



# The HorseCountry Quarterly

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRYON RIDING & HUNT CLUB

## The 74th Running for Glory! Tryon's Historic Block House Steeplechase, April 16

— PAGE 3



PHOTO COURTESY OF TIEC

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### TR&HC PRESIDENT’S LETTER

## New Life for an Event Steeped in Tradition



Many people have asked, as president of the Club, what are my goals? As a physician, first I think of the Hippocratic Oath’s “to do no harm” during my tenure! After that, the goal is simple: to continue to make the club a better place – and I want to bring the community – equestrian and non-equestrian – together.

As with any almost century old organization, there have been ups and downs and change. With change, one thing is for certain – you can’t make everyone happy. An example of a controversial

change was our partnership with TIEC on the Block House Steeplechase and moving the Steeplechase to the new Green Creek Course. Key to my goal of bringing the community together is to restore the Block House Steeplechase as a “signature event” for our community to embrace, support – and be proud of. Generations of residents have attended the Block House Steeplechase. Within our Club membership is a category known as Heritage Block House Members, many of whom have attended the race for 30 years or longer! For these and many others, the Steeplechase is synonymous with spring – a rite of passage – a family tradition.

This year’s race day will see a return of old traditions, plus some new. Returning is the Steeplechase student poster art contest. Submissions were received from over a dozen area high school and college artists. The winning art is featured on page 21.

Also returning is the pre-race party, this year we have a great evening planned. It promises to be a fun filled evening with dinner, music and some surprises! You should have received your invitation by now.

On race day, new family-friendly activities have been added. These include Tryon’s greatest Easter Egg hunt, carriage and pony rides, face painters, cartoonists, magicians, kids’ games, food trucks, and local vendors. Count this as your official invite to enter the *Fancy Hat* and *Go to Hell Pants* contests!

Race Day promises to be a great day in the country that you can spend with friends and family, enjoying a good picnic and watching a great horse sport with the mountains as a backdrop. Hope to see you there!

*Angie Millon*

Angie Millon

President, Tryon Riding & Hunt Club

SAVE THE DATE!

## Horse Country Calendar

March 18-20: BRHJA Spring Premiere, Harmon Field, Tryon, NC

March 26-27: Harmon Classics Spring Challenge, SCEP, Camden, SC

April 15: Block House Steeplechase Pre-Race Party

April 16: 74th Block House Steeplechase

April 16-17: Carolina Carriage Club (CCC) Showing/Volunteer Aiken Carriage Classic

April 20-24: Katydid CDE at TIEC (USEF) Volunteering observing.

April 23-24: TR&HC Horse & Hound Show, FENCE, Tryon, NC

May TBA: CCC Event at Windridge Farm, Mooresboro, NC

May 6-8: BRHJA Mother’s Celebration, Harmon Field, Tryon, NC

June 4: CCC Quarterly Meeting, details TBA

June 7-12: Charity I, TIEC

June 16-19: Harmon Classics Derby Mania, Harmon Field, Tryon, NC

July 12-17: Charity II, TIEC

Oct. 15-16: CCC Pleasure Show, Harmon Field, Tryon, NC

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Visit [tryon.com/allevnts](http://tryon.com/allevnts) for a complete listing of TIEC events.

### FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK



With the first blush of spring last month, I opened all the windows in my house, and plucked a handful of daffodils from my yard. I felt it was more like New Year’s than just another spring as I could see our Club’s post-pandemic bucket list of resolutions would soon be a reality.

For months, quiet preparations took place for the Steeplechase adding in-field activities for kids as well as adults. Then right on the heels of the Steeplechase, the Horse and

Hound Show promises to elevate a local two-day show to a must-go-to annual spring event. Beautiful courses, strong competition, great prizes and the Carter Brown barbecue for exhibitors and the community.

And that is just a snippet of the Club’s upcoming activities. On our own, we also have trail rides under arbors of blooming mountain laurel, hunter paces with friends, and hunt balls closing out a season. How wonderful it all feels. Hope to see you at one of the these amazing outings!

*Sybil Jones*

Sybil Jones

TR&HC Vice president & Editorial director

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# The HorseCountry Quarterly

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRYON RIDING & HUNT CLUB

The Horse Country Quarterly is the official publication of the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club, published four times a year. Visit [TryonRidingandHuntClub.org](http://TryonRidingandHuntClub.org) and click JOIN to receive The Quarterly. Send comments, article ideas and calendar events to [SJones@sybiljonesandco.com](mailto:SJones@sybiljonesandco.com)

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# RACE DAY APPROACHING – Historic Block House Steeplechase Set to Run April 16

The 74th annual running of Tryon’s Block House Steeplechase, sponsored by the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club and hosted by the Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC), will be held on April 16, 2022.

After two consecutive spring cancellations – first in 2019 due to poor track conditions, and again in 2020 due to COVID – in June, last year, on a sun-filled, steamy hot day, the 73rd Blockhouse Race returned.

The Block House Races are one of the oldest steeplechase in the United States. “This is a decades-long tradition for the Tryon Riding and Hunt Club,” says Club President Angie Millon. “It’s an amazing community event that offers something for every member of the family. It’s a great time to get together outdoors and enjoy the activities.”

In addition to the excitement of the actual steeplechase races, this year will also feature a variety of in-field activities for children and adults. (See page 5.)



**TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW**  
PURCHASE ONLINE AT  
**Tryon.com/steeplechase**  
To learn more, call (828) 351-9709 or email [office@trhc1925.org](mailto:office@trhc1925.org)



## NO ORDINARY RACE HORSE The Horses Who Run Steeplechase

Steeplechase horses begin their career in flat racing. At about 4 years old, “novice” horses start their steeplechase careers, which last for about 6 years or so. To gain experience with jumps, novice horses compete at lower-level beginner events until they are ready to compete in races such as the Block House Races.

