

ISSUE ONE

THE

2008

ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y



E Y E O N C O N F O R M A T I O N

Official Publication of the United States Icelandic Horse Congress
Member Association of FEIF (International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations)



FEIF AND THE USIHC

FEIF is the international association dedicated to the protection and promotion of Icelandic horses. Comprised of the National Breed Associations of 17 European countries (including Iceland), Canada, and the United States, it governs competition activities and regulates the breeding and registration of Icelandic horses throughout the world outside of Iceland. See www.feif.org for more information.

The United States Icelandic Horse Congress was formed in 1987 by representatives of the U.S. Icelandic Horse Federation and the International Icelandic Horse Association to meet the FEIF rule that only one association from each country is allowed to represent the breed. As a FEIF member organization, the Congress maintains the Registry of Icelandic Horses in the United States, sponsors U.S. participation in international competition, and regulates breeding and competition activities in the United States in accordance with FEIF rules. USIHC also sponsors activities, events, and educational programs in the United States which are beneficial to the overall interests of the breed. Yearly membership is \$40 (\$35 for youth members); family membership, \$60. For more information, see the Congress website at www.icelandics.org or contact the Congress office at 6800 East 99th Ave., Anchorage, Alaska 99507; phone & fax: 907-346-2223; email: icecong@aol.com.

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REGISTRY

The Congress maintains the Registry of Icelandic Horses in the United States in accordance with FEIF rules. The Registry Rules and all forms needed to register an Icelandic Horse in the United States are available on the Congress website at www.icelandics.org.

For more information, contact Asta Covert
P.O. Box 1724, Santa Ynez, CA 93450;
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WEBSITE

The USIHC's home on the web is www.icelandics.org. Visit us for up-to-the-minute information.

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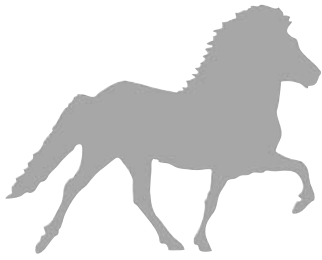
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ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y

THE ICELANDIC HORSE QUARTERLY

ISSUE ONE 2008

Official Publication of the United States Icelandic Horse Congress (USIHC), a member association of FEIF (International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations).

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The Icelandic Horse Quarterly is published in March, June, September, and December by the USIHC as a benefit of membership. Membership fees of \$40 per individual (\$35 for youth members) or \$60 per family (2 adults and children) are due on January 1 each year. Renew online at www.icelandics.org.

USIHC members are encouraged to submit articles and photos or illustrations for publication. Deadlines are January 1 (for the March issue), April 1, August 1, and October 1. See the instructions online at www.icelandics.org or email the editorial committee at quarterly@icelandics.org. We reserve the right to edit submissions.

Advertising rates and instructions are also online at www.icelandics.org. Deadlines are the same as above.

Back issues of *The Icelandic Horse Quarterly* may be purchased for \$5.00 each as available.

Editorial Committee: Heidi Benson, Nancy Marie Brown, Alys Culhane, Denise Chythlook, Anne Elwell, Amy Goddard, Janice McDonald, Penny Miller, Alex Pregitzer, Chris Romano, Judy Strehler, Nancy Wines-DeWan

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4 NEWS

4 USIHC News

8 FEIF News

9 Regional Club Updates

14 National News

16 International News

15 BEYOND THE OVAL TRACK:

Eye on Conformation *by Nancy Wines-DeWan*

23 COLUMNS

23 Youth: Tolt Kid *by Barb Riva*

24 Spotlight: The Education Committee *by Alex Pregitzer*

27 Education: My Riding Badge *by Alys Culhane*

31 Teachers & Trainers: Who is Bernie Willis? *by Alex Pregitzer*

33 Pleasure: Ready for Iceland? *by Amy Goddard*

36 It Works for Me: Dealing with SE *by David Kline*

39 Horse Tales: A Foal Is Born *by Kathy Sierra*

43 MARKETPLACE

On the cover: From her photo sequence "A Foal is Born," an image by Kathy Sierra of the birth of Solfaxa from Seigur Icelandics. The mare is Birta from Icelandic Horse Farm. The sire was Pa fra Laugarvatni. See page 39 for more photos.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Bernie Willis writes: Why join the USIHC? Several folk have asked me, the president of the USIHC, Why should I be a member? It's a no-brainer to me. Let me share my thoughts with you, so you can share them with someone who isn't a member yet. For less than the cost of one fuel fill-up for your pick-up truck you receive:

1. Four great issues of the magazine dedicated to the issues of promoting the Icelandic horse in this country. Local horse news, international horse happenings, how to's, Icelandic horses and accessories for sale. I love it.
2. Access to Worldfengur, the worldwide database for Icelandic horses. Once you catch on how to use it, WF is a direct route through history to your horse's background, FEIF news, and the latest horse information from Iceland.
3. Access to the organization that sets the standards for breeding, sport competition, and education in the U.S. You as a member get a say in how these important things are decided.
4. Access to an educational system with years of history tailored to your favorite breed.
5. The opportunity to become a judge for sport competitions or breeding evaluations.
6. The opportunity to become a certified Icelandic horse riding instructor.
7. The opportunity to learn from fellow Icelandic horses owners the how's and why's of your chosen breed. It's in the *Quarterly* and various seminars.
8. Your participation allows others to learn about our favorite horse through fairs and demonstrations.

Personally, the more I'm involved in the USIHC the better I like it. Years ago when I traveled, I had coffee with strangers in a café. Now I



Gigja Einarsdóttir

Five-Gait Open winner Elin Esping riding Haukur Freyr fra Hofnum at the Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show in November.

enjoy coffee with friends, in homes, stables, and barns. I get this synchronic feeling of working for a common cause. I am especially proud of some recent accomplishments of your leaders. The website now gives members access to each other. You can now look up your Icelandic friends through www.icelandics.org. When Caryn Cantella and Barb Riva retired from the board at the end of the year, two valuable persons were appointed, Kari Wangard and Asta Covert. We've responded to your requests for an Annual Meeting with more than dry reports. Later this month we will meet near Madison, Georgia for educational seminars preceding the annual meeting. I'd love to see each of you there.

NEW JUDGES

The Education Committee congratulates several USIHC members who have studied to become judges. In April of 2007, Will Covert passed the exam to become North America's first International Sports Judge for Icelandic Horses. Will not only passed the extremely difficult exam, but

passed it with very good scores!

In November of 2007, four participants of the judging seminar in Lexington, KY, passed the exam to become USIHC Intern Judges: Andrea Brodie, Nicki Esdorn, Susan Peters, and Katrin Sheehan. The certification allows them to scribe at sanctioned shows, to co-judge alongside certified judges, and to judge certain classes in schooling shows. For more on the Intern Judge program, see the Spotlight column in this issue.

NEW TRAINERS

In August of 2007, Sara Lyter and Bernie Willis were the first North Americans to get certified as FEIF International Level 1 Trainers. The FEIF trainer seminar is a new program, and Bernie and Sara went to Germany to take the 17-day seminar and underwent a total of nine exams (written, oral, and ridden) that they both passed, even though very little material was available in English to prepare for the test. Bernie is featured in this issue's Teachers & Trainer's column; Sara will be featured in the June issue.

NATIONAL RANK

The Competition (Sport) Committee has posted the 2007 National Ranking Summary, which ranks riders who participated in USIHC sanctioned shows last year, on the Congress website at www.icelandics.org. The trophies will be given out at the annual meeting in March. Here are the top riders in each class, and their average scores.

T1 (Open Individual Tolt): Asta Covert (7.50)

T2 (Open Loose Rein Tolt): Anne-Marie Martin (7.33)

T3 (Open Group Tolt): Asta Covert (7.35)

T5 (Intermediate Tolt): Kristen Houser (5.55)

T6 (Intermediate Loose Rein Tolt): Sverrir Bjartmarz (5.35)

T7 (Novice Tolt): Jennifer Wright (5.55)

T8 (Youth Tolt): Sophie Shalhoub (6.55)

VI (Open Individual Four Gait): Asta Covert (7.00)

V2 (Open Group Four Gait): Asta Covert (6.75)

V3 (Intermediate Four Gait): Alora Blackman (5.95)

V5 (Novice Four Gait): Rachel Ng (5.50)

V6 (Youth Four Gait): Lucy Nold (5.87)

F1 (Open Individual Five Gait): Asta Covert (6.55)

F2 (Open Group Five Gait): Asta Covert (5.40)

F3 (Intermediate Five Gait): Kari Wangard (5.80)

RIDING BADGES

In July of 2007, seven youth participants at a seminar in Kentucky passed the Riding Badge Level 1. Congratulations to Alissa Cockman,

Eugenia Davis, Grace Fernyhough, Lydia Huggins, Courtney & Sarah Swanson, and Madeline Thomas. Another six youth participants in Minnesota went through the seminar for Level 1 successfully and will be examined in 2008: Kevin Draeger, Carley O'Connor, Shaylee Russ, Jennifer Stevenson, Aubrey Wood, Erica Wood. In Alaska, Alys Culhane and Brandi Herr studied Levels 1 and 2 of the Riding Badge program and passed their exam in both levels in 2007. Learn more about the Riding Badge program in this issue's Education and Spotlight columns.

KENTUCKY SHOW

Kathy Love writes: The 2007 Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show, which is billed as the coldest show in the annual roster, was held on the weekend of November 17-18 in weather that was uncharacteristically warm! Gudmar Petursson, Laura Benson, and Thorir (Iso Lindal's dad) gave lessons and guidance as to class entry on Friday. On the weekend there were 48 horse-rider pairs in 18 classes, judged by three International Judges: Petur Jokull Hakonarson, Marlise Grimm, and our own Will Covert. This was the first time an American has participated as a U.S. show judge. Alex Pregitzer and Sara Lyter intern-judged. As the show had been preceded by a judging seminar taught by Marlise to 12 attendees, there were also five examinees judging as part of their test. Four of these are now intern judges: Susan Peters, Andrea Brodie, Katrin Sheehan, and Nicki Esdorn. Congratulations!

Participants came from California, Minnesota, Vermont, and many northeastern and mid-Atlantic States. A number of promising young riders performed well and are starting to clean the clocks of their elders! After the conclusion of Saturday's

classes, adults challenged kids in a drill-team performance. The pattern was given to the teams two hours before and there was American-Idol style judging (without the sarcasm). The audience naturally cheered louder for the kids, but the judge had to award the prize to the old ladies, who had done the drill more accurately. The music for the old ladies, incidentally was "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer."

Thanks are due to David Kline, who filled in at the last moment for Bernie Willis as announcer, as Bernie's team of sled dogs couldn't get him here from Alaska. Thanks also to Doug Smith and Jan Kane who did heroic IceTest duty; Maggie Brandt, Show Secretary Extraordinaire; and Laura Benson, who pulled the music off, again, at the last moment. Thanks also to many generous sponsors and of course, to Gudmar Petursson and Gigja Einarsdottir, who make it all happen! (To which Gudmar adds, "If you are going to write something about who should get thanks for working on the show, Kathy did a lot her self and should not be left out.")



Four-Gait Open winner Amber Perry at the Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show.

Gigja Einarsdottir

WORLD FENGUR

WorldFengur has announced that they will be changing the way USIHC members are provided with access for 2008. These changes will be in place in February. Check the Bulletin Board of the Congress website (www.icelandics.org) for information.

The Icelandic Horse !



"I don't have a Porsche; I have a Porse - short for Perfect Horse !"

YOUTH CUP

The 2008 FEIF Youth Cup will be held in Brunnadern, Switzerland, July 12-20. Deadline for applications was March 1; finalists will be notified by April 1. The FEIF Youth Cup is an international Icelandic horse competition held in a different European country in July of even-numbered summers. The United States is allowed to send three riders. Teams of six international teenage riders are made up the first day of the Cup. Renowned Icelandic horse trainers train the riders the first three days. The competition among the international teams is held the last two days. Ages for the competitions are 14-17. Applicants must be a member of the USIHC. He/she must fill out an application, including two personal character references written by adults other than relatives (teacher, church youth leader, etc.), and submit a

DVD showing a Four-Gait or Five-Gait program and a Tolt program. The DVDs are judged by the FEIF judge at the March Burbank Show; the minimum try-out score is 4.5 for each program. This year the applications were scored by an independent four-person panel made up of Asta Covert, Will Covert, David Kline, and Heidi Kline. For more information, contact the Youth Committee chair Sandie Weaver.

USIHC BOARD

The USIHC Board met via teleconference on Oct. 23, Nov. 20, and Dec. 18, 2007. Also attending at least one meeting were Regional Club observers Annette Coulon (Kraftur), Alys Culhane (Alaska), Dawn Shaw (Cascade), and Judy Strehler (Flugnir). This report summarizes all three meetings. Complete minutes of the USIHC Board Meetings can be found on the website at www.icelandics.org/bod/minutes.php.

Caryn Cantella resigned as registrar and was thanked by Bernie Willis and the other board members for her 22 years of service. It was noted by Bernie that "You will be dearly missed by all USIHC members." The Board agreed unanimously that Asta Colvert and Kari Pietsch-Wangard be elected to the board. They will replace Barb Riva and Caryn Cantella. Karen Olsen and Doug Smith were also considered.

Ed Hilgaertner gave the treasurer's report. The opening balance for November was \$9,020.84 and the closing balance was \$8,683.26. The month of December, however, ended with \$3,824.91. Significant expenses were the judges' fee for the Kentucky Seminar at \$3,900 and the printing and mailing costs for the USIHC Quarterly, which came to \$2,142.99. Membership renewals brought the total for November to \$6,955. There

was considerable discussion about the financial status of the USIHC. With the goal of making note where funds are coming from and going to, some opted to have a report take the form of a monthly analysis, and others opted to have a report take the form of an annual analysis. It was decided to ask Kari to make an analysis of the current financial situation; she will be provided with past reports. It was suggested that family and farm membership dues be raised by \$5.00. This will enable the club to cover computer and WorldFengur Costs. This will need to be ratified at the next annual meeting.

