

Wheel to Wheel FEBRUARY 2022

Newsletter for the HUB Club

<http://www.facebook.com/hubclubdrivingclub>

<http://www.hubclubdriving.com>

HUB Club Officers:

President Ann McCombs 815-482-5085 or 815-648-4471 eqvet@mc.net

Vice President Emily Berendt 815-337-3101 eberendt@yahoo.com

Secretary MaryAnn Carter maryanncarter@live.com

Treasurer Sue West 815-451-9385 suegwest@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor Kris Breyer 847-526-3012 briarpatcheast@aol.com

ADS Representatives:

Midwest Region Rep Mary Lu Norland midwest@americandrivingsociety.org

Central Region Rep Lynn West LynnWest@Realtor.com

CAA Chapter Coordinator Margie Lewin Cox margiec5601@gmail.com

A current negative Coggins must be on file with the club secretary in order to participate in any HUB Club event

The HUB Club:
Education &
Camaraderie



HUB CLUB



From the Editor As your editor, I ask that you send me photos and anything else that you would like to see in the newsletter. I am more than happy to use anything you want in the newsletter, as it is **YOUR newsletter**. If you want to continue to have an informative newsletter, I need material from the membership. You can send them to me directly at briarpatcheast@aol.com by the 20th of each month. Kris Breyer

From the Webmaster: Please submit items for web page. Include pictures of all our members. Please send names of driver, passengers, horse(s), and description of what you are doing, and where.



Prez Letter: We had a good turnout for our January meeting, 21 in person and another 3 or 4 on Zoom. We had a productive meeting and made several decisions (see minutes in newsletter). Please note that the hi-point awards program has been revised and I encourage everyone to sign up. Kelly makes custom prizes and the club presents them at the January meeting. I am sending the "Getting to Know You" form out to members to complete and return to me for future inclusion in our newsletter. Feel free to get creative as you fill out the form and include photos, lots of photos.

Sue and Lydia are the co-chairs of our clinic committee and

they have the information and sign-up sheets available (see forms in newsletter). I've been told that the clinic is filling fast so don't delay. There is always space for auditors. Guaranteed you will learn some helpful hints.

We are waiting to hear what clinics Hickory Knoll is going to offer this year and have pledged our support to the organizer as well as sponsorships to many other driving opportunities here in our area.

We will be purchasing our own Zoom meeting package so that future Zoom meetings won't be limited to 40 minutes. Our next meeting will be a Zoom in March details TBA. It's still winter, cold and icy outside but the driving calendar is starting to populate (see calendar in newsletter).

See why our newsletter editor, Kris, got a Distinguished Service Award?

Ann





Hub Club Meeting ***January 30, 2022*** **at The Bigfoot Inn in Harvard, IL**



Brunch was enjoyed by 21 members present

Ann called the meeting to order at 1:00PM, we were also on Zoom

Previous meeting minutes were accepted

Treasurer's report: \$6,119.00 account balance

VP report: HUB insured events have to be to Emily by mid-March

Newsletter editor: needs articles, photos and so on please have to her by the 20th of each month

Website: hubclubdriving.com, Lydia volunteered to keep website updated

Facebook: Hubclubdrivingclub, please check it out for lots of good stuff!!

Dairyland liaison: Lydia Gray, they are going to have another restart program this Spring

ADS: we are an ADS member club with a current contact person

CAA: we do qualify as a member club

Old Business: High Point Awards rules have been revised and will be in the newsletter

Getting to Know You section in the newsletter is popular and Ann will send out the information forms to everyone to submit for future use in the newsletter

New Business: Clinic Committee: Lydia Gray and Sue West as the co-chairs. Response was excellent to Lydia's questionnaire.

We will have pony measuring at our Clinic. Trish Demers Clinic scheduled for June 4-5, 2022
Information and sign-ups are available now and in the next newsletter.

Several ideas are in the planning stages at Hickory Knoll this year, navigator clinic, cones clinic, HDT, HUB Club has volunteered to support.

This year's sponsorships: Fox Valley Saddle Association

MW Carriage festival

Notara (We will wait to see if it will happen)

Indiana CDE

Villa Louis

Wade House

Metamora

A motion was brought before the membership to purchase our own Zoom Meeting subscription, the motion passed.

2022 Officers: Pres Dr Ann McCombs, VP Emily Berendt, Sec Maryann Carter, Treas Sue West

Kelly will still be collecting Hours to Drive and providing awards

Next Meeting in March 3/6/22, Zoom format

Motion to adjourn, 2nd, so moved, 2:45 PM

Awards were presented for Distinguished Service to Kris Breyer, Jennifer Thompson and Michelle Harm

Awards were presented for Hours to Drive participants Lidia Gray, Sheri Haviza, Ann McCombs



Please fill out this “Getting to Know You” form for inclusion in our newsletter . Please answer these questions (don’t limit yourself to this page) and email them back to Ann at egvet@mc.net or directly to Kris (briarpatcheast@aol.com) with at least 1 picture but can send as many as you want! Thank You Dr. Ann McCombs

Growing Up:

Education:

Family:

Work:

Horse Experience:

My most vivid memory while driving:

I struggle sometimes (driving related):

My favorite thing to do with my horses is:

It’s really interesting to:

Any day we’re:

I’d like to see Hub Club:

My future plans include:



SALE BARN

FOR SALE: Wooden driving cart for sale.



