



**The Woodstock Chamber of Commerce and High Horses Therapeutic Riding Program
Present**

THE 2020 VIRTUAL WASSAIL HORSE AND CARRIAGE PARADE

Order of Appearances...

ANTIONETTE MATLINS

- Parade Grand Marshal and founder of the Wassail Parade, Antoinette Matlins of Woodstock, VT is driving with Chip Kendal, owner of Kedron Valley Stables. She is wearing a vintage 19th century ensemble with a very warm antique beaver-skin muff as well! They wish everyone a very Merry Christmas!

HIGH HORSES THERAPEUTIC RIDING PROGRAM

- High Horses Therapeutic Riding Program has been organizing Woodstock's annual Wassail Horse and Carriage Parade since 2012. Our banner is carried in the parade every year by staff and volunteers. Founded in 1993, the mission of High Horses is to improve the well-being of people with unique needs through a therapeutic equine experience. Located in Sharon, VT High Horses is a registered 501©3 non-profit and a PATH International Premier Accredited Center. Thank you to all for joining us in virtual celebration of Wassail this year!

ELAINE MORRISON

- Elaine Morrison of Windy Port Farm in Canaan, NH astride her Haflinger mare, Suzie. Both are dressed for the season's festivities and send glad tidings to all from Windy Port Farm!

GAYLE SMITH

- Gayle Smith featured on Worthy, a Morgan gelding and member of the High Horses herd.

AURELIA AND LORELEI JUSCZYK

- From Wilmot, NH, Aurelia is four and her sister Lorelei is two. They are featured on their 24yo QH pony, Katty Girl. The girls have been coming to the event every year of their life, and were a little sad to miss it this year, but are SUPER EXCITED to create an entry!

JULIA KEATING

- Julia Keating and friends featured on Mac, a Connemara gelding and member of the High Horses herd.

CAROL WOOD

- Carol Wood and her horse Otello from Middlebury, VT are so excited to participate in the virtual parade this year!

NORTH COUNTRY HOUNDS

- For more than 30 years, North Country Hounds has enjoyed live hunting on horseback on Vermont and New Hampshire. Our 35-40 members and any number of guests and cappers ride twice a week, Wednesdays and Sundays, only on property where we have permission from landowners, and we hunt fox and coyote. We thank each and every landowner who opens property to us and/or to horseback riding in general. We are the only live hunt in New England and we never kill anything – we're not the blood sport as in Great Britain. We chase game on their front yards – they're way ahead of us which provides us with great riding. Some foxes are well known for running through our horses to confuse and cause good fun. Our jumps have go-arounds and we always host a second field for anyone new to hunting, or trying out a horse new to hunting, or simply wanting a walk/trot pace. Based in several locations throughout its history, North Country Hounds is looking for a new location for kennels and hounds. These pictures cover much of our history and we're pleased to have been featured in Image magazine and the Vermont Standard. AS NCH or as individuals, we've been in the Wassail parade several times and appreciate this opportunity to participate in 2020. Look us up on Facebook.

SHAUN PICKETT

- Shaun Pickett featured on Cavo, a Friesian gelding and member of the High Horses herd.

LARRY EDMONDS

- Larry Edmonds featured on Worthy, a Morgan gelding and member of the High Horses herd.

JOANNA FRODIN

- Joanna Frodin featured on Worthy, a Morgan gelding and member of the High Horses herd.

DORSET EQUINE RESCUE

- From the Dorset Equine Rescue in Dorset, VT are Addilynn Cimonetti riding Quarter Horse Tess, Sierra Seidler riding Appaloosa Quarter Horse Chico, and Dylan Collins riding Painted Quarter Horse Sadie. These ladies and their rescue horses have decorated with ruby red and gold tinsel, bows, and vibrant leg wraps to represent their theme, "Holiday Cheer".

HANNAH KIERSTEAD

- Hannah Kierstead of Canaan, NH rides her 24yo Tennessee walking horse gelding, Warrior's Legend. All decked out in emerald green and gold, with a few touches of frosty white, Hannah is wearing a long green dress and top hat fit for Victorian times.

LYNN BRALEY

- Lynn Braley of Canaan, NH is riding sidesaddle on her faithful 18yo gelding Spooner, adorned for the season in Victorian attire. In a year filled with uncertainty and challenge, we are thankful and happy to ride in our 21st consecutive Wassail Parade! Although Virtual this year, we are delighted to spread Christmas spirit and holiday joy far and wide from our farm in Canaan, NH to all of you. We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and all good things in the New Year.

