

Sonoma County

# *Horse Journal*

Volume 6 • Issue 2

Spring 2010



*Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council*



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**Sonoma County****Horse Journal**

Volume 6 • Issue 2 • Spring 2010

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

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**Cover Photo: Keron Psillas**

Dominique Barbier, trainer in Classical Dressage, performs a *piaffe* on his Lusitano stallion, Ultraje VO. Read more about Classical Horsemanship, Dressage, and Lusitanos in this issue of the Horse Journal.

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## A Message from the President



Karl & Dinero

Photo: Vanessa Bastian

Howdy,

Wow! The horse sure got out of the barn this time!

What a great night at the Equus Awards! Many folks told me it was the best awards ceremony ever. You can be rightfully remiss if you couldn't make it. I would like to thank our many, dedicated volunteers who all contributed in their own way to making this event happen. You thank them, too, when you see them.

We began this special evening by honoring a previous Equus winner, Bobbi Keville of the California Dressage Society, who recently left us. We dedicated our awards program to her as a memorial. As the evening progressed, we were all humbled by the stories, the gratitude of the recipients, and the crowd's reaction. I am privileged to stand next to the podium, and I can see how touched the winners are. Their gratitude is deep, honest, and moving. All had moist eyes. The house interrupted them continually with applause.

When witty Betty Menefee apologized to her six children for being an absentee mom because she was always out on horseback, the laughter and understanding rocked the room.

Gwen Stockebrand's story of accomplishment was inspiring and her appreciation of her fellow horsewomen Chris Mudge had us all enamored with her.

John Ryan, who works in county Parks and Recreation, let us know how valuable the horse community is to the park system. He was

proud to be with us even though he's not a horseman.

Veda Rose Pope, beautiful in her own designed and produced western wear, shared her gratitude at our recognition of her life's work in both mule training and leather craft.

Graceful and eloquent Carol Ann Barnes amazed the house with the grit of her accomplishments. Our mouths were agape that this quiet gentle woman could be so tough.

Mike Rosenberg, a man of few words, pointed out that though we all practice different disciplines, we are all doing the same thing. We are bound together by our love of our horses.

We honored a horse again this year. Marci Cook delightfully shared her experiences with her Arabian Lu. From his tireless performance in multi-day endurance races, to his trips to her kindergarten class to demonstrate H is for horse, Marci and Lu have shared love and partnership for nineteen years.

Henry Trione brought the house down—or rather he literally brought the house to its feet. This important man, largely credited with giving us Annadel Park, thanked us for protecting the noble, fragile horse. He hoped we could always find a way to make horses accessible to children.

If you missed this special event this year, be sure to be there in 2011.

As a Horse Council, we feel it is our job to honor the many independent, talented, and passionate folks that contribute to equestrian culture in Sonoma County. We've united in our common interest, but we are late! We should have been a council in the fifties when our horse's entire life and purpose changed. Join us today!

Happy Trails,  
Karl Bastian,  
*President, Sonoma County Horse Council*

## A Message from the Editor

Dear Readers,

I am proud to say that we have been publishing the *new* Sonoma County Horse Journal for just more than a year. I hope you'll agree with us that the Journal is an entertaining and informative publication, and getting better with each issue.

I would like to thank each member of the editorial staff for their reliable and high quality submissions. You make reading the Journal fun and interesting. I would also like to thank our ad sales directors and advertisers who make producing the Journal possible. Finally I would like to thank our graphic designer, Lynn Newton, who makes the Journal readable, and just plain pretty to look at.

Perhaps the most important thank you should be for the Sonoma County equestrians who aren't officially part of the editorial staff, but who take a chance and submit their stories to me. Many of you have never viewed yourself as authors, but you have a certain expertise, an opinion, or just a story to tell. Thank you for the emails and phone calls, and for taking the time to send your work and photos in. YOU make the Horse Journal what it is.

Congratulations and thanks again to all of you! Here's to the next successful year—I'm sure it will be even better than the last!

JoDean Nicolette  
*Editor-in-Chief*



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## **Wild Horses: Wild Innocence**

***A Report on Government Mismanagement  
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By Jyoti Annette Germain

### *Chapters include:*

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*Line & square dancing.....*



*Cowgirls Lisa Harder, Elizabeth Palmer, Benita Mattioli, & Cindy Cole*

*Thanks to Equus Photographers:*

*Star Dewar, Linda Feige, and Vanessa Rydquist*





## Featured Article

Written by Tressa Boulden

## The Classical Horsemen Were Masters of the Basics...

The Classical Horsemen were masters of the basics. They rode when horses had a more fundamental purpose; horses were used for work, transportation, or battle. When a horse did not perform well, the horseman paid a high price. Classical Horsemen trained their own horses. Since riding made every day existence possible, training was not a hobby or a specialized vocation, but a high priority in every rider's life. During the Renaissance period, when the horse was revered as more than a commodity, royalty with wealth at their grasp practiced training of the horse as a fine art.



Tressa and Cazador salute Classical Horsemanship

Classical Horsemanship has been described as early as 400 BC in ancient Greece. A Classical Horseman practices the art of riding. He respects the nature of the horse, treats his horse with kindness and respect, and focuses on the basics which refers to work that promotes and strengthens his horse's ability to use its body in a supple yet controlled manner. In the past this facilitated a horse and rider's ability to accomplish daily necessities. Although Classical Horsemanship is a term often used referring to Dressage, all riding style origins began there. In today's world many equestrians, in their quest for a more fulfilling relationship with their horses, seek out the more classical approach of nature-oriented training.

Today, although we do not need horses for work or war, any rider can benefit from principles of Classical Horsemanship. Because horses are now a luxury—for sport, hobby, or just a gratifying activity in our lives—they have been subject to our "instant fix" culture. We have come to spend much less time enjoying the process of working and learning with our mounts. The fundamentals suffer in our quest for results, and unfortunately, the horse pays the ultimate price. Fortunately, in the horse industry, there is a movement that has begun to take horsemanship back to nature-oriented training. Many horsemen desire an experience that is more focused on relationships which actually produces better results. Relationships and communication are built on the basics.

What are the basics? Basics are the most fundamental set of skills from which any growth is based. Basics are simple to identify, but not so easy to achieve. Basics include both physical and mental aspects of horsemanship. Horsemanship starts on the ground, and includes your physical presence and awareness around the horse. This includes approaching, leading, grooming, and saddling. Proper body language is an art form all its own. Mounting and sitting are next. Most riders have not had proper instruction in having a well-balanced, deep seat. Even the most experienced riders are surprised to find their balance is not independent of their hands. Riders with an independent seat can hold a secure position in the saddle without exerting pressure on the reins. A rider can work on acquiring an independent seat both on and off the longe line. An independent seat requires strength, fitness, flexibility, and control over body parts. By learning these basics of balance and a good body posi-

tion, a horseman can develop better communication and a happier horse.

The mental basics begin with the proper attitude. First, be open to learning. Sounds easy, right? Think again. Just like horses that are learning something new can get distracted, sometimes spooking or acting out, riders often do the same. Riders can get argumentative, cry, or simply give up. Being open to learning means being calm. Calmness leads to better decisions and responsiveness to instruction. A calm rider also communicates better with her horse. Second, practice acceptance. This means accepting our faults and mistakes without worrying or fretting. Accept where you and your horse are at. As soon as we accept our circumstance, the sooner we can focus on learning the next step. In taking the mental resistance out of the training process we can comply more quickly with the instruction that is there to help us.

One final basic is obedience. Just as we expect our horses to be obedient, we as riders must learn to do the same with our instructor's directions. To practice obedience, we have to trust our instructors. We also have to trust ourselves to learn and progress. It takes many mistakes to perform exercises correctly. We can use our past progress as evidence that we will achieve our future goals. It takes as long as it takes.

Other foundations include developing calmness in your horse, riding in the proper tempo, riding straight, and creating suppleness. Each of these basic skills is necessary for a higher level of achievement. One element out of place will prevent progress. A horse must build on basics as well. We cannot expect a proper



Tressa longeing a student

lead change if we have not taught a horse to canter on a straight path, and to easily pick up each lead. The basics when laid out properly give us a systematic evolution to the next higher step.

Although there are very few true Classical Horsemen (of the pure school of thought) left in the world, there are still equestrians who strive to hold on to the fundamentals of horsemanship and riding. They practice Dressage, Reining, Equitation, and many other disciplines. In order to master the discipline of horsemanship we need to accept a lifelong study of basics. Slowing down and enjoying the process of riding helps us see the finer details. We need to learn to ride each step with the horse. When you find yourself tired of riding thousands of twenty-meter circles, remember that the Classical Horsemen you admire have ridden millions. On that circle exists infinite possibilities, and only in your focus on the basics will you begin to experience the scope. It is within the basics that we nurture a healthy relationship between horse and rider, and remember why we started riding in the first place. U

*Tressa Boulden is a Classical Dressage trainer based in Sonoma County. Her focus in training is to establish strong foundational basics to ensure her students and their horses a successful, healthy advancement to the higher level work. Longe lessons are one of her specialties. To contact Tressa visit her web site at [www.tressabouldendressage.com](http://www.tressabouldendressage.com).*





## Readers Write

# Barbier Farms and the Lusitano

Written by Keron Psillas



Photo: Keron Psillas

Dominique and Debra Barbier live on Dry Creek Road in Healdsburg. They import, breed, and train Lusitano horses. Dominique works locally and internationally offering clinics for riders of all levels and horses of all breeds, and Debra manages the farm and the flow of horses and students through the barn. Currently the Barbiers have nearly twenty Lusitano stallions in training. Dominique paused for an interview this December.



Photo: Keron Psillas

Dominique in surf, Bahia, Toca do Marlin

KP: Dominique, this year marks your thirty-fifth year of training and teaching Classical Dressage. What keeps you engaged and eager to teach the next clinic or get on the next flight to teach in Chicago, Brazil, or Switzerland?

DB: The horses...always the horses. I have been so fortunate in my life to have learned from, and been sustained by, all the horses I have trained. Each of them has something to tell me.

