



American Haflinger Registry

intelligence • character • willingness • grace • stamina • athleticism



Welcome to the World of Haflinger Horses!

The breed origin can be traced to medieval times when writings told of an Oriental breed of horse found in the Southern Tyrolean Mountains of present day Austria and northern Italy. Many of the villages and farms in the Tyrol were accessible only by narrow paths requiring agile and surefooted horses for transportation and packing. Artwork from the region in the early 1800s depicts a noble chestnut horse with riders and packs traversing steep mountain trails.

The first official documentation of the present day Haflinger (named for the Tyrolean village of Hafling) was in 1874 when the foundation stallion 249 Folie was born of the half-Arabian stallion 133 El' Bedavi XXII crossed with a refined native Tyrolean mare. All modern purebred Haflingers must trace their ancestry directly to Folie through seven different stallion lines: A, B, M, N, S, ST, and W.

During the years of World War II, there was a significant shift in breeding practices because the military needed a packhorse that was shorter and stockier. Since the war, the height and refinement of the breed have returned, with an emphasis on developing a small horse that is versatile for both riding and driving. Characteristics observed are a strong constitution, a solid conformation with substantial bone, and an uncomplicated personality.

The specialty of the Haflinger lies, of course, in its unique golden chestnut coloring with a long, flowing white mane and tail. But more unique is the people-loving, willing and forgiving temperament that was established over centuries of living alongside and working with the mountain peasants, serving all purposes for all family members. Haflingers very simply became part of the family.

The modern Haflinger is now found all over the world, active in such varied disciplines as dressage, jumping, vaulting, packing, pleasure driving, CDE, western, trail riding, CTE, endurance riding, hitch work and therapeutic riding programs. Haflingers hold their own in competition with other breeds, often showing surprising athleticism and strength for their size.

The Haflinger continues to capture hearts and enrich lives as it has for over two centuries. Horse lovers desiring an equine companion that is safe, versatile, dependable, and beautiful have discovered the Haflinger. Intelligence, character, willingness, grace, stamina, athleticism, and long life make the Haflinger a wise choice for everyone.

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“Shasta” Makes Pleasure Driving History

By Susie Haszelbart

Walnut Hill Farm Driving Competition is “the largest show of its kind in the world” and has been held for the past 43 years in Pittsford, NY. This event is a five-day schedule of classes with a wide variety of equines and carriages, and over 250 competitors from some 20 states, Canada, and Europe. Antique vehicles from tiny pony carts to huge road coaches drawn by a four-in-hand (four horses) participate in all phases of classical driving competition, including cross-country obstacle classes and elegant pleasure driving classes in the ring. Walnut Hill recaptures the essence and spirit of the 1890’s, with a style, grace, and elegance of an earlier era. It is magical.

Haflingers are a common sighting at Walnut Hill and some of the best in the



country compete at this show. The classes are divided into type of vehicle and size & number of equines. Haflingers compete in a variety of divisions; some examples are Single Horse- Vehicle other than Runabout, Meadowbrook or Road Cart Type, Single Horse – Runabout, Single Horse- Meadowbrook/Road Cart, Single large Pony, Tandem Horse/Ponies, Large Pair Ponies, Pair Horses, Single Horse/

Pony to Gig and Park-Ladies Wicker Phaeton.

Shasta (Albany NTF x Shenango Nikki OM) is a 10 year old mare that has a competitive spirit and unique personality (but don’t all Haflingers?). I purchased her 2 ½ years ago, from Jill & Craig Sweeting of Hickory Creek Performance Horses in New York. Shasta’s training & confidence has





allowed me to develop into a better driver & has opened up a world of driving opportunities. In May, after almost 2 years of searching, I purchased an 1856 JB Brewster Ladies Wicker Phaeton carriage from Virginia. Within 2 weeks of



its arrival, we competed at an invitation only "Traditional Day of Driving" in Colorado, then on to the CAA Carriage Festival at the Kentucky Horse Park in June, and finally Walnut Hill in August.

Elizabeth, Colorado to Pittsford, New York is over 1700 miles, traveling through 7 states, 2 time zones and a 4 day road trip. I'm grateful Shasta is a wonderful traveler. Every night I found a Horse Hotel or Fairgrounds, so she could stretch her legs, eat, drink, and lay down to rest in a stall. During the day, when I stopped to refuel, I would offer her a bucket filled with water, but she was

never interested. So I spiced it up; I would put just 3" of water and sliced up some apples, carrots & flax treats. She loves to bob for apples & slurps up some water in the process. She's a happy horse and seemed to enjoy the journey, fascinated with day after day new surroundings.

Traveling all that distance, I entered Shasta in 2 divisions - Ladies Wicker Phaeton and Single Horse - Vehicle other than Runabout, Meadowbrook or Road cart type. This made each of the 5 days at Walnut Hill a varied & challenging adventure. Jill & Craig Sweeting came to help me daily and Jill was my groom on the back seat. Brian Mitteer was kind enough to be my passenger for the Picnic Turnout. Our first class was Ladies Wicker Phaeton Afternoon Turnout and we placed 2nd. The next morning we competed in the Single Horse Cross Country Obstacle class and won, coming in 3/100 of a second from optimal time. I thought that win couldn't be topped, but there was more to come. We placed 2nd in Picnic Turnout and 3rd

in Park Performance class for the Ladies Wicker Phaeton. Since points are assigned for each win, our combined points place Shasta as "Champion" for the Ladies Wicker Phaeton Division. This was an amazing accomplishment. It was great to have a Haflinger in the "Parade of Champions" finale of the closing ceremonies.

On the long drive home, I wondered if there had been other Haflingers to win Champion at Walnut Hill. I contacted the organizers and they searched all the records to find that "Shasta" is the first and only Haflinger to ever win "Champion" in any division in Walnut Hill's 43 year history. Shasta, a remarkable Haflinger, has made it in the record books at Walnut Hill Farm Driving Competition. I know there will be more Haflingers to follow her lead.



The Ultimate All-Around Performance Horse

By Rachael Kindler



Ever since I was a young girl, I have always had an interest in horses. I started learning how to ride and drive on my miniature horse “Toby” in the backyard. When I grew out of Toby, we picked up a welsh pony cross from a sale. I will mention that this pony and I did not get

along at all, as he thought that running at a full gallop towards tree limbs was always the best option. The welsh pony cross was just the first in a long line of other breeds that entered my life and unsuccessfully left soon after. But as a young girl with so much passion, I needed a pony that would keep me safe. Being a young and anxious horse enthusiast, the search for a safer pony seemed endless. It was just a matter of time, however, until we came across a beautiful golden pony with a snow-white mane and tail. It was at

this moment that I knew I fell in love with the remarkable Haflinger breed.

