

Sonoma County

COMPLIMENTARY

# HORSE JOURNAL

Volume 19 • Issue 4 • Fall 2022 | Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council





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### Managing Editor

Patti Schofler  
schc.pschofler@gmail.com

### Graphic Design

Lynn Newton  
newton5@sonic.net

### Copy Editor

Eileen O'Farrell

### Photography

Marcie Lewis  
marcielewisphotography@gmail.com

William T. Stacy

wtstacy@gmail.com

### Printing

AD-Vantage Marketing, Inc.  
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## Contact Us

Sonoma County Horse Council  
PO Box 7157  
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www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Sonoma County

# HORSE JOURNAL

Volume 19 · Issue 4 · Fall 2022

Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council - Home of the Equus Awards

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Gracing our cover is a photo of an oil painting on stretched canvas (36" x 60" x 1 3/8") by Isabelle Truchon that depicts a strong and graceful horse of the Camargue, France. She calls him/her "Wanderer," a sole traveler, explorer, dreamer, and creator of his/her own destiny. Petaluma is home to Isabelle's studio.

[www.isabelletruchon.com](http://www.isabelletruchon.com)

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# CONTRIBUTORS



**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.



**Gena Burgess** is a fourth-generation resident of Cotati. She has three adult children and is a proud grandmother. She serves as vice president on the board of directors for the California Gymkhana Association District 45 and rides at Taylor Merrill Training in Santa Rosa. Her passion is anything and everything horse related.



In 1980, **Robert Eichstaedt**, Marin resident and native son of the Golden West, found that being an accomplished ultra-runner wasn't sufficient for Ride and Tie; he had to learn to ride a horse. This led to owning one—the legendary Arabian gelding, Silver Fox of Horse Hill. Eichstaedt's many decades of caretaking commitment to Fox amazed friends and perplexed exes.



**Susan Weaver Banta** is a transplant from the East Coast, making Petaluma her home two 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.



**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 eleven-year-old PRE Toledano.



**Michelle Beko, DVM** has been an equine veterinarian since 1991. She enjoys spending time with her husband and daughter as well as doing dressage and jumping with her horse Ranger. You can reach her at Empire Equine at 707 545-3909. [www.empire-equine.com](http://www.empire-equine.com)



Valley Vet Supply content manager, **Aimee Elyse Robinson**, draws from her lifelong experience with horses, coupled with the veterinary wisdom bestowed upon her from her years working in animal health. She is the co-recipient of the 2022 AHP Equine Media NextGen Award. She resides with her husband on an Oklahoma ranchette

that is home to off-track Thoroughbreds and rescue dogs.

**Do you want to write for the *Horse Journal* or see your photos in print?**

Please contact Patti Schofler at [schc.pschofler@gmail.com](mailto:schc.pschofler@gmail.com)

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings as we roll into autumn in the North Bay. This has been a pleasant summer and hopefully, everyone in the equine world has had a chance to be active. With the frustrating exception of the continuing high price of hay and fuel to tote your trusty steeds, I hope that you have managed to be out and around, whether on the trail or competing at any number of shows.

Within the Sonoma County Horse Council's board of directors, we have welcomed two new members, Diana Hughes and Tracy Underwood. But in bringing on these two new faces, we have also lost a long-time member in Mark Krug.



Mark joined the board in 2016 and was quickly appointed treasurer. He has carefully watched over the finances and made sure that the organization is healthy and compliant. During his tenure, the Horse Council was involved in locating some emergency response funding and distributing it to those affected by the fires.

This type of activity presents substantial challenges to keep track of the funds' sources and destinations. When an organization is conferred with non-profit status by the federal government, numerous requirements must be met to assure that the sums of money are received and distributed within guidelines that protect all involved and rightly allow deductions to the generous donors. Mark has ably seen to the details associated with this often-complicated process.

Mark has a very busy life in the business world. He has been involved in the non-profit world of affordable housing and services for high-risk and vulnerable members of the community. He is currently in a management position with Burbank Housing, our award-winning local organization, overseeing various projects. He and his wife Cheryl have enjoyed the equestrian lifestyle for many years. The Sonoma County Horse Council thanks Mark Krug for his dedicated work in service to the group and wishes him well in his future endeavors.



John O'Hara Photography

## Tell the North Bay about your horse shows and clinics.

Send us your details and the SCHC website calendar will tell all.

Send to [info@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org](mailto:info@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org)



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## POPULAR SCHC TRAILERING COURSE RETURNS

The popular trailering safety course organized by the Sonoma County Horse Council (SCHC) returns to the Sonoma County Fairgrounds, Santa Rosa, on October 29 from 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. To be taught by Leonard Iniguez, a lifelong equestrian and a professional equipment operator with over two million miles of experience, the classroom and practical instruction will provide attendees with tools to become more confident, safer, and skilled drivers. Three levels of certification will be available for drivers who elect to be tested.

The topics to be covered will be trip preparation, rules of the road, driving do's and don'ts, safety guidelines, how to handle an emergency, and trailering techniques for backing, turning, and U-turns.

The course is available to SCHC members for \$79 and non-members for \$99. The fee for membership in the SCHC is \$30.

Registration is available online until October 17 at: [www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org/cal](http://www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org/cal)

## 100 MILES IN 100 DAYS

In 2020 when Covid caused the shutdown of the famed 100-mile Tevis Cup Ride, the Western States Trail Foundation (WSTF) created a virtual substitute. Instead of 100 miles in one day as the goal, the challenge became to ride 100 miles in 100 days wherever and whenever the riders wanted and then to report their mileage.

The idea drew participants worldwide. People who would never be able to attend or participate in the actual Tevis could dream and ride at home. As they passed various milestones and entered the mileage, they were directed to links that described where they would be if they were on the actual trail.

So many people expressed interest that non-riding sections were set up. A 100-year-old woman completed the first virtual ride by walking one mile a day.

The virtual ride was so popular that when the actual ride returned live, WSTF held the virtual ride again in 2021 and 2022.

The start date is 100 days before the actual Tevis, this year on April 6 at 5:15 a.m. The finish date this year was July 17, the date when most of the finishers in this year's actual Tevis crossed the finish line.

The 562 who completed the 100 miles were awarded tee shirts. North Bay entrants who completed the challenge include **Robin Everett**, Petaluma, **Susan Rowsell**, Petaluma, **Anyel Aguilar**, Rohnert Park, **Stephanie Brown**, Calistoga, **Melanie Donaghy**, San Rafael, **Jennifer Waitte**, Napa, **Sarah Kriletich**, Novato, and **Barbara White**, Novato. Barbara completed the 100 miles with two horses.

Finishing in the non-riding division were **Jan Kerch** and **Marcy Shone**, both of Nicasio.

## SCHOLARSHIP FOR JUDGES TRAINING

The Western Dressage Judges' Scholarship Program of the California Western Dressage Association (CAWDA) will grant a scholarship to a CAWDA member who is planning on entering the western dressage licensing program. All adult CAWDA members are eligible to apply except for those who are already USEF licensed large R western dressage judges. The CAWDA scholarship will cover the fee for the 2023 WDAA Judges seminar held in Colorado. The deadline for application submission is November 20, 2022.

For more information about the program and the scholarship application, visit <https://cawda.org/judges-scholarship>.



## GRANT WINNER

**Jaclyn Pepper-Millard** of Santa Rosa has been awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Dressage Foundation's George Williams Young Professional Fund. A dressage instructor since 2012, Jaclyn trains at Joey Pedroni Stables in Petaluma. She plans to use the grant funding to train with Olympian Sabine Schut-Kery and attend the U.S. Dressage Federation's instructor program.

