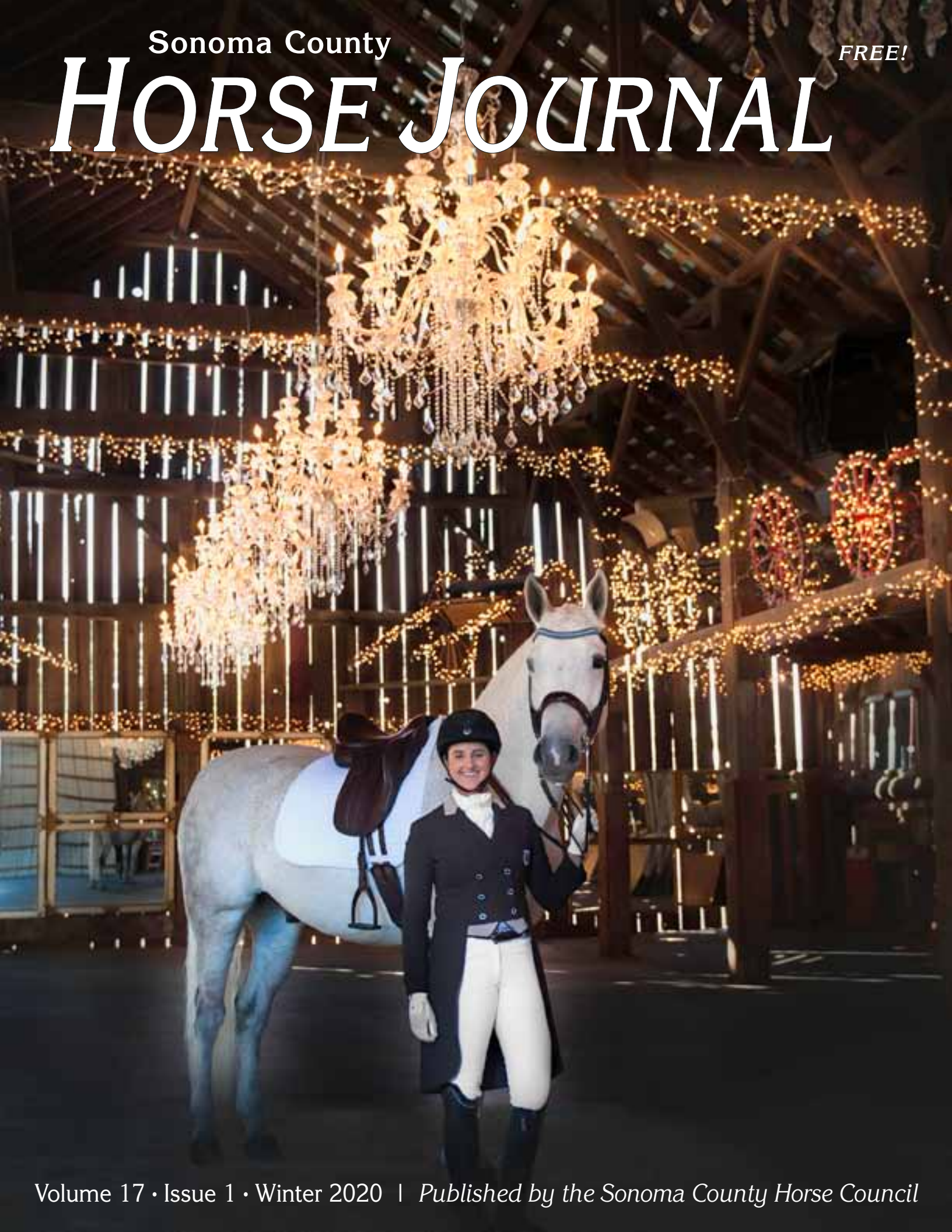


Sonoma County

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HORSE JOURNAL





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Sonoma County

HORSE JOURNAL

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Inside this Issue

Contributor Biographies	4
President's Message – Elizabeth Palmer	5
News & Newsworthy	6
Equus Announcement	7
Chatwin – Patti Schofler	8
Our Evacuation – Melissa Kalember	10
Galapagos Horses Find Support – Sandra Van Voorhis	12
Where East Meets West	14
Horse Books Linked to Northern California	16
How Horses Teach Us to Lead – Catherine A. Held, Ph.D	18
Horsing Around in the Snow – Daniel J. Demers	20
Winter Riding in Sonoma County – Robin Everett	21
Were You Ready for the Kincade Fire? – Sandra Van Voorhis	22
Get the Low Down on Horse Teeth – Mechelle Beko, DVM	23
Hiring a Hauler – Alisha Robinson	24
Getting to the Roots of the Matter – Amy Young	26
Winter Care Solutions – Elizabeth Denison	28
HaHa!	29
Ad Specifications and Rates	30



Photos: Marcie Lewis Photography

The scene is reminiscent of the Great Hall at the famed Spanish Riding School of Vienna, only it's Sonoma County's Spring Hill Estates of Tomales and the stars are Jaclyn Pepper of Santa Rosa and her own Cooper QLF, a 2010, 18 hand Hanoverian successfully competing nationally at Intermediaire I level dressage.

Cooper is home grown, bred at Queens Lane Farm in Petaluma, the city where Jaclyn runs her training business.

Spring Hill Estates which includes this elegantly refurbished barn and three homes is the venue for weddings and events and is owned by Larry Peter of the Petaluma Creamery and Washoe House.

Helping to make this photo shoot happen we thank Bob Bailey, Loren DeRoy, Marsha Busekist and Cliff Busekist.

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she is a graduate of the USDF L Judges Education Program and trains her eight-year-old PRE Toledano.



Melissa Kalembert is a U.S. Equestrian Federation R judge, Sacramento Area Hunter Jumper Association judge, equine masseuse and intuitive trainer at (707) 363-1258 or melissa@kalembertequine.com



Sandra Van Voorhis is a 30-year resident of Sonoma County. Horses have always been a passion from her first feisty pony Shasta to her current herd of two-gaited horses Shadow and Timber. Best of times have been on the local trails or in the high Sierra with her posse of like-minded equine enthusiasts. She serves on the Sonoma

County Horse Council board of directors and continues to enjoy a long career in the food industry.



Depth psychologist **Catherine Anne Held, Ph.D.**, hangs out with Primo, a thirty-something Peruvian Paso. The Petaluma author's forthcoming book is *Called by the Horse: Women, Horses and Consciousness*. Find out more at www.catherineheld.com.



Danny Demers and his partner Chrissy Nichols are former owners of MCT's Bullpen sports bar in Guerneville. Danny holds a BA in History from George Washington University and an MBA from Chapman University. Demers is a history researcher and writer. See www.danieldomers.com



Robin Everett is a freelance bookkeeper and 35+ year resident of Petaluma. She has been a board member of Golden Gate Arabian Horse Association since 2004, and holds the position of trail coordinator. Although horse-crazy her entire life, she did not purchase her own horse until age 50. Her equine sport of choice is endurance, and she

has an AERC record of 4,720 miles since 1998. She currently owns three horses, two of which are retired endurance horses and a third who is an excellent trail horse.



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



Alisha Robinson grew up in West Marin and Petaluma eventing and fox hunting. When she was 15, her mom, farrier Laura Gish, insisted that when they returned from horse shows, Alisha was to back the horse trailer up their windy driveway. By 18 she was a polo groom, driving 12-horse goosenecks, and a dressage groom flying with

horses back East.

When she couldn't ride, clip horses or manage a barn because of a broken shoulder, she bought a four-horse trailer and announced she was in business. After 15 years, she is in high demand, as she was during the 2017 Sonoma County fires when she ran logistics for a fleet of trucks and trailers around the North Bay.

"When people asked me what I wanted to do, having a successful business hauling horses wasn't on the radar. But my skill set, everything I've done up to this point, makes me the perfect person to do this."



Amy Young is the equine outreach manager at the University of California, Davis, (UCD), Center for Equine Health. After completing her master of science in genetics at UCD, she spent several years researching genetics and health of companion animals, horses, and livestock at the UCD

School of Veterinary Medicine and Department of Animal Science. She is a hunter rider and a judge for the Sacramento Area Hunter Jumper Association, Interscholastic Equestrian Association and Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association. Information about the Center for Equine Health is available at <https://ceh.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/>.



Elizabeth Denison of Simply Wonderful Living is a wellness consultant and educator with 40 years of knowledge in wellness practices, including certifications in yoga instruction, massage therapy and energy healing modalities. Her passion is the use of therapeutic grade essential oils to help others

build nuanced, respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and with their horses. She lives with her husband in Santa Rosa and enjoys trail riding and dressage training with Kali Rose, her beloved Morgan mare. (707) 477-1824 or elizabeth@essentialoiloracle.com

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This past October was disturbingly familiar, yet completely different from recent years.

Fire once again forced many of us to flee with our animals, many in the early hours, with roaring winds around us and the future uncertain. And once again, we populated the Sonoma County Fairgrounds, Santa Rosa Equestrian Center, Sonoma Horse Park and private ranches with our horses and other large animals.

We are all better at evacuations, a somewhat sad, yet encouraging development. Most did everything right, getting out early, coming to the designated large animal evacuation centers. There were still challenges and some problems, but we'll learn from them and respond even better next time. Yes, our reality includes a next time.

So, as president of the Sonoma County Horse Council and as one of dozens of volunteers who worked to coordinate and support what arguably was the largest and perhaps most successful animal evacuation in the county's history, I commend all of us. It was a heroic effort by any measure and a tribute to our entire community of animal owners, ranchers and organizations. Gratitude may be the appropriate word, yet seems woefully inadequate to describe how we all feel toward the unrelenting work of first responders and law enforcement in fighting the fire and keeping us all safe. Sonoma Community Animal Response Team (Sonoma

CART) was exemplary in its assistance at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds and Sonoma Horse Park, creating an organized, safe environment for evacuated animals. The Horse Council is honored to be part of CART's large animal sheltering team. We are also grateful for the commercial services, retailers and other organizations that donated time, effort and supplies.

We live in extraordinary times in an extraordinary place. We accept that we have unique responsibilities to our animals, neighbors and ourselves. The Horse Council will continue our mandate and improve upon it, providing information, news and training while fostering the relationships necessary to keep our community safe, informed and prepared.

We are saddened by the loss of homes, structures and land, but we take comfort in knowing not one human life was lost during this extraordinary event.

We remain Sonoma Strong. We were all there for each other, as we will always be.

Best,
Elizabeth Palmer
President, Sonoma County Horse Council



Elizabeth and Greycie




Put your love of animals and experience to work by volunteering with at-risk children at Forget Me Not Farm. All you have to do is commit to one hour per week!

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News & Newsworthy

FUN WITH BARRELS AND BARRELS OF FUN WITH DRESSAGE

Barrels of fun is the theme as Taylor Merrill and Judy McHerron introduce the basics of classical and western dressage along with the basics of using barrels, pole bending and ground poles to improve any style of riding. English and western riders welcome to the Sunday, January 19, event, to be held rain or shine at SRJC Shone Farm indoor arena, 7450 Steve Olsen Lane, Forestville. RSVP by Wednesday, January 15, to Judy McHerron, 707 696 2848 or eqwine@sonic.net.

