



The Mane Bit

www.harrogatehills.com

905-473-3847

Spring 2009

EXPERIENCE IT!

On Sunday, January 22nd, Harrogate Hills hosted its first "Experience It!" event. The goal was to open our doors to some new faces and give them a glimpse into what life is like at Harrogate. The day was a huge success with over 150 people braving the cold.

Our visitors participated in fun activities including roasting marshmallows on the open fire, an outdoor obstacle course, a mini riding lesson, the chance to groom a horse and a timed stall mucking event – tennis balls were cunningly concealed in the stall and had to be found and thrown into a wheelbarrow using a pitchfork!

All participants were provided with a passport which was stamped on completion of each activity; at the end of the day these were drawn from the ballot box to determine the winners for the following prizes:

- **2 Grand Prizes:** 4 riding lessons (group) or 2 (private) lessons at **Harrogate Hills**; \$10 gift certificate from **All About Equine**; Matted Photo of a Harrogate horse, greeting card and gift/reusable bags from Christine Bennis Photography; Horse books, toys and posters from **Scholastic Books Canada**.
- **4 Prizes** consisting of all the above except for the riding lessons

THE GRAND PRIZE WINNERS WERE **OLIVIA FREEBURY AND THE GUILLET FAMILY.**

Carissa Graham's sharp mind won her the Trivia Challenge prize. **Emma** was quick on her feet, completing the Obstacle Course in a record breaking 30.16 seconds. **Shannon** left us all in awe when she whipped through the Muck-a-Stall event in only 1 minute and 34 seconds (Shannon, please report for work as soon as possible).

- **All participants** present at the time of the draw received a horse book from **Scholastic Books Canada**.

The climax of the day was a musical ride – always a favourite with the crowd!

Many thanks to all of you who came and 'experienced it', and of course a huge thank you to all of you in the Harrogate Hills family who were able to help out and show everyone just how much fun we have! A very special thank you to **Christine Bennis** whose great organization skills and hard work made the day such a success!



DO YOU BELIEVE IN FAIRIES?



Yes! The Tractor Fairy recently paid a visit to Harrogate Hills and, with the help of some dedicated fathers it is up and running and doing a fantastic job of harrowing the arena which has never looked so big and well groomed. Stand by for more exciting times when we hope the tractor will be persuaded to dig post holes and bush hog the uneaten weeds in the paddocks.

Very many thanks to the Tractor Fairy and to the expertise provided by all the fathers who seemed easily diverted from admiring their talented children on horseback!



'GOOD AS NEW' SALE

There was a "Good as New" stall at Experience It. All proceeds went to **Save A Horse** (a charity). The following are some of the items left over. If you are interested in anything please take it from the bag in the Lounge as soon as possible and leave a donation in the box provided.

- **Black Half Chaps** (3 pairs: size small & 2 adult medium))
- **Fleece Riding Pants** (medium child)
- **Kerrits Shell Pants**, burgundy (Size 5)
- **Green Riding Pants**, full seat (Size 34)
- **Tan Riding Pants** (size 32)
- **White Golf Shirt** – new! (Youth XL)
- **Brown Suede Half Chaps** (medium adult)
- **Dark Green Suede Full Chaps** (Regular length)
- **Short Black Winter Riding Boots** (size 2 and 5)
- **Tall Rubber Boots** (size 2)
- **Short Brown Leather Boots** (size 2)
- **Black Vest** (child size 8)
- **Boot Jack**
- **Green Winter Pants** – fleece lined (child size 10)
- **Green Pants** (size 24)
- **Child's Ball Cap** – black
- **Nike Spring Jacket**, green (youth, 14)
- **And More . . .!**



Oatmeal Molasses Cookies

2 cups oatmeal (dry).
1/2 Cup grated carrots
3 tablespoons molasses
1/2 cup brown sugar
Combine all these ingredients. Add enough water to make into soft dough. Stir well.
Put into oven on 365 degrees until golden brown and crisp.

Yummy Molasses Treats

3 Carrots chopped into small pieces
3 apples cut into small pieces
Cup of oatmeal
Molasses - the more the better!

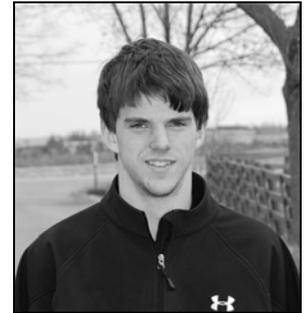
Drench cut up carrots and apples in molasses
Roll molasses covered carrots and apples into oats.
Put in refrigerator and serve to your horse after working him - the horse must be cooled off completely first!



