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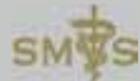
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The Horse Journal Editorial Committee

Managing Editor

Patti Schofler
editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Graphic Design

Lynn Newton
newton5@sonic.net

Copy Editor

Eileen O'Farrell

Photography

Marcie Lewis
marcie@marciewisphotography.com

William T. Stacy

wtstacy@gmail.com

Distribution Diva

Sandra Van Voorhis

Printing

AD-Vantage Marketing, Inc.
ad-vantagemarketing.com

Contact Us

Sonoma County Horse Council
PO Box 7157
Santa Rosa, CA 95407
www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org



Sonoma County

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Cover Photo: Marcie Lewis

Valen Dolmen, a 10-year-old Andalusian Pure Raza Espanola (PRE) owned by Kathy Kennedy, strikes an elegant pose as he and his trainer Andre Ganc explore the hills around Sienna Mountain Ranch in Petaluma where Andre teaches and trains. A native of Brazil, Andre is a dressage and working equitation judge. He wears traditional Portuguese working equitation attire. Both the tack and clothing were donated by Iberian Connection.

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CONTRIBUTORS



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



Caryn Hoeflein is a horse trainer and runs small boarding and training facility, Sky High Ranch, in Penngrove where she likes to help everyday horse owners build a better connection with their horses. She has two teenage boys, too many animals to count, and her third-degree black belt in Taekwondo. She is also earned her Equine Bodyworker Certification. Growing up in Novato, she started out riding gymkhana and running barrels, and eventually she made her way into reining and cow horse through local clubs where she also volunteered and held board positions. For almost 10 years she rode, competed and coached the Petaluma Riding and Driving Club's senior mounted drill team, along with competing in many obstacle and cowboy challenges. Two years ago, she had the opportunity to take a horse to the San Francisco Opera, onstage, for seven performances of "Carmen."



Esther Siegel is a psychotherapist whose two horses partner up with her doing equine therapy with her clients. They also provide opportunities for riding lessons for beginners and work with Esther on improving her own dressage riding skills. Esther is available in Redwood Valley and on Zoom, at (707) 485-5354 and at harmonygaits@pacific.net.



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



Wanda Smith is an engineer, the Executive Director of CEPEC (www.cepec.us), and a Board Member of the California Horse Council. She has Quarter Horses, showed cutting horses, and authored several books including *Horses of the Wine Country*. She designed the 2017 exhibit at the History Museum of Sonoma County: *Equine Epochs, The History of Sonoma County Horses*. www.cepec.us/EquineEpochs.htm



A native of Ontario, Canada, **Katherine Roederer** began riding at a very young age. She became a certified riding instructor through the Canadian Pony Club and successfully competed in hunters and jumpers at A-rated shows throughout her adolescence. She has an undergraduate degree in French and graduate degree in education. When she moved to California she obtained 3rd level certification in

teaching the Middle Years Program from the International Baccalaureate School. She lives in Santa Rosa where she teaches math at the French American Charter School. Katherine is also a yoga trainer and teaches English riding to children, teens, and adults.



Gwen Kilchherr is a long time Sonoma County landscape consultant and designer. She hosts the Saturday morning KSRO 1350 AM "Garden Talk" show and authors the Q&A garden column in the Press Democrat, "The Garden Doctors." Gwen is a Sonoma County California Dressage society member and has volunteered at many of their events and shows. She and her warmblood mare, Cleo, are working with trainer Lori Cook and moving up to Second Level dressage.



Gary Johnson is the primary instructor and owner of ResQFAST, LLC, that offers education programs in rescue, fire, animal and safety training. Having instructed thousands of people on animal technical rescue and fire/life safety techniques, Gary also is a fire captain with the Sonoma Valley Fire District.



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



Melissa Kalember 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@kalember-equine.com



Mary Taft-McPhee is a farrier based in Port Orchard, Washington, who works part time in Sonoma County. Prior to entering the trade, she worked in San Francisco as a data scientist and in New York as a bond trader. She enjoys spending time with her retired polo ponies, Frenchie and Bayita.

Elizabeth R. Palmer
Attorney
Business & Taxation

ElizabethPalmerLaw.com

707-849-6444
epalmer@elizabethpalmerlaw.com
Santa Rosa, CA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the calendar rolls over into 2021, most of us are more than happy to see last year fade out of sight in the rearview mirror.

Many of our friends and neighbors are setting out on the journey of reassembling their lives and homesteads after the fires even though resources are still somewhat strained from the 2017 fire rebuilds with contractors in short supply and lumberyards trying to keep materials flowing. And then there's COVID-19 and all of the frustration that it has brought to our community and economy.

However, while the movie "Groundhog Day" certainly comes to mind, the horizon is looking much better with vaccines that hold promise to help wrangle this virus into a more moderate problem. Keep in mind that once immunizations start, it will still be a trek towards opening things back up and putting the spurs to the economy. Keep yer hat and mask on and we'll get through it.

As more good news, starting after the fires in 2017 your Sonoma County Horse Council has been developing funding sources for disaster relief. We were able to offer some valuable assistance back then, and we are now ready to accept applications for some level of help with the current rebuild efforts. These grants will range between \$1,000 and \$5,000 and are intended to help people with uninsured equine related losses. With a limited amount of money to work with, the Council will do its best to fulfill requests in an equitable manner and assist in closing the gap for some who have lost so much.

And it bears saying that for those who remained safe through all of the turmoil and are so inclined, donations to the SCHC

Disaster Relief Fund will be cheerfully accepted and distributed to those in need.

The equine community lost one of its stalwart members with the recent passing of Ron DeGrange. Ron, along with his family, running the Cloverleaf Ranch, introduced scores of young people to the joys of equitation and the lessons of life. Please see the memorial in this issue.

Also in this issue, we have stories to lift your spirits such as "What Horses Can Teach Kids", "Obstacle Training is More Than Just Fun" as well as the history of horses and cocktails with "Beyond Mint Juleps".

2021 will no doubt be a challenging year. As we are all aware, we need to get out from under the grip of the virus and crank up the economy and life in general. Nothing beats a positive attitude at the start of each and every day to set you off on the right path. And the best results are usually achieved by people who think independently and allow for multiple ideas to germinate and grow. If we all put our shoulders into it, we can achieve fantastic results.

So, go feed your animals and get a good night's sleep with a clear mind so that you're ready to tackle the day tomorrow.

Happy Trails!
Henry Beaumont
President, Sonoma County Horse Council

John O'Hara Photography



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News & Newsworthy

SURPRISE ENDING OF TRAINING VIDEO

Make it to the last third of horsemanship trainer Warwick Schiller's video Helping A Grand Prix Dressage Rider. There's a good chance you'll be as surprised as was the star of the video, Sonoma County grand prix dressage rider Kristen Aggers. www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WPhkAq2nIA

SCHC BRINGS TRAILERING COURSE TO THE SANTA ROSA FAIRGROUNDS

With Covid-19 allowing, the Horse Council is offering a day long trailering course **April 17** at the Santa Rosa Fairgrounds. The morning lecture (8 a.m. to noon) will cover the nuances of trailering, laws and safety. The afternoon (1 p.m. to 4 p.m.) will give participants the opportunity to practice three backing maneuvers.

Upon the successful demonstration of the three maneuvers, each driver will earn a certificate of competency that will satisfy one of the requirements for becoming an animal service disaster service worker or a Sonoma CART evacuation driver.

Leonard Iniguez, the course instructor, has been a commercial driver for 40 years. "Leonard has moved everything over the road, including one of the space shuttles," said Greg Harder, SCHC board member and course organizer. "He has extensive experience hauling horses everywhere, has taught commercial vehicle operation on the West Coast for a number of years, and is a very nice guy. He's most helpful getting the students to understand their trucks and trailers, what to do and not to do."

The cost of the lecture and lab is \$30 for members and \$45 for nonmembers.

CLONED PRZEWALSKI'S FOAL OFFERS HOPE FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES

The summer of 2020 saw the birth of the world's first successfully cloned Przewalski's horse. The colt is named Kurt in honor of Kurt Benirschke, M.D., who was instrumental in founding the Frozen Zoo® and the conservation research program at San Diego Zoo Global (SDZG).

Born to a domestic surrogate mother in Texas, the foal is a clone of a male Przewalski's horse whose DNA was cryopreserved 40 years ago at the SDZG and represents the first time this species has been cloned. Scientists indicate it could provide an important model for future conservation efforts.

The new cloned foal, who will move to the San Diego Zoo Safari Park to join a breeding herd of his species, represents a major milestone for Przewalski's horse conservation. He was cloned from a cell line stored in the Frozen Zoo® since 1980. That stallion was born in 1975 in the United Kingdom, was transferred to the US in 1978 and lived until 1998. As the new clone matures and successfully breeds, he can provide a valuable infusion of genetic diversity for the Przewalski's horse population.



"This birth expands the opportunity for genetic rescue of endangered wild species," said Ryan Phelan, executive director of Revive & Restore.

"We are hopeful that this colt will bring back genetic variation important for the future of the Przewalski's horse population," said Bob Wiese, Ph.D., chief life sciences officer at San Diego Zoo Global.

Formerly extinct in the wild, the Przewalski's horse has survived for the past 40 years almost entirely in zoos around the world, and all of the surviving horses are related to 12 Przewalski's horses born in the wild. Though Intensive breeding programs have helped recover the species, losses of genetic diversity have occurred.

While ongoing reintroductions since the 1990s have established several wild herds of Przewalski's horses on grasslands in China and Mongolia, maintaining genetic variation is likely to be an important part of ensuring the species' survival in the future.

"This new Przewalski's colt was born fully healthy and reproductively normal," said Shawn Walker, chief science officer at Via-Gen Equine.

"A central tenet of the Frozen Zoo®, when it was established by Dr. Benirschke, was that it would be used for purposes not possible at the time," said Oliver Ryder, Ph.D., director of genetics at San Diego Zoo Global. "Now, the living cells in the Frozen Zoo are contributing to reversing losses of genetic diversity and contributing to population sustainability. The cells of hundreds of Przewalski's horses reside in the Frozen Zoo, and form the basis for new opportunities in applying scientific research to preserve the species into the future."