ON THE MOVE

Kristen Aggers Dressage has moved to
Sporhorse America, 2297 Olivet Road, Santa Rosa

Brian Hafner Dressage has relocated to
Double B Farms, 4175 Hessel Road, Sebastopol

J Dot Stables and Jack Burns have moved to
Fairwind Farms, 2276 Crane Canyon Road, Santa Rosa



Photo Courtesy of Julie Feldman

Sabrina Hrabe and Bella Daana are regular competitors at the GGAHA show.

64TH ANNUAL GOLDEN GATE ARABIAN HORSE SHOW AT FAIRGROUNDS

Formed in the mid-1950's, the Golden Gate Arabian Horse Association is planning the 64th Annual Horse Show for March 28 and 29, at the Lyttle Cow Palace, Sonoma County Fairgrounds, Santa Rosa, with Arabian, Half-Arabian and All Breed classes offered. "The show is extremely exhibitor friendly and ideal for every level," said Julie Feldman, show manager. Disciplines offered include hunter, western, English and sport horse under saddle. Ribbons, trophies and garlands will be awarded.

Other attractions include the silent auction and equine merchandise vendors. The show is free to the public. For information contact Show Secretary Margaret Shepherd, margareth@aol.com or Competition Manager Julie Feldman, feldman33@comcast.net, 415.305.4918.



Photo: Eileen O'Farrell

Welcome to Hoofbeat Park.

YEARLY MEETING FOR RRR

Russian River Riders annual meeting is slated for January 26 at 5:30 p.m., at the Hoofbeat Park clubhouse, 300 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg. Following the meet-and-greet with a dinner of soup and salad, members will share fire stories and the lessons learned. The new gate combination for 2020 will be given out to members.

March 7 & 8

Sustainable Equine Management Workshop (Daily Acts)

Main Presenter: Alayne Blicke

Petaluma

tcequine@earthlink.net

EDITIONS HORSE SHOW SERIES TRIPLES IN SIZE

The Editions Horse Show that started off as a small schooling show for a local gaited horse association has turned into a multi-breed show series attracting 65 entries at the fall version. Now with a variety of divisions for gaited horses as well as western and English, saddle seat, youth riders, beginners and a trail challenge, prizes include 10 belt buckles offered at each show and year-end high point awards.

"Whether you're new to showing or a seasoned show expert, there are classes to suit your needs, a very fun environment, great catered lunches, huge raffles and centrally located at the Sonoma Country Fairgrounds," said Marie Boyd, Editions Horse Show manager. Dates for 2020 are April 4, June 13 and October 10. www.NorthCoastHorse.com



Save the date!

April 25, 2020

5:30 p.m. Registration and Cocktails
Villa Chanticleer, Healdsburg

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Photo: Sherry Stewart

Chatwin showed his amazing stamina and speed in the cross-country phase at the Longines Luhmühlen Horse Trials.

CHATWIN

By Patti Shofler

Chatwin loves donuts, particularly glazed, and the greatest influence on the 16.2 hand horse is a four-year-old boy named Drake Stutes. Chatwin is admired for his sense of humor and his propensity to play hard and work hard, and when his ego becomes enormous, a 17.2 hand retiree keeps him in check.

Occidental resident Chatwin last year was the only horse in the world to win two CCI Four* Horse Trials (Rebecca Farm in Montana and the U.S. National Championship at Fair Hill, Maryland) and this year he was fourth overall at his first CCI5*, the Longines Luhmühlen Horse Trials in Germany, making him the highest placed horse abroad at a 5* in a few years. Of fifteen international competition starts, he has finished in the top five 14 times and six times in first.

Sonoma County native Frankie Thieriot Stutes, Chatwin's rider, owner (along with the Chatwin Group), feeder and mother of Chatwin's best buddies, Kingsley and Drake, shared with the *Horse Journal* the details of who this champion really is.

Chatwin was six when Frankie tried him out at the Florida barn of Australian Olympian Clayton Fredericks who had imported the horse six months before. Though he thought highly of the horse, Fredericks hadn't successfully sold him. Frankie actually described

him to her trainer Andrea Pfeiffer of Petaluma as ugly with a personality like Eeyore. The Oldenburg with 73 percent German Thoroughbred in his pedigree apparently had talent that wasn't obvious. His form over fences was at best nontraditional and perhaps the deterrent for other top rides when they tried him. None of Stutes's friends said OMG when they saw him.

A Safe Ride Becomes International Eventer

But when she tried him out, he felt safe and familiar, like her retired horse Fric Frac whom she had ridden to advanced level eventing. That was important to her because she does everything with her horses herself at home. He was fancy enough that he would be good.

But, clearly, no one knew how special he was until his tremendous work ethic and big heart came charging through. That especially showed up in his amazing stamina and speed on the cross-country course. That also meant he developed a history of leaving people on the galloping hill. When Stutes was pregnant with her second son, Chatwin spent time with 5*eventer Tamie Smith where he bucked off a few people. "He was kind of naughty if the rider wasn't giving him proper attention, like talking on the cell phone. He has a sense of humor and will take advantage. I can't get away with a thing."

Yet, ninety-five percent of the time he's with her. "The other five percent when he says no, it's not going to happen; you have to work though that or the next day he's actually worse. His ground manners liken him to a Great Dane puppy, kind of in your way, never in a mean way. Actually, pretty sweet and personable.

"He works incredibly hard and he plays incredibly hard. He's turned out every day in a giant field. You literally have to look the other way because he plays so hard. He's great with me and Drake and Kingsley, but with other horses? Obnoxious and in their face."

Horse Finds Confidence

Frankie gets him. He won't eat anything that is wet. He won't eat supplements. "He'll have days where he'll decide he's not coming in from the field for dinner. Everyone else comes up for dinner. He'll run away and hide under the trees like he's not here. If he doesn't want to get caught, you can't get him. I ride first thing in the morning. He has to stay in his stall until he's ridden, otherwise I can't catch him. Once he's had his time in field, he lets you get him. It's his sense of humor and confidence in himself."

In the off season, Chatwin enjoys four to six weeks off, turned out with twenty-six-year-old Fric Frac who takes no guff from the youngster. When Chatwin came home from winning the national eventing championship, "he thought he was so neat. He galloped full speed at Fric. Fric planted his feet and wouldn't budge. By end of the day Chat was literally walking with his face in Fric's butt, like 'I'm nobody and I'm so sorry I acted that way.' Ego in check."



Photo Courtesy of Frankie Thieriot Stutes

Chatwin and his best buddy Drake Stutes go out for a ride.



Chatwin didn't always see himself as king of the world. When he moved to Occidental at six years old, he was pretty spooky and had confidence issues, especially in show jumping. Today at 11, he is good at all three phases. "He's so comfortable that he's probably the only horse that gains weight at shows. When I was pregnant, he did a lot of dressage, competed in the California Dressage Society Championship/ USDF Region 7 Finals, and we took home reserve champion."

Much credit goes to four-year-old Drake who Chatwin likes more than anyone. When Frankie was pregnant with Drake, Chat would lick her stomach as if introducing himself to his future best friend. "Drake is quite wild and hard to tame. The only time he sits still is when he's on Chatwin. When I'm feeding in the barn, Drake will sit on Chatwin while he's eating, with no halter. It's the only place I know he's actually contained."

The boys have bombproofed Chatwin, chucking things through the stall bars and acting out like little boys do. He doesn't care. "Chatwin is trailered out almost every day to be ridden and he's comfortable with things going on all the time. I'm pretty sure he didn't come out of the womb that way."



When Frankie and Chatwin returned home from competition in Germany last June, first thing she turned him out in the field. "When he saw the boys, he came racing across the field to them. When Drake rides him, Chatwin keeps turning around as if to say 'are you ok?'"

It's pretty much a family affair with Chat. 



Photo: Sherry Stewart

Show jumping cinched fourth overall for Chatwin and Frankie at their first CCI5*, the Longines Luhmühlen Horse Trials in Germany.


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OUR EVACUATION

WHAT WE DID AND WHAT WE THOUGHT

By Melissa Kalember

Journaling my memories of the Kincadee fire helped me to process what happened. My hope is that this will help others to do the best job they can do for our horses.

October 23: At 10 pm I saw out my window the large glow of fire. My heart was pounding, thinking of the Tubbs fire just two years ago and with it all the overwhelming questions: Do we need to evacuate now? Where is the fire? Which way are winds going?

A fire in Windsor was not that far from my house. I packed our irreplaceable items. My husband and I took turns sleeping so we could have a small amount of comfort knowing where the fire was and what it was doing. For two days, all the items stayed packed as we tried to continue with our normal responsibilities that did not feel normal.

October 26: At Wine Country Sporthorse LLC in Sebastopol where I have my training business we prepared in case of evacuation, grateful for the time we had. We labeled all of the 50 plus horses with names and phone numbers on their butts and halters. We loaded in the trailers on property all our tack, water buckets, bailing twine and clips. I made grain bags and took pictures of items for insurance. A team of boarders checked all the tires on all the trailers on the ranch.

I loved on the horses and gave them the herb mixture Rescue Remedy and calming supplements. These herd animals were handling the collective worry and nerves extremely well, but they were on edge.

Annika Leet, owner of Wine Country Sporthorse LLC, brought in a huge generator to keep the electricity and water flowing for the ranch, her tenant's home and her house. She secured a couple of evacuation destinations for our 50+ horses and arranged for a group of boarders to drive during a possible evacuation. My husband and daughters were to join other family members in Tahoe. By the afternoon we had the ranch, the horses and our families ready for the inevitable.

Around 5 p.m., my home was put under mandatory evacuation. Because I had done so much prep, it did not take long to leave. One of the most surreal moments was hearing the Graton Fire Department alarm going off for three minutes straight and the police driving around making sure everyone was out.

With my cat who did not go to Tahoe, I drove to the barn,



Photo: Annika Leet

Sonoma CART set up a station at Sonoma Horse Park which became home for the Wine Country Sporthorse, LLC, horses.

checked on all my horses and saw a Facebook post from trainer friend Marian Nelson that Sonoma Horse Park (SHP) had plenty of room for evacuees. Annika and I agreed that this location would be preferable to our original plan as it was closer to home and all the horses could stay together. This choice brought us great comfort.

I curled up in my sleeping bag with my cat in my car, hoping for a cat nap before the barn evacuation. I wanted to be 'on' when the time came. But every hour the Nixle alert went off and I jumped up to see if it was ours.

October 27: 3:30 a.m. Nixle alerted us that the barn was under mandatory evacuation orders. We had 48 horses that were residents of the barn, plus three that had evacuated from Healdsburg. Now came the complex creativity of moving that many horses. We made so many lists as more questions came up: Which horses go in what trailer and when? Which horses are difficult to load? Which ones have to travel together due to separation anxiety? Which ones needed a straight load trailer or Warmblood size?

