



The HorseCountry Quarterly

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRYON RIDING & HUNT CLUB

Foxhunting Adapts to Changing Times

— PAGE 3



PHOTO DON WEST

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TR&HC PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Looking Forward – Milestones Ahead!



In 2024 Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) will be 99 years old! When I look over the club’s history, it becomes clear that Tryon and TR&HC are nearly indistinguishable. Carter Brown, the club’s founder, essentially charted a path — his vision was that Tryon would become a sought-after equine haven. He basically brought all his friends to town, built and sold them houses and farms, and kick started TR&HC and its roster of equestrian events that have drawn people to this community ever since.

The club’s mission is to support equestrian sport, honor our shared traditions, and invest in our community. Our club truly aims to give back with our time, energy, and financial resources. We are a small, but mighty nonprofit, dedicated to serving the Tryon community we have all grown to love. We couldn’t do this without all those who give to us as well. Our volunteers and sponsors are vital to the success of our club and the running of its events. To all of you, I am truly grateful.

2024 will be the last year of my three-year presidency. My goal is to leave the club strong, energized, and secure. One thing that the club’s history has taught me is that as time passes, things change, but TR&HC has remained strong and resilient. It has evolved over the years to meet the needs of the community and times. I look forward to a great 2024, and hope to see you all out at our events!

Angie Millon

President, Tryon Riding & Hunt Club

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SAVE THE DATE!

2024 TR&HC Dates

April 12: Block House Pre-Race Party

April 13: 76th Block House Steeplechase

April 19-21: Tryon Horse & Hound Show

June 4-9: 96th Heritage Charity I Horse Show (Spring 6)

June 7: Charity Horse Shows/CSHHF Induction Party

July 2-7: Charity II Horse Show (Summer 4)

September 21-22: Schooling Days

October 19-20: 49th Morris the Horse Trials

November 3: 91st Any and All Dog Show

December 7: Annual Meeting/Holiday Party

— — —

Visit tryonridingandhuntclub.org for more info.

FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

Happy Centennial Eve! It’s not a phrase I’ve ever used before, but it’s fitting for the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club, which turns 100 years old next year!

How many organizations can make that claim? And how exciting that we are here to see it happen. Last year I had the honor of working with a local town on their centennial events and it’s incredible to recall the milestones and memories that comprise 100 years.

In this edition of the Quarterly, we also have much to celebrate. President Angie Millon was named USHJA Amateur of the Year, Gerald and Betsy Pack were honored by our community, and a local horse claimed top honors at the 2023 Special Olympics.

While I look forward to seeing what’s in store for the Club’s centennial in 2025, I know there will be much to celebrate in 2024.

Let the countdown to the Centennial begin!

Michelle Yelton

Michelle Yelton
Editorial Director



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The
HorseCountry
Quarterly

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Tally Ho! Foxhunting Then & Now – Inevitable Change

By Leigh Borreson

Many sports have adjusted the rules of old as people’s time and ability to participate shrinks. Fox hunting is no different. While people still want to participate, they no longer have multiple hours to ride, and those who do are faced with fewer tracts of land on which to hunt.

Bonnie Lingerfelt, Master of Foxhounds at Tryon Hounds, has been fox hunting here since the 1970s. Lingerfelt sees a change in the type of person out hunting now. “The people who come out to hunt now are different,” she said. “They just don’t have time to hunt all day long. And many don’t want to gallop around at breakneck speeds hurtling over jumps.”

Thankfully, our local fox hunting clubs are adapting to these new needs to avoid becoming a dying sport. Lingerfelt explained: “They no longer chase the hounds for over three hours in an outing; they’re now out for an hour or two. And instead of having one huge group on the hunt field, there are three flights: the first flight follows the huntsmen and hounds, the second is further back and has the option to jump, and the third flight, or ‘hilltoppers,’ walk and trot at the rear, rarely jumping. This gives beginner riders and young horses the opportunity to participate.”

For many people, Gerald Pack’s name is synonymous with fox hunting in the foothills. He has ridden since childhood on land that once made up one of the largest hunting fields in the world. In 1974, Gerald and his wife, Betsy, inherited the Greenville County Hounds, which eventually merged with Green Creek Hounds in the 90s.

Pack reflected on his early days as a fox hunter. “When I was a kid, we would start early in the morning and didn’t stop until it got dark! The area we had available to us was massive. We would meet up and have five different directions we could go in.” Today, Pack is concerned about several threats to modern-day fox hunting, primarily the disappearing land.

“We were fortunate to have landowners who owned hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of acres that we could hunt on. But time changes everything. The cost of owning large pieces of land is prohibitive [today], and the countryside is now dotted with small horse farms that are less expensive and



PHOTO: DON WEST

easier to maintain. You have to ride around them and try not to get tangled up with the owners’ dogs and animals.

