



Blue Rider Messenger

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Year End Report 2016



Ebony

This past year has been a roller coaster of upheaval and anxiety, as well as steadfast joy and moments of exhilaration. The changes in our environment have kept us on edge, not in our usual mind set.

A winter with barely any snow and a summer without rain made for very poor growth of grass, which meant not much pasture for the horses and a poor hay crop. This puts the very existence of our horses in distress, as this is most of their food. Hay prices went up, and economic difficulties made it harder for many of our riders to experience our programs (our rider numbers went down for the first time in years). Top this off with the global political situation, and the whole atmosphere of our work is surrounded with anxiety.

New health challenges were a concern this year. In an April snowstorm, Oskar (one of our stronger horses who is a mainstay in our adult program) fell and hurt his shoulder badly. His prognosis was that he may not be rideable again. In June, right after our awesome circus, Ebony (our elderly Tennessee Walker) died of colic. In July a moose (I kid

you not) took down our electric fence, and Falcur (our #1 therapy horse), injured himself while chasing off the intruder. He reacted badly to medications and was in critical condition for a few weeks. It has been a slow process bringing him back into work. Our old cat Marmaduke and our young female cat Lucy both passed away.

So where is the bright side? We had a moose at the barn! Also a bear, and we got to see three baby bobcats grow up. Our horses constantly amaze us in the things they do. Every day we see how someone who struggles in some way grows and thrives. The diligent care we gave Oskar and Falcur paid off, and both are back to work. We had two new horses join our herd, and have grown to appreciate and love them. Our old horses that have supported us all these years are happy and healthy (Mona still escapes if we don't watch our backs at the gates). Our summer camp programs were awesome. Our Easter Egg Hunt brought over 70 children to the barn. Our gala was the most incredible event!! We are an amazing team of people working together.

With all this said, our team is committed now more than ever to hold this space – this tiny, overcrowded, somewhat chaotic little blue barn with all of its surroundings – as a place where anyone can come and experience the magnificence of these equines in a safe non judgmental way. Our work teaches us as instructors and mentors as much as it guides our students. We find the space to identify and leave non-necessary patterns, behaviors, and thoughts behind and live more fully in the moment, centered and grounded. We actively strive to create an environment to allow change to come from the horse and students. The instructors' role is to facilitate this without force, so we can all move forward towards a more balanced space. We hope that this ability to breathe and the momentum that comes with that will hold against the turmoil of the life we see outside the barn.

Come knock on our door and join us!

A Year in Stories

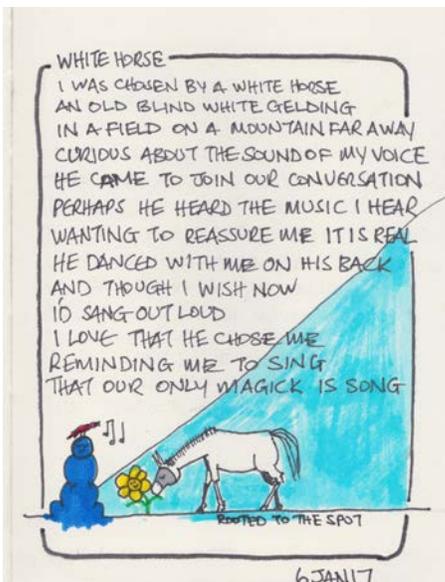
Lisa Reynolds



“I’ve been riding off and on at Blue Rider Stables for what began as a tight hip issue. This turned out to be the best thing I’ve done for myself. I’ve been exploring alternative medicine, yoga, and healthy exercise for over 20 years, but nothing changed my life with more immediate effect than therapeutic riding. I knew, since I tore an Achilles tendon 13 years ago, that my body was unbalanced and believed yoga would make me more self-aware and help even me out. Well it hasn’t. Riding does. I recently had Lasik surgery to an eye after discovering I protect myself by hunkering down on one side. This made me crooked in life and on the horse. The body is interconnected. One thing effects all the others: muscles, joints, sight, etc. My muscle memory begins to kick in sooner each time I ride, tightness dissipates sooner, and healing begins quicker than the time before. My healing feels progressive and natural each time I ride.

