



HOLIDAY LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

December 2005

Dear Maryland Equestrians



With this issue, *The Equiry* celebrates 15 years - and for this milestone, we thank you, our readers, users, distributors and advertisers.

As you, our readers, know, *The Equiry* is not an ordinary publication. Unlike most publications, which simply provide information related to the advertising, *The Equiry* goes above and beyond by providing individuals with complete contact lists for any horse related service they seek.

Like most inventions, the idea for *The Equiry* arose as a solution to a problem a friend and I saw. It was September 1990, and media pundits were calling it "the information age." Yet we were frustrated that Maryland equestrians had no central information source, despite having the technology to create one.

So, rather than complain, we (Mercedes Clemens and I) decided to simply do it -- to create that free warehouse of information. The idea for the publication was secondary, conceived as a means of generating revenue to support the business's core function - the gathering and distributing of information. *The Equiry* would be an unbiased source, providing Maryland equestrians with all the options for the services they seek -- not just information about advertisers.

Then & Now: The first issue was 12 black and white pages, listed 45 Riding & Boarding Stables, and we hand delivered 2,500 copies to about two dozen tack stores.

Fifteen years later, issues average 136 pages with color; the Riding & Boarding Stables features 640 listings, and our average monthly circulation is over 30,000.

We cannot thank enough those early advertisers who had faith in us and took the risk of advertising with us. Many are still in business - and still advertising with us: Clay Hill Stables, The Grey Pony, Reddemeade/EquiShare, Associations Underwriters/Zipflow Horse Insurance, Maple Spring Farm and The Surrey. Evergreen Stables, which has the same management today as it did then, was known as and advertised as Coventry Farm.

In 1990, 11 year old Blake Curry placed a classified for a \$1,200 Welsh pony. Today, 26-year-old Blake Curry places ads for real estate and \$30,000 jumpers.

For 15 years, Mercedes designed every ad, every page of *The Equiry*, while I focused on developing content (advertising, lists, editorial), as well as marketing and distribution. In 1992, Tracy McKenna joined us, assisting in customer and community services, as well as the development and management of content, and -- as is typical in a small office -- readily tackling anything that was thrown at her. In 2000, the year of our 10th anniversary, Linda Miller joined our staff, her capable administrative skills providing a steady and reliable rhythm under the monthly roller coaster of deadlines and production cycles.

With your support and enthusiasm, *The Equiry* continues to grow, adding more services for the public, expanding its editorial coverage into topical, political issues, and increasing its circulation. As the magazine has evolved, so, too, has the office staff.

Linda and her husband moved farther away from *The Equiry*, whereas Mercedes has taken on new challenges, each saying her good-byes last spring. We wish the very best to each of them.

We are pleased to welcome Laurel Scott as the first independent editor of *The Equiry*. Many of you will recognize Laurel as one of *The Equiry*'s regular contributors. A former foxhunter, eventer, and show rider, Laurel has been a career journalist since 1987, and enjoyed an unprecedented 10-year stint as the steeplechasing columnist for *The Washington Post*. In 1990, she became assistant editor for *SPUR Magazine*. During her eight years working for *SPUR*, she continued to photograph horse sports and freelance for *The Post* and numerous Mid-Atlantic horse publications, as well as editing newsletters for both the *Virginia Thoroughbred Association* and the *National Steeplechase Association*. A longtime contributor to *The Chronicle of the Horse*, Laurel's work for that publication has received several in-house awards, including "Best News Article" in 2000 and 2003. After *SPUR* closed its doors for good, she served briefly as business editor of *The Fauquier Times-Democrat*, winning an award for best business section in the 1994 Suburban Newspapers of America national competition. In recent years, Laurel branched out to edit travel guides for *Hunter Publishing* and write ad copy for *Breyer Animal Creations*. She has also been a frequent contributor to *Breyer's Just About Horses*, as well as such Primedia publications as *Everything for Horse & Rider* and the Kentucky Horse Park's official magazine, *Discover Horses*.

The Equiry also welcomes LuAnne Levens as associate publisher. With a riding background as varied as her childhood homes (LuAnne was an Army brat, whereas Tracy and Laurel were Navy "juniors"), LuAnne has shown hunters and jumpers, ridden cross-country and enjoyed dressage. She has also owned a boarding facility for 25 years. Professionally, she was publisher of *The Armed Forces Journal International* for 17 years. Since leaving the *Journal* in 1993, LuAnne has worked part time in sales, doing, she says, "essentially in my 50s what people usually do in their 60s: work part time and do community volunteer work."

Juli Moyer, Lynn Hoffman and Lauren Maruskin are *The Equiry*'s outstanding support staff. They help callers find the information they seek (which is still our core mission), also handling classifieds, providing customer service, and more. Angela Bungartz is our incredibly helpful intern.

With the expansion of the office staff, Tracy is now able to focus more of her time and talents in working with our clients. In addition, over the years, Tracy has discovered a latent interest in technology, becoming our de facto, in-house IT go-to gal. Not bad for someone who was afraid to turn ON a Mac computer when she first started at *The Equiry*!

Our office staff has a boot in just about every stirrup -- from hunter/jumpers, barrel racing, foxhunting and dressage, to eventing, trail riding, saddle seat and even Civil War reenactment.

This summer, we partnered with the *California Horsetrader*, accessing its incredible web-based production system -- which utilizes graphic artists around the country -- for our ad design and production. Derrick Cook, *California Horsetrader*'s former art director, has taken over the design and composition of the publication itself, while M&M Design Group has provided editorial design.

The Future: This expansion of talent will allow *The Equiry* to grow in new directions, providing more services and meeting more of the needs of the rapidly expanding equestrian community. In the coming year, readers and advertisers will find many new and improved features -- particularly on equiry.com -- as we continue to maximize technology to meet our core mission: providing our readers and users with readily accessible information, and helping to expand the marketplace for our advertisers by encouraging more people to get involved with horses.

As always, we are eager to hear from you -- your thoughts about our new look, your ideas about how we could improve the services and information we are providing. *The Equiry* is your publication, your community service; so please continue to share your ideas with us. And thank you for embracing *The Equiry*, for making it your one resource, your bible for the Maryland horse community. Your calls and your messages of support have personally inspired us to bulldog through deadline after deadline, year after year. Through you, we continue to discover new stories and new insights into the people and horses who constitute Maryland's equestrian community.

Sincerely,

Crystal Brumme Kimball
Publisher



We look forward to serving you for another 15 years, and another 15 years after that, and so on!

Happy holidays, with a safe and prosperous New Year for all!