

# Grayt Times

*A Show Jumping Collective*



**Samantha  
Buir-Darvill**  
She's Got The Touch

**Learning To Fly**  
A Wild Horse Adoption

**Para Show Jumping**  
Sign The Petition To Help



FREE

Fall 2021

*On the Cover: Samantha Buir-Darvill & Baton Rouge  
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GD

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# Canadian Riders on the FEI Ranking List

The Longines Rider Rankings list is released monthly from the international governing body of equine sport, the FEI. The rankings as of October 1st, 2021 are as follows:

Canada Ranking	World Ranking	Rider
1	38	Mario Deslauriers
2	55	Erynn Ballard
3	99	Tiffany Foster
4	120	Eric Lamaze
5	224	Amy Millar
6	255	Vanessa Mannix
7	281	Ben Asselin
8	298	Jacqueline Steffens
9	393	Brian Morton
10	342	Lisa Carlsen
11	352	Jim Ifko
12	367	Sam Walker
13	388	Kara Chad
14	395	Ali Ramsay
15	434	Darrin Dlin
16	405	Sean Jobin
17	505	Beth Underhill
18	591	Mac Cone
19	981	Alicia Gadban-Lewis
20	550	Nicole Walker

Contributors: Holly Grayton | Jack Goldberg | Gavin Pearson | Tina Watkins | Alexander Grayton | Debra Garside | Kim Gaudry  
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## Letter From the Publisher Holly Grayton

Thank you for taking the time to read our last issue of 2021, and what a year it has been!

As you may know, featuring the young and up and coming riders has been a particular cause of ours, and this issue is no exception. We have no less than four young riders to feature along with all your other favourites. We offer an insightful exercise article, an update from the Canadian Warmblood Fall Classic Sale, an open letter to support the inclusion of Para Show Jumping, and much more.

Going forward, we plan to continue supplying readers with content in a more social media centric way. Look to our social media platforms for a continuing stream of articles online starting in 2022. While the condensed version of Grayt Times will be no more, we hope that the constant stream of current information is more useful to our followers as we evolve with readership habits and trends.

We wish to thank everyone for their support over the years of our little magazine and hope you will continue to find fresh and interesting articles with us next year!

Enjoy,





# Dear All,

from Jack Goldberg

Dear all,

all of my time into the jumpers.

Just to re-introduce myself, I am a 17 year old para equestrian and the disabilities that majorly affect my body are, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, hemiplegia and scoliosis. In my previous article (Spring 2021 issue) I explained what the para movement is and that it's making a positive addition to the sport by bringing our differences together to demonstrate we're all able. The goal is to have a para show jumping league in Canada and the US and add show jumping to the Paralympic Games.

Since then and over the summer, I travelled far and wide from Ottawa to Toronto to Lexington, Kentucky, so that I could compete in the hunters and jumpers.

This past summer I decided to close out my hunter career in Kentucky so that I could focus

Recently Virtual, my hunter, was sold and Big Easy, who was the jumper that I rode, retired. At the end of the summer, I found a new horse that

I will be partnered with for at least the next year who is named Fanatieker (Fred). In the near future I hope to compete at the 1.20m level with him.

Meanwhile I have worked continuously to progress the para movement forward.

To begin, I have created a petition in order to ask for everyone in the riding community's support so that para equestrians can have the same opportunities that most other equestrians already

get. Link through QR code at the end of this letter.

More specifically, the aim of this petition is to reach out to other athletes in the riding

community so that the team of para equestrians that I am working with can request the support of the organizations that regulate the sport of showjumping such as Equestrian Canada and USEF. Furthermore, this will also demonstrate to the governing bodies of the sport that instating para show jumping leagues in Canada and the USA is imperative for the advancement of equality amidst the world of sports which would benefit all of the equestrians in the athletic world, regardless if they are disabled or not.

To continue, not only is this petition crucial in terms of pushing the equestrian world to be more inclusive, but it also sends a message to the public on a larger scale due to the fact that it will make the athletic world more welcoming. This gives people with disabilities many more opportunities which is something that they need.

Despite the negative connotations that the word disability is associated with, through my 17 years of participating in physical and occupational therapy, I have had the pleasure of meeting so many strong, good-hearted people that, yes, have disabilities, but could easily overcome the challenges that life has presented them with, if they are just given the opportunities that everyone else is fortunate enough to have.

