



## *To Landowners, Riders, and Supporters:*

As of the June Annual Meeting, the reins of NSBTA have been turned over to Charlotte Harris. Charlotte has been on the Board for almost 15 years and has served the organization in many capacities including: Vice President, Treasurer, Communications/Publications, Webmaster, Director of Membership, event coordinator, and NSOLF liaison. Charlotte has a "can do" attitude and generously supports NSBTA with her many hours and financial support. I am excited about the new leadership and look forward to the future with Charlotte guiding a very talented and dedicated Board of Directors.

Looking back over the 6 years that I have had the pleasure to serve as your President, I would like to share some thoughts about where the future may take NSBTA. So in no particular order nor agenda, here goes.

### **Access to the land**

During the past 6 years more new trails have been established than have been abandoned. I still believe this is the greatest challenge for NSBTA. When a property with trails is sold, the new owner may not be

comfortable providing trail access. More often than not, this is the reason for trails being abandoned.

We have also lost trails due to expiration of trail easements and deer fencing. I believe that deer fencing regulations for large and perimeter applications should be pursued to minimize the adverse impact to wildlife movement. While most of our riders are not to be considered wildlife, the deer fencing has the same impact on our riding community. Once a fence is constructed, even a new owner supportive of trails does not really have the option of opening a trail without deconstruction of a fence.

I believe that trail easements should be pursued more aggressively by the town and NSBTA.

### **Relevance to non-riders**

NSBTA's recent expansion into environmental pursuits should help with this. To further the cause, NSBTA should continue to work with landowners, such as NSOLF and Audubon, to provide valuable trail maintenance services in exchange for trail access. This model can

be evaluated for select private landowners who may be amenable to non-rider trail usage.

### **Further develop relationships within the equestrian community**

As the focus has shifted to competition and horse shows, there are more local riders that do not utilize the trails. Efforts to reach out to local barns and trainers to demonstrate the benefit of cross-training (trail riding) should be re-doubled. Our outreach to the local Pony Clubs should continue so that youth learn to love trail riding. While our Summer Trail Ride Series is an excellent form of outreach, large groups are not always the best environment to introduce green horse/rider combinations to the trails. We can and should do more.

Please accept my sincere thanks for allowing me to serve as your President for the past 6 years. It has been a rewarding experience to work with landowners, riders, and supporters.

Steve Mulligan





# Super Storm Years

BY CHARLOTTE HARRIS

Hurricane Irene, the Halloween snowstorm, Super Storm Sandy and yet another early snow, wreaked havoc on our trails in 2011 and 2012. The good news is that the extensive work on the trail system from 2009 through 2011 kept most of our trails intact. The grading of trail beds, the installation of culverts, the extensive drainage and water diversion work all helped the trails withstand the harsh storms of the past few years. The cleanup was more about downed trees and branches rather than structural trail repair. These storms hit us one after the other and once the initial post storm cleanup was completed there was the ongoing work of cleaning up all the “hangers” that came down on any windy day. The snowstorm last fall caused many treetops to just snap off! The good news is that we were able to recycle many of the downed trees into great jumps which you will hear about in a bit.

No part of our 100+ mile trail system was immune from the wind, rain and snowstorms; however the hardest hit were the Turkey Hill and Windswept Farm areas.

The other bad sections were the trails in the woods behind the GBH Kennels, through Bloomerside and up to the power lines. The northeastern most section of Grand Central Farm had massive trees down which blocked trails and crushed paddock fencing. We had to enlist Harry Evarts’ tree company to help us remove some trees blocking these trails. As we dealt with these trail blockages we continued to perform normal maintenance projects such as repairing culverts, adding more water bars to direct runoff, picking rocks and cutting back invasive vines that choked trees and threatened to strangle riders! The control of these invasive species, especially cutting vines, is circular: the vines kill the trees, the dead trees fall across trails or get hung up in the vines, which creates more and sometimes very dangerous work for us and can be dangerous for riders also.

## ► VAIL LANE / FINCH ROAD

Along with the ongoing trail maintenance, we continue to come up with new projects that appeal to all of our members. From my standpoint, the quality of the footing is most important. Others want variety such as new trails and new jumps. We have done it all. On the east side of Vail Lane, in a stonewall channel that runs west to east in Stanton’s fields, we built a number of cross-country fences with trees and logs collected from storm cleanup. One side of the lane has lower fences, the other side has more challenging jumps. Down the middle is a clear alleyway for riders to pass through. The whole stretch has great footing. We also rebuilt many of the stonewall jumps and added new log ‘riders’.

Let’s stay in this part of town for a bit. There is a trail in the woods that runs north/south, between Peach Lake Road and Vail Lane. You can get there by coming down from Vail Lane or up from the Rt. 121 crossing at Monomoy Farm by the power station.

However you get there you will come to a stream crossing with a steep bank on either side. Over the years, the banks have gotten eroded from both weather and horses. We have installed steps, angled to divert the runoff, to prevent continuing deterioration. We also built a new trail, on the right just after the stream if you are heading north, that will bring you up to a meadow behind the southwestern most home on Vail Lane. Hug the left side of their property, along the stonewall, and



you will end up on Vail Lane or go right and jump a new stone wall. This “meadow” is the homeowner’s back yard so please keep to the edge.

If you stay on the main trail you will reach a section we refer to as the “Trolley Track” as it is truly set on the bed of the old proposed trolley line from Danbury to Goldens Bridge. This fall we fixed the rough section of the Trolley Track to compliment the section already repaired by the landowner. At the end of this beautiful trail you will cross a dirt driveway and enter a “walk only” zone next to a pond. Please respect the landowner’s signage.

Cross over Vail Lane and continue (walking) east along the trolley trail to 3-Ponds Farm. Past 3-Ponds, further along Finch Road, you will see a trail on your right that has recently been fixed by the landowner. The trail bed is woodchips and it goes behind their farm and hooks up with a glade where you will see a plethora of new jumps. From Finch Road these jumps will be on your right just before you cross into Connecticut. This property belongs to Peter Kamenstein and he has allowed us to build jumps with all the deadfall we have cleaned up in that section of our trail system. These trails can also be accessed from 3-Ponds Farm or from the eastern woods off of Vail Lane. The footing is dry and the jumps are set strategically in “S” curves crisscrossing the trail. This area is definitely worth a visit: no rocks, no mud and lots of fun jumps if you are so inclined. These are some of our very best trails. We have worked on quite a few other projects on this side of town, which tends to be very wet and easily eroded. Most of the work revolves around environmentally sensitive drainage, erosion control and water diversion.

### ► BAXTER ROAD

The North Salem Open Land Foundation (NSOLF) parcel is horse heaven on both sides of Baxter Road. The fields

are beautiful and the footing is great throughout most of the season. Last year we rebuilt the historic stonewall jumps on the south side of Baxter Road. The jumps are historic with 20-foot milled riders sitting on beautiful rock walls. Because of their historic significance we hired a stonemason to fix the walls and had a lumberyard mill the riders to the same specifications as the original jumps in keeping with their heritage. In the woods, just south of the pond we built new steps using railroad ties to control the erosion on either side of the stream. We also cleaned up the trails in the woods going back towards the Hammond Museum and cut those annoying, throat slitting vines!

### ► HARDCRABBLE ROAD / JUNE ROAD

On to the northwestern side of town, which we admit, needs more TLC. One of the reasons it hasn’t been on the top of our list is that not too many riders actually use these trails. The GBH hunts in this country but there are not many trail riders in this area. That said, we still care and we would like to hear from you if you want us to fix anything. To access these trails you either have to go in from the north side of Darlington Hall or cross Hardscrabble Road just west and down the hill from Autumn Farm. The trail in from Hardscrabble used to be impassable before we fixed the old culvert and reinforced the existing trail bed. If you come in this way you will reach the intersection of the east/west trail. If you go west (left) you will parallel Hardscrabble Road and be able to access trails through a 300-acre wooded parcel, which was recently logged. The trails are passable and they are beautiful but a bit rough. Turning east (right) will bring you behind Darlington Hall with (eventual) access to the new development behind Volunteer’s Park and Kingsley’s Deli. The “Bridleside” development is in the construction phase but once it is finished there will be a beautiful trail around the

## Super Storm Years (cont'd.)

perimeter. As of this writing, we have begun work on the eastern section to help the riders at Pleasant View Farm and private barns to get off the main road. This trail will lead you to the trails behind the North Salem High School. From there you can cross June Road and access the Bloomerside trails that lead to Baxter Road.

