

ISSUE THREE

THE

2008

ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y



THE PLEASURE RIDING PROGRAM

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

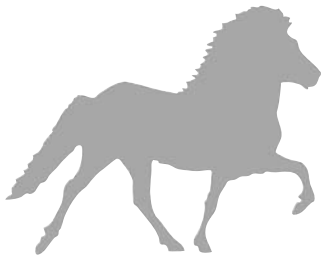
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THE ICELANDIC HORSE QUARTERLY

ISSUE THREE 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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On the cover: Nicki Esdorn and Fengur cross the finish line jump at the Bedford Pace.
Photo by Kathy Mathew.



FEIF AND THE USIHC

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

The United States Icelandic Horse Congress was formed in 1987 by representatives of the U.S. Icelandic Horse Federation and the International Icelandic Horse Association to meet the FEIF rule that only one association from each country is allowed to represent the breed. As a FEIF member organization, the Congress maintains the Registry of Icelandic Horses in the United States, sponsors U.S. participation in international competition, and regulates breeding and competition activities in the United States in accordance with FEIF rules. USIHC also sponsors activities, events, and educational programs in the United States which are beneficial to the overall interests of the breed. Yearly membership is \$45 (\$35 for youth members); family membership, \$65. For more information, see the Congress website at www.icelandics.org or email: info@icelandics.com.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Kari Pietsch-Wangard, Secretary/Treasurer
Laura Benson
Ásta Covert
Doug Smith
Kathryn Love
Karen Olson-Fields

REGISTRY

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

For more information, contact Asta Covert
P.O. Box 1724, Santa Ynez, CA 93450;
805-688-1393; registry@icelandics.org

WEBSITE

Visit www.icelandics.org to update or renew your membership, download the electronic Quarterly, subscribe to RSS feeds for the Events Calendar or web updates, register for WorldFengur, find a Regional Club or USIHC registered horse, join a committee, download USIHC guidelines and forms, submit a proposal, and learn more about FEIF and the USIHC.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Bernie Willis writes: It's fall and I hope your summer has been a real good one. I have seen things that I hoped would never happen in America. The price of petroleum energy has affected everything we do. Just like in Switzerland, I've seen horse folk cutting the grass along the side of the road to get some fodder for their horses. I know one man who now rides his horse to work instead of taking the family car. Many of us have shortened or cancelled auto road trips. Spending more time at home with our horses really isn't a bad deal after all.

One thing I promised earlier this year was to get a full understanding of the USIHC's financial condition. I must admit that while writing this in June, although progress is being made and the full board is being very cooperative, the final result has not been accomplished. It has been determined that the membership fee does cover the cost of the Quarterly magazine; the income from the registry is marginal and, while it covers basic expenses, it is not the significant funding source it might be. As many of you know, it has been basic operat-

ing policy for many years to keep our membership fees as low as possible and to use funds from the registry account to foster other programs with the goal of making them self supporting. The educational programs are a good example of how this works. The costs are user-based but backed up with Congress funds. The Pleasure Riding Program is another success financially. I know several of you personally and realize how much you like riding toward a goal.

Complaints are welcome. They are like taking pulse and respiration rates on a competitive trail ride. They give us a measure of how we are doing. Recently we have received complaints about our registration fees being too low. Basically we charge \$25 for what other registries are charging \$100 to \$260. I can't predict what the board will do with this information, but since I have four horses that need to be registered I am not waiting around any more to get it done. You might join me in saving some money right now before the costs of registering your horse goes up. But if you would rather wait till the costs go up, remember the extra you will pay will go toward a good cause.

I hope your hay is in, that your horses are fit and that your summer has been as wonderful as mine.

GEORGIA EVALUATIONS

The Northeast Icelandic Horse Club held a successful breeding evaluation at Creekside Farm in Georgia the weekend of May 16. Katrin Sheehan hosted the event; the judges were Silke Feuchthofen and Barbara Frische; show manager was Martina Gates. Twelve horses were judged for full evaluation, while 20 young horses were also scored. Brian Puntin reported for the NEIHC, "The young horse assessment is somewhat new and I found it very interesting. A better explanation of the young horse assessment will be given by Martina Gates at a later date. I would like to personally thank Martina Gates, Nicki Esdorn, Maike Liekweg, Dawn Shaw and Jana Meyer who all flew down at their own expense to help work the show. Also thanks to Bernie Willis for assisting in the conformation measuring." The highest score was received by the stallion Tyr fra Arbakka (riding: 8.62, total: 8.35). The high scoring mare was Gunnildur fra Kollaleiru (riding: 8.43, total: 8.18).



The Tunbridge Fairgrounds, in Tunbridge, VT, where the Judging Seminar will take place. Here Jessica Hainesworth rides Thor.

Nancy Marie Brown

SPORT SEMINAR

The USIHC Education Committee organized two seminars this summer. A Sport Competition Seminar was held in conjunction with a schooling show at Winterhorse Park Icelandic Horse Farm in Eagle, WI, July 24-25. Barb Riva was the organizer.

The clinician was Andre Boehme, a very experienced International FEIF Sports Judge and the trainer of the German elite youth team, Hessen Kader. The classroom-style seminar covered a variety of topics to allow those interested in competing to educate themselves, gain a better understanding of FIPO and the judging guidelines, and to improve their own performance. Andre addressed details of FIPO such as: the welfare of the horse, prohibited bits, tack and other equipment, shoeing, the track, the different classes and how to ride them correctly, the preliminaries, the finals, disqualifications, different speeds, etc.

In addition, the seminar covered some basics of judging so participants could gain a better understanding of what the judges are looking for. Participants discussed the scoring system and what aspects of their performance were getting judged. Tools like videos and watching ridden horses helped to develop a better feeling for performances.

There was no exam for this seminar. Participation of the seminar satisfies the prerequisite for joining the USIHC Sport Committee. Participants of the seminar also had the opportunity to take riding lessons from Andre before or after the seminar and to compete and get judged in the schooling show.



Andrea Barber

Stallion Kalman frá Lækjamóti, owned by Steven and Andrea Barber of Mendon, NY, showing off for the mares.

JUDGING SEMINAR

A Judging Seminar was scheduled for August 27-31, in conjunction with a USIHC-sanctioned show in Tunbridge, VT. The Second Annual Tunbridge Icelandic Horse Show was hosted by Sigrun Brynjarsdóttir and Jason Brickner of Solheimar LLC, with classes for all levels of riders. Susan Peters organized the accompanying judging seminar. The clinician, Marlise Grimm, was an experienced International FEIF Sports Judge, German Master Trainer, FEIF Breeding Judge, and former trainer of the German World Championship Team. The full seminar, which included an exam, was geared towards participants interested in judging and in becoming a sports judge. The three-day basic seminar, however, was of interest to any competition rider. It also satisfies the prerequisite for joining the USIHC Sports Committee.

The classroom-style seminar cov-

ered a variety of topics to allow those interested in competing and judging to educate themselves, gain a better understanding of FIPO and judging guidelines, and learn more about the judge's point-of-view with regard to competitions. On the first day of the seminar, judging guidelines and competition rules were explained and discussed. The next two days were spent with videos, as well as theory and riding performances, to give participants the opportunity to discuss performances of horses and riders and to develop a good feeling for how to judge their performances according to the guidelines.

The final two days of the exam were optional. Students judged a show and their scores were compared to those of the International Sports Judges, followed by a personal interview and oral exam. Those passing the exam were certified as USIHC intern judges.

BOARD MEETINGS

The following report summarizes highlights of the topics discussed at meetings of the USIHC Board of Directors during April, May, and June 2008. Full minutes of the meetings are available online at www.icelandics.org.

Members present were Laura Benson, Asta Covert, Anne Elwell, Ed Hilgaertner, Kathy Love, Karen Olson-Fields, Kari Pietsch-Wangard, Katrin Sheehan, Doug Smith, and Bernie Willis. Regional Club Observers were Annette Coulon (Kraftur), Alys Culhane (Alaska Icelandic Horse Association), and Dawn Shaw (The Cascade Icelandic Horse Club).

The Stallion Book Listing: The USIHC stallion book listing fee will be free for all USIHC members who currently pay for a Farm Listing. Other members will pay \$10, and non-members \$100 per stallion. The Board unanimously approved annual updating of all stallion listings in the Stallion Book to USIHC members only; members with Farm Listings will not be charged, other members will have to pay \$10 per year. Fees shall be paid at the same time as their membership renewal. Anyone who previously paid the \$100 fee will receive 10 years of free listing, as long as they maintain a current USIHC membership and update the stallion's information annually. By making listings renewable, the information on each stallion can be corrected and updated annually.

All stallions listed in the Stallion Book must be USIHC registered. All stallions listed in the Stallion Book must also be evaluated, but there will be no minimum score required in order to be listed. The Board voted unanimously to not include BLUP scores in the Stallion Book. A horse's BLUP score is not the probability predictor for horses that do not have

Sigrun Brynjarsdottir readies her stallion Parker for the Open Four-Gait competition during a schooling show in Tunbridge in May.



Nancy Marie Brown

offspring in Iceland and therefore is often misleading here. Stallions under age five with conformation judgment only are allowed; they will be eliminated from the book if not fully evaluated during the year they turn five. The board members feel that it's important to provide additional information on the breeding evaluation system and judging guidelines as an education tool. This can be accomplished by providing direct links to the FIZO sources on the Breeding section of the USIHC website.

Domestic Bred Icelandic Horse

Names: All American-bred horses will be entered into the World Fengur 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 spellings. 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.

Judge Housing: The pros and cons of allowing an organizer or a show participant to house the judge during a sanctioned competition were carefully considered by the USIHC board. Reasons for: It is normal in other countries. We should be using our FEIF International Judge and currently he is limited. If family is allowed to judge family, why should the housing matter? Where the judge sleeps does not make a difference. Cons: Some competitors feel the judge may feel obligated to those housing him/her to judge in their favor. Some feel that this gives unfair access to the judge for certain parties.

Promotion: Kathy Love asked the members of the promotion committee to think about the mission statement and goals for 2008. She plans to establish what horse magazines have the biggest circulation and contact their sales people about submitting articles and placing small ads in their publications as incentive. She's also

asked Carrie Lyons-Brandt to write an article on the Youth Cup for Young Rider magazine, which has Icelandics on their list of featured breeds in their September issue. She's also in contact with Deb Putnam and Brian Puntin regarding the November Massachusetts Equine Affaire.

