
The Mane Bit

www.harrogatehills.com

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Fall 2007

A FEW WORDS ON SHOWS AND SHOWING



It is true that going to horse shows gives us an opportunity to measure our progress as riders but, perhaps more importantly, it also allows us to take a measure of our character and how we react under pressure.

Successful showing relies on disciplined preparation and focus. The Harrogate Hills Show Team ensures that the horses are kept well trimmed and clipped so that, the night before the show, their equine partners need only suffer the aggravation of being bathed and braided. At Harrogate we have always believed that proper turnout is a demonstration of respect for the judge as well as the sport and the Harrogate Hills Show Team also takes this seriously. They honed their skills by participating in the Harrogate Hills in-house shows and they are now getting to the point where they would not look out of place at an "A" show, which is how it should be.

On show day the pressure on the team is increased as the trials and tribulations of shipping the horses to the event takes its toll. As the horses unload, the team gets its first

inkling of how they are going to behave in different surroundings. It takes a certain amount of experience to put aside your own worries and fears and calm down the horse, but it is a skill that is of great value in many aspects of ones' life. The horse looks for that confidence in his rider, especially when he is unsure and, to a large extent, the success of the day ultimately depends on the faith the horse has in his partner. It gives me a sense of great pride to note that every show we attend sees the Show Team riders taking on more and more of that important leadership role.

Once the warm up is complete the test of 'performance under pressure' begins. Unlike schooling at home, there are no 'do overs' at a show. With that pressure can come an attack of nerves. While the rider has to enter the ring with a focused plan he also has to adapt his plan instantaneously to unexpected events in the ring. The rider must make these decisions without assistance - and then live with the consequences.

Over the course of the spring and summer the Harrogate Hills Show Team has been busy refining all of these skills. They started with a great attitude at our in-house shows and continue to use that experience to help take them to this next level. They are always courteous and appreciative of the efforts made by the volunteers. They are professional and safe in the warm up areas and stay focused on their own situation rather than paying attention to the challenges others may be facing.

What begins with a potentially sleepless night before hand and the early arrival on show day culminates in the riders tending to the needs of their horses at the end of the day.

(And you thought it was just about jumping over a few fences!)

The members of the Harrogate Hills Show Team are not only good ambassadors for Harrogate but also for the sport itself. They continue to prove that good horsemanship, with the self-discipline and focus it requires, embellishes and enhances good character. We are all just as proud as could be every time we ship to an off property show.

Our next outing is on Oct. 14th to Pause Awhile. We invite you to come out and cheer on the 2007 show team. Hope to see you there as well as at our special Hallowe'en Harrogate show.

HORSE SHOW SCHEDULE

At Harrogate Hills:

Sunday, October 28, 2007 (this is a Special Hallowe'en Show – with a **costume class** and a **class for the "over 21" set**. Be sure to sign up for a fun day!

March 2008

June 2008

At Pause Awhile:

Sunday, October 14, 2007
Sunday, November 11, 2007

Sponsors of Harrogate Hills Horse Shows



**Pictures from
Hallowe'en
Past - can
YOU rise to
the occasion
this year??**

The Mane Bit



CLEAN SWEEP HARROGATE HILLS STYLE

Are you looking for lightly used riding equipment?

The tireless Sheryl Schweinburger, who **once** volunteered to co-ordinate this worthwhile programme, has boots, jackets, riding pants etc. for sale or purchase. Check the list posted in the Lounge. If you have something for sale, please drop a detailed note, marked "attention Sheryl", in the box and it will be added to the list. (Thanks Sheryl!)

Horses have never hurt anyone yet, except when they bet on them. *(Stuart Cloete)*

There is no secret so close as that between a rider and his horse.

(Robert Smith Surtees)

FIRST LOVE

I think everyone feels the same. Your first love is always very special. It was no different for me. I fell totally in love when I was twenty years old, and the object of this adoration was “Dillon’s Gunsmoke” – a seven-year-old snowflake appaloosa horse.