### ► ROUTE 116 / HILLTOP ROAD

We have built a new trail that helps riders avoid crossing Rt. 116 near Hilltop Road. Ride to the bottom of Hilltop Road and turn left just before you reach Rt. 116. There is a small meadow that leads to a stream crossing. Instead of going across the Titicus River, head upstream, under the bridge, until you reach the left bank. We have built a trail that goes along the stream and eventually brings you out to Wallace Road. It is steep in sections and we have worked to reinforce it, but please let us know if you want anything tweaked. It's a great alternative, for those horses that don't mind water, to crossing Rt. 116. I would much rather battle trout than cars!

### ► GRANT ROAD

The NSOLF has a parcel on the east side of Grant Road, just south of the Rt. 121 / Rt. 116 intersection (Hearst-Mead & Halmi Preserves). It is a beautiful wooded area to which we have access. We have made it more horse friendly and built some jumps along the trails. It's a nice segue to the NSOLF parcel that runs from the intersection of Rt. 121 and Rt. 116 (Lances Preserve), along the Titicus River. We have built a couple of fun jumps along this path which will eventually bring you behind the firehouse and along to June Road. The trails across June Road will bring you to the Turkey Hill area.

### ► JOE BOHRDRUM

Last but not least, as reported on the website, we have reopened a very old trail on the absolute western most side of our bridle trail system. The easiest way to access this area is from Joe Bohrdrum Park. There is a very large parking lot, which makes this a nice trailer destination. Once you are tacked up and ready to go, proceed down the gravel service road that bisects the park and head northeast into the woods. The trails are not well marked yet but we are working on it. Eventually, we hope to clear the trails that meander along the ridge, parallel to Rt. 116, and connect to our trails in the orchards and the Audubon.

On the other side of the park, cross the road (Sunset Drive) and proceed south for about 50 yards until you see the NSBTA trail marker. Head into the woods. The trails are well marked here and this network winds through the woods behind the Waterview Hills nursing



home and ends up behind the restaurant, Farmer and the Fish. If you speak to Ed Taylor, owner of Farmer and the Fish, he might install some hitching posts so you can stop for lunch!

In past newsletters I have written "virtual trail rides" as an idea to help you figure out exactly where your membership dollars have been spent. The "rides" have also been helpful to those who don't know where some of the NSBTA trails are, especially new members. It's also more fun than just reporting trail work. We have re-printed past "virtual rides" and have put them on the NSBTA website for those of you who haven't seen them. As we explain different areas where we have been working, you will have an easier time picturing the locations. Some of the information is a little outdated now as trail accesses change, people move and new trails are cut. As always, feel free to contact us with any questions you might have. And don't forget that we have a "Summer Trail Ride Series" that we host so our members can learn the trail system, meet fellow members and just have fun! 🐾



# Does Your Saddle Fit Your Horse?

BY KAREN WITHSTANDLEY AND THE REFINED EQUINE

In England when you purchase a new horse, the norm is to have a saddle fitter come and fit a saddle to the horse. In the U.S., we rely on more mass produced saddles and typically do not have them custom fitted. We have generally paid more attention to how the saddle fits the rider rather than the horse and have ignored the importance of saddle fit in the equation of performance riding. Karen Withstandley, owner of The Refined Equine, is a professional saddle fitter with 7 years of experience. Karen trained in England with David May of the Cumbria School of Saddlery, one of the foremost saddlers in the world. She has the ability to completely rebuild a saddle from the tree up.

Karen stresses the importance of proper saddle fit in keeping our equines happy and performing well. She works with wool-flocked saddles and can convert foam-paneled saddles to wool in most cases. Wool flocked saddles can be adjusted to compensate for any disparities in the horse's conformation, (shoulder height or development and limb length), as well as any rider imbalances (leaning or more weight on one side).

Through the use of a thermographic imager, Karen is able to look at the panels of a saddle and determine how the panel makes contact with the horse's back. Ideally an even, consistent contact with the horse's back is desired of the panel and the flap. Adjustment of the wool flocking to where there are deficits, using a flocking iron, and then reimaging the panels will yield better contact. Adjustments are made until the contact is even. Older saddles may need to be completely re-flocked or just have more flocking added. Hard saddles may have some of the

flocking removed or adjusted to soften the panels.

Proper saddle fit can be an inexpensive solution to performance problems. We spend lots of time and money on training, veterinary care, chiropractic adjustments and shoeing, often overlooking this very important element. A poor fitting saddle can cause a variety of soundness issues: back problems, limb lameness, ulcers and respiratory problems. It is a very important piece of the big picture.

Karen will come and evaluate your horse and saddle and either adjust

your saddle to fit better or advise you on what type of saddle may fit your horse better. In many cases the tree size is incorrect for the horse's conformation. In this case finding a saddle of proper tree width will be necessary. If a horse is particularly hard to fit Karen will produce a template of the horse's back to aid in finding a saddle that will fit.

Karen enjoys educating people on the importance of saddle fit and is passionate about her trade.

Please visit her website at [www.therefinedequine.com](http://www.therefinedequine.com). 🐾



*Karen at recent Fairfield Westchester PHA "Art of Saddles Clinic" at Three Phase Equestrian*

# Country Vet Chronicles

BY MATT ELLIOTT

The splash back was cold and messy but a life-saving measure. "Add another bag of ice and keep pumping," I instructed the rider who was kneeling down next to my stainless steel pail filled with an ice water slurry.

We were on our third pail and as I stood behind the horse with my arm up to my shoulder in his rectum holding the stomach tube, I could see the muscle tremors over his sweat covered flanks.

It was August, the air dead still and the heat and humidity were stifling. I was the vet on call for a three-day event competition in Millbrook, NY. I had been radioed by the show secretary to head over to stabling to check on a horse that had come in off cross-country with possible heat stroke.

When I arrived the horse was at the wash stall surrounded by several people all working to sponge him off. I hopped out of my vet truck, grabbed a stethoscope and a thermometer and walked quickly to introduce myself to the rider.

"He's not doing well," the rider said as she came over to meet me. "I've had him in a great conditioning program and I know he's fit but we've been trying to cool him down for almost an hour. He's still breathing pretty hard, won't drink, and he's even starting to shake," she added. "How was he on cross-country?" I asked as we walked toward the group gathered around her horse. "He was great. He's a Thoroughbred, loves to go and I didn't have to push him much. We were clear over all the jumps and close on making the time," she responded.

"Let me have a listen on him and take his temp," I said as I placed my stethoscope over his chest noticing the muscle tremors over his flanks. His heart rate was much too high, nearly 80 beats per minute, more than double what it should have been and his respiratory rate rapid at almost 50 breaths per minute, three to four times the normal of 12-15. I took his temp and was startled to see the mercury pushing 106°F, well above the normal of 100.5°F.

Paradoxically, instead of cooling down after a period of strenuous exercise, the overheated horse will often do



the very opposite. Hyperthermic and exhausted, his body will preferentially shunt blood to the skin in an attempt to cool off but in doing so will develop a rising core body temperature. This is even more likely to occur when both the ambient temperature and humidity are high.

The horse's vitals were much too elevated for a fit Thoroughbred having come through the finish flags over an hour ago. But it was one of those brutal August days where the combined effects of the heat and humidity would stress any athlete regardless of how well conditioned they were.

A complicating factor that predisposes horses to an even greater risk of heat stroke is the fact that horses, unlike other athletes, will continue to perform at strenuous levels despite severe, life-threatening hyperthermia and dehydration. Numerous clinical studies, using treadmills to evaluate exercise tolerance in horses, support the conclusion that horses do not manifest fatigue until in a state of near life threatening exhaustion.

"What do you think?" the rider asked as I pinched a fold of skin over the horse's shoulder and waited to see how quickly the skin returned to its normal position. "Hang on a sec, let me have a look at his gums," I responded as I lifted his lip and pressed his gums with my thumb.

The skin tent test should have resulted in the horse's skin returning to normal much quicker than it did. The mucous membranes of his gums were more white than pink and the capillary refill time was delayed after

pressing his gums. This horse was markedly dehydrated and the muscle tremors over his flanks were an indication he was electrolyte depleted as well.

"We're going to have to hurry," I said to the rider. "I'll explain everything later but get over to the vendor area and round up several bags of ice. I'll get a catheter in him and start running some fluids," I added dashing back to my truck.

"Hang on to his halter and steady his head," I asked one of the rider's friends who was there to help. I would have ordinarily clipped and surgically scrubbed the area over the horse's neck before inserting a catheter into its jugular vein but the timing was now critical. A few wipes with gauze pads soaked with some disinfectant would have to do. I held off the horse's jugular vein with my thumb and had to wait much longer than normal for it to distend, yet one more sign that he was severely dehydrated.

"That looks like a harpoon," the rider's friend said as I slipped the six-inch needle into the horse's jugular vein. "He's going to need a lot of fluids in a hurry," I responded placing a couple of whipstitches around the catheter to secure it in place.