KP: You and I have known each other many years, and I have watched your methods evolve. But in the last ten years there has been a renewed excitement in you. Tell me why.

DB: About nine years ago, I had the privilege to travel to Brazil and find a number of farms that were breeding and selling very fine Lusitano horses. The Lusitano is my first love. The three horses that I first brought with me to the US in 1975 were Lusitanos. Dom Giovanni, Dom Jose, and Dom Pasquale were my horses as I studied with the Mestre Nuno Oliveira, the acknowledged master of Classical Dressage. These three horses helped me to form the basis of my training philosophy. Finding these fine horses again re-energized me.

The Lusitano by its breeding has the disposition, the confirmation, and the desire to partner with a rider. The Lusitano horse has been bred for century upon century to be a horse that you can communicate with easily. Also known as the Iberian Horse or Portuguese Iberian Horse, the Lusitano has its foundation in the horses of the Iberian Peninsula from as far back as 25,000 BC. This area was an early center of horse domestication as we can see from the cave paintings in the north of Portugal and Spain. The

influence of the Barb horse was included by the year 800 AD. In the intervening centuries between 800 and 1600 AD the Iberian horse was widely admired as a war horse and agile mount for royalty, knights, and wealthy soldiers. Centuries of selective breeding has crafted a horse that is amazingly calm, personable, and generous. The tradition of Classical Horsemanship survives today in the Portuguese and Spanish riding schools, and is being propelled by an interest in the humane treatment of horses and a greater desire to partner with them rather than train with force.

When I approach a horse in a clinic situation, where I see at least eight or ten horses a day, my question is, "Do you want to dance?" With the Lusitano I can easily go beyond that and ask, "What kind of dance would you like to do today?" They are so willing, indeed anxious, to partner with you. They want to perform and to create a dance, most often in joy. This is a generally a scary thing for a rider. When we allow ourselves to approach the horse in trust—total trust—then we can create magic together

KP: It sounds to me as if you are speaking of an energetic exchange between horse and rider.

DB: Yes, of course! As you and I are talking we are having an energetic exchange. When you approach your horse, you are bringing all that you are in that moment into your exchange with your horse. Did you have a wonderful day at work or school or did you have an argument with a colleague or your partner? Are you willing to let all your negative or positive energy drop away and approach your horse with a clean slate, so to speak?

KP: Tell me what else is happening for you in these first few months of 2010.

DB: I am preparing for a trip to Brazil later in the month to collaborate with Gerd Heuschmann, veterinarian and author of *If Horses Could Speak*. Dr Heuschmann has gained worldwide attention for his principles and his scientific descriptions of what happens to horses when they are trained by means of force and compression. I'm very excited about focusing on correct and humane training, and the classical training of horses in lightness.

Further, I have two new books that are now available, *Meditation for Two*, and *Dressage for the New Age* which is in its third edition. I'm creating a series of video lessons and television specials on riding, Classical Dressage, and the Lusitano horse. Later in the year we are planning a trip with a group of horse enthusiasts to Golega, Portugal, for the Lusitano Festival. The events and pageantry celebrating the Lusitano heritage are a great source of pride for the Portuguese, and we will be right in the middle of it all. It's going to be a great year!

For more information about the Barbier Farms, Dominique's clinic schedule, the horses, books, and travel opportunities visit [www.dominiquebarbier.com](http://www.dominiquebarbier.com).

Keron Psillas is a photographer and photographic consultant. She works locally and internationally. Keron travels and teaches with Sam Abell, Rick Holt, and other top professionals. Keron rides a Selle Francais stallion, Fol Amour. She lives in Seattle. To contact Keron, or view her work visit [www.tanatyva.com](http://www.tanatyva.com) or [www.keronpsillas.wordpress.com](http://www.keronpsillas.wordpress.com).



## The Vet's Office

Column editor Michelle Beko, DVM

# Greener Pastures

Here we are in spring with lush green pastures calling to our equine friends. But most of us have heard that green grass can cause laminitis so what do we do?

### What is laminitis?

Laminitis is inflammation of the lamina which attach the horse's hoof wall to the underlying coffin bone. Inflamed lamina are weaker and therefore laminitis may result in the coffin bone sinking or rotating in relation to the hoof capsule. Once a horse has rotated coffin bones, many people say that it has "foundered." Laminitis is very painful and can be life threatening. Laminitis has many causes, including grain overload, retained placenta, severe pneumonia or diarrhea, Cushing's disease, and serious injury to the opposite limb (e.g. a broken bone in the right forelimb may lead to laminitis in the left forelimb). However, one of the most common causes of laminitis is indeed green grass.

### How will I know if my horse has laminitis?

Acutely laminitic horses will most often present with severe lameness. They may refuse to walk or stand. Often horses will short step with the front feet ("walking on eggshells") or shift their weight back and forth, attempting to minimize weight bearing time on each foot. Digital pulses will be increased, and the hooves will be warm. When the front feet are involved, a horse may shift its weight to its back feet with its front legs extended. You should call your vet immediately if you suspect your horse has laminitis or founder.

### How can grass cause laminitis?

Unfortunately, we don't know exactly how this occurs. We do know that the nutritional content of grasses and other plants varies considerably throughout the year, as well as from daytime to nighttime. Sunlight allows plants to photosynthesize, turning light energy into food energy, primarily in the form of carbohydrates. We also know that some types of carbohydrates are digested in a horse's small intestine and others in the large intestine. Excessive amounts of any type of carbohydrate will go to the large intestine where they may ferment and damage the horse's intestinal wall. This allows toxins not normally absorbed to gain access to the horse's bloodstream and eventually cause circulatory changes that can result in laminitis.

### Will all horses eating green grass get laminitis?

Some individuals are much more prone to laminitis than others. Obesity is a very big risk factor. We now know that fat is not a benign storage of energy. Fat tissue actively secretes many different hormones, some of which very likely predispose a horse to getting laminitis. Also, an obese horse's lamina must carry more weight. Regular exercise appears to be protective against some of the effects of obesity.

### Can we let our horses have any grass?

Yes. Keep in mind that spring (March, April, and May) is the riskiest time in northern California. Most horses can have free access to grass pastures at other times of the year. Many horses will be okay on spring grass also as long as they are not overweight. However, all of those "easy keepers" need to be watched very closely for excessive weight gain and will likely need to be restricted. This can be done by limiting their pasture space to a small area or limiting their time in a larger pasture. Morning hours are the safest since the carbohydrate concentration in grasses is highest in the afternoon. Their weight should be assessed frequently (at least once a week). This can be done subjectively by feeling over their ribs, checking for a cresty neck, and looking for a crease down their

back, as well as objectively by measuring their girth. Any horse that is significantly overweight (for example, you believe that they have ribs but can't actually feel them) should not have access to spring grass. Additionally, all horses should be introduced to grass gradually, especially in the spring time.

Grass and grazing are great for your horse. Too much can cause unintended consequences such as obesity and laminitis. As with many foods, moderation is the key. Caution and vigilance should allow your horse to enjoy that nutritious, delicious pasture. U

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



**Michelle Beko, D.V.M.**

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## Readers Write

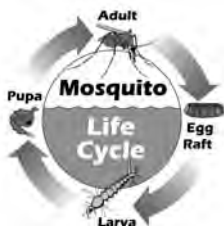
# A Mosquito Farm on Your Property?

Written by Nizza Sequeira, Public Relations Director-Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District

Horses fed...check, animals watered...check, called vet...check, fixed fence...check.

Everything is marked off your list, but you still feel like you're missing something. So, you sit down outside for a few minutes to enjoy the sunset and hope you'll remember... Bzzzz .....Ouch...SLAP... Argh... those vicious blood sucking mosquitoes! Thanks to that mosquito, you just remembered you were supposed to check your property for standing water so that you wouldn't be bothered by mosquitoes this year!

Did you know that in Marin and Sonoma counties there are over twenty species of mosquitoes? Each species has their own set of characteristics, such as biting behavior, flight range, types of diseases they can transmit, and even the type of water in which they will lay their eggs. Think about the mosquito that just bit you. Where could it have come from? A water trough? Maybe a pond? How about the gutters on your house or barn—did you clean them out this year? What about the old tires laying around outside that you were supposed to get rid of but didn't get around to it? They are probably filled with water and teeming with mosquito larvae!



Once you understand the basics about mosquitoes, combating them will become much easier. Let's begin by discussing the biology of mosquitoes (see figure at left). Mosquitoes have four distinct developmental stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. The average time it takes a mosquito to develop from an egg to an adult in warm weather is

only five to seven days, which is why it is so important to take care of standing water on a regular basis.

The eggs hatch into larvae or "wigglers" which hang from the surface of the water and breathe through a tube called a siphon. They feed on microorganisms and organic matter in the water. In a matter of days each larva will molt (shed its skin) into a pupa. The pupa or "tumbler" cannot eat; it hangs on the surface of the water breathing through two tubes on its back. If you touch the water you will see it "tumble" downward. The adult mosquito grows inside the pupal casing and when it is fully developed (usually within a few days) it will split the casing and emerge as an adult mosquito. The newly emerged adult will rest on the surface of the water until it is strong enough to fly away and feed. Both males and females will feed on nectar from plants and flowers. Oh, and did I mention that only the adult females bite? This is because she needs the protein from blood in order to produce eggs.


Most people hate mosquitoes for many good reasons. Mosquitoes are annoying, they can keep you up at night, their bites sometimes hurt and are extremely itchy, but most importantly, mosquitoes have the ability to transmit certain diseases. In fact, mosquitoes are responsible for killing over one million people per year worldwide. Fortunately, we live in an area with organized mosquito control, but we must still be diligent and aware of the threat of mosquito-borne diseases such as West Nile virus (WNV). WNV is a serious disease that can be spread to humans, horses, and other animals by the bite of an infected mosquito. Protect yourself by wearing an FDA-approved insect repellent outdoors when mosquitoes are most active (dusk and dawn). Don't forget to protect your horses too! Talk to your veterinarian about vaccinations and how they can help protect your

horses from WNV, and other diseases spread by mosquitoes.