Therefore, I ask you, the people in the riding and the athletic community, to sign this petition to not only progress the idea of inclusiveness in the equestrian world forward, but to also support a movement that encourages people with disabilities to participate in sports so that disabled people can have the same chances that able bodied people already have.

Sincerely,  
Jack Goldberg

*Link to sign petition through  
QR Code here:*



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# Fall Classic Sale Recap

Gavin Pearson

This year marked the 27th consecutive Fall Classic Sale presented by CWHBA-Alberta Chapter and hosted in partnership with ClipMyHorse. The concept of this sale when it was started was for breeders to come together to help each other market and sell their youngstock and riding aged horses. With the help of the hardest working volunteers and guidance from some of the original core group the sale admin team put together an impressive catalogue of top youngsters and riding horses with something for absolutely every market. We now have 1082 separate bidders accounts and of those 508 were logged in during the bidding and the videos were viewed an incredible 33,000 times in the past three weeks. All of this makes the sale a smashing success!

The first category was our weanling group where we saw some incredibly well-bred youngsters going for record prices. The absolute top dressage bred colt consigned by longtime supporter of the sale Heather Lynn Smith of Thelma and Louise Sporthorses, Deutsch Deniro -Han (De Niro x Romanov) fetching a record price for a weanling with the final bid of \$49,500! This colt will make his way to BC. The second high seller consigned by Klondike Victory Farm was Real Deal -CWB (Daily Deal x Florencio I) also making his way to BC for a price of \$17,500. The rest of the weanling market was also very strong with bloodlines for the jumpers, hunters and three nice event prospects. The overall average price was \$18,700 with youngsters heading to NY, KY, SC, SK, BC and AB.

The next category was the yearlings with all selling for \$10,000 or more the high seller was consigned



by another long-time supporter of the sale Cathy Chalack of Ulterra Equestrian. For a final bid of \$16,500 the beautiful Ulterra Giselle -CWB (Gare du Lyon x Indian Artbeat) will be making her way to BC. The second high seller once again consigned by Klondike Victory Farm was the jumper bred Poker Face -CWB (Adequan Z x Contender) who will stay right here in AB for a final price of \$15,500.

The two-year-old category saw an incredible average price of \$19,600 with no horse selling below \$12,000. The high seller was the gorgeous Zinfandel -Han (Zinedream x Viscount) once again consigned by Thelma and Louise Sporthorses. This lovely young horse will be one of 12 horses heading stateside, she will be going to OR. The second high seller was the talented dressage prospect Ser Jaimie ST (Sir Gregory x Rotspon) who was consigned by Sandra Erickson and will be staying in AB.

The prospects under saddle category saw some of the most fantastic horses that the Fall Classic Sale has ever had the pleasure to market, these horses as a whole sold for the record average of \$29,900 with no horse selling under \$15,000. The top seller the 3-year-old super star hunter prospect Estrella del Norte -CWB (Jethro Tull x Chiquitin La Silla) was

consigned by first time consignor Gareth Graves of Highbury Show Stables. The final bid amount of \$62,500 is a new record for the Fall Classic Sale and she will be making her way to NY. The second high seller Daphne -CSH (Diamant de Semilly x Mylord Carthago) was also consigned by a first-time consignor Rachel Cornacchia of Eventrye Farms. The bidding was hotly contested at the end for this ultra-talented jumper bred mare with the hammer dropping at \$56,000. She will make her way out to ON.

Our performance horse category was a small one but with some very nice show horses. For the second year in a row Tamie Phillips consigned the high seller in this category Lex Non Scripta -CWB (Ahorn x Flemmingh) will be staying in AB for a final price of \$34,500. The second high seller Grundstein W -CWB (Gervantus II x Kingston) consigned by Tiara Chambers will be making his way to ON for a final bid amount of \$12,500.

The Fall Classic Sale saw only one broodmare in foal being offered Ru -CWB (Rabino x Donner Bube) who is in foal to VDL Prestige. This big good-looking mare was consigned by another long-time consignor Roxy Bell but this was the first time that

her daughter Mickey Bell has participated. Ru will be making her way east to SK for a final bid of \$9,500.

This sale has grown into a huge co-operative with breeders consigning their top horses and buyers rewarding them for the efforts. This year 47 horses were consigned with 44 being offered for sale and 37 will make their way to new homes for 84% of the horses sold for an overall average of \$19,900! There were 25 horses sold outside of AB with 12 of those making their way to the US.