Pack added that cost is another issue. “Many of the large landowners have died, and their heirs aren’t interested in incurring the cost of taxes and maintaining large tracts.”

Landowner relations have always been a challenge, Pack added. “The reality is that you are a guest of the landowner. We used to do a lot to support them and maintain good relations.”

Lingerfelt agrees that a good relationship with landowners is still key and additional changes have impacted these relationships. For starters, the clubs mainly hunt coyotes now, which are faster and cover more territory than the fox.

“Our fox hunters are still devoted to hunting and love being out in our beautiful countryside — that hasn’t changed. But, like other equestrian disciplines, we’ve had to make adjustments to our sport to accommodate the people who are interested.”

Still, Lingerfelt is optimistic about the sport’s future and the changes clubs have made.

“It’s working! We are keeping the sport alive!” she concluded.

Barbara Claussen
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CLAUSSEN WALTERS REAL ESTATE

My wife and I just recently closed on our new home in Tryon. We spent over a year looking for the perfect home. We were introduced to Barbara by our family members who had the pleasure of working with her before. So what we are happy to say, in a nutshell, is this: You will not find a better realtor in North America or Australia (our home country) than Barbara Claussen. She is just plain honest and real in all ways. We are grateful to have had Barbara’s guidance and support during this process and highly recommend her services. Nigel and Regina

Save the Date!

APRIL 13, 2024

The 76th Running of the Tryon Block House Steeplechase

YOUNG RIDER: SOPHIE MARTIN

by Margie Askins

Teen Foxhunter is a Natural!

While many eighth graders are stuck like glue to their cell phones, and often spend their Saturday mornings sleeping in, Sophia Martin is an exception. You don't have to pry a video game controller out of her hands to get her to be outside doing the sport she loves the best—fox hunting.



PHOTO DON WEST

Martin, who resides in Columbus, N.C., is up many Saturday mornings at dawn riding horseback on her Irish Sport Horse, Gold Bug, and actively fox hunting with a pack of hounds. She fits this passion in while still maintaining good grades, reading for enjoyment, and playing on her school's varsity volleyball team.

Now 13, Martin's love for horses began at the age of six when she started fox hunting with her mother, Shanna Mauldin, and the Low Country

Hunt. "She always rode. She has been my influence. She assured me it would be fun, and here I am," said Martin. Her fun relationship with horses began when her first pony, Cracker, joined her on a Halloween adventure as the dynamic duo dressed up as Dorothy and the Lion from the "Wizard of Oz." Her mother allowed her to go off the lead line, and she and Cracker had a blast.

That fun quickly evolved into fox hunting, and at the age of six, Martin was actively participating in the sport alongside her mother, and with the guidance of her trainer, Stacia Wolfe. "For inspiration, I look to my mother and Beth Blackwell, the Tryon Hounds Huntsman. They have mentored me, and I'm really happy to have them in my life," Martin shared.

Martin has been a natural at the sport from the start, earning impressive achievements such as: the Fairly Hunted Award from Master Foxhounds Association since she was six, the National Junior Foxhunter Championship qualifier, Best Junior for Lowcountry Hunt in 2018, Junior Huntsman for Goodwin Hounds for hound



Martin's love for fox hunting began at the age of 6 alongside her fox hunting mother, Shanna Mauldin.

showing in 2021, and Junior Huntsman for Tryon Hounds for the last three seasons.

She will never forget helping the hunt when they discovered a puppy's tracker wasn't working. She radioed for help and held the horses while people went in to rescue the puppy. "When everyone came back, they

were caked in mud. I was holding all four horses while mounted," explained Martin.

Martin's future plans include getting another horse so she can try eventing. She encourages other young riders to "try new things and don't be afraid." If she had never explored fox hunting, she would have missed out on a passion that she plans to pursue and an amazing, beautiful part of her young life that she can develop further. "What I love the most about fox hunting is hearing the hounds speak— each one of their voices is different, which makes an amazing rhythm/melody," stated Martin. May this melody carry her through many more years of fox hunting, and her love for the equestrian life.

Tribute to Gerald and Betsy Pack Celebrates Talent, Professionalism, Integrity and Giving Back

by Sybil Jones

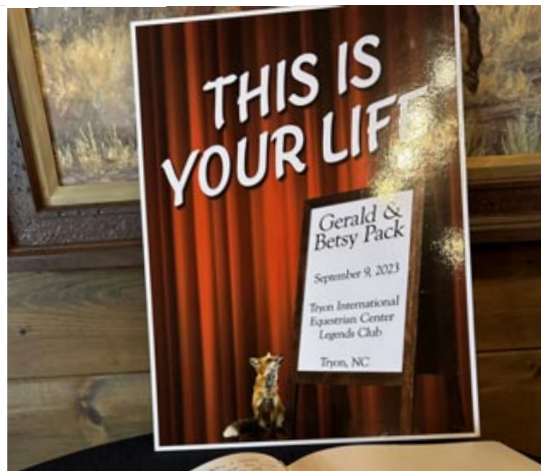
Back in September, the Legends Club at The Tryon International Equestrian Center filled with guests who shared one thing in common: their respect and love for a couple who exemplify all that is good in the horse industry and in Polk County. The occasion was a surprise tribute to Gerald and Betsy Pack.

