



# The Riding Centre News

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SCENES FROM THE RIDING CENTRE'S 60th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION: From left: Jim Nealon gives a jumping lesson to Adriene Kramer on her horse Louie; Ayla Current on Doc in a lesson demonstration; Brandon Dietsch on Maisie getting a therapeutic riding lesson from Carolyn Bailey, with Matt Dietsch and Lari Graver sidewalking and Terry Luzader leading. PHOTOS: REGINA BRECHA

The Riding Centre at 60—

## Louise Soelberg's legacy lives on

By Lauren Shows

When Louise Soelberg died in 1994 at the age of 90, it was enough to spark the interest of several national news outlets. Obituaries in the NY Times and Variety note her work as a pioneer of modern dance and the injury that ended her dancing career. That's where the obituaries end. But Soelberg's life was far from over when she stopped dancing. In 1959, when she was 56 years old, she established The Riding Centre, and 60 years later, it continues to fulfill the mission laid down by Soelberg: to connect people and horses.

In 1959, Soelberg petitioned Antioch College to lease 15 acres of unused farmland owned by Glen Helen to her in order to establish a horse riding school. The Riding Centre would provide riding lessons to community members and physical education credits to Antioch College students.

Under Soelberg's leadership, The Riding Centre strove to keep costs low in order to keep riding lessons accessible to the community. Soelberg taught her students to ride properly in the English style, but she also expected them to understand that caring for a living thing requires hard — and often dirty — work.

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*Soelberg's life was far from over when she stopped dancing.*

*In 1959, she established The Riding Centre; 60 years later, it continues to fulfill the mission*

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In 1961, Soelberg and Antioch College drew up a formal lease agreement which granted The Riding Centre 60 acres. The Riding Centre would lease the land and be responsible for the upkeep and improvement of the facilities there. Original to the property, which had been vacated by a local farming family several years before Soelberg leased it, were a 19th century barn and a small house, which for several years The Riding Centre used as an office. Soelberg eventually moved into the house.

With the money they raised from lessons, boarding horses, and on-site horse shows, Soelberg and her cohorts continued to make improvements to The Riding Centre where they could, building stalls in the old barn and an outdoor arena for training. An indoor arena followed in the mid 1960s after young Peace Corps members in residence at Antioch began

training there in summer.

In 1974, The Riding Centre expanded its offerings with its Therapeutic Riding Program, which offers riding as an alternative therapy to children and adults with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. Program participants are referred individually by physicians and agencies, and ride specially trained horses, with the aim being to improve balance, coordination, and muscle tone.

Carolyn Bailey, who had been training at The Riding Centre since she was 8, was inspired by the Therapeutic Riding Program to enroll at The Cheff Center for the Handicapped in Augusta, Michigan, in 1977. After two years of training and teaching there, Bailey returned to The Riding Centre to work alongside Soelberg as head instructor and trainer. When Soelberg retired in 1989 at the age of 85, Bailey became The Riding Centre's director. Though she was retired, Soelberg continued to live in her "hovel" on the Glen property until her death in 1994. "When I think of how I am as a boss, it's because of who Louise was as a person," Bailey said. "There was never a day you

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## Ride-A-Thon 2019— They Baled us Out

By Carolyn Bailey

Every few years Mother Nature rears her ugly head and wallops our part of the world: 2019 was that year. With a wet Spring and a dry Summer, the hay crop suffered, making hay scarce and expensive. The proceeds from our annual Ride-A-Thon went towards offsetting the increase of the cost of this most basic but necessary item. I want to acknowledge the riders who participated this year: You were few but mighty! Your love for our horses and desire to help keep them fed through the winter makes me love you all. Much heartfelt thanks to Kasey Baugh, Sophia Birdsall, Emily Bradley, Alex Brooks, Elly Deerwester, Brandon Dietsch, Elsa & Farah Girard, Brian Klos-terman, Renee Laskowski, Terry Luzader, Kate & Scarlett Mattinson, David Warren, and Tania — you're a superstar!



## The Riding Centre

**STAFF MEMBERS:** Carolyn Bailey (Manager and Head Instructor), Adriene Kramer (Assistant Manager and Instructor), Regina Brecha, Marsha Casdorff, Rowan Coburn-Griffis, Greg Fry, Yana Garing, Jody Garrett, Molly Hendrickson, Grace Keeton, Elise Laskowski, Jennifer Lawson, Janetta Lewis-Jennings, and Anna Williamson

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**NEWSLETTER:** Editors: Marsha Casdorff and Jill O'Banion; **CONTRIBUTORS:** Carolyn Bailey, Janetta Lewis-Jennings, Lauren Shows

**DESIGN & PRODUCTION:** Matt Minde

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## Soelberg's Legacy

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left that she didn't thank you."

Unlike in The Riding Centre's early days, when students like Bailey would sometimes get up before dawn to come down to the barn and take care of the horses, today's students are bound by liability clauses that prevent them from doing as much heavy lifting. Though employees do much of that work now, The Riding Centre still teaches students as much as it can about what it takes to care for a horse. "In camps, the young people have to clean the stalls, and they get a bare minimum taste of the care that goes into these horses," Bailey said. "They learn to tack up the horse, brush the horse — they learn that 99% of horse riding is the care of the horse, whether it's cleaning the stalls or mowing the fields or putting up the hay or holding them for the farrier. It gives them a sense of responsibility."

Of the approximately 80 students currently learning at The Riding Centre, Bailey estimated that 98 percent of those are girls or women.

Bailey said that it's a nearly universally accepted truth that young girls are drawn to horses, whether for their beauty or their nature, both wild and gentle, or for the freedom they often represent.

