



The HorseCountry Quarterly

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRYON RIDING & HUNT CLUB

Meet Young Rider Mary Hampton Cottingham – PAGE 6



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TR&HC PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Mark Your Calendars!



Dear Friends,
As the crisp autumn air returns to the foothills, so does a season full of community, celebration, and cherished traditions. I’m excited to share some upcoming events that highlight the spirit of our club.
First, mark your calendars for Halloween in Tryon. Join us for an evening filled with costumes, candy and fun! Next up, is the return of the 92nd annual “Any and All Dog Show”— a historic and heartwarming day that will be returning to Harmon Field. Always a crowd favorite, bring your pups and enjoy a “Best in Show” afternoon!
Looking ahead, we invite you to our Annual Meeting and Holiday Party, hosted this year at the Mirror Ball Gallery in downtown Tryon. It promises to be a festive evening of connection and celebration, featuring a special artwork auction in support of our ongoing community giving programs.
As always, we are grateful for your continued support. These events are not just dates on the calendar, but opportunities to come together and strengthen the bonds that make our community such a special place.
We hope to see you there!

Joanne Gibbs
TR&HC President

DID YOU KNOW?

The only true “wild” horses are the Przewalski horses of Mongolia. The most important evidence we can readily see of this is that some Przewalski still have stripes on their legs and back that they inherited from wild ancestors.
What about other “wild” horses and mustangs? Well, they are scientifically “feral” horses whose ancestors were domestic horses.



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The HorseCountry Quarterly

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRYON RIDING & HUNT CLUB

The Horse Country Quarterly is the official publication of the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club, published four times a year. Visit TryonRidingandHuntClub.org and click JOIN to receive *The Quarterly*. Send comments, article ideas and calendar events to tryon1925@gmail.com.

TR&HC President	Joanne Gibbs
Editorial Director	Michelle Yelton
Art Director	Stephen Bleezarde
Administration	Bonnie Chiles

SAVE THE DATE!

2025 TR&HC Dates

October 31: Halloween in Tryon

November 2: 92nd Any and All Dog Show

December 5: Annual Meeting/Holiday Party

Visit tryonridingandhuntclub.org for more information.



TR&HC Board Member Donna Younkin presents a check to Mary Adams of Red Bell Run, one of the 2025 TR&HC Charity Horse Show beneficiaries. Read more about this year’s Charity Horse Shows on page 4.

FAREWELL FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

As we reach the end of the calendar year and conclude the celebration of 100 years of the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club, we also encounter another conclusion – my run as editor of *The Horse Country Quarterly*. For three years, I have had the privilege of sharing the inspirational and uplifting stories of Tryon Horse Country’s pioneers, legends, rising stars, equine professionals, horse enthusiasts, entrepreneurs, volunteers, and most loyal supporters. When I stepped away from Tryon International in 2022 to pursue a new career path, I was grateful that the newspaper’s founder, Sybil Jones, invited me to carry forward her incredible vision.

Now, three years later, I introduce you to our next editor, Margie Askins, who will take the reins of this important tribute to the remarkable work happening across the Tryon Horse Country community. While new to the editor’s chair, Margie is not new to *The Quarterly*. As my son’s former high school English teacher, she was the first person I recruited to join the team, and she has been a steady presence ever since, contributing thoughtful articles in every issue.

While I will miss talking to the community members who keep the legacy of Tryon Horse Country alive, I look forward to being a continued advocate for your efforts and to many more years of *The Horse Country Quarterly*.

Michelle Yelton
Editorial Director

Tally-Ho Rolls on a Century Later

by Michelle Yelton

As the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, it’s exciting to see one of Tryon Horse Country’s most iconic historical equestrian artifacts—the 1885 Tally-Ho Park Drag—in the spotlight again. Once upon a time belonging to the TR&HC, the club donated the coach to the Polk County Historical Association (PCHA) in 1982, who relocated this rare treasure in April to its new home on display at the House of Flags Museum in Columbus, N.C.

Lovingly named “Maude” in honor of former owners Colonel Frank and Mary Coxe’s daughter, the late 19th century yellow-and-black park drag originated in Brussels, Belgium, and was constructed by coach builder, Henri De Bruyn, before arriving in the United States. Intended for leisurely outings rather than extended, long-haul travel, the Tally-Ho is one of only a few surviving examples of its kind and the only one known to exist in the Western Hemisphere, making it a truly unique treasure housed in Tryon Horse Country.

Mike McCue, an independent scholar on Tryon area history, shared how the club came to own the historic carriage for a time: “The Coxe Estate auction took place at Green River Plantation in 1928, the country home of the family. Frank Coxe by then was dead, Maude still alive. The coach didn’t attract spirited bidding so TR&HC got it cheap,” McCue explained. A docent at the House of Flags Museum added that the coach later became a familiar sight at early Block House Steeplechase events, where it was often used for tailgating in true sporting style.

