

Sonoma County

Horse Journal

Volume 5 • Issue 4
Fall 2009



Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council

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SCHC Officers List**President**

Karl Bastian 541-0603
 president@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Vice President/Membership

Dagmar Hoheneck 575-4315
 vicepresident@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Recording Secretary

Lisa Thomas
 secretary@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Treasurer

Tricia Henry
 treasurer@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Economic Survey

Barbara Whitson
 survey@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

The Horse Journal Editorial Committee**Editor-in-Chief**

JoDean Nicolette, MD
 editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Graphic Design

Lynn Newton
 publications@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Advertising Director

Lisa Harder
 ads@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Consulting Editor

Barbara Chasteen
 editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Column Editors

Debby Bailey
 facilities@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Michelle Beko, DVM
 vet@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Julie Cross
 horseman@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Kelly Henson
 kids@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Mark Krug
 husbandry@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Grant Miller, DVM
 rescue@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Sarah Reid
 trails@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Contact Us

Sonoma County Horse Council
 PO Box 7157
 Santa Rosa, CA 95407
 583-2317

www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

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

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**Cover Photo: ProSportsPix**

Six year old Marissa Rosenberg cuts a tight turn around her second barrel at the Pac West California Dreamin' Event in February. Read more about Marissa Rosenberg and Barrel Racing in this issue of the Horse Journal.

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A Message from the President



Karl & Dinero

Photo: Vanessa Bastian

Howdy!

I want everyone to understand the importance of Horse Council membership. Nationally, Horse Councils almost always emerge in response to some problem requiring a unified voice to impose political pressure. This happened in Sonoma County, where horses are the county's second largest industry. When we, the Sonoma County Horse Council, fill the supervisor's chamber with cowboy hats we are a powerful force to reckon with.

According to the American Horse Council in Washington, DC, there are forty Horse Councils nationwide. Marin may be the oldest! A veterinarian started one of the earliest Councils in North Carolina, and some years later he helped Colorado start theirs. The same vet is presently helping start a California Horse Council. We met at a statewide meeting, held at Harris Ranch, in an effort to get the organization up and running. I am proud to say that Sonoma County's Council is far more organized, effective, and polished than the statewide version. We may have to help out with the California Horse Council. It seems almost everything "horse" starts in Sonoma County! Let's wish them well and support their efforts.

The statewide Horse Council meeting was a real education. As horse owners, we do not get our unified opinion out there enough. Take for example, the horse slaughter issue. That whole legislative, nationwide decision was made without one word of input from the horse industry or community. Imagine something that important, and no input from horse people. This happens because horse people are independent, action-oriented folks. Sometimes we are a little apathetic and isolated. We also tend to hold onto our money. With all these tendencies together, we missed giving input on this major issue. Trust me, there are many more issues out there hanging unprotected.

Your Horse Council has achieved much to protect your horse and your interests. And you need us, this isn't your fathers' era. You can buy a silver concho for \$30, or put that sum into something that assures your horse's place in the future. We hope you'll join the hundreds who have seen the vision and joined us.

Join your Horse Council today, you're sorely needed.

The next journal will highlight our local needs and what your SCHC has accomplished.

Finally, please find an Equus nomination form inserted in this Journal (you can also download a form from the website). Nominate your favorite horse or equestrian. Deadline October 15th!

Happy Trails!

Karl Bastian

President, Sonoma County Horse Council



SCHC members: *We need your vote.*

The Horse Council strives to operate in the most effective and efficient manner possible. As we look to the future, it is apparent that certain changes to our Bylaws will assist the Council in fulfilling its mission. However, SCHC members must approve any change to the Bylaws—so we need your vote.

We propose two changes to the Bylaws:

- 1) The first change pertains to the election of the Board. Currently, the Board is elected every two years by a mail-in ballot requiring a majority of the members to participate. This has proved to be an unrealistic expectation. We propose that in the future, the names of nominees for Board positions will be printed in the fall issue of the Horse Journal and appear on the SCHC website (www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org) in October. The Board will be elected by majority vote at the November general meeting.
- 2) We also propose a change to the Bylaws modification process, itself. Currently, amending the Bylaws requires a ballot by mail. The proposed amendment will allow the Bylaws to be modified by a two-thirds majority of the members present at a meeting. Advance notification will designate any meetings that will address Bylaws modification.

If you are member of the Horse Council, pursuant to the current Bylaws requirements, you have received a mail-in ballot with this Horse Journal. Please take the time to vote on the proposed changes and send it back. We must receive your ballot by October 14, 2009. You can mail it to the SCHC PO Box (see p. 1) or bring it with you to the SCHC meeting on October 14, 2009. Ballots will be counted at the October 14 meeting.

We also encourage you to attend our meetings every second Wednesday of the month at 7pm at the SCDRC clubhouse. Remember—this is *your* Horse Council.

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May your trails be clear,

Lisa Harder

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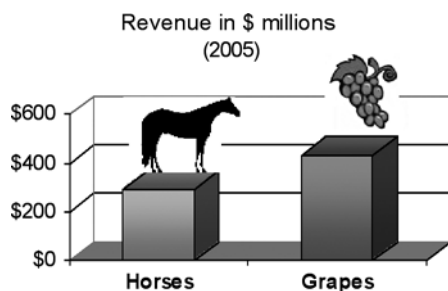
The Horse Council at Work

Putting Sonoma County Back on the National Equestrian Map

Written by Wanda Smith

In the last century, Sonoma County has twice been a major center for horse events in the western United States. As we began the twentieth century, the county was producing the fastest harness race horses in the nation and held races on nine local tracks. Just a few decades ago, Sonoma County again became a horse event center hosting the most highly attended horse shows on the West Coast. The revenue generated from these two eras of horse events enormously benefited the county.

Although Sonoma County is no longer the horse events center of West Coast, it does have a large equestrian community which includes 22,000 horses, 30,000 equestrians, thirty breeding ranches and 100 boarding stables. Equestrian revenue grows at a rate of 4% per year, and is the second largest source of agricultural revenue after grapes (see graph).



Unfortunately, the resources and facilities of Sonoma County no longer meet the needs of its growing equestrian community as demonstrated in a market research study just completed by the Horse Council. The information collected from a wide cross section of equine business owners and local equestrians clearly shows that current facilities do not meet local or national show requirements, or the recreational requirements of the local equestrian community. The current facilities also fail to capitalize on the well-established tourism market in Sonoma County and the surrounding area. The study also found that high level competitors increasingly attend shows and spend money outside the county because of superior facilities at other locations.

Sonoma County has a unique opportunity to address its insufficient equine event facilities by creating a state of the art equestrian complex. Sonoma County is the perfect place for an equestrian complex because it houses a large and dedicated equestrian community, a well-established tourism industry, great year-round weather, and sufficient land.

To meet this challenge, the Sonoma County Horse Council has initiated activities to propose, construct, and operate an equestrian park. The Project Director is Stanford University engineer, Wanda Smith, who has a background in corporate project and executive management, entrepreneurship, research and development, horse ranch management, and horse show competition. The

project is known as the Sonoma County Equestrian Complex (SEC) and its objectives are to:

- Improve the local economy by providing jobs and revenue
- Provide venues for local, regional, and national equestrian competitions, conferences, and clinics
- Provide an attraction for competitors, spectators, and visitors
- Provide career technical education, internships, and certification programs for a variety of students
- Preserve land for equestrian activities and public recreation
- Attract people, horses, and businesses to the county
- Preserve the history of horses and their contributions to the county

SEC will promote the education and training of equestrians, and host breed shows and competitive events. It will serve as a year-round facility for equestrian events at various skill levels and be a center for equestrian information, education, and activities. SEC will also have a horse museum and be constructed as the first "green" equestrian facility in the country, becoming a model for environmentally-friendly, recreational development. SEC's proposed facilities include multi-purpose indoor and outdoor arenas for different equestrian disciplines, spectator facilities, a trail system, track, polo field, and cross country riding and driving courses.

SEC will be able to partner with local high schools and colleges to promote and host intramural equestrian teams, competitions, and educational events. It will also enhance partnerships with the thirty-five equestrian clubs in the county, their 2,700 members, and other organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, and the Hannah Boys Center.

SEC's public-private model will generate revenue from horse shows, events, horse camping, and RV parking. Horse camping is an increasingly popular activity for families to enjoy their horses in new surroundings, especially those of Sonoma County with its twenty-three parks that have horse riding trails. SEC will be able to offer out-of-area trail riders a base camp.

The operation of SEC will bring an estimated \$65 million per year to Sonoma County—much needed to increase and help diversify the county's revenue base. It is anticipated that major equestrian events will come to SEC because of the quality of its new facilities, its location, and Sonoma County's tourist attractions. SEC is expected to draw participants and spectators from adjacent counties (Marin, Solano, Napa, Lake, and Mendocino) as well as throughout the Western US and Northwest Canada. Over time, SEC is expected to attract prestigious national and international events of the caliber of the Rolex Three-Day Event, the National Cutting Horse Futurity, the Snaffle Bit Futurity, and maybe someday...even the Olympics. U



Readers Write

Hoof Boots: Making Barefoot Easy

Written by Linda Cowles

When I first started riding barefoot horses six or seven years ago, boot choices were limited. The boots were unsophisticated and frustrating to use. I could choose from the EasyBoot with its fraying wires and nasty metal teeth, or Old Macs and Boas which worked fine, but for short distances only. As an ex-endurance rider with over 1000 competitive miles, I struggled with the Boas and Old Macs trying to make barefoot work for my riding style.

Over the past three years, barefoot has become increasingly popular. As a result, vendors have developed boot choices to meet the swelling demand. Epic, Renegade, and Simple Boots evolved, and this year EasyCare announced three new boot styles, including a real game-changer named The Glove. We now enjoy a wide variety of boots suiting many different purposes; this article will cover the most widely-used boots, and their uses.

Types of boots

Hoof boots fall into three categories: low profile, high profile, and rehab.

Low profile boots depend on surface tension and gaiters or heel captivators to keep the boots snugly in place. The Glove, Renegade, Edge, Epic, Marquis, and Bare are low profile boots. Gaiters are neoprene pastern wraps that keep the hoof from slipping backwards out of the boot. Renegade's "heel captivator" is a device which fits over the heel bulbs and holds the hoof securely in the boot shell. The downside to these boots is that the models without gaiters can fall off, especially when riding on sticky terrain.

Low profile boots require a barefoot trim which stays compact and resists chipping and flaring for five to six weeks. Most Pacific Hoof Care Practitioners and American Hoof Association members provide this type of trim.

High profile boots will work for you if you use a standard farrier trim, or want the flexibility of sharing boots among several horses. The best high profile boot choices are Old Macs, Boa Boots, and Simple Boots. These boots offer a forgiving fit, and stay in place by enclosing the whole hoof from the coronet down. They are heavier than low profile boots, and sometimes rub the heel bulbs, pasterns, or coronets. For this reason, they are not recommended for use on rides of twenty or more miles.

High profile boots can be used on horses with flared walls, or

Best Boot Styles by Intended Use

	Most Popular	Trail	Endurance	Driving	Jumping	Arena	Easy to Use	Rehab	Round Hoof/ Farrier Trim
Renegade	★	✓	★	✓			✓		✓
Epic	★	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Bare	✓	✓		✓			✓		
Edge	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Grip		✓							
Boa		✓		✓			★	✓	✓
Old Mac's G1		★		★	★	✓	✓	★	★
Old Mac's G2	✓	★		★	★	✓	✓	★	✓
Glove	★	★	★	✓	★	✓	★	✓	
Glue-On	★	✓	★	✓		✓		✓	
Soaker	✓						✓	✓	✓
Rx	★						✓	★	✓
Soft Ride	★						✓	★	✓
Marquis				✓		✓	✓		
Simple Boot	★	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
✓ = Great ★ = Very Good									

if your horse's trim gets chipped and ragged after three or four weeks.

Rehab boots are the best boots to buy if you have a hard-to-transition horse, or a horse with severe navicular or founder. Boots designed specifically for rehab include Rx and Soft Ride. In addition, several of the riding boots serve a dual purpose. It is particularly important to make this choice of boot with an experienced barefoot professional.

