

# THE HORSE'S MOUTH

## *MISHO Annual Horse Show Huge Success: Donates \$400 to Charity*

The annual MISHO Hunter Show was a huge success again this year. Unfortunately we had to cancel the Dressage portion due to a last minute venue change to Briarstone Riding Academy. But the hunter/jumper riders came out in large numbers to ride a beautiful course designed by Kerry Warren Couch and judged by 'r' rated judge, Janis Collette.

Again, we held our charity fun class fees were donated to charity, while spectators enjoyed watching riders juggle riding with holding a cup of water or an egg on a spoon. This year we will

split the proceeds between two charities: Hoof Beats for Heart Beats, the Special Olympic riding team based out of Briarstone Riding Academy and Renaissance Rescue Ranch in Farmington, MO. Additionally, the MISHO board elected to donate part of the proceeds from the show and will be sending out at total of \$400.00 to those two organizations.

The hunter derby was especially challenging this year. Kerry put extra thought into the course that required the riders to jump out of the arena circle back to jump two jumps in the field before jumping back into the arena again. Dravin Kennedy did an excellent job taking the harder options to win the class in a flawless performance.

The MISHO Board is already working on a new venue for next year so we can once again offer the dressage classes.

The MISHO Annual Banquet will be held on January 25, 2015. Be sure to save the date! Time and location to be determined. See you there!

### **SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:**

- ◆ Dressage for Soundness
- ◆ Banned Substances
- ◆ Barn Drama



## *MISHO Grand & Reserve Champion Division Winners*

Congratulations to our Grand and Reserve Division Winners!

	Grand	Reserve
Walk/Trot	Kate Connolly on Maximus	Kira Harris on Peppermint Twist
Cross Rail	Charlotte Rowe on Mr. Misbehavin'	Kate Connolly on Maximus
Short Stirrup	Addison Miller on Limited Edition	Elise Mannie on Black Tie Affair
Pony Hunter	Dravin Kennedy on Chances of Flurries	Rebecca Marselle on DB Jamilah
Beginner Rider	Cheri Drennar on Kimber	Nicole Lauzon on Bo
Low Hunter	Leah Schwedoman on Vivienne	Christine Ward on Shine On
Baby Green	Sarah Sanders on Sambucca	Delany Toensing on Mad Mad Skillz
Limit Rider	Cara Van Lenven on Whiskey Julius	Draven Kennedy on Chance of Flurries
Adult/Children's	Leah Schwedoman on Vivienne	Kelly Sandelin on Jeopardy

## *Dressage Helps Maintain a Sound Horse*



I'm a dressage rider. That wasn't always the case. I actually started out riding/competing English pleasure. (Western was never my thing.) I even dabbled in Hunters for a time, and learned to jump our first horse. But inevitably I came back around to dressage and the longer I study and learn about it, the more I'm convinced that dressage really is the basis for all riding. Why? Because it improves the overall health of your horse!

Having an OTTB, I've always had to have the chiropractor out to keep him moving correctly and the farrier always commented about how he was sore in the hind. Fast forward two years of dressage training and surprisingly, the farrier commented about how much easier my boy is to shoe. He's no longer sore or tight in the hind. Coincidence? I don't think so. How about

correct training, muscling and suppleness!

I recently read an article in *Dressage Today* by Christoph Hess, German Dressage Master. "If you have a horse that is harmonious, happy and willing, you know you are on the path to achieving our first goal of wellness and health in the horse. I believe the more you school a horse in his natural direction, developing correct connection (like a bridge between his hind and front end), the less you will need the vet. A horse that is not accepting of the aids cannot truly be accepting of the bit, and will become predisposed to pain in his back and his legs from carrying himself in a false frame and/or incorrectly pulling too much with his front end."

I recently had a lesson with local trainer, Martin Kuhn of Star West, and he made the same

statement. A horse properly trained will be a healthier horse with less lameness issues and, **BONUS**, will live a longer, productive life. Who doesn't want to keep their favorite horse as long as possible.

