



The HorseCountry Quarterly

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRYON RIDING & HUNT CLUB



Training the Next Generation of Eventers

YOUNG RIDER: ZOE RITTENHOUSE CRAWFORD — PAGE 4

PHOTO SHANNON BRINKMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

IN THIS ISSUE:

9 | Sandhurst Leatherwork

11 | Prepping for Hunt Season

12 | Nonprofit Spotlight: Homeward Hounds

14 | Liability Waivers for Minors

16 | Understanding Your Hay Analysis

18 | Expert Tips on Massage Therapy



3 | 90th Any & All Dog Show



6 | Local Legend Patti Lovelace



8 | TR&HC Trail Ride Weekend



10 | Business of Braiding

TR&HC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Membership Matters



As we head into fall, we look forward to one of TR&HC's oldest annual events, always a fun day for all our families and friends, the 90th edition of the Any & All Dog Show at Harmon Field's basketball pavilion on Nov. 5.

Now in our 97th year, the TR&HC has been a constant pillar of the Tryon area for as long as most can remember! I encourage our members to renew their membership as the year closes, and I encourage new friends and neighbors to join our club whose mission is to support equestrian sport, honor our shared traditions, and invest in our community.

Membership benefits include free or reduced fees for TR&HC social and equestrian events, a subscription to *The Horse Country Quarterly*, priority parking at the Block House Steeplechase, first access to scholarship and grant opportunities, and the knowledge that your support allows this historic club to continue to put on an annual roster of equine-related events that benefit our community.

Our year-end annual meeting will be held at the FENCE House on Friday Dec. 8. Please mark your calendar and join us for a fun evening of early holiday revelry, good food and drink, a brief meeting to review 2023, and eager anticipation of 2024!

I hope to see many of you at one of our fall events either as an exhibitor, volunteer, or spectator! If you have any questions or input, we always welcome your call.

Angie Millon

Angie Millon
President, Tryon Riding & Hunt Club

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Dec. 8: 97th Annual Christmas Party and Membership Meeting

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Did You Know?

What will your horse be dressed as for Halloween?
How about a horse skeleton! Did you know that horses have 205 bones—one less bone than humans have? However, Arabian horses have one less pair of ribs, so they have 203 bones.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Nearly every day my long hair ends up in a braid, mostly to get it out of my face, so I was fascinated to learn more about the equestrian world of braiding. I enjoyed interviewing three of our local braiders and learning more about their field. It's an art form that deserves more recognition and one that we should not take for granted.

Also, check out this month's local legend, Patti Lovelace. During my brief stint as the interim executive director of Foothills Humane Society last fall, I was surprised to learn that Patti also catches loose horses, which of course happens from time to time in Tryon horse country. She was also my saving grace in a stressful role that I was not equipped to do thanks to her quick-witted remarks and appropriately-timed humor to ease any difficult situation. And trust me, the work of an animal control officer is non-stop. I don't know how she does it!

A compliment goes a long way in a tough job, so give thanks this holiday season to our braiders, animal control officers, and others who work behind the scenes for their dedication to our horse community when you see them.



Michelle Yelton

Michelle Yelton
Editorial Director

90th Any & All Dog Show Set for Nov. 5 Event to Feature "The Behavior Savior" Dina Zaphiris

In celebration of the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club's (TR&HC) 90th anniversary of the Any & All Dog Show, attendees will be "treated" to a special performance by professional dog trainer Dina Zaphiris. With over 30 years of experience, Zaphiris has titles in both competitive obedience and agility work with dogs, and has trained the dogs of celebrities including Al Pacino, Nicolas Cage, Bruce Willis, and Kate Beckinsale.

Zaphiris has a fun and entertaining show planned with a Q&A session to follow. And while training dogs to perform basic commands, jump through hoops, and wow crowds is certainly impressive, Zaphiris has a far more astounding trick in her bag – she was the first American dog trainer to train dogs for federally funded studies involving dogs detecting early stage human cancer!

This beloved dog show spoof returns Nov. 5 from 12 p.m. – 3 p.m. at Harmon Field and now is the time to start planning and training your pups for their moment in the spotlight.

Enter one of the traditional categories like smallest or largest dog, best costume, or best trick, or amp up the creativity in the "Looks Like Owner" division. Shelter dogs are invited, too, with their own special category, the "Best Rescue."

