

The Near Side - HorseChannel.com

The Near Side - Dispatches from Horse Illustrated HQ

The Horse Illustrated staff works hard to bring you the best of the horse world each month. But when we're not in the office we're usually at the barn, or any place that's horsey! In addition to living equestrian lives, we're always finding fascinating horsey stuff that we think you might enjoy beyond the magazine. The Near Side is our place to share what goes on in between issues at Horse Illustrated. Join us for the ride!

For more info on the Horse Illustrated team, read on >>

Thursday, March 11, 2010
Horses, Helmets and Equestrian Heroes
By Leslie Potter

By now, you've surely heard about Courtney King-Dye's accident in Florida. You can read the article here. Current reports are that she is gradually improving and her vital signs are good, but she is still in a coma. [View Blog >>](#)

Monday, March 8, 2010
Short and Tall, Big and Small
By Kimberly Abbott

I recently started riding two new horses that couldn't be at more opposite ends of the equine spectrum. Chyanne is a 14-hand Haflinger and Diesel is a 17-hand Clydesdale-cross. [View Blog >>](#)

Thursday, March 4, 2010
Spring is in the Air
By Leslie Potter

This has been a particularly rough winter. We haven't had any major blizzards here in central Kentucky, nor did we have a debilitating ice storm like we did last year. No, this winter wasn't so dramatic, but it has just sort of droned on and on and on with neverending cold weather and just enough snowfall to be inconvenient. [View Blog >>](#)

Wednesday, February 24, 2010
The Wonder Years
By Liz Moyer

Today is Chance's birthday—he turns 4, which makes him an official adult horse now. I have been getting a lot of comments lately on how much he's grown up and filled out. Which he absolutely has! But he's still a baby to me. [View Blog >>](#)

Friday, February 12, 2010
Top 10 Horsey Wish List Items
By Holly Werner

As February drags along, we are faced with yet another icy, snowy day here in Kentucky. Apparently there is snow on the ground in 47 of 50 states right now, with 49 (and possibly 50) of 50 expected by Saturday. [View Blog >>](#)

Thursday, February 4, 2010
Two-Point Air Jacket
By Lesley Ward

I spent last weekend snooping around the American Equestrian Trade Association show in King of Prussia, Penn. It was great looking at all the new equestrian products on offer. One new item stands out in my mind, the Point Two Air Jacket. This is a vest that you put on over your body protector before you gallop off to jump cross-country fences. [View Blog >>](#)

Monday, February 1, 2010
Retired Police Officers on the Auction Block

By Leslie Potter

Without a doubt, 2009 was filled with bad news in the horse world and the world at large. One depressing trend of recent news is the loss of mounted patrols from cities across America. [View Blog >>](#)

Friday, January 29, 2010
Blue Hors Matine
By Leslie Potter

Some sad news from the dressage world this week. On Monday, January 25, Dutch dressage star Blue Hors Matine was euthanized after breaking a leg in a pasture accident. [View Blog >>](#)

Friday, January 22, 2010
As Seen on YouTube
By Leslie Potter

It's hard to be lazy when you have horses to take care of. Unless your horses live on green pasture with a source of potable water, you have chores to do every day. At bare minimum you have to scoop grain, toss hay, fill buckets and muck stalls, and that's on a slow day. [View Blog >>](#)

Friday, January 15, 2010
Dressage King
By Leslie Potter

If you follow the international equestrian scene at all, or if you read the news here on HorseChannel, then you are no doubt familiar with Dutch dressage rider Edward Gal and his remarkable mount, Moorlands Totilas. [View Blog >>](#)

Wednesday, January 13, 2010
On Pins and Needles
By Holly Werner

Yesterday was the big vet clinic at the farm where I board Dexter and Zephyr. That meant approximately 40 horses received a battery of shots and pokes to the vein for their Coggins tests. [View Blog >>](#)

Tuesday, January 12, 2010
Winter on the Farm
By Lesley Ward

After reading Leslie's blog about the freezing conditions we're experiencing here in the Bluegrass, I thought I'd contribute my two cents. I'm fed up with this crappy weather! [View Blog >>](#)

