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INSIDE THIS MONTH

**SPECIAL 'HORSE
SENSE' FEATURE
PULL-OUT SECTION**



Check out our first-ever Horse Sense issue, with great stories about the horse and agricultural industries locally. That includes the Horse Spirit Connections shown above where horses are therapists to high power executives.....**Page 13**

**REALTORS 'FALL'
INTO PLACE**



Official Welcome. Carmen McClelland, Brampton Board of Trade President (L), gives new incoming BBOT CEO Gary Collins a helping hand with his lunch. Collins took office September 29th after former CEO Sheldon Leiba vacated the job to accept a position with the Mississauga Board of Trade. The McClelland/Collins topping off ceremony took place at the Brampton Farmer's Market, lunch supplied by the Village Deli.

Photo by Stephen Uhraney

BBOT has a new top dog

HORSE \$ENSE

Never saddle your therapist

By JAN DEAN

Horses have taken us to war, they have ploughed our fields, transported us where we want to go – who knew they were therapists too?

Actually, Wendy Golding figured that out. Golding spent years riding horses for the physical freedom they gave her. She was a member of the Governor General's Horse Guards, and played polo for sport.

But when an injury ended her riding days, she discovered how therapeutic horses are after reading *Riding Between the Worlds* by Linda Kohanov which posits that we can learn everything from leadership to personal empowerment and intuition from horses. Golding trained at the Epona International Study Center and Equestrian Retreat that Kohanov founded to certify as an Epona equestrian instructor. Then Golding started a non-profit corporation called Horse Spirit Connection which is dedicated to learning what horses can teach us.

It's the place where busy executives commune with horses for personal discovery and leadership training at Horse Tales Farm 45 minutes north of Toronto near Tottenham.

There's no horseback riding involved – would you try to saddle your therapist? So even for the horse-fearful, it's a positive experience because your feet stay on the ground.

It's all about the horse's nature. "Horses look for leaders in the herd," explains Golding. "Mares are the herd leaders, stallions are the herd protectors and every horse knows the pecking order and is comfortable with that. When horse and human meet, they form their own herd."

Humans are predators. Horses are prey animals and they've evolved amazing survival



their own herd.”

Humans are predators. Horses are prey animals and they’ve evolved amazing survival skills according to Golding who explains that the phrase ‘gut instinct’ comes from the horse. Quite literally a horse’s intestines are able to sense muscle tension, blood pressure, and heartbeat in creatures around it – so they know when they have to run from a predator. “The horses’ gift is their highly evolved intuition,” says Golding. “They deal with emotions rather than the mind. So for horses there’s no uncomfortable emotions, and no ego; they’re open, sentient beings.”

Think of horses as providing the ying to human yang – people are mind-focused. Many of us won’t even admit to having or using intuition. Where horses are non-verbal intelligence – people are verbal – remember the quip about Americans and Brits separated by a common language? A lot of the time that describes human verbal interaction because no matter how cerebral we think we are, more than 90 per cent of our communication is actually non-verbal.

For three years people have been going to Horse Spirit Connection to spend time with horses in pursuit of self-discovery. There are a variety of exercises involved which allow people to interact on a non-verbal level. Think what it would be like to be introduced to a horse while blind-folded.

This year Golding and her fellow Horse Spirit Connectors’ have introduced leadership training with the 11 horses at the farm. It has proved a big hit with corporations like Fed Ex, Research In Motion and the Bank of Montreal. “The larger corporations are intrigued by this,” says Golding, “and they use it more for teaching team work. They often send managers to hone their leadership style.”

Management is getting people to do as you want. Leadership is getting people to follow you willingly. There’s a big difference and executives get a better understanding of that difference when a group of them in a field are given the task of herding horses without tools. They need to convince the horses to follow them – in effect leading the herd. Or convince the herd to walk, trot, and turn. The focus is on teaching leadership.

For many entrepreneurial types, it’s a way to get an understanding of what their own leadership style is, and develop a personal style that will work for them.

“Horses are non-verbal,” says Golding, “and they’re very gifted at teaching non-verbal skills.”

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Wendy Golding and one of her four-legged therapists at Horse Tales Farm (top) while below another resident of the farm works with a human client.

Horse Sport and Horse-Canada magazines invite you to visit its booth at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair November 7 to 16. Subscribe, buy a book, win a prize or just say hello or share your views on the magazines. Horsepower editor will sign copies of her new book “Pocket Pegasus” on November 8 and 9.

Check it out at www.horse-canada.com

**HORSE
SPORT**
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Horse medicine

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And of course there's always Golding or one of the other human facilitators who can help humans understand "horse".

Golding says horse therapy can be a very profound experience, a spiritual experience. They usually advise a one day session designed by consultation with the corporation, and then a gap of up to two weeks before the second day long session. You need time to integrate what you've learned after all.

"The whole experience takes you out of your normal comfort zone," says Golding, "and opens you up to new ideas and new experiences." And it also gives horses that are past their riding days a wonderful home and purpose in life.

Golding and her husband Andre Leclipteux co-own Horse Spirit Connections as well as a marketing and merchandising business called Wings & Ink Inc which the two started in 1994. That business now has a staff of 24 in the office near Pearson International Airport, and 1,100 reps across the country.

As successful as their marketing company is, Golding says she loved riding horses for many years, but now she finds what she learns from them even more exciting.

For more information about Horse Spirit Connections, call 905-936-4450 or check out www.horsespiritconnections.com.



Technology

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Novice riders build their enthusiasm very quickly, to the point where they can't understand why everyone isn't a horse person, says Barrett, who enjoys the company of equestrian experts running the federation, and little "horse technology" but lots of non-profit strategic planning in her own background. "An administrator's job is to set policy and direction for organizations, but in my retirement I'm convinced I'll be a horse person, learning about stable management, the care of horses, and how to pack them."



"Trail horses are quite placid. But I've learned that horses can surprise you with side jumps and quick moves, mostly a result of being spooked by insects or startled by something. Or they may think, 'hmm, I'm now in control, so I'll gallop.' Helmet laws in Ontario now cover horse-riding, and that reduces the number of accidents."

Asked about how an urbanite should begin, Barrett said stable owners and staff always educate individuals, and especially novices, about riding and about the behaviour of individual horses. "There's lots to learn, in the stable, in the stall, in the field, on the trail, but it's all great fun and therapeutic."

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Congratulations to the Equine community in Brampton!






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