

Sonoma County

Horse Journal

Volume 7 • Issue 2 • Spring 2011



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

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**Cover Photo: Marcie Lewis**

Verso do Retiro (Verso) is a nine year old champion Lusitano stallion, imported by Dominique Barbier, and owned by Wesley Leckner and Tracy Underwood. He is accomplished in both Dressage and jumping. Verso stands stud at Santa Rosa Equestrian Center (SREC). Read more about SREC, and local horses in this issue of the Horse Journal.

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A Message from the President



Howdy!

I am honored to have been chosen by Karl Bastian and the Board of the Sonoma County Horse Council (SCHC) to succeed Karl as President. Karl's vision and energy have been extraordinary and we are all indebted to Karl for his remarkable contributions to the horse community. We all look forward to continue working with Karl on the projects he has initiated.

The central mission of the SCHC is to promote the health and well-being of horses and the horse industry in Sonoma County, and to serve as an informational and advocacy resource for the

entire horse community in the county. In order to more effectively carry out this mission, your Board has launched a major outreach program, called the SCHC "Horse Cabinet," wherein every constituency of the horse community in Sonoma County will have a forum to discuss issues of common concern. In essence, the Horse Cabinet will provide advice and counsel to the SCHC Board of Directors so that SCHC can be informed of the grass roots issues and concerns of all horse-related constituencies in Sonoma County.

In sum, the mission of SCHC is to be the "voice" of all aspects of the horse community in Sonoma County and the mission of the Horse Cabinet is to be the eyes and ears of the Horse Council, so that together we can identify and resolve the problems, issues, and concerns of the entire horse community in the county.

We truly believe that if the Sonoma County horse community can effectively organize itself, together we can promote and grow this industry—worth \$300 million a year to our county—to even greater heights. Board members Greg Harder and Tony Benedetti are leading the effort to get the Horse Cabinet up and running. Be sure to check our website for future meeting dates for the Horse Cabinet and for membership meetings.

This year's Equus Awards Hall of Fame Dinner was a great success, and great fun was had by all. For those of you who couldn't make it this year, be sure to watch for next year's Equus Award's Dinner.

Ron Malone
President



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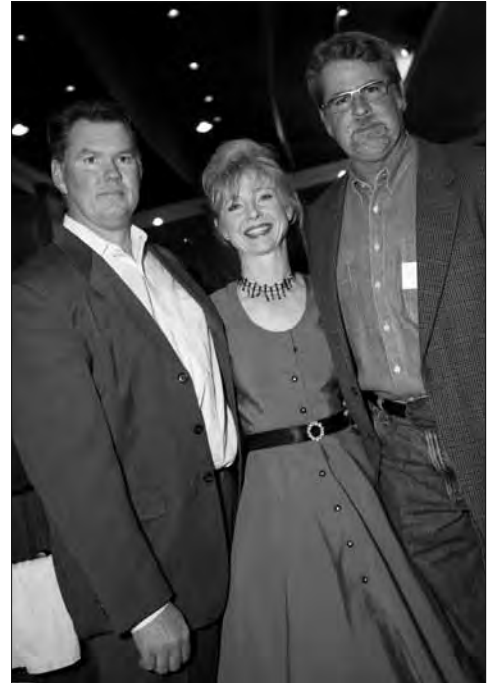
Karl Bastian gives a bear hug and the reins to new SCHC President, Ron Malone



Cindy Cole and Lisa Thomas with an Equus Awards original hat



Cowboy Punch!



Wes Leckner, Tracy Underwood, and John Kaufman, DVM



Jeff Pierce, JoDean Nicolette, and Ilona Letmanyi



Ben Fritz, Rafael Negrete, and Dan Horn



Readers Write

Local American Saddlebred Wins USEF Horse of the Year Written by Brigitte Scholl

To see this pretty, petite, chestnut mare one would hardly suspect the heart and talent behind the darling exterior. At first glance, people comment on her beauty, but her looks are just the tip of the iceberg; this special mare is a champion, as well as a beloved member of the family.

Two years ago, a special partnership was formed when Shamrock's Jessica became the new family member of Julie Strietfeld of Tarzana, CA. Julie purchased Shamrock's Jessica from a fellow boarder at Monarch Stables. Jessica was well-known and loved at Monarch, and had been there for some years, sold from one client in the barn to another, and kept "in the family," so to speak. Jessica has always been a good performer and competed well in the Kentucky Saddlebred show world in her youth. Julie had admired Jessica for years and when the mare came available, she was excited to have the opportunity to purchase her. Trainer Brigitte Scholl was hesitant at first, thinking that maybe Julie's seven year old daughter, Sami, wouldn't be ready to ride Jessica for a few more years.



Sami and Jessica

But Julie proved Jessica was the right horse, for herself and for her daughter. She began showing and riding Jessica and garnering win after win. The two seem to light up the show arena. They make every step in syncopated perfection and they rarely make a mistake. They suit each other to a "T," which makes competing look effortless and fun for this duo.

As a team, they have gotten better every show, and are a dynamic combination that is hard to describe. They began this dance, two years ago at a spring show in Scottsdale and have continued to conquer one new challenge after another, this year culminating in two exciting achievements. First, in April 2010, they earned the final points to officially rename Jessica as a Lifetime Champion with the American Saddlebred Registry. And finally, Julie and Jessica were named United States Equestrian Federations (USEF) Horse of the Year National Champions!

Jessica and her owner Julie compete in the Saddlebred Country Pleasure division which is exemplified by a highly animated and high stepping horse, who also shows the utmost in manners and ability to give a comfortable and enjoyable ride.

Julie Streitfeld shares Jessica with Sami. Sami enjoys playing with Jessica and practicing her riding. She has been competing with Jessica in the lead line classes for the past two years. Last summer at the Summer Classic Horse Show in Watsonville, Sami



Julie and Jessica in competition

Sami and Jessica won the Walk and Trot on a lead class, their first trotting class together. Jessica has an uncanny affinity for children. She will lean out of her stall and knicker to any youngsters to beckon them near. She drops her head to them and adores their undivided attention! Kids at the barn delight when Jessica takes apples, and makes apple sauce!

Every ounce of Jessica is packed with personality! She thinks she is the princess of Monarch Stables. Even now, while on winter vacation and wallowing in the mud all

day like a piglet, she will prance back into the barn, calling to all the boys and waving her mud-caked tail. When faced with blanketing, she will pin her ears to her neck and give her most menacing head toss, but all one has to do is hold the blanket up and she will duck her earless head into it and then, BING, back go the ears to a forward, happy, and kind pose. She goes forth into the show ring with the same special flare that she has for life and for loving. In addition to their USEF National Champion award, Julie and Jessica's accomplishments for 2010 included, American Saddlebred Horse Association State Champion, Pacific Coast Champion, Northern California Champion, and USEF Regional Champion.

Champion Shamrock's Jessica has a special place in the hearts of all who know her, as a top performance horse, and as a delightful companion and charming friend. U



The whole family smiling for the camera

Horseman's View

Column editor Art Grunig

Training with Expectations

To a large extent a horse's behavior is guided by what he expects to happen next. This starts when you first greet him. When he sees you coming, you want him to say, "Here comes the best part of my day!" What you do not want your horse to think when he sees you coming is, "Oh no! Here comes trouble," or "Here comes my daily hassle." If the horse expects trouble, he will look for trouble and very little else—as a result he might cause it. To avoid the "trouble mentality," I like to do things the horse is good at most of the time. If I need to criticize his performance I want to pick my moment and get it over as smoothly and efficiently as possible. Then I will let the horse rest or do something the horse is good at and comfortable doing. If the horse expects to have a good time, and participate with his rider and feel happy and successful, he will contribute a good attitude to the ride.

Your horse can develop expectations of your time together. Make sure your routine changes, and he doesn't think, "I have done my ten laps—I AM DONE! Now let's go back to the barn or let's go eat grass." He might start acting up if events don't happen according to his plan. Lead your horse to grass, or give him treats in such a way that he doesn't develop expectations you do not want him to have. Grazing your horse every time after a ride will cause him to expect it, and he may eventually actually demand that you end the ride so he can eat grass. Instead of never giving your horse grass, mix up the pattern. I find I get the best results if I graze the horse before I ride most of the time.

You and your horse should vary the exertion of your rides, as well. I like to ride my horses moderately most of the time. This maintains a healthy level of condition, not only physically but also mentally. I also change what I do; if my horses expect to do something interesting, they won't worry about how much they put into the work. They almost always have more than enough to spare and finish the ride still feeling comfortably fresh, and also engaged.

Here's how I vary the work. If the horse is a Reiner, I will send the horse down the arena, stop, turn around, and come back... Maybe go right into some circles. I do this a while in a single ride or for a few rides. The horse is expecting things to happen and is ready. I will then do something like send the horse down the arena and stop and just sit there and enjoy the day and the moment with my horse. If you use this pattern, your horse soon goes down the arena thinking of nothing else. He'll expect to settle and relax



Art performing body work

when he reaches the end of the arena. I also do this with circles, varying the number and sizes of circles, how I conclude them, and where I stop. The main thing is to balance the expectations of doing continuous work with the expectation of completing single maneuvers. If possible, do a little in one arena and then go to another and do it there too. Balancing these two styles of riding, I get a horse that is comfortably ready to do the next thing, but is also comfortable in the moment. For me this is a perfect attitude for a horse to have.

