**WELCOME TO LANCERS**

# MISSION STATEMENT

The Halifax Junior Bengal Lancers is ***“Organized to encourage young people to ride, learn and enjoy all kinds of sports connected with horses and riding; to provide instruction in horsemanship and to instill in the riders the proper care of horses; to promote the highest ideals of sportsmanship, citizenship and loyalty.”***

1. OUR HISTORY

The history of the Halifax Junior Bengal Lancers is inevitably entwined with the history of horses and their integral connection with human lives. Horses have impacted people through the centuries with a multitude of services from carrying soldiers into battle, to pulling milk wagons on their morning deliveries. Halifax is one of the only cities worldwide where horses are stabled downtown and hold an active presence in city life.

Children growing up in Halifax have been learning to ride horses since the city first settled. A riding and equitation school was operated here as early as 1829. The history of the Halifax Junior Bengal Lancers itself began in 1936. During that year, M.B. (Dick) Zwicker founded the Halifax Ride and Drive Club and began teaching students. In addition to his equitation program, he developed a drill that the students, mounted on their ponies, learned to perform. This “Musical Ride”, was stabled in the premises on Bell Road, as it still is today. George Low constructed the building in 1908, as a stable for various horses including the Fire horses, Livery horses, Police horses and Fire equipment. It is a landmark building in present day downtown Halifax and has been recently designated as a heritage building.

Zwicker’s Halifax Junior Bengal Lancers was first and foremost a school of riding equitation. The school was intended to be of benefit to city children who could not practically own and house horses. This way, city children could continue to learn the sport of riding. As the Lancers perfected their Musical Ride, another whole benefit blossomed - they became widely known and highly respected for their lively and clever performances.

In 1949, the Lancers were scheduled to receive their regimental colors from Lord Cornwallis (descended from the city’s founder). In the early hours of that very morning, tragedy struck. The stables were badly damaged in a devastating fire. Although 36 horses were miraculously led to safety, four well-loved ponies were lost. Despite their bereft spirits, the young students bravely groomed and braided their horses. They then presented themselves and their mounts to Lord Cornwallis. He, in turn, presented them with their colors: red, blue, gold and white (combining the colors of the Nova Scotia flag and the City of Halifax Crest). In his adulate address to the Lancers, he credited their determination and fortitude to their disciplined experience that was “developed by riding ponies”.

The stories of the Halifax Junior Bengal Lancers are many and as bright as their colors. Over the years, the great legacy begun by Dick Zwicker has been carried on.

Throughout our history we have performed for Governor Generals, and Royal visitors to the city including The Queen and Princess Anne. The Lancers have performed in and have keys to cities such as Boston, Toronto, Ottawa, and Fredericton and have had the great honor of performing the Musical Ride with the world famous R.C.M.P. Musical Ride. Lancers have been the subject of films, television programs, and numerous media stories.

Lancer students are highly respected in the field of equitation for their riding accomplishments. Many well known riders are products of the Lancer School.

1. **HOW WE OPERATE**

Registration

* Membership registration deadline is June 30th for our new season which begins in September
* A $50. deposit is required by June 30th to secure your spot for September
* Your annual membership fees can be paid upfront in a single payment or with 11 posted-dated checks, dated for the first of each month, including July. The only month that has no fees, regardless of members’ vacation schedule, is August.

Our Board

A volunteer Board of Directors oversees the Bengal Lancers. In order to be elected to the Board of Directors, a person must be either an adult rider in good standing, or the parent of a Junior Rider who is also in good standing. The Board meets monthly and is responsible for policies, infrastructure, negotiating leases and fundraising.

The Lancers is a not-for-profit riding society. We lease the stable building from the Halifax Regional Municipality and we are responsible for all the finances. Your ride fees are our primary source of income, with more formal fund raising drives conducted by the Board, as required. On occasion, we do qualify for grants from the Municipality or the Provincial Government. Every rider and their family are valued for their active participation in the fund raising events within the club to continue the high standard of care for the horses and rider programs.

Fundraising

We strongly encourage all riders and their families to support fundraising endeavors in any way they can, e.g., selling tickets, volunteering their time for building maintenance, donating either food or money to the weekly canteens, or making a tax deductible donation to HALTR.

Junior Executive

The main purpose of the Junior Executive is to foster a sense of community, civic duty exposure, and camaraderie among the junior members. The executive is elected in June each year to serve for the following September to August. The Junior Executive members contribute their fund raising efforts and proceeds to events such as educational clinics, fun days, painting parties, etc.