The CWHBA-Alberta Chapter has an incredible group of volunteers who put in countless hours making personal sacrifices to help out each and every year and this sale would not be possible without them. Many of these dedicated people have been volunteering nearly since the start and we are proud that each year there are some new faces putting in hours helping in any way they can. The Admin team is a unique group of individuals who each have their own talents that complement each other, helping to bring the finished product to the public in a professional manner.

As we welcome in the new year of 2022 the Canadian Warmblood Auction team will be starting their preparations for the second annual Spring Riding Horse Sale. This Sale will feature riding prospects, performance horses and schoolmasters. Nominations for the Spring sale will be available on our website [www.cwauction.ca](http://www.cwauction.ca) or email us at [admin@cwauction.ca](mailto:admin@cwauction.ca). Our tentative auction date for the Spring Riding Horse Sale is April 22 - 25, 2022.

# DeWinton Pony Club

## Horse and Rider Safety Initiative 2021

Tina Watkins

The DeWinton Pony Club is a branch of the Canadian Pony Club that has been developing young Equestrians since 1971 in the sports of Dressage, Show Jumping, Cross Country Eventing and Prince Philip Games, and it has recently added a Western stream.

Currently there are 13 members ranging in age from 6 -13 years and skill level from beginner to more advanced levels in their amateur equestrian sports. The club is unique in that members are not required to own their own horses, as school horses are made available to them. This enables those that do not own a horse the ability to still participate in the sport. DeWinton Pony



Club is run by volunteers dedicated to the promotion of safe, knowledgeable and competent equestrian skills in youth aged 6 to 25 years. The Canadian Pony Club motto is *Loyalty, Character, Sportsmanship* and as an organization it is a mission to not only develop strong riders but also upstanding citizens. The Canadian Pony Club has an established curriculum to develop young

Equestrians. The curriculum allows members to test riding and stable management skills at progressive levels of competence.

The club depends on membership fees and fundraising to offer their programs. Members' participation in the club ranges from riding lessons from qualified coaches, clinics, or competitions, to equestrian theory and stable management lessons and workshops. Canadian Pony Club Alberta South Region holds various educational events for the branches as well. DeWinton Pony Club has been fortunate to have many individuals in the industry willing to share their knowledge and expertise with the youth in our Club through the workshop series. Recently other branches have joined in the learning workshops that the DeWinton club offers.

### The Program

DeWinton Pony Club implements the Canadian Pony Club curriculum and Badge Program in its theory and lesson plans and workshops. During the pandemic, the UK Pony Club in Great Britain shared resources. The UK Pony Club has some amazing achievement badges that are not in Canada, which is another benefit and opportunity to share resources for younger and older members to learn so much more about their passion and their equine friend.

### Why Safety?

The education program focuses heavily on health and wellness for members and their Equine partners. There have been so many high profile accidents in the equestrian community, which has prompted Equestrian Canada and the The British Equestrian



Trade Association (BETA) to establish safety recommendations for our sport. While equestrian sports are understood to have a certain degree of risk associated with them, there are ways to make them safer. Wearing safety equipment, such as approved helmets and body protection, proper footwear and obtaining education and experience can lessen the chance of incurring serious injuries. Equally as much there is a focus on teaching proper care and injury prevention

*Continued on page 14*





for our horses.

The DeWinton Pony Club wanted to mark this memorable year with an initiative focusing on on safety for the horse and the rider.

The funds from the Spruce Meadows Leg Up Foundation will be used to help educate the DeWinton Pony Club's members on proper fit and use of safety equipment for the rider and their equine partner, and will provide the club an opportunity to purchase some of this equipment.

The funds will also be used to provide a Dryland Equestrian Falls Techniques clinic for the members. The DeWinton Pony Club is very excited to be working with Pegasus Gymnastics, a local gymnastic club, to provide the members

a unique opportunity to learn fall techniques, so they understand the proper placement of their body to prevent injuries in the event they have a tumble from their pony. The goal of this is to limit the chance of serious injury in a fall scenario while riding.

The DeWinton Pony Club is planning a fantastic clinic weekend that will benefit not only Pony Club members but others in the horse industry. We will learn more from industry experts, safety equipment fitters and our falls training team. What a wonderful opportunity to bring knowledge to our next generation of Equestrians!

