



Sonoma County

Horse Journal

Volume 5 • Issue 1
Winter 2009

5th Annual

Equus Hall of Fame Awards Edition

Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council

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Volume 5 • Issue 1 • Winter 2009

Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council – Home of the Equus Awards**Inside this Issue**

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**Cover Photo: R. Todd Cary**

Coin's Spirit of Mered has been chosen as the Sonoma County Horse Council's first Hall of Fame Horse. Read more about Mered and the other Equus Award winners inside this issue of the Horse Journal.

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A Message from the President



Howdy!

As you read this issue of the Horse Journal, I'm sure you'll notice our new format. The Journal is undergoing change. We have a new team, led by Editor-in-Chief JoDean Nicolette. This team is creative and tireless, and will undoubtedly take the Journal to new heights.

I want to thank John Straussburger, our past editor, and Carol Bolum, our past graphic designer, for their outstanding service to the Journal.

Carol volunteered for many years and brought this Journal from a newsletter to a full-on publication. She made this Journal the face of the Horse Council, and the voice of the horse community here in Sonoma County. Time is the greatest gift one can give the community. Here's a hooray and thanks, Carol! Horse lovers—you thank her, yourselves, the next time you see her.

The Equus Awards are right around the corner. We have a fine list of honorees; read on to find out more about them. Please plan to

celebrate with us at the Fifth Annual Equus Awards on March 7, 2009. We'll be at the Flamingo Hotel for the awards, a fine meal, and dancing to Manzanita Moon.

I'm excited to announce our First Annual Hall of Fame Horse this year. I think you'll see why this special horse got our attention. We'll be choosing an annual Hall of Fame Horse from now on. During the coming year, we look forward to receiving your nominations for the Hall of Fame Horse—possibly your own—for next year's award. Tell us your wonderful stories. A good horse tale could get your horse on our cover.

Finally, we have an additional award this year. Look further in this issue for our announcement of the Sonoma County Horse Council Special Service Award. We chose to honor Al Kuck this year. This community is very fortunate to have such a special man to help us during a difficult time we all eventually face with our equine friends.

SEE YA AT THE HALL OF FAME EQUUS AWARDS!!!!!!

Happy Trails,

Karl Bastian

President, Sonoma County Horse Council

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 Farm Bureau.***



**Special thanks
to the following for help
with Equus Awards bio
information:**

Mike Bailey

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R. Todd Cary

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Nancy Kasovich

Benita Mattioli

Donna Meier

Joel Miller

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A Message from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the new Horse Journal! I am pleased to introduce our new publication to the equestrians of Sonoma County. If you have been here any length of time, you know what a gem this publication is for all of us. I would like to thank Carol Bollum and John Strassburger for their tremendous dedication and work, which transformed this journal from a newsletter to its current, upgraded, professional form. John and Carol recently retired to a long-deserved rest from their creative contributions. The Horse Council helped us establish a new team to keep our unique Horse Journal on track, and as strong as ever.

Our new team consists of writers and editors who each have a special area of expertise. Each member has taken charge of a column, which you can count on seeing in every issue of the Horse Journal. Let me introduce you to a few of the columns:

All Creatures Great and Small: Veterinarian and animal advocate, Grant Miller, will keep you informed on the health and well-being of the horses of Sonoma County. He has a guest writer this issue, and he welcomes your stories.

A Horseman's View: Professional instructor, Julie Cross, will share her expertise with you, and invite other experts to contribute their perspectives, as well.

Healthy as a Horse: As a physician, I created this column to focus on the health of horse owners in our community. I'd love to hear from you with ideas or articles.

Colts and Fillies: Kelly Henson, Sonoma State student and creative writer, produces this column so that kids and teens (and their parents!) can also enjoy the Horse Journal.

Please enjoy these, and all the columns in the new Horse Journal. We recognize that the Horse Journal belongs to the Sonoma County community. Our column editors will be contacting YOU to contribute to their sections. And if you want to write for us, let us know. We also have a **Readers Write** section for your personal contributions on any topics about which you have something to say! You'll find our contact information on the first page, and at the close of each article.

Finally, let me introduce the new Director of Graphic Design, Lynn Newton. Lynn is responsible for the artful layout of the Journal. Whether the names on the Editorial Board, are familiar or new to you, be assured that we all have the same mission in mind as we create each Horse Journal: To inform, engage, and entertain the horse lovers of Sonoma County.

Thanks for your time and attention. Read on, and enjoy!

JoDean Nicolette
Editor-in-Chief

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2009 Equus Hall of Fame Winners



Coin's Spirit of Mered – First Annual Hall of Fame Horse



Photo: R. Todd Cory

The Sonoma County Horse Council has chosen Mered as the first equine member of the Equus Hall of Fame because of his outstanding talent and work with special children.

Mered was born and raised in Sonoma County. He is a Tennessee Walking Horse belonging to the Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center. Mered was bred specifically for work with disabled children, and began training at an early age. His disposition and intelligence were so impressive that his career helping children began when he was only three years old. Mered has been a hero ever since.

Mered is now ten years old and is the backbone of the Giant Steps Program. He shows the poise, steadiness, and positive attitude that one would expect from an older, more experienced horse. Robert Pope, Executive Director of Giant Steps shared, "Mered is the smartest horse I have ever seen... Since he is so good at his job, he can hardly wait to show new volunteers just what to do." Although Mered works with riders of any age, he is especially good with children. Mered's first rider was a child named DJ, with cerebral palsy.

DJ's parents were told that DJ would never walk, or even feel his legs. They brought

him to Giant Steps not quite knowing what to expect. From the moment DJ and Mered met, it was clear they had a special bond. Mered became DJ's new best friend. After a few months of therapeutic riding, DJ was walking, and after six months, DJ's mom received a phone call from his teacher complaining that DJ was running too much in the classroom. DJ's mom laughs as she reports that her gleeful giggle wasn't the reaction her son's teacher had expected.

The professionals at Giant Steps have many more stories about Mered. One day he was carrying a small child when a deer bounded into the arena, causing alarm among the therapists. Mered just stopped and stood absolutely still until the deer bounded back out. He moved again when the command was given. Mered gaited for a ninety-four year old stroke survivor who wanted to ride a Tennessee Walker one last time. The weakened rider had difficulty with the leg commands, but Mered safely and gently carried her around the arena, compensating for her mistakes. Mered has touched children and adults with severe anxiety, autism, and developmental delays. Mered is eager for each day, taking his job very seriously, and enjoying all of his riders.

In his free time, Mered enjoys kids, carrots, and walking on the beach. He loves to hang around with his best friend Shiloh, an older horse with whom he bonded as a youngster. In the pasture he is playful and energetic, kicking up his heels and stirring up the herd. Mered has no plans to retire; he will likely continue his magical work until he's twenty-five or so. That means he'll help thousands more children before he retires to a life of leisure with the clover and the dandelions.



DJ "no hands" riding Mered





2009 Equus Hall of Fame Winners



Deborah Ilene Bailey



Debby Bailey has been named to the Equus Hall of Fame for her many years of volunteer work for the Sonoma County equestrian community, and in particular, for her outstanding work in creation and development of the Regional Parks Mounted Assistance Unit (MAU).

Debby was born in Los Angeles, which she insists was a mistake. She yearned for the country life from day one. The only horse

she rode as a child was the "Wonder Horse" in front of the grocery store.

Debby moved to Sonoma County in 1975 with her husband, Mike. In 1984, Debby and Mike bought their current home in Windsor. Debby chose the house because it came with a horse (her first) in the back yard. Debby joined the State Parks MAU in 1996. She served as President for three years. Debby soon saw a need for a separate unit that focused on the regional parks. She collaborated with Sonoma County, the Regional Parks Rangers, and the State MAU to create a well-organized Regional Parks Mounted Unit. This unit is now over fifty members strong, with more than one hundred horses. As Regional MAU President, she has collaborated



Debby and Margarita

with local administration to facilitate equestrian access to open spaces, including Riverfront and Tolay. Debby forged a partnership with Back Country Horseman of California (BCHC), promoting projects that improved equestrian facilities, and earning her BCHC's "Top Hand Award." Debby has also received the California State Parks "California Poppy Award." The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors acknowledged her outstanding "County Volunteer Efforts," for acting as a liaison between the County and the equestrian community. Debby has also served as President of the Peruvian Paso Club, and has been featured in *Gaited Horse Magazine*.

Debby and Mike currently live in Windsor. Their three daughters live in Northern California. She still has horses in her back yard.

