

THE



# INGATE



NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2021



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Lexi Ray and Evita. Photo courtesy of RingSide Media.

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## THE **INGATE**

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Visit the OHJA website at  
[www.ohja.ca](http://www.ohja.ca)

You will find the specifics to all  
 OHJA programs and all necessary  
 membership information



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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**Dear OHJA friends and family,**

On behalf of the entire OHJA Board I hope that this Issue of the InGate finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy.

The last year certainly brought with it so many challenges for our friends, families, work, and mental health. We are all looking forward to getting back to the sport we love and enjoying the pursuit of competition at the Gold Horse shows in Ontario.



As previously announced, we are thrilled to be bringing back OHJA programs, OHJA points and OHJA Annual Awards in 2021, as well as the first ever Ontario Gold Championships! For specific details on this year's amazing schedule of events and programs, please be sure to check out this issue and please visit our website for further information.

Please note, given the evolving situation with local health authorities we will endeavour to keep our channels up to date with the latest information and appreciate everyone's understanding that things may change in order to comply with COVID-19 protocols.

I also want to give a critical update to our members that the OHJA funding has undergone some changes this year. The Board has been working hard to evaluate how best to secure income to support our great programs for the foreseeable future and gain financial independence. A large portion of our income comes from the Equestrian Canada's (EC) Jump Canada Levy. EC has confirmed that the OHJA will not be receiving Jump Canada funds in 2021 and that changes are coming to the program for future years that are not known at this time. As a result, the OHJA needs to replace funding that previously came from the EC Jump Canada Levy. Through much consideration and deliberation, the OHJA has made the decision to introduce an OHJA Levy Fee for the 2021 show season. We sent out a notification to all members that a fee of \$4 will be charged on each entry fee at Gold Show venues. These monies will go directly back to members through the operations of OHJA programs.

As always please remember to renew all your memberships (EC, OE and OHJA) before competing at the first show. Even though we have deferred 2020 OHJA memberships you still need to renew. Make sure you use the same email address as you did in 2020 so your fees are waived. Full instructions are on our website: [www.ohja.ca](http://www.ohja.ca)

Looking to give back; participate in developing OHJA programs; enjoy planning events or writing then definitely consider joining one of our OHJA committees. We are always looking for enthusiastic volunteers who want to make a difference! Please contact us at [info@ohja.ca](mailto:info@ohja.ca).

Enjoy this Summer 2021 InGate Issue. Along with the entire Board of Directors I wish all our Members a safe and happy 2021 Gold Horse Show Season!

**All the best,  
Diane Ratigan  
OHJA President**

## WELCOME NEW 2021 OHJA BOARD MEMBERS

I wanted to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to our outgoing Directors Gabrielle Gallant and Nanci Forfellow. The contributions of these individuals to the OHJA are countless and we are grateful for their many years of support and dedication towards the OHJA membership. We have 9 returning Directors and 2 new Directors joining us for 2021. Please join me in welcoming Heather McCann and Katie Blum to the OHJA Board of Directors.

Sincerely, Diane Ratigan, OHJA President



### Heather McCann

As an avid competitor on the A Circuit since the 1980's, Heather has competed in the pony divisions, Children's hunters, Younger and Older Adults and most recently with her horse Sequoia in the 3'6 Amateur Owner division and Hunter Derbies. Her husband Brent, and son Cameron compete in the Jr/Am Jumpers. Heather brings her expertise with both provincial and national sports governing bodies to promote government funding for our sport. When not riding or competing with her family, Heather teaches history at Branksome Hall.



### Katie Blum

Katie had a successful junior/amateur career, making her way from the pony rings to competing at Young Riders (NAJYRC), and supporting the Ontario Collegiate Equestrian Association (OCEA) throughout university. After stepping away to focus on her career as a CPA, specializing in the translation of climate impacts for business, she is now planning her return to the show ring. Katie is excited to have the opportunity to further develop the OHJA community, supporting riders at all levels of competition.

## 2021 OHJA PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

### Introducing the 2021 OHJA Programs

The OHJA is proud to continue to offer a number of hunter, jumper and equitation programs that support the development of our members and their equine partners.

