

www.riding-instructor.com

# Riding Instructor

Official Publication  
of The American Riding  
Instructors Association

Summer 2009

Presort Standard  
US Postage Paid  
Permit #592  
Pontiac, IL

**Sally Swift  
1913–2009**

**Sally Swift's  
Lasting Legacy**

**Teaching Children  
Kindness and Empathy  
Toward Animals**

American Riding Instructors Association  
28801 Trenton Ct.  
Bonita Springs, FL 34134-3337  
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED





First-Rate Line of  
Quality Products



*It's About*  
**RESULTS**

**Dramatic results, in only a few days, no matter the discipline.**

**Need proof? Visit [www.JointSupplementResearch.com](http://www.JointSupplementResearch.com) for more information.**



[www.CORTA-FLX<sup>®</sup>.com](http://www.CORTA-FLX.com)



**Award  
Winning  
Products**

**OVER 70 YEARS...  
of Show-Stopping**

*Excellence*

Proudly Made in the  
**USA**  
Since 1938



We offer an extensive line of superior products with unique formulations that achieve award winning results. When it comes to your horse. . .

**Choose Only The Best!**



Superior Equine Grooming Products ... Since 1938

**1-800-982-2017  
www.Shapleys.com**

View our website for a complete product listing.



# THE LEGENDARY SPRING SALE - EXTENDED!

“THE COVER-ALL RIDING ARENA KEEPS MY FOOTING PERFECT...”

"... and the natural environment of the building is better for the horse's mind. The bond and trust between the rider and horse is so important in this sport. If you want to keep a horse healthy to compete, the horse has to keep fit and injury-free. I needed a building big enough to minimize the risks I can control."

Carrie Wehle – Wehle Farms, Rochester, NY - 100' w x 200' l (30.4m x 60.9m) TITAN® building

*Proud sponsor of the*  
**American Riding Instructors Association**



Providing you with the safety, comfort, and convenience of indoor riding, Cover-All is the most dependable choice for your indoor riding arena or stabling facility in every climate and every season.

**Building strength and confidence through experience.**

**1.800.268.3768 • [www.coverall.net](http://www.coverall.net)**



## Departments

4 Editor's Message

5 Bulletin Board

6 Peer Profile  
Julie Thomas  
Jean Morrison

10 Legal Focus  
Can injured trainers sue horse owners?  
*by Julie I. Fershtman*

32 Cameo's Cauldron  
What Sally taught us  
*by Cameo Miller*

## Features

11 Teaching Children Kindness and Empathy Towards Animals

*by Didi Arias*

14 Building Essential Cross-Country Jumps

You can do it!

*by Emily Wigley*

20 Sally Swift's Lasting Legacy

*by Susan Harris*

A Horse's Tribute to Sally Swift

*by Peggy Brown*

22 Surviving Sticky Situations

*by Allison Thurston*

25 Writing about Riding

*by Jennifer Brooks Hippensteel*

28 Setting your Students up for Success

Building a Lesson Plan

*by Judy Whipple*



20



11



14



22



28

# National Riding Instructors Convention November 18-21 Naples, Florida

A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity

By Charlotte Kneeland



Photo: John Lawson

**I**F YOU ARE A RIDING INSTRUCTOR, stable manager or barn owner, there is absolutely nothing else, anywhere, like ARIA's National Riding Instructors Convention. Nowhere else will you have the opportunities for mentoring, networking and small group discussions with our dedicated speakers: George Morris, Jane Savoie, Denny Emerson, Susan Harris, Peggy Brown, Sgt. Jerry Mayo RCMP, and lots of others.

We work hard for over a year to bring you the best learning opportunity available in only 3 1/2 days. Nowhere else is the atmosphere so warm, generous and caring; each and every member of the ARIA family is special and important.

The hotel rooms are going fast – reserve yours so you can stay right at the luxurious Naples Grande Beach Resort where the Convention is being held.

**Hotel reservations:** Call the hotel at 888-722-1270. Rooms are only \$109. per night, (special ARIA discount) and you can stay extra nights at the same cost, to have a family vacation. We will be happy to assign roommates if you are coming alone and would like to cut your room cost in half.

**Convention registrations:** Call 239-948-3232.

See you there! ■

Charlotte

## Riding Instructor

Summer 2009

**Published by**

American Riding Instructors Association  
28801 Trenton Ct.  
Bonita Springs, FL 34134-3337

**Tel** 239-948-3232

**Fax** 239-948-5053

**E-mail** [aria@riding-instructor.com](mailto:aria@riding-instructor.com)

**Web site** [riding-instructor.com](http://riding-instructor.com)

**Editor**

Charlotte Brailey Kneeland  
[riding-instructor@comcast.net](mailto:riding-instructor@comcast.net)

**Corporate Sponsorship and Advertising**

**Manager**

Donna Hartshorn  
**Tel** 407-927-3578; [harts@cfl.rr.com](mailto:harts@cfl.rr.com)

**Account Executive**

Kandace Mattson  
**Tel** 603-239-6606; [mattson.kandi@gmail.com](mailto:mattson.kandi@gmail.com)

**Art Director** Peter Frys, PearTree Graphics

[peter@peartreegraphics.ca](mailto:peter@peartreegraphics.ca)

ARIA recognizes that equestrian headgear that does not meet the ASTM standard (#F1163-88-SEI) is not safe, although certain equestrian activities pictured in this magazine may not adhere to these requirements.

*Riding Instructor* is the Official Publication of the American Riding Instructors Association.

**Member** American Horse Publications



**For Advertising Rates & Data, contact the publisher.**

The editor of *Riding Instructor* reserves the right to edit reasonably all copy submitted, and all contributions become the property of *Riding Instructor*. The Editor does not hold herself responsible for, nor does she necessarily agree with, the opinions expressed in *Riding Instructor*. *Riding Instructor* assumes no responsibility for loss or damage to unsolicited photographs or manuscripts.

Reproductions without permission are strictly prohibited by copyright laws. While endeavoring to accept only reliable advertising, *Riding Instructor* will not be responsible to the public for advertisements, and the right to decline or discontinue any advertisement is reserved.

**ARICP Advisory Board**

- Debi DeTurk Peloso
- Denny Emerson
- Julie I. Fershtman, Esq.
- Gayle Lampe
- Jane Savoie
- Sarah Sliva, MD
- Linda Tellington-Jones

### Visit our Sponsors

These companies, whose commitment to quality reflects our own, are official sponsors of the American Riding Instructors Association. We thank them for their support which helps us to continue our work.



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



[www.corta-flx.com](http://www.corta-flx.com)



**COWBOY  
MAGIC**

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



[www.coverall.net](http://www.coverall.net)



[www.equisure-inc.com](http://www.equisure-inc.com)



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



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



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



[www.lec.edu](http://www.lec.edu)



**Farrier's Formula®**



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

We Listen. We Educate. We Care!



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



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



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



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



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



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

To find out about the many benefits of becoming a sponsor, contact the American Riding Instructors Association office at (239) 948-3232 or e-mail [aria@riding-instructor.com](mailto:aria@riding-instructor.com).





Officer James P. Naughton, Training Officer, riding Chopper, an 11 year old Percheron who has been with the Boston mounted unit for 8 years.

## Nation's oldest mounted police unit to be disbanded

**T**HE CITY OF BOSTON'S mounted patrol – the oldest police horse unit in the United States – is scheduled to be disbanded on July 1st because of budget cuts. The unit, which is comprised of 12 horses and 10 officers, will be closed this summer, bringing to an end a service which dates back to the 1800s. About a dozen staff who help tend the horses will be laid off and the 10 mounted officers will be re-deployed to foot duties.

Sergeant Chris Walsh said his preference would be to find homes for the horses with other mounted patrols, given the horses' specialized training.

Boston Mayor Tom Menino described the decision as irreversible, but a petition has been started in a bid to save the unit, which costs \$600,000 a year to run. Letters may also be sent to Mayor Menino at [Mayor@cityof-boston.gov](mailto:Mayor@cityof-boston.gov).

## New Research Demonstrates Phenylbutazone Risks

**N**EW RESEARCH demonstrates that prolonged administration of phenylbutazone (bute) can cause some adverse effects in horses as soon as three days after initial treatment. The effects include protein loss, lowered white blood cell counts, blood flow changes in the right dorsal colon and changes in volatile fatty acid activity. For more information, please see [www.merial.com](http://www.merial.com).

## ARIA Instructors featured in touring equestrian exhibit

**R**HONDA WATTS HETTINGER has helped thousands of students succeed in the classic disciplines of side-saddle riding and riding to hounds, and Polly du Pont has tirelessly preserved and promoted the rare genetic legacy of Italy's Lipizzans. But today their work is literally going down in history: both Rhonda and Polly have been invited to appear in the internationally touring equestrian exhibit, *The Literary Horse: When Legends Come to Life*.

The exhibit, touring public and school libraries worldwide through 2012, pairs up to 100 photos of today's horses and horse-people with quotations from the world's great books. "When Sir Walter Scott wrote *Rob Roy's* Diana Vernon, he was describing Ms. Watts Hettinger's skill in side-saddle riding and riding to hounds, her bold leadership, and her quick, kind wit," said the exhibit's creator and fellow ARIA member, Vanessa Wright. "When Shakespeare immortalized Adonis's glorious, winged steed, he was describing Ms. du Pont's gracious and beautiful Italian Lipizzan stallion, Conversano Orcia."

More than 40,000 people have visited *The Literary Horse* since its debut in May 2008. The exhibit is scheduled to appear at the Oldham County Public Library in LaGrange, Kentucky for the 2009 Kentucky Derby, at the Saratoga Public Library for the 2009 Saratoga



Aeolus and Zephyr, Prince of the Winds (Polly du Pont).

racing season, and at the Central Library in downtown Lexington, Kentucky, to celebrate America's first hosting of the 2010 World Equestrian Games.

*The Literary Horse: When Legends Come to Life* will be touring public and school libraries worldwide through 2012. For more information, a tour schedule, activities, and a book-list, visit [www.theliteraryhorse.com](http://www.theliteraryhorse.com). ■

## Bob Allen named New Jersey Horse Person of the Year

**B**OB ALLEN has spent his life showing horses, judging competitions, teaching horsemanship and sharing his love of anything equine with thousands of others. This commitment to a thriving equine industry in the state earned him the title of New Jersey Horseperson of the Year from the Equine Advisory Board.

"Robert Allen is respected not only in New Jersey for his many skills, but all over the nation," said Acting New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Alfred W. Murray. "He is charitable with both his



knowledge about horses and the needs of others, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for Philadelphia and New Jersey area hospitals and other causes through equine events."

Mr. Allen is a licensed USEF judge and a course designer. He has managed more than 600 horse shows, many of which benefited various charities. He has served as National Panel Chairman for the American Riding Instructors Association since 1984.

At his Woodedge Stables and Equitation School, Bob and his staff teach horsemanship to more than 240 students each week.

# Julie Thomas

Aubrey, Texas

**RI** *Why did you decide to become a riding instructor?*

**JT** I became a riding instructor because I was offered a position at a friend's barn as the barn manager, but it also required me to teach some lessons. I thought I would be terrible at teaching but I quickly found that I loved it and surprised myself by being pretty good at it!

**RI** *How long have you been teaching?*

**JT** I have been teaching full time since 2001, when I took over at Windmill Stables in Richardson, Texas.

**RI** *What is your background as a rider, horse owner, etc?*

**JT** I come from a military family and when I was nine years old my family was stationed at Ft. Hood, Texas. The girl across the street from me took lessons and I went with her to the barn one day. It just took that one visit for me to become instantly hooked. My dad bought my first pony when I was 11 because he thought I was just going through a phase and he might as well – I do have to point out that ponies were much less expensive back then, especially in the rural central Texas setting we were in. Now we all wonder what I would be doing now if he hadn't bought me that pony! I showed hunter/jumpers and ponies while growing up (which continues to be my passion today) and I also joined Pony Club, and became a C-2 member before heading off to college. I went to the Pony Club National Championships in "Quiz" twice as a child (our teams placed 10<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, respectively) and currently serve as a National Quiz Judge for USPC Championships. With Pony Club I have also served as a District Commissioner and the Regional Supervisor for the Red River Region Pony Clubs. I was the Head Instructor for Windmill Stables in Richardson, Texas, for 6 years before deciding to start my own venture in Aubrey, Texas, where I currently live and work. My business, Abingdon Park and Pony Farm, is entirely devoted to ponies and hunter jumper riding. I specialize in beginner riders, because I absolutely love to start new riders. However, I do very much enjoy my more advanced students, it is a pleasure to teach more challenging skills on more challenging horses! I take my students and their ponies to local circuit shows as well as the occasional "A" rated show. I am currently serving as the President of the Dallas Hunter Jumper Scholarship Circuit, a circuit that gives back to its' members in the form of school scholarships, based on participation and awards earned.

