

Sonoma County
Horse Journal

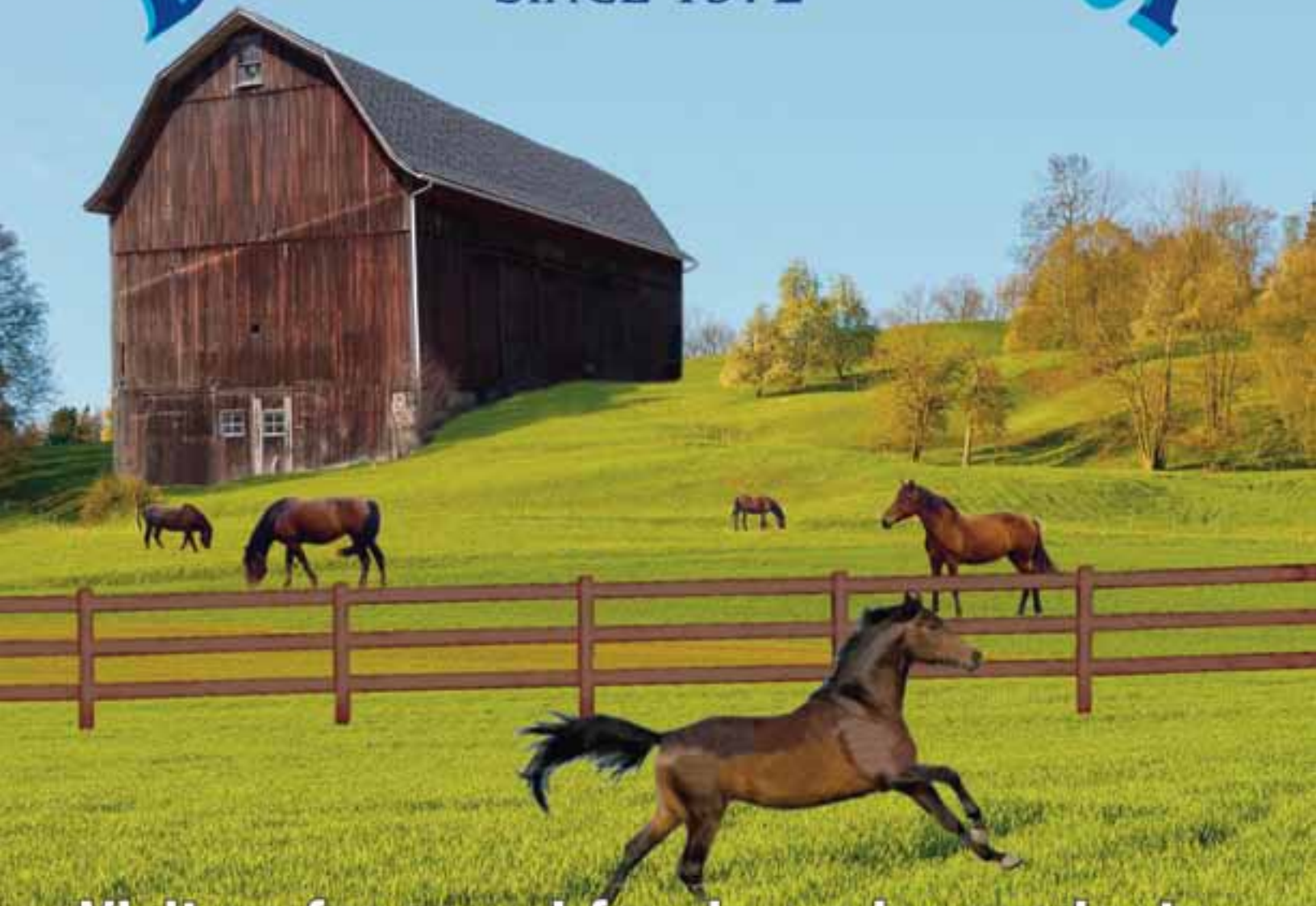
Volume 15 • Issue 1 • Winter 2018



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schc.tstashak@gmail.com

Membership Chair

Jan Loewen
jan@janloeweninsurance.com

The Horse Journal Editorial Committee**Editor in Chief**

Patrice Doyle
schc.pdoyle@gmail.com

Graphic Design

Lynn Newton
newton5@sonic.net

Photographer Extraordinaire

Marcie Lewis
marcie@marcielewisphotography.com

Distribution Diva

Lisa Thomas
lisa@premiercountrystates.com

Column Editors

Michelle Beko, D.V.M.
Patrice Doyle, Attorney at Law
Melissa Kalember

Contact Us

Sonoma County Horse Council
PO Box 7157
Santa Rosa, CA 95407
www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Sonoma County**Horse Journal**

Volume 15 • Issue 1 • Winter 2018

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

A Message from the President	4
Letter from the Editor	5
Thank You!	6
Notice of Grant Funding	8
Fire Relief Grant Application	9
Wildfires and the Damages They Do to Our Horses	10-11
Evacuating to Hoofbeat Park	12
Equi-Ed: People and Horse Power Strong	13
Evacuating Horses in the Line of Fire	14-15
For the Love of Sonoma	16-17
Halloween Horse Camp	19
Cloverleaf in Our Hearts	20
Phoenix Rises from the Nuns Fire	21
Hana Musgrove	22
"Fuego" ...Never Forgotten	23
We	23
Local Equestrian Events & Places to Ride	24
Advertising Specifications & Rates	25
Sonoma County Horse Journal Submission Guidelines	25



- 1 Loading horses for evacuation at Cloverleaf Ranch. Photo: Terry Carney
- 2 Evacuated horses settled into their temporary home at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds. Photo: Terry Carney
- 3 Part of the California State Parks Mounted Assistant Unit, JoDean Nicolette and her beloved JimmieJames survey the aftermath of the firestorm in Annadel State Park on 11/8/17. Photo: JoDean Nicolette
- 4 A little relief and distraction at Lisa Lombardi's Halloween Horse Camp.
- 5 The smoke was thick for Equi-Ed Therapeutic horses and volunteers.
- 6 Tere Crocker, D.V.M. writes about her harrowing experience on page 14.
- 7 Saralynn Specht, D.V.M. evacuates Evelyn James' mini, Santana. Photo: Christopher Chung/Press Democrat
- 8 Cloverleaf Ranch's Ginger DeGrange soothes a frightened horse. Photo: Terry Carney
- 9 When you gotta get out, you do what you need to! Lauren Mesaros evacuated her mini, Stardust, in the backseat of her car! Photo: Lisette Hall Frye

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President's Message



Elizabeth and Greycie

The newspaper headline on October 10th summed it up: "Utter Devastation." The North Bay awoke to the tragedy that many lives had been lost and the reality that thousands of others are forever changed.

The experiences of those displaced by the fires contain a common thread: The rampaging inferno was unstoppable and unpredictable, leaving many only moments to escape. When every second counts, advance preparation can save lives. And when the unimaginable happens, advance preparation increases the chance that

humans and animals will be safely evacuated and sheltered.

In the aftermath of the fires, stories of terror and heroism emerged. We learned that the horse community rose up to help animals of all sorts. As firestorms consumed acre after acre, rescuers with horse trailers headed into areas that residents were fleeing. They ignored their own fear and evacuated every creature they could—equines, goats, sheep, pigs, alpacas. Most animals loaded without incident, creative solutions were used for others. Tragically, some could not be loaded and were left behind. Disaster preparation includes taking steps to ensure that animals will load in an emergency. In fire or flood conditions, even the most cooperative

horses may resist getting into a trailer. Without advance training, the odds of a safe and efficient evacuation decrease dramatically (in 2018, the SCHC is offering clinics on loading the reluctant horse and loading under difficult conditions—watch our Facebook page and website for details).

Sheltering the large number of animals displaced by the fires was a gargantuan task requiring flexibility and continual adaptation. Sonoma County Animal Services moved quickly to open the Fairgrounds and requested the Sonoma County Horse Council's assistance in operating a large animal shelter. In the chaotic and emotion-filled days that followed, SCHC communicated regularly with Animal Services and Fairgrounds staff. SCHC team leaders coordinated the scores of volunteers who took on the challenge of tracking and caring for roughly 400 sheltered large animals. Many lessons were learned that will improve future sheltering efforts.

In the coming months, thousands of us will struggle to find something familiar in our new normal. For many of us, horses and other beloved creatures will be that lifeline. Sadly, for others, the loss of four-legged family members will add to the void. As a community, we will search for something positive in this upheaval. We have demonstrated our support for one another. Now, let's work together to ensure that the legacy of this disaster is a community prepared for a range of emergencies.