Steeplechase horses have a special lifestyle. They usually live in country areas, spending their days outside, rather than training at racetracks. Many participate in fewer than 10 races each year.

Steeplechase events cover much more ground, and varying terrain, than flat tracks. Therefore, these horses need to exhibit exceptional stamina to maintain their speed.





# Block House Steeplechase Races – *The History*

Steeplechase is said to have begun in Ireland when some foxhunters dared each other to race to the nearest church steeple. Since then, “steeplechasing” as it came to be called, has become popular in Great Britain and the United States.

Locally, the Block House races were started by Carter P. Brown in 1946 at Harmon Field. The first steeplechase in western North Carolina was a single race with a tin cup as the winning prize.

Eventually Brown built a racecourse around what had been an old tavern called the Block House, which gives the Tryon race its name. The course went from North Carolina into South Carolina several times and included a daring ride up Heartbreak Hill. Officials used flags to let the jockeys know how many times they had been around the track.

Since then, the Block House Steeplechase has moved—first to Foothills Equestrian Nature Center (FENCE) and, most recently, to the Green Creek Race Course where it is held today. This recent move was made to provide a more state-of-the-art course with improved footing, irrigation and year-round maintenance. This all translates into a safer course for the horses, jockeys and trainers. And, it’s a plus for all who bring top horses for competition.

Today, the Block House races attract horses and jockeys from across the United States. Sanctioned by the National Steeplechase Association, the Block House races are an enduring and much-loved tradition in western North Carolina.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TIEC AND TR&HC




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## Track Conditions Paramount: Green Creek Course Good for Going!

Steeplechase jockeys pick and choose where they want to race. Key to that decision is the venue's track. The track must be safe and fast, with healthy grass—which, like a golf course, requires year-round maintenance so it will be perfect on race day. Perfect happens to be the condition of the Green Creek Race Course off Route 9 in Columbus which will host the 74th Block House Steeplechase.

Champion American Steeplechase jockey, Graham Watters who rode (and won) in the 2021 Block House Steeplechase says, "As a rider, I analyze each racetrack differently, how to ride a race, where do I need to be at a certain point in the race and how are the horses I'm riding going to handle the track. Most riders prefer similar courses that create fair racing with no hard luck stories," he says.

Watters, who will ride in this year's Steeplechase, says, "The Block House track is a sharp track, because of the irrigation system. The ground is on the soft side, keeping it safe for horses and riders."

Steeplechase historian and former jockey James Cullen agrees with Watters. He says, "The horses' and riders' very lives depend on the condition of the tracks. Trainers and riders look for good going."

Originally from Ireland, Cullen grew up foxhunting and eventing, and riding his father's steeplechase horses. Cullen and his wife, Nancy, moved to the Tryon area from Minnesota in 2020. With experience comes a great understanding of the risks horses and riders face during a race. He explains that the ground must not be too hard or too soft and must have good drainage.

"The weather here can change quickly," he says, adding that a good drainage system, such as

recently installed on the Green Creek Course can accommodate sudden rains.

Other criteria trainers and riders look for are the topography and the placement of the fences. According to Cullen, the fences must be placed to maximize safety. An abrupt incline or decline and fences placed on the wrong spot of a hill can be dangerous. "They want forgiving and gentle rolling hills," he says.

Cullen adds that because spectators are a big part of keeping steeplechasing alive, easy access and easy viewing for spectators is an important factor. Tracks such as the Green Creek track that offer easy traffic flow and a spectacular 360-degree view are an excellent draw.

"So many components go into a successful horse and rider team," Cullen says. "It's a combination of luck, skill, perseverance and persistence. You also need a good racetrack that brings out the best."

Graham Watters celebrates a win in Charleston, SC.



Steeplechase historian and Tryon resident, James Cullen (left) and his wife Nancy (right) take part in a 2017 steeplechase demonstration at Canterbury Park in Shakopee, Minn.

### Behind the Scenes —

Preparing and maintaining a race course requires many hands and many hours. For months, the course is nurtured through fertilization, aeration, appropriate cutting, and other carefully honed (and sometimes expensive) methods, to make the course as perfect as possible for the horse and rider's comfort and safety.

Two on-course veterinarians and two fully equipped horse ambulances are on hand during the running of each race. Additionally, horses are examined by veterinarians well-versed

in determining pre-race fitness. If there is any concern, the appropriate stakeholders are notified, and the Presiding Steward decides the outcome. This veterinarian review happens twice before each race, ensuring that horses are ready to run.

Back at the barn is a dedicated veterinarian for equine safety and, for jockeys, two fully equipped ALS ambulances and four paramedic groups on gators are strategically placed around the race course. As always, the safety of every event is a top priority for everyone.

## More than Just Races! Nourishing Historical Treasures for Future Generations

Mark your calendars for an exciting day of fun for kids and grown ups. Spectators can claim their spot when gates open at 10 a.m. Once you've unpacked your tailgate food and gear, visit the infield Kid's Zone to search for Easter eggs, take a carriage ride or compete in relay races. Activities for the entire family will keep everyone entertained before the races start at 1 p.m.

"That's only a partial list of the fun activities we've planned," says Angie Millon, Tryon Riding & Hunt Club president. "We'll have a fancy hat and pants contest with prizes, pony rides, and corn hole games.

Anyone can compete and it will be fun to watch, whether you compete or not!"

With the addition of activities and vendors in the in-field, this year's races promise to be a bit different from recent races. "We wanted to create a country fair atmosphere where this historic event will have something fun for everyone—regardless of age," she says.

"It's time the tradition returns," says Millon. "Frankly, it's a treasure for our community to have such a prestigious event in our own backyard. It's time to re-embrace it!"



