

Top Hat

Building an Equestrian Community
Fall 2010

What's the Plan?

Another summer is over and winter is approaching. A beautiful fall is underway. Now is a great time to take inventory of where you are as a rider, where you've come from, and where you are going. First, think back to this time last year. What were your goals? What seemed impossible at the time? What skill were you struggling with? Can you do it now or are you getting closer? What fear have you overcome? Pat yourself on the back! You are a long way from where you were! It's easy to constantly move on to the next problem and never congratulate yourself - or your horse!

Most people who come to me are go-getters with a sliver of perfectionism, so take time to appreciate your accomplishments. It'll give you hope for that thing that's driving you crazy now! So, on to that. What's your big struggle now or what do you wish you could do? Every rider who wishes to move forward needs to have a SPECIFIC goal. If you don't have a defined goal, you will not accomplish it. Non-specific goal: I want to show my horse. Specific goal: I want to show my horse at a dressage schooling show at the introductory level by next Sept. Once you have a specific goal, you must work backwards to figure out what milestones you need to set to accomplish your objective. For example: to accomplish the above I need to obtain the introductory level test and make sure I can ride each element in the test on my horse. Then I'll go to a schooling show and see what to expect, learn the show rules, and take my horse to a schooling show (or two) just to practice being at a show ground, and so on. Once you've written down your milestones, you can start working through them one by one. Suddenly what seemed like an impossible dream is far more manageable because you have a plan and timeline.

It is very important that as a rider you learn to train this way as well. Let's say you want to get your horse to canter on the right lead but he won't. What are the elements of a right lead canter? Well, the horse needs to be able to put his right shoulder and right hip forward on command at a trot and a walk. Can he do that? If not, begin there. He also needs to strike off into canter at the moment you ask, not 6 steps later after straightening out. Does he respond to your canter request immediately (on either side, whatever lead)? Fix that. Or do you need to go back a step because he doesn't respond to any of your go forward requests immediately at a walk or trot either? Learn to break your objective down into smaller elements, achieve them, and put it back together. Riders rarely do that. They tend to just keep drilling the same thing over and over again even though it's not working. Part of the problem is that, most often, they don't have a working understanding of the smaller elements. By following this process, it's likely you will find out that you are lacking some understanding in how to "do the thing" you're trying to do - great! Now you will be able to really learn it because you will be in a position to incorporate the skill or knowledge with some understanding - that's when teaching has the most value: when a student KNOWS they have a need for the knowledge being given and they know where it fits into what they are doing. I look forward to hearing about your goals for this spring, and your specific, detailed plans for accomplishing them this winter!

To get you thinking, some goals might be:

- safely trail ride around the pasture before going on an "away" trail ride
- an away trail ride
- trot for 10 minutes with no stirrups in your two-point position
- first canter
- take your horse to a schooling show at intro level next year (or whatever next level for you is)
- achieve at least a 68% at your current level
- learn an element from the next level test
- get your horse light and responsive enough that a small child could easily stop, go, and turn it at a walk and trot

One more thing - to accomplish anything you will have to devote at least three days each week to your horse and your goals - you both deserve it. I look forward to working with you this winter!

- Shannon



SUMMER SHOWS 2010

*Interested in showing in 2011?
Now is a great time to contact
Shannon to map out your
training goals!*

Shannon and Hannah Matasich at the American Haflinger Registry National Show in Springfield, Ohio.



Emily Kronenberger and her Thoroughbred Eragon had several successful outings at the CADS schooling shows in Wadsworth. On July 24 they earned a blue ribbon in the Introductory A Youth Rider class and third in the Intro B. Way to go Emily!



Hannah Matasich and Ivy participated at CADS schooling shows and placed second and fourth in the Youth Introductory A and B shows in July. On August 28, the pair rode to blue ribbons. At the Central Ohio Haflinger Show, Hannah placed third in Youth English Pleasure and first in the Youth English Equitation Class. At the National Haflinger Show, they placed third in a Youth Introductory dressage class.



Shannon successfully showed Ivy at the Buckeye Haflinger Show and the American Haflinger Registry's National Show.

Julianne Bedel and Ivy finished second in the Halter Class and fifth in Adult Horsemanship at the Central Ohio Haflinger Show.