FEIF Youth Cup: The board unanimously approved Jasmine Ho and Susan Peters to be Team Leader and Country Leader at the FEIF Youth Cup this summer. Laura Benson also reported that a fundraiser held at Flying C Ranch's May competition netted \$951 for the kids going to the Youth Cup. In the future, she would like to see more Youth Cup fundraisers.

Articles of Incorporation: Anne relayed a conversation she had with Beth Yingling regarding the USIHC Articles of Incorporation. These Articles were drafted as required by the state of New Jersey and the club maximum protection for New Jersey, but not necessarily for every state in the country. There is nothing that can keep someone from suing us over the actions of a USIHC-certified trainer. Beth suggested that we require USIHC-certified trainers to carry liability insurance, with the Congress listed as additional insured. In this case certification would have to be renewed on an annual basis. Beth remarked that it's difficult to sue a non-profit organization. Most states have "charitable immunity" laws that would protect us. Bernie will research how other organizations handle certification of trainers and instructors.

Web page updates & links / sharing Congress documents: Doug Kane offered a way for the Board to have access to documents, forms, spreadsheets etc. from anywhere at any time via our website (see next item). An example would be to have all of the Pleasure Rider Program's forms,

which would be readily accessible to the new chair without having to rely on the old chair to forward via mail. Doug Smith will check into how easy this will be for the Board members to use.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

Doug Kane and Doug Smith are working together to help the USIHC Board take advantage of the new technology. Says Kane, "Gudmar Petursson has been utilizing this technology successfully for nearly a year now. The key to it is centralization. The technology centralizes Windows Programs like Microsoft Office, documents, and files. The centralization of these resources will allow users to share the resources and access them from anywhere in the world. Multiple users can use Word or Excel from anywhere, even if they do not have these products installed on their own computer. Gudmar uses the technology to track horses and finances, yet has no data or programs on his local computers. The data is backed up daily, secure and encrypted. These advances will improve efficiency and accuracy and the users will find it easy to use." Doug Kane hosts the new technology and has offered his services to the USIHC.

EQUINE AFFAIRE

The Ohio Equine Affaire for 2008 had an unusual Icelandic display. Word of the Icelandic horse spread throughout the show because of the strange presentations put on by Doug Kane, Mark Fulkerson, and Sarah Fulkerson. Promoting the USIHC and the Ice Horse Adventure Series of books, Doug, Mark, and Sarah dressed in ancient Icelandic warrior garb and walked through the show with an Icelandic horse, doing presentations. In addition, two young women, Carrie and Lilly, on



Doug Kane and his two costumed helpers drew attention to the Icelandic horse at Equine Affaire in Ohio. Doug (left) is the author of *Ariel's Journey*, the teen fantasy book that centers on Icelandic horses. Sarah Fulkerson is dressed as Laura in her warrior gear and Mark Fulkerson as the evil chieftain Siklingur, both characters in the book. Their fanciful approach brought a lot of traffic back to the USIHC booth.

their Icelandic horses acted out a skit based on the book series. They did a fantastic job and drew applause at every event. Gudmar Petursson and his show team also put on a great performance at both the Fantasia and other events. The results of the costumes and various presentations drew many people to the USIHC booth and created a lot of interest in the Icelandic horse. The booth was manned throughout the show, and the people manning the booth provided the audience with a great deal of information on the horses and Iceland. A wonderful mare provided by Gudmar stayed in the booth from early in the morning until late at night, attracting many people.

WELFARE OF THE HORSE

The welfare of the horse was one of the main items on the agenda at the FEIF Conference 2008. Horse welfare is paramount in the FEIF rules and in the general policy. During the conference, a “Welfare Café” was held, where horse welfare questions were discussed. Each participant in the Café represented an aspect of the whole system’s diversity and intelligence, and each person had the chance to connect in conversation. Bernie Willis, president of the USIHC presented together with the chairman of Switzerland. “The experience was rather fun,” Bernie says. “We were divided into groups of five persons, of which only two could be from the same country. Each group was asked to discuss a particular topic. After a few minutes the groups were changed and a new topic or question was focused on. At the end, each person was asked to write down what they would do personally to improve the welfare of their horses.”

Due to this international discussion, several areas of support by FEIF were requested, mainly collateral educational material for the average Icelandic horse owner, such as educational articles, information on saddle position, discussion of general



welfare issues, and a certification program for good horsemanship. Other areas included a re-visit of the FIPO (breeding rules) to encourage an emphasis on the overall impression of the horse and less emphasis on lift, an analysis of the biomechanisms of the horses, and public encouragement for judges to use warning cards. Publication of bad behavior was also discussed, as well as a request to develop a better warning system in sports and breeding events. A request for support from FEIF to request monetary grants from EU to finance welfare projects was also made.

With participants from many different countries—speaking different languages—a request for translation of material and better communication between the individual countries became paramount.

A strong focus on the welfare of the competition and breeding horse is not new to FEIF. The earliest versions of FIPO (the competition rules) carried lists of requirements for preserving the psychological as well as the physical welfare of the horses, and physical welfare has always been much more than simply not abusing the horse. FIPO requires, in fact, the sanctioning of any behavior that is “unfair to the horse.” A yellow and red card warning and disqualification system has always been in place at competitions for immediately sanctioning any behavior that is seen as inappropriate. Checks of shoeing, tack, and health are rigorous.

These rules and policies for competition and breeding horses have been developed over the years by all of the member associations of FEIF together. Like everything that is done within FEIF, they reflect the values and concerns of the populations of Icelandic horse owners worldwide: competition riders of all levels, breeders large and small, and thousands of

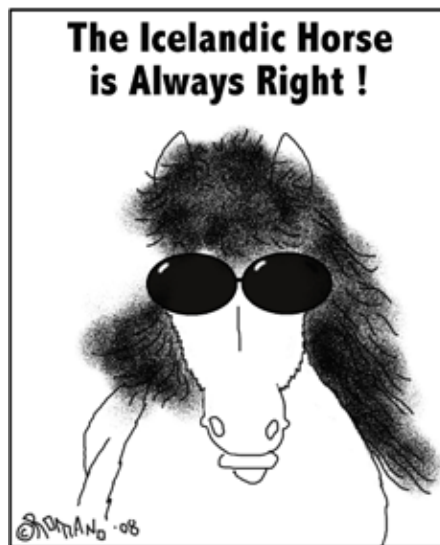


Icelandic horse pleasure riders. The ethic of good horsemanship is required in all aspects of competition, and negative response to any lapse, however minor, on the part of competitors, judges, and spectators, has always been strong and immediate.

FEIF is now expanding the concern for the welfare of the horse into areas other than competition and breeding. If the welfare of the horse is the responsibility of all horse owners, then surely it is the responsibility of the breed associations to provide information and education on as many aspects of the horse’s welfare as possible so that owners will have more resources to understand and meet that responsibility. With the participants of the Welfare Café returning to their home countries and individual clubs, the important discussion about welfare of the horse will continue.

GÆDINGAKEPPNI

The weekend of August 29-30, 2008, an International Gædingakeppni Seminar was organized by FEIF in cooperation with the Danish member association. The seminar, with teachers from Iceland, focused on judging. The Gædingakeppni is the most widespread form of competition



Chris Romano(3)

on horseback in Iceland. There are many reasons for this: for one, it is in very much line with the old traditions about the Icelandic horse. 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.

SPORT JUDGES

A new FEIF Sport Judges Committee has been established. The members are Markus Karrer (Switzerland), Nicolai Thye (Denmark), Rune Svendsen (Norway), Thorgeir Gudlaugsson (Netherlands) and Uschi Heller-Voigt (Switzerland). This committee operates under the umbrella of the FEIF Sport Committee; the members are appointed by the Director of Sport. However, the members were proposed by the International Sport Judges, after an election among this group of 74 persons. This is the result of proposals of a working group to bring more structure to the organization and more support for FEIF International Sport Judges.

YOUTHCUP

The FEIF YouthCup 2008 which took place in Brunnadern, Switzerland, July 12-20 showed 72 Youth from 12 countries who shared and learned together. Switzerland sent the most Youth, 10, followed by Iceland and Germany with nine Youth participating from these countries. Four promising youth riders from the U.S. also participated: They are Lucy Nold, Carrie Lyons Brandt, Sophie Shalhoub, and Amber Parry.

NORDIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Nordic Championships is the bi-annual FEIF sport event between Iceland, Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Every country sends a team. This year the event took place from August 6–10 in Seljord, Norway.

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

The preparations for the 2008 Mid-European Championships are on their way. The Mid-European Championships are the bi-annual FEIF sport competition between Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Switzerland. Each country involved is allowed to send up to 40 participants

FEIF SEMINAR

The annual FEIF International Instructor/Trainer Seminar will be held on January 9-11, 2009, at NHB Deurne in the Netherlands. Details are available on the FEIF website (www.feif.org). This weekend is planned to be a full program of discussions of interesting and important education issues for the Icelandic horse community. The seminar will be open to all instructors registered in the FEIF Matrix, all FEIF International Sport and Breeding Judges, and, subject to availability of spaces, other interested participants.

REGISTRATIONS

From WorldFengur.com: As of January 2008, 294,711 Icelandic horses have been registered in the studbook of origin. This is an 8% increase compared with the number of horses that were registered in 2007. Last year, 2,608 assessments held in FEIF countries were registered for 2,270 horses. All in all, 9,177 horses born in 2007 have been registered in WorldFengur so far, and 14,981 horse were registered as microchipped last year.

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 or ask the Regional Club committee chair, Andrea Barber. Regional Club members, please send your updates to the Quarterly c/o Doug Kane (dkane@kcssi.com).

Alaska Icelandic Horse Association

Susan Tilly writes: We've been having relatively good riding weather here in Alaska, dry, cool, damp days, and plenty of sunshine. Another plus, in this, the land of the midnight sun, is that the daylight hours allow for lengthy evening rides. We all know this won't last, so we're taking advantage of it. In Fairbanks, weekly trail rides are the norm. In Palmer, there have been a handful of organized trail rides, the most notable of which was at Alys Culhane's place. Alys rode Raudi, Bernie rode Undrun, and Ruth rode Curly Sue. (Curly has honorary Icelandic status because Bernie got her to tolt).

