



# New York State Horse Council

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## VOL 4

## 2024

# NEWSLETTER



## President's Message from Pauline Burnes

Thanks to everyone who has served as a volunteer on the New York State Horse Council Board of Directors. We accomplished a great deal in 2024, and look forward to 2025 with a “changing of the guard”. The past elections resulted in my continuing to serve as the Horse Council’s President for another two years. We are dedicated to the continued growth of the Horse Council’s influence to have a positive impact on the community of equids and their owners in the Empire State.

Stephen Ropel, who has served the Horse Council as past President and Treasurer has decided not to run again for a position on the Executive Board. Steve has done an excellent job as Treasurer and has agreed to serve as Director at Large.

Allison Conti-Frey has served as the Horse Council’s Vice President for the past two years, performing tasks outside of her “job description.” For her extra service, Allison received the NYSHC Horse Person of the Year Award at the Annual General Membership meeting held at Cornell University’s Equine Park in November. Allison has a master’s degree in finance and will be serving as Treasurer for the NYSHC.

Stepping up to serve as our Vice President is Colleen Segarra, current Vice President for the Mid-Hudson Region. Colleen is also Chair of the NYSHC Humane Committee and has been influential in her knowledge and experience related to horse rescue operations and laws protecting equids. Shannon Budnick, past president of the NYSHC, will be assuming the role of Vice President of the Mid-Hudson Region for 2025-26.



Pauline & Little Jo, Cathy & Rooster at Otter Creek Tails

Christina Hansen, a Carriage Driver and spokesperson for the Carriage Horse Industry in New York City, has agreed to serve as Secretary. Please welcome new Board of Directors members Fiona Farrell, who is the new Vice President for the Capital Region and Jodi Gray, Western Region Director. Ms. Farrell is an Attorney and will be a great asset in educating our state legislators regarding the Horse Council and how we advocate for horses and their owners in New York State. Jodi is an organizer of Equine Trail Sports in Western New York and has assisted with the Endurance Ride offered in Western New York in 2024.

A special thanks goes to Cathy Floetke, Ride Manager, and her team of volunteers for the efforts to hold the 55th annual NYSHC fall pleasure ride held at the Madison County Fairgrounds in early October. Cathy has agreed to volunteer her services again for the 56th annual ride, to continue the tradition. We had 50 horses and riders in attendance in 2024 and could accommodate more in 2025. The Erica Raab Award was presented to Kirsten Bennett for her volunteer assistance in with the popular activities of “Jar Wars” and other items.



Erica Raab award recipient Kristin Bennett

The Annual General Membership Meeting was held at Cornell University’s new Equine Park November 9 th . This is an incredibly beautiful facility, with large meeting room, new office space, and two wings of spacious horse stalls to assist with accommodations for equids that visit Cornell’s Veterinary facility. Attendees had an incredible tour of Cornell’s Animal Health Diagnostic Center, led by Dr. Francois Elvinger, Director of the facility. We also toured Cornell’s Equine Park, just days before the ribbon cutting ceremony held on November 13 th . The Ribbon Cutting was attended by Colleen Segarra and I.



The Lifetime Achievement Award, a beautiful engraved perpetual trophy, was awarded to Veronica (Barnee) Weber and Ainsley Smith. These ladies are long-time members of the New York State Horse Council and have served as officers of the Cattaraugus/Chautauqua Chapter of New York State Horse Council, Inc. championing trails for equestrians and working the trails regularly. They have also provided guidance and support to volunteers, organizing thousands of hours of trail maintenance, and have actively engaged with government officials to emphasize the importance of trail access and its benefits to the public. Their mentorship has been invaluable to the Chautauqua County Equestrian Trail System (CCETS) in developing and maintaining multi-use trails in western New York and have contributed to its success in Chautauqua County. “We are committed to carrying forward their teachings to uphold their legacy in Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties.” Missy Whittington – Chautauqua County Equestrian Trail System.



Lifetime achievement award winners  
Veronica Webber  
&  
Ainsley Smith

There were some new initiatives in 2024 that will continue in 2025. The New York State Horse Council, Inc. was represented at the New York State Fair by a wonderful banner display in the Coliseum, thanks to the efforts of Gary and Sharon Slate. We had a great display at the 4H Horse Barn during Fair Week, which gave us the opportunity to interact with many people who were walking through to see the horses there. Thanks to Gary and Sharon Slate for helping with the display; Marcia Schwartz, Central Region Director; Colleen Segarra, Vice President Elect and Mid-Hudson Region VP; Cathy Floetke, NYSHC Fall Pleasure Ride Manager; and Brianna Hughes, Cornell Cooperative Extension 4H Program Manager for making this all possible.

