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Sonoma County

HORSE JOURNAL



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Sonoma County

HORSE JOURNAL

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Cover Photo:
KELLY KENNEALLY

BEST DAY EVER—Just look at the joy on the faces of Carlie Leyden (left) on Docs Impressive Plug and Taylor Dean on NW Rubicon as these good friends ride through Hansen Vineyards in the Russian River Valley.

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Patti Schofler is the managing editor of the *Horse Journal*, a publicist and freelance writer for national equestrian sports magazines. She began her writing career as a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* and is author of the Lyons Press book on Arabian horses *Flight Without Wings*. Passionate about journalism and dressage, art and travel, she is a graduate of the USDF L Judges Education Program and trains her eight-year-old PRE Toledano.



Rosemary Passantino was a city girl until a yearling mustang changed her life. She now lives outside the town of Sonoma, and works as a communications specialist for Marin County Parks. She enjoys gardening and having fun with her two horses, mustang Reno and Quarter Horse Zip.



Award-winning sculptor **Jacquelyn Giuffré** combines her love of nature and science by sculpting animals. She takes endless inspiration from travels to Sub-Saharan Africa, Morocco, South America, and Southeast Asia. Although she maintains a studio in Napa, much of her time is spent studying animals at the San Diego Zoo. For several years, she has served as detail animal artist/ coordinator and an onsite botanical artist for Fiesta Parade Floats at the Tournament of Roses Parade, Pasadena, California, creating textures using botanical materials including petals, grasses and seeds. www.jgiuffresculpture.com



Susan Weaver Banta is a transplant from the East Coast, making Petaluma her home three years ago. She is a life-long amateur hunter-jumper rider with a career in human resources, including 17 years at PricewaterhouseCoopers. For many years she was fortunate to be a pioneer of working remotely, allowing her to compete in Florida and the northeast. Now retired, she rides, writes, and is a volunteer mediator with Recourse Mediation Services at the Sonoma Superior Court.

If you are interested in writing for the Horse Journal, please contact Patti Schofler, editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org



Gwen Kilchherr is a longtime Sonoma County landscape consultant and designer. She hosts the Saturday morning KSRO 1350 AM "Garden Talk" show. Gwen is a member of Sonoma County Chapter of the California Dressage Society and has volunteered at many of their events. She recently purchased the nephew of her mare Cleo. His name is Quest and like Cleo he is a Holsteiner from Oregon. She is excited to have both horses and herself in training with Lori Cook.



Michelle Beko, DVM, has been an equine veterinarian since 1991. She enjoys spending time with her husband and daughter, eventing her horse Zeke, hiking and traveling. She can be reached at Empire Equine, (707) 545-3903. www.empire-equine.com



Gina Ruth is a hunter/jumper trainer who specializes in starting and developing young horses, as well as working with horses experiencing behavioral challenges. Gina's style draws on diverse equestrian traditions and emphasizes shared communication between horses and riders. Gina teaches and trains at Hawkwood Hill Farm in Petaluma. www.openwaterfarms.org



Shonna Berk grew up in Southern California and rode in the hunter jumper show world from age seven to 14. After moving to Portland, Oregon, and receiving a degree in psychology, Shonna spent the next few years teaching beginner riding lessons, and working for various hunter jumper and dressage trainers. She landed a job as a traveling groom for Cavalia Odysseo where she met Pinsapo, her 13-year-old PRE gelding who she adopted in 2017. The pair especially enjoy trail rides all over Sonoma County. In 2019, Shonna started West Coast Magnawave, LLC, offering PEMF (pulsed electromagnetic fields) to horses, people, and small animals.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Driven by our efforts to represent the equine community, your Sonoma County Horse Council (SCHC) is joining the discussions in search for a healthy interaction among all users on local park trails, especially between horses and bicycles.

Talks have arisen within the hiking and biking communities about the applicability and place for electrically assisted bikes (e-bikes) on the trails. That conversation needs to necessarily be extended into our community. Even in heavily used areas, some trails may have seemed relatively safe from surprise bicycle activity because they were just too steep for high-speed uphill runs. That paradigm is now changing with the advent of powerful and quiet assist motors that can allow bikers to scream up formerly peaceful and predictable trails.

Another very bumpy ride today is our relationship with Mother Nature both in terms of Covid 19, its variants and what we perceive as normalcy, and the drought.

We were buoyed in early summer by the thought that our days of mask wearing had come to an end only to be reminded that Mother Nature has her own ideas and that she will let us know when it's safe to no longer worry. Regardless of what the media's message *du jour* is saying, we appear to be on a fairly steady course of putting the pandemic behind us. Although the virus is expected to be around for years to come, reasonable care and prudent thinking on everyone's part should help us get back to life as we know it.

The drought, however, is not in our ability to resolve in the short term. Many in our community are seriously water-challenged and working to find individual solutions. We see a noticeable

increase in the number of potable water trucks on the road these days, hauling water from city hydrants to the far reaches of the county 3,000 gallons at a time. We hope that you have been able to secure your water sources, either from your own wells or from neighbors or services and that you and your animals are safe and well hydrated. Cool thinking and careful planning are key until we return to normal rainfall.

Other subjects that need attention on the part of horse owners include manure management plans. For those of you in sensitive watershed areas, please make sure that you are complying with requirements from local water boards. Bowing to modern bureaucratic methodology, some may be required to have written plans even though there is no apparent concern for pollution. My point here is to remind people to be aware of local requirements in the ever-changing landscape of governmental oversight and not get caught off guard.

On a most joyful note, SCHC had such a great turnout at our summer "meet and greet" that we will be following up with more get togethers, surely a sign that there is a turnaround on the horizon.

Once again, we have a terrific group of stories in this issue along with some artful levity from Jacque Giuffré. Enjoy the reading and please support our advertisers.

Happy Trails!
Henry Beaumont

John O'Hara Photography



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Julian Bermejo



Jesse Graves

RUSSIAN RIVER RIDERS AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

The Russian River Riders has awarded two \$500 scholarships to recent Healdsburg High School graduates **Julian Bermejo** and **Jesse Graves**.

Graduating with an average 4.13 grade point, Julian Bermejo's many extracurricular activities include soccer for which he was captain of two teams, received a varsity letter, and was named Defensive Player of the Year and Rookie of the Year by the Healdsburg High soccer team. He actively rode horses, trained Mexican dancing horses and rode them in parades. His teachers were impressed with his math skills and comprehension, his enthusiastic participation in school activities and his dedication to learning, honesty and sense of responsibility. He is attending University of California at Berkeley, majoring in Economics.

Jesse Graves worked hard and participated vigorously in extracurricular activities, especially those connected with nature. The Boy Scouts inspired him to appreciate the beauty of mountains and wildlife and to work on projects such as cleaning up the Russian River. Active in Future Farmers of America, he raised and showed pigs. He enrolled in higher level school classes while enjoying varsity wrestling, track, basketball, and tennis, and playing in the high school band. One of his favorite activities was at Red's Riding School, teaching children to ride and take care of horses. His teachers characterize him as a highly motivated hard worker. He is attending college in Montana, majoring in fish and wildlife ecology and conservation.

OCTOBER 24 IS FULL OF FUN

On October 24, **Wine Country Arabian Horse Association** will hold its annual All Breed Halloween Schooling Show at Fairwind Farm, 2276 Crane Canyon Road, Santa Rosa. Contact Debbie Wiegmann 707-321-7060.

October 23-24 **Chris Ellsworth** returns to Hoofbeats Park, 300 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg, with his horsemanship clinic. Contact Claire at 307-689-8375, chrise Ellsworthhorsemanship.com. To preorder pens and lunches, contact Marci Cook at mloucookie@gmail.com by October 10.

GOT MANURE?

The Santa Rosa Junior College's (SRJC) Shone Farm is looking for a sustained supply of clean horse manure. The Farm has installed a state-of-the-art covered aerated static pile (CASP) compost system that significantly reduces emissions from the

composting process while operating a more efficient process. This system will allow the farm to increase organic matter in their soils and mitigate climate change. The CASP system is used for education through composting class and other workshops.

The manure must be free of contaminants, specifically clopyralid, an herbicide that does not break down in the composting process. Donors must provide a lab test demonstrating that the manure is clopyralid free. The farm could use about 50 cubic yards per month. For more information contact Will Bakx, adjunct instructor at the SRJC, at wbakx@santarosa.edu.



APPLYING FOR WATER TROUGHS

The Sonoma County Regional Parks Foundation has applied for a grant from the nonprofit Bay Area Barns and Trails organization (BABT) to fund trenching, pipes, and a water trough at Helen Putnam Park to provide the horses with fresh water. Bay Area Barns and Trails has made major investments in Putnam Park including a \$5,000 grant to the Sonoma County Regional Parks Foundation to improve the trailer parking.



Photo: Patti Scholler

SCHC MEET AND GREET AMONG FRIENDS

Over 80 members and guests of the Sonoma County Horse Council (SCHC) shared a lovely summer afternoon barbeque, wine, and conversation at Tomrose Ranch in Santa Rosa. Stay tuned for more "meet and greets" in the near future.

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Please contact us at: info@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

HORSES AT HOME

Your Dream Come True or Your Worst Nightmare

By Patti Schofler



Photo: Marshall Patterson

Fantine checks in at her home barn.

As you see it, you would be living the dream if you had a pony living in your backyard. This lyrical vision of life with horses at home, however, can tarnish as the reality hits. And maybe that's okay. For most people with horses at home the gain far outweighs the loss—until it doesn't.

This double-edged sword experience begins when you wake up early to get ready for your day and look out your window to see three handsome horse faces looking towards the house for answers to how their day will go. At the other end of that day, you return home to find three horses standing side by side in the

pasture staring at you in a way that causes you to suspect trouble. In the barn you find a stall has turned into a lake because one of the suspicious looking characters broke the automatic waterer.

