

## 2009 ATRC Youth Events Sliding Into Tulsa By Meaghan Burns

Over the Labor Day weekend, the National Reining Horse Association (NRHA) South Central Regional Affiliate Finals was hosted by the Oklahoma Reining Horse Association (OKRHA) at the Ariat Tulsa Reining Classic (ATRC) in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Oklahoma Youth Reining Horse Association (OKYRHA) with the help of the Youth Coordinators Paula Pidcock and Anne-Marie Burns planned several activities for the youth.



The OKYRHA hosted, for the second year, the National Reining Horse Youth Association (NRHyA) meeting on Friday evening. The theme of the meeting was the decade of the 50s with decorations and several members dressing for the 50s decade. The OKYRHA members planned the meeting and everyone had a part – from the welcome, dinner blessing, door prizes, introductions, and the ice breaker. Brian Bendele, NRHA Manager of Youth and Outreach Programs, along with his wife, Andrea, attended the meeting to talk about NRHyA events. The meeting also included the elections for the NRHyA South Central Regional Delegates. The 2010 NRHyA SC Regional Delegates are: 14 – 18 Jessi Clemmons - Sand Springs, OK and Will Letner - Harris, MO and 13 & Under Emma Holbrook - Stillwater, OK and Sara Walton – Sapulpa, OK. The meeting ended with an ice cream social.

The ATRC John Deere Youth Futurity winner was Megan Gunther riding Gotta Step Up from Houston, Texas. The second place winner was Jordan Donnelly riding Chics Got A Gun from Aubrey, Texas. The third place winner was Jamie Solberg riding Lena Jac Gotta Gun from Stillwater, Oklahoma.

The OKYRHA held its first annual Photo and Art Contest. There were several entries from young reiners everywhere! In the Painting or Drawing division first place went to Cody Bell in the 13 & Under and Jessi Clemmons in the 14 – 18. In the Miscellaneous Art division first place went to Kyle Ross in the 13 & Under and Jessie Clemmons in the 14 – 18. In the Digital Photo division first place went to Sara Walton in the 13 & Under and Meaghan Burns in the 14 – 18. The People's Choice Award winner was Kennedy Clark for her pink reining horse clay sculpture. The winner of each division had the option of a Big Chex Breyer model horse or \$25!

The OKYRHA were busy preparing for the Slide Zone on Saturday. Several members participated in the Youth parade as part of the Slide Zone. OKYRHA Youth Jessi Clemmons and Neila Cook carried the flags for the opening ceremony. OKYRHA member Vance Brainard dressed as Slider and made his grand entry as well. OKYRHA member Maegan Gardner competed in the Slide Zone Freestyle competition. During the drags, the OKYRHA members threw t-shirts to the crowd.

Radio Disney was on site to provide fun for the youth prior to the start of the Slide Zone. There were games, quiz competition and dancing lesson that even Slider participated in! Earlier in the week, OKYRHA members Emma Holbrook, Sara Walton, Ben Wagman, and Jessi Clemmons were interviewed by Radio Disney. The interview aired on the Saturday of the Slide Zone.

The NRHyA Raffle Ticket Sales challenge was a great success with close to \$2,000 of raffle ticket sales. The high sales person won a flip camera and other participants won Varsity Reining Club t-shirts. Ben Wagman was the high ticket seller for the second year in a row! Other youth winning the t-shirts were James Michael Phillips, Kyle Ross, Sara Walton, Kennedy Clark, and Heather Ross.

The OKYRHA silent auction raised close to \$1,600. Several OKYRHA members donated theme baskets to help raise money for youth activities. The theme baskets included vet supplies, cowgirl jewelry, Italian food, games, car wash products, spa items and gardening. For the second year in a row, local OKRHA member and artist, Kathryn Schaapveld, donated an original cowboy oil painting.

The Youth Team Tournament winners were Nick Schmersal, Choloe Gates, and Olivia Rogers. Placing second were Maegan Gardner, Kayla Rae Hatfield, and Jake Letner. The third place team was Jaci Marley, Thea Arnold, and Hannah Jechow. There were 10 teams competing for prizes and scholarship money.

On Sunday, the affiliate youth competition ended with several youth qualifying to compete in the 2009 North American Affiliate Championship held in conjunction with the NRHA Futurity in Oklahoma City in December. Qualifying in the 13 & Under are Maegan Gardner, Jaci Marley, Heather Ross, James Michael Ross, and Kyle Ross. Four of the five qualifiers are OKYRHA members. Qualifying in the 14 – 18 are Jordan Donnelly, Olivia Rogers, Chloe Gates, Will Letner, and Brooke Summers.

New this year at the ATRC was the inaugural OKYRHA membership drive. With any paid youth membership (\$10 annual fee), the new member received an OKYRHA logoed t-shirt. Over 20 youth new to reining joined OKYRHA over the labor day weekend.

The youth activities at the South Central Regional Affiliate Finals was a great success. The OKYRHA members have expressed their appreciation to the parents and adults who helped make the weekend happen!