Giving the registrar's report, Caryn Cantella reported that there was \$67,224.05 at the beginning of November, and that the balance at the month's end was \$69,418.05.

There was considerable talk about the upcoming USIHC meeting. This year's annual meeting will be held on March 29, in Madison, Georgia. All in attendance agreed that the club needs to have activities that will bring members to this and future annual meetings, and that these activities need to be both interesting and affordable. Katrin Sheehan, who lives in Georgia, has proposed having a series of events prior to the meeting, some of which may include pace training, judging evaluation, and a breeding seminar. The board members have also been discussing how the actual meeting might be structured and what activities will be included. Sheehan agreed to propose possible options, which she'll post on the internet. Board members will vote on these possibilities.

The Breeding Committee put before the group the issue of Certificate of Origin, which is essentially a document that indicates the Icelandic horse buyer has paid all their overseas purchase-related bills. The USIHC



Chris Romano

members voted unanimously to continue to support the acceptance of this particular document. Breeding leader Katrin Sheehan noted that the first 2008 evaluation has been approved. This will be held at Creekside Farm in Georgia on May 17-18. If there are enough horses and interest, the event may also be held on May 16. There was considerable discussion about the future of World Fenger—its purpose, goals, and benefits to the Congress. Some members see it as a valuable learning tool, while others are concerned that people find it difficult to use. For now, the Congress will keep it.

Laura Benson, chair of the Promotion Committee, noted that there will be a breed profile on Icelandic horses in the January issue of *Horse Illustrated*. This full-length article will contain interviews with Katrin Sheehan and herself. Laura suggested that pre-written articles promoting the Icelandic horse be sent to magazines that request them. She is currently working with Kim Hart on this. Laura also noted that the recently held Equine Affaire in Massachusetts was a huge success. The Icelandic Performance Team did better than ever, and there seemed to be a larger than

normal attendance rate throughout the entire show. She had a meeting with Debbie Putnam about the 2008 Equine Affaires, both in Ohio and Massachusetts, and plans for both events are underway.

Mark Peal resigned as head of the website committee. Doug Smith, who was previously coordinating the website with Mark, will chair the committee. Judy Strehler, head of the Quarterly committee, noted that there have been problems with the USIHC Quarterly mailing lists; she will talk with Doug Smith and get back to the board on this. All voted in favor of the use of Paypal to pay for ads.

The Regional Club Committee Report was given. The decision to accept the West Coast Can-Am Icelandic Horse club as a regional club was given unanimous approval. There are currently two club brochures in the works. The first brochure offers general information on the Icelandic horse, and the second provides USIHC information. Andrea and Laura are currently working on the second brochure.

The Competition Committee revisited the issue of housing competition judges. Currently, those who are competing cannot house the judges. The board members voted 3-4 to keep the current rule the way it is. Ed suggested that the USIHC make a concerted effort for all event participants to have access to the judges at USIHC events. There will continue to be reimbursement costs for the first two years of a USIHC sanctioned show's existence. As defined "existence" is the organization and location of that particular show. Reimbursement costs go to pay for FEIF and USIHC judges and for their transportation costs. Reimbursement costs have been provided to Los

Angeles and will be provided to Santa Ynez show organizers.

The final show of the year was held in Kentucky on November 14-16. The three FEIF judges included Peter Jokull Hakanarsson, Marlise Grimm, and Will Covert. This was the first time an American has participated as a U.S. show judge. Marlise Grimm, who in the past has conducted intern judge seminars in the U.S. flew in and did the training and testing for the intern judge seminars. The test consisted of a practical part in which participants judged the riders in the Kentucky show, and these scores were compared to judge's scores. An oral exam was also an integral part of this test.

In 2008 the Education Committee would like to start offering a wider variety of seminars and clinics which could be held in conjunction with shows and Icelandic horse events. The committee will soon come up with more suggestions. The board decided that there will be a \$20 user fee for the riding badge. This fee will cover administrative costs. Judge, examiner, and instructor fees will, as they have in the past, remain separate.

The Application for the Youth Committee and team leaders have been written and are waiting for approval by the Board. It was suggested that the Country Youth leader be reimbursed \$100 for overseas phone costs. This proposal was approved.

It was unanimously agreed that observers (those who are *both* regional club members and USIHC members) will soon be able to listen in on the USIHC teleconference board meetings.

WC 2011

The Board of FEIF has decided to grant the World Championships 2011 to St Radegrund, Austria (Islandpferde Reithof Piber). St. Radegrund is located in Upper Austria, close to the German border near Munich. The FEIF Youth Cup 2005 took place at the same location. The application was very well prepared and presented and fit the rules and regulations approved by the Delegates Assembly in 2006 and 2007.



Chris Romano

FIPO 2008

Every year, IceTest, the free competition software provided by FEIF, requires an update of FIPO Rules. Starting 2008, changes of FIPO will be published and valid by April 1 of each year. This is due to the change of the date of the yearly Delegates' Assembly from September to February or March. A new set of FIPO rules for IceTest will be published at the same time. IceTest will also be adapted to allow rules of a previous year to be valid until April. The current version of IceTest still requires an update of rules after January 1. A set of rules (to cover the period between January

1 and April 1) is available from the FEIF website.

2008 CONFERENCE

The 2008 FEIF Conference took place in Reykjavik, Iceland, on February 15-16. The main theme for the conference was the welfare of the horses, which was discussed both at the annual department meetings and in the plenary session.

PERUVIAN BIT

The FEIF Sport Committee has decided to add the Peruvian bit (and other bits specifically designed for other horse cultures) explicitly to the list of prohibited equipment. This bit is not suitable for the Icelandic horse style and/or culture. The bit is not allowed after January 31, 2008. The complete list of prohibited equipment is available at www.feif.org/equipment.

NEW ZEALAND

IHBRANZ, the Icelandic Horse Breeders and Riders Association New Zealand applied for associate membership of FEIF. Associate membership allows a country to join FEIF at an early stage, without having full obligations or rights. New Zealand would be the 19th country to join FEIF. At the moment, there are about 60 Icelandic horses in the country, many of them bred there. The Board of FEIF supports this application. The Delegates' Assembly will decide upon it at the FEIF Conference, February 15-16, 2008 in Reykjavik.

PACE RECORD

The eight-year-old world record in Pace Race (150m) has been broken by the Danish rider Samantha Leidesdorff with Mondrian vom Lucahof (DE1996106993), with a time of 13.75". The old record was by Gudmundur Bjorgvinsson with Reddi fra

Lykkegarden (13.8"). The record was established at the WM Sichtungsturnier in Kaufungen (D) on June 3, 2007. Registration took place December 10, 2007.



Chris Romano

WC 2007 DVD

The triple DVD disc on the World Championship 2007 in Holland was published in December. According to Eidfaxi.is, "There is detailed discussion on all the different competition events, and most horses in the championship are shown as well. The quality of the photography and film itself is good, and photos of the spectators and guests are placed into the film in a very entertaining way. The material from the finals is excellent, with many cameras working at the same time. All interested horsepeople should have this disc, regardless whether they were in Holland or not." Einar Öder Magnússon, the trainer of the Icelandic team, received the first copy. After watching a great deal of the 444 minutes of footage, he was clear in his comments: "This is really very nice, very professional." The triple DVD set can be ordered online at www.icelandichorses2007.tv, where you'll also find a list of national retailers.

REGIONAL CLUB UPDATES

ALASKA

Contact: Susan Tilly (907-455-6143; rstilly@gci.net)

CALIFORNIA

Contact: Ásta Covert (asta@tolt.net)
Website: www.ciacub.net

CASCADE

Several members have attended riding or training clinics since our last report. Lisa Brandenburger, Susan Rochester, and Linda Eddy attended, with horses, a Centered Riding for Gaited Horses clinic August 10-12 in Junction City, Oregon. The clinic was a combination of centered ground work and under saddle work, and really helped riders understand cues for gaits much better. All found it to be very helpful and are hoping to attend another of these clinics.

Another of the highlights was the Starting Young Horses Clinic at The Icelandic Horse Farm in Vernon, BC. Club Vice President Linda Eddy attended and was able to work with her own filly, Brana. With Robyn Hood and Christine Schwartz, we are able to learn better communications skills and watch our horses as they discover what we are asking of them as we learn to ask clearly.

The Pacific Northwest brings all sorts of interesting weather between October and February, so horse activities become a bit more restricted and home-based as a rule. However,



Linda Templeton



Lisa Roland

Birta the Horse Elf at a Christmas 4-H fundraiser in Oregon.

we would never let a little thing like weather stop our annual beach ride! Three horses and eight members made it to the house we rent in late October. Patti Moyer and Bonnie Houghton were our photographers. They also rode their pinto mare, Katla. Carol Burkhardt and Linda Eddy went, so Linda rode their new mare, Lipurta. Claudia Rancore rode

The sleigh driver is a friend and trainer from Germany, Sara Sun-Hee Schuh. The photo was taken on Linda Templeton's Red Feather Ranch in Trout Lake, Washington, in early December. Drottning, the silver bay, had just foaled in September.

Bylgja. Those were the only three horses. Linda was really proud of Lipurta because she had never been anywhere like that before and she was great! All the horses did very well. Bonnie and Peder Swenson came, but without horses. Lisa Roland was also there without a horse. The weather was terrible this time: cold and rainy as only an October Washington beach can be. Members had a nice break for a ride Saturday morning, but that was it for riding. The annual trip provided a wonderful time sitting in the living room with the fireplace, eating good food that we all took turns making, and getting to know each other better.

Sasha Roland, a 4-H member in the Moonlight Riders, has been busy introducing her club to Icelandic horses. In addition to sharing breed and showing standards that differ from the norm in our area, she was able to provide Birta, horse elf, as a backdrop for the 4-H club fundraiser this December. Since our Icelandics are so irresistible with all their fur in the winter, mom (Lisa Roland) and Sasha decided to volunteer Birta for the picture shooting. We parked at our Dalles, Oregon, PETCO and offered to snap pictures of Birta with kids that had gone shopping with their parents. We had several broken hearts when the parents pulled their kids off the back of the horse. I stopped counting how many times we heard the phrase, "I want that pony!"

Contact: Lisa M. McKeen (509-966-6135; blackhorsewoman@wabroad-band.com)

Website: www.cascadeicelandichorse-club.com

FLUGNIR

Contact: Kristin Wood (kristinhorse@hotmail.com)

Website: www.flugnir.50megs.com



Jurgen Kleffner, Suzi McGraw, Alice Sudduth, Kelsey Knight, and Sam Castleman wearing Icelandic sweaters at the holiday parade in Charles Town, West Virginia, in December.

FRIDA (FIRC)

Twelve members of the club participated in a ride on the Manassas National Battlefield Park in October. Jo Ann Brown organized the event. It was followed by a nice picnic. Everyone had a good time.

Club members Laura and Tony Colicchio, Dave Goodman, and Megan Milloy participated in Gudmar Petursson's show at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington in the middle of November. FIRC member Curt Pierce transported horses to the show. Curt and Tony Colicchio

also took part in a seminar for intern judges held to coincide with the show.

Marsha Korose, Megan Milloy, Rich Moore, and Curt Pierce participated in a holiday parade in Manassas, Virginia. Twenty riders signed up to do a parade in Charlestown, West Virginia, the following weekend. Unfortunately, rainy weather reduced the number who rode to five stalwarts.

The club had its annual holiday party and annual meeting at the home of Barbara Sollner-Webb in early December. Almost 30 members attended and enjoyed good company and excellent food.

The club's fall clothing drive resulted in the purchase of more club jackets, shirts, and saddle pads by members. As a result, close to \$250 was raised for the club youth scholarship fund. Susan Milloy led this effort and did a great job.

The club plans to do its usual active program of schooling shows, trail rides, and clinics in 2008. Six schooling shows are planned, along with six trail rides and three clinics. The drill team will continue with its training program and will perform at local events. For the first time, one of the



Rich Moore, Curt Pierce, and Marsha Korose (driving a wagon with Fjords) at the holiday parade in Manassas, Virginia, in December.

schooling shows will be held at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington, Virginia at the end of June.

Contact: Rich Moore (703-754-0883; rmpm3481@verizon.net)

Website: www.firc.us.

KLETTAFJALLA

Contact: Sandy Clouse (burlwood@directnet.com or 307-867-2223.

Web site: www.totallyice.com/Klettafjalla.php

KRAFTUR

Contact: Annette Coulon (831-722-8774; mountainicelandics@hotmail.com)

Website: www.kraftur.us

LOS ANGELES

Contact: Kristin Houser (530-823-6046; hawkhaven@hotmail.com)

NORTHEAST

Contact: Brian Puntin (413-528-6188 Ext 2; bpuntin@bcn.net)

Website: www.neihc.com

SAINT SKUTLA

The St. Skutla Icelandic Horse Club welcomed two new members—Sandy Plumb and Heidi Wilhelm. Sandy lives in Mendon and bought her first Icelandic horse, a 2007 colt, Skati from Sand Meadow (sire: Kalman fra Laekjamoti; dam: Flugra fra Blonduosi). Skati had a short ride to his new home and was accompanied his buddy, a Mediteranean miniture donkey which Sandy also purchased from Steve and Andrea.

Heidi Wilhelm moved from Michigan to upstate New York this fall. She brought with her two Icelandic geldings, Hlekkur fra Aslandi and Blakkur fra Laugaboli. Heidi and her husband purchased a farm in Mountour Falls, N.Y., and are getting settled in. We are all looking forward to meeting her and going riding.



Skati from Sand Meadow at three months old

Andrea Barber

On August 26 four club members, Andrea Barber riding Vikingur fra Gotu, Steve Barber riding Kalman fra Laekjamoti, Heidi Kline riding Djakni fra Litla-Dunhaga I, and David Kline riding Sorli fra Dalbae II competed in a Trail Trial at Fieldstone Farm in Canandaigua, N.Y. The event was a benefit for the Wyoming Coun-

ty Sheriff's Mounted Unit. It was a great day with inventive obstacles and beautiful scenery.