Now that we have covered the basics of mosquito biology, let's talk about ways to minimize the production of mosquitoes on your property (see table below).

Irrigation:	Manage irrigation to minimize puddles and standing water.
Water troughs:	Change water twice/week or stock with mosquitofish.
Feed buckets:	Cover or turn all buckets upside down.
Wheelbarrows:	Dump and leave in upright position.
Drains:	Keep outdoor drains free flowing.
Leaks:	Fix leaky hoses and faucets that may create puddles.
Rain gutters:	Keep barn gutters clear of leaves and debris that can cause water pooling.
Ponds:	Stock with mosquitofish.
Fly sheets:	Use flysheets and fly masks to protect your horses.
Fans:	Utilize fans to keep air circulating and help keep mosquitoes out of the area.
Screens and doors:	Close stable doors and use screens.
Dawn and dusk:	Stable horses during peak mosquito feeding times.
Trash:	Dispose of items that can hold water, including cans, cups, and bags. Make sure trashcans are tightly covered to prevent rain water from collecting.
Rain barrels:	Conserve water responsibly by using a mosquito-proof screen (fine mesh – 1/16 of an inch) under the lid and over the overflow hole.
Most importantly, <b>report mosquito problems!</b>	

The Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District is committed to protecting the health and comfort of the public from mosquitoes and mosquito-borne disease. We want to hear from you, especially if you need our help. Our programs and services are supported by property taxes and are provided free of charge to all residents in Marin and Sonoma counties.

To learn more about us and how the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District can help you, check out our website at [www.msosquito.com](http://www.msosquito.com) or just give us a call at 707-285-2200, or toll free (800)-231-3236. 

*A native of Sonoma County, Nizza Sequeira has worked for the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control for thirteen years. She has is certified by the California Department of Public Health in mosquito and vector control. She is passionate about her work and proud to be part of an organization that truly cares about the people they serve. If you are interested in additional information regarding the District and mosquito and vector control you may contact Nizza via email at [nizzas@msosquito.com](mailto:nizzas@msosquito.com).*



## Readers Write

## A Visit to the BLM

Written by Nancy Martin



The BLM: Ready for Ishi LeClair?

In the spring of 2008 we broke ground for our new house in a secluded area of Kenwood, located on the southern border of Annadel State Park. Our new neighbors spoke of the nightly "coyote chorus" and reported visits from mountain lions in their yards, and even on their decks. At that time the local newspaper was reporting mountain lion attacks on equines and I began to be concerned for the safety of my two geldings.

A video clip was forwarded to me documenting a mule protecting his horse buddy.

The video depicted the mule grabbing a lion by the scruff of its neck, shaking it severely, dropping it, and then kicking it to death. This made a big impression on me and I began to do some investigation which led me to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) website ([www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov](http://www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov)). One link took me to 'Guardian Burros' and highly recommended the adoption of wild burros for protection of domestic horses. This planted a seed of thought in me, which grew until I made the decision to adopt a burro.

Coincidentally, right around that time the BLM was advertising a "wild mustang and burro auction" to be held at the Santa Rosa Fairgrounds. The morning of the auction I hitched up my trailer and went to the fairgrounds, hoping to come back with a "guardian" burro. I decided not to bid that day, but made a decision right then and there to make a trip to the BLM and bring

back my burro.

In May 2008 my riding "pard" Ishi Le Clair and I set out on our excellent adventure in quest of the wild burro. Making our way on Hwy 5 up to Red Bluff and heading east, the scenery became nothing short of spectacular. We made our way through the densely forested, emerald green Lassen Volcanic National Park (a sight well worth the trip alone), and somewhere along the line I decided to adopt two burros—one for each horse.

Susanville is a quaint little town which offers a selection of clean, comfortable motels along its long main street, along with numerous restaurants and stores. We chose a motel, checked in, and hot-footed it over to the BLM, which is located on the outskirts of town in nearby Litchfield. For a few weeks prior I had been communicating with Videll who works in the Litchfield Corrals BLM facility. Videll was very helpful in ironing out all of the details for the trip and the adoption. We were given a tour of the grounds and made an appointment for the following morning. That night we scouted around Susanville, and had dinner and a good night's sleep.



Gem

Following a hearty cowgirl breakfast in town we made our way back to the BLM, where the very experienced wranglers put my rig in place to load the little guys, and then took us out to look over the stock. The BLM wanted a non-negotiable \$125.00 per animal. The atmosphere was very peaceful and we could take our time. I had my choice from a large herd of wild burros. Immediately I fell in love with a small chocolate jenny who was thought to be one or two years old. "I'll take her," I said, and asked Ishi if she wanted to pick out another one. She said, "I like the one with lightning stripes on her ears." That one was maybe four years old. And so

it was a done deal. The wranglers deftly captured and loaded the two little jennies who came to be called Jewel and Gem. We stopped to take a photo of Ishi under the BLM sign and set off for home. The ride back was thankfully uneventful, even with two thoroughly wild burros in the trailer.

The next year was full of slow, patient, and loving care...and a surprise! Ishi called the surprise gift "a twofur"—Gem presented us with a baby jack whom we named Jack. As



Jewel

part of introducing our new burros to our family, we sent them to "Burro Camp" with Sonoma County's own "Longears Whisperer," Dawn Marie. Jewel gentled down and became a loving affectionate pet, but Gem remained aloof and spooky. Dawn Marie fell in love with Gem's distinct personality. Dawn Marie had an affectionate BLM burro named Jackson, who fit me well, and so we traded. The burros are now pastured in with the horses and everybody is happy. U

Nancy Martin is a San Francisco native who lives in Kenwood with her husband Joe, dog Taffy, cat Jane, two Peruvian Paso horses Amigo and Milagro, two burros Jewel and Jackson, eight cockatiels, and six parakeets. She is certified and currently practicing as a Nutritionist, Pilates Instructor, and Personal Fitness Trainer. She also designs jewelry. You can reach Nancy at [nmartin@cds1.net](mailto:nmartin@cds1.net).

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*All Creatures Great and Small*

Column editor Grant Miller, DVM

**A Little Help from My Friends**

Guest written by Kate Sullivan

The first time I saw Sierra she was in a small pen at the Petaluma Auction. At seventeen hands she looked like the horse version of an anorexic New York model. Her legs went on forever, impossibly holding up her young, thin frame. Four years old and unraced, she came with her Jockey Club papers. She was down about 200 pounds and her haunches were covered in rain rot.

Sierra's halter had worn an open sore on the side of her face. She was clearly frightened and confused. *Oh geez, I sighed, what on earth would be wrong with this one?* As a 501c(3) horse rescue, SAFER (Sonoma Action for Equine Rescue) takes in horses like Sierra and finds them homes. When absolutely necessary, SAFER offers some unfortunate horses a peaceful end. SAFER's efforts are supported by hard-earned dollars contributed by the North Bay community. As a result of the community's generosity, I could afford to bid \$170 on Sierra. This one would not be on the truck to Mexico.

Sierra was the only horse at the auction that day, so I had to change my foster plans. She had to foster at place with companion animals. I begged my very patient foster mom Susan Simons to let Sierra stand in her pasture in sight of her gelding Taz and another SAFER foster Loni during her quarantine period. We treated her rain rot. She ate and ate. A vet check by Dr Grant Miller revealed some startling news: there was nothing wrong with her! She was healthy, had strong hooves, and had excellent conformation. He mentioned that she could be a jumper with those long legs and powerful hind end.

Meanwhile Sierra was very lonely. She tried to make friends with Loni, even from a distance. As a youngster she still needed the guidance of an older mare in the herd to help her learn how to behave and fit in. But our Loni was having none of that. Loni is an older retired horse and adores "her" gelding Taz. Loni did not want some long-legged young filly around to offer him any alternative interest. While Sierra was gaining weight, Loni was losing it as she patrolled the distant fence line against this unwelcome competition. This would not do; Sierra needed a home quickly. Sierra's

*Fast friends: Sierra and Doris*

new home needed to be with a rider with the expertise and passion that would give her a solid start. Would there be someone for Sierra?

So the word went out on the SAFER email alert list. And behold—out of the mist came Doris Eraldi, a novelist and horse trainer from Potter Valley. She and her husband came down to check out Sierra on a day that was so foggy we could hardly see across the driveway! She longed Sierra a bit and Sierra decided right away that Doris was the one for her. Others had come to see her and she had been polite...but she put her head in Doris's hands and that was that.

And that *was* that. Doris adopted Sierra and loves having her. Doris also has an eleven year old gelding and a thirty-two year old retired mare that she has had all her life. More great news—Doris found that Sierra is already green-broke!

It turns out that Sierra has touched more lives than just her owner's. Doris is not only a novelist (*Settler's Chase*, Berkeley, Penguin Group, New York, to be released this July), she is also editor of the Rainbow Ag newsletter. When Doris informed the owner of Rainbow Ag, Jim Mayfield, about the SAFER Donate A Bale, and Hay Assistance Program, which helped initially support Sierra, he decided that Mendocino and Lake Counties should also have those programs available. Now many horses in Northern California will have much needed feed because of a skinny thoroughbred filly at the Petaluma auction. Horses have their missions in life too.

These days Sierra has a lovely farm to call

her home. She mostly ignores the gelding, which causes him great dismay. Instead she stands shoulder to shoulder with Doris's older mare most of the day. They have much to discuss.

