

Sonoma County

# *Horse Journal*

Volume 9 • Issue 3 • Summer 2013



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



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

Volume 9 • Issue 3 • Summer 2013

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**Cover Photo: Midge Ames**

Sandy Bonelli rides Flo Rider to Derby Open Champion at the 2009 Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Association's Derby in Paso Robles. Read more about Sandy, and other competitors in this issue of the Horse Journal.

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## A Message from the President



Dear Sonoma County Equestrians –

I am very pleased to welcome our three new Board Members: Tracy Underwood, Patrice Doyle, and Melissa Kalember. These talented and dedicated horsewomen bring an enormous amount of energy, enthusiasm, and determination to the furtherance of our mission to promote the health and well-being of horses and the horse industry in the county. I also want to express the entire Board's heartfelt thanks to Lisa Thomas and Tony Benedetti for their incredible contributions to the success of the Horse Council over the past several years. Even though they have stepped down from the Board, they continue to make very significant contributions to the Horse Council because they understand the need for all of us who care about preserving the horse industry in this county to pitch in for the benefit of the entire horse community. They understand that in order to be prepared to meet the challenges the horse community faces today, and will face in the future, we

need to unify ourselves and be able to speak with one powerful voice. So please get involved with your local horse club and join the Sonoma County Horse Council. Encourage your local horse club to join the Horse Council and take advantage of our low annual associate membership rate of \$10. Go to [www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org](http://www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org), click on membership and SIGN UP NOW!

Our April 25th Horse Cabinet Meeting at the Sonoma County Driving and Riding Clubhouse at the Fairgrounds featured Professor Robert Eyler of the Sonoma State Economics Department. Professor Eyler made a presentation and led a discussion of the new Economic Impact Survey of the county's horse industry that the Horse Council is undertaking this year. This updated information will provide important data for governmental decision-makers who have a great influence over the continued health and well-being of our horse community. Please see the Horse Cabinet update for more details (p. 4). Your input at this early stage regarding the design of the survey, as well as your help in collecting the relevant data, is vitally important to insuring its success. So please help us help all of you who enjoy the equestrian way of life in Sonoma County and want to see it preserved and promoted. If you would like a copy of Professor Eyler's presentation, or you would like to get involved in this exciting and important project, please send me an email using the contact information on the website.

Ron Malone, President



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Photo: MJ Wickham

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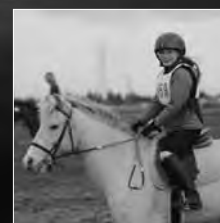
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## Sonoma County Horse Council at Work

# Horse Cabinet Update

Written by Greg Harder, Vice President



The April cabinet meeting was fast and furious.

First, we elected the new positions to the SCHC board, each by a unanimous vote. When you get a chance, please welcome Patrice Doyle, Tracy Underwood, and Melissa Kalember. Each will assume a member at large position. A big thanks to Lisa Thomas and Tony Benedetti for their service!

Next, we listened to a proposal from Robert Eyler, PhD, professor of economics from Sonoma State University. Professor Eyler used a power point presentation to outline the process, dynamics, and intricacies of conducting an equine impact survey in Sonoma County. The SCHC has commissioned Professor Eyler to conduct an updated economic analysis regarding the financial impact horses have locally. Historically, knowledge of the economic force and impact that our horse community represents is powerful information, especially when interacting with the city and county regarding horse-related issues. Given our numbers, the Board of Supervisors listens when discussions come up regarding the well being of the equine industry in Sonoma County. We want to keep it that way. The last survey was done in 2006.

Professor Eyler led us in a discussion bringing various survey issues to the forefront: respondents' ability to remain anonymous, methods to avoid duplication, the complexities of blending a paper survey and online data collection, what specifics about the horses themselves that are pertinent, data formulation and interpretation, and being sure to be able to identify the trickle down of the dollar in this county. The study will also identify missed economic benefit to the county by adopting unfriendly equine policies and limitations.

With input from the members, Professor Eyler is progressing with the design of the survey. The end date for data presentation will be around the first of the year. If you want to add input or volunteer for the project, please contact the Horse Council through the website and we will be happy to put you to work.

The original meeting was to feature our beloved CHP, and we were going to get a VERY CLEAR understanding of what license we need to move our trailers up and down the road; this has been rescheduled to the next Horse Cabinet meeting at 7pm the second Wednesday in July (7/10). Hope to see you there!



Next Cabinet Meeting—July 10 • 7pm  
**"Trailer Safety and Legally"**  
 SCDRC Clubhouse, Sonoma County Fairgrounds

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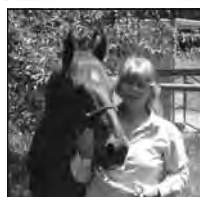
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## Sonoma County Events



### DRESSAGE IN THE WINE COUNTRY

#### *Dressage in the Wine Country*

The thirty first annual Dressage in the Wine Country (DWC) will be held at Santa Rosa's Sonoma County Fairgrounds on September 7th this year. Join your fellow equestrians for a day of wine tasting, shopping, equine demonstrations, and top flight equestrian entertainment. Sponsored by the Sonoma Chapter of the California Dressage Society, DWC has become an eagerly anticipated event in our local community and we would like to invite you to be a part of this wonderful day. More than twenty award-winning wineries and

microbreweries will exhibit and offer tastings. Among the trade fair vendors will be saddle makers, equestrian fashion and horse ware shops, artwork, glass sculptures, and barn and ranch equipment suppliers. Jousters from Reveler's Ranch, Quadrilles, and Combined Training are just a few of the evening's performances. Bring your appetite and grab a bite to eat from the many food vendors. Doors open to the trade fair at 2pm with the wine/beer tasting starting at 4pm. Equine performances start at 7pm. For tickets and information visit the Sonoma Chapter website, [www.winecountrydressage.org](http://www.winecountrydressage.org), or call 707-536-1842. Hope to see you there!

#### *Sonoma County Fair Board Presents Award of Excellence*

The Sonoma County Fair Board has announced Pete and Benita Mattioli as recipients of the 2013 Award of Excellence in the Horse Industry. The Mattioli's, long time residents of Sonoma County, are best known for pioneering the Cutting horse industry in the North Bay. In 1974, the Mattioli's acquired their Hunter Lane property, starting what was then known as the Double Bar M Ranch, initially a breeding facility, and eventually becoming one of the most well-known and established boarding facilities in Sonoma County. As



*Pete and Benita Mattioli*

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Sonoma County Fairgrounds

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Wine Tasting 4:00 –6:00

Evening Performance: 7:00

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**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH**

equestrian activity evolved locally, so did the activity and services offered by the Mattioli's. In 2012, the Double Bar M changed its name to the Hunter Lane Equestrian Center to better reflect the wide range of facilities and services offered at the property. The prestigious award was presented on May 16th at the Sonoma County Fair Board's Award dinner, and will also be presented more publicly at the 2013 Farmer's Day, held July 28th. The Fair Board's Award of Excellence in the Horse Industry has been awarded to Sonoma County equestrian business owners since 2007. Recipients are recognized for their leadership, involvement in the fairgrounds, and contribution to the local equestrian industry. Past recipients include Henry Trione, Ron and Ginger De Grange, and Jack De-Meo. For more information about the Mattioli's and heir facility visit [www.hunterlaneequine.com](http://www.hunterlaneequine.com). For more information about the Sonoma County Fair Board, visit [www.sonomacountyfair.com](http://www.sonomacountyfair.com).



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## Feature Article

## Profile of a Competitor: Sandy Bonelli

Written by Joan Rasmussen, Editor at Large, Board of Directors



Sandy on Lil Juice Fruit, PCCHA Futurity

Sandy Bonelli loves horses. As well as sheep, goats, donkeys, dogs, and just about anything else with four legs that lives with her on her Heart Ranch in Petaluma.

She also, by the way, has lifetime earnings of over three million dollars in the ultra-competitive world of Cutting horse competition. Not to mention being in the National Cutting Horse Association's Non-Pro Hall of Fame and Rider Hall of Fame. That's not a bad run for a kid from Marin County competing in a Texas-dominated sport.

While Cutting is the event where Sandy made her mark, she would have been happy competing in any event involving horses. A native of Belvedere, she spent her childhood weekends on her family's ranch in Marshall, the Soula Jule Ranch (now the Soulajule Reservoir, pronounced "Soo-la-HOO-lee"), riding the family horses bareback over the rolling hills. By the time she was in high school, she was riding hunters and jumpers, which she loved. Her father, however, was not as happy about it, and gently steered her toward events that took place closer to the ground. She was riding reined cow horses in 1977 when two of her mares were bred to Doc's Oak, owned by Tom Lyons in Phoenix. It was Lyons who got her started in Cutting. She's been competing in the event since 1978, and enjoys every aspect of the sport.

When she began earning serious money, she started eyeing Cutting as a career. While her parents acknowledged her equestrian abilities and were supportive, they encouraged her to pursue an education, and she graduated with a business degree in 1985. She has never regretted taking the time to complete her education,

stating that you incorporate your education into anything you do. "I'm running a business here. I'm still trying to make my bottom line."

In 1984, before she was out of school, she captured the National Cutting Horse Association (NCHA) Super Stakes Non-Pro title riding her mare Oakalola and had winnings of \$158,166 for the year. In 1989, riding a daughter of Oakalola, Bella Coquette, she was the NCHA Futurity Non-Pro Champion. Her earnings for that year came to \$133,721. Between 1984 and 2006, she consistently earned at least \$60,000 per year, with one year topping out over the \$300,000 mark. There are very few years between 1989 and 2009 that don't include a championship for Sandy and her horses.