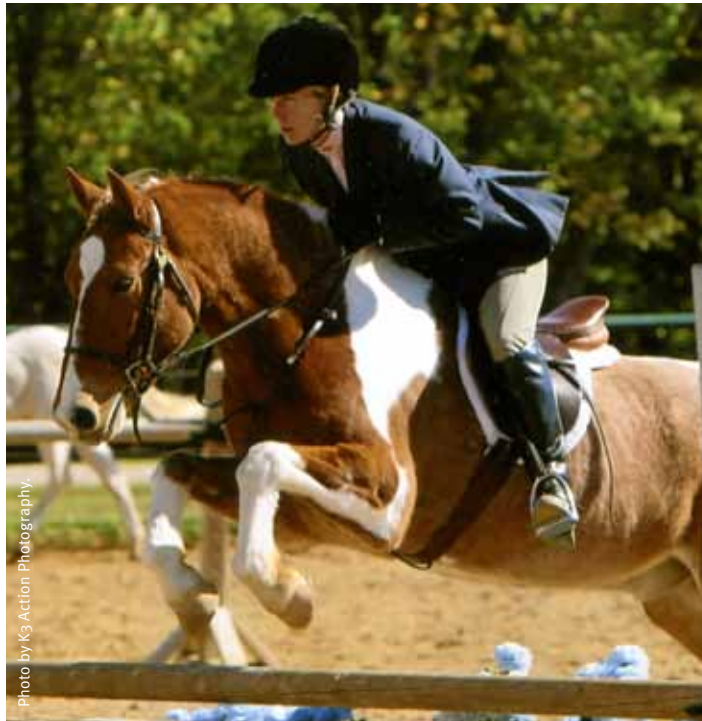


Photo by K3 Action Photography.

**RI** *When and why did you become ARIA certified?*

**JT** I first learned of ARIA through a fellow instructor. She was going to become certified and invited me to go through the process with her. In 2004 I became a Level 2 Hunt Seat certified instructor. Just recently I became a Level 3 Hunt Seat instructor, the only one in the entire state of Texas! I found the process for each testing to be challenging but extremely rewarding. I believe my pony club and especially "quiz" background really helped me prepare for the examinations. I felt that I should become certified because by 2004 I was giving lessons to more than 30 children per week and wanted to give their parents a fantastic reason to really feel comfortable with me, as well as to refer me to other parents and potential clients. This area has many instructors and I wanted to stand out in the crowd as an instructor who takes her teaching and students very seriously. I knew that my safety and skill-

oriented lesson program should be recognized, and having ARIA stand behind something I have built from scratch is definitely something I am very proud of!

**RI** *You achieved your Level 3 in Hunt Seat with very high scores. Any tips for others trying to achieve this high level?*

**JT** My advice is to be prepared! Wait until you are truly ready to take the test. I had originally planned to take the exam in September of 2008 but as the time approached I knew that there was no way I was ready for it. I took the "winter" here (I use the term winter in Texas very loosely!) to perfect my video, re-read some books and articles, really sat down with the philosophy and general instructor exams and concentrated on the questions as well as editing and proofreading

them about 10 times! I considered many different ideas for the candidate presentation, finally deciding on one I knew I could deliver easily and make with confidence. The candidate presentation probably was the thing that made me the most nervous, so I practiced it with friends and other instructors. I knew if I could do it in front of them, I could do it in front of the examiners! I have to admit, though, that I was still very worried that I did not pass one or more parts of the exam. I was thrilled and super relieved when I got the results! It really means a lot to me to be the only Level 3 certified Hunt Seat instructor in the state of Texas. I am hoping that the time I took to earn this recognition will pay off by helping my business survive these tough economic times.

**RI** *What are your hobbies and interests outside of the barn?*

**JT** I am addicted to reality TV, including American Idol, Dancing with the Stars and the Biggest Loser. I also love Grey's Anatomy and HGTV's House Hunters. I DVR everything and watch them after long days at the barn or when I crash after a horseshow. I also love spending time on the lake with my friends – we lay out, do some wakeboarding, and enjoy ourselves immensely!





**RI** What is your biggest success and future goals?

**JT** I am hoping that my biggest success is yet to come. My business is just in its infancy and I would love it to be prosperous and enjoyable for many years! As my business becomes more successful I would like to be able to travel more, especially to the very large horse shows (as a spectator mostly) and equestrian world events. I would love to take a pony at some point in the future to Pony Finals – I have been as a spectator and though I don't really appreciate the pretentiousness of that elite world, I would still be thrilled to have a pony that I trained qualify and participate in the Finals.

**RI** What words of wisdom would you share with new instructors?

**JT** **Have integrity.** Be kind to your students – make them laugh, encourage their passion and have respect for them. If my students are happy then I'm happy, the ponies are happy and the parents are happy! That means long-term survival in this very tough business.

**RI** If you had to do it all over again, what would you do differently?

**JT** Not much! There are a few things I regret; a few relationships that went south that I would like to have back again. As I get older my emotional, sensitive side is learning to take a back seat to the business, non-personal side of the student/parent/instructor relationships and I think if I had had that wisdom when I was younger I would have very few regrets indeed! ■

# Stop Shouting Across the Ring!

**The Cyber**

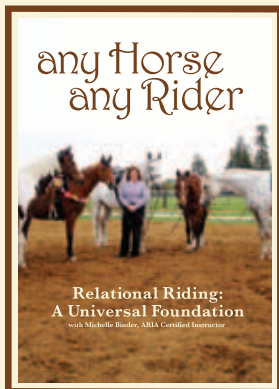
**24G-2/Cyber \$299**  
2 Simultalk Radios  
2 Cyber Headsets  
Batteries, Chargers  
Padded Case

**The Loop**  
optional student headset

**Easy Instructor to Student Communications**

- Hands Free Wireless - No Buttons to Push
- Provides Simultaneous Talk 2-Way Conversation

 [www.eartec.com](http://www.eartec.com)  
1-800-399-5994



## A Universal Foundation

ARIA certified instructor Michelle Binder combines the best of natural horsemanship techniques with basic dressage to create a video that will help you think, ride and train YOUR horse in a new way. Unique.

Multidisciplinary. Different. Endorsed by riders, trainers, AND judges.

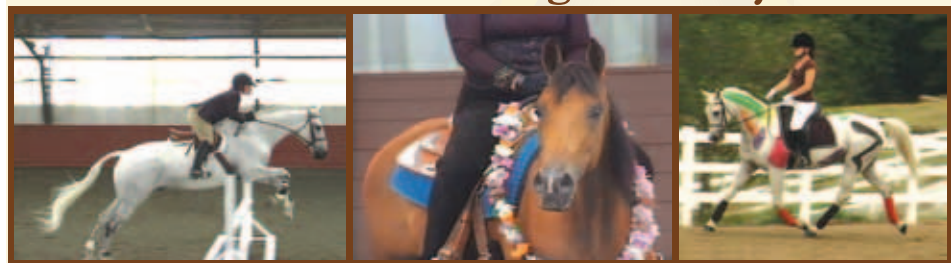
**Fabulous gift for the horse lover you know!**

"This video does an outstanding job of introducing biomechanics and dressage in a way that any rider can learn to apply the concepts to any discipline or riding style."

- Donna Longacre, USEF Dressage R Judge and  
USEF Recognized Judge in Western  
and Arabian Divisions

"An amazing fundamental explanation of the biomechanics of the horse that could benefit all riders and trainers." - Janis Limman, FEI Eventing Judge

Watch the video trailer and the bonus feature "Every horse is worth it" at  
**[www.relationallridingacademy.com](http://www.relationallridingacademy.com)**



# Jean Morrison

## Chaplin, Connecticut

**RI** *Why did you decide to become a riding instructor?*

**JM** I sort of “evolved” into it, after years (decades) of being a working student for my two wonderful instructors/mentors at Anderson’s Acres, a teaching stable in western Connecticut. I assisted in classes by riding as a leader, or alongside a rider who needed a little extra coaching, and I simply soaked in the lessons and teaching techniques. Thanks to all those hours and hours in classes, it became natural to me to want to help people learn to ride, while teaching them how to be safe; all in an atmosphere of appreciating and trying to understand horses.

**RI** *How long have you been teaching?*

**JM** “Officially,” having primary responsibility as “The Instructor,” about eight years. My instruction experience as a working student went back quite a bit earlier than that, about 20 years.

**RI** *What is your background as a rider, horse owner, etc.?*

**JM** I started riding lessons at nine years old, after spending years bugging my parents to let me take lessons (ballet lessons instead? Oh, puh-LEEZE. You can’t be serious). I began taking lessons at Anderson’s Acres when I was 15, and became a working student there shortly after I got a driver’s license. Talk about living for the weekends. . . . I finally got a horse of my own in my early 30s (after more years, before I “left the nest,” of unavailing effort to bug my parents into letting me get one). I boarded my first horse, a 4 year old off-the-track Thoroughbred gentleman, and then his successor, a 16 month old Andalusian-Saddlebred filly, until about four years ago, when I sold my carefree condo and bought a “farmette” so I could at last fulfill the dream of having a horse at home.

When I went out into the “real world” and moved farther east in Connecticut, I took lessons with several dressage instructors, and in more recent years I found myself going off on a tangent and got into “natural” horsemanship. So, now I am having fun mixing it all together with my main “guinea pig,” La Bonita, who’s now 9 years old.



**RI** *When and why did you become ARIA certified?*

**JM** In 2001. I was very honored to receive the ARIA scholarship that had been created in honor of one of my mentors, Clare Coley. I earned my certification at the Florida convention, which was a wonderful experience.

**RI** *How has certification affected your business?*

**JM** I’m still out in the “real world” of 40 hours/week in an office in a city, so I am not instructing as my business. When I do have the opportunity to teach, I approach it with a boost in my confidence, knowing that my knowledge and skills have been reviewed and approved by the ARIA program’s experienced and capable panel of examiners.

It’s a bit funny, actually, now that I think about it – how achieving my ARIA certification has affected me even though I am not in the business of instructing. I passed the Connecticut Bar exam in 1991 after four

years of evening division law school, including summers. That was a big deal – oh, my yes, what with spending that whole summer in intense, exhausting study. But when I compare the Bar exam with the ARIA certification process, I think the latter did more for my self-confidence. After all, tests like the Bar exam focus on your ability to demonstrate your knowledge on paper; it doesn’t tell you that you will be able to apply all that book-learning to succeed in the practice of law. In contrast, the ARIA adds to the written exams the practical demonstration of your ability to confidently impart knowledge to students when you record those video(s) that will be reviewed by a panel of highly qualified instructors.

**RI** *What other aspects of the horse business are you in?*

**JM** When I have the chance, I enjoy scribing at dressage shows and recording for competitive trail rides. Both give me the opportunity



to improve my “eye,” thanks to the observations made by the judges ... that is, to the extent that I am able to lift my eyes from the score sheet long enough to watch! I also have learned to do my own hoof trimming – with periodic oversight from an understanding farrier, that is. I’ve learned a lot from learning how to trim hooves, but I also appreciate that there’s an awful lot I don’t know.

**RI** *What are your hobbies and interests outside of the barn?*

**JM** I make the 34-mile trek each day to sit in an office and practice law, which supports my farm and my “horsey habit.” The rest of the time I’m either indulging in said “horsey habit” or doing work on my farm, which I also find fulfilling. (We won’t go into my feelings toward doing housework, however.)

**RI** *What is your biggest success?*

**JM** Any time I “took the plunge” into something new. I am not a natural risk-taker, so going to law school and passing the Bar, then going for my ARIA certification, and then buying a farm and bringing my horse home for the first time – those were all challenges that made me push myself beyond my comfort zone. I am very proud of each of these efforts.

**RI** *What words of wisdom would you share with new instructors?*

**JM** Be proud of your teaching, even if your niche is “just” starting beginners. There can be no true success without a strong foundation. Everyone has to start somewhere, and how gratifying it is to start a new rider and see her improve to the point that she is ready to graduate to the next level, even if that means she moves on to another instructor.

Keep learning, and keep an open mind. You may run across a method or concept that at the moment seems pointless or even wrong, but months or years later on you might discover that it has a purpose and use for a particular situation. Been there, done that, when I first became immersed in that “horse whispering” stuff; later on, I realized that many of those “traditional” practices make a lot of sense after all. Trends come and go – be open to them because you can get a lot out of them, but don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater!

**RI** *If you had to do it all over again, what would you do differently?*

**JM** Perhaps it’s a lack of imagination on my part, but there isn’t much I would change. I think now that it was a good thing that I didn’t have a horse of my own until I had set-

tled into a career. If I had succeeded in realizing my dream of having a horse of my own as early as I wanted, I may not have had all those wonderful years being a horseless, horse crazy kid who was able to spend so much time as a working student, with all that exposure to fine instruction and instructing technique, the opportunity to ride many different horses, and the chance to learn how to start young horses – all of which have tremendously enriched my experiences with horses. Furthermore, I suspect I would have been too distracted while living the “horsey life,” so I would not have gone to law school, which would have made it less likely that I’d be able to support the “horsey lifestyle” I have now.

**RI** *What are your future plans and goals?*

**JM** Near term, I’d like to get that incredibly fussy contraption known as a “side saddle” properly balanced for my horse and me (\*sigh\*), and then put some time into growing my skills as an aside rider. I think it’d be fun to try a dressage competition aside.

Someday, although perhaps not until after I’m retired from the office job, I would like to really put my ARIA certification to work by offering lessons. I’m also intrigued by Centered Riding certification, too ■

**New Stall Safe<sup>®</sup>**  
Concentrated Disinfectant and Sanitizer

# ATTACK GERMS BEFORE THEY ATTACK YOUR HORSE.

- Effective Against Equine Herpes Virus Type 1\* and Equine Influenza A Virus\*
- Disinfects and deodorizes stables, trailers, stalls and utensils
- Comes with a convenient motorized sprayer and gallon dispenser
- For use in kennels, crates, coops and catteries
- Stall Safe<sup>®</sup> is an alternative to commonly-used chemicals, such as bleach, ammonia, iodine, and pine cleaners
- Less than one ounce makes one gallon\*\*



\*Effective in the presence of 5% blood serum.  
Not available in California as of 4/1/08.

\*\*See directions for use.



The Horse World's Most  
Trusted Name<sup>®</sup>  
www.absorbine.com

© 2008 W.F. Young, Inc.

