

The kindest treatment of the horse is gained through knowledge.

Competition advice



Zephyr, Maren & Sierra enjoying themselves at a horse show.

As our show season draws closer, I think it's natural to feel a bit of pressure especially after all the hard work and preparation to which the students of Harrogate have committed. That pressure can feel pretty amped up on the actual day.

Here's my best tip for you. Put all your emphasis on how your horse is managing. You will be amazed at how that change of focus alleviates your nerves. All of a sudden you will become less aware of your personal circumstances. In fact, you'll begin to see it from the horse's point of view. He is being dragged in on a Sunday (or taken on a trailer ride somewhere) and he has no idea what the purpose or

the goal is. He just knows everything looks different and everything looks scary. When we allow our nerves to overwhelm us, the only thing our horse will be aware of is that that the one person

he is counting on to guide him through this potentially hazardous day is no longer present and is just as afraid as he is. This makes an ultimately good performance almost impossible.

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Hannah and Savanna.

CALENDAR of EVENTS



HARROGATE HUNTER HORSE SHOW SCHEDULE

Sunday, May 3
Sunday, June 7
Sunday, October 4

OFF PROPERTY HORSE SHOW SCHEDULE

Sunday, May 31
Sunday, September 20
(both at Bellewood Equestrian)
All students are welcome to come out and cheer on the Harrogate Team.

MAKEUP LESSON

Friday, April 24

FREE INTRODUCTORY NIGHT

Monday, May 18

PHOTOGRAPHY NIGHT WITH JEN SHORT PHOTOGRAPHY

Friday, June 12

TINY TROTTERS GRADUATION CEREMONY

Saturday, June 27

SUMMER CAMP BEGINS

Tuesday, June 30

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The funny thing about changing your focus is that all of a sudden you realize ultimately, that you and your horse are competing against your previous best effort. The colour of the ribbon will seem less important as you and your horse try your best to rise to the occasion.

This is not to suggest that we should not strive to be competitive. I used to be very competitive, but I also know that the best memories I have are not the red ribbons but the moments where my horse gave me his best effort because he trusted me and I was able to

give him the confidence that, in the moment, he lacked.

P.S. Read the story on the next page and you'll discover that sometimes the biggest fiascos at horse shows provide the funniest memories!!



Holly covered in ice.



Winter is finally a memory!

Just a little shout out to our resilient riders who managed to persevere through what has felt like the LONGEST winter ever! We're sure your dedication, tenacity and hard work will pay off this summer!



The winter can create some beautiful scenes.



Dallas asking to come inside.



All bundled up.

ANECDOTES FROM A HORSE SHOW

It all started because it was Vuokko's birthday. As a gift, we had paid for her registration at a dressage show so that she could take her horse Lugor to an off-property competition. A group of our students were going and we talked Vuokko into joining us. (We probably should have talked to Lugor.)

The horses loaded well and travelled to the facility without incident. That is probably the full extent of what I can recall that went well.

It might be difficult to list everything that went wrong that day, so I'll just give you the highlights. Willie, our little off the track thoroughbred became alarmed at the white dressage fences and the absence of his friends. Being an athletic sort, he chose to resolve his anxiety by leaving the ring at 'C' and jumping over the corner of the judge's table. As you might imagine, that is a disqualifying event. After many apologies we eventually got him, the spectators and the judge settled and

returned to the trailer to retrieve Vuokko. We gave her a leg up on Lugor so that she could proceed to the warm up area but unfortunately, he was having none of it. He refused to move and finally he reared up, spun around, sat down on the hood of Russ's truck. Now Russ was working nights at that time and was fast asleep so you can only imagine how high his heart rate went when he awoke to see a wild eyed Vuokko acting like a spreadeagled alarm clock on his windshield.

We quickly determined Vuokko was okay and Russ, thankfully, seemed to have a strong heart. But we now had a loose horse on our hands. The show proprietors announced this fact over their loudspeakers as we ran around every which way trying to convince Lugor that blindly galloping full out was not going to make anything better. It felt like forever before we could catch him and again, amidst many apologies, we quietly slunk back to the trailer area.

We had only one more horse from Harrogate to go and I confess we had some high hopes for this combination.



Samantha on Gus, Meredith on Dallas being held by Meredith P.

Legacy was a Hanoverian gelding who was quite lovely to ride in his day and he really looked the part. Even though he had begun work over fences, it really seemed like dressage would be his forte. I was personally relieved that we could end on a high note.

Legacy entered the ring and made a beautiful square halt. He trotted straight up centre line, went fairly deep into his corners and kept a lovely, even rhythm. I could feel the

weight of embarrassment from the day lifting off my shoulders as Legacy reached the part of the test where the canter began. He had a beautiful transition, cantered steadily down the long side of the arena and then in perfect hunter style, with a beautiful bascule, he leaped out of the ring and continued cantering down the hill to the trailer area.

At this point I asked all the riders and helpers to remove or cover any articles of

clothing that had our logo on it!

So remember if you're worried that you're going to have the worst horse show experience ever, you can relax! We set the bar pretty high thirty-five years ago!

The ridiculousness of the day got funnier and funnier over time and even though this happened long ago, we all still fondly reminisce about the horse show from hell!

Check out our *new* Specialty Camp



The **Partnership Project** is a four-day experience spent developing a true connection with your horse and then getting to put that partnership to the test in an off-property adventure.

Space is limited to 6.

Please note: all other specialty camps are full.

harrogatehills.com/augustspecialtycamps/

APRIL'S TRIVIA QUESTION:

A horse presents with intense, painful muscle stiffness (often in the jaw and neck), seizures, trouble swallowing, fever, sweating, and a rapid heart rate.

While probably too late for a horse in this condition, what might have caused it and what could have prevented it?

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

The answer to March's Trivia Question is:



Q: What is this horse suffering from? Name three things that could have caused this.

A: The horse is suffering from laminitis which has caused a rotation of his coffin (pedal) bone.. This can have numerous causes such as endocrine disorders like cushings disease, a diet too high in starch or sugars, sepsis, colic, failure to pass all the placenta after birth, and white line disease to name a few.

The individuals listed below all had a variation of the above answers. This month's winner of a \$25 gift card from Greenhawk is **Aidan H.**

Honourable mention goes to **Marleigh B., Pax, Claire M.**

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 correctly submitted answers and one person will win a prize.
- The winner will be announced in the following month's Newsletter.



Stay tuned for unique and exciting adventures with horses, as we present new learning opportunities in our monthly newsletter that take you beyond your regular weekly lessons.



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