You can use expectations to overcome some undesirable behaviors in your horse. I have good luck using a variation of this with a horse that spooks or acts up in a specific area. Many horses pick a spot to shy. If I do not have good success with firmer riding or corrections, I will ride the horse as close to the spot as I can without fighting and just sit there until the horse is bored and relaxed. Then I will either ride away and come back and do it again or just ride a little closer and repeat the resting process. I find that when the horse expects to stand around and relax in that area, it's not so scary. Some horses are determined to leave an area. I will ask the horse not to, but let it leave, and then work the horse much more intensely in the area the horse wanted to go to. When he starts trying to work with me I take him back to the arena and relax with him. Soon the horse's expectations change as to where a good place to be is. They also start expecting to work with me no matter where they go. This is one way to help us re-establish the harmony in our activity and our relationship.

Horses, like people, develop expectations. They choose their behavior based on what they expect to happen next. With this in mind, you can "train" your horse in a gentle, and informed way, and significantly reduce conflict and frustration. You and your horse will grow into an engaged and harmonious partnership. U

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

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Readers Write

Courage

Written by Jackie Skvaril, MD

I slapped the brochures of GMC, Ford, and Toyota trucks down on the table one evening. "Guess what I did today?" I asked my unflappable husband. "I have been test driving trucks." He immediately snapped to attention. "But, we don't need a truck," he said, knowing full well where this was going. I had been talking about buying a truck and a trailer for a few years now and he had effectively staved off this event with various reasons that we didn't need to do this yet. Even if "we" didn't need the truck, I was positive that "I" did. When he understood that I was probably not going to be put off any further, he immediately got on the computer and researched different trucks, specs, and what exactly was needed to be safe and effective with the horse in tow. He gave me a list and I was off.

A few months later, I was researching trailers. When I had a fairly good idea of what I was looking for and planned a two-hour trip with the truck to a trailer dealer, I asked Mom if she wanted to come along for the ride. "Should I bring sandwiches?" I appreciated her organized optimism. Brought up during the Depression and health conscious, she was watching out for our pocketbooks and longevity. So, we hit the highway with sandwiches and drinks. At the trailer dealer, I walked the lot and looked at what was available and the pros and cons of different models. I wasn't sure if I wanted a two- or three-horse trailer just yet, and wanted to try both.

A cowboy named Bob took me out with the three-horse trailer hooked up and gave me my first and only trailer hauling lesson. He taught me to think of my right foot on the accelerator as always being in the middle of my lane. He emphasized long braking distances. He showed me how to do a three point turn and to back up. I saw how there was less play backing up a three horse compared to a two horse trailer. When backing up, I still hear his voice in my head saying "Turn to the problem. Turn to the problem." I don't know what I would have done without his tip to look at a rock on the ground and use it to gauge how many inches or feet I had moved when backing up to hook up the truck and trailer.



Jackie and Ana

Bob reassured Mom. "She'll be fine. She's got a good head on her shoulders." On the way home, with my just purchased trailer in tow, we had to stop for gas. Mom and I discussed which exit to take for a gas station. "I don't know about this one," Mom said. "You're going to have to make a right turn." I laughed; now was as good a time as any to start practicing that skill.

For weeks, the night before I went trail riding, I tossed and turned with nervous energy, thinking about hooking up the truck to the trailer, and driving down country roads and highways with my horse in tow. The physics of the hook up is not intuitive to a city girl. Once, I was sure the hitch was stuck on the ball of the trailer. It took sev-

eral minutes and some outside assistance to see that all I had to do was crank the handle the other way. I quickly learned that if at all possible, avoid the back up. Figure it out way in advance. Plan ahead. If you do it right, you can avoid the back up and the full body sweat. It didn't help to hear my trainer's voice saying "You're an idiot!" as I told her my plan to buy a truck and trailer. I have had to call upon courage many times in my life. I picked up and moved across country at the age of twenty-one to go to medical school. I had to figure out how to pay for it. I have been faced with many hair-raising situations as a physician. But I had not had to call up as much courage as this for many, many years. I was pushing myself way beyond my comfort zone. And it was worth it.

My friend JoDean tells me I have "biophilia" or the love of nature. I know she is right. I have always enjoyed animals, hiking, and the outdoors. So, taking my horse on trail rides combines many of my loves for a wonderful morning out. Two years later, I sleep well the night before hitting the trails. U

Jackie is a practicing internist in Santa Rosa who competes in Hunter-Jumper competitions and trail rides as often as possible. She also founded a small group of trail riders who fondly refer to themselves as the "Monday Mares."

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Readers Write

Journey to Harmony with Horses—Terry Church

Written by Joan Rasmussen

"Showing became a much different experience—I was going to a show to perform and showcase the horse's abilities," rather than being driven to win. So commented Sonoma County horsewoman Terry Church about the difference between her show experiences before studying with master horseman Tom Dorrance, and afterwards. She wrote about her horsemanship journey in her 2007 book, *Finding Pegasus*, which started as a standard riding instruction book and evolved into a fictionalized version of her life experiences and especially what she learned working with Tom Dorrance.



Terry showing Pan

Terry did not come from a horsey background, but developed a love of horses early on. Despite lack of support from her family, she pursued her passion, receiving her first professional instruction after leaving home at an early age. An ambitious horsewoman, she studied Dressage in Germany for a year and had her sights set on competing in the Olympics with her Thoroughbred gelding, Pan. However, the more she trained and pursued her goal using traditional methods, the more her horse fell apart until it seemed she was moving away from her dream rather than toward it.

In 1990, at her wits' end, she happened to be visiting a friend in Carmel Valley. The friend had two imported stallions, a Holsteiner and a Lippizan, who were exhibiting dangerous behavior. Tom Dorrance lived in the area, and he had been contacted to work with the horses. This was Terry's first exposure to this method of horsemanship and while she watched with interest, she could not see that much was happening. It seemed that he mostly waited—he would ask a horse to do something, then back off and wait. After several hours of this, the horses were saddled and ridden with halters and lead ropes, completely safe, happy, and compliant! Although Terry didn't understand exactly what had taken place, she was very aware that she had missed *something* in her years of traditional training—"It was like having the rug swept out from under my feet."



Terry and Tom Dorrance

Still, it wasn't until six months later that she reached the point where she was ready to call Tom and went to his ranch to work with him and try to understand his methods and why they were so effective. Tom was eighty at the time but still working with horses and horsemen.

Terry found him to be gentlemanly, genuinely comfortable in his own skin, and possessing complete faith in the goodness of both people and horses. Over the next seven years, until Tom retired, she made several trips to learn as much as she could from him.

This required stepping back from her usual driven style. Tom Dorrance's teaching method was the opposite of the traditional linear, step-by-step approach used by most traditional instructors and was


based on developing a "feel" for the horse. It's more art than science. His book, *True Unity*, is notoriously difficult to grasp by those who don't already have an understanding of the concept often labeled "natural horsemanship"—a term Terry avoids.

Terry's goal has shifted from winning in the show ring to developing excellence in horses and riders in a way that is positive for both. She strives to integrate the technical and classical aspects of her traditional Dressage training with the compassion for horses that she learned during her years with Tom. She works to set up a situation in which the horse understands and is a willing participant

in the learning process. She has led clinics nationally since 2000, focusing on Northern California since 2009, offering clinics locally at Flying Cloud Farm near Petaluma. Many of the participants are Dressage riders who are disillusioned with traditional Dressage methods and are seeking a more compassionate way of working with horses. She also leads classes for Equinology in ground handling skills based on Tom Dorrance's approach.

Terry and several like-minded trainers have developed a website, www.naturalsporthorse.com, where they "promote a mindful approach to working with horses of all breeds and disciplines." The website includes a forum called the Collaborative Clinic, as a resource for horse lovers to resolve conflicts between them and their equine partners. Participants may ask questions and share ideas in a supportive, non-"preachy" way. There are also several articles written by Terry, including a provocative series on the pyramid of training. She has expanded this traditional training tool to make it more three-dimensional and less linear.

Terry currently does not own a horse, having been traveling to clinics since 2000. She retired Pan, the horse that led her to Tom Dorrance, shortly after working with Tom, although she has owned and ridden horses since. In recent months she has cut back on activities and worked close to home, taking some time to regroup. She would like to write a sequel to *Finding Pegasus*, and also to compete again, although she does not have a timeline for either.

One of her dreams is for an equestrian-based, sustainably designed and operated experiential learning center where riders from all backgrounds and experience levels will be able to participate. More information about Terry can be found at www.naturalsporthorse.com and www.equinology.com. 

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 is working on achieving Level 3. Joan supports her horse hobby by running and bookkeeping and tax service (In Balance Bookkeeping Service). She occasionally blogs about her horse experiences at cowdex.blogspot.com. To reach Joan, email her at joanras@att.net.



Vets Office

Column editor Michelle Beko, DVM

Rabies

Rabies is a very old disease that occurs worldwide excepting Australia, Antarctica, and a few islands (eg the United Kingdom, New Zealand). The Ancient Greeks were familiar with rabies. It is caused by the rabies virus which primarily infects bats and carnivores (dogs, foxes) however all mammals, including humans, are susceptible.