Do you have to be a dressage rider to get these benefits? Absolutely not. Perhaps all it takes is a lesson now and then from a local dressage trainer to help you get your horse moving correctly. There are trainers listed on the MISHO web page. Or ask a dressage rider. There are lots of great trainers in our area.

Good luck and good riding – for your horse's health.

*-Lynn Coeboorn*

## *Do Your Products Contain Banned Substances?*

**"SORE NO MORE  
CONTAINS BANNED  
SUBSTANCES."**

Drugs in sport are a hot issue, and the publicity received by human athletes who test positive during international competition is immense. Drug abuse is equally topical among equine athletes. Positive swabs have caused a number of horses and riders to be disqualified and lose individual or team medals in recent years. In racing, races are lost and the value of the horse is diminished when positives occur.

The really sad thing about all this testing is that those who cheat will find another way to do so, those who were looking out for the best interest of their horse

and the sport will get penalized. Yes, riders, trainer and vets need to be on the lookout for what's being fed and put on a horse – but because of the 0 tolerance, even a trace amount will yield a positive test. Unfortunately for many of the well-meaning, well-intentioned riders when the news breaks about a positive test it hits the media with much more sensationalism - **DOPING** - and making it seem as though the horses are high on **METH** or something, which often is not the case. Often it is indeed trace amounts. With the list of banned substances, you have to read what's in the shampoos, lini-

ments (**SORE NO MORE** contains banned substances). There are only three exceptions to this rule: therapeutic fluids, antibiotics, and Dexamethasone. All excepted substances must be administered by a veterinarian and cannot be administered to a horse or pony within six hours of competing.

## "Barn Drama" Puts Riders on Their High Horses

Scot Gillies has a good idea of the kind of horse people who will fit in at Gryffindor Farm, the small barn he helps manage in Lexington, Ky. So his advertisements for new boarders spell it out in detail: Owners must be "laid-back," "happy" and above all, "drama-free."

Mr. Gillies, a marketing consultant by day and a horse owner himself, says that during his 14 years in the equestrian world, "I've seen the full range of drama that is associated with horse people."

A few categories of problematic individuals reign: There are over-protective owners who insist their animals be treated like porcelain figurines, and neglectful owners who never show up. There are "back seat riders," as some call them, who love to criticize other people's technique. Some freak out over a stray wisp of hay in the barn aisle; others let their animals leave unwanted souvenirs.

"I had to make a sign: 'Please pick up your poop properly,'" says Ronnie Eden, who recently sold her boarding ranch in Laramie, Wyo.

About 40% of the country's 1.8 million horse owners keep their animals in group barns, where misbehavior among the human crowd is a common hazard.

"Barn drama," as equestrians call it, is a catchall term for all manner of interpersonal unpleasantness. It tends to revolve around the use of shared amenities (such as grooming areas and riding arenas), the "borrowing" of other people's stuff and animal welfare. It happens between fellow boarders, but also among barn staff, and can quickly escalate from petty bickering to screaming matches to vandalism.

Bonnie Erbé says she almost got punched. The PBS journalist and equestrian once got into an altercation with a fellow boarder over the height of some jumps at

their facility. Ms. Erbé asked the other rider if she might lower one or two. "She pulled a fist at me," Ms. Erbé says. The woman eventually walked away.

Now Ms. Erbé owns her own horse farm in Maryland. She takes boarders very selectively. "I try to bring in people who have plenty of other things going on in their life," she says.

The setup of a boarding barn almost guarantees unstable behavior: Take a group of passionate, opinionated individualists. (Riding, a solo activity, doesn't attract "team players.") Give them a consuming hobby centered on a delicate, expensive living creature. Put them in close quarters, often with children and dogs that run amok, spooking the horses, and let the backbiting begin.

In a barn where Mr. Gillies used to keep his horses, he says, one boarder accused another of stealing her hay—and retaliated by seeding the suspect's horse's grain with salt pellets. Hence Mr. Gillies's list of requirements. He says the rules help to "reduce the number of bad matches."

