

*The kindest treatment of the horse is gained through knowledge.*

## Welcome to Harrogate's newest additions!

As always, I manage to forget important things in our year end video. I forgot to announce our two new additions and how they have ended up in the HH school! Mrs. V and Stretch were introduced to us through Sarah Mark. They are both ex polo horses and Sarah fell in love with Mrs. V straight away. She was convinced she would make a great school horse (she was right) and for indiscernible but wonderfully generous reasons, Sarah purchased her and then agreed to let us use her in the school. Mrs. V also had a lovely friend



Mrs. V



Stretch

named Stretch who was simply too tall to be a polo pony (plus he hated the game). Our friend Erica Clayton, who currently lives in Newfoundland, somehow decided that she would like to buy Stretch and that until she returns to Ontario, we can use him in the school.

Harrogate has always been surrounded by incredibly supportive people and many many thanks are owed to Sarah and Erica for giving us such a great opportunity and for trusting us with their horses.

## CALENDAR of EVENTS



### WINTER BREAK CAMP

Monday, Dec. 23,  
Thursday, Jan. 2,  
Friday, Jan. 3

### PA DAY CAMP

Friday, January 31

*For more information on any of these events please email [info@harrogatehills.ca](mailto:info@harrogatehills.ca)*

## TRIVIA QUESTION:

*There are 27 horses presently living at Harrogate. At one time there were many more. What is the greatest number of horses that ever lived at HH at one time?*

The answer will be in next month's issue of The Mane Bit.

The school is closed:  
Tuesday, December 24,  
Wednesday, December 25,  
Tuesday, December 31, and  
Wednesday, January 1

**We look forward to welcoming everyone back in the new year.**

## “Do you offer trail rides?”

Someone asked me a while ago where my aversion to taking out public trail rides comes from. I'm happy to explain!

When I managed the University of Toronto Riding School, the powers that be decided that we had to serve the entire University community as well as the surrounding public. They felt the only solution was to make sure we offered public trail rides as well as riding lessons. Despite our warnings about the possible difficulties that could arise, they were firm on this. So, against our better judgment, armed only with our loyal school horses, we were forced to implement the policy.

It was always a bit of a nightmare. I remember coming by on a weekend just in time to see our weekend manager cantering up to the barn on a horse and leading another one beside him.

“Some people have fallen off on the football pitch” he yelled.

I got on the horse he was leading, and we rode back to where he had left his group. When we came around the corner to the football pitch it was quite a sight. None of the riders had managed to stay on their horses. We found out later that only one had gotten off on their own accord. The rest had somehow lost their balance and fallen off when our wise school horses had come to an abrupt halt on the fresh grass. There were seven horses, heads buried in the grass and eight people huddled together trying to figure out what had just happened. We managed to get everyone back to the barn in one piece but as always it led to a conversa-



tion about how we really had to convince the upper management that this public trail ride thing was not a great idea. We tried to explain that when the horses, (whether frightened or just recalcitrant), were in an open, unfenced area, they had the ability to return to the barn at their own pace. We tried to explain the possible consequences of this for inexperienced riders. It was to no avail. Even our concerns about potential lawsuits didn't seem to sway them from their determined plan.

Because the University of Toronto Scarborough campus was nestled in a nice leafy neighbourhood in West Hill, it wasn't too unusual to have people come in 'off the street' for a ride.



Toby, above. Chucky, below.



On a bright sunny day, a mother and her daughter, neither of whom had ever ridden before, came by and asked to go on a trail ride. I got the horses ready, dreading the excursion but reminding myself that I was obliged to take out anyone who asked. The mother nattered to the daughter constantly, warning her to stand clear of these beasts because they were dangerous and untrustworthy. I tried to placate this fear by telling her some insights into the nature of horses but both of them seemed indifferent. The mother was hiring these creatures to take them for a ride. That was all she seemed to feel she needed to know. I confess I found it hard to like her very much.

I led the horses out to the driveway and began the almost always painful process of

hoisting the new riders aboard. We didn't have a mounting block back then and for that, and so many other reasons, I feel I owe all my old school horses an apology. I had chosen Chuck and Toby for the adventure. Chuckie was a sour little paint gelding but reliably stoic when ridden on the trails. Toby, one of my favourite horses of all time, was a lovely, old fashioned appaloosa and a safe choice if all we were going to do was walk.

It is hard to overestimate the potential for disaster, even as we just stood in the driveway. I had to hold onto my horse while trying to get two complete beginners up on their horses. It was nerve wracking, and we hadn't even started yet!

Since Chuck was generally happy to stand around, I chose to heave the little girl up on to him and then attempt to get the mother onto Toby. This turned into a comical affair of much jumping, groaning and reorganizing on the ground. Toby stood like a saint. Finally, on perhaps our fifth attempt, holding her aloft with as much strength as I had left, the mother was encouragingly close to getting her leg over to the other side.

Unfortunately, by this time Chuck had decided it was time to move on. He started walking towards my car. This was not just any car. It was my beautiful, blue, 1971 Dodge Charger.

