

## SHOW MOM ETIQUETTE

Patti Boysen

### Preparing for Show Season

For some, preparing for show season is like gearing up for a root canal. Just the thought of it makes your teeth hurt. And while it can be a stressful time for your rider let's not forget the role of the show mom. After all, behind every rider there is a show mom with her arms full of luggage, boots, cameras, water bottles, peppermints, hairnets and a credit card clenched between her teeth for everything else.

To help eliminate some of the stress and allow you to be fully prepared for the fun of the season, here is a proven timetable to help you get started.

#### Four Weeks Out

1. Meet with trainer to decide what shows you will be going to this season and arrange for hotel rooms.

2. Ask your rider for all dry cleaning so you can make sure everything is cleaned, pressed and ready to go.

3. Search Internet for travel directions.

4. Try and locate show boots and derby in upstairs attic.

#### Three Weeks Out

1. Ask your rider for all dry cleaning so you can make sure everything is cleaned, pressed and ready to go.

2. Call hotel and change reservations to now include husband who has suddenly decided to go. Make arrangements to board four dogs and two cats.

3. Go back into attic and look for show boots and derby. Quickly realize the noise that has been coming from upstairs all week has not been from Guitar Hero and quickly rescue screeching, smelly cat from the artificial Christmas tree your husband stored in the attic just last month complete with lights and decorations. Offer food and water to hissing cat. Spend next hour applying antiseptic to your wounds. Make mental note to take tree outside and burn.

4. Ask grooms and trainer what liquid libations you can bring for them. Buy large pack of peppermints for horses; Advil PM for yourself.

#### Two Weeks Out

1. Ask your rider for all dry cleaning so you can make sure everything is cleaned, pressed and ready to go.

2. Replace liquid libations you bought

for grooms and trainer that you consumed while waiting for dry cleaning.

3. Change hotel reservation, as husband is now unable to go because of business. Keep boarding arrangements for dogs so you know they will be fed in your absence. Leave cats to fend for themselves.

4. Order new show boots and derby. Pay for overnight shipping.

#### Week of the Show

1. Venture upstairs and pick up all show clothes from floor where they have been since last show of the season. Plead with dry cleaner to provide you with over night service even though it is now 4:30 PM. Promise first-born son and two cats for their efforts.

2. Call school principal to explain why your child will be missing three days of school so soon after winter vacation. Tactfully enlighten him that while you understand saddle seat is not a "school sanctioned sport" it is a sport. A very expensive sport. Make note not to mention that part again while writing check to school building campaign.

3. Go to drugstore buy, at a minimum, three cans of hairspray, 14 packs of bobbie pins and 12 packs of color appropriate hair nets. That should last

you through the qualifiers.

#### Driving to the Show

1. Be sure to have directions to hotel and fairgrounds in front seat of car and not under one of five suitcases, three garment bags, your small overnight bag or cooler that is now only half filled with liquid libations for grooms and trainers after you explained to your husband

your more than generous donation to the school building campaign.

2. After five hours on the road call trainer to make sure you are headed to the right show as directions indicated you should have been there two hours ago.

3. Text trainer same question.

4. Explain to police officer that has pulled you over for swerving into oncoming traffic while you were texting that you are lost. Put ticket in glove box along with expired registration and wish him a nice day.

5. Call Onstar to find out how you can get out from behind the truck you have been following since ticket two hours ago. Learn that your husband has cancelled your membership. Note to self: Put husband in room with cat.

#### Night Before First Class

1. Have conversation with your rider



#### TOP TEN THINGS TO AVOID AT A HORSE SHOW IF YOU ARE A NERVOUS SHOW MOM

1. Never pop a balloon within a 20-mile radius of horses. This is not only alarming for the horses but it can take years off a nervous show mom's life.

2. If the ears of your horse (or any horse) are pinned back and your husband thinks it is a sign of being docile—like your dog—just know that some things need to be learned the hard way. Be prepared with band aides and to dial 911, which as a show mom, you already have on speed dial.

