

Sonoma County

# *Horse Journal*

Volume 8 • Issue 3

Summer 2012



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



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

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**Cover Photo: Marcie Lewis**

Just a few weeks old, Stacie Martinelli's MPH Full Moon Friday (aka "Friday") enjoys a quiet moment with his mom. Read more about Friday and other young horses in this issue of the Horse Journal.

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## A Message from the President



Howdy!

Your recently-revitalized Sonoma County Horse Council is committed to promoting the health and well-being of horses and the horse industry in Sonoma County, and to being an effective voice for all aspects of our \$300

million a year horse community. We cannot, however, do it alone. WE NEED VOLUNTEERS. In addition to the newly-formed Horse Cabinet, where representatives from all horse-related clubs and associations in the county are welcome, your Horse Council has formed the following standing committees:

- Disaster Response
- Fairgrounds Relations
- Government Relations
- Events (Equus Awards, Equine Extravaganza, Rose Parade)
- PR and Communications
- Finance and Fundraising
- Membership

If you have the time, talent, and commitment to help, and have an interest in serving on any of these committees, please contact me or one of the board members, using the contact form on our website ([www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org](http://www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org)). If you would like to contribute in another way, please let us know.

I also encourage every local horse enthusiast to take advantage of some of the resources the Horse Council makes available to the horse community. Our world class *Horse Journal*, with a circulation of more than 3000, is mailed quarterly to all Horse Council members and HJ advertisers, and always contains interesting and informative articles (back issues are available on our website). Our website always has current information on trail and park news, upcoming local horse events, veterinary information and disease alerts, and more. You can subscribe to our newsletter by contacting [webmaster@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org](mailto:webmaster@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org), and you can "Like" us on Facebook for updates, as well.

If we want to protect the horse industry and our equestrian way of life in this county, we must stay involved and act together.

On a final note, it's time to think about nominating your fellow equestrians and equines for the next Sonoma County Equus Awards. Look for our nomination form on the website, and in the next issue of the *Sonoma County Horse Journal*.

Ron Malone, *President*  
Sonoma County Horse Council

[www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org](http://www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org)



- Horse Council Activities and Projects
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Photo: MJ Wickham

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## Sonoma County Horse Council at Work

# Horse Cabinet Update

Written by Tony Benedetti, Board of Directors

When the Horse Cabinet first met in 2011, emergency horse evacuation was identified as being important to local equestrians. At the time, the attendees talked about the evacuation of many horses due a single incident such as fire, earthquake, or flood. The word evacuation also applies on a smaller scale. For example, evacuation of a single horse due to an accident or dangerous situation. Examples include rescue of a horse from an overturned trailer, or of a horse that fell off a trail. More unusual situations might include removing a horse from a pool or septic tank. All of these situations have occurred, and we saw pictures of these types of rescues at the March Horse Cabinet meeting.

Dr John Madigan, professor of medicine and epidemiology at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, and his associates, Dr Cheryl Ellis, and Tracey Stevens, Deputy Director International Welfare and Training Institute for UC Davis, presented a very stimulating and informative program on equine emergencies and evacuation at the last Horse Cabinet meeting. They showed highlights of their emergency rescue work, and care of horses and other animals during and after emergency situations. Dr Madigan shared an interesting experience involving a grassland fire in which close to 1400 sheep were burned. He and his associates, through emergency agencies, headed up the evaluation and care of the injured and displaced animals. They also talked about the Veterinary Emergency Response Team (VERT), an extensive program which provides training courses for first responders who are called to assist during emergency situations involving animals. VERT provides training for veterinary students, residents, faculty, staff, and animal control officers. In 2008 VERT expanded to become part of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), which is sponsored by the office of the Surgeon General.

The SCHC and the Horse Cabinet have discussed how local equestrians can be better prepared for emergency situations involving animals. This includes the training of individuals who can respond to an emergency situation, and the coordination of individuals who can help with the evacuation and the care of animals in cooperation with local agencies. An evacuation plan would include a list of individuals, organizations, and agencies which should be included at the initiation of an emergency plan, phone trees, plans for evacuation, and post emergency stabling and care. The Marin Horse Council has instituted advanced emergency planning and has offered to help the Sonoma Horse Council in its efforts to establish a similar program. The Marin Horse Council was successful in its efforts because several individuals were passionate about the project and got it done. Now Sonoma County needs to do the same.

At the May Horse Cabinet meeting, Dan Horn spoke about new legislation that may prevent equestrian access to many public lands. Currently, the Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Park Areas are undergoing litigation and debate surrounding this issue. If equestrians and pack stock are denied access to these parks, the trend may spread to include other important park lands. Your equestrian voice is needed on these important legislative issues. My cover-



Tony and Exchange on the Bandit Springs 100-mile ride

age here is brief because Dan has written article on this important topic, which you can read on page 7.

I said the following in a previous Horse Cabinet article and I think I am going to say it every time I write this article. The Horse Cabinet addresses issues important to Sonoma County equestrians through the dissemination of information at its meetings. We want you to attend and tell us what is important to you. Please help the Sonoma County Horse Council meet your needs by being a member; help us help the Sonoma County equestrian community.

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*Sonoma County Events***Circle Oak Equine Health Fair***Update on Regenerative Medicine in Equine Health*

Written by Jackie Skvaril, MD

I was fortunate to be able to attend the Circle Oak Equine's Second Annual Equine Health Fair on May 5 in Petaluma. I highly recommend it for anyone with an inquisitive mind and love of horses. It was extremely well organized and free to the hundreds of attendees through generous sponsorship. Like other conferences I have attended, there were so many interesting topics running simultaneously, that I had to rank and choose just a few.

I was impressed with the caliber of all speakers I heard. There were thirty-five presenters in all. The lecture hall ran eight lectures, thirty to sixty minutes each, given by veterinarians or PhDs. The fair also had several exhibits and hands on demonstrations. Topics included body work, saddle fitting, nutrition, balanced riding, physical therapy, farrier demonstrations, and advances in veterinary care, including thermography, gastroscopy, and regenerative medicine.

Dr Jamie Textor, a veterinarian/PhD candidate from UC Davis, spoke about platelet rich plasma therapy or PRP. PRP is a treatment which is administered by injection to injured tendons or ligaments. She explained that an injury that heals on its own, forms a "bandaid" in the form of scar tissue which may or may not be strong enough to withstand force and pressure during the course of work in the future. The goal of PRP is to form a stronger, more durable scar. A veterinarian can draw blood from an injured horse, spin it down to get a concentration of platelets, and then inject the platelet rich portion back into the horse into the area of tendon/ligament injury. Platelets, one of the blood cells that assists in forming clots, also contain growth hormone which is believed to be responsible for stimulating re-growth of the tendon. This treatment has been proven through research studies to make a stronger scar after only one treatment. It is commonly used now to treat human athletes as well, often in conjunction with stem cell treatment.

Dr Larry Gallupo, also from UC Davis, spoke about stem cell treatments. Stem cells are immature cells that have the potential to become many different types of cells—muscle, blood, connective tissue, or brain cells. Stem cells can come from embryos or adult sources. In horses, adult stem cells are used from the injured horse, itself, and may come from bone marrow or fat (useful in horses over age eighteen years). The bone marrow or fat is collected and then the stem cells are grown in culture for a few weeks in a laboratory before they are ready for use. When they are ready, a sample is sent from the lab to the local vet who will do the injection. Initially, one injection was done per injury, but now often vets are giving two or three injections. Dr. Gallupo showed some impressive results of healing after injection into a sesmoid fracture, a bone cyst that ruptured during surgery, and a case of severe laminitis. While stem



Phil Tressenrider demonstrates lower leg anatomy

Photo: Marcie Lewis

cell treatments are not a cure all, they do show notable results for injuries that previously had less hopeful treatment. Stem cells may be injected into a local injury, or into the vascular system. The injected cells have been demonstrated to gravitate towards injured spots. Brilliant. All stem cell and PRP treatments must be used in conjunction with rehabilitation services and lay ups, provided by centers such as Circle Oak Equine. Stem cell treatment may cost \$4,000-5,000 and takes several weeks to complete. PRP is much less expensive and can be done in one day.

On another topic, the lower leg anatomy demonstration, created by farriers Phil Tressenrider and Jesse Deck, was fascinating. A dissected horse leg was put on a hydraulic system and clearly showed how with different positions of the foot, flexion and extension, different ligaments would be taut or relaxed. They also demonstrated how a lift pad under a horseshoe could cause stress on the ligaments. Therapeutic treatments always available at Circle Oak Equine were on display such as the cold spa, hydrotherapy tub, body work, and the Equivibe.

It is encouraging to know how much can be done for our horses with injuries, right here in Sonoma County. May we never need to use it! I look forward to another exciting day next year.

*Jackie Skvaril is a practicing internist and rides her horse, Ana, in Hunter Jumper competitions and on the trails of Sonoma County.*



The painted horse is a fascinating and popular demonstration

Photo: Marcie Lewis



## Your Horse Council at Work

# Lobbying for Parks in Sacramento

Written by MJ Wickham, webmaster and Horse Cabinet representative, Sonoma County Horse Council



## California State Parks Advocacy Day 3/20/12

I joined 180 state park supporters in Sacramento to lobby our state legislators on behalf of the state parks. We attended hearings and met with our local representatives to make the case for keeping our parks open and funded. This event is sponsored by the California State Parks Foundation (CSPF), is very well organized and in its tenth year. We were placed in small teams and given appointments with Assembly Members and State Senators. People from all over the state attended this annual event.



### AB 1589

We started the day witnessing a hearing of the Assembly Water, Parks & Wildlife Committee. They debated AB 1589, the Omnibus Parks Revenue Bill authored by Assembly-member Jared Huffman. AB 1589 passed unanimously, and we were all impressed by the clearly bipartisan support for this initiative.

### Our team

The CSPF designated the members of our team. We met early in the day for some training, and to receive specific points for which we were to lobby during our meetings with legislators. My team consisted of: George Loyer, Kirsten Schultz, Avery Dinauer, myself and team leader Mark Hanrahan. (l-r) We spent the afternoon meeting with legislators to discuss our concerns and ask for their support.



Pictured at left is State Senator Mark Leno as he listens to fellow advocates.

### Legacy winner

The evening was capped off with a dinner reception and the Legacy Awards, an annual honor given to an outstanding legislator who has helped park issues. This year's recipient was Assembly-member Jared Huffman, (pictured right) who has worked tirelessly to submit bills to alleviate the state park closures. I had a great time, learned a lot, and highly recommend it.



*MJ Wickham is a commercial photographer who loves going on location. She and her daughter Zandra share a big gray Oldenburg, Armani who is a Mounted Assistance Unit horse, as well as Three Day Eventer.*



*Your Horse Council at Work*

# The Strength of Our Voice

Written by Dan Horn, Representative to the Horse Cabinet

No matter what your discipline—arena, trail or pack horses—now time that we all come together as a united equestrian front. The historical use on public lands of our pack and saddle stock (*for you flatlanders, stock means horses and mules*) that we all enjoy is being threatened by special interest groups using the courts as a battle ground.

Last year the High Sierra Hikers (HSHA) filed a law suit against the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks (SEKI) claiming the National Parks Service (NPS) had violated the Wilderness Act by issuing permits for commercial pack stock use in the park wilderness. HSHA's assertion was that in the assessment for the Wilderness Stewardship Plan the NPS failed to properly address the impact of the commercial packers in the SEKI parks.