PHOTO COURTESY OF TIEC



# Let the Fun Begin!

## Horse and Hound Show Returns – Bigger and Better

TR&HC's historic Horse and Hound Show returns for its second year following a decades long hiatus. This year the horse show has expanded to two full days, April 23-34. Saturday will be a traditional full day of horse showing, and Sunday will be reserved for the derbies which include a \$2,500 TR&HC Derby, and a \$1,500 Tryon Horse and Home Derby. Plus, this year, a \$500 Fox Hunter Challenge Derby will be sponsored by the Tryon Hounds.

Special custom-made trophies and neck sashes will be awarded for each derby. A "Best Turned Out Award" will be given in the \$2,500 TR&HC derby. The winner will receive a hand-crafted halter from Tryon's Sandhurst Leatherworks. Lastly, a \$1,000 bonus will be split and awarded to the top three junior/amateur riders in the \$2,500 TR&HC derby.

The Horse and Hound Show was reintroduced last spring on an unseasonably cold and rainy April Saturday, forcing a move to FENCE's covered arena. The weather did not dampen the competitors' enthusiasm however, as over 50 horse and riders competed in the two novelty derby classes. The feedback was universally positive – the beautiful courses, the special ribbons, and trophies.

This year, after months of careful planning, the show promises a good time with strong competition. Once again, the derby courses will be lush and colorful.

### Hound Show

The historic Hound Show is set for Saturday, April 23 with the first class starting at 8 a.m. A full slate of traditional classes is planned. Ribbons, trophies, and custom-made championship platters will be awarded. This



unsanctioned show precedes the big, sanctioned shows taking place in May.

Judges for the Hound Show are Jordan Hicks of Piedmont Hounds, and Larry and Peggy Pitts of Bedford Hound. The Hound Show organizing committee includes Gerald Pack and Tot and Colleen Goodwin and committee chair Terry Lynch.

Starting Saturday at 5 p.m., TR&HC will host the Carter Brown BBQ. Admission is free for TR&HC members. Tickets will be available at the show office for \$10 per plate for exhibitors. As is

usual the public is welcome. Tickets can be purchased at the door until the food runs out!

Photographer Liz Crawley will be on hand to capture special moments from riders, trainers, and families.

For more information and prize list, visit [Harmonclassics.com](http://Harmonclassics.com)



THE TR&HC

*Carter Brown*

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Saturday

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## LOCAL LEGEND: JOEY CABANISS

by Leigh Borreson

## Boots on the Ground Rather than Seat in the Saddle

Joey Cabaniss is a volunteer extraordinaire! As Joey is always quick to tell you, he loves being around people and horses; volunteering has allowed him to do both. For years he has helped with pony club events, cross country and Block House Steeplechase, to name a few. His humility, personality and sense of humor have made him a favorite wherever he goes. "All I can tell you is that volunteering is fun, fun, fun!"



Joey grew up in Shelby, N.C. in a golfing family, but he remembers that he always had a pony to ride – so Joey was a mainstay in the annual Christmas Parade. Joey fell in love with Western Carolina after driving up to look at a car for sale ("It was a sports car that I couldn't afford, but I really wanted to see it"). That led him to move to Tryon, where he's been living and volunteering for over 30 years. He retired from Polk County after 21 years as a Senior Property Appraiser. "It was great! I got to look at some beautiful farms and barns."

Joey took up fox hunting in the 70s and bought his favorite and best horse from Vic Russell. "Vic told me I wouldn't be a good customer if I bought this horse – he said I'd never need to come back for another one." Joey remembers. He started out hunting with Tryon Hounds and said he just loved the atmosphere and being around the horses. He earned his colors with them in '84. "I loved it! I fell off every Saturday – I thought that was part of the game." Joey said that over the years, he's always been impressed with the horse owners and riders in our area. "Their loyalty and dedication to their horses is amazing!"

Joey no longer rides, but is now a road whip for Tot Goodman and Goodman Hounds. "I've had some great experiences with Tot. He's all about the hounds," Joey recalls. Tot says he and Joey have been friends for about 30 years, "Joey is my right hand man at the hunt. He'll do anything he can to help – he is one of those people who is serious about everything he does." They both vividly recall the time that Tot called Joey on a Saturday night after 9 p.m. "Tot told me 'we've got to find that hound,'" Joey says. They finally located the hound who was trapped on a ledge jutting out above the Green River. They found a rope and Joey tied it to himself and a tree before tying it around Tot to lower him down the cliff. Tot was able to get to the



**Saturday  
April 16th**

**Tickets & Info:  
[Tryon.com/Steeplechase](http://Tryon.com/Steeplechase)**

Horses | Tailgating | Beer Garden | Food Trucks  
Kids Games | Pony Rides | Easter Egg Hunt | Contests





hound, and with some effort, Joey pulled both Tot and the pooch back up the cliff. “We realized afterward that it could have gone very wrong!”

The Block House Steeplechase is absolutely Joey’s favorite event and through the decades, he’s worked many positions. “You get to see people that you haven’t seen in years. In the old days, people partied and visited and didn’t leave until Sunday.” A close second on his list is the *Any and All Dog Show*. “I loved working with them – folks just love their dogs and are so proud of them!” Joey says one of the most satisfying things about volunteering is watching the children.

“The kids aren’t usually worried about winning ribbons, but are just so excited simply to be riding or presenting their pets,” he says.

Joey has simple advice if you want to volunteer: “Go find something you really enjoy and maybe know a little about – then go get involved with a group, any group that needs you. There are so many different options in our area. I’m thankful for all the people who help – it is very rewarding. Tradition is important... and volunteering is a tradition we need to make sure to continue.”



*“Go find something you really enjoy and get involved with a group that needs you...”*

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# The Art of Hauling Horses

by Catherine Hunter



“It’s not about what you can pull. It’s what you can stop,” says Ken Feagin, owner of Ken Feagin Truck and Trailer in Campobello. Feagin has been helping local and long-distance horse owners find the right trailer for 45 years.

