


Sonoma County

Horse Journal

Volume 6 • Issue 3 • Summer 2010




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



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Cover Photo: Ruth Lake / www.lakewebdesign.com

Larry Braun, Riding Coach for the Peruvian Paso, performs on his Peruvian Paso Champion and High Point mare, *TLR Amada*, photographed at the Equine Extravaganza in Santa Rosa, CA. Read more about the Peruvian Paso and other Gaited breeds in this issue of the Horse Journal.

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A Message from the President

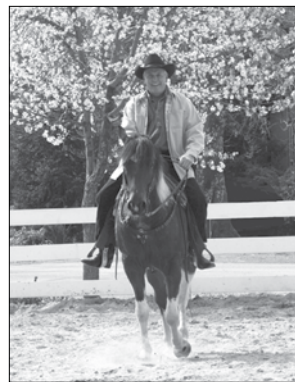


Photo: Vanessa Bastian

Karl & Dinero

Many times people have come up to me to thank the Horse Council for its work. They say, "Oh, I always mean to join!" After that, maybe they will, maybe not. Sometimes I guess it falls off their priority plate. I know the money is money, but everyone has \$30.00 a year to protect themselves and their buddy.

If you need a clear example of what you get by joining the SCHC, here it is:

- Trails made available and protected into the future.
- Working with government to get things right. I said to one member, "I heard we saved you \$200K on your arena!" He said, "No, \$300K, and thank you very much!"
- You call us about a horse that needs rescue, we're there for you.
- You call about accidents. You've needed advice, and we give it with a the "big picture" perspective.
- You call about disagreements and arguments. These very touchy

Howdy!

I have one word for you folks—membership!!! It's not about the money, it's about our numbers. Thousands of voices speak out louder than hundreds. We do need money to do our work, and work we do! We have willing volunteers that give much of their time. It's about love for our strong, fragile, four-legged friend who lets us up on his back and ride, that we do all this work.

situations need a family-like advisor to bring everyone back to earth and keep our family on the same page.

- You want facilities. We heard you loud and clear. We are working diligently to bring the horse community a world class equestrian park (see the California Equestrian Park and Event Center (CEPEC) feature on page 4). Curiously it may be the community at large that gets the biggest gift. Do you know that one event, the World Cup, will bring a \$100 million into the local economy? From the Draft Horse Classic to the Olympics, we will be able host it here! We want a stage for every breed and discipline. Please join the Horse Council and/or participate in making the CEPEC happen.

THERE IS MORE!!!

- A recent committee suggested we give store discounts, insurance price breaks, and other such incentives. So we're working right now on that. I am confident that our members will appreciate these perks.
- We brought you the Sonoma County Horse Journal, enjoy! This home grown magazine is something for us to brag about. It has gotten attention from New Mexico to Oregon. And it's ours.
- The Equine Extravaganza... just around the corner! Come to the Sonoma-Marin Fair in Petaluma and watch the exciting demonstrations from local experts and horse folks involving all breeds and disciplines.

Please Join Us! You'll feel good knowing you helped.

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



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Your Horse Council at Work Proposed Equestrian Center in Sonoma County: Q & A

Written by Wanda Smith

What are SEC and CEPEC? What do the acronyms represent?

SEC is an acronym for Sonoma Equestrian Complex which was the Horse Council's original name for the equestrian facility to be developed in Sonoma County. The name of the project was recently approved for change to California Equestrian Park and Event Center (CEPEC) to better convey the large area it will serve and the functions of the facility. The CEPEC would be used for recreation, education, equestrian activities, events, and competitions.

What facilities would be there?

The center will provide facilities for a wide variety of horse events (shows, competitions, and demonstrations) for many disciplines such as Dressage, Show Jumping, Eventing, Driving, Cutting, Reining, Barrel Racing, and Polo. The center will also be ideal for educational events such as classes, clinics, and certifications. We hope to house and preserve memorabilia that document Sonoma County's rich equine history. Additionally, the center will be used to provide advanced medical services such as surgeries, medical imaging, and quarantine.

How big would it be?

The current plans are for a 1,400-acre facility. In working with the Open Space District for land acquisition, we are required to maintain 50% of acreage as open space. The CEPEC meets this requirement, conserving at least 700 acres; this open space would be used for trails. The remaining land would be used for the center and its support infrastructure.

Why can't the Sonoma County Fairgrounds be used?

The Fairgrounds are not ideal for several reasons. The Fairgrounds do not offer space for large scale national or international events, or multi-discipline events such as Dressage and Cutting. The types of events that can be held at the Fairgrounds are limited due to issues such as arena footing. The Fairgrounds do not house the infrastructure or space for education and conference centers, or medical/surgical and imaging centers. The Fairgrounds administration is not interested in utilizing its facilities for training and conditioning of horses (including race horses). However, there is a huge need and market for a race training facility in the Wine Country. Finally, the central location of the Fairgrounds requires visitors to travel through Santa Rosa, which is often congested. The CEPEC would be outside the city center, and more accessible from areas in Sonoma, Marin, and Napa Counties.

How would the CEPEC benefit the average equestrian in Sonoma County?

CEPEC would offer average equestrians a place to ride year-round in open and covered arenas, a central location for clinics and viewing prestigious events, a nearby facility to obtain advanced level medical services, and a place to view Sonoma County's historical equine artifacts and memorabilia. The average equestrian

CEPEC

would also benefit from the services and professionals such a high-quality facility will attract to our local community.

How much will the CEPEC cost and who is paying for it?

The entire center is currently estimated to cost \$200 million. Plans are to build it in stages so that as money is obtained, facilities can be developed. Potential funding includes a variety of sources such as investors, grants, donations, fund raising events, taxes, and bonds.


What has been accomplished so far?

The project was initially conceived in March 2009. So far, the following activities have been accomplished:

- Market Research survey and interviews
- Creation of initial business plan
- Creation and submission of Open Space application
- Presentations to County Supervisors, Lynn Woolsey staff, and PMRD representative
- Discussions and negotiations with land owners
- Creation of a marketing campaign that has included presentations on local TV and radio shows, publications in the Sonoma-Marine Farm Journal and Sonoma County Horse Journal, announcements at public events, and creation of marketing materials such as brochures and a website (www.cepec.us)
- Formation of advisory team consisting of: geologists, hydrologist, civil engineers, infrastructure engineer, concept architect, horse park architecture design firm, representatives of various equine sport disciplines, financial advisors, and investors.

What are the next steps?

The next steps will be to create a corporate structure and revise the business plan. After obtaining seed funding, the Horse Council will pursue discussions with land owners and finalize initial agreements. Land acquisition includes geologic assessments, presentation to the Open Space District, and negotiations with land owners. After land purchase, the Horse Council will initiate project design steps, and start the process of permit applications.

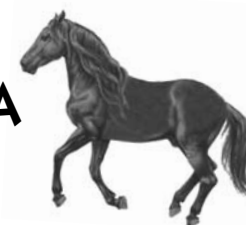
It seems like a long project, and a lot of steps, but when we can proudly claim the California Equestrian Park and Event Center as part of Sonoma County, it will all be worth it. 

For more information about the CEPEC visit the website at www.cepec.us or come to the next Sonoma County Horse Council meeting. The meetings are held the second Wednesday of every month at 7pm at the SCDRC Clubhouse. We'd love to see you there.

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Editor's Perspective

Contemplating Gaitting

Written by JoDean Nicolette

All horses gait. For most horses, gaits refer to walking, trotting, and cantering. Many of us riders, especially newer ones like myself, find simply mastering seat and managing tempo of the basic gaits material enough for daily practice. But, as horse *aficionados* have come to take for granted—there's more... There's always more. Some special breeds of horses not only perform gaits—they perform Gaits. Gaitting refers to certain horses' genetic predisposition to locomote without transmitting vertical movement to the rider. Understanding Gait, and identifying the various Gaits, can be both fascinating and confusing. I decided to spend some time sorting out the basics here.

The anatomy of Gait

Breeds that Gait, such as Peruvian Pasos, Tennessee Walking Horses, Icelandics, Kentucky Mountain Horses, American Saddlebreds, and Missouri Fox Trotters (among others) have been bred to Gait naturally. This means that their conformations support their unique motion. Gaits are four-beated, and are either lateral or diagonal. They often produce the same movement in the rider's hip as a walk or trot—slight elevation with a forward arch in parallel motion to the horse's ipsilateral hind leg—but without suspension and impact. While Gaited and non-Gaited horses are put together essentially the same, in order to achieve their special movement, Gaited horses demonstrate subtle conformational differences. Keep in mind that conformational differences even exist among different breeds of Gaited horses in order to support their unique Gaits (as evidenced by the distinct appearance of each breed), but I won't address that here. The differences between Gaited and non-Gaited horses are subtle, and are usually reported as averages and tendencies rather than rules. According to Lee Zeigler, one well-respect Gaited horse expert,¹ Gaited horses, for example, tend to have shorter necks than backs, with a neck that rises from the withers at a higher angle. They may have shorter and steeper hips and pelvises, making it more difficult to lower their haunches, and raise their backs, supporting their non-vertical movement. Other conformational differences can include longer, more horizontal pasterns, and a longer loin.

While Gaited horses are often compared to non-Gaited horses when describing conformation, it is important to refrain from ascribing "normal" conformation to non-Gaiters. Gaited horses are ideally conformed (and hence normal) to produce their much-desired, special movement.

Examples of Gait

Gaits are usually defined by their footfall sequence, timing, support sequence, and shift in center of gravity. While general categories and definitions exist, as you can imagine, there are as many subtle variations of Gaits as there are horses. I've included some examples of common Gaits, and as a beginner, I have chosen to focus on whether the footfall is lateral or diagonal, and the audible beat or rhythm.



Debby Bailey demonstrates the pinto gait on her Peruvian Paso, Luna (for more info on Peruvian Pasos and the pinto gait see p.14)

Fox trot

This is a four-beat diagonal Gait. The front hooves should set down just before the hind hooves, producing an uneven sound: 1-2- -3-4. The sounds closest together will be from the diagonal hooves hitting the ground. Breeds exhibiting this Gait include the Missouri Fox Trotter, the Paso Fino (for which it is called the *trocha*), and the Peruvian Paso (the *pasitrote*).

Rack

Also known as the *tölt*, the rack is a four-beat lateral Gait. In this Gait the high action of the front hooves delays their contact with the ground, so the hind hooves set down first. The beat is even: 1-2-3-4. The horse jumps forward between his transverse pairs of legs, at one point supported by a single hind hoof. Breeds exhibiting this Gait include the Icelandics (the *tölt*), the Boeperds (the *trippel*), and the American Saddlebred.

Running walk

The running walk is a four-beat square Gait. In this Gait the hooves lift off and set down at even, separate intervals. Neither the lateral, nor the diagonal hooves travel at the same time. The beat is 1-2-3-4. The running walk is the characteristic Gait of the Tennessee Walking Horse.

Sitting the Gait

As any trainer of Gaited horses and riders will tell you, riding a Gaited horse is an art. The literature describes the Gaited rider as taking care to lighten the forehand in order to engage the hindquarters to Gait; any weight over the horse's shoulders will inhibit the natural movement. Historically, riders are taught to assume a balanced seat, but maintain their upper bodies slightly behind the true vertical (as little as ½ inch), with their feet an equal distance in front of the vertical. Recently, some Gaited horse riders have begun to advocate a traditional equitation seat, with the shoulders, hips, and heels in line.

While Gaited horses are known for their special movement, they share many other desirable characteristics, including a pleasant temperament, desire to please, capacity for endurance, and exquisite beauty. They have great hair. Many Gaited horse owners will describe their horse's spirit as complex and soul-like, as if they are human in their ability to feel, cognate, and intuit. Given their wonderful attributes, it's no surprise that these versatile horses are used for purposes as diverse as celebration and endurance, team penning and park patrol. And yes, I asked... They can canter and gallop, and will enjoy that beach romp just as much as you.

For more information about Gaited horses, start with www.gaited-horses.net. For information about local riders and local resources, read further in this issue of the Horse Journal.

¹Zeigler, Lee. Good Horsemanship: How to Do Your Own Conformational Analysis for Gait. *Icelandic Horse Connection*, January 2004.

