



*The*  
**HAVENWOOD TIMES**  
 HAVENWOOD FARMS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER  
 ROCKY MOUNTAIN & KENTUCKY MTN. SADDLE HORSES



**Colleen & Tom Wood riding Sparkle and Cappucino in warmer weather.**

**Happy New Year and welcome to our first issue of “The Havenwood Times” !**

We’ve been kicking around the idea of starting a farm newsletter for a couple of years now and over Christmas we finally got down to it. We’d like to use this newsletter to keep folks up to date on what’s happening here at the farm... upcoming clinics, new foals, horses for sale, as well as sharing training tips and information on new products that we’ve tried... in fact, any items of interest relating to the wonderful Rocky Mountain breed.

For those of you who don’t know us, Havenwood Farms is the largest breeder of Rocky Mountain Horses in Ontario (Canada). We have been breeding Rockies for over 12 years now and currently keep a herd of more than 50 horses, including 3 double registered stallions. For more information on our farm, please click [here](#). If you are not familiar with the Rocky Mountain horse, you can learn more from our web-site at [www.havenwoodfarms.com](http://www.havenwoodfarms.com).

We hope that you enjoy this newsletter and find it helpful (or at least interesting). If you’ve received it, it means that at some time in past couple of years we’ve exchanged emails. If you feel that this has been sent to you in error and do not wish to receive any future copies, please click below to send a note to:

[unsubscribe@havenwoodfarms.com](mailto:unsubscribe@havenwoodfarms.com) and we’ll take you off of our mailing list.

Happy Trails,

Havenwood Farms

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**Horses For Sale**

Below are a few of the more than 20 Rockies we currently have on offer. To see them all visit our webs-ite at: [www.havenwoodfarms.com](http://www.havenwoodfarms.com)



**Spirit**



**Trefina**



**Razzmataz**

# Havenwood in Print:

*Tim, Cappucino, Sparkle and the rest of the gang  
featured in Blaze Magazine & Canadian Horse Journal.*



Back in the fall we had a visit from writer Karen Briggs and equine photographer Shawn Hamilton. The pair have partnered on many projects, including several magazine articles and the popular series of children's books: 'Crazy for Horses', 'Still Crazy for Horses' and 'Crazy for Ponies' (in which Karen profiles different breeds, illustrated with Shawn's superb photography). Shawn's photos, distributed through her company "CLiX", have appeared on the covers of dozens of magazines worldwide

Karen and Shawn visited our farm while researching an article on gaited riding for an upcoming issue of the Canadian Horse Journal. As well as looking for information, they were also looking for subjects to photograph to accompany the article. Of course, we never have to be asked twice to show off our horses.

We saddled up 'Cappucino', Colleen's chocolate gelding, and just for contrast thought we should bring out 'Sparkle' as well. Sparkle is a three year-old, silver buckskin Rocky Mountain mare who, at the time, had only been under saddle for about six weeks. She and C'cino made for a striking pair as they gaited side-by-side down the field and Shawn clicked away.

Not content with merely photographing us, though, Karen and Shawn wanted to experience the gaited ride for themselves. So, after we were through, they mounted up and took turns riding; not just the trail-seasoned gelding but the green-broke mare as well. Colleen coached and offered pointers from the ground and both horses did us proud. C'cino, as always, was the perfect gentleman. Sparkle behaved wonderfully ("...this horse only has six weeks training?") and both of our guests were able to feel the signature rocking-chair ride of our mountain horses.

After we'd finished riding we asked Shawn if she'd like to visit Tim and the girls at the back of the home farm. Tim, of course, is our 12 year-old stallion "Tim's Choco"; a son of Clemon's Tim and a big, lumbering puppy-dog, who spends his summers in his own 100 acre domain with a dozen mares and their babies. This herd has things just about as natural as they can get and I thought Shawn might be interested in getting some pictures of them in this setting. Shawn enthusiastically agreed, so we piled into the truck and drove down to the back farm, where she spent more than an hour taking dozens of shots of the mares, the babies and, of course, Timmy.

A few weeks ago Shawn sent us an email to let us know that one of her shots of Tim had been featured in Blaze Kids magazine. That was pretty cool. But, even better, they also chose this picture to use on the banner for their booth at this year's Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, so we can say that Timmy really is a "poster boy" for the Rockies!

