

The Catalpa Experience ... Looking Back;

By Susan Brigham

Long before trailers pulled into the driveway in early August last year for the USEA-recognized Catalpa Corner Charity Horse Trials, volunteers began the long, patient hours of mowing and weed whacking the park's foliage into submission. The park emerged with a fine new haircut and the stage was set for the rest of the work to begin. Next, the placement of multiple rings, jumps and their decorations, signage, warm up area roping and fences, and course markers commenced. At the same time, organizers considered and made arrangements for manure management, portajohns, garbage cans and stall set up. It isn't glamorous, but you'd know if it wasn't done! We are grateful for the massive manure spreaders borrowed and emptied by Cathy Skriver, Skriver Stables. Meanwhile, Carol Eilers (*Apples 'n Oats* magazine) was hard at work creating a show program for our event. It takes no end of volunteers to accomplish all of this; thus, we are grateful to our enthusiastic and patient volunteer coordinator, Kate Hladky, who kept everyone on task.

On the Friday before the show, our Parking Stewards, Steve Snyder, Thad LaPorte, and Shane Pankonen, performed their duties with masterful tact and precision, creating neatly organized trailer parking out of the chaos of hastily arriving exhibitors. Haley Jones, Stabling Steward, designed, accepted and carried out the politically-sensitive stabling requests with finesse. Sawdust was delivered to every stall by Dick Trimble, Scales Bend Stables. Electrical hookups for the stalls were connected by Steve Wildman.

The long trailer haul always produces some loose horse shoes, and volunteer

blacksmith Eden Hall was on hand for repairs and more.

Saturday morning, the big day, dawned cool and overcast and with a hint of mist. No one would have predicted that type of weather for an August morning in Iowa. As the event commenced, it was set into organized motion by seasoned announcer, Jeff Riecke, assisted by Trish Ringgold, of Chesapeake Central Equestrian, and Phil Harder, who stepped in for a spell on Sunday. Jeff lifted the day with humor and ended it on Sunday with perfect championship music.

Our volunteer secretary, Beth Stoker, drove from Kansas for the thankless paperwork, and two-day scoring that went on into the darkness. Our dressage steward, Kristen Johansen, along with her bit checkers and scribes, ran the three-ring dressage circus, ably facilitating 160 rides in a little more than six hours. Cross country steward, Jay Stockhausen, and a cohort of jump stewards, judges, timers, runners, and comptrollers, formed a cast of characters deep in knowledge and commitment. Their patience and dedication was humbling.

When Cross Country time came, Catalpa Corner Charity Horse Trials' new Preliminary cross country course was complete – groomed and decorated – and the virginal three dozen cross country jump obstacles were diverse, solid and



- CCCHT VOLUNTEERS -

Haley Jones, Thad LaPorte, Gary Hart, Don Roe, Jessica Schumacher, Shane Pankonen, Pam & Phil Harder, Paul Welsh, Derith Vogt, Ali Hayford, and "Sammy" (Fish Jump sponsored by Abraham's Equine Clinic)

impressive in height and stature. The new preliminary course showcased the efforts of skilled carpenters Paul Welsh, Steve Snyder, Jay Wetmore, and Jay Stockhausen, who also provided the time, labor, and instruction for "apprentice carpenters." Many fond memories, along with solid new jumps, were the outcome. The fundraisers needed to build the new course this year, and continued upgrades, were spearheaded by Derith Vogt and Dr. Jim McNutt. The generosity in a year of recovery from floods, and a desperate financial outlook was heartening. We are continually grateful to Dr. Charles and Donna Abraham, Abraham's Equine Clinic, for their support of the multi-level water complex. On an individual level, Dr. Luis Lebrede and Ruth Rose continued their support by sponsoring the new preliminary coffin complex, a coop-to-creek crossing-to-log complex.