My name is Rachael Kindler, and currently I am the proud owner of two golden beauties. I am also a student at the Ohio State University, with a focus in Animal Nutrition. During my sophomore year of college I was in search of an equine internship that would adopt me and my Haflinger, Charlotte, for a summer. I knew that I wanted the opportunity to involve the remarkable Haflinger breed because this is a breed within the industry full of knowledgeable and kind people and farms. I came across Walnut Ridge Farm at Equine Affaire, and they were more than accepting to take me as an intern. As I successfully showed with the farm



Visit walnutridgehaflinger.com for more great samples of Haflinger versatility, to see video of the jumping drill team!

throughout the summer and made heart-warming connections with the Walnut Ridge Team, they kindly asked me, along with Charlotte, to stay at their farm. Of course, I accepted the invitation to be a part of the team and have been actively participating and showing at all of the Haflinger events since.

With many thanks to such great people at Walnut Ridge and in the industry, I was very successful this past show season with my little mare Charlotte. I was fortunate enough to receive the Haflinger Championship Challenge Versatility Award at the end of the year. The versatility award recognizes receiving 100 points in the disciplines of pleasure driving, and western and English riding, and 25 points in halter. Truly, an award only able to be received by the one and only Haflinger horse.

After my internship concluded, I became a member of a jumping drill team at Equine Affaire, rode my first cross coun-

try course, and even got to drive my first Combined-Driving Event! Along with many other endless opportunities with Walnut Ridge, all of these events are things that I only dreamed of doing with Charlotte! I

never thought I would have the opportunity to say that I had actually done some of these things. It has been a long, but adventurous ride with my golden girl, Charlotte. But it was all worth it because I was able to do and learn all of these things on just ONE horse! Actually at the time I wasn't sure that Charlotte was capable of all of these things, but she sure

did prove me wrong. That one horse has taught me everything that I know how to do today with horses. She was patient when I was young and learning and just waited for me to get better. She and

I have achieved so much together through hard work and wonderful opportunities. Recently, I was given another project mare from Walnut Ridge to work with for this upcoming show season. I look very forward to working with another beautiful Haflinger to be an all-around performance horse.

These horses cannot only ride any discipline that you wish, but can also drive and look elegant doing so. These horses are truly the all around performance horse. From just trail riding to performing any discipline at a show - they can do it all effortlessly. I recommend if you are searching for an amazing horse, not just capable of showing but also to be your best friend, I promise that a Haflinger can do the job and will touch your heart forever.





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show horses. The Haflingers have been found to be very useful by our Amish friends as evidenced by the various uses exhibited at the annual Horse Progress Days. This is an event held each year in 6 rotating areas of the larger Amish communities where new horse-drawn equipment is exhibited in many ways. The hitch Haflingers are very popular as Show animals where they are exhibited in the same type classes and frequently in conjunction with the larger draft Horses.

Hitch Type Haflingers

By Jim Arnold

Going back to the origin of the Haflinger breed, it was developed as a work animal for use in the mines and mountains of the Tyrolean Alps. When the Haflinger was first imported to the USA, they had a much different look from what we see today. They were much smaller in height, their body color darker and their mane & tail were not near as white as what we see now.

In the 50+ years since they were first imported, there have been a lot of changes to all Haflingers. This is evident in the fact there are now 2 types – the pleasure style and the hitch

style. The hitch type probably comes the closest between the two those Haflingers that were 1st imported. Today they are all taller, whether hitch and pleasure and have the beautiful white mane and tail. Today the hitch Haflingers are used very similar to their larger cousins – the draft horse as both are used today as work and

Showing the Hitch Haflinger is a Family Affair

Showing the hitch Haflinger is a very Family friendly endeavor and most of the exhibitors are family groups. This then becomes an extended family affair do to the comradery among the various exhibitors. This is another important element in showing the hitch Haflinger. This is evidenced by the many things that all the exhibitors do to help their fellow exhibi-



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 Youth Team with Kevin Heintz and Lisa Heintz VanderWall. See More
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tors. These things include helping to harness, hitch, hold horses and make sure everything is in order. After they do everything to get you ready, the roll is reversed and that person helps the one that helped him in the same manner. I have heard it said many times, everyone is friends until they enter the ring and then you are the competition for the duration of that class. Then as you leave the ring, everyone is friends again and everything reverses to get unhitched or add horses for the next class. Another thing that everyone looks forward to is the social aspect. At most of the shows that are more than a single day show, there will be a pitch-in meal in the evening followed by a Fun auction.

Requirements to Show Hitch Haflingers

A person that is interested in starting to show the hitch Haflinger should and

most often has attended several shows and visited with the exhibitors. If not they should do so as all exhibitors are happy to help in any way they can. The only precaution I will offer is that you do not start asking questions or get in the way while they are preparing for their classes. The best time is after the show or earlier in the day before they start getting ready.

Not to skirt facts, showing the hitch Haflingers involves a lot of work, equipment preparation. As with showing any Haflinger of any type or discipline, the number one priority is to present a horse that is clean, well groomed, the harness polished and the decorations properly placed.

As a new exhibitor to showing hitch Haflingers is to purchase the equipment required. This will include a cart, wagon

and harness. Next comes equipment to store the harness and means to haul the horses, wagon, cart and harness.

Preparing for the Show Ring

The hitch Haflinger is “decorated” for showing whether at halter or hitched. Each hitch will select a color scheme for decorations that either matches or enhances the colors of their cart and /or wagon.

There is some difference as to how they are decorated for halter. When showing Stallions and Geldings at halter, they are decorated the same as if being shown in a hitch. On the other hand, mares do not have their mane rolled for halter.

To address the term “decorating” it consist of braiding the foretop using 2 stands of ribbon in the process. Next a portion of the tail is braided, then rolled up and tied

to the base of the tail. A bow is then placed over knot. The final element of decorating is the “rolling” of the mane. This is done using 2 long strands of fabric and working it into the length of the mane. To do this – it is started just behind the bridle path taking two small sections of hair – one in each hand and separates them. Place the fabric between these 2 strands of hair, a length hanging on each side of the neck. Next the 2 sections of hair are twisted together to make one section in one hand while picking up a new section with the other. At this point, the two strands of fabric are pulled to the opposite side still having one on each side, then repeating the process down the length of the mane. At the end it is tied off leaving length of fabric hanging down the mane. To make the decorating complete, 5-7

“decorations” are placed equally spaced down the length of the mane. The decorations vary from flowers to bows to sprigs. Each hitch exhibitor selects a color scheme for their Hitch. This starts with the wagon & cart and continues through the decorations.

When showing in the Hitch classes, all horses are decorated the same. But when showing at Halter, there are some differences. The stallions & geldings are decorated the same as if being shown in a Hitch but mares do not have their manes rolled. They do most often have a bow in their tail.

Hitch Classes and How They Are Shown

The classes that they are shown in are as follows. The single cart, the Tandem – 2 horses hitched in-line to a cart. The rest of

the “hitch” classes are referred to as Multiples as they start with a team next is the Unicorn – a single horse hitched in front of the team. This requires a well-trained animated horse that responds to voice commands well. From the Unicorn next is the 4-horse hitch, the 6-Horse and now more frequently an 8-horse hitch. The cart and team classes will most often have classes for both men and women and rest of the classes are referred to as “Open” so either a man or woman can drive.

