

OUR INAUGURAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER!

Volume 1 | Number 1

March 2026



THE HORSE COUNTRY MONTHLY

SAVE THE DATE!

TR&HC Events Coming in April!

✓ April 17-19th:

Horse & Hound Show at Foothills Equestrian and Nature Center (FENCE)

- April 18-19th:
Silent Auction
- April 18th:
Horse & Hound Used Tack Sale sponsored by The Tryon Riding & Hunt Club – 10am-2pm
- April 19th:
Derby Day

SPRING AHEAD!

TR&HC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we spring ahead, we are excited to welcome you to our newly launched digital newsletter, The Horse Country Monthly. The monthly format is designed to keep you more connected to our programs and events.

One highlight to look forward to is the historic Tryon Horse & Hound Show, April 17-19th at FENCE. It will be a fun-filled horse show complete with derbies, the returning hound show, exhibitor parties and a spirited silent auction.

Please join us for an exciting weekend!



Joanne Gibbs

Joanne Gibbs
TR&HC President

GETTING DIGITAL IN THE NEW YEAR

From the Editor's Desk

I've always had a deep affection for the printed word. With two college degrees in English focused on literature, publishing, writing, and editing, I've long cherished the experience of setting in with a good novel on a rainy Saturday afternoon or at my local library or turning the crisp pages of a newspaper. But even with the personal fondness for print, it's clear that traditional print editions are no longer the most effective way to deliver timely information to you--or readers. And so, as a Club, we're embracing a shift to better meet the needs of our members, sponsors, and the community we serve. Beginning with this March issue, The Horse Country Quarterly will transition from a printed publication to a fully digital format: The Horse Country Monthly, delivered directly to your email inbox. The new platform will allow us to provide current updates, highlight monthly events, and share more concise feature stories in an accessible, timely way.

If you have any suggestions, questions, or even future story ideas, please contact me at thcqaskins@gmail.com. I'm excited for what comes next, and I hope you enjoy our first digital edition.



Margie Askins
Margie Askins
Editorial Director

CONTACT US!

The Horse Country Monthly is the official online publication of the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club, published monthly. Visit TryonRidingandHuntClub.org and click JOIN to receive THCM directly to your inbox. Send comments, article ideas, and even events to tryon1925@gmail.com

TR&HC President...Joanne Gibbs
Editorial Director...Margie Askins



ALISON SCHUTT – THE MONGOL DERBY AHEAD!

by Leigh Borreson

Alison Schutt, a local rider with a reputation for grit and confidence, is preparing to tackle the Mongol Derby — a 620-mile endurance race across Mongolia described as the longest and toughest horse race in the world.



Photo by Kami Bitting

The 10-day race, held each August, traces routes inspired by the 12th-century relay system developed under Genghis Khan, thought to be the planet's first long-distance postal network. Competitors ride semi-wild Mongolian horses — sturdy animals typically standing 12 to 14 hands — across open steppe, high passes, valleys, rivers and deserts, often facing extreme weather and gale-force winds.



Photo by Kami Bitting

Riders are in the saddle for 10 days, 10 hours each day, and switch mounts roughly every 25 miles. The course's remoteness means participants can go days without encountering another person. Previous riders have loved the "absolutely fantastic" horses who were unfazed by the things they encountered.



Photo by Barbara Smith

One past rider stated, "The experience is so fulfilling — nothing compares to it. The scenery is breathtaking. One minute you're galloping by camels, then past a yak . . . and a golden eagle flies up in front of you!"

Selection for the Derby is stringent. After an initial application and phone interview, organizers vet candidates for weight, height, fitness, survival experience and mental toughness. Expert equestrians are not required, but confidence and determination are essential — qualities Schutt reportedly possesses in abundance. Follow next month's coverage as she readies for what organizers and participants alike call a uniquely brutal — and unforgettable — challenge.



ADJUSTING GRAZING STRATEGIES CAN REDUCE HEALTH RISKS FOR HORSES ON FESCUE

by Cassie LeMaster, Areas Equine & Livestock Agent, NC State Extension

In North and South Carolina, pasture management is often timed to match peak forage production—spring and fall for tall fescue and summer for warm-season grasses like bermudagrass. While this approach supports pasture health and livestock production, it can create challenges for horses, particularly those prone to excess weight gain.