Horse Tales

Love at First Ride

Written by Wendy Watson

I had my first contact with the Missouri Fox Trotter (MFT) late in life. Like many women in their forties, I had returned to my childhood passion of horseback riding after a twenty-year hiatus. I had always ridden Hunter-Jumpers, and was doing so again. I was leasing a handsome Canadian Sporthorse with beautiful gaits and a real future in the show ring. I had every intention of buying him, but destiny intervened.

I was at the barn when the trailer arrived...all the way from Missouri. I watched as he was unloaded—a gangly, three year old, dark buckskin with a donkey nose and wild, golden eyes. He danced down the barn aisle as he was led to his new stall, snorting the entire time. He was the recent acquisition of an elderly boarder, and his name was Hank.

Hank's stall was across from mine, and he was very social. He begged for attention constantly, and being a sucker for handsome colts I gave it, always having an extra carrot or kind word for him. A few months after his arrival, Hank went up for sale. His owner had decided he was too young for her. On a whim I rode him with his trainer yelling instructions at me, and found he was kind, willing, and a ton of fun. We sped around the arena as smooth as silk. He bobbed his head as he fox trotted, and his mane and ears bounced up and down in time with his stride. It was the cutest thing I ever saw and I was officially in love. Reason had no part in it as I wrote the check with stars in my eyes. I knew nothing about Gaited horses. Over the years I have learned a lot. I studied with trainers and read every book I could get my hands on... And I rode, rode, rode.

I found out Gaited horses are not new breeds; they have always been here. Almost all ancient societies that had horses made reference to Gaited horses in their writings and art work. Gaited horses were the mount of choice for any person of stature. Only those who couldn't afford a Gaited horse would ride a trotting one. The ancient Romans called trotting horses "bone crushers" and "torturers." I was excited to find out about the history of the Missouri Fox Trotter, which is shared, at least in the beginnings of recorded history, by almost all other American breeds, whether Gaited or not. A really excellent book on the subject is *Of Royal Blood...the Missouri Fox Trotter* by Dyan Westvang (Booklocker.com, March 2006).

The Missouri Fox Trotter is a descendant of the Scottish Galloway, which by co-incidence happen to come from the same area of Scotland as my own ancestors. My clan on my mother's side is MacEachain, which means "son of the horse lord," and I was thrilled to think maybe my ancestors had been with Hank's ancestors. Were we born to be together? Many of the horses in the British Isles were Gaited horses before Henry VIII took the throne. He altered the

appearance of the regional horses, though, because he wanted all horses in England to be big enough to carry him (no small feat!). He ordered all small horses to be gelded or destroyed. As most Gaited horses of the time were pony-sized, this reduced their numbers dramatically.

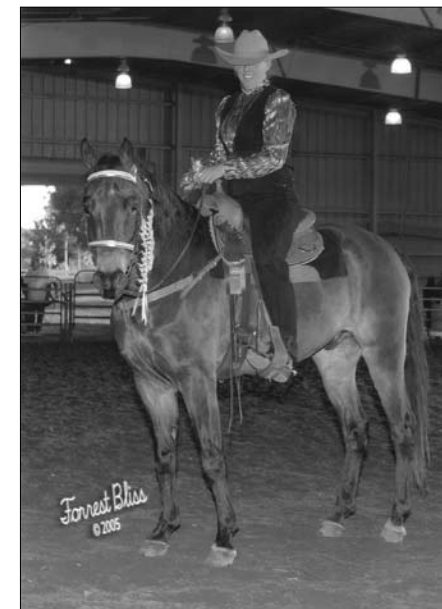
The modern Missouri Fox Trotter was bred selectively in the Ozark Mountain regions of the United States. This region has almost always been economically challenged, and slow to develop. Many people relied on horses to do every conceivable job well into the 20th century. Horses needed to be sure-footed, strong, and gentle enough for any member of the family to use. An MFT registry was created in 1948. Missouri Fox Trotters are incredibly kind, patient, and willing. They have great agility and endurance, and excel at almost any discipline. They are intelligent, and very social, craving human contact. They are incredibly sure-footed and can go quickly for miles on the trail without tiring. Because I refused to believe he couldn't do it, I taught Hank Dressage and Jumping with the help of my open-minded trainer, and he loves it. He is also a fine trail horse. Brave and curious, he loves to get out as much as I do.

Special considerations for MFT's include saddle fit and biting. Fox Trotters need to have a saddle that fits properly and doesn't interfere with their shoulder movement. Fox Trotters usually have shoulders that are wide and long. Skirting can also be an issue; some square western skirts can rub and irritate the MFT hip bones. Fox Trotters also usually have thick tongues and a shallow palate, and do better with a snaffle with a French link, roller, or Mullen mouthpiece.

I'm so glad I got to know this wonderful breed. If you see a dark buckskin with golden eyes and a donkey nose Gaitting on the trail—he'll probably be snorting, he still does that—be sure and stop and say "hi." He wants to get to know you.

To find out more about the Missouri Fox Trotter contact the Pacific Coast Fox Trotter Association. 24265 Clayton Rd. Grass Valley, CA. 95949, or check out their website at www.pcfta.org.

Wendy Watson has loved horses since she was a child. She has put on and/or assisted with many shows for Gaited Horses in the bay area over the last seven years, including the Woodside Gaited Horse Show, the PCFTA show at Elk Grove, the NCWA Oktoberfest Show and the Jen Hackney Memorial Show. Wendy was voted Volunteer of the Year by the Northern California Walking Horse Association in 2009. Wendy lives in Santa Rosa with her three horses, Hank, Pinky, and Spring.



Hank's first blue ribbon

A Horseman's View

Column editor Art Grunig

Choosing Equipment: Bits and Spurs

I am often asked, "What bit should I use with my horse?" Another question often included with that is, "Should I use spurs, and if so what spurs should I use when I ride?"

The answers to these two questions are somewhat linked. The general principle is that influence from the bridle should match the influence from the rider's leg. I stress that I am talking about matching influence, not fashion or aesthetic matches in the bit and spur. For example, if you ride with a halter, then bare heels match really well; if you ride with a bit you should most likely ride with spurs. Remember, riding with spurs requires just as much care, time, and completeness in training as riding with bits.

Guidelines for choices

Equipment choice is personal, and should be made with not only the rider, but the horse in mind. Bits and especially spurs should not be associated with force, pain, and punishment, but rather clearer, more refined communication. Hauling on the reins or pummeling your horse's sides is ineffective and rudely annoying, and frustrating to both the horse and rider. Awkward and late responses can be dangerous, as well. A more skilled rider can use a greater variety of equipment both in styles and sensitivity. For these riders the choice is based on personal preference and perhaps tradition and rules in their chosen discipline. A healthy well-trained horse can do well with a broader range of equipment also. The less-skilled rider, and a less-developed horse will have a narrower range of successful aids. For example, bits must allow a horse to have a degree of comfort while he filters less refined signals, and sorts out how to respond. In addition, some horses have special needs. A horse with a damaged or overly sensitive mouth, a stiff neck, or tight back will need equipment that allows a little more "leaning" on the bit to allow him more time to organize his legs and body.

Use the following criteria to choose equipment:

- The bit or spur must elicit the desired response without the rider struggling or tensing his or her body. A tense rider can not move well with the horse, nor can he or she handle aids with skill and finesse. A struggling rider is a poor rider.
- The bit or spur should not cause a "pain starburst" (similar to when a person stubs a toe). This pain threshold does not produce intelligent, thoughtful choices, or promote learning. Of course, these moments are not without value; we learn to pay attention. However, if painful moments are frequent, all the horse really learns is to be alarmed.

The following information should help riders in their choices of equipment.

Spurs

Spurs have two important components: the length of the shank, and the rowel (see figures 1 and 2). When selecting a spur, consider the level of the horse's training, his personality, his natural sensitivity, hair length, and sometimes his daily attitude. Longer hair can require deeper notches in the rowels. Sensitive skin



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requires smoother rowels with shallow notches. Dull sides require sharper rowels. A horse that enjoys the feel of leaning on the rider's leg needs a sharper rowel. The length of the shank on the spur usually depends on the size of the horse and the length of the rider's leg. The smaller bodied horse and the longer legged rider both need a little longer spur shank to facilitate contact. The idea is to have the rowel positioned so that it is easy to keep it off the horse, and the rider does not have to move his or her leg much to touch the horse with the spur.

Bits

Bits come in many forms all with their special purpose. Riders should consider both the influence in the horse's mouth and the cheek piece, which effects how the pressure on the reins is translated to the horse. The ring snaffle is used when tolerance of pressure is needed and when more lateral directing is desired. Straight bar mouth pieces tend to be milder than those with tongue release. A straight bar with a port requires less movement in the reins to communicate with the horse. The weight of the bit can have a significant influence. The heavier bits tend to be more easily noticed by the horse but can be too much for a sensitive horse.

Curbs or shanks amplify pressure from the rider. The longer the cheek piece, the more sensitive the bit is to the horse. Shanks encourage collection more easily, and facilitate neck reining. Jointed



Fig. 1: Short shank spur with smooth, shallow rowels



Fig. 2: Long shank spur with smooth, shallow rowels

mouth pieces with loose shanks offer a soft initial contact which is less scary for the horse, but when held firmly the double action of the curb and jointed mouth piece give a very firm reminder to the horse to listen. With stiff bits the first movement is the sharpest, but the pressure is less intense with a firm hold. A stiff bit may be good for solidly trained horses who get a little blasé about listening to light or subtle cues. In between these are the bits with loose cheek pieces with a solid mouthpiece.

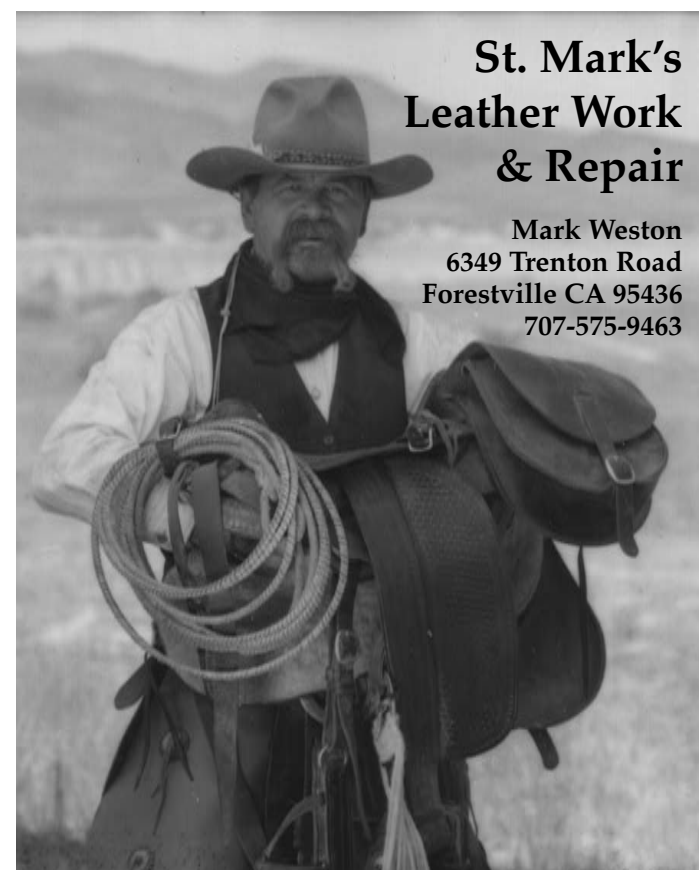
Other bridled possibilities include mechanical hackamores and braided rawhide hackamores—also called bosals (see figure 3). Hackamores are useful for horses with dental issues or damaged tongues. Hackamores exert pressure on the nose. Mechanical hackamores are strong and hard for the horse to overlook, making them easy to overuse. Communicating the finer points with a mechanical hackamore may be difficult. The bosal facilitates lateral influence, and collection. A bosal used in conjunction with a curb bit, such as the spade bit or the half breed bit, allows a horse to learn about the bit while the rider achieves control with pressure on the nose.