He says it’s important to match the gross weight and the tongue weight of the trailer to the tow capacity of the vehicle. Gross weight rating includes the total weight of the horses, hay, tack, etc. The vehicle tow capacity can be found on its title.

Owners also need to consider the load bearing weight, and the condition of the trailer tires. Kenneth Stott, owner of Larry Stott’s Garage in Columbus, says trailer tires should not be kept longer than five years—regardless of how they look. He also recommends getting the advice of a trailer professional regarding the load bearing rating for the tires.

“Even though the tires might be really expensive, they may not be designed for trailers,” Stott says. “Trailers don’t have the suspension of vehicles, so trailer tires take more abuse than vehicle tires, especially on rough roads.”

In addition to being sure their vehicle and tires can handle the load, drivers need to consider maintaining a safe rate of speed for the road conditions, and keeping enough distance from the car in front, to allow for smooth, safe stops.

“There’s an art to hauling horses,” Feagin says. “Drive as if you have a cup of water on the floor. We can see the road and know what to expect. The horse doesn’t.”

Other safety measures include protecting the

horses from debris flying from the road by keeping windows closed or using the window face guards on the trailer. Horses should never be allowed to stick their heads out the windows when the trailer is in motion. Feagin also recommends hauling any flammables or chemicals in the truck rather than the trailer with the horses.

Feagin suggests printing out a checklist to use every time a driver hitches up. Some items on the check list include checking ball size, securing the hitch with a safety pin, checking all lights and doing a visual check to be sure the trailer is level. On gooseneck hitches, check the latches and pins, and check for enough clearance so that it won’t hit the truck.

Crossing the safety chains is a law in many states. If the trailer jumps off the ball, crossed safety chains can cradle the hitch, preventing it from digging into the ground, causing the trailer to flip. For complete checklists, see the sidebar.

Stott agrees with Feagin that checklists are very important, and he cautions drivers to not get distracted when hitching up. “No matter how many times you do it [hitch up the trailer], never take it for granted,” he says. “It seems so simple that people lose respect for it.”



Both Feagin and Stott say routine trailer maintenance is a must. Stott, who has been servicing the local horse community since 2000, says the most important maintenance is servicing and packing the trailer axle bearings at least once a year regardless of frequency of use.

In addition to maintaining the bearings, Feagin says trailer owners should remove urine and manure after every trip and check the floor for soundness.

For more information, visit Larry Stott’s Garage on Facebook and Ken Feagin Truck and Trailer at [kftrailer.com](http://kftrailer.com).



PHOTO: CATHERINE HUNTER

Feagin recommends running a checklist that includes the hitch and the lights, each time a horse owner prepares to haul their trailer; clean the urine and manure out of the trailer after each trip and check the floor regularly; and remember to haul all flammables such as gas and other chemicals in the truck rather than in the tackroom of the trailer with the horses.

## CHECKLIST FOR TRAILER SAFETY:

1. Check ball size – most of today’s trailers are two inch or 2 5/16 inches.
2. Secure the hitch with a safety pin.
3. Criss-cross the safety chains.
4. Be sure chains are not dragging and are long enough for turns. Shorten chains by twisting.
5. Check that all lights are working properly.
6. Be sure light cord is secure, not dragging or touching the ground, and allows enough length for turns.
7. Do a visual check to be sure the trailer is level.
8. Tie hay nets high enough horses won’t get their feet caught in them.
9. Keep windows closed or use the window face guards on the trailer to protect horses.
10. Tie horses with slip knots or quick release snaps affixed on the trailer side with the regular snap attached to the horses’ halters.
11. Do a final check of all latches, doors, tires, etc.

## FOR GOOSENECK HITCHES:

1. Check that all latches and pins are secure.
2. Check there is enough clearance so that it won’t hit the truck.
3. Be careful of your feet when hitching up and adjusting the hitch – the sleeve can drop down quickly.



YOUNG RIDER: HOPE SPRINGHART by Catherine Hunter

# Life Lessons Learned from Riding

Perseverance, resilience and life lessons are what 15-year-old Hope Springhart says she gets from riding. Though she lives in Greenville, Springhart takes lessons with Katie and Stephen Pack of KS Sport Horses in Columbus.



“When life gets stressful with school and everything, I can take that break and get away to Tryon,” Springhart says. “It’s my home away from home.”

Springhart started riding at age seven at a barn in Greenville. She discovered the Packs two years ago and has been riding with them ever since. She likes to ride with them because they really emphasize that the horse always comes first. “Not a lot of people do that all the time,” she says.

Springhart has been showing in the children’s hunter classes in the Tryon area for a couple of years. Her current goal is to win the Taylor Harris Insurance Services

Springhart says her Dutch Warmblood, Charmeur, is very sweet with a puppy dog personality.

PHOTO: SARAH RABB PHOTOGRAPHY

National Children’s Medal. She says she likes to show, because, like riding, it’s a challenge. “Riding has so many high and low points,” she says, adding that showing helps her with her mental game and gives her the focus to fix her mistakes.

“Wanting to fix mistakes gives you grit and determination,” she says. “Being able to come back from the low points is really incredible.”

In September 2020, after leasing horses for a few years, Springhart got a 15-year-old Dutch Warmblood named Charmeur. She describes “Charm” as having a puppy dog personality and always wanting to do his best to please. “His barn nick name is ‘The Creeper,’” she says. “He’ll come up behind you and before you know he’s there, he’ll have his head in your arms.” Springhart is aspiring to a career in the equestrian industry. “I’m very interested in journalism,” she says. “Working alongside horses would be fun.”



