



Two Pisgah students had an exciting end to their summer vacation. Carly Reinsel and Sydney Johnson spent August 4th-9th at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington, Kentucky attending the USEF Pony Finals. This competition, for which riders and ponies qualify by being champion at a USEF show during the year, is the national championships for pony hunters. Competitors come from all over the country to compete head to head in their respective divisions. Ponies are shown in a Model class, where they are judged on conformation, an Under Saddle class where they are judged on movement, and then an Over Fences class which counts 50% towards the overall awards.

Sydney and Carly began their week in the Green Pony Divisions. Green ponies are in their first year of showing at their regulation fence height. Sydney showed her pony Double Whammy in the Medium Green division and won 4th place in the difficult Over Fences class and 6th place in the overall awards out of 66 competitors. Carly showed Clanfair Silver Wish in the Small Green division and was 5th over fences and 8th overall out of 47 competitors. Carly's pony was also Reserve Champion Registered Welsh Pony, a special breed award. While Sydney has been in the ribbons at Pony Finals before, she was 7th over fences in 2007, these were Carly's first wins in four years of attending this competition.

Carly's week was not over yet. After the Greens are finished, the competition moves on to the more experienced ponies in the Regular divisions. Pony Finals rules only allow riders to show one pony per division and on Thursday and Friday Carly picked up the ride on Everyday Enzo, whose usual rider elected to show another pony in the Regular Small division. After placing 9th in the model class, she did well enough in the Under Saddle class to enter the final day in 13th place. An amazing over fences round put her in 1st place, but then she had to wait for the final 12 ponies to complete their rounds. Several top ponies had surprising difficulties, and when it was all over, Carly was still on top winning the blue ribbon and was also awarded the Small Pony National Champion in the Country, on a pony she had never ridden until a week before the Finals.

Both girls will always remember the 2009 Pony Finals, but they are now setting their sights on the 2010 competition. So when the last week before school rolls around again--remember to wish them luck and maybe they can even outdo this year's results!