

A VOICE FROM THE WOODS

Alexandra Layos

William Woods students returned from winter break refreshed and ready to take on the spring semester. Whether it was by partaking in lessons with Burt Honaker, listening to speeches by Redd Crabtree, or preparing for the horse shows this spring, the equestrians have been busy.

On Saturday, February 3, many stu-

his heart was two or three times larger than anyone else's...it got to where he was trying to do, on his own, exactly what we were trying to do."

Asked about his favorite horse, Crabtree said that it was not really possible to favor one over another.

"Often my favorite horses are ones that didn't quite make it, but they tried so hard to do what I asked them to do," he said.

He talked about his training philosophy, and about how he feels you need to start with the fundamentals and spend

lives in Raeford, N.C., served as five-gaited manager.

Bender enjoyed her time in South Africa, immensely.

"My favorite part was riding, of course. The horses we got to use were incredible. The South African team donated their show horses, so we were riding the nicest equitation horses in the country. They were super fancy and really well trained," said Bender.

But besides riding, Bender enjoyed Team Day, when the U.S. Team took a "quad bike," or four-wheeler trip across



Redd Crabtree signs "Saddle Seat Equitation," books, as well as Will Shriver Breyer horses for excited juniors.



Ms. Lampe accepts Fred's award for being initiated into the MHS Lesson Horse Hall of Fame.

dents made their way to the Peachtree Banquet Center in Columbia, Mo., for the annual Missouri Horse Shows Association banquet. Some came to gather awards for the horses they helped to show, and many came to listen to the guest speaker that day, Redd Crabtree.

Crabtree spoke about his life in the saddle horse industry, and gave advice to anyone out there who wants to make a life in that same business, advising them to start early and decide if it's really for them or not.

He also shared the advice he was given from Charles Crabtree, and told everyone that if you want to be a trainer you need to go and work for a variety of other people.

Crabtree shared stories about Will Shriver, Cora's Time, (SA) Zovoorbij Commander In Chief, Chief Of Greystone, and Admiral's Mark.

Of the great Will Shriver he said, "I bet

long hours mastering them.

"I'm still learning how to train horses," he said. "Horses will teach you how to be a horse trainer if you let them."

On February 6-7, Burt Honaker came to visit William Woods, and took over the mike for a few saddle seat riding classes. The chance to learn from a different professional in the industry was enjoyed by all.

While students at William Woods were hard at work taking final exams, three William Woods graduates and the rest of the World Cup Team were hard at work bringing home the gold in Parys, South Africa, December 4-10.

Jamie Bender, a 2006 graduate, overcame a knee injury last spring to make the five-gaited team.

Renee Biggins, who graduated in 1983 and lives in Simpsonville, Ky., served as three-gaited coach, and Liz McBride Jones, a 1975 graduate who

the countryside.

"We got so dirty!" said Bender.

"I didn't realize how dirty we were until we stopped at a cheetah breeding project, run by this nice couple. We got to play with and pet the cheetahs and this big male cheetah started licking my arm and made a white spot on it," laughed Bender.

Bender also got the opportunity to go on a safari by elephant back.

Though there were many other activities to enjoy, in the end they were there for the horses.

According to Bender, the South African horses are only slightly different from our American horses. They move a little bit different, and they don't emphasize the trot as much as Americans do, so the horses don't have as much motion at the trot.

Yet, Bender said that they are "hardy and very talented," and they have to be

because the classes are extremely long.

"We must have trotted around seven times the first direction, and the arena is the size of a football field," said Bender.

Bender also noted that their horses are not nearly as pampered and spoiled as our American show horses.

However, Bender learned a lot more from her time in South Africa than the difference between saddle horses. She learned a lot about herself, as well.

"I learned to appreciate what I have. Seventy five percent of the country is in poverty. It really made me appreciate everything I have and everything I've ever gotten," said Bender. "I was expecting to see poverty, but not expecting the magnitude of what I saw."

Bender may not have been prepared to see the country's poverty, but as far as the riding goes, she went into the competition feeling very prepared.

"Lynda [Freseth] did an amazing job of preparing us," said Bender, speaking of the five-gaited team coach. "We were ready for anything that came our way."

Along with the excellent riders, dedicated coaches and managers, and supportive families, Bender also feels that William Woods played a role in both teams "bringing home the gold."

"William Woods provides the venue and resources to hold tryouts like that," Bender explained, speaking of the World Cup Trials held March 17-19 at William Woods.

