

THE COMPLETE GUIDE FOR HORSE ENTHUSIASTS • 2021

OHIO EQUESTRIAN DIRECTORY

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FINDING COURAGE Through the Heart of the Horse

LIVING LEGENDS of the Triple Crown

Turcotte • Cruguet • Cauthen • Espinoza • Smith

A New Magical Kingdom for Equestrian Enthusiasts:
World Equestrian Center - Ocala

A *Bridge* to Greener Pastures - Retirement Home for Horses



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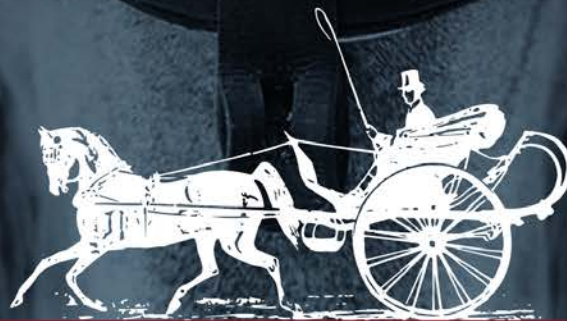
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OHIO 2021 EQUESTRIAN DIRECTORY

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I am deeply saddened by the recent passing of my dear friend and colleague, Laura Gentile - a beautiful human being who lived life to its fullest - holding nothing back, always present in the moment, and always looking for the very best in people, encouraging others to do the same. She will forever be an inspiration to me and those whose lives she touched. I asked her family to help us best memorialize her. Their following tribute honors an incredible human being - Laura Gentile, my friend, beloved member of the Ohio horse community, and avid supporter of our publications. We dedicate the 2021 – *Ohio Equestrian Directory* in her memory.

— Erika Milenkovich, Publisher

“Laura Gentile was a radiant light and beautiful soul. Her passion for being a mother, teacher, equine massage therapist, friend and owner of Guaranteed Horse Products only scratches the surface of what she meant to the many people who knew her. One theme interwoven throughout her



Laura with her horse, Forte

relationships was the positive impact she made in each person's life. Her time was generously given to all those she met. Her heart was open to every person and animal alike. Touching each one of our souls and changing the world for the better.

Throughout her house, etched on various surfaces and nestled discreetly in each room were two words that epitomized Laura's life: LOVE & LAUGH. These two priorities were apparent when spending time around her as she lived her life to the fullest, loving and laughing every day. Our lives will not be the same without her, but her light and free spirit will forever shine through the people and animals she touched. Cheers to you, Laura, and the love you continue to spread!”

ABOUT THE COVER

Chemistry aka “Sheldon” is an 8-year-old Oldenburg gelding owned and bred by our own Feature Writer, Mandy Boggs. Sheldon's dam was actually Mandy's favorite childhood horse, Faith. As luck would have it, Sheldon possesses many of her beloved qualities, along with some rather quirky and goofy traits of his own. Mandy describes Sheldon as a “toddler in a dinosaur's body” as he stands nearly 18.0 hands high and is always getting into some kind of trouble! For instance, last summer he got stung by a bee while trying to eat weeds near a cross country jump at the Kentucky Horse Park. By the next morning his nose was swollen, and he had itched it so badly it needed stitches. Mandy contacted Holly Helbig, DVM, the KHP's official show vet, and from that chance meeting the story, *Holly Helbig, DVM: A Stethoscope, Saddle and a She-Shed* was born.

Cover Photo taken at Quiet Meadow Farm in Novelty, Ohio. Courtesy of Enso Media Group, Inc.

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From the publisher

Welcome to the 2021 issue of
Ohio Equestrian Directory!

Ohio Equestrian Directory was created for YOU - owners, riders, professionals, and businesses of all disciplines - to help you connect within the local horse community. More than just a business directory, it also features content on trending topics, the best practices and innovators in the industry, plus tips from the pros.

2020 was a challenging year, with various industries being hit hard during the Covid-19 crisis. Ironically, many equine businesses, such as tack + feed shops, reported record sales. This just may support what we equestrians already know - that horses are considered *essential* especially during trying times! Venues, such as trade shows and competitions, had to reorganize to virtual events, many being forced to make last-minute decisions and announcements. Out of respect for these businesses we chose to extend our deadlines, postponing the launch of the new 2021 issue until closer to Spring. We hope you will agree that it was well worth the wait!

It is with much gratitude that we present you with this new issue.

Finding Courage Through the Heart of the Horse, illustrates how horses help humans cultivate their awareness in order to expand the internal resiliency needed to navigate through life's most difficult obstacles. One poignant example is that of a group of doctors from a well-known Cleveland hospital system whose participation in a workshop with horses, helped them discover increased clarity and calm amid the stresses of being on the front line of a pandemic. Horses instinctively live in the moment, neither reflecting on "what was", nor worrying about "what may be" - they remain a powerful paradigm for encouraging mindfulness and inner reflection, which precedes all else in the healing process.

Our feature article in the *Kentucky Equestrian Directory*, is so special we wanted to share it with our readers in Ohio. **Living Legends of the Triple Crown** features five stories - including childhood memories, early life experiences, the unique personalities of each horse and rider, and the emotional highs and lows - on and off the track - of the existing Triple Crown champion jockeys. From Ron Turcotte (Secretariat 1973), Jean Cruguet (Seattle Slew 1977), Steve Cauthen (Affirmed 1978), Victor Espinoza (American Pharoah 2015), to Mike Smith (Justify 2018), we were granted "free rein" to interview each of the racing greats to uncover the secrets behind what makes these "jocks" and their mounts so spectacular! In an unprecedented collaborative effort, we are honored to share each and every one of these inspirational living success stories.

Speaking of success, the Roberts family is at it again. Just when we thought they had outdone themselves with the unveiling of World Equestrian Center (WEC) in Wilmington, Ohio just three short years ago, along comes WEC Ocala. Situated on over 600 acres of prime real estate in horse haven, Ocala, Florida, the grand opening of this world class venue has been much anticipated and is a welcome addition to horse showing for Ohio snowbirds, and equestrians across the U.S. We invite you to sit back, relax, and take in the beauty and grandeur of it all in **A New Magical Kingdom for Equestrian Enthusiasts: World Equestrian Center - Ocala.**

And someday, when all the ribbons have been won, every fence has been jumped, every trail explored and creek crossed, your faithful riding partner and loyal best friend will be ready to hang up his horseshoes and settle into his "golden" years. **A Bridge to Greener Pastures** offers a rare glimpse inside Bridgehaven, an incredibly beautiful and well-designed equine retirement farm in NE Ohio.

Special thanks to the equestrians who generously shared their stories and the businesses that enthusiastically supported this issue!

We hope you find this to be an invaluable resource and ask you to please support our advertisers, without whom this complimentary directory would not be possible.

— Erika Milenkovich,
Publisher, Ohio Equestrian Directory/Kentucky Equestrian Directory



Erika and Enso

Photo by Jessa Janes Photography



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FROM IEA CHAMPION RIDER TO IEA CHAMPION COACH

Coach Katie Morehead of KM Equestrian Shares Her Passion With Young Riders

Written by Kimber Whanger, IEA Communications Coordinator

As a high-school student, Katie Morehead had big dreams when it came to riding. The **Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA)** Western program was still relatively new when Morehead began her involvement through long-time IEA coach Linda Dare of Hilliard, OH. Although she lived nearly two hours away, Morehead rode on the Dare Equestrian Team, where she competed as a senior in the Varsity Open Reining and Horsemanship divisions with IEA. In her senior year, she was named the IEA Varsity Opening Reining National Champion in 2007 as well as the IEA Leading Western Rider.

After graduating high school and leaving the IEA, Morehead attended the University of Findlay and majored in equine business management. As a collegiate competitor, she was the National High Point Rider in the Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association (IHSA) and won two national champion open horsemanship titles, all while being the high point rider in her region in four consecutive years! She was also named the University of Findlay Female Athlete of the Year in 2008-2009.

Following college, Morehead decided she wanted to take her knowledge and experience of draw-based competition to her own students and she established KM Equestrian IEA Team in her hometown of Findlay, Ohio. Since becoming an IEA coach in 2011, Morehead's teams have enjoyed much success including numerous High School and Middle School Champion and Reserve Team and Individual titles. This success led to Morehead being named coach for the Bowling Green State University's IHSA team.

"I am so grateful for the IEA and IHSA", says Morehead. "Because of these associations I've been able to capture my own personal dreams as well as make a living by helping my team riders achieve theirs. IEA helped start it all!"

These days, Morehead is not only busy managing her two IEA teams of 30+ riders, she also serves on the IEA Board of Directors as well as serving as Chairman of the IEA Western Committee. Recently, she and members of her team participated in the IEA's inaugural virtual online western show that was hosted by the American Paint Horse Association (APHA).

"My students and I really appreciated the judge's critiques and the opportunity to get feedback that will help us with our IEA season. The virtual show made for an easy two weeks of lesson planning for me. We practiced the patterns one week and then filmed the next."

Morehead is just one example of how IEA alumni are giving back to the equestrian community by developing the next generation of young riders. Thank you, Katie!

ABOUT THE IEA

IEA is preparing to mark its 20th anniversary with the 2021-2022 season as an official non-profit association, serving aspiring equestrians from across the United States and the Bahamas.

Founded in Ohio in 2002, the most unique thing about IEA is that no rider needs to own a horse or tack. Hosting teams provide horses for every competition, making it an affordable way for families to participate in equestrian sport. Along with draw-based competitions in hunt seat, western, and dressage disciplines, members also have access to financial assistance through numerous scholarships and the IEA Benevolent Fund, leadership opportunities within individual teams and on the National Youth Board, online horsemanship testing, sportsmanship awards, educational webinars, virtual horse shows and the offerings continue to expand!



Photo by Ron Schwane Photography
IEA Western National Finals ©2021

Membership for the 2021-2022 IEA season opens in May 2021.
To learn more, visit www.rideiea.org.



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Exploring Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness on Horseback

by Danelle Crary

A day on the trail with the 7 Lazy P Outfitting to explore Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness...

The sun rises above the mountain peak and starts to warm the ground as the day begins. The crew is up early to saddle the wrangle horses; two horses who have spent the night in a nearby portable enclosure. The wranglers mount up and head out to find and gather the rest of the horses and mules that were out grazing for the night. The camp cook is up early building a fire to get coffee and breakfast going. Camp starts to come alive as guests begin to emerge from their cozy tents to capture the warmth of the camp stove and that first cup of "mountain brew."

Soon the sound of bells is heard as the wranglers bring the stock back to camp. The satisfied stock is caught, brushed, saddled, and offered treat "cakes" made with grain and alfalfa. The horses happily munch as the cook finishes up breakfast. It is soon time to tear camp down, carefully mantle and balance everything up, load it on the mules, and head down the trail toward the next campsite. The mantle, a canvas tarp, completely covers and protects the packed items that the mules carry from campsite to campsite. Great care is used during packing to ensure the various mules are carrying safe and balanced loads (of between 60 and 90 pounds) on each of their sides. What a site the mule string is with their meticulously packaged loads!

With lunches distributed, guests get on their trusty mountain horses and start down the trail, guided by the knowledgeable 7 Lazy P crew. Surrounded by spectacular scenery, the next 10+ miles on horseback are astounding. No motorized or wheeled tools (such as bikes or carts) of any sort are allowed in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, so you can imagine the sounds of nature that can be heard. The steady beat of horse hooves moving down the trail becomes soothing, and allows the rider to continually scan and soak up the surroundings. Guests and their guide stop for breaks and lunch as they make their way toward the next campsite. The packers keep trudging ahead with the mule string.

Arriving at the next campsite well ahead of the guests,

the packers begin to transform the mantled mule loads into a comfortable camp. The transformation is truly magical. Arriving in camp, guests are welcomed with a cool glass of lemonade under the kitchen fly, a large tarp that serves as a "roof" over the camp "kitchen" area as protection from the hot sun or rain; used by the crew and guests as a gathering place to enjoy meals, coffee, and conversation when a camp fire isn't used.

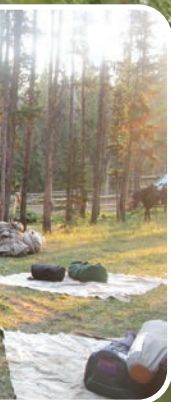
Horses are put up and guests start to scour the area for that perfect place for their tent. The location of the "green rocket" (outhouse tent) is made known to all. Details and being prepared matter in nature as firewood is gathered, equipment tended to, and water buckets filled, along with numerous other camp chores. Guests have the opportunity to explore around the area while the cook finishes setting up the kitchen and starts the evening meal. Well-planned, wholesome, homegrown meals prepared on a wood cook stove are highlights of the camp. The dinner bell rings, dinner is served, and folks share highlights of the day. With camp cleaned up and belled stock turned loose to graze, conversations continue around the campfire, while others choose to quietly take in the solitude. The serenity of the vast wilderness embraces your soul and calms your mind.

For another day in the wilderness, the chaos of the world is forgotten, and time seems to both stand still and yet, fly by. Lulled to sleep by the ripple of the nearby river, rustling leaves, the faint sound of the bells on the stock, one feels exhausted, yet so refreshed. The next day is a layover day, allowing time to explore the area. Authentic activities immersed in nature and guided by the 7 Lazy P crew will fill the day; hiking mountain trails, climbing peaks, fly fishing scenic wild waters, connecting with your horse on a day ride, or just relaxing in camp. A guest referring to a week-long trip into the Bob Marshall summed up the experience with, "you wonder how you are ever supposed to go back to 'real life,' because your soul understands that this was the 'realist' you have ever lived."

For more information: sevenlazyp.com. Call or text 406-781-7496. ♦



Photos courtesy of Danelle Crary



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The Small Things Matter

by Tania Cubitt, PhD

Performance Horse Nutrition

When feeding horses, we often concentrate on the major components of the diet. Does the horse have enough pasture, hay, or even concentrate feed? When we are pressed for more details of the diet we can sometimes recall the amount of protein in the feed, but most other nutrients seem unimportant. However, it is the intake of these *other* nutrients, *the small things*, which keep horses healthy. Specifically, it is the intake of minerals and vitamins that are vital to the performance, growth, immune function, and reproduction of all horses.

Minerals can be divided into two broad classifications – macro-minerals and micro-minerals, based on the amount required in the diet. Macro-minerals are required in large amounts in the diet. They include minerals such as calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, sodium, chlorine, and sulfur. These minerals are vital to the development of the skeleton, muscle contraction, acid-base balance, activity of the nervous system, and hoof and hair growth. The other classification of minerals is micro-minerals. These minerals are required in small amounts in the diet. They include minerals such as copper, iodine, iron, manganese, selenium, and zinc. These minerals function in most of the chemical reactions in the body, helping to metabolize nutrients, maintain connective and joint tissue, aid in oxygen transport to muscle,

and perform as antioxidants.

Vitamins are equally important in the diet of horses. Vitamins are classified as either fat-soluble or water-soluble based on how these are stored within the body. The major fat-soluble vitamins include vitamins A, D, and E. These vitamins are important for vision, calcium absorption and regulation, and as a primary antioxidant within the body, protecting cells and muscle function. Fat-soluble vitamins are stored within the fat deposits of the body and

can accumulate - giving the potential of toxicity if overfed. The other classification of vitamins is water-soluble vitamins. These vitamins

are often referred to as B-vitamins. They include thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, biotin, and folic acid. These vitamins function in nearly every chemical reaction within the body; therefore, they are critical in metabolism, growth, and energy generation. The B-vitamins are manufactured by healthy bacteria within the horses' digestive system, and specific requirements have only been established for thiamin and riboflavin.

The reason many horse owners are oblivious to the vitamin and mineral content of the diet is simple – a mild deficiency of any of these minerals or vitamins is difficult to visually see in the horse. For example, a deficiency in calorie content of the diet can easily be seen as weight loss. A deficiency in protein can be seen as a rough hair coat or poor growth. But a deficiency of minerals or vitamins is much more difficult to visualize until the condition becomes quite severe. However,



less obvious signs of mineral and vitamin deficiency exist - if you look closely. For example, cracked, brittle hooves are often the result of zinc deficiency. A crooked-legged foal could be the result of a broodmare diet deficient in trace minerals.

So how can we ensure our horses' diets are properly fortified with essential minerals and vitamins? The easiest approach is to feed a prepared feed or supplement that is properly fortified with these nutrients. It is not enough that the feed is properly fortified with nutrients, we must also ensure that we are feeding the product according to label directions. If we are only feeding one half of the recommended feeding level, our horse will not be receiving the proper amount of nutrients.

The "source" of minerals is also important – chelated minerals should be used in equine diets as they are more bioavailable than inorganic minerals. Providing these minerals in a chemical form to enhance absorption is critical.

The word "chelation" is derived from the Greek

word, 'chele', meaning claw. Pronounced *key-lay-shun*, the chemical definition is: One substance grabs hold of another substance. More technically, the word chelation means: To firmly bind a metal (mineral) ion with an organic molecule (amino acid) to form a ring structure. The resulting ring structure protects the mineral and facilitates absorption. The body has a limited ability to naturally chelate minerals inside the stomach and intestine.

A chelated mineral that can be utilized by the body is one that has been bonded to two or more amino acids. A mineral in this "chelated state" allows easy passage through the intestinal wall into the blood resulting in increased metabolism of that mineral. In other words, when this mineral (zinc) is bound to an amino acid, the combined particle (mineral plus amino acid) is perceived as food by the body, whereas the mineral itself is not food. Your intestines are designed to allow food to pass through, but not raw (unbound) minerals. ♦





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A New Magical Kingdom for Equestrian Enthusiasts:

WORLD EQUESTRIAN CENTER - OCALA

As the tumultuous year of 2020 came to a close, the first set of hoofprints made their way across a freshly dragged arena, marking the moment World Equestrian Center - Ocala, the largest indoor/outdoor equestrian facility in the United States, was officially open for business.

by **Mandy Boggs**

Palm trees, sandy beaches, and a new magical kingdom for equestrian enthusiasts had emerged in Ocala, Florida. Situated on 378 acres, with an additional 300 acres in reserve for future expansion, WEC Ocala offers more for the horse industry than one could have

imagined, right in the heart of Marion County, said to be the Horse Capital of the World.

The original World Equestrian Center in Wilmington, Ohio, (known as Roberts Arena until 2016), has reached impressive national attention, attracting competitors from surrounding states frequently traveling to

the variety of horse shows put on every year. The Ohio facility has earned the respect of many trainers as being the 'Showplace of the Midwest', which comes as no surprise since nearly every show has sold out in the past few years.

The World Equestrian Center was created from the Roberts family legacy, beginning with Quarter Horse shows and Quarter horse breeding, and earning well-regarded respect across the industry. Roberts Arena's decades of AQHA competitions and events allowed the Roberts family to craft their facility to what fellow exhibitors desired, eventually making a shift to the hunter/jumper world. In 2015, Roby

Roberts began new construction of indoor arenas, new stabling, and installed new footing, along with other various expansions, resulting in the official rebranding as World Equestrian Center by 2016.

WEC Ohio has grown exponentially in the last four years, annually drawing over 70,000 people to the Ohio facility. Trainers started shaping their own equine-related businesses around WEC Ohio, buying nearby property to create their home-bases, planning their schedules around the shows held at the facility. Many booked stalls for the entire spring, summer, fall, and winter hunter-jumper show series, essentially living at WEC full

time. From affordable lodging in their “Home Away from Home” options, on-site dining, the General Store, to anything else you might need either at the facility or just a short drive into the quaint town of Wilmington. It was common to see large competition barns from Tennessee, Georgia, Michigan - even Texas, spending weeks or months with WEC Ohio as their “home base”. The shows were well run with excellent footing, prizes, entertainment, dining, shopping, and the constant curiosity of “what will Roby (Roberts) do next?” The “regulars” quickly made lasting friendships with staff and other riders and trainers, blossoming a sense of community that, for many, was a rarity when compared to other show grounds.

When news broke in 2016 that a second location, a much larger facility, was going to be developed in Ocala, Florida, many could not imagine how there could be a place bigger or better than what WEC Ohio already offered. Nestled amongst ancient live oaks and farmland, while still within an easy drive to area attractions, WEC Ocala was cultivated with every possible amenity a horse enthusiast could dream of, crafted from the passion the Roberts family had for creating a world class facility unlike any other.

WEC Ocala was designed to host international events and equestrian competitions, exceeding the style and amenities from even the most prominent sports complexes in the world. As a multidisciplinary facility that can host hunter/jumper, dressage, eventing, polo, and various breed shows, the show grounds have something for everyone, whether a competitor or spectator.

WEC Ocala isn't just for horses. Its central location to surrounding airports and major freeways serves to connect Ocala, Tampa, Orlando, and Gainesville. The venue hosts many seminars and



Chapel



Ralph's Restaurant



Grand Arena

symposiums, as well as various recreational and sporting events, including dog shows and canine sports events - such as dock diving, flying disc, and herding and tracking. Pop culture events, trade shows, and conventions can be held

at the resort, offering space for any sized gathering. With five state-of-the-art exposition centers offering over 132,000 square feet of multi-use space, WEC Ocala is capable of handling everything from local and regional, to national events.

Placed at the end of a winding pathway amongst mossy oaks and detailed landscaping, is a beautiful chapel adorned with exquisite chandeliers and an elegant stained glass window focal point.

The family-friendly atmosphere allows those visiting the grounds to stay busy and entertained, without ever going hungry. Offering quick bites or sit-down dining in one of their restaurants, including Mexican, Italian, and fine dining options with steak and seafood, to more casual fare of burgers, sandwiches, desserts, pastries, ice cream, and coffee. Having a cocktail, beer, or glass of wine after a long day certainly has its perks, *especially when you never have to leave the show grounds*, and spending evenings making memories with (who better than) your fellow equestrian friends.

If shopping is something you enjoy, whether just browsing, in pursuit of new tack and supplies, or you happen to be on a quest to find the perfect addition to your home décor, you will have over 13,000 square feet of vendor space to check off everything on your list. From prestigious designers, fashion, beauty, décor, and antiques, to horse care, equipment, and supplements. There is something sure to catch the eye of everyone in the family.

On-site lodging is available, and includes a luxury hotel overlooking the Grand Outdoor Arena with picturesque views, boasting a state-of-the-art fitness center and a 7,000 square foot salon and day spa which offers everything from popular services to full spa and bridal packages. An RV park offers convenience for those traveling with their motorhomes and living-quarter horse trailers, including an on-site gas station - making filling up a breeze. Nearby vacation rental homes line the streets in Golden Ocala, or you can take advantage of the limited properties available for sale adjacent to WEC Ocala, in World Equestrian Estates.

Continued on page 18

WEC Ocala

Continued from page 17

Whether utilizing the golf cart paths across the show grounds, riding your horse along the designated horse paths, or taking a stroll through the miles of hiking trails, you will constantly find yourself noticing something new, and feeling as if you are truly riding in paradise. Three thousand mature trees were planted, along with creative landscaping and winding paths, to transform the resort into a park-like setting. With 22 outdoor rings and 4 indoor arenas featuring world-class custom blended GGT-footing, you will never feel crowded. WEC Ocala also boasts polo fields and a "designed-by-Captain Mark Phillips" cross country course, for those up for a bit more adventure.

The Grand Arena is the centerpiece of the resort, showcasing 145,000 square feet of space and more than 600,000 square feet of pavers surrounding the arena for events and gatherings. With covered

grandstand seating, 30' x 60' Jumbotrons, al fresco VIP dining, and climate-controlled areas for added comfort, no detail was forgotten. In addition, the four 262' x 550' indoor arenas also offer climate-controlled indoor space during inclement weather, and were designed as replicas of the highly praised "Sanctuary" indoor at WEC Ohio. Jumper Village sits on the north side of the resort, while Hunter Land can be found on the west side, both boasting numerous outdoor show rings, warm-up areas, and covered spaces - allowing spectators, horses, and their grooms a way to stay out of the sun and weather while waiting ringside. The WEC Stadium (located in Hunter Land) has a large grass show ring with covered grandstand seating for featured competition and exciting classes.