During peak growth periods, fescue is high in calories and sugar content, increasing the risk of obesity, Equine Metabolic Syndrome, and laminitis. Compounding the issue, tall fescue contains an endophyte that produces ergovaline, a toxin that causes reproductive complications, restricts blood flow and has been linked to hoof health concerns.

Rather than grazing during these high-risk periods, shift to “off-season” grazing. Allowing fescue to mature before grazing increases fiber content and lowers sugar levels. As summer temperatures reach 85–90 degrees, fescue growth slows, and both sugar and ergovaline concentrations decline, making it a safer grazing option.

Under this approach, horses are removed from fescue pastures in early to mid-March to allow growth. By mid-June, seedheads can be clipped, and grazing can resume through the summer months. During the fall growth surge—when sugar levels rise again—horses can be rotated to warm-season grasses as their quality declines. Fescue pastures can then be fertilized and stockpiled through fall for winter grazing, when both sugar and ergovaline levels drop. The chart below describes the action for each season:

SEASON	ACTION
December through February/early March	Graze semi-dormant fescue pasture.
Early March through mid-June	Remove horses from fescue and stockpile growth. Non-EMS horses can graze bermudagrass/bahia grass as these are non-toxic.
Mid-June through mid-September	Graze fescue pastures until a 4-inch residual is reached, then rest. Move to bermuda/bahia/crabgrass or dry lot when that occurs.
Mid-September through early December	Graze bermuda/bahia/crabgrass until gone.

While this strategy may not suit hard-keeping horses, it offers many owners a practical way to maintain consistent grazing while reducing dietary risks. Would you try this technique? Let me know what you think at cassie_lemaster@ncsu.edu.



Join Us!

Fifth Annual
Silent Auction
at
TR&HC's Horse & Hound Show



ITEMS YOU CAN'T DO WITHOUT!
Valuable and not-so-valuable, keepsake, funky and fun items. Mostly equine or canine treasures and fun experiences!

Auction items will be on display during Horse & Hound show —
Final bids will be posted at noon on Sunday, April 19, 2026

All proceeds benefit the Tryon Riding & Hunt Club.
TRHC is a 501(c)(3)

(If you have items you would like to donate, contact the TRHC at office@trhc1925.org. Deadline for donations April 17.)

CELEBRATING 100 WONDERFUL YEARS WITH TRYON HOUNDS!



Photo by Don West



Foothills Amish Furniture 

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HOOF CARE PROGRAM OFFERS FINANCIAL RELIEF TO HORSE OWNERS

by Margie Askins

The American Farrier's Association, in partnership with the American Horse Council and the United Horse Coalition, has launched the Farrier Direct Safety Net to assist horse owners facing temporary financial hardship.

The program, available to U.S.-based AFA members, provides up to \$300 per horse for essential hoof care. Covered services include trimming, shoeing, emergency shoe replacement, and treatment for common hoof conditions.

Officials say the initiative aims to help horses remain in their homes while continuing to receive necessary care. Horse owners are encouraged to contact their farrier to determine eligibility, while farriers can apply through the AFA website at americanfarriers.org.

TR&HC SCHOLARSHIPS

Students in five counties are eligible for 2026 awards!

The Tryon Riding and Hunt Club is accepting applications for its 2026 college scholarships, with submissions due May 15 and awards to be announced in June.

Students living in Polk, Henderson, Rutherford, Spartanburg, and Greenville counties may apply. Eligible applicants include graduating high school seniors and current college students, with preference given to graduating seniors.

Scholarships will be at least \$500, with priority given to students who have ties to the equestrian industry or sport or who belong to a recognized equestrian organization. Financial need will also be considered.

The Club awarded \$10,000 in scholarships in 2025 as part of its ongoing commitment to supporting education and preserving the region's equestrian heritage.

For more information, please visit:

<https://tryonridingandhuntclub.org/scholarships/>



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April 17-19, 2026
Foothills Equestrian Nature Center

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