

## Gifts for horse-lovers are found at many sources

Most university vet schools have websites where donations may be made. Try the North Carolina State University site at [www.cvm.ncsu.edu/ncvmf/giving\\_societies.html](http://www.cvm.ncsu.edu/ncvmf/giving_societies.html). One of the features is a Walk of Honor where the donor designates a brick in the CVM Walk of Honor to tell family and friends how much they mean to you. At the same time your donation supports the teaching, health studies and service activities at the College of Veterinary Medicine. A tax-deductible contribution of \$150 or more earns you a brick in the Walk of Honor. Each brick in the walkway is a lasting testament honoring a friend – animal or human.

A contribution to the Gallop of Honor directly supports the College of Veterinary Medicine's Equine Health Program. This program brings together horse owners, veterinarians and college faculty on issues, research and advancement of horse health. A contribution of \$250 or more entitles you to a bronze, silver or gold horseshoe mounted on a handsome personalized plaque.

The plaque, engraved with your horse's name, or that of someone important in the life of your horse, will be displayed on the Gallop of Honor Wall in the CVM Large Animal Hospital. With this gift, you will be helping the college set and keep pace with the advances in equine health. You will contribute to the care and quality of life of horses throughout the Southeast and the nation.

The Florida vet school has fourteen different categories for regular gift-giving. You can give a memorial for a pet or a gift that goes toward the small animal hospital. Visit [www.ufl.edu/OnlineGiving/Vet.med.asp](http://www.ufl.edu/OnlineGiving/Vet.med.asp). You may feel that the suggested donations are beyond your reach. Though you may not see your name on a brick or a plaque, any amount is appreciated, no matter the size.

The University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine has a program where donors may buy a brick or horseshoe online to support teaching and research at the college. A link takes you to the Georgia Fund Web site where you may make a secure online gift. Visit [www.vet.uga.edu/giving/index.php](http://www.vet.uga.edu/giving/index.php).

### Artist Brian Justice paints pet portraits

For any pet or animal enthusiast, the "paw"fect holiday gift is available from Brian Justice, pet artist. By e-mailing or sending in



a photo of a pet or animal, animal lovers will be able to purchase a signed and framed portrait of their favorite four-legged, fork-tongued or furry friend.

He works from a photo (or photos) provided by the client. Prospective customers needn't worry if they don't have the perfect photo. The artist can take the head from one shot, the body from another, etc. Up to two animals and fit into one five-inch-square portrait. All types of pets can be painted. Justice has done all sorts of pets, including a horse, snake, iguana and even a hamster.

Frame sizes vary, but the end product is about 13" x 13".

Portraits are \$155, which includes the frame and a box. Shipping is an additional \$10. Shipping occurs within five days of the order being placed. He guarantees delivery within the U.S. in two weeks or less.

Justice can do custom sizes with more than two animals (the 5" x 5" size limited to two animals in a portrait), at additional cost of \$75 per animal.

For more information or to view the gallery, visit his website [www.brianjusticeart.com](http://www.brianjusticeart.com), e-mail him at [brian@brianjusticeart.com](mailto:brian@brianjusticeart.com), call 816-582-8217 or write Brian Justice Art, 5836 Harrison Street, Kansas City, MO

### America's mane attraction is the golden age of horses

With interest in horses on the rise, it's no surprise that more Americans are finally getting involved. They are taking vacations at dude ranches, going on relaxing trail rides to de-stress after work, skipping gym workouts to fulfill fitness routines on horseback, and using horses to teach kids responsibility and confidence.

"Getting involved is easier and less expensive than you might think," said Bill Brewer, executive vice president of the American Quarter Horse Association. "With our nationwide network, AQHA can connect people - regardless of interest level, age or income - with horses. It's what we do best."

Brewer mentioned several cost-effective options for enjoying horses without the cost of ownership, such as leasing, time-sharing, vacationing at a ranch or taking lessons.

AQHA is making it easier than ever to get involved by offering a gift set for \$30. The set includes a Breyer model horse, a book about American Quarter Horses and a certificate good for one free riding lesson from a local professional trainer in your area.

"This gift is an easy way to make a dream for a horse come true," Brewer said. "A lesson on a dependable breed like the American Quarter Horse is a fun and safe way to be introduced to the joy of a life with horses."

To purchase the gift set or to find out more about horses, contact AQHA at 1-877-4-A-HORSE or visit [www.4ahorse.com](http://www.4ahorse.com).