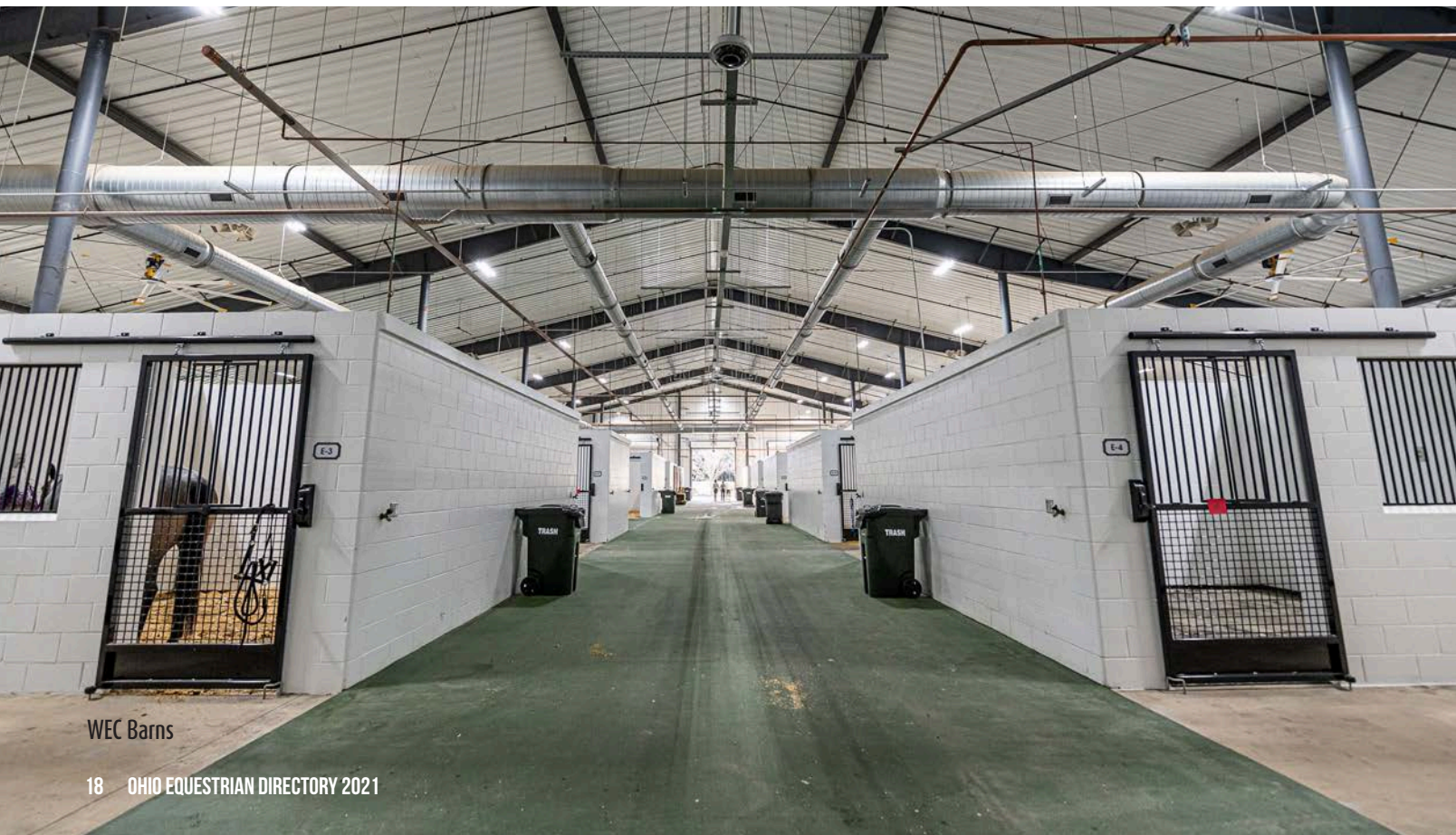
Back at the barn, when it comes to the comfort, care, and security for your horses and equipment, the Roberts created everything one could want when dreaming of the perfect show stable. With over 2,000 permanent stalls, the heated and air-conditioned

concrete barns feature large aiseways to increase airflow, and spacious 12x12 and 12x14 stalls, each with individual fans and comfort stall mattresses. The aisles feature horse-friendly surfaces, ample wash stalls with hot and cold water, and locking 12x14 tack rooms included with each group of stalls to keep your equipment safe and secure. 24/7 security presence and over 800 cameras monitor the grounds, stabling area, and on-site trailer parking, with well-lit arenas, lunging, and schooling areas. More than 250 turnout paddocks near the barns can be rented, allowing your horses the ability to enjoy the sunshine and graze during their time out of the show ring.

All events follow strict COVID-19 protocols set by national horse federations, as well as CDC, local, state, and federal advisories, with dedicated staff going above and beyond daily cleaning and sanitizing to keep everyone safe during the pandemic. Stabling is sterilized, from the stalls to all surface areas during week-to-week turnover, with the barns designed for easy and efficient cleaning.

Commercial-size washers and dryers offer plenty of space for your clothes, saddle pads, and even horse blankets, in the WEC laundromat. Pet boarding and grooming services can keep your pets clean, especially after those rainy Florida days - or give them the love and attention they need if you want to sneak away for a trip to the beach for a few days. A full service, 41,000 square-foot Veterinary Hospital will keep your pets and horses healthy while you are away from home. Offering both a Small Animal Hospital with everything from X-rays, CT, and MRI equipment, to a fully-staffed Equine Hospital that can handle lameness, illness, routine care, and rehabilitation; with a therapy pool, aqua equine treadmill, salt therapy room, vibration therapy, dedicated surgical/treatment areas, and an equine ambulance on the show grounds.

WEC Ocala kicked off their opening with the "Winter Spectacular" - 12-weeks of hunter/jumper shows running from January 2021 to March 2021, with over \$4 million in prize money and free stalls



WEC Barns



World Equestrian Center

for all competitors. Due to mileage rule restrictions from the US Equestrian Federation, the Roberts went a different route by offering exhibitor-friendly, affordable competition at a world-class facility, without sacrificing safety or equine welfare. The “Winter Spectacular” did not run as a USEF-sanctioned event; however, the sold-out show serves as a testament of gratitude to the Roberts family for offering their continued support and generosity of the sport. They have created a world-class facility, always putting their customers’ best interest at the forefront of their business model.

Partnering with The National Snaffle Bit Association (NSBA), most notable for being part of Quarter Horse shows, the Roberts had a long-standing history with the association, forming an exciting opportunity to welcome the

hunter/jumper community to their family of sanctioned shows. The NSBA stands by their mission to grow the horse show community while benefiting horses, owners, breeders, and exhibitors. The new Hunter/Jumper division will develop following similar rules, guidelines, and standards as the US Equestrian Federation and the FEI Federation, to ensure a seamless transition for those that would like other opportunities to show at WEC Ocala year-round.

All Safe Sport requirements from the United States Center for Safe Sport will be followed, including Safe Sport Suspensions and bans. Suspensions imposed by any international or national U.S.-based equestrian governing body for anti-doping violations will also be enforced. The NSBA also conducts equine drug testing at every horse show to ensure horses and

riders are competing safely and fairly. The facility was built with the utmost welfare of the horse in mind, from the footing, stabling, and layout, to having at least 12 EMTs on the grounds daily to ensure rider safety at a moments’ notice.

Moving forward, the US Equestrian Federation and WEC Ocala have been working together on plans to allow WEC Ocala the ability to host USEF-sanctioned events in the future, keeping the best interest of the sport as a collaborative effort.

The 2021 show season kicked off with NSBA shows, the Hunter/Jumper “Winter Spectacular” series, and the Dressage at Ocala winter series. In addition, “A Sudden Impulse NSBA Show & Futurity”, named after Mrs. Roberts’ stallion, “A Sudden Impulse”, has claimed dates in April and September, with added prize money of \$360,000.

Various non-equine events fill the schedule through 2021, with something for every interest. And when the time comes that your family is trying to decide where to spend your next family vacation, you will likely have no trouble convincing them to join you at World Equestrian Center Ocala, a magical paradise that has forever altered the way we experience equestrian events. ♦

Mandy Boggs is a lifelong equestrian, passionate for the sport and equine industry. Mandy grew up in a multi-generation family involved with Thoroughbred racehorses, breeding, and showing in the hunter/jumpers. She is a published writer, volunteers for various non-profit organizations, while running her marketing and design agency, Aristo Marketing LLC. She enjoys spending time with her family and many animals.



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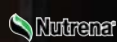
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Trail Innovations at Winterhawk West

by Lisa Kiley

Last winter, members of the Cashmans Horse Equipment Team ventured out to a stretch of trail known as Winterhawk West in the Alum Creek State Park in Kilbourne, OH. It was a mild day, and although you could tell it had not been ridden on recently, the stretch of trail quickly devolves into hock deep mud. Different efforts to re-route the trail only created another muddy area in a less desirable place to ride.

Bobbi Arters and Mary Chmielewski, both active members of the Delaware County Chapter of the Ohio Horseman's Council (OHC), showed us this problematic area. They, along with other members of the Delaware OHC, work tirelessly to maintain the trails of Alum Creek. The devotion that this group of riders has for preserving and maintaining the grounds is something that anyone who enjoys the trails, from riders to hikers, should appreciate.

While the chapter was planning on adding wooden

boardwalks to several sections of trail, it became clear the project would be labor intensive, and the area was not easily accessible. Using fill material in this section would also be difficult because the area was often flooded, and



it would only be a matter of time before the fill would wash away.

Thinking outside of the box, we offered the suggestion of using mud grids to create a trail. The grids fit together right on top of the mud while providing an anti-slip surface that wouldn't sink. As longtime supporters of the Delaware Chapter of the Ohio Horseman's Council, Cashmans decided to help make this project a reality. Once the organization approved the project, and with



help from state grant funding for trail improvements, we were able to start planning the trail project.

Beyond the fact that mud can create a dangerous situation for your horse, there is also the environmental impact that mud, exacerbated by horses' hooves, can have on the ground long term. The mud grids provided a quick solution on this muddy section of trail. The environmentally friendly grids are made of 100% recycled plastic, need only minor preparation, do not require backfill, and prevent erosion.

The trail maintenance crew set out to clear some of the areas so that we could maximize the length of the trail, rather than use additional grids for turns that weren't necessary. The preparation involved cutting back brush and removing some stumps out of the way of the new path.

On a bright day in late winter we were able to complete the project. The pathway, which was just over 200 ft., utilized just

under 300 grids. We were able to wheelbarrow the grids straight to the worksite and carry them by hand to the muddy areas. The grids easily fit together and we could apply them right on top of existing mud. There were a few areas where we dug out roots or moved a little bit of ground to make them lay flatter, but overall, the surface prep was very minimal.

Because of the weight of the grids, they did not need to be secured into the ground. The surface is textured for anti-slip traction which is so important for the safety of the riders and horses. From start to finish, we were able to complete the project in under three hours, including the time it took to get the product to the area of trail where we were working.

Mud can be difficult to deal with, but there are opportunities to mitigate, prevent, and eventually solve issues associated with it.

For more information on Mud Grids visit us at: cashmans.com ♦





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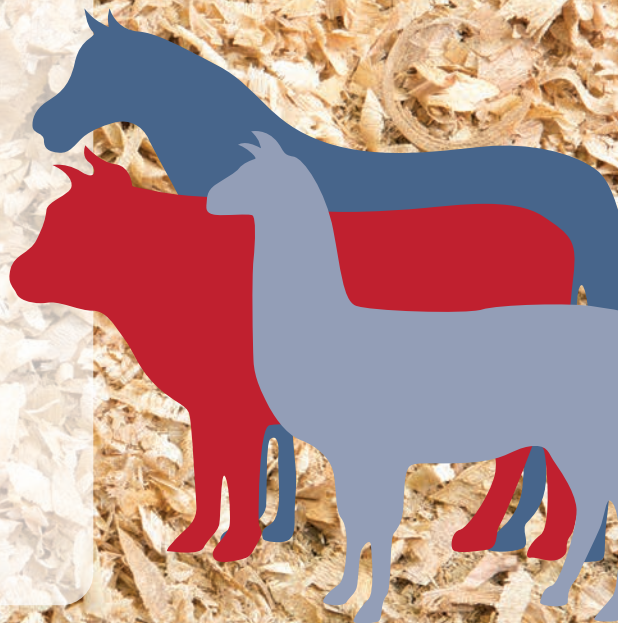


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Holly Helbig, DVM: A Stethoscope, Saddle, and a She-Shed

by Mandy Boggs

If you grew up with a passion for horses or have been in the industry long enough, you have likely heard it all, “there’s no money in horses...choose a career that pays the bills...go to college and get a real job first.” These steadfast warnings, so common you can almost reach out and grab one, floating amongst the dust encircling a lifelong horsewoman methodically tending to her daily chores. Holly Helbig, DVM, took those words of advice and forged her own path to success, right back to the barn with a stethoscope and saddle in hand.

Today, Dr. Helbig effectively runs a hunter/jumper training facility, veterinary practice, and

mobile veterinary pharmacy while still finding time to be a judge, licensed FEI show vet, and attend national shows with her own training horses and students. Dr. Helbig is, in fact, just one person, perhaps performing some sort of sorcery when it comes to finding those extra hours in a day that everyone seems to be in search of.

Dr. Helbig grew up in Akron, Ohio, competing in hunter/jumpers and cultivating a passion for horses from a young age. “I have been completely self-made with everything I have done in my life and worked really, really hard for every ride and opportunity. I have always wanted to have a career with horses somehow. Everyone in

FEATURE 2021

my life advised me 'don't do horses', you will never make any money," she chuckled. "I have tried some other things, but they weren't for me. I cannot imagine my life without horses!"

With an undergrad degree in Business and Communications from Ohio University, Dr. Helbig took her first position in Boston working as a wedding planner at the Ritz-Carlton, a job she quickly realized that, quite frankly, she hated. She spent most of her early career as a pharmaceutical representative for Merck & Co., Inc. while also working part-time as a horse trainer in Chagrin Falls, Ohio for Jeff and Keeley Gogul.

"It was not like I spent my life sitting there dreaming of just taking care of dogs and kitties," she laughed. "I kept trying to figure out how to have a successful career with horses, yet do something I love. My time in the medical world with Merck made me fall in love with medicine; it was quite a journey."

In 2013, Dr. Helbig graduated from The Ohio State University, College of Veterinary Medicine, also being awarded Student Surgery Award for Excellence in Large Animal Surgery from the American College of Veterinary Surgeons, due to her special interest and skills in equine lameness.

She has over twenty years of diverse equine experience to offer her clients between her hunter/jumper training farm, Hawthorne Hill, and her Hawthorne Veterinary Clinic, both based in Dublin, Ohio, just outside of Columbus. Dr. Helbig has multiple horses and riders competing at the national levels. She has trained riders for some of the biggest competitions including, Capital Challenge Horse Show, Pennsylvania National Horse Show, Washington International Horse Show, and US Pony Finals.

The help of Alisha Metcalfe, Head Trainer at Hawthorne Hill, allows Dr. Helbig to focus on her sale horses and

Photo courtesy of Dr. Holly Helbig



Holly Helbig, DVM aboard Guest List at the Kentucky Summer Classic, 2020

see numerous patients each day with her ambulatory vet practice. Dr. Helbig also serves as the official show veterinarian for World Equestrian Center in Wilmington, Ohio, Brave Horse in Johnstown, Ohio, and Kentucky Horse Shows in Lexington, Kentucky.

"Every day is vastly different for me. I have a ton of help from so many great people that literally support every aspect of each business," she shared. "Stephanie (Rowney) works in the pharmacy, runs the books, orders my supplies, things like that. I just hired a new vet, Kaylin Van Horn DVM, to help with my practice which has been exciting. If I am at a horse show and I am showing, she can go to an emergency call. Before, if I was riding or at the in-gate ready to walk in the ring, it was understood that if I was needed, I immediately got off and went to take care of the horse."

Managing a large training facility, showing horses herself, and running a busy practice quickly ate up the minutes that ticked by on the clock each

day. "I have trimmed down a bit on the training as it was getting a little too complicated to juggle everything," said Dr. Helbig. "Now, I have fewer clients and more sale horses. I love training young horses, doing the Baby and Pre-Green divisions, and working with them as they develop. I really enjoy and focus my business on that. I have a really nice young one right now [Guest List] that just finished up the Greens and will start the 1st Years in 2021. I bought him as a sale horse, but I really love him, so I am keeping him."

She still takes a few kids to the shows, but still must work hard to find a balance between her businesses. "I have a calendar and there are only so many hours in a day. It is just a matter of being organized. The amount of support staff that we have is what truly makes this all work," she explained.

While working as an official horse show vet comes with perks, it is not always an easy job. What began as a simple solution to a problem, quickly morphed into yet another

business venture for Dr. Helbig.

World Equestrian Center ("WEC") in Wilmington, Ohio is one of the largest equestrian facilities in the United States, with over 200,000 square feet of climate-controlled riding space and over 600 stalls, all connected by indoor walkways that even the veteran exhibitors can find themselves getting lost in.

"WEC gave me a little office up in barn A. It is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to get from barn A to the end of barn M. So... it would be in the middle of winter, icy, snowing, and I would be in barn A at my office. I would get a call to go to barn M. It was easier to just walk than trek out to my cold truck and drive around, so I would take my backpack and be on my way," she shared. "Sure enough, the client would need something I didn't have with me, so I would walk 20 minutes back to barn A, get what I needed, and take it all the way back down to their stalls. On top of riding and showing, I was putting in like 60,000 steps a day just looking at horses and I just got so tired!"

When WEC built their picturesque indoor shopping area known as "Vendor Village", at the heart of the facility, Dr. Helbig decided to use one of the spaces and put a veterinary pharmacy in as a centrally located office and hub of sorts, where she could send clients to pick up their medications or supplies. She could simply see the patient, write a prescription, and they could go pick up what they needed, saving her what seemed to be never-ending trips down those long hallways.

"It was a tiny, little corner shop that we very quickly grew out of," she chuckled. "At first it was just stuff I needed, some basic medications, and a central place for my computer and a printer. Within a year I was out of space. I hired Stephanie Rowney, and she really added this sort of boutique vibe to it. People started coming in and asking for other items."

"The Apothecary" was

Continued on page 28

Holly Helbig, DVM

Continued from page 27

born and continues to thrive. Offering everything from medications, equine health and wellness supplies, supplements, gastrointestinal products, first-aid products, to even “FEI safe” natural alternatives for both horses and pets. Soon customers were coming in asking for convenience items for themselves, from over-the-counter human medications to everyday hygiene products. The business grew to include unique items that either mobile tack shops did not carry, or those items that it was just simply too inconvenient to leave the show grounds searching for at nearby stores. The Apothecary comes with the unique benefit of having a veterinarian there to answer questions and offer knowledge to the customer.

“We realized there was a void in the local market and thought, well heck, we need this at every horse show,” said Dr. Helbig. “I got the idea for a she-shed on wheels. I took my idea to the Amish and said I need you to build this shed on this trailer. At first, they thought I was crazy, but they did it and it came out great!”

While The Apothecary becoming a veterinary pharmacy on wheels was not in the initial plans, it quickly became a very successful mobile business that fit into the world that Dr. Helbig continued to establish. Patrons at the horse shows she attends have been grateful and have become continuing customers, refilling their medications online, and looking to Dr. Helbig for advice or follow-up visits when they can meet her at shows.

Dr. Helbig has always been one to give back to the equine community, especially to those who work so hard to be in it like she has. She is currently building an extension onto her training facility for a small veterinary care area to offer more options to those that can't always afford the

large veterinary hospitals for treatment.

“Say you have a horse that doesn't have a surgery option, or the owner can't afford a big hospital stay or treatment. Maybe the horse needs to be treated for a few days for something. The horse can come here to be monitored, treated, and given non-surgical treatment(s) to try - without having those other options available,” she explained.

“We will now be able to offer our facility as a haul-in clinic for lameness work-ups, with a full-sized indoor arena so that I can lunge, see the horse go, or even hop on and get a feel for what is going on - that you can't always see. There are no veterinary clinics around here that can offer something like that.”

The dedicated efforts to heal horses and offer them the care they deserve have not gone unnoticed. Dr. Helbig has been lucky enough to acquire various horses over the years that perhaps had lameness issues, or could not perform at the level the owners had hoped for.

“I have quite a few horses that had past lameness issues that I have been able to keep comfortable and happy, giving our students a chance to ride and show horses they could not have otherwise been able to afford. We work hard to maintain them, keep them sound, and give them a job they can do. These are really, really nice horses giving so many kids such wonderful opportunities,” said Dr. Helbig.

While her businesses quickly flourished, she would often spread herself thin while trying to be present

everywhere, always expected to perform her best. Dr. Helbig admitted that sometimes you must reorganize and readjust along the way.

“My mom just passed away about a year ago, my dad died when I was younger, and I am realizing that I don't want to go on and just work. I want to get married, have a family, and do some normal things,” she said. “I am working hard for that work-life balance. Having a balance has made me better in my career and not feeling as overwhelmed. It is an extremely hard thing to do, but I am so happy to share that I am trying really, really hard.”

Everyone along your path can try to change your ambitions, especially when the word *horse* has something to do with it. Dr. Helbig has proven time and again that if you genuinely want something in your life, it just takes passion, persistence, and hard



Photos courtesy of Dr. Holly Helbig



work to eventually reach those goals. Dr. Helbig shares her life experience and words of wisdom freely -

The stethoscope, saddle, and she-shed are sold separately. ♦

Mandy Boggs is a lifelong equestrian, passionate for the sport and equine industry. Mandy grew up in a multi-generation family involved with Thoroughbred racehorses, breeding, and showing in the hunter/jumpers. She is a published writer, volunteers for various non-profit organizations, while running her marketing and design agency, Aristo Marketing LLC. She enjoys spending time with her family and many animals.



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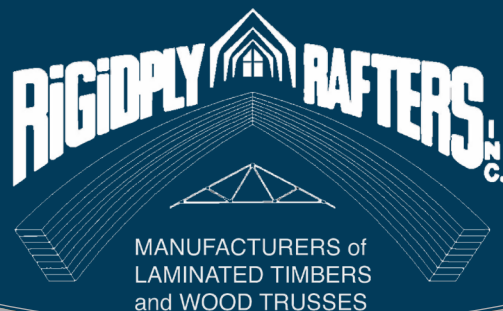
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My Horse Has Thrush, It's No Big Deal, Right?

by Resources of the
American & International
Associations of
Professional Farriers

It is important that the horse owner understands, a hoof with any amount of thrush is **NOT** a healthy hoof! Thrush is a microbial invasion of the sulci, or the grooves surrounding the frog, that often leads to an infection in the tissue of the frog. The discharge associated with thrush is usually black in color and characteristically has a highly unpleasant odor. Infection of the frog and surrounding tissues often leads to lameness. High humidity or wet environments predispose horses to thrush. Once the organisms begin dividing in the frog sulci, the stage is set for a progressive invasion and subsequent infection of the frog tissue. Other factors that cause a hoof to be predisposed to thrush include: unclean stall environments, lack of oxygen to the frog, poor hoof maintenance, and/or poor trimming.

The health of your horse's hooves is not your farrier's responsibility alone. Treating and preventing thrush will take a joint effort from both you and your farrier. Thrush, and other hoof problems, will likely continue to develop and never resolve if you are not involved in the daily responsibility of caring for your horse's hooves. The responsibility of preventing thrush can be broken into three parts.

First is maintenance. There is more to hoof maintenance than scheduling your farrier every four to six weeks. Proper hoof maintenance is a daily objective that the horse owner must manage. This includes



Photos courtesy of AAPF/IAPF

picking feet daily, which will help reduce an environment conducive to thrush. Also, keeping a regular farrier schedule allows your farrier to spot early signs of thrush and assist in treating thrush. Be mindful that caustic chemicals are not be used for thrush treatment as they can create additional hoof damage where bacteria can thrive!

Second is nutrition. Nutrition plays a vital role in the development of a healthy hoof. A healthy hoof is more

resilient to the bacteria that causes thrush. As the horse owner, it is your responsibility to ensure your horse receives a balanced diet that supports hoof health. A quality hoof supplement can assist in developing new and healthier hoof growth. The nutrients provided will also strengthen the hoof, making it more resilient to chips and cracks which act as entry points for the microbial invasions that lead to crumbly hoof horn, White line disease and thrush.

This new growth will also quicken the recovery time of the hoof.

Third, but also very important is environment. Even with proper maintenance and nutrition, the environment can wreak havoc on your horse's hooves. Most cases of thrush are predisposed by environmental conditions. Leaving your horse in wet, mucky areas or unclean paddocks can quickly destroy the hoof. You will promote chronic thrush if your horse is regularly being exposed to these environments. It is important to consistently manage the environment surrounding your horse. To help prevent thrush, keep stalls clean/dry, limit exposure to wet/muddy paddocks, and apply conditioner to maintain hoof moisture balance.

When left unchecked, thrush can become a serious issue, even leading to lameness. It is important to act at the first signs of thrush and not wait until it becomes more serious. Through proper hoof management horse owners can not only treat current cases of thrush, but can also prevent future cases from developing. Always consult your farrier and veterinarian if your horse develops any hoof related issue. ♦

NOTE: The American and International Associations of Professional Farriers have created bi-lingual 11" x 17" posters on the topics of "Thrush 911" and "Laminitis 911". Through the support of AAPF/IAPF Educational Partners they are able to make these posters available to horse owners, trainers, grooms, and others at no charge (including postage). To order your posters, please visit their website: professionalfarriers.com

Questions to Ask When Hiring a Farrier

A List of Questions Compiled by the Members of the American and International Associations of Professional Farriers (AAPF/IAPF)

Are they a member of an international, national, state/provincial, or regional trade association?

While we hope they join the AAPF/IAPF, we want to encourage all farriers to belong to a farrier organization which provides them with professional support.

What is their annual commitment to continuing education?

AAPF/IAPF Accredited Farriers® must commit to earning a minimum of 24 AAPF/IAPF continuing education credits each year. They earn these CE credits by attending educational events, watching webinars, listening to podcasts, reading books, mentoring with other farriers, and earning accreditation/certification credentials.



Does your farrier subscribe to a code of conduct?

AAPF/IAPF Accredited Farriers® agree to conduct themselves and their businesses in a professional and ethical manner.

Is your farrier a team player?

AAPF/IAPF Accredited Farriers® are committed to forming positive partnerships with other equine professionals including owners, veterinarians, trainers, riders, and grooms in order to provide

the best hoof-care for the horse. AAPF/IAPF farriers also agree to provide assistance to ill or injured members at no cost to the ill or injured farrier.

Does your farrier have a support team?

AAPF/IAPF Accredited Farriers® belong to a global family of farriers who are willing to share their knowledge through

mentoring – regardless of their age or years of experience. If there is a question about your horse's hoof-care, an AAPF/IAPF Accredited Farrier® can find the best solution.

Does your farrier carry liability insurance to cover her/himself, your horse, and you, as the horse owner?

AAPF/IAPF Accredited Farriers® are eligible for financial discounts for liability insurance. They are encouraged to take advantage of this program so as to provide coverage for the horses and horse owners for which they serve.



Other considerations:

Do they show compassion to your horse?
Take an appropriate amount of time?
Fully explain their planned treatment plans?

Have lameness expertise?
Display a pleasing demeanor?
Provide explanation of fees?
Value the opinion of the horse owner, trainer, rider, and others? ♦



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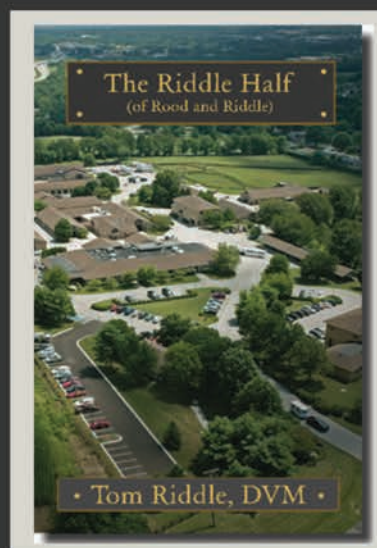
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Hinckley Horse Haven

Hinckley Equestrian Center

by Regina M. Sacha-Ujcz

Ethereal heavenly light shines lovingly upon the rooftop, illuminating the gorgeous and statuesque cupolas which adorn the majestic Hinckley Equestrian Center. A welcoming marquee, *"In God We Trust"*, crowns the entrance apex of this magnificent facility. Already it appears unique and interesting and, perhaps, vastly different from many others.