"For as much time as I spend around horses for work, I still enjoy seeing my own at home," described farrier Steve Swanson of Sebastopol. "I like having them there. My mare I bred and raised is 21 and she's never lived anywhere else."

Hanging out with the horses is a major upside for having horses at home. Cleaning stalls becomes less a chore and more a chance to be with them, and even a therapy as many found out during COVID 19 and the fires.

After years of boarding all over Sonoma County, Lisa Bacon of Santa Rosa has had horses at home for 20 years. She and her family actually moved into their horses' home, the barn, and stayed for three years when that was the only building on their property left standing after the 2017 Nun's Canyon fire.

"My son Jackson's room was over his pony's stall, and Grommet would whinny every morning to tell him to get up. Because you are the ones who feed and care for them when they live with you, they become very attached to you," Lisa said.

On the other hand, you become very attached to their care. When they are in the backyard, you are in charge of everything. You can monitor exactly how much water they drink and how much food they eat. You can change their supplements in a moment's notice. "You can go crazy watching every step they take," Lisa warned.

When Steve's horse injured a suspensory ligament, he was grateful to have her at home because it was easier for him to care for her. When he got home from work in the evening, he could hand walk her, even though it was winter and dark and cold.

More rewarding was the experience of having two horses born at home. "That was two good experiences. If you do breeding, it's a lot easier to have the youngsters at your own place. You don't have to raise them at your place, but if not, you miss out on seeing them meeting new experiences and handling them regularly."

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS ON COSTS

Whether or not you save money having horses at home is debatable and depends on how you calculate the costs. How many horses would you have to board if they weren't at home? Do you need to build an arena? How is the fencing? Is there someone to feed them if you're not home? Do you have paid help? How much is your labor worth?

"There are a lot of hidden costs you don't realize. Putting in a small arena costs a small fortune. Farm equipment costs considerably to purchase and maintain. So, with one horse, it might be better to board," Steve advised.

Lisa joked that she definitely saves gas because at one point she had her English horse at one facility and her western horse at another, and she often visited both of them twice a day. "With multiple horses it's cheaper at home. But you need to consider property tax and the cost of your labor."

Country property requires considerable maintenance and who does that work may save or add to the cost of horses at home. It may seem obvious that having horses at home is time consuming, but perhaps, like hidden costs, there may be more work than you anticipated.

"Whether it's the rider or not, someone has to have an interest in working around the place. It works out even better if you find it rewarding," Steve contended. "Driving the tractor, mowing, weeding, making repairs. We know how destructive horses can be.



Photo Courtesy of Lisa Bacon

Jackson goes for a night ride.

Dressage rider Pam Tuft's father raised her to believe that women can do anything that men can do. "I was taught to work on cars, change spark plugs, tires and oil," she said. Pam and husband Sam do all their own maintenance and construction on their 2.5 acres where they have lived with their horses since 1985. They built their barn, reroofed the house, tore down the barbed wire fencing and replaced it with safe horse fencing. Sam doesn't really ride, but he cleans a mean stall, grooms the arena when she can't, and does the muscle work on the ranch.

THE DAILY PHYSICAL LABOR BEATS THE GYM

"At home they're yours 24/7. It's your every waking moment," Pam added about the four horses she has at home, ranging in age from eight to 34. "It's daily physical labor, and that's better for my body than if someone else cared for the horses and I just showed up."

Every day someone has to feed and check on them. Lisa feeds at 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. "You're the one who blankets and unblankets. You do it all."

Now that Sam and Pam are retired, they can feed three times a day. Pam's daughter reminded her how holiday celebrations, including present opening, had to wait until stalls were cleaned and horses were fed. "On rainy, stormy days and beautiful sunny days, the animals always come first."

In any scenario the cost and availability of hay is a challenge these days, but especially for those with horses as home. The larger facilities with several horses usually receive a discounted rate on their contracted hay bought from farmers. "They can negotiate the price. I'm buying four bales at a time from the feed store at a set price, and every time we buy, it's new hay," said Lisa. "I keep half a bale so I can slowly integrate the new hay with the old hay."

Another reason why a single horse at home is not the best scenario is that we know that horses do best in a herd. However, the number of horses at home can grow exponentially. First a horse needs a companion. Then if one horse

You get the fence looking nice and then they wreck it. Then there is plumbing and electrical. You can bring in a pro to do it right, but when there is an emergency, you need to be able to patch it together so you don't run out of water or the barn doesn't burn down because of an electrical problem."

"This year we weed-whacked the entire property and the hours that went into that were crazy," said Lisa.

often goes out for lessons, shows, or trail rides, the horse left at home needs a buddy. Then the companion horse needs a companion horse—or a donkey.

MISSING THE HUMAN HERD

At a boarding facility the "herd" is bigger, and separating your horse from the others does not lead to as much drama. Often when the two at-home buddies go out together, they can be stuck together like glue. At a recent playday, Lisa's son's horse Indigo was challenged by having to go calmly down to the end of the arena away from his roommate Vegas.

The human herd at home is also smaller than that at the boarding facility. One pleasure of boarding at a public barn is the camaraderie, the joy of riding with your buddies, and the support and shared knowledge from other horse people.

At home, you may need to form a team to fulfill all these needs. When horses are at home, you mostly ride alone. "When I'm in the arena and Sam's outside, he can keep his eye on me. But because of my career, I had many night meetings. We had lights in the arena because when I came home from night meetings I would ride, sometimes at 11:30. The lights would wake up Sam and he knew I was home."

Getting away from the ranch for a vacation or even for a day is perhaps the biggest challenge with horses at home. "It's really hard for me because I worry about the horses," said Lisa. "We usually have someone stay on the property to watch over them for us."

The chief need to handle the complexities of having horses at home is a commitment to your herd. Getting up in the middle of a stormy night to assure their safety? Not dismissing that nagging feeling in the late afternoon that you need to get home to feed? Not just showing up to ride, but also having to drag the arena so you can ride? Cleaning stall? Mending fences?

In the meantime, you might be missing the chance to learn from that team at the boarding stable.

Or look at your home team who is happy to see you morning, noon and night. And who better to learn about horses from than the horses? 🐾



Pam Tuft can watch her horses from her front porch. Photo: Patti Schofler



HORSE BOARDING CHECKLIST

Should you be looking for a place to board a new horse or searching to make a change from your current barn, this checklist should help to get your thoughts in order and ask the helpful questions. Our thanks to www.equineinfoexchange.com

HEALTH RELATED

1. Veterinarian – Who do they use as a vet? Does your vet service this new barn?
2. Feet – Who do they use as a farrier? Does your farrier service this new barn? How are the feet of the other horses in the barn?
3. Horse Weight – Do the horses look well fed or are they skinny?
4. Water – Do they have an automatic watering system? If so, are the dispensers clean? If not, is there ample water and are the buckets clean?
5. Feed – Do they carry your brand of feed? Is the feed and hay high quality? If not, will they order it for you or do they have something comparable? Is it stored in a clean and dry place?
6. Medication – Does your horse require special medication or supplements? Is there an additional charge?
7. Turnout – How are the paddocks? Are they well maintained? Are there any broken boards or nails? Will my horse have a paddock buddy or be turned out alone – or with many horses? Is there a run-in shed? Are the paddocks cleaned? How long will they be turned out every day? Are they turned out at night or during the day? Does your horse have issues with being turned out next to mares or geldings? What type of fencing do they use and is it secure? Is turnout grassy or muddy?
8. Bedding – Do they use shavings, sawdust, straw or some thing else? Are you satisfied with the depth of the bedding?
9. Stall Mucking – How many times a day do they muck stalls? Can you pick out the stalls if you choose to help?
10. Coggins – Do they require a Coggins test prior to shipping in? (They should!)
11. Owner Information – Is there a sign outside each stall with the name of the horse, owner, veterinarian and other information in case of emergency?

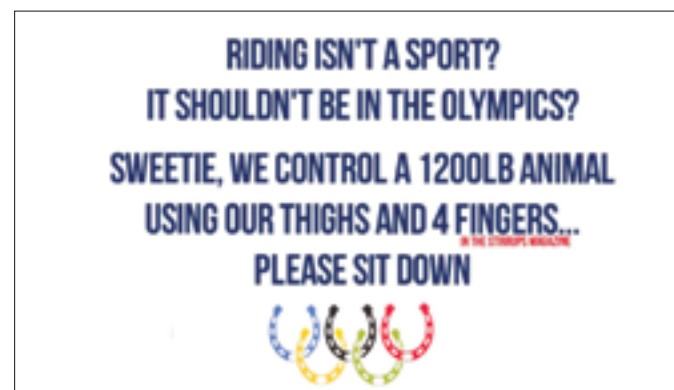
BARN RELATED

1. Ventilation/Cleanliness – Are the stalls/barns well ventilated? Are they clean? Are there lots of cobwebs? Are the aisles blown or washed? Is there a foul odor or does the barn smell clean?
2. Wash Stalls – Are the wash stalls available and clean?
3. Tack Room – Is there ample place for your tack and tack trunk? Are people respectful or does everyone “share” and use each other’s brushes, fly spray, etc.? Is there an identification system so people know what belongs to whom?
4. Indoor Arena – Is it well lit, ventilated, and maintained? Do you like the footing?

5. Stalls – Which stall will you be assigned? Is it big enough for your horse? Is it clean and well ventilated? Are you happy with the location in the barn and the horses next door? If there is a runout, is the outdoor space maintained? Is the ice issue addressed in the winter?
6. Location – Is it close enough for you to see your horse?
7. Access – Is it easy to drive in? Are there potholes in the summer, ice in the winter and is the driveway appropriately plowed when it snows?
8. Warning Signs – Are the paddocks near the road where the public can access the horses? If so, are there signs not to feed the horses or give them treats?