We'd like to thank Shawn and Karen for helping to spread the word about our horses and giving us the opportunity to share them. Karen's article on gaited riding is currently slated to appear in the March/April '05 issue of the Canadian Horse Journal, but according to the publisher that may be subject to change to a later issue (we'll keep you posted). If you're looking for a top notch photographer for horses, Shawn's web-site is [www.clixphoto.com](http://www.clixphoto.com).



# Havenwood Sponsors Gaited Clinics at CanAm Equine Show in St. Thomas



Colleen Wood and Judy Jones minding the booth with the Gaited Horse Group of Ontario at last year's CanAm Show (March, 2004)

Havenwood Farms will be back at the Can-Am Equine Show in St. Thomas (near London) again this March. Can-Am has become the premier spring event and trade show for the horse industry in Ontario. This year we'll be bringing along, Jim Bob, one of our two year-old stud colts, to help us out with public relations at the booth (he's really quite a charmer). We'll be located with the Gaited Horse Group of Ontario in booths W2-5. For more information on Can-Am, a site map of the Western Fairgrounds Agriplex and schedule of events, visit their web-site at: [www.can-amequine.com](http://www.can-amequine.com)

As well as exhibiting with the Gaited Horse Group of Ontario, Havenwood Farms will also be sponsoring the following clinics on identifying gait:

**Clinic: Know Your Gaits**

(This was originally entitled “**Understanding and Identifying the Four-Beat Gait**” but the folks at Can-Am changed it... I guess we were just too long winded.)

**Clinicians:** Tom & Colleen Wood

**Description:** Using video tape, slow motion digital photography and simple animations, the instructors will explain and illustrate the four-beat gait, how it relates to other intermediate gaits, how to identify variations in gait and discuss some of the factors that can influence your horses ability to gait well. A question and answer session will follow the presentation.

**Time/Location:**

March 17, 18, 20 - 2:00PM, Meeting Rm. #2

March 17, 18, 20 - 3:30PM, Lecture Rm. #1



# Road Apples

## Unresolved Issues

Spend five minutes listening to any pop-psychologist, from Joyce Brothers to Dr. Phil, and the odds are that at some point you'll hear the word "closure". Every budding Frasier Crane worth his salt will tell you that, in dealing with life's events, it is necessary to acknowledge and tackle the source of a problem before you can achieve closure and move on. Unresolved issues are bad for your mental health.

Not surprisingly, though, we all have some things that we'd sooner avoid, deny and work around, rather than admit, confront and resolve. At the time, it just seems easier. In the long run though, we know we're just fooling ourselves. Unresolved problems don't go away and frequently compound themselves the longer we avoid them. And it's not just in our personal lives either. For many, it is equally applicable to the way we deal with problem behavior in our horses.

A while back my wife had a mare in for training whose owner, when she dropped her off, proceeded to rhyme off a laundry list of things that we "couldn't do" with her horse: "You can't use fly spray on her, you'll have to wipe it on with a rag. You can't touch her ears, she won't let you. You can't hold her hind feet up for very long... you can't... you can't..." What this owner was really telling us was the list of all the things that she had avoided dealing with because it seemed easier for her to work around these problems than confront them. A month later she was amazed to watch her mare standing quietly in the cross ties while we sprayed fly repellent on her, hauled the headstall up over her ears and picked out her hind feet with no fuss. "How did you get her to do that?", she asked. Well, like all training, one step at a time... the first step: acknowledge the problem; the second step: do something about it.

There are dozens of behavioral and training "issues" and the remedies for each might vary depending on the horse's disposition, or the trainer's, or the time and resources available, or maybe the phases of the moon. But here are some suggestions that ought to apply no matter what "unresolved issue" you have to contend with.

### **Just do it...**

There are lots of reasons why owners might avoid dealing with problem behavior. Lack of confidence in their ability to correct it. Fear of being injured. Just plain being too nice ("aw, gee, I can't get mad at him..."). Often, I hear owners making excuses for their horse's misbehavior ("oh, it's not his fault..."). So, of course, if the horse isn't really to blame it wouldn't be fair to correct him, would it? Regardless of the reason, though, until you decide to address the problem rather than avoid, deny or excuse it, it isn't likely to correct itself. So screw up your courage, drop the excuses and, like the Nike slogan says, "Just do it."

