



The Mane Bit

www.harrogatehills.com

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WINTER 2009/10

RECURRING THEMES

What should be the point or theme of my little piece this issue

It is not as if there is not a lot to talk about. On my mind lately is the Riding Levels we are implementing this year. We decided that this would allow students to track their progress and see where they will go next in their riding. Sometimes there is so much to learn and we hope that the levels will give us a framework or road map as to where we are going. The testing will occur during the lessons the last week of February and all successful students will receive a badge to show their level of achievement. Harrogate Hills' jackets will be available for purchase to display the badges. For those of us who fret about tests, relax. Prior to the actual testing the students will have the opportunity to decide which level they would like to achieve and a 'mock' test will be run. There are more details to come so keep an eye on the board in the original lounge for more details.

I also feel I'd better mention that the first week in December will be a busy one. On Saturday, December 5th we will be taking a few horses, and as many students as are available, to the Santa Claus parade in Mount Albert. It was a blast last year (but cold!) and hopefully it will go just as smoothly this year.

On the next day, Sunday December 6th, we host our annual pot luck Christmas party and we hope to see everyone there. Rumour has it there will be another musical ride and as usual Christine Benns has put together a little year

in review movie for everyone and we look forward to seeing it on the 'big screen'.

Still, I keep thinking, where can I find a theme that would make this article hold together.

Undoubtedly, since the last newsletter there have been some exciting changes. I feel I should acknowledge that the farm was given a big spruce up this fall. One day the entire top aisle was painted by numerous volunteers equipped with a paint sprayer; the next day the painting continued in the arena and much of the rest of the barn. I was amazed by how much could be accomplished and couldn't help but reflect on the fact that I could never have done it by myself. Many thanks to all of you.

I should also mention how later in the month the new Harrogate Hills Café and Lounge arrived. It has been long hoped that we would have a lounge where parents could watch the lessons from a slightly better vantage point than the current lounge. Lucky for us, Joan spotted the building one day on her way south on Hwy. 48 and told us about it. Rob prepared the site and continues to winterize it. Gord Stephen provided us with a beautiful marble counter top and now Linda has been setting up a coffee/tea station for anyone coming to the farm in the evenings and on Saturdays. Some of those people already famous for painting the existing lounge/restroom are planning some interior designs. Again, left to my own devices none of this would ever have occurred.

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I could also mention how in November we held our Teach Your Parent/Friend to Ride. We had a great turnout and it appeared to me that some of those hours they spent watching have paid off. It seemed everyone got the gist of it in almost no time and, though they might have been sore for a few days after the fact, they certainly were brilliant at the time. I like to think that this event gives parents/friends a little different perspective on what it takes to learn to ride. Of course all of the helpers who assisted the learning riders were fabulous too and, as you can imagine, I couldn't have managed the day without them.

As I wrote this I slowly came to realize that, despite the incoherent jumble of stories I have recounted here, there really is a recurring theme. The fact is that on October 1st, 2009 Harrogate quietly celebrated its 24th anniversary. And, just as you can see in the stories above, not a day has gone by that I have not been helped and supported by all sorts of wonderful people. I have been blessed for all these years and yet never seem to find the right way to thank everyone. So, even though this still is not really the right way, to everyone mentioned and to all those who should have been mentioned in this article, in the spirit of thanksgiving, thank you so much for everything you do for me and all the horses at Harrogate Hills. Without all of you there would be no Harrogate Hills.

A NEW HORSE!



Penny is a five year old Appaloosa mare who joined us at the beginning of November. She is very quiet and easy going and has adapted well to life at Harrogate Hills. Many thanks to everyone who contributed suggestions for her name – there were so many that the decision was not easy!

TEACH YOUR PARENT OR FRIEND TO RIDE DAY



Kathleen (running very fast!) with her mother, Denise, on Sadie (thanks for the help Nikki)

I had wanted to learn to ride before I had the kids, western riding was all I had done before. This was the perfect opportunity to try it and the best was giving my daughter the chance to "teach Mommy" something new! We were both so looking forward to the day, it was fun and very special! I must say though ... my legs are just now starting to feel back to normal...it is a workout! I would love to try it again someday!

Thank you, **Denise Anderson**

COMING SOON

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Horses Health, Hooves &
Handling Clinics**

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open for more information**

MEET OUR CO-OP STUDENT



Hi Everyone,

You may have met me around the barn already but my name is Meagan Knott and I am doing a 4 credit co-op at Harrogate Hills. I am currently in Grade 12 at Dr. John M. Denison Secondary School. I have been riding since I was about 8 years old and I have yet to fall off at more than a walk.

