



Sonoma County

Horse Journal

Volume 5 • Issue 2
Spring 2009

**Riding Shoeless—The Bare Facts
Choosing a Horse Camp for Your Child**

Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council

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

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**Cover Photo: Denise Gilseth**

Certified Wilderness Rider Donna Meier hauls gravel for the Skaggs Springs water trough at Lake Sonoma. Donna is assisted by Stanley (under saddle), Cisco, and Rebel (rear). Read more about the new spring-fed trough at Skaggs Springs in this issue of the Horse Journal.

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A Message from the President



Howdy and WOW!

I was awed by the Equus Awards Event this year. The award winners were amazing. The stories of their lives were amazing enough...but to hear how articulately and profoundly they expressed themselves was truly inspiring. Many spoke of how the horse helped them gain wisdom and understanding, and reach a joyous and appreciative place. We also shared in the stories of the people

who benefited from the winners' passion. The wonder of horses and how they teach us was brought home for us all again.

These are new times for horses; their purpose has changed. The constant is that they teach us. Horses, new and old, brought us all together at the Equus Celebration. This year, we had the wisdom to celebrate horses in a new way. We finally honored a horse. As a result, we received a surprising amount of attention—a newspaper article, an interview with HRTV, and another TV spot, as well.

But none of that compared with the positive response from you all in the community; you let us know we did the right thing. We are proud to continue improving our already fabulous event.

I would like to say some thank yous. I want to give a special thanks to Jacqui Bailey for doing a wonderful job as our master of ceremonies. We hope this was the beginning of many years to come. Thank you to the winners for their candor and heartfelt expression of their lives and stories. Thank you to the hardworking members of the Horse Council. I see your fatigue when the load gets heavy. But on this night, once a year, it's all worth it.

Thank you if you were there to celebrate with us, and even if you missed this inspiring event, thank you for your continued support of your Horse Council.

Remember to send in your horse tales so we can put them in our journal for all to enjoy!

Happy Trails,

Karl Bastian

President, Sonoma County Horse Council

A Message from the Sonoma County Horse Council Board



Recently the County of Sonoma was notified of several horse ranches operating boarding and training businesses without obtaining the proper permits. We would like you to know that the Sonoma County Horse Council has not been involved in these notifications. We do feel it is important to inform our horse community of county regulations and laws. To be clear, Sonoma County considers boarding horses without use or zoning permits to be illegal, and subject to code enforcement practices.

The SCHC was organized in 1996 with the goal of being a voice for Sonoma County horse owners, but also in response to thirty-nine ranch owners who were turned in for not having the proper use permits for their land. Working closely with county officials, we developed new zoning regulations that allowed smaller ranches to operate horse-related businesses. This was widely viewed as a very positive effort that supported the continued operation and growth of many facilities. For more than a decade we have continued to support all groups: individual owners, small ranches, and large businesses.

The SCHC has evolved into a much stronger non-profit organization. Our primary goal is to advocate for horses, horse owners, and horse businesses, which includes keeping our county rural and accessible to the horse community. While no one likes to be regulated, the fact is that Sonoma County requires land use permits for almost any business within the county. We encourage individuals who purchase "horse property" in Sonoma County with the expectation of operating a horse-related business on it to check with the county for information about land zoning and permits.

If there is any way that the SCHC can be of assistance to you, please give us a call, or visit www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org. Please feel free to call President Karl Bastian at 707-974-8685. We represent horse interests of all kinds; we welcome your membership and contribution. Count on us to support you and your horse's interests in Sonoma County.

Readers Write

Barefoot in Sonoma

Written by Linda Cowles

I'm a professional barefoot trimmer. I trim more than 150 horses on a monthly basis in Sonoma and Marin Counties. I also offer barefoot trimming clinics, training, and consulting. I am frequently asked questions about going barefoot and transitioning from shoes. I was asked to share some of those questions and answers with you.

My horse has always been shod and has very thin walls and soles. Can he go barefoot?

Yes. When shoes are removed, the hoof's circulation increases by approximately 80% (Dr Diane Isabel, DVM). The increased blood flow results in hoof stimulation and the hoof wall will begin to grow faster and thicker. Barefoot walls typically grow to the ground in six months or less, with more durable walls and soles. Diet also plays an important role in developing dense walls and soles. The better you manage a horse's diet, the better his hoof and sole quality will be (more about that later).

Is one type of horse more suited for barefoot than others?

Mules, donkeys, and ponies are definitely the best barefoot candidates. Arabians have an excellent vaulted sole that assists in easy barefoot transitions for them, as well. But the secret to going barefoot isn't breed or foot type. I trim many Quarter Horses, Thoroughbreds, and gaited horses that all handle Sonoma area trails barefoot without a problem. With the wide assortment of riding boots now available, even horses that need boots over rough terrain can go barefoot. The most important factor is what the owner prefers. If an owner thinks barefoot is too much trouble, a horse with awesome feet doesn't have a chance. Other important factors include diet and pre-existing problems. Horses that will especially benefit from the increased circulation associated with going barefoot include those diagnosed with navicular and laminitis.

What makes a barefoot trim different than a regular farrier trim?

Barefoot trimmers use a different approach to balancing the foot and trimming the bottom edge of the wall. We trim based on the natural sole plane and the position of



A barefoot trim



the coffin bone. We essentially place the toe breakover and the "mustang roll" where a wild horse would wear it naturally. We leave the sole, bar, and frog natural and untrimmed unless they are shedding. A properly trimmed barefoot hoof wall shouldn't split, flare, or chip (see photos).

What do you recommend feeding a barefoot horse?

I recommend low carbohydrate grass hay and balanced minerals for all horses, barefoot or not. Low carb grass hay pellets and molasses free beet pulp are also okay. Many horses can't tolerate the early spring pastures because the grasses are too rich. If you want more info, visit www.safergrass.org.

Why do some horses need boots and others don't? Why do some wear boots only on the front?

The boot issue is based on two factors: soundness on different terrains and stage of development of the horse's feet. Some barefoot horses are sound on trails right away, but I still advise that boots be carried on the saddle just in case. For most clients beginning barefoot, I advise riding with boots for the first six to twelve months. After that, the hoof has had a chance to grow out its new, durable hoof and sole, and a strong heel area, and most horses can be ridden bootless. Most horses don't need rear boots because the rear feet do more work so are naturally healthier. Some horses will always need front foot protection, while others will need protection only on tough trails. Whether your horse will always need boots depends on your horse's feet, how much exercise he gets, and where you ride. If you ride primarily on soft trails and your horse lives in a soft environment, you may need boots on rough trails. Many people add deep pea gravel to their horse's paddocks to toughen feet up. Finally, owner preference plays a role. Some riders like to

use front or full-set boots regardless, because they are easy to use and it makes the rider more comfortable. If I'm riding fast and long on the trail, I put front boots on, but it's more for me than for my horse. I really like to go fast and not worry.

If I use boots on the trail, should I use boots in the arena?

Most horses that are sound in shoes are fine barefoot in the arena (or the beach!). A horse recovering from navicular will do better in boots for all riding and vigorous exercise because boots encourage good movement, which helps develop tougher feet.



The EasyCare Glove in action

How much do boots cost and how long do they last?

Most boots cost \$120-\$150 a pair and last a year or two. The variety of boots is growing. Some examples include EasyCare's Easyboot and new Edge and Glove (see photo). Other favorites are the Renegade, Old Mac, and Simple Boot. U

Linda Cowles started barefoot trimming in 2003 when her horse Gavilan staged a sit-down strike after she tried to shoe him after a 6 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). She is a member of the Pacific Hoofcare Practitioners. For more information about barefoot riding, or to contact Linda, visit www.HealthyHoof.com.



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Facilities Focus

Column editor Debby Bailey

The Clubhouse

Who hasn't attended a meeting at the Sonoma County Driving and Riding Club (SCDRC) Clubhouse? Whether or not you are a member of the SCDRC, chances are your club has taken advantage of renting this homey and historic place. This great old building was built in 1942, and sits on Aston Avenue behind the Sonoma County Fairgrounds. Many locals claim this building is the oldest equestrian club still in existence in Sonoma County. The interior is warm and inviting, and consists of a large meeting area, an imposing fireplace, a bar, a fully equipped kitchen, bathrooms, and storage areas. The walls boast half a century of equestrian artifacts and history. Black and white photos of Sonoma County equestrians from years past, color print copies of famous western artists, plaques, poems, and trophies are all part of this building's unique decorum. When you next visit, allow yourself an hour or two to just browse and soak up the history and equestrian ambiance exhibited there. My favorite item hangs on the northwest wall—"The Horses Prayer." This anonymous poem, written from a horse's perspective, describes how he would like to be treated during his lifetime. It is a moving poem, and one of the few things that made me feel better after I had to euthanize one of my best equine buddies. This warm and comfortable building would make any "cowboy" or "cowgirl" feel that they have come home. We equestrians have enjoyed this wonderful clubhouse for nearly seventy years largely due to the generosity of the Sonoma County Driving and Riding Club.

The Sonoma County Driving and Riding Club was founded in 1937 by Warren P Richardson, (for whom Warren Richardson



In charge of SCDRC: Bruce, Madalynn, or Tater?