On September 15 three club members, Stephanie Sher riding Flygill from Vesturbaer, Andrea Barber riding Vikingur, and Steve Barber riding Kalman, travelled to Syracuse, N.Y., to compete in a Trail Trial sponsored by the Central New York Horse Club. The obstacles were challenging, but the weather even more so. The group had to deal with sun, rain, cold, and hail! The group did well, however. In the Trail Boss division Steve and Kalman placed 4th, Andrea and Vikingur placed 6th, Stephanie and Flygill placed 7th and also got the award for the oldest horse and rider combination!

David and Heidi Kline went to Dillsburg this year, David as a participant and Heidi in her supporting position as Sport Chairman. David won both the Intermediate Four Gait and Open Tolt on David fra Oddholi.

Stephanie Sher and Flygill from Vesturbaer enjoy success at the Trail Trial.



Andrea Barber

David, Heidi, and two of their horses also attended the 24th Annual Cornell Farriers Seminar on November 10-11 in Ithaca, N.Y. Sigurdur Torfi, Director of Shoeing Principles at Holar University in Iceland, was invited to lecture about shoeing the Icelandic horse. He brought his friend and horse trainer, Sigurdur Oli Kristinsson. David's and Heidi's stallions Oskar fra Litla-Dal and Logi fra Skardi were used in demonstrations. On Saturday, Sigurdur Torfi gave a three-hour lecture in the morning and the afternoon. Sigurdur Oli rode Logi in the morning, while Sigurdur Torfi explained about the horse and its gaits. He then trimmed and replaced the shoes, explaining the possible ways to benefit the horse by using larger or smaller shoes, pads, packing material, and other methods suitable for the Icelandic horse. Then Sigurdur Oli rode Logi again while Sigurdur Torfi pointed out any improvements in movement. This was repeated in the afternoon with Oskar. By the end of each period the attendees were standing very close, almost attempting to be a part of the work. On Sunday, Sigurdur Torfi gave two one-hour lectures. The subjects were Basic Shoeing Principles for the Icelandic Horse and Shoeing the Icelandic Horse for Gait Quality and Performance. Among the important messages was the need for good communication between rider or trainer and farrier. After the lectures there were many questions from farriers currently working on Icelandic horses and also those new to the breed. Other lecturers at the seminar were very impressed and also had many questions for Sigurdur Torfi. David and Sigurdur discussed the possibility of a smaller clinic-size event that could take place in the spring and further educate Icelandic horse owners so they can better communicate with



Chris Romano

their farriers. Horse owners, trainers, and farriers would all be welcome. More information will be available as spring draws near.

Contact: Andrea Barber (585-624-4468; toltstar@yahoo.com)

Website: groups.yahoo.com/group/Skutlaclub/

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Contact: Kimberly Hart (858-759-1626; kmbryhrt@worldnet.att.net)

TEXAS TOLTERS

Contact: Bonny Solney (214-597-2572; bsolney@pol.net)

Website: www.texastolters.org

WESTCOAST CAN-AM

There is a new regional club in the USIHC. We are called the Westcoast Can-Am Icelandic Horse Club. We are still in the process of organizing the club. We have a little different twist in our club, because part of our mission is to promote, encourage, and offer support to Icelandic horse enthusiasts in British Columbia, Canada, and Northern Washington. Our small group of Icelandic owners in far Northern Washington noticed how many Icelandic own-

ers were just across the border in lower B.C. They are a fun, active, and growing group of riders and owners. Because of the proximity to the lovely Icelandic Horse World Resort in Vernon B.C., who has held yearly competitions and done much to promote the Icelandic horse in North America for the past 30+ years, and other great breeders and trainers, there has been a substantial increase in Icelandic horse owners in our area in the past year.

This coming summer, July 11-13, there will be an official sport competition in Chilliwack, B.C., the Tolt-ally Icelandic Horse Show. Our club, which includes members from both sides of the border, is working to support the promotion of this event. We are also working to ease the way in bringing horses across the border. Chilliwack is only 30 minutes from the border crossing in Sumas, WA. A local Icelandic horse farm is offering stop-over accommodations for horses traveling to the competition. It's going to be a whole lot of fun. There is also going to be a breeding evaluation, sponsored by the Canadian Icelandic Horse Federation. It is scheduled for September 12-14. It will be held at the Icelandic Horse World Resort. Those of us who have been to either of these types of events know how much fun they are and how much can be learned over the several-day events. If you live within driving distance, you won't want to miss out. There are many opportunities to make friends, learn new things about our favorite breed, and immerse yourself in the joy of being around other people who share your love of these horses. There will be camping on-site for both of these events. Please contact: Nathaly Jones for information about the Tolt-ally Icelandic Horse Show at glue2265@look.ca or Erhard Marenbach about



Nathaly Jones on Hurla, Shaundel Dodd on Grima, Chanel Jones on Skella, and Bernie Willis on Askja performed last July in Mt. Vernon, Washington's Horse Around Days.

the evaluation, at www.toltaway.com.

As you can see, there is a lot going on just across the Canadian border. Those of us here in northern Washington have been busy as well. Our first unofficial event took place last July in Mt. Vernon, WA (see photos). Horse Around Days was a two-day event promoting the horse. The future members of our club participated by having some of our horses on hand for the public to visit. We also did two breed demos, drill

team style. USIHC President Bernie Willis helped us out by coming to the event, helping plan the demos, and riding one of the member's horses. Others of us manned the pavilion, answering questions and explaining tack and riding styles. There was huge interest in the horses. The horses were perfect examples of Icelandic temperament. Even though they were located in front of the arena gate, excited horses milling all around, huge tractors driving past,

and all the other distractions, they stood calmly by and collected their usual pets and hugs from children and adults alike. We were very proud.

So far we have only just begun as a club. The coming year promises to bring exciting opportunities for participation, both with our horses and without. Pleasure rides, overnight trips in the Cascade Mountains, and trips to horse resorts are just a few of the many things on the table being planned. Of course, don't forget the Sport Competition and the Breeding Evaluation. Those are our big events. One of our club's main missions is to give support to each other and build friendships, sharing in the fun events on both sides of the border.

Contact: Kathy Lockerbie (360-398-2404; akhlockerbie@comcast.net)



The Westcoast Can-Am club's booth at Horse Around Days.

NATIONAL NEWS

YOU TUBE

YouTube (www.youtube.com), the Internet phenomenon where anyone, anywhere, may upload anything and everything, has a wealth of entertaining, informative, and educational videos of Icelandic horses. Over 500 videos were listed for a search on "Icelandic horse." Some are exhilarating: "First time getting our beautiful Hvita to tolt!" (youtube.com/watch?v=vDVo2WLVEJc). Some are amusing: "Charm gets stuck between the shed and the fence" (youtube.com/watch?v=OSluen10atc). Some are quite popular: An adorable child, practically a toddler, being given a riding lesson (youtube.com/watch?v=gG4NwU24FXI&feature=related) has been viewed 32,728 times. And there are many, many horse-for-sale videos and videos showing Icelandics performing the various gaits. Many videos were taken by people in the audience at events, which lends a wonderful casual perspective to shows both large and small. Midwest horse fair, 2007 (youtube.com/watch?v=rJ3UUT6s5Rw) has been viewed 1,656 times. Do you have any Icelandic videos you would like to upload to YouTube? Remember to click "do not allow comments" if you do not want outsiders to post comments, some which may be unreasonable or inflammatory. Some horse websites will post YouTube video sites and attract hundreds and even thousands of views and comments, some of which may be complimentary and helpful, but some of which may be insulting and embarrassing. All in all, YouTube can be a valuable tool for entertainment or instruction. Youtube is free to participants.

HORSES ON ICE

The Solheimar Farm, an Icelandic horse farm in Vermont, has announced what it hopes will be an annual event: an Icelandic Horse Show on Ice. Sigrun Brynjarsdottir and Jason Brickner have organized a two-hour demo and tolt competition (by invitation only) to be held on March 14 at the Union Arena in Woodstock, VT, which seats 600 people. Tickets are \$20 each. Riders from all over the United States and Iceland will compete and demonstrate the unique skills of the Icelandic horse. *Writes Sigrun:* "The show will begin with an exciting demonstration by professional riders, where the viewers will be dazzled by images of fire and ice as the horses and riders show their skills. The show will be followed by a competition involving youth riders and adult amateur and professional

riders. There will also be an intermediate Tolt and Open Tolt Competition. Sponsors will be given the opportunity to either sponsor a rider in the competition or to be an event sponsor. Sponsoring a rider is a lot of fun. Names are drawn from a hat and if your rider wins, your business will have the trophy to keep for a year. The winning sponsor's name will be engraved on the trophy. As an event sponsor, your name will be placed on the poster that will be displayed prominently throughout Woodstock and other areas and will also be mentioned in the press release that will be sent to major New England newspapers as well as to New England magazines."

GUDMAR AT EA

At Equine Affaire in Massachusetts last November, Gudmar Petursson



Gudmar Petursson, shown here at the Wisconsin evaluations, gave a well-received clinic at last fall's Equine Affaire in Massachusetts.

Heidi Benson

gave a clinic showing dressage as training for gait. Vicka Corey, who was in the audience, summarized his presentation on the icehorsesworldwide list and agreed to let the *Quarterly* print her comments with this caveat, "I am a relative newcomer to Icelandic horses, and a tremendous amount of information was presented, much of which I am sure went clear over my head."

Vicka writes: I have audited two of Gudmar's clinics, and the exercises he presents have helped both me and my horse tremendously. He teaches in a way that is really easy for me to understand and most important, actually use. The things I took away from Equine Affaire were:

1. The priority in training and conditioning a gaited trail horse is that the horse should be able to carry you easily, comfortably, and willingly, and that this required both clear communication between rider and horse and good physical condition for the horse.
2. The importance of using balance to control the horse's movement. The balance should be forward for forward movement, backward for slowing, stopping, and backing, and what he called "left seat" and "right seat" for turns (which included turning both the seat and the head and shoulders).
3. The rider's control of the horse's head set. In between exercises (when one may want the horse's head up), let the horse go on a loose rein (Gudmar often rode on the buckle, or with one rein while dropping the other, as for one-rein-stop exercises) and stretch as low as he likes.
4. The importance of doing a lot of lateral work. I think he showed shoulder-in, turn on the forehand,

maybe turn on the haunches (I forget), sidepassing, and one-rein stops to increase flexibility and strength.

5. Eventually some of these dressage exercises could be done at the tolt, including what he called "gait with collection." For this he had his horse gaiting in a very round frame, hind legs stepping well under, neck high, and head on the vertical. I had not seen this before and was very interested, though when I mentioned it to my own instructor, she said she had seen my horse do that for a few moments now and then. I had heard that it was not possible, because ventroflexion was necessary for tolt. But this horse was visibly anything but ventroflexed. Over-ventroflexion Gudmar blames on an overdeveloped set of pectorals and front-of-the-neck muscles and an underdeveloped topline.

6. Gudmar differentiated between "connection" (which should always be present, a horse and rider attending to one another and using their whole bodies, I think) and "collection" (a lifted back, rounded neck, and propelling from a long-reaching hindquarters—a not-all-the-time thing but a strengthening and flexibility exercise).

7. For all the flexibility exercises demonstrated, he recommended beginning with groundwork. For instance, if a horse is too stiff to move its head all the way to the stirrup for a one-rein stop, start on the ground and encourage the horse to bend its neck from the ground, perhaps using candy or whatever the horse likes as a bribe for the stretch. For an arena-sour horse, he recommended very short arena work (five to ten minutes), followed by a trail ride or just putting the horse out and being

finished, then slowly working up to more time as the horse becomes acclimated and realizes that the arena work is pleasant.

EQUINE AFFAIRE

The press releases for the next Equine Affaire, to be held in Columbus, Ohio, April 11-13, feature the Icelandic horse. "Beautiful Horses and Exceptional Riders Will Define the 2008 Pfizer Fantasia," the organizers claim. "This extraordinary musical celebration of the horse will feature a variety of outstanding equestrian acts from throughout the United States choreographed to musical styles ranging from traditional and country to classical and contemporary. The 2008 Pfizer Fantasia will showcase the beauty and diversity of a variety of horse breeds, as well as the excitement of equestrian disciplines from reining and dressage to driving, drill teams, and liberty acts. The equine performers who will be participating in this year's Fantasia will include a plethora of breeds from Icelandics and Haflingers to Andalusians, Friesians, and drafts. Among the performers who have been retained for the 2008 Pfizer Fantasia are Jerry and Staci Diaz who will travel from Texas to present a roping act and special tribute to Will Rogers and a beautiful duet ride to music from the Phantom of the Opera. The very talented Laura Amandis will once again grace the Pfizer Fantasia stage with both liberty and garotcha performances. Spectators will also be treated to an award-winning freestyle reining presentation by Stacy Westfall, a grand prix musical freestyle dressage ride, a high-speed tandem combined driving segment, horses performing at liberty, an East Meets West performance featuring Yvonne Barteau, and driven and under saddle drill team presentations by the Haflinger Driven Drill

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

BREEDING FILM

Plus Film (plusfilm@plusfilm.is) in Iceland has made a new DVD, in cooperation with the Icelandic Breeding Association, to inform viewers of the breeding goals. The film consists of three parts: In the first part, the breeding goals are shown on the screen for the viewer to read, and then one can study the horses that have gotten 9.5 or 10.0 for each of the nine categories over the last few years. In the second part, the same breeding horses are judged on all nine categories (Tolt, Trot, Pace, Canter, Spirit, General Impression, Walk, Slow Canter, and Slow Tolt). The name of each horse and the numbers they got are superimposed over the images for each ability. In this way the viewer can test him- or herself and learn about the judging procedure. The third part is a seven-minute music video showing the horses that scored 9.5 and 10.0 during Landsmot 2006. The film is in English and Icelandic, and on the back of the DVD cover the Breeding Goals are displayed.

