

Horsemen's Council of Illinois Adds Three to Board

Lawyer, editor, breeder lend talents to equine industry

Springfield, IL – Horsemen's Council of Illinois (HCI) has named three new board members, adding talents of an equine legal specialist, a farm publications editor and a breeder to its 15-member board of directors, according to Frank Bowman, president.

Joining the board are Yvonne Ocrant, Barrington, IL, a member of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, Chicago; Cherry Brieser Stout, Argenta, IL, editor of Farm Progress' *Prairie Farmer* magazine; and Mark Niebrugge, Effingham, IL, American Quarter Horse breeder.



Yvonne Ocrant, a member of Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP

Ocrant assists individual horse owners, trainers, breeders and riding and boarding facilities litigate personal injury, property damage, breach of contract, fraud, misrepresentation and a variety of other legal issues. She also drafts agreements for equine purchases, sales and leases, and creates equine liability releases and disclaimers for boarding and training facilities.

Author of "Heads up", Ocrant produces this monthly column on various equine law issues published in the *Scribe*, a monthly magazine sponsored by the Illinois Dressage and Combined Training Association. She also writes "Legal Bits" monthly for "From the Horse's Mouth."

Ocrant competes in hunter/jumper, dressage and three-day eventing and travels daily from her Barrington home to Elgin to care for her horses.



Cherry Brieser Stout has written about the horse industry and many other aspects of Illinois farm life for 18 years, serving on the editorial staff of *Prairie Farmer*, based in Decatur, IL. She is the first woman to serve as editor of the 166-year-old publication for Illinois farm families.

She grew up with horses on a family farm at Mineral, IL in Bureau County and was active in 4-H and FFA. She studied equestrian sci-



Cherry Brieser Stout, editor of Farm Progress' *Prairie Farmer* magazine

ence and journalism at Stephens College in Columbia, MO, and received two master's degrees from Ohio University in Athens, OH.

Stout spent two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Lesotho, southern Africa, working on the Basotho Pony Project. Funded by the Irish government, the Basotho Pony Project was a breeding program to improve the traditional mountain pony and to create an international registry for the breed.

Before joining *Prairie Farmer*, Stout was a newspaper reporter for the *Herald-Whig* in Quincy, IL and the *Telegraph* in Dixon, IL.

Stout lives near Argenta, IL, with husband Dan, daughter Kimberly and four horses.

Mark Niebrugge grew up with horses, cattle, pork, chickens, row crops and six brothers on the family farm. He was an active 4-H member and participant in the first 4-H/Meadow Farm Standardbred co-op program (caring for a weanling, preparing it for the Yearling Sales the next fall), which gave Mark an enduring appreciation for the sport.

Today, however, Mark produces AQHA winners, including a 2006 Champion with points in halter, reining, barrel racing and team roping, and Top 5 winners in the Palomino Horse Breeders World Championship Show.

Mark has served on the Illinois Quarter Horse Association board of directors since the late 1990s and as a district director and vice president for the Southern Region. He has worked on the Show and Contest Committee and the Futurity Committee, and has chaired to Grievance Committee, Congress Queen Committee and the Convention Committee.

Mark lives on his Effingham farm with wife Amy, son Will (6), and daughters Audrey (5) and Grace Anne (1).

In his free time, he says "I have been a marketing representative with Federated insurance since 1998, specializing in commercial lines coverage for selected businesses throughout a 13-county region – you know you need a hobby like work to pay for the horses."