Monday, January 11, 2010
A Winter Wonderland
By Leslie Potter

Most regions of the United States have been experiencing extreme cold over the past couple of weeks. Sure, it's January, so we shouldn't be expecting sunbathing weather, but it has been exceptionally frigid. [View Blog >>](#)

Wednesday, December 23, 2009
Arresting Argyle
By Holly Werner

I recently purchased a couple of new turnout blankets for Dexter and Zephyr, since the old rugs were A) totally devoid of all waterproofing and therefore acted more like a sponge; and B) torn to shreds and sit horribly on the shoulder so as to create rubs. [View Blog >>](#)

Tuesday, December 22, 2009
The Measure of a Horse
By Liz Moyer

When I bought Chance and brought him home this summer, I went through a major downsizing in the horse and tack department. [View Blog >>](#)

Thursday, December 10, 2009
Winter Reading List
By Leslie Potter

As I write this, snow is furiously blowing past the windows. It won't stick, and the forecast predicts it will be clear by this afternoon, but for now it makes for a dramatic view. [View Blog >>](#)

Tuesday, December 8, 2009
Back on the Vaulting Pad
By Kim Abbott

I recently had a vaulting lesson for the first time in a few months. Although I was wary about my muscles and the cold weather, it was worth it! [View Blog >>](#)

Tuesday, December 1, 2009
Belated Thanks
By Leslie Potter

Thanksgiving is a fairly low-key event in my house. My family celebrates the holiday a thousand miles away, and given Thanksgiving's inconvenient proximity to Christmas, I prefer to save the air travel fund for the latter. [View Blog >>](#)

Tuesday, November 24, 2009
Tally Ho!
By Liz Moyer

Last weekend my barn held a "mock" fox hunt. What exactly is a mock fox hunt? Well, no actual foxes or hounds were involved, but instead it was a big fun group ride and a chance to get out of the arena to hack and jump, plus a scavenger hunt and costume contest, all followed by a potluck at the barn. [View Blog >>](#)

Monday, November 23, 2009
Starting Over
By Holly Werner

Once I made the decision that I would need a different horse to continue eventing, the bittersweet time came to start scanning the sale ads for a new horse. [View Blog >>](#)

Tuesday, November 10, 2009
I Grab Mane over 18" Crossrails
By Leslie Potter

Despite recent warm temperatures, it is November, and there's no denying that winter is getting close. I'll be the first to admit that I lose a lot of motivation when daylight saving time ends and the cold weather sets in. [View Blog >>](#)

Saturday, October 31, 2009
Horses in Disguise
By Leslie Potter

One equestrian experience that I've missed out on is entering a costume class. In fact, I don't think I've ever dressed my horse in costume at all, unless posing him in a Santa hat for Christmas pictures counts. [View Blog >>](#)

Wednesday, October 28, 2009
Pumpkin Carving!
By Leslie Potter

The other day we got together with some of the staff from our sister publication, Hobby Farms, and had a pumpkin carving party. [View Blog >>](#)

Thursday, October 23, 2009
Moving On
By Holly Werner

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to take a lesson on a horse I'd never ridden before, Bosco. [View Blog >>](#)

Wednesday, October 7, 2009
Parade of Breeds
By Leslie Potter

My first trip to Kentucky was a field trip with my riding instructor and a group from my barn when I was about 15 years old. We visited several of the legendary Saddlebred farms in the area, watched a race at Keenland and spent a day at the Kentucky Horse Park. I was pretty sure I'd found heaven. [View Blog >>](#)

Monday, October 5, 2009
Vaulting Demo
By Kim Abbott

I made my first public appearance in vaulting this weekend at the Festival of the Horse in Georgetown, Ky. I was nervous about being nervous, but the event was fairly small, and since it wasn't a competition, I felt almost completely comfortable; let's not forget that I was exhibiting myself in a skin-tight unitard. [View Blog >>](#)

Wednesday, September 30, 2009
Movie Star in the Making
By Kim Abbott

I had a star-studded weekend that began at the Secretariat Festival in Bourbon County, Ky., on Saturday. [View Blog >>](#)

