



# Sunnyside Stock Farm

## Newsletter Spring – Summer 2014

Established in 1964

Hello and welcome to the 2nd edition of the Sunnyside Farm quarterly newsletter. Our goal is to bring you ranch news and stories, both new and the past. We welcome all story ideas or news you would like to share. So tighten your cinch, get aboard, and let's get this ride going.

**New Boarders:** We welcome our new boarders, Gail Nobles and her Appaloosa mare *Winnie* and Jean Brown with her bay mare *Sara* and mini-horse *Mr. Kelly*. Mr. Kelly and Sara are housed in the block barn and Winnie is domiciled in the corrals adjacent to the hay barn. Jean is returning to Sunnyside Stock Farm, having boarded here for many years previously. In our *Horse Tales* you will find an interesting and sometimes humorous article regarding Jean and her horses. Be sure to give a big “Howdy” to Gail and a “Welcome Home” to Jean and their equine friends. Also note that Breanne Bednash has acquired a thoroughbred chestnut, *Whistler*, who is stabled at the north end of the ranch.

**Capital Improvement Status:** The capital improvement projects, new lunge pen and new corrals and infrastructure have been completed. The block of tack rooms is on schedule for completion in the next two weeks. The rear shoeing area will be covered and new wash racks will be installed during the coming year.

**Ranch Contacts:** Reminding you to contact Jennifer Dawson, our Book Keeper and Office Manager, Monday through Wednesday's from 9:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M. if you have questions regarding billing or change of services. Changes to services you desire for your horses should be confirmed by filling out a services request form, on the clip board by the block barn at the ranch south end, or by contacting the office Mondays – Fridays at telephone 619-434-3812 or email at [descanso1@reagan.com](mailto:descanso1@reagan.com) or [davidphair@msn.com](mailto:davidphair@msn.com). Kathy Eble is available on weekends if you have an immediate service need. Kathy's telephone numbers are 619-481-8018 or 619-773-7300.

**Reminder of Electronic Invoicing & Payment Services:** Sunnyside Stock Farm offers electronic invoicing and payment options or you can continue payment via check, cash or money-orders. If you desire the electronic invoicing and automatic payment options then contact Jennifer Dawson at [davidphair@msn.com](mailto:davidphair@msn.com) or the office telephone, 619-434-3812.

**Love of the Horse and Your Neighbor:** On Monday April 14, 2014 the *Wall Street Journal* ran an article regarding the “drama” inherent on ranches and boarding facilities across the country (attached). The article speaks for itself but one particular point should be noted; that we as horse people are “passionate, opinionated individualists” enjoying a “mix of disciplines, levels, from serious equestrians to children taking lessons” which when mixed can result in “drama times three.”

As owner and manager of Sunnyside Stock Farm I do not accept the premise that this ranch has to be filled with drama and gossip. My task, and the responsibility of each boarder, is to work towards an environment where we all focus on our commonality, the horse. Let us cease the drama before it starts; recognizing that each of us has different motivations for horse ownership, differing levels of expertise, differing interests in breeds and disciplines. Thus, we create an enjoyable environment and experience, by conscious effort, focusing on our mutual reason for being at SSF and minimizing the perceived negatives, the momentary inconveniences and our differing personalities.

**Reminder to Update Emergency Contact Information:** If your contact information has changed or there is a change to your attending veterinarian please notify the office or Kathy Eble immediately. The office email contact is [davidphair@msn.com](mailto:davidphair@msn.com) or by telephone, 619-434-3812. Kathy’s email address is [maynard14@cox.net](mailto:maynard14@cox.net).



**Horse Tales: Sara & Mr. Kelly,** owned by Jean Brown, are housed in the block barn. Below is some of their story. Jean did the talking for the threesome and neither Sara nor Mr. Kelly contradicted any of Jean’s representations so here is their story (and they’re sticking to it).

Sara is a 26 year old mare. Her pedigree is Mustang, Draft & Paint cross. Jean & Sara have been a team for 14 years. Sara was a broodmare and an occasional pack horse before Jean rescued her. Sara was never ridden prior to Jean acquiring the mare. Jean worked hard to turn Sara into the dependable trail horse she is today.





