



# The HorseCountry Quarterly

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRYON RIDING & HUNT CLUB



## 75 Years of Steeplechase Traditions

*Bringing Community Together with Fun for the Whole Family*

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PHOTO MONICA STEVENSON

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TR&HC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Ready for the Races?



I hope everyone has seen our “Think Spring” billboard advertising this year's Block House Steeplechase as you enter Tryon. The Block House Steeplechase has been a Tryon spring tradition for decades. For many, the Block House is synonymous with spring. It's a chance to enjoy an amazing day of horse sport decked out in your best spring finery, surrounded by a few thousand friends and family. It is a visual extravaganza of colors and sounds. The tailgating ranges from extravagant catered spreads to picnic baskets brimming with family favorites.

There is something for everyone from the heritage members who have attended the steeplechase for as long as they can remember, to first-timers.

This year will not disappoint, and in addition to the feature races and the pomp and circumstance, there is an infield full of activities for kids of all ages. The newly-expanded “Kids’ Zone” will have a Gold Rush (think Easter egg hunt with gold nuggets), pony rides, face painters, a magician, a balloonist, kids’ games, food trucks and local vendors.

Count this as your official invitation to enter the “Fancy Hat” and “Go to Heck Pants” contests!

Please call up your friends and family and join us on Saturday April 15th for a day to remember. Mark your calendar, make memories, establish new family traditions, and join in on the fun...I hope to see you there.

*Angie Millon*

Angie Millon  
President, Tryon Riding & Hunt Club

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**Horse Country Calendar**

- April 14: Block House Pre-Race Party
- April 15: 75th Block House Steeplechase
- April 21-23: TR&HC Horse & Hound Show
- June 6-11: 95th Annual TR&HC Charity Horse Show/ Spring 6 TIEC
- June 9: Carolinas Show Hunter Hall of Fame Induction / TIEC
- July 4-9: TR&HC Charity II Horse Show/ Summer 4
- Sept. 22-23: Schooling Days
- Oct. 21-22: 48th Morris the Horse Trials
- Nov. 5: 90th Any & All Dog Show

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

### Laughable! Steeplechase or Bust!

Even the kids take the fancy hat contest seriously!

Do you have your special hat and crazy pants ready to show off on April 15th?

We want to see your silly steeplechase photos.

Send it to us at: [office@trhc1925.org](mailto:office@trhc1925.org) and let us share it with our readers.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

### Who Has Spring Fever? I Do, I Do!

Spring is here and that means gladly packing up winter gear and relishing the warmer weather, unless you were already soaking up rays in Florida for winter competition! And what better way to enjoy the season than outdoors with fellow horse lovers watching equestrian sport? For the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC), the season launches the year's return of several beloved traditions beginning with everyone's favorite tailgating event, the 75th Tryon Block House Races on April 15th!



Spring also ushers in the historic TR&HC Horse & Hound Show on April 22-23 and concludes with many celebrations and riders vying for top honors and perpetual trophies at the 95th annual TR&HC Charity Horse Show/Tryon Spring 6 competition hallmarked by the Carolinas Show Hunter Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony.

So, whether you are gearing up for spring competition or preparing your tailgating menu, fancy hat and tabletop decorations, or just ready to trail ride without a toboggan, I hope you and your horses have a wonderful spring!

*Michelle Yelton*

Michelle Yelton  
Editorial Director

## 75th Tryon Block House Steeplechase Returns April 15th Pre-Race Gala April 14th at TFAC

### Racing or Tailgating - Which Do Steeplechase Fans Love More?

Is it daring jockeys and intrepid horses that bring steeplechase fans back year after year for 75 years or the full day of tailgating on a gorgeous spring day with family and friends?

“To think that this is in our backyard is absolutely amazing. The races have been fabulous, the food is fabulous, and the drinks are even better!” shared local attendee Mindy Weiner, who lives right around the corner from Green Creek Race Course.



Beyond the excitement of the actual races, fans come out to enjoy tailgating, the fancy hat & pants contest and a variety of in-field activities for children and adults.