Monday, September 28, 2009
My Rainbow Latigo
By Allison Griest

This July I celebrated my purchase of a used Crates Lady Reiner. I am still so excited that I stumbled upon such a gem. For the purposes of this story, know that my saddle conveniently came with a leather latigo, so I didn't think about putting on the nylon one from my old saddle. [View Blog >>](#)

Thursday, September 24, 2009
Vaulting Lessons
By Kim Abbott

With each vaulting lesson I take, my fears subside and my confidence grows. I've graduated from a stout Haflinger named Cheyenne to a much taller (probably 15.1 or so) Quarter Horse named Leo. [View Blog >>](#)

Thursday, September 17, 2009
Not Quite Right
By Lesley Ward

It's always frustrating when a horse comes up slightly lame and there doesn't seem to be a cause for the lameness. My five-year-old Thoroughbred, Tee, hasn't been quite right for about a week and a half. [View Blog >>](#)

Wednesday, September 16, 2009
A Day at the Park
By Leslie Potter

On Saturday, Snoopy and I attended the Kentucky Equine Humane Center benefit show here in Lexington. The show was held at a fabulous nearby park with an extensive equestrian center. [View Blog >>](#)

Monday, September 14, 2009
A Horsey Keepsake

By Kim Abbott

After Mirkos lost a shoe, I decided to make an art project out of it. You can purchase horseshoes decorated with beads and ribbons and hang it in your home as a sophisticated way of showing your love for horses, but wouldn't it be more meaningful if you used your own horse's shoe and decorated it yourself? [View Blog >>](#)

Friday, September 11, 2009
Party Like It's 1959
By Leslie Potter

When I was a horseless (and equestrally challenged) teenager aspiring to be a world champion saddle seat equitation rider, I dreamed of someday making it to Louisville. The word itself seemed magical. [View Blog >>](#)

Thursday, September 10, 2009
Off the Track(s)
By Holly Werner

The last weekend of August was the biggest show of the year for me and Zephyr. I felt like we'd done a lot to prepare, and all of the smaller shows had led up to this in an orderly fashion. [View Blog >>](#)

Tuesday, September 8, 2009
Graceland in Pictures
By Kim Abbott

Here are some photos from my trip to Graceland. [View Blog >>](#)

Saturday, August 29, 2009
Aged to Perfection
By Leslie Potter

Our latest HI Spy question asks about the older horses that have had an impact on your equestrian life. If there's one topic that makes me sentimental, this is it. [View Blog >>](#)

Thursday, August 27, 2009
Herding...Goats
By Allison Griest

I think baby farm animals are adorable. I remember growing up and seeing baby goats and sheep in the fields in Texas and thinking, "I really want to play with baby farm animals!" [View Blog >>](#)

Saturday, August 22, 2009
"No Hoof, No Horse"
By Holly Werner

We've heard it said a thousand times, but the old adage remains true. Last night, Certified Journeyman Farrier Rodney King of Rood & Riddle Equine Hospital gave a talk at Alltech's monthly News & Brews meeting. [View Blog >>](#)

Friday, August 21, 2009
Excuses, Excuses
By Leslie Potter

It's too hot. It's too cold. It's raining. It might rain. It rained yesterday. I have errands to run. The ground is too soft. The ground is too hard. I don't have time.

I am the queen of excuses. [View Blog >>](#)

Wednesday, August 19, 2009
My Visit to Graceland
By Kim Abbott

I recently took a very special trip to Memphis, where I was given a tour of Elvis Presley's stables. [View Blog >>](#)

Friday, August 14, 2009
Eventing: Like a Drug!
By Holly Werner

With the show season in full swing, I find myself fixated constantly on riding. I compete in eventing, which becomes more addictive the more you do it. [View Blog >>](#)

Wednesday, August 12, 2009
Ups and Downs of Horselessness
By Allison Griest

As a free agent in the horse world, there are lots of pros and cons. Within the past week I've gotten to experience both extremes. [View Blog >>](#)

Tuesday, August 11, 2009
Vaulting Lesson No. 2
By Kim Abbott

For my second vaulting lesson, I left the stationary barrel behind and moved on to the real deal--an adorable, plump little Haflinger. [View Blog >>](#)

