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SPRING 2021  
COMPLIMENTARY



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HAFLINGERS  
RECONNECTING WITH RIDING

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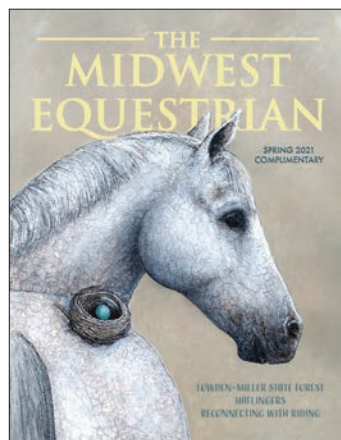
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*Along for the Ride*  
By Jennifer Ross  
Mixed Media  
(Acrylic and Eggshells)  
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## THE MIDWEST EQUESTRIAN

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Spring, that special time of year of change. A time when change is expected and accepted. Change gets a bad rap sometimes, but not around Spring. I think all of us have had to make some changes over the past year and I hope your changes have been as positive as ours.

One of our most important changes is that Sarah Aldridge and Carrie Dodt have joined our team. Sarah contributed last year as a writer, and this year she has officially joined us as our copy editor. Carrie is our new graphic designer. Please help us in welcoming them and read a bit about them below.

Sarah bought her first horse when she was fourteen and for the past 20 years has been volunteering at various therapeutic riding facilities. "I've been volunteering at various therapeutic riding programs for more than 20 years, finding great blessing in seeing differently abled kids and adults achieve huge goals." Sarah and her family adopted two donkeys last year, and yes, it is purely coincidental that our book review is on a series of books about Donkey-Donk, a donkey! Sarah's donkeys are very entertaining and so is Donkey-Donk.

Carrie bought her first horse as an adult. She rides Western and has competed in Western pleasure and horsemanship. "I have proudly ridden on the Timmermann's Drill team since its inception in 1994 to 2018." Carrie is also a gifted photographer, as you can see by the new photograph of my horses and me.

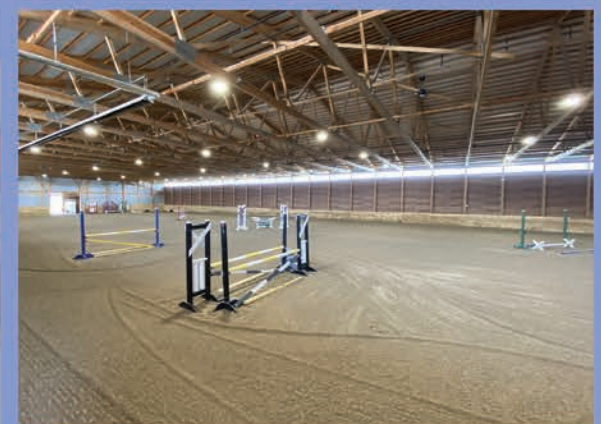
Speaking of change, word at the barn is that people of various ages are starting to ride or are getting back into riding. How exciting for a change! I love to see new people joining our ranks. Sarah wrote a useful on reconnecting with riding, so for those of you thinking about getting back into riding, her article has some practical tips.

Though we have made some major changes at The Midwest Equestrian, we have also kept with tradition. In this issue we continue to bring you our Trail Trekking, VetEd, Things You Should Know, and The Young Equestrian sections. We hope to have The Midwest Kitchen back in the next issue.

We will continue to change in order to bring you an educational and informative magazine, but like Spring, our change will be for the better. We hope you enjoy our changes as much as we do.

Best wishes and ride on.

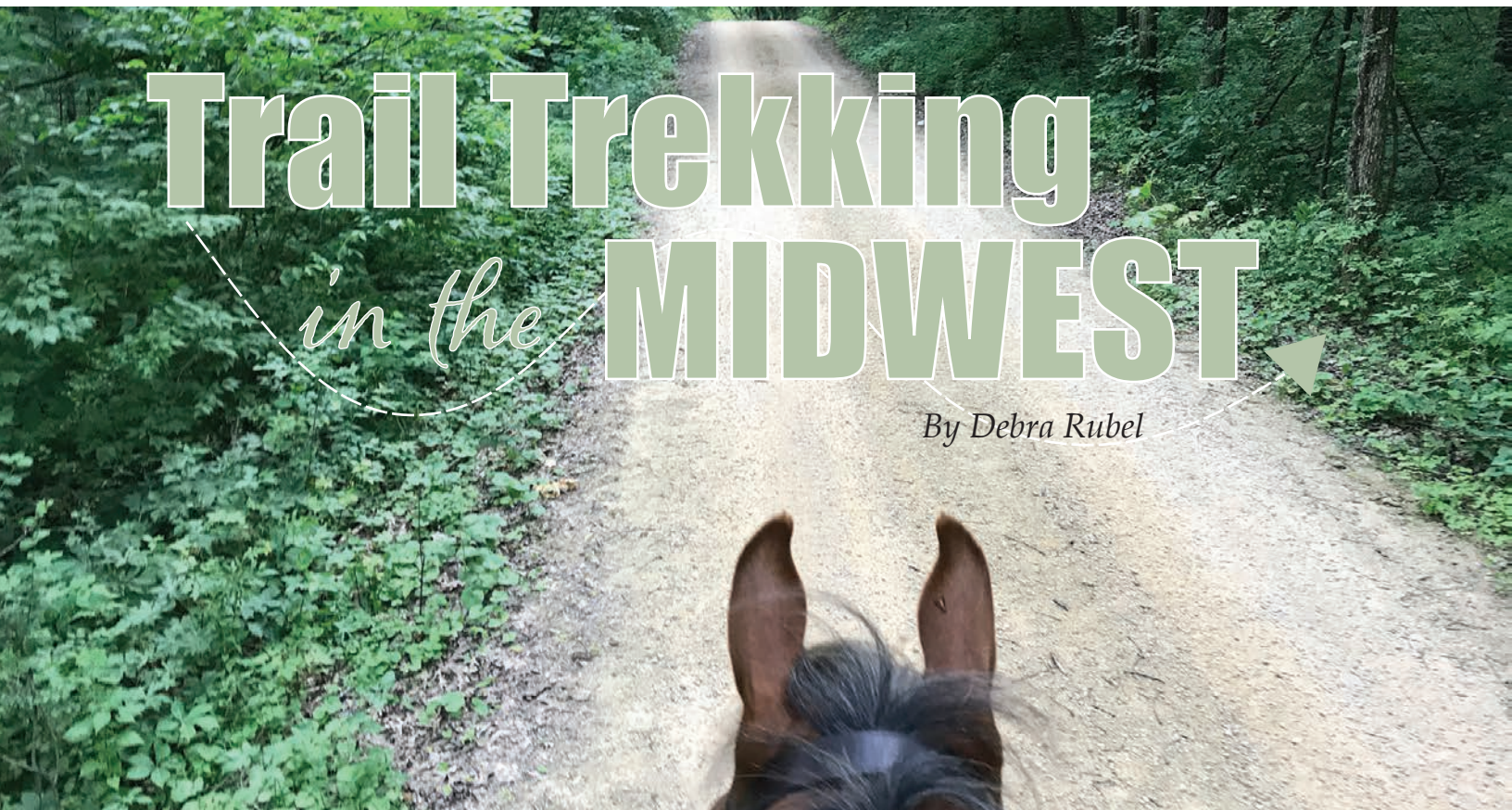
*Janice*



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Department of Natural Resources in 1993. The park encompasses 2,291 acres. In 1920 Frank Lowden, a single-term governor of Illinois, owned the land and was interested in forestry. At the time, the land was referred to as Sinnissippi Forest and consisted of hardwood trees. Lowden experimented with various types of pine trees to find the most suitable varieties for the area. He oversaw seeding of patches of pine trees among the hardwoods. It's estimated that his seeding effort resulted in more than 500,000 pine trees being planted. The oldest plantings of white pines in this park date back to before 1910 and are believed to be the oldest white pines in the state. The quality of the forest in this park has been of interest to the forestry department at the University of Illinois. The forest

serves as a field laboratory from which data are still collected, to this day. In fact, approximately 80% of the Illinois hardwood data, collected for study, come from the Lowden-Miller State Forest.

