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# The Mane Bit

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[www.harrogatehills.com](http://www.harrogatehills.com)

905-473-3847

Winter/Spring 2008

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## ON TRAINING RIDERS AND HORSES

We all start at the same place, even though some might forget how it felt. There had to be a first time for all of us, the first time that we placed our left foot in the stirrup and swung our right leg over the saddle. Everything the horse did felt a bit foreign and we told ourselves the jostling, bouncing and sore muscles that we suffered for the next few months was worth it, if we were able to learn how to ride. But somewhere in that period of time we found that we needed less time to think about how to communicate with the horse. Somewhere along the line, the basic signals became almost instinctive. When the instructor said "trot on" we automatically squeezed a little with our legs and allowed a little with our hands and we automatically expected the horse to oblige.

Each level of skill was acquired the same way. First we were introduced to the concept, next we learned how to execute the concept and then we would practice it. Finally we no longer needed to think about it but naturally felt the correct time and the degree of aids required to accomplish the task.

Throughout all of this of course the horse continued to teach us. Faster than anyone on the ground, the horse tells his rider when he has it right and, just as willingly, he explains when the rider has it wrong! (The horse, as the saying goes, is always the best teacher.)

Finally however the rider begins to move to the next stage and that is when his competence has reached the point where his

position and his application of the aids has become second nature. At this point it is of value to take this physical competence and add to it a theoretical knowledge of training.

In my opinion this is the most exciting part of riding. While our respect for our horse's intrinsic knowledge never lessens, we can now, with sufficient humility, begin teaching the horse. (The humility is an important aspect of training and riders who lack it are usually given great doses of it by any horse they attempt to train!)

Riding is a classical discipline and in the last two thousand years pretty much everything has been tried. Short cuts, training contraptions and cruel equipment have all gone in and out of style over the centuries, but an enlightened and kind method has always produced the best and happiest horses. We can trace the basics of training back to the Greek statesman and general Xenophon who, in 380 B.C., said "anything forced and misunderstood can never be beautiful."

So that is the challenge facing the Harrogate Training team.

The team consists of the following riders: Geoff Bishop, Erica Clayton, Kandice Coates, Nick Clulow, Jayme Feliz, Jenn Hooper, Billy Mason, Sydney Neilly, and Rebecca Schweinberger. These are riders who have met the standard mentioned above and they are now attempting to impart their knowledge to their equine students. The horses chosen for this program all have a few issues and so the training will be more complex than starting a young horse. The goal, at the end of 8 to 12 weeks, is to take the horses to a Basic

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Walk/Trot Dressage test in the spring. The test asks the horses to perform fluid transitions and ride basic school figures. It will be fun and exciting to see how both horses and riders make out!

As Xenophon said over 2000 years ago:  
“...Horses by correct training will become more beautiful but never less so...”

I am sure the Training Team is up to the challenge.

Pat.

### THINKING ABOUT CAMP?

During **March Break** you can experience a week long winterlude with horses - learn a lot, ride a lot and have a lot of fun!

Registration is in full swing for the annual **Summer Camp**. The first session is already full - summer will be here before you know it!

### A HORSE IS A HORSE WHEN

A horse is usually not considered to be a horse until it is 5 years old. Before that, males are known as colts and females are known as fillies. However it is still acceptable to call a colt or filly a horse.

A foal is a very young horse and can be either male or female.

A mule is a cross between a male donkey (a jack) and a female horse (a mare). Mules are usually sterile.

A hinny is a cross between a male horse (stallion) and a female donkey (jenny) Hinnies are also usually sterile.

## DECEMBER SEEMS A LONG TIME AGO BUT . . . .



Thank you to everyone who took the time out of their busy schedule to come to the Open House on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Thank you also to Santa and the Elves and our own special reindeer, represented handsomely by Cheyenne.



The quadrille is turning into an annual event! Jayme Feliz on Scout, Jenn Hooper on Little Cheyenne, Kandice Coates on Pete, Nick Clulow on Legacy, Billy Mason on Mandy and Geoff Bishop on Tobias amazed the crowd with their great performance. What will they have in store for us next year?

Christine Benns rounded out the evening with a wonderful slide show featuring Harrogate Hills' horses, students and staff – hopefully this too could become a new tradition!



### A SUMMER CAMP MEMORY

It was the big day. The final day of camp. After two weeks of riding every day friends, parents, grandparents and all of the kids attending camp gather round dutifully watching as riders get a chance to showcase just how awesome they've become.

It was my turn and things were going well. I was riding Jake and we were almost through our final course of the day. Just one line left. That's when things started to go wrong.

I'm not really sure how it happened. I'd like to say that's because it all happened so fast, but I'm fairly sure it was actually painfully slow. I think it began in mid-air over the first fence. I lost both stirrups and fell forward on to Jake's neck. The fact that I was unable to recover and sit up straight again didn't faze Jake; he carried on in a nice little canter towards the second fence.

