

THE EMPATHIC HORSEMANSHIP OF RICHARD BOULÉ

A portrait of five decades living with Morgan horses.

By Stephen Kinney

In addition to the many champions he has trained, and along with the horsemen he has mentored, Richard Boulé's legacy involves the nearly extra-sensory knack he has for understanding, sensing, and reacting to the needs of horses.

Sarah Gove, his colleague for nearly two decades at Taylor River Farm, says, "Richie is 100 percent a horse psychologist. You can take it a step further and call him a horse psychic. I think all of us as horsemen develop an ability to read body language and temperament, the outside shell of horse behavior. But Richie has an ability to listen to what a horse is worried about, to hear what the horse would like to see happen. And then to change the conversation. He sees inside thoughts, not just outward behavior. There have been horses I've tried to position for a canter lead or departure, for instance. I tried to do it structurally, tried to teach them. Then he would pop up there and just do it. And when you ask him about it, he explains, 'you need to visualize it. You need to see it to make it happen.' When you need something to go right, just seeing it, visualizing it, can add to the technical tools in your toolbox."

Sarah digs in. "It sounds like an abstract tool, but I have tried to make it mine. I do believe you can compile tools, technical as well as visualization. If you can see the departure, if you can see where they are comfortable wearing their head and neck. If

you are open, it becomes a sixth sense sort of thing. It's like being open to feng shui or 'good ju-ju' or positive energy. It happens in other sporting events. We watch football as a family and you can

see the good energy involved in getting the ball down the field and you can see when there is a play, but it is just not connecting. It is a skill he has. It is a skill I am open to and hope to continue to develop. I've seen it work with difficult horses when conventional language was not working."

I had my own early encounter with Richard's investment in the emotional life of his horses. In the mid-2000s I was attending Citrus Cup Regional when Richard was working in Florida. Walking the shed row barns, I saw a big chestnut horse standing outside in a round pen, eating hay and greeting visitors who stopped by to pet him. The horse was the super-charged Mantic Bullseye. Richard had determined that the unusual custom of bringing a round pen to a show so Bullseye could spend parts of his day in his happy place would aid with success. Richard found a key to this powerful horse, with, to use his words, "triggers which made showing him challenging." Ultimately,

two different petite young ladies won world titles in the Park Saddle and English Pleasure Divisions on Bullseye.

Partner Shane Darnell experiences Richard's horsemanship in



INSET, ABOVE: Richard Boulé with world champion CBMF Hitting The Streets GCH at Grand National 2013; **RIGHT:** With RRB Mad Love (Tug Hill Celebrity x Orcland Tinaline) and her 2011 colt Missoni (by BKC Valiant Star). Richard is the breeder of both mare and foal (photos © Howard Schatzberg, Andy Illies).



a similar light. He remarks that he has had horses “since I was two, but when I came to Taylor River, Richard taught me things I didn’t see before. The biggest thing I have learned from Richard is the mechanical engineering of a horse, the skeletal system and the muscles. When you see something not right about a horse, we all look for the root cause, but he picks it up quick. He has taught me when issues may not be caused by the horse, they could be man-made. Sarah says he ‘peels back the onion.’ He does it from a physical perspective, but also from the mental. Horses have emotional lives, just like humans do. Horses are beings that feel stress and pain but can’t always communicate it the way humans can. He sees them as souls, just like we are. They are energy sources as we are.”

Many of the skills described here were not learned in a riding academy or from the contemporary model of horse industry professionals. Richard headed to a horseman’s laboratory in the mid-1970s when, first, he apprenticed himself to Vermont trainer Harold Childs and, a few years later, signed on to do everything asked of him at the legendary Orcland Farms (see *“The Orcutt Family Morgan Legacy, Part 5,”* in this issue). There he fed horses, cleaned stalls, helped tease, breed, and foal out mares. Training, and eventually showing horses, was an essential but sometimes secondary part of the process.

