

Sonoma County

# *Horse Journal*

Volume 7 • Issue 1 • Winter 2011



Equus Awards Edition

*Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council*



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# Horse Journal

Volume 7 • Issue 1 • Winter 2011

Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council – Home of the Equus Awards

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**Cover Photo:**  
**Dirk Bietau** [www.dirk.com](http://www.dirk.com)

Midnight, the 2011 Hall of Fame Horse, shows thirteen year old Mariah Blevins the ropes in the EASY Program, which is part of Linda Aldrich's Pony Express. Read more about Midnight and the other Equus Hall of Fame inductees in this issue of the

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## A Message from the President



Karl & Dinero

Howdy!

I'm pleased to announce that our Equus Awards selection committee has chosen the Equus Hall of Fame Inductees for 2011. It's a fine group, and like cream they rose to the top of a very large field of nominees. We have selected a horse as well for the third time. Read on to learn more about these extraordinary folks and what they have done for us in Sonoma County. You will want to be there March 12th, 2011. The Equus Hall of Fame Awards Banquet is the center of the horse world for one evening. Seeing people from all the different facets of horse activities is inspiring and just plain fun!

Your attendance also helps the Horse Council continue its fine work. And fine it is!!! This Council has the will to represent you and your horse in a variety of ways.

Our objectives include promoting access, parking, and equestrian facility maintenance for our open spaces. We provide education in the form of our economic survey, legislation, voter issues, horse health, and media contacts. We support communication in

the form of the Horse Journal, our website, our Resource Directory, and our media contacts. We advocate for our horses in local, state and federal government by lobbying to include horses as agriculture, and preserve access to public lands. We have worked collaboratively for your benefit with LandPaths, the Sonoma Land Trust, and the Bay Area Ridge Trails Council. And we do so much more...our number of projects increases all the time. The largest project of course is the California Equestrian Park and Event Center (CEPEC). This exciting 1200-acre, \$200 million equestrian park will have an enormous financial impact on the economy here in Sonoma County. We will once again be a national and even international equestrian focus. CEPEC will bring horses, horse professionals, horse-related business, and opportunities to the county. The financial success of this center will make it possible for local horse folks to have access to arenas and facilities at very favorable rates.

The Horse Council is here for you. Please join the organization that is spearheading CEPEC, protecting your horse interests, and bringing us all together.

Happy Trails!

Karl Bastian  
President, Sonoma County Horse Council

*A special thank you to Sharon Fay for her help in collecting photos and bio information.*



### 7th Annual Equus Hall of Fame Awards Dinner

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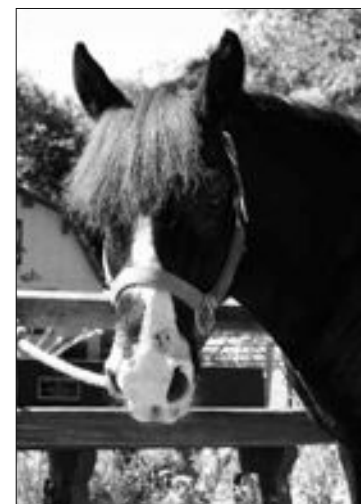


## 2011 Equus Hall of Fame Winners



### Midnight: A Little Black, and a Lot of Pony

*A special thank you to Linda Aldrich*



he's probably gaining on his second decade in this world. And in the last decade his popularity and purpose have become increasingly apparent as his appeal to the young masses continues to rise. Midnight is the favorite four-legged friend at Howarth Park, and his future looks bright, lit with the smiles of kids coming to pay their respects to their best pony friend. But that wasn't always the case.

When Linda Aldrich, owner of The Pony Express, a non-profit organization that advocates on behalf of both horses and youth in need, first met the Mighty M, he wasn't quite the mane man he is today. Living as an outcast in a field of goats, Midnight had long since lost his trust in humans. It used to take an entire team of two-legged horse folks to catch him, and once caught, his survival instinct kicked in hard. Midnight had but one goal: to get away, or get you to go away. Afraid of everything, Midnight was decidedly not going to get along or go along with anything human. Bucking and bolting his way in and out of most situations made this little guy a big force to be reckoned with.

Up at Howarth Park, Midnight was literally beside himself most of those early days. Regardless of the fact that Midnight was not ready to participate in the pony ride operation, Linda felt it was helpful for him to be a part and a party to the daily routine. He soon learned it was a safe

place, and Midnight realized that he could put his survival mode of operation into the past...big step for a fearful little pony.

Soon Midnight embraced his new life. Once impossible to catch, Midnight was now equally as impossible to not catch. While the other ponies that faithfully serve the young park patrons look forward to days off, Midnight looks forward only to days on. Midnight impatiently waits to get out the gate and into the trailer to go to work. Midnight soon became the mane man at the Howarth Park pony corral, with his very own herd of kids requesting him by name. With a kind nudge or a nod of his head Midnight acknowledges each young equine enthusiast who calls him by name. One child nominator wrote, "I love Midnight. He loves everybody who pets him." The parents who nominated Midnight uniformly commented on the confidence, engagement, and growth that interaction with Midnight has created in their children.



Now, over a decade later, Midnight can be found at Howarth Park Pony Corral every day it is open (February through October). He waits patiently along the fence for the next passionate little person to call his name. Never one to turn down a carrot or an apple, Midnight is treated to well-earned treats by his little charges who charge gleefully in his direction. From offering simple pony rides, to teaching the highlights of horsemanship, Midnight dedicates himself to his youthful fans with devotion. A little black, and a lot of pony, has finally come home. And as they say in story books, he is living happily ever after.



Photo: Dirk Bietau





## 2011 Equus Hall of Fame Winners



## Robert C Adams



Bob awarding one of the youngest members in CSHA at year end

Robert Adams has been named to the Equus Hall of Fame for over thirty-five years of dedicated leadership in the equine industry.

Robert was born on a farm in Akron, Ohio. At the age of ten, he learned how to drive a team of horses for haying and picking up sap for the sugar mill on the property. After high school and during a tour

of duty in the Air Force he was part of a goodwill touring rodeo team that visited Europe. He rode broncs and bulls for several years in the program.

After returning home, Robert focused on education and work. In 1977 he purchased a two year old stallion named Sugar Daddy Two, which began his adulthood love of horses. The success of this stallion resulted in several memberships, including the American Quarter Horse Association, the National Reining Cow Horse Association, and the National Cutting Horse Association. Here in Sonoma County, Robert was president of the Western Cow Horse Association (WCHA) for five years. Under Robert, the organization grew and enthusiasm reached a new high. The WCHA experienced an increase in the type and breadth of program. Bob went on to become president of Redwood Empire Cutting Horse Association, with a board of directors that were responsive, dedicated, and enthusiastic. The association continues to be a premier participant in the Cutting horse industry in Sonoma County and on the Pacific Coast.

Bob served three terms as president of the California State Horseman's Association (CSHA). He has held several state-level positions including northern area vice president, chairman of the Long Range Planning Committee and several others. CSHA has eighteen regions and thousands of members. As president, Robert became one of the principal architects for the corporate restructuring of the organization, updating and changing the structure for a transition to a 501c3. With the dedicated assistance of CSHA staff, members and board of directors, the transition was completed successfully.



Along the way, Bob and his wife Nancy continue their interest and participation in the Cutting horse industry. They live in Forestville, California. They have three children, five grandchildren, one dog named Halle and thirteen horses.

## Pamela Anne Berg



Photos: Christine Churchill

Pamela Berg has been inducted into the Equus Hall of Fame for her twenty years of dedication to helping horses in need in Sonoma County.

Pam can't remember a life without horses. She grew up doing all the crazy things kids do...and miraculously avoided injury: jumping bareback without reins, jumping "problem" horses, and barrel racing.

She attempted the Hunter/Jumper show circuit in her teens, but realized she really wasn't competitive. Pam decided early to work with horses for her own pleasure and accomplishments, with their wellbeing in mind. Pam will tell you, "They taught me so much!"

In her adulthood she continued her love for horses by schooling, breeding, training, and a enjoying a long career as a steward in racing. It was there that she recognized the need for a retirement and rehabilitation foundation for injured and needy horses, and also the need to teach people the skills to work with horses in a safe and humane manner. Pam saw too many horses needlessly euthanized for injury or sent off to slaughter. In 1995, Pam founded Glen Ellen Vocational Academy (GEVA, inc), a nonprofit retirement and rehabilitation foundation for horses. Since then, GEVA, inc has rehabled, helped place, or simply offered safe haven for thousands of horses. GEVA, inc houses about thirty horses at a time, usually injured Thoroughbreds, but does not discriminate against any horse in need. GEVA, inc also tries to place horses they cannot accommodate. GEVA, inc has no employees and is dependent on the dedication of volunteers and donors. GEVA, inc welcomes both for the welfare of the horses we all love so dearly.



Pam Berg &amp; Posey

Photos: Christine Churchill

Pam has many qualifications indispensable to the equine industry. The Jockey Club has certified her as a horse identifier. The California Horse Racing Board has designated Pamela a trainer and a steward. She has received the national Dogwood Dominion Award and the Sonoma County Ursula Liarcos Award for her dedication to horses in need. She is a nationally recognized expert witness and equine consultant, all of which she does to benefit GEVA, inc and the horses.

Pamela currently lives in Glen Ellen.



## 2011 Equus Hall of Fame Winners



## L Lawrence Braun



Larry with his newest horse, ACS Erebus

considered becoming a jockey but this idea passed as he grew.

Larry's education and law practice left him little time for horses until after he and his wife Rossana relocated to wine country in 1987. It was here that his childhood passion for horses was rekindled. Larry discovered the Peruvian Paso at the State Fair, and he and Rossana purchased two fillies, and joined the Wine Country Peruvian Paso Horse Club (WCPPHC). In 1997, they moved to their ranch in Petaluma and expanded their Peruvian Paso horse family to five. Larry competes on his horses, most recently at the US National Show in September in Burbank. Larry's passion for the Peruvian Paso has also driven him to participate in many parades and exhibitions, including Equine Extravaganza's and Ag Days in Sonoma County, as well as musical performances on horseback. Larry retired from the practice of law in 2000, and in 2006 began professionally instructing and coaching adults and children to ride the Peruvian Paso.