Co-op is a senior program offered only to grades 11 and 12, and has an option of 2 credits or 4 credits; I chose to do 4 credits. To complete the course I have to spend at least 440 hours in total at both Harrogate Hills and in-class sessions. I am at the barn Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, except for every other Monday because of an in-class session. My teacher, Cathy Coffin, comes to visit every so often to check and make sure everything is going alright and talk to Pat about me.

When I arrive in the morning we work until about noon doing the daily chores, such as mucking, sweeping, cleaning and filling buckets etc. and then we break for coffee. Afterwards I have been riding Hollywood, and hopefully he will be ready for lessons soon. The first time I rode him he was a wild pony and he was just running around with me on him, and I came close to falling off. That made me pretty determined, and since then he has been behaving so well and getting better everyday. He is almost starting to get lazy.

I am really enjoying the time I have been

spending at Harrogate Hills, and I do not want to go back to class mid-January. Everyone at Harrogate Hills has been so nice, and made me feel very welcome and comfortable. I don't know if I have said it to anyone but, I am so thankful for the opportunity I have been given by the people at Harrogate Hills. I look forward to seeing and meeting everyone around the barn everyday. I have already learned so much and there is always more to learn with new and exciting things happening everyday.



DID YOU KNOW

- The average horse weighs about half a ton and its brain is the size of a baked potato
- A horse's hoof is similar to the human fingernail. Horses stand on their middle fingers
- Some of the equine family's closest relatives are tapirs and the rhinos
- A horse can poop up to 14 times a day!
- Horses cannot vomit
- Most of the time, a horse's ear points where the horse is looking
- Horses can lock the muscles in their legs so they can go to sleep standing up and not fall over
- In the wild horse world, the mare decides when and where the herd will go while the stallion follows

TEACH YOUR PARENT OR FRIEND TO RIDE DAY

“Second Saddle”

Yep that's me! You've heard the term “Second fiddle” well, when you are the spouse of a horse rider, second saddle will be your inevitable lot in life. Because everything will revolve around horses, Trust me on this. Some try to beat 'em, some join 'em and hang on for the ride. I chose to ride 'em. Actually, I have a double whammy, you see, both my wife and daughter ride at Harrogate Hills riding establishment. I often come to watch them ride and help out with tacking and un-tacking the horse my daughter rides during her class, more so when she was little, during the frigid winter months and so on. However, as much as I enjoy the interaction when handling the horses, once my girls get talking about horses, yours truly usually ends up zoning into another dimension until “what do you think Dad?” That's when I must admit that I missed that part of the conversation, (try the last 20 minutes!) So now they are only too happy to repeat it all so I can give them my opinion. Now, understanding riding terminology or ‘horse lingo’ more than the average, for obvious reasons, again, I have to admit I didn't observe “simultaneously” whether or not their posture, hand position, foot position and seat were correct or not. “Well, did you see anything?” And that's how the fight got started. Well not really, but when you are second saddle, that means you are not in the saddle. So how can you really know what it's all about until you've been up there yourself? Believe me, watching Is Not Doing!

You've heard it said that opportunity knocks. Well it did, and real loud I might add. So when the list was posted for “Teach a Parent or Friend to Ride” my name was at the top. That's right, numero uno, and in my daughters handwriting to say the least, or was it my wife's? Either way I know that it was followed by an evil snicker shared by the pair!

After being fitted with the proper safety equipment, there I was, standing on the

mounting block. Once astride Wapiti, I felt I was a little more forward than I should have been, kind of like when you are sitting on someone's shoulders in a piggy back fight. That's how it felt on top of Wapiti, I felt as though my legs should have been in front of me as if sitting on someone's shoulders rather than around her side (Wapiti's barrel). I mentioned this to my wife and she said that feeling was because Wapiti was not the biggest horse in the front end and it was normal and I would get used to it. And I did.



Mikaela with her father, Jaret, on Wapiti

The class was informative, eye opening, and in my opinion definitely fun. I had a good ride. I didn't leave the saddle involuntarily, meaning I didn't have an abrupt interlude with the ground. Overall it was a pleasurable experience that I would recommend to any one. As a matter of fact there was a rider who was in my class that was taking it not for fun or for her love of horses, rather to overcome her fear of horses. With Pat's coaching, and her competent helpers, this rider mentioned that although she was not ready to start riding lessons right away, she would like to ride again. This person was later found warming up to the horses even petting and feeding the horses carrots.

As it stands I am still second saddle. My positive riding experience at Harrogate Hills did not miraculously bring me up to par with my girls 5 years each worth of riding chatter, but I have a better idea of what they do, not to mention what it takes to do it. Thanks Pat for a great time!

