

Sonoma County

# *Horse Journal*

Volume 9 • Issue 1

Winter 2013



*Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council | Equus Awards Edition*



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

Volume 9 • Issue 1 • Winter 2013

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

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**Cover Photo: Steven Yeager**

Eight year old Shelby Giannamore grooms Hall of Fame Horse Clover Easter (aka Clover Ten-Thirty) in preparation for a lesson. Read more about Ten-Thirty and the other Equus Award winners in this issue of the Horse Journal.

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## A Message from the President



Dear Sonoma County Equestrians,

**Welcome to the 2013 Equus Awards edition of the Sonoma County Horse Journal!**

In the last two years, the Sonoma County Horse Council (SCHC) reorganized and refocused its commitment to promote the health and well-being of horses and the \$300 million per year horse industry in Sonoma County. The equestrian way of life in this community faces many challenges, from increasing urbanization, to regulation, to economic pressures, and the only way to effectively meet them is to organize and unify ourselves. A unified and powerful voice will be heard. In the past two years, SCHC has gotten stronger and better organized and we have significantly increased our outreach into more aspects of the horse community. But in order to most effectively inform and advocate for the county's entire horse community, we need the active involvement of more of you who share our passion for horses and the equestrian way of life.

So get involved with your local horse club, and get involved with the SCHC. Membership fees are a bargain. Sign up now by visiting our website at [www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org](http://www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org), and click on "membership. Download the form, fill it out electronically and email it in. You can even pay online. Encourage your club to join SCHC and you can take advantage of our low \$10 annual associate membership rate. We are doing important and good work and we are having fun doing it. So please come join us in the fun and help protect a way of life that is important to us all.

Mark your calendars now for March 23rd, 2013 for the ninth annual Sonoma County Horse Council Equus Awards Dinner at the DoubleTree Inn in Rohnert Park. The Equus Awards banquet is the SCHC's signature event and principal fundraiser where each year we honor a select group of local leading horsemen and women, and a special equine, all of whom have made significant contributions to the health and well-being of horses and the equestrian way of life in the county. The banquet is jam packed with hundreds of local equestrians who share a common passion and they all have a great time honoring some of our outstanding equine leaders. It really is an event to remember.

Read on and learn more about this year's honorees. Please join us in recognizing these outstanding equine leaders and toasting Sonoma County's rich equine heritage and future. See you on March 23rd !

Ron Malone, President  
Sonoma County Horse Council

The Sonoma County Horse Council honors  
the memory and achievements of

**Sharon Saare**  
(Equus Hall of Fame-2005)



Sharon Saare, native of Santa Rosa, died June 11, 2012 after a short illness. Sharon had a lifelong interest in horses. Sharon was an international endurance rider before it became common place, and competed in Australia, Germany, England, and the US. She completed the Tevis Cup three times, as well as many other endurance rides. Sharon designed the first endurance trail saddle to be put into mass production and was the owner of Sharon Saare Saddles, an international business that continues to this day. Sharon was awarded the US Forest Service's 75th Anniversary Award for her contributions to forestry and conservation, she was included as one of the US Pony Club 50th Anniversary "Legends", and was also inducted into the Sonoma County Horse Council's Equus Hall of Fame.

The Sonoma County Horse Council honors  
the memory and achievements of

**Natlee Kenoyer**  
(Equus Hall of Fame-2008)



Natlee Kenoyer, Sonoma County equestrian and author, passed away peacefully in her sleep on Nov 7, 2012. Natlee, who called herself, "a Californian, by birth and by choice," had just turned 102 years old. She was known for her loving and joyful attitude toward horses, which began as a young child when she rode her pony to and from school. Natlee trained horses as an adult, and started her own riding school called the K-5 Ranch. She was known as a renaissance horsewoman, and talented in many disciplines. Natlee authored many horse-related articles and books, and was a member of the Western Writers of America. One of her books, Three Children and a Firehorse was designated a Literary Guild selection.



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## Sonoma County Horse Council at Work

# Horse Cabinet Update

Written by Greg Harder, Vice President, SCHC

Hello fellow horse enthusiasts! At the September Horse Cabinet meeting we continued our tradition of bringing useful information to you regarding your horses, horse-related business, and lifestyle. We hosted members of the Sonoma County Sheriff's Department to discuss the resurgence of rural crime, and to introduce the Owner-Applied Number identification program.

The Sheriff's Department has re-instituted the Rural and Agricultural Crimes Unit. This unit includes prevention of rural crime, and also tools to recover items lost to theft. Our guest, Detective Tony King, discussed and encouraged Sonoma County residents to participate in the Owner-Applied Number (OAN) program. Due to the widespread concern of increasing rural theft, the OAN program was initiated by the State of California for the identification of farm machinery, equipment, tools, livestock, and household goods. The Federal Bureau of Investigation established a system which is composed of ten characters, identifying the state, county, and owner. The coded identification number, which any individual can apply for, allows local law enforcement to identify stolen property and contact the owner. OAN's are stamped on property by metal die stamps, indelible ink, branding irons, or electric pencils. Sonoma County horse owners are encouraged to imprint their OAN on all tack, trailers, pickups, tools, and horses.

In addition to the stamping and engraving of the OAN number, Detective King provided various inventory sheets that OAN participants can fill out and have available for law enforcement in the unfortunate event of a theft.

Detective King's presentation was very informative regarding the issues and concerns of the rural community. He also addressed trespassing, vandalism, wild dogs, and suspicious behavior. He shared some very interesting real life situations and encouraged discussion. The bottom line is, if you think a law is being broken, tell law enforcement of your concern immediately and be specific. Include descriptions of people and vehicles, and license numbers if possible. If you believe someone has stolen something, inform the police right away, so they can investigate.

To make this program more accessible to Sonoma County Horse Council members, the Sonoma County Horse Council will host a

BBQ in January at the Cloverleaf Ranch in Santa Rosa (see info below). At this event, Detective King will bring his team and assist us in marking our property. The Sheriff's Department possesses all the necessary equipment to label tack, trailers, and any other equipment you bring. They will not be able to apply the OAN to your horses—so unfortunately, you'll have to leave your four-legged buddies at home. Also at the BBQ, the highway patrol will perform trailer inspections for road-worthiness for the first thirty trailers (you must make a reservation). You'll get the most out of the event if you have already contacted the Sheriff's Department's Rural Crime Task Force (707-565-3940) to request the application form, or downloaded it from our website ([www.sonomacounty-horsecouncil.org](http://www.sonomacounty-horsecouncil.org)), and obtained your personal OAN number.

This Sonoma County Horse Council OAN event and BBQ, held in conjunction with Cloverleaf Ranch, is a great opportunity to get together with your friends, inventory and mark your equipment, have your trailer inspected, and just have a good time. This will be a rain or shine event due to the availability of a covered arena.

We'll report on the November Horse Cabinet in the spring issue of the Horse Journal. We all enjoyed an informative and hoppin' discussion on traditional shoeing and barefoot trimming (Thanks Linda Cowles and Phil Tresenrider). And if you haven't yet joined the Sonoma County Horse Council, please do so. You can find the application in this issue of the Sonoma County Horse Journal, or on our website at [www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org](http://www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org). We need your membership to be an effective voice for you.

## Sonoma County Horse Council BBQ and OAN Application Event

**January 18th, 2013**

Cloverleaf Ranch  
3892 Old Redwood Hwy, Santa Rosa

**OAN applications begin at 8am**  
(you MUST already have your OAN number)

**BBQ begins at 11am (\$5)**  
Trailer inspections for the first thirty reservations  
(no horses, please)

**RSVP to Greg Harder at (707) 546-4211**

Attendees must have OAN number assigned before this event. Numbers can be obtained by filing form found at [www.agcrime.net](http://www.agcrime.net) web site, or [www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org](http://www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org).

*Service provided by the Sonoma County Horse Council, in cooperation with the Sheriff's Department and Cloverleaf Ranch*



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*Sonoma County Horse Council at Work***West Nile Virus Update**

Written by Ted S Stashak, DVM, MS, DACVS, Board of Directors, SCHC

**Introduction**

West Nile virus (WNV) was first detected in the US in New York City, in 1999. The virus has since been identified in all forty-eight continental states. Locally, this Fall two birds found in west Santa Rosa tested positive for WNV. Currently, it is the leading cause of encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) in horses and humans in the US. WNV can cause a wide range of illnesses from mild flu-like symptoms to encephalitis. While the virus may be fatal to both humans and horses, many horses infected with WNV do not develop any clinical signs of illness.

**Virus life cycle**

Mosquitoes (and infrequently other blood feeding insects) acquire WNV from infected birds and pass it on to other birds, animals, and people during feeding. Horses and humans are considered to be dead-end hosts for WNV, for the virus is not directly contagious from horse to horse, or horse to human. Mosquitoes that feed on an infected horse do not ingest enough of the virus to transmit it to other animals. Migratory birds are an important reservoir for WNV and have served as the major vector for spread of the virus into new areas.

**Emergence in California**

WNV was first diagnosed in Ca in October 2003 in an unvaccinated horse. In 2004, Ca became the disease epicenter with 540 confirmed clinical cases of WNV in horses. Since 2004, WNV has become endemic in Ca. A survey completed in 2010, found of the 1152 confirmed cases of WNV; 496 were either euthanized or died and the majority were unvaccinated. In 2012, twenty-one equine cases with WNV were confirmed in Ca and eight of these horses were euthanized.

**Risk factors**

The highest risk of infection coincides with the months during which mosquito activity is highest, typically July through October in most states, including Ca. However, cases have occurred in all months of the year in areas with year-round mosquito activity. Mosquitos are typically most active during dawn and dusk. Unvaccinated horses are at the highest risk for infection.

**Clinical signs and fatality rates**

Signs of infection include lack of coordination (especially in hindlimbs), generalized weakness, head and lip drooping, lip smacking, muscle twitching, lethargy and unresponsiveness, grinding teeth, hypersensitivity to touch or sound, fever, recumbency (inability to rise), seizures, and coma.

Fatality rate for horses exhibiting signs of WNV infection is around 33%. Approximately 40% of horses that survive the acute illness will exhibit residual effects, such as gait and behavioral abnormalities at six months post-diagnosis.

**Treatment**

Currently, supportive care, including hydration and fever management is recommended, and most horses recover from the infection.

