

## IHSA Hunter Seat Show

### St. Andrews Equestrian Center

October 17, 2007

From: Staff Reports

High Point Rider  
Janelle Harcus

Regional Qualifiers:

Jaci Ayers -- Novice Flat  
Hayley White -- Novice Flat  
Kate McAlinn -- Intermediate Flat  
Morgan Worthington -- Intermediate Flat  
Jamie Nickolson -- Intermediate Fences

Open Flat:

Janelle Harcus -- 2nd Section A  
Jess Potts -- 2nd Section B  
Jamie Nickolson -- 4th Section B  
Gabby Grubic -- 4th Section C  
Kelsi Peterson -- 4th Section D  
Megan Radigan -- 1st Section D

Open Fences:

Janelle Harcus -- 1st  
Kelsi Peterson -- 3rd  
Jess Potts -- 6th

Intermediate Flat

Jaci Ayers -- 1st Section B  
Kate McAlinn -- 1st Section C

Intermediate Fences:

Jamie Nickolson -- 3rd

Novice Flat:

Hayley White -- 2nd Section A  
Lilly Russell -- 5th Section B  
Rob Jacobs -- 2nd Section D  
Christina Canada -- 2nd Section E

Novice Fences:

Hayley White -- 1st

Walk, Trot, Canter:

Katie Lavery -- 2nd Section A  
Brittany Coulombe -- 6th Section B  
Heather Wile -- 3rd Section C  
Megan Stiles -- 3rd Section D

Walk, Trot:

Florence Wojcik -- 4th Section A  
Jessica Randall -- 1st Section B

Team Competition (top ten)

1. Virginia Intermont College - 43 points
2. St. Andrews - 39 points
3. UNC Charlotte - 34 points
4. N.C. State - 30 points

## Duke Intercollegiate Show

October 28, 2007

Reserve Champion Team -- St. Andrews IHSA  
Hunter Seat Team  
Class 8 - Open Fences  
Janelle Harcus - 2nd

Class 7 - Open Flat

Janelle Harcus - 3rd in Section A  
Lindsey Gates - 3rd in Section C

Class 6 - Intermediate Fences

Kate McAlinn - 1st

Class 5 - Intermediate Flat

Carolina Taylor - 4th

Jaci Ayers - 5th

Class 4 - Novice Fences

Caroline Taylor - 1st  
Bridget Hutchens - 7th  
Class 3 - Novice Flat  
Kelly Landino - 1st  
Liz Dulski - 4th

Class 2B - Advanced WTC

Karen Gruninger - 1st  
Jenn Callahan - 2nd

Class 2A - Beginning WTC

Amanda Liguori - 2nd

Class 1 - Walk, Trot

Jessica Randall - 4th

# EDITORIALS

## My Unchristian Christianity

By: Matthew Peak

Throughout my years of being a Christian, I have visited several churches from several different Protestant denominations. I have even attended Catholic mass. For the most part, my experiences have been positive. There have been friendly people, powerful ceremonies and plenty of messages.

Underneath it all, though, there is a darker side, a weakness of Christians that is hurting what people think about my faith. It almost drove me from the faith and forced me to ask important questions about what I believed. It is the fact that, sadly, Christians do not know how to handle the physically handicapped. Too many times, I have rolled my wheelchair into a church with a smile on my face and joy in my heart only to be met by one of two reactions.

First, the members often see me as a pitiful example of human suffering and over-compensate in their efforts to be compassionate. They approach me with a tone of voice that assumes that because I am physically handicapped, I am mentally handicapped. If there is one thing that truly offends me that would be it. With wide smiles and an overdose of motherly tenderness, they approach me with statements like, "Hiiiiii. How are yooooouuuuu? My name is ...," and on it goes. A vindictive part of me wants to act as if I am mentally retarded and follow them around, calling, "Dad," or "Mom." I do not think God's word advocates for such an approach. So I grin and bear it with politeness and generally try not to make a big deal about it, though I leave feeling demeaned and ready for daycare.

Second, members of a church will simply not say anything. Not knowing what to do with me, they generally cast a few sideways glances and keep to their respective clicks. I am already a stranger and feeling out of place. If there is one place where I should find some sort of introductory acceptance, it should be a

church. I often leave these places feeling hurt and wounded, rejected for being a crippled in a religion that has no place for me.

Jim Ritz, author of *Megashift*, wrote, "If you've ever felt lonely and unimportant in church, there's a good reason: You are alone and unimportant." Yeah, that's how I felt.

Through these experiences, there came a time when I wanted to take my Bible and toss it, along with God, into the trash. At least liberals, pagans and atheists showed some semblance of caring. They were telling me that Christianity was a cruel, heartless religion and I believed them. They told me that they were the ones who cared for the disabled and I believed them. After all, it was the Democrats and liberals who were talking about justice and equality.

There came a time, though, when I had to ask myself a question. What was I going to do with Christianity? I decided that I would not conform to what people expected a Christian to be. I chose instead to investigate for myself what I truly believed.

What I discovered was a two-side coin. On one side, people are made in the image of God and they have a natural value that only God can take away. On the other, people are like a herd of animals, always driven by fear and seeking comfort in the familiar. Whenever a disabled person rolls in and violates that comfortable familiar, they know they are supposed to be "good Christians," but have no idea how. So they put up a false front of compassion and niceness that is phony through and through, or they just stumble over the obvious and move forward with the ceremony. How many people with disabilities are being hurt by this lack of clarity and lack of courage? I weep to think of it.

There was a time, though, when I did experience a genuine love, an honest appraisal of who I was as a person. Hurting and wound-

ed, I attended a tiny Methodist church in Stony Point, North Carolina, willing to give God one more chance. The pastor was man in his forties with more of a fundamentalist view of the Bible and the world. There was something different about this man, though. He came out to my house and visited with me. He helped me deal with tough personal issues I was experiencing. He helped find ways to get me to church. I was cynical, jaded and cold, a person who normally did not illicit a large crowd of friends, but he acted like a friend of his own choice. One day, he came by my house and outside, next to his van, he prayed for me. When we were finished, he took my hand into his in a strong handshake, looked me in the eye, and said, "Matthew, I love you."

That was when I began to under just what kind of God the God of Christianity was. Who Jesus was came into such a clear focus. I stopped being a handicapped man and became a man who happened to be handicapped. There was also the realization that I could know God, as a friend and confidant. To my mind this had seemed impossible and stupid. After all, what kind of God would come down to this earth to live like a man, then take my heart into His hands and say, "I love you"?

In churches across America, Christians hold important ceremonies, delve into deep theology, experience spiritual power and express themselves in unbridled ways. Past it all, though, there are people who are in need of basic affirmation that they loved by God just as they are. We need to learn how to let God's strength and love guide us past physical disabilities and see the person underneath. That person will have a heart and at the door of that heart, you'll find Jesus knocking.

Or better yet, you'll find the door wide open and Jesus inside.