



# The Lafayette Parish 4-H Hub-City Equine News



Nov./December 2010

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**Lafayette Parish**  
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## General Information

Welcome to the 4-H Horse program. Our records show that you have joined 4-H and have enrolled in the horse project. By doing so, you have indicated to us that you plan to show horses at the 4-H summer shows in June/July, 2011.

Take a look at our 4-H horse newsletter! We are starting the Volume 15 of the horse newsletter. It will be mailed periodically throughout the calendar year 2010-2011. During the past thirteen years, we have received many positive comments in regards to the horse newsletter. Thanks for your comments; they were greatly appreciated.

This is "the look" of the Lafayette 4-H horse newsletter. These letters will include both educational and informative information to help you with your project(s). The educational information will consist of issues such as nutrition, feeding, health, breed information, and reproduction.

We begin by defining the two words which make up the title of the newsletter:

**Hub City**—A center of activity of a large or small town.

**Equine** - Of, relating to, or resembling a horse or the horse family.

**News** - A report of recent events in a newspaper or news periodical.

You can contribute to the overall appearance of this letter. Four-H'ers in the horse project can send in articles to inform others on tips or ideas that are no longer than 1/4 of a page. These ideas can come from your project books or other magazines. Send your article to Equine Gazette, Charles Hebert, 1010 Lafayette Street Suite 325, Lafayette, LA, 70501.

As a 4-H horse exhibitor, it is important that you make yourself aware of how the program operates. You have enrolled in 4-H and selected the horse project. This has enabled you to be on the horse mailing list. Periodically, you will receive more mail from this office. You should recognize our envelopes. When you receive a letter from us, be sure to open it and read the enclosed material as soon as possible. Be sure to adhere to all deadlines, regulations and follow all instructions each time you receive a letter. Parents, be sure to read each letter your child receives.

In addition, periodically 4-H horse information is printed in the 4-H Hotline you receive at your school 4-H Club meeting. Reading the Hotline and the mail you receive from this office will keep you informed and up-to-date with our program. It is your responsibility to become familiar with all rules that govern the program and to keep yourself informed.

## Mark Calendars for 2011 Benefit Show

In the past, the program has been working on ways to generate funds for the horse program. Each year the committee has proposed and implemented various methods to generating funds for the parish horse program.

At the last meeting, the committee decided to conduct a Barrels & Poles Benefit Show. It will be held at Sugarena on Sunday, January 9, 2011. The exhibition classes will begin at 9am and show starts at 11am.

The classes that will be offered and prices

are as follows: Exhibition barrels, \$4 each or 3 for \$10; Lead in Barrels (6 & under) \$5; Open 4D Barrels \$25; Youth 3D Barrels (12 & under) \$15; Open 3D Poles \$20 and Youth 3D Poles (12 & under) \$10.

Sixty percent payback to exhibitors and all other proceeds will benefit the Lafayette 4-H Horse Program. Cash only for entries. For more information contact Angie Nero at 298-5225, Lisa Jacob at 288-9020 or the 4-H Office at 291-7090.



# Horse Advisory Committee

Advisory Committee is the key to a successful program. The primary purpose of the committee is to give the stakeholders the opportunity to express their views on the needs of their community and how Extension can best meet those needs. The committee's overall purpose is to advise and make recommendations to the Extension Staff to improve the parish program. Furthermore, the committee should assume responsibility in assisting the Extension personnel in planning, executing and evaluating programs.

The committee members gain and grow from the experience, as-well-as gain support for the Extension program in the community. In addition, they have to be willing to invest their time and have the capability to work and communicate with others.

The horse advisory task force committee members provide leadership for the group and make all decisions on matters concerning the horse program. The board is composed of elected officers and representatives. If you are unable to attend a meeting, you may submit your recommendations to these board members.

These members were recently elected to serve the following term.

## 2008-2010—2 year term

Merl Landry, Parent

Mark McMillan, Parent

Timmy Nero, Parent

Blake McMillan, Youth 2009-2010

## Alternate

Lisa Jacob, Parent

## 2009-2011—2 year term

Shane Boudreaux, Parent

Joel Guidry, Master Horseman & Parent

Kerry Simon, Parent

Cole Guidry, Youth

Josh Landry, Youth

Kealy Stelly, Youth

There will be an important meeting on **January 5th starting at 6:00 PM** at the 4-H office. It will be held at the local office of the LSU AgCenter, at 1010 Lafayette St., Ste. 325, in the Parish Government Building.

- Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public.
- Any interested individual may be a member of the Advisory Committee. Contact the Lafayette 4-H office at 291-7090 if you would like to be a member. Parents of 4-H members are strongly urged to become members.
- The purpose of the committee is to ensure smooth operation of the Parish Horse Show and the horse program. All volunteers wishing to help with the show need to be a member of this committee. New volunteers are **always** welcome!

- Among the items to be discussed will be: Parish Show; Benefit Horse Show; Publicity, Volunteer Recruitment, workshops/clinics, etc.
- Horse Board representatives make decisions on items requiring a vote.
- Lafayette Parish County Agents and FFA Advisors serve as ex-officio members of the board.

If any committee member is unable to attend, please contact one of us at 291-7090. Your attendance is crucial in order to conduct a productive meeting.



## eXtension HorseQuest Site

eXtension is pleased to announce the launch of its first Community of Practice web site: HorseQuest. Available at <http://www.extension.org/horses> this was the first of many communities of practice .

“We are very excited to launch HorseQuest today and to demonstrate the capacity that eXtension brings to America’s Cooperative Extension System,” said Dan Cotton, eXtension Director.

HorseQuest provides Internet visitors with reliable and up-to-date horse information through a knowledge base of commonly asked questions that have science-based, peer-reviewed answers. In addition, online lessons use self-paced learning objects to help users learn more about specialized areas of equine science. The newest lesson being introduced is a module for new and prospective horse owners.

“eXtension has provided an exciting new method of delivering scientific data to horse owners. Its 24/7/365 availability and interactive capability puts the horseman in direct contact with experts,” said Clint Depew, chair of the HorseQuest team and Louisiana State University extension horse specialist.

“The 37-member HorseQuest Community of Practice has brought greater expertise to each area of interest and reduced the workload on individual experts at the same time. The collaborative relationships with other experts is minimizing duplication of effort and maximizing utilization of good materials. The spin offs into other projects is phenomenal,” noted Depew.

We ask you to check out the site and give us your feedback. It features attributes of Frequently Asked Questions, Ask the Experts, news, events, and learning modules.

## Horse Project Leader

With horse show time quickly approaching, most of you are making good progress with your projects but we realize some of you, especially our newer exhibitors, still need lots of help. With this in mind, we are continuously working to implement a Horse Leader Program in Lafayette Parish. The program will operate in the following manner.

1. The Horse Advisory Board, Master Horseman Graduates and Junior Rep's will coordinate the program. They have been working with us to recruit potential Project Leaders (older, experienced 4-H'ers, 4-H Horse alumni, leaders, etc.) and to locate younger inexperienced 4-H'ers who need help.
2. Horse Project Leaders are adults and youth who help exhibitors with their projects. This help includes everything related to showing your horse, teaching showmanship, horse show questions, or educating others about animal health and nutrition, etc. This does not include family members helping other family members (example: sister helping brother or parent helping son/daughter). We are encouraging this wholeheartedly as this is an example of good sportsmanship and brotherhood, especially in a time when the world needs as much of this as possible.
3. If you are interested in becoming a project leader, or you are already doing some of this work, call us at the 4-H office and we will put your name on the project leader list; a list of possible people to contact for horse help. We already have some people who have graciously volunteered to be project leaders. If you want help with your horse project, do not hesitate to contact these volunteers.

### **Master Horseman Graduates**

Teresa Bartlett—886-0250  
Michelle Begnaud—989-4360  
Jerri Bourque—212-5205  
Ted Champagne—230-6694  
Cathe Charlier—857-0297  
Lonnie Dugas—988-9797  
Dixie Bunton-Ferrata—896-6738  
Joel Guidry—896-7264  
Ruby Halter—234-8652  
James Hebert—278-0009  
Katrjn Hinnan—331-4346  
Lisa Jacob—288-9020  
Danielle Jones—334-1433  
Randolph Joseph, Jr.—845-4014  
Tammy Payne—837-5813  
Glenda Pickett—232-5609

Rhonda Richard—684-2831

Jamie Simon—981-4400

Greg Smith—2780192

Jamie Stinson—277-3355

Elisha Trombley—258-7040

Edward Willis—781-4461

Nelson Waguespack—984-8778

### **Project Leaders**

Sky Salter Abshire—873-2470

Amanda Magnon—886-0250

Rene Mouton—981-3721

## AgCenter Information

During the past several years, Administration has presented and discussed the new direction of the AgCenter. Our organization is continuously undergoing some re-organizational changes.