Best,
Elizabeth Palmer
President, Sonoma County Horse Council



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Santa Rosa, CA



LESLIE MIKULICH D.V.M.

Equine Veterinary Medicine

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Letter from the Editor

I usually write an article for the Equine Esquire page of the Horse Journal, but for this issue I appropriately refrained. First, there are too many legal issues related to the recent tragedy to condense on one page. Second, and far more importantly, it seemed right to simply offer a letter from the editor at this time.

On behalf of the Sonoma County Horse Council, we offer our condolences, sympathy, encouragement and support to all of you who may have lost your home, personal belongings, and/or animals during these deadly and ravenous fires. We have a long road ahead, but I am so very encouraged by the incredible outpouring of love and kindness that was shown and continues each day. As you read this issue, my hope is that you and your animals have long returned to your homes and barns, and those who are without such shelters are in a long-term safe haven.

It is a privilege and honor to publish this particular issue of the Horse Journal as it contains many personal accounts and heartfelt stories from our equine community. You will read stories of loss, and new found strength and perseverance. Stories of survival, rescue and recovery. Stories of strangers and friends alike coming together at a time when it was needed most. Stories of future plans to rebuild and coming back better than before.

Special thanks is given to those who contributed to this issue: Lily Baker-Lubin, Teresa Crocker DVM, Saron Dorthick, Lisa Lombardi, Sheila McCarthy, Shane McColgin, Gina Olibas, Alexandra Rochman, Saralynn Specht DVM, Katherine Theus and Barbara Walker.

As we welcome 2018, let us continue to embrace each other and our incredible equine community. Let's move forward together, ever ready and ever strong.

Be well.

Patrice



Patrice Doyle is an attorney in Santa Rosa and has been an avid horsewoman since childhood. She can be of assistance in guiding you through equine-related legal issues. Additionally, her practice areas include: personal injury, landlord-tenant, and contract law. She can be reached

at (707) 695-9295, or visit her websites www.pdoylelaw.com and www.equineesquire.com.

PATRICE A. DOYLE

Attorney at Law

Personal Injury • Landlord-Tenant
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Thank You!

The Sonoma County Horse Council would like to acknowledge the incredible love shown by so many volunteers. With great tragedy comes great support, and with great support comes great thanks.

Thanks to all the wonderful volunteers who came to the fairgrounds in Santa Rosa and worked tirelessly over a two-week period.

A special gold star THANK YOU should go to SONOMA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS for responding immediately to our call asking that the fairgrounds be made available to evacuated animals. To MARILYN ENGSTROM, who was there morning until night from day one, overseeing the volunteers and offering direction. The number of volunteers who phoned or responded through social media offering help was overwhelming - over 2,500 people! If you offered to help and didn't get a response, we apologize. We tried diligently to return all calls and emails.

Many came to muck stalls, check on animals, feed, water, and make veterinary rounds. Also, huge thanks to all the wonderful people who offered to house orphaned animals and to the teams of brave, brave people with horse and cattle trailers going into the burning hot spots and bringing creatures big and small to safety. A HUGE thank you goes out to all the feed stores, tack stores, and veterinarians who generously donated time, supplies, and services.

Finally, thank you to all the people who worked behind the scenes selflessly, buying needed items and paying for them out of their own pockets, not expecting any recognition for their efforts with the primary goal of organizing the influx, care and, finally, the departure of animals from the fairgrounds.

We are humbled by the support our community has shown for one another. Now that we are safe, the next goal is to compile and document all of this knowledge and experience so that it may be put into a PLAN that can be implemented should another disaster occur.

Sonoma County Horse Council

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OCTOBER FIRES: EXPERIENCES & REFLECTIONS

We are grateful that so many in the community are safe, and extend our deepest condolences to those who lost homes and loved ones, whether human or animal.

Our fire experience was different from many of those shared in these pages. The Nuns Fire began very close to our ranch around 10pm on October 8. We were instantly cut off from any escape route. We had a plan for such an event, we put it into action, and we survived, sheltered in place with our animals. Late evening, October 11, our dedicated staff evacuated them. They'll winter at our Red Bluff ranch, in fresh air and safe pastures while we rebuild. We stayed behind, defending the ranch, helping neighbors, and providing welfare checks for animals in Sonoma Valley. Katy Wilson, DVM provided wonderful support. We joined the students of the UC Davis Veterinary Emergency Response Team on rescue missions.

October vaporized, but we managed to join in some activities where experts from more than 16 countries converged to improve the lives of equines and other species. We participated in the BARTA Conference on Animals in Disasters, where I'd been scheduled to speak months before. Nov 5-7, we attended the International Donkey Welfare Symposium, where presentations were both sad and heartening. Time spent in the company of fuzzy long-eared equines was my "Donkey Therapy". We also had a fascinating day with FEMA



Elizabeth watches her shelter burn



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Notice of Grant Funding ***Equine Disaster Relief & Preparedness Fund***

The Sonoma County Horse Council ("Council") is pleased to issue this Notice of Grant Funding to solicit applications from Sonoma County individuals, businesses and non-profit organizations impacted by the recent fires. Grants from \$500.00 to \$5,000.00 are available for restoration and rebuilding that improves the well-being of equines and the equine community. The Council's mission is to preserve and protect the health and well-being of horses and horse-related activities in Sonoma County.

The Council established the Equine Disaster Relief & Preparedness Fund ("Fund") shortly after the Lake County Valley Fire and the Council has been working on disaster preparedness protocols and training since that time. Given the devastating Tubbs and Nuns fires in Sonoma County, the current focus of the Council is disaster relief for local residents and businesses. The community has contributed generously to the Fund and the Council encourages everyone to consider making a contribution, no matter the amount, to help those in the equine community who have suffered unimaginable losses and need assistance in rebuilding. Contributions should be made payable to "Sonoma County Horse Council" and be sure to write "fire relief" in the memo field. Checks should be mailed to the address below. Alternately, donations can be made on-line at <https://www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org>.

Purpose of Grants: Grants will be made to individuals, businesses and non-profit organizations who demonstrate through their application that: 1) they suffered fire loss that affects equine well-being; 2) they will use grant funds as part of their effort to restore and rebuild equine infrastructure (including personal property such as tools and equipment); and 3) these grant funds are necessary because insurance, other donations, and public assistance grants combined fall short of the estimated costs of restoration/rebuilding. Grants will be provided to applicants who meet the above criteria and that have limited resources in order to initiate and complete the restoration/rebuilding process.

Timing and Deadlines for Grants: The Council will provide grant funds in at least two rounds, possibly more. Round 1 Grants will allocate a total of \$50,000.00 and the deadline for submitting an application was November 30, 2017. The application deadline for Round 2 is January 31, 2018.

The Council recognizes that for some fire victims, the status of insurance coverage and public assistance, such as F.E.M.A. grants, will not be finalized for many weeks. For this reason, the Council is doing at least two rounds of grants. The Round 1 Grants can assist those with immediate financial needs while Round 2 Grants, and possible later grants, can assist people once their status with insurance and public grant programs are finalized.

Grant Terms: Applicants selected for grant funding will be asked to sign a Grant Agreement with the Council. The Agreement will ask the grantee to certify that: 1) they do not have the necessary resources to complete the restoration and rebuilding without financial assistance from the Council; 2) the grant funding will be used to restore/rebuild equine infrastructure as indicated in their application; and 3) they will provide evidence (including pictures if applicable) of restoration/rebuild completion to the Council in a timely fashion.

P.O. Box 7157, Santa Rosa CA 95407 www.SonomaCountyHorseCouncil.org
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Fire Relief Grant Application

Applicant Name: _____ Cell phone #: _____

Full Address: _____

Email Address: _____ Amount requested: \$ _____

Need help with the application? Contact Mark Krug at schc.mkrug@gmail.com

Applicant type:

- ☐ Local Non-Profit Agency
☐ Local Business
☐ Individual

If "Individual", please complete the following:

Gross Annual Income: ☐ under \$83,900 ☐ over \$83,900
 Net Assets/Net Worth ☐ under \$250,000 ☐ over \$250,000
 assuming insurance reimbursement, where applicable.