On January 24, 2012 Federal District Court Judge Richard Seeborg ruled that the National Park Service did not have the authority to issue commercial use authorizations for pack stock in the parks' wilderness.

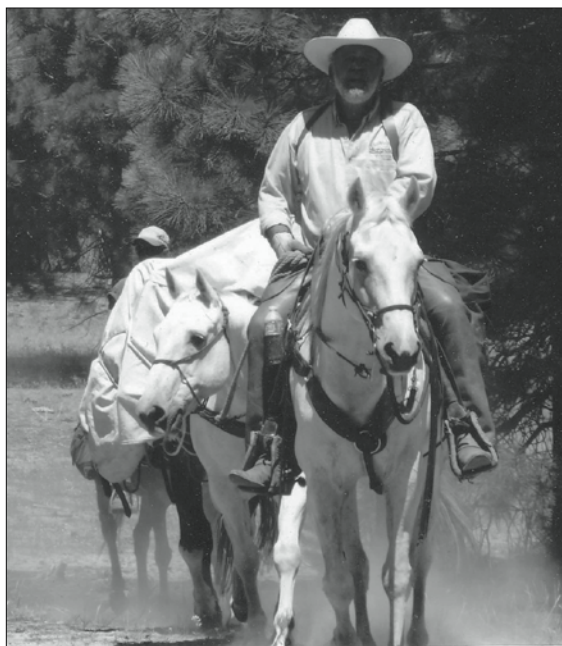
This put into jeopardy many family owned pack stations and around 500 employees that provided camping trips for all users into the Wilderness of SEKI, not to mention the economic impact on the small Sierra communities that rely on the summer tourist to survive.

As part of their law suit, HSHA wanted the court to mandate NPS to restrict what the public could take with them in to the Wilderness. On their list of no "luxury" items were camp chairs, cots, two burner stoves, lanterns, beer, and ice chests. HSHA stated that the only permitted items are what a person could carry on their back. HSHA also submitted reports of environmental damage caused by horses. HSHA wants it required that all manure be packed out to trail head.

One look at the HSHA web site ([www.highsierrahikers.org/ha-SEKI-WSP](http://www.highsierrahikers.org/ha-SEKI-WSP)) is all it takes to confirm that their goal is to restrict all equestrian use in national parks, not just commercial pack stock.

In April Congressman Devin Nunes was able to pass a bill HR 4849 through the House of Representatives that authorizes issuing stock permits for the 2012-13 seasons. Backcountry Horsemen of California (BCHC) mounted a very aggressive call in campaign to Senators Boxer and Feinstein. With the help of the larger Backcountry Horsemen of America, the bill passed the Senate and hopefully will be signed by the President next week. This also will give the NPS time to mitigate the Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

This last week on May 23, during a hearing in San Francisco Judge Richard Seeborg provided oral authorization for NPS to issue the commercial permits. During the hearing when the HSHA lawyer was arguing for legal limitation of "luxury" items, the Court told her she "bordered on arrogance." A final written ruling from Judge Seeborg will follow in the near future.



Dan and Cisco, followed by pack horse Bill

This was a major win for the equestrian community and shows the importance of an organized voice. We in Sonoma County need to organize an *Action Alert* network and collectively speak up on these issues. There are 698,000 horses in California with an economic impact of 54,200 direct jobs. Here in Sonoma County there are around 20,000 horses, so we have a voice and we should use it! The Horse Council is our central hub and the Horse Cabinet requests designated representatives from every equestrian group. When we need your help these *Action Alerts*, we'll be able to reach every horse owner in the county. Recently I found out that every phone call to a politician is counted on a ratio of 40 to 1, so your one call does make a difference.

We need to be ready, HSHA has already turned toward the Tahoe Basin and Yosemite. Their goal is to remove or to restrict all equestrian use. Point Reyes is on their list, too. I am part of newly formed Legal Affairs Committee of Backcountry Horsemen at the state level. Our job is to call out when *Action Alerts* are necessary. Please stay involved, watch for our emails and make the phone call. It does work!!

A new bill (HR 5545) was introduced in May in the House of Representatives by Congressman Mike Thompson designating California land as the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Conservation Area. The proposed conservation area would consist of 319,300 federal acres within Napa, Lake, Mendocino, and Yolo Counties. BCHC is very involved with this project. I would like to say thanks to Mike Thompson for addressing one concern with the following section in the bill.

"HORSES.—Subject to any terms and conditions determined to be necessary by the Secretary, nothing in this Act precludes horseback riding in, or the entry of recreational or commercial saddle or pack stock into, the conservation area where such use is consistent with the purposes of the conservation area and other applicable law (including regulations)."

If anyone would like more information about any of these subjects, feel free to contact me.

Dan Horn (*Equus* Hall of Fame-2009) is co-Vice President of Education for Backcountry Horsemen of California's North Bay Unit (BCHC-NBU), and also serves as a representative at the state level. He represents BCHC-NBU at the Sonoma County Horse Council's Horse Cabinet. You can email Dan at [Bearstrap@msn.com](mailto:Bearstrap@msn.com), or call him at 707 953 4903.



## Featured Article

# Thank God it's Friday!

Written By Stacie Martinelli

## *My Journey from Live Cover to Live Foal*

MPH FULL MOON FRIDAY (name pending), aka "Friday" arrived at 7:53pm on Friday, April 6, 2012 at 347 days gestation and sharing the date with Good Friday, a full moon, and TGIF! I was able to assist, opened the sac, tickled the foal's nose with a piece of straw and held his head when he opened his eyes and took his first breath—it was truly an amazing experience!

Friday is an Appendix Quarter Horse (registration pending), by CAPSIZED (TB), out of LILBIT CHERISHED (QH). CAPSIZED, is a 1996 dark bay Thoroughbred stallion, who has lifetime earnings at the race track of over \$480,000, and is a Saratoga Grade 3 Stakes winner. Capsized placed in five stakes, four of them graded. Victories included the Grade III Fourstardave Handicap at Saratoga in 1992. Bound for slaughter, I rescued LIL BIT CHERISHED, a 1998 chestnut mare from a Southern California feedlot at nine months old. At just under two years old, she suffered a serious injury and never had a performance career, but is a happy lawnmower and baby-maker. Friday is her second foal.

There are several methods of breeding—live cover, pasture breeding, and artificial insemination via cooled or frozen semen. The live cover method is the physical mounting of a broodmare by a stallion (the "natural" way). Artificial insemination, also known as AI, is a procedure that involves direct insertion of cooled or frozen semen into the mare's uterus. Artificial insemination can be beneficial in many circumstances because it increases the choice of stallions, does not interrupt the stallion's competition schedule, and optimizes bloodlines. Embryo transfer is a process of assisted reproduction in which embryos are placed into the uterus of a recipient mare from a donor mare.

While most horse registries accept all forms of conception, Jockey Club rules ban conception by any means other than live cover. A natural gestation must take place in, and delivery must be from, the body of the same broodmare in which the foal was conceived. Thoroughbred foals must be genetically typed, with parentage verification (all lines linked to horses recorded in *The American Stud Book* or a foreign stud book), in order to be registered with The Jockey Club.

Broodmares being prepared for breeding need to be monitored carefully. Regardless of the method of insemination, it's useful to know a mare's cycle pattern before you start any program. Beginning in January 2011, we began tracking Lil Bit's heat cycles. Lil Bit was initially bred in March and again in early April. Unfortunately, she did not conceive either time. Upon ultrasound in late April, it was determined that she also had a follicle that was about to



*Friday at Lil Bit's side*

Photo: Marcie Lewis

release an egg. At the veterinarian's direction, we bred her that night. Within twenty-four hours, she also had a lavage procedure to clean out her uterus, and was given a shot of oxytocin to cause her uterus to contract and evacuate any residual fluid. After the procedure, her first ultrasound at two weeks confirmed she was pregnant, and the second at four weeks detected a heartbeat and no indication of twins.

Lil Bit received the Pneumabort vaccination (specifically for the strain of Rhino that causes abortions in pregnant mares) at five, seven, and

nine months gestation, along with regular worming and trimming. Additionally, she was wormed thirty days before her estimated due date. Up until eight months she was in pasture with other broodmares. During late-term pregnancy, in addition to her hay ration, I fed Purina Strategy. I chose Purina Strategy because it was formulated for gestation through lactation, as well as for growing foals and I would not have to change feed once the foal was weaned.

Foaling occurs in three stages of labor: preparation, delivery, and passing of the fetal membranes. About mid-March the usual preparation signs had taken place—development of her udder, changes in the position and tone of her vulva, and a noticeable softening in the muscle tone of her tail. During the week of March 26th, Lil Bit had us on a roller-coaster. She started showing the classic signs of Stage I labor: pacing and restlessness, tail switching, laying down and rolling to position the baby, kicking and biting her belly, rubbing her tail on the wall, frequent urination and bowel movements, and pawing. We thought for sure the foal was coming on April 1st, when a grumpy and sweaty Lil Bit laid down on the straw in the middle of the day and started groaning. I spent that first night at the ranch checking on her every hour, but come 6am, no foal. After no sleep at all, it was time for a surveillance camera.



*Stacie and Friday*

Photo: Marcie Lewis



For another three nights, I checked her hourly during the night without ever leaving my warm bed...And that mare did not lay down once!

Lil Bit was anxious and uncomfortable throughout the day on Friday April 6th, and the signs of labor were profound. In addition to the other signs, she stopped eating, milk was dripping and squirting from her teats, she was aloof and stood in the corner of her stall, but most noticeably her belly was no longer bulging and round. The foal had dropped, and was no longer lying crosswise. It was now positioned and ready to exit the birth canal. True to her own personal style, she waited until the evening feeding was over, everyone left the barn and it was silent, to begin foaling. Foaling begins when the mare's water breaks, and from past experience with Lil Bit, things move quickly. However, she didn't account for Kris Caiati's [owner, Running C Ranch] watchful eye and the second she dropped and rolled on to her side the phone call came and I was able to be there in less than two minutes. Lil Bit had managed to choose a spot dangerously close to the side of the stall and repeatedly attempted to rollover during labor and get caught up in an awkward position. After seeing this happen several times, the decision was made to assist in delivery to prevent serious injury to either mare nor foal. The delivery itself was quick and easy, and the whole process from water breaking to first breath was over in less than ten minutes. Unfortunately, Lil Bit did not expel the placenta, nor did Friday nurse within normal timeframes. A late night phone call was made to the vet, and emergency care in the form of manually removing the placenta and pumping the mare's milk were administered. Passive immunity is critical and foals must receive maternal antibody loaded colostrum through suckling within the first few hours of life. Friday received his first mare's milk with the all-important colostrum via stomach tube, as well as an antibiotic injection and an enema, all within the first few hours of life outside the womb.

While there were complications from the beginning, I would not change this experience in any way. Lil Bit and Friday are doing fine now and have received a clean bill of health. This was not my first foaling experience and I was confident throughout. This is the first one where I encountered a problem, and if there is one thing I learned from this it's that things can change quickly! Horse owners need to be educated and experienced, but most importantly, work closely with their vet throughout the entire process to ensure a happy ending.