### Sunset Farm offers window decals

EZSignsOnline.com has introduced Sunset Farm window decals to its line of personal-

ized signs.

The decals are a way to add a splash of color to your car, truck or trailer. These colorful preprinted decals are four by six inches and are available in dozens of different farm related subjects, including cows, horses, farm animals, dogs and more. Prices start at \$5.95 each. They make great gifts for family and friends.

Visit [www.EZSignsOnline.com](http://www.EZSignsOnline.com) for more information or to place your order.



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## Judson College to host Intercollegiate Horse Show Association competition in new arena

by Jennifer Hoggle

Judson College and the Judson equestrian team hosted three Intercollegiate Horse Association (IHSA) shows in Judson's new covered arena on November 10.

Since May 2005, Judson equestrians have been practicing and preparing for classes and Intercollegiate Horse Show Association shows without the use of a riding arena. The covered arena given in honor of Dot Crawford was disassembled to allow for construction of the Charles Dunkin Athletic Center, part of a long-term plan to provide state-of-the-art facilities for Judson athletes.

Construction included grading and preparing the grounds, running underground piping and water lines, planting grass, running the main power supply, adding slag for the roads as well as resurrecting the covered

arena that will become the new barn consisting of approximately 30 stalls.

The new arena is 35,000 square feet and will include a clear span riding arena of 120 by 200 feet.

The Nov. 10 shows were the only IHSA shows hosted in Alabama and mark the ninth time that Judson has been host to the shows.

Invited teams included Berry College, Clemson University, Furman University, Lander University, North Georgia College and State University, The University of Georgia and The University of South Carolina.

The public is always welcome to come and support the Judson team as they compete in the new equine center.

For more information, contact equine director Jennifer Hoggle at 334-683-5456 or by e-mail at [jhoggle@judson.edu](mailto:jhoggle@judson.edu).



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## Angie Voss and Loredo champions at ESDCTA show

Angie Voss and Loredo won the third level championship at the Eastern States Dressage and Combined Training Association (ESDCTA) championship show held in October. Loredo, a 12-year-old Oldenburg was imported from Germany with the help of Jessie and Betsy Steiner. Dressage Team Steiner coach, Jessie Steiner, was extremely proud of her student's performance. "Angie and Loredo are still a fairly new partnership, so it was wonderful to see them working so well together already."

The pair received first place honors in both of their third level tests. They won the third level test two class with a score of 64 percent and went back to win the third level test three class with a score of 68 percent. The combined average earned them the third level championship. This is the pair's second championship. They also won third level high score championship at the Delaware Valley Horseman's Association dressage show in June. The Delaware show was their first show together. Jessie Steiner was especially proud of the scores and the comments Voss had on her test sheets. "She received seven scores of 8 and great comments from the judge including, "confident performance" and "talented pair", said Steiner.

Team Steiner Dressage specializes in selecting and importing competition horses in Europe. Betsy Steiner is spending the month of November in Germany hosting



Angie Voss and Loredo show off their ESDCTA Championship ribbon. Sue Stickle photo;

horse shopping expeditions for American riders. Meanwhile, Voss and Loredo will continue to train with Jessie Steiner and serve as good advertising for Steiner Dressage's ability to match riders with horses. For more information visit [www.betsysteinerdressage.com](http://www.betsysteinerdressage.com).

## Towell-Boyd wins working hunters championships

The warmblood gelding Brunello and Liza Towell Boyd achieved the trifecta of the indoor circuit by taking home the champi-



Liza Towell Boyd and Brunello clear the stone wall at hunter championships.

onship ribbons in the regular working hunter division at the Capital Challenge Horse Show and the Grand Hunter Championships at both the Washington International Horse Show and also at the final leg of the indoors at The Pennsylvania National Horse Show in Harrisburg, Pa.

Trainer Jack Towell and daughter Liza of Finally Farm in Camden, S.C., piloted Carolyn Clark Morrison's gelding to all three victories.

Boyd's father and brother, Jack and Hardin Towell, first found the ten-year-old gelding on a trip to Belgium. Although slated to be Hardin's mount, Liza took over. They quickly moved to the working hunters, where he immediately stood out.

Boyd is not the only one to take home top ribbons during indoors, and both the family and clients have had a very successful fall circuit with one of their top junior riders, Sarah Ward, of Atlanta, Ga., placing third, fifth, sixth and eighth on her small junior hunter, Foolproof, and winning the large junior hunter stake aboard Onassis, who Boyd also rides in professional hunter classes.

