

Sonoma County

Horse Journal

Volume 5 • Issue 3
Summer 2009



Published by the Sonoma County Horse Council

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

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Cover Photo: MJ Wickham

A saddleless Yves Sauvignon, Three Day Eventer and professional trainer, demonstrates Cross Country on Renaissance Man (aka "Armani"), a six year old Oldenburg owned by Zandra Wilkerson and MJ Wickham. Read more about Yves and Three Day Eventing in this issue of the Horse Journal.

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A Message from the President



Photo: Vanessa Bastian

Karl & Dinero

Howdy!

With the wonderful Equus Awards behind us it's time to look forward to our next annual event, the Equine Extravaganza at the fairgrounds during the Sonoma County Fair. This exciting annual event showcases numerous breeds and disciplines, one right after another! Look for the Equine Extravaganza on **Thursday, July 30th**, all afternoon at the Chris Beck Arena. We plan on lots of great showmanship, from the Petaluma Drill Team to a Mule Exhibition. Kathy Sparling and her young women with their natural horsemanship demonstrations are always a huge hit for everyone to see, especially for children. Watching these young riders without saddles or bridles is truly exciting. Spectators, young and old, hang on the fence with mouths agape. We hope you'll attend this free event and be mesmerized by Kathy,

and all the other exciting quality demonstrations.

We'd also like you to start thinking about who you'd like to see honored with an Equus Award this year. Remember, we have started honoring a Hall of Fame Horse, too. So if you know any equestrians or their mounts who deserve recognition, make sure you let us know. We're setting the deadline in October this year. It comes up sooner than you think!

Thank you for supporting the Horse Council, we have much good work planned for the horse community in the coming year. Remember to remind those in the community who can help us, and those who could potentially be more helpful, that we are the second largest economic engine in the county. *Go Horse Council!*

Happy Trails!

Karl Bastian
President, Sonoma County Horse Council



Membership is the Horsepower that *Drives* the Sonoma County Horse Council!

Equestrians and horse lovers number 30,000 in Sonoma County. That's a lot of horsepower, but only when we have a strong central organization to advocate for us and protect our mutual interests. The Sonoma County Horse Council was founded by horse owners in 1993 to be that central organization.

The mission of the Sonoma County Horse Council is to:

- Promote the horse as agriculture, industry, and recreation in Sonoma County
- Communicate to members on horse-related issues
- Inform the public about horse community goals and projects
- Support private and public equestrian facilities
- Promote all aspects of the equine industry

Your membership in the Sonoma County Horse Council unifies us! An individual yearly membership is only \$30, but it means everything to our community when you show your support. JOIN TODAY by visiting our NEW website

www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

or by completing the enclosed membership form.

Your horse will thank you for becoming an SCHC member today!

SCHC meetings are held the second Wednesday of every month, 7pm at the SCDRC Clubhouse, So.Co. Fairgrounds.



Equus Hall of Fame

*Know a dedicated equestrian?
A talented horse?*

Nominate them for a 2009 Equus Award! The deadline for nominations will be October 15 this year—right around the corner. Find the nomination forms on our website www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.



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Featured Article

Three Day Eventing: History & Modern Practice

Written by Yves Sauvignon and Cindy Cole



Photo: Briant Gamma

Cross Country: Yves and Native Dispute

Pop Quiz! What is Eventing?

- 1 One of the original three Olympic disciplines
- 2 A combination of three phases: Dressage, Cross Country and Show Jumping
- 3 A sport that attracts riders with a "need for speed" and adventure, but also control
- 4 Referred to by the French as *Le Concours Complet*, meaning "the Complete Test"
- 5 All the above

The answer is..... number 5!

Three Day Eventing, aka *Militaire*, Combined Training, Eventing, Equestrian Triathlon, and "those crazy riders that gallop at high speed over jumps," are all terminologies that people use to describe this exciting sport. Three Day Eventing originated from military training. Cavalry horses required great versatility of discipline, endurance, boldness, and bravery. The French evolved these early military exercises into a sport called *Championnat du Cheval d'Armes* which was first staged in 1902.

Have you ever seen the movie "Best in Show" in which the dogs

<i>Corresponding levels in Dressage and Eventing</i>	
Traditional Dressage	Three Day Eventing
Training Level	Novice and Beginner Novice
First Level	Preliminary and Training
Second Level	Intermediate
Third Level	Advanced

resemble their owners? Some people say that Eventers demonstrate the same character traits required in their horses. In this article I discuss the sport of Three Day Eventing, and how it originated from military training and evolved into the modern day sport.

First, let's test your knowledge of Eventing! Riders advance through a series of levels, each with standardized skills and tasks. Can you rank the skill levels below from lowest to highest? (Answers on p. 5)

- Training
- Novice
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Beginner Novice
- Preliminary

So what are the modern day phases of Eventing and why were they important to the original military horse? Each phase is a discipline of its own, and requires its own expertise and dedication. Only the most accomplished horses and riders can perform at a high level in all three.

The three modern phases are: **Dressage, Cross Country, and Show Jumping.**

Dressage

Origin: The original military horse needed to be powerful, supple, collected, and highly trained. Under battlefield conditions disobedience could mean the horse and/or rider's death. Additionally, in peaceful times, Dressage training played a crucial role in keeping the horse focused on the rider's commands. As with traditional military drills for humans, the consistent training of horse and rider kept both fresh and ready for the constant threat of war.

Modern: How do Eventing levels compare to traditional Dressage levels? Hint, hint....this CAN help you answer the previous quiz question!

All the movements found in a United States Dressage Federation (USDF) test (with the exception of "*renvers*") can be seen in the corresponding Eventing levels. Eventing and Dressage competition levels are compared in the table at left. At the highest level of competition, the Eventing Dressage test is roughly equivalent to the USDF Third Level. Required skills include a half-pass at trot, shoulder-in, collection, medium and extended gaits, *travers*, single flying changes, and counter-canter. No USDF Grand Prix movements such as *passage* or *piaffe* are included at any level in Eventing.

Cross Country

Origin: Soldiers required military horses to gallop over rough terrain, jumping hedges and fences, and still remain sound for the next day of battle. The horses needed to have tremendous endurance and bravery in order to withstand the daily challenges.



Photo: Brant Gamma

Dressage: Yves and Native Dispute

Modern: In the Cross Country phase, horse and rider must navigate a variety of obstacles resembling those encountered by the early cavalry. Such modern day obstacles could be fences constructed of wood, stone, logs, or telephone poles. Courses present other obstacles such as drops and banks, ditches, ponds, and streams. The obstacles may stand alone or exist in a variety of combinations. Certified Cross Country designers are responsible for the safety of the course and obstacles. Recently the concept of the frangible pin was introduced, allowing parts of a jump to collapse upon specific impact.

Speed is a factor in Cross Country. The horse and rider must complete the course within an "optimum time." Penalties are added for every second over the optimum time. At the lower levels a horse and rider may be penalized for completing the course too quickly. This phase of the event is meant to determine bravery and obedience, so additional penalties are added for refusals or avoidance.



Show Jumping: Yves and Le Samurai

Show Jumping

Origin: The Show Jumping phase is a test of recovery and is less difficult than traditional Show Jumping. The military horse traveled long distances and his prompt recovery was vital to his efficacy in battle.

Modern: In modern competition the course averages nine to fifteen jumps in courses as long as 500 meters. The courses should be navigated at specific speeds based on the levels. Jumps can be as high as four feet one inch for national competition, and even higher for international competition. The jumps are a mix of ob-

stacles built from poles, panels, and coops. The poles are set to fall easily. Many mothers, fathers, boyfriends, girlfriends, dogs, and of course *trainers* are observed holding their breath, praying, or turning away during this phase! Penalties during this phase result from falling poles, refusals, and time penalties.

Scoring the overall Three Day Event

Course designers must achieve a good balance among the three phases so that the competition represents skills adequately from all disciplines. This ensures that the best horse and rider team wins. Typically, show jumping is the last phase performed. The riders perform their show jumping test in reverse order of their scores (last to first). Imagine the excitement as the sixth place rider enters the arena and rides a clean round while the other riders knock down poles. The sixth place rider can win the overall event! The horse and rider team finishing the entire competition with the lowest total score will be the winner.

If you are interested in watching a competition offering all national levels, an *almost* local event takes place each spring in Woodside CA, half an hour south of San Francisco.

For more information go to www.horsepark.org and come visit us. U

Yves Sauvignon has been a professional horse trainer since the age of nineteen. Yves is originally from France and moved to Santa Rosa in 1981. He has competed through the Three Stars international level and is recognized for training numerous event riders to the highest levels of competition. Yves trains at Santa Rosa Equestrian Center. You can contact him at Ysauvignon@aol.com.

Answer from Pop Eventing Quiz on p. 4: 1-Beginner Novice, 2-Novice, 3-Training, 4-Preliminary, 5-Intermediate, 6-Advanced



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Readers Write

The Hay Report

Written by Danny Winters

Thank goodness for a new hay season. As we all know, prices got a little out of control last year. Hopefully I can provide you with some optimistic information regarding this year's hay prices.

Generally we all feel better when we go to make a purchase and find out the product is a lot cheaper than we anticipated. That's exactly what you are going to see this year with hay. Hay prices are dropping big time. The reasons? Oil prices have dropped, keeping freight rates in check, and the supply has gone up because we have a bit of carryover. You are probably asking yourself how in the world can there be carryover when all the information we heard last year implied we were going to run out of hay. Well I am a little dumbfounded, myself. None of us in the business has ever seen such a dramatic turn around. Let me try to explain in the next few paragraphs why we have excess, and what I believe will happen.

First of all, everyone who has animals found cheaper sources of feed. Remember those thousands of acres of wheat I wrote about last year? They produced thousands of tons of wheat straw. Dairy-men and cattlemen found ways use straw and other cheaper commodities to decrease their hay use. Farmers also used corn byproducts in the form of baled corn stocks. You, as horse owners, supplemented rye and meadow grass for orchard grass. For one creative buyer, I found orchard grass in big bales which saved about \$80.00 per ton. Now I know everyone can't do this, but getting back to my first sentence, everyone tried to save money. What cures "high prices" in any market? High prices!

Second, greed has played a role in the current downward price spiral. Many farmers in California, Oregon, and Nevada were holding out for higher prices. Good Luck! Some think that because of the current water shortage, they can sit on their hay into the fall, and prices will rise. I agree that water may affect quantities and pricing in the fall, and I would like to suggest this: you'll likely find the lowest prices between June and mid-August. About September prices will start going up. I've already talked to farmers who'll be pulling marginal fields out early due to water cut backs and lower than expected prices. Remember what cures high prices. The same applies when prices get too low. We will see a fairly large amount of hay pulled out after the first three cuttings.