# Questions for an Equine Law Practitioner

By Julie I. Fershtman,  
Attorney at Law  
[www.equinelaw.net](http://www.equinelaw.net)



## Can Injured Trainers Sue Horse Owners?

Dear Ms. Fershtman

I am about to take my colt to a trainer that came well-recommended. What if my colt hurts the trainer? Should I be worried about being sued?  
— A.L. (Indiana)

**H**ORSE TRAINERS, it might seem, should expect the risk of being thrown or injured by the horses they train. Over the years, however, injured trainers have filed lawsuits against those who hired them and others. And sometimes the trainers win.

### Cases Involving Equine Activity Liability Laws

As of March 2009, 46 states have passed some form of equine activity liability law. As I have written in the past, all of the laws differ, but many of them share common characteristics. Most of these laws state that an equine professional, equine activity sponsor or “another person” should not be held liable if someone is injured as a result of an “inherent risk of equine activity.” The laws typically include exceptions that could allow certain kinds of lawsuits to proceed.

Both before and after the passage of these laws, some professional horse trainers have filed lawsuits after being injured on the job. A brief discussion of the cases follows.

#### Trainers Lose

In one case, a horse trainer sued the horse’s owner after being kicked while preparing a horse for a show. The case was dismissed based on Georgia’s Equine Activity Liability Act. On appeal, the Georgia Court of Appeals agreed and found

that the law protected the owner from suit because the trainer qualified as a “participant in an equine activity” to whom the law applied.

In a case from Louisiana, an exercise rider at a race track was injured and sued. The Court likewise held that the case should be dismissed based on Louisiana’s Equine Activity Liability Act.

#### The Trainer Wins

A case from Massachusetts involved a horse trainer who took a test ride to evaluate a horse for potential purchase, but the horse threw him, causing injuries. Throughout the case, a dispute existed as to whether the horse’s owners warned the trainer that the horse was temperamental and disliked being ridden in a certain direction. The trainer did not necessarily win the case outright, but because of the discrepancy in the facts, the court ruled that a jury needed to decide whether the horse owners satisfied a requirement in the Massachusetts Equine Activity Liability Act to “make reasonable and prudent efforts” to determine the trainer’s ability to safely ride the horse.

### Cases Involving No Equine Activity Liability Law

#### Trainers Lose

New York’s highest court affirmed dismissal of a law-

suit filed by the famous jockey, Ron Turcotte (who was best known for riding “Secretariat” to his U.S. triple crown victory). During a race at Belmont Park, Mr. Turcotte fell and was rendered a paraplegic. He sued several people, including a jockey who allegedly caused the accident and the owner of the horse that the jockey rode. In dismissing the case, the court stated in part that “professional sporting contests ... by their nature involve an elevated degree of danger. If a participant makes an informed estimate of the risks involved in the activity and willingly undertakes them, then there can be no liability if he is injured as a result of those risks.”

In a case from Indiana years ago, a trainer worked a horse on a longe line when the horse allegedly attacked and injured the trainer. The trainer sued the horse’s owner. However, the court dismissed the case based on the principle that the trainer had “assumed the risk” of being injured.

#### Trainers Win

In a New York case, an experienced horse trainer volunteered to help another trainer load a colt into a trailer but was injured when the horse kicked her. She sued the horse farm claiming that it was negligent for, among other things, failing to warn her of the colt’s dangerous propensities and for improperly administer-

ing a tranquilizer to the horse before the incident. Ruling that the case should be permitted to proceed to trial, the court noted that the trainer did not “assume the risk” of being kicked under the circumstances.

In a case from Minnesota, a professional horseshoer was kicked while trimming a horse. His lawsuit claimed that the owner knew, but never warned, that the horse was a “kicker.” The court held that the horseshoer deserved her day in court so that a jury could decide if the owner, by not warning of the horse’s history, created an unusually hazardous situation that put the horseshoer in danger.

### Conclusion

As these cases show, trainers are more likely to succeed if they can prove that the owner or stable knew that the horse at issue had an unusually dangerous tendencies but failed to warn them. Trainers are more likely to lose if the risk at issue was an “inherent risk” or an “assumed risk.” ■

*This article does not constitute legal advice. When questions arise based on specific situations, direct them to a knowledgeable attorney.*

#### About the Author

**Julie Fershtman**, a lawyer for nearly 23 years, is one of the nation’s most experienced Equine Law practitioners. She has achieved numerous courtroom victories, has drafted hundreds of contracts, and is a Fellow of the American College of Equine Attorneys. She has spoken on Equine Law at conventions and conferences in 26 states. For more information, visit [www.equinelaw.net](http://www.equinelaw.net) and [www.equinelaw.info](http://www.equinelaw.info).

Julie Fershtman’s books, *MORE Equine Law & Horse Sense* and *Equine Law & Horse Sense*, can help people avoid disputes. The books are easy to read and are required reading at several equine studies programs. Order both for \$42.90, first-class shipping included. For more information, or to order, contact Horses & The Law Publishing at 866-5-EQUINE. Or, send check or money order to Horses & The Law Publishing, P.O. Box 250696, Franklin, MI 48025-0696.





## Teaching Children Kindness and Empathy Towards Animals

Donning the hat of the humane educator is one more important piece of headgear that riding instructors need to wear when they teach.

by Didi Arias

**T**HE HOME ENVIRONMENT is the first place in which children should start to cultivate an understanding of kindness towards others; once children become interested in horses, the riding stables becomes an additional perfect classroom in which these feelings can be further developed and nurtured. Humane education is a form of character moulding that puts emphasis on the importance of being respectful and compassionate towards others, including animals and their habitat. Donning the hat of the humane educator is one more important piece of headgear that riding instructors need to wear when they teach.

### Teach by example

As children tend to copy others, especially the adults around them, make sure that you treat both people and animals with equal respect, regardless of race/breed, gender, age, value or background. Whether the horse is the fine, new, show animal or if he is an old, moth-eaten school horse, they should both receive equal amounts of care and affection by you or their caretakers. Teaching kindness starts by the good example of showing acts of kindness: towards your students, co-workers and towards the animals.

Teach children that even if they dislike someone or a particular horse, that they still have to be polite and treat him or her correctly. Simple formal courtesies of “hello” and “goodbye”, and “yes, please” and “thank you” are still required towards others as well as the gentle handling, or pats of praise for a job well done, are still warranted by all of the horses, favourite or not.

Avoid harsh expressions and name calling when dealing with the horses as this can also mould the way a child perceives an animal. Make sure you avoid admonishing the horses with negative expressions such as “useless nag” or “stupid”.

Talk softly to the horses as well as to the children. You will probably find that the tone of others’ voices lowers with yours.

Personalize the animals by referring to them as “he” or “she” instead of “it” (but be prepared to explain *how* you know they are a “he” or “she” to the very young riders!).

Utilize the daily animal-related activities at your facility to help broaden your students’ respect towards all creatures. Involve them in the feeding of the horses and other barn animals and in rescue missions such as the taking of bugs out of water troughs or putting baby birds back in their nests, or ask for their help in making a cozy straw bed for the new litter of barn kittens. Also show a respect for the habitat in which the animals live as well as the environment in general. Most children are very keen to learn these lessons and will enthusiastically participate. Last spring our barn had its regular showering of baby birds coming out of the nest too soon as well as a young hedgehog that had been injured and who needed bottle-feeding. Glad to spend the time teaching the children about the needs of these species and how we could best help them, I was quite touched when I saw the baby bird rescue sanctuary they had constructed >

**Above** Lucy Byrne and Twizzle – A post-ride hug of thanks.



**Left** Hannah Foy and “Atajo” – Post-ride care.

in a spare stall. We were all very proud when the bird parents located the babies, still cared for them, and eventually helped their young fly off. What an extra bonus the students got coming to the stables that week: horses *and* baby hedgehogs and birds!

### Teach by discussion

While children most definitely learn by example, they also learn by discussion; those classes in which you teach about horse care and management are as important as the mounted classes you teach. Teach them how a horse functions: how often, if ever, do children get to listen to a heart through a stethoscope? Let them hear the wonder of the “lub-dub” of a horse’s heart both at rest and immediately after exercise. By showing how the animals are living, breathing individuals, the children learn to be more compassionate and not to just think of the animals as “riding machines.”

Explain the many little things that one needs to be aware of with animals, such as the *real* needs of the pony with laminitis are not extra goodies, but instead are rest and extra deep litter – or how that old retired horse still wants their visits for grooming and petting and to still feel appreciated.

Encourage your students to read quality

publications about animals. Who of us Baby Boomers will forget reading Anna Sewell’s 1877 classic novel *Black Beauty*? This book was the first to bring to the public mind the sad plight and suffering of many horses of the day. For over a century, this book has been an influence on many a reader in the development of his feelings and actions towards horses. I hope that children of today still read this book; we should all keep several copies of it in our tack room libraries and make it required reading in our teaching curriculum.

### Teach kindness by learning to recognize the feelings and needs of others

When a horse does not give the expected response to confusing and conflicting aids, ask the student what the horse must be thinking at that moment: “do you think he may not be so sure what you wanted to tell him, when you pulled his head *both* left and right?” I like using the question “Is he a ‘Happy Horse?’” to encourage the student to find out whether the answer is “yes”, “no” and “why/why not?”

Remind students not to only think of themselves: if the temperature is high and they are hot, then the horse is probably hot or tired, or if they are thirsty, maybe the horse is thirsty, too.

When you involve the student in the horse’s pre- and post- ride care, you directly present to the child the animals’ immediate needs as a riding mount. This is where you need to encourage the collaboration of the parent by explaining the importance of learning empathy through basic horse care. So many parents drop the student off barely in time to mount up in time for the ride, or are impatiently waiting for them to dismount so that they can be whisked off for their next appointment. Impress upon the parents the reasons behind this philosophy and that you consider this to be part of their equine education, and ask them to allow enough time for their child to partake in these activities. I’m sure there will be parents who thank you for the insight.

**Reward kindness** – For some reason, humans have the tendency to notice the behaviour we don’t like, but overlook the correct behaviour we are looking for. We often admonish for doing something wrong, but we don’t notice when someone does something right. Notice when the children are being kind and thinking about the animals’ welfare. Stop yourself from saying “hurry up, it’s time to go, we’ll do it later” and instead point out how thoughtful the child was to want to rinse the horse down before leaving. Showering a child with praise when you catch him in the act of kindness will go a long way: children like to be told they are doing something right! For a pattern of caring behaviour to emerge, it needs to be nurtured; show your appreciation with verbal praise, or sometimes little rewards such as stickers, coloring pages, or a star.

What if we notice a student harming or being cruel to the animals at the stables? While children will often kill insects, few will actually intentionally cause harm to pets or other animals. It should be addressed any time a child has caused harm to an animal, whether it was seemingly an innocent act of cruelty or a calculated desire to cause harm. If you know that a child has harmed an animal, alert the child’s parents (but if you are really concerned you may report what you know to the local animal welfare organization or even the police department).

“Showering a child with praise when you catch him in the act of kindness will go a long way: children like to be told they are doing something right!”



Teachers and parents should be aware that animal cruelty, like any other violence, is not just a developmental "stage" that some children go through. Children may treat animals badly because of embarrassment, anger or frustration, because they may themselves be the victims of abuse at home or at school, or because they may be neglected and not have their needs attended to.

In conclusion, to help children learn to be kind towards animals, be realistic and patient. Kindness is not necessarily something that is learned overnight, but is a gradual learning process that takes place over time. Many children are naturally empathetic, but it is wise to continue to nurture and maintain the trait. As soon as we make our first contact with our young students we have the luxury of being able to guide them towards developing a sense of great kindness, respect and even love towards all creatures, two, four, six and eight legged, and both great and small.

For useful teaching resources, class discussions, project ideas and downloads geared towards humane education, visit the website of the Humane Society of the United States on [www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org). ■

## FIRST+ICE®

*It's never been so simple to give your horse Cold Therapy Leg Care, anywhere, anytime, without the ice mess.*



**ICE HORSE**  
Equine Cold Therapy

**MACINNON** 800-786-6633  
Fax 858-792-1373  
[www.mackinnonicehorse.com](http://www.mackinnonicehorse.com)



## BUG OUT



Insects are more than just a nuisance. They spread infection and disease, and they drive your horse crazy.

SmartBug-Off is your one-stop solution for flies and insects.

This special formula works to both deter biting *and* discourage breeding of pests, while protecting your horse's skin.

All this in a tasty pellet form...

It's no wonder why SmartBug-Off is creating quite a buzz.



## BUG-OFF



SmartBug-Off™ is part of the SmartSupplement™ family of over 40 targeted problem solvers, available in buckets or daily dose SmartPaks™. For more information, visit us online at [www.SmartPakEquine.com/SmartBugOff](http://www.SmartPakEquine.com/SmartBugOff) or call 1-888-672-1057

SMARTSUPPLEMENTS™ BY  SMARTPAK™



**American Riding Instructors Association**  
28801 Trenton Ct., Bonita Springs, FL 34134-3337  
**Phone** (239) 948-3232 • **Fax** (239) 948-5053  
**e-mail** [aria@riding-instructor.com](mailto:aria@riding-instructor.com)  
[www.riding-instructor.com](http://www.riding-instructor.com)

### Membership Benefits

- Riding Instructor magazine
- Insurance Discounts!
- Free classified ads on the ARIA web site!
- Membership card to carry in your wallet
- ARIA color logo decal for your car window

### Application for ARIA Membership

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Visa/MC/AmEx/Discover accepted)

*Membership is available to individuals only.*

**\$35 for one full year** from the date of application or **\$75 for three full years!**  
**Lifetime Membership \$750**



**Left** Hannah Knaebel of Topline Sporthorse, and Finale clear the roll top at Fish Bowl Farm.

# Building Essential Cross-Country Jumps

## – You Can Do It!

by Emily Wigley

**M**ANY INSTRUCTORS and facility owners feel that building cross-country obstacles is out of the question for several reasons: lack of space, lack of funds, and lack of know-how. They don't think they can do it. There's a big mystery about cross-country course design and fence construction. The truth is that you don't need much space, you don't need a big budget, and you don't need years of design and building experience. You can do it!

