

# ASHA of NJ Educates and Entertains at High Point Awards and Mini-Conference

BY SHERRILL DUCHARME

LANGHORNE, PA\_This year, in the spirit of renewal, the ASHA of New Jersey hosted a mini-conference as part of their annual High Point Awards Banquet.

When Nealia McCracken was named chairperson for the annual dinner, she came back to the ASHA membership with a proposal for a new venture which would be a departure from previous years in several important ways. First, the date of the function, traditionally held in the busy pre-holiday rush of early December, was changed to mid-February. McCracken also proposed a mini-conference for the event, with informative speakers who could educate the membership across a broad range of topics involving showing and owning Saddlebreds.

If there was one overriding theme presented during the conference, it was that “details matter.” From Ellen Beard, through the panel of judges, attending physicians, to Dr. Scott Bennett, the message was clear: success comes from paying attention to the little things, as well as to the big ones.

The weekend’s activities took place February 12-13 at the Sheraton Bucks County in Langhorne, PA. The club took over the Mezzanine complex where participants could visit Silent Auction tables loaded with goodies, Dale Becker of Becker Brothers, Saddlebred Rescue trainer Anne Butler and the SBR information booth, as well as Doreen Weston and The Tack Room shop.

Conference registration began at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday morning, with most overnight guests able to access early room check-in for their convenience. The Educational Series kicked off at 10:30 with guest speaker Ellen Beard, Director of Equestrian Operations at Stephens College, who gave an informative Power Point presentation on the basics of the Saddle Seat show world. Ms. Beard clarified division specifications and addressed the importance of communication and cooperation between exhibitors and their trainers, as well as stressing the value of family support in the enterprise of competition. In addition to her Power Point, Ms. Beard distributed a humorous pamphlet entitled Line Up On the Ringmaster, authored by Jeanne Cox Purcell and Dr. Rogers Cox in 1982, which highlighted many of her themes.

For the next session on the agenda, Ms. Beard was joined by local trainers and judges Gary Guz and Nealia McCracken for a discussion of “Understanding the Judge’s Perspective”. Each member took a turn describing their own views as a judge and their particular areas of focus above and beyond what the judging criteria calls for. Ms. Beard revealed that a pet peeve is loose billet straps, while McCracken disdained “buzzing the judge”. The standout lesson for many was the realization that a judge realistically is able to watch each competitor for a maximum of about one minute, usually in 10-second increments, at each gait. Another important lesson came as each member of the panel stressed that in the final analysis, the judge’s opinion is just that: an opinion. The panel answered a vari-

ety of questions from members of the audience on topics from turnout, to rail-side coaching, to advertising.

Dr. Kathleen Ververeli gave a fascinating presentation on “muscle memory” and how it impacts learning to ride and show, followed by a detailed lecture on “Tips for Staying Healthy for Competition”, which included helpful nutritional advice.

Dr. Prodromos Ververeli, an orthopedic surgeon, spoke on Pre Competition Sports Conditioning, focusing his advice on the knee and back complaints common to riders.

A quick “What NOT to Wear” for the show ring skit followed, with Theresa Scott and Mary Mitkish modeling a mash-up of fashion “don’ts”, critiqued by Nealia McCracken and Dale Becker of Becker Brothers. After the audience reassembled from their lunch break, the girls returned in perfect turnout.

Dr. Scott Bennett of Equine Services in Simpsonville, KY, gave an entertaining and effective presentation on “What You Need to Know About a Pre-Purchase Vet Exam”. Dr. Bennett stressed that the veterinarian should strive to give you good information with which you as a purchaser, can make an intelligent decision. In addition to providing the veterinarian with accurate and up-to-date registration information about the animal in question, the buyer has the responsibility to make his expectations and wishes known to the veterinarian so that he can adequately advise on the usability of the horse.

ASHA of New Jersey President Joan Booth has 28 years of experience in the equine insurance industry and gave participants an overview of the varieties and limitations of policies in her presentation “Understanding the Basics of Equine Insurance”. Her top-of-the-list recommendation is for owners to (actually) read and understand their policy.

