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HORSE PARK HAPPENINGS

by Laura D'Angelo

JUNE 2013 MUST-SEES

Pyramid Society Egyptian Arabian Event, June 3-8

Country Heir I Hunter Jumper Show, June 5-9
Grand Prix Show JumpingCountry Heir II Hunter Jumper Show, June 12-16
Grand Prix Show Jumping

Mid East Kentucky Quarter Horse Association Show, June 19-23

Mid South Pony Club Rally, June 21-23

Carriage Association of America Carriage Classic, June 28-30

For more information kyhorsepark.com and khpfoundation.org
See TopsinLex.com for photo coverage of these and other events

LEXINGTON POLO

The face of Lexington Polo has been rebranded as the Club undertakes new leadership with Chet Lott as President, James Miller as Vice-President, Callan Strouss as Secretary and Billy Hilliard as Treasurer. Original Makers Club ("OMC") will partner with Lexington Polo to add a certain glamour and cultural flare to Lexington Polo social events, tailgates and tournaments.

Under Chet's leadership, the Club has a new "old-glamour" logo. The Club is in production with a new membership and advertiser-partner book, which will be available at various venues and polo events throughout the year. It is a beautiful coffee table guide to polo and local advertising partners. The book was produced in partnership with Josh Meredith of OMC and will

be a desirable addition to every tailgate. The book will also include a guide to watching polo and understanding the strategy and play of the game.

The Club will create and market its own Lexington Polo Club attire (vintage-like t-shirts, woven silk ties and scarves) which will be available for sale on the Club's website lexingtonpolo.com, at polo events, and at Stuart Mercer on Maxwell Street (above Bella Rose).

To launch the 2013 Lexington polo season (sponsored by Audi of Lexington), the Club hosted a special event and tournament on Sunday, June 2nd at the Kentucky Horse Park. The tournament took place on the front Man 'O War fields next to the main entrance to the Park.

This tournament was the first in a series of OMC Club Cup tournaments throughout the summer, featuring several excellent teams, great competition and rivalry. Halftime was marked by the traditional invitation to the spectators to stomp divots (while sipping champagne).

A special polo guest planning to make a summer polo appearance in Lexington is Ignacio "Nacho" Figueras,





the other in memory of polo club member, supporter and farrier, Johnny Collins. A tournament benefiting breast cancer research, "Pink Polo," will also be scheduled.

Come out and watch the polo ponies (called that traditionally, they're not really ponies) who are incredible athletes with lovely dispositions. Most polo ponies are actually horses (over 14.2 hands high) with the average polo pony measuring on average 15.2 hands high. These ponies are typically thoroughbreds; some former race horses and some bred for polo. They are fast, quick turning, quick stopping, agile athletes.

For more information on the oldest organized team sport – exciting, fast, action-packed and physical, played on the largest surface in sport please visit lexingtonpolo.com. Detailed schedules of practices, tournaments, social events, membership and other information are available on the website. Up-to-the-minute information can be found by following Lexington Polo and Original Makers Club on Facebook. Join in the summer fun!

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE HORSE



International Museum of the
HORSE

Of the many, many things to do at the Kentucky Horse Park, one "can't miss" stop is a visit to the *International Museum of the Horse*. The Museum is located just past the entrance to the Park. Admission to the Smithsonian affiliate museum is included with a general admission ticket to the Park. A brilliant tour through time and all things horse-related, the Museum contains some gems that should not be overlooked by any resident or visitor to Lexington who has even a passing interest in horses, history or art.

The Museum—the world's largest equestrian museum—traces the history of the horses through time and worldwide. Aside from an extensive collection of artifacts and horse-drawn vehicles, the museum also houses incredible photography, fine art, folk art and equine sculpture. However, perhaps the most integral exhibit to the Lexington community is the new permanent exhibit that interprets the history of thoroughbred breeding and racing in Kentucky and how Lexington became the "Thoroughbred Breeding Capital of the World". The highlight of this exhibit is the skeleton of the great thoroughbred racehorse, Lexington. Now on permanent loan from the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, Lexington is considered by many to be the greatest racehorse and sire of the 19th century. The Thoroughbred in Kentucky exhibit is housed next to the Calumet Farm trophy exhibit.



renowned Argentinian player. Nacho is the face of Ralph Lauren Black Label® polo ads nationally and internationally, and is a great advocate for polo. Nacho will be appearing at "Polo in the Park," a benefit for the Fayette Alliance that is now an annual Lexington social tradition.

At venues such as Aspen snow polo, Miami Beach polo, the Veuve Cliquot Classic in Manhattan and others, Chet witnessed successful polo tournaments and plans to bring the best of each back to Lexington for the enjoyment of players, patrons and spectators alike. The focus of the Club, in partnership with the Kentucky Horse Park, will be support of charitable and other worthy causes.

Three such events are already planned for the upcoming season, including two memorial tournaments; one in honor of local sportsman, polo player and horseman Hilary Boone and



Doncaster Cup



Borrowing a full skeleton of a real horse from the Smithsonian may sound like a simple task; but it wasn't. Bill Cooke, the Director of the Museum, John Nicholson, Executive Director of the Horse Park, Lucy Breathitt (former aide to First Lady Pat Nixon and wife of the late Governor Ned Breathitt) and numerous others spent 25 years lobbying the Smithsonian to bring Lexington (the horse) home.

