



Kim Wilkins and adoptees at Montpelier

Photo by Jane Fogleman

THE THOROUGHbred RETIREMENT FOUNDATION

by
Jane Porter Fogleman
Photos by Hay Hardy

I am always quick to tell people that retirement is my favorite word in the English language; however, to a thoroughbred racehorse that word often comes as the result of failure, age, or injury. As none of these conditions can lead to a continued productiveness, the retiree often becomes a burden to its owner. It was from this set of circumstances that the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation or TRF was conceived and has flourished.

In 1982 concerned individuals founded the TRF, and their mission statement remains the same today: *to save Thoroughbred horses no longer able to compete on the racetrack from possible neglect, abuse, and slaughter.* How could owners let any of these terrible conditions befall the animal that had given them such pleasure and in many cases monetary rewards? Many of the owners are of limited resources and do not have the space or economic ability to maintain the horse no longer able to compete. So what happens to these horses? Traditionally, scenarios varied from being turned out on the back 40 and forgotten, being given to a third party with the hopes of rehabilitation to another useful life, or being sold for cents per pound at the slaughterhouse. There are many countries where horsemeat is considered as delectable as Kobe beef, a horrifying thought to anyone who ever swung a leg over one of these noble creatures.

Enter the TRF. The TRF is multifaceted and does not just turn horses out in a field and feed, water, and check them to see that they are still alive. Early in its history Monique Koshler, a founder and Chairman of the TRF Board, negotiated a mutually beneficial arrangement with the Walkill Correctional Facility in New York State. This has expanded to several other adult and juvenile correctional facilities becoming involved in the arrangement. How does this work? The prison system makes the land and the labor available, and

Recent TRF fundraising events held outside Charlottesville at Little Keswick, the farm of Peggy Augustus



Stuart Burford, Ginny Semmet and Tim Foreman



John Western and Greg Schmidt



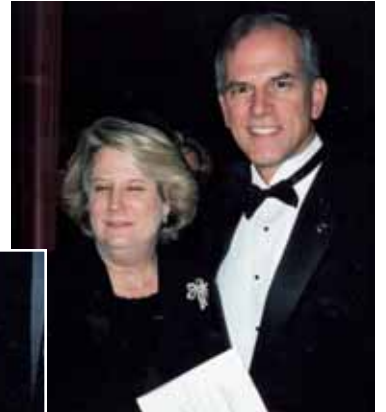
Bunny Gibson and Tommy Lee Jones



Sandy Rives and Charles Seilheimer



Peggy Augustus and John Stuart



Carolyn and Michael Quinn



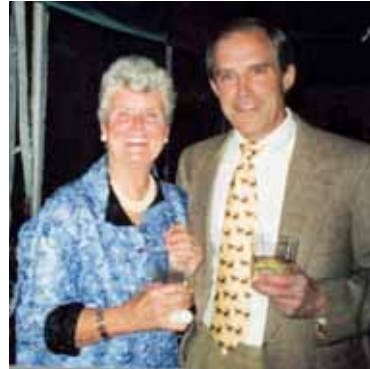
Matt Collins, Jane Fogleman, Rodney and Unjin Jenkins



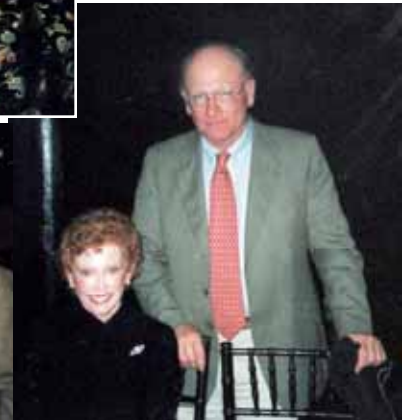
Pat and Kay Butterfield



Joy Crompton, Joe Cashman and Amy Nunnally



Carter McNeely and Hal Young



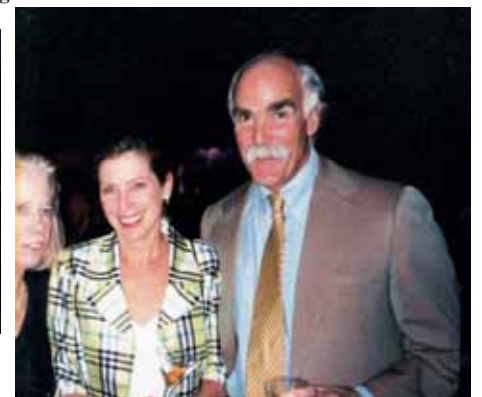
Winkie Motley, Cathy and Stuart



Sandra Forbush, Nancy and Justin Wiley, Molly Vere-Nicolls



Terrence Collier and Bill Graves





Kim Wilkins at the TRF barn at Montpelier

Photo by Jane Fogleman

the TRF designs a vocational training program in equine management and care. The prisoners learn a useful trade, which will hopefully benefit them upon their release. They receive some emotional gratification, and the horses, where able, are trained for another career or at least have their needs cared for and attention paid to them. The TRF feels that these relationships have been mutually productive and beneficial.

