



# Harmony Horse Stables

## An Appetite for Success

by Sophia Hall

Just at the corner of the appropriately named Trot Road, nestled on a quiet residential street in Littleton, is where you'll find Harmony Horse Stables. Owned by the Cecere family for more than 25 years, this farm is a gem. When you pull in the driveway, on your left are several paddocks and run-in stalls, and to your right is one of three riding rings, the entrance to the main barn, office, as well as the indoor riding arena.

farm begin with feeding, checking horses, and turnout. "I'll prep the indoor ring or the outdoor rings for training horses and lessons," says Don. "Right now, it's a late-summer day program going on which starts at 9:30. We'll try to get at least half of the barn cleaned out before the students arrive, so they can work in that part of the barn." The barn's day program offers lessons for beginner through advanced riders, as well as plenty of horsemanship

Giving riders so many options explains why there are numerous teams out of Harmony Horse Stables, including an Interscholastic Equestrian Association (IEA) team, an Athletic Equestrian League (AEL) team, a very popular and successful eventing team, as well as riders showing at the various farms for jumper shows, horse trials, and dressage shows.

When asked about the how riders progress Don says, "We're very proud of



Part of the Harmony Horse Farm Interscholastic Equestrian Team.



Alana Deacon on Cricket at the Central Massachusetts Horse Show Series.

On the morning of my visit, barn manager Don Pollard, assistant manager/trainer Kara Kobernick, and students were tacking up horses for the morning lessons.

Before coming to Harmony Horse Stables, Don was a dairy farmer for more than 35 years, but has always had horses. Don now keeps his horse Moose at the stable, where Moose helps teach students when Don isn't riding him.

Don loves his work and notes that caring for horses is very challenging at times and also so rewarding. "I'm an animal person and that's why I like it here," Don says. "[The owners] really care about the animals. They're always keeping track of their use and constantly bringing new horses in for the lesson program."

What's an average day look like? Like so many barns, mornings at the

and, of course, includes some fun — adding some sparkles to the lesson ponies, among other activities.

There's a wide variety of disciplines and abilities at Harmony Horse Stables. The farm is home to 33 horses, including 13 boarders. There are several school horses that take riders to small and local schooling shows, there are riders who compete in dressage and eventing, and those who prefer some light pleasure riding.

When asked what the greatest challenge is, Don says, "The biggest challenge is making sure these horses stay sound and are physically fit. Keeping them sound and to the appropriate fitness level is especially key with the eventers because we have riders going from Beginner Novice to Preliminary." Don also added that keeping the boarders and students happy is a top priority.

everything we've been able to do. This is a very special place for the riders and horses."

The barn has more than 75 regular students. The facility also hosts clinics, which have included clinics with the late Mark Russell, Suzie Gornal, and Jerry Schurink. The barn also hosts some in-house schooling shows, as well as IEA and AEL shows from time to time.

"We're here to do whatever our clients want to do," says Don, as Kara nods in agreement.

"We do a lot of trailering out locally to get the conditioning in," says Kara. "We're always doing something around here. It's never very quiet!"

The barn has been succeeding in shows for years now. "I don't think that there are many barns that do all the different things that we do on top of the

competing," Kara says. This is the barn's 13th year eventing, and they've had 57 riders qualify for American Eventing Championships (AEC) in those years. Kara just recently came back from the AEC where she placed 12th in a very competitive division.

Last year, Erica Jarrell, a longtime rider at Harmony Horse, and the rest of the Area 1 Young Rider Team brought home the gold from the NAJYRC. Erica, of Lincoln, boards and trains with her horses at Harmony Horse Stables, and so does her younger brother William, as well as her sister Rebecca, and mother Brenda. Both Erica and William were participants in this year's North American Junior and Young Rider Championships. These are just some of the winning results for the hard working, determined riders, instructors, and horses at Harmony Horse Stables.

Kara has been working at the barn for more 15 years and considers the barn a staple in her life. Some families have been here for more 20 years. "We are very much a family here," says Don.

How did the farm get started? Kathryn Cecere grew up on a breeding/lesson family farm. Kathryn got her first pony when she was in fourth grade and started teaching riding lessons at the age of 14. Kathryn's husband Dennis teaches music at Berklee College of Music. The family's history and love of music is where the name Harmony Horse Stables came from. For a while, they were naming horses inspired by music — they've had a Duke Ellington, Satchmo, and Penny Lane.

Kara explains how Kathryn has helped shape the riders at Harmony Horse Stables. "She's an excellent teacher," says Kara. "She's taught all of us to be good horse people. She does the showing and the coaching and she's great at that, but I also think she's unique because during the winter when things slow down a little bit, Kathryn is really creative in the exercises she comes up with for everyone."

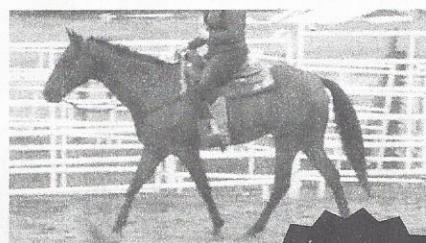
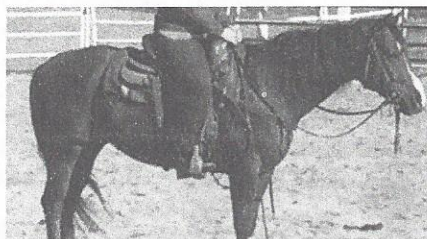
One year, right after Christmas, they gathered a bunch of Christmas trees that didn't sell and put them all in the indoor ring and made an obstacle course for riders to navigate. There were more than 20 trees, which sounds like quite the sight!

