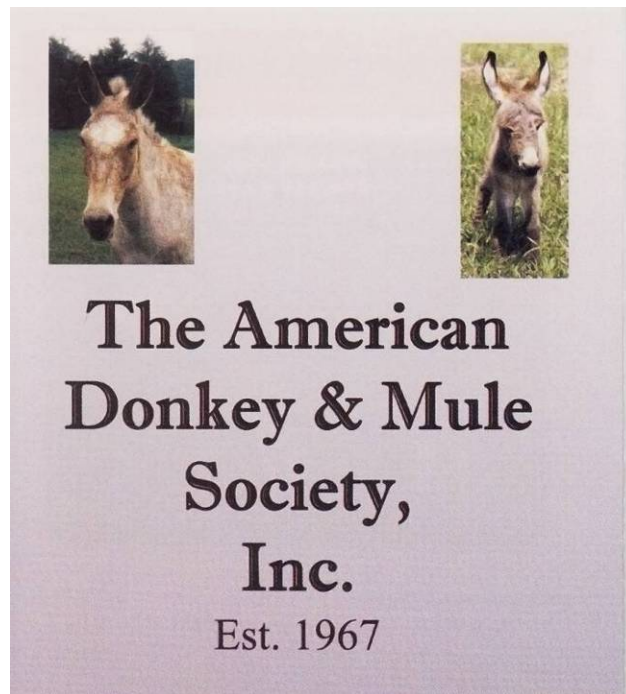


MULE CROSSING: ADMS National Show Carolinas

BY Meredith Hodges

On October 20-22, 1992, the Donkey & Mule Society of the Carolinas hosted the American Donkey & Mule Society National Show in Columbia, South Carolina in conjunction with their state fair. The American Council of Spotted Asses' 1992 National Show was held concurrently. This was truly a colorful and entertaining extravaganza of mules and donkey! As many as 23 states were represented, and classes were filled to maximum attendance. There were over 60 entries in the under saddle pleasure classes, and over 20 entries in each of the driving classes. The quality of their performance of the donkeys and mules was, without a doubt, above average, and in some cases, exceptional!



The Donkey & Mule Society of the Carolinas is to be commended on a job well done in the organization and running of this show, with special thanks to Leslie Bruce and Jackie Sanders for their tireless dedication and support. Founders of the American Donkey & Mule Society, Paul and Betsy Hutchins from Denton, Texas, were thrilled with the success of the show while they too made their own personal contributions. Paul's captivating and humorous comments throughout the show kept the audience perked, while Betsy spent the long hours manning the A.D.M.S. booth taking new memberships, renewing old ones, selling longears products, and talking longears with hundreds of eager spectators and exhibitors. Tennessee mule balladeer Marilyn Powell Greene's melodic voice filled the air, musing on mules and setting an enchanting ambiance to the whole affair. Even I, Meredith Hodges, was compelled to travel all the way from Colorado to lend my support to this special longears event... and I am really glad that I did! I was particularly thrilled that I was able to bring with me my apprentice mule and donkey trainer/breeder, Ruth Elkins, a representative of the British Mule Society! We both had a wonderful time!

I think that I can safely say that a wonderful time was had by all. Because of the numerous entries in the 110 halter, performance, driving classes, and games, the show lasted well into the night each day, but good sportsmanship and good humor never waned, and the exhibitors did a terrific job of showing their lovely and well-trained animals!

The entries represented in the “authentic” and “original” costume classes were really very clever and innovative! These folks have wonderful imaginations, as was reflected by the numerous and extraordinary costumes in these two classes. What great folks, great longears, and great fun!

Of particular interest were the driving classes: Single Hitch, Youth Hitch, Multiple, and Parade Hitches exhibited in Pleasure Driving, Reinsmanship, Races, and Obstacle classes. There were teams of all different sizes, colors, harness, hitches, and vehicles. Classes were held for both mules and donkeys. As we know, running mules in races of any kind is lucrative at best, but the mules that ran in the harnessed races at this show were really quite good. Even the donkeys did a respectable job, though there were a couple that gave us a chuckle with their deliberate unconcern with their driver’s enthusiasm, yee-hawing and flailing arms!

The judges of the hitch classes, Christine Berry and Jackie Starnes, couldn’t have had an easy time. Every entry in the Single Hitch Classes was turned out quite elegantly and appropriately. Harness was fitted properly, in good repair. Vehicles were of a wide variety of colors and make, yet balanced and appropriate to each of the animals. The animals themselves reflected quiet obedience and dependability. It was clear that the exhibitors had put a lot of time into training their mules and donkeys. The youth drivers are to be commended for an exceptional enthusiasm for driving; it was clear that they had practiced and had put their heart and soul into their performance. We can all be proud of our young mule lovers!

In the multiple hitch classes, we saw a wide variety of wagons and other four-wheel vehicles coupled with many different sorts of hitches. Mules were shown in pairs and fours, and we were pleasantly surprised to see a hitch of three abreast and even a unicorn hitch. In keeping the more traditional use of mules and donkeys, we witnessed mules pulling an old plow and another team pulling an old manure spreader. There were as many different types of harness as there were teams, each with its own particular style and charm. Though there were impressive numbers in the under-saddle classes, the entries in the hitch classes were clearly the highlight of our National Show, with their unique and impressive performances!

Congratulations and a hearty thanks to all of you who helped to make the 1992 A.D.M.S National Donkey & Mule Show the tremendous success that it was. You all did an exceptional job of showing the public that mules can do... and donkeys, too! So keep your traces tight, and long live Longears!

For more information about Meredith Hodges and her comprehensive correspondence training Program, *Training Mules and Donkeys*, please visit **www.LuckyThreeRanch.com** or call **1-800-816-7566**. Also, find Meredith Hodges and Lucky Three Ranch on Facebook and Twitter. And don’t forget to check out her children’s website at **JasperTheMule.com**

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