

# The Instructor Voice

A Special Interest Newsletter

VOLUME 7 • NUMBER 1

## 2007 NARHA Annual Meeting certification programs overview

By Patti Coyle, NARHA Certification Oversight Committee Chair



**G**reetings from the NARHA Certification Oversight Committee! We have had an incredibly productive year and are excited to share some of the highlights of this past year's accomplishments. The Certification Subcommittees (Riding, Driving, Interactive Vaulting, Equine Specialist and AHA

Task Force) will report on their respective accomplishments in this publication.

NARHA Certification Oversight Committee, a subcommittee of the NARHA Standards Committee, supervises the development and implementation of programs that train and certify individuals who provide equine assisted activities at various levels and in various disciplines. The committee ensures that the certification process accurately reflects the NARHA standards and code of ethics across the disciplines. The committee is comprised of individuals who represent the various disciplines where NARHA offers or is developing certification. The members have a significant and unique opportunity to share knowledge and expertise across these disciplines.

One of the objectives of the NARHA certification process is to assist in creating a viable profession for individuals in various disciplines while fostering safe and effective equine assisted activities and therapies in an atmosphere of respect and consideration for the horse.

### A year at a glance

- More than 3,100 instructor members
- 48 Registered on-site workshop and certifications (OSWC)
- 636 individuals participated in the workshops
- 467 participated in the certification portion and 80% passed. This is a 5% increase over the previous year
- Two members obtained Master Level Instructor status
- NARHA's six ATC centers held a total of nine instructor training courses
- Three Driving on-site certifications
- Four advanced on-site certification
- Two Interactive Vaulting Workshops
- Five Equine Specialist Workshops

We look forward to another very busy year with new events and programs being offered. Please refer to calendar on the NARHA website at [www.narha.org](http://www.narha.org) for upcoming events.

### In this issue...

Mentor training and continuing education .....	2
Changes in certification .....	3
Therapeutic driving .....	5
Master level update .....	6
Interactive vaulting .....	7



## NARHA Certification Committees

### Certification Oversight Committee

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Lorrie Renker  
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### Equine Specialist

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## 2008

### Interactive Vaulting Workshops

February 19–21, Windrush Farm Therapeutic Equitation, MA  
June 12–14, Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center, WA  
September 5–7, Special Equestrians, ME

### Interactive Vaulting Instructor Certifications

February 22–23, Windrush Farm Therapeutic Equitation, MA  
June 15–16, Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center, WA

To register please contact Sddita Fradette or Jaime Covington at NARHA for a workshop and/or certification application booklet. (800) 369-7433, ext. 114 or email sfradette@narha.org or jcovington@narha.org. Spaces will be filled on a first come, first served basis from complete applications only.

## Mentor training in fall 2008

Instructors who mentor others play a very important role in the success and professionalism of our industry. Practice teaching hours (working with a mentor) are a required component in the registered level certification. However, until now there has been no formal training to assist instructors in developing the specialized skills that are necessary to become effective mentors. Recently NARHA outlined a mentor training course to enhance mentoring skills.

The course is designed to help instructors understand and clarify the role of the mentor. As mentors, individuals need to possess highly developed skills in observation, self reflection and objectivity to provide appropriate, accurate and effective feedback. The training will address ways to offer effective written and oral communication and feedback. Additionally, mentors will learn to provide constructive feedback to peers in order to help them enhance skills in a variety of areas.

The mentor training course will be available to all who mentor instructors-in-training and their peers. In order to make the course accessible to the largest number of people, the training will be provided at state, regional and national conferences, and at volunteer host centers. An outline of the training has been completed and is waiting on final approval. The mentor training course will be available in the fall of 2008.

## NARHA Registered On-site Workshop—continuing education for certified instructors

If you are a NARHA certified instructor, and have not completed the NARHA Registered level On-site Workshop you can attend this workshop and apply the hours listed below, depending on your level of participation, toward your annual continuing education requirement. This is a great opportunity if you were certified many years ago through the NARHA video process. A certified instructor may use this workshop as continuing education only once.

