

Wonderful

Women of the Bluegrass

Tops Wonderful Woman of the Bluegrass is Margaret “Meg” Jewett.

Meg is the owner of the Kentucky-based farm Walnut Hall Ltd. and gift store L.V. Harkness.

Her most passionate cause is fighting against the slaughter of horses. Meg was a driving force in the founding of the Kentucky Equine Humane Center, which is open to all breeds. Its primary mission is to provide refuge for Kentucky’s unwanted horses and hopes to be a model for centers all over the country.

She has been honored recently for her efforts on behalf of unwanted horses with the 2007 U.S. Harness Writers Association’s President’s Award.

L.V. Harkness is renowned for its classic and innovative designs in trophies which are now gracing winner’s circles around the country, including the historic Red Mile.

The company is the official supplier of trophies, awards and medals to the FEI Alltech World Equestrian Games, which will be held at the Kentucky Horse Park in 2010.

Meg has also been quietly and deeply involved in many other community efforts.

All of this passion for life and business began with her great grandfather L.V. Harkness.

In 1869, at 19 years of age and with a \$500 stake from his father, L.V. began his career in land and cattle. In 1891, L.V. purchased Walnut Hall Stock Farm near Lexington, Kentucky. His keen eye and uncompromising tastes transformed Walnut Hall into the foremost standardbred breeding and racing establishment in the world.

Today his great-granddaughter, Meg Jewett, shares his love of standardbreds, objects d’art, and his spirit of adventure.

Meg enjoys traveling the globe seeking the unusual “wants” and unique “must haves” that add so much spice to life. It is with great family pride that she shares these treasures through L.V. Harkness & Co.

TOPS: Tell us about your great grandfather L.V. Harkness.

Meg Jewett: He lived in New York and California and came to Lexington to look for carriage horses, and he fell in love with the place. He ended up buying the original part of Walnut Hall, the original 400 acres—which I own—and he ended up with over 5,000 acres, which is part of the Horse Park. Although he did live in other places, I think this was his favorite. He was a global traveler—he had a yacht and he traveled all over the world on it. It was called the Wakiva.

TOPS: Tell us about the Kentucky Equine Humane Center.

Meg: The Kentucky Equine Humane Center was formed 18 months ago. We take in all breeds of horses! It’s your work horses, donkeys, miniature horses, race horses and saddle horses... we just got a call from somebody who had eighteen Saddlebreds that needed a home. I think we are the first of its kind to take in all breeds.

TOPS: Is there adoption involved?

Meg: Absolutely. It’s a center where we are connected with not only other centers, but also other horse associations trying to place these horses. We need volunteers, and we need adopters. It’s a terrible situation. As the cost of caring for a horse continually increases, some find they can no longer care for their horse and we get the call.

We always try to find a home for them.

We’re blessed to have the best group of veterinarians in the world right here in Lexington who give so much to help the center, but we desperately need donations of feed and hay.

TOPS: When people come to adopt, what’s their general purpose for adopting?

Meg: Mostly, they’re looking for pleasure horses or a companion horse for a horse they already have.

TOPS: Are there any stories that have particularly touched you?

Meg: We had one horse that was found tied to a telephone pole on the side of a highway. Somebody called and said, “Can we bring this horse in?” And then there are the horses that people have found starving. And they’re all so sweet. It’s just so strange that these horses have been so rudely handled yet can be so kind. They’re just so forgiving.

It all started—do you remember Ferdinand, when he went to slaughter? He was a Kentucky Derby Winner. We got a call from Representative Ed Whitfield, and he said, “We have to do something.” And my husband and I said yes, of course. So we joined up with him in the anti-slaughter movement. I went to the slaughter sales—killer sales—and there are a couple of big ones. My husband said, “You’re not going unless we send bodyguards with you.” And he did, because it can be a bit dangerous.

They didn’t want any outsiders there, because they were worried what we would say to the outside world. We ended up buying a tiny miniature horse and this skinny, non-descript work horse. Our vet said it should’ve never been in the sale.

When we got back, the miniature horse had to be neutered, and it was discovered

Meg Jewett

that his halter had never been changed as it had grown into his head.

And now there is this HUGE giant, who we call Mister Ed, and this plump miniature horse called Spitfire.

So that's when I decided that I would do this. You can't go week after week after week to all these sales—where would you put all these horses? So, I thought well, this is something we could do to help. The other avenue is to go and lobby on Capitol Hill, which I do.