Lowden-Miller State Forest is located alongside the Rock River. Trails meander through beautiful forest and run along the river. Along this stretch of the river, bluffs line both sides, some reaching 120 feet high. When you ride the river trails, you're actually riding on top of bluffs. So when you look out across the river, you're looking down from the bluff you're atop. You can see the matching picturesque bluffs of Castle Rock State Park, with its scenic viewing platform, across the river. There are also bluffs located in the trees on the Lowden-Miller side of the river. Lowden-Miller

State Forest has 3.5 miles of river frontage.

### Hitting the Trails

With 22 miles of equestrian trails, you may wish to visit this park more than once to cover all the trails. If you're familiar with the park, you could ride without a map. The park is in the shape of an upside-down L. The outside of the L runs along the river. In the summer, you can locate the river from the sounds of the boats traveling on it. The inside of the L is formed by Nashua Road and Scout Road, and has six parking lots along it. If you get lost, ride away from the river and look for a parking lot. You can then ride Scout and Nashua Roads back to the equestrian parking lot. These roads have light traffic and are safe to ride down, though not

## LOWDEN-MILLER STATE FOREST

*Winter is ending and Spring is on the way. Looking forward to tacking up your horse and hitting the trails for a beautiful ride? Look no further than the parks of the Illinois Rock River Valley.*

One such park, with a lovely mature forest, is Lowden-Miller State Forest. This park should not be confused with Lowden State Park. Both are located on the Rock River, but Lowden State Park is located between Byron and Oregon, Illinois and is home to the giant Chief Blackhawk statue on the river front, visible from Illinois Route 2, just south of the Stronghold Camp and Retreat Center. Unfortunately, there are no horse trails at Lowden State Park. On the other hand, Lowden-Miller State Forest, located 3 miles south of Oregon, Illinois, offers 22 miles of beautiful trails through scenic hardwood and pine forest.

### History of Lowden-Miller State Forest

Lowden-Miller State Forest takes its name from the landowners who sold the parcels of property that make up the park to the Illinois



quite as scenic as the forest trails. The Boy Scout Camp, located just south of Parking Lot 4, is another landmark that can be used to orient yourself.

Typically, this park is lightly used. There are occasional hikers or dog walkers; on the weekends you may encounter Boy Scout troops hiking the river trail. If you ride at dusk or dawn, you will see deer. You may even flush some out of hiding when riding during the day. If you're lucky, you may see wild turkeys, too.

If you're looking for a short, hour-long ride, you can ride the trails circling the equestrian parking lot. These trails have markers 81 through 89 on them. Parking Lot 2 is the next closest access point to the trail system. It is located across the street from the equestrian parking lot entrance, though you may not see it. To find the driveway leading to Parking Lot 2, ride to the eastern edge of the equestrian parking lot clearing and you'll see it.

For a nice ride that combines forest, clearing, and trail along the river, I would recommend accessing the trail system from Parking Lot 4. To the west out of the trailhead, follow the mowed path marked with a horse shoe. When you reach Scout Road, keep going straight up the gravel driveway to Parking Lot 4. From there, if you go south into the trails marked with 50's and 60's, you'll pass through some beautiful forest with a good combination of hardwood and pine trees. The trails around marker 58 offer

a beautiful pine stretch. Near marker 54, you'll come across some bluffs and hills in the trees. Travel north to marker 52 and you'll come across an open area. From marker 50 to 29 is a beautiful stretch of river with the bluffs of Castle Rock State Park visible on the opposite side of the river. Return to the trailhead

*Lowden-Miller State Forest offers 22 miles of beautiful trails through scenic hardwood and pine forest.*

*The trees are big and the river trail is beautiful, as you're riding atop bluffs and looking down on the river.*

by a direct route for a 90-minute ride. Continue riding either along the river or in the forest, north of Nashua Road, for a longer ride. The forest north of Nashua Road is my favorite area to ride.

There are a number of trails at this park with heavy gravel, so I recommend having shoes on your horse. Unfortunately, these trails do not have shoulders on them so you can't avoid the gravel by riding alongside the trail. In addition, all of the driveways and parking lots are gravel. The open field around markers 50 and 51 is also gravel. Further, the river trail from marker 50 to 29 is gravel. Trails through the trees are packed dirt, but you'll encounter gravel where spots get low and wet.

The only open area in the park is around marker 50 and around Parking Lot 1. The remainder of the trails are all under tree cover.

### Mapping It

If you're looking for pine trees, as I'm always doing because they smell so nice, there are pine trees around the trails north and east of Parking Lot 1. There are also pine trees north and east of Parking Lot 3. You'll find more pine trees south and west of Parking Lot 4 and there is a clump of pine trees around Parking Lot 5. There are random smaller clumps of pines throughout the park.

For directions to the park, begin in the town of Oregon. Take Highway 64 to the east side of the Rock River. Turn south on Daysville Road. Then take Daysville Road to Lowden Road, and turn right on Lowden Road.

Take Lowden Road to Nashua Road, and turn right on Nashua Road. Nashua Road enters the park. The equestrian parking lot is marked and will be on the left side. Parking Lots 1, 2, and 3 will be on the right side and you'll drive straight into Parking Lot 4 if you don't turn left when you reach Scout Road.

The equestrian parking lot offers a large gravel pad for parking and also has an ample grass area for additional parking. There are two picnic tables and hitching posts. Trees offer shade. One picnic table has a grill. There's a kiosk with information and a map box. There's also a portable toilet at the back of the parking lot. Don't forget to bring water for your horse. There used to be a water spigot but it appears to have been removed since the parking lot was upgraded. There are no park entrance, parking, or bridle tag fees to use this park. It's free!



from Lowden-Miller State Forest and the rangers there manage Lowden-Miller State Forest.

If you're looking for a beautiful, wooded trail along a river with amazing views atop scenic bluffs, load up your horse and head to Lowden-Miller State Forest. It's not a heavily used park so you're guaranteed a quiet, unobtrusive ride. The equestrian parking lot has trees and amenities for a relaxing picnic afterward.

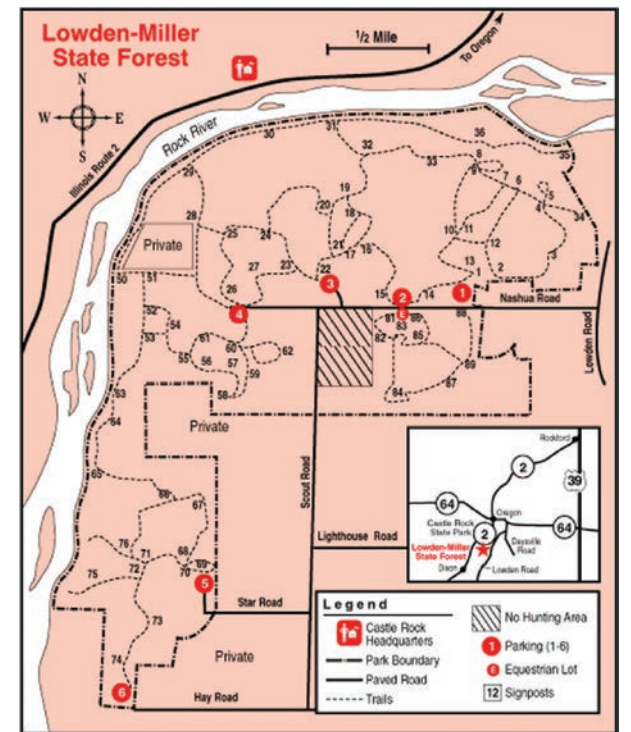
I hope you enjoy riding at this park as much as I do.