The NYSHC Banner was displayed at a variety of venues, including the Mounted Patrol Competition at the Hemlock Fair, Lorenzo Carriage Driving Competition, Taste of Heaven Campground at Brookfield, Genesee Valley Riding and Driving Competition in Geneseo, Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway Signature Bicycle Event at the Avon Driving Park, NYSHC Annual Fall Pleasure Ride, Genesee Valley Hunt Races in Geneseo and is now displayed at the Houghton University Equestrian Center climate controlled indoor arena. This program can be expanded to other venues, horse shows and County Fairs across the State to remind equestrians and visitors of the presence and activities of the NYS Horse Council.



The New York State Horse Council, Inc. was invited to participate in the Signature Bicycle Event sponsored by the Friends of the Genesee Valley Greenway, Inc. This was an organized bicycle ride starting in Scottsville, New York, traveling south on the Genesee Valley Greenway State Park to the Erie-Attica Trail ending at the historic Avon Driving Park. This was combined with a Parade of Horses on the historic harness track at the Avon Driving Park with the Livingston County Mounted Patrol, members of the Genesee Valley Hunt, and Big Hoof Horse Rescue participating. The riders were able to safely interact with the bicycle riders and their families. A demonstration of how bicyclists and horses should safely pass each other on the trail was narrated by myself over a public address system which was well received. Allison Conti-Frey assisted at the booth handing out “Share the Trails” and “Trail Etiquette” brochures.



NYSHC continues to be involved with trail issues. We have been invited to comment on the trail master plan for Harriet Hollister Spencer Recreation Area when it becomes available through the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation early in 2025. Thanks to Carol Schmelz and Wendy Wakula who have stayed active in this effort. Wendy has circulated a trail survey to NYSHC membership to gain comments on access for horses on this trail system that overlooks Honeoye Lake in Ontario County. If you would like to provide comments on the Trail Master Plan when it becomes available, contact me or Wendy Wakula.

Please send in your request for sponsorship for events by January 8, 2025, as we need to budget for these. The NYSHC will likely continue to sponsor the events from 2024, but it is difficult to meet all requests that come throughout the year, and some may be turned away if not submitted in January.

The New York State Horse Council Board of Directors recognized the need to hire a part-time Administrative Assistant to assist the President and Secretary with the many tasks that are required to advance the influence of the organization and meet requirements of performing as a non-profit, 501c3 organization. We are also branching into diversifying the NYSHC income stream, increasing sponsorships, donations, researching grant opportunities, and expanding educational programs and marketing. Resumes have been received, by the Selection Committee. The review of applications, interviews, and hiring is anticipated for selection by early 2025.

I am grateful to all who support the New York State Horse Council, Inc with your time, treasure, and talent! NYSHC members are invited to serve on Committees, chaired by a leader from the NYSHC Board of Directors. Please contact me at [pauline.burnes@nyshc.org](mailto:pauline.burnes@nyshc.org) if you would like to help.

Best wishes to all for a wonderful Holiday Season, and success in the New Year!

President Pauline Burnes, NYSHC, Inc.

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# **2024 New York State Horse Council (NYSHC) Election Results**

We thank the membership for your time and consideration. Below are the results of the 2024 election.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD POSITIONS**

**President:**

**Pauline Burnes**

**Vice President:**

**Colleen Seagarra**

**Treasurer:**

**Allison Conti-Frey**

**Secretary:**

**Christina Hansen**

## **REGIONAL POSITIONS**

**Central Region**

(Oneida, Herkimer, Madison, Onondaga, Cayuga, Oswego)

**Vice President:**

**Gary Slate**

**Finger Lakes Region**

(Monroe, Wayne, Ontario, Livingston, Seneca, Yates, Steuben)

**Vice President:**

**Lauren Berardi**

**Northern Region**

(Essex, Franklin, Clinton, Hamilton, St. Lawrence, Jefferson, Lewis)

**Director:**

**MaryBeth Green**



### **Southern Tier Region**

(Cortland, Otsego, Delaware, Broome, Tioga, Chemung, Schuyler, Tompkins, Chenango)

#### **Vice President:**

**Wendy Wakula**

### **Southeast Region**

(Suffolk, Nassau, Staten Island, Queens, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Bronx)