This horse passion had started with Roy Rogers’ horse, “Trigger”, many years before. From then on only horse stories were read and everything had to have horses on it! I had taken riding lessons in my early teens but found them very unsatisfying. I kept getting different horses when what I wanted was a relationship with one horse. But I did learn that I loved to smell like a horse, feed horses, groom horses, etc.

After starting my career in nursing I had my first money and a lot of spare time. I decided to give horses another try so went to Sunnybrook Park, in the city, to take lessons. That spring the teacher moved to Gormley and bought six horses to start his own school. As you might have guessed, one of these horses was an appaloosa. I started riding him right away and fell head over heels. Needless to say my riding skills were pitiful at the time so “Smoke” would often just turn and take me back into the barn and into his stall when he was tired. Thank goodness we were both short!

Now our story takes a scary twist. Our riding teacher wanted to “train” Smoke, but I was not to come and watch. This didn’t seem right to me so one day I showed up unexpectedly. I discovered him hitting Smoke with his fist between his ears and this poor horse was white with foam. Having bought Gunsmoke two weeks prior to this you can well imagine how upset I was. I decided to move him to another

The Mane Bit

stable immediately. My once quiet, lovable horse was so high on oats and so traumatized that it was months before he settled down and trusted men again.

But this was not the end of the abusive teacher. He found where we were boarding and came to threaten Smoke. In effect, if I didn’t give him more money, he would make sure Smoke would be seriously harmed! We hid my little spotted guy in an out of the way stall and I went directly to the police. They paid this determined bully a visit, but even that didn’t stop him as he came back to re-state his demands. Finally the owner of the stable caught him on the property and threatened him with trespassing. This was finally the end of this frightening episode, although we hid Smoke for several months.

So, now I had my dream horse safe and sound. I just had to learn to ride him. I tried, but every time I rode I fell off at least once. Finally another boarder suggested a really good teacher, Ed Rothcraz. He decided to take us on but told his wife that night that he had hit the bottom of the barrel – teaching a scared spotted horse and a pitiful rider.

Steady progress was made under Ed’s care. Everyone at the barn thought we were ready to go to a show. Off we went to a small schooling show just down the road. After falling off three times in the “walk – trot – canter” class I disqualified myself and walked slowly home. This event only made me more determined to show everyone that Gunsmoke was a diamond in the rough and we could do dressage! A year later we went back to the same show and won our first of many ribbons.

It was a fun barn, with many lovely people that are still my friends today – some thirty years later. We staged a musical ride one winter. Smoke knew it all by heart and got so upset when someone messed it up. We had a party when we presented this awesome display to parents and friends. Awards were given out to various horses – “best improved”, “best mannered horse” etc. When our name wasn’t called I again thought my poor friend had been discriminated against, but the final award was for the best horse in the musical ride and Gunsmoke won it! I still have the little trophy and it reminds me to believe in yourself always and to persevere, in spite of all odds. We eventually went to a recognized dressage show

4

– but Ed warned us that the judges would never give a ribbon to a western horse, as these horses do not do dressage! Surprise, surprise – we did extremely well and they did give us a fourth place ribbon.

Some Sunday mornings a group from the barn would go for a hack around the concession. Gunsmoke loved these outings but when we headed for home he would take off with me and race back to the barn (this was before our better days). One morning I did as Ed instructed – “just grab hold of one rein and circle him”. Well I did! We rode right around a house – through flowerbeds, through the back yard, under the clothes line (again, good that we were short) and out the other side. A bit harrowing, but Smoke never did that again.

He loved “Orange Crush” and would put his tongue out flat so that I could lay the can on it and he could have his drink.



Gunsmoke ignited the passion that has stayed with me all these years. When I have a horse to love and care for my soul sings! I learned to cherish this special connection when it occurs. I have been blessed with a few very special relationships with these marvelous animals.

(Heather Woods used to own Harley Davidson who many of you will remember at Harrogate Hills. Unfortunately he passed away last winter. She has now found a new soul mate – a Morgan by the name of Shenanigans Rocket (Rocky) who she is currently training.)

