

# Free for Learning

*IQHA tradition celebrates youth and horses.*

**By Abby Whitaker**

IN 1968, AQHA HALL OF FAME MEMBER BUD ALDERSON FROM Sharpsville, Indiana, had a vision to unite one lucky Hoosier 4-H member with an American Quarter Horse. That vision is celebrating its 40th anniversary this August at the Indiana State Fair and is one of the longest-running equine-related awards given during the fair's 150-year history.

Backed by the Indiana Quarter Horse Association board of directors and Purdue University's 4-H office, Bud began a longstanding tradition of providing a tremendous opportunity for Indiana's 4-H members.

In the beginning, Bud created an application and spread the word for 4-H members to apply for the award – the ownership of an American Quarter Horse yearling that would be used for that 4-H member's future project. Applicants were narrowed down to 10 finalists who advanced to an interview process that took place at the Indiana State Fair in the fall. From those 10 finalists, Dana Magnuson of Fort Wayne was selected to take home the first yearling, named Pasiano Bert.

Bud didn't just want to hand out a horse to a youth member. He wanted to give a deserving 4-H member the opportunity to own and train a horse that could not only be competitive in 4-H competition, but could also step up and carry that member in AQHA competition. Bud's award has successfully generated tremendous exposure for IQHA throughout Indiana's 4-H program and has also drawn individuals into the horse industry who otherwise might not have had the means to do so.

Former winners of the IQHA 4-H Horse Award include 1973 recipient Beth Lancaster Moon, who went on to win an AQHA world championship in amateur hunter under saddle and reserve world championship in amateur pleasure driving.

The 1993 winner, Robyn Naile, continued on to win an amateur high-point title in barrel racing. Andrea Tappy, who won in 2004, also earned the 2007 Indiana Horse Council scholarship and attends Purdue University.

## Award Winners

ALTHOUGH BUD CONTINUES TO BE A PART OF THE IQHA 4-H Horse Award, others have had the opportunity to head the program. Patrick and Marion Welsh from West Point, Indiana, took over as chairs of the award committee six years ago. Both Pat and Marion were 10-year members of 4-H growing up and are now watching their children be part of 4-H. Their son, Morgan, is 15 years old and in his sixth year of 4-H. Pat and Marion also have two daughters – Sarah, 7, and Emma, 4 – and look forward to their participation in 4-H.

"We feel like Bud had a vision and saw a need and a way for the IQHA to give back. It's a wonderful program, and we're extremely thankful that the IQHA board continues to let us do it," Marion said. "We have a lot of fun with it."

As Marion and her husband have taken over the reins, they have also worked to maintain the history of the award. From scrapbooking past pictures to keeping in touch with former winners, they hope to ensure the program will continue well past its 40th year.

One of the former winners and long-time supporters of the award is Michelle Taylor Tucker from South Bend, Indiana. Michelle watched other award winners compete in 4-H events and knew about the IQHA's award. She had a desire to start young horses and wanted a horse that could help her step up to AQHA competition. She decided to apply in 1974 at age 16. She made it to the top 10 and received an invitation for an



Mary Foster of Columbus, Indiana, holds Winter Step.



MacKenzie Wells of Frankfort, Indiana, handles RV Just Blue.

interview at the Indiana State Fair. That year, the 10 finalists were asked to bring a horse to ride during the presentation.

"Mom remembers sitting on 'PR,' her bay gelding, along with the nine other girls as the camera man was scanning the group from ground level," Michelle's 18-year-old daughter, Margaux, recalled the familiar story. "When they announced her name as the winner, with tears in her eyes as she reenacted the moment, her jaw dropped, her hand came to her mouth, tears poured out of her eyes, and she spurred her horse and he jumped in the air."

When Michelle won her yearling, Rosalena, it was just the beginning of a promising future with both 4-H and the AQHA. With Rosalena, Michelle won numerous grand championships and reserve grand championships at the St. Joseph County Fair in South Bend. She hauled her mare back to the Indiana State Fair to win a halter championship, finish fifth in reining and place in showmanship. The pair also earned AQHA points in showmanship, trail and reining.

Rosalena was a part of Michelle's family until she died at age 32. Michelle actually gave lessons on Rosalena up to the mare's 27th birthday.

Michelle continues to give lessons to 4-H members and AQHYA members and has passed her love of horses down to Margaux, who is the 2007 IQHYA vice president. Michelle coached Margaux's IQHYA horse judging team, which earned top honors at the 2004 AQHYA World Championship Show and helped Margaux to high finishes in 2006 year-end competition with her horse Radical McCue.

"I feel very honored and privileged to have won the award and to give back by promoting the award and being a judge of the contest," Michelle noted.

Ginny (Veith) Tauer from Plainfield, Indiana, had a great 4-H horse when she was 14, but he was 15 and she knew she would need to find a new horse soon. She filled out an application in 1992 and made it to the top 10. Once she got to the fairgrounds, before the interview, she spotted the horse she was in line to win and fell in love instantly.

"My parents told me to not get my hopes up when I saw the filly before the interview. I had always wanted a sorrel horse with flaxen mane and tail and her tail looked pink," Ginny recalled. "I fell in love with her. When I won her, she was this horse that I dreamed of owning my entire life."

Ginny won Miss Leætta Tee, a horse she brought back to show as a 2-year-old. She said the mare was a great pattern horse and excelled in versatility events. She only showed Miss Leætta Tee, or "Chrissie," in open shows and 4-H events because of financial constraints and then sold the mare when Ginny left for college.

"Winning her changed my life," Ginny stated. "When I had my gelding, it was fun to do 4-H. When I got my mare, it made me serious about showing horses. When I sold her, I went to Purdue and got a degree in agricultural communications. Winning her made me see what I wanted to do with my future."

Ginny now works for the Indiana State Board of Animal Health, and although she didn't get to show Chrissie in



Sara Van Hoy of Mooresville, Indiana, leads Indelible Captain.

AQHA competition, she knew that the mare was perfectly capable of competing at that level.

"The Quarter Horse world is so competitive, I think a lot of kids get intimidated," Ginny said. "The horses given away in Indiana are quality horses, and you can really do more than just show 4-H. This is such an awesome opportunity for kids."

## The Process

WHEN THE PROGRAM FIRST BEGAN, IQHA PURCHASED A YEARLING each year for the award. For the past 10 to 15 years, AQHA breeders have stepped up to donate horses.

"We are trying to set the bar high enough to where if the recipient wants to take the horse to AQHA novice level and they have the means and support to do that, that horse is capable of doing that," Marion said of the horses awarded. "But if all they want to do is 4-H or go trail riding, so be it."



One Hot Coastal, aka "Annie," will be going home with a teen to become part of a 4-H project. Indiana Quarter Horse Association gives away a yearling at the Indiana State Fair to encourage growth in the horse industry.

Today, the horse selection process begins in the fall prior to the award year. Marion begins by approaching breeders who have expressed an interest in donating a horse. This year, she met with Denny and Terry Robinson of Francesville, Indiana, and selected One Hot Coastal, a brown filly by One Hot Invitation, sire of offspring earning more than \$20,000 in National Snaffle Bit Association competition, and out of the Thoroughbred mare Ann's Coastal, who also produced open and amateur superior hunter under saddle horse Coastal Sky.

Once the award horse is secured, the advertising begins and the application is posted on the IQHA and Purdue University Web sites. Applications are open to 4-H members in third through 11th grades who will be able to exhibit the awarded horse as a part of their 4-H

project the following year.

This August, the 40th recipient of the IQHA 4-H Horse Award will be selected, securing a spot in Indiana's history and potentially a permanent place within the horse industry. ■

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