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Profile: Kimberly & Perry Walden

Past & present Celebrations, future goals

By **DAWN HANKINS**

dhankins@t-g.com

When it comes to being a part of the Tennessee Walking Horse history, Perry Walden is proud to say he's been a part of the industry in some way since he was a little boy back in the mid 1960s.

A native of East Tennessee, he attended Shelbyville Celebrations with his family for many years. He's proud to say that his father was a big part of the horse industry.

As for the Celebration, Perry notes, "It was a yearly vacation for us . . ."

He recalls how he and his dad would go to the barn of C.A. Bobo and purchase horses. He has fond memories of the late trainer.

Perry worked professionally as a Chattanooga police officer. Just like his father, though, he inherited a love of the horse.

His first Celebration as an exhibitor was in the 1970s. The rest, as they say, is history.

Wife Kimberly notes, "Each of us are very separate on how we got involved."

She grew up going to a dude ranch. She recalls collecting figurine horses as a girl. She rented horses. And she even took her savings as a young girl to buy her first horse.

She grew up in California and attended the University of Redlands, Calif., where Jim Landers use to be a walking horse trainer. She had quarter horses at the time. She would board the quarter horse there and work with their weanlings for board.

She wanted horses of her own, but her parents wouldn't buy one. She eventually



T-G Photo by Zoe Haggard

Kimberly and Perry Walden take in most every show, especially around July 4th. They're seen here at the Christmas in July Horse Show at the Ag Center. This horse show also benefits students--something important to them.

saw that dream fulfilled, following a lot of hard work on her part. She's still working hard.

"My first real horse show was at Pasadena [Calif.] Fairgrounds . . . back in 1986-87," she recalls.

Her first Celebration was about 10 years ago. Kimberly admits it is as thrilling as people often share.

"It is . . . especially when you go down the chute."

It was walking horses which brought Perry and Kimberly together several years

ago. The couple eventually moved to Shelbyville; their walking horse farm is now located off Highway 64 W. and is called Forest Shadows Farm. Part of the farm is leased by trainer Joe Lester.

Professionally, Kimberly owns Forest Shadows Pet Resort in Texas, where they do boarding, training, grooming and doggie daycare. She had a home previously in Shelbyville right behind the Celebration grounds.

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Perry and Kimberly Walden support a team of youth riders.

Walden

(Continued from Page 2A)

These days, she travels to Texas for her pet resort business, but is now, along with Perry, making Bedford County her full time home. She only has to go back to Texas now about once a month, she says.

So most of her time is spent here working horses. The day of this interview, her all-time great champion, Designer Champagne, was in the horse trailer. Perry and Kimberly were getting ready to train with a youth rider.

Truthfully, the two never really imagined themselves living in Bedford County. She was used to hauling horses back and forth from Texas. That process was old hat after a while, but life changed.

Living here finally came to fruition. "I never thought I'd marry someone in the walking horse world—someone who would be interested in sharing that. That's been the awesome part of our marriage—how much we love the horses and being around them."

While they have a great horse history, Kimberly is also investing in the future generations. "Children and horses have been my passion."

Perry agrees. He admires her for her real enjoyment, which is seeing the juvenile girls show. After all, the young riders are the future.

Shelbyville is no doubt the better now that the Waldens are investing their time and sponsorships into this community. As a matter of fact, Kimberly hopes to open a 501(c)(3) barn for disadvantaged and disabled youth in the future.

She explains, "This doesn't mean that they are labeled. It means they come from an at-risk family . . . veterans."

This will be exciting for the walking horse industry, she notes, as she will encourage all to become involved.

The kids will be special. "Sometimes kids come from a broken home and need time with horses . . ."

This is Kimberly's way of her way to give back to the community, hopefully another piece of walking horse history to be made in the future.



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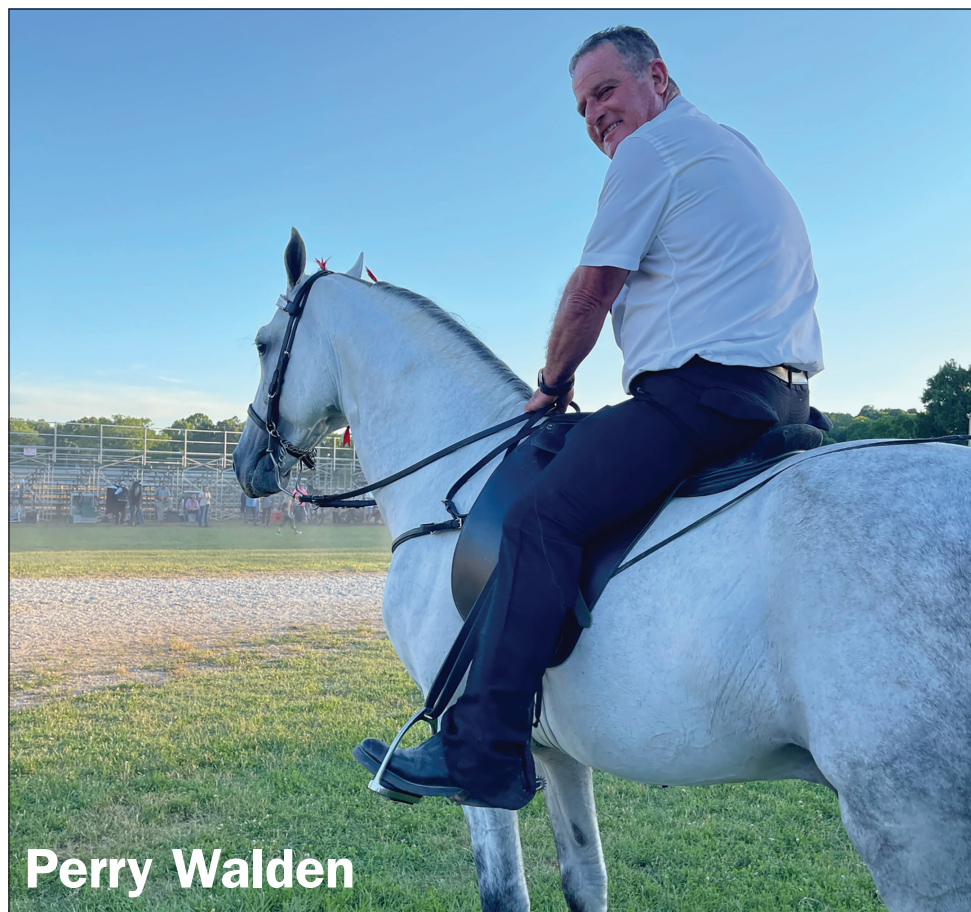
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A Georgia girl has an eye for Tennessee

Frances Bates runs TWH museum

By **ZOË HAGGARD**
zhaggard@t-g.com

What do Tennessee Walking Horses, nursing, and museums have in common?

They all make up the life of Frances Bates, curator at Wartrace's Tennessee Walking Horse National Museum.

Though originally from Waycross, Georgia, Bates said she was introduced to the Tennessee Walking Horse in the mid-1960s by her brother-in-law, who owned some gaited Walking Horses.

Horses are also in her blood. Her mother was an Italian born in Marseilles, France. A beautician, she emigrated to New York and would ride her horse through Central Park there in the 1930s and 1940s.

"I remember getting into the closet and opening up her trunk and she had the

typical puffy pants and coat and I always thought that was neat. So maybe I did kind of inherit some of that," said Bates.

Bates' father, on the other hand, was a country boy from Georgia. Her parents met in New York when her father was serving in the Navy during World War II.

They moved back to Georgia where Bates was raised on a farm.

She recalled how other horses' gaits made her bounce up down in the saddle. But that Walking Horse gait—that one, two, hesitate, three, four—was smooth, making her glide side-to-side. She was amazed.

"We don't get them to do that; we just condition them," Bates explained. "Many people don't realize the horse propels from his back feet. Gets his front feet out of the way."

She had friends who owned quarter



Frances Bates looks at the display case with dozens of breeder books.

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horses which she rode occasionally. "But when my brother-in-law came along and I got on this gaited horse...I thought, this is what I want." After Bates married, she got her husband interested in walking horses. They traveled to Tullahoma where they came across a colt—a chestnut stallion named Ebony's Bold Courier born in 1975. He turned out to be a World Grand Champion in 1983, ridden by Joe Fleming and trained by Gary and Larry Edwards.

"And most everything else I've done has been through his colts."

The first Celebration she attended was in 1974, the year Another Masterpiece won the World Grand Championship.

Then, she began showing in 1976. "I went from trail riding to showing around home to amateur showing to world grand champion back to amateur back to trail riding...and now at the museum," she said. "And I didn't see myself getting involved in any of this."

But even though history was her best subject in school, Bates found a career in nursing. She attributes growing up on a

farm and around animals to her interest in science.

Bates can always remember the horse's name but never the riders'. That's from years of being in the medical field where disclosing people's names was inappropriate.

Between horses and nursing as well as raising her daughter, Bates was busy. "But if you enjoy something, it's not work."

And she's found her home here. In Shelbyville, the horse is the common ground. No one stares at you if you have a truck and a horse trailer driving through town. "When you're living here, life still goes on. And the horse show is just in the middle of it."

Getting into the museum

When talk of the museum opening in 2011 by Philip Gentry, Bates recalled she just began showing up. "I said, 'Y'all need some help?'" And I guess they just adopted



Frances Bates has been involved with the museum for over a decade.



Frances Bates reads James R. Brantley's breeder notes with fascination.

Bates

(Continued from Page 6A)

me," she said with a laugh. "I don't think anyone invited me, I just started coming. I knew about it, and I cared about it."

And she loves every little detail—from the old, rusty horseshoes, to the black and white pictures, to the coats of trailblazers, to the retirement blankets of great horses. Bates said the museum is progressive, but they keep the same foundation.

"I've learned a lot of the history. But I'm older and I lived through a lot of it too."

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Revisit some horse history

By ZOË HAGGARD

When walking around the Tennessee Walking Horse National Museum, you'll find all kinds of buttons and advertising memorabilia for past Walking Horse champions. The importance of advertising your horse is to help gain a following, very similar to a sports team.

