

**RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION (NSW)  
RAYMOND TERRACE & LOWER HUNTER CENTRE**

# Newsletter April 2012

Volume 4, 2012



#### Important Dates:

- Monthly Meeting  
21 May - All Welcome
- National Volunteer Week  
14 - 20 May
- RDANSW AGM 5 May  
at RDA Ryde Centre

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## Planning Day Outcomes by Malcolm Storey

It was disappointing that such a small group got together at the Centre on Sunday 15 April for our Annual Planning Day, particularly since it had been deferred a couple of times to try and have a day that was suitable to as many people as possible. However, in many ways a small group fostered free and open communication and all present were quite pleased with what we were able to achieve.

The day started with a review of the previous two planning days, with a quick decision being made that this year we would focus entirely on the what those present saw as the Centre's most pressing and immediate issues. After a brief brainstorming session, an intimidating list of 15 issues emerged. As it was simply not possible to deal with such a large and wide ranging list of issues in one day a democratic process then led to the identification of four major issues. There was also agreement that we would come up with a process of how to deal with the remaining issues during the coming months. The four issues selected were:

### 1. Permanent Location

There is a need to look at extending the lease we currently have with Hunter Water which expires in 2018, as well as securing on a long term basis additional land, such as the back paddock, which we current only have access to on an agistment basis.

Another major issue is the impending Kingshill development which will be immediately adjacent to our northern and western boundaries. The Management Committee has been given the task of investigating our current legal situation, determining the likely cost impacts on the Centre of a large housing estate being developed on our boundaries, and then commencing negotiations with all parties.

### 2. On-site supervision

This issue was felt pressing, as those present commented on a growing uneasiness about the perceived lack of day to day management of operations at the Centre. This was felt in large part to be due to no-one taking on the role of maintenance manager, in association with the employment of a caretaker who has full-time off-site employment. The Management Committee has been given a number of tasks to try and overcome the current difficulties:

- Renegotiate a contract with the Caretaker that more directly addresses the issues of managing the Centre's assets given her personal situation.
- Attempt to recruit a volunteer willing to take on a maintenance manager role

# Planning Day Outcomes cont'd

- Communicate better with all volunteers about the roles and limitations of Centre office holders

## 3. Volunteers

Recruitment and retention of volunteers is a problem that plagues all large volunteer based organisations and certainly provoked a lot of suggestions during our planning day. To better manage the discussion this issue was broken into three parts:

**a. Coaches** – while our traditional recruitment of coaches will continue to be through the training of volunteers willing to take this role on, it is recognised that other approaches are necessary. One approach will be for the Volunteer Coordinator to adopt an initiative successfully trialled in another Centre of using Joblink to provide “funded” volunteers. The Coaches meetings will also be asked to take a stronger role in devising and implementing volunteer support initiatives.

**b. Volunteer retention** – the Management Committee will take a more hands-on approach in communicating Centre issues with volunteers and parents. Some of the issues to be highlighted will be the fabulous contribution of volunteers to the development of our riders, the benefits of abiding by our code of conduct and how opportunities for volunteers to get involved in a wider range of Centre activities.

**c. Volunteer involvement** – If the Centre is to continue to be a financially viable organisation there is a need to interest a wider group of volunteers. This can be done by moving beyond assisting in riding sessions by getting involved in a wider range of Centre activities. One of the main activities that should be driving the Centre is participation at our monthly meetings. In an endeavour to create greater interest in these meetings the planning meeting proposed a change in focus from day-to-day management issues to gathering ideas for the future direction of the Centre. The starting point is to be the discussion and development of the 15 ideas put forward at the planning meeting but for which there was insufficient time to discuss.

Another approach will be to develop a second wish list. We currently have a wish list for items the Centre needs and the planning meeting recommended a second wish list of tasks or roles that could be taken on. For example, it was thought beneficial for every Centre officer holder could have an assistant.

## 4. Fundraising/Publicity

There is an urgent need for the Centre to find people willing to take on these two roles. There is no need for prior experience just an outgoing personality, perhaps a gift of the gab, but mainly just a willingness to help.

