

A VOICE FROM THE WOODS

Alexandra Layos

The snow is falling both in Missouri and here at home in Pennsylvania. I am home for winter break, and as it's my senior year, the semester literally flew by me like it never has before. I graduate in the spring, and hopefully next semester will go by just a bit slower so I can savor it.

I will leave William Woods University in the spring, but "saddle seat land," as we call it at WWU, lost some good students from our senior class during December commencement, including a girl named Terra Schroeder.

Schroeder always impressed me; we came in together my freshman year, and while we were never exceptionally close, I always admired her for her ambition. She is the kind of person who takes every opportunity presented to her and wrings every last ounce of knowledge out of anyone she meets.

Now having graduated, I'm sure she will continue to display this thirst for knowledge no matter where she goes in life. And though it may surprise some people who know her, at the moment "where she goes" (in the mornings at least) is not to a barn.

Schroeder has been riding all of her life. She grew up competing in 4-H, mostly in speed events like barrel racing and rodeo. In high school she wanted to expand her horizons and started taking lessons for a bunch of different things, including dressage, jumping, working cow horse...and saddle seat.

"Coming to WWU," Schroeder said, "I had a pretty wide background; a little of everything but not a lot of anything."

Schroeder chose WWU mainly because they offered all four disciplines and she wanted to get more experience in each of them. She also wanted a school that competed on the "A" circuit, not with an intercollegiate team. And of course, she wanted something that had saddle seat.

"I wanted to do more with that because I had really enjoyed what I had learned so far. Most schools don't offer it. It was a good opportunity to make new connections in the industry," said Schroeder.

She took saddle seat during her first two years at WWU, then took hunt seat all of her junior year and western her last semester.

"What I really enjoyed about William Woods was the variety offered in riding and the fact that you get to meet people from all across the country with different backgrounds. There were so many opportunities to learn new things. We had all sorts of clinics with different trainers and instructors, and we also hosted clinics for outside groups, like the USEF judge's clinic my sophomore year. Also, the location was great; it's right in the middle of everything, and there were so many nearby shows. And I went to all of them!" said Schroeder.

Schroeder feels that riding so many different disciplines has helped her overall as a rider.

"I think you can learn a lot from each different seat and apply it to whatever you're doing next. A horse is a horse; you can always use that information on the next horse you ride, no matter what the seat," she said.

Schroeder came to WWU with the plan of being a trainer—she's always known that she wanted to work with horses and have them in her life. However, she didn't feel that going right into that field was her best option at the moment, so upon graduation she took a job at the United States Equestrian Federation as a representative in the Breeds and Western Division.

"It's only day three but so far it has been about what I expected it to be. The people at the USEF office have been wonderful and made me feel very welcome in my new environment," said Schroeder. "I like the potential of working for an organization that makes such an impact on the direction of the horse industry."

Schroeder feels that her job at the USEF was a good match for education at WWU. While in school she double majored in Equestrian Science and Business Administration, and she has found both of these majors very useful.

"WWU also gives students the opportunity to experience a variety of seats, both through riding classes and simply by interacting with others in disciplines besides their own. This has helped me a lot in my career at USEF since the association deals with so many breeds and disciplines," said Schroeder.

Anyone who has known Schroeder would probably say that her motto in life is "learn from anyone who is willing to teach you." She's doing it now at USEF and she did it throughout all of her years at school, from the time she was a freshman.

"As a freshman I always enjoyed

holding horses for the farrier at school (Bill McDonald) because he and his assistant were so fun and so willing to teach those who wanted to learn," said Schroeder. "I would always ask why they were shoeing a horse a certain way or what they might do to improve a horse's way of going. By showing that interest, which could do nothing but improve my own base of skills, Bill began to teach me some of the basics of horse shoeing."

Eventually Schroeder learned how to pull shoes, cut pads, trim feet, draw out toe clips on the forge, and eventually nail shoes back on with assistance. Her one regret is that by her junior and senior years she was spending so much time off-campus at shows or other events that she didn't have enough time to reach her goal of learning how to completely forge her own horse shoe and nail it on by herself.

"But it was an opportunity cost of other experiences," said Schroeder.

During her last three years of school, Schroeder took on a work study job as office assistant to associate professor of equestrian science, Laura Ward.

"I got the position mostly because my freshman year I would always hang out in her office and see if she needed help with anything in the barn. While a lot of time was spent researching items on e-bay or observing the behavioral habits of her cats, I did get to be behind the scenes for many of the events that took place at school," said Schroeder.

"My time with Laura is just about the only office experience I had walking into USEF but I am still amazed at how many of the little projects she had me work on transferred right on over to my new career but on a much larger scale. Interestingly enough, my current boss is a former WWU graduate who worked for Laura while she was in school. Just another reminder of how you never know how one connection may lead to another."

Every spring and fall semester equine photographer extraordinaire, Avis Girdler comes to WWU to take pictures of students with their favorite horses, pets, and friends. Schroeder was introduced to her during her freshman year and ended up helping her out at these photo shoots by recording all the pictures that were taken, positioning people, and getting horse's ears up. Later on she would schedule the dates she came, post flyers, organize the sign-up list for students, and distribute the pictures to students when they arrived.

"I learned about the equine photog-

raphy industry, about which I had previously known nothing, and I made another connection that has helped me tremendously, both in acquiring jobs and in everyday life," said Schroeder.

The other thing about Terra Schroeder that amazed us all was that she was game for anything. One year she flew from Missouri to West Springfield, Mass., to act as assistant to horse show secretary Sandy Backer during Octoberfest.

