

COUNTRY ACRES NEWS

March/April 2008

We have the most wonderfully eclectic group of people at MacNair's--- staff and customers. So we sent out an e-mail last month asking you to send us some bragging material about your accomplishments in 2007. Here's what you sent:

Rebecca Bishoporic, instructor and 4H assistant at the school barn, had a banner year in 4H competitions---She was a member of the Horse Bowl team that went from the state level all the way to 1st place in the AQHYA World Horse Bowl Contest and a member of the NC State Hippology team which placed first at the All American Quarter Horse Hippology Contest. She was Rockingham County Horseman of the year and received the 2007 NC 4-H Horse Program Scholarship. Rebecca helped Lissy Newton in coaching our Horse Bowl and Hippology teams and is now helping us with our Cloverbud program at MacNair's and as an instructor for Pony School.

Laura Pendleton, with Vico, came in first place in North Carolina at first-level dressage (NCDCTA) at the professional level in 2007.

Drake Driscoll had a fantastic first year showing ponies at the A-Rated level on Design by King. Together they qualified for the Zone 3 Finals, where they won a pink ribbon, and also for the NCHJA "C" Equitation on Ponies Finals. On the non-horsey side of things, Drake won two cello scholarships for summer cello study from the Raleigh Music Club and Lamar Stringfield Camp where she played in an Honors Quartet. Drake is among the youngest selected to play in the top triangle Philharmonic Association Orchestra.

Drake's mom, *Anya McGuirk*, who is an avid rower, won the Golden Hammer at the 1st Annual Capital Carolina Erg Springs for "Senior" Women (40-49), completing 2k meters in 7:52, handily beating all the "younger" senior women just 3 weeks before her 50th.

Colleen Sheridan has been accepted to the Honors College at the College of Charleston for the Fall of 2008, and was also awarded a merit-based scholarship. She hopes to hear soon if she will be invited to try out for the Equestrian Team. Another big milestone: Colleen has now been riding at MacNair's for over ten years!

We also received a note of thanks from *Linda Edmisten* for the support of her MacNair's "family" while she was helping get her husband Rufus back on his feet.



Eye on the Farm

There's been a lot of hammering going on around the farm this past month as the fences in the paddocks and mare and gelding fields at Country Acres have been repaired. New boards, fresh creosote and yards and yards of pristine new horse wire have whipped those fences into shape.

Caroline is preparing to make improvements on the Starnes property, including constructing some cross-country fences for our riders to use in lessons or clinic situations. Many of you have already discovered the great riding over there---it's a nice addition to the wooded trails we already have. The farm will be used for hay production so please ride on the roads around the open fields. If you have any questions about riding on that property, stop in the office and we'll fill you in on what's over there and how to access it.

We're also in the process of rebuilding and repainting our show jumps. Melanie is working with Jeff Butler to get this done. Look for some new colors and combinations!

CONGRATULATIONS TO

*Dottie and Charlotte Burch on the lease of Gray Boy
Logan Emmons on the arrival of Gracie*

BEST WISHES FOR A QUICK RECOVERY TO

Tyler Hoft



"...The ultimate test of a rider's skill is his simplicity"

---George Morris



CONGRATULATIONS PIA!!!!!!

We are pleased to announce the arrival of a new member of our farm family. PeterK was born at 11:00 am , March 26, 2008. He is a bay, the color of his father, and 3 hours old in this photo. He enjoyed posing for the camera, galloped and bucked around the stall. The sire is PopeyeK and his website is www.popeyek.com. The dam's sire is a World Class Stallion and can be viewed by putting in google, Welt Hit II. The dam is Pia, an imported Oldenburg mare from Europe that was used for jumping. Her career in the United States was as a hunter and ridden by my sister Catherine. Thank you to Apex vet Hospital for helping with the delivery. Another happy spring on the farm,
Caroline



From The Barn Manager

(Otherwise known as "Dena's Domain")

We now have a boarder e-mail list so we can notify all of you about things like vaccination and worming dates, turnout changes or restrictions, etc. Please be sure and check your e-mail for info from us. And, if we don't have your e-mail please be sure and get it to us. We only send you useful information.