**Prevention**

Several WNV vaccines are available. All products require an initial

series of at least two vaccinations then periodic "booster" injections. Horse owners are urged to consult their veterinarian. Questions frequently asked:

- 1) **Should I vaccinate my horse that was previously infected with WNV?** Yes. Vaccination should be resumed no later than one year after infection. While more work is needed, it appears that acquired immunity is not lasting.
- 2) **Will vaccination protect my horse 100%?** No. Vaccines have been shown to reduce the risk of infection, and they significantly reduce the magnitude of viremia (amount of virus in the blood), and decrease the severity of symptoms, up to twelve months after initial vaccine series.
- 3) **Is my horse protected after one vaccination?** No. Directions include administration of two doses of vaccine three to six weeks apart. Optimal protection is expected two weeks after administration of the second dose.
- 4) **Do I need to revaccinate my horse?** Yes. On an annual basis, or more frequently when local conditions are conducive to a prolonged period of exposure to infected mosquitoes.
- 5) **Should I vaccinate my pregnant mare?** Consult your veterinarian.
- 6) **Should I vaccinate my foal from a vaccinated mare?** Consult your veterinarian.

Besides vaccinating, you can decrease the chances of WNV infection in your horse by minimizing its exposure to mosquitoes during the peak mosquito feeding periods, which are dusk and dawn. Applying mosquito repellent effectively reduces the number of mosquito bites. Efforts to eliminate mosquito breeding sites are important. Methods to do so include:

- 1) Draining standing water found in wheelbarrows, tires, etc.
- 2) Cleaning water containers weekly (eg bird baths, plant saucers, etc).
- 3) Scheduling pasture irrigation to minimize standing water.
- 4) Keeping swimming pools optimally chlorinated and draining water from covers.
- 5) Stocking water tanks with fish that consume mosquito larvae or using mosquito "dunk" available at hardware stores.
- 6) For more information on mosquito control locally, contact local organization Marin-Sonoma Vector Control for assistance at [www.ms mosquito.com](http://www.ms mosquito.com).

**Conclusion**

Since 1999, when WNV was first identified in the US, it has spread across the country and is now endemic, achieving what scientists call "ecological equilibrium." In other words, it has become a permanent part of the nation's eco-system. Therefore it remains a very important disease which can be managed to a large extent by vaccinating your horses, and other preventive practices.

For more information on WNV, as well as updates, visit the SCHC website ([www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org](http://www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org)). You can also visit websites for the California Department of Food and Agriculture ([www.cdffa.ca.gov](http://www.cdffa.ca.gov)), the American Association of Equine Practitioners ([www.aaep.org](http://www.aaep.org)), and Marin-Sonoma Vector Control ([www.ms mosquito.com](http://www.ms mosquito.com)).



## Sonoma County Events

# First Annual Jack London Park Memorial Ride: In Memory of Paulette Carroll

Written by Nancy Martin



*Paulette and Payaso*

In August 2011, at the same time the press was full of articles talking about the closing of state parks all over California, my friend Paulette M. Carroll, both a state and regional parks Mounted Assistance Unit volunteer, passed away. She had suffered for quite a while with ovarian cancer, trying every treatment imaginable with no success.

Paulette's memorial service was well attended, and her many loved ones discussed memories of Paulette's love of horses. A bridle was placed at the altar as part of the ceremony. Afterwards, I spoke with John Ryan, the Volunteer Coordinator for Sonoma County Regional Parks about the idea of memorializing Paulette by putting on a benefit event in her honor. My idea was a ride and dinner event that generated funds to help keep our parks open. From this conversation, the Paulette Carroll Memorial Ride & Dinner-Dance was born to benefit Valley of the Moon state parks. John suggested Jack London State Historic Park as the venue.

Jack London State Historic Park is a cultural and historic property that sits east of Santa Rosa in Glen Ellen. The park has 1,400 acres, with twenty-six miles of trails (open to hikers, cyclists, and equestrians), and a collection of historic buildings that constituted Jack's Beauty Ranch. Among these are the wine cellar ruins, which are a perfect venue for a dinner celebration. It was a great plan.

Close to one year later, with plans defined, zero dollars in seed money, and the gorgeous donated artwork for the posters completed, the Valley of the Moon Natural History Association took over operations of Jack London Park. With the new leadership, I was concerned that I would have to go back to square one, or even cancel plans after an entire year of organizing. Much to

my delight, I met with Tjiska Van Wyk, the new Executive Director for the park, who was more than enthusiastic and supportive for the event to move forward. The event date had been set for September 2 at 5pm (the evening closure time) and so the posters were printed and I began to advertise the event.

The very day I went out to hang up posters, the news story broke regarding the "found" \$54 million in California State Park funds. The park-supporting public was enraged! Few tickets were sold right up until two weeks prior to the anticipated event and I was completely ready to throw in the towel. However, Ms. Van Wyk continued to encourage me and mentioned that often ticket sales all happened in the days just prior to their events at the park.

The evening of September 2 was warm and balmy as many horse trailers pulled in to the park. I relaxed, the event would be well-attended. We fired up the huge BBQ and Plan Be, a local Sonoma Valley dance band volunteering their services, set up to play. By the time the riders and their mounts returned from the evening ride and the breathtaking park trails, many non-riding registrants had arrived and were enjoying glasses of Hook & Ladder wine (also donated by the very generous DeLoach family—Christine De Loach is an avid rider herself). Then the band kicked in, and dinner and dancing merrily proceeded in the moonlight.

Thanks to many wonderful and generous donors and volunteers, this absolutely magical event took place without one dime of start-up money, and we were able to both honor Paulette's memory and contribute a respectable sum to the park.

As the founder and organizer of this event, I hope the Jack London Park Memorial Ride will become an annual event, and that each year, another outstanding member of our community can be remembered in style. The added bonus is that the parks will benefit from the proceeds of future events as well. If you are interested in memorializing a local equestrian with this annual event, contact the Jack London State Historic Park office at 707-938-5216.



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## Sonoma County Events

## Equestrians on Patrol at Tolay Lake Fall Festival

Written by Sarah Reid

This year's Fall Festival at Tolay Lake Regional Park (Petaluma) was attended by record crowds. The Tolay Lake Fall Festival runs for two consecutive weekends each October, and offers a wide range of exhibits and activities for visitors of all ages. Visitors enjoyed hayrides out to the pumpkin patch (just to browse, or to shop for the perfect one), pumpkin seed spitting contests, candle dipping, cornhusk doll making, looking through a telescope, touching reptiles, playing science games, old-fashioned gunny sack races, climbing on a fire truck, petting farm animals, and much more. As an historic and cultural property, attendees were treated to exhibits of farm equipment, and an extensive, informative Native American village display which included artifacts and history.

Tolay Lake Regional Park is a 1700+ acre property, soon to be more than doubled by a new land acquisition. Tolay has a well-documented, rich cultural and natural history dating back at least 8,000 years. The site offers opportunities for hiking, cycling, and riding, in addition to bird-watching, picnicking, and interpretation of the natural and cultural resources. There are several high points on the property providing spectacular views of the Petaluma River basin, Mt Tamalpais, San Francisco, Oakland, Mt Diablo, Mt St Helena, as well as other landmarks in the six adjacent counties.



MAU members Cindy Sauvignon and Willow interact with visitors at the pumpkin patch

Except for the Tolay Lake Fall Festival, the park is usually open only to permit holders, but is regularly patrolled by the Sonoma County Regional Parks Mounted Assistance Unit (SCRMP MAU).

This year, the SCRMP MAU played an integral part of the festivities. For five years, the regional parks mounted unit has exhibited at the festival, displaying information, providing demonstrations, and sharing their equine partners with families and scores of children. Official festival duty for the public weekends includes patrolling

the roads, the pumpkin patch, the parking lots, and into the actual festival activities. The horses have to prove patient, calm with crowds, tolerant of hours of petting, picture taking, children in Halloween costumes, and lots of noise and commotion. By the end of a shift or day at the Festival, both riders and horses are hot and tired, but satisfied with their part in introducing the public to this spectacular park.

On a personal level, it's very rewarding to finish the day knowing that our horses merely stopped and stared at the unusual sights like giant pumpkin EXIT signs or little girls with wings, then sighed and moved on. After all, usually we are patrolling the trails, not a busy festival. SCRMP MAU would like to offer a big thanks to Buzz Bozzini for supporting the MAU by demonstrating and teaching roping techniques.

Tolay Lake Regional Park is currently in its Interim Phase, and open on weekends only to permit holders, except the two weekends of Fall Festival. To learn more about Tolay Lake Regional Park, or how to attend a free permit orientation for access, visit Tolay Lake on Sonoma County Regional Parks website ([sonoma-county.org/parks](http://sonoma-county.org/parks)). Docent-led hikes and programs, and school programs are available as well. Don't miss a chance to visit this special and historic property.

*Sarah Reid (Equus Award 2012) is an equestrian representative to several open space and park projects. If you would like to share trail or public land news with Sarah, or you have an idea for a story, email her at [trails@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org](mailto:trails@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org).*

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## The Closest Thing Yet: Taylor Mountain

Sonoma County Regional Parks (SCRMP) is adding a new property: Taylor Mountain. For those of us in Santa Rosa, this is the closest park yet. On October 9, 2012, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors unanimously supported the master plan for this newest park, and SCRMP will take ownership of the property from Open Space District in the next few months. In the last few years, Taylor Mountain has been open to permit holders only, but as early as January, 2013, the property should be open to general access by the public. Construction will start soon on about fifteen miles of multi-use trails, affording excellent riding opportunities on the 1,100 acres. The top of Taylor Mountain affords sweeping views of the area. Current entry is via Kawana Springs Road, but additional access points are planned. Thanks to the Open Space District, and to the Board of Supervisors, especially Shirlee Zane, for their support. And thanks to Sonoma County Regional Parks for expanding the parks that give us such great equestrian opportunities.



## 2013 Hall of Fame Horse



### Clover Easter (aka Clover Ten-Thirty)



*Gentle with the smallest of riders*



*Displaying her namesake facial marking*



*Enjoying a good belly-scratch*

Clover Ten-Thirty has been selected as the 2013 Hall of Fame Horse for the lifetime of teaching and healing service she has offered to thousands of Sonoma County residents.

Most horses are special to someone, but Clover Ten-Thirty holds a special place in the heart of each person who has come into contact with her. Her open, gentle, and kind nature has inspired hundreds of people to ride and work with horses in their lives.

Born Clover Easter in Santa Rosa in April 1988, Ten-Thirty was a registered Quarter Horse and the last AQHA baby to be sired by Peppy San Bar, the famous local one-eyed Cutting horse.