How did this all begin and where is it going to go? I should have known when Jennifer Caiati, Angie Machado, and I snuck Capsized out of his stall to see him move, it was a bad idea. The first time I saw him float across the arena at full speed, slide stop and roll-back, I was in awe. I had no idea racehorses could move like that and knew instantly my mare would be in foal to him that next season. Aside from being a proven racehorse, Capsized is graceful,



Stacie and Friday share a special bond

Photo: Marcie Lewis

athletic, and beautifully conformed. On top of that, he has a great personality. Lil Bit is beautiful, has a great conformation, is well-mannered, and goes back to the great Driftwood, who was inducted into the AQHA Hall of Fame and made a name for himself by producing more top rodeo horses than any other sire of his time. Driftwood also sired two horses that earned their AQHA Race Register of Merit, as well as nine daughters that produced Race Register of Merits. With a pedigree like that Friday is bound to be fast. It's my philosophy that horses have their own special way of telling you what they want to do and it remains to be seen whether he races down a rodeo arena chasing a barrel, down the backstretch at Los Alamitos, or simply down the beach. The choice will be his.

A very special thank you to Marc Horrell, DVM and Canyon Large Animal Clinic for their quick response in this emergency situation.

### About Capsized

*Capsized was among California's leading first crop sires of 2007 and leading sires of 2008. In 2009 he maintained his position as one of the state's top third crop sires. From his first five crops of racing age, his progeny earnings total more than \$1,565,000 led by 2009 Del Mar Stakes placed runner Nitro Active, 2011 Wine Country Debutante Stakes Winner 2yo Power Of Nine, Stakes placed runner 3yo Chokecherymary and 2011 Stakes placed runner 3yo Summer Surprise. In 2011 Capsized was among the state's leading 2yo sires and had 30 starters of which 18 won a race (60%). Capsized' race record includes At 2: Won a maiden special weight race at Belmont Park (1 1/16 miles); At 3: Won an allowance race at Santa Anita (6 1/2 furlongs), an allowance race at Saratoga (7 furlongs), 3rd San Rafael S. (G2) at Santa Anita (1 mile); At 4: Won an allowance race at Saratoga (1 mile, turf); At 5: 2nd Nassau H. (L) at Belmont Park (1 mile, turf); At 6: Won Fourstar-dave H. (G3) at Saratoga (1 1/8 miles), Steinlen H. (L) at Arlington Park (1 1/16 miles, turf), an allowance race at Saratoga (1 mile, turf), 2nd Canadian Turf H. (G3) at Gulfstream Park (1 1/16 miles), 3rd Fort Marcy H. (G3) at Aqueduct (1 1/16 miles, turf), Appleton H. (G2) at Gulfstream Park (1 mile, turf). Capsized stands at Running C Ranch in Petaluma, California.*

### About Stacie Martinelli

*Stacie Martinelli is a lifelong resident of Sonoma County and the owner of Diamond M Productions, an independent producer of jackpot barrel races, polebendings, and horse shows in Northern California. She has owned horses for over twenty-five years and is the former District Director for NBHA California District 7, a position she held for eight years. She has also served on the Petaluma Riding & Driving Club Board of Directors, as well as held many leadership positions including President of the Eldridge Mounted Posse Search & Rescue Unit. Stacie owns six horses, including retired racehorse Ex-Angel, winner of over \$80,000, who has been rehabilitated as a successful barrel horse and is a half-sibling to Friday.*



## Readers Write

## Young Horses

Written by Pinie Minto



Pinie and Ruby on the Minto ranch

Training a horse, young or old, requires us as individuals to assess our relationship with the horse. First we need to look at the reality of what is about to happen. The predators (humans) are trying to convince the prey (horses) to let us control and teach them. Simpler description: the trainer is attempting to rewire the God given and naturally developed survival instincts. Survival instinct #1—Stay away from predators, and #2—At all cost stay in the safety of the herd. As horse owners we all need to realize the miraculous transformation that takes place when a horse is trained. Whether it is a success or a disaster, the influence of the human on the horse is awe-inspiring.

One of the basic concepts of horsemanship is keeping a horse "right." A new horse is purchased, loved, and pampered, but over time, and often a very short time, the horse deteriorates in behavior and attitude. Sadly the new owner did not have the knowledge, skills, or dedication to maintain the performance and attitude they purchased. It is imperative that we set goals for our horsemanship. Goals must include performance and attitude, for our horse and ourselves. The young horse requires even more attention and commitment to leadership than our "old faithful." For both horse and human, goals are necessary for training and teaching. Goals must be accompanied by plans for commitment, consistency, and discipline. Discipline has two meanings: punishment for misbehavior, and self discipline, which means being committed to a routine for the purpose of excellence.

Whether you want to admit it or not every time you make contact with your horse you teach him something...always, every time. If you handle horses, the truth is you are a trainer. It's a fact. Young horses, like any students, regardless of species or discipline, require a few basic fundamentals.

- A level-appropriate curriculum
- Consistency
- Fair testing
- Consistency
- Steady advancement
- Consistency

Here is an example of training that incorporates the basic fundamentals: a level-specific curriculum, evaluation, consistency, and advancement. It also incorporates another important principle of training: an ounce of prevention. How many times have we heard

this age old "ounce of prevention" adage? It has been around because it works. With horses, we need to identify potential for a problem early, rather than react to one that already exists. Reacting to the problem will get us by, but it's not really training the problem away, so it happens over and over again. As an example, let's use the situation when your horse wants to choose her own gait. In particular, I'll address unwanted trotting on the trail.

The typical scenario goes like this: the horse trots without being asked, so the rider stops him and backs him up. The level specific curriculum is for the horse to learn that the rider chooses the gait, and the horse sticks to it until the rider gives another signal. The fair testing is offering the horse the option to just walk. Consistency means that you do this every time he trots without your command. Here is the ounce of prevention: stop and back your horse before he trots, and even when he is walking perfectly! What's happening is that you are practicing perfect. You're committed to discipline for the purpose of excellence. The unwanted performance never happens because you have replaced it. And he is always focused on you, and what you might ask next. You got ahead of the problem—acting, not reacting. You can evaluate his progress by noting the number of times he trots off on each ride. For the sake of fair testing, remember that horses learn by repetition. So, the longer you have been reacting, the more times you will need to ride with prevention in mind. If things improve 1% in each ride, in 100 rides, you'll have 100% improvement. Steady advancement means that you might ask him to walk over increasing difficult terrain, like steep hills, or gullies.

Self discipline means that on each ride you are thinking about what could happen, and what you can do about it. This is planning, and it will give you confidence. This approach will work on most any problem if you take the time to think it through and ride for improvement.

In conclusion, get help if you need it. The best trainers know that training and teaching are continually growing skills. As reputable trainers, we know the value of having trustworthy and honest evaluation. For the horse owner that has always dreamed of training their own horse, *go for it*, but don't go for it alone. Get honest, consistent help along the way. The day will come when you will wonder "Why did I think I could do this myself?" Often the best is just around the corner.

I have a motto "I ride to ride tomorrow." That means I ride safe enough today so that I will have many years of riding to come. As trainers we often see the mismatch. Be honest with yourself, if it turns out you're not a young horse trainer, make the evaluation early before you are in the emergency room or your horse is a delinquent. Remember: Ride To Ride Tomorrow.

*Pinie Minto is known in Northern California as an expert horsewoman and trainer of horses and their owners. A working cowgirl/wife/mother/grandmother, she grew up working cattle astride Quarter Horses on the family ranch in Elk Creek, California. As a partner and founder of the Elk Creek Buckarett Ranch Ride, her main focus every spring is sharing the ranch experience with other women. According to Pinie, "God gives his best to those who leave the choice to Him."*



*A Horseman's View*

# The Joy of Training Green Horses

Written by Toora O'Mahony

I've been an incurable horse addict from the time I started riding at age five. As a kid, I quickly decided that working with horses was what I wanted to do with my life. I leapt at every opportunity to ride any available horse. My first instructor let me sit on an un-started pony who crow-hopped when he felt my weight on his back. I proudly exclaimed, "That was my first buck!" At age eleven, I enjoyed galloping Thoroughbreds on a training track where I boarded. As a teenager, I was riding everything from freshly off-the-track Thoroughbreds beginning their second careers as sport horses, to young, freshly imported Dutch Warmbloods. Through my experiences, I've come to love the journey of bringing young horses up through the levels. Each day holds the opportunity for them to learn and accept something new. There's nothing more exciting than seeing a horse evolve from reactions of fear or confusion, to testing possible solutions, to complete acceptance and satisfaction at figuring out the right response.

One of my most influential learning experiences came during the two years I worked for François Roemer at the *Haras de la Clairière*, outside Paris. Mr Roemer runs a well-respected operation where he breeds and sells *Selle Français* sport horses for Eventing and Show Jumping. I trained and competed on three to six year olds. Because horse sports are "big business" in Europe, the goal for each horse was to find its greatest strengths and develop them quickly and efficiently. From the time that the horses were weaned, they'd practice occasional free-jumping sessions so we could evaluate their style and aptitude for the job. The youngest ones were encouraged to trot over a pole or tiny vertical. By the time they had reached their fourth year, the horses wouldn't have any problem free-jumping a four-plus foot oxer. Because of their early experiences, it was quite easy, once started under saddle, to ride them to the jumps and know that they had the skill and understanding to answer the "questions" posed to them. By four years, the horses were confidently jumping 3'-3'3". Although it may sound like a lot



Toora's own horse, Raydiance, who she has brought along from jumping cross rails to upper level Eventing

to ask of a baby, the wonderful thing about France's young horse circuit is that the courses are technically very simple, so the horse is allowed to show their scope without being mentally over taxed.

In California, I still enjoy working with youngsters, although my goal for each horse depends more on the needs of my clients. Instead of bringing the horses along quickly to show their scope and athleticism, I now focus on making horses easy and reliable for whoever is the next person to pick up the reins. Most of my students compete, or have the goal to compete, in Three Day Eventing. It seems that each year in our sport the jumps don't get any bigger, but the level of technical difficulty raises the bar for the trainer. A horse's rideability is tested early on: lengthening and collecting of the stride, jumping multiple related distances on a bending line, and asking for straightness and accuracy over narrows, corners, and angled fences. It's wonderful to have these tests at the

lower levels, but it does require that we really take our time when introducing an inexperienced horse to these questions.

I've recently been working with a lovely six year-old mare, Ladybug. She has a fantastic foundation in Dressage, but she also really enjoys jumping. Her trainer wanted her to gain more experience over fences, so she asked me to work with the horse. It's been great fun to see this mare change from one week to the next. She's also reminded me that I need to be sure to only ask one new question at a time. Presenting too much difficulty at once can cause any horse to refuse to participate. It's my job to make it easy for the horse to say, "Yes!" and, just as importantly, that she wants to say, "Yes!"

For instance, I was playing with a gymnastic line and Ladybug was jumping beautifully, so I kept asking my ground crew to raise the jumps. At one point I thought, "Oh heck, let's move the whole thing up six inches; she's handling things so well!" On my next approach to the gymnastic Ladybug jumped in willingly, but in the next stride I could feel her uncertainty about continuing to the next fence. I gave her a big kick and pushed her successfully over the rest of the line, but she was clearly telling me that I was pushing the limits in how much was fair to ask in one session. I told my ground crew to reset the jumps nine inches lower. They seemed puzzled; she had cleared the gymnastic just fine. But for Ladybug, a willing and talented mare, I owed it to her to finish a tough ride with her feeling proud, relaxed, and eager to try it again next time!