I really loved that car.

I begged the little girl.

“Stop him, please!”

My mind was racing. I knew that somewhere in our barn, there was a horse who chewed on vehicles. I just didn't know which one. The

gentleman who delivered our hay had found teeth marks on his truck when he had left it unattended for five minutes in the paddock with the horses. We had never caught anyone in the act but a little voice in the back of my head was telling me that I was about to discover the culprit.

I repeated in a loud stage whisper:

“Please make him stop!”

I strained to push the mother towards the saddle but, besides groaning, she did nothing.

I yelled in desperation.

“Pull back on the reins!!!”

Still Chuck kept walking.

The little girl, pulling as hard as she could, was now almost lying on Chuck’s back in her effort to stop him. But oblivious to the big fat snaffle bit in his gaping mouth, he kept walking ever closer to my car.

I began considering the legal consequences of dropping the mother on the ground but before I could arrive at a decision, Chuck reached my car and scraped his teeth along the quarter panel right down to the metal, from the back window to the taillight. The little girl started to cry and the mother, upon hearing her child in distress, abandoned her attempt to climb onto Toby and fell in a heap on the ground.

I secretly hoped that the excitement of having tried to get on would be enough for all concerned but, as I mourned my car, the mother angrily decided we should continue.



Similar to my beautiful, blue, 1971 Dodge Charger.  
I really loved that car.

I finally got everyone aboard and we set off at a sedate walk. I looked back at Chuck, wondering if he knew how much I hated him at that moment. Yet, somehow, he seemed sort of sweet and innocent as he made his way through the forest. The longer he carefully carried the little girl, the more I found myself forgiving his transgression.

Neither the mother or daughter seemed interested in any sort of conversation and since it was such a beautiful day, I decided to just try and enjoy the ride.

My quiet enjoyment was disrupted by the mother shouting that they were pressed for time and had to get back. I found it remarkable that she hadn’t told me this before we set out, but at this point, the idea of cutting this adventure short had a certain appeal to me. We had a route we usually took for these rides but since finishing the circuit

at this point would likely not satisfy her timeline, I decided to go back the short way, through the creek...

The horses never hesitated to cross at the shallow point but as we carefully picked our way across, I heard an ominous splashing sound. I looked back and there was Chuck, full stop, pawing at the water. There was no

**“Please...  
make him  
stop!”**

doubt about his intentions but before I could get my horse turned around, he unceremoniously lay down in the water. The child started to scream and jumped off into the knee-deep water. The mother began screaming even louder than her daughter and began a panicked attempt at a dismount. She leaped off Toby with remarkable speed but after successfully landing on her feet, her momentum caused her to fall backwards with a splash. Chuck, oblivious to all the excitement buried his nose in the water, rolled over luxuriously, and finally stood up and shook like a dog. Then, in playful disregard, Chuck and his newly liberated friend Toby, cantered gleefully back to the barn.

I know it was wrong to find this funny.

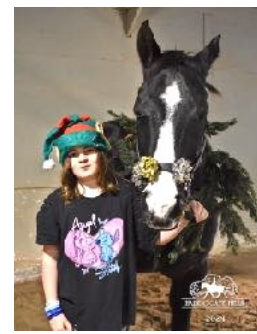
I tried to comfort the soaked riders as they walked sullenly back to the barn on foot but there was no appeasing the sobbing child or the sodden mother who was convinced that these wicked horses had made their day a disaster on purpose.

I was still apologizing as they climbed into their car and, as I watched them drive down the driveway, I made a personal promise that if I ever had my own place, I would never, ever take out public trail rides again.

It is a promise I have kept for over forty years.

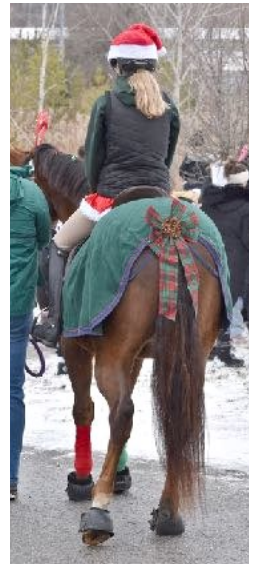


**PHOTO GALLERY**  
**Christmas Festivities**  
**Night**  
**December 7, 2024**





**PHOTO GALLERY**  
**Mount Albert**  
**Santa Claus parade**  
**December 7, 2024**





## PRICING FOR 2025 SUMMER PROGRAM



SESSION	DATES	REFER A FRIEND 20% discount if paid <b>IN FULL</b> by Nov 28, 2024	<b>\$75 DISCOUNT</b> if paid <b>IN FULL</b> by Dec 31, 2024	<b>\$30 DISCOUNT</b> if paid <b>IN FULL</b> by Jan 31, 2025	REGULAR FEE if paid after Feb 1, 2025
One	June 30- July 4	\$540.00	\$600.00	\$645.00	\$675.00
Two	July 7-11	\$540.00	\$600.00	\$645.00	\$675.00
Three	July 14-18	\$540.00	\$600.00	\$645.00	\$675.00
Four	July 21-25	\$540.00	\$600.00	\$645.00	\$675.00
Five	July 28- Aug 1	\$540.00	\$600.00	\$645.00	\$675.00