## PREVIEW THE FUTURE

### MARK WEST CREEK REGIONAL PARK

Enjoy the rugged beauty of the nearly 1,200 acres recently acquired by Sonoma County Ag + Open Space and transferred to Regional Parks for a future park at 3000 Porter Creek Road, Santa

Rosa. The preview of the Mark West Creek Regional Park, not yet open to the public, will be on October 15 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Registration is required for the free event at <https://reserve.sonomacountycamping.org/registration/mark-west-preview-F1>.

For more information, contact Andrew Traverso at: [communityengagementprograms@sonoma-county.org](mailto:communityengagementprograms@sonoma-county.org)

## LOCAL PONY CLUB KIDS SHINE AT REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Sonoma and Marin County Pony Club members were well represented at the U.S. Pony Club USPC Championships West, held June 30 through July 8 at Twin Rivers Ranch in Paso Robles, California. Competing successful were: **Pyper Arnold**, **Isabella Stikes**, **Leah McAvoy**, **Themis Gabalda**, **Sonia Zahradnik**, **Meghan Hill**, **Anwyn Cunha**, **Marie-Charlotte Guion**, **Skyler Lee**, **Summer Nelson**, **Sara Ransick**, and **Audrey Ryan**.

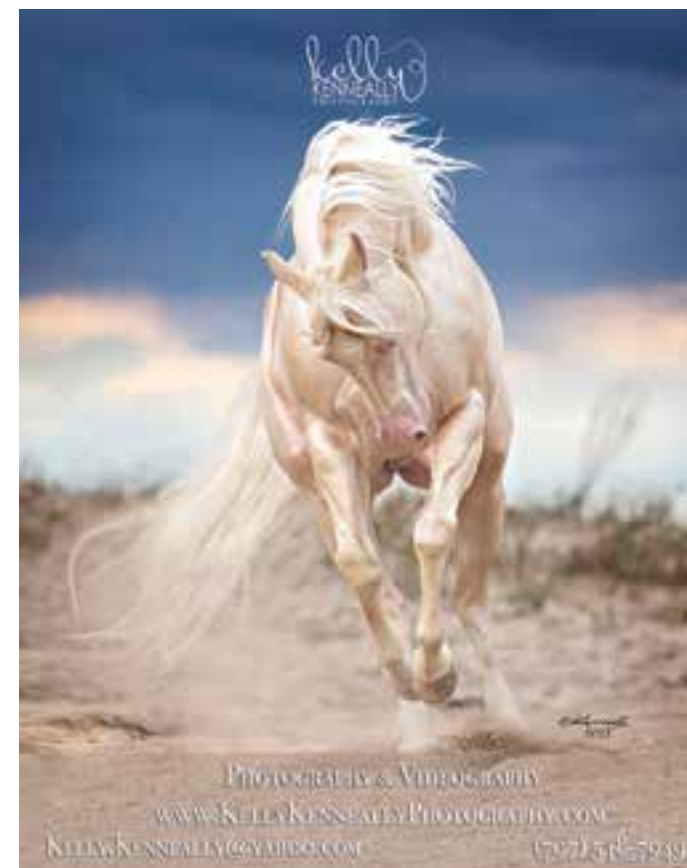


## PREGNANT MARE RESCUE COMES TO PETALUMA

Pregnant Mare Rescue has relocated to Petaluma. Founded in 2006, the nonprofit was created in Santa Cruz County to take pregnant mares and orphaned foals from situations of abuse, neglect, abandonment, and sometimes on-the-kill lots into a temporary sanctuary. In sixteen years, the 501c (3) organization has rescued, rehabilitated, and rehomed over six hundred horses, according to founder **Lynn Hummer**.

Mares spend months at the rescue, settling in, foaling, and nursing their young. The Petaluma facility presently hosts nine rescues and nine permanent residents.

[www.pregnantmarerescue.org](http://www.pregnantmarerescue.org)



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# PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEW SCHC BOARD MEMBERS

## DIANA HUGHES

Diana Hughes was raised on a small hobby farm in Petaluma where the family practiced sustainability and raised 4-H animals. The family purchased two Ponies of the Americas and Diana enjoyed gymkhana, high school rodeo, schooling shows, trail, and horse camping with local clubs. Her parents instilled in her a passion for living and loving the Sonoma County rural lifestyle, which always included horses.

Today Diana shows western pleasure and hunter. She continues to explore and learn by taking lessons, attending events and clinics across disciplines, including dressage, and improving human-horse relationships. She also continues to be an avid trail rider on regional and state park trails.

Diana is a full-time middle school teacher and youth/teen advocate. She and her husband Tom are active members of the Petaluma Riding and Driving Club. Together they currently own three horses.

"I hope to support the Sonoma County Horse Council as an outreach liaison between the council and training/boarding barns and events facilities," Diana said.



## TRACY UNDERWOOD

In 2004 Tracy Underwood bought the 50-acre Oak Ridge Training Stables, renamed it Santa Rosa Equestrian Center, and managed it for 17 years. The Southern California native fondly recalls her favorite aspects of the business as the European Pony School, and the many riding clinics, educational symposiums, and jumping and dressage shows she hosted annually.

Tracy has been quite active in several local and national equine-related organizations. For several years she served as northern regional director of the California Dressage Society and co-chair of its Sonoma Chapter. The United States Dressage Federation saw her contribution to several national committees. Locally, she sat on the equine advisory committee at Santa Rosa Junior College, the horse show committee of the Sonoma County Fair, and the SCHC board.

"I am looking forward to serving on the SCHC. I am happy to help where needed but will focus on community outreach, social events, and fundraising to support the activities of the horse council," said Tracy.



Photo: Marcie Lewis Photography

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# HALLOWEEN FUN WITH HORSES



Should Cinderella need a ride to the ball, no need for a carriage. Pumpkins Sydney Burnett and Stoney would gladly give her a ride.



Behind that mask is Sonoma Horse Park trainer Marion Nelson riding Canadian Olympian Ian Miller's famous jumper Lonesome Dove.



Riding Polish Arabian Muri is for Susan Noonan and friend like floating on a cloud.



Maiden Adrienne Spatz is carried to the Halloween festivities by Gypsy Cob Guinness and squired by Neil Spatz.



Little Miss Muffet (Robyn Woodruff) Sat on a tuffet, Eating her curds and whey; There came a big spider (Scamper) Who sat down beside her And frightened Miss Muffet away.



# RAVE REVIEWS FOR RAPTORS

By Gwen Kilchherr

Rats are one of the worst pests to have in your barns and stables. They eat and contaminate horse food, damage structures, and property, and transmit parasites and diseases to animals and humans. Rats can thrive in a wide variety of climates and conditions. They can be found in and around homes, barns, farms, gardens, and open fields. They can squeeze through gaps as small as a half inch in diameter.

California's two most troublesome rats are the introduced species, the roof rat and the Norway rat.

**Norway rats**, *Rattus norvegicus*, sometimes called brown or sewer rats, are stocky burrowing rodents. They are believed

to have arrived in the U.S. from Asia in the 1700s. They have relatively poor vision, but their other senses, including hearing, smell, touch, and taste, are keen. They cause damage to properties and structures by gnawing. Their burrows can be found

along the foundations of buildings, under rubbish or woodpiles, and around gardens and fields. They line their nests with cloth, shredded paper, and other fibrous materials they find. When Norway rats invade buildings, they usually stay in basements or on ground floors. They live throughout the 48 contiguous United States.