I recommend printing and bringing a copy of the park map, rather than relying on finding maps in the map box at the trailhead kiosk. The map shows trail markers at trail intersections and straight stretches. The markers are useful for tracking the route you ride. At random locations, there are small signs with a copy of the map on them, which some people may find helpful for navigating. I don't. I need to carry a map with me and consult it at every intersection when riding a park with a complicated trail system.

The equestrian parking lot at Lowden-Miller State Forest is a day-use trailhead. If you're interested in a nearby horse campground so you can return to this state forest the following day to continue riding, I recommend Franklin Creek State Natural Area near Dixon, Illinois. It has a very nice horse campground that's not too far from Lowden-Miller State Forest. Franklin Creek, one of my all-time favorite northern Illinois parks, will be covered in a future article.

Lowden-Miller State Forest is open year-round. Trails close during hunting season. For information regarding trail conditions, contact Castle Rock State Park headquarters. Castle Rock State Park is located directly across the river

### Happy Trails!



### PARK SUMMARY

**LOCATION:** Ogle County. On the east side of the Rock River in Oregon, IL.

**TRAIL DESCRIPTION:** 22 miles. Packed dirt. Some long stretches of driveway gravel with no dirt shoulder. Majority of trails are under tree cover.

**TRAIL DIFFICULTY:** Easy. Flat. Horseshoes recommended.



**PARK OFFICE:**  
For Lowden-Miller State Forest trail information, call Castle Rock State Park headquarters: 815.732.7329.

**TRAIL SEASON:**  
Open year-round. Closed during hunting season.

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## Haflingers are Versatile and Virtuous

By Sarah M. Aldridge, MS

**Athletic. Good natured. Intelligent.** With their flowing flaxen tresses, golden coat color, and kind eyes, Haflingers can also add the word “handsome” to the long list of superlatives their fans use to describe them. They are equally at home competing in the show jumping arena, navigating combined driving event courses, leading trail rides, and building riders’ confidence in therapeutic riding classes. Let’s find out more about this small, stocky horse with a range of talents.

### Haflinger History

Haflingers hale from Hafling, a former Austrian village in the Southern Tyrol mountains, now part of northeastern Italy. These sure-footed, hardy horses were used by farmers as packhorses on the steep,

narrow mountain trails that connected remote farms and towns. In addition, their draftlike build made them useful for plowing a field, pulling a cart, and hauling logs.

According to the American Haflinger Registry (AHR), the first written evidence of the breed was documented in 1874 with the birth of 249 Folie, a colt by the half-Arabian stallion 133 El’ Bedavi XXII and out of a native Tyrolean mare owned by Josef Folie. All modern Haflingers trace their ancestry to Folie through one of seven stallion lines: A (Anselmo), B (Bolzano), M (Massimo), N (Nibbio), S (Stelvio), ST (Student), and W (Willi). The studbook was closed in 1946 to preserve the purity of the breed, so no new bloodlines could be added.

But it wasn’t until 1958 that Haflingers made their debut in the US, interestingly in Illinois. That’s when Tempel Smith, whose farm is synonymous with

Lipizzans, imported Haflingers from Austria to begin a breeding program in the states. Since then the population has grown to approximately 20,000 Haflingers in the US.

The largest number of Haflinger breeding farms is found in Austria, where stud farms own stallions and control the breed quality. Breeding farms are also found in the US, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, and England.

### Breed Standards

There are two main types of Haflinger: the pleasure type used for under-saddle riding disciplines and the heavier draft type for draft and driving work. In Austria, the latter type’s build is often referred to as “a prince in the front, a peasant behind” due to its powerful, muscular haunches.

Haflingers range from 54” to 60” at the withers (13.2-15 hands). Their coat color can be pale chestnut to dark liver chestnut, but without leg markings. The mane and tail are white or flaxen. The AHR describes the breed as having a lean, expressive head; large eyes; a well-framed neck; a supple mid-section; and broad or flat knee joints with broad, strong hocks.

The gait of a Haflinger should be rhythmic and swinging, according to the AHR. The horse should be light on the forehead and balanced, with natural suspension.

One caution to note: Haflingers are at risk for ocular squamous cell carcinoma, the most common cancer of the eye in horses. A DNA test can determine if a Haflinger is likely to develop the condition. At-risk horses should undergo regular eye exams, wear a UV-protective fly mask, and be kept out of bright light when the sun is most intense.

### Versatile Partner

Haflingers are about as versatile as a horse breed gets. Throw a Western saddle on their back, and you’re ready for a leisurely trail ride. Don a set of leg wraps and you’re ready to show off your mount’s half pass. Or set up a pattern of jumps in the outdoor arena, and over them you’ll sail. Haflingers have even risen to the ranks of royalty. Prince Philip of Edinburgh, Queen Elizabeth’s husband, once competed in 4-in-hand driving competitions in England with his team of Haflingers.



Haflingers are eager jumping partners, as shown by Maggie Pierson riding Classic Beauty SGH.

Photo credit: John Ellingson

Two years ago Jen Piecz, a riding instructor in Woodstock, Illinois, bought the Haflinger mare Mesmerize MJW, or Mimi. The horse is registered with AHR and her pedigree is quite impressive. Her sire, Nordtirol, jumped 5'3", setting a world record for the breed. Mimi's dam, Maserata TOF, set a record for the highest selling filly. Both are from the A stallion line. "I've learned that breeding counts mentally and physically," says Piecz, who teaches foundational horsemanship on the ground and under saddle. "The ones with the paper and solid breeding for good temperament are money well spent."

So far, Piecz has introduced Mimi to obstacles, dressage, and trail riding. And to a real-live roundup. But not of cattle. When a neighbor's pair of standard donkeys made a mad dash for the soybean field next door, Mimi came to the rescue. She rounded up the long ears and helped corral them, a newly discovered talent. "I'm very happy with her," Piecz says. "She's bold under saddle, and a confident trail horse." Plus, Mimi is personable. "She's friendly and in your pocket. She wants to be right there, nuzzling you."

One place of prominence for the Haflinger is in therapeutic riding programs. It seems like just about every barn has a Stony or Goldie gracing their farm. "I fell in love with the breed in 1999 when I visited Tudor Oaks Haflinger farm in Barrington," says Meggan Hill-McQueeney, President and COO of BraveHearts Therapeutic Riding & Educational Center in Harvard and Poplar Grove, Illinois. "They looked like stuffed animals," she says of her initial meeting. But it was more than looks that won her over. It was Gunther, a 2-year-old Haflinger with only 90 days training, whose gentle, quiet spirit and easy-going personality did it for her.

When Hill-McQueeney took over the helm at BraveHearts 10 years ago, she wanted to add some Haflingers to the program. On a trip to Deer Haven Farm, a renowned Haflinger breeding farm in



Kevin, a student at BraveHearts Therapeutic Riding & Educational Center in Poplar Grove, IL, checks Neal's girth.

Lexington, Kentucky, she was privileged to choose a couple of favorites to add to the BraveHearts herd, courtesy of owner Rachel King, who had terminal cancer. Hill-McQueeney chose Buddy and Sara, a gelding and mare. "They are remarkable little horses, extremely tolerant and kind."

Averaging 14-some hands, Haflingers are good mounts for children, yet strong enough to support a small adult. What they lack in height, they more than make up for in heart.

The horses at BraveHearts are tolerant of riders with balance issues, challenging behaviors, or loud outbursts. "They have such good manners," says Hill-McQueeney. "Ours are unflappable."