1. Briefly describe the nature of your loss (not covered by insurance, other donations, and public assistance grants), including monetary value of the loss:

2. Briefly describe how, and to what degree, this loss impacted the well-being of equines, and if applicable, the equine community:

3. Briefly describe the restoration and rebuilding plan and where you are in the process:

4. Status of insurance and other third-party financing (include "crowd-sourcing" or other donations):

Financing Source	Amt. Requested	Status
Insurance		
FEMA		
Other: _____		
Other: _____		

5. Briefly summarize how Council funds will be used if granted:



Wildfires and the Damages They Do to Our Horses

By Saralynn Specht, D.V.M.



Photo: Sara Lynn Specht, D.V.M.

Locally diffuse severe burns of the muzzle after debridement

The North Bay wildfires caused a tremendous amount of destruction in a short period of time. Many people were affected by this horrible fire losing so much. Homes, buildings, vehicles, beautiful vegetation, livestock, and family pets were all lost due to the fire's severity. Many animals were evacuated to safe locations but, sadly, many endured one or several nights of the fires, and some even succumbed to the deadly blazes.

Similarly to people, the two major health risks associated with fires is smoke inhalation and burns. Both can range in varying degrees of severity. As an attending veterinarian on and off the sites of destruction, I personally dealt with multiple cases of burn and smoke inhalation victims. This article outlines a brief description of the pathology of these injuries and the generalized treatments performed for such circumstances.

Smoke inhalation was the most common injury endured by our livestock during the wildfires. The rate at which the fire burned prevented many animals from being rescued, forcing them to breathe smoke. The fire's smoke is composed of multiple particulates that can last for many days, which also affects overall air quality.

What, exactly, is in the smoke? In general, fire smoke contains carbon dioxide, soot, particulate matter and the more commonly known ingredient carbon monoxide (CO). CO is an odorless, colorless gas that can be highly fatal. Additionally, depending on the surrounding environment, the smoke can contain vegetation, plastics, metal, household materials, and combustibles. The burning of these materials can create hazardous liquid droplets that can be aerosolized into the respiratory tract. This particulate matter causes injury to the mucous membranes (ocular surface, nasal passageway), trachea, and then further advance down into the lower respiratory tract, the lungs. The particulates cause an inflammatory reaction on the mucous membrane surface and can clog the natural movement of cells through the surface layers. This dampens the body's local immune response to the inflammation.

If the particulates are carried deeper into the lower end of the respiratory tract, the physical obstruction can impede oxygen flow across the lung surface and result in chronic respiratory inflammatory diseases such as heaves. Additionally, the physical presence of particulate matter that has settled on the lung surface predisposes the affected region to infection and, depending on severity, can even cause permanent damage.

A lot of livestock we have seen during and after the fires suffered from varying degrees of smoke inhalation; clinical signs include watery eyes, nasal discharge, cough, and fever. Those treated early with anti-inflammatories and broad spectrum antibiotics recovered well. However, those who endured untreated lung damage were predisposed to developing pneumonia and even other respiratory diseases due to compromised immune systems.

Luckily, the respiratory tract in all species is very well perfused with blood from the circulatory system. Thus, the drugs we use to treat respiratory inflammation and infection can more easily reach these affected surfaces, unlike skin burns which have lost blood flow to locally affected sites. The concerns when treating a smoke inhalation case are inflammation and damage to the affected site, and infection, therefore treatment must be initiated early and continued long-term to reduce the likelihood of recurring inflammatory episodes or permanent damage.

Anti-inflammatories and antibiotics are the most commonly prescribed medications for smoke inhalation. The respiratory tract can take weeks or months for full recovery. Many of the animals treated may end up with chronic respiratory issues, and lifestyle changes may be indicated for long-term management.

The second and more commonly known fire-related injury are skin burns. If severe enough or left untreated, a common sequela to thermal injuries can result, which includes colic, founder/laminitis, permanent eye damage, kidney damage, and/or sepsis.

Burns most commonly seen and treated during the North Bay fires were first and second degree burns. A first degree burn is most

(Cont. next page)



Periocular superficial burn

Photo: Sara Lynn Specht, D.V.M.



(Cont. from previous page)

closely related to what sunburn causes. More severe are second degree burns, which extend through the superficial layer of skin, creating red, swollen and blister-like lesions. The acute phases of treatment are more focused on keeping affected regions, cool, moist, and dressed with antibacterial ointments. The majority of the lesions found were of the extremities and muzzle region. Due to the locations of these wounds, my treatment mostly consisted of daily lavaging with pure warm water and gentle exfoliation of necrotic surfaces. The wounds were then dressed with either Vaseline or an antibacterial ointment to help keep it moist and protected from oxidative damage. A readily used dressing on burns was also silver sulfadiazine (SSD). This topical medication was first formulated for human burn victims and is only available by prescription. It has the advantage of supplying antibacterial properties while also promoting new skin growth to shorten healing rates. I find this medication soothing when applied.

During the process of healing, the thermal injury to the skin must first be contained. Once the tissue has gone through the acute trauma and inflammatory stage, if secondary infection has been prevented, a healthy layer of granulation tissue beneath the injured site can then start the reparative stage. Essentially, a scab must be formed to allow new tissue and skin growth beneath. Depending on severity of the lesions, depigmentation and/or scarring can result leaving a somewhat weaker tissue layer. This is why treatment must be initiated sooner rather than later to allow good healthy tissue growth.

Pain and infection is another factor to consider during treatment. Due to the thermal damage and loss of normal tissue structure, lesions are extremely sensitive to touch, movement and temperature. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatories such as phenylbutazone or Banamine are readily used for pain and inflammation. A secondary infection due to the compromised tissue layers is another concern and is difficult to treat. As discussed earlier, unlike the lungs, thermal injury to the skin surface destroys pathways for drugs to be carried to the locally affected sites due to poor circulation. This further supports the use of topical antibiotic agents in addition to systemic antibiotics to inhibit and prevent infection.

Overall, severe wildfire-related injuries to livestock were minimal. Most horses were evacuated without injury and those affected did receive the proper medical care. I am thankful for our heroic first responders who personally helped get livestock to safety. I am also grateful for the numerous medical products and supplies donated by our pharmaceutical companies to help treat our small and large animal fire victims. Everyone's combined efforts helped ensure superior medical care for our animals. The people and animals affected by our wildfires are just beginning their recovery process. It will be a long journey, but our community's efforts and performance give us hope for the future.



Dr. Specht is a native of Sonoma County where she grew up working on her family's thoroughbred broodmare farm. She graduated from UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and the Chi Institute in Florida. Dr. Specht is currently an associate veterinarian at Sonoma Marin Veterinary Service.



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Evacuating to Hoofbeat Park

By Shane McColgin



Horses in a safe location at Hoofbeat Park after being evacuated from various parts of Sonoma County

Waking up Monday morning, October 9th, to the terrible and frightening news of the fire, my husband and I made ready to flee our own home if necessary. He dealt with the paperwork; I dealt with the animals. Although we live in Forestville, about 10 miles from the Coffey Park neighborhood that was devastated, the unpredictability of the fire made feeling assured of one's safety impossible.

By mid-day, after hitching up the trailer and loading my truck with hay and various horse stuff, I had been mulling my options of where I could take my horse and mini donkey if evacuation became necessary. Perhaps the rodeo grounds at Duncan's Mills? It's usually closed up except for events, so I had no guarantee there. Maybe the fairgrounds in Cloverdale? A phone call gave me the information that they could not take large animals.

Hoofbeat Park in Healdsburg? I called Tom Thomason, Vice President of Russian River Riders, who has a saddle shop there. He said all 20 individual pens had horses in them, as well as one arena and the round pen. But the large arena was open, so come on over! It took a split second for me to decide I would rather have my animals safely located, loading and transporting them now, in daylight, with no frantic pressure, than wait and worry throughout the coming night.

Tom greeted me as we rolled into Hoofbeat Park and kindly helped me settle my boys into their luxury suite. Reid Borgwardt, RRR President, came by with big water buckets and hay. The large arena was an amazing experience for my 2 animals, and my horse worked up a good sweat racing around, bucking and farting. In total, there were 25 horses and 2 donkeys at Hoofbeat Park Monday night. Before he went home, Tom informed me he had left the clubhouse open for me and had left a working telephone as well, for which I was very grateful. I slept in my truck near my animals.

The other horses at Hoofbeat had been hastily evacuated around 4 am on Monday, in the dark. I give the people who were responsible for moving them so much credit. All the horses seemed to

adapt quite well to their new circumstances and, although the air was full of smoke, all was serene throughout the night. Except when my donkey escaped the arena by squeezing through the people-sized space in the fence line in front of the bleachers. I certainly overlooked that! Normally I walk any new (to me) fence line. Just another lesson in paying attention to details. My horse's concerned whinny woke me up and I found Joey socializing with the other donkey and happily checking out every little detail of the new environment he was now in charge of. Early Tuesday morning Reid's wife, Eileen, showed up. She greeted me with a hug and an offer of fresh coffee!

