

Fall 2007

A CRES

Innovative Country Living

Autumn Gold,
page 16

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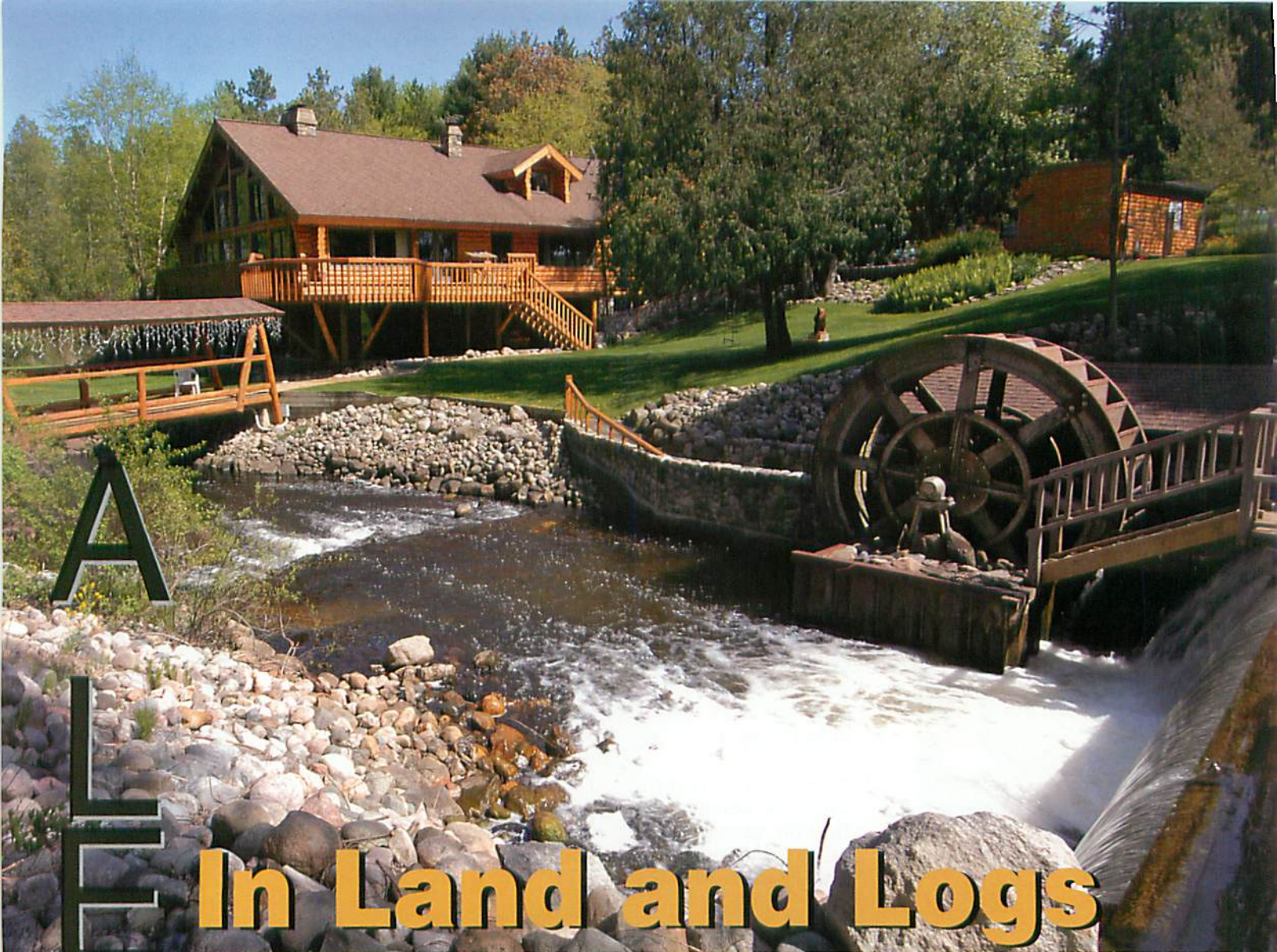
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Six-year old Avryana Goplin has found her treasure in The Perfect Pumpkin Patch. See article, page 16. Photo by Rick Mooney

Managing Editor: Dawn Fox • Editor: Gary Martin • Design: Toby Buckley



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In Land and Logs



A Ride To Remember



Cinderella had it right: when a young lady wants to be noticed above her peers, she travels in a horse drawn carriage.

