



PHOTOS KATHIE DAVENPORT

◀ **MFH Owen Hughes leads the field during Norfolk's opening meet at historic Charlescote Farm.**

patiently in center field as children ages four to 14 were invited to come meet and pet the hounds before the polo match resumed.

Elaborate tailgates lined the playing field and competed for prizes. Norfolk member Lee McCloskey teamed with Associate Master Ruth Lawler to judge tailgate competitors for creativity, presentation, enthusiasm, and menu. Gourmet food, smoking grills, sushi bars, elaborate décor and furniture, a "Pretty in Pink" themed dollhouse and cupcake display, an Oktoberfest, and a rodeo themed tailgate were among the highlights of the contest.

Local horseman and polo player Ted Eayrs called the match and regaled the audience with polo anecdotes, while Norfolk member Gil Rodgers provided local color and commentary. At the end of the last chukker, despite Norfolk's solid

## Norfolk Hunt Club

### FALL HUNT SEASON BEGINS

SUBMITTED BY GAELAN CANNING AND D.A. HAYDEN

The Norfolk Hunt Club's informal hunting (cubbing) season started at the Trustee's of Reservations Powisset Farm on September 3, with hounds, horses, and riders ready to roll. The event marked the 116th year of drag fox hunting for Norfolk. It also marked the start of a massive clean-up effort, as Hurricane Irene had left her footprint on New England the week before, with miles of trails in the Charles River watershed requiring a legion of Norfolk volunteers and professionals to remove downed trees and repair damage to the trail systems Norfolk hunts. Each year, the club contributes to the maintenance of 200 miles of trails and the care and upkeep of over 300 jumps, used by both the Hunt and the equestrian community at large.

The early fall season continued with hunts starting at the beautiful Pincroft Farm in Medfield, Green Hills Farm in Sherborn, Adams Farm in Walpole, and a joint meet with Tanheath Hunt starting from the Steeplechase Course in Medfield, among others. As September continued, more and more riders joined the field, in preparation for formal hunting season.

Continuing a treasured tradition, Opening Meet of the formal season took place on October 1 at Charlescote Farm in Sherborn, Mass. Before the hunt began, Rev. Peter Disanto, the

pastor of Grace Church in Dover, Mass., delivered a "blessing of the hounds" and continued by blessing horses and riders, wishing safety in the field for all. The hunt was ably planned by Norfolk's Masters of Foxhounds, Owen Hughes, Carol Mansfield, and Associate Master Ruth Lawler.

### Dedham Wins at Polo in the Country

Norfolk member Greg Sandomirsky, who manages a large group of volunteers to present the event, chaired Polo in the Country for the ninth year in a row. Attended by over 1,100 spectators, Polo in the Country is Norfolk's opportunity to share the Steeplechase Course in Medfield, Mass., with the surrounding community. Attendees cheered exhibition polo, brought picnics, took children on pony rides, had their faces painted, and competed in the tailgate competition.

The Barnstable Barn Burners Precision Equestrian Drill Team captured everyone's attention during their dazzling half-time show. Next, the audience watched, enthralled, as the parade of Norfolk Hounds, guided by Norfolk Huntsman John Elliott and Norfolk Master of Foxhounds Owen Hughes took the field. Following the parade, the hounds waited



**Mary Hughes riding Benjamin at Norfolk's Columbus Day Hunt.**

effort, the Dedham team won the match 10-9.

### Westport Hunter Pace Attracts Over 150 Riders

By 7:30 a.m. on September 25, horses and riders were arriving at Norfolk's third annual Westport Hunter Pace in beautiful Westport, Mass. Although weather forecasters had

*continued on page 62* ▶

# Yankee Walkers, Gaited Horses of New England

MEET STEVE TILLOTSON, YANKEE WALKER ADVENTURER IN THE SADDLE AND ON THE SEA

SUBMITTED BY JULIE DILLON

Steve Tillotson is a native of Michigan, who moved to Maine in 1996 to pursue his dream of boatbuilding. Steve inherited his love of the water from his father who would frequently pack up the entire family and spend days sailing on a 25' "pocket yacht." Now a boat designer and builder for 14 years, Steve also crews for a racing boat called the Voodoo and serves as the sailing team tactician, which is the person that plots the fastest way around the race course.