#### **Director:**

**Ahmed H Zubair**

### **Mid-Hudson Region**

(Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Sullivan, Ulster)

#### **Vice President:**

**Shannon Budnik**

### **Capital Region**

(Washington, Warren, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Albany, Greene, Columbia, Schoharie, Montgomery, Fulton, Saratoga)

#### **Vice President :**

**Fiona Farrell**

### **Western Region**

(Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Alleghany, Wyoming, Erie, Genesee, Orleans, Niagara)

#### **Vice President:**

**Lissette M. Ruotolo**

#### **Director:**

**Barb Cunningham**

#### **Director:**

**Jodi Gray**

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# New York Council Of Non-profits (NYCON) Camp Finance

**By Allison Conti Frey, New York State Horse Council, Inc. Vice President and  
Treasurer Elect**

The New York State Horse Council, Inc. joined the New York Council of Nonprofits to strengthen their position as a nonprofit organization, improve training for the Board of Directors, and take advantage of educational opportunities offered by NYCON.

In October, I was fortunate enough to attend Camp Finance as a representative of the New York State Horse Council. Camp Finance is an annual two day conference hosted by the New York Council of Nonprofits for financial staff, board members, practitioners, executive director, fundraisers, marketing & communications staff, development staff & more. Leaders of non-profit organizations from all over the state were in attendance where Finance, Marketing, and Fundraising gurus shared their expertise in a plethora of presentations.

## **Collaboration:**

The keynote speaker, Dr. Lomax Campbell of Rochester, New York, spoke of 'Unity in Action'. His presentation resonated with me as essential for the NYSHC to thrive. Dr. Campbell spoke of developing a network of organizations that all support each other. He presented the concept that 'I am who I am because of who you are.' We are interdependent. Collectively we are greater and able to achieve more than when we are isolated. If we want to go far, we need to go together.

This is a concept that the New York State Horse Council was originally founded upon over fifty eight years ago. NYSHC was a consortium of different horse clubs and breed organizations as well as individuals. Today, we have a diverse collection of horse people with a great variety of interests. NYSHC continues to advocate for "all breeds, all disciplines" in their mission statement "To create a strong unified voice for all interests toward the preservation of a future for horses in New York State".

We must admit that despite our many differences, we have much in common including our goal to advocate for the horse and the horse industry so that we can preserve a future for horses in New York State. By collaborating together through educational events, fundraising, and network development for example, we can ensure the Equine Industry is sustainable and our collective voices will be heard. This is the principle the American Horse Council and the NYSHC are based upon and historically the source of our success.

In these times it is especially important that although we don't always agree on everything we need to work together in order to accomplish our collective goals. When issues arise related to the horse industry, such as loss of trails or development pressures impacting open space, equestrians and horse owners need to be willing to become a member of NYSHC and actively participate in educational activities and even meeting with legislators. Likewise, the NYSHC needs to ensure we are welcoming of new volunteers who are willing to contribute. We also need to continue to develop relationships and work collaboratively with other organizations, such as the American Horse Council and Empire State Council of Agricultural Organizations. Then we have strength in unity.

**Fundraising:**

Fundraising is essential for non-profits. Everyone has a role for fundraising to be successful, members and Board of Directors alike, whether it is ensuring we keep our memberships current, and encouraging others to join, such as equine related clubs, businesses, families, and individuals. Members can participate on committees, Chaired by a member of the NYSHC Board of directors. Volunteers can participate in running a silent auction, grant writing, or sending in a donation. Volunteers and members need to be committed to contributing in whatever way they can with their time, talent, and treasure. It is also essential to diversify funding to ensure there isn't an over-reliance on one source. This ensures sustainability of an organization.

**The Board's Role in Building Financial Capacity:**

"Stop trying to change the world by yourself... Team up with similar organizations."

The Board shall manage the organization. They should do this by delegation and need to make sure they are spending enough money on administration. They are responsible for managing the organization's funds, ensuring that they are spent appropriately in support of the organization's mission.

There is a direct link between Board involvement and organizational success. They need to Govern by leading, guiding and making decisions on behalf of the entire organization. "Board" is a collective noun - they work together. Board members should be engaged with the organization. They should also be representative of the population we are serving. BoardStrong <https://boardstrong.org/> is an organization that has free as well as paid resources for boards to learn more about their important role.

**Conclusion:**

NYCON's Camp Finance was a wonderful opportunity to learn more about how to successfully manage a nonprofit organization. I hope to share more of what I learned with the NYSHC and that we can incorporate these ideas as we move forward.