Choosing the right boot

If you don't work with a barefoot trimmer knowledgeable in boots, how do you know which boots work for your horse and riding activities? First determine whether you need high or low profile boots. Next, consider your riding activities. Hoof characteristics like very round hooves or tall heels play a role, as well. I provided a table (Best Boot Styles...) which should get you started, but I encourage you to consult with a professional for the best results for you and your horse. I'll comment on a few examples.

EasyCare is owned by an endurance rider, and carries a variety




Above: Renegade, The Glove.
Right: The Edge



To learn more about barefoot and boot trimming, watch for Linda's article on trimming in the winter issue of the Horse Journal.

of boots. These boots have evolved to offer variety and durability. Visit EasyCare's web site for details on their products (www.easycareinc.com/education/new_to_boots.aspx). The Glove is the cheapest and easiest boot to use if it fits right! I suggest having your hoofcare provider fit them for you. You can also order a fit kit from EasyCare, where you measure your horse's hoof and "rent" three shells to try for fit. The Glove Glue-On is a Glove shell without the gaiter, and is popular as an endurance boot and for rehab purposes. Remember your trim is important for this boot.

Renegade is also owned by an endurance rider. This company's boot comes in two models: one with a "heel captivator," and one with a glue-on shell. These boots are more expensive than the EasyCare boots but are popular for their ease of use and the fact that the heel captivator works well for endurance rides.

As barefoot hoof care becomes more popular, boot manufacturers have expanded their product lines to meet the needs of a variety of riders. Boot styles are varied and can meet the needs of all disciplines and most hoof anatomies. Whether you jump, drive, or ride on the trail, there's a boot that will work for you and your horse. 

Linda Cowles started barefoot trimming in 2003 when her horse Gavilan staged a sit-down strike when she tried to shoe him after a six month barefoot vacation. She has trained and worked with nationally known barefoot clinicians. Linda is co-founder and Vice President of the American Hoof Association (www.americanhoofassociation.org), and a member of the Pacific Hoofcare Practitioners. For more information about barefoot riding, or to contact Linda, visit www.Healthy-Hoof.com.



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*Readers Write***Hunting for Horse Property: *Finding Your Own Fence Post*** Written by Lisa Thomas

Most people would like to have their horses at home. Some just want the country lifestyle, while others dream of owning a farm or ranch someday. Regardless of your dream homestead, a smart buyer knows what's important to be happy, safe, and comfortable.

So what makes a "great" horse property? Like any other home, taste is individual, so there is no single "right" answer. But I've worked with over 100 equestrian properties locally, and in my opinion, you should always consider the following key elements.

- **Location:** As with *all* real estate, location the most important factor and has the most bearing on price. Consider the people requirements first. It's easy to think you can compromise on commute time or schools by moving further out to afford your dream, but many people find that they can't sustain the inconvenience. Remember, too, that blue chip locations hold prices better in a downturn and recover faster in an upturn.

- **Water:** Almost all country property in our area is on well water. If you find city water hookups, you'll pay dearly for them. Ask about quantity and quality.

Quantity: In Sonoma County, a well should yield at least one gallon per minute (GPM) flow to support a home. While a horse will only drink about twelve gallons/day, you'll use a lot more than that around the barn. You'll find 1 GPM really low, and if you don't have at least 3-4 GPM, you'll need some storage tanks.

Quality: Certain contaminants (e.g. nitrates or pesticides) can be quite hazardous. If there are vineyards or farming nearby, you'll need testing to ensure that your well water isn't toxic for your animals (or yourself!).

- **Access:** Can you get your horse trailer and a hay truck in and out during the winter and summer? If you're miles off a decent road, ask yourself who's paying to maintain that road.

- **Terrain:** I strongly prefer gently rolling to flat land. Flat lands often have standing water in winter so you'll have to know



One benefit of having your owners at home

how you'll manage that. You can no longer move any dirt, gravel, or other fill in the county without a permit, which is pretty restrictive, but this is because it might disturb the flow of water to other properties.

- **Soil:** Most locals prefer "sandy loam" which is a light soil that drains well and doesn't pack too hard. Many people use it as a "free" source of arena sand. Other footing such as adobe can be problematic, as it tends to be quite sticky. Rocky soil offers good drainage, but can be sub-optimal for grazing or riding.

- **Improvements:** The type of fencing, barns, hay sheds, and riding areas you'll need will depend on your horse and riding style. The possibilities are endless... from a simple fenced field (horsey youth hostel) to a heated stable and covered arena (the equine Taj Mahal). Safety for your horses, convenience for you, and design consistency should be your most important considerations. Some properties have no improvements, but have the possibility for adding them...I call these "horse-able" rather than true horse properties.

- **Permits and uses:** This is a topic full of misconceptions. Many different zoning classifications allow horses in Sonoma County. Details of what may be permitted can be found on the Permit and Resource

Things Mama Didn't Tell You About Buying Horse Property

Horses won't pay your mortgage

If you think boarding a couple of extra horses will help pay your mortgage, think again! It's not legal to be a "back-yard boarder" without a permit. You could be sued and/or fined by the county. Most commercial horse activities have to be permitted, carry liability insurance, etc. Often costs are higher than you think and profits lower, so proceed with eyes wide open. Training and breeding are often allowed without special permits, depending on the zoning, so check this out carefully.

Non-permitted improvements

Installing arenas, barns, and living units without permits may seem like the easiest and cheapest route, but it's really not a good idea. Non-permitted structures cannot be included in an appraisal, and buyers recognize they might have to tear them out (which costs). Time and money you spend may not come back to you when you re-sell.

Time to ride?

The first time I brought my horses home, I was shocked at how much less riding I did. You may end up spending a lot more time mending fences and mucking stalls than on horseback. If you just love all the time you spend with your horse, you'll find it incredibly rewarding, even if you're not riding so much.

Hay! We're herd animals!

Horses don't belong in fields by themselves. This is not a good way to treat your best friend and in my opinion, borders on cruelty. If you just have the one, why not adopt a pasture mate? Call CHANGE (Coins to Help Abandoned and Neglected Equines) at (707) 570-7050 (www.sonomachangeprogram.com) or SAFER (Sonoma Action for Equine Rescue) at 707-824-9543 (www.saferhorse.com) (both 501 (c) (3) non-profit horse rescue organizations) for great companion horses that need safe homes.


Management Department website: <http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/docs/zoning>.

In general, subdivisions will not allow horses, although equestrian estates such as the Foothill Ranch, Loch Haven and "The Ranch" are notable exceptions. Most rural residential or agriculturally zoned property will allow one horse per 20,000ft² (that's just under ½ acre per horse). Some zoning allows more horses on two or more acre parcels with a use permit, but every parcel should be thoroughly researched before purchase.

Flies and odors are **the** hot topics that get neighbors (and the county) excited. Responsible horse owners will have a management plan that deals with fly control, manure handling, and groundwater protection.

- **Habitat for humans:** Contrary to popular belief, many horse people do care about the house! Most equestrians live in a blended household... some horsey, some not. Keeping a balance on everyone's needs is important to maintain harmony.

- **Cost:** Country property has always been pricier than single family homes, but the good news for buyers is that the median price for a horse property has dropped by about 30% over the past two years. That makes this a great country property buyer's market, offering lots of choice and giving you good negotiating power. A bare bones starter horse farm (looking pretty gnarly) can now be found for around \$500,000. And seller's take heart: the total volume of country property sales is up by about 15% in comparison to 2007, quite a good sign of a recovering market.

So if you have always wanted your horses at home, don't be afraid to look around. With a little information, and some help, you can have your dream come true. Because at the end of the day, there's absolutely nothing like looking out your kitchen window and seeing your favorite four-legger munching grass or sleeping in the sun. 

The information contained in this article is of a general nature and is not to be used to make specific decisions on the purchase or development of any particular property. Buyers and sellers of any property should fully inform themselves as to possibility and/or desirability of keeping horses on the land. The author and Coldwell Banker accept no liability as a result. Data is based on all 2+ acre developed parcels, county-wide.

Lisa Thomas was a competitive dressage rider until she moved from London to Sonoma County with her Danish Warmblood, Malibu. Now she mainly enjoys trail riding, horse camping, and hanging out with her horse. She belongs to the Mounted Assistance Unit, the Russian River Riders, the Sonoma County Driving and Riding Club, and the Horse Council. Lisa specializes in the sales and purchase of horse and country property throughout Sonoma County. "I love what I do... it's the only way I could figure out how to work with horses and not have to shovel manure!" Lisa can be reached at 707-579-LISA or on the web at www.PremierEquestrianProperties.com.

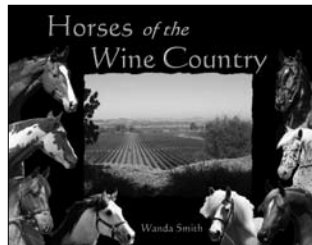
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Local Author Publishes Coffee Table Book About Sonoma County Horses

Horses of the Wine Country, written and compiled by local equestrian Wanda Smith, is a photographic tour of



Sonoma County horses. While this 152-page book with almost 400 photographs was written to honor and celebrate our local equines, Smith also hopes to raise awareness of the

importance of the equine industry to Sonoma County's economy and quality of life. Although the equine industry is the second highest source of revenue for the county, it is not recognized for its economic contribution. Horses of the Wine Country captures the beauty of the county's many horses and the dedication of their owners, trainers, breeders, and riders. This rich book begins with a description of the synergy between horses, wine, and vineyards. Smith covers the history of horses with antique photographs that include Sonoma County's prestigious history as the center of harness racing in the nineteenth century, and the show world in the twentieth century. Well-researched sections describe economics, champions, breeders, and local annual events. Smith also describes local innovations and programs created for disabled riders, rescue horses, wellness and conditioning therapies, and equine education. The book concludes with a summary of some of the thirty-five equine associations in Sonoma County and photos of their events. Smith compiled the information for Horses of the Wine Country from history and photographs provided by horse owners of Sonoma County. Smith, a former Quarter Horse breeder and ranch manager, is a current cutting horse competitor and Project Director for the Sonoma County Equestrian Complex. To contact Wanda, email her at wanda@equisports.net. For more information about her book, visit www.winecountryhorses.info.

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Editor's Feature

Bunking Down with the Buckarettes

Written by JoDean Nicolette

"We'd have to say that our favorite part of the Buckarettes is the interaction we have with the riders...the friends for life that we have made. We also love being an example that life doesn't end at fifty! This ride has changed our lives."—Claudia, Kathy, and Pinie



Early morning...ridin' the range

At first I wondered, "Is that a bear?" I woke staring up at the clear, night sky listening to a low-pitched combination between a growl and snort. Eyes wide, I turned my head to check on Jimmie in his portable electric pen. Suddenly I knew it was a bear because Jimmie was gone! Or so I thought, until the moonlight and a closer look revealed my blanketed boy flat out on his side...snoring. One more grumpy utterance revealed that the "bear" was actually my five year old black and white Paint gelding, out cold, sawing some zzzz's in his grassy pen. Clearly Jimmie was as relaxed, content, and tired as I was after the first day of our vacation with the Buckarettes.

The Elk Creek Buckarette Ranch Ride was conceived of by three real life cowgirls, Pinie Minto, Kathy Landini, and Claudia Street, all of whom live and work on ranches in the Elk Creek area. The story goes that in 2002, Claudia invited longtime friends Kathy and Pinie over for a discussion. Around her kitchen table, she shared her idea about creating a ranch ride on the beautiful and varied terrain of private working cattle ranches in Glenn County. Claudia, Pinie, and Kathy all work hard. They love their long days, each working in some way with the local ranching and farming communities, and caring for their families. Each spends hours each week in the saddle. Wouldn't it be great, Claudia suggested, if we could create a getaway for riders like us, during which guests could just hang out and relax with their own horses. We'll cater to them. And the best part: let's make it for women only! Over the next seven years the ride grew in scope and popularity, becoming what it is today.

Today the Buckarette Ranch Ride is a four-day get away with your horse. The ride is open to all levels of rider, and all breeds of horse.

Whether you ride an Andalusian or an Appaloosa, a Paso or Paint, you'll enjoy the leisurely trail rides on the beautiful and wild terrain of the 4M Ranch in Elk Creek, owned by Fritz and Alma Mast. And if you've had enough of the rolling hills, herds of grazing cattle, wooded lanes, and breath-taking views, don't worry—the Ranch Ride offers much, much more. The Buckarette leaders, all expert cowhands, provide Reining, Team Penning, and Roping opportunities, as well as an optional "Ranch Horse Competition." The arena participants range from first timers to experts, so you'll find your niche. The ranch sports have become so popular that the Buckarettes have decided to offer an optional fifth day for riders of all levels who want a day dedicated solely to working with cows. So get ready to get dirty...and tired.