“Almost 20 years ago we had, I don’t want to call it an interview, it was a dinner meeting among our family and Richard at New England Morgan,” Sarah Gove says. “We were on the lookout for a senior horse trainer because I knew enough to know I didn’t know enough. Richard said, ‘I like to feed my own horses.’ It wasn’t just that he liked to select the feed. It was that he preferred to feed them personally. For 20 years, if he is on site at this farm—Christmas day, Saturdays, it doesn’t matter—he feeds all 60 horses. He comes through and feeds their hay, then back through and feeds their grain. He decides which one needs a carb-based diet versus higher protein. At a horse show, it may be 10:00 at night and we have finished our day and there’s Richard in his ‘office’ (which is what we call the grain room).

“We’ve all been in other barns and at horse shows and heard horses being pushy when it’s time to eat. So, this may sound amazing, but that behavior is not allowed at Taylor River. Horses will wait patiently for their hay and grain as it comes to them. If he is away and I am in the barn when we are feeding it is just amazing. It is silent. We get a new horse in and there is an adjustment period, but they learn to wait. It is very peaceful. I think that is the perfect definition of his horsemanship. He doesn’t just want to train them and ride them and show them, he wants to feed them every day, he wants to check them every night before he goes to bed in his apartment above the barn.”

Shane Darnell sees Richard’s long history with Morgan horses also at play in his approach. “He enjoys the breeding part of Morgans. He can overlay a pedigree and talk about what should cross well based on his knowledge of the bloodline, but also on the mechanical engineering of horses he’s known in the past. He’s good at that. When a horse comes in the barn, he knows what he has to do based on bloodlines and how he had to work their ancestors years ago. That takes a lifetime to learn.”

Shane adds that to steward his horses, Richard also “works with chiropractors and vets and farriers. Recently he bought the

PEMF [Pulsing Electro-Magnetic Field] machine and he has taught himself a lot about muscles and skeletons from using this treatment. He received training when he bought the machine, but he spends hours a week treating every horse in the barn himself.”

Richard has a philosophy that being a horse trainer is about more than just training horses. “The older I get, and the more aches and pains I have, the more I worry about my horses. When I started physical therapy after an accident 17 years ago, I realized that if I’m not feeling well, I can’t work well. Therefore, it is important that our horses, mechanically, can do what they are supposed to do and are fit to do it. If they are sound, then they will give you the best that they can. I got this PEMF machine to help out. I’ve become a caretaker and it has taken over a good portion of my time.

“In my life I often have had what I call ‘rehab.’ Horses that, for whatever reason, have issues. They let you know intuitively. What are they panicked about? What sets them off? I have the time where I can help with difficulties. We had a horse who came in here as a train wreck, mentally and physically. He had the scars to prove it. I worked with him through his issues so I could ride him. We put Sarah on him, and she could ride him. But he couldn’t deal with shows. Today he is a competitive trail horse. He found his place. Finding them a job is satisfying. Finding them a place to be productive is a privilege.”

Richard’s empathy reaches the students who ride under his direction as well, as Jared Gove’s observation illustrates: “The way Richard approaches things with his riders is almost an opposite of what Sarah does. Sarah gives almost a stream of consciousness to her riders, frequent repetition of detail. Richard sees a big picture. He knows he can’t tell his riders everything, every moment in the show ring. He wants them to get a feel for it and to understand themselves what they need to do. He wants you to figure it out, and he doesn’t want to overwhelm. That has worked so well for our son, Gavin. When he started to ride “Pac Man” [Pondview Park Avenue GCH] at the age of eight, there was only so much he could absorb. If the lesson went on too long there were diminishing returns. Richard gave him three 12-minute lessons a week and channeled it into something more efficient and far more productive. It’s been an excellent match between the way Gavin learns and the way Richard teaches. In fact, I also notice it is a teaching style that works with the boys who ride at Taylor River, the Shamples, the Miners, and our boys.