When showing your Haflingers, all hitch classes are shown in the same manner. The exhibitor enters the arena at an animated trot in a counterclockwise direction. This continues until the judge or ring steward calls for the reverse. At their direction, each exhibitor turns their hitch and continues at the trot in the opposite



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direction. After all exhibitors have completed the reverse, they will be requested to walk their hitch. They will then return to the trot until requested to line up at which time they will line up side by side in the center of the ring. The judge will then proceed down the line inspecting each hitch for the proper equipment and cleanliness of the hitch. They will then request each to back at which time each hitch should take a few steps back moving together and as straight possible. The judge will motion them to walk back forward.

Youth – A Very Important Element

Another example of the versatility of the hitch Haflinger, they are excellent horses for youth. The Youth are quite involved in the hitch type Haflinger show world. Youth classes offered range from Cart, Team, Showmanship and Decorating. According to the length of the show – one day or multiple days- determines the number of Youth classes offered.

Most all shows have at least 2 classes for the Youth exhibitors – Cart & Team. The shows that offer all 4 Youth classes are usually the State fair shows. Some of these shows like the Indiana State Fair will break them down into Junior (10-14) & Senior (15-18) divisions.

As safety is of utmost importance in the youth classes, an adult (over 18) must ride with them.

The most popular class for the youth is

the Cart class. This is due to the availability of carts for them. If their parents do not have the number required (more than one child in the class) there are carts avail-

able from other exhibitors.

It is not unusual for there to be more youth showing than the total number of exhibitors at a show. This was evident at the Indiana State Fair in 2014 where there were 3 more youth showing than the total number of exhibitors. This is a prime example that the showing of the hitch Haflinger is truly a family affair. This is not just the immediate family but the family extends to other exhibitors that loan equipment, horses or themselves by riding with the youth as required.

Recognizing and Rewarding Youth

On a more local note, I am in Indiana and belong the Indiana Haflinger Horse Association. A few years back another member, Kevin Prather, came up with the idea of special awards for the winner of the Junior & Senior cart classes. This was approved by both the IHHA & Indiana State Fair director and has been a part of the youth awards at the Fair since.



In 2011, my family, Arnold Family Haflingers, approached ISF director Bryan Messersmith about another award for the Youth – the Outstanding Youth Exhibitor at the Indiana State Fair. This was well received by him and he made several changes and additions. Those being splitting into Junior & Senior divisions and adding the Decorating class. To qualify to receive this award, each youth must participate in each of four classes – cart, team, decorating & showmanship. Points are calculated on the placing in each class with the youth with the lowest accumulated total the winner. A few modifications have been made since then in that an award is given to the winner in each division. This consists of a plaque and monetary award. Then the youth with the best score of these 2 winners is named the Outstanding Youth Exhibitor of the Indiana State Fair and receives the Mary Elizabeth Frey Memorial Award and another monetary stipend.

Built and Bred to Excel in Dressage

By Tara Biedenbach

I got my first Haflinger in 2005. I must admit that, at first, I wasn't sure how athletic this breed would be as a riding horse. Even so, I still decided to take the plunge and experience Haflingers first hand. Before my first purchase, I viewed many riding pictures of Haflingers excelling in all disciplines imaginable. Wow, how versatile they are! And this includes excelling as a dressage horse.

After riding western pleasure for many years, I was ready to try something different, and I was determined to learning about dressage. By now, I owned two Haflingers. I took a dressage lesson on one of them, Nordstar HFB (Nordstern M&B x Liz HFB), and my dressage instructor, Megan Huey, (a former warmblood breeder, trainer and showman) was very impressed! First of

all, she was amazed with his movement. I was not used to the feeling of being lifted up, and I said to her, "he is bouncy!" She clarified it as impulsion. Meg said that she had been around a few Haflingers before meeting mine, and she was becoming increasingly impressed with them the more

she met. She told me that this horse could take me far in dressage. She ended up riding him, and the trot that I felt was impossible to sit, she sat with complete elegance. I then discovered it was me who did not know which muscles to contract and relax while sitting the trot on a horse with this much impulsion. She then picked him up to the canter. I remember her saying this horse truly had a rocking horse canter and what fun he was to ride! Secondly, she just couldn't get over his great temperament. Yes, I agreed! Riders of all levels could ride this horse and they did, including my six year old and nine year old sons on the trail. Thirdly, did I mention how also very beautiful she thought he was and how she liked his conformation in the dressage eye?

I showed this Haflinger for at least a couple of show seasons in dressage and never did I get even close to a bad ride on him. Every dressage score was no less than the mid 60s to 70s. I had become very passionate about both the Haflinger breed and dressage. I was so passionate about



it, I wanted the whole world to know how great it was! One day, someone fell totally in love with Nordstar, and although I was not advertising him for sale, I let her purchase him. As I really do enjoy training young horses, it felt right to share him and I would get another one. I ended up buying two more young ones: a two year old mare and a four year old gelding, and then sold my eleven year old Haflinger so that he could make someone else very happy as well.

I began working with my four year old gelding, Akiva HOS (Alois, x Hubsche-Helena HOS), and to sum it up: WOW! He was a kind and gentle soul, but with incredible forwardness. I showed him three summers, while he had the winters off. His first time ever in the ring, he scored a 70 percent. He quickly advanced to first level the following show season, scoring in the 60s. He scored an 8 on his gait quality nearly every time he was shown, which is a very good mark, even for a warmblood. By the next show season, he was schooling second level. There is no doubt in my



mind that he could have continued going up the levels if I didn't have life-changing events that led to his sale. Again I was able to share my passion for the breed with others, including buyers getting their first Haflinger.

So do Haflingers excel in dressage? I can say first hand that YES, they do! As time goes on, more and more people (amateurs and professionals alike) are discovering the breed and living the dream of going up the levels in dressage, with their Haflingers!

Do Haflingers display what is considered to be "ideal" conformation for a successful dressage horse? Ideal conformation begins with the overall balance of the horse from head to tail. The dressage horse should look proportionate and symmetrical. The front end should match the back end, making the horse look harmonious. The horse should have an uphill build with withers slightly higher than the croup, and have a look of strength. Height is NOT a factor when

horse is enhanced while suppleness is increased, maximizing the horse's range of motion in all gaits.

There are other conformational qualities the ideal dressage horse should possess. It is impressive for the horse to have a graceful arch in his neck. It is also not desirable to have the neck set too low from the shoulders. The dressage horse should not have too long, nor too short, of a neck, and should have a clean throat latch. He should have a sloping shoulder (45 degrees is ideal). Another very important aspect of his conformation is the length of his back. A long backed horse is more difficult to collect, while a back that is too short can make it difficult to perform lateral work and bending. The topline should look strong and not dipped. The horse should have a decent sized girth. Powerful hindquarters are a must, and most all Haflingers have the hindquarters to do anything you ask! Hindquarters are considered the "engine" in dressage. The more advanced the training, the more weight the hindquarters and hind legs are expected to carry. The croup should neither be too steep, nor flat, and should be of a medium slope. The horse should appear to have a strong stifle and sturdy hocks. The hocks should not extend out behind the buttons, but instead be aligned beneath the point of the buttocks

to make collected work easier. It is advantageous for the horse to have sturdy looking legs and feet—big feet are a good quality to have in your horse!