Registration starts at noon. For questions or more info, visit www.tryonridingandhuntclub.org.



Dina Zaphiris (above) will perform with her dogs at the 90th Any & All Dog Show.



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YOUNG RIDER: ZOE RITTENHOUSE CRAWFORD

by Michelle Yelton

Training the Next Generation of Eventers

When children set off into the neighborhood to explore, it's usually not on horseback, but 28-year-old eventer Zoe Rittenhouse Crawford's flare for adventure sprouted early in life. "I definitely got into trouble a few times as a kid sneaking onto properties and jumping cross country fences I wasn't supposed to be jumping," she recalled.



From a young age, Rittenhouse Crawford was determined to ride. "My parents tell me that I threw a fit after my first pony ride as a kid because I didn't want to get off the pony. They signed me up for lessons shortly after that!"

Growing up in Boston, M.A., Rittenhouse Crawford rode in the hunter/jumper circuit through grade school because the eventing barns were too far away. After getting a little taste of cross country through Pony Club, she "gravitated more and more to eventing."

At 18, Rittenhouse Crawford competed in her first event and took a gap year after graduating high school to be a working student in Ocala, FL. "It was really from that point that I knew eventing was what I wanted to do!" She continued eventing, competing through college and into adulthood.

It wasn't just the thrill of the sport that lured Rittenhouse Crawford. "Of course, going cross country is ridiculously fun, but doing it with an animal that you are bonded with and connected with, there's nothing like it," she explained. "I think the connection and bond you have to have with the horses is very unique from other disciplines."

Rittenhouse Crawford credits her equine partner of 11 years, Zara, for her successful journey in the sport. "She was a lanky green, broke six year old. We did both of our first event together and went all the way up to 5*! She is hot and difficult, but the most amazingly brave cross country horse (probably a little too brave)! She took me to young riders, helped me get named to the Eventing 25 and USEF Developing Rider list, jumped around Land Rover Kentucky 5* and Maryland 5* twice each."

For young riders looking to event, Rittenhouse Crawford encourages a slow and steady path. "I

think the most important thing is to stick to the basics. This is a hard, but incredibly fun sport. Finding a trainer that believes in education over competition at the beginning will pay off in the long run. Slower is sometimes faster!"



5* Eventer Zoe Rittenhouse Crawford is using her experience to develop the next generation of Eventing horses.

Now a new resident of Tryon, N.C., Zara retired at the age of 17 following an injury, and Rittenhouse Crawford is shifting from the competition circuit to developing a string of young horses.

"I really enjoy bringing along young horses because you can really feel them learning and pro-

gressing every day. It takes time to produce the young ones, but it's so rewarding and you can create that bond and trust with them. I'm still relatively new to this area, so my main focus is building my business but I'm also hoping to start building a string of young horses to develop."



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SCAN ME

LOCAL LEGEND: PATTI LOVELACE

by Leigh Borreson

Animals in Need Have a Friend Indeed

Patti Lovelace is passionate about her job – and fortunately, she has the right mindset and people skills to do it very well. In her seventh year with the Polk County Sheriff’s Department, Lovelace handles all calls for animal control. “We get more calls than the sheriff’s patrol and the city police departments put together...and we try to respond to every one that same day!” She and her colleague, Samantha Herrington, are called the ‘Dynamic Doggie Duo’ but they are not just dog catchers! “We get calls about horses, pigs, cows, goats and ducks. Legend has it that one of my predecessors chased an emu down the road!”

Anita Williamson, lead volunteer for the Polk Equine Emergency Rescue (PEER), has known Lovelace for over 25 years and has collaborated with her on many rescue and abuse situations. “Patti is star quality – the real deal! She is always advocating for changes in state and local laws to protect the safety and welfare of animals and she is totally dedicated to her job.”

As an animal control officer, Lovelace rescues all kinds of animals!

Below, Lovelace and her horse, George.



Lovelace, who was an animal investigator for 17 years, is justifiably proud of their work. She recently shut down two puppy mills and sent two dog-fighters to prison. One of her most satisfying experiences was assisting Rutherford County Animal Control with serving a search warrant to rescue 23 starving horses, 17 goats, and one sheep in Bostic, N.C. But there is much heartbreak, too.

