



Western Dressage Association® of Michigan (WDAMI)
2019 Year End Awards Banquet
By Sue Hughes

Horses make all of us happy and spending time with other “horse people” makes us happy as well. On cue everyone was smiling, laughing and talking with one another at the WDAMI Awards banquet held on Saturday February 22, 2020.

This year we met at a new venue. It was the Holiday Inn and Suites in Mt. Pleasant and a little poll suggests that that will be our new “home” for several years. As we entered there were multiple signs with arrows directing us to the room where we met. The buffet was set up in the wide aisle outside the room. More opinions gathered also were happy ones as the menu and individual items were tasty and plentiful.

Diane Kaser, the board member who organized it all, chose a barbecue-based meal which had all the good things one would expect with that. We even had a mixture of desserts from which to choose, plus coffee and various kinds of pop.

Another nice feature was that we sat in groups at round tables which makes for easy conversation. Each table had a colorful pot with a planting in it. Rachel Belcher and her Mother put them together and donated them to us. Many thanks as they were also taken home by lucky ticket holders for table and donation prizes.

Thanks to all others who contributed items to be given away. In addition, the silent auction produced a nice fund for the treasury. Rachel Belcher and her Mom contributed baskets filled to the brim overflowing with goodies.

Quite a group went to the Western Dressage Association® of America (WDAA) World Show championship competition last fall and several shared stories from their adventures. Suzanne Morisse talked about riding tests, Kristin Kill had a great time volunteering there and was the person who handed out the ribbons to World Show winners and Joanne Coy shared Marilyn Heath's super article about the reworked Training Pyramid. Joanne generously printed a copy for each of us to read, treasure and follow. She also gave out another informational sheet about the words that go with the scoring numbers and how they are used by judges on tests ridden by competitors as well as sharing a good story about how judges can help sooth a rider who has had an awful ride. She learned that her comforting words had helped a rider in Texas who had shared the kindness in that state, and it came back to Joanne super nicely.

Of course, the Big item on the lovely program created by Rachel Belcher, was the awards. Suzanne had them laid out for viewing and for ease of presentation (a complicated job). Diane Kaser assisted by reading the awards as they came along to the accompaniment of much applause and cheering by the 42 people who attended the banquet.

All the first-place division winners received the traditional western buckles designed especially for WDAMI. There were lovely championship ribbons and printed certificates suitable for framing that were presented as well.

Everyone stayed until the very end when we had to vacate by 4 pm. The very helpful hotel manager Tom O'Connor said we could stay longer. He had watched over us and had done special favors for the group throughout our visit which encouraged us to say that "we will be back".

Please come and join us next year! We look forward to seeing you all for the 2020 Year End Awards Banquet.