Haflingers are being selectively bred for desired sport horse traits. Breeders are well aware of the connection between proper conformation and movement (form to function), and they want their horses to not only do their jobs, but to excel! Each year, there is an AHR Inspection and Classification held where judges look at specific attributes and score horses accordingly on their conformation and movement. Gaits must be true and track straight in walk and trot. The horse should have strong impulsion and engagement of the hindquarters, resulting from relaxation of the topline and coiling of the loin muscles. There should be suspension and extension, and the horse's movement should be long and loose with natural athleticism. The forelegs must lift as well



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determining the quality of a horse's conformation as a successful dressage horse. Good things really can come from small packages! With correct dressage training, the natural balance of the



the front legs; a strong back and loins, and correct length of back; evidence of strong abdominal muscles and adequate girth depth; and a back that is shorter on top with a longer underline; and not too steep or flat a croup. Haflingers are continually bred and selected for improved movement, usefulness and wearability.

as reach for rolling, ground covering strides in the canter. In all three gaits, the horse should be straight with no paddling or winging. The horse should also move freely in the shoulders, with light and uphill movement. The walk must be four beats, the trot must be two beats, the canter must be three beats, and all three should have swing and elasticity. Conformationally, judges look for clean, well defined legs and joints; sufficient bone for the size of the horse; straight legs; long pasterns with good elasticity; large round hooves with good depth of heel; an athletic, well-muscled appearance; correct angles in the legs; a balanced, harmonious conformation with an uphill build from back to front; a head proportionate to the body size; normal teeth and bite; a well-muscled neck coming high off the shoulders, with adequate thickness and length in relation to the length of the body; a slightly arched neck with a clean connection to the throat latch; a well-sloping shoulder in balance with the body; a defined wither and good chest clearance between

Finally, another important factor on which Haflingers are judged is their disposition and overall presence. A good disposition as well as a strong conformation is paramount for a successful dressage horse. Most Haflingers are noted for their good temperaments and solid work ethic. Once trained, they are usually ideal mounts for children and adult amateurs, but are often also enjoyed by the professionals.

Trainers, riders, and breeders are recognizing the potential in smaller breeds like

the Haflinger, often once they discover that the horse's athletic ability and quality is not compromised due to their smaller size. Not to mention that grooming, tacking, bathing and blanketing are easier on a shorter horse, and Haflingers are very easy keepers—what more could a person want in a dressage horse? Haflingers are sturdy, intelligent, willing to work, and have a great presence about them. Even though Haflingers are considered a horse breed, they are eligible to enter pony classes under USEF Licensed dressage competitions. With increased interest, classes specifically for the pony division include any level of dressage test, as long as it is not at a CDI or official FEI sanctioned event. To sum it up, Haflingers are fun, which is why we ride our equine partners in the first place! They can take the rider to any level of dressage they desire, and do it well!



Our Path to The Haflingers

By Martha Gugel



Haflingers amplify the early morning sunshine, their golden color a sharp contrast to the sparkly blanket of snow covering our pasture. They are standing like figures in an oil painting, absorbing the scant warmth of the winter morning sun. Plumes of steam from their nostrils freeze on their whiskers like the heavy frost evident on twigs and branches. I look at them with wonder, amazed every morning at their beauty.

I began riding at the age of 8, with many hours spent both on and under my Grandmother's Shetland mare Topsy. When I persisted in my passion to ride my parents started me in a lesson program at a hunter barn. My most memorable event was participating in a hunt and finding Jackie Kennedy was also riding! My instructor took me aside and told me in no uncertain words that I was to stay behind the First Lady no matter what. I guess my pony Button wasn't listening....!

Quarter Horses became a focus for me

as a teenager. My aunt, Emily Bundy, had several very good mares, and was friends with the Furbers of Isleaway Farm in Green Village NJ. Isleaway Farm was the home of Bars Bailey, a top AQHA stallion at that time. I took advantage of every chance to be around those horses and their people, learning all I could.

My young adult years were busy with family and nursing school, but horses were never far from my mind and my heart. Yes- it was inevitable. I fell in love, this time with a tri-colored paint gelding from cutting horse heritage, Colonel San Man, AKA Cowboy. 20 years later, he is now there for my granddaughter, after teaching so many children and adults to be horse people!

Next came the attack of the Minis, and everyone knows you can't have just one! Our first mini is now age 20 and he is our barn manager. His name is Li'l Gold Bar. He was our introduction to driving and he was a school master! He has multiple open driving championships, even a win with my Mom driving him in her 80's. When he was waiting for his turn at cones you would swear he grew to 17 hands. Cones were his passion! We have collected a fair number of additional minis just because!

When I met George, I was showing minis and George was watching the driving events. He said that he thought

driving looked like fun and he would like to try it. My little stallion looked up at all 6'4" of George and I swear I heard him say "No Way Pal"! And so the search for George's driving horse began. We talked about several breeds, but when I mentioned Haflingers, George was not familiar with them. We went on line to view some pictures and we were both hooked. We have been Haflinger folks for about 10 years now.

The show pen has changed radically since my day, with Paints, Quarter Horses, and Appaloosas being forced in to an unnatural collection, cantering and loping in a painful appearing 4 beat gait with heads and ears drooping in submission. I find this very sad. It has enforced my admiration for the Haflingers. No matter what their job, they perform with expression and animation. I pray we never see the day that our Golden Horses are turned out like expressionless marionettes to move only when strings are pulled.

I love the breed for their intelligence, their devotion to their people, their athletic abilities, their history which matches no other, and their beauty.



Promoting a Haflinger Stallion

By Mary Procopio

While I have been interested in horses all of my life, I did not learn about the Haflinger until I moved to Laingsburg, Michigan in 1997. As it turned out, a person who owned some Haflingers lived very close by and introduced me to the breed, as did some top breeders who lived not far from me. Shortly thereafter, my first horse (given to me by a private student) turned out to be a small, grade Haflinger mare. From that point on, I was hooked on the breed. Their size, steadiness, sweet temperament, hardy constitution, and versatility was very appealing to me, not to mention the fact that their beauty made them stand out from many other breeds. The next year I decided to seek out the best bloodlines in the breed and purchased a registered filly. After that, I purchased a Haflinger foal that went on to become not only my foundation broodmare, but one of the premier

mares in the breed, becoming the second mare in AHR history to achieve elite status based on the quality of her offspring that were inspected.

My next goal was to someday own an imported stallion of a line that needed to be developed in North America. While importing a stallion was out of my reach at the time, a friend contacted me about a colt named Stellar TVR who had recently been imported by the side of his dam. Stellar is by Straden (Standschutz x Mory/Adrit)—the top St-line stallion at the time in Austria and the sire of the 2010 Junior Reserve World Champion Stallion—and out of Chione TVR, by Altess (full brother to three-time World and European Champion Stallion, Abenstern), who is by Amadeus, the highest scoring Haflinger stallion in history at 85 points. Chione's dam is the Gold mare Clari, who received a 9 on movement at her inspection.