Her first time at the Tryon Block House Steeplechase at the Green Creek Race Course, Deb Schiedle from Arden, N.C., raved about the sport. “It's my first time at a steeplechase, but not my first time around horses. The condition of the horses, the jockeys, the facility is just amazing. I'm hooked, I love it!”

The answers are varied, but the consensus is always the same — the Block House Races are worth going to every single year.

The Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) will kick off the weekend on Friday, April 14 with the Pre-Race Gala at the Tryon Fine Arts Center. Dinner, beer and wine will be served alongside an auction, prizes and entertainment. The cost to attend the Pre-Race Gala is \$50 per person for TR&HC members and \$75 per person for non-members. Limited seating is available.

Then, it's on to tailgating and racing on Saturday, April 15th. TR&HC members are invited to the Club's hospitality tent located at the finish line for complimentary food and drinks.

TR&HC is also hosting an even bigger Kids' Zone with free pony rides, face painting, a magician, and musical performances by PacJam. There will also be a “Gold Rush” treasure hunt and a “Touch a Truck” exhibit, plus vendors for shopping.



PHOTO BY MONICA STEVENSON



PHOTO BY MARK JUMP

The official 2023 Tryon Block House Steeplechase poster will be for sale at the TR&HC hospitality tent on race day. Steeplechase tickets can be purchased at [Tryonsteeplechase.com](http://Tryonsteeplechase.com).

### Did You Know?

*A steeplechase horse's lineage must be proven through official Jockey Club registration papers. Most start competing in the steeplechase at four years old and continue until they're ten or eleven.*

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TR&HC President .....Angie Millon  
Editorial Director .....Michelle Yelton  
Art Director .....Stephen Bleezarde  
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### And the Winner is... Sara Bailey!

Tryon Riding and Hunt Club named Sara Bailey the winner of the 2023 Steeplechase Art Contest. Bailey, a 19-year-old from Spartanburg, S.C., has focussed her art on painting for most of the last six years after enjoying drawing in her childhood.

“I mainly work in oils, but I also really enjoy watercolors and colored pencils,” shared Bailey.

The Converse University student is studying studio art and recently held a personal exhibition at Spartanburg Methodist College during their Junior Artist Project, an art program focused on highlighting fine artists within Spartanburg County's seven districts.



Bailey's depiction of the Block House Races has been integrated into a poster promoting this year's steeplechase. A framed print of the artwork will be auctioned off at the Steeplechase Pre-Race Gala on Friday, April 14. Posters can also be purchased for \$20 at the Pre-Race Gala or Steeplechase or by contacting the TR&HC at 828-351-9709 or [office@trhc1925.org](mailto:office@trhc1925.org).



NEW FACES: ANNA TWINNEY

by Michelle Yelton

# Community Welcomes Skilled Horse Whisper

For Polk County, Anna Twinney is a new face, but to thousands around the world—humans and horses—she is a lifesaver. Formerly in the traditional emergency and rescue field, Twinney served with the British Police Force for almost seven years, a career that led her on a path to communicate with horses and unexpectedly propelled her into a career teaching the world about natural horsemanship.

Her Whispering Feather Farm in Polk County offers natural horsemanship certification courses, energy healing retreats and animal communication workshops. She also boards rescued and retired horses as part of her mission that “no horse is left behind.” She and her husband,



Just a few of the horses rescued as part of Twinney’s “No Horse Left Behind” mission.

PHOTOS MICHELLE YELTON



Anna Twinney with Excalibur, her herd leader.

An international equine specialist, natural horsemanship clinician, animal communicator, life coach and energy healer, Twinney has led over 1,000 clinics worldwide and makes an average of 50 appearances per year. She also helps hundreds of clients with all types of animal communication from helping an animal through its final stages of life to behavior modification.

Unlike most who discover their passion for horses as a child, it was a head-on car accident, combined with years of serving as an officer trained to investigate rape, child abuse and major incidents, that landed Twinney with a diagnosis of PTSD and a new connection to horses. She recovered alongside her palomino named Carrie, which led her to an internship, then a paid position with the world-renowned horse whisperer Monty Roberts in California.

