

Expert Promotes Putting Goats In Harness

Mika Ingerman of Burlington, Vt., is on a mission to earn more recognition and respect for harness goats - an area she believes has been a somewhat forgotten treasure.

Her Facebook page, called "Team Snazzy Goat," currently has more than 8,000 followers, and is where she offers tips into harness training goats and photos of her two Cashmere wethers known as Harry and David.

"They're trained to be driving goats with all the spit and polish that was so prevalent with harness goats during the 19th century," Mika says. "I use the same techniques used to school elite driving horses and, so far, they love it."

Mika also has experience driving and training miniature horses, American shetlands, and mules, spanning a 14-year period.

She bought her Cashmere wethers in the spring of 2011, and started halter breaking them when they were 3 mos. old.

When they were 6 mos. old, she started getting them used to having something comparable to a harness on their bodies. Since they were still too small to fit a real harness, she used a homemade surcingle, a

training device made of rope with rings.

When Harry and David turned one, Mika started teaching them to ground drive (steering them with reins while she walked behind them).

"I waited until they were 2 to introduce the bits and cart because I wanted all of their teeth to be done growing in, and for their bones and joints to be fully developed, so as not to hurt them in any way," Mika explains.

"Since harness goats seem to be rare in the social media world, people are excited to spread the word about them," Mika says. "Really, for me, it's a labor of love. We do demonstrations and education at the Vermont Sheep and Wool Festival, and at the Washington County Fiber Tour, and just encourage everyone to drive goats. We hand out business cards and flyers at these events and urge people to follow along with our progress on the Facebook page.

"Driving animals is incredibly rewarding," she adds. "It gets adults out in nature, and it gives kids a great sense of self-esteem and responsibility. Goats are much easier to handle than horses and less expensive."

Mika has published a book about this area of specialty in the goat world. Called



Mika Ingerman has more than 8,000 followers on her Facebook page, where she offers tips on harness training goats and photos of her 2 Cashmere wethers known as Harry and David.

"Educating the Harness Goat," the book breaks down the training process into several simple lessons, and names sources for 2-wheeled carts and harness.

The book, "Educating the Harness Goat," is 8.5 x 11 in., with 26 pages, and sells for \$16, plus S&H. If you live outside the U.S., you can purchase a PDF copy online for \$8.

"We also have Youtube videos and pictures on Flickr," Mika says.

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Randy Priest not only builds hats from scratch but also searches second-hand stores for older models and reshapes them.



"Within minutes of meeting someone, I can tell what's going to look best on their head," he says.

Old-Time Milliner Adapts Hats To Heads

By Carolyn White

Randy Priest, owner of Silver-Tip Hat Company in Donnelly, Idaho, believes that a hat is a statement of the person who wears it. "Within minutes of meeting someone, I can tell what's going to look best on their head," he says.

In business since 1974, Priest not only builds hats from scratch but also cruises second-hand stores, searching for older models. Tearing those apart, he soaks the sections in hot water and reshapes them using broomsticks, dry fluid, steam, and an 1899 crown iron.

Customers bring Priest materials like snake skin, porcupine quills, bear claws, bones, and other items to use as decorations. He also buys beaded hat bands from local crafters. He accommodates any special requests, whether it concerns an everyday style or something totally unique.

Priest works with felt, leather, and suede, but his favorite material is a 50/50 blend of beaver and rabbit hair. During summer, palm leaf hats are his top sellers. He buys them with a flat brim and open crown, dips each in water, and creases them "while you wait."

Despite living a quiet life in small-town Idaho, word of his skills has spread. Among the silk scarves, jewelry, and paintings displayed in his shop are pictures of Priest with actors Sam Shepard, Scott Glen, and singers Lyle Lovett and Natalie Imbruglia. The late Steve McQueen's widow, Barbi, also owns a custom Silver-Tip hat. "Isn't she

cuter than a bug?" He chuckles, pointing to their photo together.

Raised outside a Blackfoot Indian reservation in Pocatello, Idaho, Priest became interested in hat-crafting as a teen. "I could walk into a restaurant, look at the row of hats that was hanging on the wall, and tell who was there by those creases," he recalls.

He made his first paychecks by hitting pawn shops at the Reservation. "The men there bought new hats when they had the money, and pawned them when they ran out."

Randy's skills really took off when he left home and moved to Idaho City, where he met another hat maker. "She told me I was a natural and gave me some tips as well as the names of her suppliers."

These days he works out of a historic 1907 former bank building on 209 N. Main Street in Donnelly. The shop is a place where old and new friends stop in regularly to pull up chairs, gather around the wood stove during central Idaho's long winters, and of course, try on hats.

It's all just fine with Randy Priest. "I love meeting people," he said, grinning broadly, "and I've met a lot of them. My favorite expression is, if you want to get ahead, get a hat."

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Veterinarian Uses Eastern Medicine To Help Animals

By Brad Miller

Taking your sick cow to get acupuncture or feeding Chinese herbs to a prize sheep may raise some eyebrows at the local coffee shop. However, these are some of the techniques that Dr. Ronald Anders of County Animal Clinic in Coldwater, Ohio uses with great success in his practice.

Dr. Anders uses both holistic and conventional veterinarian methods to heal many types of animals. I own a dog breeding operation in Ridgeville Corners, Ohio, and his techniques have saved me thousands of dollars. I raise and breed purebred French Bulldogs, whose puppies can sell anywhere from \$1,800 to \$4,000 or more apiece. When one of my females was having trouble conceiving, I took her to my local veterinarian who told me she would never be able to have puppies.

I found Dr. Anders through the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association (www.ahvma.org; ph 410 569-0795). He examined the dog and found that her kidney, spleen, and liver were out of balance. He told us not to worry and that she would be fine. He administered acupuncture and prescribed a few Chinese herbs and a diet change. Sure enough, on her next heat cycle she got pregnant and had 5 puppies which we later sold for a total of \$12,500.



Dr. Ronald Anders is shown here at his clinic performing acupuncture on one of Brad Miller's dogs.

I now take all my dogs to Dr. Anders and have benefited greatly from his work. He has used holistic methods to heal our dogs' problems with hip injury, digestive issues, hair loss, aggressive behavior, infertility, and many other issues. He's a miracle worker not only with dogs and other small animals, but also large animals and is in high demand among championship cattle and horse breeders.

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