Trail in Annadel is named), Charles H Bauman, and Dr JP Franchetti. It became incorporated on April 25, 1941. Member donations funded building of the clubhouse in 1942. The original members contributed hard work and sweat to raise the timbers. The Club's mission, then and today, is to promote equestrian comradery by organizing club rides and social activities. The Club prioritizes pleasure and safety for both members and guests. The SCDRC is a non-profit organization, and maintains the clubhouse through membership dues, activities, and rental. The Club boasts a membership of 150, making it one of the largest equestrian organizations in Sonoma County.

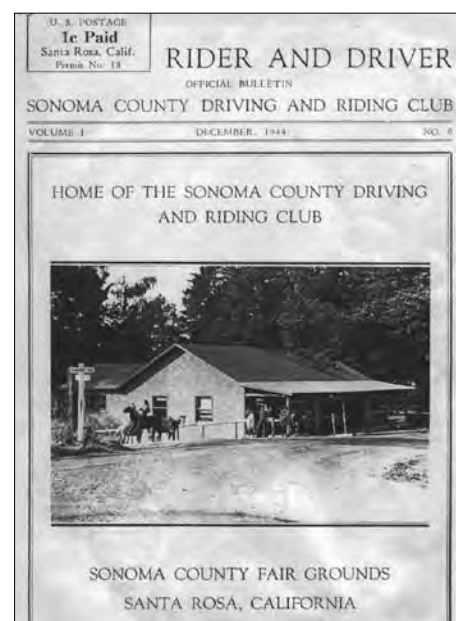
Recently, the SCDRC associated with the Rincon Riders. This has proven to be a "win-win" situation for both groups. The Rincon Riders' beautiful arena on Saddle Club Lane in Rincon Valley has been a valuable addition to the SCDRC. The former Rincon Riders group, as part of the combined club, now enjoys festive, well-organized play days at the arena, organized by SCDRC. The SCDRC

arena is available to other equestrian clubs for rental. There are no stalls or paddocks, however, so animals must be tied to their trailers when not being used.

This club is fun. They organize monthly rides

and two overnight campouts in the summer. The monthly rides are usually in State or Regional Parks, but the SCDRC also enjoys the privilege of riding on private properties. Two or three times a year members can ride on and enjoy properties they would otherwise miss, such as the Dolcini Ranch. The Club also puts on six play days per year. The Club hosts an annual St. Patrick's Day dinner, and a Christmas party. Members receive a monthly newsletter and ride calendar. Meetings are the second Monday of the month at 8:00pm at the clubhouse. Every third meeting is a potluck dinner. Every type of equestrian is represented in the SCDRC and new members are always encouraged to join. If you would like to join, contact the secretary (see Executive Body) who will forward you an application. Prior to the submission of the application you will need to attend an SCDRC horse-related function (i.e. a scheduled ride or play day). You will also need two existing members to sponsor you. Membership dues, amazingly, are only \$20 per year. As a member, you can enjoy the clubhouse for free. 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.



1944 Clubhouse—better parking

Current Executive Body of the SCDRC:

President	Bruce Mandel	(707) 545-4964
Vice President	Josette Brault	(707) 537-0533
Secretary	Patti Williams	(707) 529-3406
Treasurer	Donna Crowley	(707) 539-7184

Board Members: John Neves, Melissa Benjamin, Tammi Bernd, Dawn Dolan, Alsia Dodge, & Ishi LeClaire



The 5th Annual Equus Hall of Fame Awards Dinner



Bidding and socializing before the program began



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JoDean Nicolette, Dan Horn, Kelly Henson, & James Kelly



The raffle prizes were outstanding this year!



President Karl Bastian kicks off the evening

March 7, 2009



Manzanita Moon set the mood



Great conversation over dinner



FAME AWARD RECIPIENTS



Leah Justice & Robert Pope for Coin's Spirit of Mered

Michael Muir

Sue Reinecke

Maria Silva

Many thanks to Emcee Jacqui Bailey, KZST!

Membership is the Horsepower that *Drives* the Sonoma County Horse Council!

Equestrians and horse lovers number 30,000 in Sonoma County. That's a lot of horsepower, but only when we have a strong central organization to advocate for us and protect our mutual interests. The Sonoma County Horse Council was founded by horse owners in 1993 to be that central organization.

The mission of the Sonoma County Horse Council is to:

- Promote the horse as agriculture, industry, and recreation in Sonoma County
- Communicate to members on horse-related issues
- Inform the public about horse community goals and projects
- Support private and public equestrian facilities
- Promote all aspects of the equine industry

Your membership in the Sonoma County Horse Council unifies us! An individual yearly membership is only \$30, but it means everything to our community when you show your support. JOIN TODAY by visiting our NEW website

www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

or by completing the enclosed membership form.

Your horse will thank you for becoming an SCHC member today!

SCHC meetings are held the second Wednesday of every month, 7pm at the SCDRC Clubhouse, So.Co. Fairgrounds



A Horseman's View

Column editor Julie Cross

Trail Training: A Good Foundation

Guest written by Nancy Kasovich

As more and more equestrians discover the peace and pleasure of trail riding, I'm often asked, "How do you teach a horse to navigate some of the perils that may be encountered on the trail?" I have been asked about opening gates, side passing quickly, or even just standing quietly while a family pushing a baby carriage (with flags flying) comes toward you on a single-track trail. My favorite encounter has been two or more people carrying inflated rafts on their backs, jogging toward you! Riders wonder whether it is better to introduce your horses to obstacles in an arena, at clinics, or on the trail. My answer is...all of the above! But most importantly, you must primarily focus on establishing your horse's attention, trust, and respect.

Some basics for a trail horse can (and should) be taught in a controlled environment—an arena or barnyard, for example. I'll call these the first two phases: basic commands, and obstacles. The first phase includes moving forward, stopping, standing quietly, backing up, and moving off your leg. Only when your horse is doing all of the above in a quiet, relaxed manner, is it time to move to phase two—obstacles. Consider remaining in a controlled environment until you know how your horse will act with unfamiliar things. Use whatever is available: a tarp, a gate, logs, etc. When I'm working new horses at this stage, I don't ask a lot. I just want them to pay attention to what they're doing. This is confidence building time, so take it slow and always stop on a positive note. I find these first two phases can take two months or two years, depending on your horse (age, experience, etc.). "But that's too



A confident Nazzie takes local equestrian Sandy Edwards over logs

long," you say! Not as long as it takes to correct bad habits, or to rebuild trust.

Let's jump ahead to the third and most important phase of your training program. Let's hit the trail. This is where you'll find out if you've built the trust and respect you need. Go with a friend and his/her solid trail horse if you can, or look for a trail clinic that involves actual trail riding. You'll find out now whether your horse trusts you as he sees other horses, turkeys, bikes, and things he probably hasn't seen before. If you've taught your horse to listen to you, even if he's scared he'll trust you. If your horse does shy at something on the trail, don't panic. The most important thing is to keep him facing the object; don't let him turn away. Talk, comfort, reassure, and take as long as you need to help him get comfortable. Move off the trail so you don't endanger others and let him gain his confidence. With more experience you'll find

him taking most things "in stride."

Many issues may come up for a horse on the trail—riding in groups, position in line, inability to stand quietly, separation anxiety, rushing to the trailer, and more! I've seen it all. But if you've taken the time to build a good foundation with your horse, and he respects and trusts your judgment, you'll have the tools to work with and your trail rides will be peaceful, fun, and safe. U

Nancy Smith Kasovich (Equus Hall of Fame-2008) has been a nationally recognized North American Trail Ride Conference (NATRC) judge since 1970. During her career, Nancy has accumulated fifteen thousand miles of NATRC/Endurance competition, including completing six Tevis Cups. Nancy lives in Santa Rosa with her two horses, Dixie and Mouse, and her husband, Tom. To contact Nancy with questions or comments, email her at nsmithka@sbcglobal.net.



A Horseman's View

Approach and Retreat: Desensitization with Understanding

Written by Julie Cross



We are privileged to have an expert like Nancy Kasovich instruct us on how to prepare our horses for the trail. What techniques can you use, as you work in the arena or on the trail, to introduce your horse to obstacles, and gain his trust and confidence? I like to use a technique called "Approach and Retreat" which helps my horse overcome his fear of new things, and capitalizes on the innate curiosity most horses have.

I start on the ground. Pick any obstacle—a tarp, for example (as Nancy suggested). Remember, if your horse hesitates to approach the object, he is not being disobedient or disrespectful... he is afraid. Don't punish him for being afraid. Maintain a calm and friendly posture. Put the object in between you and your horse in case he shies away. As your horse looks at the object, let him stay at the distance he feels confident. I may even ask the horse to back away. Observe your horse's threshold. Be careful to not push or force your horse closer. Take him away and

look at something else. When you come back, notice that he may move a little closer to the object this time! Ask the horse to look at the object from the left and right sides. Walk away and come back again. You'll notice that each time, his threshold is a little closer. Soon he'll walk up and touch it.

Okay! Get up in the saddle. Try the same object, and then a new one. My personal favorite is at the beach with kids or someone moving under a blanket. Keep your horse's ears and nose pointed at the object. Let him back away to what ever distance he feels safe. If your horse spins off to the left, counter turn him back toward the object. Ask your horse to walk away. Then return. Practice the same procedure you did on the ground, but never push him past his threshold. Never force. You'll notice that every time you approach, he moves a little closer, willingly.