“I went out to California, took a year sabbatical from the British police force with a vision to bring horse whispering back to the UK and into the police force,” explained Twinney. “I wanted to do life coaching, but I was way before my time. There was no such thing as equine coaching in those days. But I thought this could help with the bedside manner for victims and the police officers who served them.”

Her plan to spend six months studying with Roberts in California evolved to six years as she followed the call of the horse, taking a leap of faith.

After Roberts, Twinney worked for a wild Mustang sanctuary, teamed up with rescues, and tamed wild horses all over the globe including Mongolia, Australia, Europe and Canada. She was the first female natural horseman clinician to go into China and Mongolia and teach the Chinese endurance team natural horsemanship, having become recognized by British Royalty and the US Government as one of the premier professionals in the language of the horse.

Twinney’s current endeavors are three-fold:

Reach Out to Horses® (ROTH) is Twinney’s global enterprise designed to teach people the methodologies and concepts necessary to fully understand and work in the language of the horse through mindful movement, energetic connection and telepathic communication.

Vin, started the farm when they moved to the area from Colorado in 2020 during the pandemic.

And just last month Twinney launched The Way of the Equine Warrior, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which is the torch that spreads the light of compassion, collaboration and communication to the equine world.

“Those who become certified equine warriors in the ROTH methodologies also become the next generation of horse whisperers to venture into third world countries and make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate. I’ve been to Morocco, Mongolia, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, to infiltrate and improve the lives of horses. But this program allows me to take a team with me. We’ll go in, create change, come out and go help others.”

And they’ll do it again and again.

To learn more about Anna Twinney, her programs or to get involved, visit [www.ReachOutToHorses.com](http://www.ReachOutToHorses.com).

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YOUNG RIDER: SYDNEY LANGLEY

by Michelle Yelton

# “Picnicking” Her Way to Success

Hard work is paying off for 16-year-old dressage rider Sydney Langley of Tryon who recently earned her United States Dressage Federation (USDF) bronze medal at Winter Wonderland at Stable View this past December. Building on that momentum, this year Langley also earned the second level Junior Horse of the Year from the N.C. Dressage & Combined Training Association, as well as her H-rating in

*“I love that both of my horses show up every day ready to work, whether we are working on something hard that day or just going for an easy stroll.”*

the United States Pony Club (USPC), the highest level in horse management. Next, Langley has her eye on obtaining her A-rating in Dressage this summer, which would make her a complete A, the top rating in the USPC.

With a goal of riding on a Dressage team in college, and in hopes of one day entering the professional circuit, all of Langley’s free time is spent on the back of her 11-year-old competition horse, Picnic in the Park, aboard whom she claimed the bronze medal, and Pocket Change, her 21-year-old eventer.

Describing both as having “puppy dog personalities,” Langley, who was riding before she was walking, says her horses share her diligent work ethic.

“I love that both of my horses show up every day ready to work, whether we are working on something hard that day or just going for an easy stroll,” she said.

After spending four years training Picnic in the Park, who she calls Darby, the duo crossed a major milestone by earning their USDF bronze medal.

“When I got my final score towards my bronze medal, it was a sigh of relief because I’ve taken Darby from basically not being able to canter a circle



Above, Langley and Picnic in the Park earned their first USDF bronze medal in 2022.



Left, Langley with her eventing horse, Pocket Change.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

to getting my bronze medal, and it was like the end to a chapter, like a bow tie on the present.”

Realistic of the challenges that accompany a collegiate and professional riding journey, Langley’s plan is to learn as much as she can from her trainers and employ patience as she “figures out the logistics of it,” because the path to success has many steps.

Langley explained, “I hope to take my riding into college and beyond. I have a lot of passion for it, and I really enjoy the sport. I am working with [trainers] Ashley Perkins and JJ Tate and I’m getting a lot of experience that way, and I’m planning to go to our local community college for two years while I figure everything out.” And in the meantime, we expect we will continue to see Langley making headlines.