But for those who are new to the industry, such a following may be a strange concept.

And for museum curator Frances Bates, she recalls a time early on, when she was still new to the industry, that she came face to face with a champion without realizing it.

Bates recalled going to one of her first Celebrations in 1976. That night, on stake night, instead of the typical flag-bearer opening the show on the back of a white Tennessee Walking Horse, well-reputed

trainers rode on a horse of their choice.

"This old horse came in, just pittlin along. And I thought, why is he the flag horse? But, oh my, he was Talk of the Town—the only three-time World Grand Champion winner horse, and he was almost 30," Bates said.

He was sired in Salisbury, Maryland, in 1947, by Midnight Sun and Merry Rose. He was trained and ridden by Steve Hill, who first came across the spirited horse while on his way to a horse show in Fort Worth, Texas.

According to Bates, Talk of the Town was a perfect specimen of the Tennessee Walking Horse breed. But he was also a "handful." It was known Hill had to ride him some five times a day during training.

But the work proved worthwhile. Talk of the Town won the World Grand



This is Out on Parole's 2013 retirement blanket. He won The Celebration's 2002 World Grand Championship and eventually passed in 2018.

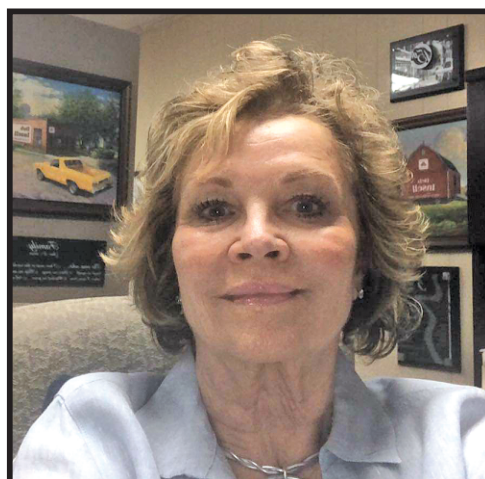
► See **History**, Page 10A

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He's Puttin' on the Ritz's retirement blanket. He won the WGC in 1996.

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Horse Talk of the Town won the WGC in 1951, 1952, and 1953. He was trained and ridden by Steve Hill.

History

(Continued from Page 8A)

Championship in 1951, 1952, and 1953—the only horse to do so three times in a row.

But some champions come in small packages.

In the museum, there's a picture of Sherry Dietz riding what almost looks like a Walking Horse pony.

Born in 1966 and known as Reves Little Boy, the horse stood at only 14 hands, according to Bates. But he was reserved World Grand Champion in 1979, while Dietz won several pony World Grand Championships with him. Today, the museum houses some of his padding.

Step into the museum and you'll see a booth for the flag horse. Occasionally,

you'll have a flag horse that's a World Grand Champion. But Bates said there is a flag horse named White Diamond Dollar, who is the first mare flag horse.

According to Bates, Reserve World Grand Champion mares are rare nowadays, while there hasn't been a mare win the World Grand Championship since 1954. That was White Star.

Sired in Prescott, Arkansas, White Star was actually born a dark-colored colt and was named Strange Gal due to her appearance. But as she grew, her coat became gray-white, and she was named White Star to reflect the change. Her trainer Percy Moss was also the youngest rider ever to be on the World Grand Champion in 1954.

Today, there are two Reserved World Grand Champion mares—Victoria's Secret and Shout, the great granddaughter of Ebony's Bold Courier, who was owned by Bates herself in the 1970s and 1980s.

Breeding books in a little cherry table

By ZOË HAGGARD

The Walking Horse Museum in Wartrace recently acquired a collection of breeding books for some of the first Tennessee Walking Horse breed: Allan F-1 and his son Allan F-38.

F-1 stands for Foundation 1 and pretty much all Walking Horses trace back to him, according to museum curator Frances Bates.

But it's the mare Gertrude F-84 who Bates has dubbed the "Mother of the Breed."

"Every World Grand Champion, every prominent breeding horse all trace back to her," said Bates. Gertrude was recently nominated for the Tennessee Walking Horse Hall of Fame and she was unanimously put in.

Bates said the mare probably should have been named F-2, to represent her breeding prominence.

"But her owners, the Brantley family didn't realize she was the grandmother of the two main breeding horses, Midnight

Sun and Merry Go Boy," Bates explained.

"Back in the early 1900s, they weren't looking to register horses. They were looking for a good farm horse and a good horse to ride and to hook to the buggy to take to church."

But as the sale and prominence of the Tennessee Walking Horse grew, owner and trainer James Brantley began to keep these pocket-sized books to collect his \$6 breeding fee. They include the dates the mare was bred and with whom she sired with as well as the owner of the mare.

And little did they know the secrets of Walking Horse history were trapped in a little drawer in a little old cherry table.

That cherry table

"This little cherry table is the key," said Bates. It sat by the front door of Brantley's home in the Noah community in the early 1900s.

Bates described how Brantley would



▶ See **Table**, Page 12A

"The Little Cherry Table" is one of the newer acquisitions of the museum.

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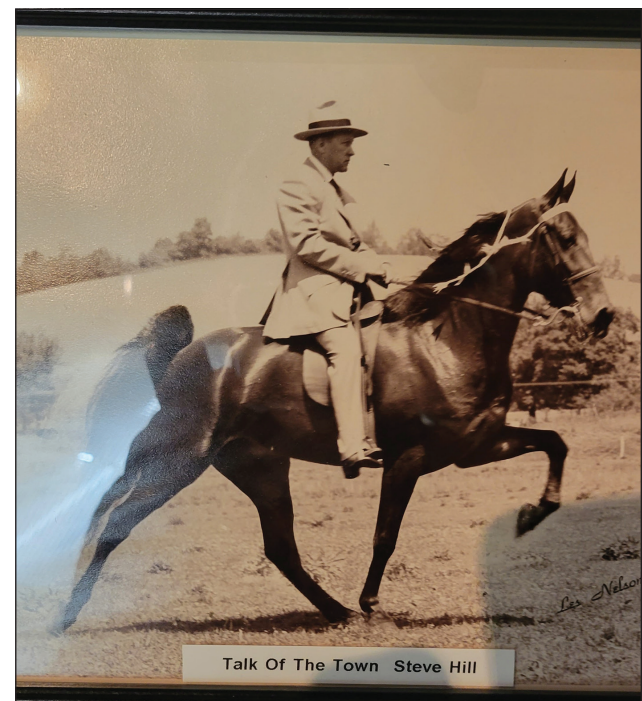




A Shelbyville Gazette newspaper featuring the original story of Old Black Allen, the first Walking Horse sire.



The beautiful Gertrude. She is known as the "Mother of the Breed" as every WGC traces back to her.



Steve Hill riding Talk of the Town in the 1950s.

History

(Continued from Page 11A)

walk in at the end of a long day—probably pull his dusty shoes and socks off—then set the notebook down on the table. When every page was filled, the breeding books would simply be put in the table's drawer. There are dozens of the little books—a visual for the days before phones and digital storing systems.

But in the mid-1930s, the house got hit by lightning and a fire started. Everything was lost except a few things on the first floor. But one of the few to survive was the cherry table.

However, in the midst of the confusion, the key to the drawer was lost. Besides

Mr. Brantley's breeder books was also a picture—the only picture—of Allan F-1, standing in front of the old barn with the jack. By that time, breeders in the Walking Horse industry knew he was important—and they needed that picture.

"So, they took an ax to the top. Got in there and sure enough there was the picture and all these little notebooks," said Bates. The little table was eventually stored in the family's attic until 1961, when the table was re-discovered.

The table was given to Brantley's granddaughter, Ada Wright, who had her father-in-law, a skilled carpenter, replace the top. Mr. Brantley's notebooks were stored in a box in the attic for nearly 50 years until they were donated to the museum this year, Bates notes.



James R. Brantley's breeder notebooks that survived a fire.

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Walking Horse Museum history

By ZOË HAGGARD

In order to know how the museum began, let's take a step back and look at how the little town of Wartrace came to be known as "The Cradle of the Walking Horse."

Wartrace is the oldest horse show, they believe, in Tennessee, according to Tennessee Walking Horse Museum curator Frances Bates. The show has gone on since 1906 and has been consistent every year.

It was originally part of a larger stock show and festival, but the popularity of horses in the area grew the Walking Horse show. The first Wartrace Horse Shows awarded sacks of flour and coffee as prizes, and the town well house was used as a stand for the judges to view the horses.

For the first 20 years, the show was held on Front Street in Wartrace, but was later moved to Jernigan Field, where it is still held to this day.

Although Wartrace had a population of

▶ See **History**, Page 14A



There are many display cases at the museum. This one has memorabilia featuring horse advertising.



A Times-Gazette article featuring Dr. W.H. Hill of Georgia, who won a blue ribbon at the age of 90.

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STAFF REPORTS

Judy Tillett, Betty Sain, Deedy Decker—trend setters, leaders and legends among the women within the Walking Horse industry, according to the Tennessee Walking Horse Museum.

When at the museum, you'll probably come across a display case filled

with grainy pictures of beautiful riders atop black and chestnut horses.

Beautiful Deedy Decker

One of those photos is of Deedy Decker, wearing her iconic rhinestone coat. Look to the right of the photo and there in the

display case is the rhinestone coat itself. Weighing a total of 34 pounds, the coat, according to museum curator Frances Bates, was made by the same company that made costumes for Porter Wagoner.

It was so heavy that when Decker put the coat

▶ See **Legends**, Page 15A



The silver bowl is a Walking Horse trophy somebody found online in Indiana.



Like today's sports brands, horse advertisement buttons promoted the WGC contenders.



The painting in the center is by Bille Napper who has several paintings on display at the museum.

History

(Continued from Page 13A)

500 people in the early 1900s, the show reportedly attracted around 5,000 visitors.

The Wartrace Horse Show is still held on one Saturday night in early August (this year is on August 20) and remains popular for enthusiasts and novices alike.

"We didn't birth the Walking Horse. We developed them. We raised them," said Bates. "And most of it was done over here in the hotel because that was one of the only buildings."

