

USDF “Art of Dressage” Results

... and Congratulations to CNYD&CTA’s own Mackenzie Cooley for not one, but two First Place Entries!!!

The United States Dressage Federation (USDF) is pleased to announce the results of the USDF Art of Dressage Youth Arts Contest. USDF received more than 100 entries from youth members in fourteen divisions of photography, art, and writing. The USDF Art of Dressage Contest was designed to encourage creativity and the involvement of youth riders in the sport of dressage outside the realm of riding.

The winning entries will be published in the 2005 USDF Yearbook and will be displayed at the USDF Annual Convention. The winners and second place finishers will receive a trophy and prizes.

PHOTOGRAPHY – POSED 15 & UNDER DIVISION

First Place Mackenzie Cooley Liverpool, NY

WRITING – NONFICTION 15 & UNDER DIVISION

First Place MacKenzie Cooley Liverpool, NY

(see next page and back cover for Mackenzie’s works)

For more information on the USDF Art of Dressage Contest, contact Sheila Forbes at (859) 271-7879 or sforbes@usdf.org.



Burying Arctic Treasure
By Mackenzie Cooley (1/17/05)
Dedicated to Kaye Osborne and the Memory of Artie

He had been sick for a long time.

Over the past months, his fits of glee and fitness had gone and urine became thick with blood. Just walking from his stall became a great challenge.

Thus, it was a unanimous conclusion that Artie needed freedom from this pain and torment after thirty-three years.

I waited alone in the barn, staring unseeing at the white horse motionless in his stall. The sun was setting in the August sky.

Not long ago, Artie had once a week, on lesson days, been my horse. However, the irony was that every other child felt the same way. Everyone's first show was on Artie: first trot, first canter, first trail and anything else. When he was not being ridden in beginner lessons, the older girls would ride him, and depending on his mood, he would buck them off. Each night as we departed, after tending to our own horses, we always made a special point to bid Artie a good night.

As I peered at him, a monarch drifted in through the open door. Whether the stench drew her or the sense of sorrow needing light, I will never know. She landed proudly on the pony's back. Even when he swayed unsteadily, debating if he would give up standing, the butterfly held.

I stopped thinking for the next hour. I felt my trainer come to stand behind me. Although all of the girls believed that Artie was theirs, in essence, he belonged to her. I could hear her breath quiver in the thick air.

My senses returned with the sound of speeding tires on the driveway. The veterinarian jumped out of the vehicle, moving quickly with his box.

"Where?" He asked briskly, knowing that drawing out would only increase the pain.

"Out back," whispered my instructor. She lifted the worn periwinkle halter from its hook. Her hands moved swiftly over Artie's head, hesitating over the hook, unwilling to finalize the dismal reality.

Artie walked from his stall. The shine was gone from his coat. It was thick and rough now, though the weather had been stifling for weeks.

His pace was slow, strides were careful. This movement down the aisle was no different from a dead man walking. Yet what crime had this little white pony ever committed? Outdoors, he snorted once, knowing what was coming. The butterfly opened her wings and flew away into the newly fallen night.

The trailer sat in front of the fresh hole. My trainer held her breath as she lead Artie to it. The veterinary box was open and needles filled. With one glance exchanged, my trainer nodded.

Artie lifted his head in protest. My instructor held him with a sob. With the next movement my heart stopped. For a second he wavered, tipping from side to side. He was a ghost floating in the light summer breeze.

The thud echoes in my dreams to this very day.

I cannot remember anything more of that night other than my trainer's hand in mine as tears trickled down her face. I could not cry, one who has lost one's heart also lacks tears to shed.

Yet time has a way of passing. The hole has long been covered and grass has grown over it. But every time I depart, I make a point to bid good night to Artie.