

Freedom Farm top-notch equestrian venue

BABY, IT'S COLD outside.

Chilly, misting, frosty — all describe the crisp air inside Freedom Farm's covered arena during Sequim High School equestrian team's practice Monday evening.

While riders and horses circled, loped and practiced maneuvers, their warm breaths created an eerie haze in the cool air, their chauffeurs — myself and other parents — were happily viewing the practice through a window inside a heated room.

In my opinion, Freedom Farm's covered arena is the envy of almost every horse owner in our region.

Its entrance looks like modern log cabin; its well-built arena is large, wide and long.

Mary and her staff specialize in hunter/jumper and dressage, with a focus on Natural Horsemanship techniques.

Lesson horses are available, with lessons offered to both adults and youth.

The team would like to shout out a gigantic "thank you" to Freedom Farm's owners, **Mary Gallagher** and her husband, **Jerry Schmidt**, for allowing them to practice in their facility.

Hoof Beats

Hoof Beats is their after-school club for teens.

Those in Hoof Beats often relish having their own "project horse," a rescued horse retrained, rehabilitated and offered for sale to good homes.

In addition to running the farm, Jerry recently added an outdoor arena for working cows, plus he is certified in Natural Hoof Care and Balance Equine Dentistry.

Oh, and horse owners can haul-in to use the facilities for a fee.

For more information, phone 360-457-4897 or go

PENINSULA HORSEPLAY

Karen Griffiths



online to www.freedomfarms.net.

Water works

DeDe Mulligan reports the **Jen Verharen** clinic for today has been canceled because

of the weather.

DeDe and I are on the same page when we say we see "so many horses that are living on the edge" or in frail health because of the lack of clean water and/or feeding on poor quality hay.

Please check water buckets and troughs twice a day to ensure the water hasn't frozen and are full of clean water.

No one, livestock included, likes to drink dirty water.

A lack of good water can lead to impaction and colic.

Keep in mind it takes more energy to live outside when it's cold, so please feed quality hay or alfalfa and supplements if you can.

Flood damage has created a severe crisis for many area horse owners.

I feel for the many whose pastures have flooded.

As the waters recede, residents are returning to find that their winter's supply of hay and grain destroyed by the rushing water.

I know hay prices are high, but throw out moldy and/or rotten hay, because it can kill your horse.

In last Sunday's *Peninsula Daily News*, a story was published about Clallam Bay's Hull family horses needing to be rescued when their lives were endangered by chest-high cold waters.

Read the story and how they were helped by a state trooper and Department of



KAREN GRIFFITHS/FOR PENINSULA DAILY NEWS

Sequim High School equestrian team members Lucas Martins, left, Brooke Stromberg, Jessica Holmberg, Tori Cantelow, Shannon Robbins and Conner Ackley practice inside Freedom Farm's covered arena Monday evening. Sequim and Port Angeles equestrian teams will attend their first Washington State High School Equestrian Team division competition in Spanaway on Feb. 6 to 8. Not shown are Cody Chase, Ashley Priddy, Clara Duncan and Mishel Arthur.

Transportation workers online at <http://www.patternedspeedhorse.com/Archive>.

Thankfully, I've had no problem with flooding.

However, I think my situation is similar to many who despise having to pick up muck in the mud.

Mud management

Several years ago, I learned and applied mud management techniques through a seminar taught by **Alayne Blickle**, owner of Horses for Clean Water.

I'm sorry to say I haven't done a good job of maintaining the area.

Thankfully, my drainage ditches around our property,

horse shelter and arenas are still working well.

I'd laid a geotextile fabric and crushed gravel over that so they aren't sinking in mud. Next summer, I'll do a major overhaul of gravel.

Until then, I'm laying down fresh straw (and picking up the old) to help soak up moisture and to provide a clean walkway so they're bringing less muck inside the shelters.

My horses can walk 500 feet down the pasture hill to a sand-based arena.

This time of year they just prefer staying at the top of the hill in their shelters.

I am making sure they have clean water, and during freezing weather, I use a stock tank deicer.

Filling the water these days involves hooking up hose to fill tank, unhooking and then draining the hose of water.

If I'm lax, I end up bringing the hose inside the house and running warm water in my shower to thaw it out.

It's a pain, yeah, but a necessity to ensure my horse's tummies feel good after drinking.

Cold weather woes

Did you know horses can also die from hypothermia?

Please make sure they have shelters to go under if they chose.

Keep an eye out to see if your animal is shivering. If so, brush and blanket it and

find a way to get its body temperature back to normal.

Remember to brush your animal's back during and after rainfall to reduce the chance of rain rot.

Matted hair inhibits air circulation and the animal's ability to keep itself warm.

Karen Griffiths' column Peninsula Horseplay appears every other Wednesday.

If you have a horse event, clinic or seminar you would like listed, please e-mail Griffiths at horseplay.kbg@olympus.net at least two weeks in advance.

You can also write Griffiths at PDN, P.O. Box 1330, Port Angeles, WA 98362.