Visit the SAFER website at [www.saferhorse.com](http://www.saferhorse.com) for information about SAFER services, the Hay Assistance/Donate A Bale Programs, and



available horses. Please also check out our listing service. If you need to re-home a horse, you can list him or her on the website for free (see site for details). The website also allows you to sign up for emails alerts about newly available horses. U

*Kate Sullivan worked in business development in the high tech industry before returning to her roots in a rural community. She belongs to the demographic of older women returning to their childhood passion of all things equine. Kate believes in working to solve local problems in tangible and flexible ways. SAFER is born of that philosophy. To reach Kate, email her at [katesgate@comcast.net](mailto:katesgate@comcast.net).*

***The Hay Assistance Program and Donate A Bale***

The Hay Assistance Program and Donate A Bale are operated by SAFER. Under these programs, horse owners who are having difficulties feeding their horses can receive free hay and feed. Hay and feed for the Hay Assistance Program is supplied by community participation in the Donate A Bale program. To participate in Donate A Bale (and now Donate A Rail thanks to Martin's and Wine Country Ranch Supplies) ask your local feed store how to make a tax deductible contribution at check out. SAFER then commits to supporting local businesses by purchasing feed from the store receiving the donation. Foster facilities also draw from the Donate A Bale Program. The guidelines and application are found on the SAFER website, [www.saferhorse.com](http://www.saferhorse.com).

*A Horseman's View*

Column editor Julie Cross

**Power in Performance.....Naturally**

You just can't fight with Mother Nature in the winter. We had a wet January! After my eleven minutes of complaining about the rain, I took out my classic horse movies and settled into the couch. I gleefully watched "Seabiscuit," "The Black Stallion," and "Hidalgo".

I felt there was a common thread with in these movies. I realized the thread was about the relationship between the horse and human. It was the relationship that made the pair victorious in their competitions. One line in "Hidalgo" stands out in my mind. Frank and the English woman were having a conversation. The English woman asked how Frank had "tamed" the wild Mustang stallion after capturing him from the wild. Frank matter-of-factly replied, "I didn't." She had a look of surprise!

I know many horse owners and movie viewers think these stories of the horse and human are exaggerated and all "Hollywood," but I don't think so. In these movies there is a strong bond between the person and horse that carries them both through stressful times and competition. Anyone can develop that bond with his or her horse, it just takes time, patience, and meeting your horse on his own terms.

Any one who has competed at any level can attest to the pressure to win (how we like those ribbons and buckles!). Trainers, especially, are under pressure to produce results; their pressure can be financial as well. At shows, our horses feel pressured by the change in environment, the level of energy or excitement at the event, and the other horses. When I started as a pre-teen with horses, I had already been successful in the Dog Show world. I kind of liked the adrenalin. When I was showing in English, Hunter Over Fences, and Western Equitation I just jumped in and expected to win. My horses suffered my bad behavior if I didn't!

Today I have a different consideration and admiration for those who compete. I'm constantly competing with myself on how to develop a positive relationship with my horses. The initial development starts on the ground where I establish/affirm the communication with my horse or a client's horse. I try to take a systematic



Julie and Forté

approach. I believe there needs to be "foundation" before specialization." This philosophy originated in Classical Horsemanship and is now called Natural Horsemanship by many. I've had the opportunity to ride with the O'Connor's in Texas and Colorado. David O'Conner compares a bad relationship (without foundation) to a bad tasting cake with a lovely frosting. Only mutual respect can support a fluid performance. I've also heard from million-dollar Reiner Craig Johnson that a horse and human need to have a balance of "obedience and exuberance,"

not one without the other. Many trainers are about the obedience without supporting and nurturing the individual personalities of horses. Remember the success Seabiscuit's trainer had when he met the horse where he was, and put the horse's needs first?

There are some great clinicians who help folks develop the language and process to create success both in relationships and competition. They teach that our responsibility is to put the horse first, and I don't mean by providing tons of carrots and cookies. Whatever your goals are for you and or your horse—Trail Trials, Search and Rescue, Eventing, Cutting, Reining, Show Jumping, Dressage... (fill in your own ideas here!)—I've found a few professionals I highly recommend. They have developed their own philosophies which are embedded in the psychology of the horse, then applied to performance. I recommend courses, clinics, books, and videos taught by these folks:

Walter Zettl, (Classical Dressage)

Craig Johnson (Reining)

David & Karen O'Conner (Eventing/Gold Medal winners)

Jack Brainard (AQHA Trainer and Judge)

Karen Rolff (Natural Dressage)

I've enjoyed writing this column, and I hope you and your horses find partnership performance together. U

May the Horse be with you!

Julie Renfro-Cross, 3-Star Parelli Professional Instructor  
Chalk Hill Ranch, Healdsburg CA

**Sebastopol Resident Writes Book on History of Local Brands**

Sebastopol resident Ernest P Ongaro has documented the history of brands in Sonoma and Marin Counties in his well researched and illustrated new book, The Brands of California. Ongaro started ranching in Kenwood in 1950, and has lived and ranched in Sebastopol for thirty-five years. He has seen the undeveloped countryside change remarkably in that time. He wrote Brands partially to record and preserve the area's rich agricultural heritage.

According to Ongaro, branding as a means of identifying livestock has been in use since 2000 BC. He documents its use in California for at least 200 years. In his forty-five page book, Ongaro illustrates and reviews the brands of local ranchers, both historical and contemporary, from Joe Montana to Jess Jackson. Most brands carry a special significance to the owners and Ongaro's thorough research sheds light on how many of these symbols evolved. Readers will also learn about methods and tool used for branding, and how to obtain a registered brand. Foreward by local veterinarian Gene Harlan provides a thoughtful complement to the text.

To learn more about The Brands of California or to order a book, visit [www.brandsofca.com](http://www.brandsofca.com) or write to Ernest P Ongaro, PO Box 7794 Cotati, CA 94931.



## Readers Write

## Amity de Fontaine: Equine Artist

Written by Joan Rasmussen



Amity's "The Bay Colt"

As an artist and horse lover, Amity de Fontaine strives to have her paintings create a connection between their equine subjects and the people who view them.

"Horses are my teachers, my gurus," states Amity, and she wants to convey their spirit and depth through her art. She finds it particularly rewarding when a person who has previously regarded horses simply as farm animals senses the energy of these special animals in her work.

Horses have always played an important role in Amity's life. Growing up in Mountain View, she was the typical horse-loving little girl, using horses as subjects in her drawings, paintings, and poetry. Her mother, also a horse lover, encouraged her and took her riding, but her parents assumed that eventually the horses would give way to boys. No way. "When I got interested in boys, I would just bring them with me to the barn." Her love of horses was there to stay.

Her equine experiences range from showing Arabians in Western Pleasure and Saddle Seat to "breezing" horses at Golden Gate Fields after high school. The racetrack environment did not appeal to her and she moved on to college at San Luis Obispo, where she originally planned on becoming a veterinarian. She was delighted to be able to enroll in equine classes and learned colt starting through their program, which was influenced by Monte Roberts. Students worked with colts out of the mountains, and at the end of the program were expected to have the colts able to walk, trot, canter on the correct lead, and drag a hay bale.

She earned a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree from UC Santa Barbara, with horses still being a focus of her artwork. She developed her current technique during an emotionally tumultuous time in her life. The emotions spilled over into her work, and the resulting style was well received at a showing at a Santa Cruz gallery.

The technique is "wet-on-wet." She starts with a sketch, focusing on technical aspects, capturing the expression of the horse, and ensuring that the conformation and features of the horse are correct.

Then she douses the painting well with water. As she prefers her work to be life-size, she usually works on the ground, with her favorite music in the background. Some of the line work may be lost during this step, which does not detract from the end result. She

then applies acrylic or watercolor, which bleeds as it touches the wet surface and takes on a life of its own. At this point, Amity feels she is more of a guide for the paint as she shapes and defines it as it flows. She describes this as being "in the zone" and it can last for six to ten hours. Due to the size of the painting, it's quite a workout, and she is considering developing a means of suspending herself over the canvas as she works to make this part easier.

The last stage of the process is tying it all up, bringing in more line and definition and focusing on features such as the eye and ear that form the connection with the viewer.

Currently, Amity owns Lotus Horse Farm on seven-plus acres in Sebastopol, where she lives with her husband, seven year old daughter and five year old son, eight horses, two goats, two dogs, a cat, and a parrot. Originally, she had planned to breed Friesian horses there but, after becoming aware of the current situation of unwanted horses, abandoned that plan and began rescuing horses. She currently has five rescued horses, as well as her Friesian Dressage horse, Elan, a leopard Appaloosa, and a Shetland pony.

Amity enjoys teaching students to develop a relationship with the horse and to communicate with the horses in their language. She particularly likes working with beginners and on helping riders overcome fear. Her goal is to help students become gentle, fair leaders, and to develop a conversation with the horse.

She also leads a therapeutic riding program at the stable, working with students affected by developmental disabilities. She feels that a particularly dynamic relationship is developed due the openness of the students combined with the openness of the horses.

Amity rides her Friesian Elan with the *Cheval Noir* Friesian team, which performed at the CHANGE fundraiser in September 2009. She also donated two of her large art pieces to the fundraiser—both sold before the auction started, helping to raise funds to help the Sonoma County Animal Control Department with horse cases.

More information about Amity's artwork and Lotus Horse Stables can be found on her website at [www.artofhorses.com](http://www.artofhorses.com).



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## Trails and Open Spaces

Column editor Sarah Reid

# Riding the Lakeshore

I am not sure which I like best: the views or the trails. Lake Sonoma offers some of the most spectacular views of Sonoma County, unencumbered by scenes of the cities—just beautiful mountains, lake, valleys, trees, sky, osprey, bald eagles, and the geysers on a chilly day. The property offers a rich variety of activities as well.

### The trails

Lake Sonoma bends into the Warm Springs and Dry Creek arms. Both areas provide a great mix of single-track and fire road trails. While neither arm offers a perimeter trail, you can plan to shuttle from various parking areas for an all day ride. The parking lots start you from the ridge tops, which sit in the sunshine even on days when fog hangs in Dry Creek Valley and the Santa Rosa Plain. The trails are nicely packed dirt or mulch with very few rocks. Barefoot horses may not need boots. Lots of areas are tempting for long trots and gallops, and these trails are utilized in October for Lake Sonoma's annual fifty-mile endurance rides.

