



COR BITS

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Spring 2010

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Meet Your New Regional Youth Rep

The Central Ontario Regional Youth Rep for 2010 is Ali Sprague, who serves as Branch Youth Rep for the Kawartha Pony Club. Here's what Ali had to say in her nomination papers, to introduce herself.

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Ali Sprague from the Kawartha Pony Club. I have been a member of Kawartha for seven years and their Youth Rep for the last two. The opportunities for education, growth and friendship make me want to encourage others to do the same.

My background is mostly in dressage with my ten year old TB/QH mare, Kaya. I currently have my C Level and ride at First Level. We plan to start eventing this year to gain experience in different areas. I would also like to work toward my coaching licence. I really enjoy helping the younger members reach their goals both in education and riding. With that in mind, I would like to be COR's youth rep in order to reach out to other clubs.

We wish Ali well and look forward to her participation in this year's Regional Committee meetings.

Thank You, Ontario Equestrian Federation!

Central Ontario Region has received a grant of \$1,820 from the Ontario Equestrian Federation. Thank you, OEF! And thank you, Karol Shipley, who put together the grant application.

Shop and Learn Nights at Greenhawk



Highly educational, though not a part of the formal COR program, has been a series of "Shop and Learn" nights organized by the Maple Pony Club and held at a local Greenhawk store. These proved popular, not least because Greenhawk offered a discount to Pony Club members attending these mini-workshops. Here is a brief report from Mike Stephenson, Maple's DC, on the second one.

Hi everyone....what a fabulous turn out this evening...the Pony Clubbers came out in force to support our second Greenhawk Education and Barn Night.

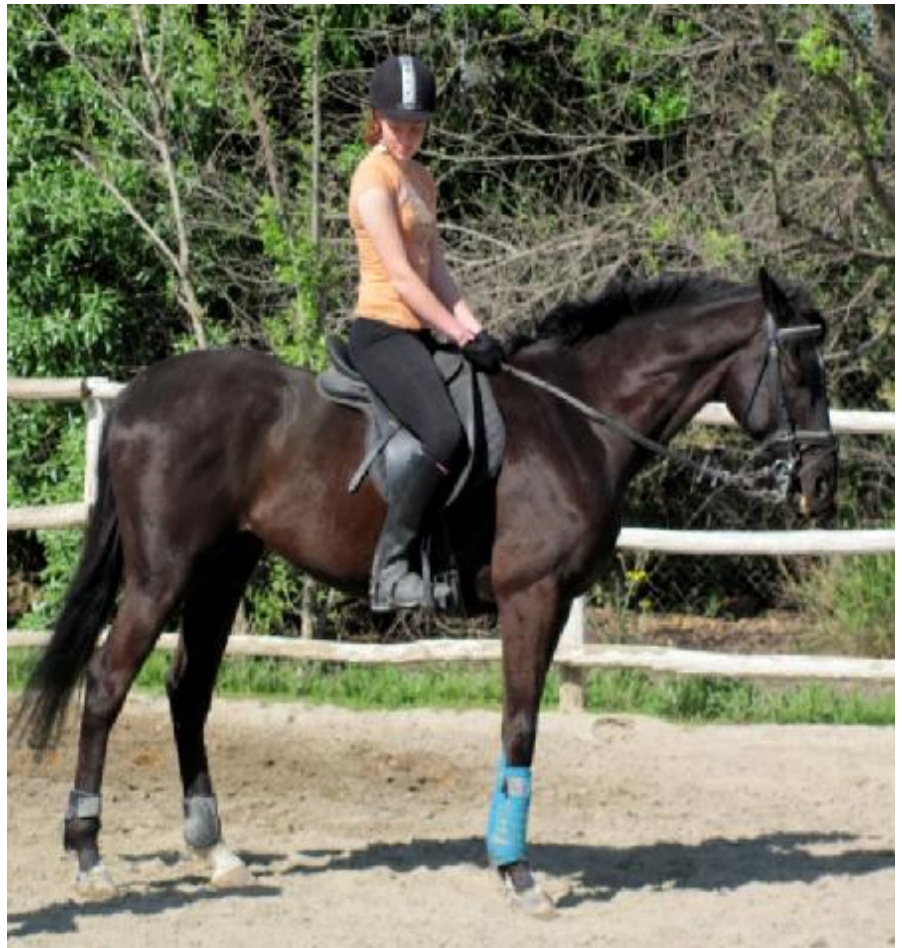
So how successful was it?

