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# Introducing Alayna Arnold, age 9

## Small in the saddle, big youth contender

By **ZOË HAGGARD**  
zhaggard@t-g.com

At age 9, Alayna Arnold is already an Owner Amateur Country Pleasure World Grand Champion contender. That's actually big stuff in the walking horse industry.

"I try not to brag because I don't want to hurt anyone's feelings," she said.

As humble—and little—as she is, this Liberty Elementary student is making her way in the walking horse world. Trained by Kimberly Walden and her stepfather Bill Callaway, Alayna will be showing Designer Champagne—bred from Design To Love—which she co-owns with Walden, at the Celebration.

"It's fun just to show and to be just around all the people," said Alayna.

She's been riding padded and country pleasure since she was 3 years old and even though she doesn't remember the first time she rode a horse, she loves it.

"It feels great to me... [Horses] are easy to get around with and just fun to watch."

She says she trains around 90 minutes every day. But with school having started Aug. 2, getting her schedule together is a little difficult. Still, she said so far, she's enjoying school, especially her science and social studies classes as well as getting to see her friends.

One day she'd like to become a veterinarian to help horses that are sick and do something about it. Now, as the Celebration carries on, Alayna is ready to take her trainers' advice to the arena: "Try your best when you showing to have fun."

And you can bet she'll be doing so while wearing her bling atop Designer Champagne.



Alayna Arnold, 9, is an Owner Amateur Country Pleasure World Grand Champion Contender. She will be riding Designer Champagne, which she co-owns with Kimberly Walden.

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# Turner: female board member for TWHNC

By **ZOË HAGGARD**  
zhaggard@t-g.com

The Celebration experienced much change in 2020, and Lisa Turner, one of the board's newest members, was one of those changes.

Now, she's hoping to help the Celebration get back to normal.

Born and raised in Shelbyville, Turner has been going to the Celebration since her childhood, saying she holds it "very near and dear to her heart."

"It's hard to explain, but when that white horse walks in with the flag and goes around...I don't know it just does something to my heart," she said.

And as a certified public accountant and former Shelbyville City Treasurer, Turner understands the economic benefit the Celebration brings to the area as visitors travel from across the country stay, shop, and eat locally. Not to mention the Celebration brings in job opportunities and income from visitors renting housing houses throughout July and August.

"I don't think people realize what we've got here, what a gem it is. The fact that it brings just some wonderful people—people with lifelong friendships," she said.

With last year being different from the Celebration's now 83-year run, Turner has high expectations for the upcoming show, saying box seats are selling readily while the smaller shows leading up to the Celebration have been popular.

"There's been a lot of excitement in all of these little one-night shows around in the area. There's a lot of good horses. People are excited about it," she said.

She also said she's excited to work with the other board members.

"It's a good selection of people with different strengths...Not everybody knows how to do everything; it all kind of just works together to make everything work," Turner said.

But specifically, Turner said she and other members are hoping to get more of the community involved with the Celebration once again, especially within the younger crowd.

"I hate to not see the kids not be involved," she said. Growing up she remembers how common it was for her peers to work at the Celebration. And they weren't easy jobs—they taught hard work and how to give, Turner said.

Turner herself was selected to become a part of the board of directors after being with the Celebration Association. They nominated and selected her in January 2020 as the first female member and following in her father's footsteps, who was also on the board of directors.

Now on the hospitality committee, Turner will also work with sponsors, the new CEO Warren Wells, and with judges to talk about their expectations.



Lisa Turner



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# Inmans: Back in the saddle, again

By ZOË HAGGARD  
zhaggard@t-g.com

Serving as a TWHNC volunteer, Karen Inman, along with her husband Mike, former Celebration CEO, meant they couldn't buy and sell horses or compete within the Celebration.

Well, they're back at it now. And happily so.

The Times-Gazette recently caught up with the couple.

"It's great, honestly...we waited a little while, but we couldn't help it," Karen Inman said with a laugh.

They recently bought a colt from the King family of Leatherwood Farm in Lewisburg. Karen said they hope to raise him as a 2-year-old for next year.

Even with her mind on next year's competition, Inman said she's really looking forward to just about everything for the upcoming Celebration.

"We're excited to go to [the] Celebration, sit back, relax, enjoy the show," she said.

"A lot of good horses, and the people are great. We have so much support and so many friends in the industry that we want

to do well—we're looking forward to all that."

Inman also said she and her husband are getting back into the home building business, focusing on new home construction—which was Mike's profession before becoming TWHNC CEO a few years ago.