Staged as the iconic TV show, "This is Your Life," Maryland trainer/clinician and Master of Ceremonies Mike Henaghan greeted the surprised couple at the door, escorting them to their center-stage seats, as special guests fêted the couple, their accomplishments and contributions. As Tryon Riding & Hunt Club member Libbie Johnson said, "Contributions that have made where we live, 'horse heaven.'"

The Pack's fingerprints are everywhere. "From Gordon Wright's founding of Greenville County Hounds leading to the Pack's eventual leadership of the hunt, to the founding of Stoney Knoll Farm and the growing influence of The Stoney Knoll riding programs, to the Pack family's influence and leadership in our local horse parks and shows, the list goes on," explained Johnson as she set the stage for the evening. "This, all this, is here because we have you both to thank. Indeed, you both are a tough act to follow, but today, sir and madam, we honor your legendary careers. And today ... you are the one and only act."

Among the notable guests sharing their memories were Mike Henaghan (aka the best man at the Pack's wedding), Betty and Ernie Oare, Carol Davidson, Jordan Hicks (on video), Sean Gaul, and Kelly Kocher.

Special thanks to all those who gave time and talent to the success of the evening: Libbie Johnson, Anita Williamson, Scott Trees, Judy Hamill, Michelle Gaul, actors Susan and Bob Penfold, Sean Gaul, and additional thanks to Stephen and Katie Pack, and Lewis and Leslie Pack who donated the venue and the food.



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FUTURE FARRIERS

by Michelle Yelton

Apprentices Learn New Skills and Patience

In the summer of 1995, Sean Gaul was a directionless high schooler. At the advice of a teacher, he made a list of jobs he did and did not want to do. After reviewing the list, his teacher recommended he become a farrier.

“I didn’t know what a farrier did,” Gaul remembered with a laugh. “So, I met my teacher’s farrier one day and watched him shoe a horse and knew that’s what I wanted to do.” Now, 28 years later, Gaul is one of the best farriers in the business.

Like most trades, the best way to learn is by becoming an apprentice, and Gaul currently has two under his tutelage.

Wanda Gortner of Chesnee, S.C., is absorbing as much as she can from Gaul. “Pulling shoes, clinching, and finishing is the starting point. It gives you time to ask questions and watch how they work. I cannot overstate how much there is to learn from watching good farriers work. How they pick up and hold a foot is just as important to learn as how to shape a shoe or trim a hoof.”

Another Gaul apprentice is Chaise Cantrell of Taylors, S.C. “I feel like the best avenue is to work with multiple farriers to get as much experience under horses as you can. You’ll get to see different styles from everyone, and different situations that come up, along with how that farrier handles it.”

Gortner grew up riding and always had respect for farriers but did not think she was strong enough for the trade. “It wasn’t until I met Meredith Clark, an extremely talented and successful female farrier, that I started to consider it as a possibility. She was smaller than I was and shoeing at one of the top shows on the west coast.”

Gortner learned quickly that a good farrier requires both physical and mental strength.

“There is a heavy mental weight that comes with being a farrier,” explained Gortner. “You’re working on live animals whose welfare is in your hands. It is a lot more subjective than that, and that leaves a lot of room to doubt yourself. Having good mentors to teach and challenge me has been great, and I don’t know where I’d be without their support and guidance.”

Like Gaul, Cantrell’s interest in becoming a farrier was sparked in high school. “I always enjoyed being around horses and found it interesting when the farrier would come to shoe my family’s horses. By my sophomore year in high school, I knew I wanted a career working with horses,” Cantrell explained.

While there are no mandatory guidelines for becoming a farrier in the U.S., Gaul has certain criteria he looks for in an apprentice.

“I look for someone with a strong work ethic, a good horseman/woman, a

Wanda Gortner (right) and Chaise Cantrell (below) are learning the trade as apprentices to a veteran farrier, Sean Gaul.



people person, and also a sense of humor,” said Gaul.

Becoming a farrier is hard, but all agree that it is a rewarding career.

“It’s hard work, but very rewarding! I recommend checking out the different schools to find a program that works for

you or finding a farrier to ride along with to start learning,” said Gortner.

“My biggest recommendation would be not to get into a hurry when starting out. Take the time to learn, be selective, and absorb any information that people are willing to share with you,” explained Cantrell.