There are also TRF facilities set up on private lands or farms where, once again, the horses benefit from the individual attention of volunteers. There is an adoption program set up for those horses that have the physical and mental soundness to participate. The process involves an application, a nominal tax-deductible fee, and acceptable lodgings for the adoptee. The success stories abound throughout these farms. A family may take a horse or two and make them pasture pets if they are not sound enough for work. Riders may find their future show horse,

event horse, trail horse, fox hunter, or pony club horse in the fields of a TRF farm. The Native American school, Sitting Bull College in North Dakota, has adopted several horses and is successfully reacquainting their Standing Rock Reservation students with the pleasures of horses and horsemanship as their ancestors knew them. Certainly these are more noble lives for the retirees.

We in Virginia are fortunate to have one such facility in Orange County. The vast estate of Montpelier, home of James and Dolly Madison, has become the home of the TRF in Virginia. Montpelier has a long relationship with the racehorse from Madison himself to the last private owner, the well know horsewoman, Marion DuPont Scott. Mrs. Scott left Montpelier to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the home is currently being restored to the Madison era manor. The TRF has taken up residence on a part of the estate under the guidance of Kim Wilkins. They have restored the

yearling barn to accommodate the horses, equipment, and an office facility. They have fenced the large lovely fields and now have 31 horses that have come from all over the East. TRF is currently negotiating with Montpelier to lease more land, and once that is accomplished they will have a capacity of about 80 horses.

TRF feels very positive about their position here in Virginia horse country. Their hope is that there will be much more demand for adoptees in Virginia as there are so many horse enthusiasts here in the Commonwealth. Last year there were four horses adopted from Montpelier, but Kim feels she will have many more adoptions this year and currently has some great prospects at Montpelier. Her horses' average age is six years, and most of them are sound enough for a post-race career in trail riding, showing, hunting, etc. Kim, as is the case at all of the TRF facilities, relies almost entirely upon volunteers to help with the horses, maintain the grounds, make hay, ride the horses and facilitate their rehabilitation. She currently has about ten volunteers who come on a regular basis for several hours a day.



The TRF is a 501C3 organization and as such relies on the generosity of the horse owner whose horse benefits, the adopter, and the general public who appreciate the TRF efforts. There are numerous fundraising events that benefit the TRF. Recently one such event was held outside Charlottesville at Little Keswick, the farm of Peggy Augustus, noted Thoroughbred breeder. This gala evening was without comparison! If the opportunity presents itself, do not miss one of these events. The evening's tariff is a tax-deductible donation, and without a doubt the participants received more for their dollar than they spent. Many TRF participants and prominent racehorse owners arrived from all over the Eastern Seaboard. The 2003 gala benefit at Montpelier raised \$90,000 for

the TRF, and the expectation is that when the final tally is in, Little Keswick will exceed this figure. The money raised goes into the general fund to run the various facilities of the TRF. There is a rumor abounding that next year there will be a **Very Big Raffle Item**, which will entice people to the galas from all of the states. So keep your eyes open!

For private donations, to volunteer your service, to see what TRF is about first hand, or to see the adoptees in person, please call Kim Wilkins at 540-672-3986 or drop by the yearling barn at Montpelier behind the Mansion. She can use all the help she can get, and your reward will be immense.


Jane Porter Fogleman was born and raised in Albemarle County and is an avid life-long foxhunter. She hunts with Farnington Hunt Club, Keswick hunt Club and travels to other Virginia Hunts whenever possible.



Serving Lexington, Rockbridge & Augusta Counties


 **TOWN & COUNTRY PROPERTIES** 



LUCY MADISON TURNER
Specializing in historic town and country homes
& small acreage to large farms.

463-7168 Office  464-2201 Voicemail
21 N. Main St. INCORPORATED Lexington, VA

 www.meadproperties.com 




Essential General Purpose Rack
Handcarved curly walnut with hand-forged hooks. \$495
6"(h) x 26"(d) x 3 1/4"(d)
*Cashmere sweaters by GardyB

GARDY BLOEMERS
FINE STABLE WARES


934 Harris Street, Charlottesville VA
Open Tues & Thurs, 12-5 or by appointment
(434) 220 6303 gardybloemers.com

A Division of Dickson-Bloemers, LLC

TOM BARIL *Washington DC Portfolio*



MARCH 17—APRIL 30, 2005

 **THE RALLS COLLECTION**
1516 31st Street NW • Washington, DC
202.342.1754 • www.rallscollection.com

Great Falls, 2004, photographure, 14 x 11 inches