The Wartrace Hotel was built between 1920 and 1930, according to Bates. During that time, everyone would meet over there and get together and go trail riding through

the beautiful landscape of eastern Bedford County.

Wartrace is also where the name Tennessee Walking Horse was first pinned. Before it was termed that, the breed was known in the area as the Plantation Walking Horse.

"But it was the visitors from out of the state who came to buy the horses that wanted one of those 'Tennessee' Walking Horses," explained Bates.

*Subhead*The museum

The Tennessee Walking Horse National Museum was first in Shelbyville, in a room adjacent to the Calsonic Arena. Then, in 2011, it reopened inside an old store on Wartrace's main street.

In 2016, the museum was given over \$3,000 in state grants, which was used to restore old film of the Tennessee Walking

Horse National Celebration and make it available for viewing.

The front of the museum remains the same throughout the year. You'll see display cases of old horse memorabilia and grainy black-and-white photos of Wartrace. Pictures, cards, pins, and even small checker sets had horse names to encourage a following.

Bates, along with other volunteers, help to rearrange other display cases throughout the year, so there's always something interesting and new to view.

For example, there is an exhibit on the current World Grand Champion (Justified Honors), updated yearly as a new horse win, and saddles and tack worn by past winners.

There are also exhibits honoring select breeders and trainers, which are changed

periodically. One prominent piece is the saddle worn by the first National Champion, Strolling Jim, as well as a color portrait of him painted in 1940 by artist Bill Humphreys.

Another exhibit is focused on Betty Sain, who became the first female rider to win a World Grand Championship. Sain won the title in 1966, on her horse Shaker's Shocker.

The museum also contains a hands-on section where visitors can look through old show bills, industry-related magazines, and the like.

The museum is free to visit and is open Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Museum as well as artifact donations are always accepted.

Legends

(Continued from Page 14A)

on, the 98-pound rider couldn't mount her horse. She ended up having to mount first then put the coat on.

"Deedy was definitely an artist and fashion setter and an overall beautiful woman," said Bates.

Born in Mexico, Missouri, Decker is remembered for her show ring performances on Second Time Around, Shadow's Red Warrior and Mr. Sensation—who she rode to the Amateur World Grand Championship in 1961.

After retiring from exhibiting, Decker went on to be a publicist for multiple walking horse magazines as well as a board of directors member for the Walking Horse National Museum. She passed away April 17, 2021, at the age of 80.

Tillett-Young's challenge trophy

Another prominent female rider of the Tennessee Walking Horse breed is Judy Tillett Young, who still holds the most World Championships between 1966 and 1999, according to Bates.

Born in Shelbyville in 1953, Young started riding at the age of 6, and from there won the 1964 Amateur Mare World Champion

with her horse Untouchable at just 10 years old. For the next two decades, she would continue to win blues and championships along with her well-known horses Black Magic Woman and Mountain Man.

And like Decker, she was quite a sight, sitting straight in her saddle, her blond hair tied back with a black ribbon, and her head steady in view with the crowd.

Somehow a challenge trophy—one that you win three times and one that Young almost won in the late 1960s—has escaped her possession. This particular trophy was donated by the Federal Land Bank.

But last year, a friend of the museum found the challenge trophy on Ebay in Louisville, Ky. That challenge trophy has four winners on it, with the last two being Young before she "aged out" of the class.

Today, it sits in the museum with the legacy of Young, who passed away April 23, 2021, carved on the side. "It was returned to Bedford County," Bates said.

Betty Sain legacy

Betty Sain was born Elizabeth Fay Sain on Nov. 20, 1942, in Manchester. In 1962, the Sain family bought the weanling colt Shaker's Shocker from Tom Barham of Lewisburg. Sain trained the colt exclusively and started him under saddle herself.

In 1964, she began showing him. In 1966, she entered Shaker's Shocker in the



Deedy Decker's display case. The iconic rhinestone coat on the right was so heavy Decker couldn't mount her horse with it on.

Celebration and won the 4-year-old junior stake. She was expected to compete in the 4-year-old division again but instead chose to enter the open stake, making her the first woman ever to enter the World Grand Championship class.

Sain and Shaker's Shocker placed first out of 13 horses. Sain was the first woman to win and at age 23, was the youngest rider in the class.

Now that's walking horse history.

A unique TWH museum

Finding little tidbits of history like those associated with Betty Sain, now retired, and Tillett and Decker, really make the museum unique. Bates said she loves it when other Tennessee Walking Horse fans get into it and find dozens of treasures across the country. It's a community of the museum.

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By **DAWN HANKINS**
dhankins@t-g.com

For many years, there were tons of horse shows that were considered feeder shows into the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration. While many are still in existence, Perry and Kimberly Walden know without community support, many are falling by the wayside.

That is sad to this couple—one having donated a lot of personal finances, time, energy and love into the walking horse industry for decades.

“I do a lot of sponsorships within the shows . . . a lot. Every little bit helps those

shows,” says Kimberly.

Perry and Kimberly, and their youth riding team, show throughout the area and country. Those may include such shows as Belfast, Wartrace and Lewisburg and all the 4th July Shows.

Kimberly talks about the continued community support in Belfast, a show which is organized by the Lions Club there.

She’s also served as flag bearer at the Wartrace Show.

She talks about another show with great community involvement— Germantown. They transport people into the show on tractors and many people can be seen walking through town to the show grounds. It’s just a way to get the community involved, she notes.

Kimberly talks about how the Texas show circuit from which she came is

slowly becoming non-existent. “They have one show—once in a great while.” That is, compared to one every 6 weeks as was the case up until a few years ago.

The Perrys even attend flat shod shows in the winter. While days on the road get long, they do as many shows a year as possible.

Perry notes that sadly the Jackson, Miss., show is now gone. He names others which have not survived, likely due to lack of hometown support.

They say all this to note that if communities want to hang onto their shows, residents of those respective communities MUST be involved in creative ways.

“We have to give back to the community more, in order to get the community to give back to us,” said Kimberly, a California native now Shelbyville resident.

► See **Waldens**, Page 3B

Walden

(Continued from Page 2B)

Come Celebration time, the Waldens are giving as much as they can to the walking horse industry. They encourage others from Shelbyville and the area to continue to support the Celebration.

With a large amount of community

participation in the greatest walking horse show, it is true the people will come, they explain. This community will be the better for it in many ways, the Waldens—both veterans within this industry.

With that, Kimberly is off to work with her “girls,” which is her team of youth riders—the future. Look for Kimberly and Perry Walden and their them at the Celebration.



Top contender

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“A lesser known fact about our club is that we also pay for the street lighting in the Belfast community,” said Nancy Greene.

She added, “The Belfast Lions Club sincerely appreciates all of the trainers, owners, exhibitors, sponsors, and volunteers that made this year’s show successful!”

So, where in the world is tiny Belfast, Tenn.? Belfast is an unincorporated community in neighboring Marshall County.



Interesting fact: A post office was established at Belfast in 1836. The community was named after Belfast in Northern Ireland.

That’s a part of Belfast history. In the future, the small community will keep with tradition.

The Belfast show is held on the first Thursday night at S.W. Beech Memorial Field (named after horse trainer here.) This year’s 61st was held on Aug. 4.



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While the horses are important, of course, some area groups are also helping out the community by sponsoring their annual events. In this tab, we highlight some of the area walking horse shows.



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Wartrace Horse Show: community-driven

By **DAWN HANK INS**
dhankins@t-g.com

According to Wartrace Horse Show Chair Ronnie Sutton, the main attraction of the show is of course the horses. But it is largely a joint venture, fundraiser, organized by East Bedford Civic Club and Cascade Elementary PTO.

Sutton notes the two groups come together, comprising Civic Enterprises. All proceeds collected at the Wartrace show are divided between the two groups.

In addition to ticket sales and entry fees, concessions are sold at the show. So, some volunteers stood over a hot grill to make hamburgers on Saturday night.

East Bedford Civic, of which Sutton's a part, then turns around and with their proceeds, hosts such events at the Strolling Jim marathon and the popcorn booth at the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration.

From these fundraising efforts, Cascade students and the elementary PTO will ben-



Wartrace show

► See **Wartrace**, Page 7B



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Wartrace

(Continued from Page 6B)

benefit. East Bedford Civic offers two scholarships and supports other student and community needs.

The 116th horse show, he advises, brought in 143 entries. "We expected to have a blow out night," says Sutton.

It was estimated that 95 percent of box

seats sold. In addition, nearly 500 people who came through the general admission gate at some point during the evening.

Sutton thanks members of the community and the horse trainers, owners and exhibitors who drove out to Jernigan Field to show support for a very worthwhile cause.

Now, East Bedford Civic prepares for the big show—The Celebration. See them at the popcorn stand.



Wartrace show contender



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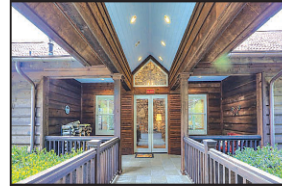
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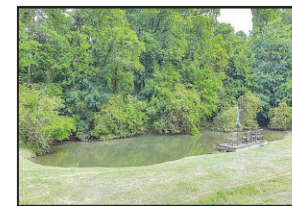
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At the Celebration with Warren Wells

CEO shares from first year

By **DAWN HANKINS**
dhankins@t-g.com

After a year in office, how do you sum up progress or changes within Celebration?

- Well, I survived the first year. It has been a lot of learning. We had our first truly profitable year since 2006 last year. I am not taking all the credit for that . . . something has been building for several years and I happened to be at the wheel when we finally hit it. I hope we do it again this year but inflation is killing us. Everything is so much more expensive.

- I watch three things to see how we are doing as a show. Tickets sales are up, corporate sponsors are up, and entries are up the last two Celebrations.

- For us to be truly successful and to help support this community, we have to have large events on our property very regularly. I am so proud that we were able to recruit the Eastern US Championship for the Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association. They have been in Murfreesboro for many years and will be coming to Shelbyville in September. I really hope the community supports them when they are here, because this will be our largest event other than The Celebration. It will be a very big boost to the local economy.