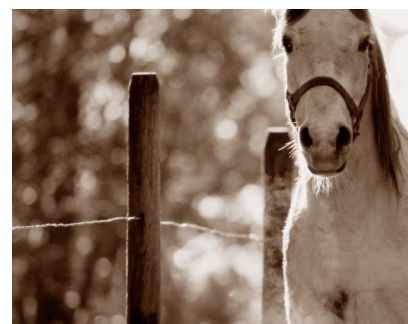
As stated by our Chancellor, "Our existence is in jeopardy if we do not change. We have to adapt to the complex issues that affect much of what we do." The organization is continuing to adapt and prioritize our programs.

Several trainings have been offered to all employees to prioritize programs. The purpose of the trainings was to address the change of programs as well as taking on new opportunities. The challenge was deciding what we will do differently in order to take on new responsibilities.

In an effort for Extension to remain effective and valued by communities, we must keep open communication among stakeholders.

The changes that affect the Horse Program will be sent out in a future issue of the newsletter.

In an effort to maintain our current program as-well-as to expand with new opportunities, we will need to continue to utilize more volunteers. Our program currently operates with the help of many volunteers, but we will have to have additional assistance to maintain our demanding program.



# Clay Roberts: A 4-H Success Story

Writer: Robert Burns

Corrected by: Renae Roberts

EAST TEXAS – It is 1998 at the 4-H state horse show in Abilene, and Clay Roberts, whose IQ has consistently measured below 70 throughout his life, is having some serious self doubts as he watches the other contestants perform.

“Why am I here? I’m not going to do any good.” Clay plaintively asks his mother, Renae. Renae remembers the sweltering July day with perfect clarity.

“I told him that when he went to Special Olympics World Games he would be the only athlete there who would have experience in competition at this level.”

Renae’s foresight paid off. Though Clay didn’t place that day in the 1998 State 4-H Horse Show, in 1998 he served as Special Olympics Texas’ Male Athlete of the Year. His success there led to more opportunities, including meeting President Bill Clinton and the first family at the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for Special Olympics International held at the White House in 1998.

In 1999 he became the only male equestrian athlete selected by Special Olympics Texas for competition in Special Olympics World Summer Games. Held in North Carolina, he stood out in the competition, winning a gold and two silver medals.

In June of 2003 Clay traveled with Special Olympics Team USA and spent an exciting two weeks in Ireland. Competing as an equestrian athlete in his second World Games, he won two silver medals.

Though Renae and her husband, Mike, also kept Clay involved in high school sports and other extra-curricular activities, she is absolutely certain that Clay’s positive experiences in 4-H had much to do with his success in Special Olympics and with developing life skills in general and building self esteem. As anyone who has worked with individuals who are mentally challenged knows, self esteem can play a huge role in developing self-dependency and life skills. Many disabled individuals are held back from functioning at higher levels not by their abilities, but from fear of failure and ridicule.

Renae remembers one of Clay’s giant steps along the road to gaining self-esteem happening at a regular 4-H horse club meeting. Clay had been unsuccessful riding on his own and needed someone to lead his horse for him. He was a bit afraid of his horse (and of failure) as many mentally challenged equestrians are. They were practicing in preparation for his first Special Olympic competition. All Special Olympics competitions are divided into levels to accommodate different skill levels. Having a leader is allowed at the B level and it looked like this was the perfect place for Clay to start. Having no other place to practice with other horses and riders 4-H meetings were invaluable. Local club members were very supportive of Clay’s efforts but it was difficult for him to ride around with the other kids with someone leading his horse. At one club meeting one of his fellow 4-H club members shouted to him from across

the arena “Clay! Ride that horse on over here.”

