

CanTRA celebrates silver anniversary with successful conference

Tools to Teach...To Learn...To Lead' was the thrust of last fall's successful Conference in celebration of the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association's 25th anniversary. Although the event's lectures and workshops illustrated that very positive theme, it was six-year-old Ariana Magrics, grinning happily from the back of her horse, Petey, and the delight on the faces of seven-year-old Haley Veit and Vanessa Blurton-Jones, 22, as they demonstrated their riding skills, that really brought the message to life for audiences.

Over 150 delegates, including in-

structors, special educators, volunteers and board members, attended the milestone Conference held at several venues—including the arena of OnTRA member Sunrise Therapeutic Riding and Learning Centre—in and around Guelph, Ontario. Audience members and speakers came from across Canada and as far away as Australia, Bermuda, Texas, North and South Carolina, and East and West Virginia.

The keynote presenter at the four-day event was Carl Hiebert, a paraplegic motivational speaker and pilot of ultralight aircraft. Hiebert enthralled the audience with a slide show based on his popular book *A Gift of Wings*, which features photographs taken during two ultralight flights across Canada. The lineup of speakers also included pediatric physiotherapist Pippa Hodge, B.S.R., M.C.S.P., M.C.P.A., who provided intense instruction on identifying the special physical needs of therapeutic riding students, goal setting and progress assessment. In addition to a lively lecture that included a film about horseback riders with disabilities, Hodge conducted a well-received workshop using two young students.

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COVER PHOTO (by Alissa Gibson): Six-year-old rider Ariana Magrics, supported by her mother Lige Magrics, gets some assistance from well-known instructor and pediatric physiotherapist Pippa Hodge. Volunteer Helen Reid and Petey are in the background.

The MANE LINE/20-1

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In another well-attended presentation, Dr. Peter Physick-Sheard, equine specialist with the University of Guelph, delivered in-depth instruction in horse care and health with his characteristic humour. Later, with rider Vanessa Blurton-Jones demonstrating, Mary Longden and Marion Slatter-Blistein, P.T. gave a well-structured workshop on the necessity and benefits

of cooperative teamwork between the riding coach and therapist.

In total, sixteen excellent presenters provided lectures and workshops that were designed to send delegates home with new, valuable and useable information.

Organized by Ann Caine, CanTRA president and Sunrise executive director, and Donna Naylor, executive director of CanTRA, the success of the

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Mary Longden (right), presents the Outstanding Therapeutic Riding Instructor Award to Andrea Friedman.

National awards presented at CanTRA Conference

Andrea Friedman, of Sunrise Therapeutic Riding and Learning Centre, Wendy Roberts, an East Coast physiotherapist, and an Edmonton horse named Tuffy were honoured for their work in therapeutic riding at a gala awards night during the CanTRA Conference.

Member therapeutic riding centres and individual CanTRA members, from across Canada, were invited to nominate worthy recipients for awards in three categories: Outstanding Therapeutic Riding Instructor, Outstanding Volunteer, and Outstanding Therapy Horse.

Taking home the prestigious Andrea Gillies Award for Outstanding Therapeutic Riding Instructor was Sunrise assistant head instructor Andrea Friedman. Andrea has worked diligently over the past six years to achieve her full CanTRA certification as a therapeutic riding instructor, as well as certification as a regional driving instructor (horse and buggy).


Wendy Roberts, a physiotherapist from Halifax, Nova Scotia, who, over the past 25 years, has volunteered at every level from 'grass roots' to international, won the Rhonda Davies Outstanding Volunteer Award. And the Outstanding Therapy Horse Award went to Tuffy, a 40-year-old hard-working horse at Little Bits Therapeutic Riding Centre, in Edmonton, Alberta. *Congratulations to all!* 🐾

CONFERENCE...

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Conference also came through the assistance of a strong team of active volunteers and financial supporters.