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# ***EquiCenter Receives a \$2M Grant***

## **from Tom Golisano - Executive Director Katherine Hatch's Experience**

Steering a nonprofit is a reality of contrasts—conviction in our mission's positive impact paired with the ongoing challenge of securing predictable annual funding that allows for planned growth and expansion. This ever present tension between our goals and the need for means to achieve them lessened the morning of Tuesday, September 17th.

Tom Golisano, as all of us in the region know well, is a powerful champion for inclusivity and opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities (a population that makes up over 60% of our participants). Any announcement from him is a significant event.

Board Chair Charlie Fox and I arrived at the Golisano Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship for such an announcement, not knowing what it might signal, and were immediately struck by not only the number of people in attendance, but also the diversity of organizations that they represented.

As Mr. Golisano spoke movingly about what he sees as the privilege to give back to the community, the collective surprise of the audience revealed that the landscape of the upstate New York nonprofit community would be forever transformed. The names of organization after organization that his gift will benefit, from healthcare, education and animal welfare, to those that support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities were read out - large and small. The emotion that the leaders in that room felt was expressed in different ways - tears, trembling hands, wide eyes, speechlessness. While the media's cameras were understandably trained to the stage, a camera facing out to the audience would be powerful to watch!

As we look forward to 2025 and a new arena, this gift, combined with the unwavering support of our community, allows us to continue to be ambitious, growing our capacity to serve, while preserving the individuality of our programming for those whom we serve.

# Cornell CALS

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Life. Changing.



**The Horse Farm Improvement Program (HFIP) aims to improve animal health and wellbeing and to bolster economic success in the equine industry.**

The program is designed to help individual horse farms improve in targeted areas of their choosing through evaluation, discussion, and resource provision.

Currently, New York State (NYS) does not have a program for equine farm certification, evaluation, or improvement. The goal of this project is to enhance equine welfare and equine operation sustainability by building an improvement program for equine farms. More specifically, we are training a statewide network of extension personnel who feel comfortable in advising horse farm operations on best management practices by using the evaluation and resources we are compiling. These extension personnel can then help interested farms to improve.

**The Horse Farm Improvement Program focuses on equine health and management, operations, and environmental sustainability.**

The HFIP is a voluntary program for interested equine operations. Farms can reach out to enroll (see side bar for details); they will then fill out a pre-visit questionnaire, schedule a farm visit, and work with the extension personnel on a comprehensive equine operation evaluation. Based on that evaluation, extension personnel can then offer the equine operation tailored recommendations for improvement.

The areas covered in the HFIP evaluation include horse health and biosecurity, nutrient, pasture, and manure management, human safety, business management, facilities, and environmental sustainability.

Our priorities are equine health and wellbeing, stability of the state industry's many sectors, and equitable access to evidence-based resources for NYS equine operations.

**Reach out to your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office to learn more and set up a farm visit!**

Find your local CCE office here:

[cals.cornell.edu/cornell-cooperative-extension/local-offices](https://cals.cornell.edu/cornell-cooperative-extension/local-offices)

Once you reach out to express your interest, your local CCE office will put you in touch with the county or region livestock specialist.

These specialized extension associates will send you a pre-visit questionnaire and schedule a farm visit.

After your farm visit, the extension associate will provide you with a summary and feedback customized to your farm's unique needs.

You may also choose to schedule follow-up farm visits or discussions if you're interested in continued guidance or partnership.

## PROGRAM LEADER

**Lindsay Goodale, DVM** is Cornell Cooperative Extension's Equine Specialist and a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Animal Science in Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lindsay Goodale: [lfg28@cornell.edu](mailto:lfg28@cornell.edu)

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## Tribute to Gail Bartas, “Mover and Shaker” for Equestrian Trails November 3, 1938 – September 28, 2024

*By Pauline Burnes, President, NYSHC, Inc.*



It is always hard to lose a good friend and best riding partner. Gail was an extraordinary woman, with many talents and interests.

I first met Gail Bartas when I was invited to attend a meeting at the NYS Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) West Almond Forestry office to discuss our comments on the Draft Unit Management Plan for Allegany County. Gail was in her late '70's at the time, with a great deal of experience riding and maintaining the trails at West Almond and Coyle Hill. Not only an experienced horse woman, Gail was also an avid snowmobiler and still operated a chain saw and marked trails before the onset of snowmobile season.