- The Walking Horse Industry does so much for our community, but I am very focused on bringing in income that will assist . . . in funding our facility while helping our community.

- Repairing infrastructure is big with me. We have had some lean years since 2006 and getting The Celebration grounds back to the world class facility it is, is a priority for me. We are doing that with new barns and other projects.



T-G Photo by Dawn Hankins

Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration Chief Executive Officer, Warren Wells, was announced this year as the “Emerging Leader,” during a special banquet sponsored by Shelbyville-Bedford County Chamber of Commerce. Wells brings with him leadership and governmental experience. He and his family reside in Shelbyville.

- The State of Tennessee appropriated \$150,000 to use to change out our footing in Calsonic Arena (dirt.) A big thanks to Speaker [Pat] Marsh and Senator [Shane] Reeves and the entire General Assembly for this help. New footing will help us attract other events like the Cowboy Mounted

Shooting Assoc.

What new things might we expect from Celebration this year?

We added a new 2-year-old Mare World Grand Championship for the first time. There is a lot of excitement around this class and we have 55 entries in the preliminary class.

Are you seeing exhibitors increasing this year?

Yes. We have over 2,500 entries this year for the first time since 2012.

Surmise how you feel that the Celebration is benefitting this community (revenue, events, etc.)

I believe the Celebration has a duty to do three things. 1. Provide an economic boost to the local economy. 2. Encourage an environment that creates jobs. 3. And be an entertainment for Bedford County/Shelbyville. The Walking Horse industry has had a great year so far. Entries are up in most shows if not all shows. I am

constantly surprised at how many new Walking Horse people are buying houses in Bedford County as vacation homes or are moving here permanently. Many now can work from anywhere. We have added more events this year and in recent years that are a source of entertainment for the local economy. We have a new bull riding event this fall coming. We are very excited about the Eastern US Championship of the Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association. We expect this to be our largest event other than the Celebration. It will be a significant economic impact as well as very fun for our community.

I always encourage people to come out and support all the local civic groups that raise their funds from our show. We have also starting getting local school teams to setup and take down chairs in exchange for a donation to the athletic department. That has been a very successful and fun new addition.



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'Best of Best' turn out for Trainers' Show

By **DAWN HANKINS**

The highlight for many who work in the industry and for fans each year is the National Walking Horse Trainers' Show at Calsonic Arena—a venue where all that sacrifice and work can literally pay off.

The March show is a big predecessor to the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration. Payback amounts from the trainers' show range from \$45 to hundreds within grand championship.

But most trainers and exhibitors will admit, this big week in the industry is really about professional accomplishment. It's literally a place where the "best of the best" can bring out their "big horses" and put their "best foot forward."

The Trainers' Show was held this year at Calsonic Arena March 16-19, and showcased classes ranging from fine harness to the riders' cup trail pleasure championship.

Carlyle Johnson, cochair of this year's event, along with Dee Cantrell, said committee members organizing this year's

▶ See **Trainers**, Page 10B



On Wednesday, May 25, 2022, the Walking Horse Trainers' Association presented staff at The Center for Family Development a check for \$7,000. Proceeds were from the National Trainer's Show that was held in March.

T-G Photo by Zoe Haggard

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T-G Photos by Dawn Hankins

The National Trainers' Show at Calsonic Arena is one of the shows which kicks off the Shelbyville horse show season.

Trainers

(Continued from Page 9B)

show had a lot of "fun" planned throughout the week. And they were telling the truth, with good audience participation.

An extra night was also added to the schedule this year, but only 19 classes planned for each night, according to Johnson.

"This is a new trend . . . With better time management, we hope to get people home early each night." That is aimed to be 10:30 to 11:00 p.m., versus 2 a.m., the seasoned horse trainer added.

While of course the annual show is being conducted to showcase those within the Tennessee Walking Horse industry, a local non profit also stands to benefit. Carlyle explained that proceeds from the Trainers' Show benefit the Center for Family Development, located on Belmont



There are a lot of vendors during the Celebration with unique wears and great looking western attire.

Avenue.

Center for Family Development

The Center for Family Development is a nonprofit with an office in Shelbyville—one which dedicates itself to building "Forever Families."

The Center has a number of programs—all of which complement one another to provide "a holistic approach to



TWHNC Photo

Local residents are encouraged to purchase and put out their colorful Celebration ribbons. Most florists have these available.

meeting the needs of families."

Still strong after decades

Cantrell said they want the decades old event to be enjoyable and most important, "grow even larger in the best possible way."

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The Big One—The 84th Celebration

Annual TWHNC general information

T-G STAFF REPORTS

The 84th annual Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration is taking place Aug. 24 through Sept. 3.

Tickets can be purchased by calling (931) 684-5915, Faye Lynn Ext. 104. General admission seating, located in the South Grandstand, will be sold during the show. Morning performances in Calsonic Arena are free.

Box seats are not sold by the night. However, the Celebration does have special packages available for certain nights.

The Celebration also does not sell reserved parking by the night. Reserved parking is sold for the entire show, but cash parking is available by the night. The cost for cash parking is \$5. Parking Permits for all nights are \$87.80.

Children, regardless of age, who sit in a reserved seat must have a ticket as all seats are assigned. In General Admission, where there are no assigned seats, children six and under are free.

Below is pricing for reserved then general seats:

Aug. 25 and 26—\$7.00.....\$5.00
 Aug. 27—\$15.00.....\$10.00
 Aug. 28 through Aug. 31—\$7.00.....\$5.00
 Sept. 1—\$15.00.....\$8.00
 Sept. 2—\$18.00.....\$8.00
 Sept. 3—\$20.00.....\$12.00
 Combination of Sept. 1 to 3—\$50.00
 Book of tickets for ALL NIGHTS—\$100.00

Special events

Tune into 89.1 FM for live broadcasts of the morning and evening shows. The first class will begin that Wednesday morning at 9 a.m. The full class schedule can be found at twhnc.com.

AUG. 27

Hat night! Come wearing your big and bold hats for Hats off to The Celebration on Saturday.

A Celebration Super Horse Sale will take place Saturday at the Highway 43 Auction Co. Celebration Sale at Wisner Farm.

AUG. 28

- A nondenominational worship service will be held beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the north end of the main Celebration Arena.

- Celebration Shootout is a 4-person scramble format golf tournament will be held at the Riverbend Country Club beginning at 9 a.m. Register online at twhnc.com.

- The Auxiliary Dog Show will be at Champions Arena at 12:30.

- A golf cart decorating contest and the annual Barn Decorating Contest will be at 1 p.m.

AUG. 29 – 30

Dollar nights! General admission will be just \$1 while the food booths will have dollar specials as well.

SEPT. 2

Come out to the Celebration to support local veterans during the annual Veterans' Night.



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ONGOING

Vendors will be set up on the concourse of the Calsonic Arena and will be open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Outside vendors under the west grandstand area will operate 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

In addition to special events, visitors can also enjoy the Celebration Hall of Fame, the Celebration Plaza and Winner's Circle, and the Tennessee Walking Horse National Museum in Wartrace.

Prohibitions

Cameras are allowed—but only hand-held models. Tripods are not allowed, and filming must be done in your seat.

Individual, tote-size coolers are allowed but subject to inspection. No glass containers allowed.

Umbrellas are allowed in the facility, however, the raising of umbrellas inside is prohibited. Plastic tents are not allowed in the box seats or grandstands.

When walking around barn areas always be aware of horses and attendants and give them the right of way. If you have questions or would like to speak with a trainer, the Celebration suggests waiting until after the show as trainers are known to be very busy. Visitors are advised not to walk into stall areas or onto stable porches.

All guests are prohibited from entering the center ring without credentials.

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Who will be judging the 84th Annual Celebration?

T-G STAFF REPORT

The Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration has selected Jamie Bradshaw, Johnny Puckett, Paul Robbins, Sam Sorrell and Amy Trimble to judge the 84th Annual Celebration.

The panel is a combination of two veterans, three total judges with Celebration experience and two newcomers to center ring at The Celebration.

"We are excited to select such a diverse group of judges that blends experience with newcomers to our show," said Celebration CEO Warren Wells.

He continued, "Our board takes very

seriously the process of selecting our judging panel with a continued goal of selecting the best judges available. We feel once again this year we have achieved this goal."

Sorrell, from Lexington, Ky., will be making his eighth appearance in center ring at The Celebration. Sorrell is a veteran across the industry circuit and most recently judged the FAST Spring Showcase earlier in 2022 after judging four major venues in 2021. Bradshaw, of Arab, Ala., will be marking the cards for the sixth time, his last appearance coming in 2019. Bradshaw recently judged the Fun Show earlier this

spring and just completed an assignment at the Money Tree Classic.

Robbins, from Shiloh, N.C., previously judged The Celebration in 2014 and most recently worked for The Celebration at the 2021 Celebration Fall Classic. Robbins also judged over the recently completed 4th of July shows at the three-day Christmas in July horse show.

Both Puckett and Trimble will judge at The Celebration for the first time.

Puckett, from Shelbyville, Tenn., will be a rookie at The Celebration but has previously worked a Celebration show at the 2018 Spring Fun Show. Puckett's

resume since 2018 includes the North Carolina Championships, Belfast, Fun Show, Fayetteville, National Trainers' Show, FAST Spring Showcase, Money Tree Classic and Puckett recently judged the Christmas in July show on panel that included Robbins.

Trimble, from Pulaski, Tenn., judged the Columbia Spring Jubilee earlier this show season. Trimble's judging resume includes judging the Celebration Fall Classic in 2010 and in 2021 as well as stops at the Marshall County Horsemen's Association, Mississippi Charity, and Money Tree Classic.

CONGRATS BOBBY SANDS!

Celebration CEO Warren Wells, left, celebrated in Columbia in June with Bobby Sands on his 50 years of announcing in the Tennessee Walking Horse industry. "Alright, let 'em walk on . . ."

TWHNC Photo

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The CELEBRATION

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GREAT SHOW, LOTS LOVIN'



Submitted Photo

Sheeza Farmer's Daughter made a great showing at the International as the amateur 2-year-old country pleasure champion. There were also some kisses available from Crystal Deputy and Taylor Legate, to boot.