While she has ridden many horses in competition over the years, some of the standouts include A Little Starlight, Shakin Flo, and Flo Rider.

Sandy obtained the mare A Little Starlight from trainer Charlie Ward, who also owned the mare's sire, Gray's Starlight, in 1993 and took her to win the Gold Coast Futurity Non-Pro Championship the following year. She continued competing with great success on this horse through 1997. At this point she started competing on Shakin Flo, a mare she purchased from Ken Hill of Placerville. Sandy won the NCHA Futurity Non-Pro Championship with her that year, and continued to compete with her very successfully through 2000. The diminutive mare earned NCHA Horse of the Year in 1998 and had lifetime earnings of \$417,909 when she ended her career at age six to become part of the breeding program.

Shakin Flo produced seven NCHA money earners, including Shakin Rondee and Midnight Rondeevous, both sired by Smart Little Rondee, out of Bella Coquette, Sandy's 1989 NCHA non-Pro Futurity Champion. She was also the dam of one of Sandy's current stallions, Flo Rider, who only competed one season before being retired due to an injury. Flo Rider, by High Brow Cat, was the reason

for Sandy's turning Pro in 2009. Under new rules enacted at the time, she would not be allowed to compete in both the Open and Non-Pro divisions. Riding him in the Open division, they became the 2009 Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Association Open Derby Champions.

Tragically, Shakin Flo died last year while foaling. Her filly sired by Smooth As A Cat and named Flo Get Me Not, was raised on goat's milk and by a surrogate and is doing well. "She's my next dream horse," says Sandy.

Midgie Ames Photo



Sandy and Andy



As a Non-Pro, Sandy rode her own horses and was the breeder for many of the horses. She enjoys breeding and training every bit as much as competing. Her two stallions, Flo Rider and Soula Jule Star, are products of her breeding program. Soula Jule Star, named after the ranch where Sandy spent her childhood astride a horse, is co-owned by Sandy and the Polo Ranch in Oklahoma and currently standing in Oklahoma, while Flo Rider is based in Oakdale, Ca.

While she turned pro in 2009, she has since cut back on her competition schedule to spend more time at home. She loves Sonoma County but has found it difficult to be based here and to compete at the top level. "To be great at Cutting, you need to be in Forth Worth," she states. The sport is based there and the top events are held there. If you don't live in Texas, the travel schedule can be daunting. When she started out, she loved all of it—the travel, the training, and the winning. The travel is no longer as appealing, and she would love to see more events held on the West Coast, enabling her to both compete and spend more time at home. She enjoys the weather and scenery of Sonoma County, making riding both her horses and her bike enjoyable year-round.

Sandy clearly loves competing in her sport, but acknowledges that it is a hard climb to the top. At the top levels, the horses are better and your operation needs to be much bigger. In the Open division, rather than riding one or two of your own top horses, you will likely be riding upwards of thirty horses at your barn. It takes huge drive and commitment, and she is developing other priorities in her life at this time. She loves being home, focusing on her breeding and training operation, and getting up close and personal with her menagerie, which includes not only her horses but an assortment of donkeys, sheep, goats, and dogs. She often fosters lambs and goats for a veterinarian friend, and occasionally she just can't send them back. Popcorn, a lamb she had fostered, has found a permanent home at the Heart Ranch.

She still competes as part of her training program, and still enjoys it and gets a thrill from a pretty run. If she fell on another horse as good as Shakin Flo, she would be tempted to go back on the road full tilt to bring the horse to the highest level.

More important than winning to her is knowing that she has done her best, and that she has brought her horses along to be a willing and eager participants. If she is out of the running in a competition



*Sandy and Got me Shakin*

out of the running in a competition but feels she gave it her all and that she and her horse were fully prepared, she still considers it a successful event. These are the qualities she admires in other competitors as well. She acknowledges that in any sport where money is involved, there is going to be the temptation to take shortcuts and engage in unethical behavior, but that the majority of people competing in the sport are there because they love the horses. They're honest, they work hard, and they are striving for excellence.

Sandy credits her success to being committed, being consistent, and being dedicated. In addition, she has gotten her hands on many good horses, and is quick to acknowledge that there is an element of luck involved. The older she gets, the more she realizes how much luck really plays into the results! She also acknowledges her excellent team for their contribution to her success, including her coach of eighteen years, Kathy Daughn of Texas. Daughn credits Sandy with her ability to consistently know cattle and to deal with the draw.

Her advice to anybody considering making competition their career is to realize that this is a passion and a lifestyle more than a career choice. It's a 24/7 job. You can't turn it on and off. If you want a nine to five job, with weekends off, this is not the career path to choose. But to Sandy the rewards of experiencing a willing horse and a pretty run are worth the sacrifices.

More information about Sandy Bonelli and her horses can be found at [www.heart ranch.com](http://www.heart ranch.com).



*Shakin' Rondee and Sandy*



## Vet's Office

Column editor Michelle Beko, DVM

# Parasite Control

By now you may have heard that most veterinarians don't recommend deworming all horses every two to three months. There are several reasons for this change in practice. First, we now see more infections with small strongyle (worm) infections than with large strongyles. Large strongyles caused significant health problems including fatal colics in horses. Small strongyles on the other hand, are of little consequence in small or moderate numbers. Secondly, we now know that horses vary widely in their susceptibility to parasitism. Lastly, deworming horses too frequently is unnecessary and can lead to increase the incidence of resistance to deworming medication.

### **Parasite lifecycle**

Controlling equine parasites requires knowledge of parasite lifecycle. Adult parasites in the horse's intestines lay eggs that are passed with the manure. Once they are outside the horse, the eggs hatch and develop into larvae that can then reinfect a horse. This process (egg to infective larvae) takes at least a week and often longer for most small strongyles depending on environmental conditions. If it is too hot, cold or dry, the eggs or newly hatched larvae will die. Once a horse inadvertently consumes some infective larvae while grazing, the worms will then proceed to develop into adults in the horse's digestive tract. Large strongyles take at least six months to mature, while the various small strongyles species usually take less time. Once they mature, they start laying eggs and the cycle is repeated.

One variation on the above lifecycle is that sometimes small strongyle larvae will burrow into the horse's intestinal wall and delay their maturation. This is probably a good strategy from the worm's point of view because they can avoid growing into adults and laying eggs when the weather is bad and the eggs wouldn't survive. Most wormers don't kill these so-called encysted small strongyles. If large numbers of encysted worms emerge from the intestinal wall at the same time they can cause the horse to colic or have diarrhea.

Tapeworms have a different lifecycle. Mites living in pastures consume the tapeworm eggs that horses pass and the worms develop into infective larvae in the mites. Pastured horses can get tapeworms when they eat the mites while grazing.

### **So what should we do now?**

Our first step should be to identify our horse's risk based on his individual susceptibility. Fecal exams performed when it has been three or more months since the horse has been wormed can separate "high shedders" (eg those passing large numbers of eggs) from low or intermediate shedders. My practice has been doing fecal egg counts for over three years now and I have been surprised several times when I find horses living together and one will have a very high egg count while the others will have few or none.

Using the fecal egg counts as well as knowledge of your horse's living arrangement should allow your veterinarian to recommend a deworming program for your horse. Regularly cleaned stalls and

paddocks without grass are difficult places for parasites to complete their lifecycle as they tend to be too dry. Pastures, especially irrigated ones, are very good places for parasites to complete their lifecycles. Most horses stabled in regularly cleaned stalls or paddocks with no access to grass can be effectively dewormed by giving a wormer twice a year as can most "low shedders" living in pastures.

Removing manure from all stalls, paddocks, and pastures is also a very effective way to minimize our horses' exposure to parasites in the first place. While we will never get every tiny piece of manure picked up we can dramatically decrease the number of parasites out there by cleaning at least once a week (remembering that it takes at least a week for the eggs to develop into infective larvae).

Lastly, fecal egg counts should be repeated every one to two years to make sure the deworming frequency we have chosen is working and that we are not getting problems with resistant parasites.

### **Why don't we deworm only when our horse has a positive fecal egg count?**

Some people would like to deworm as little as possible, even less than twice a year. In theory, this could be accomplished by doing frequent fecal egg counts and administering wormers only when we find parasite eggs. I do not recommend this for several reasons. Fecal exams can not differentiate large strongyle eggs from small strongyle eggs. Since it takes large strongyles at least six months after being ingested to develop into adults, deworming at least twice a year should keep these dangerous parasites from becoming more prevalent. Secondly, there is no way to diagnose larval parasite infestations in a living horse whether the larvae are encysted or actively growing into their adult stage in the intestinal lumen. Thirdly, there are other parasites (bots, pinworms, tapeworms) that may be living in our horses but do not necessarily show up on a fecal egg count.

### **What products should we use?**

I recommend that all horses get ivermectin or moxidectin (Quest) twice a year. If they are on grass pastures they should have praziquantel to control tapeworms along with the ivermectin or moxidectin at least once a year (Quest Plus, Ivermectin Gold, or Equimax). Horses being dewormed more frequently could also have pyrantel or oxbendazole for some of their other treatments. Contact your veterinarian for more specific advice or to schedule a fecal egg count.



*Michelle Beko, DVM, has been an equine veterinarian since 1991. When not working, she enjoys spending time with her husband and daughter, Eventing her horse Zeke, hiking, and travelling. You can reach her at Empire Equine at 707-545-3909, check her website ([www.empire-equine.com](http://www.empire-equine.com)), or on Facebook.*



*Horse Husbandry*

Column editor Mark Krug

# Joining the Parelli Cult

OK, so half of you who came here after reading the title above are ticked off because you believe I've maligned the wonderful Parelli program and its evidence-supported results. The other half are here hoping to validate your somewhat cynical opinion that "Parelli is an over-merchandized, pyramid-scheme cult." Well, both camps will probably be disappointed should they read this to the end, sorry...

