

Training with the legendary Pony

Travelers attend clinic of famous equine guru

Remarkable weather we are having for October, don't you think? So warm and sunny, and still in the 80s for some! Well, at least in most parts, although the word generally is that we could do with some much needed rain, but we didn't have that problem on our visit to Maine recently.

For almost the entire duration of our visit, the skies were gray and filled with a dull, drizzly mist which periodically turned into heavy rain – good for the land of course, but rather dampening to the spirits. Still, we didn't let it spoil our fun in New Hampshire.

Our thanks go to Kathy Wile who helped us with our arranged visit (this time well in advance for a change) to Boo McDaniel's almost legendary "Pony Farm" in Temple, N.H., where we were to meet the famous GaWaNi Pony Boy and attend one of his clinics.

For those of you not as savvy about these things, Pony Boy ("Pony" to his friends!) is one of the well-known clinicians in horse behaviour and training who travels the country teaching us mere mortals how best to handle our horses.

He is a Native American and has written several books on the subject, including one, "Horse Follow Closely," which was part of the inspiration for our trip across America (see pony-boy.com for more).

We couldn't miss the opportunity to meet the great man and have him sign our T-shirt! I should explain that we have one pristine white T-shirt which has our HorseQuest USA logo on it, and which we carry around with us to have signed by any equine-related "celebrity" we meet on our travels. Our intention is that once we had finished our trip, we would frame the T-shirt and then auction it off to the highest bidder for the benefit of one or more equine charities — there are some pretty fancy names on there already, I can tell you!

Anyway, suffice it to say that the more we discovered about Pony Farm, which has no relation to Pony Boy, and their associated organisation, Horse Power, the more amazed we were at Boo's incredible work there.

Pony Farm is essentially a therapeutic riding center and there is so much that goes on there that it would take me an entire column just to list it all. But it started some 30 years ago with Boo running "summer camps" for young girls interested in horses, and then slowly ventured into the field of therapeutic riding, carriage driving and even equine massage.

Boo even runs courses on how to set up, manage and profit from your own equine center and trains the specialist instructors who run the therapeutic riding classes! These instructors don't



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

An unidentified cowgirl takes a rest at a farm David and Anita visited while in New England. The weather was damp, but they were able to go on some lovely country rides.



DAVID AND ANITA HASBURY-SNOGLES

just work at Pony Farm, but go on to work for other centers throughout the country, and of course in some instances open their own approved centers. Thus the impact of Boo's ideas and good works is gradually permeating throughout the equine world, to the betterment of horse and human alike.

We didn't get to see a great deal of Maine from our short time there, but saw enough to appreciate the beauty of the landscape and the surrounding countryside. On a short break in the weather, we took advantage of the sun and hopped on our horses to discover a local trail or two deep into the woods around the farm.

We had a lovely ride on smooth unpaved, winding roads through the deep and colourful woodland, passing by enchanting stone and log cabins, and crossing small stone bridges beneath which ran bubbling creeks filled with fast-flowing, crystal clear water.

The sun would pop through the trees every so often and light the canopy with brilliant reds, yellows and greens of the fall foliage, and the air smelled so fresh



David and Anita pose with GaWaNi Pony Boy, center, whose writings form part of the inspiration behind their trip.

and clean with just a hint of winter in it that it was a sheer joy just to be able to experience it.

Indeed, there was even a slope or two along the way steep enough for us to be able to take our foot off of the brake, open the throttle, and let the horses canter up it until they reached the top. Breathless, sweating and full of adrenalin, the blood coursing through their veins with the vitality of life that only a sense of such freedom can bring, we brought the horses back down to a slow walk, and eased back into the saddle — we were pretty "hyped up" by the end too!

But back to the rain, and thankfully the big indoor arena at the farm where Pony Boy would hold his clinic. Our horses, Max and Roo, had been out in the field next to the arena so were not looking their best when we brought them inside, despite having had rain sheets on them. Nonetheless we met the other participants of the clinic and proceeded to follow our "leader" in the art of getting one's horse to "follow closely."

The morning was all basic groundwork, whilst after a break for lunch, we spent the afternoon on mounted exercises trying to get our horses to go in the same direction as we wanted to.

It was all good, clean, fun as they say and in the evening we had a glass of wine with Boo, Pony, his assistant Dawn and a few others around a lovely warm fire in Boo's house, before we headed out to eat at a highly recommended "English Inn" nearby, so called because it was based on the real thing in the U.K. and was owned and run by a couple of Englishmen. It was a rather fitting way to end the day we thought, being a couple of Brits in a part of New England called New Hampshire!

David and Anita Hasbury-Snogles are British residents riding across the United States on horseback to raise money for charity. Visit HorseQuestUSA.org for more information. David can be reached at david_hasbury@yahoo.com.

Tips for cattle farmers

Farmers working together is an important concept most often seen in arrangements that leverage the power of the group. The group benefits when many decide to do something together, in this case, beef cattle farmers who decide to sell their feeder cattle at the same time.

Many associations exist across Virginia and locally our group is the Culpeper Madison Feeder Cattle Association (CMFCA).

The CMFCA markets feeder cattle for all its producer members to maximum advantage. Sales are co-sponsored with the Virginia Department of Agriculture (VDACS), whose graders assign frame and muscle scores to the feeder cattle.