RIDING TRAILS

Eidfaxi.is reports: The Danish Icelandic Horse Association has published a manual on the structure of good riding trails. The manual was published in order to convey various tips directly from riders to the authorities, politicians, and others who in one way or another have to do with the structure of riding trails. The manual includes tips on how to contribute to the safety of riders and horses, while allowing other traffic; what kind of underlay is suitable; and much more. The manual also points out that horsemanship is in seventh place among the most popular sports in Denmark. For teenage girls, horsemanship is in the third place. The

total number of horses in Denmark is about 180,000 and the total number of riders is close to 160,000.

SCIENCE WEB

Eidfaxi.is reports: The University of Iceland publishes a website (www.visindavefur.is) where specialists give answers about everything under the sun. Eidfaxi will periodically be translating and posting horse-related questions and answers on its website (en.eidfaxi.is) in English. For instance, "Why is the Icelandic horse smaller than other horse breeds?" Expert Stefan Adalsteinsson answers: "Horse breeding has been practiced all over the world for thousands of years. Great variability in the size of horses can be found from one region to the next. Horses in the northern part of Norway are small, as are horses in the Shetland Islands. Both the Shetland horse and the Icelandic horse have come from the horse in northern Norway, and that horse can tolt as well as the Icelandic horse.

The horses in northern Norway are very ancient and have not been in contact with other horse breeds in the south of Norway. Kristján Eldjárn, our former president, believed that this horse was the forefather of the Icelandic horse. His assumption is based on the size and appearance of the horse in the northern part of Norway, which he felt resembled considerably the Icelandic horse. So the answer to that question is simply that the Icelandic horse originates from a small horse breed and has not changed throughout the centuries, as no hybridization has occurred."

LANDSMOT 2008

The 18th Landsmot, or Icelandic National Horseshow will be held from June 29 to July 6 at Hella in southern Iceland next summer, with sponsorship from shipping company Samskip. The 19th Landsmot, in 2010, will be held in Vindheimamelur in Skagafjord, northern Iceland.



A typical scene in Skagafjord, Iceland. Toti Eymundsson shows a young horse at a local breeding evaluation.

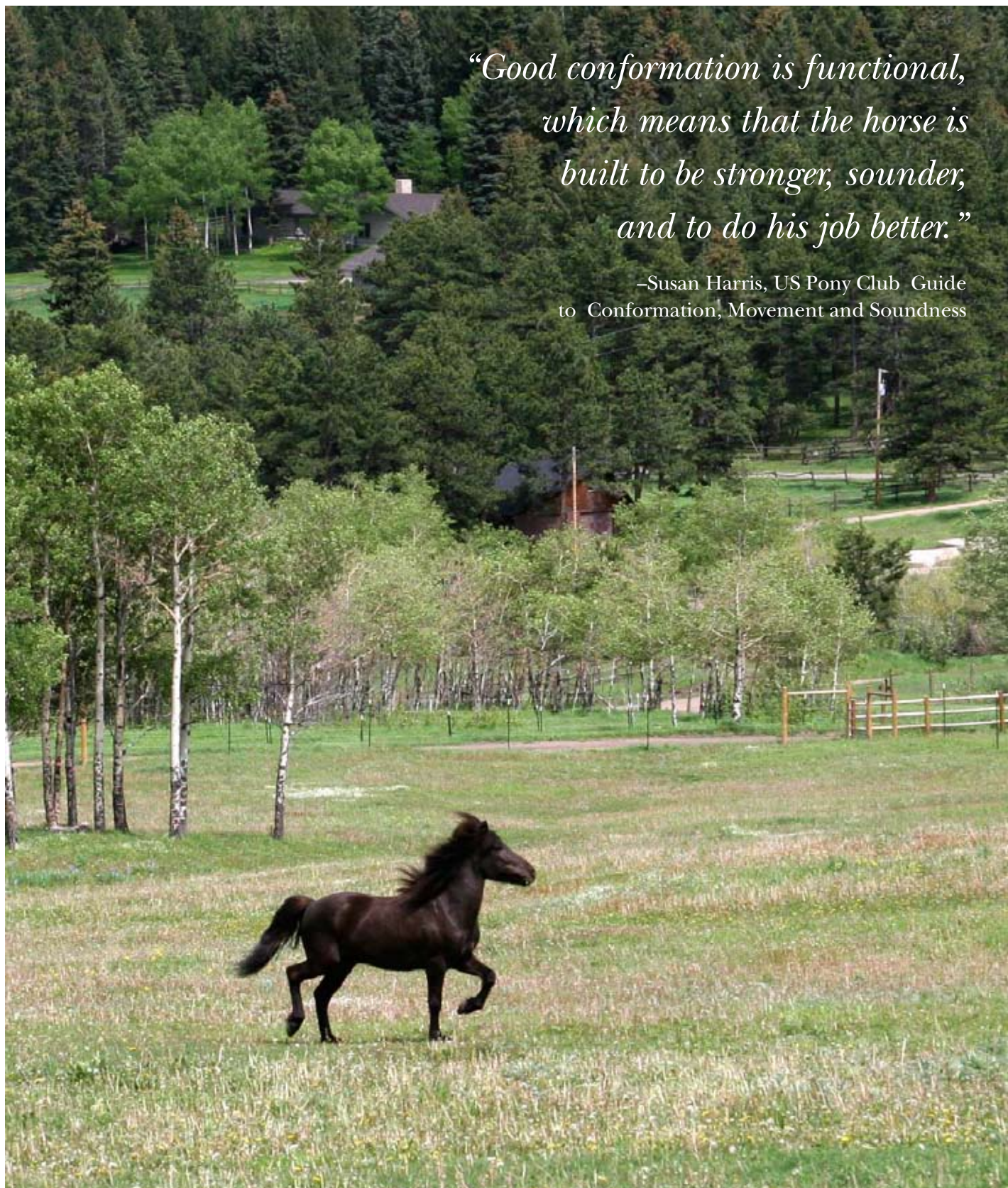
Charles Fergus

BEYOND THE OVAL TRACK

E Y E O N C O N F I R M A T I O N

*“Good conformation is functional,
which means that the horse is
built to be stronger, sounder,
and to do his job better.”*

—Susan Harris, US Pony Club Guide
to Conformation, Movement and Soundness



Heidi Benson

DOES FORM FOLLOW FUNCTION?

by Nancy Wines-DeWan

The answer to that question just may be a very qualified “yes, but ...” When I decided to write this article, the idea seemed simple enough. If conformation is so important as to be part of the breeding standards outlined in FIZO, the Icelandic horse breeder’s “bible,” then there must be reasons behind all of these rules.

It seemed logical to assume that how a horse is put together—how his bones and joints and muscles and tendons and ligaments are connected and interrelated—would influence his performance and his health. Over the nearly five years I’ve been associated with Icelandics (plus nearly 30 years with “big horses”), I’ve heard snippets of conversations at clinics and trail rides (and anywhere else that Icelandic horse owners have gathered) that included statements such as: “That horse is croup-high—he’s going to be pacey.” “Look at that short neck and steep shoulder—his gaits aren’t going to be very good.” Or even, “Very few Icelandics have straight legs—it’s not considered very important.” Or the classic statement, “That horse isn’t put together very well.” I thought that if I were able to understand conformation, that it might help me work with my own horses. Perhaps there are some things that would be hard for one of them to do because of their conformation—it might take longer, or require some additional exercises during training, or it might never be physically possible. Could it be that one of my mares, with her crooked legs,



Nancy Wines-DeWan

might be more prone to injury or stresses because of that? If I were going to buy another Icelandic, it would be really helpful to understand what conformation faults were important to me as a pleasure rider. I’m not a competitor, nor a breeder, but I do ride nearly every day. Are there any points of conformation that would be more critical to my horses because of their use?

I suggested this topic to the *Quarterly* committee and met with a favorable response and a request that I consider writing the article myself. My premise was this: *Why do we look for*

a certain angle in the shoulder or pelvis, and what are the ramifications if these are greater or smaller than the ideal? How do these deviations from the ideal affect the potential of an individual horse and his/her training? I think the article could be geared to the average horse owner/rider with a less-than-perfect equine partner (like me!) as well as someone who is looking for an Icelandic horse to purchase.

A Logical Premise

It sounded like a logical premise, and one that could be answered fairly easily, if I just found the experts to help me—or so I thought. My first

resource was the FEIF breeding standards on the USIHC website. From these breeding goals, I formulated several questions, and then sent them out to a few Icelandic horse trainers and judges.

If a potential buyer is evaluating a horse to use for pleasure riding and trails, not for breeding, to be ridden several times a week—what would be the most important conformational traits to look for?

If a potential buyer is looking for a “family horse” which will be ridden less frequently, what influence should conformation have on his/her decision? What are the most important things to consider in this case?

If a person owns a horse, how can understanding that horse’s conformation strengths and shortcomings help to understand how to work with that horse in terms of training or use?

Is it possible to accurately evaluate a young horse for conformation during its years of growth?

I should have known this would not be easy when I read Magnus Larusson’s response to my question about a “family horse.” His answer? “Temperament!” Hmmm, no comment on conformation at all. Katrin Sheehan’s comment echoed this thought: “If I were looking

for a horse for my children, the most important consideration would be safety.” This makes sense, of course—but it wasn’t what I had in mind. I thought that perhaps certain conformation faults would not be as important to the horse’s soundness if he were not worked as often or as hard.

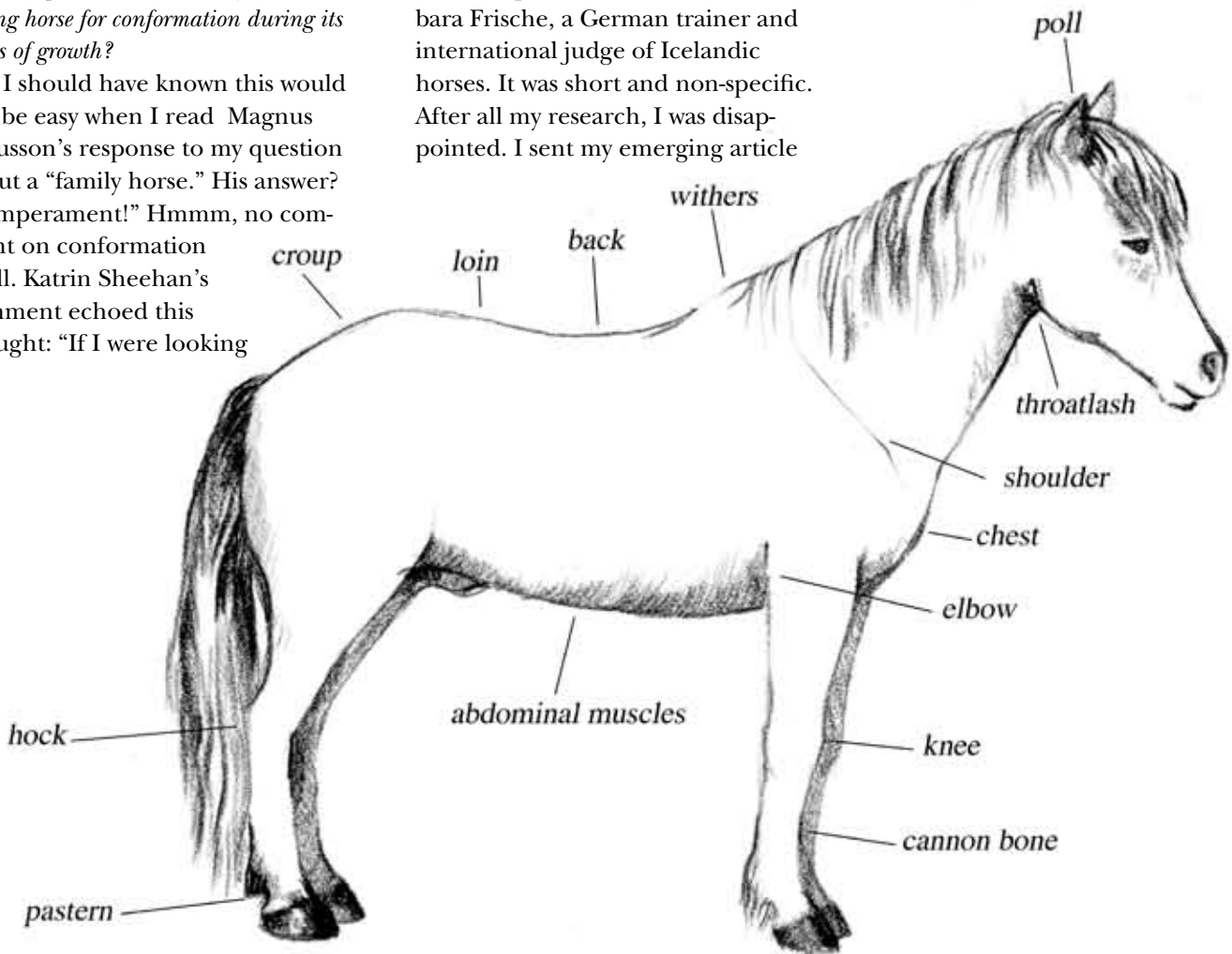
While I waited for additional responses, I began researching conformation. I found books, recommended to me by Icelandic trainers and owners, that described conformational faults in great detail. I read about the horrors of straight shoulders, incorrect angles of legs and croup, short necks, long necks, toeing in, toeing out, knock knees, narrow base, wide base ... And with each new discovery I ran out to my barn and studied my horses. I found faults in abundance!

A response arrived from Barbara Frische, a German trainer and international judge of Icelandic horses. It was short and non-specific. After all my research, I was disappointed. I sent my emerging article

to both Barbara and Katrin, full of specific conformational faults and the resulting weaknesses and effects on a horse’s movement. Barbara responded immediately and promptly, but it was obvious that more discussion was going to be necessary to insure the accuracy of this topic. The resulting three-way conference call between Barbara, Katrin, and myself was fascinating, and forms the basis of the remainder of this article.