"We're totally committed to Shelbyville," Karen said.

Originally from Northern Michigan, she and Mike live here full time and love being a part of Shelbyville and the Celebration's growing community.

"The wonderful thing about our industry is, there's a place for everybody to give—whether male or female. There's a need all over the place to fill," she said.

Now with training—you do need a special strength. But each of the trainers, Inman said, have been great ambassadors for the breed.

And even though they're no longer in charge of Celebration events, Karen said they're happy to support and answer questions.



Karen Inman

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## IN MEMORY

Judy Tillett Young, poses for a photo with her husband, Ronal Young and step-daughter, Beth Lawwell. Judy was a former Amateur World Grand Champion and multi-grand champion rider, notably known for riding Black Magic Woman in her orange riding suit. Sad for the industry, Ronal passed away in 2020 and Judy passed away in April. She and Ronal were married 35 years.

See story and more photos on page 8B.

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# Judy Tillett Young's honor lives on

By **ZOË HAGGARD**  
zhaggard@t-g.com

The word is tough. It's safe to say it's what most people in the Tennessee Walking Horse industry are and always have been.

And those who have been around long enough, may remember one of the toughest women of the industry—Judy Tillett Young.

A former Amateur World Grand Champion, Young was the first Amateur rider inducted into the Grand Celebration Hall of Fame in 1986, eventually earning 39 blue ribbons.

"She was very well-known, strong-willed, very good rider. She'd been riding all her life," said Beth Lawwell, daughter of Ronal Young and Judy's stepdaughter, who is also a rider within the Celebration. "She was an icon for the Walking Horse industry because people were always looking up to her, wanting to ride like her."

But the industry lost its icon last spring when Young passed away on April 23, 2021 at the age of 67.

## Background

"She was very easy-going but firm when she decided to need to be—and very plain spoken," said Joe Tillett, former Bedford County Commissioner and Judy's older brother.

She started riding at the age of 6, and from there, won 1964 Amateur Mare World Champion with her horse Untouchable at just 10 years old. For the next two decades, she would continue to win blues and championships along with her well-known horses Black Magic Woman and Mountain Man.

And she was quite a sight sitting straight in her saddle; her blonde hair was tied back with a black ribbon, and her head steady in view with the crowd. Her brother

agreed one could see her personality in how she carried herself on her horses. "She was one-of-a-kind," he said.

## "Strong-willed"

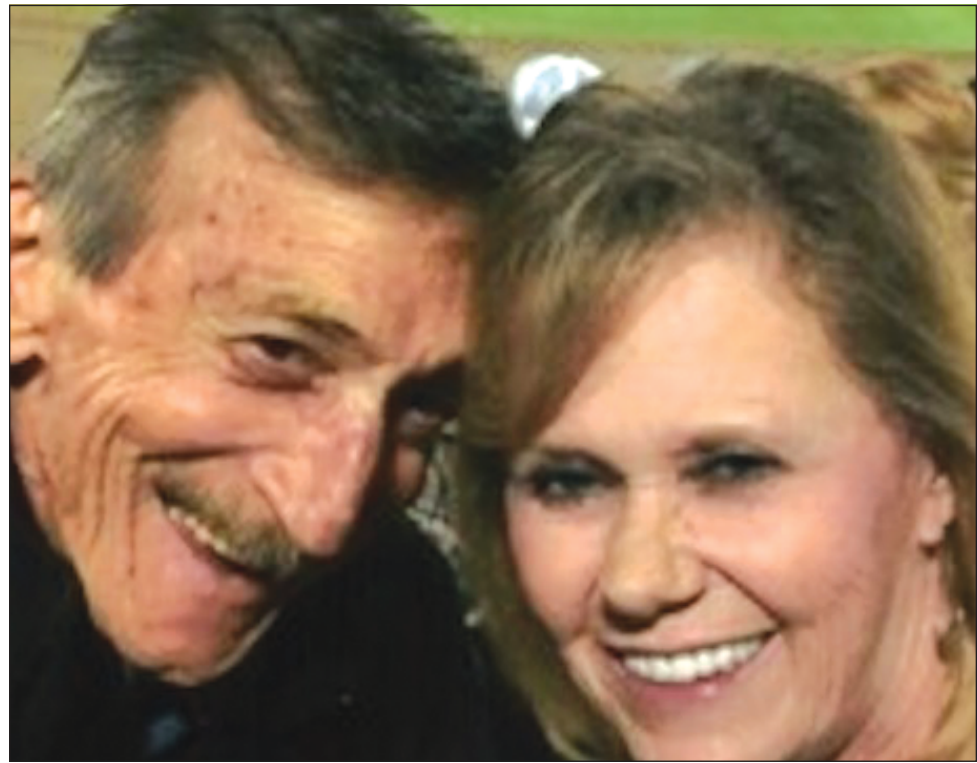
Incredibly, even though she faced a diagnosis of colon cancer in early 2000, becoming unable to ride a horse for over a year, she rode her horse, Hy-Tone Dancer, to another Amateur World Championship—despite first riding the horse only two days before she showed, according to the House Resolution which will forever commemorate Young.