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# Elma Garcia: The Woman Behind the Award

by Leigh Borreson



Elma Garcia with her young mare, Fancy Pants.

“This is it!” That was Elma Garcia’s first thought upon visiting the Tryon area. She and husband Jim, who was a Master fox hunter in New York, had fallen in love with the beauty and serenity of the South when she competed at the Dressage finals in Lexington, Kentucky. They considered Aiken, but something was missing. Then, a realtor suggested they check out Tryon—since it offered the equestrian lifestyle they were looking for, as well as access to the superb golf they both enjoy. They were instantly smitten and quickly bought 65 acres on the Green River to build their horse farm from scratch.

“We fell in love with Tryon, its equestrian facilities and the scenic landscape, so we immediately immersed ourselves in the community and the culture,” shared Garcia.

You may recognize Garcia’s name from the Elma Garcia Award given annually by The Carolinas Show Hunter Hall of Fame to a top children’s or adult amateur horse.

When the Garcias first moved here, they attended the induction ceremony and were so enamored by the event and community that they bid on and won the naming rights to the unnamed Child/Adult Hunter Trophy. It was a way of giving back and Garcia returns year after year to present her trophy.

Although she is not a Hunter rider, her enthusiastic energy embodies the amateur spirit. “I have two passions: horses and filmmaking,” said Garcia. “Filmmaking was my career—how I would make money so I could turn around and spend it on my horses!”

Garcia grew up on an apple farm in the rural Northwest, competing in barrel racing until she left for college and stopped riding. Later, her successful career as a photographer and filmmaker meant life was too busy for horses. She was in her 40s when she took riding up again, this time to focus on Dressage.



Garcia and Furst Lady (above), and with Wenesa at the CDI in Wellington, FL (top right).

Garcia is most proud of her National Dressage Championship win with her mare Wenesa. “I love competing and getting all geared up for it! The championship was so much fun,” she said.

Garcia’s next goal is to compete at the Grand Prix level. Her trainer, David Hunt, has told her that when you pick up the reins, you pick up the horse’s mind. You have to be in the moment with the horse and be focused – you want the horse to be on your side. “David’s philosophy really inspires me.”

She feels that eventually, it comes down to the training. “It’s the training that excites me. It is so much fun to develop a horse! That’s creative! You are creating something beautiful ... I just love [training] and wouldn’t trade it for anything!”

# Olympian Dutton Donates Time for Eventing Clinic Proceeds Benefit Homeward Hounds

Twenty-four riders of all levels attended the exclusive Phillip Dutton Eventing Clinic where they trained under the seven-time Olympian, seven-time competitor at the FEI World Equestrian Games, and medalist at many of these competitions. While many top clinicians charge a rate of up to \$2,000-\$2,500 per clinic, Dutton donated his time to coach attendees on flat work, show jumping technique, and eventing skills. Dutton also gave a slide presentation of his Olympic experiences prior to a well attended dinner at Campagna Italian Cuisine.

The Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) was approached by the Homeward Hounds organization that wanted to host this clinic, but did not have the bandwidth to do it by themselves. With support from the Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC), the clinic was hosted at TIEC’s Indoor Arena and proceeds benefited the Homeward Hounds, a program that “prepares hounds for a stress-free transition from life in the pack to life as a pet and to find each hound a forever home.”

Community members even sponsored several riders who would not have otherwise attended the clinic, like twins Sammy and Rosie Miller of Tigerville, South Carolina.

The twins’ mother was overjoyed that her children could attend. “What an



PHOTOS DON WEST

Seven-time Olympian Phillip Dutton with attendees and organizers of the Phillip Dutton Eventing Clinic.



extraordinary experience. Our children are so excited to go home and practice everything that they learned and they’re already watching and studying their videos,” raved Nicole Miller.

TR&HC President, Angie Millon, was humbled by the teamwork that went into making the event a success. “Everyone was so generous with their resources to let this clinic happen. How lucky are we to live in this area that can bring these experiences to us?”

