

ISSUE TWO

THE

2008

# ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y



WELFARE OF THE HORSE

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

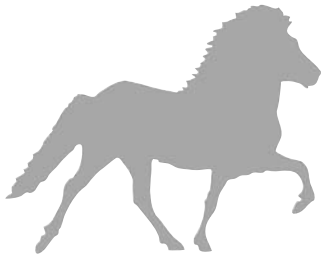
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# ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y

## THE ICELANDIC HORSE QUARTERLY

### ISSUE TWO 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](http://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](http://www.icelandics.org) or email the editorial committee at [quarterly@icelandics.org](mailto:quarterly@icelandics.org). We reserve the right to edit submissions.

Advertising rates and instructions are also online at [www.icelandics.org](http://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.

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**On the cover:** "Waves," taken by Heidi Benson in January at the state beach at Moss Landing, CA. The rider is her sister Laura Benson on Punktur fra Stekkjarholti.



## 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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.icelandics.org). For more information, contact Registrar Asta Covert, P.O. Box 1724, Santa Ynez, CA 93450; 805-688-1393; [registry@icelandics.org](mailto:registry@icelandics.org).

## WEBSITE

The USIHC's home on the web is [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org). Visit us for up-to-the-minute information.

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## VARIETY AND RANGE

Just a quick note to let you know how much I am enjoying reading the latest Quarterly magazine. Such a variety and range of articles. I am loving it. Keep up the great work.

—Sali Peterson

## WONDERFUL ISSUE

I just wanted to let you know that I am really enjoying this latest issue of the Quarterly, especially the artwork! The drawings are marvelous! The full-page drawing of the two girls picking two feet of the horse is wonderful and the artist really got the horse's expression! What a fabulous enhancement for the Quarterly! Congratulations! Happy Trails!

—Betz Haartz

## INFORMATIVE

I really enjoyed reading the last issue of the Icelandic Horse Quarterly. Informative and easy to read!

—Marko Mazeland, FEIF Director of Sport

## DIRECTLY RELATED

I received my Quarterly today and so far have only had a chance to glance through it briefly. It is the first complete issue I have received being a new member. I'd like to take this opportunity to say how nice a magazine I think it is. All of the articles are directly related to the Icelandic horse and the members/community surrounding the breed. I receive another breed publication as part of my membership there. That magazine used to be optional, but now it is mandatory to have and the dues were increased

to absorb the cost. It is a very flashy, full-color glossy magazine. Unlike the Quarterly for the USIHC though, this magazine has a lot of fluff and filler that has nothing to do with the breed, in fact the vast majority of it has nothing to do with the breed. Instead it is full of articles about trucks, trailers, clothing—things you would expect to find in a general all-purpose equestrian themed magazine. To me there is no comparison between the two publications. The Quarterly is informational and relates directly to the breed. The other holds no interest to me whatsoever—even the few articles about the breed it represents are so dull and repetitive. To everyone at the Quarterly—thanks for all the hard work and the great magazine.

—Juli Cole

## C O R R E C T I O N S

### CONFORMATION

Barbara Frische and I worked with Nancy Wines-Dewan on the conformation article in the *Quarterly* (Issue 1 2008), and it was a pleasure to do so. I myself have no skills in writing at all and am grateful for anyone who can help bring knowledge about the Icelandic horse to others. Even though I read Nancy's article before it was printed, some things slipped by me. I am trying now to help bring some of the points into the correct wording.

*"A lot of problems are of a psychological nature, which is another field of evaluating horses."* There is no other evaluation pattern for Icelandic horses than the one that is used by FEIF and its member countries. What is meant here is that it would

be another field of *observation* of horses.

*"A naturally bent, smooth, well-raised neck with a slim poll carries itself easier."* A poll cannot be slim. What is meant here is that the neck should be thin or slim at the throat.

A balance shift is necessary for a horse that is too much on the forehead to create good tolt; the weight has to be moved more toward the back. When speaking about horses with flat ribcages and small chests, they often need more time to find their balance than do horses of different conformation. Often those horses are searching for balance through the rein and need to be better educated and gymnasticised.

—Katrin Sheehan, USIHC Breeding leader

### KENTUCKY SHOW

In the article about the Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show in Issue 1 2008, we gave credit to Doug Smith for operating the IceTest software for the program. It was actually Doug Kane who ran the program.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Bernie Willis writes:* It's too bad, but I missed some of you at the annual meeting in Georgia last March. Since you couldn't make it, I must fill you in on some of the fun things that happened.

First of all we met in Madison, a unique Southern town with many fancy old homes. We were hosted by Katrin Sheehan. Several of our activities actually took place in her home. Much of it was built originally in 1837 and escaped damage from the Civil War. The annual meeting took place at a city conference room. The reports were preprinted and simply reviewed for the presentation. Questions were addressed by board members and then we got on to the review of constitutional amendments. After consideration, they were all accepted along with an increase of annual dues for individual and family membership by \$5.00.

Lunch was enjoyed just outside the conference room on a veranda in a few minutes of pleasant spring sunshine. A few sprinkles invited us



Katrin Sheehan's Creekside Farm in Georgia, host of the 2008 Annual Meeting in

Bernie Willis (5)

to return to the conference room for a group think on the future of our Congress. It was clear that we have many really good things going for us. Our organization is excellent, we know our financial situation, have an energetic board, and a great core of members ready and willing to share their Icelandic horse knowledge. We

did identify a disconnect between those who are most interested in competition and those who are most interested in pleasure riding. It was the general feeling that this space needs to be bridged by education. It was emphasized that in our breed, unlike many breeds in America, the best trail horse is also a great competition horse. In fact the history of the Icelandic horse competition in its home country indicates that this versatility is necessary to maintain its basic character. It is this willingness, smoothness, boldness, and reliability that make it such a great horse. The only problem is the wait from birth until you know what you may have in the individual horse.

After the last Annual Meeting many of you expressed an interest in having a seminar or other learning experience associated with this year's get-together. We followed up on your suggestions with a breeding seminar and a young horse evaluation. We learned some very valuable things. Would you believe that 22 days after birth you can have a batting average over 300 for determining the relative



Barbara Frische of Germany gave a young horse conformation seminar in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. See the Breeding column in this issue.



High scorers in the National Ranking for 2007 were Asta Covert (left) and Anne-Marie Martin (right).

performance of your foal at adulthood. Wouldn't a pro baseball scout love to have a tool like that? You may have a foal once every few years or a dozen a year, but either way it's very expensive to wait five years before you really know what you have produced. In the meantime you could repeat the mistake many times over. If you are lucky you may repeat the greatest breeding over and over. With the latest technology of the linear young horse evaluation you can be reasonably sure, early on, what your breeding has produced. The tool is the experienced young horse evaluator. Barbara Frische, an experienced breeding judge educator, led our group in understanding the procedures of young horse evaluation. The character, conformation, and gaits are all considered. It can be determined whether the foal will have four or five gaits as an adult, how responsive it will be to further training and the quality of movements it is most likely to have. The wait from birth to adult to know what you have is over; if you want to know, now you can. If you recently purchased a young horse you can know right away what you will have when it grows up. If you are breeding your favorite unriden



mare or perhaps breeding a proven mare to a young stud, now you have a much improved chance of getting what you desire.

Perhaps you are asking what this information will cost. If all the youngsters were trailered to a central location for evaluation, it would cost each of you a fortune in time and money, but there is another idea. What about moving a qualified young horse evaluator to you? One idea that your

Board will consider is moving the evaluator to several locations around the country, making the individual owners' transport much shorter, cheaper, and less time-consuming. To do so would take a commitment from many individuals to share in the expense. However, that expense would be much less than if any one person took it on themselves.

At the Annual Meeting, we also learned that there has been more than a 10 percent increase in sanctioned shows and a 100 percent increase in schooling shows over last year. The riding badge program is expanding rapidly. Some adults are taking it too.

Summer is here. It's the best time for riding for many of us. It's breeding season and new foals will be coming. Check out the events calendar on the Congress website, get together with your human and equine friends, and stir up the mix. In just one year from now you may be able to participate in the first USIHC young horse traveling evaluation.



Heading out for a trail ride during the 2008 Annual Meeting in Georgia.

## WELFARE OF THE HORSE

The USIHC Board of Directors is following FEIF's lead in trying to focus attention on "Humanitarian Issues Regarding our Horse," the theme of the 2008 FEIF conference. At the January board meeting, USIHC president Bernie Willis reported that the chairman of FEIF is asking each member country to support the goals of FEIF concerning the welfare of the horse. "FEIF wants to know how we, in our organization, are going to support these goals in areas such as riding in a humane way, stopping the improper use of equipment and bits, etc.," Bernie said. He noted that the consensus regarding the welfare of the Icelandic horse was to "educate not regulate."

Although the U.S. does not have the same level of problem as they have in Europe, the Board agreed that it is important to address this issue *before* it becomes a problem here as well. "By educating our members

we can ensure the well-being of the Icelandic horse in the U.S.," Bernie said. It was suggested that this be done partly with articles in the Quarterly. Breeding committee chair Katrin Sheehan suggested that the Board also needs to make a formal statement that we promote the well-being and welfare of the Icelandic horse. Anne Elwell remembered a letter that used to be given to judges at U.S. competitions. The letter urged them to make USIHC representatives aware, in a friendly way, of any rough riding or questionable use of tack (including bits). Anne will send a copy of this letter to the Education Committee.

The topic was brought up again at the February Board meeting. FEIF would like to see the USIHC take action to support the welfare of the horse and has requested that the committee chairmen talk about their actions at the upcoming FEIF conference. This request was timely, as

Bernie and education committee chair Alexandra Pregitzer had, a few weeks earlier, talked about offering a seminar on horse welfare and ethics in training and competitions. One idea was to offer a seminar in the fall of 2008 or maybe even a series of back-to-back seminars in different parts of the country. The committee is hoping to be able to invite two specialists in the field to come to the U.S. to talk about the welfare of the horse in training and competitions. Other, related topics may include healthy

training and riding, realistic goals, correct use of aids and equipment, and education of riders, trainers, and judges. The education committee will brainstorm further, request speakers, check out costs and locations, and bring a detailed proposal before the board.

## TRAINER SEMINAR

The first FEIF International Trainer Seminar to be held in the U.S. took place March 3-18 at Creekside Farm in Madison, Georgia. Eight people participated; five passed the examinations to be certified as FEIF International Trainer level 1. The seminar was organized by Katrin Sheehan and Alexandra Pregitzer. The trainer was Walter Feldmann, Jr. Feldmann is one of the highest educated Icelandic horse trainers and instructors in the world. Feldmann and his father, Walter Feldmann, Sr., introduced the unshanked bit (loose ring bit) to Iceland some 40 years ago. Feldmann has developed many Icelandic horse training methods and tack, has written books, and has produced videos. He has numerous World Champion titles, both in Sport and Breeding, and competed in Landsmot before this became fashionable for non-Icelandic people. He is known for helping horses with human problems and the other way round. Feldmann has been the first to teach the FEIF level 1 course in almost all FEIF countries, Katrin says, "And he was always successful. He is a professional, straight-forward, and he finds solutions for problems." The trainer matrix for the clinic is posted on the FEIF website ([feif.glitnir.nl/documents/edmatrix07.pdf](http://feif.glitnir.nl/documents/edmatrix07.pdf)). More seminars are planned to be held in the U.S., although no dates are yet set. Please check the USIHC web site events section or contact Education Committee chair Alex Pregitzer.



Chris Romano





Chris Romano

## COMPETITION SEMINAR

Alexandra Pregitzer announced that the Education Committee hosted a two-day seminar on May 1 and 2 in combination with the CIA Open, a sanctioned USIHC competition, at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. The seminar focused on competition riding, classes, rules, FIPO, and judging guidelines. Much like the judging seminars offered before, this seminar was an educational seminar that does not involve any riding instruction. Compared to the judging seminar, it will have its emphasis more on competition riding than on judging, yet it will also teach the basics about judging. The clinician for the seminar was Uschi Heller-Voigt, a FEIF International Sports Judge from Switzerland. Uschi is well known and respected and was on the Committee that examined future FEIF judges last year.

## NEW OFFICERS

New officers and committee chairs were chosen at the March meeting of the USIHC Board of Directors. The first item on the agenda was the election of the USIHC Board President. Bernie Willis began by saying that he had enjoyed the past year as president and also admitted that he'd caused some friction which he regretted. He and the other Board members agreed that it's inappropriate for Board members to take Board email postings onto other email lists. Bernie said that

he'd like to continue as President unless someone else was interested. No one else stepped forward. Bernie was elected Board President by unanimous vote.

Anne Elwell's nomination as vice president, Ed Hilgaertner's nomination as treasurer, and Kari Pietsch-Wangard's nomination as secretary were unanimously approved.

Bernie had previously asked Sandie Weaver if she wished to stay on as Youth Committee chair even though she was not re-elected to the Board. She indicated to other Board members that she would not continue on the Youth Committee. Laura Benson was suggested as chair. Laura said her youth-related interests are very strong, but was concerned about the size of the job. She suggested including Nicki Esdorn, Susan Milloy, and Susan Peters, all of whom have been very involved with youth in their part of the country. The Board

approved, and suggested that Laura recruit additional Youth Committee members from other unrepresented areas of the country. Laura agreed to chair the Youth Committee as long as she has a strong committee to back her. Laura was unanimously approved as Youth Committee Chair. Kathy Love also suggested including youth members on the committee. The Board agreed, and felt it should not be limited to just one youth member.

Andrea Barber had mentioned that she would like to step down as the Pleasure Riding Committee Chair and no longer run the PRP program. Karen Olson-Fields was given unanimous approval after she volunteered to replace her. Andrea also requested that she remain chair of the Regional Club Committee but would need a Board liaison. Karen also offered to take this position as well and was approved unanimously.

Kathy Love agreed to be the Promotional Committee Chairperson. Laura promised to help Kathy, especially with the brochure which is almost ready for print. Kathy agreed and was approved unanimously. The rest of the committee and liaison positions remained the same.

## BOARD BIOS

*The Quarterly asked the new members of the Board of Directors to tell us a little about themselves. Here are their responses.*

**Karen Olson-Fields:** By trade, I am a Family Nurse Practitioner in fulltime private practice. My other life is the Icelandic horse. I purchased my first Icelandic in 1997, and my interests since then have mushroomed! My husband and I started a small breeding farm in 2002, when we imported our stallion Omur fra Brun. I felt I could contribute as a USIHC Board member because I enjoy and participate in so many areas

Handle every **STRESSFUL** situation like an old horse.

If you can't nibble it, nuzzle it or ask it for a carrot ... just walk away.



Chris Romano

of the Icelandic horse world. I have trekked in Iceland, competed regularly, hosted clinics, attended clinics and evaluations, and horse camp and trail ride endlessly! I feel I stand to represent all members in some way! I am enthusiastic about my election to the USIHC Board of Directors, have some new ideas, and have a positive outlook for the next three years of my appointment!

**Kari Pietsch-Wangard:** In 2002, my husband and I joined friends on a trek to Iceland. I had been riding horses my whole life, but had never ridden an Icelandic. Little did I know how much my equine world would change. We were completely won over by these spunky, hearty horses. During the last five years, I have enjoyed countless trail rides, hunter paces, and poker rides with our small herd of three Icelandics. Whether it is riding in a clinic, fast-paced drill demos at the Midwest Horse fair, competing on the oval track, pace

race, or riding a dressage test, their versatility and willingness to please have never ceased to amaze me. Last December I was asked to consider taking over Barb Riva's position on the USIHC Board as secretary. Yikes, secretary? I had just finished my 22nd year as a board member for another breed organization. I had held the office of president, vice president, and most recently, treasurer, but never secretary. With Barb's encouragement and Bernie Willis's support, I decided to draw on my own versatility and willingness to try something new. It is my hope

that I can use my experience to guide the future and growth of the Icelandic horse in the U.S.

**Kathryn Love:** I am a 60-year-old retired Infectious Disease specialist. I started riding western when I was 10 years old. After the usual time-off for college, I got back into horses at age 32. I trained in dressage for 18 years and was introduced to Icelandics on a trail ride in 2002. I sold all of my other breeds and now have only Icelandics, including my horse of a lifetime, the stallion Pegasus. I moved from MN to KY in 2007 and am fortunate to train with Gudmar Petursson, who got me to the World Championships in the Netherlands this past summer. I have been on many boards and committees and presently serve as Secretary of the Flugnir Icelandic Association of the Midwest and have recently been elected to the Board of the U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress, where I have been given the Promotion Committee Chair. I have been on the Sport Committee since 2005.

I love Icelandic horses, both for trail and competition and find the Icelandic culture and people to be as fascinating as their land and their horses. My particular vision for the Congress is to nurture competition for all levels of horsepersons and to encourage and support young riders. I also wish to see continued improvement in the quality of horses being bred and imported to the U.S. I have a strong tradition of dedication to education and believe that there is no point in getting up in the morning if there is nothing to learn that day!

### **USIHC FINANCES**

At the request of the USIHC Board, Kari Pietsch-Wangard had been asked to make a financial overview of the Registry and Membership accounts. She reported to the Board in February. It was agreed that the USIHC would discuss the format of the 2007 Annual Report for both the Registry and Membership accounts and a sample of a possible combined Income/Expense report that Kari will prepare from data given to her by registrar Asta Covert and treasurer Ed Hilgaertner. The Board wanted more time to digest the actual financial numbers presented at a later date.

Kari made the following suggestions for future policy:

1) There should be two signers on each checking account. In the case of an emergency, it is very important to have another person approved to sign checks.

2) There is currently over \$90,000 in non-interest-bearing checking accounts. Kari suggested that \$50,000 be invested in some type of money market account or bank insured CD. Ed had once reported that the 501(c)4 status allowed us to have the income from these types of investments tax free. Anne said that

the Board had discussed this in the past, and had wanted to get a formal letter from a CPA or tax attorney confirming our ability to have tax-free income from investments, but had been unable to do so. Kari agreed to contact accountants to see if she could get some type of letter to this effect. Ed referenced IRS publication 598 that gives more information about our type of non-profit organization.

3) An audit of the two accounts should be done on a regular basis. This can be done either internally (within the Board) or from outside sources. Kari asked when the last time an audit had been done. Ed responded that there had never been an audit of either account. The Board felt it was important to get this done. Kari was asked to get a bid on what an audit would cost and what would be involved. In discussing the format of future monthly financial reports, Kari explained that by using Quickbooks, she would be able to present a combined Income/Expense report showing year-to-date financials for both accounts on one report. The report sample presented was for the month of January. The Board was interested in seeing this report format over the next few months before deciding if they want it to become a permanent part of the treasurer's report.

