

Since we last met

The days, weeks and seasons pass so quickly and so much progress has happened! In this annual letter, we'll try to capture a snapshot of what transpired since the meeting last summer in the areas of programs, staffing, facilities and finance, and what is on the horizon for the coming year.

Riding Program: Our schooling and lesson programs are an integral part of our educational activities. Our instructors teach children through adults and focus on providing insights into many aspects of horsemanship. Allison King joined us in September, and it didn't take long for her to have a significant impact, bringing her substantial training and experience to our programs. More about Allison in our staffing update.

Eric Horgan continued to extend our instructional opportunities with his well-attended clinics.

This year, we expanded the number and types of shows at which our students compete that are held away from Southlands. Lucy and Sophia have been instrumental in these activities. In addition to the Dutchess County Fair, our students are successful showing at venues such as: Saratoga, the Vermont Summer Festival and HITS events.

Pam's hard work is paying off. We have increased participation in our Dressage shows and hope to continue trending up in this area of our riding program. Allison has helped to bring in some new faces for judging, and you may also see her as a judge at area shows.

We continued to pursue equine related educational opportunities through a range of events including those hosted by our staff, Rhinebeck Equine (Dr. Amy Grice) and Dr. Carol Vischer. We are working with our staff to integrate even more of this type of education into our riding program.

With the warmer weather, we have also seen the return of some faces from the past returning to join our current riders.



Our Halloween Horse Show

Program Outreach: Teaching riding is a core element of our mission. In addition to our riding program, we also extend our outreach to the broader community.

A Horse Connection, under direction of Nancy King provides equine assisted therapy programs here at Southlands. Her organization believes that horses and their environments provide a unique and optimum way in which to receive therapy services for individuals who are physically, emotionally or developmentally impaired.



Nancy King of A Horse Connection

The Equus Projects partners professional dancers with horses and their riders to create site-specific performance works that merge the artistry of dance with the athletics of equestrianism. The Equus Project conducted rehearsals at Southlands in 2010 and returned again in 2011.

The 4H Gentle Giants is a 4H horse club that focuses on horse projects and community service. They lease a barn and paddocks from us and can be regularly seen operating the snack bar during our shows.

The Board met with a representative from Scenic Hudson, with whom we have an easement. Our purpose was to better understand what is permitted on the property and easement restrictions including forest and field management.

We hosted field trips by nursery and elementary schools this spring. The Girls Scouts joined us for a day to learn about grooming horses. The Vassar College Club team rode with us again this year and we look forward to working with them in the fall. The DayTop girls program has also visited us.

We continually look for opportunities to invite the public to use our grounds through our Community Bird Walks, Hiking Trails, and events such as Easter Fun Day. Next year, we will continue to look for additional opportunities to increase community awareness in our foundation and programs. If you have ideas, please speak to a board member!

Scholarships: Our thanks to Halle Becker who is co-sponsoring camp scholarships with us for two years.

Staffing: The last 12 months have seen quite a few changes in staffing at every level of Southlands from Executive Director to Barn Manager to instructors right through to the horses and ponies!

In September, we welcomed **Allison King** to Southlands as our Executive Director. She literally made Southlands her home and had an immediate impact on our operations. Her energy, experience and professionalism provide a great foundation for the team and our clients. She brings with her Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) certification as a master instructor and competition experience across disciplines, including US Dressage Foundation (USDF) Bronze and Silver medals, and as a dressage judge.



In May 2011 we welcomed **Zsa Bataille** as our new Barn Manager. Zsa traveled from Montana braving tornadoes and wicked storms to join our team. She brings many years of professional management of varied horse programs, both English and Western. Her background also includes training and experience with 3-day eventing. She integrates educational aspects in many phases of her job. She is posting educational bulletins on the board; you should check regularly for detail. See the latest about electrolytes and sugars for your horse. Obviously, she'd love to talk horses with you.



At the instructor level, **Susie Williams** returned in great shape and is teaching, riding, and helping with fund raising.

Most recently, Sarah Gilbert joined Southlands as overall lead of Summer Camp and specifically heading up our Junior Rider program. Shelby Quackenbush returned to help out with summer camp and this year has stepped up to lead the Young Rider program.

Tina Cordier, also a Southlands alumnae, has returned to lead Southlands Nature Camp. For those not experienced with Nature Camp, Southlands provides the community with a great venue for children to learn about nature in our idyllic surroundings.

On the equine end of the staffing spectrum, we bid "farewell" to our special friends Peter (adopted by Sonia Neeley) and Rosita (adopted by the Migliore family), and to Stuart now residing in NJ- as part of meeting our goal to responsibly retire or place our horses. Susie has visited Taylor and Topper, who send their regards from their new homes.



Taylor at her new home this spring

We've also welcomed several new ponies and horses into the barn. We've been joined by Ontario, Onyx, Stuart Little (an immediate favorite), and soon to join us- KC. We are attentive to the needs of managing our population and try to best meet the needs of our clients. "Interviews" for new school members are continuing.

Facilities: In September 2010, the construction of our new turnout shed began. This fall, we celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony (complete with sparkling cider).



Burton and Tallulah cut the ribbon



We also improved drainage around the new turnout shed to give the horses using the new shed solid footing.

This winter we upgraded the footing in the indoor at a cost of approximately \$6000. This was critical to improving the footing air quality for the horses (and humans) due to the high volume of traffic for both students and boarders that the indoor ring supports when the outdoor rings are not available. The winter also brought along substantially higher snow removal costs.