Murfreesboro International Show

FAMILY AFFAIR

LEFT: Brothers Kyle and Tom Insell proudly pose with The Dixie Preacher. Look for them to have other contenders in the Celebration this year.

Submitted Photo

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Christmas in July Show benefits students

The Christmas in July Horse Show had another successful run at the Bedford County Ag Center on Midland Road.

Proceeds from the show go to collecting and distributing Christmas gifts to Bedford County school-aged children in the upcoming holiday season.

Last year, a \$10,000 check was presented to Bedford County School System. Organizers of the event note that they

anticipate, based on this year's turnout, another great contribution in the fall to the schools. (Amount not available as of August end.)

Despite sweltering temperatures, a good crowd was in attendance to watch a variety of classes as well as enjoy famously good eats. There was a performance by the MidState Cloggers as well as stick horse classes for kids.



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Fun Show still going strong

The spring Fun Show was held on schedule this year, May 26-28, at Calsonic Arena.

Classes included amateur riders on walking mares or geldings; 4-H flat shod invitational; optional tack; park performance walking horses, youth riders; various-aged stallions and much more.

It was a well-attended event. See photos below from the 2022 show.



T-G Photos by Dawn Hankins

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Walking horses are like athletes

Welcome to Forest Shadows Farm

By **DAWN HANKINS**
dhankins@t-g.com

The horses are like athletes,” says long-time horse trainer and owner Perry Walden.

He and partner/wife, Kimberly Walden, run Forest Shadows Farm in which they produce owner-amateur trained horses. Some horses are “Tiger Woods” and some are not. Perry admits you go through several horses to find the champions.

They’ve been fortunate, through a lot of hard work, to get a hand full of champions, Perry says. After all, some trainers, he explains, go through 120 horses to wind up with about 30.

That’s the nature of the horse industry; you win some, you lose some. But you dream of winning, more.

It all comes down to care and training, the Waldens agree.

Those “athletes in training” at their barn for the upcoming Celebration include Primetime Player, a padded 2-year-old. Purchased last November, he will be entered into the Celebration and will be ridden by World Grand Champion exhibitor Bill Callaway. (See Section A Cover.)

“He’s one that we’ve had real high hopes for and seems to be turning out to be real good,” said Perry. “He is in the 2-year-old stallion open division.”

Kimberly recalls, “Perry looked at him many times . . . one day I said, if you don’t buy him today, he will be gone tomorrow.” So they purchased Primetime Player.

Kimberly adds that someone did try to buy the horse the next day. Call it woman’s intuition or just great horse business sense, she seems to have picked a winner.



The Horse



Living the dream

Another horse that has been groomed and yes “babied” by Kimberly is the famous, Designer Champagne, now age 17. The strong guy has won the Celebration five times. Designer will be ridden this season by juvenile rider, Alyana Arnold.

Kimberly notes, “Everybody is surprised when they see him; he doesn’t look his age.”

Kimberly always gets excited when she talks about her three juvenile riders. This year, they are: Abi Smith, age 16, who will ride World Grand Champion Habanero Picante—winner of the Money Tree Show on the 4th of July. Her sister, Lexi Smith, age 13, is showing Diamond at the Ritz—a horse which has earned their Forest Shadows Farm in Bedford County lots of wins. Alayna,

► See **Athletes**, Page 4C

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Youth rider



The Dream Team

Athletes

(Continued from Page 2C)

age 10, is the daughter of Bill and Casey Callaway. (See Section B Cover.)

“She is defending her title this year, as the 11 and under country pleasure champion. They’re all showing in country pleasure.

The other two are in 17 and under country pleasure; she’s in the 11 and under country

pleasure.”

Other horses include rising star Quesadilla. Trainer Joe Lester will be up during the Celebration.

“He took second place in the maiden class, which in the flat shod industry, that’s a huge deal,” said Kimberly. “That was at the Murfreesboro show—the International. So we have high hopes for him at the Celebration.”

Kimberly will show Diamond at the Ritz in the AOT (Amateur Owned and

Trained Class) and Perry will be showing Private Line in AOT. (See the Waldens on Section C Cover.)

The Waldens note it’s busy, but they’ve

had a good summer on the farm. With this list of Celebration contenders, they have high hopes their “athletes” will make for an excellent fall.

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Photo by Shane Shiflet

Jackson with her little brother Wylder Way atop Tin Man Too.

Spotlight: Jayden Jackson talks 2022 contenders

By **ZOË HAGGARD**

Jayden Jackson was “born into the Tennessee Walking Horse industry” --and she said she’s been able to ride in every versatile division the breed offers, whether it’s performance, pleasure, equitation, halter, or trail riding.

This year, Jackson will be showing several horses in the 2022 Celebration, including Black Gin’s Scout in the Amateur 4-Year-Old Stallions Division, Wicked Gin in the Amateur 2-Year-Old Mares and Geldings Division, Anthony Davis in the Amateur Mares and Geldings Pony Division, and Tin Man Too with her little brother, Wylder Way, in the Lead Line Division.

Jackson said she’s especially excited to show Scout in the Amateur 4-Year-Old Stallions World Championship.

“This is going to be a very competitive class and being able to see my name in the class list is super exciting to know that I have a horse that is talented enough to compete,” she said. “Scout is a big black stallion, and he definitely knows that he is a beautiful guy.”

When selecting a horse for each division, Jackson said she likes to find a horse that highlights that division’s strength.

However, one thing that she will always look for in a horse is one that has a ‘good look’ to them.

“I love a horse with a beautiful head and a tiny ear. I always joke and say, ‘Well if I’m not the best in the ring, I at least want to be the prettiest!’” she said.

Last year, after selling her juvenile horse, Cole Haan, Jackson’s grandfather, Jack Heffington, gave her Black Gin’s Scout as a new ride. Then, in the winter of 2021, Jackson said she wanted to select a 2-Year-Old and came across Wicked Gin. Three days later he was delivered to their farm. Jackson also said Terry Lowman let her start showing Anthony Davis in 2018, and in 2021 she gifted him to her.

“For the horses that I’m showing this year at The Celebration they all share the same sire, Gen’s Black Gin, so it’s funny because they all share some of the same personality traits,” Jackson explained.

Though the breed’s temperament is well known to be calm and friendly, Jackson said all three of her horses are very “sassy” and can definitely give them a hard when they want to.

“My mom has always joked and said



Jackson with Wicked Gin

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Jackson

(Continued from Page 4C)

that my horses all act like me, and I'm still trying to figure out if that's a compliment or insult!" Jackson said with a laugh.

In addition to Scout, Anthony Davis is a "character to say the least," according to Jackson. "He knows that he is my baby and not going anywhere so he uses that to his advantage!"

On the other hand, "Wicked Gin is definitely the sweetest of my horses, he loves when I go in his stall to give him a kiss and treats."

Jackson said the most difficult part of training has been learning to be a humble winner and a good loser. "Through showing my whole life I have been blessed with

many World Championships, but I have also had my fair share of not placing," she said.

But the best part of working with the Tennessee Walking Horse breed has been the friendships she has made throughout the years and throughout the country. "One of my favorite parts is seeing how our breed can come together whether it's for one of our fellow showmen being sick or all of us cheering for a crowd favorite horse!" she said.

After graduating from Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Jackson said she plans to apply for the physician's assistant program at MTSU with the hopes of one day working in a medical spa.

Yet Jackson can confidently say, "I plan on showing horses for the rest of my life as this is my passion and my family's livelihood."

OVER AT MIDLAND FARM



T-G Photos by Zoe Haggard

It's that time of the year in Bedford County! Welcome to the 84th Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration! These photos were taken at Midland Farm on Trott Road.



Jayden Jackson with Black Gin's Scout


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Trainer spotlight: Crystal Deputy

By ZOË HAGGARD

Shelbyville trainer Crystal Deputy branched off on her own a year ago to train Tennessee Walking Horses full time.

Working at Midland Farm, Deputy brought a lot to the table, including a Trainer of Year award by Spotted Saddle Horse Breeders' and Exhibitors' Association (SSHBEA) and the first ever Walking Horse Trainers' Association (WHTA) Assistant Trainer of the Year award in the pleasure division.

"That was cool because you're voted on by your peers. So, other people see how hard you work," she said.

She's been training horse professionally for nine years. Granted, those nine years have been filled with a lot of, literally, back-breaking work.

Originally from Virginia, Deputy was given her first walking horse at the age of nine. Named Top Man's Souvenir, or "Ariel," Deputy learned to love the temperament of the breed.

She spent a lot of time riding and showing with Robert and Karen Airey and their daughter Jamie Gardner.

She attended many horse shows as a kid throughout the South, but it was the Celebration in Shelbyville that was the highlight.

And now today, she'll have horses she's trained showing in the 2022 Celebration. One horse, Diva, recently won a maiden competition in Murfreesboro where she placed 6th out of 60 entries. Deputy said she's excited to see how she does in the

▶ See **Deputy**, Page 8C

Deputy with "Diva," who will be in the Celebration.

Photo by Zoe Haggard



Crystal Deputy with "Girlie."

Photos by Zoe Haggard



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Deputy

(Continued from Page 7C)

Celebration.

Over the years, Deputy has had many horses in the reserves as well as one World Grand Champion, Jose's Valentine in 2016. "As a kid I loved horses. I didn't care if they bucked me off. I would've ridden any horse."

Horses and college

Deputy attended Virginia Tech where she studied natural resources and forestry. "I just wanted to be outside."

To put herself through four and half years of college, she broke two-year-old horses on the side. "I used to get up in college and go to a barn and feed, clean out stalls before classes."

She's a hard worker, to say the least. So, when she applied and got the job with long-time acquaintance and horse trainer, Dickie Gardner, she packed up her Volkswagen Jetta and made the move to Shelbyville in 2012.

"I'm sure at the time, my family thought it was a little crazy," she said. "When I first moved down here, I told my mom it was going to be for 2 months. Here we are 9 years later." Before going off on her own, she worked at Dickie Gardner Stables for about 6 years then another 2 years at Joe Lester Stables.