I didn't need a set of lab results from a CBC or chem screen to know that the horse was teetering on metabolic chaos. Already 'shocky' from severe dehydration, his blood pressure was likely spiraling out from underneath him. Diminished blood flow to vital organs coupled with substantial loss of electrolytes through excessive sweating would cause the horse to soon develop an array of life threatening disorders.

Kidney failure is but one of several concerns in muscle fatigued and dehydrated horses. As oxygen deprived muscle tissue begins to break down, the muscle pigment myoglobin is released into the bloodstream obstructing the delicate renal filtration tubules. The exhausted horse's urine becomes dark, almost coffee colored, within hours following the period of strenuous exercise. Aggressive fluid therapy is essential to 'flush' or diurese the kidneys in order to prevent the onset of acute renal failure.

Additionally, loss of critical amounts of electrolytes such as sodium, potassium, calcium, chloride and bicarbonate in the horse's sweat play havoc with both the delicate acid-based balance of body fluids as well as nerve and muscle function.

Excessive sweating is the normal cooling mechanism for the tremendous heat that is generated as a 1000 lb. horse gallops at aerobic speeds over a cross-country course. In doing so however, 5-10% of a horse's body weight can routinely be lost as sweat, a figure that translates into 5-10 gallons of fluid loss.

Because of the extensive vascular supply of the horse's gastrointestinal tract, ice water enemas can be an emergency life saving procedure in cooling down the hyperthermic and exhausted horse.

The rider and I sat on a couple of bales of hay outside the horse's stall and waited. Hours had passed and finally after 25 liters (almost 7 gallons) of intravenous fluids and 3 more gallons administered with a stomach tube, her horse urinated and began to look a bit brighter. The horse would need another 15 liters (4 gallons) of intravenous fluids over several more hours before he finally began to drink on his own.

This story ultimately had a good ending due to the availability of immediate medical treatment and the rider's knowledge of the severity of the horse's condition. Unfortunately it is an all too common occurrence at competitions and sometimes even just schooling sessions or a too-vigorous trail ride on a hot and humid summer day. As those days approach we all want to be out riding and enjoying the warm weather so I have taken the opportunity to list some common sense precautions that can help to get through the warm months safely.



- **NEVER** give electrolyte preparations to a horse that is already dehydrated. This will pull more fluid into the gut and take more water out of the blood causing the horse to become further dehydrated.
- **NEVER** give Banamine, bute, naproxen or any other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs to a dehydrated horse. These medications will cause kidney damage in the dehydrated horse.
- **DO NOT** use electrolyte preparations with sugar (glucose, dextrose, sucrose) listed as the first ingredient. High sugar electrolyte preparations result in roller coaster blood glucose and insulin surges.
- After exercise, provide water that is not extremely cold and in graded amounts
- Know the early signs of dehydration in your horse: delayed skin tent test, dry mucous membranes, delayed capillary and jugular refill time, elevated heart, respiratory rate and body temperature.
- Horses cope much better with hot and humid conditions after 10-14 days of daily exercise in similar conditions.
- Lastly, it is important to re-emphasize the fact that horses do not manifest fatigue until near life threatening exhaustion has occurred. 🐾

# Demystifying Equine Nutrition

BY LYDIA HATCH, OWNER OF PARADISE FARM

In the old days, feeding horses was a simple thing. Practically every horse in the barn ate the same diet of whole grains (oats, barley, corn or a combination thereof) and hay. What varied were the amounts fed. Other than weight and energy needs, not much else was taken into consideration. Eventually sweet feed came along and replaced whole grains partially or entirely at some horse farms. With the advent of sweet feed came varied protein percentages which enabled horsemen to feed according to workload or occupation i.e. showing, racing, breeding, pleasure or idle (turned out or retired).

Fast forward to today: we now know more about horses' nutritional needs and health conditions than ever before. The evolution of that knowledge is the understanding that not all horses' nutritional and digestive needs are created equally.

At our farm, my approach to feeding addresses not only workload and weight, but age, overall condition, breed and existing health conditions. Luckily there is a feed for nearly every type of horse. Just to name a few individual needs:

**THE POOR KEEPER:** this could be a thoroughbred or thoroughbred type or any horse that comes to us with a low condition score. When I plan a feeding program for these individuals the first thing I request from the owner is that he/she provide a veterinary evaluation. I want to make sure the horses are free from parasites and ideally have been screened for ulcers. If there is an infestation with parasites, I ask the veterinarian to prescribe a worming protocol. If the horse has

gastric ulcers, they are fed a low carbohydrate diet. Corn based feeds can cause extra acidity in the stomach which in a horse suffering from gastric ulcers is highly contraindicated. My preference is a feed such as Purina Ultium or Pennfield's Fibergized – both are low carb and have a high soluble fiber content. These feeds generally help horses to gain weight, have plenty of energy to work and compete and keep the stomach acidity to a minimum. Also splitting meals into three or possibly four daily feedings is imperative. It allows horses to have the amount of feed they need to improve their condition without too much stomach irritation. Unlike humans, horses constantly produce stomach acid since they were designed to browse for forage the majority of the day. Long periods of fasting in some equines can cause an overproduction in digestive acid and that can cause ulceration. Spreading feeding into 3 or more meals and also feeding small quantities of hay throughout the day

and evening can help control acid overproduction. Access to pasture is also very helpful since "Dr. Green" is naturally the best preventative of gastric upset.

**THE EASY KEEPER...** this could be a warmblood, draft cross or a pony. Depending on age, we feed these horses a diet of a high fiber feed like Purina Equine Senior (which is a great food regardless of age) or a high quality pelleted grain. My favorite is Pennfield's Ultra Adult 12% Pellet. The horses fed this product have a very glossy coat and carry good weight. When feeding an easy keeper it is important to recognize if the same horse or pony is suffering from either Cushing's disease or Insulin resistance. They are two different medical conditions but are generally fed the same way. It's important to speak to your veterinarian if you have a horse in your care that has a very poor, thick coat, that doesn't shed out and who has a very cresty neck. If these symptoms are present you should consider having your horse



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tested for Cushing's disease. These horses require a very low carb, low sugar diet of which there are several options on the market. Cushingoid horses also generally need to be on medication for the condition. If weight and diet are not carefully managed, these horses and ponies are at risk for serious health conditions, such as laminitis.

Lastly, and this was a recent and first experience for me, are **HORSES WITH FOOD ALLERGIES**. This could be any horse regardless of age or breed. One of my personal horses got very sick a few years ago and although his condition was an idiopathic (no known cause) enteritis, my veterinarian tested him for food allergies. He came back highly allergic to two of the primary ingredients in his feed, beet pulp and flax. Who knew! I consulted several nutritionists and formulated a feeding plan for him based on Pennfield's Ultra adult corn-free textured feed mixed with Pennfield's Ultra adult 12% pellets to tone down some of the sugar. He also happens to be a thoroughbred with a history of gastric ulcers, but has done very well on this feed with no apparent relapse in the disease.

I hope my experiences can help demystify feeding the modern horse. There are many options out there today, but the most important thing I've learned is to ask questions of my veterinarian and equine nutritionists. There are independent nutritionists who can come out to your farm and evaluate, even weigh your horses, and help you tailor all their feeding needs. Also, let's not negate the value of good quality hay and plenty of fresh, clean water. A nutritionist can have your hay tested so that you know more about its nutritional value. This provides you with the information needed to switch types of hay or hay suppliers to help keep your horses healthy, happy and satisfied. 🐾



## Trail Wardens Hard at Work

BY MIKE CHAVES

It takes a huge commitment by many dedicated members to keep our trails as safe and passable as they are. Erosion, fallen trees, encroachment as well as a myriad of other problems occur constantly throughout the year. An open trail one day can be totally obstructed the next.

We are very fortunate to have a trail warden program in place to ensure that our network of trails is the best it can be. Our trail wardens act as the eyes and ears of the NSBTA. They play an important role in the NSBTA structure.

Each warden oversees a particular riding sector; one that they frequently use.

Whenever they see a problem that impedes the flow or safety of the trail, they report it to me. I compile a priority list along with detailed directions and send it to our trail maintenance team for immediate action. They do an amazing job, as we all know.

The wardens are also responsible for making sure that any rider not following the NSBTA rules is informed of our "Terms of Membership." The support of the landowners is imperative. Adhering to our rules is crucial in keeping landowners happy and North Salem a rider friendly community.