Ten-Thirty, so named because of the distinctive marking on her face, had the conformation, talent, and personality to be owner Lisa Lombardi's long-dreamed-of top Reining horse. Lisa and Ten-Thirty began a successful Reining career together. Early into their career, a bazaar twist of fate changed everything. Ten-Thirty sustained a broken knee, which seemed immediately devastating to Lisa, but ultimately turned the course of Ten-Thirty's life in an unforeseen and profound way. She went from being just a personal dream horse, to changing the lives of thousands of people.

When Ten-Thirty became serviceably sound, her real work began. Ten-Thirty became not merely a lesson horse, but the obvious choice for a first horse or riding experience. Her gentle nature made her perfect as a confidence builder for riders recovering from an injury or fall, or for those overcoming fear. She was known as the ultimate confidence builder because Ten-Thirty seemed equipped with a set of equine "training wheels," so that everyone who rode her felt successful. Unlike many school horses who "check out" and simply tolerate beginner mistakes, Ten-Thirty routinely checked

in with her riders and handlers, maintaining a genuine two-way communication. During her twenty-plus years as a lesson horse, Ten-Thirty was used not only for solo lessons, but also on the SRJC equine program string (for the most timid), for summer camp, for kids' drill team performances, for lessons on ground work and trailer loading, for guided trail rides, and most recently as an official therapy horse for the Children's Village of Sonoma County. (See summer 2012 Horse Journal). Ten-Thirty inspired Lisa to earn PATH (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship) instructor certification.

Ten-Thirty's other achievements included five years of service in the Mounted Assistance Unit, local parade duty, and foaling two beautiful sons, one of whom has earned year end belt buckles in all around divisions in local and national shows. Ten-Thirty also posed as the official camp photo horse (with several professional photographers) for literally thousands of summer camp children between the years 1994 and 2004. Her photo is displayed in households and offices around the world with happy, smiling campers. Ten-Thirty has served Sonoma County in every way a mare could for twenty-five years.

In recognition for her lifetime of service, Ten-Thirty was first runner up as the 2011 and 2012 Certified Horsemanship Association International School Horse of the Year.

Ten-Thirty was born, and left us (just a few weeks before receiving her Sonoma County Horse Council Hall of Fame honor), as a gentle old soul, and left her mark on the soul of anyone and everyone who encountered her.



## 2013 Equus Hall of Fame Winners



### Steven Bruce Burchfield



Steve Burchfield has received an Equus Award for his outstanding contribution as president of the Sonoma County Regional Parks Mounted Assistance Unit.

Steve remembers starting to ride in fifth grade. He shared an Arab-Appaloosa cross named Shiloh with his two sisters, taking turns riding around the family's five-acre Sebastopol property, using just a hackamore and saddle pad. He even remembers riding Shiloh to his elementary school. Steve roped in high school rodeo.

Steve was born in Vallejo, but grew up in Sonoma County. He met his wife Megan locally at a fireworks booth, resulting in good natured joking about Megan "setting fire" to his heart. Steve is now retired after twenty-six years in law enforcement.

Steve joined the Sonoma County Regional Parks Mounted Assistance Unit (SCRPM-AU) in 2006, and was promptly appointed as vice president by then-president Debbie Bailey. After two years, volunteer coordinator John Ryan appointed Steve as president. Steve has quietly and effectively, served in this role for four years. As a retired police officer, he has the training and leadership



Steve and Cash on patrol

ability to create a strong service unit, and he has. Under Steve the unit has doubled in size, and has increased in its professionalism and organization. The SCRPM-AU now contributes thousands of hours in patrol and trail work to Sonoma County, and participates in event management, and standing ceremony. Because of Steve's efforts, the MAU plays a tremendous role in the increasingly popular Tolay Lake Fall Festival. The unit not only offers patrol and supervision, but also functions to introduce Tolay to the public, and to horses, in general. Under Steve's leadership, the SCRPM-AU was awarded the California Park & Recreation Society's District 1 Community Service Award in 2010. Steve was also a recipient of the Board of Supervisors Outstanding Volunteer of the Year award for Regional Parks in 2010.

Steve and Megan currently live in Sebastopol with their three horses, four dogs, five cats, and a goat. Their three children and two grandchildren all live nearby.

### Martha "Marty" H Griffin

(A special thank you to Stacie Martinelli)



Marty Griffin has received an Equus Award for creation of the Varykino Program and her introduction of young people to the care, riding, and showing of horses.

Marty learned to ride at the age of ten in Florida. She and her first horse Lightening would run like "wild Indians" around the 12,000-acre Hillsboro River State Park. She rode bareback because her family could not afford a saddle. Marty later moved to northern California.

Shortly thereafter, she purchased her first Arabian horse, King Bessaar. For many years, she and "King" traveled up and down the Pacific Northwest winning Championships in Halter, English Pleasure, and Driving.

In the late 1970's Marty opened Varykino in Sonoma, which is named after "a place of love" from Pasternak's novel Doctor Zhivago. She started with the mother and son duo "Tonka Toy" and "Pacquita," to whom many children owe their ability to ride. At Varykino, she stood her two prized champion Arabian stallions, King Bessaar and JYS Royalty, as well as numerous broodmares and show horses. Varykino was in operation for approximately twenty years in Sonoma Valley, moving its location once to Glen Ellen. In that time, nearly one hundred children from all walks of life strode down the aisle of that old barn. There was never a charge. Marty taught hands-on horse care with her priceless Arabian horses in trade for horse-related chores, and educated children in Halter Showmanship, Western, and English Pleasure. Marty's motto was strive, achieve, and be rewarded. Many of the children who learned at Varykino are involved with horses to this day. Most importantly, Marty taught children to be healthy, happy competitors, humble winners, and good losers in the show ring and in life.

Marty currently lives in Tiburon and while she is no longer riding horses, she is riding the high seas of the San Francisco Bay area and Pacific Ocean on an Islander thirty-six foot sailboat named "WindCatcher", for which she is the skipper.



Marty with King



Royalty





## 2013 Equus Hall of Fame Winners



### Donald Lee “Red” Rightsell

*(A special thank you to Shawna DeGrange)*



Red Rightsell has received an Equus Award for his achievement in Team Roping and his mentorship of local riders.

Red learned to ride when he was in fifth grade on a sorrel Quarter Horse named Shiny. He rode around his family's ranch in Patterson, Ca, and Red remembers Shiny as being “just a nice guy.”

Red was born in Riverton, Iowa, but grew up in California. He moved to Sonoma County in 1979. He has

been a respected farrier here for more than thirty years. Red picked up roping as a hobby, and was self taught. He admired friend, fellow rancher, and roper Bobby Jones, and imitated him as he learned. They are still friends today. Red began his successful career as a header in high school rodeo winning All Around and Calf Roping buckles. He went on to many successes including competing in the National Roping Finals in Los Angeles in 1962 and 1964. In both 1960 and 1962 he roped the fastest steer in Oakdale's Team Roping Jackpot event, each with fields of 2,000 competitors. Red has also been successful as a heeler, winning his first and second saddles at a 1999 competition in Rancho Murrieta. He won a third saddle at the America Cowboy Team Roping Association's (ACTRA) National Finals in Reno in 2006, at the age of seventy-six. Red says he still ropes as much as he can. He is too humble to say so, but he is a regular mentor to other ropers. Red is particularly active in a roping and riding club in Windsor, where he works with new ropers from all walks of life, from contractors to lawyers. One nominator wrote, “Many of us here in Sonoma County view Red as a living legend in Roping.”

Red still lives in Windsor with his girlfriend Suzanne, their five horses, and their one dog.



Red heading off “the best horse he ever had”—WW

### Neil Murdock Shepard



Neil Shepard has received an Equus Award for his dedication as a teamster and his leadership in the driving community.

Neil has always loved horses. He is the great, great nephew of Jack London, and remembers riding all over the Beauty Ranch as a child. He and his sister and brother shared a Morgan named Shenta, and pinto named Apache. He grew up using horses as transportation.

Neil has lived his entire life in Glen Ellen on the original 1,400-acre Beauty Ranch. As a day job, he works for the Serres Corporation in various skilled capacities. In 1984, Neil was gifted his first draft horse, a Belgian mare named Belle, as a riding horse. After discovering that Belle was trained to drive, Neil became interested in this special field. Neil met Silvio Pinchinotti who became his mentor and taught him the art of driving horses. Pinchinotti belonged to the North Coast Draft Horse & Mule Club and one year later introduced Neil to the Club at Plowing Playday.



Neil with his black Clydesdales, Leo and Sunny in the Glen Ellen Village Fair

Pinchinotti helped Neil become the expert teamster that he is today. Neil has served as president of the North Coast Draft Horse & Mule Club for almost ten years. He has been instrumental in keeping the annual Plowing Playday alive by finding a permanent and stable venue for the event at Jack London State Historic Park. Neil volunteers a great deal of time to preserve and promote the art of driving teams by offering wagon rides in Sonoma and surrounding counties, and by participating in the various events, such as Harvest Fair, and three different Scottish games. His spectacular “four-up” team of black Clydesdales can be seen at weddings, funerals, and parades. Neil is dedicated to preserving other historic arts, and has achieved expertise as a wheelwright. He now has a word-of-mouth business repairing wagon wheels. He also does his own farrier and blacksmithing work.

Neil still lives on the Beauty Ranch in Glen Ellen with his six black Clydesdales (Willie, Sunny, Gus, Saxe, Max, and Mindy), one dog, and three or four fierce mousers.

## 2013 Volunteer of the Year

Golden Pitchfork Award

Valerie Gay Kasnick



Val Kasnick has been chosen to receive the first annual Volunteer of the Year Award for her many contributions to the SCHC, and for her willing, cheerful, and positive attitude.

Val started to ride at the age of sixty-one. In the first year she took about a dozen lessons, and worked a

lot on her confidence. She admits she hated to trot, and never cantered. When Val, and her husband of twenty-five years, Tom, visited a Paso Fino ranch in North Carolina, they had so much fun, he insisted on buying her a horse of her own. The ranch owners suggested a pasture mate, and before they knew it, Val and Tom were shipping Sarah and Dominga, two Paso Finos (so Val doesn't have to trot), back to Santa Rosa.