Well we had 51 members and parents....My count is not perfect on the breakdown, but I estimate that there were eight from TNY, seven from King, 20 from Maple, five from Rising Star, seven from Centaurus, three from Whitchurch and one from Uxbridge....I apologize if I did not get that count exactly right...not everyone put their club's name on the sign-in sheet...but suffice to say, it was a great turn out.

Thanks to Katie Stephenson who held a D2 Testing prep session, Kyra Holmes who held a very popular bandaging session and Emily Mitchell who held a D, D1 level Quiz Visuals session. Thanks to all three of you....I think all of the club members got a lot out of your lessons and I saw many parents in the shadows as you went along...clearly they were interested in learning as was I.

The Rain in Spain ...

How would you like to take some time off from (a) school and (b) winter, to go riding in Spain? What's that? Some of you could tolerate it? Well, that's exactly what happened to Rising Star Pony Club member Emily Lindsay. Here is her account of what most of us - or at least those of us who can ride - would count as a dream trip. *I am on a student exchange program in Seville, Spain, organized through ISE (International Student Exchange). They come to the school to talk about the program. Most kids go on this exchange in grade 10 but there are some that go in grade 8 right through to grade 11. I left Canada on February 12th (first day of the Olympics) right after second semester started. I have worked with my teachers and am doing school work while I am over here. Some of my classes are the same here as at home, like gym and commtech. As part of the exchange we had a girl come and stay at our place for three months as well. Some of you might remember seeing her as she came to Banquet with me. Her name is Belen, I am staying with her family now, just outside of Seville.*



The country is beautiful and so are the horses. The horses are very well trained - the school horses can do first level dressage (pc). In some parts of the city people offer horse and carriage ride to the public. We got to see the centre of the city in a horse drawn buggy, it was amazing. Over here dressage is the main discipline, but they also do show jumping and endurance; I have yet to see ANY eventers. I am taking lesson over here, they are very different from home. The barn is very big, it has over 40 horses all in box stalls (there is no turn out for the horses). My favorite horse here is Etiope (he is one in the pic). He is a TB cross. Most of the School horses are cross breeds just like at home. There are some Andalusians but not in the lesson barn. The style taught is different. My coach believes that every horse should wear a curb bit, even if they do not need it. The lesson reminds me of a trail ride. Whatever the horse in the lead does the rest just follow. All the horses side pass and leg yield pretty much on their own. At first look you would think the riders are fairly advanced as the horses all go around in frame. But then I found out with the big bits in it is just a false frame to kept the kids from pulling on their mouths. The horses don't jump much here, hopefully next week I will get to jump bigger than 12".

In Spain there is so much to see and do, if you like old Roman architecture some of the buildings are amazing. We saw a book from the 1600s in one of the churches - really cool. We even went to the beach in Portugal last week. Very different then anything I have ever seen before. Spain would be an awesome place to go for a vacation. Next week is a huge celebration in Seville called "La Faria"... Everyone dresses up in traditional clothing, including the horses. I think it is going to be amazing to see. I have only seen pictures and the horses have flowers on their bridles.

I arrive back home on May 7th... Just in time for the first PPG meet. Can't wait to get home and start practicing PPG's again.

Oshawa Pony Club Member Wins Scholarship to University in England

Carolyn Russell-Poliquin, a proud C level member of the Oshawa Pony Club (who just received her ten year membership award from National), has been accepted at the University of Western England, Hartpury College, to study Equine Sport Science starting this September. Hartpury College has an elite athlete program for dressage, showjumping, and eventing, AND Carolyn had just been offered a spot on the Hartpury Equine Academy for elite dressage riders. This is a huge accomplishment for her and her horse, Cornucopia.(aka Corbin). They were the 2008 second level provincial junior champions, rode the FEI JUNIOR level in 2009, and are schooling fourth level movements now. They have been recognized by Dressage Canada with Achievement



awards in 2008 and 2009 for second and third levels. She was recognized by COR with year end championships several times in the past four years. She is representing COR at this year's National Dressage Championships in BC, and then will be off to England with her horse to study and train. Well done, Carolyn!