Friday, August 7, 2009
Vaulting Lessons
By Kim Abbott

I've decided to embark on a new journey in my equestrian life: taking vaulting lessons. [View Blog >>](#)

Wednesday, August 5, 2009
Living in a One-Horse Town
By Leslie Potter

I'm lucky enough to have my dream horse. I may have had to wait 21 years to enter the world of horse ownership, but it was well worth it. [View Blog >>](#)

Tuesday, July 28, 2009
In the Pink—Again
By Lesley Ward

This weekend I did something I haven't done in a long time—I went out and jumped some cross country fences. [View Blog >>](#)

Thursday, July 23, 2009
The Young Ones
By Allison Griest

During the past few weeks I've had the opportunity to ride my friend's young horse. He's a very willing, polite little guy, but he is absolutely still a baby. [View Blog >>](#)

Monday, July 20, 2009
Showing, Take Two
By Holly Werner

Sunday marked the return of Zephyr and I to the show world. It had been kind of a rough late spring/early summer for us, but I decided to hack down the road about a mile or so from my boarding barn and go to a combined test schooling show (dressage and stadium jumping), entering the Beginner Novice (2'7") and Novice (2'11"). [View Blog >>](#)

Friday, July 17, 2009

A Purple Ribbon
By Leslie Potter

In an act of support for the rare-in-Kentucky Morgan breed, my co-boarder Dana and I decided go to one of the nearby county fairs that offered a Morgan class. I'd never actually competed at a county fair before, so I wasn't sure what we were in for, but for a twenty minute drive from the barn and five bucks a class, there really wasn't much to lose. [View Blog>>](#)

Friday, July 10, 2009
Misadventures with Mirkos, Part Deux
By Kim Abbott

Mirkos was recently moved to a new pasture after his herdmates left him with one too many hairless patches of skin. I urged him several times in the past to stick up for himself, but as the low man on the totem pole, I guess there's not much he could do. [View Blog>>](#)

Wednesday, July 8, 2009
Good Morning!
By Leslie Potter

I am not a morning person. I've never been a morning person. Sure, I'll get up at the crack of dawn for the occasional horse show or something fun and out of the ordinary. But for the daily grind, I am very much one of those people who abuses the snooze alarm until the last possible second. [View Blog>>](#)

Thursday, July 2, 2009
Saddle? Check. Horse? Not yet.
By Allison Griest

This weekend I road-tripped to Murfreesboro, Tenn., with the Managing Editor of Hobby Farms, Lisa, to watch the American Ranch Horse Association World show. [View Blog>>](#)

Friday, June 26, 2009
Yay for Yard Sales!
By Kim Abbott

I recently came across the buy of the year, no, the decade, no, the millennium! The Kentucky Equine Humane Center, an equine rescue facility in Nicholasville, Ky., collected horse tack, blankets, buckets, et cetera for a yard sale to raise money to help take care of the horses. [View Blog>>](#)

Monday, June 22, 2009
My "Aha" Moment
By Kim Abbott

I attended Centenary College in New Jersey for its equestrian program and had the opportunity to ride many horses throughout my four years. Learning to work with various horses and their unique personalities is a great way to improve your riding experience, but I always wanted to work with one horse so I could hone my skills. [View Blog>>](#)

Friday, June 19, 2009
Alltech Tour
By Holly Werner

On Tuesday afternoon, the Horse Illustrated staff was invited on a tour of Alltech's headquarters in Nicholasville, Ky. As you probably already know, Alltech is the title sponsor of the 2010 FEI World Equestrian Games. [View Blog>>](#)

Thursday, June 18, 2009
Best Monday Ever
By Allison Griest

This week I had the best Monday night I've had in a long time, and it wasn't because The Bachelorette airs on Monday nights. It was for a number of reasons. [View Blog>>](#)

Wednesday, June 17, 2009
Rockin' the Rust Britches
By Lesley Ward

Young Rider Magazine is doing a feature about riding in college in the next issue, so assistant editor Allison Griest and I went on a hunt to find pictures of ourselves competing. [View Blog>>](#)

Tuesday, June 16, 2009
"Sit Happy!"
By Kim Abbott

That's the motto of Salli Systems, manufacturer of saddle chairs that are touted as being able to improve your posture and overall health. Here at HI, we receive information about new products that can benefit the lives of equestrians on a daily basis. [View Blog>>](#)