After a long, hard day a Buckarette has certain needs. Whether it's a hot shower, a hot meal, shopping at the charming Buckarette Boutique, or a massage, you find it at the base camp. Despite the wild west nature of the Buckarette ride, you'll find the accommodations and amenities quite impressive. You can stay in your own trailer, sleep under the stars with your horse (like I did), or slumber away in one of the fancy, spacious tents provided. The food is catered by a local chef (the only stud allowed on the property), and the beverages are free and plentiful. The evenings are filled with events from Talent Night to the Buckarette Range of Fame Awards.

So whether you're a cowgirl, a wrangler, a tinhorn, greenhorn, dressage queen, drama queen, or just plain interested in a fun and relaxing time with your horse away from it all, the Elk Creek Buckarettes have a Ranch Ride for you. The next ride is April 21-25, 2010. But don't spend too much time pondering, the ride sells out fast. If you're interested, visit www.elk-creekbuckarettes.com for more info, or to register for the four-or five-day stay. Jimmie and I will be looking for you. U



Gittin' ready to rope: Terry and her Friesian, Bella

JoDean Nicolette, in addition to being a Buckarette, is editor of the Horse Journal. She is also a local physician, and President of the California State Parks Mounted Assistance Unit. JoDean enjoys trail riding and riding bareback on her three horses—Jimmie, Chance, and Bear. If you would like to contact JoDean about this article, or writing for the Horse Journal, email her at editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.

Treat yourself to this unique outdoor cowgirl experience, featuring rides on a private 5000-acre working cattle ranch, excellent catered cuisine, charming accommodations, and the camaraderie of Women of the West. Whether you have been busy mending fences or holes in your baby's britches, battling traffic or the board of directors, it's time to load up your horse and come out for a ride with the Buckarettes.

Healthy as a Horse

Column editor JoDean Nicolette, MD

Eye Protection for Riders

Guest written by Greer L. Geiger, MD

Most of us do not think about protecting our eyes while we are riding. There are two significant ways that our eyes can be injured on horseback. The first is related to eye injury or trauma, and the other related to injury from sunlight, or ultraviolet light (UVA and UVB). Eye trauma is acute, meaning it usually happens one time and causes an immediate problem. Injury from sunlight is cumulative. You experience small degrees of damage that you don't notice over time, but the repetitive damage becomes an issue later. We'll talk about both, and what you can do to prevent eye injury.

Trauma: Riding is a contact sport

Most of us have had close calls with our eyes when riding. We have fallen or had a near miss with a low hanging object like a tree branch. Other hazards include dust and insects, which can both cause pain and inflammation. You experience inflammation in your eyes as redness, sensitivity to light, and possible vision loss. Dust can be just irritating, or carry metal particles which can adhere to your cornea (the protective cover to your lens). Insects can cause a particularly severe problem if the barbs on their legs penetrate the cornea; the barbs can act like harpoons, gradually penetrating deeper into the tissue. These can be difficult to remove and can cause severe long term inflammation. I describe these scenarios not as some rare occurrence but as an eye specialist who has regularly treated people with each of these conditions. We do not think of visual loss as a potential injury from horseback riding, but it can occur. The eye is a soft organ, and a brisk strike from a tree branch can cause permanent injury.

Cumulative damage: Sunlight

Most riders, whether they focus on arena or trail, spend considerable amounts of time in the sun over the years. We all know that

UVA and UVB cause sunburn (oxidative tissue injury), but we don't consider that our eyes are out in the sun as long as our skin is. The same sun that injures your skin injures your eyes. Over time, sun damage can cause cataracts to develop. Cataracts are opaque areas on your lens (like scarring), that impair your vision. Fair-skinned individuals, for example those with blue eyes, or red or blonde hair, have less protective melanin pigment in their skin and their eyes, which makes them more susceptible to UV injury.



Seychelle & friend Cathy sporting their eye protection

Another major condition related to UV light injury is macular degeneration. This occurs with chronic light damage to the inside of the eye, in particular the retina and the macula. The retina is a thin layer of neurologic tissue at the back of the eye which acts like the film in a camera. It captures the light coming into our eye and converts it into electrical impulses which are then passed to the brain. The brain interprets the information and creates the images we see. The macula is the centermost part of the retina, where the 20/20 vision cells are located. Chronic retinal and macular exposure to UV light can cause loss of vision over time, often as early as age fifty.

Protecting your eyes: What you can do

You can do something now: wear sunglasses! Sunglasses can protect your eyes from trauma and injury by providing a hard barrier in front of your eyes. They also protect your eyes from ultraviolet light, which may help prevent visual loss from conditions like cataracts and macular degeneration later in life.

Most recently-purchased sunglasses have some degree of UV protection. The inexpensive ones are made from cheaper plastics which can have some degree of haze and distortion. Intermediate-priced sunglasses usually will have less haze and distortion and will be made from plastics that are harder and less prone to scratches. If you are in doubt, read the tags or stickers. Buy the ones that are labeled as UV protection. Most prescription eyewear provides 100% UVA/B protection (ask!) and is sufficient for protection while riding. For those who do not require distance correction consider some of the "sport-" oriented 100% UVA/B blocking sunglasses. They are designed to fit well during active pursuits and are less likely to fall off.

Check out the photo of my cremello Foxtrotter, Seychelle. He has blue eyes. With my penchant for long rides, and his pale complexion, I figured he needed something like I wear to protect my eyes, so I got busy and created his "shades." This may make you smile, but eyewear that protects your eyes from injury or UV light may save your vision. Happy trails while protecting your eyes! ☺

Greer Geiger is a graduate of Harvard Medical School and is a practicing Ophthalmologist specializing in Retina Surgery with a special interest in treating eye trauma. She practices at Kaiser Santa Rosa. She has been clinical faculty at UC San Francisco, UC Davis, and the University of Alabama, Birmingham. Greer has loved horses most of her life and after a many year hiatus has rejoined the community of riders. Greer is member of the California State Parks Mounted Assistance Unit and an avid trail rider. She owns two horses, Poacher and Seychelle.

*Facilities Focus*

Column editor Debby Bailey

Russian Rivers Riders' Hoofbeat Park

Throughout the 1990s, my husband and I took our daughters and their horses to Hoofbeat Park in Healdsburg for their many 4-H horse shows. We loved the little facility tucked away just off Dry Creek Rd and Hwy 101. As recently as 2000, I used the arena, myself, with five other equestrian ladies to practice a drill team routine which we performed at the Western Horse Expo in Sacramento. How fortunate we local equestrians are to have such an accessible and high quality facility available for our use. Hoofbeat Park belongs to the Russian River Riders (RRR). The Russian River Riders and Hoofbeat Park have a special and unique history, which I would like to share with you now.

In the 1940s, a bunch of local guys started trail riding. According to long-time Russian River Rider member Carol House, the group included Al Azevedo, Jake Boatman, Charlie Gardner, and a few others. They rode trails along Dry Creek, Pozzan, and Lytton Springs Roads—the entirety unfenced at the time. The group made the relaxing ride to the Russian River a regular event during hot summer months. This group formed the core of the Russian River Riders. This ride has evolved into the somewhat infamous annual Russian River Ride.

Sidney Grove, Ernest Cornell, Hazel Hopper, PA Kerns, and William Maher founded the formal Russian River Riders group in 1947. The founders created the organization's goals: good sportsmanship, fun, healthy competition, and education among equestrians. The group's current president, Reid Borgwardt, commented that many riding clubs were founded in California during this period as the state grew in population and equestrian soldiers returned from WWII. The children of new members joined and began the horse-show tradition at the club.

Hoofbeat Park, owned and operated by the Russian River Riders, was purchased for \$10 from Earl and Ruby Frampton in 1949. The RRR constructed the clubhouse in 1952. The story goes that Grove, Gardner, and several other members went to Hunters Point in San Francisco and picked up a war surplus building kit for \$3,000. They brought it home, and put it together over a three year period. Doris Golden, the Framptons' daughter funded much of the purchase. Currently, the five-acre property consists of a 120 x 60 foot arena, bleachers, a 60 x 60 foot warm-up arena, a round pen, twenty corals, and the original clubhouse (seats fifty).

Until the 1980s, Hoofbeat Park reflected the surrounding agricultural community, with cattle facilities and family events. By the 1990s, however, the number of farming families declined in Sonoma County, and the character of the membership changed. Fewer horses lived in pastures behind houses, and more boarded at stables where owners could ride. Owning a horse became more expensive. RRR membership declined, and maintaining ownership of the club property became challenging. But RRRs endured, largely due to the efforts of members like Judy McHerron, who put together horse shows, clinics, and work parties to raise funds to perform repairs and maintenance, and even add to the clubhouse and grounds. Without her energy and enthusiasm, the club would not be what it is today. Since 2000, RRR has grown and thrived.

Currently, the arena and clubhouse are used by local equestrians for many activities. Regular patrons include several 4-H clubs and the Healdsburg Future Farmers Country Fair Board. Local experts and trainers hold lessons and clinics, and members bring their horses

*Russian River Riders' Hoofbeat Park*

almost daily to practice Barrel Racing, Dressage, and other disciplines. McHerron hosts a series of schooling shows in Dressage and Show Jumping. Notably, the facility houses the Hoofbeats Pony Club.

Hoofbeats Pony Club, part of the United States Pony Clubs (USPC), was founded in 1989. With the enthusiastic leadership of Dennis Toth and Pam Bacigalupi, the local branch grew in numbers and activities. McHerron, a USPC national examiner, mentored and instructed the group. Her influence encouraged a more English bent to the club, as well as basic horse care and management. The current director, Joan Starrett, continues the legacy of leadership and equestrian excellence for young people.

Among Hoofbeat Park's unique features is a resident saddle maker. Tom Thomason, a well-known, jovial, local professional, keeps his shop at one end of the clubhouse. He'll make you a new saddle, fix your old one, or wash your horse blanket. Where else can you find a trained individual to fix your broken billet or rein during a show so that you can continue to participate?

Today, the Russian River Riders club has over 100 voting members, in addition to junior members. New members of all riding disciplines are welcome. Dues are \$65 for an individual and \$90 for a whole family. Members receive a monthly newsletter and are entitled to use the arenas, as long as a show or demonstration has not been booked. Equestrian organizations can rent the facility for shows or demonstrations. For information, or a membership application, you may contact their current president, Reid Borgwardt, at (707) 433-1098 or borgwardt@jps.net. U

Do you know of a Sonoma County facility or event that you'd like to read about in the Horse Journal? Contact Debby Bailey (Equus Hall of Fame-2009) at facilities@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.

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Readers Write

Farrier Stories

Written by Michael Rosenberg

I enjoy being a farrier. It's hard work, but it's rewarding. I like being outdoors, even though you have to put up with the heat, and the cold, and the wet. It's independent work; you can usually set your own hours. And for the most part, your customers really appreciate you. I appreciate them, too—they make my life interesting. I thought, in this article, I would share some of my favorite stories about some of my most interesting clients.

One of my best friends had a chestnut and white Paint horse he called Sadie. I called her "Satin's Little Angel." When I worked on that horse, I spent more time on the ground than working on her feet. One day she reared and flipped over, and flattened my fancy, new tool box. I was so nervous about shoeing this horse that I would ask him to keep quiet about when she was due. I made regular trips to his barn to shoe lots of horses, and would rather just show up and just see her name on the list, than be awake at night for a week worrying about it. I kept it up, but I was worried that I



Mike and Spook clearing an obstacle in the PRDC Cowboy Challenge (like father, like daughter—see Cover & p. 23)

Photo: Paulina Telderer

was going to have to choose between my friend, and my health and well-being. Well, this horse was a Reiner, and every time my friend left for a show, he swore he was

going to sell her to anyone who made an offer. (I made him promise to not tell the buyer who had been shoeing her.) Luckily, he finally came home from a show without her. Well, what goes around, comes around, though. That ornery Paint got bought by a Hunter Jumper for her daughter...as a trail horse.