Robert Kenneth Birkland Jr



Bob Birkland, affectionately known as "Ranger Bob," has been named to the Equus Hall of Fame for his dedication in promoting the multi-use trail system in Sonoma County, and for his role in developing the California State Parks Mounted Assistance Unit (MAU).

Ranger Bob was born in Reno, Nevada. He moved to Sonoma County in 1970, at the age of thirteen. Bob received his first horse, Diamond Lil,

at the age of fourteen. As a teen he rode his bike one mile to Diamond Lil's pasture in Rincon Valley, and then rode his mare right into the hills of Annadel. Bob always dreamed that he would one day be a State Park Ranger assigned to Annadel State Park.



Ranger Bob and Bishop

Ranger Bob has served Sonoma County with both the regional and state parks, and has always advocated for equestrians. During his first state park assignment, Sonoma Coast State Beach, he worked with Backcountry Horseman to install trail signs and hitching rails at Bodega Dunes. In 2000, Ranger Bob was finally assigned to his dream park, Annadel. He patrolled on horseback, and was instrumental in facilitating communication and safety among hikers, cyclists, and equestrians. Ranger Bob encourages all user groups to volunteer and act as park stewards, and to collaborate to maintain trails. In particular, Bob supports and promotes the MAU, which has grown from a handful to seventy-five riders under his wisdom and guidance. Ranger Bob has obtained more than \$10,000 in grant funding from REI for map design and trail maintenance at Annadel. He continues to work with local companies to help fund park improvements for all user groups.

Ranger Bob lives in Rincon Valley with his wife, Sandy, and daughter, Kelly. He still rides in the hills of Annadel with horses, Bishop, Hannah, and Dolly—but just for fun.



2009 Equus Hall of Fame Winners



Patricia Peters Eliot



Pat Eliot is receiving an Equus Award for her dedication to protection of open space, while promoting responsible equestrian access.

Pat Eliot's earliest equestrian memory is as a three year old, looking between long white ears of her mule as she rode in the Sierra. She received her first horse at the age of twelve. As a youth, she spent summers with her horse at Jack London Guest Ranch in Glen Ellen as part of a

housekeeping crew, and was paid \$50 plus her horse's keep for a summer's work.

After her marriage to diplomat Ted Eliot, she lived in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East where she had many international riding adventures. Upon moving to Sonoma in 1987, Pat became active in land conservation and stewardship. She helped form the Sonoma Mountain Preservation Group to protect a parcel on the southeastern flank of the mountain, a magnificent redwood, oak, and



Pat and D2

maple forest. This land is now protected by the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (OSD) and slated to become accessible to the public by trail from Jack London State Historic Park (SHP). Pat also helped Jack London SHP acquire 600 acres of the Sonoma Developmental Center, set for vineyard development. Pat is a board member of LandPaths, a county organization that provides responsible public access to many of OSD's 72,000

acres. Pat is a longstanding member of the State Parks Mounted Assistance Unit (MAU) and the Eldridge Posse. Pat says protecting lands for the public "doesn't just happen. Collaboration, cooperation, communication, compromise, and public involvement can move mountains."

Danny Earl Horn



Dan Horn has been named to the Equus Hall of Fame for his outstanding contributions to trail riding in Sonoma County.

Dan was born in Oakdale, California, and raised in Humboldt County. He first remembers riding a horse at age seven. Dan's first equine pal was a mule named Flapjack, with whom he shared many adventures.

Dan moved to Sonoma County in 1975. Dan has made many

contributions to the trail community through his membership in Back Country Horsemen of California (BCHC). He currently serves as their education officer. Since joining BCHC in the 1990s, Dan has



Dan and his herd

cut and maintained trails, built bridges, installed water troughs, hitching posts, and manure bunkers, and designed camp sites. He has obtained grant funding to upgrade facilities and purchase equipment. Dan's contributions can be seen at the county and state parks, and especially at Lake Sonoma. As one nominator put it, "If you have ridden on the trail in Sonoma County, you have benefited from Dan Horn's generosity." His experience and knowledge of back country travel is extensive. Dan has earned the title of Master Educator in "Leave No Trace (LNT)" from the National Outdoor Leadership School. He is also a "Wilderness Rider" with BCHC. The Wilderness Rider designation results from a collaboration between BCHC, NFS, NPS and the BLM, and is awarded to individuals who demonstrate extensive knowledge and skill with back country stock use. In 2008, Dan was named "Wilderness Rider of the Year," a statewide award given to a single rider by BCHC for his or her outstanding contribution to back country riding.

Dan currently lives in Santa Rosa, and has four children. He is a Vietnam veteran. Dan is a contractor when he is not on the trail with one of his three horses (Cisco, Bill, and Rebel).



2009 Equus Hall of Fame Winners



Michael Hanna Muir



Michael Muir is receiving an Equus Award for his dedication to promoting horsemanship among physically challenged individuals.

Michael Muir, international horsemanship champion, began as a teenager on Fulton Road in Santa Rosa. Michael received his first broodmare when he was twelve, and soon acquired another. Both mares had fillies in tow, and fillies on the way. "With six females, I was

well on my way to being a horse breeding son of a gun!" His first stable was a roof-less barn at a feedlot in Dixon, owned by the local banker. Michael rode his bike every day to care for his growing herd. He had already found his life's work.

Michael has worked with Appaloosa show horses and bred race horses. His horses have earned National Grand Championships in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. What makes this extraordinary record unique is that Michael has lived with multiple sclerosis since the age of fifteen. When the course of his disease prevented him from riding, he turned to driving, and was introduced to the world of draft horses. Michael began crossing some descendants of his original Appaloosas with Percherons and developed his eye-catching Stonewall Sporthorses. Michael



Michael drives Percheron sisters Heartstrings, Bonnie, and Diamond Lil

and an international team of equestrians with disabilities completed a remarkable 3,000 mile Horsedrawn Journey across America in 2001, with his unique Warmbloods. They drove wheelchair accessible carriages from the Mission in San Diego to the White House. His experiences with the Horsedrawn Journey across America led Michael to found Access Adventure, a program that enriches the lives of people with disabilities.

Michael's journey has come full circle. In 2009, Access Adventure will begin offering programs in outdoor recreation, environmental education, and open space access, using wheelchair accessible carriages to residents with disabilities and underserved youth in Sonoma County.

Sue Matthiessen Reinecke



Sue Reinecke has been named to the Equus Hall of Fame for her outstanding contribution to dressage in Sonoma County.

Sue's first riding memory is as a four year old sitting on a neighbor's placid plow horse. She grew up riding in Carmel, Woodside, and Pebble Beach. She rode her first dressage horse in the Round Barn at Mt Weske in Windsor.

Sue moved to Sonoma County in 1970. She met her husband

Tom in Healdsburg and subsequently moved to his family ranch, Renaissance Farm on Milk Barn Road. Sue's presence transformed the rustic former dairy from a few stalls and a "piece of sand" for riding, to a boarding barn with a first-class arena. The facility now attracts dressage clinicians from all over the world. Nonetheless, Renaissance Farm remains a relaxed, working farm with 200 acres of oak and wildflower-covered pasture for Sue's beloved cows and a few lucky horses. One nominator wrote, "When local equestrians think of dressage, or of a horse-and human-friendly stable, Sue's cheerful face is the first that comes to mind." Through the California Dressage Society (CDS), Sue has volunteered promoting dressage, encouraging local riders, and fostering Sonoma's own "Dressage in the Wine Country." In the 1980s, collaborating with 4-H and the Sonoma CDS Chapter, Sue sponsored a riding program called "Horsepower" for people with special needs, such as autism and paraplegia. Sue has worked with world-class dressage trainers, including Darren Taplin, Lilo Fore, and Shelley Siegel. She has ridden at FEI (Federation Equestre Internationale) Grand Prix level, currently at Prix St George, and has won the US Dressage Federation Bronze and Silver medals, and the FEI Master's Challenge.



Sue sidesaddle on Lester

Sue and Tom currently live at Renaissance Farm. She owns two Hanoverian geldings, 19-year-old Lester and 20-year-old Raj. She continues to love and support dressage.



2009 Equus Hall of Fame Winners



Maria Emilia Silva



Maria Silva receives an Equus Award for her outstanding work with Quarter Horses, and her dedication to advancing the disciplines of reining and western pleasure in Sonoma County.

Maria Silva was born in San Francisco. Although she comes from a family of musicians, she rode her first horse at 1½ years old. As a child, she rode in Golden Gate Park. At the age of six, she entered her first show at Albert's

field in San Rafael, and had to ride her horse fourteen miles to get there.

