

Let's talk about HORSES



By Jennifer Barr

Had a delightful letter in answer to a recent column discussing the correct side for horses to wear their manes this year. Here it is in full.

"I have been with horses and cows all my life, fifty-seven years to be exact. Was raised and spent half of my life so far in Western Canada.

"In those days the cow pony served in many ways from church to dances.

"This brings me to your article on how the mane should fall. In those days it was considered the very poorest kind of horsemanship to mount a horse standing still. Nearly everyone mounted from the left. The idea was to stand about half-way between the horse's head and the saddle with your back to his head. With the reins in your left hand, having the inside rein shorter so that the horse's head was pulled toward you, you grasped the mane and put your weight on the big neck muscle.

"You did not pull the mane hair, only used it to help your fingers grasp the neck. As the horse started up with the inside rein shorter, he was drawn towards you and around. As you put your foot in the stirrup and reached for the horn with your right hand, he would swing you into the saddle. Your actual weight

would be on the heavy muscle of the neck with the mane hair keeping your fingers from slipping off, saving the drag of the saddle against the backbone.

"When cowboys were working cows day in-day out, a heavy stock saddle and a heavy man would have made a horse's backbone sore, causing bruises, fistula etc. This is why the mane was always trained to the left. Some of the old horses lived and died and never were mounted on the right. When the cowboy mounted that way, he already had his horse on the move, his left hand with the reins and his right hand free. We cannot forget that in those days the cows were nearly as fast as the horses and twice as smart.

"This way of mounting would not be good for the show ring of today, I know. It is not easy. Both horse and rider have to practice it. But to this day it breaks my heart to see somebody putting all their weight on that backbone."

Please send letters to Jennifer Barr, R. R. 2, Acton.

FLASH—June 11, Acton, Ont.—Annabelle gave birth to a beautiful baby donkey boy. Mother and son fine.

Erin council briefs

At their regular meeting, June 3, Erin township council:

—Were informed that the land proposed for a parksite in Ballinafad had been decided to the adjacent cemetery years ago and therefore not available.

—Approved a motion donating \$50 to the Erin Horticultural Society.

—Read two anonymous letters from township residents, one asking if certain businesses in Ospringe were being taxed as commercial, the second asking for a garbage cleanup at a neighbor's, being concerned about rats.

Reeve Lloyd Lang declined to discuss either problem until the writers gave their names.

Conference

—Were invited to a Grand River Conservation Authority conference June 11. It was decided that councillors Bert Wheeler and John Reid would attend.

Deputy-reeve Donald Matheson commented that this year's conference should be quite interesting if there is any discussion of the spring flooding.

—Met with Robert Armstrong and Son who proposed an estate lot development on their previous 24 Hwy. proposed gravel site. "If we can't have gravel" said Mr. Armstrong "We'll try estate lots." Every time I turn around there's someone against gravel."

Subdivision

Council did not show much enthusiasm for this proposed development or for another on the former Shortill property on the Ballinafad town line, which would involve 10 smaller lots.

Councillor Bert Wheeler stated "We don't want to get mixed up in another subdivision till we get our present one cleaned up."

Reeve Lang told present owner Mr. Burnett "The day will come when you can subdivide it, but I really don't think that day has come yet."

Heard a request from a fourth line resident who is at present building a house on his 25 acres and would like to erect a 16 foot square sleeping cabin for his son and

daughter-in-law. "It's a natural reaction on the part of young people. They'd like a little spot of their own."

Although council was assured there would be no roadway or hydro put into the cabin which would be used only weekends and holidays, they declined to set a precedent.

Reeve Lang commented "It would put us in a real difficult position. If we let one build we'd have to let others." Council did agree to discuss the matter with planner Howard Smith.

Gravel site

Met with a delegation from Premier Concrete and heard plans for the proposed concession 11 gravel site if the area can be rezoned from agriculture.

President of Lake Ontario Cement Company, Mr. Bateman, informed council that if the Ismond and Saunders properties are bought and rezoned, an average of 18 feet of gravel will be removed in yearly phases of a 20 year plan (a total of 20 million tons) with the intention of returning the land to farm land.

After being questioned on this last statement, Mr. Bateman admitted it had never been tried before, but his advisors said it could be done.

Nuisance fires

Discussed a request for a by-law concerning the issuing of burning permits, with Fire Chief Bob Cheyne.

Chief Cheyne told council he would like to have a means for controlling "nuisance fires." He felt that with permits the department could either control fires or prohibit them. He cited two recent events where the firefighters were called out unnecessarily.

—Learned from figures provided by the Ministry of Transport that the total amount which may be spent on township roads in 1974 exceeds \$220,000.

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