You don't have to be a warden to report trail issues. Just contact me directly or contact the trail warden responsible for the area where you are riding. The website has a list of the trail wardens, their contact information and the specific sections of trails they are responsible for. Visit [http://nsbta.org/NSBTA\\_Site/Trail\\_Wardens.html](http://nsbta.org/NSBTA_Site/Trail_Wardens.html) or just [www.nsbta.org](http://www.nsbta.org) and click on the "Trail Wardens" tab.

Since we have occasional turnover within our warden ranks, openings occur. If anyone is interested in becoming a warden, please contact me at [mikechaves@earthlink.net](mailto:mikechaves@earthlink.net).

Happy trails! 🐾



At liberty. (NO lunge line, but Zizay chooses to stay with me.) Plus she's matching and mirroring me!

## My Journey into Natural Horsemanship

BY KYLE VAN SPLINTER (with great editorial feedback and support from Deb Higgins)

“The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers.”

—M. Scott Peck (Author of *The Road Less Traveled*)

I might say that the journey began on September 17, 2011. Zizay, my thoroughbred mare and I trailered to a pace about an hour from home. When I returned, I didn't think too much of the fact that my then 2-year-old orphaned filly, GiGi had been without her paddock-mate for a longer period of time than usual. As I lead Zizay into the paddock, in a split second, GiGi turned and double-barreled me. In horror, I yelled and she responded with another double-barrel, but this time toward my head. Other than four lovely hoof shaped bruises on my chest stomach and hip, I was OK.

In hindsight, I should have seen this coming. GiGi was quite a handful to lead; she would push into me to the point of almost knocking me down. In my ignorance, I attributed this behavior to her youth. Interestingly, things were also going on with Zizay. On the day of the pace, she took an hour to load in the trailer; yet for two years prior to that day, Zizay self-loaded quite well. Shortly before (and after that day), Zizay was steadily regressing back to the highly reactive behavior that she exhibited two years before when I adopted her: balking, spinning,

backing, bucking, exploding, etc. After the day of the pace, Zizay even stepped-it-up a notch by REFUSING to get on the trailer at all.

Were my two horses having conversations about me? Whatever the reasons, these incidents propelled me to look beyond traditional horse training methods and search for a different way of doing things. Enter Natural Horsemanship.

Natural Horsemanship: The words often bring out strong emotions in people, or at the very least, misunderstanding. What's natural about riding a horse? What's natural about putting a saddle and a bit on a horse? I'm an English rider; I'm not going to start riding Western. Or, I've been working with horses for decades... why should I change the way I do things now, and isn't Natural Horsemanship basically the same as regular/traditional horsemanship?

Yes, I think Natural Horsemanship is essentially the same as regular horsemanship, but many people like Pat Parelli and Mark Rashid feel that the basics of “traditional” training and riding have been lost over the years. Riders seem to be in a hurry to “get to the finish line”... taking shortcuts, and skipping steps along the way. In doing so, people are missing the foundation necessary to become partners, both in the saddle and on the ground, with their horses. I've come to understand that Natural Horsemanship involves understanding and utilizing the basic psychologies and instincts that motivate the horse's behavior. It also entails using very clear communication that makes sense to horses, both with our body language and our corrections while also being aware of what the horse is communicating with her physical cues. The ultimate result of good Natural Horsemanship practices is to create a trusting, give and take, partnership with your horse.

While not all of the trainers who practice Natural Horsemanship market themselves as such, they are a well know group: Pat and Linda Parelli, Monty Roberts, John Lyons, Buck Branaman, Clinton Anderson, Linda Tellington-Jones, Mark Rashid, and many more. They all have something to offer and interestingly what I'm finding is they're all saying very similar things...just in different ways.

Many well known riders in English horse disciplines have been delving into Natural Horsemanship methods for years: Legendary Spanish dressage rider and trainer, Luis Lucio endorses the Parellis ; classical dressage master, Philippe Karl can be seen on a video conducting a clinic that was very reminiscent of the Parelli method, even using the term, "games"; the eventing duo of David and Karen O'Connor were part of the Parelli team at one time and now practice very similar methods in their videos; Karen Rohlf bridges classical dressage and natural horsemanship through a program she calls, Dressage Naturally; even a horse racing training center in Ocala now uses Parelli methods.

There are a many important lessons that I've learned on my journey thus far which began with Parelli Natural Horsemanship. I am constantly searching for more education from instructors as well as through books and videos (newest on my shelf is Mark Rashid and Karen Rohlf).

The first big lesson came soon after a Parelli clinic in November 2011. I was working toward helping GiGi to lead respectfully and I was beginning to teach Zizay to load confidently on the trailer and be more sure of herself on the trails. I was planning to take the horses to Aiken, SC for the month of March and I was very excited about riding Zizay on the beautiful trails there. I called the instructor and asked if she thought my horses' training would be completed in time for the trip. The trainer paused (she must have heard other clients ask similar questions) and told me I was putting a lot of



pressure on myself and my horses. Well, I don't have to tell you that I was pretty upset with her. After all, four months should be plenty of time to take care of these problems. Right?

That's one of the themes of Natural Horsemanship that I didn't understand then: as Pat Parelli says, "Take the time it takes and it will take less time". I was looking a quick fix or a shortcut to solve my horses' issues. How often have you tried a different bit, saddle, or bridle; or decided to add a martingale, in an attempt to correct a problem? I learned that sometimes the process takes longer than you would like, but—if you take the time it takes—in the long run, the partnership and the willingness on the part of your horse will improve greatly.

When training or riding my horses, I work very hard to maintain a respectful relationship; I don't have time limits for what we're trying to accomplish. One of the most challenging aspects of this new program was accepting that I may need to adjust my goal for the day. Consider this: Zizay and I are heading out on the trail with a particular destination in mind (maybe Baxter or Turkey Hill) and we encounter a stream crossing that for some reason becomes a problem. I'll use methods such as approach and retreat as well as moving her in figure eight patterns so she sees the obstacle with each eye; I'll do this in a manner that's assertive as opposed to aggressive and I'll be sure not to ask her for more in a moment when she's already trying. All the while, I'm listening to what she's communicating with her body language and attempting to respond accordingly. Taking my time to help her with the stream crossing so that she can confidently go through it—rather than just pressing her through it before she's ready—will ultimately be more beneficial than arriving at our previously planned



*Left: GiGi showing trust and loving the attention. (Right after this shot, Zizay allowed me to sit on her as well.)*

*Top Right: Riding Zizay in the Millbrook Hunter Pace*

## My Journey into Natural Horsemanship (cont'd.)

destination that day. So, I adjust the goal and reward her for her effort by quitting and going home.

I make every effort to recognize and reward the “try” which I alluded to in the previous paragraph. All the Natural Horsemanship trainers that I’ve read about emphasize this. In fact, one of Mark Rashid’s DVD’s is called: FINDING THE TRY—A Key to Communication Between You and Your Horse. What’s the reward for trying? It can be, and often is, as simple as a RELEASE of the aid to show the horse that she has done something right. If you don’t release on the slightest “try”, the horse will think she’s doing something wrong and start trying something else. “Release” is applicable in so many instances: when your horse is learning and you need your horse to move over in the aisle and you push her shoulder for the first time—the minute you see muscle movement—it’s key to quickly release. In time, you’ll expect more before you release but in the beginning, reward small efforts. In the saddle, if your horse really offers you something BIG which you’ve been looking for...jump off! Big efforts require a big release and reward. You can choose to quit for the day or get back on after a bit of a rest. Releasing essentially means taking away the pressure.

In March, I discovered when I was riding that I wasn’t releasing “in my body” when my horse was giving me the requested gait. Now I am releasing by lightly going with the horse’s motion and I’m getting big results. I try to think of riding as Mark Rashid describes; it’s like a dance...sometimes I lead and I ask my horse to follow. When that happens, she leads and I follow (taking away the pressure). Of course there’s more to it, but this was a big realization for me.

There are so many principles/concepts that I’m learning and working on with my horses on-line, in the saddle and at liberty such as: raising and lowering my energy; the art of “going with”; finding and using my “center”; “cause” instead of “make”; asking for gaits “in my body”; when and how to use the various forms of the four phases of pressure; making the horse’s idea my idea, etc.