**New in 2021, the OHJA is very excited to present the following new programs:**

- Eastern Final of the Canadian Hunter Derby Series
- OHJA Beginner & Low Childrens'/Adult Hunter Classic
- Major League Show Jumping Course Walks

For more information and specific programs details for each of these programs, please visit our website: [www.ohja.ca](http://www.ohja.ca)



### All OHJA Programs

Returning in 2021 are many of the very popular hunter, jumper and equitation programs. All details regarding each program can be found online, including program specs and planned horse show dates.\*

### OHJA Hunter Programs

- OHJA Pony Power Series and Pony Power Final
- OHJA Beginner and Low Child Adult Stake Series
- OHJA Beginner & Low Childrens'/Adult Hunter Classic
- OHJA 3'0 Junior Amateur Derby Series
- OHJA 3'3 and 3'6 Junior Amateur Derby
- OHJA Young Hunter Development Series
- OHJA Top Score Hunter Award
- OHJA Eastern Final of the Canadian Hunter Derby Series (CHDS)



### OHJA Equitation Programs

- OHJA Jumper Medal and OHJA Jumper Medal Finals
- OHJA/CET Mini Medal and OHJA/CET Mini Medal Finals
- OHJA Equitation Weekend
- OHJA High Point Equitation Award



### Jumper Programs

- OHJA Water Jump Schooling Program
- 0.9m and 1.0m Jumper Stake
- Major League Show Jumping Course Walks
- OHJA Super Jumper Weekends

### Other OHJA Programs & Awards

- The FEI North American Youth Championships
- Travel Grant
- OHJA Sportsmanship Award

## OHJA LEVY INTRODUCTION LETTER TO MEMBERS

Dear Valued Member of the OHJA,

This pandemic has been challenging for so many, in so many different ways. Like many nonprofits, the OHJA is faced with a shortage of funds as we work to protect the programs that our members know and love.

As a nonprofit volunteer-driven group dedicated to the growth of our sport, the OHJA operates solely on two sources of income. These are the OHJA membership fee and the JC Levy, which is collected through the Jumping Committee of Equestrian Canada.

Forty percent of JC Levy funds collected at Ontario Gold Horse Shows have traditionally gone to the OHJA. For the last thirty years, we've leveraged this money and our membership fees against hundreds of volunteer hours to run meaningful horseshow programs that are dedicated to the growth and preservation of our sport.

In 2020, the Jumping Committee made the decision to disperse all collected levy funded to support horse show organizers who were faced with additional challenges and costs because of the pandemic. Unfortunately, we were informed that Equestrian Canada will not be awarding levy funds to the OHJA in 2021 either.

Without the Jumping Committee funding for two consecutive years, the OHJA has made the decision to add a small OHJA Levy for the 2021 show season.

Having received this notification from Equestrian Canada without much notice, the OHJA board had to act quickly to protect its horse show programs and points tabulation.

For 2021, a small fee of \$4 will be charged on each entry at Gold Show venues. One hundred percent of this levy will be invested directly into our sport, through the operations of OHJA programs. These programs include the hunter stake classes and classics, the Junior/ Amateur Derbies, the Pony Power series, the Super Jumper Weekends, Young Hunter Development Series, Stake Classes for the .90m and 1m jumpers, and the OHJA Medal and OHJA CET Medal.

Through these unprecedented times, the OHJA board is committed to protecting these programs for our members and their equine partners. Over the long term, the board will stay focused on maintaining our ability to continue to offer our horseshow programming by exploring other funding options and eliminating this new \$4 levy. We will work hard to make sure this small fee is only a temporary measure.

There's a light at the end of this long COVID19 tunnel, and we know what that means (among other things!): getting to celebrate our shared love of horses and this sport at horseshows soon.

**Please visit <http://ohja.ca/levy-program/> for more information. If you have questions about the Jump Canada levy, please reach out to Equestrian Canada.**



## TRANSITIONING RIDERS (PONIES TO HORSES AND HUNTERS TO JUMPERS)



Avery and Cumano CL.

