

# Horse-related injuries set Betty Weibel on course to write book

by SALI McSHERRY

Betty Weibel has her own little piece of heaven and its angels are in the form of horses. On the day I visited, we headed down to the barn followed by her faithful boxer, Laila, to feed carrots to Luminaire, her former show hunter, now pleasure horse. At 17-years-old, he still acts like a three-year-old and offers daily entertainment.

Betty and her husband live in southern Geauga County in a picturesque Tudor-style home they built 20 years ago on 90 acres of pure bliss. As mentioned, there is a barn and there are horses. At any given time, there might be a horse or pony that needs extra attention living there temporarily from Fieldstone Farm Therapeutic Riding Center.

Betty is a morning person, arriving with carrots and feed for the horses at 5:30 a.m.

When the fields are cut, she's seen deer, coyote pups, turkeys and foxes. She has seen eagles fly. Her cat likes to bring home chipmunks.

Binoculars are perched at each window from which one can view forests and fields, wildflowers and an expansive sky.

Growing up, she participated in 4-H and cleaned stalls at the stables at Cleveland Metroparks in Brecksville in exchange for riding lessons. She got her first horse, Pebbles, when she was 13. She showed in many horse shows along the way, went to Lake Erie College because it had an equestrian program, and went to ride in Ireland for a semester.

To say she loves horses is quite honestly, an understatement.

Her love of writing and horses spilled into a nice little gig when she oversaw public relations for the national American Grand Prix and its 36-event national series.

It was two years ago, when she was laid up after two horse-related foot surgeries; she couldn't ride, she couldn't make it down to the barn so she finally opened up eight boxes of archives from the Chagrin Valley Professional Horsemen's Associa-

tion and decided it was time to do something with them.

She didn't throw many dinner parties during that time because there were so many stacks of papers, programs and photographs piled high on her dining room table. For months, she researched, she learned the history of horses in Cleveland, she wrote, she lived and breathed the horse show she remembers lovingly from her childhood. The riders were celebrities to her. She rode in the show when she was an adult, as did her daughter, Claire, who is now in college.

In her first book, "The Cleveland Grand Prix – An American Show Jumping First," Mrs. Weibel takes readers on a journey back in time recounting the history of the Cleveland Calvary, and the popularity of fox hunting, harness racing, sleigh riding down Euclid Avenue, polo and early horse shows at the Chagrin Valley Hunt Club and the evolution of the Cleveland Grand Prix, sponsored by the CV-PHA in Moreland Hills at Cleveland Metropark's Polo Field, which was a significant innovation in the states and is celebrating its 50th anniversary next year. This year the show was cancelled because of lack of sponsorship and scheduling conflicts with other equestrian events lined up across the country. But a committee is working to attract a title sponsor, and prospects look favorable, she said.

Mrs. Weibel's 176-page book featuring more than 65 photographs and published by The History Press, explains how the Chagrin Valley became a "world-class horse sport hub" and the lively book gives fans a chance to reminisce about their favorite victories of some of the best Olympic-level riders in the country and for newcomers, an opportunity to learn about the beauty of the sport and why it means so much to so many.

*For more information visit [clevelandgrandprix.com](http://clevelandgrandprix.com).*

*The book is available online and at local bookstores and tack shops.*



**Local author, Betty Weibel, and her pal, Luminaire, at her barn in Geauga County. (Photograph by Sali McSherry)**

Local author Betty Weibel, who wrote  
"The Cleveland Grand Prix – An American Show Jumping First"  
will be at the following venues soon:

Sept. 17 – noon to 1:30 p.m.,  
**Case Western Reserve  
University Barnes & Noble**  
(book signing and meet the  
author)

Sept. 25 – 11:30 a.m. to  
1:30 p.m., **The Union Club**  
of Cleveland luncheon

reception and book talk for  
members of the Union Club,  
Chagrin Valley Hunt Club,  
Rock and Roll Hall of Fame  
and Playhouse Square  
members.

Sept. 28 – 11 a.m., **Lake  
Erie College Alumni Week-**

**end book signing** at the EQ  
Brunch at the new Learning  
Center

Oct. 1 – 7 p.m., **Lakewood  
Historical Society** at Lake-  
wood Library