NEW SOLO PRACTICE

Dr. Courtney Lewis has opened Peregrine Equine for sports medicine and general practice, serving Sonoma, Marin and Napa. She can be reached at: 415-254-3112, drcourtney@peregrineequine.com

THE HONORS AND DONATIONS GO TO GIANT STEPS

Horse Whisperers are a special group of people and organizations recognized by the EQUUS Foundation for their compassion and dedication to horse welfare. A select group of charities are designated as Horse Whisperer Award Recipients each year by the EQUUS Foundation Board of Directors. The Split Rock Farm/Bobbie and Derek Braun Horse Whisperer Award was awarded recently to Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center, Inc., in Petaluma.

TELL THE HORSE COMMUNITY ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS

The Sonoma County Horse Council has created on its website an online platform for the horse community to share their offerings. Join our Barn Directory, Nonprofits Helping Horses Directory, and Horse and Herd Helpers Community Directory.

www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

EDUCATION FACILITY AND VET PRACTICE COMBINE IN PENNGROVE

Animals In Motion (AIM) has opened at Chicken Foot Ranch in Penngrove both as a veterinary practice focusing on whole horse wellness and as a facility to provide a horse owner educational program. Drs. Carrie Schlachter, Mariya Pitel and Lauren Taylor have as their goal to prevent injuries in our equine partners by employing the latest technology, routine examinations, education, and integrative modalities to improve comfort and physical fitness.

The veterinarians have developed a horse owner educational program that starts with teaching the very basic knowledge of horse health. The advanced horse course topics include sport horse nutrition, fitness, regenerative medications, and pasture rotation. AIM's educational facility also houses Equinology courses for horse owners, veterinarians and licensed practitioners as well as the Academy of Animal Sport Science's yearly rehabilitation certification classes. AIM also provides a monthly free lecture to the horse community on the first Wednesday of every month at 6 p.m.



Eight geldings serve as educational partners at AIM, housed on the 20-acre Chicken Foot Ranch with its old barn and education building. 🐾

GONE AWAY



Ron DeGrange and his daughter Shawna DeGrange

Ronald David DeGrange of Santa Rosa passed away October 25, 2020. He was 76.

Born August 20, 1944, in Hayward and raised in Lone, Ronny attended Amador County Schools and Sacramento Community College. He had a passion for horsemanship and in 1963 took a summer job at the Cloverleaf Ranch in Santa Rosa where he became a wrangler and met his wife-to-be Virginia (Ginger) Armstrong.

He served in the US Air Force from 1965 to 1967, became a music promoter and continued to improve as a horseman. He reunited with Ginger at a horse show and the two married in the Cloverleaf Ranch Buzzards Gulch Chapel on August 18, 1974.

An accomplished horseman, Ron spent years mentoring with professionals like Harold Cummins and Greg Ward. He competed in cutting and reining events and was a respected horse breeder and trainer. He worked with thousands of horse enthusiasts while running the Cloverleaf Ranch Summer Camp alongside Ginger. He was a great teacher who understood horse and rider alike, and was fair, gentle, and kind to both humans and horses.

A member of both the Sonoma County Trail Blazers and the Reno Sierra Riders, Ron could always be found on the trail or in the arena. He loved to host dinner parties and cook for friends and family.

He is survived by his loving wife Ginger DeGrange, daughters Rachel Morgan and Shawna DeGrange and son Tye DeGrange along with a brother and grandchildren.

A Daughter's Remembrance

By Shawna DeGrange

Dad... on October 25th you left this world. You are the greatest man I have ever known. I feel unbelievably lucky to have had you in my life and to have been able to share in your final moments.

Remember when the music would come on, you and I would be the first out on the dance floor. You made our house a home with your lovingly prepared meals and making dinner times central to our family routine. I love the way you always looked at Mom and will never forget the last strawberry milk shake you shared with her. You loved her for 57 years and were married for 47.

You were Superman at the ranch: driving the people mover, whipping up food in the Feedbag, grabbing campers to work on random projects—before child labor laws were a thing. I loved that in all those moments you created deep relationships with both campers and staff and you inspired the young people here with your teachable moments. Your simple, common sense approach made you refreshing for so many. You were the man that could dress up in a tux and be the most handsome man at the opera, and then go to a cattle branding and make the guys around a campfire laugh with an inappropriate joke.

Dad, my tennis partner, my dance partner... I LOVE YOU. I hope I make you proud with the woman and mom that I have become.



RESCUE IN THE HOOD

By Patti Schofler



The four-year-old pony mare (to be named Karma) and her yearling son (to be named Pippin) peer out of their small enclosure.

The Facebook sales photos didn't seem right. A pony mare and her offspring were enclosed behind fencing Patricia had never seen used for horses. On her request, the seller sent the sales video: a 5'10" man was riding the yearling pony around a concrete lot in downtown Oakland.

Patricia (an alias) had to get the ponies out of there. She called for help from her sister Margaret Davis who at her Petaluma facility was facing potential wildfires and immersed in settling in horses evacuated from fire.

"I was in survival mode," Margaret recalled. She just didn't have room for more horses, even ponies. As it was, she moved her own horses to Novato so she would have enough trailer space for every horse on the property—in case of fire. "Then I watched the video a second time and said, 'Game over. We're going in.'"

Margaret's neighbor Jodi Richardson whose American Made Miniatures Farm Sanctuary shelters all kinds of animals, from alpacas to zebras, didn't hesitate to say yes when Margaret agreed to pony up the cash for the rescues if Jodi would take them in.

The sisters hooked up the trailer in the morning, a time when Margaret's 12-year-old daughter Ainsley was busy elsewhere. As Ainsley is passionate about animals and a compassionate

individual, she would want to go on the rescue mission. Margaret wasn't comfortable taking a 12-year-old into a situation where she didn't know what would happen.

But Ainsley had her own ideas. She texted Margaret that she couldn't leave without her. "I always knew mom would save them and that I might have to track her down so I could go," Ainsley laughed. "She's a good mom. She was giving me experience to gain perspective, to understand. Believe me, I know how good I have it."

TRAILER SERPENTINES THROUGH PILES OF GARBAGE

As they crossed the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge on a late Friday afternoon, Patricia and Ainsley found relief in teasing Margaret about her anxiety. She drove to the owner's house and then followed him through streets barely accessible for a horse trailer, weaving down thoroughfares where trash was piled so high on the sidewalk that it spilled onto the narrow road, requiring the truck and trailer to serpentine past the garbage and broken-down cars. Music blared out of double-parked cars and out of houses. Parties dotted the street corners.

They recognized from the video the 12-foot solid fence and the gate secured by a chain and lock. As they exited the truck, they smelled the trash and felt the ground shake as a BART train roared by.

Behind the fence, in the abandoned lot, accompanied by a broken-down RV and debris, two black ponies paced inside a makeshift stall that barely gave them room to move around. Corn-cobs served as bedding over the concrete floor. A bucket of dirty water hung from the rail. Alfalfa cubes dotted the floor. They hadn't had their halters removed since they arrived six months before.

The three animal advocates from across the Bay listened carefully to the owner describe his dream to produce dancing horses like the ones his famous cousin trained in Guadalajara, Mexico.

He bought the ponies to make a name for himself. They also were a gift for his daughter. But his wife and daughter had left him and returned to Mexico. He had a DUI to pay for and he had to get his life together. Patricia was sad for him, as he busily showed them everything, the food they ate, their saddle, how they lunged—on the concrete. "If he was in a different situation, and someone trained him to be a good horseperson, he would do a good job," Patricia was certain.

Margaret reminded herself of her sister's insistence that she not get into it with the seller. "Just get in, pay the guy, and get out, she had said. Seeing the video, it was hard not to be enraged. I wanted to enlighten him without offending him, which I quickly learned is not an easy task. He thought we were dumb ladies."

Margaret had to say something. "Wow, you ride these guys really young. Younger than the horses at the race track." He quickly said, "They're very strong."



With the ponies loaded up, boys and girls say goodbye to the animals they didn't know were in the neighborhood.

In his mind, it was justified."

NEGOTIATIONS ON PONIES

While the owner and Margaret negotiated their price, the ponies paced in their tiny enclosure. They were in good weight, didn't seem wormy, but were clearly stressed. Their feet were worn down from standing and working on concrete. It passed through Margaret's mind that the mare could be pregnant as she was living with her ungelded yearling colt.

Ainsley and Patricia led them out the solid gate, into the noise and chaos of the neighborhood. Margaret thought, "How did they sleep? How did they take a breath?"

Walking to the trailer, the pair were scared, fearful of the changes in surfaces, the curb, the street. The owner had said he often took them out. Margaret didn't believe it.



Ainsley Davis grooms her new buddies. The pony mare sports her new halter donated by the Girl Scout Troop at the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center in Petaluma.

A woman and her four children watched the ponies easily load into the trailer. Breaking into tears, she exclaimed that her kids loved animals, but she didn't have a car and couldn't take them to be around animals. If only she had known the ponies were in the neighborhood. Did Margaret want to buy one of the 18 husky puppies she was raising to make a living? "Who am I to judge? We show up in the big truck and go back to Petaluma," Margaret reflected.

Ainsley added, "She was really nice and her kids were adorable. And she was taking good care of them."

As the truck and trailer navigated the same risky path as before, Margaret tried not to think about the consequences of a flat tire. Yet despite the anxiety, there was no turning back. Once on the freeway, the three breathed a collective sigh. The ponies were out of there and everything was fine.

In the dark of night, the truck and trailer traveled up Jodi Richardson's driveway where the ponies unloaded, staying tightly close to each other, walking in lockstep. The yearling was quite scared as they were led to a large paddock, a space much larger than they had seen in months, perhaps ever. They went straight for the hay. They whinnied to the other horses on the property and got calls in return.

A couple of days later they were trotting around the paddock, happy, and even a bit difficult to catch.

