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12th May, 2008

Governor Steve Beshear
700 Capitol Avenue, Suite 100
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Subject : Threat to Kentucky's Equestrian Heritage

Dear Governor Beshear,

Earlier this month the nation's literary liberty, and Kentucky's equestrian heritage, came under an unprecedented monopolistic attack when the Amazon corporation attempted to seize control of the production and distribution of America's books.

In a bid to gain financial control of the publishing industry, Amazon presented publishers with an ultimatum. Switch to their company's printing facility or have the "buy" buttons on their famous marketing website disabled in retaliation. The ensuing blitzkrieg saw one publisher alone having 70,000 titles silenced when his company dared to resist.

While that news is alarming, this communication isn't just about books. This letter is being sent so as to draw your attention to the fact that a vital international portion of Kentucky's equestrian reputation is also threatened.

Though it enjoys a statewide reputation for hosting the "Highland Games," Glasgow, Kentucky is known world-wide as being the home of The Long Riders' Guild, the world's first international association of equestrian explorers.

Every major equestrian exploration alive today belongs to The Guild including: Hadji Shamsuddin of Afghanistan, who recently rode a thousand miles through that war-zone, Jean-Louis Gouraud of France, who rode 3,000 miles from Paris to Moscow, Claudia Gottet of Switzerland, who rode 8,000 miles from Arabia to the Alps, Adnan Azzam of Syria, who rode 10,000 miles from Madrid to Mecca, and Vladimir Fissenko of Russia, who rode 19,000 miles from Patagonia to Alaska.

Additionally, nearly a hundred of these extraordinary Long Riders are also Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society, including:

Sir John Ure KCMG LVO, who rode across the Andes -

Stephen McCutcheon, of England, who is currently riding 10,000 miles solo from Delhi to Peking -

Gordon Naysmith, of Scotland, who rode 14,000 kilometres from South Africa to Austria -

Pedro Luiz de Aguiar, of Brazil, who at the age of seventy made an 18,000 mile journey across Latin America and -

Robin Hanbury-Tenison OBE, who has made a number of equestrian expeditions in all parts of the world, including riding the length of China's Great Wall.

Furthermore, at two-thousand plus pages, and still growing, and having now been visited by more than a million people world-wide, The Long Riders' Guild website (www.thelongridersguild.com) is the repository of the largest collection of equestrian travel information in human history. Additionally The Guild's publishing arm, The Long Riders' Guild Press, has published nearly 300 titles in eight languages, making it the world's premier source of equestrian exploration wisdom.

Thus, while Kentucky looks to Keeneland for race horses, the world looks to Kentucky when it thinks of equestrian exploration.

Yet The Guild's tiny independent publishing company is next in line to be attacked and we are currently awaiting the on-coming destruction of nearly ten years of unprecedented literary labour.

That is why we are writing to you, Governor Beshear.

On your website you acknowledge how you have worked with and enjoyed horses in your past. You also said, "We often look to the past to find clues to the future."

In an ironic twist of fate, the equestrian past, represented by The Long Riders' Guild, is now endangered by the future represented by the Lexington based Amazon corporation. This IS a Kentucky issue.

As equestrian explorers, my wife and I have had to face a multitude of dangers in the saddle. We have done so fearlessly. Yet we realize that the danger facing us, and so many thousands of other publishers and authors, is too enormous to attempt alone.

That is why we are writing to you today, Governor Beshear, to request you to consider this petition for aid in our hour of desperate need, by ordering an immediate investigation into this assault on America's literary legacy and Kentucky's equestrian heritage
In closing, though we appreciate the complexity of your daily schedule, as well as the international obligations under which you labour, we trust you can have a member of your staff contact us without delay regarding this emergency? In anticipation of your response, and to alleviate the grave concerns of the American publishing community, this letter will be published on the websites listed below and provided to our readers in thirty-nine countries.

Many thanks in advance for your attention and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

CuChullaine O'Reilly FRGS

Enclosures: Editorial by Publisher CuChullaine O'Reilly
Interview with Publisher Basha O'Reilly
Research article by The Long Riders' Guild Academic Foundation

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www.horsetravelbooks.com
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