

Grateful

BY BOB FUNKHOUSER

It's been a while since I've had the time to write an editorial, although there have been instances I've wanted to offer my two cents on issues facing our industry/sport/hobby. However, now is not the time for discussing "issues."

Right now, I'm just grateful for many things, most of all, a healthy family. A strong second is the fact that I get to be a part of a most amazing extended family because of the love of horses (and ponies). To see how the industry leaders, trainers, and owners/exhibitors have responded and come together to help one another through this crisis is awe-inspiring. As Nelson Green said to me earlier today when discussing this situation, "We hang our friendship up when we hit the gate, but outside of the show ring, horse people have always been great about supporting one another when faced with a crisis."

I'm grateful the Joint Leadership Council jumped right on this and came up with a program to raise funds to help our own as many will find themselves struggling to keep grain, hay and bedding in the barn, much less put food on the table and pay bills for themselves.

I'm grateful for families stepping up and sponsoring lesson horses, which are the backbone of many facilities. Through social media that concept has been widespread and the response has been another badly needed form of relief for those providing those all-important services. Another spin off from this generosity is New England farriers offering their services to lesson horses free of charge during this time when barns are closed down and lessons cancelled.

I'm grateful for the leadership of managers and committee chairs that have had to make painful decisions to cancel their events, even before being dictated to.

I'm also grateful that in this time of horse show hiatus and uncertainty that I work with a great group of professionals at Saddle Horse Report who go the extra mile to bring all aspects of our sport to your home week after week, year after year. I'm extremely grateful that across the board our team has given back over the decades in so many ways to make this a better industry. Serving on boards, committees and producing projects and events has been a way of life for our Dabora family.

And when the Coronavirus outbreak became a reality weeks ago, I was grateful we had the tools to stay connected with you, our extended family, and provide perhaps our greatest service to date. Publisher Christy Womack rallied our troops and we all worked together to come up with a plan to switch all of our focus to bringing our devoted readers a consistent flow of something equine on our website and Facebook page, starting that very day. I'm also grateful for the youthful insight of our social media leaders (Sara Pizzuto, Emily Zahnd and Erica Faulkner) in guiding us through the most effective way to stay connected and bring a daily dose of sunshine into your lives when it is most needed.

Now, more than ever, let's all be grateful for the people and animals that bring us so much joy. We have to be grateful from a distance for now, but let's keep this same caring attitude, lifting one another up and taking care of one another when we do return to normal. There's going to be a lot of pressure on all of us to get our own lives back on track, but let's remember to take the blinkers off and make sure our non-geographical neighbors are okay and on the way back as well.

In the meantime, stay safe and take a moment during each of these dark days to find something to be grateful for. If you're having a hard time finding that something, just think about our four-legged friends who are the very reason you're reading this.