In 2002, Steve discovered a second passion and bought his first horse, a young Saddlebred named Sport. Then in 2006 he began showing his wife Kelly's Tennessee Walking Horse and fell in love with the breed. A year later, Steve bought his own Walking Horse Ellie, aka Million Dollar Ruby. Her sire was A Strong Dollar, a Reserve World Grand Champion and a National Champion. Her dam, Star Sapphire, was bred and born in Tennessee, making the move up to Maine in 2006 while she was in foal with Ellie.

Born in Raymond, Maine, in February of 2007, Ellie has six World Grand Champions in her bloodlines. Steve first saw her when she was two weeks old and knew she was something special. When she was five months old, Steve started working with her, and from the beginning, she was a bossy little lady with an attitude to match. Ellie showed everyone that she was something special too when, at only 14 months old, she displayed all of the distinctive Tennessee Walking Horse show gaits: the flat walk, running walk, and canter. Shortly thereafter, Steve had her excelling at ground driving before her second birthday.

Steve started her under saddle as a 2-year-old and as a 3-year-old, Ellie made her show debut at Bob-Lyn Stables in Amesbury, Mass. She



Steve Tillotson riding Ellie at the Skowhegan Fairgrounds in Maine.

JEFF ANDERSON

won her first class and was Champion of the Day in the Plantation Pleasure 3-Gait division and hasn't looked back since. By the end of the 2010 show season, in her first year of competition, Ellie won 12 out of 15 first place ribbons and High Point Year-End, beating out the stiff competition of multiple breeds from all over New England.

In 2011, Ellie has once again won championships in Youth classes, 3-Gait Plantation Pleasure and 2-Gait, with different riders in each division. She also received third in an Open Pleasure class. Steve feels that Ellie is truly a "Million Dollar" filly and one of the most talented and intelligent horses he has ever worked with. It is clear that she is a wonderful horse and companion and brings a new light into Steve's life, the show ring, and his barn.

Steve and his wife Kelly live in Limerick, Maine, and he enjoys sharing his talents as a trainer and invites horses into his barn for training on a selective basis.

For more information on Yankee Walkers, Gaited Horses of New England, please visit [www.yankeewalkers.com](http://www.yankeewalkers.com).

## Norfolk Hunt Club

*continued from page 60*

predicted another dreary day, spirits were far from gloomy and the enthusiasm only increased as the day progressed and the sunshine reigned.

The course covered about eight miles of varied terrain—wooded trails, large hay fields, and miles of paths along the scenic Westport River. Gallops around large cornfields bordering the river were especially spectacular. The jumpers enjoyed many inviting stonewalls, as well as other obstacles along the course.

Chaired by Norfolk members Gaalen Canning and Tom Lewis, the pace was planned to provide the opportunity for equestrians to ride over some beautiful countryside along the river and ocean. This year's event attracted over 150 riders. Proceeds from the event support both the Norfolk Hunt Club's efforts to preserve and protect land for equestrian recreational use and the land conservation programs of the Westport Land Conservation Trust (WLCT), which to date has protected over 3,700 acres of farmland and open space in Westport. Riders quickly realized how lucky they were to be able to enjoy the fruits of the WLCT's efforts to safeguard the scenic vistas and working farms, at a time when development is consuming so much of the landscape.

As with all Norfolk events, the success of the Westport Hunter Pace was due to the commitment and hard work of many people. Twenty landowners willingly opened their property to the large number of riders and many club members traveled to join the many WLCT supporters who gave their time to assist. The success of the day was thus assured by hard working volunteers—who organized and oversaw registration, the start and finish, the check, street crossings, parking, and much more. Enthusiastic riders and their gallant mounts were overheard discussing plans to mark calendars and come early to the Westport Hunter Pace next year!

## SHOW RESULTS

The following are the results from the Westport Hunter Pace, held September 25, 2011:

FENCES DIVISION: 1. Fanny Lee, Paddy; Ann Geoghegan, Marigold; 2. Jen Mulstay, Raleigh; Sue Levy, Hannah; Linda Saba, Axle; 3. Ralph Williams, Thunder; Joe Sandulli, Simi.  
FLATS DIVISION: 1. Cindy Ostrowski, Rosie; Carrie Cichocki, Sparkle; 2. Patrice Anderson, Guinness; Lisa Kane, Hamilton; 3. Linda Haynes, Rhapsody; Francoise Marlenola, Diablo. ●