Barn dramatics aren't new. But in this insular world, in which participation is down and costs have soared, the tension isn't helping business. So to suss out potential troublemakers, stable owners are taking measures, including installing security cameras and locked storage areas and marketing themselves as "drama-free."

Equine law, a niche practice, is also becoming more prevalent as owners seek enforceable contracts.

After a young boarder vandalized her Lexington, Ky., barn in 2010, Lisa McConathy added locking gates and installed security cameras. But even those measures haven't solved all of the drama. Earlier this year, she says, two boarders who were planning to move out "decided

someone had taken their horse's blanket, and they were going to take it back. So they went up to a kid's horse and plucked off the blanket, in the middle of the day, in broad daylight."

Says Ms. McConathy: "I'll probably end up replacing it, because I'm the one responsible."

Some barns attract more drama than others. High-end facilities with riders who compete on the show circuit in events like jumping and dressage can be hotbeds of jealousy; trail-rider barns are said to be easier-going. A mix of disciplines and levels, from serious equestrians to children taking lessons, can make problems worse.

"The minute you start mixing the hunter-jumpers with the dressage people with the Western pleasure people, that is like drama times three," says Macala Wright, who boards her two horses in a facility that also includes a nonprofit equestrian-therapy group.

"The affluent people look down on the everyday horse owners. The dressage people don't like the hunters, and every group looks down on the nonprofits," says Ms. Wright, a Los Angeles branding consultant who has shuttled one of her horses through four barns in two years. At the second, which catered mostly to wealthy riders, "People would comment, 'Oh, your dressage saddle isn't very good quality,'" recalls Ms. Wright.

Half of horse owners have household incomes of \$75,000 or less, according to a 2012 survey by American Horse Publications, an industry group. And the hobby is pricey: Horses can sell for \$100 or \$100,000. Monthly boarding fees range from \$200 for a rural, no-frills setup to \$2,500 or more for a luxurious full-service suburban facility. Barn drama can be even more costly, as Vicky Castegren, a Virginia breeder of high-end



jumpers, discovered. One morning a couple of summers ago at a Kentucky horse show, Ms. Castegren's staff arrived at the stall of one of their prized stallions to a shocking sight. "The horse's big, beautiful white tail was on the floor," says Ms. Castegren. The horse wasn't hurt, but it took the equivalent of hair extensions to camouflage the damage. The culprit has never been caught.

The best defense against drama may be a no-nonsense management style. "Three strikes and you're out!" works for Donna Hyde, who juggles 22 horses, 18 boarders and disciplines including therapeutic riding, Western dressage and trail riding at her Norco, Calif., facility.

If a conflict gets bad enough that one boarder changes his or her riding schedule to avoid another, Ms. Hyde steps in. After two warnings, she tells the offender "they'd be happier somewhere else," she says. If all else fails, she can remind them of the name of her business: No Drama Ranch.

-Lauren Lipton

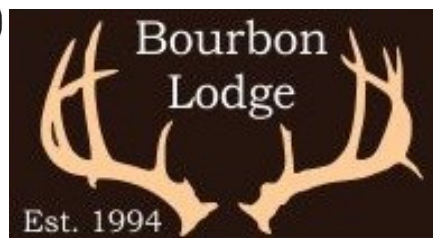
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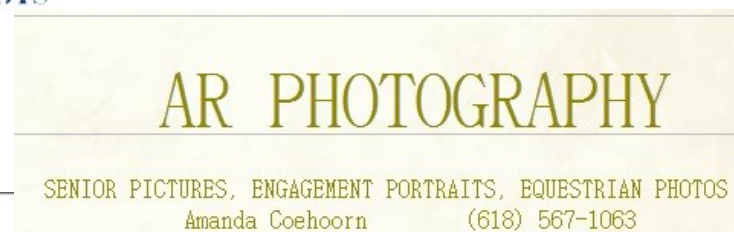
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