\$750 OBO Built by Amish - DA Hochstetler & Sons, Topeka IN for a 16H TB. Has been stored inside so the condition is very good – just needs the dust cleaned off. Striking Red with Black pin striping. Wheels are 48". Black leather seats. Rear entry – seat moves forward. Call Nancy Jacoby 847-650-2447 or email nanookj@comcast.net for more details. Located in Wauconda, IL.



DRIVING 2022



Midwest Region (and then some...) 2022 Driving Season (1/17/2022)

Note: The Midwest Region is Region 5...Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota & into Canada

Event	ADS Rec'd	Date	Host	Location	Contact
National Drive		4/28 – 5/1/2022	Nat'l Drive	Hoosier Horse Park 7105 S. Kern St. Ninevah, IN 46164	Linda Sadler TheNationalDrive@gmail.com
Raymond Helmuth Clinic		5/14/2022	Mid-Iowa Driving Ass'n.	Helmuth Equine Facility 56124 280 th St. Ames, IA 50010	Theresa Burns theresadburns@gmail.com
Mid Missouri Miniature Horse Show		5/14/2022 3:00 pm Start time	Mid-Missouri Saddle Club	5 driving classes 2985 State Road TT New Bloomfield, MO 65063	Barb Schaffer 573-619-5092 Karen Craighead 573-220-3345
Midwest Regional Drive	X 5	5/20-22/2022	ADS	Jester Park Equestrian Center 11171 NW 103 rd Ct. Granger, Iowa	Mary Lu Norland midwest@americandrivingsociety.org
Robin Groves Clinic		6/4-5/2022	ENDS	Arlington Training Stable Elkhorn, NE	Garnet Blatchford garnetblat@gmail.com
Pioneer Pleasure Show	X 5	6/11-12/2022	ENDS	Seward County Fairgrounds Seward, NE	Garnet Blatchford garnetblat@gmail.com
Midwest Carriage Festival & CT	X 5	6/17-19/2022		Walworth County Fairgrounds Elkhorn, WI	midwestcarriagefestival@gmail.com Also FB Midwest Carriage Festival
Wade House Carriage Driving Days		7/16-17/2022		Wade House W 7965 State Hwy 23 Greenbush, WI	Rachel Meek haffvfun@gmail.com
Preliminary Championships Metamora CDE		8/19-21/2022		Metamora, MI	
41 th Annual Villa Louis Carriage Classic	X 5	9/9-11/2022		Villa Louis Prairie du Chien, WI	Mike Rider www.CarriageClassic.com



A Clinic with Patricia “Trish” Demers

June 4-5, 2022

Fox Valley Saddle Association, Hampshire, IL



- The clinic will be held at the Fox Valley Saddle Association, 44W300 Rohrsen Rd., Hampshire, IL, which has an indoor arena, outdoor arena, and outdoor grass field for cones and obstacles, weather permitting. All levels and disciplines welcome!
- Private lessons are \$120, payable to HUBClub. Refunds for cancellations will only be given if the slot can be filled.
- Someone will be available for scheduling official ADE pony and VSE measurements. There is no fee to HUBClub members for these measurements.
- Trish is available to evaluate for CAA Level 1 Driver Proficiency including the Road Test. Contact Sue for more info.
- Per our insurance and bylaws, anyone actively involved with a horse at the clinic must be a HUBClub member. This includes drivers, grooms, certain volunteers, and anyone bringing a pony or VSE for measurement.
- Participants may clinic out of their trailer for a daily haul-in fee of \$10 or out of a permanent stall for a daily stall fee of \$25 (add \$10 if coming in the night before). Electrical hook-ups for overnight camping are also available upon special request. Bedding is not included and is NOT available for purchase on-site. Everyone is kindly asked to clean up after their horse when they leave whether hauling-in or using a stall.
- Anyone riding on a carriage must wear properly fastened protective headgear which meets or exceeds current ASTM/SEI standards for equestrian use.
- A negative Coggins test dated within one year of the event is required. Out-of-state horses must present a Veterinary Health Certificate dated within 30 days of clinic.
- There are bleachers outside but your own chairs may be more comfortable. A hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, and bug spray are also recommended.
- Each person should bring their own lunches, drinks, and snacks. If the weather is nice, bring chairs and eat outside! Otherwise, as long as everyone maintains social distancing, we can eat in the clubhouse. Dinner TBD.
- No dogs allowed.
- We will be following the current State of Illinois/Kane County COVID-19 guidelines on the date of the clinic.

QUESTIONS?

Contact Sue West for more info at sueqwest@gmail.com, text or phone 815-451-9385



A Clinic with Patricia "Trish" Demers

June 4 and 5, 2022

Fox Valley Saddle Association, Hampshire, IL

I would like to participate as a (circle all that apply): Driver* Groom* Auditor Volunteer*

____ I would like my pony/VSE to have an official ADS measurement* (must schedule a time)

____ I would like to be evaluated for the CAA Level 1 Driver Proficiency* (contact organizer)

Name _____

E-mail _____

Street Address _____

Cell Phone _____ Other Phone _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

***per insurance, must be a HUBClub member, join below**

EQUINE Name(s) _____

Mare

Gelding

Stallion

Breed(s) _____

Age(s) _____

Height _____

Color _____

Single OR Pair

DRIVER

Per private lesson: \$120

\$ _____

Preferred lesson time(s): _____

Day stall fee EACH CALENDAR DAY: \$25

\$ _____

(if you just want to bring horse the

night before, add \$10 to the day stall fee)