Toora O'Mahony runs her business, Raydiance Eventing, from the Santa Rosa Equestrian Center in west Santa Rosa. She works with horses and riders of all levels in Dressage, Show Jumping, and Cross Country. You can contact her at [toora@raydianceeventing.com](mailto:toora@raydianceeventing.com) or 707-292-8365, or through the Horse Journal at [horseman@sonomacounty-horsecouncil.org](mailto:horseman@sonomacounty-horsecouncil.org).

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## Readers Write

## Willow: Honoring the Spirit of A Young Horse

Written by Charlotte Angin

*“Naive and foolish are those who expect a horse to do their bidding without taking into consideration its natural inclinations.” – Stephen Budiansky*

What magic force draws a human to a particular horse is a question I've often pondered but have yet to truly understand. The mysterious force transcends our preferences for color, breed, and disposition. The force, both outside and inside the human, recognizes a particular horse as a master teacher of lessons and experiences essential for growth both as a horseman and as a human being.

Willow was the smallest of the BLM yearlings on display at the mustang and burro adoption event that I attended as a halter-project volunteer. As I scanned the tightly packed corrals, one filly in particular stood out, though not for the obvious reasons, like flashy color or a natural curiosity toward humans. No, this one carefully moved behind the other more confident yearlings, shyly peeking out from behind them. It was clear to me that she did not want to be noticed. Without hesitation, my gut said, “I'd like that one. She'll be a challenge.”

Watching her settle in during the first few weeks at home, I noticed there was something very different about this young mustang. For weeks, Willow was physically and emotionally unreachable and exhausted. Self-imposed deadlines and halter training methods I had learned and observed over the years were cast aside. This young soul in my hands was deeply grieving the loss of her mother, her friends, and her freedom. It was a level of grief I had never seen before in any horse I had known.

In the beginning, a simple glance in my direction constituted a good day, as she was initially so shut down she would spend hours leaning against the fence and staring off in the distance or quietly napping. I honored her grief while I sat in the center of her paddock daily, trusting that when she was ready, she would come to me. Purposely putting her in “flight” mode to satisfy my own ego would have assured that any trust we were building would be greatly diminished. There is an ancient saying, “deserve first, then desire.” How often horsemen get this backward.

A couple of months went by before Willow was comfortable with human touch. Not surprisingly, real progress began when her special human, Sonya, chose to adopt her. Sonya's love and emotional investment was a real energy Willow could sense and feel. Following her own excellent intuition, Sonya immediately tuned in to Willow's heart and respectfully honored her grieving process and deeply emotional nature. As we worked together with Willow, it was clear to me that these two had a secret and sacred understanding with each other, one that the outside world would never be completely privy to.

Sonya encouraged Willow's curiosity by leaving brushes and toys



Willow at the BLM corral

in the pen for Willow to explore on her own. The filly soon discovered that being brushed or rubbed with human hands wasn't such a bad thing. Sonya's slow and careful grooming set the stage for Willow becoming acquainted with a halter and lead rope. With her committed human by her side, slowly Willow began to emerge from her depression and engage with the world around her. She began to trust Sonya so completely, that by the time she was initially haltered and took her first steps with Sonya, everything came naturally, easily. The foundation of trust had been laid first, before

attempting to engage her in traditional training activities.

Undoubtedly, the process of gentling this filly took much longer than we initially anticipated. But fortunately for Willow, she found an owner who was unafraid of bucking conventional horse training wisdom. At all times Sonya honored who Willow was, and took the time to notice her moods and to stop, or release, when it was clear the filly was overwhelmed or frightened. Sonya's human agenda came second to her consciousness about the individual spirit and emotional needs of her little horse.



Sonya and the now gentled Willow

Each horse is an individual with unique lessons to teach humans, and they have the ability to bring out the very best part of ourselves. I believe our horses choose us as much as we choose them. Horses call us to slow down, and remain open and aware of their emotional, intuitive, and intelligent presence. In order to create a more symbiotic union with them, we must transcend our linear, “rational” thinking and tune in to a different kind of wisdom. They truly are extraordinary teachers. The question is, are we listening to their voices?

*A Bay Area native, Charlotte Angin facilitates conscious partnership between horses and the humans who love them. Her lessons and consultations emphasize human awareness and “presence” with horses while honoring both partners ~mind, body and spirit. Her background in education, Equine Facilitated Learning, natural horse care/horse-manship, and animal communication offers a unique perspective to her clients—both horse and human. She is based at Windhorse Ranch, Sebastopol. Charlotte's website is [www.equispirit.net](http://www.equispirit.net).*



*Trails and Open Spaces*

Column editor Sarah Reid

# Experiencing the Young Horse on the Trail

Having a well-seasoned trail horse is a wonderful thing. But everyone has to start somewhere. To get a young horse out on the trails requires a minimum of time and exposure, and a maximum of patience and understanding. Here in Sonoma County we have many parks providing a variety of experiences for young horses. Approaching the trail experience for the young horse with safety and fun in mind can create many happy years ahead.

**Preparation**

Before even planning the first trail outing, many hours of pre-trail training must take place. Even if you are going to pony the young horse for the first months of trail training, the youngster must trailer comfortably and easily. Make the trailering a happy experience or he won't want to go out in the first place, or could be nervous every time.

Help him get him ready for what he will experience out on the trails: bikes, hikers with big floppy hats and hiking sticks, strollers, dogs on leashes, hikers with backpacks, kids on little bikes, runners from front and behind. Have friends help you with these things practicing exposure with these at home first so he doesn't react on the trail. You'll also get an idea of how he acts when he encounters something new. If his tendency is to bolt or rear (or both!), you'll be glad you found that out in the arena.

Practice ponying before you go out. If you are riding him, make sure he moves off your leg. It is best if he will sidepass even a little bit; you can move him away from a tentative hiker or cyclist as you move by on the trail. Remember, many trail users are scared of horses. Condition the horse for the terrain on which he will be expected to travel. Do not expect your flat-pasture horse to be able to do the hills of Point Reyes, even if that youngster does a lot of running around and playing.

**The mentor horse**

The experienced mentor horse is priceless. Two is beyond priceless. A mentor horse can create an atmosphere of, "So what? That's just a rock/person/tree/turkey/bike/cloud/shadow." The mentor horse radiates calm confidence, showing the youngster that there is nothing to worry about or react to. Repeated trail experiences with a strong mentor horse will strengthen the confidence of the youngster like nothing a human can. Giving a young horse two



*A younger horse, third in line, enjoys himself...*

mentor horses can create a nice "sandwich effect" on the trail, with the youngster in the middle. With mentor horses buffering both ends, he also has a chance to fearlessly see and experience those new things with the mentor horses there to "protect" him. The mentor horse can either be a ridden or ponied horse.

**Choosing the right path**

Where oh where to go with the young horse? Annadel State Park is not the best first choice, due to the heavily trafficked trails. Choose instead something a little more tame and quiet for the first experiences so the young one has a chance to see things, stop and look around, experience a slower pace on the trails with less user traffic. And if you are ponying, choose nice wide fire roads so you can safely meet other trail users at all times. Go to a more heavily used park and trails only after the young horse is really ready to handle fast moving traffic—lots of other equestrians, runners, bikes—and unforeseen things like hikers with inflatable boats on their backs (Riverfront Regional). But at the same time, variety is the "spice of life" here, too. Take him lots of different places and see lots of different things.

Suggested parks are Jack London State Historic Park's Mountain Trail, Lake Sonoma's Half-A-Canoe Loop, Sugarloaf Ridge State Park Meadow and Hillside Trails, Shiloh Ranch Regional Park, and Riverfront Regional Park.

**Final thoughts**

Remember to think of the young horse as a young teen: short attention span, minimal endurance with short spurts of energy and enthusiasm, and a lot of distraction. Make sure to have fun and make it fun for the horse so that he will want to do it again. Don't be in a hurry. Let him stop and look and listen; give him time to experience. Set the horse up for success, then you will have success time after time, and great trail rides in the future.

*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](mailto:trails@sonoma-countyhorsecouncil.org).*



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## Readers Write

# The Prince has Arrived

Written by Jessica Bordeaux

Totilas. We all know him and his many accomplishments. A Dutch Warmblood nicknamed "Toto," he is considered to be one of the most outstanding competitive Dressage horses in the world. Totilas is the first horse to score above 90 in Dressage competition, and the current holder of the world record for the highest score in Grand Prix Freestyle Dressage. What we don't know is much about is his offspring. 2010 was the first year the historic stallion was made available to a select number of mares for breeding. Many mare owners were hopeful that their horse would be chosen but in the end only a few were so lucky.

Otasja. A well-pedigreed, graceful, dark bay mare, who has competed successfully in jumpers and Dressage in Europe. She was one such mare. I can still remember the first day I saw her. Otasja stepped off the trailer at the UC Davis quarantine facility and I broke out in tears immediately. She was just so gorgeous and a total sweetheart; I fell in love immediately.

Geluvium. A big, majestic yearling, who knows he is hot stuff. He is the combination of some of the best bloodlines available. Around the barn he is known as "Gelly," or the "Little Prince." He definitely knows he has the goods. Watching him trot around his pasture is such an inspiring sight. I can easily see him take after Totilas in more than a few ways...pride, confidence, self possession, carriage. Everyone who meets Geluvium is impressed with the good looking youngster. Not only does he have the looks, but he has the movement to back it up.

Geluvium was born on a warm July night in 2011. At first I thought being a summer foal would prove to be a set back since all the other foals would be bigger and have more time for training and handling. He was too young to be shown in hand just yet and his foal inspection was right around the corner. You have to be careful

working with such young foals, you don't want to overdo the training sessions, which can result in negative experiences. On the other hand you can't let them walk all over you. Little did I know that I would be wrong about not only his trainability but also his natural talent. It was all just below the surface.

At only one month old I decided to enter him in his first show. We competed in a Halter class, meaning I had him "in hand." In a Halter class horses are judged



Gelly was a champion at the Shelly Siegel show

Photo: Marcie Lewis

on movement, conformation, and suitability as breeding stock. Depending on breed and geographic region, these events may be called Halter, In-Hand, Breeding, or Conformation classes. Gelly hadn't had much training and was barely halter broke, but I had faith in us, and decided to give it a chance. Geluvium acted like a champ the whole time. He didn't balk or start, even with all the scary horses, noises, and the big new arena that he had never been in. I was especially proud of Otasja. She was calm the whole time and didn't fuss over her baby or what was going on. She is definitely a good mom and I couldn't have asked for a better broodmare. Gelly ended up receiving 74.7 from Lilo Fore at his first show, not a bad score for only being one month old at the time.

With his first show behind us I was ready to focus on his foal inspection. The Keuring was to be held at DG Bar Ranch in September. The five hour drive to DG Bar ended up taking even longer due to a highway fire. Thankfully no one was hurt and we were able to make it there safely. Geluvium received a Blue Premium with great notes from the judges. He was also in the Top 5 Scoring Dressage KWPN-NA foals/weanling in 2011.

Surprisingly trailer training the little guy for the trip was a piece of cake. One bucket of grain and he just hopped in the trailer without a thought. I'm really surprised at how easy he has been so far. Yes he is a young playful colt, and yes he does have his tantrum moments, but most days he just needs a few minutes to have his "baby moment," and then he is back to being a easy boy.

Most people don't fully understand young horses and what they need. You can't expect a foal or young horse to behave perfectly when he hasn't had the years of experience and time to understand what you expect. Young stallions are notoriously more difficult to handle, raise, and house. Taking a step back, and realizing that they are still horses (and not monsters that need to be locked up away from other horses) makes for a happier horse in the long run. And a happier owner.