In March 2001, the resolution was made to honor Young, stating "Judy Tillett Young is one such noteworthy individual who has attained the highest levels of achievement; a renowned equestrienne, Mrs. Young was recognized by her peers as Junior Rider of the Century in 1999..."

"I'm certainly very proud of my sister," her brother said.

Stepdaughter Lawwell said, "She just taught me that women could get out there and ride just as good as a man."

**Additional photo on page 7B.**



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# Margo Urad: First female TWHBEA president

By ZOË HAGGARD  
zhaggard@t-g.com

One year later . . .

Former president of the Tennessee Walking Horse Breeders and Exhibitors Association, Margo Urad now serves as the executive director all while owning an insurance business in Texas since 1992.

You might say she likes to stay busy.

Between the pandemic and serving as TWHBEA's first female president in its 85-year history, Urad says she's learned a lot and holds expectations for the future of the Tennessee Walking Horse industry.

"Overall, it was a good learning experience. I've learned something in every position there, it showed me the other side of things," she said.

Those things include just how much support and collaboration it takes to keep the breed front and center while providing services to the variety of members within the industry.

"The great thing with our horse is whether you trail ride, endurance ride, show performance or pleasure horse, or versatility, we have a program for you. And I think



Margo Urad

that's something I really wanted to promote and get people more involved with as far as the membership..." she said.

Urad graduated from Louisiana State University in 1980 with a degree in accounting. She grew up showing saddlebreeds and was first introduced to the walking horse

while living in Texas in the early 90s.

About 20 years ago, she became involved with TWHBEA, serving on the executive committee on and off in various positions.

Then in December 2019, she became the association's first female president.

"I don't want to say it's not a big deal because I think it's a very big deal for women, but at that time it didn't hit me that way. It was just being president, and I was thinking about all the stuff I wanted to accomplish and the things we did," she said.

While she was president during the pandemic, Urad worked on improvements to build and increase membership.

The association also offers rail to trail programs that are "outside the box." It's just some of the ways the organization is hoping to increase membership beyond just registering the breed.

TWHBEA is currently doing a worldwide trail riding video competition, which was started by international VP Brad Woodruff last year with its first competition taking place in Mexico. The competition for this year started in June and will go through

September.

Participating groups—of as few as 4 and as much as 25—can submit video segments of their trail riding that captures the excitement and authenticity of the ride—all while earning hours for trail riding.

Being one of the sponsors for the Celebration, there will also be a TWHBEA night on the last Thursday night of the Celebration.

But all the programs and time put into the industry is, in the end, all for the horse.

When people ask Urad, "Why do you do this?" her answer is simple, "Because I love and believe in this animal and our association. Anything I can personally do to better the industry and support the animal and industry, that's what I'm doing."

As for her advice for women within the industry, she says, "I think number one, you've got to follow your heart. Have goals—and I think for women, if you're a goal-oriented woman—it's just a matter of sticking to the path to achievement. I mean, it's a bumpy path. But one well worth sticking with."



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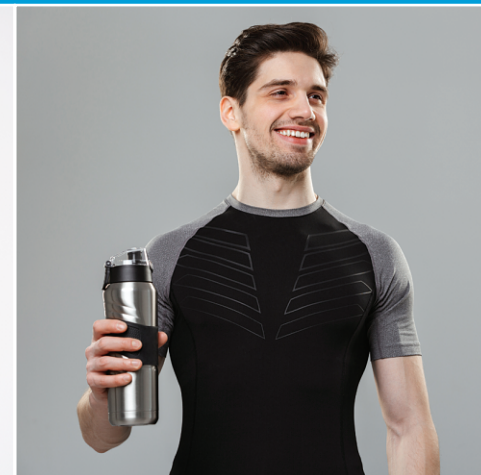
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SHE MADE MEMORIES



Betty Sain was the first woman to ride into the winner's circle with a World Grand Champion at the Celebration in 1966 at the age of 23. She showed the horse she owned and trained Shaker's Shocker after choosing to enter open stake.