OPERATIONS & CULTURE RELATED

1. Hours – Does the barn have set hours? If so, are they in line with your riding or visiting schedule?
2. Drama – Is the barn free of drama and pettiness?
3. Cost / Value – Can you afford to board at this new place? Does the money they are charging match the value of what they are offering?
4. Barn Rules – Are you happy with the barn rules?
5. Security & Safety – Is your horse safe? Do you feel safe



6. Kids - Do you have kids and enjoy seeing them ride, especially during times of “summer camp”? Do you want to escape kids and ensure that it is an adult only barn?
7. Horse Profile - Do they like your type of horse? Do they have issues with some colors or breeds, e.g., chestnut Thoroughbred mares?
8. References – Do people you know and respect recommend this facility?
9. Lessons/Training – Do they offer lessons or training? Do you want/need them? Is there a schedule to know when the arena may be crowded/off limits? Is there an online sign up or notifications? Is it possible to take a lesson with the trainer onsite to see if you fit well together? Other wise, do they allow outside trainers in?
10. Events – Do they host events, clinics, or horse shows? If so, do you want to participate? If not, does that impact your visiting/riding your horse? If it is a show barn and you don’t show, do you have to pay a fee anyway? (Yes, this actually exists!) Does the barn often go to shows together or have events, like barn happy hours or holiday parties? Do you want to come socialize or just ride and leave?
11. Communication – Are they receptive to your questions or are they defensive? Do they offer text or email alerts? How do they communicate in case of emergency?
12. Staff – Are there enough people working there or is the owner/manager completely overwhelmed? Is the staff experienced, especially if it is related to your discipline?

13. Number of Horses – If you have more than one horse, is there a multiple horse discount? Do they require a minimum number of horses per boarder?
14. Trailering – Do they have a trailer if you want to go on a trip? Or, if you need to go to a clinic or an emergency?
15. Trailer Parking – Is there a place to park your trailer, and if so, do they charge a fee for it?
16. Level of Riders - Are they like you? Are there beginners and you are experienced?
17. Discipline of Riders – Do they ride in the same discipline as you? If not, are you OK (and are they OK) if you have a different discipline?
18. Owner/Manager – Do they have experience? Do they live onsite or offsite? If offsite, how much time do they spend at the barn?
19. Trails – If you trail ride, do they have trails? Are there other people who may be available to ride with you?
20. Night Check – Is there night check? Are there security cameras to see anything suspicious or alert someone when there is a sick horse?
21. Payment – What is the board amount? What are the terms (beginning/end of the month)? Is check best or do they prefer Venmo, PayPal, or other methods of payment? Do they have a late fee for payments and if so, can you meet the terms? What is their policy if you choose not to stay long-term? Do you need 30-day notice to leave? Some barns state on contracts that if the boarder defaults on payment the horse can be held for collateral.

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The National Park Service's MORGAN HORSE RANCH

By Rosemary Passantino

On February 25, 1995, a colt was born in West Marin's Bear Valley, named for the giant grizzlies that once freely roamed, but were long gone. Loggers and developers looking to cash in on the rich, scenic lands had been outwitted by ranchers and preservationists who aligned in support of a new park, Point Reyes National Seashore, signed into existence by President John F. Kennedy in 1962. One of those ranchers, Boyd Stewart, came from a family that claimed to have bred Morgan horses in California for a hundred years.

Amidst the ongoing political and land acquisition wrangling that marked the early days of designating Point Reyes National Seashore as public land, Stewart aimed to continue his family's horse breeding tradition within the new park. With the aid of the Northern California horse community, Morgan Horse Ranch opened in 1970. John L. Sansing, park superintendent at that time, said the purpose of the ranch was "to provide an interpretive experience for youngsters and adults of the Bay Area and the nation of seeing and watching these beautiful animals and to provide Morgan horses for ranger patrol and backcountry work in National Parks." Stewart, an old-school cattleman who grew up riding the ranges of western Marin County, continued rallying support for Morgan Horse Ranch and Point Reyes National Seashore throughout his long life, serving as an advisor to the National Park Service and the Coastal Parks Association.

ROCK STAR RESIDENT

Honcho, the colt born 26 years ago, is by most accounts the last resident with the bloodlines brought to Point Reyes by the likes of Boyd Stewart. He's been called a "rock star" and a "national park treasure." Some say his papered name, Los Reyes Don Primero, as well as his nickname, is derived from a park superintendent whose career ended in ignominy.

But Honcho didn't let that bad name karma get in the way of a distinguished career. He packed rangers on countless patrols out and back to Wildcat, Limantour, and beyond. He took part in



Photo: Patti Schoffler

Honcho, the ranch's senior resident, and pasture mate Rose greet visitors.

many an elk census. He travelled to Death Valley and Yosemite to help train other Park Service horses and novice ranger riders. He walked in the Point Reyes Station's Western Day Parade, Petaluma's Egg and Butter Day Festival Parade, and in 2015, the Tournament of Roses Parade, to celebrate the National Park Service centennial.



Photo Courtesy of Morgan Horse Ranch

At a fundraiser for the Morgan Horse Ranch, Chief Ranger Julie Byerly introduces fans to the newest member of the herd, seven-year-old Knight Hawk.

Some horses display extraordinary resilience living amidst the inevitable parade of human foibles. Things have changed quite a bit at the ranch and out in the world over the 26 years of Honcho's life. By the early 2000s, a gentleman's status was no longer measured in sires and dams. Boyd Stewart, the ranch's champion, and other notable local supporters of this living history program had passed away. The number of people hiking at the seashore skyrocketed, but visitors to the Morgan Horse Ranch dwindled. By 2016, there was talk that the predominantly volunteer run Morgan Horse Ranch might be closed.

At that point, only a handful of horses, including Honcho, remained, down from a herd of 35 to 40 horses in its heyday when the breeding program produced 73 horses. As foals were born, mature animals trained at the ranch were transferred to other parks. For many years classes were also held at the ranch to train park rangers in horsemanship.

HISTORY OF THE MORGAN HORSE

The Morgan horse bears the distinction of being the only American breed of horse descending from a single foundation sire. In 1795, Vermont choirmaster Justin Morgan was given a horse as payment for his musical services. Figure, as Justin named him, was a reddish-brown-colored bay stallion. He was short in stature, not much bigger than a pony. Morgan leased Figure to a local farmer as a workhorse to clear a woodlot. Much to the farmer's surprise, there was no log too large for Figure to pull. What he lacked in size, he more than compensated for in strength. Figure outpulled and outran all the other horses in the area. He was also known for his calm and steady temperament. After Figure died in 1821, his offspring who resembled him in size, form, character, and temperament became known as the Morgan horse breed.



Photo: Patti Schoffler

Ranger Bonnie Phillips halts the seven-year-old Gentry to take him on patrol through the park.

A FRESH START FOR THE MORGAN RANCH

Three and half years ago, newly appointed Chief Ranger Julie Byerly rode into town. Along with Visitor and Resource Protection Division Park Rangers Emily Henderson and Bonnie Phillips, she is bringing new energy to the Morgan Horse Ranch and managing the ranch as a committee. Chief Byerly described the Morgan Horse Ranch as "a place with a cool, original, unique history that I haven't experienced elsewhere in the national parks. It deserves to be preserved and revitalized."

She envisions maintaining a four-horse unit to patrol, participate in rescue operations, and attend public events on behalf of Point Reyes and the National Park Service. Last June, an open house celebration of the ranch drew over 100 visitors.

Before being promoted to Point Reyes, Chief Byerly had patrolled Yosemite, Grand Teton, and Big Bend on horseback. She is enthusiastic about rangers riding horses. "I've never had a more meaningful interaction with the public than when I am on a horse. People see you riding in your uniform and everyone wants to talk to you. It makes it easier to speak to visitors about how they can be good stewards of the land."



Photo: Patti Schoffler

At the Morgan Horse Ranch, several exhibits of artifacts and photos explain the world of horses and specifically the Morgan horse.

attitude. He's a grandpa with attitude."

The young horses are not the only ones who need training. Most rangers these days don't come equipped with horse riding or

As for Honcho, Chief Byerly expressed warm feelings. "He was born here, and he has never lived anywhere else. He's not going anywhere. He still likes to go out, but at his age we don't ask him to climb Mt. Wittenberg."

She noted that Honcho's current duties include settling in new recruits. Two younger Morgan geldings, Knight Hawk and Gentry, purchased with the help of donations, are currently in training. "Honcho is the herd boss. He's confident and unflappable, but he still has a bit of an

horse husbandry skills. One of Chief Byerly's goals is to send rangers and horses to a Western States Mounted Officers training, typically held in October in Norco, California. The forty-hour classes include rider equitation, crowd control, and desensitization to lights, sirens, and other stimulation horses will encounter in emergency situations. She estimates the cost of sending four horses and four rangers at \$6,000. To fund this training, donations are needed.

WORTHY NEED FOR FUNDING

Chief Byerly noted that the horse ranch must be bolstered against the vagaries of federal budget allocations. "Many parks have moved away from horses. I want to make the Morgan Horse Ranch self-sustaining, so that it can continue in perpetuity, through whatever financial hardships might come."

From the start founder Boyd Stewart understood that the survival of the Morgan Horse Ranch depended on community support. Historic notes indicate the first seven yearlings at the ranch received 12 hours of training per week, provided by an unnamed local volunteer horseman. Present day volunteers Liz Harris and Tara Behrsing are examples of the dedication the place and these horses inspire. Liz Harris has donated time to the ranch since 1986, ten years before Honcho was born. Tara Behrsing has volunteered since 2005. Others join in on a variety of tasks from repairing the outbuildings that house informational exhibits to gardening and caring for barn cats.