Val was born and raised in San Diego, and moved to Sonoma County in 1967. At first, she focused on raising her kids. Then she and Tom started their own business, which they recently sold, because Tom wanted to retire. About three years ago, as a new equestrian, she met former SCHC president Karl Bastian. Karl invited her to join. Val's first job was delivering the Sonoma County Horse Journal. She started out with twelve drop-offs on her route. She now holds the title of Director of Distribution, and has expanded delivery to eighty five locations. Impressed with her initiative, the SCHC board offered Val the position of Membership Chair. Val organized the membership process and more than doubled the number of members. Val energetically promotes the SCHC and its mission, and recruits new members with phone calls, and visits to club meetings. Val also helps with the annual Equus Awards dinner.

Val and Tom live in Santa Rosa with their three dogs, and fifteen chickens. Her two children and four grandchildren also live in town. In her free time she trail rides and camps with Sarah, and occasionally arena rides with Dominga.



Val and Sarah at the Cooley Ranch Ride



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## Readers Write

# A Stable Life...

Written by Lisa Thomas, Board of Directors, SCHC



*Stable owners enjoy a great view*

Several of my clients own horse boarding facilities in the area. They are a unique breed and I'm intrigued at how different their businesses are. Each operation has its own market position and operating practices, demonstrating that there are many ways to successfully run a stable. So, what is the attraction of owning a horse business? And the secret to success?

### ***It's a service business***

Boarding horses is a service and making clients feel happy is the key. People pay for good service. Making services cheap means that you don't give much service. The nice thing about boarding businesses is that there is a market for everything from the basic Do It Yourself boarding, to the full service "Drive up Darling, your horse is saddled," and everything in between. At the lower end you provide a safely fenced pasture and water and owners provide the care. At the upper end, you are the all inclusive vacation resort with full service, three to four times daily feeding, supplements, spraying, rugging up, holding for farriers, tack cleaning... take this as far as you'd like to go... service. Find your market and be clear about your service offering. This is the secret to making a profit, not just income.

### ***Interesting people!***

Taking care of horses means taking care of their "parents," too and the people are fascinating. From cowboys to the rich & famous, boarders are people from different riding disciplines and from all over the world. Let's face it, horse people are generally good folks and long-lasting relationships form as you care for their steeds.

### ***Good income!***

Done well, you can generate a good income while covering costs for your own horses. Like any small business, a stable enables you to tax deduct many expenses you couldn't otherwise take. There are many nice angles (talk to your CPA!) but they include putting your kids on the payroll, reducing your personal horse expenses and having the business pay toward your housing and maintenance costs. Boarding stables also qualify for 1031 Tax Exchanges, so if you own rental property now, you can actually exchange into

a boarding stable and help pay for your horse hobby. But don't confuse income with profit.

### ***You just love horses!***

Well, if you're going to do this, you'd better! But you had also better know about caring for them. Stable management, nutrition, keeping a watchful eye on their health are all important aspects of the job. There are excellent courses to help a newbie stable owner—take them! And if you do enjoy horses and being around them, why not choose to make your living at it? If nine-to-five isn't for you, if you're grinding away at a desk while longing to be outdoors, if you can't wait to get to the stable... this could be a life changing decision.

### ***Live in the country...***

Love having elbow room, not seeing a neighbor, and being close to nature? Then living in the country will be one of the greatest joys for you. There's no substitute for fresh air, sunshine and exercise to make you feel good and look healthy. It's not exactly a spa package but there are definite physical and psychological benefits.

### ***The "secrets" to running a successful equestrian facility:***

- Be customer-focused. Some barns have a "take it or leave it" attitude to customer service. This keeps costs down but to keep boarders long term, you may find that giving special attention to a horse or owner's needs pays off in the long run. Remember, an empty stall costs more to fill than keeping a good client happy and staying with you. Spraying a horse with fly spray doesn't take twenty seconds and if it keeps a happy client, then it's a good thing to do. Try to find an acceptable line between providing free and chargeable services. Clients don't want to get their bill and feel "nickel & dimed" to death, and you can't afford to give them the Ritz Carlton treatment at the Days Inn rate.
- Be present. There is no substitute for "face time" with clients and no better way to manage your business and employees than "walking the walk." Be physically present and visible to clients so they know you are attentive. This keeps staff AND clients in line and is crucial if you have outside trainers. It helps trainers to understand this is your business and you are paying attention





without being intrusive into their business.

- Clear communication. Let clients know what to expect about what you do and don't offer. When new horses arrive, explain your rules, personal boundaries, and paperwork. If you live on the property, clients need to respect your privacy but still feel able to call on you in an emergency. You can avoid a lot of problems by setting clear expectations upfront. Be diligent about boarding agreements, vaccination certificates, liability releases, and payment requirements. It's easiest to get it right first time.
- Set your quality standards. Appearances count! Don't let the entrance or the barns look run down. Larger operations always have a turnover of clients due to their size. This means you're always marketing and new clients are always coming to check you out. Making your barn look spiffy pays off in attracting them and in keeping your loyal, highly valued clients as well. Remember that every visitor is a potential client or may refer one to you.
- It's about people. Many owners think it's about horses. Doing a good job with the horses is what's called a "hygiene factor" meaning duh... you have to do a good job with the horses to be in the business. But going beyond is what makes the difference between a good quality operation and a poorly run one. Keep the owners happy and watch out for the bad apples. They exist on every trail of life. Some clients just can't be pleased. Screen them out early and move them on if they are a problem. Better to have one empty stall than for all your good clients to get upset and find another home for their horses.
- Take care of your employees. Like ANY business, staff will make or break you. Training is crucial so staff know what to do and what you expect. Treat them with respect and compensate them fairly. Good staff are hard to find... you have to make and keep them. Acknowledge their contribution to your business and recognize that they enable you to have a private life!
- Obtain permits and licenses. Obey the law! Boring stuff, but just like paying taxes, if you don't take care of it, you are sunk. The regulations are there to insure that animals are protected and neighborhood nuisances are not being created. The big issues are manure and fly management, protecting our water supply, traffic, noise, and if you are serving the public, accessibility. Several zoning classifications allow stables, depending on the type of business you are planning. Planning to fly under the radar? Beware... you can lose your business and your home if you're not careful.
- Have a business plan. Fail to plan and you're planning to fail. You need a clear outline of how you will succeed in this arena. What will differentiate you from the other barns out there? Why will clients come to you? How can you outshine the competition? How will you market your business? How long will it take to get going? You need a budget to get a good idea of what you can



Lisa and Malibu

and can't afford. Be sure to include marketing activities!

- Manage the plan and make a profit. Never forget this is a business. You will lose the property, your shirt, and your friendships if you don't make a profit and an honest wage. You will take in a lot of money. You will have a lot of expenses. If you don't have a head for business, get help! Money can trot out the door pretty fast if you're not careful. Often the more profitable facilities are the larger ones. Under twenty horses and you're really a one-man band, either with part time or one full time helper. Be prepared to be hands on, and involved in everything! Over thirty horses and you have a bit more support. You are more focused on marketing, operations, and staff management than mucking out. Once you hit fifty-plus horses, you move into a different level of operation. Your overheads are covered and the income from an extra horse or two goes straight to the bottom line. Marketing and managing a quality operation are the core activities for you. Once you've nailed the boarding side of things, leveraging your client base into training, showing, sales, and other activities often adds substantially to the bottom line.

Business schools call these "Lifestyle Businesses," and many times scoff because they will never make multi-millions. But Lifestyle Businesses enable people to live their dreams, pursue their interests, and take control of their destiny. Having worked in large, small, and now my own business, I know that many operators of well run equestrian facilities make more money than highly skilled company employees. They get to enjoy the day, walk in the sun, pat a velvet head, laugh with a client, and feel good at the end of the day.

In today's world, we all work so hard... why not do something you love? Running an equestrian business may not be right for you, but don't be scared to consider it if you have business acumen and a love of horses. It's a strong market here in the wine country, where horses are the second largest agri-business (next to grapes, of course!).

*Lisa Thomas sells fine horse & country property, including boarding and training stables, throughout the wine country.*



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## Vet's Office

Column editor Michelle Beko, DVM

# Natural Therapies

People often tell me that they want to address their horse's health or injury/illness with "natural" medicine. In this article, I would like to discuss "natural" treatments. First let me state that I am neither for nor against natural medicines, but I do believe that they are surrounded by a lot of misperception and misinformation. For example, many products claim to be natural, but what does "natural" mean? For this article let's say that a natural medicine is one that is found in nature; it can be "processed," but not synthesized in a laboratory. Other "natural" therapies might include exercise, hand walking, icing, and hydrotherapy.

Probably the most common misconception, is that because something is natural, it is safe. That is most definitely *not* true. Consider all of the toxic plants that exist. Deadly nightshade, hemlock, and oleander can all be rapidly fatal in people or animals, ingesting even small quantities. Pennyroyal oil which has been used in natural fly spray can cause severe liver disease in dogs when used as a flea repellant. We all know that tobacco can cause many fatal problems in humans who smoke or chew this "natural" plant. Even non-toxic natural therapies can have unwanted or dangerous effects. Gingko for example can cause bleeding, and kava can cause muscle spasms.

Another common misconception is that if something is natural it is likely to be weak or ineffective. This is also untrue. Many of the conventionally used medicines (perceived as "stronger") are derived from naturally occurring chemicals. It's true that some natural compounds are changed by a chemical reaction, which can make them effective when taken orally, or different in some way. For example, Penicillin G is natural. It is produced by a fungus. It is a powerful and effective antibiotic (eg it kills bacteria). Ampicillin is not "natural," because it is chemically derived from Penicillin G, but different because it has a broader spectrum of activity (eg it kills more species of bacteria).

Most drugs (natural or not) work by interacting with or blocking normally occurring biochemical reactions happening in our or our pets' bodies. Inflammation, for example, happens when something (trauma, infection, etc) causes injured cells to "summon" white blood cells (healing cells) to focus in on the injured area. An example would be when your horse gets kicked in the knee and the knee becomes swollen and warm; the swelling and warmth are caused by the concentration of white blood cells in the area. Anti-inflammatory drugs block some of the enzymes causing these white cells to collect, and therefore decrease inflammation. We use both synthetic (eg "bute") and natural (eg arnica) medicines to treat inflammation. Importantly, I am not aware of any evidence that our or our pets' bodies have ways of knowing whether these enzyme "blockers" are natural or synthetic.