To everyone’s surprise, including Renae’s Clay turned his horse, Glow, toward the group of boys and road off to join them. He never needed the help of a leader after that. He competed in the B level, unassisted, at his first Special Olympics state competition. The next year he advanced to the A level where equestrian athletes compete as they would in any horse show, with no special concessions. From there it was on to several years of 4-H horse shows at the county, district and state level.

That’s the core thing about 4-H. It provides a safe environment for kids to try and fail and still feel good about themselves,” says Gayle Hall, 4-H specialist and close friend of the Roberts’ family.

“Because it is such a safe environment, if they do fail, they feel free to try again until they succeed,” Gayle adds.

For the most part, 4-H policy does not single out members who are dealing with challenges of any kind. They are allowed, even encouraged, to be all they can be and participate in the same competitions as other 4-H’ers. Clay, for example, participated in horse, rabbit, clothing, food, swine, public speaking and shooting sports throughout his 4-H career.

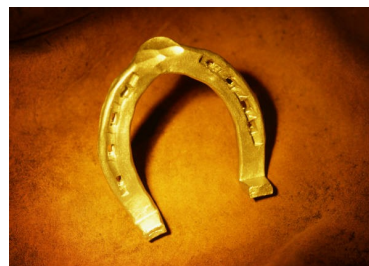
The single exception is the expansion of the age limit. Normally, 4-H membership is limited to those ages nine through 19 years. But for special needs children, this has been expanded to allow membership for as long as they are enrolled in high school. To be fair to other 4-H’ers, the participation in competition after age 19 is limited to local and county events, and then at the county Extension agent’s discretion.

Clay, who is now 23, still remembers his 4-H experiences with fondness. He graduated from Mineola High School in 2001. He was awarded the vocational scholarship and a Wood County Jr. Livestock Show scholarship.

The scholarships enabled him to continue his education at Kilgore College where he attended a 12-week welding course obtaining a welding certificate.

Renae credits his high self esteem and good life skills as being instrumental in becoming a skilled welder. He is applying for jobs at local manufacturing factories. In his spare time he still rides and keeps busy welding ornamental iron.

“We couldn’t have done this in town, and we couldn’t have done it without 4-H and without, Glow, that red horse over there,” Renae says. “We were able to give Clay a place where he could succeed.”



# Bending, Flexing and Leg Aids

By: Richard Hebert

Master Horseman, Vermilion Parish

“Horses have hard bodies, not hard mouths! ... The mouth is nothing more than a sending station. If every body part (poll, neck, shoulder, ribcage and hips) is unwilling to yield and soften, the mouth will feel hard and unwilling to soften to your pressure on the reins. When you have your horse's body soft and supple, the mouth will feel very light, soft and willing to give to the pressure you apply with the reins. Basically, in a nutshell, the more we bend our horse laterally, the easier he will be to control.”

Clinton Anderson

## **Lateral Flexion:**

Lateral flexion exercises are the key to foundation training. The horse follows its nose, and directional control works in a progressive line starting from the nose, then the shoulder, terminating in the hips and hindquarters.

A beginning exercise will be performed on the ground with rope halter and lead. We pick up on the lead at a standstill and wait until the horse gives in the direction of the pull. It is very important that we ask for a little at first, as this will help the horse understand better. If we ask for too much at first, a tug of war battle will ensue. A common mistake most riders make here is when they pick up on the lead or rein, they want to release as soon as the nose goes over. Very important – you need to wait for the release until the give is in the direction of the pull. And when you do release, it should be immediate. That is the reward. Remember, lateral flexions are a critical foundation exercise and you might expect to do two to three thousand repetitions on each side. Some horses of course take longer than others, but it is vital that the horse truly “gets” this lesson before moving on. Remember to do this exercise on both sides. If one side is harder than the other, then a good rule of thumb is to work 2/3 on the hard side and 1/3 on the good side till they are both even.

Once the horse “gets” this exercise, we would move to the snaffle bit, still on the ground. Do the same thing, the horse may react or brace because the bit will apply more pressure than the halter. Remember to ask for a little at first. The key is to let the horse figure it out on its own. Remember also to release only after the horse has released, and it should be immediate.