Nature or Nurture?

Conformation is a very important aspect of an Icelandic horse’s potential, but it is not the only aspect. Breeding, gaits, temperament, spirit, conformation, and training all combine to form the character and movement of any individual horse. In turn, conformation influences a horse’s health, balance, gaits, and spirit.



Nancy Wines-DeWan

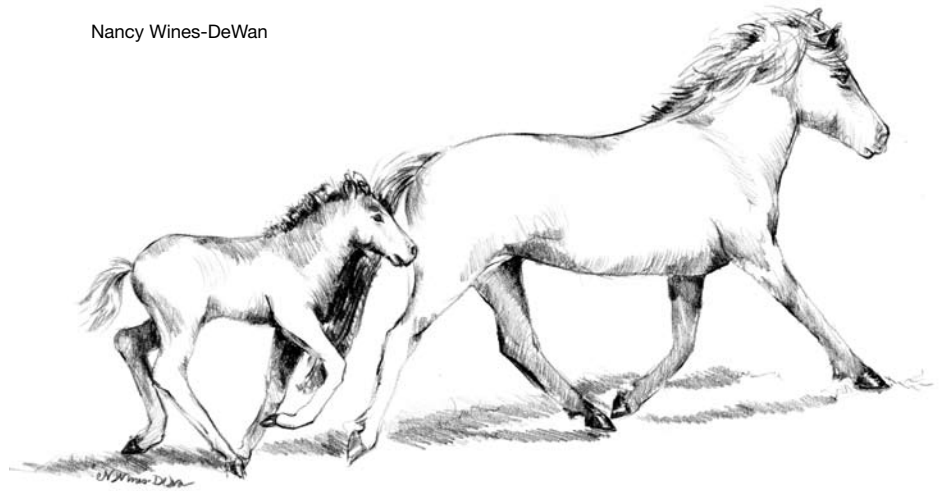
International breeding standards, including but not limited to conformation, have been developed by FEIF (the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations) and published in a document called FIZO. This book of rules and regulations reflect the current standards for Icelandic horses. It is a living document which is constantly being revised. The problem with looking at rules only is that there are always exceptions. Short neck? There will be breeders who will point to a highly evaluated stallion who has great gaits and defies the viewpoint that this will limit a horse's abilities. As Katrin put it, for every rule, there will be at least 10 exceptions!

Katrin cited a case in point: She has two mares with seemingly identical conformation. Their bloodlines are different. One is in her teens, with little or no professional training and currently being ridden by her owner strictly for pleasure. Suppleness and collection are not part of her training, she does not tolt, and her owner is very happy with her just as she is. The other mare is six years old, has been and still is under professional training. She tolt readily with good balance and collection. What makes the difference—training or genetics? If one were to look only at conformation, these mares would be considered the same quality, but if one considers the bloodlines (better in the first mare than the second) and the training (better for the second mare than the first), there are quantifiable differences. Nature or nurture?

No Absolutes

Barbara's response to my initial questioning contained this word of caution: "However, practically all these correlations cannot be seen as absolutely as stated. Lots of complications need intense observation and a lot of knowledge and experience with horse evaluations. A lot of problems are of psychological nature, which is another field of evaluating horses."

Nancy Wines-DeWan



That's right—no absolutes. No easy answers: If a horse has *this* conformational fault, he will have *this* problem with his gaits, or *this* unsoundness in his legs. That would be simple, but unfortunately, "t'aint always so." There are tendencies, certainly; there are relationships between conformation and performance and soundness, but there are also these "complications" as Barbara calls them.

"We all want a healthy, strong, cooperative, beautiful, typical, balanced horse with perfect gait ability and smooth sequence of motion." This is what FEIF is looking for in their FIZO document and in their breeding evaluations. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you didn't have to train a horse to tolt because it came naturally to him? It should be easy for an Icelandic horse to gait—if he has a good combination of conformation, bloodlines, and temperament. This is something we all want, breeders, competitors, and pleasure riders alike. As Barbara and Katrin talked about this, the goals for Icelandic horses became crystal clear. But what about my horses, and my friends' horses—the "not-so-perfect" Icelandics?

Understanding our horse's talents, abilities, and limitations is important for any owner or rider. This is simply good for the welfare of our horses. When we know what these limitations are, then we can work

with our horses in a way which helps them to learn, but does not require them to do what they may be physically incapable of accomplishing. The FT (Icelandic Trainers' Association) has posted an article on their website which includes this example: "No horse can carry his head more beautifully than his conformation allows. The way a horse carries his head is mostly defined by the composition and build of his front quarters. It is best when the neck is suitably long; not too long and not too short. The shoulders should be sloping and the withers should be high. It is important that the neck is well raised up from the shoulders and that there is no curvature in front of the withers. The neck should be cut inward at the throat and the neck band should be long and supple. A horse with such a neck, does not have any trouble carrying his head beautifully and will most often be soft on the reins because it is easy for him to bend his neck. The way in which a horse carries his head affects the way he holds and uses his back. The way he holds his back, in turn, affects his gaits."

Barbara described the process of evaluating a horse for conformation as a "hands-on" process. A judge will assess the horse visually, feel the horse, and then step back and watch the horse move. Evaluating a horse through photographs alone is virtually impossible—or inexact at

the least. A horse's conformation will provide hints of how it will perform at various gaits, but those hints will be either confirmed or disproved by actually seeing the horse move. Even the experts don't always agree!

To be sure, there are some FEIF breeding standards that are based on aesthetics. After all, we want to be certain that an Icelandic horse continues to look like an Icelandic, not a Morgan or an Arabian. The shape of the head, the long, thick mane and tail, and the "lightly built, athletic" type with longer legs are governed by current aesthetics, however, not performance considerations. More information on FEIF and FIZO is available online at www.feif.org (under *Breeding—Breeding Rules—FIZO*).

Some Important Points

Here are some important conformation points and the reasons behind their inclusion in the FIZO breeding standards:

The conformation of the neck affects balance, the way a horse moves and therefore how easy he is to train and ride. A naturally bent, smooth, well raised neck with a slim poll carries itself easier. Bending and suppleness are less of an effort for a horse with these attributes, than a horse with a neck which is too thick, too short or too low set.

High, long withers are associated with a good shoulder position. Saddle fit and the correct position of the saddle are easier with withers of this shape and proportion.

A broad, well-muscled back is needed with an ideal topline. A forward-sloping back (in which the croup is higher than the withers) will force the center of gravity of the horse too much on the forehead, a problem that is difficult for the rider to reverse. This balance shift is necessary, however, to create a good tolt. A horse with this conformation is more difficult for a rider to work with, and requires

advanced riding skills to bring out the best tolt of which he is capable. A forward-sloping back could also cause stress on the front legs. If the horse has a deep chest on top of that, the problem could become worse.

A flat ribcage and a small chest can affect the horse's balance. A flat ribcage is usually associated with a narrow chest, often on a horse who is not well muscled. When a rider sits on a horse of this conformation, neither the rider's legs nor the horse's legs are spread very far apart. This horse will often need more time to gain his balance as he moves laterally or makes turns. He may also need a balanced rein to help him maintain that balance. Riding a horse like this with a long rein might be very difficult. Icelandics are gaited horses, so they are even more dependent on balance for a clear beat in all five gaits than are three-gaited horses.

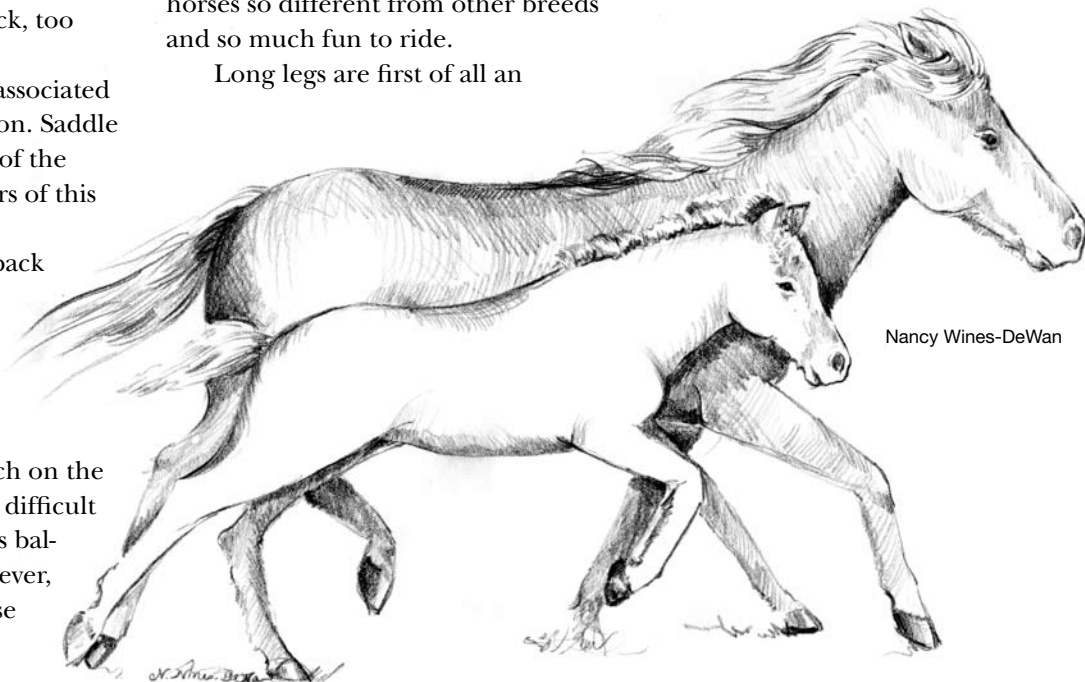
A cylindrical body is not only more beautiful to look at from the side, but also provides a good attachment for the back muscles. Strong, ample back muscles result in smoother movement of the body. It is these flowing movements plus the great variation in tempo of the tolt, trot, and canter that make our Icelandic horses so different from other breeds and so much fun to ride.

Long legs are first of all an

aesthetic consideration for modern Icelandic horses. Long legs do, however, contribute to the height and length of movement as long as there is an angled shoulder which is well separated from the neck.

Strong joints and tendons, with correct angles are necessary to enable these relatively small horses to carry heavy weights for long times and in difficult terrains. The USIHC website describes the desired quality of an Icelandic's legs as being "clean" and "dry." After my initial puzzlement over how washing and drying a horse's legs could improve its conformation, I discovered that "clean" has nothing to do with a bath, and "dry" does not refer to a towel: "Clean" means that the legs are free from thickness and swelling. "Dry" refers to the amount of lymphatic fluid present in the legs. Bones and tendons stand out clearly and are easy to see in a "dry leg." The current FIZO wording is slightly different: "Firm, very strong tendons and good separation between the tendons and the bone."

Spirit! Barbara believes that conformation affects even the spirit of the Icelandic horse. She contends



Nancy Wines-DeWan

that a balanced horse with natural, good, clear-beat gait distribution is most likely much easier to start and to train. A good conformation makes it easier physically for the horse to achieve what the trainer asks for (i.e. balance, collection, a good head carriage, smooth gaits). Such a horse has fewer reasons to fight against the rider. Thus it is easier for rider and horse to establish a harmonious partnership.

Young Horses

Is it possible to evaluate young horses for conformation? This was my last original question, and I discovered that Barbara was the perfect person to answer it. She helped to develop a method of evaluating young Icelandics which is being used extensively in Germany, and most recently, in Canada. This is what she had to say: "Young horses change all the time during their development. Many conformational characteristics, however, remain the same as they were at birth (e.g. the neck connection) and will always be visible. During the last couple of years we have learned a lot of valuable information about young horses through evaluations, and we continue to do so. As a result we are able to judge young horses pretty well with respect to conformation, gaits, and spirit. In Germany we judge around 2,000 young horses per year—but we still can't claim to be prophets!"

Thank you to Barbara Frische and Magnus Larusson for their patient responses to my questions, and to Katrin Sheehan for translating Barbara's German into English. Our hope is to write a sequel to this article, describing conformation standards in greater detail. This second article would be more technical, discussing the possible results of deviation from the FIZO conformation standards. Yes, that's right: possibly, not "definitely" or "always" because, as Barbara reminds me: "There are no absolutes!"

Educational Opportunity

Barbara Frische will present a breeding seminar at Katrin Sheehan's Creekside Farm in Georgia on March 27-28, 2008, just prior to the USIHC Annual Meeting on March 29. This seminar will be of interest to all Icelandic horse owners, not just breeders. Along with the Meeting will be a two-hour show of trainers, with a demonstration of how they train, as well as the first Pace Race to be held on the East Coast.

May 16-18 there will be a Breeding Evaluation at Katrin's farm in Georgia. This will be preceded by a Breeding Seminar conducted by Barbara Frische on May 14-15. Barbara will explain the FIZO breeding standards and regulations, and then encourage participants to join her in a hands-on conformation and evaluation clinic. In addition, there will be a Young Horse Evaluation, which will also be part of the seminar. She will explain the process of evaluating young, unriden horses, including foals, a procedure which she established. The young horses will be allowed to run free, with their mothers if they are quite young, while Barbara discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each young horse. Katrin assures me that after watching a few of these young horses, and listening to Barbara's commentary, we all will begin to understand what to look for and how to predict mature confirmation and gaits.



Nancy Wines-DeWan

TOLT KID

by Barb Riva

When we see a young person who excels at riding Icelandic horses, our hearts anticipate a good future for the breed. We know that some day that talent will become a great asset in teaching new riders and in training our locally bred horses.