## PROMOTIONS

*At the Annual Meeting, Laura Benson reported on the work of the Promotion Committee in 2007. Said Laura: We now have access to the beautifully designed Icelandic Horse brochures from Iceland in a CD format allowing us full access to the layout and content of the brochure for printing in the U.S. The newly designed Congress labels can be placed on the back of the brochure. These are fabulous*

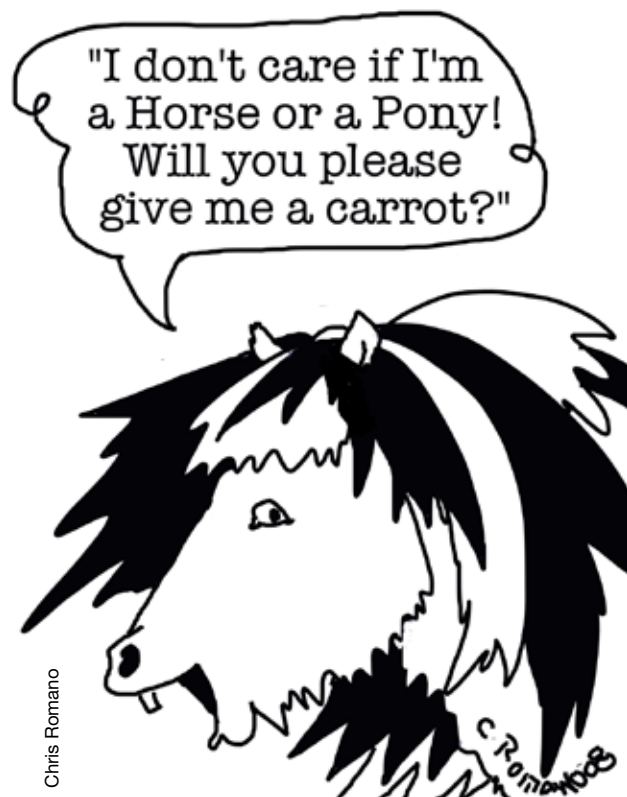
brochures with accurate descriptions of the Icelandic horse and breathtaking photos. In addition to these brochures, work is almost complete on a separate informational brochure on the Congress itself. This will give people an insight on what the USIHC is all about. We are very excited to be in the final stages of this brochure and believe it will be a huge asset at large promotional events. We also had a fantastic breed profile on the Icelandic horse in America's bestselling horse magazine, *Horse Illustrated*. Many farms and trainers put in ads promoting the breed and much interest was stirred. Finally, three successful Equine Affaire expos were put on in 2007 in California, Ohio, and Massachusetts. As always, these events are a great tool for marketing the breed to a large population.

## BOARD MEETINGS

The USIHC Board of Directors met on Jan. 15, Feb. 26, and Mar. 18. Present were Andrea Barber, Laura Benson (missed Feb.), Asta Covert, Anne Elwell, Ed Hilgaertner, Kari Pietsch-Wangard, Katrin Sheehan, Sandie Weaver, and Bernie Willis. Regional Club Observers were Annette Coulon (Kraftur), Alys Culhane (Alaska Icelandic Horse Association), and Dawn Shaw (Cascade Icelandic Horse Club). At the Mar. 18 meeting, newly elected Board members Kathy Love and Karen Olsen-Fields replaced Andrea Barber and Sandie Weaver. The

following report includes highlights from all three meetings. See also the related stories, "Welfare of the Horse," "USIHC Finances," and "New Officers." Complete minutes can be found at [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org).

*Breeding:* The Board voted unanimously to adopt the new version of FIZO, the international book of breeding evaluation guidelines. These guidelines have been used in the U.S. for several years and all the breeding committee members had voted in favor of this. The Breeding Committee also proposed to adopt the newly-developed "breeding evaluation checklist for organizers." This was created in conjunction with the FEIF checklist. It was reviewed by the committee and found to be an excellent source for FEIF evaluation organizers. Chair Katrin Sheehan said that the committee was currently working on the evaluation forms; they will be submitted to the board for approval.





Chris Romano

The committee proposed the following, relating to the naming of American-bred Icelandic horses: All American-bred horses will be entered into World Fenger with the correct Icelandic spelling of their first names. Horse owners/breeders have the choice of registering their horses with the USIHC registry in either Icelandic or English spelling. In both cases the correct Icelandic spelling of the name will be the first to appear on the registry papers; the English spelling of the name will appear on

the same line in brackets. Six Breeding Committee members were in favor, and three were opposed. Since some were opposed, the board suggested that it be brought up again at the next meeting.

Katrin noted that at the Oct. 23, 2007 meeting, the Board voted to accept a proposal that the "Certificate of Origin" be required as proof of ownership for U.S. registration of horses imported from Iceland after 2002. It should have been "Certificate of Ownership." The Board agreed with this correction.

A letter from Michael Edwards, Chairman FEIF Registration Group, was discussed. Asta reported that the mare Hetja (and offspring) have been proven to be purebred and have been entered into World Fenger. This was not the case for the mare Litla. The result is that Litla and her offspring (one mare and one gelding) are not considered purebred. This poses a problem they because they

are currently in our registry and our registry only allows for purebred Icelandics. Ed suggested that these three horses be removed from our registry and placed in a pending file. It will be up to the owners to prove that Litla is purebred. Asta was instructed to write a letter to the horses' owners regarding this situation and their pending status. The Board will approve the letter via email.

*Education:* Concerning the Sports Judges Education Program, several changes were made to the website after some members reported issues finding the intern judge listing. The intern judge list on the education committee page was made more visible; the list was added to competition page since many people look there; and the list got a visible addition with the email address of president and committee chairman, as well as the information that individual interns can be requested at any time.

The board had decided not to use the surplus from the last judging seminar to reimburse Gudmar Petursson, but there was no answer as to the question of where the money would go, and if there was a way to credit it to the committee for use in future seminars. The Board felt that this would have to be treated the same as all other Congress sponsored events—the profit (if any) would go into the general fund.

There will be a USIHC Judging Seminar in August 2008 in Vermont, in combination with Sigrun Brynjarsdottir's show. Marlise Grimm will be the clinician, and the date will be posted on the USIHC and Tolt News websites. The committee is trying to organize at least one, and possibly two more judging seminars. This may include a basic seminar that is geared towards competition riders and one that is more specifically geared towards the further education of intern

The Breeding Committee also proposed the following new rules for the USIHC online stallion book:

- a. All stallions must USIHC registered.
- b. Fully-evaluated stallions must have a score over 7.5 overall.
- c. Stallions five years or younger with a BLUP of 110 or higher are allowed to be listed. They must be fully evaluated by the end of the year in which they turn five, and score higher than 7.5 overall or will be eliminated from the stallion book .
- d. Stallions five or younger with conformation scores only are allowed to be listed. They must be fully evaluated by the end of the year in which they turn five and score higher than 7.5 overall or they will be eliminated from the stallion book.
- e. Owners with farm listings can list their stallions for free, members without farm listings can list their stallions for \$50.00. Non-members can list their stallions for \$100.00.

**Tonights breaking news...  
Our areas atmospheric visibility  
has been affected, by a small  
shedding horse!**



Chris Romano

judges. Asta described the 2-day West Coast seminar as being one in which the competitor will learn the FIPO rules and what judges are looking for. There will be no testing involved. The person who tested the International Judges will teach the seminar. Heidi Kline noted on the Sport Committee email list that it would be fine with her to have this seminar fulfill the requirement for the committee, however, a committee vote was never taken. The Board felt it was necessary for her to get the vote from the committee in case there are other opinions.

The FEIF International Trainer Seminar has been confirmed and is in preparation.

*Pleasure Riding:* The 2007 PRP results will be published on the USIHC website and all the winners will be contacted. Andrea is in the process of ordering the medals and jackets for the annual winners, as well as the vests for those who've reached the 1,000 hour mark. Iceline no lon-

ger donates the winner's jackets, therefore the prize cost has increased dramatically. While the Board has every intention of approving funding of the PRP prizes, they first need to know what those costs will be. Otherwise it would be a "blank check" approval. Karen will contact Andrea and get a report specifying the awards and their cost for the Board to approve. The prize for the 2007 Regional Club PRP winners still needs to be determined. It was clarified that Andrea meant for each member from the winning regional club to receive a prize. Since the Board has

no idea of the number of eligible members, it is hard to approve the cost. Karen will contact Andrea for a total number of members and what the cost will be if the gloves are the prize. In the future, the Board would like an Annual report from the PRP chair showing the number of participants enrolled, the total income and the total expenses related to that year's program.

*Promotion:* Laura Benson sent a PDF copy of the new USIHC brochure. The brochure will inform people about USIHC, the registry and our programs. While some information about the Icelandic horse will be included, it was suggested that she eliminate most of the text on the horse breed. The email address and website will be printed on the brochure. The Congress's physical address and phone number will not be included as this information is available on the website, and the physical address and phone number can change at any time. It was suggested that Laura put pictures in

place of the eliminated text. There will also be some blank space for the addition of various information stickers. A reprint of the membership form will also be included. Bernie Willis said that he was in Iceland at the FEIF delegate's conference. He gave the Icelandic Farmer's Association brochure on a CD disc and said that we may now have it reproduced at any time. Andrea offered to get quotes for printing and will put our logo onto the back of this brochure.

*Regional Clubs:* Andrea sought board approval for the application for the formation of a new Regional Club: The Maine Icelandic Horse Association. She noted that this group that has been a cohesive one for a number of years and wishes to become an official regional club. All the paperwork has been reviewed and is complete.

*Sport:* The Board discussed whether there might be other criteria to consider for members wishing to join the Sport Committee besides taking a judging seminar. Some thought it was unfair that this is the only committee that has a requirement for membership. A number of Board members felt that if an individual is serious about being on the Sport Committee, they should attend this seminar. Committee members need to better understand the rules. It was noted that since we have judging seminars, the education is now available. A roll call vote was taken on the proposal to require that all members of the Sport Committee (with the exception of Board members) complete a judging seminar. It was mentioned that taking the test is not a requirement. There will be a one-year grace period, so the requirement would begin on January 1, 2009. Five were in favor, two were opposed, and one board member abstained.

At the March meeting, the Sport

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Committee asked that the Competition Seminar given by Uschi Heller-Voight in May at Flying C Ranch be a qualifying prerequisite for those wishing to be on the Sports Committee. The committee feels that her focus on the FIPO and competition areas will suffice. The committee doesn't want to limit people on the committee but does want those on the committee making educated decisions. The Board unanimously approved this event—it will enable participants to qualify for the Sports Committee.

David Kline proposed to the board that the following be added to the newly in-place National Ranking system: In the event of a tie in any discipline, the National Ranking committee will determine the average based on as many scores as necessary to determine separate average scores. The Board approved.

Kline also asked for a rule change regarding dress code at sanctioned competitions. The Board had discussed this via email earlier. It was agreed that Anne Elwell's wording was to be added to the USIHC Competition Rules under the section titled "Rules of General Application." The wording is now as follows: *Dress Requirements: All provisions in FIPO Section 3.3 shall apply. The dress requirements in all FIPO classes at USIHC sanctioned shows shall be those required at international sport competitions. The dress requirements in all non-FIPO classes shall be those allowed in Pace Race and Pace Tests.*

*Website:* A proposal had been sent to the Board from Doug Smith regarding posting the Quarterly on our website, to be made available only to current members and accessible with a password. The Quarterly Committee had discussed this and although no formal vote was taken, most of the committee members were not in favor of this proposal. It was

felt that it would take approximately 50 members to opt for the online only version to save on the postage to break even. This might also result in a loss of membership as those members, whose main purpose for USIHC membership is receiving the Quarterly, could have another member print one out for free. No additional action by the Board was taken on this issue. The Board suggested that this proposal go to the Quarterly Committee, where it is being reviewed.

Andrea Barber felt that the web committee shouldn't make any changes without the affected committee's okay. Some examples given appear to be in violation of this policy. Katrin will share this policy with Doug. Discussion continued whether it would be acceptable to send notices, approved by the Board, to the membership via email. Some board members thought this might exclude some members who do not have email but it would be okay for reminders. In March, the Board revisited the policy for website posting. The Board must approve any item that is in the name of the Board before it is posted on the USIHC website. Anne will add this to the Policy and Procedures list.

Katrin Sheehan said that the following was voted on unanimously by the Website Committee for presentation to the Board: Free links on the site should be limited to FEIF, our parent organization; Regional clubs, our child organizations; internal links to our own pages; established business partners providing online services to USIHC members (e.g. World Fengur). The Board unanimously accepted this. It was unanimously agreed to accept the following as Board Policy:

*"It is the policy of the Web Committee to not post documents on the USIHC web site at the request of members-at-large. The*

*USIHC will link from calendar items to flyers, applications, etc. hosted on a third party web site at the member's request; but, the USIHC will not host such documents."*

*Youth:* Sandie Weaver reported that Martina Gates and Steve Barber are currently working on the Icelandic horse coloring book. Her understanding is that it can be printed and used for any promotional use, but that any profit (if sold) must go back to the youth of that country. Anne asked whether there were any copyright issues. Both Bernie and Sandie did not think so as long as the coloring book was used as intended. To be on the safe side, Sandie was asked to get a letter from FEIF that clarifies this understanding. Sandie also mentioned that the coloring book had been delegated to two people who are trying to have it published online, so anyone who wishes to order one can go through the on-line publisher. A certain percentage of the cost will be set aside for youth activities.

Sandie announced the winners of the 2007 Spaejari Awards: Megan Milloy from Vermont, Emily Pfoutz from Massachusetts, and Jennifer Wright from Maine. Their essays are printed in this issue of the Quarterly. Every December Sandie sends a letter to all USIHC youth encouraging them to enter the Spaejari Essay Writing Contest, the FEIF Youth Cup or Camp, and the Pleasure Rider Program. The Spaejari Essay Writing Contest is sponsored by John and Marilyn Parke. John has ridden his Icelandic, Spaejari (commonly known as Remington) more than 10,000 miles in endurance rides. Horses written about must be USIHC registered and the authors must write about the activities that best exhibit their horse's loyalty, courage and devotion to the rider. Three USIHC youth each year are chosen to win \$50 each and a plaque.

## **SPORT RULES**

The new FIPO (valid as of April 1, 2008) is available for download from the FEIF website. The main changes are: the harmonisation between FIPO and the Sport Judges' Guidelines, so the term "tempo" will be replaced by "speed" and the term "working tempo" will change into "slow (speed)"; the separate marks for seat and aids in oval track classes will disappear; the change of horses between riders in the finals of Four Gait V4 will no longer take place; specific new rules will be valid for the training of horses on competition grounds. There are also other minor changes.

## **MOUTH CHECKS**

Based upon the experience at the World Championships 2007, new forms have been designed for veterinary checks (mouth inspections) at sport events. The forms have been designed by Claudia Glück (Deputy Chief Judge at the WC) and Caroline van de Bunt (Head Veterinary Surgeon at the WC). The forms cover the new checks on oral wounds and general health matters. Added to the forms is a clear description of the procedures to follow. The forms fit both major events with a central entrance check ("fit to compete check") and medium size and smaller events without such a check. They are available for download from the FEIF website: [www.feif.org/forms](http://www.feif.org/forms). The new release of IceTest, the free competition software of FEIF, will be able to print the forms as well.

## **FOR INSTRUCTORS**

In August 2007, at Basselthof in Germany, the pilot project of the FEIF International Instructors Course and Examination resulted in two Americans getting certified as FEIF International Trainer level 1. The

next course will be held from July 21 to August 5, with examinations on August 6-7, again in Basselthof. To assist instructors in FEIF countries where there is no instructor training system available, FEIF has decided to arrange this annual international course and examination in English. Each year the course will be hosted by one of the FEIF countries with a training system in place. The qualifications will be issued by the national association of the host country. In 2008, the IPZV in Germany has agreed to act as the host. It is planning to offer examinations at Level 1, 2, and 3 of the FEIF Matrix. In the German system, these qualifications are Trainer C, Trainer B, and Trainer A respectively.

## **EDUCATION MEETING**

The annual meeting of the FEIF Education Committee was held at the FEIF Conference in Iceland. As Hannes Kirchmayr had decided to retire, the committee had to reorganise. Ian Pugh became the new chairman, and as often happens when new board members are joining a group, new questions are asked. As a result the committee had many positive and exciting discussions. All the details can be read in the minutes of the meeting, but we would like to draw your attention to two specific subjects: In 2008 the committee will start the work concerning comparing the different examination systems. The committee will need input from the different member countries, and we are looking forward to a positive cooperation. All the countries having an education system will be contacted by our new chairman Ian Pugh. In 2008, it will be possible to attend courses and examinations at FEIF-level

1, 2 and 3 at Basselthof, Germany. The courses and examinations will be done in English and German and could be a possibility for those being a member of an association not having their own education system (more information will be available soon). Finally we would like to introduce to you the question asked and discussed during the whole conference: "What is good riding style?" Be sure that this question will be discussed everywhere in the years to come in order to define the riding style of Icelandic horses even better. The question will also be a theme for the next international instructor seminar in Jan. 2009. The Education Committee is full of energy and expectations for the coming year. Don't hesitate to contact any of us for sharing good ideas or asking questions.

## **JUDGES SEMINAR**

Forty-six judges planned to participate in the FEIF Sport Judges Seminar 2008, April 11-13 at the Agricultural University of Iceland, Hvanneyri (IS). Thirteen judges from Iceland will take part, six from Switzerland, five from Norway and Denmark each, four from Germany and Sweden, three from Austria, two from Finland and the Netherlands, and one from the United States. Ten Candidates were to take part in the test to become a FEIF Licensed International Sport Judge, April 13-14.

## **GÆDINGAKEPPNI**

A new version of the rules and judges' guidelines for gædingakeppni is available for download from the FEIF website.

# REGIONAL CLUB UPDATES

To contact a Regional Club, or to find out if there is one in your area, see the complete directory on [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org) or ask the Regional Club committee chair, Andrea Barber. Regional Club members, please send your updates to the Quarterly c/o Alys Culhane ([alysculhane@hotmail.com](mailto:alysculhane@hotmail.com)). The next deadline is July 1, for publication in the September issue.

## Alaska Icelandic Horse Association

Up here in the land of the midnight sun, Icelandic horse doings are an ongoing concern. We're now reflecting on the past riding season, and planning for the upcoming year.

According to Alys Culhane, the club census taker, we have 104 Icelandics in the state, and four foals on the way. In addition, a handful of individuals will, this spring, be bringing horses up from the Lower 48.

We had a wonderful 2007 riding season. Our club is unique in that our membership is fairly far flung, as are our varied horse-related interests. For example, the Collins sisters (Miki and Julie) live in Lake Minichumina,



Heather Skopik

Winners of the V1 Finals with judge Hordur Hakonarson at the CIA show.

which does not have road access. Their Icelandics are used for a variety of purposes, including packing, hunting, trapping, trail riding, and whatever else the twins have need for. And Amy and Mike Rogde live 1,000 or so miles distant, in the Kenai Peninsula, a place which does have road access. Amy owns Lysy, a small, spunky, and fearless palomino mare. Amy recently remarked that when she took Lysy moose hunting, her scabbard about touched the ground!

There is also considerable dis-

tance between those of us who live in Southcentral (Anchorage, Palmer, and Wasilla) and Interior (Fairbanks) Alaska. The most exciting thing of all is that despite the distance, we are becoming a fairly unified regional club. We're all keeping in touch, mainly via email, on a variety of topics including nutrition, blanketing, and farrier concerns.

In October five of the Fairbanks folks ventured down to Southcentral for an informal farm tour/TTeam clinic. Every minute of the three-day visit was packed. Some of the highlights included hands-on young horse TTeam demonstration at Alys and Brandi Herra's, and farm visits at Misty Circle and Virginia Crawford's. The visit culminated with a visit to Bernie Willis's place. We all were the first to see his four new horses, which had arrived from Iceland just a few days before.

And this past March, the Kenai contingent ventured north, for an Icetolt bonfire at Bernie's place. The afternoon/early evening event took place on the lake—Bernie's legendary Kolby pulled a cart and Anott and Kappi tolled on the still-firm ice. Regional Club member Ruth Hirsinger brought her horse, Curly Sue, and pony, Diablo-Angel along for the festivities.



Heather Skopik

Judge Hordur Hakonarson gives the awards to Donna Rich and Willy Ma after the Pleasure Four-Gait final at the CIA show.