They were unable to save one of the dogs in the dog fighting ring that they had worked tirelessly to eliminate. “Everything we do is hard,” Lovelace admitted. “We witness difficult situations that can be emotionally exhausting. We have a man in court now who left a momma dog and her puppies in a camper for two weeks in the heat with no food or water.” She said there are some nights when she goes home and cries or throws things, but she still wakes up each morning eager to take on the day. “I tell everyone this is the worst job I’ve ever loved!”

Lovelace said they also do everything they can to help people, especially those without a job, or even a vehicle. They take animals to the vet or take care of animals them-

selves when necessary, plus they have a dog and cat food program. They frequently see the negative aftereffects of people not having their pets spayed or neutered, and are hoping to get funding for a spay and neuter clinic. In addition, twice a year they hold a clinic that offers rabies shots for \$10.

Lovelace has high praise for the Foothills Equine Rescue Assistance (FERA) where she serves as Treasurer. “They back us up with financial help for people in need; everything from hay and feed to helping with vet and farrier bills,” she explained. “The county can’t afford a \$20,000 vet bill...so getting their help is huge!”

Few people realize everything involved in Lovelace’s job. They have been called on to help with narcotics and even homicide cases when there are animals involved. “We have five Animal Cruelty Investigators, and it takes a small army to get it all done, but we try to educate the public before anything else.” Lovelace reminded us of that mission, saying “We want every animal owner to be responsible. There is a reason for our laws! Dogs and cats must be vaccinated and maintained on your property – not allowed to run loose.” Lovelace stressed that everyone should call the sheriff’s office if they have an emergency or need help. And if you have financial trouble and need assistance, don’t be proud – ask for help! “We offer assistance and education first – law enforcement is a last resort!”




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TR&HC Tries Something New: Inaugural Aiken “Weekend in Hitchcock Woods Trail Ride”

by Angie Millon

For the last two summers, I have taken riding vacations abroad with my equestrian friends and have come home thinking, “That was so much fun; how can I create a similar experience, bring it closer to home, and share it with the TR&HC family?” Thus, the inaugural “Weekend in Hitchcock Woods Trail Ride” was born.

This year, nine horse and rider combinations shipped to the historic Whitney Barns in Aiken, S.C. for our new adventure. The Whitney Barns, a group of old, shed row racehorse barns built in 1901 and recently restored, have a prime location in Aiken’s downtown dirt road horse district, just a few minutes’ hack to the 2,000+ acre Hitchcock Woods.

With 70 miles of sandy trails, Hitchcock Woods is on many equestrians’ “bucket list” of places to explore...

Hitchcock Woods is the largest, privately-owned urban forest in the country. With 70 miles of sandy trails, it is on many equestrians’ “bucket list” of places to explore on horseback. We experienced two days of glorious group rides through the



woods exploring beautiful sandy bridle paths with jumps sprinkled in for the more adventurous. There was also plenty of leisurely walking with some brisk trots and gallops. On top of that, we enjoyed a pool party, dinner at the historic Wilcox Hotel, and some downtown adventuring – it couldn’t have been better!

“We have to do this again,” was the overwhelming sentiment from attendees, and therefore, my new plan – look for an open invite for our next adventure ride! If the numbers support it, we will most likely divide everyone into smaller groups to match riders with similar expectations – those who want to gallop on and jump and those who prefer a leisurely walk in the woods. Stay tuned for more details, and I hope to see you out with us next time!

Sandhurst Leatherwork

by Margie Askins

Custom Consideration and Craftsmanship from Mark Walter

For Mark Walter, the owner of Sandhurst Leatherwork, his craft is much more than a career; it’s a life-long passion. When combined with his love for all animals and people, and exceptional craftsmanship, these guiding values help to produce the highest quality leather products. Walter grew up around the equestrian world, and his father’s work combined his occupational therapist career with saddlery; leatherworking runs deep in Walter’s family roots.

When Walter attended a horse show in Tryon, N.C., one weekend several years ago, he decided to buy a small factory, and create Sandhurst Leatherwork: “I had a good feeling about it. It put us in a location with great horse people,” Walter said. Shortly after opening, he partnered with John Ingrassio, owner of the line *Leather with Love*. This dynamic duo combined their talents, and passion for leatherworking, and began creating many superbly crafted items for their clientele. From halters and lead shanks to dog collars and belts, Sandhurst Leatherwork creates and repairs a wide range of leather products.