Whatever the reason, for young girls especially, she said, working with horses can be a confidence boost. "There are very few things of which these kids have been in charge. And I tell them, 'You may not be in charge when you go home, but when you're here, you're in charge of this 1,000 pound horse and look at you!'"

Though The Riding Centre has made some necessary augmentations to programming and facilities over its 60 years, much has remained unchanged, according to Bailey. Since becoming director 30 years ago, Bailey has continued to run The Riding Centre according to Soelberg's values, including instituting affordable lesson fees and a scholarship program as the cost of living rises nationwide. "That's

part of our mission: to keep our lessons affordable, to inspire people to ride and love horses, and to get away from the idea that riding is a rich man's sport," she said.

Bailey also said that The Riding Centre's longevity can be chalked up to its unflagging attention to its core values, and that the best strategy going forward into the next 60 years is to keep doing what they've been doing since 1959. "In the horse world, 60 years is phenomenal, and I think our success is that we haven't really changed what we do — which is teaching people horsemanship."

This article is used by permission; it first appeared in the September 12, 2019, edition of the Yellow Springs News. 🌐



Carolyn Bailey has served as The Riding Centre's director for 30 years.

PHOTO: JEFF LAWSON

## THANK YOU to Our Sponsors!



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SUZETTE CASTONGUAY & RON HAMPTON







Volunteers from Cresco Labs pose after tidying our outdoor riding arena. PHOTO: CAROLYN BAILEY

Our Volunteers—

# Generosity = Value

By Janetta Lewis-Jennings

2019 was an eye opener for us. In addition to the volunteer hours and contributions that are given in a normal year at The Riding Centre, our 60th Anniversary Celebration bumped those up to a whole new level of generosity. New organizations, contributors, and volunteers jumped on the RC bandwagon.

We would like to acknowledge two local organizations that provided us with amazing volunteers who helped spruce up our facilities just in time for the celebration in September. Local college students with the Yellow Springs Community Foundation Nonprofit Leadership Institute cleaned our tack room from top to bottom, cleaned the light fixtures in the barns, and helped clear riding trails. Workers from



Melissa Heston, Emma Peifer-Burns, Hannah Brown, and Elle Peifer from the Yellow Springs Community Foundation Nonprofit Leadership Institute clean light fixtures in the barn.

PHOTO: MARSHA CASDORPH



Yobome Kanu and Windom Mesure from the Yellow Springs Community Foundation Nonprofit Leadership Institute clear trails.

PHOTO: MARSHA CASDORPH

Cresco Labs cleaned and removed cobwebs in the barns, groomed the outdoor arena, and helped with the 5K race and the silent auction on the day of the celebration.

While there are not enough words to express our gratitude to everyone who donated their time and dollars, this amount of support can only lead to one conclusion — The Riding Centre and the programs it offers have made, and continue to make, a profound difference in our community and the lives of many individuals.

Special thanks to the following organizations and foundations:

Antioch College, Community Health Foundation, Cresco Labs, Dayton Foundation, Della Selsor Trust, Liberty Mutual-Give With Liberty, Morgan Family Foundation, Network for Good, Physician's Charitable Foundation of the Miami Valley, Springfield Foundation, Springfield Rotary Club, St. Luke's Advent by Candlelight Tea for Women, the Union Club, Wagner Subaru, and Yellow Springs Community Foundation.

## Our List of Contributors...

...and how you can join it!

- Adopt a Horse (yearly) .....\$1,200
- Donate towards: Endowment, Buildings,  
Special Projects, General Fund.....(Any amount)
- Become a Member (yearly)
- Family.....\$100
- Individual.....\$75

Special thanks to: Dr. Brett Ellis, Dr. Kathleen Lennon, Dr. Brad Luckenbill, Gary Holland, and Kenny Hoyle for keeping our horses healthy and sound; Cedarville University for providing students for the hundreds of hours of volunteering for our therapeutic riding program; David Acton, Diane Dubose, Dave Kianka, Sean Oberschlake, and Chad Wilt for the hay they provide (our horses thank you too!).

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LIST CONTINUES ON PAGE FOUR

## IN MEMORIAM



It's never easy to say good-bye to a good friend. 2019 was particularly tough for us because we lost three amazing horses (from left): Special, who was retired but still active in the therapeutic riding program; Mocha, who was one of our most versatile school horses; and Chipper, who was in well-deserved retirement. Over the years, they have been favorites of so many riders, and they are so greatly missed.

### Shopping at Kroger Helps the Centre



You can now support The Riding Centre through Kroger's Community Rewards® Program. Kroger Community Rewards makes fundraising easy. All you have to do is shop at Kroger and swipe your Plus Card! Sign up at [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com). Just sign in, click on "Community," and follow the link to "Community Rewards." Our NPO number is 43599.

### Did You Re-Member?

Have you renewed your membership for 2020? For insurance purposes, no one outside the lesson program is allowed to ride on Riding Centre property unless they are a current member. This includes guests. A guest membership can be purchased for \$10 a day.

Riding Centre property includes the McCally Barn and arena, the hunt field, the woods beside the hunt field, and the commons area. **A helmet must be worn at all times while mounted on Riding Centre property.**

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 22	Adriene Kramer Clinic
May 3	Lori Miller Clinic
9	Dressage Show
August 1	Jim Nealon Fundraising Clinic
September 19	Dressage Show
20	Hunter Show
October 17-18	Elaine Meredith Steele Fundraising Centered Riding Clinic
November 8	Adriene Kramer Clinic
14	Riding Centre 5k Fundraiser
December 6	Riding Centre Association Members' Meeting & Potluck

For more information, check [www.ridingcentre.org](http://www.ridingcentre.org) and our Facebook page.

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