Rabies is primarily spread from animal to animal via bites. A rabid animal has a high concentration of rabies virus in its saliva. When the rabid animal bites another animal these viruses are injected into the wound. The virus then multiplies in that wound before traveling up the animal's peripheral nerves to the spinal cord and then to the brain. The viruses eventually travel down nerves to the salivary glands. The "incubation period" is the time it takes from initial infection to the development of symptoms, and in horses this is two to six weeks.

Once the rabies viruses reach the animal's brain, symptoms begin. All animals exhibit neurological deficits. Dogs usually show somewhat predictable behavioral changes including aggression. Horses show various clinical signs and in fact, rabies can mimic many other neurologic diseases in horses (Equine Protozoal Myelitis, Equine Herpes Virus, and several cervical vertebral problems). They may have behavioral changes, difficulty swallowing, hyperexcitability, lameness that progresses to ataxia (incoordination) or other neurologic deficits. It is a rapidly progressive disease; once symptoms begin the animal dies within ten days although five days is average.

Rabies is a lethal disease. Not every animal that gets bitten by a rabid animal will get rabies; the infection can be stopped at the level of the wound. Any animal that does get the disease however, will die. A few humans have survived rabies recently but there are no reports of any other animals surviving the disease. There are no tests to confirm a diagnosis of rabies in living people or animals. Diagnosis is made by examination of brain tissue. Bite wounds from rabid animals are not always visible.

Rabies persists in nature in a variety of reservoir species. In North America, skunks, foxes, and raccoons are the main reservoirs. In California skunks are the primary reservoir, while raccoons are the main carriers on the east coast. In California, rabies is maintained in the wild primarily by skunks infecting other skunks and occasionally another species. Bats are effective reservoirs all over North America.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, in 2009 there were 6,694 cases of rabies reported in the US. 92% of these were wild animals. There were forty-one confirmed cases in horses and four in humans. Three of the four people died. One was exposed to a rabid dog while traveling in India and the other three were exposed to bats in the United States. As with these four people, most Americans who get rabies either get it from bats or while out of the country. Exposure from cats is not uncommon.

In Texas last December, a three year old Morgan mare named Pearl died of rabies. Her owner noticed that she wasn't eating and was acting oddly. She was examined that day as well as the following two days by her veterinarian. Her symptoms rapidly progressed. She began twitching, became hyperexcitable, and lost a remarkable amount of weight. Eventually she went down and could not get up. Unfortunately, although he could not find a bite wound the veterinarian suspected rabies and euthanized Pearl. Post mortum examination of her brain confirmed that she had the skunk variant of rabies.

The primary source of human rabies in this country used to be pet dogs. Widespread canine vaccination began after World War II in order to protect public health. By the late 1970's, dog to dog transmission of rabies was essentially eliminated. Although there has been no documented case of a person getting rabies from a horse, it is possible. A vaccinated horse that gets exposed to a rabid animal is required to be quarantined for forty-five days and revaccinated as soon as possible. An unvaccinated horse exposed to a rabid animal is required to be euthanized or vaccinated immediately and quarantined for six months.

Vaccination is an effective means of preventing rabies in domestic animals including horses. While no vaccine is 100% effective, it is rare for a vaccinated animal to get rabies. There are several rabies vaccines labeled for use in horses. We do not know how long immunity lasts, but revaccination is recommended every twelve-fourteen months depending on the brand of vaccine. Although rabies is not common in horses, the severity of the disease, the safety of the vaccination, and the potential threat to human health makes choosing to vaccinate your horses a wise decision. U

Michelle Beko, DVM is an equine veterinarian and has been practicing at Empire Equine in Sonoma County since 1992. She lives in Santa Rosa with her husband and daughter and enjoys riding her horse Hennessy. You can reach her at 707-545-3909 for questions or comments.



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

Equus Caballus: Babe Magnet

Column editor Mark Krug

This article is for the boys. So if you're not a young male, go ahead and turn to some other article and maybe learn something of actual value from Dr Michelle Beko or other learned writer.

If you're still with me gentlemen, listen up—you should seriously consider making horses a part of your life if they aren't already. Because if you do, you will always be surrounded by available females. Simply put, horses are the ultimate babe-magnet. They have babenetism.

I adopted a Samoyed-mix weanling puppy many years ago while in my late teens. Okay, decades ago. Drew the ladies like flies to honey. But, this was fleeting for the obvious reason that the puppy was soon a dog. Less obvious: these brief, superficial encounters with random women had little value as they were with strange females who may or may not have been wing-nuts, and who all shared precisely the same concern about me.

But, if you are a farrier, vet, instructor, or just someone who makes horses a significant part of their lives, you've eliminated all the problems of fleeting babenetism. Here's why:

First, like I've already said, horses have babe magnetism for life. Even a sway-back, toothless, cataract-filled retiree attracts the females of our species. No one knows why this is.

Second, if you're a young horse guy you'll naturally run into young horse gals on a regular basis...getting to know these ladies somewhat over time (and they you). This eliminates the two-trains-passing-in-the-night syndrome associated with puppies and other lesser magnets. And with exposure based on periodic encounters, the acute wing-nuts will emerge as such. However, as a realist, I know that in time-honored tradition, most of you will miss the difference between cute wing-nuts and acute wing-nuts, and so it goes...

Third, the traits of the females you will be hanging around will be far superior to the traits of females in the broader population. Horsey gals are less likely to be prissy "oh-dear-I-broke-a-nail" types, less likely to be mallrats, less likely to be jewelry-obsessed, and just, frankly, a heartier breed. They will also be brighter and smarter. Think about it: A woman whose interests and hobbies center around retail stores isn't going to learn much about life, nor will she be very interesting. Conversely, a horsewoman will learn not

only about the horse, of course, but also a great deal about nature, herself, trust, communication and how we all fit together on this journey of life. And best of all, she'll gain all this deep wisdom with a sense of humor and real humility. I mean, it's only a matter of time before we horse people get bucked off and land face first in a pile of manure, or some other such event, requiring us to not take ourselves too seriously. The mall provides no such training ground.

Fourth (and this is big), it's really hard for a horsey girl to have much in the way of awful girly hobbies because a) she will have no money, and b) she will have no time. Translation: a horsey girlfriend or, gulp, wife will not expect you to join her in scrapbooking, clothes shopping or, double gulp, interior decorating. The other side of this same coin is that you'll have a great deal in common. This may not seem like a big deal now but trust me, after you're a bit older and mostly recovered from testosterone toxicity, this will matter.

Picture this tactic: you train to become a farrier. Once established, the number of reoccurring encounters you'll have with unattached females is staggering. And if you're even modestly skilled (at shoeing horses, that is), you'll be in such demand and so appreciated your ego may just burst. And, should you become the rarest type of farrier (one that actually returns client phone calls), well, you'll rocket to Rock Star status overnight. Women will mention your name in hushed, reverential tones.

Such tactics involve the game of numbers, of probabilities. For example, should you take up roping as your main horse hobby, it will primarily be with other males that you associate. There will be some female ropers, of course, and some of them will kick your butt. Which reminds me of an important requirement of horse-association as a babe-magnet strategy: taking stock of the fragility of your male ego will be necessary.

To really stack the numbers in your favor, take up Dressage. Yes, you have to wear stretchy pants and ridiculously high boots and fold words like "impulsion" and "passage" into your vocabulary, but it is well worth it; the female:male ratio in the Dressage world is unparalleled.

Now, I've been around long enough to know that adolescents and teens aren't going to be open to advice, for the most part, from an old guy like me. But fella, try to be open-minded. I'm talking here simply about increasing your exposure to female peers. It's not like I'm telling you to get off my lawn, or some other crotchety directive.

Further, babenetism aside, developing an interest in horses will pay lifelong dividends as it is a sustainable, social, and healthy hobby...uh, oh...the crotchety old guy soap-box speech is swelling up now... Sorry, it can't be helped: Learning to enjoy horses and the great outdoors will serve you better in the long run than will spending countless hours staring at a rectangular screen while typing 140 character messages covering your observations of life's minutiae, but not actually living a life. That habit, most assuredly, is devoid of lasting babenetism. U

Mark lives near Graton with his Dressage queen wife Cheryl, his beloved geriatric Aussie/Lab dog Cowboy (a former babe magnet), a wing-nut cat, and a herd of highly attractive horse flesh.





Local Author Publishes Second Book in Tennessee Walking Horse Series An Excerpt from Wild Cat by James M. Naugle

"...Without a bridle to help Jennifer direct her mare, it was a battle of wills to get Dixie to start forward on the narrow trail. The horse was well trained and extremely responsive, but going past an enraged grizzly bear was not something in her bag of tricks.

The dogs and the bear had moved their battle behind a rockslide, disappearing entirely except for their continuous barking and snarling. With the monster out of sight, Dixie took one tentative step ahead and then another. Had she been able to do it, she would have been creeping along on her tiptoes. Jennifer tried to stay loose, ready for anything. Would the mare bolt forward, or spin and run back the other way? Would the bear come charging out, all fangs and claws.

A break between the rocks ahead showed the trail to be clear beyond where she expected they were fighting. Dixie must have been tuned in to what the girl was contemplating because she dropped her rear end and shot forward at a dead run. Not caught off guard, Jennifer gripped her mane, locked down with her legs, and leaned into the gallop, pushing her face against the forward momentum.