Luckily, the fire was not burning right next to us. We had time. In quick response to our texts our trailer drivers showed up. We parked the trailers in a circle so that once we loaded them, all could caravan together to SHP. Once we had all trailers and trucks stocked with bales of hay, water buckets, medications, etc., we loaded the first 15 horses. Boarders took their personal horses with them; then Annika assigned who went next.

It took our drivers three hours to get to SHP, only 24 miles away. So many people were evacuating. Being on the ranch with 15 horses gone was eerie for us and for the horses that knew something was going on. Most of them handled it well; some we moved around when their neighbors left. We strived to make every horse as comfortable as possible.



Photo: Annika Leet

After being labeled with his owner's phone number, Joost loads up.



By mid-morning, the winds were the worst I've ever experienced, blowing sand and dirt so hard you couldn't see the edge of the property. It was crazy how it would bring the smoke in so thick your eyes burned, and then move it back out to make crystal clear air.

Emily Eyles was our point person at SHP. She has tremendous horse experience and knew what horses to put next to who and how to handle difficult ones, older ones and scared ones. This was extremely comforting and necessary so that Annika and I could focus on getting more trailers on the road. There was a tenuous period of time as our boarders were still in traffic or unloading and everyone else we reached out to help evacuate the remaining 23 was either evacuating or helping someone else. A sister of a friend sent us two awesome ladies to help. A trainer friend of mine was passing by and had room for a few. Then our boarders started coming back for the rest.

By 4 p.m.—12 hours later—we had all 55 horses off the ranch.

Annika and I each drew a deep breath when we arrived at SHP and saw our horses together. We moved a few horses so they were either next to their buddy or could see them. We organized the ranch and donated hay, the grain and medicines for individuals we brought. We finished setting up water buckets and then labeled each stall door with a duct tape sign spelling out the horse's name, our phone number and what kind and quantity of hay to feed.



Notes upon notes is a sign of the complex organizing needed to move 50 horses in an emergency.

Photo: Melissa Kalember

October 28 and 29: These days blurred together and ran about the same. Everyone loves to help during times like these, but Annika and I set the tone by staying in charge, delegating what we could, but having everything filtered through us so we knew each horse got what they needed. With that many horses, it was crucial to have someone guide the worried owners and give them jobs suitable to their capabilities, to soothe the concerned horses and to keep the flow for horses and humans.

Before and during the evacuation, Annika sent boarders emails updates, protocols and expectations. We later heard from several boarders this was very helpful.

I would take the first half of the day shift which included feeding breakfast, filling waters, checking on each horse to make sure dinner was consumed and evaluating each horse's emotional state. I checked in with the vet on site and managed the flow of hand walking/stall cleaning, etc. Annika took the second half of the day shift which included the same rhythm as mine. She also medicated and treated some of our super senior horses who needed extra care the entire time.

One of the many reasons I have boarded and run my training operation out of Wine Country Sporthorse LLC for 10 years is that each horse is so well understood, cared for and watched. At



Buddies Max and Finn traveled together.

Photo: Melissa Kalember

Sonoma Horse Park, Annika brought a huge white board so we knew whose stall had been cleaned and who had been hand walked. There we posted notes for each other, boarders and the veterinarian that was living on site during our stay. Annika and I walked the horses that were too frisky for their owners or whose owners had to work. Luckily, most of the horses did an amazing job holding it together.

Sonoma CART checked in with us multiple times a day, making sure our horses and humans had everything we needed. A client set up a donation account at Rivertown Feed and Pet Store. She shared this on social media, and the response was overwhelming. A few trainer friends of mine donated money to help us. Walnut Creek nonprofit ARF (Animal Rescue Foundation) made a large donation of hay and shavings for all who were evacuated to Sonoma Horse Park, which added up to about 120 horses.

October 30: In deciding when to take the horses home, we considered how bad smoke still was in Sebastopol, the projected winds, getting the home ranch ready for horses to come back, and how the horses were doing. On our huge white board we once again puzzled over which horses to put in which trailers, who should they haul with, what time and which trailer to load the difficult ones in, among many considerations.

We assigned a point person at the barn to receive and help get horses tucked back in. Annika and I stayed at SHP to move horses around, load the difficult ones and finish packing up all our gear. Once again, our boarders who were hauling got caught in traffic as now everyone was coming back to Sonoma County. We finally pulled into Wine Country Sporthorse LLC with the last group at 7p.m., a job we started at 12 p.m.

We walked the ranch checking on each horse to make sure they were doing okay and settling in. Most were so happy to be home—like roll five times in their pasture happy. Our few that were on colic watch stayed on colic watch for days after returning home.

The letdown I had after walking the ranch and seeing and feeling all 55 horses were back home safe and sound was profound. Piles of the extra water, clips, hag bags, ropes and gear were heaped all over the ranch so everyone could collect their personal items. But I didn't care how long it took to organize everything because our horses and humans were safe and tucked in at home. 🐾



GALAPAGOS HORSES FIND SUPPORT

By Sandra Van Voorhis



Photo by Sandra Van Voorhis

Indigo Bannister easily makes friends with Galapagos filly, Jolie.

Who knew? A year ago, I never imagined people or horses living on the Galapagos Islands, a remote archipelago 600 miles off the coast of Ecuador known mostly for its blue-footed booby birds and giant tortoises. With the islands consisting of 97% National Park and only 3% towns, farms and businesses serving the tourist economy, nature documentaries make no mention of horses.

Last August, my 25-year-old daughter Indigo, a graduate student in environmental management, joined me to check the Galapagos off our bucket list. Being lovers of travel and horses, our first stop was Galapagos Horse Friends (GHF) on Isla Santa Cruz, founded by animal advocate Claudia Moreno who is devoted to benefiting the horses in this remote paradise.

The history of horses on the Galapagos is checkered and not without its sorrows. And yet, thanks to a German optometrist, the future is considerably brighter.

Claudia created Galapagos Horse Friends (GHF) on the islands where Charles Darwin first gained insights that eventually led to his publication of *On the Origin of Species*.

For centuries before Darwin arrived in 1835, these uninhabited rocky, volcanic islands were a way station for pirates and whalers, taking on water and live tortoises as meat for the crew.

During the 19th century Ecuadorean settlements on the Galapagos were established and failed, leaving horses behind. In the early 20th century European settlers brought horses to farm sugar cane and coffee. In 1940, Quarter Horses from the U.S. were introduced, but with the creation of the National Park in 1959, further introduction of horses was banned.

In 1980 the human population of the Galapagos was 5,000. Today, the population of over 25,000 is made up of mostly poor Ecuadorians seeking a better life and bringing with them cultural norms toward horses.

Feral populations of horses that escaped or were released live in forested areas of the National Park. As government officials do not view feral horses as having significant environmental impact, they have never been studied, counted or managed. Given that feral horses may have been breeding for nearly 200 years without human intervention and under the unique selective pressures of the Galapagos environment, they may have evolved into a breed of their own.

Claudia was born and raised in Germany where she trained and practiced as an optometrist. Drawn by the exotic mystique of the Galapagos, she moved there in 2003 and, speaking three languages, worked as an interpreter in the international tourist industry. She was eventually able to buy a hectare of land in the highlands of Santa Cruz Island and began building a small house.

She always had a great fondness for riding, and her emotional connection with horses had helped her cope with trauma she had experienced as a child. Living on the Galapagos, she became increasingly angered by the neglect and abuse of horses. Bits are used that have been banned in the U.S. because they can break a horse's jaw. The customary way to break a young horse, usually before it is a year and a half old, is to put one of these bits in its mouth, tie it to a tree, put heavy sacks of concrete or sand on its back, and leave it there for a week, until it gives up. It is then considered ready to ride. They are often staked on the side of the road all day without water or left loose where they are in danger of getting hit by cars. Loose stallions find their way to mares with predictable results—more horses.

In 2012, Claudia stopped construction on her house to found and fund GHF with the commitment to change the cultural norms of the Galapagos to respect and care for horses as the sentient, sensitive animals she knows them to be.

Initially, she bought two neglected mares from a neighbor that were soon in foal due to uncontrolled stallions. She rescued more horses, rented a farm with lush green pasture land (there are no feed stores on the Galapagos) and gave them the best life she could. Seven of her 12 horses were born on the farm. Five were rescued, two as very young foals.

To change the way horses are treated and to share the personal connection she has always felt with horses, she opens her farm to local families and school groups so children can see the horses treated with respect, kindness and caring.

Many adult visitors admit they had accepted the way horses are treated as normal, but intuitively didn't feel it was right. Seeing the different way that Claudia treats her horses and experiencing an emotional connection with them, it is not unusual for adults to cry.

The social dynamics of the Claudia's herd of 12 incorporate well into horse-assisted therapy programs, such as Ecuador's Horse Guided Empowerment therapy program, which brings groups to Claudia's farm.

With no equine veterinarians on the Galapagos, GHF is

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providing leadership in basic aspects of horse care. For example, some surgical procedures including gelding are currently done without anesthesia or antibiotics, and tetanus is a common cause of death. Claudia's herd are the first horses to be vaccinated against tetanus, and she managed to get enough vaccine to do the first round of vaccinations. She is working with government officials to permit her to import vaccine.

In September, 2019, her right-hand man, Freddy Carrera, attended a three-day equine medicine workshop in Quito. Today Freddy is the closest thing to an equine veterinarian anywhere on the islands; they call him Dr. Fred.

The Ministry of Tourism sees GHF as part of a vanguard of innovators who are creating new forms of tourism that are respectful and caring of not just the needs of tourists, but also of the needs of the local people, animals and of the Galapagos itself. Volunteers come from around world to spend a couple of weeks, or a few months, helping care for the horses.

In late 2018, Claudia's money ran out and she nearly lost the farm she is renting. She had no other place to take the horses, a horrible dilemma knowing that horse meat is not uncommon on BBQ grills in the Galapagos.



Freddy, Pepita and Claudia.

Photo by Marine Geriard

Contacts were made in the US, a benefactor was found and the 501(c)3 Galapagos Horse Foundation was created to provide financial support, administrative oversight, and to develop a long term plan for sustainability, including a capital fund for a permanent home.

Today Claudia offers free, basic lodging for volunteers who visit to help with the mission of GHF. Indigo and I met a couple from Europe who devoted a few weeks of their South American adventure to assist at the ranch. They had quite an experience overseeing the birth of a filly, rounding up a loose horse and assisting with doctoring wounds.

The Galapagos are truly fascinating and a visit to GHF displays a facet of the islands unlike anything on a routine tourist itinerary. The live-aboard cruises are not the only way to experience the wonders of Galapagos. One can easily travel independently with ferries providing links between islands and tour operators offering day trips for land and sea adventures. Hostels and lodges are plentiful and food is

cheap if you eat like a local.

For information on GHF, visit www.galapagos-horse-foundation.org. For information on volunteering, visit www.workaway.info. FYI, total cost including airfare for 16 days was around \$2000 per person. From the islands to the Andes and the Amazon, the culture, people, nature and food of Ecuador are superlative.

Claudia's little house still has no doors or windows, but her horses are safe, and she continues her personal mission to improve the lives of the horses of the Galapagos.