The display of the vintage Tally-Ho offers a bridge between Driving’s elegant 19th-century expressions and its continued presence in the modern equestrian world. While Driving isn’t as widely practiced as



other equestrian disciplines, it remains a sacred tradition among enthusiasts. Tryon International Equestrian Center hosts annual Driving competitions, impressive events that test the powerful combination of precision, elegance, and teamwork.

“It’s known that Frank’s son, Tench Coxe, drove the De Bruyn [Tally-Ho Park Drag] for excursions from Battery Park, and in competition at the Asheville Horse Show right after the turn of the 20th century,” McCue added.

McCue encapsulated the value of the Tally-ho carriage being on display at its new location: “Of all the historical artifacts exhibited in Polk County, there’s none more important, I think, than this authentic, unique vehicle. It’s of national importance and deserves to attract visitors with equestrian interests from all over the nation and the world,” said McCue.

In this centennial year, the Tally-Ho is more than an artifact – it’s a legacy on wheels – and reminds us that even as time rolls forward, some traditions are simply too beautiful to leave behind.

Make your own visit to see the iconic Tally-Ho Carriage in person at the House of Flag Museum, located at 33 Gibson Street in Columbus, N.C. For hours of operation or contact info, visit www.houseofflags.org.

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The screened, published image of Dr. Harry Brown jumping on the outside course at a Tryon horse show was featured in Jane Brown’s 1960 photo book. Rider Brown wasn’t related to photographer Jane Saxman Brown, who was from Illinois. PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.TRYONHISTORY.ORG.



The Tally-Ho carriage in its present-day home at the House of Flags Museum. PHOTO MICHELLE YELTON.

THE 2025 CHARITY I & II HORSE SHOWS

Penny Ante Trophy Retired & Other Achievements

by Michelle Yelton

The Tryon Riding & Hunt Club's (TR&HC) 2025 Charity I and II Horse Shows delivered several landmark moments, from the retirement of a long-standing trophy to repeat victories across multiple divisions. The two weeks of competition at Tryon International offered much celebration for riders and spectators alike.

One of the most significant milestones came during Charity II with the official retirement of the Penny Ante Grand Children's Hunter Perpetual Trophy. For a trophy of this caliber to be retired, the same horse must win it three times—a rare and remarkable feat. That honor went to Eligius, ridden by Addison Heywood of Nashville, T.N. Angie Millon, former president of the TR&HC, called the duo's success a "huge honor and accomplishment." This achievement not only highlights the consistency and quality of Eligius, but also the dedication of the Heywood's family and team. According to Millon, the family plans to introduce a new trophy named for their champion, ensuring the legacy continues for future generations of riders.



Penny Ante Winner Eligius with rider Addison Heywood.



Liza Boyd and Ondine d'Orleans in the USHJA International Hunter Derby. PHOTOS NATALIE SUTO PHOTOGRAPHY

Another standout performance came from Liza Boyd and her chestnut mare, Ondine d'Orleans, who swept the \$20,000 USHJA International Hunter Derby at both Charity I and II. In a recent press release, Boyd credited Ondine with securing the victory at the July show:

"Ondine helped me a bit there," Boyd said. "I have to say, a good horse helps their riders, and when you need her to dig in, she definitely covered up a little bit of a weakness I had there, and took good care of me, because I probably could have used a little bit more leg for the back

pole. She'll get extra carrots tonight!" The shows also highlighted the next generation of talent, including Lydia Callard and her mount, Souvenir, who claimed repeat victories in the Grand Junior Hunter division at both Charity I and II. From historic retirements to repeat champions, the 2025 TR&HC Charity Horse Shows reflected the values the club has championed for decades: tradition, excellence, and the celebration of riders and horses at every level of the sport.

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Meet Katie & Stephen Pack:

Honoring Traditions, Building a New Legacy

by Margie Askins

Katie and Stephen Pack are writing the next chapter of a storied family tradition in Tryon Horse Country through their hunter/jumper training and boarding facility, KS Sporthorses, at Overlook Farm in Columbus, N.C. "Our business is a training, showing, and sales operation that focuses on horsemanship, quality care, and training for both horses and riders. We are a boutique-style barn with a family-orientated atmosphere focusing on all the details," Katie stated. Their picturesque 40-acre facility is an added bonus to clients who also get to learn from two accomplished trainers, both with equestrian backgrounds rich in history and abundant in expertise.

Katie grew up with horses her entire childhood and began riding at the age of five on her family farm. Foxhunting and horse showing throughout her junior years, Katie continued to develop her craft and had the opportunity to ride with many accomplished horsemen. "I rode with Gerald and Betsy Pack, and had the opportunity to ride with Mike Henaghan, George Morris, and Joe Fargis," she shared. Katie attended Sweet Briar College, rode on their collegiate equestrian team, and also competed in shows. She had multiple championships and wins in the hunters and jumpers, competing up to the 1.25m level.

