



# Trail Riders Of Today

Dedicated to maintaining and expanding sustainable trails for equestrian use.

[www.trot-md.org](http://www.trot-md.org)

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Issue 251

Founded 1980

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## Trail Riding, Things to remember:

- It's Hunting Season! Remember to check Park Websites for closures
- Please remember to be good trail stewards and do not ride trails when wet.
- Share the trails—help non-horse riders understand the importance of yielding to horses on the shared use trails.

## Presidents Corner from Carolann Sharpe

Volunteering is defined as “doing something when not forced or paid. Doing something that benefits others with no expected compensation”. Overall, we respect and admire those that give themselves for the greater good. We have award ceremonies and printed certificates to say, “Thank you”. We in the horse world, rely heavily on volunteers. We would not be able to do what we do if not for volunteers. I want to say here, publicly, THANK YOU.

I have gained some of my greatest experiences volunteering. A couple years ago, I stopped calling it Volunteering and I call it “Working Pro Bono” because volunteering didn’t truly describe the magnitude of what I do. I can name roughly 9 jobs I do and only 2 ½ represent a financial income. Everything else is

“Volunteering” and yet, those 6.5 other things are the most rewarding and life changing of what I do.

I have been volunteering since I was 13 years old. My sister, 9 years older than me, became a Candy Striper at our local hospital when she was 15. I counted the years until I was 13 and allowed to be a one. I was a helper, a gopher, a tray remover, magazine hander-outer, a trash remover, a message deliverer and a smiling face to people that really would have rather not been in a hospital. I volunteered at animal shelters when I lived in San Diego and St Louis. Both taught me about compassion and the joys of animal love. Also of the stupidity, heartlessness and sometimes downright evil of humans. It was volun-



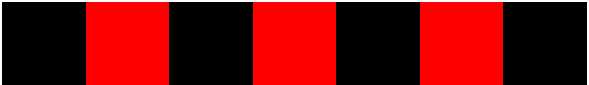
teering to help with paperwork at Days End Farm and Horse Net rescue that put me on the path to owning my first horse. Since then, volunteering for Trail Riders of Today, Maryland Horse Council, Fixen Fences, PATH therapeutic barns, and all the other places I put my energy has defined a life of joy and reward paved with friends and networks of highly intelligent people I just wouldn’t have known otherwise. We volunteer our time, our energy, our know-how. All these things weave a fiber of achievement and support for others. Trail maintenance getting your hands dirty is just as valuable as having an enlightening

conversation in Annapolis with a decision maker about a bill that influences our horse world. Every single one of us has a talent. Getting involved by being a volunteer trail leader, fund raiser, board member, side walker, horse leader, networker, booth employee, and walking billboard for the good our other volunteers do, has paid me more than the green pieces of paper we call compensation. I believe I am my true self when I am volunteering. I want to say THANK YOU – to all of you that volunteer. I do it because I am grateful for those that have done it before me, and I do it because I am wealthy in the knowledge my efforts are of benefit to others. I thank all of the TROT members that have done anything for TROT. I thank the riders that carry clippers in their saddle bags for those random branches. I thank the Trail Angels that clear the BIG logs. I thank the many volunteers of other clubs who's work benefits me and those that ride the trails. I thank the political minds who watch the bills, laws and proposals locally and nationally. I thank the riders, trainers and rescuers that

show a horse can do anything with the right guidance and understanding. I thank my friends, the ones that accept me for who I am and support my sometimes-crazy method of wanting to be involved. It is not for everyone. Perhaps that why those that do it are truly that special and can find themselves burned out or frustrated by others. It is a given, when we know someone is a worker bee, we give them more work to be done. We should always support those with the giving spirit - "If I don't do it, who will? How do I stand by and allow someone else to go where I wouldn't go? Do what I wouldn't Do?" It reminds me how I taught my horse to get on a trailer. How can I ask him to go in a dark scary place if I am not willing to go there?"

This year, give a little of yourself. There is so much you can do. Volunteer to lead a Big or Small TROT ride at your favorite place. Sign up for a membership meeting and volunteer your ideas. Volunteer your time – share your know how, write an article or contribute one to our newsletter, report what is going on in your neck of the woods with trails, horses and other important things. You are valuable. Your time and efforts benefit everyone, and you will be paid in self-satisfaction, you did something of priceless value. Pro bono publico means "For the public Good" Today, Tomorrow – I am committed to the public good. I invite you to join me and know you are the key to our success.

— Carolann Sharpe





## Gentle Giants Draft Horse Rescue

As my first article, I was inspired to start big! But I needed a extravagant story of a inspiring person. After ten minutes I picked a person that makes a large difference in the country, Christine Hayek, the CEO and founder of the Gentle Giants Draft Horse Rescue.