So, before diving into the Parelli debate, first I wish to say that my favorite horse magazine, except, of course, for the Sonoma County Horse Council Journal, is the Eclectic Horseman. This every-other-month publication is, I suspect, limited in circulation based on its rather non-commercial appearance. And, as the name suggests, it's rather eclectic in nature. I bring up this publication's existence not just because I like it, but also, for its marketing "tag line" of "Whatever Works." I've subscribed to this magazine for many years, but, of late, this tag line has become profound—given my current station in life with horses.

A few of you know that I've written this column since 2009, and then took a hiatus for calendar 2012 and the first half of 2013. During that period, life-with-horses, well, sucked. I retired my arthritic and... ah ... unique Percheron gelding Mojo and my Paint gelding Tucker suffered a series of injuries and was "laid-up" for basically all of 2012. Aaarrghhh...! That's part of the deal having horses, I know, I get that, but I feared my negativity around all this would manifest in Journal articles and who really needs that? So, I took a break.

So, you're wondering by now, what the heck does this rambling and whining have to do with Pat Parelli and his enterprise, or "cult?" Well, here's the deal. Tucker's extended lay-up changed him, changed his basic personality and demeanor. He became rather troubled and "un-manageable" and indeed, dangerous and unpredictable. Though married to an experienced and capable horsewoman and DQ who successfully started innumerable colts in her thirty-five years in the business, we needed help with Tucker and we both knew it. So, we sought out help from a well thought of and highly recommended local Parelli disciple...I mean trainer—Julie Cross. And, I must say, the results to-date are undeniably impressive by any standard or point-of-view. In fact, astonishing.

This is especially high praise when one considers that my personality and deep-seated values are such that I'm not a "joiner" and I tend to abhor structure, dogma, rigidity, and pre-ordained approaches. Thus, I'm pre-wired to reject Parelli-style structure and pre-scripted approaches. But, I've learned, it works! There is no question in my mind that some other approaches, rooted in natural horsemanship and founded in horse-herd language and herd dynamics, would be equally effective. But Parelli was available in the form of a skilled implementer and teacher—an accomplished three-star level professional—so, why not try it? Why reject?

Whatever works!

Is Parelli highly marketed and merchandized? Yes, of course it is. Does that trait provide proof it is not effective? No, of course not.



Mark and Tucker

To reject it because you find the marketing, merchandizing or dogma too distasteful is one thing, quite another to use the marketing and merchandizing presence as proof that the approach is somehow defective. The former is a matter of legitimate personal preference and the latter, twisted logic. This reminds me of what philosophers and logicians call the *ad hominem* fallacy. That's where one argues with someone by attacking the characteristics of a person rather than the merits of that person's argument. We all do this; it's basic human nature.

I think many of us have already taken a position on Parelli and it is actually quite difficult to set that pre-conceived opinion aside and consider the merits of the techniques as applied to your own situation. It is really quite hard to maintain an open mind and healthy skepticism, the lazier approach is always to fall back on pre-manufactured opinions, be they opinions we manufactured for ourselves or, more frequently, manufactured by other people or institutions.

Anyway, stepping off the soap box, many of you know that one of the trademarks of the Parelli technique is the four-foot stick with the attached string—the "carrot stick" as they are often named because of their orange color. I don't know if Pat Parelli invented the stick technique or just made it popular, but his technique is very much associated with those sticks. As an individual, Pat Parelli is appropriately catalogued with other "horse whisperers," that elite group of clinicians and trainers who are highly skilled in the ways of so-called natural horsemanship.

So, I can't help but think, might this horse-whisperer Pat Parelli have been influenced by, of all people, the "Rough-Rider" President Teddy Roosevelt who stated, famously:

"Speak softly and carry a big stick".

Mark and his DQ wife Cheryl live near Graton with their horses Tucker and Sophie and a menagerie of other critters.



## Readers Write

# Competing with a Conscience

Written by Chris Ellsworth

Competing with our horses can be a good thing so long as we remember who it is we are really competing with. And who we are not. And most especially that our horses aren't competing at all.

Regardless of your chosen pursuit, competition can heighten awareness of where you really are with your horse and sharpen your focus concerning those things you and your horse need to improve upon. If you can maintain your objectivity, being seen or judged through someone else's eyes (or stopwatch) can be an important tool for getting better. Maybe you can visit with a show judge and ask him what he saw when he watched you and your horse. It's only an opinion and you're free to disregard it but perhaps it will carry a grain of truth that can help you in the future. This is the positive side of competing: learning from others, focusing on what you need to do to improve, and measuring the progress of your own, personal horsemanship journey.

But the show-ring has a dark side, too. We've all seen it: folks who'll do anything to win and other folks who'll applaud them for it, folks who don't win and blame their horses for it, and folks who win but don't know when to stop. A person can get lost on this darker side of the show pen and when that happens it's usually the horse that gets stuck in the darkest corners.

Sometimes when I travel I take along the skeletal mount of a horse leg. The bones come from the top gymkhana horse in Montana for several years running. This horse lived out his retirement years hobbling around on our ranch and after he died I put this mount together to show folks what happens when you over-use and under-prepare a horse for his job. His bones are gnarled and grotesquely misshapen by degenerative arthritis. I wish I could've asked that horse if he thought his ribbons were worth it but I



Chris and Pancakes

think I know the answer (hint: you can't eat them...).

Pressure to win rather than encouragement to learn leads to other sorts of nonsense too: ropers who yank on their horses' mouths when they miss, show jumpers that rear before entering the arena (think he's not trying to tell you something?) and little kids in tears behind the barn at the fairgrounds. Even more heart-breaking to me is to see a parent take their vicarious failures out on their child, who then takes it out on his horse.

When I was a teenager I got a job as a groom/exercise rider for a show string. I remember a horse from those days named Davitt, who developed a mysterious limp that only occurred when he entered the show ring. This Morgan park horse was always shown by the head trainer who thought Davitt was clever but a "dirty, cheatin' SOB."

In those days men never posted a trot when showing park horses. The fashion was to lean way back and bounce along

like a jackhammer. Presumably this look was to appear more manly and impressive, right down to the jaunty toothpick clamped in the corner of the mouth. It did not, however, impress Davitt. Looking back with older, wiser eyes I don't see a "dirty, cheatin' SOB." I don't even see Davitt being particularly clever. What I see is a horse with his belly clenched so tight he could hardly move his hind legs. I see a horse who knew that once inside the show ring the good riding stopped and the jackhammering began. I see a horse who knew that fashion hurts.

It's been many years since I've been inside a show ring or a rodeo arena. I've seen what can happen there. I prefer to let my horse judge me. He knows better than anyone if I've done well. If I can get beneath his hide and truly be one with him, if I can reach that heavenly spot where our thoughts happen together and everything flows without resistance—that's my blue ribbon. And his.

But competition with others isn't inherently bad. The problems that come with it are really inside of us, the humans, as are the solutions. So show. Compete. Get in there and ride on the bright side. Use it to learn and grow. But don't get your horse stuck in a dark corner just to win. It's not about winning to him. It's about getting better. Ride fair!

*Chris Ellsworth has spent a lifetime working with horses and riders of all kinds, including competitors. He will be bringing his "horse conscience" to the Greater Bay Area, including Healdsburg, for clinics in July and October. Contact Sylvie Anacker at (415) 309-0162 or [asorges@gmail.com](mailto:asorges@gmail.com) for more information. Chris's website is [www.chearthorses.com](http://www.chearthorses.com).*



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## Readers Write

# If I Didn't Have a Horse

Written by Sadé Cain

If I didn't have a horse  
I would be hair blowing through the wind of my orange Lamborghini  
I could jet set across the country, and vacation across the wide oceans  
I should have endless time to make plans with friends, and work out, at normal gyms  
I would look perfect 90% of the time.

If I didn't have a horse  
I would run in corporate circles, trying to be the best in the office  
I would day dream out my big presidential window of my seventieth floor Manhattan suite  
I could buy all my favorite shoes (as they were coming into season, not three seasons later)  
I should embrace my life, as an endless fountain of lust, envy and greed.

If I didn't have a horse  
How empty would I be?  
Would I understand responsibility, and have generosity?  
Can I love others, and eventually love me?  
Should I run and hide, to avoid animosity?

Yes, it's true, if I didn't have a horse I would have all these things...  
But, I wouldn't have met a soul mate that could mirror me for me  
I wouldn't, couldn't, shouldn't imagine a life so empty  
As a horse gives their heart, and asks for nothing better  
So quiet they stare, their eyes say it all  
Come to me they whisper, and like dominoes, we all fall.  
Obsessed in this fantasy, the mystery is slayed.

If I didn't have a horse, to hold me at bay  
The fantasy is true, in this wild world we choose  
One love, all love is so full and so true. Like no other sport, to contest to this truth,  
A horse is of course the most beautiful...

FLIGHT INSTINCTIVE, BONNET WEARING, ADEQUAN NEEDING, MORE DENTAL TRIPS THEN I HAVE EVER HAD, DESIGNER BLANKET WEARING, MASSAGE NEEDING, SHOES MONTHLY, SADDLE ADJUSTMENTS NEEDED CUZ THEY GREW MUSCLE, GRAIN HOARDING, SUPPLEMENT ABUSING, FOOD INHALING, BANK BREAKING...

...gem of all time.

Love your pony!

