

EVENTING MAKES A SPLASH

Kaiti Saunders, Area Chair

Welcome to August! What an exciting time for Area II: our young riders team was showered in gold medals at the North American Junior & Young Rider Championships last month and USA's World Equestrian Games team (well-stocked with Area II riders!) is looking for the same next week in France.

Meanwhile eventers throughout the Area are enjoying this lovely summer weather. The calendar seems full with great summer competitions, as well as schooling opportunities, summer camps, and hunter paces. Recognized eventing hasn't stopped either, and it's been fun to catch up with Area II eventers at successful outings this summer across the area, including Waredaca, Olney, and Plantation. We're so lucky to have great volunteers that help

make these events run smoothly. Special thanks also to the Area II YRAP kids and families, led by Chris Donovan's tireless efforts, who did a super job running the parking at Maryland HT.

Eventers are also supporting causes outside of horses and finding another use for ice



Crosby takes on the ice bucket challenge

besides the vet box! Everywhere I look there's another eventer doing the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge, a campaign to raise

awareness of and fundraising in support of a cure for this fatal disease (the challenge is near and dear to my heart, as my father had ALS). So far, I've seen US Eventing's CEO Jo Whitehouse and USEA President Diane Pitts, Eventing Nation's John Thier, and eventers Meg Kepferle, Jon Holling and Jennie Brannigan - who dunked her entire body into

STAY IN TOUCH

Keep up with all of the WEG news with USEF and USEA! Links to news, interviews, videos, and event results are available at USEA's Twitter account at:

<http://twitter.com/USEventing>

and at USEF's eventing high performance Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/LandRoverUSEventingTeam>

the ice-cold EquiSpa! What a great campaign and so fun to see eventers bring our particular brand of good-sport-go-for-it-ness to this challenge. If you'd like to participate, more information is at <http://www.alsa.org/fight-als/ice-bucket-challenge.html>.

This month's Optimum Times brings some fabulous new contributors. Maria Holman has a neat profile on a local eventer who conquered an eventing goal and Seema Sonnad reflects on some of our Area II eventing legends. Plus, we've got updates on our Area II programs and events and fun photographs from around the Area.

From all of us at Area II, we hope you're having a wonderful summer!

-Kaiti

ADULT RIDERS

By Donna Bottner

There are a lot of Adult Rider events coming up soon. Don't miss out!

Upcoming team competition at ESDCTA HT Oct 4-5 and The Event at Kelly's Ford, Oct 18th.

Contact competition secretaries for more info and to get on a team. The rules are pretty flexible for team participation in the friendly events and you get a chance to meet other adult riders, get a team placing ribbon and bragging rights all in the same great weekend!

National ATC's: We are sending a couple of teams to the National Adult Team Championship held at the AEC's in Texas Rose Horse Park this year. There will be special adult rider sponsored socials, gift bags and excellent prizes. On top of all that, there may be vouchers available to help defray traveling costs for our adult rider members. Be sure to contact Donna if you are planning to go on a team. Not sure about traveling to Texas?? Think about sharing a ride for you and your horse! The USEA has put together some great tips for you and there is a podcast by Cindy DePorter and Robert Kellerhouse to help you figure out logistics. They're all right here:
<http://useventing.com/news/lower-cost-lower-stress-pro-tips-traveling-aecatcgold-cup-final>



Adult Riders Sally Muncy, Foy Barksdale, and Barb Culbert share the fun at a prior Adult Team Championship

and <http://useventing.com/news/podcast-aec-adult-team-champs-cindy-deporter-robert-kellerhouse>

Win free passes to Rolex!

Keep your calendars marked for the Training and Novice 3-Day, Oct 23-26. We always need lots of volunteers to make this a great event, so please make time to support us. Leading up to the 3-day is our annual silent auction and this year we have an easy way for you to score free passes to the 2015 Rolex Kentucky event. We need donations to auction in late September/early October for our silent auction. The persons bringing in the highest number of items for the auction will get two sets of passes for the 2015 Rolex Kentucky event. We'd like to thank the folks who run Rolex

Kentucky for their generous sponsorship of the Area 2 Adult Riders. Now, get busy getting those donations together! It can be any new horse product, tack or clothing item, wine baskets, horse trials entries, XC schooling, instruction or whatever your imagination can come up with that will bring in more money for the silent auction. Contact Donna at drbottner@gmail.com for questions and instructions on where to mail your items.

Area 2 ATC at VAHT: Yes, back by popular demand is the formal Adult Team Challenge at the VAHT Fall event Oct 31-Nov 2. This will be a formal ATC as it has been run in past years as the Eastern ATC. Teams from BN thru Prelim. Stay tuned for details and entry instructions, but plan to be

there to help VAHT celebrate their 25th Anniversary celebration and Area Championships.

