

Good Day BCQ members,

I write this letter to inspire discussion, thought and consideration. Though I now reside in AB, having been blessed to have lived half my life and majority of my adult life deeply involved in the BCQ industry, it is very much still in my heart.

It is a different perspective looking at it from the outside in, and with that, can humbly bring a bit of clarity or a wider lens.

Times change, industries evolve and diversify, and to thrive, we need to adapt along with it. There seems to be wide spread and exciting opportunities to welcome folks into the BCQ fold, from the folks running the 3 breed AQHA approved show, to the AQHA approved dressage show, as examples, demonstrates that folks want to be involved at an AQHA level. How do we draw them in to be involved in BCQ and want to have those events BCQ approved? The thriving ranch shows in the South Central region, would be awesome to have AQHA classes and/or BCQ approval for.! Versatility shows, barrel races...incredibly diverse array of branches to tune into. One thing that all folks can agree on is the shrinking volunteer base, these markets would be outstanding to tap into.

It seems the need is cohesiveness, and a sense of working together towards a common goal for the whole of the industry with an open and welcoming culture. Folks have their passions and where they feel they could best contribute or fit, and the best way to achieve any goal is as a team. Humbly, the reality is there is barely enough volunteers for BCQ to survive, let alone thrive and grow. Those volunteers are further divided into geographical boxes, in a world where distance and topography no longer pose an obstacle as in the past, with zoom and teams meetings, virtual collaboration is prevalent.

I encourage everyone to think outside the box, reimagine what the industry could be with BCQ leading that charge. Perhaps it is time to dissolve the zones for example, in favor of committees for the whole of the province. A highlight perhaps is the folks who currently volunteer in South Central seem to have a passion for clinics which is amazing and a great way to involve more interest from the community. Imagine a clinic committee for like minded folks, that collaborate on clinics throughout the province! Or people that have a passion for the grass roots open shows, a committee that work on those throughout the province either running them or partnering with existing open shows to provide high point AQHA trophies from donated repurposed wins...so many possibilities there! Of course AQHA shows which we need to maintain the mandate an affiliate must attain - a committee that helps each other attain this as well for those who find that their primary focus. The possibilities are truly endless! An ambassador committee where members promote the quarter horse at events and/or reach out to other groups for collaboration such as the dressage group or 4h. Envision a truly provincial club with all borders both imaginary and self imposed erased. Where volunteers can bring their strengths and gifts putting the right people in the right seats they will excel in because they are driven for that cause. The board would be the governing body, with a director sitting on at least one committee for governance. These are just brainstormed ideas, however given the decline of the industry as a whole - what can we do to inject new perspectives and enthusiasm into the

mix, inspiring new blood and extending collaboration.

A sad note on coming more now from the outside in, I have heard some things that's been hard to hear about a club I care so much for - that BC quarter horse is not relevant, is elitist and not welcoming for example. I know most folks involved in BCQ personally and professionally and believe that folks come from the right place, wanting what all feel is best for the industry. So how do we change this perception? What can we do to drive our branding to one of openness and inclusion? It is possible. What do you want folks to feel when they think of BCQ? How can you contribute to that feeling? If you were brand new and didn't know what BCQ was, what would make you want to be a part of it? Whatever that vision is, that is what we need to bring to the forefront.

It is easy to continue down the same path "as it is the way it has always been done". However down that road there is far more risk of becoming stagnant or worse, irrelevant which is something no one wants to see. Think Blockbuster vs Netflix. To grow, we need to get comfortable being uncomfortable. I challenge each of you to close your eyes, imagine the options being endless - what would you love to see and what would best join the province together to promote and engage the community with our wonderful Quarter Horse. Don't let your dreams be dreams - do it.

Thank you for reading this out at the AGM, I wish nothing but the best for BC and its future, and hope this helps to inspire. With care and well wishes from AB.

Mellissa Buckley