I rarely go to Hoofbeat Park to ride in the arena because my passion is trail riding. I seldom

make it to the various clinics, events, and presentations. Yet every year I find I want to maintain my membership and try to become more involved. The 2 days and night I just spent there are example of why. I feel very fortunate we horse folk have a facility of this nature in our community with a wonderful core group of dedicated volunteers. I do not want to take them or Hoofbeat Park for granted!

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Equi-Ed Therapeutic Equestrian Program: People and Horse Power Strong

By Jan Kahdeman



The fires ravaged the Equi-Ed property.

trian program for people with special needs.

While the Tubbs fire was raging along Porter Creek Road Sunday night, October 8, instructor Lindsay Merget got to the barn and took four of our horses—Cisco, Tooe, Mike and Charlotte—to safety at Watermark Farm in Fulton, thanks to Katie Margason Moore.

Lindsay also raced to Cloverleaf Ranch and helped save many of the horses there, moving them out of the wooden barn and into open pastures. She later learned that her own home was lost in the fire.

Meg, Buttercup, and the small ponies, Peggy and Garland, remained behind as the fire quickly moved through and the road was closed, preventing anyone from getting back to them for two

"We're pretty sure we lost our home, but I'm scheduled to feed on Wednesday. Where should I go?"

This quote from an Equi-Ed volunteer is just one example of the commitment our supporters have for our therapeutic equestrian

frightening days. The fire burned through the ranch and even around the paddocks the horses were in. It destroyed three homes on the property and burned the fencing that enclosed pastures, turn-out areas, and the outdoor arena. But blessedly, it left one home and the barn and office standing.

Tuesday afternoon, volunteer Tim Dempsey got the clearances needed to get into the evacuation zone and move the remaining four horses to the Sonoma County Fairgrounds, with help from Marin County Sheriff's Posse and Hal-leck Creek. They have since moved again, to board member Stephanie Arata's home-- a calmer environment with more space and better access to care.

Our executive director and instructor Maxine Freitas lost her home, barn and horse in the fire. She literally had only minutes to get out and sought safety in a vineyard while the fires burned around her. We have learned that at least three of our wonderful volunteers lost their homes as well.

While our staff and horses are safe, the fires have affected us greatly. We've endured an extended period of evacuation, and have much work to do to clean the facility and restore the habitat for our horses, so that we can get back to providing lessons and horse and outdoor time to our very special students.

Many friends and supporters have asked how they can help.

You can donate to help fund our recovery online through our website or use our mailing address: 1535 Farmers Lane #217, Santa Rosa, CA 95405.

We will continue to post updates to our story on our Facebook page. We are Sonoma/Napa strong and moving forward!



A challenge—moving horses during a fire-storm



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Evacuating Horses in the Line of Fire

By Tere Crocker, D.V.M.

In the wee hours of October 9th, I lost my house, barn, office, husband's 45-year study of graphic novels and vinyl and, daughter's, father's, grandfather's artwork...

My dear neighbor Dan perished, along with dozens of other souls that night. Hundreds of homes were reduced to ash in a few hours, thousands of homes gone in a day, tens of thousands of people and animals displaced. Two major hospitals caught in the hot-zone closed until further notice.

My own family escaped through a rain of fiery embers, burning branches, and smoke thicker than winter-fog. I had been awake, outside, listening to the wind. I heard a faint roar and smelled smoke. To the northeast a sinister glow. I drove up the ridgeline for perspective. The glow grew larger. I phoned a neighbor...she went online and called Cal-Fire. We heard dozens of explosions, propane and diesel tanks succumbing to flame...and yet, no sirens.

I told my husband to collect the cats, prepare to evacuate, and I headed to Lawndale (Cal-Fire report). As I approached Highway 12, I saw ribbons of flames marching up the east side of Annadel State Park. The fire was already strung out the length of Lawndale, between the Kenwood and Glen Ellen Fire Stations...totally out of control. I knew we needed to get out, I knew I needed to get home.

I texted family and neighbors, I raced wind driven wild-fire back to my home, which stood directly in its path. I saw first responders directing evacuations along Warm Springs, skirting the south west flank of flames. I reached Bennett Ridge. The fire was a sixty-foot ring of flames, sixty feet high, already at the long meadow where three roads merge into one single egress. It was lit brightly. neighbors piled into cars, flashing lights, honking as they drove out...and I drove in.

We all got out safe. Four cats, one large collie dog, two old horses. First off the mountain was my teenage daughter. Newly licensed, in pajamas, with four cats, her phone, computer, camera, and the instructions, "wait for dad at Safeway." Next, I was blessed by my



What remains of a tractor and other farm equipment after the fire roared through

dear Goosey's bravery and trust. Even with screaming wind and flying embers, he loaded without hesitation. He had once been a feral horse, a \$1.00 animal control acquisition, but we had practiced, even at midnight, so when it really mattered he loaded, and his Welsh pony, William, followed.

Time was warped. Thirty minutes to hitch up and haul out was a mere instant and absolutely forever. I knew to get out, but could not fathom the

reality that we would actually burn. I grabbed William's special boots, some buckets of feed, a couple of full hay bags...but no blankets, fly masks, or brush boxes.

I glanced at my office as I loaded horses into the trailer. I was overwhelmed...the embers were in the air all above me...there was just too much...and so, I left everything. I focused my thoughts on the family. I descended from the ridge, searching for headlights behind me through almost impenetrable smoke. Flames danced higher as I neared the single egress. I texted, called, prayed, and trusted Dan was behind me. Dozens of homes were engulfed, burning trees and power lines now obstructed the roadway.

Clear of the flames and my family secure, I began calling clients. Get up! Get to the barn! Get the horses out! I focused on who



The fire left some intriguing remnants giving some words new meaning.

was in danger, who had a trailer, needed another set of hands, or chemical lubrication. I lived only five miles from the fairgrounds, but no-one knew evacuations were happening; those gates would be locked. I had pre-arranged places to take my horses in case of emergency and headed to an irrigated ranch in west county. Ranchers answer their phones at 2 a.m., so I just handed over the horses and headed back to Bennett Valley.

For three days, from dawn past dusk,
(Cont. next page)


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(Cont. from previous page)

I extracted horses. I pleaded my way past road blocks followed by trailers, driven by amazing people. We could not get to some animals. Some would not load. Cattle flatly refused and broke down the fences used as alleys. Some humans waited too long, some were not prepared...prompting others to risk their own safety. Emotions ran high, stress passed to animals.

Unfortunately, not all got out safely. In Healdsburg, I euthanized a lovely mare. She had panicked when the farm evacuated and was non-weight bearing lame. It was inhumane to leave her, pasture-mates gone, fire encroaching on all sides. Her owner, evacuating her own home when her mare was injured, cradled her head and wept as we released Lorian's spirit into the wind and flames.

My contingency plans would have probably failed. My backup exit on fire roads in Annadel was barred and there was no releasing horses into that wildland, which became inaccessible and smoldered over a month. Water tanks require power, so no sprinklers. The round pen appeared unscathed, but horses confined in such a small space are often over-taken by heat and smoke. My last option, was to turn them loose. I wish I had been more prepared. A list in my phone of a few things — my great-grand-mother's copy of Black Beauty, my grand-father's WWII pith helmet — I took pet food, old laptops, my controlled drug locker, dirty laundry basket, and hockey skates.

Sonoma County also thought itself prepared for flood, earthquake, or wildfire. We had committees, meetings, trainings, phone trees, but no cell service. Official agencies were overwhelmed. There was no air support, smoke so thick, planes were grounded. First Responders focused on extraction, there was no time for structures, only lives. Evacuation centers were threatened, key community organizers themselves evacuating, not enough fire fighters to respond to the magnitude of the problem. For more than two weeks, new fires broke out, even after the arrival of CalFire and the National Guard.

The community response, however disorganized, was amazing, which bodes well for the future establishment of a legitimate Sonoma County CART (or CERT aka community action or emergency response team).

Teresa Crocker, D.V.M. a 2001 graduate of U.C. Davis School of Veterinary Medicine has been practicing in Sonoma County for over 15 years. Her practice is focused on dentistry, podiatry, and geriatric medicine. Dr. Crocker owns and operates North Coast Equine, (707)543-8186.