MARCH BREAK



Jenn Hooper



Nick Clulow

You may have been skiing or lounging on a beach down south but at Harrogate Hills some of the students came out for extra lessons taught by aspiring instructors Jenn Hooper and Nick Clulow. Jenn and Nick were supervised and critiqued by Pat and Gerry, who were running the clinic, to ensure the Harrogate standards are maintained.

Pat and Gerry were both impressed by the teaching skills displayed by Jenn and Nick and we look forward to their future contributions to the riding school.

WE'RE NOT OLD! WE'RE JUST IN
OUR THIRD HALF OF OUR LIFE!



HORSE SHOWS

Keep your eyes and ears open for information about upcoming horse shows!

A COP IN THE SADDLE

Sergeant Howie Peers was a member of the Toronto Police force for thirty years. Thirteen of these years were spent in the Mounted Unit where he patrolled and taught new recruits. Howie was kind enough to take the time for the following interview. He is now retired and lives just east of Mount Albert with his wife, Joanne, and two thoroughbred horses, Luke and Jenny.

What made you choose this career?

I chose policing because I was a 19 year old guy who wanted to work outside and get involved in a lot of action. At 19 you really don't know what you want but I felt it would be an adventure. I worked in a police car for 5 years and then saw the Mounted Unit in action a couple of times and transferred there.

Why ride under those scary circumstances?

Although riding into a violent crowd is somewhat dangerous, when done properly it is much safer than policing the same crowd on foot. A man on horseback is worth at least ten men on foot and basically it is a great way to deal with crowds.

Were you a policeman or rider first?

I rode when I was a kid but nothing serious. We would catch a neighbour's mare and tie a piece of binder twine to each side of her halter and, two at a time, would ride her until she bucked us off (we usually both fell at the same time). When I was transferred to the Mounted Unit I went on the fifteen week basic course and this began my formal training.

What are the selection criteria?

When I was running the training I looked for good police officers who were not afraid of horses. I found that people with extensive English or Western riding backgrounds were too busy trying to tell me how they would approach situations in light of their prior experience and were quickly surpassed by officers who had no experience before the basic course. A reasonable fitness requirement was also necessary although

poorly conditioned officers generally could not take the physical work and excused themselves from the program part way through.

Tell me about the training.

The first two weeks of the training consisted of 50% theory and 50% riding. The only day on the course without riding was the first day when equipment was issued and grooming and mucking out etc. was taught. After week two the course is basically 100% riding with the class going out on to the street some time after the 10th week, depending on the ability of the class.

I taught basic balanced riding. I taught students to ride from their seat to their leg to a collecting hand. Development of a deep seat with a long leg was the goal.

Describe a typical work day

A typical day for an officer would consist of muck out, grooming, three hours of riding on the street, lunch and then three more hours on the street.

Horses work about 5 days per week and may be ridden 6 hours per day. When on patrol, this is almost all at the walk.

These schedules applied to all seasons.

Do horses and riders develop a special relationship or do they change horses regularly?

Experienced officers are assigned their own mount. They may ride other horses from time to time. New riders do what is called "riding spare" and ride horses whose regular rider is on a day off or annual leave. All officers develop a special bond with their assigned mounts.

Did you know Brigadier?

I didn't know the Brigadier that was killed. I had transferred off of the unit well before he arrived. I did ride another Brigadier, years ago. The names of the horses are often reissued when a horse is retired. Especially if it is a Military name.

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How long does it take to train the horses? What is the success rate?

Basic training of a horse takes about 6 months. More for some but that would be approximate. I spent about twelve years at the unit and in that time I think only a handful didn't work out.

The RCMP have their own breeding program - where did you get your horses from?

The horses are purchased from farms in Southern Ontario.

Apart from being big and bomb proof what would you look for in a horse? Geldings preferred?

Over the years I was involved in buying the horses, I never bought a mare. As horses retired I replaced them with grade horses, Clyde or Percheron as the predominate breed. The odd Belgian cross was also bought over time. It was important for each horse to carry heavy bone to stand up to all the walking on asphalt.

What were your best/worst experiences?

I can't think of a worst experience, but I was involved in a Van Halen concert at Maple Leaf Gardens that turned sour when a thousand people without tickets tried to crash the front door and get in. We had four horses there and enjoyed great success with the crowd.



Sergeant Howie Peers (right) ready to take on the football fans at Stamford Bridge (notice the horse on the left has chain reins which are less easily cut with a knife)

Tell me about your overseas experience

I worked overseas for just under a month with the Metropolitan London Police Mounted Unit. The training was put on by their unit to get ready for the Notting Hill Carnival held in August each year. This festival is the largest Caribana in the world with several million people involved in a long weekend. During the course I was involved in policing a football match at Stamford Bridge Stadium involving Chelsea and Everton Football Clubs. The aftermath was very busy with dozens of people arrested and two local pubs closed and cleared out.