For more information about Homeward Hounds, please visit [www.homewardhounds.org](http://www.homewardhounds.org), email [homewardhounds@gmail.com](mailto:homewardhounds@gmail.com) or call Beth Blackwell at 406-596-0340.

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**TR&HC HORSE & HOUND SHOW RETURNS APRIL 21-23**

*History, Horses, Hounds and BBQ*

The Tryon Horse & Hound Show, one of the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club's (TR&HC) oldest events, returns to FENCE on April 21-23. An archived event program states that the earliest show was held in 1935 and local folklore refers to an inaugural show in 1928, although no evidence confirms this date. The show was a staple on TR&HC's calendar until the 1970s where it fell dormant until 2018 when the club decided to resurrect the tradition.

Kicking off the competition weekend is the TR&HC Carter Brown Barbecue on Friday, April 21 at 6 p.m., a community tradition established in 1932! The barbecue will be held on the horse show side, under the tent on the hill overlooking the show rings. Tickets are \$20 for TR&HC members and exhibitors, \$25 for non-members, and free for children 12 and under.

Next, the Historic Hound Show begins on Saturday at 8 a.m. and continues through the afternoon with competition categories including Stallion Hound, Champion, Retired Hound, and Brood with Produce. The horse show takes place on Saturday and Sunday and features the \$2,500 TR&HC Derby, the \$1,500 Mini-Morris Derby and the \$500 Fox Hunter Challenge Derby. Competition on Sunday runs concurrently with a champagne brunch hosted by the Tryon Hounds.

A silent auction will also be held all weekend and winners will be named at Sunday's champagne brunch. For more information, visit [www.tryonridingandhuntclub.org](http://www.tryonridingandhuntclub.org).



**HORSES & HOUNDS, THEN AND NOW**

From the historic show to last year's hound showing (above) and Rebecca Drumgool's mounted appearance (right), the Horse & Hound Show is always a spectacle to enjoy!



HISTORIC PHOTO FROM TR&HC ABOVE HOUND PHOTO MARK JUMP

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**LOCAL LEGEND: SUSIE KOCHER**

by Kathy Woodham

*A Song in Her Heart Keeps Her Grounded*

Susie Kocher, a local songbird, regional thespian, horse show announcer and executive coach, shares a big message day in and day out: in work and in fun – “do what you love and love what you do!”

Spend any time with Kocher and it's easy to see her positive outlook on life. Her family, job, community, horses and hobbies are all keys to happiness, but singing, for her, is the breath of life.

A former band member and character in numerous community musicals, Kocher believes anytime is “a grand night for singing,” whether it's in Tryon Little Theatre's State Fair, Hunter/Jumper competitions around the Carolina Foothills or singing the National Anthem at the Block House Steeplechase as she has for years.

“I need music, a play or a band to keep me grounded,” Kocher said recently between work as a national corporate trainer and evening rehearsals for a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. Also active with Big Brothers Big Sisters and Green Creek Hounds, Kocher came to Tryon in 1997 with husband Kelly Kocher, owner/trainer for Blockhouse Sport Horses. The two originally met at Penn State, where Kocher worked in radio and made enough money to buy a horse and riding



From the show ring to show tunes and rock songs, Susie Kocher is a woman of many talents.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

lessons at Kelly's family's large equestrian operation. They married in 1989, headed to Tryon and began careers in the horse show world.

With two small children (daughter Emily is now in Law School; Michael followed in his father's footsteps), Kocher learned the art of horse

show announcing while Kelly trained horses and riders, taking the family across the country for competitions and vacations. When announcing, she likes to provide personal biographies on the competitors, their trainers and horses. She also practices accents and pronunciations.

Though horses run a close second to her love for music, Kocher has made memorable experiences fox-hunting locally and galloping in the local steeplechase. From 2005-2007, she won the Block House Amateur Race three years in a row and on three different horses. With training tips from her husband, Kocher vividly remembers “singing Joni Mitchell in my brain” as she galloped against some of Tryon's finest, more experienced jockeys.