My first question over the phone to Christine was describe yourself as a person. Christine started by saying that she likes to help, as I asked her. What do you mean you'd like to help? Christine stated that my career was never supposed to be horses. My career was supposed to be a paramedic/firefighter, which tragically ended due to an injury. Christine stated she never knew anything about horses minus what her mother had taught her.

As intrigued as I was, I asked Christine how did she first get involved with horses that would have led to this miraculous empire as I would say. Christine responded. I wouldn't call it an empire I'd call it an a Christine started off with her first horse was in 2001, She went to an auction and saw a beautiful Belgian, she paid for the auction, and when she went to the store to get the horse, she saw a gentleman crying. She asked why he was crying, and he responded that his horse was just sold to slaughter and Christine Being the selfless, helping and caring person that she is explained to the gentleman that she bought the horse and was going to a good home, which was just the beginning of her being able to comfort animals and people.

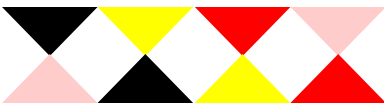
Christine, how did you start thinking about creating Gentle Giants Draft Horse Rescue? Christine stated by 2005 she had 2 to 3 horses and was growing, these horses she got from rescue to prevent them from going to slaughter, Christine had to obtain volunteers because she could not do it all. So she got the idea to start a rescue, as her and her mother talked she needed a name, and her mother suggested the Gentle Giants Draft Horse Rescue . Christine questioned the name, but she also knew she needed a name that the public will automatically know what it is and that had an impact, and that's when gentle giants was officially created.

After speaking with Christine , I asked what is the difference between gentle giants, and all other rescues, Christine responded we have a plethora of different programs and ways that we deal with horses than others do Christine started with the euthanasia program the euthanasia program she stated she wanted to break down in two parts. The first part was that many people don't understand that there is such a program, which as the editor I clearly think is a shame. However, the program doesn't get spread because many people lack the ability. Do you understand that there horse may not get better that their horse may be in pain and they don't want to make the choice which is highly complicated and understandable that they need to let their animal go. Christine went in depth that the euthanasia program is held into four different sections number one gentle giants will pay for the vet. Number two they will hold the horse while the vet administers the euthanasia and number three, they will make sure that they stay there until the horses body is picked up and they will contact you. It's OK to come home the other option number four as you're there during the whole thing but the greatest part about this program is you're not alone, and these hard times that an individual faces giving up their friend.

The second program that Christine , I was very stoic about was operation gelding, I asked what is operation gelding? Christine responded that operation gelding is a program to help people guild their horses that lack the funds to do it, I asked her what do you mean? Christine said we wanted to Assist planning executing to help horses that needed castration and people that couldn't afford the castration nor the transportation to have it done, one of the issues with the program is that when Gentle Giants Draft Horse Rescue 's information to the vets, they trust the vets to identify clients that are in need for help to prevent the abuse of the program, the biggest problem is that that stone always keep the information nor receive it due to the plethora of invoices, mail, and things they get from other facilities.

I was very interested in some thing that I recently saw, which was a TLAER a program that offers technical large animal rescue training to the general public. After speaking with Christine , she stated that there was another company that had actually did a version of TLAER a hospital, Ryan , rescue, etc. however they went out of business. I asked Christine how did you get the inspiration to do this and Christine states that it just fits with the mission statement of Gentle Giants Draft Horse Rescue and could expand The benefits of having a rescue, she first saw the tripod that lifts 50,000 pounds, which could lift an elephant, and she fell in love with it, and she also could put her love of being a first responder to use even more by being even more selfless, to help farms in need.





## ...Gentle GIANTS cont.

After the fascinating communication, I really wanted to know why I hear that gentle giant trains draft horses not to use Stocks, into the readers most track forces have to be in stocks to get their feet done, however, in the equestrian community, I've heard from a plethora of people, that gentle giants makes it a possibility, and a successful Rehabilitation to ensure that draft horses don't need stocks however, I did ask Christine why are stocks so dangerous and Christine responded in 2008 she snapped her left arm due to dealing with Stocks and I asked her lol what else could happen and she stated horses were flipping them and they will die as she had seen once before and they can experience extreme trauma in the stocks so I asked Christine how do you stop it and she simply stated clicker training to those who don't know clicker training is used in a plethora of different training methods and Equine.