"Fall was my favorite season," said Margaret. "Now I dread Fall. With so much difficulty in the world, here was something we could actually do and not be victims of circumstances. This is something good we've pulled out of the ashes. Rescuing the ponies is small by comparison to what's going on in the world, but it's something."

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WHERE EAST MEETS WEST



Heather Bailey

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

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



Sahar Bartlett

For this issue we're looking into buying or adopting a rescue horse or pony.

Our experts are eventer **Heather Bailey** and western rider **Sahar Bartlett**.

HEATHER BAILEY (HB): Having rescued and rehabilitated horses, primarily Thoroughbreds, on a private basis for most of her life, eventer Heather Bailey is past president of the board of directors of the rescue organization Coins to Help Abandoned, Neglected and Equines (CHANGE) and is the editor of The Windsor Times newspaper. She and her husband eventing trainer John Strassburger own Phoenix Farm in Healdsburg where they live with son Wesley and where Heather breeds Nigerian goats. She also consults on horse and rider matches.

SAHAR BARTLETT (SB): CFO of the nonprofit Sonoma Equine Rescue, Rehab and Adoption (SERRA), vice president of the Sonoma County Horse Council and a board member of Bay Area Barns and Trails, Sahar has shown western pleasure horses extensively. Currently, she enjoys trail riding, drill team competition and color guard performances. She is an active member of the Petaluma Riding and Driving Club, Novato Horsemen and the Marin Horse Council. She also serves as a court-appointed special advocate for at risk youth. Sahar is a retired federal court reporter and lives with her husband, Joel, in Santa Rosa on their ranch with their six horses and two dogs.

Share with us tips for buying or adopting a rescue horse.

HB: Everybody likes the idea of a rescue horse. We all want to live in the Black Stallion world. But they are not suitable for everybody. Most importantly, you must be scrupulously self-aware of yourself as a rider and a trainer and as to your experience and capability with different types of horses.

Rescue horses are rescue horses for a reason. These horses more than likely come with some degree of physical, mental, or training baggage. That doesn't make them any less worthy of love

and care and attention. And it doesn't mean they can't become amazing, useful animals. But if they are taken in by a legitimate rescue, likely they have some sort of physical issue. It can be as simple as emaciation and they just need to be fed. The hooves may have been ignored for years. Or they weren't rehabbed correctly and are horribly asymmetrical. Or they may be terribly old and got left behind. You have to know that you can care for the horse's physical, training and handling needs. It's not in the horse's best interest for them to end up in a place not able to deal with their baggage.

Second, assess your comfort with being involved with a rescue organization. Many rescues that offer adoptions require lifetime monitoring of the horse they adopt out. They can have requirements about where and how the horse lives. There is nothing wrong with those requirements, but not everyone is going to be comfortable with them.

If you go through a legitimate, good rescue, you have the best chance of getting the most information possible about the horse in question. On the flip side, you will have a lifetime relationship with that rescue.

If you are buying a horse out of a situation that is negative enough that it feels like a rescue, you're taking a chance because you won't have any relationship with the sellers and you're on your own. But the horse is yours free and clear.

Part of the attraction of a rescue, is "Oh, I can get a horse for \$200." But then it can cost thousands of dollars for care because the horse has suffered from chronic, long term neglect, on top of the significant expense of keeping any horse. The purchase price is not the costly part of horse ownership.

If the person doesn't have a lot of experience but is committed to adoption, that person is ideal for working with a legitimate rescue because they will be vested in making a good match and can provide support if there are any issues down the road. If they don't have access to a legit rescue, or are not comfortable with the commitment to the rescue, then it's good to work with someone who has experience with that kind of horse to help you learn how to train and handle the horse.

These animals have already been through a bad situation, and no one should want them to end of up in that situation again.

SB: When SERRA takes in a rescue horse, we apply many of the same considerations as when you find a horse on Craigslist, dream-horse.com, or through private treaty. We look beyond obvious physical or emotional issues. We search for the horse's history, requesting veterinary records and querying about the health issues. How many owners has the horse had? How was he used? What negative behaviors exist? To fill in missing puzzle pieces of the horse's history we bring in our own vet to examine the horse and provide any necessary treatment, including updated vaccinations.

One of the many ways SERRA acquires its horses is through surrender. A daughter goes off to college and leaves her childhood horse home with the parents, who have no knowledge about the horse or interest in keeping it. Or the horse's owner becomes critically ill or passes away. The owner might move to a place that isn't appropriate for horsekeeping.

Recently a woman contacted us about a horse she wanted to surrender. She lost her job because of COVID and can't pay her rent. It turned out she had purchased two horses for \$200 on Craigslist and was trying to turn them around for more money, but couldn't. She had no history about them. Since they were Thoroughbreds with lip tattoos, their records were documentable. They were six and 16-year-old sisters. Both went back to Secretariat and Seattle Slew. We were able to rehome both to wonderful homes where the new owners are now doing low-level dressage and jumping. Lovely horses with great outcomes.

What are the red flags to note when looking at a rescue horse?

HB: It's the same with a horse you're spending thousands of dollars on. What is their reaction to having a halter taken on and off? Can I pick up their feet? Can I touch them? What is their reaction to a human coming into their space? Do they bare their teeth? Look at me kindly? Do they lead? Are they interested in me or everything around me?

I've run into many rescue horses that have an issue with dogs. Is the horse going to a farm with lots of dogs? You don't want one that wants to kill every dog it sees or who climbs out the back window when your old German Shepherd walks down the barn aisle.

A red flag to me is when a horse costs as much to adopt as it does to just buy it. If a rescue organization wants \$5,000 for a horse, that's not a rescue. That's a sale.

This may sound strange, but with a good rescue organization, you should always feel a tiny bit judged. There should be a little moment where you feel irritated. That means they're doing their due diligence and not just shoving the horse out the door to the first guy that comes along and wants to give it a home.

And they should be willing to open their books as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. They should be willing to give you contact with other adopters. And you should be able to speak to the vet who is caring for the horse. There are legitimate rehoming who are not a 501(c)(3) because it's an expensive process and they can often provide excellent resources and assistance to adopters. But if they are claiming to be a nonprofit, they should be able to provide documentation showing that they are a 501(c)(3) organization.

SB: Be sure to consider the horse's temperament and if it is a good

match for your skills. A reputable rescue will let you spend time with the horse multiple times. Are you wanting a kid's horse but the horse you're looking at is nervous on the ground? That's an indication that the match isn't right. Is the horse you're considering "hot" and needs to be ridden five days a week but you only have the weekends to ride? This is a sign the pairing might not work. Bottom line: look for indications that the horse does or doesn't suit your level of experience, your time commitment and your lifestyle.

Are there myths about rescues you would like to bust?

HB: Master Merlin was a rescue my husband and I got free from a race horse trainer. The horse had injured a couple of people and he was likely to go on a one-way trip to Mexico. She called us because he was big and fancy and she knew we could handle his issues. He was very difficult, but he was also the most talented horse either of us had ever worked with. He ended up eventing at Intermediate Level and winning an area championship. He was an exceptional animal.

That horse loved me. At every competition, John would drop the reins after his dressage ride and Merlin would walk out of the arena right over to me and put his head on my chest. And yet my riding that horse was one disaster after another.

A horse's love for you will not necessarily translate into their working for you. He loved me more than he loved my husband, but he would work for John.

There is a myth in rescue that if you just love the horse enough everything will be fine. But we're talking about 1500 lb. animal capable of seriously injuring someone and who has an unknown background with possibly terrible, sad, ugly baggage. The attitude that just loving them is going to solve a bad backstory is a sure-fire way for someone to get seriously hurt.

I still get teary about the ones we couldn't save, that were too damaged to live their best lives.

Rescue is extremely emotional. But to do them justice you have to take the emotion out of it. and make decisions from a place of logic and fact. Nobody gets involved in rescue because they don't love horses, but love isn't what will save them.

SB: A myth I would like to bust is that all horses that come through rescue are problem horses with excess baggage. Some have been relinquished due to changes of circumstance in their owners' lives, having nothing to do with their character. Most horses that come to SERRA with behavioral issues have acquired those issues because of improper training that can usually be fixed by giving them time and respect, and retraining of their bodies and their minds to help them unlearn negative behaviors. They're amazing creatures with a remarkable capacity to forgive and to bond.

Another myth: Old, unrideable horses are useless. A senior companion horse has so much to offer. Has your horse recently lost his pasture buddy? Do you no longer ride but miss having horses in your life? Do you have kids or grandkids you'd like to introduce to these amazing creatures? Wouldn't teaching them about the care (and perhaps light riding) of a horse be a fabulous way to spend time with them and to help perpetuate the next generation of horse enthusiasts? Don't discount this most fantastic segment of the horse population. They have so much to give and ask for so little. 🐾



OBSTACLE TRAINING IS MORE THAN JUST FUN

By Caryn Hoeflein



How did we end up in a dump like this?

The other day my husband was riding down the trail towards the lake at Trione-Annadel State Park when he met up with a man walking down the trail wearing a dragon inner tube. This was proof that one never knows that life will present you and your horse.

This meetup also demonstrates the importance of desensitization, one of the several benefits of obstacle training for horses of any breed, riding style and disciplines. When all goes well with the training, horses learn trust, courage and confidence. Imagine the need for that if there is a fire and the horse needs to go over downed logs.

Further, when horses maneuver over and through obstacles, they round their backs, engage their abdominal muscles, and pick up their feet, all physical benefits to their wellbeing.

And equally beneficial is the fun of obstacle training.

A few basics of this type of training include the following:

1. Always take the time to do your homework, as you cannot write a sentence if you haven't learned your ABC's first.
2. Do a little at a time so not to over face your horse. Don't expect anything.
3. In building obstacles, safety is the first priority. Don't use anything they can get tangled in or that can fall over or come apart.

We have received questions about obstacle training and here is a sampling. Let the magazine know if you have more.

Q. I'm starting to work my mare with obstacles and I don't want to make mistakes. What are "no no's" with horses and obstacles?