"The way they organized it allows the best team to be selected. Indirectly that contributed to the gold medals, by helping gather the strongest team possible."

In the end, the whole experience was one Bender will remember forever.

"I had a fabulous time and I would go back to South Africa in a heartbeat," said Bender.

Yes, William Woods turns out some great saddle seat riders, some of whom go on to participate in international competitions. But William Woods also introduces people to the discipline who have never sat astride a saddle horse.

Colleen Werner, a junior from Virginville, Penn., has been riding Arabians since she was nine years old.



Colleen Werner leads *Our Spittin' Image* to the arena for a ride.

She took lessons on a weekly basis and started showing on the A circuit when she was 12 years old. She showed mostly hunter pleasure and western pleasure, and also did showmanship and some halter classes.

Since Arabians are a breed that is routinely used for saddle seat, Werner had seen saddle seat horses perform, and thought it looked "exhilarating and fun."

But since there were no saddle seat horses at her own barn, the opportunity to ride one never arose. That is, until she came to William Woods.

At William Woods equestrian science majors are required to try two seats outside of their own concentration. Werner's concentration is western, but this semester she is enrolled in a saddle seat riding class, with other riders mostly from hunter/jumper and western land. Werner chose to take saddle seat because of her future goals.

"I think it's an important part of the Arabian horse industry and since I would like to be a trainer, I think it's important to make yourself marketable by being well rounded in all seats," said Werner.

"My experience has been a pleasant one. The horses are so powerful. It's a whole different feel from what I'm used to. Riding saddle seat I can feel the horse in my hands a lot more, just because you have to ride them on a lot more contact than our western pleasure horses. It reinforces the importance of using your seat to keep your horse in the bridle."

Since Werner came from an Arabian background, and the William Woods western program is filled mostly with stock horses, Werner says that she is enjoying being back on saddle-type horses again...even if it is in a different seat!

"Riding another seat humbles you," said Werner. "Everyone in my class is considered more than proficient in their own seat. It takes you back to the days of learning to ride again because there are so many new aspects that you need to learn. It's a very humbling experience for people who are used to being good."

Werner feels that riding different seats and under different instructors is the best way to improve your own riding ability.

"I think it is important for everyone because we have the

opportunity to ride with trainers who are respected in their discipline, and anyone who wants to be a good horseperson should take advantage of any opportunity that comes their way. I don't see how anyone could be anything but positive about expanding his or her knowledge. You need to take the best aspects of everyone you learn from, and mold it into what works best for you as an individual rider."

Katie Watson, a senior saddle seat rider from Indianapolis, Ind., is spending the semester riding hunter/jumpers. She has been riding since she was nine years old, but her experience was almost solely in saddle seat until she came to William Woods.

Along with her many saddle seat classes, Watson has already taken two western classes, one of which was an Advanced Western class where she got the chance to work all semester with a three-year-old paint mare named Nia.

"She only had three weeks on her the previous summer and I had never done 'baby' babies. That was quite an experience. It was a very interesting and satisfying experience because a young horse is such a raw product," explained Watson.

Now in hunt seat, Watson feels that she is learning how to be a more flexible rider.

"I have learned to adjust my riding to a different kind of horse that is lower headed and moves a little different and

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cats, Millie, Nutty, and Harley. Brittany is currently in 10th grade and her favorite subject is English. Her favorite color is red and Saddlebreds are Brittany's favorite breed. Other than riding, Brittany enjoys horse photography. Brittany has been riding for eight years and now trains with Linda Coffen and Joe at J&J Farms. She rides saddle seat on her horse Windracer, nicknamed Jake. Jake is a chestnut Saddlebred, and Brittany's best friend. In this upcoming show season, Brittany and Jake want to have lots of fun! Brittany also mentioned to us that her family has been riding Saddlebreds for over 20 years! Keep the tradition going Brittany. Thank you and Good Luck this year!

Katie and I recently attended the Pennsylvania Saddlebred Horse Association (PSHA) High Point Awards banquet. As always it was a fun-filled time for friends to reminisce about the past show season and talk about the next one. The banquet was held at the Holiday Inn in Fogelsville, Penn., on January 21. The banquet began with a social hour so everyone could mingle, buy Chinese Auction or 50/50 raffle tickets, or relax and enjoy the slide show that Steve Custer put together. Then at 2:00 the banquet officially kicked-off with a few words from Curt Melick, the president of PSHA. Next brunch was served and everyone had last minute chances to buy tickets. Following brunch the high point awards were presented and the banquet continued on with the live auction, Chinese auction, and 50/50 drawing. Congratulations to everyone who showed in the 2006 show season, we hope to see you this year too!