The average farm owner can successfully plan a few basic cross-country jumps. Space, finances and expertise may limit the options; it might be unrealistic to build an entire Rolex course in one's backyard. Still, proper design and placement can result in a few basic obstacles that are just right – perfect for introducing riders to jumping fixed obstacles outside, and preparing horses and riders to face the jumps found at horse trials.

As an instructor, it is your job to prepare students for whatever they may be faced with on a cross-country course. Riding in the open, riding in a new place, and the hype of competition are all challenges at a horse tri-

al. While schooling at other facilities in your area is one way to expose horses and riders to different cross-country obstacles, the expense and time required to trailer horses and students around to neighboring courses is high. The high cost of fuel and a busy schedule may mean you are better off with a few thoughtfully conceived jumps at your home base. As riding space disappears across the country, you may not have a great local spot for schooling, so putting in some jumps at your farm will double the use of your land (grazing and jumping) without the need for travel. With a cross-country schooling field you will attract more students to your program,

and your existing students will have a lot of fun learning as they jump around, whether or not they ever compete cross-country. You also may find that other professionals wish to utilize your cross country jumps. Set a haul-in fee for your jumps, host clinics or schooling days for you or others to teach. A few cross country fences are a great plus to instructors and students alike.

### Understanding basic jumps

At the lowest levels, there are a few goals and points of safety to keep in mind. Riders at Beginner Novice, for example, need to get out in the open and learn to pace themselves in control while jumping simple jumps out of the trot and canter. It is possible to design a few basic obstacles to fit into many training situations.

There are really only three shapes of fences: vertical, square oxer, ramped or ascending oxer. Look at the profile, or side view, of an obstacle to determine its shape. With these three shapes, you can create the most popular obstacles on competition courses: simple logs, coops, ramps, benches, cabins or barns, roll tops and tables. If you have limited space, you can build three obstacles, one of each shape, and make them your own with interesting details and placement. With three fences that can be jumped from both directions you have six jumps.

A square oxer at its simplest is a log. Logs should be placed a few inches off the ground on pressure treated lumber for longevity and easy maintenance and placement. There is a multitude of ways to dress them up: six- to twelve inch rocks placed on the ground across the face of the log; planted shrubs along the face of the log; taller evergreens at either end of the log make excellent wings. A larger oxer could be a large diameter log section, or a constructed roll top or table. Simple to build, a roll top or table requires more heavy timbers or lumber than simple logs, but offers unlimited opportunities for creative finishing. Logs don't have to be boring: carve your farm's name in the face of the log, use interesting ground lines to make them different. A ground line on each side of the log makes two jumps – make them different (small log, rocks, small shrubs or flowering plants) for variety.

A vertical is a simple obstacle like a pasture fence. A simple vertical, such as a small post and rail fence, with a ground line in front becomes softer to approach for both the horse and rider, and more interesting to look at.



Ground lines can be a smaller log, different footing, short shrubbery or flowers, and so on.

An ascending or ramped oxer is a fence that slopes up in height from the face of the jump to the back of the jump: a coop, cabin, bench, and pheasant feeder. A bench can be small or large, and can be dressed up to soften the severity of the profile with things sitting on the bench: flower pots, small straw or hay bales, etc. Softening is the difference between a severely angular looking jump and a rounded, inviting jump. Soft is good for both riders and horses, and offers unlimited options. Change the “softening” element during the season to keep it fresh and interesting. Holes drilled for natural brush to be inserted are a handy feature. Use fabric flowers if watering is inconvenient.

## Where to put each jump

The placement of each obstacle, based on the shape of the space to be used and its terrain, is just as important as the composition of the obstacles. Remember that terrain adds difficulty, the horse’s stride and sometimes the shape of the fence. Any shape of field or space – oblong, square, dog-legged – can be used for cross-country riding. Draw a rough scale map for reference and planning, and then walk or ride it several times. Imagine going to fences and riding away from them; the approach and the get away are equally important. Place them where the approach feels welcome, open, and straightforward. The more you walk or ride the land, the more comfortable you will feel with the placement of the obstacles. Use spray paint, shavings, lime or flour to mark the spot where the jump will be placed. Make sure there’s a balance of obstacles on the flat, uphill and downhill,



and think about the level of horses and riders who will be using them. It is always easier to increase the level of difficulty in the future; start with the basics!

A lot of riders at the lowest levels are uncomfortable jumping downhill, but it’s easier for the horse to jump down rather than up. Imagine the effort he horse has to make uphill and over a fence, versus the minor effort to jump downhill. Keep in mind that riders need to be comfortable riding on terrain without jumps before attempting to jump down and up hills.

Avoid putting obstacles on steep slopes for the lower levels. Slopes of 45° are best left to Training level courses and above, and only where the footing is very good. Keep in mind that jumps placed on slopes will require more maintenance for the surrounding footing.

The best thing I’ve ever been told by a course designer is that the most important

part of the course is the track and its footing! This is the only part a horse will (hopefully) touch, and therefore, it is the most important. The track should always be planned for the horse to take off from a safe spot.

What makes a safe spot? A level take off and landing, even if it’s on an incline or decline. This sounds contradictory, but it’s the left-to-right level that I am referring to. If your jump is set at an angle across a slope, it’s probably not a safe spot. We don’t want the riders and horses to feel that if the horse had shorter left legs than right legs it would work better! Save those angles not for jumping, but for getting across the land. Riding across-country includes letting the horse find his best line on terrain, and schooling should teach riders to let the horse make these decisions when possible.

Jumps placed along fence lines are a good choice for lower level schooling because the ▶

**FarmTek<sup>®</sup>**  
**EQUINE**supply

*We offer a wide selection of high-quality equine supplies to help maintain your horse's good health and happy lifestyle.*

- Indoor riding arenas
- Horse stalls • Barn flooring Buckets & feeders
- Mineral holders
- Hay feeders • Waterers
- Barn fans
- Dust control systems
- Energy-efficient lighting

**Call today...**  
...for your free master catalog **1.800.327.6835** or shop online at **www.FarmTek.com**. Please mention code FE0921.

*I'm Happier & Healthier*

fence line guides the horse and rider. Walk the field. Imagine trotting, cantering, galloping across it. Be sure that obstacles are placed so that the horse reaches the obstacle with enough time and space to see it in order to avoid a surprise.

Fences with great visibility before and after them also makes schooling with a coach that much easier. You want to see your students and horses, they'll feel better being able to see you, and green horses will feel more secure with horses in sight.

Trees are fabulous! One doesn't need to remove trees, but thoughtful limbing and brush removal for good visibility is important. A head clearance of 14' is good, so horses and riders of all sizes don't feel closed in with branches.

Big, round figure eights are excellent for courses. Imagine a traditional show hunter course: it's simple, it uses both directions, and it's fun for horse and rider. It also uses space quite well, so for those of us with a few acres or less a nice schooling course can efficiently utilize the land. Put some obstacles in the middle and some around the perimeter. Be sure to leave room between obstacles and fences for tractors and trucks unless you want to trim weeds and grass by hand. You want to be able to move, repair and maintain the obstacles, the field's fencing and its footing. Placing cross-country obstacles in a horse pasture is a good use of space; you may look out one day to see horses happily jumping at liberty!

My favorite obstacles at my own farm are an adjustable cordwood jump and a roll top. The cordwood is in our woods, built between two trees. It's symmetrical, making it safe and fun to jump from both directions, and it's

placed where two paths meet, offering three different approaches. It is adjustable by simply adding or removing secured cordwood. It usually sits at 2'-6", suitable for use by riders at the lower levels of eventing. (Beginner Novice fences are maximum 2'-7" in height and Novice fences are 2'-11".) The wood that we stack for our cordwood is local madrona, a hardwood, which makes for a longer life of the jump.

Our roll top is made of Douglas fir flitches (or slabs, as they're also called), which are the pieces of wood from the first four cuts of a log on a sawmill. Imagine cutting off the four long sides of a log, resulting in scrap pieces with one curved, barked side. We take the bark off the flitches so the wood lasts longer. My husband, Alex, has a band saw mill, and the leftover flitches are excellent for cross-country jumps. The frame of the roll top is made from a salvaged wooden cable spool and heavy pressure treated lumber. The pressure treated framing lumber is the only part of the obstacle we purchased; the rest is salvage or scrap. The roll top is placed near the edge of a field bordered by a natural salal hedge. It is a portable fence, and is usually placed on a slight slope for schooling from either direction.

## What not to do

The biggest problem I've seen is building "mini-Badmintons." At the lowest levels, jumps should be inviting, helpful and encouraging to learning riders and green horses. The more difficult fences should be left to the mid- and upper-levels of riders and horses, and to licensed course designers. These jumps would include skinny fences, corners, and tight complexes. Sometimes the enthusiasm of non-rider parents and adults gets in the way of safe,

simple fences. Keep your focus on simple and functional jumps.

Simple fences need not be boring! Dress them up with shingles, natural colored stains, chainsaw carving, interesting materials and plantings, etc. The shape is the blank canvas; the finish details are the oil paint.

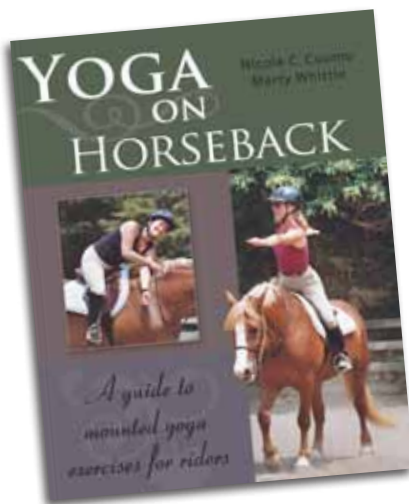
Mistakes come from the extremes: too much imagination (making small versions of upper level, inappropriate fences), or not enough imagination (log after log after log). Avoid monotony, keep the track flexible, and maintain it for safety.

Most cross-country fences should be symmetrical so they can be jumped from both directions. This is an opportunity to change one simple obstacle into two! For instance, a coop with natural cedar shingles and a stone dust ground line on one side and stained lap siding with flowering plants for a ground line on the other side. It will be more interesting, and help you get the maximum schooling versatility out of your cross-country course.

Digging out a ditch is one thing, but making it safe for months and years of use is another. A ditch should be revetted (reinforced and supported) on the inside and at the lip of the ditch. A plain dirt ditch invites erosion from weather and skidding hooves. This is an easy mistake to make when one is enthusiastic and in need of a ditch for teaching and schooling, but taking the time to build it properly will be safer and longer lasting.

Banks and water complexes are best left to those with a lot of land and larger budgets, where heavy machinery, elaborate building plans and materials such as liners for water obstacles are used.

I have also seen combinations placed incorrectly. While this seems like an easy task to



## You and your horse in balanced harmony

- **Improve** your balance, overall awareness strength, and flexibility.
- **Increase** your freedom of movement.
- **Learn** to focus on body awareness.
- **Breathe** correctly and freely at all gaits.
- **Open** the hips, chest and heart areas for correct posture.
- **Experience** more confidence and trust in your riding ability and your horse.
- **Align** both your own and your horse's energy into a balanced harmony.

**\$15.95** plus shipping

*Marty@topcatfarms.com*

860-663-2810

Clinics Available



an instructor well versed in striding, often at lower level schooling sites the builders are not riders, but are helpful parents, or riders without the experience and knowledge to place combinations safely. Using portable jumps is one solution, as the jumps can be moved. Or, place two jumps as unrelated distances. Walking (let alone riding) to a fixed in-and-out such as a sheep pen is downright scary when the striding is off!

My pet peeves are also the most dangerous things...

- Under-built obstacles must be avoided! If you remember the horse's adage "when in doubt, feel it out" and build obstacles to withstand a horse touching down while jumping or getting hung up on it, it will be safe. Flimsy jumps must be avoided at all cost. If it can't be built as stout as necessary, skip the construction project and find a good log!
- Square edges and corners are dangerous. Rounded or chamfered edges and corners are safe. Use the backside of a chainsaw to chamfer an edge; making it rounded and softer for the horse that touches it. Or run lumber through a table saw so there are no 90° angles exposed. It looks more natural and inviting this way, as well as being much safer.
- Unstaked fences are scary! Portable fences are a wonderful way to create a flexible course of obstacles – but if a portable fence isn't staked safely, it may roll when a horse slides into it or hangs a leg over it. That is as dangerous as a poorly built fence. Staking with wood or rebar is easy to do, and is easy to change for repositioning. It's simple: holes are drilled in the base of the

fence's frame, and rebar is pounded into a depth of two to four feet, depending on soil conditions. Bend the top of the rebar into a loop before pounding it in so it is easy to pull with a chain and tractor when you are ready to un-stake and move the fence. Pound wooden stakes in at both ends and on both sides of the obstacle, effectively pinning it to the ground. Placing the stakes (wood or metal) at opposing angles will do the job safely.