Try "approaching and retreating" next time you encounter a horse-eating log or rock. You'll be amazed at how much trust and confidence you build—a real partnership. U



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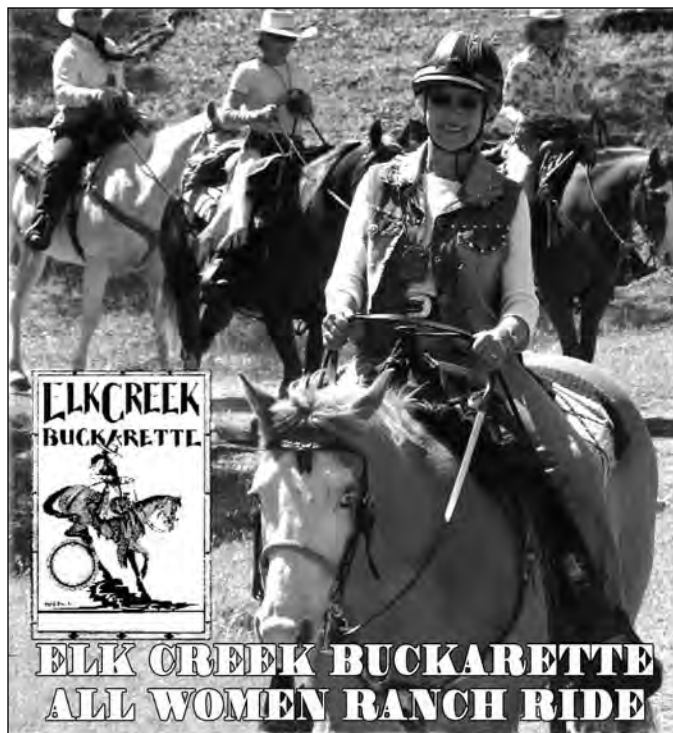
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Healthy as a Horse

Column editor JoDean Nicolette, MD

First Aid Kits for the Trail: Keeping Yourself Safe

Trail riding is great for you and your horse. Whether you spend your time performing *piaffles* in the arena or competing as a Trail Trial pro, a relaxing meander down a wooded lane can be heaven on earth. As regenerating as the trail can be, keep in mind that the great outdoors is not a controlled environment. Even the most skilled equestrians and most seasoned trail horses can encounter surprises. A small amount of preparation can prevent your minor mishap from becoming a major one.

Most trail experts agree on a few universal basic safety tips. Wear a helmet. Know your route and your terrain ahead of time. Prepare adequately for the weather, cold or hot. Carry identification (ID) and your emergency contact numbers. Obtain the numbers for local Emergency Services before your trip, and store them in your phone or an accessible place. And finally, bring a well stocked First Aid Kit for both you and your horse. I will focus on what you need for yourself, as the rider.

First Aid Kits are geared toward the most common injuries a trail rider might face. This article serves as a general set of guidelines for a day ride in Northern California (see Table for list of suggested contents), but the specifics of your kit should vary with the geography, terrain, and length of your ride.

The most common injuries a rider faces on the trail are 1) scrapes and cuts, 2) sprains and strains, and 3) insect stings and allergic reactions.

Scrapes and cuts

If you sustain an injury to your skin, your First Aid Kit should contain supplies to ad-

Table: Suggested Contents for Basic First Aid Kit for the Trail

Bandages/wraps:

Band-aids, various sizes
Gauze pads
Blister pads
First aid tape/duct tape
Ace/pressure wraps, two sizes
Small towel
Cold packs

Cleansing:

Sterile saline
Towelettes

Medications:

Topic insect sting relief
(antihistamine)
Hydrocortisone cream
Loratidine or diphenhydramine
(two common oral antihistamines)
Ibuprofen, naproxen, or aspirin
Acetaminophen

Misc. items:

Latex gloves
Blunt scissors
Flashlight
Safety pins
Tweezers

dress two issues: controlling bleeding and preventing infection. Control bleeding by holding pressure on the wound for several minutes with any clean, thick materials such as gauze or cotton dressing. Prevent infection by flushing with clean water. You can use bottled saline if water is not available. Water or saline and mild soap should suffice in most cases; antiseptics like iodine are only warranted in the case of deeper wounds. A clean dressing will protect the area from contamination. Antibiotic ointment is optional, but provides an additional barrier more than anything else. Get help immediately if you have a puncture wound or a wound with embedded particles, a cut more than a few inches long or a one-quarter inch deep, or if you have trouble controlling the bleeding.

Sprains and strains

Addressing traumatic injuries like sprains, strains, or even bruises, involves managing swelling and pain. Doctors use the pneumonic R.I.C.E (Rest, Ice, Compression, and Elevation) to describe the steps managing such injuries. You can't carry "Rest" or "Elevation" in your bag, but you can carry cold packs to help with swelling and pain, and ace wraps for compression (helps keep swelling down). If you use a cold pack, don't forget to put a layer of fabric between the pack and your skin to prevent a cold injury. Some people carry anti-inflammatory pain medications like ibuprofen (Motrin), naproxen (Anaprox), or aspirin for pain. Other medications like acetaminophen (Tylenol) can also help with pain. Get help right away if you can't use the area you've injured, if you have significant swelling, or if you suspect a fracture.

Insect stings and allergic reactions

The most common insect bites are from bees and wasps, and mosquitoes. Mosquito bites are annoyances, but require little attention. Stings from bees and wasps can be very bothersome, usually causing swelling, redness, pain, and itch within the first twenty-four hours. The best initial treatment for bites is a cold pack. If you want to try a medication, topical or oral antihistamines like diphenhydramine (Benadryl) or topical corticosteroids (Cortisone 10) can be helpful. The most important advice is to avoid scratching, which prolongs the allergic reaction to the bite. Rashes that occur in response to plant exposure (e.g. poison oak) are usually "delayed hypersensitivity" reactions, meaning they take several hours to days to develop. These are most often treated with topical corticosteroids and avoiding scratching. If you have allergies to pollen, ragweed, or other substances, it may be helpful to carry an antihistamine like diphenhydramine or loratidine (Claritin). Any allergic reaction that involves swelling of the face or airway should prompt activation of Emergency Services.

In Case of Emergency

Many cell phones are not connected to the 911 Emergency System. For emergencies in the Sonoma County Regional or State Parks call the Sheriff's office at 707-565-2121.



Personalizing your First Aid supplies

In addition to basic First Aid Kit items, you'll want to take into consideration your individual needs. If you are allergic to bee stings, you'll need an epinephrine delivery system (e.g. "Epi-Pen"). Riders who tend to get blisters may need mole skin, or the newer blister gel pads. If you have a chronic medical condition, or an allergy to a common medication, you may want to wear a medic alert bracelet with the appropriate information. If you take any daily medications, put a list of your meds with the dosages near your ID. This information can help emergency personnel in the event of a serious injury.

Medications

Medications in your First Aid Kit should be considered for your personal use. Unless you are licensed to diagnose and treat, you may be vulnerable to legal action if you dispense medication to others with a poor result.

Real emergencies

Your basic First Aid Kit has limitations. It is up to you to use your experience to recognize emergencies and situations that require immediate attention by a professional. In addition to the conditions already mentioned, get help right away for any of the following:

- accidents involving the eyes
- head injuries
- any reactions or injuries cause swelling of the face or airway
- any reactions or injuries that affect breathing.

No First Aid Kit is a substitute for good judgment, and prudent action.

Trail riding is a regenerating and challenging activity for you and your horse. Some simple preparation can ensure your experience is enjoyable, relaxing, and safe for you both. U

JoDean Nicolette is President of the Mounted Assistance Unit for the California State Parks, Diablo Vista District. Dr. Nicolette is also a Family Physician who practices and teaches in Santa Rosa. She is an avid trail rider, horse camper, and long distance hiker. She has three horses—Jimmie, Chance, and Bear.

If you have an idea for Healthy as a Horse, contact JoDean at editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.

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Readers Write

The New Trough at Skaggs Springs

A story by Dan Horn

The setting

In September while working on trails at Lake Sonoma, I was using the Skaggs Springs Road Trail Head for a staging area. I located a large spring about two hundred feet up the old road from the Lake Trail crossing. The endurance folks use this site for a lunch break and vet check and have always had to haul in water. Ranger Joel Miller and I hiked up the creek and located a spot for a spring box. We decided we could set up a trough for the endurance horses.

How it works

Here's how a spring-fed trough works: At the spring site, you set up a box with holes, surrounded by gravel. The box collects the water, and the gravel helps filter out the debris and silt. You run a pipe from the spring box to a big tank. When the tank fills, the overflow from the tank runs through a pipe to the trough. Gravity and pressure push your water through the system.

I went home and started looking for a water tank, pipe, and other materials. One of the Back Country Horsemen of California North Bay Unit (BCHC-NBU) members found a used 1500 gal tank at Hop Kiln Winery. BCHC-NBU purchased the tank for \$500.00, and donated it to the trough set up. The large size of the tank will also provide Cal Fire with some back up water for the area.



The work party

Del King, Donna Meier, and I hauled the tank to the Skaggs Spring site and the three of us went in to set up the tank. The bank was rather steep, so we took in ropes and pulleys. We did some fancy rigging that made the job easy for the three of us to handle.