Still lying on his neck, I started to think he might actually jump the second fence . . . I was pretty sure that would be a bad idea . . . but, from my position, I didn't really have much say in what we did, so over the fence we went. As Jake landed on the other side, I landed in front of the saddle. Jake didn't really seem to be bothered by the fact that his rider was now sitting on his withers with her whole body wrapped around his neck. I'm sure a lesser horse would have bucked, or shaken his head, or taken some other means, understandably, to rid himself of the annoying rider. Instead, Jake did what any respectable school horse would do. He trotted over to some nice lush grass, stuck his head down and started to eat.

I slowly slid, face first, off his neck. The crowd held their breath in anticipation, looking on as I sat with my head down and shoulders shaking. Pat approached me to make sure I was OK and was relieved to see that I was laughing, not crying. I think she was mostly relieved because it meant that she was also allowed to laugh right away and didn't have to hold it until later, which I'm not actually sure she would have been able to do.

Those who were there to see it used to enjoy embarrassing me by telling this story to those who missed it. And when they told the story they would pull out the picture. The picture. The worst part. Sarah was standing beside the second fence and snapped the picture as we were in mid-air. The position I'm in makes me look as though I should be riding some high-speed motorbike; this isn't helped by the fact that I was wearing a pair of painfully tight light blue chaps (don't ask why).

I guess we can all learn a few lessons from this story: sit back, keep your heels down, and give a school horse a hug. Sure, they can be lazy, and they can be stubborn, but I don't think any other horse would lower you gently to the ground and let you make the mistakes we all have to make (OK, maybe most people don't make that particular mistake.)

Maybe you should submit your embarrassing moments as well! Next time I'll tell you about the time my Mom went to camp and hid the fact she'd peed her pants by sitting in a bucket of water and telling everyone a horse had pushed her in.

*Name withheld at request of "Mom"*



# RIP

Very sadly, in January Duchess and Patrick had to be helped on their way to a better world, due to medical issues. They are greatly missed.

# NEW HORSES

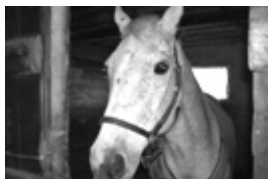


On an icy Sunday in January Nemo arrived. It wasn't the best start as the trailer slipped off the driveway, but Nemo took it all in his stride and was soon frolicking in the front paddock. His first friend was Grandpa who treated him in a very gentlemanly fashion. He has now been integrated into the field with Cash and Eddie – and Grandpa to keep an eye on their behavior.



*What??? Me in a dressage show?*

**Nemo** is a three-year old Thoroughbred gelding and is Pat's Special Project. (She is very excited!). Will she join the Training Programme and enter the next walk/trot dressage show? There are some who think she should!



**Remy** is a privately owned, flea bitten gray mare with a wonderful temperament. She has spent the last couple of years out at pasture and is being slowly brought back to working by her owner. When she is sound and ready to work she may be used in the school.

### CLEAN SWEEP HARROGATE HILLS STYLE

Have you grown over the winter? Are you planning to enter any shows this year? Do you want to look great without spending too much?

Sheryl Schweinburger has boots, jackets, riding pants and more for sale – or she will find someone to buy the equipment that you just cannot squeeze into any longer.

Check the list posted in the Lounge. If you have something for sale, please drop a detailed note, marked “Attention Sheryl”, in the box and it will be added to the list. (Thanks Sheryl!).

### WHEN IS A SNAFFLE NOT A SNAFFLE?

While Snaffle bits can have a variety of different mouthpieces and cheeks a true Snaffle will be one that has no leverage/fulcrum action to it.

An exception could be shown in the Hanging Cheek or Baucher’s Snaffle, as this will provide some downward pressure on the horse’s poll.

Other bits such as the Bubble or four Ring bit are really a Pelham that has no curb chain. When the contact is taken up they provide a *downward* action through the rotation of the cheek pieces. As this rotation continues it is halted in its movement by the mouthpiece and so the pressure is then carried through into the horse’s tongue and bars.

It can be argued that a Snaffle is not a Snaffle when the rein is activated below the line of direct rein action so creating the leverage/fulcrum effect.

Snaffle bits act on the horse’s lips and tongue with a general action to lift the horse’s head upwards. If a bit has a direct rein action that creates a lever effect, it is not a snaffle.

*Taken from A Better Understanding of Bitting* by Tricia Nassau-Williams of The Worshipful Company of Loriners [www.loriner.co.uk](http://www.loriner.co.uk)

### ARENA ETIQUETTE

There are a few basic safety guidelines of which everyone – rider or observer – should be aware if they are spending any time at the barn.

