

February 20, 2008

We just got back from Scottsdale today! We are all exhausted from the long journey, but boy was it worth it. Jonathan Burton gave Annapolis 9.5s on all of his conformation scores and 7s and 8s on his movement scores. He made a note at the bottom of the page that said that the horse was "restrained" (I ran him for Mr. Burton, and I cannot get my short, fat legs to run that fast, especially with the "knee from hell"). Annapolis also scored well enough in dressage and his open sport horse class to qualify Stephanie and I for our "Scottsdale Jackets." The show was still in full swing when we left on Monday afternoon, and will be going through this coming weekend. Scottsdale is a lovely city, and I highly recommend a visit, even if you aren't bitten by the bug to go and show there. We are planning on a repeat trip next year for sport horse week, so if you think you might want to go, keep us in mind and we can share hauling and camping. It was a total blast! The shopping WAS INCREDIBLE!!!!!!

More news when I've actually had some sleep.

Janet

February 23, 2008

Now that I've had a couple of days to catch up on my sleep, I'll try to catch ya'll up on the activities for the past 2-weeks. I can pretty much sum it up with WOW! This is truly a Not-To-Be-Missed-Show. Even if you only go once, and even if you only go to observe, it is simply the most amazing horse show I have ever been to.

Jeff and I left Stephanie's driveway mid-day on Sunday, 2/10. We made it as far as Stockton that night before pulling into a truckstop for some rest. At 6:30 A.M. we were on the road again. Somewhere between Santa Nella and some other nameless little town, a small nondescript white car pulled alongside Jeff's side of the cab honking the horn and pointing back at the trailer, where we were apparently losing a tire on the trailer. Jeff slowed down and the whole tire and wheel peeled off and went behind the trailer and passed us on the right. There is definitely something to be said about having a three-axle trailer. We made it for another 2-1/2 hours to Bakersfield on the remaining back two axles, where we were able to buy a new wheel assembly and mount our spare tire.

Climbing over the Tehachapi summit, we started spitting and sputtering around Caliente (famous to us as the home of Aul Magic), where we had to do some manipulating of fuel filters, which subsequently made our truck run like a brand new machine the rest of the day up into the night where we stopped at a truckstop on Hwy 395 just long enough for dinner, a brief nap, and AJ to inform us that he was no longer interested in "standing" in the trailer (AJ is very much a "lay down to sleep" horse). We continued on to Blythe, California, avoiding San Bernardino rush hour traffic, and turned AJ loose in the trailer for the night while we caught a couple of hours of sleep. Tuesday morning bright and early, we hit the road once again, arriving at West World in the early afternoon.

You should have seen AJ, knees and hocks buckling, waiting, hovering, as Jeff and I frantically opened and spread shavings bedding his stall. He hovered precariously there through 4 bags and was down and thrashing about before we were totally clear of the door! He was one happy horse! Wednesday was his day of rest as we waited for Stephanie and the AJ Fan Club Bus to arrive. We went and set up camp, unloaded the golf cart, and cruised around the grounds watching the "big name" barns get set up.

Thursday morning, Valentine's Day, Stephanie, her daughter Morgan, Arlene and Shanda arrived. Stephanie lunged AJ and we went on tour of the facility and our first shopping outing (of many) at the Schneider's Saddlery tent. The shopping at this place was absolutely incredible. There were two enormous, gigantic, huge tents, at least the size of football fields, that were filled with vendors of everything from mink coats to farm equipment. You didn't have to leave the

grounds for anything!!! Thursday night Jeff and I attended the kick off concert. Picture this....an airport hangar like building, huge, tall, gigantic, with a level, asphalt floor, vendors booths at one end with t-shirts, flowers, jewelry, CD's, 3 different bars, at the other end a band stand, stage lighting, and opening the concert...Emerson Drive...next act...Heart! Public concert? Not on your life. It was just for us at the show!!!!!! I told you it was amazing. By the way, Heart still has it, even though they are getting up in years. Nancy still has the hair and Annie still has that soulful voice.... Emerson Drive was also great.

Friday morning was the first day of showing with 9 or 10 show rings going at all times. AJ did well in both of his dressage tests with qualifying rides both times and ribbons with rosettes the size of bread plates and about 4-foot streamers. Saturday morning was more dressage, with a little lower scores, in the low 60s and 58.8. Sunday morning was Sport Horse In Hand, where he was 1st place in the 4 and 5-year old stallion open class and 3rd place in the 4 year old and over stallion class ATH with Jonathan Burton "S" judging. I don't feel too bad about the score though, because he got 9.5% on all of his conformation marks and the gait were the 7's and 8's with comments of "horse was restrained." For all of you that know me, you probably remember that I blew my knee at the 2004 SHN and I haven't truly been able to run well since. Usually I solicit the wonderful legs of Natalie for running in the ATH classes. That girl can really go! Had she been there, I'm sure he would've won. Guess we'll just be happy to know that he scored above some really top name, top farm owned and bred horses, even with the old, fat, gimpy owner being drug around....

Monday we spent the morning shopping and waiting for our Top Ten Jackets to finish being embroidered before heading off in the afternoon. Jeff was delighted to have our truck and trailer detailed while we were there for only \$325.00 He had been quoted \$600.00 here. They pressure washed it, acid washed it, and waxed it all on the grounds. I'm telling you, everything you could possibly want was right there on the grounds. It was like a large, self contained community. We were parked in the RV spaces that overlooked....get this....the polo field. And yes, they played polo on Sunday!

The trip home included a stop at the Cabazon Factory Outlet Center, where we spent a few more \$\$\$\$, and then we were off again on one of the windiest trips I have been on in a long time. We were all happy to be back home on Wednesday, including AJ, who bucked like some kind of rodeo bronc for at least a half hour upon being turned out into the arena on arrival. Stephanie emailed me a photo of him to work on Thursday morning with him stretched out as stretched as he could possibly get in his stall, sleeping soundly with shavings hanging from his ears and his nostrils..... It's good to be home. It's good to be a star!

When we decided to do this, it was on a whim. I'm celebrating the big 5-0 this year, so I thought "It's now or never." Now I'm thinking that this needs to be a yearly trip, especially in view of the fact that after 2010 SHN will be moving to Kentucky.... so far away (not that Scottsdale isn't a drive...). When you look at the show program, hold it, all 2-inches thick in your hand, and realize that there are 3 horses entered from France, 3 from Brazil, 3 from Australia, and 1 from South Africa, not to mention all of the many fabulous horses (over 2700) from all over the United States, it is really overwhelming. WOW!

Sure hope that some of you will consider joining us for Sport Horse week next year!

Jeff and Janet Jones  
and  
ANNAPOLIS (AJ)