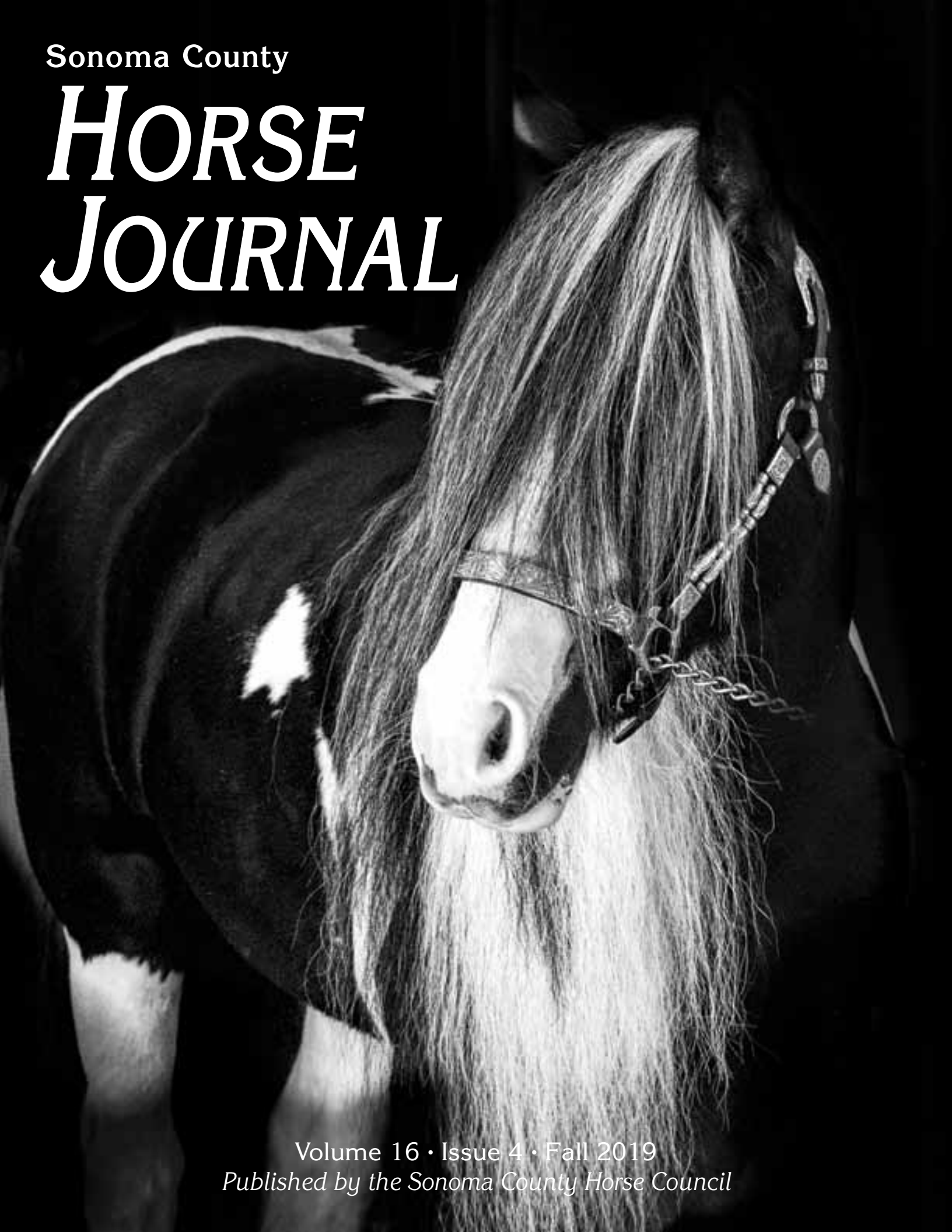


Sonoma County

HORSE JOURNAL



Volume 16 • Issue 4 • Fall 2019
Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council



Jennifer Knef approaches luxury real estate marketing from an investor's perspective even if her clients are buying or selling their primary residence. She helps homeowners sell at the highest possible price in the least amount of time and also helps buyers uncover hidden opportunities for upside potential. With a professional career that spans over 30+ years in Real Estate, Banking and Finance, Jennifer's focus is representing the most distinctive wine country, rural and equestrian estates of Sonoma, Napa and Marin Counties.



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Inside this Issue

Contributor Biographies	4
President's Message – Elizabeth Palmer	5
News & Newsworthy	6
Cowboy Mounted Shooting – Patti Schofler	8
The Best of Botswana – Elizabeth Palmer, Sahar Bartlett	10
Beware of Tempting Trees – Gwen Kilchherr	12
Lake Sonoma Endurance Ride – Patti Schofler	13
Best Feed Room Practices – Amy Housman	14
Tackling Tick-Borne Equine Diseases – Michelle Beko, DVM	15
Local Entrepreneurs Create World Worthy Horse Products	16
Cute Critter Carries Critical Disease – Amy Young	18
When a Tack Room is More Than a Tack Room	21
Belonging – Nikki Cuthbertson	22
HaHa	22
Prepare Your Horse for the Farrier - Mary Taft-McPhee	23
English Meets Western – Patti Schofler	24
So Co Horses Back in the Day / Modern Horses – Wanda Smith	27
Good Ground Manners – Melissa Kalember	28
Local Equestrian Events	29
Ad Specifications and Rates	30



Cover Photo: Marcie Lewis Photography

Murphy is a Gypsy Cob born in 2008. He enjoys camping and trail riding with his brother Guinness, also a Gypsy Cob. "When he's out in his pasture, no matter what he's doing, if I call him, he always comes running to the gate. He loves his people," reports his owner Adrienne Spatz, born and raised in Oakland, always dreaming of living in the country and owning horses. The dream came true in 1994 when she moved to Sebastopol.

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Mary Taft-McPhee is a farrier based in Port Orchard, Washington, who works part time in Sonoma County. Prior to entering the trade, she worked in San Francisco as a data scientist and in New York as a bond trader. She enjoys spending time with her retired polo ponies, Frenchie and Bayita.



Elizabeth Palmer is a Santa Rosa attorney and longtime dressage enthusiast. She is the president of the Sonoma County Horse Council (SCHC) and the Wild Horse and Burro Sanctuary in Shingletown, California.



Amy Young is the equine outreach manager at the University of California, Davis, (UCD), Center for Equine Health. After completing her master of science in genetics at UCD, she spent several years researching genetics and health of companion animals, horses, and livestock at the UCD School of Veterinary Medicine and Department of Animal Science. She is a hunter rider and a judge for the Sacramento Area Hunter Jumper Association, Interscholastic Equestrian Association and Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association. Information about the Center for Equine Health is available at <https://ceh.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/>.



Gwen Kilchherr, a Sonoma County landscape consultant and designer, is the host of her Saturday morning KSRO 1350 AM Garden Talk show, and writer of the Q&A garden column in the *Press Democrat*, "The Garden Doctors." Gwen is a member of the Sonoma County chapter of the California Dressage Society and has volunteered at many of their shows. She and her Warmblood mare Cleo are moving up to Second Level dressage.



Wanda Smith is an engineer, executive director of the California Equestrian Park and Event Center and a board member of the California Horse Council. She has Quarter Horses, showed cutting horses and authored several books including *Horses of the Wine Country*. In 2017 She designed the History Museum of Sonoma County exhibit, *Equine Epochs, the History of Sonoma County Horses* (<http://www.cepec.us/EquineEpochs.htm>).



Amy Housman, a native of Forestville, is the animal and equine science program coordinator and an instructor at Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC). She grew up riding eventers and jumpers until she went to college where she fell in love with cow horses in Cal Poly's equine unit. Amy has a master's degree in animal science from Fresno State University, where she studied insulin resistance in horses. She worked in the animal nutrition industry for eight years before coming home to teach at SRJC. She enjoys riding her Quarter Horse mare Moose.



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Marcie Lewis of Santa Rosa is a professional equine and lifestyle photographer with 15 years of experience and has been a student of photography and horses for many more years. She has specialized in capturing the horse and human relationship through singular photo shoots or multiple sessions. marcielewisphotography@gmail.com.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Beautiful fall weather is one of the many benefits of living in Sonoma County. Whether you are on the trail or in an arena or both, this is great time to appreciate all things equine.

That shared appreciation was evident at the Sonoma County Horse Council's first Pizza and Horses get-together at the Santa Rosa Equestrian Center held in August. There was no agenda other than to enjoy fresh-from-the-oven pizza, have some wine or beer, and talk about the things that matter to our equine community. Soon we'll be hosting more get-togethers around the county. You can find out about the next one by visiting our website (www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org). Better yet, the best way to always know what's going on is to join the Horse Council.

The Horse Council is pleased to announce that we have joined forces with Sonoma Community Animal Response Team (aka Sonoma CART) to assist Sonoma County's Animal Services in the event of a disaster. We have accepted the role of Large Animal Sheltering Lead and look forward to training volunteers to care for all species of large animals.

In other news, we are expanding our social media presence to provide more timely updates on our activities and get important information out quickly. Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Twitter.


This issue includes more of the educational and informative articles you have come to expect from the Horse Journal. Here is your chance to learn about mounted shooting competitions, horseback safaris and horse health, and to check out our enlightening feature, "East Meets West."

We hope that you had a great summer with your horses and horsey friends. If you are not yet a Horse Council member, please take a pre-fall breather, go to our website and join today. We're proud to work on your behalf and look forward to seeing you at our next get-together.

Best,
Elizabeth Palmer
President, Sonoma County Horse Council



Elizabeth and Greycie



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Creekside Farm is located outside of Kelseyville on 40 acres along Kelsey Creek. It is fenced with horse-safe fencing and has 2 barns with ample parking for when you visit your horse. There is space for tack and some supplies. The owners, Peter and Kathy Windrem, live on the farm with their own 2 horses, 2 dogs, and 1 cat.