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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. 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 ride. Or, are horses horses?

With Northern California in its rainy season when riding isn’t always an option, should horses have a vacation? To help out with this question, we asked trainers Brigitte Scholl and Taylor Merrill for their thoughts. Both trainers are based at Santa Rosa Horse Company.

In the future, if you would like us to ask our county’s experts a question, get in touch with Patti Schoffler at editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

BRIGITTE SCHOLL (BS): Brigitte’s Monarch Stables, founded in 1998, specializes in a training and lesson program with Saddlebreds and Morgans for riders from beginner to advanced. Her students and horses compete at California, Nevada, Oregon and Arizona horse shows and have won several regional and national championships. Having ridden Saddlebreds since she was 11 years old, Brigitte is a USEF licensed judge for American Saddlebreds and Friesians, a member of the United Professional Horsemen’s Association and a graduate of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, with a liberal arts degree and a minor in equine science.

TAYLOR MERRILL (TM): Taylor grew up in Santa Rosa where he and his sister learned to ride on the same horses that his mother and her sister learned to ride on. Today he has his most fun on a horse in speed events including barrel racing and gymkhana. His training business ranges from starting colts, working with problem horses to tuning up experienced horses. He focuses on helping horses to become stronger mentally and physically through correct movement and patience. He works with horses of all ages and breeds, in the arena, on the trail, leading, tying, trailering and more, all with the idea of producing willing and educated horses that can excel in all aspects in their life.

HJ: Do your horses get vacation?

BS: As our show season runs through November, our horses’ vacations start the first week in December, and we give them off until mid-February. This time off is for the seasoned horses that know their jobs and the riders that are proficient and don’t need to practice.

I don’t let down our show horses that are over 15 because I feel that as they get older, it’s harder to get them back in condition. Saddlebreds show into older age, a lot to mid-20s, and I don’t like them to get out of shape. In the winter I’ll keep the people off their backs, but I’ll work them in a biting rig. We also do a lot of driving



Photo: William Stacy

Taylor Merrill (left) on Haypatches Fern Tiger (Regina) and Brigitte Scholl on Supreme Kiss (Rico) shake hands in the spirit of shared horsemanship. Regina, a Quarter Horse, and Rico, a Saddlebred, share a common heritage—both are American breeds.

for conditioning, but that is hit or miss in the winter. People who know their horses trail ride around the property without doing the repetitive work needed before a show.

TM: I think they need vacation, but what that vacation is depends on the horse. A younger horse shouldn’t get a vacation until it’s getting what it’s supposed to be getting. If you give the young horse a break when you’re really stuck on something, or it’s having trouble getting something, the horse can come back worse. If you work through the issue and then give the horse the break, it usually comes back better. Horses learn from release of pressure. So, wherever you release the pressure or training, that is where the horse will settle. If you settle on the part where you two aren’t clicking, you’re likely to get that when you come back.

Time off is really good for competition horses. However, I like the time off to include some kind of exercise or riding. I’ve seen a lot of horses get hurt because they’re turned out to pasture for a few months and when they’re brought back to ride, their muscles, tendons and joints aren’t up to par. And not everyone has the patience to bring their horses back slowly.

It’s good to have breaks from the job, but not breaks from actually doing things. Trail riding is great. If dressage is the horse’s regular job, go to a cow sorting. Give the horses something else to think about. Make it a mental break more than physical one.

HJ: What does that vacation look like?

BS: Those with higher energy are turned out in the arena. Others go out in the paddocks or pasture. We don’t usually leave them out at night because they are used to being in box stalls. But we turn out in the sunshine, especially when there is less light in the day. I worry that they get enough vitamin D from the sun. Once in a while I supplement with vitamin D if a horse seems to be getting down. They can suffer from seasonal affective disorder like humans do.

TM: Vacation is wherever the horse is relaxed and comfortable. I have horses that do great in pasture. I have some that panic in pasture and feel comfortable in their stall and paddock. Some horses you

don't touch for a few days. Other horses get depressed if you don't spend time with them. Their break may be turn out or lunging.

Turning out in pasture is a little better than the stall because they move a little. But I have to say that I have yet to see a horse regularly exercise itself in pasture. If you turn out a young horse for six months, its body isn't going to fall apart. If you turn out a 15-year-old for six months and try to put it back to work, you'll have a different story.

HJ: What changes do you make? Shoes? Feed?

BS: We try to get the shoes off as soon as it gets wet. Since our Saddlebreds have really long pasterns, their heels can get a bit contracted if the shoes stay on long term. It's good for their feet to get in mud. Of course, I have some that have feet issues and can't be completely barefoot. But most can get away with that.

I used to change feed during their time off because I fed a higher performance grain. Now I keep everyone except one or two on senior feed all year around. I've really gone away from the high-end concentrated grains because it's so hard on their stomachs. We hand grind our flax seed every couple of days. So, I don't change much of their feed when they're on vacation.

TM: I used to think it was best to take off the shoes, but now it depends on how hard the ground is, and how stable the horse's feet are. If your horse is healthy and fit and you put it out on the hard ground, it's likely going to get sore and develop more body issues. It can take months for feet to harden enough not to get sore. I have horses that only have shoes on because of how hard they work. I have others that can't walk across the hard ground with being ouchy. It's not a break if your feet are sore.

I don't make any drastic changes in feed, and I lean toward less is more, supplementing as needed. If not, you can end up with horses hotter than you need or throwing money out the window. Even in my sport which requires speed, a healthy diet of hay and



Taylor Merrill moves out on Haypatch's Fern Tiger who he calls Gigi or Regina. The two compete in barrel racing, a sport Taylor loves in large part for the speed.

Photo: William Stacy/410



Brigitte Scholl takes Supreme Kiss, saddle seat reserve World Champion, for a trot around the arena at Santa Rosa Horse Company. Brigitte loves the forward movement of a saddle seat horse.

Photo: William Stacy

maybe a little supplementing gives them plenty of energy. If you have to do too much tweaking of the horse's natural way of being, maybe the horse isn't doing the right job. I don't want to change the chemistry of the horse that doesn't like to run because there are plenty of horses that love to run.

HJ: Do you make the change to vacation gradually?

BS: As soon as the farrier can get out to take the shoes off, their vacation starts. They don't have to be body clipped. They don't have to be clean in the winter. They just have to be horses and be happy. A lot of what they judge our horses on is their attitude and presence. They have to look happy and enthusiastic about what they do. Our horses are so good natured that we don't need to do a lot of drilling. They play a lot. Then when they get home from the December show, it's like woo hoo, vacation.

TM: It depends on what they're taking a break from.

HJ: How do you bring them back?

BS: In mid-February we start up again. I gradually increase the number of minutes in their work program. If weather cooperates, we start driving. I don't let them get so dilapidated or lose so much muscle tone that we can't ride them fairly soon, but we just increase the number

of minutes a day until we get to 25 minutes or so.

TM: If the break is a couple of days, by the end of the first ride, the horse should be right where you want him. But if it's a few weeks or months off, you've got to take a few weeks to get them back to where they should be physically and mentally. If you're a marathon runner and you don't run for a month, it will take you a few weeks to get back to where you were.

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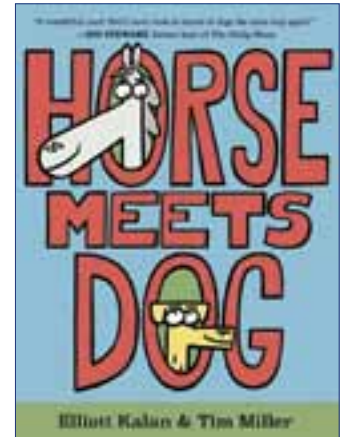
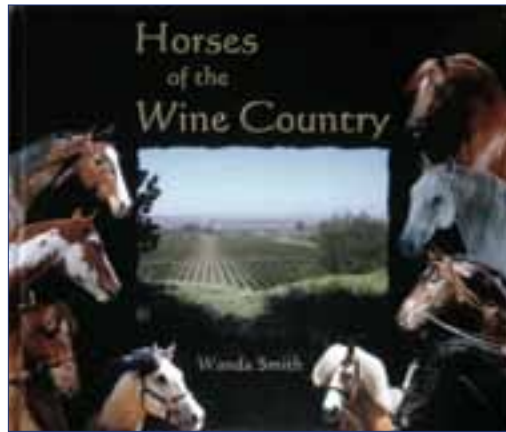
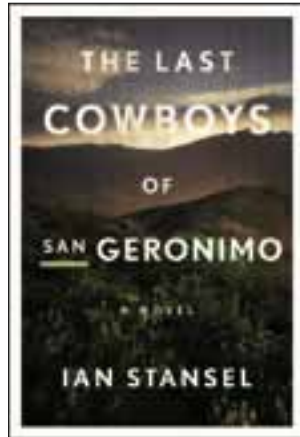
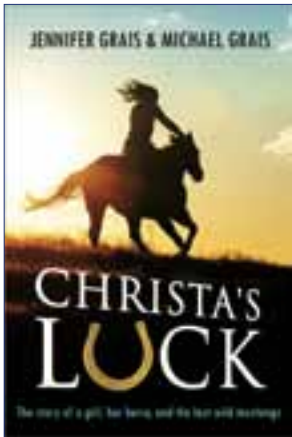
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H O R S E

Linked to North



CHRISTA'S LUCK by Jennifer and Michael Grais, Sonoma

Inspired by a real horse rescue, *Christa's Luck* is a teen fiction novel about Christa's love for an endangered herd of wild horses, and how her special connection with them inspires her to look beyond her own mistakes and try again. She rises up to become a horse advocate at fourteen, whose passion and heart move an entire town to take action. In the vein of *The Horse Whisperer* and the *Black Stallion*, *Christa's Luck* is an epic adventure story of courage, friendship and freedom.

THE LAST COWBOYS OF SAN GERONIMO by Ian Stansel, Louisville, Kentucky

Set in modern day Northern California, *The Last Cowboys of San Geronimo* follows Silas Van Loy, a successful horse trainer who, at the book's opening, has just shot his brother Frank dead. Atop his best mare, Silas then rides from his home in Marin County into the wilds of the region north of the Bay Area. Frank's wife Lena catches wind that Silas was the shooter and that he is making a getaway on horseback. With steel-like resolve, Lena secrets away on her own trusted horse, tracking her husband's murderer. The story also recounts the history of the two brothers who, after a hardscrabble childhood of western riding, reinvent themselves to become two of the most respected and sometimes feared men in the California horse world. The book reveals a decades-long feud that ultimately leads to Frank's murder. *The Last Cowboys of San Geronimo* borrows some of the most beloved tropes of the Western genre, while putting them into a fresh new modern context.

HORSES OF THE WINE COUNTRY by Wanda Smith, Santa Rosa

Horses of the Wine Country is a treasure trove and photographic journey of horses of Sonoma County. It captures the beauty of the county's horses and stories of their breeders, riders, and contributors to the equine industry. Over 350 photos portray the many horse breeds in the county as well as champion horses, riders, associations and events. Historical photos depict the early fame of the county's horses as the West Coast center of harness racing and horse shows. Also included are graphic displays illustrating the economic contributions that horses have made to the county and the distribution of breeds and equitation venues.