Three weddings took place in Greenport, Long Island, in New York, on the same day, on the same street, and at the same hour, but only one of those brides was seen on the front page of the next day's newspaper.

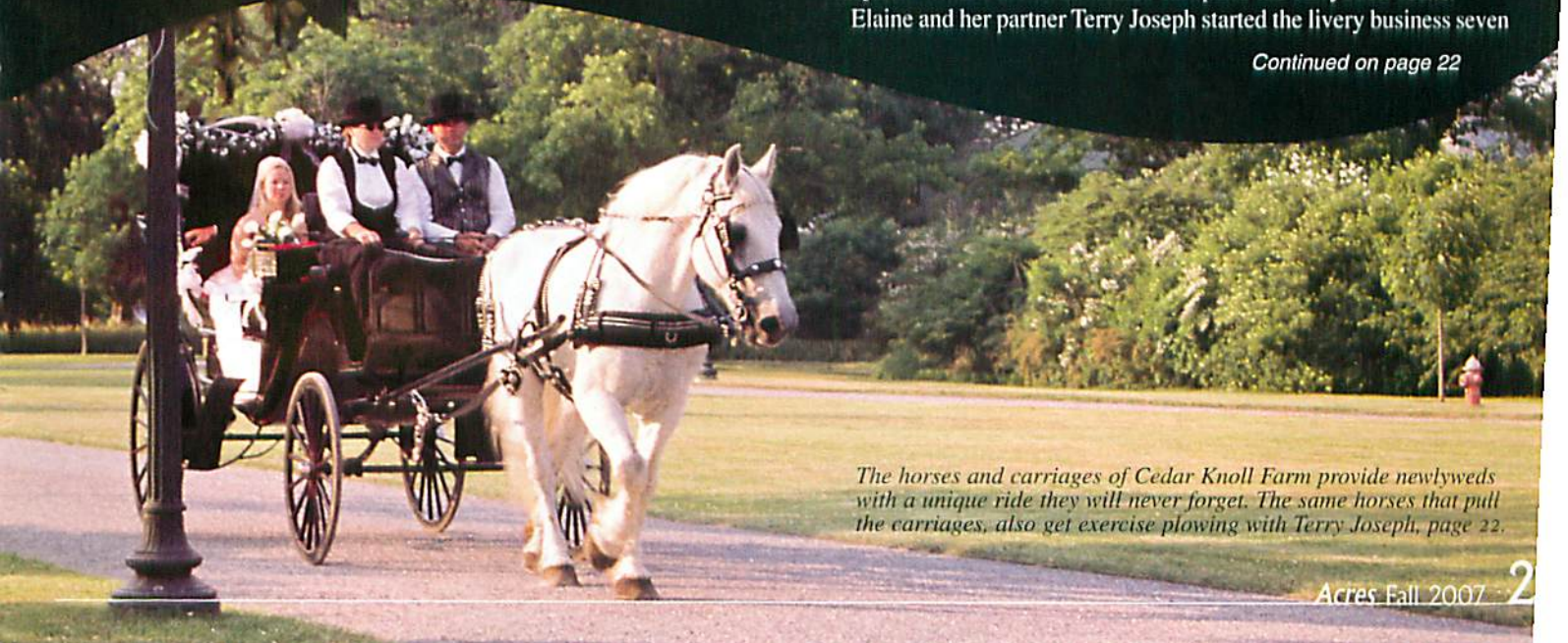
The first bride left the church in an impressive stretch limo. The second one rode in a meticulously restored antique automobile, while the third bride chose to ride through town in a horse drawn carriage borrowed from a fairy tale.

"You would have thought Princess Diana was coming up the street," recalls Elaine Juska Keeley, who drove the horses that day. "People came out of stores and restaurants to clap and cheer as she and her groom went by. That bride knew what she was doing."