You may have noticed that currently we only have one wash rack that drains. The one that doesn't work is clogged because of things other than water going down the drain (hair, hoof cleaning debris, etc.) Please remember that the wash racks are for washing/rinsing only. If there is some reason you cannot groom and tack in your stall, please feel free to use the farrier's stall. If that's occupied and you have to use the wash rack, PLEASE sweep up after yourself, so nothing but water goes down the drains.

Lastly: If EVERY horse had a breakaway halter with a nameplate on it, no one would borrow anyone else's halter and everyone's halters would stay put on the right stall. REALLY!! Please help us out with this, and it will help you out too!!

Thanks!!!

-Dena



Dressage Corner

“Earn Your Stirrups” Clinic Pays Big Dividends

Does my horse look forward to seeing me when I enter the barn?

This was one of many questions discussed in the illuminating four-part Earn Your Stirrups clinic taught by Kris Hamilton this past winter. The course involved classroom work as well as riding demonstrations, with an opportunity for students to ride on a lunge line. An emphasis was placed on developing clear communication with our partner, the horse.

Kris discussed the importance of following the USDF Training Scale to help our horses reach their fullest potential. Numerous hand-outs were given to the clinic attendees that discussed the importance of having smart strategies as part of your riding plan, clear intentions, and developing our own horsemanship skills so we can train our horses to be willing partners. The need for an independent seat was stressed.

As an added bonus, Kris provided tasty culinary treats at each session and played inspirational songs while we enjoyed the company of our fellow riders.

On graduation night, Kris awarded the lady students with beautiful silver stirrup necklaces while the gents received silver stirrup charms.

Thanks from all, Kris, for the camaraderie and great information!

-Lorrie Richards



More Dressage News

The show must go on! The rain, wind and thunder did not dampen the spirit of the NCDCTA show enthusiasts. Our first show on March 16 was a huge success with 144 dressage rides and 38 jumping rides. We want to thank all volunteers who contributed hours to help make this show a success. Again a big thank you to Nancy and all the staff that worked so hard to make it all happen.

We are off to Florida!

One afternoon Bill and I were talking about my riding goals and dreams. As I explained to him about a needed Florida trip to take more lessons and show he asked "Don't you know how to ride yet?" In a way he was playing, but also it became very clear to me that as I progressed in my riding, I realized how much more there is to learn. I continued forward and after 25 years of hard work, Escondido finally carried me to the ride at Grand Prix that I needed to achieve the required score of 60%. The dream of the USDF Gold Medal for Rider Accomplishment was mine!

You may think that I am a very slow learner!! Well, there were thousands of hours without stirrups, thousands of lessons, traveling all over the east coast, 8 different horses to train and one horse I bought just to learn how to ride and teach a flying change. All this was needed to achieve a dream and an answer to a goal that had been set, written down and worked for.

After the final ride on Escondido I quit riding seriously and focused on enjoying this wonderful life time sport. Years passed and many more horses have come and gone. I almost hung up my stirrups and then along came Viktor. Laura and Kris encouraged me to meet this handsome bay. Now, after 6 months of work, a new saddle, and support team we are off to Florida. I am sure Bill is watching just wondering if we will ever learn how to ride!

Laura has been a wonderful inspiration on Vico and it is truly a beautiful thing to watch as they wow the crowds with enthusiasm and talent. Kris has trained Pharaoh to the Prix St. George level. This alone is an accomplishment of years of dedication and training. Now we need more lessons and focus time. Florida opens up all kinds of windows of opportunity to watch, learn new challenges and ride with the best. Visit the website for the Poulin Family at Michael Poulin Dressage and you will see where we are studying this year.

We will end the week with a show in Jacksonville and then home to share with all dressage enthusiasts the exhilaration of Florida.

Traveling and showing gives the opportunity to see how you compare with a group outside your old playing field and gives good quality horse and friend time. Next year we hope you can come, ride or just observe and open up new doors of opportunity.

We will return on April 6.

----Thank you, Caroline



This Month's "Must Read"

This article was recently published in the April, 2008 "Practical Horseman" magazine. It was written by Melissa Page Marshall who is an environmental lawyer in Washington, DC. "Bozo" taught her to ride!!! This should ring true in every student at MacNair's who has come up through our program. Enjoy!!