A. The first "no-no" is to get after them when they refuse. Sometimes you see when a horse balks at something, the rider spurs her and smacks her on the butt to go forward. Using that method, all that horse really learns is that the obstacle will hurt her if she gets near it. So always let them stop and inspect. If you ask them to move forward, release and accept any try, even a lean.

They will remember that the next time you ask.

The other "no no" when introducing a new item (i.e., tarp, flag, sack of cans) is to touch the horse with the item before a proper introduction. Instead, walk the horse up

to the object, and as she gets close to it, move it away, giving the horse the feeling that she is pushing it. Once she gets close enough to sniff, move it away again. Once she is curious and wants to get closer, let her sniff it.

When the horse has had a chance to be introduced properly, and only then, see if you can touch to her body with it. If you have horses that blow up, jump away, or rear when introduced to an obstacle, you probably missed some steps along the way.

Q. Should I start on the ground before riding my stallion through obstacles?

A. If I don't know a horse well and am not sure of the reaction to a new obstacle, I start on the ground. With that said, I want to have done proper ground work beforehand. I want my horse to know how to move his hindquarters and front end when I ask, and I want my horse to respect my space before I introduce an obstacle that may spook him. I will lunge the horse around the obstacles, both ways, and let him rest when facing the obstacle. I encourage him to inspect the obstacle by sniffing it. If he seems comfortable and interested, I will then back him away from the obstacle. I do not push my horses to step over or through an obstacle the first time.

If I am introducing multiple new obstacles, I will lunge around all of them, letting the horse inspect them. Then I'll move away from the obstacles if the horse is interested and comfortable. The first impression will stick, and you don't want it to be a bad one.

Q. My horse refuses to walk into water, especially water boxes. He will always try and jump it. How can I get him to walk through water?

A. Water obstacles, especially water boxes, can be tricky for horses. If I walk a horse up to a water box and he snorts and doesn't want to get near it, I will walk circles around it (as far away as I need to be for him to be comfortable) and then I ask him to get close and sniff it. I will squeeze with my legs to move him closer, and if he as much as leans forward, I release. Your pressure and release are key to getting the horse closer to something that scares him.

Many times, people want the horse to put a foot in or sniff it from the get go. They are asking too much too soon. Taking your time will pay off in the long run. If the horse does sniff it, I pet him and walk away. I will circle back around to it and see if he will sniff it and maybe take a drink.

If I have a horse that I know water is an issue for, I will work her beforehand so perhaps



The water box tempts Cali to stop for a sip.

she is thirsty and likely to take a drink. Some horses I will ride up to the box after every ride to rest and have a drink, for up to a week before I ask them to put a foot in. Now it's a happy place to be and the horse is much more likely to step in it.

If a horse jumps the water, I pet him and tell him he was good. I wanted him to go forward, and he did. I will let him jump it, praise him and do other obstacles or work on something else and come back to the water. I will go over to the water, not caring if he jumps over and over. Eventually he will step in it as jumping it is more work for him.

If he doesn't know whether or not you wanted him to step in it, don't punish your horse for doing what he thought was right. If you need to start asking for him to go forward, ask for some collection so the steps are smaller. He will figure that out if your cues are consistent.



Cali walks the teeter totter with confidence.

Q. If I go to an obstacle clinic, or places like Running I Ranch in Dunnigan, CA, where there are tons of obstacles, how do I make the best use of my time and where do I start?

A. Sometimes those places are overwhelming. Running I Ranch has over 50 obstacles spread over 20 acres. It's especially tough if there are lots of horses. I will start by walking around all of the obstacles, both directions, weaving in and out and around everything without trying to do any obstacle. If my horse seems pretty comfortable, I start with the easiest obstacles first, maybe log step overs, or if I know my horse is fine with tarps or hanging noodles, I start there.

That's when you will get a feel for what makes them nervous. If they really shy away from any bridges, I would start with something easy, then go to the bridge. Taking the steps from the water box question above, see if you can get them closer (even if it's a lean or a step), then leave and go back to the easy ones. Depending on how well it's going, you add obstacles as your horse seems comfortable.

If I know some obstacles are just too much, I won't attempt them. I want to have the day be a positive experience. Even if you only accomplish five out of 20 obstacles, that's ok. The next time you go will be better and your horse will trust you more.

In large groups I try and stay away from the horses that are really scared. Mine may feed off the anxiety of others. Most of the time riders that have nice quiet horses are happy to let you follow them through obstacles.

Q. My horse is terrified of bicycles. Since they are always moving, how do I get her comfortable with bikes?



Many logs of many lengths and thickness, trees, a plastic goose and deer lurking along the way require considerable concentration to navigate this labyrinth.

A. Bikes are somewhat like cows. They're always moving and you aren't sure where they are going to go. See if you can get a friend to hop on a bike and help you out. Have the friend bike away from you, and you follow it. Have the bike stop and see if your horse will walk closer to the bike. As your horse gets close, have the bike ride away. Do the stop and go multiple times. Every time your horse gets close to sniffing the bike and it leaves, your horse will start to get more curious. Introducing a horse to cows can happen the same way. Cows generally walk away from horses, leaving horses feeling more in control. You want your horse to feel as though the bike is scared of her. Your horse will start to feel dominant, like she is pushing the bike away, and she will get more and more curious to get closer.

I am not a fan of feeding treats to horses to gain their trust, but there are instances where a horse is really unsure of something, like a bike, where you can use cookies to your advantage. Have your friend feed your horse a cookie when she gets close enough to sniff the bike.



Cali navigates truck tires filed with sand.

Then you can start to walk past the bike when it stops. The bike can go forward past you and stop, and you can go past the bike and stop. Doing this slowly back and forth will help the horse be comfortable with the bike coming up behind you. Always turn the horse's head towards the bike when it comes from behind to see it coming. As they get more comfortable you can keep their head straight.

If you have questions on obstacle training and building, let us know at schc.pschofler@gmail.com.

Photos: Patti Schofler



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TAPPING OUT THE JITTERS

An Aid to Performance Anxiety

By Esther Siegel

Horse shows got me. The jittery stomach, difficulty concentrating, dread, inner freak-out, racing thoughts, body tension, irritability, obsessive thinking, and adrenaline exhaustion would override anything positive. I kept thinking I just needed to go to more shows to get over this anxiety. Boy, that didn't work.

Sound familiar? Maybe your anxiety shows up when you're taking a riding lesson or being observed riding. You are not alone. This reaction is a more common experience than you might think. People talk about it, but rarely how to deal with it.

I discovered a way when I was dealing with performance anxiety because I was to be a witness as a therapist in a custody trial. I was very worried about not looking competent and not having the right words to say when a friend showed me a technique that's worked for me since: Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) or tapping.

At the time it seemed like a silly little technique, but what did I have to lose? Wow, the change was immediate and profound. My worry and fear disappeared. I could think about the case, but without the anxiety. I even slept through that night. When I went to court the next day, I was only slightly nervous as opposed to highly anxious.

WHAT WOULD TAPPING DO FOR THE SHOW?

So, I decided to try it for my next dressage competition. It couldn't hurt. As I was driving that morning to the show, I tapped on myself. My set-up statement was: "Even though I get nervous and anxious at the show, I am a good rider doing the best I can."

Low and behold, I was able to focus, feel calm and confident with my mind and body relaxed. I left the arena energized and wearing a genuine smile. It was a victory shared with my horse, who finally had a more relaxed rider working with her at a show. It is now a part of my show routine. Having mastery and control over this anxiety gave me the freedom to focus on riding, the horse and the enjoyment of competition.

The tapping is a very simple process. I start with a slight rhythmic tapping of my fingers on different body parts that are specific acupuncture meridian points. Ok, easy so far. I then repeat out loud a statement that addresses the problem and a positive affirmation.

With 14 points to tap on one's face, upper body and arms, EFT takes about a minute or so to do. You don't have to believe what you are saying or that it will work, and you really can't do it wrong or harm yourself in any way.

UNBLOCK THE ENERGY SYSTEM

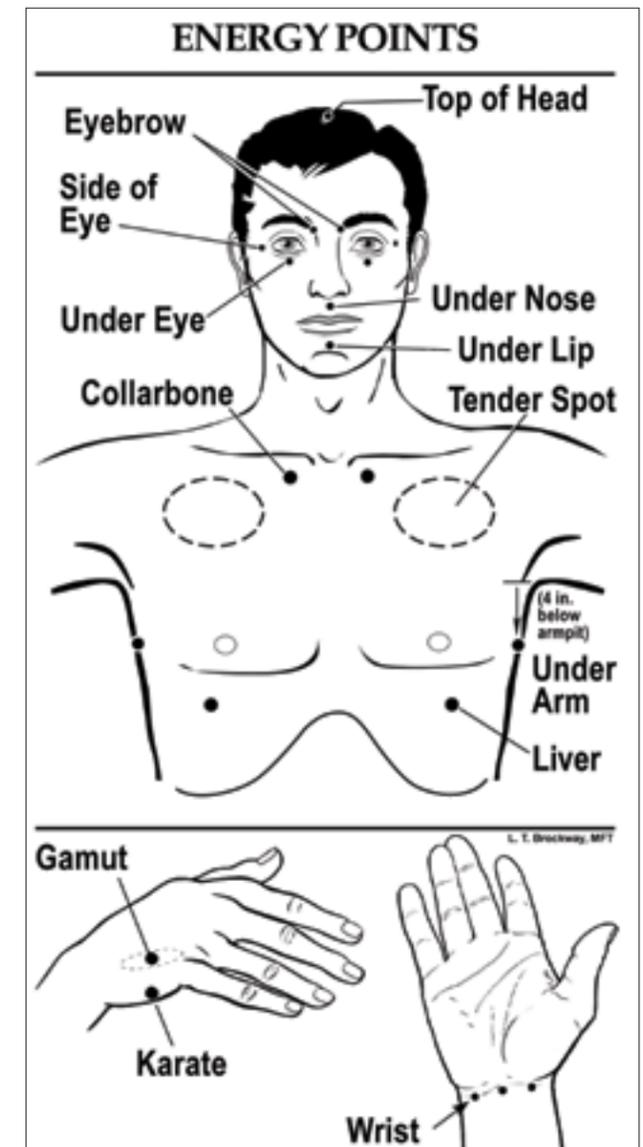
The basic principle is that the cause of all negative emotions is a disruption in the body's energy system. When we tune into these emotions (and the thoughts behind them), our system is disrupted from its normal positive energy. EFT taps out the negative energy, giving one a sense of freedom and calmness. From this place our interactions and responses change without any effort.

