



Spring 2009 Newsletter

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President's Message

I've moved to Kentucky! I can't wait to get my fencing up and get Carmin near me again. Even though I'm looking out my window at snow, I know that spring is just around the corner and I can start driving again. We have lots of events planned for the year. Please invite friends and family to join you in these activities. We are always looking for new driving enthusiasts and the best way to get interest is to let them see us having fun with our horses, ponies, and very small equines (VSE's). Looking forward to seeing everyone at the next meeting!

Victoria

Report of thte MTCC Trip to Black Prong Center, Florida March 30 through April 7, 2009

by: Linda Finley

Several members trekked to Bronson, Florida, to Black Prong Equestrian Center, well equipped with carriages, horses, and all manner of good food to contribute to our wonderful outdoor meals together. What many of us forgot was the sunblock, not realizing that we would have several 80 degree days in our fun week. The weather was very accommodating, and the facility itself was nothing short of fabulous. Every possible amenity is provided there that a guest could desire, beginning with the challenges for your horse. There are numerous hazards to drive through, in the form of mazes, bridges, water obstacles, and visuals such as towers over bridges. There are cones courses and well-kept dressage arenas. Horse stalls include a private paddock for turn-out, very generous in size. There are campsites with full hookups, as well as modern rental cabins, with stalls attached. This facility is a driver's dream for practicing, training, or just plain having fun with your horse. It is attached to a huge acreage of trails in the Goethe National Forest. Beautiful Live Oak trees adorned in Spanish Moss provide some shade respite from sunny skies on these trails.



The tower at Black Prong from the driver's seat!

Those attending this fun-filled week were: Tom Mezick, Linda Freeman, Mike Lyon, Ken and Maureen Sayre, John and Jane Hart, Donny and Laura Nuessle, and Boyd and Linda Finley. They all managed to slip away from the campground to enjoy a wonderful fresh fish lunch in nearby Cedar Key, and some sightseeing. Another special treat was a visit to the amazing Gloria Austin Center, Antique Carriage Museum. She graciously gave us a tour of her library and some interesting equine history. We were encouraged by her to come back at some future time.

Yet another unexpected treat was attending a nearby Fun Show hosted by the Florida Whips, who kindly treated our group to lunch on the grounds following the show. The entires were varied and enjoyable to watch in cones and arena competitions, but a breathtaking joy was watching Bob Giles drive the four in hand of Gypsy Vanners belonging to the WR Ranch. What beauty, symmetry, and precision they displayed.

The group readily agreed that this could not have been a more enjoyable trip. The Black Prong hostess, Maureen Aulson, and all employees were very accommodating. This facility is highly recommended. A 2010 return trip to Black Prong is already planned to include the Live Oak CDE and stay longer. This will be at the end of March, next year, so all who can, make plans to join in this fun trip.

Gypsy Vanners- Our 1st Horses

A spotlight on MTCC members, Ron & Kate Cowan

Kate and I first met in 1999 at my Dad's surprise 75th birthday party in Sacramento, CA. Kate came with my best friend, Mike. Three years later, Mike was gone from a heart attack, and Kate and I were both so devastated, we clung to each other for comfort. Hardly a day has gone by since then that we have not been together. We were married on July 3rd, 2003.

We soon began wondering how we could "get out of the California rat race" and jobs that were all-consuming of our time. We compiled many pros and cons lists of what semi-retirement would look like, including the key element of being able to afford a small farm so we could each have a horse. After many hours on the internet investigating various parts of the country that would meet our criteria, Kate and I began taking trips to check out the most likely candidates. The last place we came to visit in June of 2004 was the greater Knoxville area, and we really liked it. In fact we bought our current home while on that first visit. Can you say "don't let grass grow under their feet?"

With that mission accomplished, we returned to Sacramento to figure out how we could leave our jobs and get back to Tennessee. Oh, and there was that small detail about deciding which breed of horse to get once we made our move. You see, Kate and I had never owned a horse before, and were both over 50 at that time. We had both been "horse crazy" as kids, but nothing more than borrowing from a friend or riding at a stable had ever been available to us.