HORSE MEETS DOG by Elliott Kalan and Tim Miller

Horse is just an oversize dog with funny paws...according to Dog. And Dog? Just a tiny baby horse with a weird tail. That's what Horse thinks, anyway.

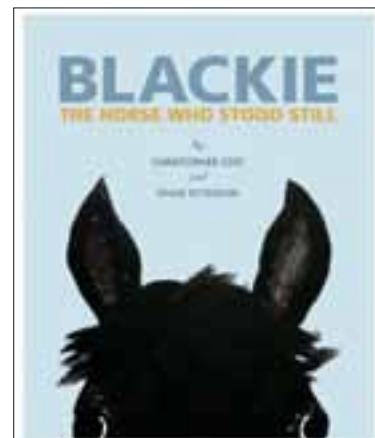
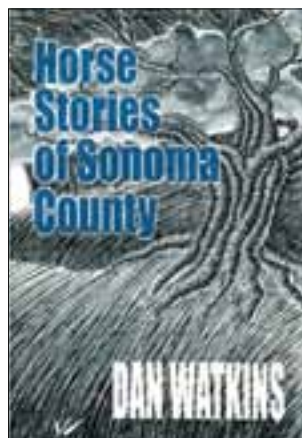
Television comedy writer Elliott Kalan and illustrator Tim Miller team up in this comedy of mistaken species identity. *Horse Meets Dog* is about those times when we make assumptions about other people, and talk rather than listen. Like Dog and Horse, it's easy for us to make the mistake of thinking other people see the world exactly as we do, and that there's only one right way to live.

Ask anyone about landmarks in Sonoma, and you're likely to hear about Mission Bell Farms. For decades, the iconic property on East Spain Street has been home to a stable of Clydesdales, the oversized equines with shy hearts. Elliott Kalan was charmed when he saw them, nickering and neighing a half-block from downtown. His wife, Danielle Friedman, grew up around the corner, and the Clydesdales were the backdrop of her childhood. The Kalans' son, Sammy, likewise, loved seeing the horses, and on one visit to his grandparents' house, when Sammy was about two, he spotted a dog in their pasture. "He thought it was hilarious," Elliott said.



BOOKS

Southern California



NEAPOLITANO NIMA I, THE WHITE DIAMOND by Rudolf Kuzmicki, translated by Yvette Koth, San Francisco

The Spanish Riding School (SRS) stallion Neapolitano Nima I turned an astonishing 40 years old last April, making him the oldest registered horse in the Lipizzan International Federation. Nima was known as the 'levadeur' of a century who performed before kings and queens, and an equine version of the insane genius. This book tells stories about this brilliant, mischievous stallion and his people at the SRS. For example, Nima hated having his ears touched, which made bridling him adventurous. Less experienced or short grooms ended up being chased in circles around his stall. The book also outlines the almost 500-year-old training philosophy of the SRS, which stresses the importance of not rushing the training, building the horse's trust in the people and confidence in the process, as well as carving out space for the individuality of each horse.

When Rudolf asked Yvette to translate the book into English, she was honored. "This past summer I was training and teaching in Germany and took the opportunity to meet this exceptional horse who had been retired for 14 years at Lipizzaner Stud in Piber, Austria," recalled Yvette, a Sonoma County trainer. "We brought bananas, Nima's treat of choice. His body showed his age, but his untameable will was still very much alive in his eyes: they were bright and alert, noticing and judging everything. I left grateful to have met him in person. And then, three days later, I received the distraught call that Nima had died. I have a feeling that this stallion had decided himself that it was his time, just as he had always made his own decisions. Love and adoration by his people, however, will be forever his."

FLIGHT WITHOUT WINGS by Patti Schofler, Petaluma

The world's oldest horse breed, the Arabian epitomizes equine versatility, participating in all disciplines of English, Western, dressage, driving, and in-hand horse show classes. *Flight Without Wings* chronicles the essential qualities and capabilities needed for success in every Arabian show division. It shares sound advice from top trainers and exhibitors to prepare for and compete in these competitions. It outlines the who, what, where, when and how of the Arabian show circuit.

HORSE STORIES OF SONOMA COUNTY by Dan Watkins

This book gives readers 13 fictional short stories about horses living in Sonoma County.

BLACKIE, THE HORSE WHO STOOD STILL by Christopher Cerf and Paige Peterson

This (mostly) true tale tells the heart-warming story of a horse who made standing stock-still a lifelong endeavor, while becoming a champion rodeo horse, a tourist favorite at Yosemite Park, a legendary environmental crusader, and the beloved mascot of Tiburon, California, on the shores of San Francisco Bay. His likeness stands today as a life-size sculpture in what is known as Blackie's pasture.





HOW HORSES TEACH US TO LEAD

By Catherine A. Held, Ph.D

Photo: William T. Stacy

This group of bachelor stallions in Nye County, Nevada, crosses the plains in the diamond formation.

We marvel at how horses can thunder across the landscape in unison, swaying this way, then that way as a group, as if a choreographer were directing the moves of a chorus line, in and out like a large school of fish. Today, corporate management teams turn to horses, with the help of their human facilitators, in search of the leadership skills that produce that kind of teamwork.

Years ago, I encountered leadership lessons at my first equine guided education workshop. Lisa Walters' EquuSatori in Sebastopol hosted a Linda Kohanov workshop that I attended with eleven other participants. Kohanov had published *The Tao of Equus*, a book that hit a cultural nerve. The author was one of the first to articulate the magic, mystery and healing capacities of the horse-human partnership.

Practicing Leadership with Diora

One of the exercises that weekend was with Lisa Walters' mare Diora. The bay waited for us in a large paddock under the covered arena. We were told to go into the paddock as a herd. One person at a time was assigned the task of being the lead mare or lead stallion. Our task was to take direction from our leader and invite Diora to be a member of our herd.

The first woman/lead mare set off in a counterclockwise direction at a fast clip, leaving her human "herd" behind. She was distracted and had not absorbed the directions. We struggled to catch up with her. Diora never joined us, and our coach told us that we needed to have a clearer group direction to capture Diora's interest. The second woman went slower around the enclosure. We were all excited when the mare came up to us. Unfortunately, Diora went right up to the designated leader and split our human herd into two parts. The woman was so pleased to have Diora with her that she didn't notice that the mare took the lead and some of us were again left behind. On our third try, we were led by the only male participant in the group. He seemed depressed. We walked together slowly. As the exercise progressed without Diora joining us, he became more dejected and looked at the ground, despite

the coach's urging to focus on the intended goal.

We all felt the sting of the three "failures." Assimilating the advice of the human coaches from our previous attempts, instead of focusing on Diora, when it was my turn, I focused on the goal of being such a high-functioning team that she would naturally be attracted to join us. When we went in the paddock, I asked everyone to practice centering, breathing and becoming present. As I laid out the course we would follow, I asked them to imagine our destination in their minds and reminded them that we were a team. Several paces in, Diora joined up in the rear. We broke out into goofy grins as she followed us to the gate that I had selected. It was magic.

In the debriefing, we learned that Diora was not attracted to us when we were distracted, disorganized or lacked motivation and energy. We were told that a leader who does not notice the needs of the individual herd members is not trusted, which is why she tested the second participant and then took over the role as lead mare.

The TeachingHorse Diamond Model of Leadership©

In subsequent years, I have participated in other leadership exercises that have given me a context for my earlier experience. June Gunter, a pioneer in the field of equine guided education from North Carolina, has developed the TeachingHorse Diamond Model of Shared Leadership©, based on her studies of how horses organize themselves, especially when they are in motion. She found that the main roles are lead mare, lead stallion, the direction setter and the sentinels. They form a diamond shape. The lead mare is typically in front of the herd, which is the north or top of the diamond, while the lead stallion provides the energy and impetus to move from the south or rear of the herd. The sentinels, alert to changing conditions, are on either ends of the west-east axis. The direction setter can take any position.

In this model, every member of the herd is needed and responsible to the others. Gunter's model also has four attributes



that ensure the smooth working of the herd: direction, attention, energy and congruence.

In my earlier experience, the first participant did not have a clear **direction**. The second did not pay enough **attention** to the dynamics of our "herd." The third participant, who was depressed, lacked the **energy** to motivate Diora to join us. So what is **congruence**?

In the 2000 film *28 Days*, the Sandra Bullock character Gwen is an out-of-control alcoholic and addict. At a recovery center with equine therapy, in the course of trying to clean Tennessee's hoof, she is told that congruence is when her "insides match her out-sides." She can't do it when she is professing her desire to be sober but still scheming to get high. The horse doesn't trust her. In the context of Gunter's leadership model, congruence occurs when the internal motivation of the individual is aligned with the needs of the group. When a leader is not congruent, neither horses nor humans trust their leadership.

The foundation of the horse's distrust harkens back to the prey/predator syndrome. As a prey animal, the horse is potential victim if the predator's inside intentions do not match its outside appearance. The horse is instinctively alert to this split energy.

When I am working with others at work or at the barn, if communication breaks down or plans go awry, I will ask myself: Is my direction/intention clear? What needs my attention/awareness? Do I have the energy/motivation for my task? Am I congruent/authentic?

It has been many years since that brief exercise with Diora, but it has had a lasting impact. Newly divorced at the time, I found it helped me recognize my own capacity for personal leadership. At work and in my volunteer work, I was used to being a follower, someone more comfortable taking secondary positions. That short exercise nudged me to take more responsibility in different arenas of my life. 🐾



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HORSING AROUND IN THE SNOW

By Daniel J. Demers

In 1856 a number of California communities were pitching themselves as the best site for a proposed road to cross the Sierra Nevada mountains. One route was the Big Tree Route in Calaveras County. The *San Andreas Independent* newspaper suggested a weekly express could traverse it through the winter to Carson City "with horses...not on foot [but] with snowshoes, to keep above the drifts."

At the time the only way to the California gold fields was by horseback or horse-(or oxen)-drawn wagons over the Sierra Nevadas or by ship along the Atlantic coast to Panama, thence a land transit across the isthmus, followed by re-boarding a ship on the Pacific coast.

A month later the *Bidwell Butte Courier* (a town now under Lake Oroville, California) reported that a mule had "arrived in Rabbit Creek [now LaPorte, California] ...on snowshoes" adding "horses [had] left there, shod in the same manner...gunnybags" being used for the purpose.

In 1874 California stage line reportedly were shoeing horses with snow shoes for the twenty-one-mile run between Camptonville and Downieville—two California gold mining towns. According to a Vermont newspaper, the snowshoes were 8 x 12 inches. The top side was made from "malleable iron" and covered with "India rubber."

On the underside was a common horse shoe "with a sharp toe and heel corks." The two were fastened to the foot of the horse "by means of a clasp with a swivel screw...directly under the hoof of the animal."

The same year the *Truckee Record* called horse snow shoes as a "new-fangled notion." The snow shoes "weigh about four pounds each...[and] once accustomed to using them [horses] can hardly be induced to make their way through fresh...snow without them."