Stellar TVR was bred by Erick Scheiber, one of the top Haflinger breeders in Austria, and was imported with his dam by Gail Baum of Twin View Ranch in California to the United States in 2008. While I was unable to purchase Stellar as a foal, I did follow his progress as he grew, and was very fortunate to purchase him as a two-year-old when he came up for sale. This is where my story of promoting a Haflinger stallion begins.

I had made a promise to myself long ago that if I were to ever own a stallion, he would not be just another pretty face; he would have to prove himself in performance in open competition as well as at halter. It has always been very important to me to not only promote my own breeding program, but to promote the Haflinger breed in general. To this end, I have attended various expos, state and county fairs, open shows, and other functions with my horses, as well as breed shows, and I wanted to have my stallion compete against horses and ponies of other breeds, to prove that Haflingers could indeed win and hold their own in the sport horse world.

In 2010, shortly after I purchased Stellar, I presented him as a young horse for dual registration at the American Warmblood Society inspection as a two-year-old, where his score ranked him fourth in the nation out of all breeds in the sport pony division of the AWS National Year-End



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Inspection Awards Program. (While Haflingers are a breed of horse, the German and American Warmblood and Sport horse registries categorize them in the small horse/pony divisions and stud books.) The AWS Director who was the inspector commented on Stellar's balanced conformation, wonderful temperament, rhythmic stride and purity of gaits.

In 2011 Stellar was lightly started under saddle and made his debut on-the-line at the age of three in USDF/USEF rated shows in both breed and open classes in zone 1 on the East coast, winning Reserve Champion colt/gelding and first place stallion (open/all breeds) at his first rated show in Pennsylvania, and first place/Grand Champion Haflinger in the IBC class at his second rated show in New Jersey. Stellar's Reserve Champion win qualified him for the Great American/USDF Breeders' Championship East Coast Series Final in the colt/gelding championship class at the prestigious dressage at Devon. At Devon, Stellar was in the ribbons against Warmbloods in two very large classes, including the championship class, and was the only Haflinger stallion competing in his classes. Stellar's success on-the-line that year ranked him first in the nation out of all Haflingers and earned him the USDF All-Breeds Dressage Sport Horse Breed National Champion Haflinger title, and also ranked him sixteenth in the nation out of all three-year-old stallions/geldings of all breeds of horses competing that year. Stellar's median scores

were higher in both the open division as well as the IBC division than all other Haflingers—all ages, all sexes—that participated and qualified for the 2011 All-Breeds DSHB program. In 2011, we also presented Stellar for his Haflinger breed inspection at the AHR inspection and classification in New York. Stellar was approved for breeding with a score of 77 points,

which included scores of 9 for head, and 8s for type, overall movement, hindquarter, midsection and front legs, and was the highest scoring stallion on the U.S. North American inspection tour that year.

After much research, in 2012 I decided to focus on presenting Stellar for breeding approval to several American and German Warmblood/Sport Horse Performance Registries. In June Stellar won the Bronze Medal over Warmbloods as the third highest scoring horse at the Michigan inspection site. Stellar has since been awarded two stars in the AWS Five-Star Program, is currently the highest scoring Haflinger stallion inspected by the American Warmblood Society, and is the only Haflinger stallion approved for breeding through the AWS. In July Stellar was presented to Weser Ems (the North American division



of the Pferdestammbuch Weser-Ems e.V. in Germany), which is the sport pony/small horse division of the Oldenburg Horse Breeders Society, also known as the GOV/German Oldenburg Verband (the North American Division of the Verband der Züchter des Oldenburger Pferdes e.V. in Germany). Weser Ems follows very strict standards for breeding small horses and ponies for sport. Stellar received excellent scores in breed and sex type, temperament, and correctness of gaits. Some comments from the GOV Breeding Director who was the inspector include "His correctness of gaits are excellent, he is very well-balanced, and has an outstanding temperament! I think he is just delightful!"

In August 2012 Stellar was presented to RPSI (the North American division of the

Pferdezuchtverband Rheinland-Pfalz-Saar in Germany), and was not only approved for breeding, but he also started the Haflinger Stud Book of RPSI in North America. At another inspection later that summer, Stellar tied and/or out-scored several Warmblood stallions in both conformation and dressage index! That summer, Stellar made history for the Haflinger breed by becoming the

Day Stallion Testing. After only a few weeks of jumping under saddle, in September he attended his first schooling horse trial, where he placed third out of twelve against other breeds—his first time over a cross-country course—and was within 1% of the first and second place horses in his dressage score. A month later Stellar was shown in hand and under saddle at the Keystone Interna-



first Haflinger stallion in North America to be provisionally approved for breeding through Weser Ems and RPSI into their top Stud Books. We also presented Stellar at the AHR Stallion Liberty and Parade in 2012 and donated a breeding to him to support the AHR Futurity.

In March 2013 we presented Stellar to the public at the Michigan State University Stallion Expo, the largest horse expo in Michigan, where he was very well-received and participated in a breed demo daily. In summer 2013, Stellar made his debut under saddle in preparation for the 2013 North American 30

Day Stallion Testing. After only a few weeks of jumping under saddle, in September he attended his first schooling horse trial, where he placed third out of twelve against other breeds—his first time over a cross-country course—and was within 1% of the first and second place horses in his dressage score. A month later Stellar was shown in hand and under saddle at the Keystone Interna-

tional Livestock Exhibition (KILE) Pleasure Haflinger Breed Show, winning first place in a larger stallion/gelding halter class and Grand Champion stallion/gelding, as well as a first and two second places in his under saddle classes. But, Stellar's biggest challenge was to come in November, when he would become the first Haflinger stallion in history to attend the world-renowned and highly challenging North American Stallion Testing. In order to keep his provisional approval through the German registries and to obtain his lifetime license, Stellar needed to prove himself in performance. We decided to go the route of the stallion testing because it would demonstrate what Stellar was capable of, and it would provide excellent exposure for the Haflinger breed on a world stage. We were a bit nervous at this huge undertaking, and knew that we were taking a chance presenting Stellar for this major

event that tested the best young stallions in North America in all areas, from interior characteristics and temperament to rideability/dressage and jumping. But, we had a great deal of faith in Stellar and his abilities, as well as in his trainer and rider, Jennie and Chelsea Deephouse, who had prepared him for the testing. We knew that this was a way to bring world-wide attention to the breed, which was especially important for the Haflinger in North America.

For two months each fall, breeders from all over the world eagerly await the results of the prestigious North American Stallion Testing, which takes place at Silver Creek Farms in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma. The 70 day test is held for larger Warmblood breeds, and the 30 day "Pony" test is for smaller horse and pony breeds. There is also a 30 day test for the younger Warmblood stallions that is sometimes held as an optional precursor to the 70 day test, but this is not as well attended, as many of the young stallions opt to go right to the 70 day test.