Turning her head, Jennifer glanced to where the dogs and the bear had ended up. She hardly had time to focus yet the image she captured stuck in her head like a photograph. The two little dogs were dwarfed by a monster. Dot was on a ledge above it,

snapping and barking, dodging in and out, barely avoiding its snapping maw. Pepper was on the other end, biting at its legs and barking as well. Could they escape? She doubted it, although she and Dixie certainly had.

Her fears for the dogs were tremendous, even at this moment when her own self-preservation reared its head, demanding her full attention. The mare was digging in, cutting hard into each turn, leaning close to the steep walls on either side. Jennifer's leg scraped against a bulge in the rock, jerking her backward and nearly dislodging her. Gritting her teeth, too frightened to feel the pain, she regained her balance. For an instant, she imagined she was flying off a cliff when the wall that had hemmed them in on the left suddenly disappeared. Dixie leaned to the right, clinging to the pull of security the solid mountain face presented. Again, Jennifer felt its coarse surface scrape through her jeans.

"Whoa!" she commanded the horse. "WHOA!"

Dixie only flattened her ears and continued speeding along the edge of the precipice. Jennifer's instincts told her to get off while she fought the fingers of panic gripping her heart.

Dixie entered a sharp bend, sending gravel cascading over the edge. For just part of a second, Jennifer saw nothing but empty space. Then the mare's long mane was whipping her in the eyes, stinging and blinding. Tears welled up – from the long hairs, the wind resistance, or just plain fear- she did not know.

At last Dixie began to tire, the pounding of her hooves slowing until finally, she dropped into a smooth walk and stopped. She was breathing hard, her expanding ribs raising Jennifer up and down rhythmically. Sweat poured off her body in foamy globs.

Jennifer didn't know whether to jump off or stay put. It wasn't uncommon for a horse to bolt a second time after such an experience. Any movement could set her off again. Carefully, she reached forward and stroked the horse's neck. She could feel the quivering muscles under her hand and the heat steaming through her skin. Dixie looked over her shoulder and then farther behind. She had not forgotten about the bear..." (Excerpt abridged.) U



Wild Cat, by James M. Naugle, is the highly anticipated sequel to the popular adventure, Johnny's Jacket. The story centers on Jennifer Gates, whose Caribbean vacation is cut short by strange occurrences that threaten her Montana horse ranch. When she arrives home, she is forced to ride deep into the wilderness to search for answers to a

plague of trouble that has haunted her family since the Indian wars of the 1800's. Wild Cat stands on its own with two great stories twisted into one, leading readers to a scary, heart pounding conclusion.

This book is for teens and adults, priced at \$17.98.

Order autographed copies at www.chevalleranch@aol.com.

It is also available at Amazon.com.

You can also inquire about Petaluma horse boarding (starting at \$250) and gaited horse training with Jim Naugle at www.chevalleranch@aol.com.

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Trails and Open Spaces

Column editor Sarah Reid

Get Ready For the Trails: Brush off the Winter Blues

Almost sounds like a song, doesn't it? Those of you who know me know I ride all year, all weather; if it's not pouring when I'm hooking up the trailer, we're hitting the trails. But I realize not all of you ride the trails all winter. So here are some helpful reminders—for all of us really—to get ready for spring and summer trail riding and horse camping.

For the trailer

- Check the walls of the horse area for mildew on the walls: mildew/mold can cause respiratory problems for horses. Manure, shavings or hay on the floor should be removed to avoid a source of mildew and mold.
- Check the floorboards for rot. Peel back the mats and stick a screwdriver into the boards, especially in the corners. You might be in for a nasty surprise, like I was! Replace them.
- Check the tires for wear and pressure; don't forget the spare.
- Replenish all First Aid supplies, check dates. Replenish emergency snack and water rations for horses and people. Change old water in tanks.
- WD-40 hinges and locks.
- Check connections and lights. Check to make sure the emergency brake box battery still works.
- Change batteries in flash lights, head lamps, GPS units, camera.
- Clean water/food buckets, bowls.
- Tighten the screw on the manure fork handle.
- Buy more horse cookies.

Tack and supplies

- What did you loan out this year and didn't get back? Replace it or get it.
- Did you have any repairs you "left for later?"
- Check leather tack for dirt, mildew, and rot.
- Clean and condition all leather tack on one of the rainy days. Set the tack near a heat source so it absorbs more oil and will be well-conditioned for all that sweat it's going to be exposed to.
- Wash anything that needs it—put a change of clothes in the trailer for you—extra sweatshirt, and cap.

Make some plans to look forward to

- Call ahead, call some friends, call around, email Sarah at the Horse Journal.
- Do you know where the wildflowers burst out in bloom when you want to start riding?
- Do you know when the trails open up at Sugarloaf Ridge State Park or Shiloh Regional Park?
- Do you know the trail conditions out at Lake Sonoma?
- Is the campground open at Stewart Ranch yet?
- Download maps from Sonoma County Regional Parks website.



Photo by Susan Hanks

Cold sunny January (2011) day on Sonoma Mtn summit, Jack London SHP, fog-shrouded Valley of the Moon below. Sarah Reid & Mustang Ore, MAU patrol.

- Plan to go somewhere new and different!

Most importantly, make sure your horse is ready to go. If he/she has not been out on the trails all winter, take it slow and easy. Even regular arena work all winter does not prepare a horse for hills and uneven terrain. You and your horse will need time to condition properly, and above all, be safe and have fun! U

I want to hear from our readers: **Why do YOU ride the trails?** Send me a **SHORT** reply to trails@sonomacounty-horsecouncil.org by May 15, 2011 and you may be featured right here in an upcoming Horse Journal! Include with your reply: your name, equine trail partner name, email address (in case I have a question), city. Happy Trails!

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@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.

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All Creatures Great and Small Coming Together

Column editor Grant Miller, DVM

Submitted by Deborah Beebe



...A ground breaking event in the world of animal rescue.

I have stumbled upon some good news, of a rare occurrence, that is happening right now. Two animal rescue organizations based in the Santa Rosa area are coming together to enhance their respective common goals of helping animals in need to live happy, loving, and healthy lives.

Both organizations are IRS-approved, non-profit public charities that rescue animals who would otherwise be neglected, abused, or simply abandoned. Without the noble efforts of the caring individuals that form these two groups, these animals would face the fate of many before them.

In light of the two groups' common interests and goals, BrightHaven (www.brighthaven.org) invited Sadie's Haven Horse Rescue (www.sadieshaven.com) to bring its twelve horses to share BrightHaven's facility before the stormy weather ruined the grounds of the former's flood zone pasture. The result will be a doubling of efforts to care for the fortunate animals in their charge. To get a true sense of the vision of the two groups, I encourage you to visit their web sites and take some time to become acquainted with their animal families; it is certainly a heartfelt pursuit that brings much happiness and joy to all involved. You can be a part of it too and experience the personal satisfaction of helping make the world a better place for all species.

BrightHaven, an organization that began in Southern California twenty years ago, is a Healing Arts Center, sanctuary, and hospice for animals, whose mission also includes a variety of important aspects. BrightHaven focuses on the rescue care and enhancement of the lives of senior and special needs animals, saving many from shelters in the San Francisco Bay Area. The organization offers education via seminars and consultations regarding a myriad of natural alternatives to conventional health care, and also provides both hospice and sanctuary for a variety of animals in a loving family environment.

The purpose of Sadie's Haven Horse Rescue is to provide safe, loving, and experienced care and sanctuary for equines who have been neglected, abused, or abandoned, as well as find homes for many. Last year good homes were found for twenty-eight lucky horses! The Board of Directors has accumulated many years of experience in the skills necessary to properly care for elderly or special needs horses so they are able to live healthy and well-adjusted lives. The new Sadie's program will include educational tours and day camp programs for the community, with special consideration for underprivileged children and teens.

Both BrightHaven and Sadie's Haven have encountered animals who are very old or have some physical or emotional disability. In current economic circumstances many of these cats, dogs, or horses are being abandoned by their former owners. These animals are often found in compromised conditions, severely emaciated, or with chronic medical conditions, some of which are life-threatening. Once at BrightHaven or Sadie's Haven most of these

amazing creatures find the will to live and prosper and the bright light of hope returns to their eyes.

During this recession so many of our pets, whom we call family members, are being abandoned. Some are sadly being euthanized as there is no one left to care for them or, in the case of our equine friends, sent to slaughter. The animals from both groups are asking for your assistance in this absolutely necessary, but absolutely joyous mission. These animals are totally dependent upon your generosity, to enable them to live out their lives in peace and happiness. They have given so much—please give them a little back.

Donations, corporate sponsors, sponsorships for the animals and volunteers are all desperately needed to ensure the safety, security and well-being of these animals. I invite you to join this noble effort to save these poor defenseless ones and, by supporting this unique and ground-breaking example of help and cooperation, send a message for a new way forward. For more information, visit one of our websites at BrightHaven (www.brighthaven.org) or Sadie's Haven Horse Rescue (www.sadieshaven.com). U



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All Creatures Great and Small

Healing with Horse Sense

Column editor Grant Miller, DVM

Guest written by Gwen Justis

*Rudy makes a friend*

What do autism, literacy, and life experience have to do with horses? Well, a whole lot—for the kids at Cimmaron Sanctuary!

This local nonprofit was formed last year to provide rescue and rehabilitation for horses, educational programs for kids, and opportunities for communication between kids and horses. The combination works, and magic is happening.