## Date for first USDF FEI Junior, Young Rider clinic series set

Four well-known teachers will be presenters at the 2007 USDF and FEI junior and young rider clinics. Kathy Connelly, Sue Blinks, George Williams, and Jan Ebeling will conduct the clinics throughout the country. There will be one clinic in each of the nine USDF Regions. The clinics, with funding support provided by The Dressage Foundation, are open to riders between the ages of fourteen and 21, currently riding at third level or above. Auditors will be treated to a special theory session at each clinic. Auditors of all ages and levels are welcome.

Clinicians will be Sue Blinks, an Olympic

and USET World Championship competitor; Kathy Connelly, international rider, trainer and coach; George Williams, three-time winner of the Grand Prix Freestyle at Dressage at Devon; and Jan Ebeling, a trainer of young riders for the North American Young Riders Championships.

The first USDF FEI junior and young rider clinic will be held on January 5-6 at the North Texas Equestrian Center in Wylie, Texas. For more information on the clinic series or to register, visit [www.usdf.org](http://www.usdf.org) or contact a programs and education coordinator at [jryoung rider@usdf.org](mailto:jryoung rider@usdf.org).

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## Dutton wins eventing championship at Dansko Fair Hill International Festival in the Country

Phillip Dutton of West Grove, Pa., rode The Foreman to victory in the U.S. Equestrian Federation (USEF) CCI\*\*\* Eventing Championship at the 19th annual Dansko Fair Hill International Festival in the Country.

In the four USEF National Driving Championships held at Fair Hill, Larry Poulin of Petersham, Mass.; Robin Groves of Brownsville, Vt; Lisa Stroud of West Grove, Pa.; and Sara Schmitt of Gardner, N.J., emerged victoriously.

Dutton's CCI win was his fourth at Fair Hill with previous wins coming in 1996, 2000 and 2004. This marked his first time winning the USEF Three Star Championship however, as this is the first year riding as a U.S. citizen for the three-time Australian Olympic veteran. Earlier this year, riding in his first international event as a U.S. citizen, Dutton won the USEF Four Star Championship at the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event presented by Farnam.

"It was a hard decision to change my citizenship but the U.S. is where I live and I thought it was time to make the change," he said. "It's great to win as an American and I could really feel the crowd behind me."

Dutton led throughout the competition. He took the lead on his 11-year-old bay thoroughbred with a score of 42.4 penalties in dressage. He then turned in a clean cross country ride and added just four penalties in show jumping for a three-phase score of 46.4.

Placing second was Boyd Martin of Australia who scored 50.5 on Ying Yang Yo, also an 11-year-old bay thoroughbred. Martin has been living in the U.S. and training with Dutton this year.

Dutton and Martin also took the next two places with Dutton finishing third with a score of 50.9 penalties on Woodburn and Martin taking fourth with a score of 52.4 on Neville Bardos.

In driving, Poulin won a tight battle with longtime rival Lisa Singer of Chadds Ford, Pa., when he finished with a three-phase score of 167.53 penalties to win the pairs horse championship for the seventh time, equaling the seven won by Singer, who finished just behind with a score of 169.48.

In the other driving championships, Groves won for the third straight year at Fair Hill, taking the single horse championship with a three-phase score of 163.84. Stroud won the pony team championship with a score of 174.28 and Schmitt won the single pony championship with 154.99.

The 2007 Dansko Fair Hill International Festival in the Country attracted 15,000 spectators who enjoyed not only the world-class competition but also a wide array of other attractions. Fair Hill's popular dog agility trials featured over 400 canine competitors. The Festival also featured appearances by the Delmarva Miniature Horse Club with driving and hunter/jumper demonstrations, United

States Pony Club Games, a kids corner with a variety of activities for the younger set, puppeteer Jack Foreaker, and live music by Rebecca Pitre's Whoa Buddy Productions.

Fair Hill's country shops boasted a wide variety of shopping and dining, featuring vendors of tack, jewelry, artwork, pet needs, exceptional apparel and fine gifts for the approaching holiday seasons. The Fair Hill Club offered fine dining, with other dining options at pubs around the Fair Hill grounds serving classic Maryland crab cakes and other treats. All of this is a reason why the Maryland Department of Agriculture has named the Fair Hill International as a "Maryland Top Event".