**Roof rats**, *R. rattus*, sometimes called black rats, are slightly smaller than the Norway rats. Unlike the Norway rats, their tails are longer than their heads and bodies combined. Roof rats secured their place in history by spreading the bubonic plague that decimated Europe in the Middle Ages. They are very agile climbers and usually live and nest above ground in shrubs, trees, and dense vegetation such as ivy. They can often be found hiding in enclosed or elevated spaces such as attics, cabinets, false ceilings, and walls of buildings. The Norway rat might also be present in areas where the roof rat is found.

## CONTROL METHODS

- Keep your barns and stables squeaky clean.
- Seal up all holes in the roof, walls, foundation, around piping, and where electrical wires enter the walls.
- Make sure weather stripping around doors and windows is tight.
- Keep all horse feed and other feed sealed and stored in tight metal containers.
- Store bedding and blankets in tightly sealed metal containers.
- Check for sources of standing water since a roof rat needs an ounce of water a day.
- Use products that will control and deter, such as Good Nature Rat and Mouse Trap and Raticator.
- Use the non-poisonous Contrapest. This Environmental Protection Agency-registered rodent fertility control product does not kill rats but knocks back their numbers. Using the contraceptive, San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department saw a 65 percent reduction in rat burrows. Upper Queen Anne business district in Seattle, Washington, saw a 90 percent reduction in the number of rats in the city-block-sized development.

**\*\*\*DO NOT USE POISONOUS BAITS**

As we are seriously trying to avoid using

pesticides on our properties to control weeds, diseases, and insects on plants because of what they do to the environment; we are also learning about the dangers of using rat and rodent poisons in the food web.



Photo: Patti Schaffer

This barn owl was born in this barn. Here he has begun "branching," a common behavior in which an owl moves from nest to branch and starts flapping his wings to strengthen the flight muscles.

## BRING IN THE RAPTORS

Raptors are amazingly efficient in capturing and controlling rats and many other pests. We can and need to encourage them onto our barn properties and protect them by not poisoning them.

The term "raptor" refers to birds such as eagles, falcons, hawks, kites, owls, and vultures. Raptors are also referred to as "birds of prey." All raptors are a valuable resource to our state and are protected under California law.

In addition to erecting barn owl boxes around your barn and stable, horse and donkey owners can invite the raptors onto

the property with the construction of raptor perches.

Who can we turn to for help? Raptors Are The Solution (RATS) came into being in 2011 when Cooper's hawks were dying on the streets of Berkeley after ingesting poisoned rodents. Since then, RATS has built a strong coalition of agencies and individuals working hard to eliminate toxic rodenticides from the food web. RATS also works with organizations for educational outreach and grassroots action.

To learn more about how to stop using poisons for rat control and how to switch to safer, non-toxic methods, head to [raptorsarethesolution.org](http://raptorsarethesolution.org) or call Executive Director Lisa Owens Viani at 510-292-5095.



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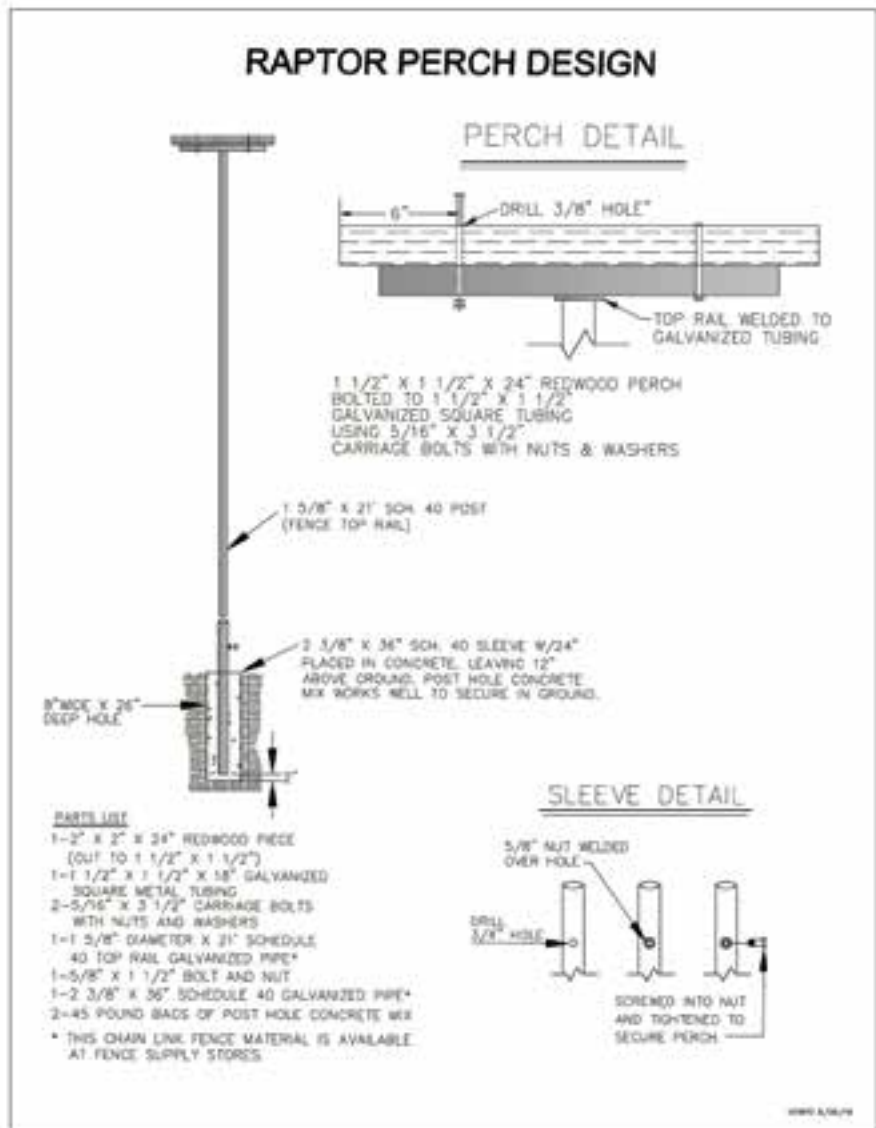
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Courtesy of Ventura County



# Our Local Gymkhana Star

By Gena Burgess

Armed with determination, grit, and a super horse, 23-year-old Lindsey Merrill was recently inducted into the California Gymkhana Association (CGA) Hall of Fame. This notable accomplishment was the result of a three-year journey.

A Santa Rosan, Lindsey is a full-time student working on her business administration degree with a focus on finance and accounting. She also works full-time at a security and private investigating firm in the office and occasionally in the field on investigations. In her little free time, she reads fantasy books and spends time with friends and family.

Lindsey shared her thoughts about this award and her plans for herself and her horse with the board of CGA District 45, which includes Sonoma and Marin counties and is called the Sonoma-Marin Rush Riders.

## What do you like about gymkhana?

Gymkhana is competitive and accessible, with many opportunities to win and grow as a rider. No matter who you are, what skill level you are at, or how competitive you want to be, CGA will help support you to reach your goals. The people I've met when traveling to different districts have become close friends as well as competitors and truly have been great support even on the most challenging days.

Each day of the competition, they run seven events, which usually cost about \$50

for the whole day, making it one of the most affordable equestrian competitions I know. I also love that it isn't just about who wins the daily shows. There are also people competing for year-end awards or those just trying to improve their times.

## Tell us about your horse. What makes a good gymkhana horse?

My horse Toph is an 11-year-old Quarter Horse mare. I bought her as a four-year-old and my brother, Taylor Merrill, helped me with her training. She loves to run, and it took me years to get a solid and consistent turn on her. She always gives 110 percent, which is a blessing and a curse.

I believe that any horse could do gymkhana, but if you want to be competitive in the top divisions, the horse needs to be able to run somewhat fast and, most importantly, complete the patterns smoothly. I find that a lot of the time if I slow down and focus on a smooth run, I end up with a faster time than when I run full speed.