Early in my career my ex-wife and I traveled to an AQHA show together. She was showing in Western Pleasure and I was Team Penning. I was also on call as the show-farrier. On the third day of the show, a quiet, respectful man approached me about re-shoeing his horse. He wasn't in

a rush, so I thought I would get to it later. My "ex" rushed over after he had left, and informed me that this was the current champion...the man to beat. He was from Arizona and was riding the five-time AQHA Super Horse. I was so nervous after that, it took me three hours to shoe his horse! Well, he must have liked my work because the next day he brought me another one. I was a little quicker this time, but I managed to get myself into trouble, anyway. This expert rider had been placing behind my "ex" in every event until then. After I shod his horse, he beat her soundly. It was a long ride home.

One time, I was at a Quarter Horse Show in Reno with one of my friends, who I used to shoe for. I was just watching, and he was riding Western Pleasure on a black horse with a really crooked front leg. The horse lost a shoe after a day or so at the show. When we approached the show-farrier to help us out, my friend jokingly asked, "Hey, can you do something to straighten out that front foot?" The old farrier, who was from Texas, replied in a slow, smooth southern drawl, "There's only one man who could do that job for ya son, and they hung him on a cross."

Being a farrier is a great job, even if you can't fix every problem. I especially like spending my day with the horses. Most of them are fine to work with, except a few spoiled ones that are tough. The most interesting part of the job is the owners. I have more stories than I can tell here, some I'm sure many of you will recognize as your own. I wish I started writing down my experiences because I'd have a pretty darn good book. Now that I think about it, watch out for that, you might be reading about yourself in the future. U

Michael Alan Rosenberg has been shoeing horses in Sonoma County for twenty years. Mike is President of Petaluma Riding and Driving Club (PRDC) and a guest of the Trailblazers. Mike enjoys Team Penning and Roping with his wife, Christine, in his free time. He lives in Santa Rosa with his family and their six horses, one pony, three dogs, and one cat. To contact Mike about this article, or about PRDC, visit the club...He's usually there.

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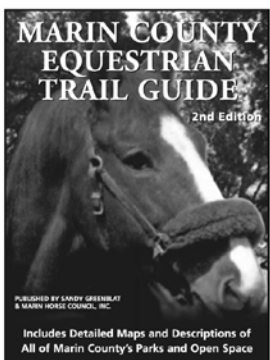
Updated April, 2009

This Equestrian Trail Guide covers all trails within approximately 200,000 acres located in the Point Reyes National Seashore, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) including the Marin Headlands, various California State Parks, the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed and lands of the Marin County Open Space District. It contains all the trail updates available as of the end of April, 2009.

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Vet's Office

Column editor Michelle Beko, DVM

Equine First Aid Kits and an Ounce of Prevention

Those of you who have had the pleasure of having some equine companionship in your life are probably aware that horses can be quite adept at hurting themselves. So what should you have on hand in your barn or trailer to help you help them? And perhaps more importantly, what steps can you take to minimize your horse's chance of injury?

Preventing wounds

Although some horses can manage to hurt themselves on just about anything, most wounds have one of two causes: fences or other horses. Wire fences (other than non-climb) are especially problematic. Among wire fences, barbed or non-electric high tension are the worst offenders. Using safe fencing is the first step to avoiding injury.

In order to minimize your horse's risk of injury from other horses, make sure your horse is in a stable (no pun intended) pasture group. Herds work out dominance hierarchies in the first few days and strife is minimal after that. Conflict mostly occurs when new horses join. On trail rides, or at shows or clinics, keep your horse a reasonable distance from others. Don't believe someone who says, "Don't worry, my horse doesn't kick." All horses kick (and bite), some just do so less often than others.

Finally, keeping your trailer safe is an important way to prevent injuries. Consider leg boots or wraps for your horse if he travels with other horses. Have regular trailer inspections and maintenance, and check your floor and the hitch. Always make sure the trailer door is securely latched.

Yikes...I see blood!

So you've done all that and still end up

with a wound...What do you do? Stay calm; most of the time it's not as bad as it looks. Control any bleeding by applying direct pressure to the wound. For lower limb wounds, cotton or gauze padding under vet wrap helps, and keeps the wound from getting dirtier. Remember, horses have a large blood volume (about forty liters) so a wound that's just dripping will not likely be a problem.

Cleaning the wound is the next step. The best choices for rinsing are saline, diluted iodine solution (1:10), or water. Direct the rinse downward so that dirt and bacteria flow out of the wound rather than deeper into the wound.

Topical antibiotics can be applied to scrapes (wounds where hair and a partial layer of skin have been scraped off) or small wounds that do not need suturing. Many acceptable wound ointments are available. My favorites are triple antibiotic ointment (neospirin) and SWAT (the pink stuff). Triple antibiotic ointment is a safe and effective choice for most fresh wounds and can be used under a wrap. SWAT is a good choice for wounds that are a day or two old. SWAT discourages proud flesh, flies, and doesn't melt away. It's particularly good for fly sores that many horses get on their bellies.

Do you need help?

Call your veterinarian if a wound needs stitches, you can't stop the bleeding, or if your horse has additional problems, such as lameness or pronounced swelling with the wound. If your vet's coming, control the bleeding and clean the wound if your horse will tolerate it, but don't apply any topical ointment. Put a clean wrap on lower limb

wounds if your veterinarian won't be arriving for a couple of hours.

Keep your vet's phone number with you when you travel, and make sure your horse sitter has it. If you are traveling with your horse, find phone numbers of a couple of local veterinarians before you go.

What else do you need?

Every horse owner should have a few things on hand in an Equine First Aid Kit (see Table). For example, keep a thermometer handy. An adult horse's normal temperature ranges between 99-101 degrees Fahrenheit, depending on the weather. If your horse seems a bit lethargic and is not eating well, he could have a fever. Some owners keep boots available, which are handy for hoof abscesses or shoe loss. Most owners don't need to keep medications on hand. However if you live in, or are traveling to, a remote area, you may want to have some phenylbutazone (*Bute*) or flunixin meglumine (*Banamine*), as well as some antibiotic eye ointment in case a vet is hard to reach. *Bute* and *Banamine* relieve pain and inflammation, and reduce fever (horse aspirin or ibuprofen). They are prescription items which you must get through your own veterinarian and should be used under a veterinarian's direction.

Conclusion

Despite your most conscientious efforts, your horse can get injured. Most injuries are not serious or life threatening, and can be managed safely by you and your vet. A few "on hand" items and some common sense will prevent complications, and keep you and your horse safe, happy, and ready for your next adventure. U

Equine First Aid Kit

Betadine solution

Triple antibiotic ointment

SWAT (pink)

Wrap material:

Vet wrap or flannel wrap

Gauze or cotton wraps

Thermometer

Veterinarian's phone number

Optional items;

Antibiotic eye ointment

Bute or *Banamine*

Easy (or other) Boot

Michelle Beko, DVM is an Equine Veterinarian and has been practicing at Empire Equine in Sonoma County since 1992. Her family includes her horses *Splash* and *Ty*. You can reach her with questions, comments or ideas for future articles at (707) 545-3909.

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Horse Husbandry—The Occasionally True Tales of a Local Horse Husband

Horse in Translation

Column editor Mark Krug

I'm not a total gizmo junkie, but after I lost my cell phone last winter I went ahead and bought an iPhone. Wow! The amazing technology and the catalog of applications from the Apps Store is mind-boggling. By far the best is iWilbur. This application translates your horse's thoughts into spoken language. Naturally as soon as I downloaded it, I was down to the barn to chit-chat with my Percheron gelding, Mojo. Here's our very first conversation—fastidiously captured for the Journal:



Mojo also speaks fluent Hippo.

Mark (fiddling with the iPhone): So.... Mojo, does this thing work? Tell me what's on your mind.

Mojo (matter-of-factly): I'm hungry.

Mark (slightly stunned): You've got to be kidding, we have this amazing opportunity for trans-species spoken word communication, and that's what you want to tell me?

Mojo (mildly annoyed): Yes, I'm zeyer hungerik.

Mark (understanding but perplexed by the response, and then glancing at Mojo's mid-section): You don't look like you're underfed.

Mojo (craning his neck around to view Mark's mid-section): Well, you don't appear too *schlank*, yourself.

Mark (returning his attention to the iPhone): *Schlank*?

Mojo: Skinny, slender. And ya know, you're the one who needs a draft horse to get a *groys ferd* under you.

Mark (fiddling with the iPhone): Aha! I had Yiddish expressions enabled, let me turn that off, I don't understand half of what you're telling me.

Mojo (his voice trailing off): Sorry! *Goyim*...

Mark: I guess it turns out you're really a bit of a smart ass, aren't you?

Mojo: I'm a horse; an ass has the tall ears, no withers, and the bray... Man, that bray freaks me out big time...

Mark (interrupting): 'Smart ass' is just a figure of speech. I know you're a horse.

Mojo (getting quite serious): Then, why don't you just say what you

mean and mean what you say? You chatty humans are forever saying something other than what you mean...Speaking in metaphors, abstractions, and "figures of speech." (Mojo rolls back on his haunches, rearing slightly and clumsily tossing both front feet in the air)

Mark (ducking out of the way of a front hoof): Wow, I've never seen a horse do the air quotes thing! That was something...And a little awkward there big guy.

Mojo (impatiently): So anyway, like I was saying, I'm hungry. How about some food, Sonny?

Mark: "Sonny"? I'm Mark, that's my name.

Mojo (getting slightly irritable): Sorry, we equus types have a hard time with your labeling conventions.

Mark: Huh?

Mojo: Well, I've met several humans who answer to "Mark." It makes no sense that y'all share these names...And you do it to us too—give several of us horses the same label, or "name" as you say. Like that half-blind mare we met at the Lake you humans called "Star."

Mark: She was half-blind?

Mojo (loudly): Well duhhhhhhh! You humans selectively breed horses for totally ridiculous characteristics...Like cute heads, or some color, or lots of hair or...I don't know what. And with that selective breeding for traits you think are cute comes all kinds of genetic problems—like the whacked-out vision Star has.

Mark: Whacked out?

Mojo: Anterior Segment Dysgenesis, maybe. Probably why she freaked out that day when we were at the Lake when the Well-Above-Average Blue Heron took flight...She can't see so well ya know.

Mark (laughing heartily): I think you mean "Great Blue Heron."

Mojo (defensively): Don't look at me; it's your language and your iWilbur translation techno-gizmo thingie. Anyway, about lunch...


Mark: Dang, again with the food. Ya know, you just ate three hours ago.

Mojo (interrupting): Well, ya know, Sonny, I mean Mark, I'm built to graze most of the day, to basically eat all day. This habit of yours of tossing a big pile of hay a few times a day isn't the same. Doesn't really cut it.

Mark: Alright, alright. I'll put you out to pasture.

Mojo (interrupting again, nervously): Whoa! Not out-to-pasture, I know what that metaphor means.

Mark (grabbing a halter to put on Mojo and leading him to the pasture gate): No, no. Relax, just go out and enjoy the pasture. Nice talking to you...I think.

Mojo (while crashing through the not-quite-fully-opened gate into the pasture): Yee-ha, buffet time, I love buffet time! 

Mark Krug lives near Graton with his spouse and horse-trainer/instructor, Cheryl, their over-achieving Aussie/Lab cross, Cowboy, two cats of questionable utility, and several well above-average horses. You can reach Mark about this story, or ideas for future issues at markkrug@comcast.net.



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Readers Write

Barrels at Fifty

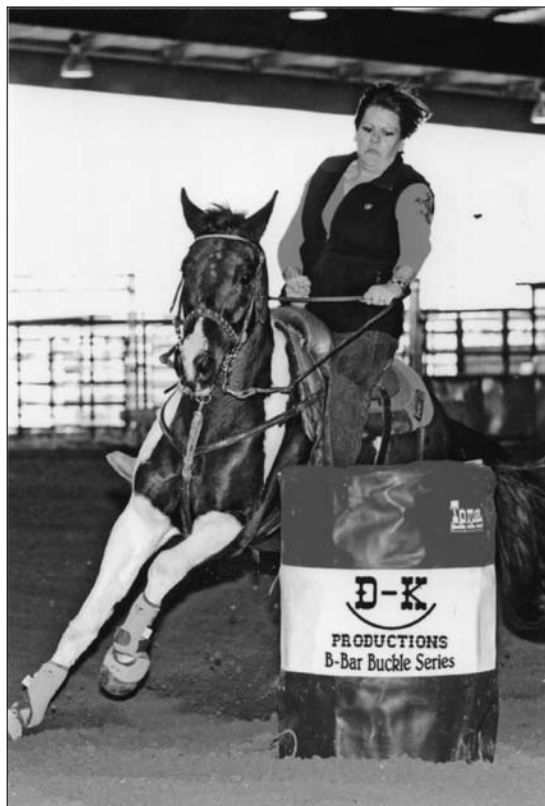
Written by Linda Hogerton

I started Barrel Racing at age forty-nine. I decided to try it because I'd watched my daughter Katelyn race, and I wanted to do something with her instead of being the one hauling the trailer and writing the checks. And of course, I wanted to ride like her. I was scared to death though, but I did it anyway. How someone like me started Barrel Racing at this point in my life is an interesting story. I wanted to tell it, and also to try to generate some more interest and participation in Barrel Racing around Sonoma County.