Geluvium gets turned out daily in large grassy pastures and stays in his large stall at night or when the weather is bad. I also have him turned out with other horses as he grows up, and plan on continuing that all throughout his life. Most people separate young stallions from group turnout in fear of them hurting the other horses. With the proper combination of horses, such isolation is not necessary. I want him to have a friend at all times. That way he gets to socialize and be a horse all throughout his life and is less likely to have behavioral problems down the road.

At the moment Geluvium calls Fairwind Farms ([www.fairwind-farm.com](http://www.fairwind-farm.com)) in Santa Rosa home. Nestled among eighty-seven acres of rolling hills, the full service Dressage facility has everything the ambitious Dressage rider or peaceful pleasure rider could want.



Photo: Marcie Lewis





Before importing Otasja I spent a great deal of time searching for a facility that would fit my short term and long term goals. Owner Sue Curry Shaffer's barn had everything I was looking for: big pastures for the baby, a great facility, a professional, reputable trainer, and knowledgeable staff. I have been at Fairwind a little over a year now and I have never once had any problems. Sue was more than willing to work with me to design a pasture and boarding option that would fit Geluvium. She is helpful now, as he is a baby, and she will continue to work with us as he gets older.

Right now Gelly gets turned out with Twilight, my Friesian sport horse gelding. They work well together but we are still on the lookout for other young colts or geldings as other turnout buddy options. So far we haven't found many people with geldings/colts close in age, who are interested in moving their horse to Fairwind Farms.

But I'm remaining hopeful. Who knows, maybe Geluvium's next pasture buddy is right around the corner just waiting to enjoy Sue's amazing facility.

October 2011 was another big month for us. I was lucky enough to have Otasja's previous owner visit from Holland to see the baby. Astrid and her good friend Anne came out to meet Gelly, see Otasja again, and have some fun time in California. I was happy that I could talk to Astrid about "Easy," Geluvium's half sister, and see how Geluvium might develop. I compared their similarities, and speculated about their differences. Easy is a beautiful young mare and I am glad to see that Otasja's other offspring are doing so well over in Europe.



Otasja and Gelly

my baby and taking it day by day. Geluvium has also been a great teacher to me. Every horse has something to teach us and I am thankful I have had the opportunity to own such a promising young horse. I am very proud of Geluvium and his accomplishments so far in his short time with me.

I'm looking forward to showing him at the breed shows this year and having fun with my big stinker. The 2012 show season started out with a bang. At the Sonoma County CDS Shelly Siegel Dressage and Breed Show Gelly won both his class and the championship! I have worked hard to get here and I am continuing that hard work as Geluvium and I grow together. Remember to enjoy the baby years, they set the foundation that will follow your horse all throughout his life. And always remember to smile and laugh at the crazy stuff the youngsters do. The complex world of horses wouldn't be the same without the playful colts and fillies that grow up to be the next big stars. Remember that they are



"The Little Prince" has his sire's movement and self possession

Photo: Marcie Lewis

still babies, they still need to grow...They can't be rushed. Most importantly never forget to let them be who they are, give them time and space to just go out and be a horse.

Jessica Bordeaux began riding at the age of eight years at a local Western barn. Her love for horses quickly developed into a passion for Dressage that is still very strong to this day. She lives on seven peaceful acres in Penngrove with her horses. Jessica enjoys riding and competing in Dressage and occasionally jumping and Eventing.

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## Spitting Sand—A Learner's Journey Young at Heart

Jessica Boyd, column editor

The horse industry seems to view “young” horses as those under age seven, give or take, depending on the breed. Most breeds aren't considered physically mature until five or six, slightly older for the larger breeds like Warmbloods and drafts. Two year-olds are universally considered young, but many sports start them at that age anyway. With horses regularly living now into their late twenties and early thirties, how young is young anyway? I've met some young horses that seem old and tired and some old horses that still have a spring in their step and fire in their eyes.

Calabar and Lena are not technically youngsters. He is twelve, she is eleven—not old by a long shot, but on their way to being mature...We hope. At only six, Forrest is still technically a youngster but there is something about him that makes me think he will never actually be old. Not ever. What is young about all three, is their spirit—always engaged in their worlds. All three share a brightness about them that, yes, occasionally leads to spooks for no apparent reason, but also means a big, bouncy walk down the trail, and ears pricked forward with curiosity and interest.

Their youthful energy presents challenges to their riders, but in very different ways. Lena, having had a well-rounded education in trail riding and cattle, assumes she is the expert. If she can't tell what you're asking, she simply decides herself. *Here is what you mean, I'm sure of it. Aren't I a good girl?* Calabar often isn't sure what you are asking, which has led to some wreckage along the way. I've had to figure out what he knows and how to teach him what he doesn't know. Forrest is, well...Forrest. He does new things fairly well at home, but still needs to build confidence away from home. With his racing background, that's understandable. Luckily he has a knowledgeable owner who isn't afraid to ask questions and figure things out.

We got Lena when she was four, which I now know would be considered a young horse. Back then, she was a horse who had some good, basic training and knew way more than I did. Riding her is often a matter of harnessing that lovely energy, pointing it at good instead of evil, and cueing gently, lest you send a big blast of spotty energy spinning faster than you can control. Which, by the way, is plenty fast. She starts out slowly, until she has tested your abilities. Let's just say you always know when it is she's decided you're a good rider.

Lena will likely always be young at heart, and if her brother (by the



*Is that water chasing me? (Katie and Forrest)*

same dam) is any example, we have many more years to enjoy her spirit. Eclipse will be twenty-eight this year. One of the last times we visited Slide Mountain, I witnessed him prancing, his solid topline helping lift him quite gracefully off the ground. He is stiffer than when we first met him at twenty, but he is still eager to come out of his paddock and be ridden, still patient enough to teach the grandkids how to ride.

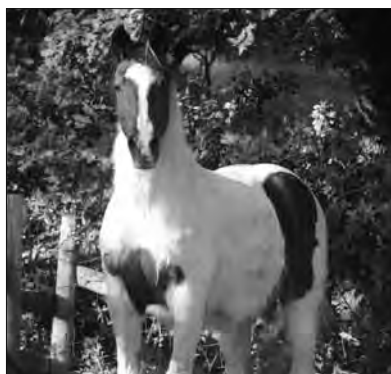
Calabar has been around a different block. A big oval block with lots of noise and energy, but also a very predictable routine. Big tractors, cars, and flapping things do not phase him; that part of him is solid and older. But learning new things can be hard for him, especially with a rider who may not have all the answers herself. Calabar was good at what he knew how to do—run forward really fast—but he and I have both had to learn

new things and he gets frustrated when he doesn't understand what he's being asked to do. That meant I had to learn better what he knew before I could really begin learn how to tell him what I knew. Unfortunately for him, what I knew when we met filled a very small bucket. Thanks to him, I've learned more than I ever could have imagined and that bucket is beginning to fill up for both of us. One of the best compliments I've ever received was from my friend Karen who told me he looks younger now than he ever has in the time she's known him. We must be doing something right, this horse and me.

Forrest and Katie are both young and both old in different ways. Similar to Calabar, Forrest came from the track. That life taught him things some horses never learn. Forrest, not a winner, didn't race as long as Calabar did. He also didn't have a few years off between the track and his new home like Bar did. He went from one job to the next and transitioned fairly well, all things considered. Katie had been riding for years before she brought Forrest home and knew how to teach him things. Or so she thought. He has taught her that patience is pretty important, something many people (old or young) never learn. Forrest looks at the world with wide, curious eyes. He'll never be jaded. But I guess time will tell.

Just as with their human counterparts, horses can seem old or young depending on their backgrounds, their lives, and their health. Some days, Calabar moves stiffly at first, but always greets me at his gate ready to go out. Some days, Lena acts like the greenest two year old on the ranch and then settles in to do her job. Forrest has surprised me on more than one occasion by standing still when his age is the perfect excuse to act out. I don't ever want any of them to lose that youthful curiosity, the eagerness to play. It will keep them young and it will keep me young. And that means we can all ride for a long, long, time to come.

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



*Truly young at heart—Cals Eclipse, age 28*



## The Vet's Office

# Colic

Written by Michelle Beko, DVM

Whether your horse is young or old, a high level performance horse or a retiree who's keeping your field mowed, you likely have some inherent fear of colic. Colic is indeed a common cause of death in our equine companions and an even more common cause of suffering. One large study found that approximately one in ten horses in the US colics every year.

### **What is colic?**

Colic is abdominal pain due to gastrointestinal disease (eg a belly ache). It is not one specific disease; many different problems can cause colic. The treatment and prognosis depend on the specific cause. The degree of pain and seriousness of the situation can vary from very mild to a life threatening emergency.

We can recognize that a horse is colicky when he shows some of the following symptoms: pawing, stretching, looking at his sides, "laughing," lying down, or rolling or violently throwing himself on the ground. Some mildly affected horses will simply not eat and appear a little lethargic. Some of the most severe cases can be so painful that they are dangerous to be near.

### **What causes colic?**

Many abnormalities can cause colic. Some of the most common are gas (with no obstruction), spasmodic colic, gastric ulcers, impactions (feces or sand), enteroliths, displacements of the large intestine (twisted or not), and strangulations of the small intestine.

Gas and impactions are probably the two most common causes of colic. Either may be precipitated by a change in feed. Gastric ulcers are very common in performance horses and sometimes cause colic (see summer 2010 SCHJ for more info). Enteroliths, another cause, can form in the horse's large intestine. They are made of magnesium ammonium phosphate and are most prevalent in horses whose diet is 50% or more alfalfa. They are much more common in California than in other states, especially in certain hot-spots, likely due to high magnesium concentrations in California alfalfa, and in some water sources. Equine large intestines are only anchored in a few spots and thus are almost free floating within the abdomen. Gas, not equally distributed throughout the large intestine, can cause it to float out of place. The colon can twist in a complete circle that cuts off its own blood supply, causing what we call torsion. Similarly, the small intestine can be strangulated when the long stalk of a fatty tumor (lipoma) wraps around it. The small intestine can also slip into other parts of the abdomen where the blood supply is cut off.

### **How do we treat colic?**

Ideally each horse is treated based on its presumed diagnosis. Many gas or spasmodic colics will resolve on their own, although some horses will need pain relief. Horses that have impactions can be helped by treatment with oral fluids and laxatives such as mineral oil or Epsom salts, administered through a stomach tube. Those with persistent impactions can benefit from intravenous fluids.

The most common pain reliever used by most veterinarians to treat colicky horses is flunixin meglumine (Banamine). It provides very effective gastrointestinal pain relief for all but the most serious cases. Butylscopolamine (Buscopan) is an antispasmodic that can help horses with spasmodic colic and some times helps those with

impactions as well. Several sedatives including xylazine, detomidine, and butorphanol are also effective pain relievers.

Some horses with impactions, most with enteroliths or non-strangulating displacements, and all horses with strangulated small or large intestines need surgery. The latter two conditions need surgery ASAP! Colic surgery is done at referral hospitals such as UC Davis. Although your veterinarian may not know exactly what is causing your horse to colic, there are several parameters that indicate that surgery is likely necessary. These include an elevated heart rate, lack of gut sounds, severe pain, and a poor response to pain relievers.

