

SECRETARY CANDIDATE - IRENE HOWCROFT

1. What are your main priorities as Secretary.

As secretary I will be trusted as custodian of all USMMA official records, this is a responsibility and privilege I take seriously. It is my first and most important priority. Being trusted with this is an honor.

The integrity of these records is paramount if the USMMA is to continue to have the authority and value it has accomplished.

As secretary I will have a duty to keep meticulous official records of meetings, maintain open communication and be available to all Board and other members of the USMMA. I own and operate a successful business and am familiar with optimally organizing logistics, meetings etc. I am a skilled team member and understand the immense value of a cohesive well run organization.

As Stated on the USMMA website "Such records may include minutes, the by-laws, operating rules, breed standards, membership roll names and addresses and emails". This is no different to running any business.

2. As a candidate for being elected to the USMMA board, what do you think the purpose and goals of USMMA should be moving forward?

- To inspire increased availability of Marchadors in the United States through breeding and import from Brazil.
- Preserving the integrity of the breed with high registry breed standards and accredited breeders so that the purchasing public can have confidence in the horse they purchase.
- Educate and expose the equine world to the immeasurable talents of the Marchador through print, social media platforms, clinics, and trainers from Brazil.
- Support horse trainers in the United States to gain specialized experience in Brazil regarding the unique gaits and talents of the Marchadors to further educate and help the USA riders of this breed fulfill both their potential and the potential of their horses.

3. What can you personally contribute to achieve these goals?

I would like to take this opportunity to share a little of who I am.

SECRETARY CANDIDATE - IRENE HOWCROFT

Like most of you I am a rider, not a breeder. Like you, I ride for the joy of having wings without flying, for the communion with my horse, for the adventures and terrain explored, for the human friendships that horses enrich. I currently have one dual registered Marchador mare, Nazere (Nazere-Pereira de Lazy T), whom I love dearly and with whom I am so fortunate to share my life. She is a gentle teacher. (I have much to learn from every horse, the moment I am no longer listening to my horses is the moment I should not be honored with their presence.) She is tolerant, athletic, brave, confident, calm and I trust her with my life. She has just enough mischief and sass to make me laugh and remind me that I will always be humbled by her. We have started our Endurance journey together, a dream of mine for many years. For me, she is perfection.

In 2005 I was involved in establishing the by-laws of the USMMA as I welcomed to my home 2 Marchador geldings, Boom Boom de Miami who lived out his life with me, buried here at my home, and whom I still miss terribly, and Orixá, who has been living very happily for 10 years in Durango and I am still in touch with the family that I released him to. He is 26, loved and as healthy as can be. Boom Boom and Orixá were part of a small gaited equine facility that I owned for several years named Ruidoso Equine. I dissolved Ruidoso Equine to focus on my current business Ruidoso Malinois which I founded 15 years ago. I grew up with horses, and have been riding in some form since I was 4 years old. Horses are in my DNA, a passion, and a life without them is something I cannot imagine. I know you, as a rider, can relate to the joy, peace, delight, fear, challenge and magic that an equine, especially a Marchador, brings to our lives. I know mine have brought all of this and more.

As the owner of a kennel that specializes in a Belgian Malinois I understand, admire and respect the commitment needed by breeders, of any species, to breed with integrity for the preservation and enhancement of a breed, its necessary structural conformation for success in its athletic endeavors, the importance of genetics for health, and temperament. I understand the critical importance of genetic diversity. I also am fully aware of how important the nurture and handling of foals is to ensure that the temperament they are born with is enhanced and by gentling, nutrition and exposure.

As a rider I bring fresh eyes to USMMA and a perspective from many professional years in the animal world. I understand the value of marketing, and education. I was so successful in marketing my company on Facebook with 72,365 followers (very large following in my industry) that I was targeted by my competition and Facebook closed my Facebook Link, I am working on having this re-published as I go through the appeals process. I opened another Facebook page and that too was targeted by competition.

If USMMA and Marchadors are to flourish we need to engage our youth. They are the future. We need to meet them in their world with Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, Reddit and Snapchat. There is a whole world of young boys and girls, teenagers, and people in their 20's and 30's that we need to reach. It's those riders we need to engage and

SECRETARY CANDIDATE - IRENE HOWCROFT

inspire. They are the holders of the Marchador future. The breeders and importers need to satisfy their dreams by having horses available.

I understand and know well how to engage in those ways, how to enter and reach that world. I have many resources I can access to vitalize USMMA and the exposure of the Marchador.

I am starting a public facebook page for RIDERS of Marchadors. I will be published this weekend.