Back in Sacramento a week or so after purchasing our "ranch" (8 acres), Kate and I saw an advertisement for the Western States Expo in Sacramento, and decided to go have a look at the different breeds. We both were interested in seeing the gaited breeds' demos and were on our way to one of the pavilions at the fairgrounds when a man rode by on a horse like we had never seen before. Was it a unicorn??? Were we hallucinating??? No, it was a Gypsy Vanner. We stopped the rider and spoke with him for ten to fifteen minutes, and learned that the Gypsy Vanner was bred by Gypsies to be a member of their families. It is said that the horses were bred originally from Clydesdales, Friesians, Shires, and the Dales ponies added in to make them the ideal height: 14 to 15 hands. The horses had to be very calm, strong, willing and "easy keepers" who could live off the grasses found alongside the roads at days end. In addition, good conformation included flashy coloring and markings; heavy, luxurious feathering; a sweet and refined head; a neck arched at the top; a short coupled back; a thick, long mane

and tail; well-rounded hind quarters i.e. "an apple butt"; and last but not least, heavy boned. To say we were smitten would be a major understatement. Yes, we went to the breed demos for all of the horse breeds, and they were wonderful. But, did I mention we were smitten? There would be no other type of horse in our new barn!

After searching on-line, we found a site that told about an American, Jeff Bartko, who had just completed a caravan trip across England to Appleby Fair in June of 2004. According to his story, Jeff was the very first non-Gypsy person to be invited to drive a gypsy vardo (living wagon) across England to the 300 year old Gypsy Horse fair at Appleby. Jeff purchased a gypsy vardo, and borrowed a young gelding named "The Clem Horse" to make the journey across England, in company with "the King of the Gypsies." This gelding had been a working horse pulling a freight wagon in England. Once they arrived at the fair, Bowtie also became the "taxi" ferrying people in wagons back and forth to town. Jeff was so taken with this gelding, that after the trip he purchased him and changed his name to "Bowtie", as there is a marking on his neck that looks like a bowtie. Kate and I were filled with awe as we read about this trip. We found out that Jeff, Bowtie and the Gypsy vardo returned to Jeff's home in Colorado, and we both hoped one day to see them in person.

Kate and I targeted March of 2005 to move to Tennessee. Having that out of the way, Kate started horse shopping. Can you say cart before the horse? How about horse before place to keep the horse? In early December Kate found her horse! Other than it being 4 months before blast-off to Tennessee, and there being the small inconvenience of the horse being located in Ireland, Kate knew that this horse "fit her right down to the ground" according to the Irish owner. There is no hill too big for a climber, is there? Did I say we were smitten?



Ron and Bowtie having fun!

So using our "no grass growing" theory, we bought Kate her new horse -- Clononeen Chriona (meaning heart-felt in Gaelic), who was in foal to an amazing young stallion, Clononeen Poitin. She is a black and white pinto (piebald in gypsy speak), stands 14.1 hands, and was trained already to drive. Knowing we had a couple months of riding training and then a quarantine period in which to find a temporary home for Chriona, there was no pressure there, right? After having found a horse for herself, Kate started browsing around looking for a gelding for me. And who do you think she found for sale? -- the one and only Bowtie. He was now located in Southern California. It seems Jeff had sold Bowtie to a man a few months before, and this man had then been served with divorce papers which meant he had to sell one of his two Gypsy geldings. Kate found the ad on a Wednesday. On Thursday we purchased our airline tickets to go see Bowtie, and on that Saturday we spent the afternoon with him and the other gelding, Hagar. We were leaning towards Hagar (due to his shorter height) until we saw Bowtie's movement in a dressage demonstration. Bowtie's movement was so much more graceful and he was very willing to "go". He just seemed to float through the air. The

other gelding's rider was obviously getting a bumpier ride. That sealed the decision and we bought Bowtie on the spot. We have never regretted for a single moment this purchase. They say you are a lucky man if in your life you have "one good friend, one good dog (or is it 12 dogs?), and one good horse". Well I can check off the one good horse part from having Bowtie in my life. Our relationship just keeps getting better and better, and he has taught me so much about driving.