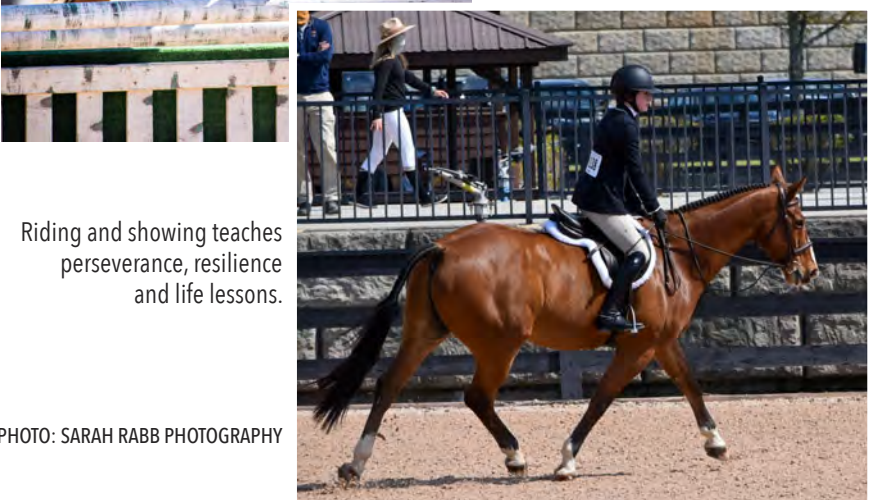
Springhart and her Dutch Warmblood, Charmeur, win in the children’s hunter division at the Tryon International Equestrian Center. Shown from left to right, Stephen Pack, Katie Pack, Eduardo Aguilar, Charmeur, Hope Springhart.



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Though she lives in Greenville, showing in the Tryon area is like coming home.



Riding and showing teaches perseverance, resilience and life lessons.

PHOTO: SARAH RABB PHOTOGRAPHY



# Charity I and II: Set for Another Spectacular Round of Shows

by Joanne Gibbs

Mark your calendars for June 7-12 and July 12-17 for the TR&HC Charity I and II Horse Shows respectively to be held at the Tryon International Equestrian Center.

Last year's Charity I and II drew competitors from across the country. July's Charity II sold out with approximately 1,000 horses vying for top prizes during the five day competition.

These two shows stand out in TIEC's roster of shows. "For one, they are benefit shows supporting local charities" explains Angie Millon, TR&HC president and show organizer. "Plus, we try to keep the small-town warmth, hospitality and sense of community that the TR&HC shows are known for." Riders as well as spectators see this with the naturally decorated

hunter course, the goody bags, special receptions, the welcoming effort, the photography and the perpetual trophy awards presentations.

"Thanks to our partnership with TIEC, TR&HC's A-rated shows can thrive and grow as they continue to positively impact on our local economy," Millon says.



- *Charity II began in 2003 and last year marked its 17th consecutive year.*
- *The Charity I Show, first held in 1926, was designated in 2019 as one of its Heritage Horse Shows by the U.S. Equestrian Federation.*
- *Each year, TR&HC donates to local equestrian and community charities during the Saturday night Grand Prix events held on each of the Charity Shows' weekends.*

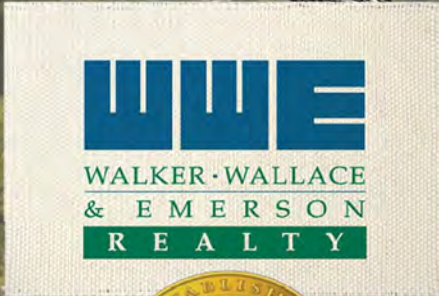



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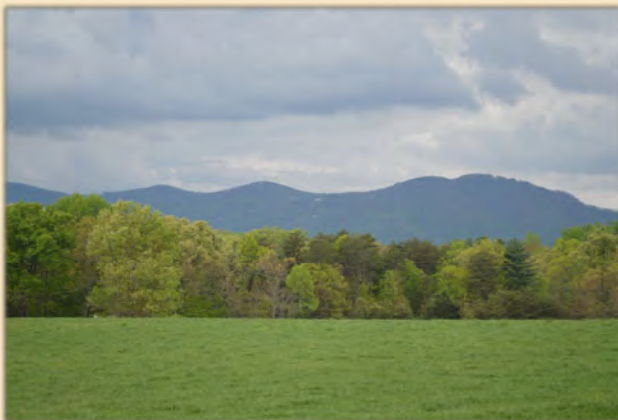
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## Spring Grazing and Laminitis Risk

by Cassie LeMaster



Polk County Equine,  
Livestock & Forage  
Agent Cassie LeMaster

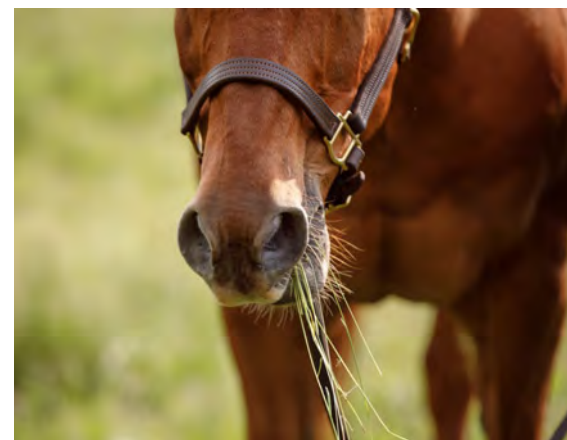
Spring grazing is often associated with laminitis concerns for many area horse owners. Cool season grasses, such as fescue, are

most often the culprit in pasture-associated laminitis cases

because the sugar these grasses store during photosynthesis isn't self-limiting. Depending on environmental conditions, non-structural carbohydrates (NSCs), mostly in the form of fructan\*, can accumulate in the plant. Excess accumulation of NSCs can occur when cool nighttime temperatures restrict the plant's

ability to utilize the sugar made and stored during the warm, sunny days (conditions that occur in spring and fall). For horses considered high-risk for developing laminitis, such as those that are easy keepers, overweight, are insulin resistant, or have Cushings, grazing fescue or other cool-season forages may need to be avoided all together in spring and fall. Both grazing muzzles and dry lot turnout may be options to reduce forage consumption in these horses, while still allowing for exercise. Feeding a lower calorie/mature hay before turn-out could also help prevent horses from gorging. It's important to monitor body condition in these at-risk horses to prevent excess weight gain.