*Sade Cain has a degree in Equine Science. She is currently studying more about riders with disabilities, and is a therapeutic riding instructor under the guidance and mentorship of Maxine Freitas at Equi-Ed, located in Calistoga. In her spare time, when not competing and teaching, you can find Sade relaxing with friends and horses on the beach or in the local parks.*



*Sadé and Zelos*



## Reader's Write

# Endurance

Written by Tony Benedetti



Tony and Crickett (right) with Tony's wife Terry

It is called Endurance Riding, and it is different things to different people. Technically, endurance riding is a long distance horse race of fifty, seventy-five, or one hundred miles; first horse to finish wins. Some people ride endurance competitively, but many, if not most, ride endurance to just enjoy time with their horse, see beautiful scenery, and gain a sense of accomplishment by riding long distances.

Many people believe one of the most prestigious endurance rides in the world is the Tevis Cup 100 mile in one day ride which is held here in California. It starts in Truckee, traverses the Sierra Nevadas, and ends in Auburn. There is also the Florac in France, the Tom Quilty Cup in Australia, and the Old Dominion in Virginia—all famous hundred-mile races. Right here in Sonoma County, a person can compete in several fifty-mile endurance rides. I regularly compete in northern California and western Nevada with an occasional trip to Oregon or Idaho.

At the most competitive level, endurance is about speed. Some of the fastest 160 km (100 mile) races have been held in Dubai and have been won in less than six hours. At the international level, world championships are held every two years with the next one in 2014 in Normandy, France. These competitions are governed by the Federal Equestrian International (FEI), and allow for individual and team competition between countries. The United States dominated endurance at the international level in the 1980s and 1990. In recent years, UAE, France, and Spain have been the most competitive countries.

I started riding endurance in 1975 at the age of thirteen, when my mother asked if I wanted to join her in competing in competitive trail riding and endurance. I am now in my thirty-eighth season of competing—so I guess I do enjoy endurance. I like that I spend enumerable hours riding my horse. I see countryside and views that I would never see otherwise, and I get to compete with horses. Because I became involved in the international part of endurance, I have traveled to France, Dubai, Malaysia, Australia, Canada, and all over the United States competing, coaching, or crewing. I now have friends all over the world who share with me the love of horses and endurance.

More recently, I switched my focus back to the local rides and to Tevis in particular. I can go to a ride and be competitive, or I can ride fifty miles at a leisurely pace, enjoy my horse, enjoy the mountains, and have fun with friends. My point is that there is something for everyone, at every level. One of my short term goals is to travel to southern Utah and compete in a multiday ride in Bryce Canyon. People tell me the scenery in gorgeous.

Endurance is all about the relationship with your horse, whether you want to race or just ride fifty miles. It is about conditioning your horse to a level that he/she can complete a fifty or hundred-mile ride safely. The bond you create when conditioning your horse is amazing. One of my most memorable experiences was when I was seventeen years old and I rode the Virginia City hundred-mile ride in Nevada. It was my first one hundred-mile ride. I started at 5am and rode all day. I had four miles to go, it was about 11pm, and the road was winding along the side of the mountain giving me glimpses of the lights of Virginia City. It seemed like it took forever to actually get to the city finish, and the whole time, I kept thanking my horse Crickett for such a wonderful experience.

If there is one thing that I tell people about endurance, it is that nothing is more important than the horse. It is a difficult sport and the sense of achievement is amazing and gratifying, but every decision has to be based on the welfare of the horse. Endurance rides have multiple vet checks to make sure that the horses can safely continue down the trail. The motto of the American Endurance Ride Conference is "to finish is to win". The welfare of the horse must be paramount in this sport of endurance riding.

I just gave you a taste of what endurance riding has to offer; from local to international. If you want to spend time with your horse, see amazing country, and gain a real sense of achievement, try endurance.



*Tony Benedetti was born in Sonoma County and has been a life-long equestrian. He started in the sport of endurance thirty-eight years ago and still competes today. He has completed such 100 mile rides as the Tom Quilty Gold Cup in Australia and the Tevis Cup ride here in California. Recently, Tony has competed one of his endurance horses in Dressage. He is a past member of the Sonoma County Horse Council Board and a current member of the Western States Trail Foundation Board of Governors.*



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## Readers Write

# It's Not About the Height

Written by Jackie Skvaril, MD

Why compete?

You may ask me this question, a valid one, knowing my situation. You know that I am a middle aged woman with three school aged children. This lends itself to the inevitable chaos of school schedules, chauffeurism, last minute trips out in the night for school supplies, lost item crises, and the like. You know that I also hold a demanding job, caring for sick and ill people and attending to the needs, questions, and anxieties of close family members. You may think, why does she add the stress of competition to her busy schedule? What is she trying to achieve? We all know she doesn't have the time, skill, or years left to make it to the Olympics, World Cup, or year-end finals. I mean, if we were being realistic.

When I started back to riding as a much younger, but well-seasoned adult, I was essentially starting as if I had never ridden before. I had taken horseback riding lessons for a grand total of three years in grade school and attended two or three schooling shows. I remember one class where there were only two of us competing against each other, and the judge asked us an anatomy question of the horse, presumably to break the tie, and I took second. I was not getting anywhere near the hours of time and practice and horse showing that the young girls I currently ride with are fortunate enough to experience. When I asked Dad, not too long ago, why I didn't continue riding in high school, since I am obviously making up for lost time now, he said, "It was just too far to drive you." I must not have been creative enough to push the issue, look into bus schedules and nearby barns.

Coming back to riding as an adult, therefore, was a lifelong desire. I suppose, in the beginning, I went to horse shows on the trainer's suggestion. It was the thing to do with other adults who were also taking lessons at the time. In Sacramento, we would sign up for local schooling shows, take the most likely-to-be-successful school horse in several cross rail jumping classes, and go home. It was a lot of bang for the buck. But as I stayed in the sport longer, I was encouraged to go to more competitive shows, B- and later A-rated Hunter Jumper shows held at increasingly distant venues. My family moved to Santa Rosa and I found myself competing locally, all throughout northern California, Bend, Oregon, Tucson, Arizona and recently Thermal, California. In the beginning, nerves were the biggest obstacle to jump. It's too bad we have to experience the pain and discomfort of show nerves. We are terrorized by the idea of going into that arena and demonstrating the infantile skills we have mastered in front of a handful of strangers. My God! We



Jackie and Ana

could fall off. In front of everyone. My husband once commented that he felt sorry for me when I was having a hard time getting the horse to jump all eight jumps in succession and was subsequently demoted to such a low fence height that many of my fellow competitors were under the age of twelve and on ponies. We definitely don't do this sport as amateurs to build our own egos. There are thousands of skills to be learned to compete successfully at a horse show. One must also master how the show is run. In the Hunter Jumper world, I must leave most of my day open, although

my time in front of the judge may total three to four minutes. I needed to learn, and practice over and over again, how to be show ready, eg pack the hunt coat, show shirts, gloves, spurs, crop, hat, boot polish, sunscreen, show pad, equitation boots, saddle, bridle, bran mash, carrots, and rags. Then, there is the skill of learning the Jumper course. The Hunter course becomes familiar rather quickly, consisting generally of eight single fences, two outside lines, two diagonal lines, and a finishing circle. Transitioning to memorizing Jumper courses was not so easy. These consist of fourteen to eighteen fences put together in an infinite series of combinations: straight lines, bending lines, roll back turns, long gallops, and the sneaky direct lines to the angled fence which will save three seconds on the overall time. The map of the course will end up looking like a spaghetti noodle twisted around and back and forth over itself many different ways. It took me studying the course diagram several times, riding it in my mind. Then I watch other competitors riding it, preferably 100 times, before I could feel that I had it down. In the beginning, there was, unfortunately, the inevitable forgotten fence.

There's something about the adrenaline of horse shows that demands more focus and awareness. It is easy to feel relaxed and happy at home taking a lesson on a beautiful morning. In competition, however, I know that I am there to give this round of jumps my best effort. I think to myself, "Give her your leg. She deserves a great ride.



Telestar's Anastacia

Contact with her mouth." Competition brings under the microscope those areas that bear improvement. The roll back turn to the oxer must be better organized, arriving straight on at the base. The lead changes must be clean, every time. I must be more balanced on the landing side of the jump and collect my horse's body in one to two strides, no more. The corner turns must be more precise, well bent and balanced, in order to make that fence coming up, forty feet away, light, airy and above all, straight. Inevitably, we bring home our areas of weakness, now well identified for more scrutiny, drills and improvement work. Every horse show identifies mostly new—sometimes old—problem areas. That is progress. That is one of the main reasons I compete: to accelerate my growth and improvement. Recently, I've tried to hawk back to imaginative powers of my childhood, and pretend I am at a horse show when I am riding at home. Give it my all. Give it my best.

As an adult, it is most valuable to make mental notes of my own successes. For me, it has less to do with the ribbons than with my own acknowledgement of personal bests. I memorize courses much more easily now. My horse left all the rails up on that course. We had no rails down the entire horse show. Our lead changes were smooth and balanced. There was quite a bit less bulging in the turns. We all know we can lay down the ride of our life and place fourth, because three other people had the ride of their lives and were faster. Or the kid on the pony racing around lightening fast, leaving out strides and generally looking like a disaster on four legs was much faster than we were.

Winning the class is not really the point. The point is personal best. Mastery of the skill. Controlling show nerves. Ease of memorizing complicated courses. Good distances to the fences. Straight horse. My partner and I are dancing the Hunter Jumper dance together.

We are improving.

We are having fun.

*Jackie Skvaril is a practicing internist in Santa Rosa, married and the mother of three school aged children. She and her horse, Telstar's Anastacia, compete in the Jumper divisions and trail ride together in the parks of Sonoma County.*



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## A Horseman's View

Column editor Toora Nolan

# Get the Most Out of Your Schooling Show Experience

Spring has sprung and the 2013 show season is well underway! I am lucky to train at an active facility, the Santa Rosa Equestrian Center, where we have schooling shows scheduled throughout the year. I encourage my clients to participate in these shows often because both horse and rider can gain valuable experience in a friendly environment, and at a fraction of the cost of a rated show.