Richard is 68 this year. He started out in the 1970s when “horse trainer” was an unlikely choice of profession. His career spans three distinct phases, at the iconic Orcland Farms, as a public trainer running his own stable in Florida, and, for the last two decades, at the vast lesson and training program that is Taylor River Farm.

Here Richard shares his colorful journey as a horseman.

Richard grew up in Dracut, Massachusetts, and got his start in 4-H. He found an early love for competitive trail riding on the back of a neighbor’s part-bred Arabian. Prior to completing a Bachelor of Science degree with a specialty in equine studies, Richard attended Essex Agricultural School in nearby Danvers, Massachusetts. That program required students find a “job in the field,” leading to three summers working at Harolyn Hills, the Vermont stable of Marilyn and Harold Childs. He calls Harold Childs his “biggest mentor.”



EARLY MENTORS

LEFT TO RIGHT: Harold Childs on Topfield's Janet and Marilyn Childs on Lippitt Mandate (photo © Budd).

ON HAROLYN HILLS

“Mr. Childs was soft, quiet, and methodical. I have never forgotten something he said to me, but it took me a lot of years to understand it. He said, ‘A lazy man makes a good horse.’ Basically, he meant take your time and never rush them. Everything was smooth bits, and the horses all wore their bridles as light as they could be.

“Another saying of his was, ‘Everything you train is for the horse, not for the client.’ He meant he would never respond to pressure to rush anything. He felt if you skipped a step today, you’d regret it tomorrow. Of course, in the 1970s our industry was very different. We didn’t have many amateurs and junior exhibitors. The clients came with very little pressure, there was never a rush to get an owner or a client on the horse. In fact, it was a privilege to have Harold Childs on your horse.

“Marilyn was an influence in a different way. She did not spend a lot of time in the barn. Mr. Childs was very Southern, and the men did all the work in his day. Marilyn would come in on Saturday and the horses were already prepped for whatever she wanted to do. She did not train them during the week, Mr. Childs would. She was a school principal, she coached a debate team, and she would teach you to have a plan and to organize, organize, organize. To this day I try to think ahead and have a plan. When we have a goal for a horse or a plan for a show, I work backwards to it. If I have to do a certain thing on a certain date, then I have to plan my work in a systematic way. I learned that from Mrs. Childs.

“The Childs’s sons were bigger than I was. Since I was the smallest and the horse was tiny, I got to show one of Dana Wing-

ate Kelley’s horses at the Lippitt Show. And I showed a horse in-hand for Clara Hendin. Mrs. O [Ruth Orcutt] was judging. At the end of the show Mrs. Childs always insisted we thank the judge. Mrs. O asked where I came from and remarked that wasn’t far from Orcland Farms and invited me to visit. I was graduating from the University of New Hampshire where I did all of my equine studies with Dr. O’Conner, so I had left Childs and was going over to Orcland on weekends. They offered me a job and I went directly to work at Orcland Farms in May of 1978. I didn’t go to my graduation because we had Mass Morgan in Northampton that weekend.”

ON ORCLAND FARMS

“You may have been hired as an assistant or a groom, but the reality was you did everything. I got up and fed the horses. Then cleaned stalls. Depending on the season, we teased mares. You have to have a plan for that, because if there were mares in season, next you were breeding. We foaled out mares, which meant scheduling the vet. Then you would get to work horses. Lyman [Orcutt] traveled constantly to judge horse shows. When he was away, I would work a lot of the horses. If he was home, I would get them ready for him to work and I would assist. Lyman left in 1980. We were actually getting ready to go to a show when it was finalized Lyman was not coming home. I said, ‘what are we going to do?’ And Mrs. O said, ‘You’ve been here long enough, you’ve worked the horses, you know the horses.’ And she told me I was going to show them. That is when I stepped up into that role.