I started riding when I was sixteen on a leased Appaloosa—Happy Appy. He was an all-white, no-spots Appy, but his hardheadedness made up for his lack of decoration. I rode in the arena, just farting around. I didn't take lessons; I just learned by doing. We did walk-trot-run...fall off-run some more. I mucked stalls at Coastsides Corral in Pacifica to save the \$1500 to buy my first horse. His name was Jay-Kay-Fierra-Beau ("Beau") and he was the most beautiful bay horse that you have ever seen. He was a four year old green broke Arabian, and he was quite a ride.

I sold Beau when I was twenty-two. I had met and married my best friend and lifelong partner, Terry, and it was either our first apartment or a horse. Terry promised me that someday I would have another horse (Ha...Little did he know!). For the next twenty years I focused on my family and my home. During that time, like many moms, I pretty much put myself and my own needs last. I let my health slip, I got heavy, got diabetes, and had a heart attack. Needless to say I wasn't feeling my best. I got worried that I wouldn't see or know my grandchildren, so I decided to take a big step. I underwent gastric bypass surgery in 2008 and, over the last eighteen months, I have lost 135 pounds! My health has improved dramatically. I no longer have diabetes, and I feel like a new person. When I was heavy I didn't have any balance or sense of my limbs. Now I can move freely and lightly. I got the confidence to try riding again.

So I began by taking a lesson or two where Katelyn was boarding and riding (Double Bar M Ranch). Katelyn's trainer and close friend, Amy Jo Tolson, taught me the fundamentals of riding in the arena. Katelyn had her own horse, Miwok (for all that knew him—"Mimers"). I knew that I eventually wanted my own horse. I bought Dillinger in 2004 as a trail horse. He's a big 1300lb bay Quarter Horse out of Sir Cool Skip. Boy-oh-boy, was he the looker! We didn't do much riding though because I could not find his niche. My daughter's boyfriend, Mark Edwards, started to ride him



The old timers: Linda and Kidd burn it up

and rope on him, and now Dillinger and Mark are a great team. I am happy for them, but that left me horseless again! Coincidentally, I was helping my friend try to sell her two black and white Paint siblings, Kidd and Jazzy. She wanted them to go to a single home, but none of the buyers wanted two animals. She offered them to me for free if I would take them both...uh oh! Suddenly I had two horses. Now, twenty-eight years after getting married, the "horse" my husband promised me that I would one day own has turned into five horses.

I made the leap into Barrel Racing with the urging and support of my dear friend and coach, Christine Gutsch. New sense of balance or not, I was scared. Kidd and I are both seniors (he is twenty-one!) and we are both rookies. Christine is patient, encouraging, and inspiring. My first Barrel Race was a National Barrel Horse Association (NBHA) event at the Petaluma Riding and Driving Club (PRDC) in 2008.

Kidd and I rode the cloverleaf in twenty-one seconds (still my best time). In the 2008/2009 season I won my first buckle for the High Point Award at the Pac West Year End Finals in the Senior 4D Division. I accumulated the most points racing in Sheridan and the California Dreamin' event at the Santa Rosa Fairgrounds. This summer I raced five times, winning first in the Senior Division 4D each time. I sit first in Senior Division 4D for NBHA District Seven. On August 8th Kidd and I raced in Duncan Mills with one more to go in September. My hotshot daughter Katelyn won High Point for Novice 3D, High Point for Open 3D District Finals and Novice 3D District Finals in 2008; I am hot on her tail!

Barrel Racing is addictive; when I race I am excited and my adrenaline flows. Sometimes I am so nervous before a race, I think, "I am going to die." Then I start, and everything I have taught my horse, and everything Christine has taught me, just falls into place, (Christine says this is muscle memory). All I know is I can't wait to do it again. Many people think that running the barrels is just a crazy, uncontrolled gallop around some over-sized tin cans. But that's not true. Barrel Racing is horsemanship at a high speed. It takes balance, control, and communication. Sure your horse has to be fast, but he must also be supple and agile. He has to make great, tight, lateral bends around the barrels and accelerate on your focus. When I have done the barrel pattern right, it is a huge accomplishment for me; my horsemanship skills are puzzle pieces that have fallen right into place. I also love the camaraderie with all the other barrel racers.



A special team: Katelyn and Miwok

Kidd and I plan to continue with the NBHA, Pac West, and West Coast Barrel Racing Associations. Our goal is to break twenty seconds. The other NBHA District Seven Chapter Board Members (see Table) and I would like to increase local interest in Barrel Racing. Contact me if you are interested, especially all you other seniors out there—Kidd and I are waiting for you!

NBHA District Seven Chapter Board Members

Stacie Martinelli, District Director

Board of Directors:

Barbara Walker, Christine Gutsch,
Linda Hogerton, Liz Pellidini

I would like to dedicate this article to my husband, Terry. He is my soul mate and my support. I couldn't do this without him. He recently had a large stroke, and he is in rehab therapy. Even still he is focused on my racing. I wanted to stay with him one day, and he poked the buckle on my pants and said, "You go race, Linda." I cried. He has done everything to support me. Thank you, Terry. 



Linda and Happy Appy

Linda Hogerton sits on the Boards of PRDC and NBHA District Seven Chapter. She is a proud wife and mother of three children, David, Erika, and Katelyn. She has a wonderful daughter-in-law, Katrina. The Hogertons and Mark Edwards own five horses, Kidd, Dillinger, Spinner, Jazzy, and Emmie. Linda works for the Dental Design Studio as a dental technician. Linda also owns a horse transport

business, The Rocking H Ranch Transport, which serves all of northern California. If you would like to contact Linda, email her at hogerton@sbcglobal.net. If you would like to check out NBHA District Seven racing, visit www.nbhaca07.com, or email the board at nbhaca07@gmail.com.

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*Horse Tales*

Never Give Up on Those Horse Dreams

Written by Lisa McClish

I rode my first horse when I was three years old. Even at that young age I knew the passion would continue throughout my life. My parents were not "horse" people, so were confused when I relentlessly begged for my own. When I was eleven, they finally bought me one. I was a backyard warrior on my Morgan-Quarter cross, who behaved more like a Mule-Shetland Pony cross. She was happy to dump me whenever she had the opportunity, and I learned to ride by simply learning not to fall off. After a year of abuse at the whims of this animal, I actually learned how to stay on and earned her respect (I just kept getting back on!). That little mare turned out to be a pretty good horse for me. My parents couldn't afford to have me in formal riding lessons, so unfortunately, as a teen I lost interest. I was sixteen and bored, so I sold her to buy a stereo system. My first bad decision: I cried for year. For years I was busy with marriage, raising my son, and working. I missed having a horse, but didn't have the time or money to support one. Finally at age forty, my life was again in a place to pursue my passion. A friend was taking lessons and invited me to meet a local trainer. Soon, I was back in the saddle. Talk about a humbling experience! I thought it would be so easy (like riding a bike!). I soon discovered how much I didn't know about riding. But the biggest change for me was the FEAR I now felt! Falling off had at one time been no big deal to me, but now I was keenly aware of how hard that ground would be if my forty-year-old (*ancient!*) body were to make contact with it.

Eventually, I decided to buy a horse. I informed my trainer that I wanted a very broke, gentle, older horse that would be easy to handle. One day my trainer called to let me know he had a great prospect. I couldn't wait for the details, and listened intently about my new horse—a three-year-old mare. Three!! I wanted more like twenty-three! Nonetheless, I went out the next day to try this "easy going" mare with a great disposition. "Jackie" was a beautiful Tobiano Paint. After a short trail ride I agreed to try her in the arena where she promptly spooked and dumped me! I thought, "Oh

*Lisa and Jackie still keep in touch*

no, here we go again." My trainer encouraged me to give her a chance, and he was right...she was a great horse and we clicked. I bought her immediately.

My trainer introduced Jackie and I to Reining. "Reining," I thought, "How hard can it be? You just run a couple circles, run down the arena and stop, no big deal...sign me up!" I soon found out how technical and challenging the sport was, and I loved it! Jackie and I showed together for a couple of years. She eventually got bored with Reining (I worried she would try to trade me for a stereo system!). I agonized about how to afford keeping her, and still get a more athletic, enthusiastic Reiner. I finally decided to purchase a new horse, but hold on to Jackie.

"Johnnie" was a seasoned show veteran and athlete. One of my friends nicknamed him "sexy." He helped me take my riding to a new level, and I was finally becoming competitive in the show arena. In 2008 with the help of local trainer, Terry Clancey, I fulfilled a lifelong dream of competing at the Grand National Horse Show in

San Francisco. Johnnie and I competed in the Non Pro Reining and placed second in our class.

Meanwhile, Jackie and I got lucky. A young girl at my barn had always admired Jackie and wanted to lease her. Mandi and Jackie were a great match. Mandi rode and worked with Jackie every day. After a few months, Mandi's family approached me, wanting to buy Jackie so Mandi could have a horse of her own. I would miss her, but I knew what a great home Jackie would have. Mandi's family bought Jackie quietly and surprised Mandi on her thirteenth birthday. Jackie and Mandi are both so lucky! I continue to ride and show Johnnie, and everyday I am so thankful for all that these horses have brought to my life. I can't imagine life without them. ☺

Lisa McClish lives in Santa Rosa. She can be found weekends exploring the trails of Sonoma County or practicing for an upcoming Reining competition. You can email her at lamclish@yahoo.com.

Got a Horse Tale? Whether it's sad, happy, or just plain funny, we want to share it. Send your stories to editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.

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Readers Write

Three Sides of the Story

Written by David Lawson


For horse sales, it's a buyer's market. Even so, selling a horse can be complicated and difficult. I've bought and sold my fair share of horses, and I can honestly say that I am not fond of either situation. Both sellers and buyers find the situation stressful and daunting. While we commonly say there are two sides to every story, I would like to suggest that a horse sale has three sides: two humans and a horse. The key to success is to make sure that buyer, seller, and equine find the best possible fit.

Owners sell horses for lots of reasons—new goals, new interests, or economic needs to name a few. Too often, sellers focus on the financial bottom line. No matter how motivated you are to sell, I caution you to consider more than your potential profit. Ask yourself a few questions before you agree to end your relationship with your horse and begin someone else's. Can you accept competing against your old mount? Are you ok starting a novice horse, while someone else rides your finished one? What if the new owner has different goals for your horse? The new owner may be more successful with your horse than you were, can you live with that? What if the new owner uses a different training method? These are tough, but important questions.

I sold my mare Diva because I thought the new owners were more financially capable of campaigning her. Diva had had some recent great barrel runs and generated significant interest and attention. I sold her cheaply, assuming the family would credit me when Diva succeeded. Recognition as the trainer would bring me new business. WRONG! The new family did well, but never acknowledged Diva's history. I was really hurt, and brooded for an entire year. Looking back, I realize that I wasted energy and time being mad about having sold my good horse, and eventually realized that my expectations were out of line. The new owners never promised me anything. I acted hastily based on wrongful assumptions; if only I'd followed my own recommendations and honestly answered my own questions.

The best way to satisfy the buyer is to understand his or her expectations, as well. You want the buyer to be happy. Consider

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sales as extensions of your abilities with your horse, and also measuring sticks of your honesty and integrity. Consider much more than just a fair price. Is your horse truly capable of achieving the buyer's goals? Does your horse's personality and individual performance style match the ability and competitive spirit of the buyer? Simply put, is this a good fit?