### Hours accepted for different levels of participation

Host center employees or volunteers who have organized and run the workshop/certification but have not attended all components of the workshop, may not count hours.

Fifteen hours: Participant has attended entire registered instructor on-site workshop and obtained copy of certificate of participation from faculty.

Up to ten hours: Participant has audited the workshop and attended all components. Participant may count the exact number of hours for that component toward continuing education. For example, if a person attends the entire tack and equipment (45 minutes) and disabilities sections of the workshop (three hours), they may count three-and-three-quarters hours for continuing education.

NARHA encourages all certified instructors to attend the new registered on-site workshops when they are available.

# Future changes to NARHA Registered level Instructor Certification process

by the NARHA Riding Certification Subcommittee

The certification oversight committee and the riding certification subcommittee presented information regarding the future changes to the NARHA registered level instructor certification process at the NARHA National Conference and Annual Meeting in November 2007. As expected, many people had questions about the changes. The following information should help everyone to understand the changes and why they will be put into effect.

## New timeline

Although we announced tentative implementation dates at the conference, we are now developing a new timeline that will allow everyone more preparation for the changes. The changes will be introduced throughout 2008 and implemented in 2009. There will also be a transition period after the changes have been implemented so that anyone who is in the process will have a grace period in which to complete their certification as it was when they started. This extended timeframe will ensure that NARHA has properly prepared the faculty/evaluators, host sites and the entire membership for this important format change. NARHA will be sure to com-

municate the changes and absolute effective date (via email, *NARHA News*, *STRIDES*, and future *Instructor Voice* issues) well before they are put into effect

## A brief history

Originally, the on-site workshop was set up as a review to prepare for the certification; therefore it only touched on each area. As time went on, more and more candidates expected the workshop to provide them with everything they needed to know to become certified. Many candidates, with this expectation, were not successful. At this point, the process was divided into two phases. Completion of Phase I was required before candidates became eligible to attend the certification portion (Phase II) of the registered on-site certification.

The addition of the self-study course and the rest of Phase I increased the pass rate; but there was still room for improvement in order to increase the passing rate and preparedness of candidates. After much discussion and review, the NARHA certification committees and NARHA staff concluded that education and certification should be separated. This would better provide for the needs of all certification candidates and

potential candidates with ample opportunity for mentoring and preparation for certification.

## Addressing members' concerns

### *Learn first; then test*

Separating the education from the certification process will provide a more relaxed atmosphere for learning at the workshop. Candidates need not be so stressed about their certification during the workshop that they miss out on valuable content and the expert instruction by the faculty.

### *Training accessible at more and smaller sites*

Separating the workshop from the certification will provide opportunities for the smaller programs to host the registered on-site workshop (OSW). Many smaller programs do not have the resources (horses, tack, volunteers or students) to host the on-site certification (OSC), but they may be able to host a workshop and fulfill the requirements. This will give candidates more choices of where to go for the registered OSW. They may be able to save money by driving rather than flying and by staying at home or with friends rather than paying for a hotel.

### *Help contain travel costs*

Travel costs to attend only a registered OSC will decrease because candidates may only have to travel to the on-site certification. The on-site certification is only one-to-two days, resulting less time away from home and fewer travel expenses for the candidate.

### *Help smaller sites find or develop trained instructors*

Of great benefit to smaller centers is that they will be able to host a registered OSW themselves, if approved, and not have to send their candidates to other sites to attend both a workshop and later, a On-site Certification. Hosting a registered OSW will provide opportunities to network within the industry and within the NARHA community.

### *Support professionalism*

As part of a growing profession, our instructors and centers need the oppor-

*Continued on page 5.*

## Congratulations Karen Abbott: 2007 NARHA Instructor of the Year

Karen Abbott is the head instructor of SIRE, Houston's Therapeutic Equestrian Center where she has served for 19 years. Many people consider her to be the top expert in developing programs for special needs riders in the Houston area. Karen has a unique ability to work with a group, while individualizing the achievements of each rider. Within one riding class there is a person with mild mental impairment, a young man with severe cerebral palsy, a girl with a severe cognitive impairment and an autistic student.

