



CORBITs Spring 2012

I would like to start off this issue by describing the amazing winter adventures that I had on horseback, playing in the snow and attending wonderful clinics ... but I can't. We didn't really have any snow and unfortunately I didn't get the chance to attend any clinics. Have you ever heard the phrase "biting off more than you can chew"? That pretty much sums up my winter ... only with less sleep. My winter has been less about Pony Club, and more about trying to keep awake in class/at work/driving to the barn. But as they also say, "this too shall pass", and pass it has.

With the early coming of spring comes the gear up for testing and show season. Central Ontario has already played host to a show jumping and dressage clinic, which will hopefully have a spot in the next edition, and the season's schedule is up and ready for viewing on the web site. Soon we will be gathering for Quiz craziness and horse show fun. Until then, this issue of CORBITs will have to tide us over with contributions from Centaurus Pony Club, a Pony Club parent, a traveling Pony Clubber and of course Bob's Corner.

Before we get to the rest of the links, I have a video to share that features our own Karen Foell. Karen recently tried out for and made the Canadian Team for International Mounted Games. She will be competing at the Worlds this July in Wales and in the International Games next March in New Zealand. In the video, the riders switch ponies so I can't tell you to watch for a specific one, but Karen is the rider in the light blue t-shirt. Speaking as someone who has never quite figured out how to vault onto a pony, watching this made me feel a little inferior ... but that didn't stop me from pressing the replay button. Enjoy the video and make sure to congratulate Karen whenever you see her.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=i7EG6p6bs8c

Links

A little riding education:

<http://eventingnation.com/home/idcta-leslie-law-clinic.html>

<http://eventingnation.com/home/videos/why-michigan-eventers-are-seriously-cool-or-the-sinead-clinic-recap.html>

<http://eventingnation.com/home/buck-davidson.html>
<http://eventingnation.com/home/colleen-rutledge-clinic-january-14-15.html>

Something just a little sentimental:

<http://eventingnation.com/home/a-parents-perspective-yikes-my-baby-is-turning-18.html#comments>
<http://eventingnation.com/home/one-for-all-the-eventing-moms.html>
<http://www.dressagedaily.com/article/japanese-dressage-rider-hiroshi-hoketsu-70-will-be-oldest-olympic-competitor-london>

Some history:

<http://www.eurodressage.com/equestrian/2011/03/30/matador-scandinavian-fairytale>
<http://www.eurodressage.com/equestrian/2012/03/29/seldom-seen-connemara-crossbred-going-all-way>
<http://thevaulthorseracing.wordpress.com/2012/03/18/my-echo-my-shadow-me-ruffian/>
http://horsetalk.co.nz/2012/04/07/seabiscuit-and-war-admiral-to-duel-again/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=seabiscuit-and-war-admiral-to-duel-again
<http://www.horsenation.com/2012/04/02/horses-in-history-britains-royal-mews/>

It's good to watch the best:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVE0cq1zqWI&feature=related>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lRw7gmmQM9s&feature=player_embedded
<http://eventingnation.com/home/buzzterbrown-the-fork.html>

These are just interesting/informative/cool/funny:

<http://www.eurodressage.com/equestrian/2010/11/03/uta-graf-and-stefan-schneider-kingdom-horse>
<http://www.eurodressage.com/equestrian/2012/04/05/thelwell-was-right-chubby-ponies-misbehave-more>
<http://www.bitbankaustralia.com.au/>
<http://www.horsenation.com/2012/03/30/friday-night-flicks/>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4N1L_-ZsL0&feature=youtu.be
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTDSW-69Iy0&feature=player_embedded#!

Musical Drill Team

Centaurus Pony Club

This past summer, six members of Centaurus Pony Club got to experience something new, something that they've never done before: musical drill team. They were taught by RCMP Constable Terry Russel, who had been on the RCMP Musical Ride.

“It was really cool having an RCMP officer as my instructor because I got to learn a few things that I didn’t already know,” shared Kendra Stewart. “I liked knowing that he had done the musical ride before,” added Jamie Paterson.

“I liked that we got to learn what the actual RCMP officers have to do and all the difficulties they have to go through,” continued Sabrina Eira. “We were learning everything he learned in the start.”

“Doing the drill team was a totally different riding scenario,” suggested Emily Newton. “It was the complete opposite to riding lessons.”

“At first, it was a little tough to get used to the style of riding we were going to use,” explained Patricia Rothenburg. “The horses were pretty much head to tail and the riders were four inches knee to knee.”