Larry has served several terms as president of the WCPPHC. Under his energetic leadership, the WCPPHC has become one of the largest, most active and best known Peruvian Paso clubs. He has been an important force behind the WCPPHC's participation at the Western States Horse Expo in Sacramento since 2001. In March of 2010, Larry organized a Peruvian Paso Festival held at his ranch, drawing 120 Club members and guests, including the Counsel General of Peru, his family, and staff.

Larry Braun has been inducted into the Equus Hall of Fame for his promotion and preservation of the Peruvian Paso breed.

Larry was born in Indiana, and began riding horses at a very young age. As a teen, Larry assisted children on pony rides at a local amusement park and was given riding privileges after work. Larry also rode a neighbor's small stallion who he credits with teaching him how to stay in the saddle, as this stallion would try everything to get Larry off his back. For a time, Larry



Larry and Principe de Fe JC winning Grand Champion Pleasure Gelding



Larry &amp; Principe de Fe JC at Ag Days at Sonoma County Fairgrounds

Larry and Rossana currently live on their Petaluma ranch, Terra LarRossa, with their five Peruvian Pasos and one barn cat.

## Ann Gillis, DVM



Ann Gillis has been named to the Equus Hall of Fame for twenty years of dedicated equine veterinary service in Sonoma County.

Ann first remembers riding at summer camp at age eight. After that she stole any ride she could until age twenty-two when she got Snip, a Quarter Horse. She trail rode and worked cows on Snip, and has owned horses ever since.

Ann was born in Oakland and trained at UC Davis. She was a Regents Scholar and a National

Dean's List honoree, and also received the George Hart Scholarship, and the Merck Manual Achievement Award. Ann has run a nutrition lab at the University of Idaho, and a mammalian physiology lab at UC Davis. In her day-to-day practice Dr Gillis specializes in Equine Health, priding herself on providing outstanding "general equine care." Ann consults for the California Veterinary Medical Board, and sits on the Large Animal Practitioner Advisory Board for UC Davis. She is currently being considered for the Human-Animal Bond Committee of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Ann has been practicing in Sonoma County for twenty years. Her strengths include communication, honesty, and experience. One nominator wrote, "When my horses are sick, I am scared; they can't talk to me. I relax when Ann shows up. She speaks for my horses." Despite her experience she is not arrogant, but maintains humility and an open mind. Ann is confident with most barn calls, but also doesn't hesitate to call for second opinion or send horses to tertiary care centers. She has closely networked relationships with specialists at UC Davis, and local equine vets. Ann's favorite visits are pre-purchase exams because they require a sharp eye, analytical skills, and fairness to the horse. They are also challenging in "people management and diplomacy." Ann took 24/7-call for many years and now shares her call with another local vet, Dr Michelle Beko.



Ann enjoys trail riding (both Western and English), and she has experience in cow work. She currently lives in West Petaluma with her partner of twenty-four years, and numerous animals including three dogs, twenty-two cats, three miniature donkeys, one full-size donkey, one miniature steer, four goats, and six horses.





## 2011 Equus Hall of Fame Winners



## Stuart Alan Greenberg



Stuart Greenberg has been named to the Equus Hall of Fame for his thirty years of humble and dedicated service as a classical farrier, and as teacher and mentor to hundreds of equestrians in Sonoma County.

Stuart was born in Louisville Kentucky. As a child, Stuart remembers starting to ride at Mrs Brown's farm, where he would take lessons with his brother. "She hollered at us a lot, I remember," says Stuart.

After that Stuart took the opportunity to ride any friends' horses he could...usually bareback. Stuart reports that he has never had much formal training, and doesn't ride Western or English, but rather just focuses on communication with horses.

Stuart studied psychology at the University of Kentucky, until he moved to Steamboat Springs, Colorado. There he met his mentor, Dave Lewis, a journeyman and classical farrier, who hailed from a long family line of blacksmiths. He studied with Lewis for a number of years. Stuart received recognition in several iron-working competitions while working in Colorado.

Stuart moved to Occidental in 1983. In 1988 he began teaching Farrier Science at the Santa Rosa Junior College. Over the last twenty three years he has taught owners, veterinarians, and aspiring farriers. He has consistently received the highest evaluations for his class. Stuart's farrier technique is a dying art. He forges all his own shoes, making each set at home before he leaves for his shoeing appointments. His practice has evolved into shoeing horses that need special care and rehabilitation. Stuart views "helping the horse" as his primary focus, whether it's a little girl's pony with founder, or a retired horse needing comfort during its senior years.

Stuart loves horses, but he doesn't own any. He will ride on occasion when invited by friends. He does love to ride his Harley. He says likes to spend his free time doing something that is not so close to his daily work.

When not shoeing horses, Stuart is also a blacksmith. He makes custom fireplace tools and irons, and small decorative pieces. Stuart lives in Glen Ellen.



## JoDean Nicolette



JoDean Nicolette has been named to the Equus Hall of Fame for her extensive volunteer service supporting equestrians and equestrian organizations of Sonoma County.

JoDean began riding as an adult. "I started to ride horses at age thirty-nine," she shrugs, "just as I started to develop fear, and a sense of my own mortality." JoDean's first horse was a three year old Paint horse named Jimmie (Jimmie-James to his friends). She still has Jimmie, and has continued to add to her herd.

JoDean has lived in Santa Rosa for ten years, and has been involved in the Sonoma County equestrian community for about half that time. According to her nominations JoDean "is a driving force behind equestrian interests in our county." One nominator wrote, "I challenge you to find a person who has done more for horses and horse people in their lifetime, than JoDean has done in just a few years."

In 2007, JoDean was elected president of the state parks Mounted Assistance Unit. Since then she has contributed thousands of hours leading and building the organization, and expanding its role. Under JoDean, the unit has produced record numbers of service hours, and was awarded the statewide Grassroots Champion award for its role in park advocacy. The California State Parks recognized JoDean's achievement in 2009 with a California Poppy Award.

Two years ago, JoDean quietly took over the *Sonoma County Horse Journal*, the voice for the SCHC. She has worked to improve the content and aesthetics, and to include all riders and disciplines. As editor, JoDean says she wants the whole community, even people who never thought of themselves as authors, to feel that they can see themselves in the *Horse Journal*.

JoDean was awarded the 2008 Top Hand Award for her participation in Backcountry Horsemen. She also sits on the Board of Directors for Giant Steps Therapeutic Equestrian Center. She is a consistent and quiet contributor to the local horse rescue organizations.

JoDean practices Bareback Equitation and enjoys trail riding. She'll tell you proudly that she is a Buckarett. Besides Jimmie, JoDean's family includes Ben, Chance, Bear, Charlie, Bruiser, Sandy, and her estranged cat, Pebbles, who has moved into the field next door.



## 2011 Equus Hall of Fame Winners



## Yves Serge Sauvignon



Yves and Cindy

Yves Sauvignon has been named to the Equus Hall of Fame for his contribution to Three Day Eventing in Sonoma County and abroad.

Yves, who hails from France, started riding at age nine. He didn't own his own horse for many years, instead riding the horses at his training facility. Yves' earliest training was in Classical Dressage and Show Jumping. At age sixteen he was admitted to *Le Haras du Pin* in Normandy, a professional riding school for talented equestrians administered by the French government. Upon graduation Yves was accredited to teach riding anywhere in the world.

Yves immigrated to California in 1981 after teaching all over France. He started Oakridge Training Stables at the Wikiup Equestrian Facility, and eventually moved to what is now known at Santa Rosa Equestrian Center (SREC). Oakridge Training Stables is now divided between SREC and Yves' ranch on Lone Pine Road in Sebastopol.

Yves has been training Three Day Eventers in Sonoma County for thirty years. He minimizes his own personal performance success, and focuses on his students. Yves has trained hundreds of Three Day Eventers, many successful at regional, national, and international levels. Several of Yves' students have been Olympic qualifiers. Yves has been accredited as a Cross Country course designer, and developed a large Cross Country course at Oakridge, which has hosted several events. A nominator described Yves as a "calm and confident trainer who instills trust in riders and mounts. He is a charming and patient teacher." Yves is equally proficient teaching teenagers, young adults, and adult amateurs. He has a loyal following; some students have been with him for twenty years. According to Yves, his greatest teachers have been his students and his horses.

Yves currently trains horses and riders half time at SREC and the rest of his time at his new ranch in Sebastopol. He lives with his wife Cindy, their Vizla Sambuca, five cats, and six horses.



Photo: Brant Gamma

## Diana Kay Thompson



Photo: Joanne Panizzera

Diana Thompson has been named to the Equus Hall of Fame for years of teaching Sonoma County horse owners how to use equine acupuncture, massage, and gentle, effective training methods with their horses.

Diana was born in Tacoma, Washington. Her parents gave Diana and her siblings a pinto palomino filly named Trixie for Christmas when she was six years old. Diana enjoyed years

of trail riding, competing in shows, and competitive trail rides. As a freshman in college, she earned a spot on the mounted drill team.

In 1980, while in her early 20's, Diana opened a stable near Newport, Oregon. She started young horses under saddle, trained English and Western show horses and conditioned race prospects. When horses with deeply rooted emotional and physical problems showed up at her barn, Diana questioned conventional ways of training. She looked for ways to relieve fear and muscular tension in horses so they could relax, learn, and perform to the best of their ability. She studied alternative therapies and equine anatomy and earned her massage certification. She currently studies Traditional Chinese Medicine and ways to train horses using positive reinforcement such as clicker training and liberty work.

Diana first came to Santa Rosa to teach a clinic sponsored by endurance rider Barbara Reinke. She moved here in 1990. Diana founded *The Whole Horse Journal* in 1996. As editor-in chief, she guided the publication to eight national awards.

In 2003, Diana became an adjunct instructor in the Equine Science department at the Santa Rosa Junior College. She developed and still teaches the first accredited course in equine acupuncture and massage in California. Diana and her husband Bob Murphy own a commercially permitted horse facility just north of Santa Rosa where they live with their two horses, a dog, and two cats. The facility has a barn, classroom and indoor riding arena where Diana teaches private lessons and group classes. She recently published her first book *Acupressure Point Charts for Horses, An Illustrated Guide to 128 Point Locations and Uses*.







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## Horse Husbandry—The Occasionally True Tales of a Local Horse Husband

Column editor Mark Krug

### In the Belly of the Beast

Recently, I took my big gelding out for a trail ride on a gorgeous Tuesday afternoon. I had one of those great and rare rides that bordered on spiritual. I had been out of town and hadn't ridden for ten days and so I was simply delighted to be astride a horse, especially Mojo, my eleven year old Percheron. The real memorable part though is that I had one of those break-through rides.