Tina Watkins Tina@inhandequinetherapy.com



# 3 Parts to the Turn

Alexander Grayton

One of the most important good habits for a horse and rider to develop together is an effective departure from each jump.

Often we spend so much time focusing on the approach and take off to jumps, our position over the jumps, and so on, that we can overlook what to do on the landing side. It is helpful to consider that every landing side of a jump is the beginning of the approach to the next jump on course – this is true for every jump until the last one on course, so why not just apply that process to them all?

Ultimately what we are looking for on the way to a given jump is an attentive horse, a good connection and contact, a powerful, straight and rhythmical canter. So this becomes our focus as soon as we land – we want to make sure we have those boxes checked as soon as possible.



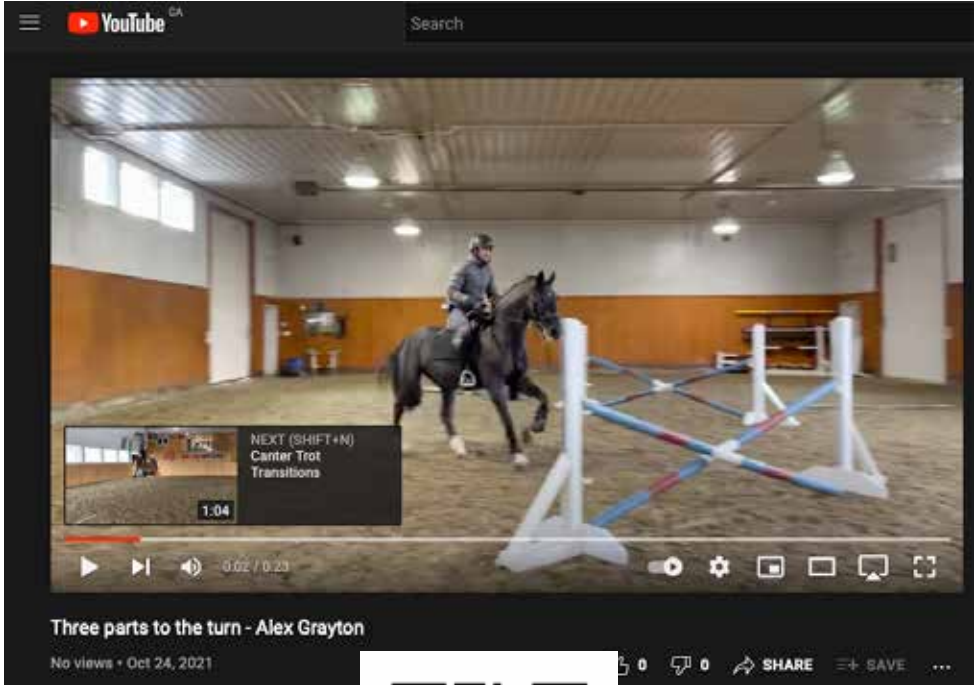
If we have a mistake on course and a messy jump, we will have some work to do to get things back in order for the next jump – but importantly, there will also be some work to do (albeit less) even with a perfect jump. Every jump will cost us something in our quality of canter. Maybe not much, just a small straightness fix or re-energizing the stride and so on, but something; perhaps even the next part of the course requires a different canter than you had approaching the previous jump, so inherently something will need adjusting even after the perfect effort.

So there's no excuse on the landing side – let's get to work!

As always, keep things simple when communicating with your horse. Only do the

*Continued on page 16*





Continued from page 15  
things that are required, and try not to overcomplicate the matter, making changes when they aren't needed. The art of this sport is in the miniscule reactions executed with feeling.



with you, get right to work establishing the gallop you need for the next jump. Make it forward-thinking, on the correct stride length for where you are in your course plan, straight, and powerful.

This is an adaptation of a fantastic exercise from John and Beezie Madden, which they taught my wife Holly the last two winter seasons when she rode with them in Florida.

**Step 1: Get them back**

As soon as you land, recover your own position, reassume your contact with your horse (not too sharp, just reconnect and get a sense of where things are), and then ask for your horse's attention. This might include a downward transition if your horse has sped up over the jump or away from it, or has changed the rhythm or balance. Or, it could be a simple shortening of the canter stride and picking their balance and head up.