It's a rare, but wonderful time when we can get Icelandic horse owners together, especially now that gas prices are so high. But we did manage to do this in early June when Bernie hosted at two-day gait clinic at his Big Lake-based Arctic Arrow farm. Amy Rogde brought Lysy up from the Kenai, and Susan Tilly and Theresa Harmon brought Dukka and Prinz down from Fairbanks. There were five other local participants. The clinic was very well organized. Bernie gave a lecture on gait training on Friday evening, and on Saturday and Sunday, in groups of two, we put theory to practice. Most of us are trail riders. Bernie emphasized the importance of trot, and showed us ways in which we can use uneven terrain to our advantage. Between classes, the majority of us went for informal rides, and put our hard-earned theory to practice.



Karleen Oosterwal pauses for a break with Skerpla during the NEIHC Bunny Hop ride.

California Icelandic Horse Association

Asta Covert writes: The May show was very successful. About 35 horse-and-rider combinations signed up. The Friday Night BBQ was a great evening, and there were about 40 of us enjoying the delicious food in the barn. The preliminary rounds were on Saturday, and we were most proud to have five youth riders, who all rode very well. Lucy and Sophie were among them, and they are going to compete in Switzerland this year at the FEIF Youth Cup. We had a Silent Auction to raise money for them, and for Amber and Carrie, who will join them in Switzerland. We raised a total of \$951 that we will split evenly between the four. At the end of the day on Saturday, we did the 100 meter speed pace, which is always a crowd pleaser. Sunday we had all the finals.

A group of us are going to

Landsmót. Our member Anne-Marie Martin owns and bred a four-year old stallion, Villandi frá Feti, that went first prize and qualified to be shown again at Landsmót. He is a son of Anne-Marie's mare Gola frá Höfðabrekku, who is also first prize with a total of 8.25, and his sire is Lúdvík frá Feti.

Another Sanctioned show will be held at Flying C Ranch November 1 and 2. For more info check out the CIA website (www.ciaclub.net).

Cascade Club

Lisa M. McKeen writes: Despite the rising fuel costs, the first half of 2008 has been a busy year for members of the Cascade Club. We participated in demos, clinics, poker runs, 4-H events, BCH events, and many, many regional trail rides. Icelandic horses are not such a surprise in the Pacific Northwest any more, but remain great conversation openers with



Alex Pregitzer gave a clinic for the Cascade Club. Here are the clinic participants at the end of the day Sunday.

horse enthusiasts wherever we go.

Gwen Feero and Karen Brotzman headed up the group that did demonstrations at the NW Equine Expo in Albany, Oregon, this year. Renee Phelps, Dawn Shaw, and Pam Nolf participated in the event. Next year will be the tenth anniversary for the club's participation in the event and we are already planning for a special demonstration for the crowd that always welcomes us so warmly.

Thanks to Rachel Knowlton, Alexandra Pregitzer, who currently lives in Michigan, taught an Icelandic Horse Riding Clinic on May 3-4 in Ridgefield, Washington. Participants were Lori Birge, Carol Burckhardt, Linda Eddy, Missy Genova, Bonny Houghton, Rachel Knowlton, Lisa McKeen, Renee Phelps, Janella Radetich, Diane Spear, Jean Waller, and Susan Yeager. Patti Moyer and Ron & Barb Pitney audited. Claudia

Rancore and Karen Brotzman joined us for lunch each day. We all learned a great deal and enjoyed the skill of a trainer that could read both horse and rider. Alex helped each participant make steps toward being a better partner for each horse. She has been asked to do another clinic next spring.

At the end of May, Dawn Shaw and her gelding Floi participated in the War Horse Challenge games at Bridle Trails near Redmond, Washington. They placed third in the Ring Joust. In the beginner's version of the ring joust, competitors jab a wooden sword through rings on several stanchions. Riders cannot take two rings off the same stand at one pass. More advanced riders have to use metal swords, have many more stanchions, and the rings are different sizes with the smaller rings being worth more points. Time counts, and bonus

points are earned by wearing armor. Other games included simulated head-lobbing, a quintain, and spear/javelin tossing.

In May, Svanny Stefansdottir gave a clinic at Red Feather Ranch in Trout Lake, WA, at Dick and Linda Templeton's place. Members learned a great deal, and the setting was spectacular. Dick and Linda have built a regulation track so that Icelandic owner/riders can learn and practice for sports competitions or evaluations in Washington.

This year the club's annual summer meeting was held in The Dalles, Oregon at Lisa Roland's new home. We had a full agenda but made sure the weekend had time for what draws us together: horses. We rode and practiced on the trail course or in the arena we rented for the day from a local 4-H group. Lisa hosted beautiful trail rides through the scrub oak for-

est and up into the high mesas which are the setting for Lisa's new home. We have a full slate of nominees for our up-coming vote by mail ballot on its way to members through our summer newsletter.

Club member Shari Nees has started a new blog on research information gathered about the early years in America of the Icelandic horse. She tells us it will take her a few months to really get it going, but we are all excited about finding it and sharing with people new to the breed. The address is <http://naicelandichorse.blogspot.com/>. Shari is an artist, and we are lucky to have her donating to horse events in the area to help promote Icelandics. She has donated two T-shirts to be raffled off, one for each of the July shows. All funds will go directly to the Club.

Upcoming events are Celebrate the Horse Event in Puyallup, WA, headed up by our membership chair, Sandy Solberg; an All Icelandic Horse Show to be held in Chilliwack, BC, by the CanAm Icelandic Horse Club;



the Northwest Gaited Horse Club will once again sponsor the Evergreen Gaited Classic in Puyallup, WA; the second Trail Trials event held in Ridgefield, WA, is drawing a large group of Icelandics; a beach ride with horse camping is planned by Gwen Feero, one of our Members at Large;

a second clinic by Svanny Stefansdotir will be forthcoming in August; and our club winery ride will again take place the second weekend in September. We are all excited about the rising number of events that include participation by Icelandics.



Rich Moore

Photos from the FIRC schooling show in Thurmont, MD, on May 17. Competitors Suzi McGraw (left) and Sally Thorpe (top). Judge Alex Pregitzer and Sally Thorpe (above).

Frida Icelandic Riding Club (FIRC)

Rich Moore writes: The FIRC held schooling shows in April at Dave Goodman's farm in Nokesville, VA, and in May at Sam Castleman's farm in Thurmont, MD. Curt Pierce judged the first show. Susan Milloy was the scribe. Alex Pregitzer, with Curt's and Susan's assistance, judged the May show. Both shows were well attended.

The FIRC hosted six classes for Icelandics at the end of June at the Virginia Gaited Jubilee at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington, Virginia. Susan Peters was the judge. Curt and Susan Milloy assisted. The Center was a great place to ride. The organizers and other riders made us feel welcome. (See FIRC schooling show results on the USIHC website.)

Gudmar Petursson ran clinics for the FIRC in May at Rich and Pat Moore's farm in Virginia and in June at Lynne Alfonsi's in Pennsylvania. Both events attracted lots of riders and auditors.

Tony and Laura Colicchio hosted a trail ride in May in Upper Marlboro, MD. The riders had a nice time during the ride and at the picnic that followed.

The FIRC drill team, under the leadership of Curt Pierce, put on a demonstration in May at the Virginia Horse Center. The ride went well, and the audience enjoyed seeing the horses. Don and Julie Roll, who live near Lexington, were active in arranging the show. Don was the narrator during the drill team performance. The Rolls hosted the riders for pizza at their home after the show.

In June, members of the FIRC were invited to attend an Icelandic Independence Day reception in Washington, DC, at the residence of the ambassador of Iceland. A lot of good Icelandic food and drinks was



Jana Meyer demonstrates proper mounting technique during the introduction to her NEIHC clinic at Roberts Woods Farm in April for the NEIHC.

provided. Everyone had a nice time.

The FIRC plans to hold schooling shows in September and November and conduct trail rides in September, October, and November. Club members will be riding in a holiday parade in Charles Town, WV, in early December. For additional information on club events, please see the FIRC events calendar at www.firc.us.

Kraftur Club

Doug Smith writes: The Kraftur Club, which is located in the Southern San Francisco Bay Area, has been quite busy with evacuations due to the fires here in California. June 20, Mountain

Icelandic Farm received a reverse 911 call declaring a mandatory evacuation due to a fire in the area. The fire started on a nearby highway by a car that was dragging its muffler and sending sparks flying into the very dry grass along the roadside. The fire started at about 1:30 in the afternoon and quickly spread to approximately 500 acres, burning about 15 homes and killing several animals.

The farm manager at Mountain Icelandic Farm quickly called club members Bert Bates and Doug Smith on their cellular phones asking them to quickly come and hook up their trucks and trailers so they could haul

the 20 horses off of the property.

Bert Bates and his wife Kathy Sierra promptly got to the farm and took the first load of horses to safety. Meanwhile, Doug and Gayle Smith, with fellow Kraftur members, Lucy Nold, Ayla Green, Laura Benson, and Heidi Benson were about five miles away trying to escape the triple-digit heat with a trail ride through the redwoods. Gayle, Lucy, and Ayla stayed behind to tend to the horses while Doug, Laura, and Heidi raced back with empty trailers to help get the horses off of the farm. Heidi hauled one trailer full of horses to Paradise Valley Icelandics, located in Moss Landing 20 minutes away. Doug took a load of six horses to the local Safeway parking lot and, with the aid of Laura Benson, put them in one of the shopping cart “corals” that are common in most grocery store parking lots. While Laura and Pedro, a farm hand, held the horses in the Safeway parking lot, Doug drove back to collect the last of the horses. He met up with Steindor Thorisson, who was at the farm to do farrier work, and loaded up one mare and her baby and another filly from the pasture and drove them to Paradise Valley Icelandics. Bert Bates fought his way back through the increasing street traffic to collect the horses from the Safeway parking lot. The final step in the saga was to spend two hours driving five miles to collect the horses that had been left at the trailhead when the first call for help came in. Gayle Smith likely had the hardest job of all, since she was left standing with the last of the horses for four hours at the gate to Nisene Marks State Park.

Everyone arrived safely at Doug’s farm in the early evening and wandered around making sure that all the horses were settling in to their new surroundings. The fire persisted

until Sunday morning, when it was 90% contained. Thankfully no one was hurt, and only a couple of the horses came down with a cough from the smoke inhalation. The Kraftur members all banded together to save our precious Icelandics. Sadly for Northern California, this was the third-fire related evacuation of Kraftur horses since June first.

Northeast Icelandic Horse Club (NEIHC)

Brian D. Puntin writes: The NEIHC had a successful spring and early summer. Twenty-four different club members participated in three separate clinics at Roberts Woods Farm in Monterey, MA. One was taught by Gudmar Petursson, and two by Jana Meyer. All clinics were full to capacity with a waiting list.