First things first: horse and rider need to get dressed up, and be on time for the party! Attire at schooling shows is generally more casual than at a sanctioned competition, but it's still important to show respect for the judge by making sure you and your horse look as tidy as possible. Formal dress is always accepted, but you can still look the part in light colored breeches, a collared shirt, tall boots or paddock boots with half chaps, hairnet, gloves, and don't forget your belt! Your horse should be gleaming, with his mane neatly pulled. If your braiding skills aren't up to par, schooling shows are the perfect time to practice.

A big source of stress for many riders is budgeting time. You and your horse should be at the ring in a punctual manner. I suggest writing out a schedule so you know exactly what you need to be doing, and when. Nothing's worse than struggling with your hairnet while your horse is fidgeting in the cross ties, and your coach was expecting you in the warm-up arena ten minutes ago! Remember to include in your timeline things like eating breakfast (for you and your horse!), checking in at the show office, and walking your course.

At a Dressage show, I generally have my students ride two tests. Some people like to memorize one test and perform it twice, using the second attempt to fix any mistakes that may have occurred in the first ride. However, many horses are quick to memorize the pattern after only a few repetitions, in which case you should choose different tests in order to keep your horse tuned into you and avoid him anticipating the movements. If you and your horse are confirmed in the show ring at your current level, a schooling show is a great environment to try moving up a level to see how your partnership handles the added difficulty. This can be a great gauge for whether more homework needs to be done, or better yet, if you are both ready to move up at the next rated show.

At a Jumper schooling show, I find that the greener horses and riders generally benefit from doing up to three classes, as it can take a few rounds for them to find the right balance, timing, and bravery while competing over a new course. Have a plan for how you're going to familiarize your horse with the arena before you



A young horse's first show

start your course, so that he's able to have a glance at any spooky jumps, flowers, or the dreaded judge's booth before you head towards the first fence.

See if you can have a friend video your rides. More and more, I've been using my smartphone to record my student's round so they can quickly watch to see which lines worked well, where they might need to add a little half halt, or when a tighter leg position could have saved them a rail. Either way, it's a great tool for visual learners to be able to improve from one class to the next.

Here's to an educational, successful, and fun 2013 season! I hope to see you at the next show.

*Toora Nolan 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)*



Josh Barnacle on Florestan du Serin

## Big Pasture Project

The Santa Rosa Equestrian Center, when it was known as Oakridge Training Stables, hosted United States Eventing Association sanctioned events through the Intermediate level. Hundreds of horses would compete in the horse trials, enjoying a beautiful Cross Country course built on irrigated turf. Over the past few years, the course has been neglected and we have lost a lot of the wonderful Cross Country questions that used to be accessible for schooling. Fortunately, a group of excited volunteers have recently come together to rebuild our course! Goals for this year include a conditioning track around the perimeter of the field, renovating the surface and banks in and around the water complex, and a huge amount of work on the footing: removing gophers, filling holes, and aerovating the turf.

We're already off to a great start, but the Big Pasture Project needs donations of time, supplies, and funds! If you're interested in helping, please "like" the Big Pasture Project on Facebook, or contact me at [toora@raydianceeventing.com](mailto:toora@raydianceeventing.com) or 707-292-8365.

## Readers Write

## My Superstar

Written by Jodie Barnes

How do you gauge a life, really? Sometimes it's easy. Some lives are splattered on the cover of Time magazine for their tremendous achievements, like Secretariat or Seabiscuit. Or they are commended for their unbelievable courage and fighting heart like Barbaro. Well, this isn't a story of a national superstar, this is simply a story of my horse who is my superstar...a hero, and the best friend I could ever have.

My horse's name is Royal (DIL Royal Flush). He is a fifteen-two bay Morgan gelding whose name speaks volumes for who he is. In Webster's dictionary the name Royal is described as "pertaining to a king or queen, or descended from or related to a king or line of kings; or a royal prince." So to put matters frankly, he is special. And although his name suggests he could be an arrogant jerk, and even though he has won a Grand Champion title, he remains modest. He is simply ... princely. His Sire, RJM Pardon My French, won many National Championships. His dam, DIL Sara May, was of humble breeding.

I met Royal on April 6th, 2004 when he was three. At that time, everything in my life seemed to be falling apart. Growing up I had spent my life around horses, first riding at age two. But this isn't a story about my childhood, this is the story of a miracle horse who was sent to me from the Great Divine to save my life.

In 2004, I had a job that paid the bills, but the job was stressful and taking its toll. At one point I had so much stress that I had chest pain that I thought was a heart attack. I also developed vertigo due to fatigue. All this was compounded by the death of a very close Grandmother. I had a supportive relationship, but even that wasn't enough to keep me from spiraling into a depression so deep that I just wanted to end it all.

Then came the phone call that would change my life. My mother told me she had a three year old gelding she wanted to sell in California. The horse would need to be started and shown the basics. Would I be interested in working with him? I told her I would have to discuss it with my partner and would get back to her. When I hung up the phone I felt something stir in me that I hadn't felt in a long time ...Hope.

Royal arrived in April 2004. I knew the moment he arrived, when my eyes met his, I wanted to live again; I knew there would be no selling him because he was mine. It's like that sometimes, when

you are struck dumb with the knowledge of something bigger than you are. I ended up buying Royal from my folks for one dollar. It's been the best buck I've ever spent. I'm sure my folks knew it might turn out the way it did, or maybe the Divine whispered in their ears for me. I don't know and don't care.



Jodie and Royal

Now to say the road with my Savior horse has been easy would be a lie, for he was a bit broken himself. With the help of many special people, I discovered he apparently suffered a shoulder injury at the age of eight months, which put him in a crooked frame. But like all spiritual beings, he probably knew what he was doing. He knew that by learning to heal him I would be healing myself, too. See, I couldn't wallow in myself anymore, I was too busy spending time with my new friend. I would teach him something and then he would teach me. I learned about ligaments, muscles, and tendons, and their functions. Because of him, I became a certified horse masseuse, learned level two Reiki, acupressure, and Bach remedies, as well as better nutrition and corrective shoeing. He was there for me when I left that stressful job to pursue horse massage. And supported me when my relationship of twelve years ended. When I make mistakes, stupid ones, he forgives me and loves me all the more. For him I would do anything: pass up that new fancy jacket so he can have a new blanket, postpone my dental cleanings so his pearly whites can be balanced, forgo my new shoes so he can have a new pair every six weeks. Any horse gal or guy who has this kind of relationship with their mighty steed knows exactly what I'm talking about. Because this relationship is one that you would do anything for. It taught me about unconditional love, patience, and gave me the strength to keep fighting the fight. Royal saved me a fortune in therapy, and is much better than sitting on a hard couch staring across a room at a stranger.

So how do you gauge a life such as this one? I can't, because how can you gauge a life that has saved yours and continues to do it every day? I'm eternally grateful for my Royal, my pampered Prince, my Savior ....my Superstar. Now ...screw the weather, hot or cold, and go hug your horse.

*Jodie Barnes has lived in Sonoma County for eighteen years. She has trained horses in Saddle Seat, Western, Halter, and Driving for state, national, and international competitions. In 2006 she became a Certified Equine Body Worker and her biggest client has been DIL Royal Flush.*

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## Readers Write

# College Team Puts Sonoma County on the Map: SSU Equestrian Team

Written by Sarah Reid

Commonly in the equestrian world we think of "team" as the partnership between the horse and rider. This is a story of teamwork: a "joint action by a group of people, in which individual interests are subordinated to group unity and efficiency" (Webster's New World Dictionary). Meet the Sonoma State University (SSU) Equestrian Team—a group of students who come together because of love of horses and competition with horses, but who are the epitome of team within their group. They represent the type of thoughtful, balanced practice and perspective that we in Sonoma County strive for.

### History and background

In 2008, a five member team was established to represent Sonoma State University in the Intercollegiate Horse Show Association (IHSA) competition circuit. Today there are twenty-five members representing three disciplines: Three-Day Eventing, Huntseat Equitation (flat classes and over fences) and Western (both regular flat classes and Reining). According to the IHSA website, "IHSA provides collegiate riders of all skills the opportunity to compete individually and as teams in equestrian competition. It was founded on the principle that any college student should be able to participate in horse shows regardless of his or her riding ability or financial status." The colleges and universities involved in IHSA provide riding coaches and mounts—school horses either stabled at the universities, or provided by nearby riding establishments. The rules, which insure that all competitors face the same conditions, focus judging exclusively on riding and horsemanship skills. IHSA was founded in 1967 and spans college campuses across the USA. The current SSU Team competes with eight UC schools in northern and central California, and University of Nevada/Reno.

Shelly Davis, one of the co-founders of the SSU Team and currently a volunteer coach, says that starting the team was more "individuals coming together (for community) than for competition ... it



Elizabeth Grewal on Stella Rose

isn't to get together for competitions then go home." She sees this as a second level of the college experience; that the students have a "story later in life of what they did in college." Shelly and two other students found each other through facebook and recruited other SSU students to join them in developing the team.