3. Never pat a horse on the head while their girth is being tightened.

4. If you are at an outdoor show never allow young children to eat Skittles or M&M's on the top row of aluminum bleachers.

5. Do not open an umbrella near a horse.

6. Never allow young children to climb on the rail and play "peek-a-boo" with the riders in the ring.

7. Never yell at the judges or try to have a running dialog. Ever. Just don't.

8. Never think it is a good idea to introduce little "Fifi" to the large pit bull by the rail that is wagging his tail when there are riders in the ring. In fact, leave Fifi at home.

9. Never wear open toe shoes.

10. Never, ever sit next to someone who likes to talk about their equestrian accidents in graphic detail. Not only will this make you even more anxious as your rider enters the ring, it will give you a whole new list of things to worry about that you had never even remotely considered before.

The American Saddlebred Horse Association of New Jersey

# Jersey Classic Horse Show



June 5 – 7, 2009

Horse Park of New Jersey • Allentown, New Jersey



Benefiting Saddlebred Rescue, Inc. and  
Sharing Village Cancer Survivor Group

Saddlebred • Morgan • Friesian • Hackney Harness/Ponies • Equitation Academy •  
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Information: Joan Booth, Show Manager, (908) 995-9807, [asb.nj@verizon.net](mailto:asb.nj@verizon.net)

*Pick Up Your Points at the Jersey Classic!*

as to what time they would like to be at the barn in the morning. If they say 8:00 AM set alarm for two hours earlier. This will allow you time to prepare for the day and you won't be caught coming out of the shower at 6:15 AM with your rider looking at you incredulously and saying, "What on earth are you doing? I show this morning!"

#### Day of First Class

1. Drive two minutes from hotel and arrive at fairgrounds at 6:20 AM.

2. Do not be alarmed if your child is unusually quiet and reserved before they show. Try to avoid conversation relating to horses. Actually, avoid all conversation.

3. Do not take it personally that the minute you get to the barn your quiet and pensive child runs up and hugs trainer and all grooms and eagerly engages them in conversation. Simply

continue to unload the car, making several trips if necessary.

4. You will know when it is time to leave the barn area and find your seat in the arena. Either your rider will come and politely say, "Are you still here?" or the trainer will announce that all parents need to leave as their eyes start to twitch slightly. Hug your rider and wish them good luck. Avoid making eye contact and do not make the mistake of telling them to "have fun" as this will elicit a verbal diatribe that begins with "you just don't get it."

5. Walk to arena and choose your seat. Sit, wait and watch 22 classes that are ahead of your rider.

#### The Class

1. After six cups of coffee, countless trips to the ladies room and three ring drags it is finally time for your rider's class. Grab hold of the arm of the person you are sitting next to you as your rider enters the ring.

2. Watch class.

3. When they call for the line up release the vice grip you have on the person sitting next to you and return to your seat.

4. Wait for results.

5. When they call your rider's number and announce they have won the class,

immediately try and make eye contact with your rider and give them a thumbs up. They will only be looking for the trainer—do not take this personally. The smile on your rider's face as they make their victory pass will bring tears of joy and you will momentarily forget all you went through to get here. That moment will be short lived however as the salt from your tears seeps into the open cut wound on your face. And when your rider runs up to you, hugs you and exclaims, "That was fun!" simply tell them how proud you are. After all, that's what show mom's do.

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*NOTE: The views expressed by the author are her reflections and hers alone and should not be in any way seen as a reflection upon her daughter or her husband. Any similarity to them again is purely coincidental. Also, no animals were harmed during the writing of this article although the cat refuses to come back inside for fear of getting trapped in the attic. The publishers of Saddle & Bridle magazine do not necessarily share the same views as the author but admit they are glad that their wives tend to all the details of show season. It is their hope however, that the reader will take the tongue in cheek musings of a nervous show mom with the humor in which it was intended. You can email the author at [Patti@ADistudio.com](mailto:Patti@ADistudio.com).*

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