\$ _____

Preferred lesson day: _____

OR Haul-in fee per trailer, per day: \$10

\$ _____

AUDITOR

MEMBER Single day: \$25

\$ _____

NON-MEMBER Single day: \$40

\$ _____

What would you like to work on? (circle all that apply):

dressage cones obstacles other

Other: _____

MEMBER Both days: \$35

\$ _____

NON-MEMBER Both days: \$50

\$ _____

Join as a HUBClub member! \$25

\$ _____

TOTAL FEES

\$ _____

Mail a registration form for each person attending, a check made out to "HUBClub," and a copy of your horse's current negative Coggins test to: Sue West, 711 Myrtle Way #215, Janesville, WI 53545

QUESTIONS? Contact Sue for more info at sueqwest@gmail.com, text or phone 815-451-9385

HUB CLUB YEAR END HIGH POINT GENERAL GUIDELINES

(Revised 1/26/2022)

To be eligible for these awards horses must be owned/leased by the HUB Club member making the entries. Drivers of the horse(s) must be current HUB Club members. To be eligible for awards, the submitting member must have been in attendance at one HUB Club gathering during the competition year, which shall be from **December 1st to November 30th** of the following year.

A nomination fee of \$15.00 per division (horse or exhibitor) must be paid before any points will be counted. Results must be submitted on the appropriate entry forms, along with appropriate documentations for each division by **December 1st** of the competition year. Entry forms should be duplicated by the participants. The HUB Club will not accept event results from prior years or incomplete entry forms. A copy of the prize list or program from each show/competition entered must be submitted with your competition entry. To ensure a level playing field for all participants, a show prize list must include rules and class specifications, dates, times, names of judges/officials and show secretaries name and contact information, fees (entry fees, late fees, stall fees, etc.) and prizes. Please attach each prize list to the entry sheet for that show. Results may be verified and proof of placings may be required. If there is a significant difference between the number of points reported by the driver and the results reported by the show secretary, the entry will not be accepted and the horse will not be eligible for the program the following year. All decisions by the HUB Club are final. All high point records are available to any HUB Club member upon request. No year end points will be awarded to any horse that does not meet the age requirement for competition as defined by the American Driving Society or the USEF. Club or show year end awards will not count.

The High Point System has 2 divisions: Pleasure and Combined Driving

1. Carriage Pleasure Shows

All driving classes in rated and unrated pleasure shows count towards the high point. Championship classes will count double. Shows using multiple judges will only count for 1 set of points. Exhibitors may use the highest placing for their points. Overall show championship awards that are based on an accumulation of points will receive 10 points for champion and 5 points for reserve champion if they are specific to a division. Table A is used to tally points in carriage pleasure shows.

Table A: Carriage Pleasure

Placing	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	Participation
Points	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

2. Combined Driving Events

For shows to be counted in the CDE division, the show prize list must designate the competition as a CDE, driving trial, arena trial or driving test. Shows without this designation should be entered under the Pleasure Show division. An entry in this division shall be defined as a specific driver/equine combination. Competitors receive points for each phase (dressage, cones and marathon) and points are accrued in the overall placing of the event. Division champions will be awarded 10 points and 5 points for reserve champion. Table B is used to tally points in combined driving events.

Table B: Combined Driving

Placing	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	Completion*
Points	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

*Completion is defined as completing and /or receiving a score in each of the phases offered, without elimination, withdrawal or retiring

Categories in each division shall be as follows:

Pleasure:

- A. Single Horse
- B. Single Pony
- C. Single VSE
- D. Multiple Horse
- E. Multiple Pony
- F. Multiple VSE
- G. Junior Exhibitor

Combined Driving:

- H. Training Level
- H1. Single Horse
- H2. Single Pony
- H3. Single VSE
- H4. Multiple Horse/Pony/VSE
- I. Preliminary Level*
- J. Intermediate Level and above*

*If entry numbers warrant, these categories may be divided like category H

❧ HUB Club High Point Nomination Form ❧

Owner/Lessee: _____ Phone: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Email: _____

Name of Horse(s) or Exhibitor	Age	Division(s)	Total Fees (\$15) per division)

Categories in each division shall be as follows:

Pleasure:

- H. Single Horse
- I. Single Pony
- J. Single VSE
- K. Multiple Horse
- L. Multiple Pony
- M. Multiple VSE
- N. Junior Exhibitor

Combined Driving:

- H. Training Level
 - H1. Single Horse
 - H2. Single Pony
 - H3. Single VSE
 - H4. Multiple Horse/Pony/VSE
- I. Preliminary Level*
- J. Intermediate Level and above*

*If entry numbers warrant, these categories may be divided like category H

Make check payable to: The HUB Club

Return form with payment to:

Kris Breyer 26715 N. Schwerman Road, Wauconda, IL 60084-2703

Questions: 847-526-3012 or briarpatcheast@aol.com

❧ HUB Club High Point Report Form ❧

Owner/Lessee: _____ Phone: _____

Horse Show/Event: _____ Date(s) held: _____

Location of Show/Event: _____

Name of Horse(s)	Exhibitor	Name and number of Class	Placing in Class	Number of Points	Division category

Table A: Carriage Pleasure Driving Point Chart

Placing	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5 th	6 th	Participation
Points	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Table B: Combined Driving Point Chart

Placing	1st	2nd	3 rd	4th	5 th	6th	Completion*
Points	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

*Completion is defined as completing and/or receiving a score in each of the phases offered, without elimination, withdrawal, or retiring.