"Portrait of a School Pony"

No one knows how old he really is. He is not a horse who ever had papers. He arrived at Shadybrook Stables in McLean, Virginia, at least 30 years ago. He was probably 3, and his coat was still a luxurious black. The kids at the hunter stable named him "Bozo" after a then hugely popular TV and cartoon clown. He taught them, and eventually their children to ride.

You would not guess it now, looking at his sagging back and arthritic walk, but Bozo had a wild side in his youth. As the late Jim Moss (then owner of Shadybrook) said, "Good school ponies can't be bought, you have to make them." Bozo was quick to learn, and though three decades, he was the school pony every student wanted to ride. (Beginners were usually assigned someone else on days when a stiff wind was blowing, however; Bozo viewed this as an excuse for little spooks.)

Breed? "A little of this, a little of that," was Jim's description. Solidly built and technically small-horse size at about 15 hands, Bozo easily carried both children and adults. He never wore shoes and in living memory he never had his coat clipped or his mane pulled. He never wore a blanket until his 30's. He never had a box stall until this year, and he strongly objects to it.

Soundness combined with attitude make a good school horse, and Bozo's heart of gold has always been highly tolerant of human error. It was almost impossible for beginners to fall off of him. He had a great knack for moving underneath unbalanced riders, keeping them in the saddle.

"Bozo was the first pony I ever rode, and he was perfect," remembers Alex Santoli, a hunter rider for over 20 years. "He had energy, but he was also really safe: He wouldn't take off on you. You could tell he loved what he did and was having fun."

For Shadybrook instructor Pam McAfee, who used Bozo in lessons for 15 years, he was always the ultimate for teaching the canter to a student who lacked the confidence because Bozo would not actually canter unless firmly pressed into the task (and then only on the left lead). Instead, he did the “Bozo Shuffle,” cantering in front while his back end trotted to keep up. “Because his shoulders were cantering, students had the sensation of canter, but it was not as fast or as powerful as a united canter,” Pam explains. It was Bozo’s idiosyncrasy that he never, to anyone’s recollection, picked up a right-lead canter.

Although Bozo had no equal as a school pony, he did not lack character. With the able assistance of his small-pony sidekick, Little Man, he found and exploited any weak spot in the stable’s perimeter fence. He made it perfectly clear to the other geldings who were his own, very special mares. Unlike every other Shadybrook horse and pony, for more than 30 years Bozo simply refused to stand at the fence to be saddled and bridled. Unless held, he would just drift away.

Bozo was so beloved that it could be difficult to wean students off him when they were ready to advance in their riding. At barn shows, every young rider tearfully demanded to be the one to ride him. But every school pony eventually grows old, and so did Bozo. His arthritis worsened and his teeth wore down. At some point in a lesson class he might decide he had done enough and simply stop. He colicked for the first time ever.

Pam had always said that when it came time for Bozo to retire she would take him home with her, and she was true to her word. This past summer, he moved to her farm in Leesburg, Virginia, where she cares for other retirees. When he was released in the big pasture, Bozo looked around-and then picked up a perfect right-lead canter.



Hunter/Jumper Corner

Check out the Horse Shows bulletin board and see the photographs from the "Chronicle of The Horse" Horse Show Issue of this year's EHA championship winners. You'll see some very familiar riders!

A reminder to everyone that Holly Hugo-Vidal will be here Saturday and Sunday, May 3rd and 4th. For a hunter/jumper/equitation rider, Holly's expertise is an invaluable tool---a set of "fresh" eyes belonging to someone with Holly's knowledge and background will help even the most confident rider to do something better. Holly will be doing private and semi-private sessions this year, offering more individual assistance. Contact Melanie for more information.

Hunter/Jumper Show News

The EHA show season has started.

We started our EHA show year on March 8 and 9 in Williamston with a small but successful contingency from MacNair's. Congratulations to Devney and Carly Hoft showing new horses Nickolas and Willy Wonka, Jenna Cameron and Snowball and Colleen Sheridan and Levi. Even though a small group, MacNair's made its mark with both Champion and Reserve Champions and lots of great ribbons. Our next show will be on April 12 at MacNair's and after that on May 31 and June 1 back in Williamston. Come join us at the shows!