For more information, please call 707-279-4387 or 707-349-3888



News & Newsworthy

MAKE YOUR HORSE A STAR

The 2020 Sonoma County Horse Calendar is in the preparation stage. If you have high quality photos of your horse(s) please submit them. Everyone who submits will receive a free calendar and if your horse is chosen, you'll get a supply to share with friends. Lisa Thomas is looking for the crazy, the funny, the costumed and the beautiful pictures of wine country horses. Deadline is October 30. Send photos and questions to Info@PremierHCE.com.

WEBPAGE ON EQUINE HEALTH

Thanks to the Center for Equine Health at University of California, Davis, the latest on several equine health topics are a click away at <https://ceh.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/articles/health-topics>.

covered arena, gigantic outdoor arena, washer/dryer and—wait for it ... a bathroom."

PETALUMA EVENTER TAKES NORTH AMERICAN EVENTING CHAMPIONSHIP

Charlotte Babbitt of Petaluma and 2 A.M. (Abe) captured the gold after leading every phase in the USEA North American CCIJ2*-L Junior Eventing Championship presented by Montana Equestrian Events at Rebecca Farms.

SEE THEM AT COW PALACE

Two junior drill teams (Angels & Cowgirls, Hearts & Hooves) plus one senior drill team from the Petaluma Riding and Driving Club will compete in drill competition at the 73rd Grand National Rodeo and Horse Show October 11 at the Cow Palace in San Francisco.

WAY TO GO SONOMA COUNTY COMPETITORS

Sonoma County competitors were right up there with the best in the country when the United States Equestrian Federation announced Horse of the Year Champions.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

ARABIAN COUNTRY PLEASURE/COUNTRY PLEASURE DRIVING JUNIOR EXHIBITOR: Reserve Champion, A Shocking Affaire, **Hidden Gem Farms**, LLC, Petaluma

ARABIAN DRESSAGE AMATEUR FOURTH LEVEL: 6th Place, Exchange, **Terry Benedetti**, Santa Rosa

ARABIAN DRESSAGE AMATEUR THIRD LEVEL: Champion, Exchange, **Terry Benedetti**, Santa Rosa

HALF/ANGLO ARABIAN HUNTER PLEASURE: Champion, PS Huk Me Up, **Hidden Gem Farms**, Petaluma

ENGLISH PLEASURE HUNTER SEAT: 4TH Place, Scotch and Soda, **Ann Kottler**, Glen Ellen

JUMPER/SIX-YEAR-OLD YOUNG JUMPER: 3rd, Hudson VDL, **Amanda Flint**, Penngrove



Kristen Aggers at Sonoma Equestrian Center

Photo: Patti Scholfer

KRISTEN AGGERS AND SONOMA EQUESTRIAN CENTER MAKE A RETURN

Dressage trainer Kristen Aggers has returned to Sonoma County after a year in the other wine county. Now she makes her home at the Sonoma Equestrian Center, 2989 Napa Road, Sonoma. Tracy and Damian Simmons' horse facility was in absentia from the horse community for over a year after the 2017 fire storm blazed down the nearby mountain and fortunately took only the hay barn. Today, the facility is in full recovery. Aggers boasts about the "great footing, 12'x 24' and 12'x 12' stalls, large turnouts,



News & Newsworthy



Vintage Vaulters Katie Keville and Flo Rubinger at the World Equestrian Games

Photo by Daniel Kaiser

VAULTING PAS DE DEUX: Reserve Champion, Revlon, **Katie Keville**, Cotati, **Flo Rubinger**, Santa Rosa

HUNTER ZONE 10

CHILDREN'S HUNTER PONY: Reserve Champion, Candy Crush, **Mika Gretton**, Santa Rosa

GREEN HUNTER 3'0": Reserve Champion, Mystere, **Amy W. Hilmer**, Santa Rosa

HUNTER SEAT EQUITATION 14 & UNDER: Reserve Champion, **Avery Glynn**, Penngrove

JUMPER ZONE 10

1.20M/1.25M AMATEUR OWNER JUMPER: Reserve Champion, Philadelphia, **Zume Gallaher**, Windsor

1.20M/1.25M AMATEUR OWNER JUMPER: 4th Place, D'Artagnan VK, **Carrie Wicks**, Petaluma

SIX-YEAR-OLD YOUNG JUMPER: 6th Place, Hudson VDL, **Amanda Flint**, Penngrove

REGIONAL CHAMPIONS

ANDALUSIAN/LUSITANO HALTER HORSE: Champion, Ma'donna, **Audrey Stroupe**, Petaluma

ANDALUSIAN/LUSITANO HALTER HORSE: 5th Place, Nevita, **Audrey Stroupe**, Petaluma

ARABIAN COUNTRY PLEASURE/COUNTRY PLEASURE DRIVING OPEN: Champion, A Shocking Affaire, **Hidden Gem Farms, LLC**, Petaluma

ARABIAN SPECIALTY HORSE: 3rd Place, A Shocking Affaire, **Hidden Gem Farms, LLC**, Petaluma

ARABIAN COUNTRY PLEASURE/COUNTRY PLEASURE DRIVING AMATEUR: Reserve Champion, A Shocking Affaire, **Hidden Gem Farms, LLC**, Petaluma

HALF/ANGLO-ARABIAN DRESSAGE TRAINING LEVEL OPEN AND AMATEUR: Reserve Champion, Tykus Maximus, **Isabella Vaca**, Santa Rosa

HALF/ANGLO-ARABIAN DRESSAGE TRAINING LEVEL: 4th Place, Irie C, **Carol Fricke**, Sebastopol

HALF/ANGLO-ARABIAN HUNTER PLEASURE JUNIOR EXHIBITOR: Champion, PS Huk Me Up, **Hidden Gem Farms, LLC**, Petaluma



Horse Journal photographer Marcie Lewis walked away with big wins at the Sonoma County Fair including Best of Division—Architectural, and Best of Show—professional color photography.

The Horse Journal welcomes your news to share with the horse community. Deadline for the winter issue is November 1, 2019. Please send your news to editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.



COWBOY MOUNTED SHOOTING

A New Sport from an Old Tradition

By Patti Schofler

Cotati carpenter Mark Thomas might look like a cowboy straight out of the Old West, but he came to his passion quite by accident. Driving home from a job, he stopped at the grocery store to pick up dinner. The woman making him a sandwich filled him in on an upcoming cowboy mounted shooting (CMS) clinic at Novato Horsemen's Association.

Having never heard of the sport, curiosity sent him to the clinic and he was hooked. Nine years later, Thomas regularly takes off with his Quarter Horse Goose to competitions throughout California, Nevada and Arizona, home of the Cowboy Mounted Shooting Association.

For the unfamiliar, CMS is a speed sport with only a 25-year history, but with focus on the American West of 1850s. The goal

for horse and rider is to follow a prescribed pattern and shoot 10 balloons on sticks anchored in road cones in the fastest time with the least time penalties. Five balloons are shot with one gun; the second five with another gun, with a typical run taking 10 to 35 seconds. The fastest time wins.

Time penalties are derived from missing balloons, going off course, committing rule infractions or knocking over barrels or target stands. Missing a balloon

or knocking over a barrel is a five second penalty. Off course is 10 seconds. At the higher levels missing one balloon could take you out of the running since the top two riders might be half a second apart.

Pistols are reproductions of 19th century guns

Thomas competes with two Ruger Vaquero pistols, a typical type of gun for competition that requires two single action .45 caliber revolvers designed prior to 1898 or a reproduction thereof. Each is loaded with five black powder blank brass cartridges with crimped ends, as were used in the 1800s. Strict rules apply as to

how the guns are loaded and unloaded. They can carry only five bullets at a time.

A horse running at a full gallop needs the calm to react obediently, quickly and precisely to rating or changes in the course if the rider is going to hit the target and stay on course. If the horse doesn't respond quickly to the rider's leg and seat, the pair may blow by a barrel or not make the turn to get the next balloons.

"Half the game is the horse knowing what he should do. Shooting is the by-product," said Mari Benson, Penngrove, who has been in the sport since 2013. Her husband, Dan Millikin, on the other hand, has been dedicated to the sport for over 20 years. Together they have five shooting horses, including her 18-year-old Quarter Horse, Doin' the Hokie Pokie.

The sport is open to all breeds of horses and mules. Benson described the ideal horse as "an agile horse who listens to you, isn't spooky, has a willing, good mind and is physically fit."

Benson swears her horse knows the courses and the distance he should be away from a balloon. "Horsemanship skills are the biggest part of CMS. You also need the mental skills to face competition. And you have to keep riding to the end of the course, even when you're done shooting. I've seen several people fall off after they've shot their balloons because they stopped riding."

Before the start Benson has her first gun in hand. After she shoots her first five balloons, she jams one gun in the two-gun holster and pulls out the other.

The secrets of gun changes

"You never look down to change guns. As soon as you look down, your horse slows or stops. So, you practice in the mirror. It has to be by muscle memory. When new to the sport, you go slow. You trot the course. Later you can do a nice lope. As you progress you start asking for speed. You need balance. A lot is going on with the gun changes," said Benson who loves the fast sport that keeps her thinking and practicing as she builds confidence and enjoys the camaraderie.

When a gun's trigger is pulled, the hammer comes down, hits the primer and ignites the black powder which creates bright spark embers. It's the embers that burn the balloon. If you're too close, the embers will go around it and not break the balloon. If you're too far away, the embers will die out and not break the balloon. Sometimes the balloons are fairly close to each other. Are you able to cock your gun quick enough to shoot in fractions of a second? Will the excitement get the best of you so that you shoot too early?