As a psychotherapist I have taught my clients to use EFT to help them with a wide range of problems such as general worries, getting homework done, depression, specific fears, traumas, cravings and physical pains. Through the release of negative energy, the results have ranged from increased relaxation and calmness, reduction or elimination of physical ailments to new insights and solutions.

Tapping can benefit the horse world with more issues than rider anxiety. Consider tapping for problems in rider position like my collapsing left hip. EFT can help horses with both emotional and physical problems through tapping their acupressure points.

My personal experience using EFT with physical pain occurred at a show when I stepped out of the truck into a hole and twisted my ankle. It was a #10 pain at the time, and I began intensely to do the tapping on myself about the pain. After about four repetitive rounds the pain subsided, and I rode pain free that day. Tapping has become a handy tool for my mental, emotional and physical health.

It is an easy process to learn. The Internet hosts many videos on how to do the technique. Practice on yourself, your partner, your friends and family. The more you practice the more it becomes second nature for you.



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Please contact us at: info@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org



BEYOND MINT JULEP

Even people who don't know one end of a horse from the other have heard of the Kentucky Derby, its fast running Thoroughbred horses, its high fashion and fancy hats and its signature cocktail, the Mint Julep. Yet while perhaps the most famous horsey cocktail, the Mint Julep is far from the first or the only.

In fact, the word "cocktail" has its roots in the world of horses.

The word's origin was less than glorious. As early as the 1790s in England, the term "cock-tail" referred to the effects of putting ginger and later cayenne pepper up the hind end of horses, causing them to raise or cock up their tails, presenting themselves as spirited, especially when a poorer animal was on the sales block. By the 1820s that stimulus of ginger or hot pepper was added to spice up the human's drink at the local pub, and the cock-tail incited a similarly spirited response in people. In time, ginger and hot pepper gave way to bitters, a mixture of herbs, bark, root and/or fruit that preserved more easily; bitters became a necessary ingredient in early cocktails in America.

Our first president, George Washington, had a favorite cocktail. His choice was the **High Horse** with the traditional cocktail ingredients of rum, brandy, sweet vermouth and Angostura bitters, accompanied by cherry liqueur and a brandied cherry, thus combining Washington's love of fine steeds with that cherry tree. I cannot tell a lie—surely it was his favorite.

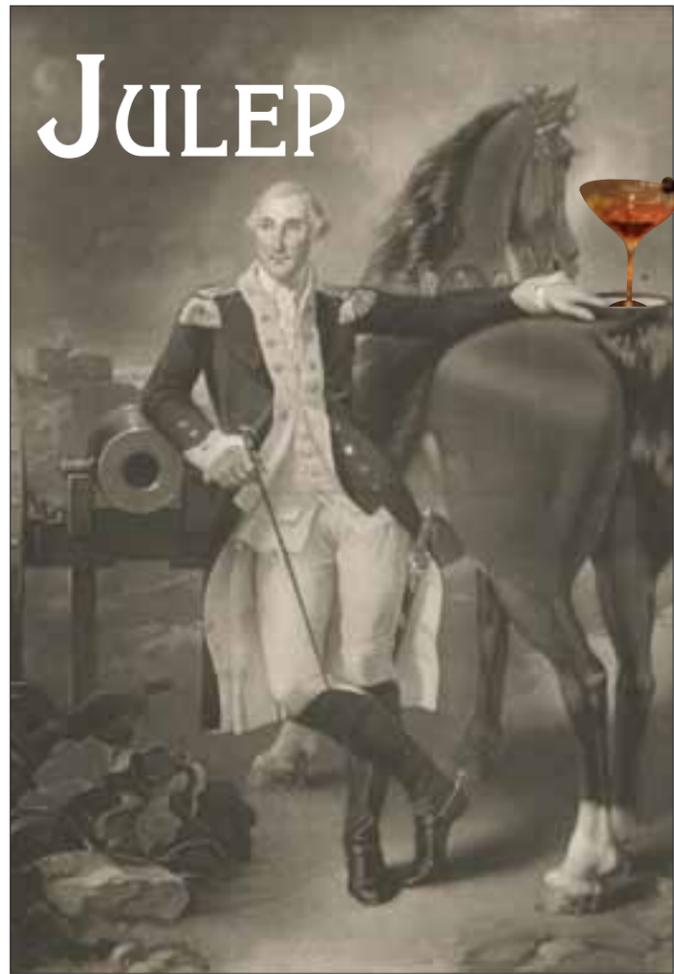


Photo: Susan Banta

High Horse

1½ oz. aged rum
½ oz. kirsch brandy
½ oz. cherry liqueur
½ oz. sweet vermouth
2 dashes Angostura bitters
Garnish with a brandied cherry
Put ingredients into a mixing glass with ice and stir. Strain into a martini glass. Garnish with a cherry.

The **Horse's Neck** is a drink that got its name from the required long, curling strip of lemon rind that drapes over the rim of the glass and infuses the drink as you drink it. In the late 19th century, the Horse's Neck was a cooling summer drink without a kick, simply the lemon peel and ginger ale (there is that ginger again), until it evolved into a cocktail with a kick of bourbon or brandy, and bitters, of course.



Horse's Neck

Garnish: a long spiral of lemon peel
2 oz. bourbon or brandy
3 oz. Ginger Ale
2 to 3 dashes bitters
Stir into a highball glass with ice and garnish with the lemon rind.

Horses and Cocktails Have History

By Susan Weaver Banta

The origins of the cocktail **Flying Horse** have eluded this research, but the connection seems clear, as we think of flying horses as mythological winged creatures or, as Wikipedia states, "They are horses which fly, some of which are equipped with wings." The recipe for your wings perhaps?



Photo courtesy of Pernod Ricard USA

Flying Horse

Ice cubes
1 1/3 oz. vodka
1/3 oz. dry vermouth
1/3 oz. orange flavored brandy
1 whole Maraschino berry (yes, there are berries and cherries)
Mix together in a cocktail shaker.
Serve in a martini glass.

Speaking of flying horses, a few of our favorite racehorses have sped their way to the hearts of creative bartenders. Here are a few:

Sea to Shining Seabiscuit

(America's Horse of the Year 1937 and star of the movie of the same name)
1 part coffee liqueur
2 parts coconut milk
2 parts coconut rum
Crumbled Chessmen cookies sprinkled on top. That's what happens when you bet against Seabiscuit.

American Pharaoh Pie

(the 2015 12th Triple Crown winner and first in 38 years and certainly worthy of his own simple-as-pie cocktail)
1 part applejack brandy
2 parts sparkling apple cider
Dash of nutmeg

Smarty Jones

(with all this sugar it seems you just wing it...a sure winner)
Smarties (sugary candy disks) for the bottom of the glass
A pour of vodka
Sweet liqueur like crème de cassis
Lemon juice and club soda
The Smarties are likely to outlast your drink. Share with your favorite steed this candy with a kick.

That most famous horsey cocktail of all, the **Mint Julep**, was originally concocted to settle the stomach. In the 1700s it became popular in the South, developing an elite air as only the rich had easy access to ice and to the silver or pewter cup in which it was served. The Mint Julep became the official drink of the Kentucky Derby in 1938, using, of course, Kentucky bourbon. It is said that it is the mixing of the fresh mint leaves and aged bourbon in that frosty silver cup that makes the magic. I might suggest it is also the combination of those marvelous flying horses and a little something to settle the nervous stomachs of owners and betters.

Mint Julep

4-5 fresh mint leaves, roughly torn
1½ - 2 oz. simple syrup (see recipe below)
Crushed ice
Splash of cold water
2 oz. bourbon
Sprig of fresh mint

In the bottom of a serving glass, put mint leaves and simple syrup. Muddle together with a muddler or handle of a wooden spoon.
Top with plenty of crushed ice, then pour in splash of cold water and bourbon.
Stir, garnish with the sprig of mint, and serve.



Photo courtesy of Southern Living

Simple Syrup (For Your Mint Julep)

1 cup water
1¼ cup granulated sugar
Add water and sugar to small saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves, boiling about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool completely. Leftovers can be refrigerated up to two weeks.
Serve in your best silver cup or best plastic to bring it all down to earth.

Do you have a favorite cocktail that you drink to honor your favorite horse right here in Sonoma County? Let us know. 🐾



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How a Horseperson Knows She Is Rich

I am rich. I have \$15 in my checking account and a golden mare in the barn.

I am rich. I have a car that mostly works and enough gas to get to the barn every day this week.

I am rich. I have boxes of pasta and generic sauce in my pantry and enough hay to feed my horse through the winter.

I am rich. I have enough old coats and sweaters to layer up and stay warm while I do barn chores.

I am rich. I vacation by camping with my horses and going to cheer on my horse-riding friends at horse shows. Sometimes I even play, too, and spend \$1,000 to bring home a fifty-cent ribbon that I will treasure more than a photo in front of the Eiffel Tower.

I am rich. I have tools—duct tape and baling twine and the know-how to fix just about anything with these tools.

I am rich. I find joy in making my own things, making do, and making right. I have a 30-year-old saddle, a 50-year-old body, and the wonder and joy of a six-year-old child learning that a horse can give her wings.

I am rich.

My wealth is not measured in dollar signs, but in horsey snorts and nickers. My riches aren't spent on electronics and fancy clothes, but are shared with my human and four-footed friends.

Next time someone finds out that I have a horse and says, "You must be rich to afford that," I will smile and agree.