For Gaul, his greatest reward comes from the relationships he has built through the years. “I’ve been fortunate to shoe for some great trainers in the immediate area, most of them I’ve worked for 15-24 years. We’ve developed great, understanding relationships.

“Their clients come and go, but as professionals we work really well together to make sure their clients’ horses are ready to lesson and show when needed, and that we have an open line of communication to do what’s best for the horse.”





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PROFILE: JULIO MENDOZA

by Michelle Yelton

Local Dressage Rider & Trainer Preps for Paris Olympics

Local legend and fourth generation rider Julio Mendoza of Ecuador has been training horses for over 35 years and is no stranger to success. In 2022 and 2017, Mendoza made history for Ecuador after earning all five gold medals in dressage at the Bolivarian Games in Bogota, Colombia. In 2018, he competed on behalf of his home country at the 2018 FEI World Equestrian Games held here in Tryon, and he is a repeat dressage competitor at Pan American Games where this year Mendoza won the individual gold in dressage for Ecuador with a record setting score of 87.23%. This victory earned him an individual spot for the 2024 Olympics in Paris.

Mendoza, who owns land and bases his farm out of Tryon now, is currently riding Jewel's Goldstrike, or "Goldie" as he is known at the barn. Mendoza acknowledged Goldie's contribution to their success and raved that his horse is "the whole package. He knows he's a champion and that he will always have a home with us!"

Mendoza and Goldie are focused on training for the 2024 event. "I am trying to work hard and stay focused while maintaining my horse's happiness and health – physically and mentally."

While Mendoza has a spot to the Olympics, affording to get there is another challenge and donations are being accepted to help cover travel



costs. When asked how he would prepare for Paris, he jokingly responded, "selling my kidney!" But, he knows many people are supporting him and is grateful to everyone helping him achieve his dream.

"We are so excited for this opportunity and it is a dream come true to go to the Olympics next year," expressed Mendoza.

Want to support this Olympic dream? Donations can be made through Venmo: venmo.com/u/Mendoza-Dressage, via Paypal: paypal.me/mendozadressage or on Zelle: 301-801-9353 or endozadressage@gmail.com.



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Four Horse Movies to Watch this Winter

by Sarah Madden

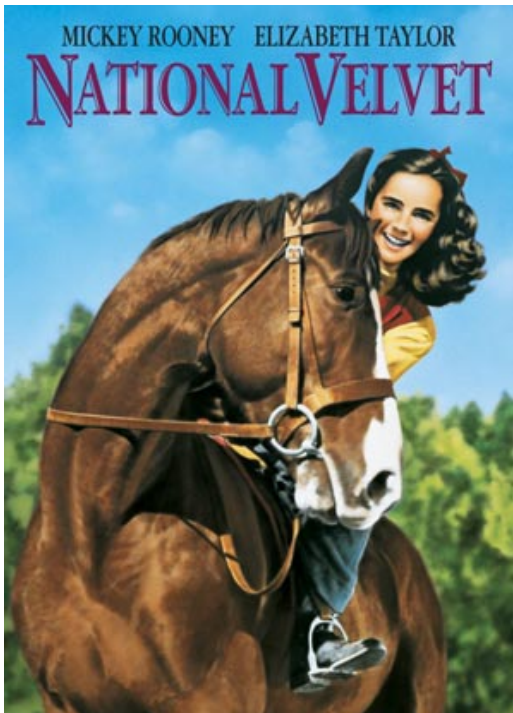
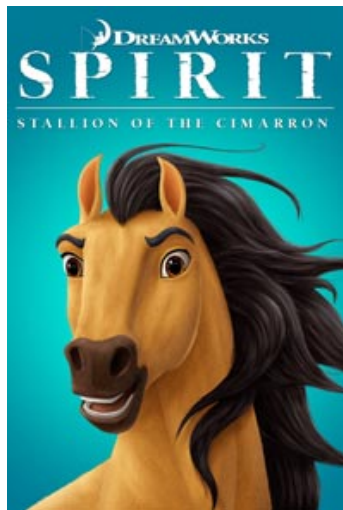
When winter weather keeps you away from the barn – or at the very least, out of the saddle – as is bound to happen to us here in the foothills, there are only so many live streams from horse shows in sunny Florida to keep us entertained. Whether you prefer warm-and-fuzzy entertainment or gritty, artful storytelling of true events, there are horse movies and documentaries of all kinds to explore! From kids' classics to new hits, here are four (of my favorite 20, but I'll spare you that list) that should be on your watchlist.

THE CARTOON:
"Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron"

2002 | G | 1h 23m

How to Watch: Peacock, Prime Video, Amazon

Alright horse girls (and guys), raise your hand if you've ever listened to the entire soundtrack of this classic on the way to a horse show... Just my IHSA team? Trust me, and try it next time. This film is equal parts endearing and inspiring, and captures the spirit of why a lot of us love horses in the first place. I can't emphasize the iconic score enough – thank you to Bryan Adams for giving us this masterpiece soundtrack. Family-friendly, and with something for all ages!