Here, and elsewhere, we've begun planning for the upcoming season. Ruth, who is our trail events coordinator, is organizing a series of trail rides in Southcentral. We've also scheduled a gait training clinic at Bernie's in June, and a Mandy Pretty Tteam clinic at the same, in August.

We're also working on putting together a website—our hope is that this will result in increased communication, both inside and outside the state. —Susan Tilly

### California Icelandic Horse Association (CIA)

The CIA will have another sanctioned show May 3-4, 2008 at Flying C Ranch. Uschi Heller-Voigt is coming from Switzerland to judge and will teach a two-day Competition Seminar that will cover the FIPO rules and Guidelines. The past CIA shows have been a great success and everyone participating has had a great deal of fun. We will have the Friday Night BBQ for everyone to mingle and meet the judge. Then on Saturday the competition starts. The last class of the day is the exciting 100 m pace race. Sunday will be a short day filled with finals. The CIA will have a silent auction at the show to raise money for the Young riders going to the Youth Cup in Switzerland this summer. —Asta Covert

### Cascade Icelandic Horse Club

January to March are busy months for the Cascade Club. In January we have an annual meeting where we set up the general events for the year including our points of contact. We make decisions and every other year install newly-elected members. Our scheduled events can be seen on our website. We have all the usual events and this summer will add a summer show to our summer meeting.

New Year's Day Carol Townsend and her gelding Kopar, attended



Warming up before the CIA show.

Heather Skopik

their first large group trail ride. The ride was sponsored by the Nisqually BCHW Chapter. About 40 riders went out, Carol had the only Icelandic on the ride and was very proud of her "little horse." Kopar did an awesome job with any and all trail hazards, including a 75-foot long section of the trail with water on it. He bravely tackled it all. The ride was 3-4 hours long with a barbecue/potluck at the day's end.

On February 8-9, 2008, at the Clark County Fairgrounds, Linda Eddy and Carol Burkhardt did an Icelandic Breed Demo, taking Lipurta and Koki to the event. The two were chosen because they represented the two ends of the Icelandic horse size spectrum.

Lipurta is a petite 12.2-hand chestnut mare and Koki is a 14-hand bay gelding. Spectators loved the demo and asked numerous questions about our Icelandic horses. The most frequently asked question was: "How does Koki see through his forelock?"

In February, members Linda Eddy, Rachel Knowlton, Janella Radetich, and Jean Waller took Lipurta, Sorli, Gjafar, and Koki to the Winter Woolies, a schooling show which was held in Ridgefield, WA. It was Janella and Gjafar's first horse show and Gjafar tolled around the arena very proudly. They both received rib-



Stina Sigurbjornsson gets her scores and comments from the judge.

Heather Skopik



Rachel Ng riding Erro fra Slettuboli.

Heather Skopik



Asta Covert riding Dynur fra Ytra-Skorudugili in the Speed Pace.

Heather Skopik



Jark meets the Alpaca, Christmas 2007.

bons! Sorli eagerly tolted around with the other gaited horses and lapped the Tennessee Walkers. He received first place in both shows in the open-gaited classes. Linda and Jean also participated, and their horses carried them enthusiastically in the class. Audience members were excited to see the Icelandics; Gjafar should get an award for Icelandic ambassador because he is a magnet for kids and those who want to learn more about the breed. In the Gaited Horse class, Sorli won first, Lipurta took second, and Gjafar took fifth place ribbons. It was a great showing for our little horses! Rachel and Janella also participated in another Winter Woolies

#### Horse Show in March.

Early in March Svanny Stefansdottir and Pamela Nolf took Fafnir and Blessi to a local schooling event near Gig Harbor, so Svanny's two students, Bella and Leah, five and six years old respectively, could ride in their first horse show. The two have been taking lessons for over a year. Because both girls did so well, the judge awarded them blue ribbons and cookie awards in the lead line class. At the end of the class, the observers gave them an ovation. The girls looked cute on matching flaxen chestnut Icelandics. Blessi did everything Bella asked—stop, back, walk on—and did better than he does

for Pam. Both Icelandics took care of their little riders. Children running through the parking lot, trucks driving by, kids playing in the bushes—nothing spooked the horses with their little riders. Blessi was fascinated with Bella's cap (which was replaced with a riding helmet) and kept trying to see it. Both girls now have a serious case of blue ribbon fever.

Member Dawn Shaw reported in as she attended the trainer certification course with legendary German trainer Walter Feldman Jr. in Georgia. She was supported with lots of emails and positive thoughts as she informed us of the rigorous demands of the certification process.

As for the rest of us, we're excited to be able to have a weekend ride, stay out in the fresh air for an extra day, and get in an occasional ride with another Icelandic owner in the area. We're looking forward to a packed schedule for the year which will include clinics by Liz Graves, Robyn Hood, Don Miller, Svanny Stefansdottir, and Alex Pregitzer; as well as trail rides from mountains to ocean and horse shows. Please visit us online to see if one of our upcoming events fits your schedule! You can visit us at [www.cascadeicelandichorseclub.com](http://www.cascadeicelandichorseclub.com) to find contact and event information. —*Lisa M. McKeen*



Sorli and Gjafar at the show.



Bonny & Claudia on the Klickitat Endurance Ride in June 2007.



Carol Townsend and Kopar, February 2008.

## Flugnir Icelandic Horse Club

Flugnir has had a quieter winter than usual due to increased cold, snow, and ice. We're gearing up to really enjoy the warmer months ahead with many opportunities for fun with our horses. Winter didn't stop us from getting out once and a while. Many people at Winterhorse Park in South-eastern WI enjoyed trail riding on the Kettle Moraine forest trails on warmer winter days.

The second weekend in February is always big for those of us in southern Minnesota. We do an ice tolt performance at an ice harvest festival for Waseca area fifth and sixth graders. The weekend brings a huge sleigh and cutter parade. This year three of us braved the below-zero windchills and biting wind to join in the fun. Warmer years have had up to 20 Icelandic horses and their riders attend. (See photo for some of the ice tolters doing their thing.)

We have many fun events planned for 2008. To see a complete listing take a look at our recently updated website [www.flugnir.50megs.com](http://www.flugnir.50megs.com). The end of April brings the Minnesota Horse Expo. There are 20 horses and riders registered to participate. Riders participate at whatever level they're comfortable at. All can ride in the Parade of Breeds. A demo with drama is planned this year, as well as the usual type of gait and formation demo, with a beer tolt of course!

July 12-18 we will again be offering Youth Riding Camp. Alex Pregitzer will instruct and Sara Lyter will test youth. There will be a Riding Badge One review, which all of last year's campers trained in and will now have the opportunity to test for on the last day of camp. Riding Badge Two Instruction will be offered at this camp to those who are interested in pursuing it. Riding instruction will



Scenes from the Flugnir Ice Tolt performance at the ice harvest festival in Waseca in below-zero windchills.



also be a big part of this camp. After the final day of testing, there will be fun and activities for all. Camp is held at Courthouse Park in rural Waseca County. There are wooded trails and a river which the kids enjoy taking their horses swimming in. For registration forms go to the Flugnir web site.

Mark your calendar! Flugnirkepni will be held August 29-31 at Winterhorse Park; September 18-21 a young horse evaluation and seminar will be held at Winterhorse Park. Octoberfest will be held October 12 at the Simon Arena in Cannon Falls, MN. This is a tri-state show that will offer classes for Icelandics. They also have a really great horse and

rider costume class! A club camping and trail riding weekend is planned for the Kettle Moraine forest near Winterhorse Park in WI for October 16-19. As you can see 2008 will offer lots of fun! —*Kristin Shirley*

## Frida Icelandic Riding Club (FIRC)

In mid-February, Sverrir Bjartmarz invited the FIRC to attend the Icelandic Association of Washington's Thorablot party. (Sverrir was the President of the Icelandic association.) There were about 120 people in attendance, including the U.S. Ambassador of Iceland. FIRC members had a great time. Members ate sheep cheek, ram testicles, and shark. It all tasted good! There was also a great deal of standard fare which included lamb, potatoes, and vegetables. There was a folk dancing group and dancing and singing. The highlight of the evening for us was when FIRC member Susan Milloy won the grand prize in a raffle. She got a free round trip to Iceland and accommodations for two nights at an Icelandair hotel, for travel between October and May. She was very happy!

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The club was pleased to learn that Megan Milloy was one of the winners of the youth Spaejari Awards (*see her essay in this issue of the Quarterly*). Megan and her mother Susan traveled to Vermont in March to attend the Ice Tolt festivities. Megan rode in a youth drill team on ice and did well. She also got a second place in an open ice tolt competition.

The FIRC planned schooling shows in April at Dave Goodman's farm in Bristow, VA, and in May at Sam Castleman's farm in Thurmont, MD. The FIRC will be taking the lead in hosting classes for Icelandics at the end of June at the Virginia Gaited Jubilee at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington, Virginia. Susan Peters will be the judge. For information on the show, please see [www.gaitedjubilee.com](http://www.gaitedjubilee.com). Everyone is invited.

Alex Pregitzer plans to judge the FIRC schooling show in May and to give lessons the day before. Gudmar Petursson plans to do clinics for the FIRC in May at Rich Moore's farm in Virginia and in June at Lynne Alfonsi's in Pennsylvania. Trail rides will be held monthly during the year the bulk of the year.

The FIRC drill team, under the leadership of Curt Pierce, began practicing in March. The team planned to appear at large horse shows in April near Fredericksburg, VA, and in May at the Virginia Horse Center. For additional information on club events, please see the FIRC events calendar at [www.firc.us](http://www.firc.us). —*Rich Moore*

### **Los Angeles Icelandic Horse Association**

LAIHA kicked off 2008 with three fun and educational events. Daniel Stewart, U.S. Endurance Team Coach and the U.S. Paralympic Squad did a great sports psychology workshop. Attendees are now deleting "D" words from their vocabulary, developing dy-

namic images to guide riding corrections (Wonderbra! and Ponytail!) and identifying theme songs to sing while riding (shades of Ally McBeal!).

A schooling show was held at Hansen Dam Equestrian Center, judged by Will Covert. Participants had a great time and commented on how much they appreciated Will's feedback. All are now getting reading for the Santa Ynez Open in May.

Eyjolfur (Jolli) Isolfsson made his regular spring visit to Valhalla Icelandics, working with eight horses for a week. Riders demonstrated what they had been doing with their horses on a Sunday afternoon, then Jolli worked with each horse Monday through Friday, showing riders what he had been doing with their horses on Friday. On Saturday and Sunday Jolli worked individually with each horse and rider, and left each with a plan for forging ahead. The horses all made very positive changes, and everyone had a great time. —*Kristin Forbregd Houser*

### **Northeast Icelandic Horse Club**

The NEIHC and its members stayed very busy through a winter of record-breaking snow. We held our annual meeting and Thorrablot party at Roberts Wood Farm; over 30 members came. Also, Sigrun Brynjarsdottir and Jason Brickner arranged, produced, and performed in the very successful first annual Horses on Ice in Vermont for an audience of over 300 people. Many club members rode in the show. Last November's Equine Affair had a dozen club members perform in three breed spotlights. This year's upcoming events include a "bunny" hop (not to be confused with "turkey" tölt) which will be held on April 5th. This is the twice-annual trail ride at Rockefeller State park. We also will hold our second annual Youth Clinic

in August at Roberts Woods Farm. There are two sanctioned shows in Vermont this summer. The NEIHC will sponsor two breed evaluations, one in Georgia May 17-18, and one at Mill Farm on September 19-21. Nicki Esdorn and Brian Puntin participated in and passed their FEIF International Level 1 trainer exam in Madison, Georgia. More details on our website [www.neihc.com](http://www.neihc.com). —*Brian D. Puntin*

### **Southern California Icelandic Riders**

The Southern California Icelandic Riders have had a full and busy year. After evacuating more than 32 Icelandic horses during the October fires, we finished last year with a Second Place Ribbon in the Encinitas Christmas Parade. We had just been camping in Bonita, where we tolted around the golf course, crossed creeks, and rode over freeway overpasses on an elevated horse bridge. Our camping excursions include themed meals with appropriate music and have become a heavily sought-after activity. We have had members drive out to our campsites to join us for dinner when their schedule wouldn't allow them to camp all weekend. We are currently preparing our drill team for a demo at Night of the Horse in Del Mar. We have an upcoming Photo Shop clinic to help you take the best pictures of your Icelandic horse. Happy Toltng everyone! —*Kimberly Hart*

# NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## VIRTUAL SHOW

Judy Ryder has organized an on-line video “show” to enable Icelandic horse owners around the world to share information about training and riding using natural horsemanship techniques. “Many of us are geographically so far away from each other, that it’s not easy to get together to exchange information about training and riding,” she notes, “but now technology can help fill in the gap.”

Judy is a long-time gaited horse and Icelandic horse owner located in California. As what she calls “an educator and a facilitator,” with an Internet chat list reaching over 1200 members, she is an advocate of natural horsemanship techniques and natural gaits for gaited horses. She currently has two personal Icelandic horses, both mares, called Cookie and Charm, and a handful of rescue/rehab Icelandic horses.

The on-line virtual show is an innovative concept that will enable Icelandic horse owners from any country to share natural training methods. The location of the show will be on YouTube, the free on-line video hosting service (<http://youtube.com>).

“Hundreds of videos about any topic in which you may be interested can be found on YouTube,” Judy says, “including many about Icelandic horses.”

Anyone can create an account at YouTube for free, she explains, and upload videos at no charge. There is no limit to the number of videos that can be uploaded, although there is a limit to the size of each video (100 MB and less than 10 minutes). YouTube gives you your own page and all of your videos are linked to your personal YouTube page.

The focus of Judy’s Icelandic Horse Virtual Show will be the increasingly popular techniques of natural horsemanship and, in particular, natural gaits (gaits without gimmicks, gaits without mechanical aids). “Natural Horsemanship is growing in leaps and bounds all over the world,” Judy says, “and many Icelandic horse owners have started their journey on the natural horsemanship road and are doing quite well. The on-line show will enable us to share what we are working on with our Icelandic horses, and the progress from one point to another. All Icelandic horses

worldwide are invited to participate, and we hope to have all countries around the world represented. There are no costs involved, and no fees to enter the virtual show.”

Any type of natural horsemanship can be used. Some owners use Parelli, some use John Lyons, or Clinton Anderson, or a mix thereof; some add clicker training. “The method doesn’t matter,” Judy says. “It’s the two-way communication between horse and rider that is the focus.”

Some ideas for videos to enter might show a foal getting used to a halter; an older non-rideable horse being led through an obstacle course; riding bareback; lead-line riding for kids; neckline riding; platform and/or mat work; driving; and trailer loading.

The steps to take to join the on-line show are: 1. Register for a free YouTube account. 2. Grab your digital camera, turn it on to video mode, and set it on a fence or barrel, or ask a friend to take video of you. 3. If you’re alone with your horse, turn on the camera, move to the right spot, and start action (remember to try to stay within the area of the camera’s viewfinder). 4. Focus on the relationship with your horse, and let ‘er roll! Don’t worry about your hair, or weight, or background noises, etc.—just your horse. 5. When you’re done, turn the camera off, put the horse away, connect the camera to your computer, and upload the video to your YouTube account. 6. Send the link to Judy at [iceryder@gmail.com](mailto:iceryder@gmail.com).

“This is fun to do,” Judy says, “and you can practice videoing and uploading as much as you like. You can submit one video to the show—or many videos. There are no limits.”

Judy will link all of the videos submitted for the Natural Icelandic Horse Virtual Show to one webpage so that everyone can view them. “This



Judy Ryder

Teaching a young horse—one possible demonstration for the Virtual Show.

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will be a very educational endeavor for all involved!” she says. The show will open on June 14, although videos will still be accepted after that date.

### **SADDLE FIT?**

Stan Hirson recently posted an extensive section of videos about saddles for the Icelandic horse on his video website, Hestakaup. Says Stan, “It may be more than you ever wanted to know about the biomechanics of the horse and rider, but I was so taken with the subject that I have put it out to share.”

Stan filmed a visit of saddle maker George Gullikson to the dressage barn where he takes lessons. Gullikson was referred to the barn by Allen Schoen, DVM, who is the author of several books on animal care and has a holistic veterinary practice. Gullikson was willing to let Stan film him as he examined Stan’s Icelandic horses and their saddles. “The results are very interesting,” Stan says, “and I welcome you to visit as well as discuss the videos at [www.hestakaup.com/content/view/59/97/](http://www.hestakaup.com/content/view/59/97/). I know that saddles are a hot subject, but it is an important one if we wish to keep our horses healthy and vigorous for many years.”

### **SHERIFF’S POSSE**

Janice and Donny McDonald of Fountain, Florida, recently had one of their Icelandic horses, Tivar Fra Bodega, certified as a Search and Rescue mount for the Bay County Florida Sheriff’s posse. “To pass certification,” Janice explains, “horses must pass a performance test of meeting similar conditions of crowd control; search and rescue through dense woods and uncertain terrain for both live human beings and static evidence; perform in a sound manner in the midst of blaring police sirens, loud horns, and whistles; follow commands in a controlled manner in very close

proximity to other horses and ground personnel; and stand quietly in the midst of hectic crowd behavior.”

### **LANDSMÓT 2008**

The 18th annual Landsmót takes place at Hella, Iceland, from June 30 to July 6. Landsmót is the Icelandic name for the biannual National Horse Show of Iceland (it is also being called the Icelandair Horse Festival), the biggest event involving Icelandic horses in the world. “At Landsmót you will see all the best horses in Iceland in different types of competition,” the organizers say, “including the classic Icelandic gaed-ingakeppni, tölt competition, racing, and breeding shows. Landsmót is an unparalleled event, representing the optimum in Icelandic equestrianism and horse breeding. The schedule is exciting and represents the pinnacle of excellence in the handling and breeding of Icelandic horses. There are competition horses (gaedingar), breeding horses, races, and the very best of young riders. Only the best

classified horses participate in the tournament and compete for the most prestigious titles in the country. Shows of Icelandic stallions, mares, and their offspring give an insight to the best breeding stock available. The fellowship of riders, singing, and dancing are also some of the most important features of the festival.”

An estimated 12,000 visitors from all over the world are expected at the 2008 Landsmót. “Landsmót guests are an international crowd, and nowhere else can you meet such a group of Icelandic horse enthusiasts. All of Iceland’s most influential breeders will be there, along with the best riders in the country. The board of Landsmót puts great emphasis on improving each show, and one of the key factors is the flow of information to guests. A giant display screen, seating stands, and daily newspapers are among some of the new things that have been offered at previous shows. In 2008 the board aims to do even better.”