Combinations

The balancing of the bit with the spur is based more on how each influences the horse, not any physical characteristics of the



Fig. 3: Braided rawhide hackamore (bosal)



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equipment. You may think, "shank bit=sharp shank spurs," but it's subtler than that. Often a horse's sensitivity is not the same in the mouth and sides. If a rider finds himself pummeling his horse's sides, while his horse is backing off the bit, he may need a milder bit, or a spur that gets the horse's attention. The reverse can also be true. He may need a milder spur, with a bit that produces more feel for the horse. As a rider's skill level goes up, he or she can make more of the sensitivity adjustments within the use of their hands and legs.

Choosing the best equipment for you and your horse involves considering many factors. Experiment with different equipment. Don't be afraid to change your mind and your equipment any time you do not like the results, keeping in mind the balance between bits and spurs. Remember the ultimate goal: communication. If you and your horse are communicating, your equipment is just fine. U



Introducing Art Grunig

Art Grunig (Equus Hall of Fame-2007) has trained horses professionally for forty years. He and his students have won over thirty championships and reserve championships at regional and national levels. Art has trained horses for many disciplines, from Reining, Working Cow Horse, and Cutting (his specialties), to Vaulting, Western Pleasure, and Dressage. He works with all breeds of horses. Art works from coast to coast, in addition to Hawaii, Mexico, Italy, the Virgin Islands, and Ethiopia. Since 1986 Art has incorporated bodywork into his training, which improves performance. He has studied in the United States, France, and Italy and is trained in massage, cranio-sacral therapy, lymphatic drainage, and visceral manipulation (watsu and tantsu). Art developed a neurologically-based equine bodywork method called Reflex Balancing.

To contact Art about training, body work, or bits and spurs, call him at 707-838-9755, or email him at art-grunig@aol.com. You can also visit his website at www.artgrunig.com.

The Vet's Office

Column editor Michelle Beko, DVM

Equine Gastric Ulcers

Gastric ulcers are common, especially in racehorses and show horses. As many as 90% of racehorses may have gastric ulcers! You don't have to have a performance horse to encounter ulcers. In this article we'll discuss risks for ulcer development, and how to recognize and treat them so your horse will remain comfortable and healthy.

What are gastric ulcers?

An ulcer is the erosion of some or all of the layers of mucosa lining the inside of the stomach, not unlike a scrape on skin. Mild ulcers are not very deep but severe ulcers may actually erode through all of the layers of the stomach causing it to rupture (a rare occurrence, fortunately). In adult horses ulcers primarily occur in the nonglandular portion of the stomach rather than the glandular (i.e. acid secreting) portion.

What causes horses to get ulcers?

Unfortunately, we don't know all of the answers regarding the development of gastric ulcers. Feed and feed habits play a role. We know that horses secrete stomach acid continuously, unlike humans. This is likely due to the fact that they evolved as grazers who ate a little bit all day long instead of having distinct meals. Horse's stomach pH will drop markedly (become more acidic) if they don't have access to feed for a prolonged period, and this acid environment likely contributes to erosion of the stomach lining. Saliva buffers the stomach thereby increasing the pH, so continuously feeding, especially with roughage (hay, grass) reduces the chance of ulcer development. Large quantities of grain lead to a more acidic stomach, which can increase risk. Alfalfa hay seems to be particularly good at buffering stomach contents.

Stress and exercise likely have a role in development or worsening of ulcers. Horses in training have a significantly higher incidence of gastric ulcers compared to those living at home. One study showed that even just trailering to a horse show without showing caused ulcers in some horses. Exercise, especially if it is high intensity, might increase gastric acid production and/or cause the stomach wall to have excessive exposure to acid by delaying gastric emptying.

What are the symptoms of gastric ulcers?

The symptoms of ulcers are not very specific and vary from horse to horse. Also, the severity of ulceration does not always correspond to the severity of symptoms. The most common signs are mild colic that may reoccur, a tendency to be underweight, and a

poor appetite. Often a horse with ulcers will act hungry, eat for a little while and then walk away. Some may not perform up to their previous level or will have an attitude change.

How do we diagnose ulcers?

The most accurate way to diagnose ulcers is via gastric endoscopy. This may require a visit to a referral facility such as UC Davis. In endoscopy, a long tube with a camera (the endoscope) is passed through your horse's nose into his empty stomach so that the examiner can actually look for ulcers on the mucosal wall. Sometimes clinical symptoms and response to treatment can yield a tentative diagnosis if endoscopy is not possible. Recently some people have suggested that sensitivity to certain acupuncture points is suggestive of ulcers.

How do we treat horses with ulcers?

Unfortunately, antacids such as Maalox or Neighlox (calcium and magnesium "buffer" salts) have a short duration of action in horses and although they may temporarily relieve symptoms, they do not effectively heal ulcers. Ranitidine (Zantac) suppresses baseline gastric acid secretion and aids in healing ulcers if given three times per day at effective dosages. The most effective medication for healing and symptom relief is omeprazole (Gastroguard or Ulcerguard). It is quite expensive (up to \$40/day) and must be given for several weeks, but only needs to be given once daily. Horses prone to ulcer development may benefit from "preventive" dosing of these medications when placed in a stressful situation, such as going into training or to a show.

Nonpharmaceutical management of ulcers includes having free access to hay or other forage, and increasing the amount of alfalfa in your horse's diet. In addition, decrease grain or other concentrated carbohydrates.

Gastric (stomach) ulcers are a common condition in horses. You do not have to have a performance horse to be aware of potential signs and symptoms. While ulcers primarily manifest with pain and discomfort, they can have significant consequences for your horse. Dietary change and medications can help in treatment and prevention of ulcers. 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 Hennessy. 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

Thrush

Written by Phil Tresenrider

It has been a wet winter and you haven't checked your horse's feet for a while. The sun's finally out and you want to go for a ride. You pick your horses hooves and you are dismayed to see that it looks like a rat has eaten the frog. You notice a foul odor and black exudates. Your horse has a thrush infection.

Thrush is caused by bacteria. These bacteria thrive in damp conditions, like the hoof crevices of horses living in pasture. Thrush can also be caused by poor diet, poor or inadequate trims, and poor circulation, among other things. Clean dry stalls, good nutrition, and picking hooves daily will help prevent thrush. Thrush can be classified into three types. Type 1 is the mildest, and affects only the commissures of the frog. Type 2 is moderate and more invasive, attacking the body of the frog. Type 3 is the most aggressive and attacks the central sulcus of the frog.

Thrush, besides being messy, can effect the movement of your horse. Horses tend to land heel first. With a moderate to aggressive case of thrush your horse will no longer want to land heel first. Here's why: Inside the hoof above the frog is the digital cushion. As your horse places his foot, he loads weight on the short pastern which pushes on the digital cushion and frog. Your horse counts on an intact frog for a soft landing. When the horse has thrush, the frog is irritated, and uncomfortable to load with weight. Your horse will naturally want to land toe first. Toe-first landings can lead to hoof distortion ("run out" toes), collapse of toe arch, tripping, and lameness. In short you want a heel-first landing. Note: there are exceptions to all rules; when the horse accelerates it will go toe first

to grab ground but just for a short period until it reaches speed. This is normal. Toe stabbing all the time is not. If your horse has thrush and sore feet it could also have behavioral problems. I have seen many horses with severe thrush have bad attitudes. When the thrush is cleared up the horse's attitude improves.

Well, what should you do? For any type of thrush, you should have your farrier trim away the dead and damaged tissue. If your horse has a Type 1 or 2 infections I recommend treating it with copper naphthenate or sulfate (Coppertox and Thrush-XX are two copper products). Clean his hooves daily, dry them, and then apply the medicine once a day. Copper naphthenate comes in a spray type dispenser now which is easier to apply than the pour-on bottle. You can get copper products at most tack and feed stores. With Type 3 your horse may be sensitive to copper salts. If you think your horse has Type 3 thrush, it is important to consult with your farrier or veterinarian. In the case of Type 3 thrush I would use a product called Quarter Master, which you can only get from your vet. Quarter Master is an ointment with two antibiotics in an oil matrix. It is also used for mastitis in cows. It does not burn the sensitive exposed deep tissue of the sulcus. Quarter Master comes in a syringe type tube. The plastic tip of the syringe can be inserted into the deep seated infection of the central sulcus for treatment. Apply Quarter Master one or two times a day to clean dry hooves.

Most horses with thrush will recover completely, although serious and untreated cases can lead to permanent lameness. Remember to sort out the underlying cause of the bacteria over growing so you can prevent it from happening again.

Thrush is a serious problem. If left untreated it could lead to hoof distortion, tripping, and lameness. A sore horse can also have behavioral problems. Clean dry stalls, good farrier care, proper nutrition, and daily hoof picking can help prevent thrush. Treatment consists of cleaning hooves daily and applying the appropriate medicine (copper salts or Quarter Master). Hope this helps you have a happy horse with healthy hooves. As the old saying goes—no foot, no horse. Happy Trails! U

Phil Tresenrider is an American Farrier Association Journeyman Farrier. His specialties are Dressage and jumping horses. Phil lives in Sebastopol with his lovely wife Sheila. He has three daughters, Amy, Colbi, and Brittney. In his free time he likes to ride his stand up paddle board at Doran Park. You can reach Phil at 707-696-7717.



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Readers Write

Black Sterling Friesians

Written by Joan Rasmussen

"Geez, Janna, did you buy a horse or a BULL?"

These were Ron Goldman's words in 2000 as a high-stepping, snorting, jet-black Friesian horse emerged from his transport. The Friesian had just arrived from Europe to facilitate Ron's wife Janna's re-entry into the world of horses. Janna, with a solid background in Saddle Seat Equitation, had not shown horses for several years. When Ron's eight-year-old daughter, Julia, expressed interest in getting a horse, Janna found herself with the desire to start again. She and Julia considered different breeds, deciding that the Friesian breed met their requirements for a well-rounded horse capable of performing in shows and trail riding, as well as being both beautiful and intelligent.

They bought "Black Sterling," an eight year-old gelding, sight unseen, after extensive research about the breed. Friesian horses, a Dutch breed, resemble a light draft horse but are nimble and graceful for their size. They are notable for their long, thick mane and tail and their feathers, as well as their jet black coat.

One Friesian horse is never enough, and the Goldmans acquired a second horse, which turned out to be a better driving horse than a riding horse, so they sold him—at a profit, which eventually led them into the business of importing Friesian horses. Because the cost of boarding multiple horses was prohibitive, they started looking for horse property within a thirty-minute drive of their Greenbrae residence. The result was Black Sterling Friesians in Sonoma County's Carneros region.

Trying to sell horses in the winter by providing potential buyers with a raincoat was just not working, and the best spot for a covered arena belonged to a neighboring property. The Goldmans bought the adjacent property and ripped out three acres of vineyard to put in their covered arena. The original three-stall barn has expanded to thirteen stalls, and about fifteen horses at a time are in residence at the property.

Black Sterling Friesians imported fifty-eight horses in 2009. Janna has a knack for matching buyers with horses, and has developed a broad network in the US and abroad to find the right Friesian horse for a potential buyer. Horses are thoroughly screened for temperament and health before making the journey to the United States. If, after all that, the match between horse and rider doesn't work, the Goldmans often re-acquire the horse. Ten percent of the profits from the horse sales go to the Susan G Koman Breast Cancer Foundation in honor of Ron's first wife.

Janna is the primary show rider, and this year was awarded the Friesian Horse Association of North America (FHANA) President's Trophy, a high-point award given annually to a rider of Friesian



Janna showing Black Sterling in Western Pleasure

horses (see details on p. 27). Because Friesian breed shows are still relatively rare in North America, the Goldmans often compete on the Saddlebred circuit in open or Friesian classes, and are considering showing in open classes on the Andalusian show circuit in the future. Most of the shows they compete in are on the west coast, and they are excited that the Friesian Grand Nationals will be held in Del Mar this year. Their horses are shown in several disciplines, including Saddle Seat, Hunt Seat, Driving, Dressage, and Western, proving the versatility of the breed. The Goldmans also enjoy riding their horses on the local trails.