“MANGALARGA MARCHADOR RIDERS WORLDWIDE SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE”

4. How can the USMMA become more active and promote the Mangalarga Marchador in North America to a wider audience?

As I mentioned in my previous answer, if USMMA and Mangalarga Marchadors are to flourish we need to engage our youth. They are the future. We need to meet them in their world with Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, Reddit and Snapchat. We need to inspire them at shows, on ranches and on trail rides. There is a whole world of young boys and girls, teenagers, and people in their 20's and 30's that we need to reach, that will fall in love with the kind, brave temperament of the Marchador and all the athletic talents this breed has. It's those riders we need to reach and inspire. They are the holders of the Marchador future. The breeders and importers need to satisfy their dreams by having horses available.

I understand and know well how to engage in those ways, how to enter and reach that world. I have many resources I can access to vitalize USMMA and the exposure of the Marchador.

This is a question of marketing in print and social media platforms, not in traditional ways, and traditional pictures and videos. There is a whole world of creative options that need to be explored and employed. Without this exposure and the excitement it evokes the Marchador and USMMA with plateau.

SECRETARY CANDIDATE - IRENE HOWCROFT

I believe it is critical that the integrity of Marchador be its strong traceable bloodlines, its purity, the strict registry that holds it true to everything that has been so carefully enhanced and protected in Brazil. I think ensuring that each horse be traceable as it moves through its life, and not be lost, will preserve its nobility in the equine world where so many other horses of different breeds are lost and their lines diluted so that they are no longer a representative of where or how they originated.

I think a book of all the Marchadors that have come to the USA and have been bred in the USA be created, that there are pictures of each horse, its bloodlines, whether it is USMMA and ABCCMM registration, trace those histories and accomplishments, not only in the showring, but in endurance (the Marchador holds the Guinness book of world record for endurance), ranching, jumping, dressage and trail riding. There needs to be something tangible, not just digital that honors this breed here in the USA. Something that people can look at and be inspired to be a part of. What we do now will determine the preservation of this breed 100 years from now. This is not about us, today, it is about how we steward this breed for the future.

5. Do you value our affiliation with the ABCCMM? If yes, how would you like to strengthen this connection?

I believe it is imperative that USMMA has a very strong affiliation with ABCCMM. Breeders with both USMMA and ABCCMM registered horses should be recognized and celebrated for their commitment and stewardship of the Marchador. The fact that the USMMA Zoom meeting with the Brazilian President of ABCCMM was featured on Brazilian TV News reflects the respect that USMMA has in Brazil. This is hard earned and must be preserved.

USMMA is a young organization, and has been entrusted with the Marchador breed in the USA. I believe the breed standards of the USMMA should directly reflect the breed standards of ABCCMM. The Brazilians have stayed loyal to these and it has resulted in a solid standard. It protects both the horse itself and the consumer riders.

ABCCMM has extended, most graciously, their trainers, their inspectors and their support. To honor the Marchador horse itself and the future buyers of Marchadors, nurturing this relationship and embracing all that ABCCMM has offered will enhance USMMA immeasurably.

6. How are you going to support members who have different viewpoints, interests, and levels of experience?

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The foundation of any organization is the adherence to its principles and its mission. As long as those principles by-laws and mission are adhered to there is no limit to what can be explored and encouraged. Every voice, interest and level of experience has value, fresh ideas and animated enthusiasm which is enriching. We all started with our first step into the mesmerizing world of the Marchador and that journey for each of us is personal and committed. A team is much greater than the sum of its parts. A Board of Directors is such a team.

As a reflection of my ability to stand strong for principle and commitment, I want to make public my legal history in my industry to openly address any concerns or possible hearsay. False accusations were made by my local law enforcement which were dismissed by the courts. I was further vindicated when I won a civil suit against these law enforcement agencies and 3 other defendants who had caused me great harm in my industry. Here is the link where you can see the full legal complaint. <https://ruidosomalinois.com/abuse-charges-civil-suit.html>

Here is another news article relating to that incident:

<https://www.lcsun-news.com/story/news/local/county/2016/07/16/do-ana-county-shares-settlement-costs-tied-kennel-investigation/87149878/>

This vindication was also featured on KOAT TV and ABC Nightly News and picked up by other TV channels.

I have subsequently been in the news many times representing Belgian Malinois as an expert in the field. Here are other links for those that are interested.

<https://ruidosomalinois.com/news-articles.html>

I have had to petition for, and been awarded, protection orders by the courts when I have had my life threatened, unfortunately more than once. I was married to and subsequently divorced from Stuart Braun, an owner of Marchadors.

I am proud of the life I have lived and obstacles overcome. I will stand strong for the USMMA with the same dedication, commitment and forbearance I have held to in all aspects of my life.

It would be an honor to be Secretary on the Board of Directors of the USMMA. I pledge my hard work, my passion and my commitment to strengthening this Association, the protection and breadth of exposure, of this most noble of breeds, the Mangalarga Marchador.