



DRIVING NEWS

Spokes & Spurs Inc Newsletter

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President's Message On December 7, 2025 the club held its annual meeting at Valkyrie's Haven. We had a wonderful turn-out with ~30 members. I began the meeting by thanking several members, our VP, Doug Lindsey; Treasurer, Hugh Bellis-Jones; NL Editor, Jennifer Harber; Web Page, Jack Goodman; Membership reminders, Kathi Davis as well as Farm hosts for many events held throughout the year; Valkyrie's Haven, Leslye Sandberg & Jim Shanel; Charlotte's Creek, Chris & Judd Roseberry & Jennifer Harber; Coach House, Kate & Katie Whaley. None of these events would be possible without the generosity of these local farms as well as the staff behind the scenes. I also wish to thank members who volunteer at various events so that anyone can enjoy driving. We are so very fortunate to have so many events, for all levels of drivers in this area.

The club has many more events planned for 2026. There will be competitions at the ADS & USEF levels as well as the three round educational series and a three part Driving Derby.

A couple of other topics for discussion included membership. We have had a couple of members ask about a "lifetime" membership. We discussed this at the meeting and another suggestion was to have a 5 year and/or 10 year membership. Let me know your feedback on this.

A good discussion followed concerning fund raising for the club. Various ideas were discussed. One idea was a "Photo-op"; this would involve someone with a photogenic horse, a draft or mini perhaps, to be available one day prior to the Holiday season to offer an opportunity for family photographs with a festively decorated carriage. Another idea would involve a donation(s) and selling raffle tickets.

Along with a fundraiser, we discussed forming an "Outreach" committee. This committee would meet and come up with ideas to let the local equine community learn more about what Spokes & Spurs does and invite others to join the club. Along with this is to host a learning event (such as one of our indoor winter meetings) along with another small club. The Bluegrass Morgan Club is a club that has been in existence for a few years and they are also trying to build a larger membership. As we know Morgans are naturals to the world of driving. We may coordinate an educational lecture or farm visit event with them. Again, please read out to me if you would be interested in working on an Outreach committee.

Once again we have three educational clinics in the works for 2026. We are still coordinating clinic dates with clinicians. Please see Pg 2 for a brief overview of what is being planned. They will once again be held at Valkyrie's haven in Paris, KY. Thank-you very much to the clinicians who step up to teach and be a part of these educational events. Carrie Ostrowski-Place, Sterling Graburn & Jacob Arnold.

The 3-part Derby Series returns for 2026! Please see page 3 for more information.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all !!

I also wish to reach out to two of our officers, Hugh-Bellis-Jones & Doug Lindsey who both had surgery recently. Sending healing thoughts and speedy recoveries!

Ann

SPOKES & SPURS

EDUCATIONAL SERIES

at Valkyrie's Haven Farm Paris, KY

Learn to Navigate – Be the Backstep!

What does a navigator do and can you do it? Ever wonder how they know where to stand? When to lean? How to help avoid getting hung up on an obstacle? Everyone will have the chance to give it a try as we practice on an indoor obstacle course. Bring your friends or spouses – maybe they will be your next navigator!

You Be The Judge

Have you wondered what the Judge looks for in a dressage test? What do the comments really mean and how does the judge arrive at the score? You will judge dressage right alongside an expert. Then see how your scores look next to theirs and have the opportunity to get all your questions asked and answered.

Obstacle Judging: See It – Time It – Hold It

Thinking of volunteering for one of our local CDE's? Large numbers of marathon volunteers are always needed! New to the sport? No need to panic – incoming equines can be very fast – lots going on and it's your job to manage it. And what if there is a hold? And what if something gets knocked down? And what if someone gets stuck and the groom gets down? Who does what in an obstacle during an event? Obstacle Volunteers (observers, judges, timers) all have a job and you will learn what those are and how you can be **large and in charge** with confidence. Volunteering at an event is one of the best ways to learn more about the sport!

Upcoming Dates and Clinicians to be Announced Soon

SPOKES & SPURS DERBY SERIES

Derby 1 May 23, 2026 at Valkyrie's Haven;

Derby 2 June 27, 2026 at Charlotte's Creek

Derby Finals July 25, 2026 at Valkyrie's Haven

Entries will open 30 days before the event and Close 1 week before the event (Details will be sent prior to each Derby with entry form, waivers and request for equine health information)

Finals - You must have participated (with same equine) in at least one of the previous derbies to qualify. You may compete multiple entries if you wish.

Entry Cost - \$50 Dollars \$25 goes into the Prize Money Pool for Finals

\$25 goes to support Spokes & Spurs as sponsoring club

*Each Derby will have 2 rounds with points being totaled for Final Scores at each of first two events. Ribbons will be awarded in each class. FINALS will take your 3 top round scores from any events you entered, for overall winners of each class.