Cimmaron Sanctuary provides Cypress School, Petaluma, a destination for local field trips, learning, and fun. Cypress School has four classrooms of autistic children ranging in age and severity of condition. Most recently, Classroom One visited the ranch and met the horses and miniature donkey. The changes in the children surprised everyone including the teacher, and many more trips are planned.

Eight students, ages seventeen to twenty-two, visited the Sanctuary. Visitors were considered severely autistic and nonverbal, and there was a ratio of nearly one caregiver to each child. These visitors were noticeably excited when they arrived and we walked to the barn to meet the horses and donkey. After a few minutes with either a horse or donkey, many of the kids' movements became peaceful, and instead of making unusual sounds, they became quiet in a content way. One child petted the horse, Fancy, gave her a hug, then came back and gave her a kiss on the cheek! Another was frenetically stroking the crest of Fancy's neck when

we slowed the movement down by placing a hand on his. Eventually, this special young man relaxed and gave us a huge, happy smile. A third child was initially timid in front of the Fancy, but she repeatedly touched the horse and smiled as the exchange went on. Those who were near the miniature donkey, Rudy, had similar reactions.

The Cimmaron Sanctuary offers programs in addition to the special connection with Cypress School. Literacy is an important skill for all children, and kids love reading books to animals. Community response was immediate to Cimmaron Sanctuary, and a literacy program

was implemented with the horses and donkey. Jenny Alphin, a Sonoma grammar school teacher, was given forty books in just one week for the Cimmaron Sanctuary Library, and more are on the way. Parents have asked to sign up their kids to read books to the horses on Saturday mornings. Local feed stores are being asked to provide straw bales for the kids to sit on in front of the stalls where they will read their books. Jenny has volunteered to help with these pilot sessions.

Life Experience is what we term a trip to the ranch for kids whose background is radically different from the average. For example, SFPD takes inner city kids, who have never been out of their neighborhoods, or seen the Golden Gate, on field trips away from the city. This summer those kids will spend a few hours at Cimmaron Sanctuary, experiencing the country setting, meeting the animals, observing nature, and learning about horses. Barbara Pinelli, our lead volunteer, is a veteran of SFPD and made the contact for us. She is also a First Responder and our miniature donkey's (Rudy) new Mom.

*Fancy works her magic*

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The Cimmaron Sanctuary is dedicated to rescue, providing a home to horses in need, and rehabilitation for them on all levels. We are currently based in Petaluma. Cimmaron Sanctuary's programs are free. We exist on donations, and request your support to continue these community activities for the horses and the kids—the next \$350 covers our annual liability insurance. Your donation today of \$25 or more in honor of your horse will put him or her in our "Donor Horses Hall of Fame." All donations are tax deductible and are greatly appreciated. Online donations can be made at <http://cimmaronsanctuary.org>.

Thank you for supporting the good that Sonoma County horse lovers do! 

Gwen Justis is a veteran sales and marketing executive of Silicon Valley software startup ventures. She founded and ran her own consulting business for five years has invented products for horses. She has ridden and taken care of horses since she was a child.

*Colts and Fillies*

Column editor Kelly Henson

Best Trail Ride EVER!

"Yay yay yay! Is it time to leave? Can we go now?!" Emma Morgan was so excited to go on a "trail ride," otherwise known as a pony ride, at the local park. She had been waiting all week to go and it was finally Saturday morning.

Emma was obsessed with horses; it's amazing how much horse stuff a five year old can accumulate in such a short lifetime...But leave it to Emma. She had horse wallpaper, horse sheets and blankets, horse toys, and horse t-shirts. A day didn't go by that she didn't talk to someone about horses, be it a stranger or a friend. She wanted everyone to know how serious she was about her love of horses.

"Ok, get in the car. I will get your father and we can leave," said Mrs Morgan with a big grin on her face.

"Honey lets go. Emma's waiting in the car and you should see how cute she looks. She's wearing her pink cowgirl hat and the chaps Grandma gave her for her birthday," Mrs Morgan said while walking down the hallway to pull her husband from his workshop. The ten-minute car ride to the park felt like an hour to Emma, whose green eyes were wide with excitement. When they finally pulled into a parking space, Emma clapped and cheered because she could see the ponies waiting for the first children to arrive.

"Mommy, aren't they the most beautiful horses you have ever seen?" Mrs Morgan hadn't spent much time around horses but she was pretty sure the short, round, and very hairy-looking ponies in front of her were not the most beautiful in the world.

"Yes Emma, they are very pretty," she said, while trying to keep a straight face.

Emma was the first child at the pony corral that day so she could pick any one she wanted. Without hesitation she picked the black one. After all her favorite movie was Black Beauty. Her father lifted her up on to the back of the black pony. She sat up tall and exclaimed, "Giddy up!" as the pony took off at what most people would consider a trudge, but Emma felt like they were galloping wild and free.

*Emma's new trail partner*

"Mommy, Daddy, look at me go. I'm a real cowgirl!" called Emma as she made her second lap around the pen. She had never looked so happy and content in her life. Emma was petting the pony's black mane and telling him how much she loved him, and that she would come and see him every day; they would be best friends forever and ever.

When it was finally time for Emma to leave, she kissed the pony on the nose and said, "I will miss you Black Beauty but I will be back soon to see you." Then she turned and ran into her dad's arms, squeezing him tight.

On the drive home Emma chatted away about her new pony friend and the fun things they would do together in the future. As they pulled up their driveway, Emma began to get sleepy. Just as she was about to fall asleep she whispered, "That was the best trail ride ever!" U

Kelly Henson is a Sonoma State student and creative writer. Kelly and her National Show Horse, Tobi, trail ride regularly. If you would like to contact Kelly about a story, email her at kids@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.

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Readers Write

The European Pony School— *A Sonoma County Institution Since 1986*

Written by Tracy Underwood

Most of us in Sonoma County know someone who grew up riding or working at the European Pony School. The European Pony School (EPS) was established by Yves and Christine Sauvignon in 1986 as part of their Oakridge Training Stables in Santa Rosa. The Santa Rosa Equestrian Center (SREC) now occupies the facility formerly known as Oakridge, but the European Pony School remains. Founded on European principles of horsemanship and riding, EPS offers a safe, fun environment for kids to learn to ride and care for horses.

The riding program at EPS consists of private and group lessons. Beginning riders usually start with a series of private lessons, working one on one with instructors to learn how to lead a pony, groom, tack up, and, of course—basic riding skills. Once a student masters the basic skills, he or she may join the group lessons. The group lessons are an hour long and a great way for kids to learn to ride because they get lots of time and instruction in the saddle; they also learn by watching the other students. An important part of the instruction is understanding the “non-riding time” that is required to be an equestrian. Students must arrive half an hour before their lessons in order to groom and tack up their pony or horse. After riding, students untack, groom, and otherwise care for their mounts.

EPS has several talented, well-qualified instructors. Manager Jennifer McDonald has been teaching children and adults riding and horsemanship since 1996. Originally from the east coast, Jennifer is an accomplished Three Day Eventer. Assistant manager Katie Franchini started as a young student at EPS riding her pony Taffy. Katie has been an instructor at EPS since 2004 and Taffy continues to teach young riders the basics. Assistant trainers Lauren Henry and Tineka Huff are both highly skilled riders who started their riding careers as children. All EPS instructors remember the importance of having fun, and each truly enjoys sharing her knowledge with her students.

Although called a pony school, EPS has several small horses in addition to the ponies. From the veteran ponies who carefully carry children through their first trot, to the experienced Eventing horses who introduce young riders to joyful Cross Country gallops, EPS has mounts to accommodate riders of all skills and sizes.

In addition to mounted lessons, EPS offers a Stirrup Club which establishes a foundation of safety habits and complete horsemanship. A member of the Stirrup Club achieves one of four ratings: the



Learning to Show Jump

Photo: MJ Wickham

Copper (beginner), Bronze (beginner/intermediate), Silver (intermediate), and Gold (advanced). Students advance through the levels and are rated by taking written, oral, and riding tests. Once the Gold Stirrup rating is achieved a student has the knowledge and skill to own or sponsor a pony (or horse) of his or her own.

EPS hosts well-known spring and summer day camps. These camps are a unique experience, and many former campers now bring their own children back, in order to give them the opportunity to create their own special memories that will last a lifetime. In addition to riding, campers participate in a variety of activities including games, arts and crafts, treasure hunts, picnics, and the favorite activity: a riding demonstration for family and friends on the last day of camp. The camps are designed to meet the needs of all riders from the beginner who has never ridden, to the advanced Cross Country rider. All EPS instructors and camp counselors are certified in CPR and First Aid.

The European Pony School riders have the opportunity to participate in many events regardless of level. EPS offers beginner pony school shows, more advanced jumping and Dressage shows, and overnight trips to Three Day Events. This year EPS riders will perform in front of thousands of people at Dressage in the Wine Country. The riding program at EPS helps students in all aspects of their lives by developing self discipline, a sense of responsibility, and self esteem.

For the past twenty-five years the European Pony School has been located at 3184 Guerneville Road in Santa Rosa. EPS, as part of the Santa Rosa Equestrian Center (SREC), is situated on over fifty acres, housing Cross Country courses, pony trails, five arenas including a competition jump arena, a full size Dressage court, and two covered arenas. For more information about the European Pony School, visit www.europeanponyschool.com, or call 707-546-PONY (7669). Spring and summer camp entries are available online. 