Lexington (the horse) was gone from the Bluegrass State for 132 years! Residents of central Kentucky may know Lexington as the blue horse symbol recently adopted by the city and Visitor's Bureau literature, websites and pins. His image is ubiquitous throughout the city at this time. The artist of the well known painting giving rise to the "blue" horse version was the famous artist Edward Troye.

The horse in question was born in 1850, named Darley, and was renamed Lexington in 1953. He was sold in 1956 for \$15,000 which was reported as the highest price ever paid for an American horse to-date. He was victorious in 6 of 7 races, losing only to Lecompte who he later beat in a match race. He was retired due to problems with his eyesight, reported to have been inherited from his sire, Boston. Lexington was the leading sire from 1861 to 1874 and one of the most influential sires in the record book. The first Kentucky Derby winner ever, Aristides, was a grandson of Lexington. Lexington, the horse, put Lexington, the city, on the map when it came to thoroughbred breeding. The Lexington Stakes, held each year at Keeneland, is not named after our city, but after the horse.

Upon his death, Lexington was originally buried whole, but later exhumed and moved to the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. where his skeleton was painstakingly reassembled and exhibited in the National Museum of Natural History's Osteology Hall as an example of equus caballus and later in a Timex exhibit relating to speed and marking of time and distance. See

imh.org for more information. Upon his death, his obituary was included in the *New York Times* Obituary section.

And because there is an unlimited tie-in of horses and bourbon in the region, the Thoroughbred in Kentucky exhibit also includes a fascinating history of the Pepper Stables. James E. Pepper and his wife Ella Offut Pepper operated Pepper Stables from their Meadowthorpe Farm (location of the current subdivision of the same name). Mr. Pepper was founder and president of the James E. Pepper Bourbon Distillery in Lexington. After her husband fell ill and the farm encountered financial difficulties, Ella took over the operations, reversing the farm's fortunes and turning Pepper Stables into a major racing operation. The racing stable won the 1900 Doncaster Cup with Kings Courier marking the first time that an American horse won this prestigious race in England. The Doncaster Cup is the oldest continuing regulated horse race in the world. Another wonderful example of the long history of bourbon and horses in the Bluegrass.

GRAND PRIX WRAP UP

Kentucky Spring Horse Shows I and II brought excitement and pageantry to the Rolex Stadium at the Kentucky Horse Park in May. Spectators had the opportunity to watch many Olympic, Pan Am and World Cup level riders from several countries including the USA, Canada, Argentina and Mexico, compete in various classes throughout the two weeks. But it was our youngest grand prix riders (and now local residents!) who took top honors at the \$75,000 Grand Prix on Sunday, May 12th.

Victorious in the big and challenging show jumping course designed by Richard Jeffery was Meagan Nusz (25) with her talented horse Dynamo. Meagan and her family recently purchased a training facility in Central Kentucky from fellow Grand Prix rider Derek Braun. A close second to Meagan was fellow



Meagan Nusz on Dynamo

young rider Reed Kessler (18) and her gelding Mika, another new resident of Lexington thanks to her family also purchasing a farm close to the Horse Park. Reed represented the United States in the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

Organizers and spectators alike could not have been more proud of the excellent riding demonstrated by these two new home town girls! Forty riders negotiated the difficult track and only these two young women had clear first rounds. Jumping off on a shorter course against the clock, Meagan emerged the faster of the two double clear rounds in an exciting finish. Meagan will now head to Spruce Meadows in Calgary, Alberta and Europe to compete internationally for the remainder of the summer.

Be sure to come out and watch the competition in the Hunter and Jumper rings for two weeks in June at the Country Heir Horse Show. Detailed schedules are available at countryheir.com.

ON DECK COMING IN JULY TO THE HORSE PARK

- Bluegrass Morgan Classic, July 3 – 6
bluegrassmorganclassic.com
- Robert Murphy Hunter Jumper Show, July 4-7
- Miniature Horse Show, July 4-7
amha.org
- Champagne Run Horse Trials, July 12-14
champagnerun.com
- Celebrity Team Penning, Sunday July 14 5p
khpfoundation.org
- North American Young Riders Championships, July 17-21, youngriders.org
- BreyerFest 2013, July 19-21
breyerhorses.com
- Clayton Woosley Hall of Fame Reining Show, July 23-28, ckrha.com
- Kentucky Summer Horse Show (Hunter Jumper) Week 1, July 24-28, kentuckyhorseshow.com
- Rood & Riddle Grand Prix and Hats Off Day Saturday July 27, hatsoffky.com



Laura D'Angelo, JD, MBA is an equine, gaming and business attorney at Dinsmore in Lexington. She is an active community member currently sitting on the Boards of the Kentucky Chamber, Commerce Lexington and LexArts. Laura moved to Lexington 20 years ago from Toronto, Canada. Laura followed her lifelong passion for horses in choosing Lexington, UK Law School and her profession. An active competitor in show jumping, she also plays polo occasionally and so makes her second home at the Kentucky Horse Park. Her daughter Lilly is following in her footsteps with her pony, Valentines. Laura loves Lexington for the vibrant and developing downtown scene, the beautiful horse farms and above all, the wonderful people she has come to know here.