Needless to say, feedback on the 25th anniversary event has been glowing. Delegates are already looking forward

to the next CanTRA Conference, which is scheduled for 2007 in western Canada, and a lineup of workshops planned for various parts of the country on an ongoing basis. For further information, please contact the CanTRA office at 519-767-0700 or visit www.cantra.ca 

CENTRE PROFILE

Lanark County Therapeutic Riding Program keeps growing in size and scope

For almost two decades, the Lanark County Therapeutic Riding Program has been providing specialized riding lessons to children and adults with physical and/or developmental disabilities. Located just west of Ottawa, our riding program operates under Lanark Community Programs, which in turn is a part of Lanark Health and Community Services.

We began in 1986 with just twelve young riders at one location. Now, in our nineteenth season, the program serves more than one hundred riders at four different Lanark County stables, including Heroncrest Stable in Smith Falls, Leeview Farm in Carleton Place, Cedar Rock Farm in Perth, and Ballycalmar in Lanark.

The riders in the Lanark County Therapeutic Riding Program range in age from two to 73 years and have a wide variety of disabilities, including

cerebral palsy, spina bifida, Down Syndrome, stroke, spinal cord injury, amputation, sight and hearing impairments, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Riding lessons, which are offered spring, summer and fall, run between \$25 or less per lesson per student. A sliding scale based on a family's ability to pay keeps lessons affordable for everyone. During the winter a ski program is offered in cooperation with the Canadian Disabled Skiing Association-National Capital Division.

All volunteers welcome

Nowhere is the community support for the Lanark County Therapeutic Riding Program more evident than in its volunteers. Our program could not exist without its volunteer base. We are very fortunate to have a terrific team of more than 55 committed volunteers.

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LANARK PROFILE...

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This dedicated group assists with riding lessons, transports riders to and from lessons, helps to organize fundraising events, and assists with administrative tasks.

The program's volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and age groups—12 to 70 years old. For example, we train volunteers who are participating in a life skills-training course at a local residential drug treatment centre run by the Community Support Service Program. We also welcome high school students, who are doing volunteer work as part of their

curriculum. Another source of volunteers is the growing number of seniors and retired people who want to stay active and participate in rewarding volunteer work. They enjoy seeing the benefits and progress that the riders make during their lessons.

Volunteer training sessions are given to new volunteers and there is an extensive training program for volunteers who are interested in becoming certified as Assistant Instructors through the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association. 

*Contributed by Susan Cressy,
Lanark County Therapeutic
Riding Program*

RIDER PROFILE

Lanark rider Josie Proulx shows winning spirit

One of the many great rewards in therapeutic riding comes from working with riders like Josie Proulx, who first came to the Lanark County Therapeutic Riding Program in 1987. Legally blind and physically disabled, Josie was excited and apprehensive about riding. She arrived at our facility in a wheelchair and was pushed up the ramp that placed her at the same level as the horse's back. It was a difficult process transferring her from the chair to the horse's back because of her stiff limbs and inability to manipulate her body fluidly. And since she was try-

ing this new sport for the first time, she was visibly nervous. The horse stood patiently while we lifted and shifted Josie to the centre of his back—then off they went. With one volunteer leading the horse and two more walking beside her, offering physical and emotional support, it wasn't long before Josie felt comfortable enough to enjoy the sensation of movement and mobility and the newly found sense of freedom. Her earlier look of concern and apprehension soon gave way to a smile—Josie was hooked on riding.

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WINNING SPIRIT...

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Since then, Josie has become a confident rider who climbs on to a mounting block with just a volunteer's hand to steady her. She mounts the horse by putting her foot in the stirrup and swinging her leg over his back. Instead of clutching the handles of a vaulting surcingle, she uses an English saddle. And with the reins in both hands, Josie steers the horse into the riding ring to begin her lesson without leader or sidewalkers.

Over the years, Josie's increased abilities have led her to the world of competition. At home, Josie's apartment walls are covered with certificates and ribbons testifying to her success as a competitive rider. Of course, photos and pictures of her favourite animal—the horse—are right alongside.

In 1995, Josie competed and won the High Point Championship and the Easter Seals Trophy for her dressage test and obstacle course at the Eastern Ontario Regional Horse Show. The same year, Josie qualified to compete in Toronto at the Provincial level, where she came second in her division. Later, she came second at the Eastern Canadian Championships. Josie has continued to be enthusiastic about competition and, in 2005, competed in the Ontario Provincial Dressage Championships.

