

## FLIPSIDE: Teen rider has one Ty-riffic horse



George Washington High School senior Allison Boyd sits atop her horse Ty at a recent competition. Ty, who escaped from the 2003 fire that destroyed Evergreen Farm, became Boyd's horse after the previous owner had to sell him when she left for college.

By [Frannie Salisbury](#)

Weberwood Elementary School

On top of a hill in Pinch, a barn named Fiesta Farm stables about 45 horses and ponies. One of those is Ty.

Ty is a gigantic, shiny, dark brownish/black American Saddlebred. He measures almost 17 hands (68 inches) tall, which is fairly tall because they only measure him from his hooves to his withers, which is where his back and neck meet. Comparatively, the ponies at the barn measure about 12 hands (48 inches) tall.

His present owner is Allison Boyd, 17, a George Washington High School senior.

Ty's story began with a previous owner who had him for nearly two years. She showed Ty in Kanawha Valley Horseman's Association events and housed him at Evergreen Farm in the Alum Creek area.

Tragically, one summer day in 2003, Evergreen Farm burst into flames. Luckily, someone was there to open Ty's stall, and without any panic he led himself out of the barn and went straight to the field to eat grass.

"He loves grass. I know that's why he survived," Boyd said.

Ty was one of only 15 of the 32 horses that survived this unfortunate disaster.

After that, his owner had to sell him because she was going to college. Boyd said it was very hard for the girl to give him up. "She did not want to, but knew she had to," Boyd said.

At the time, Boyd had been riding two years and had been searching for a horse for six months. She had gone to a horse auction and tried a number of horses recommended by her riding instructor. When she was introduced to and rode Ty, she fell in love with him immediately.

Now Boyd and Ty -- also known by his show name, Springhurst -- have won more than 100 ribbons together.

"He never makes any mistakes," Boyd said proudly.

"When in the practice arena you need to be patient with him and always remember to reward him when he is good. You can't be a lazy rider, and you need to stay after him to know when he needs an extra push or bump."

This past show season, Boyd did an extraordinary job with Ty. They ended up taking Reserve Champion -- the second highest scorer -- in the Juvenile American Saddlebred Country

Pleasure class, which looks for well-behaved, obedient horses ages 17 and younger that smoothly transition between gaits (walking, trotting, cantering).

It takes a lot of time and effort to own a horse. Boyd quit ballet and piano to take good care of Ty. He needs to be ridden three to four times a week and Boyd stays in the stall with him to really connect.

She said there's one trick to really connecting with him -- "Treats!"

Ty's favorite treats are Lipton green tea and bananas. If Boyd walks in the barn with a bottle of green tea, Ty has to have the whole bottle.

Next year Boyd will be going to college and will have to leave Ty. "I will really miss him," she said, but added that she'll be sure to make it home on weekends to ride him and sneak him a bottle of green tea and a banana.