In addition to creating high quality leather goods, Walter also says he believes in doing business with people the old-fashioned way. “Retail is not my bag,” Walter admits. Instead, he believes in doing business with people on a personal level. He strives to make sure his clients are not only happy with his products, but they are also safe. When dealing with horses, he advises people with a quote he says he has become known for, “Remember, this is a big, strong animal.”

Respecting and loving animals comes naturally for Walter, and creating leatherwork that lasts and keeps both the animal and people “safe and



Master saddler Clarence Brown, above, holds one of his custom-made halters. Sandhurst Leatherwork creates and repairs a variety of fine leather products.



make an incredible team designing, creating, and repairing all things leather.

Walter welcomes interested parties and “horse folks” to stop by their small factory at 687 North Trade Street in Tryon or to give him a call about any project they have in mind, or any needs they may have. “We really can do anything they dream up!” Interested future clients can also contact Sandhurst Leatherwork through their Facebook page or at 828-440-1373.

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The Business of Braiding

by Michelle Yelton

Dating back centuries to Africa, the braid has remained a timeless expression of art, culture and beauty, with even the equestrian world adopting the artform. Originally intended for protection and not beauty, horse hair was braided to avoid getting tangled in equipment when horses were domesticated for farming. But today, the art of equine braiding has evolved into a business of beauty.

Laura Marks of Arden, N.C. started braiding horses as a child, but quickly learned that the skills needed to braid professionally differ drastically.

"I started with a book when I was a kid. I thought it was fun to braid their tails. I thought I knew what I was doing until my first paid job for braiding. It was very humorous and humbling," she remembered. Forty years later, Marks has braided for some of the top riders in the country.

Braiders work the third shift when the show-grounds are more quiet. One misconception is that horse braiding is easy when it can actually be very grueling, especially "the long hours, loneliness, and watching your legs swell as you stand on your ladder for hours," explained Marks. "If I do more than 10 horses, it's entirely possible for me to cry spontaneously," she laughed, adding that "the stress can be overwhelming. Getting the horses done in a timely fashion can be difficult."

Tryon, N.C. native McKenzie Gramling, who owns Armour Equine Services, LLC, has been a professional braider for nine years and also offers clipping services. She hears the misjudgments, too, like "the job is nothing but profit, we get to sleep all day, our businesses are 'under the table,' all we do is twist some hair. I am fortunate enough to be surrounded by clients that truly know and appreciate all that goes into this job," said Gramling.

Newbie Jamie Martell of JM Equestrian in Forest City, N.C. just started braiding professionally a year and a half ago after hearing there was a need for braiders and was accepted into a mentorship program. She can attest to the challenges. "Coming from being a vet tech for 11 years, braiding horses is an incredibly hard job!" said Martell.

Braids, also known as plaits, cost around \$80-\$90 per mane and \$30-\$40 per tail, and most horses get rebraided daily, which is especially important in competitions where appearance matters.

"I will never encourage leaving braids in [overnight], as I feel like the horses deserve a break from them, but it will never be a dealbreaker for me," explained Gramling. "Tails are always rebraided, no questions asked!"

As more competitions pop up around the country, existing braiders are struggling to keep up with the demand. "With all of the new horse shows popping up, it does cause a dilemma. It's not like you can clone yourself, and there aren't a great deal of braiders out there," said Marks.

"There's only so many of us. We aren't replicating as the show circuits continue to grow, so the small

army of braiders are just getting spread more and more thin," added Gramling.

However, like many careers of passion, their love for horses fuels their purpose.

"I do this for the love of the sport. It's an amazing trade to have. We get to spend time with the top horses and ponies in their most peaceful state. Most of all, I love seeing the success my horses and ponies have," said Gramling.



Forelock braid (above) by Lara Marks, tail braid (top, right) by Jamie Martell, and mane braid by McKenzie Gramling

"I do get great satisfaction from making a horse beautiful," said Marks. "Braiding has allowed me to ride and show in some of the best places. Without braiding, I wouldn't be able to have my horses or a lot of other things."