Although not every rider goes on to organized competition, all those who participate in the Lanark County Therapeutic Riding Program learn to set their own goals and achieve successes that are just as important. Simply being able to use your legs to urge a horse forward, or discovering and moving to the

rhythm of a two-beat trot are achievements leading to confidence and self esteem that can transfer to a winning attitude in other areas of their lives. Therapeutic riding has certainly worked for Josie. Eighteen years ago, when first encountering a new challenge, Josie would say "I don't think I can do that." But recently, as Josie was learning a new dressage move that she couldn't accomplish the first few times, her response was, "Let me try that again. I'm going to get it—I know I can do it".

Contributed by Susan Cressy

MARCH 11 & 12, 2006 COMMUNICATION AND TEACHING SKILLS WORK- SHOP

**Location: ITA La Pocatière, 401
rue Poire, La Pocatière, Quebec**

The workshop includes: practicing and refining teaching and communication skills, equine teaching principles, lesson planning components, lecture and practical. Course is conducted by Lelia Sponsel, CanTRA Coach, Examiner, CAC/NCCP Rep., and Hilary Webb, CanTRA Coach, Examiner. Registration fees (before February 15): CanTRA members-\$150, non-members-\$185; (after February 15) CanTRA members-\$190, non-members-\$225. Fees include Instructor In Action Workbook, handouts, lunches and breaks. Participants receive a certificate. To register contact CanTRA at 519-767-0700, ctra@golden.net, or visit www.cantra.ca

MARCH 16-19, 2006 CAN-AM ALL BREEDS EMPORIUM

**Location: Agriplex Building, Western
Fairgrounds, London, Ontario**

The All Breeds Emporium offers everything from workshops and presentations to equine gift and service vendors, plus loads of attractions with horsey appeal. Most breeds and disciplines are represented. OnTRA is hosting a Silent Auction that includes fabulous items, such as four complete stall fronts, donated by Classic Equine Equipment. Come and support OnTRA at this exciting venue—it's one of our most valuable fundraising events. Visit www.can-amequine.com for Show details or call the OnTRA office at 905-839-4931.



APRIL 23, 2006 EVENTING/JUMPING CLINIC WITH JO YOUNG

**Location: Sunrise Therapeutic Riding &
Learning Centre/Guelph**

Time: 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

The clinic, which covers eventing rules and practical sessions over fences, is given by FEI judge and former chair of the Canadian National Eventing Committee Jo Young. Registration fees: participants (limited stall space available)-\$125, auditors-\$25. Fees include coffee/juice, muffins and lunch. Contact 519-837-0558, info@sunrise-therapeutic.ca or visit www.sunrise-therapeutic.ca

APRIL 29-MAY 2, 2006 CONNECTING WITH RIDERS: MICRO COUNSELLING SKILLS FOR THERAPEUTIC RIDING INSTRUCTORS (Pilot Workshop)

**Location: Ontario Institute for Studies
in Education/University of Toronto, and
Sunrise Therapeutic Riding & Learning
Centre/Guelph.**

The course is directed to therapeutic riding instructors who wish to work in an

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WE'D LIKE TO GET TO KNOW YOU!

Over the coming year, The Mane Line is planning a series of profiles on our member centres and their riders. OnTRA centres are located all over the province and each one provides unique programs and services to some very special participants. So, if you know a rider who deserves to be recognized or would like others to know about the good things going on at your centre, drop us a line at: editor.maneline@sympatico.ca

COMING EVENTS...

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equine-facilitated mental health setting in partnership with a mental health therapist, or who want some additional skills recognizing mental health issues and how to deal with them in the therapeutic riding setting. Workshop presenters include: Becky Liddle, Ph.D.; Judy Silver, Ph.D., C.