The CMFCA cooperates with the Farmers Livestock Exchange of Winchester to offer these opportunities at the Culpeper Agricultural Enterprises (CAE), located on U.S. 29 south of Culpeper.

The next sale date is Nov. 14, a change from earlier announcements that avoids conflicts with Thanksgiving. The cattle will be taken in from 7 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the CAE.

While the main purpose is graded feeder cattle, all types of cattle are accepted and sold for your convenience in a regular sale starting at 5 p.m., followed by the graded sale at 7:30.

A sale was held Oct. 17 at the CAE with 280 graded feeder cattle. Forty-eight producers participated from Albemarle, Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Lancaster and Rappahannock counties. Sample steer prices per hundred pounds include 3 weights at \$115.25 (\$450/hd.); 4 weights at \$121.50 (\$548/hd.); 5 weights at \$102.25 (\$592/hd.); 6 weights at \$101 (\$646/hd.); 7 weights at \$105.25 (\$784/hd.); and 8 weights at \$94 (\$831/hd.).

For more information contact association secretary Pat Kerrick at 825-1957, association president Walker Somerville at 825-5571 or field man Wes Ware at 335-0047.

Gross dollars per head is an interesting number that only means more profit if



CARL STAFFORD

costs are held down. When feeder cattle reach higher weights they tend to do this using higher cost feed inputs, usually grain of some kind. Weaning time is when most people will bring in some type of processed feed.

Another time is during creep feeding. Cost of gain and cattle prices trigger these management choices.

Cheap grain may be a thing of the past with fundamental changes in our grain industry dominated by domestic ethanol production. Until this goes away we can expect our grain markets to have higher volatility to supply, weather and demand changes.

You can see the high gross dollars came from producing more pounds. The market is telling us they want heavier feeder cattle because the cost of gain has jumped. Your cost of gain is the big factor in setting profit per head.

With this year's drought we will be lucky to maintain cattle and very lucky if we can put on gains from our short and expensive feed supply.

One final suggestion to fall calving producers is to ask you to begin thinking about qualifying your calf crop for a health-verified sale. Double vaccinate your cows for respiratory and reproductive diseases when open and after three months of age, vaccinate your nursing calves while still on the cow.

I just finished double vaccinating my little group of cows, turned the bull in and will start the calves' shots after the youngest passes three months of age.

Carl Stafford is Culpeper County Extension Agent, Animal Science. He can be reached at ccstaffo@vt.edu.

Don't forget to check out our Web site.

www.star-exponent.com

829-WINE
Chateau du Reaux
219 E. Davis St. Culpeper
SPECIAL FREE TASTING
Friday, Oct. 26, 5-8 PM
Clos Les Fites Blanc '04
Rare White Priorat from Spain
Taste with Ed Gentry's Famous Back Fin Crab Dip
www.culpeperwines.com

Flowers say...
what words cannot

Randy's Flowers, Ltd.
211 West Evans St. - Culpeper, VA
540-825-4440 www.randysflowers.com 800-625-4440

PERMATREAT
PEST AND TERMITE CONTROL
(540)829-0000
www.permatreat.com Free Inspection

SERVING CULPEPER COUNTY RESIDENTS FOR OVER 40 YEARS!

HOLDEN INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.
Specializing in...
Auto • Home • Farm • Business
605 S. Main Street
Culpeper, VA 22701
Business (540) 825-8011
Toll Free (800) 272-1292
Fax (540) 825-4375
Email deborahthomas@theholdengroup.com

Deborah Thomas
Insurance Agent

It's time to take 30 at Curves.

Join Curves now and get 30% off the service fee, plus your first 30 days free. Discover how 30 minutes is all it takes to get a total body workout with our total support.

Curves
Amaze yourself!

Over 10,000 locations worldwide.

30% Off + 30 Days Free!

(540) 428-3400 256 Broadview Ave. Warrenton, VA 20386
(540) 825-3799 603 S Main St (Acher & Main St.) Culpeper, VA 22701

CULPEPER ANIMAL HOSPITAL, PLC
CARING FOR YOUR SMALL ANIMAL COMPANIONS

10% off Flea & Tick & Heartworm prevention products during Sept. & Oct.

Meredith Vargas, DVM • Cathy Kreyling, DVM • John Bond, DVM

441 Aspen St. • Culpeper 540-829-9085
(Rt. 522N, across from Found & Sons Funeral Home)
Open Mon.-Fri. 7:00-6:00 pm; Sat. 7:00-1:00 pm

Envision This
Style Imaging and Hair Salons

Call for an appointment today!
(540)825-1815

Full Service Salon ~ Digital Style Imaging
Schwarzkopf Hair Color Specialists

Featuring Schwarzkopf's Bonacure and Scruples hair care products, and OPI nail and skin care products.

2002 Orange Road Suite 203, Culpeper
Open Monday-Friday with evening hours available by appointment

Did You Know ...

Clarke Hardware
has Paper White Narcissus & Winter Pansies?

Celebrating over 100 Years of Service in Culpeper and the surrounding area!

201 E. Davis Street - Culpeper **825-9178**
Open 7:30 am-5:30 pm Mon.-Sat. www.clarkehardware.com

Culpeper County Volunteer Fire Department

BINGO
WEDNESDAYS
Doors open 5 pm
Early Games start at 6:30 pm
Regular games 7 pm
Non-Smoking
AT THE FIREHOUSE
151 W. Davis St., Culpeper