Staff

1. *Barn Manager/Head Instructor*

The Barn Manager/Head Instructor is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the barn, supervision of staff, health and utilization of horses and rider programming. The Barn Manager/Head Instructor and the Board of Directors work hand-in-hand to deliver the Mission and Vision of Lancers. (A formal Job Description is on file)

1. *Stable Hands*

We have full time stable hands who look after the daily needs of the horses from Monday to Saturday (Sunday shifts are completed by riders from Rides 1 through 4). The stalls are mucked out daily and the horses are turned out for leisure and exercise before the riders arrive for their lessons each weekday. The riders themselves are responsible for ensuring that the horses’ stalls are prepared for the night, including fresh water and hay, each time they have a lesson. During the week, the barn monitors are responsible to ensure the riders complete their assigned chores.

Members from Rides 1 through 4 are responsible for covering the Stable Hand paid shifts on Sundays and holidays. All Stable Hands complete a Stable Hand-specific training session and Emergency First Aid course offered within the barn, provided by HJBLs, prior to their first shift.

1. *Instructors*

All instructors and coaches are certified or are working on certification within the Equine Canada Coaching System (ECCS). All the teaching staff is certified and current in their First Aid Training as well.

**There is an External Credit Program available through the Nova Scotia Equestrian Federation where students can work on their certification and get a high school credit.** **Our school is unique in the fact that riders may gain all the experience necessary to fulfill the requirements of the NCCP (National Coaching Certification Program) without leaving the stable!**

1. *Communications & Office Coordinator (COC)*

This part-time position is responsible for all in-house and external communication as well as the administrative tasks within the office. The Barn Manager supervises and advises the COC.

1. *Barn Monitors*

When the Instructors are teaching, the Barn Monitors manage the barn and support less experienced riders in developing their skills in preparing/untacking their horse as well as their barn chores.

1. *Volunteers*

Lancers is always looking for riders and their families to volunteer in numerous ways: skills of professionals, e.g., accountants; tradesmen, e.g., electricians, carpenters; marketing and fund raisers; unskilled general labourers for barn maintenance, e.g., cleaning, painting; help with bedding and hay deliveries; and supporting our fund raising events, e.g., selling wreathes, baking for canteen, etc. Our collective effort supports the barn, horses and Lancer community to continue to thrive.

1. **COMMUNICATION**

The most current e-newsletter is located on our website [www.bengallancers.com](http://www.bengallancers.com) under the members’ only page (password: lancers1936). This is our main form of communication within the stable. It is important to keep up-to-date with the bulletin boards and check the e-newsletter when it arrives in your mailbox to be informed of upcoming events within the organization. Items such as sign-up sheets for clinics, shows, make-up rides, fund raisers, and other events are posted in the front entrance of the barn, outside the main office.

If your contact information changes throughout the year, please contact us to have the changes recorded. If you have questions, please contact the office (902 423 6723).

1. **SAFETY FIRST**

It is important for potential riders (and their parents, if rider is under 18 years of age), to be aware of the risks and the potential for injury. To mitigate these risks, all of our instructors and coaches are certified (or “in training”) with the Equine Canada/ National Coaching Certification Program and all possess current Emergency First Aid certification. All of our riders are required to wear American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) approved helmets and safe footwear. Some riders elect to wear protective vests as an added precaution.

Lancers is a riding school with teaching and riding skill development as the primary goal. The introduction of new skills is done in a safe, progressive and controlled fashion. Riders will be supported to attempt/practice exercises that may push them outside their comfort zone. However, the methods used by our coaches and instructors are ‘best practice’ meaning that they are tried and true.

General Safety Rules

* Horses need to be groomed using **cross ties** or within a stall.
* Horses must be led within/outside the barn with **properly fitted halters** and lead lines.
* During warmer weather when the doors to the stable are open, the **safety chains** must be up across the doors at all times.
* **Closed-toe** footwear must be worn by everyone at all times in the barn.
* Riders must wear an **ASTM approved helmet**
* Junior members under the age of 13 are permitted in the barn outside of normal lesson times when there are **instructors on the premises**.
1. **RESPONSIBILITIES AND MEMBERSHIP**

Attire

* Closed-toe, hard-soled boots with a small heel
* ASTM approved helmet
* Pants that are comfortable (no jeans)
* Long hair must be tied back and preferably held under the helmet with a hair net if necessary.
* Riders are to wear red shirts (with collars) tucked in and belts that are visible (official Lancer shirts with logo are available through the office for purchase or exchange)
* Jackets and vests must be either zipped up or removed (flapping jackets are not safe)
* Clothing should be well fitting and shirts should be tucked in
* Riding gloves are strongly recommended for protection as well as warmth

Cell Phones

Cell phones are not permitted or safe in riding lessons.