Dr. Bennett returned to the podium for the last words of the day on “The Basics of Well-Horse Care”. With the perspective that managing how a horse distributes concussion is the key to sound performance, Bennett detailed crucial points of saddlebred conformation that should be monitored constantly for health. In addition, Dr. Bennett observed that “quality of terrain” is a critical component in the safety and ability of our horses. Noting that of all the breeds, he believes Saddlebreds are the best equine “product”, Bennett stressed the importance of knowing what is usual and normal for your horse, conformation and performance-wise, the better to evaluate any negative changes that might occur.

While adult exhibitors, trainers and parents of junior exhibitors attended the educational programs, the children were kept entertained first with a pool party sponsored by Kierson Farm and then with supervised craft projects under the direction of Academy mom, Landi Gates and her daughter Erin. After their swim and before starting the crafts, the youngsters enjoyed pizza and a visit with Ellen



*Ellen Beard provided helpful information for exhibitors and trainers alike in her remarks to the ASHA of NJ membership.*



*ASHA of NJ President Joan Booth enjoyed the cocktail hour prior to the awards banquet with featured speaker Dr. Scott Bennett and his wife, Linda.*



*Pat Johnson and Nealia McCracken were awarded one of two special President’s Choice awards for their work with Saddlebred Rescue.*

Beard, who spoke to them about the discipline of equitation, where some were surprised to learn that equitation patterns evolved from cavalry maneuvers.

Participants had several hours free to relax before reassembling at 6 p.m. for cocktails prior to the banquet, which began at 7 p.m.

Joan Booth welcomed the guests and presented two "President's Choice" awards. The first went to Pat Johnson and Nealia McCracken for their work with Saddlebred Rescue. The second award recognized the work and 10-year existence of the Eastern Saddle Horse Breeders Association. Diana Kressley-Billig, a past president of the group picked up the honor for ESHBA, which is being disbanded this year.

As appetizers were being served, Ellen Beard shared her thoughts on and experiences with the Saddle Seat World Cup competition, noting that USEF has recently agreed to be a partner in this venture. With this move, Beard noted, the Saddle Seat discipline, as well as the Saddlebred breed, will be showcased to a much broader audience. She concluded her remarks by sharing a moving video produced by Donna Pettry-Smith saluting the 2008 World Cup Team which won the silver medals in both the 3-gaited and 5-gaited competitions in South Africa that year.

Mark McCracken emceed the High Point Awards presentations. With a nod to the Academy Awards format, pictures of nominees in each category were shown as their names and trainers were announced.

Winners were called to the stage in reverse order, with the Champions receiving a handsome, engraved crystal obelisk trophy and posing for pictures with ASHA of NJ President, Joan Booth.

The awards were concluded by 9:00 p.m. and the real party started with music and dancing. The Ververeli family co-sponsored the lively entertainment from Wesley Works. Participants of all ages kept the dance floor hopping throughout the rest of the evening.

The weekend concluded with a Brunch and Fashion Show at 10:00 a.m., co-sponsored by North Wind Stables. While guests enjoyed their food, the junior members of the club provided spirited presentations of a variety of "looks". Laura Schiffer described the fine points of the ensembles which included show ring attire, casual/barn wear and Saturday Night at Louisville finery. The morning ended with Anne Butler, Academy Tournament coordinator, revealing the various academy patterns that will be called for at the local shows this season.



*Elizabeth Ververeli and Fox Grape's Forever Yours won the High Point award in the Junior Exhibitor Park Horse division under the direction of Kierson Farm.*



*Winter and Scott Bruggeworth, with the help of Kelsea Byrd, accepted one of many High Point awards won by Siren Song Stables.*



*ASHA of NJ junior fashionistas present their final tableau after walking the runway at the Sunday morning brunch.*

## ASHA OF NEW JERSEY AWARDS

### THREE-GAITED OPEN

- |                     |                              |                                      |
|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Follow the Sun   | Annika and Scott Bruggeworth | Gerald Hutson for Siren Song Stables |
| 2. Finally a Prince | Annika and Scott Bruggeworth | Gerald Hutson for Siren Song Stables |

### THREE-GAITED AMATEUR

- |                                 |                              |   |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| 1. CH Steel in Love             | Dr. Geraldine Meanor         | Geraldine Meanor for North Wind Stables   |
| 2. CH Callaway's Merry Go Round | Annika and Scott Bruggeworth | Annika Bruggeworth for Siren Song Stables |

