

## Winterthur's grand tradition turns 30 (The News Journal)

Point-to-Point co-founder marvels at its popularity  
By ROBIN BROWN &bull; The News Journal  
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George A. "Frolic" Weymouth smiled as he looked over the sun-drenched, people-packed hills of Winterthur Museum & Country Estate on Sunday, recalling the start of Point-to-Point 30 years ago.

"I never imagined it would grow like this," said Weymouth, founder of Point-to-Point's popular Parade of Carriages. "It's great to see so many families and children enjoying the day. When we started, there were only a handful of carriages and maybe a hundred people."

After an early chill, the clouds lifted, and Sunday's attendance topped 20,000, with a record 40 carriages, more family activities than ever and more than 200 horses.

George Strawbridge's 12-year-old Rochester won the Winterthur Bowl and the \$20,000 purse.

"I've been coming since I was a little kid," said Skip Achuff of Concordville, Pa. "It's one of Wilmington's biggest social events. I love the carriages, the timber racing is good and it's a perfect day -- 68 degrees, breeze is blowing and the sun is out."

U.S. Rep. Mike Castle, R-Del., and his wife, Jane, enjoyed riding in the carriage parade. "What a beautiful day for the 30th anniversary," she said.

For the special day, carriage collector Weymouth of Chadds Ford, Pa., chairman of the Brandywine Conservancy, opted out of his usual four-in-hand to lead the parade in a two-horse favorite.

"This

carriage belonged to President Buchanan," he said, "and it is believed to have been the one used for Abraham Lincoln's inauguration."

The historic carriage was suitable for his honored passenger, Greta "Greets" Layton of Greenville, founder of the steeplechase event that has grown into a mainstay of Delaware's social scene, raising about \$250,000 for the nonprofit site's educational efforts.

Samantha Abdullah, 10, of Greenville, who has been riding horses for about a year, liked getting a free horse book, given by the Pony Book Club of New York. Nearby, Personal Ponies, a nonprofit youth program, held a book drive and let young donors try their hand at leading ponies around a course.

Samantha and her brother, Simon, 4, liked the chance to ride ponies. "That was fun!" Simon said as he hugged their father, Ali.

Volunteers Beverly Christina of Wilmington, a retiree, and Melanie Dudley, 16, of the Fairfax area said they felt lucky to help at the pony rides.

"Just the look on the children's faces and a chance to give back to the community," Christina said. And she was happy about the weather, despite the threat of rain. "Last year, it was freezing," she said.

For Dudley and fellow members of the Winterthur Kids Corps, "it's neat to be part of such a big event," she said.

Members of the University of Delaware Equestrian Team -- Kristina Christiansen, Tabitha McAnally, Jen Windish and Sara Lessler -- also took turns on the ponies. On Wednesday, they head to Los Angeles for the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association nationals.

"Last time I rode a pony that size, I was about 10 years old," McAnally said. "This is great -- and great to have for the kids."

Their friend Jake Wiggins, also a UD student, held their drinks and purses patiently.

"I'm enjoying the horse races," he said, but he didn't like seeing some of the young people drinking too much.

"They should just chill," he said.

In another new activity, families packed the portrait tent and lined up for Winterthur Swiss Avalanche ice cream by Woodland Farm Creamery, which seventh-generation farmer Jim Mitchell said, "we make just for Winterthur. It's sweet cream ice cream, light vanilla and dotted with chocolate cows."

"Just great," said ice cream fan Cheryl Abhau of Pennsville, N.J., attending for the first time with regular Gloria Jarobilla of Quinton, N.J. Both wore elaborate hats -- an event trademark --- but said the breeze gave all hat-wearers a little challenge.

Jarobilla said the carriages are her favorite -- they give her goosebumps -- but loves the whole event. "I look forward to it every year and every year I bring someone new."

Joanna and Peter Markham said they didn't mind driving about six hours from New Hampshire to attend with Delaware friends, and plan to return. "This is great," Joanna said, adding, "I like the kiltie band" with bagpipes.

Their golden retriever, Tyler, was among hundreds of dogs to attend, like hats, an event trademark.

But he had it better than most.

The Markhams gave him bottled water, direct from the bottle.

"He always drinks from the bottle," Peter said. "He likes Poland Spring best. Maybe he should do a commercial."

Caroline

Bell, 22, of Claymont said, "I like that they have so much for the kids." She cheered on her stepsister, Mide Erickson, 9, who galloped in the stick-pony races.

"I think it's fun," Bell said. "You get to get a pretty dress and sit around in the sun and I could care less about the horse races, but I like looking at everyone."

One

person never seen before at Point-to-Point was 84-year-old Thomas Marshall of Auburn Heights in Yorklyn, who brought most of his late father's collection of steam cars for display.

Marshall, whose collection is being preserved, said he wondered why he never got to Point-to-Point. "This is real nice."

And his being there brought out retired judge David Coggins of Haddonfield, N.J.

"The

cars are why I came. This is my first time at Point-to-Point," he said, admiring Marshall's 1908 Stanley Model H-5 roadster. "These are just marvelous. This is a great panorama of early cars, the steam vehicles then Rolls-Royces and Bentleys -- and the carriages, too."

Auburn

Heights volunteer Kelly Williams of Mount Joy, Pa., said he felt honored to accompany the cars. "They're fascinating pieces of machinery."

Clydesdales from Budweiser and the New Castle County Police Department were big hits -- and the biggest horses Kyle Ketterer, 5, and his sister Katie, 3 1/2 ever saw. Their mother, Dana, of Kennett Square, Pa., said the family enjoys every Point-to-Point with friends.

University of Delaware professor Ken Lomax of Kennett Square, Pa., also was impressed with the carriages and Clydesdales. "Just magnificent animals," he said, adding the collection

of horses, historic cars and carriages cannot be beat.

"Point-to-Point is a great day," he said. "It really is."

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