Categories in each division shall be as follows:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Pleasure:
O. Single Horse
P. Single Pony
Q. Single VSE
R. Multiple Horse
S. Multiple Pony
T. Multiple VSE
U. Junior Exhibitor | Combined Driving:
H. Training Level
H1. Single Horse
H2. Single Pony
H3. Single VSE
H4. Multiple Horse/Pony/VSE
I. Preliminary Level*
J. Intermediate Level and above* |
|---|--|

*If entry numbers warrant, these categories may be divided like category H

Please use one sheet per Show/ Event
 A copy of the show bill/prize list for the competition/show **must** accompany this form.

Return completed form to: Kris Breyer 26715 N. Schwerman Road, Wauconda, IL 60084-2703
 Questions: 847-526-3012 or briarpatcheast@aol.com



Drive On!

A program for both competitive and non-competitive drivers

Who Can Join? The *Drive On!* program is open to anyone who drives their equine for pleasure.

You must be a HUB Club member. You must pay an individual lifetime recording fee of \$20 that provides you with an official log sheet to get started.

What Hours Count? Record the time you spend driving or training your equine(s) to drive.

Awards: As you accrue hours, special certificates, and gifts are awarded.

Certificates are given after logging 50, 75, 150, 300, 500, 750, 1000, 2000, 3000, and 5000 hours with your equine.



Guidelines:

1. Horses must be owned/ leased by the HUB Club member submitting points.
2. Drivers must be HUB Club members for each year hours are logged.
3. You must pay a one-time \$20 enrollment fee.
4. The equines names must be included on your log sheet.
5. Once you are registered in the program, there is no limit to the amount of time taken to achieve award hours.
6. More than one equine may be driven for overall hours.
7. The HUB Club prefers results on official club or ADS Hours to drive log sheets or easy to follow Excel forms
submitted by December 1th of each year.
8. Awards are based on hours logged.

Submit:

Send your completed sheets with hours totaled on each page to:

Kelly Chuman
3N968 Meredith Road
Maple Park, IL 60151
KellyChuman@gmail.com

Starting Your Driving Horse At Home, Pt 1

By Jeff Morse

Yes, you can start your driving horse at home. It makes little difference whether the horse will ultimately be a Park Horse, Carriage Horse, Pleasure Show Horse or a horse for you to simply enjoy driving at home. The basic starting approach is the same regardless of the ultimate discipline.

There are a few caveats for starting your own horse, however. Professional trainers have facilities and equipment specifically designed for the purpose of training horses which minimizes the risks involved. That does not mean necessarily that you will need expensive specialized equipment to do it yourself. Training equipment need not be particularly expensive but it must be well made, of proper design and in good condition. Equipment failure can put you in harm's way without warning and can ruin your horse for driving in a split second. There may be ways to use or modify the equipment you already have. Training a horse safely to pull a vehicle can rarely be done single-handedly. Professional trainers have qualified assistants to help them. This doesn't mean the amateur horseman can not start their own driving horse but safety for both the horse and the humans must always be the prime consideration. There will be steps along the way that will require you to have assistance from at least one other person, sometimes two. These people should be familiar with handling horses and preferably with the particular process involved. You should seriously consider paying for professional help at these critical junctures if you have the slightest hesitation or concern about how to proceed. Preparing horses for driving must be done a safe environment. If your quarters are cramped, cluttered, full of noise and other distractions for both you and your horse, your outcome will probably suffer.

Perhaps the best method of starting your driving horse at home is to work with a professional trainer. This may sound odd considering the topic at hand, but a professional can be invaluable at guiding you through the steps involved with your work at home. If you have never driven before, it is definitely advisable not to attempt starting your driving horse by yourself. Take some lessons first to gain a better understanding of what is involved. There is a lot of preparation required to produce a result which, when all finished, looks fairly simple and straightforward. Locate a trainer who will bring you along through the training process before you try it on your own. Books and articles, while quite helpful, pale in comparison to real life experience. This article is only meant to be a guide. It is by no means a definitive manual on the subject.

The Horse

Age will obviously be a factor. Most Morgans are not trained to drive before they are at least 2 years old. Some preparatory work is usually done before they reach 2 years and some are even hooked before they are 2 but serious driving mileage should not be asked of a Morgan under 2 or even 3 years old. Great care is necessary with these young horses because not only are you introducing physical stresses on young, developing bodies, you are introducing them to issues of trust for the very first time. One mistake can affect their attitude about learning everything to follow forever. Heike Bean in her very valuable book, "Carriage Driving", put it this way: "What does it feel like to be this animal of flight, who must submit to being strapped to a carriage and controlled through a piece of metal in his mouth, doing things and going places he would never dream of doing on his own?" Obviously the handling a young horse receives from birth can play a significant role in how well accepts the learning process later on.

Making the transition from a fairly well schooled riding horse to a driving horse is generally much easier, and shorter than starting from scratch with youngster. They generally have some understanding of the training process; that is, they know the difference between the classroom and recess. One caveat: be extremely mindful of the fact that you may not fully know what mishaps might have occurred in the early years of older horses. They may be perfectly wonderful riding horses but could have had poor experiences in their early lives with driving. These horses can be dangerous even for a professional trainer and they are always dangerous for the unprepared.

