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I Was Hoping for Just One Ribbon...

Sally Armstrong, Donkey-Oaties in Johnson City, Texas

I know, the ribbon is just a piece of colored cloth or sometimes a rosette. I know it's not the only reason we go to a show. We go for the fun, the camaraderie, the chance to work with our Miniature Donkeys, to see if we have improved, etc. Coming home with a ribbon or two is an added bonus.

But...

This was my first time to attend an NMDA National Show. It is my second year of showing. Not only that; this show was in Oregon! That's a mighty far piece from Texas. This was really something special! And so, I was hoping for just one ribbon to mark this momentous occasion.

I started figuring my chances. I was taking two pre-green geldings. Each had two classes they could enter – halter and in-hand trail. We had to place in one of four chances. I was also going to show a green gelding for Stock Market's Miniature Donkeys. SiSu Morris and Barbara Hilliard had encouraged me to make the trip with them. It was a great relief to travel with some pros. Of course, it made me a bit more nervous to be showing someone else's donkey. This donkey was new to driving and so was I. This was only our third show together and only our third time to drive. In the back of my mind I could visualize Pleasure Driving turning into a demolition derby since I knew the class would have more than three or four entries. The only thing I knew for sure is that I would try to do my best. And of course, cope with stomach butterflies that felt more like hummingbirds.

We arrived along with others and everyone was busy getting settled into their stalls. RV's started rolling in and soon I felt like I was observing a big family reunion. One of the greatest things about the entire weekend is that we were made to feel a part of this wonderful long-ear-lovin' family. I can't begin to adequately thank Marilane Jorgensen and everyone on her show committee for the best donkey outing I have ever experienced!

Everything about the show was top rate and so well organized. Even the weather was perfect! Best of all, I met so many wonderful folks and made new friends. It is so gratifying to actually meet and visit with people you only knew by name from their advertisements. I also learned a very important lesson from Matt MacLauchlin as I watched him construct, plumb, excavate, landscape, and run electricity to "The Trail". I learned, "Trail is trail; it ain't a bunch of that plastic sh.....(stuff)." I had never seen anything like it! What looked like something so difficult, if not impossible, turned out to be my favorite part of the show. It presented my donkeys and me a real challenge, and we did it. That trail gave me more respect for my donkeys' abilities and our bond of trust. What a wonderful thing to come away with from the show!

Thank you to NMDA and the Pacific Crest Classic for a weekend I'll always treasure due to the fun, the camaraderie, the meals, the great spirit of competition & sportsmanship and new friendships. And oh, I almost forgot...my boys brought home three ribbons!