THE CLASSIC:

"National Velvet" 1944 | 2h 3m

How to Watch: Amazon, Prime Video

You thought I was going to pick "Black Beauty" for this category, didn't you? While I can't commend Anna Sewell's classic tale enough, I consider the 1944 flick starring Elizabeth Taylor and Mickey Rooney the first horse movie I fell head over heels in love with as a child. Who isn't inspired by a young girl who takes a horse that nobody else can handle and achieves what no woman before her has even attempted? We know a thing or two about the art of the steeplechase in these parts, and this film can help you get excited for the Tryon Block House Races in April, too!

THE DOCUMENTARY:

"Unbranded" 2015 | PG-13 | 1h 46m

How to Watch: Peacock, Freevee, Plex, Roku Channel, Prime Video

Sometimes things can get a little western, and the same is true for this documentary that follows four men riding sixteen mustangs from Mexico to Canada to showcase the quality and resilience of the American mustang.



Do I like to think I have the talent and guts to adopt a string of wild horses, train them (sort of), and then ride them through some of the wildest parts of the country? Absolutely not. Do I love watching these guys do it? Absolutely every second of it.



THE TRUE STORY:

"Dream Horse" 2020 | PG | 1h 53m

How to Watch: Hulu, Prime Video

Based on a true story, this isn't your average racing movie, and I was thrilled when this film was released. It's no secret that our sport can be so difficult to sustain financially, and improving access to horses is an ongoing conversation throughout all equestrian industries. The triumph of a band of owners from a small village, breeding and owning their own champion, is both a feel-good story and one that helps convey the magic of horses in a way that I don't think often comes across in film. Plus, this one gets bonus points for being another steeplechase story.

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LOCAL LEGEND: MARY ADAMS

by Margie Askins

Red Bell Run Sanctuary Runs on Love

We have all heard, and some have, unfortunately, witnessed, the cruel world of animal neglect--specifically with equines. In these dark spots, we find refuge in the bright stories of the loving rehabilitation and care that some of these rescued animals receive, like those in the care of Mary Adams, founder and president of the non-profit equestrian rescue organization Red Bell Run Sanctuary in Columbus, N.C.

Adams' love for horses began at four years old when she started frequenting her family's stables. Equestrian life was deeply rooted in Adams' family. "There were always horses. My grandmother, great uncle, and mother were all involved with horses," explained Adams. "They raised and showed American Saddlebreds." At a young age, she nearly lived in the stables, and could even be found napping in the corner of her favorite horse's stall.

We do a lot here at the Sanctuary, but the most important thing we do is simply love them.

Adam's early love for animals – combined with her family's compassionate spirit to help animals and people in need – later inspired her to create and grow Red Bell Run Sanctuary. When her purchase of 200 acres with a 40-acre working vineyard became a new home to her and her horses—she opened her home to receive horses, donkeys, and mules who had faced neglect and abuse from the entire nation, and bringing them to a gorgeous oasis with plenty of room for the animals to grow, heal, and explore.

With 15 barns, 30 full-time staff, and about 30 volunteers, Adams begins her day every morning at 5 a.m. feeding and caring for the minis and then makes her way around the Sanctuary. Currently, it is home to around 150 rescued equines as well as minis, ponies, donkeys, mules, and hinnies, and each animal receives individualized care. The equines live in one of the 15 "villages" and are housed with other animals with whom they get along. The villages are designed with each animal's needs in mind, providing the appropriate feed supplementation, bodywork, massage, acupuncture, and traditional veterinary medicine to help and heal them. The animals are groomed and loved each day. With patience, training, small steps, and time, most animals thrive and grow.

Their primary needs are feed, hay, and vet expenses. While financial donations are always welcome, people can help in other ways: tour the Sanctuary, sponsor an equine through a monthly donation, follow and share their social media,

volunteer at the Sanctuary, donate gently used horse items and supplies, get involved in the school/ children's Read to Rescues program, and of course, hay is always welcome.

The success stories at the sanctuary are endless, but Adam encourages everyone to take a tour and



Rescues Program. Adams added, "We do a lot of things here but at the Sanctuary, the most important thing we do is simply love them. They come here in need. We fulfill as many of those needs as we can."

hear about some of them such as Shelby Ann, the giant Belgian draft mule, sold to a kill buyer in a bankruptcy proceeding, but saved by a rescue in Oklahoma and sent to Red Bell Run. Or the story of sweet Willow, a miniature horse who was the victim of one of the most heinous things a human can do to an animal, who is now happy and healthy and a participant in the Reading with

To learn more about Red Bell Run or sign up for a free tour, visit online at redbellrun.org or call or 828-863-2017. Follow them on Facebook or Instagram at @redbellrun.