### **Never set yourself up to fail...**

Letting a horse win just once can sometimes write-off weeks of progress, so it is essential, when correcting your horse's behavior, that you win every round (at least in the horse's mind). Perhaps the best example of this is the horse that avoids being caught. Once a horse has successfully evaded capture a few times, it will be progressively harder to catch ever after. We've all seen owners heading back to the barn for a bucket of feed to entice their wayward mount into a halter after he's decided that he'd really rather stay in the pasture today. Score Round #1 for the horse (and Round #2 isn't likely to be much fun). Walking up to such a horse in a 20 acre field swinging a lead rope is setting yourself up to fail. But if you've planned his approach, confinement and haltering in such a manner that the horse is convinced that getting caught is inevitable, thoughts of escape don't even come into play. Plan-

ning is key, but so is perseverance. Whether it's a runaway in the field or misbehavior under saddle, if the horse does temporarily take the upper hand, it is imperative that you continue until you have the situation moving back in the direction you want it to be. If you can't have a perfectly willing horse (which is the ultimate goal), you can at least have one who eventually knows that "resistance is futile".

### **Always work in a controlled environment...**

Working in a controlled environment doesn't mean that you never leave the arena or fenced paddock. It simply means anticipating the horse's reaction and being prepared to control it. To correct a horse that shies away from movement over its head, for instance, you're obviously not going to drop the reins and begin waving both arms madly. While this would provide the necessary stimulus to bring the reaction on, it wouldn't leave you in a very good position to control it when it occurred! But if you gather the reins and get contact, knowing that the horse is going to react, you can gently wave an arm to provoke the spook and be ready to pull him up immediately when he does. (Do this a few hundred more times and eventually the horse begins to anticipate the correction... he may still not like things waving over his head, but he'll learn that he's not allowed to react to them). The key is to provoke a reaction, but never provoke more of a reaction than you can control. The gains made correcting a hundred small spooks can be lost if you let one BIG one get away from you.

### **Don't start something you can't finish...**

I'm not really a big fan of "round pen reasoning" as cure-all for every training issue (I figure I can teach a horse more with my hands on him than when he's circling me 30 feet away). But I've found it does have its place, particularly with youngsters who haven't had much handling. Over the years, I've discovered that the effectiveness of this method depends largely on the success of the first session. And once I've begun a session, if I quit before the horse is responding properly, I might just as well never have started.

The same is true, for almost every lesson we begin with our horses. If you quit before you've achieved the desired response, all you'll have done is wasted your time and confused your horse. But that's no reason not to start. This is where a well defined lesson plan is so important. Decide what you intend to teach the horse and break it down into small component steps. Then take each of those steps and break it down further. Continue this process until it starts to get a little absurd (I'm serious). Now, every one of those steps can become a stopping point for your lesson, on two conditions: 1) that you can bring the horse to that step and get him to repeat (and be rewarded for) it at least twice, and 2) that next time out you go at least one step further. This way you have a flexible plan that gives you a choice of "finishes" and no excuse not to "start".

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Last year I had a front tire on my Dodge pick-up go bad. It wasn't a big deal; a little shimmy at around 55 mph and slight pull to the right. I kept driving on it for most of the summer, not really noticing that it was slowly getting worse. It wasn't until I finally got it into the garage and had the tires replaced that I realized how much I'd been compensating for the pull. I was amazed at the difference, how much easier it was to drive, considering that I hadn't really been aware that it was taking all that extra effort.

Compensating for behavioral issues with your horse can be a bit like that. Avoiding certain things, accepting misbehavior or making excuses for it... it all becomes habit. It's not until you've corrected the problem that you suddenly realize just how much enjoyment it's taken from the time you spend with your horse. So take an honest inventory of your horse's behavior. Anything you've been avoiding? Excusing? Working around? Perhaps it's time you gained some "closure" on these unresolved issues.

# Product Review: Myler Bits

by Colleen Wood



When it comes to bits, I could go on forever. Some people collect shoes, I collect bits. I think it's fascinating the way different bits will work in different ways on different horses. The Rocky Mountain Horse can be very particular about it's mouth. You find a bit that works well on one, and the next horse you put it on absolutely hates it. When training for gait, the choice of bit is often determined by what we are trying to correct (head carriage, collection, etc.), and of course we're usually working with youngsters with a lot of changes going on their mouth that can make them all the more fussy. For these reasons, I need good selection of tools to choose from in the tack room... and so, among other things, I collect bits.

All of the horses we start under saddle here begin with a full-cheek snaffle. We use this to teach them turning, stopping, and the rest of the basics. When we begin to work on perfecting the gait, increasing stride and collection, we generally change to a curb bit. Depending on the horse and what's required, we might use anything from a Kimberwick to a big, vulcanized rubber Pelham.

Every so often, though, we get a horse that just needs something a little different. While researching, looking for different ideas and concepts (...okay, shopping for more bits), I came across the Myler Bit System.