We have a few youth riders in the Midwest who are continuing to improve their skills every year. One of these special kids is Kevin Draeger—also known by his email address as Tolt Kid. Kevin has made it his goal to become an Icelandic horse trainer. Kevin has participated in youth camps and competition clinics here in the Midwest and last year traveled to New York to participate in the Youth Camp offered by the USIHC Regional Club in that area. He has been competing in Wisconsin and Kentucky for about two years. He sets aside a few months every summer to stay in Wisconsin working at Winterhorse Park and interning with their visiting trainers. He's an accomplished Pleasure Rider Program rider and winner. What about the FEIF Youth Cup? Of course he had hoped to attend this year. The problem is his age: He is only 12 years old! He will not qualify for Youth Cup until 2010. His riding abilities are not what keep him from excelling in this field; it's just his age.

I was amazed to find that he entered the Five Gait individual program at the Kentucky show last November. The horse he had leased from Winterhorse Park months prior, Vinur, can be very forward-going and, while he is a schooling horse, is not for the beginner rider. But Vinur is also a strong four-gaited horse. So Kevin's entry for the Five Gait was with Glotti fra Saudarkroki, an im-

pressive, young first-prize, five-gaited stallion owned by Steven and Deb Cook of Waterville, Minnesota.

Unfortunately for Kevin, there is an age limit of 14 years old to enter open, individual classes, and a limit of 16 years old to enter any classes that include pace. I remember when the USIHC Sport Committee put this rule into place. Everyone on that committee was concerned about kids getting hurt at a show riding pace. The show organizers and judges in Kentucky were stumped as to where to put Kevin to gain the experience he was hoping for. He entered the Five Gait Intermediate class, only to be told that he was also too young for that. As it goes in the U.S., however, there are not a lot of entries in classes that require pace, so he was in fact the only entrant. The judges then made the decision to allow him to perform the Five Gait Intermediate class alone. While he didn't get Glotti to pace, he

was thrilled with the judges' input on his performance, so he could return to Minnesota to continue working toward his goal.

As a side note, his family was in the stands watching his five-gait performance, and the announcer asked that everyone be silent while Kevin rode. I'm sure the organizers were worried about Kevin's safety while riding pace. Tom, Kevin's dad, sat in the stands very frustrated because he knew Kevin could get pace easier if there was a loud audience. Tom said that out of frustration, on Kevin's last try he let out a loud and outstanding, "Yi-haaaaa!" Even though there was no pace that time either, Tom said it was still worth the glaring shushes he got from people sitting nearby.

We look forward to seeing Kevin and many more of our talented youth riders excel at their goals in the coming years.



Twelve-year-old Kevin Draeger, aka "Tolt Kid."

THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

by Alex Pregitzer

“The purpose of the Education Committee is to further the goals of the USIHC and FEIF by developing and supporting programs to educate and promote general understanding of the unique qualities of the Icelandic horse as well as its correct use as a competition and riding horse.” This is the official definition of the Education Committee that you can find on our website (www.icelandics.org/education.php). Striving for the best education possible is a noble goal that will benefit our friend, the Icelandic horse. A better educated owner and rider will be able to make better choices, resulting in healthy and happy horses, as well as harmonious riding. In trying to educate ourselves for the benefit of our friend, the Icelandic horse, it is our task to reach out to USIHC members with a diversity of information and programs.

During the past years, the Education Committee has become more active, not only by supporting events and programs, but also by actively offering some of our own. We would like to give you a short overview about the current programs our committee is offering, and also keep you up to date with some general information.



Rich Moore

Megan Milloy braving the snow at the FIRC Schooling Show in April 2007.

Riding Badges

The Riding Badge Program was put into place in 2006 as a means of education for Icelandic horse owners and riders. One participant passed the level 1 riding badge the same year. That first student was Quianna Cress, who was taught and certified at Mountain Icelandic Horse Farm by Heidi and Laura Benson. In 2007 the number of riding badges grew, and three locations offered a certification. A youth camp with a riding badge seminar which had seven participants was held in Kentucky, and one with six youth participants was held in Minnesota. Another two adults partic-

ipated in ongoing lessons to get certified in Alaska. (For their story, read the Education column in this issue.)

After talking to participants, instructors, and examiners, it seems that the program was well received and that all parties involved felt the participants acquired a lot of knowledge. The seminar includes two to three riding lessons, as well as about two to three hours of classroom style theory per day. The number of days varies depending on the level of the badge. It is a very intense seminar with the goal to teach the participants a fair amount of knowledge—riding as well as



Rich Moore

Participants at the FIRC Schooling Show in April 2007.



Deb Cook

Participants at the Minnesota Youth Camp and Riding Badge seminar.

theory—about horse care, nutrition, grooming, health, tack, the gaits, etc.

In upcoming years, we hope the riding badge program will continue to grow and that more seminars for the seven levels, and for a variety of participants, will be offered at many different locations.

Schooling Shows

Schooling shows have the purpose of introducing Icelandic horse riders to the fun and fulfilling sport of competition riding according to the rules of the International Association of Icelandic Horse Federations (FEIF). The goal is to increase participation in sport competitions by offering education in a nonthreatening and supportive environment. The schooling show also exposes the public to the Icelandic horse; it gives experience to new riders and to experienced riders who are unfamiliar with show protocol.

Organizing a schooling show and participating in it has a great educational value. Because no certified judge is needed to judge a schooling show, and because of fewer restrictions in regard to the facility and less formality, the costs for these shows are lower than for a regular show. Another benefit of a schooling show

is that the host is allowed to bring in a judge who can also give a clinic before judging the show. There are no restrictions on the judges' staying on the same property as those competing in the event. Classes can either be FEIF classes or fun classes that the organizers create and name as they please. In 2007, the NEIHC regional club organized a youth competition clinic that ended with a schooling show to practice the new knowledge. The combination of clinic and schooling show was very well received. The possibilities are endless.

The number of schooling shows has grown immensely over the past few years, and we hope that even more schooling shows will be held

in the future. Results of some of the shows can be found online on the USIHC website. Submitting results from schooling shows is optional.

Judging Program

The Education committee has been offering a number of sport judging seminars, which are geared toward the education of those riders interested in competing, as well as those interested in scribing at sanctioned shows or in becoming a certified sports judge for Icelandic horses.

The seminar is a five-day clinic. The first three days are spent with classroom style teaching and discussions concerning general information on FIPO and judging guidelines,



Alex Pregitzer

Theory class outdoors at the Minnesota Youth Camp and Riding Badge seminar.



Deb Cook

Riding lessons at the Minnesota Youth Camp and Riding Badge seminar.

the explanation of rules and regulations for competition classes, as well as some basic understanding of gaits, beat, carriage, and the quality of movements. Participants will also watch videos and DVDs, as well as live horses, to gain experience in judging and to develop a feel for the scoring at sports competitions. The last two days are optional. Those interested in become a USIHC certified intern judge will judge classes at a sanctioned show, and their scores will be compared to those of one or several International Sports Judge(s). The participants will also undergo an oral exam which will test their knowledge with regard to FIPO and judging guidelines, basic shoeing knowledge,

basic horse training, the gaits of the Icelandic horse, prohibited equipment, etc.

Those passing the test will be USIHC intern judges, which is an aspiring sports judge for Icelandic horses. Intern judges will follow up with their education by co-judging alongside International Sports Judges in the U.S. and overseas, by scribing, and by judging schooling shows. This way they can stay current with their knowledge and further their skills to prepare for the International Sports Judge Exam. At the same time, there is a benefit for the rest of the Icelandic horse community in having knowledgeable intern judges available to judge schooling shows.

The number of Intern Judges within the USIHC is now 16. A complete list can be found at www.icelandics.org/Education/judgeresults.php.

To further educate members in breeding, we are also planning to offer seminars to train breeding judges. A breeding judge has a very different field of expertise than a sports judge, so this training program will be independent from the sport judging program. So far, we have not yet offered any breeding seminars but are hoping to do so in the future. Katrin Sheehan in Georgia, for example, is planning to host an educational breeding seminar this spring. Dates will be published in the events calendar on the Congress website (www.icelandics.org/events.php) as soon as possible.

All of the judging seminars would have not been possible without the help and support of numerous people. The Education Committee would like to thank all those who have generously supported the seminars in so many different ways:



Rebecca Bing

Grooming practice at the Kentucky Youth Camp and Riding Badge seminar.

Heidi and David Kline, Barb and Dan Riva, Gudmar Petursson and Gigja Einarsdottir for hosting a seminar in combination with their shows and for generously supporting the program by sharing their facility and staff and also by providing horses to judge, as well as time riding them for judging practice. All of them recruited interns, staff, trainers, and friends to ride the horses for the participants of the seminar. Asta and Will Covert, Anne-Marie Martin, Laura Benson, and Kathy Love provided horses and/or riding for judging experience. Kathy Love volunteered to be in charge on site for the first days of the seminar in Kentucky and helped tremendously. There were so many others who helped by printing, running score sheets, etc., such as Jim Parry, Maggie Draeger, and many, many more. Thanks to all of you!

In upcoming years, we hope to offer more judging seminars to further educate those interested in competition riding, breeding, and judging as well as other topics.



Rebecca Bing

Theory class at the Kentucky Youth Camp and Riding Badge seminar.



Horsing around (without the horse) at the Kentucky Youth Camp and Riding Badge seminar.

Rebecca Bing

Trainer Seminar

We are proud to announce that Katrin Sheehan, in cooperation with the Education Committee, will be hosting the first FEIF International Trainer Seminar in the US in Madison, Georgia, this year in March. The FEIF International Trainer Seminar is a brand-new concept. Two US citizens got certified last year (Bernie Willis

and Sara Lyter) in a pilot project, and we are hoping to host the seminars on a regular basis in the US to give those interested an opportunity to get certified without having to leave the country. (See the profile of Bernie Willis in this issue's Teachers & Trainers column; Sara Lyter will be featured in the June issue).



Rich Moore

Rich Moore rides at the FIRC Schooling Show in April 2007.

MY RIDING BADGE

by Alys Culhane

Bernie Willis tells me it's time to ride. I grab Kolbrunn's reins in my gloved fingers and lift my left leg. Grunting, I set it back on the ground. This task is more difficult than usual—I'm wearing a bulky Refrigerware suit which hampers movement. Bernie, laughing, gives me a boost. Kolby steps onto the frozen lake, and Bernie hooks the lunge line onto the gelding's bridle. It's February in Alaska—our "arena" is a shoveled-off portion of the Willises' frozen-over backyard lake.

Bernie's firm grip on the line enables me to focus on my balance. Having no rein contact, I focus on where my body is in relation to Kolby's. After 20 minutes, Bernie, apparently satisfied with my progress, suggests that I ride Kolby off-line.

I presume that Kolby, an experienced lesson horse, will stay within the parameters of the arena. I presume wrong. We round the corner, and he heads in the direction of his pasture and buddies.

"Whoa," I yell, as Kolby plows into a waist-high snow berm.

"Bring him back here, and the next time you go around that turn, give him more outside leg," Bernie says, adding, "and put more contact on your inside rein."

I do as I'm told. Kolby again bolts, but this time I'm prepared. After a half-dozen or so attempts, I have him walking nicely around the entire arena. Bernie, honoring the time-honored premise that a lesson or training session should end on a good note, suggests that we untack and put Kolby away. Once inside, we resume discussing the questions that are listed under the *Grooming* and *Tack* section of the Riding Badge I requirements. We conclude my first



With her new Riding Badge, Alys is more confident riding Raudi alone on the backroads of Alaska.

session with Bernie suggesting that I next review the section entitled *Keeping and Care of Horses*.

For the next six months, I worked on Riding Badges I and II. I'm not a typical riding badge student, that is, a young child with no horse experience. Rather, I'm a returning rider. After a 20-year hiatus, a renewed interest in horses led to my purchase of an Icelandic filly.

I soon discovered two things. First of all, while I knew some about

horse management, care, feeding, and riding, I knew little about *Icelandic* horse, care, feeding, and riding. And secondly, I was now toting around "returning rider baggage"; defined, this is the loss of riding-related confidence. After reading about the Riding Badge program in the December 2006 issue of *The Icelandic Horse Quarterly*, I contacted Bernie, who agreed to work with me.

My initial lesson on Kolby was both a humbling and a fortuitous experience. Humbling, because I figured that I'd have no problems riding Kolby, the quintessential beginner's mount, but fortuitous because by the hour's end I was even more receptive to Bernie's initial belief, that we should assume that I was a beginning rider/horseperson. I also agreed with him that the best way to go about this was to work on Riding Badge I and II, that is those in which the basics of horsemanship and riding are addressed.

For the next two months, Bernie and I met on a weekly basis. The first half of our two-hour session took the form of an outdoor lesson, and the second half took the form of an indoor discussion/lecture. Inclement weather occasionally forced Bernie to improvise. However, it was those improvisational lessons that were the most useful to me. For instance, after one heavy snowfall, Bernie drew a circle in the snow, and had Kolby and me follow it. Kolby walked to the inside of the circle, because (as I discovered) I was putting more weight on the left side of my body than on my right. But when I shifted my seat bones to the right, he also moved in that direction.

In April, I was joined by Brandi Herr, age 30. She'd decided to sign onto the riding badge program because this would better enable her to train her three young Icelandics.

Brandi was also eager to learn as much as she could about horse care, so that she could pass on her newfound knowledge to her husband and three children.

Our new routine went like this—one or the other of us would first get our lesson. Then we'd go inside for what Bernie, an airplane pilot, called ground school. After, the other would ride. I learned a great deal watching Brandi ride—and vice versa. Brandi is a fearless individual who rides by the seat of her pants. However, I err on the side of caution. A case in point: I expressed dismay when one week Bernie told us that Kolby had been returned to Anchorage, where he was again to be his daughter Janet's primary schooling horse. Instead, we were to ride Pia, a more spirited individual.

I watched intently, as during the course of her lesson Brandi, under Bernie's tutelage, worked on turns on the forehand and haunches. I'd done these exercises in a Gudmar Petursson clinic; however, I soon forgot what I'd been taught. But as I watched my friend and riding teacher, I internalized this long sought-after information. And I was assured that Pia was not the fire horse that I'd envisioned her to be. In fact, I took an immediate liking to the spunky chestnut mare. And yes, I was not only able to do the required maneuvers on Pia, but I was later able to do them at home, on my horse Tinni.