As you walk into the inviting and homey greeting room, complete with multiple round tables and a large American flag made from fire hoses, the facility grandeur is complemented and toned by a sense of warmth and welcome. This is not by accident.

Owner, Ron Rice, a retired corporate executive, has loved horses his entire life. A self-assured, yet humble demeanor

envelops him. Not surprisingly, in 2018, when Ron retired early, he turned his focus and skills toward developing a family-centered horsing facility that is superb in every way. His horse property shopping was brief, since he knew immediately when he stepped upon the grounds of Hinckley Equestrian Center (HEC) that this was the place to develop his horsing dream. It was a very special venue and one which could accommodate his future vision. Ron beams as he says, "I looked at no other property. It was love at first sight. I took 34 years off from horsing and now I'm back."

Truly, it has been a lifetime love affair with horses for Ron. His love of horses began as a child with fond memories of his first horse, "Bucky" whom his parents purchased for around 300 dollars. Everything horsing is of interest to Ron. "As a child I could sit all day and watch a horse show"—much to the intrigue of his parents. Ron definitely possesses the "elusive horse gene" that science has yet to prove but horse enthusiasts know exists for certain.

Ron is not your typical equestrian facility owner. He possesses a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor

of Arts in mathematics and statistics from Miami University (Ohio), with minors in operations research and statistical analysis. Despite his rigorous academic coursework Ron stayed connected to horses, riding on Miami's nationally recognized Equestrian Team. A pictorial collage, lovingly made by his wife, Susan, attests to the many blue-ribbon achievements throughout his college years, and is displayed in HEC's main office.

It is easy to see why Ron was captivated by this facility and 52-acre property located in rural Medina county at 1575 Ledge Road in Hinckley, Ohio. Expansive, impressive, and picturesque, the location is easily accessible from major highways, (I-271, I-71, and Routes 3, 303, and 94) and is close to the Hinckley Metroparks bridle trails.

With infinitesimal attention to detail, Ron endeavored to recreate HEC as a dream multi-disciplinary horsing facility which would accommodate the needs of horses, and bring together his family and a diverse extended family community of horse lovers.

Everything was researched, planned, and selected with horse welfare and comfort

as a priority. There was much to do - footing selection, lighting, feed management/storage, farm implement organization, water systems, and staff/crew support. Hacking trails were created. With the vision of future horse shows at the facility, temporary show stalls, a show office, trailer parking, creation of a cross-country jump field plus stadium jumps (for mini trials) were also in the plans. Exhausting detail and complex tasks, but each piece came together beautifully and continues to evolve.

The farm office reflects family, replete with ribbons, horse art, and memorabilia. Cozy dog beds dot the floor to accommodate the various farm dogs, Cooper, Winston, and Corona. In addition, Ron's young teenage daughter, Julia, visits with her dogs, Keebler, Newton, Snickerdoodle, and Cookie.

HEC is a family affair extraordinaire! Ron Rice is assisted by his wife, Sue, who is a "hard-working organizer, designer, and the one who creates the beauty within." Ron's eldest son, Will, lives next door to the property with his wife, Morgan, who is the Barn Manager. "She truly does a great job of running the place every day" and, by the way, "she can walk to work," Ron smiles.

While pursuing a marketing degree, Morgan also found time to ride on the Miami University (Ohio) IHSA team. She currently owns two OTTB's,

Photo: Enso Media



FEATURE 2021

Richie and Rio, and has enjoyed competing with Richie (age 7) at local hunter schooling shows. Rio (age 3) is currently busy just learning how to “horse” under the watchful eye of Morgan’s best friend and mentor, HEC on-site trainer, Stephanie Frammer.

The two have high hopes for a bright future in the hunter ring for both horses. “I am super passionate about the process of taking my boys from wild track babies to show horses,” shares Morgan. “And Stephanie is the one that really got me into finding the joy and satisfaction that comes from working with young horses.”

Ron and wife, Sue, live off-property with their son, Thomas, and daughter, Julia, who is an avid and already accomplished equestrian. Her tack wall is papered with show ribbons - mostly colored red and blue - and all attained this year with her horse, Chesney, who just “*might* be named after Country singer, Kenny Chesney,” Ron shares with a grin.

As one enters the barn area, a “Suggestion Box” is located to the left of the entrance door and is a sign of open communication and consideration of boarders and staff. Diversity of horse discipline is reflected in the variety of horse breeds represented at HEC - from tiny, white Welsh pony, Tinker Bell - to ginormous, large-boned Kramer, a 30-year-old Thoroughbred, who rests comfortably in his oversized 12’x 16’ stall. A total of 41 horses of varying sizes and breeds occupies these ample, gorgeous, pristine wooden stalls of varying sizes; (12’ x 12’), (12’ x 14’), and (12’ x 16’). There are an additional 32 temporary stalls constructed outside to accommodate stabling for events, shows, and mini trials, etc.

Pleasant nickering and the sound of contented hay chomping are warm, welcoming greetings as you walk through the spacious barn aisleways. Natural light beaming from sky lights illuminate the stall area during the day with plentiful barn lighting for dreary days or at night. The floor is fastidiously hand swept to perfection as you journey down the hallway to the impressive indoor arenas. Two temperature-controlled (*yes – heated!!*) arenas are enclosed within this facility. Even more impressive is the prestigious Martin Collins MCEcoTrack® equine surfaces footing. It is a horse and rider’s dream come true to ride upon this dustless perfect footing, which never needs watering because of its wax extruded coating. “It

Photo: Enso Media



Ron Rice (owner) dragging the arena

Photo: Enso Media



The indoor arena



Aerial view of Hinckley Equestrian Center

Photo courtesy of HEC

is a low maintenance product which is a combination of CLOPF® fibers, industrial soft rubber, and high grade sand which is carefully weighed and blended with a wax coating. This premium product is featured at international competitions and is a must for the demanding equestrian.” The huge multi-purpose outdoor arena has the same perfect footing but is not wax coated in order to facilitate element water absorption. Watching a jumper rider glide across the nearly “soundless” footing in approach to a giant oxer is comparable to angel footsteps treading lightly upon Heaven’s floor!

In addition to the remarkable arenas and specialized footing, the lighting, both inside and outside, is comparable to stadium lighting or an illuminated night venue in Wellington, Florida. Many other impeccable details are addressed to include two large restrooms with plentiful space and hooks for changing, and four large tack rooms with roomy lockers. There is an impressive heated “solarium” complete with hot/cold water faucets for veterinary use if needed. Additional amenities include a lunch room, complete with stove, refrigerator, microwave, and vending machines for snacking. So, beyond the horse’s wellbeing, the comfort of riders, grooms, and crew is also of paramount concern. One need only articulate a concern and the attempt is made to resolve the

issue. For example, a western rider could not fit her large saddle in the normal locker. This concern was remedied by constructing a low and wide locker underneath a window in the tack room, which amply accommodates the saddle and other necessities. That is personalized customer service!

A spacious hay field was turned into a cross-country eventing mini trial field. It is “pristine”, but “inviting and easy”, according to Ron. Paths have been cleared through the woods to the field for a hacking trail. Gorgeous new cross-country jumps were constructed by the esteemed expert, Chris Gable, from the well-known South Farm, who also assisted in the cross country course design. Three large pastures and eight all-weather turnouts were fashioned. Drainage was studied and impeccably addressed around the facility to preserve long-lasting riding fields, pathways, and proper runoff.

Planning and organization are stamped everywhere at HEC. Manure is wheelbarrowed up a ramp into a dumpster which is

Continued on page 42

Hinckley

Continued from page 41

hauled away weekly. This practice is an excellent way to manage fly control. An enormous white board lists all horses and pertinent activities, including turnout and stall cleaning, and is meticulously tracked and initialized. Buckets, feed tubs, blankets, and hooks are all numbered for accuracy and organization. The large implement area houses necessary farm equipment, and includes a giant mound of stall bedding which is replenished easily by backing the supply truck in and unloading it in the corner. A huge 4.5-ton grain bin stores Purina brand food that is easily dispensed through a chute to the feed room. No need to deal with bags and bags of grain! Of course, if a horse needs another specialty feed, they will administer it.

Horses are cared for with utmost attention, including blanket management and turnout. Stalls and pastures are equipped with Nelson Automatic Water systems. Some horses even enjoy the luxury of nighttime turnout, especially welcome in the hot and buggy summer months.

Ron has created a horing haven with the development of a top-notch premier facility that has more than just wonderful amenities, and constructed with the "best of the best." It is a community of horse lovers where all are welcome - hunter/jumpers, dressage enthusiasts, western, trail riders, competitors, and leisure riders - all coming together to live their journey. According to Ron, HEC exists "for the love of horses."

Speaking of horse love, the "Crew" at HEC is methodically devoted to the ultimate care of its horses. The AM Crew is led by seasoned Crew Manager, Mel Gingery. Mel manages feeding, turnouts, stall cleaning, and horse care, etc. with attention, concern,

and wisdom. Her horse care history is extensive and rich from decades of working for famous Standardbred Trainer, Earl Bowman. At one time, she even held an Assistant Trainer's License. Mel accrued a plethora of interesting "tried and true" remedies from Earl and others in Standardbred racing, and applies her diverse and proven expertise at HEC in caring for the horses. She breeds and shows Guinea pigs as well. It is a mutual admiration society since Ron describes Mel as "an animal lover with a big heart." Mel radiates joy about her work and states, "Ron is so nice and is truly invested in this place. It is great to work for such wonderful people like Ron and his wife, Sue." She began working for the previous facility owners over 11 years ago and is the most tenured person at HEC. Mel is assisted by three other AM helpers and a slightly larger crew on Saturdays.

HEC is a full-service facility with complete care, training, and lessons for children and adults with two impressive trainers. Stephanie Framer, who lives at the farm with her black lab, Cooper, owns and operates High Standards Stables (HSS), a Hunter/Jumper lesson program exclusively operating out of HEC. She and independent trainer, Tammy Cagno, provide excellent training, lesson guidance, and event organization. Also, with a live-in trainer and nearby Barn Manager, there is comfort in the knowledge that someone is always on the property for oversight, security, and that very important "night check."

With a vision beyond full care and premier boarding, HEC was revamped and renovated



Stephanie Framer and Julia Rice



Barn aisle

Photos Enso Media

with hunter shows, trials, and various equestrian events in mind. Ron's planning skills are showcased with forethought to build 32 temporary stalls and an outdoor show office for various venues. He recommends, "pull in, circle the barn, unload, check in, and park your trailer. No backing!" That's music to most equestrian's ears in a very competitor-friendly environment.

Ron is multi-faceted and continues to demonstrate his vision and reach well beyond HEC as the owner of an interesting Cajun restaurant on Sanibel Island in Florida, named Mudbugs Cajun Kitchen. It is known for excellent service and interesting Louisiana-style food, great atmosphere, and lively music. There are two bars, with one of them located on the rooftop. For those who don't

know, "mudbug" is a name for a crayfish (also known as crawdaddy), a freshwater crustacean, related to the lobster.

Ron, Sue, and their family demonstrate the value of giving back, and are quietly involved in a multitude of philanthropic endeavors with equestrian non-profits, and are generous with use of their HEC facility and support. Even their Mudbugs Restaurant was recently recognized for its generosity to the Florida Golisano Children's Hospital Pediatric Neurosurgery Unit by donating 50% of takeout proceeds - up to \$50,000 in total support.

On September 20, 2020, HEC held its inaugural Mini Trial as a fun way to introduce Eventing to both riders and horses. The 1-day competition included dressage, cross-country, and stadium jumping. HEC



Mel Gingery and
a nosey friend

also offered cross-country schooling for several days prior to the show for those interested.

What resulted was a very well attended, (over 100 entries!) successful event with ALL proceeds being donated to Trinity Farms Therapeutic Equestrian Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to using the therapeutic nature of horses to make a difference in the lives of those with special needs.

Don't let the magnificence of Hinckley Equestrian Center distract you from the basic premise that Ron was inspired by - and has further enhanced at this beautiful facility - to create a venue "for the love of horses with a peaceful, calm atmosphere." Ron states with sincerity, "we figure out how to make it right." Yes, beyond problem-solving, they have "made it right" with inclusion, diversity, and horsing joy. That hallmark is the real magic of Hinckley Equestrian Center.

If you visit HEC, you might find Ron investing sweat equity, as he is known to pitch in where needed. He is a hands-on owner and can easily be mistaken for a crew member on any given day.

HEC is at full boarder capacity - with a wait list. However, you may just find yourself a fortunate boarder at



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this premier facility sometime in the future, or a visiting competitor, volunteer, or spectator at one of the many equestrian events. If so, you will be forever heartened and inspired by its enchantment.

Visit their Facebook page for current events, pictures, videos, and up-to-date general HEC information. ♦

Regina Sacha-Ujczko is a USDF Silver and Bronze Medalist devoted to the pursuit of dressage excellence and one score shy of her Gold Medal. Formerly VP of HR for FedEx Custom Critical, she now leverages her communication, equestrian, and people skills as a Freelance Writer for horse-related websites, features and reviews. Her writing has received national recognition from USDF. Regina is married to Ed Ujczko and is "mom" to a robust animal family of three dogs and three horses. She and her husband reside in Seven Hills, OH.

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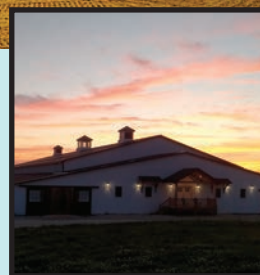
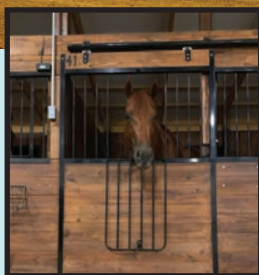
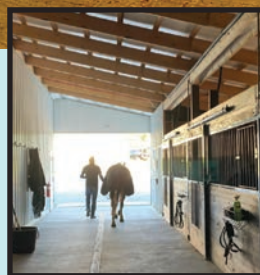
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The Riddle Half

(of Rood and Riddle)

a book excerpt
by **Tom Riddle, DVM**
(co-founder of Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital)

CHAPTER 1

The Rood and Riddle Story

The partnership which led to the formation of Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital began in 1982, when I left my resident veterinarian position at Leslie Comb's world-renowned Spendthrift Farm to join Bill Rood's thriving solo equine ambulatory practice in Lexington, Kentucky. Dr. Rood, a University of California at Davis veterinary graduate, moved to Lexington in 1972 to practice veterinary medicine. He subsequently also graduated from the University of Kentucky College of Law in 1975. I was a 1974 graduate of Wake Forest University and graduated from the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine in 1978. After graduation I moved to Kentucky to do

Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital Lexington, Kentucky

an internship with Dr. Don Witherspoon at Spendthrift Farm; after my internship year I continued working there as one of the resident veterinarians until joining Dr. Rood in January, 1982.

Early in the formation of Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital, the partners' goal was to be the "Mayo Clinic for horses." This vision of excellence has guided our plans since its inception, both in our facilities and technology and in our selection of the veterinary and lay staff. This commitment to premier service, care and communication has resulted in the establishment of an outstanding international reputation for our equine veterinary practice.

CHAPTER 5

Partnering with Dr. Bill Rood

After three and a half years at Spendthrift, it was time for me to "spread my wings." I was in a very comfortable "rut" there, and I realized I needed to do something else. In 1981, I started looking around for other opportunities and ended up calling Dr. Bill Rood, who had an excellent solo practice in the Lexington area. We got together for drinks a couple of times and ended up deciding that we would give practicing together a try. This was a great decision for me. Bill was very interested in the business end of veterinary medicine, and I was more interested in the actual "hands on" of practice. Next to my marriage and my decision to go to vet school, deciding to work with Dr. Rood was my "number

three" best decision.

Bill had two philosophies that served us well over the years of practicing together. He always emphasized surrounding ourselves with quality people, and we have been very fortunate with that philosophy. Another principle that he stressed is "always taking the high road." By this he meant that even in difficult circumstances, we would be better off making decisions that would consistently reflect well on our practice and ourselves; we should never appear to be vindictive.

In January of 1982 Rood and I began practicing together, working out of Bill's garage.

By the second year, we moved to a combination warehouse/garage/ office at the Melbourne Distribution Center and were very pleased with our accomplishment. We had an "open house party" at that first office and felt that we had really arrived! At that point, Bill and I had hired our first associate and really started to think of Rood and Riddle as a practice.



**First home (garage) of
Rood & Riddle 1982**



Second home of Rood & Riddle 1984

From our early days of talking about practicing together, Bill had talked about wanting to build an intensive care unit to care for sick neonates. He had a guy in mind, Dr. Tim Cudd, to hire to run our ICU, and Tim did a great job with our foals. I knew that if we had sick neonates, some of them would end up needing surgery, so we decided to look into hiring a surgeon. If we had a surgeon, we would need more than just foals for him/her to work on, and thus Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital as a complete equine veterinary service began. We were absolutely blessed that Dr. Rolf Embertson eventually agreed to join us as our first surgeon.

Bill and I started looking around for a place to build our hospital, and we ended up buying 24 acres on Georgetown Road. This land was part of a 206-acre tract that had been for sale for a while. Fortunately, the sellers agreed to carve off a smaller tract for us, which made it possible for us to afford it. The property had been part of the farm where Man o' War was foaled and raised, which is an historical fact we have had some fun with. It turns out the balance of the 206 acres is now extremely valuable and would have been a great investment for us. However, we were absolutely financially stretched to buy what we did, so I really don't have any regrets about not buying the whole parcel.

We broke ground for Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital in July of 1985. Six months later, in February of 1986, we moved into our new facility. Having gone through many construction projects



Tom Riddle & Bill Rood 1985

since then, I am amazed that we were in our new buildings just six months after we broke ground. (We knew that we needed to open as soon as possible primarily for financial reasons, so we related this to our contractor. We had a clause in our building contract: if we were not operational in six months, the contractor would be penalized.) With this financial motivation in place, he came through.

Breaking Ground

Dr. Rolf Embertson started with us on March 1, 1986, and, the rest, as they say, is history. We have added veterinarians and expanded our facilities in Kentucky almost every year since then, and we have started satellite hospitals in Saratoga Springs, New York, and Wellington, Florida.

One of the first veterinarians to join Rood and Riddle was Dr. Scott Pierce. Boy, were we lucky he did! From the

beginning, Dr. Pierce was excellent at almost every aspect of equine practice; from broodmares to sales yearlings, he has done it all and done it well. In recent years, he has concentrated his practice on the sales, and he is a trusted advisor to many of the best in the Thoroughbred business.

All profits from the sale of The Riddle Half (of Rood and Riddle) go to The Foundation for the Horse, the American Association of Equine Practitioners' (AAEP's) charitable arm that supports horses and horse people throughout the world, and the Theriogenology Foundation, the global non-profit of the organization of veterinarians dedicated to animal reproduction. ♦

The book may be purchased by contacting Rood & Riddle Veterinary Pharmacy at 859-246-0112 or online at RRVP.com. For a signed copy, \$5.00 will be added to the purchase price.

A BRIDGE TO GREENER PASTURES



Photo by Tara Fox

by Regina Sacha-Ujcz

"Eighteen years led up to this moment. Until now it had never been a consideration, but suddenly has become an unrelenting issue. My beautiful mare, Ballerina, was just diagnosed with a career-ending injury. She needs rest and pasture turnout time for the rest of her life but I don't own my own farm. What she needs is a retirement farm to relax and enjoy her twilight years, but I want to be able to visit and groom her regularly. Does a place like this exist here in Ohio?"

Yes, and one of the premier dedicated equine retirement farms is right around the corner in Hunting Valley, Ohio. Bridgehaven Farm has a rich history filled with synchronicity and destiny. This heartwarming story begins in 2016 when Cyndi Gale Roller, the mother of Lyndsey Roller, passed away from a horseback riding accident. With her mother's loss, Lyndsey recognized the fragility and uncertainty of life and decided to pursue a more personally fulfilling career than her IT position at a major medical facility in Cleveland. Her vision was to create a

unique equine retirement farm where the needs of the retirees are catered to in every way. Lyndsey and her brother inherited three of her mother's horses, two of which were seniors and had a different set of needs than those of the active riding show horses. She explored the possibility of buying a farm but found most out of financial reach, or so run-down and in need of repair that it would take years to become operational.

Then – out of the blue, in February of 2017, Tom and Nadia Wearsch telephoned Lyndsey. They were the owners of the prestigious Eutrophia Farm, the Alexander home and foaling barns in Hunting Valley. A mutual equestrian jumper friend, Megan Bash, had communicated to them Lyndsey's zealous search for a local farm to create a retirement community. The Wearsch's were delighted to join forces with Lyndsey and pleased to envision the vacant barns on their gorgeous property full of happy and contented retirees. A lease agreement was drawn up and Bridgehaven Farms, Inc. was born, a retirement oasis nestled in Hunting Valley, Ohio with picturesque plush pastures.

According to Lyndsey, "the farm had three bridges and the name Bridgehaven was fitting." However, "Bridgehaven also has a dual meaning of bridging the twilight years of horses to the Rainbow Bridge in Heaven." How apropos!

Even for an avid equestrian, farm management is complex and challenging. Early on, Lyndsey was fortunate to work with Elias Del Val, who had managed the Alexander farm for many years. He willingly shared his sage farm management wisdom, including tractor operation, maintenance of automatic waterers, and a myriad of other farm management techniques. Together, they even grew and gathered 200 bales of grass hay to kick-start her feeding operation.

On September 1, 2017, five horses were welcomed as the first Bridgehaven retiree residents. Shortly thereafter, the main barn was full with a dozen horses in specialized senior care. It takes a village to keep up with running a top-notch facility, so Lyndsey engaged help and a year later hired Tana Fox, as Barn Manager, and several helpers. This allowed Lyndsey time with her wife, Kriss Petti-Roller, and children, Stella and Hugo. Her stepdaughter, Michaela Mekker, is currently involved in the farm as Night Checker. Bridgehaven was begot from family and continues in a family-focused operation.

In 2019, Lyndsey opened up an additional two-stall barn to allow for more occupancy. The total is now up to fourteen residents and is perfect for the 28 acres of pasture land. A wait-list is now maintained and those who have visited the impressive Bridgehaven Farm are anxious to add their name to the list well in advance of the need.

In short order Lyndsey has become an expert in the needs of senior horses and provides a quintessential retirement community for local equines. The science and art of retirees

is specialized and requires knowledge that Lyndsey has acquired and often shares with fellow equestrians who turn to her for advice as a trusted expert in senior equine matters.

Lyndsey and her Barn Manager, Tana, pay close attention to the needs of her retirees and manage their

Photo by Anne Gittins

Lyndsey's mother, Cyndi Petti-Roller



weight, nutrition, supplements, veterinary care, and of course, their valued pasture time. As steward of these beloved horses "the care is tailored to the needs of each horse which comes first before all else!" Lyndsey emphatically states.

A typical day begins with early morning feeding in the stalls. Most of the horses have "in and out" access to their stalls. They can freely come and go all day. Two of the pastures, which are not joined to the barn, have run-in sheds for weather protection. All pastures have heated automatic waterers and supplemental buckets that hang from the fences. Weather permitting, the horses may graze upon the lush pastures up to eight hours per day.

Stall cleaning is provided seven days a week with free-choice hay, winter blanketing, fly spray management,

grooming, and bathing as needed. Feed is tailored to the needs of each horse. For example, feeding low-starch food to Cushing's disease or insulin-resistant horses. If necessary, grazing muzzles are used to limit sugar intake. A soupy mash can be provided for the elder horses who are prone to choke.

Most horses wear various kinds of shoes for support but, if possible, back shoes are removed for safety. Lyndsey states, "we try to make sure our herd really gets along so no one gets hurt."

The herd is diverse. The youngest is a chestnut Thoroughbred gelding who is 14 years old. The oldest resident has been a 32-year-old Appaloosa/draft cross. The largest was an 18-hand Percheron who weighed in at close to 2,000 pounds! They are all varying breeds, colors, sizes, disciplines, and accomplishments, but all have been equalized by the now peace-filled grazing and well-deserved rest.

It might be surprising to note that some horses who have spent their lives in private or limited turnout adjust quite quickly to the herd groups. Of course, the introduction is performed with care and caution, and sometimes they must make a decision to have a new horse join a different turnout group. And, if necessary, a horse may need solo turnout if all attempts to merge into the herd fail.

A local neighbor and photographer, Robert Glick, frequently visits Bridgehaven. He offers a great perspective. "Call it a 'retirement home' but most of these horses are active and truly enjoying life. The grounds are beautiful but the care is even greater." Bob wishes he could convey the "amount of caring, kindness, special attention, and love that these lucky horses enjoy each day!" He especially adores witnessing the sonorous greeting given to Barn Manager, Tana, when she arrives for early morning feeding. Also, according to Robert, when they are first turned out, their "morning frolic



Photo by Tara Fox

is a hoot!"

Owners are welcome to visit and groom their horses, and most do on a regular basis. It is so serene to view the herd grazing contentedly on the lush pastures. One such owner is Betsy Krohngold, who shares her story of love and contentment.

The experience of boarder, Betsy Krohngold, her friend, Amy Ford, and Amy's "heart horse", Noble, is a shining example of Bridgehaven's greater purpose. Like many equestrians, Betsy was a "horse-crazy" young girl who fell in love with riding and horses. She rode various horses all her life but never had the means to buy a "fancy" trained horse. She was ecstatic when she had an opportunity to lease Noble, a very well-trained and well-bred horse, and son of Olympic SF Stallion Quidam de Revel. The years of riding joy flew by but Noble's physical issues worsened. That day came when Betsy "knew it was the last day she would ever ride him. He was done." Betsy was "heartbroken."

That was just about the time Lyndsey was readying her new facility for retirees. Betsy lived fifteen minutes from Bridgehaven and for years had driven daily by the famous Eutrophia Breeding Farm, replete with gorgeous



Noble

Photo by Betsy Krohngold

pastures and beautiful steeds. How amazing that now Betsy was there picking out a stall for Noble!