According to the N.A. Stallion Testing website, "The North American Stallion Tests are held in accordance with the German Stockbreeding Law following the standards of performance tests and horse breeding value requirements as ordered by the breeding associations of the German Equestrian Federation. It is open to stallions of any sporthorse breed who are a minimum of 3 years of age." The Training Director works with the training riders to design an individualized program for

each stallion during the training phase of the test, and the Training Director scores the horses during their training. During the three testing days at the end of the training period, two test judges are flown in from Germany to judge all phases of the test—the same judges that judge the prestigious stallion testing in Germany—and the horses are scored for rideability by two dressage guest riders who are also brought in. Each judge and rider has a say in the final score, with each score carrying a different weight. All scores are averaged together to determine the final score in each category and the overall score of the test. The breakdown of scoring is on a ten point system, but it is a much stricter scoring system than we are familiar with at Haflinger inspections in North America. The testing itself shares similarities with the Haflinger performance tests in Austria, with the exception that the N.A. testing does not test stallions in harness or on pulling a load. The breakdown is as follows, with half scores being allowed (i.e. 7.5): 10-Excellent, 9-Very Good, 8-Good, 7-Satisfactory, 6-Above Average, 5-Average, 4-Below Average, 3-Insufficient, 2-Bad, 1-Very Bad.

Although Haflingers are considered a breed of horse, they participate in the 30 day test, as do the German Riding Ponies, Connemaras, and other small horse and pony breeds. The final scores are calculated and sent to Germany for verification, then rechecked in Germany the day after the testing before becoming

official. Each registry has their own requirements for what the overall score and breakdown scores must be in order for the stallions to pass and receive their lifetime approvals. While a score of 6 is considered above average, stallions are expected to receive a higher score in every category, and most German registries require a minimum overall score of 7.0 for the pony test in order to be lifetime license and permanent approval for breeding.

According to Summer Stoeffel, President and General Manager of the North Ameri-

can Stallion Testing and owner of Silver Creek Farms, “In the Pony Test, the pony stallions are expected to train and be judged in all of the same areas that is expected of the 70-Day stallions—Rideability/Gaits, Showjumping, Freejumping, and Cross Country. Except there is one big difference—they only have 30 days instead of 70 [to prepare]. The challenge these ponies rise to every year is incredible to watch. They run the exact same cross country track and jump all the same obstacles (minus the largest rock wall) as the 70 Day stallions run, they





jump the same showjumping course at the same height as the 70 day stallions... and they have the same Rideability/Gaits judge riders. It is a very thorough testing.”

In addition to the jumping portion of the testing where horses are judged on their scope and technique in all three phases and their canter (gallop) on the cross country course, stallions are judged on overall athletic ability, and also receive scores on interior traits (character, affability, temperament, willingness to work, and constitution), rideability, and movement scores for walk, trot and canter. Each category is rated separately, then averaged together to come up with the overall score of each stallion.

Not only did Stellar successfully pass and complete the stallion testing, he also received rave reviews on his intelligence, temperament, rideability and jumping ability. Stellar was Reserve

Champion and received an outstanding overall score of 7.98, with interior scores and athletic ability ranging from 8 to a perfect 10, and 8s from the Training Director for rideability, canter, free jumping, stadium jumping, and cross country jumping! Better yet, Stellar tied and/or outscored many of the 70 day stallions’ scores given by the Training Director for interior, rideability, canter, and jumping! Stallions receiving a minimum of 7.5 also receive the designation of “performance stallion” from Weser Ems, so Stellar can add that to his resume as well! The best part is that Stellar’s scores were right in keeping with the scores of German Riding pony stallions and stallions of other breeds that have attended the pony test in North America. His overall score and most of his other final scores in each category were higher than last year’s Reserve Champion and his canter and cross country scores tied those of last year’s Champion—both German Riding Ponies—so he represented the Haflinger breed proudly

and well!

We have made many new friends inside and outside of Haflinger circles, and Stellar has definitely generated interest in the Haflinger breed through his successes in the sport horse world. Shortly after the photos of approved RPSI stallions were posted on the RPSI Facebook page, Nick Edmund, a Holsteiner breeder of hunter/jumpers who attended the testing, and the owner of a 70 day stallion that successfully completed the test in 2012, posted under Stellar’s photo, “No offense to any other, but this one was completely captivating... love this guy!” What a huge compliment from one of the top sport horse breeders in the country!

Several people have asked me why I chose to follow this path with Stellar. While it obviously brings an even greater level of legitimacy and attention to Stellar and to my breeding program, the main reason was to promote the Haflinger breed in sport horse disciplines, to educate non-Haflinger people about modern sport horse type Haflingers, and to prove that Haflingers can, indeed, compete and hold their own with other Warmbloods and sport horses of other breeds. What better venue to do so than the ultimate test for some of the best sport horses in North America, in front of a world audience? It was a risk, as we were not sure if there would be bias towards a Haflinger attending the test, especially as I had overheard an inspector last year at an inspection make a comment along the lines of Haflingers don’t jump; they aren’t bred

for jumping. (She obviously had never seen Nordtirol's photos of him jumping over five feet!) Since jumping was weighted so heavily in the testing and Stellar had never jumped under saddle until a few months before the test, we were understandably nervous. We hoped that they would give Stellar a fair shot and judge him on his ability, not on their perceived notion of what a Haflinger was or should be. We had faith that Stellar had the mental and physical stamina, athleticism and ability to complete the test successfully, and were ecstatic that he did so with flying colors—and that he was as strong a jumper as he was a dressage horse!

I truly feel blessed to own Stellar. At only five years of age, he accomplished more than we could have ever imagined, and we could not be more proud! He has met and exceeded our expectations time and time again, and has truly lived up to his name. Stellar has spent time on at least a dozen farms since his importation as a foal, but he goes with the flow and is game for anything, all the while demonstrating his amazing personality and wonderful "Golden Retriever" temperament. We feel truly blessed to own such a remarkable stallion. As a friend and client said, "Stellar is like a fine wine, he gets better with age!"

We have had a great amount of interest in Stellar and his foals since his success at the stallion testing, from Haflinger and Warmblood people alike. We strict-

ly limited Stellar's breedings his first three seasons to focus on his training, and continue to limit the number of mares in his book each year, only breeding approved mares that we believe will cross well with him. Since we had to cut Stellar's breeding season short in 2013 to prepare for the stallion testing, his breeding season was extended through the summer in 2014 to meet the needs of our clients wanting to breed to him, and he was not shown.

Stellar is currently in full-time dressage training, and will make his debut in Zone 2 in 2015. Even though Stellar has demonstrated that he excels at jumping, our plans are to take him as far as he can go in the dressage ring, and to follow in the footsteps of other Haflinger stallions successfully showing in dressage at the upper

levels, like Maximotion WSF, who successfully competed at fourth level when owned by Kim Spann in Oregon, and Brenner IK, owned by Ingrid Kraus, who is currently showing successfully at fourth level in Wisconsin. We have faith that Stellar has the athletic ability, conformation and temperament to successfully reach Grand Prix someday with FEI trainer Tracy Rowe at the reins, but are being careful not to rush his training.