In April, 17 riders attended the first annual “Bunny Hop” group ride at Rockefeller State Park in North Tarrytown, NY. This is the spring equivalent to the “Turkey Tolt” ride, held in November.

The NEIHC also hosted its fourth breed evaluation, this time in Rutledge, GA, at Creekside Farm, owned by Katrin Sheehan. The evaluation included a young horse breed evaluation as well. See the report in this issue. We will host our fifth breed evaluation this September 19-21 at Mill Farm in Ancramdale, NY.

Saint Skutla Club

Andrea Barber writes: Spring came to Western and Central New York and club members in short order started, riding, riding, riding! Our club had several trail rides in the usual places, Mendon Ponds Park in Mendon, NY, the Outlet Trail in Dresden, NY etc. As usual the horses all seemed to keep themselves pretty fit over the winter and were happy to really move out on the trails in the spring.

Sadly, distances between mem-



Andrea Barber

Sandra fra Hrafnholum, with Hera fra Raufarfelli 2 in the background, owned by Ron Bunce, Mohawk, NY.

bers still make these events hard for some to participate in. One would think that a club that only encompasses part of a state wouldn’t really have these issues. But we have members as far East as Mohawk, NY and as far West as Ellicottville, NY – a distance of approximately four hours. So that can be a real challenge when trying to plan an event for all. The majority of our members live in the Rochester, New York area so often most of our events are held there. But in the future we want to try to make greater efforts to ride in as many different places as possible, and include as many members as possible.

In addition to riding the club has also been growing. New members have joined from the Central NY area. New horses have been purchased and breedings are happening with the promise of foals for next year. Our climate and conditions here in Western and Central New York couldn’t be more perfect for the Icelandic horse and I think we will continue to see growing interest in the breed.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

LANDSMOT

Between 13,000 and 14,000 spectators watched the finals at Landsmot 2008, the Icelandic Horse Festival, held in Hella, Iceland, June 30 to July 6. Winner of the popular tolt competition was Vidar Ingólfsson and Tumi frá Stóra Hofi with a score of 8.83. Röðull frá Kálfholti, ridden by Isleifur Jonasson, won the B-class gæðingar competition “with considerable supremacy,” according to Eidfaxi, which called Röðull a “great and roomy gæðingur”; he received 9.15. The winner in the A-class gæðingar competition was Aris frá Akureyri with a score of 8.86; the rider was Árni Björn Pálsson. For other results, see en.eidfaxi.is/

Earlier in the week, spectators and participants suffered through a storm fierce enough to call out the local search and rescue squad, according to a report on Icelandreview.com. “The situation was terrible for a while. We tried to save tents but they blew away in all directions and were torn to pieces. Some tent trailers that were torn in two,” Árni Kristjánsson at the Hella Aviation Rescue Department told the newspaper *Fréttabladid*.

“The weather is unbelievable. Everything is upside down,” said the editor of the website “IceHorse News,” Daníel Ben Thorgeirsson. “Several people are leaving the area because they can hardly stand upright because of the wind. I have been to horse festivals for 14 years and I’ve never experienced anything like it,” he added, expressing his surprise that festival organizers did not postpone the tournament. “They are making the riders continue in crazy weather on expensive horses in front of empty stands.” One night the competition was in fact postponed because of the weather.

HORSE DAYS

From Eidfaxi.is: The International Horse Days show held in the arena at Saudarkrokur, Iceland, in April mixed riding, history, and humor. Instead of a traditional horse show, glamorous horses were used in fun settings to tell the hilarious story of Thormóður from Skagafjörður. The acting was supported by live music, lighting, and sounds from the surroundings. All the actors, as well as the horses, played their parts very well. It is safe to say that Sæmundur Sæmundsson, who played the father, as well as Jakob Einarsson, who acted as a ram, were outstanding. Spectators got tears in their eyes as Thormóður, acted by 20-month-old Halldóra Sölvadóttir, ran into her father’s arms and rode away with him at a fast speed around the arena. It was a surprise to see Thórarinn Eymundsson dressed as a priest, riding the stallion Vilmundur frá Feti, on his way to Thormóður’s funeral. It was no less surprising for the spectators to see the lid of the coffin lift up and Thormóður rising up in the coffin towards the end of the show. Many different and well-implemented events took place between the main shows. Mette Mannseth caught great attention as she rode the mare Hapadís without a bridle, like nothing was more natural. It is safe to say that this very untraditional horse show was very professional and ambitious in every way.

NEW BLUP

From WorldFengur.com: A new BLUP has been calculated and is now available through WorldFengur. A total of 238 horses qualified for the breeding assessments at this year’s Landsmót in Hella, Iceland. Only two stallions qualified for the Sleipnir trophy, the honors prize for offspring: first is Hróður frá Refstöðum, who has

a BLUP of 126 points with 54 fully assessed offspring; second is Sær frá Bakkakoti with a BLUP of 125 points with 53 fully approved offspring.

BIOSECURITY RULES

From WorldFengur.com: MAST, the Icelandic Food and Veterinarian Authority, has issued a leaflet in English called “Protect the Icelandic Horse!” in which people traveling to Iceland are asked to take measures to prevent bringing diseases to the horse population on Iceland. A quote from this leaflet: “As a result of its geographical isolation and strict import policy, Iceland has remained free of serious infectious diseases in animals... Visitors are asked to adopt strict biosecurity measures!” It is pointed out that it is absolutely prohibited to bring used tack and/or riding gloves into the country. Other riding gear needs to be machine-washed and tumble-dried before travel; if this isn’t possible, it should be washed and dried carefully and then treated with 1% VirkonS. Another quote from the leaflet: “Icelandic horses are not vaccinated and are therefore susceptible to infectious agents from abroad.” WorldFengur is very happy with the publication of these guidelines by MAST and kindly asks everyone to help by informing people who intend to come to Iceland about taking preventive measures.

HORSE EXPORTS

From WorldFengur.com: As of May 2008, 500 horses have been exported from Iceland. The highest number (133) was exported to Denmark, just one more than the amount that went to Sweden (132), and 107 horses were exported to Germany. Horses have been exported to eleven countries in total. A total of 1497 horses were exported from Iceland in 2007.

BEYOND THE OVAL TRACK

T H E P L E A S U R E R I D I N G P R O G R A M



Kevin Draeger of Morristown, Minnesota has won 1st place in the junior division of the Pleasure Rider Program in both 2006 and 2007. He's also accrued over 500 riding hours. He's pictured above on his gelding, Soti, who Kevin describes as "a bit of a chicken, but I love him anyway."

Kevin says: "The Pleasure Rider Program is so fun and easy to participate in. If more people joined it would be even more fun!"

MEET THE 2007 WINNERS

The USIHC Pleasure Riding Program is for everyone! Riders and their horses accrue points by clocking hours for riding, driving, and training (Freedom Ride) and through participating in riding-related activities such as parades, clinics, seminars, etc. (Special Events).

What makes this program even more fun is that it offers friendly competition, as riders actually compete individually and regionally for prizes and medals. Gold, silver, and bronze medals are awarded to first, second, and third-place riders, determined by high-point scoring. Gold medal winners receive an awesome, embroidered riding jacket. A yearly award is also attainable for the Regional Clubs. The club with the highest PRP enrollment wins an award for each club member. Those who achieved their 1,000 hours in 2007 were awarded an Ariat riding vest!

The PRP is growing and changing. So far this year a new prize for 2,500 hours was established, riders will now be able to log hours and points accrued on foreign soil, and a limit was set on winning a jacket to twice.

PRP rules and details can be viewed on the Congress website (www.icelandics.org). Enrolling is easy. Application forms and log sheets can be accessed on the website as well. Profiles of the 2007 PRP Winners follow. We hope you'll join us.

— Karen Olson-Fields, *Pleasure Riding Committee Chair*



Bonnie Borgerson with Litla-Linda and Draupnir.

FIRST PLACE

Eastern Region Adult Division (Tie)

Bonnie Borgerson, Sylvania, OH

All I know is this: I am an active grandmother who was born to ride. I hope it never ends. I love it! I love my horses! I have two Icelandics. My gelding, Draupnir fra Feti, is 14 years old. I have owned him eight years. We do mostly trail riding in Oak Openings Metropark and other parks in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. We have also swum, done numerous clinics, some shows, and some camping. I am an active member of Fulton County Ohio Horseman's Council and Great Lakes Dressage Club. My mare's name is Litla-Linda fra Northstar. I purchased her at six weeks old. She is now seven years old. We trail ride, too, but I mostly show her in dressage. Presently, we are working on First Level. I have fun with both

horses, and so do my granddaughters, ages 13, 11, eight, and six. It is great to have the extra horse when one of the girls wants to ride. Sometimes they all are at the barn at the same time, which means taking turns. Both horses are very patient and kind. They know they will be receiving extra treats.

Nancy Wines-DeWan, Yarmouth, ME

While I may dream "globally," when it comes to trail riding on a day-to-day basis without access to a trailer, I find myself riding "locally." Though Máni and I constantly search out new diversions in our riding circuits, we often travel the same routes over and over again. Thus the riding highlight of 2007—for both Máni and me—was a three-day camping trip to Acadia National Park with members of the Maine Icelandic Horse Association.

For those of us "down south" (in

Maine), Acadia is considered “up north,” but in reality, there are still hours to drive in a northerly direction before one runs out of Maine roads and ends up in Canada. Among equestrians in Maine, Acadia is famous for its 45 miles of beautiful carriage roads built between 1913 and 1940 by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., an avid equestrian. The roads are open to horses, ridden or driven, bicyclists and walkers, but are closed to motorized vehicles (except for the maintenance vehicles which keep the road surface and surroundings pristine). Rockefeller laid out the roads with an eye toward scenic views and the contour of the land. Though there are plenty of hills, no grade is too steep or curved too sharply for horse-drawn carriages. Máni may have wondered about the truth of this last fact. He started out our first ride very enthusiastic, and very determined to be out in front of our group of nine Icelandics. Unfortunately, even though we ride daily, there are few hills on our trails, and he was unprepared for the never-ending inclines he encountered in Acadia. He soon learned that quicker is not necessarily better, and that it’s okay not to be the leader all of the time.



Emily DeWan.

Nancy Wines-DeWan aboard her gelding, Máni.



Caleigh Anderson relaxing with her precious pony, Prins.