When Blue Rider Stables’ staff asked me to be on the fundraising committee and help with their 25th Anniversary celebration I was honored. 25 years is an important milestone and I thought celebrating it at Chesterwood (where I work) would be a perfect combination of holistic therapy riding and the beauty and nature of Chesterwood. Everyone who visits Chesterwood always says they “love” it – for a plethora of reasons – from the views, trees, nature and wildlife, to the sculptures, architecture and outdoor art. I’ve never met anyone who said they “liked” Chesterwood. I love Blue Rider Stables with that same enthusiasm. What better way to celebrate than bring the two together for a perfect night of music, dancing, food, drink and celebration. Beautiful sunset, perfect weather, and everything fell into place with panache. Everyone worked together to make it the magical evening it was. Local folks who had never been to Chesterwood were thrilled to watch the sunset over the Taconic Mountains (where Blue Rider is located). The band didn’t stop playing until well after most people had gone home, there was a group that just kept dancing (including me). I hope the memories of that special evening live on for another 25 years. I’m lucky to be associated with Chesterwood and Blue Rider Stables – both enrich my life a thousand-fold!” Lisa Reynolds

Isabel Haywood ~ Rhythm



Artwork by Peter Nolan

Rhythm, in my eyes, can be described with one word, well two words, strong and kind.

Rhythm has worked hard every day of his life in order to keep himself safe. Without his sight, he’s had to memorize his home and rely on his other senses to tell him where he is. Even then he can’t always find his way. Along with this, he’s had to deal with working twice as hard to breathe, just like Twist. Twist and Rhythm both have chronic allergies and weak lungs. I consider strength a big part of who Rhythm is because not only does he work so hard daily to keep himself safe, but he still has strength to help others, including me. It takes strength to be able to trust someone you can’t see and I’ve been lucky enough to be someone trusted by Rhythm. What he has the ability to teach is something I could never have gotten with anyone else. Rhythm has the ability to teach you how to be strong and sturdy for yourself, because you have to be strong and sturdy with him in order to keep both you and him safe. This strength has to come from an inner balance of muscles, body awareness, mental awareness, and emotional strength. When I get this, he shines in what he can do, and then my whole being smile.

Stories (Continued)

Contemplating Poop

Christine Sierau

Every morning when we get to the barn there is a huge amount of poop to get out of our way. This is also a metaphor for the way my mornings feel with all of the worldly issues pulling and pushing on me.

It feels good to get all of the manure managed, and onto the big pile instead of stumbling through it as we take care of the horses. Some days we shovel, rake, and sweep with a vengeance, other days we go about it more leisurely with time for conversations along the way. Some days it is a horrible chore, when the rain is pouring down, or all is frozen to the ground, or sweltering heat and flies abounding. But always the sense of accomplishment, and how nice everything looks and feels when we are done.



The manure heap has its own job, to be squared and tied and kept in its boundary. What hard work to drive the wheelbarrow all the way up to dump!

And then the manure sits there and turns into compost. Still smelly, still unsightly, but manageable.

After due process, this whole load of manure has turned into a very valuable compost, to be spread on our pastures or sold to the gardeners in the area to nourish the soil that grows our food. And once the horses eat the grass and the carrots, they poop...

My love and passion in Horseback Riding

Louisa H. Millenzi



As I think about the Blue Rider Stables in the back of my mind, I find it such a beautiful, wonderful, heartwarming, peaceful, relaxing and also calming place to be. I really love my teacher Christine so much.

The reason why I am saying this is because I find her as an educational and smart and wise woman, and that's what I love the most about her. She is always around when I need her to help me with certain things while I ride and even when I need her support with tasks in the stable. I also love my helpers as well, they are always so helpful and supportful to me too. They are always around when I need them to help me with all kinds of things that are needed for me to learn more about the program and how things work there.

I am so grateful and thankful and lucky to have the Blue Rider program in my life now.

The End.

Rachel Siegel



Rachel's son Patrick

I adjust my hips a little on his back, trying to lower my one recalcitrant hip. He feels so sturdy and warm beneath me. “That is how a horse should feel,” Anna says. And it’s true. Fritz looks a little dumpy and bowed in the back but to climb aboard is like getting into a warm bath. His back is wide and round and his backbone not at all prominent. As we circle the barn my inner thigh muscles, tight as a fist, slowly begin to relax. My sitz bones lower. My trunk extends longer out of my base. My brain is trying so hard to figure out how it happens—determined to reproduce it at home on my own—that it’s difficult to just be present to the sensory experience. I remain in my upper brain, concentrating, and Christine says periodically, “Do you feel that? You just dropped down into your pelvis on that side.” Or “Did you hear him breathe? He’s walking better now.”