**Step 2: Re-establish the gallop**

Once your horse is attentive and is checked in

**Step 3: Hold on to the gallop**

Once you have established the right gallop, simply stay on that. Be specific about what you want, stay connected with your horse, and keep the connection going to the next jump. This ensures that you don't simply accelerate endlessly to the next jump, chasing your horse away from contact onto a gallop that isn't exactly what you want or need. Hold on to what you're creating.

It sounds simple – and it is – but it is so easy to forget. When you land from any segment of a course, do this exercise. Land, get your horse back (physically and mentally), re-establish your gallop for exactly what you want to do next, and hold the connection to the jump. You will have more time to turn tighter, go faster, and jump better than your competitors.

# Young Guns Stephanie Valdes

**Stephanie Valdes**  
*Langley, British Columbia*  
**Cyber Lady Z**  
**Balermo**  
**Thalis de la Roque**  
**Ducati 24**

I train with Tiffany Foster at Little Creek Equestrian, and I have four horses. My horses are all very special to me and I love sharing a connection with each one of them! They all have such interesting and amazing personalities, and each one of them is so unique. I've been riding Cyber Lady, Balermo and Thalis now for about 3 years, and I've had Ducati for just over a year now.

This season I have been showing them in the High AOs and the CSI2\* shows, and I am aiming to compete in the 2\* Grand Prix this year.

One big goal of mine would be to win a Grand Prix. Right now I am just trying to go clear, so it's a long road ahead, but I'm excited to see where it takes me. I would love to compete for Canada one day, and represent my country!

One of my major influences and inspirations in my riding career has been my mom,



Wendy Valdes. As a competitor herself, she has shown me a lot of what it means to be dedicated to the sport and to the horses. Her passion for riding and how much she loves and cherishes her horses has shown me what it means to be partners with your horses and truly share a bond.

Tiffany also inspires me every day as a kind and diligent horsewoman. She sets an amazing example for being very consistent and thorough, and to work hard to be prepared for anything.

A quote I saw once that I loved said, "A horse will always remain a horse. But a rider without a horse is just a person." I think it motivates me because it shows how important your horse is in making you the rider that you are, and that you owe so much to them. It motivates me to be at my best for them, and to do everything to make sure they are happy, healthy and enjoying their job as much as I am enjoying mine.



# Samantha Buirs-Darvill:

## She's Got The Touch

Holly Grayton



The big news lately on the west coast has been the recent sale of Baton Rouge from Samantha Buirs to her good friend Ben Asselin. Sam raised Blitz (Baton Rouge) not only from a foal, but she also made her international debut on the Canadian team riding his mother Total Touch several years earlier!

Needless to say the decision to complete the sale was an emotional one, not made lightly.

We interviewed Sam right after her and Blitz's double clear performance in the BMO Nations Cup at the CSIO 5\* Spruce Meadows Masters presented by Rolex.

*Your family is very involved in show jumping and specifically your career; what does this mean to them to have you perform so well for your country?*

It means the world to them. They have worked so hard in this business in order for us to stay active in this sport. We all know how expensive it can get, so a successful week showing for team Canada at the Spruce Meadows Masters was emotional and they wouldn't have traded that experience for anything.

*Tell us about your relationship with Total Touch - Blitz's mom!*

My relationship with Total Touch (aka Nancy) was so special. In order to purchase her in the first place I had to sell a homebred that my parents gave me to break and produce when I was a kid. It was a project and I was to do it myself. I was also given some money by a very good friend of my mother's to make up for what the rest of what Total Touch cost.

Total Touch was a hard-headed 7 year old mare, and my mother was wary of us making the purchase - but I was in love. She was so bold, which worked well for me, I was still slightly ignorant in my kid riding ways: we just kind of went... neither of us really knowing what we were doing. *Continued on page 20*





Total Touch was just starting to jump the 1.50m division with me. I was 22 years old and only really knew to ride forward at a fence. We decided to take an embryo from her and that summer I just happened to be asked by Jennifer and Armin Arnoldt to ride Dreamscape Farms stallion Banderas on a cross-country schooling course. I thought to myself, "Wow what a feeling this horse gives!" He wasn't very big but he sure could jump. When the time came to pick a stallion for our embryo transfer, he was first on my list especially given that fresh was better than frozen semen for the procedure.

