

The New Guild Chronicle

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Guild of Professional Farriers

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The Guild of Professional Farriers

www.guildfarriers.org

theguild@horseshoes.com

Guild of Professional Farriers
2020 Pennsylvania Ave. NW #800
Washington, DC 20006

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President's Message

Thanks to Tommy Bloomer and Rick Burten we had the first Guild testing in quite a while on December 16th and 17th. I'd like y'all to welcome Jeff Holder, Dave Purves, and Jaye Perry to the Guild. They did fine jobs and will be a welcome asset to the Guild.

Our Guild of Professional Farriers annual meeting will be on Wednesday January 31st, 2007 in Cincinnati, OH at the **International Hoof Care Summit (IHCS)** at 8 PM. Room to be announced. Contact me at the Summit for last minute details, or call my cell at (301) 667-0410

I appointed Charlie Majors to fill in for Vice President through this term. He'll be at the meeting.

I appointed Tommy Bloomer to Chair the Planning Committee. He'll fill you in on some details in this newsletter.

More information and plans will be discussed at the Annual Meeting. See y'all there!

- Henry

Guild Exam in Alabama ... More to come this spring

We have the story about our most recent Guild exam along with pictures in **The Latest Guild News** section on our web site www.guildfarriers.org. In addition, due to numerous requests from prospective Guild members, we are working on scheduling Guild examinations this spring in the Mid Atlantic and New England regions and possibly the Southwest for early summer. There appears to be a lot of farriers interested in the Guild lately and we have not yet rolled out our marketing plan or membership benefits proposals!

Time to roll up our sleeves and dust off our keyboards!

In the last issue of the Chronicle we talked about the need to create a marketing strategy and tangible membership benefits. Right now your Planning Committee chairman is putting together an outline for these strategies to present at our annual meeting at the IHCS in Cincinnati on January 31st at 8:00pm. However, YOU can start participating in these strategic initiatives RIGHT NOW. The single most important item that the Guild needs right now is written material for our web site. That's right, we need to put OUR STUFF out there on the web.

What kind of "content" are we looking for? How about writing down everything you wish that horse owners would do to make your job easier? If horse owners come to the guild looking for competent professional farriers, shouldn't we let them know what we expect from them when we come to their stables? Since the Guild has **DEFINED a valid standard of practical competence for professional farriers**, why shouldn't we also define what it means to be a good customer?

We can also educate our customers about:

- Husbandry practices that promote healthy horses and healthy feet.
- Equine behavior issues and responsible behavior management/training.

- The importance of a good work environment and the problems that may result from a bad work environment.
- The importance of teamwork and collaboration between farriers, veterinarians, trainers, and horse owners.

What should the Guild have on its web site for veterinarians, trainers, and other equine professionals? How about we define what professional farriers need from veterinarians when we request a set of radiographs? We often make decisions about the mechanics of trimming and shoeing based on diagnostic images provided by veterinarians. However, what may be a perfectly acceptable image for medical diagnosis is not always suitable for determining accurate shoe placement or phalangeal alignment, etc.

How about we explain to trainers how horses benefit when they (trainers) provide us with feedback and input we can use in OUR DECISIONS about how we trim and/or shoe a horse they are training. Wouldn't it be more beneficial for the horse if the trainer communicated directly with the farrier about "the needs of the horse" instead of attempting to instruct the farrier on "how to shoe horses?" After all we don't "instruct" trainers on how to train horses. But we may provide a trainer with feedback about a behavior issue we have with a horse they are training. Thereby we provide them with information they need to help them solve a behavior problem.

Bottom line, we can use our web site to define the role of the farrier, the horse owner, and the trainer in respect to our profession. We should be able to do this better than anyone else because we already know OUR PROFESSION. Therefore we can **benefit our profession** by clearly and specifically defining our role in respect to the entire equine industry.

What about our BUSINESS?

How many farriers have a formal written business plan? Suppose you decide to ask a bank to loan you \$75,000 to buy and outfit a new shoeing rig for your business? If you're going to borrow that money in your own name on your own credit, the bank might want you to provide 100% collateral to back up the loan. If you want to borrow that money for your business, the bank might not take your business seriously unless you can show them a real business plan. This is just one example of the value of a good business plan.

The biggest benefit of a business plan is that it provides you with a long-term view of where your business will be in the future. Your business plan should include wealth building, retirement, and disaster recovery and disability income loss protection. It should also include a way to build substantial value in the business entity itself – your farrier practice.

I don't know how to do a business plan. How can the Guild help me with that? The answer is called **BOILERPLATE**. The term "boilerplate" simply refers to a standardized template or outline of procedures. WE CAN HELP EACHOTHER create a set of boilerplate business plans for our membership. Each of us can contribute some aspect of our own business experience to help define a standard set of templates, which provide the generic foundation for a solid business planning foundation. Take the template and "fill in the blanks," pick out the parts that suit your needs, customize and tweak rather than create from scratch.

The boilerplate business strategy has the potential to be our greatest *membership benefit*, because it can have such a huge positive impact on the long term FINANCIAL SECURITY of every one of us. Shouldn't our profession reward us with long term financial security and long term success? By pooling our resources and experience we can and SHOULD do this for ourselves. We all have something to contribute and we all have something to gain.

Membership Renewals

We have sorted out the membership expiration dates so that your membership expiration (*on your address label*) is the same date as the expiration date for your subscription to the American Farriers Journal. Since some of you have a multi-year subscription to the AFJ, when you paid your dues, we extended your existing subscription and also extended your GPF membership to expire on the same date. So, don't be surprised if your GPF membership was extended out 3 or 4 years or more.

This is the last newsletter that we will send out to ALL of the members in our registry. Future newsletters will only be sent to members who are **current in our dues**. However, if you haven't yet decided to re-up, you can still go to our web site www.guildfarriers.org to find out what we're up to. We just can't continue to pay postage for members whose dues are not current.

There are two members for whom we cannot find forwarding address information. If any of you know the whereabouts of the following farriers; **Arturo Diaz Ortiz, Scott Childres, James Gurney, Jack Miller, and Ronald Dash**

Please contact Tom Bloomer (302) 222-6404 – hoof@snip.net with their contact information so that we can update our records. Also, if you would like to help the GPF save on postage, we are now able to send our newsletter using electronic mail. So if you would like to receive the newsletter by email, send an email to hoof@snip.net with "GPF News" in the subject line.

Wednesday January 31st, 2007 in Cincinnati, OH

Just wanted to remind you about our annual meeting. The Guild will have a booth at the IHCS trade show. Please stop by to find out the location of the meeting. We do not know the exact location of the meeting in time to publish it in this newsletter. However we will post the location on our web site as soon as we have a decision. So you can also check the "**Calendar of Events**" on www.guildfarriers.org after our next update on January 22nd.

Future Guild Activities

Date----	Activity-----
01/22/07	GPF web site Update – Calendar of Events – GPF Meeting Location
01/31/07	GPF Annual Meeting - New officers, Marketing Strategy, Member Benefits
02/15/07	GPF web site Update – Online membership directory
03/15/07	GPF Newsletter – RFJ Exam locations and dates