The indoor lessons followed the lecture/discussion format; however, the now more-collaborative nature supported what I've always believed, that two heads are often better than one. Bernie asked a question, and Brandi or I answered it. If we were both stumped, Bernie would either rephrase, or ask a related question. Lengthy discussions, which were often interspersed with laughter, usu-

ally followed. Bernie was also adept at providing us with information, handouts, and photos gleaned from clinics and workshops. For example, in late spring he had attended a farrier clinic in California. He'd been invited to see a master farrier from Iceland who came to the states to shoe for Doug Smith and others in the area. This timely hands-on demonstration and lecture complemented the Riding Badge program's section on Health.

Come early June, the ice in the woods had finally melted, which meant that it was time to take to range further afield. Bernie took us both out on the trails, and here we practiced suppling by winding our way around birch trees, and gait changes, by walk, trot, and toting on the straightaways. I knew that I was making progress when Pia, behind fast-moving Rjupa, did a zippy tolt, and then, when I asked, transitioned back to a slow trot.

One warm July afternoon, Bernie informed both Brandi and me that our Riding Badge tests would take place the following week. Hearing this, I shot him a look of disbelief. I was becoming increasingly more confident on Pia, and was enjoying putting riding and horsemanship theory to practice. After this announcement, Brandi and I, who had long since become what I called "Riding Badge Partners in Crime," began putting even more energy into our studies. We both read and then talked about the important points in Charles DeKnuffey's *The Art of Dressage* and Rikki Shultz's *Understanding Icelandics*. And while at her place, we practiced grooming and tacking up. The day before our test, we went over all the questions in the Riding Badge I and II sections. I thought I'd been thorough, but Brandi had me beat. She'd even memorized the answer to the question, "Name the markers in a 20

x 40 foot dressage square or arena."

Our test examiner was Janet Willis, who had recently earned her USIHC intern judge certification. We all agreed that I'd take my riding test, and then Brandi would take hers. Then Janet would go over the test questions with us both. On the day of the test, I arrived at the Willises' Wasilla-based Arctic Arrow Farm and did as our test examiner instructed—I walked into the pasture, haltered, and led Pia out to the saddling area. All the while, Janet made notes on a clipboard. This, and the forthright manner in which she asked the test questions, made me feel as though I was again in the midst of my dissertation defense. But as the session progressed, I began to feel as though I was both being tested and being presented with new challenges. For example, after noticing that I was having difficulty getting Pia to trot, Janet suggested that I loosen up on the



Learning proper horse care is a big part of the Riding Badge Program.

reins, and go into the two-point position. I complied, and Pia responded in kind. Plus, other, much-needed advice followed. Too soon it seemed, the riding portion of the exam was over.

Brandi next took her riding test. Then she, Janet, and I went into the backyard, sat down, and went over the written questions. Janet prefaced the final question by remarking, "I don't know why this question is on here, but all right. Here goes. 'Name the markers in a 20 x 40 foot dressage arena.'"

"AKEHCMBF," Brandi said.

"How'd you know that?" I asked, half in jest.

"I memorized it," Brandi said.

"You know a good way to remember this?" Janet asked. "Think: All King Edward's Horses Can Make Big Fences."

"That's a form of mnemonics," I said.

"Mnemonics?" Brandi asked.

Janet, interrupting what probably would have become a lengthy discussion on memorization, informed us that we'd passed.

Minutes later, Bernie presented us with our badges. As I took mine out of his outstretched hand, I remarked that I felt like I'd accomplished something major. I'd learned more than I thought possible about the care, feeding, and riding of Icelandic horses. At the same time, I'd also learned (first hand) some things about this new program, which I hoped to eventually pass on to others. First of all, this program is not the exclusive domain of kids—rather, it's for all ages. And secondly, the ongoing nature of this program complements what one learns in clinics, which take place over a few days as opposed to a few months' time. And thirdly, it's a great way to make life-long friendships.

The Riding Badge Program



The Riding Badge Program was developed by the USIHC Education Committee. It is partially based upon the German Riding Program and the United States Department of Agriculture's 4-H Program. The seven achievement levels consist of USIHC Basic Badge Levels I and II; Competition Riding Badge Levels I, II, and III; and Pleasure Riding Badge Levels I and II.

Students work under an instructor, who assists them in putting the theoretical material into practice. At the conclusion of the course, students are tested on their knowledge of this material. The goal of each level is for students to be able to understand and answer all the section questions, and to be able to perform the requisite practical exercises.

The badge courses can be taken individually or consecutively, and the rider can focus on competition and/or pleasure riding. The emphasis is on Icelandic horse riding and husbandry; at the same time, much of the material covered is applicable to other breeds. The theoretical material takes the form of questions,

some of which are repeated in the next highest level. The time frame varies—the badges can be earned in a multi-day clinic, or over a period of several months.

The USIHC does not certify riding instructors. Riding instructors are associated with Icelandic horse farms. Some have certification from FT, the Icelandic Riding Federation in Iceland. Some may have 4-H certification. And still others may be independent instructors. After doing the various level "coursework," the student takes an examination which is given by a designated USIHC examiner. Those working in groups won't be asked every question. However, students should be prepared to answer them all. If a student doesn't understand a question, he or she may ask the examiner to repeat or rephrase it. In order to receive a "pass," the student must answer 70 percent of the questions correctly. If a question is answered incorrectly, the examiner will go over it with the student and be sure that student understands the answer before moving on.

A list of designated USIHC examiners is kept on file at the Congress office. These individuals are entitled to charge a fee for their time and expenses. They are required to file a report of their testing within a week of each exam. The Congress office administrators will mail riding badges to successful students. The financial arrangements for exams are between the students, instructors, and examiners. The USIHC provides curriculum material, lists of examiners, and awards, but does not provide monetary help for the courses or set the fee structure. There is a \$20.00 fee for those earning badges—this fee goes towards administrative costs. The test questions can be found on the Congress website—click on the education link.

WHO IS BERNIE WILLIS?

by Alex Pregitzer

What is your background?

I'll assume that this question refers to teaching. I have a natural interest in stuff. Early on I discovered that to really understand something it is good to try and explain it to someone else. Since college days I've been involved in some kind of teaching: flying, college, religion, animals, wood-working, mechanics. I'm certified to teach in several areas, most recently the basic level of horsemanship with the International Trainer "C" certificate.

How long have you been riding?

My earliest recollection of riding is from about eight years old, on a well-trained Shetland. That would make it 52 years.

What is your horse experience?

As a kid I wanted to ride anything, anytime. I remember coming off quite a few times. I never owned a horse until 1992, just borrowed horses as often as I could. Neighbors had horses where I grew up, in Glendale, California. My dad taught me the basics, according to him, when I was around 12 or so. We rented horses at a stable near Hansen Dam in southern California. My cousins had horses, so when we visited them on their farm in Dinuba I was riding or learning something about driving. In Alaska, where I've lived for the last 38 years, friends had Arabs. Only one of the couple rode, so when we visited, the wife was happy to have someone to ride with. Finally in 1992 I discovered a breed that I thought would fit my lifestyle and became rather involved with Icelandics.

What is your training philosophy—do you follow a particular way of training?



Bernie Willis ponders a piece of tack. What is it?

In general terms yes, but it is not a strict system of techniques promoted by a certain expert. I recognize each horse as an individual with a unique background of experience. Usually the owner has a goal for his horse. Taking the horse from where it is to that goal will involve many steps. To keep the horse interested and engaged in the process, I find that positive experiences work best in most cases. Classical training as interpreted at Holar University in Iceland makes sense to me, but the personality and background of each horse make it necessary to individualize the training. My toolbox can never be too full.

What is your philosophy in teaching—do you follow a particular way of teaching? My experience as a teacher tells me that to be effective, the teaching technique must meet the learning style of the student. For instance, some folks learn best by hearing. These auditory learners need good explanations of how to do a certain thing, and why it is appropriate. Some people learn best tactilely, through feel. While others need to see from an example how to do things. Using the right combination of techniques for each student is a challenge. Sometimes I find a student that needs support to get to where they want to be as a rider.



Bernie and Kelly Anderson at the Wisconsin Evaluations.

Their goals don't match their mental state or physical ability. Each person needs to feel a sense of progress and affirmation regarding their efforts. Usually positive strokes work best with people too.

What are your hopes for the Icelandic horse in the U.S.?

I hope the Icelandic horse will remain the great horse it is around the world, including the U.S. I hope it will remain true to its origins as a powerful, medium-sized, sports horse. I would love to see those interested

in this breed achieve a high level of competence with it. This riding ability will accelerate as more Icelandic horse enthusiasts become riding instructors. We've all seen some pretty good horses become less than they were, in spite of good intentions. When we Americans can take decent horses and train them to be great, we will be contributing to the Icelandic

horse world. When we see domestic-born Icelandics make first prize at breeding evaluations, I know we are on the right track. When these same domestic-bred horses are presented by American riders and make first prize, then I will know we have arrived. When this happens the availability of quality Icelandics and the knowledge to keep them will be ours.



Bernie Willis backing up the judges (literally) at the Wisconsin evaluations last June.



Bernie goes over scores with judges Marlise Grimm and Barbara Frische at the Wisconsin Evaluations.

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The horse barns at Snorrastadir, beside the river Kalda in western Iceland. From here, riders can cross the golden sands of the Longufjorur beneath the glacier Snaefellsjokull.

Nancy Marie Brown

READY FOR ICELAND?

by Amy Goddard

If you're planning on riding or horse-shopping in Iceland, you need to know how to prepare your riding clothes and equipment before you leave home. As most of us familiar with Icelandic horses are aware, diseases are almost unknown among Icelandic horses living in their homeland. Protection from contagious diseases is controlled by strict regulations of the Icelandic government. No horse exported from Iceland can ever return, and import of horses or other livestock is prohibited. In fact, the World Championships for Icelandic horses can never be held in Iceland because of these regulations.

In addition, all imports of used

riding wear, tack and other equipment used around livestock are also forbidden, unless fully disinfected. This includes boots, helmets, gloves, pants, jackets, and all horse equipment and tack. Every horse person traveling to Iceland needs to know what can and cannot be taken into the country.

In researching information for this article, I quickly learned that the "rules" are not exactly clear, and some of the information that I found, and was given, was quite confusing. Can I take my used leather boots with me to Iceland? What items must be disinfected? How exactly do I disinfect something?

Sigridur Björnsdottir, the Veterinary Officer for Horse Diseases in Iceland, helped clarify for me the "Rules

regarding used riding equipment" posted on The Food and Veterinary Authority of Iceland's website (www.mast.is). With her input, I have developed what I trust is an understandable list of rules:

It is prohibited to import used riding gear that cannot be thoroughly cleaned or disinfected. This includes all items made of leather or containing leather, such as shoes, boots, gloves and jackets, and items containing other materials that are difficult to disinfect, such as helmets. Import of used leather saddles, bridles, halters, and wax coats is also prohibited.

Used riding clothes that have been washed in a washing machine, or dry cleaned, are allowed. This includes almost all ordinary riding clothes, such as pants, shirts, sweat-



VETERINARY CERTIFICATE

**For used riding boots¹⁾, sport fishing equipment etc.
which are intended for import to Iceland**

Exporting country:

Responsible ministry:

Certifying department:

Name and address of consignee:

Nature of the goods:

Veterinary declaration:

I, the undersigned veterinary surgeon, certify that the above mentioned goods have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected by ²⁾

(Name and concentration of the disinfectant)

Place and date

(Issuing veterinary surgeon, name in capital letters)

Stamp:

(Issuing veterinary surgeon, signature)

1) Can not be leather boots or saddle.

2) Approved disinfectants (the goods should be sprayed by or immersed in the solution):
Virkon-S (1%), Caustic soda (0,2%), Crystalline soda (5%), Setax (0,3%), Korsolin (3%),
Formalin (2%), Phenol solution (2-5%).



Many farms in Iceland offer riding tours from one hour to several days in length, for individual riders or large groups. The farmers take it for granted that tourists have disinfected their riding gear.

Nancy Marie Brown



ers, most jackets, riding suits, and overalls.

Disinfection is required for boots made of rubber and items made of steel or iron. This includes rubber boots, synthetic bridles or halters containing metal, and bits. A Veterinary Certificate is required for import of these items.

How to disinfect: dilute the disinfectant with water, following the label instructions. Clean the item completely and then submerge it in the disinfectant solution for 10 minutes. Allow the item to air dry prior to packing.

Recommended disinfectants include:

- Nolvasan S
- Virkon-S (1%)
- Caustic soda (0.2%)
- Crystalline soda (5%)
- Setax (0.3%)
- Korsolin (3%)
- Formalin (2%)
- Phenol solution (2-5%)

One thing to remember is that not every customs agent in Iceland will necessarily check your equipment or even question you upon your arrival. But for the health of our favorite horses, please familiarize yourself with the rules, and prepare your gear before your next trip to Iceland.

Or, to simplify your trip, pack light and treat yourself to some new gear at one of Iceland's tack shops before you even reach your riding destination.

For more information, see the website for The Food and Veterinary Authority of Iceland: www.mast.is. Click on the "English" link at the far right to display the site in English text. A pdf of the Veterinary Certificate can be downloaded there.

DEALING WITH SUMMER ECZEMA

by David Kline

When we lived in central California we never had to protect against summer eczema (SE, also called sweet itch). That's nice except we now live in western New York. Everything about New York is prime for SE. One of the horses we brought with us, a mare, lived in New York before, so we knew she suffered from SE. That left our other eight horses—we had no idea what to expect in their regard. We moved the horses from California to New York in April, so it wasn't long before the SE signs appeared, first on the horse we knew suffered from SE, and then, later in the summer, on one of the geldings.