So my final questions over this phone interview were what are your goals for gentle giants and Christine asked well there's a lot that I have however, there are very specific ones. Christine went into. There is a new barn that they have opened up which she has invited me to come and look at the barn Will handle nodular, dermatitis and canker. Both of these are viruses that are very detrimental and fatal if not treated to horses, the barn will be targeted to interns and veterinarians to teach about canker. I was very surprised when Christine explained to me that not too many vets know about canker or have ever seen it. Christine stated that she had the idea to make this barn based off of Leesburg animal Hospital which to those who do not know is a equine/large animal hospital I asked Christine what do you mean and she stated that she made this farm based off of the things she did like, and the things that she thought could be improved at Leesburg which as we all know as the ordinary person when we go into a doctors office there are areas we like in areas that we don't. Now the interesting thing about the barn is it's got 27 stalls here and there will be

Seminars given to vets and Ferriers, the name of the barn, which is very interesting, will be called the healing barn, which will be the comfortable hospital care built, based off of as I explained earlier Leesburg hospital. It's just fascinating that one could have the possibility to be able to make this happen my final questions to Christine work what is the one thing that you will always remember when starting this Christine responded That she was very fortunate to meet people to help with fundraising and have guidance and the happiness that dealing with these horses and the accomplishments had given her.

What does Christine Heyjek do now most of you or me ask, Christine , explain to me that she works 60 to 70 hours a week behind the computer however, the one thing that she truly struggles with is looking out the window and seeing all the horses that she fell in love with, as the other this article, it is a shame that Christine has the ability to teach and do amazing work with these animals. However, it is understandable to me that she has moved onto the next step of making sure that this facility stays around for generations to come, and if paperwork and computer work is what it costs, she has again become selfless and giving up One thing she loves to do to ensure that these animals are safe happy and are rehomed and will never experience the traumas and pains that they have endured

Now, my personal experience with gentle giants, is after speaking with a plethora of volunteers, and ask volunteers and employees that have moved on the most common thing that I have heard as a response of what has gentle giants done for you. Every one of them has said that gentle giant, they remember the way Christine taught them one on one not only how to treat the animals, but how to care relates and connect with these animals things that they will never forget and things that heal during traumas. One could only wish to be able to work one on one with Christine , I is the editor look forward to seeing Christine Ajax, accomplishments in the future

—Tyler W Frame



March 2024



TROT has two Facebook pages;

(1) the "official" page for members:  
<[www.facebook.com/Trail.Riders.of.Today](https://www.facebook.com/Trail.Riders.of.Today)> and

(2) the "community" page:  
<[www.facebook.com/groups/127953560568829/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/127953560568829/)>

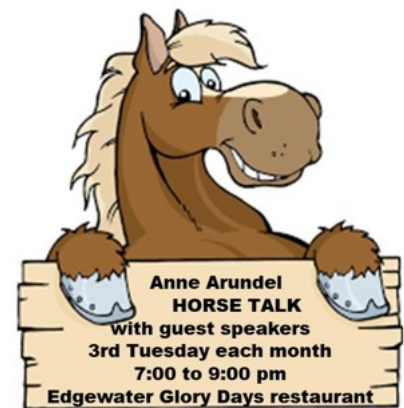
TROT Website: <[www.trot-md.org](http://www.trot-md.org)>

TROT Newsletter archives: <[www.trot-md.org/newsletter](http://www.trot-md.org/newsletter)>

TROT Originally founded in 1980, by a group of 22 Maryland riders seeking to save a single trail, Trail Riders Of Today (TROT) expanded in 1997 to a 501(c)3 Corporation for charitable and educational purposes and specifically to educate the public concerning the preservation of existing equestrian trails and the establishment of new equestrian trails. TROT encourages partnerships with local organizations, state government agencies, land developers, and the public at large to maintain, preserve, and promote open space and equestrian trails with ecological and aesthetic benefits for public recreational use across the region. TROT and its members work with the public to educate and disseminate information concerning trail stewardship, safe riding practices, proper equine care and horsemanship, clinics, work groups and public forums. Join TROT - If you enjoy riding horses on trails in Maryland, want to learn about great places to ride, and would like to see these trails remain open to all riders, see our membership page to join/ renew/ contribute. And be sure to check out our list of scheduled rides on our calendar page.

