



# The Mane Bit

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

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**WHO HAD THE MOST FUN AT THE HORSE SHOW ON MAY 25?**



We hope everyone had fun! Many thanks to everyone who helped to make the day a success – the horses, the riders, those talented people who braided manes, the essential people who mucked out the stalls, the photographers, the fans and the human pylons. It would not have happened without you!



## A HARROGATE ROMANCE!



On Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup> Erin Follett and Jon Harper were married at Kortright Conservation Area.

Many of you will know Erin, who owns Glory and Cirrus, and will have seen her with Jon and their two dogs Hannah and Boots. It was a great day – the weather and bugs co-operated, but the birds were another story!

Congratulations to both of you, may you have a long and happy life together!

### QUIZZ #1

1. Do horses sleep lying down?
2. What is a farrier?
3. Can ponies smell well?
4. Do horses have muscles in their lower legs?
5. What are the horse's 4 paces?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 8

## Newsletter

### The Most Amazing New Dressage Test for Horses Unsuitable to Become Anything (1974)

#### The Test:

1. A. Enter at ordinary serpentine.
2. X. Sprawl. Salute.
3. C. Stop dead. Stare in horror at judge and shy to left. Continue at ordinary working gallop.
4. E. Stagger left 20 or 15 or 22 meters in diameter circle or pear shape or five pointed star.  
Avoid excessive crossing of legs.
5. K. Begin to halt.
6. Z. Keep trying.
7. F. You can do it.
8. B. Pulley rein. Give up. Continue at out of hand gallop.
9. H. Regain right stirrup. Continue at ordinary trot. Bouncing.
10. MKT Change rein. Free walk loose reins. Remove horse from judge's luncheon table. Ask judge for leg up. Jump back into ring.
11. Z. Turn down centre line. Halt. Grin. Scratch. Burst into tears. Leave area at free walk on long reins, loose language.

### History of the Amazing New Dressage Test

There used to be dressage classes "For Horses Suitable to Become a Dressage Horse". Almost every dressage person in the English-speaking world has giggled over this test, it has become an anonymous classic. Hardly anybody knows where it came from. Karyn Curtis and Joanna MacDonald know. They wrote it. Here's the story:

In May 1974 some Spiritwood riders went to the OADG Spring Dressage Show at Copanspin Farm in Dunrobin. There was Lorraine MacDonald, with her TBX mare Baska, Big Sue MacMillan with her 3-year-old Quarter Horse,

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Flyer; and me, Joanna MacDonald, with my 5-year-old grey mare, Azteca, known to her friends as Tattie. It was our first dressage show ever in our lives – except for Lorraine, who had been in just one. A bunch of little kids came to help; Karyn was one of them. It turned out to be The Dressage Show from Hell. The rain came down in buckets all day without stopping. The show was held in the indoor arena with no place to warm up. We were up to our knees in mud outside. The ramp of the truck got slippery. The horses went crazy and we didn't get any ribbons.

We finally got home, soaking, shivering, miserable and disgusted. The word dressage was enough to make us throw up. We all sat around the kitchen table. Lorraine, her husband, Angus, Sue and me and a lot of little kids. There was also, I remember, a bottle of wine. And we got silly and we wrote The Amazing New Dressage Test to express what we had just been through.

It went, anonymously, into the OADG Newsletter; then it went into the OVH Pony Club Newsletter, the the Corinthian (now Horse Sport) picked it up; then the Chronicle printed it; then, over the next ten years, it went into many regional U.S. dressage newsletters, to England, to California, back to Canada via Vancouver, and it's still traveling. Horse and Country printed it and, I ask you to believe, a friend sent it to me from Yellowknife, NWT, saying "Isn't this the funniest thing you ever read, who do you think wrote it?"

Do you want to know what happened to the cast of characters? Flyer was sold as a hunter/eventer and was re-named Cashel and, when I last heard, was still in retirement in Oxford Mills. Tattie achieved a respectable Medium 2/3 and ended her days as a shool horse here at Spiritwood, teaching about a million people how to do shoulder-in. I don't know what became of Baska – I last saw her picture in a tack ad for a Toronto store, modeling a blanket. Big Sue MacMillan went back to Edmonton and married a dairy farmer and has two children. The little kids all grew up; ponies were replaced by horses, horses by

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university, careers, husbands. Karyn came back to Spiritwood. I never left. Lorraine MacDonald is an FEI Dressage Judge for Canada!