***Was it always a dream to breed a horse for the Canadian team? Or was this just a happy accident?***

The dream was to breed a horse that I could potentially produce to a top level. Whether it made the Canadian team or not is always a dream but never really on the list.

***What similarities do you see in them?***

They both have huge hearts, they have the same shape of ears, curvy to a small pointed tip. They are both brave as lions and they both have the same mouth. Luckily with the way we start horses at Fairway Farms, we could teach Blitz not to pull with that mouth of his. He also had such a beautiful canter that his balance was always correct. His mother was a bit of a freight train and downhill but always jumped a



perfect 10. Blitz has a bit of an open front end until the jumps reach about 1.60m - then he tightens up his knees!

Blitz and I have a very special relationship because I've been there from the beginning. My husband Tom Darvill did the initial starting, Blitz had a western saddle and lots of straps hanging off him, and I can say till this day it's definitely saved my butt a few times having him used to things hanging off him! It's so important to teach these horses basic skills from the beginning because you never know when it might be useful.

Our relationship is also special because I know every single move the horse has made over his 10 years on earth. I am a much better and more aware rider than I was when I rode his mother, and a lot more thought has gone

into his training rather than just riding around at Mach 10 like a yahoo kid. Every single time my hands touch the reins and my leg touches his side, there is thought that goes into it. Every move counts.

***Do you have more horses from Total Touch coming up?***

I have a full brother Broeky (final name TBD) who is 5 years old. Very similar in how careful he is, a bit smaller and much faster. And another brother, a 4 year old colt named Clancy by Callboy 13 (Clearway x Baldini ) who is quite lovely and very easy going.

"Broeky is a bit spooky just as Blitz was when he was young, and very careful. Clancy is like how Blitz is now, super easygoing and not spooky at all."



# Young Guns

## Emily Fitzgerald

**Emily Fitzgerald**  
*Calgary, Alberta*  
**Coco du Houlbec**  
**Pasquinelle**

I have two show jumpers at the moment. They are completely opposite in their personalities, but ride surprisingly the same! I also

have two retired show jumpers, as well as a 3 month old colt by my stallion New Boy de Logerie out of Coco. I ride with Lisa Carlsen and Dayton Gorsline. A typical day at home is usually riding my horses and doing all their physio and care myself, and just spending time with them! Show days I will have someone grooming for me, as the days often get very chaotic.

I've always known I wanted to compete at the top of the sport, but it wasn't until I went to train at Millar Brooke in 2015 that I understood what it really took.

My ultimate goal in this sport is to ride for team Canada someday, as well as become very competitive in the FEI division. The Olympics would be an ultimate goal for me, but who knows where my path may take me! All I know is that I am willing to do whatever it takes to



achieve my goals. You have to love the horses first, the sport second, and winning last. That will keep you going when everything seems to be working against you. I truly believe that "There's no such thing as talent.

Hard work will take you anywhere you want to go."

Honestly, I would say the biggest key to my success so far is that I don't quit. Like everyone in this sport I've had some hard times and major setbacks, but I just keep getting up and continuing on.

Working out also has done nothing but benefit me, even when I sometimes neglect it. My sports psychologist Dirk Stroda has also been incredible. This is such a mentally tough sport at times, and he has really helped me work through difficult times and keep on track to my goals.

My mom also is always the first person I go to when I'm having trouble. She always approaches my problems with empathy and understanding, and I've been trying to do the same!

# Young Guns

## Alicia Timm

**Alicia Timm**  
*Calgary, Alberta/*  
*Holland*  
**Loughnavatta Ash**

I currently own three horses, two of which are based with me in Sevenum, Netherlands, where I ride and work for English professional Chad Fellows.

My day usually consists of horses all day long. It really depends on the day how it all plays out, but some days I just ride and school the horses at home, and usually once or twice a week we take young ones out to schooling shows and try to do an international show at least once or twice a month. Our schedule constantly changes depending on what horses we have in work and what shows are coming up.

My ultimate goal has always been to make it to the top of the world rankings and have a successful buying and selling business worldwide.

Beezie Madden has always been a big idol of mine. I love the gratitude she shows towards her horses and her riding is just textbook. Any horse



she competes she makes it look easy and that is what I hope to be like one day.

Gail Greenough once told me good horses make good riders. As I keep working and riding different horses abroad I really started to understand the meaning of it, you can ride a million

different horses that don't have the heart or the scope or even the brain for the sport, but once you have a good one who has all three of those things you feel like you can conquer the world.