Many therapy horses relish the job they have to do. Mo, a Haflinger donated to BraveHearts by Tudor Oaks Farm, was one of them. He was still sound, healthy, and working right up until he passed away



Haflingers are much sought after in therapeutic riding programs for their unflappable demeanor and willing attitude.

in 2020 at the age of 37. "The breed is phenomenal as hippotherapy, therapeutic riding, and Special Olympics horses," says Hill-McQueeney. She is a PATH (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International) Master Instructor and United States Equestrian Federation Para-dressage coach.

Not only do the Haflingers at BraveHearts engage in the typical equine-assisted services, but they also join other horses in the Trail to Zero Program, a 20-mile ride to build awareness for the skyrocketing suicide rate among veterans. They have been ridden down Michigan Avenue, around Wrigley Field, and even under the El tracks in Chicago with trains rattling overhead. "Because they're so solid mentally and physically, they do great around traffic," Hill-McQueeney says.

If there's one downside to Haflingers, it might be their somewhat lazy nature. The upside is that the rider has a bit more of a challenge. "They require you to make sure your skills are on point. You can use that to sharpen and refine a rider's aids," says Hill-McQueeney. Piecz has found that Mimi can be a bit stubborn or sticky, as she calls it. "But once she understands what you want and it's a routine question, she's very light and responsive."



Mimi has the classic Haflinger flaxen mane and tail, and burnished golden coat.

### Golden Inside and Out

Before she passed away, Rachel King gave BraveHearts a parting gift—her favorite Haflinger named Neal. "He is drop-dead gorgeous with dark, liquid brown eyes that melt you, and a beautiful forelock and mane to match," Hill-McQueeney says. But it's his happy attitude and desire to please that make him so valuable. "He would go to the ends of the earth for you," she says. "He is as golden on the outside as on the inside. **He is worth his weight in gold.**"

### Fun Facts

- A Haflinger filly named Prometea was the first horse to be cloned in 2003.
- The brand for registered Austrian studs is an edelweiss flower with an H in the middle.
- Haflingers crossed with Arabians and Andalusians are called Arabo-Haflingers.

#### LEARN MORE

- American Haflinger Registry: [haflingerhorse.com](http://haflingerhorse.com).
- BraveHearts: [braveheartsridding.org](http://braveheartsridding.org).
- Contact Jen Piecz at: [Face2facewithhorses.com](http://Face2facewithhorses.com).



Haflingers have kind eyes and beautiful markings.



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**H**orseback riders have no freshness date. People are riding horses well into their 50s, 60s, and beyond. You see them on drill teams, out on the hunt course, and trail riding from coast to coast. If you're itching to get back in the saddle, it's never too late to return to riding.

But before you sign up for month's worth of lessons or a pony trek vacation in Ireland, you may need a tune-up to get fit for riding. After all, horseback riding is a sport that enlists many muscle groups that may need a wake-up call. In addition, since that dreamy week at horse camp as a teenager, safer, more comfortable tack and attire have been developed for riders of every age and size. Let's explore what you will need to get reacquainted with your horse side.

### FITNESS TUNE-UP

Horseback riders need a combination of good balance and posture, flexibility, and strength. Slings a saddle over a horse's back, and swinging your leg up and over the cantle are not things most people do on a daily basis. As with any new sport, it's wise to consult your primary care physician before galloping off into the sunset. Once you get a thumbs up

from your doctor, you should be good to go.

To prepare to get back in the saddle you may need to work on a few muscle groups, such as your core, biceps and triceps in your arms, and your inner thigh and hip muscles. A light weight-lifting program, plus a yoga or Pilates workout can help. So can walking; it helps build endurance.

They don't call it saddle sore for nothing. So in anticipation of walking bow-legged for a few days, and feeling the twinges of a sore back, bottom, and knees, you might consider taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen before and after riding, at least in the beginning.

### DRESS THE PART

Riding attire never goes out of style. Just look at all the women wearing knee-high leather boots, modeled on riding boots. And Ralph Lauren has a whole line of clothing based on polo wear. But riding gear also needs to provide safety from head to foot. So your first order of business is to invest in a high-quality helmet. With the advancement in research findings regarding traumatic brain injuries, it's imperative

that riders protect their heads. Any fall in which your head hits the ground can result in trauma to the brain as it hits the skull, potentially causing damage. Look for a helmet that has the label, "ASTM/SEI-certified." That means that it has been approved by the American Society for Testing and Materials, and certified by the Safety Equipment Institute, both reputable organizations that test products for safety.

Safety helmets are not limited to English riders. There are a few Western cowboy hat makers that have created a hat with an inner polystyrene core that absorbs shock and impact if you fall. Both types of helmets have a movable dial in the back, similar to that on a bicycle helmet, so you can adjust the snugness of the fit.

Footwear is another important consideration when riding. Running shoes, hiking boots with a waffle bottom, or work boots just don't cut it. They're either too slick, too easy to get stuck in the stirrup, or too bulky. You'll need to invest in some leather boots that will protect your feet when you're on the ground or in the saddle. If you've ever been stepped on by a horse, you know that boots can make the difference between a merely sore toe or a broken one.

Make sure the boot has a 1-to 1.5-inch heel. That way, you'll lessen the likelihood that your foot will slide through the stirrup and prevent being dragged in the event of a fall.

The height of the boot is up to you. Some riders like the ease of putting on a pair of ankle boots, while others prefer knee-high boots. Ankle-high English boots, called jodhpur boots or paddock boots, can be worn with half-chaps, leather leggings that cover your leg from your ankle to your knee. Western cowboy boots have a slightly higher heel than English boots. But try to avoid crepe soles and those made of vinyl uppers or lowers, which break down over time.

To avoid chafing, a good pair of riding breeches or your favorite jeans will do. The nice thing about riding breeches is that they come in a variety of colors, materials, and styles. Some have knee patches or full-length seats, which help you adhere to the saddle better. Many now have a 21st century necessity—a cell phone pocket.

While gloves may seem like optional equipment, they serve a multitude of purposes. In the fall and winter they

keep your fingers warm. In the spring and summer they help you grip the reins, even if your hands start to sweat. Gloves also come in handy when you're grooming a horse or cleaning a stall. In addition, they protect your hands from rope burn, if the horse you're leading yanks on the lead line.

### FIND A COACH

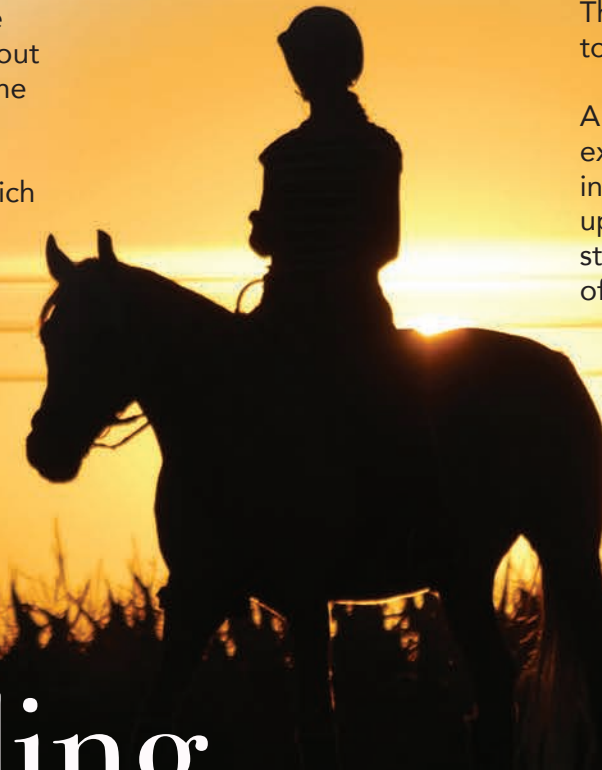
The same traits that your favorite schoolteacher displayed are what you should look for in a riding instructor. Ask around to find a coach who is encouraging, challenging, and cares about your needs. Audit another student's lesson to observe where the instructor stands, how directions are relayed, and how often the instructor consults a cell phone

during the lesson. You need an instructor whose complete attention is devoted to you throughout the lesson, from mounting to dismounting, to putting the horse away.

