

GENERAL NEWS

# Judges ruling affects walking horse industry

**By Heather Mathes**  
**of The Courier-Journal**

The walking horse industry has been greatly affected by a Washington District Judge's decision concerning the limited weight of horses and also the result of a study conducted at the University of Auburn and also the result of a suit filed by the American Horse Protection Association and all has resulted in the Department of Agriculture being ordered to tighten its restriction on how horses are shown.

According to Mack Mate, President of the Walking Horse Trainers Association, the decision may cripple the Walking Horse Industry.

Those trainers, breeders and show people of the Tennessee Walking Horse and other breeds of the horse in Northern Kentucky have also been greatly affected and possess strong opinions on the subject.

Brace-like chains, used to train and to enhance the front action and strength, weighing more than six ounces have been

banned by the court ruling. Pads, used to absorb and reduce the shock of the action, if more than two inches high have also been banned.

According to an interview in a copy righted story in the Lexington Herald Leader, pads have been as high as four inches and have been used by some to contain small hidden objects such as nails or chemical irritants commonly known in this area as "mudstap".

Gerald Hammons, principal at Nicholas County Elementary and breeder/showman of walking horses thinks that the charges being made are unfounded.

"I do recognize that there are those that try to work outside the rules, however, at the Designated Qualified People Shows there is a qualified person in the horse field present to thoroughly examine each participant and determine if the horse is fully able to stay among the participants," he said.

Hammons commended further, "I really don't see any difference between the horse at the Three Day Event in Lexington in the Great Country

division jumping almost six foot jumps, jumps over bridges or into water or even Thoroughbreds running at top speed for a mile and a quarter.

"Walking horses are bred and trained for what they do just as all these others are trained for their special events."

Hammons also added that other breeds also wear pads to train and to show.

"There are race horses, and Saddlebred all wear pads for training and showing, and will also be affected by this ruling," he said.

Hammons specified the cost of the ruling will measure much further than a cost to the pride of breeders and fans but a monetary cost to Kentucky, Tennessee and all surrounding areas that have a vested interest in the Walking Horse.

A statement released by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture said, "This order threatens grave economic damage to an industry which generates many millions of dollars in Tennessee and numerous other states."

Although the decision was based on a study conducted at Auburn University, the proposed department of agriculture said the court's finding "is contrary to veterinary research."

R.J. Doyle, a trainer based in Hartsville, County with a well known stable of walking horses said, "Trainers have been trying everywhere so to what exactly will be the end result but I have heard that the Judge (Oliver Gatch) recently found that he has been greatly misled as to the circumstances and also did not realize how many would be affected as to such a ruling."

Doyle continued to say, "I personally believe they do have a law to uphold ruling."

"Why doesn't the government come in and check these horses?"

"I also feel that if there was a regulatory commission, the people that acted as a scenario would cut the people out they did not want to have compete in and let the ones they wanted in and that would be most unfair," Doyle continued.

Doyle also suspects there will be some hearing in two to three weeks that will make any decision clear.

At the other end of the spectrum, animal rights activist, a proponent of the movement to remove restrictions, appeared before Lexington Tennessee's Board of Animal Regulation to state in accounts of nails being driven into the hooves of horse and their front legs "sore" with searing chemicals to make them perform.

Stephanie Greene, head of the Tennessee Walking Horse Protection League said, "The industry is self-policing is a fact, the fact guarding the chicken coop."

In agreement with the animal rights activists is known Nicholas County horsewoman, breeder and exhibitor, Len Miller.

Miller said, "I do believe there is nothing greater than a walking horse's four beat walk, but I think that this ruling is the best thing to happen to the industry in ages."

"I think it is fantastic, the fact that the industry is keeping the horse natural because I have always believed that putting those huge pads and keeping their feet as long as exactly like putting high heels on an athlete and asking him to jump hurdles. It is just not natural," she said.

"I have sponsored and run horse shows involving 4-H and elsewhere and have seen the nails to show, but mustard and steel wool amored on the legs that started as a gimmick and evolved into a cruel practice that is accepted."

However, I do recognize there are good trainers and the few that train is for everybody," concluded Miller.