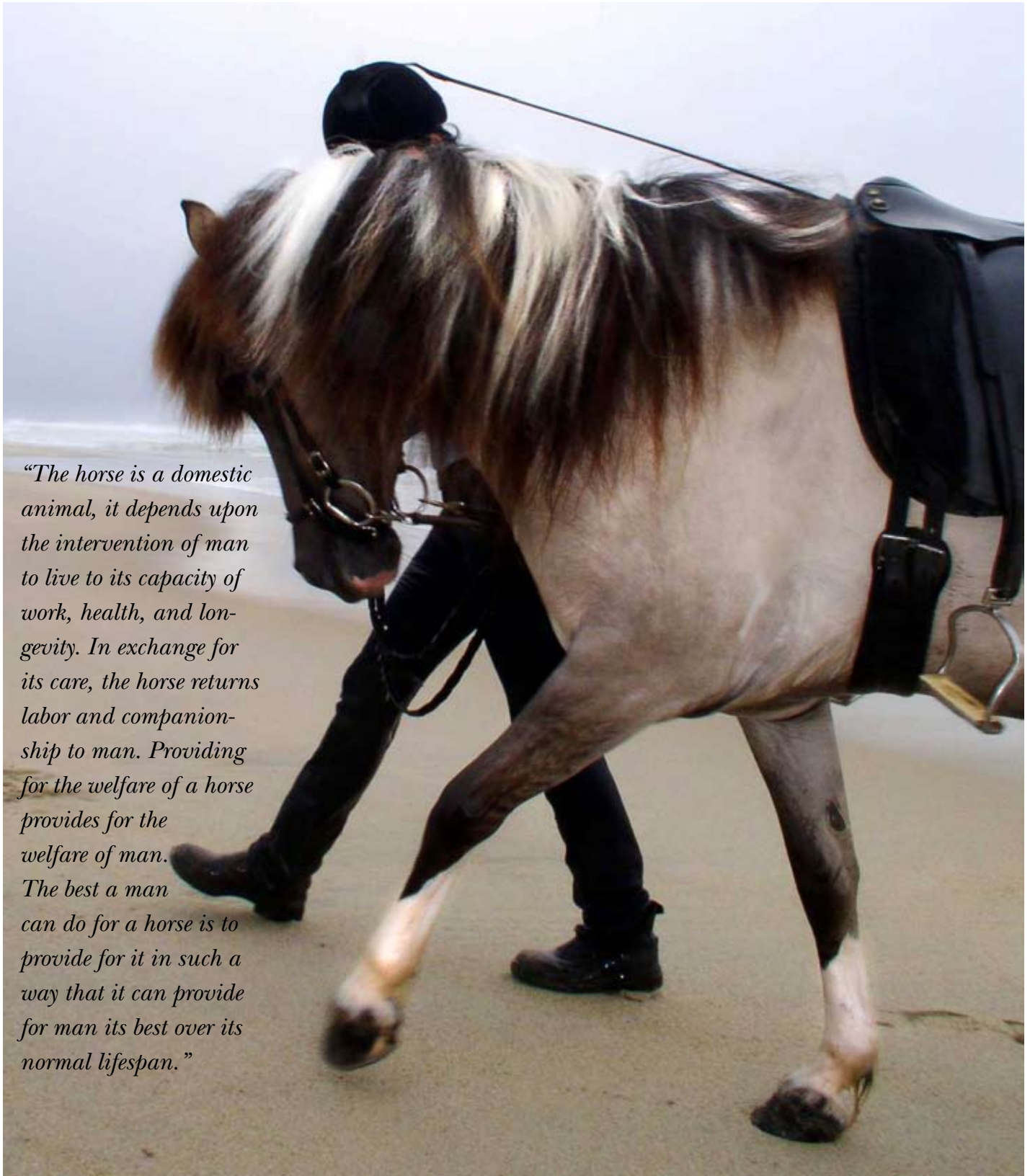


Florida Search and Rescue horse Tivar Fra Bodega.

Janice McDonald

# BEYOND THE OVAL TRACK

W E L F A R E O F T H E H O R S E



*“The horse is a domestic animal, it depends upon the intervention of man to live to its capacity of work, health, and longevity. In exchange for its care, the horse returns labor and companionship to man. Providing for the welfare of a horse provides for the welfare of man. The best a man can do for a horse is to provide for it in such a way that it can provide for man its best over its normal lifespan.”*

Laura Benson

Heidi Benson and the mare Gaefa fra Saga California in perfect step at the state beach at Moss Landing, CA.

# KNOW YOUR HORSE

by Bernie Willis



Heidi Benson

The definition of “pleasure riding” in a photo taken by Heidi Benson in January at the state beach at Moss Landing, CA. The riders are her sister Laura Benson on Punktur fra Stekkjarholti and Doug Smith on Flygill fra Mosfellsbae.

**T**he welfare of our horses really gets my attention, but it may not be for the reasons you imagine. I have a long history of trying to understand welfare in relation to people and animals. You need to have a look at this background before you evaluate my comments below.

I was raised under the Jeffersonian philosophy of independence and self sufficiency. For a few years I lived among and worked for the welfare of aboriginal Americans in the far North. Among the concerns were adequate shelter, food, and social structure, the basic needs of humans

and horses. It is often thought that food comes before shelter and social structure is the least important. That may be true if simple existence is the priority. I would like you to consider that quality of life is more important than simple existence. In the village there were several folk who were alive but had no motivation, or in their minds, no reason for living. Everything was provided for according to government standards. Suicide was their response to welfare. A sense of self worth was missing. This sense of self worth is the basis of social structure. When an individual sees

purpose and value in himself, then shelter and food usually come from his own or his group’s efforts. It’s the sense of value in oneself that is highest in my estimation of basic needs.

I’ll never forget the experience of being asked to sign up for government welfare money. When I asked why I should sign up, the government agent said, “Because I needed one more person to meet my quota in order to keep my position.” A more misguided person and program has never crossed my path. The motivation was selfishness, the concern was about herself, not the villagers. She



saw money for herself instead of self respect as the key to welfare. She missed the purpose of her job.

There are many organizations that deal with the welfare of animals. Do they really know what they are talking about or are they just using people for their selfish needs? You may remember the efforts to turn people away from dogsled racing by the SPCA and PETA. It was later clearly understood that these organizations were misguided. They were interested in highlighting apparent welfare issues so money could be raised from uninformed persons to pay the high salaries of their organization's leadership.

I was asked to give a sled-dog ride to a person who hated the use of dogs for pulling sleds. She was an urban dog owner. A couple sentences will show her level of rationality. She was chilled by the snowy cold day. I offered her extra clothes and a blanket. The 10 dogs were hot, pulling through the fresh snow, their tongues hung out, dripping with perspiration. She said, "I sure hope you have some hot broth for the dogs when we return." I mentioned that I had hot chocolate for her, but cold meat soup for the dogs. After the short three-mile loop, which lasted 15 minutes, she said, "I know about dogs, I have three myself, they live in my apartment. All the exercise they need is a walk down the block and back." After her ride, the dogs that pulled her went happily along for 12, 100-mile days across Alaska. They never saw a whip or heard a cross word. They had a purpose and loved it. Each dog knew its place in the team, its social structure, had self respect, respect for their musher, and a job to do.

The welfare of the Icelandic horse was the theme of the recent FEIF Conference in Reykjavik, Iceland. The various committees were tasked with finding a definition of horse welfare. The veterinary group shared their concerns about the horse. One definition shared in

contempt was to never ride a horse. Others were more specific, like never shoe or bit a horse. Natural horsemanship has been the rage in the U.S. for several years. Some of its promoters see it as a solution to horse welfare. The round pen, bitless bridles, bare hooves, special ropes and wands all come to mind when I think of their methods. Do any of these methods define what horse welfare really is?

One definition offered during our meeting made sense to me. It is broad, and based upon principles instead of their application. It gives a basis for individual decisions regarding specific situations. Here it is: "The horse is a domestic animal, it depends upon the intervention of man to live to its capacity of work, health, and longevity. In exchange for its care, the horse returns labor and companionship to man. Providing for the welfare of a horse provides for the welfare of man. The best a man can do for a horse is to provide for it in such a way that it can provide for man its best over its normal lifespan."

At first I wanted to challenge this definition. I checked out various sources of information about the feral horses in the U.S. What I learned is that they don't live as long as horses used by man. Either they suffer from lameness or teeth problems and starve to death at about half the lifespan of the farm or family horse. Their social structure is predictable but not necessarily kind. Old mares are usually in charge. Stallions temporarily associate with a group of mares until a younger stallion kicks them out. Bachelor bands of stallions keep to themselves and may never breed. Life in the wild for a horse is tough. The willingness of a horse to cooperate with man is really in his best interest.

How can a man provide for a horse so it can do its best for a man? The only way to answer this is to really know a horse. It made sense to me that blood in the mouth of a

competition horse was an indication that the horse had been abused by either rough riding or an inappropriate bit. When the FEIF veterinary group was asked this question, they warned, Don't jump to conclusions. Blood in the mouth has many sources. It comes from sharp points on teeth, poor mouth conformation, biting problems, and tongue placement issues. Small lacerations can bleed a lot but cause little pain. A much more important concern is the thickening scar tissue that develops under a nose band that is too tight. In this case the tissue loses its sensitivity and rarely bleeds. Longterm communication between horse and rider is compromised, while there is no blood to indicate a problem. Their concern was that some owners were too concerned about blood in the mouth. So concerned that they over-rasped or floated the teeth so that the ability of the horse to chew was limited. They believed that the lifespan of such horses was shortened by the attempt to avoid blood in the mouth. In this situation, not really knowing the horse led to a presumed solution that was worse than the problem.

I heard of a person who wanted to avoid bits altogether, so decided to replace her snaffle bit with a bitless bridle. All went well until one day on the way home the horse took off, leaving the rider on the ground. Back at the barn, the horse tangled with some wire and was cut, requiring stitches. Another situation was quite different. While walking through a meadow full of mares, the farmer was disappointed not to see her stallion. She sent the hired man up the hill to look for him. After a while the man came back riding the stallion, bareback, with a piece of hay string for a bit and bridle. This man knew the horse.

If the best a man can do for a horse is to provide for it in such a way that it can provide for man its best, over its normal lifespan, then each of us should be able to apply this principle in many ways. Let's try and

do that for a bridle. First, for the sake of space, we will leave out other ways of directing a horse, such as legs, seat, and voice. The bridle is a harness of sorts that a horse wears on its head. Attached to it are reins that the rider holds in his or her hands. With the reins the rider can move the horse's head, if the horse allows. To encourage the horse to allow the use of the reins to move its head, some sort of irritant is used with the bridle. The irritant can be a bit in the mouth or a strap of some sort over a sensitive area of the head. Some bit and bridle combinations apply an irritant to several places depending upon the amount and angle of rein use. The goal is to be able to direct the horse. The horse naturally moves away from the irritant. When the horse's head moves, the irritant is removed, the horse feels rewarded, and the rider is happy. This is for the mutual benefit of man and horse. What happens if the irritant is not removed? The horse doesn't know it acted correctly. What happens if the irritant becomes pain? Horses being prey animals relate to pain or perceived danger by running away. Bits can cause pain just sitting in the mouth if they don't fit right. Straps of leather or chain can cause pain if they are adjusted too tightly. A rider concerned for his or her own welfare and that of the horse learns about the anatomy of the mouth of a horse. Once a person understands the mouth and the pressure points of the horse's head, he or she can then choose a pain-free bridle. Once the bridle fits the horse, then it is up to the rider to use his or her hands in an effective way.

When a person asks what bit is best, it is like asking what screwdriver is best. The screwdriver must fit the screw. It must match the slot in the head of the screw. Some slots are straight and need a flat-blade screwdriver of the same size as the slot. Others have a Phillips head, which is a cross-shaped slot which come in three common sizes. There are also

star and square screws. Each one needs its own special tool. There isn't a best screwdriver or best bit. It all depends.

Several young people have asked to help in my shop. I enjoy them and like to see them learn how to use tools. Some tools take more skill to use than others. Some are sort of safe and others are very dangerous. I always start a beginner who wants to cut wood with a hand saw. The wood is held in a vice. There is little the beginner can do to hurt him or herself. I may use a powerful electrical saw and hold the wood in my hands. Is one tool more cruel than the other, or is it a matter of experience and skill? The electric saw will make a more accurate and smoother cut than the hand saw even in the hands of a skilled craftsman. But it can also make a huge mess out of a small mistake. It is more dangerous but is it cruel? It all depends.

In August 2007, I had the privilege of riding instruction at Basstelhof near Hanover, Germany. My mount, Jupiter, was an experienced lesson horse. I learned many things, after I unlearned some old habits. One of my problems was the use of my hands. It took a couple of sessions before I really believed the instructor, Marlise Grimm, knew my problem. I wore a radio so I could hear Marlise from the far side of the oval track. She would tell me exactly when I was doing something wrong and when I got it right. How did she know? I finally asked. She explained, "I don't need to see your hands. I can see how your hands affect Jupiter's head." She knew her horse and that was enough.

In the *American Farrier's Journal* there is nearly always information about the problems with long toe, low heel syndrome. It's been accepted that such a condition contributes to navicular problems. The long toe of the hoof causes extra strain on the navicular bone with every step, as the ligament stretches over it. Long toes without shoes come from the lack of

abrasion in soft ground. Since the front of the hoof is subject to a lot of wear on hard ground it tends to grow faster than the heels on most horses. Iron horse shoes do a reasonable job of protecting the hoof wall from chipping, but when left on too long the quarters tend to grow over the shoe. The hoof wall is weakened and usually cracked at the heel from this neglect. When the farrier trims to healthy material, the horse is left with a low heel. Either way neglect with shoes or neglect without them means trouble for your horse. Do you know enough about your horse's hooves to provide for their welfare?

Many horse owners can see the physical needs of their horses while the mental needs are overlooked. The April 2008 issue of *Equus* magazine references the *Equine Veterinary Journal* of January 2008 and its article about horse companionship and learning. It appears that there are measureable benefits for horses learning from other horses. In her recent book *Animals in Translation*, Temple Grandin discusses a broad range of psychological needs of the horse. Would you like to know how a horse knows the difference between a stick and a snake? Or what a horse can see in the dark, or about various kinds of fear and how to address them? The more we know about how a horse thinks, the better we can arrange of its welfare.

I can find no short answer to putting the welfare of my horse first. Each one is an individual, each of our situations is a little different. What may be good for my horse may be less than the best for yours. If this article has encouraged you to think for yourself, get off some popular bandwagon, and dig in and discover your horse's unique needs, then it has been worth my time. If you are aware that you will get the most from your horse when you put its welfare first, then reading this may have been worth your time too.

# PILED HIGHER AND DEEPER

by Alys Culhane

*Horse manure contains about 60 percent solids and 40 percent urine. On average, a horse produces 0.5 ounces of feces and 0.3 fluid ounces of urine per pound of body weight each day. A 1,000 pound horse produces about 31 pounds of feces and 2.4 gallons of urine daily, which totals around 51 pounds of raw waste per day in feces and urine. Soiled bedding removed with manure during the stall cleaning may account for another 8 to 15 pounds of waste per day. The volume of soiled bedding removed equals almost twice the volume of manure removed, but varies depending on management practices. So for each stall, about 60 to 70 pounds of waste material is removed daily. This results in about 12 tons of waste a year per stall with 8.5 tons being manure from (that) 1,000 pound horse.*

These statistics, gleaned from the Penn State Cooperative Extension website, are daunting; had I read them before becoming a backyard horse owner, I might have continued to board my critters. However, my bringing them home was in many ways life-changing. My writing interests used to revolve around the composing process of writers but now center around the decomposing process of horse manure. My ongoing research findings have since verified what I initially suspected was a truism—the implementation of sustainable manure management practices is synonymous with good neighborly relations and quality horse care. Furthermore, manure, the supposedly inert by-product of our equine friends, is a nutrient-rich substance that, when tended to correctly, contributes to healthy plant growth and enhances depleted soil.

I remember it well—June 22, 2005—the day we set Raudi loose in the temporary enclosure at the rear of our cabin. She checked out

her new environs, trotted to the far corner of the pen, and defecated. I grabbed my new manure rake, scooped the steaming pile in the air, and flung it over the fence, into a nearby patch of fireweed. Pete (my husband), who was holding Siggi's lead, remarked that this wasn't going to work.

"What's not going to work? The battery powered fence charger? I hear it. Don't you? It's going mmmmm mmmmm mmmmmmm."

"You can't toss the manure over there because it will drain into our well. And it'll attract flies and what-not. I want to be able to leave the living-room window open this summer," Pete said.

"Well, we can't let it sit here."

"I agree. But we can't toss it over the fence."

It was lunch time. I followed Pete back to our cabin, head down, deep in thought. I'd spent the past two years cleaning pens for a 10-horse stable. I should have given the matter of disposal more consideration;

however, the only requirement of this unwritten job description was that I get the goods from Point A to Point B. My daily routine went like this: I scooped the pile onto a manure fork with the side of my foot and emptied it into a muck bucket. I then loaded the full muck bucket onto the snowmobile or ATV, drove the vehicle to the edge of a nearby creek bed, and emptied the contents of the buckets down the said hill. I hadn't thought outside the stall, or how I'd deal with home-based manure pick up and disposal. My laxity was understandable; I'd been assisting Pete in putting our collective energies into the construction of our own horse palace. Drainage concerns had come first. We'd had the paddock area excavated, put in a spillway for the runoff, dug a trench, and laid in a plastic pipe. Our thinking was that the inevitable rain and snow melt would run down the driveway, and out into the road. And so, the question, What do we do with the manure? was the least of our concerns.

I reached for the rake when Raudi lifted her tail because I knew that manure is not a benign substance. Thirty years prior, I'd lost my Standardbred mare to a parasite infestation. Shortly thereafter, I acquired an Associates degree in Light Horse Management. My final semester's degree requirements included a course called "Equine Parasites and Diseases." The on-screen images of the insides of parasite-infested horses stuck with me. Over the whrrrr of the projector, Dr. Don Burton had intoned, "and for this reason, manure pick-up and disposal is crucial."

Thrush and other manure-related maladies were brought back to mind by author Cherry Hill, who on her website, writes: The "combination of dung and manure is the perfect medium for the proliferation of bacteria that's destructive to the hoof. When certain fecal bacterial ferment, their secretions chemically dissolve the intertubular 'hoof cement.' Dung and urine can also break down the components of the hoof horn structure. In addition, the pungent vapors of manure and urine can be irritating to the eyes and lungs of horses and humans." Add to this the prospect of tetanus, which resides in manure and enters open wounds and sores.

I'd also learned second hand that sound manure management planning makes for happy neighbors. Our New Hampshire-based friends had intimated that the sight and smell of their neighbor's "horse yard" had resulted in bad neighborly relations; this then, was something that we wanted to avoid. We live on a 2.5 acre parcel in a subdivision aptly called "Alaskan Beauty Estates." We didn't want to pollute Dick's primary water source, ruin Nancy's south-facing view, contribute to Ryan's mosquito problem, or offend Scott, who detests the smell of horses.

I had other equally valid reasons for keeping my horses' environs clean. Raudi and Siggi needed to learn to stand quietly and be good

## INTERNAL PARASITES

Internal parasites can cause extensive internal damage without you ever realizing that your animals are heavily infected. Contrary to popular belief, horses can have high numbers of internal parasites while still appearing to be healthy. But parasites can take a heavy toll, particularly in young horses. Common signs of an infestation can include a dull, rough coat, decreased energy or depression, decreased stamina, loss of condition, slowed growth in young horses, pot belly (especially in young horses), colic, and diarrhea.

Horses can be infected by more than 150 species of internal parasites. The most common and troublesome are large strongyles (bloodworms or redworms), small strongyles, roundworms (ascarids), tapeworms, lungworms, pinworms, bots, and threadworms. Horses are most often infected by the first four; large and small strongyles, roundworms, and tapeworms.

The life-cycle of endoparasites differs from species to species, but generally goes like this: The eggs or larvae are deposited on the ground when the horse defecates. They are internalized when the horse is grazing or nibbling at the ground. The larvae mature into adults in the stomach or intestines. In some parasite species the larvae migrate out of intestines into other tissues or organs before returning to the intestine, and maturing into egg-laying adults.