“You have to find the perfect ponies for a good team,” said Katie Bradbury, “because not all the ponies like to ride close together.”

“My favourite movement was ‘thread the needle,’” offered Rothenburg. Stewart added “half sections left and right” to her list of favourite moves. “They were very tricky,” said Stewart, “but once we perfected them they looked great.”

The riders performed to music from Harry Potter and “Hooked on Classics” Mozart. “I found that when we were riding to music it helped the team flow a little better,” remarked Rothenburg. “It was so much fun to ride with music and feel the beat,” added Paterson.

Paterson really liked the performance aspect of the activity. “What I liked about riding in a fair,” she explained, “was having all sorts of people watching us present the routine. It felt really neat to perform for a big audience like that and it was even neater to do it with my friends.”

“Doing the drill team has made me a better rider,” reflected Newton, “because you learn to be aggressive, you learn that you’re the operator of your horse and they’re not the operator of you.”

“I now feel that I’m a better rider because I learned new skills that will help me succeed,” said Bradbury. “For example I learned to look not just at where I was going but where I was going next, and also where everyone else was.”

“We learned that through the whole thing we have to work together,” explained Eira, “which was good because you gain trust in your team.”

“I hope we do something like this again next year,” remarked Stewart. “This is going to stick in all of our hearts forever,” exclaimed Newton.

Look for “Centaurus pony club” on YouTube!

(Your fearless editor did the looking for you ... so enjoy)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQFji9yqPMQ>



A Drive in the Country

Murray Chamney (Pony Cub parent; future driver)

I was the typical Pony Club father; I knew very little about these large beasts that give our children such pleasure. The only facts I knew about horses, when we started our adventure many years ago, were two simple things: The pointy end goes forward, and stay away from the business end. Since that point, I have become more accustomed to the horse life. I like to think I am even useful at times, as I warm up a bit, hold a horse between events, or lane judge at Prince Philip Games.

I have never had any desire to put a leg over.

My wife and children all became adept riders. There was lots of pressure to get the grumpy old boy on a push button horse....but I fended this off. In the ten odd years of Pony Club I thought that everyone had finally stopped insisting that I at least try riding. My daughter, Christy, however, knew it was in my best interest to do something with a horse, so she bought me a driving lesson.

I kind of liked the idea of driving. There's a seat with a back on it, wheels, brakes, and the reins are much like the steering in a go cart. Also, I had a vision of trotting down a gravel lane, the sun poking through the overhead umbrella of foliage. Bliss.

My instructor Jelle, assisted me in tacking up Alex, a small horse (please don't ask me the breed). There is a considerable amount of additional tack required. Alex didn't seem to mind the rookie fumbling around all over him. He is a pro, and recognized that he would need to be very patient.

The cart we used was built at the beginning of the 20th century. It was very light and well balance, but put little strain on the horse, and easily supported 2 adult males, in relative comfort. The engineering was impressive.

I learned that Alex is much smarter than me. He knew what to do, when to do it, and only need to be gently told to walk on, trot, or stand. I, on the other hand, insisted on over compensating with the reigns, shouting commands, and being very busy with my hands. After Alex schooled me, I learned very quickly.

I spent a couple of hours walking and driving with Alex. I had a wonderful time walking, trotting and zooming around the arena. At the end of my lesson, I feel confident enough that I may be able to have my drive down that country road very soon.



Adventures in America: Part 1

Kyra Holmes

(Kyra currently is currently a working student with Mogie Bearden-Muller – see CORBITs Fall 2011)

Hello all,

I have been a bad Pony Clubber and have not found the will to maintain a blog. Katie harassed me so on my day off I have decided to give everyone an update via CORBITs! Fabulous, I know.

Well, things have been quite busy since I left Canada at the end of November. I was at the farm in Maryland for just over a month when we moved down to Aiken, South Carolina for the winter. The horse who is my main man down here is named Ace. Ace is a super star. He is a spry 27 year old who was competing Prelim last year in eventing with the previous working student. Ace has been there and done that. He has competed through the three star level back in California and has taught many many riders over the years. He will be my partner in crime when it comes to getting my A rating down here. And Ace sure will teach you, he is no pushbutton schoolmaster! While he knows all the tricks, he knows all the tricks to make you work, too.

So right now we are in the mecca of eventing in the winter, the lovely horse town of Aiken. We are at a really nice farm, although we are in the boonies and surrounded by lots and lots of rednecks, which is apparently the norm in South Carolina! I am very happy because Ace and I have been given the go-ahead to go to a jumper show this weekend. We will be doing a 3' jumper class and a 3'3" jumper class. Then on Monday we will head over to Full Gallop Farm and go cross country schooling. Never a slow time in Aiken!