### THREE-GAITED JUNIOR EXHIBITOR

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|-------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Rosewood's Potpourri | Trish Malcolm and Mary Mitkish | Mary Mitkish for North Wind Stables     |
| 2. She Sparkles         | Morgan Billig                  | Morgan Billig for Little Lexington Farm |

### FINE HARNESS

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|----------------|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Hoof Prince | Annika and Scott Bruggeworth | Annika Bruggeworth and Carson Kressley for Siren Song Stables |
|----------------|------------------------------|---|

### PARK OPEN

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|----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Callaway's Dream Weaver | Dr. Geraldine Meanor | Jason Molback for North Wind Stables |
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### PARK AMATEUR

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|-----------|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Sue Me | Annika and Scott Bruggeworth | Annika Bruggeworth for Siren Song Stables |
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### PARK JUNIOR EXHIBITOR

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|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Fox Grape's Forever Yours | Kathleen and Elizabeth Ververeli | Elizabeth Ververeli for Kierson Farm |
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### PARK AMATEUR "B"

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|--------------------|--------------|---|
| 1. The Cardiac Kid | Dorothy Cobb | Dorothy Cobb for Nicholas Villa Stables |
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### PARK PLEASURE

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|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Whole Lotta Verve | Kathleen Ververeli | Mike Richardson for Kierson Farm |
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### ADULT THREE-GAITED SHOW PLEASURE

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|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Unlisted Number      | Kathleen Ververeli | Kathleen Ververeli for Kierson Farm |
| 2. CH Out Go the Lights | Nancy Ehle         | Nancy Ehle for Kierson Farm         |

### JUNIOR EXHIBITOR THREE-GAITED SHOW PLEASURE

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|-------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Top Beat | Pat Johnson & Nealia McCracken | Theresa Scott and Mary Mitkish for North Wind Stables |
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### WALK AND TROT 12 AND UNDER PLEASURE

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|------------------------|-------------------|---|
| 1. Daddy-O             | Olivia Schumacher | Joanna Ricci and Olivia Schumacher for Kierson Farm |
| 2. CH Empress in Black | Grace Allison     | Sarah Hecht and Jordyn Vallorosi for Kierson Farm   |

### FIVE-GAITED SHOW PLEASURE

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|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. CH Titleist Right Tonight | Nancy and Bob Ehle               | Allyson Ehle for Kierson Farm        |
| 2. Manhattan Whirlwind       | Kathleen and Elizabeth Ververeli | Elizabeth Ververeli for Kierson Farm |

### COUNTRY PLEASURE ENGLISH (ADULT)

- |                      |                              |   |
|----------------------|------------------------------|---|
| 1. CH Sir Winston C  | Nancy and Bob Ehle           | Allyson Ehle for Kierson Farm             |
| 2. Steel A Secret TS | Joan Booth                   | Joan Booth for North Wind Stables         |
| 3. CH Sagaman        | Annika and Scott Bruggeworth | Annika Bruggeworth for Siren Song Stables |

### COUNTRY PLEASURE JUNIOR EXHIBITOR

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|--------------------------------|------------------|---|
| 1. CH Callaway's Royal Request | Nealia McCracken | Val Nuno and Hailey Parker for North Wind Stables |
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### COUNTRY PLEASURE DRIVING

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|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Lover's Sweet Sensation | Maureen Bentley | Maureen Bentley for Royal Crest Farm |
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### COUNTRY PLEASURE WESTERN

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|-----------------------------|-------------------|---|
| 1. CH I'm Goin' Out Tonight | Margory Brown and | Theresa Scott, Pat Johnson and Nealia McCracken                     |
| 2. Piney Flats              | Pat Johnson and   | Jessica Moctezuma for North Wind Stables                            |
|                             |                   | Meghann Belser, Doug Engle Saddlebred Rescue for North Wind Stables |
| 3. CH A Magic Surprise      | Pat Johnson       | Doug Engle, Trish Malcolm, Ashley Young for North Wind Stables      |

### COUNTRY PLEASURE HUNTER

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|-----------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Winter's Rembrandt | Mary Elias | Ashley Young for North Wind Stables |
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### COUNTRY PLEASURE ADULT "B"

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|-------------------------|----------------------|--|
| 1. CH Prince of the Day | Dr. Geraldine Meanor | Geraldine Meanor for North Wind Stables                        |
| 2. Heart Flame          | Brian Campbell       | Brian Campbell for Smoke Hollow Farm                           |
| 3. CH A Magic Surprise  | Pat Johnson          | Doug Engle, Trish Malcolm, Ashley Young for North Wind Stables |