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ORCLAND FARMS

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Bar The Way was the first major horse Richard trained himself at Orcland Farms; Richard with the Bar The Way son Orcland Star Way (x Orcland Supreme Doll); daughter Orcland B Dawn (x Orcland DollySupreme); and with Orcland Tinaline (UVM Clipper x Orcland Supreme Doll), a mare Richard kept all her life (photos © Equus Studios, Bob Moseder, Howard Schatzberg).

Do you work with horses today and think, “I remember his/her grandsire or great grandam behaved the same way”? Does the experience back then come in handy with horses today?

“There are not many direct crosses to Orcland Morgans in the horses we work today. But every once in a while I can see quirks from Ulendon or Orcland Supreme come across in a horse. One thing that Lyman did was breed for a powerful hind end. But with that sometimes they’d get those hind ends under them and all the sudden round their backs, get a bit nervous, and would grab the bits with their mouths. They’d bundle up in a ball and the Ulendon horses would tip their heads. And you could hear them because they would get heavy-footed when they did this.

MEMORABLE ORCLAND HORSES

“There was this wonderful little mare I loved, Orcland Supreme Doll. She was out of a mare called Silkoline. On a good day she might have been 14 hands. Powerful, a lot of character. She was never broken; in fact, she was sort of wild. She ended up having 15 foals. I owned three of them. One was Orcland Tinaline [by UVM Clipper]. I kept her all her life; she never left my care until I moved and had to place her in boarding. I had Orcland Barway by Bar The Way. I had a sister, Orcland Lee Way. Silkoline was a full sister to Trophy and these horses always made me think of Trophy’s Emerald, Saddleback Supreme, Trophy’s Jade. I fell in love with those horses.

“Bar The Way was a little bit controversial for that time. But



LEFT TO RIGHT: Corriminie (Corisham x Glory's Hallelujah) and his sire, Corisham (Corisor Of Upwey x Petersham Fitzie). Richard counts working 15 offspring of Corisham during his career (photos © Bob Moseder, Warren Patriquin).

he was my first big project when he came to Orcland Farm. Lyman was very proud of him, and it was special that I got to work him. That horse probably taught me the most of any horse ever.

“Some of the older mares are memorable. Orcland Donanna wasn’t the prettiest mare, but she could trot. She was the pride of Ruth. Orcland Bolenda, Helen Of Troy. These were special mares that I will always remember.”

Lyman and Ruth Orcutt divorced in the early 1980s. By the middle of that decade, Richard had taken on outside clients at Orcland Farms, including the Packard sisters, Bill and Janice Pring, and the Dooleys. Richard says, “But Mrs. O wanted me to concentrate on farm owned horses, especially as she was starting a partial dispersal.” Richard ultimately started Richard Boulé Stables, in partnership with Larry Bonnell at Jill Bertrand’s farm in Brookfield, Massachusetts. “That is when I finally became a public trainer,” Richard says. “We went there with 20-some horses.”

BECOMING A PUBLIC TRAINER

“I had never had a vacation. Larry, [Tedwin Farm’s] Johnny Paluga, and I went to Florida on vacation. We went to see Earleen [Kenyon] and the farm in Florida she owned. I had horses for Bill and Nancy Curtis and their daughter, Chrissy. They vaguely mentioned looking around for some property. Earleen said she was going to put her place up for sale. I told her I’d love to buy it, but I could never afford it. She said, ‘Yes you can.’ She made an arrangement that I could pay her rent for two years and she would use that money as a down payment and I could own it. Which is what we did. We made a financial decision and we traveled to Florida with 21 horses and opened Summerfields Morgans LLC. We had the Curtis’s horses, Bonnie Messier’s hunter, we had a stallion named Spirit Of Ecstasy for Father Kelley, I had Corriminie and one or two mares. We had already purchased Rhythm Nation.”