TOPS: So it's not too dissimilar from other Humane Societies. It's just that you take in horses, try to adopt them out, and if it doesn't work out, then other more humane options are available.

Meg: Exactly. It sounds very ordinary. What's extraordinary about it is that it's done right here in Lexington, the Horse Capital of the World, for the first time.

TOPS: How is KyEHC funded?

Meg: It's all through private funding. That's it. It's rough—we go month by month.

The In-Kind volunteer work is very important. There are opportunities working with the horses, but if you paint, if you hammer, if you are a secretary, or if you're good with computers, or if you can write invitations, or you know how to give parties, or if you are a fundraiser, if you know how to write grants, that's what we need!

TOPS: Is there a goal to expand?

Meg: There is a goal for us to be a model, and for us to expand in other places. In Kentucky, outside of Kentucky. In that way, just speaking for myself and not as the Center, then there would be no need for inhumane slaughter as an alternative to... unwanted horses.



TOPS: You have also been very involved with the Headley Whitney museum.

Meg: It is a decorative arts museum, started by George Headley who was a jewelry designer. I have been on the board for going on five years now. I remember once when I was there at a brunch, long before I was ever associated with the museum, and looking at the beautiful jewels that he had made.

I remember being so impressed by his work and the museum. When I came back here to live and they asked me to join, I was very pleased and honored. We identified many challenges and opportuni-

ties, and began raising money for our two wings.

All of this will allow us to bring in Smithsonian exhibits. I think that will be a wonderful thing for Lexington.

TOPS: How can our readers get involved?

Meg: The Derby Brunch, the weekend before the Derby. It's open through Saturday, closed on Mondays. We take tours and I think it's a marvelous thing for clubs, ladies' clubs, or book clubs—any kind of clubs. Business meetings or retreats can be hosted in George Headley's

Continued on page 62.

Wonderful Women of the Bluegrass: Meg Jewett

Continued from page 61.

old house, which we now call the La Belle House.

TOPS: Another cause for you is The Lexington Public Library.

Meg: “Buzz” Carmicheal told me that if I were chair of the library, I’d only have to show up four times a year for meetings...It’s a daily thing! I’m on the foundation, which raises the money. One of our fundraisers is the Literary Feast, which is January 30, 2009. We fly the authors into town and pair them with a family who hosts a dinner party at their home. And the night before the Literary Feast, we will have a dinner at my farm for people to meet and talk with all of the authors.

TOPS: All of your involvements would overload most people. Not to mention the store! What else are you passionate about?

Meg: The Lexington Cancer Foundation... The Kentucky Horse Park... The Rotary Club.

TOPS: L.V. Harkness, the very unique shopping experience—how would you describe it to someone who’s never been here?

Meg: Well, that’s hard. Because it’s not a store, and it’s not a shop... it’s a way of life. It got started in 2000, when Greentree asked us to come in and top their tables with our porcelain and silver. We did that for about a year, and then they decided that we were a little bit too much for them. At that time, our original building had become vacant—it used to be a welding shop or something--so we decided that would be great for us.

We then got the building on the back end where we decided to open our fabric work room. There’s a really neat garden in the back--we’ve had a lot of parties out there. Last November, we moved into the new building.



TOPS: Where do you go to do your buying?

Meg: We go to every show, everywhere. We go all over Eastern Europe. We spend a lot of time in England, France, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Poland, and Hungary.

TOPS: What are you most known for?

Meg: I think we’re most known for coming in and seeing something that you don’t see in other places. That you come in and say, “Oh my gosh! Where did that come from?” Things I see everywhere bore me. I carry what I think is different and beautiful. If I wouldn’t have it in my house, I won’t buy it. I’m always looking for something that’s a little different. Even with a vendor that everyone knows, we will go up to the factory and say, “What else do you have?” “Eclectic” is very fair, but in good taste.

TOPS: What else do we need to know about Meg Jewett?

Meg: When you have a passion for what you do, then your whole life is that. Honestly, what I do – my charities, my reading, my travel, my animals – I love and I integrate it all into the life of the store. That’s what I love about this store—it can be everything! This store is a lifestyle!

smooth it out
smooth out wrinkles
in no time flat

steam it out
steam away odors with
a 10-minute tumble

fresh it up
clean away odors and
refresh clothes instantly

get it out
rub it on and the stain is gone

SWASH
Tide

swashitout.com