**Editors note:** *This just proves that shows are not always successful, in every way, for everyone involved. There are some Harrogate Hills dressage stories:*

- *Willie almost jumped over the judge's desk at a dressage show*
- *In Legacy's first test he did a wonderful job until it was time to canter, when he jumped out of the ring*
- *Heather Woods once took an Appaloosa to a dressage show and was made to wait out of sight, round the corner of the barn, so as not to lower the tone.*
- *All experiences, however they turn out, can be counted as learning experiences!*

*Look out for a new line of Harrogate Hills clothing – be one of the first to model these hot items!*

### QUIZZ #2

1. What is the difference between a pony and a horse?
2. Are Shetlands the smallest breed of horse?
3. Can horses swim?
4. What is a roached mane?
5. Is a 'sire' male or female?

**Answers on Page 8**

## THE HORSE WITH NO NAME

By Janice Carroll

*(This should be required reading for anyone considering buying a horse)*

Late last summer I decided that I was ready for another horse. Scarlet has been gone since April 2004, and I wanted one of my own again. I figured that it would be a simple process. Fall is supposed to be a great time to buy a horse as prices tend to drop once the show season is over and sellers don't want to have to keep extra horses over the winter. I waited for the RCMP auction as it had been four years since the last one and I had always thought that the RCMP horses were the epitome of what a great horse should be; big, brave, calm, and beautiful. Thanksgiving weekend, off I go to Ottawa with a moral support team of my mother and Janet Dalby (and my step father who really isn't a fan of the horse but didn't want to miss a good road trip.) I brought what I thought was plenty of money but the bidding for the three year old geldings started at \$20,000, and they were sold for close to \$35,000 – I didn't even get to raise my bidder's card. The 2007 RCMP horse auction made more money than they were hoping for and almost twice as much as the previous auction – just my luck! That's OK; I mean how hard can it be to find a young Warmblood gelding?

Upon my return from Ottawa, I started checking online at all the usual sites, and there were a lot of Warmbloods listed in my price range. One of my first calls was to a place in Stouffville that had a "Spectacular Warmblood Gelding" for sale. I eagerly called Nancy Patterson, but to my chagrin, the spectacular horse had just turned two in June. What would I do with a two year old all winter? I wanted something that I could ride today, so I filed the information away and started again. I sent e-mail after e-mail and made call after call. You'd be surprised at how many "Warmbloods" are actually off the track Thoroughbreds, or heaven forbid draft crosses (sorry Tobias, while you may be lovely, a Warmblood you are not!) I called about a five year old Holsteiner gelding near Caledon. Katherine was selling him as she had just had a baby and didn't have time for him. Off I go to meet the second coming of Grandpa – and I wasn't disappointed, Cyrus was a big bay with a big white star, and he seemed very friendly. Katherine rode him first and he seemed nice enough so I got on and rode him walk, trot, and canter in both directions. He was a little lazy but pretty nice. We took his tack off (at

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this point I noticed the swayed back) and free jumped him. What a jump! Now I was in love and had to rush to get the vet out to check him before someone else bought him. Dr. Potter was nice enough to fit me in a couple of days later, and Pat agreed to come as well, to be the voice of reason. I got there first and we brought Cyrus in from the field and put him in his stall. While we were waiting for the vet, I asked if I could take him out and groom him – I believe that Pat arrived sometime between him trying to kick me, and trying to bite Katherine. Pat commented on his "Pig Eye" but tactfully didn't tell me that I had lost my mind. Dr. Potter's life flashed before my eyes as he was doing flexion tests on the horse – every time he let go, the horse would try to kick him (they must teach agility in veterinary school.) The horse seemed a little sore in the stifle on one side. This could have been explained by the fact that we had made him work harder than he had in months when I tried him out a few days earlier, but Dr. Potter suggested x-rays. I accompanied him to his truck to get the supplies and asked what the x-rays would show – if it was a sore stifle, or an injury would the x-ray be definitive? He said that he wanted to give me a reason not to buy the horse as he was afraid that he'd end up hurting someone really badly. We'll that was a good enough reason for me, so we didn't x-ray, and off I went determined to try to annoy a horse on my own the next time around before paying a vet to do it for me.

