



# CORBITS

Loyalty, Character, sportsmanship

Central Ontario Region  
Pony Club News Letter

Summer/Fall, 2014

## Editor's Desk

Katie Stephenson

How did it get to be fall? I remember writing exams. I remember packing the car to go home. Then it was June. Then there was that one day when it was warm. Then I was packing to go back to school. I am fairly certain we skipped July all together. Despite my incredulousness, fall really is here. In addition to cozy sweaters and fewer bugs, fall also signals the end of the show season for many and the return to school for most. For me, it means that I am back to sitting in front of a computer for most of the day, and away from my horses for weeks and even months at a time.

This past summer was not one filled with shows for me, but it was filled with lots of learning. I made some important advances in my position both on the flat and especially over fences. I also had several "EURIKA!!!" moments. The greatest of these came in June when my coach said, "Make both feet feel the same in the stirrups". I had heard several versions of this in the past such as, "stay balanced between your stirrups" or "stay centered". Despite the fact that I understood what all these phrases were getting at, I knew that I wasn't really 'getting it', since they were often repeated. But when I heard "Make both feet feel the same", I did ... and magic happened. My pinching right knee let go, I stayed centered in my lateral work, I could keep the counter canter and I consistently got leads after fences. It is truly amazing what happens when someone says something just the right way, at the exact time that you are ready to hear it.

A final thought. I read an article not too long ago by Sally Cousins about "Mental Strength". This has often been a personal demon of mine. Stubbornness I have in spades, but harnessing that into the strength needed to keep my nerves at bay or my concentration facing in the right direction is something else entirely. This past season I have watched two riders who have shown the epitome of mental strength. I have never met Jonathan Paget or Charlotte Dujardin, but I watch them as examples of how I want to ride. Despite their different sports, both of these athletes have faced incredible scrutiny and media attention this year, both good and bad. Despite that, both have stayed the course, worked hard, showed incredible class and have shown a kind of mental strength that I could only dream to possess. Who do you watch as your "idols" and examples, both in and out of the ring?

## House Keeping

Don't forget to get all your award nominations, scores and pictures in for the end of year awards, scores and pictures. Every year, COR honours members who have worked hard, trained hard, cheered hard and cleaned hard (because scrubbing bridles with tooth brushes has to count for something).

Please make sure you get everything to the right people by the deadlines. Keep an eye on Facebook and emails. When in doubt, ask!

## Tack Cleaning

Michelle – Canterbury Outpost

After every ride it's important to get the arena dirt and sweat off so just use a very slightly damp cloth to remove this. This will help prevent rubs to the leather as the dirt acts like sandpaper.

About once every two weeks or once a month use a conditioner, a cream, like Passier, Stubben or Joe's personal favourite, Koch-a-line. Slightly dampen the saddle with warm water (do this at home where it's warm) to open the pores. While it's still slightly damp, apply your conditioner and allow to sit over night or 24 hours to let it seep in.

Things to remember:

Do not use ONE STEP products or Murphy's oil soap

Do not use saddle soap too often, it dries out the leather. Maybe do it once or twice a year.

Do not condition your billets or leathers too often, it will cause them to stretch

Do change your leathers from side to side about every two weeks so they stretch evenly. No matter what a tack shop says, no stirrup leather is Non Stretch

Do not condition too often as it will soften the leather and can cause it to tear (probably once a month is fine\_

If you use a wire rack for storing your saddle, put something soft between it and the saddle, as it can cause ridges in the wool (it cannot be removed and you would have to have all the wool replaced at \$350.00)

Do not store your girth on top of your saddle, the sweat from it can cause the leather on your seat to rot (a \$900.00 replacement)

## Fun Rally!!!!

This year, TNY Pony Club and Anita and Colin Barnes put on an absolutely fantastic fun filled FUN Rally this year. Good fun and learning was had by all, and a good summer jog was had by a few parents!!!



## Bob's Corner

(Sometimes horse people can be so caught up in our own sport and disciplines that we forget that there are other sports out there. More importantly, we can forget the passion that other people have for those sports. Thanks for the reminder Bob)

### Special Riders

This article is not about horses, it's about riders – Roughriders, to be specific. I'm not sure I can communicate how much seeing them win the Grey Cup at home means to me, but I am going to have a try. I'm writing this the day after the Grey Cup game.

It's not just that I was born and raised in Regina. And it's not just that, when I was a little kid, two weeks' allowance got me a "seat", on the ground, along the sidelines at Taylor Field (which was an easy walk from our house). I tried not to miss any home games. I once got run over by Jackie Parker, along with several other kids, when he got blocked out of bounds. Even though he was the Eskimos' quarterback, I liked him because he made sure we were all okay before heading back to the huddle.