Since parasites are primarily transferred through manure, good management should include the following:

- Pick up and dispose of manure regularly (at least twice a week, even in dirt or sand yards).
- Use a feeder for hay and grain rather than feeding on the ground.
- Compost the waste in an area distant from your pasture rather than spreading it on fields that are to be grazed by horses.
- Keep the number of horses per acre to a minimum to prevent overgrazing and to reduce the number of parasite eggs and larvae.
- Mow and harrow pastures periodically so as to break up manure piles and expose parasite larvae to the elements. (Larvae can survive freezing temperatures but cannot tolerate extreme heat or dryness.)
- Keep foals and weanlings separate from yearlings and older horses so as to minimize the foals' exposure to all parasites, particularly roundworms.
- Remove bot eggs from your horses' coat.
- Consult your veterinarian; together set up a deworming program and monitor its effectiveness.

horse hosts when visitors entered their living room. We'd accomplish zip if guests had to wade through ankle-deep slop to say hello, because they'd remain outside the pen. I also had pride-of-ownership concerns; manure-coated Icelandics reflect poorly on the owner and are bad for the breed image.

Pete interrupted my musings. "For now, just toss it over the fence," he said, adding that soon we'd figure something out. I didn't press him for specific details because I felt overwhelmed by what lay ahead—

our horse things-to-do list included digging post holes, erecting fencing, building a shelter, and putting up hay. Pete was true to his word; once we finished building our facility, he refocused his energies and assisted me in problem solving. Unbeknownst to us both, getting a solid working plan in place would take an additional two years.

Shortly after the horses were installed in their new digs, Pete constructed two mesh pens in the far corners of the enclosure. I then layered each with manure and moldy hay.

Nancy Wines-Dewan



(We had not yet learned the ins-and-outs of buying hay; consequently, we had to return 100 or so bales to the seller.) Constructing the bins inside the pen was a huge mistake—Raudi, thinking that we were providing her with an all-you-can eat buffet, ate her fill and colicked. Pete and I emptied the bins, moved them to the temporary horse enclosure/future garden site, and built eight more.

I'd filled eight mesh bins by January 2006. I began piling the excess next to the new shelter, and focused my energies on streamlining my pickup process. This, the problem-solving aspect of manure management, was an enjoyable challenge. I couldn't get all the material up with the manure rake, so I did as Pete suggested, and purchased a flat blade shovel and a small metal rake. I chuckled as I pushed the mound onto the shovel with the rake (instead of my foot) and, with the same, scraped up the crumbles, because I felt like was really onto something. I was right; this saved time and resulted in a much cleaner pen. As I later told Pete, my Ph.D. —my supposedly academic initials—now meant Piled Higher and Deeper.

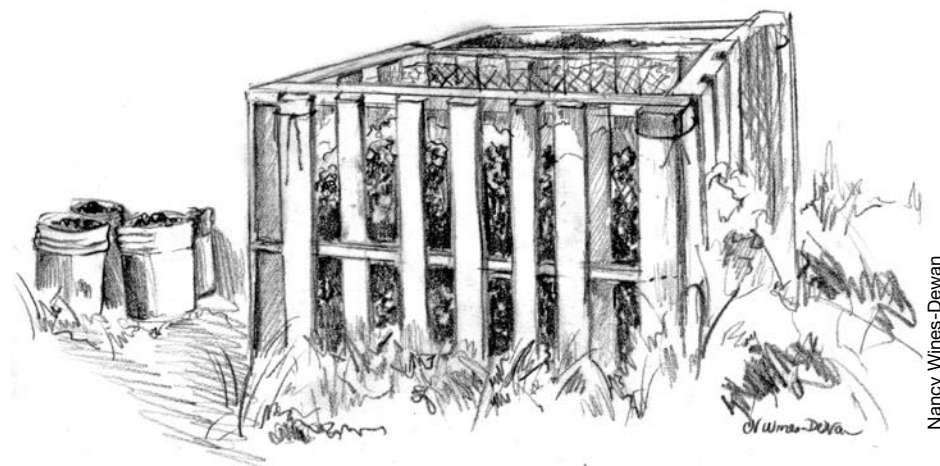
Lifting the muck buckets was

hard on my back, so I began using recycled five-gallon buckets. (Pete's the president of the local recycling center board, so we had access to an ample supply.) This worked; I could more easily lift the buckets onto my toboggan and haul them to the pile I'd dubbed Mt. Bush. The bucket method also had an unseen benefit. Once they heard about it, the gardeners came, loaded the 30 or so buckets onto the beds of their pickup trucks, emptied the buckets, and returned them. Added incentive came when I inducted them into the Manure Hall of Fame, and at an end-of-the-sum-

mer party, handed out certificates.

In May 2006, we decided to increase our herd size by one. This was not without considerable forethought. Pete pointed out that the addition of Tinni would increase our manure load by one-third. My veterinarian, Dr. Sandi Ferris, also alluded to a related problem; our paddock area was designed for two horses, so the addition of a third would increase the overall parasite load. She said that should we purchase Tinni, pen cleanup would be even more crucial. In addition, I'd need to paste worm the three horses every six-to-eight weeks, and add daily dewormer to their feed prior to, during, and after Breakup. (Breakup is what Alaskans call late spring). Dr. Ferris stressed that deworming would do what even the most scrupulous of pen cleaners could not do—kill internal parasite larvae.

I eventually decided that the benefits outweighed the drawbacks. Tinni, an older gelding, would both be Siggi and Raudi's much needed father-figure, and my steady-eddy riding horse. On the day of his arrival we had a horsewarming party. One of the 50 or so greeters was Ellie, our new friend and gardening guru. Ellie, small, spry, fiftyish—has never been one to mince words. Her appraisal of the situation was that unless we did something with the manure on hand,



Nancy Wines-Dewan

and, as well, the manure that was to come, that we'd soon be up to our necks in really in deep s—.

"Have you got any ideas as to what I should do with the stuff?" I asked.

"Compost it," Ellie said.

I glanced around at the bins, which now dotted the landscape of Squalor Holler Farm.

"Why bother? It'll break down if I let it sit, won't it?"

"Yes," Ellie said, "but with three horses, the amount of output time will far exceed the amount of time that it takes for your manure to turn into usable organic matter."

Seeing that I looked dubious, Ellie talked at length about the benefits of composting, telling me that turning it kills parasites and weed seeds, and increases microbial growth. Another selling point was that turning my piles would both speed the decomposition time by 75 percent, and make for garden-rich organic matter. I agreed to give this a try. I began turning my piles, and as I went along, added other "ingredients" some of which included grass clippings, kitchen scraps, wood ash, fish bone meal, and lime.

## PRINCIPLES OF PASTURE MANAGEMENT

Don't overstock.

Graze young horses separately from older horses; the younger horses have a higher susceptibility to parasites.

Deep harrow or plow pastures that are badly parasite infested. Deep plow pastures and reseed every three to five years. This also helps break the parasite cycle.

If you have smaller pasturage, rotate your horses to a fresh area every two weeks; this will break up the internal parasite cycle. One-to-two acres of well-managed pasture can support one mature horse during the grazing season with rotation. When the animal is rotated as frequently as every two weeks, the acreage needed will be closer to one acre.

Four-to-five acres of unimproved native grass pasture will support one mature horse for the entire grazing season.

Don't spread fresh manure on pastures. Non-composted manure will introduce the threat of additional parasites.

When there is nearby cropland, consider tilling in fresh manure when possible. This saves nutrients and alleviates storage problems. Fresh manure should be applied to crops with long growing seasons, and is better suited to clay and loam soils. Light or sandy soils benefit the most from applications of aged or composted manure. Portions of the nutrients in manure aren't as readily available for plant food as commercial fertilizer nutrients; however, slow-release provides a continuing supply of nutrients and less potential runoff.

Do not apply manure to land that is subject to erosion, frozen, or saturated. To protect water sources from manure runoff, do not spread manure within 150 feet of a water source such as a well, creek, or pond. Incorporate manure into the soil as soon as possible.

The easiest way to spread compost is to use a manure spreader and a tractor (or a strong riding mower) to load, pull, and spread your compost. But you can also spread it without all that equipment; all you need is two people, a shovel, a riding lawnmower, a small cart, or a pickup truck. Have one person drive while the other spreads a thin layer of compost.



## Compost Happens

Ellie convinced me. Large-and-small scale composting was the way to go. This process quickly reduces odors, cuts pile size in half, kills weed seeds and parasites, increases the potential for marketability, and evens out grazing patterns. In addition, compost supports essential soil bacteria, feeds earthworms, and enables them to multiply. It also changes soil pH levels that are either too low (acidic) or too high (alkaline).

Composting also reduces the amount of waste going to landfills and reduces fly problems by eliminating breeding grounds. In addition, using compost instead of chemical



Nancy Wines-Dewan

fertilizers reduces the use of non-renewable resources like natural gas. Approximately 2 percent of the natural gas consumed in the U.S. goes into the manufacturing of nitrogen fertilizer.

Composted manure/bedding makes an ideal track or arena surface addition when mixed with river sand and wood products. Surface depth of compost depends on soil type and climate; too much organic matter can hold excess moisture and may cause the horses to slip and fall.

Manure that's been left uncovered in a large, spread-out pile will eventually compost; however, this often creates bad odors because there is not enough air reaching the inside of the pile. These piles also rarely reach high enough temperatures to kill parasites, fly larvae, weed seeds, and pathogens. Instead, make storage for manure available—a 12 x 12 square foot area of confined storage space will hold one horse's yearly manure output.

Accumulation will be 3-5 feet in depth. Pile it properly, keep it moist, and turn it over several times for 1-2 months, or until the air temperature routinely drops below freezing. Carbon, nitrogen, water, and air are the basic ingredients of compost. These four ingredients require the proper quantities of mixing, heat, and time to produce.

Horse manure alone provides the desired carbon to nitrogen molecule ratio of 30:1. The addition of straw, wood shavings, or newspaper (printed with soy-based ink) increases the carbon content, which needs to be balanced with additional material high in nitrogen, some of which also include food scraps (freezing these beforehand kills fruit flies and gnats), green grass clippings, hair clippings, garden stalks and leaves, lime, blood meal, coffee grounds, fish heads/skins (chop finely), or fish bone meal. Shavings and sawdust are both wood products with the same carbon to nitrogen ration; however, the fine-

ness of the sawdust will reduce the time requirement for completion of the process and alter the appearance of the finished product. Dog manure contains pathogens, and therefore should be used for flowers rather than vegetables.

Pile materials should be layered, starting with stalk-type materials. (This allows for more underneath air flow.) If your pile appears to be on the cool side, say it is around 110 degrees, consider adding more nitrogen-based materials. Conversely, if it appears to be on the hot side, say around 165 degrees, consider adding more carbon-based materials.

Research findings suggest that large amounts of bedding usually present in manure are low in nitrogen content and high in carbon. A high carbon/low nitrogen ration ties up nitrogen temporarily until the bedding decomposes.

The composting process begins as soon as you pile up your manure. Almost immediately, microorgan-

isms spring into action; temperature increases are often noticeable within a few hours of pile formation. Finished compost is a crumbly, evenly textured, earthy-smelling dark material that resembles potting soil. If you monitor your piles with a thermometer, you'll see a gradual drop in the higher "active" composting temperatures. The pile temperature should increase rapidly to 120 to 160 degrees F and may remain in this range for several weeks, provided it has adequate airflow and moisture. Compost should cure for at least two weeks, and preferably be set aside for a full year before use.

Your method of composting will (of course) depend on the amount of manure and other wastes that you have on hand. If you have a small-scale operation, your best bet is to go the bin route. Bin composting is neater, keeps the materials contained, and requires less space. There are many plans available, but keep in mind that a starter pile should be at least 3 feet wide, 3 feet tall, and 3 feet long. Smaller piles won't maintain heat.

Aeration is a key component to successful composting. Before building your pile, line up several 4-inch PVC drain pipes. (These pipes have holes drilled throughout; this allows air to flow through freely.) The pipes should extend beyond the perimeter of the pile. Build the pile on top of the pipes. Placing pipes in the middle of the larger piles increases airflow. This method still requires occasional turning. If you don't have the time or energy to turn piles, consider building a forced aeration static pile. A thermostat triggers a blower which forces piped air through a pile or windrow.

Keep track of the moisture content and the temperature. If the pile is too wet or dry, essential microbes will die. An ideal mixture contains 50-60 percent moisture. You can test for this by squeezing a handful. It is wet enough if a small amount of

water comes out from between your fingers. (It will feel like a wrung out sponge.) Be forewarned; if you live in a dry area, you'll need to water your piles. And if you live in a wet area, you'll need to cover them.

Composting larger amounts of waste works better if you construct long, narrow piles, or windrows. Horse manure is fairly dense; therefore, the windrows should be no higher than 3-5 feet or wider than 12 feet. This size allows for passive air movement through the row. The windrow can be as long as you wish. The windrows can be placed side-by-side, but if you don't have a forced aeration system, you'll need to allow room for turning. You'll need to turn windrows with a windrow turner or a front-end loader tractor.

There is yet another option available, should you have a large herd and limited space. You can build a three-sided bunker with a concrete floor and turn it with a tractor or Bobcat. Several companies are now making automatic turners—some are said to hold prodigious amounts of waste.

Covering the compost sheds rainwater which prevents it from becoming too wet. Shedding water away from the compost will also lessen the amount of leaching or washing or nutrients into the waterways. Covering also helps retain heat and limits fly breeding. During the rainy season, cover the windrows with a tarp.

You'll know the compost is "cooked" when the temperature in the middle of pile subsides to the ambient temperature and does not reheat with turning. The first turning will more evenly mix the higher and the lower nitrogen content materials, and in the presence of higher micro-organism populations, continue the composting process. After the second turning the composting process will have progressed to the point where the material is free of pathogenic organisms and objectionable odors. At this point, the nitrogen compounds

will also stabilize, enhancing their utility as a fertilizer. A third turn will further stabilize the material, but will have little effect on its usefulness as on-farm fertilizer.

The amount of available processing time is dependent on a number of factors, weather being a primary consideration. We here in South-central Alaska have to stay on top of maintaining and turning our piles because we have, at the most, four months of ideal cooking weather.

## **Manure Meditations**

As I was figuring all this out, the manure kept coming. Mesh was expensive and difficult to work with, so Pete began building what he called "stations" with pallets. These stations were four-sided, tied together with baling twine, and lined with chicken wire. I cut the twine on the front "door," set it aside, and turned the contents into the next empty station, took off the front... I suggested that we suggested that we buy a turner, but Pete nixed this idea, noting that we didn't have enough electricity on hand to power what we needed—a large-size model. He also nixed my second suggestion, that we purchase a tractor or Bobcat, by saying that we couldn't justify the cost.

Turning compost, like picking up manure, became a meditative activity. On some days I put together my horse home-school plan. And on others I dreamed about what it was going to be like to ride Raudi, who was then three. And, for the first time ever, I acquired strong back and arm muscles.

We modified our set up in September 2006. My view of the horses had been obstructed by the construction of the bins, so I took them apart and reassembled them on the far side of the enclosure. Pete put in two gates so that I'd have easy access to the compost compound. In addition, we constructed eight additional stations. We figured that eight bins



and 16 stations would be enough. We figured wrong—though it was smaller than the previous two years, we ended up with a small pile of excess.

My spring and summer 2007 compost-turning activities complemented Pete's. Unlike my mother and sister (who have the genes), I'm not a gung-ho gardener. However, I enjoyed tending to and turning compost, which is an outdoor strength-building exercise. Each morning, I'd plunge my thermometer into the steaming piles of compost, check the temperature, and if they'd dropped below the requisite 130 degrees, turn them.

By fall we had enough compost for the following year's garden. It was fortuitous that our neighbor Kirby then said that he needed a lot of manure, both for composting and for fill. The way we worked it all out is fitting with how we do things in our neck of the woods. While we all have our own properties, we often assist one another with building and other outdoor-related tasks. And so Jim (another neighbor) welded a hitch onto a truck bed that another neighbor had abandoned. Instead of emptying the five-gallon buckets into our stations, I emptied them into the trailer. When the bed was full, Kirby hauled it over to his place with his tractor. The winter addition of plywood sides increased the storage space and decreased the number of moves. Kirby now hauls the trailer to his place once a month. Together, he, his wife Aubrey, Pete, and I unload it.

It's now Spring 2008. I currently have two full stations, both of which contain manure, hay, last year's dead bees, chicken bedding, kitchen scraps, leaves, and wood ash. Kirby's trailer is about half full—he'll haul it to his place in a couple of weeks. He and I are currently putting together a pasture management plan, that is one that will involve the use of compost and livestock rotation. Yes, I must say that what we're doing around here takes considerable time and

energy—but what makes it a rewarding endeavor is our belief that this is the right thing to do. Healthy horses, congenial relations with our neighbors, and garden-fresh produce attest to this fact.

I've barely touched on the surface of the subject of manure man-

agement, parasite control, pasture management, and composting. The additional websites contain listings of additional books and articles. I also hope that this article prompts additional discussion on these subjects, both here in the *Icelandic Horse Quarterly*, and elsewhere.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Horse Manure Management:**

Quick Facts. [www.ext.coloradostate](http://www.ext.coloradostate)

Penn State Cooperative Extension Agency. [www.Panutrientmgmt.cas.pus.edu](http://www.Panutrientmgmt.cas.pus.edu)

Horse Stable Manure Management. [www.californiaRangeland.ucdavis.edu](http://www.californiaRangeland.ucdavis.edu)

Oh, Horse Manure! [www.thehorse.com](http://www.thehorse.com)

Good Neighbor Guide for Good Horse Keeping: Manure Management [www.extension.unh.edu/pubs](http://www.extension.unh.edu/pubs).

### **Composting:**

A Guide to Composting Horse Manure. [www.whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/compost](http://www.whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/compost)

Composting the Manure. [www.mdastate.md.us/pdf/compost](http://www.mdastate.md.us/pdf/compost)

Composting Systems for Small Horse Farms. [www.dasnr.okstate.edu](http://www.dasnr.okstate.edu)

### **Parasite Control:**

Strategies for Effective Parasite Control. [www.bayer.equinecontrol.com](http://www.bayer.equinecontrol.com)

Parasite Management and Grazing. [www.uwrf.edu/grazing](http://www.uwrf.edu/grazing)

Deworming. [www.equisearch.com](http://www.equisearch.com)

Management and Control of Internal Parasites in Horses. [www.extension.org](http://www.extension.org)

Parasite Control. [www.ultimatehorse.com](http://www.ultimatehorse.com)

### **Pasture Management:**

Manure and Pasture Management for Recreational Owners. [www.distribution/naturalresources](http://www.distribution/naturalresources)

Purdue Pasture Management. [www.ag.purdue.edu/ext/forages.rotationalindex/html](http://www.ag.purdue.edu/ext/forages.rotationalindex/html)

## QUESTIONS ABOUT BITS

by the USIHC Education Committee

During the past year a number of riders, primarily at competitions and exhibitions, have been using a bit previously all but unknown to Icelandic riding. It is called, among other things, an elevator bit, a gag bit, a three-ring bit, and “The Wonder Bit.” Inquiries have been received by the Education Committee and we thought it might be useful to research this bit and provide some information about how it functions.

There are some differences between these bits, but in essence they are so similar as to be almost the same bit with a different name. They differ in appearance from a classic gag bit, but this term is used since they have a gag function.

These bits (see illustration) may come with a wide range of mouthpieces—a mullen, snaffle (single or double-jointed), port, etc.—set in rings. Above each mouthpiece ring is a smaller ring. Below the mouthpiece ring are one or two additional rings. The particular bits which seem to have gained popularity are sometimes used with a curb chain attached to the mouthpiece rings.