Among the horses that are currently under saddle is SHOCKER'S. Sain Stables is in good shape for 1974.



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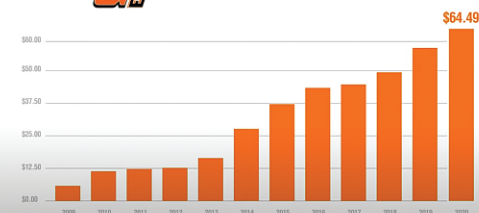
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**FAVORITE MEMORY**



Elaine Butner of Shelbyville, now retired from showing, performs at a show in the late 1990s.

**STYLISH BARNS**



T-G Photo by Dawn Hankins

Barns at the Celebration grounds are always decorated with fresh flowers and personal items to show support for special horses and riders. As well, many demonstrate where horse owners are located.



## BASKING IN SUNLIGHT



T-G Photo by Dawn Hankins

Tennessee Walking Horses are bred in various colors, like this pure white which was shown at the Wartrace Horse show held earlier this month at Jernigan Field.



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# List of Judges for 83rd TWHNC

## T-G STAFF REPORTS

“We are excited about this panel which includes such a diverse geographic representation and includes some valuable experience along with a newcomer that recently judged our Fun Show,” said Celebration CEO Warren Wells.

- David Sisk, from Columbia, will be marking the cards for the fourth time. Sisk previously judged the Celebration in 2014, 2015 and 2018.

- Chris Bobo, from Shelbyville, will also be making his fourth appearance in center ring having judged The Celebration previously in 2012, 2016 and 2017.

- Derek Bonner, from Mooresboro, N.C.,



will be making his third trip to judge the world championships. Bonner previously judged the Celebration in 2013 and 2015.

- Brent Grider, from Columbia, Ky., will be judging the Celebration for the second time with his first being in 2012.

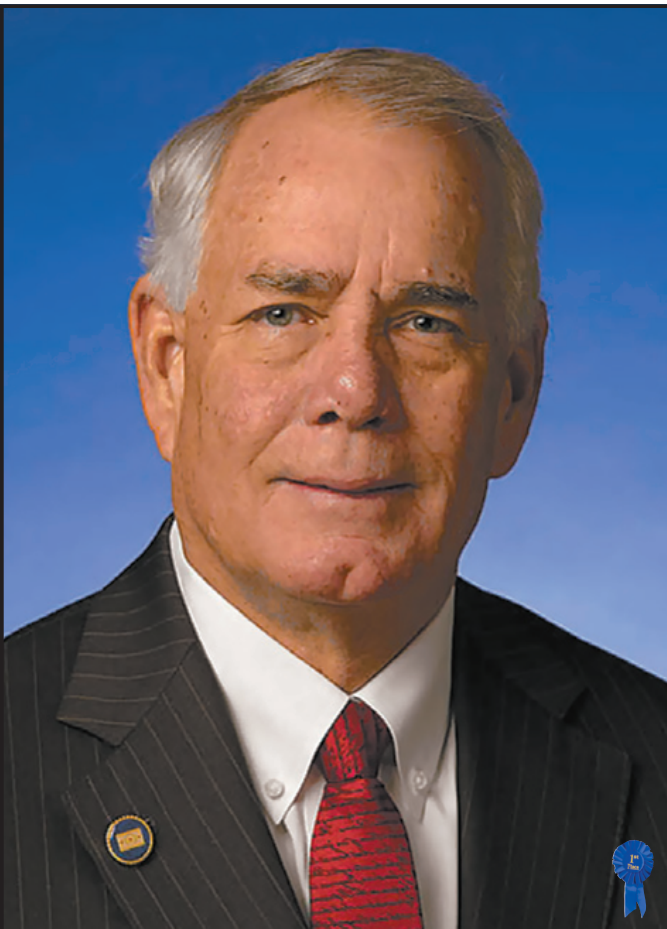
- Dale Watts, from Summit, Miss., doubles as a walking horse trainer and as a Hall of Fame girls and boys high school basketball coach in Mississippi. Watts will be marking the cards for the first time but recently worked for The Celebration at its 2021 Spring Fun Show.

READY FOR 2021



T-G Photo by Dawn Hankins

Since its inception, the Celebration has grown into its own 100-plus-acre equestrian complex; a complex frequented by many breeds and including a 30,000 seat outdoor stadium, a 4,500 seat indoor arena, a covered outdoor practice arena, permanent stalls for more than 1,700 horses, and campgrounds featuring full hook-ups for more than 350 recreational vehicles.



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