I could go on-and-on but a few months ago when I was getting so excited about this with my trainer at the time, she said this: “Have you ever met a born-again?” Well, I got the message. So if you’d like more information and wouldn’t mind me telling you a bit about how I’m having fun and having more and more really fine moments partnering with my horses, and riding, please feel free to email me at: [vans@westnet.com](mailto:vans@westnet.com) 🐾



*Kelly jumping Fortis Atticus (George)—Preliminary Level/ Stadium Phase at Pine Hill, Texas*

## A Professional’s Road to Parelli Natural Horsemanship BY KELLY SIGLER

*Kelly Sigler (3-star Licensed Parelli Professional and an ISRB Certified Coach) travels the country teaching Parelli Natural Horsemanship and Rider Biomechanics. She resides in Aiken, SC and over the past couple of years, has come up to teach clinics as well as private lessons in North Salem at River Horse Farm and Vail Farm.\**

*In Kelly’s earlier competitive life, she competed through the Intermediate Levels in eventing with much success on the regional, national and international levels. In 2002, her horse, George helped bring his team to 2nd place in the USEA Chronicle of the Horse Area IV Adult Team Championships, which qualified he and Kelly to compete in the National Adult Team Championships. In 2003, George was named the Central Texas Preliminary horse of the year, and Kelly was named the Preliminary rider of the year.*

People ask me all of the time how I got into natural horsemanship; I always tell them this story at the beginning of my clinics:

Eleven years ago, I had no idea what natural horsemanship was...seriously...no clue!

I was eventing at the Preliminary/Intermediate level on my Thoroughbred, George and we either did really well or really badly. We did really well if I didn't get mad at him or really badly if I did. I know that sounds awful, but that's the way it was.

So one Sunday, I was in my house waiting to set out for my jumping lesson. All of a sudden, I heard this horrible wind and a thunder of hooves. I looked outside and saw my horse George quivering in the corner of his paddock. His run-in shed had disappeared; I presumed he had been standing under it a few minutes before.

In Texas, where I lived at the time, we have these little "thangs" (that is how we say things in Texas) called Dust Devils. They are little tornadoes. They move "thangs" like horses' run in shelters ... and then go away! Anyway, that is what had happened. So I had a scared horse and no run-in shelter. As far as I was concerned at the time—no problem! He will calm down eventually and I can always hunt for my shelter and put it back up some other time.

So, I proceeded to go and get my horse ready for my lesson and then lead him to the horse trailer, which he never really liked in the first place. As he exited the gate, he saw the horse trailer and stopped. He planted his feet. He was not going ANYWHERE.

After 30 minutes of attempting to drag my 900-pound horse to the trailer, I realized that this was just not going to work...even with a chain around his nose. As always happens in situations like this, around 30 people just appeared and tried to shove my horse in the trailer. (Just as a caveat—this was a HUGE four horse stock trailer—not some little two-horse straight load.)

George was not having it. After another hour of 30 predators trying to chase him in, George finally started rearing and really fighting. I called it quits, sent everyone home, and realized my fate- I would be living here for the rest of my life, never to go to another lesson or show again—and that was just the way it was.

Over the next week, I still persisted. I even tried bribery, which didn't work; I would put a bit of hay and sweet feed just at the near edge of the trailer. He would sneak a bite and then run back. He knew what I was up to.

At the time, I was training and boarding at a very nice, but traditional facility. We rode around in the dressage arena and held our horses in a death grip and then jumped them wildly around the jump field.

We scheduled our rides to avoid riding when our neighbors at the nearby "Parelli" barn were bouncing a big green ball around their horse, driving their horse across a flapping tarp or better yet, driving them through a "car wash" (a tall wooden frame with a bunch

of pool noodles hanging down). We certainly didn't want to ride near them for fear of "spooking" our horses. We had no idea whether these people actually ever rode their horses; all we ever saw them do was play with their horses with all this crazy stuff.

One day, a neighbor who rides at the "Parelli barn" got my attention. She idled along the "Berlin Wall" near where I happened to be standing and slipped me a scrap of paper under the fence; I was slightly suspicious. "Psss..." she said, "I know someone that can help you!"

"Who is this lady?"

"She helps us with our horses, and I think that she can help you!"

I was game for anything and frankly, I was desperate. So, I took the piece of paper and quickly marched back to my house and called the number. Someone answered, "No, she is not in...she is in the hospital..." I wondered why she was in the hospital; maybe she was a trainer that got hurt? Turns out, she was not a trainer at all, but was a nurse by profession. Maybe she was going to drug my horse—no problem—I was desperate!

"No...she is a Parelli student, and she's willing to help you!" Parelli...hmmm... I'm thinking green balls, tarps, and "car washes"! My thoughts then went to: the owner of the barn where I boarded considers Pat Parelli the "Anti-Christ" and feels the same about his cohorts and disciples. This might become a problem!

Again, I was desperate so I made an appointment anyway. The Parelli student showed up the next Sunday. I borrowed one of the orange sticks (called a "carrot stick" by Parelli people) and a rope halter from one of the boarders at the Parelli barn. By the way, these items



*Kelly jumping one of her current horses, Buckley, online (with lunge line) over picnic table at a North Carolina Parelli Tour Stop*

## *A Professional's Road to Parelli Natural Horsemanship (cont'd.)*

were considered contraband at our barn! I gave it to the nurse/trainer/Parelli student. With the Parelli tools that I borrowed, that Parelli person had my horse quietly standing in the trailer within 15 minutes. Needless to say, I was speechless.

Right then I knew I needed one of those sticks!!

"It's actually not about the stick," said the Parelli person.

How often would I hear that dialogue in the future?

So that is how it all started; after the friendly Parelli person helped me finally get my horse in the trailer, I decided that I needed to go out and buy an orange stick. They obviously had magical powers to get your horse in a trailer. Plus, I needed some lessons with this Parelli lady.

At the moment I was planning all of this, the owner of the facility where I boarded and trained came rushing out—almost as wild as the Dust Devil that ripped George's run-in shed away—and told me that THAT woman was not allowed at the facility. If I wanted to continue to board there, I couldn't work with a Parelli person. Not totally surprised, I tried to explain that this Parelli woman was the only person that could help me; it was then that I was officially kicked out of the barn!

Since I didn't have my magic orange stick yet nor had I had a lesson to learn how to successfully trailer-load my horse by myself, I needed to find a stable that was a ride-able distance away. Thankfully, I found one and I rode George over there a few days later.

The Parelli gal came over to my new barn several times to help. I was finally able to wave my stick around and get George in the trailer. I felt like I was some kind of a genius...now an expert at Natural Horsemanship, and I was thinking that I no longer needed lessons. I could probably take it from here.

Then, on that same day, a newsletter called "SAVVY UP" showed up at the barn. On the cover was a picture of Linda Parelli riding a horse over a picnic table with just a halter, which I thought was really cool. I opened the newsletter and there were the O'Connor's—eventing royalty—with their students along with Parelli students jumping HUGE jumps! The difference between all of them and the eventers that I knew was that these people were doing it all bareback and bridleless.

Needless to say, I was impressed. I wouldn't have even been able to get my horse around some of those jumps riding with a mechanical hackamore!

Well, of course, now I needed to learn how to do THAT.

The lady that I was working with explained that THAT took awhile; I wasn't even Level One yet!

Soon after I saw the "SAVVY UP" newsletter, my mother received a postcard about a Parelli clinic in Orange Grove, TX. At that point, I had moved back to my hometown, Corpus Christi, and was teaching riding.

By this time, I could load my horse with a wave of my stick. So, in the 100-degree heat, I bundled George up with bell boots, shipping boots, fly mask, and his short bus helmet and headed to the clinic.

We arrived, popped out of the trailer, and headed to the arena. The "arena" was a fenced in area with hard, black, clumpy ground. In my mind, there was no way I could put George in there; he might injure himself. Even though he was an event horse, I was VERY cautious about footing, which I know sounds crazy!!! So I decided to watch for a while.

People were already in the arena "playing" with their horses. It all looked very alien to me. Here were these people walking towards their horses on lunge lines while their horses were traversing in an arc back and forth about 10-15 feet in front of them. The horses had their ears pricked forward and their eyes were bright.

"What are they doing?" I asked.

They explained that they were doing the Falling Leaf pattern and their horses were looking so bright and curious-looking because in horse body language, they were basically asking their owners a question.

Ok, now I felt really bad. My horse had NEVER looked at me like that. I just ordered him around!

Now I definitely had to learn THIS too! When would this ever end?

Needless to say, I had to learn a lot more; this took me down a long journey that included developing George and many other horses through the levels and then eventually becoming a Parelli Instructor. My goal is to help people (who are traditionally minded like myself) understand that natural horsemanship can help give them and their horses a more solid foundation so that they can truly become ... great partners! 🐾

\* If you are interested in a clinic or a private lesson with Kelly when she's in town, please contact:  
Kyle Van Splinter (vans@westnet.com)



## Are You Fit To Ride? BY MICHELE LEASURE, MPT

Winters in the Northeast try even the hardiest of riders. Many of us don't have the luxury of an indoor ring or sending our horses south to stay in shape. So this puts most riders and their horses at the same level of fitness come spring. For those of us who are more motivated and continued to go to the gym, do yoga or pilates may feel they have a jump on their riding fitness. However, most of my clients realize very soon that the winter workouts they were doing didn't prepare the muscles they need for riding. So what should you do?