Roxy

We named her Roxy because she has rock star hair! She is an incredibly adorable American Haflinger Registry mare standing at 14.1 hands high. At just five years old, Roxy is smart, talented, and has an excellent mind.

She's been under saddle about two months and is already more reliable than other horses who've been training for a year! She knows the basics of walk, trot, and canter (canter needs finishing) and is just beginning to learn bending, contact, and lateral leg aids. She's been outside on trail alone and with a friend and did excellent! This mare will make a fantastic novice dressage horse or trail horse. She also has a smooth trot for western and could go in any direction you take her. Roxy ties, loads, and is good for the far-

Introducing Mia

The horse for you?

Mia is a gorgeous, stout AQHA Quarter Horse who stands 15.2 hands high. This liver chestnut mare is just about



ready to show either hunter under saddle or western pleasure walk/trot. She has a super slow jog, neck reins and

make an excellent broodmare. In the past, Mia was shown in halter as she has a very pretty face and great conformation.



can also extend her trot to a great hunter clip! She has had some struggle with canter work due to past training, but is coming along nicely. Mia is currently ridden both English and Western and goes nicely in just a snaffle. She is a bold trail horse, but takes creeks, hills and obstacles carefully. She likes to look around, has a nice powerful walk, and will do great with an experienced rider.

This horse has the look and movement of a 5 - 8k horse, which is what she'll be listed at once her canter is finished. She is a big-bodied mare, appropriately sized for most riders. Mia is very sound, Hypp negative and clips, loads, and ties well. She would also

If you have questions about Mia or Roxy or would like to schedule a visit, please contact Shannon at 330-461-2318.

At TNT, we try to have a few quality, good-minded horses available for sale at all times. We strive to help create long-term partnerships between us and our students as well as between our students and their horses. Feel free to contact Shannon if you would like assistance searching for or evaluating a prospective purchase or lease.

For information on other TNT horses available for sale or lease, please see Shannon for details.

rier. If you wanted to keep her with a trainer, she will be beginner safe with a bit more work and experiences. Presently she will do fine with an intermediate rider or above. If you're interested in Roxy, you may want to act quickly as she's not likely to be available for long!



Happy Trails!

Contributed by Kris Speller

Trail riding is a fun activity throughout all the seasons, but there's something undeniable about riding your horse through the warm red woods of fall. Tacking up for the trail is a great way to change up your horse's routine by getting them out of the ring and into a fresh new environment. Of course, venturing out into unknown territory means you might encounter unexpected circumstances. Here are some helpful tips to keep you prepared and safe the next time you and your pony are on the trail:

1. Always ride with a trail buddy. If you must ride alone, tell someone where you'll be and when you expect to be back. Be sure to bring a small first aid kit and a cell phone for emergencies.
2. Check the weather and dress accordingly.
3. Plan a route and familiarize yourself with your surroundings. The last thing you want is to get lost or find yourself riding on common hunting grounds.
4. Wear proper riding equipment-helmet and boots are strongly suggested.
5. Know your horse and your limits.
6. Warm up and cool your horse, it's just as important as any other physical activity.
7. Use hand signals, the same as used by bicyclists. This is especially helpful when riding in bigger groups.
8. Maintain a distance of two horse lengths from the horse in front of you to avoid kicking.
9. Walk up and down steep hills.
10. Remain the same speed as the most inexperienced horse/rider.
11. Obey all traffic laws and ride with traffic. If you must cross the road, cross as a group once it's cleared.



Marie Shamberger is the Activities Coordinator for the farm. Please contact her if you have any ideas for outings or programs that you'd like to see! Marie can be reached at anewbluefish@yahoo.com or by leaving a note on the message board.

Marie's newest project is to organize **TRAIL RIDES** on Sundays. Sound like fun? Please contact her and let her know you're interested!

TNT Equestrian Center Shannon Edgar

7651 Friendsville Road
Lodi, Ohio 44254

330.461.2318

tntequestrian@aol.com

www.tophatntailsriding.com

Top Hat is produced by Julianne Bedel. Have an idea for a story? Comments and suggestions are welcome! Contact Julianne at tntnews-now@aol.com