"The ideal distance for the best shot is 10 to 12 feet from the end of the gun to the balloon," said Thomas. "Sometime the air from the gun will push the balloon over, but not kill it. Sometimes you have to wait on a shot because you're just too close. It has to be the right distance. That's when the rider has to be reactive more than thinking. I saw one guy jump the balloon and then shoot backwards."

As if shooting the two pistols isn't challenging enough, Thomas has recently competed with a shotgun and a pistol. He shoots five balloons with his pistol, holsters it, drops the reins, keeps Goose on course and straight between his knees, pulls out the shotgun from its holster on the other side, holds it with both hands and shoots.

Training tips

Competition is 11-year-old Goose's favorite. He came to Thomas without CMS training which Thomas began with Goose



In a cloud of smoke, Mark Thomas takes out a balloon from a tricky position.

Photo by Bruce Shoji



accepting the cracking sound of a bullwhip. Riding with the whip also got him comfortable with the sight of something moving near his eyes, caught in his peripheral vision.

The next step is to acclimate the horse to the sound of a .22 caliber gun which is not as loud as the .45 caliber gun. A cap gun also is a good introductory gun. "You can ride with a quarter or half load of black powder in the bullets. As you add powder, the shot gets louder with more smoke. Let them just stand in the stall or paddock as you shoot and after a bit they don't care," said Thomas.

The first step under saddle is to shoot high up and back over the hindquarters. "You don't ever want to shoot over the head. You want to be at three and six o'clock." Eventually you can shoot from 11 and one o'clock.

To acclimate the horse to balloons, tie some in the stall or pen or carry balloons on a stick as you ride.

The balloons are one giveaway that you have arrived at a cowboy mounted shooting event. Another is the people walking around in 19th century clothes. The dress code calls for traditional western cowboy and cowgirl clothes and hats and encourages authentic dress from the 1800s. If jeans are the choice, they must be worn with chaps or chinks.

Thomas had ridden his fair share when he came upon the sandwich woman on his way home. "I did a lot of cow work, team penning, trail. Then I found CMS. From day one I'm addicted." 🐾



Mari Benson, Pennngrove, and "Bully" (Doin the Hokey Pokey), an 18-year-young registered Quarter Horse gelding, compete in a Las Vegas cowboy mounted shooting event.

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THE BEST OF BOTSWANA

A View from Between the Ears of Horses

By Elizabeth Palmer and Sahar Bartlett

We ride up a slight grade to a berm, an old dam perhaps, that separates a vast, marshy wetland from an equally vast, bone-dry savannah. It's narrow at the top, and we ride single file.

Our guide signals "halt" and points to two shapes moving in the distance. My heart pounds as the shapes become elephants, lumbering toward the water. A moment later, I realize that more than a dozen elephants are pouring out of the brush, all headed for the water—and us.

We are transfixed, and increasingly nervous, as they come closer, clearly unaware of our presence. Our guide signals for retreat.

As I turn my horse toward safety, it hits me. I AM IN AFRICA. ON A HORSE.

That magical experience happened less than an hour into a 10-day, life-changing adventure. It underscored the importance of the safety precautions impressed upon us at the stable, and the months of preparation before we left home.

We were eight women from Santa Rosa, most of whom did not have a horseback safari on our bucket lists. But when we heard that a trip planned by two local women had openings for a few more riders, each of us had the same reaction: this is an opportunity to do something amazing that I probably wouldn't undertake on my own.

Expectations and Experiences

We rode with two equine safari companies that jointly marketed the trip as "The Best of Botswana," splitting our time between the Tuli Block in the Limpopo Valley, renowned for its massive rock formations, and the Okavango Delta, the world's largest inland delta.

Both companies were very clear about their expectations and the demands of the trip: no novice riders; two-point position for trotting and cantering; ability to jump 18 inches; and ability to gallop from danger (really). It would be 10 straight days of riding. The shortest time in the saddle would be four hours, the longest around seven hours.

Although we were all experienced riders, several rode exclusively western, and it had been a long time since any of us had jumped (if ever). We began taking jumping lessons months in advance of the trip, getting solid in our two-point position and clearing those cross rails.

The safari folks had not exaggerated, and we were all thankful we had prepared. We often cantered for seven to ten minutes (in two-point, mind you), but being in shape enabled us to embrace the thrill, only occasionally distracted by aching quads or sore backs.



African elephants pour out of the bush towards the watering hole and the visitors from Sonoma County.

We cantered with zebras and wildebeests, long enough to observe how well the babies kept up with the herd, marveled up close at the ungainly elegance of a loping giraffe and saw a newborn zebra, not yet on its feet. We came to recognize that a giraffe, elephant or cape buffalo standing away from its herd is probably a bull and entitled to a wide birth. We now can tell the difference between kudu,

eland and tsessebe. We grew accustomed to our horses dropping their heads to graze whenever we stopped, permissible behavior because it reassured the wildlife around us that nothing was amiss.

Our horses were impressive, very fit and not bothered by the surrounding wildlife. We had a few unintended horse races and an occasional spook, learning that rheboks hide in the grass. Overall, the riding was simply exhilarating. Our guides were just as impressive in their own way, proud to introduce Botswana's wildlife, birds, habitats, plants and even minerals. Their knowledge of animal behaviors and sounds was reassuring, particularly as we rode through dense brush or near water, where an accidental ambush could prove dangerous.

Both safari companies also took us on game drives, the typical way of seeing wildlife. From the safety of the Jeep, we saw cheetahs roughhousing and hyenas out for a night's work. Young lions watched us while their mothers napped, and we laughed at the cacophony of nearly 50 hippos sharing a pond with dozens of crocodiles.



From Left: Donna Miller, Betsy Robinson, Priscilla Lippincott, Lisa Thomas, Sahar Bartlett, Elizabeth Palmer, M. J. Wickham, Marianne Skinner.

Photo: M.J. Wickham Photography

Photo by Bongway



Game drives often included a sundowner, an impromptu cocktail hour for guests timed to coincide with a dramatic African sunset.

Ah, life is good.

But Is It Safe?

We all had concerns about safety, because, after all, it is Africa. The safari companies stressed the need to be aware and follow instructions, in camp and on horseback. We were escorted to our tents in the evening, and we understood that **we must not leave our tents at night**. Since the tents had bathrooms, there was no need. We loved that coffee was delivered to our tents each morning, but figured out that this bit of hospitality also kept us inside until well after dawn.

When pressed about the likelihood of an encounter with a lion, the Limpopo safari's manager offered the expected disclaimer that each of us must decide our risk threshold. She added, however, that she does not hesitate to allow her daughter to spend time in the bush.

Reassuring...sort of.

An armed guide led our rides, with an unarmed guide at the back. Our lead guide in Limpopo, Mpho (em'-poe), also carried a bull whip. Before we'd even laid eyes on our horses, he gave us a stern lecture about riding in the bush and emphasized that in a dangerous situation, he would announce "Follow Tips!" Tips was our rear guide, and this was our cue to pivot 180-degrees and do whatever Tips was doing, be it walking calmly, cantering or running like hell. Tips would lead us to safety while Mpho, his horse and bull whip distracted the threatening animal.

Ok, got it.

We only heard "Follow Tips" once, during a dicey encounter with a young bull elephant. Our group performed like a precision drill team, albeit with our hearts in our throats. Mpho and his




SCHC's Elizabeth Palmer and Sahar Bartlett are joined by a giraffe as they pose on their horses in the Okavango Delta.

horse gave an impressive display of bravado, and the elephant turned away.


Whew.

Simply Magical

We each experienced a profound sense of freedom on safari, connected to our horses and riding among wildlife in the vastness that is Botswana. We were empowered by the constrained danger and physicality of the trip. Home was very far away, and it slipped from our minds for days at a time. Our phones were simply cameras. We were truly unplugged and immersed in something magical—the best of Botswana. 🐾



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Black Locust



Black Walnut



Chinese Pistache

BEWARE OF TEMPTING TREES

By Gwen Kilchherr

Established trees growing in pasture benefit our horses with shelter, shade and wind break. And like any plant growing in our horse pastures, those trees are fair game for the residents to nibble. For that reason, we need to know if those trees are toxic or poisonous, especially if it is a new pasture for newcomers.

Horses are grazing animals. If they're hungry and there's nothing available in the pasture for them to graze on, they may start eating and chewing on the bark, branches, leaves or fruit to curb their appetite. They also are curious animals, and when bored, they might start eating them to entertain themselves.

The toxicity level depends on the tree. Consuming a minute amount of one type of tree could mean sudden death for a horse, while another type of tree would need to be consumed in large amounts over time to be toxic.

Fortunately, most trees are unpalatable to horses. Some, however, are quite palatable and appealing. Their tender, young shoots that appear in the spring or the dry, falling leaves in the fall make good dining.

Pay close attention to horses that are pastured with trees. Examine the pasture, especially after a storm, for fallen or broken limbs and fallen leaves and remove them.

Unfortunately, there seems not to be repellent products that could be sprayed onto trees to discourage horses from nibbling on them. If you were to use repellants designed for deer and rabbit control, you would need to spray often, following the directions on the label. This would not only be quite costly, but very time consuming. Besides, these repellents do not work well, if at all, during the rainy winter months.

Planting Trees

If you decide to plant a tree or two for shade, you'll need to protect them from being nibbled or rubbed on, which could cause the trees to break. Make a framework around the tree using

non-climb fencing, building it far enough away from the tree to keep it out of the horses' reach.

Depending on the size of the tree you plant, you may need to keep them protected for a number of years, until the trunks are wide enough to withstand being rubbed on. If planting for a wind-break, you should plant them outside the fence, just beyond the horses' reach. Don't forget to give them adequate water as they get established.

