



# GAITED HORSE GROUP OF ONTARIO

Serving the Gaited Horse Communities of Ontario

## A Message from the President

October 2004

### GH-GO Annual General Meeting

The date has been selected for our Annual General Meeting. It will be on November 20, 2004. at the Granit Restaurant ,Sutton.

A guest speaker will be arranged.

All members are asked to show their support for our club by attending and adding their vote to matters concerning next year.

Details will follow.



### Join a Trail Ride in the Vivian Forest on Oct. 17/04 10:00 a.m.

A trail ride in Vivian Forest is planned for October 17th date Colleen Marquis agreed to organize the event. Teresa Dimarco and Bonnie Whaley will be called upon to lead the ride. The time – 10:00 a.m. There may be a short ride and a long ride with some of the members cooking hot dogs and hamburgers after. A note to the Web Master is needed to post the ride. All members are welcome to join the group for hotdogs after the ride. Time and supplies need to be arranged.



### Fun for all at the Gaits of Caledon

The Gaits of Caledon Horse Show was very successful for the mountain horse. There was a great deal of interest displayed for the gaited breeds. All who participated had a great time and were supportive of each other.



### OTRA NEWS

Oct. 9/11 Trail Ride and Camp  
Vivian Forest



#### Executive

Gord King	PRESIDENT
Anne McKeown	SECRETARY
Judy Griffiths	TREASURER
Colleen White	
Bonnie Whaley	
Pat Rittgasser	
Naomi Seigel	
Tom Wood	

#### Breed Reps

Glenda Newland - Paso Fino
Don Woodrow - Mountain Horse
Ian Luckett - Tennessee Walking Horse
Mary Loney - Peruvian Paso

#### Of Interest Inside:

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## 796 Good Reasons for Trailriding

*Submitted by Tom Wood*

Back a while, we received a package in the mail from an outfit that was putting on a horse show near Caledon. Normally this would have gotten only a cursory once-over before being deposited in the recycling bin; I've never really had enough patience for all the primping and preening required to be successful showing horses. This one caught my eye, however, because it was going to include some classes specifically for Mountain Horses and other gaited breeds that, so far, haven't had much of a show circuit in Ontario.

The topic came up at the next GH-GO meeting, where everyone was very pleased to see a major national show offering gaited classes. Collectively, the group decided we should all make an effort to support it. So, with three months to go before the show, my wife and I sat down to sort out which horses we ought to take and what we'd have to do to get them ready.

We decided on two, a seven-year old Rocky Mountain gelding, 'Cappuccino', and a three-year old Kentucky Mountain buckskin mare named 'Sparkle'. We'd already picked this pair from the herd to be our trail-riding mounts for the year, so we figured they'd be pretty in good form for the show at the end of the summer. I was soon to learn, however, that the decision of which horses to take was about the only one involved in this "show business" that didn't have a price tag attached.

I downloaded the entry forms from the show's website and tallied up what we could expect our attendance to cost with two horses in three classes each. After I stopped hyperventilating and my pulse rate returned to normal, I then calculated approximately how much that worked out to in "dollars per hour" of actual riding over the two days of the show. My wife found me some time later, still unable to render a coherent explanation of why I was pointing at the numbers on the calculator and laughing hysterically. By my reckoning, the two-day show would cost us \$796.00, or \$530.66 per hour actually spent in the saddle.

I should probably explain, for those who don't know me, that I have the reputation of being rather frugal (in fact, I was once described as "tighter than bark to a tree"). Family legend has it that copper wire was invented by two of my ancestors fighting over a penny. I should also add that my greatest joy with horses is exploring trails, preferably for hours at a stretch and (more preferably) a long way from human habitation and any sound of traffic. Riding around an arena or circling a sand ring makes me feel a little like a hamster on a cage-wheel. I know that many riders enjoy this immensely but, like an appreciation for opera and blue-cheese, I've accepted that the ability to understand why is beyond the limited scope of my comprehension.