Photo: Mike Pacheco

**YOU GO GIRLS: Lindsey Merrill and her mare Toph run against time.**

## What is it about gymkhana that makes it such fun?

Having 13 different events, there will always be something you love and are confident in, but also something you need to improve. The people who participate make CGA fun. Everyone cheers for each other. When I was running for the Hall of Fame, I had people I didn't even know cheering me on and congratulating me on getting my times. That supportive environment is contagious and makes everyone feel invested in each other's success.

## Tell us about your family life. Who do you ride with? How often do you ride? Is your family involved with horses?

I grew up riding horses and running at gymkhanas. I learned most of what I know from my brother who has his training and lesson business Taylor Merrill Training in Santa Rosa. I try to ride almost every day, and I ride with Taylor every chance I get. Growing up, my mother and sister competed with us, but my mom doesn't ride anymore, and my sister took a break from showing for a few years to focus on her family. Currently, my sister, Liana McCarthy, gives riding lessons and has fun summer camps on her farm, Twilight Ranch.

## What does this award mean to you?

It took me three years straight of running for the Hall of Fame before I got it in 2021. The amount of blood, sweat, and tears my brother and I have put into achieving this title is unmatched by anything else I have ever attempted. It doesn't



Photo: Victoria Beardslee

**Hall of Famers Lindsey and her mare Toph bask in the glory of their success.**

just require skill and dedication; it also takes so much mental strength to push through the stress and disappointing days. This award is an acknowledgment of all the years of hard work that my horse and I have both put in.

I missed my Hall of Fame the first year by just one run, and it took everything I had to try again the following season instead of giving up. I could not have done it without my family and friends from the barn, especially not without Marc Hughes and Taylor Merrill, who went to every show with me whether they also rode or didn't.

## What are your goals with your horse?

Toph and I will start focusing on barrel racing now. We will get our pro card and start going to the bigger rodeos. My biggest goal with her is to make it to the National Finals Rodeo in Las Vegas. Of course, more than that, I want to make sure she is always happy and healthy, and I want to continue learning more and becoming a better rider.

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## GYMKHANA AND HOW IT WORKS

The western equestrian events known as gymkhana are made up of 13 different speed pattern racing and timed games including pole bending, barrel racing, and variations of running, weaving, turning, and jumping. The competitor's goal is to run the patterns in the fastest time without knocking over any obstacles. Each downed obstacle adds two seconds to the time.

While similar to barrel racing, gymkhana offers horse and rider combinations a variety of speed divisions that are based on a set time matrix that is used by every competition. This set matrix allows participants to compete against the competitors in their division and gives them clear personal goals.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the word gymkhana and the event it describes originated in 19th-century India. The term is probably an alteration of the Hindi "gedkhana," which describes a ball-playing area similar to a racket ball court. The first gymkhanas were displays of athletics and equestrian skill. The 20th century introduced a new kind of gymkhana, designed to show off car handling.

The California Gymkhana Association (CGA) oversees the state's gymkhana shows and offers a variety of awards and titles. These include daily highpoint and reserve prizes, buckles, saddles, jackpot money, and year-end awards. Each rider can sign up for a year-end rating and use the whole season to get rated in their chosen division.

The Race of Champions, or the Hall of Fame, is the most challenging division with the fastest rating. To become a Hall of Fame rider, you have to earn three times in the fastest division (AAA+) in 12 out of the 13 events for a total of 36 AAA+ times. Riders have all year to achieve this rating. It restarts every season.

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# HORSE HILL

## More Than a View from the Freeway

By Robert Eichstaedt

We're bringing to you a conversation between a horse and non-horse person about a spot familiar and maybe a mystery to some who drive through Marin County on Highway 101.



Photo: Suzanne Gooch

Carrie Morgan's third grade class from Edna Maguire School in Mill Valley and adjacent to Horse Hill takes a drawing lesson from artist Suzanne Gooch, a boarder at Horse Hill. Then the horses pose and the kids create.

**"H**orse Hill,...huh? Sounds like a pretentious pre-school or trending millennials' bar or some ludicrous luxury home development.

You're close on the last, as it nearly came to be. Horse Hill is a 55-acre Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) preserve in Mill Valley, a horse boarding pasture on rolling grasslands in the heart of suburban southern Marin. You've seen it from the highway.

**I never knew it had a name. I have spotted a bunch of horses on the knolls to the west. "Bunch" is how they come, right?**

"Herd" would be the proper collective noun. There's a herd of fourteen equines grazing on the Hill. They're free-range but not feral. Each has an owner; many of them have a caretaking

retinue: sponsors, groom crew, adolescent horse-huggers.

**Sweet deal. Some kinda giveaway to the equestrian elite, no doubt.**

Sweet deal indeed, if you're a horse. Horse Hill was a gift from the community to itself and is now preserved as a legacy for future generations. The local Alto-Sutton Manor neighbors fought off successive Horse Hill development schemes from 1961 through 1990. In 1989, the Save Horse Hill Committee raised \$600,000 from over 5,000 individual donors. This was combined with

state land acquisition funding plus City of Mill Valley and Marin County monies to enable the purchase of the property via eminent domain process. The final price was \$2.4 million. The city then donated the land to the county to be held in perpetuity as open space and as a place for horses to live.

**I remember seeing that "Save Horse Hill" sign. I gave \$2 out of my paper-route earnings but had no clue what I was saving. Now, when I'm bogged down in 101 North commute traffic at Alto Hill, I'll see the horses on the Hill and see what my two bucks did. They're a refreshing sight.**

After the land was saved from development, the MCOSD agreed to a grazing agreement with the historic Alto Bowl Horse Owners Association (ABHOA), which is responsible for all horse-related activities and expenses at Horse Hill. It's a not-for-profit co-op, with every member having a job. There's a board of officers and several managers. Everyone takes a hand at hay-tossing and manure management in the feeding area. ABHOA members and their horses carry out environmental work parties several times a year and frequent public outreach.

**Let's say I have a horse. Could I just bring it to Horse Hill and leave it? And where do they sleep at night? And what does a horse normally eat? My brother's friend has a horse he says is a famous champion, and he'll give it to me for free. Should I take it? It's a brindle or a mustang or something, and I think it comes with cribbing. He mentioned fetlocks. Would I need those?**

As Horse Hill is public open space, it receives many visitors with questions like yours. One of the joys of being a boarder at Horse Hill is helping horse lovers learn more about the animals and their proper care. Horse Hillians advise families against pandemic pony purchases while recommending horse sponsorships as a way to learn what committed horse ownership requires. Horses live longer than some mortgages and many marriages.

The Horse Hill herd has shade/rain shelters available, plus the lee of ridges in stormy weather. Most Hill horses are blanketed on the coldest wet days. Oak groves provide a shady retreat when temperatures are high. The horses roam the pasture, grazing and lounging at will. For a comfortable and healthy life, horses need their herd mates, quality forage, clean water, and room to roam.

When the grasslands go California gold and the pasture grazing is less nutritious, the ABHOA feeds premium grass hay twice a day, usually from July through January. Two natural springs supply drinking water, with municipal water augmenting them when drought conditions persist.

**But what do they do all day? Are they waiting to be ridden or pull a wagon or whatever?**

Horse Hill horses have full lives simply being horses, an occupation at which they are experts. Horses can graze for 18 hours a day. We try not to burden their schedules.

**OK, but somebody does ride the Horse Hill horses, no?**

Yes. The ABHOA asks that all new boarders be active trail riders with a solid trail horse. Incoming horses must be at least five years old but not more than 20. Horse Hill is not suitable for stallions, pregnant mares, foals, retirements, or lay-ups.

