

THE LITTLE CREEK TIMES

*The official publication of the Little Creek Farm Conservancy
and DeKalb County's Little Creek Horse Farm and Park*

WINTER/SPRING 2024



*Welcome to Little Creek,
Hope, the adorable Quarter Horse Mix!*

Look for a full story on Hope coming soon!

Happy Valentine's Day to the Heart Horse!

**Read heartwarming stories of some very special horse / human relationships
to get you in the Valentine's Spirit!**

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**Let's all help keep the Neigh in the
Neigh-borhood!**



Little Creek Farm
CONSERVANCY

Behind the Barn: LCFC Programming and Fundraising

Contributor: Rene Iverson, Acting Vice President

Could it be that winter is on its way out? So much is in store for this wonderful park in 2024! When asked, President Nick Thompson reports the direction for 2024 is “continued emphasis on programming and offsite outreach!” A rethink/rework of the website is also on tap - anyone know a WordPress expert?



Coming soon.....

- 2/17 LCFC Volunteer L*O*V*E Open House, 12-1:30p
- 2/19 Spring Weigh-in, sponsored by Seminole Feed - Time TBD, usually late afternoon
- 3/17 Online Auction to support Programming
- 3/22 & 29 Connections School Alumni, Group Volunteer and interaction with Horses
- 4/28 10a-12p, Pony Rides/Petting Zoo *ALSO, June 23rd & October 6th*

LCFC Ongoing programming available...

[Saturday Pony Crew](#)

[Birthdays](#) - Always on Sundays!

[Hands on Horses](#)

Group Volunteer Days, always including horse love at the end!

Minis on the Move - visits to senior living communities and libraries for reading hours

Green Space Volunteer Workdays

Did you know?

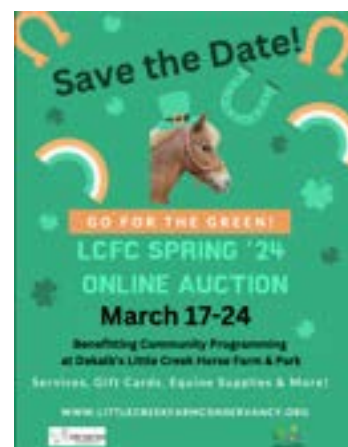
LCFC Programs get Metro-Atlantans close to horses. Many for the first time.

The Conservancy's Mission: Partnering with [DeKalb County Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs](#), we promote the stewardship of Little Creek Horse Farm and Park for equine activities, including educational and recreational outreach programs for the general public.

Current Conservancy needs!

- ☐ WordPress Administrator
- ☐ Auction items by March 1st
- ☐ **Donations** to cover costs of programming
- ☐ Lost and Found chairperson
- ☐ Event chairs & helpers (Halloween, Pony Rides, etc)

Email President@littlecreekfarmconservancy.org to sign up



Longeing and More from Atlanta Riding Academy

Contributor: Leslie Hunter

Lessons in Longeing

-If you're a fan of the long-running Canadian horse opera, *Heartland*, you've probably seen Amy Fleming longe at least 100 horses, and make it look so easy... all you need is a round pen and a horse? Think again. While it isn't brain surgery, it does take skill and patience:

Last fall Dana McDaniel, founder and instructor of Atlanta Riding Academy, offered two longeing clinics to everyone in the barn community.
(at right, Dana with Riley)



Basic groundwork—a must for solid horsemanship even if you aren't longeing--was also included. Echoing the words of Benjamin Franklin, “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn,” both clinics included verbal instructions, visual demonstrations, and hands-on experience with her horses.

Topics Dana covered included why we longe, safety precautions, equipment for horse and rider, attaching the longe line and voice commands. She noted that longeing can be a warm up prior to riding or provide strategic exercise when riding isn't possible. For the actual training, Dana demonstrated usage of the whip and longe line, making a triangle of communication between longer and horse. We were advised to determine longeing times depending on the fitness of the horse as well as how often to change directions.

Jan Smits with Vic

All in all, it was a very detailed and helpful experience. For yours truly – still very GREEN when it comes to horses in general and groundwork in particular – Dana taught me so much about what I still need to know for not only the horse's good, but my own as well. One-on-one time with her at a future date was also offered, and notes were provided in a follow-up email for those of us who like to see instructions written out. Thank you, Dana!