- Riders should all know that they pass “left to left” when going in opposite directions.
- In a perfect world, riders should keep a horses’ length apart.
- If everyone else is cantering and, for any reason, one horse breaks into a trot, this rider must move off the track towards the middle of the arena. Similarly, if everyone is trotting and you want to walk, move off the track in order to avoid being rear-ended.
- Make the other riders aware of your intention if you are going to change direction, change pace, or if you notice something that may possibly cause a problem – such as a barn cat strolling in to make sure all is going well.
- Should the unthinkable happen and a rider parts company from the horse, it is important that everyone should remain calm. Generally the horse will stop in the event of such a catastrophe, all other riders should come to a halt and give the poor soul on the ground time to re-group and recover their poise. It is unusual for the rider to be seriously hurt and although, from the point of view of a proud parent, this may appear to be a cataclysmic event comparable to a botched rocket landing, given a few moments and a general inventory of body parts, all is generally well. The important thing to remember is to stay calm!
- When going into the arena, do a visual check and shout “DOOR” in a loud clear voice before entering. This is both for your own safety, as you would not appreciate being run over by a horse cantering down the wall, and the safety of the horses and riders as it would not be your intention to startle either party,

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### HOW TO DRAW A HORSE

Draw these shapes, very lightly, arranged just as they are in the example:



- Start with a triangle
  - Add a circle for the cheek
  - A rectangle for the face
  - A curving arch for the neck



- Add the eye (a semicircle with a pointy hat shape)
  - Cut off the corners of the rectangle to make the nose
  - Add the bump of the chin
  - Draw nostril and mouth
  - Add an s-curve for the throat
  - Add the mane and ears



- Erase your working lines and fix any bits you don't like. Strengthen the drawing with a firm pencil or pen line, or add shading or colour.
- Visit [www.drawsketch.about.com](http://www.drawsketch.about.com) for more great drawing tutorials.

### WHAT DOES THE UN-MUCKED STALL TELL YOU?

If you have ever mucked out stalls at Harrogate Hills (if you haven't yet, you probably will!) you will have noticed that none of them are the same. Randy Roy believes you can tell the nature of the horse from the way he leaves his "bed". Can you match any horses you know with the following?

**Stall:** Perfect, tidy and organized.

**Horse:** Steady, reliable, consistent.

**Stall:** Manure spread everywhere, ground in.

**Horse:** Unhappy, worried, nervous.

**Stall:** All manure in one spot.

**Horse:** Happy and reliable.

**Stall:** Every day is different, no order/consistency.

**Horse:** Unpredictable, difficult, not friendly.

**Stall:** Unusually messy and disturbed

**Horse:** A really bad night – colic or cast in stall

**Stall:** Centre stall poopers. Just poop where they stand and eat, not enough energy to move.

**Horse:** Relaxed, unmotivated, laid back, lazy.

**Stall:** Corner/organized poopers

**Horse:** Intelligent and reliable.

**Stall:** Poop piled up like little mountains.

**Horse:** Restless, anxious, nervous.

**Stall:** Poops next to wall, manure packed down from walking around.

**Horse:** Restless, wants more space.

**Stall:** Poops against wall, manure spread around, covered, on hay

**Horse:** Aggressive, domineering, hard to train.

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### HARROGATE HILLS SHOWS

Sunday, April 13      Show Prep Clinic  
Sunday, April 27      Spring Horse Show  
Sunday, June 22      Year End Show

### Sponsors of Harrogate Hills Horse Shows



### HORSE FACTS

A horse's height is measured in units known as "hands". One hand is equal to 4 inches.

A horse is usually considered to be 14.2 (14 hands, 2 inches) or taller when mature.

Anything under 14.2 when mature is usually considered to be a pony.

The horse has one stomach. In contrast cattle, sheep, goats, bison, deer, elk, caribou, moose and camels are 'ruminants' which means, among other things, they have four digestive chambers instead of one stomach.

The horse is a herbivore, which means it feeds mostly on plants.

The normal horse's small intestine is about 12 feet long.

The average horse's heart weighs approximately 9 or 10 pounds. The racehorse Phar Lap had a heart that weighed 14 pounds. Secretariat had a heart estimated during his autopsy to weigh 21 pounds, though the heart was not weighed.

Horses produce approximately 10 gallons of saliva a day.

Horses cannot breathe through their mouth.

### HARROGATE HORSES



**Cheyenne** is a school horse. She is a Clydesdale x Thoroughbred mare and was born in 1983. For many years she was a mainstay of the school and taught countless people to ride – she accommodated beginners as well as more advanced riders. She is now retired, except for her Christmas duties.



**Cirrus** is owned by Erin Follett. She bought Cirrus in July 2003 as a yearling and is training her for dressage and possibly eventing. Cirrus is a Welsh Cob x Thoroughbred palomino mare. Her show name is Royal Serenity.



**Eddie** is a fleer bitten gray gelding owned by the Glaeser family. He was born in 1999 and his show name is Limited Edition. His mother, Lady, was a Harrogate Hills resident – she was a thoroughbred and his sire was an Appaloosa.



**Fritz** is a well-loved thoroughbred chestnut gelding born in 1987. His show name is Fitzpatrick and he had a dressage career before taking on his teaching duties. Fritz has now retired from both these occupations but still loves a good grooming – an needs it!



**Glory** is a bay Thoroughbred mare owned by Erin Follett. She was born in 1988 and came as a Christmas gift to Erin in 1994 (lucky Erin!).



**Grandpa** is a bay Holsteiner gelding born in 1988. He is now a school horse but was originally on the Swiss National Jumping team. When he came to Canada he showed on the 'A' circuit. He is very handsome and a great favourite.