Betsy selected an amazing stall that opened into a private 2-3-acre pasture. Noble is not friendly with other horses so it allows him run-out time in his own pasture without incident. According to Betsy, "This is the retirement that Noble deserved after years of hard work." The day she moved Noble in was a bittersweet and tearful event. It was his time to be just "a horse." No more show clipping, no more mane pulling, no more bridles or bits and lungeing or competition. Noble just had his own time to enjoy the lush grass and peace of Bridgehaven every day. Amy and Betsy "could not be happier that Noble is there." Most importantly, they attest, "Noble is happy and he looks great as he moves through his senior years."

They and the other Bridgehaven boarders are assured that Lyndsey and her Barn Manager, Tana, keep a watchful eye on each and every

horse and, of course, always have the cameras to ensure that all is well. Lyndsey is fittingly pleased with the realization of her dream. She chuckles, "Most days I feel like the barn rat kid I was growing up. Only now I get to do it for a living!" Then seriously, Lyndsey sums it up in one poignant sentence. "These horses owe us nothing; we owe them for the lifetime of love."

The decision to retire your horse varies as much as the diversity of riding disciplines and breeds. Horses can have a career-ending accident at a young age or work well into their 20's, when they just need to rest and relax in their sunset years. Locating a retirement facility where your horse can graze and be cared for without worry is a decision which faces many non-farm-owning equestrians today or in the future. Whether you select a farm which allows retirees along with active riding horses, or you choose a dedicated and specialized retiree facility like Bridgehaven, it is never too early to investigate local facilities to build a bridge for your beloved horse from working life to greener and sedate pastures!

Bridgehaven Farms, Inc. is a non-profit.

(Donations accepted)
Connect with Bridgehaven Farms, Inc. via Facebook. ♦

Regina Sacha-Ujczko is a USDF Silver and Bronze Medalist devoted to the pursuit of dressage excellence and one score shy of her Gold Medal. Formerly VP of HR for FedEx Custom Critical, she now leverages her communication, equestrian, and people skills as a Freelance Writer for horse-related websites, features and reviews. Her writing has received national recognition from USDF. Regina is married to Ed Ujczko and is "mom" to a robust animal family of three dogs and three horses. She and her husband reside in Seven Hills, OH.

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by **Gina Fortunato, AVP**

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Visit Horse Country

by Anne Hardy

For horse lovers anywhere, bucolic Lexington, KY should be at the top of the must-visit list. Rolling hills and farmland abound, populated by generations of horsemen and women and horses of all breeds. In the inner Bluegrass region alone, there is said to be over 450 horse farms; there is a reason it is known as the Horse Capital of the World.

Thirty of these farms and equine organizations are united under the umbrella of Horse Country, a not-for-profit membership organization offering experiences to guests that allow for deep connection and interaction with equine life. Founded in 2014 and launching tour experiences in 2015, Horse Country has hit its stride as a premier attraction for visitors to the area. Access to the local Thoroughbred farms and the opportunity to meet some of the famous faces of horse racing (humans and animals!) has long been a top request at the local visitor centers. Horse Country offers all that - and more. And it's not just great for the visitors and fans. Offering authentic

and transparent experiences and owning the narrative of horse care is transforming the way the farms and equine businesses relate to fans.

"What we have found is that guests are looking for a 'horse experience', and when they find Horse Country, they get that, but also an up-close look at the day-to-day life of the many people who make this industry go," shares Stephanie Arnold of Horse Country. "It's meaningful because it's about original stories and it's about education and it's about an appreciation for the utter dedication to the care of these beloved animals. When guests leave a tour, typically their satisfaction increases, and they have a greater understanding of the sport in ways they may not have expected to."

Founded with the mission of fan development, Horse

Country has evolved from basic, one-hour tours to offering a variety of experiences for fans at every level:

maintaining entry-level tours but also offering private, VIP, specially curated, and elevated tours. Some guests have even purchased shares of racehorses as a result of Horse Country tours. The tourism crisis of COVID-19 recently offered the opportunity for the farms to share virtual tours when in-person wasn't possible, exposing the organization, locations, and Kentucky to millions of viewers who otherwise would not have been captured. "Silver linings as they say," Arnold reflects. "But in all seriousness, the organic reach that sprung out of a very difficult time is indeed a bright spot. We've heard from many virtual tour participants that now they'll be visiting the

Bluegrass - and these farms - because of the exposure through these live-streamed experiences."

Typical peak tour season runs March through October in Kentucky, when upwards of 30 locations - stud farms, nurseries, clinics, a feed mill, a sport horse farm, aftercare organizations, and training/track locations - offer varied experiences seven days a week. All experiences are booked in advance on the organization's website: VisitHorseCountry.com. Guests looking for assistance can connect with the Horse Country concierge with any questions and for assistance planning an itinerary.

"Our ultimate goal is fan development, so that we can share a part of the industry that promotes the sport and the care of the horses," Arnold says. "Anything that we can do to share our knowledge and assist with planning a wonderful trip, we are going to do that. We're locals, and we work for Horse Country, but we're fans first, and we love sharing the best of the sport and the state."

For more information: visithorsecountry.com ♦





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Ron and Secretariat,
Kentucky Derby,
Winner's Circle, 1973

Photo courtesy of Ron Turcotte, Churchill Downs

LIVING LEGENDS

OF THE TRIPLE CROWN

by Mandy Boggs

Each year over twenty thousand Thoroughbred foals are born in North America purposefully bred with the dream of becoming a racing champion. Only thirteen of those foals over the past century and a half, have had what it takes to win what is known as “the Triple Crown”, three of the most prestigious and challenging races in North America. In American Thoroughbred horse racing, there is no greater goal for anyone involved; breeders, owners, trainers, grooms, and the jockeys, than winning the Kentucky Derby, Preakness Stakes, and Belmont Stakes. Spanning five weeks starting the first Saturday in May, only the best 3-year-old colts and fillies can take their shot over three different tracks, all with varying lengths, to see if one of them has *what it takes* to seize the Crown.

Today there are only five living Triple Crown-winning jockeys, claiming this pinnacle achievement in racing. Before Ron Turcotte and Secretariat won in 1973, it had been 25 years since Citation (Eddie Arcaro) won the Triple Crown in 1948. Jean Cruguet (Seattle Slew 1977) and Steve Cauthen (Affirmed 1978) followed in Secretariat’s *emblazed* path with their own inspiring feats, before a 37-year span left the Triple Crown trophies collecting dust again. Victor Espinoza and American Pharoah shattered that 37-year gap in 2015 with Mike Smith following close behind on Justify in 2018.

Horse racing has been

around since Ancient Rome, further developing in Europe during the 18th century. Racing in North America began sweeping the country in 1665, in New York. In 1868, the American Stud Book was created, a clear sign that horse racing would become more than just a test of a few fast horses; an entire industry was beginning to take shape. By 1750 the Jockey Club (Europe) was established, setting rules and standards for the sport, with The Jockey Club of the United States and Canada following suit in 1894.

Early races, including those in North America, would often have just two horses

running against each other to determine who had the fastest horse. These races were run down streets, through towns, on farms, and eventually, on racetracks, albeit primitive in comparison to the tracks we have today. Grandstands were built as crowds began to gather at these events, farms began to form entire business models around breeding, raising, and training Thoroughbreds, and the general public started placing their bets. The “Sport of Kings” was here to stay.

Ron Turcotte Secretariat 1973

Ron Turcotte was born in New Brunswick, Canada in 1941, a month after Whirlaway claimed the Triple Crown. Being one of 14 children, he grew up around horses and hard work. “I was around horses all of my life. My job was hauling logs with my father; we had a bobsled in the winter, bringing the logs through the yard from the forest, hauling them over to the river. We hitched the horses up as singles or teams,” Turcotte shared. “I had to learn from an early age how to take care of the horses, from getting up early to feed them before I had my own breakfast, to being a blacksmith, I had to do everything. The horses always came first. My dad was a very good horseman, I learned my horsemanship from him and am very proud of that. He also taught me that horses are like us. They each have their own likes and dislikes and you often can get more from a horse by getting to know them first.”

Turcotte left home when he was 18, looking for work in Toronto before he found himself starting as a hot-walker and groom in 1959, eventually being recognized for his knowledge of horses and good work ethic. He started galloping horses each morning. “When I started galloping horses you had to start from the bottom. I had to work hard, learn to gallop a horse, and prove myself,” said Turcotte.



Ron and Northern Dancer, 1963

Those early rides soon earned him racing silks, and almost as quickly as he started competing in races, the wins started coming. Crediting his horsemanship and innate ability to really connect with each individual horse and not just *ride the race*, he became an apprentice jockey, quickly getting matched with better and better horses. By the end of 1962, Turcotte was the leading rider in Canada with rides on the current Horse of the Year, Crafty Lace. In 1963, he was the regular jockey for Canadian-bred Northern Dancer, piloting him to his first win. Together they won the Coronation Futurity, the biggest stakes race for two-year-olds in Canada, and won the title of Two-Year-Old Champion in Canada. By fall

of 1963, he was so far ahead of the second leading jockey, he had already assured himself the title for his second year in a row. He left Canada to try his luck in the U.S., proving that he could compete with American riders. He quickly became leading rider in both Maryland and Delaware, where he picked up the mount on Tom Rolfe. A Preakness Stakes win on Tom Rolfe in 1965 quickly moved him up the U.S. and Canadian leaderboards as a jockey. With a leading rider title at every track Turcotte had raced at, he soon found himself in New York. Lucien Laurin, trainer for the famed Meadow Stable, shared Turcotte's same French-Canadian accent, and soon had him riding his horses at the request of Penny Chenery, breeder and owner

of Secretariat and stablemate, Riva Ridge. In 1972, Turcotte rode Riva Ridge to victory at the Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes.

“I used to hear at the racetrack things like, ‘Oh, that horse has the brain the size of a pea’, and I would get so mad I couldn't help but talk back! Of course, I wouldn't get to ride for that guy (trainer) for a few days,” he chuckled. “They are more intelligent than you realize. That was me, I love horses and cannot find much fault in them. Some don't have the same ability as the others, some can be more stubborn, but if you coach them, they will all come around and try.”

Turcotte paid close attention to each horse he rode. He liked to be around them and

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noticed how they felt, what they liked, and how to keep them wanting to perform. If a horse felt a little “off”, even as slight as swishing its tail in agitation, he would let the trainers know. Often this could catch an injury or problem before it became a bigger issue. This trait seemed to pay off, as often horses that other jockeys struggled with, Turcotte never had a problem riding, or winning on them. Some trainers appreciated his close observations, others brushed him away, telling him to just do his job and ride. With horses that had a reputation for being rogue or difficult to ride, he would look like he was out for an afternoon stroll, not understanding where the disconnect was with some of the other riders or jockeys. Many would argue that, while Secretariat was the greatest racehorse of all time, it seems almost inconceivable to imagine anyone other than Ron Turcotte as the jockey piloting him to greatness.

Secretariat was as brilliant as a horse can be, standing 16.2 hands, his copper coat enhanced by nearly flawless conformation and a stature that demanded attention anywhere he went. The colt was known for his intelligence, and kind, yet playful, demeanor. Turcotte recalls that he was always relaxed on race days, sometimes not even breaking much of a sweat after the race. He loved to eat and take naps. He never misbehaved, even as a young horse, in a way that many racehorses are notorious for when their excitement and energy grow on race day. The crowds never bothered him, as he loved the attention. Turcotte genuinely loved everything about Secretariat from being around him in the barn, to being on his back, as they appeared to almost float around the track. Turcotte rode



Riva Ridge and Ron with groom, Eddie Sweat, 1972

Photo courtesy of Ron Turcotte

Secretariat in all but three of his 21 career starts, breaking track records and making history every step of the way.

“I always said, to win the Triple Crown you need a horse that can go any distance, be placed anywhere in the race, and will relax. He has to be able to run on any kind of track, muddy, sloppy, or fast,” explained Turcotte. “In 1972, on Riva Ridge, I likely would have won the Triple Crown with him had he been able to handle the mud. He was the best 3-year-old in the country that year, but when the rain came on Preakness day, I knew he wouldn’t do it. Secretariat was a horse that could do all of those things.” Turcotte always felt that, as Secretariat’s overshadowing veil of stardom cast itself over the entire country, it also concealed the authentic greatness of stablemate, Riva

Ridge; a 3-year-old every bit as deserving of admiration for his greatness, even despite missing the middle jewel of the Crown for himself.

On May 5, 1973, a crowd of over 130,000 filled Churchill Downs in Kentucky, with Secretariat as the favorite, despite some chatter about Secretariat’s third place finish in his previous race, The Wood Memorial, later learning was the result of a painful abscess in his mouth. “I couldn’t figure out why he ran the way he did in the Wood Memorial until I heard about the abscess. I was so relieved when I learned about the abscess, knowing it would get better, and it did. I knew we were going to win then. He felt good and took ahold of the bit in his workout leading up to the Derby,” said Turcotte. “Lucien didn’t seem as confident saying, ‘well he’s a Bold Ruler running 1¼ mile,

no Bold Ruler runs that’, and I said don’t worry about the extra ¼ mile he will run as far as the race is!”

Secretariat won the Kentucky Derby by 2 ½ lengths, setting the track record with a brilliant performance. Two weeks later, at the Preakness Stakes in Maryland, Secretariat won again by 2 ½ lengths, breaking the record at Pimlico as well. “I noticed other riders were taking hold of their horses, waiting for me, thinking I was going to ride like I did in the Derby. I wheeled him to the outside and let him go. I went from last to first and took control of the race around the first turn. I could have won by another 10 lengths if I wanted to. It was that easy for him,” he reminisced.

“At Belmont, I wasn’t worried about the 1½ mile distance because of how he pulled up at the end of his races, and when I worked him, running was like playing for him. He just loved running and I let him do what he wanted. I never fought with him,” Turcotte explained, “the Saturday before the Belmont he worked faster than he had run the Derby.” Secretariat took an early lead in the Belmont before breaking into his signature long stride of over 25 feet, never needing the whip, galloping past every record ever set at Belmont, winning by an unprecedented 31 lengths, in world record time.

“I told Lucien that day, you are going to see something you’ve never seen before, but I didn’t think it would be a win by 31 lengths!” chuckled Turcotte. Secretariat became the first Triple Crown winner in 25 years. His Belmont win, to this day, is still regarded as the greatest horse race in history. Secretariat went on to run six more times before retiring to stud, adding the Arlington Invitational, Marlboro Cup, Man o’ War Stakes, and the Canadian International to his impressive resume of wins. He was



Ron at book signing

inducted into the Hall of Fame in both the U.S. and Canada, won five Eclipse Awards, Horse of the Year as both a two and three-year-old, has numerous statues in his honor, including one in the center of Turcotte's hometown in Canada. "Big Red" still holds the track record for all three of his Triple Crown races.

Turcotte went on to win over 3,000 races during his career, winning the three races of the Triple Crown, *twice each*, among over 50 other prestigious races. He was the leading jockey for multiple years, Canadian Racing's Man-of-the-Year in 1978, has had multiple Hall of Fame inductions, and received the honorable Order of Canada award in 1974.

His brilliant career was tragically cut short due to a racing accident in 1978 on Flag of Leyte Gulf at the start of a race held at Belmont Park. He was thrown during an accident, resulting in becoming paraplegic - never to walk or ride again. Heartbreaking, not only to Turcotte, but to everyone that had followed his career, his fans, and those close to him. He has been able to overcome the initial difficult emotions he experienced with such a life-changing injury, finding a way to still enjoy his life and passion for horse

racing, while continuing to share it with others. "I woke up in the hospital after the operation with no anger, just as a changed person. I became more patient, nicer to everybody. I had a very supportive family and just went through life taking it one day at a time," shared Turcotte.

Turcotte retired from racing going back to Drummond, New Brunswick, Canada to a farm he purchased many years ago. He and his wife, Gaëtane, raised four daughters. While Turcotte circled back to his roots, this time, however, rather than cutting down trees, he plants them. He has planted over 300,000 trees on his property over the years, appreciating the beauty of nature and the home it gives to the wild animals.

"I had a very good career; I've ridden some really good horses. I always stayed confident in myself and most importantly in my horses," shared Turcotte, "I am lucky I am still here today. I did get hurt and couldn't ride anymore, that is what I miss the most. I am still enjoying life, have made a lot of trips to the racetrack over the years, and help raise money for the Jockeys' Guild and the Permanently Disabled Jockey Fund (PDJF)."

Turcotte has been praised by fellow jockeys and those

that have known him over the years for his ongoing support of the racing industry, especially injured jockeys; attending charity events, signings, and offering not just encouraging words but being a true friend to many with his warm, positive outlook on life. Even just a few minutes talking with Turcotte feels as if you've known him your entire life. Penny Chenery remained friends with Turcotte for many years, never forgetting the remarkable journey they all went on together with Secretariat. He still remains good friends with many past jockeys, including Triple Crown-winning riders, Jean Cruguet and Steve Cauthen, whom he has attended events with on a regular basis over the years.

"I still watch those races on Secretariat and remember

them like it was yesterday. I don't know that there is a word to use to describe the feeling I have when I watch them. I had the original reels of those races. Anytime someone came over to the house they wanted to watch them. The reels faded away, or maybe I just wore them out myself," he laughed.

"Secretariat is everything to me. He was special and so kind. He was even jealous, if I pet another horse, he would grab my coat and pull me back," he laughed while reflecting on his memories. Turcotte speaks of Secretariat's greatness anytime he is asked about winning the Triple Crown, often downplaying his own achievements, never one to discredit the partnership a jockey must have with their horse, or the talent a horse offers. "Nobody can carry a horse. They have to carry you."

Photo courtesy of Jean Cruguet



Jean and Seattle Slew - iconic moment in sports history as he stands up in his irons, reaching for the sky, whip in hand, after winning the Triple Crown, 1977.

Jean Cruguet Seattle Slew 1977

Jean Cruguet was born in 1939, in southwestern France near Toulouse and Bordeaux. With his mother already struggling to make ends meet and his father never returning

from the war, Jean and his brother were dropped off at an orphanage. Five-year-old Jean found himself rejected by his family and, seemingly, by everyone else around him. In the beginning he was treated kindly by the nuns at the

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orphanage, but by the time he was old enough for secondary school, and perhaps in part due to his short stature, he found himself an easy target for others' torment and mistreatment. His life at the orphanage had become unbearable. Against all odds, and coupled with his lifelong determination to make something more of himself – "to be somebody someday" – Cruguet was able to find a way to ultimately parlay his physical attributes to become a Triple Crown-winning jockey.

"I would have done anything to be something special in my life," said Cruguet. With tenacity, Cruguet began working at his grandfather's small farm. By 16, he had begun working with horses at a neighboring farm and started riding horses for the first time in his life. He soon found himself with an opportunity to ride Thoroughbreds at a racetrack nearby, where he spent two years training at a farm with not much of a track to practice on, but he was able to live there and ride every day. His newfound purpose was interrupted when he was called to serve in the Algerian War with the French Army.

Focused on his unfailing perseverance to change the way his life had begun, Cruguet returned from the war and went back to the horses. In 1965, an Army friend contacted him about an opportunity with horses in Florida, all the way over in the United States. Cruguet knew very little English and did not know anyone there besides his friend, but went to America with hopes of changing his life.

"It was difficult for me as I did not know anyone and to make a living in racing you have to make a big name," explained Cruguet, "my wife (Denyse Pendanx) said, *yes, you must go*, so I went to America. We were some of the first ones to come



Jean Cruguet, who rode Seattle Slew in 1977, made a cameo appearance on another Triple Crown winner, American Pharoah, at Churchill Downs, 2015

Photo courtesy of Loren Hebel-Oborne

here from France, but it seemed like everyone followed me. I wanted to go back home but my wife said, *no, stay here it will be worth it.*"

Cruguet's wife, Denyse, was one of the first women jockeys and trainers in Europe, pioneering a path for women in the industry today. Cruguet attributes much of his own success to the guidance of his wife throughout his career. "She was a special woman, one in a million. We were together 47 years. I have always said if it weren't for her, nobody would know me," he shares. Cruguet began his career as most jockeys, having to work hard to get any races, competing amongst the better jockeys, and hoping that each decision made is the right one to get closer to being at the top of the jockey rankings. He admits a lot of his career seemed to include some good luck, but he worked very hard to get there.

In 1970, Cruguet got the ride on Triple Crown hopeful, Hoist the Flag, a horse he still declares to this day as the greatest racehorse he ever rode, and one he proclaimed would win the Kentucky Derby in 1971. In

fact, Cruguet made it known that he had the best horse in the country and did not hesitate to prove it, not surprising due to his outspoken nature. At the Bay Shore Stakes, Angel Cordero Jr., riding Jim French, jokingly prodded Cruguet saying his horse was going to beat Hoist the Flag. "I said, 'You can't beat this horse!' and I threw my whip on the side of the gate and told him I don't even need the whip," laughed Cruguet, clearly a memory he still enjoys to this day. "Angel said, 'Jean you are crazy!' but I won that race easy." Easy it was, winning by seven lengths in a track record-breaking time of 1:21.

Leading up to the Derby, the unbeatable colt and race favorite shattered a hind leg during a workout, nearly bringing Cruguet to his knees with grief knowing the world would not witness the greatness he knew this horse had. Cruguet fought back tears of emotion while Hoist the Flag's owners quickly summoned the top veterinary surgeons to save the horse's life, with no expense spared, a sentiment to just how special this horse was to so many. Over

one thousand get well cards were sent to the colt, the owner answering every single one. The surgery, the first of its kind, saved his life allowing him to become a leading sire in North America. Knowing that the horse would never race again, Cruguet would wait another six years before his next true chance at a Triple Crown win.

For the next few years, Cruguet moved around the U.S. and often went back and forth to France, depending on where his career and opportunities took him. "We had great success in France, made good money, enjoyed life. I got a call from trainer, Billy Turner, about a young horse he wanted me to ride named Seattle Slew. I wasn't very interested. My wife had a lot of confidence in the horse and said I had to take the ride, so I did."

Seattle Slew started out as an awkward-looking colt, nicknamed, "Baby Huey", by many for his clumsiness and unremarkable, mule-like appearance. During his career, however, he quickly proved everyone wrong, including Jean Cruguet, an ironic twist

of fate as both Seattle Slew and his jockey were on their way to becoming a pair that nobody would ever forget. In 1976-1977 he was the U.S. Champion 2-year-old and 3-year-old colt, winning Horse of the Year in 1977.

Cruguet recalled how Seattle Slew was sensitive to the nearly deafening roar from fans in the crowd, as it echoed through the tunnel connecting the paddock to the track on the day of the Kentucky Derby. "He was so worked up, he got himself totally washed out in sweat before the race," said Cruguet, making efforts in the other legs of the Triple Crown to keep him away from the crowds as much as possible.

In May of 1977, Cruguet and Seattle Slew left the starting gate of the Kentucky Derby with a tumultuous start, knocking into the steel and slamming into the horse next to him as if a reflection of Cruguet's own rough start in life. Completely blocked by the horses in front of them, Cruguet took a chance, one he knew would cause either a win, or be one of the greatest risks he had ever taken resulting in certain failure, he barged Seattle Slew through



Jean at 26, after first arriving in the U.S. from his native France. In what his close friends jokingly refer to as the "Ralph Lauren" photo, he appears to be straight out of a RL equestrian photo shoot! Jean poses in front of the stable of Derby champion, Northern Dancer's, famous trainer, Horatio Luro. Luro trained many other great horses, which he allowed Jean to ride.

him. His stamina proved to be accurate and he went on to win the Belmont by four lengths, over a muddy track, becoming the 10th Triple Crown winner and the only horse to earn the title with an undefeated race record, until Justify duplicated the feat in 2018. Cruguet had done it. Over 70,000 people knew his name and were cheering for him in a euphoric moment that even he himself could hardly contain. As he crossed the wire, Cruguet stood in his irons, thrusting his arm triumphantly over his head, his whip pointed toward the sky, sharing his joy not only with the fans present that day, but with the entire world. That photo has become an iconic piece of history, creating a tradition amongst many jockeys who, after winning prestigious races, will often be seen reaching skyward, celebrating their victory.

After a long career as both a historic racehorse and one of the most influential breeding sires in America, with over 100 stakes-winning offspring, including champion A. P. Indy, Seattle Slew died peacefully in his sleep at his farm in Lexington, KY. His death, as if poetic, occurred exactly 25 years to the day that he won the Kentucky Derby.

Cruguet retired from racing in the mid 1990's. He had over 2,400 career wins in the U.S. and another 450+ wins across Europe, as the leading jockey in France. With numerous impressive accomplishments over his 40-year career, from the dirt to the turf, all across the globe. Cruguet was often surpassed in popularity by American jockeys, with many fans left questioning his absence in the Hall of Fame, even after his Triple Crown win. Ron Turcotte shared his admiration for Cruguet when reflecting about his fellow jockeys that have earned their name on the Crown. "Jean Cruguet was a very tough jockey," said Turcotte. "He won a lot of big races. Every jockey's dream is to win the Triple Crown and only

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Jean and Billy Turner, trainer of Seattle Slew, pose in front of the famed "Barn 54", known for being Slew's Belmont home.

a slender opening with just a split second to succeed. A move considered by those watching as guaranteed to use up the horse's stamina too early in the race, both Cruguet and Seattle Slew proved the critics wrong, with an impressive victory by nearly two lengths. "Sometimes you have to make a move first and take a chance, just hope that it pays off," he explained. "Most jockeys stay still, but if you always stay still, then before you know it, you've lost the race. There is only one Derby, you don't get that

many chances so sometimes you just have to take it." Cruguet was able to harness the horse's amplified muscle and force on the track in a way that even his trainer, Billy Turner, acknowledged; Cruguet was *the* ideal rider for Seattle Slew, being absolutely fearless in the saddle.

Two weeks after the Derby, Seattle Slew went on to win the Preakness Stakes by 1½ lengths, after Cruguet eased up down the stretch for an easy win. Cruguet now realizing he had a real chance at winning the Triple Crown, he just had to keep the horse focused and continue believing in himself that he could claim the title.