The Centre is facing the dual problems of a reducing funding base and increased costs. The planning meeting talked about the need to review our traditional fundraising activities to see if they could be expanded, what new approaches we could take, how we could get greater assistance from our riders' families and a greater connection with local businesses.

There was considerable support for the idea of having a two tiered “Friends of RDA” scheme aimed at corporates and individuals. The planning meeting thought that this would be a good concept that the revised monthly meetings could take on and turn into practice.

Those present at the planning day look forward to the coming months when these ideas get put into practice.



# Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on Monday 23 April 2012 in Murphy's Room at the Raymond Terrace and Lower Hunter Centre. The purpose of the Annual General Meeting was to consider any outstanding matters from the 2011 AGM and the elections of our Office Bearers for 2012.

Office Bearers and Centre Position Holders take on a variety of roles that ensures the successful operation of our Centre.

It is with great pleasure that the following RDA Members were elected to listen to our rider, driver and volunteer needs, and lead us into a new and rewarding year:

<i>Position</i>	<i>Holder</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Holder</i>
President	Roly Taylor	Driving Coord (RT)	George Sinclair
Vice President 1	Gerard Murphy	Driving Coord (Stroud)	Rosemary Laing
Vice President 2	To be Confirmed	Newsletter Editor	Veronica Caban
Treasurer	Jan Sharp	Parents'/Carers' Rep	Terry Dalmazzo
Horse Manager	Isabel Taylor	Workplace Health	Trevor Bullen
Volunteer Coord	Judy Edwards	Building Officer	Gerard Murphy
Monthly Minutes	To be Confirmed	Share-A-Horse Coord	Trevor & Michelle Bullen
Mgt Committee Minutes	Judy Edwards	Dressage Coordinator	Isabel Taylor
Riders' Rep	Michelle Dalmazzo		

Unfortunately, a number of positions received no nominations and were left vacant at the meeting. All Centre Positions are vital for the successful operations of our Centre. For a number of years, if positions have not been filled, members of the Management Committee have been responsible for the additional workload to ensure that important tasks are completed.

To change this situation for the future, it was identified at our recent Planning Day that the Management Committee needs support to effectively manage the Centre. For this to be achieved, RDA needs willing people to go beyond helping in the programs and step up to this exciting opportunity. We are looking for enthusiastic people who are interested in improving the Centre and the services we offer to people with a disability across the Hunter Region.

If you would like to take on a position, assist someone in their position or simply take on small jobs to help, please contact Vicki in the office on (02) 4987 1402.

The following positions are currently available and help is needed for 2012:

Fundraising Coordinator	Finance Officer
Coaching Coordinator	Secretary
Fundraising Events	Website
Publicity Officer	Competition Events Coordinator



## Updated and New Emails Needed to Receive Newsletter and Centre Updates

If you wish to receive regular newsletters and updates by email, please let Jack Henry know at [myjac@bigpond.com](mailto:myjac@bigpond.com). Alternatively, if you wish to be removed from our emailing list or have changed your email address, please send Jack an email.

Jack Henry kindly sends out our newsletters, and group emails regarding our Centre, on behalf of RDA. Please support him by contacting him directly with any email address changes you may have.

## 2012 Royal Easter Show Mounted Games by Veronica Caban

This year we had three riders competing at the 2012 Royal Easter Show Mounted Games. Sharni Thompson and Daniel Burns competing in the walk events, while Jordan Brown competed in the trot events.

Aria and Wedge were washed on Wednesday with help from Ellie, before travelling to Sydney with Wendy and Merryll. Both settled well into their stalls, until the fireworks went off. Then they got a bit upset, but settled soon as it was over, unlike other horses down there.

After what seemed to be a very short sleep, we were up at 5.30am to start the day. We kicked off by feeding the horses and started the long process of plating Wedge's mane and tail. After this, glitter hair spray was added to

both horses to help make them sparkle.