Psych.; Margaret Schneider, Ph.D., C. Psych.; Lana Stermac, Ph.D., C. Psych. Registration fees (before March 15): CanTRA members-\$650, non-members-\$750; (after March 15) CanTRA members-\$700, non-members-\$800. Course includes handouts, lunches/breaks, and shuttles to and from arena. To register contact CanTRA at 519-767-0700. ▼



Achievements highlighted at OnTRA's Annual General Meeting

During its annual Conference last November, the Ontario Equestrian Federation hosted OnTRA's Annual General Meeting for the fourth consecutive year. As always, we're grateful to be part of the yearly OEF Conference, which gives us an excellent opportunity to combine our meeting with a full day of equestrian activities.

Every year, as the province's therapeutic riding representative and a member of the OEF, OnTRA is allowed

to nominate individuals for a long list of OEF honours and awards. The awards are handed out during the Conference's evening banquet, and we're proud to report some well-deserved recognition went to five individuals, including: Barry Finn, of *The Rider*, Leslie Brooks and Jim Waechter, Sandra Silcox, and SARI's Barbara Johnson. (Please see sidebar on page 10 for photos and more details.)

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AGM...

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Only a few OnTRA members were in attendance at our own Annual General Meeting as President Peter Henderson and the eight directors reported on our group's many accomplishments in the 2004/2005 season.

President Peter Henderson's Report

Through the dedication of a nine member volunteer board, OnTRA has experienced an extremely successful twenty-first year—a year filled with both growth and change.

Not only have we maintained a high standard, but in many cases, we've actually improved on the many services we offer our members. The list includes:

- a financially responsible organization
- an accurate list of centres in Ontario
- education clinics held throughout Ontario
- regional and provincial competitions
- fundraising opportunities for member centres
- public relations through the OEF, Trillium, RAWF and Can-Am Marketing Inc
- communication through four issues of *The Mane Line*
- OnTRA grant program for member centres

In addition to the above, OnTRA initiated the following services in 2005:

- communicated by phone with all centres in Ontario
- developed a profile on all member centres
- recognition of members through the OEF and Ontario Sport Alliance awards programs
- developed and launched the OnTRA website: www.ontra.ca
- collected tack for distribution to member centres
- Became the charity of choice for the two Can-Am Marketing shows

As OnTRA is a volunteer organization, without paid staff, we continue to analyze the work required to operate this association. An increase in the services and activities of our Association has put a tremendous amount of pressure and demand on our board members. This must be addressed in the coming year. As an example, the OnTRA Grant Program distributed over \$17,000.00 this past year. OnTRA generates the funds to support this program through special events during shows like the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto and Can-Am events in London. For this to continue we need more involvement and help from our membership.

Consequently, my goals for the coming year are:

- develop committees to help spread the workload
- increase the number of OnTRA members

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OnTRA nominees take home awards at annual OEF Conference

During last November's 2005 Ontario Equestrian Federation Annual Conference, the following individuals were recognized for their hard work in support of Ontario's horse industry.



The Rider publisher Barry Finn (right), accepts his award from OEF president Allan Ehrlick.

MEDIA OF THE YEAR AWARD Presented to *The Rider*

The Rider, nominated by OnTRA, received its second consecutive OEF Media of the Year Award. *The Rider* is the only news publication that consistently covers all breeds and disciplines, resulting in strong support from a broad sector of the equine industry. Unlike other media groups, which give coverage to a smaller section of the equine sport, *The Rider* does it all.



Leslie Brooks (centre), and Jim Waechter (left), accept their award from Allan Ehrlick.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR Presented to Leslie Brooks and Jim Waechter

Jim and Leslie received well-deserved recognition for their leadership and hard work in helping to resolve Ontario's controversial Horse Property Tax issue. Without their efforts, the proposed legislature—if approved—would have had serious and negative impact on much of the province's equine recreational and sport industry. Not only did the pair bring the issue to the attention of the media and the entire horse industry, but they also helped to organize Ontario's disparate equine groups into a unified body that spoke with one voice at the government level.



Sandra Silcox (right) with Allan Ehrlick.

OFFICIAL OF THE YEAR Presented to Sandra Silcox

Sandra has had a lengthy involvement in therapeutic riding—sitting on CARD's Board of Directors for several years. Sandra, who has supported our provincial association in many ways, is responsible for initiating some of OnTRA's past and well-attended clinics on subjects, such as governance. She continues to support our riders at competitions, recently joining ParaEquestrian Canada.