The volunteers will remind you that although Honcho often steals the limelight, the other horses also need time and attention. The two new guys are just getting going, learning how to navigate 40,000 acres of designated wilderness. Rose (Los Reyes Liberty Rose) the last filly born at the ranch, is age 21 and has some health issues. Her half-brother Elvis (Los Reyes El Rey) is also there. It's a very rare thing today for a working horse to be given a forever home, and not all remain as robust as Honcho in their later years.



Photo: Patti Schoffler

The main barn is among the traditional ranch buildings at the Morgan Horse Ranch located near the Bear Valley Visitors Center at Point Reyes National Seashore.

The Morgan Horse Ranch is open to the public seven days a week and horse ranch staff and/or volunteers are usually present from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Interpretive exhibits in the ranch buildings and outside provide information about the history of the Morgan horse, the ranch, and how the horses were trained.

The Morgan Horse Ranch is located on a small hill to the southwest of the Bear Valley Visitor Center. To visit, walk up the maintenance road located at the southeastern end of the Bear Valley Trailhead parking lot.

Information on making a tax-deductible donation to the preservation of the Morgan Horse Ranch is available at the visitor center, or search online for the Point Reyes National Seashore Association Morgan Horse Fund.



Jacqueline Winspear's Love of Horses is Not a Mystery

By Patti Schofler



Mystery writer Jacqueline Winspear competes in dressage aboard her horse Oliver.

Photo Courtesy of Jacqueline Winspear

When you're reading a Maisie Dobbs mystery, something tells you that New York Times bestselling author Jacqueline Winspear knows horses. No, these aren't horse books, but horses appear in Winspear's novels with considerable authenticity.

A scrupulous researcher, Jacqueline points out that horses were part of life in central London in the first half of the twentieth century, the time period in which her books are set. What's more, Jacqueline has two obsessions: writing and horses, especially dressage horses.

Her dual passions dictate the rhythm of her day. After a morning walk, Jacqueline sits down to write for four hours. After a bit to eat, she goes to the barn, rides her horse, and spends as much time at the barn as she can. Then the British expat returns to her California home, has a cup of tea, and writes for a couple more hours.

The disciplined schedule has enabled Jacqueline to turn out 16 historical mysteries since 2002. Fans have followed the adventures of British investigator and psychologist Maisie Dobbs through World War I and into World War II. Jacqueline has also penned two nonfiction books and another novel set during World War I.

Jacqueline and husband John Morell were residents of Marin County until a year ago, but the horse-crazy kid grew up in the rural county of Kent, England, where a horse was out of reach for her family. The closest riding stable was at a boarding school attended by the likes of Princess Anne. But Jacqueline jumped on a horse whenever the chance presented itself.

She got her love of horses from her late father, Albert Winspear, who rode London cart horses when he was a kid, and she relates the tale of how her father learned to ride.

Toward the end of World War II, while serving in the British military, Albert Winspear was stationed at a barracks in Germany where the Nazis had housed cavalry mounts. "The Germans had hightailed it out of there, but they left the groom to care for the horses, and the groom taught my father how to ride like a gentleman," she said.

Jacqueline herself was a largely self-taught rider until her twenties, when she began learning to ride "properly," as she puts it, with an equestrian education that included jumping and dressage.

Then in 1990, she moved to California, living, writing and riding mostly in Marin County where she eventually rode



with dressage trainers Pam Andrews and Becky Cushman.

Writing and dressage have many similarities, Jacqueline contended. "The wonderful writer and great horsewoman Monica Dickens, the great-granddaughter of Charles Dickens, said, 'Riding is a complicated joy; it's never quite the same, and you never know it all.' And it's the same with writing. Every time you warm up your horse, you're back to the same basics. When riding on any day, you could be doing an exercise or movement that someone is being asked to do on the very first day they get on a horse. And every time you start a new writing project, you have the same blank page ahead of you, and you're in the warm-up."

And both pursuits, of course, require discipline and focus. "When you go into the arena, all your attention has to be focused on what you are doing because if it's not for even a split second, your horse thinks, 'Where did she just go?' And you can go into the zone when everything is going right and where you just feel the lightness of being on your horse.

"If I'm doing anything worth doing," Jacqueline continued, "I have to give that my full attention. I definitely get into the zone when I'm writing. The other day, it was very hot where I live. I kept the curtains closed and had the AC on. I stopped work to get a bite to eat, and when I stepped outside, I was shocked to realize that I was in California. I had been so immersed my work, I thought I was in 1930s London.

"Writing takes such dedication. And then there is this other obsession. Your horse dies, and you say you can't stand the heartbreak. You think you're never going to do this again. And then there is a lovely horse that walks by."

That, in fact, is how the Dutch Warmblood Cavalry Sinclair came into Jacqueline's life. Jacqueline's mother had died in late 2015, and she needed to return to England to tend to her mother's affairs when Oliver, her Friesian, was slated for surgery to remove a keratoma. She left town in February 2016, and all went well with the surgery. But a day or so later her dressage trainer, Becky Cushman, called to say that Oliver was back in surgery after suffering a twisted bowel. Sadly, the prognosis was determined to be poor.

"Becky called me and said it was time to call it. I wasn't able to say goodbye to him," Jacqueline lamented.

The day after Oliver was euthanized, Jacqueline went for a walk near her parents' home, taking the path past Paul McCartney's recording studio and through a farm. "In the field," she recalled, "I stroked the horses when they approached me and then told them to leave me alone because I had to go. I

walked down the hill and thought, good Lord, one of those horses is right behind me. I could hear him. I could feel the horse behind me, following me. I turned around ready to say, 'Go away,' but I saw no horse." She felt a chill. "I knew Oliver was with me."

Back home in California, Jacqueline hung out at the barn. One day in June, Becky invited her to cool out the big dark bay she was riding. It was Cavalry Sinclair, aka Calvin.

"Of course, walk went into trot, and that led to 'What do you mean he's for sale?'" Jacqueline said. "And I bought him. He's a beautiful boy with a lovely temperament. Becky says we're made for each other because we both really like to get things right. And if we don't, we get upset."

Last year Becky moved from Marin County to Port Townsend, Washington, and Winspear moved to southern California. "I had a book coming out, and I was on deadline for another I was writing. Life was getting crazy. I asked Becky to take Calvin with her so I would I know he was



Calvin and Jacqueline share special time together.

Photo Courtesy of Jacqueline Winspear

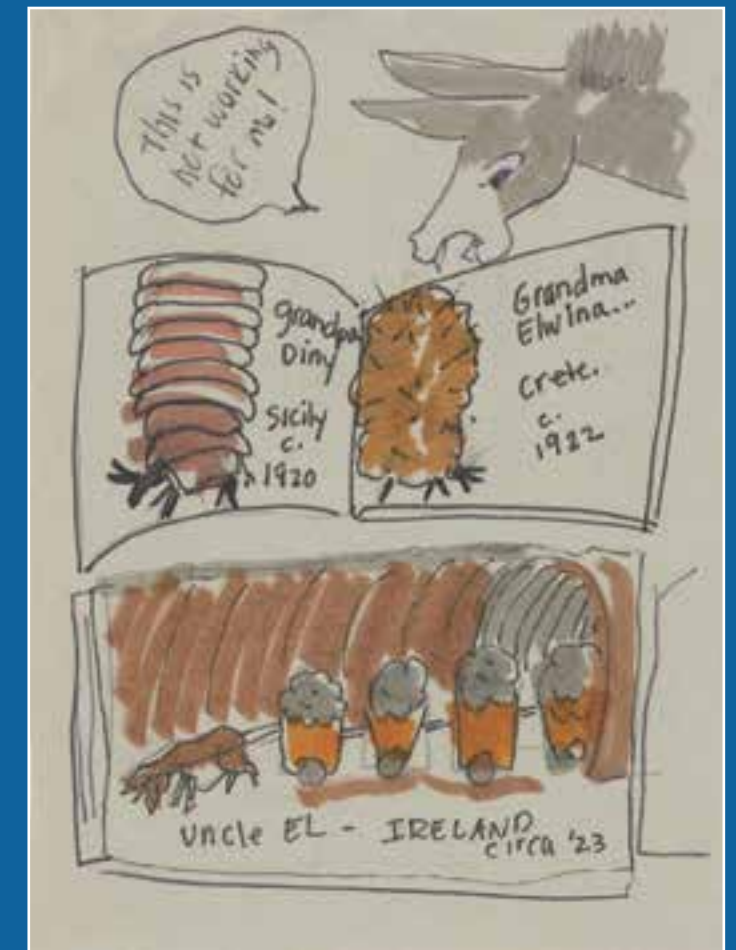
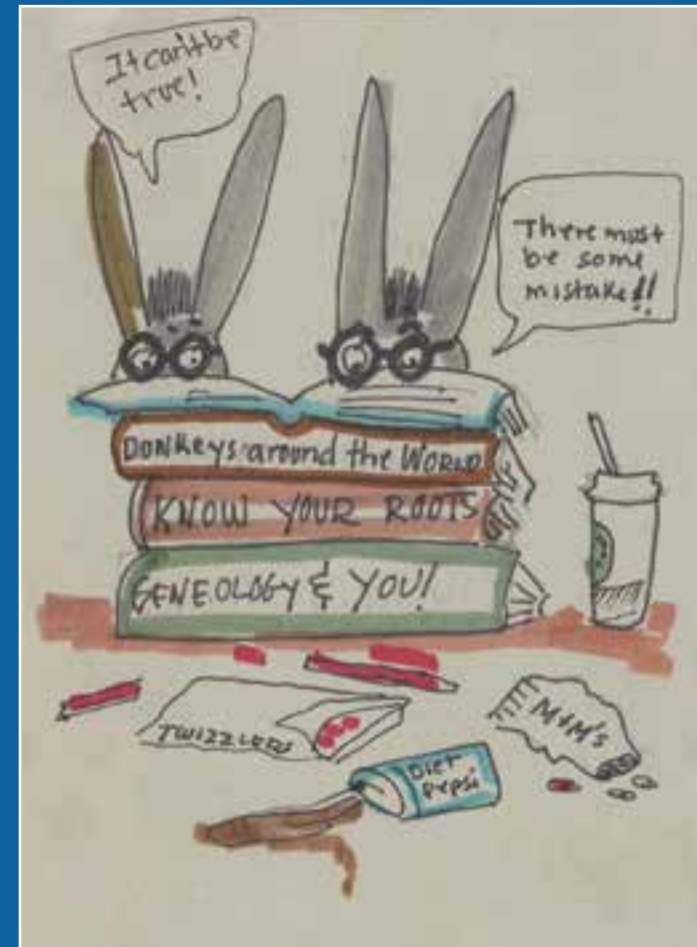
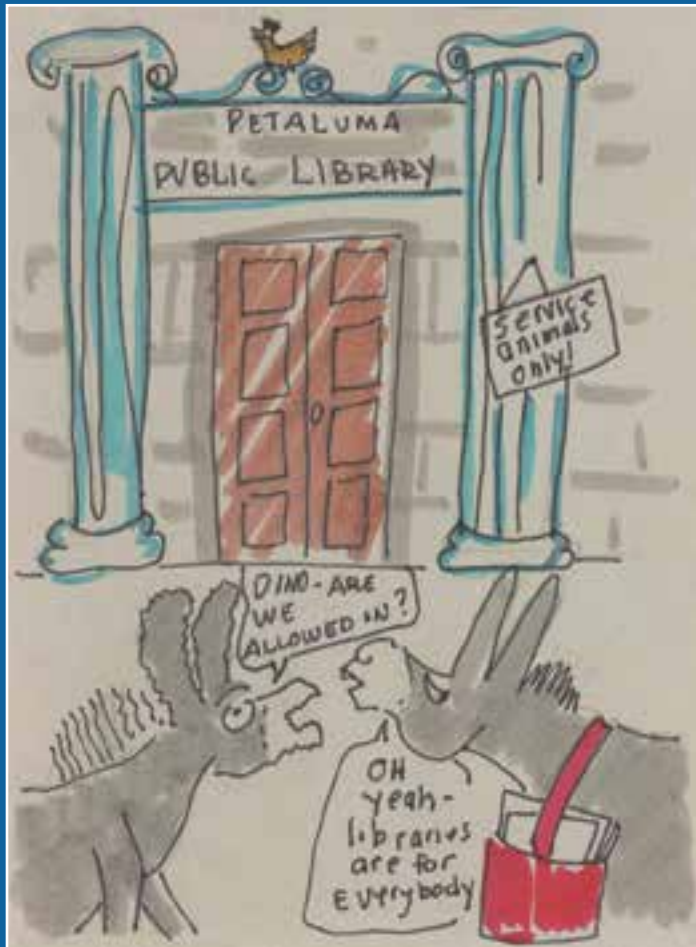
being taken care of."

