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WHAT MAKES A GRAND NATIONAL SHOW "GRAND?"

Among the most frequent questions I'm asked about the MCA are "What is a Grand National show" or "How is a Grand National different than a National show?" And, for many people there is even bewilderment over the definition of a Regional show?

GRAND NATIONAL SHOWS

What makes an MCA show a Grand National? There may be several answers. Historically, this show has been the final show of the season. It was originally meant to be a reunion, when everyone got back together, like a giant tailgate party. The best judges came to the "Grand." Some owners worked hard to earn the Best of Show trophy (which is no longer part of the award system). But, now the Grand National is not always the final show of the season. Some years ago a Grand National was awarded for early August. This year's Grand National is followed by a National in Phoenix in October. In 2010, the Grand National is set for July in Bellevue, WA. One year there were two Grand Nationals: one in New Mexico and one in New Jersey. Charles Hampton, our longest serving President, says that he remembers when everyone really looked forward to the close of the year, but now "...it seems like we have drifted into the Grand National just being another show."

So, what is it that makes a Grand National Grand? First and foremost, the Regional club or clubs hosting the show must have prior experience by presenting a National show. The Grand National is like "pulling out all the stops" in programs and events. The show site needs to be beyond "special." Everything is the best of activities. There are special awards, which are only given at a Grand National. The President's Award to Regional clubs is generally presented at the Grand National. In the Mustang hobby, the Grand National is where you go to see and be seen. There is talk of developing a special Grand National award, based on a point championship, gained by the standings at various Regional and National shows.

The Park City, Utah, Grand National was about as high as you can get (excuse the pun made at the expense of some 6,500-plus feet in altitude). This show was end-to-end excitement. Judging was done in downtown Park City. There was a pony trails, a Sunday autocross, the Canyons Resort for the host hotel, and an air gondola ride to top it all off. Everyone in the Northern Utah Mustang Owners Association had a job to do, and they did it to perfection. This was truly a GRAND NATIONAL.

NATIONAL SHOWS

A National Show may be all the things a Grand National show is, except on a more Regional basis. The MCA Show Committee attempts to spread three to four National shows across the USA and Canada, annually. Again, a Regional (local) Mustang club, or clubs, submits an application to the Show Committee. If approved by the committee, the Board is asked for final approval. Although the Regional club puts on the show, the MCA sets the judging standards and provides the National Show Secretary and the National Head Judge and his staff of Assistant Head Judges. Additional Gold Card and Certified Judges handle the judging. National Shows are exciting and wonderful.

REGIONAL SHOWS

An MCA Regional club, or several clubs, may choose to put on one or more "Regional shows" a year. Clubs do not need MCA approval to have a Regional show. MCA will provide show insurance and some limited supplies. Regional clubs may choose the type of judging at their shows, if they have any judging at all.

WHAT ABOUT THE FUTURE?

Some ask if there are changes planned for the show future. Who knows what the next generations will demand. My guess is that Ford will continue to produce the most popular car in history. That means that more judges and more trophies will be required, and that translates into modifying the rules in lots of areas of judging. Additionally, I have been hearing lots of talk about dividing the United States into three to five Regions (areas), with the expectation that each Region will provide one show a year.

The Grand National for 2009 will be replaced by the 45th Anniversary of the Mustang to be held in Birmingham, Alabama.

See you there!

Bill Johnson

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