

Alberta Donkey and Mule Club News, November 2008

Team Mule Wins the Telus Battle of the Breeds at Spruce Meadows

Submitted by Irene Morck

It all started in 1999. That's when Team Mule first entered the Telus Battle of the Breeds at Spruce Meadows. Out of 12 or 13 breeds, there were some years when the mules placed close to the bottom. We were delighted when we made fifth one year. Then last year we were thrilled that the mules placed third out of thirteen breeds.

This year through tears of joy, we watched Team Mule enter the International Ring, clad in royal blue blankets to be awarded the Championship for Telus Battle of the Breeds. In front of thousands and thousands of cheering people, four humans riding longears "floated" around Spruce Meadows' incredible International ring in the Parade of Nations, in the presence of great Olympian jumping horses, the fanfare of marching bands, gigantic arrangements of flowers from Holland, and dignitaries from all over the world. "Savor the moment," a friend from another breed had said, "It will be one of the most precious memories for all your life." And indeed she was right.

Now, how do we thank everyone? To Ron and Marg Southern and Linda Southern-Heathcott for their visions and dreams which provided such an amazing place as Spruce Meadows and such a unique competition as a Battle of the Breeds. To Maggie Brand, coordinator of Telus Battle of the Breeds, for her patience, kindness, enthusiasm, and caring. To Julie Brewster for all her work. To Telus and the Telus Volunteers for their faithful support, friendliness and hard work.

We thank the Team Mule members for perseverance and years of dedication. This year, against 13 breeds of horses, Katherine Cook of Alberta with Lionel Gartner's mule Mastco Jane, and Jessica Bishop with L.S. Hot Buckaroo of Oregon won 4th in Jeopardy Jumping. Deloit Wolfe with his mule Horse from Montana [who have been on Team Mule every one of the ten years!] and Mogens Nielsen with his very vocal mule Maizie of British Columbia won 4th in Trail Riding, 3rd in Precision Driving and 1st in Compulsory Skills.

We thank Jadene Mah for all her work as Team Captain.

How could we ever give enough thanks to our people behind the scenes? The selfless people who spent endless hours in the ADMC booth, giving up their chance to watch the Battle of the Breeds and other events of Spruce Meadows, just so that the public could learn more about Longears. The people who ran errands, helped in the stables, passed on messages, who assisted in so many important little ways. The ones who brought their animals to be in the booth stall and around the grounds so that delighted adults and children could caress a donkey or mule, some for the very first time. Those who took part in the ShowCase to display their longears. Thanks to Keith and Lil Kendrew, Colleen Campbell, Russ Shandro and his daughter Jade Shandro, Shelby Bishop, Don and Anne

Fossum Linda, Leggette, Bob Leggette, Ida, Alice Todd, Jennifer Campbell [from Scotland!], Paul and Vicki Barrow, Ron, Eileen and Amy Rust, and Katie Skeels

We are grateful to the members of the Alberta Donkey and Mule Club who have supported efforts at Spruce Meadows over the years, even when they couldn't be there. Thank you to Jim Martin and Russ Shandro for videotaping. Thanks to Pondsides Digital Media, Meagan Forberg, and Jay Duke for their support. Thanks to Lionel Gartner and Christine Verchomin, owners of Mastco Jane for providing their great jumping mule. Thanks to Jessica's mom Joyce as the owner and sponsor of L.S. Hot Buckaroo.

To all our families, fans, and friends, including members of other breed teams, thank you for your support, encouragement and kind words of congratulations. To have Team Mule win the Telus Battle of the Breeds at Spruce Meadows was an unbelievable experience for us to savor, and honor, a thrill beyond words. To everyone involved in any way, thank you, thank you, thank you.

One truly sad note. Countless people fell in love with a fluffy baby donkey named Charlie in the ADMC booth and around the grounds at Spruce Meadows. Less than two weeks later, on Sept 16th, 2008, beautiful little Charlie died. We offer our heartfelt condolences to his owners Keith and Lil Kendrew, we thank them for sharing baby Charlie with us.



Mogens Nielsen and Maizie successfully negotiating the rail drive-through in the Precision Driving competition.



Jessica Bishop and Katherine Cook in the victory parade with their 4th place ribbons in the Jopardy Jumping competition.



Team Mule in the International Ring being presented with the trophy for winning the Telus Battle of the Breeds Competition.



Here is Team Mule Photo in the International Ring being presented their Trophy for WINNING THE BATTLE OF THE BREEDS. L to R, Deloit Wolfe and Horse, Mogens Niesen and Maizie, Katherine Cook and Mastco Jane and Jessica Bishop and L.S. Hot Buckaroo. Team Captain, Jadene Mah unmounted. Presenters are an Official from Telus and Linda Southern from Spruce Meadows.