## The budget

How much should it cost to build a few jumps? Free to \$2,000 per fence. I know this is a horrible answer, because it's not very specific! If you are good at salvaging and scrounging materials, then your time, fuel, tools, and hardware may be your only expenses. The typical 2'-6" diameter log, 14' long, will cost around \$200 in the Pacific Northwest. Hardwood will cost more, and transportation will add to the price. A well crafted jump made of 4"x6" or 6"x6" pressure treated framing materials and finish materials (shingles, etc.) can easily cost \$1,500-\$2,000. Chances are you can get some logs to cut and stack, cordwood to secure, pressure treated materials and house building materials. Talk to small scale sawyers, home builders, or tree services, and you may find a bargain. You may find someone interested in helping with labor too! Networks for sharing free items are a good resource; online try your local Craig's List or Freecycle. Salvage building supply yards are also a good resource.

## Building & maintenance

Jumps are not hard to build when one understands basic framing and safety concepts. Go

look at the jumps you admire on courses in your area. Look not just from the rider's point of view, but study them from the ground and under the fence to see how they are built. Tractors, chainsaws and drills will be needed for building cross-country obstacles, even at the lowest levels.

Many hands make light(er) work: host a work party for riders and their families to help build your fences. Be sure to have a clear plan, and supervise those who don't have building experience. Offer something in return: free or reduced fee lesson or schooling, or a simple meal of thanks. Your students will enjoy being involved. "Our barn" or "our course" takes on even grander meaning with a cross-country course, no matter how small, for riders to enjoy.

## Simple rules for safe, fun jumps

- Make sure that no holes or spaces in the obstacle are between 3"-8" in diameter (hoof size).
- For lower level fences, be sure there is a ground line of some kind (small log, big rocks, plants); even a different ground material gives the visual effect of depth (gravel, shavings, brush, etc.).
- Peel your logs! This is easy to do, and critical for the longevity of your wood and fences. Bugs like to live between the bark and the wood, and they eat the wood!

Maintaining simple fences generally involves re-staining them regularly, keeping them clear of weeds and grass, checking the soundness of wood annually for dry rot, and the security of hardware and fasteners. Wood will shrink and expand, changing the integrity of >

# NEW Triple Crown® Treats

Made with ground oats and alfalfa meal, Triple Crown Treats are a healthy, baked cookie-type treat high in Omega-3 fatty acids derived from fish oil and flax seed, which is a proven benefit for improved hair coat and reduced inflammation for horses in exercise.

Reward your horse with confidence.

**TRIPLE CROWN**  
Nutrition, Inc.

800-451-9916

www.triplecrownfeed.com



Triple Crown® is a registered trademark of Triple Crown Nutrition, Inc., Wayzata, MN 55391

the construction over time. Most wooden jumps will last five-ten years depending on materials and climate. Check for insect, rodent, snake and other pest infestations. Schooling a fence full of yellow jackets or ground-nesting bees can be a disaster!

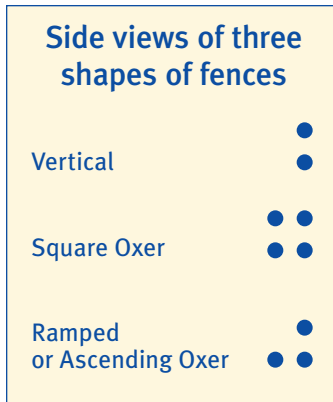
## Obstacles with higher level potential

If a stable has horses and riders at many levels, how would that affect the course designer's plans?

I recommend thinking ahead so that obstacles can work for Novice, Training and Preliminary schooling with simple changes and updates. Large rails can be secured to existing fences for more height. Portables can be moved to create combinations. A selection of similar jumps, say cabins, can be placed side by side; with different faces/widths/heights, they create appropriate questions for Beginner Novice to Preliminary horses and riders. Use terrain to challenge riders moving up the levels: hills, bending lines, turns, etc.

Keep the USEA rules in mind. There is a table of specifications by level in the rule book, a wonderful guide for what to expect in competitions and what to build at home for schooling. Your students and horses will literally learn by leaps and bounds with safe, fun schooling obstacles at home! ■

Reprinted from *Hunter & Sport Horse Magazine*.  
www.SportHorseMag.com



## Resources

Professional course designers are either "approved" by the USEA ([www.useventing.com](http://www.useventing.com)) to design courses through Training level (3'3" height), or are licensed ("r" or "R") by the USEF ([www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org)) for Preliminary, Intermediate and Advanced courses. The FEI ([www.fei.org](http://www.fei.org)) licenses international course designers.

*Design and Build a Cross-Country Course*, by Hugh Morshead, Kenilworth Press, Ltd., 2005.

*Cross-Country Course Design and Construction: The Essential Guide for Course Designers, Builders, and Competitors*, by Mike Etherington-Smith, J.A. Allen, 2003.

### About the Author

Emily Wigley and her husband, Alex, own Fish Bowl Farm in Washington. Emily is a Level II certified ARIA instructor in dressage and stable management, and runs a lesson program for beginners, lower level dressage and eventing riders. She is an approved course designer through the U.S. Eventing Association. "Being a USEA approved course designer means that I have gone through the association's course design seminar. This includes lectures, discussions and hands-on course design exercises. The seminars are taught by USEF licensed 'R' course designers, often with FEI credentials as well." Emily adds, "I particularly enjoy developing obstacles and courses to educate riders and horses at the lower levels of the sport. It's fun, and the lower levels are the heart of the sport." Emily's husband and partner, Alex, is an expert mechanic and woodworker. He operates a bandsaw mill at their farm, milling local wood for a variety of uses, from custom mantle pieces to cedar shingles and framing lumber. He brings essential talents to the Fish Bowl team's course design and building process. Emily offers cross-country and stadium course design for recognized and unrecognized competitions, complete site design for courses, and single obstacle designs for facilities of all sizes and scopes, portable and permanent. Most recently, she designed a series of portable fences for the Noble Riders Pony Club to use at Lily Glen in Ashland, Oregon. Fish Bowl Farm is on the web at [www.fishbowlfarm.com](http://www.fishbowlfarm.com).

**FORAN**  
EQUINE PRODUCTS

**YOUR PARTNER IN PERFORMANCE**

**NOW AVAILABLE IN THE U.S.**

**Chevinal Plus** multi-vitamin & mineral syrup  
**Ost-O-Flex** the smart choice for healthy joints  
**Equi-Lyte G** the electrolyte choice of champions  
**Equi-Calm** for a calm, responsive horse  
**Pro-Am BOOST** pre-competition energizer  
**Re-Fuel** the ideal post-competition pick-up

**www.KimminsInternational.com**  
(239) 216-0074

**Reduce your supplement and feed expense...**

**Farrier's Formula® Double Strength**

- More economical to feed compared to original Farrier's Formula®.
- Twice the concentration... Lasts twice as long!

**Barn Bag™ Pleasure and Performance Horse Pelleted Feed Concentrate**

- You manage or eliminate excess grain, starch and calorie intake.
- You regulate body weight of "easy keepers" or improve body condition of working horses.
- You reduce feed expense by making your hay and pasture more efficient.
- Barn Bag™ provides needed nutrients without over supplementation... The nutrition is in the Bag!

Life Data Labs, Inc.  
12290 Hwy 72  
Cherokee, AL 35616  
Product of the USA

800-624-1873  
256-370-7555  
eservice@lifedatalabs.com  
www.LifeDataLabs.com



Save these dates –  
Mark your calendar now!

**Wednesday, Nov. 18**  
**Test Center**  
 8 am – 5 pm  
**Welcoming Reception**  
 6–9 pm  
**Thursday, Nov. 19**  
**Convention**  
 8 am – 9 pm  
**Friday, Nov. 20**  
**Convention**  
 8:30 am – 9 pm  
**Saturday, Nov. 21**  
**Convention**  
 8:30 am – 4 pm

# Come join us as we celebrate ARIA's 25th Anniversary

## The National Riding Instructors Convention

November 18–21, 2009  
Naples, Florida

The Naples Grande Beach Resort is a deluxe resort located on the Gulf of Mexico.  
 Call 1-888-722-1270 (Group Reservations) or 239-597-3232 (Hotel main number)  
 for hotel reservations.

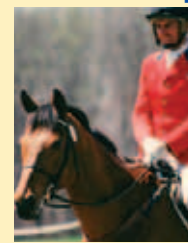
**Online Reservations:**  
<http://waldorfasteria.hilton.com/en/wa/groups/personalized/APFNGWA-ZZLE-20091113/index.jhtml>

ARIA has a special rate of \$109. per night + tax, single or double. (Resort fee has been waived.)

### Some of our featured Speakers



George H. Morris



Denny Emerson



Jane Savoie



Susan Harris



Sgt. Jerry Mayo  
 Royal Canadian  
 Mounted Police

## Convention Registration

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Convention fee** \$325 (Registered attendees may bring a guest for half price)  
**Certification testing fee** \$595 (New candidates); \$200 (Others)  
 Testing will be held at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, November 18

**Mail to** ARIA, 28801 Trenton Court, Bonita Springs, FL 34134  
**Tel** 239-948-3232 • **Fax** 239-948-5053 • **e-mail** riding-instructor@comcast.net



Convention sponsors



# Sally Swift's Lasting Legacy

by Susan Harris

(Sally Swift's Apprentice in 1989)

**W**HAT I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER most about Sally Swift is her kindness, clarity and positive approach to teaching. When she came into a room, everyone lighted up and wanted to sit next to her. When I first rode with her in a clinic, Sally created such an atmosphere of encouragement and learning that the clinic audience broke into spontaneous applause whenever a rider would do something right. At a time when riding instruction too often involved shouting and pressure, Sally taught riders – and teachers – to be aware of themselves, their horses and their students, to stop and wait for the process, and to allow positive changes to happen in the body, the mind and the horse. She brought grace and harmony to the relationship between horses and riders, teachers and students.

The horses knew it, too. When Sally taught, part of her apprentices' job was to keep horses from coming too close and perhaps knocking her down. During the course of a lesson, horses would inch closer and closer to Sally, and eventually they would be standing around her with their muzzles near her face. I feel privileged to have known Sally when she was still riding, and I'll always carry the memory of her riding Black Velvet at a smooth, energetic trot, with both of them practically floating over the ground.



A delighted Sally, accompanied by her friend, Francois Lemaire de Ruffieu, receives the ARIA Master Instructor award.

Sally had gifted hands. She could bring a person's balance, centering and awareness to a new level through her clarity, patience, and touch. She has helped so many people find the road to personal growth, help with body issues, and a way of being that goes far beyond riding. She would plant a seed of change and step back and allow the person to grow and develop in his or her own way, and often the results were life-changing.

Most of all, Sally Swift taught teachers. She would teach anybody, young or old, beginner or Olympian, but she particularly liked to teach teachers because they passed what they learned from her on to their students. Sally was extremely generous in sharing her work and acting as a mentor and master teacher, not only to her apprentices, but also to anyone who wanted to learn what she had to teach. Through sharing her work and helping so

many instructors learn and grow, Sally's work has brought about profound changes in the teaching of horsemanship, and has touched the minds, hearts and horses of thousands of riders who may never have met her, but who continue to benefit from her ideas. Sally created a ripple that has become a wave, and that wave will continue on to reach many other shores for long after her lifetime.

It is said, "A person lives on while their name is still spoken." Sally Swift's memory will continue through those she touched personally, her unique work, and all who continue to benefit from her gifts to us now and in the future.

## A Horse's Tribute to Sally Swift

by Peggy Brown

Centered Riding

Level IV Clinician, © 2009

**T**HE HORSES OF THE WORLD would like to come forth to honor our dear departed friend Sally Swift. A strong New England horsewoman, Sally lived a good life and ran a long, strong race. Her Centered Riding teaching technique has been a breakthrough worldwide, improving the lives of horses and their humans. Sally showed riders and trainers how to put their attention on themselves, before they put all of their attention on riding and training their horses.

We horses have worked for centuries for mankind. Some of us run fast, jump high, pull heavy loads, thrill the show ring crowds, herd cattle, follow the hounds, cover miles of trails, softly carry special riders, bravely patrol busy streets, and quietly listen to our humans' hearts and dreams. Sometimes however, our riders and trainers fail to understand our cautious and alert nature, our extreme sensitivity, our strength and speed, and our great primeval concern over maintaining our balance. There are some humans who have only seen us as beasts of burden, or as pieces of sports equipment, and think only of taming us, using us, or training us to do their bidding.

Sally Swift, through Centered Riding, understood us and helped people learn to "speak horse" to us through the balanced use of their bodies, their breathing and their centers. Sally showed riders how their minds affected their bodies and how their minds and their bodies affected the horse's body.



Sally and Carol Lavell are center stage at The National Riding Instructors Convention. Others in the group include George Morris, Denny Emerson, Linda Tellington-Jones, Bob Allen, Clare Coley, Cameo Miller, Susan Harris and Cathy Howard.





Sally demonstrates a point with help from her longtime assistant, Lucille Bump.

What had so often been unclear to us horses, and sometimes even frightened us, became easy to understand as our riders began to realize that often their bodies would actually tell us the exact opposite of what their brains, their spurs and their hands expected us to do. We horses clearly understand Centered Riders.

Sally was a gifted and generous teacher who skillfully guided riders and trainers around the world in an approach to teaching and working with horses in a humane, compassionate way, while at the same time incorporating the age old classical techniques that made the lives and training of horses better. Sally's hands, voice and her clear intent calmed, balanced and empowered horses and humans alike.

Sally Swift leaves this world a better place with the legacy of her books, teaching and exercises, and with a network of over 700 teachers of Centered Riding worldwide who offer the riders of the world techniques for working to balance and educate themselves in order to communicate and work with their horses. Thank you, Sally, from the horses of the world for making our riders and our lives better. You are a treasure and you ran an incredible race for us. ■

Introducing...  
**The Candice King Bridle Collection**  
 featuring



The Smart Lock System is a new patented fastener system that is easier, safer and more attractive than hook studs.  
 Comfort Plus Crown with ear cut outs.