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Millon Receives USHJA Amateur Sportsmanship Award

When considering the criteria that go into choosing the annual U.S. Hunter Jumper Association (USHJA) Amateur Sportsmanship Award, it is easy to see why Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) President Angie Millon was this year's recipient. According to the USHJA website, this award recognizes amateur exhibitors "who exhibit a degree of excellence and integrity by supporting their fellow competitors and volunteering their time and resources to various aspects of the industry." Success in the show ring is second to the importance of serving on committees, providing sponsorships, and promoting the welfare of the horse.

Winning this award was a complete shock to Millon. "I got a call from the USHJA to let me know I had won the award this year. I was so surprised and humbled to be added to the list of very notable amateurs in the country who have won the award in the past. I feel I have contributed to our area, but to be recognized on a national level is just amazing. I still can't quite believe it!"

Millon, who fell in love with horses as a young child, rides almost every day. "No matter how bad of a day I am having, it all melts away when I get to the barn." For the last six years, her partner has been Jackson Square, an 11-year-old Dutch



Angela Millon with Laura Bowen (left) and Gisele Beardsley O'Grady (right), both local trainers and Tryonites who came to celebrate the occasion!

Warmblood gelding, who is just starting to come around to be "the partner I had hoped he would be," said Millon. Together, they compete in the Amateur Owner Hunter Division.

Millon credits her membership with the TR&HC for the opportunity to give back to her local horse community. "Since joining the board six or seven years ago, I have chaired the horse show committee, which has let me become much more involved in our historic charity shows, and by moving them to Tryon International Equestrian Center, the shows earned more national, and even international, attention."

Millon was instrumental in the development of the Carolinas Show Hunter Hall of Fame, which she co-chairs with Joann Loheac, and also completed the lengthy application process to have the TR&HC's 97-year-old Charity I Horse Show – one of the top five oldest shows in the country – designated a USEF Heritage Show. This elite group of historic shows represents the best shows in the country by involving the community, giving back, and encouraging the growth of the sport.

When considering all her success in 2023, Millon's favorite accomplishment was winning the Grand Adult Amateur Hunter Championship at TR&HC's

95th Annual Charity Show. "That was on my bucket list; getting my name on one of the TR&HC's perpetual trophies had been an elusive goal of mine for about 25 years!" she shared.

"Between scholarships and gifts to groups such as the Foothills Humane Society, PEER, FERA, Guiding Reins, Red Bell Run, Harmon Field, Fence, and Foothills Outreach Ministry, serving on the TR&HC board has allowed me to be directly involved in fundraising and subsequent philanthropic endeavors that support the local community. I can give back much more than I could individually!"

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2023 SPECIAL OLYMPICS AT TIEC

by Misty Yelton

A Local Volunteer’s Special Experience

“Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.” These words from the Special Olympics Athletes’ Oath rang through Tryon Stadium where I volunteered last fall for the 2023 Special Olympics North Carolina (SONC) Equestrian Tournament. More than 80 SONC athletes of all ages and abilities competed in events such as showmanship, barrel racing, pole bending, trail, dressage, and equitation.

While TIEC is no stranger to hosting upper level international equestrian competition, the tournament that took place last September may have looked a little different from other competitions. It is hard to put into words how volunteering at this event impacted me. As you witnessed the interaction between rider, horse, and support team, you knew you were seeing something special happening. It is hard to say which were the stars of the show – the riders, or their equine partners.

One of the athletes I met was Leah Glazer from Bright Star Stables in Durham County. Glazer enjoys competing at the SONC Games because it “is always so much fun, especially since so many riders from our barn get to participate. Competing makes me feel good about myself even if I don’t win. It takes courage to try.” Glazer not only competed, but she also won the silver medal in dressage, her first time competing in the event.

Using experience gained through Special Olympics, Glazer rode away from this year’s All American Quarter Horse Congress, billed as the world’s largest horse show, with the coveted Congress Jacket and Don Bell trophy by winning the EWD walk/jog Western Trail class on her horse, Tucker.

Each year, the SONC names a Horse of the Year, an honor given to the horse that made the biggest impact on the games, and each time an athlete needed a horse, my mare — ARC Shesa Walla — stepped up and showed out. By the end of the games, she had won a gold medal in pole bending, trail, equitation, and even dressage. She carried five different Special Olympics athletes to victory. During the award ceremony, her story was told over the loudspeaker, and I saw several people suffering from the same “dust in the eyes” that I was. I am blessed to be able to call her my heart horse, my unicorn, and the Queen of the Farm.

Donating Walla to be used at the SONC games in 2023 was good for my soul.



Above, Walla was named 2023 SONC Horse of the Year. Left, Leah Glazer on Tucker with her supportive mom.