Kocher recalls an amazing experience: “Coming up that hill I was thinking, ‘Get outta my way, I want to win!’”

While there is no longer an amateur race at steeplechase, Kocher remains an active member of the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club where this year she is the announcer for the Horse and Hound Show's Derby Day and the Carolinas Show Hunter Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Though she proclaims she is the least talented rider in her family, Kocher is quite known as the “Energizer Bunny” who just keeps on going — as long as she can sing along the way.

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# Guiding Reins Helps Bring Peace to Veterans *by Margie Askins*

Diane Prewitt, the founder/executive director of the non-profit organization Guiding Reins worked with TROT (Therapeutic Riding of Tryon) as a volunteer for 12 years. The journey inspired her to create her own equestrian-based non-profit to help veterans and their families navigate the mental hardships many veterans face when returning home: PTSD, anxiety, traumatic brain injuries and the effects on the entire family unit of those who serve.



Guiding Reins founder Diane Prewitt (below right) with a group of combat veterans on the last day of their 16-week course.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Prewitt saw the need for veterans and their families to find healing in a way that did not include static presentations on whiteboards in cold rooms with folding chairs, or even endless prescription pills. Prewitt knew of an alternate healing only a horse can provide to a human—a deep, trusting bond and loving relationship that develops with time, patience, and mutual understanding. This alternative approach to mental and physical well-being has been life-changing for the program's participants, many describing it as "peaceful."

she held her first session in 2020 with two veterans, two volunteers, and two horses.

Guiding Reins began five years ago when Prewitt enrolled in a course specifically for equine-based non-profits. She began applying for grants and received small funding amounts and each grant was another step in the direction of her larger vision. She offered two open house events in 2019 to get the word out to the community, and Prewitt's hard work began to pay off when

Today, the organization serves many veterans and now also includes first responders and front-line workers. In an eight or 16-week course participants will "dig deeper" and work on their well-being as they build relationships with the horses in small groups. All the work is done on the ground and includes activities like grooming, groundwork and classical dressage in hand work—

these activities give participants an avenue to experience unconditional love while discovering ways to improve their mental health.

Prewitt explained that the small group work also allows for deep friendships to form among the participants. "The groups are so powerful because some incredible friendships form for veterans who have lost their tribe members due to war or suicide," she shared.

In addition to friendships, graduates of the course say that they feel "peace" and a "release" after participating in the program. "I didn't realize there were so many people hurting so deeply. We've helped some people deeper than I thought we would and I want to help more," Prewitt said.

Non-profit organizations can't live on healing and friendships alone—Guiding Reins accepts donations on their website, where people can also sign up to volunteer or participate. Learn more at [www.guidingreins.org](http://www.guidingreins.org).

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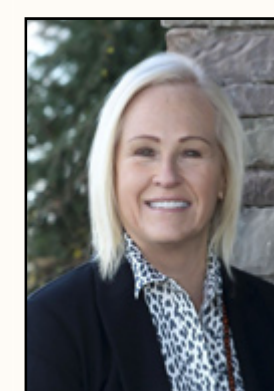
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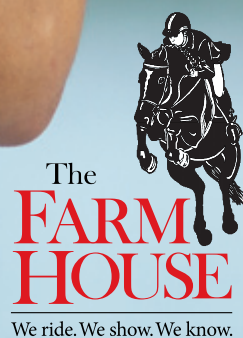
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## From Jump Crew to Jump Designer

Courtesy of TIEC



Favian Hernandez

Hernandez began designing and building his own

Favian Hernandez has been a valued member of the Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC) jump crew since 2014. Demonstrating his talent and expertise, Hernandez grew into the role of jump crew manager, but his ambition didn't stop there. Inspired by the beauty of the jumps,

*“At the end of last year, we went to the cross-country course and saw the bees and were like, ‘We have to make something!’”*

jumps, stunning creations that are regularly showcased in the TIEC rings. Hernandez's designs are based on ideas native to the region, such as his “Beehive” jump (pictured, top right).