I have had persistent left hip and knee problems since I was 19 and was hit in the thigh by a van crossing a dark street at my college. I had subsequent painful subluxation of my patella and a pattern emerged of shortening and tightening my psoas muscles to compensate for the instability in my knee and tightness in my IT band. It quickly became established and I have spent nearly half my life alternately ignoring, trying to fix, and living with the discomfort and sense of being ‘out of whack’ it has brought. Exercising, living, picking up children, I do most of the activities of life not quite centered. It takes a toll over time.

I have never thought of myself as a rider. I was never one of those horsey girls I went to school with. Never understood why my friends were so obsessed with horses, drawing them, riding them, spending whole weekends showing and grooming them, week days mucking stalls. My four year-old son takes lessons at Blue Rider and somehow I was drawn to try it too. These days anything that takes me away from the news and the screens and to an older aspect of human culture is welcome. I try it. I had taken a few lessons about ten years earlier with Christine and I knew enough to know that this was not about my pretty pony et al.

In one of my first lessons, Christine said to me, “Well, you’re a performer and teacher so you’re always out here,” and she gestures outwards from her chest toward the pasture and Jug End. I think, Well yes, of course. Isn’t everyone? “What the horses help you do is get grounded in your core, your pelvis, and their energy draws you down to the earth.” Sounds good, yup. I kinda like my energy where it is.

In that first lesson I get off the horse and my orientation to the world is not the same. I am aligned the way nature intended. As the lessons continue, a realization slowly dawns that when I get off the horse, I feel physically great but I am also aligned energetically to some other axis. My energy is lower, more earth-bound. Wow, I think. Maybe there’s more to this than even a great chiropractic session. It’s similar to how I feel after an afternoon spent in the garden, but not exactly the same. It’s a connection to the earth but through the energy of another living being. It feels... simple, right, easy. Of course, I think, humans have had this connection to equines for thousands of years, we just aren’t dependent on them anymore so we have largely forgotten it.

As time goes by and I ride every week, my hip and leg start to readjust themselves. It isn’t a smooth progress, I make a big stride and then I teeter back a little and then I make some more progress and struggle to maintain it. But overall, I have a dawning centeredness that has had an impact on every area of my life. And not merely the physical relief from pain and tightness that riding provides. As I continue to come week after week, I perceive the accurateness of Christine’s assertion about me. I think of myself as grounded but I am not. Being on a horse lowers my energy from my outward-focusing brain inward and downward. I feel calmer, momentarily released from the prison of my ‘presenting’ self. These gentle, wise creatures have the power to teach us things we have forgotten in our hectic, mediated lives.

Some folks dig motorcycles or ATV’s for the feeling of power and control they give. I get that; but I am realizing with horses, it is a gentle give and take whose depths and possibilities could take a lifetime of pondering to truly fathom. At least as it’s done at Blue Rider.

Big Twist Vaulters



2016 was a busy year for The Big Twist Vaulters. We worked really hard to be able to participate in our first competition this year in Litchfield, CT. In order to prepare for the competition, we met and practiced every week. During our practices, we condition and stretch our bodies as well as work on both the vaulting barrel and on horseback. At the competition we were able to show our compulsories and freestyle routines on the barrel that we had been working on all season. A few of our team members participated in a vaulting barrel demonstration at the Equine Affaire. We were a bit nervous to participate in the demonstration because there were many people there to watch. It was more challenging to perform in front of a large audience at Equine Affaire than it was

to perform in front of the judge at the competition.

As a team, we also welcomed our new horse Rico. Rico used to be a jumper but has adapted well to his new work as a vaulting horse. It is clear he knows his job and enjoys doing it. Our wonderful coach, Anna, helped us to train him and learn new ways to make a horse feel comfortable. During vaulting practice we make sure to perfect our moves on the barrel before moving them onto the horse. This is super important to make sure we are never hurting our horse or ourselves. We appreciated having the opportunity to learn more about the equine perspective of vaulting.

