

## *TATTLE TRAILS*

The Newsletter of the Harding Township/Green Village Bridle Path Association

[www.bridlepath.org](http://www.bridlepath.org)

February 2012

From the Editor:

It's been a pleasant winter so far – a far cry from the snow and ice of last winter. Hopefully you've been able to spend some time astride your horses. Our trails are slowly peeking out from the fallen trees and debris thanks mostly to Kathi & Ron Young and, while the jumps and dressage at the showgrounds are safely stowed out of the weather, the ring still beckons a few to add their footprints. Some of my horses are a little confused by the warm weather and, much to my delight, have not gotten too fuzzy. Others are making up for their barnmates deficiencies looking more like a yak than a horse. It's time, now, to start planning our activities for the coming year. We had a number of exciting, informative and fun events last year and this year should best even that. As always, I'm looking for news to share, so don't be shy about reporting what's going on with your horse or barn. From great trail rides, to show success, to helpful tidbits, we're all in this together and sharing our experiences is a great way to strengthen our organization. None of us can do it all, and we need each and every one of you. My winter has been spent slowly building a better foundation for my eventing season and Joanna Bligh, our secretary, has been hard at work with her Rita, prepping for her first competitive driving events. Trail boss, Kathi Young, has been tirelessly tackling the trails, and our Town liaison, Mare Olsen, has been keeping an eagle eye on our easements. **Our next membership meeting will be on February 22 from 7:30-9pm at the Kemmerer Library in New Vernon** and we hope to see you all there!

Ingrid

### **HT/GVBPA Officers**

President: Ingrid Johnston – 201/213-8287  
Vice President: Jessica Jones – 973/267-2060  
Secretary: Joanna Bligh – 908/578-2833  
Treasurer: Katrina Vitale – 973/593-0268  
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Newsletter Editor – Ingrid Johnston 201/213-8287



Membership time is right around the corner. Do think about rejoining again this year – we really need all of you. Membership forms may be found on our website ([www.bridlepath.org](http://www.bridlepath.org)) or contact any of the officers for a hard copy.



Dear Friends and Members,

Looking back, 2011 has been a heck of a year!

Meteorologically speaking, we had a window-rattling earthquake, Hurricane Irene dumping buckets of water onto streets and yards and knocking over mighty oaks, and an untimely October snowstorm dismembering tons of limbs and toppling more trees.

Politically speaking, we've already had about a year of all-you-can-take politicking with about another year's worth yet to go.

Practically speaking, we've lived through too many days and nights without electricity, i.e. no lights, no phone, no TV/radio (and those of us dependent on wells and septic - no water, no toilet). The "good ole'days" without JCPL weren't really so much fun once we personally sampled how it must have been.

Speaking about Bridle Path, I'd say we had a pretty good and eventful year. Many of you helped think up, organize, manage and participate in quite a lot of activities. We could not have done it at all without you - Thank You. So in no particular order, here is a summary of what happened during the year:

- The **Bridle Path building at the Showgrounds got a brand new roof and accessories**. Broken and worn out places on the exterior were mended and it got a fresh coat of paint. (Thank You, Town!) Who guessed the old house could look so smart?!! Such a fine exterior just cried out for a good cleaning out and sprucing up on the inside. It was really hard to part with stuff we had clung to in case it was needed someday. But eventually unfixables were discarded and furniture was rearranged to make storage room for things that did need to be saved. Wooden boxes were custom-built to hold all of the hunter pace flags. Our new light-weight and portable dressage ring is now completely corralled in a few buckets. The principle now will be: a place for everything and everything in its place.
- Sometime in the spring we held a **clean-up day**. Mainly this involved picking up branches and some debris along Sand Spring Lane and was the easy part. The bigger job was cleaning up the area under the evergreens along Sand Spring Road. For this we were able to get a machine (with operator) to kind of chew everything up into a very rough mulch. We also trimmed the tree and shrub-line on the long side of the property.
- We had a couple of truck loads of **sand hauled into the sand ring**. This was raked, dragged and smoothed, making the footing more consistent and resilient for horse feet.
- **The decrepit metal gate at the small grass ring was replaced** with a smoothly operating and better looking one. Wheels added under the sagging double gates makes it easier and safer for the ring steward to open and close them during horse shows. You can now also open/close them from horseback, if you are so inclined.
- Our Town arranged to have the **fields mowed** and looking nice all season and we continued to replace failed fence rails one by one as they fell down. Most of our perimeter fencing is decades old and we'll have to think about replacing all of it some day.