The life may sound crazy to some, that is, getting up early each morning to ride for hours on end until the saddle pads are wet with sweat-not to mention all the while working in the heat and the cold and swatting at horse flies.

But Deputy says, "I love horses." And specifically, Tennessee Walkers, "They are so versatile because I do the showing but

then I have horses that I take trail riding. And they're just gentle, too."

She tries to ride 12 to 14 horses a day, she says, that is, if her back allows. This year, Deputy has started working around 35 (2 year olds) that have never been ridden. She has to teach them how to turn, stop and stand still. Then after the basics, she teaches them the correct gear.

"But I like starting them from the ground-up like that."

When looking at yearlings, Deputy said she's looking for swing and good conformation. That means, "a gaited horse, but not too swingy."

"You want them to be a true walk. So, the gear that we show them in is in the middle: not too swingy or pacey and not too square or trotty."

Deputy says if she has one that's too square, she'll ride them fast to make them find that pace. Or if one is too pacey, she'll ride them in circles and figure eights to square out in their gait.

But oddly enough, in addition to knowing how to work with the horse, Deputy says her job involves a lot of people skills. "We are not only horse trainers. We are therapists, mentors . . . So what you really have to be good at is talking to people. Because in the end, you're training for the people," Deputy explained.

She said the most rewarding part of her job is seeing young riders place ribbons. And she'll definitely be looking for such an award this August.

"As a horse trainer, for us, the most rewarding part is the owners and the children when they win."

Deputy atop the 2021 SSHBEA Lite Shod World Grand Champion.

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Trainer spotlight: Carrie Martin DeJarnatte

A bit 'horse crazy'

By ZOË HAGGARD

Originally from Spokane, Washington, Carrie Martin DeJarnatte admits she's always been a little "horse crazy."

"I grew up horse crazy my whole life—can't imagine anything else."

It's generational as her mom and grandparents rode horses.

DeJarnatte jokes, "When you get the horse drug, it's the most expensive drug in the world."

In the early 2000s, DeJarnatte moved to Florida where she was introduced to Tennessee Walking Horses for the first time.

"Well, I just answered an ad in the paper for a job. I had been working with horses my whole life thoroughbreds, quarter horses, Arabians. Never seen a walking horse before and I was just so impressed by this breed."

DeJarnatte lived in Florida for almost 20 years and trained horses for Montverde Academy's school program (run by Kasey Kesselring of Shelbyville) as well as working in an assistant trainer role at Hard Rock Farm in Williston.

At that time, she primarily worked with flat-shod horses. And she was struck by how friendly the Tennessee Walking Horse breed was. "And I had a big learning curve for not trotting."

She started coming to Shelbyville for the Celebration in 2004. "Back then, on stake night, you could barely walk through the streets and the barns, there were just so many people. I had never experienced that at a horse show before."

She won her first World Championship shortly after in 2006 in Novice English Trail Pleasure. That was the same year she received her professional training license.

"You learn so many aspects of horse care and health and

how to train. And, how to communicate with customers and how to give a lesson. That's one of the most difficult things, putting something into words that is nonverbal."

But coming from other breeds, the Walking Horse people impressed her a great deal in how welcoming and friendly they were.

DeJarnatte said she loves working with anyone who is a horse enthusiast—even those half-way around the world. "The breed has brought us so many great friendships and experiences."

She went to Europe three times to do Walking Horse riding clinics, including in Germany, the Netherlands, France and Switzerland. "They always impress me with their level of dedication."

Tennessee Walking Horses began being imported around the world over 40 years ago. DeJarnatte said riders fall in love with their temperament and gait. "Once you get the feel of it, it's a wonderful thing."

She said one of the most impactful horses she's worked with has been Etta James by TJB, who won two World Grand Championships. She was bred by close friend, Kathy Zeis, who passed away 2019. Etta James was then given to DeJarnatte. Etta James won the Celebration 17 times by the time she was 7 years old and was then retired two weeks before the 2020 Celebration.

Now, in this year's Celebration, DeJarnatte will be showing Blacklist and Big Booty

► See **DeJarnatte**, Page

Carrie DeJarnatte on Blacklist, winning the trainers show in 2022.

Submitted photo



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Blacklist won World Championship in 2021



T-G Photo by Zoe Haggard

Carrie Martin DeJarnatte with Big Booty Judy at Wayne Dean Stables in Lewisburg

DeJarnatte

(Continued from Page 10C)

Judy, a new horse.

Another horse, Malice, is a contender for Novice English Trail Pleasure, which is the same class DeJarnatte first won 16 years ago.

“During the Celebration, we’ll work a 20-hour day, generally for about 10 days. It is stressful but it’s a lifestyle.”

DeJarnatte has been working full-time at Wayne Dean Stables in Lewisburg since 2012. DeJarnatte and Dean do everything themselves from cleaning the stalls, to feeding and riding. DeJarnatte described the stables’ as having a boutique feel—one where they focus on quality over quantity as they keep around 20 head.

But outside of the physical labor, DeJarnatte said the hardest part of being a trainer is upholding everyone’s hopes and dreams and getting everyone in the ring, including the horse and its rider at their best.

“There’s a saying: you win or you learn. And sometimes you learn. It’s always a long road . . . lot of ups and downs. And a lot of times people don’t see that from the outside . . . work we put into the horse and the rider for it to all come together.”



From left, Freda Dean, Malice, Carrie and Ralph DeJarnatte

Submitted photos

Celebration entries top 2,500

The Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration closed entries for its upcoming 84th Annual Celebration on Aug. 2. The pre-show entries for the upcoming World Championship topped 2,500, coming in at 2,536. The 2022 total is a 12% increase over 2021.

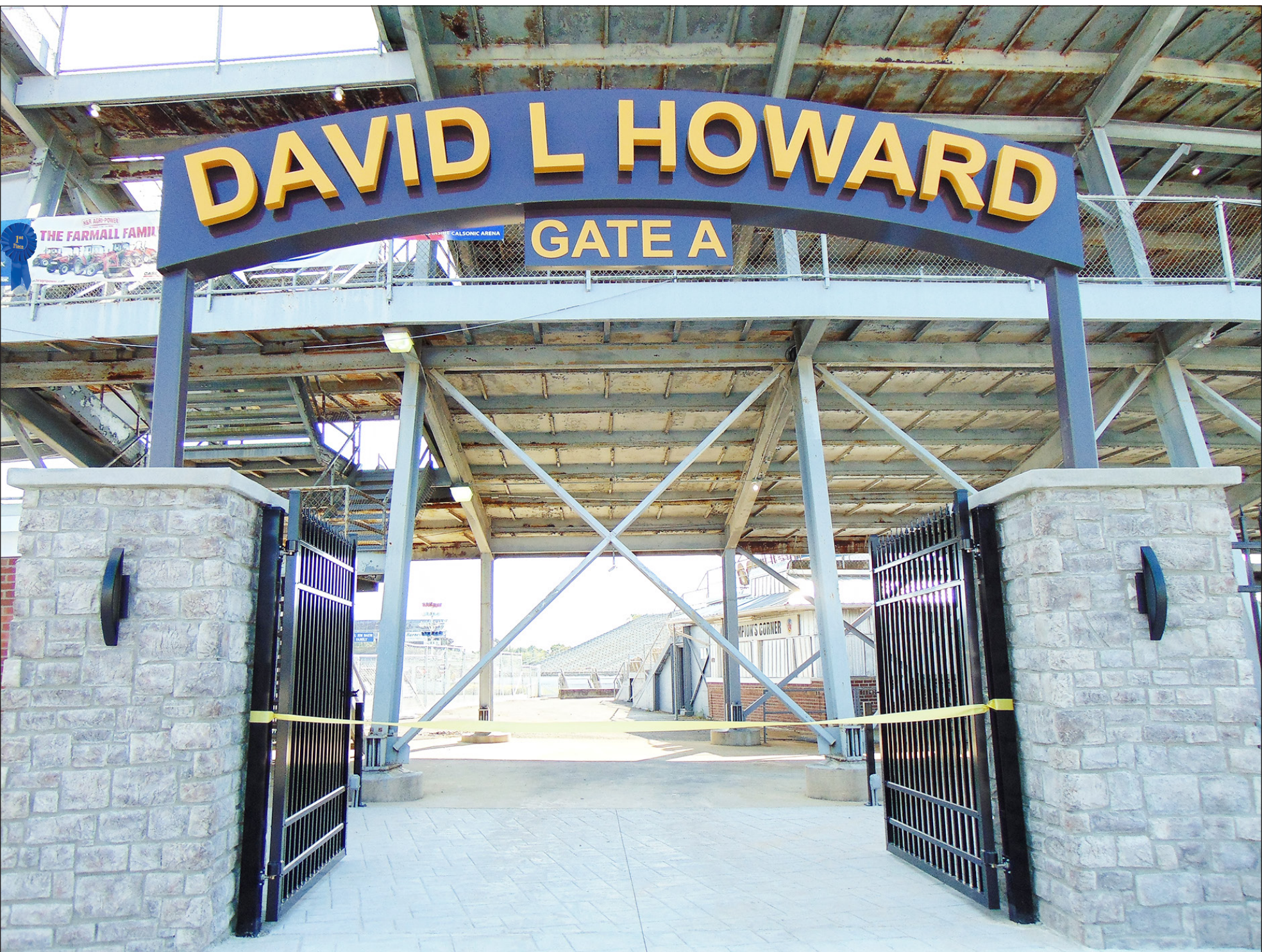
"I'm ecstatic about our entries this year. Our numbers in 2020 were up 10% so I knew 2021 would be hard to have much of a jump, and was happy to have 10 more entries than the year before. But to have an increase of over 10% this year is very exciting. Everything we watch to get a pulse on the show is trending up this year and it feels like it is going to be a great Celebration," said Celebration CEO Warren Wells.

The 2022 Celebration will feature four Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders' & Exhibitors' Association Futurity classes as well as some combined classes that allow futurity nominated horses to participate in both the Celebration class as well as earn their futurity prize monies. The Futurity accounts for approximately 75% of the increased entries at this year's World Championship, Wells advised.