Many clients ask what are the most common riding injuries. My answer, "The same as any other working person has - back, neck, hips, knees and shoulders". The top reason most people have pain or balance problems when riding is their posture. When you consider how much time you really spend riding it doesn't compare to the time sitting at your computer, in your car or on the phone. For the younger set, that includes the time spent sitting in the classroom and lugging heavy book bags.

Posture is the key and riding requires symmetry. If you slouch all day, don't stretch or exercise, you are going to find it difficult to sit up on your horse and be balanced. The professionals deal with the same issues in that they are either on top of a horse all day in a sitting position or standing for hours on uneven surfaces while teaching. Those of us who take care of our own horses and lift and carry heavy buckets, hay bales and muck out stalls are at more risk for pain and injury.

If you are not already exercising and stretching then you need to get a program tailored to you, one that you will follow! We are all busy and want to get in shape, so you need to find a program that fits into your schedule and is safe. My preference is Pilates. My horse did go

down south and was kept in training, but I was only able to ride him three times in three months. Pilates is an all over stretching and strengthening program that improves your posture and stabilizes your joints. I was able to compete when I went down to ride and never came home sore. Aerobic exercise is not enough nor is just stretching, you have to work the muscles that allow you to be upright and balanced. It is not just about your legs. Exercise programs should address mostly the muscles on the back side of your body, the ones that get overstretched all day from slouching. Men are notorious for working their abs, chest and biceps - all muscles on the front of the body, which only adds to the inability to sit up straight.

Most injuries occur from muscles that are overstretched and weak i.e. rotator cuffs and the lower back. A balanced program is a must and cross training is always the best: mixing up aerobic exercise with strengthening and stretching. It is very important that if you seek advice from an "exercise" professional that he/she is a properly trained professional. The old saying of "No Pain No Gain" is not a good one to follow. This saying was meant for those who are in regular training and are trying to bump up to the next level i.e. squatting an extra 10 pounds and pushing out another repetition. It is not referring to "real" pain where you actually feel like you might be injured.

I have written many articles over the years about injuries and how to rehabilitate from them. Please visit my web site at [www.salemsportsandspine.com](http://www.salemsportsandspine.com) to view the articles. You may also email me any questions at: [micheleleasure@aol.com](mailto:micheleleasure@aol.com).

*Have fun and be careful!* 🐾

# Pegasus Hosts Its Annual Horse Show at Home This Year

**BY CHRISTINE FITZGERALD,  
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR**

When Pegasus purchased New England Equine's former medical center on Peach Lake Road in Brewster in 2008, one of our many program-related goals was to bring our annual Pegasus Horse Show "home" to Pegasus Farm. For the past three decades, the Richter family has generously hosted our show at Coker Farm in Bedford. This year, we were ready to relocate Pegasus' signature event to our own equestrian center at the top of Route 121.

The 32nd Annual Pegasus Horse Show blended our favorite Coker Farm traditions with some new beginnings that reflected the best of what Pegasus Farm has to offer. In doing so, we honored both the unparalleled support of the Richter family and the spirit of today's Pegasus Therapeutic Riding.

Our Friday, May 17, schedule included a formal opening ceremony at 6 p.m. and several riding classes. Activities resumed at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 18, with additional classes, including the crowd-pleasing Max Richter Costume Class. In keeping with Pegasus tradition, each student received a ribbon in recognition of his or her horsemanship skills. The event also featured special awards, fun and games, merchandise sales, farm tours and more.



*Student Robert uses a ball to stretch and warm up during program*



*Student Sherrie leads therapeutic horse Lilly during a Horses & Me class*

The 32nd Annual Pegasus Horse Show was a wonderful opportunity for students to celebrate their accomplishments with family, friends and the community. Whether you know a student personally, love horses, or just want to be a part of a feel-good event, the Horse Show is a joyful day of celebrating the human spirit at its very best. Visit [pegasustr.org/horseshow](http://pegasustr.org/horseshow) for a full event recap, including this year's award recipients and a photo slide show.

We have many helping hands and committed donors to thank for enabling us to realize our dream of hosting the show at Pegasus Farm. Most notably, the late Ann "Pinky" Pinkerton presented a transformative gift of \$1 million to Pegasus in 2009 while she was still a student here. At the time, the donation was to be kept anonymous; after her passing in 2010, her family permitted us to begin sharing the true origin of Pinky's incredible contribution to our future.

Pinky's gift funded the construction of our 80' x 184' covered outdoor arena, improvements to existing buildings and an extensive amount of site work around the farm. The benefit was immediate; we accommodated over 30% more students in our spring 2009 session than in fall 2008, and weather was no longer a deterrent to the smooth running of classes. In a very real way, Pinky's arena has allowed Pegasus to fulfill the very core of our mission: providing our therapeutic equine-assisted services to a growing, diverse number of people with needs.

We also are grateful to the hundreds of board members, staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to transform Pegasus Farm into the equestrian center it is today. Over the past five years, we have developed a unique, multifaceted sensory trail; expanded our preexisting therapeutic riding program; formalized our Horses & Me unmounted program; and launched two new initiatives: Pegasus Patriots for our heroic military veterans, and Wings, an initiative for at-risk individuals, including victims of abuse and human trafficking.



Our three regional chapters are also integral partners in the success of our organization. We thank the owners of Kelsey Farm in Greenwich, Ox Ridge Hunt Club in Darien, and Fox Hill Farm in Pleasantville for their longtime dedication to our mission and students. All of these chapters pre-date Pegasus Farm, and as such, they are an essential part of the rich tradition of Pegasus and a vital link to the communities they serve.

Of course, there is always room at Pegasus for more helping hands. As a nonprofit, we rely primarily on charitable donations to help us run our programs, compensate our staff, care for our horses and maintain our facilities. In fact, more than 90 percent of our annual budget is funded by gifts from our community. 🐾

To support our mission through a tax-deductible gift, contact Syreeta Jones at (845) 669-8235 x101 or [sjones@pegasustr.org](mailto:sjones@pegasustr.org). In addition, if you or someone you know would like to join us as a volunteer, please contact Lynn Peters at (845) 669-8235 x109 or [lpeters@pegasustr.org](mailto:lpeters@pegasustr.org).



*Student Bella rocks out at the Making Music station on the Pegasus Farm sensory trail*

## We Will Ride BY DIANA FRIEDLANDER

Ben was excited to have me come to his riding lesson at We Will Ride. As I pulled into beautiful Vail Farm I was equally excited. Ben is a first grader at the school where I teach special education. I recommended We Will Ride for Ben because he has autism and several of the challenges children like Ben sometimes face. Although he is very bright, reading beautifully, keeping up with his classmates in math, he struggles to follow directions, focus on verbal language, maintain adequate core strength and balance and correctly regulate his sensory input. In a nutshell, Ben and We Will Ride make a perfect match.

After a bit of shy hesitation and with encouragement from Mom and a young volunteer (who happened to be a previous student of mine), Ben came into the barn. With but one reminder he gladly put his helmet on and waited patiently for his horse to be ready. Not 2 short hours ago I had to ask him 4 times to pack his backpack. I guess I need to offer

horseback riding lessons as an incentive to follow my directions. Ben followed each and every direction he was given during his lesson. He entered the ring calmly (at school I am constantly trying to keep him from surging ahead of me as we walk down the hall), he mounted like a pro without fuss (if he comes across a difficult or unfamiliar word while reading we can sometimes face several minutes of moans and groans). He posted when asked, rode with his hands atop his head when told, spoke clearly and appropriately to his helpers and instructor.

I was more than impressed with Ben's show of ability and focus but what really made my heart leap and my eyes well up was the huge smile that never left his face. Ben has found a passion and he is embracing it.

We Will Ride provides individual horseback riding programs and



other equine-assisted activities to individuals with a range of disabilities. Programs are designed by certified therapeutic riding instructions, licensed health professionals and are tailored to each rider's needs. Programs run at Vail Farm in North Salem.

Visit our website for more information: [www.wewillrideinc.com](http://www.wewillrideinc.com) or call 203-438-1947 🐾



## No Stress, Sure-Fire Trailer Loading BY JILL MURPHY\*

Surely one of the most frustrating moments in dealing with a horse is when you are all set to trailer somewhere and he flatly refuses to load. Teaching horses to load has been a pet project of mine for about the last twenty years ever since reading books by a British trainer working in Australia by the name of Tom Roberts. He instinctively knows how horses think and none of his methods have ever failed for me. His methods are also behind the philosophies of most of the “cowboy trainers” out there whether they acknowledge him or not.