Triangle Farms "C" shows

Our H/J riders just completed the third of the Triangle Farms 2008 C Show series with much success. At the January Show Colleen Sheridan and Levi scored 2nd and 3rd in the Children's Equitation and had great rounds in the Children's Hunters. Louise Price on "T", Drake Driscoll on Georgie, and Meredith Medlin on Pica all had outstanding rounds and good ribbons in the Pre-Children's hunters and equitation. Meredith Sitze and Sweetie brought home the Small/Medium pony championship on both days. Carly Hoft showed Breyer in Young Entry and got good ribbons, including a 1st and a 2nd on Sunday.

At the February show, Leigh Sizemore showed Dante in the Adult Hunters and had solid results. Colleen and Levi continued to do well in the Children's hunters and equitation and Drake and Georgie took more steps towards getting to know each other in the pre-children's classes. Jenna Cameron and Snowball got great ribbons both days, including 3 firsts on Saturday. Haley Gintis and Kirby did the Pony Hunters and won the under saddle.

In March, Leigh Sizemore won the Adult Equitation medal on Dante in a tough class. Katie Hall and Warron joined us at this show and had a great time in the Adults as well. Louise and T got top 5 ribbons in every class in the Pre-Children's hunters and equitation, including a blue. Drake and Georgie scored a solid prize in every class. Haley and Kirby had good rounds over fences and were third in the under saddle in the Pony hunters on Sunday. On Saturday, Meredith and Sweetie were champions again in Ponies and Meredith won the 11 & under equitation over fences.

"A" shows

February saw the MacNair's contingent back at the Fairgrounds for the Winter II A Show. Bryan Rosenberg and Character made their 3' debut in the Adult Amateurs and got ribbons in every class. Drake Driscoll and Georgie won the under saddle in the pre-children's division and got ribbons in each over fences class. Drake also won the flat equitation. Sally Henry and Tucker, true hunter/jumper competitors, finished first and third in the Level II jumpers, 3rd and 4th in the 12-14 equitation, and got solid ribbons in the Children's hunters! Over in the pony ring, Meredith Sitze and Sweetie were reserve champion in their first rated Medium Pony division and Meredith finished 4th in the WIHS pony medal and the USEF Pony Medal. Tory Hoft and TK finished in the top 3 in three of the Medium Pony Hunter classes and Tory was 6th in the USEF Pony Medal. Haley Gintis and Kirby were 5th and 6th in a tough Large Pony division. Kendall Foster and Sputnik were Champion in the Green Ponies and Kendall finished 3rd in the USEF Pony Medal.

At the Triangle Farms Spring Classic "A" Show, our riders were phenomenal, especially in the Equitation divisions. Meredith Sitze won the USEF Pony Medal and Tory Hoft was 8th in that tough class, which combines riders from all three pony divisions. Haley Gintis had a good round in that class, too, but had a little trouble with the trot fence, otherwise would have been in the ribbons. Meredith was 3rd in the NCHJA pony medal. Sally Henry won the 12-17 flat equitation and finished 2nd in the over fences, which made her the Triangle Farms Winter A Circuit champion in that division. She also finished 7th in the SCHJA Governor's Cup, which was huge. Devney Hoft won the THIS National

Children's Medal and finished 8th in the Governor's Cup. And Drake Driscoll won the Pre-Children's flat equitation and was 4th in the over fences. WOW, girls---congratulations.

In the pony hunter ring, things were good, too, with Meredith and Sweetie taking the Medium Pony championship. (They now join Kendall Foster and Sputnik as having qualified for Pony Finals in August.) Tory and TK ribboned in the mediums, and Tory showed Willie Wonka in the Small Pony division on Friday and got ribbons in all but one class. Haley and Kirby ribboned in the Larges.