Rider Responsibilities

**RIDERS ARE EXPECTED TO TREAT THEIR SURROUNDINGS AND EACH OTHER WITH RESPECT AT ALL TIMES. ALL MEMBERS MUST CLEAN UP AFTER THEMSELVES AND PUT EVERYTHING BACK IN ITS PROPER PLACE.**

* Fostering community spirit amongst members is paramount to the success of the organization and wellbeing of the horses
* Riders must arrive at least one half hour before their lesson and stay for at least one half hour afterwards.
* Younger riders are supported by barn monitors and more experienced riders to groom, tack up/untack their horse and complete their barn chores
* Lockers are rented on a yearly basis for $35. The office will assign a locker, locker combination number and lock. Only locks distributed by the office are to be used. There are rules and conditions to the use of lockers listed on the locker agreement. (The Locker Agreement is also located on our website)
* Riders are to completely empty and wipe out the locker before returning the lock to the office on the last day of classes end of July. Riders are to keep their locker combination private for security reasons. (Lancers are not responsible for lost or stolen items).
* There are surveillance cameras throughout the barn, including the locker room for additional security purposes. For this reason, please use the private washrooms for dressing/undressing.
* We strongly encourage each piece of equipment have your name permanently and clearly marked.
* Riders are to return their/the barn’s equipment to the proper place without exception.

General Information

* **Make-up rides** are to be completed within 14 days of the missed lesson. Otherwise, the lesson is forfeited. (Make-up rides are only available to riders who have provided 24 hours notice prior to their missed lesson – email, phone call, or coach directly)
* The **rider-horse pairing list** is made up for each lesson at the discretion of the instructor. Horses are assigned with careful consideration of rider skill level and educational needs matched with the qualities and skills of the horse. Practical considerations such as the fatigue/utilization level of the horse is also a critical aspect of the horse-rider decision.
* **Guests** are welcome to visit the barn when two important rules are followed:

1.) they need to have an experienced member be their guide at all times, and 2.) they must wear closed-toe footwear

* **Parents** are welcome to watch riding lessons from the observation room
* **Junior members** under the age of 13 are permitted in the stables outside of normal lesson times, when there are instructors on the premises.
* The **barn is closed** on Sundays unless there is a scheduled extracurricular event.
* The Barn Manager or instructor may permit a rider to take a **horse for grass** at the end of the parking lot, next to the Museum. All manure dropped while grazing is to be cleaned up by the attending rider.
* Your **membership** starts at the beginning of September and ends at the end of July, at which time you must re-register for the following September.
* **New members** may join at any point during the year and fees will be prorated accordingly. Members may terminate their membership with thirty (30) days written/email notice. Fees are to be paid on the first day of each month with post-dated cheques. (Although many riders are on vacation during the month of July, fees are still due for the month of July as the horses continue to need their oats and hay, even in your absence!)
* In cases of **inclement weather**, please call the office at 423-6723 or check the web site www.bengallancers.com. The answering machine message will inform you only if rides are to be cancelled.
* **In-barn lectures** will be provided at the instructor’s discretion in the place of a riding lesson. This may be indicated when the weather may be disruptive to the horses or a skill level needs to be met by a particular group of riders, pertaining to general horse(person)ship. Make-up rides will not be provided in lieu of in-barn lectures.
* **Lost and Found** trunk is located in the tack room and riders are encouraged to check it regularly. All unclaimed contents will be considered property of the barn as of July 31st each year.
1. **MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS**

## Boarding Horses

At times there are a few private horses boarded at the Lancers stable. These horses are boarded here by already existing members and through a written Agreement, will be provided all pertinent information. (Boarder Agreement is available on our website)

Leasing

In special circumstances part leasing may be available. Horses who require more specific riders may be part leased to riders who have the skill set that will benefit that horse. (Our Lease Agreement is available on our website)

### In-Barn Shows

From time to time we hold in-barn competitions. All members are welcome to join in these shows. If a rider wants to compete outside of the stable, they will be taught how to horseshow at Lancers first. These shows are meant to be fun as well as educational. They also double as fundraisers for the stable. The details will be posted in the lobby.

### Local Schooling Shows

These shows fall into the “Learn To Ride Phase” of Equine Canada’s Long Term Athlete Development Plan.

Within the province of Nova Scotia we have a novice circuit of horse shows. A Nova Scotia Equestrian Federation (NSEF) membership is mandatory to compete on this circuit. Riders are sometimes able to share horses to contain costs, approximately $250.00 per show.