This summer and into the fall, Jacqueline had leased a cottage in Washington so that she could write, hang out at the barn, and ride Calvin—after her shoulder heals, that is. Jacqueline sheepishly reported that she was looking at a dog while on a bike ride, and she rode over a tree root and crashed. The incident got her thinking about a riding accident she'd had 20 years ago, when she—like most equestrians—wanted to know if, and how soon, she would ride again. Her doctor replied wryly that "one of the great failures of her medical career was that she never stopped anyone from riding a horse."

Horses, it seems clear, are part of Winspear's own plot line for many years to come. 🐾



THE ADVENTURES OF ELVIS AND DINO



By Jacque Giuffré

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STEP FORWARD EQUUS AWARD WINNERS

The 13th Equus Awards Dinner, April 30, 2022, will celebrate the honorees chosen by the Sonoma County Horse Council for their outstanding contributions to the horse community. Until that date the *Horse Journal* will be introducing you to the winners: Andrea Pfeiffer, Ted Stashak DVM, Lee and Barbara Walker, Tracy Underwood and Royal Crest's Rockappella (Barbie). In this issue we applaud Andrea Pfeiffer.

2020 EQUUS AWARD WINNER ANDREA PFEIFFER

By Susan Banta

As the coach of nationally recognized three-day event riders, 2020 Equus Award recipient and well-known Sonoma equestrian Andrea Pfeiffer has forged a career based on persistence, compassion and a commitment to maintaining a balanced life for herself, for her riders, and for the horses.

Manager and coach at Chocolate Horse Farm (CHF) in Petaluma, Andrea's family always had a horse at home and shared eclectic interests from breeding Arabians and endurance riding to Pony Club. It was through Pony Club that Andrea discovered eventing and made it her career choice.

In the early years, "I had an interesting string of horses, you might say. They were the more challenging ones, and not always ones who were cut out for the sport," Andrea said. This ability to evaluate which horses are going to make it and which would be happier in another job has added to her skill as a coach. "Finding their best job is always your first goal."

Today, Andrea focuses on coaching rather than on her own career as a rider which in the past included many successes. One of the best was Hot Commodity, an Irish Sport Horse she competed to the three-star level in eventing and then transitioned to dressage where he competed at Intermediare I and earned Andrea her USDF Silver Medal. "He was a gem," she said, though her favorite win was on the 1999 Irish Sport Horse mare she and her husband James had imported. She and Ballinakill Glory, nicknamed Pippa, competed at the world-class event at Rebecca Farm in Montana, shortly after Andrea's daughter Tayler was born.

"It took quite a bit of mental strength to leave the box on cross-country (as a new mother) and to come home with the win was sweet." True to form, Andrea then said that her other favorite win was as a coach when her student Kelly Prather also won on Pippa in Montana, but several years later. It was a win that sent them to the World Cup Finals in Poland.

With the birth of the Pfeiffers's son Jack, Andrea became even more aware that "you have to leave the start box for yourself at the upper level," she said describing the need to ride without hesitation. At this point, she didn't feel she could do that. This revelation led her to stop competing and focus on coaching. She found that the thrill for her was "getting to see people succeed." She had been coaching at the lower levels and as that aspect took off, she realized that she was a good coach. Her life came in sync with her passion and her talents.

Since Andrea switched to full-time coaching 25 years ago, she has not only brought along from a young age star riders in the



Ballinakill Glory (right) and her baby Ballinakill Poppy, Pippa and Corky to their friends, join Equus Award winner Andrea Pfeiffer.

eventing game such as Kelly Prather, Matt Brown, and Amber Levine, but she also has had a hand in developing numerous horses that like Ballinakill Glory have gone on to successful careers. Among them are Happenstance with Matt Brown, and Blackfoot Mystery who with Boyd Martin went on to be the highest placed U.S. horse in the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Her coaching talent extends beyond the talented and driven riders who are aiming for the top of the sport. Adult amateur riders contend that Andrea's greatest success is coaching kids and adult amateurs. "If you want to know how good a coach Andrea is, just watch us old lady amateurs ride," wrote Dana Wilcox in eventingnation.com about her coach of 20 years. "It's easy

to look good coaching natural talent, but making us look good is a miracle!"

The foundation of Andrea's coaching is certification from the British Horse Society. Later she worked for mentors Tony Tyler, Elizabeth Winter and Eve Poole. However, her natural ability to connect with people as well as with horses is perhaps what has made her accomplished in this realm.

One of her primary lessons she passes on to students is compassion for the horse. All sports ask a great deal, but eventing especially tests the horses and if a rider doesn't have compassion for the horse, that rider is going to come up short. Also among the traits she looks for and wants to bring out in her riders is drive, commitment, and a thick skin. You have to be able to cope with the amazingness of winning and then you have to cope with the times things go wrong, she said.

She encourages her riders to be multi-dimensional or it is easy to burn out. For instance, Kelly Prather's family was involved with draft horse driving, and Matt Brown earned a black belt in the martial arts. "You have to be all in, but it is a big world out there and if you pigeon-hole yourself in one spot, in the long run you do yourself harm," Andrea said.

Andrea holds high regard for adult amateurs and strives to protect them. "They have jobs and families and many commitments. Riding is their outlet." As a coach, she feels she must keep them safe because they are the ones keeping their families afloat. "They want to be competitive. They are athletes. They are talented. But you have to be very aware that they have to go to work on Monday." Yet she is excited for them, for their love and their dedication. "They just want to be in it. Just seeing their enjoyment is infectious," she said.

Andrea is a planner, sometimes reaching as far as three years for riders to attain their goals. Even getting to a competition prepared requires careful planning as it did to take 15 horses to Rebecca Farm.

"You need your A plan, but you also need your B plan, especially when working with the horses. We truly are checking off the boxes and if a box isn't checked, you go to plan B, and once in a while you have to go to plan C. You want the horses to arrive fresh. You want them to love their job. The horse is never sacrificed for a goal."

CHF has 54 horses in training with 50 active clients. Daughter Tayler is the barn manager. Husband James is the farrier. Andrea's assistant Tommy Greengard, a student at University of California Berkeley, studying environmental science, does much of the riding and joined Andrea in taking the horses to Rebecca Farms.

Among Andrea's favorite moments is when a rider who began competing at beginner novice moves up to advanced level competition or when a rider brings along a horse from a green four-year-old to advanced level. But there are smaller moments, too, like watching a rider overcome fear. "I love that. As a coach, you have to actually believe that they can do it, and you always have to be positive. And they have to believe you as a coach."

She holds dear advice given to her by her father: "You are always replaceable. Go out every day and do your best, work hard, but never think that you are irreplaceable. If you are not there and present, you are not the only game in town."

Andrea Pfeiffer is an equestrian whose successful career as a coach is grounded in the fundamental qualities of compassion for the horses, commitment, tenacity, patience, and maintaining a balance in life, making her an ideal recipient of the Sonoma County Horse Council Equus Award.