By 1882 Yosemite Valley stages were drawn by horses wearing snow shoes. One report related "the horses readily learn to manipulate these clumsy appendages and make excellent progress over the snow." The *Sacramento Record Union* routinely advertised horse snow shoes in advertisements provided by Hopkins & Company Hardware by the 1880s.

An 1888 article in the *Virginia City Enterprise* [NV] debunked the story that horse snow shoes were a California invention. They "were used on horses...400 years B. C...[as reported by] Xenophon in his "Retreat of the Ten Thousand" in which 10,000 Greek soldiers retreated from



Photo courtesy of Vintage Winter Museum

It was said that the shoes could be attached in about five minutes and cost between \$2.50 and \$10.00 for a set of four depending on the make. If the teamster was careful and removed the shoes when the horse was traveling on hard roads the shoes would last for several seasons. Snowshoed horses were used for breaking roads in deep snow or for off-road skidding and wood hauling when the snow was deep, but not excessively loose. On warmer spring days the shoes were used to prevent horses from punching holes in logging roads with their hooves.



Photo courtesy of Vintage Winter Museum

A 1931 article in *The Canadian Illustrated Forest and Outdoors* magazine describes how the snowshoes were made. Three holes were drilled in the upper surface of an oblong birch plank (9x12x2") to fit the calks—or metal knobs—of the horse's shoe. Three other holes were made through the plank to accommodate 1/2" hemp rope, two loops of which buckled in front with a leather strap to hold the shoe to the horse's hoof. Strips of wood were nailed to the plank's under surface to prevent the horse from slipping. A more elaborate shoe had a rim (12" to 14" in diameter and an inch or so thick) made of hardwood sapling or metal rod. This rim was connected to a central ring by rope, chain or wire.

an overwhelming Persian army. In order to get over the Armenian mountains where "they encountered heavy snowstorms...[finally finding refuge in mountain villages where they were given] several horses [and were shown] how to fasten a kind of hurdles to their [horses'] feet...to prevent their sinking in the snow." In 1555 a woodcut print in a book depicts a merchant traveling with pack-horses in snowclad fields between Norway and Sweden.

In 1897 the *San Francisco Call* newspaper related that the Eclipse Mining Company in Gibsonville, California, snow shod its horses "to overcome the disadvantages of the snow and enable us to carry on our operations" adding that snows "not infrequently reaches to the depth of 20 feet." The mining company only used "California-bred horses...these are the best...if possible, we get [horses] bred [and raised] at high altitudes."

As the Nineteenth Century closed an article in Idaho's *Emmett Index* related that horses on snow shoes "do not sink more than six inches at any time on the trail and rarely over a foot in the loose snow." A *New York Sun* article reported that only one in ten horses "make a good snow shoer...at first it comes hard; the horses stumble and often fall down...but once the trick is acquired, they walk, and even trot easily."

In Anaconda, Montana, postman Dick Chalmers supposedly trained his snow shod horse to carry the mail without the attendance of a driver, making a [44-mile] round trip. The horse, according to a newspaper account, "can go over almost unfathomable drifts of snow without breaking through the crust or becoming mired."

A 1912 newspaper article related a different type of snow shoe was used in Chicago. The shoes, provided by the *Chicago Society of Humane Friends*, were made of "carpet and canvas...and are intended to be slipped over a fallen animal's feet so he can get up. Traffic policemen...carried sets of four for horses that fall."

By 1915 few mentions of horses with snow shoes were made in the nation's press as chained rubber tired motorized transport, snowmobiles and snowplows began to replace horses. 🐾

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Winter Riding in Sonoma County

By Robin Everett

In parts of the country, winter riding means weeks relegated to covered arenas. We are truly fortunate to be able to trail ride regularly almost the entire year. Still, winter brings change and considerations for riding out. Here are some of my concerns.

Trail Conditions

Some trails become very hard in the summer, causing unwanted concussion on our horses' feet. Those same trails will likely soften with some rain and may become perfect. Other trails—often our favorite single-track jaunts—become slippery and muddy with rain. Enjoy your favorites as the first light rains arrive, then plan to revisit them after the rains stop and the mud has dried. You may need to delay until park personnel have had time to clear storm-caused downed trees. You do not want to damage your favorite trails by riding when they are muddy. Neither do you want to damage your favorite mount by asking him to travel through sticky mud.

Tack and Gear

Your usual saddle and bridle should work in any season. In the winter, a rump rug or quarter sheet may prove quite useful to keep the big butt muscles, your horse's engine, warm. You can ride with it rolled up and attached to your cantle, then unroll it when you stop. Or you can ride with it open across your horse's hindquarters. When you return to the trailer, a fleece cooler is handy to throw over the horse and keep it warm as you pull the saddle and clean it up before you put on a blanket (if needed) for the haul home.

For yourself, an insulating cap that fits under your helmet can give you comfort on the colder days. I also have a neck cover that I can pull up over my nose and mouth. Heavier gloves—water proof if possible—are also welcome.

A number of parks have trails suitable for rainy season riding.



Robin Everett is far from a fair weather rider. For this winter ride on Gold Rush Shuffle, she was still cold despite covering herself with a silk sleeveless shell, a cotton tee shirt, a sweatshirt, a fleece vest, fleece riding tights and a headband under her helmet that covered her ears. At least it wasn't raining that day.

Photo: Gore/Baylor Photography

Here is a partial list.

- **Jack London State Historic Park**, 2400 London Ranch Road, Glen Ellen: The main trail to the top is good.
- **Lake Sonoma Recreation Area**, 3333 Skaggs Springs Road, Geyserville: The trails on the west side are generally better than those under the trees on the east side.
- **Riverfront Regional Park**, 7821 Eastside Road, Healdsburg: The trail around the lake is perfect, although short. As there is a washout, you cannot go all the way around. You can, however, ride to the washout in one direction, then go back to the start and go the other direction. That has the effect of going twice around the lake. If the river is very high, this trail can be flooded out.
- **Tolay Lake Regional Park**, 5869 Cannon Road, Petaluma: Most of the trails are good for winter riding.
- **Foothill Regional Park**, 1351 Arata Lane, Windsor: Equestrian parking here can be tricky, but the trails hold up well in winter.
- **Shiloh Ranch Regional Park**, 5750 Faught Road, Windsor: The main trails hold up well, although some of the steep downhill get very muddy and the Canyon and Creek Trails are often

closed for the season. They will be marked as closed if they are.

- **Pt. Reyes National Seashore**, 1 Bear Valley Visitor Center Access Road, Pt. Reyes: From the Five Brooks trailhead, the Stewart Trail is good. From the Bear Valley Visitors Center, the Bear Valley Trail is open to equestrians except for weekends and holidays.

If you cannot get out to ride, you can comfort yourself by remembering that a month or two vacation from riding will let your pony pal heal all those micro-tears from the year's riding adventures. You can relax and enjoy the holiday season. It only takes about six weeks to bring a previously-fit horse back into peak condition.

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WERE YOU READY FOR THE KINCADE FIRE? SONOMA CART WAS

By Sandra Van Voorhis

I thought the 2017 Sonoma County wildfires would be a once in a lifetime experience, terrifying and happy to have in the rearview mirror. Unfortunately, what we thought was abnormal manifested as the Kincade Fire, again a high velocity, wind-blown conflagration that consumed tens of thousands of acres of our bucolic wine country.

In the largest evacuation in Sonoma County history how did you fare? When the meteorologist forecasted yet another red flag day was your gas tank full, trailer hitched to the truck, "go bags" for people and pets at the ready? Did you have your camping stuff loaded up so you could get by for possibly a week without electricity? Had you identified a place where you and your animals could shelter, maybe with a friend out of the area, a boarding stable or a campground? The magnitude of the evacuation area this year created new challenges for finding shelter. The previous plan to go to a local friend's barn evaporated when half the county was on mandatory evacuation. Many had to travel as far as Davis, Pleasanton and even further afield.

Did you know to call Animal Services if you needed help evacuating your animals or assistance caring for them if sheltered in place? Or that the Sonoma County Fairgrounds is where to go if you needed a place to shelter your large animals?

If it made more sense for your animals to shelter in place, did they have ample water and feed plus instructions for volunteers on how to care for them and how to contact you? Were they identifiable by microchip, halter tag or some other means?

The Amazing Sonoma Cart

Sonoma CART (Community Animal Response Team), created to streamline communication and resources for animals during a disaster, was ready.

When Sonoma CART WhatsApp messenger started pinging in the early morning hours of October 24, Animal Services had activated the organization to assist in what became the largest fire and evacuation in Sonoma County history. The previous years of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) courses, as well as training in trailering, loading and large animal handling, paid off. Volunteers were at the ready to help thousands of animals in need, as they were directed by Animal Services officers, local law enforcement and local fire officials. Streamlined into 35 evacuation teams with trailer assignments based on species and maneuverability, CART volunteers assisted in organizing Sonoma County Fairgrounds and Sonoma Horse Park evacuation centers, as well as transporting animals home or to long-term



In Geyserville, these horses had been in the pasture when the fire burned selective parts of the fence and pasture, much of which had no grass. "The horses were okay." Sandra recalled. "We had to supply a water truck and extra troughs because the water pump was out."

Photo: Sandra Van Voorhis

foster care, with food and water, when it was safe to do so.

The 450 CART-trained volunteers and professionals cared for over 1,700 sheltered animals, in all assisting over 3,000 animals all the while staying safe, uninjured and out of the way of fire fighters.

"Assisting Sonoma County Animal Services with animal evacuation, sheltering and reunification during the Kincade Fire were indescribable," said Dr. Amber Bowen, president of Sonoma Cart. "The selfless and brave actions of this dedicated group of individuals from near and far was awe inspiring. You do not have to be a large animal wrangler to help—logistics, communications, volunteer and donation coordination, etc., are all vital components of any disaster response.

"No doubt we were all more prepared this time, but, unfortunately, we will be tasked with similar events in the future. Form a community group with your neighbors and make a plan

on how to stay informed and stay safe. Take advantage of the great training and education resources available to get better prepared and to get involved."

They include:

Sonoma Community Animal Response Team or CART

www.sonomacart.org

Halter Project

www.halterproject.org

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection or CalFire

www.fire.ca.gov

Federal Emergency Management Agency or FEMA

www.fema.gov



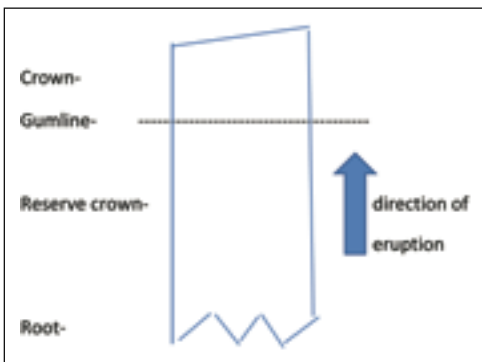
Dr. Amber Bowen of Sonoma CART comforts an evacuee stabled at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds.

Photo Courtesy of Sonoma CART

Since we spend so much time tending to them, let's talk horse teeth which are surprisingly different from our own.

