

MANY SAY THEY WANT TO STOP THE SORING OF THE TENNESSEE WALKING HORSE AND WILL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO STOP IT, MANY SAY THEY NEVER HAVE OR NEVER WILL DO IT, HOWEVER FACTS FROM PRESENT AND PAST AND STATISTICS SHOW DIFFERENT...MANY STILL WANT TO BE AT THE TOP AND DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET THERE AND STAY ON THE TOP.

- By Christen Davis

Over the past two years, the Barney Davis case and the Jackie McConnell case have been widespread throughout the horse industries. Numerous horse associations along with SHOW and The Celebration have called these two men out of hundreds of trainers saying we aren't allowing soring and they are no part of our industry nor allowed at an event sanctioned with us. They are saying that these two men are the only bad apples that have fallen off the tree, but yet they both have trained numerous world champion and world grand champion horses in the Tennessee Walking Horse Industry and the Spotted Saddle horse Industry for years, as well as both held Tennessee Walking Horse Trainers Licenses and shown at TWHNC (Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration) These men, yes are guilty, admitted their wrong doing, accepted their responsibility and did receive punishment for what they did, however these two men did nothing different than 90% of other trainers in the industry continue to do today.

Almost every trainer has received a HPA violation, and many of those have received not just one but numerous violations over the years. These HPA violations are available and searchable online and the amount is astounding. Despite the extremity of the violation for a sore horse: unilateral, bi lateral or pressure shoeing violation, they all amount to the same thing, a sore horse and these violations should be treated the same way. Everyone wants to stop the soring but the trainers are allowed to accumulate ticket after ticket and also tickets in "ticket takers" names, which is employees that are hired to work at the barn. Rules should be changed and if a trainer receives one ticket of any type of soring then their trainer's license should be taken for good instead of a slap on the wrist time and time again for soring. The officials of SHOW and others do not want to see this happen because they know how widespread soring still is in the industry and if they pursue the soring this way not only will the horse industry fall dramatically but they most likely will be without a job as well.

Many of the people in the Tennessee Walking Horse, Spotted Saddle Horse and/or the Racking Horse industries enjoy the horse training and showing as a hobby and enjoyment, however most owners and trainers combine the enjoyment aspect with the monetary hopes of selling horses for a large sum of money. This may be good for the owner and the trainer but it is unfortunate for the horse. Close to 90% of the performance horses in training have been, at some point of their life, sored and most of that percentage are still being sored today if they are in the training operation for show purposes. Most of the animation gaits are not achievable without some sort of pain done to the horse at some point in time, especially in the padded performance horse and spotted saddle horse. These percentage amounts are not just a random number stated previously. They can be researched and proved to be true.

Many of the walking horse owners, trainers and board of directors of different clubs inside the association, such as TWHBEA, Walking Horse Trainer's Association and TWSHO have members who have been cited a HPA violation ticket. Whether it is a scar rule ticket or more importantly a unilateral or bi

lateral sore ticket, it's a violation and the walking horse industry as a whole, who states they want to clean it up are letting people like this run the organizations and clubs within the business. A sore horse is a sore horse, regardless how anyone wants to look at it, whether the horse has been cited a unilateral sore, bi lateral sore or pressure shoeing violation, the horse is still sore. No treatment should be any different and if the industry wanted to clean it up so much they would treat all soring the same. The majority of the top trainers at the 2012 TWHNC have received a HPA violation currently this year or in the past years. The previous 2012 President for the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders and Exhibitors Association, Marty Irby, has in the past had a bilateral sore ticket. Walking Horse Trainer, Winky Groover, who has produced a video demonstrating how a show horse is sound and natural and that a show horse can be caught out of the pasture and placed back on a package and will start right back demonstrating his big lick naturally, has had bilateral and numerous unilateral violations. Mike Inman, TWHNC CEO has had two unilateral sore tickets. Eighteen of the past twenty Trainers of the year have had HPA violations cited and served suspension and many of these violations were unilateral and bi lateral tickets.

I know that some people in the horse industry that read this article are going to take offense and say that nothing like goes on in the walking horse industry anymore however you can't change documentation that states it continues to go on. Representatives from SHOW will state that they are doing everything in their power to stop the soring and punishing the ones that do sore and are found guilty, however they are not doing everything that they can and they are not giving the same punishment for everyone. The DQP process has the same under the table games they play with special ones and they are cheating just as bad as the trainers that sore their horses. In an incident last year there was a person who falsified entries and placed a trainers name on the entry sheet who was not even at the show, and that person received a one year probation/suspension from SHOW. This year the same thing was caught with a trainer falsifying entries and SHOW placed him on a 7 year suspension. There are some people running the inspection process that have participated in pressure shoeing, requesting pressure shoeing devices and also sored horses with chemicals in the past years and the industry is continuing to let these people help run the industry and checking process. Is this what is called cleaning up the industry? It doesn't seem any of these people want to change nor do they want to better the business or protect the horse.

This industry is one that will not change without new rules and punishment. The continuous slaps on the wrist are obviously not working due to the amount of HPA violations by trainers. Until drastic measures are taken by the government or a higher authority I don't know if the industry will ever change. This is what many know as their livelihoods and no one wants to have that taken away.