

## Meet your 2025 KWAH Vice President Mark Riley

Mark Riley and his family joined KWAH about seven years ago when he was at a mounted shooting clinic at the home of Stan Schremmer whose family was heavily involved in KWAH. Stan invited Mark's family to the Rocking S KWAH Show the following weekend at the Rocking S Arena. At this time the Plainville Saddle Club was not an active club in the association, so he and his family joined the Rocking S club. Now the Plainville Saddle Club has renewed membership to the association, the family rides for the Plainville Saddle Club that is local to his hometown.

His family attends as many shows as possible as he feels that it is a great family activity that is affordable, and everyone can enjoy it together as a family unit. Mark and his family travel to various shows across the state because they like to meet members from all the KWAH clubs, and they like to ride in different arenas. The family goal is to make shows three weekends a month.

Mark states his favorite event to watch is Western Relay because the entire team must communicate and work together as a unit to be successful. This is also an event he likes to ride with his family because it is one of the events they can do together. Even though he likes to ride Western Relay his favorite event to ride though is 2-Barrel Fag Race because it's as reliant on yourself as a rider as it is on the ability of your horse. In most cases if you don't get a recorded time in this race it is because you didn't do your job when the horse did.

He feels his goals as a rider is always to perform better with each run, to have fun, and to pass on his knowledge on to others so that they can become better riders and meet their goals. He especially likes to teach kids how to do the events and what it takes to put a show on by working in the arena. You will always find my kids helping in the arena because they need to understand that you can't just sit on the horse all day and have fun, he commented. Fun comes when you do something to help make it happen.

Mark previously held a Board of Directors seat in 2018, 2019, and 2024. In 2023 Renee Nichols asked him to run for a 2024 BOD seat, since he and his family were becoming more and more involved in the association and the shows. Mark states that he believes that the younger



members of the association should play a part in carrying out the legacy that has been passed down through generations of members. He had originally planned to run for a board seat for 2025 but was nominated for Vice President and now he holds an officer's position. Mark indicated one of the biggest challenges of serving on a diverse board is getting all the different personalities to work together cohesively. Big personalities can always be a challenge in any association but finding a way to bring everyone together is always rewarding.



Mark says that the best part of being on the KWAH BOD is it is like a family. There are lots of times that there are serious discussions but there is also a lot of comradery and laughter. They pull together when the time is needed at the KWAH ran events so that they run smoothly, knowing what needs to be done so they just do it. Mark said for those that have interest in serving on the KWAH BOD make sure that you have the time to volunteer, it takes time. Also, you need to have your mind in the right state so that you are there to represent the association and advocate for the members of the association, and not for personal gain or reasons.



State Horse Show Committee is rewarding, stated Mark, because it reflects everyone's hard work throughout the year. Picking events for the season for riders to compete is challenging so that you are not picking events that are the same year after year, finding events that haven't been run in a while and bringing them back and adding some of the new events so that everyone gets to learn them makes the shows interesting. Mark says since he has been on the State Show Committee he has learned to work well with different arena locations, the host club, and other members of the associations to bring the show together.



When it comes to fund raising he enjoys the live auctions the best. Mark says that it is fun to see the competition between bidders. He also likes it when family members are bidding against each other and don't even realize it. When kids start bidding it also creates a bit of confusion before the parent realizes it and so the fun begins, there always seems to be plenty of laughter to go around.

He feels the association needs a committee that is dedicated directly to finding membership, bringing in an interest to the association, marketing what we do by finding other equine interested parties, club, and associations, that would enjoy similar things. Finding this through word of mouth for his family was lucky and he feels that we as an association can find more membership and interest if we had a committee to help make that plan of action.

Mark states when talking about KWAH he says that there is something for everyone. That the individual can come and compete, or an entire family can be involved because it is so affordable. You don't need fancy equipment, clothing or horses, you just love to ride. It is based on family, with great sportsmanship and lifelong friendships can be built. Your kids are not on video games but communicating with others and learning good work ethic while having fun. What better way to spend a weekend than that.

Until Next Time,  
Renee Nichols  
KWAH Historian