Healthy feet, healthy body, healthy planet. That's the spirit behind Dansko, founded in

## National Show Horse combines Arabian stamina with Saddlebred motion

The National Show Horse Registry (NSHR) was created for beautiful show horses with athletic ability, for incentives in the show ring and for a broader base for the show horse industry.

The choice for this new breed was an animal that would combine the beauty, refinement and stamina of Arabian with the size and high-stepping motion of the American saddlebred. The National Show Horse was born in 1981. During its history, the NSHR has taken steps to make possible the employment of a variety of combinations of these two basic bloodlines to produce a breed that continues to surpass its own standards for National Show Horse.

1990 by husband and wife team, Peter Kjellerup and Mandy Cabot, both former horse trainers. Dansko manufactures comfort footwear sold in independent and specialty retailers locations.

The 2007 Dansko Fair Hill International Festival in the Country benefited Union Hospital in Elkton, Md. The hospital, whose mission is to enhance the health and well-being of the residents of Cecil County and its neighboring communities, has been caring for area families and neighbors for nearly 100 years.

Full results and further information on the Dansko Fair Hill International Festival in the Country is available by calling 410-398-2111 or by visiting the Fair Hill website at [www.fairhillinternational.com](http://www.fairhillinternational.com).

Founders of the NSHR were not satisfied just to create a registry for the new breed. They also wanted to create a new atmosphere in the show ring in order to generate broader public appeal and to develop a prize system that would make it rewarding for exhibitors to show their horses.

The National Show Horse Registry is dedicated to creating an atmosphere in the show ring that reflects the excitement created by the horses themselves. New concepts and formats for the shows have been combined with a prize system to create enthusiasm for spectators and exhibitors.

— [www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/horses/nationalshow/index.htm](http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/horses/nationalshow/index.htm)

**Dutton's CCI win was his fourth at Fair Hill with previous wins coming in 1996, 2000 and 2004.**

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## Care of the broodmare

Now that your mare is pregnant the goal is to keep her healthy through pregnancy and then deliver a normal vigorous foal. This information was originally a fact sheet from the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

**Biosecurity** – Ideally mares are kept in small groups with others at a similar stage of pregnancy. Mares that are long-term residents on the farm are kept separate to outside mares. All pregnant mares are isolated from horses likely to be shedding infectious organisms. These include weanlings and yearlings, young horses in training, and horses in the show or performance string. Mares that have recently been bred are also an infection risk to pregnant mares. Separation ideally means a separate barn, and no sharing of feed or water sources.

**Pregnancy exams and loss rates** – Following breeding, the first pregnancy exam is usually performed by ultrasound at 14-16 days. This is an important exam because it is the best time to correct a twin pregnancy and also allows you to begin planning the rebreeding if the mare is not pregnant.

Occasionally an exam is done at day 24-25 of pregnancy to find the embryonic heartbeat, but the next important one takes place at around 30-35 days. If the mare has lost the embryo before this time she can usually be re-bred successfully; but if she is pregnant at 35 days and then aborts, she is not fertile for another three or four months due to formation of the endometrial cups in the uterus. These structures, which come from the embryo and implant into the uterus, do not die even if the pregnancy aborts until around 120 days after mating. This usually means

that the breeding season is over for that mare.

A further exam to confirm that the mare is still pregnant can be done in the fall. In addition to these, other pregnancy exams may be performed if they are mandated by your breeding or insurance contract, the mare has a history of embryonic loss or abortion, the mare fails to gain weight and look pregnant when she should in late pregnancy, and/or she shows signs of aborting.

On average, a young mare pregnant at 14-16 days has approximately a six percent chance of losing her embryo by day 40, and an eight percent chance of aborting after day 40. The expected loss rate increases progressively with age and for a 20 year-old mare losses are 21 percent at day 40, and 15 percent after day 40.

**Nutrition** – Mares should enter the breeding season in moderate to fleshy condition (body condition score of five or six on a one-to-nine scale) and be fed to maintain that level throughout pregnancy and lactation. The fetus does most of its growing towards the end of gestation and a mare can be expected to gain nine to 12 percent of her body weight during pregnancy, with two-thirds of this coming in the last three months. During the first eight months of pregnancy the mare's nutrition requirements are no different to those before she conceived. In the last trimester, the mare's requirements for protein, calcium, sugars and phosphorus increase faster than the need for energy, and may require supplementation. Free access to high quality grass or alfalfa, either grazed or cut for hay at an early growth stage, will meet energy requirements and usually those for protein (which have gone from eight per-

cent earlier in pregnancy up to 11 or 12 percent now). However, neither of these forages will meet her increased need for phosphorus and grass forages will also be too low in calcium. To correct this, mares should receive a daily salt-calcium-phosphorus mineral mix supplement, and these can be purchased tailored to the type of forage she is getting.