Tracy Underwood is a real estate attorney by profession. Tracy moved to Santa Rosa from Manhattan Beach, California in 2004 when she and Wesley Leckner purchased SREC. Tracy enjoys overseeing the day to day operations of SREC and EPS. She is very active in the local horse community, hosting several Dressage and jumper schooling shows. She is a Northern Regional Director of the California Dressage Society as well as co-chair of the Sonoma chapter of CDS. Tracy can be reached at tracy@srequestrian.com.



Photo: MJ Wickham



Facilities Focus

Column Editor Debbie Bailey

Circle Oak Ranch

Written by Kim F. Miller

Reincarnation as an injured performance horse is not many people's fantasy. But that's the dream of *California Riding* sales rep Susan Nelson after a tour of Circle Oak Equine in Petaluma. Owners Sara and Ron Malone began developing their beautiful property five years ago and it recently opened its doors to outside horses as Circle Oak Equine Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation.

Initially, the couple planned to focus on comprehensive and cutting edge rehab, along with retirement, but that shifted when the chance arose to bring Dr. Carrie Schlachter's sports medicine focused veterinary practice into the fold.

The result is a one-stop shop for performance horses seeking the very best in injury diagnosis, treatment and recovery, and care targeted at injury prevention, comfort and success in each horse's specific sport. "There are a lot of rehab facilities and incredibly talented vets throughout the country, but I think you could count on one hand the number of places where diagnosis, treatment, rehab and return to fitness are all done in the same place," comments Ron Malone.

Circle Oak recently received state certification as a veterinary facility, a reflection of the owners' commitment to the highest-level professional practices in its services and staff.

The facility offers a remarkable range of services. "The biggest advantage from the horse's perspective is that, whatever their injury, we have something to offer," says Schlachter. Services range from the simple, like hand walking, to the most advanced and complicated, including regenerative therapies IRAP, PRP and stem cell.

State-of-the-art equipment includes an ECB spa that uses thirty-five degree salt water to suck inflammation out of an injury, accelerating the healing process. It is also effective in preventing various leg injuries. The Hydrohorse™ is an underwater treadmill that enables a horse to burn off energy and get back into fighting



form in a mode that greatly reduces the load on joints and healing injuries. A covered, free flow exerciser, seventy feet in diameter, is another asset in returning horses to work.

In more traditional rehab settings, often a trainer's or owner's barn, formerly fit show horses are cooped up for days on end. "You can have a mental case on your hands," Schlachter notes. "The Hydrohorse allows a horse to burn a lot more energy, doing something that is new and engages their mind, without putting

the same stress on joints, tendons and the injury." It typically eliminates the need to sedate horses during rehab. "It's not that sedation is bad," she notes. "But it does put a damper on what you can do with the horse."

Prevention Is a priority

Schlachter is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's Veterinary School and New Bolton Center. In addition to her VMD, she is certified in veterinary chiropractic and acupuncture, has won several awards and formerly served on a UC Davis Veterinary Hospital advisory board. Beyond that, adds Ron Malone, "She can see things in a horse that aren't visible to me or most people."

Equine sports medicine has been Schlachter's specialty since vet school. The field includes treating injuries, but preventing them is its overarching priority. Analyzing each horse's gait and conformation and the demands of its discipline are part of a whole-horse approach that is the foundation idea of this increasingly popular area of veterinary medicine.



Schlachter estimates that lamenesses account for only forty percent of her practice, formerly known as Animals In Motion. The rest are horses whose owners believe they could perform better if they felt better and those who suspect physical issues are causing behavioral problems. Better conditioning, chiropractic, acupuncture, massage and other complementary therapies are among the many approaches likely to improve such cases.

"One example might be an owner whose horse stopped doing lead changes to the left," Schlachter



relays. "The owner says their vet has looked at the horse and determined he is not lame. The next step is to figure out why the horse won't take that lead change. You start looking at the horse's body, but sometimes it comes from the rider. It may be that they are riding crooked."

In short, equine sports medicine appeals to owners who want their horse to be comfortable performing at its peak. "I have not met many devious horses," the veterinarian observes. "I think most want to do what they are trained to do, and if they are not doing it, there is a physical issue. Especially if it is something the horse used to do. My job is to find the discomfort and talk about options. Not everything is fixable, but we can help eighty to ninety percent of the time, whether it is returning the horse to full function or to full comfort."



A healing place

Circle Oak Equine started as a facility for Ron Malone's top notch cutting horses, some of whom sustained significant injuries. "While staffing up to rehab them I became very interested in the veterinary aspects of diagnosing and treating them, and bringing them back to their peak," he says. "What Dr. Schlachter does and we try to support is understanding and dealing with both the injury and its root causes, then making sure the horse

gets the rehab it needs and the proper return to fitness."

Circle Oak has fifty oversized stalls and various pasture arrangements and is equipped and staffed to handle approximately forty rehab clients. A staff of three full-time and five part-time veterinary technicians will grow as the business does. Circle Oak's goal is to combine the professionalism found in a veterinary hospital with the personalized attention of a premier spa. Schlachter supervises all cases, but clients are welcome to work with their own veterinarians as well.

Last but not least of Circle Oak's amenities is its location. Set in a landscape of rolling hills, green pastures and abundant trees, the facility houses its high tech equipment in beautiful rustic-looking



barns designed to complement the pastoral and serene environment. It's hard to quantify the surrounding's effect on its equine inhabitants, but if human reactions are an indicator, the setting is a powerful part of Circle Oak's healing process. U

For more information on Circle Oak Equine Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine, visit www.circleoakequine.com or call 707-766-8760.



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Readers Write

Thanks for the Leg Up

Written by Gretchen Forrey



Gretchen and Lena Show Jumping

"She is no more able to articulate why she loves her horses than most people are able to articulate why they love their children. It is as if her purpose here on earth is to love horses, a purpose that is so obvious it's inexplicable." As Susan Nusser so eloquently relates, I knew from the moment I sat on my pony as a child that I was meant to ride. Growing up, my parents never had much money but as my love for horses, and Three Day Eventing in general, grew, I knew I would need a lot more

than just love to succeed in the competitive world.

It took me six years, from age fourteen to age twenty, to save enough money to buy a horse with upper level potential; then on December 26, 2009 my dream finally came true. While my mare, Lena, did not have any Cross-Country or Dressage experience, she was an extremely athletic fancy horse and a bold scopey jumper. Since then, Lena and I have made leaps and bounds in our training and in competitions. Last season in May we qualified for the United States Eventing Association's (USEA) Training Level Championships with a second place at Woodside. This season I am planning on moving her up to Preliminary Level, and we are schooling much higher than even that! I have high hopes for her career as an Advanced Level horse, as do many of the other professionals I know.

While my mare is amazing, the road towards reaching my goal has not been easy. I am twenty-two years old, still in college, and though I have been lucky enough to ride for successful trainers to earn financial support for me and my horse, and been granted off-hour free use of many facilities, the expensive nature of the sport can be daunting. I always paid for the majority of the unavoidable expenses myself. In the last year when my parents halted their financial support of my endeavor, the equestrian community stepped up and provided dependable and indispensable help so I could continue to achieve my goals.

This help has ranged from trainers recommending me for more riding jobs, to free or discounted Dressage lessons, even almost-brand new Pikeur breeches! At the moment I do not have use of a truck or trailer to get to lessons and multiple people have offered rides and even to allow me personal use of their rigs each week. Besides the various helpful equestrians (who I am not naming for the sake of brevity and anonymity), I especially am grateful to the Bondocs of Novato who are farm owners and breeders, who have offered any help they can provide and treated me as though I was family.

While most equestrians bond over our common love of horses, I have been astounded and joyed time and again by the generosity



Gretchen and Lena demonstrating their form Show Jumping (above) and Cross Country (right)



and support of the people in this community who expect nothing in return except to help my dreams come true. I can say with one hundred percent certainty that if it had not been for this help, I would have had to quit competing long ago. While I cannot give back even close to what this community of friends have given me, I can try express the gratitude I feel towards each and every one of you. This article is the best thank you I can offer at this point, but in time I hope the aid you have all given me will help me be in a position to return these many favors. U

Gretchen Forrey is a college student at Sonoma State University and Professional Equestrian at multiple barns in Petaluma. If you would like to reach Gretchen, feel free to email her at eventgurl911@yahoo.com.