Toxic trees not suitable around horses:

Black locust tree (*Robinia pseudoacacia*)
 Black walnut tree (*Juglans nigra*)
 California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*)
 Chinese pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*)
 Golden chain tree (*Laburnum anagyroides*)
 Horse chestnut trees (*Aesculus hippocastanum*)
 Kentucky coffee tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*)
 Leyland cypress (*Cupressus x leylandii*)
 Oak trees (*Quercus spp.*)
 Red (the most toxic), silver, and sugar maple, and including Japanese maples (*Acer spp.*)

Fruit and nut bearing trees to avoid:

Apple (*Malus spp.*)
 Apricot, cherry, peach, plum, including wild cherry and plum (*Prunus spp.*)
 Fig trees (*Ficus spp.*)

Horse friendly trees that do well in our area:

Ash (*Fraxinus*)
 California Redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*)
 California sycamore (*Platanus racemose*)
 Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus spp.*)
 Sweet Gum (*Liquidambar*)
 Tulip tree (*Liriodendron*)



Golden Chain



Maple



Redbud (Horse Friendly)



LAKE SONOMA CELEBRATES 36 YEARS

By Patti Schofler

A week before Halloween, 36 years ago, the struggle to create Lake Sonoma came to a conclusion and the Warm Springs Recreation Area marked a new beginning with its first event ready to ride, literally.

As Healdsburg's Ruth Waltenspiel handed over her county permit for the recreation area's first endurance ride, she saw clearly that the head ranger was exhausted. The ride's manager and founder recalled how much the rangers and Army Corp of Engineers (ACE) put into building the venue that would hold the ride.

"He said, 'I don't know anything about endurance rides. Here's the master key. Just don't break anything.'"

Returning to the lake this year on October 19 with a 50 and a 30-mile ride, both sanctioned by the American Endurance Ride Conference, the Lake Sonoma Endurance Ride has been canceled only twice in all those 36 years, both times because rain made the steep trails too slippery.

In 2017, the ride had been scheduled for two weeks after the Tubbs Fire. "We postponed the ride because we felt it was irresponsible putting our big vehicles on the road when there was so much emergency work going on. But then it rained on our new date," said Waltenspiel who had turned over the ride to Jennifer and Jon Niehaus of Cloverdale in 1998. Today the ride is managed by Marci Cook of Healdsburg.

Struggle to build the dam

"Lake Sonoma was one of the most fought over dams in the history of the Army Corp of Engineers. The fight went on for decades," said Waltenspiel. "Then when we had three years of drought, everyone was for it."

Created by the construction of Warm Spring Dam by the Army Corp of Engineers (ACE) in 1983, at 3333 Skaggs Spring Road, Geyersville, the lake when full has a surface area of more than 2,700 acres and 50 miles of shoreline.

Like clockwork, the ride attracts 100 riders yearly, drawn in part by the proximity to the major hubs of San Francisco and Sacramento, but mostly by the gorgeous lake, golden hills and pockets of redwoods that the riders enjoy. And perhaps the wildflowers.

Originally the trails were carved out of the hillsides with a small bulldozer that left the sides soft and dirty. "I wrote Burpee Seed that I had 50 miles of trail and would love to put wildflowers out, but they were terribly expensive. They sent me in exchange for freight several free gunny sacks of who knows what and



Ruth Waltenspiel competes in the Lake Sonoma 30-mile ride on Rush Creek Thor.

Photo by Baylor-Gore Photography

ENDURANCE RIDE



Photo by Marci Cook

View of the lake as seen between the ears of a horse on the Oak Knoll Trail

how old seeds," said Waltenspiel.

The wildflowers were put into small bags given to each rider. "They sprinkled them along the ride. Today, Lake Sonoma has some the most spectacular wildflower displays. I like to think they come from that."

With her husband Ron, the Waltenspiels for 46 years ran the Dry Creek Valley's Timber Crest Farms, growing and packaging dry fruits and vegetables. Ruth was considered a pioneer in the American production of dried tomatoes. In 2003, Timber Crest was sold and recently Waltenspiel transformed the property into a collection of small production wineries, the first collective wine tasting venue in Dry Creek and a home to artisan food producers.

Today, Ruth, 81, tries to go to a 25-or 30-mile endurance ride every two weeks starting in March. Recently, she finished 11th out of 67 riders at the Cash Creek ride on the border of Lake and Colusa Counties. In her lifetime she has ridden 30,000 miles and trades off between riding Rush Creek Stu and Rush Creek Thor.

Fun on the trail

Competition and fun are major parts of the formula accounting for the ride's longevity. One rider, who was in first place with 1/8th of a mile to the finish, got off his horse and jogged with him, wanting his horse to look fresh at the finish. "Well, rider number two galloped in front of him and went over the line first. He was furious," according to Waltenspiel.

If it was any compensation, he did go home with the Lake Sonoma Pissing and Moaning Award, a bleached cow head that goes to the one doing the most whining, sniveling and complaining. "One year we had a vet win it."

That year a mama pig and her babies were crossing the trail the same time riders were going through. A horse's hoof hit one of the piglets. Rider Deborah Peek dismounted, snuggled the

(cont on page 14)



Meggan Casarotti on Willie (left) and Marci Cook riding Hank on Crossroads Trail, take up rear on the Lake Sonoma 50 miler. Their job is to assist riders who may have fallen behind or are in trouble, pull ribbons and overall check the trail.

Photo courtesy of Marci Cook



Whether you have a dedicated feed room in your barn or you keep your feed in a bin clustered outside your horse's stall, consider these ideas for efficient and safe feed management.

1. Measurements – One of the costly items for the horse owner is feed. For that reason alone, if you've chosen to add grain or supplements to your horse's hay diet, go the extra mile to make sure you know what you're feeding.

Who isn't guilty of using the coffee can method of measuring feed? Grains and supplements are carefully formulated based on weight, not on volume, which means that using the coffee can may result in either over or under feeding important nutrients.

One of the most valuable items you can keep in your feed room is a scale. While most supplements come with a measuring cup, grains do not. Take the time to determine the feeding rate for your horse and then use a scale to measure out the required weight. Once you have the weight of the feed you plan to give, you can fill your favorite scoop, coffee can, etc. and draw a line that represents how much to feed. This ensures your horse is getting the recommended feeding rate of your chosen food and ensures better results.



Photo: Patti Schoffler

Use a hanging scale to ensure exact measurements of grain and hay.

Digital scales are relatively inexpensive. If you get one with a hook, it is easy to pour grain into a bucket and hang it to weigh it. You also can use this scale to weigh hay by placing the flakes in a hay bag and hanging that from the hook.

Horses should be fed two percent of their body weight a day. Their feed requirements are not met by measuring flakes since flakes vary in weight. Further, a flake of alfalfa may weigh several pounds more than a flake of oat or grass hay.

While it is not practical to weigh out hay every day, it can be valuable to recalibrate your own internal scale to know what a certain amount of hay feels like when you lift it. When a new shipment of hay comes in, weigh in again with the new batch.

2. Storage – Metal trash cans are the horseperson's pal. They're cheap and often a great size for feed bags. Containers made of food grade plastics can also be a good choice. However, they must be used with care.

Ideally, keep the cans in a cool, dry environment. If left in the sun, high moisture grains will release moisture, creating condensation in the cans. Due to the impermeable nature of the metal cans

(Lake Sonoma Endurance cont from page 13)

injured piglet into her shirt and rode on to the next vet check. She said to the vet, "Here, save this pig."

Dr. Roger Hayes had a fit. "He spent the whole day moaning that he put \$12.50 worth of good medication into a lousy pig. The pig made it and Deborah took it home and raised it," said Waltenspiel.

On the other hand, there are the endurance riders who never piss and moan, like the one who went down on the trail few years back. Support from police, sheriffs and rangers came to the rescue

BEST FEED ROOM PRACTICES

How to save that valuable commodity

By Amy Housman

bins to not more than three weeks worth.

Open feed bags should be emptied into storage bins with lids and not left open in the feed room. Fats in feeds like rice bran can oxidize and become rancid when exposed to open air. Further, exposure to open air can lead to the degradation of the feed's vitamins and minerals. Open bags also invite pests into the feed room.

Sealing grain bags in difficult to open containers can also protect your horse from itself. If by chance your horse gets into the feed room, you don't want him to have a free choice, high starch buffet that can lead to founder or colic. It's also worth mentioning that a feed room with a door and lock that is difficult for a horse to open will go a long way in preventing these sorts of accidents.

3. Reduce pests – Good storage and a tidy feed area will reduce pests. As rodents are attracted to grain, be sure to secure lids tightly and sweep up anything you may have dropped. Mice and rats can chew through grain bags, even plastic bins. Rats can carry leptospirosis which can cause abortion and kidney disease in horses. Possums also may be attracted to open grain in feed rooms. Possums can potentially carry equine protozoal meningoencephalitis (EPM), a neurological disease spread when grain or hay is contaminated with feces. (See Vet's Office) Disease risk makes keeping pests out of the feed room an important health practice.

Proper grain and supplement storage in a cool, dry location will help maintain the nutrient content and palatability and decrease the likelihood that you'll have to toss out your feeds.

—but they couldn't find the rider, even with a helicopter. "It turns out she sat on the ground a little while, rubbed her head, put her helmet back on, got on and finished the ride."

To finish the 50 miles takes around 12 hours. The 30 miles takes about seven hours. Around 25 volunteers are on board. Cook, herself a passionate endurance fan with over 9,000 miles, described the Lake Sonoma Ride where she often trains. "It's a fairly tough, hilly course. The trails are fabulous, and fall is a beautiful time in Sonoma County."



Photo: Patti Schoffler

This open can invites rodent diners.



Tackling Tick-Borne Equine Diseases

By Michelle Beko, DVM

Infectious diseases occur when bacteria, viruses or fungi invade an animal or person's body. Many of the infectious diseases that horses can get are contagious (influenza, strangles, herpes viruses) and are caught directly from other horses. Some are environmental in that they get into a horse directly from the soil (pigeon fever, tetanus).