Monday, June 15, 2009
The Life Aquatic
By Leslie Potter

Our current HI Spy question asks visitors to share what they would love to have in their dream barn. This is a topic I could probably go on about for a very long time. [View Blog>>](#)

Friday, June 12, 2009
Misadventures with Mirkos
By Kim Abbott

As Mirkos and I neared the end of our ride one afternoon, I noticed a skunk waddling his way toward the arena. Although I was debating continuing our ride a little longer, that clinched my decision to stop for the day. [View Blog>>](#)

Thursday, June 11, 2009
Being Black Beauty
By Holly Werner

So, my boy Zephyr may have a little bit of a "girl problem." He's been pastured mostly with geldings during the years I've owned him. Occasionally a nice filly or mare will share a pasture with him ... he seems intrigued by them, but not overcome with emotion. [View Blog>>](#)

Wednesday, June 10, 2009
Brain Buckets
By Leslie Potter

I recently retired my old helmet after many years of service. And by "many years of service" I mean it protected my head for three or four years, and then spent the next five or six years sitting on my head looking like it was doing something useful. [View Blog>>](#)

Tuesday, June 9, 2009
Back in Texas
By Allison Griest

This weekend I was able to visit my family in Texas. The main reason for the visit was to help my parents pack and get ready for their move. However, Saturday morning was reserved for a visit to my old barn. [View Blog>>](#)

Wednesday, June 3, 2009
Show Ring Victory
By Leslie Potter

A couple of weekends ago, Snoopy and I went to our first big show of the season. This was a landmark show for me, since it was the first all-Morgan show I'd ever competed in. [View Blog>>](#)

Tuesday, June 2, 2009
The Sustainability Principle
By Holly Werner

On May 18, I had the pleasure of attending Alltech's 25th International Animal Health and Nutrition Symposium. The theme was "the sustainability principle." [View Blog>>](#)

Friday, June 1, 2009
A Horse to Remember
By Liz Moyer

June 1st was the day I said my final goodbyes to Ted. While today is the anniversary and it will of course be on my mind, not a day goes by that I don't think about him. [View Blog>>](#)

Saturday, May 30, 2009
The Kentucky Experience
By Kim Abbott

The plans for "The Kentucky Experience" were unveiled in a press conference held at the Kentucky Horse Park on Friday. Two of my co-workers and I took a break from work to find out what this is all about. [View Blog>>](#)

Friday, May 29, 2009
Happy Birthday Snoopy!
By Leslie Potter

When your best friend turns 21, it's an unofficial American tradition to take him out for a drink or two. However, today is Snoopy's 21st birthday, and I think we'll find some other way to celebrate. [View Blog>>](#)

Friday, May 29, 2009
Ponies & Peonies
By Liz Moyer

I recently horse-sat for my friend Debby. She has three horses on her property. They live out full-time, so the daily routine is pretty low maintenance. [View Blog>>](#)

Wednesday, May 27, 2009
Trail Riding at Shaker Village
By Lesley Ward

On Memorial Day, my friend Bridget and I packed up my horses Jasper and Tee in my trailer in the morning and headed off to Shaker Village, near Harrodsburg, KY, for a trail ride with my neighbor Judy and her horse, Luna. [View Blog>>](#)

Friday, May 22, 2009
I Ride a Rocky
By Elizabeth Moyer

In putting together the July issue of HI that's hitting the mailboxes right now, I was able to get out of the office and do a little "field research." [View Blog>>](#)

Wednesday, May 20, 2009
Showing in Kentucky
By Allison Griest

As a girl from Texas and a rider who hasn't shown her own mount in five or more years, it goes without saying that competing in a combined test in Kentucky this weekend was quite the experience. [View Blog>>](#)

Wednesday, May 13, 2009
The Return of Show Season
By Holly Werner

It was a late start getting back into shape for Zephyr this year. Daylight saving time began March 8, so I resumed after-work riding that week--for one whole day, before Zephyr managed to get a nasty puncture wound right over his stifle joint. [View Blog>>](#)