TRAINING IN MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES

“At shows, with Orcland Farms we stabled near the Parker family—Joe Parker, Uncle Robert, the boys were young in the ’70s and ’80s. I got to watch Bennfield’s Ace, ER Hope Diamond, and others. To this day, I see a good horseman in any discipline, and I just stare it down. I just watch and watch and then I go home and practice. The trick is to find a mentor. I remember watching Fred Herrick with some of his horses. Bill Holtz on Trophy’s Jade. Watching Annie [Anderson] on Topfield’s Janet, Ladys Enticement. I was into watching them working horses and I still am.

“I started carriage driving while I was in Brookfield. Nancy Wardwell had Orcland Tinaline. One year she won the Amateur Park Harness Championship at Mass Morgan, but she really just squeaked by. And Nancy knew that and said, ‘we can’t do this anymore.’ She wanted to do carriage driving. That was in August and at the end of October she won the marathon and cones at the New England Carriage Driving Association. Ultimately, I had multiple clients with carriage horses—Jean French, Ed and Penny Barker, Dimity and Wayne Webster, and others. I did have a few lessons with Robin Groves and I would see John Greenall at shows, and he gave me tips. I kept at least five, sometimes six, carriage horses. I rarely won a carriage dressage test. My horses were too animated. But there was a Hungarian judge at the time who loved their headsets. I won a lot under him.

“The difficult one was Western. I didn’t have someone on my radar when I was in Florida. Rick Gervasio wasn’t there yet. Daryl [Hopson] was up in Washington. Judy Nason was back in New England. I had to start messing with it myself, so I did it like it was carriage driving under saddle. It was a more relaxed frame, you let a horse find its bridle. The gait had to be soft. Shane [Darnell] is an excellent Western rider, loves to have a Western pleasure horse, and his determination and skill have helped me understand the art of Western pleasure better.”



YOUNG HORSES

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Richard has a way with young horses. AMZ Tiger Lily (Three Wishes x RRB Mad Love) in 2005; Pondview Promises Promises (Tug Hill Commando x Baymeadow Prima Diva) in 1994; Pondview Unforgettable (Futurity French Command x Pond View Portrait) in 1996; and Corsairs Perfection (Appleton Corsair x Music’s Lil Rodi) winning the Morgan Horse Breeders Association \$10,000 Championship at New England in 1986 (shown with Martha DuPont) (photos © Bob Moseder, Howard Schatzberg).

MEMORABLE HORSES AT SUMMERFIELDS

“One of the horses that meant so much to me was the Corisham Corriminie. I got him from the Van Buskirks when he was two. His right front foot had gone through a particle board wall and became infected. It took me a few years to clean it up. I had him until he died at 26. I showed him as a pleasure horse, both under saddle and harness, and in carriage driving. He was a very special horse and would do anything you wanted. I’ve had 14 offspring of Corisham, and he was the easiest of them all. In Florida, people wanted to breed to him. It got so I could put a mare in the chute, lead him up to tease, and collect him by myself. Two-hundred fifty bucks for the collection and that is how I paid my mortgage.

“We got both Mantic Bullseye and Mantic Top Gun (Joan

Bowers said we had to take them together). Larry got Top Gun and won the Three-Year-Old English Pleasure World Championship with him. I worked Bullseye, who was older. I got to Oklahoma with him and let’s just say I hung on. We lived and learned how to deal with him. Over time, he actually turned into a junior exhibitor horse for Lindsay Bofman and Kristi Buehrle got him as an amateur horse. Mentally he was hot, but he had triggers. Any sudden noise or flashes and he wouldn’t do bad things, but he would trot so hard and so fast you couldn’t stop him. To pair them up, Lindsay would ride him in the round-pen for months doing stops, and starts, and time outs. We practiced that until he understood and got over his nervousness. But when Lindsay bonded with him and treated him as her pet, that