Never hook any horse to a vehicle unless you are certain that it has a good history as a driving horse. If you are unsure, start with a review the basics in order to make an assessment of its level of training and its anxiety level.

Size will not be much of a factor until the time comes to determine for what job the horse will be used. There are some jobs where size does matter. Pulling larger vehicle for instance is easier for larger horses or pairs. One of the best kept secrets in the driving world is the use of smaller Morgans (14.2 Hands and under) in the pony divisions of carriage driving competitions, both Combined Driving Events and Pleasure Competitions. The driving heritage of the Morgan breed serves them quite well in competition against other breeds. Size may matter if your equipment does not match your horse well. Some vehicles simply may be too heavy for younger, unfit or smaller horses.

Mentality, Maturity, and Mental Aptitude play a part in how you proceed with your horse. Horses, like people, each learn at different rates. If the horse's mind is immature, the lessons may have to be quite brief as the horse may

have difficulty staying focused, making longer lessons counterproductive. If your horse is high strung, the process may take great tact to accomplish and may in fact be better left for someone with more experience. Sometimes these high strung horses are really not so much the product of their genetics as they are of their environment. A change in their feed or their turnout time may make a huge difference in their energy and anxiety levels. There is plenty of time to concentrate and focus a horse's energy after they are trained. For starting horses in harness, however, one needs as much mental cooperation as a horse can give you. Anything that takes away from that should be examined and changed if possible. Are there Morgans that just don't have the aptitude to be driving horses? Probably but in our breed it has been my experience these are few and far between and almost always previous poor handling has been the real root cause for this shortcoming.

The Equipment

The Harness used to start your harness horse does not need to be a special training harness although there are some features with specialized equipment that can make the job easier and possibly safer. The "quick hitch" style training harness is ideal for starting driving horses since it can be put on and removed quickly and with a minimum of effort. It is also easily adapted for the different stages of the training process, from accustoming the horse to the feel of a harness, to lunging, to ground driving, to actually being hooked and driven. Most quick hitch style harnesses also are quite suitable for just driving for pleasure at home. Of particular note is the safety feature of using traces that snap in a single quick, easy motion to the breastplate at the horse's shoulder, allowing the handler to remain near the horse's head for more control. This is especially handy when you find yourself working horses alone or with horses that are a little nervous.

Harness Fit and Adjustment is critical to the comfort of your horse. Poorly adjusted harness and bridle fit is a major cause of poor training results. Any pain or discomfort caused in the training process may be remembered by your horse for years to come, even after the pain and physical injury are gone. Of particular importance is the width of the harness saddle, its construction over all and its placement on the horse. Narrow saddles are fine for the brief workouts in a well conditioned, level show ring but they are unsuitable for work over the varied terrain found on longer cross country drives. For use outside the show ring, the harness saddle should be a minimum of 3 inches wide. It is imperative that there be no pressure from the saddle directly on the top of the spine of the horse. Most saddles will have a tree and great care should be taken to make sure the tree does not interfere with the spine and that it does not cause undue pressure on the muscle groups behind the withers. This pressure is a common fault of many Amish made harnesses coming right from the manufacturer and can usually be remedied by taking the saddle apart and reforming the tree. The stuffing or padding of the saddle should be wide. Too often this padding is too narrow and hard which can cause discomfort or pain for the horse. Supplemental padding can be useful as long as it well fitted and well constructed. Generally speaking, a well made harness will not require additional padding. The saddle should be placed well behind the withers. This is probably the most common mis-adjustment seen on harness horses. As a general rule of thumb, place the forward edge of the saddle behind the last hairs of the mane by the width of your hand. It may look too far back when your horse is first harnessed but the saddle will reposition itself forward a bit once you are driving.

The Bridle used in the initial phases for starting harness horses can be an open bridle or one with blinders. Professional trainers each have their preference on that score. Some use an open bridle up to the hooking stage and then use a blinker hood or switch to a blindered bridle. Some start right away with a closed bridle and some use an open bridle for driving. To some extent you will have to assess how your horse reacts to different types of bridling and how it reacts in general to the process and the environment around him. Some horses are too distracted when they are allowed the full view in an open bridle. Others feel claustrophobic in a closed bridle. Personally, I start the basics using an open bridle and drive hooked to a vehicle in blindered bridles. I have never gotten in trouble with a horse using a blindered bridle.

Check Reins are a source of great debate. Whether you use them or not will largely depend on the final job your horse will be asked to do. Overchecks and side checks are "considered proper" equipment in park and pleasure driving classes in the show ring. Roadster classes require a check rein. Check reins of any kind are generally not used at all in carriage driving competitions (in some competitions, they are illegal to use). For starting your harness horse, I recommend not using a check at all in the beginning. Once your horse is ground driving well, a check rein can be slowly introduced if the job you will eventually ask your horse to do requires one. There are those who consider a check rein a safety device on the theory that if the horse can not lower its head, it can not buck or kick up behind. There are two problems with that theory. In practice, when a horse is scared enough to buck or kick, the very first piece of equipment that will break is the check rein. Second, many accidents are actually caused by the discomfort and subsequent anxiety created by the use of poorly adjusted check reins.