Myler bits (distributed by Toklat) are the invention of brothers Dale, Ron and Bob Myler. They feature a curved mouthpiece that enables the horse to have bar and tongue relief. This is said to make it easier for the horse to swallow and it creates an even pressure across the mouth. The bits are well-engineered to give pressure where it is needed and avoid it where it's not. Many feature shanks which can lift and swivel independently on each side, allowing the rider to more easily engage a single direct rein or isolate a shoulder, acting on one side of the mouth only.

The bits are available in several ready made configurations of direct action and shanked bits, or the purchaser can order the mouthpiece and side pieces separately to create a custom bit. They also offer different designs of hackamores and combination bits, which are a hybrid between a shanked bit and a hackamore. Their selection of ready made and custom bits can be seen on the Toklat website at [www.toklat.com/myler](http://www.toklat.com/myler).

Myler categorizes their bits according to the horse's level of training: from Level 1 bits for early training to Level 3 for finished horses, moving to a progressively "softer" action as the horse progresses. The Myler brothers have also published book ("**A Whole Bit Better**", published by Toklat Originals Inc.) which does a very good job explaining how bits work in relation to the horse's mouth (and other parts) and the differences between the action of their bit design and others. It discusses the factors involved in selecting a bit and some of the signs of resistance that an improperly bitted horse may show. The book also contains the whole catalogue of Myler bit designs with a description of the action and uses of each one. The copy we bought was less than \$15 and is well worth it for anyone wishing to gain a better insight into the workings of a bit in a horse's mouth.

Last summer I had a two year old gelding that was quite tall and lanky. His gait was smooth and long-strided, but I was having to work very hard to keep his head up and his back end engaged with just a snaffle bit. I didn't think his owners, who are new to horses of any kind, would be able to effectively get him to gait in a snaffle. I tried him in a Kimberwick, an Argentine and a Wonder Bit, with limited success, but not the ease I was looking for. I then worked him in a triple-roller mullen-mouth bit from Myler. The improvement was immediate. He suddenly seemed happy with the bit in his mouth, his front end lightened up and he swung into an easy, natural gait with a nice head carriage. For this horse's mouth, at his stage of development, I believe the curved mouthpiece offered

relief to the tongue and bars in a way that allowed him to carry his head higher without having to be “pulled” up and resisting the bit. Another horse might have responded to a different bit, but I was glad to have this one in the toolbox at the time.

I like the concept of the Myler Bits, but they can be two or three times more expensive than most others. The ready made bits generally range in price from \$50 to \$150 US (\$70 to \$200 CDN ...custom ones can be more). If you only need one bit for a single horse, the Myler price isn't too big a drawback. But for our purposes, replacing all the 20-odd bits we currently keep in the arsenal with equivalent Myler bits could cost two or three thousand dollars. While I really like the design, that's a little cost-prohibitive. As time goes on though, there is no doubt that I'll be adding more Mylers to my collection.

I'm also great fan of the 'try before you buy' concept. I often beg and borrow different bits from other riders to try them out before deciding whether purchase one. To this end, the Toklat website offers a “rent-a-bit” program from select dealers. For a nominal price you can take the bit home and try it on your horse to see how it works. If you're considering buying a Myler, inquire whether you can rent it first, to be sure that it's going to work for your horse. The bottom line for us: for most purposes we can find a \$40 bit that does just fine. But if you think your horse needs something different, or are simply willing to spend the extra money for a better-engineered, well-built bit, then take a look at the Mylers.

As a final note, if you're having biting problems, don't blame the bit until you've had your horse's mouth checked out by your vet or equine dentist. If you skimp on the dental maintenance, you'll frequently wind up with horse that tosses it's head, evades the bit, and will never gait consistently.

# Jim Bob and Cross Bo Are Turning Two!

In the fall of 2003 we said good-bye to one of our stallions, Northern Drifter, and sent him on his way to warmer climes with JLM Ranch in sunny California. We had been breeding Drifter to Tim's daughters for four years at that point and had a new crop of beautiful fillies that we wanted to keep for brood stock. But since they were daughters of Drifter and also granddaughters of Tim, the time had come to bring along some new blood.



That year we headed south to Kentucky in search of Drifter's replacement. We knew the bloodlines we were looking for. Our favourite two stallions from the "sons of Tobe" are Clemon's Tim and Sewell's Sam. Since we already have a son of Tim, we set out to look for a colt with Sewell's Sam lineage.