For those of you who have read my earlier columns, you'll recall I became interested in horses some twenty-two years ago, after I married Cheryl, a Dressage queen, instructor, and horse ranch owner. My fate as a future horse-husband was sealed.

Cheryl and I elected not to have children. Thus, I'm a total dope when it comes to understanding the developmental stages of children—a complete parenting ignoramus. When people ask why I didn't want children, I state, honestly, that I think the planet is already overcrowded with humans. The follow-up question is often "Then why not adopt?" My response here is less meek, my eyes dart around to see who's in ear-shot, then whisper the taboo truth, "I don't really like children that much."

Now, of course, this doesn't mean I despise children or that I don't like any children. But generally speaking, I'm just not drawn to kids. As a smart-alecky sport, it's great fun to exaggerate this trait like WC Fields did when he said stuff like, "Anyone who hates children and animals can't be all bad." Granted, this is pretty harsh stuff, at least the part about animals. But it amuses me...

My utter ignorance about the development of children means that similar developmental stages in horses simply amaze me. Parents, I've noticed, can see the training, learning, and developmental passages in a horse as similar to those they have experienced with their kids and so it isn't a big, amazing deal. But to me, it's stupefying how much horses can transform. Perhaps I'm just dense, but I much prefer the childless theory over simple naïveté. So humor me here.

Thus the transformation in Mojo astounds me. When I got Mojo five years ago, he had issues. These problems, as is typically the case, weren't part of his DNA but rather things that humans gave him. I don't believe he was beat or even handled too roughly, but instead started by people who were well-intentioned, but unskilled. These "trainers" gave him confused and mixed-up commu-

nication so he became distrustful of people and clearly preferred being away from humans. And maybe as a draft horse he did, in fact, inherit a little stubbornness in his DNA. His barn nickname from those early years is telling. We called him The Beast. We had other choice names for him during those frustrating days, but the family nature of the Journal requires that I not share these.

Since then, Mojo has transformed into a more or less trusting horse that not only tolerates humans, but seems to genuinely like those of us that are part of his day-to-day life. And he's become a decent arena horse. Early on he would just clamp down on the bit, take the rider to the gate, and use his formidable 1,500 pounds of horseflesh to clearly communicate his desire to not go around in circles any longer, thank you very much. He has since become an awesome and incredibly dependable trail horse, save one remaining "issue."

This last "issue" is stealing snacks on the trail. Now, most of you are now thinking, "Oh, yeah, I rode a horse like that, I can relate." Well, with all due respect, no, you haven't had ridden a horse like this. When on the trail with Mojo, his every molecule, his every thought, his every action and reaction is based upon getting into position for sampling the buffet. He will take the smallest window of opportunity, the slightest lapse in the rider's attentiveness, the smallest distraction to steal a nibble.

This leads us, at long last, to the remarkable Tuesday ride. Until now, I've been trying my best to manage the head of this giant eating machine. But on this Tuesday, I put him on a long rein and gave him his head no matter what. It just happened, not really a conscious experiment. When he dove for munchies, I didn't fight with his head. Instead, I flipped the end of my *mecate* reins back and forth, cracking him pretty good. He'd move his feet, and I'd stop. And so it went. He traveled with his head outstretched and low, much better for his muscle development, because I gave him a loose rein at all times. Every dive into the shrubbery generated a big, serious response from me to go forward. And *voila!* He's not perfect, but now within the bounds of normalcy!!!

Naturally, the real message here is don't give up on your horse and never, ever assume certain things can't progress, or that certain problems can't be solved. Sure, we can destroy their trust, as was the case with Mojo, but horses can learn to trust us again. Sometimes real progress requires a new mindset on the part of the human. In this example, when I switched my focus from trying to steer his head away from munchies to moving his feet, it made all the difference.

We just need to get smart enough to work things out with our equine partners; the communication part is on us to figure out. The horse is smart, sensible and aware—just waiting for us to sort this out so they can understand, depend on, and trust us clumsily and often wrong-headed humans. WC Fields puts it this way, "Horse sense is the thing a horse has which keeps it from betting on people."

Mark lives near Graton with his spouse Cheryl, The Beast, and a bunch of other critters, but no kids.



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## Readers Write

# Good Horse Training According to Classical Principles

Written by Tressa Boulden

When equestrians look for a trainer, whether for their horses or themselves, they enter a vast sea of information that can be confusing. Growing up with horses, and having to sort through all of this information, I learned the hard way about what was good training and what doesn't work. In my quest for further education, I always looked for the reasons why training was successful or not. As a result, I was inspired to find the best educators who were Classically trained. These are some of the guidelines that Classical training and its principles identify.

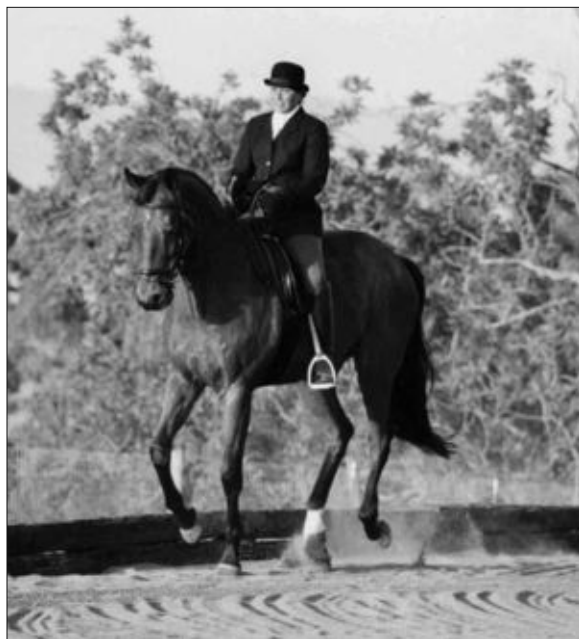
Whether your trainer is training you or your horse, explanations are always important. Your trainer may not explain when he or she is mounted

and concentrating, or when pushing you to get through a difficult moment, but when the appropriate moment comes, you should always feel you can discuss what is going on in the training process. This allows you to understand and trust the work and skills you are learning. No matter what your level, the concepts of training should be common sense enough that you can grasp the essence of them.

The system your trainer uses should have a consistency to it. Although sometimes it takes some creativity to figure out what works for an individual horse or student, the method used should have some thread of common sense and regularity. Horses and students both learn by being introduced to the same foundational methods again and again until you have something solid to build from.

Good training should always build from a good strong foundation and develop from there in a chronological way. Training is like building a house. For example, a house must begin with a foundation. Then framing is added, and so on and so forth. Horses and riders both learn best if one thing leads to another in a systematic fashion. If you run into problems, you can always take a step back see if the foundation is solid enough.

In all training we hit our rough patches, but if training gets persistently worse, and more and more troublesome, we can assume there is a problem. Either there is a physical problem or mental issue. In both cases your trainer should recognize when training is going backwards for too long and take an approach of backing off to assess if there is some sort pain issue and lower the demand of training, or if the horse or rider may not be ready for the degree of



Tressa practicing Classical Horsemanship

work difficulty. This does not excuse horses and their riders from having to work hard to advance; the old adage still applies—no pains no gain. However, working hard is different than being over-faced and having no success.

It is as important to find the right teacher-student combination as it is the right trainer for your horse. Find yourself a teacher that not only follows Classical guidelines for good training, but also has a good chemistry with you, and teaches in the manner in which you learn. This is an important aspect to learning and having success. When you find this teacher it is important to stay loyal to the learning process until you are able to grasp the concepts that he or

she has to offer you.

Learning new skills and teaching new thing to a horse always has trials and tribulations, but overall training should have a progression to it. Training should not feel forced, but will feel challenging and sometimes unnatural when exploring new and unfamiliar territory. The best judge of correct training is your horse. A horse, not unlike its rider, must learn a certain amount of discipline, so riders are bound to face some resistance. But every session should end on some kind of a positive note, and horse and rider should have a sense of accomplishment. A positive note can be as simple as knowing when to quit asking for more. Good training should have a warm up, a work period with short breaks, and a cool down. The release of pressure is a form of reward within itself, and a rider always should be encouraged to praise their horse.

Good training does not belong to a secret society; it is accessible to all riders. The Classical guidelines that have been passed down by master horsemen long before us hold the keys to successful training. By using Classical guidelines, equestrians can more easily nurture a positive, healthy relationship with their horses. U

*Tressa Boulden is a Classical Dressage trainer based in Sonoma County. Her focus in training is to establish strong foundational basics to ensure her students and their horses a successful, healthy advancement to the higher level work. Longe lessons are one of her specialties. To contact Tressa visit her web site at [www.tressabouldendressage.com](http://www.tressabouldendressage.com).*

## Horseman's View

Column editor Art Grunig

# Accepting and Letting Go

Balance is one of the most important parts of any good performance...or relationship for that matter. Learning to accept and to let go of a rider's touch is the key to mental, emotional, and physical balance in any horse.

When a rider guides the horse by allowing the horse to release the rider's contact/pressure, the horse relaxes into its own center, and achieves perfect balance and a beautifully soft, functional coordination. The horse also feels in control of itself, while at the same time responding to and taking care of the rider.

When I speak of accepting the touch of the rider I am referring to the horse moving with an ongoing contact with the rider's hands and legs. This encourages forward motion, extension, collection, moving with engaged power, lateral bending, and stretching or lengthening the top line of the horse. It is important that the horse and rider meet each other in mutual contact. If one is pulling or pushing on the other, both the horse and rider will be stretched or strained, and braced against the other and within themselves. The strength of the contact can vary, but the contact must be held within each and between both. Pulling or wrestling leads to poor balance, poor coordination, bad timing, and disharmony.

The alignment of the rider's body—especially the spine and arms or hands—is a key to the horse being able to accept or let go of contact with the rider. When the rider holds his or her spine upright, with the vertebrae lined up straight, the horse will move the rider forward. Jockeys in a race and Hunter riders use this to encourage forward motion and prevent themselves from being left behind the motion. I suggest a C-shaped alignment for letting go. When the rider assumes a C-shaped spinal alignment, this means that he or she is not leaning back but sitting with a curve in the spine as one tends to do in a reclining chair; the seat bones rest in the forward position compared to the alignment of the rest of the vertebrae, and the bones in the back will be slightly stacked behind each other. This position causes the presence and weight of the rider to be a secure and less changeable for the horse. This alignment promotes stability, balance, and security, rather than tension. In this position it is easy for the horse to let go of the rider. The C-shaped alignment also makes it easy for the rider to allow the horse to let go with out changing its position, effort, or balance.