At this point in the course you should have already been doing all the ground work exercises, including getting your horse to give to direct pressure or the porcupine game. After the horse is giving laterally at a standstill, we will put movement into the exercise. Ask your horse to give laterally and soften then apply direct pressure to the mid section approximately where your spur or heel would go. We want the horse to move while maintaining lateral softness. This may not happen at first; just keep doing it until you achieve the objective.

The next exercise is from the saddle, with snaffle bit. After mounting, start lateral flexions just as you did on the

ground. Slide one hand down on either side, lift slightly towards the hip to make contact with the mouth. Release only when the horse releases, the release should be immediate or as Parelli says “like a hot potato”. The horse may turn in circles, relax your body (let all the air out) and just wait till the horse is still and releases. Make sure there is no contact with your legs. Some may have tendency to hold on with their legs to maintain balance. This will cause the horse to move even more, because the rider is applying pressure with the legs. Do this exercise till the horse is soft and relaxed.


Now we will put movement into our lateral flexion exercises. Remember the exercise on the ground where we put direct pressure in the spur area and ask the horse to move while maintaining softness. We will now do the same thing from the saddle. First bend the horse laterally and wait for release then apply a small amount of pressure with your spur or heel in the midsection while turning a small circle with forward movement. Imagine lifting the rib cage, this will cause the horse to bend in the middle and arc its body into the circle. A good way to understand this is to put your thumb in your rib cage and press, the more pressure you exert the more uncomfortable it becomes and the tendency will be to turn your head and body in the direction of the pressure. The horse will have the same tendency. You must be observant and reward the slightest softening. Remember to do as little as it takes, but also do as much as it takes. Horses learn from repetition, so repeat the exercise till you achieve some degree of softness. Do it on both sides and remember the 2/3 rule. Once the horse understands and is proficient at a walk, move to trot and then to canter, never moving to a higher level until the horse has mastered the lower level.

Lateral flexion exercises also comes with a built in safety feature. The one rein stop. Once the horse understands lateral flexion and if it gets out of control, all we would need to do is slide our hand down the rein and lift towards the hip. This will disengage the horse's forward motion and cause it to either stop or turn in a small circle until it does stop. A good exercise to help understand this and to further fine tune the horse is walking in a straight line, then sliding your hand down the rein and lifting towards the hip until the horse stops and softens. You do this on both sides and when the horse gets good at the walk, you proceed to the trot, then the canter, never moving to a higher level until the horse has mastered the lower level.

## **Vertical Flexion:**

Vertical flexion exercises are key to getting your horse collected or to move with self carriage. Lateral flexion is the key to vertical flexion. If your horse is soft laterally it will be easy to get vertical softness. So it is very important to do a lot of lateral flexion exercises. Don't be content with one good release.

To get started with vertical flexion, we might put our horses rear to a fence (to prevent backing) and with reins in hand put both hands on our thighs while making contact with the horse's mouth. Placing the hands on our thighs ensures that they are steadfast and will not move. This allows us to feel the release. If our hands are floating in the air we will have a tendency to move when the horse releases and not feel it. Ideally the horse would immediately give



to our hands and drop its head, neck and poll downwards and back to us. However what most horses do is to lift their head and neck and fight against our hands. They may also start to back even though there is a fence behind them, they will simply turn their haunches to avoid it. Some would have the tendency to release at that point. This would only reinforce bad behavior. We should hold until we get release, just as we did when doing lateral flexion exercises. The horse will soon start to look for that release. That's why it is very important to be relaxed and observant, in order to feel the release. Once the horse understands vertical flexion, you move away from the fence and repeat the exercise, this time lifting the energy in your body and ask for a step back. If the horse does not move, bump gently at first with your legs, increase the severity of the bump until it moves. Remember the release is the reward and we want to reward the slightest try.

These are some beginning exercises that will achieve both lateral and vertical flexion. There are others and there are more advanced exercises. Remember to do a lot of these; you will begin to see your horse become more soft and supple.

#### **Leg Aids:**

The inside leg and the outside leg are used in turning, but they do different things. Outside leg gives direction, inside leg gives impulsion. The inside leg is applied at the girth to elevate the horse's shoulder and give the horse a point to bend around. The outside leg bends the horse's haunches.