### **Are there any other problems that look like colic?**

The most common scenario that can look like colic is a horse with a fever. A fever, regardless of the cause, usually makes a horse lethargic and reduces his appetite. Some will also lie down. Most colicky horses do not have a fever. Additionally, some liver diseases, respiratory diseases, or "tying up" can look like colic.

### **What do I do when my horse colics?**

First try to calmly assess the situation. Did she eat all of her previous meal? Is there the usual quantity of manure in the paddock? Take his temperature if you can. If your horse is consistently rolling or getting up and going right back down, call your vet right away. If her pain is mild you can try walking her for a few minutes to see if the problem resolves on its own. If it continues for over half of an hour you should call your veterinarian. If you opt to medicate your horse, especially if you give him Banamine, do not feed him for several hours afterwards (You may make a horse with a mild impaction comfortable enough to eat and he may turn a small impaction into a large one.).

### **Why are horses so prone to colic??**

Horses eat food that is poorly digestible because it contains cellulose, a fiber for which mammals lack the "digestive" enzyme. Horses manage to obtain nutrition from cellulose by housing a large population of bacteria in their intestines to digest it for them. Different types of feed require different populations of bacteria. This makes our equine friends sensitive to changes in diet, because the gut-bacteria have to change in time to handle the new diet. Secondly, there are three places in their large intestine where the diameter changes from large to smaller. These are common sites for impactions. Lastly, horses evolved as grazers who wandered around all day and continuously ate small amounts of food. Confinement and eating two meals a day or eating concentrates like grain is not what their digestive system was built for.

### **How can we prevent colic?**

Pasturing, slow changes in diet, frequent feedings, minimizing grain, regular turn out and exercise, appropriate dental care, and parasite control can help us minimize our horse's risk of colic. Unfortunately the only way to guarantee that you'll never have to deal with a colicky horse is to sell all of your horses. Most of us don't want to do that!

*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. You can reach her at 707-545-3909 for questions or comments.*



## All Creatures Great and Small

Grant Miller, DVM, column editor

# CHANGE's First Baby

In the early morning hours on a breezy fall day in 2011, Sonoma County Animal Care and Control contacted the CHANGE Program because of a report of two donkeys found running loose on Todd Road in Santa Rosa. Animal Control had successfully corralled the two animals in the pasture of a Good Samaritan. CHANGE personnel were sure that someone would call and report that their animals had gotten loose, so we decided to leave them at the property for a few days. It was likely that their home was not far away. To our surprise, nobody called, despite Animal Control distributing flyers and knocking on doors in the area. Rather disturbingly, it seems that someone trailered the donkeys to the area, opened the doors, and let them loose.

The CHANGE Program is a 501(c)3 corporation that has assisted the Sonoma County Animal Care and Control Department with equine humane cases since 2007. The volunteer based program provides 24/7 horse transportation, foster care, rehabilitation, veterinary, and adoption services to horses in Animal Control custody. Although CHANGE assists the department with a variety of cases, recently the number of abandoned horse cases has increased. Until now, CHANGE had assisted with several dozen horse cases, and a few mules... but never donkeys!

Immediately it was apparent that these donkeys were a mother/daughter pair. The mother, which CHANGE volunteers named Luna, is a beautiful black donkey with a slick shiny coat. Luna, while gentle and polite, clearly carries reservations about humans and prefers to keep her distance. However, her daughter could not be more opposite. Her bubbly and boisterous personality is apparent, and her inquisitive nature is adorable as she approaches everyone and anyone just to say hello. She was affectionately named Lily. Both donkeys were taken into foster care and given vaccinations, much needed hoof care, deworming, and dental work. We knew that it would be no time at all before people would be eager to adopt them. But wait... after veterinary examination... we knew that Luna would have to stay in foster care for a while!

To be expected, Luna was pregnant! This was a first for CHANGE and we eagerly waited and prepared for her to have her baby. After months of waiting, Luna gave birth on a cold December morning to Lucy. Lucy had a rough start in life. She was unable to stand up and walk and generally just seemed a bit laxidasical. CHANGE volunteers were smart and got her to a safe, warm and dry place



*Lucy's first uncertain steps*



*Luna and Lily*



*Luna and Lucy*

in order to help her nurse. The veterinarian came and put some support splints on her hind legs to help her stand, and within days, she blossomed to life! Before long, Lucy was galloping and bucking in the pasture, much to her tired mother's shargin!

Today, all three donkeys have been adopted out to loving homes. Lily has moved to paradise, living in the lap of luxury at a five star barn in Nicasio. She gets to play in pasture with friends and greet horses in the barn as she makes her daily rounds. Her owner reports that the halter and lead rope really don't mean much to Lily since she basically walks and stops to smell the roses at whatever pace she chooses! By an amazing stroke of luck, Luna will get to remain living with her sweet and super-social second daughter Lucy at a loving foster home in Santa Rosa.

*CHANGE relies on the support of patrons and volunteers in the community. To get involved, or for more information about CHANGE, please visit [www.sonomachangeprogram.com](http://www.sonomachangeprogram.com), or call (707) 570-7050.*

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## Readers Write

### GEVA, Inc

Written by Pamela Berg

Would you like to get up close and personal with an ex-racehorse? Would you like to have your picture taken with your favorite horse, feed her carrots or horse cookies, see how horses live and play, and find out about their needs? Do you have a soft spot in your heart for horses, and feel concerned about what happens to them when they can no longer perform or are no longer wanted? Then please join us in taking care of them through volunteering or donations. Plan a trip to visit Glen Ellen Farms, the home of Glen Ellen Vocational Academy, Inc (GEVA, Inc). GEVA provides a safe retirement for injured, retired, and abused horses, and some horses just in need of a home.



Pam and a GEVA, Inc client

GEVA was founded to provide homes and care for unwanted horses. GEVA was also founded for the equally important mission of providing training in the skills necessary to humanely and safely work with horses. Our goal is to be able to accept all horses in need, and through our "adoption program" place them in loving homes. Some may not recover sufficiently from their injuries to return to riding soundness and may remain as pensioners with GEVA, or possibly become a companion for another horse. Others will go on to be pleasure horses, show horses, or just pets. All of these options are certainly preferable to the inhumane conditions of slaughter or needless euthanasia.

We have horses for "adoption" as well as for "sponsorship." Sponsors receive photos and regular communication on the activities and condition of their horses. All donations from sponsors are tax deductible. For those who have fulfilled the "full sponsorship" obligation for one year, GEVA also offers two nights of free lodging at Glen Ellen Farms in the Sonoma Valley, where GEVA is located. Glen Ellen Farms donates to GEVA the profits from the vacation rental. The farm is located in the scenic Valley of the Moon, which attracts numerous visitors. The farm can provide stabling or paddocks for horses if guests wish to bring their equine companions to enjoy the miles of spectacular scenic trails nearby in Annadel or Jack

London State Parks. Although our costs are more, full sponsorship for one of our horses is \$150.00 per month. Please note that sponsorship does not grant the sponsor any right to possession or use of the horse sponsored. The sponsor may visit the horse with adequate notice and arrangements for a visit.

GEVA is supported primarily by tax deductible donations and fund-raising events. We actively seek funds from grants, and also provide some facilities for lay-ups and conditioning, which generate additional income. GEVA received a grant from ASPCA and a much appreciated grant from Thoroughbred Charities

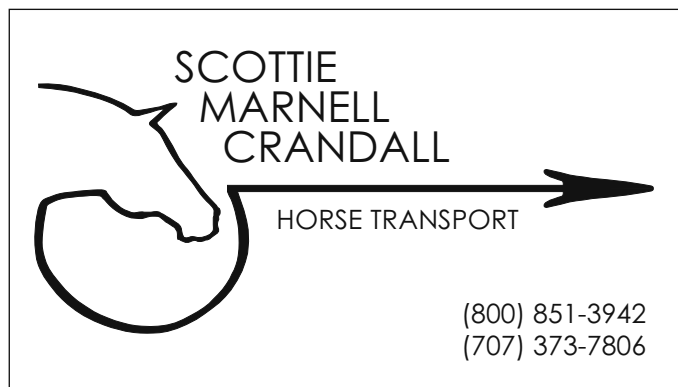
of America (TCA), which is the charitable arm of the Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association based in Lexington, Ky. TCA determined that GEVA's grant request upheld the mission of TCA, which is "to provide a better life for Thoroughbreds, both during and after their racing careers by supporting retirement, rescue, and research, and by helping the people who work with them." GEVA is also now recognized as a sanctuary by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS).

We offer farm tours to small groups (usually limited to ten people) on either the first or last Saturday of the month, May through October. We charge \$25.00 per adult and \$10.00 for children (under five years old are free) to tour the farm and meet "The Gang" of retired and rehabilitating horses. It's a day you won't forget! We don't have grapes— just horses. But we do offer a glass of wine or other beverage during your visit, and a couple of hours of fun.

If you are interested in a career or vocation working with horses, we have a variety of programs to offer you. If you really care about horses please contact us. If you are interested in sponsoring or adopting a horse we have a list of the horses available for your inquiry. We really need your help in helping them. Don't they deserve it?! We think so and hope you do, too. Your tax-deductible donation goes toward the costs of maintaining the horses. All funds generated through any of GEVA's events or activities go directly and exclusively to the ever-increasing cost of caring for the horses at the farm. We have no employees, so there are no salaries to pay. Any amount you can give is always appreciated.

When you pledge monthly support for GEVA, you will be helping provide for the recurring expenses and be a pillar of support for the organization. We appreciate your support!

*Pamela Berg (Equus Hall of Fame-2011), besides founding and running GEVA, Inc, has been certified by the Jockey Club as a horse identifier. She is also a California Horse Racing Board certified trainer and steward. Pam has received the Dogwood Dominion Award, the Sonoma County Horse Council's Equus Award, and the Ursula Liarcos Award for her dedication to horses in need. Pam currently lives in Glen Ellen.*





## Readers Write

# Racing Young Horses

Written by Jessica Boyd

For horse racing fans, the first Saturday in May presents a long-anticipated field of horses that have trained and raced well as two year olds. Presumably, these horses are ready to run, both mentally and physically. If you disagreed, you'd have to argue with the top trainers in the world, many of whom are repeatedly successful in the Run to the Roses. In order to race in the Kentucky Derby—the Holy Grail to most racetrackers—a horse must be three and must have a certain amount of winnings under the girth. That means these horses must have raced in high dollar races as two year olds. According to Wikipedia, "No horse since Apollo in 1882 has won the Derby without racing at age two."

Not all racehorses start racing at age two. Some who do are extremely successful and go on to win more races before retiring to the breeding shed. Many racehorses, like horses in other performance sports, simply start training at two in order to begin to build the muscle, bone, and cardiovascular capacity necessary to compete in the sport they were bred for.

Is two too young? "That depends entirely on the horse," says Sue Greene at Woodbridge Farms. "Some are and some aren't. And you need to consider both mental and physical readiness, whether you're in training or actually racing."

Devon Blanton, a very hands-on owner who exercises her own horses daily at Golden Gate Fields (GGF), thinks waiting is part of the answer for her horses. "Waiting until the knees close is important. Light training helps build bone, but they still need time to fill out while they are figuring things out."

Don Smith, DVM, who has been a track vet for over thirty years, agrees with Blanton. But Smith adds that there are reasons why starting a horse at two is common practice and has been for many years. While training styles undoubtedly differ, the goal is the same: to build a horse mentally and physically strong enough to succeed and stay healthy. Secretariat was a very successful racehorse as a two-year old, but Zenyatta did not start racing until late in her three-year old year.