One of my favorite rides starts at Lone Rock parking area and offers views of both arms of the lake. From the lot, start on Dry Creek Trail, which drops down to the Dry Creek arm. You'll ride through a madrone grove and have an opportunity to approach the shore before climbing up to the Grey Pine parking area and crossing Rock Pile Road. You can merge with Half a Canoe Trail from either Bummer Trail or Boar Scat Loop. On Half a Canoe go left for a three mile loop that takes you down to the Warm Springs arm, or go right to take the short route back to your trailer. Watch for bald eagles all along this route below Bummer Peak. A shorter version involves just following the Half a Canoe Loop, which begins just across Rock Pile Road from the Lone Rock lot. The Half a Canoe Loop can be longer and more technical if you ride to Liberty Glen Campground and include the Serpentine and Rancheria Trails. South Lake Trail from South Lake Trailhead is all single-track, and fairly narrow, but offers fantastic riding and great views.

### Facilities

Horse trailers can be parked at Lone Rock (the biggest), Grey Pine, and Overlook. Old Skaggs Springs Road offers limited parking along the road at the trailhead. Only Lone Rock has a water trough (intermittent). Backcountry Horsemen North Bay Unit has built three specific horse camping facilities. The trailer camp at Lone Rock, just below the parking lot offers a toilet, highline poles, fire pits, horseshoe pits, a covered dining area, a manure bunker, water, and room to park twenty-plus rigs. For more adventure, pack in to Falcon's Nest or Old Sawmill, which house pipe corrals.

### Things to consider

The topography of Lake Sonoma requires that you know your horse, his abilities, and his fitness before venturing too far. Make sure your horse is strong enough to negotiate ups and downs, and traverse the steep trails. Some trails are steeply graded, and many are technical. Riders will encounter bridges, and water/mud crossings.

Lake Sonoma is hot. The temperature often runs about ten degrees



*Sarah and Oreo enjoying the trail and the view*

hotter than Healdsburg. The parking areas and some trails have no shade. Consider riding the exposed southern trails in the morning and shadier northern trails in afternoon. Water troughs on trails are reliable year-round. Exercise caution if attempting to water horses in the lake; the shorelines are steep and boggy.

Lake Sonoma is wilderness. Wild pigs, turkey, deer, and predators are prevalent. Most pig sightings are at dawn and dusk, and off trail. Avoid bushwhacking as you could scare up a dangerous, frightened pig—which

could charge. Lake Sonoma is an active hunting area, so check the website for specific hunting dates.

Next to Lone Rock parking lot, there is an active bow hunters range. Look for the interpretive panel just below the parking lot. A red flag flying indicates bowmen on the range. The range does not cross trails and is only on the north side of Lone Rock.

Lake Sonoma is a recreational lake. Boaters abound. Motors are loud and abrupt, and speeding boats cause spooky waves.

Lake Sonoma is a multi-use area. You will not experience the volume of pedestrians or cyclists you would at Annadel State Park, but there are some cycling events (check local listings with BikeMonkey, [www.bikemonkey.net](http://www.bikemonkey.net)). Some hikers may be carrying bows for hunting, or fishing or backpacking equipment, which can startle horses.

### Getting there

From Hwy 101, take Dry Creek Road west at Healdsburg. Follow Dry Creek Road until it changes to Skaggs Springs Road, just over the narrow bridge at the base of the dam. The Visitors Center and Fish Hatchery are immediately on your right. You can get maps there which designate parking, trails, camping, and even water troughs.

**Thanks** to Army Corps of Engineers for building Lake Sonoma. Thanks also to Backcountry Horsemen for building and maintaining trails and horse camping facilities. Thanks to Lake Sonoma 50 Endurance Ride managers for assisting in maintaining the trails. Thanks to all of you who consistently ride the trails and encourage responsible use of our parks. U

For more information, or to make a reservation, call (707) 433-4533, or visit [www.sonomainfo@usace.army.mil](mailto:www.sonomainfo@usace.army.mil) or [www.corpslakes.us/sonoma](http://www.corpslakes.us/sonoma).

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## Readers Write

# Dressage on the Trail

Written by Barbara Chasteen

The best horseman I have ever seen appeared literally to float around the arena on horses that looked as if they were performing high level Dressage movements for the pure joy of it. He held slack reins, smoking his pipe in perfect serenity. When we asked him, he told us that the purpose of Dressage training is "to have a nice ride outside." Though he rode in an English saddle, many Western riders have the same light, focused, content horses, especially in Reining.

Well-done Dressage is beautiful to watch and even more beautiful to feel from the saddle. Dressage training is not aimed at creating a horse that performs robotic patterns of movement in automatic response to certain cues. Instead, it aims for a great athletic partnership. The exercises are designed to arrange the horse's body in positions that will supple his back, strengthen his muscles, and create perfectly straight, flowing movement. Imagine riding such a horse down the trail. He is calm, responsive, strong, light, and willing to do whatever you ask, or cope with any emergency that comes up. "Trail Dressage" has many benefits, including a safe ride on a calm, attentive horse, finesse-full footfalls, and softer gaits. You don't need a typical Dressage horse, or to train in a Dressage court to get the advantages of this type of training. Here are some ways I've enjoyed bringing Dressage into every day trail rides.

### Exercises for the trail

- Warm up for the hills, rocky steps, and stream crossings ahead. Instead of getting your horse out of the trailer, saddling up, then just mounting and riding away, spend a few minutes in the parking lot asking for Dressage movements on the ground. You will warm up your horse's legs and back (and your own)! You'll also help the horse take in the new environment, check out the other horses in the group, and settle into the ride; you'll have his mind with you before you get on.
- When I had a hot-headed Arabian, I learned this: To ask for your horse's attention on the trail, ask him to do a few yards of shoulders-in or half-pass, or simply leg yield (side-pass) back and forth on the trail. If he's wound up, he'll slow down and be back in control. Even on a single-track trail or for stopping and standing, he'll collect, relax, and be with you.
- My short-legged, long-backed Mustang tended to stumble under a rider. I learned to ask him to collect himself and pay attention to his feet, which made downhill slopes and rocky trails much safer (for me and him). It was also a real life-saver on those ninety-horse



Kathy Sparling of Windhorse Ranch, Sebastopol with her Quarter Horse mare, Licorice

*This trail horse and rider demonstrate the benefits of practicing Dressage. Both are balanced, focused, and relaxed. The horse has a rounded back and vertical head carriage that comes from correct posture and impulsion, not from pulling on her bit. She is bent slightly through her whole body, lightening her left shoulder for a long, smooth stride forward. The rider sits tall and relaxed, while her legs follow her horse's body movement. They are traveling together straight to their goal, and enjoying the trip!*

fundraising rides, when he thought he had to keep leaders in sight at all times. I could ask him to stay with me instead by making our movements a little more interesting.

- For years I rode a big, tall Morgan who was sure he should always be in the lead. Asking him to round up and shorten his stride could keep him in line.
- That same Morgan, when he trotted or cantered down the trail, would go faster and faster no matter what I did. I learned that he was going heavy on the forehand. I used Dressage to teach us both how to keep his body balanced and his speed under control.

### Doing your homework

The best place to learn and practice Dressage is in a place that's smooth, flat, and safe, like an arena. You can work on how to communicate clearly with your horse without the distractions and challenges of the trail. You can practice how you sit, and practice Dressage moves, helping your horse be straight, light, and smooth, and in the habit of listening to you.

When I didn't have an arena, I practiced Dressage wherever I could find a flat space: apple orchards, wide flat ranch roads, trail junctions, parking lots, even the beach at low tide...There was room for circles, transitions, and lateral work of all kinds. One of my favorite trainers uses the landscape to train her horses: She will jump over any obstacle, aim the horse down a steep bank to teach him to lower his hindquarters, and gather him up to trot back up the bank. Wading in two or three feet of water, in a river or lake, is a great way to get the feel of collection for both horse and rider.

Practicing Dressage "outside" is so much fun, and it gets you in touch with why you're out there on the trail in the first place! U

Barbara Chasteen has been riding for more than fifty years and has ridden many thousands of miles on the trail. She has trained and managed horses, and loves Classical Dressage and Natural Horsemanship. Barbara has worked with many trainers, including Harry Whitney, Darrin Taplin, Judy McHerron, Tom Dorrance, Ray Hunt, and Debra & Dominique Barbier. To contact Barbara about Dressage on the trail email her at [equiline@sonic.net](mailto:equiline@sonic.net).



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## Readers Write

# The History of My Horse History

Written by Linda Aldrich

For those of you who don't know me I'm the Pony Lady, aka the Howarth Park pony lady, a title I have carried for the last twenty-eight years. On October 25 we closed the barn door on yet another successful Howarth Park season, and to commemorate this auspicious occasion, I called Mr Jim Grady



Linda and her special Thoroughbred, Seven

of KZST DJ Hall of Fame to shout out thanks to all of our loyal family following, and the kids that make our pony corral go round. Grady of course opted to have me do it myself. He quickly had me on-air, peppering me with pony ride trivia questions such as how long had I been in the business, of horse business and during that time how many pony rides had I given?

In doing the math I came to the somewhat shocking realization that twenty-eight years in the business of pony rides equated to approximately 560,000 pony rides. All of the sudden I felt really tired, like maybe it was time to put me out to pasture. Think of it—½ million pony rides not including the almost three decades and two generations of birthday parties, company functions, downtown markets, riding lessons, pony camps, and the many other miscellaneous activities that The Pony Express has been a part of over the years. It's no wonder that I too, began feeling a bit long in tooth, not unlike many, most of my equine herd, and in need of a permanent pasture of my own. It was then that I got to thinking about my humble horse beginnings. After almost three decades of making my passion my profession, where I had been and how and where it would (could?) it go from here? Good questions with somewhat interesting answers that I will share with you.

I don't know that anyone actually grows up with the intention of giving pony rides for a living. I know I didn't. But what I did do is grow up with a passion for horses that dates back to my earliest

recollection of a life living with my family in the Montgomery Village area. Back when kids could roam the streets with abandon I did just that and found myself at Howarth Park at the tender age of eight. Captivated by the pony corral which was at that time manned, or wo-manned I should say, by then proprietor Ms Delores Bible. I immediately signed on as a volunteer. The rest is history, or more accurately, my horse history.