Our trip took place in early October, the last weekend before the stables close for the season. We encountered riders and drivers who return year after year with their carriages and saddles (or both) to enjoy not only the beautiful scenery, but also the camaraderie around the nightly campfire. Other riders were struck not only by the good-natured ease with which our group of riders got along, but also how closely our horses chose to travel, without incident. Our group included teenagers and adults, seasoned campers (who remembered to bring everything) and inexperienced campers (who benefited from the seasoned campers’ wisdom). Some of our horses were young (four and five-year-olds), others were in their prime (10- to 15-year-olds); some were shod, some barefoot, some with boots, but all handled the broken stone carriage roads with ease.

We all—horses and riders alike—came away with wonderful memories and a determination to plan another trip like this next year.

Eastern Region Junior Division

Caleigh Anderson, Saltsburg, PA

Prins and I have been trail riding for many hours. We love to trail ride! So, one night we were riding in the woods in the dark when Prins stopped and wouldn’t go forward. I squeezed him, but he stood still. I urged him forward, and he slowly went. Then something dashed out in front of him. He stopped dead. It turns out that it was only a deer but I was so thankful that he was protecting me from whatever it could have been. That night he got an extra helping of treats.

Now after telling you about a story that happened to us while we were trail riding I will tell you about how I got my beloved pony Prins. My grandma, Mary Burns, bought him from a man named Gudmar, who brought him over from Iceland on a plane. My gram gave him to me and my sister trained him to be a wonderful, adoring pony. And even though we had some rough times and I fell

Kevin Draeger ready for a bareback ride on his horse, Soti.



off, I always got through it somehow. That's how Prins and I came to be a wonderful pair. All he needed to come out of his shell to be a great saddle-seat pony that took me to the state 4-H competition two years in a row. That's all he needed was some care and love.

Well that's the true story on how Prins and I came to be a couple. He is the best pony ever and I love him!

Central/Mountain Region Junior Division

Kevin Draeger, Morristown, MN

Hello all! I do many different things with my horses. I trail ride, compete, do demos, and ride in parades. In the winter I ski and sled behind them. In the summer I take them swimming. Both of my horses love to jump. I like to be teaching my horses new things all the time, like bending and stretching, dressage exercises, or teaching my big chicken of a horse that the giant rock in the field, as much as he thinks so, is not going to kill him!

I have two horses, although I enjoy riding many others. I have a 21-year-old gelding named Laufi. Laufi is a horse that knows his rider and likes to please. If the rider is a beginner, he walks as slowly as possible

and just follows the horse ahead of him. If he has an experienced rider riding him, on the other hand, he can be a very fun but controlled ride. He has a very easy and smooth tolt. He knows what he has to do even if the rider doesn't.

I also have an eight-year-old gelding named Soti. He is a bit of a chicken but I love him anyway. I have had him since he was three. He has taught me a lot about young horses and their unpredictability. He is hard not to like, with his big brown fluffy hair. He is a fun horse.

Western Region Adult Division

Alys Culhane, Palmer, AK

We have, at best, five months of good riding weather here in Alaska. This, plus the fact that two of my three Icelandics are young, has made participating in the Pleasure Rider Program a fun challenge. There are times (particularly when it's cold and dark) when I'd rather be doing other things, like reading about Icelandics. But once I'm out the door, I'm committed to the day's horse home-schooling activities.

Siggi, who is a pack horse-in-training, recently turned four. The

past year's focus has been on getting in "ground training road miles." I routinely take him up to what we call The Ridge. (We live at the base of the Talkeetna Range). His gait of choice is the pace, so hill and on-trail obstacle work has been invaluable. He now canters when playing with Raudhetta and Tinni.

Raudhetta's training program differs from Siggi's because she's a year older and is more temperamental. I've been working on what she learned in ground training class under saddle, mainly— walk on, whoa, stand, stand, and stand. A local riding instructor has also helped Raudi to make the transition from Lawn Ornament to Riding Horse.

Tinni, who just turned 19, is an experienced trail and show horse, so quite often, I'm the student and he's the teacher. Lately, we've been working on flexibility exercises and walk, trot, tolt transitions. We also spend considerable time exploring area trails and socializing with neighbors.

The clichéd phrase, "a single



Alys Culhane hits the Alaskan trail with her trusty steed, Raudhetta.



Alexandra Venable and Trissa stand by for the start of the Los Gatos Christmas Parade.

journey begins with a single step,” is true in my case. I’m planning on riding from Mexico to Canada, beginning in March 2010. Participating in the Pleasure Riding Program has been central to this goal, since it better enables me to keep my long-term riding goals in mind.

Western Region Junior Division

Alexandra Venable, Santa Cruz, CA
Trail rides, riding on the beach, and playing games on horseback with my friends are some of my favorite things I like to do with my Icelandic horses. My favorite event every year is the Los Gatos Christmas Parade, which our regional club Kraftur rides in every year. I rode my horse Trissa, and my friend Zane rode my horse, Aegir.

The parade is an all-day event. We get there at 8 a.m., tack up and are ready to go by 9, when we go to the staging area and wait for our turn in the parade. We all get decked out for Christmas, including the horses! This year there were about 16 of us. We have to wait a few hours at the staging area on a side street. While we wait, we talk to people about Icelan-

dic horses, take pictures, and eat food and hot drinks that people who live in Los Gatos bring to us. Families and friends come to visit our horses while we wait.

When we are in the parade, everyone cheers for us! They all like us and our horses because they are so fluffy, cute, and energetic, and they say we look like we are having so

much fun. Usually we walk the entire parade, but this year we did tolt also and the crowd went wild for that. I can’t wait for next year’s Los Gatos Christmas Parade!

SECOND PLACE

Eastern Region Adult Division

Nicki Esdorn, Bedford, NY

My Icelandic gelding, Fengur, and I are lucky to live on the famous Bedford trail system in Westchester county in New York. Every spring and fall the trail associations around us put on hunter paces, and we always participate. In a hunter pace, you ride in a team of two to four, and you can choose a category: hunt is the fastest; pleasure is, well, pleasure; the western category has to have at least one western rider; and the youth category is usually the slowest.

The Bedford Pace will lead you on the most beautiful trails with woodlands, meadows, a stream, and plenty of inviting jumps. Up to 120 teams participate and enjoy the competition and a great lunch afterwards. The “pace” is set by an experienced rider and kept secret. The idea is to match a perfect pace for a hunt horse: You canter where you can, you



Nicki Esdorn and Fengur all set for the Turkey Tölt at Rockefeller State Park.

Amy Goddard.



Martina Gates.

Gloria Verrecchio riding Sara at the June 2007 Wisconsin breeding evaluations.

walk where you must, and trot (or tolt!) everywhere else.

Fengur and I have gone with friends on big thoroughbred-cross hunters and won quite a few ribbons! Lately we have enough Icelandic horse riders nearby to form a few teams. Fengur loves this event, I am sure he can tell when we have to follow the arrows on the course, and he also pricks his ears and loves to show off jumping!

Central / Mountain Region Adult Division

Gloria Verrecchio, Marine on St. Croix, MN

Participating in the PRP helps me monitor the time I spend training to the results achieved. Last year I rode Fonix (five-gaited second-prize Stallion), Sara (four-gaited second-prize mare), Aradis (five-year-old homebred mare), and worked Kappi (our homebred gelding) in hand. I also participated in a number of events: rode demos in the Minnesota Horse Expo; hosted an Icelandic Training Clinic; rode Fonix, Mosi, and Sara in a three-day Classical French Dressage clinic (imagine an Icelandic next to a Friesian!). I took lessons from natural horse trainers, dressage trainers, and

Icelandic trainers. I also traveled long-distance twice in May for lessons and practiced on the oval track by riding in the WC Tryouts.

In June, I took Sara to the Breeding Show at Winterhorse Park. The entire process of training, conditioning, and the preparations necessary to show horses at a breeding show are exhausting, nerve-racking, and at the same time exhilarating. Do you think it stressful to ride in the company of professional Icelandic trainers, and in front of world champion judges? It sure is, but the second time was easier! And the thrill of riding slow



Rán enjoys an interesting book with her owner, Ronelle Ingram.

canter accelerating into fast gallop down that bright white track is unforgettable. Even over the thunder of Sara's hooves, I could hear the spectators cheer for the speed of that trip! Sara received an 8.0 for that gallop. Also an 8.0 for spirit, general impression, and for walk. She kept her second prize, and I experienced a great pleasure ride!

Western Region Adult Division

Ronelle Ingram, Santa Ana, CA

As a sole owner of two Icelandic mares, I have learned the joy of being able to ride the trails with both of my mares simultaneously. It took a bit of trial and error to establish a correct protocol for ponying my two ladies. I usually ride Rán, my laid-back black mare. We pony my very willing pinto mare, Sletta. This has helped Rán to be more forward. Sletta has learned to relax and freely extend her reach at the trot and round her back during a side by side relaxed canter. Riding Rán and ponying Sletta also keeps me very engaged in the ride. There is no time to get bored on a long trail ride. All three of us enjoy our time together on the trail. There is no separation anxiety. I am able to exercise and entertain all three of us at the same time. My favorite pleasure rides are when all three of us can have fun together.

THIRD PLACE

Eastern Region Adult Division

Nina Beyer, Mantua, NJ

When I purchased Skorri in October 2006, I was a recently widowed 45-year-old woman who hadn't ridden in more than 25 years. He was a 13-year-old Icelandic gelding looking for a new home. By the beginning of 2007, when I signed up for the PRP, I had been riding him in lessons several times a week with my trainer. His excellent ground manners and his kind temperament made him easy to love. I also discovered that he's



Nina Beyer and Skorri in costume following their “Kokomo” performance.

practically bombproof, so I was able to get creative with costumes for my trainer’s twice-yearly musical performances. In fact, we were so popular in our Hawaiian costume, riding to the Beach Boys’ “Kokomo,” that we were invited to ride at a fund-raising event at ARCH, the Atlantic Riding Center for the Handicapped. There we were, only a few feet away from an open bar, catered food, loud music, and a huge crowd enjoying themselves. Skorri was very excited, but he behaved so well! We walked, trotted, and tolted to the music, and were admired by the spectators. Our picture has been on their website since last September.

My goals for the future with Skorri are to continue working on improving my riding skills. Our trainer works with him also to improve his balance and suppleness. We were part of a group of women riding to Eartha Kitt’s version of “Santa Baby” for the winter musical performance, and this summer we’ll be one of the Village People: “Y-M-C-A!”