The number of unique horses also jumped significantly in 2022. There are 1420 unique horses entered at The Celebration compared to 1,320 in 2021, marking an 8% increase in horses competing this year as well.

The 84th Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration runs through Sept. 3 at the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration grounds.





TWHNC dedicates David L. Howard gate

By **DAWN HANKINS**

TWHNC held a ribbon cutting on Aug. 15 to celebrate the addition of the David L. Howard Memorial Gate. A wine and cheese social, featuring a champagne toast, followed the event. This section at the Celebration grounds

is known as Gate A, which is located near Blue Ribbon Circle and the VFW booth.

Howard's family was present for the ceremony—one which honored a man who was deeply invested in the walking horse industry. He served on the board of the Tennessee Walking Horse National

Celebration for almost 20 years.

Howard, who passed away in 2016, first had a summer job at the Voice of the Tennessee Walking Horse magazine.

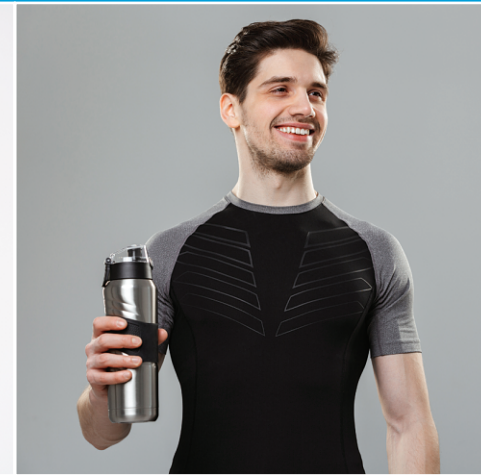
David and Mary married in Chattanooga on Aug. 20, 1966; they had three children, Christy, Jennifer and

Jeffrey.

Howard started in Shelbyville the Walking Horse Report with the assistance of 12 investors, including his mentor Randall Rollins. The family built a legacy—the publishing business known today as Dabora, Inc.



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It's Celebration time! Check it out!

Jon English Antique Sports & Cards

By MARK MCGEE

Editor's note: Many visitors to Shelbyville for the Celebration also enjoy other sports, in addition to horse shows. If you're a sports memorabilia collector, be sure to stop in and visit with Jon English at his Antique Sports and Card store on the historic square. (See Section D Cover.)

Jon English Antique Sports and Cards is a museum where visitors can actually purchase what they see.

With thousands of items of all kinds on display it would be difficult for a sports fan to not be able to find something of interest whether it be a rare baseball card or an antique football helmet. Keith Wallace helps English run the shop.

"I always wanted to do a store on a square in downtown, USA," English said. "Traveling around and collecting this stuff, I went through a lot of little towns that have squares."

English has a basement full, but his collection grew exponentially as he traveled around to flea markets, antique stores, yard sales and private homes on buying trips.

"It is nice to be able to display my collection and have it out of bins," English said. "Growing up, I collected coins. It was cheap fun back then. I have always collected something. My life has always been around hobbies."

Most of the time it was due to history. It wasn't about the monetary factor.

He refers to himself as the caretaker of his sports collection, but he has become more willing to part with items since he opened the store on Labor Day weekend in 2020. He also has an online presence at vintagesportsantiques.com.

"It is good stuff and easy to sell, but I don't care if I sell any of this stuff," English said. "I still look at it as a hobby and I want to enjoy it. I don't look at it as a business. I might be buying more than I sell anyway. You never can tell what might come in the door."

See more about Jon English in the Saturday, Aug. 27, Times-Gazette.





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Don't forget those Optimist Club donuts

By ZOË HAGGARD

It's safe to say, people just don't understand what all goes into making a donut. Especially into making an Optimist Club Donut found at the annual Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration.

"I usually eat one, maybe two. Because if you're there, especially in the kitchen, you get to smell the donuts—and your hair, and your clothes," said Brent Pewitt, Optimist Club president and second-generation donut booth manager.

And on top of the smell, the kitchen gets to be 80 degrees with the deep fryers going and the volunteers running around trying to meet both the early morning and late-night demands.

Not to mention the over \$200 worth of cooking oil and 10,000 pounds of donut mix that goes through the booth over the course of the Celebration's 10 days.

And you better watch for "misfires," those tricky donuts that don't make a complete circle or break on the sticks during the icing process. But even those are saved

**Booth opens at
6 a.m. and
closes at 11 p.m.**



and fed to crowds who come yearly for the same cake donut that's been around for over 60 years.

Pewitt describes it as a "pluck it cake" with a lot more icing.

The Optimist Club began in 1958. Their food booth started a year later, which began selling doughnuts at the behest of club member George Baker by 1960. Originally, the club didn't think there was a market for just selling donuts and coffee. But there was.

So much so that the club upgraded to bigger booth in 1974 after outgrowing the

Celebration barn.

They're still there today and Pewitt, whose father was around during the club's inception, has been a part of it since the late 80s.

Even the mixers are traditional as the same 1930s dough mixer the club received from Whitman's bakery are still up and running here in 2022.

Pewitt's background as an engineer at National Aerospace Solutions comes in handy when working with those machines. But it's the usefulness of his time and the people that keeps him coming back.

"The people is the main thing...I see more people there in the booth than I do inside a box...I bet you can see up to 10,000 people easy," he said, especially people he hasn't seen in a year up to 30 years.

But it's all worth it—for customer satisfaction and the work that can be done with the funds raised.

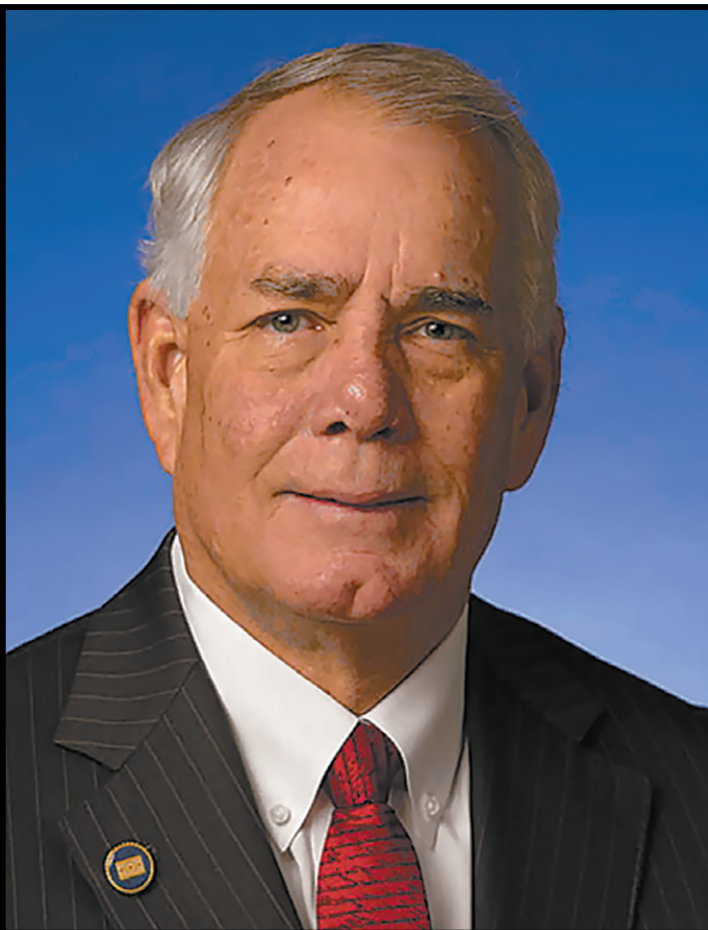
Projects like Stuff-A-Bus, Warm Coats, Imagination Library, as well as donating money to new athletic fields and school art supplies are all funded in part by the Optimist Club donut money.

"I can raise a lot more money with my time than I can just being paid for my time. So, it's a multiplier—makes my time a lot more valuable," Pewitt said.

And social media, Pewitt says, has helped a lot. You can follow them on Facebook or tag #optimistdonuts.

The booth opens at 6 a.m. and closes at 11 p.m. Get a dozen for \$8.00.

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All in God's timing: Regina Sauls

Those walking horse dreams

By **DAWN HANKINS**

Some folks fall into the walking horse industry by happenstance, others perhaps by family legacy. Regina Sauls is convinced her involvement in the Tennessee Walking Horse industry is a “dream come true.” Better yet, a gift from God.

Regina is an amateur owner and rider; she works professionally as a special education bus driver by day. Come August, she's a true Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration fan, owner and exhibitor.

Regina notes that she was introduced to the Tennessee Walking Horse in 1990 by Norma Lynn Bledsoe Beal. She rode her first walking horse (which everyone knows is quite a thrill) in Pinson, Ala., courtesy of the late David Bledsoe Sr.

It was so thrilling, she doesn't remem-

ber the name of that horse. What she does recall is that it was a tall, gray, beauty owned by the late Sally Flack.

Regina was hooked immediately on Tennessee Walking Horses.

She began a trail of going to the shows and just cheering for, well, everyone. She learned about the breed. She dreamed of owning one. But in her mind, she thought, “maybe someday.”

“My first Celebration was in 1990. Norma Lynn and her dear brother, David Bledsoe Jr. told me I needed to go to this ‘little’ 10-day show in Shelbyville, Tennessee’ and meet up with their mom and dad.”

Regina says she was all for an adventure, so she loaded up the car and hit the road for about a 3-hour drive. Shelbyville, in her eyes, was, indeed, that “cute little town” of which her friends spoke.

“I thought but now this little horse show was huge! Wow! I remember walking around the show grounds. Barns were decorated so pretty. People were sitting around talking . . . horses were being rode.

The last Saturday night, we sat up in the north turn. I still remember the announcer saying that there was more people there then there was at the Alabama - Tennessee game. I was like, dang!”

Fast forward to the 1990s. “I ended up with a beautiful black walking horse, Chip's Mark Of Carbon. Chip became my pal. I did finally get in the show ring on him. It was fun, but due to things beyond my control, all that came to an end. But, I still had Chip and that was all that mattered.”