Art and Matt accepting and letting go

The position of the rider's wrists is important. If the rider holds his or her wrists so that the hand is pointed down, the rider's spine will be disengaged from the horse and the rider will "float" above it. This is true in all spinal positions. If the rider's wrists are straight or bent up, the rider's spine will be connected and engaged with the horse, providing a secure anchor for the hands, feet, position, and balance of the rider. There are times when it is good to float and times when we need an anchored security.

Where we hold our power has a strong influence on how much contact the horse will take. When we hold our power in our finger closest to the bit the horse is going to want to let go of the contact. When we hold our power in our core and our fingers are soft and gentle, the horse will take a bolder hold of the bit. The same is true of the leg. If all our power is in the spur the horse will want to be very light to our leg. When our strength is in our body and the spur is soft or not touching the horse, it will move with stronger contact with the rider. By changing where we hold our strength and by changing how large a space the power occupies in its body, the rider can achieve a very wide range of effects, with consistent balance and performance.

Whether riding in contact or release, the rider must remember to handle his or her horse in a gentle and consistent way that the horse understands. The horse must be able to keep up in the natural and desired rhythm of what the rider is asking it to do. The horse and rider must move together as one. If we leave the horse behind, we force it off balance or lose our ability to guide it. If we do not keep up with the horse we drag it off balance and let it get lost in the movement. Remember, riding in balance is the goal. Mental, emotional, and physical balance between horse and rider, and within each, will encourage a lasting and satisfying partnership. U

*To contact Art about training or body work, call him at 707-838-9755, or email him at [artgrunig@aol.com](mailto:artgrunig@aol.com). You can also visit his website at [www.artgrunig.com](http://www.artgrunig.com).*



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## Trails and Open Spaces

Column editor Sarah Reid, "Annadel 2010" Poker Ride Organizer

# Annadel 2010: An Inaugural Event to Support Local Parks



Heading out on the poker ride at Annadel 2010

On Sunday, September 12th, 2010, twenty-four equestrians rode out into Annadel State Park on the first ever event to celebrate Annadel State Park and Spring Lake Regional Park: *Annadel 2010*. What started as a cold, foggy morning broke into a gorgeous sunny fall day to welcome riders and horses onto a loop around Lake Isanjo in Annadel, gathering what they hoped was a winning poker hand along their ride route. One group of riders came all the way from Brentwood to experience our wonderful Sonoma County parks for the very first time.

Thank you to the Sonoma County Horse Council for sponsoring the poker ride on Sunday, and providing the winning \$50 cash prize. Winner Marcia Phillips had collected three "2s." The two runner-up hands received \$35 and \$20 cash prizes, respectively. All riders received an event t-shirt, Annadel medal, lunch, beer, and enjoyed the expo. We saw quite a few equestrians vying for who could put up the tent fastest at the Marmot booth!

This weekend-long outdoor festival included a mountain bike cross country event, a twelve-mile footrace, an equestrian poker ride, outdoor gear festival and vendor fair, organized hikes, and treasure hunt. This collaborative event, staged at Spring Lake, brought together Sonoma County Agriculture Preservation and Open Space District, California State Parks, Sonoma County Regional Parks, Bike Monkey LLC, Fleet Feet of Santa Rosa, REI of Santa Rosa, the Sonoma County Horse Council, and others. The purpose of the event was to serve as a platform to reach a large demographic of park users with information about the need to support both state and regional park infrastructure through funding and volunteerism. Event proceeds went towards trails and support



John Ryan enjoying the slackline exhibit at Annadel 2010

for the two parks. We hope this becomes an annual community event to support these two parks.

The Sonoma County Horse Council and Mounted Assistance Units for the state and regional parks were represented by booths both days. MAU patrols also assisted with the activities in Annadel State Park both days, providing general trail patrol and riding drag on the bicycle and running courses on Saturday, and on the poker ride course on Sunday.

I can't thank my poker ride and booth volunteers enough, equestrians one and all. All of you stepped up to help me at the very last minute and I really appreciate it: Lori Cleveland, Shar Ege, Marty Lownes, Marcia Phillips, JoDean Nicolette, Valerie Kasnick, Dagmar Hoheneck, Chris Huot, and Marci Cook. Special thanks to my cycling husband, Ken who went back up on Sunday evening and took out the poker buckets on "Marge," the Cross Bike, and provided endless support in the previous six weeks. We could not have had the booths without John Ryan, Volunteer Coordinator for Regional Parks, who brought the stuff and a team to set them up. Lastly, thanks to Bike Monkey LLC who conceived the entire event for our beloved parks. Hope to see you next year! U

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

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## Readers Write

# Local Rider Reins at WEG

Written by Joan Rasmussen

The World Equestrian Games (WEG) were held in Lexington, Kentucky from September 25 to October 10, the first time this prestigious event has been held on US soil. Sonoma County equestrian Guillermo Recio and his horse, Bonnie's Smart Chic, were there for the Reining competition. Guillermo lives in the US, but was born in Sevilla, Spain, and represented Spain in the competition.

The circumstances leading to Guillermo's participation were exceptional. Guillermo grew up in Spain and moved to the US to work in the Silicon Valley, eventually moving to Petaluma's Telecom Valley. Although always an animal lover, he only became involved in horses when he met his wife, Haley, a longtime horse-woman. When the telecom industry collapsed, the Recios decided to shift career tracks and opened their equine facility, Sonoma Mountain Equestrian Center. They obtained Bonnie's Smart Chic ("Charro" to his friends) intending to show him as a Reined Cowhorse, but he turned out to be a talented Reiner. Charro suffered a tendon injury in late 2008, resulting in a year-long lay up, resuming training just in time to qualify for the Games.

The World Equestrian Games are the major international championships for equestrians. They are held every four years, halfway between consecutive Summer Olympic Games. The eight represented disciplines include Combined Driving, Dressage, Endurance, Eventing, Paraequestrianism, Reining, Show Jumping, and Vaulting. Fifty-seven countries and 800 participants attended the 2010 WEG. The World Equestrian Games are regulated by the FEI (Federation Equestre Internationale), and the regulations tend to be more stringent than those of any of the US governing agencies. The first step at a competition regulated by the FEI is to pass the vet check. The FEI has a "zero tolerance" policy toward drugs, with almost all drugs banned. This was not a problem, but a fairly new FEI regulation states that horses in competition at a FEI-regulated event may only be ridden one hour per day. A highly trained Reining horse has only warmed up after one hour, and this was a major



Guillermo performs on Charro

disruption in the training plan, as the horse was under this regulation for three days before his competition. When the big moment arrived, Charro kicked while doing a flying lead change, and at this level of competition, that kick lowered his ranking enough to end his run at the WEG.

The World Equestrian Games, though, are about more than winning. Horses and riders are not merely competing, they are representing their country at an international event. Each country turns out their team in their best, with special dress uniforms, to show their pride in country. Turning out in tailored suits with your fellow countrymen at an event of this caliber is inspiring, regardless of the final results. Guillermo found that this, combined with being surrounded by the world's equine superstars from all disciplines, made for an unbelievable WEG experience.

The next WEG is scheduled to be held in France in 2014, and Guillermo and Charro are planning to be there, with a winning strategy designed to maximize their performance while complying with FEI regulations. Guillermo and his veterinarian, Dr Grant Miller, are working closely together to keep Charro sound and fit and ready to compete in four years. FEI regulations are geared toward keeping horses sound, a philosophy Guillermo buys into as it aligns with the *Californio* tradition of bringing a horse along slowly, with both physical and mental fitness intact. This tends to produce horses with long and productive careers.

Two weeks after returning from Kentucky, the pair competed at the Northwest National Reining Horse Association Affiliate Finals in Idaho, where they won championships in Rookie Professional and Limited Open classes, with scores that would have likely won medals at the WEG. U

*The Recios own Sonoma Mountain Equestrian Center in Petaluma. For more information about their facility and horses, visit [www.sonoma-mountainequestrian.com](http://www.sonoma-mountainequestrian.com).*

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## Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games



Michael Jung (GER) had fault-free Cross Country and Show Jumping rounds to win the Individual Eventing World Championship on his Dressage score of 33.



Phillip Dutton (USA) and Woodburn warming up outside the Rolex Main Stadium.



In an historic sweep, Dutch rider Edward Gal and Moorlands Totilas captured three gold medals at the Dressage World Championships. Friday night, in front of a sold-out crowd at the Kentucky Horse Park's Rolex Main Stadium, he won the Grand Prix Freestyle with a score of 91.8 percent. Edward perfecting the piaffe while waiting for the bell to enter the ring.



The Great Britain team enters the stadium for the Medals Ceremony after winning the Gold in the Team Eventing World Championship.



Camilla Gray-Nelson and Mary Poe, intrepid horsewomen of Petaluma, ride the Equine Guelph – one of the many exhibits and clinics at the Kentucky Horse Park.

## Lexington, Kentucky



Kari Ontko, Photographer



The last phase of the Eventing, Show Jumping, brought a blustery, rainy day. The Individual Eventing World Champion, Michael Jung (GER), on course.



A favorite entry at the Alltech Experience Ladies Day.



Tom McCutcheon (USA) on Gunners Special Nite won Gold in the Individual Reining World Championship.



Crowd favorite at the Dressage Freestyle, Juan Manuel Munoz Diaz (ESP) on Fuego XII does one tempis down the centerline holding the reins in one hand – quite the showman.



Andrew Nicholson (NZL) and Nereo clearing Fence 7, the Kentucky Fence Line, a jump where many riders had faults. A clear round gave New Zealand the Bronze medal in Team Eventing and Andrew an Individual Eventing World Championship Bronze Medal.



## All Creatures Great and Small

Column editor Grant Miller, DVM

# The Unwanted Horse: What You Can Do During the Season of Giving

Well horse lovers...it's that time of year again. The days are getting shorter, the air is crisp, and the winter hair coats are growing like gang-busters. For many horse enthusiasts, it's time to end the show season and pull out the winter blankets for a winter break. Most of the 22,000 horses in Sonoma County are lucky enough to have caring owners who provide excellent homes, including high quality feed, clean water, and adequate shelter—especially important during the cold winter months. Unfortunately, a growing number of horses won't enjoy these necessities as they fall victim to abuse or neglect. Sadly we will see a record number of these "Unwanted Horses" as we begin our season of giving.