Although encouraging pasture growth may seem counter-intuitive, proper pasture management is important to reducing NSC content in these forages. Overgrazed pastures expose the base of the plant, where most of the fructan is stored, to grazing horses. Maintaining pastures in a state of growth, with proper fer-



tilization and by maintaining a height of at least 4-6 inches is a good practice to reduce forage NSCs.

Well-maintained pastures can be an excellent resource, reducing feed and hay costs, providing much-needed free exercise for your horse(s), and reducing pollution from run-off. Many young horses, those that are lean and fit, and many without any previous laminitis episodes can graze safely in the spring, but remain aware of any changes in behavior or weight gain. Feet of grazing horses can also be monitored for heat and/or a digital pulse, indicating a potential laminitis episode. Horses that have been on pasture 24/7 throughout the winter generally adapt as the pasture composition gradually changes. If you're introducing a horse to a new pasture or if grazing has been limited through the winter, start by allowing the horse to graze for one hour then increase by 30 min every few days until a total time of four hours is reached. Grazing should be initiated early in the morning, when NSC content is the lowest. If you suspect your horse may be insulin-resistant, consult with your veterinarian.

\*A type of carbohydrate formed by a chain of fructose molecules found in certain grasses and fruits.

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## The FARM HOUSE



# 50 Years of Steeplechase Memories

## A Tribute to Joan Lonnes

As the oldest steeplechase in North Carolina, nearly a century of tradition surrounds the Tryon Block House Races - the historic steeplechase of Tryon Riding and Hunt Club - attracting generations of families who have attended not just for years, but for decades. For 50 years, Joan Lonnes of Tryon, NC, who sadly passed away in 2020, had attended the historic steeplechase since 1969. Outranking all current attendees as the longest consecutive participant, her memories of the event were captured in an interview with TIEC shortly before her passing.

“We moved down here with my husband’s work, and one of his associates who also lived in Tryon invited us to the steeplechase in 1969. Of course, we enjoyed it. We moved here with a horse, one pony and two children, and my husband also rode with the hounds. We enjoyed

steeplechase so much that we decided immediately that we needed to get our own group together, and we have done it every year since,” explained Lonnes.

Lonnes credited her late husband, Wolfgang, for starting their steeplechase family tradition that grew to include friends extending three generations:

“My husband was the one who started [to extend] our group beyond family. Of course, our children were little when we moved here and now they are in their 50s, so that was the nucleus of our guest list, and some of those original people are still coming. We now have a third generation coming, because my husband’s friend’s daughter came as a small tot and now she comes with her own daughter,” shared Lonnes.



Lonnes encouraged people to attend with friends or family, and enjoy this event she treasured for a remarkable 50 years: “Our group loves to attend; they don’t hesitate to do it. I’m so lucky this started with an associate from my husband’s work.”



Generations of fans have enjoyed the famous hat contest.



Hosted by Tryon International Equestrian Center & Resort, this historic steeplechase will celebrate its 74th running on Saturday, April 16, 2022. Tickets to the 74th Tryon Riding & Hunt Club Block House Races are on sale now at [Tryon.com/steeplechase](http://Tryon.com/steeplechase).



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### SPOTLIGHT ON NEW FACES

by Margaret Freeman

# After a Star Spangled Career, Dr. Rick Mitchell Comes Home

When Dr. Rick Mitchell says he's "been all over the world because of the horse," that's an understatement. Retirement has now brought him to Flat Rock, N.C., but he's continuing many of the activities that have earned him an international reputation in equine veterinary medicine.

Mitchell was the vet for the USET dressage team at six Olympic Games. He's been president of the American Association of Equine Practitioners and on the Board of Directors of the USEF and American Horse Council. He's delivered lectures all over the world and currently heads the development council of the Foundation for the Horse.

Mitchell co-owned a renowned equine practice, Fairfield Equine, in Newtown, Conn., for 30 years and still retains part ownership. He and his wife Julie spend winters in Wellington, Fla., and now the rest of the year in the North Carolina foothills.

"I still enjoy the practice and horse shows," says Mitchell. "I didn't want to disappear into the sunset. I wouldn't be happy just retiring. We both enjoy the mountains."

Mitchell grew up on a horse farm in Greensboro, North Carolina and showed hunters. He graduated from NC State before vet school at Oklahoma State and has maintained a license in North Carolina ever since. Mitchell says he's now doing "mostly lameness and performance-related consultations." Julie, who



was hospital manager at Fairfield and traveled with the USET for vet support, still coordinates his activities.

Mitchell says the Foundation for the Horse is doing "cutting edge research that will actually help the horse." It aids equine victims of disasters such as floods and fires and also helps vet students with debt. "We're losing equine practitioners to small-animal practice because of school debt: If you're going to be a horse doctor, you're going to work a lot," he says.



Mitchell conducting an ultrasound



In the early 90s, Mitchell owned and showed "Cool Twist" in the amateur owned division. Photo by James Parker, in Wellington at WEF.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Steeplechase races may have begun in Ireland in the 18th century. It is believed that the riders would race to identified structures such as a church steeple.



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## TR&HC GIVING

# Outreach: Helping Hands • Caring Hearts

TR&HC is committed to supporting the area’s charitable and civic causes. Through our Philanthropy program, TR&HC focuses its giving on local programs that support important needs in our community.