Twelve incisors (six on top and six on the bottom) are the front teeth that you would see if you raised your horse's upper lip. They are used to grasp food or take a bite of grass or hay. Next is an interdental space where there are no teeth in female horses and canine teeth in male horses. Lastly, the cheek teeth lie behind this interdental space. Six cheek teeth make up each of the four rows of teeth (or "arcades") with the upper row being wider set than the bottom row. These are the teeth with which horses chew their food.

Additionally, some horses have vestigial cheek teeth called wolf teeth. They lie in front of the first cheek tooth and are difficult to see. They are nonfunctional; they are too short to chew with, are often very sharp and have a short root that may wiggle and cause pain when a horse has a bit in his mouth. Removing them is relatively easy and should be done before the horse is broke to ride.



How teeth grow

Equine teeth are full grown by the time the horse is five to six years old. By this age all of the baby teeth (the incisors and first three cheek teeth in each arcade) should have come out and all of the adult teeth should have fully erupted. As the years go by, continued grinding of feed wears down their crowns (the portion of the tooth below the gum). The continued eruption of the reserve crown below the gums maintains crown height until it runs out, usually in the horse's early to mid-20s. Note that this differs from continued growth because no new dental material is being added and the overall length of the teeth decreases as the horse ages.

Eventually some teeth become very short and may fall out or become loose and need to be pulled. Continued chewing over many years also tends to wear down the occlusal (chewing) surface of the teeth. This normally level and somewhat roughened surface may become smooth or even cupped in older horses, resulting in a less effective chewing surface. Horses with many

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GET THE LOW DOWN ON HORSE TEETH

By Michelle Beko, DVM

missing or worn teeth need to be fed pelleted feeds.

With the wider upper jaw, a side-to-side chewing motion and continued eruption, sharp points develop on the outside edges of the upper cheek teeth and the inside edges of the lower cheek teeth. Floating (filing) with hand or power tools is done in order to smooth the sharp edges of equine cheek teeth. We can also identify any excessively overgrown teeth that need to be lowered. If, for example, a horse has an overbite where the upper and lower cheek teeth do not align, the continued eruption of these unopposed cheek teeth can result in "hooks" or "ramps" that may impair the horse's ability to chew. Additionally, incisors that are slanted, curved or too long may need to be corrected.

The research in equine dentistry

Unfortunately, there isn't much research regarding equine dentistry. We used to think that a regularly floated horse would have less coarse manure and be less at risk of getting impaction colic than a horse whose teeth were not regularly floated. Two studies from Canada showed that the coarseness of manure is related to the coarseness of feed, but not to sharp dental points. A more recent study from Belgium showed that horses with impactions were not more likely to have sharp teeth than horses without impactions.

Regardless of their impact on colic, sharp points can cause your horse distress. Floating teeth regularly may help prevent choking and will keep your horse's mouth comfortable. Some symptoms that indicate dental problems are: quidding (spitting out partially chewed hay or grass), eating slowly, being fussy with a bit (especially tossing their head vertically) and bad breath.

The lack of research means individual judgment is the primary means of deciding how much dental work should be done. Most veterinarians/dentists agree that all horses should be floated every six months to two years. We do know that taking too much off of any adult tooth or getting any tooth too hot with power tools can result in the eventual death of that tooth. Hopefully, future research will lead to improved dental care. 🐾

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HIRING a HAULER

By Alisha Robinson



The author is ready to pick up horses in one of her seven-horse trailers.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Need to get your horse to University of California (UC) Davis for surgery? Have a group going to a show at Murieta Equestrian Center and the trainer's trailer is full? Bought a new horse in Paso Robles and you're without a truck? For the times we need to hire someone to transport our horses, how do we choose the right person for the job? Alisha Robinson, whose Cotati-based horse transportation company has become a fixture in California, gave us some insight.*

1—FINDING A HAULER: To find the right person for you, ask around. See who everyone uses. Find out how long they've been doing it. They may have just put their shingle up and may not be the best driver yet. The best haulers aren't advertising or on social media; they're on the road.

2—COMMERCIAL LIABILITY: Be sure they have commercial liability insurance. If they have a four-horse trailer or bigger, they should have a commercial driver's license. We're now seeing the California Highway Patrol cracking down on this. As a rule, they don't want to pull over horse trailers because of the potential liability. And they don't want to pull semis hauling horses into the scales for inspection. If they have the truck waiting for a few minutes, the horses will start to pee and they don't want that in their inspection area. But if you're driving like a fool, they will stop you.

Who is responsible for the trailer? Normal wear and tear are just part of it. But not so when a mare kicked through the rubber mats, sheet metal, insulation and out the back wall. She had only a slice on the bulb of her heel, but my trailer looked like a cannon had gone through the back. The client paid for the repair.

3—WHAT ABOUT THE RIG SIZE? Get a picture. Haulers get asked all the time for one. See if the trailer is the right size. If you're just going to vet down the road, it's not a big thing. But I hear over and over from people that their horse won't load because we tried to put him in a trailer that was too small. The trend is to have bigger, taller, wider body horses. People try to cram them into a slot in a normal size trailer, and while they might fit, they might not be comfortable. It's not just a front to back issue. They need to be able to spread their legs to balance going around corners.

4—IS THE TRAILER CLEAN? I strip and disinfect my trailers every two weeks. I don't want to be carrying bugs around. It doesn't have to be sparkling, but it should look like attention is paid to it.

5—CAMERAS: I don't have them on all my trailers because I switch trucks and the hook ups don't match all the trailers. Now they've come out with wireless that will work for all of the setups. Though cameras are great, 99% of the time the horses aren't doing anything.

If they're coming uncorked, like horses that aren't used to back leg wraps and they're firing on my back wall, I can feel it or hear it.

6—WHAT IS THE BEST SET UP?

Bedding: I use course wood chip shavings because they don't blow around and get in horses' mucus membranes. When you see horses coming off the trailer with a thin layer of dust on them, you know they've been breathing in that stuff the whole ride.

Tie or not: It depends. For a 16-hour trip, a box stall gives the loose horse plenty of room to stretch out. The average horse going to a new home doesn't need box stall. I never tie colicking horses in case they go down. And I don't tie young horses. They could pull back and damage their cervical spine. When they're loose, most horses will turn around, put their butt into the corner and ride backwards.

All my ties come from the ceiling. I tie them long enough so that the horses can hang their heads down to heart level, where the neck meets the chest, and they can cough to clear their lungs. Especially on long trips there is less risk of respiratory infection or shipping fever with the higher ties.

Food: I keep slow feed hay nets on my trailers for any ride over three hours. For less than three hours, like to Murieta Equestrian Center, they're fine without. But if it's a single horse that doesn't travel a lot, I give them something. I'm a firm believer in keeping them occupied. Some big shippers won't allow the hay nets because they don't want the mess. I have an old chicken barn that is filled with timothy, orchard and alfalfa, because this is what the barns I drive for feed. I will fill 30 hay nets if all the trucks are going.

Water: Say we're driving to Los Angeles from the North Bay; I offer water once. Since most of the time they don't drink, I give them a bran mash before they leave or at the destination. The only time they suck down a bucket of water is if you're driving in the heat.

7—STOPS: On a long haul I'll stop once for fuel, snacks and a break for me. I never take horses out.

If you're going to have an accident, you're likely going to have it in a strange place. If they are set up right, they can easily take a 12-hour ride.

8—PRICING: I base my pricing on \$100 per hour. The basic hook up to go across town is \$75 to \$100. Horse show pricing is different when we have so many going. Haulers that do single horses are more expensive. I don't really go out for single horses anymore. Even UC Davis will help group horses together.

My consideration is the cost of my equipment. I buy a new truck every year. The truck I drive goes about 15,000 miles a

month. I have three trucks going out. Do you know how many sets of tires I go through? Tires are \$500 a pop—I have 10 wheels on each truck and trailer. The semi is more. An oil change is \$200. A bridge toll can be \$25 for truck and trailer.

Essentially, a good hauler gives attention to detail and does all she can for all the horses to do well and hit the ground running. I haul a horse at Edgewood who when she sees the trailer pull in, she'll start rearing in her stall. She is fine in trailer box stall as long as she doesn't have on a fuzzy shipping halter. I have one who only rides in the back slot. You get to know them.

I think of them a smovie stars: "I only want this kind of water in my dressing room." 🐾

SONOMA COUNTY HORSE HAULERS

These horse transport specialists are based in Sonoma County. Some travel locally, some throughout California and others transport horses further afield. The listing does not constitute an endorsement by the *Horse Journal*.

Alisha Robinson
Horse Transport
292-5153

Blew By U Horse Transportation
Billy & Felicia Brucker
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586-7874 -695-5901

Genevieve Ghilotti
415-302-0883
g.ghilotti@comcast.net

Glenn Wright Horse
Transport Services
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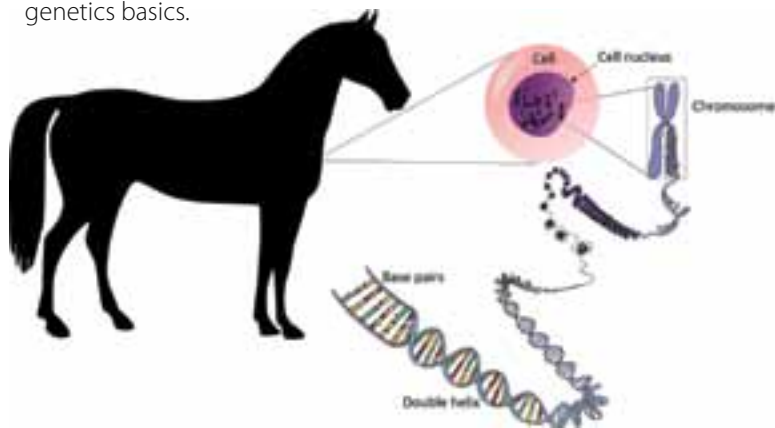
GETTING TO THE ROOTS OF THE MATTER

A Guide to Equine Genetic Testing

By Amy Young

Breeders around the globe regularly use equine genetic test results in choosing which mares and stallions to breed, and many breed organizations require parentage testing for registration. But DNA tests also provide significant information to owners not interested in mate selection.

Before delving into genetic testing, here is a refresher on genetics basics.



DNA consists of four bases, A, C, T and G that form pairs (A with T and G with C). The DNA structure is the double helix, which resembles a twisted ladder. The DNA is packaged into chromosomes, which come in pairs (one from each parent) and are contained in the nucleus of each cell of the body.

Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) consists of four nucleotides, or **bases**: adenine (A), cytosine (C), guanine (G), and thymine (T). The bases pair with each other (A with T and G with C) to form the double helix, which resembles a twisting ladder. This DNA contains all the instructions for life. Stretches of DNA that code for traits are called **genes**. DNA is packaged into **chromosomes**, which come in pairs, with one set from dad and one from mom.