Western Region Adult Division

Lisa McKeen, Moxee, WA

I have been crazy about horses since my earliest memories. Lots of children have imaginary friends; I had an imaginary horse. He was a colt, black

with a white blaze, and Mom says I took very good care of him. My non-horsey parents gave up when I was five and bought me a horse ... you guessed it, black with a white blaze, not a colt though, a wise mare who taught me lessons I am still using at age 53.

As my life went along, I have had horses off and on ever since. I have had Icelandics since 2001, when I bought Tinna fra Hvammi II from Alfasaga and Karen Brotzman. What a journey Tinna has taken me on. We have done trail rides in all sorts of terrain, parades, horse shows, demonstrations, and even tried an endurance race once. She is still my best horse sister!

I am a school district teacher mentor and that keeps me plenty busy, but the PRP keeps me aware of whether or not I am spending time with my little herd of four Icelandics. There is Tinna; her daughter, Eisa fra Alfasaga, liver chestnut; Skuggi fra Heidurborg, my only gelding; and Lukka from Coeur D Alene, a black and white pinto youngster. We all live in Moxee, Washington (close to Yakima), with my most wonderful husband, Van T. Herndon. I am glad for the PRP and the support for pleasure riders like myself.



Lisa McKeen with friends, Tinna, Eisa and Skuggi.

TAKING THE GEORGIA COURSE

by Dawn Shaw

When Katrin Sheehan of Creekside Farm mentioned that she was hosting a FEIF Level One Trainer certification course at her farm in Georgia, I thought “what a great opportunity to get certified for something I already do anyway.” I was soon to learn that it wasn’t to be that simple.

Katrin managed to line up Walter Feldmann Jr. as the instructor. Walter is a legend in the Icelandic horse community, following in the footsteps of his famous father. He doesn’t teach these clinics often even in Europe, but the novelty of this being the first of its kind in the United States as well as his long history with Katrin must have made it attractive enough for him to agree to do it.

There are many things said about Walter as a trainer, rider, and instructor. As with any instructor or clinician, he did present some training options and techniques that I chose not to adopt. However, during our course I thought him firm but fair with the horses.



Alex Pregitzer (6)

Participants in the seminar, from left to right, Alisa Breedlove on Alur, Nicki Esdorn on Fengur, Brian Puntin on Glitfaxi, and Katelyn Barnett on Vokull.

I especially found him to be a great instructor of people. His presentation style was no-nonsense, firm and clear. He did his best to bring each of us along, and some of us had a long way to go. I am left with Walter’s words echoing in my brain: “It’s OK,” “Doesn’t matter,” “Good so.” But you have to hear them in a German accent to get the full effect.

Language did pose a challenge. His English is very good, but he found himself having trouble some-

times expressing exactly what he meant. However, we had two native Germans in our group, both of whom have been living in the US for many years and who spoke fluent English, so they were able to help him find the correct words. We taught Walter a few new English words, much to his amusement. Glad we could teach him something in return.

Taking the course was like being back in college, only with less free time. We were in class from 9-6 daily including weekends, with only two half-day breaks on Sundays. Class time consisted of being lectured on theory, watching videos of ourselves and each other riding so we could better see what we needed to correct, watching Walter give a demonstration of a training or riding technique, riding our horses, practicing teaching, or doing ground work. We also each had to give an oral report on one of a selection of topics.

On the first day, each of us rode a horse so that Walter could assess our current riding status. He then rode each horse himself. We were to all take notes of our own observations, and then each horse and rider was



From left to right, Katrin Sheehan on Rjód, Janet Muldur on Blökk, Dawn Shaw on Thoka, and Jill Merkel on Sunna.

reviewed on video. There is nothing more educational, or perhaps humbling, than to watch oneself on video.

We were informed that we would have to pass ten tests: gait riding (walk, trot, tolt, canter), dressage, ground work, ponying or longeing (which was to be determined by lottery), signal riding, a trail obstacle course, gait theory, teaching, teaching theory, and our oral report. This is when the anxiety attacks started for me. This curriculum was more advanced than I'd imagined.

As an example of the complexity of the course, take longeing. How hard can it be? You move the horse in a circle around you on a line, right? We were using a round pen so the circle was pre-defined and there's nowhere for the horse to go. But it's not so simple after all. Everything has to be just so. The way you carry the whip on approach, how you lead your horse, how you go through the gate, how you hold the whip, how you stand, where you stand, how big the loops in the coiled rope can be, how much slack is in the line, the way you use your body, how you use the whip, when you use the whip, how you transfer the whip, how you ask the horse to go the other direction, how you stop the horse; plus you have to remember a pattern. Of course there are practical reasons things are done they way they are, mostly to do with communicating to the horse or avoiding unintentional communication. But this is a lot to coordinate all at once. And if your horse doesn't cooperate, you have to fix things as well as keep your composure.

I'll try to give a brief synopsis of each test. For the gait riding test, we had to ride all four gaits each direction. Gaits should be clean and the speed was whatever was best for that particular horse, with tolt only ridden at one speed. After riding our regular

horse, we had to switch horses. For dressage, we had to ride with a correct seat in walk, trot, and canter first with stirrups, then without. Ground work included ground tying, leading at walk and trot, turning, and backing. I've already explained longeing. For ponying, the rider had to keep both horses under control at walk and trot/tolt, move the hand horse in front then behind, and demonstrate stopping and backing up. Signal riding involves riding with one hand on the reins which are loose, and mostly in two-point seat at trot. We had a course and had to memorize the pattern, which included changing reins, canter transitions, stopping at certain points, large circles, serpentine around buckets, tight circles, and backing up. It's an exercise in balance and communication. The trail course consisted of standard obstacles including loading in a trailer, mounting from a block, a gate, a teeter totter, and backing through an L. The practical teaching test involved giving students a short lesson on one of the things we had been working on in the course. For gait theory and teaching

theory we had to answer questions orally from lecture material and the oral reports. We had all the study questions in advance but were graded on how thoroughly we could answer them.

At one point early in the course I asked Walter how our group compared to the groups he taught in Europe. It was a courageous question and I wasn't sure I really wanted an answer. Walter told me that people in Europe were required to have achieved a certain level in the rider badge program. In fact, they had to have obtained a silver badge level before they were even eligible to take this course. We don't yet have such a program in place here in the US. Some of our horses were not as well trained as what he would expect to be ridden in the program, but he was very straight with us in that if he didn't think a horse would be suitable he told us so. Several of us ended up using different horses than we started with.

While the semi-tropical Georgia rain pounded the red dirt into mud and ran in rivulets along the roads



Jill Merkel on the teeter totter with Alisa Breedlove standing by to assist.



Alex Pregitzer (6)

Katelyn Barnett and Brian Puntin practicing ponying; Walter Feldmann (below) demonstrates.

and pathways, we listened to hours of lecture on gaits, including footfall, phases, variations of each gait and the Icelandic horse ideal; mistakes in gait and how to fix them; how to ask for, ride, and improve each gait; and the differences between the gaits.

When Walter caught a terrible cold and had to sit out a day, some of us gave our oral reports. Those



reports gave us inside time for more of those blights of rain. Because Walter missed some of them, we were all given a passing score rather than a grade.

The tests are each scored on a scale of 1-6, with 1 being perfect and 6 being poor. We needed a 4 to pass, and we had to achieve a 4 or better on all 10 tests. If someone did not achieve a passing grade on one or more of the tests, rather than having to retake the course, that person need only retake those particular tests. Five of us passed all ten tests and are eligible to be certified as FEIF Level One trainers/instructors. Two others fell short by only one test. As of this writing, there remains the unresolved issue of recognition by the USIHC of these test results, meaning that until the USIHC officially recognizes these results, those who pass the test cannot be considered certified.

My advice to anyone considering taking this course: if you haven't had

instruction in classical riding (dressage), I strongly suggest that you do so. Balance, proper seat, and coordination of the riding aids are imperative to success. Study up on the gaits: learn the order of the footfall, how the gaits compare to one another, how each gait should be ridden, how it can be improved, and what the ideal version is for the Icelandic horse.

The most suitable horses for this sort of course are ones that are trained. Not just ridden a lot, but truly trained, as in rein response, self-carriage, clear gaits on cue, and knowing basic dressage such as leg yields. In addition, the horse should be mature, respectful, and have excellent ground manners. If you can take two horses with you, that is better, as you can use different horses for different tests.

It is my opinion that someone with hardly any background in riding, training, or giving instruction would



Clinician Walter Feldmann demonstrating loose rein in signal riding.

have little chance of passing this course. And this course alone is not going to qualify someone as a trainer of Icelandic horses and riders. It might, however, enhance the knowledge of those who already have some experience in this field and allow them to have some sort of credential. I would hope that the broader spectrum of experience, results, and

references would be examined more carefully by those seeking training and instruction, no matter what sort of certification a trainer or instructor may have.

Regardless of the intended outcome, the information in this course is extremely valuable and helpful for anyone interest in improving their knowledge of gaits and gait riding. It

will make you a more well-rounded rider as well as give you tools to become a better trainer and instructor. It will highlight areas that need improvement so that, if you choose, you can pursue those educational opportunities on your own. And if you are really ambitious, pass Level One and have all the right skills, you can set your sights on Level Two.



Brian Puntin and Nicki Esdorn practicing in the round pen.

WHO IS BRIAN PUNTIN?

by Alex Pregitzer

What is your background?

My background is quite different than that of most Icelandic horse trainers. I am an American who grew up on a gentleman's farm. Unfortunately, there were no horses on the farm; the only animals on the farm were our ducks, rabbits, and pigs. My life, however, was always about being outside. I was never good at, nor did I really like, video games and sitting around the house. I was always outside hunting, fishing, farming, or riding my motorcycle. Horses were not part of my early childhood.

Why and when did you move to the United States?

See above, a better question would be, When am I going to move to Iceland?

How long have you been riding?

In the 1990s, I was made a terrific "offer I couldn't refuse." I became employed full time at Roberts



Brian ponying a young horse.

Alex Pregitzer (4)

Woods Farm and was immediately submerged into the Icelandic horse world.

What is your horse experience?