Jocelyn Giesbrecht
New Dayton, Alberta



Ecological artist, designer and builder Kelsi Anderson and her longtime friend, 33-year-old Gunnor, find joy in meeting up at the Petaluma barn where Gunnor is retired. They rarely miss their weekly walks over the trails and through the woods. www.wildearthart.com

Photo: Patti Schofler

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What Horses Can Teach Kids

By Wanda Smith and Katherine Roederer

People rarely think of horses as teachers when, in fact, they are first rate educators who can teach young children and teens a variety of useful skills that promote lifelong learning, success and fulfillment.

In 2017, a study conducted by the Tokyo University of Agriculture reported that children had positive physical and mental effects from horseback riding. The report stated that “the act of horse-riding could improve cognitive abilities in children. These are brain-based skills of which an improvement can lead to enhanced learning, memory and problem-solving.”

Because riding increases their ability to focus and ignore distractions, children involved in horse programs generally get better grades, according to several studies. Children can apply the lessons learned and the skills acquired from working with horses to a variety of situations throughout their lives including skillful learning studying and concentrating on a task.

Although Sonoma County cutting trainer Chris Brown's son started riding a pony at six years old, he didn't show much interest in horses. He rarely rode until his late teen years when he appeared to have an amazing natural ability to train horses. When Chris started receiving cancer treatments, his son took over riding the horses on their ranch. Chris thinks his son's riding helped him develop responsibility, independence and confidence. His son is now in his 20s and manages a cattle and horse Nevada ranch of over one thousand acres.

One of the first lessons youths learn when working with horses is the importance of safety for themselves, horses and others. With horses typically outweighing young riders by a factor of ten, safety is a top priority. Being conscious of safety procedures around horses and the animals' behaviors teaches youths awareness of their actions and reactions, consideration of others and awareness of their environment.



Olivia loves going to the barn to meet up with her horse friends.

Since one of the skills required to be safe is self-control, kids learn to stay calm and patient when working with horses. Studies have shown that horses are sensitive to their handlers' moods and that they mirror their riders' feelings. It becomes important for youths to learn to control their reactions as their behavior immediately impacts the behavior of their horse.

Through horses, youths can calmly respond to a situation instead of reacting emotionally. They learn how to interpret the horse's reactions and stay calm in order to co-operate with such a large animal. These skills are not only useful when they work with horses but are also important when interacting with people.

From horses kids also learn the importance of consistency. Horses often worry about changes in their daily routines and their environment. For example, they like to be fed at the same time,

and when they are not they may become so anxious that they do not attend to their rider's commands which can result in an unruly animal and unsafe ride. Horses thus require those who are responsible for them to have good time-management and discipline.

Both youths and horses benefit when tasks are completed in a timely and efficient manner. By staying organized with their time and belongings while at the barn, kids gain important preparation skills. As kids work with horses, they learn the importance of consistency in their routines, habits, moods and interactions with these sensitive animals.

Lori Dapel of Santa Rosa enrolled her eight-year-old son in riding lessons to help him overcome various fears. He took lessons on weekends for a year, overcame his fears and learned to trust his coach and horses. He utilized the consistent, repetitive behaviors he acquired during riding to become an excellent student.

Interpreting the feelings of a horse teaches kids empathy and enables them to understand the feelings and situations of others. Much of modern interaction between kids is with hi-tech media such as cell phones, tablets and computers. As a result, their in-person exposure to the body language of other people has significantly decreased, reducing their ability to be empathic.

Through horses, children become caretakers attending to the needs of their animals often before their own needs, enhancing their ability to empathize. Recent studies have shown that regular exposure to a horse farm regulates the immune system, lowers stress levels and improves well-being. Spending time with horses minimizes hours on hi-tech devices and increases time spent outside—another activity that has significantly diminished during the digital age. The direct exposure to others and outside activities associated with involvement with horses improves the balance of a child's daily life.

When children begin riding, they quickly learn that it is more than just “sitting in the saddle.” Proper riding techniques and habits require balance, coordination, flexibility and control. Riders out of balance become uncomfortable for the horse and may cause it to misstep, increasing their risk of falling off the horse and being injured. By maintaining proper riding form, children develop strength in their backs, legs, core and upper-arms. Their balance and elasticity improve as they allow their body to move with that of their horse. Something as simple as looking down at a horse's neck while riding can shift up to 30 pounds to the front of the horse, making it more difficult for the horse to perform well balanced moves. Since horses require impulsion from their hind-quarters for better balance, riders must use their balance and core strength to allow their horses to move properly.

Proper riding enables youths to communicate their expectations to horses through their body language. Horses teach kids how to set up expectations for themselves and for their equine partner. Riders must be able to communicate with horses quietly, yet assertively and clearly, in order to be effective. Kids thus learn to be assertive without being overbearing. These skills are especially helpful for children who are not confident or who are introverted. Being able to control an animal the size of a horse allows youths to



Caitlyn Crawford began life in the saddle at a very young age.

develop confidence and problem-solving skills while maintaining composure. This type of learning is rare in other activities.

Julie and Tony of San Francisco and Duncans Mills purchased a horse for their 11-year-old daughter who has the learning disability dyslexia. Her love of horses provided a sense of strength and mastery as she struggled with traditional schooling.

“The responsibility of ownership coupled with regular riding and competing provided a remarkable relationship between a magnificent animal and a thoroughly engaged and talented child,” Julie said. “This relationship allowed our daughter's self-esteem to grow which supported her in tackling challenging school work. Now that she is 30 years of age, with a master's degree from Cambridge University in England and a successful career in New York City, we are grateful for her amazing relationship with her horse—it was just what was needed at a time of stress and confusion.”

Horses teach kids perseverance and courage. Since horses have minds of their own, problems can occur, even when a rider is doing his or her best to communicate clearly and calmly. Falling off a horse is scary; it takes a lot of courage and perseverance to get back on and keep riding. Children learn to pursue their goals in spite of adversity.

Italian opera singer Andrea Bocelli learned to overcome challenges by riding horses starting when he was seven. “I used to fall off the horse quite often, but I was not afraid and mounted again and again. After each fall, I would get back on the horse more determined than ever, my only objective being: I must learn.” This skill helped Andrea persevere when at 12 years old he was blinded by a soccer ball. He has become one of the most famous opera singers in the world and excels at many sports, including riding.

Success in team sports requires interaction with others as well as focus on individual behavior. Many sports involve moving an inanimate object like a football, tennis racket or rowing oars and require significant coordinated effort and communication between teammates. However, most sports do not require constant interaction with a live animal.

The sport of polo requires interaction with the horse, a mallet, and a puck as well as other riders and horses. Although horses are herd animals, some resent being crowded by other horses or dislike riding in unison, a must when playing polo. Training and riding a horse to be comfortable and focused in these conditions requires skill from a rider who may experience similar feelings about crowds. However, those riders must overcome their personal fears in order to help their horse feel confident. This team building process supports children as they become adults and deal with personal and business relationships, increasing their comfort as well as the comfort of others with whom they interact. These skills are vital throughout life, whether it be in a marriage, raising children, working or socializing.

Cynthia Crane whose family stretches back four generations in Sonoma County encouraged her granddaughter Trinity to learn to ride when she was seven years old through the Petaluma Riding and Driving Club. Riding and learning how to properly control horses helped her granddaughter overcome shyness and gave her confidence. She became so comfortable riding with others that at 12 years old, she became a member of the Petaluma Junior Drill Team and often participates in public demonstrations and competitions including the Grand National Horse Show at Cow Palace in San Francisco.

In addition to teaching kids important life-skills, studies have shown how horses and riding enhance the physical health of young riders through core muscle strengthening, posture improvement, cognitive function enhancement and communication development. And youths who spend time outside in sunshine and clean air are more likely to be healthier than those staying inside.

Granted, working with an equine partner requires dedication, determination and diligence. Horses are unique educators with an abundance and diversity of skills to teach. Most importantly, caring for a horse and creating a union with these emotionally sensitive and intelligent animals opens up a world of fun, adventure, learning and love. 🐾



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BARN BUILDING FROM INSIDE TO OUTSIDE A Few Tips

Sienna Mountain Ranch outside Petaluma was essentially built from scratch, giving owner Margaret Davis options. She shared with us some barn building observations and lessons particular to our Northern California environment.

- 1 If possible, build structures at higher elevations.
- 2 Install ample drainage around the property.
- 3 Build oversized stalls slightly up hill from their runs so that the stalls never flood.
- 4 Provide a metal grill between stalls for better airflow and so horses can see each other. However, the area where the horses eat should have solid wood wall so horses don't feel intimidated by their neighbor while eating.
- 5 Slope cross-tie tack up areas towards the back. Install a drain at the very back of the enclosure so the horses won't stand over a drain.
- 6 Lights for the cross-tie areas are better on the side versus overhead so horse shoers can see feet more clearly, vets can attend to wounds and injuries and grooms can see what they're doing.
- 7 Line cross-ties with pvc siding to make them safe, easy to clean and bright enough to facilitate grooming.
- 8 Orient tacking areas to allow a view of the riding arena where all the action is. This allows trainers to keep a close eye on those riding.
- 9 Make aiseways wide enough for a tractor with a manure spreader to easily enter and exit.
- 10 Build all driveways wide enough to allow large trucks delivering shavings, hay and water plenty of room. This also gives large horse trailers ample space. Include a turn-around area in the driveway so no large trucks have to back up.
- 11 Store hay in a metal building, far from horses, as a fire prevention measure.
- 12 Place the hay barn so it is readily accessible for hay delivery (without blocking through traffic) and is equipped with a 16' door to allow a hay squeeze to maneuver.
- 13 Install pressurized fire hydrants near all barns. Hydrants should be situated 20 feet from barns so in the event the barn catches on fire the hydrant is still accessible.
- 14 Lighting an indoor riding arena with several solar panels means no electric bill.
- 15 Locate the main riding arena as the focal point of the facility for the benefit of the horses and the people.

