

Lenora Coulter has served the Iowa Harness Racing community for at least 40 years in the capacities of organizing and hosting annual meetings for first the old Hawkeye Colt Association and the then USTA District 4A Annual meetings; 20 years as a starter and at least 20 years assisting in the operations of Iowa Harness Racing Promotions in organizing and putting on harness racing at What Cheer and Oskaloosa.

Lenora has done it all. She has arranged locations for banquets in Oskaloosa, Des Moines, Altoona, Newton, Marshalltown, Sedalia and St. Joe, MO; made arrangements for meetings, banquet menus and hospitality rooms, took reservations, arranged for trophies, answered the myriad questions of guests and the membership and cleaned up afterward.

A Bit of History:

Before 1974, Iowa was in a USTA District made up of Illinois and Iowa. It was the goal of the leadership in Iowa to become aligned with the midwestern states that were not pari-mutuel, feeling that they might have the opportunity to elect a director from Iowa that would represent the issues we faced from the fair racing level. Armed with a petition requesting a realignment, Jim, Lenora, Roger and Judy traveled to the annual meeting of the USTA in March of 1974, where the petition and request were presented to the Rules Committee. The committee was receptive to the request and moved our state to District 4 and subsequently divided the district into an A and B designation and at the same time establishing the at large directorship.

The horsemen of Iowa were asked to select a candidate, at a subsequent Hawkeye Colt Association banquet, to run against an incumbent director from Wisconsin. The horsemen selected Jim Coulter who was then elected at the USTA District meeting in Eau Claire, Wisconsin in 1975. Thus began Lenora's 35 years of organizing and hosting District USTA meetings and attending to the details of accomplishing this annual event, A very organized person, Lenora kept notes each year on what was done, so that we had a beginning point from which to work. As a new director, Judy Roland 10 years ago, appreciated the fact that we didn't have to start from scratch in planning every year! She is the expert.

In 1984, at the early meet in What Cheer, Lenora was launched on a career as a "starter" for fair races on the Iowa Circuit. This is how it happened. On Learning that the licensed starter wanted to quit and sell the starting car. Jim and Roger very generously volunteered the services of their wives. Not really knowing what they were getting into (but thinking it had to be better than grooming horses on race days) Lenora and Judy agreed to give it a try.

On duly taking the starters test and obtaining the license, our first start was at Eldon with Judy driving and Lenora starting. Wouldn't you know, on the very first race, the gate would not close. Uttering a rather loud OH, (expletive), Lenora turned the lever several times with no effect and I as the driver stayed in the middle of the trace and accelerated around the turn and pulled off into the infield, ahead of the field of horses. That was the first lesson in a little idiosyncrasy of out gat that required raising the rear lid and releasing a lever that would at times, "stick".

Having worked closely with Jim on the farm in keeping equipment maintained and repaired, Lenora was the one who looked after the starting car, mechanically. We had a tool kit and all

the different fluids we might need (and those were always checked before bringing the gate to the track). When we began hauling the gate(s) on a trailer, Lenora was the expert on getting the car tied down securely.

On occasion, we split up the gates and had to secure a substitute driver to cover two racing locations. Judy has to tell you that this situation was always traumatic for them because they had gotten so used to working together. As you all remember, Lenora had a particularly bad experience at Humboldt one year, when the car went over the embankment at the start of the race. Lenora is also part of a corporation, Iowa Harness Racing Promotions, that was originally formed years ago, to put on harness races at early meets, when the Fair did not want to sponsor races on non-fair dates. This involved getting the grounds and barns ready (and sometimes cleaning the bathrooms and grandstands); taking entries, doing the draw and producing a program; arranging for concessions' contacting and engaging officials; taking admissions at the gate; getting the track ready and after the race day – the really fun part – cleaning it all up. Lenora participated in all of this and for any of you who have had the opportunity to be responsible for putting on the race meet, you above all, appreciate the effort involved.

For many years Lenora dedicated to or sport, she is most deserving of this honor we are bestowing upon her tonight. And we want to say a big THANK YOU, Lenora, for all that you have taught Judy and for being a part of her life.