

My First Lendon Gray Experience

by Sara Martin, C-2, Delaware Pony Club, Delmarva Region

My name is Sara Martin and I am a C-2 with the Delaware Pony Club in the Delmarva Region.

I wanted to take a moment to share my

wonderful experience at the Lendon Gray Dressage festival 2008.

Earlier this year I was surfing through the USPC website and came across a

Suggested reading for: Parents, Leaders, Instructors, all Members

scholarship opportunity to attend the Lendon Gray Dressage 4kids Festival. Immediately I went to the Lendon Gray website to do a little research and see what the festival was all about and I knew that this was something that I wanted to do. I discussed it with my parents and they agreed that it would be a wonderful opportunity for me and my pony, but they said that I could not depend on the scholarship—if I wanted to attend I needed make the commitment to go and to prepare myself and my pony. If I was able to prepare myself we would attend with or without the scholarship. I set my sights on showing First Level which was something new for "Keeper" and myself. We contacted our Regional Supervisor—Bodgie Read—and she was so supportive, we sent in the necessary paperwork to the USPC and I began to prepare Keeper and myself for the festival.

Keeper and I worked extremely hard to prepare, he can be very difficult and very naughty at times but my mother called on an old friend and wonderful Trainer Kate Hutchings to help me along. So Kate, Keeper and



USPC Team at the 2008 Lendon Gray Dressage 4kids Festival "Teddy's Angels" consisted of Sara Martin, Megan Kapral, Mackenzie Durtz and Ashley Anderson.

myself spent hours preparing and riding our First Level tests. My pony had always been shown in the Hunter Ring so trying to school him in Dressage has been quite challenging but also very rewarding.

The wait for news on the scholarship seemed like a lifetime but just a few weeks before the festival I finally received word that I was a member of the USPC team and I would be attending the festival. I was so excited and immediately began planning and communicating with my teammates online. Before I knew it we were packing the trailer and heading for New York.

I must say when we first arrived I was very intimidated by some of the riders and their mounts, but I remembered the instruction my trainer had given me and I concentrated on myself and my pony "Keeper."

The festival began and Keeper and I began to ride our tests. I had entered two divisions Training and First Level. This was only our second time out First Level so I was relieved that we were scheduled to ride our Training Test

first. We were both a little nervous in the ring but the judge was so positive about our ride that we relaxed and really started to have fun. We had a blast the entire 3 days. There was so much to do, educational opportunities, ice cream socials, pizza party, demonstrations and the judges were all incredible. They were all so positive and had such wonderful constructive comments. I rode my first ever Dressage Equitation class and came in second and finished 2nd in the First Level Division, our USPC team took second place also. Our last day was a little disappointing with our musical ride, the heat had taken its toll on Keeper and he had no fuel left in his tank. I struggled to push him through the music and I was so far behind I am not sure I rode all of the required movements and I totally made up the second half of the ride as I went along. At the end all I could do was laugh; I guess that's the beauty of the freestyle. We had such an incredible time and my pony gave me more than I could have ever asked for. It was awesome!!! I won many wonderful prizes, but most

KATY BARGLOW (Crossfields and Woodside Pony Club s) Katy graduated from Stanford with a degree in Chemistry with Honors, minor in Biology. She recently finished a PhD in Biochemistry at the Scripps Research Institute, as a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Predoctoral Fellow. Katy now works as a researcher at UC Berkeley, as a Postdoctoral Fellow of the American Cancer Society. She is married to Jonathan Melnick (they met in grad school) who is also a PhD biochemist, now working for a small biotech startup. She still rides and has earned her USDF Silver and Gold medals (4th-Grand Prix) and Freestyle Gold Bar. She won the USDF National Amateur Horse of the Year Award at Grand Prix—on a horse she trained from a 3-yr old—and other Dressage awards! Katy is a USPC National Examiner for the new Dressage specialty

ratings and the knowledge tests (H-B). She lives in Berkeley, CA, with her husband, 4 cats, and her 2 horses, working at UC Berkeley and training two young horses up the levels.

NICOLE RAYL (Bay Hills Pony Club) Nicki graduated from UC Davis in 2002. She worked a post-graduate researcher doing Marine Ecology Field work for two years. Nicki then took a job with NASA as a Flight Projects Specialist at NASA Ames Research Center at Moffett Field in California. She works as a project manager for international partner space station flight experiments and green technologies. At NASA she has received a number of awards for her work in project management and implementation of student safety programs. She also conducts hypergravity research and is a scientific scuba diver for NASA. Nicki doesn't have her horse anymore but she still

teaches at a couple of Pony Clubs in the area and has a handful of Dressage and Eventing students.

JEN GILBERT (nee Goss) (Berks Pony Club) Jen is a graduate H-A who has graduated with a degree in History and Political Science from Kutztown University. She married in 2004 and is a history teacher at Sweetwood Area High School in PA. Jen is presently working on her Master's degree at Westchester University in Holocaust and Genocide. Jen recently is working with her new horse and helping her sister Jamie operate a new training facility, Windswept Acres in Stonetown PA. Cars are Jen's other passion and she races and shows Fieros and Corvettes. ■

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