I made a difficult, but satisfying choice selling my gelding Casey. He and I had shown in Western Pleasure for two years. I decided to sell the seasoned veteran and search for a prospect to train. A friend had always loved my big,

gray horse, but she didn't realize that he could be a little tricky to show. He needed a confident hand, and got resentful at picking. I'd competed with this young lady for years, and I knew she and Casey would not fit. She could be relentless when a horse was a little on the muscle. I passed up a substantial offer and my friend was pretty mad, but I knew it was the right decision for them both. Incidentally, she kicked my butt the next show season on a horse she purchased a few weeks later. She actually thanked me for not selling her Casey! The big gray gelding went to someone who'd shown a horse with a similar disposition.

The final side of the triangle is one that often gets overlooked—the horse! I plead with anyone who has a horse to sell to keep the equine angle in mind. We all owe it to our horses to look out for their well-being. Even the most well meaning buyer doesn't always have the ability to be successful with your horse. Ask yourself these questions: Can the prospective owner afford any upkeep or maintenance required by your horse? Does the new owner believe in maintenance programs to which your horse has been accustomed? Does the purchaser have the time required for your high energy horse? Can he or she be happy limiting riding time on your hard keeper? Will your horse click with his new owner?

You might be thrilled by your horse's selling price, and the new owner might be infatuated with his new acquisition, but if horse and owner don't fit, it won't work. For example, if your horse requires special shoeing, hock injections, and a fancy stall, and the new owner believes in barefoot horses, hates needles, and can only afford pasture board, this won't be the best situation for your horse. We all know that if the horse isn't happy, the whole situation will be toxic. Make sure that the new owner understands all of your horse's healthcare needs, quirks, habits, and housing requirements. A little attention to detail goes a long way, and your horse deserves consideration as he transitions into a new situation.

Selling your horse can be a difficult decision. As equine enthusiasts, we put our hearts and souls into our horses, and we want the best for them. Each potential transaction requires careful consideration. The next time you are marketing a horse, consider all the angles: the seller, the buyer, and the horse. You will find that when you consider all three sides of the story, you'll experience success, repeat business, and most importantly, peace of mind. U

David Lawson is new to Sonoma County, and has found a home at Double Bar M Ranch on Petaluma Hill Road. David's focus is horsemanship, and he trains for a wide variety of disciplines from showmanship and Western Pleasure, to Barrel Racing and Pole Bending. He enjoys competition but is equally happy when one of his students can compete on his or her own horse. To contact David, email him at davidlawson13@hotmail.com.



David winning with Butch in Ohio

Photo: Jeff Kirkbride

*Trails and Open Spaces*

Column editor Sarah Reid

A Day Off: On the Trail

Since “variety is the spice of life” have you thought about giving your arena horse a totally different workout? Have you ever gotten tired of going around and around in circles in the arena and wondered if your horse does, too? Have you ever considered venturing out of the arena to enjoy our beautiful Sonoma County countryside? If you and your horse practice an arena discipline, I would like to introduce the idea of taking your performance horse onto the trails.

Years ago when I was showing in the Hunter world, my horse and I always focused on preparing for that next show. Every once in a while our trainer would tell us that next weekend we were doing something entirely different. We would load up the horses and haul out to the beach for a ride. We had a crazy and fun and exhilarating ride, with both horses and riders tired and relaxed at the end of the day. The next time we rode at the barn our horses were more focused and relaxed, and ready to go to work over jumps or flatwork with more enthusiasm than before. Since then I have learned that trail riding is more than just a break for my horse. The trail helps horses extend their gaits, extend their minds, and unwind those circles from the arena, among many other things.

Trail work in the arena

Take the opportunity to use a controlled environment to prepare for your early trail experiences. Practice encounters with people with backpacks, trekking poles, and bicycles. In the round pen or arena, ask someone to approach your horse with a backpack and



Terri Hartley and Spirit practicing lateral work at Jack London

Photo: Sarah Reid

walking sticks. Have someone ride a bike around your horse so she gets used to the sounds of the tires on gravel and dirt, and seeing a person move at that speed. Make sure the person talks to your horse so she recognizes the oddly moving, wheeled-being as a human. Practice until your horse relaxes. Plan where you will take your horse—what park will be the best first experience for him? Consider which parks are quieter, and have fewer bikes, hikers, and dog-walkers. (See table for suggestions.)

For your early rides, go with an experienced horse and rider. An experienced trail horse can help diffuse

excitement, create a steady pace, provide calming companionship, or even pony an over-exuberant newbie.

Protecting horse and rider

Consider how you want to protect your horse. Even if you don't usually ride in bell boots and protective leg boots, you may want to consider them for the trail to protect your horse's legs from rocks and branches, and to provide additional support on the harder packed surfaces. Many riders use Sports Medicine Boots (*Professional's Choice*) or polo wraps for lower leg protection, or splint boots. Wraps will pick up stickers and burrs, so inspect them after the ride. Fly spray adds protection from pesky flies and repels ticks. A fly mask for the particularly sensitive horse can make a huge difference in the comfort of horse and rider. Keep your horse's tail clean and debris-free with a simple braid or tail wrap.

SUGGESTED LOCAL PARKS

PARK	ATMOSPHERE/TERRAIN	SUGGESTION	PARKING
Jack London State Historic Park Glen Ellen	Quiet trails, can be hilly and steep, not many hikers or cyclists.	Mountain Trail is a fire road with limited climbing, a picnic area about 4 miles out, and makes a nice out-and-back. It's mostly in the woods, so it's shaded and cool.	Good for trailers
Shiloh Ranch Regional Park Windsor	Fire roads and single-tracks; mostly shaded, hilly trails. Can be busy at mid-day.	Ridge Trail is quite steep, with some exposed rocks. Riding clockwise recommended so you go up-hill. Canyon Trail recommended for experienced trail horses.	Good for trailers
Riverfront Regional Park West Sonoma County	Provides about 2+ mile flat route on fire road around a pond. Usually pretty quiet.	Good for trotting or controlled canters.	On entrance road, good for trailers
Point Reyes National Seashore West Marin County	Beautiful riding but hilly and steep. Even on beautiful weekend days not many users on trails.	Bear Valley Trail from Bear Valley Visitor Center is a fire road until about ¼ mile from the ocean—one hill, not steep, all shady. This trail is not open to horses on weekends and holidays.	At Bear Valley Visitors Center, good for trailers
Bodega Dunes Sonoma Coast State Beach	Trek through dry dunes before descending to the shore. Watch the waves, horses have been swept off their feet.	Wander the dunes or go on down on the wet sand near the water. Be aware of tents and other camping equipment in the the campground as you enter the dunes.	North end of Bodega Head, good for trailers

Don't be so worried about your horse that you forget your own comfort! You might be out on the trail longer than you usually ride in the arena, so think of sun and insect protection. Don't forget sunscreen and a properly-fitted helmet. If you think you might get off and walk with your horse, tall English boots may be uncomfortable. Paddock boots, *Ariat* Terrain boots, or even lightweight hiking boots may be a good option. Try for a boot that provides support and offers a non-slip sole. Also, bring drinking water and a snack for during or after the ride. Many experienced trail riders feel that a First Aid Kit is a must, no matter how short the ride.

Arena work on the trail

Once you get out on the trail you can just mosey, or take advantage of opportunities to practice the work you do in the arena. Fire roads can offer plenty of room for lateral work such as side-passes, turns on the hind or fore, and shoulder in/out. Balance and collection can be practiced at any time. Remember the goal, though, which is to let the horse be a horse, too. Let him relax by loosening the reins (if it is safe) which stretches his neck and back. Help him to lengthen his stride, first at the walk, then at faster gaits if safe and comfortable. Give him breaks from the work. In fact, get off and walk, stop and enjoy the view. And above all, praise the horse for being in a new and different environment with all the stimulating, distracting things to hear, smell, and see.

Communicate

It cannot be said enough: communicate with other trail users. Ride the speed of the slowest horse/rider. Make sure your group is together and safe at all times. Establish a code of how to tell each other to stop or slow down. Use the universal "stop" hand signal to warn riders behind you. Talk with other trail users; speaking with an approaching hiker or cyclist will establish for your horse that this is another human approaching. Horses know human voices mean they can relax—this is not a predator. Let other users know what they need to do to execute a safe pass on trail. Do they need to stop and step off the trail? Or should you? Do you want them to walk their bike or tuck in their hiking poles so the horse is more comfortable? Should they stop waving their arms around? On a wide track, like a fire road, practice passing others while still moving. If you stop each time you see another user, this may make your horse think he should be worried each time he sees people out there. Remember, the safest pace to pass others is at a walk. Praise your horse!

Benefits for your horse

Ask any animal trainer and they will probably agree: a tired animal is a good animal. Tired means they have been thinking and using their

(continued p. 20)

Horse Council Publishes Sonoma County Trail Guide

SCHC has designed and published a guidebook for equestrians who wish to trail ride in Sonoma County. [A Guide to the Public Equestrian Trails in Sonoma County](#), designed and compiled by Barbara Whitson and Debby Bailey, covers nineteen county, state, and federal parks. For each park, the guidebook provides: location, contact numbers, fees, hours of operation, openings and closures, directions, description, equestrian parking and other facilities, maps, and suggested rides. This handy pocket-sized guide can be conveniently carried while riding. The SCHC trail guide is available for a \$10 donation at all Horse Council events and through local riding clubs. Also look for the guide on the SCHC website (www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org), and at your favorite feed and tack stores.

For the Love of the Trails Written by Dawn Dolan

Equestrians enjoy access to every park in Sonoma County. As you walk along the beautiful local trails on your favorite horse, pony, or mule, have you stopped to consider which organizations make your experience possible? The Sonoma County Trails Council (SCTC) is one such organization. The Sonoma County Trails Council is an organization with forty-two years of experience working on behalf of cyclists, hikers, and equestrians to keep our local trails open. Their website describes their full mission:

The Sonoma County Trails Council, established in 1967, is dedicated to promoting on a local level the establishment and improvement of public trails open to all non-motorized visitors... We promote and organize events and work days to help maintain local trails; promote and advocate safe and proper use of trails by all visitors; offer special training in trail and volunteer leadership skills, and inform our membership and the people of Sonoma County (CA) of important parks and trail developments.

I am one of two liaisons to the SCTC from the Santa Rosa Driving and Riding Club (SCDRC). Equestrian representation in SCTC is severely lacking, and I urge you to get involved. The only other equestrian member recently left the Trails Council board, leaving the equine interest without a board vote. I appeal to all horse people to learn about and volunteer for this organization dedicated to the maintenance of trails here in Sonoma County.

To give you an idea of things addressed at Board meetings, I'm including a posting from February, which outlines the issues discussed:

Feb 5, 2009: The Trails Council is working to ensure better access to our parks in the Russian River District. We are challenging the following trails for multi-use conversion: Stump Beach Trail at Salt Point State Park, and the Coastal Trail at Bodega Head part of Sonoma Coast State Park. Trail construction was funded by the Coastal Conservancy, which requires that new trails follow the design principles as written by CA State Parks and CA Coastal Conservancy in the planning document, Completing the California Coastal Trail. Multi-use is a key design principle.

A typical meeting includes discussion regarding trail maintenance, important pending legislation at a city, county or state level, and grants/funding for projects. The website post synopses regarding legislation pertinent to our parks. Upcoming trail work days include improvements at Jack London and Annadel State Parks, and Hood Mountain Regional Park.

If you are interested in keeping the equestrian community involved in what happens with our local trails, and are willing to meet once a month in Santa Rosa, please contact the SCTC President, Geoffrey Skinner, at skinnerbird@gmail.com or call 707-490-4950. For more info about SCTC, visit www.sonomacountytrails.org.



A Day Off (continued from p. 19)

bodies and are now ready to relax and rest and absorb what they have been doing. After rest, they will be ready to get back to work. Trail riding can be a great exercise for your horse's brain as well as his body; he is seeing, smelling, and hearing different things. He has had to think about where he is putting his feet, and how to negotiate and balance the rider over different terrains.

As a result of trail work, your horse may have:

- Engaged his brain in new ways
- Loosened, stretched, and flexed different muscle groups
- Become more balanced and focused
- Learned to pay more attention to his feet
- Broadened his frame of reference of the world
- Decreased arena burn-out
- Enhanced the work mode
- Learned to just be a horse

Suggestions for a great Sonoma County trail experience

All of the State and Regional Parks in Sonoma County allow equestrian use. Many in Marin County are less than an hour haul. Some properties are better suited to first-time trail experiences for horses. In Sonoma County you can't find a "flat" place to ride on trails; you'll always find some hills. However, if your horse is a fit arena horse, she shouldn't have any problem with walking the hills. Take it slow and let your horse rest. See Table (p.19) for suggestions and information about local parks for both inexperienced and experienced trail riders.