## Upcoming Local Events/Rides

- ⇒ **03/23/24—Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park FUN Series Trailwork— <https://fpvsp.org/>**
- ⇒ **03/24/24 9a to ...—TROT Coggins and Rabies Clinic at Morgan Run Environmental Area**
- ⇒ **04/19/24—04/21/24—Tuckahoe Spring Fling**
- ⇒ **04/21/24—Ride to Woodstock Inn, Hosted by Carolann Sharpe**  
Sign up by emailing [Blackandwhitecookie@yahoo.com](mailto:Blackandwhitecookie@yahoo.com)
- ⇒ **05/16/24—05/19/24— ESTR Spring Ride**
- ⇒ **08/10/2024 12p-3p — Save the Date!! TROT Picnic at Patapsco State Park, McKeldin Area**
- ⇒ **SADDLIN' UP for BREAST CANCER Trail Event**, September 21 to benefit The Red Devils. It features a trail ride through Tuckahoe State Park, home cooked lunch, silent auction, raffles, and an All Pinked Out Parade with great prizes...camping is available at the Tuckahoe Equestrian Center ... [jacquiecowan@comcast.net](mailto:jacquiecowan@comcast.net) / 410-215-4979



Montgomery County Updates by Christina Micek

## Local Planning Board and Council

Parks has requested to purchase the Schnabel Foundation Company property (5210 River Road) for a future Westbard Urban Recreation Park using approximately 2.3 million from the Legacy Urban Space CIP fund. It will connect to Willett Branch Greenway, Capital Crescent Trail.

The MoCo council tabled the **ZTA 23-09** that would have allowed farms in the agriculture reserve to have incidental outdoor stays. The council is currently receiving feedback and recommendations from farmers who would be impacted by the bill before introducing it.

## State Legislative Session:

**Bill PG/MC 112-24** Moco County has asked to reinstate the Office of the People's Counsel agency to represent public interest in the County's land use regulatory process. The idea is to balance out the bevy of land use attorneys that work for major developers. Prince George county has an OPC office in place.

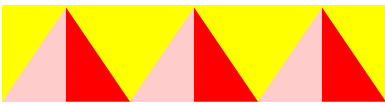
**Bill HB 530-** This is a proposal to establish the Maryland Office of Trails and Maryland Trails Advisory Commission under the Department of Transportation to develop and maintain the Maryland Trails Network to advance the development, maintenance, and use of trails in the State. The sponsor only mentions collaboration with bicycle and pedestrian advisory committees, so Maryland Horse Council (MHC) has requested equestrian committees be added. They recommended MHC as one, and Maryland Horse Industry Board (MHIB) as the second, as well as 3 equestrian public citizen seats. We don't expect this will pass this year, but we are watching the bill.

**Bill HB 113-** This bill requires minors to wear helmets on 1. A highway, 2. A public horse-riding path, and 3. The grounds of a facility for which the primary purpose is recreation, educational, or competitive equestrian activities. They carved out exceptions for 1. Crossing public highways that separates privately owned land, 2. Engaged in an agricultural practice or pursuit, or 3. a member of an Amish or a Mennonite community. We asked MHC to request an exception for equestrian vaulters, as wearing a helmet has been determined to be a safety issue. They determined they would not be considered "riders."

## Parks:

Did you know that MoCo Parks has a preservation and cultural heritage section? Here are some equestrian themed projects you might not have been aware of.

**Meadowbrook Stables** – Located within the Meadowbrook Local Park in Chevy Chase, MD, [Meadowbrook Stables](#) was hailed as one of the finest saddle clubs in the East when it opened in 1934. The facility hosted local, national, and international horse shows and festivities. The large Colonial Revival horse barn is notable for the quality of its design and construction. Work to rehabilitate the stable which has been in continuous use since its construction included installation of a sprinkler system; upgrades to the structural, electrical, and plumbing systems; repair of siding, roof, windows, and doors; and painting.



—MoCo Updates cont...

**Seneca Stone Barn Stabilization** – Montgomery Parks completed the stabilization of this historic structure located in Woodstock Equestrian Park in the summer of 2009. This project received the 2010 Montgomery County Executive’s Award for Historic Preservation. The barn features interpretive signs and is open to the public on special occasions only. Hikers and equestrians are welcome to stop by anytime to learn more about the area’s agricultural and equestrian heritage.

**Seneca Store (formerly Poole’s Store)** – Since 1901, proprietors have operated Seneca Store as a general store from this building. For more than 40 years, the Poole family provided a convenient supply of feed and specialized goods and services to local equestrian, hunting and farming communities in the Poolesville area until the family closed the store at the end of 2010. In 2019, Montgomery Parks inhouse professional staff completed the rehabilitation of the historic store and constructed a new kitchen wing. This project has also been the recipient of the Montgomery County Executive’s Award for Historic Preservation (2020).



**Seneca Stone Barn Stabilization**



**Seneca Store (formerly Poole’s Store)**



**Meadowbrook Stables**



# Classifieds



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To place a newsletter ad, email board-member06@trot-md.org. TROT Members can place one 100-word or business card-sized in each issue **FOR FREE!** What a great deal! It will run in one issue unless you notify the editor that you want it to run again. Ads for **Non-Members** cost \$20.

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TROT Membership

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