"In addition to her teaching gifts," wrote a parent, "I have observed Karen's planning and leadership skills in many of the Special Olympic events from which my son has received such joy." In a letter about Karen's 18 years of work with her son Judith Ann Hunter wrote: "It is often difficult to discern what part a person may have had in Nathaniel's long, conflicted journey towards healing. In Karen's case there is no doubt. He let her into that place within himself where few others have ever been, and the result has been astounding."



# Therapeutic Driving

by Tina Bennett

**H**ave you ever wondered what it would be like to have no cars, buses or trains? What it felt like to live in the times of our great grand-parents, utilizing the horse and carriage for daily travel? Have you ever thought of driving through the woods, or going cross-country to enjoy the sights and sounds of the outdoors? Therapeutic driving is a fast growing sport that includes activities related to carriage driving.

Centers affiliated with NARHA can offer students with physical, mental, sensory, or emotional conditions the rewards of interaction and control of a horse or pony while driving from a carriage seat or in their own wheelchair. For some individuals with certain disabilities therapeutic driving is more suitable than riding. For instance, if someone uses a wheelchair, they can drive from a wheelchair accessible carriage or transfer to a carriage with modifications adapted to meet their specific needs. Using a horse and carriage gives participants an alternative or an addition to riding—opening up the world of horses to those who may be unable to ride due to weight, balance, fatigue, fear of heights, the inability to sit astride or other issues. While there are differences, driving can offer many of the same benefits as riding, such as improved: self-esteem, balance, coordination, postural control and social skills.

Therapeutic driving is all about imparting knowledge of safety, horses, harnessing and driving skills to children and adults with disabilities. It takes a team of three to five volunteers to make one driving turn out! Drivers with disabilities who are interested in competing are welcome at mainstream carriage driving competitions, such as pleasure driving and combined driving events, where they compete on equal footing with the able bodied competitors. To gain knowledge of safe driving, seek out a specially trained driving instructor who can help you discover the ways of the horse. There are different types of vehicles that can be

used in driving, for example: a two-wheeled carts or four wheeled carriage. There are different types of harnesses, but the primary function of the harness is to attach the horse to the cart or carriage. Learn driving skills in a fenced-in arena, cross-country (drive out in the woods or down the road), cones courses (driving between a set of cones), show classes (to drive in a class at a show and be judged on your driving and horse skills). There is also pleasure driving.

Therapeutic driving offers many choices. Not only do the students learn driving skills, they also are taught all aspects of horsemanship. Participants can groom and harness a horse, practice reinsmanship on a rein board, learn the parts of the harness, its function and placement on the horse, learn breeds of horses, parts of the horse, equine health, nutrition and horse behavior.

Students may be trained in ground driving and how to hitch a horse to a vehicle, noticing how each cart or carriage has a different ride and movement.

Experiential learning occurs in how the movement can affect you and the horse, and by practicing how to balance a two-wheel cart just by moving yourself forward or backward. Once in the vehicle the participants are taught reinsmanship (halt and walk on and turning), then progress to walk, free-walk, trot and working trot. From there, skills include how to complete the rein-back, circles, figure eights, serpentine and progress to driven obstacle courses, a simple pattern and a fun cones course. Discover NARHA therapeutic driving programs. NARHA certifies 15-25 new driving instructors every year. To find out more go to [www.narha.org](http://www.narha.org) and look for therapeutic driving.

Tina Bennett currently serves on the NARHA Driving Certification Subcommittee and is a NARHA Lead Faculty/Evaluator for NARHA Driving Workshop and Certification. Tina can be reached at: [bennettmapleview@aol.com](mailto:bennettmapleview@aol.com).  
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## Congratulations Tom Cramer: 2007 NARHA Sis Gould Driving Recognition Award winner

If you can't find bank auditor Tom Cramer, he might be fixing the tractor at Heartland Equine Therapeutic Riding Academy (HETRA). Tom has been a NARHA certified registered level riding instructor and a certified driving level I instructor since 2004. He is HETRA's first and only driving instructor, serving at two facilities in the Omaha NE area. Tom's driving students range from one who is capable of using the second set of reins correctly to a nonverbal student whose hands tend to flap. Tom is currently writing a manual to train volunteers and driving instructors-in-training.