Over the next couple of months, I tried out different horses every week, sometimes as many as four but nothing I tried came close to what I wanted – was it really that hard to buy a horse? Was I being too picky? Pat came with me on one journey to Flamborough. There were breeders there that cross Clydesdales, Thoroughbreds, and Hackneys and apparently produce very nice, athletic horses. There we met Wyatt, a very sweet gelding who had had a rough start in life and as a result would tremble and quiver his lip when someone new went to get on him (ahhh.) Once on his back he was a different horse, very brave and very responsive. This one got Pat's seal of approval, and so we left with me promising to come back and ride him again. Over the next month, I rode him six to ten times and accompanied them to two shows with him. Now I was ready for Dr. Potter, there would be no surprises this time. Barb had a CD of x-rays taken of Wyatt from a year ago, so I dropped those off to Dr. Potter to look over before coming out to the farm. Dr. Potter called a few days later and when

he began the call with “Well, I have a bit of a concern...” my heart sank. Wyatt had a spavin in one hock that while not uncommon in an older horse that has done a lot of work, is more unusual in a five year old, that had done next to nothing. Sometimes spavins amount to nothing, and sometimes they can be troublesome (a spavin is what ended the career of Toby, Pat’s eventer.) Because I wanted a horse to keep, I decided to continue my search.

Again back to the ads. Getting on a new horse has never been my favourite thing; I could never be a pick up rider. I have to say that, by December, I was pretty much over that – riding three to four different horses every week tends to do that to you. I was getting pretty good at knowing what I didn’t want in a horse – sometimes I wouldn’t even get on them. By the middle of December I had found an agent that sells horses on consignment. I told Nicole what I was looking for and she agreed to help. She had one horse in Owen Sound that was a German Thoroughbred who couldn’t race because he had a slight roar. While I had been adamant that I was looking for a Warmblood, not a Thoroughbred, she convinced me to go. Well, I had never seen a German Thoroughbred before but Portos certainly looked and acted very different from an American Thoroughbred. A couple of rides later and again it’s time for the vet. Because of the horse’s location it was easier and less expensive to trailer him to Harrogate for the pre-purchase exam. If he passed, he’d stay, if he didn’t then they’d trailer him back. Dr. Potter arrived at the barn a couple of hours after the horse and started with the flexion tests – joking that he hoped that the third time would be the charm! The flexion tests went well, and he brought him in the barn to do the physical exam. He commented on the roar but said that it was minimal and shouldn’t be a problem with what I wanted to do. He said that everything looked good and asked me if I wanted x-rays, we debated, and he suggested that we do feet and hocks as he would feel really badly if something turned up in six months that we should have seen now. When the x-rays were complete, he asked me to sit down at the computer so that he could show me (I started to get that sinking feeling again.) On both front feet, the lamina was damaged, and on the left front, the coffin bone had actually pushed through the lamina and broken off nearly a third of the coffin bone. Dr. Potter believes that Portos had foundered about six months previously, and would likely be completely lame by the spring and certainly done if he ever

foundered again. I didn’t know if I should cry or throw up, 2007 certainly wasn’t my year.