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PREPARING FOR NEXT SEASON'S RAIN or NO RAIN

By Gwen Kilchherr



This illustration was first published 1880 in the children's book My Hodge-Podge Picture Book.

How long ago has it been since it really rained?

One of our biggest conundrums these days is how much, how to, and if and when to water our landscape plants during this drought. Whatever rain we get this winter will help to fill our reservoirs. But what if, once again, it's not enough, and we are looking at another drought year? Let's prepare for the future, whatever it brings.

As the owner of a place where horses live either at home or at a boarding stable, the priority must be to assure that there is enough water for the animals, making it critical to reduce water consumption, and change watering habits to use water more effectively and efficiently, and only where it is absolutely needed.

Here are some guidelines to help accomplish those goals while keeping riding facilities and their landscapes looking their best. By being proactive now, you'll be ready for whatever the weather brings for the fall and winter months.

IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

- Check, adjust, and repair pipes, sprinkler heads, and valves, for any leaks that waste water.

- Replace worn out and malfunctioning irrigation system components used to water down arenas. Consider upgrading old systems with new, higher efficiency components that provide good coverage without spray drift. When possible, water the arena in the very early morning when there is little or no wind, and only if riders will be using it once the arena has been watered. Encourage riders to take advantage of riding in the arena after it has been watered.
- Convert sprinklers or bubbler heads to drip irrigation where possible.
- Move drip emitters away from the base of trees so they are just inside the canopy of the tree, called the dripline.
- Water before 7 a.m. when there is little or no wind, as there will be less evaporation then.
- When washing and hosing down horses, direct the wash water runoff towards trees or desirable plants when possible. A little soap and horse shampoo won't harm the plants.
- Know your soil type to avoid runoff. With sandy soil, irrigate more frequently, but at short intervals as sandy soil dries out faster than a clay type soil. Irrigate less frequently but for longer intervals with loam and clay type soils.
- On slopes, steep hills, and compacted soils, you can avoid water runoff by irrigating at short intervals for a few times during the early morning allowing the soil time to soak up the water and not run down the hill.
- Check the soil moisture by digging a few inches into the soil or use a moisture meter and water when the soil is starting to dry out.
- To get the plants used to less water, gradually reduce the irrigation frequency.
- Use as little water as possible to keep the plants alive. Get used to plants not looking so perfect.
- Consider upgrading the irrigation controller to a "smart" controller that automatically calculates seasonal setbacks.
- When the rain starts, turn off the irrigation system, especially those that automatically water arenas
- Wherever possible, connect the downspouts from the barns, feed rooms, tack to direct water flowing off the roofs, into plastic barrels, cisterns, or other containers. This water can be saved to be used to water plants.

PRIORITIZE YOUR PLANTS

- Familiarize yourself as to which plants are susceptible to drought stress and which are not. When prioritizing what to keep and what

not to consider replacement costs, placement in the landscape, its purpose, and how long it takes for those plants to reach maturity. - Be warned that there may be a time when NO landscape watering will be allowed. Then of course, the high-water use plants will have to be the first to go, even if they are the ones you want to keep.

- High priority plants are usually the trees and shrubs that provide shade, would be expensive to replace, and take a long time to mature. When washing out buckets and rinsing off bits, boots, and bridles, use a 5-gallon bucket to collect the rinse water. Pour this water onto the high priority plants.
- Medium priority plants include groundcovers, perennials, shrubs, and vines that grow quickly. -Low priority plants are annuals, vegetables, herbs, and lawns as they are the least expensive to replace and can reach maturity in one growing season.
- Very lowest priority is lawns which use a lot of water and are not sustainable in our summer and dry climate.

ORNAMENTAL PLANTS

- Hold off on any planting until late fall or early winter to take advantage of the cooler temperatures and rain.
- If there is no rain, water deeply every three to four weeks through fall and winter. This will be enough water to keep the newly plants alive during this time.
- Keep beds and gardens weed-free as the weeds compete with desirable plants for soil moisture.
- Remove the lawn within the canopy of trees and spread out a four to six inches of organic mulch.
- Add compost to all planting beds to help hold soil moisture for plants when they need it.
- Apply two to three inches of organic mulch on top of the soil to prevent weeds from germinating and to minimize evaporation from the soil surface. Keep the mulch at least two inches from the base of all plants and one inch from tree trunks.
- Prune back plants that are too big. This lowers the amount of water they will need without stimulating a lot of new growth.
- Over-irrigating is a very common problem. Remember to dig down a few inches into the soil to see how wet, moist, or dry the soil is. Then water accordingly.
- Once you've gradually cut back on watering, a few deep, thorough waterings, spaced several weeks apart, will keep most small, patio type trees and shrubs alive until the rain starts. Many species will drop their leaves, and/or wilt, when drought stressed, but they will survive.

LAWNS

- Think about removing some or all of the lawn. Convert the sprinklers to drip, and install paths, a patio, sitting areas, or other hard-scape to take up the space. Check with your local nursery this fall for a selection of drought-tolerant plants to replace the lawn.
- Lawns that are drought stressed when walked on will retain footprints for several minutes and will have a bluish-gray appearance. The blades of grass will turn yellow then brown as the lawn starts to go dormant. How long the lawn goes without water will determine if it will green up again when watered again.
- If watering is still permissible, then set the irrigation timer for several short irrigation cycles in one day, to encourages deep rooting and drought tolerance. Keep in mind that you'll be watering just enough to keep the lawn alive.
- Keep horse and human foot and equipment traffic to a minimum if the lawn is not being irrigated as the growing points become brittle when dry and will be easily damaged.

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Administering Intramuscular Injections

By Michelle Beko, DVM



Areas appropriate for intramuscular injections are outlined in orange.

While veterinarians regularly administer intravenous (i.v.) or intramuscular (i.m.) injections, horse owners or caretakers can learn where and how to give i.m. shots for the occasional need to give vaccines, antibiotics, sedatives, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (Banamine), steroids like dexamethasone, and joint medication like Adequan®.

Several areas on a horse are acceptable on which to administer an i.m. injection. The neck muscles tend to be the easiest for most people. The gluteal muscles and hamstrings on the hindquarters are also good areas. The pectoral (chest) muscles are a seldom used, but acceptable area. Always avoid ligaments and bones in any of the aforementioned sites.

Most importantly, human injury is a risk to consider when giving a shot because some horses will kick when given an injection. The neck followed by the gluteal muscles are the least risky if you have a horse inclined to kick.

Another possible side effect is an abscess or soreness at the injection site. If the horse does get sore or develops an abscess from an injection in the neck, it can have difficulty moving its neck. This often makes it hard for the horse to put its head down to eat. If I am giving a horse something like Penicillin that is likely to make it sore, I avoid using its neck. If I am giving something unlikely to make the horse sore, such as Adequan®, I usually use this site. An abscessed injection site will be hardest to drain from the gluteal muscles.

Intramuscular injections should be sterile. You should never use an obviously dirty or muddy area on the horse's body. You may use an isopropyl alcohol swab but it isn't mandatory. You should never touch the shaft of the needle or the end of the syringe and you should have clean hands.

You can give an injection in the horse's neck with the needle attached to the syringe. I usually pinch the horse's skin with my left hand to avoid startling the horse. I put the needle in with my right or tap the horse with the heel of my right hand before quickly inserting the needle.

When using one of the sites in the hindquarters, I always remove the needle from the syringe, and tap on the horse a couple of times with the heel of my right hand (I am right-handed), again to avoid startling the horse before placing in the needle. Then if the horse moves or kicks, you are less likely to lose the contents of the syringe. When you re-attach the needle, make sure it is secure so you don't squirt out your medication. If you are giving a medication that can't be given i.v. (vaccines, Adequan®, Penicillin), you should aspirate when you re-attach the needle. Do this by pulling the end of the syringe out a little. If you get blood in the hub, you need to redirect the needle. The most painful part for the horse is the needle going through their skin. If you do so quickly and firmly, you will minimize that discomfort. Note that the skin over their gluteal muscles is quite thick. If you are too tentative, the needle may bounce off. Tense muscles tend to bend needles.

If you are comfortable administering injections, that is great. If you aren't, ask your veterinarian for guidance.



You can give an injection in the horse's neck with the needle attached to the syringe. Michelle pinches the horse's skin with her left hand and puts the needle in with her right hand.



When giving injections in the hindquarters, the needle should be removed from the syringe. Stand at the side of the horse to lessen the possibility of getting kicked.

Photos: Courtesy of Michelle Beko

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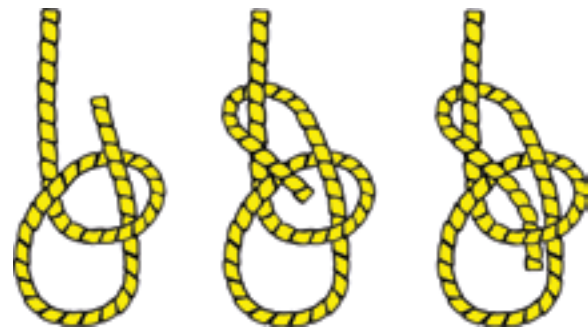
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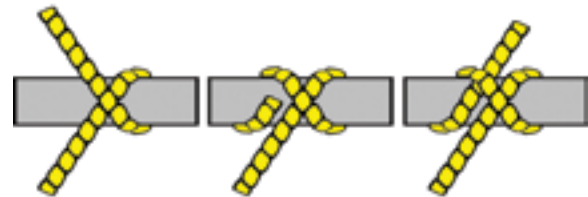
By Gina Ruth



BOWLINE

The bowline (pronounced like bowlin) creates a loop that won't tighten down on what you've tied it to. It is good for tying lead ropes around the horse's neck or any other time when you might need a loop. Most importantly, it's easy to untie after being tightened or under load.