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FLORIDA FAVORITES

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Mantic Top Gun GCH (HyLee Rare Flaire x Mantic Monica) and Lindsay Bofman; Mantic Bullseye (TVM I Promise x HEK's Moonmist) with both Lindsay Bofman and Kristi Buehrle; HVK Man Of Distinction (Noble Flaire x Carlyle Ten) and Kristin Curreri (photos © Doug Shiflet, Bob Moseder, Howard Schatzberg).

made all the difference. He needed to know her inside and out and that is when everything changed. We stopped giving him a routine. If he had a routine, he would anticipate. We had acres of trails and pathways, so we worked him out there and not in a ring. When Lindsay was on, she would stop, go, stop, go. We were careful at shows not to work him in a noisy environment, so he didn't get triggered. Lindsay was World Champion Junior Exhibitor English Pleasure. Kristi won the Amateur Park Saddle Reserve World Championship twice. Both riders were petite, but neither was timid. They were both in tune with that spicy personality. They trusted the horse enough to go with him and never react in fear.

"We bought HVK Man Of Distinction at one of the Kohler sales. He was the high seller. There was a lot of feeling we could

not get it done, but he was twice Reserve World Champion Amateur Park Saddle with Kristin Curreri. She had ridden with me in the early 1980s; the family had Townshend Jedidiah and Cordiva. When Kristen came back, she had been doing jumpers, so she had a good seat. He was another horse with quirks, but things didn't faze her."

THE AFFILIATION WITH RHYTHM NATION

"The Curtises came to me when I was still in Brookfield, Massachusetts, wanting to purchase a stallion. Lyman Orcutt was selling Dr. Benson's supplements, traveling everywhere. He had been at Bruce Ekstrom's and told me there was a weanling colt that was spectacular, so we went out to see him. Bruce showed us two-year-old studs and other horses, but I kept wandering. I went by this

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CBMF HITTING THE STREETS GCH

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: CBFM Hitting The Streets GCH is a favorite, shown here winning world championships in both saddle and harness, and with his daughters Living On Easy Street CH (x Paradigm Tokyo Rose) and Vivre L'Amour (x Playmors Beyond The Stars) (whom Richard also bred) (photos © Howard Schatzberg, Shane Shifflet).

stall and tapped on the bars and this colt turned his head and that was it. He was not for sale, but I could not get him out of my mind. We finally were able to get Rhythm Nation, but we also had to buy FCF Immortal Affair as part of the package.

“We purchased [Rhythm Nation] in good faith and his papers stated, ‘Qualified By Blood Typing.’ We started showing him at two. He was Grand Champion Stallion at Mid-A and World Champion Junior Stallion at Oklahoma. It was after that he was investigated. Eventually we got the letter that he had been cleared and that we could breed with him. We bred something like 32 mares, and he went on to be World Champion Stallion in 2000. The next year two things happened to reopen the investigation. There was new evidence and DNA testing had improved. The Saddlebred mare was located, they had better

ways of testing her blood and witnesses spoke up. They had proof of rules being broken.

“We had 14 of his offspring in our training barn. Twelve had shown and won, many of them championships or reserves. Prior to matters being concluded we could have shown the offspring at Citrus Cup Regional. I chose not to. I talked to the clients who owned all of them and said we would not show them. They were nice horses, and they likely would have won. I said, ‘what is that going to do to the people who got second?’ So, we opted to do the right thing and not put pressure on the judge. I was determined not to leave the breed, but his foals all left the barn. Needless to say, my training business was in tough shape.

“Rhythm Nation was proven not to be correctly registered. It was wrong, but we did not buy him knowing it was wrong. We



MENTORING RIDERS

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: Richard with the boys who ride (left to right: Cam Miner, Riley Gove, Spencer Shample, Gavin Gove, Cade Miner, and Nicky Shample); the girls who hunt (left to right: Sara Pizzuto-Tancredi, Sara Mononen, Michelle Quinlisk, and Sarah Gove); Vivre L'Amour with Sophia Vasapolli; Shane Darnell and Take The Crown GCH.

bought a horse qualified through blood-typing. We chose not to show offspring when we could have. Everyone impacted chose not to file lawsuits, including us. And we found good homes for all those horses. And then we moved on.”

