



ON THE CENTER LINE

GLASS-ED MEMBER NEWSLETTER

JANUARY – 2009

Welcome to the January edition of “On the Center Line” a monthly newsletter for members and friends of Glass-Ed. We hope you enjoy keeping up with the activity of your board and your thoughts and ideas are always welcome. Just call or email one of us.

The 2009 season starts December 1, 2008. In order not to miss a single edition of USDF Connection, you need to get your membership dues in before the end of December.

Another good reason to renew your membership is free auditing at the Joanne Coy groundwork clinic Saturday, Jan. 24th at Equine Line in Plainwell. Check out our great website for more information or contact Pam Dehaan. The weather is expected to be quite brisk, so bring your chair and dress warmly. See you there at 10 am and a warm lunch is provided.

Our “spring clinic” with L judge, Jane Kelly, is set for April 18th at Equine Line. This clinic will be in the format of “ride a test/fix a test” or a lesson, your option. Stay tuned or check our website for more details.

Coming up from March 13-15th is the annual Michigan Horse Council Expo in Lansing and Glass-Ed will be there. If you’ve already sent in your 2009 membership dues you can pick up your Omnibus at the Expo. Or if you’ve been procrastinating, you can join at the Expo and receive your Omnibus with details on the exciting shows planned for 2009.

If you can’t make it to Lansing, Glass-Ed will be at the Kalamazoo 4-H Tack Sale on March 16th at the Kalamazoo Fairgrounds. This is a great opportunity to renew your membership, bring a friend and sign them up too and receive a free YEA for 2009. This sale is also a great time to pick up new and used horsey stuff you’ve been wanting.

Winter’s a great time to start reading those books for the written test at Dressage Fest. The books for this year are: That Winning Feeling by Jane Savoie, The Dressage

Judge's Viewpoint by Jane Kidd and USPC Guide to Confirmation, Movement and Soundness by Susan Harris. When the weather is in the teens, it's a great time to snuggle up by the fireplace and read.

The 2009 Year End Awards banquet has been scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 7th. Mark your calendar now and don't miss this exciting event. Due to popular demand, the banquet will again be held at Eesley Place in Plainwell.

This month's Member Spotlight is Joanne Coy.

SPOTLIGHT ON JOANNE COY

Horses have been my passion from as far back as I can remember. My dad was a horseman, so as soon as he could, he set me up on a horse, and I cried when I had to get off. In my early years, most of my riding was on other people's horses, in repayment for working in the stable. Finally, at age 21, when I got my first job and paycheck, I was able to purchase my first horse for \$75.

He was the first of many to follow. I've found that



one of the greatest benefits of riding horses has not only been the terrific experiences with the horses, but also with the people in the horse sports that I've been connected with. The wonderful people I've trained and worked with are too numerous to mention, but they have all opened doors for me to meet even more people who have helped me to become the person and horseperson that I am today.

My dressage background includes many years of showing at A-rated shows, earning my Bronze Medal in Dressage back in the 80's. I can remember getting out of work on a Friday night, borrowing a horse trailer and hauling my buckskin, Breezy, to Bloomfield Hills Hunt Club to show on Saturday and Sunday. Saturday night under the lights was always fun, when lots of local people showed up just to see the horses perform to the music. I showed against such notables as Robert Dover, Carole Grant, Mary Zdunic, and many more. I've been fortunate to be able to work with some great trainers, many of whom live right in our back yard. Some of my greatest instructors, however, were judges who are now in the USDF Hall of Fame, Col. Lundquist, Max Gahwyler, and the list goes on. Chuck Grant, the Father of American Dressage, was one of the old-timers that I really enjoyed talking to, and I sought him out whenever he was at a horse show. He was a master, and had great stories to tell about his experiences throughout

the country, even performing in circuses with his horses. I worked extensively with Dee Cramer, of Encore Farms, who raised Holsteiners, and my attention turned from American-bred horses to a few lovely warmbloods that I raised and trained.

My husband and I raced Standardbreds for many years, Pacers, primarily, and that love turned into one of my favorite times with horses as well. In 1996, the Standardbred organization decided that a new sport, Racing Under Saddle, would attract crowds to the racetrack, so several of us owners agreed to race standardbreds in full racing hobbles around some of the well-known tracks in the midwest. The first race under saddle took place at Hoosier Downs, near Indianapolis, with thousands of people watching. I knew I had gotten in over my head, when I was being interviewed by ESPN about what I thought my chances were of winning the race! Talk about terrified. We finished fourth, and since this was a series, had three more big events to attend that summer. Memorable.

After we relocated to our own farm, one of my neighbors asked if I had ever tried endurance and distance riding. “Well, no, not yet...” and the next thing I knew I was competing at competitive trail rides all over Michigan and Indiana. One of the first ones I did was on my standardbred pacer, down in Brown County, Indiana, over some pretty big hills on a 35 mile ride. That poor horse had no idea how to negotiate the hills, since all he’d ever done was race on a very flat track. He literally sat down and slid down one of the hills, with a group of people down at the bottom scratching their heads wondering why he did that! After that, I purchased a couple of Arabians, and competed with them for many years, earning titles, prizes and riding thousands of miles.

Another great love of mine is raising and training quarter horses. I absolutely love the temperament of a quarter horse, and have owned a few that I felt would walk on water for me if I asked. One of the horses I raised was nicknamed, “Patty”, since he was born on St. Patrick’s day. I bought him specifically so I could raise and train him the “natural” way, using the Parelli methods I was studying at the time. I found it interesting that my horse and Pat Parelli not only shared the same name, but same birthdate! I earned my Level 1 Parelli certificate with my Arabian, but it was Patrick (also known as Zippy as I Wanna Be, a Zippo Pine Bar grandson) who showed me how important and easy it is to use the natural horsemanship techniques right from the get-go. The rewards are amazing, I was riding Patrick bridle-less and bareback in my arena, a task I had only imagined doing a few years before.

The natural horsemanship techniques that I use are a culmination of having worked with and observed many trainers, and it is with that background that I have discovered the importance of groundwork. Like many riders, I was formerly a “flick a brush over ‘em, throw a saddle on ‘em and let’s ride” kind of gal, but I know now how helpful good groundwork can be, and how much better prepared your horse is because of it! Never again will I need to ask someone to help me load my horse in the trailer. Never again, and that is such a comforting feeling. That can happen with groundwork. After all, it’s not about the trailer, it’s about the basics. The confidence level that can be gained when you establish a partnership with your horse through groundwork is immeasurable.

I was once asked to help a friend break her burros that she had gotten from the BLM. She had a problem leading them, and they were constantly getting out of their pasture and onto her front lawn. One of the first things they did, to avoid having to be “held accountable” is avert their eyes. They’d stick their little heads right down between their knees and look at the ground. If you have a teenager in your household, you’ve probably seen this one at home. Well, maybe not between their knees, but they sure can avert their eyes. Progress usually begins when we have eye contact, a lesson in life and in horse training.

When I’m not riding, I’m working—I’m a counselor at a middle school. I find working with kids is a lot like working with horses. It’s about the trust, the leadership, the



confidence and the love. My students teach me where my horses leave off—and both fulfill my life.

Keep on top of GED news by logging into our exciting new website www.glass-ed.org.

Leslie Cash
Member Newsletter Editor