

## Tracy Keen, FL. South East Region VII

Passion— an intense desire or enthusiasm for something.

For 42 years, POAs and the POAC have been my life. I grew up in the breed, after purchasing our first POA in 1977. One turned into two and two into four, until eventually our farm became home to three stallions and about 25 other ponies of various ages. My stepfather's untimely death in 1996 changed the program and the breeding end of it died. My sister aged out and it was just me and few ponies left. I changed gears developed a small program based around two mares and went back to competing again. I met my husband, Robert in 2002 and married him. The story goes that he said I wouldn't have to work as long as I didn't have ponies, and I said the ponies will be here after you are gone... and so it has been. I work and the ponies are still here, but so too, is the husband.

In all this time I have seen a lot of changes in our breed. We have gone from a spotted pony breed that catered to youth to a breed that caters to families with members and competitors of all ages. Where our breed used to compete with other breeds for participants, it now competes with other sports that are much cheaper and easier to participate in. We went from a 54" pony (in my day but 52" prior to that) to now a 56" pony. We went from not understanding how appaloosa color was produced, to now understanding and predicting what will occur

when a solid is produced, or better yet avoiding that solid altogether. Lots and lots of changes.

We are still experiencing change. Change is good but change cannot happen overnight. We have seen what happens when decisions are made rapidly and the membership not kept informed. I have made every effort to keep my constituency in the SE Region informed. I have a FB page for the membership of my region to communicate with me and me with them. I frequently answer phone calls and questions from those outside my region. I have been the chair or co-chair of the Breeders Committee for the past three years, a job I take very seriously and make lots of effort to bring ideas and entertain ideas of other breeders. I have been co-chair of the Inspectors Committee, a committee devoted to the education of the membership and fellow inspectors. Over the past few years Diana Peaton, Charlene Astin and I myself have worked tirelessly to educate in regards to acceptable color. With the inception of the LP Certification program ( my brain child), hopefully inspectors will no longer be put on the spot to determine what is and is not appaloosa color. In regards to height, it is unlikely that any genetic tests will arrive to predict future height of individuals and this is an area where we will always have issues. Through education, the committee would like to lessen those issues by working with Breeders to make educated breeding choices.



Let us not forget the basis for our breed... the youth. Some say we are losing our focus. I don't believe that to be true at the National level. Some regions, however are being forced to make tough choices in order to survive. What does a club do when they have no youth left? They turn to our adult programs. A club with a healthy youth population may not need to offer the adult classes. A club on the East Coast may have no need for Speed events. I would like to see State Clubs particularly in the outlying regions with small pony populations and struggling memberships be able to have more flexibility in the classes they offer.

Passion— an intense desire or enthusiasm for something. POAs are my lifelong passion and if elected as your director I will continue to make our region and the success of POAC the center of my focus.