

Scholarship Report by Alana Aho

Lessons with Sarah Geikie and Lendon Gray

At the beginning of the year of 2008 I applied for a Lendon Gray Dressage Scholarship. I applied with the intent of taking riding lessons with Sarah Geikie, but as it turned out I was lucky enough to ride with both Sarah and Lendon Gray. Needless to say, I learned a lot from the lessons with both these ladies.

I received one lesson from Lendon and one from Sarah. Both my pony and I worked very hard during the lessons. The experience gave us a small taste of what it would take to become an upper level rider. I love riding and my goal is to become an upper level rider, so this was a great start.

The pony I have now puts her heart and soul into whatever she does, but she is not built for dressage, so we have to work that much harder. She is perfect for training and lower first level dressage though, and that's fine because that's where I am. I learned that if you and your horse are not motivated or not willing to try, you will not succeed in the world of dressage whether you have a perfectly built dressage horse or one that's built a little downhill. It does not matter the breed of the horse or how much you paid, if either the horse or rider aren't willing to put in the time and commitment, there is no point.

It was an honor riding with both of these ladies. But they both have very different styles of teaching. The best way to get better at anything is to get different opinions on the subject. When Lendon Gray is teaching, she knows how to get her point across to you. She is firm but not mean. She keeps you on your toes when you are riding, and if you do something that she is not pleased with, she will have you do it again and again. This is why her riders are very accomplished. From just the one lesson I had with Lendon, I sit up straighter.

The lesson with Sarah Geikie was a great opportunity also. With Sarah we worked on the basics. I was having a problem keeping my pony straight. Her hind end would move inward. Sarah explained and showed me how I must move the shoulders in and not the hind out. When I got home we practiced what she had taught us and it has made a big difference.

Receiving a Lendon Gray Dressage Scholarship was a great opportunity. I learned a lot from the lessons with Lendon Gray and Sarah Geikie. I would like to say thank you very much to the Scholarship Committee and Lendon Gray, and I'll see you next year at another D4K event!

Alana Aho