At that meeting Gail and I learned about Volunteer Steward Agreements with NYSDEC. These agreements allowed clubs, such as the NYS Horse Council Chapters, and Allegany County Saddle Dusters to have volunteer coordinators, organize trail clean ups and have volunteers covered under NYSDEC Workmen Compensation Insurance in case of an injury while clearing and maintaining trails. I joined the Allegany County Saddle Dusters, and we both became Volunteer Coordinators under the VSA.

Gail was always generous with her time and talents, introducing me and “Little Joe” to the trails at Coyle Hill and West Almond. That was back in the day when Joe was a young, inexperienced trail horse, did not load very well, and even broke loose when tied to the trailer at the WAG trail when a dirt bike came down the trail. Joe didn't go very far, because there was a piece of rope dangling, and I had the presence of mind to grab it before he went running off.

Gail was real patient with Joe's lack of experience. She and her little Morgan mare Molly led Joe over bridges, through creeks and provided companionship to Joe while tied in the covered straight stalls when camping. It helped that my 16 hand Tennessee Walker gelding was in love with the little Morgan mare, and Gail too.



Heading out for a ride at West Almond Gail and Molly in the Middle Pauline and Little Joe on the far left



Molly helping Gail trim back the Beech branches



Whether pruning back beech branches while we rode the trails or showing up to help during the annual “I Love My Park” Day in May, Gail was there with nippers and hand saw. She worked alongside all the workers, young and old, with a cheerful attitude and love of nature.

When IMPACT: Friends Improving Allegany County Trails, Inc. was formed, Gail agreed to serve on the Board of Directors as an advisor. She successfully helped the non-profit organization negotiate to obtain a snowmobile used to pull snow grooming equipment for cross country skiing. That gave her the title, “mover and shaker” for trails.

Ironically, Gail passed away on the same day that her friend Mary was having a memorial ride or Joyce on the West Almond Trails. Gail had been ill, and not able to ride, but she was going to show up for a campfire dinner.

Gail’s wisdom, love for people and trails, and sharing them with her friends will be missed. She always signed off on her emails “Happy Trails”. Let’s continue her legacy and keep those horse trails open and well maintained!





**GENESEE VALLEY**  
EQUINE CLINIC

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Courses on Horses**  
**Saturday February 1st, 2025**

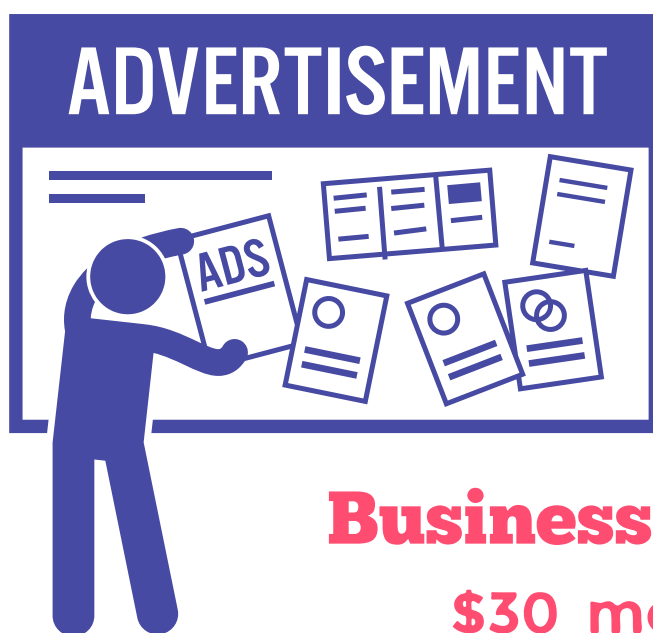
**At Allendale Columbia School**  
519 Allens Creek Rd, Rochester NY

**Free admission!**  
**Doors Open at 8:00 am**

**Lectures will begin at 8:45 until ~12:30pm**  
*Our speakers will be discussing the equine eye and nervous system*  
*The lectures will be interpreted for the hearing impaired.*

*Free refreshments will be served during our morning break*

*Vendor fair will be held in the gym starting at 8:00 am*



**Advertise with the NYSHC**

**Send ad to :**

**info@NYSHC.ORG**

## **Business card size**

**\$30 member**

**\$40 non member**

## **Quarter Page**

**\$50 member**

**\$75 non member**

## **Half Page**

**\$75 member**

**\$100 Non member**

## **Full Page**

**\$100 member**

**\$125 non member**