Conclusion

Horses and people can both experience burn out. The best medicine for burn out is to change what you are doing, especially before the burn out affects your enjoyment. Do something different: get out and explore the big wide world and let your horse relax and be a horse! But I warn you: you just might find yourself relaxing and enjoying the scenery, too! What a wonderful thing if the next time you enter the arena, you both feel ready to go back to work refreshed and focused on the tasks. U

Sarah Reid is an equestrian representative to several open space and park projects. If you would like to share trail or public land news with Sarah, or you have an idea for a story, email her at trails@sonoma-countyhorsecouncil.org.

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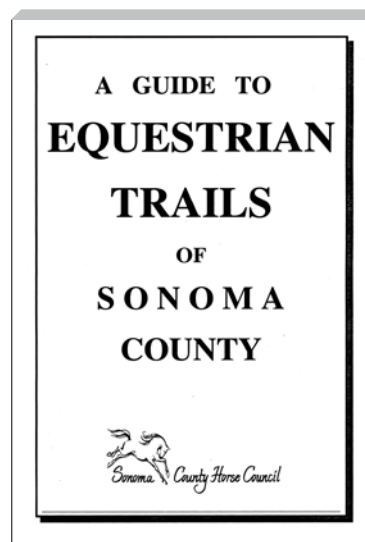
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A Horseman's View

Column editor Julie Cross, Three Star Parelli Professional

Your Saddle and Your Horse: Basic Concepts

Saddles mean many things to many folks. Some view saddles as tools, some as status symbols. Others consider them accessories (*bling!*), trophies, or collectables. Still others view saddles as a mechanism to keep their horses between them and the ground. While we, as riders, have many understandings of saddles, our horses don't.

To a horse, a saddle helps him move, or it hinders him. It feels good, or it hurts. Even though I am a lifelong horsewoman, I only have three saddles, each with its own purpose. For my needs, I choose saddles with utility and comfort. For my horse's needs, I look for three other general qualities—width, shoulder room, and balance.

Wide tree and gullet

I like to turn the saddle over and see if there is a wide enough gullet running the length of the horse's spine. Horses need room to move their backs up, and bend left and right with ease. A flat panel along the spine offers room for expansion when your horse's back muscles start to work and warm up. If the saddle doesn't allow room for back muscles to expand, your horse will be uncomfortable, and her muscles may atrophy along the spine. Your saddle tree should allow for rib cage movement. I check this by running my hand along the sides, under the saddle by the stirrup bars, front to back. If your hand doesn't slide easily, your tree is too tight. This will impair your horse's breathing.

Shoulder room

I want the front of the saddle to be wide enough for the full movement of the shoulders. This means the scapula (the bony part behind the shoulder) should be able to rotate fully. When the shoulders move freely, the horse is able to use his front legs naturally and optimally (see photo). This will help eliminate physical break down of the horse's front end. It will also help your horse move his whole body better, since it's all connected. You can check for shoulder room by sliding your hand between your saddle and your horse's shoulders. If your hand doesn't fit, the saddle may be pinching his shoulders.

Encouraging balance

Put your saddle on your horse's back with out any padding. Does the horse's confirmation bring the front of the saddle up? Or down? Your saddle should sit flatly from front to back, without a slant. Check to make sure the wither clearance is high enough that it won't vanish with a rider's weight. You want the saddle to help you sit on your balance point. This is usually your "sit bones," or the place where you are least likely to need your hands and legs to keep yourself in place. Your balance point is not only the most comfortable sitting position for you, but also for your horse. If you are pushed to far back or too far forward by your saddle, both you and your horse will have problems.

The next step: Padding

After the three general principles of saddle fit for your horse, I focus on the pad. Padding is the "heartbeat" of a good fitting saddle. In my opinion, customizing the saddle occurs here. If you can just put a pad on and go—great! However, I often find that to create a really perfect saddle fit, shims help a great deal. Cutting a closed cell pad (a sleeping pad from any outdoor/camping store) is an inexpensive and easy way to create shims. Shims can help in many




Shoulder room: The stirrup bar should fall at or behind the caudal (tail-end) line

ways. They can lift the front of your saddle off the withers, pad the spine, or raise the rear. One point of caution: Many times I've heard folks say if the saddle is tight, put on another pad, or add shims. That's like saying if your shoes are too tight, put on heavier socks! Ouch! If the saddle is too tight, you need a different saddle. The pad can't fix that problem. When you sit on the saddle, you should feel like you're on your balance point (quite comfy), without leaning. The front of your saddle should be up off the withers.

Try it out

Saddle your horse, and send her out on a circle in all three gaits. She'll immediately feel the freedom of the new saddle fit. You'll see your horse relax and start to lift her back, while moving her front end in a longer extension. There's nothing more beautiful than a horse's natural freedom of movement, with or without the rider. Now try your gaits in the saddle. You'll feel that your posture and balance are better, and she should still be moving in her new, more relaxed, free gaits. I've experienced my horse's posture change immediately when I've got the positioning and balance right. I've seen his wither muscling improve after the first ride! On thing to keep in mind is that you can change your horse's posture with a great fit and better riding position, but you can't change conformational issues. A great fit, though, can help minimize long term conditions that come from your horse's (and your) imperfections.

This fitting process may seem a bit arduous, but once you and your horse feel the difference, you'll know it's worth it. This is my recipe I now use instinctually after hours of application. Great for me...great for my horses. 

Keep it natural,
Julie

Julie Cross is a certified Three Star Parelli Professional Instructor. Julie has a multidisciplinary clientele that ranges from Three Day Eventers to Western Pleasure trail riders. To share your training stories with Julie, to suggest a topic for an article, or just to start a dialogue, email her at horseman@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.



Colts and Fillies

Column Editor Kelly Henson

Digger Stays Home

Guest written by Michelle Larson



Digger (right) and Sheepy discussing the Fair

Digger glanced at Sheepy through his flaxen forelock as they grazed in the sun. The Lady was talking to her husband as he worked on his old truck.

"Are we going to the Fair this year?" The Lady asked, leaning against the beat up truck.

"Sure, why not?" came the muffled voice from beneath the truck. He poked his head out, squinting at the Lady. "I like walking around, looking at the flower show and the other exhibits." He added, "And you like all the animals. Although why you want to go to the Fair to see more animals when you have these two..." He pointed to Digger and Sheepy with the wrench he was holding, "I don't know." The Lady smiled at him.

Digger and Sheepy listened to every word.

After the Lady tucked Digger and Sheepy into their paddock for the night, they munched on their dinner and whispered about the Fair. They nudged each other over their three types of hay: oat hay, orchard grass, and alfalfa. Digger loves his alfalfa and Sheepy REALLY loves Digger's alfalfa. The croakers chirped, a dog barked, and a sleepy bird sang its last song of the day. As Digger dozed on his feet, Sheepy chewed his cud (it's a sheep thing)...He was thinking.

"Digger... You awake?" Sheepy asked.

"I am now." Digger sighed in a grumpy voice. "What do you want?"

"What is the Fair? Have you ever been to the Fair? Animals go to the Fair; that is what the Lady said. Are we going?"

Digger chuckled and shifted his weight onto his other hip. "The Fair is big. It has lots of smells. There are herds and herds of animals, and even more people. Yes, I have been to the Fair."

Sheepy got excited and pawed. "Really—baaaaaaa?! What did you do? Did you eat at the flower show and see the exhibits? What's an exhibit? What does it taste like?"

Digger laughed at Sheepy's questions. "The people get excited when you taste the exhibits and the flowers. I didn't see anything besides my stall, the warm up ring, and the arena. It was a long time ago." Digger was thoughtful. "I went for a horse show a long time ago. It was before I knew you."

"Oh, good," said Sheepy, "I thought you went to the Fair without me when I was taking a nap."

"No, Sheepy." Digger chuckled. "Going to the Fair takes a whole lot of work. You wouldn't sleep through getting ready for the Fair."

"So what happened at the horse show?" Sheepy was anxious and twitching his nose.

"I competed a walk/jog class," Digger remembered. "You go around the arena with a rider and some other horses. The best horse and rider team gets a ribbon."

"Oh." Sheepy looked confused. "Why?"

Digger snorted, and it almost sounded like a laugh. "I don't know why people do the things they do, Sheepy. Someone thought it was a good idea and we went."

"Did you get a ribbon, Digger?" Sheepy asked.

"No, Sheepy." Digger swished his tail, walked around in a circle twice. With a big sigh he settled his big palomino body onto the pine shavings. "We didn't get a ribbon, but we did go around and around, and my rider didn't fall off so it was okay."

"Were you sad you didn't get a ribbon?" Sheepy was ready to be sad with Digger; Sheepy was a good friend.

Digger thought about that question for a bit and shook his head. "Neigh. I was mostly scared, and I was glad when it was over and I was back in my stall... Too many people and horses. I didn't know anyone. My rider patted my neck and told me that I had done a good job. He gave me a good rub down when we got back to the barn. He gave me a big bucket of cool water, a nice flake of hay, and a scoop of grain. We stayed for the rest of the day and then I got in the trailer and we went home." Digger shrugged, "That was my trip to the Fair. It was different, but I like being here at home with my friends." Digger smiled at Sheepy.

"Hmmm... I don't think I want to go to the Fair." Sheepy decided. "I don't want to have to go to a sheep show. Although," Sheepy said sleepily, "the exhibits sound like they would taste really good."

Sheepy drifted off to sleep dreaming of snacking on tasty Fair flowers and exhibits.

"Good night, Sheepy," said Digger, as he closed his eyes and went to sleep dreaming of tasty Fair exhibits, too. U

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Colt and Fillies—Kid's Corner

Column editor Kelly Henson

Marissa Jean Rosenberg—Queen of Turn and Burn*Marissa on Gus (left) with Jordan and Christine**Marissa and Calinda**Marissa and Calinda bring it home after a fast run*

Marissa turned six in January. She has been riding since she was in diapers. Marissa's first horse was Buzz and Cookie Bozzini's thirty year old Quarter Horse gelding, Gus. Currently she rides a twenty-six year old Quarter Horse mare named Calinda. Marissa loves to Barrel Race (see cover). She and Calinda have competed all over northern California in the youth divisions. Marissa attributes her Barrel Racing success to her step-mom, Christine, a well-known local Barrel champ. Marissa and Calinda also trail ride and compete in play days. Marissa is in first grade at Yulupa Elementary School. In school she likes reading the most. Marissa rides horses when she is living in Santa Rosa with her father, Mike, her step-mother, Christine, and her step-sister and step-brother, Jordan and Hayden. When she is not riding, Marissa likes to go fishing with her dad. When Marissa grows up she wants to be a teacher. But she'll Barrel Race forever.

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*All Creatures Great and Small*

Column editor Grant Miller, DVM

Sammy: From Rags to Riches

Samantha was born to perform. As the offspring of the Trakehner stallion "Tempelritter," athleticism and intelligence are engrained in her. At age eleven she is an impressive 16.2, and you'd think she'd be at the height of her athletic career. Oddly, quite the opposite is true. "Sammy" has only recently been started under saddle and has been trained to do just basic gaits. While at first you may view this as a loss, knowing what Sammy has lived through will convince you that she is actually a winner.

Sammy spent her life living in rat-infested squalor. She fell victim to an animal hoarder who kept her in a dark, twelve by twelve foot pen for many years. Sammy was denied foot care, tooth care, and veterinary needs. She and several other horses survived on moldy produce and stale bread, which their owner fished out of grocery store dumpsters. Sammy lived locked away in seclusion for many months on end, never getting clean water, good food, or exercise. Her life was a constant hell. Perhaps worst of all, Sammy never received consistent human care, warmth, or even contact. When she received any attention, it was at the hands of a tyrant who ignored her most basic needs.