Others, such as West Nile virus, are vector-borne. West Nile viruses are transmitted from an infected bird to a horse or human via a mosquito bite. Mosquitos are common vectors or transmitters of human and animal diseases. Ticks also can transmit diseases. In fact, ticks are responsible for transmitting the bacteria *Borrelia burgdoferi* which causes Lyme disease in humans and horses when transmitted from infected deer or mice.

Lyme disease is found in small pockets around the country including Sonoma County. Though a well-documented disease in people, it's unclear how much of a threat it is to horses. Many horses in areas where the disease exists have antibodies to *Borrelia*, but have not been sick from it. Experimental attempts to infect horses have not caused these horses to become ill. That said, the bacteria are believed to occasionally cause fever, stiffness or lameness. A few cases demonstrate good evidence that the bacteria are a cause of neurologic disease in horses.

In Search of Good Diagnostic Tests

Science has yet to come up with good diagnostic tests other than serology (measuring antibody levels) and since many apparently normal horses have antibodies to *Borrelia*, it is difficult to ascribe clinical symptoms to Lyme disease with certainty. For example, if I saw a horse with a fever and mild lameness and found it had antibodies to *Borrelia*, that does not prove that it is the cause of the horse's problems. Likely many horses are infected with the bacteria causing Lyme disease, but few are sickened by it.

In contrast, we do know that infection with *Anaplasma phagocytophilia* (formerly known as *Ehrlichia equi*), aka tick fever, can definitely make horses sick. The bacteria normally live in deer, some species of mice, woodrats and possibly lizards or birds without sickening them. Transmission to horses or less commonly to people, occurs via ticks with symptoms occurring after an incubation period of approximately seven to 14 days. While some horses probably get subclinical disease, many will come down with a



This male, female and nymph are the western black-legged tick (Ixodes pacificus) which can transmit Lyme disease and tick fever. Photo courtesy of Marin/Sonoma Mosquito & Vector Control District

fever which may be very high. As with most other fevers, infected horses will be lethargic and have a poor appetite. They may have other symptoms including swollen legs, reluctance to move, ataxia (walking wobbly) or jaundiced mucous membranes.

Diagnosis of anaplasmosis can often be confirmed with bloodwork. Bacterial inclusions may be seen in some types of white blood cells, and the total numbers of white blood cells, red blood cells and platelets are usually quite low. Additionally, the patient's response to treatment can be helpful. If the horse's fever doesn't resolve quickly with treatment, it is unlikely to have anaplasmosis.

Recommended Treatment

The recommended treatment for this infection is intravenous tetracycline once daily for three to seven days. I generally treat for three times and follow up with some oral antibiotics and three weeks of rest. Horses that get too short a course of treatment or insufficient rest may relapse. Most horses improve significantly after the first intravenous dose of antibiotic.

Besides transmitting diseases, ticks can cause small welts or crusty yellowish scabs where they attach. These don't appear to bother most horses and will resolve with no specific treatment. Fly sprays with permethrin will help repel ticks.

Both Lyme disease and anaplasmosis have restricted ranges that rely on the presence of reservoir animals (deer, mice, etc.) and appropriate species of ticks to transmit them. Climate change might expand the patchy areas where these diseases now occur, but we'll still see them active in spring and fall. 🐾

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Bentley Bars

Bentley Bars, homemade scented saddle soaps, are named after Maria Shahi's "dearest, loveable and precocious horse" and made and packaged by Maria and her husband Charlie in their Santa Rosa kitchen. The soaps are derived from natural ingredients in aromatic scents from florals, sweets, herbs, fruits and food-inspired fragrances. The glycerin- and castile-based products are derived from an old-world grooms' recipe with special ingredients, an old-world secret. www.bentleybars.com



Big Horse Art Leggings

Sonoma County artist Leslie Anne Webb has unleashed her grand passion for horses by capturing on canvas the essence of horses, their spirit, personality, humor and grace. And on leggings and belts, too. The Blues Brothers, on leggings (left) and a belt, are two Paint Percheron colts rescued from the Premarin industry at four months old, adopted by a family and taught to drive; they went on to win many competitions. It's easy to tell who is Charlie Blue Eyes (right). www.lawebb.com



Goode Rider Hunt Coat

The famed Goode Rider apparel are created and designed in Sonoma. In 2004, co-founders Lorna Goode and Kristin Candler left Levi Strauss and started their own equestrian apparel design company, seeking relief from the "frumpy" barn look and craving outfits that could transition to beyond the barn. This fall's line is opulent and glamorous. The palette is highly nuanced, featuring half tones and colored neutrals. Light tones evoke a strong wintery luminosity heightened by the precious touch of pearlescent white. Browns, greys and camels in many tonalities cover new ground. www.goode rider.com



Charleigh's Cookies

Charleigh's Cookies made in Petaluma evolved from Cordelia Wolf's desire as a new mother to teach her daughter, Charleigh, the power and joy of the horse /human connection while providing nutritious, organic food prepared with ingredients from their own garden. When Charleigh was two years old, they started making wholesome, homespun horse treats for their horses—and Charleigh's Cookies was born. This organic, healthful snack is Charleigh (now 11) and Cordelia's way to say thank you to these majestic creatures. www.charleighscookies.com



Equi-Towel

Petaluman Theresa Berton Chavarria created the Equi-Towel, an antibacterial microfiber towel for the horses and dogs. With nano silver particles sewn into the towel fibers, the Equi-Towel 10X grooming tool removes germs and bacteria without the use of water. The microfibers remove even particulate matters without damaging the hair coat. With its use to wash, dry, clean and sanitize, the towel reduces the volume of chemical cleaning agents and sprays used in the grooming process. Coats glow. The handy Equi-Glove does the same job. www.equi-towel.com



Holiday Cards from Sonoma

Graphic designer and avid equestrian Kari Ontko from Sonoma combines her love of horses and dogs with a modern drawing style and strong use of color to design a collection of holiday cards. Life in Sonoma brings constant inspiration for notecards and calendars. Her muses—terrier, Lexi, and horse, Rudy—pop up in various designs. www.ontkodesign.com



CUTE CRITTER CARRIES CRITICAL DISEASE

Equine Protozoal Myeloencephalitis

By Amy Young

Sad but true, equine protozoal myeloencephalitis (EPM) is no stranger to Northern California. With no vaccine on the horizon, we asked University of California, Davis, Center for Equine Health, what this disease is about and what we might do to recognize it, treat it and maybe prevent it from hurting our horses. (Editor's note)

EPM is caused by the protozoal parasites *Sarcocystis neurona* and *Neospora hughesi*, although most cases are due to *S. neurona*. The definitive host for *S. neurona* is the opossum, and horses become infected when they ingest feed or water contaminated with opossum feces.

Although an estimated 50 to 90 percent of horses in the U.S. have been exposed to the organism, only a small percentage (typically less than one percent) develop EPM. A thorough neurologic examination and diagnostic testing are required to distinguish between EPM and other neurologic diseases that can have similar clinical signs.

What is equine protozoal myeloencephalitis?

EPM is caused by infection of the central nervous system with the protozoan parasites *Sarcocystis neurona* and, less commonly, *Neospora hughesi*. It is often a progressively debilitating disease and can affect any part of the nervous system, from the front of the cerebrum to the end of the spinal cord.



A 29-year-old Quarter Horse mare was diagnosed with EPM due to *N. hughesi*. Note the abnormal placement of the feet (abnormal proprioception).

EPM is considered the most prevalent cause of neurologic disease of horses in the Americas. The range of the opossum defines the geographic range of clinical EPM in horses. In areas where the opossum is common, approximately 50 percent of the area horses have antibodies to the parasite in the blood, indicating exposure to the organism.

Opossums shed the infective sporocysts (egg-like stages of development) in their feces. Horses become infected by ingesting food or water that has been contaminated with opossum feces containing the infective sporocysts. In less than one percent of cases, the sporocysts ingested by a horse migrate from the intestinal tract into the bloodstream and cross the blood/brain barrier,



Photo by Skeeze from Pixabay.

Horses become infected by ingesting food or water contaminated with opossum feces.

causing disease by attacking the horse's central nervous system. *S. neurona* cannot be transmitted from one horse to another.

A few cases of EPM are associated with *N. hughesi*, another protozoal parasite. Affected horses may not show any clinical signs, or may show clinical signs consistent with those caused by *S. neurona*. Infection with *N. hughesi* has also been associated with abortions and neuromuscular disease. Transmission from *N. hughesi*-infected broodmares to their offspring has been reported, but not all offspring developed neurologic signs.

Although clusters of cases have been noted, EPM usually occurs sporadically and often involves only one horse on a given property. Cases occur in horses of all ages, with greater frequency in young athletes, and no sex or seasonal biases have been observed.

Clinical signs of EPM

Clinical signs due to *S. neurona* infection are dependent on the area of the central nervous system that contains the parasite and the type of damage caused. The onset of the disease may be slow or sudden. Spinal cord involvement can manifest in gait abnormalities, incoordination, ataxia (inability to control voluntary muscle movement), spasticity in all four limbs and muscle atrophy. On the other hand, when the brainstem is affected, the signs of damage may manifest in lethargy, behavioral changes and cranial nerve paralysis (facial nerve paralysis, tongue paralysis, difficulty swallowing). Signs may not be the same on both sides of the horse. Some horses may stand with their feet splayed or lean against walls or other supports. In some cases, the clinical signs stabilize and then relapse days to weeks later. Factors that influence the progression to severe neurologic disease are not well understood.

Cases of EPM due to *N. hughesi* can have a wide range of clinical signs, including hind limb ataxia and hind limb weakness that progress to more generalized weakness and recumbency. Clinicians at UC Davis have mainly noticed gait abnormalities and ataxia. Further they have noted cases diagnosed with EPM due to neosporosis often have concurrent diseases (metabolic conditions, bacterial or viral infections).