*"These truly are innovative bridles. The quality is superb and the look is so clean. My hard working horses appreciate the Comfort Plus cutout crown and to me the Smart Lock System is ingenious. Changing bits and reins is fast and easy compared to hook studs."*  
 - Candice King



All bridles are handmade by master craftsman using only the finest English leather from Sedgewick & Co., England and finished to a level of superb quality rarely seen.

Available in Show Jumping, Hunter & Dressage Models

*The line will be available through fine tack shops this spring.*

**SCHNEIDERS**  
 Enduring Equestrian Products Since 1948  
 8255 E. Washington St., Chagrin Falls, Ohio 44023  
 1.800.365.1311 or Shop 24/7 at [SSTACK.COM](http://SSTACK.COM)

**ARIA Instructor Certification Test Center Dates & Locations**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>Jun. 14</b>    | Mt. Pleasant, Michigan  |
| <b>Jun. 27</b>    | Finleyville, Pennsylvania   |
| <b>Jul. 23</b>    | Bonita Springs, Florida   |
| <b>Aug. 21</b>    | Concord, New Hampshire  |
| <b>Nov. 14</b>    | West Springfield, Massachusetts<br>(held at Equine Affaire)   |
| <b>Nov. 18-21</b> | Naples, Florida (held at ARIA's 25th Anniversary Convention)<br>Featuring: George H. Morris, Denny Emerson, Susan Harris, Jane Savoie |

Please call 239-948-3232 to register, or register online at [www.riding-instructor.com](http://www.riding-instructor.com)





# Surviving Sticky Situations

By Allison Thurston  
Illustrations by Randall Enos

**I**N A PERFECT WORLD, the job of riding instructor would be the simple, Zen-like art of teaching your students to ride. In our dreams. ¶ The reality is that, as service providers, we frequently experience in-your-face, raise-your-blood pressure moments – also known as *Sticky Situations*.

When instructors get together, we inevitably share the war stories that are so much a part of the biz. These typically concern both the day-to-day physical side of the business and the difficulties inherent in dealing with personalities. Indulging our urge to compare harrowing or funny-in-retrospect experiences is a therapeutic outlet for the frustrations endemic to the job. It also relieves a very common sense of isolation – how

many of us have said or felt we were prisoners to our horses and our calling? Well, you are not a prisoner and you are not alone.

In my 20 years of teaching clinics, I have traveled extensively and taught at hundreds of barns. Time and time again, I have observed sticky situations repeating themselves in quite predictable patterns. None of us seems

exempt from *uh-oh* moments that run the gamut from compromised safety to professional backstabbing, from interfering parents and unreasonably demanding boarders to difficult students.

## Occupational hazards

Like any other job, riding instruction has its downsides. It is, for example, a job commonly causing obsession with the weather channel since heat, rain, and cold affect us, our stu-

dents and our animals directly – as anyone who has had to take a sledge hammer to frozen buckets knows all too well! Add to that breathing dust in quantities capable of causing black lung, plagues of flies, and the unpredictability of a huge animal, and you have a formula for some genuine unpleasantness. And then there's the daunting volume of supplies to be kept track of in the world of large animals. (We ain't dealing with no hamsters!)

But over and above all this, we have the enormous responsibility of running a business staffed by horses, attended by stress levels rivaling those experienced by air traffic controllers. Ours is a high-risk sport, and there are many possibilities for moments of terror in the daily task of keeping our selves, our employees, our clients, and our horses, safe and sound.

As service providers, instructors also must deal every day with a variety of characters, including horses, students, parents, and colleagues (the latter often referred to as "my other trainer"). There *will* be conflicts, there always are. An instructor needs sophisticated interpersonal skills to deal with the inevitable.

## Back to the drawing board

If you take the time to review your professional life and identify troublesome patterns, you can set the stage for change and start the path to solutions. Once problem areas are identified, solutions can be found to improve your interactions and professional relationships, leading to what many of us dream of – a less draining, better organized, much more enjoyable work environment.





If you have made the choice to change, start by envisioning the world you want, and generate a “perfect world” list. On mine, for example, parents would stand quietly at the rail, benignly smiling, and realize this is not negotiating an end to world hunger – it’s just riding. I would have time to myself. I would not have hay in my hair. I would own at least one pair of shoes that would never smell like the barn.

In your slow season, (stop laughing) review the previous year. Identify what didn’t work for you and what could have been better.

By and large the scenarios we could do without fall into the following categories

- **Business challenges** – These include safety issues, horse and stable management (“What’s this charge for fly spray?”), barn etiquette and lessons (“No, we’re not a baby sitting service.”) These are usually the simplest problems to solve.

- **Interpersonal conflicts** – Occurring in and out of the arena, these range from interfering parents (“Mother knows best!”) recalcitrant students (“My other trainer says...”) and unsupportive colleagues.

- **Emotional scenes** – You know them: an angry student taking out her frustration on her horse, a rider in a ‘difficult stage’ or state of mind (referred to as ‘arrested development’ in the case of adults).

- **Poor communication** – This causes problems when rules are not clearly stated and consistently enforced. (“Serves her right losing her toenails – I’ve told her ten times not to wear flip-flops”).

Reviewing each of these areas, ask yourself the following questions:

What drives you crazy?

What sticky situations have you found yourself in? Have these situations developed more than once? Repeatedly?

What would you like to spend less or more time doing?

### On a clear day...

In order to arrive at any solutions, you need to take a good hard look at the situation, roll up your sleeves and prepare for work.

It’s important to be clear on what you’re clear on. List your beliefs and your ethics, meaning – what subjects make you take a stand. What principles are essential to you?

Successful professionals are successful not because their place looks like the Taj Mahal, but because they have both a clear vision of their professional goals and the ability to communicate this. They know how they want >

# LAKE ERIE COLLEGE

## WHO WILL YOU BE IN FOUR YEARS?

Lake Erie College can help you find out. Small classes, professors who care, an active campus, strong equine programs and opportunities to experience the world through our international study trips.

### This is your time to get in and stand out!

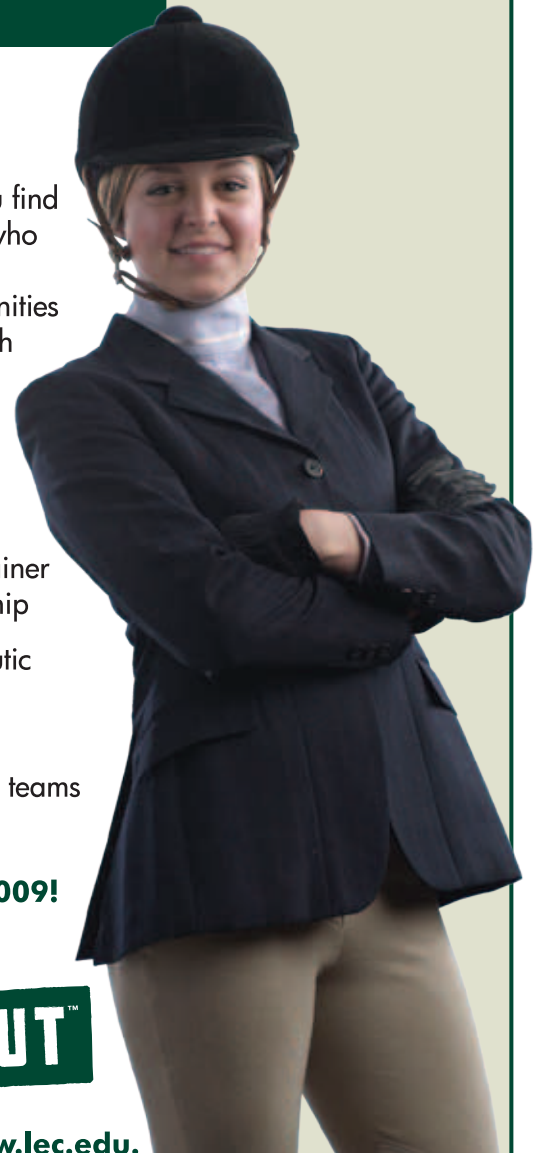
- > BS in Equine Facilities Management, Teacher/Trainer and Equine Entrepreneurship
- > Concentrations in therapeutic horsemanship and stud farm management
- > Competitive IHSA and IDA teams

**New equestrian learning facility opens in Spring 2009!**

**GET IN. STAND OUT™**

Visit us on the web at [www.lec.edu](http://www.lec.edu).

COLLEGE: 800.533.4996 | ADMISSIONS: 800.916.0904



## American Riding Instructor Certification Program

American Riding Instructors Association  
28801 Trenton Ct., Bonita Springs, FL 34134-3337 • Phone (239) 948-3232 • Fax (239) 948-5053  
e-mail [aria@riding-instructor.com](mailto:aria@riding-instructor.com) • web [www.riding-instructor.com](http://www.riding-instructor.com)

Nationally recognized certification



National standards of excellence and integrity



“The ARICP is good for riding instructors.”

*George H. Morris*

their barn to be run physically and they make sure that everyone involved understands the ground rules. Their work place is a pleasant place to be. Because they have reliable systems in place they can have what we all dream of. Time off.

#### My own belief list includes:

- My focus is on the welfare of the horse.
- I do not believe in 30-day wonder training.
- I will not send a student on to a level that they are clearly not ready for. That way they'll have the rudimentary skills to come back alive when, not if, they get bolted with.

#### You gotta do your homework

Paperwork is the bane of every horse person's existence, but there are certain must-haves. Conflict generally occurs because rules have not been written down or existing rules are not being followed. Lack of clarity or inability to communicate how you expect things to be done is responsible for a lot of everyday headaches.

Having clarified your beliefs, it's time to develop protocols addressing your expectations and how to improve the business side of your program. These should include your systems for barn management and horse management, and safety. Clear rules, clearly communicated, will eliminate many of your pet peeves, help actualize your perfect-world list, and promote safety, efficiency, and economy.

To avoid unpleasant surprises, your rules need to be written down, laminated, posted and signed on the dotted line. A student's first visit should include a tour of the facility with paperwork in hand to review how you expect things done. Creating definite protocols will allow you to address incidents relating to safety, supervision, visitors, and authority. For example, spelling out the dress code for riding and being in the barn should take care of situations like the visiting kid sister

now minus two toenails, courtesy of a fly-stomping horse.

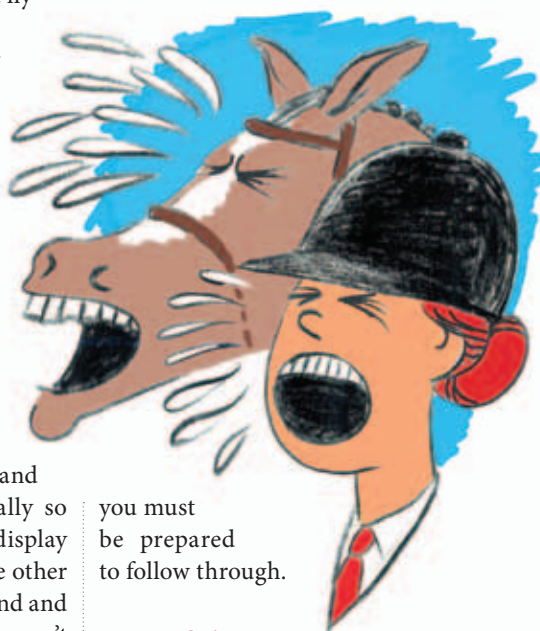
In addition, written rules clue your clients in to your particular brand of obsessive-compulsive behavior. Does your eye begin to twitch if the bridles are not put away with a particular fancy loopy-loop flourish of the straps? Well, they can't claim they didn't know.

The websites of many well-run barns list special protocols for showing and trailering. These go a long way to eliminating tensions involving authority and extra charges.

No one is exempt from those 'live and learn' days. For example, the normally so good Eunuch suddenly decides to display behavior irresistible to the mare in the other field, leaving your student on the ground and you suspecting the gelding operation wasn't *entirely* successful. Nevertheless, odds for accidents can be significantly reduced.

The best and safest instructional programs have clearly written curricula. "A student may not canter until 'xyz.'" Incorporating sound safety practices, like pre-flight safety checks and lessons on emergency dismounts into your curriculum is a must. Having a curriculum on paper provides a road map for students and their parents. It is especially helpful to spell out the standards you hold your students to, before they can move up in a lesson, up to a new competition level, or onto a more difficult horse. Here's where the problems of no-shows, challenges to your authority, interfering parents and other realities of the teaching business are solved.

Ask yourself how you will handle deviations from the rules. You must follow through on enforcement. How will you handle the person who's improperly attired or the parent who persists in teaching your lesson despite the rules? If you have specified a consequence,



you must be prepared to follow through.

#### Powerful Choices

And, finally, the best teachers never pass up an opportunity to learn.

There are truly astonishing numbers of books and websites available on the varied topics of interpersonal skills, age-appropriate behavior and conflict management. Time spent investigating these, finding approaches that suit your personality and situation, can yield high returns. You will always face business, professional, and personal conflicts but in effect you will be doing so with a well-stocked survival kit.

Take the time to review your professional life and pinpoint what's not working. Actively learn some basic principles of conflict resolution and personal interactions. By doing so you will enable yourself to break negative patterns and often avoid sticky situations before they occur.

A commitment to creating the world *you* want – that's a powerful choice. ■

**Read.  
Stay informed.  
Horse News  
keeps it simple.**

For advertising details: 908-782-4747 ext. 620 or 625  
For editorial details: 908-782-4747 ext. 643 or 646

**Monthly News. Features. Photos. Competition Results.** This leading Northeastern equine publication covers major equestrian events in the Mid-Atlantic area.