In addition to competing and breeding Stellar in the future, our hopes are to breed to Brenner IK to produce a B-line stud colt in the near future, and eventually, to find and/or produce an S-line stud colt, to continue these two rarest of lines in the Haflinger breed in North America.



Visit newhorizonshafingers.com for more photos of Stellar, or on Facebook at New Horizons Haflinger Sport Horses/New Horizons Farm LLC.

Regional Haflinger Group Profile: Keystone Haflinger Association

By Dean Baker



I have been a horse lover for all of my 74 years. Quarter Horses were my passion for many years, and then about 17 years ago I became interested in Haflingers because I thought they would be ideal driving horses. Early in my experience with the breed, several loads of Haflingers were trucked in from Ohio to a farm in Quarryville, Pennsylvania, to be demonstrated and sold. This really whetted my appetite for the Haflinger. In the following years, I made many trips to Ohio and surrounding states to attend Haflinger sales, and now I currently own three Haflingers. All three are trained to ride, and two mares are my driving horses. I greatly appreciate their disposition and trainability. Haflingers are beautiful horses that are versatile, easy keepers.

It has been a great pleasure to meet other Haflinger owners, many of which have become lifelong friends. I helped to start the Keystone Haflinger Association 10 years ago. It has been a very enjoyable and rewarding experience over the years.

The Keystone Haflinger Association celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2014. The club originated when members expressed an interest in having activities for enjoyment and promotion of the Haflinger breed. The KHA has always stressed the importance of creating an atmosphere that could be enjoyed by the entire family.

KHA sponsors several rides and drives each year. One of the highlights is a weekend of camping, riding and driving at the beautiful facilities of Fair Hill Horse Park in Elkton, Maryland. This event is enjoyed by all. Not everyone can stay for the entire weekend. Some just come for a day, and others stay in a hotel instead of camping, depending

on what works for the individual families. On Saturday evening, we meet for dinner at the main camp, and end the night by visiting around a campfire.

Each January, KHA holds an annual dinner, followed by a brief business meeting and a power point presentation from the

year's events. This is a nice time for families to come together in the winter to visit, reminisce, and talk about the upcoming year. A silent auction is held to help defray the cost of the dinner.

An important goal of KHA has always been to promote the Haflinger breed. KHA has had a booth and demo at the PA Horse World Expo for many years. We have also had a presence at Horse Progress Days, and The PA National Horse Show. All of these events have helped expose the public to the Haflinger Horse and to educate people about our horses. KHA also sup-



ports the AHR National Show financially each year. Some of our members are active in showing and participate in Haflinger and open shows. Even with all of these great promotional activities, I believe the greatest benefit of a regional Haflinger group is the friendships developed between horse people with similar interests.

Haflingers in Combined Driving Events

By Diane Mansur

My name is Diane Mansur and we, my husband Ray and I, have owned Haflingers since 2003. Kind of sounds like the AA thing where you say my name is and I am addicted to..... Well with Haflingers it's just about the same thing. Once you get your first golden pony you become addicted.

First, a little about me, thought it's actually us since CDE's are a group effort. We started in horses later in life and my husband, Ray (the driver), was fortunate enough to get an off-the-track Standardbred that was trained to drive. After attending a driving clinic, we were "hooked" both on driving in general and CDE driving specifically. We started competing in CDEs with our Standardbred in 1996 and had the opportunity to see several Haflingers competing on the West Coast. For me, it was love at first sight, and after a little nudging in the Haflinger direction by a very good friend, I knew we needed to own some of these golden ponies. I got my wish in the summer of 2003 when we were for-



Photography courtesy of PICS of YOU

fortunate enough to be able to purchase our first pair of Haflingers, Movin Car and Manfred, from Fritz and Phyllis Grupe in CA. Fritz had been competing with this pair successfully in CDE's and was making the move from ponies to horses. So, this solid pair was offered for sale and we were lucky enough to buy them. Once we got this first remarkable pair, there was no turning back.

We have been competing in CDEs for over 15 years, with both single and pair, on the East and West Coasts. We drove Manfred and Car in CA from 2003 through 2006 at the preliminary and intermediate levels. We moved to Windsor, SC in 2006 to join an established driving community. Though we have retired Car and Manfred (now 22) from

the rigors of competing, they are still driven recreationally. We are now competing with a younger pair (Major's Amigo (Major) and Neon Fire (Blaze)) at events from FL to KY.

Now, to explain what a CDE is. CDEs are driving competitions modeled after Eventing. It is a three phase event that consists of dressage, marathon, and cones driving. In a 3 day CDE, dressage is driven on the first day, marathon is driven the second day and cones are driven on the 3rd day. Scores from the three days are added together to get the final placings for each class. Dressage is similar to compulsory figures in figure skating where a panel of judges scores you on how accurately you perform your test compared to their image of perfection. Though dressage is not the most exciting phase of the competition, it incorporates all the important basics of good driving. The most exciting part of CDEs is marathon day





Photography courtesy of PICS of YOU

where the driver, horse(s) and navigator negotiate marked/gated obstacles as quickly as possible while on the cross country course (A,B,C,D etc in the correct direction and correct order). All time spent in the obstacle results in penalty points so it is important to get in and out of the obstacle area as quickly as possible while navigating the gates correctly. This day is a true adrenaline rush and is always over too quickly. The cones driving phase is designed to show that the horse is still sound, fit and agile enough to complete a cones course after the rigors of marathon day. Penalties are incurred when a ball is knocked off of a cone or if the time allowed for the course is exceeded. There are other

variations of CDE's called HDTs (Horse Driving Trials) which have a shorter marathon course and sometimes have dressage and cones on the first day followed by marathon on the last day. There are also ADTs (Arena Driving Trials) which are one day events and do not include cross country tracks, but do incorporate the timed obstacles. All include dressage, obstacles, and cones. The main difference is the length of the course on the marathon. Which type of event you choose to compete in is often dependent on the fitness level of your horse. CDE marathon courses average about 9 miles or more, while an HDT is about 5 miles, and an ADT includes obstacles only. For more information on CDE driving go to the American

Driving Society website: americandriving-society.org.

Why have we been competing for over 10 years in CDEs with Haflingers? Simply put, they are absolutely wonderful. They are good solid competitors and try their best to do whatever is asked of them. Because our equines are under 148cm in height, we compete in the large pony class at CDEs. We compete against German Riding Ponies, Welsh and any other breed or combination that falls into the height parameters for that division. When we first started, we were sometimes at a disadvantage in dressage with our draftier ponies, but their determination and agility more than made up for it in marathon and



disaster in the making but there was never the slightest indication of a problem.