The equine media world reports regularly on the staggering numbers of Unwanted Horses across the country. Most research on the subject points to "the perfect storm" of circumstances that have led to skyrocketing cases of abuse, abandonment, and neglect. Contributing factors include the recession, the federal ban on horse slaughter, and the national real estate disaster. Naturally, many horses have found their way into horse rescue operations, since few owners wish to euthanize their animals and slaughter has become illegal. However, rescue groups have limited resources, certainly not enough to adequately address the problem of the Unwanted Horse.

A 2010 research paper published by Dr Carolyn Stull of UC Davis provided an in-depth summary of the state of equine rescues. Stull's article determined that 100,000 unwanted horses accumulate in the United States each year, and between 2007 and 2009, only about 10% of these horses were actually admitted into rescue operations. Most rescue operations had an average capacity of ten to twenty horses, and for every four horses that they took in, only three were adopted out. Many were euthanized due to illness or lameness, and some were kept as permanent residents. Stull determined that majority of horses taken into rescue operations were Quarter Horses or Thoroughbreds, and that the average cost of caring for a rescued horse was about \$3,700.00/year.

Although there is hope on the horizon for real estate (average median sale price of a home in Sonoma County has increased this year), unemployment is still at an all time high (near 10% in California.) It is likely that horses will be last in line to see relief during these tough times, and therefore, it is also likely that California horse rescue operations will continue to be pushed to their limit as they attempt to help Unwanted Horses.

As we enter the season of giving, many generous horse lovers step up to lend a helping hand to the local group of horse rescue organizations. Below are some helpful tips that you may want to consider as you decide to donate during the holiday season.

- 1) Check to make sure that the horse rescue operation is a federally accredited 501c(3) corporation. Without 501c(3) status, the organization cannot legally give you a tax deduction. If a rescue operation tells you that their 501c(3) status is pending, that does not count! 501c(3) organizations are required to report

their income to the government and keep records on donations and expenditures. They are reviewed by the government to make sure that funds are not being misused. It is far more prudent to donate to a 501c(3) than a non-accredited organization.

- 2) Check to see if the rescue operation is registered on Guidestar.org. Guidestar is an online clearinghouse that rates non-profit organizations. It assists donors in finding a non-profit organization that helps with a cause important to the donor. If a non-profit organization is registered on Guidestar, a donor can see everything from the non-profit tax documents to a list of Board of Directors.
- 3) Ask some specific questions of the non-profit before you donate. Does the non-profit have a vision, a mission statement, and goals or objectives? If they do, do you agree with them? How many horses does the organization help on a yearly basis? Most importantly, what percentages of horses are adopted out in relation to being taken in? As many horse owners know, there are some "rescues" that simply collect horses. While this may be admirable in some circumstances, a donor must decide if hard earned money should be donated to pay for someone else to own horses, or if it should go to an active non-profit that maintains capacity to serve the horse community on a continual basis by adopting out horses to make room for more.
- 4) Remember: horse rescue organizations are businesses. They usually are businesses that do not make any money, but they are businesses nonetheless. Therefore, one should inquire as to the business practices of the organization. Does the organization have tax documents or financial statements for review, or even a website that posts information about the structure of the business?
- 5) Follow up on your donation by visiting the rescue organization website or calling a representative of the organization. It is important to see activity in the organization to know that your hard earned dollars are doing some good!

As your horses relax in their warm stalls this winter, and munch on warm bran mashes with candy canes, do not forget those horses that are less fortunate this year. Together, we can make a tremendous positive difference for the Unwanted Horses in our community by giving to our local 501c(3) horse rescues. U

*Dr Grant Miller specializes in large animal practice. In addition to being a full time veterinarian, Dr. Miller founded the Sonoma County CHANGE program in 2007, which provides ancillary support services to the Sonoma County Animal Care and Control Department in cases of equine abuse, neglect, abandonment, and voluntary relinquishment. Dr. Miller also trains animal control officers around the state of California on several subjects involving large-animal husbandry, handling, and case investigation.*

## Facilities Focus

Column editor Debby Bailey

# Equi-Ed (Equines and Education)



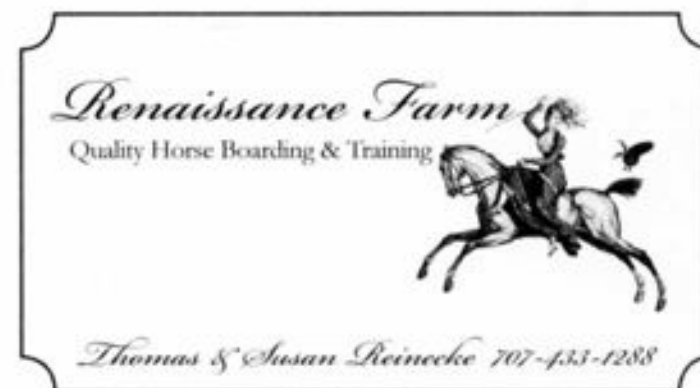
Equi-Ed is a local program designed to enrich the lives of individuals with disabilities through the therapeutic power of the horse. The director of this program is Maxine Freitas. I first became familiar with Equi-Ed, when I met Maxine Freitas eleven years ago.

I was on a quest to learn everything I could about my equine companions so I could be a better caregiver to them, so I enrolled in a course called Horse Husbandry at Santa Rosa Junior College (SRJC). This course was, and still is taught by Maxine at the College. It was a great course; I learned a great deal of information. I was the very oldest individual in the class by several decades. I was surrounded by eighteen to twenty year olds who were shy, reserved, and reluctant to ask questions. I was full of questions and definitely not shy, so I got to know Maxine quite well. She was a wonderful person and teacher (and still is), and as an added benefit, I got to learn about Equi-Ed.

Maxine is a survivor. She was diagnosed with breast cancer twenty seven years ago, and it was during that time that she developed her concept for Equi-Ed. She wanted a life plan and to create a legacy. She certainly has accomplished her goal. Equi-Ed is a renowned program in the therapeutic riding community and we are truly fortunate to have such an organization here in Sonoma County!

Equi-Ed is unique because it not only provides the opportunity for physically and/or mentally challenged individuals to ride, but also offers the opportunity for individuals to participate in classes to become professionals in the therapeutic riding industry.

The philosophy of Equi-Ed is to offer students who participate in therapeutic riding, the opportunity to experience physical, emotional, and mental benefits. Since horseback riding gently and rhythmically moves the human body in a manner similar to the human walking gait, it provides the upper and lower body sensations and mental images of walking. It also stimulates passive exercise, which in turn increases cardiovascular, muscular and respiratory strength. Students and parents of students who have participated in Equi-Ed are always happy to share with you the fact that their riding has helped them to increase their concentration, patience, and discipline. It has also helped to improve their social skills and personal relationships. One mother said that she was so grateful for "the empowerment her daughter gets" from riding. Another parent said that "changes occur in this setting that occur no where else in these children's lives."



A client in session at Equi-Ed

The disabilities which can benefit from the program include paralysis, autism, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, amputations, multiple sclerosis, head injury, developmental delays, learning disabilities, spina bifida, deaf, blind, and those who have experienced emotional or physical traumas.

Equi-Ed's horses are specially selected and tested extensively before they can enter the program. They may be former trail horses, polo horses, or lesson horses. It does not matter what their past may have been as long as they have the temperament to work with students who have special needs. I have friends who have donated horses to Equi-Ed and feel it has been quite an honor to do so. They are so happy to know that their horses are well cared for and that they are doing a very important "job!"

Equi-Ed was begun in 1994, and until 1996, it was part of the Special Education Dept. of the Santa Rosa City Schools. Now it is affiliated with the Adapted Physical Education & Equine Science Dept. at SRJC, and offers horsemanship instruction, competition opportunities and special education programs to children and adults with and without disabilities. The SRJC Agriculture Dept. offers courses for training in therapeutic riding which are taught by Maxine. Equi-Ed is the first North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA) center in California to offer interactive vaulting by NARHA certified interactive vaulting instructors. Lessons for all students are held at the SRJC Shone Farm, and at Equi-Ed's community based facility.

Equi-Ed relies heavily on the kindness and generosity of individuals to help continue their mission or providing individual equestrian experiences to students with special needs. To contact Equi-Ed about student enrollment call (707) 5-HORSES (546-7737). The website for Equi-Ed [www.Equi-Ed.org](http://www.Equi-Ed.org) If you have any questions you can contact the organization through their e-mail address which is [infoequied@aol.com](mailto:infoequied@aol.com). U

*Do you know of a Sonoma County facility or event that you'd like to read about in the Horse Journal? Contact Debby Bailey (Equus Hall of Fame -2009) at [facilities@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org](mailto:facilities@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org)*



## Trails and Open Spaces

Column editor Sarah Reid

# Double Fun North of Santa Rosa



Sarah and Oreo enjoy the pond at Shiloh Regional Park

### Foothill Regional Park, Hembree Lane, Windsor

Nestled on the northern edge of Windsor lies a great urban park which offers a “getting away” feel just feet away from the city. The park is aptly named Foothill. This 211-acre park, a cattle ranch till the mid 1980’s, is a mix of oak savanna, California bay laurel, manzanita, madrone, and buckeye. Connecting loops of trails bring you from the forests to open meadows of wildflowers and native grasses. The three very different looking ponds provide opportunities for spotting osprey, bluebirds, ducks, geese, swimming dogs, and fisherman. Look for the elusive pileated woodpeckers in wooden power poles. The multi-use trails have well-packed surfaces and are open all year, even when wet. Because the park provides several loops, a fine six-mile, figure eight ride can be planned. There are several wooden bridges, all secure and steady for horses. The only really steep slope is Alta Vista, which I encourage riders to access going up from Pond C, not down from Oakwood, as it is very steep and rocky, and for fit horses only. Parking is limited, but if rigs park smart and tight, at least five rigs can fit easily in the dirt area. Manure bunker and restrooms are provided. Be careful watering horses at the ponds: hidden fishhooks have been observed at shorelines and some have steep drop-offs. Day-use fee is required. Download trail map and directions to the park from the Sonoma County Regional Parks website: [www.sonoma-county.org/parks](http://www.sonoma-county.org/parks).