Representative Jim Cooper, Democrat of Tennessee, urged walking horse people to accept the changes and suggested a compromise of two inch pads.

Cooper also advised the industry to fund its own study to justify the use of larger pads, restate and urge closer self-policing methods.

Meanwhile, the annual show at Northern State University has been established and the Tennessee Walking Horse Celebration held in Shelbyville in late summer is in danger of the same fate.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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## Faul wants .....

**Continued from Page 1**

\* Accepted bids from Ed Jefferson and Jackie Handolph of \$25 to do backhoe work for the city on the new water line. Council agreed the work would be split evenly.

\* Accepted the low bid from Proctor Blair, CPA, of \$3900 to perform the city audit.

\* Approved a request from Dublin Hughes on behalf of the Carlisle Community Women's Club to allow a clean-up project on Main Street. Watson told Hughes she would have to check with Nicholas County Fiscal Court concerning any such improvements on the courthouse side of Main Street.

\* Approved a request from the American Legion for use of the streets for the Blackberry Festival, July 4th. John Trapp of the Legion told council Kentucky State Police would offer patrol, during the event.

\* Tabbed a motion concerning purchase of computer equipment for city use. The item will appear on the agenda of a special meeting set for April 25, beginning at 7:30 p.m. The special session will also include budget discussion.

## Nicholas Fiscal ..

**Continued from Page 1**

Brandice presented a Japanese brand bulldozer manufactured in Chattanooga, Tennessee, a 1984, 220-hp, 220-hp power, in rental status with 1800 hours work, located in Midlothian, full trade power warranty until October 20 with a \$154,000 trade difference with a proposed payment plan of five years, twice yearly at percent.

John Sullivan, representing Wayne Supply Company, presented a D-7H Caterpillar, with capacity if a cab is wanted it will have to be installed by the buyer).

Finally, the court looked into finishing a road across from the former Blue Star Nursery at the request of Charles Law.

Court adjourned for a month break.

## Meyer joins Mercury staff

Barbara Meyer, 24, a 1986 graduate of Murray State University, has joined the staff of The Carlisle Mercury, effective April 11, 1988.

Meyer will hold the position of director of marketing and promotion and will coordinate sales areas within the newspaper.

In addition, she will take part in the overall planning of the marketing programs of The Carlisle Mercury and the Lewis County News-Advertiser.

She most recently was employed by McAlpine as assistant fashion and promotion director for the Lexington store.

At Murray, she obtained a B.A. Degree in radio-television with emphasis in public relations and promomotion-vertising.

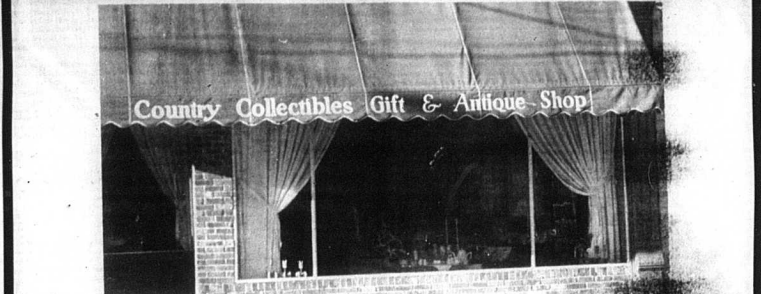
While at Murray she was a member of the Murray State News Staff (the college newspaper), serving one year in sales, and one year in production and layout.

In college she was a member of the student government body, editor of Creative Expression Bulletin for two years, and vice president and vice



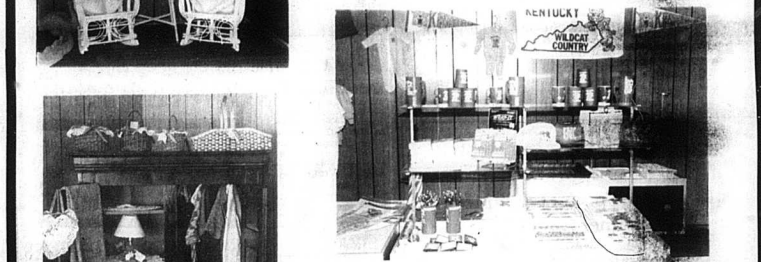
# Saturday, April 16

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