Adult Rider Communications:

We send out emails to the list of paid members and try to keep it to a minimum (even though sometimes we do get carried away). We have a Facebook

page, (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/area2ar/>) to help you connect with other adult riders and get details on official Area 2 Adult Rider events. There is also an adult rider Yahoo chat group to keep in touch if you don't find Facebook is for you; to join the

group go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/area2/join>. For those interested in advertising clinics, tack or horses for sale etc, there is a Facebook page called the Adult Riders Swap Shop at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Area.2.Adult.Riders/>

YRAP

By Chris Donovan

June and July are some of the busiest months for YRAP as we close out the spring and summer and make preparations for the fall.

For our Training Level YRAP members we have three main remaining projects for 2014: participating in the PRO Scholarship, the Charles Owen Technical Merit award, and the Waredaca Training 3-Day.

The Triple Crown Junior Young Rider PRO Scholarship Program focuses on the education and mentorship of juniors and young

riders participating in competitions at the training level. In addition World Equestrian Brands, LLC, a supporting sponsor of the program, will award a full kit of tack to the year-end east coast and west coast leaderboard champions. This includes an Amerigo saddle, girth, leathers and irons, a Vespucci bridle with reins and breastplate, an E.A. Mattes Sheepskin half pad, Equilibrium Products Airlite cross-country boots and Stretch & Flex wraps. The PRO scholarship's

objective is to offer deserving riders, the opportunity to train with a PRO professional based on their merit. The East Coast program took place at Carolina CIC, Surefire, or Millbrook. Five YRAP members tried out for the PRO Scholarship. Jamie Meiss is at the top of the leaderboard with 94 points! The other YRAP riders who participated in the PRO Scholarship included Ameila Bayer, Sofie Lufty, Molly Sherman, and Arielle Aharoni. The score sheet used is very comprehensive (think pony club ratings) and all felt the feedback they received from the judges was very valuable.

For the Cross Border Challenge this summer we traveled to Area 1 to compete at Millbrook HT at the end of July. It was a great opportunity to share ideas between the coordinators, discuss common challenges, and most importantly get to know each other. There was a pizza party on Thursday, and it was great to meet with Tik Maynard,

REMAINING 2014 YRAP EVENTS

Clinic Dates

October 24-26: Waredaca Novice & Training 3Day with YRAP Team Awards

Competition Dates

- 9/20-21: Marlborough H.T. YRAP Ribbons
- 9/27-28: Flora Lea Fall Horse Trials YRAP Ribbons
- 10/23-25: Waredaca Novice & Training 3day with YRAP Team Awards
- 10/31-11/2: Area 2 Championships at Virginia Horse Center YRAP Individual Awards

Unmounted Clinics

- 9/13-14 Seneca Valley Pony Club H.T. Charles Owen Technical Merit Award for Training
- 10/18: Fair Hill International Three-day Event - FEI Show Jumping Building

Kate Chadderton, and Sara Murphy. Buck Davidson and Lynn Symansky also met with the YRs to answer questions about the WEG. There was also a well-attended presentation hosted by PRO about the scholarship. We had 14 YRs and 20 YRAP riders from Area 2 competing on teams at Millbrook, as part of the nearly 80 competitors total participating. Area 2 YRs dominated the upper level teams, just like they did at the NAJYRC and our YRAP individuals were similarly successful.

Education is a big part of what we offer through YRAP, and we had a number of great clinics this summer. In New Jersey there were two clinics with Tik Maynard in June. In Virginia, we offered clinics at Morningside with Lynn Symansky and Skyeler Voss.

Of course, our biggest learning session was WoW Camp held at the NJ Horse Park June 30 – July 3. This year our clinicians were Sinead Halpin, Lynn Symansky, and Hannah Sue Burnett-all of whom are currently in Europe as part of the WEG team. The 31 riders (some with more than one horse) all learned a ton and it was a great tune up for many of our riders headed to the Pony Club Championships. This year cross country day started with a demonstration of the German Training Scale with both Lynn and Sinead riding horses for us. XC day finished up

with an evening 4th of July parade and a fun show that was coordinated with the regional pony club campers. We have taken the feedback received from campers each year and will be incorporating additional changes in 2015 to bring back the Derby and add another dressage lesson into the schedule.

This year was the first time the NAJYRC and Pony Club Championships were held at the same time in Kentucky. A large percentage of our membership is also a member of a local pony club, and we had 65 YRAP members participating in the Pony Club Championships in Eventing, Games, Show Jumping, Dressage, Quiz, and Polocross. In addition to competing, these riders were able to spend free time watching the NAJYRC and cheer on our team. The organizers at the horse park threw a pizza party social which gave us a chance to meet team members from all the disciplines at both championships.