For those looking to enter the field, Gramling, Marks and Martell all agree that training under a braider is critical. "Find a professional to train you and work under. Practice everyday! Watch as many videos and read as many books as you can," emphasized Martell.

"Many braiders do not mind if you shadow and ask questions," said Marks.

Gramling offers some additional encouragement:

"Getting started is very, very difficult, but the more you practice, the more it becomes muscle memory. Don't forget to take care of yourself, and don't ever hesitate to ask for help - we all need it at some point. Always take pride in your work. All of us had to braid our first horse, so don't give up!"

Fox Hunters Prep for Polk County Hunt Season

Fox hunting season returns this November, but preparing the horses starts months earlier and here is how two of our local fox hunters get their horses ready for hunt season.

DJ Jefferis, Green Creek Hounds member and retired master, is a sixth generation fox hunter and rode his first hunt 51 years ago at the age of six. "I begin seven weeks ahead of the hunting season, so just after July Fourth. I plan for my hunters to have off two days a week — the day after they hunt, and the day they are not hunting (Monday and Thursday or Sunday and Friday). Until October, all training is usually performed from 30 minutes before sunrise until about two hours after sunrise for two horses," explained Jefferis.

Local trainer and Tryon Hounds member Kaitlyn Kubiak, who owns Kubiak Sport Horses, has a similar timeline. "I always gauge the Monday after the Fourth of July as my day to really start cracking down and focusing on fitness and consistency. I am a big fan of shorter consistent rides, meaning four to six days per week for roughly 30 to 45 minutes."

Slow hill work that steadily increases in time and steepness is an important way to get your horse in shape to handle Polk County's terrain.

"Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays are hills," said Jefferis. "Starting in the summer with 10 times up a 600-yard hill (I would like longer, but

it's what I got). Each week expanding that up to 30 times trotting up and down."

Kubiak agreed, "One of the most valuable and underrated exercises is walking hills. If your horse has had a long summer break, I would start slowly



Tryon Hounds member Kailey Kubiak (right) and DJ Jefferis of the Green Creek Hounds (below) share tips on how they prepare for fox hunting season.



by walking for 20 to 30 minutes on fairly flat ground, then increase time and steepness as your horse's fitness increases."

Ring work is also a key way to prepare horses for fox hunting season according to both fox hunters.

"A lot of fox hunters do not care for ring work, but it is important as well," said Kubiak. "The more ring work that is done working on lateral movements and training will greatly help you in the field with steering and control. The more balanced your horse is, the less work you have to do when hunting."

Jefferis shared that ring work is important for "better control when galloping up and down hills in Green Creek." He spends the month of July jumping exercise poles and tiny cross rails, then increases the heights and complexities to whatever is necessary for that horse as the season nears.

"Friday, Saturday, and after hill work on other days I do about 20 minutes of ring work flat work, decreasing in time as the hill work gets longer - trotting and cantering, changing direction, leads, stop and start, as well as just doing a training level dressage test movements, to strengthen their bending and suppleness and get my legs in shape."

Training for fox hunting season is a regimented endeavor that needs to be catered to each horse, so seek guidance from fellow hunt club members to know what program may be best for each horse.

"Like people, all horses are different and will require specific needs; however, overtraining or undertraining can be detrimental to your horse. A first flight horse will require a much different program than a draft horse for third field. A consistent training program for you and your horse is the most important," concluded Kubiak.

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NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT: HOMEWARD HOUNDS

by Margie Askins



Going from the Hunt to the Home

Elvis definitely had one thing wrong—hound dogs do a lot more than cry all the time. Hound dogs are known for their loyalty, expertise in scent work, intelligence, and deep voices in the fox-hunting world. To do their jobs effectively, they must have a certain skill set; these same traits are reflected in their personalities. As hound dogs retire from their scent work, many transition well into ideal companions and family dogs. One person behind this transitional work from the pack to a domestic home is Beth Blackwell, the co-founder of the non-profit organization, Homeward Hounds.

Currently, Blackwell serves as the professional huntsman for the Tryon Hounds and has spent the past 20-plus years caring for packs of fox-hounds and basset hounds. Throughout this time, she has acquainted herself with hundreds of hounds. Personally, she has several hounds as pets in her own home, and attests to the wonderful family pets they make. “They are incredibly personable, intelligent and loving animals, each with a distinct personality,” Blackwell explained.

