

Your Future Customers

"I believe that children are our future; teach them well, and let them lead the way."

WHITNEY HOUSTON AND I agree on that concept. Our industry, more than many others, would do well to recognize the value of children as future customers of products for horses and riders.

Three years ago, we started a children's feature in our October edition, designed to help retailers think about how they can do a better job of enticing children into their stores and making equine consumers for life out of them.



The idea began shortly after I visited a retailer a couple of hours from our home in Minnesota. On the door was a sign with a dire warning: "Parents: Please Take Your Children by the Hand."

Yikes! I couldn't image what was beyond that door that would warrant such a caveat.

Once through the door, the signs continued. "No Children in This Area of the Store." "No Children Beyond This Point." "No Unaccompanied Children."

I can only guess that this store must have had a horrible experience with children and decided it was just easier to try to eliminate them than deal with them.

I began asking store owners whether they felt the same way, and my faith in retailers in our industry grew by leaps and bounds as I listened to the answers. Very few of them shared the outlook of the anti-children store. Generally, they all recognized the need to attract youngsters to their stores, but they weren't always sure how to do that.

I met retailers like Jan Gentry and Ja Nell Gentry Rose in West Monroe, La. No child leaves their store without a personal greeting and the toy du jour. They look on it as an investment in the future.

All retailers should.

I know many people in our industry today as retailers, reps, company owners or in other positions whose interest was sparked by a visit to a tack shop as a child. That was the case for me.

My tiny hometown in central North Dakota had a leather shop that sold shoes and all things related, along with saddles and a small selection of tack, and performed a huge amount of leather repair. Just a whiff of leather sends my mind immediately back to the days of my youth. The sounds of that old sewing machine still echo in my ears.

For most of my growing up years, a saddle sat in the shop's front window. It may actually have been the same saddle! I don't think the owner sold that many. I'll never forget that experience. Who would have guessed that four decades later, I'd be the editor of the leading international trade magazine serving the equine trade industry.

What dreams does your store inspire for young people who visit? How are they treated? Do you create memories that will stay with them for a lifetime? Are you creating a new generation of equine consumers?

You should be. 

Paul Wahl, Editor



Editorial and Production

Editor
Paul Wahl

Assistant Editor
Barb Kastens

Advertising Production Coordinator
Sue Slominski

Ad Design Coordinator
Val Pombert

Copy Editor
Kristin Bakker

English Editor
Charlene Strickland

Business Editor
Phillip Perry

Advertising Sales

Director of Sales and Marketing
Bill Wilken

Phone (952)930-4375 Fax (952)930-4362
E-mail bwilken@tackntogs.com

Advertising Sales Representative
Angela Foley

Phone (952)930-4368 Fax (952)930-4362
E-mail afoley@tackntogs.com

Administrative Assistant
Sarah Haslerud

Phone (952)930-4357 Fax (952)930-4362
E-mail shaslerud@tackntogs.com

Classified Advertising
Cory Huseby

Phone (952)930-4371 Fax (952)930-4362
E-mail coryhuseby@tackntogs.com

INDIA

K.S. Giani/A.S. Gianni

Westcott Bungalow, 37/17 The Mall,
P.O. Box 175, Kanpur-208001, INDIA
Phones (91)(512) 360528, 268491 or 315259
Fax (91)(512) 311356 (GIANI/57) or 311627

Corporate Officer

Publisher
Sarah Muirhead

Editorial & Advertising Sales Offices

Miller Publishing, 12400 Whitewater Dr.,
Suite 160, Minnetonka, MN 55343
Telephone (952) 930-4390
FAX (952) 930-4362

Web Site Address

www.tackntogs.com

Subscription Information

Tack 'n Togs Merchandising (USPS 770960, ISSN 0149-3442) is published monthly by the Miller Publishing Co., 12400 Whitewater Dr., Suite 160, Minnetonka, MN 55343. All qualified subscribers receive the annual Buyers Guide, published in July, as part of their subscription. Additional copies are available for a price of \$50.00 U.S. funds. Subscription rates available to non-qualified subscribers: domestic \$50.00 per year, all foreign countries \$60.00 per year. Single copies of monthly issues: domestic \$3.00 per issue, all foreign countries \$5.00 per issue. Periodicals postage paid at Hopkins, Minn., and additional mailing offices.

For subscription service, please call (800)441-1410 or E-mail circhelp@tackntogs.com.

Reader Service

For information on products featured in this issue:

- 1) Visit our Web site at www.tackntogs.com, or
- 2) Call (952)930-4390, or
- 3) Complete the Reader Service Actioncard found in this issue.

Change of Address

Postmasters, please send Form 3579 to: Tack 'n Togs Merchandising, P.O. Box 3017, Wheaton, IL 60189-9947.

Printed in the U.S.A.