Of the second generation stallions from Sam, there were (in our opinion) none better than Carl Vivian's Buddy Roe. Years earlier when we were first getting started in the breed, we had visited with Carl and Wanda and met Buddy in person. The word "awesome" is grossly overused these days, but in this case it applies perfectly... Buddy Roe was awesome. We sat and listened as Carl, in his quiet Kentucky drawl, told us his stories about Buddy. The one that always springs to mind is of how Buddy was trained haul logs down from the ridge behind their home.

Working at the top of the ridge, Carl would hook Buddy up to a log and start him off down the hill toward the yard. Watching from the kitchen window, Wanda would periodically check to see if he had arrived. On his own, Buddy would pull the logs down from ridge and stand patiently in the yard when he got there, waiting to be unhitched. When Wanda spotted Buddy arriving with his load, she would slip out and unhook him, tie the traces up over his back and send him back up the ridge to Carl. All by himself, this breeding stallion would spend the day hauling logs home from the ridge. If ever there was an example of the intelligence, willingness, trust and placid nature that we treasure in the Rocky breed, Buddy Roe was it. It is also no small testament to Carl Vivian's skill as a breeder and trainer.

When Buddy passed away, Carl and Wanda received cards of sympathy from people all over the country who had met and fallen in love with their wonderful stallion. While looking for colts in Kentucky we were thrilled to find out that Carl had a grandson of Buddy Roe (by Hammertime) for sale that year. Hammertime is the gorgeous, chocolate son of Buddy that Carl kept to replace him after his death. And he is made in his father's image.

We arrived at the Vivian's and spent some time getting to know the little colt that Carl had christened "Jim Bob". ("Don't spend much time on the names," he explained, "people always change it after they buy 'em anyways.") After meeting the colt Carl suggested that we should "take his daddy for ride" and brought Hammertime from his stall. Outside I mounted up, expecting to run him up and down the lane, but Carl moved toward the gate leading to the mare's field.

"I'll open the gate and you can take him down along that hollow," he said, pointing to the far end of the paddock. "There's a path in there follows the crick bottom on down to the fence."



Looking at the field full of mares and sitting on a breeding stallion, fresh from his stall, I suggested another route. "That's okay Carl, I can just ride him here along the driveway." Carl seemed to ignore what I'd said and, without changing his tone simply repeated: "I'll open the gate and you can take him down along that hollow. There's a path in there follows the crick bottom on down to the fence." I got the feeling that if we wanted to buy Hammer's colt, this ride wasn't optional.

Through the gate, down the field, along the creek and back again. Past the mares in two directions and finally standing amongst them back at the gate, Hammer never cast so much as sidelong glance anywhere except where he was pointed. The mares could as well have been on another planet; under saddle this horse was all business. Not to mention that he was a gaiting machine! Across the rough pasture and climbing the ridge Hammer never broke stride or, as Carl said, "That horse ain't got no trot or pace in him." This was Buddy Roe's heir!

If we'd had any doubts about purchasing Jim Bob they were put to rest with that experience. We made arrangements for shipping and a month later JB and Cross Bo arrived to join the herd here at Havenwood.

Which brings us to Cross Bo, who is pretty well-bred little guy in his own right. I hate to make him seem like an afterthought but, in truth, he sort of was. We had already settled on JB when we spoke with Sandy McCart and found out that she also had a stud-quality colt for sale that fall. Several years ago, Colleen spent some time working with Sandy and has kept in touch. When we saw this colt at her farm near Harrodsburg, Colleen and I both had the same reaction... "oh look, he's got a chest!". We had spent a lot of time during that week being shown colts so narrow through the front end that it looked like both legs were coming out of the same hole! Being used to the broad-chested offspring of Timmy, some these babies looked positively anorexic to us. Both JB and Cross Bo had a nice span to their chest as babies and are developing into deep chested adults.

While we had really only intended to bring one colt back with us that year, when we saw Cross Bo it was pretty hard to leave him behind. It didn't take long for us to convince ourselves that having three stallions might be pretty good idea and would give us more flexibility in our breeding program and a wider range of bloodlines to offer clients. Besides which, he was cute.

JB will be turning two in April and Cross Bo in June. It looks like JB will be the taller of the two, he's nearly 14.2 hands now. Cross Bo is currently 14 hands tall and will likely finish around 14.3, while JB will be 15 hands or a little better. We'll be putting them under saddle early this summer so, if they are certified in time, we may do some late breedings with them and have their first babies on offer next year. We have no doubt that they'll both make spectacular daddies!