Maria moved to Sonoma County in 1972, when she purchased the Lone Pine Ranch in Sebastopol. Maria has spent her life training and showing horses. Her students and horses have shown and won at local, national, and international competitions. Some of Maria's well-known students include Doreen Bobo and Debbie Dee, who both won year-end awards with the Pacific Coast Hunter Jumper Stock Horse Association. Steve Garretson, also a student of Maria's, held the title of Reserve Champion in the Stock Seat Medal Class of the American Horse Show Association. Maria has worked with many other ac-



Maria and student Rhonda Dunlap on Lady Charlotte

complished students, including Lyle Smith and Jan Brandt. As one nominator put it, "Maria has probably forgotten more than most of us ever knew about Quarter Horses." Docs Drifter, well-known son of Doc Bar, stood at Maria's ranch. Maria continues to broker fine Quarter Horses to buyers in the United States and abroad. In addition to her outstanding work in Sonoma County, she

has trained western show horses in Denmark. Her horses were shown throughout Denmark and Germany in the 1980s.

Maria Silva currently lives in Petaluma. She's not riding anymore (doctor's orders!), but she continues to give private riding instruction in reining to a lucky few Sonoma County riders.

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The Hay Crisis

by Danny Winters

Hay has become more expensive than any of us could have predicted. It surprised even me, and I've been involved in the hay business for twenty-five years. I evolved in the hay world working on a large ranch that produced 40,000-50,000 tons annually. Over the years I have met buyers and sellers all over the western states and I do business with exporters who trade hay to Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. In this article, I am going to explain some of the reasons that hay prices have climbed so high, and also give you some suggestions for getting the most hay for your dollars.

I can think of three reasons why hay has gotten so expensive: decreased supply of water, increased price of fuel, and more demand than supply.

More demand than supply

There are two factors here: Farmers are growing less hay, and buyers are wanting more. Let's use the Imperial Valley as an example. The Imperial Valley historically averages 170,000 acres in alfalfa hay. Over the last ten years this is down to 120,000 acres, a loss of 50,000 acres. At nine tons per acre, that's a 450,000 ton loss of hay on the market. That's a lot of hay. So why are farmers pulling hay acreage out? Last year corn and wheat played the biggest role. With government contracts on corn due mainly to ethanol, and wheat skyrocketing over \$300 per ton, how can you blame the farmer for changing crops? Especially when corn and wheat crops pose less risk than hay. Alfalfa hay, grain hay, and grass are subject to all kinds of risk: rain, wind, dry conditions, too dry to bale, or too wet—there are a lot of variables involved to make a good bale of hay.

What about demand? Since 1997 California has added over 500,000 cattle and a significant number of horses. With about 750,000 more animals and an 8 percent decrease in hay acreage it's easy to see where we're going. Competition for orchard grass and grass mixes such as alfalfa-grain hay is becoming extremely tight, with the San Diego and Santa Barbara markets driving prices to record levels. These Southern California buyers are in Oregon and Northern

California early in the season, generally setting the pace for high prices. Most of you probably don't think of alfalfa being traded as a worldwide commodity. I am here to tell you it's huge. The West Coast is lined with exporters who buy thousands of tons of hay that are compressed into containers shipped through the Port of Oakland on their way to Asian markets. The Japanese especially pay top dollar for hay to feed their beef cattle. The exporters operate in all seasons, making it increasingly hard to keep winter hay supplies intact. Tying up quality hay all year round is getting more and more difficult.

Decreasing supply of water

Another significant issue is water. When a drought occurs, farmers are forced into a more intense competition for water with urban areas and other uses. Over 13,000 acres in the San Joaquin Valley had no water after July 2008. Some Sacramento Valley Farms, which rely on local water sources, were cut off on September 15, 2008. Drought conditions are hampering total tonnage over the western United States, not only in baled hay but in pasture. I have talked to several dairymen who agree that Sonoma County has lost thousands of tons of pasture to drought.

Increasing costs of fuel

Now let's add trucking and fuel costs into the equation. Since we have decreased the amount of hay we grow locally, we have to get it somewhere. Over the last two years, California has increased the amount of hay it imports from its neighbors by 72 percent. That factor alone has increased hay prices \$10-\$20 per ton over the past year. That's not even adding in the other increased costs due to more expensive fuel: costs of seed and fertilizer delivery, costs of plowing and harvesting, and costs of irrigating. It all adds up to really expensive hay.

More hay for your dollars (and for your horse!)

So how do you become a smart buyer in a highly competitive market? Here are a few tips:

(1) The lowest-price purchasing time in the

market historically falls between July 1 and August 15, so try and make your largest purchases in this time frame. Farmers and brokers are usually looking to get stacks cleaned up before fall sets in.

(2) Check around with different brokers. I encourage a price check. I try to keep my customer base well informed with the most up-to-date prices on inventory from California, Oregon, and Nevada. These three states play the biggest role in your hay prices.

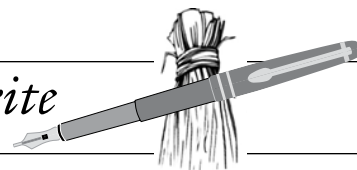
(3) Try not to be in the mindset that orchard grass is your only option. Rye grass and other grass mixes that come off early in the spring are generally \$20-\$40 per ton cheaper. The nutritional difference between most grasses is minimal except for grasses that are cut in the early stage of growth; they are higher in total digestible nutrients (TDN), and tend to run higher in protein. Besides grasses, I know that the three-way mix (wheat, barley, and oat) is becoming more and more popular, but keep in mind grain hay is simply a rotation crop for farmers. It may not always be available. Depending on projected markets the farmer can plant several other crops. The good news is that I have spoken with several farmers who intend to plant three-way mix for next year and I do expect a large supply.

These are challenging times for all of us in the hay and horse business, or for those of us who just want to watch our daughter or son ride a horse, show an animal at the Fair, or just throw a flake of hay over the fence to watch the animals come running. My personal commitment is "Working Together to Meet Your Needs". My phone is always on if you have any questions.

Fuel prices have dropped since Danny Winters wrote this article, and the hay market may have changed since the text went to press. Look for a follow up article from Danny in future issues of the Horse Journal.

Danny Winters owns North Bay Hay and Grain, supplying feed to barns in Sonoma County and beyond. He can be reached at 530-304-7960 or at nbhayca@yahoo.com.

Readers Write





Facilities Focus – Russ Gleason Arena Dedication Highlights Shone Farm Facility

Column Editor, Debby Bailey



"Russ Gleason was a cowboy... He was a natural horseman, a simple man, a kind man, a father, husband, and a hero."

So went the comments about this community leader at the Russ Gleason Memorial Arena Dedication at Shone Farm on September 11, 2008. The broad range of attendees testified to the profound and wide reaching contribution Gleason made to so many in the Sonoma County community. An impressive array of speakers, from Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC) administration to family members, stepped up to the podium and paid moving tribute. As both a teacher and a Trailblazer, Gleason made friends and garnered respect with his love of learning, fun, horses, and the outdoors. Even now, eighteen years after his passing, tears flowed as the audience heard about Gleason's life.

"He was born 125 years after his time... Russ would have been at home on the range with his homestead, his horse, and

his herd of cattle," shared Mark Gleason, Russ's brother.

The attendees, sporting cowboy hats to cocktail dresses, listened and shared in this long awaited event. At the time of Russ's death in 1990, a fund was established with the SRJC Foundation to build this arena in his memory. The project faced many years of legislative, legal, and funding issues. But with the contin-

ued dedication of many individuals, especially among the Trailblazers, the arena was finally completed. At the conclusion of the ceremony, guests found themselves watching an Equi-Ed demonstration and enjoying Shone Farm's unsurpassed, magnificent views of the Sonoma County wine country.

Shone Farm, founded in 1972, is located approximately ten miles northwest of Santa Rosa at 6225 Eastside Road. The SRJC's 365-acre property has many uses. It serves as an outdoor laboratory for the agricultural and natural resource classes. The Farm houses acres of vineyards, timber, and multi-use land for raising beef cattle and sheep. Shone Farm supports a sustainable agricultural unit which grows specialty vegetables, herbs, flowers, berries, and olive and fruit trees. Shone Farm offers SRJC students many experiences in agricultural activities, in-

cluding horsemanship classes and organic gardening. Shone Farm is also home of Equi-Ed, the equine therapeutic program dedicated to children and adults with emotional and physical challenges. The facilities at the farm include not only the newly dedicated Russ Gleason Memorial Arena, but also livestock barns and corrals, as well as office space and classrooms. Perhaps the most imposing and well known structure at the Farm is the Warren G. Dutton Jr Agricultural Pavilion.