I muddled my way through school with my equine interest leading me to become active in Future Farmers of America. From there I followed one of my favorite Ag teachers, Mr Jim Porter, over to SRJC to study equine science. My determination to make my passion my profession was a bold and daring move that one can only make when you're young and don't know or care that many, most businesses fail. I would succeed.

Starting a horse business with no horses, all the while living in an apartment on Mission Blvd with little more than an idealistic idea bordered on unrealistic. At that time I had to literally walk a mile just to draw in the dirt, much less find enough dirt to put horses (and ponies) on. But I did and what started out as a two-pony show soon grew to be a double digit herd with both horse and pony power to go.



Linda and her rescued Warmblood, Makana, compete in Cross Country

Upon successfully bidding on the contract for my old stomping ground, Howarth Park, I was soon participating in local fairs, downtown markets, and every and all things pony. Within two years I managed to buy my own mini horse ranch that included one acre with a (very) small house located on Middle Rincon Rd, next to a condominium complex. At times I would have as many as fifteen ponies (remember they're small) on my one acre. They would routinely get out and I would have to engage the neighborhood kids, along with my kids, into helping me round them up and out of the condo complex. I was thankful that many, most of the kids (and parents), in the neighboring neighborhoods liked having us as neighbors and tolerated the occasional suburban stampede.

And speaking of kids, it would be my love of working with and for the kids, not just the ones that rode the ponies, but those who, like  
*(continued p. 25)*

### *To our young equine audience!*

Do you have a favorite story about the relationship you have developed with your favorite horse? If so, please share it with us in the hopes that we can share with others the good work that you have accomplished with your equine partner. We would like to select the best 100 stories to demonstrate the special bond that develops between horse and rider, and the special lessons you can learn. Submissions should be about a page long (maybe 300 words). The winners will receive four free riding lessons. For more information, and how to submit your entry, visit [www.theponyexpressrocks.org](http://www.theponyexpressrocks.org).



## Horse Tales

# EM&ME=3

Written by Janet Kahl

WOW did my life change starting on July 2, 2004!! I was sooo very excited to be getting my first horse!! Her registered name is Emerald. I call her Emmy, and she is my Haflinger mare. She is dark chestnut with a white blaze down the center of her face, a double-sided flaxen mane, and long tail.

In 1995, I first saw the Haflinger breed on the front page of Horse Illustrated. I still have that magazine. They are known as the "Golden Ponies of Austria." Not too tall, pretty and calm... the horse for the nervous horse owner... the perfect horse for me. Today in California there are only about 400 Haflingers. I found Emmy on the internet and fell in love with her. I went to Redding to meet and ride her. All went well.

Many of you have grown up with horses, and you are lucky. You may think it's not that big of a deal, but I bet you can remember when you got your first horse. I had been waiting for about fifty-one years!!

Emmy and I got to know each other. She was a mellow girl just like a Haflinger should be. Eventually, as time went by, Emmy started to put on weight and get rounder. I asked people around me, including a veterinarian about it. I was advised that she was probably eating too much. I cut back her hay and gave her more exercise. I was getting advice from folks more experienced than me.

The morning of February 22, 2005 was a foggy day, and seemed mundane. I decided keep Emmy in and exercise her after work. To my surprise, I got a phone call later that morning—Emmy had a new foal!! (No wonder she was gaining weight and getting round!!) I couldn't get my computer turned off quick enough. I grabbed my jacket and ran out of the office. I arrived at Double Bar M (after driving as fast as I could to get there but not get a ticket) and just stood there in surprise, wonder, and amazement of this spindly little creature that was standing next to Emmy. That little creature was sooo beautiful and she was Emmy's baby!! I thought, *Thank goodness Mother Nature took over for those of us who didn't know she was pregnant!* Ignorance is not always bliss.

Still in shock, I went into Emmy's stall and touched her baby. I had



The Girls: Emmy, Janet, and Lainey

never touched a new born foal before. I then realized she was mine also. Emmy had a wonderful weight loss program, one little foal and she probably dropped 80 pounds. Thank goodness Emmy and her baby girl were both healthy. Emmy was a wonderful first time mom. She was very good about letting all our friends look over the gate to admire her new baby girl.

Since I wasn't expecting a foal, I had a crash course reading all about baby horses. Lots to learn!! In the Haflinger world, there are seven letters, which represents seven lineages. I had to think of a name that started with an "E". I named our baby, Emberlaine's A Surprise, Lainey for short.

Emmy, Lainey, and I traveled as a threesome until Labor Day weekend that year. When she was six months old, I weaned her. She cried for

her mom until she was hoarse. When Lainey was three years old I enrolled her in what I called "Terry Clancey's School of Good Horse Manners." Lainey accepted the saddle and bridle with ease. One day I saddled Lainey up and got on. Lainey just stood there and looked up as if to say, "Mom what are you doing up there?" We walked around with



Emmy's surprise

my husband, Chris, leading us. I had decided that I wanted to be the first one to ride Lainey before she went into training with Terry. What a BIG first for me, to sit in the saddle on my now grown baby Girl.

Life has not always been a bowl of cherries! Raising two young horses has been a challenge. The Girls are like two kids, what one doesn't think of the other does!! After weaning Lainey, Emmy was a new horse. My mellow Haflinger had lots of energy and a new attitude! Emmy also went into training with Terry Clancey. I always refer to Emmy as my "energizer bunny" that neighs! I do love it when they both come running to me when I go into the pasture to get them. Their nickers are music to my ears.

My Girls have been a wonderful and rewarding experience for me (most days). To have had a foal and raise her to a mature mare, has been a once in a life time chance also. We have started horse camping and trail riding recently, so if you see me with either of my two Golden Girls, please stop and say "Hello!"

Janet Kahl is a Legal Secretary for the County of Sonoma and long time resident. Her first granddaughter is due any day now. She is looking forward to sharing her love of horses with her grandkids. If you pass a white horse trailer going down the road with a decal on the rear door saying "Emmy's & Lainey's RV," Janet and her Girls are off for another fun day!!



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

### The Audacity of Horse

Column editor Mark Krug

My name is Mark and I'm a bureaucrat.

There, I said it. And it's true. My day job for over a decade now has been with local government. And let's be honest here, government workers generally seen to fall somewhere between used car salesmen and personal injury attorneys in the social strata. Okay, okay—maybe below both of those. My wife's profession as a long-time horse trainer and riding instructor always interests and engages strangers in social settings. She always gets a warm smile whenever she discloses her line of work. When I disclose my line of work, it's like saying, "Hi, I have leprosy, care to dance?"

But the nutty thing is, I love what I do. And that's because, at least at the local level, our system of governance works. No, really, I'm serious. It works from the perspective of being responsive to the citizenry. I'll be the first to admit that our state government is completely and totally dysfunctional. And the federal government is too big, and too distant and far-flung for me to offer any insight. But I witness the local government working all the time. It doesn't work perfectly... What assembly of humans does? Is it quick and nimble? Heck no, US style democracy is designed to minimize the rate of change for the sake of predictability and stability. Further, since local government reaches out to involve the general public, a slow pace is guaranteed. A long time friend, Karl Widup, who had recently retired after a long career in local government, said simply but profoundly, "Government moves slow so people can see it coming." I think he's right. Slow as it is, local government does work, and that means all of us who care about horses, and the accompanying lifestyle, can and should take advantage to push our horsey agenda.

Just as I copped to being a bureaucrat, we all need to admit to being a "special interest." This phrase, like "bureaucrat," has evolved in our lexicon to be pejorative. But it shouldn't sound so negative because our entire democratic system is built upon "special interests" fighting it out; it's the foundation of American-style governance. So, to have our horse and horseman interests represented, we need to be at the table with a voice. Opting out just means other interests gain undue influence from the vacuum we leave in our absence. Of course, I'm largely preaching to the choir here because the Sonoma County Horse Council is largely organized for just this reason: to be our voice at the table.

One problem I see repeatedly from my inside vantage point is that the instances of failure and controversy, and conflict and blunders, are what make the news—not the good, or even the neutral stuff. The vast majority of the good, well-intentioned, reasonable people involved in local government—and all their everyday actions—go largely unnoticed and unreported. When somebody involved in local government does something stupid or criminal or sleazy or idiotic, chances are you'll hear about it. On the other hand, if a bunch of folks grind out some work to make our community a better place in some small or big way, it isn't newsworthy unless there is some negative, sensational aspect. It's too bad, really.

Or is it? The good news about governmental cynicism is that very few folks participate. This means even modest numbers of participants can have a material influence. We are numerous for sure, there's something like 30,000 equestrians in this county. That's a huge number by any measure. Agricultural revenues generated from equestrian activities are second only to grapes in Sonoma County. We have the potential to be incredibly influential in this county; we just need a collective voice.

At a bare minimum, I'd implore anyone who isn't yet a dues-paying member of the Horse Council to become one. The Horse Council is your voice in local affairs and represents your equestrian interests with local governmental agencies. The greater the paid membership, the greater sway the Council holds. If, for example, Horse Council President Karl Bastian meets with a local elected official and says I represent a membership of, say, 300 folks, he isn't going to rattle any cages. But if he walks in and says I represent 30,000, well, that's a whole new ball game.

There are local public processes taking place all the time that ultimately shape our environment and our community. A few dedicated folks—even just a single person—can show up, articulate and defend the wanted outcome, dog the process, and *voilà*, positive things happen.

Ideally, we'd all commit to personally engaging in some public policy or public planning processes undertaken at the local level. For example, as new parks are developed by Regional Parks, public meetings are held and public input solicited. When this occurs, if there isn't a loud equestrian voice in the mix, our interests may not be heard, our wants and desires for horse facilities and horse-friendly parks may go unheeded. Participating isn't necessarily exhilarating, don't expect an adrenaline rush like a gallop on the beach, but it can be immensely fulfilling and it does indeed matter.