- Trail Boss, Kathi Young, and her crew were out early in the year to lay out, prepare and mark the course for the **Spring Valley Hounds hunter pace**. Now that we have a small utility vehicle to haul ourselves and our gear in patrolling the trails is easier to do. Because of persistently wet weekends it was difficult to get to some places without the danger of getting stuck, but she managed to get the job done. This hunter pace is very popular. In addition to being just a pretty place to ride, it offers fields for gallops, water crossings, wooded paths, some uphill and down, and a little bit of ruggedness if you want it. I'm pretty sure you can find this same ride in the wilds of somewhere but unlikely in many other places in NJ. Nature made this trail network beautiful, and we try to make it safe.
- In summer we had a **dressage clinic called "Dressage for all Disciplines"**. The instructor was a former town resident, Peggy Hipple, who for many years taught riding skills to our Spring Valley Hounds pony clubbers, when pony club was based at the showgrounds. Some riders might have kept away thinking this was for competitive dressage riders. We really try to have clinics that are generally useful for any horse/rider. Just like in school we need to learn our ABC's before we can read and write, so we need to teach our horses their ABC's (called dressage) before they can go on to more complicated tasks. This clinic was an opportunity to learn a little bit more how and why to do this and to remind ourselves that the fundamentals of good riding need to be consistently practiced. This clinic was so rewarding we had another one a few months later. Highly recommended if we manage one again.



- We hosted **two horse shows**. The first was the **Spring Valley hunter show**, a long established fixture on show calendars, in fact, in its 82<sup>nd</sup> year in 2011. It's organized by Spring Valley Hounds Hunt which used to hunt here and which established many, if not all, of the trails we still ride. It's popular and always well attended. In partnership with Crewe Hill Stable, we also hosted the second annual **Crewe Hill Horse Show**. It was a great opportunity to see our local riders dressed up, looking their best on their very polished horses also looking their best. There are so many big and small jobs to do at a horse show. We really appreciate our non-competing members showing up to lend a hand and to support their friends and neighbors. To see these young riders display their horsemanship and riding skills right in our own back yard can't get much better.
- **The large hedge between the rings**, overgrown, neglected and ailing, **was severely pruned** to encourage it to regain its native robust health. Years ago, before the fields were fenced, this hedge was the first jump on the hunt course of the SVH horse show. It and the remains of the stone wall in the big field are reminders of how much of the past is still with us. And, by the way, the stone wall is still used by some of today's riders.
- Having a couple of carriage enthusiasts in our midst - we thought it would be interesting and educational to have a **long-lining clinic** and see what that is all about. While mostly used for starting a horse for carriage work, it's also useful for anyone who wants or needs to do in-hand training, in winter, for instance. For interested people who had never tried this, it was a good place to begin. We had an experienced instructor, Aimee Bauman, well-known in the driving community.

- **Hurricane Irene** in late August not only blew away all plans for our annual picnic, but the fall hunter pace as well. The ensuing widespread disorder on the trails made trail maintenance nearly impossible. Every tree seemed to have fallen in the worst possible way to block access and removal. Every tree seemed to be a giant Sequoia. Things are much better now but putting everything back in place is on-going as well as slow-going.



- In late fall Bridle Path organized a one-day **Large Animal (mainly equine) Rescue Clinic** for our local fire departments who are first responders at the horse-in-trouble scene. They are the people who have to figure out how to help a horse get out of the many kinds of trouble we might find him in. Twenty-four firemen and first aid squad members gave up their entire Saturday to learn how to safely rescue horses from various accident situations. They always come when you call them and they always know what to do and that's why we love them.



- We have **two pending easements** that will further knit bits of our trail network together. One is the Fawn Hill easement that will connect us to Loantaka Park through Hartley Farms. The other is the Blanchard easement which connects trails north of Glen Alpin with those in the south. Neither is settled yet.
- Finally, the year ended with our traditional **holiday party at the Tunis-Ellicks House**. Good food, good cheer, and a good time by all in attendance made this event a thoroughly satisfactory finale to year 2011.



## Trail Report

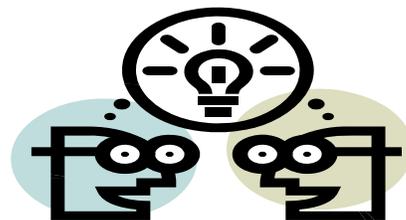
It's already February and we have been very lucky not to have such harsh cold weather and averaging 40 degrees when it should be 23 degrees! Unfortunately, it has been so wet with the relentless rain. Trying to clean up our trail system has been very challenging, to say the least! After the horrendous Hurricane Irene, we had started to make some progress.....then that shocker of a snowstorm in October really set us way back. I think I can say that as of now, most of the trails (on the Easterly side of Glen Alpine Road) are now passable....They might not look so pretty, and we still have tons of work to do, but at least a horse and rider can get through safely. Thank you to all the people who have generously donated their valuable personal time..... Mare Olsen, Ron Young, Jamie Miller, Diane Hinds and Sean Colquhoun. I could never do this job myself and am always so grateful when I can drag some volunteers along with me. There are still areas up in Koven's Woods which will need some professional attention. We still have so much more to do, not only with keeping the trail system open, clear and safe, but with perfecting easements in and around the subdivisions that are happening in town. Please report any blockage or unsafe areas to me and I will address them as soon as I am able. I am always looking for good volunteers that want to lend a hand. You can always reach me on my cell phone at (973) 464-8738, which is the best way to get me. My email address is [klyoung@hotmail.com](mailto:klyoung@hotmail.com) if you want to reach me via email. Always remember that without generosity of our landowners, we would not have many of these beautiful bridle trails. So please use caution and have good manners when riding. Be respectful of the ground conditions. When it's super wet, don't gallop your horse on the soft ground...especially on or around the hay fields. Hopefully we will have an early Spring, so get out there and ride!