In this edition, we focus on Outreach (formerly Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry). Outreach is a 501(c)(3) crisis aid organization located in Columbus, N.C. Serving Polk County for 25 years, their mission is to provide compassionate assistance to any Polk County resident who does not have the resources to provide for their basic life needs. Their services and programs are distributed with care and respect for their clients.

At the heart of Outreach is their client choice food pantry. With food insecurity being on the rise, especially in rural communities, food assistance is a key priority. In addition to the food pantry, the Feed-a-Kid Program and Summer Feed-a-Kid Program work with local schools and churches to provide food bags for nutritionally at-risk children.

Financial assistance is available to individuals and families to help meet current basic needs; rent/mortgage, utilities, prescriptions, healthcare and more. Seasonal programs include the Feed-a-Kid school backpack program, school supply distribution and Holiday program.

*Over the last seven years, the Club has increased community donations from an average of \$25,000 to \$50,000 per year.*

Outreach also hosts the annual fundraising event “Empty Bowls.” This event is a collaborative, community effort that raises money for the Outreach food pantry. For each donation made, a guest receives a bowl made by a local artisan and samples soups and bread made by local restaurants and bakeries. Outreach partners with the Tryon Arts and Crafts School as well as local potters to coordinate and organize the efforts to create hundreds of handcrafted bowls that are given to guests. This event is a highlight for

both residents and businesses alike. Outreach accomplishes all of this with local support and dedicated volunteers.

If you are interested in supporting Outreach, either through volunteering or a financial donation, please contact Outreach at 828-894-2988 or visit [www.tboutreach.org](http://www.tboutreach.org).



Outreach has over 7,000 visits each year from Polk County neighbors requesting assistance — and from school supplies to healthy meals, they deliver.



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## Anna Ruby Whitmire Wins Steeplechase Poster Art Contest

In a successful effort to tap into local young talent, the TR&HC asked local student artists to participate in an art contest to create the official 2022 poster for the 74th Block House Steeplechase. Area high school and college students were encouraged to participate. The winning poster is done in markers and colored pencil, rendering three horses in mid stride over brush, by Anna Ruby Whitmire,



Anna Ruby Whitmire

a freshman at Converse, Greenville, S.C.. Anna Ruby says "I am so incredibly excited about this! Several people told me about the contest but I wasn't sure I could make the deadline. I'm very glad I decided to do it. This is just awesome!"

Anna Ruby's winning work of art will become part of the iconic history of the Block House Steeplechase and will join an impressive collection representing the past 74 Block House Steeplechases, explains Leigh Borreson, TR&HC executive director. The winner received a cash prize of \$1,000. Additionally, the winner also receives tickets to the Block House Steeplechase. The

second place winner (Maren Penn, 18, Easley and a senior at Easley High School) received a \$500 check; and the third place winner (Kaitlin Bell, 17, Moore, S.C., in 11th grade at James F. Byrnes High School) received \$250.



Above, Maren Penn's second place block print and Kaitlin Bell's third place pastel.

"One of the Club's objectives is to sponsor programs that not only engage the community, but also teach a younger generation about traditions that are worth nurturing – and certainly the Block House Steeplechase is one of our local treasures." Borreson says.

## TRYON RIDING AND HUNT CLUB EQUESTRIAN GRANT PROGRAM

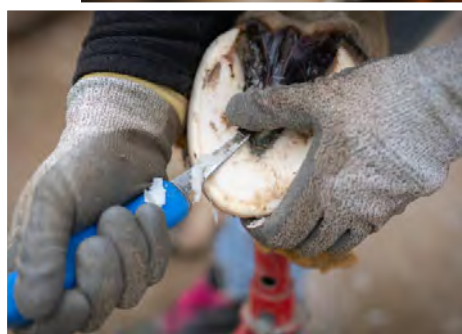
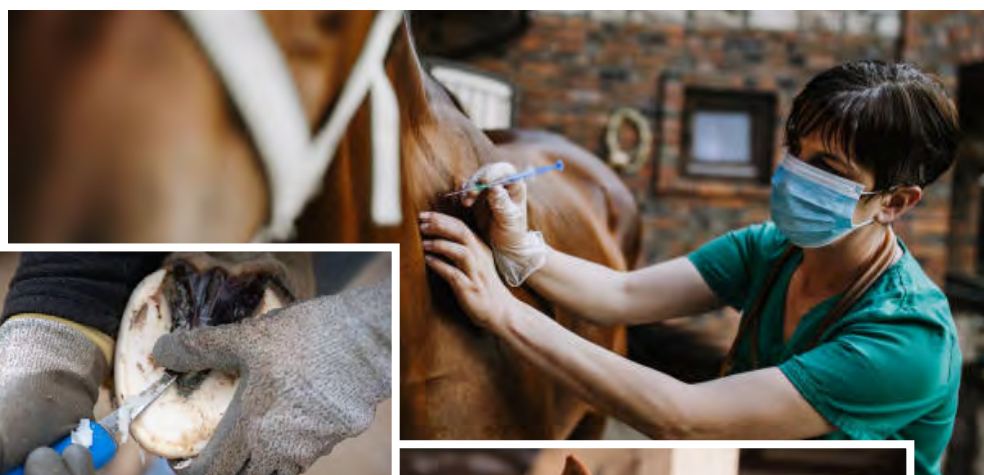
### Need Financial Assistance for a Horse-Related Career?

The Equestrian Grant is designed to assist youth and adults in the Tryon area pursuing a career in the equestrian or related industry. The program was created for high school graduates interested in achieving certifications or licenses that will allow them to work in the equestrian field. Applicants should have a specific stated goal that includes a designated road map to follow in their pursuit.