### The team members

The current team roster reads like a "who-done-what" on horseback. Many students have ridden all

through childhood, but some have only just started their journey on horseback. The newest male member has recently joined as a first-time rider, hoping to grow with the team. His future goal is to compete as a pentathlete one day. He has committed to three lessons per week this semester in the Western discipline. Though most members were raised on horseback, "many people sell their horses before going off to college," says Tori Sladek. The team gives students the opportunity to return to riding while attending SSU. Only one member currently owns and shows her own horse, Elizabeth Grewal, who Three-Day Events. She juggles her schedule, which includes lessons in three different disciplines, and her classes. She needs three separate show wardrobes! She plans to continue showing all summer with her horse. Tori describes the team as more like a sorority, since that is what folks are familiar with. "We are like sisters in our own sorority."

### Hard work and commitment

Qualifications for SSU Equestrian Team membership are extensive and require a huge level of time and dedication by each student, much more than most adults are willing to commit. Each student must be enrolled in at least twelve units per semester, attend at least one gym day a week, provide team dues, attend a membership meeting once a week (officers have an additional meeting each week), participate in team fund raising activities, and take a minimum of one riding lesson a week. For those participating in Reining or over-fence competition, a minimum of two lessons per

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week are required. Outside the school semesters, summer time is not a downtime: students are required to continue taking lessons each week. There are a number of committees and officer positions. Being a team member also pretty much requires being on a committee or serving as an officer, as well. Committees include: Activities, Publicity, Major Events, and Fund Raising. The club is run by a full roster of officers, including a Safety Officer and a Standards Officer. Each spring semester the focus is on new officer training and fundraising for the next competition year. Fall semester signals the beginning of competitions, which are held on most weekends through February. Members of alternate disciplines serve as grooms and crew for the discipline showing that weekend.

### The mounts

Unlike most of us who work with the specific horse we are to show, these students must draw for the mount for each class. That requires training on a variety of horses so they can quickly sum up the personality of the horse drawn at the show. The team does have cheat-sheets for each horse, and they "share information among the team about the horses. You have to know what you are doing wrong and find a chance to fix it before being told by your trainer," says Shira. Shira recalls the first horse she drew to ride at her first show, "He just wouldn't go. It's luck of the draw." She drew him again for another class that day. She says, "You always have another chance next time." Tori says, "It's not always your horse, you can't blame yourself or your horse. We never say anything bad about the horses."



Tori Sladek showing Western

### Shows and judges

Members can opt to be non-showing for their first year, but must show the second year to be on the competitive team. Shira says, this is "a team sport, so points count to the team, not the individual." Judges give notes to the riders at each show, which helps other riders know the judges and individuals to improve for their next rides. Judges may only judge one event per semester, so it can take several years for team members to see what each

judge is "looking for." Information cards on individual judges help the team members as well. For a particular class, if there are several team members who qualify, coaches and trainers may choose which rider gets to show by pulling the rider "points card." This card reflects the level of activity and participation of that person with the team—the more active and involved member gets that spot in the class, thus more opportunity to show.

### Vision

Team members set a goal to fundraise enough to pay for all members' show fees, often \$35 per class. Their biggest event was a wine and food pairing in April, though fund raising is on-going. Shelly "would love to see the team expand and be at a facility of its own to flourish." To support the SSU Equestrian Team, please contact them one of the following ways: [www.facebook.com/ssuequestrian](http://www.facebook.com/ssuequestrian), [www.ssuequestrian.com](http://www.ssuequestrian.com), [ssuequestrian@gmail.com](mailto:ssuequestrian@gmail.com) or Sonoma State Equestrian Club, 1801 E. Cotati Ave, Rohnert Park CA, 94928



The SSU Equestrian Team

### SSU Equestrian Team

#### Our Purpose:

- To encourage further education of horsemanship and equine competition
- To promote IHSA and WCCEL's riding disciplines and styles
- To develop a competitive equestrian team on an individual and team level
- To give all SSU students a chance to participate in equestrian activities
- To promote good sportsmanship, a positive attitude, quality leadership, and team spirit in a competitive environment
- To participate in Sonoma's equine community by hosting and attending local events
- To encourage an all around healthy lifestyle

(source: [www.ssuequestrian.com](http://www.ssuequestrian.com))



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Sarah Reid (*Equus* Hall of Fame-2012) boards her horse at Petaluma Hill Stables, training ground of the SSU Huntseat Team, and has enjoyed four years of getting to know the team members. SSU Western team members train at Peter Larson Training Stables.

## Spitting Sand—A Learner's Journey

Column editor Jessica Boyd

# I Am My Own Best Competition

Competition means different things to different people and horses come hard-wired with a genetic mission to compete with one another—for food, the best mate, and hierarchy in the herd. Competition in nature—even human nature—is a healthy, necessary thing, a drive to be the best which ultimately (in theory) benefits the species as a whole. Most of us humans are competitive at some level, though it can manifest in completely different ways and areas depending on what drives us. My ambition seems to be less about ribbons and more about the journey and that is not necessarily a new thing.



*Jessica and Calabar*

Back when I was younger and thought I was taller, I rowed on my high school crew team. I was competitive, but really only as it fit into being part of a synchronized group effort. The teamwork was a huge part of the draw for me—the thing that kept me getting up early, running stairs at Cal Berkeley stadium and pushing my body to do just as much as it could with its 5'3" self. It felt amazing when the boat would swing steadily with the power of eight oars—eight women completely balanced and moving together.

But I was not immediately an integral part of the boat, no. This was my very first introduction to team sports outside of regular PE classes and it was about a notch and a half above that. Not only was I small, I started my freshman year underweight, not very physically strong and with a cardiovascular system not prepared for any of this. The first run around Lake Merritt took me forever and there was a lot of walking along the way. Why my coach didn't cut me is a mystery, but every time I circled the lake, I walked a little less and made the loop a little faster until I could do the run in the allotted time. I was never one of the speedier runners, but I always got it done and I always tried to be a little better each time. Eventually, I made it into the Varsity boat basically because everyone knew I'd always give it my best and never stop trying to improve my performance with each race.

Calabar has needed a little more convincing, but we're getting there.

My team of two still has the same goal—that swing, the moment of suspension when both of us are doing the same thing at the same time, neither is in the other's way, and it's all working. Watching other riders is great, but comparing myself to them is not useful. I have to learn to feel, to improve on the prior ride, and move on from there. If I spent time judging my riding against those around me, I'd be too busy to focus on what I need to be doing. And I need to be thinking about what I'm doing lest I end up in the dirt again, says Calabar. No more dirt, says I, affixing Velcro to my butt just in case.

And so I ride—making mistakes, feeling him respond to the mistakes and correcting my input to get better output from both of us. I am not nearly as far away from the necessary fitness level this

time and do my part with yoga and stretching so my own body is—at the very least—not arguing with itself and, on our better days, is actually balanced and strong and out of his way.

I am my own worst critic, my own toughest competition. I don't care if I ride better than someone else, as long as I ride better than I did yesterday. Sometimes I succeed and sometimes I don't. Sometimes it's a matter of just getting up there and trying my best

so we can nudge the bar forward—even if it's just by the tiniest amount. No one else sets goals for us and we have no looming deadlines. It's just us with time and patience and many more things to try along our way to whatever comes next.

In other words, it is—as it's always been—about the journey and what can be learned and improved upon along the way—not compared to someone else, but from inside of yourself. Thank goodness for my big brown mirror or I might forget to look at the right thing—me.

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





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*Readers Write*

## Dreams Come True for the Young at Heart

Written by Judy McHerron

Competitions are not just for the young, The US Dressage Foundation (USDF) offers the Century Club which recognizes Dressage riders and horses whose combined age totals 100 years or more. Horse and rider perform a Dressage test, at a Dressage show or event, and are scored by a Dressage judge or professional. They receive recognition and an award.

The shows for riding the Century Club ride do not have to be recognized and the test can be at any level of Dressage including the USDF introductory walk trot tests. There will be a schooling Dressage show Sunday, October 20 at Hoofbeat Park in Healdsburg which will offer the opportunity. The Hoofbeat Park schooling Dressage shows put on by Eqwine Events and Judy McHerron have been offering the opportunity to compete in a relaxed, supportive, fun environment for over twenty-one years. One rider in Sonoma County, Kit Carson, will be turning seventy-five in October and has now made it her goal to compete for the Century Club Award riding Hattie, Judy McHerron's wonderfully seasoned twenty-five year old Appendix Quarter Horse.

Kit grew up in southern California, and dreamed of being a cowgirl after getting her first western outfit on her fourth birthday. Her father introduced her to horses and she enjoyed rides in and around Griffith Park in Burbank. For the next fifty years there were no horses in her city and traveling life. But then, at age sixty-eight, a horse that needed a person came her way. Hesitant to take on a horse she said yes to Dakota, a wonderful Draft mix/Warmblood that she has thoroughly enjoyed for six years, and is now seventeen. Kit is devoted to learning all she can about horses, and does not believe it is necessary to ride a horse in order to enjoy the special qualities such a relationship can offer. Just last year Kit rode a twenty-two year old mule, Odie, in her first play day and had so much fun that when she heard about the Century Club ride, she decided to try for it. Kit is learning Dressage from Judy and her seasoned mare Hattie, who is wonderfully trained, calm, and educated and will move off of the leg so easily that Kit feels safe and confident. As one gets older a calm horse who moves easily off the leg can make all the difference in one's plans to ride and compete.

Hattie was purchased by Judy in Texas twenty-three years ago as an unbroke two year old. Judy started her under saddle and she was purchased by one of her students who was a member of the United States Pony Club (USPC). This rider went on to successfully pass

*Odie & Kit*

her C3 certification on Hattie, and then passed her on to another student, Katey B, who took Hattie to the USPC National Eventing Championships at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington in 1998. Katey and Hattie went on to pass the B certification in Pony Club, which includes an extensive oral exam on horse management and care, riding a 1st level Dressage test and jumping a 3'6" Stadium and Cross Country course, the equivalent of riding at the Preliminary Level with the United States Eventing Association. What great accomplishments.