It is essential that both vitamins and trace minerals are supplemented as well. For example, copper, zinc, manganese, and iron must be stored in the fetal liver. Research indicates that when mares were not supplemented with copper in the last trimester, the foals were not as sound compared to foals born to copper supplemented mares. Feeding supplemental copper to the nursing foals did not correct the problems.

Supplementation of natural vitamin E in the 30 days before foaling can also increase the passive transfer of antibodies to the foal.

Once lactation starts, the mare's energy and protein needs increase further. Very good quality forage with a mineral supplement can meet these needs, but most mares should receive a grain/protein mix in addition, fed at around one-half to one pound per 100 pounds of body weight/day. This is also the time most mares are re-bred, and fertility is best when the mare is not losing condition. After three months of lactation, a mare's milk production is usually declining. Start slowly decreasing her grain before weaning to help dry the mare up.

**Exercise** – Provided you have been given no specific advice against it (usually in cases of lameness or injury) most mares benefit from exercise during pregnancy. Many mares have been used for rigorous athletic competi-

tion (including racing and jumping) up to five months with no problems. Light trail riding can continue until the start of the last month of pregnancy in many cases, though you may need to find a saddle that matches her new shape. Mares that aren't ridden benefit from as much turnout as possible, preferable a minimum of six hours a day when conditions allow.

**Deworming and vaccinations** – Internal parasite control relies on a combination of pasture management, manure disposal and strategic use of dewormers.

Most modern dewormers are safe for use in pregnant mares, but always check the label first. Mares generally remain on the same deworming schedule as other mature horses on the farm. It is now commonly recommended that mares also be given a dose of ivermectin on the day of birth to help prevent transmission of worms to the foal.

Vaccination of the broodmare has three aims; protect the mare from disease, prevent abortion, and protect the foal by passive transfer of immunity through colostrum. It is recommended that vaccines are not given to mares in the first 60 days of pregnancy. Ideally mares have completed their primary course of vaccination before becoming pregnant. To ensure maximal protection of the newborn foal, pregnant mares are vaccinated for most diseases in the last 3-6 weeks of pregnancy.

All broodmares should be vaccinated against tetanus, equine herpes virus-1 (EHV-1), Eastern and Western encephalomyelitis (EEE+WEE, also known as sleeping sickness)

BROODMARES, CONTINUED ON PAGE 28

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## Prepare your mare for the breeding season

By Scott Madill, DVM

Not having your mare in optimal condition to conceive when you are ready to breed her results in lower fertility, frustration, and financial losses that can extend through this season and into the next. The critical things to check for are: is she having regular heat cycles, does she have a uterine infection, and is she in good body condition?

Her maintenance healthcare including vaccinations, deworming and preventative dental work should also be reviewed and updated several weeks before going to stud. To ensure she is having regular cycles and ovulating the mare needs to be exposed to increasing day length starting 2 to 2.5 months before you want to breed her. For example, for mare owners wanting to breed in February, the supplemental lighting program

should have been started right after Thanksgiving or early in December. Even if you want a March or April foal, it is a good idea to start mares under lights as early as January, as it isn't unusual for mares that have not received light treatments to not cycle naturally until the early part of May. The old standby of 16 hours of continuous light a day is easy and highly effective. The supplemental light is added in the evening, and in winter, this generally means the lights need to be on until 11 pm. The rule of thumb for supplemental light intensity is being able to read a newspaper comfortably anywhere in the stall, which translates to a 200-watt incandescent bulb or two 40-watt fluorescent tubes. Pregnant mares that are due to foal early in the season

*To ensure she is having regular cycles and ovulating the mare needs to be exposed to increasing day length starting two to two and a half months before you want to breed her.*

should also be put under lights as it isn't unusual for them to stop cycling for a while after their foal heat. Many stud farms require a uterine culture (pre-breeding swab) on open mares before they will accept them for breeding to rule out infection. This can also benefit the mare owner as an undiagnosed infection can waste several heat cycles. Even the occasional maiden mare will be infected if she is a windsucker, and a complete veterinary examination of the reproductive tract can check not just for infection, but also for injuries and

anatomic defects that affect fertility and cycling. For barren mares a full investigation was likely performed at the end of last season and now is a good time to recheck her. From a nutrition standpoint, the critical aspect is her body condition. Mares in moderate to good condition are more likely to cycle and conceive than those that are too thin or grossly overweight. Ideally, at the time she is bred, the mare has been in moderate condition and is adding just a little weight. While many other things will affect your final result, paying attention to these aspects optimizes your mare's chance of conceiving.