The Big Twist Vaulters would like to give a big thank-you to Anna! We loved getting to learn from her again this season. She has a lot of vaulting experience to share. Anna is also helping us to strengthen our bodies to become better vaulters. As a team, we are looking forward to competing in future competitions and having more vaulting experiences.



Meet the Board



Michael Fernbacher is an architect and store design executive with 30 years' experience in conceiving and implementing store design strategies that define and expand global luxury brands. With hands-on experience in North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, Michael executes projects across domestic and international markets, resulting in more than one thousand completed projects.

Whether for the luxury designer footwear brand, STUART WEITZMAN, or creating new branded concept shops and showrooms for the luxury apparel and accessories brand THE ROW (established by the Olsen twins), Michael has been relied upon to provide design leadership in close collaboration with key stakeholders and C-Suite executives.

Michael has been involved with BRS for 6 years, as a rider, parent of a helper, and Board Member. He has been Board Chair since 2013, and is driven by the conviction that Blue Rider provides a unique and vital service to our community, that has the power to transform lives.

Meet the Board



John Greene was born in the United Kingdom where he completed his Curative Training. For the past 35 years he has been a resident of the United States. He lived in Beaver Run for many years where he was a class teacher, house parent and gardener.

After completing the Waldorf teacher education training at Sunbridge, he helped start the River Valley Waldorf School in Pennsylvania. He then spent six years at Sunbridge College as the Registrar and Administrator. He was the council chair for many years and also served on the board.

John was also the Executive Director of the Rudolf Steiner Institute and the administrator at the Great Barrington Rudolf Steiner School. Currently he runs a life-sharing endeavor for special needs adults in Stockbridge. John brings the three men in his home to Blue Rider because he believes it offers the best program in the area.

John joined the Board of Blue Rider because of his enthusiasm for the programs it offers. He appreciates that BRS is individualized for each rider and holds high expectations on what each individual can achieve and accomplish. He is excited to help Blue Rider not only maintains that goal, but develop and deepen its core mission long into the future

John is also a proud father of 5 children.



Anna-Christine Stanton is a licensed Massage Therapist. She graduated from the Swedish Institute of Massage Therapy in New York, in 1985. She passed her Board certification for the State of New York and received her License in 1986. She began her career working for a Chiropractor. She worked in his office alongside him for four years, doing mainly medically orientated work. During this time she also spent time in Germany studying Rhythmical Massage. In 1990 she moved to Great Barrington, MA, and began building a small practice in the Berkshires. Throughout the last 15 years she has studied Myofascial Release, Orthopedic Massage Techniques for Cervical pain and dysfunction, Cranial Sacral Treatment, LaStone Basalt Stone Treatment, and Aromatherapy Treatments with the Aromatherapy Associates from England.

She has also been on the Board of Blue Rider Stables since 1994. Working on the Board as well as taking a hands on approach to therapy on Horseback. Her passion for working with Massage and its relationship to movement has been beneficial for clients over the years. In the future she will be continuing to devote herself to her Practice and to Blue Rider; as well as continue to build on therapeutic modalities as they change and grow.



Carla Sadoff is known for her laser-like, straight communication and for demanding (and getting) the best people have to give - their most effective selves. She brings more than three decades of training in different methodologies to her international consulting work in construction, healthcare, energy and non-profits. She has worked with many executives on multi-billion dollar projects, including overseeing several large capital projects in the oil and gas industry. Carla's diverse background in executive coaching, healthcare and business has trained her to take effective action with grace in any environment.

A longtime advocate of programs that contribute to the under-served, Carla is actively involved with several organizations. She has participated in medical missions with the Kellerman Foundation and found her heart in the Impenetrable Forest of Uganda working with the Batwa Pygmies. She also supports the Hudson Opera House - the oldest opera house in NY state (offering free and low cost cultural events and programs) and Blue Rider Stable, a therapeutic riding stable.

Meet the Board



LAURIE GILDEN LINDNER, Ph.D., joined the Blue Rider Board in the Fall of 2016. For 30 years Laurie directed multi-disciplinary Developmental Disability programs in Medical Centers and in the Cambridge, Massachusetts community. More recently, Laurie was the Co-owner of a management and financial consulting firm with her late husband Richard Lindner.

Laurie earned her doctorate in Developmental Psychology and Communication Disorders in Children. She is now retired and lives in Great Barrington, spending much of her time with her beloved dog, Morgan, and her horse, Starlight. Laurie also takes lessons at Blue Rider Stables with Christine.