Sometime over the Christmas holidays, Pat and I were talking about my horrible luck with horses – I’m not sure which of us was feeling worse. I had spent a lot of my hard earned “horse fund” on vet bills without getting anything in return. We talked about the advantage of maybe looking at a horse that hadn’t been started yet – a lot of the three to six year olds that I was looking at had been started poorly and were already wrecked. I jokingly said that the “Spectacular Warmblood Gelding” in Stouffville was now getting to be closer to three than two. She asked what happened to him, but I didn’t know. The last time I had spoken to Nancy was in October. That night, I went home and tried to find him on-line. He wasn’t listed anymore but because I am quite organized (some might call it anal,) I had printed and kept every listing from every horse I had looked at. You should see that pile of paper. I called Nancy and left a message reminding her of our previous conversations and asked if the horse had sold. She called a few days later and said that he hadn’t sold but that she was planning on listing him again in the spring. I made arrangements to go and visit Nugget the following week. When I arrived, she showed me this big, dark, hairy, two and a half year old that wouldn’t stand still for long. He seemed nice enough but didn’t really know how to pick up his feet – he would try to shake them out of your hand. We led him outside and he was really nice (they do say that you ride the horse you lead,) and Nancy chased him around the field a bit so that I could see him move. Again, he seemed nice, but I was out of my element, how do I evaluate a horse that I can’t ride? I asked to see Nugget’s mother - Nancy had bred her to the Hanoverian stallion Goldrush in the hopes of getting a grey filly to keep for herself. When Nugget came out she decided to sell him as she didn’t want a gelding. Sierra was truly lovely, sweet as can be, so there was hope. I told Nancy that I would like Pat to look at Nugget as I had no experience with two year olds. We made arrangements to come back the following Sunday and Pat, Janet, Claire, and I all went back to look at Nugget and see Nancy try to lunge him (she had only tried this once before.) Well, the attempt at lunging was anything but pretty. At one point, the line got wrapped around his front leg and we all held our breath as Nancy went to untangle him and in the process got him on the head with the lunge whip – obviously the horse wasn’t easily spooked!

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We brought him back to the barn and I showed Pat what he was like with his feet. She said that he seemed like a young horse that didn't know what you wanted him to do, that there didn't seem to be anything mean about him at all. With Pat's approval, I called the vet Monday morning. According to his office Dr. Potter had just left for New Zealand and wouldn't be back for a month. Now what? Well, we wouldn't have a stall available at Harrogate for four to six weeks, and I was thinking more and more about this VERY green horse and not sure if I could do it all. I called Jim Young at Velvet Lane Training Centre to inquire about his fees for working a horse at your barn versus his and to see if he had space. He had just moved a horse so he had a stall open, and it made more sense to have the horse at his place where he could work with him continuously rather than just coming over for an hour a day. I decided that if Dr. Pownall of McKee-Pownall Equine Services did farm visits, then I would use him to do the pre-purchase exam. We trailered Nugget to Jim's place on Monday, February 18, and had the vet booked for Tuesday morning. When I arrived at Jim's on Tuesday, Nugget was standing perfectly still in the cross ties while Jim picked out his feet. I had to do a double take, how could Jim have done that in less than 24 hours? Apparently he had also practiced flexion tests and lunged him the night before so that it would be easier for the vet.

My great luck was continuing, the weather had gone from mild to extremely cold overnight, and everything was a sheet of ice. Dr. Pownall couldn't do the exam, and asked if we could trailer the horse to the clinic the next day. I arrived at the clinic first and reminded the vet that the horse had been barely handled, had never been in an arena, and would most likely need to be sedated to be x-rayed. Dr. Pownall had a vet tech and assured me that between the two of them and Jim they'd be able to see what they needed.

The trailer arrives, and while I watch, holding my breath, Jim leads a perfectly calm horse off the trailer and into the clinic. Nugget looked around, and at the ceiling when the ventilation kicked on, but stood perfectly still for the physical exam. We then walked over to the arena and Nugget did his flexion tests like a pro, and he even lunged walk, trot, and canter in both directions. I assured Dr. Pownall that I was not out of my mind; this was not the same horse he had been 48 hours earlier. We opted to fluoroscope Nugget instead of x-ray as it was more economical and provided more

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information. While I held my breath and refused to make eye contact or touch the horse for fear that he too would be going back home, Dr. Pownall said over and over again that he was a nice horse, one of the nicest young ones that he'd seen in a long time. I told him that I'd acknowledge that if the horse passed, and that I was trying hard not to get my hopes up again.