The Warren G. Dutton Jr Agricultural Pavilion was completed in 2006. This beautiful



Russ Gleason Memorial Arena

pavilion houses a large atrium, called the Vintner's Conference and Learning Center. The Pavilion also boasts a culinary center, a winery center, and the patio known as Warren's Outlook. The complex has a 125' x 200' covered arena, named the Richard and Saralee Kunde Showcase Arena.

You may remember that just before the Pavilion was built, many of our local equestrians

Horse Council Pioneer Offers SRJC Class at Shone Farm

Sonoma County Horse Council pioneer and longtime horseman, Michael Murphy, will be teaching a class this spring at the Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC). This course (EQSCI 161: Equine Facilities Water Quality Planning) is designed to provide those involved with equine science and equine business with information about good horse keeping management practices, especially with respect to water pollution. This eight week class meets Wednesday nights at Shone Farm, and runs from February 25 to April 22, 2009.

According to Murphy, clean water practices need not be costly, and add to property's value. Clean water practices also promote horse health and build good relations between neighbors. While horses contribute only a small fraction of the total pollutants entering local waterways, horse owners and facility managers bear the responsibility to minimize water pollution. Course topics will include facility design and location, horse waste and storm runoff management, pasture and paddock care, and protection of water bodies.

Registration information for Murphy's class can be found at www.santarosa.edu/weblink or by telephone 525-3800.

attended a meeting sponsored by the Sonoma County Horse Council and representatives of the SRJC. These local groups held this meeting to familiarize us with Bond Measure A. We were told that if the Bond passed (and it did), it would pave the way for the building of this pavilion at Shone Farm. I live in Windsor, and used to ride to, and on, Shone Farm. I watched with anticipation as the facility was built. Imagine my disappointment when we were all informed that only groups affiliated with the SRJC would be permitted to use the new structure. I am happy to report that this is no longer true!

The speakers at the Russ Gleason Arena Dedication ceremony announced that the Shone Farm pavilion and new outdoor arena would benefit the community as a whole! I confirmed this with the SRJC Animal Science and Equine Science Program Coordinator, Casey Cole Gatrell, and the Community Education Department. The Warren G. Dutton Jr Agricultural Pavilion is currently available for community use. The availability schedule and rental rates for the Russ Gleason outdoor arena have not been finalized, but will be soon. I look forward to seeing our community's local equestrian organizations holding their events at this fine facility. I am sure Russ Gleason would, too.

For more information, contact the Santa Rosa Junior College Community Education Department, at 707-527-4371.

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

Special Service Award – Al Kuck

*May tall grasses grow green and sun shine on you brightly,
May your mane dance with joy on the wind,
And your hooves race through clover and daisies so lightly,
You live on in my heart, my true friend.*

*The Sonoma County Horse Council announces its first
Special Service Award.*



To Al Kuck, for 50+ years of special service to the horse owners of Sonoma County. Thank you for helping us with gentle compassion through a difficult time we must all face with our equine friends.

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Healthy as a Horse – *A column dedicated to the health of horse lovers*

Column Editor, JoDean Nicolette, MD

The Outside of a Horse

"There's something about the outside of a horse that's good for the inside of a man."

– Winston Churchill, 1874-1965

You close the gate...and exhale. You've been there. Whether your barn is dripping with drama or rippling with relaxation, there's something about being there that makes you forget the outside world. Maybe your horse offers a low-pitched nicker, or he brushes his lips across your arm. Maybe she breathes on your cheek, or pushes her withers into your fingertips. Whatever it is, when those ears point toward you, your mind empties, and you feel better.

It turns out, it's not just your mood that benefits from your equine pals. Your overall health probably does, too. People who own animals enjoy many health benefits over people who don't. It's all part of a larger concept called "biophilia."

The term biophilia was first coined in 1984 by a Harvard scientist named Edward Wilson. It describes the sense of well-being people derive from interacting with the natural world. Interacting with animals is really only part of it. Biophilia also includes being in nature, whether it's a garden or wilderness, and even viewing nature, as in the case of landscape paintings.

Scientists have studied the effects of nature on the human body. Whether you are looking at nature paintings, looking out windows, or actually out in nature, your mood, blood pressure, heart rate, pain perception, and recovery time from illness all improve.

Why would this be true? If you think about it, human beings have evolved over several million years. We have been industrialized for about one hundred years, and computerized for twenty-five years. So really, for most of human existence, our biology has been grounded in nature. It makes sense that we would feel better connecting with the natural world. Animals are part of that natural world.

Animals have profound effects on health. You can probably name some obvious effects right off the bat. You get more exer-

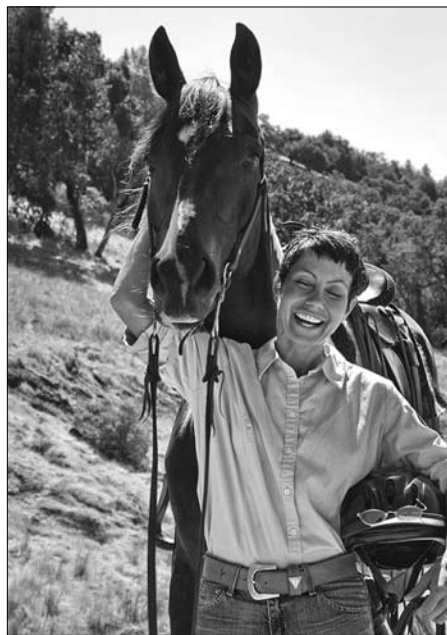


Photo: Ed Aiona

Jimmie gets all the apples—

cise, for example, whether it's walking your dog, or walking out to get your horse from the pasture. You also get exercise grooming, tacking, and caring for your horse. Riding, itself, is great for strength and balance. But doctors have found other benefits that aren't so obvious.

Just simply owning an animal is good for your health. People who have pets have lower blood pressures than people who don't. They also have lower cholesterol and heart rates. In one study of patients who had had a heart attack, those who had pets were six times more likely to be alive at one year than those who didn't own pets. People who own pets are also less likely to be depressed. Some studies show that pet owners live longer. Most of these studies have been done with dogs and cats, but if you own a horse, I bet you believe that horses are equally as important for your health.

When it became obvious that animals could affect health, scientists wanted to see if certain medical conditions would respond to contact with animals. They do!

Some animals are used successfully to treat depression—dolphins, for example! Children and adults with autism, a condition in which a person finds it difficult to connect and communicate with others, open up and respond to animals, sometimes even speaking for the first time. Adults and children with physical challenges also respond to animal-assisted therapy, in particular with horses.

Equine-assisted therapy is a general term used to describe the treatment of medical conditions with horses. Therapeutic riding (or hippotherapy) is part of equine-assisted therapy. Therapeutic riding uses the rhythmic motion of the horse to help stimulate muscles and improve nerve input. The results have been extraordinary! Riders develop core muscle and leg muscle strength, learning to sit up by themselves, even walk and run. Most of the successes are anecdotal now, but scientists have designed several larger studies, and the medical community is now seeing scientific evidence regarding what horses can do.

Many of us involved with horses know that part of the benefit has nothing to do with muscles and nerves. Some part of our souls and spirit respond to being around, and on, our horses. Unless you know and love horses, this can be hard to understand. When I speak to other doctors about biophilia, and equine-assisted therapy, I tell them to leave their pocket protectors at the door; we are speaking about something less measurable than blood pressure, or cholesterol levels. The only muscle involved is your heart.

So pick up some apples and head to the barn. Exhale, feel your teeth unclench, and your mood elevate. Enjoy your horse and feel good about what you are doing for each other. I share my apples with my horses, and now you know why. It's true that an apple a day keeps the doctor away, but guess what—that apple's not for you!

The Vet's Office – Hoof Abscesses: The “Good News”

Column Editor, Michelle Beko, DVM

Your horse is lame. You arrive at your barn and instead of wandering over to greet you, he stands there unable or unwilling to put weight on his foot. A lame horse, regardless of the reason, causes distress for most horse owners. Over the course of my career, I recall several frantic calls from horse owners who believed that their non-weight bearing horse had a broken leg. Imagine their relief to hear the “good news”—it's just a hoof abscess.

What is a hoof abscess?

An abscess is a pocket of bacteria mixed with white blood cells. Bacteria can invade a hoof when the hoof wall has a break in it, such as a fissure in the white line or sole, a hoof wall crack, or a sole bruise. An abscess can also occur when an object such as a nail penetrates the hoof. They are especially painful within the rigid hoof capsule, as a blood blister might be under a finger or toenail of a human. Hoof abscesses can occur anytime of the year but are much more common in the winter and spring. Standing in mud for long periods of time can widen fissures, which allow bacteria to invade the hoof. Horses with laminitis or “founder” are more susceptible due to separation of the lamina from the hoof wall (i.e. a widened white line). Cushing's disease causes immune suppression, and can make horses more likely to suffer chronic or reoccurring hoof abscesses.