The next several years, through the

generosity of Marc and Kathryn Roberts, I spent many, many, many hours and days riding with Kristjan Kristjansson, who was at Mill Farm at the time. He was and still is an amazing mentor and teacher. The Roberts were very open-minded, and we traveled to or hosted clinics with natural horsemen (Bob Jeffries), dressage instructors (Dominique Barbier), clicker training instructors (Alexandra Kurland), and Centered Riding instructors (Suzanne Shepard), as well as The Great Icelandic Horse Fair with Reynir Adelsteinsson and Eyjolfur Isolfsson. We also did some foxhunting. So, as you can see, I have a little taste of many disciplines. Of course I attended numerous clinics with various Icelandic trainers (Herdis Reynisdottir, Helga Thoroddssen, Gudmar Petursson, Sigrun Brynjarsdottir, Jana Meyer, and Walter Feldman). I started training young horses several years ago, which is my favorite part of my job,



Brian Puntin at ground work and trust building.

and quite frankly I excel at it. I have a great track record of turning out very well “green broke” horses that the owners can take home and immediately trail ride safely. I start about 12 four- to five-year-olds a year, many of them for Kristjan Kristjansson, but for many other trainers as well. Of course, besides starting young horses, I do gait training, problem horses (retraining), and riding lessons and horse sales as well. I have even trained horses to drive. I see giving clinics and consulting in my future. I am always amazed at how quickly horses can transform from wild and unruly to calm and gentle and let you climb on their backs. I have the FEIF International Trainer Level 1 certification, as well as a Massachusetts teaching license. I shoe all my own horses, as well as other clients’ horses. My plans are to continue my FEIF education with a “young horse certification” next.

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

I’ve taken bits and pieces of different techniques and philosophies from many clinicians and trainers. I have this “51%-49%” philosophy, meaning that your horse should be a willing “dance partner,” but as in dancing, only one person can lead (the leader has the 51%). You have to be the leader, but not a dictator. Horses always have a leader in the herd; you assume that position the minute you enter the stall or paddock. Everything is much safer and easier if this philosophy is followed. It shouldn’t be heavy-handed though, more like a gentle but firm persuasion.

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

I don’t like to bore students (and horses) by spending too much time



Brian working in the round pen.

in the indoor arena. Once I am convinced we can work safely outside, we move to the outdoor arena and then to the trails, where it is more fun for everyone. We do “fall back” to the indoor arena often to teach a new idea (for example, lateral work) and then continue to practice the new skill on the trail or oval track. I don’t follow one specific person’s training technique.

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

Of course I would love to see the Icelandic horse grow in the U.S. I think the new trainer certificates and riding badge programs are great at giving some of the Icelandic horse owners some much needed support. I have said in the articles I write for *Tolt News* that we own Ferraris, but usually ride them like Cadillacs. As more trainers and instructors are available in the U.S., owners won’t feel so left out in the cold and can ride the horses to their full potential. Also more local



Brian ready to go out trail riding.

shows would encourage and excite the horse owners, and they are a great social event too.

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WEBSITE IMPROVEMENTS

by Doug Smith

The USIHC website (www.icelandics.org) has undergone a number of improvements over the past six months in an effort to provide better service to the membership. The first changes, released last fall, made navigation of the website easier and enabled members to update their contact information and renew online. The second site update, released in June, includes a number of features to improve communication with the membership.

Improved Navigation

Members and visitors alike find it easier to find features on the site using the new menu bar on the left side of each page. The new menu bar allows users to “hover” their mouse over a category and see the list of sub-categories available without having to change pages.

A search box has been added to the left side of each page below the updated menu bar. Visitors can let Google do the work of finding specific information on the site instead of having to browse the various pages and PDF files. The Google search includes all pages on the website as well as the PDF files of meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and show results.

Online Membership Services

An entire new section was added to the website last fall to make it easier for new and existing members to keep their membership information current. New members can fill out an application, pay their first year’s dues with PayPal, and have instant access to all the benefits of membership. Existing members can update their contact information and, using PayPal, renew their membership and farm listing instantly.

Taking advantage of the online membership services pages benefits both the membership and Congress volunteers. Members have immediate access to membership benefits such as the free World Fengur subscription and reduced entry fees at competitions. The fully automated online process eliminates the need for volunteers to process applications and payments.

Over 40% of the new member applications and renewals processed in the last nine months have been fully automated.

Calendar and Bulletin Board Announcements

For the past several years, the Congress has maintained two pages on the website dedicated to informing

the community of upcoming events and important developments of interest to Icelandic horse enthusiasts. A new feature has been added to both of these pages to make that information more conveniently accessible. Members and visitors can include updates from either or both pages on their My Yahoo! or Google home pages and keep abreast of events without having to remember to visit the Congress web site.

To add updates to your home page, simply visit the Bulletin Board or Calendar page and click on the RSS feed icon at the top of the page. You will be asked how you want to receive the updates and to confirm your choice. From then on all updates to either page will be delivered directly to you.

What Is PayPal?

Where moneygrams and wire transfers were the standard in the 20th century, today over 99 million Internet users prefer to use PayPal to send money to each other via email. PayPal has become such a convenient and trusted way to transfer money online, 95% of eBay’s purchases go through PayPal.

Is it safe?

Although no system is 100% foolproof, PayPal has designed many checks and balances into its system to keep errors and fraud to a bare minimum. You won’t find another online financial institution that’s better at protecting its customers than PayPal. By utilizing the very latest in secure technology and employing a large team of experts in all areas of online safety, PayPal continues to be a leader in safe online payments around the world.

Do I need to worry about fraud or identity theft?

PayPal guarantees 100% protection against unauthorized payments from your account. Every transaction is confirmed by email to the PayPal account holder. Any transaction you wish to dispute will give you access to a support team of analysts who will sort out your problem for you.

What does it take to get started with PayPal?

Your credit card company and bank have already done the initial credit checking... Now you just need to get PayPal to connect that information to your email address. You will need a valid and reliable email address and either a valid credit card and/or a valid bank account in one of PayPal’s 55 countries. PayPal will record this information in confidence. Your email address will become your unique PayPal ID. Your email and your shipping address are the only two bits of personal information that will be displayed to a vendor. During the enrollment process, you will also choose a password to use together with your PayPal ID. Please make sure this password is not easy to guess, and that only you will know and use it!

Electronic Quarterly

Beginning with the June issue of the *Quarterly*, a PDF version is available on the web site at the same time the issue goes to print. Members who are away from home or have slow postal delivery are able to read the current issue as soon as it becomes available. In addition to being available before the printed version is delivered, the online version is in full color.

The online version comes with some basic restrictions. The two most recent issues cannot be printed. You can download the issue, but printing is disabled. Members will be able to download a printable version six months after the initial publication date. Only active USIHC members have access to issues for the first year after the publication date. After one year has passed, any visitor to the web site will be able to read back issues of the *Quarterly*.

Customizable Notifications

For the first time members may choose how they receive official information from the Congress. In the past, all official notices have been sent to members via U.S. Mail. This is a time-consuming, expensive, and slow process. Members with reliable email service may now opt to receive notices electronically. You will continue to receive information via U.S. Mail unless you tell us to send it to you electronically.

Members may now choose how they receive three different types of notices from the Congress:

- Official Notices (electronic or U.S. Mail): This includes information about the annual meeting, general members meetings, and election information (except for ballots).
- Electronic *Quarterly* Availability (electronic or no notification): Members may request an email

notification when new issues of the *Quarterly* are posted to the website.

- *Quarterly* Delivery (electronic, U.S. Mail, or no delivery): Members may opt to not receive a copy of the *Quarterly* in the U.S. Mail. At current printing and postal rates, each copy of the *Quarterly* costs approximately \$4.25 to print and mail. You can help reduce expenses and leave more funds available to support other USIHC activities by opting for electronic delivery. Members who enjoy receiving a printed copy of the magazine may still download and read the full-color PDF version from the web site.

You must login to the website to change your notification options. Visit the "Edit/Renew Membership" page on www.icelandics.org to update your contact information or change notification preferences. Your user name on www.icelandics.org is the full email address you provided when you applied for membership. If you have changed email addresses or are having any problems logging in or using the web site, contact us via email to webhelp@icelandics.org.

When you update your information on the website, your changes will be immediately recorded in the membership database. You will receive an email confirming your notification selections any time you make a change to these preferences. Members may change each of the notification options independently and may update their selections at any time.

Unless you login to the website and make a change, you will continue to receive information from the Congress via U.S. Mail. Your official notices and *Quarterly* magazines will be mailed to your address of record.

What is RSS?

RSS is a widely used method of broadcasting changes to frequently updated pages on the Internet. Sites with news, calendars, blogs, and other information which changes rapidly use this protocol to make information available to a "reader" which aggregates the information from many different sites for a user's convenience. MyYahoo and iGoogle are examples of "readers." By adding RSS content to your reader you can peruse updates from your custom collection of sites along with headlines from major news outlets.

How do I add an RSS feed to my My Yahoo or iGoogle?

The easiest way to add content to a "reader" is to start from the website that will provide the content. Start by clicking on the RSS icon or link on the page. Your browser will display the currently available data along with a list of readers. If you want to subscribe to the "feed" simply choose a reader from the list. Your browser will navigate to the selected reader and confirm your subscription.

How do I unsubscribe from an RSS feed?

Just delete the feed from your reader. In most cases, this takes a single mouse click followed by a confirmation to prevent accidents.

Are there any privacy concerns with RSS feeds?

No. There is no information collected on the "broadcasting" side of the RSS feed. Your reader needs to know which feeds you've subscribed to, but no personal information is collected or shared.

ROUNDPENNING AS A TRAINING TOOL

by Janice McDonald

The use of the round pen as a training tool has come a long way since the days of the old cowboy training methods, when a horse was simply chased around and around in a small enclosure until exhausted enough to “behave.” Yes, a round pen can be used to take the “fresh” off a horse, used similarly to a longe line. But also like the longe line, it can be used as a means of containing a horse in a smaller area to work on training issues. The key, however, is the application of pressure, and the finesse is in how much, and when, to apply pressure. Just as humans react differently to degrees of pressure perceived, so do horses react individually, often with no two reacting alike. One may, for instance, require only a stern warning glance from the boss mare in a herd, while others need a strong wallop with a well-aimed hoof or constant reminders from the herd leader to behave.

Here are some basic general guidelines for roundpenning success if you have a problem horse, a green horse, or simply a horse that needs exercising and a tune-up. The roundpen is a good place to work on matters as simple as teaching a horse to lower its head for haltering, teaching it to ground tie or stand quietly while being handled. Other roundpen basics are: listening to reining and seat/leg cues, transitioning gaits on command, keeping to the rail, sidepassing under saddle, lead changes, and even trick training.

