

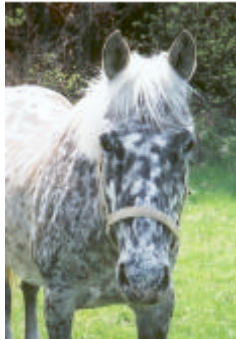


The Mane Bit

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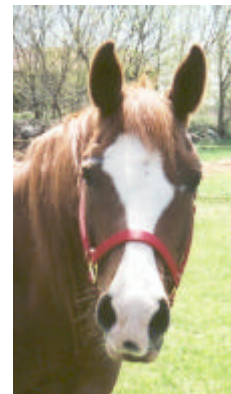
Scout is a very friendly 12 year-old leopard appaloosa mare with very distinctive coloring and we are sure she will find her way into everyone's heart.



Atticus is a 12 year-old chestnut gelding. He is quiet, can be ridden by anyone and looks very like Kerry.



Radley is a 6 year-old registered Paint gelding. He is sturdier than the other two and may need a bit of instruction himself!



Shoshana is a very pretty 12 year-old Arab mare who is being boarded at Harrogate until Jane has suitable accommodation set up for her at home.

NEW HORSES!

As you can see we have been shopping! There are four new residents in the barn, three school horses Scout, Radley and Atticus and Shoshanah who is privately owned by Jane Perlmutter. You may notice the theme involved in naming the school horses – all their names come from the book *To Kill a Mockingbird* which we recommend you should read, or rent the movie and fall in love with Gregory Peck.

TALES FROM HARROGATE

The other day someone asked why we call "DOOR!" before we enter the arena. We explained that, despite their size, horses are quite timid and that announcing your approach goes a long way in maintaining calm in the riding arena. It got me to thinking of how every now and again this simple concept seems lost, or at least misunderstood, by some very well meaning folks.

The following are two of my favorite examples:

Rain on the tin roof of an indoor arena can make a deafening sound and there is always a sense of misplaced energy when you add novice riders to the mix. On such a day a hearty "DOOR!" was heard at the main entrance to the arena.

Then "IT" entered.

I am not sure why horses find umbrellas so terrifying but it does seem to be a universal, if not primal, sort of fear. Before I could shout back "WAIT!" there appeared before me six neatly deposited children sitting on the arena floor. At the far end of the arena were six, wide-eyed, splay-legged beasts, lined up in some sort of equine panic formation. Do you ever notice how there is often a tiny window of silence after a moment like this? Before the horses start comparing horror notes by making that low, blowing sound there is silence. And for the children on the ground there is that quiet moment just before they realize that the steadfast, plodding schoolmaster they were, only moments ago, sitting astride has miraculously been replaced by some fiery, criminally insane, wild-eyed Bucephalus.

This is a very tiny window of silence of course. By the time the gentleman with the umbrella began to speak there was lots of wailing and snorting to yell over. "Wow. What's up with them?" he shouted, giving his

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umbrella one last good shake in the direction of the horses before closing it up. "Can you use a hand?" Sigh.

As we assessed the damage and realized no one was the worse for wear I tried to say, as evenly as possible, that while calling "DOOR!" was the right first step there was still the problem of this huge, glistening umbrella preceding his arrival. He cast his eyes down. I sensed I had been too harsh so I struggled to think of something to say to make him feel better. It was not necessary. He looked up and cheerfully announced that next time he would just have to yell "DOOR!" louder.

I guess I should have tried to think of it as a "teaching moment", you know, for the sake of the children. But wait, it gets better.



It was almost time for summer camp and a Sport Camp rented space in the building attached to the arena at our previous location. Not to be critical but for a "sport" camp there seemed to be a lot of machinery. Motorized baseball pitching machine, motorized rocket making, motorized tennis partner, motorized bicycles and of course the ever popular motorized ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES.

Since all of our students met their sporting needs with an unmotored means of transportation, we made a point of explaining to the tenants that, while we were not averse to progress per se, we did prefer that they kept their mechanical toys away from the horses. The expressions on their faces suggested they thought we must be Amish, although they seemed encouraged by our electric lights.

One evening I chose to put Marlene, a fairly novice rider, on a slightly more difficult horse. Kate, the horse, was kind but a little bit green and seemed to believe the shadows near the open door of the arena marked the gaping entrance to equine hell. Marlene valiantly struggled to keep her position, struggled to keep her courage up and struggled to convince Kate that, truly, there was nothing there to fear. Or so we thought.