To enhance communication, some instructors use a wireless headset, worn by both the teacher and student. It's amazing how clear the two-way dialogue is in a noisy arena or outside when the wind is blowing.

Your coach should understand your goals and have a plan to help you work toward them. If you have any health issues, such as arthritis or joint replacements, your instructor needs to know about them. There are many types of pads and cushions that can be attached to the saddle to provide comfort. There's even a gel saddle cushion to pad your posterior.

Also, be honest about your experience. If you haven't ridden in years, you should be paired up with a schooling horse that is steady and reliable. If you're fearful of falling, your instructor should help build your confidence, and work with you on emergency dismounts and how to handle a sudden spook in your mount.



# Reconnecting with Riding

## Age is no Barrier

By Sarah M. Aldridge, MS

## BACK IN THE SADDLE

One of the rewarding aspects of returning to riding at a later age is there's no pressure to be the top student or have perfect form. Relax and enjoy the rhythmic movement of the horse's gaits, listen to the creak of the saddle leather, and smell the earthy scents of horse sweat and barn dust. Simply seeing the world from atop a horse brings a fresh perspective and renewed appreciation for the oneness you can feel with a horse.

Horseback riding can be a very social sport. Once you have had a few refresher lessons, find a group of riders you can join. Many places have saddle clubs and trail riding organizations that host seminars, group rides, annual parties, and other events. In McHenry County, Illinois, alone there is the Bull Valley Riding Club, McHenry County Horse Club, and the Midwest Renegades Equestrian Drill Team.

If you're interested in group riding lessons Main Stay Therapeutic

Farm in Richmond, Illinois, offers Saddle Up, a comprehensive riding program for able-bodied riders 55 and older. Now heading into its third year, Saddle Up matches each rider's skills, abilities, and goals with a horse. Then, with the help of an assigned volunteer and the instructor, each rider learns how to lead, groom, tack, and ride during the four-week sessions, which run year-round.

"Most of the riders in the group are in their 60s or 70s, enjoyed riding, and wanted to do it again," says Jean Maraist, OTR/L, Main Stay Program Director. "Even in a few short weeks, we see goals being achieved—that's been inspiring."

Main Stay has several advantages over other riding programs. "Our horses have some additional specialized training," Maraist says. So do the instructors—they're all certified therapeutic riding instructors. The variety of horses in the herd, from ponies to draft horses, means that petite adults and those up to 200 pounds can

be accommodated. In addition, the wooden mounting ramp makes getting on the horse much easier than hoisting yourself up and over from a mounting block. Further, the 1.5-hour time frame means riders can take their time learning everything from curry combing and hoof picking to how to untack their horse and lead it back to its stall.

Riders in the Saddle Up group enjoy the social aspect of making friends with other riders and volunteers, all while building balance, strength, flexibility, and confidence. "We've seen people overcome their fear of riding, while others have learned a new skill," Maraist adds. "We make sure they leave feeling better than when they came through the door." That's what reconnecting with horses at any age should be about.

## CONNECT

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# Age-Defying Riders

- In May 2020, Queen Elizabeth of England, age 94, was spotted riding Balmoral Fern, her 14-year-old Fell pony.
- Hiroshi Oketsu was 71 when he represented Japan at the 2012 Olympics, competing in individual dressage events.
- Ronald Reagan rode horses throughout his presidency and up until his late 70s.



Series: Reagan White House Photographs, 1/20/1981 - 1/20/1989  
 Collection: White House Photographic Collection, 1/20/1981 - 1/20/1989,  
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# Itches and Scratches and Rain

## Rot, Oh My! By Dr. David Heinze, DVM, P.C.

As we transition from winter to spring and summer, we once again get to experience nicer weather along with heat, humidity, and bugs. Although skin conditions occur on our horses in Midwestern winters, they are much less frequent and severe than during warmer months. This discussion is not meant to be a broad overview of equine dermatology, but rather is an effort to focus on three of the most common conditions we may experience with the coming seasons: rain rot, scratches, and insect hypersensitivity.

### Rain Rot

Rain rot is a bacterial infection caused by *Dermatophilus congolensis*. This organism naturally lives in the hair coat of most horses and is noninvasive. However, it causes an infection when the skin is soft and permeable, such as when cool, wet conditions occur during the spring.

Rain rot, also called rain scald, is most commonly seen in horses that are wet for long periods and where their coat does not have a chance to dry off. There is a characteristic patchy hair loss, which usually affects the topline first with run off down the horse's sides. I've seen cases where horses lost about half of their hair coat. Lesions come out in small tufts of hair with an attached scabby base when they fall off. Unlike ringworm, it is not contagious to people; however, brushes and tack should not be shared with other horses unless they are disinfected.

Air and sunlight help this skin condition to heal, so careful scraping with grooming tools helps remove the scabs, that is if your horse's condition

isn't too painful. The infection is self-limiting, which means it should resolve on its own given enough time. It is also easily killed by antibiotics or spot-treatments with antiseptics. Full body baths with medicated shampoos containing chlorhexidine or benzoyl peroxide also help. Horses with compromised immune systems may be more susceptible to rain rot, so improving their general health may also be indicated. Consult your veterinarian. Finally, avoiding wet conditions whenever possible is also advised.

### Scratches

Pastern dermatitis is the more proper name for a condition commonly called scratches, greasy heel, mud fever, and dew poisoning. All breeds are affected, but it is more commonly seen in horses with feathers on their lower legs, such as draft breeds and Friesians. It also more commonly occurs on rear limbs and on unpigmented (white) skin. The back of the pasterns are the starting points, but scratches can move up the limbs especially on white hair. The causes of this dermatitis are quite variable, but early cases are often caused by standing in wet, muddy conditions and are not infectious. Clinical signs start with redness, swelling, and scaliness progressing to oozing with scabs and matting/crusting of the hair. These areas can become very sensitive so be careful about picking the scabs. Early treatment centers around keeping the horse in a clean, dry area so the pasterns dry and clipping the long hair. Towel or blow drying the pasterns is helpful and then applying a moisture barrier like Desitin also helps soften the crusts.

Unfortunately, infections can develop, which complicate treatment and can lead to serious, even life-threatening, situations. If severe, the swelling moves up the legs, potentially indicating that a bacterial lymphangitis/cellulitis is occurring and that antibiotics and other therapies are needed. If you detect such symptoms, call your veterinarian. With milder scratches, early treatment and management plus good grooming are very important and generally effective. Horses with a predisposition to develop pastern dermatitis may have reoccurring episodes so vigilance and prevention are key.

### Insect Hypersensitivity

Insect hypersensitivity is the most common allergic skin disease of horses. It is also called sweet itch, Queensland itch, summer itch, and muck itch. In other words, it itches. The allergic reaction is usually to the saliva in the bites of gnats and flies. Culicoides gnats exist worldwide and are the single biggest cause of this seasonal, often recurrent, dermatitis in horses.

Clinical signs of hypersensitivity may start at 3 to 4 years of age and usually become worse over time. They are seasonal in the Midwest, typically occurring from April through October. Although coat color is not a factor, breeds and family histories often are. The gnats are more active at dawn and dusk. They most commonly bite the horse's ears, withers, rump, and mane and tail. The first thing you'll notice is red, inflamed skin, hives, bumps, and small scabs and sores. These can progress to more severe symptoms, depending on how much the horse scratches and rubs. Hair loss, skin ulcers, and a ratty tail or buzzed off mane can occur from self-trauma. Horses can even show behavioral changes as the constant skin irritation affects them.