**And they ride around on Horse Hill?**

Not really. That would be like riding a bicycle around your living room. Big reveal here. The trails accessible from Horse Hill are some of the most spectacular in the world. No rig for

hauling is needed. The trails are varied, picturesque, challenging, and rewarding. It's like a high-end European equi-tour, only cheaper, and the locals are fluent in English. Federal, state, county, and water district watershed lands all adjoin and interconnect. Horse Hill has an impressive history of boarding successful endurance horses, including best condition (Haggin Cup) at the Tevis Cup 100-mile endurance ride, Ride & Tie winners, and total mileage champs. They all trained and conditioned on the trails ridden from the Hill including Rodeo Valley and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area Headlands, Tennessee and Muir Beaches, the top of Mt. Tamalpais, Lake Lagunitas, and beyond.

**Sounds like fun. So, would a brown horse get along with the others at Horse Hill? Not that I would take my brother's friend's free brown horse, but just asking.**

It's a tight herd that sees only occasional newcomers. Introductions are carefully managed to prevent injuries. The herd tries the newbie to see how it'll fit in. All horses want to be in a herd, and all will join up eventually—even the brown ones.

*"It was a great treat to us to be turned out into the home paddock or the old orchard; the grass was so cool and soft to our feet, the air was so sweet, and the freedom to do as we like was so pleasant; to gallop, to lie down, and roll over on our backs, or to nibble the sweet grass. Then it was a very good time for talking, as we stood together under the shade of the large chestnut tree."*

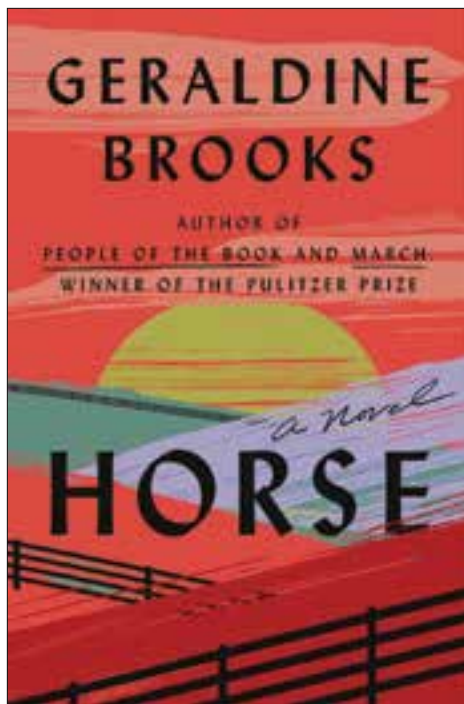
— From Black Beauty by Anna Sewell (1820-1878)

Sewell's Black Beauty would have felt right at home at the Hill.

**For information on Horse Hill, visit [Facebook.com/horsehill.org](https://www.facebook.com/horsehill.org) or email [amoryhw@comcast.net](mailto:amoryhw@comcast.net).**

**Marin landmark Mount Tamalpais adds to the scenic beauty of Horse Hill.**

*Photo: Reena Rosskopt*



# Horse by Geraldine Brooks

Reviewed By Susan Banta

In 2019 in Washington, DC, a Nigerian American art history doctoral student and an Australian forensic anthropologist at the Smithsonian Museum find their lives and interests converge around an old painting and the bones of a horse.

In 1954 in New York City, a celebrated art dealer known for representing cutting-edge contemporary art becomes enthralled by an antique equestrian portrait brought to her by her black maid. The painting ends up in the Smithsonian.

In 1850 in Kentucky, a prominent white owner of a Thoroughbred stud farm is so disappointed with the scrawny foal with offensive four white legs that he gives him to his free black trainer who had pushed him into the breeding. The trainer's son, still his slave, becomes the groom and defender of the foal that the trainer hopes will provide him the means to buy his son out of slavery.

So begins Geraldine Brooks' *Horse*, which on one level is a fictionalized saga of the great American Thoroughbred racehorse and sire Lexington. Yet on a deeper level, the book speaks of the unbreakable bond between a boy and a horse, slavery, the Civil War, current-day racism, as well as the power of art and science to endure and uncover secrets of the past.

Chris-crossing these eras, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author creates characters whose lives seem unconnected until it is clear that they are. The horse and the slave boy catch the eye of an itinerant painter hired to paint a more famous horse; the black art historian picks an old painting out of a trash heap; the anthropologist helps a colleague put together the long-forgotten bones of a once famous horse.

Brooks draws us into each of these eras as if she has lived them. The horse and art are the media that bring to life the complexity of slavery as the nation careens toward the Civil War. The horse and the boy are sold and exploited. Promises are broken time and again as the horse sets records, including winning a four-mile race, as the major races were in the mid-1800s, against the clock as there were no true contenders. The painter weaves in and out of the boy's life, each a subtle inspiration for the other, their paths crossing as racing and civilization fall apart. We experience the unbearable injustices of slavery, the thoughtless will of powerful men, as well as the incredible perseverance of an undying life-long devotion of a young man to a horse.

Brooks, an Australian-American and a passionate horsewoman, is not only the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of historical fiction (*March*, 2006), but she is also an award-winning writer of non-fiction, and a journalist and foreign correspondent who covered crises in Africa, the Balkans, and the Middle East for the *Wall Street Journal*. She combines her journalistic eye and penchant for factual detail with a passion for stories of the past, especially the American Civil War.

Skipping seamlessly between the eras, Brooks ties the characters and their struggles, especially those of the two young black men. The 21st century art historian Theo, though the product of a privileged background—a polo playing graduate of Yale and Oxford—still endures the subtle and not-so-subtle racism that we witness in the more raw story of Jarret, the black slave boy. Both must take care with what they say: "Words could be snares," as Jarret notes. They both risk their own peril and must learn to swallow their anger and be careful of their actions.

Brooks also seamlessly weaves her fictional characters into the fabric of the real-life people who surrounded the

great horse Lexington. Jarret, Theo, and the scientist Jess take us from points of fact into the depths of a real-life saga. Elisha Warfield, Jr., an important figure in early American racing and breeding, is first introduced to the reader in the chapter "Warfield's Jarret." Richard Ten Broeck purchases both Lexington and Jarret and ruthlessly builds the horse's career. Thomas J Scott, a little-known itinerant painter, did paint Lexington many times. Mary Barr Clay, the daughter of a white abolitionist Cassius Marcellus Clay, insists on an open friendship with Jarret that often puts him in jeopardy even as she tries to help him. The relationship between Theo and Jess gives us a modern glimpse of where we have come in mixed-race relationships. Brooks creates for us the very best of historical fiction.

The story is the enthralling tale of a great horse. Yet it reaches much deeper into American history and the foundation of racism, particularly the conundrum for black horsemen in the 1800s, who were admired for their successful ways with the white man's prized possessions yet bound by their imposed inferior status. And, despite progress made, we are faced with the trials and tragedies that black men still face today. Brooks also reminds us that it is not only science and historical records that show us our past, but that art is the unspoken essence of those who came before us.

Like a painter, Geraldine Brooks creates a vibrant picture of the lives, emotions, and feelings of these characters, real and fictionalized, whose lives were affected by an amazing horse and the deeper story of racism.

Author Geraldine Brooks and her horses.