My favorite exercise to do with the horses is gymnastics. It is so good for their mind and body, you can set them difficult enough that the horse needs to think but you never need to over jump them, which I find is very important for both young and professional horses.





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***WHY SETTLE FOR LESS?***





# LEARNING TO FLY:

## My Adoption of Flyer and Preacher

Debra Garside

I had been photographing wild horses for less than a year. It was late mid-May; the grass was still brown, with just a few new shoots of green coming through. In an area known as the “flats,” near the old ranger station by the Red Deer River, I came across a herd with a new foal. The horses were a little thin, especially the mare with the new mouse-coloured foal with a large star on his forehead. Right from our first encounter I could tell he was full of personality and intelligence. From that day’s photo shoot, I chose an image with a little cowbird flying past the colt’s hock and labelled it “Learning to Fly.” I dubbed the colt “Flyer.”

The herd’s familiar area was bounded by the Red Deer River on one side and Mount Balfour of the Rockies on the other. The foal, Flyer, was growing up to be stout and strong just like his formidable black stallion father. But he also showed himself to be quite a character. I watched him grow up in a herd where he was an only foal. While he had a large family to protect him from predators, he lacked the same-age companionship of other babies. He was constantly inquisitive with the other horses in his family, often pestering them to play. His yearling brother took the biggest brunt of the playfulness and was endlessly harassed by Flyer. When he would try to lay down and sleep, Flyer would step on top of him and chew on his mane until he finally got up. The older horses largely ignored him.

On one occasion, I watched Flyer’s mother get bred by the black stallion that some people called Zeus. Zeus chased her through the willows, the foal nervously trying to keep up. I was worried he would get trampled. She finally agreed to the stallion’s advances, and he mounted the chestnut mare while little Flyer ran in circles, terrified his



mother was being hurt. The covering only lasted a couple of minutes, and then everything reverted back to calm in the herd. It was the first time I really understood the vulnerability of wild foals and how easily they can be injured.

As winter closed in, I went out to the backcountry with hopes of getting photos of the colt in the snow. I searched and searched to no avail. In fact, for the first time ever, I was completely “skunked,” other than a very distant sighting of one herd. Something was wrong. I called the Wild Horses of Alberta Society (WHOAS), and that was when I first heard of “the big cull.” The government had sanctioned a cull, with open-ended permits to capture as many horses as the

trappers could get. The result was the shocking removal and subsequent slaughter of most of the 220 horses that were captured.

I was devastated. My foal and his herd were among the captured. My dreams of following this colt throughout his life had vanished, but there was little I could do. Then, a few months later, I received an email from WHOAS with an attached photo of a little dark colt. One of the WHOAS members had intervened to save six foals. The photo showed a colt with a star on his forehead, a perfect match. Flyer was alive!

I had one of those serendipity moments. I rushed to

the facility to see the colt, but I knew before I got there that I would adopt him. Since it is not legal to release captured horses back into the wild, I also decided to adopt another Wildie, so that Flyer would have a horse of his own age and kind to grow up with on my land. The second colt I chose was one that I thought had the least chance of finding a home. He was the smallest and weakest of the group, a dun colour with primitive markings and a huge scar on his left hip, most likely from a cougar or wolf attack. The volunteers had named him Preacher. His captor was a local cowboy preacher and poet who had a large ranch near the wild horses.

And so began my journey into working with and training wild horses. A whole book could (and will) be written about my experiences raising these two colts, and their training and misadventures over the years. After my forty plus years of experience training horses, these two boys opened my mind into a world I never knew existed. The wild horse psyche is so different; their minds are much more intelligent than the average, or even above average, domestic horse. A horse that is raised in the wild herd environment thinks differently. They have “street smarts,” and they have them in spades. They also have a built-in respect for leaders, because they have been disciplined from birth as to the hierarchy of the herd. Because of their inherent caution towards people, it takes them longer to trust humans. But once that trust is established, and if care is taken not to abuse that trust, the wild-born horse will do everything in its power to please its handler. Every single person I know that has a wild-born horse will tell you the same thing.