We bring readers news from the stables, paddocks, pastures and arenas of the equine community. Included in each issue are competition results and standings and exclusive stories about leaders in the horse industry. Monthly features include in-depth looks at issues facing horse owners, training and coaching techniques, new products and services and racing industry news.

#### Hunter, Jumper, Dressage, Western, Eventing, Driving, Racing

Our reporters and photographers cover them all! Our monthly Equine Events Calendar is helpful for exhibitors and spectators alike.

#### Comprehensive Advertising.

Real Estate and classified listings are a great source for horses, equipment and property. Major equine retailers and suppliers promote their products in **Horse News**.

Our business card section is a virtual "yellow pages" for products and services, barns & training.

[horsenews@hcdemocrat.com](mailto:horsenews@hcdemocrat.com)

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







# Writing About Riding

## Developing Thoughtful Riders Through the Power of the Pen

“How do I know what I think until I see what I say?” – E.M. Forster

by Jennifer Brooks Hippensteel

Photo of author by Zoe Barnard

**W**E’VE ALL HAD THOSE LESSONS, the kind where everything goes smoothly, each rider dutifully making adjustments and doing what the instructor asks, but once the students have left the arena with their ponies, we wonder if they really learned anything. We ask ourselves, “Did they enjoy themselves? Did they understand what I was saying about the use of the leg aid? They didn’t really give me much feedback;

in fact, no one spoke up at all.” All teachers, whether they are in a school’s classroom or in a dusty arena behind a barn, want their students to be excited about what they are learning, engaging with the new knowledge and concepts. We are thrilled when a student asks a thoughtful question, demonstrating that she’s trying to make sense of what she’s learning. We get frustrated and even embarrassed when we ask a question of our students and are met with nothing but silence and blank stares. While there are dozens of teaching techniques and classroom management strategies to help our students become more active learners, what all tech-

niques point towards is helping students deeply learn new material by thinking critically. It is through critical thinking that a student is able to take a new idea and make it his own, thereby truly learning. How can we, as riding instructors, know that we are helping our students think critically about what we’re teaching them?

### Writing as a key to critical thinking

Classroom teachers and school administrators across the country know that there is a substantial body of research that indicates that writing is unique in the way it ▶

### Protect your Equine Financial Investments with Reliable Insurance!

- Full Mortality Insurance
- Surgical/Major Medical
- Air Transportation
- Stallion Infertility
- Equine Related Liability Insurance
- Farm Property & Packages
- Director’s & Officer’s Liability
- Personal Accident Coverage

Ark has been providing equine insurance since 1978. Licensed in 50 states.

Toll Free 1-800-328-8894  
1-320-243-7250



**ARK AGENCY**  
Animal Insurance Services  
PO Box 223  
Paynesville, MN 56362  
Email us at: [insurance@arkagency.com](mailto:insurance@arkagency.com)  
Web Site: [www.arkagency.com](http://www.arkagency.com)

## INSTRUCTORS

do you have clients...

- ★ Learning "on the bit"?
- ★ Who are nervous?
- ★ That ride sensitive horses?
- ★ Who sometimes get left behind?
- ★ Have trouble riding "softly"?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, call now for a **FREE VIDEO** and learn how Rein-Aid can help you to help your clients.



Rein-Aid Inserts \$36.00 -- Elasto-Rein \$99.95  
[www.rein-aid.com](http://www.rein-aid.com) or (800)773-4885

# Accidents Happen

An accident that happens during your lesson is a threat to your career, business, and assets. With Markel's Riding Instructor Liability Coverage, it takes only a few minutes to protect yourself.

- Credit to ARICP certified instructors.
- Up to \$1,000,000 liability limits.
- Coverage applies on and off premises.



www.horseinsurance.com

**Debi DeTurk**  
**(850) 973-3914**

Liability • Mortality • Farm Owners • Care, Custody & Control • Umbrella Liability

*Blend your passion for horses in a professional counseling psychology training program.*

Master of Arts in Counseling and Psychology  
with a concentration in

## Equine Assisted Mental Health

Low-Residency • Self-Directed • Experiential Learning

Prescott College  
(877) 350-2100 • www.prescott.edu

## Moving?

Don't miss a single issue...

Phone or e-mail us  
**(239) 948-3232**

***riding-instructor@comcast.net***



accesses a student's critical thinking skills. Language is at the heart of learning, after all; it is in the communication of ideas that we are able to access new skills and new bodies of knowledge in order to make them our own. Of all the ways we use language (reading, writing, listening and speaking), writing stands out as a key to unlocking critical thinking. It is in the process of taking abstract thoughts, making them into words, then bringing them into the physical realm by writing them that a student's thought processes truly work through what an idea means. Let's look at an example.

Emily is your typical horse-crazy, pre-teen girl. Three years ago, she got her first horse, a sweet Quarter Horse mare that had a few issues due to some gaps in her training. Through her lessons with Jamie, Emily has learned not only how to ride, but how to think like her horse and figure out ways to help Shadow become more balanced, mentally and physically. Recently, Jamie has asked Emily to start keeping a lesson journal. One week, when it was too rainy to do lessons, Jamie brought a purple loose-leaf notebook (Emily's favorite color), markers and stickers, and the two sat in the aisle and made a beautiful journal. Each week, after her lesson, Emily sits down and writes about what she learned. Every few weeks, Jamie goes through the journal with Emily. This serves two very important purposes. First, Emily is thinking critically about her learning. She wrestles with ideas and thoughts, and then puts them into her own words. She's also being reflective in the way she thinks about riding, always considering what has worked, what hasn't, and what results in the horse and in herself give her feedback. Second, Jamie is able to see what Emily is truly learning and processing. If Emily doesn't quite understand the concept of canter leads, it will become obvious in her journal, and Jamie can re-structure the way she teaches in order to help Emily grasp this concept. Therefore, Emily's journal becomes a valuable feedback tool both for Emily and for Jamie, creating a valuable stream of communication that is authentic and informative.

### Making thought visible

There are many ways that we can use writing in our riding instruction, all aimed towards helping our students think carefully about what they're learning, put it in their own words, and keep a physical record of what they do in their lessons. The list below con-



tains just a few examples of ways that writing can be incorporated into typical lesson structures. None of them take very much time from the instructor, yet they offer valuable opportunities for communication and learning.

### The lesson journal

As shown in the example above, a lesson journal can be a fun, creative way to encourage our students to write and think about their lessons. A rainy day lesson can be used to create the journal and talk about how to use it. The student then has a sense of ownership of the journal, and many get excited about being “serious” about their riding by writing it down. After each lesson, the student will take her journal and write for a short time on what she worked on, how it works, and whether she thinks she and her horse improved. This can be as short as a couple of sentences, or, if the student is really into it, it may be several paragraphs (this is sometimes true with older riders). Every few weeks or even just once a month, the instructor ends a riding lesson by going through the journal with the student. You can simply read and then start a conversation about what you’ve seen in the writing, or you can write responses in the margins of the journal, or create your own journal entry that responds to the student’s writing. The communication that this opens up is a valuable opportunity to see how your student is thinking about her riding and the concepts that you’re trying to convey. Use this as a tool to help shape your next lesson. You may need to go back and cover a certain concept again or in a different way to help your student truly learn and understand.

### Teach your own lesson

Another way to incorporate writing and critical thinking into your riding lessons is to have your students develop a lesson plan to teach a lesson to their friends or to a class of riders that are a level below them. One week, as lessons are ending, hand out slips of paper that assign the students topics that they know well enough to teach. Then, have them write out a plan that covers how they would teach their concepts to riders that are a level below them. You can help them with the writing process by providing a bit of structure. For example, your assignment sheet can tell them to write out ideas in the following order: “What You’re Covering,” “How to Introduce It,” “How to Have the Class Ride the New Idea,” “How to End the Class.” Again, this is a valuable tool to see if your students truly understand the concepts that you’ve asked them to teach. Then, you can have them actually run a riding class (under your close supervision and with your help), or you can have them teach a “mock” class with riders from their own group.

### Exit slips

Once your lesson has ended, have your students take their ponies and horses back to where they tacked up and tie them for a short period of time before untacking. Hand each student a 3”x5” note card and pencil. Have them write just a few sentences summarizing what they worked on in class that day. You can be creative with this! For example, you could ask them to write about what they worked on in class as though they are explaining it to a friend who doesn’t ride horses. Or, you could have them write in your voice, pretending to be an instructor writing about

what was learned. It’s amazing how quickly our students learn our teaching and speaking styles, and it’s amusing to see them pretend to be their instructor. Once they have written a few sentences, they are free to go and take care of putting away their horses and ponies. You can use these note cards in several ways. First, they are invaluable feedback to determine if your students are grasping the concepts you’re covering. Second, you can store them for each student, creating a “note card portfolio” that is always fun to look back on to see how far they’ve come.

### Truly learning

Writing is a powerful tool when it comes to accessing our students’ critical thinking skills. By using writing, we are helping our students see what they are thinking by putting ideas and concepts in their own words. It is in this process that our students truly learn. When they write about what they are thinking, we can see that they have made their education their own. We all want our students to be thoughtful about the way they are riding. We don’t want to create robots that simply go through the motions during every ride and every lesson. By utilizing their critical thinking skills through short, easy-to-do writing exercises, we are giving them a wonderful opportunity to become the thoughtful, well-educated riders that we know they can be. So, ride on – and write on! ■

**Jennifer Brooks Hippensteel** is a Level II Hunt Seat/Level I Stable Management certified instructor living in western North Carolina. With a Master’s degree in an education field and experience as a classroom teacher, she enjoys integrating proven teaching techniques with her riding instruction. She also competes actively with her mare, Oberon, in dressage and combined tests.

## Do you own a Cover-All building?

We’re looking for riding instructors, trainers, and veterinarians across the United States who would be interested in becoming **Featured Cover-All Customers**. Share your story and have your facility profiled in magazines and online!

Contact us now to become a **Featured Customer**

**1.800.268.3768**  
**info@coverall.net**



COVER-ALL IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF COVER-ALL BUILDING SYSTEMS, INC.



**R**IDING has to be one of the hardest activities to teach. In a riding lesson there are three main players involved: the rider, the horse and the instructor. Each one comes to the arena with his own problems and expectations, and it is the instructor's job to steer all toward a positive end result.

This is not an easy task even on the best day, however building a successful lesson plan will ease the way. A good plan sets the student and horse up for success. If something should go wrong there are practical steps to fall back on. A well thought out plan prioritizes the learning process in a way that results in progress for both horse and rider. Just as we can break down any task that we want to teach, we can also break down the mechanics of a good lesson.

**Step 1. Know Your Audience** What are your student's needs? Is this a beginner student working on balance, or a more advanced student ready to improve the canter transition? In order to develop a lesson that will keep the student's interest you must be aware of the personal goals of your student. As an instructor, it is very tempting to work with what we think that particular person should be trying to achieve rather than what he himself would like to achieve. Sometimes we need to assert ourselves, for instance if the student would like to jump, but he has yet to balance correctly at the trot, it is our job to explain the steps for him to proceed without injury to himself or his horse. Safety must always be our first consideration. Instructors with years of experience have learned to be able to see accidents before they happen and because of this, they can usually prevent them. We must, however, respect the student's wishes and not force our goals upon them. Safety needs and training issues are the first priority; from there what the student expects to gain from our time spent together is the most important concern. As their mentor, we may wish to have them put their horse on the bit and ride a dressage test, but if they want to simply learn to be a safe passenger and trail ride, we need to accept that.

Part of knowing your audience is to know what helps them learn. By keeping communication open you will not only be able to assess the rider's fear level, but you will begin



Judi Whipple (riding), being coached by her daughter, Lindsay.

# Setting your students up for Success

## Building a lesson plan

By Judi Whipple

to discover how he learns. Some riders benefit from demonstration or imagery while others need more physical exercises. Balance your activities for the session to include work that is appropriate for your student's learning style. Be willing to explain things differently, or modify exercises, and be sure to allow time for practice. Keep in mind that all talk and no action makes it difficult for the horse to stay motivated, and it's important to consider his learning style, too!

**Step 2. Pick the Right Horse for the Job** Once you are aware of your student's ability and needs, you have to then choose the appropriate horse. You certainly wouldn't tack up the bouncy dressage mover for the unfit, aged adult beginner. If you feel this particular lesson will require more discussion then actual practice then choose a quiet horse who will allow the rider to relax and

pay attention. Gradually challenge riders by matching them with horses that are in need of more piloting skills. After assessing your rider's strengths and weaknesses, and choosing the horse helper you will use, it is then time to build the lesson that will get your student one step closer to their goal.

**Step 3. Introduction** The initial, "Hello, how are you?" may open up conversation that will key you in as to how well your student will be able to focus on the day's work. Let your client feel comfortable talking with you and then gently put them to work.

It is wise to begin each lesson by telling your student the plan you have in mind. You want to be sure that you understand your student's goals and are not pushing them beyond what they are willing to do. There is nothing more discouraging for everyone then to have worked for an hour on some-



Judi Whipple teaches student Leslie Howe, who is also an ARIA certified instructor.



Photo: Nancy McCallum

thing that their heart was not in. Communicating your plan will also help your student understand the pre-requisite exercises you include in your warm-up.

