

# Hutchinson native competes in dressage

By Ron Wilson

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Guadalajara, Mexico. The Pan American Games. It is time to announce the outcome of the equestrian competitions. The results are in: Winning a team gold medal and individual silver medal in dressage is a remarkable rider who is originally from rural Kansas. Thanks to Purina's Better Horses Network for this story idea for today's Kansas Profile.

Heather Blitz is a professional rider and horse trainer in dressage. Dressage is a French word meaning "training." It's the name of a competitive equestrian sport where a skilled rider puts a horse through

a series of precision movements. Dressage is a high-class competition. Sometimes the riders will even wear top hat and tails.

The International Equestrian Federation describes dressage as "the highest expression of horse training." It has also been described as "horse ballet."

Heather Blitz grew up around horses. Her parents are Karen and David Anderson of Hutchinson. Heather's mom Karen had grown up riding hunters and jumpers. Karen wanted her children to enjoy horses as well. When Heather was little, her folks bought a farm north of Hutchinson and west of the rural community of Medora, which has a population of perhaps 200 people. Now, that's rural.

In this rural setting, the Ander-

sons' four children learned to ride horses. Heather's first pony was a Shetland, aptly named Rebel. When Heather was five, she insisted on saddling Rebel by herself. As Karen was watching out the kitchen window, Rebel threw Heather off his back. Karen hurried outside but before she could get to them, Heather ran after Rebel, jerked the reins and got back on to try again. "Heather's career was launched," Karen said. That determination and love for riding would serve Heather well.

Heather joined 4-H and competed in lots of equestrian events. She got a degree in equine studies at Colorado State and while there, discovered the sport of dressage. Heather was fascinated by its precision movements and the connection of horse and rider. She took on the sport

herself, learning from clinicians and owning and showing several horses.

Heather became a manager of a dressage facility in Florida. She moved to Louisiana where she taught dressage before relocating to Florida after Hurricane Katrina. A visiting horse owner from Europe was so impressed by Heather's work with horses that he invited her to come train his horses in Denmark, which she did. This enabled her to show her horses in international competition all over Europe. When she went to Europe, Heather brought with her a young horse she had bought named Paragon.

Paragon had been born in Louisiana from very good breeding stock at a place where Heather was head trainer. "I've known Paragon

since the day he was born," Heather wrote. "I actually helped him to stand for the first time on his long, baby legs that night." She bought the horse with the idea of training and selling him, but as he grew she became amazed with his abilities, temperament and natural gait and decided to keep him.

In 2008, Heather and Paragon moved back to Florida, where she rides him in dressage events and teaches clinics all over the country and overseas. In October 2011, they won the gold and silver medals at the Pan Am Games in Guadalajara. In March 2012, they won the Grand Prix Freestyle at the Global Dressage Festival in Florida.

Heather has a goal of competing in dressage in the 2012 Olympics. It's an expensive task, but Heather

and Paragon have now earned enough points to qualify for the Olympic selection trials to be held in New Jersey in June 2012. If she makes the team, Heather and Paragon will travel to London for the Olympics in August.

For more information or to support Heather, go to [www.heatherblitz.info](http://www.heatherblitz.info).

It's time to leave Guadalajara, where a rider from rural Kansas has just won gold and silver medals in dressage at the Pan Am Games. We commend Heather Blitz and her parents Karen and David Anderson for making a difference by building a career based on the beautiful equestrian sport of dressage. Good luck to Heather on her quest for Olympic gold.

## Rare fire insurance atlas added to online archives

A rare fire insurance atlas from 1893 was recently added to Kansas Memory, the Kansas Historical Society's online archives of documents, books and photos. The atlas maps the blocks, lots, buildings and property ownership of Kansas City (formerly Wyandotte, Kansas City and Armourdale), Argentine and Rosedale. Pages from the atlas

may be viewed at [kansasmemory.org/item/225076](http://kansasmemory.org/item/225076).

A street index and an index to businesses and public services precede the plat maps at the beginning of the atlas. Summaries of the operations and facilities of major industries and businesses are included with some plats. Businesses showcased include

packing houses, stockyards, grain elevators and metal smelters and refiners.

The Kansas Historical Society is a state agency that also operates the Kansas Museum of History, State Archives, the Kansas State Capitol Tour Center and 16 state historic sites across Kansas.

## What are you practicing to improve your business?

What you practice you improve. Hmm... so what are you practicing? Are you practicing giving great customer service or are you practicing hiding from your customers so they won't ask for your help?

Are you practicing good financial management or are you practicing pay and pray the check doesn't bounce? Are you practicing providing valuable services or are you doing just enough to get by? Are you practicing your complaining skills or are you practicing your solution



**jamie morphew**

• business tips

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finding skills?

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## Parks department not taking reservations now

The Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism will be unable to take cabin, campsite or other reservations until Tuesday, April 16.

The temporary shutdown will allow the agency to switch to a new reservation site at ReserveAmerica, a nationwide campground reservation system. During this time, no reservations will be taken either online or by phone. Reservation made before Sunday, April 1, will be moved into the new reservation system, so there will be no need to renew existing reservations.

To make reservations on or after Tuesday, April 17, coonsite and cabin guests can visit the department website, [ksoutdoors.com](http://ksoutdoors.com), where they'll be directed to the new reservation site at [reserveamerica.com](http://reserveamerica.com) or they can call a state park of-

fice or the Pratt Operations Office at (620) 672-5911. For those without computers or who still prefer using a phone, park staff will be able to use the new system to help callers with

reservations.

For information, contact the nearest state park or phone the Pratt Operations Office, (620) 672-5911 and ask for the Parks Division.

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| <b>FOREIGNER</b><br>April 12, 8pm All the hits!   | <b>GARRISON KEILLOR</b><br>April 24, 7:30pm<br>Farewell Tour and book signing.                        |
| <b>COWBOY JUNKIES</b><br>April 20, 8pm<br>For more than 20 years they have remained true to their unique vision and intensity - critically acclaimed. | <b>IRA GLASS</b><br>May 12, 8pm<br>Host and creator of "This American Life" shares stories and clips! |

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