Walla has won the Congress, NRHA trophies, and multiple world championships, but the title she won last September means more to me than any of those. It has been said

that “the outside of the horse is good for the inside of man.” I can also say that donating Walla to be used at the SONC games in 2023 was good for my soul.



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ASK AN EXPERT: ELLEN REICHLER

by Sybil Jones

Know Your Horse to Know if Treatment Works

This is the second of our two-part series on Massage Therapy. In the last issue, Reichle answered questions about the benefits of massage including how it works in the horse’s body. Here the discussion centers on how the owner can assess if the therapy is working.

Q: Can an owner tell when their horse might benefit?

A: Some clues the horses use are that they seem stiff, cranky about being worked, stressed, won’t settle down or his overall demeanor has a depressed attitude. If you’re unsure why your horse is different, a massage, used as a starting point, can be useful information regarding the horse’s physical condition. Based on the findings, it provides the owner with another view into the horses’ change in behavior and whether a veterinarian’s assessment is needed.

Q: Is massage therapy a preventive therapy — Why, why not?

A: Performed regularly, massage therapy can be perceived as preventive care. Monthly hands on can help intercept and alleviate a potentially bigger problem. It also alerts the owner of something that needs addressing. If the problem doesn’t resolve in two or three visits, a different type of practitioner may be needed.

Short term, massage therapy is perfect as supportive care. A good example is preventing founder in a stall bound horse recovering from a fracture.



Q: How do you know your therapy works?

A: The after-effects of the massage, from the client’s perspective, is that the horse has a more fluid and freer range of motion. They also feel more elastic, have more ease in their step and feel more rhythmical in their gaits.

During the massage, you can tell how the work feels to the horse by their reactions such as where they lean into you or where they want you to back off. Quite frequently, the horse will give a huge stretch with their neck or hind leg and literally tell you where they want to be worked. That sense of their trust to relax and let go makes working with a non-verbal being extra special.

Q: Can someone without formal training give an effective massage?

A: Yes! Use a curry comb and start light. The horse will guide you!

Reichle 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 Reichle at *In Good Hands*, massage therapy for horses, dogs and people: ereichle8clubs@gmail.com

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Any & All Dog Show Celebrates 90 Years!

Dozens of dogs (and their human companions) celebrated joyful attitudes, slick tricks, and good looks at Harmon Field at the 90th annual Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) Any & All Dog Show, making it the largest gathering of cool canines – big and small – in recent memory.

The day kicked off with an entertaining demonstration by dog trainer extraordinaire, Dina Zaphiris, and her talented Border Collie, Lickety-Split, and was followed by a spirited competition held across multiple classes including Biggest Dog, Smallest Dog, Looks Most Like Its Owner, Best Costume, Best Trick and Best Rescue Dog. Winners of each class were then entered to compete for Best in Show – an honor captured by the massive black Great Dane, Johnny Cash.

In honor of the 90th anniversary, each contestant received a special medallion to commemorate the event, and everyone went home a winner with a generously stocked bag of treats and toys from Purrfect Bark.

Once again, Andy Millard offered wit and wisdom as he emceed the proceedings sponsored by Camp Wayfarer, The Noble Dog Lodge, Camp Highlander and Ivey Sumrell. Dianne Joyce and Don Borreson shared



judging duties – a challenging task with so many outstanding dogs to choose from. “The competition was superb this year — it was hard to narrow it down and pick the leader of the pack”, Borreson explained. “Best of all, it was a great turnout!”

As always, proceeds from the Any and All Dog Show went to deserving local charities. TR&HC is thankful to the Foothills community for its wonderful support of the Any & All Dog Show and for man’s best friend.



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Foxtail, Sweet Vernal and Little Barley



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

The fall drought in Polk County affected our ability to re-seed fescue pastures and may have also weakened and thinned existing stands of forage. This may give certain grass weeds a foot hold to expand their territory in your pastures or hayfields this spring. Sweet vernal grass, foxtail, and little barley are often confused for one another. This article will describe what to be on the look-out for and what can you do about them.

Sweet vernal grass is becoming a bigger problem in fescue pastures and hayfields. It can act as a perennial or winter annual and does well in our naturally acidic soil. It has a distinctive sweet smell when mature. We typically see this grass weed emerge earlier in the year than foxtail, although the two are often confused for the other. If consumed in large enough quantities, it can disrupt normal blood clotting. Grazing animals typically do not eat it in a pasture, but it may become difficult for animals to sort out of hay. Since the fall, drought forced many to skip fertilization; this weed may be more problematic in spring than previous years. Mid-February fertilizer applications may help fescue get a jump on and out-compete sweet vernal, but unfortunately there are no selective herbicides to control it.