Stephen, a second-generation professional horseman, also began riding before kindergarten. "I began riding at the age of three. I grew up riding on the farm, foxhunting, and horse showing," Stephen said. He also rode with legendary horsemen, including Joey Darby, Victor Hugo-Vidal, George Morris, and Mike Henaghan. He competed in the Medal and Maclay Finals multiple times. After college, he moved to France, where he worked in a show jumping stable, and in 1999, he began competing in the Grand Prix level. He has competed up and down the East Coast from Wellington to the Hamptons and everywhere in between at the 1.50m-1.55m level.

The two crossed paths as teenagers when they met at Stoney Knoll Farms. Eventually, they married, combined their passion for horses, and started KS Sporthorses in 2016 with two sale horses. Since then, they have successfully sold and leased over 50 horses. "We are a barn that is focused on quality, high-level training, high-level horses, and competition," Katie explained. They work with riders of all levels from cross rails to the Grand Prix level. They compete at several shows, including Tryon, Aiken, WEC



Trainer Stephen Pack, above, and with KS Sporthorses partner Katie, left.



Ocala, Devon, and The National Horse Show. They also offer several options for boarding, all of which include training rides and lessons—private and group. "Katie and Stephen are both wonderful teachers and have a good, balanced barn with dedicated riders of all ages," stated Nancy Z. Wilson, former TR&HC president.

"We focus on the basics of riding and horsemanship. We work on exercises daily to promote confidence, strength, and rideability to give the horses and riders the best chance possible to answer the questions that the course designers ask during competition," Stephen explained. This is evident at their facility, which includes a four-acre field for riding outside the ring. Every horse goes on a nice, long trail ride each day after working hard in the ring, which the Packs believe is important for the horse's mind and body—and the rider's, too. Katie explained KS Sporthorses' main focus: "We focus on the details and work with our students to achieve their goals. Our first priority is to the horse—its health and happiness. The smallest details make up the big picture."

To contact Stephen and Katie Pack, visit their website at kssporthorses.com or email them at kssporthorsesllc@gmail.com.



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YOUNG RIDER: MARY HAMPTON COTTINGHAM

by Margie Askins

From Horse Camp to College Eventing

At 18 years old, Greenville, S.C., rider Mary Hampton Cottingham’s love for horses has evolved into a collegiate pursuit. As a former member of the Tryon Collective’s Interscholastic Equestrian League team and a 2025 Tryon Riding & Hunt Club scholarship recipient, Cottingham just left for Auburn University this past August, and although she is years away pursuing a degree in Biomedical Sciences, she has her feet still fully planted in the equestrian world. “I’m very grateful to be a recipient, as it not only supports me academically but also connects me back to the equestrian community that has shaped so much of who I am,” said Cottingham.



No matter where life leads me, I know that horses will always be a part of it. At this point, they feel less like a passion and more like a part of who I am.



Mary Hampton Cottingham, 2025 TR&HC Scholarship Recipient and Collegiate Eventer. PHOTO LIZ CRAWLEY

Cottingham’s love for horses began to shape her future when she attended a horse camp in the first grade. From then on, she was “hooked,” and by age ten, she was taking riding lessons. “Horses became less of a hobby and more of a passion that has only grown deeper over the years,” Cottingham explained. In middle school, she started foxhunting with Green Creek Hounds in Tryon, which eventually opened the door to Eventing. “Even while I was in hunter/jumper lessons, I never stopped talking about wanting to Event—it was always where I wanted to be,” Cottingham stated. She kept her eye on the prize, despite not having some of the resources other young riders were more fortunate to have. Determined, she eventually began traveling with her father to his new job in Aiken, S.C., which Cottingham attributes to pure fate. She met people who became incredibly influential in her horse journey, such as trainer Janna Bankston. She began catching rides on any of the available horses and began riding at Sandy Hills Farm with Whitney Pierpont, who she credits with officially introducing her to the world of Eventing.

Although she didn’t begin Eventing until her sophomore year of high school, she remained determined to improve and grow, despite any obstacles. “I didn’t grow up winning ribbons at big shows, and for a while, that made me feel like I didn’t belong. Social media often magnified that feeling when I saw riders my age competing at higher levels or with resources I didn’t have. But over time, I redefined what ‘success’ means for me. My accomplishments are measured by the progress I’ve made with my horses—like taking a green horse and building him into a confident partner or turning my Thoroughbred into a horse that people now compliment for his build and presence. I started competing later—sophomore year of high school—and by senior year, I had brought my Thoroughbred back up to the

Training level after we really struggled to fix his flatwork and help him feel better physically and mentally. That’s something I’m really proud of,” Cottingham added. She wisely advises young riders interested in horses and riding or Eventing to remember that every rider’s journey is different, and what ultimately matters is being grateful to these beautiful animals: “No one’s journey is ever linear. A setback doesn’t mean you’ve failed—it simply means you’re growing. We all work incredibly hard, even though our experiences look different, and we all do it because of the amazing horses we’re lucky enough to partner with.” This past year, Cottingham had the rewarding experience of competing with Tryon Collective, which gave her a glimpse into what being on a collegiate team may be like. She even met two freshmen—also heading to Auburn—who plan to join the Eventing team. Some of her immediate plans are to compete for Auburn all four years of college, and to take her beloved horse, Benjamin Button, to their first Modified and possibly even compete at Preliminary on a catch ride before she graduates. Cottingham explains that this hobby she once had as a curious child is now

life-defining: “No matter where life leads me, I know that horses will always be a part of it. At this point, they feel less like a passion and more like a part of who I am.”