Janna was thrilled to be awarded the President's Trophy, but Ron is quick to point out with a smile that he deserves some of the credit as he is the one who hauled their six-horse rig to the shows! The Goldmans are "do-it-yourselfers" in the world of horse shows, hauling and grooming their own horses. Although before acquiring Sterling, Janna was the only Goldman with horse experience, daughter Julia and son Andy now show horses along with Janna and Ron. Julia is now enrolled in college at Chico, and keeps her hand in the horse world by volunteering at a therapeutic riding facility near the college.

Friesians are admittedly "high-end" horses. Most horses are imported from Holland, and the cost of importing a horse includes the cost of transporting them overseas and a three plus-day quarantine. If the horse is a mare or stallion, there are additional quarantine requirements. Add these costs to the initial purchase price and you end up paying a hefty price for your Friesian. Recognizing this, the Goldmans have developed a sponsorship program that grants more horse lovers access to these beautiful, stylish animals. Qualified riders, for less than the typical cost of board, are granted access to horses at the farm. Everybody wins in this program—sponsors have access to horses that would ordinarily be beyond their means, the sponsor fee goes into the "Hay Fund" to feed the horses, and the horses get exercise as well as becoming accustomed to a variety of riders. This allows Janna to assess the horses on a more comprehensive basis, to the benefit of the buyer.

Sterling, the horse that started it all, is now seventeen and still going strong despite a few gray hairs. He often enjoys the run of the ranch, allowing him to keep an eye on his domain and startling visitors by greeting them at the gate! U

Joan Rasmussen grew up in Sonoma County and currently lives in Sebastopol. She got her first pony, Tiny, when she was ten. In her twenties, she showed both English and Western, but has abandoned competition in favor of trail riding with her Quarter Horse buddy, Cowboy. She enjoys Parelli Natural Horsemanship and has achieved Level 2. Joan supports her horse habit by running a bookkeeping and tax service (In Balance Bookkeeping Service). To contact Joan email her at joanras@att.net.

Healthy as a Horse

Column editor JoDean Nicolette

Worth Protecting?

Almost fifteen million people ride a horse or pony each year. Most of these equestrians will enjoy their rides in safety. Some, however, will not be so lucky. Almost 100,000 horse-related injuries arrive in emergency rooms each year. Most of these injuries are head injuries. According to the Centers for Disease Control, equestrians suffer and die from head injuries more often than motorcyclists. In fact the most common reason equestrians are admitted to the hospital is head injury. Death is not the only serious outcome of unprotected head injuries. A fall from just two feet can cause a skull fracture and brain damage. Equestrians who suffer an impact may suffer chronic seizure disorder, intellectual and memory changes, paralysis, personality changes, and other permanent disability.

Helmets have been clearly shown to prevent death and serious injury among equestrians. Several organizations who have instituted helmet requirements now document fewer head injuries and hospitalizations. Since the racing industry has required helmets, for example, jockeys suffer fewer head injuries than pleasure riders. The United States Pony Club lowered their head injury rate by 29% with mandatory helmet use. England's hospital admission rate for equestrians fell 46% after helmet design was upgraded, and helmet use became more widespread. As the safety benefits of helmets becomes more apparent, helmet use has enjoyed increasing official sanction. The United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) now requires any riders—professional or amateur—to wear helmets while competing in any class involving jumping in any USEF-sanctioned event. The Endurance Riders Association now requires that all riders age sixteen or under wear a helmet during competition. In addition, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association, the Canadian Medical Association, and the American Medical Equestrian Association all recommend that helmets be worn by all riders on all rides.

Despite expert recommendations, and the evidence that helmets prevent serious injury and death, equestrians in general have failed to embrace helmet use. Helmets are most widely accepted in racing, Show Jumping, and Three Day Eventing. Acceptance of helmets in these disciplines certainly indicates progress, but nonetheless the majority shuns an important preventive tool. Why does the average rider refuse protective headgear? Many reasons for the slow acceptance have been cited. Among these are tradition, personal choice, and aesthetics. Let's briefly discuss each of these.

Tradition

Many competitive riders fail to wear helmets because they have not been part of the traditional attire accepted during competition, especially Western disciplines. Fortunately this is changing. For example, the Professional Rodeo Association, bowing to pressure from safety groups, now permits helmets in competitions such as Barrel Racing and Team Penning.

Personal choice

Many riders feel that as adults riding recreationally, they are making



NATRC judge Nancy Kasovich and her Missouri Fox Trotter Scotty model the Troxel Sierra

a reasonable choice to avoid protective headgear. Unfortunately these riders mistakenly feel that a leisurely trail ride reduces their risk. The fact is that the trail is far less controlled than the arena. Furthermore, it is pleasure riders, not high-level competitors that experience the bulk of head injuries seen in the emergency setting. Adult equestrians who feel they are making a free choice that impacts only their own personal safety are also mistaken. The loved-ones of injured riders can be faced with the unprotected rider's death or long term disability care. The effects are also financial. The costs for hospitalization for severe head injuries approaches \$25,000 per day, and a lifetime of disability care can amount to three million dollars.

Aesthetics

The days of hot, clunky, unattractive helmets have passed. Helmets now come in all sizes, and are made of lightweight, durable polymers and high tech, impact-absorbing foam. Most have several points that allow adjustment to ensure a comfortable and effective fit, and come with removable, washable inserts. Riders can choose from a variety colors (from black to sea foam), and many helmets are available with designs and appliqués. Several manufacturers including Troxel® offer a rugged "trail design" with two-tone fabric and stylish colors (see photo).

When choosing a helmet, look for the American Society of Testing and Materials/Safety Equipment Institute (ASTM/SEI) approval seal. ASTM/SEI is the recognized authority for helmet safety and design. Try on helmets to ensure an effective fit. A properly fitting helmet sits snugly, but comfortably on the head. The strap at the back of the helmet should fit closely enough to prevent the helmet tilting forward or back. Most manufacturers recommend replacing helmets every five years; when you buy a helmet, check the date of manufacture next to the SEI seal. Riders should also replace helmets that have been stored at high temperature (e.g. the trunk of a car), or those that have sustained a hard impact. Some manufacturers offer a price reduction when replacing a helmet after a hard impact. Check your User's Manual for this feature.

Cyclists wear helmets; baseball and football players wear helmets; skiers, skateboarders, and skaters wear helmets. Despite expert recommendations and safety benefits, equestrians still resist. Fortunately, the culture has begun to change. A wide variety of helmets of all shapes, sizes, and styles are now available. As the culture of riding evolves, so will the perception of protective headgear. As you consider whether to wear a helmet, remember that you are not only protecting your head, but perhaps all your future experiences in the saddle. U

JoDean Nicolette is a family physician and editor of the Horse Journal. She is an avid trail rider, and president of the Mounted Assistance Unit for the California State Parks, Diablo Vista District. JoDean has three horses—Jimmie, Chance, and Bear. To contact JoDean about writing for the Horse Journal, email her at editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.

Facilities Focus

Column editor Debby Bailey

Terra LarRossa and the Peruvian Paso Festival

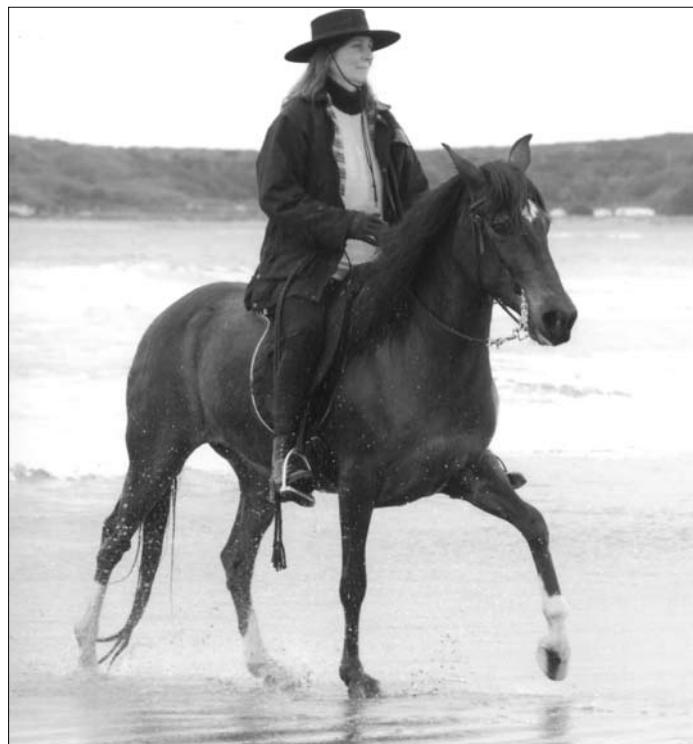
My column focuses on Sonoma County facilities; I am objective... but not this time. This time I am reporting on a breed, an event, and a facility that are close to my heart. Please bear with my bias.

On Saturday, March 27, 2010, the Wine Country Peruvian Paso Horse Club sponsored the Peruvian Paso Festival at Larry and Rossana Braun's Petaluma ranch—Terra LarRossa. It was quite a celebration of Peruvian Pasos and the Peruvian culture! In this article I share the events and photos, and cover the particulars of this coaching facility. I'll start by sharing some facts about this beautiful and rare breed, and why it has become such an important part of my life.

The Peruvian Paso is considered a national treasure in its native land of Peru. The Peruvian Paso was not available for export until the early 1960's. At that time, Peru was experiencing agrarian reform and political turmoil, and the continued existence of the breed itself was threatened. A group of dedicated horse people from the United States ventured into Peru, and with the assistance of many longtime Peruvian Paso breeders began to export some of the finest breeding stock. It is a credit to the horse people of both countries that this breed of horse has been allowed to flourish and develop outside of its native country.

Today the Peruvian Paso is a well-known and popular breed all over the world. About 30,000 Peruvian Pasos exist, and they are used for show, exhibition, pleasure and trail riding, mounted assistance unit work, distance competition, and celebrations such as parades. Peruvian Pasos display a distinctive gait, movement, and temperament, and many people consider them the smoothest and most pleasurable riding horse in existence!

The Gait is unique and not shared with any other breed of horse. It is called the *paso llano*, and it is a totally **natural** four-beat, broken pace, with neither the diagonal nor the lateral legs traveling together. This movement transmits neither the vertical movement of the trot, nor the lateral movement of the pace. Instead, the rider is carried as if seated in a comfortable chair—almost floating.



Debby Bailey and Luna demonstrating the paso llano at the beach

The movement or support sequence, referred to as *termino*, is a flamboyant outward arching of the horse's forelegs during extension, coupled with loose, rolling shoulders. The Peruvian Paso is the only breed in the world that is specifically bred for this characteristic movement of the shoulders; other horses performing similar Gaits display a characteristic head nod instead.

To dedicated breeders, disposition or temperament is paramount. Because Peruvian Pasos were originally bred to carry their riders long distances over harsh terrain, no rider wanted to deal with a temperamental, stubborn, or nervous horse. Peruvian Pasos display none of these traits. In fact, the kind temperament, or *brío*, of the Peruvian Paso may be his most appealing virtue. This horse is a beautiful blend of spirit, energy, and sensitivity, with a great willingness to please.

Peruvian Pasos come in all colors: black, brown, bay, chestnut, gray, palomino, buckskin, roan, and variations thereof (see cover). They range in size from 14.1-15.2 hands, and generally weigh from 850-1100lbs. Their natural beauty is often enhanced by a long mane and forelock, and a luxurious tail. The Peruvian equestrians developed traditional tack used with the Peruvian Paso, and this tack is widely used by Peruvian Paso owners in North America. This tack is unique, unusual, and quite beautiful. However, the Peruvian Paso horse can also be ridden in English or Western Tack (I have always used my light endurance saddle).

I found Peruvian Pasos when I was in my early forties. I had a back injury, and was wondering if my riding career was over. Serendipitously, my family and I were invited to visit a Peruvian Paso ranch belonging to the Drs McCormick in Calistoga. The ranch and the horses were breathtaking! The horses had bright eyes, silky coats,

and luxurious manes and tails. They moved with grace, and they carried riders who looked as if they were gliding around the vineyards. Well, these horses certainly looked like they would be the perfect fit for me, and the Drs McCormick emphatically agreed. So began my journey with these magnificent animals. It culminated with the spectacular Peruvian Paso Festival at Terra LarRossa.