Sammy's luck changed in 2008 when the Sonoma County Animal Control Department found her. The Department received a tip about the living conditions of several animals on this owner's farm. The District Attorney's (DA) office eventually convicted the owner of animal abuse and a judge ordered her to either sell or relinquish her



Sammy with her trainers, John Strassburger and Heather Bailey of Phoenix Farm, and to the far left, her "fairy godmother" sponsor, Angela DeCarli.

animals within 60 days. Instead, she tried to hide her horses at a ranch on Bennett Valley Road. Volunteers from the CHANGE Program located the horse and converged on the location with the DA, Animal Control, and volunteer trailering help. Animal Control placed the horses in several different CHANGE Program foster barns in Petaluma and Sebastopol.

CHANGE is a 501c(3) corporation that provides support services to the Animal Control Department in cases of horse abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Change survives purely on donations and the efforts of volunteers. All horses in the CHANGE program receive complete rehabilitative care. CHANGE searches for reliable, responsible owners, and places rescued horses into permanent, loving homes. The program also assists the District Attorney by providing expert witness services in horse abuse cases.

Sammy had some difficulties during her rehabilitation. She had no training, so she had to learn many things we take for granted. She worked through claustrophobia (most likely from being locked in a stall for so long). Now she has adjusted to being in a stall, but she loves to be outdoors. She had to develop a taste for hay and grain, rather than the bread and bell peppers that she was used to eating. You might think that her horrible life ordeal, as well as the stress of her new environment and rehab, would have turned Sammy into a behavioral challenge. But guess what—the spirit of the horse triumphs! She has thrived in the care of her expert foster, and received complete dental care, foot care, vaccination, deworming, and diet formulation. Sammy is the sweetest, most gentle, trusting horse a person could meet. She has carried young and inexperienced riders. She jumps low jumps (two feet), and is a true "pleaser." As her health improved, Sammy displayed her tremendous potential as a horse and best friend. She is sound, and has the conformation and mind of a show horse!

Thanks to the generosity of a very special donor to the CHANGE Program, Angela DeCarli, Sammy has excelled in training at Phoenix Farm. Her trainer, John Strassburger, says "Sammy is just like any other horse; she is just getting a late start. She loves to work and is very willing to learn." For more information about Sammy or other horses, or to find out how you can help, visit www.sonomachangeprogram.com. U



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Readers Write

Born to Ride or Born to Pedal

Written by Patrice Garrett

Some years ago, my bass playing husband and his band members were taped to appear in Hollywood's first "rock western," a full length film-cum-rock-video, with a plot and a wide variety of musical talent strutting their stuff.

I went along on what promised to be a great adventure, complete with horses. And that it was. In order to get the boys on horses as a warm-up for their upcoming screen escapades, we stopped in Los Angeles on our way to the Salt Flats of Baja, California, where the movie was being filmed. My husband had his first, up-close equine experience, bumping along in Griffith Park.

During the filming a scene or two required him to get into the saddle again for five minutes at a time. And he is forever memorialized in the movie *Zachariah*, bouncing up and down at the trot and trope, on the back of an extremely patient, and exquisitely trained Quarter horse. That horse and nineteen others were cared for by professional and highly experienced wranglers. They recommended icepacks and a hot bath for my cowboy's sorely tried rear end.

The film wrapped, and at home in West Marin, we were invited to dinner up the road at our friends' Peter and Cindy's house. Peter was a fellow bass player and Cindy had horses.

Of course, from the moment we set foot in the house, my spouse shared the discovery

of his new found riding ability with everyone within ear shot...Especially Cindy, to whom he announced, "I'd like to ride before dinner."

Oblivious to the alarm signals that galloped out of my rolling eyes, Cindy let him have at it. She was kind enough to tack the horse up for him...And I watched from the deck, with some trepidation, as he rode onto the narrow strip of asphalt in front of the house, and promptly backed the horse up until it was nearly sitting on the hood of a neighbor's green VW bug. And then he was gone.

Disappeared, in fact. Dinner came and went and then some...and still no husband and no horse. At about the four hour mark, when we were seriously discussing calling the sheriff's office, the unfortunate twosome arrived home. The horse was in a lather of dirt and sweat...and so was my spouse. It seems they had taken a fast forward tour of the Marin watershed lands with the pony as guide.

Grumbling about the poor behavior of the animal, my husband insisted on going home to lick his wounds and his pride. I recommended no more riding until he took at least a few lessons, learned to tack up, and got his balance in gear. The subject didn't come up again and I thought that we were in the clear.

Not long afterwards I bought a beautiful,

show trained, 15 hand, gelded Pinto for my daughters. He came with a gorgeous show saddle and bridle. "Bingo" lived on our property and was ridden endlessly into the watershed, on the Dickson Ranch, and around the back lanes of West Marin by my girls, me, and "best friend" neighbor children. Bingo, or as he was formally known, "The Pinto Kid," proved to be a great horse and riding companion.

Until, that is, one fine day, my husband, who was home alone and evidently had taken leave of his senses, decided that he was getting back in the saddle.


I came home from running errands to find him lying in bed, scraped raw and bleeding from shoulder to hip. Thinking he'd been attacked and beaten I rushed to his side wondering if I needed to call an ambulance, only to hear, "I went riding and the saddle turned sideways on me."

Of course he turned sideways too, hit the ground with a shoe stuck in the stirrup and Bingo, who was understandably terrified by this strange new appendage he'd suddenly acquired, went charging down the gravelled shoulder of a two-lane blacktop road, dragging the threat along beside him.

Needless to say, as soon as my spouse's shoe came loose, he and the saddle fell away. The Pinto Kid, greatly relieved, stopped to nibble some roadside grass and just hang out, catch his breath, and watch my unhappy hubby.

A kindly neighbor brought the two of them home. I still have no idea of exactly how it all happened. My guess is, the saddle was never cinched the properly, but I didn't ask my hubby for the details, and sure as heck, he didn't tell.

Lucky for him, his injuries weren't life threatening, and after I was certain Bingo was okay, I wasn't threatening his life either.

Happily, as far as I know, he has successfully taken up bicycling, and maintains a safe distance from horses. It just goes to show, some are born to ride, and others to pedal. 

Patrice Garrett is a writer, rider, and event producer.


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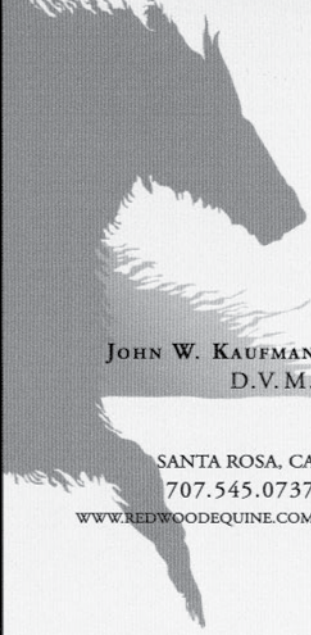
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From the Horse's Mouth

Local Wild Horse Advocate Speaks out in Sacramento

Local author and wild horse advocate Jyoti Germain attended and spoke at the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting in Sacramento June 15, 2009. Germain is well-known in this area for authorship of Wild Horses, Wild Innocence, her meticulously researched book documenting the history of the Bureau of Land Management's treatment of wild horses. According to Germain, many Advisory Board attendees displayed a lack of regard for the welfare of these animals, representing the interests of livestock and hunting. The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 set aside specific areas "devoted principally," though not exclusively, to the welfare of wild horses and burros. Despite this protection, the population of wild equines has fallen from 62,000 to 28,000 since the law was enacted. At the Sacramento meeting, Congresswoman Betty Sutton stated, "These animals cannot wait any longer for us to reaffirm our commitment to the protections we promised thirty-four years ago." If you would like to join Germain and the movement to protect wild horses, email Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board member Janet Jankura at Janet.Jankura@hiintegrity.com with your comments. You can contact Jyoti Germain for information, or to order her book, at equindeliverance@aol.com.



Local Riders Excel at Trail Trials

Several local trail enthusiasts have consistently demonstrated their expertise at the California State Horsemen's Association (CSHA) Trail Trial events. Friends and Mounted Assistance Unit colleagues Nancy Kasovich, Josette Brault, Tammi Bernd, and Sandy Edwards have competed in several Trail Trials in the last two years. These events are statewide or local, and designed to test riders' horsemanship and skill with natural trail obstacles. Each event is three to four hours in length with ten to twelve obstacles. Emphasis is placed on calmness and safety. Riders compete in Novice, Intermediate, or Advanced classes. Trail Trials are open to any breed of horse. Nearby Trail Trial locations have included Cuneo Creek, Lake Sonoma, and Taylorsville. The group places well at every Trial, and this year's Taylorsville two-day

competition held on June 6-7 was no exception. Brault placed first in the Novice division, and won a belt buckle for low score overall. Bernd placed first in Intermediate, and Edwards won third in Novice. Kasovich, who missed Taylorsville, placed third at Lake Sonoma in the Advanced class in her horse Dixie's first ever Trial. Riders interested in CSHA Trail Trials should visit the website at www.trailtrials.com...or ask one of our local experts!



Backcountry Horsemen Install Manure Bunker at Doran



Doran Beach Bunker Crew (from left): P Monette, M Murphy, T Bodtker, D Horn, T Kerfoot, B Aldridge, J Wright

Things got a little easier for riders at Bodoga Bay's Doran Beach Regional Park this summer. On Saturday April 18th, several volunteers from Backcountry Horsemen of California's North Bay Unit (BCHC-NBU) put their shovels in the dirt and installed a new manure bunker in the equestrian parking lot. According to Dan Horn, Chief Education Officer for the North Bay Unit, the project began a little over a year ago. Project Coordinator Ted Kerfoot contacted Regional Park Ranger James MacMillan in response to a request for a bunker at this site. Ted applied for a grant from Bay Area Barns and Trails which covered most of the material costs. The labor was donated by the BCHC crew (see photo), who hand dug the post holes, built the foundation, cut the lumber, and assembled the bunker. BCHC-NBU has installed several bunkers at federal, state, and county trailheads to facilitate equestrian stewardship in parks. The volunteers and regional park staff would like to thank Bay Area Barns and Trails and Burgess Lumbar for their donations, which defrayed the costs of the bunker. For more information about BCHC-NBU visit www.northbayunit.com.

Regional Mounted Assistance Unit President Hands over Reins

Longtime President for the Regional Parks Mounted Assistance Unit (MAU), Debby Bailey, handed over the reins to Vice President Steve Burchfield this summer. Bailey, who was the first President, has served for three years. She is largely credited with founding the Regional Parks Unit and developing a cooperative relationship with the Sonoma County administration. Under Bailey's leadership, the Regional MAU has grown to include more than 50 trained horses. Through Bailey's efforts, all county parks have remained open to equestrian access, and several amenities such as hitching posts, water troughs, and manure bunkers have been installed. Bailey, a Peruvian Paso enthusiast, has been honored in several venues. She has received the Back Country Horseman's Top Hand Award, the Sonoma County Horse Council's Equus Award, and she has been featured in *Gaited Horse Magazine*. For more information about the Regional Parks MAU, visit www.sonoma-county.org.



PRDC Holds Cowboy Challenge Event as Fundraiser

The Petaluma Riding and Driving Club (PRDC) held its second annual Cowboy Challenge event on May 30 at the PRDC facility. Proceeds from the event went toward funding the well-known PRDC Senior Drill Team, directed by Caryn Hoeflein. This well-planned event included obstacles that tested horsemanship, obedience, and speed. Challenges included area patterns, teeter totters, dragging logs, and jumping hay bales. While winners received buckles, fun was had by all. In the Youth Division, both the High Point and Fast Time buckles went to Katie McDermott. In the Eighteen to Forty-four Division, the High Point buckle went to Caryn Hoeflein, and the Fast Time to Rebecca Larcher. In the Senior Division, PRDC President Mike Rosenberg won both Fast Time and High Point. The Drill Team is currently preparing for the Western States Championship which will be held in Santa Rosa on September 26th. To see photos of the Cowboy Challenge, visit www.paulina-photography.com. To check out PRDC, visit www.petalumaridingclub.com.

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Would you like to see your name in print? Got something to say? The Horse Journal belongs to all of us in Sonoma County, so let us know if you would like to write. Articles are usually 500 to 1000 words and, of course, horse-related. If you are interested, contact any of the editors at the addresses listed on page one, or JoDean Nicolette, Editor-in-Chief, at editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org. You can also write to us at Editor-SCHJ, P.O. Box 7157, Santa Rosa, CA 95407. We'd love to hear from you!



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