Managing these cases is complicated but starts with environmental adjustments. Gnats are not strong fliers, so they are less active on breezy days. Stall and barn fans also help. In addition, avoid turn out at dawn or dusk. Gnats also tend to not fly long distances, so eliminating nearby standing water will reduce their breeding grounds.

Fly sheets and insecticides can help prevent bites. Further, fat supplements, such as Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids, added to grain are helpful for some horses.

Systemic or topical pharmaceuticals can also work well to reduce symptoms. Typically, steroids, such as cortisone, work better than antihistamines but have more side effects over time. Recently, we have done more allergy testing followed up by treatments of desensitization subcutaneous injections. (Oral drops are also an option.) The testing is performed on blood IgE samples rather than a skin scratch test. The injections for treatment are simple to do and the frequency is eventually reduced to once a month intervals. This has the advantage of treating the cause rather than just the symptoms. In each case, a multifaceted approach involving management, prevention, medication, and treatment is what works best.

Enjoy the warmer weather. With some of the tips provided here, your equine friend may be able to avoid annoying seasonal skin conditions and enjoy the weather, too.

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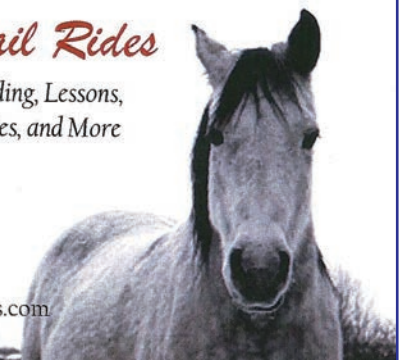
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# Convergence Ride the Power Wave

Three emerging macro trends have recently started to converge, which may provide you a unique opportunity to materially improve the financial position of your farm or ranch, if you act quickly. Any one of these trends is important in its own right, but the combination of the three long-term secular shifts magnifies the aggregate power to potentially seismic levels.

The global pandemic has shaken public health, political, social, fiscal, and monetary foundations deeply, and the resulting tsunami waves of financial implications have only begun to demonstrate their long-term power. While it is generally a sucker's game to predict markets, as predictions are often wrong not just in magnitude but even in direction, big secular trends are more visible to those willing to look at the big picture. Rather than trying to outguess the markets with short-term trading predictions, clearly evaluating these macro secular trends provides long-term investment opportunities with material wealth-building implications. When government programs roll out "stimulus" in multiple TRILLION dollar chunks, they may accomplish their intended immediate objectives (we will let the politicians sort that out), but the secondary effects as those waves of cash roll through the economy and settle into a dynamic marketplace will undoubtedly have larger and more long-term consequences. Identifying the effects of these waves can offer substantial opportunities to build long-term wealth.

As the Federal Reserve has attempted to stimulate economic activity by increasing the supply of money in the economy, interest rates have fallen to levels not seen in several generations. For the farm

or ranch owner, these remarkably low rates come at a time when payment terms for farm mortgages are attractively flexible, making the refinancing of farm mortgages a great opportunity for virtually all owners of farmland. Whether an existing mortgage is close to its maturity date, or there are still several years remaining, it is important to act now to take advantage of the lower rates and longer maturities currently available. The sooner you can lock in these rates and terms, the sooner you can benefit from the improved cash flow from the lower payments.

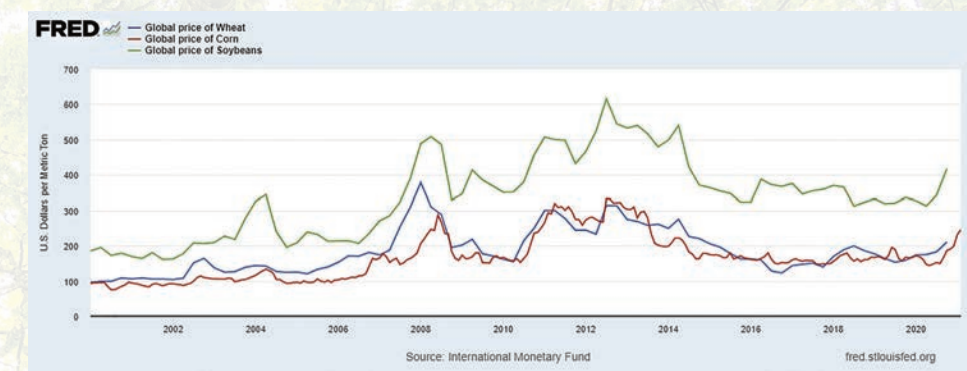
*The three waves can be summarized as follows:*

**1** Reversal of a 40-year downward trend in interest rates: The secular trend in long-term interest rates in the US has been progressively downward since 1980. This culminated in a 5-year treasury yield as low as 0.19% last year. As the supply of money has been pumped to unprecedented levels by fiscal policy, reinforced by accommodative monetary policy, in a pandemic environment that constrained money demand, the ultra-low-rate environment persisted near the zero rate boundary. With the aggressive roll out of

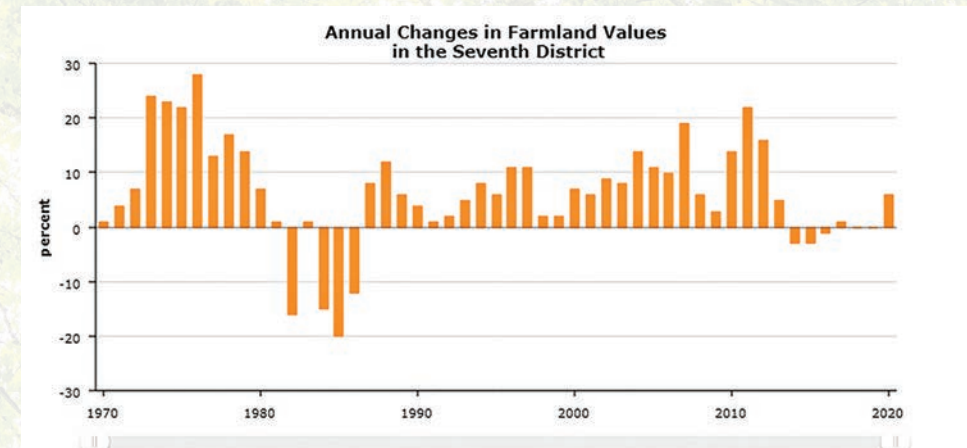


vaccines driving a rebound of consumer demand and spending, and a Federal Reserve that at some point will reduce their active purchases of government debt as they unwind their ballooned balance sheet, it is likely we are at the beginning of the next secular trend of rising long-term rates. Indeed, the 5-year Treasury rate is now around 0.80%, still historically low, but well above rates of last fall.

**2** Farm product prices have been rising: According to the Kansas City Federal Reserve, average prices for corn, soybeans, and wheat reached 6-year highs in December 2020. While various political factors may drive short-term fluctuations, the large amounts of fiscal and monetary stimulus will continue to power commodity price increases over the next several years.



**3** Farmland prices have not yet incorporated rising income expectations: According to the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, farmland valuation levels in the Central Midwest peaked in 2013, and an increase in real (inflation adjusted) values during 2020 was the first increase since then. As of the end of 2020, Midwest farmland values have been flat for nearly a decade and are down 9% from 2013 levels, after inflation is factored in. As the wave of newly printed money works its way through the economy, and product prices (including ag commodity prices) rise, it will power a strong long-term increase in farmland prices.