Athletes, even human ones, must put some stress on their bodies to be successful. Athletic trainers agree that you must tear muscle to create it, and any orthopedist will confirm that running is a bone-and joint-strengthening exercise. The bones actually respond to the stress by stronger and it has even been found that long distance runners have less arthritis than non exercisers. Endurance and cardiovascular functions improve only with exercise and constant, methodical (albeit smart) training.

Young horses begin to build bone and cardiopulmonary stamina as soon as they begin to train, regardless of discipline. Periods of work followed with periods of rest are alternated to produce a balanced and fit horse by gently stressing the skeletal structure, cardiovascular, and respiratory systems. Some studies have even shown that a horse started carefully at two years can have a longer and more productive career than horses started later.

"Really, waiting and starting a horse at three, you see the same



*Schooling a youngster at the track*

things in terms of injuries and issues as if you start the horse at two," says Smith. And the prescription is the same. Introduce a horse to work gradually, back off as they start to exhibit soreness and allow the body to heal, then slowly introduce more intensity. Often trainers refer to the time the "knee closes" as the time to start asking your horse for more. What that actually means, says Smith, is that the growth plate at the distal end of the radius has fused. One of the more interesting things, he adds, is that "Late foals, those born in April and May, will actually

close sooner, like around twenty-two months. Early foals, born in January and February, will close later." It's not really clear what that means, but it suggests real variability in age-specific performance.

Obviously, some horses can and do race at two and do quite well, or there wouldn't be horses running in the Breeder's Cup and Kentucky Derby. Smith, Greene, and Blanton adamantly agree it is dependent on the individual horse and racing should follow the same path as training. If your horse needs time off, you give it to them.

Blanton prefers to start her horses later, but says if you have a horse with good bone and closed knees as a two year old and it's late in their two year old year, it's reasonable to consider racing them. Greene tells a story about a horse who won his maiden at two, then needed some time off before he came back to race. "Good owners and trainers will give them that time," she says. Smith agrees, "It's the same as training. You have to pay attention to the horse and pull back if they need it."

As with any athlete, training a successful racehorse requires a balancing act between building strength and stamina and overtaxing the body, as well as consideration of mental readiness for competition. The physical changes required to create a durable equine athlete are much the same as they are for human athletes: build bone, increase cardiovascular and respiratory fitness, and strive for peak performance levels. Smith compares two year old horses to teenage humans, a time when many of us got involved with sports. If done carefully, that strength and stamina remains with us as a basis for lifelong fitness levels.

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



*Ginger, a youngster, participating in track activities at GGF*



*Readers Write*

# A Dream Come True: Buying a Young Horse from Holland

Written by Patrice Doyle



From newborn with Tuloma...



to age one year with pasture "friends"...



to age two years...



to 2 ½ years and working on the lunge.

For me, buying a young Warmblood from Holland was a dream that has unfolded into an amazing and incredible journey.

I've been around horses since I was a little girl. During my college years, I was introduced to the basics of Dressage on my Thoroughbred gelding. I also remember seeing the floating trot of a Warmblood for the first time. I was captivated by the breathtaking movement. I hoped someday I'd have a horse like that.

Nearly twenty years later, in 2009, I was in the midst of launching a new career. With school loans and a career shift underway, my budget and free time were both lacking. The reality of what it meant to buy a Warmblood started to sink in. First, it seemed that the trot I saw many years ago would cost money...lots of money. Secondly, a 2nd or 3rd level Dressage horse would cost even more money. Determined not to abandon my dream, I decided to take the chance on a well-bred foal. This would allow me to focus on my new career for a few years and keep the purchase price down.

I studied the Royal Dutch Sport Horse ("Dutch Warmblood" or "KWPN"), the legendary stallions, and also the up-and-coming younger stallions. Having no contacts in Holland, I found a reputable broker in the United States whose relationships abroad would prove instrumental to my search and purchase.

Based on videos and a clean pre-purchase exam, I bought a four-month old KWPN colt from Saskia van Musscher of DWH Stables ([www.dwhstables.nl](http://www.dwhstables.nl)) in November 2009. Although Saskia's primary business is starting and selling three year old Dutch Warmbloods, she also breeds a few of her mares each year. She bred Tuloma (Nourejev x Ferro) to Apache (UB40 x Krack C) in 2008 and my colt, Extramon, was born in June 2009. He has remained at her farm to grow up on the pasture, receive basic training, and most recently was put under saddle.

In October 2011, I met Saskia and my horse in person for the first time. After two years of phone conversations, emails, pictures, and videos, I was meeting this wonderful lady! We drove directly to her farm from the airport. Despite the twelve hour flight and nine hour time difference, I was bubbling with excitement. We arrived and everything looked as I imagined from Saskia's photos and videos. Making our way through her stable of young horses, we arrived at Extramon's stall. He was gorgeous, sweet, and seemingly all grown up.

I took the train every day to her farm where I helped out with grooming and cleaning, and spent time with my horse. In the evenings, Saskia, Gerwin, her boyfriend, and I shared a meal and talked for hours. We set aside any chat of "horses" and instead talked about life in our respective countries, cultures, beliefs, growing up, and most of all, we laughed a lot. The night before I left, Minouche (Saskia's working student), Saskia, and I joined Gerwin for a very special meal at his exquisite restaurant in Haarlem, Madame Marlie ([www.madamemarie.nl](http://www.madamemarie.nl)). Saying good-bye to my new found friends was sad, but I will be back later this year to see them and bring my horse home.

While my decision to buy a horse from Holland may seem like an unusual one, it is actually very common to import a sport horse, and more affordable than you think. Because Holland is a small country and Dutch Warmbloods are one of its leading exports, it is easy to visit several farms and try many horses in just a handful of days. Additionally, even considering the cost of exporting to the United States, the price still proves very reasonable given the high quality and spectacular movement of the Dutch horses. What is not easy is finding a solid connection to guide you through this process. Saskia's business is unique because she owns all the horses she has for sale. She buys most of them around age two, and she does all the beginning work herself (groundwork, clipping, cross tying, trailering, bathing, lunging, introduction of the rider, etc). The work is methodical, consistent, and results in positive experiences for the horse. There is no "bad training" to undo. When she sells her horses at approximately age three, they usually have been under saddle for at least a couple of months. At that point, they are ready to start regular and appropriate work with the new owner.

Never could I have imagined that my dream would come true in such an amazing way. I look forward to sharing my horse's progress over the years with Saskia, and continuing my friendship with her.

*Patrice Doyle is an amateur Dressage rider in Sonoma County and trains with Rebecca Cushman of Paradigm Sporthorse Training. She's looking forward to having many cross-training adventures with her three-year old Dutch Warmblood gelding just under saddle.*

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## Readers Write

# Ten-thirty

Written by Lisa Lombardi



*Clover Ten-thirty*

During my twenty-four year career as a professional riding instructor, I have been privileged to work with literally hundreds of outstanding lesson horses. Each and every one of them has something special to offer: the Morgan with a side-to-side trot ideal for learning a correct diagonal, the retired Western Pleasure Paint with the rocking horse lope for those fearful of the first lope experience, and even the stocky grade horse who carefully shifts his own weight to keep his unbalanced rider from tumbling to the ground. Ten-thirty, however, stands out above the rest. She's worth more than her weight in gold as a school

horse, just ask the thousands of students—ages five through seventy-one—who have learned from her over the past twenty-three years. (See related article page 24)

Born Clover Ten-thirty, "Ten-thirty" was the product of two show-Reiners-turned-lesson-horses. I fell in love with her at birth, as it was obvious from day one that this filly had come into the world with something special to offer. Even so, it took three years to convince her owners that I wanted to purchase her, not as a lesson horse, but as my personal horse. I instantly became Ten-thirty's first student. Lesson number one: I had no business owning a three year old, even one as gentle as Ten-thirty, without professional help! So I enlisted the help of Mike Boyle, a local Reining trainer, and for the next two years, this AQHA mare and I learned to spin and slide and change leads, eventually successfully making our way into the AQHA show pen. Ten-thirty, while possessing extreme athletic ability, also had the patience of a saint. She took care of me while we learned together, allowing me to survive learning lesson number two: learning on an older, experienced horse is better than a green one. Then at age five, a kick to her leg by another horse resulted in a broken knee, ending her short Reining career. Ten-thirty never completely recovered, but did eventually become "serviceably sound."

Always ready to work, Ten-thirty just switched gears. She qualified for the Mounted Assistance Unit, patrolling in both state and regional parks. I also bred her. Her now thirteen year old gelding son is an outstanding lesson horse as well, carrying his lessees and students to win year-end belt buckles and ribbons in all around events, including Reining and Hunter under Saddle. He has also participated in Julie Goodnight clinics, with a student of mine aboard. Soon after her colt was weaned, I tried to retire Ten-thirty to pasture. I have never seen a more miserable horse. Anyone who believes horses do not have emotions has never met Ten-thirty. She needed a purpose in life...a job to do. So began her career as a lesson horse.

Ten-thirty became the ideal school horse. She is highly trained in both a snaffle and a curb, goes English or Western, performs spins and rollbacks, and neck reins effortlessly. Or she can be ridden safely bareback in a halter and lead rope. Since Ten-thirty has lived

on 180 acres of rolling hills most of her life, she is not afraid of deer, turkeys, creeks or rustling brush, and could carry even the most fearful riders on trail rides, with confidence. Due to her age, I no longer ask her to carry riders up and down hills. She now mostly works in the arena for lessons.

Ten-thirty possesses endless patience in all situations. For example, for approximately fifteen summers, she posed with up to two hundred campers per week to have her photograph professionally taken. Without fail, she held her ears up for every single picture. She will stand for hours ground tied for small children to bath her to a metallic shine, braid up her silky red mane and tail, and scratch her tummy until she quivers into the "camel-lip" pose.

All three of her gaits are smooth as silk, making her the perfect mount for any beginner, child, or adult with physical limitations. Because Ten-thirty has developed arthritis in her knee joint, however, I no longer have students ask her to pick up her left lead. Even though I'm sure she would do it. At age twenty-three, Ten-thirty is so willing to move forward at the lightest suggestion, even the smallest child can gently ask her to walk, jog, lope. No strength or kicking is required. And she steers on a dime with the slightest turn of the rider's torso or the gentlest movement of the reins. Due to her reining background, her brakes work equally well, so a rider can stop at any time, on a moment's notice. Her mouth has remained amazingly soft, even through all of her years of carrying beginners.

Ten-thirty is also ideal for ground lessons. A student once commented that this mare had "read the textbook" on how to be lunged, both on and off the lunge line—no bucking or silliness—she just circles at the gait requested. The smallest child or most timid adult can clean her feet, as she holds each one up as the student approaches her legs. She is also perfect for trailer loading clinics, allowing anyone to lay the rope across her back, utter the word "walk" and send her willingly into the trailer, where she waits calmly for the next instruction.

But Ten-thirty gives of herself far beyond the above list of school horse responsibilities. The most frequently used words to describe Ten-thirty over the years have been "wise," "elegant," and "old soul."