This March, the Brauns hosted the eighth annual Festival. Over 120 Peruvian Paso Club members and guests attended this celebration to honor the Peruvian Paso and the Peruvian culture. The event included three musical performances, and one informative presentation. In the first musical demonstration four equestrians (Linda Frankland, Karen Steinhoff, Deborah Abrams, and Dennis Makemson) performed "Dancing Horses." A *Chalan*, or Peruvian Paso trainer, rode the second musical performance. In this piece, Luis Castaneda presented the "Enfrenadura," a traditional reining exercise which takes many years of practice to perfect. The third musical was presented by Deborah Abrams and Larry Braun, and also written and choreographed by Larry. They demonstrated "The Courtship," wearing traditional Peruvian attire and using traditional Peruvian tack. It was a sweet and touching performance. After the demonstrations, Mickey Harman delivered a fascinating and well-researched lecture on the conformational differences and similarities between the Peruvian Paso and the Paso Fino. She conducted her session with examples of both breeds from her ranch so that listeners could see first hand the attributes of each horse.



A full house: Guests enjoy the traditional Peruvian cuisine

Guests enjoyed catered Peruvian cuisine from Carlos Shimabukuro's *Estampas Peruvanas* Restaurant (Redwood City) on the spacious grassy lawn. One special part of the lunch was a traditional Incan beverage called *chicha morada* (a blue corn drink). We were also treated to caramel flan. The Peruvian/Andes band from Arcata, known as *Huayllipacha* provided music to accompany the festivities. The weather was even cooperative—the sun was shining! After lunch we were treated to a *Marinera* dance performance by students of champion Peruvian dance instructor, Rocio Collantes. The *Marinera* is a courtship dance, and was very appropriate to our day's theme since Larry Braun and Deborah Abrams had performed something very similar earlier on horseback. The guests were so impressed they insisted on an encore performance! For those interested in catching part of the festivities, a video is posted on www.californiaperulive.com.

One of the very special guests in attendance was the Honorable

Ambassador Nicolas Roncagliolo, the Consul General of Peru. The Ambassador, who was accompanied by his son, daughter-in-law, and grandson, was very gracious and thanked our club and hosts at Terra LarRossa for sponsoring and hosting such a lovely event. It is the hope of the Wine Country Peruvian Paso Club that additional members and guests will attend this celebration next year at Terra LarRossa.

At Terra LarRossa, Larry Braun lives out his dream as a riding coach, exclusively for riders of the Peruvian Paso horse. Larry began riding as a child, has been involved with the Peruvian Paso breed for the last seventeen years. Larry calls himself a "willing slave" to his Peruvian Pasos. He and his horses are accomplished competitors and exhibitors. He is an enthusiastic spokesperson for the breed. Larry offers individual lessons for adults and children at all levels at his ranch. Larry and Rossana's facilities at Terra LarRossa include a crowned, all-weather arena, and the full range of horse accommodations from spacious stalls to pastures. Horses live in an up to date center-isle barn, but the property also boasts an historic redwood barn and farmhouse. Terra LarRossa also borders on Helen Putnam Regional Park for easy access to trails. Larry welcomes all riders and Peruvian Paso *aficionados* whether recreational riders, or serious competitors.

I sat at lunch with two guests who offered great testimony regarding Larry's dedication to riders achieving a special Peruvian Paso experience! This mother and daughter pair were from Ukiah. The mother (eighty years young!) had had horses as a young girl. She had told her daughter that for her birthday, she would like either to swim with the dolphins or to ride a Peruvian Paso. The daughter found Larry through the Sonoma County Horse Council's online contacts and thought she would make the ride a reality. Arrangements were made and the daughter surprised her mother by taking her on a so-called "work-related drive" to the Petaluma area. When they arrived at Terra LarRossa Larry and Rossana had big bouquet of "Happy Birthday" balloons waiting. After learning about the history, tack, and basic equitation of the Peruvian Paso, Mom was ready to ride! She rode the Braun's Reserve and Grand Champion Peruvian Paso gelding named *Principe de Fe JC*. The birthday girl left with what many Peruvian Paso owners call the "Big Peruvian Paso Grin!" If you are interested in the Big Peruvian Paso Grin or more about Peruvian Pasos, visit www.napha.net. For info about Peruvian Paso events visit www.peruvianpasos.com.

The Wine Country Peruvian Paso Horse Club

The Wine Country Peruvian Paso Horse Club (WCPPHC) was founded in 1991 by members of a local drill team. Three of the original founders are still active members. This club is dedicated to promoting and enjoying the Peruvian Pasos, but membership is open to all equine lovers regardless of their breed preference, and even to those who do not own a horse. Family or individual membership dues are \$35.00 per year, and benefits include free seminars and organized events such as trail rides, socials, play days, and parades. Members receive a quarterly newsletter called the "*Paca Paca*," that also appears on the national registry site. Members are often invited to participate in events that highlight this special breed such as the Sonoma County Equine Extravaganza, the Sonoma-Marin Fair, and the Western States Horse Expo in Sacramento. To become a member or obtain additional information, contact Larry Braun, President, at (707) 478-2145.



The "Dancing Horse" performance at Terra LarRossa

Trails and Open Spaces

Column editor Sarah Reid

Awesome Vistas in Valley of the Moon Sugarloaf Ridge State Park

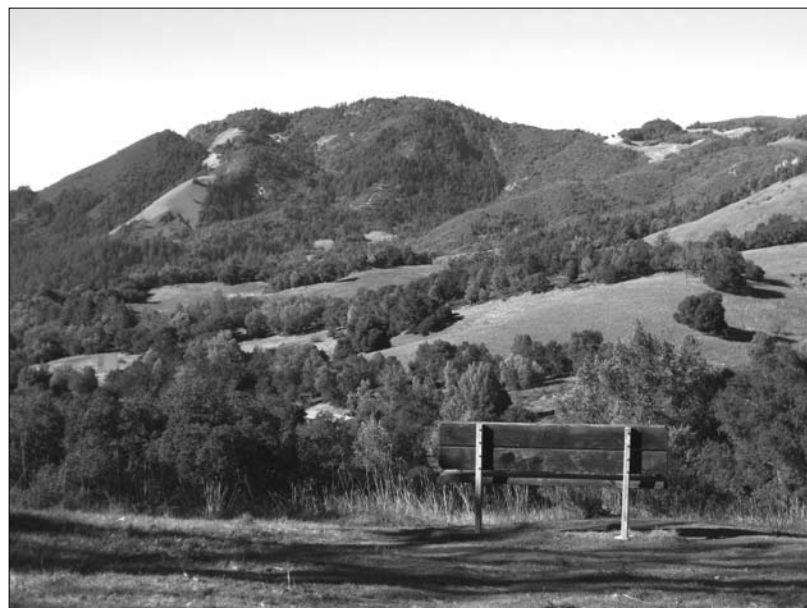


Photo: Sarah Reid

From Hillside Trail looking at Hood Mountain

Question: What place in the Valley of the Moon offers a 360-degree view which includes snow-covered Sierras, Mt Diablo, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the Geysers? Answer: Sugarloaf Ridge State Park (SP). Whether visitors are hiking or riding, this 2,700-acre park provides stunning views and beautiful examples of a variety of ecosystems.

History

The Wappo Indian village of Wilikos once stood at the headwaters of Sonoma Creek, nestled in what is now Sugarloaf Ridge State Park. The 1860's and 70's saw ranchers settling valley, though farming was limited and marginal. One settler supplied charcoal for sale in San Francisco. The state purchased the land in 1920, and in 1964 it was designated a state park. The name originated in the description of the shape of the hills—like the tops of loaves of sugar.

The land

Sugarloaf Ridge SP can be briefly described as gorge and canyon and meadow floor. Scenic rock outcroppings decorate canyon walls, while falls of water cascade down steep and rocky gorges. Redwood and fern groves compete in beauty with oak and fir woodlands, or ridges covered in manzanita and coyote brush. Meadows of wildflowers greet spring weather on sunny slopes and vales. Take your camera and binoculars.

The trails

The twenty-five miles of trail in Sugarloaf Ridge SP range from steep and technical single-track for hikers only, to multi-use fire roads maintained for equipment. Pay attention to trail closure signs because the equestrian trails close to horses in the winter months. Because of the elevation difference from 600 feet to 2729 feet, fitness is required for any rider, horse, or hiker on most trails. Footing on all trails is fairly smooth, and not rocky like Annadel SP. Pay close attention to trails closed to horses as these trails can be

very dangerous even for the most seasoned rider (eg Vista, Goodspeed, and Canyon Trails). Summers can be hot and dry, with no water available for horses out on the trails except in the main meadow. Once out of the meadow, encounters with other users will be few; but be sure any fellow users will be as well-conditioned as you.

A fairly easy route for equestrians is the Meadow Trail and Hillside Trail loop, with only one hilly section on Hillside. For more adventurous riders, pack a lunch and ride up Hillside to Brushy Peaks, down Gray Pine to Meadow. Or, up Gray Pine turn left on the ridge to Bald Mountain. From Bald Mountain, experience the fantastic views previously mentioned. These two routes are excellent conditioning loops for horse and rider. Do not, however, attempt to connect to Hood Mtn Regional Park via Goodspeed Trail; this trail is hiker-only for good reasons. At this time there is not a connector route to Hood Mtn for equestrians.

Getting there

From Santa Rosa, take Hwy 12 east to Adobe Canyon Road. Follow this road up a steep and narrow gorge to the main park center. This road is not for the faint-at-heart driver, light-weight truck, or very long trailer, though after your first time it does not seem so bad. Equestrian parking is around near the Robertson Observatory and can be minimal if there is an event there. The equestrian parking area offers port-a-potties, picnic tables, potable water, a water trough, and easy access onto the trails. Sugarloaf Ridge has a visitor's center just past the kiosk, with great geologic, ecologic, and cultural information. Next to the visitor's center is a car campground, which is open year round, but variable days depending on the season. For more information about Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, call 707-833-5712, or visit www.parks.ca.gov.

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

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Readers Write

Gaited Horses on Patrol

Written by Anna Lincoln

Many people are turning to the Gaited horses when going trail riding. They are impressed by the smoothness of the ride. You can go for miles without bouncing. People with back problems are finding that they can ride again when they thought their disabilities would prevent them from ever getting back in the saddle. There are many different breeds to choose from, but the two that I am the most familiar with are the Tennessee Walking Horse and the Missouri Fox Trotter.

The Tennessee Walker comes in all the colors that you can imagine from white, buckskin and bay, to pinto. They range in height from fourteen hands to well over seventeen hands. They have a natural gliding movement called the running walk and you feel as if you can go forever in this Gait. They were originally bred to cover large tracts of land for the plantation owners of the south. But over the last 100 years they have become one of the more popular breeds that you see on the trail. My mother's horse Pride is a prime example of a wonderful Tennessee Walker trail horse. She is very versatile, going everywhere and doing anything. Besides trail riding, my mother competes in horse shows on her; she has done everything from Gymkhana to Flat Work.

The Missouri Fox Trotter also comes in all the colors you can think of. They range in height from fourteen hands to over sixteen hands, but are most often around fifteen hands in height. They have a natural smooth Gait called the Fox Trot. It is very smooth with a slight bounce. These horses have a similar history to the Justin Morgan as they were also bred to be a work horse and be spiffed up on Sundays to go to Church. They are a fairly new breed and are becoming more popular on the trails. My Fox Trotter Summer is a wonderful example. She is very surefooted as she makes her way down the trail. We also do Flat Work shows and place regularly. She is very versatile and agile as she does her job. The motto for the Missouri Fox Trotter is "To ride one is to own one," and I find it very true.



Anna (right) and Bunny on patrol at Annadel State Park

My mother and I use our Gaited horses together on park patrol in the state parks as part of the Mounted Assistance Unit (MAU). We spend most of our time in Annadel State Park. We have over 1500 service hours between us. We glide down the trails, even over the steepest and roughest sections. One great characteristic of our Gaited horses is that even though Annadel is a busy park, with lots of cyclists and hikers, they don't react or act spooky. We have been present for injuries and accidents, and our horses have

been calm. They wait patiently while we address the situation, and make our job easier. One incident involved a cyclist who fell and injured his eye. I am glad we had the horses we did, because we had to really help this guy, including getting him to a place where he could get real aid. We use our Gaited horses for MAU horse testing, and to mentor other less-experienced horses in the unit, as well.