Tom is loved and admired by everybody. People remark about his dedication to safety and his generous community work. He's in the annual three-hour trail ride, in the ring at the Little Britches Horse Show and has chaired the annual open house at the Valley facility. Tom participates in combined driving competitions and pleasure drives. Doug Wolfson, father of a mostly nonverbal youngster writes, "It is wonderful to see Avi enjoy his activities. He looks forward all week to his Wednesday night driving with Tom."



## Future changes *Continued from page 3.*

tunity and will to put in the time and money required to become educated and then certified. The registered OSW is a great, one-time-only opportunity, for all current certified instructors to use the OSW for continuing education hours. (see highlighted box)

### The new registered on-site workshop

The improved workshop has been designed in response to comments received from past registered OSW participant evaluations. We've added time where participants felt rushed and added segments where participants desired more information. This new workshop format will offer a broader base of information for candidates to take home and practice in their daily lessons. By doing so, candidates will improve the quality of instruction they offer their riders and increase their potential for passing the on-site certification.

The new, enhanced workshop will be longer and can be run in a two-day format (ten to ten-and-one-half hours/day) or in a two-and-one-half-day format. All

host sites and faculty will be required to adhere to new format policy regarding scheduling.

### The longer workshop will

Address common areas of weakness seen during the registered on-site certification

Provide more education and hands-on practice, which is commonly requested or recommended in the workshop participant evaluation forms

Require participants to bring and submit completed activities from the Instructor Self-study Course that has to be completed in Phase I

### Changes in the new format

#### 1. Basic horsemanship

A new Horsemanship Self-study Course, available on-line, will be a pre-requisite for taking the workshop.

#### 2. Riding skills

The participants will observe and evaluate videos of pass/fail riding demonstrations. Each participant will bring a self-photo demonstrating proper posture and alignment (This is

an activity from the prerequisite Instructor Self-study Course in Phase I). Registered on-site workshop faculty will demonstrate a riding lesson and will refer to the criteria during the lesson.

#### 3. Teaching

The participants will observe and evaluate videos of teaching. As the faculty teaches the riding lessons they will refer to specific teaching techniques. There will be three role playing lessons instead of two.

#### 4. Mounting/dismounting

The group will observe a mounting/dismounting video during lunch. There will be two full hours in which participants will practice mounts/dismounts and be introduced to different mount/dismount techniques.

We invite your comments. Please feel free to send comments, concerns and suggestions, not addressed in this article to Sddita Fradette, NARHA Manager of Certification, at [sfradette@narha.org](mailto:sfradette@narha.org).

## The 2008 NARHA driving certification process change

Effective January 1, 2008, the format for completing the NARHA driving instructor certification process is changing to reflect the separation of education from certification. The new format includes a three-day NARHA driving workshop and a two-day NARHA driving instructor certification. The workshop is a prerequisite for certification and will be valid for two years. The workshop and certification can be completed consecutively; although NARHA highly recommends that they be completed at different times. Only the workshop may be audited.

Would you like to become a NARHA certified driving instructor?

The NARHA certified driving instructor must be able to demonstrate the ability to drive a variety of horses and different vehicles, over a variety of terrains. A candidate has to demonstrate

thorough knowledge of driving skills, driving instruction and the ability to safely direct a driving program. A candidate has to demonstrate skills to supervise others as volunteers and assistants in a driving lesson. A candidate must receive passing evaluation at a NARHA driving instructor certification and must meet the criteria at a level I or II.

To apply for a NARHA driving certification, candidates must meet all criteria detailed in the NARHA Driving Certification Candidate Application Booklet available from NARHA.