However, after successfully adopting out several hounds to other families, she realized that the transition was not always linear and could be stressful for both hound and human. This realization inspired her to create a structured program to help hounds transition from pack-life to home-life.

In the spring of 2021, the Tryon Hounds Club President, Sue Haldeman, and Blackwell joined forces to develop a training program at the Tryon Hounds’ kennel – thus, the Homeward Hounds program was born. They held their first Homeward Hounds Boot Camp that April where the hounds worked with trainers on skills such as sit and stay commands. The training of hunting hounds is done with the dogs working as a group initially, and eventually, they transition to working alone. But the process takes patience, structure, and time. Even learning to eat alone is new to these hounds, and without competition for

food from the pack, some simply won’t eat. Blackwell added, “Part of the training includes spending time in the house of the huntsman who they are familiar with learning to eat individually in a crate. This also exposes them to television and ceiling fans, both of which can be terrifying to a mighty hunting hound.”

Training these amazing dogs to be homebound results in success stories like the hound Pacolet, an invaluable member of the Tryon Hounds’ hunting pack. Blackwell said, “He taught many young hounds how to do the job right. Retired at the age of nine and a half, Pacolet went through our first official boot camp and proved that you CAN teach old dogs new tricks!” Pacolet retired to a wonderful life of hikes in the mountains and naps on the couch when he was adopted.

This past January, Homeward Hounds became its own non-profit entity and recently submitted its application for its 501(c)3 status. In agreement

with the Tryon Hounds, the dogs still board at their kennels and still work with Blackwell’s expertise and guidance.

Each hound in the program goes through an evaluation process that determines its readiness for adoption from testing trust levels with new people to having field trips in social environments. Potential adopters are invited to first have a visit with the hound they are interested in as a first step in the adoption process. To find the best fit for the hound, there is a formal application process, as well as verification of a current veterinarian and secure containment area.

Homeward Hounds is also looking for volunteers and donations for supplies. Information about Homeward Hounds can be found on their website homewardhounds.org and Facebook page Homeward Hounds; they can be contacted directly via email homewardhounds.tryon@gmail.com.

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Horse Crazy..or Just Plain Crazy?

by Misty Yelton

After spending two weeks this summer in Ocala Florida in the middle of summer, I have reached the conclusion that equestrians must be some of the craziest people on the planet. I have always been accused of being “horse crazy” and I am even called a “horse queen” by one of my co-teachers. However, after my time in Ocala, I have begun to question my own sanity. Why else would I spend the price of a Caribbean vacation to wake up before the sun, battle the heat, and work harder than I do at my “real” job? I have spent many hours since returning home from the ARHA World Championship Show trying to answer this question.

As an amateur owner who teaches high school for a living, I am always looking for ways to make this sport more affordable. So I often exchange cleaning stalls and grooming with my trainer for day fees. This means many long days and sometimes even longer nights at the horse show. Most mornings I am up before the sun, cleaning and re-bedding stalls, cleaning water buckets and filling hay bags. I often joke when I return home that I need a “vacation from my vacation.”

I have often been asked by my non-horsey friends, “Why do you do this?” At times I struggle to answer this question. But at the end of the day it comes down to the words of Winston Churchill, “There is something about the outside of the horse that is good for the inside of a man.” I find solace and contentment in just being around my mare. Looking into her big brown eyes brings me comfort. I can have the absolute worst day at school and come home and spend an hour with Walla and all of my cares just go away.

Or at the show, when I have had the perfect ride, you know the one where everything falls into place and time seems to stand still. There is no other feeling like this in the world.

Maybe it is the adrenaline rush of being able to control a 1,000 pound animal that has a mind of its own. To run this magnificent creature at full speed down the middle of the arena, take your legs off, say “Whoa,” and feel the dirt flying up into your hair.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once wrote, “Riding a horse is not a gentle hobby, to



Misty Yelton is a 3x World Champion Rider, 5x World Champion Breeder, 8x World Champion Owner, a science teacher at Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy and adjunct faculty at Isothermal Community College. She is a regular contributor to *The Horse Country Quarterly*.

be picked up and laid down like a game of Solitaire. It is a grand passion.” He was right. No matter how much money I spend, how many hours I put in at the barn, how many family reunions I have missed due to horse shows, you will never hear me say that it hasn’t been worth it. The passion that drives me and all equestrians to do what we do is not something that can be easily explained. I get now why some people say we are crazy. And after having time to reflect on this summer’s show, I can say I agree. Equestrians are crazy...horse crazy!