Now that I have been riding a Gaited horse I don't think I will ever go back to a trotting horse. The low impact of the ride is extremely addictive. Everyone should try one. I highly recommend it for the people with back and other limiting disabilities, but these are horses for everyone.



Fun at the beach on Summer (left) and Pride

Anna and Bunny Lincoln live in Napa. They both sit on the Board of the California State Parks Mounted Assistance Unit for the Valley of the Moon. Anna has been riding her whole life. She currently has three horses—Rama, Peaches, and Summer. In their free time, Bunny and Anna ride together and particularly enjoy Annadel. To reach Anna you can email her at buckskingold@yahoo.com.

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

Caveat Emptor: Buying a Horse & Internet Dating

I feel as though I'm uniquely qualified to offer advice on how to wisely shop for a horse. Not because I'm a true horseman and not because I've grown up my whole life around horses. But, because I'm not and I haven't.

Horses came into my life in my late twenties when I met and married a Dressage Queen (DQ). Well, a princess at least. Until then, I never heard the word "Dressage," though I was well familiar with "queen." Ironically, I grew up in an area of Colorado filled with real horsemen and horsewomen and never mounted a horse, whereas my DQ spouse Cheryl grew up in the LA 'burbs and hasn't been off a horse more than a few days at a time since her teens. I am, indeed, a horse husband.

Anyway, back to fabricating my credentials for offering unsolicited horse-buying advice. Essentially, coming into the horse world as an adult gives me some perspective. I benefit from a fresh outsider's perspective without the problem of the less-than-fully-developed cerebral cortex of a kid or teenager (sorry youngsters, no offense intended, but the facts are the facts).

Plus, I just bought a horse, so the experience is fresh.

But this wasn't my first purchase. Cheryl and I have probably bought a dozen horses together. She has also helped innumerable clients and others with choosing horses, and I had a front-row seat.

So, here's what I've learned over the last couple of decades:

1) It's Exactly the Same as Internet Dating: Whether buying a horse or internet dating, you have the same objective: looking for a life-long and compatible soul mate to "... share long walks on the beach and hikes in the hills..." So, am I right? Mate or horse... works either way?

2) Don't Overlook the Obvious: Imagine you're reading a horse ad for a gelding named Buck. Well, for Pete's sake, find out why the horse is named "Buck!" This also holds for horses named "Surprise," "Lightening," and especially "Diablo." If you were looking to adopt a dog named "Chainsaw," wouldn't you want to know how he got that name? Same for Internet match-making, doesn't "enjoy quiet evenings at home" really mean couch potato?

3) Equine Racism: Pretend you're a small business owner (a man) and you are recruiting for a new bookkeeper. You really like women with green eyes and black hair. Never mind the illegality, but doesn't it sound totally silly to recruit for a bookkeeper based on completely irrelevant characteristics such as gender, and eye and hair color? But we do it all the time with horses. Shouldn't we choose important equine characteristics that really matter to us and forget, at the very least, the question of pigmentation? I'll concede that gender question is a little more complex, but really, does pigment really matter at the end of the day? Hmmm... maybe a lesson for human relations here, too?

4) What's Not Said is Relevant: If the classified ad says, "loves the trail," does this mean "hates arena work?" Maybe. Let's say the ad says "stands nice for the farrier." Is that all they could think of to entice you to drive to the outer boondocks to look at this horse? What isn't being said? Ask lots of questions. It's not a court of law; ask leading ones. But don't set it up for the person to paint himself into a corner. I never ask, "Is the horse sound?" That question just begs for a "yes" making it difficult for the seller to then offer any information that seems contradictory. Ask instead, "What is the horse's history of injuries and illness?"

5) It's Like a Blind Date: Chances are when you meet a horse for sale for the first time, you're likely to know almost immediately whether or not you are interested. And just like a blind date, if you're not interested, social conventions require you nevertheless spend at least an hour with that person, or horse, as a basic courtesy. No big deal, unless of course, you traveled three hours to get there and the disappointment turns into anger as you realize you still have a three-hour trip home. But be nice, anger never helps.

Wouldn't it be great if you could do that whole speed-dating thing when horse shopping? For the uninitiated, in single life (so I'm told), people go to these orchestrated mixers and have a series of very short meetings, like ten minutes each, with a bunch of potential mates. You exchange phone numbers if you wish to talk more at a later time, otherwise, the buzzer goes off and you're off to the next "interview." Wouldn't it be great to be able to go down a barn isle and meet twenty horses for ten minutes each and then be able to follow-up with one or two that struck your fancy?

Of course, it isn't like that. Horse shopping can be a major time zapper as you acquire videos, play phone tag, make multiple visits to some remote ranch, maybe do a pre-purchase exam or two, and generally, ferret out why, if this horse is so dang wonderful, he's on the market? I think the parallels to internet dating are obvious, except maybe the pre-purchase exam part—that would be awkward with humans...

So, horse buying can be a trying and exasperating experience, just like internet dating. But, unlike with humans, there exists with horses something even worse selling a horse! At least when you split up with a mate, you don't have to find them a good home! U

Mark lives near Graton with his DQ soulmate Cheryl, their four horses (two of which are for sale), a requisite ranch dog, and a mateless cat. You can reach Mark about his horses or internet dating at markkrug@comcast.net.



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All Creatures Great and Small

Column editor Grant Miller, DVM

Sonoma County Gets Tough on Horse Abusers

Many horse owners facing economic hardship view 2010 as a potential turning point. While unemployment rates are still high, gradual movement in the Sonoma County real estate market presents cautious hope, and hay and fuel prices also seem to be leveling out. Some suggest that the encouraging economic trends bode well for horses who may face neglect and abandonment as their owners struggle to meet basic needs. In light of these encouraging, economic circumstances, it seems surprising that Sonoma County is seeing an all time high in equine abuse and neglect cases. Several factors may be contributing to this trend.

Local government has stepped up dedication to animal well being, enforcing penal codes designed to protect animals. From 2007-2009, the Sonoma County Animal Care and Control Department (SCACC) handled almost fifty horse-related cases, referring fifteen cases to the Sonoma County District Attorney for abuse or neglect prosecution. Many animal advocates cite the involvement of the relative newcomer, the non-profit Sonoma County CHANGE Program, with its mission to "support local law enforcement as a subsidiary in equine cases through humane education, logistical and financial avenues." CHANGE has been a primary contributor to the new accountability for horse-owners. Both SCACC and CHANGE are dedicated to prosecuting true animal abusers, rather than horse-lovers who are struggling with hard economic times.

From a legal perspective, Sonoma County District Attorney (DA) Stephan Passalacqua has taken a hard line stance against horse abusers. He recognizes that the horse industry is a vital force in Sonoma County. A lifelong Sonoma County resident, Passalacqua has assigned his top prosecuting attorneys to pursue felony charges in a number of equine cases, resulting in national recognition for their landmark convictions.

One such high profile case was that of Salvador Barrera, a former Santa Rosa Policy Academy attendee, who was convicted of felony and misdemeanor animal abuse for his extended starvation of three horses. When one of the emaciated horses began to show signs of colic, Barrera locked the sick gelding in a stall, where he died unattended of torsion colic. Barrera was ordered to pay \$8,000 in legal fees and was also sentenced to six months in county jail (a sentence rarely handed down to animal abusers). After incarceration he is face with five years probation and 100 hours of community service performed in a veterinarian's office. Barrera is not allowed to own horses in Sonoma County during his probation period.

In another landmark case, Santa Rosa resident, Monico Mijarez pled guilty to felony animal abuse after he starved and abandoned his elderly horse in Santa Rosa. Mijarez left his emaciated black gelding tied to a fence post on Stony Point Road in 105-degree heat, without food, water, or shelter. The horse later died from complications arising from dehydration and heat prostration. Mijarez agreed to fines and probation, and is not allowed to own horses in Sonoma County for a period of five years.

One of the county's most sinister horse abuse cases was that of Penngrove resident and longtime horse owner Patricia Tremaine, who was convicted of felony animal cruelty after years of systematically abusing her six horses at her Goodwin Avenue ranch. Tremaine's horses lived in squalor, subsisting on moldy, rat-infested bread and rotting produce. The animals did not receive hoof or veterinary care; some were locked in stalls for years on end. Although she avoided

serving time in jail, Tremaine was required to attend psychological counseling and is not allowed to own horses during her five-year probation period.

Amanda Holme, of Sebastopol, pled guilty to animal abuse after her role in the starvation of an elderly Arabian mare. Her abuse resulted in the mare's death. Her friend, Sonoma State University student Crystal Strand is currently facing felony charges in the same case. Upcoming cases include that of Birdy Keith, a Santa Rosa man charged with felony animal abuse when his emaciated Quarter Horse mare was discovered in a pasture without shelter or adequate feed.

Collaboration among SCACC, the DA's office, and CHANGE has likely played a significant role in local progress protecting horses. The CHANGE Program provides support by handling the transportation, rehabilitation, and adoption of abused horses. CHANGE trains Animal Control officers about horse care standards; it also provides support, education, and free expert witness testimony to prosecutors winding their way through the complexities of equine cases.

The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors has recognized the value of the public-private partnership and integrated the all-volunteer corps of CHANGE into the county infrastructure. While SCACC works with the vast majority of cases to educate owners about horse care and correct reported problems, the cases that do require legal intervention greatly benefit from the expanded options made possible by CHANGE.

Finally, many in Sonoma County feel that the government and legal establishments are simply responding to the responsible and compassionate Sonoma County residents and horse enthusiasts who have grown tired of seeing horses in their neighborhoods fall victim to neglectful care and abusive handling. SoCo residents have made a difference. If you feel that a horse is being abused or neglected, please contact the Sonoma County Animal Care and Control Department at (707) 565-7100. Although reports cannot be made anonymously, your information will be kept confidential. To expedite the case, have the address where the horse is kept and a description of the horse ready when you call. Ask the dispatcher for a case number so that you can follow up on the outcome as the case makes its way through the department.

Several factors have contributed to the increasing numbers of visible horse abuse and neglect cases in Sonoma County. Among these are local government and legal department dedication, and the emergence of the non-profit rescue organization CHANGE. Perhaps most importantly the citizens of Sonoma County have spoken out in defense of their equine friends. As the economy recovers, and we continue to collaborate, the lives of horse in Sonoma County will continue to improve. U

RESOURCES:

Sonoma County CHANGE Program,
www.sonomacountychangeprogram.com

Sonoma County Animal Care & Control Department
www.theanimalshelter.org

Sonoma County District Attorney's Office
www.sonoma-county.org/da

¹ State of California Unemployment Department report, 3/10/10

² DQNews.com: February Real Estate Report, Sonoma County



Colts and Fillies

Column editor Kelly Henson

Broken Things



Gabby Sunshine makes a new friend

The little girl named Gabby Sunshine loved broken things; she collected broken chairs, broken dishes, odd statues, and figures full of imperfections. A number of carved stone figures stood on her dresser and window sill. A parade of statues marched along the outside of the old country home. Her collection was regal: angels with chipped wings, kings and queens with broken crowns, and noble carvings of animals with missing parts. But one figure that sat on the cold north side of the Montana home was different altogether. This statue was not beautiful or large. Its face was hard and bitter and downcast.

"It must be a demon!" declared the pigeons that roosted and sun-bathed all day on the tops of the cracked, white, painted fence. But the old wise fat barn cat, who was closest to Gabby Sunshine, knew otherwise. "It is the lost soul of a broken horse," meowed the cat. "Gabby always seems drawn to the sad statue. Maybe it's the sorrowful eyes, or maybe it was the first one she collected when she moved here. All I know is that she loves that old thing." The cat spoke about Gabby and the statue with a low purr.

The truth was that the statue reminded Gabby of her dream. Gabby Sunshine had spent all summer rising before the rooster and before Tommy the baker lit up his oven, to feed chickens at 5:30am.