*Lisa accepts Ten-thirty's award from the Certified Horsemanship Association*



*Ten-thirty enjoys a well-deserved bath and scratch*

All of these are accurate. Ten-thirty herself is a cautious, sensitive, even fearful horse, which somehow works because students speak softly to her, stroke her hair, utter calming words of encouragement to reassure her, and in doing so, these students reassure themselves when they are around her. This horse is aware, observant, and genuinely gives each and every student what is needed. During her lifetime, she has earned the reputation of being the ultimate "confidence builder horse." To this day, I can say with absolute certainty because I have been there for every ride of her entire life, not a single rider has ever come off of Ten-thirty's back. Ever. That can be said of how many horses, even good solid school horses?

Even people who are not my students get referred for lessons with Ten-thirty if they have emotional or physical hurdles to jump, even non-horse related hurdles. Ten-thirty provides emotional and physical support to anyone who comes into contact with her. Even the most timid, upset, nervous, or fearful riders smile immediately upon meeting Ten-thirty, as they take note of her unusual facial "10:30" marking, and she greets them with the sweetest smelling, alfalfa scented sniff. Although I have never advertised her as such, Ten-thirty has become a "therapy horse" for people who are trying to get over the loss of a family member, for those recovering from broken bones or surgery, for those who want to recover from previous bad horse experiences or falls, for those who are painfully shy or having social difficulties. Ten-thirty always works her magic as I facilitate a riding (or ground) lesson. Some of these people become addicted to horses and begin riding regularly after just one such session. Among Ten thirty's "regulars" are students with lupus,

fibromyalgia, stroke, behcets, and spinal deterioration, as well as foster children, special needs children, painfully shy children, and anyone who just wants to gain confidence and enjoy riding a horse!

The following illustrates one student's Ten-thirty experience: A few years back I met a sixty-something year old woman on a college campus. During our introduction, I learned that she had had a scary experience on a rental horse as a twelve year old child, and hadn't ridden since. She learned that I was a riding instructor. At the close of the semester, this lady decided to come meet Ten-thirty. There is no other way to describe it. It was love at first sight for both horse and human. The woman was the very first person I have ever allowed to spend unsupervised time with my precious Ten-thirty, as I knew the time they spent with each other was healing for both of them. Ten-thirty's pasture-mate and best friend of twenty years had recently died and Ten-thirty had gone into a depression and lost weight. I soon learned this lady suffered from Lyme's disease, babesiosis, and partial blindness, and did not feel well much of the time. This student took a few months of lessons to learn basic horsemanship, and when she did not feel well enough to ride, she spent her time grazing and massaging Ten-thirty, and taking her for walks. They took care of each other. A few months back this woman was loping Ten-thirty bareback, halter on the horse's head and lead rope resting on her withers. Beaming with joy, the woman called out to me, "When I am riding Ten-thirty, I am not sick!!"

Which leads me to lesson number three: Ten-thirty is irreplaceable. Time spent with her is valuable and precious and should never be taken for granted. What she has given, and continues to give every day, to all the numerous people who have come into contact with her is immeasurable. Ten-thirty deserves to be honored.

And honored she has been. At the 2011 Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA) International Conference in Lexington, Ky, Ten-thirty received First Runner-up among the top five finalists in a worldwide search for the 2011 CHA School Horse of the Year. She received an ornate plaque, and it was an experience that I will never forget. I wish she could have been there!

*Lisa Lombardi has been a Santa Rosa based CHA certified riding instructor, English and Western, since 1987, an Equine Science instructor SRJC since 1989, and an ISPE coach for high school students earning their PE credit through horseback riding since 1991. She has a gentle experienced lesson string of ten horses, including Ten-Thirty. Lisa specializes in safety and full enjoyment of recreational horses through gentle and true communication. Her students have successfully competed in a wide variety of disciplines from Reining to English equitation, often earning year-end belt buckles in these events. Some of her students currently compete in endurance riding, Dressage, and local play days.*

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## Readers Write Full Circle

Written by Deb Jackson (aka "Grandma Deb")



*Clover Ten-thirty works her magic*

Now approaching my own elderhood, I've come full circle. Several years ago I began working with Lisa Lombardi, an instructor at Santa Rosa Junior College and Sky Tree Ranch in Sebastopol. Gradually unlearning bad habits and fears acquired over a lifetime of riding with very little instruction, I found a new level of ease, confidence, and safety.

When I became a surrogate foster grandparent at The Children's Village of Sonoma County, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) dedicated to helping children with at risk social situations, the "horse girls" and I found each other right away. One girl had been riding under Kris Huot's private instruction for two years, enjoying mentorship as well as developing confidence, physicality, and leadership abilities. I began to explore the emerging field of equine therapy, locally and nationally. And, as I became closer with our kids in the Village and their needs, some ideas started to take hold.

Our kids have lost parents and often siblings, and may have experienced abuse and neglect most of us could not imagine. At the heart of it, they are still just kids who long to have a normal life. They have missed out on the close bonding and attachment that gives a person a sense of security and self-confidence. They work hard to find emotional balance and the trust to feel that someone would want to be their friend. They blame themselves for their situations, and often act out because it's all they know. They may even despair of ever feeling connected and loved.

Here, in our little neighborhood of foster homes, our goal is to create that family container, that "village" that will give them the best chance at staying together with siblings, and having a normal, loving family. Resident "grandparents" are people dedicated to their success and happiness, and bring a full life of experiences and skills.

I didn't plan on having a Riding Program, I just started taking kids riding with me! And, a Riding Program has evolved. Clearly the two most important elements are the instructor, and the horse. Lisa Lombardi and I had many conversations about safe horseback

riding as embodied learning. With her extensive background in both horsemanship and education, she is able to read the emotional state a kid brings with them on a particular day. She knows what they need from moment to moment. A boy or girl might be brimming over with loud exuberance, whiny and unfocused, or withdrawn and quiet. They might need to groom and brush and stroke the horse for a long time, and they get all the time they need. Some might feel panic and want to take just one step, but on another day dive right in take more chances.

As much as the kids love Lisa, they love Ten-thirty more (see related article, p. 22)! She greets them with a fragrant blow and sometimes a light kiss on top of their head. This grand dame of school horses has wisdom, grace, and stamina. Ten-thirty is like a mirror for the kids' best selves. She and Lisa are an extraordinary team after twenty five years of working together, and they both clearly love the kids.

We know Ten-thirty changes their worlds. One boy told me, "When I think I can't do something, I remember, hey, I can ride a 1,000 lb. horse. I can do this!" The Village staff shares notes on each child's visit, to create an opportunity for us all to see past the problematic behaviors they present at home. We see them taking risks, being tender and kind, learning leadership, and learning personal boundaries.

Among the many therapeutic benefits of riding are: respectful relationships, clear communication, focus, balance, personal boundaries, and body language. Particularly valuable for kids in foster care is the sense of ownership of their bodies, personal leadership and control over their emotions, awareness of personal safety, touch, and affection. They learn that kindness and focus bring safety, empathy is not overpowering, and that they can love honestly and be loved back.

Now, when we approach that gate together, I notice their faces soften and smile, and they breathe a little deeper. I know how they feel. They feel happy.

I am so grateful to Lisa Lombardi and Ten-thirty, Sky Tree Ranch, and supporters who have helped us get this started. If you love kids and horses, and would like to support our riding program, we are most appreciative of any donations. Please make checks payable to The Children's Village of Sonoma County, 1321 Lia Lane, Santa Rosa, CA 95404. Or donate online at [www.thechildrensvillage.com/donate.html](http://www.thechildrensvillage.com/donate.html).

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## From the Horse's Mouth

### California Mission Ride Starts in Sonoma

On August 18th, 2012 seven riders will mount their horses in Sonoma, and begin a journey of 600 miles, riding to the Mexican border, and visiting a total of twenty-two Californian and Native American missions. The trip will consist of two rides, covering northern and southern segments. Riders will cover the first segment from Sonoma to San Miguel this year, between August 18 and September 16. They will complete the second, southern segment, from San Miguel to San Diego next year (2013) from mid-August to mid-September. California's twenty-two missions were founded by Franciscan missionaries and built by Native Americans of highly diverse tribes during the Spanish colonial era. Dotting the coastline from Sonoma to the Mexican border, these missions form the state's first and most significant historic backbone. Initially, the ride Director, Peter Newfield, was uncertain that the riders could even make the continuous trip, but planning has been going well. The group has decided make an educational documentary film about the journey, focusing on the missions' rich history and culture. Missions housing the riders include the San Francisco Solano Mission, the San Rafael Arcangel, the San Jose Mission, and the Santa Clara de Asis. Each place has a complex history, and all the missions remain alive. Some are busy state parks, while others are monasteries. All are explored by millions of visitors each year. The southern-most mission, at which the group is scheduled to arrive next September is the San Diego de Alcalá. Locally, the riders plan to traverse Jack London State Historic Park, hoping to take an historic route from Sonoma to Petaluma. They will be escorted by the California State Parks Mounted Assistance Unit over Sonoma Mountain. For more information about the California Mission Ride visit [www.californiamissionride.org](http://www.californiamissionride.org).



### Horses as Service Animals

The Illinois state Senate voted last month to add miniature horses to the list of service animals, like seeing-eye dogs, in order to aid people with disabilities. As a result, you could see horses in Illinois schools, stores and other public places, but only if they're specially trained and aren't much bigger than a golden retriever. The forty to eleven Senate vote now sends the measure to the Illinois House for the next level of approval. Miniature horses eligible for service must range from twenty-four to thirty-four inches tall and weigh between seventy and one hundred pounds, according to the disability rights section of the US Department of Justice. These animals are already considered service animals by federal regulations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Use of miniature horses is particularly helpful for instances in which disabled individuals are allergic to dog hair, need an animal that can live outdoors, or desire a service animal with a longer life span. The Guide Horse Foundation is one organization which is very active in promoting the use of miniature horses for the visually impaired. Criteria include size, and the need to be "house broken." The Guide Horse Foundation does not advocate using riding-sized horses for use as service animals due to their lack of suitability as "indoor animals," and the risk of injury to the blind handler, the animal, and the public. For more information about using miniature horses as service animals visit [www.guidehorse.org](http://www.guidehorse.org).



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### West Nile Virus Update

The risk of a return of West Nile virus (WNV) to California this year is renewing calls for horse owners to make sure their animals are vaccinated. In 2011, fifteen horses in California were confirmed positive for West Nile Virus. Four of the fifteen were euthanized. All of the euthanized horses were unvaccinated. The California State Veterinarian recommends routine equine WNV vaccinations, normally given in the spring. "Outbreaks of West Nile virus are still a risk for horses," said California State Veterinarian Dr Annette Whiteford. "Horse owners should contact their veterinarians as soon as possible to ensure vaccination status is current. If people get the necessary shots for their horses now, the animals will have optimal protection against the disease." Signs of West Nile virus include stumbling, staggering, wobbling, weakness, muscle twitching, and inability to stand. Horses, as well as humans and some species of birds, contract the disease from carrier mosquitoes. Horses with WNV are not contagious to other horses or people. Not every horse exposed to the virus will die. However, over the past eight years, affected horses have experienced a mortality rate of nearly forty percent. Mosquito control is another important factor in limiting the incidence of WNV. For more information on vector (mosquito) control, visit the Marin/Sonoma County Vector Control website at [www.ms mosquito.com](http://www.ms mosquito.com). CDFA is cooperating with the California Department of Public Health to detect and respond to the disease in California. Horses provide an additional sentinel for disease detection in the environment. For more information visit on [http://www.cdca.ca.gov/ahfss/animal\\_health/WNV\\_info.html](http://www.cdca.ca.gov/ahfss/animal_health/WNV_info.html).





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