How does a horse with a hoof abscess act?

The most prominent sign of a hoof abscess is usually an acute (sudden) onset of severe lameness. Most horses with an

abscess will be noticeably lame at a walk and some will put very little weight on the affected foot at all. The horse may have a hot hoof with a throbbing pulse, a swollen lower limb, and/or a low grade fever.

How do veterinarians diagnose a hoof abscess?

Your veterinarian can usually diagnose a hoof abscess by doing a thorough lameness examination. The location of the abscess can be detected by applying pressure with hoof testers to the affected foot. Prompt treatment of an abscess by your veterinarian can decrease the chances of the infection spreading locally. Additionally, other conditions that have similar symptoms such as infected joints or tendon sheaths and fractures, can be ruled out.

How do veterinarians treat a hoof abscess?

We have two major objectives when treating hoof abscesses. The first is to eliminate the current infection. This is best done by pulling the shoe and paring out the tract leading to the abscess, allowing it to drain. Soaking the hoof in warm water saturated with Epsom salts and wrapping the foot with a poultice such as ichthammol can help draw deeper abscesses out. Some abscesses will drain out the bottom of the hoof while others, especially ones in the heel region, are more likely to drain at the coronet band. Systemic antibiotics are not usually effective due to poor blood supply to the abscessed area.

Our second goal is to allow the portion of

the horse's hoof that had the abscess to heal without becoming reinfected. This is most commonly done by keeping the foot wrapped with a drying antiseptic such as iodine or betadine. Later, reshoeing with a pad can add further protection. Additionally, the horse should be up to date on its vaccination with tetanus toxoid. (Note: it is best to avoid tetanus antitoxin unless recommended by your veterinarian due to the possibility of severe complications).

If your horse has a puncture wound, we may need to be more aggressive. A puncture, and subsequent infection, can penetrate deeper into the hoof, and potentially affect structures such as the coffin bone or joint, the navicular bone or bursa, or the flexor tendon sheath. We might recommend x-rays, and we usually prescribe antibiotics. If the nail is not in danger of going deeper into the hoof, leave it in place until your veterinarian arrives.

How can a hoof abscess be prevented?

Regular, good quality hoof care is the mainstay in abscess prevention. It is also advisable to avoid prolonged standing in mud. But remember, even the best cared for horse can suffer an abscess. The good news is that the vast majority of horses with hoof abscesses recover completely in one to three weeks if treated promptly.

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.

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A Horseman's View – *Boldly Bareback! Why You Can, and Should, Take the Plunge!*

Column Editor, Julie Cross

When is the last time you tried—or even thought—about riding your horse bareback?

Whether you are a lifelong rider, or new to the sport, I bet at some time you've had the dream of galloping bareback on the beach. Do you see yourself like "The Black Stallion's" Alex, racing through the sand and surf on the big screen? If you are like the rest of us, age and gravity put a commercial in that scene! Well, maybe it's time to reconsider your dream. I'd like to use this article to discuss the benefits of riding *sans* saddle, and get you started with some general tips on technique and safety.

Why should you ride bareback?

Here are a few great reasons to revisit your bareback goals:

- 1) Improved strength and balance
- 2) A more independent seat
- 3) Better communication with your horse

Great communication with your horse is the culmination of strength, balance, and an independent seat. You know you have an independent seat when you can keep your balance without exerting pressure with your hands or legs. This means you have the ultimate setting for communication with your horse. Your horse becomes

lighter and more responsive because any contact, whether from legs or bit, means a cue—every time. Imagine how much confidence your horse will have in you, his rider, if you achieve this level of clarity and consistency with your movements.

How can you get started riding bareback?

Bareback riding is a complex skill, which develops with practice. You'll feel benefits right away, but real competence can take time. So start slowly, and safely. Your first session should be in a smaller space, like a round pen. Having a friend or riding buddy can make it more enjoyable. You may want to wear a helmet, which is a personal choice. Many riders feel that it gives them more confidence. Use your favorite bridle with loose contact, and your saddle. You'll start by riding without the stirrups.

I recommend two riding exercises to help you keep your balance, and get into the rhythm of your horse's gaits. The first exercise will help you move with your horse's hind legs, and the second with your horse's front legs.



Figure: Moving with your horse's hind legs

Photo: Karen Farnsworth



Julie and Forté

Photo: Coco

Let's try the hind legs first: Push into the withers with both hands, round your back, and feel your legs relax (see figure above). This position helps you and your horse. You have a "tripod" for balance, and your horse feels less claustrophobic and more willing to listen to your leg pressure when asked later on. Ask your horse to walk. To move with your horse, lift your heels up from the ball of your feet, alternating from left to right, in a peddling movement. This keeps your lower leg from gripping and helps you to get in time with your horse's hind legs. Keep your pelvis from sliding too far left or right, or you'll get off balance. The movement in your ankles and hip joints becomes more subtle as you get looser, and more comfortable.

When you feel comfortable with the peddling exercise, take the next step. Now you're going to move with your horse's front legs. Stop peddling, sit up, and reach with your arms in rhythm with your horse's front legs. Maintain the curve in your lower back. Just as your peddling gets subtler as you get the hang of it, so

does your reaching. Ask your horse for transitions in gate and direction while you practice both exercises. Can you combine the exercises and move fluidly with your horse's back and front legs?

Now try a bare back pad. I suggest a sticky seat, like suede, with a wool/felt underside. A handle can be helpful! Repeat these riding exercises and postures with the bareback pad. Are you comfortable moving to a larger arena? When your horse's movements become longer and bigger, so will yours. Your upper and lower body will be in rhythm with your horse with gentle fluid movements. Keep slack in the reins if you can; using your horse's mouth for balance feels uncomfortable to him (and it's cheating!). If you feel like a visit to the round pen would be safer, head there! Remember, advance at your own pace and confidence level. You want to be having fun as you learn.

The more you practice, the sooner you'll feel comfortable. I practice bareback about one-quarter of my ride time to keep me in harmony with all my horses' strides. I feel like a better rider the very next day! I feel looser, and have much less tension in my lower back, neck, and knees. I move better with the "ebbs and tides" of my horses' gaits, turns, and cuts—planned or unplanned. I've had no unscheduled dismounts in a long time. Riding bareback is helpful to horsemen and women in all disciplines. Whether you ride the trails, or participate in specialty events, like reining and dressage, riding bareback can improve your partnership with your horse.

Some other balance activities you may try when you're away from your horse include yoga, trampoline, balance board, and bicycle/unicycle. I bet you can come up with a few of your own.

I know I'll be seeing you—bold, balanced, and bareback—at the beach!

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 Boldly Bareback or other stories with Julie, to suggest a topic for an article, or just to start a dialogue, email her at horseman@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.

Bareback...and sidesaddle?

Did you know...Charmain Kittredge (Jack London's wife) was an outspoken advocate for women equestrians? Kittredge argued the merits of riding astride vs sidesaddle. Historically, riding sidesaddle was considered "proper." Sidesaddle advocates argued that women astride would be forced to ride in their "bloomers." Kittredge argued that riding sidesaddle was meritless. Riding astride, or "cross saddle," increased security, comfort, and safety, according to Kittredge. She described a split-skirt fashion to appease what she called the "anti-bloomerite" legion. Kittredge also argued that riding sidesaddle injured the horses due to uneven weight distribution. Ride on, cowgirl!



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The Spouse Speaks – *Diary of a Horse Husband*

Anonymous

Monday

Good Morning, Honey. What are your plans today?

Oh, I am so busy! I need to round-pen Buck because he has had such an attitude lately. He has been pinning his ears and tossing his head, and won't do anything I ask. Do you think I should go back to spurs? And I really need to get Sassy out of the arena—she is so bored! Round and round and round. I may try to take her to Annadel this afternoon if I have time, but I am so busy with everything else. I have to clean and oil the...

Well, can I help with any...

No, bye!

Tuesday

Hi Sweetie, you're home late. How was your day today?

What a nightmare! I ran out of grain, and I had to run over to the feed store to get some more rice bran, and of course they were out of the pelleted stuff so I had to get the powder which I then spilled all over the truck—Sorry!—While I was there I bought some stuff called "Platinum Performance" to try... I hope you don't mind. Do you think they really need mineral salts loose, or will they use the block in the pasture. They seem to be drinking enough. And you know what else? I may stop using psyllium because I heard... Honey, honey, are you watching TV while I am talking?