<i>2006-2008 Hay Prices per Ton</i>		
<u>Year</u>	<u>Hay-Price</u>	<u>Alfalfa/mix-Price</u>
2006	Three-way \$150	Alfalfa \$155 - \$165
2006	Rye \$135	Alfalfa/Orchard \$175 - \$185
2007	Grain Hay \$155 - \$165	Alfalfa \$185 - \$198
2007	Rye \$155	Alfalfa/Orchard \$205 - \$210
2008	Three-way \$240 - \$250	Alfalfa \$245 - \$265
2008	Rye \$220 - \$228	Alfalfa/Orchard \$265 - \$285
	Straight Orchard \$285 - \$300	

Finally, brokers and exporters stockpiled too much, expecting hay prices to exceed \$300.00 per ton. They planned on capitalizing on the winter market price and having ample supply for their customers. Unfortunately, a few of these larger brokers and exporters bought up double the inventory they needed. They took thousands of tons off the market last year. Now they need to renegotiate, resell, or just walk away and lose their investment. We are seeing all three. What have we learned? We did have shortages and water concerns, but we bit our nails instead of acting smart. Last year, prices were driven by fear and greed. This was a bad combination. Next time I believe we will all be a little bit wiser.

So what's out there for you this year? There is a huge planting of three-way mix. Three-way mix means one-third beardless barley, one-third beardless wheat and one-third oats. It's a highly palatable, excellent feed with good fiber, and it keeps weight on. Quality will vary from different regions of the valley. Dry land crops tend to be finer-stemmed and sweeter. Irrigated three-way mix tends to be a bit heavier stemmed, but still very palatable. Try not to be fussy about grain in the hay. I always ask the farmer to cut hay in the milk stage. This makes for a more palatable, digestible product for your horse. A head full of grain likely means straw for a stem. I promise to bring you good hay; if you need grain you can top dress the hay with a pound or two.

The large planting of three-way, means that rye grass acreage will be cut significantly. This may pose a problem if you want a cheaper source of straight grass later in the season. Think outside the box. Meadow grass should start showing up from northeast California and Oregon around mid-July. If you want straight orchard grass it will be there, but be prepared for the higher price. If your horse can eat a little alfalfa, grass-alfalfa mixes are a great choice. Most mixes run between 10% and 30% alfalfa, with grass the remainder.

Right now there is plenty of straight alfalfa out there. Keep the nutritional content of alfalfa in mind when feeding your horse alfalfa and supplementing with other products. Valley alfalfa runs 19% to 22% crude protein all year. Mountain region hay (second cut) runs 16% to 18% crude protein. The National Resource Council's (NRC) daily requirements for horses recommend 15% crude protein diet. Try to stay away from first cutting alfalfa, which is too rich.

The total digestible nutrients (TDN) content is too high for horses, and their stools become loose and probably their stomachs don't feel very well.

If Mother Nature cooperates and we don't see a massive amount of rain damaged hay, I expect a reasonable hay-buying year. Unlike last year, we do have some carryover to help soften the market early in the season. I hope all of you have a great year and I am looking forward to hearing from you. Remember my promise: "Working Together to Meet Your Need... That's Our Commitment to You!" U

Danny Winters owns North Bay Hay and Grain, supplying feed to barns in Sonoma County and beyond. He can be reached at 530-304-7960 or at nbhayca@yahoo.com.

Facilities Focus

Column editor Debby Bailey

Icssoma Farm: More Than Meets the Eye

Meet Bluff, a beautiful eight year old thoroughbred gelding. Bluff lives at Icssoma Farm in Sebastopol. Today, his life is good, and he is happy. All his physical and mental needs are met. This was not the case, however, prior to his life at Icssoma Farm. Bluff is a former race horse. His career was very lucrative for his owners; he won several hundred thousand dollars! But Bluff did not do well mentally as a race horse. He did not like being kept in a stall, and as a result he started to spin. His trainers attempted to prevent the spinning by tying him in his stall. Over time this made the situation worse, and eventually Bluff was so emotionally scarred that he was deemed a dangerous animal. His owners thought he should be euthanized. A rescue organization thankfully intervened, and Bluff was taken to a facility in southern California. Icssoma Farm deals with several such organizations, and eventually Bluff came to be in their care. Icssoma Farm has had Bluff for almost a year now, and his transformation has been remarkable. Bluff is ready to be adopted. He will need an experienced equestrian guardian, but overall Bluff is trusting and giving, and will be a wonderful companion and mount.

What is Icssoma Farm? How were they able to make such a turn-around in Bluff's behavior and ultimately save his life? Icssoma Farm is a full range equestrian facility, offering training and boarding, nestled in a particularly serene country setting in Sebastopol. Icssoma is owned and operated by Susan Jan Hornstein. Susan has been a Dressage rider and Three Day Eventer for twenty-five years. Since 1978, she has taught hundreds of students. Susan currently teaches and trains at Icssoma, and offers regular clinics all over the San Francisco Bay Area. She shows in Dressage and Three Day Eventing, and her students have shown successfully in Hunter Jumper, as well. Susan's lifelong dream of owning a rescue facility was realized fifteen years ago when she founded Icssoma Farm. Susan currently has twenty horses on her ranch, fifteen of which are rescues. When an animal is rescued and brought to the ranch,

*Bluff enjoys some kindness at Icssoma Farm*

Susan observes and evaluates the horse. She determines its confirmation and attitude, and learns what she can about its history. A veterinarian provides care, vaccinations, and dental work. Horses also receive farrier services, chiropractic care, and body work. Most importantly, the horses arriving at Icssoma Farm receive consistent, tender kindness, and retraining to regain trust for humans. The goal is rehabilitation. Horses stay as long as necessary—until they are both mentally and physically sound.

When Susan thinks a horse is ready, she and her team try to find the best match humanly possible. They look for compatible personalities and needs between horses and prospective humans. Adoptive guardians come to the ranch and take several lessons with their potential adoptee to make sure the match is good. If the animal is adopted, but the match does not work out, the animal can be returned to Icssoma, which is part of the agreement between Icssoma and the adoptive guardians. The philosophy of Icssoma is that all horses should be a joy for their aesthetic and intrinsic beauty. They are special spirits worthy of our love, care, and respect.

Susan would not have been able to create such a successful operation without the help of a dedicated staff and volunteers.

Her assistant trainer is Casey Derrick. Casey graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science (emphasis on equine studies) from the University of Massachusetts. Casey has been riding for twenty years and has experience with Hunter Jumpers and Polo ponies. Volunteers provide services such as brushing and grooming, cleaning stalls and water troughs, and hand walking horses. All volunteers go through a basic orientation and training program. Susan likes to give back to her volunteers. For every five hours of service, the volunteer is entitled to receive a lesson. Icssoma Farm has just received its nonprofit status. This will make its mission a little easier, but volunteers and donations will always be greatly appreciated. Susan is also looking for a handyman type person who can help with some minor carpentry & fencing.

In order to help monetarily with its rescue mission, Icssoma Farm also offers a unique summer horse camp. Campers learn all about equines, from horse psychology to natural training techniques. Susan and her staff provide hands on learning with individual attention in a supportive, fun, and caring atmosphere. Campers of all ages (children to adults) are welcome. Icssoma Farm is located at 11114 Falstaff Road, Sebastopol 95472. For more information you can call Susan at (707) 829-3600, or visit www.welltrainedhorses.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.

*Bluff and Patrick*



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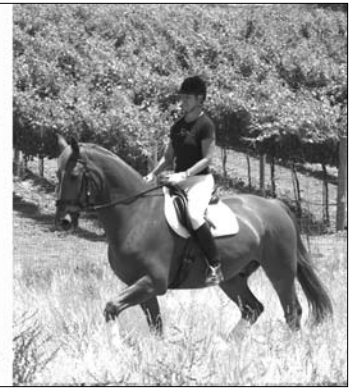
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A Horseman's View

Column editor Julie Cross

A Little Bit Goes a Long Way*"Never knock the curiosity out of a horse."* –Tom Dorrance

Horses are born curious. While this curious nature can get them into awkward situations at the barn or on the trail, it is still a desirable trait. Curious horses often lead with their noses; sometimes they are labeled mouthy. Before you too strongly discourage "mouthy" behavior, ask yourself if your horse is just asking questions, rather than being pushy. Punishing a horse's natural curiosity, or managing it unproductively, may cause your horse to dislike touching and contact with his head, ears, and mouth. This might lead to issues with bits. This article is about convincing your horse he likes the bit. We'll talk about horses new to biting and those who have become bit-sour.

Green horses

I would like to start right out by discouraging "direct line thinking." This is a predator's behavior. Your horse, a prey animal, won't respond well to this. Remember to go slow and working *indirectly*. The muzzle, which includes the inside of the mouth, is a vulnerable zone. Most people make the mistake of diving directly into their horse's mouth. Working gradually to convince your horse to allow you to work in vulnerable areas will result in a positive reaction to any head, face, or nose stimulus.

Start by standing at the side of the horse, and putting your hands on his nose. Rub gently. Move with your horse if he tries to avoid your touch, maintaining the rhythmic motion. When the horse relaxes, take your hands away. In this way, you give your horse positive feedback for relaxing. You may recognize relaxation as a sigh, loose lips, licking lips, or blinking. Next, rub your finger or thumb inside his lips and back out. If your horse gets nervous back up a step, you may not have spent enough time on the outside. When your horse is relaxed about your fingers around his lips, move on to the next step. Repeat the same process with a one-quarter inch cotton rope. Rub the rope on the front of his lips and teeth until he relaxes. Next hold the rope on his teeth (gently) until he accepts it into his mouth. Don't force it. When your



Julie uses both hands to simulate the bridle

horse is relaxed about the rope, run your thumb along the side of his mouth, and place the rope into his mouth where the bit will be. Lightly floss from side to side on his tongue. Your horse may chew, which is okay. When horse accepts rope, allow him to spit it out (don't pull). While rope is in his mouth, can you rub your hand around your horse's pole and ears, mimicking bridling? Your horse should accept this before you attempt to bridle.

Bit-ter horses

There many reasons a horse may develop a negative response to manipulating the nose and mouth. Think of why you don't like going to the dentist (prior negative experiences in your mouth?). Horses have the same reactions. A negative experience for a horse might include intranasal vaccinations, dentistry or lack of, prior harsh biting, or heavy handed-riders. The procedure for reprogramming your horse's response to biting is the same as for a green horse, except you may have to go more slowly (and *indirectly*) to re-establish trust. A large part of re-establishing trust is managing your own attitude and posture as you work with your horse. Remember the direct-line thinking concept. Establish your rapport by donning a calm, yet assertive persona. With a soured horse you may

need positive stimulus. Consider using honey or molasses on your rope and bit to give your horse a positive experience. Gradually use the sweetener intermittently going to less and less. Be patient, you are re-establishing trust.

Introducing the bit

Whether you are introducing or re-introducing the bit, go about this the same way. First, choose your bit. This is a personal choice and dependent on your riding style and training. I use the Mylar system. Start with a similar progression. Rub the bit gently outside the mouth, then inside the lips, then slowly into the mouth. Don't force your horse. Let him accept the bit on his own, then immediately let him drop it from his mouth. Gradually keep it in longer. This can be over one session or over several days, depending on your horse's reaction. Remember you can use a sweetener. One of my students used blackberry jam with success. Again, go to intermittent with the positive stimulus. Apply pressure to the pole and ears to mimic the bridle. Be patient to maximize your chances of a lasting positive attitude.