#### **COUNTRY PLEASURE JUNIOR EXHIBITOR “B”**

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|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Some Kind of Magic    | Nealia McCracken       | Julie Butler for North Wind Stables |
| 2. Windy Hill Super Star | Steve and Emily Vicari | Alex Ververeli for Kierson Farm     |

#### **COUNTRY PLEASURE WESTERN “B”**

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|----------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 1. Winter's Rembrandt      | Mary Elias      | Mary Elias, Ashley Young for North Wind Stables |
| 2. Heart Flame             | Brian Campbell  | Brian Campbell for Smoke Hollow Farm            |
| 3. Lover's Sweet Sensation | Maureen Bentley | Maureen Bentley for Royal Crest Farm            |

#### **COUNTRY PLEASURE HUNTER “B”**

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|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Wild Bruce | Paige Lilly and Brenda Rendina | Paige Lilly, AOT |
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#### **EQUITATION JUNIOR EXHIBITOR**

1. Theresa Scott, North Wind Stables
2. Mary Mitkish, North Wind Stables
3. Val Nuno, North Wind Stables

#### **EQUITATION WALK & TROT**

1. Joanna Ricci, Kierson Farm
2. Scott Bruggeworth, Siren Song Stables
3. Sarah Hecht, Kierson Farm

#### **EQUITATION, 17 AND UNDER “B”**

1. Sarah Rowland, Smoke Hollow Farm
2. Hailey Parker, North Wind Stables

#### **EQUITATION, WALK & TROT “B”**

1. Scott Bruggeworth
2. Jordyn Vallorosi

#### **EQUITATION ADULT**

TIE  
Maureen Bentley, Royal Crest Farm  
Sherrill Ducharme, North Wind Stables

#### **LEADLINE**

1. Courtney Kramlick

#### **HACKNEY PONY, ROADSTER**

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|------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Heartland's Victory Maker | Alex Ververeli | Alex Ververeli for Kierson Farm |
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#### **ACADEMY W/T/C 15 AND OVER**

1. Kaitlyn Sheehy, North Wind Stables
2. Maria Jose de la Hoz, Kierson Farm

#### **ACADEMY W/T/C 11-14**

1. Erin Gates, North Wind Stables
2. Brianne Hromnak, North Wind Stables

#### **ACADEMY W/T/C 11 AND UNDER**

1. Ally McHugh, Kierson Farm
2. Macey Getkin, North Wind Stables
3. Kimberly Earlywine, North Wind Stables

#### **ACADEMY WALK AND TROT 15 AND OVER**

1. Lorraine Schumacher

#### **ACADEMY WALK AND TROT 8-10**

1. Hallie Ricci, Kierson Farm
2. Natalie Parker, North Wind Stables
3. Gillian Kramlick, Kierson Farm

#### **ACADEMY WALK AND TROT 7 AND UNDER**

1. Emily Vicari, Kierson Farm
2. Olivia Schumacher, Kierson Farm
3. Jordan Ferrier, North Wind Stables

#### **ASHA OF NEW JERSEY LINDA GEMEINHARDT VERSATILITY AWARD**

Piney Flats, owned by Pat Johnson and Saddlebred Rescue, North Wind Stables

#### **HIGH POINT HORSE OF THE YEAR, CHARLES “DOC” COVINO PERPETUAL MEMORIAL TROPHY**

CH I'm Goin' Out Tonight, owned by Margory Brown and Nealia McCracken, North Wind Stables

#### **ASHA STATE PLEASURE HORSE AWARDS**

5-Gaited Show Pleasure, CH Titleist Right Tonight, Kierson Farm  
3-Gaited Show Pleasure, Unlisted Number, Kierson Farm  
3-Gaited Juvenile Show Pleasure, Top Beat, North Wind Stables  
3-Gaited Adult Country Pleasure, CH Sir Winston C, Kierson Farm  
3-Gaited Juvenile Country Pleasure, CH Callaway's Royal Request, North Wind Stables  
Western Country Pleasure, CH I'm Goin' Out Tonight, North Wind Stables  
Hunter Country Pleasure, Winter's Rembrandt, North Wind Stables