

Loping with the Big Dogs ~ Press Release

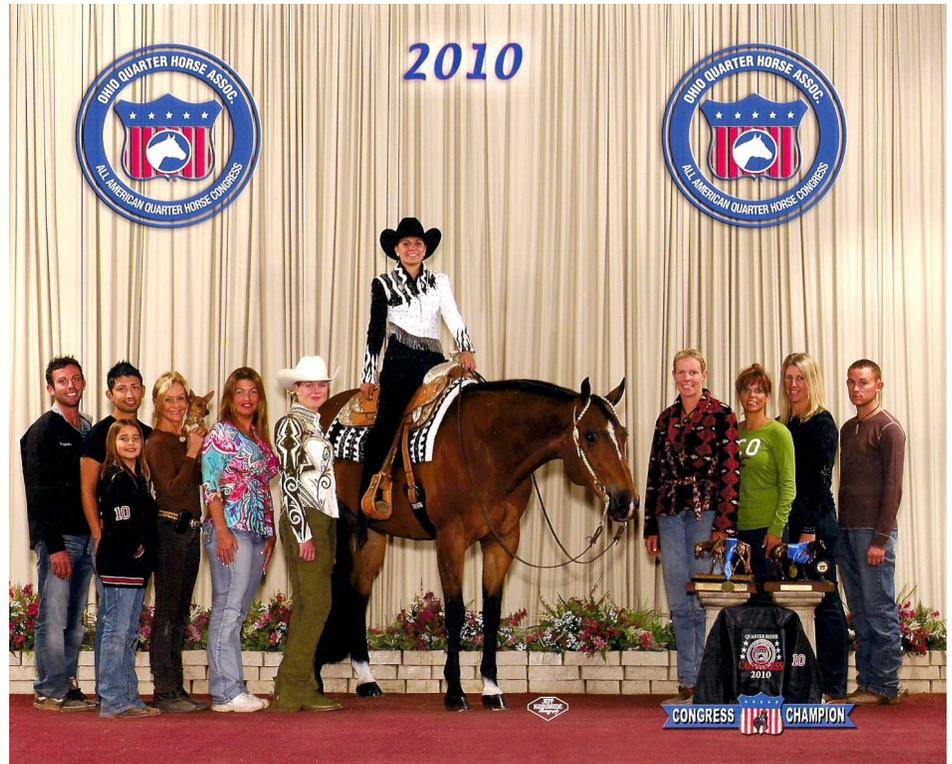
Southern California Equestrian Directory – November 10, 2010

Trendsetter LOPIN WITH THE BIG DOGS

A Trip to the 2010 AQHA Congress Show in Ohio is a dream come true for almost any horse show exhibitor. SoCalEquine is pleased to highlight two groups from California who competed in this prestigious event.

At Trendsetter Performance Horses of Chino, the Congress is always a special show; even though for some of the popular barn's clients, this top level of showing is nothing new. This year, Owner/Trainer Kellie Hinely coached two young riders to tremendous success at the Congress.

First, youth rider Chelsea Sterling and her stunning gelding Potential Duplicity, came home with the Congress Championship in Novice Youth (13 & Under) Trail. The pair also captured the Congress Reserve Championship in Youth (12-14) Western Horsemanship. Chelsea and "Andy" also reached the Top Ten, finishing 8th overall, out of a field of over 100 exhibitors, in the Novice Youth (13 & Under) Showmanship event. Second, Trendsetter barn member Miranda Mitten and her horse, Zippo's Jet Lag, topped the best of some of the nation's world caliber youth riders, winning the Congress Championship in the Youth (12-14) Trail class. Kellie and the whole barn at Trendsetter are so proud of these young equestrians, who "showed" they can take it to the top at the 2010 AQHA All American Congress. If you want to compete at next year's Congress, be sure to contact Trendsetter Performance Horses for training or to find that



perfect Congress horse!
www.trendsetterperformancehorses.com Congrats!

Another California equestrian, Wen-Dee Cote and her horse, Sienna Sky, went to this year's Congress with Trainer Buffy Young. This was such a special trip for this group, being the first time showing at the Congress for the horse, for her amateur owner and for the trainer! Wen-Dee shares some of her thoughts about the whole experience with SoCalEquine below.

SoCal Equestrian Directory (SCED): How did you get the idea that 2010 would be the year when you actually showed at the Congress? So many of us think about it, but you did it!