Teaching a horse to load demands some preparation and the first thing that anyone who plans to trailer horses should do is to take a ride in an empty trailer. Once you feel how much movement there is and how easy it is to lose your balance it will make you a much more compassionate chauffeur for your horse and not make him afraid of the trailer if he is not already.

The second step is to do some easy groundwork so that your horse understands exactly what you are asking him to do. With the horse wearing a halter and a lead rope and with you carrying a dressage whip (or a short

driving whip but not as long as a lunge whip) stroke his body gently with the whip on both sides of his body so he is not frightened of it. Teach him to back up by facing him and pinching the point of his shoulder while saying “back” and putting pressure on his nose with the halter. As soon as he takes a step back or even leans back, take the pressure off and praise him, then start again so that he understands to take slow steps and not run backwards. I often use peppermints as a reward; not as a bribe but as a way to say; “Yes, THAT is what I want you to do!” I like the mints because they have a wrapper that crinkles and that sound can get a horse’s attention. It is possible to train without them but it is an added stimulus for the horse to do the right thing and is quite effective when the horse learns to self-load.

The other important ground lesson is the “go forward” command. With the horse wearing the halter and lead rope place him against a wall or fence line of some sort so that he can’t step away from you and place yourself at his shoulder facing forward. With the whip in your right hand and the lead in your left click your tongue and tap the horse gently but firmly on the hip until he

shows any inclination to step forward. Immediately stop clicking and tapping and praise him. Do not step forward yourself; you want him to step forward from the command without you leading him. The timing is critical. The tapping doesn't hurt him but it is annoying so it must cease instantly when he moves forward as that is his reward for doing the right thing. When the clicking and tapping stop it says: "Yes, that is what I want you to do". The horse thinks; "That profits me. If I move forward the tapping stops".

Before attempting to load your horse in a trailer you should be completely calm and have one experienced horse person to help you. If you make a connection with your horse so that he trusts you he should easily become a self-loader after a few sessions. Never plan a training session if you are upset, angry or in a hurry. Horses read our body language more than we know.

When leading the horse towards the trailer, your shoulders should be relaxed and your body slightly turned towards the horse. This is an invitation to follow you. One of the most common mistakes I see is that the person leading the horse will stop half-way up the ramp and turn to face the horse if it hesitates. Facing a horse means "Stop!" in horse language. Trying to pull a 1200lb horse up a ramp while standing in front of him never works.

You should lead the horse and your helper should be next to the horse towards his rear. As soon as the horse is facing the trailer ramp your helper should begin to click her tongue and tap the horse with the whip not hard enough to hurt but so he feels it. As soon as the horse takes a step forward, or even leans like he is about to take a step forward, the clicking and tapping stop. This is the crucial moment when the horse will understand what you are asking of him. If the horse moves forward and the clicking and tapping do not stop instantly he becomes confused and thinks: "That's not it, maybe she wants me to move sideways or back up." As soon as the horse stops moving forward and no matter what else he does or which direction he goes, keep clicking and tapping. The horse is now thinking: "She can't MAKE me go in the trailer but she won't let me do anything else until I do!"

Once the horse is facing the trailer and you have asked him to step forward do not allow him to back up or turn aside from the ramp. Keep clicking and tapping until he starts forward again and then stop for a few seconds to show him that he is doing the right thing and then send him forward again. If you stop clicking and tapping and walk him in a circle or let him graze for a second he has won and it will take twice as much time as it would if you had kept up the pressure to give him no choice except to go forward.



You and your helper must keep calm and have the attitude that you have all the time in the world and will keep this up indefinitely. Sometimes the horse will walk right on but usually it takes a few minutes and the horse will give a big sigh and walk on. When he does go on, praise and pet him like he just won the Grand National and this is the time to give him a carrot or even give him his dinner while he stands in the trailer. His experience should be: Inside the trailer good things happen. Outside the trailer can be a little uncomfortable. On rare occasions the horse will walk on and then fly back out of the trailer. Do not try to stop him just do not give him any kind of break outside the trailer. Don't walk him in a circle or let him eat grass or run back to the barn. Face him right back at the ramp and start clicking and tapping until he goes on and stands quietly until you ask him to back off.

Once he gets it, only ask him to load a couple of more times and then praise him and put him away. Do not ask him to load the next day, wait until the following day so that the lesson is firmly in his brain.

I have never failed to load a horse without injury to horse or loaders using this method. Never allow supposedly knowledgeable horse people to swat your horse with a broom or get behind him with a lunge line to try and lift him on. It can make the job of teaching him to load calmly and safely much more difficult.

If you hurt your horse he will hate you. If you frighten him his brain will check out and he can hurt himself or you. If you pick a fight he will fight to the death but if you remain calm he will give in every time. The one thing a horse cannot resist is quiet persistence. 🐾

*\*This article originally appeared in the Record Review.*



## If You Love Your Smartphone...Here Are Some Great "Horsey" Apps BY KYLE VAN SPLINTER

### MOTION X GPS

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*Motion X GPS* is wonderful to take out on the trails. It shows you:

- How long you were out
- The distance you traveled
- Average speed
- Max speed
- Live speed and altitude graphs
- Total ascent/descent

You can also mark waypoints for your favorite locations and you can follow your tracks later. In addition, it has the ability to email your tracks to yourself or others. I tested a few GPS apps, but I found this one to be the best and most comprehensive for the purposes of trail riding. Only downside is that it is only for the iPhone.

### EQUITEMPO

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Riders interested in determining their horse's tempo and maintaining a consistent tempo through riding aids and body language will like the app called *EquiTempo*. It has a metronome utility that matches the tempo or Beats Per Minute (BPM) you want to maintain when riding. This app helps you develop a consistent and rhythmic tempo. Plug into an arena sound system and change tempo to suit movements. Again, this app is only for the iPhone.

### PACE DJ

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It's fun to ride to music and once you know the BPM you'd like to work with, the *Pace DJ* app takes the music

on your phone and categorizes by BPM. So you can just input the BPM you want and it will only play the songs you have with that tempo. (This app is available for iPhone and Android.)

Choose your BPM based on the gait you want to ride:

- Walk: around 90-95 BPM (ideally around 95)
- Trot: 150-155 (ideally around 150)
- Canter: 95-100 (ideally around 98 BPM)

### HORSE KEEPER

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Having reviewed two apps that purport to keep all your horses' information in one place, the one that I found to be the most complete is *Horse Keeper*. It has the capability to keep track of all of your horses' health records, training, equine-related contact information while also being capable of monitoring your horse-related expenses. In addition, when you input dates of vaccinations, shoeing, dental visits, etc.; it later brings up reminders to let you know your horse is due for a service. (You can adjust the defaults for the timing of the service reminders.) In addition, there is a spot for "notes" and you can include a picture of your horse on his/her home page. Plus this app syncs with other app users so as to allow other family members to update the app as well. Data can be backed up and shared with others via email. Sorry non-iPhone users; this one is only available for iPhone, too.

There are many other Apps out there but these will get you started. Have fun! 🐾

# Fall/Winter Warm-Ups (for riders and non-riders alike)

BY KYLE VAN SPLINTER

Non-traditional drink for your flask while in-the-saddle. (The NSBTA nor its board members support or condone drinking alcohol while riding) ☺:

## CHOCOLATE MILK

(this is a strong one—be careful!)

4 parts Vodka  
1 part Crème de Cocoa

Or if you'd prefer not to imbibe while in the saddle, here's a drink to warm you up when you get home:

## ULTIMATE MUDSLIDE

6 oz. Hot chocolate  
1 oz. Bailey's Irish Cream  
1 oz. Kahlua  
1 oz. Vodka  
Top with Whipped Cream

OK, this one isn't hot in temperature, but it does warm you up:

## COSMOPOLITAN

¾ part fresh lime juice  
1 part cranberry juice  
1 part Cointreau (please don't use Triple Sec on this one...makes it way too sweet)  
1 ½ parts Vodka

Shake all ingredients together with lots of ice and strain into a martini glass.

Maybe for dinner with a baguette from the Union Hall General Store (or another one of North Salem's purveyors of fine foods)... a couple of delicious soup recipes:

## Curried Butternut Squash Soup with Crispy Shallots & Goat Cheese

From Scott Conant, Restaurateur

### INGREDIENTS

For the soup:

- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 ½ teaspoons curry powder
- 2 medium butternut squash, peeled, seeded, cut into 1-inch dice
- 2 quarts homemade chicken broth or canned low-salt chicken broth
- Kosher salt

For the garnish:

- 1 shallot, thinly sliced
- 2 to 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Fresh goat cheese, plain or herbed

### PREPARATION

**For the soup:** Heat ¼ cup of the olive oil in a large soup pot. Add the onions and cook for about 5 minutes. Add the curry powder and continue to cook, stirring, until the onions are tender. Add the squash and the chicken broth. Bring the soup to a boil, reduce it to a simmer, and cook, until the squash is tender, 30 to 40 minutes. Remove soup from the heat and let it cool a bit. If you have an immersion blender, add the remaining ¼ cup of olive oil now and purée the soup in the pot. If not, purée the soup in a blender or food processor in batches, adding some of the olive oil to each batch to create an emulsion. Season to taste with salt.