The really nice thing about Aiken (other than the fact that most days I have my lessons outside in T shirts! Sorry!) is the hacking!! All the back roads are sand, and pretty much perfect horse footing. So we go hacking all the time, do trot sets on the roads, and there is rarely any traffic.

Hope all is well,

Kyra Holmes



(Since this was written, Kyra has been to two events at Training Level and been visited by two traveling Pony Club parents that some of you might know that go by the last name of Stephenson)

Bobs corner

Every so often when researching information for this article, I came across something that made me say, "Holy cow!" For fun, try to keep count of how many times the same thing happens to you as you read this. If it's fewer than five, then you knew all this stuff already, or you don't give a hoot about thoroughbreds, or you are just too blasé for words.

The Little Horse Nobody Wanted

One of the fondest memories of my university years is of a Saturday in May, 1964. A bunch of us were crowded around the television because, for the first time any of us could remember, a Canadian horse was entered in the Kentucky Derby, and we thought he had a chance to win. The American commentators and pundits certainly did not agree with us. Some of them were patronizing, others disdainful with gusts to downright snotty. Only one chap picked up on the human interest (equine interest?) story of the little horse that had been put up for sale at auction and nobody wanted to buy him, and now here he was, running in the Kentucky Derby, even if he was a 40 to 1 long shot. It was true. His breeders had included him in their annual yearling sale with a reserve price of only \$25,000, but everyone thought he was too small. He was the only

yearling not to sell. His actual size is now in dispute. His promotional literature said he was 15.3 hands, but many argue that was just puffery and he never got past 15.1. Either way, he was pretty small for a racehorse.

On that Saturday in May, however, it didn't matter whether he was 15.3 or 15.1. How we cheered as the little Canadian horse nobody wanted, Northern Dancer, turned on a tremendous, thrilling burst of speed in the final corner and powered past all the bigger horses down the stretch to win by a neck. He not only won, he set a record for the Derby, running the mile and a quarter in two minutes flat. Over the 47 years since Northern Dancer's victory, only two horses have ever won the Kentucky Derby in less than two minutes – Secretariat and Monarchos. The current record is 1:59.4, only 0.6 seconds faster than Northern Dancer's 1964 time. To put this in perspective, the world record for the men's 1,000 metre race was 2:16.6 in 1964, and it is now 2:11.9, a difference of nearly five seconds.

Northern Dancer's racing career was brief but brilliant. He only ran in 18 races, but he won 14 of them and never finished worse than third. His last race was the 1964 Queen's Plate, which he won despite bowing a tendon. Rather than risk further damage, his owners decided to retire him to the breeding shed. There he had a second career even more successful than the first.

Of course, none of us watching the Kentucky Derby that day could have imagined that this little colt would go on to become the most dominant sire the world of thoroughbred horse racing has ever known, and by now it is probably safe to add, "or will ever know". How dominant is Northern Dancer? In 1996 the Breeders Cup races were held at Woodbine here in Toronto, and the CBC decided to look up the pedigrees of all the horses entered in all the races, to see how many were descended from Northern Dancer. In total there were 81 horses running that day, and the CBC found that no fewer than 63 of them traced back to Northern Dancer.

And that dominance has kept on growing ever since. A couple of years ago, some fool wrote in the Toronto Star that Northern Dancer would not have much influence on the coming weekend's Kentucky Derby. That didn't sound right, so our daughter Stephanie, who has been riding since she joined the Eglinton Pony Club when she was eight, decided to check it out. (Anybody can do that, by the way, even Toronto Star reporters if they feel like doing their homework. There's a massive on-line database called "Pedigree Query", free for public use, which records the lineages of almost every registered thoroughbred on the planet.) It turned out that 18 of the 21 colts entered in the Kentucky Derby that year were descended from Northern Dancer. 18 of 21! How much more influence did that reporter want?

We don't look up pedigrees every spring. As you can imagine, it would take more and more time every year to sift through the generations. But I think we are going to have to do it in 2014, to see whether the Kentucky Derby has any entries who are NOT descended from Northern Dancer, 50 years after he won that race. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that in the next decade or so, all top flight thoroughbred racehorses will be descended from Northern Dancer. See why I say, "or will ever know"?

Just as a footnote, the little horse that nobody wanted to buy for \$25,000 eventually commanded a stud fee of a cool one million dollars. I guess everybody wanted him by then.

Well? How many cows did you add to your herd?