Oh, and incidentally, contracting leprosy is highly unlikely. 

*Mark Krug lives in a one-person leper colony near Graton with his uninfected wife Cheryl, several chubby horses, an over-achieving Aussie, and a cat who has evidently opted-out. He can be reached at mark-krug@comcast.net.*

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## Readers Write

### Got Dressage?

Written by Cheryl Krug

Dressage defined is the training to develop, through standardized progressive training methods, a horse's natural athletic ability. The progressive Dressage exercises facilitate development of strength and suppleness, and teach horses to respond smoothly to a rider's minimal aids. Leg yielding is a great example. In a leg yield, the horse moves sideways and forward away from your leg. This exercise teaches the horse straightness and to respond to the leg, and helps loosen and supple the horse. Exercises such as figure eights and serpentines will also aid in bending the horse. Horses with certain back problems may benefit from dressage training as it helps build strength and elasticity.

Many people think you have to have a big Warmblood in order to do Dressage, but this is a misconception. Certain breeds may more easily perform the higher level movements, and may have more suspension (air time) but most any breed can perform and benefit from Dressage. Dressage training improves strength and suppleness, and horse and rider communication. Many people feel that Dressage basics should be the basis for all disciplines of riding.

Equestrians attend Dressage shows with many breeds. Among these are Quarter Horses, Thoroughbreds, Arabians, and Haflingers, as well as mules. The key to performing well at the shows is a good foundation. This is more important than how big the trot is. When riding a Dressage test it is important to ride the movements, and the size and shape of the circles, precisely. The horse should bend around the rider's legs, go forward willingly, and accept soft



Rider and Paint horse compete in a schooling show

contact of the bit. The shows are filled with fun and learning. The judge will score and comment on each circle and movement. This is a great way to learn where you and your horse need to improve.

At a Dressage show wearing the proper attire and looking neat and tidy is more important than the breed of horse. Long hair should be worn in a bun or a net. White breeches, a white shirt, and a black dressage jacket are customary, as well as tall black boots. At schooling shows, which is a great place to start showing, the attire is more casual. Paddock boots with clean half chaps and light colored breeches are acceptable. Jackets are sometimes waived if the weather is hot.

The horse and tack should be clean and the tack should fit well. It is customary to braid the mane and while it is not mandatory at schooling shows, it demonstrates that you put extra effort into your horse's appearance and have the desire to be part of Classical Dressage tradition.

Even if you have no desire to show, Dressage helps build fundamental skills for both horse and rider. All breeds of horses love having variety in their training program. Dressage training is fun and challenging and gives the horse and rider new projects on which to work. It is very rewarding to see and feel the improvement and progress you and your horse will make in the course of his training. Dressage offers the rider achievable goals to look forward to as well as a great way for horse and rider to work in harmony. U

Cheryl Krug lives in northwest Santa Rosa with her horse-husband Mark, one cat, one dog, and six horses (some are guests). They have a mini ranchette where Cheryl teaches and trains for Dressage. She enjoys trail riding, as well. You can contact Cheryl at [cherylkrug@comcast.net](mailto:cherylkrug@comcast.net).



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## Colts and Fillies

# What Horses Think

Column editor Kelly Henson



*Tobi loves his mom*

cheeks but I did understand that you needed me right then. Most of our days spent together were filled with a big grin on your face and laughter in the air. I loved it when you would lie on my back in the sun and I would graze on the sweet spring grass. I could have spent forever that way.

My proudest moment was when you entrusted me with your child. I didn't really understand what was so great about that tiny thing you called a person but I figured you knew what you were talking about. When you told me to be on my best behavior as you lifted that little body over my back and placed him gently on my bare skin, I knew that I had to protect him with my life. I will always remember how those soft little hands felt as they held on to my mane.

The years went by and there was less time for me and more of those little people running around, but you still brought me carrots, brushed my coat, and stood next to me while I grazed in the tall grass. I am old now and haven't seen a saddle in quite some time but you still look at me the same way you did all those years ago, with big eyes and a huge smile on your face. You always tell me how much I have meant to you over the years. But I want you to know how much you have always meant to me. I thank you for the times you nursed me back to health and the long lazy days in the sun. And most of all, for being MY best friend all those years. Not a day passed without me hearing "I love you." Now I want to say, "I love you too." ♥

*Kelly Henson is a Sonoma State student and creative writer. Kelly and her National Show Horse, Tobi, are best friends. If you would like to contact Kelly about a story, email her at [kids@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org](mailto:kids@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org).*



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*Colts and Fillies—Kids Corner***Azure Roze—Horse Trainer***Azure and Autumn Bey**Learning to side pass with Cheryl**A solid post trot*

I am nine years old and homeschool in third grade. My favorite subject is History, and I especially enjoy studying maps. I started riding at age four, on a Shetland pony named Portia. I am training my four year old half-Arabian mare, Autumn Bey, with our trainer, Cheryl Krug. I am also taking riding lessons with Cheryl. Right now, I'm learning Dressage. I don't know what other disciplines I might try later. My horse Autumn was barely saddle broke when I

got her as a three year old filly. Since then, Autumn has learned how to longe like a pro, walk, trot, and canter on command, and I am teaching her some very basic moves, while she finishes growing. She's very "butt-high" right now, and gets sore shoulders after a lot of trotting under saddle. Autumn is usually quiet and willing to work. She is athletic, with a light and springy trot, and she picks up the correct lead at the canter almost every time. When she's grown and trained I'll be able to do anything I want with her—and I can't wait for that day. My advice to parents is this: if your eight year old asks you for a horse, get her an old school master, because it's really hard waiting for a young horse to grow up.

Besides school and riding, I volunteer at Pegasus Riding School helping homeless children learn about horses and riding. Being around horses is one of the most important things in my life. I love animals. Besides Autumn, we also have a dog named Hannah and a cat named Felix. When I grow up, I might be a veterinarian or a horse trainer, and I hope to have a training stable someday where I'll be an expert in training young, green horses. Then everything I'm learning about Autumn will come in handy. U

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## Readers Write

## Statute of Limitations

Written by Wendy Watson

When I was twelve years old my dad finally gave in to my pleading and bought me my first horse. He was a sweet, yet mischievous, half-Morgan chestnut gelding named Moe.

Moe could be exciting to ride. While he was willing, he was young and startled easily. When he did "start," he would take off at light speed and I would hold on for dear life. If I came off he would come to his senses, and stop and wait for me to get up (one of his best traits!). Occasionally I would get a poke from his soft nose as if to say, "What are you doing down there? Get back on, we're moving out!"

I kept Moe at a farm on the edge of town, and often rode him through the village streets to my mom's backyard for a glass of lemonade or a sandwich. One summer day I rode bareback down the street with my best friend Liz on Moe's back behind me. It was a hot and sleepy day, and the sky was crystal blue. The stillness was only broken by the cloppity-clopping of Moe's hooves and the occasional bird song.

I'm not sure what spooked Moe, but without warning he was bolting down the street with us on his back. I grabbed mane and Liz grabbed me as we left the street and tore through lawns, Moe's hooves tearing up divots as we flew. As we approached a large hedgerow I was sure that Moe would finally stop, but he didn't. Instead he jumped it like a steeplechaser taking Becher's Brook.

We arrived unscheduled into a garden party and sent people and plates flying. Moe dodged the guests, but I think we dragged a few party hats and streamers with us as we cleared the hedgerow on the other side of the lawn. I was dimly aware of a dignified gentleman yelling and waving a spatula at us.

Later that afternoon, on a much calmer horse, Liz and I rode back to the barn. Along the way, a patrol car pulled along side of us, and a policeman asked if we had seen "two guys on horses." We



The perps: Wendy and Moe

truthfully replied that we had not.

The following week I was in the living room with my mother. She was reading the police blotter from our local paper. She laughed as she read to me, "A Stafford Street resident contacted the Yellow Springs police to complain that two horsemen had ridden through his daughter's lawn party. Police were unable to locate the perpetrators." At that moment I realized that the police officer had been looking for us. Since Mom was laughing, and the incident has passed, I thought it was safe to confess. "Mom," I said, "That was Liz and me on Moe." She started to bawl me out, so I had to think fast.

"Geez," I said, "Don't you know when you are being kidded?" U

Wendy Watson lives in Santa Rosa and has loved horses all her life. Her current partner in crime is a Missouri Fox Trotter named Hank. Wendy can be reached at [wkittyagogo@aol.com](mailto:wkittyagogo@aol.com).



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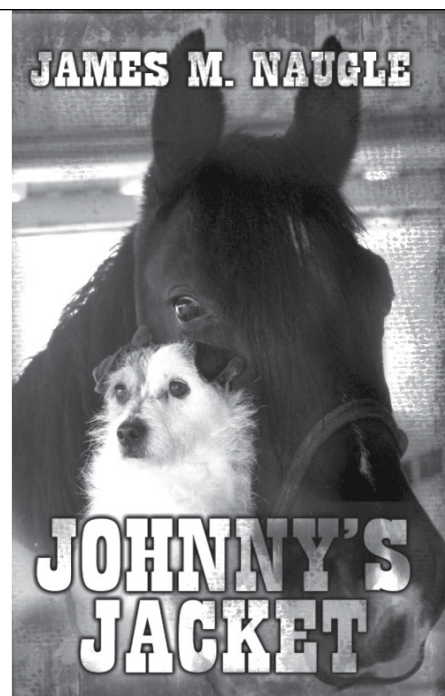
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(continued from p.16)

me, just wanted to be around horses and ponies that would keep me going all these years. Horse crazy kids, not unlike myself back in the day, and to this day. These kids somehow found their way to the pony corral, just as I had found my way to Howarth Park...my home away from home for nearly three decades.

