

Letter of Reference:

One girl after another dangles upside down, suspended in a mid-cartwheel arc off the side of her horse as her hands skim the same ground front hooves just graced. The Calamity Cowgirls and their sequined quarter horses acrobat across the arena at a dead gallop as they perform suicide drags, back breakers, and vaults – dangerous yet beautiful stunts that have the crowd roaring its approval during an evening performance in Estevan, Saskatchewan.

On assignment for a North Dakota newspaper, I was captivated by The Calamity Cowgirls' agility, power, flexibility and grace as I watched their show. Their trick riding performance was an absolute pleasure to witness that evening, and their performance alone would be a crowd pleaser and an exciting attraction at any rodeo or event. All around me spectators were on their feet, clapping and cheering, gasping and gulping at the speed, raw athleticism and elegance of movement they saw.

But just as impressive were the girls' actions outside the arena that night. I watched as these young ladies tied their horses next to the stands where fans young and old could visit with them. As the audience swarmed the young riders and their horses, the girls encouraged them to ask questions, pet the horses and take pictures. The 150 autograph cards the girls brought with them to sign quickly ran out; after that they signed whatever else was available while engaging one fan after another. These girls were approachable and warm, humble and encouraging, professional and courteous, to all the kids who were thrilled to be up close to these daring showstoppers and their horses.

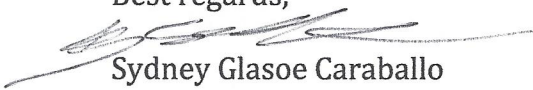
More than an hour later the girls were still visiting with spectators when several little girls begged them to perform just a few more tricks. And so they did.

One girl rose up, standing tall in the saddle, performing the hippodrome, as another dangled below her in a dead man drag. Their double trick was difficult and dangerous, but they seemed effortless, personifying grace and power far beyond their years.

Flush-cheeked and giddy, the stunt riders grinned and waved at the little girls as they finished their trick and galloped past. For those three little girls, it was an unforgettable moment.

As a farmer and rancher in northwestern North Dakota (I write for a newspaper on the side), I've attended my fair share of rodeos and ag shows. But I had never seen trick riders perform until that night. It was a pretty unforgettable performance for me also. I cannot overstate that any event hosting The Calamity Cowgirls would benefit greatly from this rare and talented addition of young ladies and their horses.

Best regards,



Sydney Glasoe Caraballo
Glasoe Angus, Wildrose, ND
Features Writer, *The Journal*, Crosby, ND