We arrived in Tennessee in March of 2005, followed shortly after by Chriona and Bowtie. Chriona was heavy in foal although due in late July according to the people we purchased her from. After being surprised in early June with the arrival of her new colt, Shadowfax, when we went up to the barn for the morning feedings, we later learned Gypsy breeders just leave their mares in the pasture with the stallion and they have no idea when the blessed union was consummated. And being the novices we are, we thought there was nothing to this breeding and foaling business!



Bowtie and the Gypsy Wagon

The first two years, I rode Bowtie perhaps a total of 10 times. When I finally started driving him in March of 2007, I knew that it did not get better than this! I was hooked! We participated in our first show in June 2007 in Cleveland, TN, where we met Carole Moss, Mark, and the Cooper racing team. We competed in a couple of ring classes and 3 or 4 cones classes, where we came away with one 2nd place ribbon and a fourth I believe. That really started the juices flowing and I knew without any doubt that I wanted to do more driving and competing. We attended our second show in August 2007 at the Cannon Carriage Classic. We improved a little and won one first place ribbon for green horse or driver (they didn't have a ribbon for green both) and few other ribbons. The Keathley's hospitality was unbelievable. I don't think I have ever been so graciously welcomed into a stranger's home (and barns) before.

We joined the MTCC shortly after the Cannon Carriage Classic, having met Laura and Donnie there. We have really enjoyed the people, events and food. The driving community has been a wonderful addition to our lives.

We have never regretted our decision to get Gypsy Vanner horses. Life with them has been very wonderful, and we have been fortunate enough to have 5 beautiful foals born at our farm.

Background and More About Gypsy Vanners

Edited from Wikipedia.Com

The Gypsy Vanner (USA) or Gypsy Horse (USA), Gypsy Cob (USA and UK), Coloured Cob (UK) or "Tinker Horse" is a [breed](#) of [horse](#) which is usually of [Tobiano](#) coloring and has many [draft horse](#) characteristics. There is no exact known history of the Gypsy Cob. It is believed that the Gypsy Cobs are descended from a combination of [Shires](#), [Clydesdales](#), [Friesians](#), and [Dales Ponies](#) with their origins in the [United Kingdom](#) and [Ireland](#).

Characteristics



Feather on the lower legs.

There is no set color standard for Gypsy Cobs, although the two most common are [piebald](#) and [skewbald](#), two variations of [pinto](#) coloring. The typical Gypsy Cob is known for an abundance of hair and "feather" (long hair starting at the cannon bone and flowing down over the [hooves](#)).

The build is powerful and compact, with a short neck and back. The Gypsy Cob is fairly large, the typical horse measuring between 14 and 17 [hands](#). There is no height limit in the registry. The cannon circumference can range from 8" to 12". The chest is broad with well sprung ribs, the hips are heavy, they have short backs, strong shoulders, and the withers are rounded. The hair should be straight and silky, kinky hair is a fault. Their legs should have heavy bone set on large hooves, their hind legs should not be too straight. Gypsy Cobs must also have excellent endurance, and be able to go long distances without tiring.

They are also known as Gypsy Horses or Irish Tinkers. A related type is the Drum Horse which is a

Gypsy Cob crossed with any type of draft horse (most commonly Clydesdales or Shires).



Most Gypsy Cobs are piebald in color, but some, such as this horse, are skewbald.