After setting the base of the tank and standing the tank up, we started the plumbing. We had to lay the inlet from the spring, and the overflow to the trough. The Rangers had laid the pipe from the spring to the tank earlier in the week, so that made our job easier. Lucky for

us, just about the time we were ready to head up the creek to dig out the spring box area, our ranger friends showed up to help.

At the spring box site we dug out a pile of mud and rock in order to make room for the spring box. Last work of the day was to set the water trough on the road and plumb it in. This trough is one of many donated by the Trail Blazers.



The final touches

Two days later we were back with a bigger crew and the pack stock. We had to haul gravel to the spring box, and needed four-legged help. Donna and James Kelly headed up over the hill on a deer trail to clear tree limbs and a path for the pack stock. Denise Gilseth, Phil Monette, and Barry Aldridge got the gravel ready to move. After we had cleared a path and loaded the gravel, James and I headed straight up the creek to the spring box, while Donna





brought the pack stock loaded with pea gravel along the trail we had cleared. We picked a flat spot overlooking the spring for the pack stock to supervise us while we worked.



James unloaded the gravel in a pile and sent Donna off for another load.



James filled the buckets and lowered them down to me in the creek.



The test

Let the water flow. Stanley performed our test of working order! He got the first drink. Stanley nodded his head in approval: Yep—it works!

To build the spring-fed trough at Skaggs Springs, BCHC-NBU donated ninety-seven total person hours, twenty-four total stock hours, and more than four hundred total travel miles. Thank you to the BCHC-NBU crew for their work and time and to the Trailblazers for donating the trough. U

Dan Horn (*Equus* Hall of Fame-2009) is Education Officer for Back County Horsemen of California's North Bay Unit. Dan also sits on the Education Board for BCHC state, is a Wilderness Rider with BCHC, and is a "Leave No Trace Master Educator" with the Center for Outdoor Ethics. If you'd like to join BCHC, or find out more, visit them at <http://www.northbayunit.com>.



Backcountry Horsemen of California: Not all Work

Imagine this: You, your horse, and thousands of acres of undeveloped land to explore. Add great food, great friends, and great music, and you've got the BCHC Annual Spring Ride in Potter Valley. Every year, on the third weekend in May, the BCHC-North Bay Unit hosts the three-day Rasche Ranch Ride (this year May 15-17th). We provide meals, entertainment, and fun. During the day you can free ride or go with a group. In the evenings enjoy our catered food and live music, with dancing, raffles, and awards. The Rasche Ranch also has some historical and cultural sights for any of you bookish sorts who want to poke your nose around. To join us, visit our website (listed below) or look for one of our flyers.

BCHC also hosts two Moonlight Ride Campouts each summer. Join us for a gentle ride under the full moon, a fabulous steak dinner, and a hearty breakfast. Free ride, swim, and hangout with fine friends and stable steeds during the day.

Backcountry Horsemen is a group of dedicated men and women working to preserve the historic use of recreational pack and saddle stock on trails. Our parent organization is Backcountry Horsemen of America (BCHA). Our local unit, BCHC-North Bay Unit (BCHC-NBU), works throughout Sonoma County with federal, state, and regional agencies. Backcountry Horsemen members focus their efforts in three key areas: public lands, education, and service. We have been active in maintaining access for equestrians in public lands like Tolay and Taylor Mountain. Our members provide education in backcountry safety with horses and pack stock, and "Leave No Trace" camping techniques. Service is probably our most active arena. We are "the shovels in the dirt" people. Our projects range from water troughs and manure bunkers, to bridges and horse camps (and more!).

If you ride northern California trails and you have not joined BCHC—well, why not? Come join the fun, we are sure we can find a shovel to fit your hands! Check out our website (www.northbayunit.com) for membership information, work party info, and ride dates. Just becoming a member adds your support.

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*Readers Write*

Choosing a Horse Camp for Your Child

The Benefits of ACA Accreditation

Written by Shawna DeGrange

An upset father came into my office last summer and said, "I now know the difference between a good camp and a bad camp." I looked up at him curiously as he told me about his daughter's experience. Carrie, who had attended Cloverleaf Ranch for five years, attended another horse camp for an extra week that summer. The camp did not have stringent sanitation standards. She got such a bad case of head lice from the camp's helmets that she required several doctor's visits (costing her family hundreds of dollars), and had to cut off most of her hair—what a way to start off your first day of high school! This article is my effort to help you avoid this kind of experience as you choose a horse camp for your child.

The American Camp Association (ACA)

The ACA has been around for about one hundred years, and has developed a set of guidelines that ensures consistency and safety for camps. Accreditation by the ACA is a rigorous process because they have 300 standards to which camps must conform.

"The ACA Accreditation:

- 1) Educates camp owners and directors in the administration of key aspects of camp operation, program quality, and health and safety of campers and staff.
- 2) Establishes guidelines for needed policies, procedures, and practices
- 3) Assists the public in selecting camps that meet industry-accepted and government-recognized standards." (www.acacamps.org/accreditation)

If a camp is ACA accredited, your decision is easier. But what if it's not? What do you



"Paint" horse at Morning Star Farm

Photo: Courtesy Morning Star Farm

how much horse riding the kids will do, so you can match the activities with your child's interests. There are day-only camps and also resident camps where children spend the night. Only you and your child know how he/she does away from home at night.

Cost

Many parents look for an inexpensive camp. I don't blame them; cost and value are important aspects to consider. I do believe in getting good value for your money. Feel free to ask if costly camps offer discounts or

scholarships to help alleviate the financial burden. No matter how inexpensive the camp, coming to get your unhappy child mid-week is never worth it.

Supervision

I recently discovered a locally-run camp had a ratio of one staff member to fifteen to eighteen children. In my opinion, this ratio is unsafe. The ACA provides guidelines for adequate ratios; typically an average of one staff member to seven campers, depending on the activity. According to the ACA, horse riding programs must, "in-

look for? Also, some important issues are not related to quality or safety, but more about what your child would like, or feel comfortable with. Locally, we have many camps from which to choose (see Table). Here are some tips on what to look for to make sure your child will have a safe and high-quality experience.

Types

There are a variety of horse camps. Some offer exclusively horse-related activities, while others offer other activities in addition to horse riding. Make sure you ask

Table: Local Facilities Offering Horse Camps for Kids

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Cloverleaf Ranch	(ACA Accredited) 707-545-5906	www.cloverleafranch.com
Double Bar M Ranch	707-584-0704	www.doublebarmranch.com
European Pony School	707-546-7669	www.europeanponyschool.com
Giant Steps (special needs)	707-769-8900	www.giantstepsriding.org
Idylwild Farms	707 546-4177	www.idylwildfarms.com
Mark West Stables	707-538-2000	www.markweststables.com
Morning Star Farm	415-897-1633	www.morningstarfarm.info
Plantation Farm	(ACA Accredited) 707-847-3494	www.plantationcamp.com
Reds Riding School	707-478-5110	www.freewebs.com/littlered1
Roughing It Day Camp	(ACA Accredited) 925-283-3795	www.roughingit.com
Sunrise Stables	707-963-7783	www.srshorsesnapavalley.com
Thunderbird Ranch	(ACA Member) 707-443-3729	www.campchannel.com/thunderbird
Willowtree Stables	415-897-8212	www.willowtreestables.com



clude a minimum of two staff members at all times, at least one of whom is an adult." (PH-5 Supervision Ratios, ACA) Ask horse camps what their supervision ratio is, and make sure you are comfortable with it.

Years in operation

How long has the horse camp been in operation? Is it locally established? Ask parents about local camps to get an idea of their reputation and safety record. As Dr. Phil says, "The best determination of future behavior is past behavior."

Facility

This includes the physical structures and the horses. Is the camp clean and well maintained? Are the horses healthy? Take



Photo: Courtesy Cloverleaf Ranch

Horsemanship at Cloverleaf Ranch

a tour or attend an open house prior to enrollment. This is a great opportunity to meet the owner/director and see the facility. Ask about annual inspections by the fire department or health department (if they serve food on the premises). The ACA has twenty-eight standards for site and food service and seventeen standards for horseback riding. The ACA also requires electrical inspections, established maintenance programs, and water purity testing. To ensure a quality riding experience, the "riding staff must check daily, the physical soundness of each horse and remove

unsound horses from the riding program." (PH-8 Horse Suitability, ACA) The requirements also include safety checks for riding equipment, appropriately matched horses and riders, and complete and secure first aid equipment for riders and horses.

Quality of instruction

The quality of instructors may vary according to experience, formal education, and/or certification. Look for quality, professional role models for your children. I also believe an accessible owner/director is important, and reflects the professionalism of an organization. The ACA recommends that staff overseeing the horse program be at least twenty-one years of age, have certification as an instructor from a recognized organization or riding school, and good references. The ACA also recommends that instructors have at least six weeks of supervisory experience at a horseback riding facility.

Health services

Does the camp require a detailed health history for your child that includes medical conditions, medications, and allergies? Is the staff First Aid and CPR certified? Does the facility have well-stocked first aid supplies? While it may be unrealistic for some camps to have nurses on site, medical personnel can create a far safer environment because injuries and illness can be immediately assessed and major problems prevented. Make sure you ask where the nearest health facility is, and if your camp has a health care professional at least "on call." Does your camp have an emergency plan in case of food borne illness, earthquake, or fire? A major event or injury is unlikely, but prevention and planning are the keys to safety when it comes to a camp environment.