### Making The Jump

Many young pony riders have dreams of eventually moving up to the junior hunters, trying the equitation, and perhaps even tackling the jumper ring. Moving up can be exciting, nerve-wracking, bittersweet, and everything in-between. Two junior riders who know this all too well are Ellah Dubeau-Kielty and Avery May Pritchard.

Burlington native Ellah Dubeau-Kielty made a name for herself in the pony divisions, showing everything from small greens to large regulars. She made multiple appearances at the Royal Winter Fair and also competed at USEF Pony Finals.

In 2018 she made her junior hunter debut, earning the OHJA zone championship with Cupidon. In 2020, Ellah entered the jumper ring and won the 5 Year Old Young Horse Final aboard Wildflower. Ellah trains with Mark Hayes and has been working with some young horses that she hopes to bring out this year.

Avery May Pritchard of Collingwood, Ontario was also a highly successful pony rider, and she too had successful showings at USEF Pony Finals and the Royal Winter Fair. Avery then moved into the junior hunters and in 2019, she finished in the top 3 aboard Dresden Row. She recently began competing in the jumpers with her young new



Ellah and Wildflower.

mount, Cumano CL, and plans to show her other horse, Nykaenen, in the junior hunters, derbies, and equitation this summer. Avery trains with Becky DeHaas and Cathy Inch.

**How did you feel about moving off of ponies? Were you at all intimidated to go straight into the junior hunters?**

**A:** The season before I moved up into the juniors I would go watch them show almost every weekend and knew it was something I wanted to do! I was very intimidated by the juniors and it was definitely very nerve wracking at my first couple shows. I remember I came out of the ring at my first show in the junior hunters and looked at my coach and said “those were some big jumps”.

**E:** Moving from ponies to horses was a huge transition for me, I was excited but also really nervous about the change from everything I knew and felt comfortable with. I was quite intimidated going straight into the junior hunters as it was a ring I never thought I would get the chance to compete in.

**What did you feel was your biggest challenge to overcome in making a substantial change?**

**A:** My biggest challenge to overcome was definitely the need to prove myself. I put a lot of pressure on myself to be perfect right away. I felt like everyone was watching me and expecting a lot from me. I needed to realize that showing against some of the top junior riders on our circuit was already a big accomplishment. It was important for me to overcome this feeling and focus on myself, my horse, and our personal goals.

**E:** Confidence was by far my biggest challenge. Believing that I could be a competitive and effective rider in the horse rings was something I had to really work on.

**You’ve both recently moved into the jumper ring as well. Was that a difficult shift to make? Do you find that your mindset or your riding style change at all between the two rings?**

**A:** The shift from hunters to jumpers was one I knew I was going to be making but was always hesitant on. I love the hunters and was so confident in the hunter ring but the jumper ring was a whole new ball game. I think my riding style and mindset has become a lot sharper and workmanlike from switching between rings. I find myself riding a lot more accurate and efficient in both rings now that I am challenged with harder tracks and higher jumps.

**E:** It was definitely a big learning curve for me as I had to change certain aspects of my riding style to suit the jumper ring. It was a job I had not done before and one that was very different from what I was used to. Working on accuracy, versatility and reaction time with such an experienced coach has really helped me make the shift.

**Has Covid-19 had an impact on your ability to prepare or your timeline for moving up divisions?**

**A:** Covid-19 has definitely made an impact on my timeline because my time as a junior is running out, although it has allowed me to take on two young six year old horses that I can take my time with and train more. Covid-19 has affected my previous goals but has me setting bigger goals I wouldn't have been able to achieve without taking a step back and taking my time.

**E:** We normally adhere to a very strict training schedule over the winter months but due to COVID-19 we haven't been able to follow the same system. With me being new to the jumper ring and many of the horses I ride being young it definitely makes things a bit harder to prepare the way we would like to but we are staying positive, working hard and adapting as best we can.

**What are the most significant things you've learned, either about yourself or your riding, through your progression up the ranks?**

**A:** I think the most important thing I've learned about myself and my riding is how important it is to be involved as much as you can. As a kid, I was very involved in the care of my horses. We used to have our own barn and I worked in the barn and with my horses every day. Moving up in the ranks I found myself focusing too much on the sport aspect and not enough on the bond with my horses. Horses aren't machines, they are our partners and our friends, and should be treated like it.