In the weeks before the Belmont Stakes, Seattle Slew was so strong in his workouts they would have to pull up early with fear that the exercise rider would not be able to control

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a few jockeys have been able to do it. Cruguet belongs in the Hall of Fame,” Turcotte states emphatically.

For many years Cruguet and his wife ran a successful training stable. Eventually moving to Kentucky, Cruguet stayed busy attending various appearances and fundraiser events, making trips to the racetrack to watch the horses train, visit old friends, and place his bets. His wife, Denyse, had become ill and suffered a massive stroke in 2003. Cruguet devoted the years that followed to caring for his beloved wife in their home during her illness, keeping her out of a nursing home, before she sadly passed away in 2010. Over the years, Cruguet has

been known to hop up on a horse here and there, even sitting on American Pharoah for a few minutes in 2015, before the horse went out for a morning gallop, a little over a week after the horse had just won the Triple Crown.

In 2018, at an event honoring legendary African-American jockeys, one poignant story left the crowd speechless, some even with goosebumps, as if a rush of cold air had swept throughout the room. The story was that of Jimmy Winkfield, Hall of Fame jockey and horse trainer, told by Churchill Downs’ Communications V.P., John Asher. His unmistakable voice filled the room as he painted a picture of Winkfield’s captivating rag-to-riches tale. Born into a sharecropping family in Kentucky, Winkfield’s career as a jockey progressed into one that now decorates the walls

of racing museums.

As the details of his story concluded, Asher spoke of how two champion jockeys in France shared an unbeknownst and deep friendship, both men coming from humble beginnings, and rising to overcome life’s obstacles with a profound strength to prosper. A collective gasp echoed through the room when Asher stated that one of those men was sitting amongst them, many looked confused knowing Winkfield died in 1974. He asked if that man would stand up. Jean Cruguet quietly rose from his seat, to even his wife’s surprise, as everyone in the room gave him a standing ovation. Cruguet had never mentioned that Winkfield was one of his most treasured friends; a friendship which began instantly upon first meeting at the Maisons-Laffitte Racecourse in Paris in 1971.

When asked by his wife how that sort of detail just slips one’s mind, Cruguet just shrugged it off with a smile. While being a man known for speaking his mind on the track, those who know him often share their high regard for the tough *and humble* jockey that is Jean Cruguet.

Cruguet, 82, currently resides outside of Louisville, Kentucky, with his wife, LuAnne, where they breed and raise Thoroughbreds. He still enjoys his morning walks and jogs, an established regimen from his days as a jockey. An avid handicapper, he relaxes by reading *The Daily Racing Form*, and watching the latest races. Cruguet enjoys being an ambassador for the industry, attending various appearances and signings to help raise funds for non-profit organizations.

Steve Cauthen Affirmed 1978

Just six days after Steve Cauthen was born in a Northern Kentucky town, 13 horses left the starting gate in the 86th running of the Kentucky Derby, on May 7, 1960. The thunderous roar of the race may have even echoed its way to his crib that day. Under a cloudy sky, a brilliant chestnut colt named Venetian Way won the race, ridden by Hall of Fame jockey, Bill Hartack. Ironically, both Hartack and Steve Cauthen would fill newsstands 20 years apart, each dressed in the same flamingo pink-colored silks. In 1978, Cauthen became the 11th Triple Crown winner on a chestnut colt named Affirmed.

With his father, “Tex”, working as a blacksmith (later becoming a member of the International Horseshoeing Hall of Fame), and his mother, Myra, balancing training horses along with raising three boys, Cauthen grew up on a large farm with a love of horses from the very beginning. He started breaking the young horses on



Steve Cauthen on Affirmed (pink silks), Jorge Velasquez on Alydar (in red), Eddie Maple on Believe It (in green) - Kentucky Derby, 1978

the farm while he himself was still just a child. Attributing his love of horses, confidence, and deep understanding of how to work with them to his father,

Cauthen credits his mother with his competitiveness and athletic ability, appreciating how both parents molded him into the horseman, husband, and father

he is today.

“As a kid, not only did I love the horses, but I was also really into sports. I was small but strong for my age and quick on

Photo courtesy of Steve Cauthen

my feet. In 7th grade I decided to join a Pee Wee football league. I was fast, but I think maybe weighed 72 lbs. and the fullback was 140 lbs. I started realizing after running for my life that I better start thinking about another sport," Cauthen laughed.

Cauthen was inspired from reading books and magazines about horse racing and began thinking about becoming a jockey. Living in the horse racing capital of the world, it just seemed to be the logical choice in his mind. He asked his parents if he could give it a try. His mother, fearful of how dangerous the sport was, agreed with his father that he could give it a try, only if he promised to quit if maintaining weight became too difficult or dangerous to his health, and he had to keep up with his schoolwork. He was just 16 years old.

Cauthen was already 5'6" and 110 lbs., and still growing. With most U.S. jockeys' heights ranging from 4'10"– 5'6", and weighing between 108–118 lbs, he was not naturally destined to be the same size. His father and his brothers, Doug and Kerry, were of average size, with heights ranging from 5'9"– 5'11", and bigger, stronger builds.

His mother was petite, but the family knew once Cauthen got older, maintaining weight was going to be difficult. The clock was ticking, but Cauthen was not one to ever let the clock win.

His first race at River Downs was just twelve days after his 16th birthday. He finished last. One week later, his horse was first to cross the wire. Cauthen's goal was to become the leading rider at the Ohio track. Almost as quickly as he set the goal, it was accomplished, establishing a new meet record. He began setting higher goals, conquering them before the ink could dry on his checklist. He studied races, jockeys, horses, and the tracks, from old racing films to watching them live any chance he had. It was common to find him practicing on bales of hay, perfecting his technique,



Steve "The Kid" Cauthen - early racing days

position, or rotating his whip from left to right, as if nothing else in his life mattered more than being the absolute best.

In 1977, Cauthen became the first jockey to win over \$6 million in one racing season, breaking the national record by over \$1 million. He was the leading jockey in America with over 500 wins. Sports Illustrated named him the 1977 Sportsman of the Year, and still remains the only jockey or equestrian athlete to ever receive that award. He was 17 years old, still in high school, and at nearly every track he set foot upon, he broke records. It was only his first year as a jockey, and Steve Cauthen was regularly beating the best riders in the country.

"In the spring of 1977, I had a bad fall opening day at Belmont (New York). I was badly injured. I knew it was bad when I woke up in the hospital and my Mom was there. She lived in Kentucky," he chuckled. "They told me I would be out for three

months. Exactly a month from that day I was back on a horse. His name was Little Miracle. I didn't know at the time, but he was actually a half-brother to Affirmed."

By the summer, with Cauthen back in the game, Affirmed became available, and his trainer, Laz Barerra, was looking for a rider. "Affirmed was the smartest horse I have ever ridden," said Cauthen. "He was almost semi-human. He liked attention, not just someone petting him, and he would almost look for the cameras. He had a lot of personality, anyone that truly knew him always talked about what a character he was. He didn't like birds and used to run flat out to chase them out of his pasture."

Like Cauthen, Affirmed kept his confidence and composure around big crowds, not letting the atmosphere, nor the murmurs about a budding rival, Alydar, divert his concentration.

With the wave of success Cauthen immersed the country with, there was never any escape from fans, cameras, or the media. Every microphone and camera in the country seemed to be pointing at this young man, now referred to as, "The Kid".

"I had just received three Eclipse Awards, I was winning a lot of races, hard races, against the best jockeys in the country. I felt like I *did* belong. I was winning on other horses all year, not just Affirmed, so I went into the Derby confident I could win," shared Cauthen. "However, I was aware of how good Alydar was. He was on the East Coast winning by 6, 8, 10 lengths. In the back of my mind the only thing I was worried about was if he improved more than my horse. We were on separate coasts, so it worked in our favor that we didn't have to meet Alydar until the day of the races."

Cauthen was preparing for the biggest race of his career. A career that was just six days short of two years, the day the Kentucky Derby ran on May 6, 1978. "I went into the Derby pretty excited. It was in my home state, my dad had fifty-some people asking to get tickets to the race. He told me if I ever ride in the Derby again, he's never getting people tickets again," he laughed. "Growing up we always went down to watch the Derby from the backside (barn area). We didn't realize how hard it was to actually get tickets to the Derby. Two nights before the race, my parents got a hotel room close to the track for us to stay in. The only room they could get had two twin beds. The first night, which was before The Oaks, I slept in one of the beds. The night before the Derby, my brothers said 'Hey! You got the bed last night!', so I actually slept on the floor the night before I won the Kentucky Derby."

Affirmed defeated ten other horses in the Kentucky Derby, beating his rival, Alydar, by 1 ½ lengths. Cauthen was the

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youngest jockey to ever ride in the Kentucky Derby, at 17 years of age (just one week shy of his 18th birthday), let alone to *win* the race. “I remember looking over after I won the Derby, and my little brother, Kerry, was right in front of a huge crowd of all these photographers with big cameras, holding this little Kodak camera taking pictures,” he chuckled. “He was seven or eight years old at the time. We were at a party later that night celebrating, standing next to Mr. Wolfson (owner and breeder of Affirmed) when he said, ‘Kerry, we sure are proud of your brother, he did a great job for us today,’ and my brother said, ‘Mr. Wolfson, anyone could have won on your horse today.’”

The excitement from the Derby win quickly passed with a focus on the upcoming Preakness Stakes. “Affirmed was working great between races and was tactically superior to Alydar. He liked to be on the outside, so I had the advantage going into that race, and with fewer horses, I knew there was a good chance I would end up setting the pace,” said Cauthen. That is precisely what happened. Affirmed set the pace and dueled with Alydar, winning by a neck. They just had one more race to go to win the Triple Crown.

“I’ve said it many times before, those three weeks between the Preakness and the Belmont Stakes were the longest three weeks of my life,” shared Cauthen. “It doesn’t really sink in that you have a chance to do something historic. It only takes one mistake that can give the other jockeys an upper hand. I did not want to be the one that made that mistake and cost us the race. Being so young, I didn’t want anyone to say ‘Well, they should have never had a little kid on that horse.’”



Steve and his wife, Amy, with their beloved miniature donkeys who reside at their Dreamfields Farm.

The day of the Belmont Stakes, Cauthen was oddly calm, confident, and focused. Once he had the leg-up onto Affirmed and gripped the reins between his fingers, the chaos of the day seemed to disperse. “You think to yourself, check the girth, check this, do your normal routine and just get things done,” he explained. “I had a good plan going into the race. I wanted to hold Affirmed a bit and was able to do that, getting Alydar to challenge us. I looked over at Georgie (Alydar’s jockey, Jorge Velasquez) and thought, *go ahead*. I knew he didn’t want to, and I didn’t want the inside. We just kept looking at each other down the stretch, head-to-head. I could feel Affirmed was starting to feel a little fatigued. That is when I tapped him left-handed for the first time ever with the whip. It surprised him, and he won by a head. It might have been by about 4 inches! It was the greatest race I have ever ridden.”

Cauthen has been praised for staying humble, even during the intense media attention as a kid, recognizing his parents and family for instilling those values in him during a time that many would have crumbled under the pressure that came with being in the headlines, and frankly, a heartthrob to many young women at the time. If anyone could attract a new crowd of fans to the sport of horse racing, it was Steve Cauthen. Every set of eyes in America was looking at Cauthen. If he was not being interviewed or asked to make an appearance on TV, his photos and critique of every move were published in a newspaper.

Almost as quickly as Cauthen reached the top of the sport, the clouds keeping him aloft simply vanished, dropping him to the ground, quickly forgetting he was just a teenager. It was almost as if a curse had been placed on a young man that seemed unstoppable. Beginning in the

summer of 1978, Cauthen went into an extended slump, losing over one hundred consecutive races. The media was ruthless and cruel. “Boos” began to echo down the rail, quickly catching him as he trailed behind in each race. His fans and friends who once greeted him with enthusiasm and kindness, stopped making eye contact. It was uncomfortable not just for Steve Cauthen, but for the entire country. It was as if the world forgot he was still human.

As Cauthen struggled with his streak of bad luck, the effort it took to stay at the low weight required for a jockey in America proved to be a harsher obstacle to overcome. His body was morphing from that of a teenager into a young man, now 5’6” tall, and still growing. He was offered an opportunity in Europe, where higher weights were allowed for jockeys, giving him the chance to continue his career without significantly jeopardizing his health as he matured.

The career move proved to be the right choice. With the media moving on to their next targets in the states, Cauthen began learning an entirely new world of horse racing. “Europe was so different. I had to really adjust and learn how they did things. I truly loved how they trained horses and realized pretty quickly that I would ride out the rest of my career there,” Cauthen explained. “You gallop across the countryside, hills, changing terrain, you could have 40-foot drops or the track higher on the outside. It was pretty amazing. I lasted 14 years over there before I finally got tired of fighting my weight and decided to come home.”

Cauthen never needed to prove his abilities to anyone but himself, and far surpassed what started out as a goal to be the leading jockey at his first racetrack. He won over 2,794 races during his career, winning both the Triple Crown in the U.S. and 10 of



Steve with his daughters, admiring Affirmed.

the top classic races in Europe in 1985. He's the only jockey to win both the Kentucky Derby in the U.S. and the Epsom Derby, known as "The Derby", in England, Britain's most prestigious and richest horse race. He won countless races in Great Britain, France, Ireland, Italy, and of course, the United States. He was inducted into the U.S. Hall of Fame and National Museum in 1994, along with earning the British Champion Jockey Award in 1984, 1985, and 1987.

Retiring in 1992, Cauthen bought a large farm in Verona, Kentucky, aptly named 'Dreamfields', where he has continued to live out his dream with horses, raising his three daughters with his wife, Amy. With two large barns on the property, one is quite special. "The original barn was actually my grandfather's. We took it down brick by brick and rebuilt it here on my property. It saved me money at the time, but really it is a great memory," Cauthen said.

He breeds, raises, and trains racehorses, along with a few resident retirees lucky enough to call Dreamfields home. He can be found doing most of the work himself, something he genuinely enjoys, with his well-loved dogs in tow, quickly leading him to the tack room where they know a bin of biscuits is waiting for them. The horses are just as loved, never running out of their large bag of "the good

horse treats", something Cauthen keeps around because "they really like them." With hundreds of acres, he is always busy and can typically be found with the horses. His main barn is surrounded by an oval of recycled track footing, upon which he rides his young horses, while they learn how to become future racehorses at the hands of one of the greatest jockeys of all time. It is not uncommon for Cauthen, now 60 years old, to get on his horses while in training, going out for a gallop to get a feel of their potential, helping him make decisions on which of his horses might have *what it takes* to become a stakes winner. While preferring to use trainers with smaller programs for more individualized care, he lets the trainers do their job and tries to leave them be. "You don't get a brain surgeon and tell them what to do," he chuckled.

Humble, kind, and a genuine horseman, Cauthen is not what most would expect from an athlete with such an illustrious career. If you did not know who he was, you likely would never know of the endless awards and accolades filling the shelves of his office, with a desk overlooking his pastures. "For one thing, I enjoy it, but it's also hard to find someone to do it the way I want. It's not difficult work but you have to have a passion. A lot of this stuff is boring, takes a while, and takes patience," shared Cauthen. "I have had

the same guy with me for 36 years, he does the mowing, fixes the fence, holds horses, etc. I trim my own horses, something I learned from my dad, and do most of the work with the horses, getting them ready for training or the sales. I feel like I have a connection with them, I can get them handled better, help them have a good mouth and understand the right way to do things. It matters for the rest of their

careers. I can't do it all, but what I can do, I really enjoy."

"I watch all types of sports, I can really appreciate high-quality athletes in any sport. I also enjoy planting trees, gardening, pretending to be a farmer. I get a few tomatoes and think we've done well!" he laughed. When Cauthen is not with his horses, he spends time with his family, enjoying a more private life at a slower pace.

Photo by Mathea Kelley



Victor Espinoza American Pharoah 2015

Growing up as the second youngest of eleven siblings, Victor Espinoza cultivated his competitive nature and work ethic beginning on the family farm in Hidalgo, Mexico. Born on May 23, 1972, just a year before Secretariat set unbeatable records during his Triple Crown victory, Espinoza adjusted from an early age to long days and hard work, helping his family take care of the crops, gardens, and assortment of animals - from dairy cows, goats, sheep, chickens, horses, donkeys, and even the occasional armadillo the kids would sneak into the house and raise as a pet.

"Growing up with eleven brothers and sisters, oh my gosh

it was wild," laughed Espinoza. "My schedule was full, from the early morning into the late-night taking care of the animals and the farm. My brothers would play sports and act like brothers do, just have fun. My sisters, that was another story. I had to hear all about their problems, what they are going to do all day, their TV shows, and when they started getting boyfriends, if I didn't listen to them and give my opinion, I got in trouble. You can't give advice to one and not the other. It was crazy all the time but it was also a lot of fun when I look back. I really enjoyed that each sibling had different goals and views on life. We would talk about that a lot growing up."

It took years for Espinoza to appreciate his early life, now

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Victor and American Pharoah win the Belmont Stakes, 2015.

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looking back and admitting it was the best childhood that could have ever happened to him. "When I moved out of the house I couldn't wait for a break. I can't imagine now how my mother, who is 90 years old and still alive, did it. She is just amazing; I don't know how she

could deal with so many of us every day!" he said with a laugh. "The hardest part, honestly, waking all of us up every morning to go start chores. I am so grateful for how she raised us. We hardly ever got sick. We raised all of our own food and meat, it was all organic, drank water from our well, and my mother only went to the store every few weeks just to buy spices."

Espinoza learned to ride, not on horses at first, but on donkeys. "I have always loved animals; my passion is animals. I used to teach the donkeys so many tricks. I would ride them without a bridle, just a stick and tap them to turn, or use my legs to go faster or slow down. I learned so much from the animals," shared Espinoza. "Nobody in my family was in the racing business back then, it just sort of happened one day. I was 15 years old and started working with my brother, Jose, on a racing farm with Quarter Horses. The next thing I knew, I was becoming a jockey."



Victor celebrating his Triple Crown win with trainer, Bob Baffert, 2015.

Photos by Matthew Kelley

Photo courtesy of Victor Espinoza



A young Victor Espinoza "up" with his brother, Jose.

At 17 years old, Espinoza began driving a bus in Mexico City to pay for jockey school. He moved to the U.S. in 1990, not speaking any English, with a dream as big as his family. Living in tack rooms in the stables, juggling school, workouts, and galloping horses, he was soon recognized for his efforts and became an apprentice rider. "I didn't want to be just a jockey, I wanted to be the best jockey in the country. If I could not do that, then why would I even do it?" said Espinoza.

His first races went well,

almost easy, he thought. He quickly learned that nothing about horse racing is effortless. "In the beginning my career went up and down, but then I couldn't win another race. I thought 'well, this isn't good, maybe I am not good enough to be a jockey.'" But I never gave up, I worked harder and harder, and if things got too hard, I would just push myself and do more," he said. "I don't know how or when exactly it happened, but all of a sudden, I started winning every race."

Espinoza moved to Santa Anita, knowing the best jockeys

in the country were there, with the toughest circle to break into. "I didn't want to be stuck at the same level the rest of my career, if I can compete with the best then maybe I can become one of the best," he explained. "I knew I would learn a lot by being around all of these top jockeys and riding against them trying to win. There was no 'just go for a ride', no matter what horse I was on, my goal was to win because second was not good enough for me. If I beat the best jockey today, I would think 'okay, how do I also beat them tomorrow?'"

From 2000-2006 Espinoza dominated the tracks, winning countless races on many of the best horses in the country, riding for the best trainers, and beating the top jockeys. Almost as long as he rode the waves of success, the ocean dissipated, and Espinoza found himself run aground in the sand, trudging for the next three years to regain his winning streak.

Espinoza won the Derby and Preakness Stakes on War Emblem in 2002, but was still young and naïve, undervaluing the prestige and difficulty of the races. It was not until 2014, when he had his second chance at a Triple Crown sweep on

the flashy chestnut, California Chrome, that he understood the amount of work, skill, and special talent a horse needs to win those races, and just how many jockeys chase this lifelong goal to even have a chance.

"I never knew how hard it was to win those races until I tried again, and again, and again. I failed so many times. To come back after all those years and win those races was pretty special," he explained.

In 2014, Espinoza got the ride on American Pharoah, a small horse in a plain brown wrapper, known for his gentle nature. "To be honest, American Pharoah was kind of a boring horse to be around. He was always quiet, just standing around, not much personality, even before a race in the warmup he was just like okay, whatever," chuckled Espinoza. "Riding him was different. Once he got into the gate, his mind changed. His body completely transformed into a different animal. Everything was so easy for him, the speed, power, endurance, just incredible. He's probably the only horse I have ridden that I have ever experienced that feeling."

On a warm day in May

of 2015, American Pharoah won the Kentucky Derby by a length, defeating the efforts of 17 other horses, with Espinoza crossing the wire, not thinking that he just won the Derby, but proclaiming that this was the year he was going to finally win the Triple Crown.

Two weeks later, under flooding downpours, thunder, and the anticipation of lightning causing the crowd of fans to be ushered to shelter, American Pharoah took an early lead in the Preakness Stakes while leaving his competitors almost unrecognizable, cloaked in mud, finishing ahead of them by seven lengths. Now, for the third time, Espinoza found himself on the threshold of winning the Triple Crown. Just three weeks stood between him and fulfilling the goal he spent 25 years chasing.

"Going into the Belmont, I wasn't really nervous, but just very confident. This was my third chance at the Triple Crown so it was a different feeling. I was excited and ready to go. I looked at AP who looked outstanding, and said, 'It's just you and me buddy,'" he remembered. "I was going to use all of my skills that I have learned over the years, from all

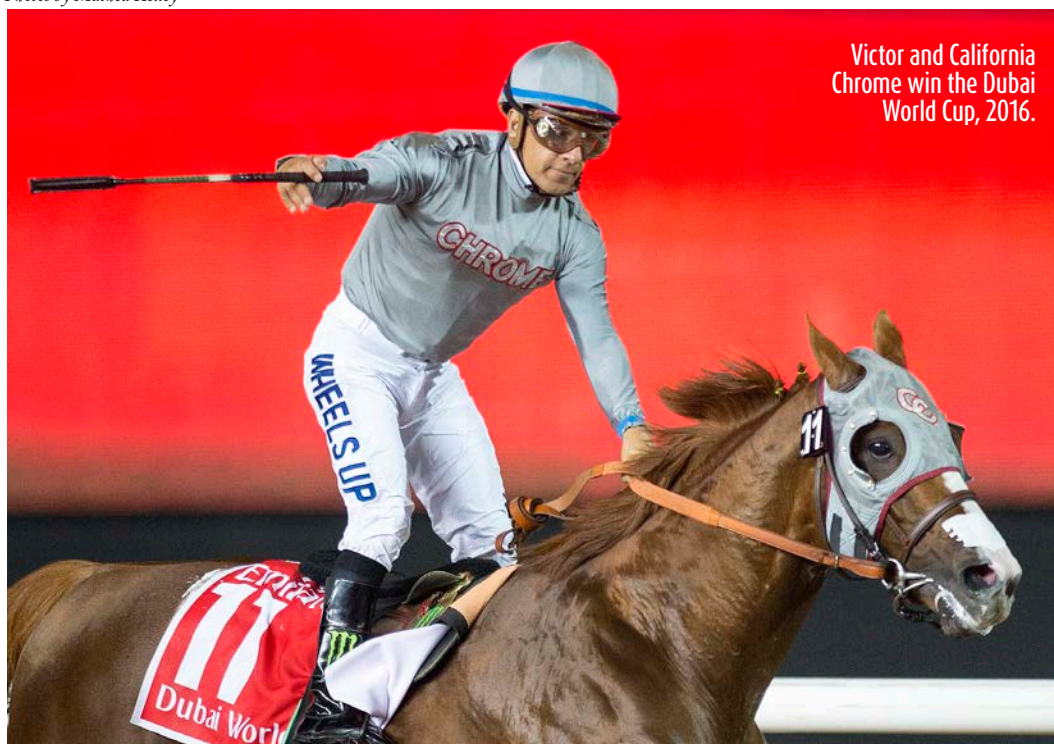
these jockeys, you know all the techniques I have taken from them," he laughed. "This was the moment I needed to use all of that knowledge and use it on this horse. I told myself I could not blow it or I might as well quit."

Rain submerged the ground the morning of the Belmont Stakes, casting a shadow of uncertainty over the 90,000 spectators waiting for what many still considered to be something only a miracle could pull off. It had been 37 years since any horse had won the American Triple Crown, the longest drought since it began in the 1800's, with only 11 horses holding the title. Just hours before the horses began walking to the paddock, the clouds separated, while brilliant sunshine seemed as if it were there only to illuminate the path for Espinoza and American Pharoah, both of which were about to make history.

Starting in post No. 5, the same position Seattle Slew drew in his 1977 Belmont win, American Pharoah stalled coming out of the gate, eliciting an audible gasp from onlookers, fearing that was enough to seal his fate. "I just focused on my horse more than anything else. He was a little slow out of the gate but it just took two big steps and he took the lead early on. I was just enjoying the feeling, like walking in the sky. This was what I worked so hard for in my life," shared Espinoza.

They led the entire race, the crowd's roar accelerating them along, crossing the wire 5 ½ lengths ahead of Frosted, breaking the 37-year streak. Horse racing fans across the world cheered, many not thinking they would ever witness another Triple Crown winner in their lifetime. Espinoza, overcome with a mix of emotion and excitement, hugged the outrider that came to gather him and American Pharoah, leading them to the winner's circle. Having trouble forming the right words to even describe the

Photos by Mathea Kelley



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joy he felt, Espinoza credited his magnificent horse for the conquest.

Espinoza was the first Hispanic jockey to ever win the Triple Crown, and the first jockey to have three opportunities for a win. At 43 years old, a stark comparison to 18-year-old Steve Cauthen's win 37 years prior as the youngest jockey to ever win the Triple Crown, Espinoza became the oldest jockey to win, keeping that record until Mike Smith claimed it in 2018.

Since the early 2000's, Victor Espinoza has donated a portion of his earnings to the City of Hope in California, supporting pediatric cancer research. After winning the Belmont, he donated his entire share of earnings, estimated to be around \$80,000., to the hospital.