All of which, of course, makes me a very poor candidate for any kind of showing, wherein the object, as I see it, is to pay a significant sum to spend the weekend cheek-to-jowl with a few hundred other competitors and, at widely separated intervals, enter the ring to ride in circles for a very brief time.

After due consideration (and consideration of the dues), we decided to forego the event. A few days ago, however, I came across the figures I'd worked out for the show back in the spring, buried on my desk. By coincidence, we had just attended a two-day trail ride with OTRA in Algonquin Park, a trail-riding trip of comparable duration and distance from home to the show we'd decided not to attend. I calculated the "dollars per hour" expense of the Algonquin ride and came up with \$12.38 per hour in the saddle, about 2% of the cost per hour of riding at the show. Here's how it worked out:

...see chart page 5

### CAN AM 2005 a GO for GH-GO!

A motion was passed at the last meeting that the GHGO would participate in Can Am Equine Event again this March 2005.

Glenda Newland suggested that we have a committee to organize for Can Am.

Pat Ritgasser volunteered to chair this committee.

Volunteers for the committee are Glenda Newland, Anne McKeown, Naomi Seigel, Colleen Marquis.

Anyone else who is willing to volunteer on the CAN AM Committee, please phone Pat at 905 476-5114

*My horses not only taught me riding, but they also made me understand many a wisdom of life besides.*

*Alais Podhajsky,*

*My Horses, My Teachers*



<u><b>2 Day Horse Show - Caledon</b></u>		<u><b>2 Day Trail Ride - Algonquin</b></u>	
Coggin's test (2 horses @ \$65/ea.)	\$130	Coggin's test not required	\$ 0
Box Stalls (2 stalls x 2 days @ \$90/day)	360	Stalls unnecessary... horses picketed	0
Admin. Fee (2 horses @ \$15/ea.)	30		
Class Entry Fees (3 Classes x 2 horses @ \$15)	90		.
Drug Test Fee (2 x \$3)	6		
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Accommodation (Motel - \$90 night)	90	Accommodation (Camping - \$9 night)	9
Travel (round trip)	90	Travel (round trip)	90
	=====		=====
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$796</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$99</b>
Time in saddle (assuming 15 min./class + 3-1/2 hrs. Sunday). 2 horses x 3 classes ea.)	1.5 hrs	Time in saddle (4-1/2 hrs. Saturday)	8 hrs.
Cost per hour riding	<b>\$530.66/hr</b>	Cost per hour riding	<b>\$12.38/hr</b>

There are as many different disciplines in the equine world as there are personality types to pursue them and, for those competitive minded folks for whom the expense of showing is worth the bragging rights, I wish you all the greatest success. But for me, well, aside from being cheap, I figure there's enough stress in my life and riding is supposed to ease it, not add to it. So, I guess I'll take my 97.67% savings and see you on the trails.

*Tom Wood and his wife Colleen live in Fenelon Falls, Ontario where they raise and train Rocky Mountain Horses. If you would like to comment on this article he may be contacted at [tjwood@havenwoodfarms.com](mailto:tjwood@havenwoodfarms.com)*

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# GH-GO Presents

## ALL BREED GAITED HORSE CLINIC

### WITH LEE ZIEGLER

The Clinic will cover:

- ✓ Conformation of horse participants
- ✓ Bit, saddle and shoeing issues
- ✓ Equitation skills
- ✓ Gait identification and troubleshooting
- ✓ Ground and mounted flexibility exercises to improve gait

Lee Ziegler has years of experience riding, teaching, judging and writing about gaited horses. She is a panelist on GaitedHorse.net and a regular contributor to The Gaited Horse magazine.

Check out her website at [www.leeziegler.com](http://www.leeziegler.com)

**CLINIC DATE:** June 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, 2005

**LOCATION & COST:** to be announced

For more information and to register, contact Naomi Siegel at [naoru@hotmail.com](mailto:naoru@hotmail.com) or call 905 939-8424

Spaces are limited to 14 riders so sign up a.s.a.p. The number of auditors will determine the size of the facility where the clinic will be held and the price per participant.