Keep in mind that many high quality camps are not ACA accredited. But these guidelines, created by ACA, provide excellent support for parents to make informed decisions about the best place for their child. Wherever you send your child, you'll feel better if you know all the facts. U

Shawna DeGrange directs an ACA accredited horse camp. Shawna also owns and directs the Cloverleaf Ranch, a 160 acre ranch located in northern Santa Rosa. The Cloverleaf was established by Shawna's grandparents in 1947, and run by her parents, Ron and Ginger DeGrange, for thirty-five years. For more information about kids and camps, contact Shawna at 707-545-5906.



A Very Special Camp

Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center is proud to announce its first summer horse camp for children. Giant Steps, which has provided equine-assisted therapy for children and adults with emotional, psychological, and physical challenges in Sonoma and Marin for more than ten years, will be offering weekly day camp programs from July 6th through August 14th. If you know a child with special needs, and want more information, contact Anthony at anthony@giantstepsriding.org, or call 707-769-8900.



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*Trails and Open Spaces*

Column editor Sarah Reid

In the Shadow of Taylor Mountain

Guest written by Pat Eliot



Taylor Mountain

Photo: Sarah Reid

Saddle up

If you happen to live in or near Santa Rosa and you keep your horse nearby, get ready for some new scenery. Equestrian advocates are negotiating with various county organizations to ensure access for you and your horse to Taylor Mountain.

In January 2006, the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District (OSD) completed the \$18 million purchase of 823 acres on Taylor Mountain. Situated just south of Santa Rosa's city center, off Kawana Springs Road, the 1150-foot Taylor Mountain provides a verdant wooded conical backdrop to the city. In March 2006 the first public OSD-sponsored hike

on Taylor Mountain took place in a spring downpour. Summer and fall volunteer work parties followed soon after to prepare the pathways for increased access in 2007.

A little history

Local historian Gaye Lebaron, in her Press Democrat article (8/28/05), provides some history about Taylor Mountain. John Shackelford Taylor, one of the original forty-niners, moved to Santa Rosa after an unsuccessful attempt at "striking it rich" in the Downieville gold fields. By 1853 Taylor had homesteaded—some say squatted—on the 1400 acres that has come to be called Taylor Mountain. He bought a herd of

dairy cows, planted a vineyard, and mined and sold coal from a vein he found on the ranch. A horse fancier, he built Taylor's Racing Oval. In 1870, in response to increasing tourism in Sonoma County, Taylor capitalized on the hot springs he had discovered on his mountain, and built the White Sulphur Springs Resort. Soon both the San Francisco and North Pacific Railways were bringing guests to his get away. Both the resort and ranch were financial successes and Taylor soon left the land to move into Santa Rosa, where he became politically active and an early member of Santa Rosa's banking aristocracy.

The mountain changes

The 1906 San Francisco earthquake shook Taylor Mountain, shutting down the hot spring. This led Taylor to lease out the resort which over time became a road house. Later, during prohibition the building was remodeled to make way for a 'still.' Finally, Taylor's granddaughter remodeled the old building and moved back to the ranch, living there until her death in 1969. In the early 1970s Madeline Haas Russell, a descendant of Levi Strauss of blue jeans fame, bought what remained of Taylor's homestead: the 823 acres that makes up OSD's purchase. Upon her death, OSD purchased the property from her estate.

A property in transition

The Taylor Mountain property was purchased with the intent of opening the land to public recreation. The complete Taylor Mountain properties, which include the Russell acquisition, the Nunes and Bath/Watt properties to the north, and the

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Matteri property to the west (bordering Petaluma Hill Road), total 1100 acres. In October 2008, an Interim Access Plan was submitted for public comment. This plan would be active during an interim period, while the Master Plan is being developed for final public use and access. Initially, the Interim Plan, coordinated by OSD, Regional Parks Department, LandPaths, and the City of Santa Rosa, limited access to hikers only. The OSD Authority and the Board of Supervisors were expected to consider and adopt the Interim Access Plan in early December 2008, after a brief public comment period in October and November.

Your local equestrian advocates at work

At a public meeting on November 6, 2008, the equestrian, cyclist, and hiker communities lobbied the OSD to allow multi-use, rather than hiker only, access to Taylor Mountain. Advocates included members of the Sonoma County Horse Council, the Trails Council, Back Country Horsemen, and the Mounted Assistance Units for the state and county. As a result of this collaboration, the OSD decided to conduct several meetings with representatives from all user groups, to discuss the constraints and mandates, and to identify common

ground for the Interim Plan. These meetings are scheduled to start this spring.

Community land stewards

The current plan offers multi-use, public access through a permit system with some assistance from specially trained members of the Taylor Mountain Volunteer Patrol. The OSD and LandPaths will coordinate public orientation and certification, allowing certified individuals to enjoy the trails and serve as stewards of the preserve. Regional Parks Department ranger patrols and LandPaths-trained volunteers will oversee use of Taylor Mountain during the interim period, watching out for trespassers and vandalism, and assuring public safety. Simultaneously, the Regional Parks Department, working with the OSD, will initiate the Master Plan process for Taylor Mountain, which will be implemented three to five years from now. As a result of inspiring activism

and collaboration among both user groups and administration, this beautiful and historic property will be accessible to all of the Sonoma County community. U

Pat Eliot (Equus Hall of Fame-2009) is a long-time advocate for local trails and open spaces. She serves on the boards of LandPaths and Sonoma Mountain Preservation. Pat is a member of the State Parks Mounted Assistance Unit and the Eldridge Posse for the Sonoma Development Center's wild lands. Pat and her husband Ted live on the south flank of Sonoma Mountain. To contact Pat, email her at patted@hughes.net.

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Readers Write

The Mule High Club

Written by Jeff Wright

Mules and horses? I use both mules and horses for hunting, packing, and riding. While they both work out pretty well, I prefer the mules. Many people ask me why I prefer mules to horses, so this article is about that. And it's a little about mules, in general, as well.

Mules were really the first hybrids. A mule is a cross between a donkey stud (called a Jack), and a horse mare. If you cross the other way, a stallion and a donkey mare (called a Jenny), you don't get a mule. You get what's called a "hinny." You see fewer hinnies around because they are harder to breed, and they're also smaller. Size is usually determined by the mare. You can breed any type of donkey with any type of horse to get a mule, but the most common crosses are Mammoth Jacks with Quarter Horse or Draft mares. The youngster mules are called Mollies and Johns (check out the photo of the Molly).



Ishi Leclair on Bonita, Veda Rose Pope on Sunny, and Dawn Marie Henderson on Mizzi

Photo: Dan Horn



RC Pope & a Molly (young mule mare)

Mules have been around a long time, and this country was built by the work of mules. Even so, it wasn't until the 1980s that the popularity of using mules for recreation and pleasure riding went on the rise. Since then folks use them for everything from trail riding to jumping, racing, and even dressage. I see lots of reasons for the popularity. Many people prefer the personality of a mule. They bond easier than horses, and they are more personable and loyal. Some people say that having a mule is like having a big dog that wants a lot of attention. Mules tend to be more confident, and sure-footed on the trail. Mules are smoother to ride. They eat a wider range of feed, with less risk than horses. Mules tend to be more durable animals with respect to illness. Finally, your mules can go barefoot (I trim my own mules).

Lately, many people find mules more profitable than horses. Local mule and donkey expert, Veda Rose Pope was quoted as saying, "I used to have a pasture full of Quarter Horse mares. I'd pay \$1000-\$1500 for a stud fee, and sell the colts and fillies for \$250. Then I bought myself a Jack for \$250, and started selling the mule babies for \$1000-\$1500." Veda Rose now rides a big ex-Jack named Sunny, and her daughter Dawn Marie (a mule trainer) rides a mule named Mizzi (see photo of Veda Rose and crew).

One major downside to mules is that you can't breed them. Because they result from a cross between two different species, they are sterile. One misconception is that mules are stubborn. The fact is that a mule might take a little longer to teach, but it preserves a lesson for life.

"Give mules a 'braaaayyyek' " quips mule-lover Ishi Leclair. "The biggest problem with mules is the uneducated horse-owner population." Ishi's just joking, but sometimes it's kind of true.

If you are interested in learning more about mules, visit www.muleschool.com or lots of other sites. Bishop Mule Days is a great place to meet mule owners and lovers. This annual meeting happens over Memorial Day weekend in Bishop, Ca. You can also visit a local trainer. Once you check out mules, you'll probably be sold. U

Jeffrey Raymond Wright has owned mules for fifteen years and trained mules for friends. He currently owns two mules, Britches and Deetz. Jeff is an auto body repair technician, a small ranch owner, and a proud father and husband (see Kid's Corner, p. 21). He is the former President of Back Country Horseman-North Bay Unit. Jeff is an avid camper and packer, and has received formal pack training. If you would like to contact Jeff, email him at jeffwright2459@sbcglobal.net.

Famous Mules



FRANCIS THE TALKING MULE made his debut in the film *Francis* in 1950. The cynical and sophisticated Army mule starred in six more films and became an official card-carrying Hollywood celebrity.



