

Gladstone 2007
By Charlotte Bredahl-Baker

My very first time at Gladstone (the US Equestrian Team Head Quarters) was in 1990. I was so honored to be invited to ride there. Now 17 years and many trips later, I am still awestruck by Gladstone. The main building and the barn are both so impressive that it takes your breath away, but beyond that, there is something magical about it. The history of this place hits you everywhere you look and you feel it in the air. You really have to have been there to understand. Every US team since 1950 has trained there. The trophy room where the USET hosts a reception during every Championship has pictures of all the Teams from 1950 until now. It is so special.

I have ridden at many Championships at Gladstone and yet I have felt equally honored each time. This year for the first time I came as a coach and my student and friend Kathy Pavlich felt and understood what an honor it was to be there. Before we went I had people come up to me and ask why we would go if there wasn't a chance to make the Team? And my answer was that making Gladstone was a big accomplishment in itself. Just to be there and be part of the elite group of riders is very special. It also puts your name on the map for the future. The atmosphere is always very friendly among the riders and trainers. The staff bends over backwards to make everybody feel at home.

I love watching the warm up arena the days before the show starts. Most of the top riders are there either riding or coaching. This year, when I was watching, Klaus Balkenhol, Debbie McDonald, Kathy Connally, Michael Poulin, Kathleen Raine, David Wightman, Robert Dover and Lars Petersen were coaching. The riders included, George Williams, Michael Barisone, Steffen Peters, Christopher Hickey, Laura Sammis, Catherine Bateson, Courtney King, Carol Lavell and many more.

California had a relatively small number of riders in the Grand Prix, but two finished in the top three. Jo Moran, Jennifer Hoffman, Kristina Harrison and Steffen all did well, with Steffen finishing the overall Champion on Lombardi.

Gladstone wouldn't be Gladstone without at least one good thunderstorm in the middle of the show. Unfortunately for Kristina it started just before she entered the competition arena. The show came to a halt, for about 45 minutes and she had to keep her cool while waiting for the thunder to stop. She came back with a very good freestyle to finish 3rd overall. Courtney King also did great and finished 2nd. Both Courtney and Steffen were off to Aachen straight from Gladstone.

Traveling to Gladstone from the West Coast can be hard on the horses. Kathy's horse Bocelli got pretty dehydrated and had to be on IV fluids during the show.

Kathy rode well and had very nice harmonious rides, just didn't have quite enough horse left in the PSG. Other horses had the same problems and a few had to scratch their last rides, including Carol Lavell and Susan Halasz. The Team selection for the Pan Am games turned out to be very competitive, even without several of the top ranked California horses. Chris Hickey, Lauren Sammis and Katherine Poulin all rode very well throughout the show and made the team. They have arrived in Brazil as I write this. It was nice to see, the efforts of an entire Poulin family to

help Katie make the team. Sharon & Michael Poulin coached her and her wonderful supportive sister Gwen helped with the grooming. They were stabled next to us and they are the nicest girls you can imagine.

CDS also had representation in the Young Riders division and Steffen's student Ashley Schempp finished 2nd overall. The Brentina Cup also had a CDS 2nd place finisher in Nicholia Zamora, coached by Kathleen Raine and David Wrightman. Well done!

Kathy, her husband Tom and I had a good time with all the other riders from The East and West Coast. Our friends Lisa & John Seeger from Markel Insurance had invited us to sit at their table, so we were in very good company. The two wonderful women Robin & Marsha who helped me with Eskada in 2005, helped Kathy this year. They live in New Jersey and enjoy helping out at Gladstone. I have to say, it was a lot less stressful to be there as a coach and not a rider, especially when your student is cool, collected and a good friend.