Many people think that since the mouthpiece is often a snaffle that this is a snaffle bit, but this is incorrect. The type of mouthpiece is only one aspect of a bit. Equally important are the places on the bit where it is attached to other parts of the bridle, such as cheekpieces and reins. And of course, as with any bit that incorporates a rein attachment to a long shank bit (Tom Thumb bit, stang bit, etc.), the leverage function is present.

In these particular bits, the cheekpiece of the headstall is attached to the top ring of the bit. This part of the bit is called the “purchase.” The rein is attached to

the mouthpiece rings or to one of the ring(s) below the mouthpiece rings. This part is called the “rate.” The greater either the rate or the purchase are in length, the stronger the leverage afforded. If the rein is attached to the mouthpiece, the bit functions much like whatever kind of mouthpiece is used. If the bit is attached to any of the lower rings, the leverage function comes into play, with greater leverage existing the lower the rein is placed. The succession of rings may be straight or curved. If straight, the leverage is greater than if curved.

These particular bits also work on the gag principle, in which the mouthpiece has freedom of movement on the rings that attach it to the rate and purchase. The more pressure that is applied with the rein, the further up into the corners of the mouth the mouthpiece goes. Some higher-end versions of this bit have a “gag stop” that prevents the mouthpiece from going past a certain point in the mouth; others do not have this little stub of metal, and the mouthpiece can continue to move upwards with increased pressure.

The bit functions as follows:

- When the rein is picked up and the rider has contact, the shank of the bit is drawn back toward the rider and the horse’s body.
- The purchase is drawn downwards, which puts pressure on the poll.
- The mouthpiece is engaged.
- If present, the curb chain/strap is drawn up against the horse’s jawbone.

The pressure of the curb chain/strap and mouthpiece create pressure on the lower jaw and on the roof of the mouth and the tongue in such a manner that the horse tucks its head in. At the same time, the gag

function will encourage the horse to keep its head up by putting pressure in the corners of the mouth in an upward manner. Simultaneously, the purchase puts pressure on the poll via the headstall so that the horse doesn’t over-compensate for the gag effect and also break over at the poll due to the pressure on the vertebrae. A rider with flawless balance and extremely sensitive hands is able to provide the instantaneous release. A rider who has not reached this level is going to subject the horse’s head to be gripped, steadily or spasmodically, in a three-point vise.

These bits have been developed for quite specific uses, almost exclusively in the hunter/jumper and game disciplines where these bits are a means of controlling/rating speed and momentum. For example, hunter/jumpers need speed and maneuverability to complete a clean course. Some get over-excited and drop their heads trying to run between jumps. This bit helps keep the head up (but not too far) and, if skillfully used, allows an almost instant release so that the horse can regain impulsion. In barrel-racing this bit will keep the head elevated enough that the horse won’t go down on the forehand and lose maneuverability in the turn. It also slows the horse somewhat in the turn but releases quickly enough for the horse to regain impulsion upon exiting the turn.

These bits have been utilized by Icelandic horse riders in the U.S. for the purpose of controlling speed in exhibitions and for producing a certain head and neck position. With regard to the former, the short-term and long-term dangers of the bit clearly outweigh any momentary advantages. With regard to the latter, the beautiful head and neck carriage we want in our horses results only from good training, conditioning,

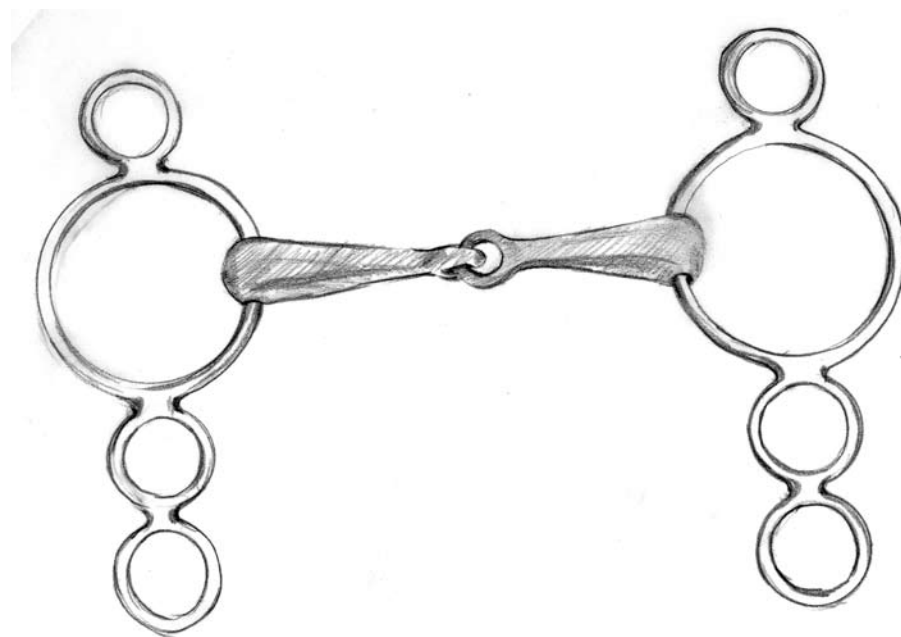
and correct muscle development over a substantial period of time.

In the very skilled and sensitive hands of a rider with excellent seat and balance, this bit can be a training short-cut to help the horse move toward the desired self-carriage, but in less-expert hands its liabilities quickly outweigh its possible benefits. Pressure without sensitive immediate release or sudden inexplicable pressure make it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, for the horse to trust the hand of the rider. Sensitive horses may react with head tossing, backing, or rearing in an attempt to escape the never-ending pressure on its mouth, jaw, and poll. Generous and patient horses, i.e., most Icelandics trying to please their riders, will usually brace themselves against the pressure as best they can, and go about their jobs with an ever stiffening neck and head and an increasingly hollowed back.

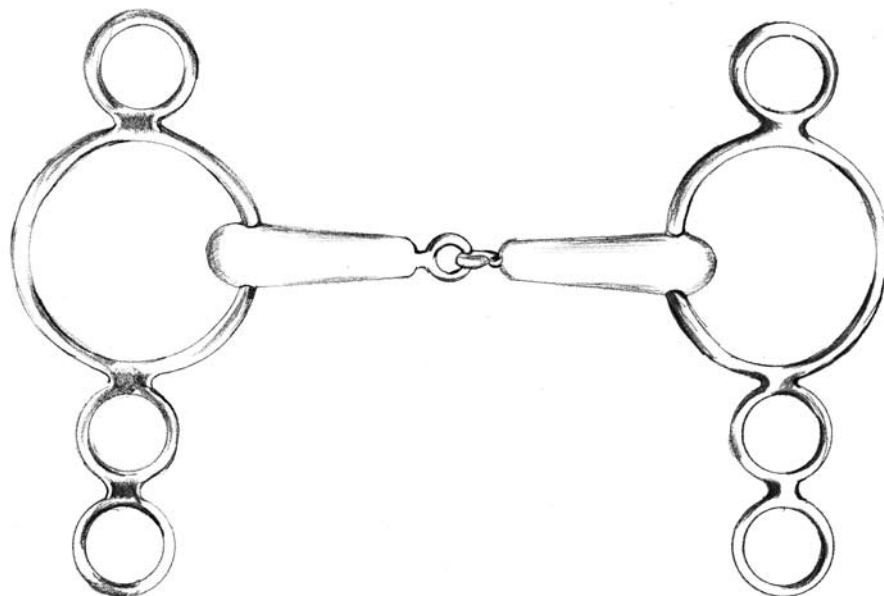
Historically, tack in Icelandics has been quite simple. For decades the stang bit was the only bit used in Iceland. It has been reported that the snaffle was virtually unknown in Iceland only a few decades ago. Until very recently, almost all other bits have been banned in Icelandic competition and therefore in training. As a result, even many professional riders and trainers of Icelandic horses have very limited experience, and often relatively limited understanding, of the effects of specialized bits such as these.

There are no “bit-ologists” on the Education Committee either. The purpose of this article is to communicate to Icelandic horse riders—trainers, competition riders, and trail riders—what we have learned about these bits from conversations with horsepeople from other disciplines and to stimulate thought and discussion. As horse owners, we need to be constantly questioning the mechanics

and effects on horses of various forms of tack that we see and think about using. If we continually question ourselves and others about these matters we cannot help but arrive at a better understanding of what our horses need and deserve from us.



Bits with this design are surprisingly harsh and not recommended for beginners, according to the Education Committee.



Nancy Wines-Dewan

**GELDING, IS IT TIME?***by Janice McDonald*

It is normally in cooler months when gelding your stallion crosses your mind. But perhaps you postponed it, thinking, well, he really isn't behaving in any objectionable way. In every breed you hear many swear their stallions act as gentle and calm as any gelding, but in Icelandics it seems practically a breed trait. My young stallion was three and had never exhibited any stud behavior whatsoever. My vet casually informed me one day that I should consider gelding him if I was going to, that he was "developing secondary stallion characteristics" and that was a clear warning stud behavior would be appearing shortly thereafter.

Secondary stallion characteristics include cresting of the neck and over-development of the jowls, greater testosterone production, and the resulting increase in libido which causes most problem behavior, leading to the decision to castrate.

In my case, I did not have a problem with libido and objectionable stud behavior from my young stallion—it was my neighbor's mare that had the libido problem. But when she tried repeatedly to tear my fence down to get to my three-year-old it *became* my problem. A very serious one, since she had a very large, very ferocious stallion housed with the mare that would have been only too happy to fight for his mare!

How *do* you know when it is time to geld? Other than breaking down fences to get to a stallion, I have never been on a trail ride which included stallions and mares where there wasn't trouble of some kind. I was riding a gelding that had been a stallion only 30 days before when a mare separated herself from the group of riders she was with and rushed to

rear and strike at my gelding, who must have still emitted the scent of testosterone. He seemed baffled yet calm, I was too shocked to react, and luckily her rider acted quickly to get her under control. Hormones and trail riding can make for a distressing trail ride or horse show event. And you cannot always be prepared when it isn't your horse that has trouble controlling hormone rage.

Veterinarians now suggest that a horse be gelded as early as possible, as soon as you realize you won't be needing a stud for whatever reason. It is a misnomer that testicles must be fully descended in order to be castrated. They may be located and easily within reach just below the inguinal ring, a small muscular ligament that prevents the testicle from receding back all the way into the abdomen once it reaches a certain size. Many horses in the U.S. are gelded before they reach six weeks of age. In other animals it is well documented that early castration results in greater adult height and many believe it is true of horses also, though that is debatable and not yet proven by veterinarian studies.

Taller height in Icelandic horses could be a desirable trait for many, but by far the greatest reason for castrating the young horse is that there is greater incidence of testicular cancer in stallions than in geldings.

The castration procedure for a horse is relatively minor. It can take less than 20 minutes once the horse is put under, and if routine with no complications the horse is up and mobile once the anesthesia wears off.

The recovery period, however, may be far riskier if the new gelding is not kept clean and on his feet. Just when you think a horse needs rest and recovery most, it is imperative to keep them moving. The sheath needs to keep draining to prevent swelling

and infection, and the best way for that is to gently exercise them. Take them for a long walk at least once a day, two or three times is even better, or if you are unable to walk them yourself you may put them in a small paddock or round pen and keep them walking at a leisurely pace for at least 20 minutes. Your veterinarian will be the best source for advice throughout the gelding process, and you should contact them immediately if the sheath swells and there is no drainage.

There are fly ointments for wounds now, but it is probably best to spread the ointment on the sheath away from the actual castration site as much as possible, down the inner legs where drainage attracts flies and other insects, and upward along the ventral line of the belly, which insects seem highly attracted to.

As with a maiden mare, it is a good idea to handle these areas a great deal prior to the actual event, so that the horse grows accustomed to human handling. My horse would get long tail hair, hay chaff, and other debris around the site, and if he had been easily startled by my handling him in that area, I might have found it more difficult to keep him clean. A gentle mist of lukewarm water on the site once a day can work wonders for discomfort and to aid the draining (and healing) process.

If you have been waiting for testicles to descend for gelding your stallion, it could be a long wait. Some stallions never descend; this is called cryptorchidism. It is a condition in which one or both testicles fail to descend into the scrotum, and it is considered to be a prevalent defect in horses by most veterinary studies. Many consider this condition to be an inherited abnormality, although it would result from the dam not the sire, since bilaterally cryptorchid

stallions do not produce viable spermatozoa, but often exhibit normal secondary sexual characteristics such as libido, because of testosterone production by the interstitial cells of the retained testes. Transmission of the trait is not 100 percent defined at this time, however.

Cryptorchidism can be a warning sign aside from problems associated with stallion behavior and libido. If you palpate and things don't feel quite right, it is important for the vet to take a look, especially if the colt is older than 16 weeks and one or both testicles are not present or palpable. If there are abnormalities of the inguinal ring, a section of the animal's intestine may enter the scrotum from the abdomen. This is called an inguinal hernia, and can be a life-threatening condition, especially bearing

in mind the rough play most young colts enjoy. It is one thing to bump a testicle in play but to catch the scrotum containing a portion of intestinal hernia can be very dangerous.

Some testicles both descend on one side of the scrotum, lending the false impression that only one has descended, and as unbelievable as it seems, a horse can have both testicles removed and still be cryptorchid, retaining a *third* testicle within the abdominal wall. These may be located through ultrasound, and hormone tests can reveal there is still a hidden testicle remaining which is producing higher levels of testosterone than a gelding. Geldings do produce varying amounts of testosterone, from male glands located in the brain, and not the scrotum, which may be a contributing factor in those times when

you swear your gelding is acting like a stud.

Should you geld? Yes. And early. It is better for the horse as a future mount due to libido behavior on his part or on behalf of other mares and stallions, and due to health concerns such as testicular cancer.

If your horse does not appear normal in the scrotal area either through palpation or it just doesn't look right, a veterinarian should examine the horse as soon as possible.

#### References:

International Veterinary Information Service ([www.IVIS.org](http://www.IVIS.org))  
Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the AAEP 1998 (Vol. 44)  
Proceedings of the Annual Convention of the AAEP 2001 (Vol. 47)



Classic study behavior from a young stallion.

Mic Rushen

**WHAT'S A GAEDINGAKEPPNI?**

by Sigurbjorn Bardarson  
introduction by Marko Mazeland

Every two years a major Icelandic Horse Event is organised in Iceland: Landsmót. Landsmót is a combination of breeding shows, gædingakeppni competition, and sport competition. It is for sure one of the top events for people that share our passion for the Icelandic horse. Apart from this, the FEIF Gædingakeppni committee (a joint project between FEIF and our Icelandic member organisation LH) is working on the promotion of gædingakeppni outside Iceland.

To provide more information about gædingakeppni, the FEIF Gædingakeppni committee has asked Sigurbjörn Bárdarson, renowned breeder, trainer and rider and multiple World Champion, to write the following article about gædingakeppni.

**Why Gædingakeppni competitions?**

The "Gædingakeppni" is the most widely spread form of competition on horseback in Iceland. There are many reasons for this. For one, it is in very much line with the old traditions around the Icelandic horse, and in the Gædingakeppni the special

characteristics of the Icelandic horse can be expressed better than in other competitions. Traits like spirit and character, form under the rider, and the power that lies within, together with the free and simple form of the competition make it easy to approach the horse in a positive manner and thus to show the horse at its best.

There are competition classes for all age groups: Children, Teenagers, Young Adults, and Adults.

**Children 10-13 years old:**

In the children's class two rounds are ridden on an oval track. The combination should show walk on one long side of the track, trot or tölt on one



Author Sigurbjorn ("Diddi") Bardarson competing on a gædingur at Landsmót in Iceland.

Nancy Marie Brown

long side of the track, and gallop on one long side of the track. That leaves about half a round (including one long side) in reserve in case of mistakes or if the riders choose to try to improve their mark for a certain gait.

Both the gaits and seat and aids are judged, and the rider needs to ride the horse for a least one long side of the track to receive a full mark for the gait in question. For each gait the mark for the gait counts for 50% and the mark for seat and aids counts for the other 50%.

This way all children are given an opportunity to succeed if they are good riders, since the child who is riding the best horse does not necessarily win—it may just as well be the child who displays the best seat, aids, and horsemanship who wins. The form of the competition encourages riders to sit well and to display good control of the horse, traits which the young riders carry with them into the later classes.

### **Teenagers 14-17 years old:**

In the teenage class the competition program is a bit more difficult, which is only a natural progression in preparation for the higher classes. In the teenage class, three rounds are ridden on an oval track (same as in B-class), walk for 2/3 of a long side and other gaits on at least one long side each: Free tempo trot, slow tölt, fast tölt, and gallop. This leaves one long side free to correct mistakes or to show the horse's best gait, again in an attempt to improve the overall mark.

The marks for the gaits have no extra weighing; marks are also given for seat and aids in all the gaits and they count for 1/3 of the total mark.

As the marks show, seat and aids are judged especially in the younger classes, and the thought is that it is good preparation for the adult classes.

### **Young Adults 18-21 years old:**

In the Young Adults class, a B-class program is ridden (see below). The only difference is that in the Young Adults class, all marks for gaits and willingness/spirit and form under rider have no extra weighing, whereas in the Adult B-class the willingness and form under the rider count double.

### **Adults B-Class Gædingar (four-gaited) and A-Class Gædingar (five-gaited):**

B-Class Gædingar (four-gaited):

In this class three rounds are ridden, walk for at least half a long side, trot, slow tölt, fast tölt, and gallop on one long side for each gait, with one long side free choice to receive a full mark.

Willingness/spirit and form under rider are multiplied by 2, but the marks for the gaits have no extra weighing.

A-Class Gædingar (five-gaited):

In this class pace is added and shown on a 175 m straight track, which counts as one long side (1/2 round) of an oval track, but the total number of rounds is still three, that is 2 rounds plus pace on the straight track.

In the A-class there are no demands for slow tölt; the tölt tempo is free up to a medium speed.

In the A-class the marks for tölt, pace, willingness/spirit, and form under rider weigh double and are therefore multiplied by 2.

In all the classes, the rider can turn around once, if they so choose.

The competition starts and ends on a short side of the oval track, except in the A-class, if the rider ends with pace on the straight track they do not have to ride back into the oval track to finish the program; the rider can choose to show the pace anytime they want after having started the program at a short side of the track.

### **Gædingakeppni versus Sport Competition**

If we compare the Gædingakeppni and the sport competition, we see that in the sport competition the rider is in the key role, by showing precise riding, rhythm, speed, and form.

In the Gædingakeppni, however, the horse plays the key role and most types of horses fit within this competition form, which is more free and open. There are much fewer demands regarding precision, and the show is based on spirit, power, and extension in the gaits.

The rider only has to show one long side in each gait in order to receive a mark, they can turn around once if they want to, and they can show the gaits in any order they want for each gait to come out as good as possible. For example, the rider might choose to start the performance with a powerful gallop sprint and then switch over to a powerful trot or tölt—it is all free and open for the rider to adapt the program to their needs and the horse's qualities.

In all classes of the Gædingakeppni, the riders are free to decide how to set up the program and they can show the gaits in whatever order fits them and their horses best.

The Gædingakeppni competition is for all people interested in competing who enjoy showing the best qualities of their horse—from the children's class up to the adult classes, where there is no age distinction.

The approach to the horse is connected to the original image of the Icelandic horse, where the spirit is free and the character comes out: That is our true Icelandic horse, a "gædingur."

**ARIEL'S JOURNEY**

*Reviewed by USIHC Youth Member  
Alexandra Venable*

Finally a book for young readers about Icelandic horses! *Ariel's Journey* is the first of a projected series of books called "The Ice Horse Adventures" by USIHC member Doug Kane and co-author Christy Wood. It is a fantastic book for anyone who loves Icelandic horses—especially young girls who love their Icelandic horses and adventure.

