

I had the wonderful opportunity at the beginning of November to attend the USDF/Great American Region 5 Championships in Scottsdale, Arizona. There were competitors from several states, including Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado and Utah. The weather was very nice for the first day, then we had a little rain and we were able to see how well the show management dealt with difficult situations! That little rain is not common in Arizona apparently (this was my first show in Arizona!) and the outdoor arenas did not drain well. Jay and his crew shifted all the show rings into covered arenas and allowed competitors to warm up where ever they could find footing to suit their needs. The staff and volunteers did a great job punting in a difficult situation!

The judging panel for the Championships was great and I had a lot of fun and learned a lot scribbling every day. It was also great to participate in the awards ceremonies and meet quite a few folks I have never met before. There were two lovely competitor parties with great food. All the food came from, to my surprise, the same caterer we use at the Colorado Horse Park, Wild Willeys.

Saturday evening's Competitor Party also hosted one of the most touching awards ceremonies I have had the privilege of witnessing. I was lucky enough to be at the World Cup when Debbie retired Brentina, but it wasn't quite as personal and relevant. Terri Patton-Rich retired her Grand Prix horse, Fontainebleau, who was her dancing partner his entire riding career. Terri had the privilege of riding with some of our top riders in the country and in the world and won many awards and Championships with Fontainebleau. He had to retire at a relatively young age due to some fairly serious injuries, but as she rode him out into the arena for the final time, you wouldn't have had an inkling. I think one of the things that touched the 100 or so people who attended the ceremony was Terri's comment that though they didn't make any of the Olympic or other National teams, they challenged those that did to be better competitors. If you have a few minutes and a few tissues, please take the time to watch the YouTube video of the ceremony -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6wNrHrAF8U&feature=email>.

Fontainebleau and Terri Hallman-Rich were great representatives for Region 5 during their careers and we were honored they chose our Championships to have their moment.



I hope everyone has a great Holiday Season and I hope I saw quite a few of you at the USDF Convention and Symposium!

Till next month!
Heather Petersen

Region 5 Director