A Personal Holiday Remembrance, for Dana

Ask anyone from the Little Creek community what happens when they walk into the barn. “You never know,” they’ll certainly say. And so it was, for me when I visited Little Creek to walk Stride horses one very damp December afternoon. Here’s what happened:

*‘Twas Christmas last year. It was raining outside. Horses were unhappy.
They were all stuck Inside.*

*The barn was so quiet. Most humans were away. Then something special happened.
On that special holiday.*

*Some kindhearted women, Dana’s students, had arrived, to tend to her horses.
Do chores-- then to ride!*



*Like elves used to teamwork, they cleaned stalls so nicely.
Then they tacked up the horses who were soon acting spritely!*

*They entered the arena, Santa Dana with her team. First a walk, then a lesson,
lots of fun in between!*

*“Here’s how to do a leg yield, and then turn around.”
A lesson we could all see, even me on the ground!*

*Soon the barn was alive, with something quite rare.
Peace on earth and good will, for all of us to share.*

*Such a sweet sight to see. My heart warmed in December. Thank you, Dana and your students.
Best Christmas day ever!*

Pictured above, left: Emily Veselsky and Carly Mashman, with Vic. Carly has been Dana’s student since she was 8



Giddy Updates: Horsemanship + Friendship = Pony Crew!

Contributor: Leslie Hunter

There’s ALWAYS something fun happening at Pony Crew! Each season, leader Nancy Cornish compiles a list of activities that are as entertaining as they are educational, consisting of all things equine. This fall, special guests like Jamie Hodges taught the crew about horse health and Nancy Scott demonstrated the Masterson Method of horse relaxation. Bobby Woolwine also joined Nancy for a session on the language of Horsespeak. (Left: Ainsley, Jaise, Nancy, Natali, Donna, Kathryn, Hypatia and Mark. Right: Nancy Scott, Jaise and Dillon)



Sometimes there’s a service project like making snacks for horses to be sold to benefit the Conservancy’s programs. Thank you notes are prepared for special presenters. Tack is made shiny clean for the horses of Mark’s Riding School. Adult volunteers like Donna Coshatt lend a hand. And there are always



yummy, homemade treats provided by Nancy Cornish. *(Above: Maggie warms up with hot chocolate topped with whipped cream.)*



The crew also enjoys special occasions. In September, Crew members who also happen to be Mark's Riding School riding students participated in a horse show sponsored by Atlanta Riding Academy. For the annual Little Creek Halloween parade, Crew members costumed Mark's horses as well as themselves for their walk through the arena. Then of course there was a celebration of National Horse Day on December 13. *(Santa Jaise, Mark, reindeer Gracie and an unidentified member of Santa's sleigh team in the*

Halloween parade.)

But every so often, something unplanned and REALLY special happens! When a new mare arrived at LC on a recent Saturday, it was the perfect opportunity for everyone to learn how horses are transported. Thank you to [New Beginnings Stable](#) for taking the time to talk with the Crew!

Pony Crew will continue to meet through May when summer break gives everyone the time to absorb all they have learned. Until then there will be lessons in Parelli Natural Horsemanship, making Valentine cards for the horses, and lots more to learn about these miraculous creatures.



On the face of it, the members of Pony Crew participate to learn everything they can about horsemanship – whether they are riders or not. But as Ainsley and Kathryn gave each other a big hug, they noted with visible enthusiasm that friendship was just as important!

If you'd like to learn more about Pony Crew, email info@littlecreekconservancy.org.

Want to help? Our friends at StrideAhead are always looking for volunteers, and many folks help out at both the Conservancy AND Stride Ahead.

To learn more about our orientation sessions and becoming a volunteer, please contact Prgm Dir., Pam Smith pashme01@gmail.com or Vol Coord. Karen Maloney volunteers@strideahead.org.



Vibrissae: A Hair to Remember

Contributor: Claire Rauschenberg

As prey animals, horses have developed heightened senses as mechanisms of defense against predators. For instance, their eyes are situated on either side of their heads so that they can see approaching predators while grazing. They are more sensitive to loud noises so that they are ready to run at a moment's notice. A horse's large and sensitive nose allows it to detect predators, food and water, and mates, in its environment.