Running Martingales are sometimes used for driving horses. They are generally used on show horses in the Morgan breed but are rarely used on carriage horses. They are not necessary for starting your harness horse. They are a specialized device serving a very particular purpose and should be introduced much later in the training of your harness horse if they are required for the use you are training for. Some feel they are a safety device on the theory they will supply the leverage necessary to help prevent the horse from raising up above the bit. This is true but there is another approach

explained below to deal with this and if the horse is taught to carry himself properly, he will find it terribly inefficient to raise above the bit making his job more difficult. Much damage can be done with the improper use of the running martingale. It can take quite a long time to re-school a horse to perform in self carriage once he has learned to rely in the running martingale for balance. As with the check rein, the running martingale can be gradually introduced as your horse progresses towards the use for which you are training.

The Bits used with harness horses at the starting stage need not be particularly different in design than riding bits. It is a myth that a "driving" bit must be used for driving (except as required by certain competition specifications). First and foremost is always the consideration of comfort for your horse. Use the bits that are comfortable for your horse in which he responds well. Then worry about whether they are of traditional driving bit design. Ultimately, you may want to use a design considered proper for the type of driving you will do but in the beginning that is not our first concern. Remember that we are first looking for cooperation from the horse and mouth discomfort is the primary source of poor cooperation. The mouth is of particular importance to the harness horse since it is our principal connection to the horse. We have no seat or legs with which to influence its behavior or performance. Many people mistakenly feel that driving necessarily means using a stronger bit since the driver does not have as much control of their horse as a rider. It would help to remember that a horse does not stop with its mouth. It stops with its brain. If your horse is scared enough to consider running away with you, it is unlikely that the metal in its mouth will stop him regardless of its mechanical power. The increased pain in his mouth from such mechanics may in fact make matters far worse. Driving horses can and should be just as light and responsive in the hand as any riding horse. Respect the power of training them to be responsive and do not abuse their mouth out of the misguided notion that stronger bits are somehow safer.

Kicking Straps are the driving equivalent of the riding helmet. I use one at home with every horse on every drive no matter how experienced or inexperienced the horse is. They have saved my life several times. A kicking strap can limit the potential damage from a horse that thinks that kicking up or bucking will solve its problems. It can prevent a kicking fit from becoming a serious accident by not allowing the horse to get one leg over the shaft. Usually when a horse engages the limitation of the kicking strap, he stops trying the evasive escape route of kicking or bucking and will move forward. The action of the kicking strap can buy the driver time enough to settle the horse. The strap runs from one shaft up over the rump of the horse, just in front of the base of the tail and then down to the shaft on the other side. It should be adjusted loose enough to not engage at all when the horse is walking, trotting or cantering normally. It should be tight enough to limit the raising of the hind end should the horse begin to lift it to kick out or up. The strap can be made of stout leather or even a heavy lead rope can be pressed into service. Harness makers can make one for a few dollars. It could be the best insurance your money can buy.

Leadlines will be part of your training equipment at times. They should be longer rather than shorter. They should have secure sturdy snaps that are easy to work with one hand. Nylon should be avoided. Should your horse suddenly pull away, severe injuries can result to your skin. Cotton leads work very well and are easy to grip securely. It is also wise for you and your assistants to wear gloves to protect your skin. Make sure they are thin enough to be able to easily work with your buckles and snaps.

Long Lines are used to drive the horse from the ground. Regular driving reins are too short and usually too heavy to make good ground driving reins. Professional trainers have their preferences for long lines. Some prefer leather, nylon or cotton rope, cotton or synthetic webbing or a combination of webbing and rope. They should be long enough to allow you to work the horse in at least a 30 foot diameter circle and light enough to allow you to carry them coiled up for close work with your horse from the side or behind without becoming too bulky.

Breeching is used on carriage horses. It is the mechanism by which the horse can hold back the weight of the vehicle on slopes and in downward transitions. Some horses initially object to the pressure of breeching or even to its feel on the rump but most adapt to it readily if properly introduced. It is advisable that breeching pressure be introduced early in the training process and certainly before the horse is hooked to a vehicle. Breeching is not used in the Morgan show ring for Park or Pleasure driving but it would be necessary equipment if you will be driving your horse outside of the ring over varied terrain at home or in carriage competition. Do not expect any horse to automatically know what breeching is and to readily accept it without some training.

Drags are be useful, if not necessary, equipment for starting your driving horse. A drag is merely something your horse can pull on the ground behind him with the traces while you drive him from the ground with long lines. It helps accustom the horse to the feel of pulling something with his chest, the feel of the traces on his sides and the sounds coming from behind him. There are many set ups one can use for a drag. You do not want to use anything that is too heavy or you run the risk of over facing and frustrating your horse. Nor is it advisable to use anything that bounces too easily. Some consideration should be given to the sound the drag makes. Steady lower frequency noise is better than a higher frequency more excitable noise. Some use an old tire or a piece of lumber. Care should be taken when using a tire that you attach it in a way that limits its ability to bounce up on edge and begin to roll. Two U-bolts placed about 90 degrees apart on a tire work well as attachments for your traces. I use a piece of sturdy metal screen which I have found

lies flat all the time, is not too heavy nor too light, is safe for the horses if they should act up and get tangled in the traces. They will not get hurt stepping on it. The screen arrangement spreads the traces wider than the width of the horse that helps keep the horse from stepping on or over the traces. It has the added benefit of grooming my work area!