How to diagnose EPM

Definitive diagnosis of EPM relies on postmortem examination of neural tissue. No test in the live horse is currently considered definitive. Therefore, EPM is diagnosed based on a combination of (1) a thorough neurologic examination, (2) evaluation

Photos courtesy of the UC Davis Center for Equine Health



of serum and/or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) for the presence of antibodies to S. neurona and/or N. hughesi and (3) the elimination of other neurological disorders.

Diagnostic tests look for the presence of antibodies to the EPM protozoal parasites in serum and/or spinal fluid collected via a CSF tap. A positive blood test only determines that the horse has been exposed to the parasite and does not mean that the horse will develop clinical signs or that the neurological deficits are caused by the protozoal parasite.

How to Treat EPM

Treatment to control infection should include an FDA-approved anticoccidial drug (Ponazuril, Diclazuril or Sulfadiazine/Pyrimethamine). Additional treatments should be provided as needed based on the severity of the clinical signs and any associated complications. NSAIDs (i.e. Phenylbutazone or Banamine) may be given to moderately to severely affected horses during the first week of antiprotozoal treatment in an effort to prevent worsening of neurological deficits. In diagnosed horses that show brain involvement or are in danger of falling, a short course of corticosteroids and dimethyl sulfoxide may reduce the inflammatory response. Vitamin E is sometimes used as an antioxidant treatment in infected horses, but the benefits of this practice, if any, have yet to be established experimentally. Length of treatment depends on the duration and resolution of the clinical signs. Duration of treatment for the FDA-approved products is approximately one month, although some products may require treatment for three to nine months. Treatment duration is mostly dependent on the clinical improvement. Because of safety and efficacy concerns, compounded anti-protozoal drugs should not be used in horses with suspected EPM.

Prognosis for EPM

If left undiagnosed and untreated, EPM can cause devastating and lasting neurological deficits. The success rate for treated horses is high. Many will improve and a smaller percentage will recover completely, but 10 to 20 percent of cases may relapse within two years. A prompt, accurate diagnosis is important and treatment should be started immediately to maximize the chance for recovery.

All horses are susceptible to EPM, but not all infected horses develop the disease. Preventative approaches include decreasing stress and reducing exposure to opossum feces. Measures such as feeding horses in feeders and not on the ground, maintaining separate fresh water sources, preventing wildlife access to areas where horses are housed, properly disposing of animal carcasses, keeping feed rooms and containers closed and cleaning up dropped grain can help reduce protozoal infections.

For information on other equine health topics, visit <https://ceh.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/articles/health-topics>

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Dressage trainer Brian Hafner's tack room at Fairwind Farm has become a place to hang out.



The Kenwood nonprofit organization Belos Cavalos, dedicated to equine experiential education, uses the tack room for office space, tack storage and meetings. www.beloscavalos.org



BELONGING

By Nikki Cuthbertson

I was standing with my off-the-track Thoroughbred as he was grazing peacefully. Suddenly, I felt the hairs on my forearm stand up and adrenaline move through my body, even though he was still quietly grazing. I thought, "I wonder if he is going to blow." At that exact moment he exploded.

I felt honored to experience herd consciousness through our herd of two. Being present gave me the experience of sharing information at the exact moment that he was living it.

I have spent a lifetime wanting to understand the deeper nature of the connection that horses offer us. I used to think that my obsession with horses was about wanting to understand the use and misuse of power. I've come to realize that my search is so much more.

Instead I wanted to understand the inner workings of the relationship between a flight animal and a prey animal, to understand my own inner wildness and when and why I ever gave that up. To do that, I have spent a lot of time reflecting on what I am asking my horse partners to give up in order to be in a relationship with me.

What I have come to experience through that inquiry is being a part of the herd, what it means to belong to something larger than yourself and have your role and contribution be valued. I call it herd consciousness.


For those of us who have dysfunctional families, belonging can sometimes mean being manipulated, judged and

misunderstood. We are a society of humans suffering from disconnection and post-traumatic stress disorder. The horses remind us how to reconnect lost, shut down or frozen parts of us, accept them and move on. We do not need to be "fixed," simply deeply acknowledged. Horses in their voiceless way can bring us into heart coherence, a belonging in which you can belong and still be who you are.

When we are a part of a herd, even if it is herd of two, we get to move into a shared experience that goes beyond the language of words and behaviors. Our equine friends communicate through the language of energy before it becomes a behavior. When we are quiet enough, we can feel their whisperings and know that they are constantly communicating with us. That is the privilege of being a part of herd consciousness.

When we are asking a horse to join up with us, it should not be one-sided. Where is our energy in that invitation? Are we present? Are we receptive? Are we clear? Are we available?

This led me to understand different forms of leadership—passive, assertive, dominating—but also to understand the nature of submission to a balanced leader. That is the human role.

The foundation of understanding concepts of power, freedom, partnership, love and forgiveness is intimacy, the act of sharing a moment, being willing to listen and joining hearts without judgment. When we connect with our horse friends in this way, we cultivate trust and learn that it is safe to belong. 

HAHA

Two horses are hanging out together. One asks, "Who was your favorite Little Rascals character?" The other says, "Alfalfa!"

Andy Woodford, Sonoma County

One horse says to the other horse "What's your name?" The other horse says "Mud." The One horse says: "Are you serious or just horsing around?"

Andrew Woodford, Sonoma County

Q: What did the horse say when it fell?

A: "I've fallen and I can't giddyup!"

Lauren Terk, Novato, CA



A pony goes to the vet and tells him, "Doc, I think I'm dying. I have this terrible sore throat.

The vet assures him, "It's okay—you're just a little horse."

Lauren Terk, Novato, California

A horse walks into a bar and asks the bartender, "Are you hiring?"

The bartender looks the horse up and down and replies, "No way. You're crazy. Try the circus."

The horse looks confused and asks,

"Why would the circus need a bartender?"

Mary Ann Maloof, San Luis Obispo, California

I call my horse Mayo and sometimes Mayo neighs.

Lauren Terk, Novato, California

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PREPARE YOUR HORSE FOR THE FARRIER

Simple exercises may make your horse the apple of the shoer's eye

By Mary Taft-McPhee



Photo courtesy of JoJan

If your horse has his donkey and dog standing by, the farrier does not even need a halter. Anonymous oil painting, 19th century English School of painting.

While any horse can have an occasional bad day, some always start snorting and dancing the minute they see a shoeing rig. Others might stand still most of the time, but then yank their leg away from the farrier when they get bored or startled. Further down the spectrum, there are those who don't budge.

Wherever yours is starting from, a number of practices can prepare your horse to work better with your farrier and help to keep everyone safe and happy. Your goal is for your horse to stand still and safely, without nuzzling or biting the farrier as they work, yanking away a leg or pulling back.

Steady acclimation will build positive experiences and can be practiced between shoeing cycles for each specific part of the farrier's routine that causes problems.

The first step is to handle the hooves often. As picking out the feet should already be part of your grooming routine, the next time hold the foot between your legs as the farrier would and note how your horse reacts. If they start to get antsy the minute it's held this way, begin holding it there on a regular basis for short periods until they become accustomed to it. Go slowly. Give the hoof back while the horse is being good.

Tap the Hoof Wall

If your horse doesn't like the concussion caused by hammering in the nails, tap a hoof pick along the hoof walls.

Practice bringing both front and hind legs forward as well as backwards, as your farrier would.

The horse that leans on the person holding the leg makes a tough job harder. As you work with your horse make sure they are squared up to stand comfortably on their other three legs and correct them when they start to lean. As always with horses, it will take longer to fix an existing problem than to teach them to behave well from the beginning. Stay patient and reward good behavior with vocal cues, pats and scratches.

If a horse is simply too curious, nervous or "up" to stand still, consider exercising them before asking them to stand quietly, or find another way to direct that energy.

As you're preparing, consider the environment in which the horse is shod. Are they alone in the cross ties with lots of people and other horses going by, or tied at their stall with buddies

(cont on page 25)

What's Up with Farrier Certifications?

You may have noticed some letters after your farrier's name, but few horse owners or riders could say what they mean. There is no licensing requirement for hoof care professionals in the U.S., and certainly many good farriers have not pursued certifications. However, many choose to do so in order to develop their skills and demonstrate their commitment to the trade. Many others are training as apprentices under farriers who have achieved a high level of recognition.

The two main organizations providing farrier credentialing in the U.S. are the American Farrier's Association (AFA), which is the oldest and largest, and the American Association of Professional Farriers (AAPF). Membership is not exclusive, and some farriers belong to both, as well as to local and regional associations.

The AFA's certification system tests the ability of candidates to perform farriery to a prescribed standard. Its main credentials are the Certified Farrier (CF) and the Certified Journeyman Farrier (CJF), with optional endorsements for forging, therapeutic shoeing and education. The CJF is the highest level of certification available in the United States and requires a minimum two years of experience, "in-depth knowledge and highly developed performance skills evidencing a level of professional artistry." <https://americanfarriers.org/page/certification>

The AAPF's credentials require continuing education to maintain. Its main credentials are the Accredited Farrier (AF) and the Accredited Professional Farrier (APF), with optional foundation and discipline-specific endorsements. The AF is for farriers with between two and five years of experience, and the APF is for those with more than five years. Both groups must complete twenty-four education credits each year they hold the credential. https://professionalfarriers.com/farrier_accreditation.php

Those farriers who wish to continue their higher education often pursue further qualifications under the British system, which is a more in-depth and apprenticeship-based program. It is administered by the Worshipful Company of Farriers, which was first established in 1356. The Diploma (DipWCF) and Associate (AWCF) are the designations available to US farriers. <https://www.wcf.org.uk/qualifications.php>



ENGLISH MEETS WESTERN

Exploring the Possibilities

By Patti Schofler



David Adamo

Photo courtesy of David Adamo



Melissa Zanetti

Photo by Shane Rux

We also deal with natural terrain obstacles like banks and water ditches. In dressage and show jumping, we deal with flowers in the dressage arena, signs lining the show jumping arena, bright and colorful show jumps and tents where spectators are sitting.

“Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet” is the first line of an 1892 poem by Rudyard Kipling. If we substituted the word “east” with English, and “west” with Western, we might ask ourselves if Kipling’s statement applies to these two seemingly different ways to ride. Or, as they say, is riding riding?

And if you would like us to ask our county’s experts a question, get in touch with me at schc.pschofler@gmail.com.

In this issue we posed the same questions about obstacle training and spooking at obstacles to three-day eventing trainer David Adamo and AQHA all-around trainer Melissa Zanetti.

David Adamo (DA) bases his business at Hawkwood Hill Farm in Petaluma where he trains and teaches eventing. Originally from San Diego, he was drawn to eventing through his local U.S. Pony Club (USPC) and earned his USPC HA and A ratings. While working on a degree in agricultural science and management at the University of California Davis, he served as captain of the eventing team. Further, he became a U.S. Eventing Association (USEA) level 3 certified instructor and cross-country course designer and has served as the USEA Area VI chair. He has brought three horses to the CCI* level, and has taken a former eventer to Prix St. Georges level dressage. He has worked closely with USEA faculty member Brian Sabo, and USET team member and FEI judge Jim Graham. Other strong influences include Jimmy Wofford, Mark Phillips, Karen O’Connor, Lilo Fore and Anne Kursinski.

Melissa Zanetti (MZ) trains, competes and coaches Quarter Horses and their riders, and has brought home many World and Congress champion awards in all-around western events. The program at Zanetti Performance Horses in Penngrove includes training, showing, sales, riding lessons and colt starting. A native of Santa Rosa and a graduate of Sonoma State University, Melissa comes from a family of horse trainers who at one time specialized in Arabian horses. Today, Melissa believes that she is the last all-around trainer between Sonoma County and Sacramento and Danville specializing in western pleasure, trail, horsemanship, ranch riding and western riding.

The Horse Journal (HJ) asked David and Melissa the following questions:

HJ: What are the obstacles in your sports that might pose concern?

DA: In cross country, we jump solid things: coops, boxes, tables.

MZ: Gates, bridges, poles and the atmosphere at the horse show itself where there are all kinds of things going on that can be their own obstacles and challenges, especially to young horses, like judges on a platform with a table and chairs.

HJ: What is your fundamental idea for introducing obstacles?

DA: The way I think about training is that horses are social animals living in a hierarchy and, as with most domesticated animals, they allow us to become the alpha in their hierarchy. It’s the basis of the human animal relationship that allows us to communicate with them and do what we do with them.

To me the process of horsemanship and riding is learning to communicate in a way the horses understand so they accept and trust us as their leaders. They’re prey animals and if they’re afraid of something, they’re afraid of something. If they trust you, they’ll gain confidence that if you say it’s okay, it’s okay. You have to earn their trust, and you can wreck that pretty quickly.

I boil down my riding into the two simple things that you are responsible for: the line of travel and the tempo. In the wild herd the leader tells the herd where to go -- that’s your line. The leader tells them how fast to get there -- that’s your tempo. I can break down everything, all the dressage exercises, the jumping, all the fancy words like engagement, into these two concepts. I have to be in control of the line to get from here to where I’m going. I try not to be in a situation where I can’t control the line. No sniffing an object. No flying backwards.

I’m not saying the horse shouldn’t look at an object. Especially young horses need to be able to look to be confident. Later, they can learn to go on the bit. If we don’t let them look and insist that they go round, they may do it, but they’ll be so anxious.

When you go into the show jumping arena, stay calm, take a breath, and feel the horse take it in, take a breath and then be ready to go. They are going from the warm up arena and all of a sudden there are no other horses and all these jumps, and they’ve got to go. When you go around the dressage arenas, they’re taking in the videographer, the judge. They learn that it’s okay to take it in and then go. Don’t take that away from them.

MZ: We expose the horses as much as possible. We have banners on the arena walls, and we play music when we ride. Horses are used to my dogs running around and customers’ kids running around. I don’t discourage the dogs and kids from making noise and having a good time. There is the noise of the weed whacking



and tractors running. The horse shoer does his work by the arena. If I have a young or green horse that doesn't like weed whacking, I may lunge or tie him within his comfort zone, but near the scary stimulus while students and I ride the older and more seasoned horses nearby.

I want them to stay in what I call "the box." In order for them to do what I want them to do, they need to have trust and confidence in me as a rider, and they need to be reassured by a physical connection with me, by the connection between legs, seat and reins. This connection goes a long way to minimize spooking.

HJ: Does the training vary according to the obstacle?

DA: Say when jumping cross country the first time, I'll sense that the horse is a little afraid or alert as I go near an obstacle. I'll start going parallel to it. I'll stay 12 feet away until I feel I can leg yield into it. The horse is trying to look at it and go away, but I can hold the line. Then as he accepts it, I'll be able to bend and leg yield in. I'll go past it, go past it, and then pop over it. They learn pretty quick it's just a wooden thing.

Ditches are usually the obstacle that if a horse is going to lose confidence on the cross country it's over this hole in the ground. I use this same technique, but I might bring along someone on a calm horse and start with a small ditch. That's the best way.

MZ: For our show horses, it's things that are not completely solid. Not being able to see through something clearly seems to upset young horses. They have trouble perceiving how deep it is or what's on the other side.

To prepare for competition at the show. I'll tell my riders that before they go to the rail, start out more towards the middle of the arena so the horses can get look from a distance at what's around them without being forced up against something, like the high wall of the arena. I find horses are more concerned about what's on the fence or behind the fence rather than what's in the arena. This way, the riders can see if there is something that concerns them before it becomes a complete spook. It's manageable.

For a trail class, I let them walk or jog around the arena before the class. The obstacles we'll compete with will be up. The challenge is that there are a lot of horses out there at that time, but they will be competing alone.

HJ: How do you handle a spook?

DA: People say you should allow horse to sniff the object of the spook. Well, if I go directly at something, I'm going to want to jump it. If I'm pointing the horse a direction and I close my leg assertively, I'm saying you go there, on that line. So, if the horse is spooking at the tent, it's not going to work for me to have him go directly to sniff. I have to pick a line that I can be in charge of.

There is kind of law with horses. If they are about a body's length away from something, they're a little more comfortable with it. If there is scary thing the horse is suspicious of, and I pass it about 10 or 12 feet away from it, I can control that line. If the horse is terrified of that and I try to get closer, I won't be able to control the line and I'm not in charge. If I go straight at it and the horse backs up, I can't control it.

If I can go the 10-foot line and the mountain lion doesn't get me, then I can go a little closer and the lion still doesn't get me, then go to the object and no mountain lion, all is okay. The beginning 10 feet gives the horse enough space to bolt if the mountain lion does come out.

MZ: I don't think it's a behavior that merits discipline. I am seeking the horses' trust and confidence in me as a rider, as opposed to being afraid of the obstacle. Whether it's going through water or

going over a bridge, I won't allow the horse to leave or turn away, but I won't force the issue or let him turn it into a big deal. I might let him back up a few steps, but not turn away. I may let him stare at it. I'll take him up to his comfort level. Then pet. Then take another step. Pet.

Generally, our Quarter Horses are pretty brave. However, some are concerned about things they cannot see; others about things they can hear. For example, I had a young horse that had a problem with things over his head. At one show in particular, the judges and scribes were sitting in chairs on a platform. He wanted no part of it. After the show, I had the owners sit in the chairs and we would hang out. He got more desensitized.

I prefer to outwit and outlast as opposed to fight.



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(Prepare Your Horse cont from page 23)

around? What sights and smells do they encounter? For example, some horses get anxious when they hear the sound of the grinder or smell the smoke from hot shoeing. If you can't replicate these things precisely on your own, maybe you can bring your horse to stand nearby on days when others are getting shod and help them associate the experience with something positive like treats or grazing.

Sometimes horses who act poorly during shoeing are doing so out of pain. If your horse starts behaving badly out of nowhere, or if no amount of acclimation helps, consider a vet exam. Bilateral hock or stifle problems can be masked until your farrier asks the horse to put all his weight on that side for a while. If the pain is severe, the horse may try to hop on the weight bearing leg to relieve it, while stepping down sharply on the one being held up.

Let Your Farrier Know

If you do find something out about your horse's physical limits, make sure to communicate it to your farrier. For example, knowing that an older horse has arthritis in his hind limbs, a farrier can plan to use a hoof cradle or hold the feet low to reduce pain and keep the experience as positive as possible. Older geldings may have shivers, a neuromuscular disorder that causes tremors and makes it difficult for them to know where their hind end is. This can cause them to jerk away the leg and kick out. Knowing this, your farrier can move slowly and steadily and prevent a negative cycle from developing.

In general, working with your horse between shoeings to ensure that they are comfortable and willing to pick up their hooves and stand patiently will make the experience safer and smoother for everyone. Putting in the time to improve your horse's behavior will make you, and your horse, the apple of your farrier's eye.



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SONOMA COUNTY HORSES BACK IN THE DAY

The History of Horses in Sonoma County: **Modern Horses Arrive**

by Wanda Smith

The second of a series of articles on the evolution of horses in Sonoma County

It had been about 13 million years since Sonoma County had seen horses on its landscape. For unknown reasons, horses and other mammals in North America disappeared. Horses had started immigrating to Asia across the Bering Straits landmass, which has since disappeared under the ocean. From Asia, over time, they migrated to Europe and North Africa.