History

The Gypsy Cob was bred to be a [wagon](#) horse.^[2] These horses were bred by the [Romany](#), and pulled wagons or "caravans" known as [Vardos](#), which is a type of [covered wagon](#) that people lived in.^[2] They were also used as riding horses for children. Today, the Gypsy Cob is no longer used for pulling Vardos, but it is still looked upon as a symbol of power and strength among the [Romany](#)^[2]

Up until the late 20th century, the Gypsy Cob was not a recognized [breed](#). Not much is known about the [bloodlines](#) of Gypsy Cobs because [pedigrees](#) were usually kept secret and only family members knew the details.^[3] However, as the interest in the breed grew, several [breed registries](#) developed. The first registered horses were imported to [North America](#) in November 1996. There are three different registry classifications for the breed, based on height. If the horse is under 14 [hands](#), it is considered to be a **mini Gypsy**. If the horse is 14-15.2 hands high, it is known as a **classic Gypsy**, and if the breed is 15.2 or taller, it is known as a **grand Gypsy**.^[4] In 2004, the breed became recognized by the [United States Dressage Federation](#) All Breeds Program, and can win breed-specific awards whenever it wins a [dressage](#) event or any event sponsored by the [USDF](#).

Rabid Horse Found in Kentucky

by: Erin Ryder, TheHorse.com News Editor
February 12 2009, Article # 13604

A horse in the Hamilton Lane/North Yarnallton Pike area of Lexington, Ky., has tested positive for rabies, according to a statement from the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department. Department Spokesman Kevin Hall said the Thoroughbred began showing clinical signs similar to colic Feb. 5. The horse was admitted to an equine hospital and underwent exploratory surgery. While in isolation following surgery, the animal started having violent seizures and was euthanized.

Testing confirmed rabies in the animal Feb. 11. Hall said the investigation into the level of human exposure is under way. "Right now we're looking to see the level of exposure," Hall said. "We're visiting with the farm and with any workers that might have been exposed."

A skunk near Abbeywood Road also tested positive this week. Earlier this year, another skunk that tested positive for the disease was found in a pasture near Spurr Road. In that case, a man was bitten while trying to dispose of the animal. These bring the total of rabies cases in the county in 2009 to five--already one more than in all of 2008. Kentucky state law requires that dogs, cats, and ferrets maintain annual rabies vaccinations.

Clinical signs of rabies in a horse can look like many different things, including colic. The CDC reported 53 cases of rabies in horses in 2006.

[Watch a Webinar on rabies](#), presented by Steve Reed, DVM, Dipl. ACVIM.

Update on State Slaughter Resolutions; Idaho Joins Debate

by: Pat Raia

March 12 2009, Article # 13765

reprinted from the Horse.com

Idaho has joined the list of states pondering legislation aimed at maintaining control of equine transport and re-establishing the horse processing industry in the United States.

Introduced into Idaho's House State Affairs Committee this week by State Rep. Thomas F. Loertscher, HJM 005 instructs Idaho's congressional delegation to vote against the Conyers-Burton Prevention of Equine Cruelty Act (HR 503). The federal measure would impose a nationwide ban on the transport of horses for slaughter.

Resolutions similar to Idaho's have passed in:

- Kansas (HCR 5004)
- South Dakota (SCR 2)
- Utah (HJR 7)
- [Wyoming](#)(HJR 8)

Similar resolutions are pending in:

- Arizona (SCM 1001)
- Minnesota (SF 133)
- [North Dakota](#)(HB 1496)
- Arkansas (HCR 1004)
- Missouri (House, HCR 19; Senate, SCR 8)

Meanwhile, legislators in the following states are considering bills that would amend current state laws to promote the development of horse slaughter plants by private investors:

- Illinois (HB 0583)
- [Montana](#)(HB 418)
- Tennessee (HB 1361)

[Read more about these bills.](#)

The bills are the first to establish horse processing facilities in the United States since 2007, when lawmakers in Texas and in Illinois shuttered slaughter plants in those states. Horses are currently shipped to facilities in Mexico and Canada for processing for markets in Europe and Asia.

Off-Season is the Season for Horse Trailer Maintenance

by: Press Release

February 14 2007, Article # 8940

From The Horse.com

It's important for horse owners to maintain their trailers during the off-season. USRider, national provider of roadside emergency assistance for horse owners, reminds equestrians to spend some time doing preventive trailer maintenance, not only in case an emergency arises but to ensure that their trailers will be in optimal shape for the upcoming riding season.

"A good roadside assistance program is something all horse owners should have but hope they will never have to use," says Mark Cole, managing member for USRider. "To that end, our mission is to continually educate horse owners about trailering safety."