"Animals were once, for all of us, teachers. They instructed us in ways of being and perceiving that extended our imaginations, that were models for additional possibilities." - Joan McIntyre

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STINKWORT *UGLY NAME, UGLY PASTURE WEED*

ON THE MOVE IN CALIFORNIA

By Gwen Kilchherr

Stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*) is a Mediterranean native plant that has invaded California and is poisonous to horse and livestock, and can cause contact allergic dermatitis in humans. Strongly aromatic, the weed was first sighted in 1984 in Santa Clara County, and since 2012, has spread to 36 of the 58 counties.

Not very palatable to animals, this erect, fall-flowering weed can grow about 2.5 feet tall. Aptly named, its foliage has sticky glandular hairs covered in resin with a strong aromatic odor, like the smell of tarweed. The flowerheads are clusters of short yellow flowers on the outer edge and yellow to reddish in color towards the center. From a distance, stinkwort can resemble Russian thistle, also called tumbleweed. Stinkwort seeds are spread by wind, feathers and fur of birds and mammals, motor vehicles and equipment, and from the soles of peoples' shoes and on clothing, when walking through it.

Though found primarily along roadsides, this weed also grows in open riparian areas, overgrazed and non-overgrazed pasture, rangelands, wastelands, vineyard edges, gravel soils, and levees. It grows best on well-drained, sandy or gravelly soils and thrives in areas with hot, dry summers, but can also grow well along the edges of wetlands.

Stinkwort has an unusual life cycle for an annual. Unlike most summer or late-season winter annuals, stinkwort flowers and produces seeds from September to December.

Is your pasture or paddock being taken over with stinkwort? That's because stinkwort has a very high seed viability, which means that about 90% of each plants' seeds will germinate when they fall off from the plant, and each plant has the capability of producing, yes, over 100 seedlings.

Here's the math. If you have just one weed growing in your pasture, that weed will produce about 90 seedlings the next year, then those 90 weeds will each produce 90 more seedlings. See how quickly one weed can grow out of control.

The seeds can germinate just about any time of year, but they will typically germinate in winter and early spring once it starts raining. When the seeds germinate in the winter, the plants will only grow to the size of small rosettes until mid-May. When the weather warms up in late spring and summer, they develop into pyramid like or sphere-shaped plants that resemble Russian thistle weed. Stinkwort begins to bolt (start flowering), in mid-May. It grows most of its branches and leaves between June and



Santa Rosan Lori Cook will haul away the pile of stinkwort pulled from her horse's paddock.

September and flowers and produces seeds from September to December.

Your horse will usually avoid stinkwort since it's not very palatable. The mature plants with seeds are the most toxic to your horse, if they should decide to ingest it. If you find this weed in your pasture or paddock, it would be best to remove it.

The challenge in controlling stinkwort is knowing when to apply the appropriate management at the proper time. If no action is taken before the weeds begin to produce seeds in the fall, they will disperse the seeds and create more weeds.

Traditional methods of control, such as mechanical and chemical, can be effective. However, there are currently two biological or cultural

practices that can be employed to limit stinkwort from invading an area. One is to minimize overgrazing, and second, is to keep dense, competitive stands of desirable perennial or annual grasses that maximize ground cover in spring, when the stinkwort seedlings are beginning to grow.

Mechanical controls can address the stinkwort's root system, which is slow growing and initially relatively shallow. The young plants can be controlled by hoeing or pulling. Because stinkwort can cause dermatitis, it is important to wear appropriate protective clothing (long sleeves, long pants, gloves) to minimize your exposure to the irritating oils.

Once the weeds are in flower, stinkwort plants should be bagged and removed from the property to prevent the seeds from maturing and dispersing everywhere. Do not leave them lying on the soil surface. Though mowing can provide some control when mowed late in the season, the buds remaining on branches below the level of the mower may regrow. Mowing too early will favor the stinkwort by removing competing other weeds while this weed is still small and lower than the mowing blades. Mowing a second time will give better control, especially when they are mowed after the soil has dried out in mid- to late summer.

Post-emergence herbicides are applied to the small germinated seedlings or to the young plants. In contrast to pre-emergence herbicides which are applied to areas before seeds germinate, post-emergence applications will directly target the weeds that are visible. However, the sticky oils on the foliage, especially on mature plants, make it difficult to control stinkwort with post-emergence herbicides.

KEEP YOUR BARN SAFE FROM FIRE

Deterrence is Key

By Gary Johnson

In the past several years, wildland fires have consumed thousands of acres and threatened our properties. They are always on our minds lately. Yet equally important, we need to shift some of that focus to our everyday threat of fire in our barns.

Statistics show that barn fires are the number one non-medical emergency that injures or kills horses.

Can we prevent fires from taking over our barns and those housed in them? Of course, we can. We just need to dispel the idea that barn fires can't happen to us and take the proactive steps to maintain safe practices in our barn environment. Let's discuss some actions that can help prevent those fires from occurring.

HAY FIRES

Hay fires can ignite any time from six weeks to several years after baling. Microorganisms multiplying within the hay generate heat, causing a spontaneous combustion fire within hay. Once hay reaches around 175 degrees Fahrenheit, fire is imminent. This same combustion may also occur with damp grain, sawdust or wood shavings.

You need to constantly check your hay for increasing temperatures. If the middle of your haystack reaches a temperature of 150 degrees, it's time to separate the bales in the stack and allow air to circulate through. Better still, store the hay in its own storage shed or at least 50 feet from the barn.

HEATING EQUIPMENT

Heating equipment statistically across the nation is the number one cause of barn fires.

Those portable heaters we use to take the chill out of the air are best not used at all in the barn. If we must, however, we have to utilize them properly. Never leave them unattended. Keep them at least three feet away from anything flammable. Unplug them after use. Never use them with an extension cord or multi-adaptor power strip as this can cause wiring to overheat. Make sure to purchase a model of heater with a UL listing on the label and that is designed not to tip over.

During the colder months, pay attention to the water bucket heaters. These can continue to heat even when the water buckets



Source: Structure Fires in Barns, NFPA. Ben Evarts. 2012



are empty, potentially causing the plastic to melt and ignite stall bedding. Also, in Sonoma County the air temperature rarely drops low enough to affect animals and to warrant installing a heat lamp. Heat lamps get very hot, and if they get knocked loose or are close to flammable materials, they can start a fire immediately.

Electrical and lighting equipment malfunctions rank number two on the list of fire causes. Keep all electrical wiring, switches, and plugs well out of an animal's reach and within weatherproof boxes, covers or conduit. All light fixtures should be caged and have a covering which will keep dust out. Frequently visually inspect all wiring to make sure it is intact and not damaged by rodents.

Sometimes too many appliances (such as vacuums, coffee pots, microwaves, fans, and clippers) may be plugged into the same outlet, causing an electrical overload in the wiring of the barn. Separate these items, plugging them into various outlets. Never use extension cords for long-term use in place of regular wiring. If you must use an extension cord, make sure it is heavy duty (10 or 12 gauge) and use it only for temporary activities such as clipping. Each appliance should be directly plugged into an outlet with its supplied cord.

Make sure to purchase an agricultural type fan versus the cheap box fan. The cheaper fans are not designed to run for long periods of time or in the caustic environments of a barn.

OTHER PRECAUTIONS

Other precautionary measures include not storing any combustible or flammable items in the barn such as farm machinery, motorized vehicles, paints, stains, and solvents. Keep them at least 50 feet away. Avoid using fine sawdust shavings as a bedding material. Remove dust and debris from fan blades and motors. Remove cobwebs from all areas. These will quickly ignite and can spread fire rapidly. Sweep up any loose hay, shavings or other materials on a daily basis. If you can upgrade systems in your barn, install fire sprinklers and a fire detection system. Make sure the fire detection system will alert you or a monitoring service if you're not at or near the barn.

Most important, make an emergency plan and make sure that the people who work in the barn know the plan. Have at least one fire extinguisher (2A:10BC rated) easily accessible every 75 feet. Teach everyone how to shutoff the electrical system to the barn. Leave a halter and lead rope at each occupied stall at all times to facilitate the evacuation of the animals if the need arises.

As we go on in our daily lives, we need to constantly be aware of our surroundings. We need to take these preventable steps so we can decrease the odds of having our barns catch fire. The National Fire Protection Association has further best practices in a publication entitled NFPA 150: "Standard on Fire and Life Safety in Animal Housing Facilities." It can be purchased online from www.nfpa.org.



Equine Winter Ailments in Northern California

By Michelle Beko, DVM

While we don't have to deal with severe midwestern style winters, our horses can experience some ailments related to our cooler, rainy season. Let's consider a few.

Weight Loss

Some horses tend to lose weight in the winter with many of the calories that a horse (or other mammals) consumes going towards maintaining a constant body temperature. Ecologists call this the high cost of being warm-blooded. On the opposite end of the creature spectrum, cold-blooded reptiles and amphibians can eat much less frequently than mammals or birds because they don't maintain a constant body temperature.

If your horse is an "easy keeper" or gets much less exercise in the winter, you may not have a problem. However, blanketing at night and increasing the horse's feed starting in October are methods to avoid weight loss.

Rain Rot



Healthy horse skin is resistant to infection. However, chronic moisture or trauma can predispose a horse to rain rot, an infection caused by the bacteria *Dermatophilus congolensis*. While I don't see it often, when I do,

it's almost always on a horse's back. It causes patchy hair loss with crusts stuck to the ends of the hairs.

It will clear up with no treatment when the rain ends, but treating it is a preferable option. This consists of currying or manually removing the crusts still on the horse and bathing with an antibacterial soap such as betadine or chlorhexidine scrub (not solution). Leave the soap on for 10 to 15 minutes before rinsing. Do the bath on a warm day, early enough for the horse to dry before dark. The debris you removed should be put in the trash as the crusts are full of bacteria. Any brushes, saddle pads or blankets that have been in contact with the affected area should be thoroughly cleaned.

Scratches

Technically called pastern dermatitis, scratches is also known as mud fever. This skin condition most often occurs on the back of a horse's pasterns, with white pasterns and hind legs seeming to be more susceptible. It causes hair loss, scabbing and sometimes swelling.



