

Thurston wins big at NSBA Show in Oklahoma!

MCC's Director of Equine Technology, Tami Thurston, was a big winner at the twelfth annual NSBA (National Snaffle Bit Association) World Championship Show & Breeders Championship Futurity held in August in Oklahoma. Over the course of the seven-day competition, NSBA paid out in excess of \$1,000,000 in cash and prizes.

The NSBA World Championship Show is recognized by pleasure horse riders, trainers and breeders as the premier event for identifying and rewarding, both excellence and talent in the recreational equine industry.

The purpose of the NSBA is to define, promote and improve the quality of the pleasure horse, to promote exhibits, events and contests in expositions and shows; to promote the training of pleasure horses, to promote interest in pleasure horses among younger horsemen and to use and encourage the use of the standard rules for holding and judging contests of the pleasure horse.

Thurston's won while riding Willy in the Sky, aka Cole. (Show horses generally have two names, its registered name for official paperwork, and its barn name for day to day interaction.) Cole is a two year old, owned by Sandra Morgan, of Scottsdale Arizona and Langley, British Columbia. Thurston is Cole's trainer and also coaches Morgan.

When asked, who is judged more, the rider or the horse, Thurston responds, "It just depends on the class. However, the classes I specialize in are mostly judged on the horse's performance but, that relies heavily on the horse's response to its training and rider. It's very symbiotic."

Thurston won in the 2-year Old Hunter Under Saddle category. Horses in this class should move in a long, low frame and be able to lengthen their strides and cover ground as in

traversing hunt country while following hounds. The horse should be obedient, alert and responsive to their riders. Judges are particularly encouraged to score on manner, movement and attitude as reflected on the horse's ears, mouth, tail and way of going.

Thurston is not new to winning at the NSBA show. She was also a Reserve Champion this year, and a Reserve Champion a few years ago.

She has placed in many top tens over the years.

Showing horses is a part of MCC's Equine student's training. Thurston states, "We encourage all of our students to show in some way or another, even if its not their main interest. It just makes our students more well-rounded and qualified to work in the equine industry."

Cameron Vansickle, a 2016 graduate of MCC's Equine Technology program and resident of Tarboro, NC, also attended the event. He was braiding and banding the manes and tails for many of the competing horses. Professional banders and braiders make anywhere from \$50 to \$200 per horse depending on the design. Pictured right and below are examples of Vansickle's work.

The recognition Thurston earned at the NSBA show, reinforces the high quality of education MCC's equine students receive from their experienced and professional instructors. Way to go Tami!



Pictured above are Tami Thurston and her mount, Willy in the Sky (aka Cole), displaying the trophy and ribbon they won at the NSBA World Championship Show in August. Below are the braiding and banding work of Cameron VanSickle (Class of 2016).