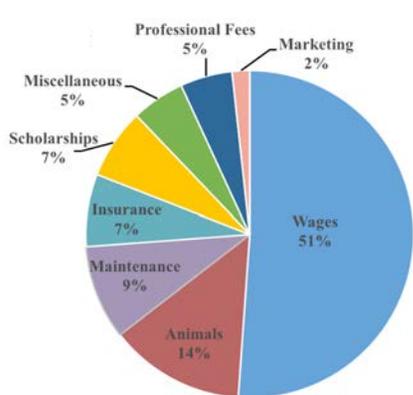
Laurie believes strongly in the Blue Rider mission, and joined the Board to help support the fundraising needs of the organization and to assist in furthering the development of Programs for the future.



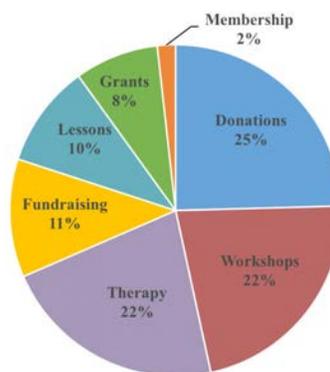
Blue Rider Stables is recruiting new board members!

Being a volunteer Board Member not only helps the organization grow and develop, but is good for **YOUR** health. Studies on volunteerism conclude that volunteering helps enriches your sense of purpose and fulfilment; improves your mood and self-esteem; helps keep you mentally active; reduces stress levels and decreases the risk of depression. It also helps you develop new skills that can help you be successful in life and on the job hunt! Board members with Legal, Financial, PR/Marketing skills are particularly needed! Anyone interested should email admin@bluerider.org for more information!

2016 Spending Overview



<u>Expenses</u>	
Wages	\$186,404
Animals	\$48,839
Maintenance	\$33,929
Insurance	\$25,920
Scholarships	\$25,330
Miscellaneous	\$19,167
Professional Fees	\$18,726
Marketing	\$6,315
Total	\$364,630



<u>Income</u>	
Donations	\$86,502
Workshops	\$77,564
Therapy	\$77,084
Fundraising	\$40,628
Lessons	\$35,292
Grants	\$28,800
Membership	\$6,250
Total	\$352,120

To request a full financial overview, email info@bluerider.org



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If you no longer wish to receive these mailings, please let us know at admin@bluerider.org

Calendar of Events for 2017

April 15th, Saturday 11am-1pm....EASTER EGG HUNT

Come and enjoy a Candy Free Eater Egg Hunt. This is a free community event, where children can hunt eggs and have a great time with friends. Pony rides, hay maze, face painting and delicious refreshments available for an additional charge.

June 3, Saturday 10:30am-12:30pm.....CIRCUS!

See what our students accomplish on horseback. Drills set to music, refreshments. \$10 parking, but no admission charge. Held regardless of weather!

June 12, Monday...SUMMER CAMP STARTS

Learn about horse care, riding and vaulting. Many different experiences and skill levels are available. Ends August 25.

July 29th, Saturday 6-9pm....HOEDOWN!

Dance the evening away in our barn. Bonfire, refreshments, good times - everything one could wish for! \$5 per person

August 26, Saturday 10am-4pm....FUN DAY

Our big fundraiser at French Park in North Egremont. Special guest performer, Bari Koral brings her infectious, kid-friendly pop tunes to Fun Day this year! Pony rides, food, games and face painting too! Great fun for the whole family! A small silent auction and lots of goodies from the Hippity Hop Shop for sale.

October 8, Sunday 10a-3pm...HORSE SHOW

Everyone who rides at Blue Rider has a chance to be in our horse show and win a few ribbons!

We have composted manure for sale throughout the year; either for you to pick up in buckets, or by trailer load. It is very beneficial for gardeners, and has no bedding or chemicals. Please call ahead for availability; if we're out, don't worry, we'll be getting more!

CAN & BOTTLE DRIVE - Ongoing at the barn, collecting nickels for the horse medicine fund.

Meet the Board
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Year End Report

INSIDE:

John Green
Laurie Lindner
Christine Sierau
Carla Sadoff
Anna Stanton
Michael Fernbacher - Chairman
Board of Directors

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