Conclusion

My recipe for success: Perform this progression twelve days in a row, then every other day for twelve days, then three times in a week, then now and again. During this time, if you are riding, consider riding in a halter. You may consider using the halter/or hackamore for communication, while your horse wears the bit and bridle with no pressure. Take the time it takes, so it takes less time. This system allows a horse to maintain dignity and curiosity—qualities you never want to discourage in your best friend. U

Keep it natural,

Julie

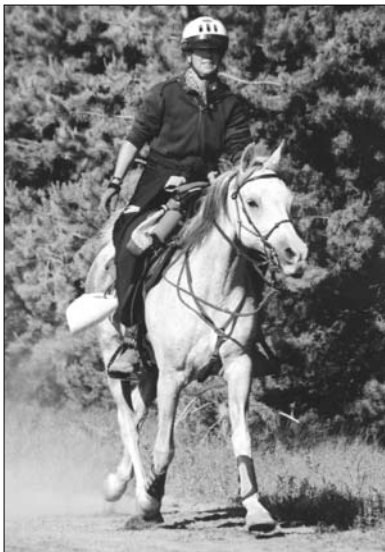
Julie Cross is a certified Three Star Parelli Professional Instructor. Julie has a multidisciplinary clientele that ranges from three day eventers to western pleasure trail riders. To share your training stories with Julie, to suggest a topic for an article, or just to start a dialogue, email her at horseman@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.



Readers Write

You Know You're a Horsey Gal When...

Written by M. Lou Cook



M. Lou and Lu at the Wild West Ride's Fifty-Miler.

- You share your home with more horses than humans.
- You have a cabinet shelf dedicated to water bottles.
- You have been to the feed store in the last week but not the mall.
- You feed your horses before you feed yourself.
- You have your vet's number on speed dial.
- You have your farrier's picture in your family album.
- You consult the ride calendar before scheduling an operation.
- You have squashed a tick in a restaurant napkin.
- You keep a carton of Haagen Daz in your trailer freezer.
- You have fixed at least one flat tire in the last month.
- You would rather sweep your barn than your house.
- You cringe at the words "Pigeon Fever."
- Your idea of a late night is walking a colicky horse at 2am.
- You think of polar fleece as your second best friend.
- You can back up a twenty-one foot, 10,000 lb hunk of steel without looking over your shoulder.
- You've pulled a twenty-one foot 10,000 lb hunk of steel through a Starbuck's drive thru.
- You think bushes are optional for peeing on the trail.
- You can fix anything with duct tape and baling twine.
- You paid more for your saddle than your car.
- You don't own a car.
- You own more saddles than dining room chairs.
- And finally, you know you're a horsey gal when...
- You test out a new bra by trotting and galloping around the fitting room.

M. Lou Cook (Marci) is avid endurance and trail rider. She and her horse Lu have completed over 5,500 miles together, including four Tevis Cup finishes. Marci works as a kindergarten teacher with the Windsor Unified School District. She also sits on the Board of the Mounted Assistance Unit for the California State Parks. M. Lou shares her home with two Arabians, three dogs, one cat, a 600 lb pig, an emu, and a variety of other feathered friends. You can share Horsey Gal stories with Marci at mcook@wusd.org.

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Healthy as a Horse

Column editor JoDean Nicolette, MD

Equestrian Overuse Injuries

Guest written by Ilona Letmanyi, MD

Aches and pains are a part of working around horses whether you are a roll-up-your-sleeves, do-it-yourselfer or you just visit the stables for an occasional ride. While falls from a horse comprise the majority of trips to the emergency room, other injuries are quite common as well. One type of common barn injury is called an “overuse” injury. Overuse injuries



Ilona and Gatsby...Lumbar strain?

occur in muscles, joints, and tendons when we put stress in one area of the body by doing the same activity over and over. These sore spots can affect your enjoyment around the barn and take time away from your riding schedule. In this article, I want to discuss three common overuse injuries, their causes, and how to avoid them.

Elbow pain: Medial epicondylitis

Medial epicondylitis is characterized by pain on the pinky side (“medial” aspect) of the elbow. Someone with medial epicondylitis has pain when bending the wrist and turning the palms inward and down. Shaking hands is one particular activity that may hurt. The elbow usually has full range of motion. Up to half of the cases of medial epicondylitis involve compression of the ulnar nerve, which goes to ring and pinky fingers and the corresponding side of the hand. Some people get numbness in that area for this reason.

Medial epicondylitis is caused by repetitive stress on the forearm tendons attached to the elbow, with subsequent inflammation and swelling. This overuse injury often results from excessive grip tension, and lifting heavy objects with outstretched arms. Common mechanisms for injury around the barn include lifting heavy wheelbarrows, carrying full water buckets, or tightening screws or other objects.

Treatment begins with rest, ice, compression (using a wrap or “sleeve”), and over the counter NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs) like ibuprofen or naproxen. NSAIDs are used because they not only reduce pain, but also inflammation, which is part of the cause. After the pain has subsided, slowly resume regular activity, beginning always with gentle stretching. Talk with your doctor before you take any medication, though,

and also if conservative measures (those I recommend here) fail.

Shoulder pain: Rotator cuff strain

The rotator cuff is a group of four muscles and the corresponding tendons that surround the shoulder. Common mechanisms for injury around the barn or stable include repetitive overhead movements like saddling

horses, brushing or currying, scrubbing water buckets, and scooping grain.

Pain from a rotator cuff injury can vary in location based on which aspect of the shoulder is involved. Different types of movements may cause the pain, e.g. raising your arms up, placing hands behind the back, or rotating your arms inward. Severe pain or weakness may indicate a more serious injury involving a tear of a rotator cuff muscle or tendon, and should be evaluated by your doctor.

As with medial epicondylitis, controlling pain and inflammation allows the progression of healing. Some doctors recommend sleeping with a pillow between the body and the arm to decrease muscle tension and reduce pain. Part of the therapy involves gentle movement to maintain full range of motion in the shoulder. Pendulum exercises (allowing your arm to hang at your side and letting it gently swing in increasingly large circles), and wall-walking (stand next to a wall and “walk” your fingers upward to gradually raise your arm toward the ceiling) can keep shoulders supple.

Prevention of rotator cuff strain involves first strengthening the shoulder muscles with exercises like shoulder shrugs, rowing, and push-ups. As with any strengthening routine, allow time for stretching. To prevent re-injury, modifying behavior is key. Use step stools, make shorter and lighter trips while carrying heavy objects, or use a cart instead of lifting.

Back pain: Lumbar strain

Lumbar strain is very common. This injury is caused by inflammation in the lumbo-sacral

ligaments. The lumbo-sacral ligaments attach the lumbar bones to the sacrum in your lower back. Because this area of the back bears the greatest loads (the weight of the body plus any lifting), it is the most prone to injury. Sudden muscle contraction, torsion (twisting), or straightening from a crouched position can cause this strain. Pain is usually located in the area between the top of the hips down to the buttocks. Common maneuvers that can lead to low back strain include picking your horse’s hooves, stretching his legs, and general improper lifting techniques.

After an acute injury, ice and NSAIDs will decrease pain and inflammation. Rest may be helpful in the first two days as well, though most studies demonstrate that keeping active speeds recovery. If at any time you experience any signs of nerve damage (e.g. numbness or weakness in the legs, or loss of bladder or bowel control), seek medical attention immediately. Again, check with your doctor before taking any medication.

Lower back rehab involves stretching and strengthening of the core muscles of the abdomen and those around the spinal cord. A strong gut keeps your back in line. This will also help to

prevent future injuries. Luckily, riding is a great way to build core strength, as are sit-ups, pilates, and aerobic exercises.

You don’t have to be on your horse to get injured. Muscles, tendons, and ligaments are all vulnerable to our daily barn activities. Repetitive movements can cause pain and inflammation in focused areas, which can be annoying and interfere with enjoyment. Knowing how to recognize, prevent, and treat these injuries is key to keeping you in the saddle and your horses well cared for. U

Dr. Ilona Letmanyi is a Family Physician and Three Day Eventer. She was born and raised on a horse farm. Dr. Letmanyi attended medical school in St. Louis, and has just completed her specialty training in Santa Rosa. She and her thoroughbred Gatsby train with Yves Sauvignon at Santa Rosa Equestrian Center. To discuss common barn injuries with Dr. Letmanyi, contact her at ilona.letmanyi@gmail.com.



Medial epicondylitis in the making



Trails and Open Spaces

Column editor Sarah Reid

Out on the Trails: Let's All Get Together!

"Coexist: 1. to exist together, at the same time, or in the same place; 2. to live together without hostility or conflict despite differences. ..." Webster's New World Dictionary

How often have you paused on one of our Sonoma County trails and thought how lucky we are to have so many parks and open spaces to experience? We all know how fortunate we are to experience these places during the same winter that socks-in so many other areas with ice, freezing rain and wind, and piles of snow. But have you considered that we are also fortunate because, as a community, we have created a trail and open space system that encourages all users? As the weather improves, and the parks experience more visitors, this is time to recognize that we all have a role in sustaining our collaborative, multi-use environment. Whether you are beckoned out by drier, warmer weather, or you have consistently braved the wind and rain, you have a role and responsibility. No finger pointing allowed: All the user groups must work together so we all have a great time out there. Here are a few points to ponder when you are out enjoying our beautiful Sonoma County trails.

Multi-use trail plans

As a general plan, our local parks and open spaces have been intended for "multi-use." This means that people use the trails and parks in Sonoma County in differing manners—on bikes, on horses, on foot—and many of the trails have been designated as useable by all of these groups at the same time. In some other parts of California, designated trails are open to certain users only, or open to certain users on certain days of the week. In Sonoma County our properties are open to multi-users without these restrictions, although a few trails are designated for hikers only to protect a habitat or historical place of interest. Two such examples are Rhyolite in Annadel State Park and the Grandmother Tree trail in Jack London State Historic Park (SHP). Every user should know the local trail rules and stay on designated trails.

Benefits of shared-use trails are many, and these trails can accommodate the needs of most users. Shared-use trails help build community by facilitating cooperation in preserving and protecting common re-



Photo by Susan Johnson

Equestrian Sarah Reid shares the trail with cyclist Ken Reid

sources and properties. Designing multi-use areas are most cost effective for land managers: One shared trail is easier to build and maintain than several trails open to specific users only. Shared-use trails enable responsible, experienced users to educate outlaws and novices. Our local organizations—Sonoma County Trails Council, Sonoma County Horse Council, Back Country Horsemen, and BikeMonkey—have been coordinating efforts by helping users to get together to protect and maintain the trails and properties so we all can continue to use them together. When groups collaborate, we understand each other's needs better, and create a healthier environment for all to enjoy. As we continue to work together, our positive trail experiences will grow.

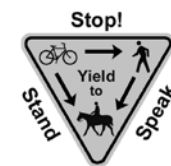
Perceptions of speed

Horses, as prey animals, have highly tuned senses. Instinct directs them to run away from danger. The horse recognizes speed as a potential predator. Cyclists in particular, should announce themselves when approaching a horse and rider from the rear. A human voice carries with it the positive experiences that the horse has with humans, and establishes that the cyclist is not a predator. While a voice may startle the horse momentarily, the rapid approach and noise of a bike might simulate the surprise attack of a predator from the rear, causing an explosive response. Also be aware that perceived speed may be dif-

ferent to the hiker or horse and rider than the actual speed. Slowing from 15 MPH to 8 MPH feels like a dramatic change, but a hiker or horse may still perceive a fast-moving threat. That's why slowing a little more than what seems natural is an important element in a well-executed pass. Most hikers and equestrians may feel safest if a bike passes only slightly faster than they are moving. This likely feels like a crawl to the cyclist, but will provide the best experience for everyone. Passing safely only slows a ride by seconds, but it prevents a potential rodeo. The same goes for equestrians; slowing from a canter to a trot may seem like a dramatic decrease in speed, but to a stopped cyclist or hiker, you may be perceived as traveling at an unsafe passing speed. The most respectful pace is a walk.