For more information e-mail [madil001@umn.edu](mailto:madil001@umn.edu).

## Using cooled semen for breeding

By Scott Madill, DVM

As a mare owner, cooled semen gives you access to stallions all over the country, and to some extent internationally. In addition to the stud fee, most stallion owners charge fees per shipment, typically \$250 and up, making it within your interest to only ship once per cycle when possible. Since cooled semen is only viable for about 48 hours after collection, in order to achieve a single shipment breeding you need to closely monitor your mare and have a clear understanding of the stallion's shipping schedule. When looking at your breeding contract there are several

things you need to take note of:

Which days does he collect? For Quarter horses and Paints, it is common for stallions to collect every-other-day from February 15 to July 15; others may be on a Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedule and still others might collect any day they are needed.

How far in advance do you need to order? For most horses you need to place your order for semen the day before he is collected, a few will allow you to call the morning of (typically by 8 am).

How is the semen shipped? If they ship FedEx or UPS you will get it the day after collection. With counter-counter shipment you

can pick it up at a local airport the same day as collection (typically late afternoon or evening), but it typically costs more and someone has to go to the airport. If the stallion is collected on a weekend then counter-counter is your only option for those days.

Does the stallion have any times when he won't be available? Sometimes a stallion will be unavailable in a window of time if he is off at a show, so you will need to schedule your mare around this. Monitoring your mare is best done by a veterinarian using ultrasound. When she starts her cycle, an initial exam will decide when she needs to be checked again based on the size of her follicle and the

amount of edema in her uterus. Generally, once she develops good edema and has a follicle over 35 mm in diameter it is time to think about ordering semen. If the breeding was timed well, the mare is young and healthy, and the stallion is fertile and a "good shipper" you should expect at least a 60 percent pregnancy rate. If your mare is not pregnant she should be ready to come back into heat in approximately two weeks and the process can be started over again.

For more information e-mail [madil001@umn.edu](mailto:madil001@umn.edu).

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Hotshots Tendon

I need to get you a picture of his healed wound. He has a bump about the size of a silver dollar which is healed with firm hard skin although hair did not grow over it. Amazingly hair has regrown all around the small scar. I credit RR for the fast healing. It did not get infected so we didn't have to administer antibiotics. This speaks so well for RR because Hotshot was in his twenties and was debilitated from his melanomas and hind end deterioration. As I write, he is doing well. He's a bit wobbly on one of his hind legs, the right one. Just let him cruise and he'll show you how he takes off. I let him out without a halter and he walks to the nursery about 20 feet away as the crow flies. When he senses a lapse on my part, he exits the nursery and makes tracks. Many of the fellow borders think it's great to see him bright eyed and trekking. Please send me my usual order. :-)

Jean

Broken Ankle

I first purchased your product January, 2006 for my 60-pound German Wirehair Pointer dog, who is now 11 years old. At the time, she was trying to recover from a (right) broken ankle and the left one badly injured. The vet set her broken one incorrectly, and when the cast came off her hind feet looked like penguins feet - and she could barely walk (much to my horror)! After hearing about your product and using it on Molly, she not only started walking, but also running and JUMPING! This is nothing short of a miracle - even though her hind feet still point out. Shortly after, I was told by another vet that her knees were bad and going out. So now I'm ordering your product again and Molly is doing so well and still runs and jumps. Your product is wonderful! Bastedo

Ad comments change with every issue - Look for it!

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## Winter riding tips

By Mary Hamilton



*Editor's note – Winter conditions in the Southeast are generally not as severe as those in the north. When the weather does turn bad, however, it's important to take precautions. Forewarned is forearmed.*

Winter, season of frozen water buckets, fingers and toes. Wind chills bite through extra layers of clothing making barn chores a miserable task. For those of us trapped in the northern climate, we can hibernate or embrace some invigorating winter riding. Here are some tips to make your winter riding safe and enjoyable.