Fundraising is part of all non-profits and YRAP is not an exception. The on-line auction was held June 20-July 2 and YRAP was also at The Maryland Horse Trials July 19-20th parking cars. One of the most exciting items on the auction was the chance to ride the famous mare UN in a private lesson with Jane Sleeper. It was won by 15 year old Gillian

Warner. Gillian was Reserve Champion in Area II last year at JBN and is competing at novice this year (schooling training), and she received her C-3 at Fair Hill in August. We are very grateful to all the donors who contributed to the auction!

Upcoming activities this fall focus on celebrating our successes from the spring. We will be awarding YRAP ribbons at 3 competitions in MD, NJ, and VA. (we did this in the spring in NC) We also have the final Training Level Charles Owen Technical Merit competition at Seneca Valley in September.

We are also gearing up for the Waredaca 3-Day for Novice and Training. This is a major clinic wrapped up into a competition. While it is hosted by the Adult Riders, YRAPs are encouraged to participate and consider this a great year end goal if they are not planning on going to the Area 2 Championships the following weekend. The learning experience at the 3-Day is in itself worth auditing (for free!!) even if you are not competing. Of course we all love to go watch Fair Hill International, and take advantage of the numerous free course walks. In addition, YRAP members are encouraged to “stick around” and help set the FEI show jumping course following XC. Parents get great volunteer parking, and we learn the course from the designer’s point of view.

COME FOR THE CROSS COUNTRY STAY FOR THE PEOPLE

By Seema Sonnad

I'm not the only one who feels this way about eventing. We all love running and jumping cross country. If we didn't, we would pick another sport, but beyond the cross country, what makes eventing special are the people. The riders, the organizers, the volunteers, the officials are all welcoming and willing to go out of their way to help each other. Here in Area II, we are incredibly lucky to have or to have recently lost many people who made making our weekends better and helping us enjoy eventing even more a major part of their lives.

Since this is a "shout out", it seems appropriate to start with the voices behind the events, our super announcers and controllers. We recently lost two of the best, Dick Thompson and Jim Ligon,



Jim Ligon. Photo by The Equiery/Katherine O. Rizzo

but they were fixtures at Maryland, Waredaca, Plantation, Fair Hill and Radnor long before I came to Area II. I had the privilege of working with Dick fairly often and loved his stories of eventers from back in the day to the present time. He also taught

me how to set up and work the electronic scoring system at Fair Hill and several tricks about positioning speakers to cover a course.

Still carrying on is Brian O'Connor, who is not only a great announcer and controller, but could have a second career as a stand-up comic. He has announced at major venues everywhere, including the 2008 Olympic Games and has ridden both real and imaginary horses as part of fundraising efforts for eventers.

How often have we all heard these voices announcing, not only where we are on course, but something special for us. How many times has some special moment on course been announced by them becoming a part of our eventing memory? I don't think I can count.



Dick Thompson (helped here by Marc Donovan) was hands (or foot) on in all aspects of eventing. Photo by Seema Sonnad

We are also blessed to have in Area II, secretary extraordinaire, Mary Coldren. Mary somehow manages to assign functional ride times even when there are 4 riders each riding 5 horses at the same level and remains unflustered through horse changes, rider changes, monsoon storms requiring event rescheduling...She does all this calmly and cheerfully and always makes the riders feel that she is on their side. She really knows most of the riders and what works best for each of them. She is willing to help organize your ride times so it is not too early for your grandmother to drive in and watch or early enough that your trainer can help you before they have to ride their own horses. In addition to being the best secretary ever, Mary is a USEF 'r' TD and has worked in multiple roles at Fair Hill and Plantation after getting her start in the eventing world working for Judy Thayer and volunteering at Radnor.

Judy is another long-time person that we've recently lost. Her work at Radnor and Fair Hill events as well as her teaching and training have touched many in Area II and she will be missed. XC at Fair Hill won't feel the same without Judy there putting the final touches on the courses and assisting through the event. The upper level riders will particularly miss her introduction of the

pumpkin path, an addition she brought to Fair Hill to help the riders make the long hack from stabling to the start without getting lost.

