

Racing to the top

Funderburk makes sure S.C. horses, owners and trainers get recognition

By TOM DIDATO

C-1 (Camden, S.C.) sports editor

COLUMBIA — For a state which does not have pari-mutuel wagering or major flat track racing, South Carolina made the Thoroughbred world take notice of horses which were sent from its sandy soil during the spring.

While towns such as Camden, Aiken and St. Matthews know the importance of the equine industry to their communities, Rep. Laurie Funderburk (D-Kershaw) made sure the powers-that-be in the state capitol knew the quality of four-legged athletes which either have been developed or are currently training in the Palmetto State.

Last Tuesday, inside the House of Representatives' chambers, a Funderburk-sponsored resolution was read and then, passed by her and fellow House members. The ceremony was attended by a group of owners and trainers, including a strong turnout from Camden. Also that day, an accompanying resolution was passed citing the accomplishments of Camden's Sue and George Sensor and Arch Kingsley, the connections of Sunshine Numbers, winner of the 2011 \$50,000 Carolina First Carolina Cup Steeplechase.

The resolution congratulating the Sensors, owners of the Camden spring classic winner, and Kingsley, who trains Sunshine Numbers, cited the 9-year-old gelding's 27 ¼-length romp over the Springdale Race Course on April 2 in Camden.

Sunshine Numbers, who was selected as the New York-bred steeplechaser of the year for 2010, became the first winner of the Carolina Cup to be owned by permanent Camden residents. The Sensors made their first visit to Camden in 1980. Twelve years later, the couple moved to Camden permanently.

The resolution lauding the efforts of flat track horses with Palmetto State ties centered on the first two legs of racing's Triple Crown.

On Friday, May 6, Plum Pretty, a 3-year-old owned by Camden resident John Fort's Peachtree Stable, won the \$1 million Kentucky Oaks at Churchill Downs. The filly was developed in Camden by Kip Elser's Kirkwood Stables. Finishing second in that race was St. John's River, who was prepared in Camden at the barn of Nancy Terhune.

One day later, runners with South Carolina ties found their way to the Churchill Downs winners' circle on Kentucky Derby Day.

Get Stormy, a 5-year-old horse, won the \$576,000 Woodford Reserve Turf Classic (Gr. I). Get Stormy was developed in Camden at Donna Fryer's Custom Care Equine.

Also on Derby Day, Aikenite, owned by the Aiken-based partnership, Dogwood Stable, and prepared there by Ron Stevens, ran away with his second straight Grade II victory in the \$348,900 Churchill Downs Stake. And Sassy Image, prepared in Elloree by Franklin Smith, won the Humana Distaff Stake.

Two weeks later, Shackleford, trained by Webb Carroll in St. Matthews, captured the 136th running of the Preakness Stakes in Baltimore. Also on the card, Apart won the William Donald Schaeffer Memorial Stake, with preparation given by Jane Dunn in Holly Hill, and Paddy O'Prado, prepared in Elloree by Franklin Smith, won the Dixie Stake.

The resolution went on to salute the Thoroughbred industry for the impact which is has on the state's economy as well as for the public relations shot in the arm it has provided to South Carolina.

"South Carolina has become a popular destination for equine tourists, who arrive in the fall of each year and train until the spring before going on to their racehorse careers and the equine industry's overall economic impact on the Palmetto State exceeds one hundred million dollars annually," the resolution read.



Photo courtesy of Sam Holland

REP. LAURIE FUNDERBURK PRESENTS S.C. Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders' Association president Lee Christian with a resolution which she sponsored recognizing the recent accomplishments of Palmetto State Thoroughbred owners and trainers. Pictured, from left, are Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter (D- Orangeburg), Camden's Nancy Terhune, Franklin Smith, Camden's Donna Freyer, Camden's George Sensor, Rep. Funderburk (D- Kershaw), Camden's Sue Sensor, Christian, Camden's Arch Kingsley, Webb Carroll, Camden's Kip Elser, Rep. Bill Clyburn (D-Aiken) and Rep. Harry Ott (D-Calhoun).

It went on to say that the House of Representatives is "grateful for the wonderful publicity and economic boost brought to South Carolina through its thoroughbred owners and trainers. The House of Representatives takes great pleasure in honoring the equine industry in our State, and the members wish much success to the industry in all its future endeavors."

Plum Pretty eyes Mother Goose: Kentucky Oaks winner Plum Pretty has been eyeing Saturday's \$250,000 Mother Goose Stakes (Gr. I) at Belmont Park for her first start since her win at Churchill Downs on May 6.

On Monday, included on what was, presumably, trainer Bob Baffert's Twitter account, the

Hall of Fame conditioner said Plum Pretty would be forced to miss the race after having developed a temperature. The Daily Racing Form later confirmed the news included in the message.

Baffert saddled the Peachtree Stable-owned 2-year-old colt Night Tide for a victory in a \$50,000 maiden special weight race Sunday at Hollywood Park. The son of Malibu Moon defeated a nine-horse field in the 4 ½-furlong race. Martin Garcia was aboard.

J.W. Blue, a 3-year-old Elkstone Group LLC homebred, finished second in the \$50,000 Floor Show Stakes at Delaware Park. Trained by Anthony Dutrow and developed in Camden at Donna Freyer's Custom Care Equine, J.W. Blue has two wins, a second and a third in eight lifetime starts. The son of Sky Mesa- Kentucky Storm, by Dynaformer has earned \$76,470.

The CCE-prepared Get

Stormy followed his aforementioned victory in the Woodford Reserve on Derby Day with a third place finish in the \$250,000 Monmouth Stakes at Monmouth Park, N.J., on June 12.

The third-place run was worth \$25,000 for the 5-year-old horse which has now brought in \$1,156,822 from 23 career starts, including 10 wins.

Augustin Stables' Fantasia, who is trained by Hall of Fame conditioner and part-time Camden resident Jonathan Sheppard, followed up a second place run in the Grade 2 Humana Distaff Turf Mile on Derby Day with another second in the \$400,000 Foxwoods Just a Game (Gr. 1) for fillies on Belmont Stakes Day, Saturday, June 11.

Coming from last in the field over a rain-soaked turf course, Joel Rosario and Fantasia charged down the stretch, coming up three lengths shy of C.S. Silk, the 12-1 longshot winner.

Another Augustin runner trained by Sheppard, English import Dyna Waltz, finished second in the \$100,000 Edward P. Evans Stakes (Gr. 3) which was run Sunday at Colonial Downs in New Kent, Va.

Ridden by Edgar Prado, Dyna Waltz finished 1 ½ lengths behind Aruna. It was the third second-place finish for the 4-year-old filly in as many starts this year.

(Turned from Home is a regular feature in the sports pages of the Chronicle-Independent spotlighting Thoroughbred flat horses, which were sent to the track from Camden, as well as local owners and trainers. Any persons having racing information which they would like to pass along and be included in this column should call the C-I sports department at 432-6157 or, via e-mail at tdidato@chronicle-independent.com.)