Set up a breastplate with traces long enough to reach the ground several feet behind your horse. Regular driving traces will be too short. You can easily add length to regular traces using stout cord of some kind. Make sure it is strong enough not to break too easily while you are working. Baling twine is not sufficient. Attach *sturdy* snaps of a design that will not easily come undone by themselves to the end of your trace extensions so that you can quickly attach and detach your drag. Some trainers attach the end of their traces to a single tree and then attach their drag to the single tree. You can make one of your own out of a solid 2x4 and a few eye bolts: one on each end facing the same direction for your traces and one in the middle facing the opposite direction to hook up your drag. Eye bolts are much more secure than screw eyes. The advantage to this arrangement is that the traces remain spread the width of the single tree, rather than coming to a single point behind your horse. This is helpful in preventing the horse from getting tangled in the traces.

With these types of drag, you can set up your traces to remain attached to the drag and to snap on the breast plate when you hook up your horse. This will let you remain more or less at the head of your horse which will give you more control of your horse than having to move out behind him.

Some trainers will make up a drag that has shafts and a single tree. It is in essence a cart with no wheels. The shafts are placed through the tugs and the horse is hitched as if it were hooked to a vehicle while one end of the drag simply is dragged across the ground. There are disadvantages to this arrangement. It is relatively easy for an excited horse to get a leg over one of the shafts since they are quite low relative to his hind legs. A horse can not back up with this drag set up. That may cause some consternation for the horse and it may cause some difficulty for you if, for some reason, you find your horse in a position where backing up could get them out of trouble. Of course, the benefit is your horse can get the feel of the shafts and become accustomed to the process of being hooked and un-hooked without putting a more expensive vehicle at risk.

Some drags are designed to have additional weight attached once the horse understands the basics of what is being asked of him. This may accustom him to having more pull on his breastplate prior to actually pulling the load of a vehicle. This may be of concern if the first vehicle to which you hook your horse is somewhat heavy. There are trainers who use heavier drag work with fully trained horses as a strengthening exercise. You may want to consider that possibility as you construct your drag; however, generally speaking, most Morgans are willing pullers and the extra weight issue is not particularly important when starting a harness horse.

The Vehicle to which your horse is initially hooked must first of all be safe. It absolutely must structurally sound. It should be well lubricated so it rolls freely and does not unnecessarily squeak as you work. It should be easy for you to get in and out of without putting you at too much of a disadvantage should your horse suddenly decide to move off while you are climbing in. You should have good vision while seated, meaning you should be seated high enough to see well in front of your horse without contorting your body too much. The vehicle should fit your horse properly. The shaft tips should come to the point of the shoulder while the rear end of your horse is at least 18 inches from the front of the basket. Some breaking carts have longer shafts to place the horse well away from the basket and driver. This design will usually prevent a green horse from reaching any part of the vehicle should it decide to kick backwards. When a horse is able to strike something, they will often kick right away a second, third or fourth time. They are more likely to stop if, when they kick, they do not connect with anything. The disadvantage is that it places the driver farther away from the horse when climbing into the vehicle. The extra step or so can make a difference should your horse act up while you are climbing in and you have to subsequently go to his head for more control.

Your horse should not be hooked to a 4-wheeled vehicle until he is well schooled at the halt and the rein back. These vehicles are easily jack knifed in reverse which will cause serious problems for an unschooled horse.

The ubiquitous pneumatic tired, light metal pipe cart is also a poor choice for starting horse to drive. They are too light and generally of poor structural strength and design. The seating is usually too low. The metal construction is also very unforgiving should you have an accident.

A wooden, two wheeled, pneumatic tired jog cart works well as long as the terrain of your work area is relatively level and in good condition. The seating is generally a little low but is acceptable or it can be raised if you are handy. Wooden wheeled road carts also work well with the one disadvantage that some can be a little clumsy get in and out of. Generally, Meadowbrooks are on the heavy side for a single horse the size of most Morgans. Once the horse is accustomed to pulling and is fit, a heavier vehicle can be introduced. It's probably wise not to use your best show vehicles for starting your horse.

Ground Work

Leading your horse is the first step in the process of training a youngster to drive. Do not underestimate the effect of simply leading your horse around your property or taking it for walks in the countryside. This is the beginning of your schooling relationship with your horse. Much of the basis for all the education to follow begins at this point. It can be easily spoiled. This process should begin in a confined space until your horse understands basic commands. Of particular importance is the command to halt and stand still. Practice the command "Whoa" until your horse is absolutely reliable. It will help you immensely throughout your entire relationship with your driving horse. You can not physically *make* a driving horse stand while hooked to a vehicle. He has to want to do it and the process begins in these first few lessons on the lead line. Once you can lead your horse anywhere with reliability, you can begin to introduce the harness.

Introduce The Bit to your horse by using a simple, well designed, well fitting bit. A mullen mouth, two or three piece mouth of simple snaffle design is just fine. Just hang it from a headstall in his mouth and keep a halter on him from which to lead him. You can of course allow him to wear the bit in his stall for a while to simply help accustom him to the feel of the bit in his mouth. Instruction from you to your horse through the bit will come later. For now, you can lead him from the halter, not the bit.

Introduce The Saddle by placing it on your horse in his stall for the first few times without a back strap (turnback) and crupper. Keep the girth loose. Just let him walk around the stall with it on for a while. When you put the saddle on, slide it on calmly and quietly from the side. Do not slap it down on his back. When you remove it, go slowly. Be especially careful not to yank on the girth. Let him know there is nothing about the saddle to be excited about. After one or two sessions you can tighten the girth slowly and carefully a hole or two and you can lead him outside with it on. Horses that move around a lot while being harnessed are unpleasant to deal with and that bad habit usually has its origins with the first few attempts to put something on his back. Be mindful how unnatural this is for a horse.

