chairperson: “I want to extend a huge thanks to Marlene Quiring and Ethel Hollihan for dedicating their time and energy in preparing for this event. Without them this show would not happen. Thanks to Paul and Vicky Barrow for setting up the promotion booth and those who manned the booth. Many thanks to the numerous people that assisted in setting up and taking down of equipment. And to Russ Shandro, thank you for being our clown. You are a natural! This show is only possible by a collaborative effort by a lot of people.”

Personally I would like to commend Colleen Campbell for a job well done and extend thanks to Donna Quick for collaborating on this months’ newsletter. It was also overwhelming to see the media coverage we received this year at the show. Photos and stories in the Red Deer Advocate [even a video of the show, now on U TUBE] The Lacombe Globe and several more papers including a very well done full page write up with colored pictures in the Ponoka News.



So members and friends, you don't want to miss next year's show. Mark August 20 –21, 2011 on you calendars!

Marlene Quiring