A lesser-known sensory organ is the horse's vibrissae, more commonly known as whiskers. These hairs of varying length grow around the eyes and mouth, and they help horses sense what is immediately in front of them where their eyes cannot see. Research shows that the vibrissae are rooted deep within the skin and can help horses detect the depth and width of objects around them, not merely whether an object is present. These hairs work much like our fingertips, allowing horses to explore what is in their blind spot and prevent injury.

As you may know, some riders prefer the vibrissae to be removed for a cleaner appearance in shows and competitions. But in recent years, the practice has become somewhat of a controversy. One internet source states, "In some European countries, not only is it prohibited to show a horse with trimmed whiskers, but it also violates animal protection laws. The Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) passed a rule in 2021 that banned the trimming of sensory hairs around the muzzle and eyes." In the US, the practice is acceptable in some disciplines and not accepted in others. Of course, removing the vibrissae will not harm a horse, but it should be considered that they serve an important tactile purpose.

To date, studies comparing the sensory capabilities of horses with and without vibrissae have not yielded conclusive results, and many scientists have expressed that more research is needed to know exactly how much of an impediment vibrissae removal is. However, many behavioral scientists argue that the vibrissae are important to the health and welfare of horses.

If you are a horse owner and unsure about vibrissae removal, it is recommended discussing the issue with a professional. [Source](#)

Want to help? Consider a donation to the [Conservancy](#), a 501c3, which brought over 1300 folks safely into this Park in 2023 to talk to and meet one of the resident equines - help us share this special world, unique in MetroAtlanta.

We provided programming 40 out of 52 weeks in 2023.

2024 MLK Day Clean Up & Learn in the Green Space off of Orion Drive



Great turnout and a fun day! Met great new volunteers and pleasantly surprised to hear neighborhood praise of LCFC's green-space projects. Check the [website](#) and social media for upcoming events - we'd love to have you!



From the Horse's Mouth: *Wallie* in His Own Words

Contributor: Leslie Hunter



Hi! My name is *Wallie*, and it is my honor to be this issue's *From the Horse's Mouth* featured equine. Officially, I am not a horse, but I do live at Little Creek Horse Farm and people –mostly children – love to ride me!

I was 'born' in 2011 at a beautiful place called **Wooden Horse Farm** in Norwalk, Ohio. My "dad" is a man named Frank Lovato, Jr., known as "Frankie." He was a professional jockey for 25 years, and in 1980 he won the Eclipse Award for Outstanding Apprentice Jockey--one of horse racing's highest honors!

Unfortunately, at 18, Frankie ([photo left](#)) was badly injured when his mount flipped over on top of him during a post parade. He suffered a fractured femur requiring multiple surgeries and endured nearly ten months of rehabilitation and recovery! It was during this time that Frankie created a mechanical wooden horse to train on that would be safer than a real horse, which as we know can be unpredictable.



That first *horse* helped Frankie regain his strength and flexibility so that he could return to racing, a passion he inherited from his dad, Frank Lovato Sr.

This first horse was the inspiration—you might say the *foundation breed*-- for the Equicizer, my very special breed of horse! It didn't take long for Frankie to realize the potential the Equicizer had in benefiting other riding disciplines. We became popular with riding programs, sports medicine facilities, riding academies, and the entertainment world where the Equicizer was used extensively in the making of the movie *Seabiscuit*!

Soon, Equicizers were built and sent to new homes all over the world, which is how I got to **Stride Ahead** (with the help of some nice folks at the Eveland Family Foundation of Georgia). Eventually the Little Creek Farm Conservancy found uses for me in their programs, including **Pony Rides, Pony Crew, birthday parties** and **Hands on Horses**, so I have more than enough activities to keep me busy! *(Right: Me with some birthday pals!)*



We Equicizers have our advantages. We don't eat or drink so we don't produce anything that needs to be cleaned up – if you know what I mean! We don't get sick which saves on vet bills. We don't require a stall because we only move when you move us. And when I'm not working, I live in a room that makes me feel very special! **The door has a sign that says: "Authorized Personnel Only".**

Also, we're very safe because we don't spook. Ever! I've been told that I spook the real live horses for some reason that no one has been able to figure out! So, when someone brings me out for an activity, they have to be extra-cautious when the horses are in the barn. Sometimes we even have to take a detour around the barn! Isn't that silly?