While there are many different causes of pastern dermatitis, the most common is chronic moisture. You can minimize your horse's risk by keeping the hair on the back of their pasterns clipped, allowing them to have a dry place to stand and putting zinc oxide (Desitin) on the back of their pasterns as a moisture barrier. Avoid putting them back in a stall or pasture with wet legs.

Most veterinarians have a preferred way to treat pastern dermatitis. I usually opt to wrap the affected area after applying an ointment such as Panalog or Entederm that contains antibiotics and a cortisone related steroid. Consult your veterinarian for treatment advice.

Hoof Abscesses

While abscesses can occur any time of year, they are much more common in the rainy season. A hoof abscess is a pocket of infection between the sole and the sensitive tissue beneath it, or more commonly between the hoof wall and the laminae. It causes a horse to be very lame at a walk and can come on very quickly. The horse can be fine and literally an hour later can be quite lame.

Horses that stand in the mud or have overgrown feet are most susceptible. In my opinion, abscesses occur most commonly when the mud starts to dry up. I believe that as horses' feet dry from the outside in, they likely trap bacteria in their hoof that forms an abscess. Prevent abscesses by providing a dry place for your horse to stand and keeping up with hoof trimming. Treatment consists of draining the abscess and then preventing reinfection before the area heals. Your vet can pull the horse's shoe if he is shod and potentially pare out the abscess. If the abscess is too deep, daily soaking the hoof in warm water with Epsom salts and/or wrapping the foot with a poultice such as ichthammol can help draw the infection out. If your horse becomes acutely lame, have your veterinarian evaluate him.



In the English countryside, a judge evaluates these well turned out Shires.

Keeping the Judgmental Out of Judging

By Melissa Kalember

Even though the dictionary simply defines "judgmental" as related to judging, in reality it seems harsher, like forming an opinion or conclusion about something or someone too quickly and critically. How then does one judge, particularly in horse shows where the job is to form an opinion, without being judgmental?

The key is to stick to the facts.

When I began the process of becoming a licensed U.S. Equestrian Federation (USEF) judge for hunters, hunt seat equitation and jumpers, I was surprised to learn how factual judging these disciplines is.

Consider this snippet directly from the USEF Rule Book. It is in the Equitation Section, page 617, EQ105 Position

Hands. Hands should be over and in front of the withers, knuckles thirty degrees inside the vertical, hands slightly apart and making a straight line from the horse's mouth to rider's elbow.

Basic Position. The eyes should be up and shoulders back. Toes should be at an angle best suited to rider's conformation: ankles flexed in, heels down, calf of leg in contact with horse and slightly behind girth. Iron should be on the ball of the foot and must not be tied to the girth.

This is exactly what judges should follow, and now after being a USEF R Judge and a clinician for some time, I am surprised how few exhibitors and trainers know the facts we judges use to determine the placings.

Judges also have additional guidelines to follow. When a rider trots during their hunter or equitation round, they automatically receive a score of fifty out of 100 possible points for breaking gait from canter to trot. Judges discuss and study how to score each round during their continuing education courses, and there are books available to the general public to help.

That said, the following may sound a little contradictory, but

think about it: Judges should be following the facts and guidelines, and yet there is and should be a healthy amount of subjectivity when judging the horse or rider.

For example, as I love Thoroughbreds, I tend to like horses that are lighter boned and light on their feet as opposed to another judge who might prefer a bigger boned horse. But even though judges have their preferences, they should not discriminate against what they don't prefer. Judge's still need to judge the facts; if the horse with more bone has the best round, then it should place higher than my preference.

On the other hand, there are poor judges who allow their subjectivity to become unhealthy. They are too biased or singularly focused on particular look or style.

Over the years I have had the privilege of learning from and working with some of the top judges across the United States, and I'm happy to say that most of us stick to judging the facts of what happens in the show ring, bring in a little bit of our healthy subjectivity and then we pin the class.

We don't care if your horse is brown, black or gray. We do care that it looks healthy, happy and turned out well for its time in the show ring. A horse with healthy weight, shiny coat and brilliance in the eyes will naturally stand out.

We don't care about what you're wearing nor do you need the latest \$800 helmet to win. We care if you are turned out well with clean properly fitted pants and a show jacket that fits well. We care about your presence in the show ring, that you walk in like you have worked hard to get there and you want your riding to reflect what you've been working on. Instead of looking mad, sad or frustrated, we want to see a workmanlike appearance.

You have worked so hard to get the show ring; it's time to own it and try your best, because most of us will judge without being judgmental.



Michelle Beko, D.V.M.

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What's Going on with This Hoof?

By Mary Taft-McPhee

Many equestrians know their horses inside and out, down to the details of their bodies, the bumps and old scars, how they respond to a hard workout, whether they play with their hay or vacuum it up. In-depth familiarity should include baseline knowledge about the horse's hooves that brings the horseperson insight into changes to the hooves appearance and what that might mean.

Here are some common occurrences.

SHEDDING FROG

Horses typically shed their frogs a couple of times a year, as the old tissue sloughs off and is replaced by fresh growth underneath. This process can vary among individuals. Some horses have steady growth which is trimmed down by the farrier each time or is naturally removed through abrasion on the ground. Others respond to seasonal or environmental change by losing the old frog all at once.

A frog generally looks like an arrow pointing to the front center of the toe. If the old frog comes away from the foot in one piece, it can sometimes stay attached at one place and rotate or shift on the foot. This can look alarmingly different until it falls off. You can easily check to see what's going on by lifting up on the sides of the frog with your hoof pick.

BRUISE

A bruise is best detected by checking for soreness in a localized area of the hoof. While discoloration of the hoof tissues can be evidence of bruising, generally by the time we see the effects, the bruising has grown out from the sensitive tissues and isn't actively causing the horse pain. Bruising is important to notice because it may tell us about chronic conditions or indicate a need to change shoe fit or add a pad. Because a severe bruise may lead to an abscess, give your horse rest and keep the hoof dry and protected as it recovers.



THRUSH

Thrush has a distinctive, sulfurous odor that comes from the waste products of the bacteria that are hard at work breaking down hoof tissue and wall. It is also detectable by a black, tarlike ooze, particularly in the two deep crevices or the sulcus on either side of the frog. Sometimes when a horse is shedding its frog, the old frog can trap bacteria and obscure the thrush developing beneath it. A central sulcus in the middle of the frog at the back, extending up between the bulbs of the heel, is also a home for thrush. If you can sink your hoof pick deeply into this sulcus, it maybe harboring thrush bacteria. Medications containing copper sulfate are common and effective treatments.

Medications containing copper sulfate are common and effective treatments. Some people also use bleach, which is effective in killing bacteria but can dry out the hoof and break down healthy tissue as well. If you do use bleach, make sure to dilute it one cup per gallon or less.

Picking out hooves regularly is great for overall hoof health and the best way to prevent thrush from taking hold.

SPRUNG SHOE

A sprung horseshoe is one that is attached to the hoof on one side or branch while the other side of it is bent down. It usually gets this way when a horse steps up from behind onto a branch of the shoe and then pulls the front foot away, twisting the branch he stepped on. Sometimes people think that this set up is less of a concern than a lost shoe. That is not the case. While the shoe is continuing to protect the level side of the hoof from abrasion and chipping, the horse feels like you might if you were walking around in one high heel. The horse tends to adapt its posture to compensate for the difference and risks muscular and foot soreness. Call out your farrier.

RISEN CLINCHES

Clinches are the folded over bits of nail that we see on the outside of the hoof wall. If you run your fingers over them, they should feel slightly raised. Near the end of the shoeing cycle they may sit up more than usual and begin to loosen. If a clinch moves when you wiggle it or you're able to get underneath of the folded end, the shoe also may be loose and may begin to trap sand or gravel between it and the hoof wall. One loose clinch is less concerning than several as each nail contributes to holding on the shoe. Your farrier likely can prevent lost shoes before they happen. If it occurs regularly, you may want to consider shortening your horse's shoeing cycle.

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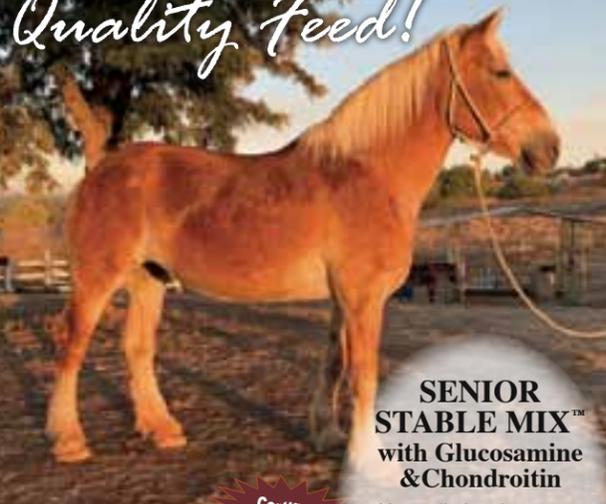
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Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council, the *Horse Journal* is a quarterly publication designed to reach the Northbay's equestrian community through direct mail to individuals, organizations, horse clubs, and with distribution to Sonoma and Marin feed stores and equestrian businesses. Ads also appear in the *Journal* online on the SCHC website: www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

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Sonoma County Horse Council

The Sonoma County Horse Council was founded in 1993 to be a central organization to advocate for horse owners and businesses and to protect our mutual interests. The SCHC is a non-profit organization.

The central mission of the Horse Council is to promote the health and well being of horses and all aspects of the horse industry in Sonoma County:

Promote and preserve horse agriculture, industry and recreation in Sonoma County

- Communicate to members on horse-related issues
- Inform the public about horse community goals and projects
- Support private and public equestrian facilities
- Promote all aspects of the equine industry

Partnering with other organizations, such as the Farm Bureau and horse clubs, the Horse Council's role expanded to include monitoring regulations and legislation affecting the horse community and acting as a liaison with local government entities.

Your Horse Council is working tirelessly to protect the health and safety of equines and to support equestrian activities in Sonoma County. When equine enthusiasts speak with one voice, we are very powerful. Join the movement. Become a member today.

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