

Burford Saddle Club is guided by membership and thrives through volunteers

By IRENE SCHMIDT-ADENEY

When Sally Davis moved to Burford 30 years ago, she had never ridden outside and arena. She wasn't sure how it would go when her husband Larry Davis bought her a trail horse.

"I was scared to death to ride that horse outside of four walls," said Davis. But she wanted to be able to trail ride with her children.

In 2015, when Sally, who is now the president, started the club with a friend, she didn't even know what a saddle club was. Through the club, she found a group of people who support riders of all ages and abilities, fierce competitors, and those who just want to be around horses.

Today the Burford Saddle Club is a non-profit organization that thrives through its memberships and sponsorships.

"This club would not exist without our volunteers and sponsorships," said Davis.

The activities are as varied as its membership. Members get together for trail rides, but the focus is on the shows. There are five shows planned for this season taking place at the Burford Fairgrounds.

"A good show will have somewhere between 30 and 40 horse and rider combinations," said Davis.

The classes for each show vary, including novice, youth, open – and they are guided by the membership. A profession-

al judge is hired for the day, although some of the classes and other events are just for fun. A typical show could include barrel races, pole bending, a mini Olympic obstacle course, English Hunter classes, and Western Performance. The popular Mystery Class could be a fun game of equine musical chairs.

"It's very laid-back," said Davis.

"A new class this year is called 'Strut Your Stuff'," said Davis. "It could be anything from a flying-lead change, tricks with the horse, or English and Western dressage. Points are awarded for performance and creativity."

There is a nominal membership fee and the club aims to keep it affordable.



Everleigh Ouellet (left) and Mary McCallum (right) at the September show.

Photo by Richard Yoshioka, Brantline Photography.



Kay Decker, Sally Davis and Emma Decker with Blue Angel.

According to its mission statement, "The founding of the Burford Saddle Club began with a vision of making the sport of showing horses available to riders of all ages and skill levels plus making it affordable for everyone. Since 2015, this non-profit, grassroots club has become a local attraction for horse people and their families."

A measure of the club's success was the annual banquet that attracted almost 100 members and their families.

In terms of affordability, there are many options for having a horse.

Emma Warren, 16, has been riding for eight years and took up the hobby after her best friend started riding. She began with lessons and recommends leasing a horse in the beginning.

"Leasing is good if you want to experience owning a horse," said Warren.

Eventually she co-owned Blue Angel, and then bought it outright when the other owner

wanted to sell their share.

As an only child, Warren says having a horse creates a special bond.

"My horse knows more about me than anybody," she said.

Although not an active rider, Warren's mother Kay Decker is the vice-president of the club.

"The Burford Saddle Club is part of the community," said Decker. "We are fortunate to have a good board and a good volunteer base."

The club is very much a family affair with parents, children, and friends, helping to run the shows. There are plenty of jobs for everyone – helping with timing, registrations, setting up for the classes. Shows are where the member-

ship comes together.

"One of the exciting things is that there are always new members coming in," said Decker. "It's exciting to watch a new trailer show up!"

And you don't even need a horse to join the club, as long as the animal has a saddle, added Davis.

"It could be a pony, a mule, a donkey. It's a 'saddle club'."

This year's shows will be held at the Burford Fairgrounds on May 18, June 15, July 20, August 17, and September 28. They all begin at 9:00 a.m. and the public is invited to watch. For more information or to register for a show, visit Burford Saddle Club on Facebook, Instagram or email Burfordsaddleclub@gmail.com.

From the North Dumfries Planning Committee meeting held on Tuesday, March 26th:

Public meeting for severance and lot addition

A public meeting was held to hear comments on a proposal by Mill-Gate Holdings that owns a 9.62-hectare parcel of land at 2852 Cedar Creek Road and is proposing

to sever a 3.03-hectare parcel, which would be added to the 6.59-hectare adjacent property owned by Techno-Bloc, creating a lot size of 9.62-hectares. The Mill-Gate property is operating as an aggregate operation.

There were no concerns or objections from agencies or comments from the public.

A report will be prepared by staff and return to a future meeting.

Public meeting for telecommunications tower on Whistle Bare Road

A public meeting was held to consider the construction of 50-metre telecommunications tower on a 8.35-hectare property at 1056 Whistle Bare Road owned by Whistle Bare Poultry Farm Inc. The property is zoned agricultural and farm-related and there is a Provincial Significant Wetland on the property. The applicant is Fontur International Inc.

There were no objections from agencies and there were two letters from neighbours opposed to the tower. Their concerns were focussed on the harmful effects to wildlife in this area and they suggested that a nearby aggregate operation would be a more suitable location.

Tom Woodcock of the rare charitable research reserve spoke against the tower due to concerns about the effect of radiation on wildlife in the area. Woodcock said the telecommunications tower could be attached to water towers in the area.

Paul Cabral made a presentation opposed to the tower due to the location between the wetlands and its impact on the birds. He said that as a resident in the area, there is no problem with cell phone coverage. He said the ideal location would be in Cambridge.

Ananda Kalubowila spoke on behalf of the Waterloo Wellington Buddhist Monastery and Meditation Centre, which is the closest property to the proposed location, and they are also concerned about the birds.

Councillor Alida Wilms said that she lives in the area and has limited cell phone service. She asked if another location could be used.

Councillor Rod Rolleman asked if the proposed tower at Harmony Road that was supported by council could service this area. Fontur representative Lucas Cuff said that coverage is typically 1.5-kilometres, and because Harmony Road is 12 kilometres away, it is too far away. Cuff said that this tower would be used by Rogers and Harmony Road will be used by Bell. He said that the two companies "have their own business circumstances and co-location will be hard to do."

Councillor Derrick Ostner questioned the range of only 1.5-kilometres. Cuff said that range depends on tower height and location with respect to the number of residences in the area, and this tower would service Cambridge residents as well Brown's subdivision in North Dumfries. Ostner requested information on the range of towers.

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