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DRESSAGE MEETS TECHNOLOGY

How JJ Tate Brought Innovation to the Sport

by Margaret Freeman

Jessica Jo (JJ) Tate’s impact around the Tryon-area Dressage scene has moved well beyond this area since she relocated here in 2016.

Five years ago, Tate extended her influence beyond the international-level rider and trainer by creating her innovative “Team Tate Academy,” and now reaches directly into riders’ homes. Each week, members of the academy receive short, precise videos that relate to basic concepts of Dressage, from Training Level to the FEI levels and Grand Prix. Some also have access to lectures and even lessons, depending on their membership level. The library of videos alone is now over 200.

Part of Tate’s motivation in establishing the academy was to impart the horsemanship wisdom of her mentor, Charles de Kunffy. “I wanted to bring the principles I learned through Charles to their home,” said Tate. De Kunffy, who died this year, was a classical Dressage master born in Hungary. He



JJ Tate’s Team Tate Academy brings Dressage lessons to students in the ring and virtually. PHOTOS RICHARD MALMGREN



immigrated to California and eventually became an influential author and instructor, and conducted clinics all over the country, including at Tate’s Blue Ridge Farm near Landrum, S.C.

Other trainers Tate has worked with include Steffen Peters, Ali Brock, Michael Barisone, Michael Klimke, Conrad Schumacher, Scott Hassler, Walter Zettl, Oded Shimoni Gerhard Politz, and Susanne von Dietze-Pollak.

Tate met De Kunffy at a Dressage clinic when she was only 11, near her home in Fort Atkinson, WI. Later, at age 18, he encouraged her to study in Hungary with Gyula Dattos, telling her, “You must apprentice and live, eat and breathe” there.

She spent two and a half years in Europe, followed by competitions in the U.S., where she earned a team silver medal at the North American Young Riders Championships, competed in the Pan Am selection trials, and earned USDF bronze, silver, and gold medals by the age of 21. She ran her own training programs in Wisconsin and Florida for several years with top competitive finishes, then decided to move to the East Cost to pursue international goals. She’s competed over 30 horses at the FEI levels. She now splits her year between Wellington, F.L, in

the winter and Landrum, S.C, the rest of the year.

While Tate strives to compete at the highest levels internationally, at the same time, she said, “I am dedicated to training and teaching under the principles of classical Dressage that have been handed down to me by my great teachers. I feel responsible for keeping the art of classical equitation alive.”

Tate keeps the academy videos short and precise. The academy, she said, “is a like-minded community to help people, to show ‘we’ve got your

back.’ It presents a systematic methodology, so they can do more than understand theory,” she said.

She also believes that classical Dressage benefits all types of horses, “if you want a sounder, happier horse that is fun to ride,” Tate added.

“High-level training and education should be accessible to everyone, regardless of where they live or the type of horse they ride,” she said, and again channels De Kunffy: “The art remains alive by being passed down by its practitioners.”

The academy is available online at www.teamtateacademy.com.

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A Century of Equestrian Experience: Perspectives from TR&HC Presidents

by Leigh Borreson

Reaching the century mark of service is a rare achievement for any institution. When that milestone is attained by a community-minded nonprofit – devoted to the magic of horses, no less – it calls for reflection on the journey. As Tryon Riding and Hunt Club (TR&HC) celebrates its 100th anniversary, we highlight a few of the dedicated board presidents whose efforts have enabled the club to grow and thrive.

Starting with Carter Brown, there have been 32 presidents of the TR&HC board of directors, all with three things in common: 1-passion for equestrian sport, 2-reverent respect for the history of the club, and 3-great love for the Carolina Foothills region, specifically Tryon. These men and women, with the support of many other loyal club members, guided the organization through growth and change in both our community and the horse world over the last century.

Naturally, the personalities and leadership qualities of each president were reflected in their goals and achievements as they led their boards. Each dealt with a variety of social, financial and political issues while our community grew and the sport evolved. To showcase this spectrum of leadership, we spoke with three past presidents from the past 25 years to discuss their perspective on the role.

Angie Millon

Angie Millon and her family have been riding and showing in the Tryon area for over 25 years. She first joined the board in 2017 and became president in 2021. Her experiences with the club have cultivated great respect for the legacy of the TR&HC. “I wanted to keep that alive while being a good steward of the club and improving the things we were doing,” Millon said. One of her goals was to bring back the feeling of the “old fashioned horse show” that the whole community could enjoy. She was instrumental in resurrecting the TR&HC Horse and Hound Show, making it bigger and better than ever.