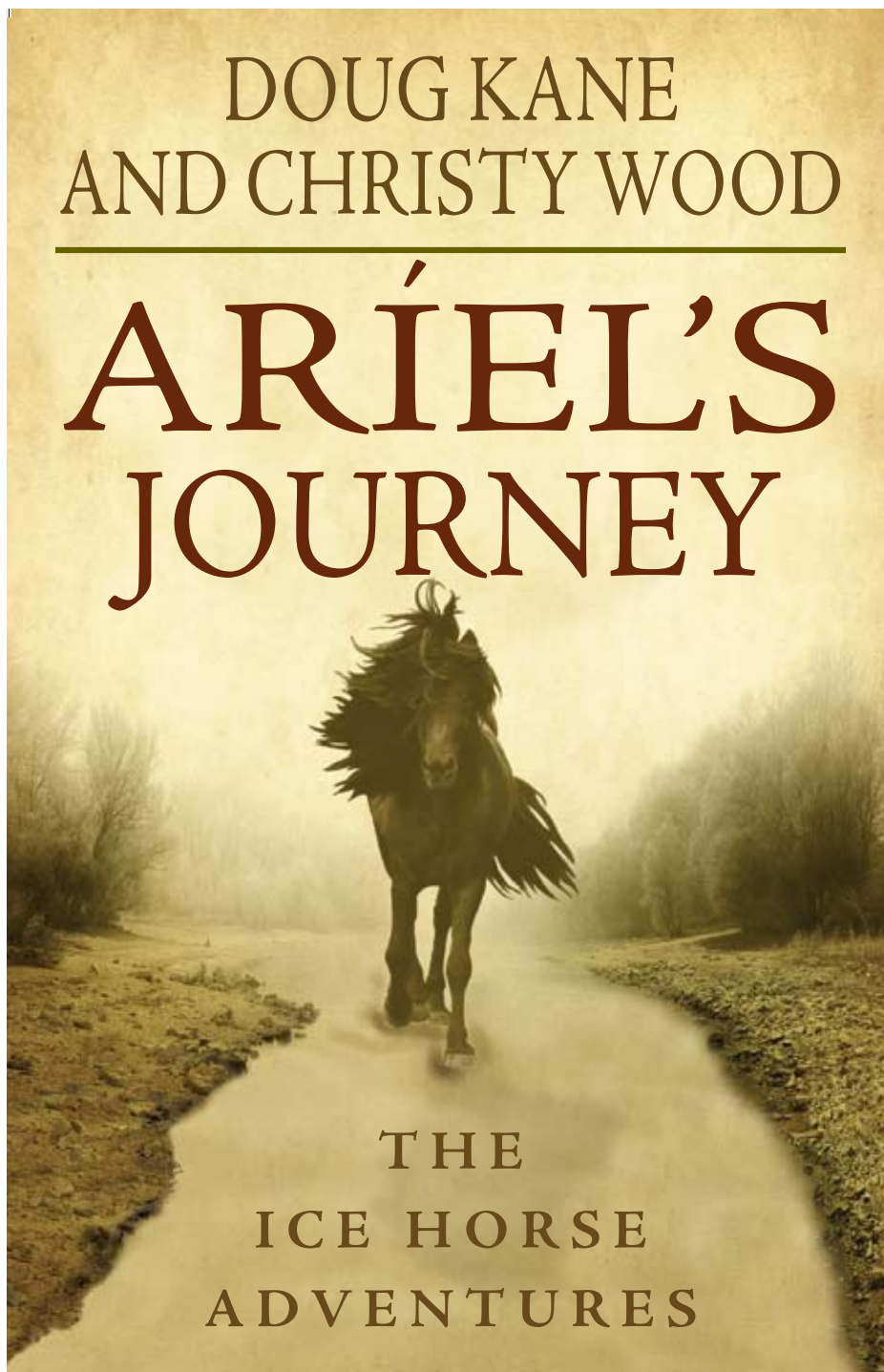
The book starts in Pennsylvania, on the Miller farm, and travels to Akureyri and Holar in Iceland, then back to Pennsylvania. Holar and Akureyri are both towns in the north of Iceland today and are the villages where most of the book takes place—but 800 years in the past! The Millers have two daughters, Emily and Kim, and Icelandic horses Prinsessa, the Alpha mare of the herd, her daughter Ariel, Hersir the stallion, Skessa and Hela, and finally Drasill, Gelmir, Falki, and Kedja who were imported directly from Iceland. I'm planning to go to Iceland, and after reading this book I am especially going to see Akureyri and Holar. (Of course I was already planning to visit Holar. I want to go to college there!)

But how did these girls and their Icelandic horses get to the Iceland of 800 years ago? Icelandic magic? I won't tell you. You have to read the book to find out! This book is also a great book for young girls who love Icelandic horses and are just starting to look at boys. There is romance in the future for one of the girls!

*Ariel's Journey* is about four girls who are very close friends dedicated to their Icelandic horses, but who don't get along with another girl and her friends who don't think Icelandic horses are as good as "regular" horses. Which of course they ride.

DOUG KANE  
AND CHRISTY WOOD

ARIEL'S  
JOURNEY



THE  
ICE HORSE  
ADVENTURES

The revised cover of *Ariel's Journey*, based on a photo by Gigja Einarsdottir.

I think almost all of us who own Icelandic horses have met many other riders who believe that and won't even try our Icelandics! The girls get in trouble when two girls, Emily and Andrea, actually start fighting over who has the best horse. Then one

parent spends time with the beloved Icelandic horse Prinsessa, and after looking into Prinsessa's deep intelligent eyes she gets an idea to help the girls get to know and hopefully understand each other and end the fights. The parents make all of the



girls go on an overnight trail ride on Icelandic horses! They are Emily, Kim, Laura, and Darci, who love Icelandics, and Andrea who had been the girl who fought Emily. Andrea, who thought Icelandics were inferior, was stuck alone with four Icelandic horse enthusiasts! Andrea's other friend didn't come for the ride! Andrea was a good rider and was given a good, sensitive Icelandic mare, Kedja, a regal show horse, and shortly into the ride she decides these Icelandics aren't too bad after all. This is not a surprise to those of us who already have Icelandics. Once you ride an Icelandic you'll understand why we love them. But of course we already know that! Then on the trail ride, when it starts to get dark, they get lost and find themselves hearing their Icelandic horses talk. The next thing they know they have traveled back in time to Iceland and the real adventure begins!

Once in Iceland, Prinsessa introduces the girls to a beautiful silver dapple stallion named Kaffeinn. Emily, her beautiful friend Laura (riding Ariel), Emily's little sister, Kim, and Darcy, her friend, and finally the reluctant Andrea learn that they and their horses are needed to help protect a village in Iceland. The girls must make a plan, fight in battle, and try not to show the villagers that they are from the future. Will the village win the battle and be safe or will they lose and be invaded by the enemy village? Find out the answer by reading the book!

One of the things I liked best about this book are the descriptions of the Icelandic horses and their very distinct personalities. I have a horse, Trissa, who is exactly like a combination of the horses Prinsessa, the Alpha mare (very smart and bossy!), and Hela, who is small, safe, and will go endlessly on the trail, but cannot

help herself from diving her head onto any green grass she sees (even at full gallop, but without unseating her rider!). She was my first horse and we still have her. My mother had a very sensitive horse named Prinsessa, who needed an experienced rider, maybe like Kedja. If you have or ride an Icelandic horse, I'm sure you will find something of the Icelandic you ride in one of the horses in this book. I'm sure as a rider of Icelandics you will understand the very different personalities of Icelandics and why we love them. A special horse for every rider. Even though this book is fiction, this part is true.

I thought this book was very good and I am really happy that there is finally a series about Icelandic horses. I love Icelandic horses and I love adventure books and *Ariel's Journey* is just that. Of course there is some romance, for those of us who are starting to look at boys... Just don't forget your head and the Icelandic horse you love. Boys and horses can go together too! I would recommend this book to anyone who loves Iceland, Icelandic horses, and other horses too!



Gigja Einarsdottir

#### **EDITOR'S NOTE:**

USIHC member Doug Kane owns Sandstone Stables, Ltd. in Amherst, OH. "We are kind of well known in the Icelandic community," he writes, "because of the terrible accident we were in on New Years Eve 2004, when our motorhome and horse trailer was hit by a tractor-trailer truck traveling 72 mph, killing our two Icelandic mares and their foals. Not a particularly good way to be remembered, but that is the way most people remember us." He is also close friends and business partners with Gudmar Petursson and Gigja Einarsdottir, who gave him feedback on the history and horse-sense in *Ariel's Journey*. As part of the publicity for the book, Doug took his mare Kedja and her foal Ariel into the Cleveland Public Library and up the elevator to the second-floor auditorium for a presentation during National Library Week. "She was a perfect angel," said Doug, who remembered to capture it on video. See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxlcZWL0MGs> The two people are Doug's friends and helpers Mark and Sarah. For more information on *Ariel's Journey* (and more of Gigja's pictures, used to inspire the book designer), see [www.icehorseadventures.com](http://www.icehorseadventures.com)

One of the "heroes" of *Ariel's Journey* is a silver dapple stallion named Kaffeinn, inspired by this photo of Gigja's Breki.

## THE SPAEJARI AWARD ESSAYS

Jennifer Wright of Maine, Megan Milloy of Virginia, and Emily Pfoutz of Vermont are the winners of this year's Spaejari Essay Writing Contest for USIHC youth members. They will each receive \$50 and a plaque. The Spaejari Award is sponsored every year by John and Marilyn Parke in honor of their horse Spaejari (AKA Remington), the only Icelandic, and one of the few horses of any breed, to have reached the 10,000-mile mark in endurance competition. Horses written about must be USIHC registered and the authors must write about the activities that best exhibit their horse's loyalty, courage, and devotion to the rider. For more information on the award, contact Youth Committee chair Laura Benson.

### Love for the Icelandic Horse

*by Jennifer Wright*

I have had an Icelandic horse for about two years now. Dolly came as a rescue case, and I bonded with her right away. We both have a lot of trust and love for each other. With Dolly I enjoy trail riding the most. She is such a trailblazer when it comes to a new trail. She will go through almost anything; she will even go off into the woods and start a new trail. When we come up to a brook she puts her nose right down into the water and plays with it! In the winter I call her my snow machine. Even when there is two feet of snow we still go out on the trail and she plows right through the snow just as excited as can be! Trail riding has to be our most favorite thing to do together!

Dolly and I have also shown. We have only shown in one Icelandic show together, but we've also done the local shows here around home. I think that Dolly and I have more fun at the small local shows because



Jennifer Wright and Dolly.

Courtesy Jen Wright

there isn't as much going on, but we still had fun at the Icelandic show we went to in Dillsburg. Even though she wasn't the best mare there or even at her best, I still had a great time on her just because I was on my horse. When we get into the ring the energy is amazing! I love it, just to be surrounded with all these great horses and to be showing off my horse! Before my shows I am able to participate in a clinic as well as have a private lesson. That helps me and Dolly a ton! Even if there isn't a show coming up and an Icelandic trainer is coming to the farm for the weekend, I definitely have a lesson. Dolly and I both benefit from it, and I enjoy working with the Icelandic trainers, such as Gudmar, Iso, and Laura.

There are a few other riding activities Dolly and I have done. One of which is riding in an Icelandic drill team. There are four of us in the drill team and when we get out in front of a crowd the horses get so much energy riding around to the fast beat music, especially Dolly, she loves it!

And the crowd loves it too! Sometimes I just can't believe the ride she gives me, she is so happy! Dolly has also been used in a therapeutic riding lesson. She is so cute just standing there while the student brushes her and loves on her. When I was leading her with the student riding her, she took baby steps and was being as careful as possible because there was a new rider on her back, a beginner. She is such a sweet and careful horse when it comes to things like that.

To be able to ride an Icelandic horse is such a pleasure. Being able to own one is even more of a pleasure. They are a breed that you have to appreciate in order to enjoy. The great temperament, disposition, and their intense energy is really what makes the Icelandic horse. Out of all the Icelandic horses I have ridden and worked with, there is something special about riding and working with Dolly. I don't know what I would do without that special bond in my life. I absolutely love my Icelandic horse.

## Skjalfti

by Megan Milloy

The first time I saw this horse was at the Kentucky Show in 2006. I had asked to borrow a horse from Gudmar Petursson. I had my lesson Friday night. I think the first information I got about him was that he was only 6, came from Iceland two weeks earlier, didn't know much at all about lateral work, and that a one rein stop wasn't something he knew to do. So at that point I was wondering what kind of horse I had to ride. During my lesson he was a bit stubborn and a little weary but his gaits were great. Who am I to question Gudmar? At that point I was falling in love with this horse.

The next day I had him tacked up and ready for my class. While waiting for the class, he decided he didn't want to wait anymore and a struggle started. He did this little thing where he would semi-rear and then spin around trying to catch me off guard. He caught me a couple times but then he was fine. Getting him into the arena was a bit of a challenge. I would have Gudmar, Laura, or Iso leading him in. Once he was in it was fine but getting him in was the challenge. Once he got in the arena, he was awesome. I loved his tolt—it was energetic and strong. He loved being ridden, and you could tell. The only time we had problems was when we went by the gate, he wanted to leave. After that weekend I wanted this horse and I wanted him bad.

When I got home, I immediately went to the Grandparents, Rich and Pat Moore. I didn't ask them right away, but just kind of told them about this horse and that I really liked him and that I thought we would be a great show team. Well, I pretty much knew then that I wasn't going to get him. I dropped it so I wouldn't cause trouble. He was mentioned a couple times by my mom, Susan Milloy, but

nothing was really decided or even thought.

In February, we went to the Pennsylvania World Expo. We went to Gudmar's booth and the first thing he said was, "Where is your grandfather?" I said he is coming, and I wasn't quite sure what Gudmar wanted. When Grumps came over, Gudmar whisked him away to go talk. None of us had any clue what they were talking about, but it seemed very serious. Later on that day I found out that they had been talking about Skjalfti. Gudmar really wanted us to buy him because he knew we would be a good team. He thought his training was getting better and he was going to be a really nice horse. So I was getting very anxious and hopeful. The next day we got there, and Gudmar and Grumps went and talked. This was very nerve-racking because they were standing over there and I knew what they were talking about. This was the longest half-hour of my life. Finally my Grumps came over and said, "You just got a new horse." I will promise you I shed a couple tears. I was very thankful and delighted that he was mine.

We got home and the first thing I wanted to know was when he was coming. He was going to come the first weekend of March. When he arrived (Curt Peirce was nice enough to drive him from Kentucky), I was so happy and we put him in the arena and let him look around. Then I walked him down to the barn. Our horses didn't even notice that he was there, but the neighbor's horses were screeching and hollering. Vinny, Morgunn, and Thor saw him and decided to check him out. Morgunn saw him first and played with him a bit, and then the head honcho guys decided to take over. Skjalfti wasn't really interested in meeting them but they followed him everywhere. He seemed a bit annoyed but didn't care much. They finally realized that he wasn't going to threaten their line of order.

After a week of him settling in, I finally got to ride him. I rode him in a lesson with Debbie Marriott. He did great, and she saw the couple things he did by the gate but he was doing fine. He settled in and I knew that he was the right horse for me. No matter what Skjalfti tries, I am never nervous



Megan's first lesson riding Skjalfti.

Courtesy Megan Milloy

because I trust that he isn't really trying to get me off, just being a bit of a butt. One day we went on a trail ride with some of the FIRC members. This was one of his first club rides. He was doing great and loving it. There was one part in the trail where there was a big gravel road that had a turn in it. Two other people and I got a bit behind so I decided to canter up ahead. Well, we rounded the turn and he saw the rest of the group and started going faster. We finished the turn and he gave out this distorted whinny. Then right after that he stopped dead in his tracks. He was like, *hmm* what was that noise I just made?? He gave a little snort and trotted along. That is the day Skjalfti learned how to make noises. Now he talks 24/7.

One of his other random stunts was at home on the day of one of my lessons. I was walking up our hill to go to the arena. He decided a quarter way up the hill he didn't want to go up. He started to have a bit of a hissy fit. For a second he spun did his little rear stunts and then he bucked. Now this is the first time he had ever bucked, and once again he stopped and stood there wondering what he had just done. Then he silently trotted up the hill. I got about three or four more bucks through the ride (at the end I got to the point where I could catch him before he did it), but every time he got away with it he would prance a bit like "*hmm* look at my trick."

Over the summer I was gone a lot so I didn't get much training in him. He got a break and kind of sat around all summer. I came back and we started his training again. We were getting ready for Dillsburg with my new trainer, Candyee Allen. We went to the show and it was great. Friday I rode him a little bit and I got some help from Sigrun [Brynjarsdottir] and Jason [Brickner] throughout the

show. He placed 2 firsts and 2 seconds. I was very proud.

In October, we got to take a clinic with Gudmar at Lynne Alfonsi's farm in Pennsylvania. We did more exercises and lateral work that really helped Skjalfti. Next stop was Kentucky. The Kentucky show was fun too. I got a really good lesson from Laura Benson and Thóris (Iso's father). Skjalfti did awesome and I knew there were many things to work on.

In December I badly sprained my ankle and he wasn't ridden for a little over a month. But we are back and are working great now. He has so much to learn and we will continue to grow together. I will grateful to my Grandparents for this awesome horse.

### **Sproti fra Sydra-Skordugili**

*by Emily Pfoutz*

I met Sproti fra Sydra-Skordugili through an Icelandic farm where I had taken lessons over the years. He was just another Icelandic horse, bay with a blaze that looked like 10,000 minuscule icicles. Why, then, was it this horse that changed my life? Why are there always those certain ones? I might never know the answers to these questions; they are only for the hills and stars to know. But I do know when I have found something beyond the ordinary, when some unworldly chance has stumbled across my path, because it doesn't happen every day. And when you let yourself succumb to its power, it will never leave you.

I was desperate for something to pour my heart into, something to fill up the hole that was deepening inside of me. I met Sproti just like I have met hundreds of horses in my life, but he stuck with me. I had been trapped and flung on that crazy roller coaster of adolescence, and when Sproti appeared within reach, I clung onto him, grabbed him as life whizzed past. I don't know how I did

it, but I have no idea what would have happened if I hadn't, because he has shaped my life.

When you bond with a horse, it is an incredibly meaningful, delicate, and powerful experience that can't be replaced with anything else in the world. Unlike with some human relationships, horses, Icelandics in particular, are 100 percent unassuming, and they ask for nothing other than food, protection, and attention. In return, they give us back everything. They are unceasingly willing to love, and the devotion they radiate is unending. There is elastic connecting me to my horse. Thoughts are sent instantly like crystal beads flying down that string of trust.

Over and over again, I am awed by Sproti's perseverance and confidence in me. I took him on a small, 12-mile endurance ride, and he walked, tolted, trotted, and cantered his heart out, giving every bit of his undivided attention, enthusiasm, and passion to the trail in front of us. All I could do was sit there, thanking and thanking him for every mile. He could sense my gratitude, and feel my movement in the saddle as we melded into one spirit. I have had countless experiences confirming this rare relationship. I have seen him work with young children, seen how he senses their vulnerability. That is why I love using him as a therapeutic riding horse. At times, when I have needed desperately to ride down a path in the woods, he would start cantering without my doing anything. I have galloped him in the snow. I have been lost and had him find my way home. There is one experience in particular, however, that stands out in my memory as the day he saved my life in so many ways.