About 30 brides a year request the livery services of Cedar Knoll Farm in Lisbon, Connecticut. Cedar Knoll's shiny black vis-à-vis carriage is the perfect foil with which to present the bride in her gleaming white satin gown. Burgundy seats, formally attired drivers, and majestic white Percheron horses complete the storybook scene.

Elaine and her partner Terry Joseph started the livery business seven

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The horses and carriages of Cedar Knoll Farm provide newlyweds with a unique ride they will never forget. The same horses that pull the carriages, also get exercise plowing with Terry Joseph, page 22.

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years ago with one team of horses and a homemade wagon for hay rides. They now have three horse teams along with a dozen carriages, wagons, and sleighs.

Cedar Knoll provides livery services for any event in which someone wants to just drop out of their jet-set lifestyle for a few hours and enjoy a more leisurely clip-clop-ping pace from the past.

While weddings are their most glamorous events, Elaine and Terry also provide horse and carriage for an occasional funeral, and recently Terry and Gillette, one of the white Percherons, appeared in a live stage production of "Oklahoma."

Elaine paid her way through art college in New York City working for a publisher of fine press books. After graduation she did in-house illustration and book design for a larger publisher, becoming the assistant art director before making a sudden career change to drive horse drawn carriages at the Mystic Seaport Maritime Museum, in Connecticut. She moved back to a small farm in Connecticut to have her son, Brandon, and four years later his sister, Meagan. There she also raised show quality Nigerian Dwarf dairy goats.

An accomplished and widely recognized artist, Elaine has compiled a long list of awards for her work which has been in

juried shows throughout the country. Working mostly in pastels, her favorite subject is...the horse, of course. "Pastel is my passion," she said, "just like horses (see more of Elaine's work at www.ejkstudios.net).

Terry has had horses since his early teen years. As a young man he was a cowboy on a large ranch, then did coast-to-coast over-the-road truck driving for 33 years. Plowing with horses is now his main interest, and the same draft horses that pull Cedar Knoll's fancy carriages one day are every bit as much at home pulling a plow the next.

It was draft horses that brought Elaine and Terry together, and both of them are involved in plowing competitions. They have four Percherons—Duke, Diesel, Lincoln, and Gillette—as well Danny and Dakota, one a Belgian-Percheron-Quarter horse, the other a Belgian-Percheron-Standardbred. All their horses pull both carriages and plows.

"We have had all three teams out in holiday traffic in cities like Hartford and New Haven, cars whizzing by and sirens going off just inches from their ears, and they don't let it bother them a bit," Elaine said. "It's because we use these horses in all situations, all the time, night and day."

Elaine and Terry prefer horses bred and

trained by the Amish. "The Amish teach them the benefits of standing still until asked to go," Elaine explained. "In a commercial carriage business, it isn't how fast or how long a horse can walk, but how long and how still it can stand."

The horses are about 17 hands high and weigh around 1,900 pounds. "Many people we know have massive draft horses for their businesses," Elaine said, "but who needs a 2,300 pound horse on a vis-à-vis in downtown Hartford? I prefer a more manageable size."

Among the carriages available from Cedar Knoll's livery service is a rare English landau made in London by Silk & Sons in 1890. Like an image directly out of a Dickens novel, the landau, built for nobility, draws attention wherever it goes and has appeared in the films *Amistad* and *The Time Machine*. Two fancy wagonettes, each with seating for 12 passengers, are available for parades and wedding parties.

Ethnic celebrations have become another significant part of the carriage business, especially Quinceañera, the Hispanic ritual celebrating a girl's 15th birthday. Elaine enjoys the happy and colorful aspect of ethnic weddings and Quinceañera.

Article by Gary Martin
Photos courtesy of Cedar Knoll Farm



Behind the Scene

The hours of preparation and travel leading up to the married couple's magical carriage ride, says Elaine Justa Keeley, is "...the hardest, most time consuming aspect of the business.

"We bathe horses either the night before or early that morning with a pressure washer. It can take hours to get these white horses clean. Then we clean and load the carriage and all its equipment...pole or shafts, lamps, carriage decorations, and lap robes in winter. We also load our tuxedo clothes and top hats into the truck.