Wednesday

Wow, you look tired!

Well, why wouldn't I? I got to the pasture and Buck had ripped off his rain sheet (we need a new one by the way, this time I want a nicer one), and it was wrapped around his hind legs. Sassy was pulling him around by

the ragged edge. They were both covered in mud so I had to rinse them both and I ran out of Know-Knot, so I couldn't get their manes and tails brushed out so they look like ragmuffins. I couldn't just leave them like that so I had to find someone to borrow from. Of course everyone there uses that Show Sheen stuff which is just a dirt magnet, so I couldn't use that. Finally I found Kally and she had some new thing, which I had to try because there was nothing else! What a day!

Thursday

Can I have some money?

Friday

Hey Honey, would you like to have dinner tonight? Or catch a...?

Are you nuts? I need to ride both horses, I haven't had time all week, and the shoer is coming, you know what an ordeal that is. God forbid he have to fetch a horse all by himself! I'll have to check and see if he trims them too short, you know how he leaves them lame sometimes and claims it has nothing to do with his work. Then I am going to the Peruvian Paso Club meeting at Shelly's. Yeah, nope! I won't be home 'til late.

Saturday

I have no idea where that dent in the side board came from. Why are you looking at me? ... Anyway, I haven't had a very good day—the vet had to come. Buck is lame, and Sassy has a big raw sore on her withers.

Sunday

Hey, what are you doing today?

Ted and Jon called; I am going over to watch the game.

What? Well, fine! I was hoping we could spend some time together.



Write for The Spouse Speaks

Do you know a horse lover? Whether you are a husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, child, or parent, 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 7157, Santa Rosa, CA 95407. Submissions are officially anonymous, but you can give yourself away in the text if you want!

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Trails and Open Spaces – *North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project:* *Another Link in the Connection of Sonoma County Trails*

Column Editor, Sarah Reid



Grasslands on Sonoma Mountain

Close your eyes and picture being able to ride your horse all the way from Glen Ellen to the Petaluma Adobe, or even all the way to Tolay Lake Regional Park and San Pablo Bay. The next section of this dream plan is taking shape through the planning and development by Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (The District). The North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project will connect from the east at the Hay Fields Trail at Jack London State Historic Park (SHP) to a staging area on Sonoma Mountain Road, providing access to some fantastic vistas as well as a trail through 530 acres of beautiful pristine Sonoma County forests and grasslands on Sonoma Mountain.

The Project History

Beginning in 2003 with the acquisition of the Jacobs Ranch property and the Skiles Ranch property, followed by the Cooper's Grove and Wilroth properties in 2004, in 2005 the District Board approved the acceptance of a planning grant from the California State Coastal Conservancy for the project. Since July of 2005, the District

has been working cooperatively with Sonoma County Regional Parks, California State Parks, the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, Coastal Conservancy, LandPeople, and consultants to develop a plan to connect the four District-owned properties along Sonoma Mountain. On March 18, 2008, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors gave approval to the entire project.

The Trails

This project will add 4¼ miles of trail to the Bay Area Ridge Trail (BART). Portions of the BART may also be found in Jack London State Historic Park and Annadel State Park. The current project will connect the trail to Jack London SHP. The staging area will be approximately three-quarters of a mile from Sonoma Mountain Road, providing passenger car parking, six trailer pull-through spaces in a gravel lot, water trough, restrooms, and signed trailhead information. From the staging area, trail users will follow a ranch road for a short distance to a picnic and view site which is ADA accessible. From there the trail commences as a four-foot single track to Jack London

SHP, climbing 1000 feet in elevation, but with never more than a 10 percent grade, and providing for wider spots as pull outs for safe passing where there is poor line of sight. From Jacobs Ranch the trail crosses Matanzas Creek, the first of about four creek-crossings, leaves oak and bay woodland into open grasslands and onto the Cooper's Grove property. On this second section, the trail continues to climb up into another section of oak and bay forest onto the Sonoma Ridge, via thirteen switchbacks. Following the ridge line, back again into grasslands, the third section of property is Sonoma Mountain Woodlands, aptly named for the dense forest. The Wilroth Donation follows with several bridge projects and switchbacks onto the Skiles Fee Portion, and finally connecting into Jack London

SHP. In the Skiles section there is a planned trail spur which completes the climb to 2200 feet on Bennett Valley Overlook Trail, just above the Fairfield Osborn Preserve. Current access to the property at Jacobs Ranch is available for hikers through docent-led tours by LandPaths (outings@landpaths.org or 707-524-9318).

Trail Construction

Construction is expected to begin summer 2009 following the acquisition of permits for bridge crossings. Trail work is planned to begin from Jacobs Ranch through the switchbacks on Cooper's Grove, and the Bennett Valley Overlook Trail spur. The latter is expected to be done with volunteer work crews. To volunteer, please contact Sonoma County Trails Council (www.sonomacountytrails.org), which also has trail crew training planned for spring and summer. These two sections of trail are expected to cure over winter 2009, and further trail construction to continue in spring 2010. Parts of the trail system may be open by fall 2010, and trail dedication for the completed project and fully cured

Photo: Sarah Reid

trails in 2011. Please be patient and respect the trail closures until the trails are cured.

The Future

Although at this point it is not certain which agency will eventually own the Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail properties, Sonoma County Regional Parks has agreed to operate and maintain the trail, trailhead, and access road. Existing ranch buildings at the Jacobs Ranch section may allow for live-in caretakers. Future property connectors are in the works west to Crane Creek Regional Park and Sonoma State University. A loop trail may be considered in the Cooper's Grove section for access to the redwood grove and to connect to Annadel State Park. Additional developments in the staging area for equestrians include a manure bunker and hitching rails.

The Source

This is another piece of property provided in part by the funding from the one-quarter cent sales tax approved by Sonoma County voters, which is now allocated until 2031. We can thank ourselves for these available funds to help protect the lands around Sonoma County and provide for future recreation access. Thank you to Kim Batchelder, Natural Resources Planner, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District for his time and the information for this article (www.sonomaopenspace.org).

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:

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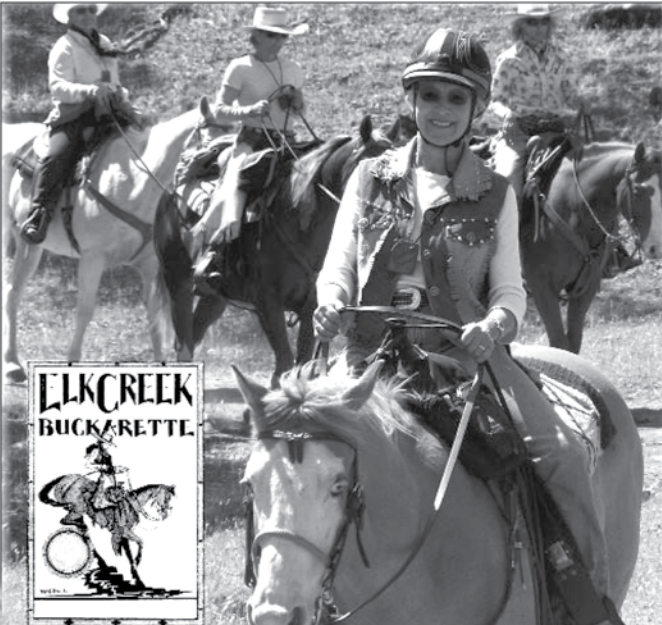
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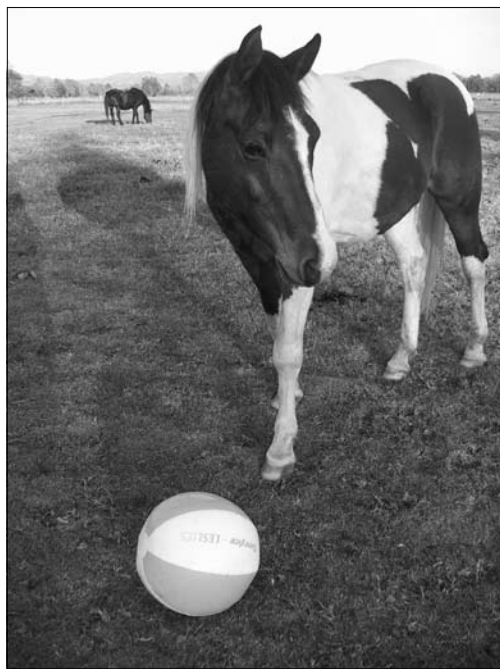
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Colts and Fillies – Tobi: A Little Horse with a Big Heart

Column Editor, Kelly Henson

Tobi's brown and white coat shined as he enjoyed the morning sun in the pasture. He looked up from chasing the ducks, and noticed the other horses gathered in a circle.