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*Readers Write***The Electric Fence Farm**

Written by Andy Shapiro

The grass is always greener
 On the other side.
 That's why my horse and I
 Went out for a ride.
 We crested the ridge
 And what did we see,
 The greenest grass in history.
 So lush and bucolic
 That we had to frolic
 Until we came to that
 First electric fence;
 They had spared no expense,
 White metallic cloth
 Stretched between poles,
 The poles pounded into
 Old gopher holes.
 We avoided that fence
 But became tense
 As we saw something that made
 Exactly no sense,
 Another fence!
 This one electrified too,
 Too many fences,
 What should we do?
 We detoured around
 The electrical sound
 Of the white cloth fence
 Was this some sort of defense
 From coyotes and deer
 Who cows might fear?
 Or property rights
 That ranchers hold dear
 Or crazy rich people
 Who cry in their beer
 Hatching strange schemes
 To do with their land
 Realizing weird dreams
 That only they can
 Of electric fence farms
 That weren't built to charm
 But to stymie my horse and I
 And bring us to harm.
 The third fence we jump
 But the cloth sears my rump,
 The horse's too I might add
 But we aren't quite as mad
 As the lady we see
 Who's yelling at me,
 "Get off of my land!,"
 A gun in her hand.
 There's more fences in the distance
 And she's surprised at my insistence,

"Why all these fences?," I ask
 And she takes me to task,
 "It's a scientific experiment
 And not for your merriment.
 These fences you see,
 Protect grasses for me.
 We have an exact type of grazing
 That's rather amazing,
 That allows grasses to grow,
 As only scientists know,
 To an exact type of height,
 So that the grasses might
 Be healthy you see,
 The cows don't run free,
 Carbon is stored
 Global warming is ignored,
 Because Oxygen is released,
 Warm air is unleashed
 To go up into space
 Saving the human race."
 Hurray, I applaud,
 The horse gives a nod,
 The lady raises cows
 As if she was God.
 The grass really is greener
 The air that much cleaner
 The cows that much leaner
 On the other side
 Where this lady has tried
 To avoid having land
 That has shriveled up and died.
 "You can pass through my land,
 If your horse lends a hand,
 And eats grass in the pasture
 As quick as he can.
 He'll graze for ten minutes
 Then he'll be finished.
 He'll be like an elk
 Chased by lions and bears
 Eating what he can
 As long as he dares.
 He'll relive history,
 He'll be part of the mystery
 Of the order of things
 Playing his part in what
 Nature must bring."
 My horse lowered his head
 And began eating grass
 And he said I must do this
 And do it real fast.
 He ate and he ate
 Then she lowered her gun



And yelled to my horse,
 "Ten minutes! You're done!"
 She went down to her house,
 And grabbed a big wrench,
 And turned off the power
 To that electric fence.
 "You're free to go now,
 Watch out for the cow!"
 And my horse,
 Who's a gentleman,
 Took time for a bow.
 "Your ranch is a treasure"
 He said with his eyes,
 "And it sure was a pleasure,"
 As he brushed away flies.
 "My ranch is all muddy,
 not a grass blade in sight,
 Not a single green clump
 To take a big bite.
 Do I have to leave now?"
 He got down on his knees,
 And curled back his lips
 To smile a big "Please!"
 "You'll have to leave now,"
 the owner smiled back,
 "Your owner will miss you,
 And that's a fact.
 He'll give you some grain,
 Keep you out of the rain,
 And brush you and pet you,
 If he has half a brain."
 The horse gave a sigh
 And said by and by,
 "I'll stand in my stall,
 And stare at the wall
 And tell all the horses
 Who come to call,
 If you can get through the fences,
 And you can if you tried,
 The grass really is greener
 On the other side!"



Editor's Feature

Written by JoDean Nicolette

Twelve Hundred Pounds of Instinct

*The view from the back of a horse*

Think you can ride? I can walk, trot, canter. I can sit an occasional buck; I've even pushed my aged constitution, my balance, and my nerve a little by switching to bareback equitation. But, truly, I have no illusions about my lack of experience and beginner status on the back of a horse. I found myself even further humbled this last month on my riding vacation in the rugged New Mexico countryside at the Double E Ranch.

The Double E is a working cattle ranch occupying several thousand acres in south western New Mexico. The ranch borders on 30,000 acres of BLM, and 3 million acres of the Gila National Forest. It's just wide open, undeveloped countryside out there. Arid, but not desert, conditions make for a real change from what we are used to here in NoCal. The canyons and mesas are covered in sage, tumbleweed, and cholla, and rivers rimmed with cottonwoods. No trails or roads navigate the terrain, but there are some well-traveled routes. Many of the canyons house buildings, cave dwellings, and artifacts from Native American inhabitants, and one remote section houses an old outlaw hideout known to have sheltered Billy the Kid and other infamous characters.

The Double E keeps several hundred head of longhorn cattle on the ranch and the BLM land. Because of the wild nature of the place, fences are hard to keep, and those doggies could be just about anywhere. Periodically the ranch needs to round them up for tallies, vaccinations, branding, or gelding. They are delighted to have help with these tasks.

Several weeks a year, the Double E invites guests to "round up" the longhorns. But hold onto your hats, and most importantly hold your horses: longhorns ain't no run of the mill cattle. Besides the dangerous appendages hailed by their name, they are tougher, wilder, meaner, and more easily riled than your average holstein or jersey. If you want to head out for a vacation pushing Tillie, Mollie,

or Bessie, head for Iowa. At the Double E you'll be locking horns with the likes of bovines more aptly named Fang, Spike, or Ace.

The terrain is another matter. The ground is rocky and dry, and the slopes steep, although spectacularly colored, especially in the setting sun. Guests ride Double E horses. These equines are mixed-breed, and tough. They sport names like Durango, Poncho, Lefty, Waylon, Willie, Woodrow, and Captain. My pampered horses could never do the consecutive 30 mile days these round ups require. And never mind the distance, it's the uneven nature of the rocky ground, and the trail-less circumstance that provide the biggest challenge. You can try to post trot, but you'll just end up eating sand. It's better to just sink your butt into the saddle and separate your top and bottom to sit the uneven gait over the miles.

I have visited the Double E a half-dozen times, and enjoyed each stay. The trips vary from relaxed trail rides to hard riding round ups. This last trip I had a new experience. While we were ranging far and wide looking for the longhorns, we found the loose horses. The ranch turns out unused horses to live on the plentiful BLM; they aren't really wild, just loose. "They do just fine," they assure the guests. In the past, I have only seen them from a distance. This time, when we saw them two ridges over, Durango's white coat like a beacon. The wranglers noted they were on the neighbor's land. Even in such wild, unbounded territory, this is an apparent transgression. We would have to push them back through the fence line and closer to the ranch. When we spotted them (waaaaayyy far away), and loped the miles over to them, I was surprised at how well they looked: shiny and fat. I was comforted by the fact that I know these horses from previous visits. "Look, there are Ranger and Trojan, and Poncho and Lefty!..And there's Juan," I thought, "How cute to see them out here in the wild!" Right.

When those loose horses saw us, they perked right up. "Time to go in," they thought! "Hay and alfalfa pellets, here we come!" Two dozen horses looked at us, then at each other, then started to mosey our way. Then they trotted. Then, one at a time, they started

Photo: Pierce Williams

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Pushing the longhorns

Photo: Debbie Eggleston

to lope. It all gets blurry from there. I was seated rather comfortably (and smugly) on a big, gray Driftwood-line Quarter Horse named Woodrow (Woody for short). Woody is five years old, and has spent quite a bit of time roaming the BLM with his buddies in the off season. I have even seen him from a distance ranging and roaming with a horse I currently own, having brought him home from Double E—my bad boy Bear. Woody was getting more and more excited. He clearly felt he should be with his herd, not sedately toting around this city-slicker in half chaps from Wine Country on his back. When Woody sat on his hind quarters, spun, and tried to head out with his buddies, I held him back. He tried to be good, he really did, but his wild heritage and herd mentality kicked in. Under me, I felt something I've never felt before: Twelve hundred pounds of instinct coiled up, and ready to explode. "Shit," I thought, "Talk about riding over your head."

Luckily the wranglers and the other riders were on older, seasoned horses all of whom acted in a much more tame manner. I had wondered why that morning Alan raised an eyebrow, smiled, and seemed surprised I wanted to ride Woodrow. As Woody popped off his front feet and started to buck, the calm horses around us and the words of encouragement really helped as I instinctively pulled the gray gelding's neck around and dug my heel into his flank. I had

learned about disengaging a horse's hindquarters in lessons, and in brief "how to" talks from my more experienced trail riding friends, but before then I really hadn't "gotten it." The point isn't to wrap your horse's head around, it's to move your horse's hind end in a way that he can't impulse, and run away out of your control. We spun and spun and spun as the horses galloped by. The whole of twenty seconds probably passed, but it seemed like all day. Mark yelled, "Look back, look in the direction you're going... Keep it up you've got him under your control. Stop when he stops moving his feet. Face away from the herd." Finally Woody and I stopped and we both sighed loudly. When I had relaxed, the wranglers sharply told me not to move. I froze. During the scuffle, my cinch had broken; I was lucky to still be on. We "ranch" my girth with the billet from someone else's backcinch, and slowly moved off to follow the excited herd.

Our ride back to the ranch was relatively uneventful. Our goal for the horses was simply to move them back onto Double E land,

which they mostly managed themselves. They galloped past us three more times on the way back. Woody, certain that he was being taunted, tried to break loose and run free again, and I found disengaging his hindquarters easier each time, and with an increasingly rapid response on his part.

The loose horses were breathtaking in a literal sense, and brought tears to my eyes. As they ran free they certainly looked graceful and beautiful, but the experience transcended visual aesthetics. I was thrilled by feel of the breeze they generated, and the vibrations of their hooves. They infused a spirit in the air that was no less than inspiring. If you visit the Double E and you don't see the horses on the BLM, your stay will still be worth it. Moving the longhorns is unique. The wildlife,

from bighorn sheep to bear, is exciting. You might even catch sight of the cougars, or the newly introduced wolves. But take care. If you don't have your guard up, you might come home with a horse. I did. U

For more information about Double E Ranch visit www.doubleeranch.com. For more information about Gila National Forest and Wilderness visit www.fs.usda.gov/gila, or www.stateparks.com/gila.

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.