Espinoza rode American Pharoah in every race, except for his very first, until the stallion was retired to stud in the fall of 2015, becoming the first horse to ever win the American 'Grand Slam': The Triple Crown and Breeders' Cup Classic. Espinoza continues racing regularly, turning 49 this year, with over 3,400 wins and \$204 million in race earnings to date. His career wins are impressive for any jockey, from a Hall of Fame induction in 2017 to an astounding list of American Classic and International wins, such as the Dubai World Cup in 2016. There will always be bigger goals and harder races to win in his mind. "Before, nobody wanted my autograph, that moment winning the Triple Crown everything changed," laughed Espinoza. "Now I don't even have time to write something for my many nieces and nephews. That is okay, celebrate these wins later, I always have work to do. I have to go beat more jockeys!"



Mike Smith and Justify kept the lead throughout the race, sparing them both the mud bath their rivals took - Preakness Stakes win, 2018.

Photo by Matthew Kelley

Mike Smith Justify 2018

If there is one place where jockey, Mike Smith, has always felt he belonged, it would be on the back of a horse. He was born in 1965. His father, George was once a jockey himself, and his mother, Vidoll, was just nineteen at the time. Their young love ended in divorce, subsequently resulting in Smith spending his youth raised by his maternal grandparents on their horse farm just outside of Roswell, New Mexico. Smith lived and breathed horses as if a necessity in his life. From an early age he was surrounded by horses, working with them daily. When he was only eight years old he started helping break the young horses, and by age eleven, while Seattle Slew was winning the Triple Crown, Smith began riding match races in his native New Mexico. In 1982, when most teenagers are hoping to pass their driver's test, then sixteen-year-old Smith received his jockey's license, and began his professional career at Sante Fe Downs with his first win, along with riding at various tracks on the Midwestern circuit across

Chicago, Omaha, and Hot Springs, Arkansas.

"I was really into sports as a kid and loved football, I just never grew big enough to do it," he laughed. "My uncle trained horses and both grandparents owned them, so I had easy access to riding early on, getting to practice a lot more than most kids probably did. Right from the start, if I wasn't breaking horses, I was teaching the babies how to lead, or doing

4H, rodeo, all kinds of things. I just loved it all."

Watching Ron Turcotte and Secretariat on TV as a kid sparked the dream of becoming a professional jockey someday, coupled with his size and natural love for riding, it just made sense. "Honestly, I thought I was going to grow up, become a jockey, and win three Kentucky Derbies and two Triple Crowns. Why those numbers, I don't know, it has



Mike getting an early start on his riding career.

Photo courtesy of Mike Smith

just always been something I told myself," said Smith.

By 1991, Smith had been the leading jockey in New York for three years in a row, and had also won the Irish 2000 Guinea (European) Classic. By 1993, he was known as a leading rider in the U.S., setting records across North America, following a path to what would become a distinguished career spanning over forty years. With over 26 Breeders' Cup wins, more than any other jockey, and currently earning more than \$333 million on the track, Smith earned the nickname "Big Money Mike", an honor for a kid who started out breaking young horses while still a child himself.

In 2018, Bob Baffert, trainer of 2015 Triple Crown winner, American Pharoah, gave Smith the ride on a massive chestnut colt that was creating a buzz in the industry as something quite spectacular.

"Justify was bigger, stronger, faster, than most horses and extremely intelligent," said Smith. Standing at 16.3 hands and weighing 1,380 pounds, the well-muscled horse almost demanded attention when he was present, puffing himself up and posing for onlookers. Starting his career as a 3-year-old, Justify quickly proved his almost cosmic abilities on the track, winning his very first race by 9 ½ lengths, his second by 6 ½ lengths, and the third by 3 lengths. His fourth race was the Kentucky Derby with Mike Smith in the saddle.

The rain poured down the day of the Kentucky Derby. Standing in the starting gate, Justify focused straight ahead, leaving the gate with his head down, as if he knew the other horses wouldn't dare cross the path in front of him. His white blaze still vivid, along with Smith's white racing silks that, while soaking wet, remained free of any mud, unlike every other jockey behind them. Justify won by 2 ½ lengths, earning Smith his second Kentucky Derby win.

"When he won the Derby,



Mike giving Justify some love after a training workout

the most pressure was on me going into the Preakness. I thought all along that the Belmont would be a track he would handle really well," said Smith. "He has that nice big stride, high cruising speed, the stamina, and tactical speed needed. I knew when he won the Derby that if he could win the Preakness, he should really love Belmont."

Justify came out of The Derby with a heel bruise requiring a special shoe, causing some to worry if he would race, let alone win, at the Preakness. For days leading up to that race, the sky drenched Baltimore with merciless rain. Another sloppy track with mud greeted Smith and Justify the morning of the Preakness Stakes. Just before the race, the rain stopped, and a heavy fog moved in like the blanket of doubt that so many had in Justify pulling off another win.

Justify never faltered, staying calm and focused in the starting gate, exploding into

day. He won by half a length, the flawless contrast of his white face pushing through the dense fog, an instant reminder that he was truly unbeatable. It was as if they had not even run the race, when comparing them to each horse coming up behind their path, covered in mud, many almost unrecognizable.

Baffert used a similar training method that he had used for American Pharoah in 2015; keeping Justify in training at Churchill Downs (Kentucky), a track the horse liked, leading up to the Belmont Stakes. He was shipped to New York just days before the final race.

"Once we won the Preakness, I was able to just enjoy that entire day of the Belmont. I was smiling before I even went into the gate, I had to keep telling myself 'stop it, knock that smile off your face, you have a job to do,'" laughed Smith. "Everyone around me kept trying to stay calm. You would think I would be a nervous wreck, but I really wasn't. I just had this calm confidence in Justify. I remember they were showing a piece on NBC, and had my mother talking about how I used to go in the front door of the school and right out the back, where my uncle would pick me up to go work the horses. The camera panned over to me and I was laying there taking a nap before the big race."

Humbled by the support of other jockeys, the fans, and those who believed in him, one person in particular stood out to Smith that day. Ron Turcotte was there. Here was the very jockey that had inspired Smith as a child - to follow the same career path. Turcotte was witness to the eruption of emotions that Mike Smith was just minutes away from experiencing. The same feelings that made it seem like it was just yesterday that he had claimed the Crown himself, in 1973, aboard Secretariat.



Mike Smith, early racing days

high speed, quickly moving to the front with his exquisite power, not even jumping puddles along the way could stop him from winning that

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Photos by Matthew Kelley

Mike Smith and Justify win the Belmont Stakes and Triple Crown.

Mike Smith flashes his winning smile, Belmont Race Track.

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Known for his ability to remain calm and focused, even during the biggest high-stakes races, Smith has a tactic he uses to his advantage. "The game is fast enough. If you can slow it down in your head, it makes it all easier. If you stay fast you are liable to make mistakes," explained Smith. "If you just slow things down enough, even though the game is still moving fast all around you, slow your mind, relax, and focus on what you need to do."

A sold-out crowd surrounded the track on a beautiful day at Belmont Park. Justify calmly walked into post No. 1 position, a place many trainers hope they do *not* get in the draw, as it often results in their horse becoming pinned up against the rail early on in a race. Smith morphed his wide smile into a focused expression, knowing that just 1 ½ miles stood between what may or may not become the greatest moment of his racing career.

Justify broke flawlessly, taking an early lead from the start.

Justify won the race by 1 ¾ lengths without so much as a speck of dirt tarnishing the new champion. "I remember passing the wire and all those people screaming, it was all happening in slow motion. I was so happy and humbled. I just wanted to stop and tell everyone! I just don't have the words in my vocabulary to describe the feeling," said Smith.

Together, they broke "The Curse of Apollo", a 136-year streak where no horse had won The Kentucky Derby without ever racing as a two-year-old. He became the only American Triple Crown winning horse that never lost a single race in his career. He matched Seattle Slew's long-held record of initially being the only horse to win the Triple Crown while undefeated, where Seattle Slew did end up losing three races afterwards. Justify retired to stud after his Triple Crown win. In total, he was undefeated in all six of his races, with Mike Smith being the jockey in all but his very first race. Smith broke the

record previously held by Victor Espinoza, taking the new title as the oldest jockey in Triple Crown history to win, at the age of 52.

Smith praised Justify for allowing him to enjoy the ride and earn the unforgettable memories he will hold on to for the rest of his life, while also dedicating the Triple Crown win to disabled jockeys. As a horse that often preferred his personal space, to be left alone, and disliked visitors in his stall, Smith recalls him being a totally different horse when you were on his back. "He was happiest out on the track. You could love and rub all over him when you were on his back. He was so intelligent and was never phased by the environment around him, the crowds or noise. It was really special for me to ride

this horse, I have said that he was sent from Heaven," said Smith.

Mike Smith continues riding today, well into his fifties, maintaining focus on his career, riding at the highest level on the top horses in the country. With over 5,600+ career wins, he certainly hasn't slowed down, but has become more selective in the races he rides in, often choosing the more lucrative options,



Triple Crown champions, American Pharoah (left) and Justify (right) size each other up, with trainer, Bob Baffert (center).

Photo courtesy of Coolmore America

balancing time spent with his wife, Cynthia, and their dog, Bella.

Among many awards and recognitions, Smith received the ESPY Award for Top U.S. Jockey in both 1994 and 2019, an Eclipse Award in 1993 and 1994, and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2003, an honor he often said he wasn't sure he deserved compared to fellow jockeys that had not received the same honors, a statement that was unsurprising due to his humble

nature that is often admired from his peers and fans. Smith is known to be universally liked and often admired for his genuine kindness and passion for the sport.

As of the start of 2021, Smith has won The Kentucky Derby twice (2005, 2018), the Preakness Stakes twice (1993, 2018), and the Belmont Stakes three times (2010, 2013, 2018). According to his long-standing childhood goal, he just has to win the Triple Crown one more time before he can retire.

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Since the early 1800's, only thirteen horses and their jockeys have had the perfect combination of skill, natural born talent, and likely, a dash of good luck to have *what it takes* to win the Triple Crown, a true test of champions. These five living legends have inspired not just the jockeys over the past century, but also future jockeys, and most likely everyone connected to the racing industry, and equine enthusiasts alike across the globe. Will there be more Triple Crown winners in the future? The answer remains unknown, but these stories will live on for generations...and for those privileged to witness their victories, the memories will last a lifetime! ♦

"Writing this story has been an experience that I will forever treasure. I want to thank each of these jockeys for sharing their stories and personal photos with me and our readers. I am especially grateful to Leonard Lusky for all of his help, knowledge, and for making this possible. I had the pleasure of spending time with Leonard at Wagner's, the famed diner near Churchill Downs, absorbing his great stories and experiences in the racing industry. I never imagined I would receive a call from Ron Turcotte on Christmas Day, followed by many more conversations where he generously shared his memories and words of wisdom. Jean Cruguet and LuAnne and I have become fast friends, and we are already planning a visit this Spring. Steve Cauthen warmly welcomed me to his home complete with a personal tour of his beautiful farm (while piled onto the golf cart with the dogs, in true equestrian fashion). Victor Espinoza and Mike Smith shared stories, laughs, and time out of their busy days, Mike, even while boarding an international flight. Writing this has been an incredible honor, forming cherished friendships along the way.

Mandy Boggs is a lifelong equestrian, passionate for the sport and equine industry. Mandy grew up in a multi-generation family involved with Thoroughbred racehorses, breeding, and showing in the hunter/jumpers. She is a published writer, volunteers for various non-profit organizations, while running her marketing and design agency, Aristo Marketing LLC. She enjoys spending time with her family and many animals.



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IEA Western National Finals

Waltenberry
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15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0.

The best slides aren't necessarily on the playground.

When our kids slide, they are not on a playground. They are on a Reiner!
Yes, the **Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA)** has student athletes in grades 4-12 who ride Western (and Hunt Seat and Dressage) in a draw-based competition format.

Nearly 14,000 of them on over 1,500 teams in 46 states.

Give your rider a leg up without having to own a horse.

Membership for the 20th Anniversary IEA Season will open in MAY 2021.



HUNT SEAT • WESTERN
DRESSAGE

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RIDEIEA.ORG

Join or start an IEA team in your area. Membership opens May 2021.

The **Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA)** is celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 2021-2022 with more than 14,000 members nationwide in 46 states on over 1,500 teams.

Ohio is part of IEA Zone 5. The map shows current teams (2020 season). Membership for the 2021-2022 season opens in May 2021 with competitions running September 2021 to June 2022 (depending upon discipline).

Teams are made up of at least three riders in either middle school (grades 4-8) or upper school (grades 9-12) and a coach. Riders compete in divisions from Beginner Walk-Trot through Varsity.

Horses and tack are provided by the show host for each IEA competition and riders draw the horses they compete on the day of the show. IEA offers competitions in **HUNT SEAT** (flat and over fences), **WESTERN** (Horsemanship and Reining) and **DRESSAGE** (Test and Dressage Seat Equitation).

Riders compete in regular season shows in their local area. Qualified riders and teams can also compete at Regional, Zone, and National levels. IEA provides an affordable way for riders to compete in equestrian sport and prepares them for draw-based collegiate riding opportunities. IEA awards multiple scholarships at the Zone and National level each season.

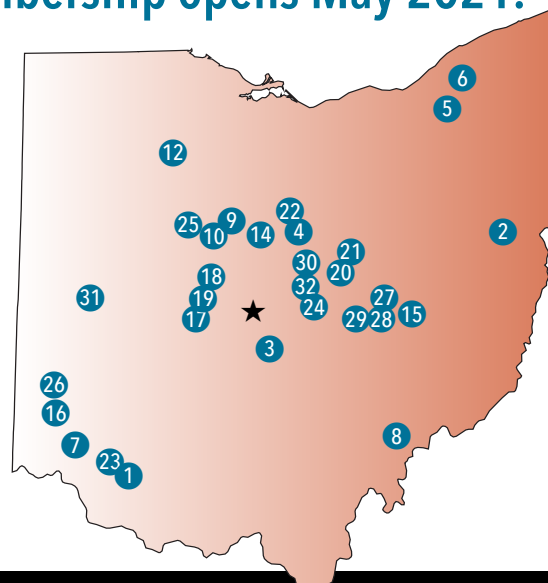


Photo by
Ron Schwane
Photography

IEA

For more information on finding or starting a team, visit www.rideiea.org or contact Jennifer Eaton, IEA Membership Marketing Coordinator by email at jenn@rideiea.org or at (877) RIDE-IEA (ext 203).

2020-2021 IEA OHIO TEAMS

- 1** **Bridle Run Riding Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Batavia, OH
(513) 477-3447
Coach: Trish Sanders
- 2** **Double B's Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Western & Hunt Seat
Bloomingdale, OH
(443) 433-2533
Coach: Benjamin Boyd
- 3** **Warrior Equestrian**
Discipline: Western & Hunt Seat
Canal Winchester, OH
(614) 214-2588
Coach: Katie Griffiths
- 4** **Sylvan Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Centerburg, OH
(614) 778-8967
Coach: Alisha Metcalfe
- 5** **Lyncrest Hill Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Chagrin Falls, OH
(330) 256-4732
Coach: Amy Allen
- 6** **Synergy Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Chardon, OH
(440) 478-6893
Coach: Lindsay Skully
- 7** **Great Parks Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Cincinnati, OH
(513) 290-3444
Coach: Taylor Schrand
- 8** **Stonegate Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Coolville, OH
(740) 336-0345
Coach: Jennifer Bowe
- 9** **Autumn Rose Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Western
Delaware, OH
(614) 207-9043
Coach: Debbie Griffith
- 10** **Concord Equestrian Center**
Discipline: Western and Hunt Seat
Delaware, OH
(740) 361-9411
Coach: Jessica Daniels
- 11** **KM Equestrian Black & Purple**
Discipline: Western
Findlay, OH
(419) 306-8797
Coach: Katie Morehead
- 12** **Fiery Manners' Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Galena, OH
(614) 371-3073
Coach: Paige McCaslin
- 13** **Foxridge Farms**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Galena, OH
(631) 245-7619
Coach: Heather Jarvis
- 14** **Centerstone Stables Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Granville, OH
(740) 328-7983
Coach: Melissa Lucas
- 15** **Magna Carta Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Hamilton, OH
(513) 325-1095
Coach: Laura Kursman
- 16** **Dare Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Western & Hunt Seat
Hilliard, OH
(614) 580-2758
Coach: Linda Dare
- 17** **Limerick Lane**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Hilliard, OH
(614) 332-2074
Coach: Linda Dare
- 18** **Sid Griffith Equestrian Club**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Hilliard, OH
(614) 570-6389
Coach: Allison Applegett
- 19** **Empress Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Johnstown, OH
(614) 537-0067
Coach: Jamie Mills
- 20** **Fairy Tale Farm**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Johnstown, OH
(614) 286-0281
Coach: Meghan Swad
- 21** **Walnut Hill Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Marengo, OH
(330) 347-9206
Coach: Keri Myers
- 22** **Childress Rodgers Stables**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Milford, OH
(513) 252-6004
Coach: Erin Washburn
- 23** **True Course**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
New Albany, OH
(614) 206-5452
Coach: Sarah Ash
- 24** **Duzan Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat & Dressage
Ostrander, OH
(614) 271-2732
Coach: Molly Wirtz
- 25** **Honey Tree Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Oxford, OH
(513) 652-4010
Coach: Beth Kupferle
- 26** **Bookmark Farms Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Pataskala, OH
(614) 805-6920
Coach: Courtney Newby
- 27** **West Licking District**
Discipline: Hunt Seat & Dressage
Pataskala, OH
(614) 989-5717
Coach: Nancy Arledge
- 28** **Yinger Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Pataskala, OH
(614) 348-5915
Coach: Lindsay Yinger
- 29** **Kendalwood Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Sunbury, OH
(614) 578-5578
Coach: Charlotte Clark
- 30** **Sunnybrook Equestrian Team**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Troy, OH
(937) 510-5972
Coach: Madeline Davis
- 31** **Carraway Hill**
Discipline: Hunt Seat
Westerville, OH
(614) 580-1548
Coach: Colleen Holton
- 32**

Contact any coach
to find out more
about their team
requirements.

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Make Your Next Horse a Thoroughbred

Photo: Suzie Picou Oldham

Courtesy of the
**Thoroughbred
Aftercare Alliance**

As the OTTB movement grows, Thoroughbreds are further proving that they aren't just one-trick ponies. Five-star eventers, champion show hunters, lightning-fast barrel racers, sensitive therapy companions. You name it, Thoroughbreds are doing it.

With 81 accredited organizations now under its umbrella across North America, the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance (TAA) and its accredited organizations have assisted more than 11,000 Thoroughbreds find a new life off the track.

These TAA-accredited organizations showcase the variety of careers available for Thoroughbreds after their racing or breeding days are over. If you're looking for your next equine partner, we recommend starting with a TAA-accredited organization. While New Vocations is the only accredited organization based in Ohio, there are many in neighboring states, including Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Visit ThoroughbredAftercare.org/AccreditedOrganizations to find what organizations are close to you and would fit your needs.

Many organizations retrain and adopt out former runners. Pairing their natural athletic abilities with their strong work ethic, Thoroughbreds excel in a variety of equestrian disciplines—everything from eventing, hunter/jumpers, and dressage—to barrel racing, competitive trail, and driving. And thanks to initiatives such as the Retired Racehorse Project's Thoroughbred Makeover, The



The TAA has 70 organizations across North America that place horses into new homes and new careers in a variety of disciplines.

Jockey Club Thoroughbred Incentive Program, and many Thoroughbred horse shows across the country, these off-track Thoroughbreds have been given many avenues to launch successful competitive careers off the track.

Occasionally lost in the shuffle of adoption is the rehabilitation that some Thoroughbreds need before embarking on a new career. Whether it is an old racing injury or recovery after receiving substandard care, TAA-accredited organizations are leading the way in helping horses recover, recuperate, and start a new chapter. This often expensive and taxing endeavor is a testament to the dedication these organizations have to the well-being of their horses.

But what about the horses that can't be adopted into a riding home? TAA-accredited sanctuary facilities are taking their missions to a new level and, in the

process, are reaffirming that these equines have value. In addition to providing a gold standard of care to their herds, many organizations are giving back to their communities through various equine-assisted programs. A growing area, equine-human therapy programs are using Thoroughbreds more and more due to the breed's incredible sensitivity. TAA-accredited organizations again are leaders in providing a variety of equine-human therapy programs, including those programs that work with veterans, inmates, and individuals with special needs, among others.

Across the majority of TAA-accredited organizations, whether they are adoption or sanctuary in nature, is the mission of not only caring for horses but to educate the public on the various facets of responsible horsemanship. Sometimes, TAA-accredited

organizations are where people meet a horse for the first time. Sometimes they are the location where an experienced horseman or horsewoman sharpens their skills in clinics. Sometimes they are home to student interns looking to jump-start an equine career. Regardless of whether or not an official education program exists, TAA-accredited organizations are doing their part to carry the banner for the breed, the industry, and the individual horses they serve by showcasing the talent and versatility of off-track Thoroughbreds. To start your Thoroughbred adventure, whether you're adopting a horse, looking to volunteer, or just aiming to expand your knowledge and experience, you can't go wrong when you start with a TAA-accredited organization.

For more information: thoroughbredaftercare.org ◆

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FINDING COURAGE

Through the Heart of the Horse

by Jackie Stevenson, MSSA, LISW, BCC

Creating Resilience, Managing Stress, Regulating Emotions in times of challenge and unexpected change.

Guided by relationship with horses and heart focus practices we can strengthen our courage, compassion, confidence, and community.

Leaning lazily back against a sturdy tree in the warmth of a sunny pasture, listening to the munching of our grazing horses and the soft sighs of contented ponies, and admiring the amazing patterns on Holly, our zebra, my personal cares and the uncertainty of life seemed as far away as the overhead clouds.

I am aware that we are in the midst of rough times, unprecedented change, disruption, challenge, and transition. Yet, in this moment, in the pasture belonging to a resilient and wise-hearted herd of horses, I feel calm and at peace.

Change is all around us and for many, within us as well. In this present moment of uncertainty and unprecedented life changes we can learn from the unbridled spirit of the horse about finding courage from our heart and discovering resiliency within ourselves.

Resilience is born in the heart. The word courage comes from the Latin word *cor*; heart, and the French word *coeur*, of the heart. Resilience is a matter of following your heart; the courage to go

optimistically beyond life's obstacles and challenges and be the better for it.

In the presence of our big-hearted horses we can more easily and clearly listen to and connect from our heart. We can learn from the relationship with our horse partners to tap into the internal and innate resilience with which we are born, like all of nature's beings. Responding in present time from our senses, the intelligence of our heart, and the

wisdom of our mind, we are resilient, able to prepare for, recover from, and adapt in the presence of stress, challenge, or adversity. It's how horses naturally survive and thrive.

"Resilience is that ineffable quality that allows some people to be knocked down by life and come back stronger than ever. Rather than letting failure overcome them and drain their resolve, they find a way to rise from the ashes." Psychology Today

When we tap into our resiliency, we can allow stressful situations and life challenges to be experienced as outside of us and not overwhelm us. We can witness the drama of adversity without being a participant in the drama - staying connected,



centered, positive, aware, and ready to act for the best possible present and future.

We share with our horses three basic needs: the need for safety, the need to belong, and the need to insure the survival of the next generation. Resiliency provides the internal resource for horses and humans to meet these basic needs, especially in times of challenge and unexpected change.

We can learn from our horses how to embody resiliency as an expression of our authentic nature and inner knowing. Our internal capacity does not depend only on external resource, it supports us to experience a sense of internal safety in our life and compassion for those in our world.

Horses are masters of resiliency, tracing their lineage back over 65 million years. Horses have embodied resilience for generations, thriving inherently through changing life conditions by:

- Being united as they stand steady and galloping forward as one
- Responding with a big brave heart and *sense-ability*
- Being present to the moment and optimistic for the future
- Seeking safety, finding their place of belonging, and protecting each other in their herd
- Adapting effectively and efficiently to change

Horses create conditions for their best possible future to emerge by building on their collective strengths and wisdom, by being resilient in unexpected change, by living in harmony with each other and their environment, and by moving toward what is positive and life-giving.

They are always on the lookout for greener grass, a friend to scratch an itch that cannot be reached alone, a way out of a corner or unpredictable dilemma, such as a locked gate. They hold no grudges toward each other, carry no imagined assumptions, and look for the value and best in one another.

Our horses at Pebble Ledge Ranch are the ultimate optimists. They move forward toward that which is of most value to them and never look back in disappointment or dwell on past regrets.

They learn from what does not work and stay focused on what does work. Our horses, like yours, lead from their hearts





and are free from the human mental models of negative, unproductive thought.

As humans who have not yet survived the 65 million years of horses' existence, we can learn resilience from being with our horses:

- To have a natural curiosity about life
- To believe that the world is a good place and has the resources to meet your need for safety and a place of belonging in your herd
- To live in the present, rather than allowing past occurrences to define current life and determine future outcome
- To engage from your heart with courage and compassion
- To celebrate often with the herd and find joy from within

Spending time in the presence of our horses can expand the range of what we are humanly capable of by opening our minds and hearts and informing our actions. Standing tall next to our horses we can practice expanding more fully into who we are. Feeling our

hooves alongside our horses' hooves we can feel the ground firmly under us. We can take a stand for our values and be clearer about that which is important to us.

Breathing deeply and slowly in rhythm with our horses' breath we can slow up, quiet down, shake off our cares and "snuffle" out our stress. Listening quietly, in the good company of our horses, we can ask ourselves our most important life questions and listen from within for what wants to be heard.

John is a coaching client with whom my horses and I work. He came to the ranch for some guidance as he was enormously unhappy in his career, even though he was a great success in his daily work. His skills were well-matched to what he was successful at doing, but his interests and heart were not. He joined the herd in the pasture, and in the peace and stillness of the horses he was able to quiet the noise inside his head, and the voices around him that were giving their fearful advice. *"How would he pay his bills? Would the well-being of his family be at risk*

if he left his current job as a factory manager and followed his love of working with computers?"

In the expansiveness of the pasture and the powerful presence of the horses he could courageously and sensibly explore how he might make that transition, from his outwardly successful career to something that had more heart and meaning for him. Envisioning a more joyful, meaningful life he was able to let go of old patterns, fears, and assumptions, and open his heart with curiosity to new possibilities.