### Shiloh Ranch Regional Park, Faught Road, Santa Rosa

Don’t be fooled by how backcountry the east end of this park feels...the Mayacama golf course sits on the other side of the fence! But that is one of the great things about this park: it does feel like backcountry. Like Foothill, Shiloh is close to Santa Rosa and Windsor, but another great little park get away. Another great thing about Shiloh is the huge equestrian parking lot with a manure bunker, picnic tables, and a water trough. Tables, hitch rails, and seasonal trough by the pond await you at your picnic stop. Shiloh is also designed with connecting loops of trails. Recent completion of trail work by Sonoma County Trails Council on Creekside Trail has allowed this trail to be open all winter, creating all-weather loops even with winter closure of Canyon Trail. Creekside Trail provides a beautiful tour of the creek habitat from the pond back to the parking lot on a well-packed single-track trail surface. Canyon is more technical and twisty, but worth the trip through the forest and down through the creek crossing during dry months only. Take care when approaching the new bridge on Canyon. It’s narrow and some horses will balk. The county has plans in place to widen it this spring. The other trails are fire roads, easy to ride fast or slow, with good footing all year and minimal mud in winter. Also once a cattle ranch, Shiloh became the 860-acre park in 1988. Trails climb from about 200 to 850 feet above sea level, offering a great view of the Santa Rosa plain and coastal range. The name Shiloh, originally spelled Shiloah, is both a biblical name and a Civil War battle name from the South. It was possibly used here because many of the original settlers in the area came from the South. Day use fee is required. Download trail map and directions to the park from Sonoma County Regional Parks website: [www.sonoma-county.org/parks](http://www.sonoma-county.org/parks).

Please respect winter trail closures in our parks. These closures remind us to use common sense to protect our resources during months when erosion and trail damage can occur, and to avoid dangerous conditions for ourselves and our trusty steeds. To volunteer for trail work in your local parks, please contact Sonoma County Trails Council at [www.sonomatrails.org](http://www.sonomatrails.org), Carlos Perez at [www.bikemonkey.net](http://www.bikemonkey.net), or Backcountry Horsemen at [www.northbayunit.com](http://www.northbayunit.com). No experience necessary!

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



## Readers Write

# Riding the Range in Wyoming

Here is a brief account of my trip to Jackson Hole, Wyoming and the Bridger Teton National Forest with Lynne Sage and Judy Teichman.

Judy’s husband, Grant Sage, rides for the Green River Cattle Association out of Pinedale, WY. Grant is responsible for about fifty square miles in Bridger-Teton (B-T) National Forest and several thousand cows, calves, and bulls which are brought up in the spring to B-T from Pinedale, a town south of Jackson Hole. For more than 100 years, lowland ranchers have pooled their cattle to graze the uplands in order to put on weight before going back down in late October to feed lots and slaughter. There are five Upper Green River Cattle Association cow camps in the Bridger-Teton National Forest spread over 130,000 acres of leased open range. Bridger-Teton is below the curve of the Continental Divide, just south of the Green River Lakes, southeast of Jackson Hole and southwest of Dubois. The elevation is around 8,000 feet.

During our visit, Judy and I stayed at Fish Camp, one of the five Association camps. To get there, we flew to Jackson Hole and rented a car, driving four hours to our destination. Our guide Bob lived in a tidy austere one room cabin. He had no electricity; the cabin’s appliances were fueled by propane. We stayed in a tent nearby the cabin and used a one-hole outhouse. We were so tired after our long journey, we skipped dinner and nibbled on a few crackers with cheese. We then slept until 8am the next morning, a very un-cowboy performance.

On Thursday when we did finally crawl out of our sleeping bags, we were greeted with forty-degree temps, and an impatient Bob, who was ready to leave for the day’s cattle work...so without breakfast we mounted Snort, Jake, and Star. I drew Star, a tall, husky, unshod, bay, nineteen-year old Quarter Horse. Star proved to be sturdy, safe, and cow-savvy. Both Judy and I brought our English saddles and girths, which made our long days more comfortable. At this time of year (Sept/Oct) the cattle intuitively head south to the lowland, and tend to stack up on the south fence line gate. They often lean on the fence, knocking it over. As we rode south after the cattle to check the fence line, we recognized the white derrieres on several herds of pronghorns. After my first long day in the saddle, I thought I might faint, since I hadn’t yet had a meal! Recovery came with a late lunch.

We had been warned to avoid politics with Bob, who tended to go ballistic on these subjects “a la” Rush Limbaugh...so that left cattle and the weather. We did settle on the topic of wolves. Wolves were on everyone’s mind as legal hunting had been introduced in Idaho and Wyoming. Fish and Game helicopters were flying low overhead in an attempt to track and eliminate a pack of wolves that had taken a calf. One day a grad student from Laramie dropped by Fish Camp with the head of the cattle association to talk about his wolf research and to say he intended to write the book about wolf behavior.

Friday we got an early start and headed north to collect thirty-five bulls, cows, and calves that had gone through the fence and into the forest where the feed is poor. We got some but missed the rest. Some of the cows looked very distressed, and we had to turn them back. Bob said we probably left their calves behind, and the

Written by Pat Eliot



The view from the east fenceline. Inset: Pat and Star

young ones would starve alone. These cows looked the way I feel when I’ve misplaced my keys...now where could I have left them and, oh yes, what is it I’m looking for?

We herded our collected cattle toward a drop into a valley on the Fish Creek which was rich with grass. Star and I were at the back of the herd and suddenly saw the herd of cattle stopped and looking fearfully down. To me it looked as if we were all going over a cliff and that’s pretty much what happened. We were amazed as Bob, using every expletive he knew, drove those frightened cattle straight down the cliff side and into the valley. Leaving them in the valley, none the worse for the wear, we headed back to camp for lunch. Bob fried up some sourdough pancakes for lunch.

Saturday we checked the fence line on Pinion Ridge, and gathered a few cattle to herd them back to the good grass. We did a better job of moving the cows this time and there was little cussin’. Saturday is Bob’s day to head for Dubois for some carousing with the boys. This gave us a laundry day, an early dinner, and a chance to read by flashlight, as the lamps had run out of fuel.

Sunday we drove to the eastern border of Bob’s fifty-square mile territory, did much the same work there. On the east fence line we looked over to the Green River Lakes. Towering blocky mountains stood on either side of the lakes like gateposts. To the east and south we saw the Green River.

On Monday we went north again with the horses in the trailer to try to find and move about forty cows south. After an entire morning, we had found only seven cows. It got so late and we were so far from the trailer that we had to camp at Fish Creek. The willows and aspens were turning yellow and the grasses, wildflowers-aster, and yarrow were fading—losing their summer bright colors.

Tuesday was our last half-day, but it was full enough. We rode the south fence line and found about twenty cows, calves, and a big Black Angus bull. Bob hustled the group back to the park and set off at a canter, leaving us to move the stragglers. We lost the bull in

(continued p. 25)



## Colts and Fillies

Column editor Kelly Henson

# All Horses Go to Heaven

It was a sad day for the Palmer family. It was the first time the children had experienced a death in the family and they were taking it hard. This death is not what you may be thinking, for this was the death of their beloved horse, Speckles. He had the most beautiful black spots on his Appaloosa body and the children liked to make believe his spots were shaped like hearts and butterflies. Speckles was the horse all the children learned to ride on. Little Jess was still learning to ride on him until a few days ago when his old body took a turn for the worst. The vet came out this morning and Speckles gently went to sleep for the last time.

As the three children cuddled up in bed together that night, their eyes swollen from crying, little Jess asked, "Momma, where did Speckles go? Will we ever see him again?"

"Well of course you will baby. Let me tell you a little story. It's called *All Horses Go to Heaven*." As she began to tell the story, the child pulled the horse-covered comforter up around their necks and listened very contently.

"You see, horses are the most pure and majestic animal. They are kind-hearted and honest and they spend their lives making children like you happy. When they have finished their job here on earth taking care of the people they love, they get to take a magical journey to heaven."

The children's eyes lit up and suddenly the sadness began to wash away from their hearts just a little.

"The road to heaven is covered in the most beautiful green grass you have ever seen and it tastes like honeysuckle. Speckles is probably on the road right now! As he enters heaven, he will see the most amazing pastures he had ever seen in his life. They will be covered in sweet grass all year long and there will be buckets of grain everywhere so that Speckles can eat it any time he wants."

That's when Brian got a concerned look on his face and said, "Oh, but Mom, you always told us not to give Speckles too much grain because it can make him sick."

Momma replied with a big smile and said, "That's what's so wonderful about heaven, horses can play and eat whatever they want and never get sick. That's their reward for making us humans so



happy. Don't you think they deserve that?" All three children nodded in agreement and Momma went on with her story.

"So, where was I? Oh yes, now all the ponds and rivers are filled with the clearest, most fresh water any horse has ever seen, and they never run dry. The horses spend every day playing with each other and eating as much as they want. And you want to know what the best part is?!"

"What, What?!!!" demanded the children.

"Some day, a long, long time from now, you will get to visit Speckles in heaven. You can tell him how much you have missed him and spend your days running and playing in those same honeysuckle pastures he is enjoying so much."

The tired children closed their eyes and Momma kissed all three of them good night. On her way out of the room she felt a cool, calm breeze wash over her. She looked to the sky and whispered, "Thank you, Speckles...for everything." U

*Kelly Henson is a Sonoma State student and creative writer. Kelly and her National Show Horse, Tobi, are best friends. If you would like to contact Kelly about a story, email her at kids@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.*

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## Vet's Office

Column editor Michelle Beko

# Our Old Friends

The population of old horses has increased over the past decade or so. Improved care, better nutrition, and increased expectations of longevity by horse owners are the likely causes. While an average life span for a horse is twenty-seven to twenty-eight years, I commonly see horses in their early thirties. Currently my oldest patient is Florie, a feisty thirty-eight year old Quarter Horse mare living happily in her owner's pasture in Santa Rosa.

Age alone is no reason to retire a horse from his career as a riding horse. If "sixty is the new forty" for people, perhaps we could say that twenty is the new fifteen for horses! I recall watching a nineteen year old German mare win third place in the Eventing portion of the Barcelona Olympics in 1992.

### What problems do older horses have?

Old age is not without its consequences. I occasionally get a phone call from a horse owner who thinks her horse doesn't have as much "pep" as he used to. Often it turns out that the horse is twenty-three. This seems to be a common age for horses to start to slow down (i.e. get hit by the old age truck). This isn't necessarily a problem; it's a normal transition.