As students were heading off to college, Hattie was up for sale. While on a trip home to visit her mother, Judy was asked, "What would you like for your birthday?" Jokingly, Judy replied "A horse, you never bought me one as a kid." So with that Judy's mom helped purchase Hattie back. That was over thirteen years ago and has been using her to teach riding on ever since. Hattie seems to know just what her riders need. She has taught numerous people of all ages to ride, from four year olds to grandmothers, happily going on a trail ride around the vineyard or jumping any fence.

The love of horses is like a disease with no cure, sometimes it goes into remission, sometimes it disappears, and sometimes it comes back. Horses can be enjoyed for a lifetime in many different capacities, at any age. It is important to get and keep the young people involved with horses, which cannot be stressed enough. They are the future for the horse in this country: a country that was built with the horse. Horses contribute to our health and well being, bringing us outdoors, providing the opportunity for leadership, social, communication and partnership skills. As Kit can tell you, horses are good for the soul for anyone of any age.

*Judy McHerron has been teaching and making a difference for people and horses in Sonoma County since 1998. She is an adjunct faculty member at the SRJC Equine Science department, a United States Pony Club National Examiner and an SCHC Equus Award winner. She is available for lessons on her horses or yours. You can reach her at 707-431-2920 or [www.judymcherron.com](http://www.judymcherron.com).*

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## Readers Write

## Optimizing your Partnership

Written by Lily Baker-Lubin

## • Part I: Interview with Sue Curry Shaffer

As a student of Dressage, horsemanship, and the movement sciences, I am always eager to learn from experts. This helps me to grow as a Pilates instructor and an athlete, and help my clients achieve their best. Recently I had the privilege of interviewing expert Sue Curry Shaffer, USEF "S" Judge and FEI \*\*\* Para Equestrian Judge about what she looks for in competition.

Sue is the founder and co-owner of Fairwind Farm in Santa Rosa. She has competed for over twenty years and has had multiple horses in the top ten nationally. She has coached many riders and horses up through the FEI levels. Sue is known for teaching with compassion, empathy, and advocacy. She is sought after as a judge and clinician throughout the US. Sue commented with Axel Steiner at one of the nation's most prestigious Dressage competitions, The Dressage Affaire, in Del Mar in March, 2013.

***As a judge who sees many riders in the show ring, can you describe the attributes that create an effective, harmonious rider?***

What makes a rider able to ride with harmony and balance to create a lovely partnership? Conversely what makes it appear as though the horse is literally a beast of burden? Two pictures immediately come to my mind. The first is what you are asking about: a beautiful partnership of a horse and rider confidently entering the arena with cadenced steps, straightness, suppleness, acceptance of the bit—a horse and rider working harmoniously as one. They make a well-prepared transition which actually ends up at X in balance and with immobility. The rider's hands are quiet, elastic, and independent. Aids are imperceptible, and the rider's legs encouraging and supportive. The horse, without resistance, promptly and happily trots forward towards the judge in balance and with pride.

Sadly, another picture can be an unhappy horse and frustrated rider entering at A with tension and resistance. The horse is tossing his head in protest, quarters to the left or right (or both!), head high, back low, teeth grinding, mouth open, and in obvious discomfort. After a halt which never reaches immobile, the rider uses the whip and continues down the track with legs flapping and spurs inadvertently banging against the horse's sides. The rider is using the horse's mouth as a balancing point and hanging on for dear life. The horse is above the bit with his mouth open trying to protect the sensitive nerve endings in his mouth.

***So, what can a rider do to create positive, clear aids to better affect their horses?***

Riding position plays a large role. Correct alignment and good posture are essential. Certainly there are riders who are born with a gift of impeccable timing and equestrian tact. But even the most gifted riders must work hard to bring out their best.

Positional errors such as asymmetry, deviation from the vertical line, and going against the mechanics of the gaits can all be avoided with proper, educated instruction and a desire to become



*Gladstone Champions Riana Porter and Romax. Porter is a student and assistant trainer to Sue Curry*

independent with the aids. The effective rider is straight, with even hips and level shoulders. Hip and heel are aligned vertically. Hands maintain a steady elastic contact with the horse's mouth. Only with these basics can a rider clearly communicate with the horse.

Fitness plays a huge part in being able to affect the horse with clarity and empathy. If the rider is struggling against her own body and needs oxygen within the first

minute she has not sufficiently prepared for the rigors of Dressage. Cardiovascular work is important. In addition, Pilates translates well into correct alignment, flexibility, and coordination. It is a joy to teach a rider who is able to isolate, understand, make rapid adjustments, and who is able to feel the changes in their horse immediately.

***I agree with you about Pilates and its benefits. Later in the article I will offer some exercises that will support what you have highlighted for us. Do you ever write comments on the scoring sheet on a rider's position? What's an example?***

I have judged many "creative" examples of Dressage movements. If I have to ask myself, "Could that be travers?" or "Is that the shoulder-in?" then I know the preparation was either misunderstood, unclear, or schooled incorrectly. If the lack of independence of the rider's aids interferes with the proper effect and performance of the horse, I will say so: "Rider needs to improve independence of seat, legs, hands to better affect your horse."

***If you could see a shift or improvement in the riding population as whole what would that be?***

I would love to see more attention to fitness, and for riders to understand that their horses directly reflect what they "say" with their aids. I would like to see:

- More harmony-less tension
- More independence of aids- less pulling
- More reward-less whip
- More education- less abuse
- More giving-less taking
- More kindness-less frustration
- More generosity-less impatience

There is nothing more beautiful and inspiring than a true partnership between a horse and rider well prepared and dancing together in harmony.

**• Part II: Exercises to Improve Position**

With Sue's comments in mind, I have chosen exercises for an independent seat and balance, two interrelated concepts. These exercises will improve a rider's sense of rhythm, precision, kinesthetic awareness, and control. After all, if we cannot control and isolate parts of our own bodies how can we expect our horses to do the

same or for us to be able to move in unison?

Pilates requires focus and awareness for optimal performance. You must be comfortable with critical examination of your weaknesses. While working out, be aware of compensations that might prevent efficient movement patterns (asymmetries you might hear your trainer echo during lessons), and adjust and adapt exercises to create an appropriate challenge level.

#### Exercise one: The independent seat

The Hip Lift is an excellent example of a simple yet challenging exercise that will help you train your body to isolate the movement of the pelvis and low spine from movement of the extremities. I often find that riders will ask for help moving with, rather than against, their horses. Hip Lifts help because they support movement in the primary plane of motion required for an effective seat. You will improve your ability to absorb, influence, and support a horse's movement. Our movement focus will be lumbar spinal flexion with posterior pelvic tilting. Our muscle focus will be lower abdominals and pelvic floor.

Begin on your back with your arms by your side and your feet in the air, legs slightly bent and over your hips. Based on your hamstring flexibility you can adjust the degree of bend in your legs. You should feel no tugging in the back of the leg. Begin with a neutral pelvis (the pubic bone and hip bones should be in the same horizontal plane). Perform a posterior tilt (a movement with just the pelvis in which the pubic bone rotates upward and becomes the highest point in front of the pelvis) and continue that movement until the sacrum begins to lift off of the ground. The leg angle should not change, however your thighs will lift as a consequence of the pelvic movement. Hold for four counts and then slowly control the descent to return to neutral pelvis. Keep your abdominals engaged on both the lift and retrograde. Emphasize the abdominals throughout and avoid the use of momentum to "throw" the legs up or collapsing the legs towards the chest.

Here's a quick modification: Place your hands on the backs of your legs to ensure the legs do not initiate, curl your chest up to watch the movement to correct any compensations, add a diagonal movement with the hips to introduce more specified muscles.

#### Exercise two: Balance

The Knee Balance helps with stabilization. Balancing on an unstable surface helps train our fine motor control. Our

goal is to ride using reins and legs for communication only. I have also found that riders with improved balance feel more confident, less frustrated, and more capable of aiding the horse. Balance exercises should be done as a "functional" activity for riders to assist in transferring proper muscle activation patterns, meaning balancing exercises are rarely performed in isolation. First we condition targeted muscles, and then challenge you to maintain your "new condition" in an exercise that requires balance. For example if you tend to lean back in the saddle and balance on rein contact, we might work on shortening the abdominals and then test your balance in this exercise and see whether you can transfer those skills to a balanced seat (vertical posture with no tension in the arms). Use balancing assists if you feel like you're falling back to compensatory patterns.

To perform the Knee Balance, find a large physio ball and always perform this exercise in a place where you can grab or hold on to a stable object. This exercise has a high degree of risk so proceed with caution. Hold on to the stable object while climbing on to the ball with your knees. Keep hold until you are able to kneel up tall. Achieve a perfect vertical position from the ear to the mid knee. Try just a light grip, or removing one hand, or even just one finger at a time. Eventually advanced balance with proper form will allow a rider to kneel completely hands free with stability, symmetry, and optimal muscle control.

Quick modifications: Begin by sitting on the ball in an upright position, your feet on the ground, and practice gentle bouncing on the ball to test your ability to absorb and balance on an unstable surface.

If we can continue to train like athletes and condition our bodies consciously with precision, control, and rhythm, we will continue to provide a support for our horses. And if we can approach this with the mentality of a student and the patience of a teammate, we can create the harmony we seek.

Many thanks to Sue Curry Shaffer for her wisdom and time. Her perspective and feedback in this article, and as a judge are so valuable for riders who want to excel in the competition and improve their relationships with their horses.