"As her assistant I saw a glimpse of what it takes to run a horse show and how much time, energy, and patience is spent on behalf of show management to give the exhibitors the opportunity to compete," said Schroeder. "It is truly a testament of the dedication the individuals who put on shows have to the industry when you look at all of the problems they have to deal with. Exhibitors should remember when they enter the show office that while they may have one serious problem they are trying to resolve, management has your problem plus the problems of every other exhibitor, trainer, parent, official, vendor, organization, show ground, etc., on top of actually running the show. Be patient, speak gently, and don't complain about free candy."

During her time at WWU, Schroeder also groomed for riders during the World Cup Invitational and the World Cup Trials, and spent much time helping WWU barn manager Mike Wessel prepare his own personal colts for competition at the American Royal.

Each summer during college was spent at a different barn, and over the past few years she has worked in some manner, whether during the summer or at a specific show, for Alliance Stud, Chrisan Park, Genesis Training Center, Keisner Training, Mace Stables, Mark Hulse Stables, Lowry Stables, Queenwood Stables, Royal Crest Farms, and Wolfstone Stables, a show jumping stable in West Palm Beach, Fla.

She has groomed at nearly every large saddle seat show: the World's Championships, the American Royal, Lexington Junior League, Morgan Grand Nationals, U.S. Arabian Nationals, National Show Horse Finals, and shows such as Rock Creek, Shelbyville, Midwest Charity, Indianapolis Charity, MHSA Kickoff and UPHA Chapter V.

Schroeder thoroughly enjoyed her time at WWU, and has many memories from her three and a half years there. Her favorite memory though, is a toss up between listening to Ms. Lampe's annual Thanksgiving turkey gobble over the

arena microphone, and watching Ms. Lampe do the Macarena.

Schroeder has much advice for anyone considering attending WWU for the equestrian science program.

"Take every opportunity that's given to you because you never know how it may help you later on. Do everything you can and do as much as you can. Even if it doesn't relate exactly to why you're there, just be open to the experience. You'll learn so much from doing that, both in and out of classroom.

"Just like anything else in life, the experience is only what you make of it and you will only get out of that experience what you put into it. Don't limit yourself. Be open to new ideas and ask questions about everything you see before you decide if it is right or wrong. Try to look at each conflict from the other person's perspective and honestly try to understand why they act the way they do before you judge their actions. Learn something from every person you meet. Act in a way that others have only good things to say about you because

you never know where your next job offer may come from and everyone in the industry talks."

Finally, Schroeder believes that, like Milton wrote, "the mind is its own place and in itself can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven."

"It doesn't matter where you go or what you do as long as you decide to be happy and make the most of everything," said Schroeder. "People have proven over and over again that they can make themselves miserable anywhere, regardless of all of the good things that are around them. When this happens, the natural excuse is to blame others for their own misfortune in an effort to evade the responsibility of taking control of your own life and just making it work. You can be happy in any situation so long as you keep everything in perspective and learn from both the good and the bad."

That's all for this month. Until next time, "*May all your days be blue ribbon ones!*"

New Two Day Show in central Indiana March 21-22

The Indiana American Saddlebred Horse Association and UPHA Chapter 11 are pleased to announce a new show for central Indiana in 2009.

The "Spring-Warm-Up" will kick off the Midwest show season March 21-22 at the Crossroads USA Arena and Expo Center, a new, heated, indoor show facility only 25 miles west of Indianapolis. This new venue offers 500 stalls, large show arena, full size make-up ring, seating area, ringside tables, concessions and vendor space under one roof. Crossroads Arena is conveniently located 30 minutes west of Indy, at the I-70/Cloverdale exit, adjacent to hotels and restaurants. Holiday Inn Cloverdale will be the headquarters hotel.

The Spring Warm-Up will provide Midwestern exhibitors with a venue to try out new teams as well as test seasoned veterans for the new show season at a grassroots, affordable event. Noted horsewoman Melissa Moore has been tapped to judge all divisions. Photographer Terry Young will be snapping the pics. By popular demand, Seahorse Video, which earned high praise for their work at the All American Classic, will be official videographers. Beautiful ribbons and trophies will be awarded in all performance classes.

Offering divisions for Saddlebreds, Morgans, open pleasure, equitation and academy, The Spring Warm-Up will feature:

Saddlebred - Three Gaited, Five Gaited, Fine Harness, Three Gaited Park, Park Pleasure, Show Pleasure, Novice/Alpha Rider, Country Pleasure, Show Pleasure Driving, Country Pleasure Driving, AOT Country Pleasure, S&B Shatner and Hunter Classic

Academy - UPHA Chapter 11 Academy Championships - open to all academy riders - with extensive classes for beginning through advanced riders in saddle seat, hunt seat and western in both pleasure and equitation.

Morgan - English Pleasure, Classic English Pleasure, Hunter Pleasure, Western Pleasure, and Morgan Equitation

Equitation - Open Saddle Seat, Pleasure Equitation, Walk & Trot, UPHA Challenge Cups and Saddle & Bridle Medallion

Open To All Breeds Pleasure - Open English Pleasure, Open Western Pleasure, Walk & Trot Pleasure

Prize lists will be mailed in January. For more information, please contact Show Chairpersons Linda Beltz (317) 844-9703 (neirliho@aol.com) or Claire Panke (317) 331-5451 (clairepanke@yahoo.com) or Academy Chairperson Caroline Boyer (317) 758-5196 (carolineboyer3@gmail.com).

Information is also available at the Indiana Saddlebred Association website www.indianasaddlebred.com.