TIMOTHY AND SHARON BUTTERFIELD

- The Butterfields of Hartland, VT first participated in the Wassail Parade over thirty years ago and have continued their participation for many years. Timothy and Sharon are featured with their horses and sleighs for the 2020 Wassail Parade: with Warmbloods – Bertie, Darcy, Adam, and Jack – four-in-hand put to a Rob Work Sleigh; with Dutch Harness Horse named Dexter put to a Portland Cutter; and with Shetland Pony cross named Aunt Toni put to a Portland Cutter.

DENISE AYERS

- Denise Ayers featured on Cavo, a Friesian gelding and member of the High Horses herd.

SUE KENNEY

- Sue Kenney featured on Dixie, a Percheron/Welsh Pony cross mare and member of the High Horses herd. Dixie was voted the PATH Region 1 Horse of the Year in 2019.

CAROLINE HEINBUCH

- Caroline Heinbuch, Facility and Equine Manager at High Horses, festively featured on her own hunter/jumper Dexter, a seven-year-old Czech Warmblood gelding.

HORSE HUGGERS 4-H

- The Horse Huggers 4-H Club present to you “The Nutcracker” in Cornish, NH. Featured are Wendy Barros and Squirrel the mini mule as the Sugar Plum Fairy, Olivia Turney with Butterbean and Gemma the mini horses as Soldiers, Ethan Drye on foot as a Soldier with a musical horn, Jason Drye and Ciderhouse Jack the Arab/TB horse as a Soldier, Melissa Drye and Finesse the Arab/TB/Clyde horse as a Soldier, Samantha Bedell and Bhreagh the Irish Sporthorse as a soldier, Hannah Foston and Fox the Quarter Horse as a soldier, Kren Jameson and Hemi the Irish Sporthorse as Clara, and Olivia Jameson and Hawkeye the Morgan horse as The Rat King.

HAILEY DOW

- Hailey Dow, age 11, from North Pomfret, VT is featured spreading Christmas cheer in braids and bows with her horses Gates – a 5yo Paint/Draft cross mare, Lucy – an 18yo Morgan/Percheron cross mare, and Hallie – an 18yo pony of the Americas mare.

DIANA HUNTLEY

- Diana Huntley LPN, is an instructor with High Horses, featured here with Smudge, a Gypsy Vanner horse and member of the High Horses herd.

BROOKE AND SADIE ROWLEE

- Sadie Rowlee, age 8, leads Stormy, a Haflinger, in holiday attire. Brooke Rowlee, age 10, leads her sister Sadie on Stormy, in holiday attire.

JULIE ANN OTIS

- Julie Ann Otis, Development Manager at High Horses, featured with Sierra, a Dutch Warmblood mare and member of the High Horses herd. Wishing Good Health and Good Cheer to all this winter season!

SUE MILLER

- For the 2020 Virtual Wassail Parade, Sue Miller, Program Director and advanced instructor at High Horses, is featured wearing a festive red and plaid Victorian ensemble with a bonnet, riding Misure Luminous Ophelia (Opie), her Morgan horse. And in memory of her beloved Morgan gelding, Sue is featured with Misure Derring-do (Sparky) riding in the snow with a beautiful Victorian snowflake costume in 2019. Wishing all a happy holiday season, peace, love and kindness!

HIGHLAND FARMS

- At Highland Farms in South Royalton, VT, walking in a greatcoat and top hat is Susan Sellew, as well as Diane Andrews, and on horseback are Hailey Dow on Gus, Jen Hewitt on Charlie, Thomas Lamson on Bud, Payton Hewitt on Rocky, Lexi Hewitt on Bubbles, Adriane on Skippy, Morgan Labombard on Toby, and Chloe Labombard on Bo, Ellen Bonner on Apollo, Libby Potter on Cisco with Katherine Roe walking beside them, and Kelly Cyr on Aude. Video and photography provided by Sally Carpenter and Gael Cantlin.

HAYLEY SWEENEY

- Hayley Sweeney and her mother Lindsey, of Tunbridge, VT featured with their horse Sammi, a Norwegian Fjord Horse and member of the High Horses herd.

ADALINE MALONE

- Adaline Malone featured on Sammi, a Norwegian Fjord Horse and member of the High Horses herd.

SHARON STEARNS

- Five Meadows Farm LLC in Brandon, VT brought Sharon Stearns on the VT Morgan horse, Many One Sir Malibu Sunset to the parade with Rachel Contois, Shayla Frain, and Melinda Rose as escorts.

JANICE WIGHTMAN

- Janice Wightman rides her 12yo Percheron/Draft cross mare named Georgia, a gentle giant and “Snow Queen” in this year’s parade. Janice has only owned Georgia since September 2020, and she is IN LOVE with her fantastic looking girl.

DEE GOULDING

- Dee Goulding featured on Sierra, a Dutch Warmblood mare and member of the High Horses herd.

ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE

- Happy Holibrays from the Road to Independence, a 501(c)(3) non-profit for individuals with physical and mental challenges, located in Goshen, NH! This year, the organization is represented by a group of their participants from Visions for Creative Housing Solutions, volunteers, and of course, donkeys! The farm's donkeys range in age from 12 to 28 years old, and have festively decorated basket saddles, packsaddles, and carts. The Wassail Parade is the highlight of the year.

BILLINGS FARM AND MUSEUM

- The Billings Farm and Museum in Woodstock, VT is delighted to represent a Victorian Christmas with the Percheron horse brothers 7-year-old Luke and 8-year-old Lonnie, and Amy Deom, Billings Farm teamster. Joining them on the wagon to spread Christmas cheer far and wide is Santa himself!

BILL LUTH

- On the chance that there might be some virtual horse droppings in this year's Wassail Parade, Bill Luth, legendary Wassail Parade rollerblading pooper scooper of over three decades, is here to help!

Thank you all for coming to the virtual parade! We hope to see you in person in 2021!

If you've enjoyed the parade today, we hope you will consider a gift to High Horses this holiday season. And please remember to support your local small-town businesses, neighbors, and community partners.

Have a safe, healthy and happy New Year!



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501(c)(3) and PATH Intl Premier Accredited Center.

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Remembering the First Woodstock Wassail Horse and Carriage Parade

By Antoinette Matlins, Parade Founder | December, 2018



Having begun in December 1985 (two years after the Woodstock Wassail celebration itself began) this year marks the 34th anniversary of the Wassail Horse & Carriage Parade, which is now ranked as one of the top winter events in New England. Coordinated by High Horses Therapeutic Riding Program and the Woodstock Chamber of Commerce, this year's parade will take place on Saturday, December 8, at 2PM, with the parade winding through Woodstock and around the Village Green.

In anticipation of this year's parade, in light of many people now asking to know more about how the parade started, I was asked to tell the story of how it all began. So here it is:

My husband, Stuart, and I had moved to South Woodstock, Vermont, in the summer of 1984. That winter, my sister was visiting from England, and we'd read in the *Vermont Standard* about a "Wassail Weekend" at which there would be the lighting of a Yule Log and caroling, beginning at 4:30 pm. Thinking it would be great fun, we headed into Woodstock to be part of it, deciding to go into Woodstock early to do some holiday shopping first. As we arrived, we noticed a large stack of logs, so we knew exactly where we needed to be at 4:30!

At around 4:20 we headed out to take part, and noticed the logs were gone! As more and more people arrived, asking where it was taking place, we noticed the sheriff sitting in his car and went to ask, learning that people from the Chamber had taken them away ... because, according to them, it was scheduled to start *at 4:00 pm*, so they thought no one was showing up!

When we pointed out that the local paper had said it would begin at 4:30, and that's why people were just beginning to show up, we were told there were no logs now, and no one to lead it, so it was too late. Just then, a car pulled up, filled with children, asking where it was taking place. At that moment, I cut off the sheriff and told both the driver and the sheriff that it would be starting a few minutes late, but just to park his car and return to the little "triangle" where Elm Street came into Central Street. Then I asked my sister (who had a wonderful voice and loved to sing) to start the caroling with those folks who had started to gather, and Stuart went into Gillingham's to buy the only logs he could find – "STERNO LOGS" – and I went into all the stores to let people know the caroling and lighting of the Yule log was about to take place; I have no doubt that at that moment I was probably the most hated person in Woodstock among the merchants, pulling customers out of the stores, 40 minutes before they closed, on the last Saturday before Christmas!

But we did it...I joined my sister in leading the singing, my husband lit the Yule log and gave a brief historical explanation about what it symbolized, and people shared memories of wonderful "past" Holidays. Everyone left feeling "the Holiday Spirit"!

Some weeks later, having heard how disappointed I had been with the lack of organization surrounding the event, I received a call asking if I could attend a Chamber of Commerce meeting at which the

decision was going to be made as to whether to continue the Wassail Weekend. I pointed out that I thought it would be a mistake to dis-continue it, but it needed to be re-organized as a real “community event,” *supported* by the Chamber, and expanded to include other events that could involve the entire community in making it something special and meaningful.

I remember saying that when one thinks of “the holidays,” the first image that comes to mind is of Currier & Ives cards, and paintings of horse-drawn sleighs and carriages, and songs like “Over the River and Through The Woods,” and the idea instantly entered my mind: we could have a “horse and carriage parade, with people in vintage costumes, which I thought would draw all the local people and visitors as well. I suggested that we should also see if the local churches and other organizations would like to do something special during the same weekend, using the Wassail Parade as the centerpiece, but adding other interesting events taking place over the weekend.