Trail etiquette

Cyclists yield to hikers, and both cyclists and hikers yield to equestrians. The inherent unpredictability of the horse is why the standard multi-use trail regulations give equestrians the right of way. As the privileged user, this means it is up to the equestrian to think of safety for all at all times. Take control of encounters with others, and be diplomatic and polite. Communicating your needs tactfully and educating other users about horse behavior can create a positive experience for everyone involved. For instance, when encountering other users on the trail, equestrians should communicate where they want the other users to stand



to allow safe passing. Some hikers move off trail behind a bush or tree not realizing they have become a hidden predator to the horse. Some equestrians find it safer to move the horse off trail to let others pass; this should be communicated properly to make sure the other users feel safe about passing the horse. In most situations, stay to the right except when passing. Sometimes, however, equestrians may feel safer staying uphill with their horse. Again, communicate this need to the other users and explain why. Luckily for these users, the bike and the trekking poles don't have minds of their own or react to stimuli!

Communication and safety are number one

Communication is one of the most important tools for all users when meeting others on trail. Multiple-use trails are generally wide enough for user groups to pass each other with adequate visibility to avoid collisions. However, it is important to ride (horses and bikes) at a safe and controlled speed and single file when someone is approaching, or when passing. For equestrians, keep in mind that some other users have had past experiences with novice or spooky horses, or are scared of horses altogether. Be aware of the tension or nervousness of another user when approaching with a horse, and help create a positive experience.

It is also important to ride at a safe and slow speed when approaching a blind turn or corner where there could be another user who may not hear you. Always announce yourself, say hello, or otherwise make polite voice contact; don't wait for the other person to notice you. A polite interaction leads to safe passage, especially as the horse recognizes the other as a human. Watch to see if the other person has earbuds in both ears, in which case they may not hear others approaching, or greetings. Sometimes a startle will be unavoidable,

especially when a visitor is unaware of his or her surroundings. To protect yourself from dangerous situations, please do not hike or ride with both ear-buds in. Safety is the most important issue.

Green horses and green cyclists

Some users ride over their heads. Lack of experience can be a safety issue, regardless of activity. Before going out on the trail, become familiar with the property you are visiting. If the horse has never been on a trail or encountered mountain bikes, know that Annadel State Park is a very popular cycling venue. Perhaps this is not the first place to take a green trail horse. Choose a quieter park, such as Jack London State Historic Park as a first ride so the horse can be gradually introduced to stimuli, or prepare the horse at home with mountain bikes and hikers with packs and trekking poles, or strollers. Preparing horses for the trail results in a better experience for horses, the riders, and most importantly, the other users.

Just as important, the first time mountain biker or hiker may have a more rewarding experience going out with a seasoned cyclist or hiker who knows the park, trails, and habits of users in the park. Mentored by an experienced peer, the new user may learn etiquette of the trails, where the best spots

are to view vistas and take a rest stop, where to use caution, how to approach other users.

Impressions

Unfortunately, negative experiences between trail users become the often-told stories and the focus of conversations. In reality, accidents between user groups rarely occur in our local parks. We are all charged with remembering and focusing on the positive encounters with other users, and continuing to create positive interactions out there on the trails. If we all coexist, and maintain our collaboration in sharing our properties, we will all have a much more satisfying time.

The author would like to acknowledge the following sources of information for this article: The International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA), the Blue Ridge Trail Riders, the Tennessee Chapters of the Sierra Club and the Appalachian Mountain Bike Club, and the Prairie City Race Series, Mountain Bike Racing, Sacramento Valley. 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@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.



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Readers Write

What Horses Want

Guest written by David Lawson



David makes a winning run on his current horse Maverick.

Regardless of our favorite breed or discipline, we can all think of a handful of great horses we've experienced in our lives. I have had the good fortune to train great horses for several different disciplines. While the basic horsemanship is all the same, it's not the only factor. Remember that the horse has to have as much desire to compete as the rider. Our horses tell us what they really enjoy, and if we are attuned to that, the whole training and campaigning process is much more enjoyable. We often hear the phrase, "That horse just needs a job." I'd like to add to that phrase by saying, "That horse just needs a job he enjoys."

Reno is an eight year old Pony of America (POA) gelding. He was purchased as a weanling by Rusty, a kind and caring woman, who wanted to give him a better life. Rusty couldn't stand watching Reno carted around from event to event because his mother had returned to the show pen. Clearly, Reno had found a great family. Two years later, Rusty sent Reno to me to be started under saddle. She hoped for a Western Pleasure show horse. While Reno was intelligent and willing, he had a little too much motor to rock back and stay slow; he never could maintain a slow, pitter-patter jog. Lucky for us both, Rusty was very open-minded, and I got to keep Reno in training long enough to find out what he really liked.

Reno showed a lot of athletic ability. Out of nowhere came a tremendous stop, which seemed effortless for the curious, pliable colt. Reno would lope around for a while, and if I cleared my throat, coughed, or spoke to someone in the arena, he would lay down a set of elevens in the sand and look around to see who noticed. He soon realized that he was getting praise and attention for the big stops,

and he almost looked for the best places in the arena to slide. Afterwards he practically gloated at a job well done. Obviously, Reno belonged in the fall Reining Futurity at the POA International. He won in Des Moines at both four and five years, and he made me look good. Listening to Reno was more important than anything else I had done as the trainer.

Most recently, I discovered Soli! Soli just "told me what she wanted to do." Soli and her human, Jeanne, spent most of their time on the trail (see related article p. 22). As Jeanne's knowledge and experience grew, she wanted to progress with Soli. What a great situation for a trainer—a rider who wants to improve, a horse who can improve, and the facility in which to make it all happen. Soli had been with a Reining trainer who didn't care for her much, and told Jeanne that Soli wouldn't make it to the show pen. Within a couple rides, I could see the other trainer's point. Soli and loping circles was just not a good mix.

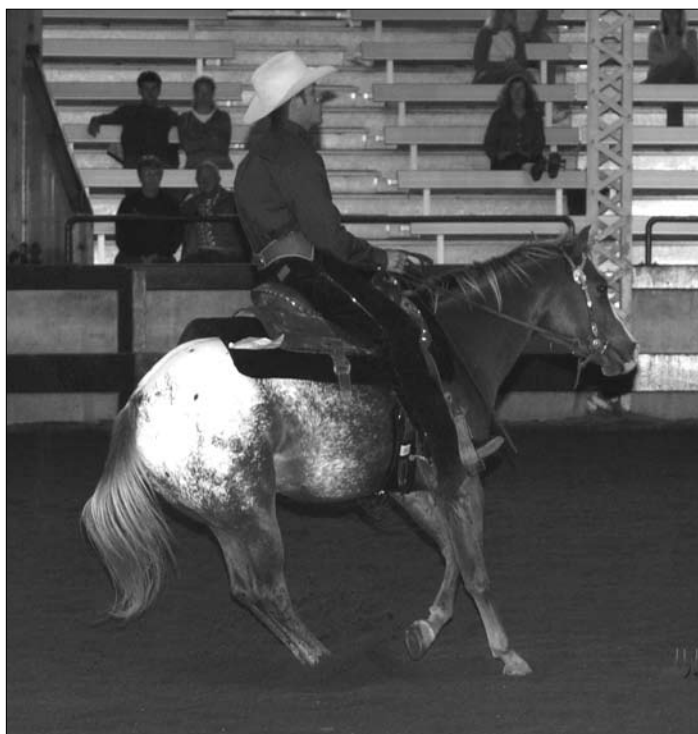
Barrel Racing has always been my passion, and early on Soli showed me some "moves" that would lend themselves to the cloverleaf pattern. I approached Jeanne about starting Soli on the barrels. I assured an anxious but willing owner that Barrel Racing is a horsemanship pattern at a high rate of speed, and that I would not be making the stereotypical "crazy barrel horse" out of her trusty trail mare. I was honored that Jeanne trusted me, and soon the fun began. Soli has a lot of natural rate and really cows a barrel. I was amazed that this mare, who was actually a little heavy on the forehead and somewhat bold in the bridle, became so light and supple in her turns. She now has better transitions, and a more correct way of going. Soon Soli was in really good shape and those dreaded arena circles were becoming more relaxed. Soli's first outing was a large barrel race in Santa Rosa, and she seemed to really enjoy the atmosphere and music. She truly loves her job, and training her for Barrel Racing has been both fun and easy. People at the barn who have known Soli for years ask me, "What horse is that?" Soli found her sport and excels at it. She is already helping Jeanne learn the basics of the sport, and you can bet that you'll see the two at local jackpots in the near future.

I can cite many examples of horses from my past that didn't fit one mold, but went on to be successful in another. Dollar, a little Doc Bar mare was supposed to run the barrels, but now Three Day Events instead. Diamonds Beaudacious ("Beau") is a POA whose Schwarzenegger-like conformation did not lend itself to pleasure riding. We found that Beau excelled at Trail, and in 2007, we added International Futurity Trail Champion to Beau's résumé.

Finding your horse's hidden talents is like finding that one-of-kind deal at your favorite store. Look for subtle direction changes like moving into western riding or western horsemanship from Western Pleasure classes, or taking that slightly laid back jumper into the Hunter ring. Rather than forcing a horse into a mold, I like to think that following a more individual-centered path reaps more

rewards. There are thousands of horses around just waiting to be teamed up with the right partner. Between networking and the internet, we have many tools at our fingertips to come up with just the right horse to suit our needs.

The quest for success in our various show pens is exciting and fun, and for most of us, it is truly a passion. With all of our wisdom and knowledge, we need to keep in mind a very simple tool—listening to our horses. If we let them, they will tell us what they can and can't, or will and won't do. A true partnership can be formed. There is nothing more rewarding than riding a horse who wants the same things as you. I can't imagine there's a single "great one" around who didn't actually have a say in his training. U



David and Reno winning the reining at the IPOAC Futurity in Des Moines, IA

David Lawson is new to Sonoma County, and has found a home at Double Bar M Ranch on Petaluma Hill Road. David's focus is horsemanship, and he trains for a wide variety of disciplines from showmanship and Western Pleasure, to Barrel Racing and Pole Bending. He enjoys competition but is equally happy when one of his students can compete on his or her own horse. To contact David, email him at davidlawson13@hotmail.com.

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Readers Write

Rhapsody's Own Hue

Written by Kathy Campbell

I first saw KHS Rhapsody ("Rhapsody") as she came off the van from North Carolina, and I instantly fell in love with her. She was coming to my best friend Mary Christopher-son's ranch, in Oakley, Ca. Mary is a professional and accomplished Arabian breeder, and I have known her most of my adult life. Although Rhapsody was heavy with foal, she was light and graceful, and had the softest eye I had ever seen. She carried her gorgeous conformation perfectly on her 15.3 frame. She was bay. And distinguished. I just knew she

was special. I saw Rhapsody again about two years later, while visiting Mary, and made an offer, buying her on the spot... untried! I just knew that she had the temperament to go with that soft eye.