The Mane Bit HORSE COLOURS – PART II

Ok sports fans...here are some more horse colours for you to learn about. Hopefully you can find some Harrogate horses that match these colours too.

Roan

Roan horses have otherwise solid colored coats, but with white hairs interspersed. The white hairs are not actual spots, but single white hairs mixed with the darker coat color. You'll find descriptions and pictures of some common roan colors below. The Roan Gene can be applied to any color of horse. The most common are Red Roans, Bay Roans and Blue Roans. There are also Palomino Roans, Red Dun Roans, Dun Roans, Buckskin Roans, etc. The Roan gene adds white hairs into the body of the horse. The legs and head are not affected and will remain darker than the body. The mane and tail are usually not affected, but some may have some white hairs mixed in.

Chestnut (also known as "sorrel") is reddish brown. The points (mane, tail, legs and ears) are the same color as the horse's body (other than white markings). Chestnuts range from light yellowish brown to a golden-reddish or dark liver color. All chestnuts have shades of red in their coats.

Red Chestnut Bright reddish and/or orange shades. This color is very appealing since it is usually bright and shiny, and very saturated. The red chestnut always has red highlights that really stand out.

Light Chestnut Light reddish-brown. Light chestnuts do not usually have points that are lighter than their body. The tips of their manes and tails may be lighter, but the base is the same color. If their mane/tail/legs etc. are significantly lighter than their body, they might be a flaxen chestnut or palomino.

Flaxen Chestnut are a chestnut colored body with a light flaxen (cream/off-white) colored mane and tail. Legs and tip of ears are the same color as the horse's body. Many people get confused between flaxen chestnut, light chestnut and palomino.

Liver Chestnut

A liver chestnut is the darkest of the chestnut colors. Liver chestnuts do not have black points.



Rugby The Barn Cat - Interviewer Extraordinaire

If you take a close look at the Harrogate lesson sheet, you'll see that the initials 'DQ' have been inserted next to the name of Karen Goodchild, an adult student who has been riding in weekly group lessons at Harrogate for close to two years. It stands for 'Dressage Queen', a nickname Karen acquired after competing in her very first horse show this past September, at the ripe old age of 29. Harrogate's own 'Rugby the Barn Cat' sat down with the Dressage Queen recently to talk to her about the big day.

RTBC: *You've been a recreational rider for almost two years now, why the sudden interest in showing?*

Karen: My coach, Carolyn Horner, asked our group one night if any of us would be interested in doing a dressage show at Blue Star this fall, and it just sounded like a lot of fun. I'd been to many shows in the past as a spectator but never a competitor, so I wanted to be on the other side for a change.

RTBC: *What was the reasoning behind choosing Scout as your show horse?*

Karen: There was no contest. At the point I decided to enter the show, I had already been riding Scout regularly in my lessons for months. I felt like we had a good partnership, so she was a natural choice. I absolutely love her.

RTBC: *Were you worried that you might be competing against kids half your age? Or that there would be any unkind remarks made about a spotted appy mare in the dressage ring?*

The Mane Bit

Karen: Sure I thought about who my competitors would be – but that's what makes the lower levels of dressage so much fun. A 70 year-old rider could take a 2 year-old Clydesdale into a Walk/Trot test if they really wanted to. At this level it's more about the experience of showing for the rider and/or the horse, so my main goal was to have fun. As for Scout, I think she epitomizes the idea that you can't judge a book by its cover. She's a fantastic horse and I love that she steals the show wherever she is. Kind of like you Rugby – you have back legs like a cow, but you're one of the coolest cats I know.

RTBC: *How kind of you. What did you do to prepare for the show?*

Karen: I was completely overwhelmed by how much work is involved in getting ready for a show. You really have to start planning weeks in advance – especially if you've never done it before. Besides the running around, borrowing and buying all the apparel and supplies that you need, you have to make sure you take care of the finer details too: registering for the show; getting a valid OEF#; finding a groom and someone to braid; arranging for walkers – the list goes on and on. I also learned that you have to make sure you leave yourself plenty of time on both the show day as well as the day before the show so that you can be prepared for the unexpected.