Over the years there have been literally hundreds of young people who have been active in the pony corral, young girls mostly all with one thing in common: a passion for horses and a desire to pursue their passion. The corral would become an outdoor classroom of sorts and the horses and ponies the teachers—dispatching valuable life-skill lessons such as trust, respect, communication, and team work. The kids learned to be both accountable and responsible in an environment that developed confidence and helped many to grow their self esteem, all the while allowing those in need a place and a space to indulge their passion and hone their horsemanship. Even on the worst of days there was a lesson to be learned making them all the best of days.

The Pony Express has experienced a year of monumental growth and change in order to create more opportunity for more kids to experience more life-changing experiences. We are now officially known as The Pony Express Equine Assisted Skills for Youth (EASY) Program, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with our emphasis where it has always been, on the kids and the horses and the amazing relationship that develops whenever and wherever the two shall meet. As it is through this relationship of horses as teachers that miracles happen, providing our valued youth with the opportunity to learn valuable life lessons in an authentic learning environment. For it is in our passionate pursuit of a journey into making our own horse history, that we might just make history happen... in our life and in the lives of others. I know I did. 

*Linda Aldrich has her Masters in Education and a lifetime of experience participating as an active member of the Sonoma County equine industry for nearly three decades. Seeing a want and need for more youth-based mentorship programs, Linda founded and currently serves as Director of The Pony Express Equine Assisted Skills for Youth (EASY) Program, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to providing equine/educational learning opportunities for youth. For more information about Linda and the EASY Program visit [www.theponyexpressrocks.org](http://www.theponyexpressrocks.org).*

## Readers Write

# Walking the Plank

My horse and I were out for a ride,  
A new trail I spied off to the side.  
We went down the trail,  
Under branches,  
Over stumps.  
But I had to get off,  
Or my head I would bump.  
We came to a plank bridge,  
Over a creek,  
This is where I found out,  
That my horse was meek,  
About walking a plank,  
Five feet in the air,  
It gave my horse quite  
A scare.  
But he bravely danced across it,  
His hoofs barely fit,  
And we continued walking  
In the forest a bit.  
When we returned,  
The plank was where it should be,  
But the sun was in his eyes,  
My horse couldn't see.  
He walked across the plank,  
And much to my surprise,  
Ended up in the creek,  
Which was dry, I surmised.  
He ran downstream,  
Until the creek walls grew narrow,  
Until there was barely enough room,  
For a deer or a sparrow.

He got stuck in the creek  
Like a cork in a bottle,  
He squirmed in the dirt,  
I was mad enough to throttle  
Him as I climbed down to his head...  
I thought he was dead!  
His eyes were half shut...  
But there was still air in his gut.  
I dug out the walls with a stick  
I dug and I dug  
The dirt was real thick  
I was in a big hurry,  
Dirt covered my face,  
I was chock full of fury,  
It was a big race  
Between now and the sunset  
I think you can see  
But all my horse did  
Was stare blankly at me.

*Andy Shapiro lives in Santa Rosa and boards in Olema. After riding in his teens and twenties, Andy was horseless for a while. He is now fifty-four and owns an Arabian named Katana. Andy enjoys riding bareback in Marin, especially Point Reyes, and writing about his riding adventures. To contact Andy you can email him at [acepilot28@yahoo.com](mailto:acepilot28@yahoo.com).*

Written by Andy Shapiro



Andy and Katana

"Rise up, my horse!"  
I yelled to his face.  
"Come back and join the  
Equine race!"  
Did his eyelids flutter?  
Did his mouth start to mutter?  
I heard a deep groan,  
Then a quiver of flesh,  
The vibration of muscles  
Starting to mesh,  
A whine in the air  
That made my ears start to ring,  
As if the very forest  
Was starting to sing  
And Vroom!!!  
My horse flew up  
Dirt flying everywhere,  
He was standing before me  
Like a giant bear!  
I got out of his way,  
And he leapt out of the creek  
No longer looking forlorn and meek.  
Back on the trail he nudged me and said,  
"You saved me again,  
I could've been dead,  
I'll always adore you  
And do what you say,  
Until we come across  
Another fateful day,  
Another plank,  
But this time you'll see,  
You won't be disappointed in me  
  
I won't be a coward,  
I won't be a chump,  
Because this time  
I won't walk across,  
This time I'll...  
JUMP!"



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## From the Horse's Mouth

### **Local Three Day Eventer Featured at Rolex Competition**

Bodega resident Kelly Prather is among the featured riders at the 2010 Rolex Three Day Event in Lexington, Kentucky. The annual Rolex event, held this year on April 22-25, draws the most accomplished Three Day Eventers from all over the world. Kelly, who rides Andrea and James Pfeiffer's Irish Sport Horse mare Ballinakill Glory ("Pippa"), trains at Chocolate Horse Farm in Petaluma. In 2009, Kelly and Pippa won the Rebecca Farms Cross Country International 3\* (CCI-3\*) World Cup Qualifier. They followed with a sixteenth place showing at the World Cup Eventing Finals in Strzegom, Poland. In October, Kelly and Pippa finished seventeenth at the Fair Hill International CCI-3\*. A fundraiser, including dinner, lecture by Jo and Rachel Young, and a silent auction, was held at the Rooster Run Golf Course in Petaluma on February 13th. To check out the feature on Kelly and Pippa visit the Rolex Kentucky website at [www.rk3de.org](http://www.rk3de.org) and select "Featured Riders."



### **Backcountry Horsemen Sink Their Shovels at Point Reyes**

Equestrian travel at the Point Reyes National Seashore is even more pleasurable than before, especially when it is time to dismount and take a break. The Marin Horse Council would like to extend a special thank you to the Backcountry Horsemen Unit of the North Bay (BCHC-NBU), who assisted in several of the improvements. BCHC-NBU members Thor Bodtker and Dan Horn, along with Petaluma residents and Point Reyes staff, installed ten new tie rails and six new picnic tables. The areas receiving improvements include Divide Meadow, Sky Camp, Coast Camp, and the Five Brooks Stables parking area. The group also installed a new redwood table in the parking area at Samuel P Taylor State Park. Horses and other pack animals are allowed on most established trails and beaches at Point Reyes. For more information about riding at Point Reyes, visit [www.nps.gov/pore](http://www.nps.gov/pore) or call 415-464-5100.



### **Rincon Riders Sweep Local Parade Scene**



The local parade participants for 2010 are advised to be in top form! The Rincon Riders (RR) swept the scene last season with first place victories in the mounted divisions of both Santa Rosa's Rose Parade and Sebastopol's Apple Blossom Parade.

Seven members participated in the Rose Parade under the theme "Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show." Five rode, two walked minis, and one member walked a pony. Costumes included Wild Bill himself and Calamity Jane. For the Apple Blossom Parade, the Rincon Riders represented "Famous Horses." Among the eight competing members were Seabiscuit, Secretariat, and a pink My Little Pony (pictured). The RR Pooper Scoopers, an under-appreciated role, won first in both parades as well! The Pooper Scoopers are the folks who walk behind the horses and clean up the deposits so the next entry doesn't have to avoid them. Winning Scoopers are part of the show, flipping and tossing their cargo. For more

information about the Rincon Riders and their events, visit [www.rinconriders.org](http://www.rinconriders.org).



### **Equestrians Ride Support for Annadel Fundraiser**

The sun shone on Annadel State Park this year in more ways than one. On February 7th, the previously elusive sunshine broke through for one day to make the participants in the first annual Annadel Half Marathon Fundraiser a little more comfortable. Three hundred runners turned out to cover the thirteen-plus mile foot race on the state park trails. A guided five mile hike was also conducted for Annadel supporters who found thirteen miles a bit ambitious. Equestrians belonging to Backcountry Horsemen and the Mounted Assistance Unit lent their time and efforts by patrolling before the race, clearing trails, providing uniformed race presence and support, and by riding sweep after the race. The Bicycle Assistance Unit also provided support. The race organizers, Fleet Feet Sports and Redwood Empire Runners, contributed the event entry fees to a special local fund designed to support Annadel. Total contributions exceeded \$20,000. For more information about the Annadel Half Marathon, visit [www.annadelhalf.com](http://www.annadelhalf.com).



### **Well-known Wild Horse Advocate Addresses Local Group**

Elyse Gardner, well-known wild horse and burro advocate, and Humane Observer, held a special presentation in Petaluma on February 4, 2010. Gardner, who works with the Cloud Foundation and the Equine Welfare Alliance to document the BLM's inhumane management of wild horses, reported on the round up and treatment of Nevada's wild horse populations. The room, filled with local wild horse advocates, listened to reports and viewed photographs of helicopter round ups, overcrowded pens, casualties and mortalities, as well as plans for future round ups. Recent events have been of particular concern because aggressive round up policies have caused late term pregnant mares to spontaneously abort on the range and in pens. In many instances the Observers and the press have not been allowed access to document events and policy. According to Gardner, the best way to take action to prevent the continued abuse of the wild horses is to "keep the political pressure on." For details on how you can act visit [www.equinewelfarealliance.org](http://www.equinewelfarealliance.org) or contact Sonoma County advocate Jyoti Germain at [equindeliverance@aol.com](mailto:equindeliverance@aol.com).

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

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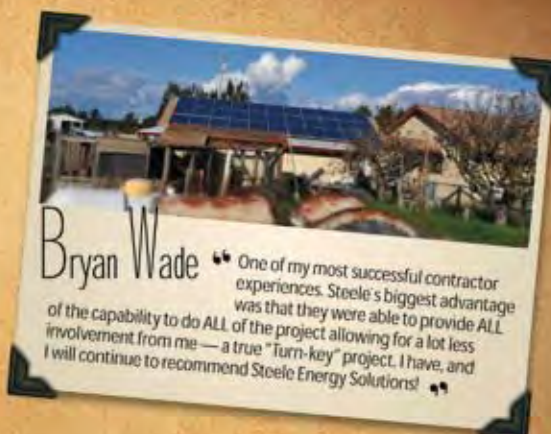
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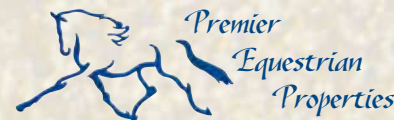


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