

THE FINE ART OF DRIVING By Renee Dubyk, Murder Hollow



*Allen Tucci and Renee Dubyk
at Windsor*

To begin, it would probably be best to explain the distinction between driving, coaching and four-in-hand driving. Driving, is simply hitching a horse to a cart, and can encompass various driving disciplines such as single or pair driving, coaching, or four-in-hand driving.

A four-in-hand is a carriage drawn by a hitch of four horses where the reins are held by a single driver, also known as the "Whip". In traditional English style, the reins are held in the left hand with assistance from the right. Combined driving and coaching both use four-in-hand driving.

Coaching involves driving a four-in-hand to a traditional road coach or park drag which are vehicles that would have been used during the Coaching Revival Period in the late 19th/early 20th century. When we turnout we strive to meet the modern-day equivalent of the elegance that would have accompanied the coach in the Coaching Revival Period. Ladies and men wear hats, gloves, lap robes and other functional and decorative elements. When showing in coaching classes, the overall turnout and careful composition of quality horses moving in harmony can be a significant factor in the judging. It is a sport steeped in tradition. Many coaching enthusiasts enjoy the history of their vehicles along with the accuracy in their appointments that accompany their turnouts.

Allen and I are excited to share our driving experiences with the ICAA community. We don't see many Appaloosas in the four-in-hand coaching sport and while I would LOVE a spotted team, I'm not sure Allen (or the coaching community) would be too keen on it... but we will wear them down in time. ☺ Many equestrians have encountered driving at some point in their lifetime – whether it was working for a driving operation or using some of the driving principles in starting a young horse (i.e. long lining). I'm always surprised at the number of people who also tell me they want to try driving at some point, particularly as they get older and still want to connect with their horses but might not feel physically confident to ride.



*Four-in-hand carriage. Renee with Whip, Allen,
and their Morgans at Devon.*



Allen at the Pendleton Roundup



Renee ground-driving their stallion, CTR Super Sonic, ICAA F4-2716. Renee would like to put him in a team of four someday.

Now to one of our favorite parts of the turnout, the horses. Depending on the type of vehicle being driven, the team is either required to match in color or can be a mixed color team. To complicate matters, the horses also need to match in size as well as movement. Putting together a team can be a daunting task. Not all driving horses are cut out to drive nicely in a team. Quiet horses that are willing to move forward and obey not just physical cues, but also verbal cues are best suited for the job. As a result, it's a bit of trial and error when building a team of four. There are a few popular breeds that are commonly seen in four-in-hand coaching such as Hackney horses and Gelderlanders. Traditionally, light draft breeds such as Friesians, were not considered to be acceptable breeds to put to a coach, but are more frequently being used in turnouts.

Allen grew up driving and has been training and driving horses for over 45 years and has done an excellent job of putting the current four-in-hand team together. Our current team is comprised of Lippitt bred Morgan horses. The team stands around 15h with many nearing or over 20 years old. We've found keeping the horses consistently fit enough to pull the larger carriages to become an increasingly difficult task as they have gotten older. As a result, we are working on building out our next team which will be comprised of taller 15.3h Hackney horses. Many of the Hackney horses were born, raised, and trained at our farm. According to the

latest Survival Trust numbers, Hackney horses are critically endangered, with less than 100 breeding mares in the world. Much like the foundation Appaloosa, the Hackney horse, prized for its elegant high-stepping trot, has been outcrossed and utilized as a staple in other breeds such as the Dutch Harness Horse. Over time, these outcrosses and a dwindling interest in driving has resulted in a reduction of pureblood stock which is now in a terrible state of near extinction. We are fortunate to now own one stallion, two broodmares, three fillies and two colts at the farm.

Allen's passion for driving has taken us to a number of shows and pleasure drives around the world. Last year, Allen was elected President of the Carriage Association of America (CAA) and in this role, he is helping spread awareness of the organization. For those of you who are not aware of CAA, the organization is devoted to preserving and promoting traditional carriage driving and is the leading U.S. and world resource for educating its members and the public about carriage makers, carriage restoration, carriage- and driving-related history, traditional standards of turnout, and more. If you wish to learn more about CAA, I encourage you to join or at least visit the website: <https://www.carriageassociationofamerica.com/>

We've been fortunate to form some wonderful friendships around the world through our love of horses & driving. On a recent trip to Scotland, we were able to visit Karen Paton, who now owns RDF Ti Kha Atta Rain (ICAA F4-2280), the sire of one of our stallions, CTR Super Sonic (ICAA F4-2716). Most recently, Allen traveled out to Oregon where he was invited to drive with friends at the Pendleton Roundup and Wagon Train. Allen was amazed at the Western experience and definitely spotted a few Appaloosas under saddle during the event. We've enjoyed getting to interact with various driving and riding disciplines to learn how others train and work through problems. It's amazing how much you can learn from one another.



*Renee with CTR Super Sonic, ICAA F4-2716,
hitched to a sleigh*



Allen with son Colin driving through their neighborhood