She was saving for her dream. Everyday her pig tails would spring from the sides of her head ready to say good morning to the sun and good night to the stars. She had saved ninety-eight dollars to buy that lonely horse...the one down the road that she saw every day...the one no one rode and no one loved...that looked like her favorite statue. She only needed two dollars more (one more day's labor) to finally get her long sought-after prize.

"Guess what, Kitty Kat! Tomorrow I will have enough money to buy my dream horse!" Gabby Sunshine announced to the big barn cat on her way to feed the chickens. She told him the story about the first day she fell in love with the old horse, just as she had done every week for three months. "I was just walking down the road and there he was, standing next to a sign that read, 'HORSE FOR SALE-\$100.' Well I had to have him, you know? He's my dream horse after all!" It was hard for the cat to imagine that the twenty-something year old chestnut horse with the white face and sway back could be her dream horse, but he also knew how much Gabby Sunshine loved imperfections.

The day had finally come and Gabby Sunshine ran the whole mile and a half to her neighbor's house. As she handed him the one hundred dollars, he counted every cent before handing the old horse over to her. The crows gathered and lined up on the electrical lines, and the fat cat perched on the pointed roof of the Montana home, as they patiently waited. Slowly Gabby Sunshine and the old horse made their way back to her house. These were the happiest steps of her life. When they reached the barn, she showed her new friend his beautiful stall which she had spent every evening working on. She had carved his name above the door: MARVIN, THE LOVE OF MY LIFE. She had carefully spread clean shavings over the floor so not a single spot was left bare.

Gabby Sunshine had found her "perfect" horse and could only imagine what fun she and Marvin would have together in the beautiful Montana countryside. "I guess perfection is in the eye of the beholder," said the old barn cat as he rubbed against Gabby Sunshine's leg.

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.

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Colts and Fillies—Kids Corner

Hannah Jeanne Frederick

My name is Hannah Frederick and I am almost fifteen years old. I have been riding since I was two. I started out taking riding lessons with Linda Aldrich; some people might know her as The Pony Lady, who provides children's pony rides at Howarth Park in Santa Rosa. My grandpa, whom I call "Papa" took me all the time to ride the ponies. Ever since the first time that I sat in that saddle I have been hooked.

When I turned six years old I started taking lessons with Linda and attending her pony camps during the summer. I took lessons with her until I turned eleven. Then I started Linda's internship program and began to ride at her ranch. This year I will have been working at the park for four and a half years. For a long time I rode Western. After I became comfortable with riding out there I switched to riding in an English saddle. My pony Lucy and I have worked together for about two and a half years on jumping, also called Hunter-Jumping. Now I'm too big for her, so I ride an Appaloosa who was supposed to be put down because she has cancer. When I met her she had not been ridden for over a year. Now she is better and has LOTS of energy. She's like our miracle horse. Her name is Sedona.

Besides riding horses, I love to run, I did track in middle school and I also played badminton this year. I love History and Science and hope to be either a pilot or a vet tech. I also love to camp, swim, hike, and fish. I love music; I can't go anywhere without my iPod. Someday I hope to make it to the US Olympic team for Three Day Eventing.



Hannah and Milo



Dad and Hanna on Reno



Hannah and Sedona, the miracle horse

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Readers Write

Written by Dawn Hansen

One Good Gait: Kentucky Mountain Saddle Horses



A handsome palomino

to tell you some things about them.

The Kentucky Mountain Saddle Horse has been described as the mutt breed which is probably true. The KMSH can contain bloodlines from many other similar breeds like the Tennessee Walkers, the Missouri Fox Trotters, and the Rocky Mountain Gaited Horses. The unique breeding history came about this way: The people of the Kentucky Mountain area bred these horses for centuries for their unique smooth gait, hardiness, and calm demeanor. They were an all-purpose horse—capable of working in the fields or carrying a family member to town. The registry was begun in 1989 in an effort to preserve the unique characteristics of these horses. Since this is a new breed you often find “unknown horse” or horses from other breeds in the registered horse’s family tree only a few generations back. As the registry is developed, the lines will become clearer and purer. But keep in mind that we also have our true-true KMSH with proud, traceable pedigrees spanning ten generations. And also what sets us apart is that this breed has to prove the gait in hand and under saddle before we are given a certificate of registration. This ensures us and our clients that the KMSH is a true four-beat Gaited horse.

Kentucky Mountain Horses can be any solid color, but they are known for eye-catching palomino, and chocolate-colored coats. The chocolates are a deep brown with a pale flaxen mane and tail. The registry allows white markings on the face such as stars and blazes, and stockings and socks below the knee. They have generous flowing manes and tails. The spotted mountain horses have their own registry. We divide our horses into two height groups: the A’s are over 14.0 hands, and the B’s are under 14.0 hands. This helps our clients who feel strongly about their horse’s size.

The Kentucky Mountain Saddle Horse executes the natural four gait beat called an amble, or rack. This is a very smooth gentle gait that can be maintained over rough terrain and has

I’m Dawn from One Good Gait on Crane Canyon Road. Most of you know who I am one way or the other, but I will leave that one alone (lol). I started out like most of you, with my Breyer models as a young girl, but now I import and train horses. My specialty is Gaited horses; I bring in and train many breeds, including Tennessee Walking Horses, Spotted Saddle Horses, and Peruvian Pasos, but Kentucky Mountain Saddle Horses (KMSH) have a special place in my heart, and I’ve been asked

the same foot-fall pattern as a walk. As a result the rider sits almost motionless while the horse carries him at speeds as fast as most horses canter. Having been developed in hilly regions where pasture was sparse, these horses are hardy and stoic with a calm, kind, demeanor. Other Gaits displayed by our horses include the Show Gaits, the Pleasure Gait, the trail walk, the and easy going walk on a loose rein (this is where you “let ‘em go” and they show what you got).

So what I’ve described above is the clinical part of the Kentucky Mountain Horse, but the most notable characteristic of this breed is its versatility. You can show your KMSH on Saturday, trail ride him on Sunday, and coon hunt during the week. We trust them with our children, moms and dads, our greenhorn friends, and the first time rider. These horses build confidence...And the Kentucky Mountain Horse will steal your heart, I’ve ridden my share of horses and for me there is nothing better than the Kentucky Mountain Saddle horse. But you be the judge—if you see me on the trail, or want to call me and come over, I’d love to show you what they are all about. Check us out at www.onegoodgait.com.

Dawn Hanson is a long time Sonoma County resident. She grew up riding horses in disciplines as diverse as Cross Country and Cutting. According to Dawn, she has been bucked off, run off on, stepped on, and nipped more times than she wants to remember. Dawn is a Gaited horse advocate and would love to see these breeds, especially the Kentucky Mountain Saddle Horse, flourish in this area. For more information about the KMSH, other Gaited horses, or training, visit www.onegoodgait.com.



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Gentle enough for the kids

Readers Write

One Family’s Journey to Horses

Written by Jessica Boyd



Katie and Sammy

Watching my Thoroughbred jig at the end of his lead rope, my grin gets even bigger as I think of the journey that led to this spot in the driveway.

People find their way to horses along different paths—some are born into it, others seek it out, and some fall backwards into it winding up wondering how they ever lived without it. In our family, my daughter Katie and partner Steve were seekers; I tried to creep in judiciously and ended up the most horse-crazy of all.

It started when Katie entered the starry-eyed horse phase at the normal age. She began taking lessons and eventually doing some schooling shows nearby. She didn’t mind cleaning pens, grooming horses, picking feet, or doing just about anything to be near the warm, fuzzy bodies. She liked all that work much better than the actual showing piece of the horse pie, and she never did master that smile some judges seem to look for. Steve had always liked horses, and years prior had been part of a group of folks that went to a barn in upstate New York to ride and exercise horses that otherwise never got out. I had taken maybe two or three riding lessons back in my horse phase, but my parents couldn’t afford it, so I had to make do with model horses and the occasional trail ride.

While trying to come up with something interesting to get Katie for Christmas the year she turned thirteen, Steve and I found a Cutting horse ranch in Tuolumne, California that offered trail rides and a rustic bunk house adventure. It seemed like a good gift and a good family vacation. Katie was excited, so we booked our trip. My plan to sit on the deck and read while they all rode was quashed the very first time I went down to the arena to see them off. The ranch owner handed me the reins of a cute little Paint mare named “Dandy” and said, “Here’s your horse.” I couldn’t very well back down, so off we went.

That was the most exciting and entertaining trail ride I had ever been on—and then we tried Cutting! These horses were so alive, so powerful, and so engaged with the rider, it was a wholly different experience for all of us. It was the beginning of the end of Katie’s Western Pleasure phase, and the start of a new chapter for all of us.

It got a little addictive.

We went up several times over the next year and a half and every time it was a bit like kamikaze riding—ride hard, limp for a week. It was worth it, but we weren’t riding enough to get better. The logical solution would have been to find a local trainer, but we liked the way the folks at the ranch taught and we liked their horses. Finding new trainers seemed harder.

Our solution was to buy one of their horses, so we bought Lena Rey Flo—alpha, athletic, and extremely smart. Keeping her entertained is an ongoing battle and we’ve tried many different things with her, from Cutting, to Barrel Racing and Pole Bending. Mostly, it’s just good to ride her regularly and give her things for her big brain to do. Lena was the center of our universe for about two years, with all three of us riding and tending her. She thought that was perfect, but we wanted to trail ride and even just ride together at the barn. A friend of mine asked if we’d be interested in looking at an off-the-track (OTT) Thoroughbred named Calabar.

Thankfully, Lena trained us well enough—mostly, anyway—to handle “Bar,” who came with a host of new and different challenges, as do many OTTs. Over the last two years—working through several difficult and disheartening events—Bar has become my horse in more than just ownership terms. He’s my mirror and continues to teach me to be a better horse-person every day. It hasn’t been easy, but when he turns to me to fix problems instead of blowing up, I know it’s been worth it. And he is absolutely rock-solid on the trail.

Katie started making noises about getting her own horse about a year ago. Being parental units, we tried to dissuade her from this plan. We lost, mainly because we found Sammy, who needed an owner, and who has the same funny, energetic personality that drew us to our other two horses. Sometimes Katie gets tired and frustrated, especially when she gets too busy to get to the barn with the three jobs she now works to support her horse. Then she sees Sammy and remembers why it’s nice to have buddy who is happy to see you, and doesn’t care what you’re wearing or driving. Sammy is teaching Katie lessons that parents can’t manage to communicate, no matter how much they pontificate and lecture and stomp their feet.

It’s been a twisty journey, sometimes, full of potholes and hidden turns, but this journey has gifted all of us with adventures we’d never have had any other way. “You’re as horse-crazy as a twelve-year-old girl,” Steve chuckled at me recently. He’s right. And I love every minute of it.

Jessica Boyd lives in Sonoma County and blogs with some regularity about all her horses and their adventures at Spotty Horse News, <http://www.spotthyhorse.blogspot.com>. You can reach Jessica and her herd at spottyhorse@gmail.com.



The wise one: Lena

Readers Write

Pippa the World Traveler

Written by Pippa (a.k.a Ballinakill Glory) and translated by Andrea Pfeiffer



Kelly and Pippa

Well, where do I start? I was so excited to be asked to write about all of my world travels. Sigh, oh yes. The first trip I ever had is when I left Ireland as a three year old. It was a busy time as I remember... frolicking in the pasture with my pasture buddies, and then suddenly I was picked out of a group to be looked at. Her name was Kelly and I remember hearing her funny accent. She was asking if I could do something called "Eventing." Kelly told the farmer she wanted to buy me and send me to America! Are you kidding me! Hollywood here I come! I could not wait to meet all those famous people and soak up the good ol' Cali sunshine.

I consider myself quite brave, but I think I under estimated all that went into traveling. First there were passport photos to be taken, vet checks, shots, and of course all the packing of belongings. What did I take that first trip? Oh, just my halter and rope... I guess the packing was not as much as I thought. In any case, off to the airport we headed. I was sure that in the US they would roll out the red carpet for me and stop off at the Hollywood Studios for a tour. What? What? I am traveling with all these commoners! There must be a mistake, I only travel first class. Oh, you mean this is first class? Wow, is it ever cramped. No moving about and certainly no lying down in here. My legs are tired and my head buzzing from all the noise. It has been a very long day with all the waiting and then finally leaving the ground. Wooosh, I felt like I wanted to crouch as low as I could, but instead I ended up leaning on my tail which hurt! The food did not taste the same as home and even though I was very thirsty the water, did not taste like home either. In fact I think I miss it...

