

Dear Friends, 1-20-10

Gratitude is the key word for Pease Farm as we begin the new decade. 2009 was the hardest year of my life. The extraordinarily wet weather made haying and all farmwork a struggle, and the loss of my dad in May and my mom in November knocked me out of the saddle in every way. Only the generous and faithful assistance of friends and family, and the loyalty of my Pease Farm clients, helped me begin to restore my mental and emotional balance. My parents' love provided me with the foundation to follow my dreams; it helped shape my character and make my life at Pease Farm a reality. I continue to believe that what you are offering your child (or yourself) at the farm is very much like what my parents offered me: love and guidance through a partnership with horses. Far more than just a set of physical skills, the horse's willingness to work with us is directly dependent on the awareness, patience, bravery, perseverance, and humility we bring to our relationship. When we polish these skills in the saddle, and in our daily lives, we open up a new world of compassion and "in the moment" contentment. Thank you all so much for your continued support as Pease Farm begins its 16th year of teaching.

I am trying hard to keep prices affordable but please do review the enclosed fee changes carefully--lesson prices are unchanged for one more year, but there are minor increases in the fees for training, boarding, camps and clinics. I received my NARHA national accreditation for teaching students with disabilities in 2008 and Pease Farm became a NARHA Member Center in 2009. Vermont Horse-Assisted Therapy, Inc., a 501c3 nonprofit, (VHAT) provides our therapy services--we will offer our first after-school program for students on the autism spectrum this spring. Please mark your calendars--Sarah will be talking about autism and riding after the showing of the 2009 documentary *The Horse Boy* at the Savoy's Green Mountain Film Festival March 23-25. This film about a boy with autism whose parents use horses and shamans to "reach" him is a good introduction to the magic of horse-assisted therapy. Visit VHAT.org to volunteer, to make a donation, or to lend your expertise as the organization grows. (And while you're online, check out our new Pease Farm website, peasefarmstable.com. We have great pictures and biographies of our equine "cast of characters"). You will note on this year's release form a place to add your email address, so I can send this yearly greeting electronically next year if you wish.

Mindy, a 13.3 hh champion blue roan jumper on loan from Sara and Mary Stewart, has been a popular addition to the schoolhorse team, and Sue McCain's 17 hh dapple grey Percheron Emily arrived at year's end to represent the other end of the equine size spectrum.

Camp dates for 2010 are as follows:

June 28-July 2 Mixed Level

July 12-16: Mixed Level

July 26-30: Sleep-away Camp (Advanced/Intermediate)

August 9-13: Mixed Level

May 22-23/ Sept. 25-26: Adult weekend clinics

All camps include a daily mounted lesson, as well as longline lessons, bareback rides, ground exercises, round pen instruction, swimming, art, haying, and impromptu variety shows. Advanced camp offers twice daily mounted activities in the ring or on the trail, and once again, due to popular demand, daily showers! Your non-refundable deposit of \$75 for camp or clinic is due by March 1. The camps and clinics are small and fill quickly, so reserve your place as soon as possible by mail, phone or email.

In addition to Level 1 Centered Riding™ instructor Susan Mitchell, we have added hunter/jumper specialist Chrissy Rohan to the Pease Farm instructional staff. Chrissy has a degree in special education and a long resume as a rider, trainer and coach; her technical skills and can-do attitude have already made her a Pease Farm favorite. Chrissy is offering a spring series of two-hour unmounted Sunday clinics to get you ready for the 2010 season:

March 14--Longe lining your horse for contact, not just exercise

April 11--Wrapping, bandaging, farrier and vet care

May 2--Mane pulling, clipping, the "how to" of showing

May TBA--Care of saddles, bridles and tack

Please call her directly to sign up: 223-6975

I so appreciate 24-hour notice for cancellations, and will be enforcing the 50% lesson fee for lessons cancelled without proper notice, except in the case of illness. Once again, my deepest thanks for your understanding in 2009 and a wish to all of us for health, happiness and renewed hope in 2010.