

# EYE ON MARTY BAUMAN

It is all about the detail with our 'Eye On' candidate this issue. Often cited as being one of the first equestrian communications professionals, Marty Bauman leads and others follow. He founded Classic Communications in 1979 and quickly built the company into a well respected public relations, marketing and event management firm. While representing a variety of interests, Marty made equestrian sports Classic's initial focus. After building a reputation for developing and implementing creative and successful programs, Marty was hired in 1990 as Director of Public Relations for the United States Equestrian Team, a position he held until 2004. He has been press officer to numerous international events including many World Cup Finals and the 2010 World Equestrian Games.

## WHICH ROLES DO YOU HAVE IN THE EQUESTRIAN WORLD?

For the first part of my career, my role was always public relations and press. That is still my primary role and I am privileged to serve as press chief for many incredible events such as the Kentucky Three-Day Event CCI4\*, Hampton Classic and several others. I have also been fortunate to serve as press chief for the last nine FEI World Cup™ Finals held in the U.S. as well as the 2010 FEI World Equestrian Games

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in Kentucky. In addition to overseeing press, for the last 15-20 years, I have also been deeply involved in sponsorship and marketing, helping events with their sponsor support. Beyond events, my company, Classic Communications, and I represent a variety of businesses and other interests, including horse show sponsors, involved in the equestrian market. We help these companies try to get coverage in the equestrian media, recommend and negotiate their sponsorships and on-site presence at events and help with other promotion that makes sense for them.



## WHAT IS YOUR MAIN ROLE AND HOW AND WHY DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN THIS ROLE?

My main role remains overseeing public relations and press. I first got involved in 1978. I was working on my master's degree and doing

freelance PR on the side. I did not have a horse background but there was a jumping event in Newport, Rhode Island (the American Jumping Derby) that was looking for help with public relations and, after an unsuccessful effort to find someone, took a chance on me. While I didn't know anything about the horse show world, everything I did seemed to work. We got great coverage in the local press and attracted big crowds. Very quickly other opportunities opened up for me and although I never planned a career in equestrian sports, all of a

sudden I had one. It is fair to say, that I didn't choose this career but it chose me!

## WHICH PART OF YOUR JOB IS MOST DIFFICULT?

I guess I would have to say the travel. While I do get to go to a lot of great events and a lot of nice places, the travel, especially nowadays, does get tiresome.

## WHICH PART GIVES YOU MOST SATISFACTION?

I love being on the inside of big events. I enjoy the strategic planning and the challenge of trying to anticipate problems and address them before they happen. I love developing plans and then being able to adjust as needed when something unexpected happens. It is truly a wonderful feeling when the plan works, the event is successful and everyone feels good about it. What also makes me feel good are the wonderful relationships I have with so many fabulous people. The plus side of all the travel I do is that I have developed close relationships with people in many different places including overseas. Whether it is media, those who run and work on

the events, sponsors, vendors, riders, trainers, owners, I am so blessed to have lots of great friends, some of whom I may see just once a year when I go to that town to work a horse show, but whose friendships I value very much. It is probably the best reward I get for what I do.

## WHO HAS BEEN MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSON IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL LIFE?

Honestly, there have been so many people who have had an influence on my career that it is hard to single out anyone in particular. I really am indebted to many people who have helped me. When I think about how I go about things, and what I find myself constantly drilling into my staff, I think about my years as Director of Public Relations for the USET which included being editor of the USET News. I worked very closely with Jack Fritz and he was meticulous beyond anyone I have ever known. He would review everything and make sure that everything—and I mean every word, every comma, everything—was perfect! I went to a high school that taught us to be that way and my staff will tell you how upset I get if anything ever leaves our office that isn't exactly right. I know it drives them crazy but to me, that's how it should be. I was also quite fortunate to learn an awful lot from Bill Steinkraus. If he ever saw something in the USET News or a USET press release that wasn't right, he would call. When I picked up the phone and the first words I'd hear were, "My dear boy," I knew something had slipped by me. Fortunately, it didn't happen too often; but when it did, I always learned a valuable lesson and, I'd like to think, didn't make the same mistake again. Because this is something that matters so much to me, I would have to say that I owe an awful lot to Bill Steinkraus and Jack Fritz.

## HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ACTIVE IN THE EQUESTRIAN SPORT YOURSELF?

While it is now approaching 40 years that I have been involved in the equestrian sports world, I still do not ride. I do think of myself as being very active in equestrian sports, just not as a rider. ■