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# Just Horsin' Around

## Holiday Event Draws Largest Crowd Ever

Posted: December 12, 2011  
By PRESTON KNIGHT

WEYERS CAVE— Who knows what goes through a horse's mind when college students dress them up and prance them around, all in an effort to spread some holiday cheer.

It's fun trying to guess, though.

"I think they like it," said Ashley Weik, a Bridgewater College sophomore and a member of the school's equestrian club. "Actually, they're really good sports about it."

For the last nine years, the club has counted on that cooperative spirit from its equine pals, which were pressed into service Saturday for the organization's annual "Horses' Christmas" at the college's equestrian center on Burketown Road.

"It gets everyone in the Christmas spirit," said Weik, 19.

'Love Bugs'

This year's theme was "A Fairy Tale Christmas," which had horses dressed as anything from the big bad wolf to Goldilocks. But even if the horses didn't



Carin Brown gets a sloppy kiss from Panda after they performed their skit of "The Princess and the Pea" during the Bridgewater College Equestrian Club's 10th annual "Horses' Christmas" in Weyers Cave Saturday. This year's theme is "A Fairy Tale Christmas" and featured horses dressed in seasonal garb with Bridgewater College students performing skits for community preschool students and their families. (Photos by Justin Falls)



Margaret Shrewsbury helps her granddaughter, Marin Sikes, 5, feed Jigs at the end of the event.

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like it, the dozens of children in attendance sure did.

"She's a horse fanatic," Elkton resident Dawn Wyvill said of her daughter, Annabelle, 9.

But given the chance to talk about horses on Saturday, another girl took charge.

Abigail Showalter, 10, of Fulks Run, grew up in Arizona around two horses. Even with the temptations of hot chocolate, candy and the sights and sounds of Christmas around her on Saturday, nothing meant more to Abigail than petting the horses.



*Eden Bowen (from left), Amy Cristallo, Bailey (horse), Ellie Jansen and Brittany Flurer perform the skit "Little Red Riding Hood" during the Bridgewater College Equestrian Club's 10th annual "Horses' Christmas" in Weyers Cave Saturday.*

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"They're big love bugs," she said. "Unless they bite. But I never met one that really bites. Maybe nips, because he wants love."

Abigail said kids who do not have horses growing up are in for a surprise at how big the animals are.

"Having a horse changes the way you think about them," the young equestrian said. "When you look at a picture in a book and see one in real life, it's very different."

The equestrian club holds events such as "Horses' Christmas" to bring children closer to the animals. Abigail wants to attend Bridgewater and become a club member.

"It's in the blood, mostly," she said.

#### Largest Crowd

Along with being an outreach opportunity for the club and a fun activity for youth, the annual event accepts donations of canned foods in lieu of an admission charge. Last year, 30 pounds of food were received, said Beth Boteler, Bridgewater's assistant director of riding. Donations should far exceed that amount this year because the event had its largest crowd ever, she said. The opportunity to give back to the community through the canned food drive adds to the event's popularity, Boteler said.

"Students get more into it every year," she said.

And maybe the horses do, too.

Quipped Weik: "They like to show off their hotness."

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