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For the Love of Sonoma

By Lily Baker-Lubin



Saralynn Specht, D.V.M. evacuates Evelyn James' mini, Santana.

Over the last few weeks I have heard many share that they are stuttering and struggling to find the "right" tone when discussing the fires that raged throughout our county. Even as I begin to type, I pause to reflect if this the "right" point of entry and message to impart. And yet, that is the very motivation behind this article; to share and encourage our community to continue to open up and feel that there is no right thing to say or feel and no one perfect message to convey or articulate. In the face of tremendous loss, what do we see, say, hear, and feel? What was this experience like for you? For your neighbor, your child, your horse, your dog, your cat, your supermarket, our hillsides, our hearts?

You see, there is a thread that connects our textured tone. It is one that embraces the depth of diverse and individual experience with the sanctity of communal compassion and a collective presence. It is the space that holds and honors shock, despair, grief, and mourning—simultaneously and equally with relief, inspiration, celebration, and joy. Yes, a true paradox. Yes, an amalgam. Yes, your experience, my experience, our experience. I want to encourage you to appreciate these stories shared by a few very brave and inspiring souls who struggled, survived, and saved so many while experiencing and witnessing so much loss. They made impossible choices, they ran for their lives, they ran for others, and they demonstrated what a love for this county, for this place, and all who inhabit it looks like.

JoDean Nicolette, a courageous county resident, doctor, and grateful horse-mom of three, wears many different hats. In the wake of devastation, JoDean, her husband, and many other healthcare providers for both two legged and four, found a way to not only survive but to assist others step by step and moment to moment: "Vista Clinic burned, leaving 26,000 patients without care. The SR Community Health Centers set up a command center at Lombardi, and directed the patients to the new location. Like so many of the community health docs, I have spent my days there trying to help with calls, labs, refills, and acute visits. The patients have acute

stress reaction, but frankly, so do the providers. At last estimate, at least 150 physicians lost their homes. If I include the other (equally important) health care providers, that number likely triples. Providers with THAT level of stress are charged with caring for our community and they have done a superlative job. Tireless, dedicated. My heroes and heroines. A sense of vulnerability descends on a community whose health and wellness structure has been assaulted in this way. I am not sure how this bodes for us in the future. I am just finishing evening clinic, myself, here at Lombardi. I am tired. I'll head back to our 'home' at the ranch, feed and walk the dogs, blanket the horses, and, if he's home from his patient care and work reopening Sutter, hear about Ben's day. My life is forever different now."

Life changed in deed, a significant shift with a gradual understanding of what had occurred and all that it had peeled back. Going forward protocols will be reworked and what was thought to once be impossible and not

plausible is now not only possible but has left marks along our hillsides and memories. However, among the wreckage, what continues to sift to the surface are accounts of people stretching themselves to do whatever they could do and the (s)heroic acts that sprung forth and prevailed during truly harrowing times. JoDean shared one such powerful image of Tracy Underwood, owner of Santa Rosa Equestrian Center on Oct. 8th:

"All eighty-five pounds of her in her leopard skin pajamas holding a garden hose aimed at twenty tons of hay. The fire—huge, monstrous, incendiary—glowed from behind the buildings to the east as she aimed the nozzle at embers the size of soft balls dropping onto the property.

Rigs arrived unannounced, from north Santa Rosa, where the fire had blown through, destroying properties and jumping the highway. Tracy beckoned them all in, pointing to stalls and runs, directing those of us there in the night to make sure each horse and owner felt safe.

'Turn the irrigation on!' Tracy called out to her barn manager, as she pulled on a pair of boots. We stopped and listened as transformers north of us exploded like gunfire. 'Start filling buckets to water the horses in case we lose power!'

I didn't sleep that Sunday night, or the next nights either, as I contemplated what this crisis meant for us and our community, but I wasn't worried about the horses. Tracy Underwood made sure of that."

Security and safety of self and loved ones isn't a given but rather a valuable commodity and at times a gift during disasters. And yet, often in the heat of the blaze, those who are driven to help others, not only detour from saving just themselves, but they go towards danger to rescue lives. These individuals make a stand in their pajamas to help a herd of those in need, and they bob and weave downed power lines, road closures and thick walls of smoke to rescue and save. With them out came a bellowing and profound

(Cont. next page)

Photo: Christopher Chung/Press Democrat

(Cont. from previous page)

movement of community organization, goodwill, and inspiration. And yet, each time these heroes shared of their experiences, their narratives are filled with humility. As Dr. Lewis shared: "It just felt like the right thing to do—to help in any way possible."

Dr. Lewis' adventure began when she got a call that Sami's mini horse farm needed 100 minis moved and no trailers: "I jumped into organizing that and getting haulers. From there it took off—we kept getting calls and eventually became a direct point of contact for animal control. Most (missions) were up Mark West Springs or in Crane Creek. These were burned homes that no one had yet visited so we didn't know what we would find. Thankfully, all of our animal missions were very successful. We came out with the animals we meant to find and most were unharmed! I was so impressed with how well the animals did. In areas of complete and total devastation, we would find two happy, healthy donkeys waiting in their driveway completely unharmed. It made me realize how amazing animals really are."

An experience so intense can conjure a tremendous rippling effect. "This tragic event has hit me both professionally and, more importantly, personally," Dr. Saralynn Specht shared. "I was driving to Petaluma (and) I saw the flames along the hillside east of Sebastopol and then the miles of cars travelling along Stony Point Road. At 5:30am this was an unnerving surprise. One of the phone calls I made was to a dear client of mine who I knew lived on Mark West Springs. She proceeded to tell me that the fire came so fast and furious they barely made it out in time and that everything was probably gone, even her mini (horse). I told her I was ready and prepared to go evac animals and would try for Mark West in the morning."

I gained entry through the barricades along Mark West and was escorted by a kind animal control officer. He led me up the hill which looked like a war zone. I barely recognized the turn-off for my client's house. We ended up walking part of the way to the house due to down power lines and trees. And there he was. Tears poured from my eyes and I was rushed with emotions of gratitude, happiness (still distraught). As I was running toward him yelling his name, I realized I was probably going to scare him. I had to stop myself, collect my calming emotions, and slowly approach him. He was absolutely traumatized. A stiffened fear and worry was evident. Scared of any noise, turning in every direction, not knowing his surroundings because of the thick cloud of smoke and smoldering environment. He was also partially deaf and mostly blind. So his handicaps made it that much more difficult to catch him. Using a lead rope I was able to make a halter and finally embrace him in my arms. Words cannot express the happiness I experienced. I cried and hugged him.

The dead silence, broken by falling branches and singing from small burns, was evident all around me. All I could tell myself was that I did it. I came here and accomplished what needed to be done. Get the one left behind. But it didn't stop with one. On our way down the hill we found goats, chickens, and another horse that was left behind. I quickly turned my parents' farm into an evac site.

Everyday I felt grateful. Grateful to be able to help these animals. Grateful to be able to have a home and grateful that they were saved. I cannot even fathom what these animals experienced while everything burned around them. It kills me to think they had

to endure such an experience and endure the injuries they did.

Everyone has since healed, but it's been a long process. I still have 4 evacuated animals. They will be there long term because they no longer have homes. Every day I see them out in pasture together, it warms my heart. They are amazing creatures and so grateful for their lives. They remind me why I'm in this business. I've been burned out and frustrated, but this tragic experience has reminded me what's important."

Dr. Saralynn Specht and Evelyn James share a love and adoration for Santana, the 28 year old mini horse who survived the fires. In the middle of the night, Evelyn and her husband had to grab what they could, load two of their three horses in a trailer, and evacuate. They had plans to return to grab Santana, the remaining family member who was in his large gravel paddock, but as Evelyn narrowly escaped the area, unable to refill gas, dodging mechanical issues with their rig, she painfully watched the glow over Mark West Springs Road increase as her hopes for Santana decreased.

"That night, we heard that our neighbor's house was gone. A big stucco surrounded by a huge green lawn and attached to ours by a wood fence. Didn't sound good for our home or our beloved Santana. Our vet Saralynn Specht called and wanted to go rescue Santana. I felt so guilty for leaving my children's pet that we had rescued from starvation 20 years ago. So, many tears were shed. I told her to go if it seemed safe and to put Santana down immediately if he was suffering. It took her hours to get permission to go up Mark West Springs. She ended up rescuing Santana, my neighbors mini donkeys, and some random quarter horse that was running down Mark West Springs Road. She sent me a text photo of Santana while Margo and I were in Safeway getting supplies. I burst out crying and a lovely stranger behind us in line gave me hugs."