WOR Tetrathlon Mini-Meet

Here is a report forwarded to me by Helaina Rothenberg of Centaurus, on behalf of Rhonda Hutcheson. Thank you, Centaurus!

On Saturday, April 10th, five members of the local Centaurus Pony Club attended a Western Ontario Region Tetrathlon mini-meet hosted by Headwaters Pony Club in Orangeville. The sport of Tetrathlon includes pistol shooting, swimming, cross country running, and horseback riding. As a pre-season tune-up, this meet did not include the horseback phase.

Alyson Weedon placed second overall in the Novice B division, her strongest event being the running.

The Novice division was the largest division of the day, and Rebecca McDowell, Patricia Rothenburg and Andie Munro demonstrated the Club's consistency by placing seventh, eighth and ninth respectively. Munro's strongest phase was swimming, while Rothenburg and McDowell tied for second in the division for the running phase.

Nicole McDowell placed fifth in the Green Junior division, with an impressive result in the shooting phase. That's Nicole running in the picture to your left. This was the first time any of the girls had competed in shooting.



Some Thoughts on the H1N1 Epidemic in Toronto

Last Fall, just after putting out the Fall 2009 edition of CORBits, Your Humble Editor got sick. It may or may not have been the H1N1 flu, but if it was, there was no help available for it, at least in Toronto. On one of his rare excursions out of his sick bed, Yr. Hmbl. Ed. dashed off an e-mail about the situation to his Virginia relatives. Some of them forwarded it to their friends, and some were kind enough to suggest that it should have a wider audience. Since you, gentle readers, are the only wider audience to which I

have access, and since we are a bit short of material this edition, here is an abridged version for your amusement (hopefully).

Liz says she has let you know I have some kind of bug. We don't really know what I have, just what I don't have. I don't have the regular flu, because we have had our shots for that. And we are really hoping it's not the H1N1 flu, the so-called Swine Flu, because that is potentially much more serious, and also because our various governments have seriously dropped the ball on getting the vaccine for it out to the public.

First, the federal government decided to sole-source the vaccine, and when you sole-source anything you really, really need, production problems follow as surely as night follows day.

Second, the local Toronto government decided to distribute the vaccine only through central clinics, not in workplaces, schools and family doctors' offices, as they had done successfully with regular flu vaccine for decades.

A few days before the first clinics were due to open, a healthy young 13 year old hockey player began feeling ill near the end of his game, and he was dead before morning from H1N1. This was headline news and caused a panic across the country, including, it seems, among the organizers. They decided to open a limited number of clinics early, and asked that only those in high priority groups go to them. In Toronto itself, with a population approaching three million, they opened two (2) clinics, which were promptly overwhelmed. Gosh! who could have seen that coming? And because they opened up before they were ready, they had neither the staff nor the vaccine supply to deal with the rush. People were lining up for four hours in the rain before the clinics opened, only to be told to go home ten minutes after the opening because there was only enough vaccine to get to some point far ahead of them in the line. Now, I might line up for four hours for a vaccine that I knew would save me from otherwise certain death, or for front row seats at the Second Coming, but nothing less. And if I had lined up for four hours in the rain with my pre-schoolers, and then got sent home, I would be tempted to come back with a "Close-Shave-On-U" do it yourself guillotine kit (some assembly required; tumbrel sold separately).

They did eventually open more clinics, but still could not keep up with the demand. So the next step was to make sure those in line fell into one of the high priority groups and send all others away. It turned out, however, that there were different definitions of "high priority" depending on who you were. Everyone agreed and accepted that health-care workers had to have the vaccine first of all. They have to be able to look after the rest of us if this turns into a real pandemic. But members of hospitals' Boards of Directors, who venture into the administrative wing of a hospital about once a quarter and never get near a patient? Hmm. Not so good. Then it turned out that vaccine was being diverted from Canadian clinics to give to Taliban prisoners of war in Afghanistan. Okay, as signatories to the Geneva Convention, we are honour bound to look after the health of our POWs, but surely they could have come a little lower on the priority list. We have not yet vaccinated our troops!