**Step 4. Warm-up, review and pre-requisite exercises**

Remember, everything you teach can, and should, be broken up into smaller pieces. Included in these smaller pieces are requirements that need to be mastered prior to taking the next step. Take the canter depart for example. Before it is safe for the rider to even attempt a canter, he must be able to balance well at the walk and trot. You can test this balance with exercises in the warm-up phase of your lesson while reviewing work from previous lessons. My favorite exercise for this purpose is to have the student practice dropping and picking up their stirrup – without looking – at the walk, sitting trot, rising trot, and 2-point position (make sure to check that the girth is tight.) This is a good warm-up exercise that also prepares them for the most common mishap when learning to canter, which is losing a stirrup either during the canter, or when the horse breaks back into a trot. This pre-requisite exercise helps the rider feel confident that they will be alright and therefore less likely to freeze and cause a disaster.


Consider the task you want to teach and think of what the horse and rider need to safely perform that task. Build your warm up exercises from there. Be sure to keep the fitness level of horse and rider in mind.

When you plan your pre-requisites and your warm-up, think also of what the horse needs to be successful. For instance, the canter depart will go more smoothly if the horse has warmed up with walk/halt and walk/trot transitions. These may be included with a short review of the last lesson.

**Step 5. New Task and Practice**

After you have warmed both the horse and rider up for the main body of their lesson then it is time to again explain to your rider what is involved in the new learning portion of the lesson. Take the canter depart example again. You would first explain the aids carefully while the horse and rider were at a halt. Once you feel that your student understands what is required, you would have them perform the depart, either from a walk or a trot. The practice exercise you choose will depend on the disposition and gaits of the horse being used. It can be helpful to tell them just how far they will be going – down the long wall for instance. Allow time for plenty of explanation and practice. It is best to plan more exercises than necessary for the practice phase of your lesson. ▶

**Do you have the Saddle Recommended by Vets, Trainers and Olympians?**

**Heike  Kemmer**  
**GOLD MEDALIST**  
**BEIJING 2008!**  
**in the "HK"**

**Schleese Saddlery Service**  
 On-Site Horse and Rider Evaluations  
 A Saddlefit 4 Life® Professional Partner  
 with Dr. Gerd Heuschmann DVM  
 1-800-225-2242 [www.schleese.com](http://www.schleese.com)

**PROTECT YOUR PASSION.™**

**INSTRUCTOR LIABILITY INSURANCE FROM**

Call Today for a No Obligation Quote  
**8 0 0 - 7 5 2 - 2 4 7 2**  
[www.equisure-inc.com](http://www.equisure-inc.com)  
[www.insuremyhorsetrainer.com](http://www.insuremyhorsetrainer.com)

**ARIA members may qualify for a discount.**

Photo by Arnd Bronkhorst

What works for one student may not work for another. For instance you could use any one of the following exercises to begin canter work:

- Canter on the lunge line
- Change rein across the diagonal at the trot and pick up the canter at the opposite corner.
- Trot, or walk a 20-meter circle and pick up the canter at X. The rider can go half circle, whole circle or circle to whole arena, depending on their ability and confidence.
- If it is a group lesson, you might have the riders walk in single file and then ask the first rider to canter around until they are at the end. The riders continue this front to rear pattern until all have had a turn. Be aware that doing this too often may cause your school horses to anticipate the depart and misbehave. That is another reason why variety is important.

You get the idea; use your imagination while keeping the safety of the rider and the welfare of the horse your top priority.

The type of exercises you plan also depends on how your student best learns. Props are helpful – arena black boards, cones, poles etc. Be creative with these as well but remember

to set a safe stage – beware of jump cups left on standards, or poles that roll, because these could cause an accident.

**Step 6. Summary and Cool-Down** Summarize your lesson with a final successful exercise. Always end with the positive. Don't forget the cool-down for the horse – this is a great time to discuss the lesson. Read your student's expressions, and review again with questions to him to be sure he understood the topic. Leave him with homework: videos, reading etc. A great homework application for the canter depart is Muselar's chair exercise (Sit on the edge of a straight backed four legged chair in a mock riding position and without tensing the buttocks muscles, lift the back two legs of the chair off the floor.) This helps the rider feel the separation of the seat and leg required in the canter.

Summarizing the topic of the lesson with a final exercise that solidifies the point can be fun for all three players. Many of my group lessons with my college-aged students necessitate teaching groups consisting of riders of mixed interests and abilities. Recently, I gave a lesson to a group that contained a western barrel racing rider, a relative beginner learning to canter, and a more advanced dressage rider. I chose to work on the awareness of the

correct lead and collecting the canter enough to be able to safely negotiate a 10-meter circle. The beginner rider was put on an "I know my job" school horse. The horses and riders went through warm up and pre-requisite exercises that prepared them for accurate, well balanced canters. During the main body of the lesson the students worked on asking for a particular canter lead on centerline, and then turning toward the lead that the horse actually picked up. This keyed me into how aware the riders really were of their correct lead. After each practiced and correctly negotiated 10-meter circles both ways, they each tried "barrel racing" in the style of their particular horse. It was so much fun to watch the dressage horse gracefully execute his version of "barrel racing" incorporating wide pirouettes, flying changes and extended canter. I think he was more pleased with himself than we were. We all ended with smiles and reaffirmation of the importance of balance and collection in the canter for any horse.

In order to develop a good lesson plan the instructor must know the student's strengths and weaknesses as well as the horse's. Lessons begin with a warm-up of the pre-requisites required in the exercise and then proceed with explanation of the new exercise, perfor-

# FLY FREE... NATURALLY!

## Aloe Herbal Horse Spray

### Fly Repellent

- Repels Flies, Gnats & Other Insects
- Formulated with Natural Ingredients
- Works for Hours, Safe & Effective
- Contains Sunscreen & Coat Conditioners for Extra Protection

HORSE  
JOURNAL  
2009

#1 CHOICE  
NATURAL FLY SPRAY

AVAILABLE AS:  
5:1 Concentrate  
•  
Makes 5 Quarts  
•  
Ready to use  
with spray bottle

**ESPREE**<sup>®</sup>

ESPREE ANIMAL PRODUCTS, INC. • 800-328-1317

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





mance of the exercise, and end with a summary plus homework assignments. Students have to first be safe, well balanced passengers before they can begin to be effective pilots. Rider position is always part of the review and warm-up even in the most advanced lessons.

Vary the practice by using patterns and props. This keeps both horses and riders from getting bored. Also be prepared with many different ways to say the same thing and know that everyone needs to be corrected many times. It takes thousands of repetitions for correct behavior to become habit. Train for the future with each lesson observing rider goals and horse capabilities. For example, if the team will eventually be competing in upper level dressage, then keep this in mind when teaching the canter depart. The aids for haunch-in and half-pass could become confused with the canter depart aids. Focusing on a more active inside leg within the canter depart early on will help alleviate future confusion. If the rider's goal is open show equitation classes, then a more active outside leg aid (not visible to the judge) is appropriate.

It is important to come to each lesson with a plan, yet be perceptive to the needs of the present moment. Of course, the success of each ride involves what the horse and rider

bring to the arena at that particular moment. There is no such thing as a "cookie cutter" lesson plan. One day the horse may need a twenty-minute walk before being unlocked enough to begin arena patterns, the next day he may need a trot on a long rein. The educated eye of a qualified instructor can help the horse and rider team succeed in a safe and successful manner. Lesson plans provide a basis to work from and the more experience we gain with various plans, the more flexible we become. The most important thing to bring to the arena each day is a positive attitude, an open mind and an open heart. ■

continued from page 32

Sally taught us many things about how to ride better and be a better partner with our horses. But just by being who she was, she also gave us the opportunity to learn to value what we can learn from others, to take good care of ourselves, to see our uniqueness and what we can offer to others, and to give generously of our knowledge. ■

**Cameo Miller** is a Masters-level clinical psychologist and a Level IV ARIA Certified Instructor based in Michigan. She is a member of the ARIA Evaluation Panel and National Riding Instructors Convention Staff.

### DISCOUNT TO ARIA-CERTIFIED INSTRUCTORS

Markel Insurance Company offers a discount to ARIA-certified instructors on their insurance costs.

#### A SUBSTANTIAL SAVINGS

Call Debi DeTurk Peloso for further information

Phone (850) 973-3914  
Fax (850) 973-4113



**Linda Fish-Brown, Broker**  
Equine Homes Real Estate, LLC

800.859.2745 ext. 705  
Fax: 603.428.8502

LFB@equinehomes.com  
www.equinehomes.com

**"The ARCO SE is the Ultimate Clipper with enhanced power, continuous cordless operation, exceptionally light weight, amazingly quiet, and low vibration."**

**WAHL**

**ARCO SE**

# 1 CORDLESS

**ARCO SE**

5 Cutting Positions  
In one detachable blade

**WAHL®**

www.wahl.com  
1.800.PROWAHL

# What Sally Taught Us

"Her focus was on others; not on herself."

by Cameo Miller

I'M WRITING THIS JUST A FEW DAYS after the passing of Sally Swift. As so often happens when we lose someone or something, I have been thinking back on the things I remember about her. This column is not a testimonial to her as I am sure there will be others written by people who knew her much better than I did. But there are several things that I hope do not get missed – lessons she taught us just by being who she was.

One of the things I remember most is how much she wanted to give us all she knew. There was never any holding back so you would come to another clinic and pay her more. Not that you could learn everything she knew in a hundred clinics, but she gave you all that she could every time she taught. It wasn't about how much she knew, or how good she was, at all – it was about how she could help others to improve. Her focus was on others; not on herself.

This is a trait that has led to many civilizations, as well as people, being truly great. As people work together and help each other to build a civilization, they learn from each other and everyone does what they do best to help the whole. The leaders recognize that they are there to support and serve. The focus of everyone is on improving the whole for everyone, and the civilization grows stronger and more vibrant for all. Eventually, in the history of each civilization, a point is reached where this declines. People start thinking more of themselves and what they can gain; leaders and CEOs start wanting more power and more wealth for themselves, and forget they are there to serve. The civilization declines and falls. Want examples? How about Babylonia, Egypt, Rome, Greece, England (in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century), and Russia (in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). We quit taking care of each other, we lose the focus on the greater good, and narrow it to just what we can gain, and it all falls apart. To her great credit, that never happened to Sally – so she remained grand and so highly regarded to the end and beyond.

This doesn't mean at all that we take ourselves and our own importance out of the equation. It doesn't mean at all that this is only and totally about others. Sally had physi-



Sally Swift doing what she did best – teaching. **Photo:** Courtesy of Trafalgar Square Books, [www.horseandriderbooks.com](http://www.horseandriderbooks.com)

cal problems that she had to pay attention to, and work with, to be able to do what she did. Many of us have physical problems as we get older or injured; we get tired, the economy effects what we realistically can afford to do, etc. We must pay attention to our own needs in order to be able to continue to give to others. If we do not, we will be depleted to the point where we are less than useless – we become part of the problem instead of part of the creation. Sometimes we need to figure out what we have to do to remain viable; sometimes we have to allow or ask for others to help us through difficult times, but sometimes the difficulties even give us ways to do better. Sally credits her scoliosis as being a major part of the basis of Centered Riding™ for the human half of the partnership.

One of the most important things that get forgotten as things fall apart is how important each one of us is. That each one of us has unique knowledge and understanding that we bring to the whole, and that without each piece, the whole is not complete. It's like a jigsaw puzzle with some of the pieces missing – you may be able to see what the big picture is, but it is flawed and the holes are glaring. And, again like the jigsaw puzzle, no one piece is any more important than any of the rest. I see people who think they are a bigger, better, more important piece and who denigrate and devalue those around them. They yell and strut; their attitude clearly states how far below them they think everyone else is, or they grasp for money and

power to hold closely to themselves. They may actually have important information and abilities they can contribute, but how many more people could they reach and how much further could their influence widen if their demeanor were different? Sally's concepts were revolutionary for her time, but look how far they have spread because of her focus on giving to others and her value of others rather than on herself and what she was doing. We still read Xenophon – not because he wrote about how great *he* was, but because he wrote about how to help the horse improve with his continual comments to the trainer to be kind and gentle. How many treatises have you eagerly read by so-called horsemen who wrote about how great *they* were? It is important that we recognize our own strengths, what we can contribute to the whole (maybe that no one else at this time can give), how our uniqueness makes us fit just so into just the right place in the whole.

Another thing Sally did so well was to constantly learn from others. She valued others and what they knew – about horses, riding, human anatomy, ways of moving the body, spirituality, how all of this might fit together, and so much more. Like any intelligent person, she didn't just accept everything out there, but she was open to evaluating it to see if any or all of it might add to what she already knew – so that she was learning more for herself and so that she might give more, in some better way, to those she interacted with.

► continued on page 31



# THINK COWBOY MAGIC®

WORKS BETTER • LASTS LONGER • COST LESS

**“CLINICALLY TESTED DERMATOLOGIST REVIEWED”**

*What does this label claim mean?*

COWBOY MAGIC® products are RIPT performance tested by an independent laboratory, under the supervision of licensed Dermatologists, who review and report the testing results. COWBOY MAGIC® products have been successfully safety tested on over 850 people, each test lasting a period of 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for 30 continuous days.

**“ONLY THE VERY BEST GROOMING FORMULATIONS PASS RIPT TESTING MEETING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF PRODUCT QUALITY, SAFETY AND PERFORMANCE”**





# The New SSG "Digital"

DigiGrip™ with Square Groove Technology



***This might be as good as it gets in riding gloves...***

Style 2100

The ultimate in feel, grip, breathability and finally exceptional durability. Attractive digital pattern increases grip and wear.

*Two years in the testing – "A new experience"*

Sizes: 6, 7, 7 ½, 8, 9, 10.

Colors: Black or White

See your  
local tack  
shop,  
or visit our  
web site for  
a dealer  
near you.

[ssgridinggloves.com](http://ssgridinggloves.com)

We do not sell directly to the public.