That night we found out we had lost everything—home, barn, travel trailer, rental (my friend Margo's home of 20 years). We have since moved the horses to Santa Rosa Horse Company, where my mare continues to feel that she has to be the all avenging protector of my gelding, who she previously ignored."

Life is precious and finite, and loss is an inevitable and unfortunate piece of it. What we do with it, how we view it, and whether we share it can have a profound effect on healing. From JoDean Nicolette and Tracy Underwood's courage in taking a stand to defend and protect, to Dr. Lewis and Dr. Specht's bravery in rescuing those who could not get out in time, to Evelyn James' harrowing escape and undeniable trauma in awaiting what type of loss she had to face paired with the incredible perspective she employed—these women exemplify Sonoma Strong. They, along with others like Alisha Robinson who transitioned from hauler extraordinaire to running a command center out of one of her trucks and Rebecca Cushman who worked day and night with rescues and refugees, articulate what it is like to face loss in the eye, feel the shock and despair paired with relief and gratitude and illustrate the depth of our textured tone which we all hold hand in hand.

Lily Baker-Lubin has been a dedicated athlete and competitive equestrian for over 25 years. She has an M.S. in Kinesiology, is a master Pilates instructor and the Director of Pilates at Body Kinetics in Marin. She is a certified Dynamic Neuromuscular Stabilization Exercise Specialist and is deeply committed to helping individuals improve their movement patterns, remove limitations and enhance performance. You can contact Lily at Lily@optimizemovement.life.



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*The gorgeous new SCHC website
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Halloween Horse Camp

By Lisa Lombardi



Everyone had fun at the impromptu Halloween Horse Camp!

As I reached to silence my alarm, 5:30, Monday morning October 9, I discovered 23 panicked texts and phone calls with words like "Wake up!!", "flames!", "evacuate immediately", "Fulton and Guerneville." I jumped up, trying to make sense of it all. I had silenced my phone to rest from the previous day's dressage show. Wait... Fulton and Guerneville?!? That is where my horses are! I flew out the door without touching a brush or seeing a mirror. I rushed to the barn trying to figure out a plan to evacuate my 9 horses with my 3-horse trailer.

In the end I did not have to evacuate my horses, and I was fortunate to not lose horses, house or property. Over the next few days of packing, unpacking, sleeping in various locations, or not sleeping, I heard many stories of horror and heroism. Due to my own fortunate situation, I began to feel a touch of what I now know as survivor guilt. I even hid out for a day in a state of catatonic non-action.

Then I got an email from Linda McDonald of McDonald Ranch. The memo line read: "I have an idea." Halloween Horse Camp became a reality overnight. We opened our doors for a full camp for any and all kids seeking positive activities, a place to come together and have something to do while schools were closed, and many were either homeless, evacuated, or housing evacuees. One child had never touched a horse. One arrived wearing Christmas pajamas. Four kids were now sharing the same cramped house. Several children were horse enthusiasts whose horses had been evacuated from burning barns.

So I designed and implemented cooperative games

in which all could participate. My horses took care of them. Horse-back trick-or-treating, eyeball toss, pumpkin smash were among the mounted games.

There was horse decorating, and a pumpkin patch field trip. During camp the children found partnership with people and animals they had never met, they gave and received affection and caring to their 2- and 4-legged friends. They had a sense of purpose, routine, focus. And we all laughed and found joy during these difficult times, skills we are all going to need more than ever in the upcoming weeks, months, and years.



Moving a saddle is easier with a couple of friends!

Lisa Lombardi is an SRJC equine science instructor, CHA Master Instructor, PATH, Ceip-ed certified, and has taught professionally since 1987. Lisa's 24-year-old lesson horse, Ten-Thirty, was Sonoma County's 2013 Equus Award winner, 2011 and 2012 CHA international school horse of the year runner-up. She currently owns 9 horses. www.clovertenthirty.com.



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Cloverleaf in Our Hearts

By Gina Olibas

Generations of families have had the great experience of The Horse due to Cloverleaf Ranch, a well-known children's camp in Santa Rosa, CA.

My name is Gina Olibas. I was born and raised in Santa Rosa, CA.

I met the owner of Cloverleaf Ranch at my very first reining horse show. There was something special about watching Ginger DeGrange on a horse — smooth, effortless, and one with the horse. Breathtaking, pure grace at its finest. Over the years, Ginger tucked me under her wing and helped me along with other great horsemen and horsewomen to become a great show woman myself. I lived on the ranch for several years. I would guess she's taught more people to ride a horse than anyone in Santa Rosa.

On the morning of October 9, 2017, Ginger called and asked me to go pick up her horses.

"Can I get in?" I asked.



Horses arrived at their new "home" in a safe pasture far out of harm's way.

"Well, you're going to have to work it," she said.

I had sent two trucks and trailers to pick up horses that were being evacuated due to the fires at another ranch. On their way back I sent them to Cloverleaf, but they were turned away. I then got on Facebook trying to get any information I could. Everyone told me I wouldn't get in. Telling me I can't do something is a sure way to make me do it. I had them come back and get me. I was getting in even if it was by foot.

I didn't ask. I told them, "I'm going to get the DeGranges' horses," and they said ok. We were in as I put it on Facebook (so many people watched these events unfold through Facebook).

As we entered Old Redwood Highway it was like a war zone. Powerlines had been burned from the bottom and laid across the



The Cloverleaf Ranch sign stands sturdy and strong...beating the fire's wrath.

roads. Homes and businesses had been burned to the ground. Small fires were burning all around us. I could feel the heat through my rubber boots. I, along with many others, was able to get 31 horses off of the property. Two of the horses didn't make it. I walked over power lines to cover one horse with a blanket, out of respect for the horse, but the other horse I couldn't get to without going through fire. I have grieved alone with Ginger over the loss. It is very sad.

I heard what happened first hand from Ginger and Gloria, a friend of the DeGranges. Ginger and a few others grabbed horses from stalls and ran them down to the arena in the pitch

dark with wind and smoke everywhere. The fire was like a torch Ginger said and they had little time as the fire was all around them. Ginger would not leave, and Gloria and Ron had to leave her for their own safety.

Ginger is a true hero. She was the last person to leave the Cloverleaf Ranch. The hours between knowing if the horses were dead or alive were spent at Gloria's house. The entire time Ginger worried about the string horses they let loose on the hillside that had burned. She cried and worried for hours until she got the message that the horses were spotted. That's when she tried getting back in and was turned away. She thought that only the horses in the arena were alive, but horses are so smart...they had made their way down into the neighboring vineyard and were standing right next to the road. She was pleasantly surprised when I posted, one by one on Facebook, the horses that were saved. That post was shared over a thousand times.

Throughout the duration of getting the horses, being at the fairgrounds, and them finally being set free in a big pasture at my own ranch, I was able to keep everyone up to date through Facebook. More people responded and thanked me than I ever imagined. This experience has changed my life. The people of this town amaze me. They went above and beyond and not expecting anything in return. The love and support of this community has made me really look at myself and how am I serving God. I could not have helped get the Cloverleaf horses alone. It took a small village. I'm forever grateful for all of the help.

Over the weeks since the fire, I've spent a lot of time with Ginger's string horses. I love them. I feel as if they thank me one by one when I come out to their temporary home. I feel as if they know that we helped them and they're grateful. They look to me for support and I try to reassure them that they're safe and all is well.

It's tragic what happened, but we as a whole will rebuild, we will move forward, and we will work on healing from all that was lost.

Photo: Terry Carney

Photo: Terry Carney

Phoenix Rises from the Nuns Fire

By Katherine Theus

It was a blink-and-you-miss-it moment. Seemingly insignificant, but for us it was a major milestone: The mare had just touched me lightly and chose to stand next to me, although she had plenty of room to get away.

Phoenix had been in my world for three just weeks, but I was already hooked.

When I first met Phoenix at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds, she was terrified. She and her pasture mate, Willow, both Arabian mares, are well over 20 years-old and it isn't difficult to understand why they were shaken; hours before, they had been on their Glen Ellen pasture. Then the Nuns fire came blazing through, chasing them off their home and into a trailer.

The evacuation team told me it took three hours to catch them. It had been their second attempt—the first, in the middle of the night, had failed. Trying to get close to the horses in the dark, smoke, and confusion caused by the fire had proven to be impossible.