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LEGAL OPINION

by Jim Ritchie

Liability Waivers for Minors: Are You Really Protected?



Jim Ritchie of Ritchie & Associates

It's a beautiful Carolina morning. Standing in front of your training barn, you look out at the pastures, arena and grazing horses. You have built a solid business through a lot of determination and hard work. It feels good.

A nice-looking SUV is heading up the drive. Your new student is arriving for her first lesson.

When it rolls to a stop, a bright-eyed child jumps out – new boots and helmet already on. Her mom, also new to riding, follows her toward the barn, and all of you go into the office. You explain the lesson process and present them with your waiver for the child's participation. "Does this mean that if my daughter gets hurt, you're not responsible?" asks the mother. Your heart sinks a little. That waiver is more than a few years old. You think, "What if it is not enforceable today? Is my business and everything I own now at risk?"

Enforcing waivers for minors is an evolving issue in the equestrian world. Unfortunately, there is no standard language that is enforced univer-

sally by the courts. In some states, such waivers are not enforceable at all. The emerging trend nationally is to enforce waivers for minors when used by non-profit organizations, volunteers and schools, but to potentially avoid enforcement when used by businesses.



In South Carolina, there is little guidance from the courts on these issues. As a general matter, South Carolina respects the rights of parents to make legal decisions for their children, including

signing contracts on their behalf. The most explicit legislation on this subject is the South Carolina Equine Liability Act (EALA). The EALA provides broad liability protection claims by minors and adults for certain equestrian activities, but it also establishes several exceptions to hold bad actors accountable. North Carolina has an EALA also. It provides similar protections; however, North Carolina courts have been less consistent in enforcing waivers against injured minors. One common thread in the North Carolina cases is the focus on the specific language in the waiver to determine its validity. As a result, it is more important than ever to understand your state's position on waivers for minors, and to be sure it is properly worded to protect you.

This fall, take some time to update your waivers and liability agreements to make sure they are up-to-date and meet your needs. You will be glad you did.

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.

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Understanding Your Hay Analysis



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

for horses. NDF measures structural carbohydrates or cell wall and is directly correlated with preference and consumption. The higher the value, the less the horse will eat. Values above 65% will not be readily consumed by horses. Higher NDF hays could be used to rate consumption for easy keepers. Both ADF and NDF are an indicator of plant maturity. Higher values are associated with more mature, less digestible forage. Water Soluble Carbohydrates (WSC) includes monosaccharides, disaccharides and some polysaccharides (mainly fructan), while Ethanol Soluble Carbohydrates (ESC) measures monosaccharides and disaccharides. Nonstructural Carbohydrates (NSCs) is a measure of starches and sugar and is commonly estimated by adding WSC and starch. For horses with

metabolic syndrome, NSC in the diet should be limited to 10-12%. Calcium (Ca) and phosphorus (P) are the two minerals needed in the greatest amount in the equine diet. A horse in light work requires about 30g of Ca and 18g of P per day. Also, the ratio of Ca:P in the diet needs to be 3:1 to 1:1, and P should never be higher than Ca to avoid potentially severe orthopedic diseases. Relative Feed Value (RFV) is a calculation used as a quick-comparison method between hays, but isn't used for balancing rations. Average quality alfalfa is set at 100.

As always, if you need help interpreting your hay analysis or selecting a hay for your horse, please contact Cassie at 828-894-8218 or cassie_lemaster@ncsu.edu.

A hay analysis will help you best understand what you are feeding your horse and how to best meet their individual nutrient needs. An analysis is especially important if you're trying to manage certain nutrition-related diseases or disorders like EMS, Cushing's or PSSM. When sending in samples, always request an equine analysis so you get equine-specific data, such as digestible energy (DE). With some labs, you may also have to specify tests to determine nonstructural carbohydrates (NSCs).