**E:** The biggest thing I've learned is that I am my biggest opponent. I've learned not to compare myself to the success of others, not to compare horses, finances or opportunities but to make the most out of what I have and what I can do. I've learned that the only rider I should try to better than, is the rider I was yesterday; block out negativity and self-doubt, and focus forward on my own goal. I also learned change is good, mistakes are okay and your team is everything.

**Lastly, what advice would you give to other junior riders who are about to move from ponies to horses, or from hunters to jumpers?**

**A:** Stay positive and stay patient. There will be many ups and downs along the way but it all shapes you into the rider you will become in the future. Focus on yourself and not on what everyone else is doing. Everyone has a different path to the top and everyone will have their own struggles. There is a positive side to everything and everything happens for a reason. Set goals for yourself and work hard to reach them. Take every opportunity given to you and do as much behind the scenes as possible.

**E:** Embracing every opportunity to learn is key regardless of the ring you're in or the goals you have. You have to really work for it, invest the time and be open to change. Be a dedicated student, watch other riders, listen to your coaches and surround yourself with people who push you to be better.



Ellah and Doctrino.

**WE WANT YOU!**



Amy Millar celebrating a win. Photo courtesy of RingSide Media.

## **LOOKING TO GET INVOLVED? WANT TO SHARE INPUT ON HOW WE CAN CONTINUE TO DEVELOP OHJA PROGRAMS?**

The OHJA is always looking for enthusiastic individuals to join the various OHJA sub-committees, which include:

- **The Hunter & Equitation Committee**
- **The Jumper Committee**
- **The Banquet & Awards Committee**
- **The Communications Committee: Ingate/ Web/Social Media**

Committee members can expect to attend monthly meetings, provide input on programs and be responsible for leading and/or supporting committee and Board initiatives.

Please email all inquiries to: [info@ohja.ca](mailto:info@ohja.ca) .

## BEST MINDFULNESS EXERCISES TO DO WITH YOUR HORSE



**Have you ever wanted to really and deeply connect with your horse?** Today's article explores the best mindfulness exercises to do with your horse, coupled with easy to incorporate guidance that you can put into practice today. In the world we live in now, it's not easy to practice mindfulness. Stress and anxiety along with depression and overwhelm are an everyday occurrence for so many, myself included. But when you have the support and trust of a willing horse? You can move mountains – I truly believe that!

To add to that, your horse will soften and surrender to the wonderful feelings, practices and

exercises I'm suggesting you try.

### **What Is Mindfulness?**

Mindfulness simply means to pay attention in the present moment. That's it, and that's all. In my opinion, there isn't a sport out there more perfectly suited to paying attention than ours.

We're always cognisant or aware of our heels, legs, arms, thumbs, hips – and then we have to think about our horses stance, position and more. Phewf!

Whether you knew it or not, you've been practicing mindfulness since your seat hit the saddle! Now we're going to fine-tune your skills to build bond,

increase calm and confidence, and support positive mental health for not only you, but your horse as well.

Even if you've been feeling like your horse lacks trust, confidence, or the desire to connect and bond with you more deeply, I just know that some of these mindfulness exercises will help you on your journey.

### **The key is to practice and repeat.**

I read somewhere that you can't learn to ride a horse by reading about it. The same goes for mindfulness.

Consider journaling your experiences which will help you in the present moment, but also down the road when you can take pride in your advancements and progress.

You might just find that your horse responds with an openness and willingness you never expected!

The exercise examples below are all tried and tested by my horse Spirit.

I spent months incorporating these mindful activities that you'll read about today, and the results astounded me.

Because of the trust I built, Spirit and I have an iron-clad bond. So let's hop in the saddle and get mindful together!

### **Mindful Exercise – Horse Breathing**

This exercise is one that you can do anywhere with your horse, and requires no additional tack, or supplies.

The only thing it requires is an open mind, and an open heart. Trust me, your horse knows!