*Three top overall scores will claim a top spot in their DIVISION - regardless of which class you entered. Prize money to be allocated at the FINALS between top 3 best total scores in each DIVISION

Divisions: Training (no cantering allowed) and Preliminary (open to all)

Classes: VSE, Small Pony, Pony, Horse, Para (if we have multiples, they will create classes as well)

All Divisions drive all gates. Cones Standardized Settings (ADS Rulebook)

Health Requirements-Current Coggins within 12 months; Flu/Rhino/EHV within 6 month; Interstate Health certificate for out of state horses. Pony measurement card required.

Schedule

Competitor Briefing 9 am

Round 1 Begins 9:30 am Order of Go will be emailed once entries close

Lunch Hour - between rounds so dependent on entry but estimated around noon

Round 2 Begins 1:00 pm (this may flex depending on number of entries)

Stabling

Individuals wishing to arrive early and wanting to rent stalls, please make arrangements with the farm.

Valkyrie's Haven - leslyesandberg@gmail.com

Charlotte's Creek - dunhorse1220@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report for 2025, by Hugh Bellis-Jones

The following report was presented during the year-end membership meeting held at Valkyrie's Haven, December 7.

Two years ago when I presented my Treasurer's Report at the annual meeting, I concluded by stating that "the club continues on a sound financial footing." However as with everything in life, nothing is static. During the past two years there has been a worrying trend where expenses have exceeded income resulting in a lessening of the club's reserves with WesBanco.

At the beginning of 2023, the club's finances stood at \$5,259.22. Twelve months later on January 1, 2024 the balance was \$4,336.17, a loss of \$923.05. At the beginning of this year the bank account balance was \$4,778. Fast forward to today (Dec. 7) and the club's bank balance stands at \$3,670.50. This means that during 2025, the club subsidized membership activities in the amount of \$1,107.58. The club's current bank balance is the lowest it's been in the seven years since I became Treasurer. Clearly this is an untenable situation and in November the Board took the step of increasing club dues to help offset these losses. This was a first increase in dues in almost a decade.

Now to a brief overview of 2025 figures. Receipts for the calendar year totaled \$1,898.20 (memberships and dues) while expenses totaled \$3,005.78. As stated, these figures resulted in a current 2025 balance of \$3,670.50

During 2025 19 checks were issued, including reimbursements to Ann Katona for various club expenses. Principal expenses were:

- American Reliable Insurance - \$505.65
-
- Ann Katona reimbursement - \$387.41
-
- Ann Katona reimbursement - \$302.55
-
- Ann Katona reimbursement - \$226.07
-
- Ann Petersen clinician fee - \$200.00
-
- Jacob Arnold clinician fee - \$200.00
-
- Carrie Ostrowski clinician fee - \$200.00
-
- Sterling Graburn clinician fee - \$200.00
-
- Ann Katona AGM meeting food - \$193.03
-
- Bluehost Internet web hosting fee - \$143.88
-

Memberships for 2025 were similar to the recent past. The club received 56 memberships in 2025 comprising 29 family and 26 single, with 85 actual members compared to 57 memberships (34 family and 23 single, 99 members) the previous year.

For 2026 we appreciate members paying their dues in a timely manner as this funds the club's various activities. Our hard working volunteer board consisting of Ann Katona, Doug Lindsey and Jennifer Harbor has scheduled a full series of events for 2026 which are posted on the club's website; we look forward to seeing many of you throughout the year.

In closing I want to stress how much we appreciate the input of Valkyrie's Haven owner Leslye Sandberg for hosting the November Board meeting and for her invaluable input in planning the 2026 calendar.

Many thanks are due to Kathi Davis for recently preparing and mailing renewal notices to the membership. This initiative has clearly worked as renewals are coming in steadily, and three individuals who are first time members.

POSTSCRIPT: As of this writing (Dec.19) the club's bank balance stands at \$4,574.68. We currently have 30 memberships for 2026, 19 family and 11 single, with 47 actual members. These figures will undoubtedly improve as additional membership renewals are received.

