

## **Notice to all MSA members:**

The 2015 competition season has had its bumps in the road. A turnover in leadership combined with tough economic times, have created challenges for our small group. Since taking over after Karin Page's resignation, there have been several issues that have required our attention and we want to remain transparent with our members and bring you all up to speed with our decisions. Without large numbers, the rewards of membership can't help but suffer and it is during these times that it is most important for our supporters to remain patient and focus on the big picture, which is the long term success of our association and its members. The MSA will do its part to be patient as growth takes time.

As with every business, change is often required to meet ongoing needs and issues and while there are those who believe changes should be made once a year, after the end of an entire season, a business must be free to adapt to changing needs and circumstances. Members will always be made aware of changes and are encouraged to take the time to read updates.

It is also more important than ever that the membership and the clubs lead the MSA as partners in our efforts. Sustainability requires running the MSA as a business and attempts to lower costs are not generally popular, but as the MSA grows it will always seek to give back to its members and not exist for profit alone.

As we focus on helping our affiliates to be successful, we continue to consider incentives that will provide value. We recently announced that clubs, which sign up new MSA members, would receive a 50% royalty on the initial membership fees from those members. That puts real money into their coffers.

Other benefits to clubs include a recently completed, 30 second promotional video that can be shared by clubs or members who wish to use it for their promotional purposes, including posting it to local equestrian web sites, or various Facebook pages. We also encourage clubs to research free or low cost publications in their areas to promote clinics, demonstrations and membership in general.

*Western Horse & Gun* continues to be the only national magazine that covers mounted shooting and clubs have been asked to send results, photos and content that could be included in the magazine. As *WH&G* continues to build an audience of horse and gun lovers outside of the current mounted shooting population, it is one of the strongest advantages the MSA has to gain access to potential members and grow the sport.

While the MSA tries to watch the bottom line, we have made substantial investment in branding and promotion, including this year's *Road to the Horse* and the *Patriot*, the final qualifier before *The American*. While we may be small in numbers, we cast a great shadow over our competition in many compelling ways. Our members have

unique opportunities to showcase their talents and provide value to their sponsors that no other association offers. The MSA offers a fair and transparent system for our members and affiliates and remains flexible with respect to change for the greater good.

### **MSA World Championship**

With respect for tough times for our members this year, we do not want to punish those who have remained faithful and who look forward to our World Championship. Therefore, we are amending the qualification for World's to include any member who attends at least two qualified MSA events before sign ups for World's close. One advantage we have as a Mom and Pop business is that we can respond to issues in a timely manner, in order to keep programs as fair as possible for everyone. The MSA World Championship, September 3-6, at the Texas State Fairgrounds Coliseum, in Dallas, Texas, will be a pointed event this year and going forward, awarding 5X Points.

MSA continues to invest in our members by offering \$20,000 added money for the 2015 World Championship. The added money will be invested as follows:

- \$5,000 for Main Match
- \$5,000 for Run For the Bucks, which is now a jackpot paying based on a D format for the cumulative overall standings of those who enter.
- \$5,000 for the Saturday Night Superstars Showcase
- \$5,000 for the Sharp Shooter jackpot, which as always, pays out 100%  
Sharp Shooters also receive a Sharp Shooter trailer decal for bragging rights

### **MSA World Point Prizes**

We appreciate your patience with a delay in determining the Point Prizes for 2015. All MSA Point Race winners must be present at MSA World's to receive their prizes or the prizes will be awarded to the next person in line that is in attendance. The prizes for 2015 will be awarded to each division, for each gender, including Platinum Plus. The prizes are as follows:

**First Place:** MSA Gist buckle and a breast collar stamped with the Division won.

**Second Place:** Custom Headstall with MSA logo

**Third Place:** Custom bridle bag with MSA logo

All First Place Division winners will draw for two *Cox Performance Horse* saddles. One saddle will be awarded to each gender. All First Place Division winners will also draw for a chance to win a check for \$1,000. All MSA High Point winners will be featured in *Western Horse & Gun* Magazine and MSA web sites.

## **MSA Regionals**

While both owners and members were disappointed over the cancelation of the Central Championship, the tornados and flash flooding that occurred, with major highways being closed, would have been a disaster for those trying to reach the event and we are thankful this did not happen. Events have been canceled in the past by all associations and this is not unique to the MSA. This was our only cancelation in three years.

The MSA Eastern Championship, June 4-7, in Pendelton, SC is open for entries. This will mark the first time that the MSA and the CSA have shared a regional venue and we are excited to bring the two groups together.

Tough economic times have made it difficult to find cash sponsors for a small hobby sport and yet MSA has featured a professional announcer, live streaming, expensive venues, a professional photographer and paid staff. We have been adamant about offering a professional experience while not charging extra fees or taking money from all payouts. We understand that competitors incur great expense to travel to regional events and expect fees to remain low to offset those expenses.

For business purposes, as we have promised not to charge extra fees, we have been in talks with club owners who are interested in taking over responsibility for the regional events. Instead of offering regionals to a single club, we feel that if clubs work together with volunteer staffs, we can continue to offer opportunities for members to earn multiple points for their participation, while we will not charge the clubs more than \$10 per person for point fees and members will continue to earn 4X points. We will also work with club owners to educate them on how to plan and execute these events so that they are run as smoothly as possible. In this way, our clubs are treated as partners in the success of the association.

These events will continue to be promoted on MSA web sites and in *Western Horse & Gun* and results will also be posted on MSA web sites and the magazine to give winners national recognition for their accomplishments. No other association has access to a national magazine audience and this is a great value for our members. Members seeking their own sponsors should be sure to present this value as a selling point.

## **Supporting our Members**

By now, most members are aware of the tragic accident that one of our most supportive members, Andra Olson had last summer. While traveling home from a mounted shooting event, Andra was involved in a traffic accident that left her non responsive. We were drawn to tears as we read a recent account on *Caring Bridge*, describing Andra interacting with her husband. We encourage everyone to follow her progress through the *Caring Bridge* website.

Last year Brittany Aleigh Little, showed her support for Andra by having blue ribbons made with Andra's name and Phil 4:13, which is a reference to Philippians 4:13 which states: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." It is very important that we do not forget our friend in need and Brittany's ribbons were a generous and very thoughtful way for us all to keep her in our thoughts and prayers.

In order to thank Brittany for her generosity and help her vision continue, *Western Horse & Gun* has produced patches that represent her original ribbons, so that members can have them sewn onto their garments to show support. The patches are available in the MSA shopping cart for \$5 each. All proceeds from sales of the patches will go to Andra's family. As always, the MSA does not charge its members for displaying patches on their clothing and we hope those who wish to show their support for Andra will not be charged by associations who typically do charge for each patch worn by members.

### **Training and Course Management Resources**

There are many great trainers throughout the country who can help MSA members with horsemanship skills and course management. We recommend everyone contact their local clubs to enquire about trainers in their area.

As an added value to our members, MSA is offering two books from our member trainers in our shopping cart. All proceeds from sales go directly to the trainers. The books are as follows:

Perfecting Performance Exercises and Drills  
By Andra Olson and Jim Hanson  
\$14.95, plus shipping

The MSA Edition of the Hired Handbook  
Spiral Bound, 103 Pages of Information and  
Course Management Advice  
\$25, plus shipping