The first reading on your report will likely be the percent moisture in the sample. Optimal horse hay moisture ranges from 10 to 15%. Above 15%, there is an increased risk for molding and above 25% there is a risk for heat damage and a potential fire hazard. Below this reading, the analysis results will be reported in two columns: As-sampled (or as-fed) and Dry Matter. As-sampled reports the nutrients in their natural state, including moisture. The dry matter column reports nutrients with moisture removed and is easier to compare the nutrient percentages across various samples. It is recommended to use the dry matter column.

Digestible energy (DE) is the measure of energy or calories in the sample. The average grass hay is about .91 Mcal/lb. A horse in light work (1-3 hours per week) requires about 20 Mcals per day. If using this grass hay as an example, an average sized horse would need about 22 pounds of hay per day to meet this energy requirement.

Crude Protein (CP) is a measure of the protein content in the hay and is an indicator of the amino acid concentration. The common range for grass hays is 8-14% CP and 15-20% in legume hays. Most horses have a crude protein requirement of about 10-12%. Lysine is an amino acid, of which horses have a specific dietary requirement. An average sized horse in light work requires about 30 g of lysine per day. Grass hays will likely need to be supplemented to meet this requirement.

Acid Detergent Fiber (ADF) and Neutral Detergent Fiber (NDF) help determine the amount of indigestible fiber and insoluble fiber in the sample. ADF values below 45% in general are suitable



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ASK AN EXPERT

by Sybil Jones

A conversation with Ellen Reichle of Good Hands Massage Therapy



Massage therapy is a wonderful tool for enhancing and supporting your horses' health. It provides many benefits and has numerous applications. This is the first in a two-part series on equine massage therapy.



Q. What does massage actually do?

A. The basics of massage therapy is to move circulation through muscle tissue. The increased circulation works to remove the buildup of normal metabolic byproducts that tight muscles trap in congested muscle fibers. Fresh circulation nourishes the tissues with the increased blood flow, which then leads to muscle repair. The manual work of the massage strokes, compression, cross-fiber friction and

direct pressure helps to reduce swelling and provides relief from pain by flushing lactic acid from the tissues. Reducing the amount of stiff muscle tissue throughout the body can also provide increased range of motion and add flexibility throughout the entire body.

Q. Who benefits and how often?

A. Most well-mannered and safe-to-work-around horses are candidates for massage. Horses fighting off an illness that have fever or a skin disorder are not good candidates.

The range of frequency varies. An athlete in training would benefit with twice a month therapy; a busy, healthy horse would do well with a massage once a month as a maintenance schedule. I recommend every two to three months for older, arthritic horses.

Reichele is a graduate of Potomac Massage Therapy Institute in Washington, D.C. She is certified in Equine Massage/Muscle Therapy since completion of her post-graduate work with Mike Scott E.C.I.T. In addition, she has completed an advanced technique study in equine massage.

To learn more you can reach Ellen Reichle at reichle8clubs@gmail.com

TR&HC MEMBER NEWS

Eat, Drink & Be Merry at Holiday Party on Dec. 8!

Join us for the 97th annual TR&HC Christmas Party on Friday, Dec. 8 at the FENCE House at 6 p.m. Eat, drink and be merry as we reflect on a great year of equestrian sport and fun in 2023, look forward to the coming year, and fondly reflect on 97 years of club memories!



The evening begins with a brief annual meeting and year in review, then transitions into a Christmas meet and greet gathering with a buffet dinner and dessert.

For more information, visit www.tryonridingandhuntclub.com.



Applications Now Open For TR&HC Scholarships

Congrats to our 2023 recipients, Sarah Moorshead and Samantha Collins!

Moorshead also received the scholarship in 2022 and is a sophomore at Clemson, a member of the River Valley Pony Club and the Clemson Eventing Team. She loves being on Clemson's eventing team and hopes to encourage more riders to join. Her goal after graduating is to open a rescue and re-training facility to give more horses a second chance at a career.

Collins is a freshman at Wofford College, competes in dressage, and is a working student for Ashley Perkins. She has also held multiple positions as a volunteer for ROCK (Ride on Center for Kids) in Texas. Collins is in training to hopefully compete at the Grand Prix level and eventually represent Team USA on an international level.



2023 scholarship winner Samantha Collins

TR&HC scholarship applications for the 2024-2025 school year are now open! Visit the club's website to view guidelines and apply at tryonridingandhuntclub.org/scholarships.

The deadline to submit applications is April 15, 2024.

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