Well, as you've probably figured out by now, Nugget passed everything with flying colours, and I paid Nancy for him that afternoon. Jim put a saddle on him the next day, and got on him the day after that. Nugget arrived at Harrogate Hills the first week of April, and Jim still helps me work with him once a week. Nugget has taken everything pretty much in stride. He can be a little stubborn at times and still likes to put everything in his mouth (please don't hand feed him.) All in all though, he is turning out to be exactly what I was looking for; big, brave, calm, and beautiful.

The moral of the story ... If you're looking for a horse, keep looking until you get what you want, they're out there (maybe in the first place you looked,) and do the pre-purchase exam. It's better to spend the money on the vet than lose a horse six months after you get it.



Nugget – at last!

## A TALE OF TALES

A horse's tail is very important to him. Not only does it act as a fly swatter in summer, it keeps his "bottom" warm in winter! The area between a horse's hind legs is the only part not kept warm by hair, so it loses the greatest amount of warmth if left exposed by too much trimming.

From a horse's point of view, the best tail is a natural tail.

Some horses have thin ragged tails, while others have tails so thick they cannot be braided for formal riding events and shows. To make the best of their appearance, thick or thin, different tails are treated in different ways. Some styles even go in and out of fashion!



**Banged Tail**

A "banged" tail is cut straight across the bottom to give it a neat appearance. It makes a scraggly tail look thicker.



**Natural Tail**

The natural tail is left thick and long if possible. **(It's the horse's favourite style!)**

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**Docked Tail**

**Often inflicted on harness horses to prevent their tails being caught up in the harness. Tail docking is illegal in many places as it's considered cruel.**



**Pulled Tail**

**The hair around the dock area, at the top, is pulled out to give the tail a more refined look. Show horses often have pulled tails.**



**Braided Tail**

The tail is first thinned at the top and then braided neatly around the dock for showing. Both manes and tails are usually braided for hunter classes.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Horses will often stand "tail to tail" and shelter each other from annoying flies by swishing their tails for each other!

Some breeds are renowned for their tails. For example Appaloosa's often have sparse (thin), tails while Friesians and Morgans are known for their long luxuriant tails.

As well as using them for fly swatters, horses use their tails to send signals to each other about how they are feeling.

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

**QUIZZ ANSWERS**

**QUIZZ #1**

1. Horses generally sleep standing up, but spend some time lying down if they feel safe enough.
2. A farrier is a person who shoes and trims horses' feet.
3. Horses and ponies have a very good sense of smell.
4. No, horses do not have muscles in their lower legs.
5. The four basic paces of a horse are: walk, trot, canter and gallop.

**QUIZZ #2**

1. A pony measures 14.2 hands and under, while a horse is over 14.2 hands high.
2. Falabellas from Argentina are the smallest breed of horse.
3. Yes, horses can swim. Many really enjoy the water!
4. A roached (or hogged) mane is one which has been shaved off.
5. A sire is always a male horse. He is the father.



Do you know anything about horses' teeth? See what YOU can find out and let us know so that we can include it in the next edition of *The Mane Bit*.

**Have you noticed the new window in the west door of the arena? Many thanks, once again, to Rob Hooper**

**TIME ON YOUR HANDS THIS SUMMER?**

There are plenty of horse related books you can read – or movies you can watch. I suggest you read the book first and then, if you liked it enough, watch the movie and see if the story is portrayed the way you imagined when you read it.

Some long time favorites are:

- |                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Black Beauty           | Sea Biscuit              |
| The Black Stallion     | National Velvet          |
| My Friend Flicka       | Running Free             |
| The Saddle Club series | The Man from Snowy River |

**THINKING ABOUT SEPTEMBER**

In order to help Pat plan ahead, and to ensure that you ride at a convenient time to you, if you have not already done so, please take a moment to complete the following and leave it in the box in the Lounge.

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

My 1st choice would be to ride on:

- |          |         |           |
|----------|---------|-----------|
| Monday   | Tuesday | Wednesday |
| Thursday | Friday  | Saturday  |

My 2nd choice would be to ride on:

- |          |         |           |
|----------|---------|-----------|
| Monday   | Tuesday | Wednesday |
| Thursday | Friday  | Saturday  |

Please circle the appropriate days.

Thank you for your co-operation.