Stretched along the 1½-mile pathway of the Preliminary cross country course were scores of volunteers; stewards, starters, timers, jump judges, pinny collectors, and comptrollers. Waiting amongst the galloping lanes and finish line were numerous coaches, grooms, parents, and friends. Mr. Bernard Morauw, of Versailles Equestrian, IL, riding the capable and bold *Mephisto des Claires*, was the first ride of the day. The horse and rider team were



Wine Barrel Jump - Midwest Vet Supply (local artist Shelly Cilek) - photo by Pam Harder

Looking Forward



Liz Lund
[www.lizlund.com]
and
"Lady Hannah B"
Bird House Jump

photo by
Derith Vogt

plus volunteers are needed to commit to a weekend of fickle weather, biting insects, full bladders, sore feet and/or bums, wilted hamburgers, and a dizzying task of double-checking numbers and colors on horse and rider! And let's not forget the countless reminders that you forgot to do something right! Recognized events such as CCCHT 2009 are blessed with countless souls and bodies who perform a multitude of tasks that form the foundation of a horse trial, and we are supremely appreciative of their dedication.

As Sunday dawned, a bit too early for some after an entertaining and energetic live band at the Saturday night competitor's party, the stadium rings were full of new jumps, provided by our Stadium Stewards, Phil, Pam, and Lizzie Harder. The Harder family's artistic and supreme jump-building efforts took place over the winter months. The resulting jumps were stunning, and provided new twists and turns for the riders, and new visuals for the horses. The supporting crews kept the event running on time.

We are continually thankful for volunteer Safety Coordinator, Gary Hart, as he maneuvered through the minor bumps and bruises of the weekend. Our volunteer West Branch Fire Department, and the generous Southeastern Iowa Ambulance, donated their time in case of a serious emergency and were on the grounds quietly and ably during the show weekend.

We were blessed to have Paul Welsh and Ali Hayford pulling all of the loose ends together, no matter what the problem or job. They wear too many hats to count!

As the weekend drew to a close and horses and riders were awarded their prizes and took their victory gallops, we were especially thankful for the magnanimous outpouring of support from the Iowa horse community that allowed the horses' and riders' accomplishments. We are grateful to Midwest Veterinary Supply, Nutramax's Cosequin, Platinum Performance, and Nutrena, for monetary and product awards to our division leaders. Importantly, Catalpa Corner was able to donate funds to our local First Responders, West Branch Fire Department, and EIDEA, for sincere appreciation for their personal time and dedication. We hope to expand our donations in 2010.

The spectacular send-off for the victorious pairs was the culmination of a year of planning, unprecedented jump building, and relentless fund raising in an economically troubling year, and all from the volunteer community!

Only a few names of the eighty-plus volunteers are mentioned above, but Dr. Jim McNutt and I are perpetually grateful for ALL our volunteers who donate hours, days and a special weekend, to remember our son, Madison Brigham, and who join in and experience the magical moments between humans and horses.

The year 2010 will have an active calendar at Catalpa Corner, with open schooling in April. May 8-9 brings Jennie Brannigan in for an eventing clinic, and June 4-5 is the date for a Field Day Clinic with Camie Stockhausen. CCCHT is host to a One-Day Schooling Show on June 6! The USEA-Recognized CCCHT will be held July 31-August 1, 2010. Come join the fun and be an important part of Iowa's horse Community! See how you can help by joining our fun group of volunteers.

You can contact me through our website or just check our calendar:

<http://www.catalpacorner.org/>

See you in 2010!



Bernard Moraau and "Mephisto des Claires" en route to successfully finishing their first ever preliminary round - photo by Derith Vogt
Jump sponsored by "The Boogers"

attempting their first-ever preliminary competition together. The smiles, cheers, joy, and obvious relief as Mr. Moraau approached and negotiated the final obstacle in rhythmic perfection, in the same manner that he rode the rest of the course, were palpable. The ensuing riders and horses were capable, competent, and exciting.

Eventing is a high risk, adrenaline-pumping equestrian sport that demands much of horse and rider - at all levels. Eventing is also a highly demanding, physically challenging volunteer sport.

For an event of 160 riders, at least 80