No, it's not just the memories of many exciting games. It's a lot more personal than that. You see, when I was a kid, Regina was much smaller than it is now. Its population was around 70,000, less than Newmarket's as of the 2011 census. So there was a good chance that one of the players would live in your neighbourhood, and you would get to know them. When I was really little, the Roughriders' place kicker and punter, Joe Aguirre, lived in the house across the back lane from ours, and I used to play with his kids. And when I was in my early teens our next door neighbours moved away, and the Roughriders bought that house, too. They used to rent it to young players trying out for the team. I used to babysit their children. Most of the time these young players got cut from the team and had to pack up and head home to Texas or Iowa or wherever. Getting cut from a CFL team usually meant the end of their football dream, and sometimes they took it pretty hard. I did, too, and I remember crying with some of them when it happened. In high school, my phys-ed teachers for two years were Roughrider players. And if all that wasn't enough, the Roughriders' office was just down the hall from my Dad's, and I used to see their staff and executives, if not so often their players, when I went to visit my Dad at work on a Saturday morning. When my Mom died, Dad was kind of at loose ends, so Liz and I decided to buy him a Roughrider season ticket for Fathers' Day. Money was a bit tight around our house at the time, and our first child was on the way, but we managed to save enough for one of the least expensive seats, high up in the end zone. But when I called from Toronto and explained why I wanted a season ticket, and by the way it was for Frank in the office next door, somehow my Dad ended up on the 55 yard line, 10-15 rows up from field level.

When I was growing up, the Roughriders had played in the Grey Cup game more often than any other team, but they had never once won. I still have a copy of the newspaper that came out the day after they finally did win for the first time, in 1967. That meant a lot. But seeing them win at home in Regina, in front of the best, most loyal and craziest fans anywhere, that means at least as much, maybe more.

I have lived in Toronto for nearly 50 years now, and naturally I cheer for the Argos most of the time. When they play the Roughies, though, I'm afraid my blood still runs green and white. Can you understand that?

# International Quiz

Kateliyn Henderson

In May, I was selected as one of four members to represent the Canadian Pony Club at the International Quiz Exchange, hosted this year in Lexington, Kentucky in July. Our exchange took place from July 11<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, with the competition itself from the 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>. Although I knew in advance who my other teammates were, we did not get to meet until we all arrived at the Chicago O'Hare airport. The other three representing Canada were: Melissa Bayer from SLOV; Jessica van Nostrand from Nova Scotia, she is also the National AM rep East; and Sabrina Kendall from Manitoba.



We were told Canada always did a photo with everyone jumping up, so we were told that we also had too. We even borrowed the Aussies' Akubras (hats).

Arriving in Kentucky, we were greeted at the airport by the organizer of our trip, Nancy. From there we headed to the hotel, where we got to meet the other two teams: the Americans (John, Eric, Kelly, and Katherine) and the Australians (Myf, Phoebe, Angie, and Natasha). We played some ice breaker games, being the Quiz nerds that we are those games included horse-themed charades and 20 questions.

The next 10 days were very busy, with activities planned for pretty much the entire time we were there. We didn't even start the competition until the Tuesday; but there were plenty of other things to see and do in Kentucky! We got to tour local thoroughbred and warmblood breeding

farms: Adena Springs (they also have a Canadian location); Claiborne Farms (where the famous Secretariat stood at stud); and Spy Coast Farms (a warmblood breeding facility). We all noticed the trend of these farms having 500+ acre facilities, and impeccable barns (like drool-worthy barns). We also toured the Keeneland racetrack, which is open to the public all the time, as it doubles as a park; the Lexington Equine Vet hospital; and Old Friends, a retirement home for TBs including Popcorn Deelites who was one of the horses who played Seabiscuit in the movie. We pushed ourselves to our limits at the Life Adventure Centre, first on the high ropes course, and then at vaulting. The high ropes course was one of the scariest things I have ever done, but everyone was super supportive and we all cheered each other on as we worked through the course. The vaulting seemed much easier after being on ropes 40 feet in the air!! We also got to go on a trail ride, on the last day before the competition started. I had never ridden a horse in western tack before, so that was a bit different.

The competition was quite different from what we do here, there were 5 phases: written, ID tables, Barn, Classroom, and stations/games. Written was much easier than our own written tests, with 50 multiple choice questions. ID tables are basically the same as our visuals, and were fairly straight forward. Classroom is fairly similar to our Oral phase of Quiz. The big difference was that questions are answered individually, rather than as a team. Barn is exactly what it sounds like, you rotate through stations, some individual and some team, and they are hands on. One example was we had to explain and demonstrate (on a modified plastic horse leg that was spurting food coloured water) how we would treat an injury like that on a horse. Stations is the normal fifth phase, but we brought some of our own games along to be incorporated as part of it, overall stations is fairly similar to games (but less fun). We were actually thanked by an USPCer for making Quiz more fun that year (as the members competing at their National Quiz also played our games)!