He was able to listen and reflect on what was the truth for him about his situation. John realized that it was important to live the life he wanted to live rather than the life others thought he should live.

John returned to the ranch and pasture a few months later and much had changed. He was working for a great computer start-up company, using many of the management skills he had learned in his past career but following his heart to what was exciting for him now in his life. He said he was happier (while giving his favorite horse a hug),

but even better was that his whole family was happier.

I am not sure whether horses "feel happy" like John, making a life change, but they do seem to experience joy. Maybe it is just being honestly who they are - in the wave of their tail, toss of their head, and flow of their body as they run and play on a cool crisp morning, without a care in the world.

We can, in the good company of our horses, feel the joy of being just who we are when we are more in alignment and in the flow of our hearts and minds and actions.

When we live fully like horses, in the present moment with care for the collective and in the flow of our life purpose, we can be more compassionate, courageous, and resilient in the face of adversity - and in that we gain the strength to thrive.

Doctors from a Cleveland hospital system came to our Pebble Ledge Ranch with the intention to discover and create a healthier way of being amid the Covid-19 crisis. At first they were a bit skeptical that spending time with our horses

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FEATURE 2021

Finding Courage

Continued from page 79

could help them recover calm, release stress, or to remember to listen from their hearts. In the presence of the horses they began to relax, slow up, de-stress, and reflect on what really mattered – and have some fun.

Hanging out with our horses like old-time friends, the docs were invited to have silent, heart-to-heart conversations with the horses and then with each other. In the presence of the herd of six steadfast horses and one playful zebra, they listened compassionately. This deeper listening from the heart and horse whispering revealed heartfelt messages beneath words and beyond what could be spoken. This “horse” way of connecting supported the docs to slow up, sense from a responsive mode, and focus their attention through their senses. Surrounded by the herd they could be more awake and aware, softly speaking from heart and listening from soul.

We next invited the docs to approach a horse that they had connected with and share silently – from their heart to the horse’s heart – a true story of when they made a difference in someone’s life. In doing this they became aware of their strengths and their heartfelt compassion which made that possible.

The docs then shared silently, from their heart to the horses’ heart, a deep desire, dream, or vision; first for themselves, next for someone they love, and third, for humanity.

In the presence of the horses, the docs each listened from within for a message, dream, or vision shared by the horse that they would be responsible for sharing with their fellow herd members accompanying them that day.

During the lunch break they each created a symbol representing their hope for each other. Then, while social distancing in small groups,



they created a symbol that incorporated all of their symbols. Taking their group symbol (drawn on a paper plate) with them, they returned to the horses. Each team consulted with their horses about what would happen next and then, after getting approval from the horses, they painted their symbol on their horse companion as a way to carry the message out into the world.

What occurred next was an unusual art walk as each group walked, introduced their horse buddy, and shared something about vision as represented by their symbol. What did all the symbols have in common? There was a heart within each of their symbols.

The docs discovered (or rediscovered) their strengths, shared meaningful stories, and brought to life through image some of their dreams. They now would have the opportunity to learn from the horses how they might move to action toward their goals, facing challenges with collaboration and courage, humor and purpose, on what we call “the obstacle course of possibility.”

Collectively, the docs decided on a common goal; to take better care of themselves and their own well-being as they

continue their good care of others.

They were given materials such as ropes, buckets, cones, and PVC pipe, with the task for each small group to build an obstacle that all of the groups (with their horse companions) could get “over,” “around,” or “through.” They decided that what they needed to “get over” was feeling stressed by not being able to do enough to save their patients. What they needed to do to “get through” was support from each other, and what they needed to “get around to” was better self-care. One of the docs was responsible for taking the lead with the horse, one for showing the way forward, one for safety, one for making sure no one got left behind, and one to make sure they were having fun. With creativity, adaptability, and resilience they accomplished getting over, around, and through the obstacles to reach the goal line of their well-being on their co-created course of possibility – *A path with heart.*

At the end of the day, tired but inspired, the docs said a heartfelt “thank you” to their horse partners and gathered to share their reflections and learning. The docs spoke about what they were taking from

their experience that had value for them, and what they would take away from this adventure with the horses and one playful zebra:

- Slow up, quiet down, and allow for silence in order to hear what matters most
- Be open-minded, open-hearted, and curious – rather than judgmental
- Find our “hooves” and be fully aware and grounded in the reality of the present moment
- Listen from the heart with the intent to understand and be compassionate
- Take time to rest, regain strength, and heal from the stress and trauma of daily work
- Support each other and have each other’s back
- Remember to smile, laugh a lot, and have fun

Horses and The Intelligence of the Heart

Horses have a big heart. This is literally true – an average horse heart is considerably larger than a human heart and weighs (on the average) seven to nine pounds as compared to a half pound human heart.

Thoroughbred horses’ hearts weigh an average of nine to

eleven pounds, while the “wonder horse”, Secretariat, had a heart that weighed 22 pounds.

The scientific research of the Heartmath Institute has measured the electromagnetic field from a horse’s heart extending out to a range of 40-50 feet or more, while the human heart was measured extending out only 8-10 feet.

Research from the Heartmath Institute has demonstrated that a horse’s most natural state is one of “coherence”, where the mind and heart are connected, and the intelligence of the heart takes the lead. The hearts of both horses and humans contain more neurons than their brains and take in essential information from their senses. But, unlike horses, who listen primarily from the intelligence of their heart, we humans override our heart intelligence in favor of our mind. Horses, in their most natural state, live in heartfelt calm and harmony with themselves, their herdmates, and their environment, allowing for their resiliency, agility, and adaptability.

Most all of us can remember a time hanging out with our horse in the pasture, riding comfortably along a trail, or sitting curled up in the stall with them while they munched hay when effortlessly and magically any stress and worry melted away, our negative thoughts and anxiety disappeared.

In the presence of our horse, and the coherence and harmony of their big hearts, we can feel the compassion of our heart towards ourselves and to others.

Our heart is amazing; roughly the size of two hands clasped together, it beats about 100,000 times a day, pumping blood through 60,000 miles of blood vessels. One of the most amazing facts about the heart is that it is a source of essential intelligence.

At Pebble Ledge Ranch

we have benefited from scientific research from the HeartMath Institute. Incorporating engagement with horses and heart-focused practices, we can more easily connect with our heart’s intelligence. This wisdom of the heart strengthens resilience, promotes recovery from trauma, and creates realignment when life becomes



unbalanced. Through horses, nature, and heart-focused practices, we can learn to create a coherent rhythm and connection of the heart and mind, leading to emotional and physical well-being.

Horses live most of the time (when allowed to “just be horses”) calmly and in harmony. They inherently have a “coherent” heart rhythm and pattern which is a reliable measure of well-being and is consistent with the emotional states of calm and joy, which we too embody when we feel positive emotions.

A horse’s heart rhythm is strong enough to influence the human’s heart rhythm in regulating and balancing our emotions, calming our unsupported fears. That is one of the reasons that we may feel better, more ourselves, when

we are around our horses.

We have introduced many people to the practice of heart-focused breathing in the presence of the horse, as an easy, energy-saving, self-regulation strategy - designed to reduce the intensity of a stress reaction and replace it with an alert calm.

People who practiced engaged, heart-focused breathing with the

horses at the ranch commented that they felt *“a sense of well-being and peace, decreased stress and anxiety, and increased feelings of trust, patience, and compassion.”*

They can then practice this at home by just thinking about the horses to feel more connected to themselves, more at ease, energized, and more in touch with what matters most.

Jen, a coaching client, returned to the ranch after two years, remembering that with the horses she felt at peace, and that with them she had a safe place to remember who she was. She arrived at the ranch stressed, deeply sad, and unable to get hold of her emotions and her life. Jen engaged with the horses as they wandered through their pasture and began to feel a sense of calm and well-being that had been

missing from her life. “I cannot take your horses home with me, but I wish I could,” she said, “so I could be me, feel safe, and regain my balance.”

I asked her if she would be interested in learning about heart-focused practices to create the internal capacity for balance, and harmony that she felt with horses. I demonstrated the heart-focused practices and then in the presence of the herd, we practiced them together. We practiced heart-focused breathing and aligning heart and head, slowing up and breathing deeply, bringing to heart what we appreciated in our life and what had important value. The horses all moved closer to her and stood, relaxed and calm.

Holly, the zebra, walked in front of her and laid down on the ground, sighed, and completely relaxed, closing her eyes to rest.

“Wow, this really works,” Jen laughed. “Not only did I calm myself, I calmed the horses and put Holly, the zebra, to sleep!”

We know that most people do not have a horse readily available for heart-focused practices, but once they have the hang of it they can bring the horse to mind and heart, and use the heart-focused practices anytime and anywhere they want:

- to stop the impact of stress on the body
- to eliminate the energy drain
- to remove the drama or significance of a situation
- to neutralize emotional reactions

Horses, with their big hearts, communicate with each other over long distances and through generations. They share information through the resonance of their heart, and can listen through the connection to the pulse of the earth through their feet. I call this the “heart and hoof” wide web.

The world wide web, our global connection, is fragile and its technology can be hacked, interrupted, or shut down by

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Finding Courage

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outside sources, but not the “heart and hoof” wide web. We all have access within us to the “heart and hoof” wide web, an internal source of information and connection which is resilient and secure from external disturbance. You just bring to your heart and mind someone with whom you want to connect. As you think of them from your heart, feel their presence. This is how the “heart and hoof” wide web helps us stay connected when physical presence is not possible.

Try bringing into your thoughts, your heart and mind, a horse or pony with whom you have a heart connection and try bringing them *more fully* into your heart and mind right now. Whether this pony or horse is across the pasture or country, or has passed over the Rainbow Bridge, you are still deeply connected and their resilient, optimistic presence and wisdom is with you.

We Can Find Courage Through the Heart of the Horse - we need but just ask them.

Horses as Our Trustworthy Traveling Companions Through Uncertain Times.

Join one of your horses in your pasture or barn, or visit a horse across a fence in a field. Bring to your attention

a current situation you are facing with concern, anxiety, uncertainty, or a seemingly impossible decision.

Gaze softly at your horse companion while you slow and deepen your breathing, maybe even matching it to your horse's breathing.

Notice your feet on the ground alongside your horse's hooves as your feet become hooves feeling the heartbeat of the earth.

Turn your attention to the area you feel as your heart space and place your palm or hand or finger on your heart to get a better feel of your heart space.

Slow and deepen your breath and begin to allow your breath to come from your heart. You might want to place your hand on your horse and join its breathing.

Sensing safety from within, allow your feelings to come up and be held in your heart and the heart of your horse with compassion.

Bring to your heart your

appreciation for your horse companion, maybe their beauty, or the joy you feel with them, maybe it's appreciation for the challenges you have met together, or maybe it's the warm feeling of love you felt for your first pony. Create and sustain the positive feelings of joy, appreciation, and care, allowing them to fill you and flow through you - and to and from your horse companion.

Listen from the place of your heart's knowing as you bring your attention back to the current situation you began with; the situation you are facing with concern, anxiety, or uncertainty.

Notice what has changed emotionally and physically as you support yourself with the presence of your horse companion and from within, with heart-focused breath, and heartfelt appreciation.

Guided by our relationship with horses and basic heart-focused practices, we can strengthen our resiliency and

our courage, compassion, confidence, and communities.

Inspired by the amazing resiliency and courageous heart of horses, maybe we can gallop beyond conventional boundaries to reach new heights of success for ourselves and the herds to which we belong.

We already have courage of the heart within us, and the capacity to create resilience to better manage stress and regulate our emotions in times of challenge and unexpected change. Horses live this way, and with the wisdom of the heart and relationship with a horse, we can too, for a life well lived. ♦

Jackie Stevenson is the founder and CEO of Spirit of Leadership, LLC, providing coaching, leadership, and team building training and seminars for corporations and non-profit organizations. For more information: spirit-of-leadership.com

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Saddle Fit – How Does a Rider Know?

by Heather Soones

Saddles101

Why is saddle fit so important? What are the signs of trouble, how do you get them fixed, and by whom? For many years this subject has been very much overlooked. With the advancement of technology, the days of “one saddle fits all” is a thing of the past. What we now know is that you, the rider, can have the ultimate comfort AND the best performance from your horse as related to your saddle fit.

Signs that your saddle may need to be evaluated include changes in the balance of your seat and the position of your leg. You may hear comments from your instructor to “sit back,” “keep your legs back,” or “keep your legs forward.” Your horse may show behavioral issues under saddle or when being tacked up. For example, if your horse is not willing to pick up the correct canter lead or has started to buck or balk. You may notice your horse’s back is sore when being saddled or groomed. Saddle fit can and will affect both your position and your horse’s comfort in work, and ultimately, your success as a rider either out on the trail or in the competition arena.

Why is it that one saddle can feel different to a rider on a different horse? It is caused by different conformation and back shape from horse to horse. High-withered horses need to be fitted with a completely different type of saddle panel and tree than that of flat, mutton-withered horses.

Your horse will change shape often as the topline develops. The frequency of these changes will relate to the horse’s age, training plan, feed, and health management. Great attention must always be paid to the condition of the



saddle’s flocking. Irregular, uneven, or lumpy flocking can cause pressure points that may seriously damage your horse’s back. Severe irregularity in the flocking can cause the saddle to sit off to one side or the other on the horse’s spine. Overly stuffed panels will be hard, and will not adapt to the horse’s back, causing pressure points, sensitivity, and soreness. Also, the flocking in the saddle may clump, shift, or compress, which may also result in discomfort to your horse. Correct flocking

provides a cushioning effect that helps to reduce trauma. It creates softness for the horse and rider, and balances the saddle on the horse’s back to help the riders’ position.

It is important to notice signs that the saddle is impeding performance during training so you can have any necessary adjustments made. All wool flocked saddles should be checked at least on a yearly basis. Once you have determined that your saddle could be causing a problem - how do you find a saddle fitter

to help you? Choosing a saddle fitter that is qualified to help you can be confusing, and my recommendation is to look for an independent saddle fitter who is trained and certified by the Society of Master Saddlers in the UK. These fitters go through rigorous training and examinations in order to be listed as a Certified Saddle Fitter. It is important for a saddle fitter to participate in continuing education to enhance their skills in evaluating the aspects of body structure, skeletal structure, biomechanics, and how the movement of the horse directly and indirectly relates to the fit of the saddle. Additional training and insight can be obtained from other respected professionals in the horse industry, such as veterinarians, chiropractors, and massage therapists, to name a few. Your saddle is important in the overall management of your horse. Your saddle fitter will help you maintain your saddle for both your and your horse’s comfort, performance, and continued success.

For more information visit: saddles101.com ♦



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Retired Racehorse Project Advances Equine Welfare

by Lisa Lopez Snyder

Every October, hundreds of off-track Thoroughbreds, each with 10 months or less of retraining, compete in 10 different disciplines during three days of the Thoroughbred Makeover & National Symposium in Lexington, Kentucky. The event has grown exponentially in the last 10 years, with trainers and owners vying for a share of over \$100,000 in prize money.

Sponsored by the nonprofit, Retired Racehorse Project, the symposium's Makeover has several goals: to showcase the trainability and talent of off-track Thoroughbreds, to inspire good trainers to learn how to transition these horses to second careers, and to educate owners and others in the care and training of these horses.

Dr. Shannon Reed, associate professor at the Ohio State University's Galbreath Equine Center, makes the 155-mile drive from Columbus, Ohio to Lexington, Kentucky to serve as consulting horse veterinarian for the Makeover. As such, she coordinates examinations of every horse participating in the event. It's a chance to use her expertise to help trainers and owners improve equine health and welfare.



Dr. Shannon Reed with client.

Photo: DeAnn Long Sloan

"I love the heart of the Thoroughbred racehorse and strongly feel that we need to do better to find them a place to go after the racing is done," she says. "It's personally fulfilling to have something I

can do to make it better."

Dr. Reed's involvement began when she groomed for a friend who was participating. "I was a trainer participant for two years," she says. "That first-hand experience gave

me some ideas about how they could incorporate more veterinarians and veterinary care into the process."

According to Dr. Reed, initial requirements were in place for participating horse health, but there was no formalized process to confirm that. That changed in 2019 with a new equine welfare initiative. "Last year, for the first time, every horse that arrived was required to have had an examination with a veterinarian," she adds. "They were examined to make sure they had a registered microchip in place, that they had achieved an appropriate body conditions score, and that they were sound at the walk."

After the success of the

New Thoroughbred Makeover Initiatives

Arrival Exam

Proof of the following:

- Current vaccinations
- Vitals within a normal range
- Microchip registration from The Jockey Club
- Pass a walking soundness exam
- 4 or higher score on the Henneke Body Condition Scale

Finale Jog for Makeover Finale qualifiers:

- Top five finishers of each of the 10 disciplines present before a ground jury of at least two veterinarians and a chief steward

Sponsor: Keeneland

Source: The Thoroughbred Makeover & National Symposium

2019 introduction of the veterinary examination, a new element was added for future Makeovers—a Finale Jog for all Thoroughbred Makeover Finale qualifiers, in which the top five finishers of each of the ten disciplines will present before a ground jury of at least two veterinarians and a chief steward. Keeneland Race Course, in Lexington, Kentucky, will sponsor the Arrival Exam and the Finale Jog.

Last year about 500 horses competed. The work entails 18-hour days for the first three days of the full week's events, a culmination of the educational efforts Dr. Reed conducts throughout the year. In 2019, 12 veterinary students assisted in the exams. Per Dr. Reed, "they were super excited to see what Thoroughbreds can do off the track, so this is also a wonderful way to educate our future veterinarians."

While the in-person events were cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic, several virtual offerings took place, including the ASPCA Makeover Marketplace, the TERF Makeover Master Class, webinars, a virtual Vendor Fair, and the Silent Auction.

Also, according to Dr. Reed, the 2021 competition will be a "double makeover," with an anticipated 700 participants.

Understanding retired racehorse health

Dr. Reed's latest research project studied 1400 retired Thoroughbred racehorses compared with non-Thoroughbred racehorses to understand any health problems they had in their first non-racing year and whether or not people were happy they had them.

The study found that while Thoroughbred racehorses were as successful as the non-Thoroughbred racehorses, it reported lameness, gastric ulcers, and weight gain or weight loss as issues of concern in the first year post-



Photo: DeAnn Long Sloan

retirement. Dr. Reed created webinars to help trainers identify these issues and find resources, and also created wellness check-ins with the trainers.

"The biggest thing is the nutritional support—to figure out how to feed them to get them healthy and help them find veterinarians if they need

them," she says.

"The Retired Racehorse Project's new welfare initiatives have had a significant impact. When I look at the Makeover when it started and where it's at now, and how good those horses looked last year when they came there, and the education that was provided, I feel like

I've done something that's really made a difference. These horses give a lot to us in racing. They deserve a good life afterward."

For more information: vet.osu.edu/about-us/people/shannon-reed/retiredracehorseproject.org/tbmakeover.org/about-rrp-thoroughbred-makeover ♦

The Thoroughbred Makeover & National Symposium

- **WHAT:** The largest Thoroughbred retraining competition in the world for recently-retired ex-racehorses, now entering its sixth year in its current format and location
- **WHEN:** October 12-17, 2021
- **WHERE:** Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington
- **WHO CAN PARTICIPATE:** Accepted trainers (professionals, amateurs, juniors, and teams) who applied between December 1, 2019 - January 15, 2020 for the 2020 competition. Horses are recently-retired Jockey Club-registered Thoroughbreds, who marked a workout or race after July 1, 2018 and have not had more than 15 retraining rides prior to December 1, 2019. Information about 2021 trainers and horses will be published soon; horse eligibility is not expected to change other than adding a year.
- **HOW HORSES ARE ACQUIRED FOR COMPETITION:** Trainers are responsible for acquiring their own eligible horses, whether through an aftercare organization, directly from track connections, or through a reselling agent. Trainers may opt to list their horse for sale via the Makeover Marketplace, but there is no requirement to sell the horse after competition.

Source: The Thoroughbred Makeover & National Symposium



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Can You Train a Horse to Use a Grazing Muzzle?



Photo: Ashley Culpepper

by GG Equine

One thing that can be frustrating about a grazing muzzle is that it is not always an easy “plug and play” device. Some horses take to a grazing muzzle quickly, while others may require a bit of guidance and training. Whether your horse is being muzzled for the first time ever, or just the first time this year, doing some trial runs before you need to use it can go a long way toward easing the transition.

Introducing the Muzzle to Your Horse

GG Equine’s customer service specialist, Kara Musgrave, who is also a positive reinforcement trainer, is a “huge fan of food rewards to create a positive association.” Musgrave says that one of the best ways to introduce the muzzle to your horse is to put his favorite treat inside, and then invite him to explore the muzzle’s scent and feel.

Photo: JJ Sillman



Once your horse is comfortable putting his nose into the grazing muzzle (or “treat basket”), the next step is to show him how to actually eat through it - which, of course, he will have to do when grazing. Musgrave’s favorite way to do this is to feed treats through the muzzle slots “to teach him how to

search for food through the holes.”

You can simulate foraging by placing small treats or feed “on a flat surface like a stall mat and let your horse try to lick them up through the muzzle openings.” Just make sure the feed or treats are small enough to easily fit through the openings; otherwise, you will have one frustrated pony!

Turnout Time

Ready for a pasture trial? Musgrave recommends “sprinkling sweet feed or other small treats in the grass.” This encourages your horse to seek the prize as grass pokes through the muzzle openings. “From there,” Musgrave says, “the horse usually gets the idea,” and you’re one step closer.

When turnout time finally arrives, a period of observation is important. The first few times your horse is on pasture, allow him to graze with the muzzle on while

you watch. This will give you an idea of his comfort level before being out of sight for hours at a stretch. It will also allow you to see the muzzle in action in case there are any final adjustments that need to be made.

How Long Does Grazing Muzzle Training Take?

Although the length of time from introduction to full turnout will vary, you can take cues from your horses to determine their comfort and readiness to wear a muzzle. For example, if your horse runs away at the sight of a grazing muzzle, is unwilling to put his nose into it, or acts like he can’t graze in it, a training period is definitely recommended to help him adjust. With only a little effort and patience - and some help from your horse’s favorite treats - you can make the start of grazing muzzle season smoother and easier.

For more information: gg-equine.com ♦



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DIFFUSING BARN DRAMA

If you board your horse, you've most likely been around some form of barn drama. Whether caused by the "know-it-all" adult amateur, the blabbermouth lessee, the entitled child, or someone else who frequents your facility, the experience is the same: a feeling of discomfort that can range from apprehension to agony.

by Sarah E. Coleman

Unfortunately, boarding or riding at a barn with some sort of drama is the norm, whether that means the boarders get snarky with one another, the owner's daughter is overly emotional, or the trainer "eggs on" unfriendly competition between her clients.

Horsewomen are notoriously strong, both of personality and physical stature. To work with horses at all, you have to be brave, driven, and independent—all positive qualities, but ones that may need to be tempered in a space as socially complicated as a boarding barn.

Stripping away everything else, the reason each of us rides is simple: Horses offer us respite from a very crazy (and sometimes scary) world. If the barn is a place to recharge our batteries, it seems counterintuitive that it may also be fraught with other feelings, but being surrounded by something you love deeply elevates all other emotions.

Drama, at its most basic level, causes chaos and confusion, whether it is spoken, written, or in actions taken. People who

cause drama, intentional or not, are insecure. They're hungry for the attention that causing drama brings them. This attention makes them feel powerful. The reverse of this is what the subject of the drama feels: powerless. As the target of the rumor mill, the feeling of helplessness is one of the hardest to deal with; it can trigger stress, anxiety, and depression.

Drama at the barn can ruin what should be a pleasurable experience, causing a reprieve from the world to become just one more "thing" on the to-do list. Gossip isn't harmless. It's hurtful and damaging, and at its most virulent can cause you to second guess everything—how you ride, how you groom, how you care for and treat your horse(s).

Though it can be difficult to see, and nearly impossible to understand, the real issue that the instigator has... is *not* with you.

How to Handle a Barn Bully

What can you do to combat the criticism, gossip, and rumors

being spread at your barn?

Many non-equestrians would tell you "it's simple, ignore it." While a great idea in theory, this isn't the best long-term strategy to deal with bullies in the barn. Avoiding them is also not always feasible: work schedules and other obligations may not allow us to adjust our riding or lesson times.

One of the most disheartening feelings is being at a place in your training where you're struggling and know other riders at the barn are passing judgement and gossiping about it. It can feel like the lowest of blows - to have others reinforce what you're already fearful of: *that you're not good enough.*

Though telling the boarding barn owner about your angst can feel a bit like tattling, it's worthwhile to keep them in the loop, especially if you're not the only one the Drama Queen has in her sights. A fair and honest barn owner will work with you

to determine how best to stop the drama at its source.

If you want to try to handle the instigator yourself, there are a few things to keep in mind. But, first and foremost: Have heart! Just like learning how to post the trot, jump, gallop in an open field, or doing virtually anything that involves a 1,000-plus-pound horse, addressing a barn bully takes **COURAGE**. You can do it!

Once you resolve to address the issue, there are a few things you can do to make it as painless as possible:

Don't address it when you're emotional. The key to a productive conversation is to not address the issue when you're in a vulnerable place and already worked up—this will lead to nothing but additional fodder for the rumor mill.

Focus on the issue and the action, **NOT** the person. They're on a power trip, remember? They feed off



emotion, so when you remain calm, it throws them for a loop.

Don't stoop to their level. This one is tough, especially if they break out the low blows. Instead of returning the favor and criticizing their riding/relationships/home life/work ethic, focus on the issue at hand: What they are doing or saying that is uncalled for and, most likely, isn't true.

I am not telling you to not cry—by all means, get in your car and cry your eyes out. Just try your best not to do it in front of the bully.

Though it can be tough to see when in the throes of barn drama, all rumors fade with time, and those that are the *least* true fade fastest. The best way to help them on their way is to repeatedly show yourself as a kind, moral person who loves her horse. Your actions will speak louder than any words ever will.