Variation in gene sequences, ranging from single bases (for example an A replaced with a C) to large insertions (extra bases added), deletions (bases removed) or duplications (extra copies of a gene or gene segment), are **mutations**. These variant forms of genes are called **alleles**. Some of these changes are **dominant**, meaning only one copy is needed for a trait to be expressed, whereas others are **recessive**, requiring two copies (one from each parent) to see an effect.

The combination of alleles that an individual carries is its **genotype**. The genotype, along with environmental factors, influences the animal's **phenotype**, or characteristics that we can see. All of the genetic information that makes up an individual is contained

in the **genome**. The horse genome contains around 2.7 billion bases. And all of that DNA is stored in each and every cell of the body.

How Genetic Testing Works

Current technology allows laboratories to sequence an individual's entire genome (i.e., determine the order of all of the bases). However, since it is still too expensive to do on every horse, most available DNA tests focus on specific areas of the genome where mutations that cause, or are associated with, specific phenotypes have been identified.

Samples submitted for genetic testing are usually hair, blood or tissue. Hair samples must contain the "bulb", which looks like a tiny ball at the root of the hair. This is where the DNA is located. If you are submitting hair samples, make sure to pull, not cut, the hairs so the bulb is present. The University of California Davis Veterinary Genetics Laboratory has an instructional video that demonstrates how to collect a hair sample. Blood and tissue samples usually require additional steps, such as the addition of an anticoagulant (for blood) or freezing (for tissues). Always follow the testing lab's instructions for sample submission and contact them with questions.



Hair samples submitted for genetic testing must contain the bulb where the DNA is located. The bulb looks like a ball at the end of the hair.

DNA is extracted from the sample and polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is used to make many copies of the part of the genome that contains the mutation of interest.

Available Equine DNA Tests

Equine DNA tests are available for inherited diseases, coat colors, some performance traits and parentage. In many cases, tests are specific to certain breeds. For example, *cerebellar atrophy* has been identified in Arabians and Arabian crosses. *Hyperkalemic periodic paralysis* (HYPP) is known to occur in American Quarter Horses and closely related breeds. These tests report a horse's genotype for the known mutation (i.e., if the horse has zero, one or two copies of the mutation). Some breed organizations require genetic testing for certain diseases before a horse can be registered.

Coat color tests report a horse's genotype for mutations known to produce certain colors. These include basic coat colors



Base coat colors include chestnut, bay and black.

(chestnut, bay and black), mutations that dilute the base colors (cream, champagne, dun, pearl, silver and mushroom) and those that result in white spotting patterns (dominant white, tobiano, sabino, frame overo, splash white and leopard complex spotting).

Other available tests include parentage tests to identify or

confirm a horse's sire and dam, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis for embryos used in embryo transfers and horse embryo clone validation. The SynchroGait™ test looks for a genetic variant that affects gait and can influence performance in gaited breeds. The Speed Gene Test evaluates mutations in a gene responsible for muscle development to determine optimal race distance in Thoroughbreds.

When to Use Genetic Tests

Genetic testing may help a breeder decide which mare and stallion to breed and your veterinarian to make a diagnosis if your horse is ill. Clinical signs of diseases such as HYPP can overlap with other diseases and conditions, as well as with environmental causes such as ingestion of toxic plants. Ruling in or out an inherited disease helps identify or narrow down the cause.

If a Quarter Horse experiences severe muscle wasting following a strangles infection, for example, the genetic test for immune-mediated myositis (IMM/MYH1) may provide insight. Horses with one or two copies of the causative mutation may require treatment with steroids to combat the autoimmune response. Another clinical presentation of the MYH1 mutation in young Quarter Horses is severe, sudden muscle damage not associated with exercise. These horses may not have any muscle atrophy.

For an Appaloosa, testing for congenital stationary night blindness can help determine appropriate management strategies (such as leaving a light on in the stall) to keep the horse safe in low light conditions.

Since many genes and environmental factors influence performance, genetic tests for performance traits are currently limited. The SynchroGait™ test is available for gaited breeds. Researchers have found that a mutation facilitates lateral gaits, ambling and pace and inhibits the transition from trot or pace to gallop. It can be used to evaluate the innate ability of young horses for gait performance and to inform training decisions.

Genetic tests can also be used as part of a pre-purchase examination and may be useful for phenotypes that can occur later in life. An example is the genetic test for gray coat color. Gray is dominant, so horses with gray coat color can have one or two copies of the mutation. Research has shown that horses with two copies of the gray mutation are more likely to develop melanoma than horses with one copy.

With all of these tests, biology is rarely black and white. A positive DNA test does not necessarily mean that a horse will develop that condition or disease. Some genetic tests are for risk factors; the horse may have the risk genotype, but specific environmental factors also have to be present to trigger clinical signs. Knowing that your horse is susceptible can ensure proactive management to avoid or minimize exposure to those triggers.

For example, Haflingers and Belgians with two copies of a genetic risk factor for *ocular squamous cell carcinoma* are at elevated risk of developing this eye cancer because the mutation is in a gene that normally repairs sunlight damage. It is particularly important to minimize UV exposure in susceptible horses by keeping them in stalls during peak sunlight hours or by using a UV protective fly mask.

The field of genetics continues to progress at a rapid pace with new equine genetic tests continuing to become available.

For more information about equine genetic testing, please visit the UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Laboratory at <https://www.vgl.ucdavis.edu/services/horse.php> or visit their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ucdavis.vgl/>).

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WINTER CARE SOLUTIONS

From a Natural Point of View

By Elizabeth Denison

Even in our milder California climate, winter has its challenges. To accommodate those, the Equine Essentials Team of Mandy Mondiel and Elizabeth Denison address seasonal change with remedies to support horses' respiratory health and prepare both horses and riders emotionally and mentally for winter weather outings.

Mandy's Winter Tips

Comforting Molasses Syrup: Mandy makes up a gallon at the end of fall to soothe irritations and ease restrictions to breathing. Each horse has its own tolerance level for the many conditions that may affect breathing comfort at this time of year. However, most are challenged to some degree by seasonal stressors: the changes in trees and grasses, the temperature swings of hot dusty days and cold nights, the adjustments to daylight changes and shifting work out schedules. This year we add the smoky air of the northern California fire season.

Comforting Molasses Syrup Recipe

6 cups purified spring water or orange infused water*
2 cups organic apple cider vinegar
6 cups molasses
2 cups ground organic flax meal
1 teaspoon each of the doTerra essential oils of peppermint, lemon and lavender
*Orange infused water: In a three-quart pot, use the peel of five large oranges and cover with six cups of purified spring water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for an hour. Let cool. Strain through cheese cloth.
Mix all ingredients together well. Add more or less flax meal as needed to achieve desired thickness.
Shake well before each use. Administer by mouth either using a 60cc syringe onto the back of the tongue or by top dressing onto feed supplements. Store in a resealable jar or jug. The shelf life is about six months.

Wintertime Grooming Spritz: Special approaches to grooming can significantly aid in circulation, flexibility and range of motion. Remove debris with routine grooming. Then apply the spritz to large muscle groups, especially the neck, chest, shoulder and hindquarter. Be careful not to spray overhead or near the eyes. Pamper your horse with the final brushing. This circulation booster can be used pre-workout or in lieu of a workout on bad weather days.

Wintertime Grooming Spritz

Combine in an 8 oz spray bottle:
3 ozs fractionated coconut oil
3 ozs witch hazel
1 oz aloe vera juice
20 drops doTerra frankincense essential oil
20 drops doTerra cypress essential oil
20 drops doTerra AromaTouch Essential Oil Blend

Elizabeth's Winter Tips

While we may bemoan the passing of summer, horses seem to quite enjoy the relief from the heat and the crispness of cooler winter days. The cooler temps may have our horses behaving as if they have been given an energy elixir. This more upbeat energy can bring a welcome liveliness and fun into the horse/human equation, as long as it is balanced and grounded.

However, sometimes this extra winter energy is expressed in ways that are challenging with our horses seemingly easily distracted, more reactive, more sensitive and/or unfocused on the training tasks at hand.

On the other hand, the colder weather may cause the human side of the relationship to slow down energy. Humans experience a mild form of the natural hibernation response to less daylight and cooler temperatures. Because the mood, the expectations and the attitude humans bring to the relationship is key to setting the tone of the interactions with horses, we can get off to a good start by taking responsibility for our own grounding.

Essential Balancing Protocols

The Human Side—Spinal Awakening Ritual: Begin with the doTerra Breathe Essential Oil Blend of laurel, peppermint, eucalyptus, melaleuca, lemon, cardamom, ravintsara and ravensara. Put one to three drops in the palm of your hands and rub together rapidly. Then hold your hands over your nose and take six slow, deep breaths. This will open your respiratory passages, oxygenate your blood and raise your energy level to better match your energetic horse.

Next awaken and free the key energy centers along your spine and encourage spinal flexibility and core strength by taking six more breaths with the following gentle yoga inspired movement.

On inhalation, stand tall with relaxed shoulders. On exhalation, drop your head. Curl forward slowly, letting each of your 32 vertebrae drop one at a time until you are hanging forward like a ragdoll. On your next inhalation, slightly bend your knees, engage your core muscles and roll back up as slowly as you rolled down. Visualize your spine moving like a fiddlehead fern unfurling and re-curling to meet the sunshine and prepare for the cool of night. Repeat as desired.

If you have any dizziness, instead of standing this may be done while seated in a stable chair. In your chair, take a wide-legged stance, balance yourself with your hands on your knees and roll down between your legs and then back up to where you started.

The Horse Side—The Grounding Ritual: Use doTerra Balance Essential Oil Blend, which contains spruce, ho wood, frankincense, blue tansy, blue chamomile and osmanthus. First, offer the open bottle under your horse's nose. Many horses will begin to lick and chew, lean into the fragrance or indicate acceptance in other ways such as taking a deep breath. Then apply a drop to the middle of their nose, on the tips of their ears and on the Teng points above each hoof. The Teng points are acupressure points from Chinese medicine. Locate them by running your finger down the front of each leg until it lands in a slight, but clear indentation just above the front middle of the hoof. A drop of Balance Blend here before working with your horse can be calming and grounding.

The Equine Essentials Team recommends using organic ingredients, doTerra Certified Pure Therapeutic Grade essential oils and products approved by the Food and Drug Association. They also recommend when introducing new protocols to consult your veterinarian. If your horse has an unfavorable reaction, discontinue use.

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Mandy Mondiel • Elizabeth Denison



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HA HA!



Guy walks into a bar, orders a drink, and shouts, "The Mayor is a horse's ass!" The clientele beat him up and throw him out the door. He crawls back in, goes up to the bar, orders another drink and sotto voce says to the bartender, "I guess this is the Mayor's country." The bartender replies, "No, sir. This is horse country".

Sara Boonin Malone, Petaluma

Q: You're riding a horse full speed, there's a giraffe right beside you and a lion is nipping at your heels. What do you do?

A: Get off the carousel and sober up.

Michele Dodge, Fair Oaks

What's the difference between praying in church and praying at the racetrack?

At the track you really mean it.

Michele Dodge, Fair Oaks

A pony walks into the doctor's office and says, "I'm a little hoarse."

Tracey Byrne, Rio Linda

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