Phoenix is settling into her new home.

particularly soft spot. I knew immediately I wouldn't be able to walk away and the decision to try to help them both was made.

The horses' owner lost the property to the fires, and when I reached out with the support of a veterinarian, they willingly surrendered the horses. With the blessing of their owner, and the help of a wonderful group of people, we adopted Phoenix and Willow, and after a week at the fairgrounds we were ready to move them to their new home.

On moving day we experienced a devastating loss when Willow had a heart attack. We so wish we were able to save her, but are comforted knowing she's no longer suffering.

Losing Willow caused worry regarding how Phoenix would do, but she is settling in at her new

home. We're slowly working to build her trust and teach her to accept touch. While Phoenix was definitely anxious about touch at the fairgrounds, we didn't realize how much of an issue it was until she arrived at our barn. She is learning to trust, and her recent willingness to touch me and stand so close is a wonderful step in the right direction.

I really cherish and enjoy a life centered around horses (a guarantee for lifelong learning). The milestone Phoenix and I just experienced is one of many more to come. There is so much to learn about how to handle her and make her feel comfortable, while helping her get past her barriers. It's an extremely slow, and sometimes frustrating process, but seeing progress is so rewarding, even if it's one spectacularly small step at a time.

Katherine is the Development & Communications Associate at Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center in Petaluma, and was recently featured in the Petaluma Argus Courier. You can follow Phoenix's journey on Facebook and Instagram: @phoenixrescue17, and support them at www.youcaring.com/phoenixrescue.



Photo: Katie Hatch

Katherine and first responders convincing goats it's time to leave.

I assisted in the rescue of multiple animals during the fires, including horses, alpacas, goats, and a very stubborn Scottish sow.... I can also tell you a thing or two about what it takes to get five goats into the back of a police car. But that's a different story. There was no shortage of animals that needed special care, but I found myself spending much of my time at the fairgrounds with Phoenix and Willow. Their very obvious bond to each other was what got to me, along with their poor condition. It didn't help that Willow was a bay mare, for which I have a

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Thank you!



Hana Musgrove

By Alexandra Rochman, Hana's adoring older sister



Hana learning to find balance on a horse

organization that provides early intervention services for infants and educates parents on how to care for children with special needs. California Children's Services also provided physical, occupational, and speech therapy. We implemented daily exercises at home to strengthen her muscle coordination and she eventually walked on her own.

Throughout her childhood her knees were covered in colorful bandages from frequent falls, but she always picked herself up with a smile. She was placed in a special education program with intensive academic support and adaptive physical training. When Hana was ten she had Streptococcal pharyngitis and developed Henoch-Schonlein purpura, causing severely debilitating inflammation of her joints. Her therapist recommended physical rehabilitation with therapeutic horses to help recuperate her motor function.

Hana began riding horses at Renaissance Healing and Learning Center and Equi-Ed, non-profit organizations that work with clients to improve their physical, social, and emotional well-being through interactions with specially trained horses in an adaptive environment. Hana is featured on the Equi-Ed website describing the impact that the program had on her development. Hana's connection with the horses was absolutely transformational. Her goals evolved from better postural balance to gracefully vaulting over fences and other metaphorical obstacles in her life. In 2010, Hana met Crystal, an Arabian-Hackney horse who became her therapy companion. They were inseparable, so the owner agreed to let her earn ownership of Crystal by working at the property. Hana enthusiastically cleaned ten paddocks and fed the horses at the ranch every weekend for two years. The responsibility gave her a profound sense of purpose and empowerment.

In 2015, she boarded her horse at Cloverleaf Ranch for reduced cost in exchange for feeding 37 horses every Sunday. Cloverleaf Ranch is a family owned 160-acre property that includes horse boarding, trail riding, and equestrian programs for children. Hana practiced endurance riding with Crystal and established an integral caretaker role for all of the horses at Cloverleaf Ranch. When I asked Hana to describe her connection with horses she said, "Crystal helped to elevate my mood, making me calm and happy.

Hana Musgrove was born with cerebral palsy, a result of birth complications due to hypoxia from the umbilical cord being wrapped around her neck during delivery.

Hana lacked muscular tone and vocal expression as an infant, and the cerebral palsy diagnosis was made when she was about one-year old, when we noticed motor skill developmental delays. Our family was introduced to Easter Seals, an

Before I started riding horses I had mobility issues. Riding horses strengthens my mind and body. Having Crystal around made me confident talking to people, and my muscle control improved. When I rode Crystal, I felt like I could do anything. It's hard to think of anything before Crystal."

Unfortunately, on October 8, 2017, the Santa Rosa Tubbs Fire became the most destructive wildfire in California history. Cloverleaf Ranch was destroyed and Crystal was trapped in an enclosed arena where she was electrocuted from downed power lines. Hana remains devastated and heartbroken as she continues to grieve the loss of her best friend and second home. The equestrian community has been tremendously supportive and encourages her to work with their horses at other local stables. We are appreciative of the outpouring of generosity and are graciously accepting donations in memory of Crystal to raise funds for Hana to have a meaningful connection with another therapy horse of her own. We would like to share Hana's story of resilience during this difficult time, to spread awareness of how horse companion therapy has allowed her to overcome adversity and inspires her to continue having a compassionate, fulfilling journey with the Sonoma County equine community.

References:

Easter Seals <http://www.easterseals.com>
Renaissance Healing and Learning Center <http://www.rhlc.net>
Equi-Ed Adapted Physical Education and Equine Therapy Video http://www.equi-ed.org/about_us
Cloverleaf Ranch Horse Boarding <http://www.cloverleafranch.com/horse-boarding.php>
CalFire Tubbs Fire Incident Report http://www.fire.ca.gov/current_incidents/incidentdetails/Index/1867
Press Democrat News <http://www.pressdemocrat.com/news/7546956-181/tubbs-fire-in-santa-rosa?artslide=0>



Hana finds peace and serenity, despite her disabilities, through the love for and companionship of her horse.

“Fuego” ...Never Forgotten

By Saron Dorthick



Fuego and I arrived at the Cloverleaf Ranch on November 1, 2015. We were proud to board and be a part of their family-owned ranch. Fuego was my therapy horse for me and my children. He helped my daughter, Haley, strengthen her left side of her body when she would ride. Haley was diagnosed with the benign brain tumor at the end of her brain stem when she was 2 ½ years old. It made the left side of her body weak.

When I came to Cloverleaf I became great friends with the owner, who asked if Fuego could be a part of their summer camp to teach children about horses and how to care for them. We loved and enjoyed every part of it. The smiles Fuego put on their faces is something I'll never forget. This past year the camp kids made a song with Fuego's name in it and it truly melted my heart. He will be well missed. Fuego stood by his equine friend, Crystal, till the very end. Fuego helped me with my daily stress and was there for me for the past three years when I had my left kidney removed and I was in so much pain. He gave me peace. I spent every day with my boy. He will be extremely missed, but never forgotten. He was my heart and soul.



We

By Barbara Walker

We answered the calls that night, we knew it was bad ... the winds were fierce and the fires raging
 We hooked up our horse trailers and headed east towards the flames, when everyone else headed west
 We quickly moved our horses to safety at the fairgrounds and private ranches, working as a team
 We watched the 100 foot flames surrounding us diminish into smoldering hill tops and ash
 We realized we were safe and became a safe destination for others
 We answered the calls for help to move horses, donkeys, miniature horses, goats, everything to safety
 We crossed fire lines, went up narrow steep roads and worried about turn around space
 We helped nervous horse owners make tough decisions
 We ended conversations with strong hugs and “be safe”
 We constantly assessed the safety of our location and had a strong evac plan in place
 We were glued to our phones and Nixle alerts
 We gathered outdoors to watch our hillsides burn, discussed “back fires” and new fires
 We stayed close to the barns and felt anxious when further away and afraid to leave at night
 We slept in the LQ trailer next to the barn, only sleeping a few hours at a time
 We regularly drove a mile up the road to look east where the fires were still burning out of control
 We didn't unhook our trailers for 6 days... they were our safety net
 We weren't eating healthy, and we really didn't feel like eating
 We lived minute to minute, and thus couldn't plan easily
 We were sleep deprived, stressed, shell shocked, relieved, grateful, guilty (why was my home spared?)
 We cried with our family and friends who lost everything
 We had been stripped of our routine and control
 We listened to KSRO on the radio
 We heard planes, helicopters and sirens regularly
 We saw all types of emergency and military vehicles constantly, from all over the country
 We were in coping/helping mode and hadn't quite wrapped our mind around this new reality
 We clung tightly to the ones we love and prayed for those who were missing
 We survived.....and did whatever we could to help others
 We became an amazing, strong community!