The leg at the girth will move the horse's shoulder away, the leg just behind the girth will move the horse's barrel, and the leg behind the girth moves the haunches. These leg aids combined with different seat and rein aids, will give all different responses. When you are teaching at lower levels, it is best to give very simple instructions. Therefore, I prefer to tell beginners to use the outside leg (along with eyes, seat and hands) to turn the horse. When they swivel their body properly in a turn, it will naturally close their outside leg on the horse. As the rider begins to understand the proper position and bend of the horse, then the inside leg can be used properly to keep the horse's shoulder elevated and keep the horse from dropping his shoulder and leaning into the turn. But until the rider is well positioned and in balance with the horse, the inside leg will get in the way.

Most of my inspiration comes from Clinton Anderson and so I included some of his quotes:

- Always think your way out of a problem rather than trying to fight your way out of it. Lateral flexion is the key.
- Do what you have to do to get the job done. Do it as easy as possible but as firm as necessary.
- You want respect without fear.
- Always reward the slightest try.
- You make the wrong thing difficult, the right thing easy.

- Horses learn through repetition.
- You gain body control through suppleness.
- Without body control you have nothing.
- Remember form to function. Make sure the horse understands "grade one" before you move to "grade two".
- It's feel, timing and experience.
- You gain feel and timing through experience.
- Exaggerate to teach. Refine as you go along.
- Trouble comes from a lack of suppleness and body control.
- Never release the pressure until you get the feel you want.
- True collection is where the horse gives you its entire body to do with whatever you want.

Always quit on a good note.

Have Fun!

## **Master Horseman**

The LSU AgCenter is considering conducting a seventh **Master Horseman Program** for adults in the spring of 2011. The Master Horseman Project is designed to improve the overall knowledge and skills of horse people so that they can serve as 4-H leaders. This program consists of eight sessions. Each session will include horse care and management in a classroom setting, and riding and training in an arena. A fee of about \$200 will be assessed per participant to defray the cost of the program. This cost will include 18 meals, rope halter, yacht cord, lead rope, vet kits, books, binders, bits and prizes. Program participants are expected to serve as volunteers to help in extension horse programs.

Sessions begin with a meal and review at 5:30 PM, with the class starting at 6 PM. They are the Sugarena in Iberia and the Cecil McCrory Exhibit Bldg. (4-H Show Barn) in Abbeville.

An individual must participate in at least 6 sessions to receive the LSU AgCenter Master Horseman Certificate. The program will be limited to 14 participants. If you would like to get more information or an application, please contact Charles Hebert, Angie Arnould or Stan Dutille at 291-7090.

## Dates To Remember

January 5, 2011	Lafayette Horse Advisory Meeting, 4-H Office
January 9, 2011	Lafayette 4-H Benefit Horse Show, SugArena, New Iberia, LA
March 23, 2011	1st Year Exhibitor's Meeting, TBA
March 23, 2011	Grade Horse Clinic, TBA
April 1, 2011	Horse Possession Date
April 1, 2011	Registered horses must be transferred into the name of the exhibitor or immediately family member identified as the owner on the Horse ID Form or complete lease affidavit.
April 15, 2011	All Horse Entries are due to the 4-H office.
May 6-7, 2011	Acadiana Area Horse Camp, Sugarena, New Iberia, LA—Tentative
June 12, 2011	Parish Horse Show, Sugarena, New Iberia, LA
June 30-July 2, 2011	District Horse Show, TBA
July 5-9, 2011	State Horse Show, Ike Hamilton Expo Center, Monroe, LA
July 26-August 1, 2011	Southern Regional Horse Show, Tunica Arena & Expo center, Tunica, MS.

Farewell partner, til we meet on the trail again....If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Charles at 291-7090.

Sincerely,

CHARLES HEBERT

Charles Hebert  
County Agent  
Lafayette Parish

*Angie Arnould*

Angie Arnould  
County Agent  
Lafayette Parish

*Nikki Mouch*

Nikki Mouch  
Assistant 4-H Agent  
Lafayette Parish



*It is the policy of the LSU AgCenter, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age or disability. If you have a disability which requires special assistance for your participation in any aforementioned activity, please contact the Lafayette 4-H office at 291-7090.*