**DON'T MISS SPECIAL DISCOUNT!**

All prices include HST.  
If you prefer to pay in two installments, a currently dated \$300.00 deposit cheque and another cheque dated June 30, 2025 for the balance **must** accompany all registration forms.  
*Please note: Discounts DO NOT apply unless camp fees are PAID IN FULL by discount date.*



## PRICING FOR 2025 LIT SUMMER PROGRAM



SESSION	DATES	REFER A FRIEND 20% discount if paid <b>IN FULL</b> by Nov 28, 2024	<b>\$50 DISCOUNT</b> if paid <b>IN FULL</b> by Dec 31, 2024	<b>\$25 DISCOUNT</b> if paid <b>IN FULL</b> by Jan 31, 2025	REGULAR FEE if paid after Feb 1, 2025
One	June 30- July 4	\$340.00	\$375.00	\$400.00	\$425.00
Two	July 7-11	\$340.00	\$375.00	\$400.00	\$425.00
Three	July 14-18	\$340.00	\$375.00	\$400.00	\$425.00
Four	July 21-25	\$340.00	\$375.00	\$400.00	\$425.00
Five	July 28- Aug 1	\$340.00	\$375.00	\$400.00	\$425.00

**DON'T MISS SPECIAL DISCOUNT!**

All prices include HST.  
If you prefer to pay in two installments, a currently dated \$200.00 deposit cheque and another cheque dated June 30, 2025 for the balance **must** accompany all registration forms.  
*Please note: Discounts DO NOT apply unless camp fees are PAID IN FULL by discount date.*

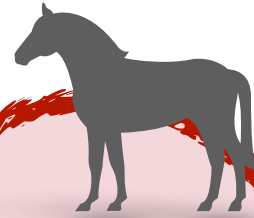
## TRIVIA GUIDELINES:

- Place your answer in the box found in the lounge and include your name and contact information.
- There will be a random draw from the correct submitted answers and one person will win a prize.
- The winner will be announced in the following month's Newsletter.

The answer to November's Trivia Question is:

**Harrogate Hills was originally located in Gormley, at Leslie St. and Stouffville Sideroad.**

Congratulations to Kaitlyn Spitzig who won a \$25.00 gift card to Greenhawk



Many thanks for all the support for our Christmas Party Raffle on Sunday, December 8. We are so grateful for everyone who generously donated items for the raffle and to everyone who purchased tickets. The Harrogate horses really appreciate your support!

**Last chance to buy tickets!**

## LION KING RAFFLE DRAW

Enter for a chance to WIN!!

**PRIZE:** Three tickets to see the Mirvish production of Disney's THE LION KING (excellent orchestra level seats, valued at \$535).

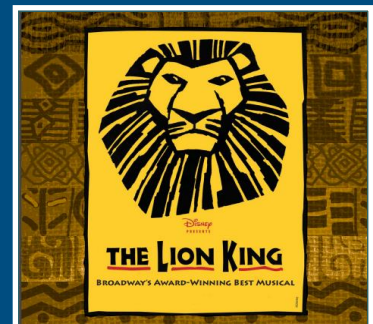
**RAFFLE TICKET PRICES:** \$10 each or \$25 for 3 chances to win.

**HOW:** Buy your tickets online by sending an email with your contact information to: [raffle@harrogatehills.com](mailto:raffle@harrogatehills.com). Payment to be sent via e-transfer to this same email address.

**DEADLINE** to purchase raffle tickets is midnight on December 21<sup>st</sup>.

**DRAW DATE:** Sunday Dec 22<sup>nd</sup>

**Performance date:**  
Sunday, January 26 @ 2:00 pm  
at the Princess of Wales Theatre



*These tickets were very kindly donated. 100% of the raffle proceeds goes to caring for the horses at Harrogate Hills Riding School. They thank you for your continued support!*



# JUMP

INTO THE NEW YEAR  
WITH OUR FIRST JUMP SCHOOL OF 2025!



Let's get ready  
for show season!

We have planned a series of jump schools through the Winter and into the Spring. Our first Jump School will help you gain a focus on your goals and your path to success this year.

Our special, inaugural  
Jump School is scheduled for  
Wednesday, January 1st!

4:00-7:30pm

It will include:

- One hour jump lesson with Pat
- Planning out your New Year's goals
- A journal to track your progress throughout the year
- Video tape of your trip
- Watching and discussing your trip
- Light refreshments and snacks will be provided

Maximum of four riders in a group.

Reach out to see if this event is a good fit for you.

Young riders who aren't yet ready to join the Jump School are welcome, as our guest, to audit the event.



\$95.00 + HST for the evening



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is gained through knowledge.*