When I believe my patients need medication, what matters the most to me is whether it is effective or not. I do not consider whether it is a natural or synthetic drug. The best way to judge

effectiveness of medications is through controlled, blinded studies performed by researchers without conflicts of interest (eg not paid by the pharmaceutical company that makes the drug). Controlled means that horses receiving the drug are compared to similar horses not receiving the drug. Blinded means that the investigators evaluating the outcome do not know which horses received the medication in question versus which got the benign placebo. This eliminates inevitable human bias.

My belief is that both natural and synthetic drugs can be safe and effective, although unwanted side effects can occur with either. I prefer to strive for prevention and when necessary and to use treatments (natural or synthetic) which have been critically evaluated through well performed studies, or based on my experience have worked safely and well.



*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.*



Photo courtesy of Julie Colt photography.

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*Readers Write*

## Train Like an Athlete: Pilates for Equestrians

Written by Lily Baker-Lubin

As a performance enhancement coach, Pilates instructor, and competitive athlete, I have watched how Pilates has become a trend among athletes within the last few years. Indeed many equestrians have heard of the benefits of training out of the saddle but may not know how or why Pilates in particular is so helpful to riders. Are you having difficulty feeling one sitz bone or picking up one lead? Is your instructor repeating the same direction over and over again? Is your horse having difficulty balancing properly? Understanding the benefits of Pilates can motivate you to add this type of cross training to your riding program, and see the difference for yourself.

For those who aren't familiar with Pilates, this exercise modality focuses on the spine and pelvis which can be generically described as the core. In general, Pilates aims to increase strength, flexibility, and overall joint health for balanced musculature. The results are improved posture and relief of pain. The movements and exercises, which utilize varying degrees of resistance, are easily adaptable to accommodate all levels of fitness and address very specific issues. Most relevant for riders, however, is the strong emphasis in precise bio-mechanical functioning, and an approach that can improve your sense of feel. Put simply, Pilates can grant greater awareness of position and access to accurate muscle recruitment. For equestrians the ability to execute precise and accurate aids and dynamic balance is the meat and potatoes of our sport. Greater precision and accuracy are reflected in our communication with our horses, and improve overall partnership between horse and rider.

As in all exercise modalities, it is best to locate a trained Pilates instructor who can lead you through a workout tailored to your body and your sport-specific demands. Workouts that emphasize unconscious, automatic movement (mindless repetition) can provide some benefit, but they lack the depth that riders need in their cross-training programs. As with your horse's training, your workout should be precise practice in which you employ discipline and focus on quality of movement rather than quantity. If you can focus on how you execute an exercise and become aware of possible compensatory patterns in your body, you can begin to make accurate corrections and profound improvements. Therefore ideal cross training programs for riders should reflect a search-



*Lily demonstrating a core exercise*

like quality, requiring self awareness, instead of a mere repetition or rehearsal of movements.

In order to increase strength, flexibility, and balance, a Pilates instructor uses what is considered a constraints-based approach. The idea is that athletic skills are more likely retained when they are acquired across a range of different challenges. In other words, to develop a particular skill, we change up the exercise to keep you interested and aware, and also increase your progress. For instance, you can practice balancing on one foot repetitively, under the same conditions each day for a few days and most likely see some improvement over time. Next practice balancing on one foot on an unstable surface, or practice with your eyes closed, or with someone talking to you. After a few days, test yourself again and see how long you can stay balanced on one foot devoid of distractions. Of the two scenarios, which do you feel would help you make the most gains?

A highly trained Pilates instructor will design exercises to challenge the students' skills across a wide set of variables, while keeping them focused and engaged. Why is that important to a rider? Because we sit aboard powerful, sensitive athletes who are unpredictable, capable of presenting split-second changes in any number of variables (direction, force, speed, etc) Our success as riders is ultimately determined by our mastery of skills across a wide base of constraints, and preparation and practice is the key to that mastery.

*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 [rideright3@gmail.com](mailto:rideright3@gmail.com).*



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## A Horseman's View

Column editor Toora Nolan

# Longeing Safely and Effectively (Part 1)



Toora and Raydiance

Longeing is a valuable tool that has many applications including exercise, warm up, introduction to new experiences, and evaluation of lameness or gait. Despite the importance of longeing, many handlers fail to use safe equipment and techniques. In this article I'll describe appropriate tack and its use. Part II of this article will appear in the spring issue, and I'll discuss control of the line and whip, and appropriate body language.

### Basic equipment

1) A longe line at least thirty feet in length. I prefer webbed cotton for the grip. Nylon can be slippery and I have to hold on too tightly. I don't recommend a stud chain attachment; it's much too heavy and will quickly make your horse afraid of the bit.

2) A longe whip. It should be long enough to influence the horse from a distance—usually 5 ½ feet with a six-foot lash. Even if you have a hot horse, a whip is still a necessary tool to help maintain the shape of the circle and to make your body language clear.

3) A well-fitted snaffle bridle or longeing cavesson. Leather tack is best so that it can break in case of emergency. I longe with a bridle unless the horse has not yet been introduced to carrying a bit, in which case I use a cavesson to protect the youngster's mouth. Longeing in a halter can be dangerous; one big spook or buck and you could be dragged across the arena!

4) Brushing boots and bell boots if your horse is prone to interference. Avoid polo wraps which can cause serious injury if they accidentally unravel.

5) Gloves for the handler! Without them, rope burn is a real risk. Even with a well-trained, polite horse, one playful head toss could rip the line through your hands.

6) Consider a helmet if the horse is green or a little fresh. You may prevent a serious head injury if the horse lets out a buck at the wrong moment, or pops off his front feet and throws out a hoof. Another good idea is to take off your spurs. It's embarrassing at best if you get tangled up as you turn in circles and end up lying in the dirt!

### Putting it all together

Make sure you have good-quality footing that provides cushion without being too deep. Some surfaces, like dewy grass, can get very slippery, so be careful when testing your work area. Allow the horse to work on a circle that's at least twenty meters in diameter. The bigger the circle, the less stress on your horse's joints. Traveling on a continuous circle is surprisingly hard work, so keep sessions to twenty minutes or less, with frequent walk breaks and changes of direction to avoid overworking one side of the body.

If you're longeing with a bridle, one thing to keep in mind is how you tie up the reins. The most secure way to tie them up is to take the buckle end and pass it behind the horse's ears (the same way you would place the crown piece when haltering). Then wrap the buckle end around both reins near the bit. Run the throatlatch through the buckle end and then fasten normally.

This method leaves the reins secure so they won't come loose even during the most athletic horse's antics! (See photo) I find other methods to be less safe. Often I'll see the reins placed over the horse's ears, with the end resting over the withers. The reins are twisted around one another, and the throatlatch used to keep the reins from hanging down. This method will allow the reins to slide forward if the horse stretches his neck down during a buck, potentially allowing for a caught hoof.

There are a few different ways to attach the longe line to the bridle. Most frequently I will run the snap through the inside ring of the bit, wrap it in a loop to run through the inside ring a second time, then run the line under the chin to snap to the outside ring of the bit. This method allows me to have contact with both sides of the horse's mouth while preventing the bit from being pulled out of place or causing a "nutcracker" effect on the lower jaw. If I'm working with a horse that is extremely strong or tries to



A safe longe line attachment

pull out of the circle, I will attach the line a little differently. I run the line through the inside ring of bit, then behind the ears and down the other side of the head to snap to outside ring. This gives you complete control by creating pressure on both sides of the horse's mouth and across the top of the poll at the same time.

So now you and your horse have all the necessary equipment, and are all dressed up and ready to work. Next time we'll talk about specific techniques to improve your skills together!

## Spitting Sand—A Learner's Journey

### Dive In!

Column editor Jessica Boyd

As I crawled out of the cold and barely forgiving Pacific Ocean, suddenly feeling every single pound of the weight attached to my body, it occurred to me that my diving and horse journeys have traveled similar paths. In both cases, simple interests have evolved to be more challenging endeavors—mentally and physically—and each has pushed me to stretch my own boundaries.

My diving career began in the warm blue waters off Maui with several boat dives. Steve and I got Open Water certified, and engaged in one imminently amusing shore dive. We had a fantastic experience—warm water, incredible visibility, not too much weight to carry, and drop-in right off the boat. In other words, it may have led to false expectations as to the simplicity of the sport, and my diving abilities. I found out later, that my experience in Maui was in stark comparison to the California coast, which is some of the most challenging diving a person can do. Those who dive here are welcomed most other places as serious and very competent divers.

Similarly, when we started our horse journey, we rode very well-trained and responsive Cutting horses at a guest ranch. These quiet horses neck-reined, turned, and backed up easily. We stepped it up a notch when we got spotty horse Lena. She was more independent and knew what she was doing, but I was comfortable enough with what I knew, and she wasn't too much trouble.

Enter Calabar. He didn't know much, and tested my confidence (actually he stomped on it) and my riding abilities. He was as unpredictable and challenging as that cold Pacific Ocean and was almost as unforgiving. And yet he was a challenge I wanted to work through, and a puzzle I wanted to solve as much as anything I'd ever done.



*Diving in heart first has its perks, too*

The California ocean is wild and beautiful...formidable, and I've loved it my whole life. I've been diving here twice so far. The first thing I noticed is that it is murkier than in those crystal blue Hawaiian waters. And of course, is the much, much colder. Colder water means thicker wetsuit and recalibrating how much weight it takes to get me to the bottom without leaving me stuck there.

On my very first dive, I lost a fin getting into the water, so didn't actually get to dive with the first group that day. My very first trail

ride with Calabar, he dumped me in the sand a few steps into the Bodega Dunes, and raced back through the campground to the trailer, so I didn't actually get to go with the group that day.

The second dive went better, though I was over-weighted, sank like a stone, overcompensated with my BCD (Buoyancy Control Device) and ended up basically bouncing up and down like a rubber ball between ocean floor and surface. My generous fellow divers



*Diving in paradise*

patiently helped me figure it out. I found out later that the fact that I didn't pull off my mask, spit out my regulator, and head for the surface was almost impressive. My second trail ride with Calabar was also much more low-key event. We rode close enough to home to allow for easy exit. He enjoyed being out, and gazing out over the vineyards. I imagined him wondering just how far we could go. Steve and Lena were there, generous and supportive, exuding calm and confidence, and we got through it with no mishaps.

Calabar still challenges me daily, and I enjoy the process as we work it out. Similarly, though I am still fighting nerves and worry about a myriad of things with my dives, I manage a few moments of calm curiosity and enjoyment. There is nothing like coming out of that ocean and knowing you hung in there—even for just a few minutes. It's very much like trying something with Calabar—like jumping—and feeling his joy as he bunches up and sails over even the tiniest jump. It's different in that we share our successes together.