Jordan Brown, Aria, Wendy Murray, Daniel Burns, Wedge and Sharni Thompson

Once competition started, Daniel was on Aria. After riding wonderfully, he ended up getting equal first. Shanie rode Wedge, who thought he was a youngster again. Unfortunately, Wedge played up in the keyhole event, and cantered in the barrels. In doing so, Sharni was disqualified in those events, ending up with 6th place.

Wedge didn't win best presented, but looked so nice I think he should have, not being biased at all.

Jordan rode Aria in the trot section ending up with 2nd place. Aria performed beautifully.

In the Horse of the Year competition, Jordan was the disabled rider on Aria, and Ellie was the abled body rider. In the end, Aria didn't win. However, all three riders and both Wedge and Aria did RT&LH proud.

*Photos Kindly Provided by Veronica Caban*



**Please support RDA Raymond Terrace and Lower Hunter Centre by keeping your contact details up to date. If you are an experienced volunteer, rider or parent/carer, who has moved or changed their details, please inform Vicki in the office when you are next at RDA, by email at [raymondterrace@rdansw.org.au](mailto:raymondterrace@rdansw.org.au) or give her a call on (02) 4987 1402.**

**If you change your details throughout the year, please remember to let us know.**

## A Tribute to Pecos by Wendy Murray

On Tuesday 20 March, Pecos went quietly to sleep. At nearly 34 years old, she had become very tired. She had been retired for over six years, but had served our RDA very, very well for nine years before that.

During her time at RDA, Pecos travelled all the way to Noosa, where Michelle Bergfels rode her at the RDA National Dressage Championships and won a Gold Medal. She travelled to Werribee, where Francis Winhleman did very well on her.

Pecos had a number of trips to the NSW State Dressage Championships, with Vicki Gaunt as her rider, winning many places and State Champion in Grade 3. She also won a number of RDA Horse Competition at the Sydney Royal Easter Show.

In between these events, Pecos was a gentle and reliable horse with our less abled riders. She gave many hours of pleasure to many of our riders.

I miss her impatient whinny each morning when I go to feed my horses.



## Companion Credit Union Charity Golf Day



Companion Credit Union is holding a Charity Golf Day on 18 May 2012 at the Crowne Plaza Hunter Valley Golf and Country Club at Lovedale.

With Companion Credit Union's association with RDA during the last few years, RDA's valued members are invited to join them for a great day.

Companion is dedicated to Variety's Vision for Life by raising the \$25,000 required to purchase and install a telemedicine system in Maitland Hospital; this system will cover both lower and upper Hunter areas.

To achieve this goal, Companion Credit Union are seeking sponsorship, prize donations and general player registrations which will contribute to the purchase of this life saving equipment.

For more information, download the flyer from the website at [www.rdaraymondterrace.org.au](http://www.rdaraymondterrace.org.au) on the Upcoming Events page.

## National Volunteer Week 14-20 May

"National Volunteer Week ... is the largest celebration of volunteers and volunteerism in Australia, and provides an opportunity to highlight the role of volunteers in our communities and to say thank you to the more than 6.1 million Australians who volunteer.

Australian volunteers are essential to society, and many charities would struggle to survive without the support of their volunteers. Australian volunteers contribute more than 700 million hours of community service to so many areas of society, including community health care, heritage and arts, environment conservation, emergency services, education, social justice and sports. NVW provides a platform to pay tribute to these volunteers who donate their time and energy to help others.

National Volunteer Week ... begins the Monday after Mothers Day in May each year - 14th to 20th May 2012." This year's theme is 'Volunteers - Every One Counts'.

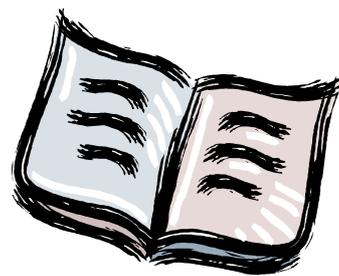
Source: Quoted from <http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org.au/News-and-Events/-National-Volunteer-Week.asp>



## New Newsletter Editor

At the AGM, Veronica Caban was elected to become the Centre's Newsletter Editor. Veronica will be undertaking future newsletters, and to assist her it would be appreciated if people could send their newsletter submissions to her at [tcaban@bigpond.net.au](mailto:tcaban@bigpond.net.au).