Dental problems are very common in older horses. Equine teeth finish growing by the time a horse is six years old. At this time each tooth is quite long with most of the tooth residing below the gum line. As the horse grinds his food, the crown of the teeth (the portion outside the gum line) gets worn down. To maintain crown height, the teeth continue to erupt decreasing the overall length significantly over the years. Eventually this leads to teeth that are worn down to the gum, or teeth with such a short root that they become loose and fall out or need to be pulled out. Additionally old horse teeth often become worn on the chewing surface so that they are excessively smooth and cupped, making them much less effective for chewing coarse feed. These problems typically start when a horse is in his early twenties.

Another common problem among older horses is Cushing's disease. This disease of the pituitary gland results in a variety of hormonal changes. The most common symptom of Cushing's disease is an excessively long hair coat which does not shed well in the summer. Cushing's disease can be complicated by laminitis and/or recurrent infections such as hoof abscesses or sinusitis.

Many older horses have musculoskeletal issues. Arthritis or other injuries from their youth may catch up to them and cause intermittent or persistent lameness. Some become inactive and lose a lot of muscle which may make them weak and lead to difficulty getting up.

Additionally, some horses become partially or completely deaf or blind. Most adjust well but may spook a little easier.



Michelle and Splash

### Do old horses need special care?

Some may not need to be treated differently than they did when they were young. Horses with significant dental problems often do better on pelleted feeds such as senior horse feeds or hay pellets. Cushing's disease is not curable but most horses benefit from treatment with pergolide which alleviates most of the symptoms. Pain relievers or a variety of arthritis treatments can help some lame horses. Most benefit from exercise whether it is in the form of riding, turn out, or being taken for walks. They are not necessarily slow to heal or less able to recover from a disease. In fact a recent study determined that age alone was not a significant factor when predicting which horses would survive colic surgery. Your veterinarian can help you determine how to maximize your elderly equine's health and comfort.

### Are there benefits?

Yes! Older horses tend to be calmer and more predictable than younger ones. They are wiser and tend to do less foolish things. They can "mentor" younger, less experienced buddies. They tend to be better for novice riders and kids than younger or even middle-aged horses. If I buy my young daughter a horse or pony in the future, it will be one that is at least fifteen years old. Even if they are retired they can be good companions to other horses and to us, especially when they've been in the family a long time. U

### Dedication:

I'd like to dedicate this column to Splash. Thank you for sharing the last twenty-three years of your life with me. You were one of the best friends I ever had, and I appreciated your company.

*Michelle Beko, DVM is an equine veterinarian and has been practicing at Empire Equine in Sonoma County since 1992. She lives in Santa Rosa with her husband and daughter and enjoys riding her horse Hennessy. You can reach her at 707-545-3909 for questions or comments.*



Readers Write

## Creating Opportunities to Ride When You Don't Own a Horse

Written by Patrice Doyle



Patrice and Pharoah, an eight year old Hanoverian gelding, participate in a Sonja Vracko clinic

Horseback riding is an expensive sport relative to most. It involves far more than purchasing a soccer ball, a fishing rod, or golf clubs. In addition to the upfront cost of buying a horse, the ongoing financial expenditures and investment of time are usually significant. However, that shouldn't discourage you from seeking opportunities to ride when you have a love of horses, but aren't ready to buy. There are many ways to enjoy a horse in your life without actually having to own one. In this article, you will learn of some of the opportunities I created for myself to continue riding during those times I did not own a horse, as well as exploring other ways to further your own riding and passion for horses.

Like many of us, as a child I fell in love with ponies and horses. I had horse posters all over my bedroom walls, drew pictures, read "horsy" books, and daydreamed constantly. When I was ten, I began cleaning stalls and feeding at a nearby pony farm. In exchange, I could ride the ponies a couple of days per week after school. I also took basic riding lessons on Saturday mornings. I joined 4-H and Pony Club, and went to summer riding camps. As I became a better rider, I was able to borrow friends' horses to ride at local shows. The benefit was two-fold: I had a chance to show without owning the horse, and the owners had their horses shown nicely and were often in the ribbons!

Some ideas for kids and teens who wish to ride on a budget:

- 1) Invest in your riding skills while off the horse – read books, watch videos, go to shows and clinics, and watch other younger riders take lessons.
- 2) Learn about the whole horse; caring for the horse goes along with riding and you must demonstrate to horse owners that you know more than just where the saddle goes!
- 3) Become involved with your local 4-H, FFA, and/or Pony Club chapter.
- 4) Take riding lessons at stables that have lesson horses.
- 5) Attend summer riding camps.
- 6) Volunteer at shows and other riding events in exchange for taking a lesson.
- 7) And simply let friends who are horse owners know you are available to care for and ride their horses if they need help.

While I have been fortunate to own a handful of horses in my life, I have experienced gaps in my horse ownership. The horses I had to ride during those gaps mainly came about by having been a boarder at a stable. Being in a boarding situation, other boarders approached me about riding, knowing I no longer had a horse of


my own. Those offers were usually based on their past observations how I cared for and rode my own horse. Before it knew it I had the chance to ride three or four horses of different breeds and training levels. A few of them I took to shows and clinics. The usual arrangement I had with the owners was that they paid "overhead" costs, and I would pay for training, clinics, shows, and put in the riding time and care for the horse.

I have also ridden horses for owners who didn't have enough time to ride their horse as often as they wanted to. These opportunities primarily came through having a common friend who knew of the owner's lack of time, and my desire and ability to ride. Because I have good riding skills this was mutually beneficial. It gave me a horse to ride and the owner benefited by having the horse regularly schooled each week. Again, a winning situation for all is most important and sometimes that doesn't involve any exchange of money.

In 2005, I made a substantial investment in my own riding and decided to go to a riding school (Dressage) in Germany. For three weeks, I had two private lessons each day, rode many different horses, received private instruction on in-hand work and long-lining horses, as well as daily sessions discussing theories of riding/training. It was an incredible experience and opened my mind to an entirely new level of riding. If you are ever able to do something similar in the discipline in which you ride, you should.

Here's what I recommend in order to increase your opportunities to ride:

- 1) Constantly invest in your own learning about horses and riding.
- 2) Start out take riding lessons on school horses, then find an instructor who has a schoolmaster to take lessons on...an investment well worth the money!
- 3) Regardless of your level of riding, always be inquisitive and set goals...it is part of how you become a better rider.
- 4) Join your local riding chapter for your discipline—Dressage, Trail, Western, Driving, etc—you will gain new friends and learn of non-horse owner opportunities!
- 5) Let horse friends and instructors know you are available to "horse sit" when needed. Don't be discouraged if horse sitting starts out as feeding, brushing, and cleaning...the next time around may include riding too!
- 6) Offer to ride a friend's horse in a clinic and you pay the costs...the next time the clinician comes to town the owner may seek you out to ride!
- 7) Volunteer at shows and local horse events.
- 8) Explore the horse husbandry classes at our own Santa Rosa Junior College.

Competence is key when you are seeking horse owners to allow you to care for and ride their horses. When you demonstrate that you can care for a horse, you practice good safety measures, and you know the fundamentals of good riding, owners will see you as not only someone they can trust with their equine partner, but also someone who brings clear benefits by interacting with their horse. 

*Patrice Doyle is an amateur Dressage rider in Sonoma County. She has owned a Running Quarter Horse, a Thoroughbred, and a Hanoverian. She currently owns a 1½ year old Dutch Warmblood colt that is "growing up" in The Netherlands. She had the privilege of riding and caring for numerous horses in the past, and presently rides horses for several different owners. You can reach Patrice at patricedo@msn.com.*

Readers Write

## The End of the Trail?

Written by Jessica Boyd



Jess and Steve enjoying the trails (and horses) of the Armstrong Woods Pack Station, courtesy of owner/operator Jonathan Ayers.

Retail businesses shutting their doors or going from brick and mortar to online. Rising feed and board costs. The sad increase in abandoned and surrendered horses from financially-stressed owners. It's all evidence that the economy and rising insurance costs have taken a toll on the horse community. One of the long-term effects could be yet to come, as existing trail riding facilities struggle to stay afloat, and the opportunity for new facilities declines in the face of escalating costs.

"If you are coming into this business fresh, having to pay for a facility, insurance, gear—all on top of normal overhead—you won't be able to cover your costs," says Jonathan Ayers, owner and operator of the Armstrong Woods Pack Station in Armstrong Woods State Park. He and his wife Laura have been leading trail rides and sharing the wonders of the Redwoods with people for thirty years. They have been able to ride out the latest downturn by cutting costs and continuing to do all the work—including shoeing the horses—themselves.

Even with low overhead, some businesses are looking at rising insurance costs and refocusing, offering great places for people to come and stay—but guests should bring their own horses.

"What this could turn into is only rich people being able to experience horses," says Ike Bunney, owner of Slide Mountain Ranch in Tuolumne City. Ike and Cheri have run a guest ranch for nearly twenty-five years, inviting people from all over the world to experience adventures on well-trained Cutting and trail horses. They made the decision this year to cut out lessons and trail rides on their own horses when their insurance went up (again). They're retooling their business to be a place for horse owners to vacation, trail ride, and learn to work cows.

"We had a good thing with teaching Cutting and running the trail rides on our horses, but the bring-your-own-horse focus seems like a good option for us for right now," says Cheri. It will allow them to work with their newest batch of up-and coming Cutters and tend their two granddaughters as well, but non-horse owners have one less choice for grand horse adventures.

It comes down to costs and volume.

When Jonathan Ayers started out, he charged \$12 a ride and ran

four trips/day. He says his horses told him that was a little much so he raised his prices and dropped the frequency to three trips/day. Then the horses objected once more and he got to where he is now, running two rides a day at \$80 per rider. He says he's making the same amount he always has, and it allows him to keep a smaller string of horses and manage his overhead better. The Bunney's found that the number of rides they'd have to do just to cover the insurance costs and decided the overhead was too much for now, especially with everything else on their plates. Plus, they were getting inquiries from people who thought \$100 for a two-hour trail ride was too high.

Horse owners understand is that even \$80-100 per ride barely covers the monthly cost of keeping that horse trained, sheltered, and healthy, but that still sounds like a lot of money to most folks—especially right now. Non-horse people don't know how much it takes to run a successful trail riding business. You need property, stock, tack, equipment, and insurance—and the time and staff to care for it all. If you are just starting out, you'll also be paying a mortgage on a suitable horse property and property taxes. Even with boarders the cost is high. The more horses you have, the more staff you need, and the costs spiral up quickly.