"After the harnesses have been cleaned, we harness the horses, load hay for the ride, and take the trip, which can be local or two or more hours away. Sometimes we go to Greenport on Long Island, in which case we have to take a ferry that must be reserved a month ahead of time because our truck and trailer is about 51 feet long. It can cost nearly \$350 round-trip.

"Once at the sight, we must find appropriate parking for such a big rig. Then we unload everything, make sure it is clean and wiped down again, get dressed into our formal clothes, hitch the horses, and go find the bride.

"The carriage ride is the easy part."



Feed and Care of Draft Horses

Want to own a few draft horses? Then forget everything you know about keeping house pets, because these nearly one ton draft horses are high maintenance. Just ask Elaine Justa Keeley and Terry Joseph.

"Horses are hard work, and draft horses are twice the work. With as many as 12 horses here, it will take me, working alone, 2 and a half to 3 hours, both morning and night, just to care for them, graining, throwing out hay to all the paddocks, putting horses out, mucking stalls, cleaning the barn, watering, bringing horses in again, and brushing or blanketing as needed.

"Because we have no pasture land, all our horses are hay fed. We will put up a full 53-foot tractor-trailer load, about four or five trailer loads a year."

Each horse will eat a 45-50 pound bale of hay every day along with 2-4 quarts of grain. The four Percherons also receive mineral oil in their grain to help prevent chronic colic problems.

"We shoe about every eight to 12 weeks, all fours with borium, which costs us about \$250 a team. Our spring and fall shots plus other vet visits cost us about \$2,500 a year.

"So you see why we are in business: we couldn't afford to have horses as a hobby."



Elaine Justa Keely caring for the Percherons at Cedar Knoll Farm.

Elaine's paintings, middle of page, are recognized throughout the country and have appeared in many juried shows.

CNH America LLC recommends the use of a FOPS when a tractor is equipped with a loader attachment.

Smokin' Hot Tractor

Donald Robbins learned a lot about his tractor during an extended dry spell in the southeastern U.S. this spring. He now knows just how tough the New Holland TB110 tractor can be, because he drove this rugged machine through swamps to extinguish one of the largest forest fires to ever hit the American south.

Robbins' day job is planting and spraying pine trees for Georgia's huge timber farms. He owns a well-respected business, Robbins Forestry and nine TB110s. Last spring he joined more than 2,000 firefighters from across the U.S. to help put out a fire that consumed a half-million acres of forest land, an area two-thirds the size of Rhode Island.

Robbins' tractors are outfitted with "really big tires" and side-mounted water tanks. Water is drawn from a tank truck with a 2,000-yard hose. He drives the tractors parallel to a firebreak that was dug by a skidder tractor, and sprays the fire on the hot side of the break.

Sometimes the skidders bog down in the swamp. "When that happens, the TB110s go right around the skidders," according to Robbins. "They handle really nice."

The fires were so serious and damaging they merited a visit from President Bush on May 29, who promised federal aid would follow.



Tractor in Ministry

For the past five years, Tom Benedict has combined his love of tractors with his desire to help others.

Tom was raised on a dairy farm near Alto in Southwest Michigan. His love for tractors began early as he watched his father work the fields, put in crops, bale hay and complete the daily work of the farm. As Tom grew older he took on responsibilities in all these areas.

His career path did not include the farm. He became an employee relations manager for an office furniture manufacturer. But he continued using tractors in his hobby farming and for helping others.

When his employer began downsizing in the mid-nineties, Tom saw that he could "retire" and devote more time and energy to his ministry. After much prayer and consultation with financial advisors, Tom left his first career and began a career of 'helps'.

Tom's personal ministry includes garden tilling, tree trimming, leaf removal, small excavation, and brush hogging as well as snow blowing and removal. He says all of his work is made much easier by his New Holland tractor and attachments. He really enjoys the ease of dropping the quick-attach bucket so he can get the rotor-tiller and brush hog into tighter spaces.

Tom and his wife, Brenda, recently made the job of transporting his tractor to the job site easier by having ramps welded to his utility trailer. Tom truly has used his desire to help people and his love of tractors to have a satisfying and fulfilling second career.



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