We would like to wish Veronica all the best in her new role, and look forward to reading her first newsletter in May!



## Debbie Simons - A Journey From Rider to Coach by Jan Sharp

Debbie commenced riding at RDA Raymond Terrace & Lower Hunter Centre in 1998, after suffering incomplete paraplegia in 1992. It was whilst in rehabilitation that Debbie first learnt about RDA and the great benefit that it gave to people with her condition. As she had ridden as a youngster, she determined that this was something that, not only would she enjoy, but that it would give her the therapy, both physically as well as mentally to get well.

According to doctors at this time, Debbie was not expected to ever be able to walk again – however, they did not appreciate the determination of the then 23 year old. Not only did Debbie walk again, she learned to ride horses in the discipline of Dressage. When asked if she would like to become a coach, she jumped at the opportunity and gained her coaching accreditation with RDA in 2004 – being the first rider to gain a coaching certificate at this Centre. It was with the help of her coach, and the amazing horses at RDA, that she realised she could achieve whatever she wanted to do.

For the past seven years, Debbie, as a coach, has been instilling that same determination and confidence, to the riders under her care, by not only teaching them the fundamentals of riding, but by her presence. She gives them a living example of what can be achieved and the realisation that ....“You Can Do It”.

Debbie's list of successes is quite impressive. From the first time she competed in a Dressage test approx. 1996 (taking out 1st place); to competing at the 2001 Masters Games, where she won medals - two Gold and one Silver. During the intervening years, Debbie was no stranger to RDA competitions, both Regional as well as State. 1998 saw her again winning two 1st and two 2nd places at RDA State Dressage, riding Monty, and in the following year, she held her own against able bodied (non RDA) riders in Open Competition, on Pluto and in 2001, on Tanman. At State competition in 2000, she won four 2nd places again on Pluto and in 2001, riding Tanman, she placed 1st and 3rd.

Debbie, since beginning with RDA RT&LH Centre, has been a shining example of the benefits of riding and all things equine and her commitment to RDA has been demonstrated in her ongoing devotion in passing onto people with disabilities of all ages – her expertise and the love of horses. In her own words ... “Just seeing the smiles on their faces is more rewarding than anything”. Amazing words from a lady who has had many “rewards” in her own riding career with RDA.

Debbie's story does not end here - she and her partner, Stewart, are now the proud parents of two beautiful little girls, six and two years of age. She is now back where she belongs – coaching children and young people in our Thursday riding program, bringing to a whole new generation of riders, the thrill of riding at RDA.

# RDANSW State Coaching Workshop & Date Change to Lungeing Workshop

**Attention All Coaches:** Please register for the State Coaching Workshop to be held at Ryde on Sat 5 and Sun 6 May. Registrations forms available from the office – although you should have a copy on email. RT&LH supports coaches attending.

Please note in your diary that the Lunging Workshop, with Presenter Mrs Noel Moore from Manning Great Lakes Centre, will no longer be held as part of the State Workshop. The Lunging Workshop will now be held on Sunday 17 June.



This is open to all people in region interested in Lungeing - to get the RDA Lungeing a Horse Accreditation you do not need to be a coach, simply an experienced horse person. To gain the Lungeing and RDA rider qualification you need to be an RDA Coach. Notify Vicki in office if you wish to attend and she will give you a flier with more information about the day (when it is developed).

## Hippotherapy Accreditation Course at RT&LH



Hippotherapy is a form of physical and occupational therapy in which a therapist uses the movements of a horse to provide carefully graded motor and sensory input. A foundation is established to improve neurological function and sensory processing, to improve a wide range of daily activities.

To increase the opportunities for riders across NSW to be able take part in this specialised activity, the RT&LH Centre is hosting a Hippotherapy Accreditation Course from 27 - 29 July. The course is designed for Hippotherapist and Hippotherapy Horse Handler Accreditation streams.