Ironically, Rhapsody is a California girl. She was born in Oakley at Mary's ranch. Mary felt that Rhapsody was a promising prospect for show. She shipped her to Dela Rosa Ranch in North Carolina to train. Rhapsody did well. She competed with fillies in the one year old Halter classes, winning junior championships. She entered a brood mare band for three years, where she had three foals. The breeders wanted the foals for Western Pleasure, but Rhapsody had too much spunk and too many opinions to throw Western Pleasure stock, so Mary bought her back. When I decided to go with my heart and take a chance on Rhapsody, I never imagined my spunky *Khemo Sabi*-line Arabian would be winning events in Dressage.

Dressage is a French term meaning training. Its fundamental purpose is to develop, through standardized progressive training methods, a horse's natural athletic ability and willingness to perform. Dressage, though often thought of as a "show" discipline, actually maximizes the horse's poten-



Winner's Circle: Kathy and Cheryl (rider) with Rhapsody

Photo: Carol Miringst

tial as a riding horse. The most well-trained dressage horses respond to a skilled rider's minimal aids by effortlessly performing the requested movement. Dressage is occasionally referred to as "horse ballet." Dressage has ancient roots, but first became popular in Europe during the Renaissance period. The sequential training system developed by the European masters has changed little in hundreds of years, and classical Dressage is still considered the basis of modern Dressage. While any riding horse can benefit from Dressage principles and training, Warmbloods are the typical horse seen in competitions. But Dressage is an egalitarian sport in which all breeds are given an opportunity to successfully compete, even Arabians.

I hadn't owned Rhapsody long when I figured out she had the "show stuff." She had only ninety days under saddle when I bought her, but it didn't take her long to show what she could do. I decided to show her because I wanted people to see her great qualities. Our first venture into the show ring was at Halter in 2006. She won the mares five and over class against professionals. In March I asked local professional Dressage trainer Cheryl Krug, who rides Rhapsody two days a week, if she

would consider entering her in the Fifty-First Annual Golden Gate Arabian Horse Show at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds—just for fun! We entered her in the Sporthorse Suitability for Dressage Class... which she won (much to my surprise, but not Cheryl's)! We then entered her in the Arabian Sporthorse under Saddle Championship. Rhapsody competed against several Arabians from all over northern California. She won the championship, too! One of the judges told Lori Cook, a local Arabian trainer who had helped us, "This mare is

loaded with Dressage talent." Another local trainer told us that Rhapsody "barely touched the ground twice during the event." Rhapsody proved to both Cheryl and I that we weren't wrong to have faith in her.

Rhapsody is currently in Dressage training with Cheryl, who plans to show Rhapsody in all-Arabian shows in training level Dressage (for now). Besides Dressage, Rhapsody enjoys carrots, pasture time, freedom, and her mom. She hates being stalled. Luckily, she has roomy accommodations, and pasture space now. She also loves the trails. She is not only beautiful, but quiet and sensible in the hills, which is my favorite way to ride her. She loves the Regional Parks, especially Foothill and Riverfront, but she has been spotted at Annadel racing the bikes. Very soon you may begin seeing her in the local Dressage shows; we feel that may be her real calling. U

Kathy Campbell is a lifelong horsewoman, and Arab-lover. She has owned twenty-five Arabians during her career. Kathy has competed in saddleseat, halter, dressage, and NATRC. Kathy is a breast cancer survivor, and a trail enthusiast. She lives in Larkfield with her mom. If you would like to contact Kathy about Arabian horses or trail riding, email her at 1k_campbell@comcast.net.

The Vet's Office

Column editor Michelle Beko, DVM

Pigeon Fever: Has Your Horse Been Affected?

Guest written by Jennifer Corsi, DVM

General information

Pigeon fever, also known as dryland distemper, is an infection caused by the bacteria *Corynebacterium pseudotuberculosis*. The name "pigeon fever" comes from a feature of the condition in which affected horses develop large abscesses in the chest area which result in a swollen "pigeon breast." The disease is most prevalent in the southwestern United States where arid, dusty conditions favor the dispersal and survival of the bacteria. Pigeon fever has a seasonal occurrence in these areas with most cases seen in the summer and fall. The fact that the bacteria can survive for at least eight months in the soil ensures the recurrence of the disease in each subsequent year.

How do horses become infected?

C. pseudotuberculosis enters the horse's body through abrasions or wounds in the skin or mucous membranes (gums, tongue, vulva, or around the eyes). Insects (namely flies) can play a role in transmitting the disease by carrying the bacteria from the soil or from draining abscesses on other horses to wounds on a susceptible horse. Skin already irritated by fly bites, especially along the horse's lower abdomen, predisposes horses to infection. Horses less than five years old and horses kept in large groups in pasture are at an increased risk of the disease. Geriatric horses may be more susceptible to infection due to weaker immune systems.

Symptoms and course of the disease

The incubation period, or time from infection to the appearance of symptoms, ranges from seven to twenty-eight days. Three different forms of pigeon fever infection occur, including external abscesses, internal abscesses, and ulcerative lymphangitis.

External abscesses are the most common and most benign form of this disease in horses and make up about 90% of cases in California. These abscesses can occur anywhere on the body, but are most commonly found on the chest, on the lower abdomen, in the sheath of males, and the udder of mares. A horse can have single or multiple abscesses. The abscesses are

often painful and are frequently accompanied by large areas of edema, or soft swelling. About 25% of horses with external abscesses will develop a fever. Most abscesses can be diagnosed based on the typical appearance of the abscesses and the odorless, tan pus contained within them. However, your veterinarian may wish to submit a sample to a laboratory for culture for a definitive diagnosis.

External abscesses may take from two days to several weeks to mature. Abscesses on the lower abdomen tend to rupture quickly, while those in the chest, sheath, or udder take longer to mature. Applying warm compresses or a poultice to the abscess will speed the process of maturation. As the abscess matures, a soft spot develops in the center of the swollen area, and the hair may fall out. Abscesses may spontaneously rupture, or your veterinarian may lance them to allow for more rapid healing. Once it is opened, the abscess should be flushed out daily with a dilute antiseptic solution until no more pus drains from the wound. The process of healing may take two to four weeks. External abscesses are usually not treated with antibiotics as this only prolongs the course of the disease.

Internal abscesses are a less common but potentially life-threatening form of pigeon fever, and occur in about 8% of horses which have had external abscesses. Internal abscesses can affect the liver, lungs, kidney, or spleen. Symptoms of internal abscesses may include decreased appetite, weight loss, fever, lethargy, signs of respiratory disease, and colic. If you notice any of these signs you should contact your veterinarian promptly as early diagnosis and aggressive treatment is key in treating internal abscesses. Treatment of internal abscesses involves long term antibiotic therapy which should continue for a minimum of one to two months or until blood tests return to normal and the horse is showing no more symptoms. Unfortunately, internal pigeon fever abscesses carry a poor prognosis; the mortality rate for horses with internal abscesses is 100% without treatment, and 40% even with treatment.

A third form of pigeon fever is known as ulcerative lymphangitis. This is the least common form of pigeon fever and only a small number of cases have been seen in California. Symptoms include generalized limb swelling, lameness, draining tracts along the limb, fever, lethargy, and anorexia. Without aggressive antibiotic and therapeutic treatment, this form of the disease may become chronic. With proper treatment, cases of ulcerative lymphangitis resolve in an average of thirty-five days.

How can I protect my horse from pigeon fever?

The good news about pigeon fever is that the great majority of affected horses do not develop new infections in subsequent years, suggesting that recovered horses develop a long lasting immunity against the disease. However, a small number of horses have been found to have recurring or persistent infections lasting longer than one year.

The bad news is that there is no vaccine available for prevention of pigeon fever. Therefore, the best ways to prevent pigeon fever are to use effective insect control, to isolate horses that have draining abscesses, and to use good hygiene measures. Fly control may consist of using fly sheets especially for horses allergic to fly bites, fly sprays, topical spot-on fly repellants, regular manure removal (at least twice a week in pastures, daily in stalls and smaller areas), and biologic control of flies, such as insect predators. Horses that are draining pus should be isolated and contaminated bedding bagged and disposed of. Any areas the pus may have come into contact with should be disinfected. Also, the tack or grooming supplies of infected horses should not be shared with other horses. Another measure of good hygiene is simple hand washing after handling the infected horse or any contaminated materials.

High incidence of pigeon fever in 2008/2009

Veterinarians and horse owners in California saw an unusually large number of pigeon fever cases last year with higher numbers

(Continued next page)



Pigeon Fever (Continued from page 17)

of internal abscesses diagnosed. Researchers tracking the incidence of pigeon fever note that the number of cases seen each year tends to fluctuate, with peaks occurring about every five years. What causes this kind of pattern? Environmental factors such as decreased rainfall, high temperature, and wind may contribute by favoring the spread of the bacteria responsible for pigeon fever. The bacteria itself may undergo mutations (genetic changes) which affect its ability to cause disease. Changes in the overall immunity of the horse population in the area may also be a factor—over time, as older (immune) horses are replaced by younger (unprotected) horses, the general population becomes more susceptible to infection and a rise in pigeon fever cases may be seen. Thus, we can only speculate as to reasons for the higher than usual incidence of pigeon fever cases seen last season, and can only hope the coming years bring fewer cases. U

Dr Jennifer Corsi is a graduate of UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. She currently practices at Cotati Large Animal Hospital. She can be contacted via the website, www.cotatilargeanimal.com, or by calling 707-795-4356.

Local Author Publishes Book About Wild Horses

Kenwood resident Jyoti-Annette Germain has recently written a book about the plight of America's wild horses, entitled Wild Horses, Wild Innocence. In her book, Germain reveals the truth behind an "unjustified oppression" by the Bureau of Land Management and other government agencies. She documents the history of these amazing wild animals, and describes government policy, advocacy efforts, and management plans for their survival. Germain details the campaign to allow them their fair allotment of public land forage and why it is so imperative that their cause and welfare be embraced.

According to Germain, the over population of wild horses is a myth. Almost 30% of present day herds are critically close to or below threshold levels. The primary causes of western rangeland degradation are humans, not horses. Wild horses and burros make up less than 0.6% of large grazing animals on public lands. Degradation is caused by livestock grazing/meat production, drilling, mining, and off-road vehicle use. As native wildlife, horses are well adapted to survive even in the most inhospitable areas. They fit into an ecological niche unique in North America, where they have evolved over time to their present day species. They are a prey species to cougars, wolves, and bears and their populations can be checked by the basic mechanisms of natural ecosystems. Wild horses and burros are an undeveloped natural resource in the area of cross species communication, and rangeland management.

Germain is a long time animal and horse lover. After enrolling in the Equine Science Program at Santa Rosa Junior College a few years ago, her interest and passion for horses reawakened. Her book was born out of a term paper for one of her classes in the fall of 2008. She reports that after she turned in the project, she realized she wasn't done! Her passion became to learn and uncover as much as she could regarding the subject of wild mustangs and burros.