Fair Hill is one of several Area II venues that run multiple events every year. At many of these venues, organizers not only organize, but also play many other roles in eventing. For example, Brian Ross, the co-organizer (with his wife Penny) of the Virginia Horse Trials, recently retired as a judge and TD. I was lucky enough to apprentice with Brian at an event that had more than its share of "special occurrences" and was deeply impressed by how he handled them. Brian always said something along the lines of there being enough ways to get eliminated and the role of officials being to help riders avoid them. For example, at one event, where the stadium jumping map was posted a bit late, one professional who had ridden preliminary, then missed a fence on the Intermediate course. Brian talked with the rider and gave them four faults. He said, "had the map been

posted on time, I have no doubt you would have jumped that fence, but we can't know that you would have jumped it clean." Brian's thoughtful decisions on the side of the rider were a great boon to the sport and while we don't begrudge him more time at home and with the grandkids, we will miss him at the venues.

There are many more I haven't mentioned and probably many I don't know. But the past couple years have been a reminder that time is not always our friend. So say thanks, share a moment (and a great eventing story) with one of the people for whom you stay in eventing.



Judy Thayer at her beloved Fair Hill. Photo by The Equiery/Katherine O. Rizzo

AREA II'S EVENTING SPOTLIGHT

By Maria Holman



As a new feature, I will regularly be sharing the story of an eventer in Area II who has moved up a level or overcome a challenge in this crazy sport we call eventing. This month, I spoke with amateur Lauren Hoffman.

At the young age of five, Lauren was bit by the horse bug, one with which I am certain many of us are familiar. After showing in local hunters, she bought her first horse at the age of 13, Sierra, a three year old, 15.3h, off the track thoroughbred mare. Sierra was not the easiest of rides and taught Lauren perseverance, which transformed her into the rider she is today. Over time, Lauren learned to "...work with the mare, and not against her." Dressage was not her forte, but Sierra taught Lauren the importance of being a tactful rider. They competed at novice but Sierra proved to be a better fit as a jumper.

Then, the hunt for a future eventing partner began, which led her to Beckham, an eight year old, 15.3h, Irish Sport Horse and Dutch Warmblood gelding. Beckham is confident, bold, and has a massive jump to him. Lauren knew from the first time she sat on him that he was meant to be hers.

"Beckham has a huge heart, and has made every riding dream come true," Lauren divulged. Since he is so bold, Beckham will jump any distance he sees fit. This quality made Lauren want to be a better rider for the sake of their safety together. "I'm just most afraid of me messing up a distance for him. I just love him so much I don't ever want to put him in a bad spot."

Fast-forward six years, and Lauren and Beckham have achieved more than they ever imagined, including their recent move up to the

Intermediate level. "Once I ran my first one star, he is such a cross country machine that I was looking for the next challenge. I ran longer at prelim than I probably needed to but I am a real believer in being ready for the level. I kept him there until he was ready to move up to intermediate."

One of Lauren's greatest struggles in moving up to Intermediate was simple: time. When she competed in her first one star, she was a working student for Kara Angula, and therefore had many hours in the saddle, keeping her a very fit rider. However, when she moved up to Intermediate, her career as a C.P.A. was taking off as well. We all know how crazy our lives are with horses in the mix, now throw in a brand new career, an engagement, planning a wedding, and I'm not quite sure how she manages it all!



Lauren and Beckham competing Intermediate at the Maryland Horse Trials

Photos by GRC Photography

Lauren has become an expert on time management and has never let her horse's fitness slip as a result of her hectic life.

"...I'll hack him at 5:30am before work if he needs it, it's a constant battle to keep his fitness at top notch," she said. Lauren is truly an inspiration!

After competing Intermediate at several events, Lauren realized it was more than she could handle, more for her than Beckham. "One of the biggest challenges in riding at this level is accuracy. The higher you move up, the smaller margins for error you have. The canter you have

matters more than before, the margin of error shrinks, you just have to be that much better and sharper," she explained. She bumped him down to the one star level, and ran a CCI* at Virginia last fall. Lauren plans to compete again at the one star level this fall, and perhaps return to Intermediate in the future. Lauren said, "Riding at the advanced level would be amazing, but I'm not sure Beckham will be able to do it as he is getting older, but maybe one day on the right horse."

Her advice to other eventers out there at levels, is

"Don't rush up the levels just because you think that you have to; perfect the skills needed and practice at home before you go out and compete. There is a lot to learn at every level and definitely learn what each level has to offer before you go out and do it."

After speaking to Lauren, she definitely showed me it is possible to compete your horse, (even at the upper levels), have a career, and a love life. Her story proves that pure passion and determination can make any dream come true.

Scenes From Around Area II



Eventing Nation's John Thier, with help from eventers Ashley Kehoe and Natalie Hummel, makes a big splash in support of raising ALS awareness.

Photo by Eventing Nation

What is Optimum Times? Regular news from USEA's Area II, including updates on Area events and programs, happenings in the Area, and stories about our members. Let us know what you think, submit articles or pictures for our Scenes From Area II feature, or offer comments or suggestions.