Photo by Randi Baird

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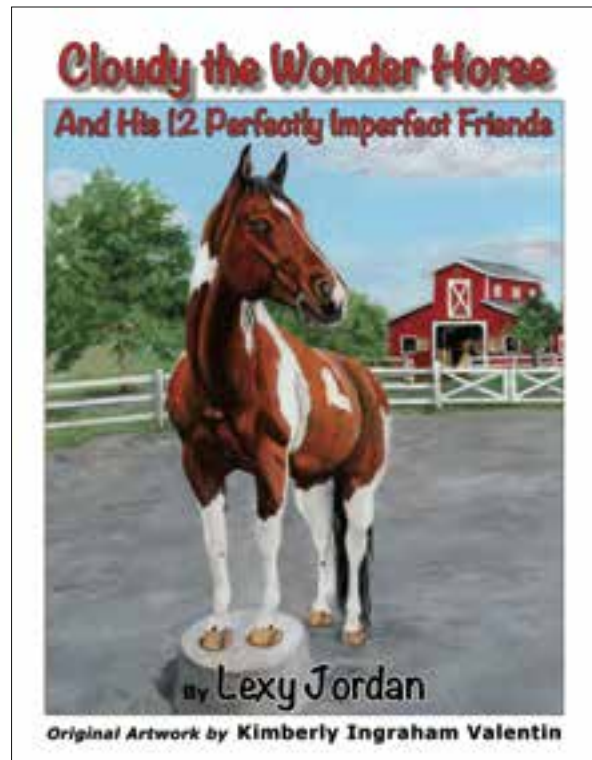
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# PRDC Drill Team Scores Big in Reno

By Patti Schofler

**S**onoma County drill is back better than ever. This year Petaluma Riding and Driving Club (PRDC) drill team saw their eight pretty women on fast horses with bling shining and flags waving make a name for themselves at the Reno Rodeo Championship Drill Team Competition.

Despite the team's small size, they came in fifth out of nine competing teams, only four points from fourth place and nine from third place. That comes after last year when the PRDC team finished dead last. Before that, it had been 12 years since PRDC competed in Reno.

The brilliant placing did not come easily. Covid, EHV-1, injured horses, and injured riders reduced the team from 12 to eight. Worse yet, they almost could not compete when a regular was injured riding a week before the competition. Fortunately, team choreographer and co-coach Ingrid Rider stepped up to take her place.

"With only three rides before the competition on a horse she had never ridden, we threw her into a 12-minute pattern at a lope with flags," recalled Colette Breen, team co-coach. "Without her, we wouldn't have been able to go. She took one for the team."

Had they not gone, they may have missed the joy of massive support from family and friends. They may have missed the unique feeling of riding at the Reno Livestock Events Center. "You ride into that Reno arena, and there is this hush," Colette recalled about the team's run. "It's so quiet, with no wind. Your flags aren't whipping around. Our riders just snapped together. They nailed maneuvers they really had been struggling with. It was one of the best runs they've ever had."

## HOW TO CLIMB THE LADDER

After placings were done and celebrated, the PRDC team



Photo: Hannah Beebe

**The PRDC Drill Team performing a half-team sweeps oblique maneuver at the Reno Rodeo Drill Competition includes Lisa Bacon on Vegas, Caryn Hoeflein on Cali, Saga McIsaac on Ref, Leslie Moreda on Blue, Marissa Gilardi on Nula, Ingrid Rider on Goldie, Brittany Rider on Danny and Emily Cooper on Lucy. Alternate riders who joined the team in Reno included Heather Mendoza, Michelle Lagos, and Summer Clay.**

wanted to know how they could push themselves farther up the ladder. As is the procedure, judges, positioned on three sides of the arena, provided teams with a recording in which they evaluated the run. All three judges agreed that the PRDC team needs more riders.

"They like to see 12 to 16 horses and riders. With only eight, they see every tiny mistake. And the eight takes up such little space compared to bigger teams. Sixteen takes up the whole arena and gives off more of a 'wow' factor. So, think about it. Look how well we scored against the big teams," said Ingrid. "Now, it's our mission to grow our revitalized team."

In a nutshell, a group of horse and rider pairs makes up any drill team. They perform maneuvers to music while at the same time taking on their distinct character: from the Canadian Mounted Police to the Spanish Riding School of Vienna, from rodeo teams to color guard teams, from formal dressage drill teams called quadrilles to teams that drill with carts or carriages, from teams that perform drills during dramas to English riding teams

that jump in formation.

## THE ORIGINS OF DRILL

Drill teams originated with military formations fashioned in the days before mechanized armies and were carried out according to dressage fundamentals. To prepare for battle and to move horse soldiers on the battlefield, military units developed a semblance of order through riding drills, which helped soldiers learn to ride more skillfully and in unison.

In the 1930s, military drill team competitions were popular features at horse shows throughout America, including the National Capital Horse Show in Washington, DC, and the National Horse Show at New York City's Madison Square Garden.

In 1945, Army Col. F. W. Koester developed the drill team program for the California State Horsemen's Association (CSHA). This San Francisco native's love for horses led him to a career during two world wars with the United States Cavalry and Army Remount Service, which bred, trained, and supplied horses to Army troops in the field. The Quartermaster Depot, the World War II-era name for what is now California Polytechnic State University Pomona, was on cereal magnate W.K. Kellogg's 800-acre Arabian horse ranch. It was one of seven facilities across the country where the U.S. military trained horses for the war.

Koester was Pomona's commanding officer and was responsible for procuring and training horses and mules for military use. In later years Koester served as general manager of the California Thoroughbred Breeders Association and editor of The Thoroughbred of California. He also developed the lip tattoo as a means of identifying horses.

## DRILL TEAM POPULARITY GROWS

Drill teams had become popular in the late '40s with children's and women's riding clubs and Sheriff Posse units. The first California State Drill Team Competition was held in October 1949. In 1957 the Junior and Senior State Champions were first invited to perform at the Cow Palace Grand National Rodeo. The 2021 overall winner at the CSHA Championship Show's drill team competition was the PRDC Junior Team.

With the PRDC style featuring flags, bling, western saddles, and country and western music, competitors may seem unrelated to the continental elegance characterizing the Spanish Riding School, Le Cadre Noir de Saumur, or the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art. However, to the knowledgeable horse person, the skills on display represent different branches of the same family tree. They all gauge their performances on control, timing, synchronization, and precision.

As one of the few equestrian team sports, drill team competition requires a well-mannered horse with basic skills that can learn to be comfortable having other horses very close or

moving toward him. For example, for one of the most difficult maneuvers, the oblique, the horse's head is at the knee of the neighboring rider, and the horse's shoulder is at the other horse's butt.

"It's the hardest for horses to accept. It runs contrary to horse instinct. We're asking them to be in the danger zone. But they learn it by starting with a lot of space between horses," Ingrid explained.

That works out in most cases. "We had one gal that tried so hard to get her horse to go through the drill pattern, but the mare just would not do it. Finally, she kicked another horse. I don't think there was a dry eye on the team. We were so sad for the rider. The gal, however, rallied and didn't give up on drill. The mare found another job, and the gal now has a horse that loves drill."

When a rider joins, the PRDC team gets more than one person and one horse. Usually, families and friends provide considerable support at practices and on the road for competitions and demonstrations, as they did at the Sonoma County Fair Wine Country Rodeo this summer. The volunteers can even earn a belt buckle for their help with the team.

The fun, camaraderie, growth of individual riding skills and success at competition made it clear that the North Bay will see much more of the PRDC drill team in the coming months.

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# SARCOIDS

## The Most Common Equine Skin Cancer

By Michelle Beko, DVM



Photo: Michelle Beko, DVM

Nodular sarcoids around a mare's eye

We are fortunate that systemic cancers are uncommon in our equine companions. Unlike dogs and people, cancer is not a common cause of death in horses. Skin cancers, however, occur commonly in horses, and of the several types, sarcoids are the most common.