- Factor in extra time – Everything seems to take longer in winter. Keep your horse warm and healthy by increasing your warm-up and cool-down times. His muscles are cold and stiff too. Plan on ten to fifteen minutes of walk on a loose rein at the beginning and end of your ride. After you remove the saddle, rub vigorously with a towel any sweaty areas. Then put a cooler on your horse to help absorb the moisture until he completely dries. This is a good time to throw a flake on hay in his stall along with a bucket of fresh water. Keeping your horse adequately hydrated in winter is an important step to preventing a colic episode. Before turning your horse out, brush his coat so it isn't matted down. A nice fluffy coat traps air which

insulates against cold temperatures. Think of it as his very own down coat.

- Winter tack tips – If possible store all your tack in a warm, well ventilated area. If you can't, remove all liquid items like fly spray and medications from your tack box and store them inside. Freezing can degrade the chemicals in these products. Even more importantly, when you need a first aid product like betadine, it won't be frozen solid. Leather takes longer to dry in cold temperatures. This can lead to mold growth on your tack. After riding wipe excess moisture off your wet tack with a towel. When it dries completely apply a conditioner to keep the leather supple. Warm the bit (bridle) before putting it in your horse's mouth. The first thing I do when I get to the barn is put my bridle in the heated lounge to warm up. As I catch and groom my horse, it warms to ambient temperature. Your horse will be much easier to bridle with a nice warm bit and warm supple leather makes buckling that throat latch a breeze.
- Riding in winter – A ride out in freshly fallen snow can be a refreshing change of pace for you and your horse. Stay warm and comfortable by dressing in layers. Choose a wind proof jacket that allows freedom of movement in the shoulder area. Fingers and toes can get cold quickly when you are out on the trail. Cross-country ski shops are good places to find warm socks and

**Winter weather doesn't mean the end of riding. By taking a few precautions and preparing for the weather, you can safely enjoy riding your horse all year round.**

gloves. You may need a larger stirrup to safely accommodate bulky winter boots. Remember the stirrup needs to be large enough that your boot won't be stuck in it but not so large your boot can slip the whole way through.

An icy crust on the snow or frozen sticks on the trail create a potential source for cuts on your horse's lower legs. Use a sports medicine boot or wrap to protect your horse from abrasions.

- Ice – Sleet, freezing rain and the freeze-thaw cycle can create icy conditions in your paddock, barn entrances and on trails. If you have seen a horse splay (lose his footing on ice) you know this can be a life-threatening situation. I keep a bucket of gravel near the barn door where my horses come in and out from the paddock. When this area becomes icy, I spread some gravel on the ice. Sawdust or kitty litter are other options to provide some grip and less slip in icy areas.

Winter weather doesn't mean the end of riding. By taking a few precautions and preparing for the weather, you can safely enjoy riding your horse all year round.

*Police story – It was a perfect, bright sunny*

day for a ride, following the first big snow of the season. Sunglasses were going to be a must. Clown by nature, Percheron and quarter horse by breed, Jimmy was my mount for the day. I like Jimmy, he is an entertaining horse. At the speed of turtle, we took off down the trail. (Jimmy is

not one for over-exerting himself). Fresh snow means you can see who has been before you. We saw rabbit tracks, deer tracks, and coyote tracks as chickadees serenaded us with their winter song. I in Pillsbury doughboy fashion was dressed in layers: long underwear, insulated Carhart bibs, turtle neck, sweatshirt, vest, jacket and winter boots. I was warm but movement other than waddling was difficult. A mile out on the trail, for no particular reason Jimmy decided to lay down in the snow. He folded his front legs and sank down on his hind legs. I thought, "He is going to roll – good time to make a fast exit". In doughboy fashion I plopped off. As I lay there in the snow, I looked at Jimmy. He was smiling.

*Mary Hamilton is a mounted police instructor who has worked in law enforcement for over 20 years. She is a certified riding instructor through the American Riding Instructors Association.*

*To learn more about the training visit [www.riderselite.com](http://www.riderselite.com). You can view a segment of the new DVD, "Conquering Trail Riding Obstacles, Helping You and Your Horse Ride Trails Safely". For information about the CD or setting up a clinic with Mary, visit her website, call 763-498-6565 or email [Info@riderselite.com](mailto:Info@riderselite.com).*



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