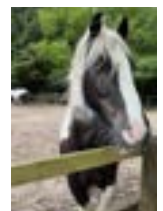
I want everyone to know that I'm very happy at Little Creek. I look forward to every event where I am used, knowing that I make children and their parents feel safe. Next time you see me at the barn, please stop by to say hi. Just don't tell the real horses where I am!



Travelogue | To Ireland with Rachel Brewer

As told to Claire Rauschenberg

I dedicated 2023 to myself and rediscovering the things I was the most passionate about. My resolution for the year was to “think less and do more.” I was also dying to travel and get away from everything. As a horse crazy kid who read way too much fantasy, I had always dreamed of horseback riding in Ireland. To honor my 2023 New Year's resolution, I booked a trip to ride on horseback across the Irish countryside (from Galway to Clare), with a group of riders, which happened to be a group of amazing women.



This was the most incredible trip I've ever taken, and I will treasure the pictures, friendships and memories for the rest of my life. People always say that everything looks cooler on social media through the lens of a filter, but this was not true of my Ireland trip. It was so beautiful! My eight-day trip included six days of riding, and I was granted my bucket list wish to ride a Gypsy Vanner. My horse for the duration of the trip was a gelding named **Cassidy**, (*above right*) and I quickly became obsessed with him. The skill and fitness of all of our horses was remarkable!



Trip highlights included crossing the Slieve Aughty Mountains in the pouring rain, which concluded with a glorious gallop along a breathtaking mountain path. I have never felt so free and alive. We rode through Lough Graney, a lake in County Clare. Not around. Not near. Not over. Through! We trotted through stretches of lake to the sound of wild splashing and so much laughing that we could barely hang on to our reins. We spent our nights in the most charming bed and breakfasts in small towns along our route. Everyone was welcoming and knew the leaders of our group, a husband and wife native to the area. The trip concluded with a ride along a cliff high above the Atlantic with views that went on for miles. The bright sunshine and sparkling water made for the perfect end to the trip. (*Rachel and Cassidy*)

I can't say enough about the travel agency, [Active Riding Trips](#), that helped make this dream a reality. If you're looking for a riding vacation, look no further. They are fantastic! (*Rachel and new friends below.*)



To our readers: *Travelogue* is a new feature focusing on those of us who have traveled for the sole purpose of horseback riding. Whether you've ridden stateside in Wyoming or Vermont, or overseas in Portugal or South Africa, we are interested in your story. You can tell it in your own words as did Rachel Brewer (a Stride Ahead volunteer), or share your story with the columnist Claire Rauschenberg (another Stride volunteer) who will write it for you. Either way, we'd love to hear from you. Connect

with Claire at cmrauschenberg@gmail.com

**Want to help? Consider donating an item to our Spring Auction,
Go for the Green! Proceeds will offset the costs of programming.
Reach out to us at info@littlecreekfarmconservancy.org and thanks!**

BOOK STALL: **Very special Announcement**

The World According to Sprinkles: The BIG Life of a Little Horse

Sprinkles' very own memoir will tell you all about her life at Little Creek, and she cannot wait to share it with you! Especially exciting is that proceeds will go to **Little Creek Farm Conservancy** and **Stride Ahead**. Publication is planned for later this year with a special event to meet the "author" & have your book autographed with her tiny hoofprint. More news to come via email and social media! Right: *The author with her favorite muse, Keegan.*



The Fine Print



Little Creek Farm Conservancy is a non-profit, 100% volunteer-run organization which supports the Park with programming to bring the public in safely, and fundraising for special projects. Please visit our website: www.littlecreekfarmconservancy.org for complete information. We have special ways to visit and volunteer opportunities available, as well as memberships that support our mission to be stewards of this special place.

The Little Creek Times is a publication of Little Creek Farm Conservancy. Please send submissions, corrections and questions to: leslieruthhunter@gmail.com or president@littlecreekfarmconservancy.org. See you in the June edition!

The Last Words

"Horses do not care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

—EquestrianCo.com