Millon’s hard work and commitment to the Charity Horse Shows have grown the relationship with Tryon International Equestrian Center. Thanks to her leadership, the Charity I Horse Show is now designated a U.S. Equestrian Federation Heritage Show—a true honor. “We’ve given the club a face again at our two Charity Shows; I’m very proud that we’ve made them special again,” Millon shared. Her advice to future presidents: “Understand the hours you’ll need to put in and recognize that the club has been around for a hundred years—going through both good and bad times. Hang in there and do the best you can.” She added, “Your window to serve as president is so small ... just try to leave the club in a



Former TR&HC presidents (L-R) Angie Millon and Nancy Z. Wilson with current president Joanne Gibbs.

better place. Looking back, I think I made a difference – and that is important to me.”

Chuck Lingerfelt

Chuck Lingerfelt served as the president of the TR&HC board for over ten years, starting in 2003. He and his wife Bonnie have lived in Tryon for over 50 years and have strong connections with the sport horse community. “I treated it like my second job, and it quickly turned into full time,” Lingerfelt admitted. When he became president, he shared his vision and said, “This is what we’re going to do,” then he took the reins of the club and ran with it, choosing board members with the same goals. “I wanted to make sure we had money in the bank, and I wanted to make sure the steeplechase would succeed,” he explained. “We moved it to FENCE and the popularity of the sport was waning,” Lingerfelt

remembers when over 20,000 people would come for the races at Block House. “Things change! Attendance is the hardest thing we have to deal with now,” reminding us that funding events like steeplechase can be challenging.

Lingerfelt emphasized that future board presidents need to build strong relationships in the community. One of his core goals was creating a “working” board. “I looked for leadership in our board. With the board’s backing, if you do things the right way, it should run smoothly.” He added, “I think the club is moving in the right direction today, giving back to the community while staging more events in more venues.”

Nancy Z. Wilson

Nancy and Jim Bob Wilson moved to Tryon in 1979 and soon became active with the club, with Nancy eventually serving as president. Wilson has

TRYON RIDING & HUNT CLUB PRESIDENTS: 1925 – PRESENT

1925 – 1947	CARTER P. BROWN	1963 – 1964	MRS. WILLIS E. KUHN	1977 – 1978	ROBERT M. HULL	1999 – 2002	THOMAS M. MOSCA
1948 – 1949	GEORGE S. BRANNON	1965 – 1966	MRS. EDWIN R. PERKINS III	1978 – 1980	EDWARD D. BEATSON	2003 – 2012	CHARLES C. LINGERFELT III
1949 – 1950	B. LEFTY FLYNN	1967 – 1969	DAVID S. BUNCH	1981 – 1985	GUSTAV A. HOFFMAN	2013 – 2015	NANCY Z. WILSON
1950 – 1951	AUSTIN BROWN	1970 – 1971	DR. JOHN R. BRADSHAW	1986 – 1988	COL. CHARLES C. ROSS	2016 – 2017	ANN TROPPMAN
1952 – 1953	WILLIS E. KUHN	1972 – 1973	KATHRYN STONE & GADEN O. CORPENING	1989 – 1991	HARRY W. BROWN, DVM	2017 – 2018	ANDREW BRANNON
1954 – 1956	HERBERT D. OLIVER			1992 – 1993	COL. R. PEYTON TABB	2019 – 2021	TERRY LYNCH
1957 – 1959	CARTER P. BROWN	1973 – 1974	KENNETH P. MILLER	1994 – 1995	WILLIAM F. CUNNINGHAM	2022 – 2024	ANGELA MILLON
1960 – 1961	DR. OLIVER CARMICHAEL	1974 – 1975	ROBERT B. IRONS	1996 – 1997	THOMAS M. MOSCA	2025 - present	JOANNE GIBBS
1961 – 1962	COL. MALCOLM KAMMERER	1976 – 1977	TIMOTHY H. BRANNON	1997 – 1999	LUCY GREEN		



Past TR&HC presidents, Chuck Lingerfelt (left), Terry Lynch (center) and (right) Tim Brannon, whose father, George, and late son, Andrew, also served as club presidents.



owned, bred, and competed horses most of her life; clearly, she is passionate about all equestrian sports. She emphasized that being board president takes time, energy and commitment. As she began her tenure, the club was entering a season that required renewed focus on stability and growth. “My immediate goal was to get us on

track and right the financial ship, so I just kept looking forward and became a cheerleader and spokesperson for the club. But, behind the scenes I was navigating [financial challenges].”

Wilson found that the key to the job is maintaining a balance: keep club history alive and deal with the constant changes in the sport. “You

have to honor the past and make the most of the present, but anticipate future needs,” she explained. Wilson is very proud of TR&HC’s commitment to the community. She was key in setting up the club’s scholarship and grant programs to help young riders and those supporting local equestrian circles. “I just loved being at the center of an organization that had such a great history of giving,” Wilson recalled. “Tryon is a special place in large part because TR&HC is in the heart of it.”

Saluting a Century of Leadership
TR&HC has served Tryon Horse Country with energy and excellence for one hundred years – all because of the love of horses, and of course, the people devoted to that emotion. Each club president has contributed to that history with their own brand of dedication, perseverance and affection for the mission – with outstanding results. Here’s to the next hundred years of tradition, growth, and community.