"Haaaaay everybody, what are you playing?" asked Tobi.



Tobi, Hoofball Champion

"We are playing a game of hoofball," said Molly, a dun-colored Belgian cross, looking down at him through her flaxen mane.

"Neigh! You're too small to play with us," said Hank, a bay Dutch Warmblood, looking down on both Tobi and Molly.

Tobi sadly trotted off. He knew he was good at hoofball. As Tobi pretended to graze, head down at the edge of the pasture, a neighbor horse came over to the fence.

"Why so sad?" asked Ben, the small Arabian horse.

"The other horses say I'm too small to play with them," said Tobi.

"Well let me tell you," Ben pinned his ears and replied, "The greatest hoofball player of all time was Stanley Palomino. Boy was he fast, and he could pass the hoofball better than anybody with four legs!"

"So?" asked Tobi, thinking to himself, "I'm not a Palomino either."

"My point is that Stanley Palomino was a pony! Stanley had high self-esteem and believed in himself."

Tobi looked up, pointing his ears at Ben with amazement. "Really? A pony? Well, if he can do it, so can I!"

"You could even play better!" announced Ben.

Tobi whinnied a "thank you" at Ben, and galloped toward the other horses. He couldn't wait to show them that he was just as good as they were. When he reached the other horses, they stopped their game and stared.

"Why are you standing in the middle of our game, Squirt?" snickered Molly.

"I came to show you that I can play hoofball as well as the rest of you. Just because you're bigger, doesn't mean you're better." As Tobi said this, he lifted his head and puffed out his chest, proud that he was standing up for himself.

"Ok, fine. Show us your stuff," snorted

Hank, tossing his large black mane.

When the game started, Tobi took off at a gallop, tail flying. He was quick as a flash, and zipped in and out between the other horses. He even ducked between their legs, and under their bellies. He scored point after point. It wasn't long before the other horses were impressed by Tobi's quickness.

"Whoa! What roll backs!" nickered Molly. "I want him on my team next time."

Even Hank gave in. "Boy, you can turn and burn! We should have let you play before. I'm sorry that we judged you."

Tobi sighed, happy he had played well. As he trotted off to finish chasing the ducks, he thought how he and his friends learned a good lesson that day: **Always believe in yourself no matter how big or small you are.**

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@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.



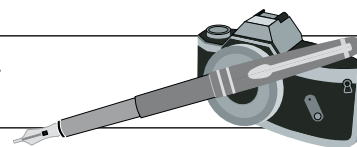
Tobi passing to teammate

*The Lovely – three weeks*

Picture This

by Ruth Lake

Readers Write



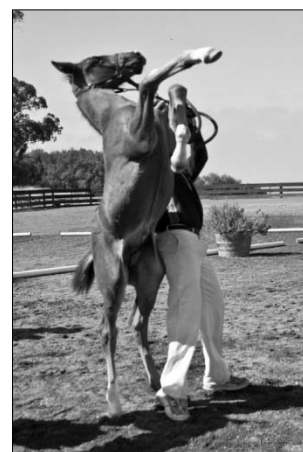
When I was asked to write an article about Photography, it was like someone wanting to know about Art...where to start? The easiest way is to pick something recent that would be useful, as there are a wealth of "how to's" for basic photo shooting everywhere.

When my friend Cindy Smith's beautiful filly "The Lovely" hit the ground this spring, I decided to do a case study following the old timer's "three weeks, three months, three years" rule for taking pictures of babies. It's to get the best view of the adult to come. Anyone who has raised a foal knows the terribly gawky stages they go through when you "hide them behind the barn"—butt high, narrow as a board, out of proportion, ugh! But you know there is a champion underneath it all.

*The Lovely – three weeks*

As a Professional Photographer, I often am asked to be the Photographer at Breed Inspections. This a challenging time for photos. I move around and around searching for a good angle, trying not to get trampled by nervous horses, or get in the Inspectors way. A word to breeders hoping for great photos at Inspections. Please tell your handler that you are hoping for some good photos. It might help them be aware that where they are standing is important to you as an owner. Sometimes posed shots outside the ring are the best insurance that you get the shot you want, as babies are too excited in the ring.

The timetable – Three Weeks, Three Months, Three Years.

*Excited colt with handler*

If you decide to take pictures of your foals for ads or sale listings, try to keep tabs on them at the three week and three month intervals, to see how balanced they are. The Lovely was pretty balanced at three weeks, even so I tried to avoid angles that would make her look unbalanced, taking shots at three-quarters angles, and shooting from a low position. When they are young, get down at their angle to get the best view. This holds true with anything young, people or animals. I prefer to shoot young horses in freedom as unless a lot of time has been spent teaching them to stand properly, they will find better balance when loose.

When I can't ride any more, I shall still keep horses as long as I can hobble about with a bucket and wheelbarrow. When I can't hobble, I shall roll my wheelchair out to the fence of the field where my horse's graze, and watch them.

– Monica Dickens



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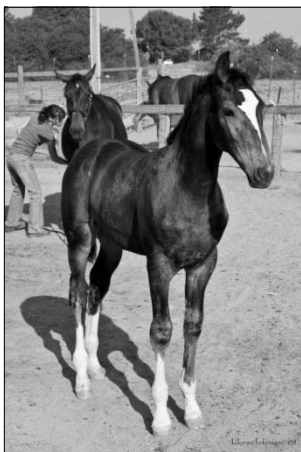
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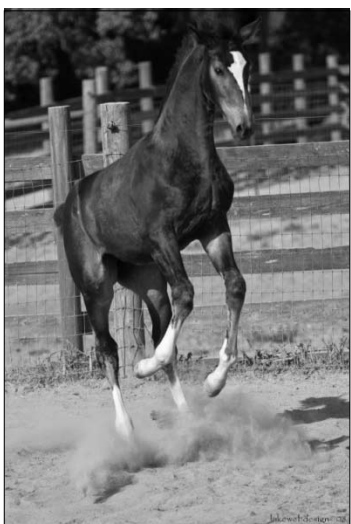
The Lovely – three months

Try to position yourself so you are always shooting them as they approach you going uphill. Babies need all the uphill they can get, and be mindful of how the shadows are falling. Also, and this is a biggy, be watchful for what is in the background. There is usually a small patch of territory where sheds, fences, feed and water tubs are at a minimum, look for them. It is much easier to use a well-composed photo then spend hours Photoshopping it out.

I shoot a lot of photos, as when I get back to my studio and see them big on the computer, I often find an ear or facial expression not quite right, and yes, horses do close their eyes in photos.



The Lovely in freedom



The Lovely at play – three months...



three weeks

At three months, The Lovely was again, beautiful and in proportion. She was in the process of shedding out, which was my only complaint as a photographer, but her lines were balanced. She galloped a lot, which is hard when you are trying for the great conformation shot, or the wonderful trot. The best shots you have to wait for, and never take the camera from your eye, as these moments happen in a heartbeat. If you are watching, you've missed it.

I hope this has been helpful; it will be quite a while before I get those three year comparison photos, but with The Lovely I'm sure she will be "lovely."

*Ruth Lake is a professional photographer from Sonoma County, specializing in horses.
Contact Ruth through her website, www.lakewebdesign.com, or call 707-849-4732.*

Would you like to exercise your "Reader's Write," and write for the Horse Journal? Contact us at editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.

Kissed by sunlight, embraced by open fields. The horse is the center of all beautiful things.
— author unknown

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All Creatures Great and Small

— *A column dedicated to the health and well being of horses in Sonoma County*

Column Editor, Grant Miller, DVM

Bear's Necessities — Guest written by JoDean Nicolette

He looked like a rat

He looked like a rat; he smelled worse. I wondered about his story as I looked at his damp and bony hindquarters. His tail and his mane were missing. His black skin showed through where patches of his gray hair should have been. Rain dripped off his nose and his naked dock. *Skinny...poor guy.* The horse seemed to know I was staring at him through the weathered boards of his pen and he slowly swung his head around. His ears stuck straight out to the side. *Eeyore.* Any pity I felt quickly vanished as he fixed his steady gaze on me—a contemptuous rat. I kept my eyes on him, trying not to smile, as I asked the cowboy what he knew about this horse.