### 2008 NARHA Driving Workshops

April 21–23, Florida Carriage Museum & Resort, Weirsdale, FL  
August 22–24, Horsepower, Temple, NH

### 2008 NARHA Driving Instructor Certifications

April 24–25, Florida Carriage Museum & Resort, Weirsdale, FL  
August 25–26, Horsepower, Temple, NH

### How to register

Contact Sddita Fradette or Jaime Covington at NARHA for a workshop and/or certification application booklet. (800) 369-7433, ext. 114 or email [sfradette@narha.org](mailto:sfradette@narha.org) or [jcovington@narha.org](mailto:jcovington@narha.org). Spaces will be filled on a first come, first served basis from complete applications only.

### Continuing education for experienced certified driving instructors

You can now take the NARHA driving workshop as a refresher. The NARHA driving certification subcommittee encourages all NARHA certified driving instructors at level I or II to complete the newly enhanced NARHA driving workshop. The new format allows you to audit or participate in the workshop only — a great way to update, review and refresh your skills.

# New NARHA interactive vaulting instructor certification program

by the NARHA Interactive Vaulting Certification Subcommittee

**N**ARHA is embarking on an exciting new certification program in 2008—NARHA interactive vaulting certification program. This program will expand the number of specialty instructor certification programs available to NARHA members and enhance the opportunities for expansion of programs offered at centers. Beginning in 2008



NARHA members will now have the opportunity to become certified in the specialty area of interactive vaulting. NARHA and the interactive vaulting certification subcommittee have designed an extensive certification program that includes a three-day Interactive Vaulting Workshop and a two-day Interactive Vaulting Certification.

The application booklets for NARHA events/programs are available for download by clicking on the link for the event or by emailing Sddita Fradette at [sfradette@narha.org](mailto:sfradette@narha.org) or Jaime Covington at [jcovington@narha.org](mailto:jcovington@narha.org).

## What is interactive vaulting?

Interactive vaulting is an activity in which the students perform movements on and around the horse. These movements can be very simple, such as sitting without holding on to the surcingle, or a more elaborate compulsory move such as kneeling or standing on the horse. It all depends on the individual needs of the vaulter.

## Benefits

Interactive vaulting is a group activity for individuals who are ambulatory and cognitively capable of following directions. This describes a large group of students who come to NARHA centers. Individuals with learning disabilities, ADHD, or social weaknesses, are just

some of the individuals who can potentially benefit from participation in interactive vaulting. Interactive vaulting is an activity that provides an energetic atmosphere, develops the students' awareness of the horse and themselves.

## Benefits for participants

Fosters teamwork, teaches respect for the horse, fosters independence builds confidence, enhances social interaction, offers individualized instruction while mounted and introduces all gaits in short period of time.

## Benefits for centers

Serve more participants with one horse, requires few or no volunteers, provides another program opportunity for participants, reduces burnout of participants, instructors and horses.

## Getting started

Please refer to the "NARHA Interactive Vaulting Specialty Standards" in the most current version of the NARHA Standards and Accreditation Manual. These detailed standards address some of the most important safety concerns for interactive vaulting, in addition to providing information about what is needed to start a NARHA Interactive Vaulting program.

If you or are interested for yourself or on behalf of your center, plan to attend one of NARHA's Interactive Vaulting Workshops. The three 3-day workshops teach you the basics and introduce you to the skills you need to become a successful interactive vaulting instructor. Please refer to the NARHA calendar on the NARHA website ([www.narha.org](http://www.narha.org)). Search for