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Local College Opens Doors for Young Equestrians

by Misty Yelton

“The equine classes at Isothermal have prepared me greatly for my current job working full time for a top performance horse trainer,” remarked Finn Parker. Parker, a 2025 graduate of Isothermal Community College (ICC) with a certificate in Equine Science, took the experience he gained through the college’s program to the “Great State of Texas,” where he is currently employed as an assistant by NRHA Two Million Dollar Rider Brian Bell.

Parker is just one of the many examples of how the Equine Business Program, part of the college’s Agribusiness Technology curriculum, equips students with the knowledge and hands-on skills needed to thrive in the horse world—whether their interests lie in training, farm management, riding instruction, breeding, or equine entrepreneurship.

What makes the program stand out is its balance of classroom learning and practical application. Students don’t just sit behind desks; they actively engage with horses and equine facilities to gain real-world experience. Courses cover topics such as equine health, nutrition, training principles, and stable management, alongside essential business skills like accounting, marketing, and entrepreneurship. This approach ensures graduates are not only confident horse handlers but also savvy professionals capable of managing successful equine operations.

“The equine industry isn’t just about riding,” explains Caroline Hall, a 2024 graduate of the program. “It’s about understanding how to care for your animals, and manage a farm responsibly. After my classes at Isothermal, I feel prepared for the demands of a very competitive field.”

For horse lovers considering their next steps after high school—or adults seeking a career change—the Equine Business Program offers both short-term certificates and two-year associate degrees. These flexible options allow students to choose the path that best fits their goals, whether they want to enter the workforce quickly or continue on to a four-year institution.

“Through my experiences at Isothermal, I was able to gain experience working with animals and develop leadership skills outside the classroom,” said Stevie Brown, a 2022 graduate. Brown has put her education from Isothermal to use working as a breeding assistant at Tallent Quarter Horses in Vale, N.C. Brown, upon completion of her four year degree in Veterinary Science in the spring of 2026, will transition into a full-time position at the full service reproductive center.

With equestrian sports and recreation continuing to grow in North Carolina, the demand for skilled professionals in the field remains strong. Isothermal Community College is rising to meet that demand by preparing students not only to work with horses, but to lead in the business of horses.

For more information about enrollment, program requirements, or upcoming courses, visit www.isothermal.edu.



Right, Finn Parker in Texas works on desensitizing a horse for a sale video. COURTESY OF FINN PARKER

Below, right, Caroline Hall schooling at the farm in Ocala where she spent the summer as a working student. COURTESY OF CAROLINE HALL

Below, left, Stevie Brown holds a mare’s head during an embryo transfer. PHOTO MISTY YELTON



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CARTER P. BROWN

A Tribute to Our Founding Father and an Equestrian Legend

One hundred years ago, one man’s vision transformed the rural corner of Polk County, N.C., into a pulsing equestrian heartland. When Carter P. Brown arrived in Tryon, N.C. in 1917, he likely had no idea his name would be etched into the very foundation of Polk County’s equestrian identity. But 100 years later, the institutions he built—horse shows, foxhunts, and an enduring culture of camaraderie—are living proof of the legacy he left behind.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TR&HC

Imagine a 1927 Tryon – a young Brown arrives by train, drawn by the promise of untapped potential, and finds a sleepy town. What he built was an equestrian empire. From a modest inn and a borrowed horse, he helped give rise to a riding culture that would put Tryon on the national map—and keep it there for generations.

In 1925, Brown started the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) and became its first president, launching an equestrian community built not just on sport, but on relationships and tradition. He followed that effort with the area’s first local fox hunt in 1926. The Tryon History Museum website refers to him as “a ‘guiding light’ of the Tryon Horse Show and the ‘father’ of the Block House Steeplechase.”

The museum’s website goes on to share how local historian and former TR&HC President Colonel Charles C. Ross aptly stated: “Carter Brown was ...the man who put Tryon on the map as a horse center.”

The milestones continued as Brown hosted the first Tryon Horse Show in 1929, which quickly became a beloved tradition. According to Ross’ interview on the museum’s website, “The event was so popular that the schools were let out and most businesses closed for the afternoon,” Ross said.

In 1947, Brown introduced the first Block House Steeplechase at the historic Block House, where his son, Austin, was one of the race’s first winners. The spawning of landmark TR&HC equestrian events continued with fox hunts, junior shows, clinics, and more, building a wellspring of equestrian tradition.

Brown also believed in giving back to the community. Around 1928, he started the first Carter Brown BBQ as a way to thank all of the landowners who allowed the Tryon Hounds (also founded by Brown) to hunt across their properties. Landowners were invited to eat for free, and the popular event became the lead-in to the horse show later in the week.