It was not a notable day. The weather was tolerable. I was in a hurry, hassled by the demands of



Emily with Sproti, all spruced up for Christmas.

everyday life. I hopped on Sproti, planning to ride to a field that led to a network of woods. I was excited to share a few precious moments with my horse. In order to get to the field, it was necessary to ride about 100 yards on a gravel country road. Inexplicably, I felt more susceptible than usual to those high-powered, noisy vehicles called cars that so rudely launched gallons of pollution at us as they disappeared and left us in their dust. I feel so separate from the modern world I live in when I'm riding a horse.

That day, the cars and machinery that wandered down the country road bothered me in particular, since I was riding alone. I decided to ride in the grassy ditch next to the road. After riding along for only a few moments, I spotted a car appearing in the distance. I sighed, wishing the road could have been car-free for just the

few minutes it takes me to ride to the field.

The image of the vehicle grew bigger as it rose from the horizon. It was approaching faster than it should have. I slowed Sproti down to a walk, wondering if I was imagining the fact that the car was irregularly swerving from one side of the road to the other as it zoomed toward me. Feeling a stab of fear, I jumped off my horse and moved over as close to the fence on the other side of the ditch as I could manage. I clutched his reins, and watched incredulously as the small, beat-up car with rust caking off it like

old skin, veered first to the side of the road opposite me and then spun backwards, aiming directly for us. I didn't actually think it was happening; I was definitely sinking into a dream. This car skidded to a stop six precious, saintly inches from Sproti's butt. This horse, my light, my miracle on hooves—he did not move. He stayed right there in his place, beside me, between me and the car ... in fact, he looked curiously at the driver and even came close to sticking his head in the window to say "Hi" as the swarthy teenage boy rolled down the window to yell, "Are you okay?" before speeding away again.

After this happened, I couldn't feel fear, or shock, or any typical emotion that would logically come to mind regarding an incident like this. All I wanted to do was drop down and grovel at his hooves, I wanted to cry and thank the heavens, the stars, whatever spirit led me to this horse

and not another. I still don't know what I did to deserve this kind of unconditional love. I can only thank Sproti for being very un-horselike and exceptionally sane.

People say I am lucky. Then again, I don't know if it's luck at all. Having a relationship of trust with a horse requires something very difficult for most of us to do, and that is letting go. There was nothing I could do in this situation. If I wanted to give my horse back what he gave me, if I wanted a mutual bond and a mutual trust—I had to do something tremendously scary: I had to accept that the situation was out of my hands and rely solely on trust. I have never felt so unbounded, so infinitely free.

As humans, we have incredible potential. We have the capacity to see and control what most species cannot. I can only pray that we will use our advantage well. When an animal loves you, he gives you his heart. I hope we, as a species, realize this and don't abuse this honor. We must see ourselves as one world community, animals and plants included, instead of higher than or separate from this gorgeous earth.

I know that when I am on Sproti's back, I am home. He has always forgiven me, shown me unending support, and caught me before I hit the bottom of my nightmare. I cannot express through words the power of our connection. However, I can describe to you how the setting sun looks from the back of my Icelandic horse, as it sent droplets of light shooting across the kingdom of rolling hills, casting them in an incandescent light. When I need to soar, Sproti is my wings. These are wings I will have forever. I do not know how to change the world the way Sproti changed my life—all I know is that somehow, I ran into freedom. When the chance is given to you, take it. Fly.

## YOUNG HORSE CONFORMATION

by Alex Pregitzer

Katrin Sheehan of Creekside Farm hosted a two-day Icelandic breeding horse seminar March 27-28. The seminar was offered in conjunction with the USIHC Annual Meeting in Madison, Georgia, and offered participants the opportunity to work with Barbara Frische of Germany, a widely respected breeding judge who is also an expert on foal and young horse evaluations.

The seminar covered a variety of topics in a very intense and efficient manner. There was a classroom-style detailed theory session on horse conformation and on the evaluation score sheets. Then Barbara shared her specialized knowledge about foal and young horse conformation. Finally, there was practice in video judging, the judging of a variety of different horses for conformation and movement, as well as judging ridden abilities of breeding horses.

Barbara gave excellent, detailed explanations. Katrin was a wonderful host and offered her beautiful home and impressive new farm for theory and practice sessions. The location was perfect, with a large variety of horses available to the group for practice sessions. Participants of the



(Top) Participants at the breeding seminar held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting practiced judging young horses for conformation. (Below, left) Scoring the head. (Below, right) Barbara Frische completes the evaluation of a young horse.

seminar were Katrin Sheehan, Bernie Willis, Sarah Elkin, Jerry and Susie Oliver, Peggy Gilbert, Knutur Berndsen, and Alexandra Pregitzer.

### Mark your calendar!

Creekside Farm will host another breeding horse seminar with Barbara Frische in conjunction with the May

evaluations in Georgia. The date for that seminar will be May 14-15, 2008, with a young horse evaluation following on May 16 and the ridden breeding horse evaluation on May 17-18. For further details contact Katrin Sheehan at [kat@creeksidefarm.com](mailto:kat@creeksidefarm.com)



Alex Pregitzer (3)

# PLEASURE RIDING

## 2007 PRP WINNERS

Profiles of the PRP Winners will be featured in the September issue of the Quarterly.

### Eastern - Adult

1st Place (tie)	Bonnie Borgerson	601
1st Place (tie)	Nancy Wines-DeWan	601
2nd Place	Nicki Esdorn	395
3rd Place	Nina Beyer	319

### Eastern - Junior

1st Place	Caleigh Anderson	572
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### Central/Mountain - Adult

1st Place	Raven Flores	1,465
2nd Place	Gloria Verrechio	634
3rd Place	Kari Pietsch-Wangard	583

### Central/Mountain - Junior

1st Place	Kevin Draeger	779
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### Western - Adult

1st Place	Alys Culhane	864
2nd Place	Ronelle Ingram	442
3rd Place	Lisa McKeen	338

### Western - Junior

1st Place	Alexandra Venable	381
2nd Place	Callie Rich	42

## FREEDOM RIDE MILESTONES

### 1,000 Hours

Bonnie Borgerson  
Alys Culhane  
Cindy Nadler  
Gerald Oliver  
Gloria Verrechio  
Nancy Wines-DeWan

### 500 Hours

Caleigh Anderson  
Nicki Esdorn  
Vince Verrechio  
Caleigh Anderson

### 100 Hours

Caleigh Anderson  
Nina Beyer  
Ashley Gallant  
Kathy Glaittli  
Krista Wescott



Judy Ryder

## WHO IS SARA LYTER?

*Interview by Alex Pregitzer*

### What is your background?

I grew up on a farm in central Illinois, and at about 12 I inherited my sister's Appaloosa. I usually rode bareback because I was too little to put on that big western saddle. No farm kids took riding lessons then, we just got on and went. Dove was a sweet, very sensitive horse who had been treated roughly by previous owners, and as a result was very spooky. We had some very interesting rides! She lived a long, happy life with us on the farm.

Years later while living and working in Chicago, I discovered horses again when my sister-in-law Lisa introduced me to Icelandics. As Icelandic horses were even fewer and more widely scattered back in 1995 than now, Lisa suggested we visit an importer in Washington state, where she had purchased two Icelandics. There I met Aldis, my first Icelandic horse. That day, as we were getting ready to ride, all the horses had disappeared out of sight into a far-off corner of the pasture, all except for Aldis. She just stepped out from behind a tree, the only horse in sight, and I walked right up to her and we went riding.

I did not plan to buy a horse on that trip. But when we were getting ready to leave on Sunday, I could not get Aldis out of my mind and I knew I had to have her. To this day, if she does not want to be caught, she will play her little games. But she was clearly choosing me on that day. We are soulmates—she is invaluable to me. Aldis is now 18 and arthritic, but we still enjoy going out on rides together.

For several years after purchasing Aldis, and then my second Icelandic Gaski, I lived in the city and drove at least an hour each way to see my hors-



Sara Lyter working on ground poles with Melkorka to help her stay focused and engage her hind legs.

es. In 2001, I told my husband that I could not stand it anymore, that I was moving out of the city and I hoped he would come with me. Happily, he did! We bought a farm in western North Carolina, 20 miles from Asheville. We now have 125 acres, four dogs, three cats, and six Icelandic horses. In 2002, my sister Teresa moved from Salt Lake City to live on the farm and help out. She added her four dogs, five cats, and one guinea pig to the menagerie.

### What is your Icelandic horse experience?

After I purchased Aldis in 1995, I began participating in various activities, such as leisure trail rides, competitive trail rides with obstacles, and breed

demos. Within a few years, I was ready for a new challenge and became interested in Icelandic competition. I never thought I would be interested in showing, but I love to learn and grow, so this was a natural progression. In 2002 I purchased a couple of horses suitable for competition as well as pleasure riding. I became much more serious about improving my riding abilities and started taking dressage and seat lessons whenever possible.

I was very excited about this breed, yet completely frustrated by the lack of knowledgeable trainers. I was ravenous for information, desperate to learn all that I could. I began traveling to Iceland for treks and going to every clinic in the U.S. that I



possibly could. In 2005, an opportunity arose to attend the judging seminar held in California. I had no aspirations to be a judge, but I knew this seminar was a learning opportunity not to be missed. I learned a tremendous amount, but passed only part of the test. The next year, I repeated the course and passed the remainder of the test. I did this for knowledge, to become a better competitor, and to support the Icelandic Horse Congress and the breed in the United States. Since becoming an intern judge, I have traveled all over the country to scribe at shows, and to practice judge. I have found that judging is much more fun than I thought!

In August of 2007, another incredible opportunity came my way when I attended the first International FEIF Trainer level 1 course, held in Germany. I spent the summer preparing, reading books, taking dressage lessons, and riding as much

as possible. The course was a very intense three weeks. It was difficult to be away from home for a whole month, so when it came time for the exam, I was determined to pass so I would not have to repeat this effort! I was thrilled to pass and earn my International FEIF Trainer Level 1 certification.

I currently own a five-gaited mare in Germany. I go every few weeks to train with her. She is teaching me pace, among many other things. I recently purchased a four-gaited stallion in Iceland and look forward to training and riding him in Iceland. Sadly, my main competition horse here in the U.S., Toppur fra Husanesi, has developed spavin and is now in semi-retirement. Toppur is my inspiration. Going to competitions, learning to ride, going to judging seminars, and then the trainer seminar was all because of Toppur. He is a magnificent horse and he

inspired me to take on all these new challenges so that I could be a better rider for him.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my very supportive husband, Larry, and my sister Teresa, who keeps everything together while I am away.

On our farm, Hulinndalur (which means “hidden valley” in Icelandic), we have an oval track and an outdoor dressage arena. This summer we are building an indoor riding hall with stable and, by next year, we will be ready to host clinics and small shows.

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

My main interest is for the welfare of the horse, and helping people have a better relationship with their horses. A horse cannot learn if it is stressed, so I like to keep the training fun as well as diverse. If I am bored, then I



Sara working with Melkorka in the round pen on bending exercises for suppleness.

am pretty sure the horse is bored. Of course, there are times you must be strict but still friendly to the horse. At this time, I am somewhat more focused on training the rider than the horse. A good rider can make a mildly talented horse look great, but a stiff, unbalanced rider can make a highly talented horse look bad. Training horse and rider together really go hand in hand, because of course this is a partnership, with one partner affecting the other. It's like a dance between the horse and rider.

**What is your philosophy in teaching—do you follow a particular way of teaching?**

Icelandic horse trainer Ingimar Ingimarsson said: "Handling horses is a never-ending source of new challenges. This is why it keeps you captivated all through your life. Don't ever be fooled into thinking you know it all."

I think this is a wonderful quote. As a teacher, I always try to learn

something from everyone I meet. I am a firm believer that you must always keep learning. In fact, the more I learn, the more I realize I don't know. It's important to have an open mind, to consider different alternatives, don't be afraid to try new things, ask questions until you have the understanding that you need. An effective teacher should be able to teach a skill in different ways and from different points of view, as students have different ways of learning.

I remember one of the most effective lessons I ever had was when my trainer got on the horse and rode, intentionally doing many things incorrectly, while I watched and pointed out the mistakes. When my turn came to get on the horse and ride, I was very conscious of how I might look and how I was using my body based on what I just saw her doing. So, in that instance, I learned best through visual methods.



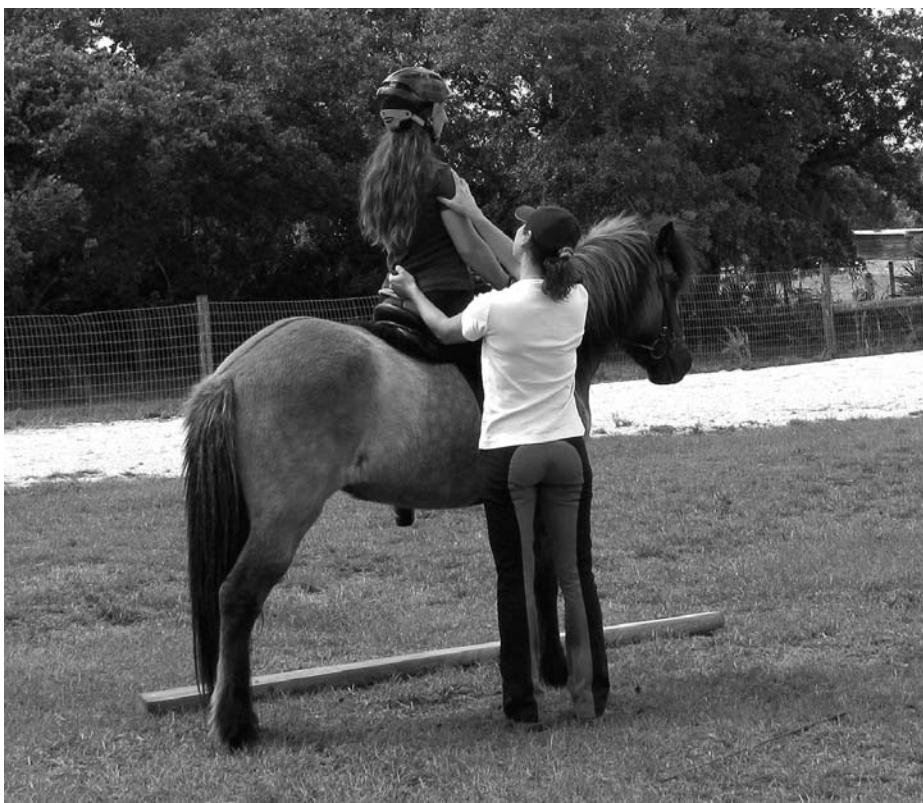
Sara working with Melkorka on leg yield for suppleness and to engage her hind legs.

**What are your hopes for Icelandic horses in the United States?**

I look forward to a time where there are numerous and widespread opportunities for people to learn. We are making progress, with the International Trainer seminar being held in Georgia, and the judging seminars that are being held in various locations.

I hope that every person who owns an Icelandic horse takes advantage of the clinics, schooling shows, and competitions that are held around the country. I would love for people who have not yet attended a competition to use it as an opportunity to learn, get feedback on how you are doing with your horse, as well as a social gathering. It's not just about winning a medal, although it is certainly nice to get recognition for your hard work.

Contact :  
 Sara Lyter  
 Hulindalur Icelandics  
 415 Bluebird Lane  
 Marshall NC 28753  
 828-712-TOLT(8658)  
 slyterz@yahoo.com



Sara giving a lesson.

Kathy Lyter

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# Throstur frá Innri Skeljabrekka

US91101511 / IS91135551 Father: Kveikur frá Miðsitju Mother: Glóa frá Innri Skeljabrekka

## *Choose a stallion with proven results*

All of Throstur's offspring have:

- Great temperament
- Lots of easy tolt
- Long legs and light build
- A pleasure to work with



### **Conformation:**

Head:	7.0
Neck, withers and shoulders:	8.5
Back and croup:	8.0
Proportions:	8.5
Leg Quality	8.0
Leg Joints:	8.0
Hooves:	8.5

Total 8.22

**Overall Score: 8.43**

### **Riding Abilities:**

Tolt:	8.5
Trot:	8.0
Pace:	9.0
Gallop:	8.0
Spirit:	9.0
General Impression:	8.5
Walk:	8.0
Slow Tolt:	8.0
Canter:	8.0
Total:	8.57

**Throstur is 14.2 hands tall and at the age of 17 he has never been or looked better!**

We are happy to announce Throstur's new co-owner, Maggie Brandt. Maggie is the mother of 14 year old Carrie Lyons Brandt. Carrie has been very successful in competitions under Gudmar's instruction these last few years. It will be exciting to watch Throstur and Carrie together as a new pair. **Go to [www.gudmar.com](http://www.gudmar.com) for more info on Throstur.**



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**Please contact Tolt Away Farm for more information :**

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Breeding Seminar at Tolt Away Farm, Enderby, BC

September 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008

This seminar will be highly educational to any breeder and everyone who want to seriously educate themselves about the Icelandic Horses conformation and abilities.. Please prepare yourself for it by reading the FIZO.

This course is open to breeders and interested individuals with a basic knowledge about the Icelandic Horse and knowledge of the FIZO.

The FIZO can be downloaded at <http://www.feif.org/Default.aspx?tabid=204>

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First Prize For Offspring

## Osk fra Brun

First Prize 8.49, 7.58  
Honor For Offspring

## Gustur fra Saudarkroki

8.3, 7.53  
Elite Stallion

## Perla fra REXKJUM

First Prize 8.33, 7.8  
Honor For Offspring

## Ofeigur fra Flujumyri

First Prize 8.52, 7.86  
Honor For Offspring

## Hekla fra Argerdi

First Prize 7.88, 8.57



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in Iceland



<b>Bloodlines</b>	Orri frá Þúfu (honor stallion)	Otur frá Sauðárkróki (first prize stallion)
Andvari frá Ey I (honor stallion)	Adam frá Meðalfelli (first prize stallion)	Hrafn frá Holtsmúla (honor stallion)

AI : May 1st-May 15th, 2008

Standing at Winterhorse Park, WI  
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[www.stigandi.us](http://www.stigandi.us)



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asta@tolt.net  
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(858) 759-8577 (fax)  
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www.Sunlandranch.com

Valhalla Icelandic Horses  
Stina & Steinar Sigurbjornsson  
10545 Woldrich St.  
Sylmar, CA 91342  
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(818) 808-8087 (fax)  
Valhallaicelandic@earthlink.net  
www.valhallaicelandic.com

Valkyrie Icelandic  
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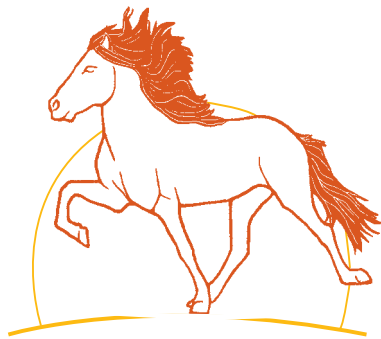
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*2008 show schedule*

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**July 26-27**  
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**August 30-31**  
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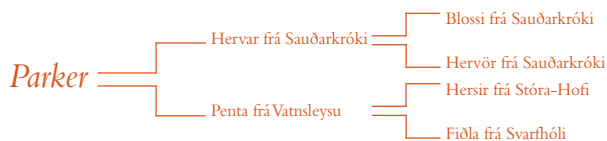


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*Sólheimar is proud to introduce Parker one of the highest scored four gaited stallions in the world standing at stud at our farm in Tunbridge, Vermont.*



*Sigur, a first prize son of Parker*



<b>Conformation</b>	
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
<b>Conformation</b>	<b>8.31</b>

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

**Total** **8.39**

**Offspring:**  
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 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.