IF there is a big demand we can book Lee for another clinic in 2005 if we act soon

## Tips From South of the 49th

written by Naomi Seigel

In spring this year I decided to buy a young Missouri Fox Trotter and, because MFT's are scarce around these parts, I figured that I'd better do some research in order to avoid bringing home a different horse than the one I thought I'd bought. My search ended in Halfway Missouri where I found a 5 year old mare that I fell in love with as soon as I spotted her; the fact that she had her ears back and was doing her best to avoid being caught by her owner only deterred me until I rode her!

Between March and August I traveled to 4 States, rode a variety of show, trail and endurance Foxtrotters and talked to owners and trainers, many of whom have raised various gaited breeds for years. From these experiences I can fill pages with interesting trivia about, for example, the cheap price of land in the Ozarks, being stalked on the I 75 and the best riding trails in North Carolina. Instead, perhaps I'll stick to more relevant information. The following is a list of things I learned about MFTs and gaited horses in general during my recent horse search:

1. Gait is a learned behaviour as well as an inborn trait. What this means is that some horses have a strong preference for gaiting while others will be able to gait but won't choose to do a smooth gait unless a rider sets them in a particular gait. People who have been riding gaited horses for years invariably have forgotten what it was like to make the transition from hard trot to getting the feel of riding gaited and seem to be surprised when novices have difficulty. When I asked experienced owners/riders how long it took them before they felt confident that they could confidently ride and distinguish gaits consistently, most said that it took learning from 2 or 3 horses.

2. Even smooth gaits vary in comfort level. As with all horses, one that feels good to one rider won't necessarily to another.

3. When buying a young horse that hasn't yet been ridden, there is no sure fire method to predict whether the horse will have an easy gait. If a horse gaits in the pasture, being led or lunged, chances are that she will under saddle. However there are lines of MFTs for example, that never gait until under saddle and then foxtrot up a storm. There are ways of predicting gait by measuring confirmation proportions. According to a gaited horse trainer, shoulder and hip angles show you the way the horse does the gait, back and hind leg proportions tell you if the horse is likely to do an easy gait.

4. Gaited horses can and should gait without artificial devices. They were originally bred to be comfortable, versatile horses that anyone could ride. As one breeder said, "The old farmers didn't know how to ride. They just got on and the horses did it for them."

5. Gaited horses tend to have shallow palates and often don't do well with jointed bits, gags and long shanks even though the tradition may be to ride and train them in these bits. Some horses I rode seemed to have jaws and polls of rock!

6. Another practice is to start and show 2 year olds under saddle but this early start is being challenged, at least by a group of MFT owners, who are petitioning the association to remove 2 year olds under saddle classes.

7. According to the North American Trail Riding Conference ride results, gaited horses are well represented in the top 10. An experienced endurance rider says that gaited horses in general can do well in competitive rides of 25 miles as long as their gaits cover ground well. To compete in endurance rides of longer mileage and faster speed, gaited horses should do a variety of gaits, including a hard trot, or they run the risk of injury and 'blowing their gait.'

8. Many of us here have heard of Brenda Imus who sells tack for gaited horses. There are lots of other saddle companies who either specialize or make a good number of saddles for gaited horses. The master saddler of Desoto Saddles in Michigan says that fully half of her custom trail saddles are for gaited horses. Her saddles come highly recommended, as do Crest Ridge saddles in Arkansas. Other saddles that gaited horse owners are using in the U.S. are: Marciante, Fallis, Advantage, SR, Black Rhino, Crates and Free and Easy. Some of these companies tell you how to measure your horse for a custom fit or sell a back mould kit to ensure a good fit.

That's about all the horse info I can think of to share. Now, if you'd like to hear about the vigilante group called the Bald Knobbers that roared through the Ozarks in the 1880's, or the flourishing puppy mills in Springfield MO, just give me a call. And, by the way, my mare has a sweet nature and, since her arrival here, has yet to put her ears back at me. So that's one last tip: first impressions can indeed be misleading!