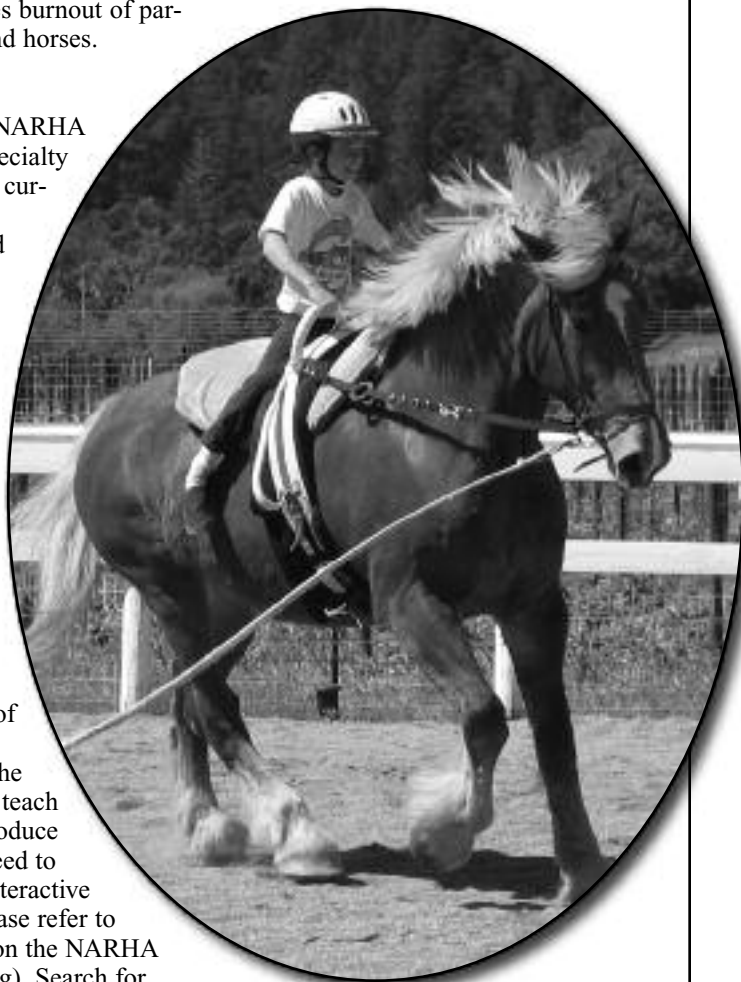
NARHA interactive vaulting events.

## Interactive Vaulting Workshop

The NARHA Interactive Vaulting Workshop includes the basics of interactive vaulting. Activities include proper lungeing\* technique and appropriate tack, ground exercises, barrel work and group oriented activities both on and off the horse.

## Daily workshop activity:

- Interactive vaulting lessons and activities
- Lungeing\*
- Horse and equipment needs overview
- Practice for participants on skills introduced at the workshop



### To participate in the NARHA Interactive Vaulting Workshop

- You must be at least 21 years of age or older
- You must be a current NARHA member
- You must complete and submit a NARHA interactive vaulting workshop application

### Interactive Vaulting Certification

The purpose of the certification is to determine if a candidate possesses the professionalism, experience and skill level to meet the NARHA interactive vaulting instructor criteria. Criteria which outline the skills and knowledge an instructor must possess in order to achieve certification as a NARHA interactive vaulting instructor are published in the *Interactive Vaulting Certification Application Booklet*, available from NARHA.

### To Apply

- You must be a current NARHA certi-

fied riding instructor (Registered, Advanced or Master level)

- You must be at least 21 years of age
- You must complete a NARHA Interactive Vaulting Workshop
- Workshop must be within two years of application submission date, and cannot be completed consecutively with certification
- You must have completed minimum a of 50 practice hours including: 50 total hours (May not count hours twice; for example teaching hours cannot be counted for lungeing hours), 20 hours teaching interactive vaulting, 30 hours lungeing
- You must complete and submit the NARHA Interactive Vaulting Instructor Application

### The On-site Certification

The lungeing component—candidates will be assigned one horse to demonstrate a five-minute warm up and a ten-minute lungeing component. Candidates will take a five-minute oral exam. The compulsories component—

candidates will be asked to teach compulsories to a volunteer vaulter for 15 minutes on barrel followed by five minutes to demonstrate compulsories themselves. The interactive vaulting instruction component—candidates will be asked to teach a 20-minute interactive vaulting lesson.

