



# IN STRIDE

The Official Magazine of the United States Hunter Jumper Association

**Stephen Foran**  
Fabulous in EAP Finals

## **Annual Meeting: Restructuring Ramps Up**

**Horsemanship  
Quiz Challenge  
Finals**

**Honoring  
Sissie Anderton,  
Keiri Kaneps &  
Laura Pickett**

# Toussaint Takes Command at Horsemanship Quiz Challenge Finals

The Mount Holyoke College student leads Zone 1 to the team gold.

Article and photos by Tricia Booker

After Hollis Toussaint left the room following the Horsemanship Quiz Challenge written exam, she wasn't sure how she'd done.

"The written test was tough; I was actually worried after I took it that I didn't do very well, so I was really surprised to hear I'd gotten the high score," she said. "But it was mostly short answer, so it was good because you had the ability to explain yourself and that helped me a lot."

Toussaint then moved on to the practicum, where those with the highest scores had 30 minutes of hands-on work, during which they were judged on their horse handling and horsemanship.

Her score of 83 on the written test, combined with a stellar performance on the practicum, left Hollis at the top of the podium during the inaugural Finals, presented by Sweet Briar College and held in conjunction with the Emerging Athletes Program National Training Session November 16-18 in Gurnee, Illinois.

Toussaint, of Wellesley, Massachusetts, also led her Zone 1 team of Lindsey Bailey (Simsbury, Connecticut) and Abigail Mulhern (Somers, Connecticut) to the gold medal.

"She was one of our first kids who came through the practicum and was



competent all the way," said Youth Committee Chair Mary Babick. "Hollis was very workmanlike and knowledgeable at the same time."

*"The whole program is so great—a wonderful learning experience."*

—Hollis Toussaint

Each member of the Zone 1 winning team received a gold medal, a helmet provided by Charles Owen Inc., Joe Dotoli's *Wylde Ride* book, signed by the author, and a \$1,000 grant provided by the USHJA Foundation for approved training and educational opportunities.



Hollis Toussaint, above left, with Mary Babick, had the best written test score and also won the overall title. Annelysse Bansbach, left, showed off her wrapping skills in the practicum.

"I had so much fun doing [the practicum]," said Toussaint. "The whole program is so great—a wonderful learning experience."

A group of 28 competitors qualified for the HQC Finals representing their zones and competing as individuals. Zoe Conlee, of Zone 9, earned the individual silver medal while Stephanie Whitworth, an individual competitor from Zone 10, took the bronze.

In addition to testing their horsemanship knowledge, the finalists attended educational seminars with USHJA Youth Committee members Amber Aslin, Brooke Mallin and Cricket Stone. They also audited the EAP Finals riding and stable management sessions.

Toussaint, 19, is currently a sophomore at Mount Holyoke College (Massachusetts) with aspirations of becoming a surgeon one day. She scored a 95 on the HQC Level 1 quiz and earned a 97 at Level 2 to qualify for the Finals and found the HQC Study Guide (available online) was quite detailed.

"Things on the study guide are just things everyone should know; I was really surprised that I didn't know as much about horses after riding for so long," said



Elaine Schott, left, holds a horse while practicum finalist Sonya Bengali explains his conformational attributes to judge Lilli Biedermann and USHJA staff member Carrie Vaught.

Toussaint, who started riding lessons at age 5. “I felt like I should have known certain things all along.”

The finalists each took a written exam, and the top four zone teams (comprised of three competitors) and the top four individuals with the highest scores advanced to the hands-on practicum. USHJA Youth Committee member Lilli Biedermann judged the practicum and was assisted by Vice Chair Elaine Schott.

“The scores in the Finals practicum were outstanding,” said Babick. “This speaks volumes for the thirst for knowledge these young riders have for becoming all-around horsemen. Their enthusiasm demonstrates the importance of providing a deep knowledge of hands-on horsemanship for our students.

“Lilli did a beautiful job at making up the practicum theme, where the competitor’s job was to try and sell us a particular horse and tack it up appropriately,” continued Babick. “You knew right away what the kid knew.”

The competitors began by removing the horse from the stall and standing it up for conformation. Schott then held the horse while each competitor walked around and discussed the conformational attributes and noted flaws. After the competitor decided the discipline for which the horse was best suited, it was taken to a tack stall and prepared for a mock trial ride.

“They really had to have good horsemanship and horse handling skills and knowledge of equipment,” said Babick. “They were judged on many aspects,

from their ability to safely remove a blanket, put on a halter, tie the horse, hang the blanket and bring the horse into the aisle. We had a variety of equipment in the tack room, some suitable and some unsuitable. They needed to tell us why they were choosing certain equipment, its use and then properly implement it.”

Participants and organizers attended a roundtable on the final day where they openly discussed the Finals. Babick said she and the committee members have a lot of great ideas with which to work in order to improve and fine-tune the program.

“They really like the seminars [and] want more hands-on time; they would like to see all of the finalists able to do the practicum,” she said. “They basically want this to be EAP without the actual riding.

“It’s extremely helpful being on both committees, and I believe the two Finals really go well together,” Babick added. “I did ask the kids in the roundtable if they would like to separate from EAP and pretty much they all said ‘No.’ The EAP shows them the next level, where they can be, and they found EAP quite inspiring.”

On the final day, the HQC participants were invited to assist the EAP riders in the barn during the Nations Cup, and they requested that opportunity again next year.

“They loved it and want to start a day earlier to meet the riders and tour the barn and know their duties,” said Babick. “I thought that camaraderie

was great. Marrying the two programs together is a wonderful thing.”

Developed by the USHJA Youth Committee, the Horsemanship Quiz Challenge was established to educate and recognize young equestrians who have exceptional horsemanship knowledge. The goal of this program is to ignite each youth’s passion for advancing his or her horsemanship knowledge and make it an integral part of that youth’s equestrian life.

For more information on the Horsemanship Quiz Challenge, please see the USHJA website ([www.ushja.org](http://www.ushja.org)) and click on “Programs.” While the program is open to equestrians up to age 21, the Horsemanship Study Guide is available to everyone interested in expanding his or her equine knowledge.

## Results of the 2012 Horsemanship Quiz Challenge Finals

### 1st place Zone Team: Zone 1

Lindsey Bailey (also achieved the highest practicum score)

Abigail Mulhern

Hollis Toussaint (also achieved the highest written test score)

### 1st place overall: Hollis Toussaint of Zone 1

### 2nd place Zone Team: Zone 10

Mary Anastasi

Elizabeth Evans

Devyn Hinkle

### 2nd place overall: Zoe Conlee of Zone 9

### 3rd place Zone Team: Zone 2

Anna O’Connor

Eliana Rabinowitz

Holly Torsilieri

### 3rd place overall: Stephanie Whitworth, an individual finalist from Zone 10