

November 2006

Dear Friends,

Waterfall Farms is a well-known Tennessee Walking Horse breeding facility owned by Mr. W.B. Johnson and his wife Sandra. Earlier this year, Mr. Johnson contacted me to help him incorporate Join-Up® principles and gentle training techniques with his horses at Waterfall Farms. Following his request I visited Waterfall Farms and was given a copy of the contract that Mr. Johnson has with his employees. It makes it clear that he tolerates no infractions to the horses' welfare whatsoever.

I was heartened by this document, and it was one of the major reasons that I came to believe in Mr. Johnson's efforts to improve the lives of Tennessee Walking Horses. I also observed virtually every aspect of the Farm and I continue to work with the team at Waterfall Farms to share the tools of Join-Up and gentle training techniques with the handlers of the Tennessee Walking Horse, so that Waterfall Farms can be an example to all Tennessee Walking Horse establishments, and owners, of the reality that these horses can be trained and handled in humane, gentle ways. Recently, I received news from Mr. Johnson that his breeding stallions are now flat-shod. These horses deserve my attention, and every human who acknowledges a problem of violence and reaches out to me for an alternative, deserves my best effort too.

I want to get to know these people who are trying to improve the care of not only the Tennessee Walking Horse but the Foxtrotters, the Paso's, the Jumpers and anybody else that asks a horse to perform at the pleasure of we humans in any discipline what so ever. I believe that when you see someone trying to make a positive difference in any given discipline, you should reach out to get to know him or her better and to assist him or her if at all possible.

Political Correctness notwithstanding, I will dive in no matter what the consequences are if I feel I can help horses. People who have concerns for the horse are on my same team. It is my opinion that we are far closer to being on the same page than we are to being at odds with one another. When I find someone whom I conclude is worth helping, I am going to do it. Surpassing my 70th year gives me a perspective that most people don't have. Non-violent techniques and using the horse's own language to train is widely accepted now, but this was not always true. Through determination and education, tremendous change has occurred. The same thing can happen in the TWH world.

Not one Tennessee Walking Horse has ever been cruel nor have they reached out to consciously harm any human being. The horses are not wrong. That area is reserved for the two-legged beasts. We must remember however that all two legged animals are not necessarily beasts and hold the thought that there are some seeking help and others willing to change.

Do not think that for one minute that I am not aware that the gaited horse industry has earned most of the aspersions that have been cast upon it. It is my position that it is time to change the gaited horse industry so that the whole world can accept these wonderful animals that have no blame whatsoever. My life has been connected with competition in the horse show-ring for nearly seven decades now. I have witnessed abuse of horses for the purpose of enhancing performance since I was four years of age. I have seen tactics that would cause a normal human being to be sick to their stomach.

In my childhood experiences, there are stories of leg tie-ins, running W's and saw blades that could fill several pages. My father wrote a book, complete with photographs, explaining many of his brutal techniques. You can see it in its entirety on my website at

http://www.montyroberts.com/images/jui_photos/horse_horseman_training.pdf

I continue to be dedicated to helping many different groups including the aboriginal youth, the wild brumbies, incarcerated violent offenders and school children.

My youthful experiences, which included felonious physical abuse of me by my father, have driven me to take up the mission against violence and abuse whether it's horses or people. My books and videos are built

on a theme that violence is never the answer. I repeat often that my life's goal is to leave the world a better place, for horses and for people, too.

I choose to be sponsored by an organization that I believe can set a new pace for the Tennessee Walking Horse. It is my hope that all individuals who focus their energy on improving the treatment of horses will not shy from introducing non-coercive, non-violent methods of Join-Up and partnership amongst the most controversial circles of horse training. It is my belief that all people who want to turn away from violence deserve support.

Sincerely,

Monty Roberts