To order her book call 707-833-1820 or email Jyoti at equindeliverance@aol.com.



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Readers Write

A Balanced Ride

Written by Nancy Dotti and Michele Guttenburg

We all want a balanced ride. Whether you ride english or western, your seat and balance play an integral part in your horsemanship. How does your saddle help you and why is the fit so important? In this article we'll go through some basics, focusing on balance.

Case study: A sore horse

We were asked to check the saddle fitting on a horse that had been "off" for months. In addition to working with the local veterinarian, the owner had taken the horse to the UC Davis Veterinary Hospital for exams. No one could pinpoint the problem.

The owner called us, thinking we would simply restuff the english saddle. When we assessed the saddle on the horse, we saw that it was slightly off level, sitting a bit high in the back. It did not seem to be a serious problem, but important. We stuffed the saddle, bringing it back into balance. The next day we were elated to receive a call from the owner stating that her horse was now sound! This saddle's uneven pressure affected nerves and muscles, causing the horse pain. Over time, the affects of uneven pressure can create disability.

What a saddle does

The purpose of a saddle is to keep the rider's

weight off the horse's spine and distribute it evenly over the muscles of the horse's back. A properly fit saddle allows a horse to move naturally and without pain. The saddle also allows the rider to be more comfortable and improve riding skill by encouraging the proper position.

Balance

In order for a saddle to distribute weight evenly, it must sit level on the horse. When a saddle is lower in the front or back most of the rider's weight is focused on the lowest part of the saddle. This undermines the saddle's primary function and the rider's weight becomes concentrated on one area of the horse's back. Focused pressure can drastically inhibit a horse's movement, causing back soreness and even lameness. In addition, when a saddle is out of balance it places the rider out of balance, causing a forward or backward leaning posture. This further inhibits a horse's movement. Because the rider's balance and movement are affected by an improper fit, riding itself becomes more difficult.


Your seat and posture are changed by an unbalanced saddle. We watch and hear about riders who spend hours in the saddle, lesson after lesson, working to get their seat and

legs in a balanced, comfortable position. It may not be the rider's coordination which is at fault. The saddle often hinders a rider's balance. If the saddle tilts to the back it may force the rider's legs forward and cause his or her upper body to compensate in an incorrect position. If the saddle tilts to the front it may push the rider's legs backward and tilt the upper body forward. As a rider it is important to understand that sitting in a balanced position should not be a constant struggle. Keeping your position through all of a horse's gaits and exercises can be challenging, but attaining proper align-

ment in the saddle and sitting level will be easier with a properly constructed saddle!

Fitting a saddle

The first challenge is choosing a saddle with the right tree and panels, which is a separate article. Just as riders do not expect one-size-fits-all britches, horses need the correct saddle tree and panels. Take the time to find the correct tree and panel design for your horse. Ask for help with this from a saddle-fitting professional. Once you have the correct tree and panel design for your horse, have the saddle assessed for balance. Have a trainer, or an experienced saddle fitter look at you riding at the trot. The saddle should sit level front to back (head to tail) as you are trotting. It should not bounce up in the rear, but make contact evenly throughout. A high front puts the rider into a chair seat, creating extra pressure and possibly bridging. Off balance english saddles can often be restuffed to bring them into proper balance. Regular assessment and saddle work can keep your saddle fitting through growth and wear, even as your horse develops and changes.

Each horse responds differently. A sensitive horse may manifest signs of discomfort with a poor fit, while some stoic horses may not show outward signs of soreness despite a low quality, ill-fitting saddle. Even if your horse seems to be moving well, consider having a person knowledgeable in saddle fitting assess your fit. You may be preventing a long term issue. You'll be surprised by how much both you and your horse move when you are in a properly fitted, balanced saddle. 

Nancy Dotti began her training in Saddle Fitting more than twenty years ago. She has been certified by the Society of Master Saddlers, UK and the Master Saddlers Society, USA. She lectures on Saddle Fitting throughout the US and co-owns custom Albion Saddles.

Michele Guttenburg has worked and trained with the owners, saddlers, and designers of County Saddlery, Performance Saddlery, and Albion Saddlery. She has worked alongside Master Saddlers. Michele specializes in human and equine biomechanics.

Nancy and Michele co-own Contact Saddles, which specializes in Saddle Fitting consultations. Together they serve the equine community by working with riding pairs, and teaching and training other professionals in the art and science of Saddle Fit. To contact Nancy or Michele visit www.contactsaddles.com.



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Readers Write

Life at Liberty: What Horses Know

Written by Janice Drescher



Janice and Joyful Day

Recently, I was with my horse Joyful Day (“Joyful”) in the arena. I had been out of town for a couple of weeks and was looking forward to being with her. I love being with Joyful free of equipment so she can make her own choices based on her preferences. She pranced into the arena and I felt an air of anticipation as I removed her halter. I call these times with Joyful play sessions. They are full of collaborative creativity that comes from sharing space and ideas that can be offered by either of us. To start this play session, I decided that the twenty feet around me was my space alone. To communicate that idea to her, I created motion that signaled to her the space was already occupied by me and was not open to her. I formed the message as a clear intention that emanated from my gut, while looking at the twenty foot circle around me. I knew that she understood me when she shot out of that space, running, jumping, twisting in the air, and kicking out her back legs. She looked back at me for what was next. My wish was to now invite her to join me in the twenty foot space that I had defined as mine. With my objective clear, I “opened the door” for her to re-enter by creating the intent within myself to receive her into that space. This was accompanied by body language that matched my intention. The body language can be extremely subtle—for example, a slight step back or open arms. Body language alone is not enough. In order for body language to deliver the message, it must be backed up by strength of intention that comes from the gut. Joyful “heard” my communication and responded by trotting right up to me

where she waited for my next invitation to play. The intimacy of these moments is palpable. This intimacy is born of the choice made by both parties to be together in the unfolding of an idea.

In order to have an effective “conversation” with Joyful at liberty, I had to learn how to express my idea clearly to her and really mean it from my core. I learned that she would always accurately reflect what my body language and intention were saying. And if I wasn’t getting what I wanted, it was because there was a gap between my idea and the way I was expressing that idea to my horse. Through my experiences with Joyful and other horses at liberty, I was beginning to learn how to clarify what I want and invite others to join me in my adventures.

I was astounded to find out in my fifties that I wasn’t clear about what I wanted. I discovered this six years ago as I began to learn being with horses at liberty from Christine Cole at Full House Farm in Sebastopol. Every week I would go for a lesson with her horses at liberty, and she would ask me what I wanted to do with the horses in my lesson that day. I didn’t have very specific ideas about what I really wanted, and found it frustrating to come up blank every time she asked. I had general ideas about being with the horses. I loved being with them. There was no doubt about that. I wanted to learn how to talk with them so they would hear me and respond.

With Christine’s encouragement, patience, and steadfast belief, I discovered that I actually did have more specific thoughts about what I wanted to do with the horses each week. Creating time and space to find my core ideas had a big impact on other areas of my life, as well. I became more in touch with my preferences in every situation: business, personal relationships, or any other sphere.

I am most surprised by how I have learned to become a person who understands what she wants and knows how to receive it with

ease. How is it that horses can teach this to people? It’s because you can’t make a horse at liberty do anything. They are just too big, too strong, and too free for that. So what’s left is the opportunity to speak to a horse using direct, but nonverbal, communication that speaks about the space you occupy. The creation of motion begins the conversation. This kind of conversation with the horse can be described as a dance of energy based on motion and intention.

When a horse chooses to join you and respond to your ideas about the space that you are occupying, the door opens to the intimacy and sense of connection that so many people seek with horses—and with people. Learning how to express myself in a way that accurately reflects my intentions has had a big impact on all my relationships



Christine Cole and Lyric working at liberty

and has opened the door to more possibilities than I might have imagined. Horses have taught me how to walk through life, able to receive what my heart desires. U

Janice Drescher is a business and life coach who believes in teaching and learning with horses. Janice lives in Forestville with her horse, Joyful Day. Janice’s passion is playing with horses at liberty and learning their language of nonverbal communication—experiencing the play and adventure of being with horses in this amazing dance. Through her coaching business Janice helps her clients achieve fulfillment of their business and life visions. You can contact Janice at Janice@IntentionalLeaders.com or visit www.IntentionalLeaders.com. You can also call her at 707-887-8488.

Horse Tales

Both His Eyes

Written by Karl Bastian

When I was about ten, I'd go to my grandfather's place to ride horses. Grandpa was known far and wide for his ability to heal horse wounds. At that time he was doctoring a seventeen hand black thoroughbred who'd been injured at the track.

Grandpa always let me go as far as I dared where horses were concerned. But this particular horse was an exception. Grandpa warned me, "Don't give this horse his head! If he's getting away from you, pull his head around until you can see BOTH his eyes. THAT'LL STOP HIM!"

Now picture this: It's Thanksgiving. The entire family has gathered. The adults are in the house...and all the cousins are at the barn. I'm the only one who has dared to ride the black thoroughbred and now I'm sitting on his back. My cousins are egging me on—daring me to "give him his head." I TOOK THE DARE.

Grandpa had a large pasture with a creek running thru it. I figured if I started in the creek I could get control before he built up too much speed. So I threw up the reins and yelled, "Hyyyaah!" and he took off like a rocket! He was moving so fast my eyes were watering. His strides were so long that his body was low to the ground. I pulled on the reins to no avail. He was headed straight to the barn.

I PULLED HIS HEAD AROUND AND SAW BOTH EYES,
BUT STILL HE RAN.

My nine year old cousin stood bravely in front of the barn door waving him away 'til the very last second. An instant before we



Photo: C.C. Garr 2006

A more experienced Karl gives Dinero his head at the beach


charged into the barn, I slipped my feet out of the stirrups. The horse still moving fast, had only one choice—a left turn. He took it, and his legs flew out from under him. In a split second I was launched across the barn. I looked back as I flew some sixty feet and that thoroughbred was flying four feet high, perfectly sideways. (So I can truly say I've seen a "horse fly.") The horse hit a post chest first and knocked it clear off its base. The roof groaned. He hit the ground and he groaned. I landed in a pile of manure, but didn't groan. Unhurt, I ran to the horse. He kept trying to stand, with no success. Then he gave up and was still. I took off running for the house and charged in among the adults, screaming "Grandpa, I've killed your horse... it was my fault, I gave him his head!"

Two dozen people leapt from their chairs and rushed out to the barn. Grandpa got there last. He pulled that horse's head around the post and it jumped right up, looking simply fine. But I'll bet his chest hurt like hell. As for me, I'm just glad I come from a family that doesn't criticize. I wasn't in trouble. I never heard a word, but I learned a horse can't maneuver his own head around a post.

That's my story. Please send us yours.

Got a horse tale? Whether we laugh, cry, or just nod our heads in understanding, we'd love to print it...especially if it's a whopper. Send it to us at editor@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org, or mail it to SCHJ, P.O. Box 7157, Santa Rosa, Ca 95407. ☺

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Colts and Fillies

Column editor Kelly Henson

Fun in the Sun



Tobi loves the beach

The horses woke from a restful night's sleep as the sun came up over the beautiful rolling hills of Sonoma County.