Sarcoids are likely caused by bovine papilloma virus, which causes warts in cattle. Wounds may predispose a horse to get a sarcoid. These tumors are benign and don't spread to distant body parts. Most horses are asymptomatic. Though they rarely affect the horse's overall health, they can occasionally become large.

No breed seems predisposed to getting sarcoids. Though they may be found in horses of any age, they most frequently start to grow when a horse is between one and seven years old. Often a horse will have more than one.

Most skin cancers are diagnosed from a biopsy that tests tissue from the sarcoid. However, taking a biopsy from a sarcoid may stimulate it to grow. Therefore, veterinarians often make a tentative diagnosis based on examination alone.

Sarcoids can take on several different forms. Verrucous sarcoids have a wart-like appearance. Fibroblastic sarcoids resemble proud flesh. Mixed sarcoids have both verrucous and fibroblastic portions. Occult sarcoids are flat. Nodular sarcoids are firm lumps under the skin and most commonly occur around the eyes.

### TREATMENT OPTIONS

While there are many treatment options for ridding a horse of its sarcoids, no one treatment option works exceptionally well. If the sarcoids are not in a bothersome location, a valid option is to leave them alone. Some may spontaneously regress.

Surgical removal is an option but has a high rate of recurrence because these tumors often have little "fingers" of tumors that extend beyond their visual edges.

In cryosurgery, the cancer is frozen with liquid nitrogen. Radiation is a newer option requiring the horse to be treated at a medical center such as the University of California Davis. Both of these procedures require repeated treatments.

Chemotherapy with Cisplatin or Bleomycin injected into the tumor or tumors is often successful. Usually, about four treatments are needed.

Finally, there are several topical treatments including fluorouracil, a human treatment, XXTERRA, which is made of bloodroot and zinc chloride, and Indian Mud, which also contains bloodroot. XXTERRA requires a prescription.

Because most treatments (except surgery) kill the cancer cells, they make lesions look worse before they look better. Some can be relatively expensive, and none are 100 percent effective. I often recommend no treatment.



Photo: Michelle Beko, DVM

Mixed sarcoid on the same mare's shoulder



Michelle Beko, D.V.M.

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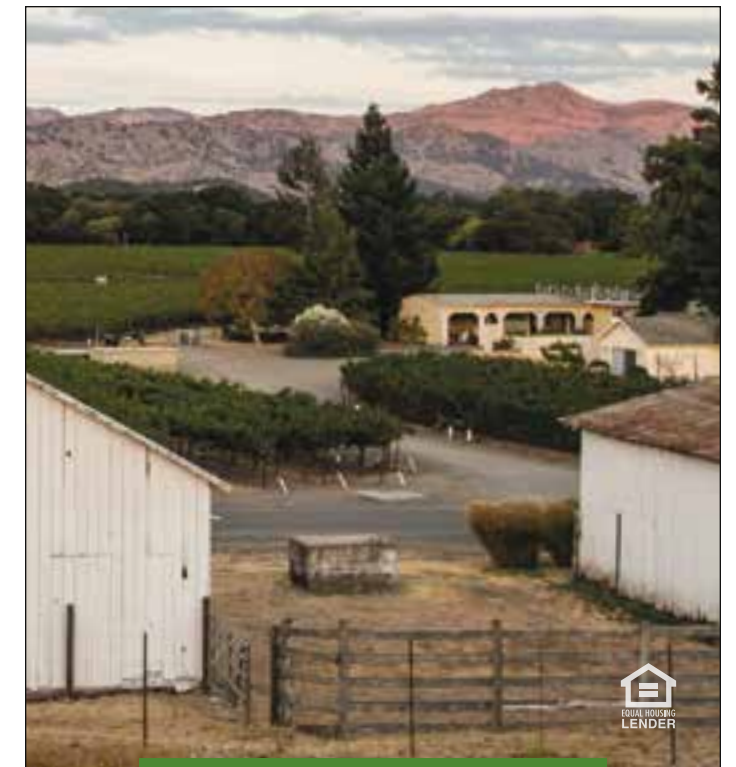
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# YOUNG HORSE HEALTH NEEDS HAVE THEIR OWN STORY

By Aimee Robinson



Photo by Melissa Ketter, Valley Vet Supply

Once you have a healthy foal on the ground, the hard part is over—right?

Bringing up a young horse most importantly calls for making good choices to support their health and nutrition. Tony Hawkins, DVM, Valley Vet Supply technical service veterinarian, joins Jyme Nichols, Ph.D., Stride Animal Health director of nutrition, to outline a young horse's health and nutrition needs.

## DEWORMING

For young horses, Dr. Hawkins warns that parasites are one of the greatest health concerns. They can diminish a horse's immunity and rob it of nutrition, energy, and overall wellness. They also can cause critical damage to a horse's vital organs, hinder performance and impair growth.

"Parasites are a big consideration for the young horse as early as six months old when the parasite risk changes from ascarids to strongyles. Because of this, a fecal egg count (FEC) is recommended around the weanling to yearling time frame," says Dr. Hawkins.

"For foals, I recommend deworming every two months until a year old. Foals are prone to ascarids early on, and benzimidazole dewormers (also known as 'white dewormers') are recommended. Yearlings and two-year-olds should be dewormed on average three to four times per year, based on their FEC results, with either ivermectin or moxidectin and praziquantel for tapeworm control in the fall."

## VACCINATIONS

Putting proper vaccine protocols in place for mares, foals, and young horses is most important, especially because at their young age, their immunity isn't built up to protect them, cautions Dr. Hawkins.

"The consideration starts with the broodmare," Dr. Hawkins says. "Make sure she is properly vaccinated so that her foal receives protection through the colostrum it drinks in the mare's milk when it is born. Assuming the mare was vaccinated appropriately, administer a vaccine booster at nine months of pregnancy. Booster with a four, six, or seven-way. Whatever your mare is at risk for, your foal will be at risk for, as well."

Once you welcome a healthy foal into the world, Dr. Hawkins finds "it's best practice to vaccinate the foal at four months of age with the same product you used for your mare. Then, booster with that product at six months of age, then again as a yearling."

## DENTAL HEALTH

According to the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), a horse's age matters in evaluating the requirements

## A healthy youngster

for dental care. Young horses such as two and three-year-olds heading into training will benefit from a comprehensive dental exam.

"Teeth should be floated to remove sharp points and checked for retained caps. Caps should be removed if they have not been shed. This should be done before training begins to prevent training problems related to sharp teeth," states the AAEP.

The AAEP also noted how young horses between two and five-year-old may require more dental care.

"Deciduous teeth tend to be softer than permanent teeth and may develop sharp enamel points more quickly. Also, there is an extraordinary amount of dental maturation during this period. Twenty-four teeth will be shed and replaced by 36 to 40 adult teeth. To prevent maleruption problems, twice-a-year examinations are appropriate for young horses from birth to five years of age," states AAEP's article, "The Importance of Maintaining the Health of Your Horse's Mouth."

## YOUNG HORSE NUTRITION

"Once the foal is weaned, don't just kick them out to pasture," warns Dr. Nichols. "The first two to three years is a critical phase where extra high levels of trace minerals and amino acids are needed to support proper bone and joint health."

The young horse should receive fortified feed with essential, single amino acid-bound trace minerals, including copper, zinc, and manganese. These will encourage maximum structural integrity.

"It does not matter how much glucosamine, MSM, chondroitin, or hyaluronic acid you pump into a horse. If those basic trace minerals and amino acids are lacking, they will never reach full structural potential," Dr. Nichols says.

## HEALTHY HOOVES

Though biotin tends to get all the credit for this one, it is just one small piece of the puzzle, shares Dr. Nichols. Other nutrients of extreme importance for hoof health include zinc, copper, manganese, selenium, lysine, and methionine.

