

Barbara Brooks

Since the day I saw my first cutting horse I have been fully engaged—some might say fully addicted—to cutting. I passionately jumped into it with all four feet and quickly learned that education about the sport along with a lot of saddle-pad experiences help make better competitors. I also believe education and experience makes better leaders. For that reason I'd like to share my cutting background with you and tell you why I'm running for NCHA Vice President.

GRASS ROOTS EXPERIENCE

1. Competitor

In 1999 I started showing in the \$2000LR and Amateur Classes in local affiliates. As I progressed, I competed in bigger shows like the Eastern Nationals and the Congress Amateur classes. Then, with more show experience and lots of time in the saddle, I moved into limited age events, first in the Amateur, then the Limited, and finally the Non-Pro classes. With each progression, I experienced that painful graduation—what I called the “pat you on the back, kick you in the butt,” mixed blessing of starting over at the bottom of the next level.

EQUINE BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

1. Owner / Business Owner

I own my own horses and understand the expense and responsibility accompanying them. I have also been fortunate enough to own horses that competed in the Open classes, so I also understand the added expense and responsibility for training invoices and Open entry fees. I can flip that coin, however, and grasp first hand the challenges of running a training operation since two professional trainers with outside clients train from our farm.

2. Buyer / Seller

I have succeeded and failed when buying both trained cutting horses



and “field-of-dreams” yearlings. Both experiences were educational. Similarly, I have known the mixed feelings of selling both old friends and prospects and then had the gratification of seeing those horses go on successfully with their new owners or had to deal with the disappointment when they did not.

3. Stallion Owner

I know the satisfaction, but also the hard work, of owning and promoting stallions. I learned first hand the enormous time and monetary commitment stallion owners must make and developed great respect for these owners.

4. Breeder

I have bred our mares to our stallions and therefore experienced the intricacies of a breeding operation. And, I have also bred mares to prominent industry stallions, learning to analyze bloodlines and read the fine print. I first showed homebred horses eight years ago and continue to do so. The offspring out of mares I showed and by our stallions have been especially gratifying, but also full of hands-on experiences and education.

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Ballots for the NCHA Vice President election will be mailed to all members on or before April 30, 2011, and the results will be counted and verified June 7 under the supervision of the accounting firm Whitley Penn. The new Vice President will take office during the 2011 NCHA Convention, June 17-19 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The Vice President will become President-Elect the following year, and will become NCHA President in 2013. ★

ON-THE-JOB EXPERIENCE

1. Association Participant

My service to NCHA began in 2001 when I became a Tennessee Director. Since then I have only missed one convention and that absence was due to the illness of a parent. I have served on various committees and am currently the Chairman of the Limited Age Events Producers Committee. At the 2009 NCHA Convention, I was elected to a three-year At Large term on the Executive Committee where I represented the interests and needs of the entire membership. This required a broad point of view with each vote. It also provided excellent training for taking the next step into an officer role.

2. Show Producer

I produced the Music City Futurity, which during its ten years, had over 6,500 entries and paid out more than \$6,000,000. For many of those years this show ranked among the top 10 Limited Age Events nation-wide. As

a significant sideline, through the generosity of the cutting community, it helped raise over \$1.5 million for the Vanderbilt University Children's Hospital and the Nashville Ronald McDonald house. Since I was involved in every detail of show management—from conception to arena cleanup—producing this show provided numerous learning experiences and me with the leadership skills to handle them.

WHY I AM RUNNING

I believe even though we face economic challenges, good leadership with a strong business background can make a difference and help plan for a successful future.

I believe I can make the tough financial decisions that eliminate distractions and prioritize the desires of the Membership.

I believe that the NCHA exists to serve the Membership and provide ways for you to participate in your chosen sport. I will make it a priority to get your feedback on how we are doing.

I believe my education and experience

in business, cutting, and the "cutting business" equip me for this position and I want to give back to the industry that has become such a large part of my life.

I live in Nashville, TN with Kix, my husband of almost 30 years, and our two children, Molly (24) and Eric (22) close by. I grew up in a family who believed in the value of hard work and education, and I have been fortunate enough to do the first and get the second. I have a degree in Psychology from Wellesley College and a Masters degree in Business Administration from Vanderbilt University. I owned and operated a small retail business for five years. I went back to school and then got a position developing and marketing continuing professional education programs at Vanderbilt University. From there I worked with a strategic planning consulting firm where we helped businesses manage their futures. When my husband began traveling almost full time for his career, I cut back on my professional life. And then I discovered cutting...