In between our different phases we got to explore the Kentucky Horse Park (where the USPC festival is held) and watch some of the other disciplines. See in the States, they hold all there National events at once, at an event called Festival which only happens every couple of years. So we got to watch Pony Clubbers compete in: Games, Show Jumping, Polocrosse, Dressage, and Eventing. They also had Tetrathalon, but we missed that. This year the NAJYRC was also occurring at the same time, so we were also able to watch some of the Junior/Young riders compete.

It was interesting to learn about how Pony Club works in other countries. The Americans have an amazing (and confusing) streaming system for their testing. Not only do they stream from lower levels, but there are differences in jump height in SJ stream vs. traditional, etc. The Australians, don't actually have a Quiz! They qualified by answering questions, first in some sort of package, then the finalists, over the phone. The Australians did quite well considering that they had never done Quiz before!

The trip to Kentucky was amazing, and one of the best experiences possible. I've made memories to last a lifetime. I don't regret a minute of it; we had some good food (even the catfish), saw some gorgeous horses, learned a lot, and had a lot of fun at all the events and activities, we always found something to make us laugh. What really made the trip were the people. I got to meet 11 amazing Pony Clubbers from across Canada and the globe; all of whom are fantastic



people. The trip itself was fun, but making new friends like that was what made it the trip of a lifetime. I hope that every Pony Clubber at least considers the chance of going to a National or International trip at least once in their Pony Club career, because although it can be expensive, it is worth every penny.

(PS- For anyone that was wondering, we took home the red ribbon! Which is actually 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the states)

With our ribbons after the banquet: Front Row (L to R): Myf, Phoebe, Angie, and Natasha / Middle Row (L to R): Melissa, Kaitlyn, Jessica, and Sabrina / Back Row (L to R): Eric, Katherine, Nancy (organizer), Kelly, and John

## **To all of the members, parents, and executive of Rising Star Pony Club**

Over the past few (well, more than a few) years, I have come to know all of you very well. Whether you've been there from the start or have recently joined this wonderful club, I can confidently say that Rising Star as family has had a momentous impact on my life.

I honestly do not know where I would be if it weren't for Pony Club. Not only has it taught me so many important lessons about horses, but it has given me many crucial lessons in life as well. It has taught me how to get along with others and work in a team; it has shown me how to always be patient and kind to every living being, animal or human; it has taught me how to work hard to achieve my goals; it has inspired me to always be ready to learn and open to new knowledge; and perhaps most of all, being a member of RSPC has taught me that the biggest success you can have in life is to help others.

In light of this, I would like to congratulate you all on your success: you have provided a wonderful and rare opportunity for young horse-lovers to come together, have fun, and learn. Each new member is another life changed! I feel that I can speak on behalf of all past and current members when I say that Rising Star is the best Pony Club there is.

However, without you- the parents, the volunteers, and the executive- this opportunity would not be possible. Although you may have received very little recognition or thanks in the past, I would like to take this chance to personally thank all of you for everything that you have done for your kids, and for me. Every ribbon, trophy, and personal victory we have had, has been won because of the tireless effort you put in for us. You were there for every (very, VERY) early morning and every late night; for the pre-show butterflies and the occasional post-round tears; and for the countless hours of freezing almost to death while practicing in those good old Canadian winters. I hope that I can one day give back and contribute so selflessly to the lives of young people as much as you have.

Words cannot begin to describe my gratitude for all that you have done for me. I am so thankful to have had this wonderful opportunity to learn and grow alongside the beautiful animals we all love. The lessons I have learned will stay with me for the rest of my life, and will always inspire me to be a better person.

*Thank you for everything.*

Sincerely,

- Amy Westlund ☺

## Have You Hugged Your Parents Today?

The fact is that none of us would be here at all, let alone doing the amazing fun things we get to do as Pony Clubbers, without them. Make sure you give your Mom, your Dad, your Grandparent's, your Aunt or Uncle or sibling or whomever brings you to the barn or lessons or shows a giant hug for it. Heck, step away from the computer and hug them right now, because they help us do what we do ... and lets face it, to put up with it all they have to be a little crazy too.



A Pony Club Mom just doing the Pony Club Parent thing and being AWESOME!!!!  
(The Dreamcrest show jumping qualifier was a little damp)

## Links

<http://eventingnation.com/home/sally-cousins-weekly-training-tip-mental-strength/>

<http://eventingnation.com/home/sally-cousins-weekly-training-tip-mental-strength/>

<http://useventing.com/news/event-college-aec-max-corcoran-talks-studs-care-your-horse-after-cross-country>

<http://eventingnation.com/bloggers-row/learning-to-fly/>

<http://www.horsenation.com/2014/09/28/how-to-explain-your-discipline-to-confused-onlookers/>