A Breastplate can be introduced at this point. Horses are usually unconcerned with breastplates. Use one that is made for snap on traces or buckle on traces. Sewn on traces will just get in the way at this point. I fasten each end of the breastplate to the saddle. Quick hitch style training saddles usually have rings on the sides. I connect the rings to the breastplate with double end snaps. This does two things. It adds some stability to the saddle while lunging and ground driving and it accustoms the horse to a feel of the breastplate across its chest as he moves his shoulders.

Introducing The Crupper should be done carefully. You may wish to prepare your horse for the crupper by making sure he is relatively unconcerned with having his tail handled. Scratching him on his rump around his tail usually will help him become accustomed to your handling. Lift his tail slowly and gently let it down. Do this regularly as an extension of his normal grooming process. Slow down the instant he becomes tense about it and allow him times to relax before proceeding. Your goal is to have your horse absolutely unconcerned about anything under his tail. Scare him only once and you may have to live with 'crupper anxiety' for a long time. Horses are quite sensitive under their tail. Some horses are naturally very concerned with this process and will habitually and reflexively clamp their tail every time you go near it or touch it. You may just have to live with it although there are exercises you can do with their tail to try to accustom them to it being handled. Some horses can benefit by massage or even chiropractic adjustment of their tail and hind end. Some never seem to get over it. A slightly over stuffed crupper seems to help 'tail clampers' as it stretches their muscles around their tail and it is much more difficult to clamp their tail around something a little fatter. This will also help prevent a rein from getting caught tightly under the tail a horse and will help minimize the reaction of the horse when that happens.

Introduce the crupper in the horse's stall with an assistant holding the horse with a lead. Your crupper should have a buckle on at least one side, which you can undo to open the crupper, making placement under the tail fairly easy and comfortable for your horse. Stand well to the side when you put the crupper under the tail for the first time and be very careful to let the tail down gently. Be very careful to not get tail hairs between the crupper and the underside of the tail. They will cause rubs and make your horse quite uncomfortable wearing a crupper. If you have never put a crupper on a horse, it might be wise to do so on a well trained driving horse a few times so you can do it smoothly and deliberately with a minimum of fuss.

The turnback strap need not be tight. Its function is to prevent the saddle from riding forward up onto the withers and to support the breeching if it is used. Keep it a little on the long side when first putting the crupper on. Shorten it once the crupper is in place only to the point where the crupper is just positioned in place, not pulled tight against the tail nor with any large amount of space between the crupper and the tail. Recheck the crupper placement once your horse relaxes in its stall or at work and reposition if necessary.

Let the horse walk about in it's stall with the crupper on for a session or two before you take it outside. Some horses seem to not fully realize they have a crupper on until they are outside and they begin to trot. At that point they may kick up and actually get the crupper off. If that happens, just stop your horse and settle him. With your assistant at his

head, put the crupper back in place and start over. Once horses realize the crupper isn't going to hurt them and it isn't going away, they generally forget about it.

Introduce The Breeching once your horse is wearing the crupper without concern. This can be done by putting on the saddle and crupper, then attaching the breeching hanger straps and breeching straps on the horse. Again proceed with some care so as not to upset your horse. The breeching straps can be brought forward and attached to the sides of the saddle, just the tugs or to a breastplate on each side in some fashion. I remove the breeching straps altogether and use a straight adjustable side rein to hook the breeching through the tug and then to a breast plate. This set up connects the breast plate to the breeching and quickly accustoms the horse to pressures on his chest, flanks and rump as he moves. As I work with the horse from the ground, I can easily pull on the side rein from the side to simulate the sudden pressures the horse will feel once hooked to a vehicle.

By now you are taking your horse for walks in a saddle and crupper with breeching and with a bit in its mouth. Next month I will cover longeing, ground driving and hooking to the vehicle for the first time.

***Disclaimer:** The concepts described in this article are generally accepted as legitimate approaches to training a horse to drive. The process is not without some risk to horses and handlers. The instructions contained in this article are to be used only as a guideline. The author can not be held liable for the actions of a horse beyond his control, nor for the actions or injuries of anyone using these guidelines to start a driving horse. The author does, however, encourage readers to contact him should there be any questions about any information in this article.*

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Resources ONLINE

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www.morganhorse.com - information about the Morgan horse and books and videos on driving for sale
www.carriagedriving.net - an online webzine about carriage driving
<http://www.carriagedriving.net/cdl/cd-1.html> - subscribe to the Carriage Driving List online
www.axwoodfarm.com - good driving articles in Nori Lamphere's online library

BOOKS

**101 LONGEING & LONG LINING EXERCISES ENGLISH AND WESTERN
A Ringside Guide** by Cherry Hill

BREAKING A HORSE TO HARNESS by Sallie Walrond

BREAKING & TRAINING THE DRIVING HORSE by Doris Ganton

DRIVE SMARTLY-DRIVE SAFELY by the Carriage Association of America

LUNGEING - The German Riding and Driving System Book 6. Official instruction handbook of the German National Equestrian Federation



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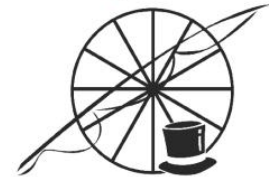
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