In the late 1700s riding horses from Mexico arrived in North America with the vaqueros or horse-mounted livestock herders of a tradition that originated on the Iberian Peninsula. These were descendants from horses brought to Central and South America from Europe during the previous 300 years by the Spanish conquistadors and other settlers.



Vaqueros escorting missionaries into California shown in this embroidery of 1794

Like their most recent pre-historic ancestors (see "Pre-Historic Horses," *Horse Journal*, Summer 2019), modern horses had evolved from having multiple toes to one toe on each foot. Unlike their ancestors, they had refined heads, long slender necks, softer manes and tails, and long toplines.

Before they reached North America, horses had been domesticated and bred for transportation and work in Europe. They evolved through selective breeding into two main types: a lighter built horse and a larger, heavier-boned and muscled horse. The lighter built type today is now known as "hot blood" horses and includes Standardbreds, Quarter Horses, Arabians, and Thoroughbreds. The heavier ones known as "cold blood" horses include draft breeds.

The horses that arrived in Sonoma County with the vaqueros were the "hot blood" type descendant from Andalusian war horses. They roamed free; stallions were not gelded and so herd members multiplied prodigiously. General Mariano Vallejo had over 6,000 horses on his rancho in the Petaluma River Valley. The 66,000-acre rancho needed horses for the soldiers who lived on the rancho and to monitor 30,000 head of cattle and 24,000 sheep

that also lived there.

The vaqueros needed a quick-footed, intelligent horse with nerves of steel to assist them with daily chores like herding, branding, sorting and doctoring wild cattle on rough terrain. The Vaqueros started breeding horses for strength, stamina, intelligence, and beauty. The result was horses that could be taught complicated gaits and control of cattle.

The vaqueros did not start their horses' training until they were five or six years old. Without a strict deadline to finish training their horses, they invested considerable time to train a ranch horse to be light in the bridle, easily maneuverable, and agile with slight cues from the reins. Now often referred to as California-style or Californio bridle horses, they were the California precursors to the modern cutting and reining horses.



Vaquero by James Watkins 1877



Vaquero Roping Cattle by James Watkins 1877

As the 1800s progressed, different breeds of refined horses were imported into Sonoma County. Standardbred horses were brought from the South for pleasure riding and harness racing. They were selectively bred for speed and ability to pull and race one-person carts called sulkies. One of the most famous Sonoma County Standardbreds was Anteeo, a racing trotter, who set a record in an 1885

match race. His time was the fastest ever recorded by any horse bred on the West Coast. As a result, Anteeo was ranked as one of the greatest trotting stallions in the United States. He subsequently sired 28

trotters with racing records of 2:30 minutes or less per mile and several valuable stallions. Another famous Sonoma County Standardbred was Lou Dillon, born in 1898 and bred by the Pierce Brothers Stock Farm of Santa Rosa. The mare was the fastest trotting race horse in the world. She was the first trotter to race a mile in 2:00 minutes, later beating her own record with a time of 1:58½ minutes.



Lou Dillon, courtesy of Horses of the Wine Country

By the end of the 1800s, Sonoma County horses were also being bred for flat racing (carrying jockeys instead of pulling sulkies). The county that had become nationally famous for its trotting race horses was to become well known for its flat racing horses in the 1900s.



GOOD GROUND MANNERS

Why Do We Care?

By Melissa Kalember

Manners:

a person's outward bearing or way of behaving towards others.

So often in the horse world I see people compartmentalize their horse by proclaiming, "Oh, this is just how he is on the ground. Once I am on, he's fine."

I absolutely relate to the fact that most people just want to ride. But what they may not realize is that the horse's behavior on the ground most definitely shows up in some way under saddle.

For example, my friend's horse was allowed to walk right up to her, get snuggles and then stay right next to her constantly nudging her with his head. Sounds innocent, right?

What started off cute and with pure intention has led to the creation of a pushy horse that forces his way into everyone's personal bubble, including other horses. When they are at a show and she rides up to the group of horses with riders who are talking to their coach, her horse walks right up and touches the other horses. This action has scared many riders. They didn't know him or if he was going to bite or strike their horses. The riders didn't know how their horses would react to this horse invading their space. Nine times out of ten it worked out okay. The horses didn't care or act



Photo by Melissa Kalember

Melissa Kalember's student Taylor Lamb learns to teach her horse Sam to stand at a safe distance while getting used to a rope moving down his back.

out. Unfortunately, however, all it takes is one kick or a bite and someone gets hurt.

How is it that many horses have bad ground manners? Many equestrians just want to ride. We all have very busy lives, and it is very easy to fall into the cycle of managing your horse on the ground just enough so you can ride. We don't want to take the time to teach them good ground manners. And it does take time and consistency like you wouldn't believe to teach a horse good ground manners. Lastly, many riders don't teach good ground manners simply because they don't know how. Maybe they don't have an instructor or they truly believe they are doing the right thing.

Back to my example. The horse had to be retrained to understand and respect personal space. He also had to learn that he was okay to stand on his own without touching a person or a horse. He was allowed into personal space so often that it became a security blanket to him. When asked to back up and stand next to, but not touching, a person or another horse, he had a hard time and would try to walk around. He was unsettled.

Over and over we worked to teach him that he could and would still get the right amount of snuggles while standing settled, on his own. He had himself to rely on and we were nearby. We had him stand near but not touching while he hung out with horses and people. Over time he realized he could stand still. He didn't need to walk up and into the space of others. This made a safe environment for everyone.

Ground manners are so important for the safety of horses and people. If we don't take the time to teach these 1,000-pound plus animals how to be quiet and listen, an accident is inevitable. Equally important, if we want our horses to be happy, we need to teach them patience and how to listen for the sake of their internal comfort, quieting the worry and insecurity they can carry. 🐾

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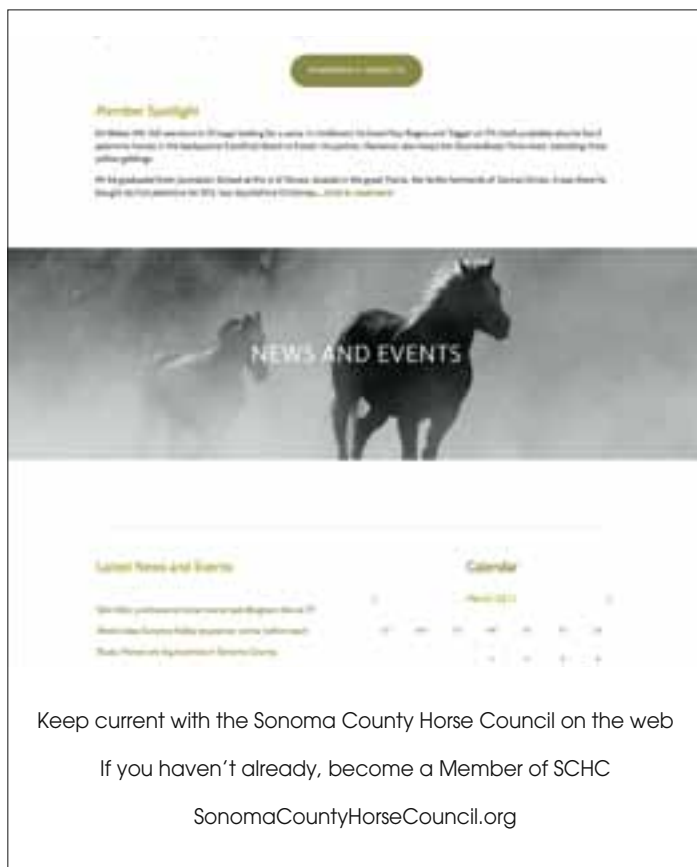
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Sept 18-22	Sonoma Horse Park Finale	Petaluma	sonomahorsepark.com
Sept 28	Lisa Lombardi & Judy McHerron "Horses, Horses, Horses"	Sky Tree Ranch, SR	CloverTenThirty@aol.com
Sept 28	Woodbridge Farm Schooling Show (Susan Ighani, Judge)	Petaluma	woodbridgefarmdressage.com
Sept 29	Jumper Show	SR Equestrian Center	srequestrian.com
Oct 12	Open All Breed Horse Show	SoCo Fairgrounds	irishhills2006@gmail.com, 805 218 0849
Oct 13	Combined Test Dressage Judge: Colleen Reid, Jump Judge: Amy Woodruff	SR Equestrian Center	srequestrian.com
Oct 13	Dressage Clinic/Show/Judy McHerron	Hoofbeat Park	eqwine@sonic.net or 707-696-2848 by 10/6
Oct 13	Trail Obstacle Event / Sebastopol Wranglers		sebastopolwranglers.com
Oct 19-20	Sue Curry Dressage Clinic	Fairwind Farm, SR	Sue Curry-707-483-0860, suecurryfwf@gmail.com
Oct 19	Barrel Race / Sebastopol Wranglers	Sebastopol Arena	sebastopolwranglers.com
Oct 26	Woodbridge Farm Schooling Show (Jaclyn Pepper, Judge)	Petaluma	woodbridgefarmdressage.com
Oct 27	(Tentative) Jumper and Halloween Show	SR Equestrian Center	srequestrian.com
Nov 9-10	Sue Curry Dressage Clinic	Fairwind Farm, SR	Sue Curry-707-483-0860, suecurryfwf@gmail.com
Nov 9	Lisa Lombardi & Judy McHerron "Horses, Horses, Horses"	Sky Tree Ranch, SR	CloverTenThirty@aol.com
Nov 10	Combined Test	SR Equestrian Center	srequestrian.com
Dec 7-8	Sue Curry Dressage Clinic	Fairwind Farm, SR	Sue Curry-707-483-0860, suecurryfwf@gmail.com


Please submit events for the next issue to Horse Journal Editor, Patti Schofler – editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org



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