“At the end of last year, we went to the cross-country course and saw the bees and were like, ‘We have to make something!’ It was hard [to get the different shapes]. The first week is always the hardest with the measurements and making sure it looks right. After that, you just start cutting!” explained Hernandez.

He also designed and constructed the Tryon Equine Hospital jump, a tribute to Drs. Anne Basket and Bill Haye who are an integral part of operations at TIEC.

“They showed me the picture of the entrance to [Tryon Equine Hospital], and we were working on these half pillars, so I got my measurements and came up with the design. I searched for the wood, put it together, and then I had the guy come and paint it. The hardest part was making sure they were straight,” shared Hernandez.

While Hernandez plans to continue designing jumps, he has other aspirations as well.

*“I have so many goals, and the main one is being a course designer. I have designed courses in the Indoor Complex for the Winter Indoor Series this year and last year. I [also] want to come up with some more jumps!”*



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# Legal Opinion: Protecting Your Prized Possessions

“Horse people are good people.” I heard that expression often growing up with horses. It was reassuring and gave us the sense that folks in the equestrian community could handle matters informally. Today, the horse world is dramatically different. There is far more potential liability and money at stake. Recent studies at NC State and the University of South Carolina indicate that the equine sector of the Carolinas’ economy generates over 47,000 jobs and has an annual economic impact of over \$4,000,000,000. The horse world has grown up and equestrians need to handle their business in ways that reflect the new reality.

Let’s take a look at a few common legal issues that affect the equestrian community.

### Asset Protection.

For most people this is their number one priority. By forming a limited liability company or corporation, you can protect your business and your personal assets from creditors and lawsuits, and you may also obtain certain tax advantages.

### Liability Protection.

It is important to create layers of protection from potential claims. The first and easiest ac-

tion is to properly post state-approved warning signs on your property. Be aware; there are exceptions to warning sign liability protections so more actions are necessary. Using up-to-date boarding agreements, releases, waivers and business contracts agreements add a greater level of protection. If properly prepared, these documents can protect you from liability exposure in most cases. However, because warning signs and written contracts may not provide complete protection, you need to add a layer of good liability insurance. The right insurance will pay for itself many times over.

Buying, selling or leasing a horse? Get it in writing! Given the significant price of horses in every discipline and at virtually every level, the traditional “handshake” deal is a bad idea. You can avoid expensive and messy disputes, and save money by using thorough written purchase and lease agreements.

Participation in our sport carries a certain amount of safety risks, however, you can significantly reduce your legal and financial risks by working with an experienced equine law attorney. By taking the steps in this article, “good horse people” can keep the equestrian life thriving in the Carolinas for years to come.



Jim Ritchie of Ritchie & Associates

Jim Ritchie is head of Ritchie & Associates, LLC. He represents business and equine law clients across the Carolinas. Look for Ritchie to share more advice in future issues of *Horse Country Quarterly*. For more information visit [tryonequinelaw.com](http://tryonequinelaw.com).

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# Celebrating 95 Years of Charity Horse Shows

For nearly a century, the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) has hosted the annual Charity Horse Shows. As one of the nation’s oldest horse shows and recognized by the U.S. Equestrian Federation (USEF) as a Heritage Horse Show, the Charity I competition made its debut in 1926 on a leased baseball diamond and moved from Harmon Field to FENCE, then to Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC), where it has been hosted since 2014. The Charity II Horse Show began in 2003.

These two weeks of horse shows are filled with A-rated competition, special celebrations, perpetual trophies, and most importantly, charitable giving. Each year, TR&HC fulfills the charity designations by making gifts to local equestrian and community organizations at the Saturday night Grand Prix of each weekend.

This year’s TR&HC Charity I Horse Show takes place on June 6-11 and the week features the Carolinas Show Hunter Hall of Fame induction ceremony on Friday, June 10. The TR&HC Charity II Horse Show is scheduled for July 4-9. For a complete list of schedules and events, visit [www.tryonridingandhuntclub.org](http://www.tryonridingandhuntclub.org).



Charity Horse Show winners receive a commemorative 1st place ribbon (left).

Ringmaster Steve Rector opens daily competition (top left).