**For the shallots:** Heat the vegetable oil in a small sauté pan over medium heat. Add the shallots and cook, stirring occasionally, until well browned all over and crisp. This will take a while, 10 to 12 minutes, but be patient. If you rush them, they won't be as sweet or crispy. Drain the shallot slices on paper towels.

**To serve:** Reheat the soup if necessary and divide it among bowls. Top each with about a teaspoon of the goat cheese and a sprinkling of the shallots.

## The Best Vegetable Soup Ever, No Kidding

From Mark Bittman, New York Times columnist and author

### INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup olive oil, more or less
- 2 onions, peeled and chopped (1 cup chopped)
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 celery stalks, peeled and chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 bunch parsley, washed and chopped, thick stems discarded
- 2 or 3 cabbage leaves, chopped
- 1 bunch chard, preferably white, washed and chopped
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 3 to 4 cups cooked white beans, like cannelloni, with their liquid if possible

### PREPARATION

1. Put about a third of the olive oil in the bottom of a deep pot and turn the heat to medium.
2. Add half the onion, carrot and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, until they soften, which takes about 10 minutes.
3. Add about half of the remaining oil and repeat the process, seasoning with salt and pepper as you go.
4. Add the remaining oil with the parsley, cabbage and chard and cook, stirring occasionally, until everything is softened but not browned.
5. Add the tomato paste and stir.
6. Mash the beans so that they're about half mashed and half more-or-less whole (I do this part, carefully in a food processor). Add this mixture to the pot, along with any bean cooking liquid and enough water to make the whole mixture stewy but not watery.
7. Continue cooking, tasting and adjusting the seasoning as necessary, until all the vegetables are very tender and the soup is hot. Serve hot or warm. 🍲



## NSBTA Reaches To The Stars

On October 5, 2013 the NSBTA featured "A Conversation with Dr. Neil deGrasse Tyson", astrophysicist and host of the upcoming FOX TV series "Cosmos: A Space Time Odyssey." This lively event was held at the magnificent Old Salem Farm in North Salem, New York. Over 100 fans from as far as Pennsylvania, as well as local residents, students, and teachers actively engaged with Dr. Tyson on topics ranging from global warming to space exploration. The "Conversation" was hosted by comedian Eugene Mirman, and featured beautiful celestial photographic prints by the local North Salem company BigBangPrints.com.



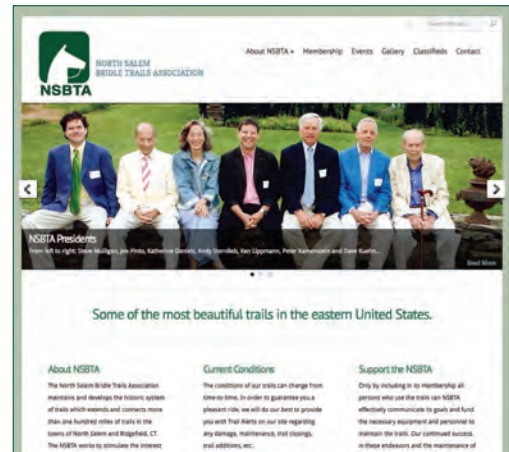
Neil is the Frederick P. Rose Director of the Hayden Planetarium at the American Museum of Natural History, and is author of numerous books including *The Pluto Files*, *Death by Black Hole*, and *Space Chronicles: Facing the Ultimate Frontier*. Neil has also hosted *Nova: ScienceNow* on PBS; currently hosts the *StarTalk Radio Show*; and is a frequent guest on news programs as well as talk shows such as *The Daily Show*, *The Colbert Report*, *The Tonight Show*, *Conan O'Brien*, and *Jimmy Fallon*.

## Website, Email and Trail Hotline

Our website is getting better and better as we become more technologically savvy. This summer we enlisted the firm of Eisenman Associates ([www.eisenman.com](http://www.eisenman.com)) to upgrade the site. Check it out and let us know how you like it! Our intention is to make it a great resource for trail news and other local events. The address is [www.nsbta.org](http://www.nsbta.org).

We also have an email address, which you can use to communicate with the trail maintenance committee regarding problems or suggestions, or to request information. The email address is [info@nsbta.org](mailto:info@nsbta.org).

We count on you to email or call us if you notice any problems on the trails. The trail hotline phone number is 914-669-8497. Ask for Olivia. She will make sure our trail crew is sent out to fix any problems.



## Membership Dues

Your continued support is greatly appreciated and vital to the on-going upkeep of our trail system. It is hard to believe that such great riding is available only one hour from NYC. The horse community has helped to keep North Salem rural. We need your membership support to ensure it stays that way!

Please send your tax-deductible contribution to:  
NSBTA, P.O. Box 585, North Salem, NY 10560

## Helmet Rule

One of the rules of the NSBTA is to wear protective headgear while riding on the trails. A lot of our access is on private land that has been graciously opened to us by the landowners. They have requested we emphasize this rule as a condition of our use of their land. As a reminder, New York State has instituted a helmet law that applies to anyone under the age of fourteen. Section 1265 requires that no person less than fourteen years of age shall ride a horse unless such person is wearing a helmet meeting or exceeding ASTM F1163 SEIC (Safety Equipment Institute Certified). For your own safety please wear a helmet while riding.

# NORTH SALEM BRIDLE TRAILS ASSOCIATION 2013 MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please visit [www.nsbta.org](http://www.nsbta.org), click on "Membership" and pay via PayPal.

OR

fill out the form below, make checks payable to NSBTA and mail to: **NSBTA, P.O. Box 585, North Salem, NY 10560**

*Corporate matching gifts welcome!*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF SADDLE TAGS (MAX IS 1 JUNIOR, 2 ADULT, OR 4 FAMILY): \_\_\_\_\_

WHERE DO YOU BOARD YOUR HORSE? \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP TYPE (CHECK ONE):

- \$50 JUNIOR       \$185 ADULT       \$270 FAMILY       \$500 SPONSOR  
 \$1000 PATRON       \$\_\_\_\_\_ CONTRIBUTOR

The NSBTA is a publicly supported, non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization. Contributions to it may be deducted for income and estate tax purposes to the extent allowed by law. A financial statement is on file with the New York State Attorney General or may be obtained by writing to the NSBTA. **By joining the organization you agree to the NSBTA Terms of Membership.**



## NSBTA TERMS OF MEMBERSHIP

1. NSBTA member in good standing.
  2. Always wear protective headgear.
  3. Be considerate and courteous at all times.
  4. No dogs allowed on trails at any time.
  5. No wheeled or motorized vehicles of any kind are allowed on trails.
  6. No smoking on trails.
  7. Always ride on the edge of fields, not through the center, unless otherwise marked.
  8. No schooling over jumps. Our landowners generously allow us to jump fences on their property as we pass through but they do not allow lessons to be taught there without permission.
  9. Stay out of wet areas and walk if you should end up in a wet section. If a trail is wet and near a house or groomed property, do not use it. Treat others' property as you would your own.
  10. Respect the privacy of landowners whenever passing through property close to their homes. Stay on the trail and walk if passing near barns, rings or paddocks. Please do not ride on lawns or approach residences. Be alert for distractions.
  11. On roads, ride single file and move to the side for passing cars. Thank drivers when they are courteous enough to reduce their speed. If they don't reduce their speed, give them a friendly wave and hopefully they will slow down the next time!
  12. Obey signs and other restrictions on trail use.
  13. Never gallop toward or away from a horse or a group of horses. Ask permission to pass and do so by overtaking gradually. Ask permission to trot away.
  14. In consideration of your use and enjoyment of the trails, you agree to assume all risks associated with trail riding and agree to hold harmless the NSBTA (including its officers, directors and contractors) and the landowners against any injury that may occur to you and your horse.
- WALKERS, JOGGERS AND SKIERS:** Please slow down or stop when approaching horses from the front. When approaching from the rear, make your presence known from a reasonable distance. Horses may overreact to silent approaches from behind.
- MOTOR VEHICLES:** Please slow down and pass at a safe speed and distance from horses. Do not honk horn, as horses may spook and jump into the road.



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# NORTH SALEM BRIDLE TRAILS ASSOCIATION

2013 NEWSLETTER



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