### Hippotherapy at RT&LH

Specialists presenters will be attending to give expert training: Pippa Hodge (distinguished Canadian Physio-

therapist & Hippotherapy practitioner) and Sally Francis (renowned Hippotherapy Horse Handler and Trainer from VIC)

A full information pack can be downloaded from our website at [www.rdaraymondterrace.org.au](http://www.rdaraymondterrace.org.au) on our Upcoming Events page. This pack includes costs, accommodation options, schedule of events, forms and information on how to become a Hippotherapist and Hippotherapy Horse Handler.

Please note: There are limited places in the both course streams. Places are awarded on a first come first serve basis, so get in early to secure your place.

If you aren't interested in attending the course, but would like to support this remarkable training program, perhaps you could offer to bake a slice, help with lunches/tea/coffee on one of the three days, help with preparation? Help from our Volunteer Team will result in a professionally run training program that will showcase our Centre as one of high renown.

For more information contact Jan Sharp at [jan.sharp@rdansw.org.au](mailto:jan.sharp@rdansw.org.au), phone on (02) 4982 2932 or via the office on (02) 4987 1402.

# Calendar of Events

The below information is subject to change, and is accurate (as provided) at time of publication.

Event	Date	Captain
Bunnings Belmont BBQ Fundraiser 1	29 April	George Sinclair
Management Committee Meeting	1 May	Roly Taylor
RDANSW AGM	5 May	RDA Ryde
RDANSW State Coaching Workshop	5 & 6 May	RDA Ryde
Bunnings Belmont BBQ Fundraiser 2	6 May	George Sinclair
National Volunteer Week	14-20 May	Judy Edwards
Monthly Meeting (All Welcome)	21 May at 7pm	Roly Taylor

## Shirts & Caps for Sale



The Centre has a number of shirts and hats left over from last year, and they are being offered to all riders, volunteers, parents and/or carers to purchase for a \$15 donation to the Centre for each item. All money raised will be used to operate our therapeutic riding, driving and hippotherapy programs.

The shirts come in male and female styles and have a screen printed RDA logo with the words Raymond Terrace Lower Hunter underneath.

The caps have an embroidered RDA logo and a white peak trim, and are great to have in your bag for those impromptu outdoor trail rides.

Please contact Vicki in the office Mon-Thurs only from 9am-2pm to make arrangements.

## Get Your Entertainment Book & Save

The new Entertainment Book is only \$60, and you'll receive \$15,000 worth of valuable offers, valid until 1 June 2013 for restaurants, cafes, grocery shopping, movies, kids holiday entertainment and more. The good news is that \$12 of your Book purchase goes towards our Centre's fund-raising!

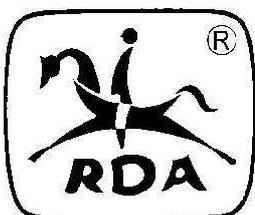
You can browse the book online by visiting

[www.entertainmentbook.com.au/about/tell-me-more/newcastle](http://www.entertainmentbook.com.au/about/tell-me-more/newcastle).

This year, we can accept credit card payments by special arrangement.

To order and pay for your book via Entertainment Publications' secure website, visit <https://www.entertainmentbook.com.au/orderbooks/324j18>

To order your copy, for cash, written credit card option or direct deposit payments, of the new 2012 | 2013 Entertainment™ Book contact Jude Oliver by email at [judeoliver@iprimus.com.au](mailto:judeoliver@iprimus.com.au).



Riding for the Disabled Association (NSW) Raymond Terrace & Lower Hunter Centre  
3219 Pacific Highway, Raymond Terrace  
PO Box 624, Raymond Terrace NSW 2324  
Phone (02) 4987 1402  
Fax (02) 4987 1434  
Email: [raymondterrace@rdansw.org.au](mailto:raymondterrace@rdansw.org.au)  
Website: [www.rdaraymondterrace.org.au](http://www.rdaraymondterrace.org.au)