Richard, who’s career started at a breeding farm with stallions, broodmares, and the resultant young stock to break, now trains at Taylor River Farm, a model of the contemporary Morgan show stable. More than 40 horses are worked by two full-time trainers and their assistants, primarily on behalf of amateur and junior exhibitor clients. One hundred-plus public lessons are conducted weekly by an affiliated, but independent, academy program. A show schedule starts in April, climaxing at Grand National in October. Richard has been part of the full evolution of the equestrian economy over a career-spanning nearly five decades.

TAYLOR RIVER FARM AND THE BUSINESS TODAY

“When I started, there were many breeders and many trainers. Owners would take show horses home in the winter and send in babies to get started for the next season. For most trainers, that does not exist today. Today, the best Morgan horses are shown by amateurs and junior exhibitors rather than trainers showing in the open divisions. Horses have to exhibit the manners and the behaviors and comply with the judging specs for amateurs and junior exhibitors. And they have to be prepared for their owners to show. Training has changed in our generation.”

This has been good for the economy of Morgan barns and horse shows. Dissect that a bit.

“Especially when COVID hit, lesson programs filled up. Barns were a safe place where people could take riding lessons in the

open air. Kids who started in the lesson programs are out of academy, and their families are leasing or buying. There is business to go around. The challenge for young trainers starting out is overhead. We are lucky here to have this facility and a staff on board that has grown with the business. To train horses for the amateur and junior exhibitor market and establish lesson programs, the most important thing is billing, which has become more complex and has to be done correctly. It helps to have a front person who communicates with clients, and takes care of emails, phone calls, and schedules. When I was at Orland and in Florida, we could always find people who wanted to work. Today, finding help is also hard. The business is bigger and better, but it is more complicated than it was years ago.”

SATISFACTION

“Today my favorite thing is pairing people and their horses, even the projects. If you have a difficult horse, getting it done well so that a horse can be successful for its rider gives me excitement. Pairing up teams and watching what they become is very rewarding.

“I’ve been around Sarah Miner since she was tiny. Now I get to have her kids, Cade and Cam around. The Shample boys ride here. They both started very young and are still riding and showing past high school. Sophia Vasapolli has been here since her walk-trot years, and she has done a lot with a mare I bred. Now Gavin and Riley Gove are riding. Before, I had never had the opportunity to have the kids who grow up and stay at this so long. They’ve become my Morgan family and I think you can have a bigger positive influence in the Morgan business with kids you have all this time.

“I think when you teach riders, you are teaching respect. Both for the horse and for the process. I want them to learn horsemanship. I drill that ‘if you do this, the result will be this.’ Step away from that (for instance, if temper comes through) and you lose it. You can never punish a horse because you’ve had a bad day. You have to be kind. If you have rough hands, you get nothing. Have a goal and accept what you have to do to reach that goal. If we set a time for you to ride, you have to show up. This applies outside of horses as well. Parents tell me that kids learning other people have expectations of them makes a difference. And animals come first.

“We’ve had some really nice horses here and they all get to me. I have multiple favorites, but ‘Breaker’ [CBMF Hitting The Streets GCH] is one of my favorite. I look at that horse and when you sit on him and see him in the bridle, he looks like his grandsire, Tug Hill Whamunion. And he produces like his grandsire. I was gone on vacation after Oklahoma. I got home in the afternoon, hugged Sarah first, then went right to the front of Breaker’s stall. I opened that door, and his nostrils were on the back of my neck, he was licking me, and he would not let me leave. That’s a nice horse.” ■



FAMILY AT TAYLOR RIVER

TOP TO BOTTOM: Richard with colleagues Sarah Gove and John Whalen; with Brooke, Jeff, Sarah, and Jared Gove; and all dressed up for the wedding of Sara Pizzuto-Tancredi.