Thanks too, to Anne Quinn, who generously houses our tractor so that it can perform at optimum capacity and not take the brunt of the weather.

Kathi Young  
Trail Boss, & Past President, HTGVBPA



Now *THAT's* using your Noggin!



## News from the Equine Medical Safety Association

Concussion is a highly debated topic in equestrian sports at present. Of course, the wearing of a properly fitted American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM)/Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) helmet with the harness secured will hopefully prevent or lessen the severity of a concussion, it is recommended that anyone sustaining a blow to the head or symptoms of a concussion.

### **Equestrian Helmet Facts:**

**Fact #1:** Between 12 to 15 million persons in the United States ride a horse or pony every year.

**Fact # 2:** Approximately 20 percent of horse related injuries occur on the ground and not riding.

**Fact # 3:** Most riding injuries occur during pleasure riding.

**Fact # 4:** The most common reason among riders for admission to hospital and death are head injuries.

**Fact # 5:** A fall from two feet (60 cm) can cause permanent brain damage. A horse elevates a rider eight feet (three meters) or more above ground.

**Fact # 6:** A human skull can be shattered by an impact of 7-10 kph. Horses can gallop at 65 kph.

**Fact # 7:** According to the National Electronic Surveillance System figures the most likely ages for injury is at 5-14, and 25-44 years with each decade having about 20 percent of the injuries.

**Fact # 8:** A rider who has one head injury has a 40 percent chance of suffering a second head injury. Children, teens, and young adults are most vulnerable to sudden death from second impact syndrome: severe brain swelling as a result of suffering a second head injury before recovery from the first head injury.

**Fact # 9:** Death is not the only serious outcome of unprotected head injuries. Those who survive with brain injury may suffer epilepsy, intellectual and memory impairment, and personality changes.

**Fact # 10:** Hospital costs for an acute head injury can be in the range of \$25,000 per day. Lifetime extended care costs may easily exceed \$3 million. There is no funding for rehabilitation outside the medical setting.

**Fact # 11:** Helmets work. Most deaths from head injury can be prevented by wearing ASTM, SEI approved helmets that fit correctly and have the harness firmly applied. Other types of helmets, including bike helmets, are inadequate.

**Fact # 12:** Racing organizations require helmets and as a result jockeys now suffer less head injuries than pleasure riders. The U.S. Pony Club lowered their head injury rate 29 percent with mandatory helmet use. Britain's hospital admission rate for equestrians fell 46 percent after helmet design improved and they became in routine use.

**Fact # 13:** The American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Medical Association through the Committee on Sports Medicine, Canadian Medical Association, and the American Medical Equestrian Association/Safe Riders Foundation (now the EMSA) recommend that approved, fitted and secured helmets be worn on all rides by all horseback riders.



## Dear Allie

Dear Allie, I've always considered myself to be a fairly manly-type of a horse – kind of a guys gelding. I work hard to develop my physique and have noticed the mares next door checking me out on more than one occasion. I was so embarrassed when my person put a bra on me! What are they thinking??!! It's bad enough that she covers up my burly build with coats (which by the way, are not always the most flattering colors – I mean, really, what strapping stud goes around in purple?) I have a magnificent mane and have worked hard all fall to produce copious amounts of body hair. This bra-thing just tips me over the edge. She even dresses me in the darned thing right there in the aisleway so everyone can see. What gives?

Signed, *Manly on Meyersville*

Dear Manly,

Well, sometimes people do the strangest things. Because they have lost the ability to prepare for weather changes they need to put clothes on like coats and hats and scarves. This bra thing may be one of their ways to make up for their deficiencies. Often they add blankets to us when **they're** cold, or take away our hair because **they're** hot. What they seem to forget is that *we* know. I've seen people wearing these bra things and, while I'm not completely sure of the purpose, they do seem to be happy with them. My advice to you is to just man up and make the best of it. It could be worse, you know – at least it's *under*wear rather than Outerwear (and, for the record, these bra things do help with shoulder rubs from the blankets).

Think Calvin Klein! Allie.

If you have a question for Allie. please send it to [buckv\\_oliver@yahoo.com](mailto:buckv_oliver@yahoo.com)

Are YOU looking for something or do YOU have a unique service or specialty that you'd like our members to know about? We're starting a WANT AD (for those of you who are looking for something or want something) and a SERVICES section for those of you who have services or items for sale. Please send your ad to Ingrid Johnston at [bucky\\_oliver@yahoo.com](mailto:bucky_oliver@yahoo.com) and we'll get it in the next edition of the newsletter.

### FOR SALE:

For sale: Serviceable two-horse bumper pull/tagalong white trailer. New tires, axles, brakes, ramp/tailgate and flooring. \$2,200 or best offer. Daniel Somers (973) 966-1671. (9.11)

### SERVICES:



**KIM CANNON**  
908-313-2855



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