

## SJCHC 2016 Ride and Dine Clinicians

**Ginger Leggett-DuPont's** love for horses began as far back as she can remember. She started riding hunter jumpers as young teen and cleaned stalls, in exchange for lessons at a local horse farm. Her first influence was Jackie Rough, an instructor with a keen eye for correct equitation, something that influenced her riding and teaching from the start. During that time, she met her lifelong best friend and teaching partner, Michelle McGee, Jackie's daughter. Another great influence to her riding and training was Gary Bailey, a true horse whisperer, who shared his insight about the way to train from the horse's perspective. Ginger and her husband, William DuPont, operate Topline Training, with the mission to use natural horsemanship methods to train horses for traditional applications. They are full time trainers at Cyndy and Mike Burton's facility in Hastings. Ginger understands that equestrians are life long learners, that horses and people have different personalities that influence their way of learning, and it is important to identify what teaching method works best for the horse and rider. Ginger works with horses and students in many different disciplines, from hunter jumpers to reined cow horses. She believes you should truly love what you do in order to do it to the best of your ability, and she does just that every day, working with her horses and students.

**Michelle McGee** has ridden horses her entire life. Most of her riding has been on hunter jumpers but she has dabbled in other equestrian sports. Her show career started at the age of 3 in walk/trot classes. She has taken many horses from the ground up, and also had the opportunity to ride some very nice schooled horses. However, Michelle feels you never stop learning or know it all. She believes riding is a partnership between horse and rider and therefore each combination is unique in its own way, and having the proper foundation is essential to success. If riders skip steps or have poor equitation, they can be a huge hindrance to the training and development of their horses. To quote Michelle, "I have learned some of my most valuable knowledge from a horse."

**Tina Sommer** is a dynamic horsewoman with more than thirty years of equine experience in multiple disciplines. Her equine journey began on the Connecticut shoreline where she grew up riding and competing. She recognized that being an equestrian was a lifestyle and a relationship between the horse and rider. For Tina, relationships proved a primary element in becoming a successful a rider, trainer, teacher and life-long student. Under the tutelage of Julie Shepard of White Wood Farm in Killingworth, Connecticut, Tina began to merge the principles of Classical Dressage from the Spanish Riding School and the methods of Maestro Nuno Oliveira, Hunter Seat, Eventing, and Natural Horsemanship under the mastery of Buck Brannaman and Pat Parelli. Tina knew that she must incorporate these disciplines to become more effective as a teacher, rider, and trainer. What she promotes as being the most important factor in riding is the riders' relationship with their horses. In essence – it's all about relationship foundation building with your horse to truly be a successful horseman.

**Beverly Foster** is certified as a Level 1 instructor in Colleen Kelly Rider Biomechanics: a seat and balance approach to riding for the optimal performance, health, and safety of both rider and horse. Check out the link at [colleenkellyriderbiomechanics.com](http://colleenkellyriderbiomechanics.com) . Beverly has been on the SJCHC Executive Board for 10 years, and is on the Administrative Board of the International Society of Rider Biomechanics based in Lexington, KY. She has been involved with Gaited Horses for 20+ years as an owner and advocate for reform in the Tennessee Walking Horse world to abolish cruel training practices, and educate people new to the Gaited breeds regarding correct tack, riding, and handling, dispelling commonly held myths and giving insight into the horses' point of view. The clinic is an up-beat, fun way to learn through student participation in demos and simulations to show how much proper balance matters in what goes wrong, and what goes right while riding in any discipline, with any breed.