**Mr. Kelly is a 4 year old gelding, class B Mini. The breed was started by Royalty in Argentina, as a novelty. Jean acquired Mr. Kelly 2 years ago, the previous owner used him to pay a feed store debt owed to Jean's daughter. Mr. Kelly is broke to ride and pull a cart. Jean's 5 year old grandson has ridden Mr. Kelly who has proved to date to be a true gentleman. They both, Mr. Kelly and grandson, enjoyed the ride.**

**Mr. Kelly was named after a trainer in Virginia that Jean knew in her youth. The trainer was a short, nice man and when she saw Mr. Kelly for the first time it brought her old trainer to mind. Owning a Mini for the first time is a learning process. Their middle name can be trouble as they can access places where a standard size breed can't go. The Mini breed needs special care. They are prone to Cushing & Diabetes and need a low starch, low sugar and low protein diet. Besides alfalfa & grass hay Jean feeds Mr. Kelly a low starch pellet supplement. Their teeth need constant care; Mr. Kelly's teeth are floated every 2 years. The Mini breed has their own tack line, which cost the same as a horse even though they need only half the material. Tack & supplies are easily found and Jean's husband, Billy, is very handy at repairing horse blankets, modifying or fabricating tack for Mr. Kelly. One of the things Billy made is Mr. Kelly's splint boots. Billy's not a horse person but he is very supportive of Jean's horse obsession. Billy is leery of Sara but right at home with Mr. Kelly.**



**Mr. Kelly & Sara bonded very quickly. Mr. Kelly was placed in a stall next to Sara and they became inseparable. Soon they were sharing the same stall. I've had the pleasure of watching them when they were turned out in the round pen. Mr. Kelly keeps Sara moving; when she stops he comes up behind her and gives her a little nip in the leg to get her going again. Who needs a whip when you have Mr. Kelly?**

**When Jean rides Sara on the trail Mr. Kelly follows on a lead line. When they encounter other horses on the trail Mr. Kelly is well-mannered but the other horses may get a little nervous. Not often that you see a Mr. Kelly cantering through Bonita.**

**Jean caught the *horse bug* at a very early age. Her first experience astride a four-legged creature was riding a donkey, in Morocco. Jean was 2 1/2 years old, a *Navy brat*, Jean's description of herself, and lived in England, France, Germany, Saudi Arabia among other countries. She has always ridden, even in those far-away countries, leasing horses wherever they went. Jean has competed in Hunter-Jumper, English, Western Pleasure, Trail and most disciplines, except Dressage.**



**Jean is no stranger to Sunnyside Farm, she first came to the ranch in 1974. She had 3 horses in 1972, making SSF her home until 1992. Jean returned to the ranch in 2002, this time she had 4 horses. She left again in 2011, returning this year with Sara & Mr. Kelly. Jean has seen first-hand the changes to SSF and is pleased how the ranch has evolved.**

**Thank you, Jean, Sara & Mr. Kelly, for sharing your story with the boarders and tenants of Sunnyside Stock Farm.**

**From the Desk of David Phair:** In Dave's desk he kept a small binder; among the sayings which were found in the binder was the following one-verse poem, the author Frances Hensley: "Each has his secret hill which he must climb,  
It matters not how wearisome the toil,  
Some inner urge bears impulse to surmount,  
Unmeasured barriers in the daily moil."

**Sunnyside Stock Farm, LLC**

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## What the Hay? 'Barn Drama' Puts Riders on Their High Horses

In a Sport Equated With Beauty, Ugliness  
Often Rears Its Head; Unwanted Souvenirs

Monday, April 14, 2014

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

By LAUREN LIPTON

Scot Gillies has a good idea of the kind of horse people who will fit in at Gryffindor Farm, the small barn he helps manage in Lexington, Ky. So his advertisements for new boarders spell it out in detail: Owners must be "laid-back," "happy" and above all, "drama-free."

Mr. Gillies, a marketing consultant by day and a horse owner himself, says that during his 14 years in the equestrian world, "I've seen the full range of drama that is associated with horse people."

A few categories of problematic individuals reign: There are overprotective owners who insist their animals be treated like porcelain figurines, and neglectful owners who never show up.

There are "back seat riders," as some call them, who love to criticize other people's technique. Some freak out over a stray wisp of hay in the barn aisle; others let their animals leave unwanted souvenirs.



"I had to make a sign: 'Please pick up your poop properly,'" says Ronnie Eden, who recently sold her boarding ranch in Laramie, Wyo.