*Lily Baker-Lubin is an avid equestrian, and the founder and director of Top Training, a comprehensive performance enhancement program. Top Training offers athletes Pilates and Sport Psychology services. Baker-Lubin has a MS in Kinesiology and has completed Body Arts and Science International's comprehensive teacher training, Core Align 1&2, Ride Right's coaching certification as well as other extensive exercise science education. She has been a competitive athlete her whole life and has been an equestrian for over twenty-four years. You can contact Lily at [riderright3@gmail.com](mailto:riderright3@gmail.com).*



Megan Vossler demonstrating the Knee Balance



## Readers Write

# Slowing Down to Speed Up

Written by Melissa Kalember, Board of Directors

The world we live in supports and almost requires a fast paced, quick thinking way of life. "What's next? What's scheduled at four pm? What's for lunch?" These are just a few of the many thoughts that consume our consciousness.

Now, picture your horse in his pasture...grazing...walking...grazing...drinking water... and then looking around to see what's happening. When you feel our reality versus our horses' realities do they feel same?

The answer is *no*. Horses are a beautiful reflection of the simplicity of being in the moment. That is why we have to slow down if we want to speed up the training process with our horse.

We have to quiet our thinking and feel the moment. What I am saying probably resonates inside of you, but let me give you an example. I was waiting in the arena to teach a new client her first lesson. From where I stood, I could see her leading the horse to the arena. I immediately noticed how tense her right arm was as she held the lead line. She radiated fear and held that right arm like he was about to take off. The horse on the other hand, was completely relaxed and walking calmly next to her. Upon entering the arena she greeted me with excitement for our lesson, and proceeded to tell me her goals. Now what's interesting, is that she didn't mention her fear while hand walking. She did however explain that sometimes she get worried under saddle because he has bucked her off. This women's fear had become a subconscious drive and was causing her body be in a "ready" state all the time.

All our brain needs is one scary episode to tell us, "You better be ready in case it happens again." But think about it. If you are poised for a problem, then you are not free to be in the moment with your horse. If you study my client she was not able to feel where her horse was in the actual moments leading him down to the arena. She missed feeling her horse being soft, loving her, and being good because she wasn't in the moment.

Now let's apply feeling the moment to rescue horses. Rescue horses can be extraordinary teachers because they almost require you to be more in feeling and less in thinking mode. Often we do not have reliable history for a rescue horse. So how would you approach a horse that looks like hell, and you don't know? You could be in thinking mode and try to walk right up and put a halter on it, and expect it to follow you. You risk the horse running away or turning to fight. Or you could be in feeling mode and watch from ten feet away, reading its energy. If it doesn't seem alarmed, guarded, or angry, you try walking closer. As you walk closer to this unknown equine, you are open to feeling the moment. You feel (and often see) energy that says "stay away," or shifts to "I'm ok, come closer." Whatever happens, the point is that you are feeling not think the moment occurring between you and the equine.



Melissa and Mimi

I currently work with a few rescue horses, and I know a little of their backgrounds. One horse, Miss L, is a Paso who was abused by men. She was whipped and beaten with 2 x 4's. My client has owned Miss L for four years, and has done phenomenal work with her, even trusting her with the oldest grandchild. On my first day with Miss L, I stayed open and felt each moment as it unfolded. I walked towards her slowly, immediately feeling she knew I was new. She raised

up her head and threatened to walk backwards. I stopped. She stood waiting, I stood waiting. I turned so my back faced her, my shoulders stooped over and I never made eye contact. I was able to slowly walk backwards to her shoulders, pet her, give her a cookie, and put the halter on. I was successful because I didn't assume that her owners had desensitized her enough just because the granddaughter can walk up to her. If I missed her energy and her body saying "go slower," then she would have just run, I would have joined her past of scary humans. Bad way to start a new relationship.

Whether you are with a client's horse, a rescue horse, or one you've known forever, slow down so that the feeling system that lives within you can emerge to help you feel the moment. When you feel where the horse is, you can intuit the next step, like I did to get a halter on Miss L. Use your imagination to feel what your horse is telling you, and then find a way to blend it with your goal. Horses are remarkably sensitive to energy, trust they will feel your pure hearted intention and want to give you more.

*Melissa Kalember has been an equestrian for twenty-five years, and obtained her BS from UC Davis in Animal Science, specializing in Equine Science. She is a Hunter/Jumper judge for USEF & SAHJA, a certified equine massage therapist, and a diverse trainer. Melissa owns Kalembers Equine which is based out of the beautiful Wine Country Sporthorse. Melissa combines the knowledge of animal physiology, intuitive training, and a deep love for horses, offering a unique opportunity for all equestrians who believe that horses are our gifts, not our commodities.*

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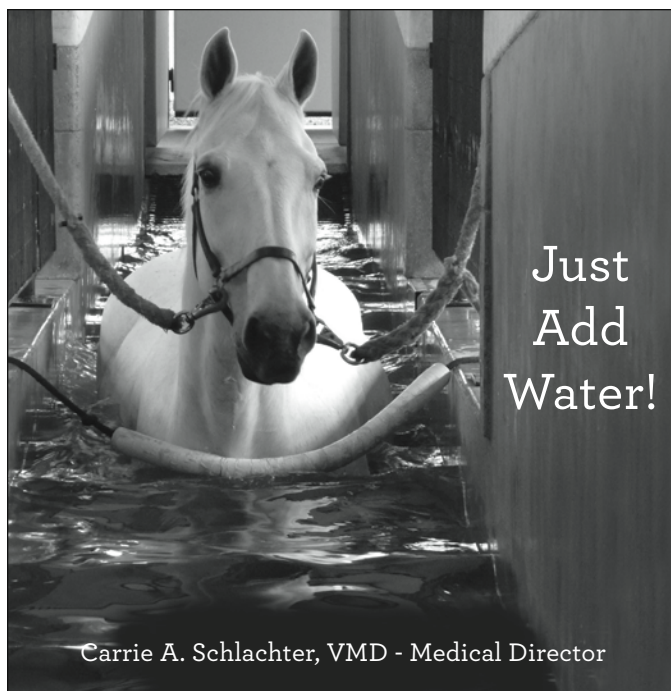
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- Horse Council Activities and Projects
- Horse Cabinet Updates
- Calendar of Events
- Legislative Updates
- Trail Updates
- Directory of Local Clubs
- Club Updates
- Equine Veterinary Alerts & Health Information
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## Readers Write

# YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF...

Written by Kimbra St Martin

YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF  
YOU KNOW SOME 'OL BOY MISSIN' FINGERS CUZ OF A TRAILER HITCH.  
HE KNEW HE SHOULDA CHANGED THAT BALL BEFORE HE MADE THE SWITCH.

YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF  
YOU HAD TO LEARN TO RIDE BAREBACK FIRST,  
'CUZ ACCORDIN' TO MAMA, GETTIN' YOUR FOOT CAUGHT IN THE STIRRUP WAS THE WORST.

YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF  
YOU RACED BARRELS AND QUADRANGLE STAKES  
AND YOUR HORSE JUST FLEW LEAVING DUST IN ITS WAKE.

YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF  
YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HORSE SHOW AND A RODEO.  
BUT IF YOUR SWEETIE ASKS YA, IT DON'T MATTER WHERE YA GO.

YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF  
YOU'VE GONE TO PLAYDAYS AT A LOCAL RING  
AND WHOEVER WON THE MOST POINTS WAS THAT DAY'S QUEEN OR KING!

YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF  
YOU REMEMBER THE SONS OF THE PIONEERS.  
DADDY PLAYED 'EM SO LOUD IT PLUMB NEAR HURT YOUR EARS.

YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF  
YOU KNEW ABOUT GHOST RIDERS IN THE SKY;  
THAT SONG WAS ABOUT BEIN' GOOD AND YOU KNEW WHY.

YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF  
YOUR PAPPA TAUGHT YOU HOW TO CRACK THE WHIP  
AND MOMMA USED IT ON YOUR HEINIE IF YOU GAVE HER ANY LIP.

YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF  
YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST SADDLE.  
CONVINCING THE FOLKS YOU NEEDED IT - A JUSTIFIABLE BATTLE.

YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF  
YOU KNOW WHAT A CURRY COMB IS AND YOU KNOW HOW TO USE IT.  
GETTIN' A WINTER COAT OFF SURE HELPS THE HORSE A BIT.

YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF  
YOU LEARNED TO DRIVE YOUR DADDY'S PICKUP BEFORE YOU STARTED SCHOOL  
AND SWORE ONE DAY YOU'D HAVE A TRUCK SO COOL IT'D MAKE YOUR BUDDIES DROOL.

YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY IF  
YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT CAMP COFFEE AND HOW TO MAKE IT GOOD -  
AND YA'LL KNOW WHERE TO GO TO FIND THE HOTTEST, DRIEST WOOD.

YEP, YOU MIGHT BE A COWBOY,  
EVEN IF YOU DON'T RIDE AND NEVER HAVE ROPED A STEER,  
BUT IT'S THE LIFE YOU TREASURE AND YOU'LL ALWAYS HOLD IT DEAR.

*Kimbra St Martin was raised on her family's ranch, Jedel Arabian Horse Ranch. She started riding at age three and spent most of her waking hours on a horse, bareback, prior to starting school. Kimbra's grandmother, Edna Draper, was inducted posthumously into the Equus Hall of Fame in 2012. Kimbra's stories and poetry are often based on her experiences growing up in a world filled with horses and the wonderful memories of the people who loved them.*





## AD SPECIFICATIONS AND RATES

*The Sonoma County Horse Journal* is a quarterly publication designed to reach Sonoma County's estimated 30,000 equestrians through direct mail to SCHC Members, individuals, organizations, 35 local horse clubs, and distribution at local feed stores and equestrian businesses

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

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