This past summer I had the privilege of visiting the Kentucky Horse Park. While I was there I was able to visit the Saddlebred Museum. On the sidewalk outside of the building there are donated bricks inscribed with horses' names on them. Before leaving on this trip I had received an idea to contact the owners of some of the horses and interview them. So I wrote down some of the horses' names that were chosen at random. In future issues I will put in the responses of the owners of these horses. Also in upcoming issues, we will be reporting on the New Holland Auction the Horse World Expo, and saddle seat attire.

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has a different mentality, but it is just as fun as any saddle horse. I have learned to listen even better to what a horse is telling me: if I've got too much hold of the bridle, if I need to use more leg or more clucking, etc.," said Watson.

Watson feels that riding hunt seat has helped her in other ways, too.

"I think my balance has gotten better and my leg is definitely stronger as well. Also, in hunt seat it is so important to plan ahead and look ahead to set your horse up for the next obstacle," said Watson.

Watson feels that anything a rider can do to improve their ability as a horse person is a good idea, and that includes learning from other seats.

"The better a rider can learn to communicate with a horse and the better a rider can learn to listen to a horse is always a great thing," Watson said.

Both Watson and Werner would like to thank the William Woods riding instructors, Gayle Lampe, Jennie Petterson, Linda McClaren, and Karen Pautz for all of the opportunities they've been given in riding class.

That's all for this month. Check back soon for the latest happenings "from the Woods."

Also, please don't forget to help us honor the memory of Fred, Ms. Lampe's personal horse who spent 22 years teaching students at William Woods.

At the aforementioned Missouri Horse Shows Association Banquet, Fred was inducted into the MHS Lesson Horse Hall of Fame. He taught many of the professional horse trainers in the saddle seat world, as well as in the dressage, hunt seat and western worlds. We said goodbye to Fred on May 20, but he will never be forgotten.

Donations will go toward a brick in the Saddlebred walkway at the American Saddlebred Museum, and a new exhibit in honor of Fred, encouraging young people to get involved in American Saddlebreds.

Check donations in Fred's memory should be made payable to Katina Layos, and in the memo it should be noted for the "Candlewick of Hearthstone Fund."

Donations may be sent to: Bank Star One, 118 West 5th Street, PO Box 638, Fulton, MO 65251. On the back of the check, please write: For Deposit Only in # 490581. William Woods University is also working on a fund in Fred's honor. All donations will benefit the equestrian program at WWU, to which Fred dedicated his life.

Until next time, "May all your days be blue ribbon ones!"

Melinda Moore to Judge Des Moines Springfest

Des Moines Springfest is pleased to announce Melinda Moore, Harrodsburg, Ky., as our 2007 judge. Springfest is scheduled for April 26 - 29 at the historic Iowa State Fairgrounds, Des Moines, Ia. It is our 10th anniversary show! We are planning a new appetizer party on Thursday evening in addition to your favorite hospitality events! Our exhibitor party at Diamond Jack's will again feature live music. Come celebrate with us!

Springfest is hosting a silent auction for the benefit of Blank Children's Hospital. All proceeds will go directly to the Regional Child Protection Center at Blank for the programs benefitting drug affected babies and children. If you or your company would like to donate an item for the auction please contact susanaschenbrenner@hotmail.com (515-278-2714). Items valued at \$150 or more will receive a page of advertising in the show program. Ad copy must be received by April 2. During our nine years Springfest has donated more than \$50,000 to this wonderful charity.

Iowa Horse Shows Association is pleased to announce the Iowa Equitation Challenge! Junior Exhibitors age 17 and under are eligible to compete for this \$1,000 scholarship. Riders must be a current junior member of Iowa Horse Shows Association and must also show and place in Saddle Seat or Pleasure Equitation classes at three IHSA accredited shows in the state of Iowa. IHSA membership forms and registration forms and rules will be available in the show office at Springfest. Membership forms are also available from Deanne Mundt - Deannesue@aol.com. Finals will be held at the Iowa Fall Classic Horse Show, Sept. 14 -16, 2007 at the Iowa Equestrian Center, Cedar Rapids, Ia.