PHOTOS NATALIE SUTO FOR TIEC

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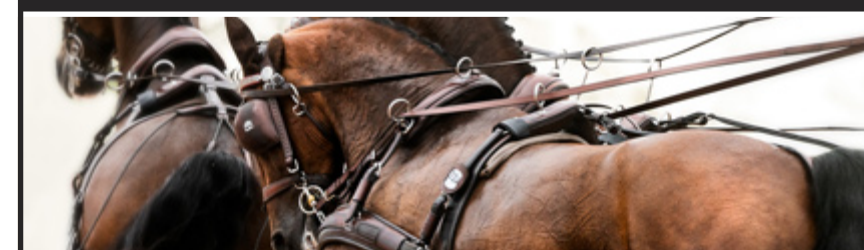
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# Limiting Laminitis: Good Grazing Practices



By Polk County Equine, Livestock & Forage Agent, Cassie LeMaster



Below, attendees gather at a NC Cooperative Extensive workshop on laminitis.



*When establishing a grazing plan to reduce NSC consumption, grazing should be initiated in the early morning, when NSC content is the lowest.*

Laminitis is a debilitating systemic disease that manifests in the horse's hoof, causing significant pain and lameness. Although there are a number of causes of the disease in horses (severe fever, grain overload, retained placenta in mares), a large proportion of laminitis cases occur in grazing horses and ponies; therefore, the term "pasture-associated laminitis" was coined. Recent workshops at the NC Cooperative Extension office focused on prevention strategies for the main mode in which grazing lush pasture grasses can lead to laminitis.

The mode that most often leads to laminitis in our area is a result of chronic inflammation from insulin dysregulation. It is often seen in chronic or subacute laminitis cases in horses with Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS) and insulin resistance. These horses are often overweight and have a "cresty neck." Overtime, their body loses its sensitivity to insulin, requiring more and more of the hormone to store glucose from the diet. This increase in circulating insulin also incites an inflammatory response. Understanding how the disease progresses and manifests is important when determining the best management strategy.

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 (NSC) can accumulate in the plant. These cool-season forages experience both daily and seasonal fluctuations in NSC content, with the highest concentrations occurring at sundown in the spring and fall. When establishing a grazing plan to reduce NSC consumption, grazing should be initiated in the early morning, when NSC content is the lowest.

For horses considered high-risk, such as those that are overweight or with EMS, insulin resistant, or with Cushings, grazing may need to be avoided all together in spring and fall. Certain "easy-keeping" breeds also have a higher genetic predisposition to the disease. 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. Cresty-neck scoring can help determine who is most at risk, as it is more predictive of insulin resistance than body condition scoring.

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. Hooves of grazing horses can also be monitored for heat 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 minutes every few days until a total time of four hours is reached. If you suspect your horse may be insulin-resistant, consult with your veterinarian.

Contact Cassie at the Extension Office at 828-894-8218 or by email [Cassie\\_LeMaster@ncsu.edu](mailto:Cassie_LeMaster@ncsu.edu) with questions.



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## TR&HC NEWS

### TR&HC Now Accepting College Scholarship Applications

The Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) continues to offer educational scholarships to high school graduating seniors and to individuals currently attending a college or university that supports equine enthusiasts in Polk, Henderson, Rutherfordton, Spartanburg and Greenville counties. Interested students should apply by May 14, 2023.

- The Club will award \$6,500 in scholarships this year. The amount of individual scholarships may vary but will be no less than \$500.
- Recipients must meet certain criteria which can be found on the TR&HC website: [tryonridingandhuntclub.org/scholarships](http://tryonridingandhuntclub.org/scholarships). In addition to meeting the criteria, priority will be given to high school seniors in financial need.

To apply for a scholarship, please complete the application found at [tryonridingandhuntclub.org](http://tryonridingandhuntclub.org) or contact Joanne Gibbs at (612) 619-2195. A financial need statement and interview may be requested. Details from a candidate's college financial aid office are requested as part of the application. A photo of the applicant should also be submitted with the application.

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