

# When Dreams Come Reality

## When Dreams Become a Reality - BY BERG'J MATTHEWS

Dressage at Devon has been the premier North American equestrian event since 1975. It combines world class dressage competition and the world's largest open breed show. However, our story does not start here but hundreds of miles away in a small town in upstate New York. There resident Cindy Rubel had a dream, and it wasn't a small fleeting dream but one that stuck with her and moved her into action.

Through the breeding of her IDSH Brigantine, Cindy was exposed to more information about the Irish Horse and soon learned that the breed was on the watch list. The breed known for producing horses of even temperament, durability and athleticism was dying out. The Irish class at Devon had not been held for several years, or it had so few participants that it could not even be called a class. Cindy Rubel was not discouraged by this, but determined more than ever to see the revival of this class at the historic grounds and to show the versatility of the breed. She was able to find a co-sponsor for the class Deborah Curtin (Lilith Farm) and from there the dream blossomed into a reality.

It began when Cindy reached out to the Irish Draught Horse Society of North America on Facebook, her post was to gauge interest and the response was overwhelming. Many responded with interest in the class, and even those who could not compete wanted to come out and support the division. From there Cindy was the rock that held the group of interested horse owners together. Whenever there was a question about show grounds, entries and preparation for the show, she was there to answer. Everyone within the group encouraged each other, and helped each other through the process. For many of the owners it would be their first time competing at a show such as Devon, and their first overnight show.

After months of planning and preparation the week of the horse show finally came. Dressage at Devon (Devon, PA) would run from September 26th-Oct 1st. The Irish Horses started arriving on Tuesday the 26th in anticipation for the class running Thursday the 28th. Seven horses were scheduled to compete in the class. This was an amazing achievement for a class that had not run for many years. Through everyone's efforts the division had been revived. It was evident the first day there that the Irish Horse owners had something special. The months spent communicating online had brought about camaraderie with each other that many do not get to experience. There was always a lending hand to help with feeding, watering and show prepara-

tion. The friendship that was apparent in the group was nothing but understanding, encouraging and helpful. The night before the show all of the owners sat together in the grandstands and enjoyed a wonderful Italian dinner. As the lights shown on the Dixon oval, the hopes and the dreams of each person were projected in that light. They knew that all of their efforts had brought them to that moment, and that the time spent together was something to cherish.

The day of the Irish Division had finally come, the morning was spent bathing, braiding, and warming up before the class was called. Each horse went in and represented the breed beautifully. 1st place: Aisling, (Rylee) 11 yr. old IDSH mare by Corcullen RID 75.9 owned & handled by Candace Martin Yackel, 2nd place: Casanova Aztlan (Cassie) 10yr. old IDSH mare by Cardenta out of Sea Probe RIDSH 75.375 owned & handled by Marima O'Toole, 3rd place: Sookie, 6yr. old IDSH mare by Cougar RIDSH (by Cruising) 74.4 owned & handled by Jennifer Bateman, 4th place: Brigantine (Billie) 2yr. old IDSH filly by Wapuzzan out of Dandelion Atlantic Lass RID 74.025 owned by Cindy Rubel-Cionciotto & handled by Brian Ohnmeiss, 5th place: DCF Hang On Salute, 12 yr. old IDSH gelding by Salute the Truth TB out of Hangan Caroline 73.3 owned by Bergj Matthews and handled by Brian Ohnmeiss, 6th place: Bealagh Aurum's Blues, (Clementine) RID '05 mare by Touch of the Blues 72.1 owned by Judy Honey & handled by Brian Ohnmeiss, 7th place: Genesee Bouncer, yearling ID colt by Stargazey's Romance At Short Notice 71.7, owned by Ann Morss & handled by Brian Ohnmeiss.

Once the class had finally commenced, everyone took a deep breath and congratulated each other on their achievements. The horses that day showed the attributes of the breed that makes the Irish Draught and Irish Draught Sport Horse special breeds worth preserving. The horses showed the versatility, willingness and amateur friendly attitude that so many know and love. The horses were put away, and Ann Morss (N/E Regional IDHSNA Chair) held a special awards ceremony for everyone involved in making the dream of the Irish return to Devon a reality. It was amazing to see how a post on Facebook had turned into a community of horse lovers and friends.

The success of the show has enabled the class to be sponsored for 2018 with the unfailing devotion of Cindy Rubel. Her spark lit a fire that we hope never burns out. These horses are our hearts, partners and companions and they need the community's help to survive. Please consider entering your Irish Horse in Devon 2018!!