Barbara Johnson (right), with Allan Ehrlick.

PEOPLE MAKE A DIFFERENCE AWARD Presented to Barbara Johnson

The People Make a Difference Award is given to an individual who exhibits a selfless and passionate commitment to a sport, discipline and/or breed organization—certainly a fitting description of Barbara Johnson, who is a dedicated member of SARI's therapeutic riding team. In addition to instructing a weekly riding class, Barbara is a member of SARI's horse committee assisting with the selection, recruitment and retirement of the program's horses. Barbara, an active volunteer at SARI since 1986

in both the driving and riding programs, is currently enrolled in the CanTRA Assistant Instructor Certification Program.

Award photos taken by River Bend Designs; Courtesy of the Ontario Equestrian Federation 🏇

AGM...

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Treasurer—John McClellan reported that the association had operated in a responsible manner with revenue exceeding expenses by \$5,800.00.

Membership—OnTRA has remained static in size over the past year. Concern was expressed that three centres had closed over the past year.

OEF—Karen Sibbald, our OEF representative, reported that OnTRA participated in the OEF-run Cavalcade of Horses exhibition at the 2004 Royal Winter Fair, and that OnTRA was the recipient of a cheque from the Provincial Sport Organization Base Funding Program.

Fundraising—The committee reported that OnTRA was involved with two new ventures—Woodbine Entertainment and Can-Am—which helped generate over \$13,000 in revenue.

Equestrian—Judi Island reported that a total of 21 riders attended the competition held at CedarLynde Stables in August 2005. An opportunity to participate in both Dressage and Prince Philip Games was offered to riders from member centres. OnTRA was thrilled to have the following celebrities in attendance at the event: Don Adams-Equine Canada; Marcia Barrett-Ontario Equestrian Federation; Sandra Silcox-ParaEquestrian Canada; Aidan Finn-*The Rider*; Judi Calow-Rogers Cable TV; and Dax Adam-Canadian Paralympic Dressage rider.

Communication—Tracy Mallory advised that the OnTRA website had been running for almost a year. The average number of visits per month is 306 with that total increasing each month. Most visits are from Canadian internet users.

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Grant Report—The committee was pleased to advise that OnTRA had provided sixteen grants to twelve centres for a total of \$17,901.

Nominations and elections —The committee provided a slate of names to the members recommending they be elected as directors for the year 2005/2006. The slate was accepted and the following directors chosen:

Peter Henderson – President

Tracy Mallory – Vice President

John McClellan – Treasurer

Laura Smith – Secretary

Judi Island – Competition

Margaret Ameli – Education

Sarah Ramsden – Communication

Karen Sibbald – OEF

Gay Harper - Director 

IN SYMPATHY

Readers of popular *Horse Sport* Magazine will be saddened to learn of the passing of its publisher Susan Jane Anstey. Ms. Anstey (nee Scott), who had been battling cancer for some time, died on Wednesday, November 9, 2005. Ms. Anstey was a strong supporter of therapeutic riding, often giving our riders special coverage in the pages of *Horse Sport*.


On behalf of all members of OnTRA, we extend deepest condolences to Ms. Anstey's family and friends. —Peter Henderson

OEF cheque supports OnTRA activities



During the annual OEF Conference, OnTRA director Karen Sibbald (above right), gratefully received a cheque on OnTRA's behalf from OEF president Allan Ehrlick. The \$2,190-cheque is designed to assist our organization in pursuing its goals in supporting the clients of our 40 member centres.

Used TACK collection almost completed—start your wish lists, now

In recent months, OnTRA's been busy collecting a large assortment of good, used tack and riding apparel for distribution to member centres. Although we're still in the process of checking and sorting through the donations, a complete list of available items will be ready to mail out to all 2006 member centres, later this spring. So, start thinking now about the items your centre needs and get ready to fill in your wish list as soon as it arrives. Because we frequently get multiple requests for the same item, the OnTRA donation committee will make the final and fair decision on awarding the item. Please note, as in the past, centres are responsible for picking up their own items—we don't deliver. 

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OnTRA Newsletter

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Lively workshops highlight CanTRA CONFERENCE

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