Wild Barley (*Hordeum pussillum*) is a short winter annual grass also known as foxtail barley or little barley and it resembles wheat or barley with it reaches maturity. It is a shallow-rooted bunchgrass weed that can grow in most soil types. Like foxtail, the seed heads form spikes and they have long, fine needle-like awns or bristles that can poke the mouth of horses or livestock. Although they may graze it before it seeds, they typically avoid it afterwards. Lambient (Propoxy-carbazone-sodium) is a Bayer herbicide that controls some grass species and partially controls Foxtail Barley and Rattail Fescue. It will also kill some other common broadleaf weeds but also may kill clovers and other beneficial legumes. The label says it is safe on many other cool season grasses including orchardgrass. Tall fescue is not specifically listed as safe, but may be worth testing a small area first if infestation was large.

While sweet vernal and little barley germinate in the fall and then grow in early spring, foxtail



Wild barley, left, and Sweet vernal grass, below, can easily be confused in the field. Knowing which you're dealing with will guide any control efforts.



waits until spring when there's about three consecutive days of 65-degree weather. There are four species of foxtail, three annuals and one perennial (knotroot foxtail). Most of the foxtail we contend with is one of the annual varieties: Green Foxtail, Yellow Foxtail or Giant Foxtail. The herbicide Facet (quinclorac) can be used as an early post-emergent treatment, but identification and application prior to seedhead production is essential to successful control. Pre-emergent control is fair with the product Prowl H2O, but it must be applied in late March/early April prior to seed germination and may need to be applied a second

time. There is a grazing restriction of 60 days and a hay restriction of 45 days. These restrictions are the time between making the herbicide application and when the forage can be grazed or harvested. Mowing is fairly ineffective as the foxtail just make seeds on a shorter stalk. Grazing prior to foxtail seed head formation can put some pressure on the weedy plant, but animals stop grazing it once it goes to seed.

As always, if you need help with identification or control, please contact Cassie at 828-894-8218 or cassie_lemaster@ncsu.edu.



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2023: A TR&HC YEAR OF GIVING

Philanthropy a Core Value of the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club

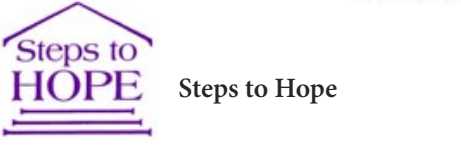
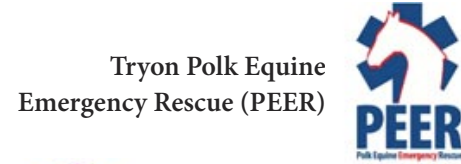
At the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club's annual meeting in December, President Angie Millon shared significant updates about one of the club's core pillars, which is giving back to the community.

"TR&HC has contributed \$200,000 to the community over the last five years. That is a lot for a small nonprofit! But as our accountant has said, 'you are a nonprofit, any money you make should be given back,' so we have," emphasized Millon.

The club gives grants to both equine and animal welfare organizations, as well as community-based programs. On average, the club donates to at least 12 organizations per year, in addition to providing educational scholarships and vocational funding to individuals in the club's five-county area.

The 2023 recipients included:

- Pet Tender Angels
- Roseland Community Center



In addition, the club granted \$5,000 in scholarships to local students.

A representative from Blue Ridge Hope shared their gratitude for the gift and stated, "Friends such as you and the entire club make what we do possible."

A representative of the Roseland Community Center concurred: "Your donation helped us tremendously. Thank you so much for including us in your giving."



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TR&HC MEMBER NEWS

Annual Meeting and Christmas Party Wrap Up a Great Year

At the annual Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) Christmas party last December, President Angie Millon's opening remarks illuminated a significant approaching milestone – the club's centennial anniversary in 2025.

"I am pretty sure that makes Tryon Riding & Hunt Club one of the oldest clubs in town. I would go as far to say that without TR&HC, Tryon would not be the same," she stated. Millon credited TR&HC founder Carter Brown for his vision to create an equestrian community nearly 100 years ago.

As a special gift, all members received a 2024 TR&HC calendar with all 2024 club events already listed, including the Block House Races steeplechase on Saturday, April 13. In addition, Millon announced that the annual steeplechase poster contest is now open to any local artist and no longer must be a local high school or college student. The deadline for submissions is January 31.

"I also want to give a huge thank you to our hard- working board and group of volunteers," concluded Millon. "Without you TR&HC wouldn't function! 2024 will be the last of my three-year term as president ... I am looking forward to going out strong."



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Congratulations to the 2024 Carolinas Show Hunter Hall of Fame (CSHHF) inductees

Horses: Brunello and Numbers
Horsemen: Ron Danta and Daniel Geitner

The CSHHF induction ceremony will be held on Friday, June 7 during the TR&HC Charity 1 Horse Show at TIEC.

Brunello pictured with rider Liza Boyd, left, and Numbers with rider Peggy Wohlford, right.



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