"Ahhh, I just love the smell of the sweet summer morning," sighed Ben, the white Arabian, as he strolled across the pasture. This time of year the cool mornings turn into hot summer afternoons, so the horses were eager to get out and cool down. They decided to spend the day at the beach.

"Neigh! I am so excited to play in real sand and cool ocean water!" whinnied Molly as she bucked and ran circles around the geldings. "Hank, will you put sunscreen on my nose. I don't want to get sun burned," Molly added, tail high, jiggling with excitement.

"Okay everyone, we got the shavings and the hay bags. Let's load up," Ben announced to the heard. "No stalling, we don't want to waste any time on mule-ish behavior."

The horses lined up from largest to smallest and loaded without a hitch into the trailer. When everyone was tucked in and munching hay, they all imagined the fun they would have in the surf. As they giggled over what they would do, Ben was surprisingly quiet. They whinnied and nickered as they drew near the coast. Finally, the trailer stopped and they knew they were at the beach. The air smelled salty and the breeze was cool. As the horses backed out of the trailer, they could feel their hearts pounding with excitement.

Tobi nickered in anticipation, tossed his white mane, and said, "Is

everyone out of the trailer? Okay let's run!" The ground began to rumble and sand flew as the horses took off down the beach and toward the water. Everyone jumped in hooves first, snorting in glee. Molly went out the furthest and started to swim. No one noticed that Ben did a sliding stop just before touching the water's edge.

Finally a salty, wet Tobi looked for his friend and saw him standing on the dry, white sand. "Ben, why don't you get in the water? It feels great," neighed Tobi as the others were splashing and pawing in the water.

"Well," Ben hesitated, head down, "I have never actually seen the ocean before. I'm from Montana and the water looks really different there. Look at it move! I'm scared." Ben had an anxious look on his face.

Ben's friends were determined to help him overcome his fears and have fun so they splashed back to the shore and showed Ben how to move in the water.

"See Ben, it isn't chasing you, and it doesn't hurt you. You can just step in, and you can also swim! Just like this: left leg, right leg, left leg, right leg." Molly had been swimming her whole life and she knew she could help. "Just put your hooves in the water and then when you feel comfortable, start walking forward," said Molly, encouragingly. She herded him gently with her nose.

Little by little, Ben made his way into the water. The other horses stood in a herd around him for support. Whenever he stopped, one of his friends took the next step first to give him confidence. Ben was soon up to his chest. He paddled like crazy even though he was only in three feet of water. He snorted in pride.

"Nicker, snort, nicker, nicker, snort. Yay Ben you are doing it!" Ben's friends whinnied and stomped, splashing water everywhere. Then Tobi squealed, "Now that we are all in the water let's get the ball and see how many times we can catch it before it gets wet." They batted around the beach ball all afternoon. Ben stayed closer to the shoreline than the others, but he was proud of his accomplishment. As the sun sank, the exhausted horses loaded into the trailer and slept all the way home. As they rolled and relaxed in the pasture at home Ben looked around and said, "Thank you. I get by with a little help from my friends." U

Kelly Henson is a Sonoma State student and creative writer. Besides writing, Kelly will be featuring local children and their mounts. If you would like to contact Kelly about a story or a child you would like featured, email her at kids@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org.

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Colts and Fillies – Kids Corner

Column editor Kelly Henson

Serena Kathryn Baensch – That Bright Girl Can Jump



Serena and Stroker



Mom, Jeanne, on Soli with Serena and Stroker

Serena Baensch is ten years old and likes to jump. She has been riding for four years. Serena has a horse named Stroker (aka Stroker Lee). Stroker is a twelve year old Spotted Saddlebred. Serena and Stroker show in Jumping classes around the Bay Area and have many blue ribbons to show for it. In the show ring, Serena calls Stroker the “Air Devil.” In addition to Show Jumping, Serena likes Cross Country and Barrel Racing. Serena raced her first barrels this spring in seventeen seconds! Serena and her mom, Jeanne, like to ride together in the arena and on the trail. Serena is in fifth grade at the Hahn Elementary School. Her favorite subjects are math and science. In addition to riding, Serena likes cheerleading, and competed at Nationals this year with the Fierce Cheer Elite Squad in Los Angeles. She also plays the flute. Serena lives with her mom and older brother, Bryce, in Rohnert Park. Serena plans on being an equine veterinarian and horse trainer as an adult, and she wants to own her own ranch. U



You go, girl!



Serena demonstrates her great form



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Rincon Riders Youth Group

By Alisa Dodge, Rincon Riders Adult Liaison

Looking for an active, fun, youth equestrian group to join? Meet the Rincon Riders! We are the junior auxiliary equestrians of the Sonoma County Driving and Riding Club (SCDRC). Our objective is to become better horse-people while being safe and having fun! We are a multidisciplinary group that rides in western, english, and Australian saddles. Our meetings are at 10:00am on the second Saturday of every month. Meeting locations are confirmed monthly in the club newsletter and on our website. We participate in all the SCDRC events, including play days, Ag days, trail rides, parades, and overnights. Please visit our web site at <http://www.rinconriders.org> for more information, pictures, meeting locations, and contact info. You are welcome to stop by any of our meetings or other club events to check us out!



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All Creatures Great and Small

Column editor Grant Miller, DVM

No Room at the Inn

Guest written by Kate Sullivan

I got a call the other day from an elderly woman with a crisis to solve. She was being foreclosed and had found homes for almost all her precious barnyard friends—even the chickens. But she had two older Arabs (twenty-six and twenty-seven years old) that still needed a place to go. They had been together and with her for more than twenty-five years. Twenty-five years! Pause to imagine that if you will...healthy and rideable. But she was down to ten days before eviction. The idea of putting them down or risking their future on a slaughter truck was more agonizing than the losses she was already facing.

We've all heard of similar situations especially since the economic meltdown. Sonoma County is rural, and many of us have acres attached to our homes. On those acres are our horses. With the implosion in the mortgage industry, we are losing our land and our horses to the recession. The horse industry may not rebound. How many of us know of former horse facilities that have recently been planted to grapes? While many folks are divided on how to handle displaced horses, we all realize that if horses go, part of the local economy goes, too, since horses are the second largest industry in the county. It's in all our best interests to keep healthy horses alive and kicking (well, alive anyway!) in Sonoma County. How can we get a handle on this problem?

The horse losses are hard to quantify, and knowing the stats can be critical in formulating policy. While large auction yards may be called upon to report numbers, vets euthanizing healthy horses, small auction yards (like ours in Petaluma), and foreclosed facilities that sell directly to kill buyers all fly under the radar. The California laws prohibiting shipment to slaughter in Mexico or Canada are apparently not enforced. Joe Shelton at TBfriends in Woodland anecdotally reports that he sees an average of three stock trailers crammed tight with horses leave northern California every week for slaughter—that's roughly 240 animals a month. Surely many trucks escape his notice. According to United States Department of Agriculture statistics, over 90% of these animals are healthy. According to auction goers who monitor the "kill pens" in northern California, many yearlings and untrained two and three year olds are making the trip this year. Many are beautiful and well-trained riding horses. Many of our family pets and broodmares are destined for the Japanese and European dinner plates. Sadly, even the slaughter industry does not want the "old and sick" horses any more than they would focus on old and sick cows.

In February, the International Animal Welfare Institute at UC Davis hosted a statewide meeting called the *UnWanted Horse Meeting*. Attendees included animal control officers, veterinary students, Humane Society representatives, and horse rescue groups from throughout the state. Discussion centered on the lack of options for horse owners with economic emergencies. Unlike dogs or cats, equines have nowhere to go while waiting for adoption. In addition, the cost of euthanasia and horse carcass disposal is prohibitive for a family that has lost income and land. Families and ranchers find themselves faced with a choice they never thought they would have to make.

One of the options discussed was regional "drop-off" shelters for horses. Such centers could provide an important central resource for desperate horse owners, and also potential adopters. In the worst case, unadoptable animals would be humanly and economically

euthanized. Unfortunately, horse shelter advocates find that neither state nor county monies have been reliable in the current fiscal crisis. That leaves fundraising as the primary option for creating and supporting the necessary facilities. Beth DeCaprio from the Grace Foundation (www.thegracefoundationofnorcal.org) gave an extensive presentation about their shelter facilities. The Grace Foundation also has an outreach program to assist groups with templates for creating and operating such shelters. So the blueprint is available, we just need to make it happen. As a community, can we come up with the funding to support our horses?

I run a small start-up nonprofit to help folks in this County find homes for their horses in these "interesting times." You might think animal welfare would be on the back burner in most people's outlook these days, but I find the opposite to be true. Our community members rise to the occasion to do what they can, even when they have limited means. Sonoma County has vacant land and unused facilities, perhaps we can engage members of our primary industry to support non-profit activities. It is time to have a local sit down meeting for those interested in keeping our horses with us as we make our way out of this recession.

In the meantime, if you can foster or adopt a horse or more, please call and/or visit SAFER's website at www.saferhorse.com. SAFER is Sonoma Action For Equine Rescue and we are here to help our community with these issues. You may list your horse on our website for free. We maintain an email alert list for folks willing to receive notices of horses in need. If you have ideas about fundraising or want to volunteer please drop us a line at info@saferhorse.com or call 707-824-9543. U

DONATE A BALE

Maintaining our Horses Through the Recession

Local rescue organization SAFER (Sonoma Action For Equine Rescue) has created a program designed to feed displaced horses, or horses in need. Through this program folks can contribute any amount at the check out stand at their local feed store and receive a receipt for tax deduction. The money collected is spent right at that local business for hay and pellets that will feed horses in need. The DONATE A BALE program has become popular very quickly. Donators can choose to leave their name and email and receive bulletins regarding horses helped by DONATE A BALE.

Contributing customers are making a statement that they care about their county's horses, and about the folks who are in transition and needing this service. They also help increase the sales that will keep their favorite feed store going through the downturn. Finally, contributors get a tax deduction for this activity which is meaningful to them. Look for DONATE A BALE at your favorite feed store.

SAFER also needs volunteers to transport hay and horses on an occasional basis. Transport expenses are also tax deductible. See www.saferhorse.com or call 707-824-9543 for more info, and to learn more about horses that need your help.

The Spouse Speaks

Learning the Ropes

Written by Anonymous

I wasn't raised with horses, nor did I have any desire to be. In fact, my relationship with horses got off to a rocky start. At the age of six, while minding my own business (*sort of*) at the tail end of my friend's mare, I learned just how a horse hoof feels when planted on my shin.

After that, I resigned myself to riding carousel horses for the rest of my childhood.

In my twenties, a friend suggested seeing the backcountry of Yellowstone National Park on a five day horsepacking trip. I remem-

bered as a child hearing some pretty terrifying stories of encountering grizzly bears in the backcountry of Yellowstone. You know, one of those stories about finding steaming fresh grizzly scat around a bend in the trail, just before . . .

After much hesitation, my bags were packed and we were headed to Wyoming's grizzly country. After the first seven hour day riding my bay trail horse Hank, I was beginning to learn that extended periods in the saddle is damn hard work. We saw some spectacular scenery, enjoyed some great fireside meals and storytelling, and made good friends. Fortunately or unfortunately, we never encountered any grizzly bears. I guess grizzlies don't care much for a string of twenty-five horses with gun-toting wranglers and guests.