Riders wanting to participate in a show or competition are responsible for:

* Attending the Annual Competition Meeting in the Spring (with parents if riders are under 18 years of age)
* signing the competition contract and may be required to provide a deposit

### Equine Canada National Shows

These competitions fall into the “Learn to Compete” phase of Equine Canada’s Long Term Athlete Development Plan.

Within the province of Nova Scotia we have what are known as Equine Canada National shows. In order to compete at this higher level Provincial memberships as well as National memberships are required. The commitment to competition is much greater at this level as are the expenses.

Memberships for EC and the NSEF are to be secured in the Fall. Both of these memberships may be done online. Any queries during a competition should be taken to the Coach in charge on that day.

# PROGRAMS

## Summer/March Break Camps

Camps are offered in all weeks of July and August and one week in March each year. ASTM approved helmets and grooming items are provided for the campers. Boots with a hard sole and a half-inch heel as well as a comfortable pair of long pants are required for comfort and safety.

## Beginner Courses

Beginner courses are typically held in September and April for our junior riders. Most riders who enter the beginner course have completed one or more introductory programs or summer camps. Riders need to be in the stable one half hour ahead of the ride time and will be in the stable at least one half hour after the ride. Each rider will learn to tack up and groom their own horse, but will share horses until the full ride has become sufficiently independent to prepare their own horses. After the ride, each rider is responsible for having his or her horse cooled out properly and all equipment returned to its appropriate spot. Each rider is required to have a grooming kit and must have an ASTM helmet to participate in this program.

## Equine Canada Rider Levels

The Halifax Junior Bengal Lancers follows the Equine Canada Rider Level (ECRL) testing system. This is a proficiency system for riders which tests rider skills at ten levels. The Lancers was one of the test stables in 2004. All lessons at Lancers are taught using the progressive guidelines of the EC Rider Level Program. All junior riders will be tested as part of the riding program at Lancers. In order to receive an Equine Canada certificate, the individuals will need to have a current NSEF membership and pay the $15 testing fee to the NSEF.

## Musical Ride

The Musical Ride is made up of sixteen horses and riders and is quite spectacular to watch. The riders are chosen from the upper junior rides and practice in the summer. Some years, if we have a major commitment, the riders may need to make sacrifices in order that they are able to attend all practices. In other years we simply practice once a week during the summer months. Although the ride is made up of sixteen riders, it really involves double that number plus a lot of parents and volunteers to pull it all together.

Each horse has a special set of tack for musical ride purposes and each rider has a red jacket, sash, white gloves, lance etc. Keeping the Musical Ride equipment in good repair is a tough job. Each year we have dedicated parents who sew on buttons, wash all the pads, polish lance buckets, wash and roll sixty-four leg wraps, wash and find mates to 16 pairs of white gloves, iron sashes for the riders and sashes for the horses. Musical Ride is a huge undertaking requiring the input of many bodies.

Members of the Musical Ride also perform Honor Guards both mounted and un-mounted for special occasions around the HRM. In past we have done the Shilling Ceremony in Point Pleasant Park, Hockey Tournaments, Golf Tournaments, Weddings, and Funerals.

Musical Ride is free of charge to participants although some special equipment or clothing may be required. Each Rider must have a white button-down shirt and a black tie. Beige or khaki breeches, belted with tall boots are required.

Equine Canada’s Long Term Athlete Development Plan

Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) is a systemic approach being developed and adopted by Equine Canada to maximize a participant/athletes potential and involvement in our sport. The LTAD framework aims to define optimal training, competition and recovery program based on biological age rather than chronological age. It is athlete centered, coach driven and administration, sport science, parent and sponsor supported.

Tailoring an athlete’s/participant’s sports development program to suit basic principles of growth and maturation especially during the 'critical' early years of their development, enables him/her to:

* Reach full potential (introduction to Olympic podium)
* Increase lifelong participation in Equestrian and other physical activities
* Improve health and well-being

This framework will set out recommended training sequences and skills development~~s~~ for the participant from the Active Start Stage (6 years of age and under) to the Active for Live Stage (adult recreational). It will address the physical, mental, emotional and technical needs of the athlete as they pass through each stage of development.

Lancers has whole heartedly adopted the principles of the LTED and the programming at Lancers is based upon those principles. More information on the LTED is available on the Equine Canada web site (www.equinecanada.ca).

## H.A.L.T.R. (There is always a need for volunteers)

The Halifax Area Leisure and Therapeutic Riding Association is a charitable group that coexists with the Lancers. This organization offers riding to disabled members of our community. This group is run by volunteers as well, and is always in need of bodies to assist in the running of the program. It takes three volunteers for each rider in order that the rider is able to ride safely.