Do all Haflingers make good CDE ponies? No; but if you find the right ones, they will give you everything they have. We have been competing in an average of 3 – 5 CDEs per year. Only once during this time, have we had to withdraw from an event because of injury. If they are well taken care of and kept fit and conditioned, Haflingers are very sturdy equines that can stand up to the physical demands of our sport. We love our current pair and have been very happy with the success we

cones. Now, with our younger and sportier boys, we are able to hold our own and sometimes place first in our class in dressage. That is the real icing on the cake. Marathon is always the most fun part of the competition for us. There is no more exhilarating feeling than cantering out of an obstacle knowing that we have done the best we could on that day.

When recalling special moments from our many competitions, there are several that stand out in my mind. In one of our first events with Car and Manfred we were heading toward an obstacle close to freight train tracks. We could hear the train coming and I said to Ray, “What do you think?” His response was that we would be done before the train got there. This picture shows that he was right. Thanks to a well placed photographer we have this picture of our boys heading for the obstacle exit while the locomotive of the train is right next

to us and heading in the opposite direction. In the typical Haflinger fashion we love, they were so focused on doing their job that the train never even caused them to miss a beat.

Another memory is when the bit we were using on Car broke in the middle of marathon. I was not navigating, but I watched as Ray drove through an obstacle with no bit in Car’s mouth. He then proceeded on course and drove two more obstacles before he was stopped by an official of the event. Ray’s comment was that he thought that Car was steering a little harder than usual but he made every turn that he was asked and sped up and slowed down whenever asked. Again, love those Haflingers. This could have been a

have had with them in CDEs. But more than that, they are members of our family. There is nothing better than to go out to our barn and see 4 heads looking out over their stall gates looking to see if we are coming to visit and, of course, give them treats (after all, they are Haflingers). We compete in CDEs for the fun of the sport and to enjoy our ponies. If we weren’t having fun, it would be time to quit; but as long as we have these golden ponies with their big hearts, I know that we will be having fun for quite a while. The blue ribbons at the end of an event are just icing on the cake.



Photography courtesy of PICS of YOU



The Outside of a (Haflinger) Horse—A Special Horse for Special Needs

By Linda Watson

I'm Linda Watson of Pretty Pony Pastures, and also the proud owner of a herd of Haflinger mares. The quote is "the outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man," but I know of hundreds of special needs persons that our Haflingers were good for – inside and out!

Twenty-some years ago I was looking for a good, sturdy horse that I could ride, but wasn't too tall. We saw Haflingers at a Horse Expo, and that was it. As soon as we were able, we went searching for our own. At the same time, my husband and I volunteered for therapeutic riding facilities in our area. After we purchased our first pair of Haflingers and experienced their great disposition, we decided to work with them specifically for special needs persons, so they could be available for therapy sessions. That evolved into the start of our own

riding facility, Pretty Pony Pastures, on our farm. We couldn't and wouldn't think of increasing our herd with just any horse. We decided to choose only Haflingers for our program and are very satisfied with how they have provided great riding experiences for all over the past eleven years.

Everyone remarks how calm they are, no matter how fussy the rider might be. They enjoy their work and the children who ride them. They appear to be nurturing to young riders, but I attribute that to only having mares! Their shorter stature makes them less

intimidating to the youngsters and makes it easier for the little ones to groom and tack.

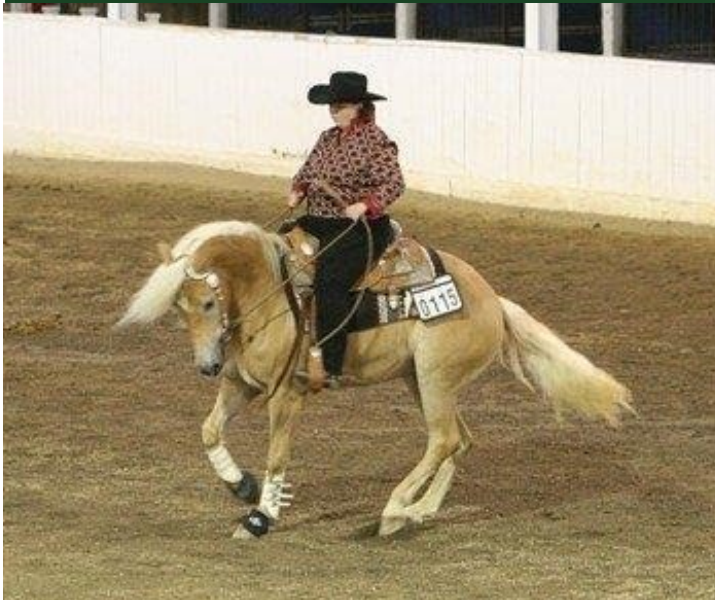
In addition to our therapeutic and youth riding programs, these horses have been shown locally in schooling dressage shows, and taken ribbons. I prize them as a great breed of horses.



Visit prettyponypastures.org to see more Haflingers making miracles!

Haflingers as a Western Horse

By Lisa Schott



breed, western was not the first discipline that came to my mind. Boy was I wrong! The more I got to know about the breed the more I realized how well suited they could be to the different western sports. With their athletic builds, powerful hindquarters and people pleasing

show at their natural gaits has many bonuses; not only happier horses, as Tara mentioned, but also much more sound horses, which leads to great longevity for this breed.

As with all breeds, some Haflingers are more suited for western than others. Our gelding was supposed to be a dressage horse, but told us right from the start that he was more suited for western. Even in the field he did not move faster than a jog with a naturally low head carriage. So after 15 years of not even sitting in a western saddle, we purchased one and started his career as a western Haflinger!

My name is Lisa Schott, and my husband Terry and I own TLC Stables in Mount Vernon, Ohio. We have been involved with Haflingers since 2002. Throughout my life before that I had worked and shown many different breeds in a variety of disciplines. We were first introduced to the Haflinger breed by friends when Terry went looking for a driving horse. And the saying that Haflingers are like potato chips is correct – we purchased 6 that first year! We, along with our students and clients, compete our Haflingers in western, English, jumping, dressage, driving, showmanship and reining. We are proud owners and trainers of 2 of only 5 horses that have earned the Versatile Haflinger award and to have owned and trained the only Haflinger to pass the 500 points earned mark in the Western division.

personalities, you can't go wrong! Reining, western pleasure and western horsemanship classes are well suited for Haflingers.

Tara Williamson, who catch-rides for our farm, says Haflingers “have nice smooth jogs, (and) expressive movement, even at the slower western gaits. The breed shows at natural gaits, which preserves the willing and happy attitude of the breed, and who wouldn't rather heave a heavy western saddle up 58 inches instead of 17 hands!”

I can't agree more with Tara! Having them

Haflingers are very intelligent horses and are free thinkers, which makes them perfect for pattern classes such as showmanship, horsemanship, and reining. One caution though – do not practice the entire pattern too much or your Haflinger may end up doing the pattern on their own in their own way!

I firmly believe that as more people are introduced to this wonderful breed and their versatility, we are going to see more and more in the open show arenas, 4-H, pony club, trails and any other place that lends itself to versatile athletic horses!

Cowboy (or Girl) Up With a Haflinger!

When first introduced to the Haflinger



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