My trail horse—Buck

Several years later, I found myself at an equestrian jumping event. I was absolutely blown away by the athleticism of the equine athletes, as well as the skill and balance of the riders.

My wife and I enjoyed the occasional beach horseback ride in Costa Rica and Mexico during the first fifteen years of our marriage, and she periodically spoke about horse rescue. Eventually one summer, she took a serious interest in developing her horsemanship skills, and we suddenly owned a young paint horse named Rowdy. Of course, trail riding as a couple isn't possible without a husband horse, so along came Buck (*buck?*).

Managing a docile string horse in Yellowstone is a very different experience from dealing with a young horse in a stall. The

simple task of taking a blanket off Rowdy made me very uneasy.

In fact, simply leading Buck to the pasture (with him frequently speeding up ahead of me, naturally) was frightening. I was sure I would be trampled at some point. Of course, the horses sensed my uncertainty, and took full advantage of the opportunity. I listened to advice, and prac-

ticed, and little by little, I was able to take on the role of alpha with the horses and overcome some of my fears.

Storm clouds were brewing, however. My wife signed us up for a weeklong stay at a working cattle ranch in New Mexico. My limited skills at horsemanship were going to be severely tested. I was going to be riding off trail, up and down steep ravines, galloping down sandy washes, jumping ditches, and herding cattle! Buck suddenly looked rather un-intimidating. I needed some formal trail lessons—fast! Ready or not, after ten weeks, boots were on and bags were packed.

On arrival, the wranglers probably looked me over and thought that it would be a long week. Then they put me to a riding test to see how well I could trot, lope, and control a horse. I felt like a kid again, taking my driver's test at age sixteen. . . Except this time, I had less control over the moving vehicle.

Words cannot describe the thrills the following seven days had in store. Galloping down sandy washes with six other horses at breakneck speed is one of the greatest thrills imaginable. Traversing 100,000 acres of gorgeous New Mexican terrain without a trail, covering twenty miles in a day, allowed me to connect with the horse and the landscape in a unique way. It helped my relationship with Buck, for sure, to know what we could have.

I'm still a horse husband, who rides a husband horse, but it's different. I can't resist the sound of horse's hooves clip-clopping along a rocky slope, or the sight of a herd grazing as the sun sets. I anticipate the quiet, rhythmic rocking I feel when I ride on the trail next to my wife. Even though I don't have the motivation she has to be a skilled rider, I have still evolved as a horseman. You'll know me on the trail if you see me—bouncing along, trying to keep up with my wife. . . Smiling. See you out there. ☺





From the Horse's Mouth

Local Arabian Aces Dressage Show

KHS Rhapsody ("Rhapsody"), owned by Kathy Campbell, "barely touched the ground twice" according to a local Arab trainer during her impressive wins at the Fifty-First Annual Golden Gate Arabian Horse Show at the Santa Rosa Fairgrounds this spring (see related article p.16). The well-attended event, held the last week-end in March, drew Arabian horses from all over northern California. Local professional dressage trainer Cheryl Krug entered Rhapsody in the Sporthorse Suitability for Dressage Class, which she won. Cheryl then entered and rode her in the Arabian Sporthorse under Saddle Championship. Rhapsody competed against several Arabians from the greater area, winning the championship. After the event, one of the judges was reported to say, "This mare is loaded with dressage talent." Kathy plans to continue Rhapsody's dressage training with Cheryl, and show her at training level "for now." For information about dressage training with Cheryl Krug, email her at cherylkrug@comcast.net. For more information about Arabians and dressage, visit www.arabianhorses.org.



Local Mother-Daughter Team Burns it up at Fairgrounds Barrel Racing Event

Local cowgirls, Katelyn and Linda Hogerton, showed us how it's done at the First Annual California Dreaming Pac West Sanctioned Barrel Race at the Santa Rosa Fairgrounds in February. During the three day competition, daughter Katelyn, riding her thirteen year old Quarter Horse, Spinner, took three third places in 3D, Novice Division. Mom Linda, riding her twenty-two year old Appendix Quarter Horse, Kidd, took two third places in the 4D, Senior Division. Linda just recently started barrel racing at the age of fifty. She attributes her success to her "great coach and great, great friend," local barrel racing expert Christine Gutsch. Christine's daughter Jordan was the big star, winning The Average for the three day event riding nine year old Quarter Horse, Junior (Classified Money), owned by Stacie Martinelli. Linda is interested in increasing local interest and participation in barrel racing.

She sits on the board of the local National Barrel Horse Association (NBHA) District Seven Chapter. If you are interested in joining, or sponsoring an event, email Linda at hogerton@sbcgloal.net or call 707-889-3314, or contact Stacie Martinelli (NBHA District Seven Director) by calling 707-292-8103.



Sonoma County Trails Council Fundraiser: Fun and Successful

The Sonoma County Trails Council (SCTC), established in 1967, is dedicated to promoting the establishment and improvement of local public trails. The SCTC organizes events and work days to help maintain local trails, advocates for safe and proper use of trails, offers special training in trail maintenance, and informs the public regarding parks and trails developments. The SCTC is a collaborative organization which includes members from all user groups: pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians. On March 28, the cycling club BikeMonkey held a fundraiser for the SCTC, the Boggs 8HR Relay. The Relay, held at the Boggs Demonstration State Forest in Lake County, consists of a grueling eight hour event, which gets easier the more riders a team has. More than 450 riders participate, including several members of the SCTC. For the third straight year, SCTC offered volunteer services for the race including serving beer, wine, hot sandwiches, and an Italian dinner. "The event was a great success for all," stated Rob Helms, SCTC Executive Director. Helms celebrated his thirty-sixth birthday and had the opportunity to ride the nine mile course prior to the race. "We all had a great time, and achieved our fundraising goal, which enables us to continue our stewardship and advocacy efforts for Sonoma County trails." For more information about the Sonoma County Trails Council, visit www.sonomacounty-trails.org. For more info about the Boggs 8HR Relay, visit www.bikemonkey.net.



TRAP your Hours to Maintain Trail Access

The California State Horsemen's Association (CSHA) maintains a database known

as the TRAP system. This database has been designed to record the length of time, names of trails, and specific parks in which members ride. The data are used to demonstrate equestrian use of trails if issues surrounding limitation of equestrian access arise. State Chair Marie Grisham also presents the trail-use data at various meetings to support the horse industry in the parks and national forests. Trail hour logs may be submitted either through email or the post. To belong to the TRAP program you must be a member of CSHA. Membership requires an application, and a yearly fee of \$15. Your state membership fees automatically cover membership in your regional chapter. For more information about the California State Horsemen's Association and TRAP visit www.california-statehorsemen.com.



Homeowners Insurance May Not Cover Your Horses

Do you know for sure whether your personal liability coverage thru your homeowner's policy covers equine incidents? It turns out that most policies do not cover equines, or if they did in the past, they may not now. Your personal liability umbrella policies may not help either. If your horse injures someone on the trail, or gets loose and causes an accident or injury, you may be subject to legal action. One quick call to your broker and you can find out if you're covered. Companies offer a variety of plans, with varying coverage depending on your activities. If you board your horses, your barn owner may have a policy that could possibly cover your horse for an additional charge. Some horse registries offer liability insurance, but it might only provide coverage while at a club sponsored event or show. Do your homework, and contact your agent or broker. If your insurance broker cannot supply you with an equine liability rider, ask who can, or try contacting Michele at Jorene Mize Insurance, the company that provides insurance to the Back Country Horsemen group. Her email is Michele@mize-insurance.com, or you can phone her at 559-877-7631.

Adopt a Pet

Sonoma County Rescue Organizations, contributors



The Adopt a Pet column is a free section of the Horse Journal for local nonprofit organizations to present rescue horses available for adoption. Horses may be any discipline, breed, or age, and at any level of training. Horses may or may not be rideable. The maximum price is \$500, but offering organizations will likely perform screening of potential owners, and require applications. For more information about any horse, or to express an interest, visit the websites provided at the close of each ad.



Soleil

Breed: Thoroughbred
Age: 4 years **Height:** 15.3 **Sex:** Mare
Disposition: She is very sweet, affectionate, and loves attention. She has good ground manners when she gets out regularly (four to five days a week). Students twelve years old and under walk and handle her successfully.

Training: We call her light green. She trailers, ties, and has been bathed by "summer camp students." She is excellent to tack and bridle. Good with dogs, bikes, school buses, and other stimuli. She longes at all three gaits, and has been ridden at the walk and trot.

Likes: Regular work and a regular routine

Dislikes: We haven't found any yet!

Health: She is in excellent health, and an easy keeper. She has four shoes all year round, and she is up to date on medical and dental care.

Rider skill Level: She would need an intermediate rider.

Cost: We require a \$500 donation and a good match. The donation includes three lessons: ground handling, full care, and riding.

Comments: We have had Soleil almost a year. She is from the track but never raced. She is a wonderful mover, like a jumper, with a fair amount of action in front. She could be anything from an Eventer to a "regular" horse. We also have Soleil's half-brother Axl available for adoption. They are similar horses.

We are not a traditional rescue. We keep most horses for at least a year. We like to learn who they are and what they like. We do ground work, longe-ing, tacking, arena, and trail work. We treat our rescued and rehabbing horses as if they are in full or part-time training.

Interested? Contact www.welltrainedhorses.com

Caleb

Breed: Thoroughbred, registered with Jockey Club as "Mac Attack"
Age: 20 years **Height:** 15.2 hands **Sex:** Gelding
Disposition: Sweet horse, loves people; lovely to ride, light in the bridle, responsive to leg. He tries hard, works hard, and is a wonderful horse.

Training: Trail riding, elementary dressage, started over fences; loads and trailers well. Calm in new places. Ties and bathes well.

Likes: Great work ethic under saddle; loves to learn.

Dislikes: Dogs and strange horses walking directly behind him. Wears a red ribbon in his tail at public events. Needs work with electric clippers.

Health: Excellent! Sound and has been in steady work since July 2008. Current on dental, vaccinations, chiropractic, worming and feet. Great feet for a TB. Easy keeper.

Rider skill level: Intermediate

Cost: No adoption fee to approved lifetime home

Comments: A former stakes winning racehorse, Caleb is looking for someone to help write the rest of his heartwarming rescue story. He was rescued from a slaughter dealer's feedlot. Not much is known about his history past age four, although he has "ranch horse" sensibility and excellent ground manners. Caleb is a lovely mover with an uphill build. He is sound with clean legs and joints and has much to offer his new person. Caleb is located in Santa Rosa and is available to take on trial.

Interested? Contact www.saferhorse.com



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FULL PAGE AD	7.5" Wide x 9.5" Tall	B&W \$500 per issue	Color: \$900 per issue
HALF PAGE AD	7.5" Wide x 4.75" Tall	B&W \$250 per issue	Color: \$525 per issue
QUARTER PAGE AD	3.5" Wide x 4.5" Tall	B&W \$150 per issue	Color: \$300 per issue
EIGHTH PAGE AD	3.5" Wide X 2" Tall	B&W \$ 65 per issue	Color: Not available

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Questions about ad specifications or design: Contact Lynn Newton – publications@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

Write for the Sonoma County Horse Journal

Would you like to see your name in print? Got something to say? 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. 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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