We finally got to the bottom of the restroom plumbing issue! Aging pipes under the cement aisle had buckled and cracked which contributed to the frequent backups we were experiencing. New piping inserted within the old casement has thankfully resolved the issue. The apartments needed a variety of repairs including a water heater and zones for heating.

A major upgrade of computer and accounting systems was completed this spring, with the active participation of Toni Hill and Robert Nieuwenhuizen.

Our plans for an indoor viewing area appear to be getting back on track, and we hope to have this ready this fall for your viewing comfort.

Nancy Strohsahl and Robert Nieuwenhuizen head up our volunteer support of facilities, working closely with Allison and her staff, and other Southlands members for specific projects.

A few of the projects they are considering for remainder of the year include performing foundation/drainage repairs for a section of school aisle, providing additional footing for the outdoor ring, and additional work on the indoor ring.

Work is underway on the additional outdoor ring! This is our project from the second Kassell Challenge. Mark Finkle has been instrumental in securing materials for the new ring and contributing his own time creating the base (a significant cost savings to us!)

The current plan is to complete the base and drainage work this fall, allowing the base to settle over the winter. This should improve the surface integrity for the footing to be installed in Spring of 2012. While taking a bit longer than we had hoped, the timing is offset by the significant savings we realized through the donated base work.

The mission of The Southlands Foundation is to provide a historical and agrarian connection to the community, and cultivate a respect and love for the land and its animals through education, conservation and outdoor recreation.

There always seem to be more projects than we can accomplish in a year, but our Building and Grounds team works closely with the Finance committee to make the best priority calls.

Fundraising:

We thank Burton Kassell for his major contribution to our first challenge grant to pay for the new turnout shed. Our second challenge for the new ring was even bigger. Several Southlands members provided the initial catalyst of \$10,000. Burton challenged our members to meet that amount, and matched with his own donation of \$10,000. Our members raised over \$30,000 for the new ring.



Duncan and Hendrik

And thank you to the rest of our membership, as memberships for 2011 improved over 2010 by over \$9000. Your membership contributions help us to help make Southlands a better place for all of us.

Thank you also to our Gala Committee (Debbie Rodriguez, Joan Quigley, Kathy McGettrick, Sophia Donohue, Susan Sweet, Rebecca Gott, and Deb Beatrice) for doing a fabulous job in hosting a successful 2010 Holiday Gala at the Rhinecliff Hotel. Nearly 100 members and friends joined us for the evening, and we raised over \$10,000 while having a terrific time!

[This year's gala is scheduled for December 10, 2011 at the Beekman Arms. Hold the date!](#)



Financials:

The 2010 Audit was performed by Shallo, Galluscio, Bianchi, & Fucito, the same firm who did our 2009 audit. The Audit report is available upon request, as is our IRS 990 form. The Form 990 provides the public with financial and policy information. Significant savings on our 2010 audit fees were achieved this year via the financial process improvements implemented by the finance committee and staff.

We have been diligent in our review of fiscal planning and in taking proactive actions. Our Finance committee (Allison King, Toni Hill, Crystal Oakes, Joan Quigley, Susan Sweet, Helen van der Voort, and Debbie Beatrice) meets regularly and continue to develop improved fiscal systems to help us manage and plan our income and expenses.

Allison manages the daily expenses, and the Committee has suggested fiscal process changes, analyzes monthly reports, and we have met with Rhinebeck Savings Bank to understand options available to us and to explore ways of managing various fees.

Year end 2010 showed significant improvement over 2009. 2011 is showing improvements in some areas but some declines in other areas. We are taking actions to address the remainder of 2011 and planning for 2012. Overall, we are still significantly stronger than 2009 and will continue our efforts. For example, we are advertising to reach out to new clients,-- you may have see our ad at the Lyceum Theater. But we need to take a much broader view of our programs, audience and options.

The Board is working closely with Allison King as our Executive Director for additional actions and opportunities, such as defining a formal communication plan that leverages non-priced outreach and will consider priced options where appropriate. We hope that this will help increase participation in our programs.

We are investing in the future, and feel that there have already been significant positive strides.

Our investments have faired reasonably well in spite of a volatile market. The balance also reflects withdrawals made for capital improvements and major repairs.

July 2010	\$2,040,540.45
June 2011	\$2,221,137.72

Delta	+\$ 180,597.27

And my closing thoughts: We have many challenges ahead, but we also need to acknowledge the accomplishments and progress that is the result of our Board of Directors, Staff, Volunteers and Members. We will continue to exercise diligent oversight while also looking at ways to grow our programs, participation, and revenue. I believe we have good reason for optimism, and have a foundation to build upon.

I also encourage our members to join in our volunteer efforts by participating or letting us know if you have a specific interest.

If you are interested in participating in a committee or have an interest in helping in a project, please contact me. We have "opportunities" in all aspects – Building and Grounds, Fund Raising, Finance, the Gala and more.

The Board of Directors is interested in your feedback and suggestions. We love to hear from you.

Debbie Beatrice
President, The Southlands Foundation
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Effective as of our Annual Meeting today- I am happy to announce our 2011/2012 Board of Directors:

Suzanne Battenfeld	Robert Nieuwenhuizen
Debbie Beatrice	Crystal Oakes
Eve D'Ambra	Nancy Stringham
Susan Dean	Nancy Strohashl
Andrea Long	Helen van der Voort