Let it Go

So, what do you do if you're not the target of the Drama Queen, but you're privy to her wily ways? Don't feed into it. This one is tough. We all want to feel liked and included, and it's easy to fall into the trap of boarder bashing while you're cleaning tack, or having a post-ride beer with pals. Simply put: Don't. Don't try to analyze why people act the way they do and don't try to help people with their issues with other boarders—leave it alone. Eventually, the *issue*, whatever it may be, will end.

If the other boarders have an issue with something at the facility - whether it's footing, feeding, turnout, or handling - first, ask if they have spoken to

the barn owner about it. If they have, and nothing has changed, brainstorm ways to help. Often "complaints" are simply insults disguised by the speaker as opinions, so the "complainer" isn't actually seeking a solution.

Maybe It's You ...

If you feel like drama simply follows you around, it's time to take a good, hard look at how you operate in the barn setting. Are you dragging all your personal and professional woes with you to the farm? When people ask you how you are, do you immediately delve into all that's wrong in your world?

Don't be a Debbie Downer. While it's sometimes hard not to focus on how much is going wrong in the world (and your life), try to be positive and uplifting when you go to the barn. And if you don't actually feel that way? "Fake it 'til you make it." Complaining incessantly accomplishes nothing other than allowing you to wallow in your own unhappiness. Horses feed off of their owner's energy, so if Trigger walks the other way when you go to catch him, it's time to take a hard look at what's really going on.

Do you make passing comments to others on how someone rides and trains? Stop. What harm comes from someone using a different bit, brush, pad, or boots than you think they should? There is no "right" way to ride or train a horse—as long as both horse and rider are safe, little else matters in the grand scheme of things.

Changing how you speak about others can be difficult: You're truly training yourself into a new mindset. When you find yourself wanting to pass judgement on another rider or horse, try simply not saying anything at all. In general, drama dissipates when people try not to be negative.



that horses bring to you. The stress of a drama-filled farm isn't good for you and it's not good for your horse, and it's certainly not good for your partnership and training. Kind people, both barn owners and boarders, are

What To Do When it Just Won't Quit

It's important to remember that everyone has bad days where they may say hurtful things. But, if the drama seems never-ending and you find yourself dreading going to the barn, know that changing farms is always an option.

Nothing, truly nothing, is worth sacrificing the solace

worth their weight in gold - and worth much more than a barn that is close or cheap, or one that has fancy amenities. Promise. ♦

Based in Lexington, Kentucky, Sarah Coleman has a soft spot for chestnuts with chrome, including her off-the-track Thoroughbred, Chisholm, whom she adopted from New Vocations Racehorse Adoption Program.



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Expanding Options for Equine Breeding Management

by **Karen A. Von Dollen,**
DVM, MS, DACT
Hagyard Equine Medical
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The decision of whether or not to breed your mare is difficult in and of itself, but this process can be complicated when considering the options which exist for *how* to produce a foal from your mare. First and foremost, you must decide whether you intend for your mare to carry her own foal, or whether you would prefer to utilize a recipient mare. Transfer of an embryo into a recipient mare allows a donor mare to continue a performance career unencumbered by the demands of gestation, provides a means to produce more than one foal per mare per year, and in some cases can circumvent subfertility

limitations of a donor mare. If you are planning to breed your mare to carry her own foal, your main decisions will be the method of semen delivery (natural mating or artificial insemination, AI) and type of semen if you are opting for AI (fresh, cooled, or frozen). Artificial insemination affords the ability to incorporate genetics into your breeding program from far flung geographic locations, both domestic and international. Semen can be shipped cooled, for short term use following collection and processing, or frozen. Frozen semen can be stored indefinitely and used months, years, or decades after a stallion is deceased. If you are planning for embryo transfer, the above decisions regarding semen still apply, but

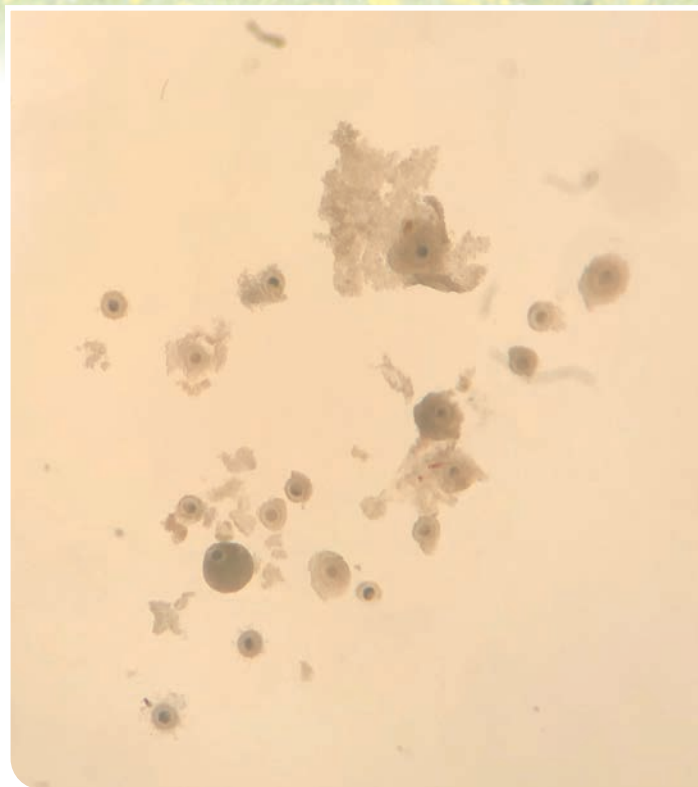


Photo by Dr. Karen Von Dollen

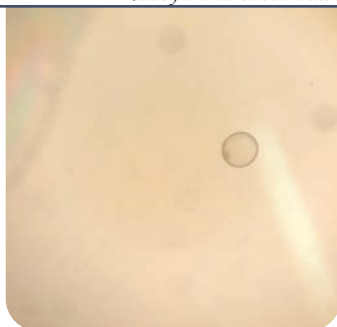
Immature oocytes collected during transvaginal oocyte aspiration.

more choices must be made regarding embryo generation and handling.

While transfer of *in vivo* produced equine embryos (those flushed from a donor mare about a week after breeding) has been practiced for many years, advancements in laboratory techniques more recently have made it possible to produce equine embryos outside of a mare's uterus by fertilizing an oocyte with a single sperm. Once an embryo is produced (either by a mare or a lab), it can either be transferred directly into a synchronized recipient mare or cryopreserved through vitrification for transfer at a later date. The latter option can be attractive for owners who hope to produce embryos outside of the traditional breeding season and have them available to transfer in the future to have a foal born at their desired time of the year. Embryo vitrification also decreases the pressure to synchronize a recipient mare, as the embryo is safely stored in liquid nitrogen and can remain there until the ideal recipient uterus is available.

The above process of *in vitro* embryo production is known as Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI). In order to perform ICSI to produce embryos, oocytes must be collected from a donor mare. The most common way that this is achieved currently is by Transvaginal Oocyte Aspiration (TVA, also known as Ovum Pickup or OPU). As a macabre but practical consideration, oocytes can also be obtained from ovaries following the death of a mare.

The process of TVA involves transrectally guiding the mare's ovary close to the vaginal wall, while a rigid ultrasound probe is simultaneously placed in the vagina and the ovary held in close apposition to the ultrasound. A long needle traveling immediately adjacent to the ultrasound is used to puncture the ovary and aspirate the fluid from the mare's follicles while fresh fluid is repeatedly



An embryo flushed from a donor mare, just prior to transfer into a recipient mare.

flushed through the follicle and the needle manipulated to scrape the oocyte from the follicular wall. As you might expect from visualizing this description, this procedure is more invasive than many other reproductive techniques such as AI or embryo flushing, and is associated with unavoidable risks. Mare oocytes are more tenaciously adhered to the follicular wall than those of some other species, which presents a challenge for recovery yield. Once all accessible follicles are aspirated and flushed, the fluid is filtered and searched for oocytes. The oocytes can then be shipped to an ICSI laboratory or handled onsite, depending on the laboratory setup of the clinic performing TVA.

ICSI represents the most efficient way to use semen, as only a fraction of a breeding dose is used for the injection procedure. For this reason, it is an attractive method for semen which is in very limited supply (such as a stallion who is deceased but still has frozen semen banked). Maximizing efficiency in stretching the last reserves of precious stallion genetics is just one reason to consider ICSI. Other reasons can be broadly categorized as stallion-driven or mare-driven. Some subfertile stallions benefit from ICSI when other methods of breeding have been unsuccessful. On the mare side, ICSI offers an opportunity to attempt to salvage the reproductive career of a mare who has otherwise proved difficult to produce pregnancies or foals. Examples include

uterine infections, those with reproductive tract trauma (such as adhesions or cervical damage sustained during dystocia), or those that repeatedly fail to produce embryos despite optimized management. It can also offer more scheduling flexibility than breeding, as it can be performed at any stage of the estrous cycle and does not necessitate follow up appointments such as those required for an embryo flush or pregnancy checks. The ideal time to perform aspiration of immature oocytes is when the mare has a maximal number of small follicles, as this will increase anticipated oocyte yield.

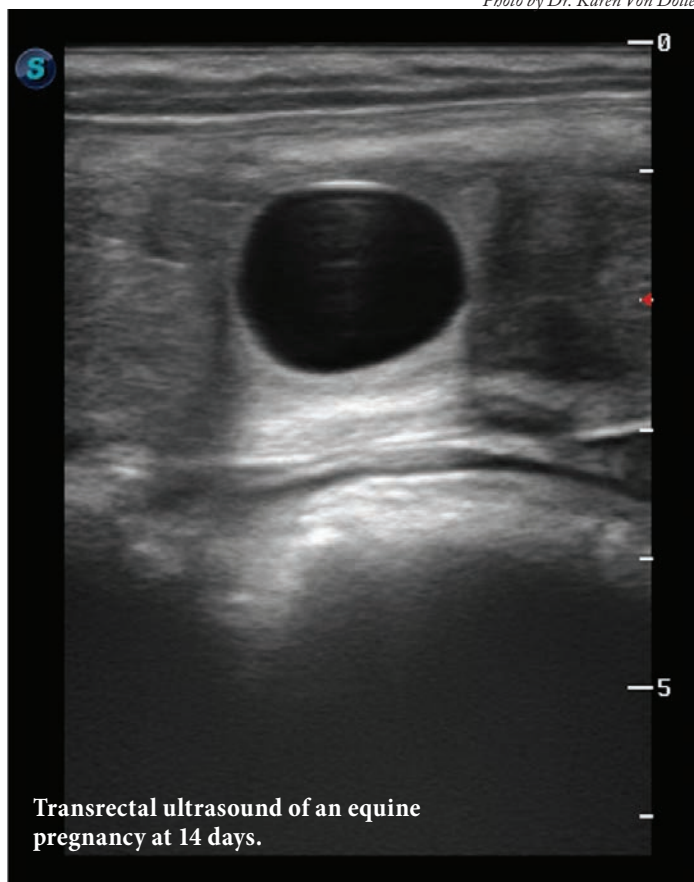
Intercepting the reproductive process at the oocyte stage requires precision to nurture this delicate gamete from the moment it is aspirated from the mare to maximize the chance that it will realize its potential as an embryo, then foal. Even the best laboratory efforts are imperfect in this endeavor to mimic Mother Nature, and owners should embark on TVA/

ICSI with realistic expectations that multiple rounds may be necessary in order to reach a desired outcome, and that even then your perfect foal may not materialize. Success rates are variable and affected by a multitude of factors on both the stallion and mare sides of the equation.

Navigating the ever-broadening landscape of equine reproduction can be daunting, and making choices for a breeding program are not one-size-fits-all. Each choice in the decision tree has pros and cons, with each decision you make often budding into more branches of options. The scope of this article precludes an exhaustive discussion of considerations when weighing these decisions, but it is the intent that it may serve as a starting point for consultation with your veterinarian as we approach the 2021 breeding season.

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Photo by Dr. Karen Von Dollen



Transrectal ultrasound of an equine pregnancy at 14 days.



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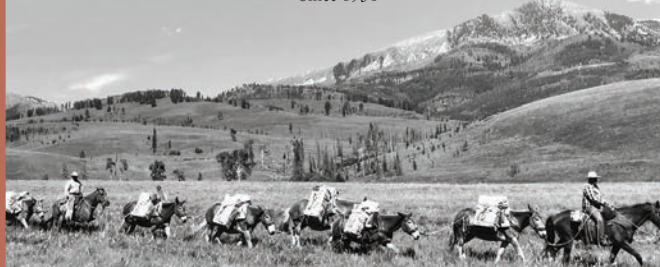


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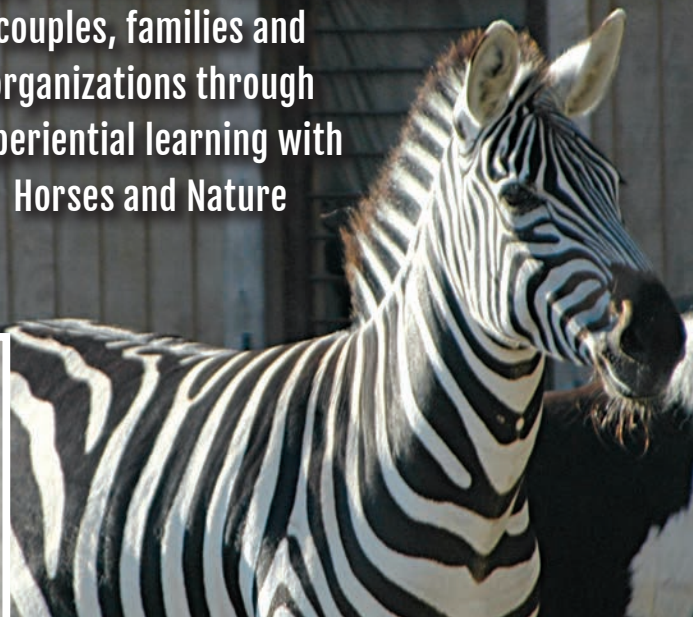
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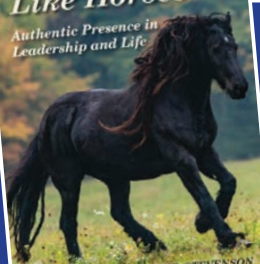
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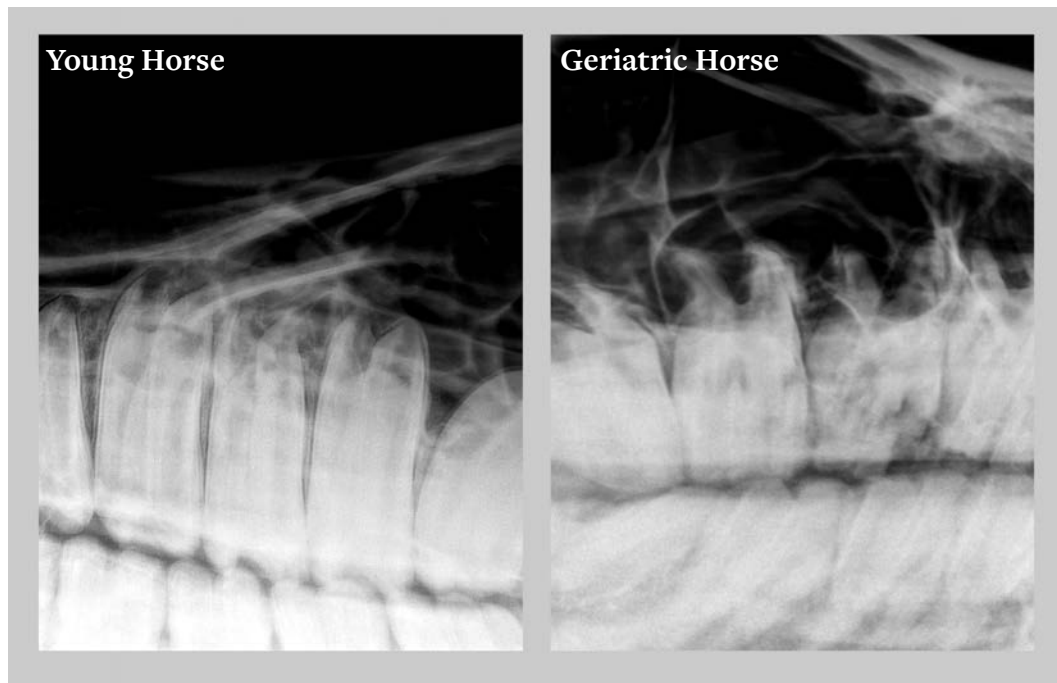
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The Geriatric Horse: Changing Needs in Dental Care

by Gian P. Gargiulo, DVM
Valley Equine Dentistry

The most challenging and gratifying cases I encounter involve geriatric horses. I continually run into the false perception that a horse's dental needs diminish as they age. The opposite is actually true. Studies show that 50%-90% of geriatric horses show some degree of abnormal wear patterns or periodontal disease. All geriatric horses will benefit from routine dental care, and preventative measures should be taken to improve the dental health of any geriatric horse.

A horse is classified as geriatric starting around the age of 18 years. To understand the special needs of geriatric horses, we must first understand the aging process of their teeth. Equine teeth are classified as hypsodont. This means their teeth have a limited developmental period, followed by a prolonged eruption period, throughout their life. If you look at X-rays (see fig.) of a young horse you will see a large tooth which (depending on the horse) can be up to 5 inches long. X-rays of a geriatric horse (see fig.) will show much less tooth - sometimes down to millimeters in thickness. The



“While we can not halt the aging process, we do have some tools to fight against its detrimental effects.”

part of the tooth that is below gumline is called reserve crown. As a horse ages, the reserve crown erupts into the oral cavity at a rate of 2-3 millimeters per year. This provides the horse with a continually replenishing surface to grind their feed. The problem is that reserve crown is finite and will continue to diminish as the horse ages. With this in mind, it is imperative to address any dental issues early to extend the life of your horse's teeth.

As the reserve crown erupts into the oral cavity, the stability of your horse's teeth decreases. You can think of the tooth as a post in the ground. When a post is buried deep in the ground it is hard to move side to side. As that post is pulled closer to ground level it becomes increasingly easier to move. As the instability of the tooth increases, a diastema will begin to form between

teeth. A diastema is a space between teeth that allows feed to pack between them. Diastema formation will lead to secondary infections and severe periodontal disease. The inflammation associated with diastema formation causes a breakdown of the structures anchoring the tooth in place. The inflammatory effects not only effect the tooth that is losing stability, but will break down the stabilizing structure of adjacent teeth. Diastemata lead to a vicious cycle that usually ends with teeth becoming extremely loose and painful.

While we can not halt the aging process, we do have some tools to fight against its detrimental effects. The most important step you can take is to have routine dental exams and floats performed on your horse, regardless of age. My recommendation is that horses up to the

age of 7 be examined twice a year and floated as needed. Horses from 8 to 18 years of age should be floated annually. Geriatric horses with no underlying issues can usually go 18 months between floats. The extended interval for geriatric horses is due to the fact that the reserve crown is not erupting as rapidly. The routine float consists of the reduction of sharp enamel points and equilibration, or balancing, of the mouth. If imbalances in the mouth are not corrected they lead to overloading of teeth. When a tooth becomes overloaded it can shift - leading to diastema or fracture. These imbalances are especially detrimental for older horses with diminished reserve crown. Routine dentals are your best tool to identify the areas of the mouth that are being overloaded. When these issues are caught early they can be easily corrected. ♦

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SilkStudioPhotography.com

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614.580.9513
ChadLong.CBInTouch.com

Mary Vedda

Keller Williams Realty
Olmsted Township, OH
440.336.2796
MaryVedda.KWRealty.com

RESCUE/ADOPTION AND THOROUGHBRED AFTERCARE

Angels Haven Horse Rescue

Evergreen Farm
13297 Durkee Road
Grafton, OH 44044
440.781.5060
AngelsHavenHorseRescue.org

CANTER Kentucky

PO Box 2996
Louisville, KY 40201
312.513.1259
CanterUSA.org/Kentucky

Copper Horse Crusade


3739 Glenn Highway
Cambridge, OH 43725
740.601.2752
CopperHorseCrusade.com

Happy Trails Farm Animal Sanctuary

5623 New Milford Road
Ravenna, OH 44266
330.296.5914
HappyTrailsFarm.org

Kentucky Equine Adoption Ctr

1713 Catnip Hill Road
Nicholasville, KY 40356
859.881.5849
KYEAC.org



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SecretariatCenter.org

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OH, KY, PA, NY Facilities
937.947.4020
NewVocations.org

Old Friends
1841 Paynes Depot Road
Georgetown, KY 40324
502.863.1775
OldFriendsEquine.org

Retired Racehorse Project
2976 Solomon's Island Road
Edgewater, MD 21037
410.798.5140
RetiredRacehorseProject.org

**Thoroughbred Aftercare
Alliance**
859.224.2756
ThoroughbredAftercare.org

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Robert Barnes
808.557.1371
BarnesTackRoom.com

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Heather Soones
SMS Qualified Saddle Fitter
135 Hunt Road
Portersville, PA 16051
240.431.1318
Saddles101.com

The Saddle Tree
Amanda Berges
Certified Independent
Saddle Fitter
Johnstown, OH
440.983.1495
TheSaddleTree.com

**(See TACK/RIDING EQUIPMENT/
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216.225.4548
EquestrianDelights.com

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Louisville, KY 40214
502.375.0001
WagnersPharmacy.com

Big Dee's Tack & Vet Supply
9440 State Route 14
Streetsboro, OH 44241
800.321.2142 / 330.626.5000
BigDWeb.com

Boot Barn
2200 War Admiral Way, Suite 110
Lexington, KY 40509
859.264.7388
BootBarn.com

Boot Barn
4511 Outer Loop
Louisville, KY 40219
502.961.8468
BootBarn.com

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440.487.1925

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Atwater, OH 44201
330.325.1641

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3380 Paris Pike, Suite 1100
Lexington, KY 40511
859.299.TACK (8225)
CentralKentuckyTack
andLeather.com

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8574 Washington Street
Chagrin Falls, OH 44023
440.708.0674
ChagrinSaddlery.com

**Chagrin Saddlery
World Equestrian Center**
4095 State Route 730
Wilmington, OH 45177
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Equus Now!
8956 Cotter Street
Lewis Center, OH 43035
740.549.4959
EquusNow.com

Equus Now!
420 Wards Corner Road, Suite D
Loveland, OH 45140
513.630.1197
EquusNow.com

Fennell's Horse Supplies
1220 Red Mile Road
Lexington, KY 40502
859.254.2814
Fennells.com

Green Mountain Horse & Tack
1327 Sharon Copley Road
Wadsworth, OH 44281
234.248.4245
GreenMountainHorse.com

Horse Cents, Inc.
199 Markham Drive
Versailles, KY 40383
859.873.4707
HorseCentsInc.com

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SaltwellWesternStore.com

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SmartPakEquine.com

The Bitless Bridle by Dr.Cook
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5220 Barrett Road
Colorado Springs, CO 80926
719.576.4786
BitlessBridle.com

The Tack Shop of Lexington
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Lexington, KY 40511
859.368.0810
TackShopofLexington.com

The Tacky Horse
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Beavercreek, OH 45434
937.427.0797
TheTackyHorse.com

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859.224.8976

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KateColemanEquestrian.com

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330.803.2043

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A Stone's Throw Farm
Northeast Ohio
814.434.0914

Angela Moore
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9317 Johnstown-Alexandria Rd, NW
Johnstown, OH 43031
614.989.9029

Poulin Dressage
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Chagrin Falls, OH
386.624.3968
KatePoulin.com

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Lynne Puthoff
3275 South Shiloh Road
Laura, OH 45337
937.546.1505

Stephanie Portman
Shirley Krames-Kopas
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440.636.3813
QuietMeadowFarmOhio.com

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VisitHorseCountry.com

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606.286.6588
SmokeyValleyFarm.com

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771 State Route 307 East
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440.624.0206
AltmeyerTrailers.com

Chuck's Custom Truck & Trailer
750 West Smith Road
Medina, OH 44256
330.723.6029

Ganley Ford
2835 Barber Road,
Norton/Barberton, OH 44203
800.942.6305
GoGanleyFord.com

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12800 Leonard Parkway
North Jackson, OH 44451
800.455.1001
LeonardTrailers.com

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Blacklick, OH 43004
614.540.0040
BellaVistaEquineVet.com

Buckeye Veterinary Service
16295 Claridon-Troy Road
Burton, OH 44021
440.834.8821
BuckeyeVet.org

Cleveland Equine Clinic
3340 Webb Road
Ravenna, OH 44266
330.422.0040
ClevelandEquine.com

Countryside Veterinary Center
Laurie Gallatin, DVM,
DACVIM
2232 State Route 61
Sunbury, OH 43074
740.965.8111
CountrysideVetCenter.net

Equine Specialty Hospital
17434 Rapids Road
Burton, OH 44021
440.834.0811
EquineSpecialtyHospital.com

**Hagyard Equine Medical
Institute**
4250 Iron Works Pike
Lexington, KY 40511
859.255.8741
Hagyard.com

Hagyard Pharmacy
4250 Iron Works Pike
Lexington, KY 40511
859.281.9511
HagyardPharmacy.com

Hawthorne Veterinary Clinic
Holly Helbig, DVM
Kaylin Van Dorn, DVM
10435 Jerome Road
Plain City, OH 43064
330.807.2643/614.359.9020
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16410 County Home Road
Marysville, OH 43040
937.642.2936
Vet.OSU.edu/Marysville

**Ohio State University
Veterinary Medical Center
Galbreath Equine Center**
601 Vernon L. Tharp Street
Columbus, OH 43210
614.292.6661
Vet.OSU.edu/VCM/equine

Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital

2150 Georgetown Road
Lexington, KY 40511
859.233.0371
RoodandRiddle.com

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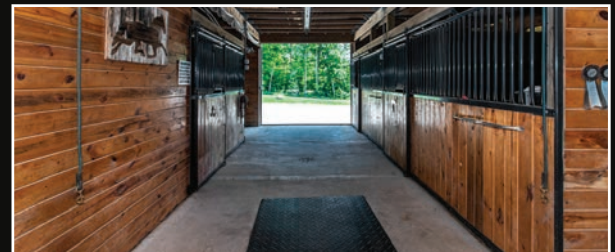
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