RTBC: *Sounds like you had to deal with a little of the unexpected...*

Karen: A good example was bathing Scout. It ate up way more time than I had allowed for, because I didn't take into account that I was taking her out of her routine and a lot of the time horses don't respond well to that. Here I was on a Saturday night taking her out of her stall *after* dinner while all her friends are staying inside; she's not hot - yet I'm spraying her with cool water; someone she's never met is trying to hold her steady on a lead line; and I'm trying to scrub her down with shampoo! She just wasn't having it, and I can't say I blame her. Thank goodness for Geoff and Pat. They saw us struggling and stepped right in and accomplished in 10 minutes what we had been fumbling with for close to an hour. It was a valuable lesson learned.

6

RTBC: *I saw pictures of Scout on the morning of the show – she looked stunning! What was your secret?*

Karen: It's not so much a secret as it was a secret weapon: Jenn Hooper. My groom and I had planned on attempting the braiding ourselves even though we had never done it before - but after the bathing fiasco there just wasn't time to 'learn'. Pat gave me Jenn Hooper's phone number and I called her in total desperation. What a champ that kid is! She was at the barn within 30 minutes and had Scout braided and looking stunning in no time...she really saved us that night!



RTBC: *Let's jump ahead to the morning of the show. You're tacked, packed and ready to go. What's going through your head as you hack down to the show?*

Karen: I felt like a queen. It's quite a procession when you hack to Blue Star because obviously safety is the first concern. My husband Rick led the way in his car; my friend Kristin walked beside Scout and me; Pat walked beside Janice and Pete who came along to make sure Scout would be comfortable; and my friend Jen (again, the trusted groom) drove at the back with her four ways flashing. I was trying really hard not to be nervous because I wanted to make sure I was enjoying every moment – so whenever I'd start getting serious butterflies I made sure to channel those emotions into excitement. We were a bit tardy with our arrival (again, you always have to prepare for the unexpected) so my coach was waiting for us at the end of the driveway when we finally arrived. As soon as I saw her my nervous/excited energy completely intensified.

The Mane Bit

RTBC: *It's your very first show so you really don't know what to expect, and now you're running a little behind. How did you pull it together?*

Karen: It just became sink or swim. I think we had less than 15 minutes from the time I stepped onto the driveway until I had to be in the show ring. I threw my jacket on, someone clipped Scouts number on her bridle; someone else wiped down my boots and that was it – off I went to the warm up ring. I found that to be the most intimidating part of the day, because you enter an arena where riders of all different levels are trying to warm up their horse. Coaches are hanging out in the centre, riders are passing you in opposite directions, some are walking, some are cantering, people are calling out to pass – it's all quite chaotic. Thankfully my horse was already warmed up from the hack, because I think I got two laps in before Carolyn told me I was on deck.

RTBC: *Finally, everything you worked for comes down to this moment. How did your first class go?*

Karen: It was nothing short of disastrous. I didn't leave enough time to familiarize myself with the ring, so I got off to a really bad start. I misread the entry gate and ended up doing my halt/salute in the wrong spot. I could hear the judge screaming to me, but she was too far away for me to make out what she was saying. Carolyn was yelling to me (as my caller) to halt and salute at 'X' – but thinking I had already done it you can imagine how confused I was. It's not like you can stop and ask to start over again, so I just had to keep going. I was so confused at this point that I literally turned in the wrong direction even though I had a caller! That forced the judge to blow the whistle (or in this case a fog horn) which, in turn, caused Scout to spook a little – and then the judge starts screaming at me that I need to listen to my caller and pay attention! I more or less finished the test just going through the motions instead of really trying to ride the horse.

RTBC: *That sounds awful – you must have been devastated!*

Karen: That's the funny thing about it. You'd figure I would have wanted to crawl in a hole and never come out, but I was beaming with

pride and couldn't wipe the smile off my face. I felt a great sense of accomplishment that I got through my first ever test. Plus, it's not like you get to sit there and feel sorry for yourself if it goes poorly, the show must go on. I don't think anything could have brought me down on that day. If anything, it was a huge motivator for my next class. I was determined and I wanted redemption. I knew we could do so much better.