Wen-Dee Cote (WC): I flew out and watched in 2009 for a few days. I was instantly star

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struck. The Congress has been a “bucket list” item of mine since I was a youth. When I was there I watched the 2 year old Hunter Under Saddle (HUS) Futurities and the 2 YO HUS Masters. That is when the wheels started turning in my mind for Sienna. I did my research of Futurities from local, Reichert, NSBA World to Congress. I then presented my ideas to my trainer, Buffy Young, and we both said if we had to pick one...“CONGRESS.” Who Hoo - I was finally going to Congress!



SCED: How much planning went into the decision, and when did you really know you were going to attend?

WC: Planning – so how well do you know me...hee hee. Not only were we going to Congress, but I had decided to show in the Masters, which is a slot class. This means not just anyone can enter- you have to purchase a slot. I found someone online that wanted to lease out their 2010 slot back in December of 2009. That is when the planning began. I took care of all the travel plans, stalling plans, social plans, etc. I left Buffy to take care of Sienna's training program. I think the best plan I made was renting an RV for camping on the grounds - that was a must and it worked out perfectly. I posted a “wanted” ad for an RV and found

one from a private person and put a deposit on it probably back in May or June. I also made a time frame Calendar of what needed to be taken care each month prior. This helped also in spreading out some of the expenses. The calendar consisted of simple things from photo shoots, washing blankets, to servicing the truck and trailer for the trip.

SCED: Tell us about your horse, her name, and which events she showed in.

WC: Her Name is SIENNA SKY, she is a 2008 grey filly by Skys Blue Boy out of Chipaluna (by Zips Chocolate Chip). I bought her as a yearling from Ann Myers in Ohio. So it was special to have her make a trip back to her home state. She showed in the 2010 Congress HUS Masters Futurity and Amateur HUS.

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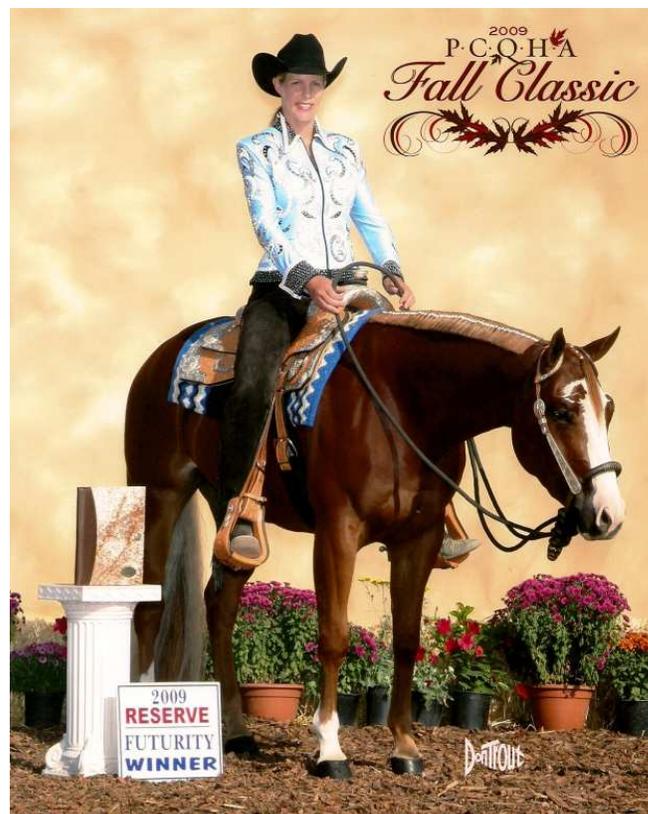
SCED: How did Trainer Elizabeth “Buffy” Young plan the horse's under saddle training for this “maiden” event – what special milestones of progress were met to insure the horse's participation?

WC: Buffy really knew what she was doing. Buffy believes in the health and happiness of Sienna, and she allowed me to partner with her in the progress. Buffy had a schedule that started slow and included lots of rest for Sienna. The last thing she wanted was to push the youngster too hard. So she had me put the first 60 days of riding on Sienna myself, which was so cool. Then Sienna went to Buffy for a little harder work. Then she came home with me for a 2 month rest before the big push into Congress. About 100 days prior to Congress, Sienna went back to Buffy for more intense training. The one thing we wanted to make sure was that Sienna had the stamina to keep up the work and stay healthy throughout. Prior to leaving for Ohio, we had a full vet check. The vet said “wish all my futurity babies looked this good”...Buffy did everything right in her plan.

SCED: When was it decided who would actually exhibit the mare? How was this decision reached between you and your Trainer, Buffy?