*Continued on page 28*



I started these colts when they were just turning two years old, expecting the progress to be slow and difficult. Exactly the opposite was true. They progressed through their groundwork so easily and quickly, with no protest or outbursts to speak of (well, maybe Flyer jumped out of the round pen once or twice), that I soon handed them over to trainer Ron Anderson for their first rides. At this point in my life I was not keen on getting bucked off, and I did not have the confidence to do this part. Again, they exceeded expectations. After sixty days of riding, Ron sent them home with walk, trot, lope, rein-back, spins, and gate training firmly ensconced. They got the next two years off and grew up as pasture ornaments, with the occasional ride just to remember what they had learned.

Flyer grew up to look like a small Percheron and because of his build he is not very comfortable for me to ride, so he mostly enjoys liberty training and being a great photo model. He has become the most extraordinary teacher to me. He is the most engaged horse I have ever worked with and probably ever will; his problem-solving intelligence continues to

astound me. Despite the fact that he almost killed my dog in a moment of reverting back to wildness, Flyer will forever hold the dearest place in my heart. Preacher, is a naturally good mover, comfortable to ride, and showed good form in the jumping chute. My old habits die hard, and I could not resist riding him over fences. As with all the tasks he was presented, he learned quickly. After two months of jumping him, I came out of retirement and competed at the international show jumping venue Thunderbird Show Park in Fort Langley, BC. He was definitely out of place in stature and type, but by the end of the two-week event he had become a fan favourite. Little kids and grand prix riders alike came to the ring to watch him in the Baby Green Hunters and have their pictures taken with him. It turned into a huge opportunity for me to educate the public about wild horses and their value to us.

Flyer and Preacher still are living out their days on my acreage in Turner Valley, content to have lots to eat and only a little exercise. We play games and take photos - that's enough for us.

In 2017, I adopted a little cream and white pinto.



“Cody” came into the WHOAS rescue facility as a problem bachelor from a recreational area near Crimson Lake, his colouring no doubt influenced by the nearby Sunchild Indian horses. He has quite a story to tell too, but that will have to wait for another time.

WHOAS does amazing work!

Wild Horses of Alberta Society's mission is to ensure the provision of all aspects of the conservation and humane treatment of wild horses in Alberta. We are committed to the preservation of these magnificent animals in their natural environment.

WHOAS Objectives (Purposes)

1.To protect the environment by working with the government to establish reasonable and achievable wild horse population management solutions.

2.To provide a public amenity by maintaining a proper rescue and handling facility that is safe for the public to attend to witness first-hand wild horses.



3.To promote the welfare of wild horses by rescuing, gentling and rehoming of wild horses providing veterinary care, and by operating a wild horse adoption program.

4.To advance education by providing presentations and workshops on the history of wild horses in Alberta.

5.To advance education by participating in research by collecting data to support scientific research that will add to overall public understanding and increasing knowledge to the scientific community.

6.To undertake activities ancillary and incidental to the attainment of the above-mentioned charitable purposes.

Not all of us can adopt a Wildie but we can help! Have a look through their website: [www.wildhorsesofalberta.com](http://www.wildhorsesofalberta.com)



# Young Guns

## Ava Wong

**Ava Wong**  
*Calgary, Alberta*  
**Concelo**

Concelo is my only horse right now. We found him in Wellington, Florida in 2018 and since then he has been the love of my life! Before me, he was mainly a catch ride for professionals and did not really have a person of his own before I came along. He has his quirks but he has the biggest heart. I have trained with Rodney Tulloch for 5 years and have recently started training with Jaclyn Duff.



I love setting up different gymnastics exercises with cavalettis and poles. I like how they help my horse back himself up and use his hind end, and that they make the rider have to be super in tune with their position. I love setting up these exercises because you never run out of different patterns to do with them. The only problem is I'll spend ridiculous amounts of time on them because I can't leave until I do every pattern perfectly!

I also highly recommend doing dressage with your horse because I think it definitely made a huge difference in my riding because everything you do on the flat transfers to how you compete in the ring.

There's not a specific person I look to for inspiration because I think I can learn something from watching everyone who competes at high levels, whether they are juniors, professionals, amateurs, world champions etc. But if I had to pick one person, I think my coach Jaclyn Duff is pretty inspiring because not only is she a spectacular rider, but she also has the best attitude and is always so positive!

"If something stands between you and your success, move it." - Dwayne (The Rock) Johnson. I love this quote because it shows that reaching success is simpler than we think.

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Fall 2021



# Congratulations

## ON A SUCCESSFUL SEASON







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