The grant will be awarded twice a year in the spring and fall and is ideal for someone pursuing the highest levels of equestrian training, coaching, judging, business and stable management skills. Examples of programs the grant would support are EAP tuition, Farrier Certification, Judges Licensure and course building and design.

Applications may be submitted at any time during the year. Grant recipients will be asked to write a story about their experience and photographs are encouraged. Awards will be made based on the merit of the proposal and the quality of the application.

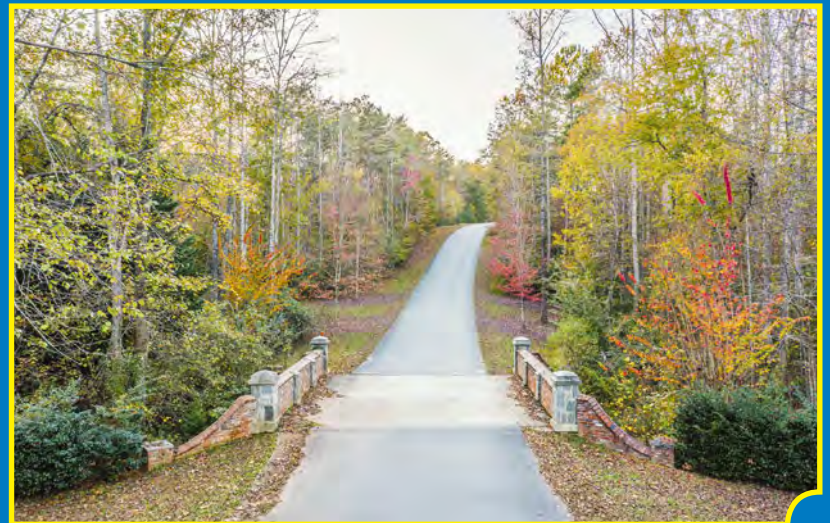
For more information, please visit our website: [tryonridingandhuntclub.org](http://tryonridingandhuntclub.org)





# Derbyshire

is an exclusive, gated and secure, family-friendly equestrian community.



## 61 Taddington Circle New Construction Ready in May

In keeping with Derbyshire's high standards, this under-construction, single-level home consists of 3,100 square feet with an attached 3-car garage. There are three bedrooms, plus a 4th bedroom over the garage, and 4-1/2 baths. The house is tucked away within a spacious, private, 2-acre lot. The home is an elegant, open concept design. The professionally designed interior includes a vaulted ceiling and a fireplace in the living room, custom shaker-style cabinetry and millwork throughout; quartz countertops; red oak hardwood flooring; 8' solid core doors; tiled bathrooms; LG Studio appliance package; and there's even a dog shower in the mudroom! Landscaping will include a fire pit with a seating area. There is still time to customize, and professional interior design consultation is available courtesy of Mapleton Lane Custom Homes. The expected completion date is May 2022. \$949,000



## Derbyshire Community A safe haven for families and horses

Derbyshire is an exclusive, gated and secure, family-friendly community. The centerpiece is a gorgeous 33-acre lake shared by all residents. Beautiful, paved, low-traffic streets are ideal for walking or leisurely biking. There are walking/riding trails around the entire perimeter of the 263 acres that comprise the development. As well as serving family needs, Derbyshire is a fantastic equestrian community. It offers individual paddocks, a community barn, an outdoor dressage ring, access to the CETA trail system, and connectivity to FETA trails, providing access to more than 165 miles of maintained trails. At the barn, you can perform your own tasks, or if you would like to ease the workload, hired attendants are available throughout the area. If you work from home, there is high-speed fiber-optic internet. Derbyshire is located in the heart of Green Creek District, a few minutes from Tryon, Landrum, Columbus, and Interstate-26. The Tryon International Equestrian Center is only five miles down the road.

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## TR&HC Scholarships Continue for 2022 *by Donna Younkin*

The Tryon Riding & Hunt Club is pleased to announce that it will be awarding college scholarships totaling \$6,500 in 2022. **Applications are due by April 15.**

The availability of these scholarships is a long-standing tradition that is in keeping with the Club's core values of philanthropy and service to the community while preserving and enhancing its equestrian heritage.

Successful scholarship applicants will be from Polk, Henderson, Rutherfordton, Spartanburg, or Greenville counties. Both graduating high school seniors and students currently enrolled in a college or university are invited to apply, with preference given to those graduating from high school.

The amount of the scholarship award may vary but will be at least \$500. Successful applicants will be a member of a recognized local or national equestrian organization or they may be

actively participating in the equine industry in our area. Financial need is also a consideration.

An applicant's volunteer efforts will also be reviewed, and awardees may be asked to volunteer at a 2022 event. Applicants may not be related to any current member of the TR&HC Board of Directors or employed by TR&HC.

**Applications are available at [tryonridingandhuntclub.org](http://tryonridingandhuntclub.org).** As part of the process, a financial need statement and interview may be requested. Awards will be announced in May.

TR&HC President Angie Millon explains, "The scholarship program supports local students as they further their education. And it does so in a way that incorporates the student's role in sustaining the local equestrian community. We are ready to be inspired by the 2022 applicants."

## Carolina Carriage Club in Full Swing 2022

*By Charleen Snyder, CCC VP*

The new Board is busy working on upcoming events, clinics, and our Pleasure Show. Check out the Carolina Carriage Club Facebook page for the most current details on new events as well as those below and educational posts.

### January 22nd new officers elected:

President, Robin Fahnle  
 VP, Charleen Snyder  
 Secretary, Jennifer Gruhn  
 Treasurer, Lara Smithson  
 Members at Large, Carol Ann Burns and Rebecca (Becky) Ginn



(l to r) Carol Ann Burns, Charleen Snyder, Robyn Fahnle, Jennifer Gruhn and Rebecca Ginn.

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