WC: Oh that is the million dollar question. All along I was going to be the one that would ride Sienna in the Masters. Keep in mind, amateurs don't ride in the Masters...this class is basically exhibited by the best Huntseat riders/trainers in the nation. But heck I can ride too! Buffy was very supportive of me and my quest to ride, in fact she told me one day that she would cry when Sienna and I entered the pen. It turned out I was crying when Buffy and Sienna entered the pen. My nerves were

getting the best of me about a month before Congress and I always get on edge when I show. We had to name the rider on the 15 th of October, which was prior to us even pulling into Congress. So I would have no way of even knowing how Sienna would handle things. In late September, Buffy and I went to lunch after one of my lessons. It was at that point that we weighed all the pro's and cons, and decided since I was already having nightmares I just would be too nervous to get the job done. Time to buy Buffy new hunt seat clothes and quick...including boots. I did get to show in the Amateur HUS and oh man it was amazing trotting in through the gates of the Celeste...I had to hold back the tears for sure.



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SCED: Did you hire a hauler, or transport yourself?

WC: The haul was the best part of the trip. We hauled ourselves in my truck and trailer. Buffy drove with me going out there and flew home. Chad, my husband, flew out and drove back with me. We had no problems... it was a breeze. Except about Tulsa, when Buffy finally decided to look at the map and I almost had to give her oxygen. She said "uh, Wen-Dee do you know how many states we are actually driving thru, and straight thru, not just the tips?" I started laughing. I told her it was a long trip but I guess she did not believe me. By the third day she was making an army of red licorice stick men... Thank goodness we pulled into Columbus just after that.

SCED: In this economy, how did you budget to attend this premier show? How much was the entry fee for the Futurity?

WC: The budget was tricky but I am very resourceful. If there is a will, there is a way. The big thing is the key word budget. I knew in advance what I needed to spend, so I bought as much as I could as early as possible. For instance, my show clothes were purchased 11 months in advance. My husband even saved all his change for a year in a jar. The entry fee for the Masters Class was, are you sitting down, \$4000. First Payment was due Jan 2010 and second Payment July 2010. I knew that in order to do this, I needed to haul some horses to cover some costs. With some great internet networking I found one horse going out and 2 horses coming home. It worked great. The magic of internet.

SCED: What was the most memorable thing for you about the show in general?

WC: It has to be the incredible friends that I realized I have and the amazing new friends that I met. The Myers Horse Farm gang was just amazing. We showed up on the grounds after a 3 day drive with a golf cart waiting for us to escort us right where we needed to go...the hospitality, bling gifts and fun never stopped from there. I had a girlfriend fly all the way out for 2 days just to give us her support. And my Facebook page from all my local horse friends was over the top with well wishes. I honestly did not know I had that many friends. Then I had tears in my eyes when so many people flooded the live feed to watch the Masters. Just truly unbelievable. I tear up now just thinking about it.



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SCED: How did you handle the jitters (nerves!!)? Any tips to other Congress “first-timers?”

WC: Believe it or not once we got there I wasn't so nervous anymore. It was almost a weird sense of calm. I was such a wreck the weeks and months prior. Tips – One thing Buffy taught me over the last few months when I ride was to count, 1-2-3, 1-2-3...I do this now as I ride and I swear it works like a charm. During my first walk in the Amateur HUS my heart just started racing...I just took a deep breath started counting and was perfectly fine the rest of the class. I think my best tip is have a good attitude and don't put too much pressure on yourself. It is our inner pressure that is what makes us nervous. Just do the best you can do on that given day. It is just another horse show....just bigger.

SCED: Having been “to the Congress,” would you recommend it to other exhibitors and will you plan to attend again?

WC: I would recommend it to anyone, and yes I hope and pray to go back just as soon as I can. It is just unbelievable. I definitely think you need to do your homework and network with others. Our trip was much more enjoyable by having a network of “non-rookies” to help us out. I would be willing to give anyone some personal tips, pay it forward right? I also was very glad I flew out the year prior just so I was not so shell shocked pulling in with my horse.

I have a full network of friends now, that I would not have if I did not just put myself out there and have fun. In fact I have plans with one new friend to meet up and stall together at Sun

Circuit and maybe just maybe the Ohio gang and I might meet up at the NSBA World show. Can't wait... “A New Decade a New Dream...”

Equestrian Dreams do come true for those who work hard, set goals and make the sacrifices to achieve them. Once again, congratulations to Kellie, Chelsea, Miranda, Wen-Dee and Buffy on reaching the achievement of participating in the 2010 American Quarter Horse Congress! Article written by Sue Schindler for SoCalEquine.com.