That was seven years ago. Yes I was home sick but like I tell all the new arrivals, it goes away. I never ended up in Hollywood which is just fine with me. I drive to LA all the time and the air is just horrible! I prefer up north where the air is pure and I have an ocean breeze to cool me off in the summer. I have ended up traversing the United States three times and every summer I get to go to Montana. It took these people a few years to really figure this travel thing out. First I had a slant load trailer with plenty of room but it was hard on my hip to be at an angle for extended periods of time. So with a bit of fussing about I managed to get the "Pippa Limo."

Yup, a box stall all for me, baby, with air ride! I even lie down on long journeys. I always arrive at my destination feeling like a movie star. Kelly and the Americans manage who I travel with so I never have to stall next to a pest! I like my peace and quite while I travel. In fact I really don't mind going by myself.

I headed back to Europe this summer to Poland. Now that was an adventure. It was another drive to LA where we met Jet Pets who took Kelly, Dougie (my FEI trainer and therapist who always travels with me), and me to my flight. Well, I can tell you the service was much better then that first trans-Atlantic crossing. Kelly traveled with me. I was much happier to have a familiar face around. I had enough room to put my head up and down and this time when we took off I remembered not to fall back on my tail! I am not so picky about what I eat or drink. When you travel as much as I do you really must tolerate the food and water, otherwise vets are always panicking and stuffing something up your nose! The flight was smooth and before I knew it we had landed. Lots more hustle and bustle! Kelly and Dougie disappeared, but I knew they would be back. I was unloaded off my crate, cleared customs, had my passport stamped and met back up with Kelly and Dougie. I assume they had the same done to them.

Poland was chilly and filled with strange voices! We traveled in a huge bright red lorry called a horse box! It reminded me of home. There was plenty of room to stretch out. Little did I know I was just starting on an adventure of a life time! However that really is a story of its own. I traveled to Poland and back to California. I like it because wherever I go, the horses speak the same language. Next on my travel plans is Lexington, Kentucky. Can't wait to put that stamp in my passport! U

Until next time,
Pippa

Pippa (aka Ballinakill Glory) is an Irish Sporthorse ridden by Kelly Prather, and owned by James and Andrea Pfeiffer. Pippa and Kelly's accomplishments include winning the three-star Cross Country International Championships at Rebecca Farm in 2007 and 2009, and representing the World Cup Team Strzegom, Poland in 2009. The Pfeiffers own the Chocolate Horse Farm in Petaluma, a facility that specializes in Dressage and Eventing. For more information about Chocolate Horse Farm visit www.chocolatehorsefarm.net, or call 707-778-7544.



Kelly and Pippa traveling in the "horse box"

Local Facilities Go Solar

It Is Easy Being Green

Written by Sally Beckwith

A little green frog said, "It isn't easy being green" but ask Tenny and Linda Tucker, owners of Sebastopol landmark, Frizelle-Enos Company. At eighty years old, this family operated feed store and more, has just gone "green" and it was easy. The Tucker's have completed a photovoltaic (PV) solar energy project on the roof of their building on Petaluma Ave that is estimated to produce 33,835 kWh annually.

Funded by the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program (SCEIP), the system employed local workers from Sebastopol's Steele Energy Solutions. The Tuckers were able to save some "green" by taking advantage of a 30% federal grant and a large rebate from the California Solar Initiative. Steele Energy Solutions made this task easy by completing necessary paperwork and guiding them through the federal grant process.

The Tucker's chose to install solar not only to become more energy independent and save on their energy bills, but to present to the community their commitment to protecting the environment. The system will generate significant environmental benefits and lower their carbon footprints by reducing green house gas emissions by 606 tons of carbon dioxide. Over twenty-five years, that is equivalent to driving a small car 2,053,220 miles and has the affect of planting 24,228 trees.

You don't have to own a business to benefit from solar. Greg and

Lisa Harder were thinking ahead when they decided to install a solar system on the roof of their barn. As the days get warmer and the fields turn brown, the grass is going to be greener at their ranch thanks to their 5.600 kW solar system. They will save enough on their energy bill to keep their water pump operating, which will keep their pastures green and allow their horses to graze.

Solar electricity, produced by photovoltaics is a proven means of generating electricity from the sun. Whether you want to be "green" in your energy usage or offset your current electrical usage, solar power could be your answer. Three things are certain when considering solar: the cost of power will increase, black-outs will occur, and inflation happens. Solar energy is an option to help level costs and beat inflation.

Using a reputable solar installation company, such as Steele Energy Solutions, a system can be designed that allows many families to trade out their energy bill for a loan payment on a solar system. Why rent electricity when you can own it with a PV system? SCEIP is putting these projects within reach of home and business owners.

It might not be easy being green for that little frog, but in Sonoma County it is easy to go green! Check for upcoming, free solar seminars at www.SteeleSolar.com or call 707-824-1000.



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From the Horse's Mouth

Local Equestrian Wins President's Trophy Award

The Friesian Horse Association of North America (FHANA) honored Sonoma resident Janna Goldman with the 2009 FHANA President's Trophy Award at the Annual General Meeting, held Feb 27th, 2010, in London, Ontario, Canada. Goldman was honored for the promotion of the Friesian horse by competing and winning numerous large classes at United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) rated shows. Goldman has used multiple horses to achieve the highest FHANA score in North America and was selected as the person who best demonstrates the versatility of the Friesian horse. Goldman's name was added to the perpetual Presidential Trophy which remains on display at the FHANA offices in Lexington, KY. Janna Goldman shows her Friesian horses in a multitude of disciplines, including Saddleseat, Huntseat, Dressage, Driving, and Western Pleasure. Janna's other achievements include Saddleseat Equitation World and National Championships, the Adult Saddleseat Equitation National Championship, and the year end Highpoint on the Pacific Coast Circuit in Dressage Suitability. She was also chosen to represent the US on the World Cup team in 1993. Janna and her husband, Ron, import Friesians from Holland and train all their own horses. To learn more about the Goldmans and Black Sterling Ranch visit www.blacksterlingfriesians.com. (See related article p.12)

Wine Country Peruvian Paso Horse Club Spices Up Parade

On April 24th the approximately 30,000 attendees of the 29th Annual Petaluma Butter & Egg Days Parade got a special treat. Seven Peruvian Pasos and their riders in full traditional Peruvian tack and attire marched in the procession to the delight of the observers. The parade theme, "Petaluma's Shining Moments," also featured floats, antique tractors, a horse drawn stagecoach, and even a "Cutest Little Chick" contest. The Peruvian Pasos and their riders represented the Wine Country Peruvian Paso Horse Club (WCPPHC). The WCPPHC has also performed at such events as the Equine Extravaganza in Santa Rosa and Petaluma, as well as the Western States Horse Expo in Sacramento. Among the riders was WCPPHC President Larry Braun, riding TLR Amada, the mare who appears on the cover of this issue. The WCPPHC also held a very well attended Peruvian Paso Festival on March 27th at Terra LarRossa in Petaluma, owned by Rossana and Larry Braun, which honored the Peruvian Paso breed and the Peruvian culture. (See related article p. 14) For more information about the WCPPHC, call Larry Braun, President at 707-478-2145.



California Dressage Society Sponsors Local Hoof Health Clinic

Contributed by Tressa Boulden – Sonoma County CDS Education Coordinator Master farriers Kevin Graham and Michael T Sovaldi spoke to a full house of dedicated equestrians at Green Vista Stables in March of this year. The Hoof Health Clinic, sponsored by the Sonoma Chapter of the California Dressage Society (CDS), offered a comprehensive view of hoof anatomy and function. According to Solvaldi, well-known author and researcher, and long-time

Professor of Animal Science at Cal Poly, trims and shoeing impact a horse's entire body. The style and angle of trim should be performed based on a horse's anatomy, including how the foot bones articulate, which is individual to each horse. Farriers can gain information about each horse's anatomy by inspection of the sole and arch. Graham presented material in both an organized slide presentation and with use of actual hoof models. The subsequent question and answer session was lively. Participants enjoyed the presentation and expressed desire to attend future seminars by Sovaldi and Graham. For more information about Hoof Health Seminars, contact organizer and CDS Education Coordinator Tressa Boulden by emailing tressaboulden@comcast.net, or by calling (707)829-0491.

Giant Steps to Hold Charity Classic Fundraiser

This summer Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center, in conjunction with the Sonoma Horse Park in Petaluma, will be holding their inaugural Charity Classic event. This five-day horse show, held August 4-8, will include four hundred of California's finest professional and amateur exhibitors, competing for over \$50,000 in prize money. Horses and riders will compete each day, concluding with a marquee class to challenge the best of the best. Events will also include the entertaining "Ride and Drive" and "Calcutta" (horse betting). Simultaneous exhibits will offer wine tasting and pairings, and art sales. The signature event, formerly the Giant Steps Annual Steppin' Out Charity Auction, will be the Saturday evening (August 7th) Grand Prix Gala. The Gala offers participants a catered gourmet dinner, live and silent auctions, entertainment, and a riding demonstration. All proceeds will be donated to the Giant Steps program which has been serving Sonoma County children and adults with disabilities for more than ten years. For more information about the Charity Classic, the Grand Prix Gala, or the Giant Steps program and services visit www.giantstepsriding.org.

Two-mile Section of the Bay Area Ridge Trail Opened

This winter an additional two miles of the proposed Bay Area Ridge Trail opened to the public. The section connecting Panoramic Highway, Mt Tamalpais State Park to Muir Beach, Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) is now accessible to pedestrians, equestrians, and cyclists. The Bay Area Ridge Trail was first proposed almost twenty years ago by National Park Service Director William Penn Mott, who envisioned a trail that would ring the San Francisco Bay, high on the ridgeline. Pursuant to this goal, representatives of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Greenbelt Alliance organized the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council in 1987. This initial partnership brought together public park agencies and trail advocates from all around the region to map out a route for the Ridge Trail, and establish an organization to promote its completion. Ultimately the Bay Area Ridge Trail will be a 550-mile continuous trail encircling the San Francisco Bay, open to hikers, equestrians, mountain bicyclists, and outdoor enthusiasts of all types. To date, 310 miles have been preserved and dedicated. On May 8th, a dedication ceremony was held on Dias Ridge to mark the new two-plus mile segment. For more information about the Bay Area Ridge Trail check out local author Jean Rusmore's book, [The Official Guide to the Bay Area Ridge Trail](#), in local bookstores or at www.wildernesspress.com, or visit www.ridgetrail.org.

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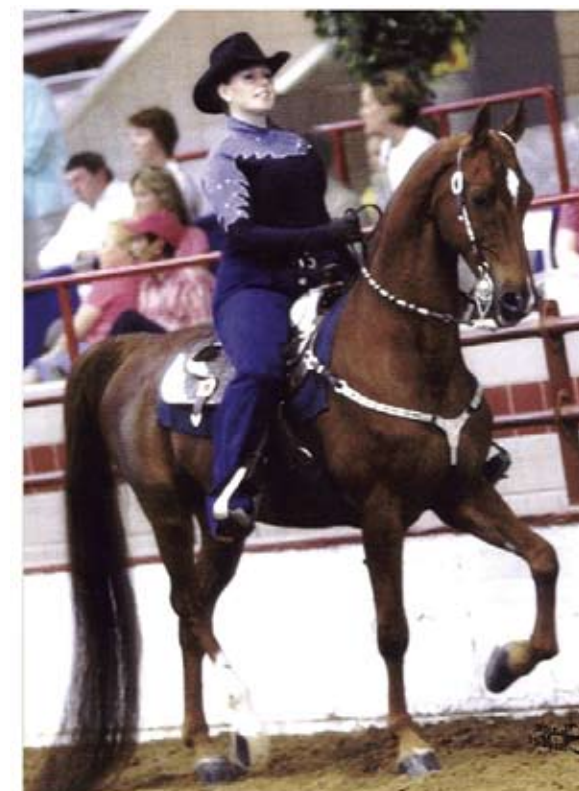
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