

Letter From Gary Pipkin

TO THE NRHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Each of our members of the full board of directors is in a unique position at the upcoming August Board Meeting to make some major decisions affecting the future of the NRHA. You've already endorsed the proposed bylaws at your June meeting. That was a huge step forward. In August you'll pass, table, modify or amend a large number of rule change proposals. Two of these, the Medications Policy and the Membership Dues Policy are as contentious, if not more so, than the Strategic Plan. I implore you to take into full account the membership's collective voice on these two issues prior to your final vote.

Of even more importance for each of you, especially the appointed board members, is your opportunity to send a message to membership of unity within the full board of directors. The impression of an Executive Board that is superior to the full board of directors has got to be extinguished. The existing bylaws repeatedly expresses that the Full Board of Directors shall manage the business, affairs, finances and property of the association. It further states that the Officers of the association shall be charged with the DAILY OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES of the Association. I don't believe our membership nor the people who originally wrote these bylaws intended for the officers which comprise the Executive Board to usurp the Full Board's authority. But, unfortunately, within the past few years, that appears to be what has happened. Appointed board of directors from around the country have repeatedly told their membership constituents that the Executive Board is making major policy decisions prior to involvement of the full board of directors. The earlier mentioned Strategic Plan is a prime example of this. Each of you are intimately aware of other situations where the full board of directors should have been involved in the initial stages of policy making, but were left out of the loop until the Executive Board members presented you with their consensus and no options prior to asking for the full board vote of approval.

The proposed bylaws submitted and endorsed by the full board will only go part way in accomplishing governance by a fully elected board of directors. The balance that needs to be accomplished is that the full board of directors have to take back their power and authority given to them by the bylaws of this association and hold the officers of the association fully accountable for their actions between board meetings. My understanding is that the officers of this association spend more time in a closed Executive Board session during the weekend of a scheduled full board meeting than all of the board members spend together in a full board session. This seems totally backwards. The

full board of directors is accountable to the membership and the Executive Board is accountable to the Board of Directors. It's time we get back on track. It's up to each of you to ensure this happens!!

It is vital for proper communications to the entire NRHA membership that the upcoming election ballots be mailed to each and every member of the association. Too many members do not browse the website and you know the reduced numbers of circulation on the Reiner magazine resulted in not reaching a large number of our members. The only way to educate the entire membership on the issues and to achieve maximum participation in the voting process is to send the ballot to every member. I feel this is your responsibility to make it happen.

Lastly, throughout the weekend of the June board meeting, I negotiated with Kim Sloan (who was acting on behalf of the Executive Board) to modify certain portions of the proposed bylaw proposals that I had submitted. It appears from the responses that we are receiving on the nrha.com bylaws page and other web forums that I should not have done so relative to the Reining Horse Sports Foundation President being a voting member of the Executive Board. Opposition to this has reduced significantly the favorable percentage. The other issue members seem to take a stance against is the continued ability for the President to appoint members to the board of directors with the approval of the Executive Board members. It seems that the consensus is that all board members should be strictly elected, and none should be appointed! These are issues that can be addressed in bylaw amendment proposals submitted in 2008 for implementation in 2009.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all of you who have taken your time and energy to respond to the membership's questions and concerns and to communicate with us openly and honestly. Now is the time to show your good intentions for the future of the association.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Pipkin