About 40% of the country's 1.8 million horse owners keep their animals in group barns, where misbehavior among the human crowd is a common hazard. "Barn drama," as equestrians call it, is a catchall term for all manner of interpersonal unpleasantness. It tends to revolve around the use of shared amenities (such as grooming ar-

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eas and riding arenas), the "borrowing" of other people's stuff and animal welfare. It happens between fellow boarders, but also among barn staff, and can quickly escalate from petty bickering to screaming matches to vandalism.

Bonnie Erbé says she almost got punched. The PBS journalist and equestrian once got into an altercation with a fellow boarder over the height of some jumps at their facility. Ms. Erbé asked the other rider if she might lower one or two. "She pulled a fist at me," Ms. Erbé says. The woman eventually walked away.

Now Ms. Erbé owns her own horse farm in Maryland. She takes boarders very selectively. "I try to bring in people who have plenty of other things going on in their life," she says.

The setup of a boarding barn almost guarantees unstable behavior: Take a group of passionate, opinionated individualists. (Riding, a solo activity, doesn't attract "team players.") Give them a consuming hobby centered on a delicate, expensive living creature. Put them in close quarters, often with children and dogs that run amok, spooking the horses, and let the backbiting begin.

In a barn where Mr. Gillies used to keep his horses, he says,

one boarder accused another of stealing her hay—and retaliated by seeding the suspect's horse's grain with salt pellets. Hence Mr. Gillies's list of requirements. He says the rules help to "reduce the number of bad matches."

Barn dramatics aren't new. But in this insular world, in which participation is down and costs have soared, the tension isn't helping business. So to suss out potential troublemakers, stable owners are taking measures, including installing security cameras and locked storage areas and marketing themselves as "drama-free."

Equine law, a niche practice, is also becoming more prevalent as owners seek enforceable contracts.

After a young boarder vandalized her Lexington, Ky., barn in 2010, Lisa McConathy added locking gates and installed security cameras. But even those measures haven't solved all of the drama. Earlier this year, she says, two boarders who were planning to move out "decided someone had taken their horse's blanket, and they were going to take it back. So they went up to a kid's horse and plucked off the blanket, in the middle of the day, in broad daylight."

Says Ms. McConathy: "I'll probably end up replacing it, because I'm the one responsible."

Some barns attract more drama than others. High-end facilities with riders who compete on the show circuit in events like jumping and dressage can be hotbeds of jealousy; trail-rider barns are said to be easier-going. A mix of disciplines and levels, from serious equestrians to children taking lessons, can make problems worse.

"The minute you start mixing the hunter-jumpers with the dressage people with the Western pleasure people, that is like drama times three," says Macala Wright, who boards her two horses in a facility that also includes a nonprofit equestrian-therapy group.

"The affluent people look down on the everyday horse owners. The dressage people don't like the hunters, and every group looks down on the non-profits," says Ms. Wright, a Los Angeles branding consultant who has shuttled one of her horses through four barns in two years. At the second, which catered mostly to wealthy riders, "People would comment, 'Oh, your dressage saddle isn't very good quality,'" recalls Ms. Wright.

Half of horse owners have household incomes of \$75,000 or less, according to a 2012 survey by American Horse Publications, an industry group. And the hobby is pricey: Horses can sell

for \$100 or \$100,000. Monthly boarding fees range from \$200 for a rural, no-frills setup to \$2,500 or more for a luxurious full-service suburban facility.

Barn drama can be even more costly, as Vicky Castegren, a Virginia breeder of high-end jumpers, discovered. One morning a couple of summers ago at a Kentucky horse show, Ms. Castegren's staff arrived at the stall of one of their prized stallions to a shocking sight. "The horse's big, beautiful white tail was on the floor," says Ms. Castegren. The horse wasn't hurt, but it took the equivalent of hair extensions to camouflage the damage. The culprit has never been caught.

The best defense against drama may be a no-nonsense management style. "Three strikes and you're out!" works for Donna Hyde, who juggles 22 horses, 18 boarders and disciplines including therapeutic riding, Western dressage and trail riding at her Norco, Calif., facility.

If a conflict gets bad enough that one boarder changes his or her riding schedule to avoid another, Ms. Hyde steps in. After two warnings, she tells the offender "they'd be happier somewhere else," she says.

If all else fails, she can remind them of the name of her business: No Drama Ranch.