8 TIPS FOR EVALUATING HAY

Keep the following points in mind when purchasing hay for your horses:



- 1** Choose hay that is fine-stemmed, green and leafy as possible. It should be soft to the touch.
- 2** Examine the level of maturity: select hay that has been harvested when the plants are in early bloom for legumes, or before seed heads have formed in grasses.
- 3** Avoid hay that is over-cured; excessively sun-bleached; or smells moldy, musty, dusty, or fermented.
- 4** Avoid hay that contains a significant amount of weeds, dirt, trash or debris.
- 5** Examine hay for signs of infestation or disease. **Be especially careful to check for blister beetles in alfalfa!** Ask the grower about any potential problems in their area.
- 6** Reject bales that seem excessively heavy for their size or feel warm to the touch: they may contain excessive moisture that could cause mold or spontaneous combustion.
- 7** Purchase and feed hay within a year of harvest to preserve its nutritional value.
- 8** When purchasing hay, have the hay analyzed by a certified forage laboratory.



2026 Spokes and Spurs Calendar

*Dates and Events are Subject to Change

Events in **BOLD** are Spokes and Spurs Events

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
FEB-TBA	Seminar or Tour	TBA
APR 11	Educational Series 1	Valkyrie's Haven Farm Paris, KY
APR 23-25	Katydid CDE	Tryon, NC
Apr 23-26	National Drive Spring Fling	Hoosier Horse Park Edinburgh, IN
May 15-17	Charlotte's Creek CDE	Charlotte's Creek Farm Georgetown, KY
May 23	Spokes & Spurs Derby 1	Valkyrie's Haven Farm Paris, KY
June 27	Spokes & Spurs Derby 2	Charlotte's Creek Farm Georgetown, KY
July 11	Educational Series 2	Valkyrie's Haven Farm Paris, KY
July 25	Spokes & Spurs Derby Finals	Valkyrie's Haven Farm Paris, KY
Aug 8	Educational Series 3	Valkyrie's Haven Farm Paris, KY
Aug 28-30	Suzy Stafford Clinic	Charlotte's Creek Farm Georgetown, KY
Sept 11-30	Villa Louis Carriage Classic	Prairie du Chien, WI
Sept 17-20	Tryon Fall CDE	Tryon, NC
Sept 25-27	Indiana CDE	Hoosier Horse Park Edinburgh, IN
Oct 5-11	National Drive	Hoosier Horse Park Edinburgh, IN
Oct 16-18	Nashoba Carriage Classic	Germantown, TN
Oct 23-25	Halloween at the Haven CDE	Valkyrie's Haven Farm Paris, KY
Nov 6-8	Stableview CDE	Aiken, SC



Winter Equine Care Tips

- ❄️ Don't introduce your horse to round bales for the first time
- ❄️ Don't put your horse in a stall if they are not used to it
- ❄️ Thin, older, or fully clipped horses are at greatest risk
- ❄️ Check that horses are not sweaty or wet under their blankets
- ❄️ Temperatures that hover around freezing pose the highest risks
- ❄️ Use caution when using electric water heaters
- ❄️ Find ways to entice your horse to drink more water
- ❄️ Watch for frostbite on areas such as the tips of your horses' ears

Spokes and Spurs Library

Spokes and Spurs has a nice little library available to our members. Let Ann Katona know if you would like to check-out anything.

*American Carriages, Sleighs, Sulkies and Carts 168 Illustrations from Victorian Sources! Edited by Don H. Berkebile

*American Horse-Drawn Vehicles - Being a collection of 218 pictures... Jack D. Rittenhouse

*Bending the Driving Horse Muffy Seaton

*Breaking a Horse to Harness - A Step by Step Guide Sallie Walrond

*Bristol Wagon & Carriage Illustrated Catalog, 1900 Bristol Wagon & Carriage Works Co. Ltd.

*Carriage Driving - A Logical Approach Through Dressage Training Heike Bean and Sarah Blanchard

*Discovering Horse Drawn Carriages D. J. Smith

*Driven Dressage with the Single Horse Sandy Rabinowitz

*Driver Proficiency Program - Level I and Road Driving Syllabus The Carriage Association of America

*Driving a Harness Horse - A Step by Step Guide (A sequel to Breaking a Horse to Harness) Sallie Walrond

*Driving for Pleasure or The Harness Stable and its Appointments Francis T. Underhill

*The Encyclopedia of Driving Sallie Walrond

*The Essential Guide to Carriage Driving Robyn Cuffey and Jaye-Allison Winkel

*Fundamentals of Private Driving Sallie Walrond

*Horse-Drawn Vehicles at the Shelburne Museum Kenneth Edward Wheeling

*Illustrated Catalogue of Carriages and Special Business Advertiser / G. & D. Cook & Co.'s Forward by Paul H. Downing

*Walnut Hill: A Grand Celebration of the Horse & Carriage Robert Lannazzi; Photographer. Bill Remley; Commentator

**Spokes and Spurs members may post FREE classified ads in the Spokes and Spurs Newsletter.*

Send ads to dunhorse1220@gmail.com.