Out of the darkness we heard a roar and then a voice yelling, even louder than the roar, "DOOR!" Next there were headlights, the roaring got louder and through the large open door careened a motorized ALL TERRAIN VEHICLE.

I am proud to say that Marlene clung to that horse the way only a desperate person on a 17.3 h.h. horse can cling, and the driver of the now stationary ATV watched in awe as Kate reached RPMs he could only dream of.

Once the dust settled and Marlene was able to slide shakily to the ground, I slowly turned to the pilot of the ATV. He seemed fearful, with a "who knew the Amish lady had a temper" sort of look on his face. However before I could begin my diatribe he squeaked "But I called DOOR!" Sigh.

I'm sure they both meant well ... 'til next time.
Pat

Did you know?

The longest ever recorded tail was measured at 6.7m long, that's 22ft

PIZZA FRIDAY



The first Pizza Friday was well attended and fun was had by all, even though Kylie, Billie and Maggie astounded us with their knowledge of equine anatomy and led the field. We will try to split them up next time.

The next Pizza Friday is scheduled for **Friday, June 6 from 7 pm to 9 pm**. We will be playing a special Harrogate Hills version of Trivial Pursuit so sharpen your competitive skills, brush up on some obscure, horsy trivialities and be sure to join us. (Maybe last month's winners will be awarded their prize too!)

Did you know?

The tallest horse ever known was called Shire Sampson then renamed Mammoth who was foaled in 1846 in Bedfordshire, UK and was a massive 21.2hh.

SUMMER RIDING

Whether you are interested in coming to Summer Camp or having lessons in July and August please avoid disappointment by making arrangements sooner rather than later.

BACK TO SCHOOL

Last week our team attended a local hunter/jumper show to support our friend Julie who was showing for the first time in a half-dozen years. It was considered a schooling show, and among the trainers busily coaching on the grounds was my former riding teacher, David. I was so pleased to see him with a new crop of students in tow, diligently giving encouragement from the arena rail, advice in the warm-up ring, and raucous rounds of applause for his students at the out-gate. I scanned his riders' mounts to look for a familiar school horse, but that was some years ago, and these too, were new faces.

School horses from all over the area participated at the show. Most of them stood out from the fancier, expensive show mounts, but they stood patiently at their trailers munching on hay, just waiting for the next rider to hop aboard.

Lesson horses have a tough job, but it is one that most of them seem to relish. They work very hard and often have long days, but many seem to like their busy schedule – so much so that you'll find quite a few lesson horses still at it into their twenties. School horses are definitely characters, forever embedded in our memories, so that even as we eventually graduate to buy our own horses, we remember how much those sessions aboard the trusty mounts helped turn us from passenger to rider. For this and so much more they deserve special praise.

So here's to High Fleet, the 13-year-old parrot mouthed Thoroughbred who I desperately wanted to own – or maybe just marry – when I was nine years old.

To Easy Does It, who was never easy, nor did he do it unless you asked the correct way.

To Peanuts, a clever feisty Shetland Pony who believed he was 16 hands tall, and taught me that if I wanted to keep my fingers, I'd lay that carrot down flat in my hand.

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To Spuds, a little gray Arabian who earned the title of allowing me more departures off his saddle than any other horse.

To Sonny, a sensitive, energetic Morgan cross who showed me that if I wouldn't cling like a tiger on her prey, he'd refrain from taking off like a trapped antelope.

To Say So, an Arabian mare with one blind eye in Cal Poly University Pomona's equine program who taught me to understand that partially sighted animals have other gifts.

To Clyde – nonchalant in his jumper days – who at 24 took me to my first rated-show ribbon.

And to Charlie, who wasn't ever a school horse, but has taught me more than any other.

We all have recollections of how we, as green riders, earned our first blue ribbon, and it was often collected from the back of a humble school horse. And we do remember that while most of these horses were not the elegant, push-button type, nor were they the most athletic creatures in the ring, to us as students of riding they were supernatural, super-wonderful equines ranking in our hearts up there with the immortals of the sport.

This article appeared in the April 2000 issue of Horse Illustrated.

Did you know?

A horse's brain weighs about 650g – over one pound.