In 1941 the drink **MOSCOW MULE** was marketed by the original Smirnoff's distributor and the owner of the Hollywood's Cock'n Bull Tavern to introduce exotic "white whiskey" (aka vodka) to this country. The signature "mule-kick" finish was achieved by adding a generous portion of ginger beer into the mix. Traditionally, this drink is served in a copper mug. The original **MOSCOW MULE** recipe (over ice, in this order):

2 ounces Smirnoff's vodka
1 ounce fresh-squeezed lime juice
4 ounces Cock'n Bull ginger beer
Stir and garnish with a lime wedge.



Ronald Reagan and Death Valley Days may be things of the past, but the **20 MULE TEAM** lives on as a symbol for the Borax Company. Between 1883 and 1889, tough, highly-trained mule teams hauled twenty million pounds of borax 165 treacherous miles up and out of Death Valley. The hardworking mules are honored in Boron with a museum and Twenty Mule Team Days.

Also see *From the Horse's Mouth*, p.26

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Column editor Michelle Beko

Tetanus

As spring arrives many of you will be having your horses vaccinated. If you are like most owners you have questions about what the vaccines prevent, and why you should give them. Each of the recommended vaccines is very important. Many of the vaccines have been so successful, that we now rarely see the conditions they help prevent. This article addresses one of the most important vaccines your horse should receive—tetanus toxoid.

What is tetanus?

Tetanus is a very old disease (described in Egypt over 3000 years ago) that occurs in humans and other mammals all over the world. Not all animals are equally susceptible. Cats and dogs for example are relatively resistant. Horses, unfortunately, are the most susceptible animal. The disease is caused by a toxin produced by the bacterium *Clostridium tetani*. The toxin blocks nerves responsible for relaxing muscles after they contract, causing the victim to have contracted (rigid) muscles. If left untreated the cause of death is usually inability to breathe.

The bacterial spores are found in soil, horse manure, and rusty metal. They most commonly get into the animal (or person) via wounds, especially punctures, although even small, superficial wounds can result in tetanus. When the bacterium grows in deep tissues, it releases the toxin. The bacterium grows best in environments with less oxygen, which is why deep wounds tend to result in tetanus more often than superficial ones. Hoof abscesses, surgical incisions, and post-foaling uteruses are other possible routes of exposure.

What symptoms does a horse with tetanus show?

Symptoms of tetanus can occur one to three weeks after infection. They can be mild or severe, and include the following: an anxious facial expression, extended head and neck, inability to chew or eat ("lockjaw"), stiff gait, difficulty breathing,

standing in a sawhorse-like stance, or lying down and being unable to get up.

Humans who have survived tetanus describe it as being extremely painful. I have seen two horses die of tetanus and both seemed scared as well as in pain. I felt that this was a truly awful way for a horse to die. Fortunately, due to widespread vaccination, tetanus is uncommon in both horses and people in this county. However, as recently as 1992, over one million people worldwide died of tetanus.

Can tetanus be treated?

Muscle relaxants, pain relief, tetanus antitoxin, wound care, and general supportive treatment can help. Antibiotics can kill the bacteria but don't do anything to decrease the amount of toxin the bacteria has already produced. Over 50% of horses who get tetanus will die from it. The best treatment is prevention.

How do we prevent tetanus?


Vaccinations with tetanus toxoid are a very safe and effective way of preventing tetanus in horses, and people as well. This vaccine is inexpensive and causes a relatively low incidence of adverse reactions, such as fever or soreness at vaccination site. Be-

cause of the severity of the disease, the relatively high risk horses face, and the safety and low cost of the vaccine, I believe this is the most important vaccine we give our horses. It is usually included in a "Three-way," a "Four-way," or a "Five-way" vaccine. Tetanus vaccine can also be given alone.

Are there two tetanus vaccines?

There is actually only one vaccine: tetanus toxoid. Vaccination with this induces the horse to produce antibodies that attach to and neutralize the tetanus toxin if it enters the blood. The other product is called tetanus antitoxin. The antitoxin is already-formed antibodies that can be immediately put into a horse's blood when it won't have time to make its own. The antitoxin is made by vaccinating a donor horse, pulling blood from that horse, and isolating the antibodies. These antibodies can then be packaged and saved for use in an exposed animal. However, the antibodies are temporary and do not help the second horse to develop its own long term immunity.

Unfortunately, some horses that receive tetanus antitoxin will develop a fatal liver disease a few weeks later. I have also seen two horses die from this scenario. In both cases, the owners (of already vaccinated horses) took well meant advice from a person at a feed store. Each gave tetanus antitoxin only to have their horses die from liver failure weeks later. Because of this potential complication, I strongly recommend avoiding tetanus antitoxin unless specifically recommended by your veterinarian.

Each of the vaccines your vet recommends is important for your horse's health. Have a happy, safe riding season with your (vaccinated!) equine companions! 

Michelle Beko, DVM, is an equine animal veterinarian practicing with Empire Equine. You can reach her with questions, comments, or ideas for articles at vet@sonomacounty-horsecouncil.org, or 707-545-3909.

Spring vaccines your vet may recommend

Three-Way
Tetanus
Eastern Equine Encephalitis
Western Equine Encephalitis)
Influenza or Influenza/Rhinovirus
West Nile Virus
Rabies





Colts and Fillies

Column editor Kelly Henson

The Easter Bunny Comes to Town

As the sun rose over beautiful Santa Rosa, a frisky Tobi and his friends kicked and bucked in the cool morning air. Tobi's white and brown mane sprayed morning dew as he galloped over to Ben, the Arabian horse from next door. Ben was coaching Molly, Hank, and the others for the spring season of Hoofball.

"Guess what? It's almost Easter and the Easter Bunny will be bringing baskets for all of us!" squealed Tobi, as he popped off his front hooves.

Hank stared down at Tobi and snorted, "Aren't you a little too old to believe in the Easter Bunny?"

"What do you mean 'believe'?" asked Molly, pinning her light brown ears at Hank.

"Well, I have never gotten an Easter basket," said Hank, lifting his nose, showing the whites of his eyes.

Tobi bobbed his head and quickly replied, "Well that's because you don't believe, but you can change that! This year we'll plan an Easter egg hunt in the pasture. We'll have bales of fun." The other horses kicked up their heels with excitement and took off bucking and farting. Tobi continued, "So Hank, why don't you help stuff and hide Easter eggs. It will help you get into the Easter spirit, and who knows what will happen!" Hank stubbornly trotted off to practice Hoofball instead.

As Easter approached, Molly and Tobi gleefully stuffed cookies, apples, and carrots into the Easter eggs.

"Now close your eyes while Molly and I hide eggs in the pasture for tomorrow's hunt," said Tobi, looking around at his friends. A dozen pairs of ears perked forward in excitement.

All the horses quickly dropped and rolled,



Hank's Easter morning surprise

and covered their eyes with their hooves. Even Hank couldn't help but play along. He wanted to believe.

That night, with all the horses snug in their stalls, Ben walked over to Hank. He reared so that he could look straight into Hank's black eyes. "You don't have to be tough all the time, Hank. Look how much joy the others feel just by believing." Hank dropped his head in sadness but Ben quickly nuzzled him, pushing his head back up. "Tomorrow is a new day!" Ben winked and quickly wiggled through the bars to his pasture next door.

It was still dark when an odd noise woke Hank. Tap, tap, tap, thud, thud, thud. He blinked a few times before getting a clear view of what was making all the noise.

"WOW, could it really be... the Easter Bunny?" Hank wondered, looking around at the other sleeping horses.

A light green fuzzy bunny was quietly tiptoeing through the barn leaving baskets with daisies, carrots, and peppermints in front of every stall door. His big ears

flopped in front of his pink eyes as he hopped along. He hopped over to Hank's stall.

"Are you really the Easter Bunny?" Hank whispered, with his eyes wide and head low.

"Do you believe that I am?" asked the Easter Bunny.

"Well...I think...I want to," Hank said hesitantly.

The Easter Bunny smiled, revealing his large front teeth. He looked over his shoulder at Hank as he passed by, "I think you do believe because I got a

message to bring you a basket. No peeking until the rest of your friends wake up!" The Bunny's tail wiggled as he hopped away on his toes.

"Thank you Easter Bunny," Hank loudly sighed. He just stood with his eyes closed until the sun crept up.

Finally the snores stopped and the shavings rustled. Hank whinnied excitedly, "Haaaay everyone, I met the Easter Bunny! I saw him deliver all the baskets. He even talked to me!" Hank squealed, tossed his black mane, and pawed. All the horses crowded around to hear his story. Then they galloped into the pasture to start the Easter

egg hunt. Hank walked over to Ben and thanked him for the advice.

Ben bobbed his head, "You're never too old to believe." U

Kelly Henson is a Sonoma State student and creative writer. Besides writing, Kelly will be featuring local children and their mounts. If you would like to contact Kelly about a story or a child you would like featured, email her at kids@sonoma-countyhorsecouncil.org.