I also lead the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace. The London Mounted Unit leads the Grenadier Guards in this event and I was the first Canadian to do this. A year later a trainer from the RCMP was allowed to do the same.



WHO'S THE BOSS?

In any group of horses, whether there are two or two hundred animals, there is always a pecking order in the herd hierarchy. The Gypsies have a theory that you can tell by pushing on the nose of the horse – if the horse refuses to budge or pushes back as you press on his muzzle he may be dominant, one who backs up or gives and flexes at the poll is often more submissive.

After closely observing how the group interact over important issues such as food it is possible to get some idea of who is at the top and bottom of the herd.

One thing is for sure – the size of the horse has nothing to do with being “the boss”. This was recently brought to our attention when Hollywood came to Harrogate and was introduced into the field with Glory, Cirrus, Asia and Pebbles. The theory was that the two ponies, Pebbles and Hollywood, would bond and hang out together. Glory has always been in charge of the group with Cirrus as her sidekick. When it was time to bring them into the barn for their afternoon feed Glory would always come to the gate first, closely followed by Cirrus. Remember, Glory stands about 15.3 hh and Cirrus is an impressive 17.1 hh while Hollywood stands a diminutive 12 hh.



(One hand is 4 inches, 10 cm, measured from the ground to the top of the withers.)



Hollywood and Cirrus on Day 1

The day Hollywood arrived there was the usual concern as to how he would get on and the fervent hope that he would not suffer too much in the initiation process. Imagine the surprise when the second afternoon he was found standing calmly at the gate, in what he obviously considered to be his rightful place, ready to come out first while Glory gnashed her teeth and threatened . . . from a safe distance! Rest assured, Hollywood does not behave like this with people.



Hollywood asserting his authority over Glory

In the big field Tobias is at the top of the pile but he is what Pat calls a Benevolent Dictator. While you rarely see him assert his authority, he has a certain confidence and presence that ensures few others challenge him. Those that do are quickly put in their place but usually only by the threat of violence. When new horses are introduced to this field he will often protect them from most of the unwelcome attention. Again, this is not a matter of size. Buster Keaton, who stood 14.2 on a good day, had the same ability to dominate the herd while rarely resorting to physical discipline.

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Kerry and Heather – just happy to be together

As with humans, the majority of the horses have grown accustomed to being in the middle of the pile. They have their own sub-groups but recognize their position in society and, as long as someone is in charge, most days pass calmly and peacefully with no up-risings in the ranks.

On the first day of creation, God created the Horse.

On the second day, God created man to serve the Horse.

On the third day, God created all the animals of the earth to spook the Horse when man was on his back.

On the fourth day, God created an honest day's work so that man could labor to pay for the keeping of the Horse.

On the fifth day, God created the grasses in the field so that Horse could eat and man could toil and clean up after the Horse.

On the sixth day, God created veterinary science to keep the Horse healthy and man broke.

On the seventh day, God rested and said "This is good. This will teach man humility. It will tire him out and keep him striving ever forward to meet the needs of the Horse."

HARROGATE HORSES



Mandy is a Thoroughbred bay mare born in 1996. She is shown here with her foal, Nellie. She has been leased by Rebecca Schweinberger for the last year and did very well at the Pause Awhile horse show.



Nemo, show name Impecunious, is a thoroughbred chestnut gelding born in 2005. He is still learning the ropes of being a school horse!



Lugor, show name Lucky Galore is owned by Vuokko Tikkannen. He is a thoroughbred, chestnut gelding who was born in 1982. He is now retired.



Nugget is owned and operated by Janice Carroll. His show name is Gold Nugget Bodes Well and he is a warmblood bay gelding, born on June 5, 2005.



Pebbles is everyone's favourite! He is the smallest Harrogate resident but is blissfully unaware of this fact!



Pete, show name Golden Dinero, is a Palomino gelding Grade Horse, born in 1994. He works hard in the school and is a pleasure to ride – once you have mastered the art of steering



Draft horses are the strongest animals in the world next to the elephant

That it is estimated that there are more than 750 million horses in the world.

That many lameness problems are misdiagnosed as a leg problem when in fact they are a back or hip problem. Never rule out the possibility that you horse is off or limping because it is his back that hurts.

That horses are basically color blind. They see black and white and some forms of shadowed outlines. They react to color as being light or dark.

That the practice of mounting a horse from the left side began in ancient Greece. Warriors always carried their weapons on their left side, which made mounting on the right side impossible.

That in the wild most foals are born at night when the herd is least likely to be on the move. This is also true of domestic foals.

That most horses are right or left handed just like people. They have a good side and a bad side. Hopefully their bad side is your good side and vice versa.

That a shoe slightly off can cause recurring neck, shoulder or back problems.

COLOUR ME!



SUMMER CAMP 2009

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FULL



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