"Researchers have found that providing 20 mg of biotin per day in the total diet of feed and supplements is enough to improve hoof quality significantly. The catch is that you must continue the supplementation to benefit. Reducing the amount or stopping will cause the quality to regress to what it was. In addition, the improvements you see happen only in the new growth; it can take eight to 15 months for the hoof to grow completely out. Ramping up the daily dose of biotin to 100 mg may be helpful for horses that have exceptionally poor hoof quality or sole depth.

"Biotin sounds like the magic fix, but don't be fooled. A well-balanced diet is a key to excellent hoof health," encouraged Dr. Nichols.

Deworming, correct vaccinations, proper dental care, good nutrition, and attention to healthy hoof quality offer the young horse the best possible start.

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# 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.



Marie Boyd

Wait a minute. Those who have read this column before know that we usually substitute the word "east" with an English riding discipline and "west" with a Western riding discipline and ask ourselves if never the twain shall meet.

For this issue, however, we approached two trainers who ride both English and Western. The tricky part is that they specialize in different breeds. We asked gaited horse trainer Marie Boyd and Arabian trainer Donna Waggoner to fill us in on their views of longeing.

**Marie Boyd (MB):** Marie Boyd of Santa Rosa's Irish Hills Equine works mainly with gaited horses, including Missouri Fox Trotters, Tennessee Walkers, and Rocky and Kentucky Mountain Horses. She trains and competes gaited performance horses using specialized tack combinations that incorporate both English and Western tack, pleasure horses that show in Western and English pleasure, and versatility horses that compete in trail classes, obstacles, small trail trials, and youth activities. She is the founder of the North Coast Horse Association and has served as the Region I director of the Missouri Fox Trotting Horse Breed Association. In addition to her Santa Rosa facility, which opened in 2006, Marie also regularly travels to teach and train at places long distances away including Anchorage, Alaska, and



Donna Waggoner

SNJ Heritage Fox Trotters in Eagle Point, Oregon.

**Donna Waggoner (DW):** Donna Waggoner of Sebastopol has trained and shown horses for over 30 years. She fell in love with Arabian horses when her family lived in Libya. After spending time in England, where Donna joined Pony Club, the family moved to a ranch in Napa and opened a boarding stable. She spent six years at West Coast Arabians in Santa Rosa, rising from groom to assistant trainer. Today she bases her training business at Julie and Gary Feldman's Hidden Gem Farms in Petaluma. She excels in many disciplines, including Western pleasure, country English pleasure, hunter pleasure, show hack, sport horse, and equitation. Donna's clients range from competitors at Arabian National Championship Shows to those who trail ride.

## Where does longeing belong in the training picture?

**MB:** I use longeing across the board, from the beginning to the end of my horses' careers, from step one for the horse that hasn't been started to my finished horses who come off the trailer at a new place or who need to learn something without being under saddle. When I'm advancing horses in their training, like getting them set up in show bridles or teaching them to move forward and use their gait and body more, I like to teach them these new things without a rider.

I also use long lining frequently to allow a horse to find his

rhythm and where he's comfortable, say going from a snaffle to a curb. It will enable the horse to drive forward without worrying about me as a rider and without me or other riders making a mistake that might hinder that horse from finding his way. The horse can experiment. Can I lean on this, how far can I take this, or what happens when I take my head up? It allows me to communicate without their feeling claustrophobic or feeling the additional pressure of the rider.

Secondly, I use longeing when I travel with horses. When I go to Alaska, we go on the ferry. I leave horses in the trailer until we get to a port where I drive my truck and trailer off the ferry and get them out on the longe line. Then I can see how they are feeling. Are they sore? Are they hydrated? Are they tired? Are they nervous? Are they eating right?

With longeing, I also can see if they're traveling strange or struggling. Gaited horses tend to get muscle fatigue in the stifle and shoulder areas. I can see if I need to back off, so I don't see a stifle injury in three weeks.

**DW:** When I was six, my mom got me a three-year-old Arabian Quarter Horse cross. We knew nothing. If we had known about longeing then, I probably would have saved a lot of grief. It's a valuable tool.

If you're trying to work horses that haven't been out for a couple of days or are hot, they need time to wind down. I longe my horses every day. My older horses need time to warm up and start slowly before we get to work. It gets them ready for a job. For young horses, it's a way to learn to come off the pressure.

If you're going trail riding, and your horse gets out of the trailer all hot and spooky, you need to be able to longe. The horse needs to get out some of their stuff out so that he doesn't start bucking when you're swinging a leg over. I'm all about a tired horse is a good horse.

## What should they be like on the longe line?

**MB:** I want a respectful horse on the longe line. For me, the longeing is work. I rarely use longeing as a way for horses to get out their excitement. So if I have a line on them, even if they're high, I use more of a technique to move their feet. If the horse is bucking, I need to work the brain more than the body.

I use turn out for horses that need to get out and run. My horses know that when I turn them out in the arena or round pen, without equipment, they get to be a horse and play. When they're on a line, they know they are working, have rules to follow, and have a purpose to it. If I'm taking a horse to an event, they are past the point where they have to run.

I do not have a reason for my horses to be worked on the ground without having the connection of a piece of equipment. Most gaited horses aren't going to collect and gait without a connection. It's about different breeds.

**DW:** I want my horses to know that once they start on the longe line, it's their opportunity to do whatever they want.

They can buck. They can blow. They can play. That does, however, come after they know their ground manners and not pull on you or drag you around. I don't want them running off their feet within a controlled environment. They need to know how to walk, trot, canter, and how to reverse. They know the meaning of "whoa." They have learned to hold the correct lead and don't cross fire behind.

## How do you do it and what do you do?

**MB:** I use a knotted rope halter with a 14-foot lead or longe line because I prefer direct communication rather than hanging on the horse's neck with a web halter. I don't want to lean my weight into them to keep them from dragging me.

When I'm long lining, I use a ring snaffle, a surcingle with side reins, long lines, or both, and a Clinton Anderson stick or a long whip.

I use clucks, kisses, and verbal commands.

I do lots of direction changes and transitions from what we call a trail walk to a breed-specific animated walk and up to their breed-specific gait, whether it's a fox trot or running walk and back down. It's fairer for them to learn from the ground my verbal cues and light pressure in doing transitions than from the rider.

**DW:** It all starts with simple longeing to teach them to come off pressure from the longe line. Then they learn to go to the bit with the biting rig on. Then you move up into the long lines. It's too dangerous to put a biting rig or side reins on a horse that doesn't know how to come off the pressure.

When I'm biting or long lining, they are doing a job. I'm asking them to go into a frame, whether a loose or a tight rein, and bend in a longeing environment that has to be done in a controlled walk, trot, and canter. If they're biting up with a surcingle or saddle or biting rig and they're working in a bridle, that is not the time to buck and run. You are in a training session.

When long lining, I use a surcingle in which the rings stand up, making for easy release from pressure. For the same reason, my long lines are made of light hiking ropes that will slide. I use a crupper to keep the surcingle in place, and I wrap it with a soft polo wrap for comfort.

I've worked with excellent horse trainers, and so much work is on the ground and in the bullpen. Even with my trained horses going to Nationals, I long line them to keep them soft and fit while staying off their backs. I get to see how they're doing, how they're moving. My horses are super soft and supple in their body, back, and neck. When long lining, I can change their frame. I can put them anywhere, whether they're Western horses or hunters or English horses that trot high.

*In the future, if you would like us to ask Northern California experts a question about horses, get in touch with Horse Journal managing editor Patti Schofler at [schc.pschofler@gmail.com](mailto:schc.pschofler@gmail.com).*



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