"Don't know much," he spoke around the cigarette hanging from his mouth. *How was that thing staying lit in this rain?* "Picked him up with t'ose ones over t'ere from the lot jus' over t'Mex....Don't look too good, do 'e?" He blew smoke in my face." 'Course it don't

help none that he stepped in that rattlers' nest on the BLM. Found him jus' about dead as my coon skin cap m'be a month ago. Hauled 'im in. Vet said 'dog food,' but Rinsler stayed with 'im day 'n night. Still look'n about half dead to me."

The rat gave him a dirty look and turned away. He slowly surveyed his pen, looking for something to distract him from our gaze. He looked almost ursine as he

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The good Lord made them all.

— Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818–1895

lumbered deliberately, head swaying and squinty-eyed against the rain. Before he reached the far corner of his pen, I had spit out "Bear!" He focused his small eyes



Bear hug

on me for a second *Approval?* before he found a fascinating object in the mud, trudged over to it, and smeared his nose with the red clay.

He walks funny

He walks funny. It isn't obvious right away. I saw it for the first time when I stared straight at his hind legs as he walked away. He lifts his left hip and swings his left hind leg around, placing it almost in front of his

right. Bear doesn't seem to notice, though. He reminds me of the kids I see in my office with leg length discrepancies, or maybe with weakened pelvic muscles from a healed leg fracture. Those happy campers just walk and run along, swinging one leg from the hip girdle, not old enough to be self conscious about moving differently from everyone else.

"Bear's a happy gimper!" I tell my friends.

I discussed it with the Silver City veterinarian. We ran through Bear's history together.

What we knew. He was picked up at an auction (*the scary kind*) in Mexico about eighteen months prior. He was probably an Azteca (a Quarter Horse-Andalusian cross); he was somewhere between three and six years old. Bear came to New Mexico with the other auction horses, and enjoyed his freedom on the 30,000 acres that the ranch shares with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The ranch hands found him down one day, back legs swollen to

elephantine size. Bear had stepped in a rattlesnake nest and sustained multiple bites to his hind legs. He had pawed a trench around his front end from his attempts to rise. The cowboys brought out an ATV trailer and hauled him in. He was barely alive. One ranch hand spent all his time caring for Bear, who was finally able to stand more than a week later. I met him in his pen in the rain as he was recovering

Read more about Bear in upcoming issues, including, *Hablas Espanol?*, *My Horse is Hoarse*, *He Moves to the Right*, *What's in that Dish?*, *Hard Luck Harry*, *He's Slooooooow*, and *Dandelions and Blackberry Jam*.

from this. Bear had two raised, white, silver dollar-sized saddle sore scars on his withers. He also had linear scars on all four legs. The scars on his legs, paired with his propensity to panic in the round pen, suggest that he might have been used in the sport called "tripping," according to the vet. The vet told me apologetically that he just couldn't say much about the hitch in his step—but for sure this horse has nine lives. "Maybe only five or six, left, though," he added. "Should be good for a discount."

He didn't cost much

It's true he didn't cost much. The transportation to California ran higher. To me, any price was worth it. Last February, I waited excitedly for his arrival here in Santa Rosa. When Bear came off the trailer I saw that he had grown some mane and tail. He was thin, but not scrawny. He showed up alert and curious. *Recognize me?* Of course! He greeted me with a bite to the shoulder, first thing. Bear finally settled into an irrigated pasture and gained weight on grass. We bonded right away, but Bear took longer to trust the other horses. He was often alone, away from the herd. *Does he speak Spanish?* He must have liked something, though, because in the afternoons I would find him lying down—snoring—and I would seat myself next to him until he startled himself awake with his snorts.

As I spend time with him, I ponder how Bear has always been more curious and trusting of humans than he should have been, given his life so far. He stretches out with his legs and offers me his vulnerable tummy for a scratch, or he lets me sit by him as he reclines in the pasture. He is also unapologetic and clear about what he wants and needs; he cranes his neck toward the blanket some nights...and that carrot—"I'll take that." No, he'd rather not work now. *Too bad.* Of all my horses, he is the most grateful, meeting me at the gate with his odd nicker, following me around, and disappointed when I leave. Once in a while I call him "Rat" just for fun, and as he fixes his detached cynical gaze on me, I wonder if he understands the joke or if he's annoyed. Then I notice his Eeyore ears, which flick from horizontal to forward and back to horizontal again, and I think how I'm just glad he's finally home.

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From the Horse's Mouth

by Sarah Reid

Newest Land Acquisition:

Jenner Headlands

Sonoma County Agriculture Preservation and Open Space District has announced intention to purchase the 5,630 acre Jenner Headlands, the largest conservation land acquisition in Sonoma County. The Headlands, previously Rule Ranch, extend 2½ miles north of the town of Jenner and inland toward Cazadero. This acquisition promises wonderful future multi-use adventures, including potential pack-in camping opportunities for equestrians such as those at Point Reyes.

PRDC Drill Teams Bring it Home!

Petaluma Riding & Driving Club Senior and Junior Drill Teams brought home awards from the Cow Palace Drill Team Challenge this fall. The Junior Drill Team won the Overall Championship while the Senior Drill Team brought home first place in the Mixed Division. Congratulations to all the riders and supporters!

Local Cowgirl Races the Barrels to Championship!

On October 26, 2008, Katelyn Hogerton (Windsor) raced the barrels in the National Barrel Horse Association District Seven Finals held at the Petaluma Riding and Driving Club (PRDC). Katelyn cleaned up with a First in Open 3D, First in Novice 3D, Second in 4D, and Highpoint Champion for the Year in 3D! Katelyn grew up on horseback in Sonoma County, riding both English and Western, and competed in the PRDC Junior Drill Team as a youth. Congrats Katelyn!

Horse Council Supports Multi-use on Lands

Representatives from the Horse Council met with the Open Space District to insure equal access for equestrians to the Taylor Mountain property, located just south of Sonoma County Fairgrounds. The Interim Access Plan, to begin in 2009, had included hikers only.

The Interim Access Plan for Tolay Lake Regional Park has been revised to include equestrians in the permit holder program to be initiated in spring 2009. This program, pending approval by the Board of Supervisors, will be similar to the Willow

Creek Permit Holder Program, requiring a short training on the property. Equestrians are strongly encouraged to attend future public meetings for the Master Plan for Tolay Lake.

For updates on the Tolay Lake or Taylor Mountain properties, contact Sarah Reid at trails@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.

State Parks Mounted Assistance Unit Holds Trail Clinic

The State Parks Mounted Assistance Unit (MAU), serving Annadel, Sugarloaf, and Jack London parks, held its first annual trail clinic on October 12, 2008. Members and professional equestrians, Nancy Kasovich and Tammi Bernd, planned an all-day ride through Annadel with stops at obstacles and time for training. The attendees raved about the clinic, describing the experience as "fantastic," "professional," and very well organized. Planned obstacles included an "injured" cyclist, gate-opening, log-hopping, and quiz questions. Unplanned obstacles included a fly-away tent during the lunch stop. President JoDean Nicolette later described the tent incident as follows: "The horses, tied nearby, watched lazily and with curiosity, while all the riders spooked." Another unplanned obstacle was a yellow-jacket nest disturbed by the horses; no horse or rider was injured.

Local Agency Goes to Court

In October 2008, a Bloomfield man was convicted of a felony and two misdemeanors for animal cruelty, including failing to provide sufficient food and water to three horses, and subjecting at least one horse to unnecessary suffering. One horse, Yiyo, died before the case was heard. Salvador Barrera was sentenced to 4 months in county jail, and 100 hours of community service. Local agency CHANGE (Coins to Help Abandoned and Neglected Equines) was instrumental in this case. County Animal Control Officer Dr. Grant Miller, founder of CHANGE, actively testified and assisted the equines. The two surviving horses are recovering well. Representatives from CHANGE note the significance of achieving a conviction and prison sentence for animal neglect and abuse in

Sonoma County.

Pigeon Fever Talk of County

Did you know that pigeon fever occurs largely in California, Oregon and some areas of Texas? For months everywhere equestrians have gathered in Sonoma County there has been talk of pigeon fever. Equine Disease Quarterly (April 2003) states that pigeon fever "is commonly diagnosed in California and other arid regions of the western United States and appears to be increasing in other, wetter areas of the country such as Kentucky and Colorado. The portal of entry for *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* (a bacterium), a potentially soil-borne organism, is thought to be through abrasions or wounds in the skin and mucous membranes. *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis* is considered to survive for long periods in the soil, and it appears endemic on most California farms and ranches." Local vets saw 4-6 new cases per day during the peak this fall, according to several reports. New cases should decrease with the onset of cooler weather and the disappearance of pesky flies, which likely transmit the bacteria.

Do you have local news to share? Write to us at news@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org, so we can spread the word.

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