His vision even reached Olympic heights. In the 1950s, the U.S. Equestrian Team trained in Tryon in preparation for the 1956 Olympics—an effort that helped elevate the region’s global profile and ultimately paved the way for the Tryon International Equestrian Center to choose Polk County for its world-

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92nd Annual Any & All Dog Show Returns to Harmon Field

A beloved Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) tradition returns to Harmon Field this fall! The Any & All Dog Show will mark its 92nd year of wagging tails, silly costumes, and community smiles as dogs and their owners gather for an afternoon of lighthearted fun. The show will take place on Sunday, November 2, 2025, from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Harmon Field in Tryon. Whether you’re bringing your pup to compete or simply coming to watch, this cherished event is guaranteed to brighten your day.

For more than nine decades, the show has invited dogs of every size, breed, and background to step into the spotlight. True to its name, the competition is open to “any and all” canines—no pedigree required. Families, children, and spectators alike look forward to seeing local dogs show off their personalities in a collection of whimsical categories that have delighted crowds for generations.

This year’s event will once again feature:

- Best in Show
- Biggest and Smallest Dog
- Best Trick
- Best Costume
- Dog That Looks Most Like Owner
- Best Rescue Dog

Each class brings its own special charm, from pint-sized pups prancing proudly beside their

owners to seasoned rescues proving that every dog deserves a chance in the ring. The “Looks Most Like Owner” class is always a crowd favorite, with pairs showing off their uncanny resemblances, while the “Best Trick” class highlights the creativity and training efforts of local handlers.

Registration is just \$1 per category, keeping the spirit of accessibility and fun alive. All proceeds benefit local nonprofits, extending the impact of this lighthearted show well beyond Harmon Field. Winners in each class will receive ribbons, but the real prize is the joy of participation and community spirit.

Spectators can also expect family-friendly activities throughout the day, making it an outing for all ages. Whether you bring a dog or not, the laughter, costumes, and good cheer make the Any & All Dog Show a one-of-a-kind experience that has endured for nearly a century.

As TR&HC continues to celebrate 100 years in 2025, this dog show continues to exemplify what the club has always stood for—bringing people together through animals, community, and tradition.

So, mark your calendar, gather your leash, and come celebrate the 92nd Annual Any & All Dog Show at Harmon Field this fall. Every dog has its day—and this one belongs to them!



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By Cassie LeMaster, Area Equine & Livestock Agent, NC State Extension

Debunking Myths About Hay

We’ve all heard them: “Second-cutting is always best!” or “You can tell a good hay just by looking at it.” But are these really true?

Myths often develop from a grain of truth that gets inflated over time. To help livestock and horse owners make better choices, let’s look at a few common hay myths—debunked by forage specialists at the University of Kentucky.

Myth #1: Second-cutting hay is always the best.

Not quite. The most important factor in determining hay quality is the plant’s stage of maturity at harvest. Cool-season grasses such as fescue or orchardgrass will produce a seedhead in the spring, often just in time for the first cutting. For hay producers, this means higher yields and more bales that can be harvested and sold; however, this also means that the crop’s fiber content is elevated, reducing digestibility. Because subsequent cuttings are often harvested with fewer seedheads, the second or later cuttings most

often results in a less fibrous hay. First cutting hay can be high-quality if cut early. Stage of maturity and other management factors at harvest affect hay quality. High-quality (or low-quality) hay can be harvested from late spring to late fall if weather and management conditions are right. Quality should be assessed on laboratory-performed analysis and not based on cutting.

Myth #2: Horses require higher-quality hay than cattle.

Generally true—but with nuance. Horses do require higher-quality hay than cattle because their digestive tracts are very different. Cattle are ruminants and are able to break down fiber very efficiently, whereas horses are monogastrics and are less efficient at fiber digestion. Therefore, cattle can perform well on hay that horses cannot.

However, the animal’s individual needs should dictate the quality of hay provided. An easy-keeping Quarter Horse in light work does not need the same quality of hay as a Thoroughbred at the peak of his or her racing career. Similarly, an open (nonpregnant) Angus cow does not need the same quality of hay that a high-producing dairy Holstein needs at the peak of lactation. Always consider body condition, workload, and pasture access—and, when possible, base decisions on a hay analysis.

Myth #3: _____ is the best type of hay.

This statement often comes from horse or

livestock owners who have relocated to the area and are not familiar with the local hay species.

Forages generally fall into one of two categories: grasses (orchardgrass, tall fescue, bermudagrass, timothy, teff, and bromegrass) or legumes (alfalfa and clover).

Hay quality is not solely about the forage species or even the variety. When managed and harvested correctly, legumes will be higher in quality than grasses; however, there will be little difference between different grasses or legumes when all other factors are held constant. Buying locally produced hay will likely save money due to reduced transportation costs. Research any concerns you might have about a specific grass or legume species, such as endophyte-infected tall fescue. If you are concerned about feeding a certain hay species, consult your local county extension agent or an equine nutritionist. In summary, don’t rely on assumptions or old wives’ tales when it comes to hay. By applying these principles, you can optimize your feeding program, improve animal health, and make the most of your hay investment.

Need help testing hay or understanding an analysis, contact Cassie LeMaster at 828-894-8218 or cassie_lemaster@ncsu.edu. For more hay myths, listen to the the “Debunking Hay Myths” episode of the Extension Connection Podcast.