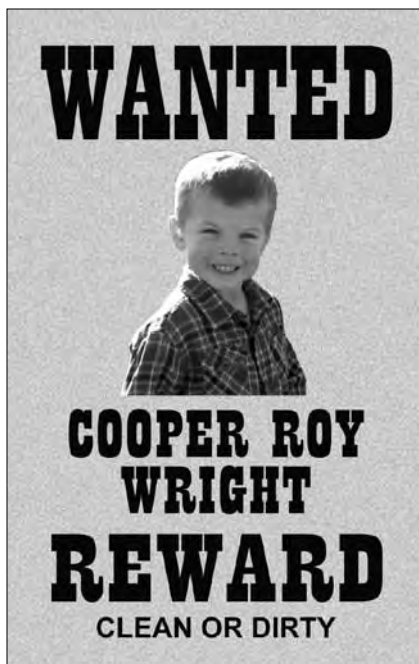




Colts and Fillies – Kid's Corner

Column editor Kelly Henson

Cooper Roy Wright – Cowboy in Sonoma County



Cooper and Dad, Jeff, with mare Julie

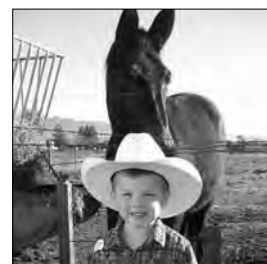
For many children, the dream of being a cowboy or cowgirl plays out only in their imaginations. But for Cooper Roy Wright, stick horses and pretend lassos are for other kids; he lives the life of a real cowboy right now.

Cooper lives in Santa Rosa with his dad, mom, Ronda, and half-sister, Courtney. Cooper is four years old, and he reports that he has been riding horses his whole life. He wants to be a milk tank

truck driver when he grows up, just like his grandfather, Roy Jensen. Cooper has his own pony named Rex, but also likes to play with his sister's mare Julie. Cooper loves to show off all of his animals. His "farm" includes two mules, Deetz and Britches, his sweet dog Roxie, and a friendly bunch of goats, chickens, and cows. Cooper loves living on his small farm, which he tours on his tractor. Cooper will clearly be a lifelong cowboy, and anything else he puts his mind to.



"She thinks my tractor's sexy!"



Cooper and mule Deetz

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Readers Write

Adventure at the Wild Horse Sanctuary

Written by Carey Regenold



Photo: Phil Monette

Welcome...

Phil and I won this fantastic trip to the Wild Horse Sanctuary (WHS) last spring at the Back Country Horsemen of California's annual Rendezvous meeting.

It was still Indian summer in the exquisite foothills just west of Lassen Volcanic National Park. There was crispness in the air mingled with the buzz of excitement. We had our bag lunches and our cameras ready to view these magnificent animals roaming free over five thousand acres of Indian and pioneer history. As our sure-footed mounts picked their way over lava rock trails forged by the wild herd, we saw horses and burros of every size, shape, and color. Mares with nursing foals grazed. A proud muscled stallion watched over his precious herd, ready to do battle with any equine intruder.

After six hours in the saddle riding over pine and oak-studded hills, we were all anxious for our first glimpse of the overnight campsite where our second adventure would begin. The camp was a delightful combination of rustic frontier and modern comfort. We were treated to flush toilets and hot showers, as well as a gourmet delight to please any palette. Our cabins had comfortable bunks. A crackling campfire greeted us as we inhaled the aroma of roasting steaks. A pitcher of margaritas and campfire songs topped off a relaxing, unforgettable evening. We were lulled to sleep by a wild horse herd stomping, nickering, and



Wild horses and burros graze for the guests



Photo: Phil Monette

Saddle up: Riders at the WHS ready for a full day

snorting through the night. The herd hung close to the camp for the free handouts of delicious hay.

We slept soundly. After a tasty breakfast of eggs, bacon, sausage, and biscuits, it was time to pack up, mount up, and head back down the mountain to the ranch's main house.

Photo: Phil Monette

Founded in 1978, the Wild Horse Sanctuary offers a safe haven for wild equines otherwise scheduled for slaughter. The current location, in Shingletton, Ca, consists of 5000 acres nestled between Black Butte and Mount Lassen. This location provides a mild climate and natural cover for the horses, and also public access. Three hundred horses and burros currently reside on this picturesque piece of our American history. The spirit of the Old West lives on in the hearts of these proud and beautiful animals.

I can honestly say this ride was an experience of a lifetime. It was like slipping back in time to a relaxed, rural lifestyle we tend to forget living in our modern, mad-paced world. At the WHS, guests can view horses for free or ride as guests on overnight rides such the one we describe here. If you would like to learn more about the Wild Horse Sanctuary and the wonderful work they do, check out the website, www.wildhorsesanctuary.org, or give co-founder Dianne Nelson a call at 530-335-2241. She would love to hear from you. U

The Mission of the Wild Horse Sanctuary is to protect and preserve America's wild horses as a "living national treasure" in a publicly accessible and ecologically balanced environment with other wildlife for future generations.



The Spouse Speaks The Other Man

Written by Anonymous

She bounds out of bed.
She's gone again.
This woman I wed,
Is off to his pen.

He trots to the gate,
This tame, yet wild thing.
He snorts that she's late,
Asking what did you bring?

Surely a gift!
A carrot-stub treat?
She knows he'll be miffed
Unless it's a sweet.

They're gone for the day,
With the cows, on the trail.
To work, ride, and play
In the mud, over dale.

She'll burst through the door,
Covered with mud, eyes a blaze,
Cursing how her jeans tore,
Her cheeks flush at my gaze.

She'll spill the events
Of her exciting, full day:
How she jumped that last fence
Or kept cows at bay.

They're cutting today.
They spin, move, and drop.
Her hair flies in that way—
She makes my heart stop.

He bends to her will
Under her gentle hand.
It amazes me still,
But I do understand.

They turn on the fly,
Perfectly melded.
My eyes raise to the sky,
Thank God he's gelded.



Write for The Spouse Speaks

*Do you know a horse lover?
Whether you are a husband, wife,
boyfriend, girlfriend, child, or par-
ent, we would like to hear your tale!
Send us your side of it at editor@
sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org,
or write to us Editor-SCHJ, P.O. Box
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missions are officially anonymous,
but you can give yourself away in
the text if you want!*



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All Creatures Great and Small

Column editor Grant Miller, DVM

Working for C.H.A.N.G.E.—One Horse at a Time

Guest written by Katie Margason-Moore



Argus enjoys a sunny day in the pasture after enduring 15 years of abuse by a Penngrove woman later convicted of felony animal cruelty.

In a county with more than 20,000 horses, Sonoma County Animal Care and Control is stretched thin. The Department handles domestic animal, wild animal, livestock, and law enforcement calls in Santa Rosa, Windsor and all county areas. Animal Control also responds to calls about abused, neglected, and stray horses.

Small animals find safe haven at the county's Santa Rosa shelter, but horses do not. Currently, Animal Control does not

have facilities for horses, or the funding, personnel, or training to care for them. Despite the best of intentions, the county has never had a solid equine care and control program in place.

That changed in 2007, with the founding of the non-profit C.H.A.N.G.E Program, or Coins to Help Abandoned and NeGlected Equines. Concerned about Animal Control's limited resources for handling horse cases, a group of community members

formed CHANGE as a support network for the department to call on for assistance with horse abuse, abandonment, or neglect cases.

CHANGE provides housing, veterinary care, farrier care, and adoption services for horses that enter Animal Control's custody. Since the organization's founding, it has assisted Animal Control with thirty-seven horses, twenty of whom ultimately entered the program as foster horses. Eighteen of those horses have been adopted by area residents.

According to Petaluma veterinarian Grant Miller, simply caring for horses who are victims of abuse and neglect without addressing the root of the issue "enables the problem." Miller, who helped found CHANGE after euthanizing an emaciated and severely dehydrated horse left tied to a fence in 100-degree heat, describes a multi-pronged approach to the challenge of horse neglect in Sonoma County. It all starts, and ends, with the law.

"The law is the bottom line," says Miller, "and if you enforce the law, you pull the situation up by the bootstraps."

By offering intensive support and au-gratis expert witness testimony to Animal Control and the Sonoma County District Attorney's office, CHANGE helps these organizations to more effectively build cases

Additional Sonoma County Horse Rescue Resources

Sonoma Action for Equine Rescue (SAFER) – www.saferhorse.org • Flat Broke Farm – www.flatbrokefarm.org
Icsonoma Farms – www.welltrainedhorses.com • Glen Ellen Farms – www.glenellenfarms.com



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against and prosecute horse abusers. Several criminal cases have already made their way through the legal system, resulting in felony animal cruelty convictions in part because of the CHANGE's support. In October 2008, former Bloomfield resident Salvador Barrera was convicted of felony animal cruelty by a jury and received county jail time for locking his emaciated, colicking horse "Yiyo" in a stall, where it died without medical care. Miller, who has forensic veterinary training, spent two days on the witness stand as he described the necropsy he performed on the dead horse. The trial played out before a courtroom packed with North Bay residents and attracted national media coverage, expanding community awareness of horse abuse issues.

Last September, one of the county's darkest and longest-running horse neglect and abuse cases quietly came to a head when Penngrove resident Pat Tremaine was convicted of two counts of felony animal cruelty. Tremaine, who kept two Thoroughbreds named "Argus" and "Bobby" confined to 12 x 24 mare motel pens on her property for upwards of fifteen years, failed to provide the horses with consistent exercise or veterinary or farrier care. The horses subsisted primarily on a diet of stale bread and rotting produce. Relinquished to Animal Control and transferred into CHANGE foster homes, they were successfully rehabilitated by CHANGE volunteers and later adopted, along with four of their siblings.

