

Meet Linda Doran. We have a lovely student and boarder here named Linda Doran. I really enjoy her, so asked for an interview so that you could get to know her and enjoy her also.

Linda is an older student. I asked her how and when she started to ride. As a child, she attended boarding school. The school had riding. She saw the riding and wanted to participate, but it was not in the cards for her at the time. When Linda was turning 50, and had signed her last tuition check for her last child, she decided that it was time to learn to ride. She started out at a local stable riding one time a week. She hopped over a pole and decided that was so much fun that she wanted to learn how to jump.

Linda progressed on to a shared ownership with a horse. He needed a place with 24 hour turn out, so she came to Mystic Valley to board as we offered that option to her and her horse.

Presently, Linda owns a horse named Kilroe Bay. He is a 17 year old Irish Warmblood. He was named for a village in Ireland, where he came from. (Linda thought that it was neat that horses have passports when they travel out of their own country, and especially since Kilroe's was five times the size of her passport.) When I asked about Kilroe, she sighed and smiled. She said that he was the sweetest horse, great ground manners, and gives back to her, which makes him easy to bond with. As they are both older, she feels that she can relate to how he feels. He loves to jump. Even if his flatwork is not good on a particular day, his jumping always is.

Linda likes riding for a number of reasons. It is a mix of being very athletic and mentally challenging.

The mental aspect is interesting to Linda from different viewpoints as she is a professional therapist. She is an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (A.P.R.N.) with a private counseling practice in Mystic. She began her clinical work at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital with people dealing with terminal illness. For the past 20 years, in her private practice, she has worked with people in a variety of circumstances including recreational athletes wanting to improve their focus and concentration.

As a rider, Linda understands that something unexpected can happen anytime with horses. She has been asked to speak to equestrian clubs and presented at UCONN's Horse Symposium this past weekend on *Managing Anxiety and Fear in the Adult Rider*.

I asked Linda what advise she has for older students starting out. She replied, "to have the right instructor and the right horse and to remember that although we may not be as flexible as younger riders, and not bounce when we fall, we have the resources of lived experience that can help us find a way to make our dreams of riding come true."

What does Linda do when she is not at the barn or at work? She has 2 children, 4 grandchildren, and lives at the beach in Misquamicut with her partner of 15 years, Diane Goldsmith, and their takes Irish Setter, Finnian. She is eagerly awaiting slightly warmer ocean waters so she can enjoy her other major sport, body surfing.