A recent research project co-sponsored by USRider illustrated the importance of maintaining horse trailers. "The data showed that a leading cause of trailer wrecks is lack of proper maintenance," said Cole.

USRider maintains a Trailering and Equine Travel Safety Area on its Web site at www.usrider.org.

Some of the horse trailer maintenance tips posted include:

- Remove and inspect all wheels and hubs or brake drums.
- Inspect suspension for wear.
- Check tightness of hanger bolt, shackle bolt and U-bolt nuts per recommended torque values.
- Check brake linings, brake drums and armature faces for excessive wear or scoring.
- Check brake magnets with an ohmmeter. The magnets should check 3.2 ohms. If shorted or worn excessively, replace.
- Lubricate all brake moving parts, using a high temperature brake lubricant.
- Remove any rust from braking surface and armature surface of drums.
- Inspect oil or grease seals for wear or nicks. Replace if necessary.
- Inspect and grease wheel bearings.

In addition to these recommendations, USRider advises horse owners to check all trailer tires, (including spares) for signs of dry rot, correct air pressure, faulty air valves, uneven tire wear, overall tire wear, and damage. They recommend investing in a high-quality air pressure gauge and inspecting tire pressure before each trip. Always replace tires if worn or damaged. In addition, tires should be replaced every three to five years regardless of mileage. When replacing tires, always replace the valve stems. USRider recommends that only tires specifically designed and rated for trailers be used--never use automobile tires on a horse trailer.

It is also important to service the wheel bearings annually, or every 12,000 miles, regardless of mileage due to moisture build-up. Be sure to inspect trailer wiring and lighting; inspect door latches and grease the doors; inspect the floor (be sure to remove any rubber mats so the entire floor can be examined); and inspect and lubricate mechanical moving parts, such as the hitch and suspension parts. If the trailer has been sitting for a while, check for wasp nests, spider webs and any other creatures.

Cole also reminds equestrians to check the contents of their equine and human first aid kits. "Any depleted and out-of-date items should be replaced," he said. A list of recommended items for first aid kits is posted on the USRider Web site.

USRider advises horse owners to use ICE, which stands for In Case of Emergency. This important initiative was designed to aid emergency responders in identifying victims and determining who needs to be notified. Implementing ICE is easy. Program your emergency contact information into your cellular phone and designate it with the acronym ICE.

Horse owners should also ensure that their emergency contact information is stored in their tow vehicle. To facilitate this, USRider has developed an In Case of Emergency form and posted it online for horse owners to print out. Simply fill in the blanks and store the paper in the tow vehicle as well as in the trailer. Additional recommendations as well as a Power of Attorney form are posted on the USRider Web site.

For additional safety tips, visit the Equine Travel Safety Area on the USRider Web site at www.usrider.org.

The National Drive has something new – and we are the sponsor!

*****Reinsmanship and Pleasure Driving*******

New for 2009, the Mid-Tennessee Driving Club will sponsor a clinic on reinsmanship and pleasure driving. This will be an introduction to the type of classes normally held at pleasure shows. Each session will be open to 15 participants. Drivers will enter the ring together and then be given individual instruction during the session. This will be a chance for anyone who would like to experience the show ring without the pressure. Classes will have a sign-up sheet at the event office and is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday afternoon. Spectators welcome.

Up Coming Events for 2009

May 1 & 2 MTCC's Quiet Moon Traditional Fun Day of Driving

Brenda@moonshadowfarm.us

quietundefarm@aol.com

www.midtenncarriageclub.org

May 12, 2009 Regular Board Meeting

6pm location to be announced open to all members

May 15-17, 2009

Gayla Bluegrass CDE

www.gayladrivingcenter.com

May 15-17, 2009

Gayla Bluegrass CDE

www.gayladrivingcenter.com

May 29-30 Liberty Classic Horse Show

Cleveland Tennessee at the Tennessee Horse Show Center

Many carriage classes

<http://libertyclassichorseshow.com>

June 12-14

Recreational Drive

Shaker Village, KY

Laura Nuessle Road Trip Coordinator

quietundefarm@aol.com

SHAKER VILLAGE

Harrodsburg, KY near Lexington

Spokes and Spurs Carriage Club has invited MTCC to come and join them for a weekend of fun at Shaker Village . This will be a more upscale trip with accommodations in one of their cottages. The horses have stalls and I hear there are paddocks available as well. Shaker Village is sited on 3000 acres with 33 miles of trails and 15 miles of carriage trails . Come join the fun!