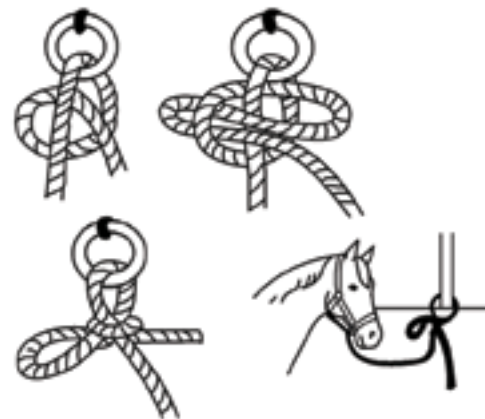
To tie a bowline, make a loop in your rope with plenty of working end to spare. Put the working end through the loop you've created from the bottom. Wrap your working end once around your standing end and back through the loop. Tighten.



CLOVE HITCH


The clove hitch is useful for tying the lead rope around a fixed object like a saddle horn. To learn to tie the clove hitch, practice with a rail. Take the working end of your rope and pass it over the rail to the left. Pass it back under itself so that it makes an x. Pick up the x with two fingers and pass your working end under. Pull tight.

To tie a clove hitch to the saddle horn from the saddle, make a loop and place it on your horn. Then take the working end of the rope and make another loop to place over the horn. Look for the "x" to know you've got it.



QUICK RELEASE

A word of warning. The quick release knot is easy and fast to tie and similarly easy and quick to untie in the event of an emergency. If a tied horse panics and pulls back on the rope, a single tug on the end of the lead rope should untie the knot. If a rope gets pulled down too tight, however, it puts the knot into a bind and it can become difficult if not impossible to untie.

Make a loop with your lead rope. Pass your loop around the object you want to tie your horse to. Twist your loop and pass it over the horse's end of the rope. Take the working end and make another loop. Pass the new loop through the old. Continue making loops in the length of the rope to form a daisy chain. 

Stand by Your Horse by Teaching Him to Stand

By Gina Ruth

At one point in the history of horsemanship, we believed that we could teach a horse to stand still, untied, for an undetermined amount of time without the horse responding to the curiosities in his environment. We called it ground tying.

As a trainer of young horses and horses with behavioral challenges, I have removed ground tying from what I ask of a horse and instead I teach a horse to stand tied.

To learn this tool, the horse needs to first lead, then stand and later stand tied, each laying the foundation for the horse's trust in the handler even in the face of distractions.

LEADING

Leading is more than walking a horse down the road. Leading a horse means moving any of the horse's four feet in any direction by using the halter without moving your own feet.

Can you move the horse's right hind foot back half an inch without moving your body to direct him? Can you move the left front forward one inch and to the left three inches? If you can't, then you might have some leading to teach.

In a round pen or arena, halt your horse. Check how he balances himself. Is a leg cocked? Is more weight on one front leg than the other? His best balance is standing evenly on four feet. If he doesn't take that stance, you can teach him to by controlling each foot.

Let's say a hind foot needs to move back for that perfect balance. Stand at the horse's head. With a couple feet of rope between you and the horse, slide your hand up the rope towards the horse's halter, slowly removing slack from the rope. By the time you get to the halter, you have met the horse's pressure and removed the slack from the rope. Try not to "pull" on the rope. Instead, think of catching your horse's weight change as he naturally goes to walk forward. When you meet the horse's pressure, hang in there and resist their pressure by tightening your core, until the horse shifts his weight back. When he does, release the pressure.

A horse might not move the foot the first time you attempt this exercise. If the horse shifts his weight on the first try, that is enough. Release your pressure and take a breath. On the second try, expect the horse to lift the foot and place it behind where it started. If you pay attention, you will see and feel the horse searching for what you're asking for. That is what you want.

Then, to move a front foot forward, stand a few feet in front of your horse and take the slack out of the rope between your hand and the halter and see how easily you can get one clean step forward. Moving the feet forward with the slightest pressure will be vitally important for when we start to work on tying and the




Stacey McCarthy's four-year-old horse Murphy has learned to be led by trainer Gina Ruth with slack in the line. Photo: Patti Schofler

greatest indicator of whether it is safe or not to attempt tying.

Repeat backward and forward with all four feet. When you have mastered forward and back, work on sideways movement. The goal is to get the hind end to move away from you because of pressure on the halter. Stand on the right side of the horse to yield the hind end. Slide your hand up the rope toward the halter. Find the pressure and wait for the hind end to move away from you with a step away from the midline by the left hind, and/or the right hind crossing just in front of the left hind foot.

To move the front feet sideways or yield the shoulder, asking the horse to move away from sideways pressure, stand on one side facing the same direction as the horse is facing. Starting on the left, I slide my hand up the rope, crossing just under the chin to meet their pressure, indicating that they should move a front foot to the right. In the beginning it doesn't matter which foot. If your horse seems stuck, you might slowly twirl the end of your rope toward the head until your horse shifts his weight. I am looking for the outside front stepping out, followed by the inside front crossing over the outside.

When you get a few good steps, teach your horse that he should move his feet to produce slack in the rope. We are connecting our body language to the rope. Horses intuitively understand body language from interacting with one another. Horses don't intuitively understand being tied to a fixed object. Eventually you will use our body language to teach them about keeping slack in the rope while being tied to a fixed object. Place your lead rope hand on your hip and take your horse for a walk for twenty feet or so. When you stop moving your feet, does your horse stop behind you with slack in the rope? When you slow down and 



← speed up your walk, does your horse rate his speed with yours?

Pretty soon, you will be walking your horse along and only a half inch slide of your hand down the rope will cue your horse rebalance and stop square.

STANDING

When you can move all four feet from the halter, you are ready for standing. You can't make a horse stand, but you can make it a better option than all the hard mental work of yielding and accurately moving feet.

When starting out, set as your intention that the horse stand and take a breath. If your horse walks too close to you, cause the rope to snake up toward the halter in time with the movement of the horse's front foot that is toward you. You want to think you are catching the foot in the air and placing it back down next to the other front foot. Get comfortable with you and your horse standing at opposite ends of the rope with slack in between.

If your horse has had enough from his mental workout, he will lower his head, cock a hind foot and move his lower jaw. He might take a breath and sigh, releasing tension in his whole body. You do the same. Watch for signs that your horse is ready to go back to work. He might turn his head to look at something more interesting or take a step as if he's ready to leave.

Gradually the resting time will get longer in between work sessions. Practice standing and resting when you and your horse have successfully moved a foot. This is helping your horse to appreciate his rest time with you and to know that he doesn't always have to be working to be at attention. This rest time will be crucial when your horse is ready to tie.

TYING

Before you think of tying your horse, ask yourself the following. If you can answer in the positive, move forward to tying. If not,



Photo: Patti Scholler

Murphy stands tied to the wall of the round pen and shows the daisy chain that often follows the quick release knot.

return to working on moving and placing the feet and taking resting breaks in between.

1. Does your horse give to pressure in every scenario?
2. Does your horse easily find a sense of calm in resting between work sessions or is he impatient and nervous? If your horse cannot find calm untied, he will certainly not find calm being tied.
3. What will your horse do if he meets the pressure? Will he panic and pull back or realize that the pressure on the tied rope is the same as the pressure from your hand?
4. Does your horse know what to do with a rope between his legs or if he steps on the rope?
5. What will happen to the system to which he is tied if he pulls back? Is he wearing a leather halter that will break and teach him that pulling back is an easy way to get to freedom? If he's tied to a ring in the wall, is the ring made of solid material? Is the ring set in concrete? Is the wall solid? If you're tying to a tree, will the branch break? Do not tie to a stall front or horizontal wood rails. If the stall front pulls apart or the rails break, your horse will take off with parts of the stall or the rails chasing him. Find something very solid to tie to with a rope halter.

My favorite intermediary step is to wrap the lead rope around the rail of a round pen set in concrete and practice standing tied while limiting the consequences of pulling back. If the rope is wrapped once around the rail and he pulls back, the rope will slip around the rail and eventually come loose. By wrapping the rope for the first couple times you "tie" a horse, you are significantly reducing the chance that your horse will panic and hurt themselves when they pull back.

What if your horse pulls back? Be calm. Take a breath, yawn and reassure him with your voice. Then quietly walk up and wrap your rope once around the rail again. Note whether the horse moves his feet forward to put slack in the rope.

When he is proficient at standing with the rope dallied around the rail, can you walk away? Will he follow you with his eyes? When he hits the pressure, will he calmly yield his feet to put slack in the rope? The longer he can stand "tied", the more he gains confidence in standing.

If you and your horse are proficient at this step, start working on tying, keeping in mind that all tying has risk. But many horse wrecks happen because the horse is not prepared to stand tied or the system holding the horse fails. Often these accidents can be avoided by investing the time to teach our horses to lead and want to stand.

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MANE MAINTENANCE CAVALIA STYLE

By Shonna Berk

Keeping a horse's mane long, thick, and flowing is a hard task. When you do it for 65 horses on a daily basis, it turns into an art form.

Such was my experience as a groom for the world renowned Cavalia Odysseo that joined equestrian arts, stage arts, and high-tech theatrical effects where the moving interactions between human and horse were at the heart of the action.

Cavalia Odysseo's nightly audience of 2,000 saw aerialists flying above gorgeous horses, grand prix dressage performed through a 40,000-gallon lake while many horses gallop about at liberty, and trick riding with the impressive "under the belly" act. One of the many things that made these horses as majestic as they were was their long, flowing manes.

Each day, a handful of us grooms were responsible for making sure 65 horses got turn out time and were clean from head to tail. Because a majority of the horses in the show were gray, cleanliness was one of the biggest challenges, especially with certain horses who loved to get dirty.