#sonomacountystrong



Local Equestrian Events—Winter 2017–18

Monthly	Clinics with Erika Jansson (email or call for dates)	SREC - Santa Rosa	ejdressage@me.com, 707-326-7612
Jan 10	Open Arena & 4D Barrel Race	SR Fairgrounds	sebastopolwranglers.com
Jan 24	Open Arena & 4D Barrel Race	SR Fairgrounds	sebastopolwranglers.com
Feb 7	Open Arena & 4D Barrel Race	SR Fairgrounds	sebastopolwranglers.com
Feb 21	Open Arena & 4D Barrel Race	SR Fairgrounds	sebastopolwranglers.com
Spring 2018	The Horse Course What a horse is and what he/she is not	Petaluma	circleoakequine.com
Mar 7	Open Arena & 4D Barrel Race	SR Fairgrounds	sebastopolwranglers.com
Mar 21	Open Arena & 4D Barrel Race	SR Fairgrounds	sebastopolwranglers.com

Please submit events for the next issue to Horse Journal Editor, Patrice Doyle - schc.pdoyle@gmail.com

Sonoma County—Places to Ride

Annadel State Park	6201 Channel Drive	Santa Rosa CA 95409	707-539-3911
Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve	17000 Armstrong Wds Rd	Guerneville CA 95446	707-869-2015
Bodega Bay Equestrian Trailhead-So Co Reg. Parks	1752 Westside Road	Bodega Bay CA 94923	707-565-2041
Cloverdale River Park	31820 McCray Rd	Cloverdale CA 95425	707-433-1625
Crane Creek Regional Park	5000 Pressley Rd	Rohnert Park CA 94928	707-565-2041
Doran Beach Regional Park	201 Doran Beach Rd	Bodega Bay CA 94923	707-875-3540
Foothill Regional Park	1351 Arata Lane	Windsor CA 95492	707-433-1625
Helen Putnam Regional Park	411 Chileno Valley Rd	Petaluma CA 94952	707-433-1625
Hood Mountain Regional Park	3000 Los Alamos Rd	Santa Rosa CA 95409	707-565-2041
Laguna de Santa Rosa Trail	6303 Highway 12	Santa Rosa CA 95401	707-433-1625
Lake Sonoma	3333 Skaggs Springs Rd	Geyserville (west of Hburg)	707-431-4590
Ragle Ranch Regional Park	500 Ragle Rd	Sebastopol CA 95472	707-565-2041
Riverfront Regional Park	7821 Eastside Rd	Healdsburg CA 95448	707-433-1625
Salt Point State Park	25050 Highway 1	Jenner CA 95450	707-847-3221
Spring Lake Regional Park	391 Violetti Drive	Santa Rosa CA 95409	707-539-8092
Stewart's Horse Camp	Pt. Reyes Nat'l Seashore	Bolinas CA 94924	415-663-1362
Sugarloaf Ridge State Park	2605 Adobe Canyon Rd	Kenwood CA 95452	707-833-5712
Taylor Mt. Regional Park & Open Space Preserve	3820 Petaluma Hill Rd	Santa Rosa CA 95404	707-539-8092

AD SPECIFICATIONS AND RATES

The Sonoma County Horse Journal is a quarterly publication designed to reach Sonoma County's estimated 30,000 equestrians through direct mail to SCHC Members, individuals, organizations, 35 local horse clubs, and distribution at local feed stores and equestrian businesses. A very affordable way to spotlight your business to the Northern California horse community!

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Rates are for camera ready art. EPS, TIF, JPG or PDF, actual size at 300dpi. Design services available at a nominal charge.

Specification Questions or Design: Contact Lynn Newton – newton5@sonic.net

Sonoma County Horse Journal Submission Guidelines

Article submissions must have content that is educational, substantive, and of interest to a broad range of equine enthusiasts. Examples would be horse handling techniques, veterinary topics, rider fitness, riding disciplines, farriers/hoof care, etc. Authors should include short (40 words or less) biographical and background information, qualifications, etc. Articles may be rejected if a submission is overtly promotional of a product, service, business, and/or organization.

All articles are edited before appearing in print.

Submissions should be no longer than 600 words and may be accompanied by no more than two pictures, unless arranged for in advance and approved by the editor. ALL PHOTOGRAPHS must be the property of the submission's author or be accompanied by verifiable usage permissions from the photographs' owner of rights. Please submit photos in jpg, tiff, psd or pdf format and at least 300dpi (about 1 megabyte).

Please format your submissions as a Word document, one-inch margins, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font. Include the author's name, phone number/email, and word count. Spell check your content, please.

News & Newsworthy submissions must be news items and/or announcements of interest to readership. Examples are show results, opening of a facility, and updates from rescue organizations/non-profits. Content must be 150-words or less and one photo.

Authors retain copyright for their work and grant the Sonoma County Horse Council and The Sonoma County Horse Council's Horse Journal permission to print submissions without remuneration.

Submission Deadlines

Spring Issue - Submission Deadline February 1 - Publication March 15

Summer Issue - Submission Deadline May 1 - Publication June 15

Fall Issue - Submission Deadline August 1 - Publication September 15

Winter Issue - Submission Deadline November 1 - Publication December 15

OCTOBER FIRES: EXPERIENCES & REFLECTIONS

We are grateful that so many in the community are safe, and extend our deepest condolences to those who lost homes and loved ones, whether human or animal.

Our fire experience was different from many of those shared in these pages. The Nuns Fire began very close to our ranch around 10pm on October 8. We were instantly cut off from any escape route. We had a plan for such an event, we put it into action, and we survived, sheltered in place with our animals. Late evening, October 11, our dedicated staff evacuated them. They'll winter at our Red Bluff ranch, in fresh air and safe pastures while we rebuild. We stayed behind, defending the ranch, helping neighbors, and providing welfare checks for animals in Sonoma Valley. Katy Wilson, DVM provided wonderful support. We joined the students of the UC Davis Veterinary Emergency Response Team on rescue missions.

October vaporized, but we managed to join in some activities where experts from more than 16 countries converged to improve the lives of equines and other species. We participated in the BARTA Conference on Animals in Disasters, where I'd been scheduled to speak months before. Nov 5-7, we attended the International Donkey Welfare Symposium, where presentations were both sad and heartening. Time spent in the company of fuzzy long-eared equines was my "Donkey Therapy". We also had a fascinating day with FEMA TV filming stories, and viewed humbling footage from their 30 days in Puerto Rico. We also heard from a neighbor firefighter who spent 3 weeks in PR with USAR. These windows into other situations brought perspective. Resources we take for granted are unimaginable in most parts of the world. Animals suffer badly in disasters. Helping SAR K-9s, and working equines in underdeveloped countries is not just a humanitarian issue – it's crucial to their economies.

Life goes on, cleanup and recovery are now in full swing. We've resumed the previously scheduled trainings in Horse Awareness & Handling for local fire services. The best fire stories, for us, are those of firefighters who, as a result of their training, were able to save horses, livestock, and people while fighting fire in extreme conditions. These success stories, and the emotional expressions of gratitude from owners, are the ultimate goal and reward for the 4 years of training and community outreach.

The first fully equipped Animal Emergency Response Trailer in Sonoma County just made its debut. With the Napa CART rig, that makes 2 in the North Bay! The trailers support the growing number of firefighters, veterinarians, and volunteers trained to respond safely to any emergency.

What's next? Our communities need volunteers able to commit to training and maintaining the skills to be Disaster Service Workers, to support agencies in everyday emergencies and regional disasters. Rural fire departments need volunteers. And, residents must double down on their efforts to be better prepared.

The HALTER Project intends to make 2018 the safest year yet! Our challenge to the equestrian community: Make every barn fire and quake-safe; have a Plan and practice it, and have safety drills throughout the year.

Being prepared brings peace of mind. It's our responsibility to the animals who bring joy, exhilaration and companionship to our lives.

Best wishes for peaceful holidays, a new year filled with hope, and a carrot for everyone.



Elizabeth watches her shelter burn



Our Safety Stall helped save us & our buildings



BARTA Conference



Donkey Welfare Symposium



SVFRA Animal Emergency Response Trailer

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Don't forget to reach out to us to get your copy of our annual Horses of Sonoma County Calendar, all proceeds will be donated to horse related fire relief efforts.

We have many more properties coming soon, call for more information!

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