If you have questions or wish to request a copy of the *NARHA Interactive Vaulting Certification Application Booklet* please contact Sddita Fradette at NARHA (800) 369-7433, ext. 114 or email [sfradette@narha.org](mailto:sfradette@narha.org)

We look forward to working with you as you progress toward your NARHA interactive vaulting instructor certification.

*\*NARHA acknowledges that both spellings "lungeing" and "longeing" are correct and used in the literature when discussing work of the horse on a circle. NARHA uses the spelling "lungeing" in all documents.*

## NARHA master level certification update

The *NARHA Master Level Certification application booklet* has been updated and revised. It will be available by the end of February through the NARHA office. The major components include: A portfolio (resume and documentation: evidence of service to NARHA, supporting documentation of commitment to NARHA, evidence of instruction, evidence of professional development and scholarship, mentoring and personal riding skills), a take-home exam and an oral exam.

The evidence of instruction includes documentation of a minimum of four years of involvement with a NARHA center and a minimum of 400 hours of teaching therapeutic horsemanship. Two case reports (one rider with physical disability, one with a cognitive disability) and a lesson progression for an able bodied student (video and written analysis) will also be included as evidence of instruction.

As evidence of professional development and scholarship, candidates

will need evidence of published or presented material, professional activities and achievement and professional development activities. Future professionals goals must be identified as well.

A minimum of 120 hours of mentoring will be required as evidenced by a minimum of two letters of reference by those who have been mentored by the candidate. Methods of mentoring may include: mentoring candidates who are preparing for the registered or advanced level certification, serving as a faculty member for a registered on-site, serving as a faculty member at an approved training course, serving as a faculty member at a college that offers therapeutic horsemanship coursework or mentoring instructional staff at a NARHA member center.

Personal riding skills will be demonstrated through a video of personal riding skills (past or present) at a minimum of skills identified in the master criteria. Candidates must show

that they have an understanding of an additional discipline outside the primary discipline as evidenced by workshops, lessons, training, horse shows or competitions. Additional documentation may include riding proficiency documented by a national organization such as the USDF, Pony Club, ARIA, and/or USA Equestrian. Successful competition experience at the recognized show level and a recommendation by a NARHA Master Level Instructor who is an Advanced Level Evaluator—may also serve as supporting documentation.

Please be aware that additional components or documents may be requested at any time throughout the process.

### 2008 Master Level Process Deadlines

Bliss Brown Scholarship Application: May 30, 2008  
Intent to Submit Master Application Letter: May 30, 2008  
Master Portfolio/Application Submission: July 1, 2008

# EQUINE FACILITATED MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

## Equine Specialist Workshop

### SKILLS FOR WORKING WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS AND THEIR CLIENTS

#### COLORADO

Pikes Peak TRC, CO – June 6–8

#### MISSISSIPPI

MSU 4-H Team, MS – July 16–18

#### TEXAS

R.O.C.K., TX – August 5–7

#### NORTH CAROLINA

St. Andrews Presbyterian College, NC – October 10–12

#### Focus of Training:

- The specific role of the equine specialist when assisting or collaborating with human service providers
- Designing safe, mutually beneficial and effective activities to enhance participant outcomes
- Determining specific horse handling methods
- Understanding students with mental health and/or learning issues
- Assessing the horse's response to student behaviors and needs

- Assisting qualified participants to prepare for the NARHA equine specialist certification once available.

#### Training is designed for:

- Equine professionals
- Therapeutic riding instructors
- Those who wish to enhance their abilities to work with mental health and education professionals and their clients.

**Cost:** \$450 EFMHA Members, \$525 Non-EFMHA Members (The Non-Member fee includes a one year membership to NARHA and EFMHA.) Includes materials, lunches and a snack for the three days.

**Contact:** Sddita Fradette or Jaime Covington at the NARHA office for questions or to register for the workshop. Please email [sfradette@narha.org](mailto:sfradette@narha.org) or [jcovington@narha.org](mailto:jcovington@narha.org)



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