Several more cases like these have been won or are pending. Before CHANGE, equine cruelty cases might never have made it to the courtroom at all, despite the best efforts of law enforcement and the District Attorney.

CHANGE recognizes that prevention of horse abuse and neglect *before* it occurs is preferable to prosecuting and punishing offenders. CHANGE is working to offer education programs for Animal Control officers in order to give them a better understanding of basic management and handling, standards of care, and body condition scoring. In addition, CHANGE helps officers develop an educated eye that can alert them to abusive activities such as "horse tripping," an underground rodeo practice which involves making a horse run at high speeds and then roping it by the legs to pull it down. Horse tripping is illegal in the state of California.

It's a tall order for a little organization that subsists solely on volunteer labor and donations from the community, but CHANGE is already showing Sonoma County that big changes can come from small efforts. "We're taking a new approach to an old problem," says Miller. "A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." U

For information on the Sonoma County CHANGE Program, visit www.sonomachangeprogram.com or email sonomachange@live.com.

Katie Margason-Moore shares her Fulton farm with seven horses, four children, and one patient husband. A CHANGE board member and foster barn, Katie chronicles her adventures in rehabilitating CHANGE foster horse "Argus" and others on her blog "From Hell to Heaven: Saving Argus" at www.savingargus.blogspot.com.

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From the Horse's Mouth

Dan "Neon" Horn and JoDean Nicolette, contributors



"Most people don't even know we exist."

BCHC-NBU Hosts Marines at Annual Spring Meeting

In the mountainous regions of the world, sometimes four hooves are better than four wheels. The US marines understand the value of equine assistance, even in this age of modern mechanized warfare. The Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MCMWTC), based out of Bridgeport, Ca, owns and operates twenty-seven mules who serve our country by moving equipment and supplies in remote regions like Afghanistan. In March of this year, the marines attended the Backcountry Horsemen of California's (BCHC) annual "Rendezvous" meeting in Turlock, Ca, where they received training in the care and use of pack stock. They also shared history and stories of combat experience. The North Bay Unit of BCHC sponsored the Marines for this event, including board, instruction, and feed.

For more info on BCHC Rendezvous, visit www.bchcalifornia.org/rendezvous.html. For more info on the marines, visit lubbockmarineparents.blogspot.com/2007/05/marine-corps-mountain-warfare-training.html.



National Forest Parking Regulations Impact Equestrians

In an effort to reduce the environmental impact of increased off-highway vehicle (OHV) travel in our national forests, the National Forest Service (NFS) is piloting some new vehicle regulations. The new regulations, although aimed at the OHV users, will affect hiker, cyclist, hunter, and

equestrian access to national forests. The new regulations stipulate numerous road closures and reclassifications, and new camping and parking policies. Camping will now be permitted in designated campgrounds only, and parking spots must be at least eighteen feet from the edge of road. As a result, trucks and trailers more than eighteen feet long will likely have to park parallel

to edge of road. This may create a safety issue for both stock and stock owners. El Dorado National Forest was chosen as a test site for these new rules, which took effect January 7, 2009. In the future, the new regulations may be adapted nationally.

For more information about the regulations or to find out how to get involved, visit <http://www.bchcalifornia.org/disbursedparking.html>.



Marin Horse Council Sets up Emergency Preparedness Contact List

The Marin Horse Council (MHC) is constructing a database for use as an equestrian organization contact network. This network will include the greater San Francisco Bay Area, from San Jose to Sonoma County, and the East Bay. Plans will eventually include organizations as far east as Sacramento and the San Joaquin Valley. This contact network will be mobilized in case of emergencies such as earthquake, fire, or flood, which require equestrian expertise for rescue or other services. Additional uses for the network include mobilization of horse community support for political action or advocacy. The collective equestrian community voice has been valuable in such issues as saving Stewart Horse Camp, and ensuring access to public lands such as Tolay Regional Park. The MHC contact list will include interested organizations and a contact individual for each.

For more information, or to register your organization with the network, contact Sandy Greenblat at sandygreenblat@comcast.net, or call 415-307-3351.

Giant Steps Equestrian Center to Increase Services

Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center has commenced construction of a new facility at Riverside Equestrian Center in Petaluma. Giant Steps, which has served children and adults with physical, emotional, mental, and developmental challenges in Sonoma County for more than ten years, purchased the new facility in order to expand its service from the present fifty riders per week to an eventual two hundred fifty. The new facility, which is contingent on continued success of a capital campaign, will consist of a 100 x 200 foot covered arena, a 60 x 125 foot outdoor arena, a twenty stall barn, a sixty foot round pen, and office and classroom space. The facility will also offer a state of the art Sensory Integration Trail Course that will allow riders to experience stimuli for all five senses while on horseback. Volunteers are always needed, especially those with some horse experience. Spanish speakers are also needed. For more information call 707-769-8900, or email anthony@giantstepsriding.org.



Local Horseman to Compete as Extreme Cowboy

Local cutting and reining expert Bubba Elliot is taking his three year old Quarter Horse mare Scarlet Chex with him to Wichita, Kansas to compete in Craig Cameron's Extreme Cowboy Race. The Extreme Cowboy competition is a timed and judged race through an obstacle course designed to push horse and rider teams out of their traditional "comfort zones." The Race also tests communication between horse and rider, and horsemanship skills. Judges award points based on five criteria: horsemanship, cadence, control, horse's attitude, and overall execution. In the past, Extreme Cowboy obstacles have included jumping into muddy water, dragging logs, various roping skills, and riding bareback double. The winning pair completes all the obstacles in the fastest time, with the most points. Watch for Bubba and Scarlet Chex on RFD-TV this spring!

Do you have news to share? If you have information about a person, horse, or event, let us know by emailing editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org. We'd love to share it with the community.

Adopt a Pet

Sonoma County Rescue Organizations, contributors



The Adopt a Pet column is a free section of the Horse Journal for local not-for-profit organizations to present rescue horses available for adoption. Horses may be any discipline, breed, or age, and at any level of training. Horses may or may not be rideable. The maximum price is \$500, but offering organizations will likely perform screening of potential owners, and require applications. For more information about any horse, or to express an interest, visit the websites provided at the close of each ad.



Samantha a.k.a. "Sammy"

Breed: Trakehner -Thoroughbred

Age: 11 years **Height:** 15.2 hands **Sex:** Mare

Disposition: Sweet, loving mare who is at home in an outdoor area with other horses. She can live alone, as long as other horses are sharing a fence line. She gets stressed in a stall or small paddock.

Training: Basic groundwork, lunging, ponied wearing a saddle

Likes: Open living environments

Dislikes: Loud noises, being confined to a small enclosures; prefers to be outdoors.

Level: Best for an experienced handler

Health issues: Gets hives if fed rye hay or certain kinds of orchard grass hay. Hives are sporadic and are easily controlled. Otherwise healthy and sound.

Cost: Complete the CHANGE Program Adoption Questionnaire and Application.

Comments: Sammy should have a loving home and a chance at a great life. She has not received the basic care or attention she deserves. Despite this, she remains a sweet and friendly mare who clearly loves life. She is an inspiration and her love of life can be felt when near her.

Interested? Contact www.sonomachangeprogram.com

*The old mare watched the tractor work
A thing of rubber and steel,
Ready to follow the slightest wish
Of the man who held the wheel.
She said to herself as it passed by,
You gave me an awful jolt.
But there's one thing that you cannot do,
You cannot raise a colt.*

—Unknown

Caleb

Breed: Thoroughbred, registered with Jockey Club as "Mac Attack"

Age: 20 years **Height:** 15.2 hands **Sex:** Gelding

Disposition: Sweet horse, loves people; lovely to ride, light in the bridle, responsive to leg. He tries hard, works hard, and is a wonderful horse.

Training: Trail riding, elementary dressage, started over fences; loads and trailers well. Calm in new places. Ties and bathes well.

Likes: Great work ethic under saddle; loves to learn.

Dislikes: Dogs and strange horses walking directly behind him. Wears a red ribbon in his tail at public events. Needs work with electric clippers.

Health: Excellent! Sound and has been in steady work since July 2008. Current on dental, vaccinations, chiropractic, worming and feet. Great feet for a TB. Easy keeper.

Rider skill level: Intermediate

Cost: No adoption fee to approved lifetime home

Comments: A former stakes winning racehorse, Caleb is looking for someone to help write the rest of his heartwarming rescue story. He was rescued from a slaughter dealer's feedlot. Not much is known about his history past age 4, although he has "ranch horse" sensibility and excellent ground manners. Caleb is a lovely mover with an uphill build. He is sound with clean legs and joints and has much to offer his new person. Caleb is located in Santa Rosa and is available to take on trial.

Interested? Contact www.saferhorse.com



AD SPECIFICATIONS AND RATES

The Sonoma County Horse Journal is a quarterly publication designed to reach Sonoma County's estimated 30,000 equestrians through direct mail to SCHC Members, individuals, organizations, 35 local horse clubs, and distribution at local feed stores and equestrian businesses.

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