RTBC: *I'm dying to hear how the second test went...*

Karen: We knocked it out of the park. Scout was totally focused and from the moment we were on deck I could feel that she was just as determined as I was to go in there and do her job. I actually *rode* her this time and felt like I was really competing. It took everything I had after my final halt/salute not to scream with joy at the top of my lungs. Even though I had no idea how we would ultimately place, I felt like I had just won an Olympic gold medal. As I exited the ring I saw all the gang cheering and clapping . . . it was just such a great feeling.

RTBC: *So how did you place overall?*

Karen: There were 13 riders in each class. I was 12th place in 'Test A' which you might consider second last, but some pony got disqualified so you can do the math on that one. We actually got a 4th place ribbon for Test B. As funny as it sounds, I couldn't be happier with how the day went. I actually felt fortunate to have had both a really good and really bad experience, because it helps you to understand what showing is all about.

The Mane Bit



RTBC: *What's the most important lesson you've learned from all this?*

Karen: Definitely the importance of team work. You think when you enter a horse show it's just you and your horse, but it really takes a small village to get you there. When I think back to that day, it wouldn't have been possible without Geoff, Pat, Carolyn, the two Jens, Janice & Pete, Kristen, Rick and my fellow 'sacred Thursday' group for encouraging me along the way. That's a lot of people when you consider it was just a Thursday night student hacking down the road for two Walk/Trot tests at Blue Star! I think it speaks volumes about the kind of place that Harrogate is not only as a riding school but as a community. The people there are so amazing and I'm really proud to be a part of it.

RTBC: *Now that it's all over and you've had time to reflect, do you think you'd ever enter another show?*

Karen: In a hoofbeat.



Scout – at the end of the day!

HARROGATE HORSES

There has been interest expressed in the history attached to the inhabitants of the barn so here, in alphabetical order, are some of their stories. As there is not room for 36 stories in one edition this will have to be continued next time.



Atticus Finch is a chestnut quarter horse gelding. He was born in 1991 and joined Harrogate Hills in the summer of 2002 at the same time as Boo Radley and Scout. (If you have ever read To Kill a

Mockingbird, or seen the movie, you will notice the theme naming.) He still has a special relationship with Scout and they can often be seen hanging out together in the big field.



Babe is a privately owned bay thoroughbred mare with the show name **Hidden Play**. She was born in 1991. Her owner Mandy van Veen wanted Babe to have a good home at Harrogate Hills while she spends time training Babe's foal. (Mandy also used to own Heather). Babe has shown in Jumper shows. She is now used as a school horse.



Benedict, more commonly known as **Ben**, is a chestnut Arab gelding born in 1997. He came to Harrogate the day Pope Benedict took office – hence the name!

Ben is generally easy going but appears to have some issues with the noise of a slippery jacket rubbing against itself! This year Rebecca has successfully taken him away to shows – they won a first place ribbon at Pause Awhile in September.

The Mane Bit



Petite Bijou is a bay thoroughbred mare, born in 1979 – she will soon be thirty years old! She is owned by the Benson family who used to live just south of the farm on McCowan Road. They have now moved to

Calgary and often come back to visit Bijou who continues to give confidence to many children as they learn to ride, even though she is now blind in one eye. Jennifer Benson used to ride Bijou in dressage, show jumping and cross-country events.



Buttercup is a palomino quarter horse x saddlebred gelding born in 1990. His show name is **Mellow Yellow** - he is often just called **Butter**.

Robyn MacFarlane rides him and has shown him at the Markham Fair. He is always happy to accept a carrot from anyone passing by his stall.



Cash Job is a bay Standardbred gelding, born in 1998. He came to Harrogate from Scott Salverson, the farrier, who used to race him. He retired from racing, after one win, and is now settled into his new job teaching

people to ride. He has great character and many people love him. The jury is out, but he could possibly be the cutest horse in the world. He doesn't seem to realise he is quite a small horse and would dearly love to be in charge of his field, however he does have some competition for that coveted position. He is big brother to Zoom.

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