For those of you who are in a position to acquire additional farmland, the current environment offers a nearly unprecedented opportunity to buy land before prices move materially higher, before borrowing rates move materially higher, and while income levels are high enough to support the additional debt load. While we acknowledge the risk of being hyperbolic in our perspective, we believe we are in the early stages of a substantial and long-term trend of improving farmland prices that offer tremendous investing opportunity for those willing to look past short-term noise. We encourage you to seriously consider not only refinancing any mortgage debt you may currently have on your farm- or ranchland, but also to aggressively pursue additional opportunities to expand your land holdings.

A good lender should be able to listen intently to your objectives and help you select the loan terms that best permit you to take advantage of today's exceptional rates and structural alternatives. While many banks may not be able to offer the full range of long-term fixed rates currently available, McHenry Savings Bank, through its relationships with FarmerMac and other leading farm lenders, can provide a full menu of attractive financing alternatives. Please feel free to contact me to discuss your situation or address any questions you may have.

*Author: Tim Kempel, SVP – Agribusiness Banking, McHenry Savings Bank tkempel@mchenrysavings.com or 815.331.6406*

# What will they think of next?

By Elaine M. Ramesh, Esq.  
Illustrations by Marilyn Borglum

What new products are on the horizon for riders and horse owners? If you don't have a crystal ball handy, you can still peek into the future by looking into what's new at the U.S. Patent Office. Patents can cover inventions in a wide variety of categories, and give their inventors assurance of certain rights to make, use, and sell their creations. It can take several years for the government to review a patent application and decide whether an invention is truly new and worthy of a patent, but before a patent issues, the descriptive application gets published. Published applications foreshadow what might be patented a few years later. I've curated a few interesting recent horse-related patents and published patent applications for you, with my commentary sprinkled in for good measure.

## WARMTH WITH STYLE

During our frigid northern Illinois winter, we're all looking for better ways to stay warm while doing barn chores or riding. Maybe you are like I am and have shopped at a ski store for snow pants to wear for your barn chores. Now there is a solution just for us. Redingote Equestrian (redingoteequestrian.com) of New Jersey created technical outerwear for horse people protected by US Design Patent D901836. Their design patent



protects the look of the waterproof, insulated jumpsuit inspired by riders. In general, a design patent protects artistic features of an item. Although a design patent expires sooner than a utility patent does (which protect how something works), design patent applications are usually examined faster and are approved more quickly than utility patent applications.

## SECURED TAIL COVER

Have you had a tail cover fly off your horse as soon as he flicked his tail? An Idaho equestrian recognized the problem and came up with improvements on the conventional tail bag, solving the issue with a sleeve that fits securely over a horse's braided and folded tail. Her invention is sold at tailboot.com, and protected by U.S. Patent No. 10,856,525. Tail Boot covers include a tassel that the horse can still use to shoo flies away while his own tail is kept clean.

## INVENTED IN ILLINOIS

Parasol Medical in Buffalo Grove has applied for patent protection for a horse bandage wrap with an antimicrobial treatment on its exterior as described in U.S. Patent Publication No. 20200281774. The U.S. Patent Office is in the process of reviewing the application to make sure it is truly new and worthy of a patent.

The addition of an outer antimicrobial coating is to further ensure that bacteria are kept out of the wound covered by the bandage. This product is not yet on the market, but may be coming soon.

## SELF-DRIVING HORSE?

A puzzling new patent describes a method to calculate ground conditions of your trail ride with a camera hooked to your helmet that feeds information to an algorithm to determine the slope of the trail. It is unclear how the system would provide any more information than the rider's eye and brain already do. The apparatus protected by U.S. Patent No. 10,825,183 also includes a speaker to be attached to the reins that can transmit voice commands that the system decides are appropriate. The patent describes this process as:

when it needs to slow down or even stop the horse, the stand-ard voice command is 'Ho', but the rider might use the non-standard voice command such as 'stop' and 'I said to stay!' and so on. This non-standard voice command is difficult to be recognized by the horse, and there will be a problem that the command is invalid. Therefore the human voice command can be processed in the following manners. When the human voice command is a non-standard voice command, and the human voice command is appropriate for the travelling condition, the pre-trained voice understanding model is adopted to change the non-standard voice command to a standard voice command having the same meaning, and the standard voice command is played through the speaker.

"There will be a problem" is quite an understatement. Even more incredibly, the patent describes an electric stimulus that "can be applied to a specific body part of a horse so as to prevent the horse from speeding up." I'm sure we'd all like to know what body part that is! If they found such a spot, that would be a real invention. This patent seems to be a description of a non-equestrian's conception of a self-driving horse.



## ANOTHER BRIGHT IDEA

Another interesting new patent is U.S. Patent No. 10,624,320. The inventors developed a way for dressage riders to determine the orientation of a horse's head. The new training device includes an indicator light on the crown of the bridle between the horse's ears that turns different colors depending on position and orientation of the horse's head. According to the patent, it could also be configured so someone on the ground could make the indicator light flash to alert the rider of danger. I don't know how useful this device would actually be for dressage, but maybe as a flashing turn signal it would be helpful for hacking in a crowded indoor arena.

These examples illustrate the variety of things that can qualify for a patent based on how they look or how they work. Contact me if you've created a horse-related invention and would like to have a patent to protect it. For more on the latest equine-related innovations, follow me on Twitter @petpatents or visit petpatentsandpolicy.com

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# Math Problems! By Mary Jacobs

**Problem #1:**

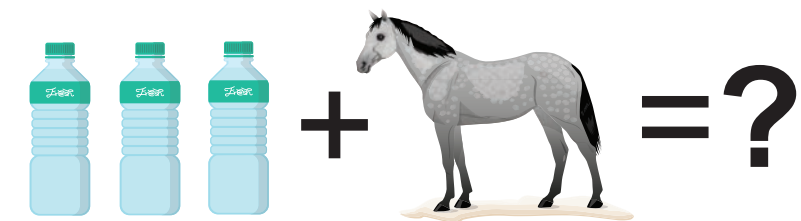
There are 42 horses signed up to compete in a race. There are 12 more Appaloosas signed up than Quarter Horses. How many Appaloosas are signed up for the race?

**Problem #4:**

A horse can drink 1 gallon of water/hour. Another horse can drink half a gallon of water/hour. How long does it take the two horses to drink 15 gallons of water together?

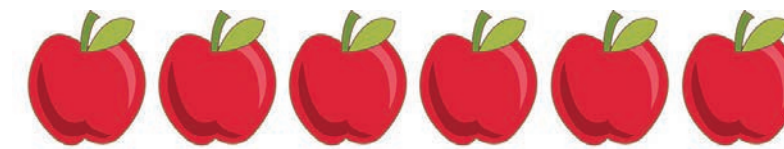
**Problem #2:**

A horse can gallop at 25 miles/hour. How many miles can this horse travel in 30 minutes?



**Problem #5:**

A horse leaves its barn at 10 a.m. and averages 30 miles/hour. A truck leaves the same barn, following the same route, two hours after the horse and averages 50 miles/hour. When will the truck catch up to the horse?



**Problem #3:**

Nina has 3 horses. She wants to give them each 6 apples. How many apples does Nina need?

Answers on page 32

## THE YOUNG EQUESTRIAN - BOOK REVIEW

### Whatever a horse can do, donkeys can do, too! Just ask Donkey-Donk.

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**What Can I Do?** A Donkey-Donk Story Donk moves to a new home, a farm with horses and ponies. They all have jobs, but Donk cannot do most them. Find out what Donk can do to help out at the farm.

**Take A Hike!** A Donkey-Donk Story Donk wants to go on a hike, but not just anywhere, she wants to hike Mount Washington which is the highest peak in the northeastern United States. Donk strategically plans and prepares for this trek. Join her in her adventure and get a glimpse of Donk on Mount Washington in New Hampshire.