Contact : Ann Voris 1-800-734-5611 ext 1548

Web site: shakervillageky.org

Rooms run about \$90.00 -100.00 a night

Stalls are \$20.00 a night bedding included

There is also a daily trail usage fee of \$7.00 (not sure if that is just a one time fee or not)

Since there will be no camping on this trip meals will either be at Shaker Village (for which we will need to make reservations) or we can find a local restaurant.

June 27, 2009

One Day Event, Lazy AO Farm, Shelbyville, TN

www.midtenncarriageclub.org

July 6-12

Recreational Drive

BLOWING ROCK EQUESTRIAN CENTER

Blowing Rock N.C.

MTCC road Trip Coordinator Laura Nuessle

Quietufarm@aol.com

Contact: Collette Mc Nell 828-295 4700

Web site: www.blowingrockequestrian.com

This will be our 3rd year going as a group to Blowing Rock . What a great place to relax and drive.

Escape the hot weather and breathe the mountain air. The town of Blowing Rock is only 2 miles away, a lovely tourist town filled with shops (don't miss the ice cream shop!) The trails are some of the nicest in the country, comparable to Acadia in Maine. Cost for this trip will be about \$300.00 for 6 nights one horse and a campsite with water and electricity.

October 6-11, 2009

The National Drive

www.nationaldrive.net

Classified Advertising

[Hay for Sale--Good Quality Roundbales Suitable for Horses \(Stored Indoors\) \\$25 each. Available after 2/17. Call Ron Obenauf at 615 347 5844](#)

Vickie has stuff to sell:

1. FOR SALE: Registered Welsh and half/Welsh ponies. If you are looking for a great hunter pony or driving pony we have great Babies for sale www.weefarm2.net Vickie Geny 615-799-0287 or weefarm@bellsouth.net
2. For Sale: Two wheel measuring sticks for setting up cones sell new for \$40.00 each want \$60.00 for pair 615-799-0287 or weefarm@bellsouth.net
3. For Sale Two Optimum Time event watches used only several times \$75.00 each. weefarm@bellsouth.net or 615-799-0287 Vickie
4. Marathon Safety Belt new \$179.00 asking \$100.00 615-799-0287 weefarm@bellsouth.net
5. Smuckers deluxe pony harness with the best saddle almost new kept in house NO MOLD...Like new Fits 12 to 13.2 hand pony. \$1,600.00 with brass 615-799-0287 weefarm@bellsouth.net
6. Smuckers deluxe pony Harness with best saddle used only a few times NO MOLD perfect condition Stainless hardware \$1,600.00 615-799-0287 weefarm@bellsouth.net
7. Spare Pony bridle with brass \$50.00 615-799-0287 weefarm@bellsouth.net
8. Barrels used for hazards 10.00 each. 615-799-0287 weefarm@bellsouth.net
9. arena letters homemade \$50.00 615-799-0287 weefarm@bellsouth.net
10. Driving hats for showing 615-799-0287 weefarm@bellsouth.net
11. pkg. deal on driving pony carriage harness with cover...\$9,000.00 call only if you are serious. 615-799-0287 weefarm@bellsouth.net.
12. Set of 5 jumps with flowers \$500.00 615-799-0287 weefarm@bellsouth.net
13. measuring wheel \$150.00 615-799-0287 weefarm@bellsouth.net
14. For Sale yearling Registered half/Welsh chestnut colt. Should mature as a large pony by "Clovercrofts Imagine That" and out of a Qh mare. \$600.00 615-799-0287 weefarm@bellsouth.net

Please [click here](#) to view additional classified advertising.