The Chamber agreed enthusiastically, but only if I would agree to take charge of organizing it. I agreed, but immediately reached out to my neighbors, who were also part of the horse-community in South Woodstock (home of the Green Mountain Horse Association), including Paul Kendall, Dinah and Steve Rojek, and Robin Groves. We all met, and the excitement was contagious. With their help, the word got out and more people joined our committee and before we knew it, a parade took shape.

We had about 50 entries signed up for the first parade, along with Bill Luth – our official “pooper scooper”! The parade was scheduled to begin at 4:30 pm. Then, as fate would have it, it SNOWED about 12 inches the night before and into the morning. We feared no one would be able to get to Woodstock for the parade. Then, the snow miraculously stopped before noon, and Jack Lord, the Billings Farm manager – where the parade assembled during the early days – cleared the way for the horse trailers to get into Billings Farm! Simultaneously, residents along the parade route began to remove snow from the sidewalks and Village Green so there would be room for spectators! It was a truly amazing outpouring of community help that made that first parade possible, and 35-40 entries showed up, from distances as far as 45 miles away. But the snow wasn’t the only challenge. The snow stopped, but the temps began to plummet!

The Rojeks brought an RV from which to make and serve hot cider, coffee, tea and soup to try to help us keep warm. Also, there were no awards given back then. We just did it for the fun of it.

My most unforgettable moment of that first parade is not known by most people. I was so busy helping others get ready that when I finally emerged from the Rojek’s trailer wearing my period side-saddle ensemble (I always ride side-saddle), I found the parking lot empty save for my horse tied to the trailer waiting patiently. The PARADE HAD LEFT WITHOUT ME, and I had no way to get onto my horse and atop my side-saddle alone! Fortunately, Bob Lord was still there and came to my rescue, after which I took off at a gallop, with my side-saddle skirt blowing in the wind behind me, but I caught up to the rest of the parade at the iron bridge going into town.

The jingling of the bells around the horses’ necks, the sounding of the “horns” announcing our arrival, and the clippity-clopping of horses’ hooves, made it a magical event, but there really wasn’t enough light. We were all carrying flashlights fashioned to look like little candles. However, at minus-4 degrees (the temperature by the time the parade began) it didn’t take long for the flashlights to go out, one by one. It was bitter cold and the wind was whipping. We went several times around the Green and then into the Woodstock Inn where they set out hot cider for the riders and carrots and apples for the horses. We had no “marshals” to keep the crowds at bay and the tourists walked right up to the horses, and

began petting them and feeding them carrots. But, everything went off without a disaster! However, it should come as no surprise that after that first year, we held the parade during the daylight hours ... and we have had “parade marshals” to manage the crowds ever since!

I’ve been asked why I always ride side-saddle. The answer is simple. I learned to ride side-saddle as a girl, from my grandmother, and I really don’t feel comfortable riding astride. My grandmother had two work horses, in Virginia, and a side saddle. She would put the saddle on “Mandy” and showed me how to sit and what to do, and stressed the importance of always keeping my shoulders parallel to the horse’s shoulders, to avoid getting thrown out of the saddle! I have always found it easier and safer than riding astride...and if you think about it, side-saddles were designed to keep the lady *safe* in the saddle!

Over the years, the Wassail Parade has had its share of challenges. Participants have braved heavy snow, pouring rain, frigid temperatures and one of the worst ice-storms in 20 years. It is definitely not for the “sunshine rider.” The time and energy involved in grooming the horses and preparing the costumes and decorations, as well as facing difficult weather conditions, make it a challenge for the horses as well as the riders. Both are to be commended.

We also had a “Sharing & Caring” wagon because it was decided at the very first meeting that the parade be a wonderful opportunity to help less fortunate families have a more joyful Holiday too. Paul drove a large wagon to the green, which stood on the Green all day long, manned by the Boy Scouts, throughout the day. People brought bags of groceries, and/or pre-wrapped presents labeled “boy” or “girl” (with the respective age of the recipient indicated on the outside). Others, just passing by, donated money. All the gifts and money were distributed to the needy. Over the years it became more and more difficult to find people willing to decorate the wagon and be there to accept the gifts, and enthusiasm waned. It was taken over briefly by other groups but in the past couple years there have been people on the Green collecting money for the Woodstock/Reading/Plymouth Food shelves. But it may be worth reintroducing the Sharing & Caring Wagon for the 35th anniversary, next year.

The Green Mountain Horse Association has encouraged the parade to grow over the years while the Woodstock Chamber of Commerce has developed an event-packed Wassail Weekend, making it a destination for locals and visitors from all around the world.

To sum it up, the parade is more than a parade; it has brought together an entire community—the churches and synagogue, the fraternal organizations, merchants, Pentangle, the Woodstock Historical Society, Billings Farm, schools, 4-H and Scouts—everyone united in helping create special events, and a special feeling, in which everyone experiences warm hospitality and camaraderie and finds what the true meaning of “the spirit of the season”!