Harmony Horse client Brenda Jarrell says, "It takes a village to raise a

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true horseman. Harmony Horse provides that village. I'm pretty sure that every rider who's wanted to qualify for a particular championship has done so. I also know that riders uninterested in competition have valuable and meaningful experiences through Harmony Horse Stables as well. My daughter Rebecca was less interested in competing and more in training. Harmony Horse Stables helped her adopt and train a Premarin foal."

"All of our boarders are home grown," says Kathryn. "We help them buy their horses. All the wonderful

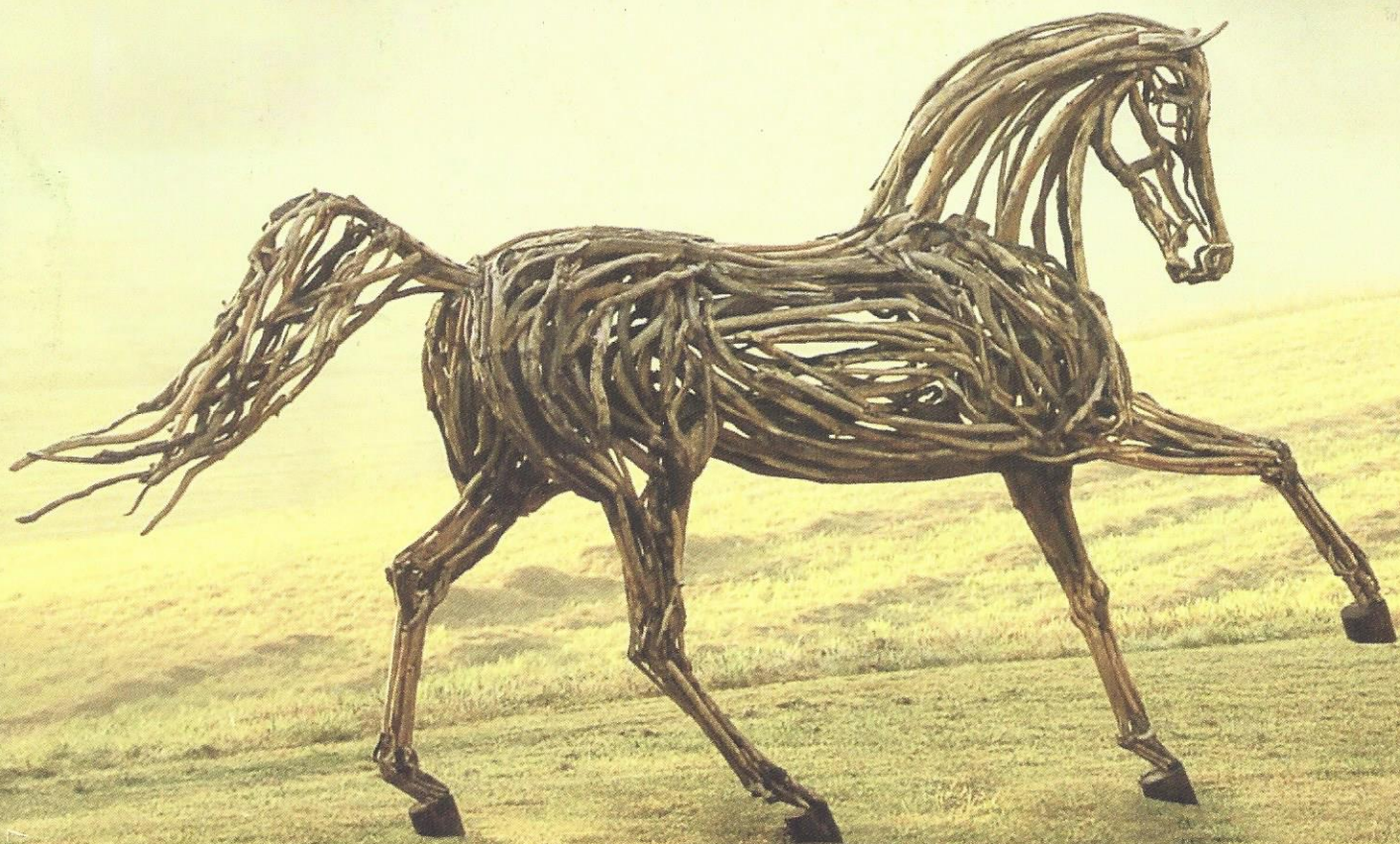
experiences, including sadness and happiness, I love it all. Harmony Horse Stables provides safe, educational, and rewarding lessons that will create memories for a lifetime."

Knowing that when she drives to work she'll get to be with horses makes her job so enjoyable. "I'm living my dream," Kathryn says. 🐾

Sophia Hall, of Falmouth, is currently in her senior year at Wheaton College finishing her degree in English. Outside of class, she spends as much time as she can with her horse Toby and pup Charlie. Sophia was a summer intern at *Massachusetts Horse*.

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