The argument used there was that the POWs were in crowded conditions and people in close proximity are vulnerable to a quick spread of the disease. Well, once that argument came out it spread like wildfire. Inmates in prisons got vaccinated. Members of professional sports teams got vaccinated, including the Maple Leafs and the Raptors. Now we have officials at private boarding schools saying that their pupils should come before the general public because they live so close together. The jury's still out on that one, but the government may listen! The people who make the priority decisions have probably not done their own grocery shopping for years, though some of them may have children in private boarding schools.

The Federal Minister of Health in particular is ill-equipped to understand crowding, not only because her current position means that she travels around Ottawa in a chauffeured limousine, and around the country by private jet, but also because of her background. She is an Innu from Nunavut. The Inuit are the people we used to call Eskimos, but they don't like that term anymore. And Nunavut used to be the Eastern part of the Northwest Territories, but got split off about ten years ago. The first thing you need to know about Nunavut is that it's enormous - over 800,000 square miles, slightly bigger than Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Italy put together, with Andorra, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Monaco sprinkled on top for garnish. And scattered over that vast territory is a total population of 29,500 people - about one for every 27 1/2 square miles. They couldn't infect each other by telegram up there! What the heck could the poor Minister of Health know about crowding? Crowding in Nunavut is when you can see a tiny dot on the far horizon that might possibly turn out to be another person (of course, it also might possibly turn out to be a polar bear, so most of the time you don't stick around to find out). If she wants to understand crowding, the Minister of Health should go to the Bloor-Yonge subway station here in Toronto, where the main east-west line intersects the main north-south line, any weekday morning. There, every two minutes, she would see a number of people roughly equivalent to the entire population of Nunavut get off one train and onto another, and be replaced on their original train by about the same number. There they sit and stand, packed in like sardines, half of them sneezing and the other half coughing. The people who make decisions about crowding should have to hold their meetings on one of those trains.

By the way, speaking of dropped balls and Nunavut, here's another one that might interest you. The territorial capitol of Nunavut is a village called Iqaluit. Notice there is no "u" after the "q", a construction alien to both of Canada's official languages. But it is important to leave it out, because Iqaluit, without the "u", translates as "place with many fishes", whereas iqualuit, with the "u", means "one who does not properly wipe his bottom". The Prime Minister's Office accidentally included the "u" in some press release not long ago, the Nunavut press shared the joke with their southern colleagues and of course our newspapers were all over it and the whole country had a good laugh. The really silly thing is that Inuktitut, the Inuit language, has its own alphabet and doesn't use our Roman letters at all. So why the capitol's name could not have been rendered as "Ikaluit", leaving the "qu" version for the Great Unwiped, I shall never know. My guess is that decision needed months of deliberation by a committee of highly paid bureaucrats and consultants (all of whom have already had their H1N1 shots). But I digress.

I am very unhappy about being sick. But I am trying to keep my sense of humour up, and not show bitterness. If what I have does turn out to be H1N1 and it kills me, then I might allow myself some bitterness. I don't think that's going to happen because (a) I seem to be feeling a bit better every day, and (b) I have had no urge to oink. If it does, however, my fall-back plan calls for some serious haunting. Those bungling bureaucrats and me-first line-jumpers shall smart for their sins! I shall pursue them through their dreams to the end of their days, wielding a gigantic made-for-use-on-brontosaurus hypodermic needle, which I shall plunge dozens of times a night into their improperly-wiped bottoms.

Of course, I do have to end on a serious note. While the situation in Toronto has been badly handled, our system does have one saving grace. In time, all Canadians who want to be vaccinated against H1N1 will get their shots, free of charge - not just those with private medical insurance or the means to pay for the vaccination at steep rates.

Your humble editor is pleased to report that the H1N1 did not carry him off, and he is still on the right side of the grass.

Comments and criticisms are welcome, letters to the Editor are invited and news of your activities is really needed for the next issue.

Have a great summer!