It's also important to note here, that before even seeing your horse, taking stock of your current and present moment energy is crucial. If you're anxious – try 5-10 deep breaths in the car, or barn first. Then go get your horse. Being aware of the energy you bring, and softening your mind and body is key. Your horse will catch on.

**How-To:** Finding a quiet, calming and relaxing spot – whether it's in the barn on cross ties, or on a beautiful trail, stand directly beside your horse, holding his or her halter firmly in your hand. You should both be facing the same direction.





Place your ear as close as possible to your horse's nostril and try to match up your breathing.

Together, breathe in and out through the nose, 10-20 times, and imagine your body and your horse's totally relaxing, melting into the earth, feeling warm, and completely zen. As you move to the other side and repeat, gently stroke his neck, nose, ears, forelocks, and anywhere else very slowly, while continuing to breath, helping you both find calm and peace.

For spicy horses, you'll need to do 20+ deep breaths in and out together on both sides.

Journal your experiences and don't give up!  
Remember: practice and repeat.

## **Mindful Exercise – Mindful Massage & Affirmations**

Our horses love to be touched, for the most part. During this exercise, I'd like to invite you to play peaceful music so that your horse can hear it. Spa music, or meditation music will do.

**How-To:** Using your intuition as guidance, gently massage and rub all parts of your horse's body. Use light and hard pressure and notice how they respond. Use just your hands.

Breath in and out deeply, and in your mind, recite as many positive affirmations as you can keeping your mind focused, and your hands moving slowly and methodically.

An affirmation example could be: "I am deeply connected to my horse ", or "I am so grateful my horse loves me deeply."

Notice how your horse responds, and do this for a minimum of 20 minutes. Notice how YOU feel too!

If you're going to go for a ride, see if there's a difference there too.

As always, journal your experiences and enjoy!

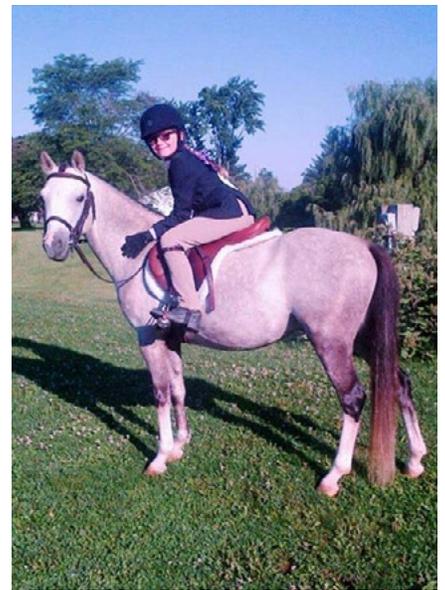
**Wishing you the very best in mindfulness horsemanship,**

**Stephanie Van De Ven**















# 2021 HORSE SHOW COMPETITIONS

COMPETITION NAME	LOCATION	DATE
Angelstone	Angelstone Tournaments Erin	July 1-4
Angelstone	Angelstone Tournaments Erin	July 7-11
Ottawa International I	Wesley Clover Parks Ottawa	July 13-18
Ottawa International II	Wesley Clover Parks Ottawa	July 20-25
Caledon	Caledon Equestrian Park Palgrave	July 29-Aug 1
Caledon	Caledon Equestrian Park Palgrave	Aug 4 - 8
Ten Sixty Stables	Ten Sixty Stables Uxbridge	Aug 12-15
The Champions	Angelstone Tournaments Erin	Aug 18-22
The International	Angelstone Tournaments Erin	Aug 25-29
Ten Sixty Stables	Ten Sixty Stables Uxbridge	Sept. 2-5
Kubota Triple Crown Finale 2	Angelstone Tournaments Erin	Sep 8-12
Ottawa National	Wesley Clover Parks Ottawa	Sept. 15-19
Caledon	Caledon Equestrian Park Palgrave	Sept. 22-26
Caledon	Caledon Equestrian Park Palgrave	Sept. 29-Oct. 3
Caledon	Caledon Equestrian Park Palgrave	Oct. 13-17
Caledon	Caledon Equestrian Park Palgrave	Oct. 20-24
RAWF	Exhibition Place	Nov. 5-14