Re-Introducing Young Equestrian Artist Anna Ruby Whitmire ARTWORK TO BE AUCTIONED THIS DECEMBER

by Michelle Yelton

Recent Converse University graduate Anna Ruby Whitmire is flourishing in her pursuit of an art career, thanks in part to momentum sparked by the

Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC). In 2022 as an undergraduate art education major, Whitmire took the plunge and entered the steeplechase poster contest – and she won!

“I still regard my first time participating in the steeplechase poster contest as a turning point. It was the fall of 2021 and I had just started college as an art major, excited to be pursuing art but unsure what would come of it,” shared Whitmire. “Winning the contest, attending the pre-race party, and watching the races for the first time was such a defining moment because it opened my eyes not only to the possibility of a successful career as an equine artist, but to all the amazing people that are willing to support it.” Not only did she win that year, but Whitmire went on to claim second place in the 2023 and returned to win again in 2024.

Whitmire’s work was so good that the club decided to commission a painting from her for the 2025 steeplechase. Unfortunately, the races were

canceled, so former club president Angie Millon sought another way to honor Whitmire while paying tribute to the steeplechase legacy she captured so beautifully. “She created an amazing oil painting and it’s spectacular!” Millon said.

Whitmire remains grateful to the club for their ongoing support and encouragement of her, which reinforced her decision to pursue art.

“Through these experiences, I’ve learned that every artist needs a village, and I’ve certainly found one here in the mountains and fields of Tryon. The Tryon Riding & Hunt Club is beyond faithful in their mission to support young equestrians and I couldn’t be more grateful!”

Whitmire’s pursuit of equestrian art continues. She recently began her Masters of Fine Art in Visual Art at

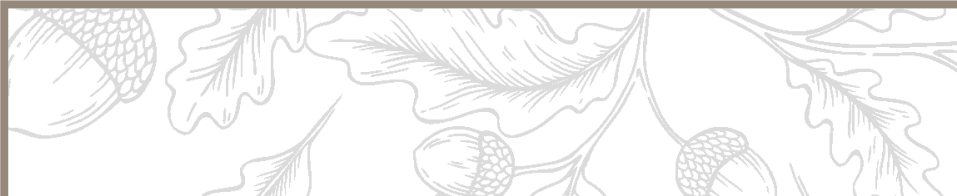
Florida Atlantic University with a concentration in Painting.

As for the steeplechase painting, it will be auctioned off at the TR&HC Annual Meeting and Holiday Party on Thursday, Dec. 4 at the Mirrorball Gallery + Studio Lounge in Tryon, N.C. Bidding will start at \$1,000.



Anna Ruby Whitmire’s 2025 oil painting of the Block House Steeplechase will be auctioned at the December member party.





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TRYON INTERNATIONAL

The Duke “Jump for the Children” Horse Show is coming to Tryon International November 2025 - Competition will feature USEF National and Level 4 competition, continuing a 42-year tradition of raising lifesaving funds for Duke Children’s Hospital



Learn More & Plan Your Visit

TR&HC MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Celebrate the Season at TR&HC’s Centennial Holiday Party

The Tryon Riding & Hunt Club invites members and friends to close out an unforgettable 100th year in style at our TR&HC Annual Meeting and Holiday Party! Join us on Thursday, December 4th, from 6–10 pm at the stunning Mirror Ball Gallery in Tryon, N.C. for an evening filled with holiday cheer, fellowship, and festivities.



The night will sparkle with delicious hors d’oeuvres, drinks, and music, while we gather for the club’s annual business meeting to celebrate accomplishments, elect new officers, and share what’s ahead. This year’s party will also feature a very special highlight: the live auction of a gorgeous oil painting of the Block House Steeplechase by acclaimed young artist Anna Ruby Whitmire—a one-of-a-kind opportunity to take home a piece of TR&HC history.

Don’t miss this joyous evening as we toast to the season and to a century of equestrian tradition. For event details and to RSVP, visit tryonridingandhuntclub.org or call 828-351-9709.

TR&HC Scholarship Applications Open for 2026

The Tryon Riding & Hunt Club (TR&HC) is excited to announce that applications are now open for its 2026 college scholarships! Students have until May 15, 2026, to apply, with awards announced in June.

Scholarships have been a TR&HC tradition for decades, reflecting the club’s mission of giving back to the community while honoring its equestrian heritage. In 2026, scholarships will be awarded to students from Polk, Henderson, Rutherford, Spartanburg, and Greenville counties. Both high school seniors and current college students are eligible, though preference will be given to graduating seniors ready to take their next step.

Awards start at \$500 and may vary. Applicants with ties to the equestrian world—through sport, industry, or membership in recognized organizations—will be given priority, along with those demonstrating financial need.



2024 TR&HC Scholarship winner Samantha Collins

With this program, TR&HC invests in the future—supporting students who embody the values of service, commitment, and equestrian tradition. TRHC is happy to accept donations earmarked for funding the scholarship program. For more information, please contact us at office@trhc1925.org.

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