# *Article for Mid Illinois Sport Horse Organization’s Newletter*

Everyone is constantly exclaiming to me how lucky I am to have my job. While I will forever appreciate everyone's support and well-wishes, this idea of luck really got me thinking. To me, my job is not just some cool horse opportunity that happened came along and I thought it'd be neat so I managed to snag it. What some people fail to realize who may not know me extremely personally is that this job is a VERY specific dream I've held since I was a very young equestrian girl. Clydesdale figures, postcards from St. Louis visits, mugs and other horse toys line my bedroom shelves. You better believe when Build-A-Bear released a limited edition Clydesdale bear back in 2005, I went straight to Fairview Mall to get one. I used to tell my Uncle Rich that I would only drink Budweiser like he did solely because the gorgeous, big ponies were the ones who delivered it. I forced my parents in the freezing cold weather to bring me to the Chicago Southside Irish parade hours before the events began so I could watch the team of horses be hitched up and then stay until the very end to watch the boys close the parade with such elegance and style.

So, here I am years later, and every time I walk around the corner to our paddocks, I all but tear up when familiar brown ears perk forward and I get "that look". Simply, because I am just so happy to be where I am in that moment. My other co-workers laugh and say that eventually the effect will wear off. I can't help my find humor in it myself in a different way because they just have no idea what my job means to me. Yes, while I recognize that I am beyond lucky to achieve my dream career at such a young age, I also worked every part of my being endlessly hard. After hitting rock bottom multiple times and have other equine opportunities be ripped from underneath me; to the point where I started to believe maybe I wasn't meant to be in the horse world anymore. Then I was finally blessed to finally achieve my truest of all dreams. We all know more than well that when you fall off, you're supposed to get right back on. Well, I was at that point of sitting on the ground in the dirt staring on a riderless horse-type feeling when I decided to try and get back on that horse of life and try again. I can only hope that everyone, horse person or not, be able to find what passion makes them as truly content and joyful as I feel about being a handler for the World Renowned Budweiser Clydesdales.

Although I get asked frequently if my only job requirement is to take constant pictures of Prince, Charlie, Fez and Big Jake or any other of Anheuser's herd of over 170 Clydesdales, the team of handlers actually do throw our cellphones in the pockets of our khakis and spend long hours working quite hard. I'm proud to say that we care for an icon that is over 80 years in creation in representing Anheuser Busch. The STL hitch team reside on historical stables on the brewery grounds that belonged to the Busch family back in 1885. However, when not home at these stables, all of our 3 hitch teams (Fort Collins,Co.,St.Louis,MO.,&Meramack,NH.) travel over 300 days a year to various festivals, events and parades with a team of 6 or 7 handlers. We do everything from drive the custom made semi-trailers, set up the portable box stalls and clean harnesses, to grooming and washing white feathers. An unbelievable amount of routine work and preparation go into the system of readying the Clydesdales for an appearance. It could be thought of as the OCD prep required for an A-rated show, on steroids. It is a large amount of work for just what normally is a quick appearance in comparison.

I could go on and on about everything Anheuser Busch and Clydesdale related, but instead of taking up too much room, I encourage everyone to come on over the river and visit me and my favorite horses on the planet.

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