What draws me to difficult things? Why not have a push-button horse or just dive where it's warm, clear, and tropical? Maybe it would have been easier on my confidence if someone else had taken the rough edges off Calabar. I certainly wouldn't have felt so anxious if I had clung to the dive guides and avoided the kelp forests with their five-foot visibility. But in both cases, the accomplishment would then not be my own. For me, there is no growth without challenge. And, frankly, life is short and boring enough, without clinging to the mundane.

I think I just don't do "easy." Once I've done it the hard way, I dig in and work at it until the path becomes easier through practice. Envelopes are there to be pushed. I want to dive here on this majestic coast. I want to fly over fences and down the beach on this horse...my horse. I want to live life, even if it beats me up a little along the way. Scars are tattoos with better stories, right?

*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).*



## Facilities Focus

# Double Bar M Ranch Becomes Hunter Lane Equestrian Center

Written by Joan Rasmussen, Editor at Large



Pete and Benita Mattioli

Double Bar M Ranch has been a Sonoma County equestrian icon since 1974, when Pete and Benita Mattioli acquired the Hunter Lane property to use as a breeding facility for their newly crowned Pacific Coast Cutting Horse Association (PCCHA) champion stallion, Cal Bar. Construction began immediately after purchase to create a facility designed to accommodate the 100+ mares who would soon be arriving.

Pete Mattioli, who was in the nightclub and restaurant business, was introduced to the horse world by a pony named King, purchased in 1967 for his daughter Amy. He added a couple trail horses for he and his friends to ride, and eventually, looking for equine business opportunities, got into breeding horses. He met Benita, an international flight attendant, in 1970. Benita, who had grown up on a farm in Utah where the horses were used for haying and moving cattle, quickly took an interest in Pete's horse endeavors. Besides working with horses, Benita and Pete particularly enjoyed trail riding in Sonoma County together.

Much of the equestrian activity in Sonoma County today is centered on Dressage and Three-Day Eventing. Back in the early 1970's, though, the focus was on Western working horses. The California Reined Cow Horse Association (CRCHA) Snaffle Bit Futurity was held at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds from 1972 to 1974, attracting not only Californians but major trainers from Texas as well, who came to compete on, as well as buy, some of the country's finest Quarter Horses.

Cal Bar was something of a sensation back then. Son of Doc Bar and out of Teresa Tivio, the royally bred stallion had been

owned by Arnold Dolcini of Petaluma and trained by Harry Rose, who competed him (and usually won) in Reined Cow Horse classes. The Mattioli's acquired the seven-year-old in 1973. Pete thought the horse would do well in Cutting, and although the general consensus in the cow horse world was that this was not going to be a good change for the horse, Cal Bar proved himself to be a formidable competitor as a Cutting horse. After only eight months of training under Larry Reeder, Cal Bar became the Champion Novice and Champion Open Cutting Horse in 1974. He was then retired to stud, and the Double Bar M Ranch came into existence to accommodate his new career.

Over the next few years, the ranch grew to be one of the largest Quarter Horse ranches in the area, functioning primarily as a breeding facility. The Mattioli's, with the help of their ranch manager Rich Gimondo and their veterinarian Dr Jack Woolsey, stood not only Cal Bar but also several other stallions, including San Peppy Doc and two Thoroughbred stallions, Carey County and Macho Hombre. Business was good, and Pete turned down a million-dollar offer for Cal Bar in 1979, partly for business reasons but largely because he couldn't stand the thought of selling his prized stallion.



The round arena is our barrel arena



Larry Reeder and Cal Bar

The Mattioli's also became involved in the equine industry, with Pete serving on the boards of the National Cutting Horse Association (NCHA) and PCCHA. He was instrumental in founding the Sonoma County Horse Council. Benita has actively volunteered with the Horse Council over the years, serving as the advertising director for the Sonoma County Horse Journal and assisting at the Equus Awards galas.

As Cal Bar got older, the Mattioli's began facing the fact that his breeding career would be over at some point. In 1988 they started thinking about transitioning the ranch from a breeding facility to a boarding facility. Several major changes were made to the ranch facilities to attract boarders. This turned out to





Show Jumping arena



Indoor arena

to be a good strategic move as, sadly, Cal Bar passed away in 1990 at the age of twenty-four from complications of colic surgery—the only time in the great stallion's life that he had been ill.

The boarding business was a good fit for the Mattiolis, who have enjoyed the relationships they have developed with their boarders. Some of their clients have been with them for over two decades! The facility started out geared to Western riding, particularly cow horse work. As the focus of riding in Sonoma County began to change more toward English disciplines, the Mattiolis began to solicit English trainers and to develop arenas and stable facilities geared more toward English riding, including an arena designed to accommodate Stadium Jumping. Their goal has always been to implement one major improvement to the facilities each year. Over the years, these improvements have included a 150-foot round arena (currently favored by the Barrel Racers), a large multi-use indoor arena and a smaller indoor arena. There is a large “play-ground” on the property with natural and man-made obstacles to help desensitize horses and challenge their minds. In 2005, the completion of the Hunter Creek Trail, with access just outside the main ranch gate, offered the opportunity for trail riding directly from the ranch.

As time went by, the riders and horses at the ranch evolved from mostly Western disciplines to a more diverse group, representative of the changing equine population of Sonoma County. The Mattiolis began to realize that the name of the ranch, with its distinctly cowboy ring, no longer reflected what the facility was about. As a full-service equestrian center, it needed a name that mirrored its evolution. When the name “Hunter Lane Equestrian Center” was suggested, Benita worried about Pete's reaction to the change. Pete surprised her by loving the idea immediately, saying “Yes, I think it's time for a change. Let's do it.”

The branding makeover has involved a new logo, signs, and website redesign, to list a few of the items on the to-do list, all marking the start of a new chapter in the work that the Mattiolis began thirty-eight years ago. The three resident trainers will remain and are excited about the changes. They include Barrel Racing professional David Lawson, Three-Day Event expert Valerie Belot Bertoli



Hunter/Jumper arena

and Hunter/Jumper instructor Monica Lukes.

And while Cal Bar, the horse that started it all, may be gone, his last son, Cal's Last Star, is still in residence on the ranch.

While change can be intimidating, it is also exciting, and the Mattiolis are excited about the new image for their beloved ranch. They are proud to present Hunter Lane Equestrian Center to the people and horses of Sonoma County.

For more information about the Hunter Lane Equestrian Center, call 707- 584-0704 or visit the new website at [www.hunterlane-equestrian.com](http://www.hunterlane-equestrian.com). Visitors are always welcome at the ranch, located at 603 Hunter Lane, Santa Rosa (off of Petaluma Hill Road).

*Joan Rasmussen grew up in Sonoma County and currently lives in Sebastopol. She got her first pony, Tiny, when she was ten, and now enjoys trail riding with her Quarter Horse buddy, Cowboy. Joan supports her horse hobby by providing bookkeeping services (In Balance Bookkeeping Service). She occasionally blogs about her horse experiences at [cowdex.blogspot.com](http://cowdex.blogspot.com). To reach Joan, email her at [joanras795@gmail.com](mailto:joanras795@gmail.com).*

(Special thanks to Benita Mattioli for her contributions to this story)

*Please see HLEC ad on page 28*



## All Creatures Great and Small

Column editor Grant Miller, DVM

# Relief Resources for At-Risk Horses

Horse owners continue to face very high hay prices in the midst of depressed real estate value, a high unemployment rate, and record high fuel costs. These financial demands can result in some owners "coming up short" when it is time to purchase feed for their horses. As a consequence, owners are facing a very real challenge in keeping weight on their horses. Some horse rescue organizations are reaching out to try to provide assistance for these "at-risk" horses through subsidy programs designed to provide options for horse owners facing hard times.

### **The ASPCA Equine Fund**

The ASPCA Equine Fund provides grants to US nonprofit equine welfare organizations and other animal welfare organizations that care for horses, mules, donkeys and ponies – both wild and domestic – in an effort to extend protection to all equines. The ASPCA Equine Fund grants program seeks to award equine organizations which strive to achieve best practices, including maintenance of updated websites and robust fundraising practices, as well as excellent animal care. The Fund requires that the nonprofit organization be a 501(c)3. Not all equine rescues in Sonoma County that call themselves 501(c)3 organizations actually are accredited as such. To know for sure whether a local horse rescue is a true nonprofit, you can visit Publication 78 from the IRS and search for the organizations name at <http://apps.irs.gov/app/eos/>.

### **The ASPCA Hay Bale Out Program**

With drought reports stretching across more than 65% of the country, equine welfare organizations are scrambling to secure winter hay not only for the rescues in their care, but also for the hay bank programs they run for at-risk horses, mules, donkeys, ponies, and minis in their communities. The ASPCA Equine Fund offers financial support to help keep equines fed. Money for hay will only be distributed to 501(c)3 organizations. In Sonoma County, some horse rescue organizations have applied to this program in the past, and may have hay resources available upon request.

### **A Home for Every Horse**

A Home for Every Horse is an Arizona-based organization that operates a website that allows national and international exposure for people looking to sell or re-home their horses. A Home for Every Horse offers low cost advertisements that reach thousands of enthusiasts at <http://www.equine.com/services/service-ad-1588358.html>.

### **The Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance**

In response to a detailed request by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), the Jockey Club has assembled the Thoroughbred Aftercare Alliance (TAA)—a group of industry professionals who will develop a program that will help provide care for Thoroughbred race horses at the end of their running career. PETA petitioned the Jockey Club with a proposal for "The Thoroughbred Lifecycle Fund" (<http://www.mediapeta.com/peta/>



[PDF/jockeyclub.pdf](http://www.jockeyclub.pdf)) asking the Jockey Club to mandate a \$360 fee for every Thoroughbred foal registered. Since all Thoroughbreds that race must be registered, this would create a fund that could potentially provide resources for thousands of horses that come and go from the track. The TAA is composed of owners, trainers, breeders, racetracks, jockeys, horse-rescue experts, and others in the racing industry. The TAA will lay groundwork for the program, which will include site visits of stables and sanctuaries that want to provide a home for a Thoroughbred. The facilities that make the grade will be accredited. The TAA will also raise additional funds to get the horses into those homes. To contribute to the TAA and to review their initial accreditation standards, visit <http://thoroughbredaftercare.com>.