In 2003, Regina decided to leave Alabama and move to that “cute little town of Shelbyville.” She had a dream of being involved with Tennessee Walking Horses. “I call this my pre-mid life crisis move.”

She says though things did not work out like she had thought, or desired, she

remained “a cheerleader for the walking horses.”

“I knew that in God's time, it would happen or at least I hoped it would. I still had my Chip, but he was still in Alabama. I loved him from a distance, until he passed away.”

She remembers saying after that loss, no more. She remained, though, a walking horse supporter.

“I did end up getting a great job working with the Board of Ed as a school bus driver with special ed kids. It's a job I love.”

Best of all, she adds, Bedford County School System takes a break during The Celebration. How convenient for this Celebration enthusiast.

“My mother and I started making The Celebration a yearly mother/daughter event. She would come up from Alabama and stay the whole week. We would have so much fun laughing . . . making memo-

▶ See **Sauls**, Page 6D



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Sauls

(Continued from Page 5D)

ries. In 1997, I checked on getting box seats. I got put on the waiting list which was no big deal.”

In 2007, she received her seats; she’s now located at the south turn, which is right at the rail. This is the perfect place, she notes, for cheering people on during their ride.

She laughs and says when you get seats at the south turn, cover your food and drinks. The exhibitors really let ‘em walk on’ around that turn, she advises.

Mom moves to Shelbyville

In 2000, Regina’s mother sold her place in Alabama and moved to Shelbyville. They needed a place to put her Tennessee Walking Horses (a.k.a her babies) until they could get the barn built.

“With one phone call, I was given the name of trainer Jerry Williams at Uncle

Nearest—just down the road. He was able to board the horses for us. I would go over on Saturday and check on them and watch them ride.”

She was determined to remain a cheerleader. “After we got the barn built and the horses moved home, mother decided one day (August 2001) that she wanted to go over and see ‘Jerry and the Boys.’” That trip proved productive in many ways for Regina.

“Well . . . I asked Jerry, “So what are honor horses selling for these days?” (Honor horses in most cases refer to a horse whose sire was of World Champion status.)

She listened to Jerry. Then, she saw her horse, “Juicy.”

“I went back a day or two later and they rode him. I could see something special but I could also see in Jerry, Jeremy, and Brad’s eyes that they saw something special in this horse. I think they had just had him in the barn for about 2 weeks.”

Sold! Regina thought all the way home about what she had just done. Then it hit

her how all of it had to be in “God’s timing.”

“I came home and broke the news to mother that I bought the horse and she said, ‘I knew you would. I could see the connection you two had when he was in the cross ties.’”

She wanted to ride, but decided to turn the reins over to Jeremy Jeansonne-Williams. She remains “the cheerleader.”

Sadly, Regina’s Mom, Pauline Allen, just passed away on Sunday, Aug. 21. “Ms. Pauline’s” obituary in Alabama states additional survivors include her “grand horse,” John McEnroe “Big Juicy.”

While grieving, Regina plans to will carry on with their mother/daughter dream.

Still “the cheerleader”

“I have loved going to the barn ever Tuesday and Thursday . . . after I get done doing my morning route on the bus,” she reveals.

Regina believes she was afforded the opportunity to give “Big Juicy” tender-loving care. In turn, he does the same by

warming her heart.

It’s the simple things; she is thrilled to see him stick his head out of his stall. She says sometimes, she thinks it’s as if he knows it time for her to be walking in.

“I call it my barn therapy! Everyone needs a little barn therapy.”

Regina notes how for over a year, it’s been talked of Big Juicy being in the TWHNC. “It has been so much fun knowing that this year, I will have a horse in that ‘little show’ that I saw for the first time in 1990.”

She’s currently making sure her contender has every thing he needs—a new headband, ads, banners, photos, etc. While she may not be in the show ring as an exhibitor, Regina notes she remains ever stalwart as a “cheerleader for the breed.”

She has future plans. “I hope I can get more involved in promoting the walking horse in some way, whether it’s talking to kids and letting them know they can do it . . . letting people know dreams can come true. I keep telling myself that this is all a dream. I was never suppose to have a horse good enough to be in The Celebration. But, then I remember, IT’S ALL IN GOD’S TIMING!”



ABOVE: Mom and Daughter
RIGHT: "Big Juicy" and Jeremy



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Among friends and family

Walking horse business: Sarah Thomas

There's just something special between trainers and exhibitors. Those involved in the industry know this well.

It's a hard business. The competition is tough. So it only makes sense that exhibitors like Sarah Thomas have those trainers who have her back.

Sarah knows this all too well of her friends with Dickie Gardner Stables—Victoria Kalosis and Dickie. (By the way, named 'Pleasure Trainer of the Year.')

Sarah and Victoria, though they have a business partnership, have been friends longer—since elementary days. They even took riding lessons together.

Victoria and Sarah still ride together—both professionally and for fun. Victoria now trains two of Sarah's horses. Dickie rides the other two horses.

Look for horses named Just a Few Dollars More and Resurgence to make a great showing.

That sums up the horse industry they say—friends and family.



TRAINER DICKIE & SARAH

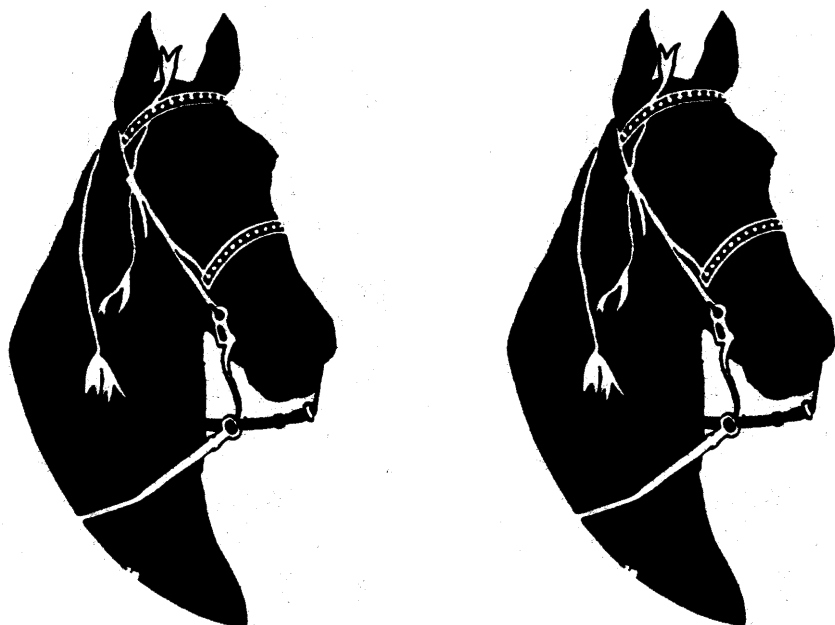
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In the quiet of the TWHNC grounds . . .

One week before the show

BY WARREN WELLS
TWHNC CEO

As we approach one week from the start of the 84th annual Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration, I took a walk around the grounds to think and clear my head.

The team has been working so hard with such long hours the last few weeks that it was the first time in weeks I can remember being the last one on the grounds.

This is a special place but you can feel its greatness in the still and quiet. I believe in my heart this will be one of the

best Celebrations in a long time. It was so peaceful to walk around the grounds and smell the fresh mulch and paint . . . the perfectly manicured Bermuda grass in the center ring . . . the lights on and the trophy case full.

I loved seeing the new David L. Howard gate lit up along with our new barns. All those stalls, getting ready for what could be the next World Grand Champion.

I know this place is special to so many and can't wait as people start making their pilgrimage back to Shelbyville, Tennessee for the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration.



Brief history of The Celebration

By ZOË HAGGARD
zhaggard@t-g.com

DID YOU KNOW?

The Celebration is Tennessee's longest continuously running event and has been chosen numerous times as a "Top-20 Event" by tourism groups.

As much as the Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration has given to the community, it makes sense that its inception began with community service in mind.

Over 80 years ago, the Shelbyville Lions and Rotary Club set out to begin a "festival

of sorts" to raise money for their community service.

"Back when the festival began, a couple members went over to Winchester to a Crimson Clover festival and they realized they needed something kind of like a festival," said Lions Club President Marc Majors. Among those members was Henry Davis, a horse trainer from Wartrace, who is credited with beginning the Celebration.

And it was finally decided that since the Tennessee Walking Horse was being marveled at inside the horse industry—being appreciated for both its strength and size—it was the perfect way to bring in a

big crowd.

It did just that. The first Tennessee Walking Horse National Celebration was held Sept. 7-9, in 1939, on the Tate Athletic Field, just north of Shelbyville High School. Ticket sales were in excess of 40,000, according to the Shelbyville City website.

During that first show, Strolling Jim was named the first Tennessee Walking Horse World Grand Champion.

Walking horses were originally known as Tennessee Pacers. They were officially recognized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1950 and became Tennessee's official state horse in 2000.

"We probably wouldn't have the industry if it wasn't for the Lions Club," said Majors.

So, when the Founder's Trophy is presented to the Grand Champion at the end of this year's show, watchers can understand that the everything the Celebration has given to the community began with a community-inspired project.

Over the years, the Celebration has remained a tradition and a legacy—one passed from generation to generation.

Thank you for being part of such a great legacy! Let 'em walk on!





LOCAL COUNTRY COOKING

T-G Photo by Dawn Hankins

If you're looking for home-style cooking, then you've come to the right town/county. Shelbyville and Bedford County offer some of the finest dishes with full southern service. So please support local businesses while visiting during the Celebration. This lunch photo was taken at Southern Fare on Lane Parkway.

At TWHNC

Connie Allen and
Lisa Turner



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1939 Parade



The Celebration



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HOWDY!



Visitors are welcomed into Shelbyville with a big greeting.

PROGRAMS



See the Shelbyville Lions Club for your program to the Celebration.

WEAR YOUR HAT!



Hat night! Come wearing your big and bold hats for Hats off to The Celebration on Saturday.

SMILING FACES



There are a lot of smiling faces at area horse shows, like these from the Wartrace Show this month.

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