Photo Credit: Willow Bend Publishing

**Horse Show!** A Donkey-Donk Story Donk decides to go to a horse show and compete with horses. Pretty ambitious for a donkey, right? Not for Donk. Learn how she prepares for the show and find out how she did.

Donk is a small, but mighty donkey that you will surely fall in love with. The Donkey-Donk books have an educational element to them and the graphics are a pleasant mixture of photos and illustrations.

Enjoy and read on,  
Janice

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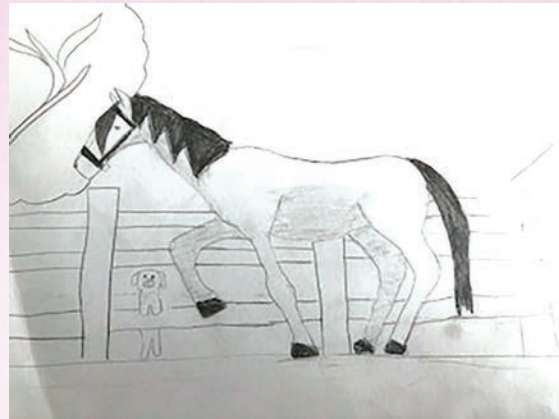
# I ♥ Horses Art Contest

A big round of applause to the winners of our first annual art contest. Lots of good entries and one can truly see the artists' love of horses!

Entrants were judged by local artist and author Sandra Ann Nowicki, who says: "A beautiful group of art created by horse lovers! The expressions on the horses' faces are wonderful! Excellent use of color and strong design of the horses' homes in every entry. All entries are excellent and here are the winners."

## 1st Place

**Ella** is 11 years old and has been doing hippotherapy since 2017. She fell in love with horses and her biggest dream is to own a horse one day! She enjoys Thunder with his joyful and assertive personality.



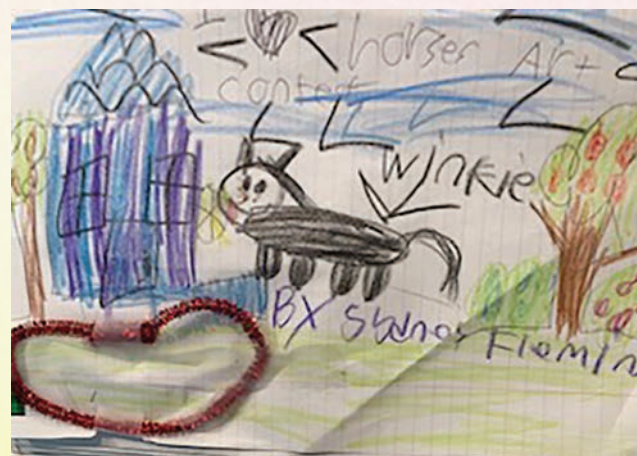
## 2nd Place

**Abi** does hippotherapy. She enjoys riding Heidi and before Heidi she rode Pepper.



## 3rd Place

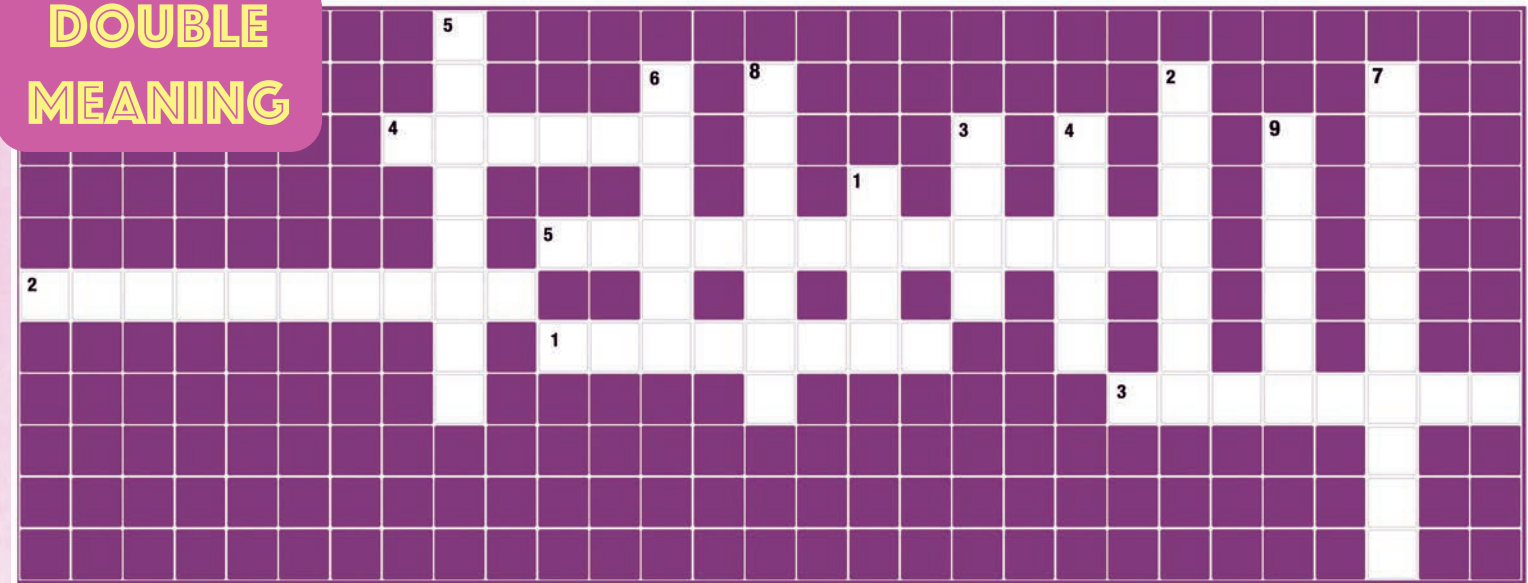
**Samantha** rides Patrick who is very sweet and loves to be outside.



## 4th Place

Winkie is **Sydney's** favorite horse that she rides at the barn.

## DOUBLE MEANING



### ACROSS

- 1) A four-wheeled vehicle pulled by a horse or horses, occasionally used by royalty, it is also the way in which a horse carries its head.
- 2) A nickname for an allergic skin disease in horses, " \_\_\_\_\_ itch" and the name of a state in Australia.
- 3) An equestrian discipline that is performed in either a Western or English saddle.
- 4) A piece or portion of something, as in the back part of the saddle that is raised.
- 5) A breed of donkey originating in the Italian islands of Sardinia and Sicily and also the name of a sea connected to the Atlantic Ocean.

### DOWN

- 1) A part of the underside of a horse's hoof that is also the name of a carnivorous amphibian.
- 2) A type of canter when a horse canters on the outside lead, you will also find this in your kitchen.
- 3) To take charge much like you do when walking a horse with a lead line.
- 4) An oblique riding pattern that drill teams perform, but something you might do to a tack room floor.
- 5) A straight line joining two opposite sides and what you "keep" while trotting.
- 6) Part of a car and saddle, in addition to being the brand name of a famous guitar company.
- 7) This word originates from two Greek words that translate to ox-head, which is perhaps why it is also the name of Alexander the Great's horse.
- 8) European country home to the Haflinger breed and The Spanish Riding School.
- 9) The name of a luxury brand that is known for it's saddles and scarfs.

**Answers found on our website:**  
[themidwestequestrian.com](http://themidwestequestrian.com)



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**Our next issue will come out  
Summer 2021.**  
For details on home delivery please visit  
our website: [themidwestequestrian.com](http://themidwestequestrian.com)

## Math Answers:

Problem #1:  
27 Appaloosas

Problem #2: 12.5 miles

Problem #3: 18 apples

Problem #4: 10 hours

Problem #5: 3 p.m.

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# Magnificent Barrington Hills 10-Acre Equestrian Estate



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 T E A M



Tricia Wood

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