Thoughts from another rider in the ‘Second Saddle’
Jaret Grimble

Summer/Fall 2009

4-H

By Kandice Coates



Kandice showing Sirus, Royal Winter Fair 2009

Many people may wonder what 4-H means . . well it stands for Head, Heart, Hands and Health. It all started back in 1919 with the first club held out in Winnipeg. You must be ten years old to take part in 4-H but, before I was ten, I joined what we call "Little Britches" where I showed for four years. I was inspired to join by my brother who participated for one year before me, he taught me many things. You can belong to 4-H until you reach the age of 21 as of January 1st. I hope to continue showing until I no longer can.

You must sign up to be a part of the association. You can join as many clubs as you like but must be able to balance them all out. There are many clubs to choose from – dairy club, chicken club, tractor pull club, scrap booking, photography, cooking etc. and for each club you must have twelve hours of meeting together. I am enrolled in the Sutton/Sharon Dairy Club, Milk Makes it Better (cooking) and the Photography Club. At the end of each club there is one achievement. For the Dairy Club you show at the Sutton and Markham Fairs. For the cooking one we would make a certain item that we made in one of our meetings and bring it to a gathering. Last, but not least, for the Photography Club we choose a category for our pictures, have them judged and can enter them in the Sutton and Markham Fairs.

There are many opportunities involved in 4-H. You can travel around Canada with the exchange program and meet people from different countries. Another achievement available for the Dairy Club is to show at the Royal Winter Fair. The people with the top points in the group are eligible to go. I qualified for the first time last year – all I can say is that it was one of my best experiences and I met many people from Nova Scotia, British Columbia and Niagara Falls. It was so much fun and I cannot wait to be a part of the 2009 York Team.

Being part of 4-H has been one of the most important parts of my life. It has shown me the love I portray to dairy cattle, which I wish to pursue for my career. Also, our motto has told me something I will carry with me for the rest of my life: Learn to do by Doing.

I can't wait for the years to come for the experiences, the people I will meet and the fun I will have.

The 4-H Pledge:

I pledge,
My Head to clearer thinking,
My Heart to greater loyalty,
My Hands to larger service,
And my Health to better living,
For my club, my community and my country.



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START THINKING
ABOUT MARCH
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Summer/Fall 2009

A "ROCKY" ROAD

By Heather Woods

As most of you know, Rocky joined us in July 2007. I fell totally in love with him and needed a project to keep me busy after the sudden death, in January, of my previous horse, Harley Davidson.

When Rocky arrived we knew he was in poor shape. His muscles had totally tightened up from standing alone in a field for more than a year. He had strange large patches of discoloured hair on his body and was full of parasites. But still he was such a happy, curious horse. He was, and is a joy to work with and has brought me many happy hours.



Rocky in July 2007

After about six months of Pat's great feeding the strange patches disappeared and his muscles gradually relaxed and stretched. We were all so excited when he could stretch his neck down at the trot – a great accomplishment for him!

Over time he has blossomed. His trot/walk is now great and we are working on the canter. We entered a Dressage Show at Blue Star this year and won a couple of ribbons.

But one problem remained a mystery. Rocky had "ANHIDROSIS" which means he was unable to sweat. This was a huge concern. Humans and horses are the only mammals that sweat to cool their bodies. On hot days we would hose him down with cold water before we rode. I think his reluctance to go forward was his body's defense system taking care of him.

We consulted vets about this condition but received little help. The condition is fairly rare

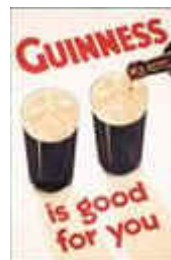
and appears mostly in race horses. We had his thyroid checked. We tried some homeopathic supplements made from forsythia. Nothing worked. In my search I kept hearing "old horse people" say "Give him a bottle of Guinness a day and he will sweat like a pig". So last July, when everything else had failed I bought a case of Guinness and he started on a beer a day! After a couple of weeks he did seem to be sweating and after about two months he was sweating absolutely normally!



Rocky in July 2009

We are still not sure how it is helping but believe the iron in the malt may be the key. He was a bit anemic a year ago but his levels are now normal. Amazing!! I am now going to try reducing the dose to ½ a beer a day during the winter but will stick with the Guinness. So, when you see the beer bottles in the lounge they are for Rocky – the alcoholic horse!

Many thanks to all who have helped Rocky along this road – cleaning his stall, feeding him, riding him and, of course, giving him his treats – his favourite part. It has been a bit of a "Rocky" road but he is transforming into a super little dressage horse. Thanks again to you all!



. . . and your horse!

Summer/Fall 2009

JUST ANOTHER DAY AT HARROGATE HILLS!



We are ready



Here it comes



It's all too boring for Shade
(but something told us to put her inside)

*Please come and check out this new
addition to the barn at the Annual Pot
Luck Christmas Party on Sunday,
December 6th from*



OOOPS! A tree got in the way



Over works better than under



The eagle has landed!

*4pm on - you will have a great view of
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Summer/Fall 2009



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