### **The National Equine Resource Network**

Virtually all horse rescue organizations have policies requiring that stallions be gelded. In California this procedure must be performed by a licensed veterinarian, which makes it an expensive endeavor for some. The National Equine Resource Network (NERN) (<http://www.nationalequine.org/>) is devoted to providing low-cost gelding clinics for California horses. Donations made to NERN go to offset the cost of the gelding procedure. While horse owners do have to pay a fee for the gelding, the cost is nominal.

The gelding clinics are collaborative efforts with local nonprofit equine welfare organizations, and veterinarians who volunteer their time for this important work. The gelding clinics are scheduled throughout California monthly, from February through June, with additional clinics planned for October through December. One clinic has already been held in Sonoma County, and another is currently being planned for spring 2013. Visit the NERN website for more information and gelding clinic announcements.

These national resources help augment the local rescue community network, and provide additional options for horse owners to consider when they are facing difficult times. With these added efforts, at-risk horses in Sonoma County may hopefully receive a bit more feed, or maybe even a new home in the event that their owners be unable to keep them.

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*Readers Write*

# The Year of the Horse

Written by Leighann Malilay

Born in the Chinese Zodiac's Year of the Horse, Laurynn has always had a fascination with horses. Starting at the early age of four she asked to learn to ride. Searching high and low, in phone books and online, I looked without success for someone who would teach a four year old how to ride. Finally, when Laurynn was five we found someone, and she has stuck with it since then. She had two different trainers off and on for a year, and at age six we found Patti Belanger of PJB Arabians ([www.pjbarabians.com](http://www.pjbarabians.com)). I knew nothing about Arabian horses except that my aunt owned one when I was a kid. Until then, Laurynn had only ridden ponies. After her first lesson with Patti, I knew we had found the right place. We started with one lesson a week, then two, then three...She was hooked. Soon Laurynn started asking for her own horse. At that time, her dad jokingly said, "Maybe when you are ten, if you are still riding, we can buy you a horse." I don't think he really thought at that point she would still be riding horses four years later.

One Saturday, Laurynn was spending the day at Patti's ranch. It was a cold day with rain coming in, so Patti took a few of the girls into the big pasture to put blankets on the horses. One horse in particular took an interest in Laurynn. The filly had never really seen a small child before and she walked up to Laurynn and put her head down low to check her out. Laurynn and Patti blanketed "Princess" (PB Polish Princess A Wish SFF x R Desperada) together, and the Laurynn and Princess love affair began.

*Happy Birthday!*

Laurynn began to ask if we could buy Princess. She took any opportunity to visit the big pasture and take Princess an apple, carrot, or some kind of treat. She visited her every Christmas, bringing special homemade warm bran mash, with carrots and peppermints. Laurynn would also make sure that for Princess' birthday we would go to the ranch and bring her a special Laurynn-made birthday cake. She and Princess had a special bond that grew over the

course of years. A few years after meeting Princess, Laurynn still was asking to buy her and asked to give up all gifts for the next two years, receiving just money to save to buy Princess herself. She saved every bit of pocket change she could find, and pennies she found on the ground. She learned how to roll the coins so we could take them to the bank. Laurynn was serious about no more birthday or Christmas gifts...we opened up a special savings account just for Princess.

As the time crept closer to her tenth birthday her dad and I realized there was no turning back. She was so determined and hard working that there was no way we could not get her the horse she dreamed of; plus she had saved up half the money on her own. So, in preparation, Patti help Laurynn work with Princess over the next

few months. Patti taught Laurynn how to longe and work a young horse, and then Patti would ride her. It was hard at first for Laurynn to separate her love affair with Princess from being her trainer, but it was a very valuable lesson and exciting opportunity for her that not too many other kids get. Learning how to train your own horse! After not too long, Laurynn could ride Princess on the longe line, and quickly progressed to riding her in the whole arena.

*Laurynn and Princess*

Laurynn shared with me that she had a dream. She dreamt that when she woke up on the morning of her birthday, Princess would be in the front yard with a ribbon in her hair. We live in the city, so I thought this was pretty far-fetched. I joked about it one day with Patti as Laurynn's birthday was nearing and Patti said, "I can probably help you with that!" I really didn't think it was possible, but she put the plan in place. My best friend and I made ribbons for Princess' neck and tail, in teal, which Laurynn had deemed as her barn color.

Patti planned to be at our house at 7:30am on Laurynn's birthday. When Laurynn woke, Patti was outside and ready. I told Laurynn her birthday present was here, and she sleepily asked if she could open her friend's present first. She looked at me confused when I told her to look outside first. I opened the door for her and there was Princess waiting for her! Laurynn was completely speechless. Anyone who knows Laurynn, knows she never has nothing to say, but I think she was in shock at such a grand birthday gift. We spent some time hanging out with Princess and letting her graze a bit before Patti took her back to the ranch. Laurynn says that was the best day ever.

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## Readers Write

# Healing with Horses ...the Road to Better Health!

Written by Linda Dougherty



*Hippotherapy increases core strength*

All of us who are blessed with horses, dogs, or cats (or any animal) as part of our families know that they are built in stress relievers. A purr, nicker, nudge, nuzzle, wagging tail or just their quiet presence heal us. I wasn't surprised when I learned about "therapeutic riding." What horse owner would be? But using a horse for pain management and strength building was not in my realm of knowledge when I was injured, and it has since changed my life. As I travel this path I continue to learn and share the dynamics of healing with horses: hippotherapy, adaptive riding, equine-assisted therapy, service animals, and biophilia.

Four years ago I experienced a debilitating injury from a horseback riding accident. Pain, anger, frustration, depression, and limited mobility plagued me until my healthcare provider decided I needed to get back on my horse. At that time I had been going two times/week to traditional physical therapy plus once a week for aqua therapy, and yet I wasn't improving. I was falling on a regular basis and used a cane for stability. As horses are such a large part of my life, both my healthcare provider and physical therapist recommended hippotherapy, and my road to enlightenment and healing began.

A year and a half ago I started treatment at Renaissance Healing & Learning Center, a Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) facility, with Fran Judd, a licensed physical therapist certified in hippotherapy. Besides Fran, my team included a wonderful Fox Trotter named Stormy and a black lab service dog named Max. Fran designed a treatment plan that combined hippotherapy with massage therapy, and while I'm not "cured," my pain levels are more manageable, my depression has diminished and I can move. Best of all I am able to get back on my own horse again, albeit in a limited capacity. In a few weeks I became independent, gave up the cane, and became more functional.

### **Hippotherapy**

Hippotherapy is a medical treatment using the horse as the modality. Only licensed physical (PT), occupational (OT) or speech

(SPL) therapist who has received additional training can provide hippotherapy. For this reason, insurance may cover hippotherapy as part of PT. Hippotherapy is loosely translated as treatment with the help of a horse. However the most accurate definition refers to a session while the patient is ON the horse, and the resulting movement is part of the treatment strategy.

When horses and the horse's environment are used as part of an OT, PT, or SPL session but the patient is not actually on the horse's back, the term equine-assisted therapy is used. Therapists can achieve many goals and objectives around horses and in the horse's environment, including goals related to coordination, calmness, and anxiety reduction.

The American Hippotherapy Association (AHA) refers to riding lessons for individuals with special needs as "adaptive riding," rather than therapeutic horseback riding. Adaptive riders generally have "enough" therapy, and are looking to participate in an enjoyable sport rather than another treatment session. Being a good adaptive riding instructor is a skill, and rewarding. Imagine teaching someone to overcome their limitations. The experience is great for self-esteem and growth for both the rider and instructor. While adaptive riding has great benefits, it is not therapy in the traditional sense.

I would like to discuss the different functions of adaptive riding and hippotherapy. Adaptive riding provides all of the benefits associated with becoming an equestrian athlete. Riders have the joy of spending time with wonderful animals in a natural environment. They get to spend time with others who share a common interest. They exercise. They become stronger. They increase confidence. They may overcome obstacles and will learn a new sport. Because of these benefits some may argue that riding a horse in this setting must surely be "therapeutic," despite the fact that it is not classified as such. Adaptive riding is valuable and needed as a recreational activity and a sport for individuals with special needs. It is important, just as other adaptive sports are. In Sonoma County we have two outstanding organizations that provide adaptive riding—Giant Steps and Equi-Ed.

The physiological basis for hippotherapy lies in the movement patterns of the horse's gait on a human rider, and the participant has biomechanical goals. The horse's movement pattern is multidimensional, variable, rhythmic, and repetitive. Hippotherapy is a valuable treatment strategy for patients receiving occupational, physical, and speech therapy. People who may benefit from hippotherapy range from slightly to severely impaired, with diagnoses such as cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis. Stroke victims and those with orthopedic injuries benefit as well. Therapists utilizing hippotherapy as a treatment strategy must work hard to educate patients and insurance companies. Using the right terminology is crucial.

### **Equine-assisted care**

Horses have now become important in what we call assisted care programs. Miniature horses (aka Minis) have joined the ranks as companion/service animals. According to information contained on the Guide Horse Foundation's website, miniature equines are

suited to roles as service animals due to their longer lifespan, good manners, stamina, and excellent vision. So-called guide horses also benefit some visually impaired or blind owners who are allergic to dog hair. Minis now work in hospitals, hospices, and in private homes as therapy horses. Under its rules, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) allow the use of trained service horses as alternative to dogs in situations where use of the equine would be appropriate. The state of Illinois has passed legislation designating miniature horses as a recognized service animal. The bill allows equines to accompany disabled students to school and other public venues currently open to service dogs.

Horses for Heroes is a program that supports our veterans. Picture a dusty barn and the earthy smell of manure. Birds chatter and flutter among the rafters, and horses softly nicker from stall to stall. Veterans can participate in this non-traditional therapy program far from the chaos of a war zone or the bustle of the local VA hospital. VA medical centers around the country are partnering with adaptive riding centers to offer veterans an alternative rehabilitation program. The idea is gaining momentum. Soldiers and the horses from the 3rd US Infantry Regiment at Arlington, also known as The Old Guard, are part of a pilot program at Washington, DC's Walter Reed Army Medical Center. This program is researching the use of horses to help soldiers with prosthetic legs regain mobility through horseback riding.