Our horses were on a roll, too, with Georgie and Drake winning the hunter warmup Sunday and getting top 5 ribbons in every Pre-Children's class, including two second places. Katie Hall and Warron did the Younger Adult Hunters and finished 8th in the Classic. And Sally Henry and Tucker ribboned in the Children's hunters and finished 9th in the Classic.

Our A riders are home for a while, heading out to Aiken, SC in mid-April for their next adventure.

Photos by Anya McGuirk





The Clover Corner: MacNair's 4H News

The 4-H club has been keeping busy with many activities, clinics, Hippology, and service events. On February 23, we did a service project of giving the school horses a good grooming. We will repeat this service project on April 2 followed by a pizza party and a holiday horse lease. On the 2nd of April we will also clean tack and weigh each pony.

We are excited to make each meeting more interesting by adding educational speakers and games. On March 6, we had three students from the NC State veterinary program come and talk about the body condition of horses. The members split up into three groups and worked together to determine the body condition score of three different horses. This was a great hands-on activity for each member to get a feel for what the proper weight for each horse should be.

Achievement night was held on March 15 to recognize 4-H members and volunteers who went above and beyond the call of duty and members accomplishments for 2007. We are happy to congratulate all of our 4-H members who were recognized at this event. Nancy was awarded Volunteer Leader of the Year and was recognized for being the Wake County 4-H vice president from 2005-2007. Caity Caggia won first place in the 9-10 yr age group for record books and Lauren Clements won sixth place in the 13-15 yr age group for record books. Congratulations to everyone who was recognized and thank you to all members for their hard work in 2007!

On March 21 the 4-H group will be attending the Lipizzaner stallions in Greensboro as a social event. We are excited to see these beautiful stallions in action at the coliseum. We are planning a scrap booking party for another social event on March 28, directions to the event will be emailed closer to the date.

Congratulations to new show team members! The new members are: Mary Copeland Cain, Emma Elsea, Lauren Clements, Laura Barkley, Jaime Fordham, Sarah Bass, Lila Miller, Lizzy Kane, Caity Caggia, Ruth Huggins, Taylor Steinmeyer, Mariah Fennel, Kara Wilcox. We are excited for the coming show season and wish you all good luck! Our first show will be the EHA show on April 12.

We would also like to congratulate all of the Hippology and Horse Bowl team members for their hard work this year. Junior Team members for Horse Bowl include: Jessica Mohr, Caity Caggia, Sarah Bass, Jaime Fordham, Laura

Barkley, Olivia Chason, Mary Copeland Cain, and Lila Miller. Mixed Team members for horse bowl include: Lauren Clements, Lizzy Cain, Kara Wilcox, and Samantha Doughty. Congratulations to the following Horse Bowl members for winning 5th place horse bowl in February: Jessica Mohr, Caity Caggia, Sarah Bass, and Jaime Fordham. We would also like to congratulate all of the Hippology team members for all their hard work and testing on March 8. The members of Hippology include: Olivia Chason, Laura Barkley, Mary Copeland Cain, Lila Miller, Jaime Fordham, Jessica Mohr, Caity Caggia, Sarah Bass, Samantha Doughty, Emma Elsea and Lauren Clements. Hippology and Horse Bowl requires a lot of hard work and practice. Thank you to the members of these teams for your hard work and dedication.

In April we will be doing many service projects. These projects include collecting clothing for the N.C. Children's Hospital, and collecting and mailing supplies for soldiers over seas. Please keep checking your email for updates about service projects, social events, clinics and any other activities and dates.

When I am an old horsewoman

I shall wear turquoise and diamonds, and a straw hat that doesn't suit me.

And I shall spend my social security on white wine and carrots, and sit in the alleyway of my barn and listen to my horses breathe.

I will sneak out in the middle of a summer night and ride the old bay gelding across the moonstruck meadow if my old bones will allow

And when people come to call, I will smile and nod as I walk past the gardens to the barn and show instead the flowers growing inside stalls fresh-lined with straw.

I will shovel and sweat and wear hay in my hair as if it were a jewel.

And I will be an embarrassment to all who will not yet have found the peace in being free to have a horse as a best friend---A friend who waits at midnight hour with muzzle and nicker and patient eyes,

For the kind of woman I will be when I am old.

---anonymous