Located in western New York, our farm continues to be named what it was called in the 1800s; it is currently listed in the National Historic Register. It was the westernmost farm toward the Genesee River, thus Westerly. Over 60 acres is fenced in varying-sized pastures, all of which offer the horses room to move and graze. We have two barns and a half acre pond. The Genesee Valley Greenway borders our farm which gives us over 90 miles of trails to explore. Westerly is primarily a breeding farm at this point and sometime in the future we'll add a competition oval and straight track for sport competitions. We're happy to own two very good stallions and a couple of first-prize mares. We offer boarding services for Icelandic horses and we offer a transportation service across the US. We're especially happy to board young horses, pregnant or recently foaled mares, and horses on vacation. Our pastures are large enough that the horses have all the grass they need and the room to run. But the

weather in western New York is more humid than we were used to, and the number of flies and other bugs told us we would have to deal with SE.

What is Summer Eczema?

Summer eczema (SE), sweet itch, or Summer Seasonal Recurrent Dermatitis (SSRD), is an allergic reaction to insect bites. It is a problem that affects thousands of horses, ponies, and donkeys in many countries of the world to a greater or lesser degree. Virtually all breeds can be affected, from tiny Shetland ponies to heavy-weight draught horses. Although known by different names (e.g. Sommer Ekzem in Germany, Kasen in Japan, Queensland Itch in Australia), the symptoms are the same.

These symptoms include severe itching, hair loss, skin thickening, and flaky dandruff. The top of the tail and the mane are most commonly affected. The neck, withers, hips, ears, and forehead, and in more severe cases, the mid-line of the belly, the saddle area, the sides of the head, the sheath or udder, and the legs may also suffer. The animal may swish its tail vigorously, roll frequently, and attempt to scratch on anything within reach. It may pace endlessly and seek excessive mutual grooming from field companions. When kept behind electric fencing with nothing on which to rub, sufferers may scratch out their mane with their hind feet and bite vigorously at their own tail, flanks, and heels. They may drag themselves along the ground to scratch their belly or sit like a dog and spin themselves around to scratch the top of their tail on the ground. There can be a marked change in temperament: lethargy with frequent yawning and a general lack of "sparkle" may occur, or the horse may become agitated, impatient, and when ridden lack concentration. When flying insects are



around he may become agitated, with repeated head shaking.

Diagnosis is not usually difficult—the symptoms and its seasonal nature (spring, summer, and autumn) are strong indicators. However, symptoms can persist well into the winter months, with severely affected cases barely having cleared up before the onslaught starts again the following spring. There is anecdotal evidence that stress (e.g moving to a new home, sickness, or severe injury) can be a factor when mature animals develop SE. Hereditary predisposition may be a factor in SE, and work to identify the gene(s) responsible is at an early stage. However, environmental factors play a major part—where the horse is born and where it lives as an adult are at least as significant as the bloodlines of its sire and dam.

The Boett Blanket

When we first moved to New York, we knew we had one mare who would suffer, so early on we bought a Boett blanket designed to help protect against SE. It covers the majority of

a horse's body, other than its legs and head. Boett also offers a hood that easily connects to the blanket for additional coverage. The blanket slips on over the head and buckles to fit the body snugly yet comfortably. Our mare remembered the blanket, so she allowed it to be put on right away. Later, when the gelding needed a blanket, he was concerned the first time we put it on, but never gave us any trouble afterwards. He began to line up so it would be quick and easy. We only took the blankets off at night when the horses were put into the barn.

Ideally the horse should start wearing the blanket before symptoms appear, but even later in the season, once the blanket is fitted on, sores will quickly heal and mane and tail growth will restart. Typically it will take from one to three weeks after the blanket is fitted for damaged skin cells to recover and itchiness to decline. Horses wearing the blanket all summer keep their full manes and tails and have glossy, clean coats; those susceptible to sun sensitivity and contact nettle rash are also helped.



The Boett is different from other designs of horse blanket and should fit snugly, apart from the neck, where there is ample fabric to ensure full coverage when the horse puts his head down to graze. It covers the neck, the body, and the tail and consists of two separate pieces. The mane, neck, body, and tail-piece is fitted over the head (it is extremely rare for a horse to object to this) and there is an elastic neck band which adjusts behind the ears for a snug fit. The separate adjustable belly-flap is attached over the blanket with two elastic surcingles and a chest strap. It takes only a couple of minutes to fit.

Horses in the pasture can wear the blanket permanently to great benefit, 24 hours per day, every day, all summer long. Indeed, a significant number of horses even wear the blanket during mild spells in winter. The blankets fit so well, a mare can give birth and nurse her foal while in the blanket.

There are four blanket sizes that fit most Icelandic horses. The #3 fits a standard size Icelandic, the #S4 is for standard Icelandics with larger shoulders. The #4 is for large Icelandics,

and the #M5 is for large Icelandics with larger shoulders.

Two out of three horses with SE suffer damage on their heads. The ears, forehead, and around the eyes are commonly affected. For these animals the Boett Hood is recommended. It is attached to the blanket by an elastic loop behind the ears, which fastens to a point inside the blanket by the withers area, and by two snap-clips below the cheeks. No halter is required. As with the blanket, horses rarely object to the fitting and use of the hood. Hoods come in eight sizes, though only two are regularly used with Icelandics, #3 and #4.

The blanket is machine washable and can be tumble-dried. If necessary, the fabric is easily repaired using Copydex adhesive or by patching with a domestic sewing machine. The fabric used for the Boett Blanket and Hood is strong enough to withstand normal horse activities: rolling, mutual grooming, galloping etc. Horses being horses, however, it must allow an animal to break free should it become hooked up on anything. For this reason, common sense should be applied if the blanket is not to get torn. Electric fencing considerably prolongs the life of the blanket. Barbed wire is totally inappropriate. Certain types of hedges or rough stone walls can also cause damage to a seriously itchy horse. If that horse just happens to be wearing a brand new blanket, the outcome can be disastrous. The barn and pasture should therefore be checked for protruding nails, jagged branches on hedges or trees, and other sharp objects that could cause damage.

Blankets never self destruct while the horse is grazing! If a blanket does get damaged, the reason is usually obvious: unsuitable pasture boundaries or even an aggressive herd leader's teeth can be responsible. It makes



sense to take steps to avoid these potential problems. Experience shows that, on average, a blanket will last for three years on mares and two years on geldings (boys will be boys!).

The History of Boett

Once we saw how well the Boett blanket worked on our own horses, we contacted the Boett company and spoke with them about becoming a dealer. The owner and founder, Lisbeth Sundberg, was very interested in who we are and about our involvement with Icelandic horses. She has a fondness for Icelandic horses and was very happy to have a dealer in the US that's heavily involved with them. We now carry the blanket and hoods in all Icelandic sizes, will order any size necessary, and will be carrying Boett's new fleece cooler in 2008.

From Lisbeth Sundberg, the founder, we learned the history of

Boett. In 1988, Lisbeth decided to start a new brand-name in the "pet business" after several years in the fashion industry. Lisbeth and her family bought an Icelandic horse in 1989, when Icelandics first started to gain popularity in Sweden. At this time it was, and still is, difficult to buy blankets that fit the special shape of these horses, therefore the fit and quality became her company's number-one concern.

One day a customer asked if Boett could make a blanket for her horse that would protect it from insect bites and other causes of SE. The Boett blanket was invented and tested on several suffering horses. Surprisingly, the blanket proved to be very effective. Boett first exhibited the blanket at the World Championships for Icelandic horses in Stockholm in 1990, and began to offer sizes for all different breeds. In 2005, improve-

ments were made in both design and fabric for the blanket and hood, and a few more sizes were added. The blanket has been a tremendous success and is exported all over the world.

For more information, contact:

Lisbeth Sundberg
www.Boett.se
www.sweet-itch.com

A FOAL IS BORN

story and photos by Kathy Sierra

It was a very sunny morning June 2, 2007, when my husband Bert and I took a very pregnant Birta for a walk around the back pasture. We wanted our new (and first) foal to be born out in the pasture, but we never expected a front row seat. We'll never know why Birta chose to deliver not just in the daylight, but at the end of a lead rope. It was breathtaking. It was scary. It was quick.

There we were walking along when mid-stride she suddenly refused to go forward. Her water broke. My husband didn't believe this was the time, but, I'm a mother of two myself. I sprinted to the house for camera and cell phone. On the way back, I saw that the mare was lying down. Bert was giving me the "thumbs up" sign. Then I saw a little wet furry head looking around. Birta had delivered the front half of her new baby.

Suddenly the rest break was over and it was time for the back half of Solfaxa to greet the world. A small bit of effort from the mare and the rest of the filly was on the ground, still wrapped in her amniotic sac. Birta stood up almost immediately and began a full assault on the pasture grass. She split her time between licking the foal and grabbing mouthfuls of grass. Meanwhile the filly was psyching up for the big moment: standing up. It was hard to watch. Just like your child's first time on roller skates. Your own body contorts in sympathy: impossibly long legs struggling for purchase and leverage and balance. Solfaxa stretched and strained and slipped and fell face first and sideways and backwards. Birta began nudging her hard from behind. The filly had fought her way almost completely out of the sac. But after a half-dozen intense but unsuccessful attempts,



Solfaxa stopped trying. I remembered the vet telling us that some foals will simply give up if they can't manage to stand. I began to worry. Birta stopped nudging her.

I needn't have worried. The filly was simply regrouping for her final push. With a look of Viking determination, Solfaxa put her front two legs out straight and began scrambling to get her back legs under her. She made it halfway up, all four legs shaking. We all held our breath. She crashed, hard. Then she was back at it, both front legs straight out, back legs scrambling. She got halfway up again and teetered. But this time, just before losing her balance, she took a diagonal pair of legs and spread them out wide—a front leg and opposite hind stepping way out at the same moment. She was up! Within five minutes, the filly had found her way to the milk—after trying just about every other potentially useful part of the mare.



Then part two of our morning show began. It was time to walk the mare and filly back to their own paddock, nearly a quarter-mile away. We began leading Birta, and Solfaxa started to follow, shaky at first but getting stronger with every stride. We took breaks every 30 yards or so and stopped to rub the foal, our own attempt at a little imprinting. We touched her everywhere, including tapping the bottom of her hooves (to be shod, one day) and all around her ears, face, chest, flanks, poll, hocks. She had no fear. By the time we made it to her new home, just over an hour after her birth, Solfaxa was tolt. Tolt! There she was, prancing in her little four-beat gait.

For a video of Solfaxa's first steps:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MAPgjhIYkU>





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Hello, my name is Allison Dufresnoy. I'm 19 years old and I'm French. I am at the moment enrolled in a BTS (equivalent Higher National Diploma) animal production with equine option at Sablé sur Sarthe in France. I am due to make a 12-week training period abroad to discover your job and to improve my English. I would like to know if you would accept me as a trainee next summer (from June to August 2008). I love horses and I practice horse riding for 8 years. It would be for me a great experience and I can assure you that I would do my best in order to help you in your daily work. Thank you for answering me. Best regards, Allison Dufresnoy (kastillane@msn.com)

QUARTERLY@

What would you like to see more of in the Icelandic Horse Quarterly? What topics interest you most? Health matters? Breeding? Trail riding? Are there issues and concerns you would like to read more about? Do you have questions you would like to submit for an "expert" to answer? Would you like to join the Quarterly Committee? Email quarterly@icelandics.org and let us know!

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www.Sunlandranch.com

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theherd@oz.net
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Denise M. Taylor -
James D. Taylor
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Philippi, WV 26416
304-457-4238
gaitedgirl@verizon.net
mysite.verizon.net/vze8yxx8/
rockymountains/

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Icelandic Horse Farm
Barbara Riva - Daniel Riva
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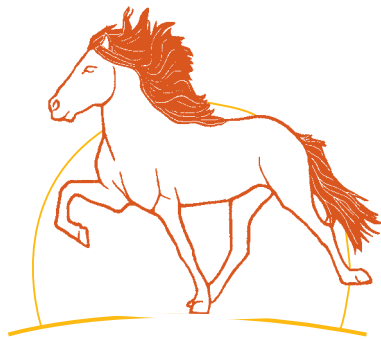
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Sólheimar

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Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir rode the top 5 year old stallion at the World Championships in Germany, she is an Icelandic champion, Landsmót's finalist, & a certified Icelandic trainer (FT member).

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Sigrún & Baldur frá Bakki the World Champion in Five Gait

2008 show schedule

March 14
 "Horses on Ice" – Woodstock, VT
June 14-15
 Schooling show
 Judged by Alexandra Pregitzer & Susan Peters – Tunbridge, VT
July 26-27
 Sanctioned show
 Judge Einar Orn Grant – Tunbridge, VT
August 30-31
 Judging seminar & sanctioned show
 Judge Marlise Grimm – Tunbridge, VT

Contact us for more info signunb@aol.com

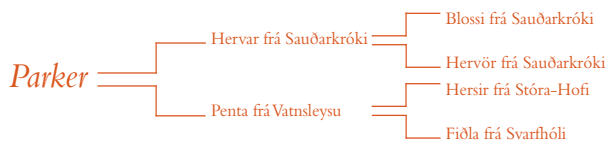


Sigrún rode the World Champion, receiving a 9 for trot, canter, gallop and five gait ride.

Sólheimar is proud to introduce Parker one of the highest scored four gaited stallions in the world standing at stud at our farm in Tunbridge, Vermont.



Sigur, a first prize son of Parker



Conformation	
Head	8
Neck - Withers - Shoulders	8.5
Back & Croup	8.5
Proportions	9
Legs (quality)	7
Legs (joints)	8.5
Hooves	8.5
Mane & Tail	8
Conformation	8.31

Ridden Abilities	
Tölt	9
Trot	9.5
Pace	5
Gallop	9
Spirit	9
General Impression	9
Walk	8
Slow Tölt	9
Canter	9
Rideability	8.44

Total **8.39**

Offspring:
 Already producing first prize offspring.
 Parker has inherited the best qualities from both sides of his lineage, the high stepping movements, powerful trot and charisma from his mother's side and the beautiful conformation, elegance, and powerful Tölt from his father's side.