#### **Horses are natural healing**

Animals have been used to help patients dating back to the 1800's. But only in the past few decades scientists have been able to pinpoint how exactly they help. The research evidence is growing, and can be very compelling. For example, one of the earliest studies found that petting a dog can help reduce blood pressure in people with heart disease, and now several universities have centers that study human-animal relationships. One of the most important discoveries has been that interacting with an animal increases a person's level of the hormone oxytocin. That's good because oxytocin helps people feel happy and trusting. But that's not all. Oxytocin has some powerful effects for us in promoting the body's ability to be in a state of readiness to heal, and also to grow new cells, so it supports our bodies in the process of being healthier. So being around animals clearly has health benefits, and animals can also act as therapists themselves. An animal's presence can greatly reduce a person's stress levels.

Why do horses help us heal? For the same reason you feel better when you are on a trail ride or walking your dog. Let me introduce you to the term "biophilia." Sonoma County Horse Council representative and MAU president, Dr JoDean Nicolette, gave an



*Children who engage in therapy with horses make impressive gains*

eloquent presentation on this topic to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in January 2012 as the board pondered whether to approve funds to keep Annadel open. To quote Dr Nicolette, "Biophilia is the term that refers to the improvement in health and the sense of well-being that humans experience when they interact with the natural world...{the natural world} consists primarily of wilderness areas, and animals, but health benefits can be seen when humans walk through a garden or a park, or even view a landscape." The term was first coined by a Harvard zoologist. Documented health benefits include a decrease in depression, anxiety, and behavioral issues. People also see improvements in thought and memory. Additional documented benefits include lower blood pressures, lower cholesterol, lower heart rates, and fewer heart attacks. Much of the health improvements associated with "getting out in nature," and interacting with animals are yet unexplored.

In my journey to heal, the most challenging experience has been the general lack of understanding and knowledge in the medical community. Many health providers know nothing of hippotherapy and still insist on the old adage that "horseback riding is not exercise, as the horse does all the work." It is my hope that sometime soon this missperception will be no more.

If you are suffering from chronic pain, depression, or any number of health issues, know that you are not alone. I was fortunate to have a forward thinking health care provider (Sebastopol Community Health Center) that got me on the right track to healing. It's still a struggle, however, now there are moments where I really enjoy the ride, and so will you.

For more information, check out these resources:

Renaissance Healing and Learning Center (RHLC),  
 Fran Judd, Director ([www.rhlc.net](http://www.rhlc.net))  
 American Hippotherapy Association (AHA)  
 Gentle Carousel Miniature Therapy Horses  
 TheHorse.com  
 Veterans Administration  
 NPR: Pet Therapy

*Linda Dougherty is a long time Sonoma County equestrian who is recording secretary for the Sebastopol Wranglers, and also their horse show chair.*



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## Readers Write

## Carmencita: A Fight for a New Life (Part I)

Written by Ted Draper

Dark rain clouds were moving in and the wind was getting stronger. It was a little after one o'clock in the afternoon, and it was getting cold. My mother, wearing her rain gear, was out in the foaling pasture checking on one mare that was due to foal any time. I could see her bending down looking at Carmencita's udder, but the mare wouldn't stand still very long for my mother to get a good look. She decided to take the mare up to the barn, leading the mare with her "catch string," a leather boot lace about four inches long, which she always carried in her back pocket. She would walk up to any of her mares with the "catch string" rolled up in her right hand, scratch the mare on her neck, and drop one end of the string over the horse's neck. By taking hold of both ends of the string, mother was able to lead the horse back to the barn.



Ted and Houdina

I came over to question her about what was wrong, and she said that something didn't seem right about the way the mare was acting. She asked if I would get the upper stall bedded with straw. The rain was beginning, and adding to the chill. Carmencita was in the early stages of labor. I bedded the stall, which was dryer and much warmer than the foaling barn. My mother had a feeling something was wrong with Carmencita, but she didn't know what. She had been foaling out of her brood mares for eighteen years and felt confident she could handle any problem. Mother had heard many horror stories about mares and foals dying, foals born dead, and difficult deliveries. I think in the back of her mind she was thinking this might be a problem delivery.

I couldn't see what worried mother other than that the mare was very big and seemed to be uncomfortable. Mother had a special intuition that always amazed me. Normally, the mares foaled in the foaling barn. Many times the family would sleep in the foaling barn waiting for the mares to deliver. We would watch the foal being born. Mother would go in and occasionally help and then treat the foal's navel with iodine. The situation with Carmencita was different, and I could see and feel my mother's concern.

I opened up the gates and helped get Carmencita up to the bedded stall as the rain started and the wind picked up, making conditions very nasty. The mare immediately walked in, smelled the straw, circled a few times, and then laid down and had big contraction. "Great," I thought, "we are going to have this baby quickly." After a few minutes the mare got up and just stood, shifting from one hind foot to the other. She pawed the ground, looking around at her sides, when she had a contraction. Mother expected any time to see a little white bubble or the little feet emerge from the birth canal. An hour passed and still no baby. Occasionally, the mare would lie down and push and then get up with no progress.

Mother told me to go call the vet, and tell him to hurry. I still didn't realize the urgency of the situation. The storm had hit with full force, with pouring rain and heavy wind. I had to go down to an unoccupied house on our property, make the phone call to the

vet, and then make my way to our house, which was another mile away to fetch the list of items that my mother needed. It took me about twenty minutes, and I finally got back up to the barn with flash-lights, a lantern, and the other necessary things. I was wet and cold, but getting into the barn and seeing the pained look in the mare's face, I forgot about my own discomfort. My job was to look out every so often for the headlights of the vet's car so I could direct him to the mare. We didn't have electricity into the barn, so I had to hold the lantern and flash lights. The rain was beating down on the metal roof, which was only a couple of feet above our heads, making it impossible to hear. The wind ripped up some of the roofing, and I heard banging. With all this noise and commotion, the mare was frightened, unable to relax. I went out in the pounding

rain and wind and repaired the broken roof.

Mother felt the foal was very big, making the delivery difficult. Carmencita needed help or we would lose her and the baby. She was thinking about moving the mare back to the foaling barn, where she would be near the other mares. But the rain and wind would be the same there, preventing her from relaxing, and the vet would be unable to find us in the foaling barn.

After two hours of labor with no baby and no vet, Mother knew she needed to do something to help Carmencita deliver. Mother wanted to reach into the birth canal to get the foal's feet and pull during contractions, but whenever Carmencita went down, her rear end would be facing a wall, or she would

get up quickly before mother could get around to help. Mother was determined to find out the problem. She wanted to check to see if the feet and the nose were in the birth canal while the mare was standing up. If there were no front feet, then the foal could be "breech" (coming rear-end first), or several other foal positions which would make delivery impossible.

Ted's Mother, Edna Draper,  
*Arabian Horse Times*, August 1996

Mother knew we were running out of time, if we were going to save the mare and foal. She didn't know if the foal was still alive, it had been so long in delivery. The vet's wife had told me he was out on another call and would come right out when he got home. We knew if the vet's wife said he would come right out, he would, rain or shine or night or day. We knew he would come, but when?

I held the mare's head up in a corner with her body along the wall. Mother, being only five feet three inches tall, could barely reach into the birth-canal but when she did the mare would immediately



move side-ways pushing Mother away. Just then a bolt of lightning lit up the darkness, startling the mare, and a moment later rolling thunder fueled the mare's fright, making her unmanageable. After a few moments we calmed her down, Mother tried again, and was able feel into the birth-canal. She could only reach in about half of her arm's length and now felt the foal was in breech position. The mare was beginning to sweat. Mother told me to go call our vet again, and several other vets. On the phone, I learned that our vet was delayed because of a flat tire, and no other vets were available. When I got back, the mare was down, breathing very hard, the sweat beaded up all over her body. My mother felt the mare was experiencing a great deal of pain.

All the time I was gone, Carmencita would lie down, push, and then get up, pace the stall, and go down again. The mare was getting up and down quickly, trying to reposition the foal. Bouncing on the ground helps turn the foal around. After she had gotten up and down six or seven times, Mother felt for the feet again. I stayed at the mare's head and held her still while Mother reached for the foal.

The storm had receded, the rain quit, the wind had died down, and it was actually quiet. The mare laid down in a relaxed way and rolled over onto her side with her feet stretched out and seemed to be saying, "I give up. Help me." Mother got down behind her and reached into birth canal as far as she could, and what she felt filled her with dread. She could not feel any foal.

Part II of Carmencita: A Fight for a New Life will appear in the spring 2013 Sonoma County Horse Journal.

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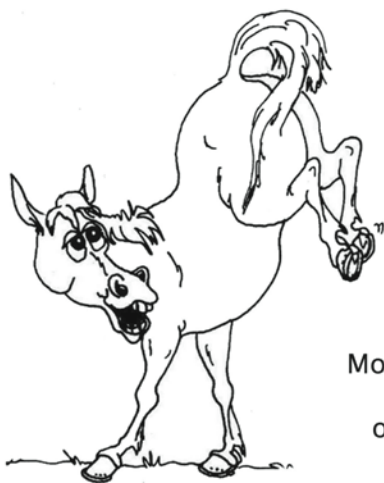
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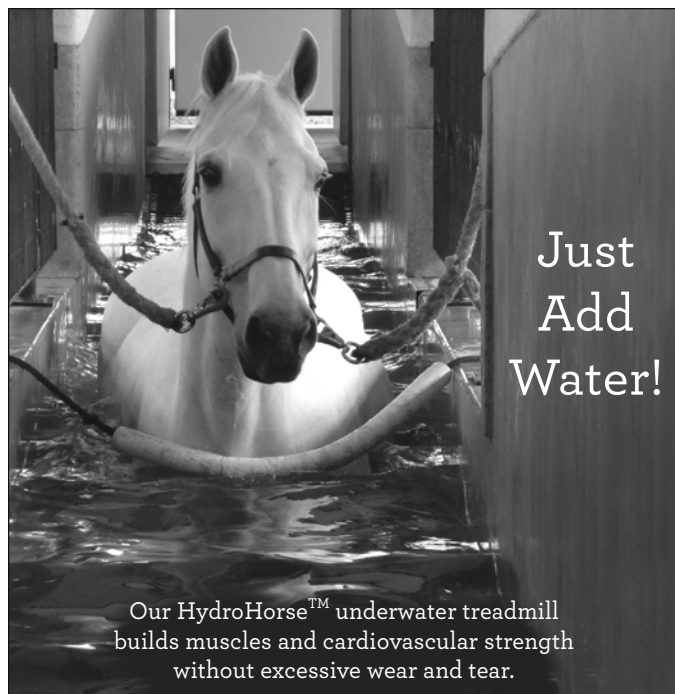
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