Each groom did things a little differently, but we all used the same products: Cowboy Magic shampoo/conditioner/detangler, Show Shine spray, and a French bar soap called Savon de Marseille, that worked almost like a magic marker in getting the "colorful" spots off. This artisanal soap is commonly found in French drugstores and consists of mostly olive oils and soda. Another soap we often used was called Kirk's, which had a coconut oil base and was a gentler Castile soap.

To maintain the beauty, thickness, and length of the hair, the manes were braided after each show and for the horses' day off to keep the mane hair from breaking, drying out, or tangling and to maintain a healthy, silky texture. This consisted of making several braids that hung vertically along the neck about two to three inches apart.

Once the body was clean, we worked on the manes. This process began with gently removing the rubber bands, and one by one unbraiding and combing out the hair. Wetting and washing the mane every day wasn't ideal, so we'd try not to if it was clean enough to spot check. This is one of the tasks that you cannot rush or you will damage the hair.

While the horses were in their stalls awaiting showtime, we grooms could show off our French braiding skills. Their manes might be in impressive French braids starting at their poll and ending at their withers. I personally do a Dutch braid, just because that's how I've always done them. For this type you move each strand under instead of over while braiding. Practice and patience are the best way to get better at French or Dutch braiding.

After the show each of us would be responsible not only for rinsing the sand off of our finale horses who galloped through the water scene, but also for re-braiding their luscious manes, some



The French braid runs down this Cavalia horse's neck, then moves into a regular braid.

Photo Courtesy of Shonna Berk

shorter and less time consuming than others. This would happen while the VIP guests toured the stables, asking questions and gawking at the beautiful main attractions.

Their manes ranged from four inches to, no exaggeration, four feet.

Some were so long that we had to wrap them overnight so the horses wouldn't eat them by accident. This consisted of making a normal three-inch-wide braid, then bringing it up through the top and wrapping it once or twice through the braid, securing it with extra rubber bands if needed.

Between each city, the horses would have 10 days off to get long turn out time and relaxation. During these times, their manes would again be braided in three-inch-wide braids, similar to how they'd sleep each night. The extra-long manes were wrapped up and secured with vet wrap prior to loading them on the trailer or in an airplane.

Keeping my retired Cavalia horse's mane long and luscious has been surprisingly pretty easy, with a less is more mentality. My routine? Every two to three weeks, I will gently remove the rubber bands one by one, undo the braids, wash the main with a gentle oatmeal-based shampoo for hydration, apply Cowboy Magic conditioner, and douse it with Cowboy Magic detangler while softly brushing through it with either my fingers or a brush depending how tangled it felt. Once I've managed to get all the tangles removed, I loosely re-braid it into three-inch braids. Occasionally, if they are looking messy after a week or so of washing, I will undo and redo the braids dry and add detangler.

During winter months, I do occasionally let his mane out for weeks at a time, but I make sure to wash it and add detangler often so it doesn't get matted. Again, the less is more technique works if you pay attention to it every two to three weeks.

This simple routine has not only helped my horse's mane stay healthy; it's managed to lengthen since retiring three years ago.



Z Braid, Photo Courtesy of Shonna Berk



Monica Lukes



Michelle Quirico

WHERE EAST MEETS WEST

“Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet” is the first line of an 1892 poem by Rudyard Kipling. If we substituted the word “east” with English and “west” with western, we might ask ourselves if Kipling’s statement applies to these two seemingly different ways to enjoy horses. Or, are horses simply horses?

For this issue we wondered about the approach to showing in competitions that required that the competitor follow a pattern or course.

Our experts are western dressage and ranch riding trainer Michelle Quirico representing the western horse realm and eventer and hunter/jumper rider Monica Lukes describing the English horse world.

MICHELLE QUIRICO (MQ): A Bay Area native and trainer at American Canyon Training Center in American Canyon, California. Michelle and her clients have earned national level awards in western dressage and multiple sport horse divisions. They have also excelled at regional level breed shows bringing home championships in halter, ranch riding, western dressage, and sport horse. Michelle works with an assortment of breeds ranging from Quarter Horses, mustangs, Friesians and mules, though she reminds us that her heart is with the Arabian.

MONICA LUKES (ML): Monica grew up in the Midwest riding English, western, saddle seat, and bareback. When her family moved to Southern California, she spent four years riding at the hunter jumper barn Foxfield where she was often given young horses to bring along. Attending college at the University of California (UC) Davis, she taught at the UC Davis Equestrian Center, and she took a quarter off from school to be a working student at Pebble Beach Equestrian Center. After graduation, she began a

career in lending and raised a family. Over the years she turned race horses into eventing horses with instruction from Yves Sauvignon, had a small breeding business, and competed in eventing, dressage, and hunter/jumpers under the guidance of Andrea Pfeiffer and Dusty Blackwood. For the past 13 years she has been teaching and training full time and competing in eventing and jumping.

What courses or patterns are part of your riding and training?

MQ: Western dressage has 37 test patterns and ranch riding has 15 AQHA approved patterns. In ranch riding, you go over ground poles and try to do the exact stamp of the given pattern.

ML: We have a variety of dressage tests, and stadium jumping and cross-country courses. With jumpers there is the first course and a shorter, then faster jump off course to memorize. And there are also equitation and hunter courses.

Do you have a special technique for remembering a course/pattern?

MQ: I have a heaver background in western dressage. When at the show I get my pattern for ranch riding, I basically divide it up like a dressage court. I envision the letters. For example, when I get to M

I have to cut across the diagonal and swap leads at X. I see in my head the lines that intersect.

I find little tricks for my brain. Like in western dressage, if I have to walk at the letter M, I envision the letter M as an upside ‘W’ for walk. If I get lost, I do know that with western dressage if I do something on one side, I’ll need to do it on the other side.

To help myself with which way to turn after the salute in a western dressage test, especially with the bigger moving horses, I jog in posting on the diagonal I will need when I make the turn after the salute.

ML: Especially for those new to dressage, I suggest printing out the dressage test that you can find online. Keep the test in your pocket for reference when you ride. Then after you ride the test a few times, mark on the printout things you might have forgotten.

When I’m practicing, I prefer to practice sections of the test, rather than run through the entire test repeatedly. This way you can pick it up at the parts of the test you need to perfect. Also, your horse is less likely to anticipate movements if you do it in pieces.

With jumpers the show usually posts the stadium jump course early in the morning. I suggest taking a photo of the posted course to keep with you when you take the course walk.

When you’re walking the courses, focus on the track, not the jumps themselves. Have landmarks that will help you. Most importantly, when memorizing the order of the jumps, don’t say to yourself, “It’s jump one, two, three.” Say “It’s the green vertical, five stride bending line, brown oxer, land with an inside turn,” saying the names of the specific jumps.

With cross country, it’s customary to walk the course two, maybe three times, maybe once with a coach and twice by yourself, so you really understand the jumps and the terrain. Notice the options offered at some of the jumps. If your horse is tired, you might want to do the easier, longer route instead of the shorter, trickier route.

Do you get concerned that you won’t remember?

MQ: Oh, the moment I step into the arena I think, omg, what’s my test? Once I start, I think, “I got this.”

I don’t watch other competitors go because if they go off pattern, I start second guessing the pattern I’ve known, and it scrambles my brain. So, I don’t watch others go before me especially with the ranch patterns because we don’t have markers. If I watch, I might think “Have they done it wrong? Am I going to do it wrong?”

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ML: I don’t personally worry because I’ve been doing it for a while. The more you do it, the more the courses start to make sense. Certainly, if you’re new to the sport, then you might forget. But take comfort that everyone has gone off course.

Check the arena schedule and plan when you can do the course walk. I recently had to tack up during the scheduled course walk. So instead of taking the official walk, I walked around the outside and saw the jumps from different angles. It worked well. I had one of the best rides I’ve ever had.

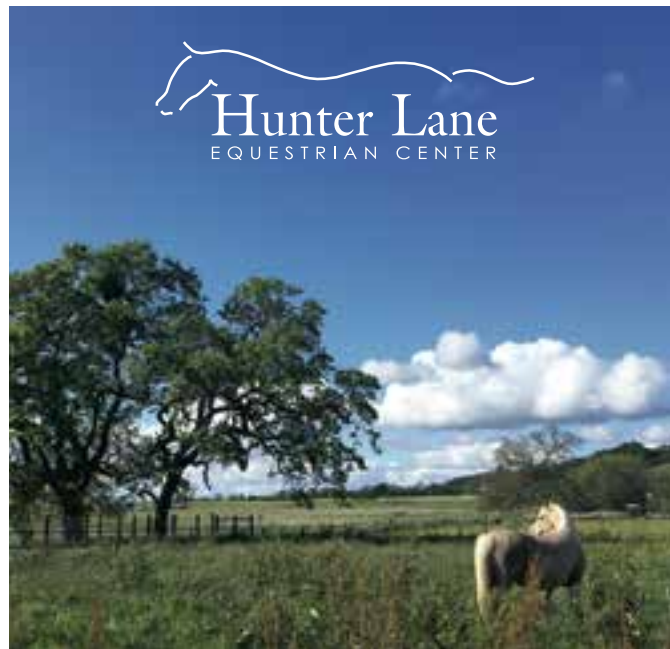
What about if you’re competing with more than one horse with different patterns/courses?

MQ: With ranch riding I do on the Arabian circuit open, I noticed they usually stick to only a few patterns, like maybe different ones between open and amateur or purebred versus Half Arabians. They don’t want to destroy us.

ML: When I have more than one horse, I’ll finish the ride on one and then focus on the next, being careful not let myself think “Yes, but in the other test I go around the other way.” I do one at a time.

Once I was watching a friend go right before my ride, and he wasn’t doing the test I had memorized. Eventing tests have A and B versions. In the middle of the year the officials change which test we ride. I had been in a hurry when I was entering the show and I didn’t check for the change. Lucky for me, the arena was running ahead five minutes, and I had five minutes to memorize the correct test. I went in and performed the test without an error.

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