View of the terrain and Bear Creek from a ridge top

Photo: Pierce Williams

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Contributed by Wendy Watson

Twist, turn, buck, snort.
Feel the brisk, cold, morning air.
Enjoy your turn-out!

More manure. Yes!
I'll gladly scoop it up.
Means your insides work.

Mane, cheek, neck, muzzle
My horse, my hero, my friend.
I breathe deep your smell

Contributed by M. Lou Cook

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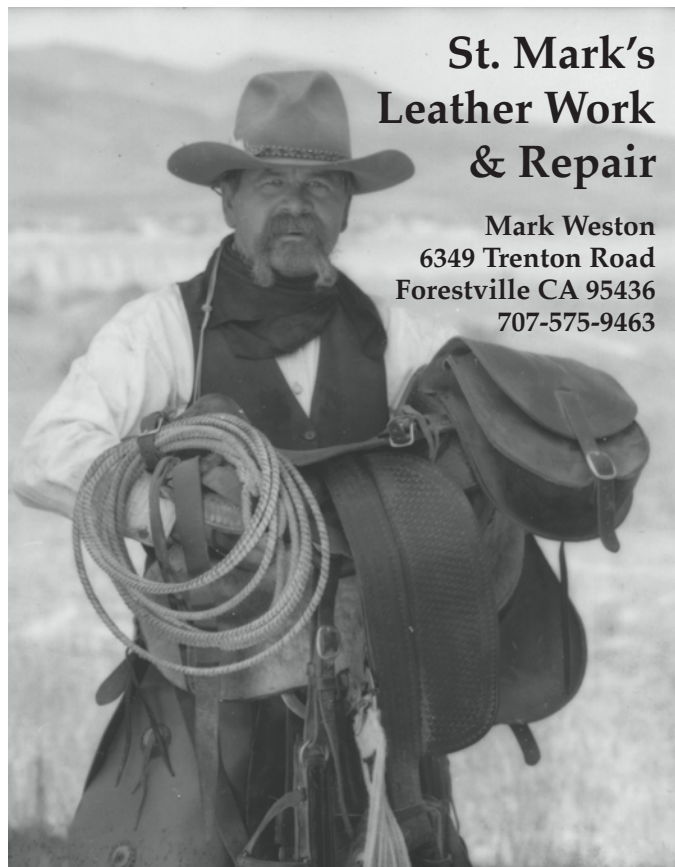
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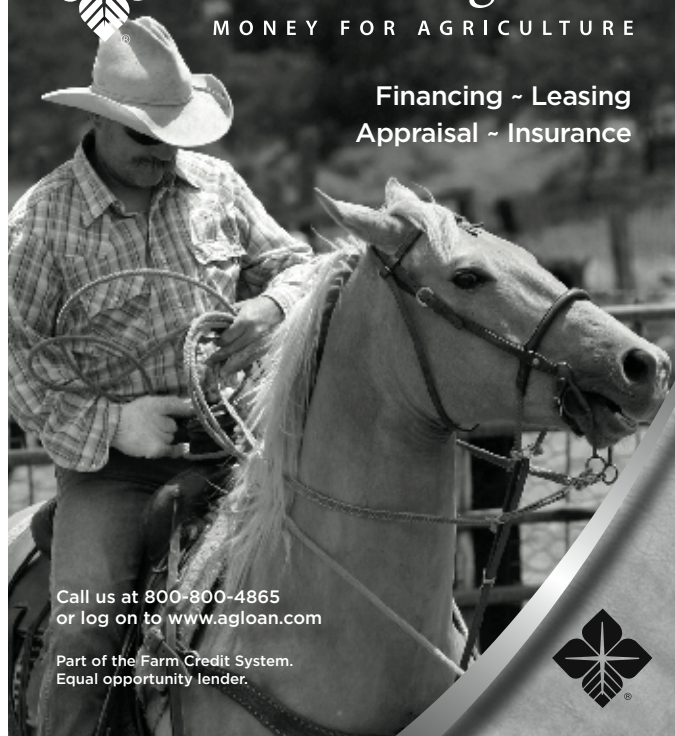
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From the Horse's Mouth

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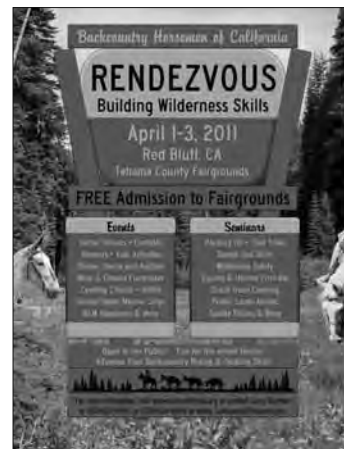
Equi-Ed Hosts Instructor Training Program

Santa Rosa's Equi-Ed therapeutic riding program (see article Winter 2011 Horse Journal) will be the host site for a North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA)-approved Registered Level Therapeutic Riding Instructor Workshop and Certification. The course will be held July 21-24, 2011 in the beautiful wine country of Sonoma County. Equi-Ed is a NARHA Premier Accredited therapeutic equestrian program that has provided lessons to students with disabilities for eighteen years in Sonoma and Napa Counties. NARHA, an internationally recognized organization that certifies instructors and accredits programs, offers three levels of instructor certification: registered, advanced, and master. According to NARHA, a certified registered-level instructor is able to conduct a safe, basic equestrian riding lesson to individuals with disabilities. The workshop that Equi-Ed will host provides part of the process required to achieve registered-level certification. Evaluators for this workshop and certification testing will be Master Instructor Chris McParland and Advanced Instructors Jodi Wong and Maxine Freitas. Those who would like to pursue certification within the next two years are encouraged to sign up for the workshop, and those would like to find out more about therapeutic riding and the skills needed to be an instructor are encouraged to audit. For more on the certification process, visit: <http://narha.org/resources-education/certifica->

tions/riding. The deadline to register is June 15th, but spaces tend to fill very quickly! Email Sheila at infoequied@aol.com for a brochure and registration packet, or for more information.

Oregon Bill Introduced to Require Horse Registration

The Oregon State Senate has introduced a bill (SB 262) that introduces new restrictions and requirements for horse owners in that state. Among the requirements is horse "registration" with the State Department of Agriculture. Horses living in Oregon for more than thirty days must be registered, and owners will be subject to a fine if found to be noncompliant with the proposed law. If SB262 passes, all bills of sale must be notarized, and a horse must be re-registered every time it is sold. Other provisions in the bill include minimum safety standards for horse boarding and care facilities, and regulations about transport of horses, including types of vehicles and mandatory rest periods outside of transport. The bill also proposes some regulations for horse traders/sellers, and rescues. For more information about this bill, and to read the full text visit <http://www.leg.state.or.us/11reg/measpdf/sb0200.dir/sb0262.intro.pdf>.



BCHC-NBU Hosts Marines at Annual Spring Meeting

In the mountainous regions of the world, sometimes four hooves are better than four wheels. The US Marines understand the value of equine assistance, even in this age of modern mechanized warfare. The Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MCMWTC), based out of Bridgeport, Ca, owns and operates twenty-seven mules who serve our country by moving equipment and supplies in remote regions like Afghanistan. In April of this year, the marines will attend the Backcountry Horseman of California's (BCHC) annual "Rendezvous" meeting in Red Bluff, Ca, where they will receive training in the care and use of pack stock by BCHC leadership and members. BCHC, in addition to participating in political advocacy in stock access to open lands, also houses the most accomplished experts in stock use and management. The best of the best will be present in Red Bluff this year, including local members Dan Horn, Salina Glick, and Michael Murphy. In the past, Rendezvous attendees have enjoyed the relaxed visit with the marines, particularly the tales of combat situations. Historically, and this year as well, the North Bay Unit of BCHC has sponsored the room, board, instruction, and feed for the marines and mules. For more information about BCHC Rendezvous, visit www.bchcalifornia.org/rendezvous.html. For more information on the marine unit, visit lubbockmarineparents.blogspot.com/2007/05/marine-corps-mountain-warefare-training.html.

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

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Country Property Market Update

After four years of tumult, the real estate market has settled down considerably. I focus on horse and country property, a specialized niche. It's rare to get good quality information on this market, so here's a summary of recent trends:



Country Property Sales, All Sonoma County	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	% Change 2006 vs 2010	% Change 2009 vs 2010
Total Number of Sales	303	302	242	267	321	+ 6%	+ 20%
Median Sales Price	\$1,072,000	\$1,089,975	\$1,112,500	\$750,000	\$790,000	- 26%	+ 5%
Days on Market	105	126	133	141	139	+ 32%	- 1%
Est. Interest Rates ¹	6.525	6.456	6.083	5.058	4.787	- 27%	- 5%
Est. Payment ² (20% down)	\$5,396	\$5,486	\$5,384	\$3,242	\$3,310	- 39%	+ 2%

¹ Avg. US Contract Rate, Federal Housing Finance Board ² Principle & Interest, 30 year fixed rate

Buyers have much to get excited about, which has driven a 20% increase in sales over last year. Sellers take heart: if you are realistic, your property WILL now sell. Think you should wait for prices to rise? Think again! It may be another 4-10 years before you'll see a significantly better return. Do you want to stay in your home that long? If not, let's have an honest talk about how to turn today's real estate market to your advantage.



Whatever your requirements, I have the passion to help you find the home that you've been dreaming of... Ask about my special services for Buyers!

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