Insurance is a major part of this picture, even for existing businesses. Slide Mountain's insurance more than doubled this year—even with no incidents or accidents. And while getting insurance as a new horse business is possible, "If you don't have a track record, it is exponentially more difficult to get insurance, and statistically most accidents happen in the first few years a business is in operation," says Tom Sawyer, an insurance broker in Sebastopol. Tom also said that as the number of businesses within a specific risk "pool" shrinks, costs go up to be sure the minimum reserves are in place—as is required of the insurance companies by law. The insurance companies themselves are reacting to the soaring costs of litigation by hedging their bets and mitigating risk where they can.

What is the big deal? What are we losing?

Like much of the non-horse-owning world, my first experiences with horses were pony rides and simple trail rides—sitting on a sturdy trail horse, plodding along in front of and behind other sturdy trail horses, taking in the sights and smells around us. Trail rides are generally a great way for non-horse owners to both explore and enjoy the great outdoors with the help of a four-legged partner, and experience horses without the daily commitment ownership requires.

Our family trips usually involve finding a trail ride excursions whether over granite-pocked trails in the Sierras, or pineapple studded fields in Hawaii. Some of the rides were more exciting than others—including the one that introduced Katie to her first parent-child role reversal moment when my horse reared underneath me. Most string trail horses are quiet and dependable, though.

We might have stayed non-horse owners had we not had the good fortune to visit Slide Mountain Ranch and experience their trail rides and Cutting lessons. Their well trained and responsive horses knew their job, and did it well. They actually seemed to like going out and working, which was refreshing compared to what

(continued p. 25)





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(continued from p. 19)

the willows. Star took off with me, and I lost control, but I held on! How ironic if I had fallen off on my last day! I survived, joined Bob and the others, and we jogged on back to camp.

A few days after we left, Bob opened the south gates and let the cattle graze their way down to Pinedale where the Ranchers pick up them. Each is identified by brand. If a cow comes in without her calf she is history. If Bob loses a cow, he is docked \$7000 from his salary. What a life. On the last day, I rode through willows and sage, and over rolling hills, thinking that this week had been an incredible experience of beauty, and I was lucky to experience the western life, and the glorious spots in the west like Bridger Teton, before they are gone. U

To read more about the Green River Cattle Association and Pinedale, WY, visit [www.pinedale-online.com](http://www.pinedale-online.com) or [www.grvm.com](http://www.grvm.com). Pat Eliot (Equus Hall of Fame-2009) is a long-time advocate for local trails and open spaces. She serves on the boards of LandPaths and Sonoma Mountain Preservation. Pat is a member of the State Parks Mounted Assistance Unit and the Eldridge Posse for the Sonoma Development Center's wild lands. Pat and her husband Ted live on the south flank of Sonoma Mountain. To contact Pat, email her at [pat-ted@hughes.net](mailto:pat-ted@hughes.net).

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(continued from p. 23)

we had experienced before. Once we made the leap into horse ownership, trail riding on vacation seemed a little silly, so I hadn't tried it again until we went to Armstrong Woods and met the horses at the pack station.

That brought home what will be missing without these businesses.

We took a ride with Jonathan that was completely different than we would have on our own horses—a bit more on the leisurely side. "I like to see what I'm riding past," said Ayers. For the experienced horse owner, it was an unexpected treat. For the experimental horse rider, it could be something that opens a door to a new journey. Or even just a new perspective.

Either way, losing businesses like these—either due to costs or just the normal cycle of things, with no replacements in sight—will change the horse landscape. And, all bias on the table, that's a real shame. U

Jessica Boyd lives in Sonoma County and blogs with some regularity about all her horses and their adventures at Spotty Horse News, <http://www.spottyhorse.blogspot.com>. You can reach Jessica and

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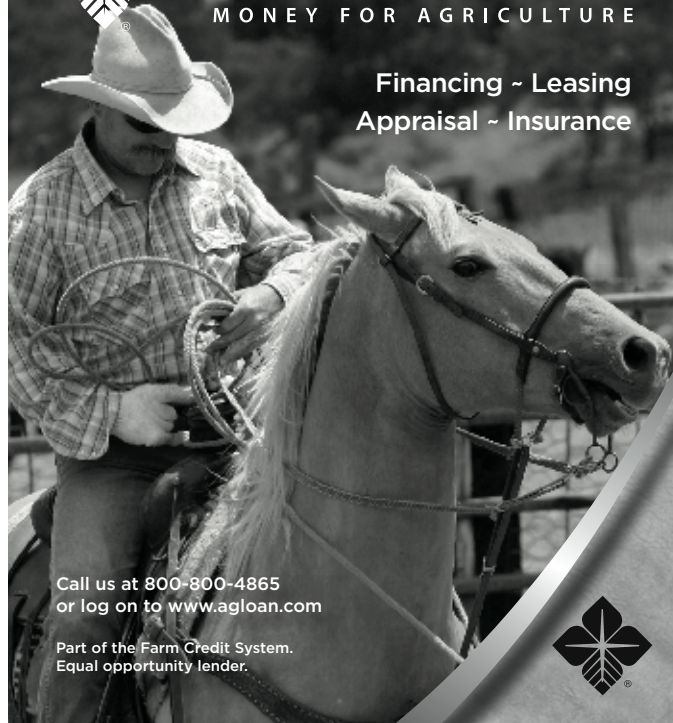
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## From the Horse's Mouth

### *Cross Country Cowboy Bunks Down in Santa Rosa*

Baden Whitehead is currently living and working at Cloverleaf Ranch in Santa Rosa, but he's a relative newcomer to these parts. The man and the horse he rode in on hail from the East Coast. Whitehead, now sixty-three years old, started his cross country trek in 1998 after losing his family in a tragic accident. He saddled up in West Palm Beach, Florida, followed the Appalachian Trail north, and then just turned west. He says he has been through twenty-four states and had a great many experiences in the last twelve years. He started out with just a small rolled up tent, and some clothes strapped to his saddle, and that's still about all he has. Whitehead slept where he could, often under the stars, and stopped to rest and work where he needed to. Currently he says he focuses on the simpler aspects of life, and caring for his loyal Tennessee Walking Horse, Osage, who has carried him many miles. Whitehead plans to eventually finish the rest of the fifty states, although he says, "Alaska will be a push, and Hawaii will take some serious pondering." To read more about Whitehead and Osage, visit [www.pressdemocrat.com](http://www.pressdemocrat.com) and search "A Life in the Saddle."

### *San Francisco Hosts Cavalia*

Known as "a magical encounter between horse and man," Cavalia visited San Francisco this winter for the second time. Cavalia's last visit, in 2004, played to sold out houses, and received rave reviews. Constantly evolving, the 2010 production is nearly double the size and features new artists, new horses, and entirely new acts never before seen in America. The production consists of over 100 performers, including fifty horses from all over the world, riders, aerialists, acrobats and dancers. One artist, Sylvia Zerbin, works with nine Arabians, unbridled, in a liberty act of breathtaking beauty. Normand Latourelle is the visionary and creator behind Cavalia. Latourelle co-founded Cirque du Soleil in 1985, introduced Cirque du Soleil to San Francisco in 1988, and brought Cavalia to San Francisco in 2004. Cavalia's horses are trained based on a philosophy of understanding the horse, rather than requiring the horse to understand the human beings around it. The tone of the show, embraced by the entire Company, is one of respect, kindness, patience, and trust. The audience finds Cavalia riveting, yet touching in the compassion and mutual respect shown by both horse and human. According to Latourelle, "Cavalia honors the mystique of horses, their ability to connect uniquely with human beings and their extraordinary achievements across our history." If you missed Cavalia in the White Big Top by the AT&T Park this time around, you can be sure it will be back. Follow Cavalia at [www.twitter.com/cavalia](http://www.twitter.com/cavalia) or [www.facebook.com/cavalia](http://www.facebook.com/cavalia), or visit [www.cavalia.net](http://www.cavalia.net).

### *CHANGE Benefit a Success*

The annual benefit for the Sonoma County CHANGE Program took place in September at the Sebastopol Veteran's Hall. Approximately 350 guests enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by The Villa Restaurant of Santa Rosa. Wine and beer were served as guests toured the huge silent auction, mingled with CHANGE board members, and read the stories of each of the CHANGE Program rescue horses on hanging posters. A movie about the program followed dinner. CHANGE serves Sonoma County as a subsidiary to

the Animal Control Department. After dinner, the organizers held an awards ceremony in which Helen Chisham was given the Volunteer of the Year Award, and Shirley Zindler was given the Animal Control Officer of the Year Award. The event was a success largely due to a combination of frugal budgeting, combined with generous patrons. The Board hopes the proceeds will sustain the program through the coming year. Among the guests were Sonoma County District Attorney-Elect Jill Ravitch, Supervisor Efron Carillo, and Supervisor David Rabbitt. To learn more about CHANGE, or to make a contribution, visit [www.sonomachangeprogram.com](http://www.sonomachangeprogram.com).

### *Upcoming Classical Horsemanship Clinic at Barbier Farms*

Dominique and Debra Barbier will be offering a three-day clinic in Classical Dressage at Barbier Farms in Healdsburg this January 14th-16th. A similar experience, offered in August, hosted more than thirty riders and auditors, and was a resounding success. Participants ranged in age from ten to eighty-five. The Barbier clinics feature lessons, didactics, and great food! Besides discussion on techniques and how-to's, and hands-on practice, the clinics offer time for expression or how riding affects lives, and discussion on subtle spiritual connections between horses and humans. The Barbiers would like to extend a special invitation to auditors who will be able to experience the "work-in-hands" techniques. Dominique, internationally-known for his work with Lusitanos and his writings on horse-human bonding, will be leading many of the sessions. The clinic has filled up fast, so to reserve your spot by emailing [barbierfarm@aol.com](mailto:barbierfarm@aol.com) soon.



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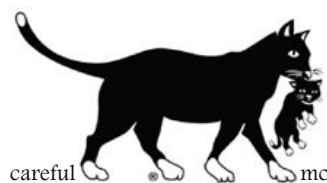
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The Horse Journal belongs to all of us in Sonoma County, so let us know if you would like to write. Articles are usually 500 to 1000 words and, of course, horse-related. If you are interested, contact any of the editors at the addresses listed on page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

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