Horse School

To begin, first walk your roundpen and make sure there are no sharp objects, rocks, debris, or enticing plant material that might lead to



distraction. Lead the horse in and immediately remove the halter and lead rope and hang them outside the rail, leaving the horse completely free. This is very important psychologically. It is good that the horse knows it is free and can decide whether it wants to be caught or not. Walk to the middle of the roundpen and study your feet, the sky, the ground—anything but the horse. Just let the horse be a horse for a few minutes. Let it smell around the area, leave its scent, explore a little. The horse will be a little curious about what’s up, and most horses will be a little wary if they are completely untrained.

When the horse seems comfortable, send it around the ring with the absolute least amount of pressure. This is vital. Horses have been known to hurt themselves trying to jump the railing or burst through the gates. It does no good whatsoever to frighten or startle the horse. What we are seeking here is to engage the thinking part of the horse’s brain and not the reactive, flight part of the brain or worse, the *fight* mentality. Sending the horse bolting around in fear

defeats the whole purpose, and you will be back to the old cowboy days of simply running them until they are too lathered and overheated to fight any longer and will submit out of fear and intimidation, learning nothing in the process.

I have found that the younger the horse, the more susceptible they are to pressure. I would not recommend a horse younger than age two be roundpenned at all, except to use the pen as a small enclosure to work on basic ground manners, such as preparing it to lead, desensitizing it to spooky objects, or teaching it to accept the farrier.

Once a horse is accustomed to roundpenning, it learns that the pen is a learning place, a place that isn’t frightening, a place that is *horse school* and not a place to frolic and fool around. They begin to look to you for direction, for the lesson of the day, and are ready to get down to business as soon as they enter.

Is That All You Want?

I usually begin by taking up the lead rope and halter and walking over to put it back on the horse, which usually provokes it to walk, or run, away. Which is fine by me. I just stand in the middle with the lead and halter and study my fingernails, while the horse races around like a nut and finally slows down, realizing it’s useless to expend energy running away. I walk toward it again, and off it goes. I don’t even apply pressure unless the horse offers disrespect by turning his back on me or grazing or starts calling to his friends in the paddock. At that point I will lift an arm, and if that doesn’t send the horse off again, I will either lazily swing the lead rope in its direction or sling it more forcefully at its rump.

Two basic rules are: 1) If the horse is looking at you and facing

you, immediately release all pressure. Turn away and don't even look at the horse. Just looking at a horse is perceived by it as pressure. 2) If the horse turns its back end to you, immediately send the horse off and keep it moving until it lowers its head, licks and chews, slows, or faces you, all signs that it is willing to renegotiate and figure out what exactly you want. Each time the horse faces you, just turn away (a release of pressure: remember horses learn from the release of all pressure, not from the application of pressure), circle casually around, and again approach with the lead.

I have not known this to take longer than a half hour even with the greenest horse. A horse with issues may take longer, but it isn't a step you should skip. Haltering a horse at liberty is the first step in any horse's training program. If a horse will not stand still and allow haltering, then training should not go any further until these steps are mastered.

Tommy Turvey, the "Equine Extremist" and trick trainer who has studied at the Spanish Riding School and has trained horses at Buckingham Palace, as well as at Arabian Nights in Orlando, Florida, says that the first step to every trick you train a horse, no matter how elaborate, is to teach the horse to stand still on command. This first step in the roundpen is teaching the horse just that—and as soon as the horse figures out what you want, it will often be relieved you are asking for something so simple.

Scarey Objects

The round pen is an excellent tool for desensitizing a horse to scarey objects. Once the horse stands quietly and accepts the halter, gently swing the end of the lead up against its feet. Do not hold the horse in any way. It is free to go at any time. If the

horse walks off, just follow casually, and when the horse stops, pet him, scratch its ears, talk to it in a friendly tone. Lift the end of the lead rope again and swing it against the horse's legs. When the horse stands, just keep on until you can swing that rope against its legs and it won't even flinch.

It is critical to keep on until the horse is practically taking a nap while you gently whap him on the legs with the rope, drop it over the back and pull it back slowly, flip it under the belly and through the legs to rub and pull it gently in and out. When the horse is completely relaxed with that, then it is time to move to the other side and start over.

Once you can swing a lead rope all over the horse, find a new object—a tarp or rolled-up feed sack. Proceed in the same manner, lightly rubbing

it all over the horse, dropping it over the back, lightly flapping it against the legs, while the horse strolls away from it, then stands quietly, perhaps flinching a little, then is practically napping. Then move to the other side.

Once a horse is readily accepting spooky objects in the round pen, it is time to open the gate. Most horses become so accustomed to responding to cues in the roundpen that it becomes second nature outside the roundpen, which is the ultimate goal. A roundpen should be a pleasant training tool, and if it ever becomes a place that a horse dreads to enter, then it might be a good time to look at your roundpenning method and ask, Is it the old cowboy way? Or is it a way which leads to a horse using the thinking part of the brain?

Janice McDonald and Monasi (aka Nasi) from Permanent Vacation. Says Janice, "I'm dressed in my bo-lero look because this photo was taken for a regional magazine. I don't usually dress up to work in the roundpen!"



May Lattanzio

SIGGI'S STORY

by Alys Culhane

Today I backed Siggi Halastajarni. I did the same thing that I did with Raudhetta, a year-and-a-half ago. I placed a bucket of hay under his nose, pulled the mounting block up next to him, and climbed up onto his back.

As he ate, I sat on him and reminisced. Like the lowly third child, Siggi's attributes have been overshadowed by those of his half-sibling, Raudhetta, and his herdmate, Tinni. Visitors have routinely focused on Raudi, who is good looking, and Tinni, who is dependable. Seldom have they ever noticed the lanky blue dun who hovers in the background.

I met Siggi on the day of his birth, May 12, 2004. He was, from the start, inquisitive, but not overly energetic. During his first few months of life he stood watching, as his half-sister Elsa raced around the pasture.

I didn't entertain thoughts of purchasing him until he was three months old. Raudi had picked me out; however, Siggi had no say in the matter. Instead, his dam, Roskova, decided that Pete and I should own him,

I remember this day quite well. It was a cool August evening. I was riding Ros, and Siggi was grazing at the distance. When the usually taciturn mare glanced over at her offspring and neighed, her message to me came through loud and clear—I then knew that she wanted Pete and me to buy him.

Pete agreed to this, since for some time we'd been looking for a companion for Raudi. Siggi's name was consistent with the Icelandic practice of naming one's horse after its physical and mental characteristics. At birth, Siggi had a zig-zag

stripe down his back, and a few white hairs on his forehead. This was why, in Pete's mind, naming him Ziggy Stardust was a no-brainer. Pete explained that rock star David Bowie's Ziggy Stardust was the man who fell from earth, and ours was the horse who fell from earth. And, as it turns out, like original Ziggy Stardust, ours was also kind of spacey. I, of course, insisted that we follow tradition by making sure that his USIHC registration be the Icelandic translation of the English version of Ziggy's name. And so Pete, who is a compulsive researcher, first found the direct translation looked in an English/Icelandic dictionary, and then verified his finding by running it by Gudmar Pétursson. When it was all said and done, the little horse's moniker was Siggi Halastarni fra Alaskastadir.

Gudmar approved. "It's a good name," he said, adding, "I might even give it to a horse of mine."

I bought Raudi when she was 11 months and Siggi when he was 4 months. What I subsequently learned is that buying a young horse is a gamble—like Forrest Gump's proverbial box of chocolates, you don't know what you're getting. A case in point: Raudi now has above average, and Siggi now has below average looks and conformation. As one observer put it, "Raudi has taken full advantage of all she's been given genetically and environmentally; however, Siggi has not. Now at three-and-a-half, he stands under in the rear, is cowhocked, and stands with his left rear hind leg at a 45 degree angle. He's one-gaited, and that gait is pace. I have now grown used to the look of horror on my veterinarian's and farrier's faces when they watch Siggi move. He flails at the air with both his front and rear legs. My own research has confirmed what my veterinarian

told me—that because he's throwing his legs outward as he moves, he's expending energy that would otherwise be used to propel him forwards. Siggi's conformation-related ungainliness, combined with his size (14 hands), and his color (blue dun), make most, when they see him, think that one or both of his parents must be a moose.

In all fairness to his breeders (Virginia and Ben Crawford), they've twice offered to buy him back from us. However, we've refused because Siggi's character-related strengths far outshine his conformation-related defects. Siggi, I long ago decided, is a very gentle soul whose job it is to teach me some very important truths. On our near-daily walks around our neighborhood loop (of which there have been many), he's forced me to stop and take in the view, which is something that I can't do with the more energetic Raudi. Once, after standing in the middle of the road for fifteen minutes, he remarked, "Isn't it great, just to be?" As I looked into his calm brown eyes, I knew that he was getting at an essential truth, which is that true peace comes about when one is living for the moment.

Siggi's more gentle nature has also endeared him to his herdmates. Raudi and Tinni, who are constantly at odds with one another, prefer to eat separately. Siggi, knowing this, will on one day eat with Tinni, and the next eat with Raudi.

My hope, that Siggi's conformation flaws would, as he grew, rectify themselves, did not come to be. If anything, they became worse. The question that his physical state of being then raised was, is he in pain? I secretly thought that if this were so, the best thing to do would be to have him put him out of his misery. There was only one way to find out, and that was to ask him. This was why,

last spring, I decided to consult with an animal communicator. My initial reasoning was that animal-human telepathy worked for author Jane Smiley, who in *A Day at the Races* wrote movingly about her experiences with her thoroughbreds and clairvoyants. And my secondary reasoning was that I'm a believer—my animals and I often have very interesting conversations. However, I'm willing to concede that, because I'm very attached to Siggi, I wouldn't hear what he might be trying to tell me, which was that he wanted to head on over to the Rainbow Bridge. This, then, was why I sought out an intermediary.

This past summer, while taking a clinic at the Icelandic Horse Farm, I met Nella Missnell. The grey haired, soft-spoken woman didn't, when we first talked, tell me that she was an animal communicator. Instead, I discovered this a few days later, after we had repeated conversations. I was not surprised to hear of this. I'd noticed that the horses she worked with responded well to the soft-spoken woman's touch.

A casual statement of Nella's, that she waited until the animals invited her to speak before engaging in conversations with them, was what prompted me to ask her if she'd tune into Siggi. Siggi, I thought, would very much enjoy conversing with this respectful, low-key individual. Nella lives in Ontario, Canada, and so she would not be able to meet Siggi face-to-face. In the past, I would have regarded this as an impediment. After all, much can be discerned by taking note of the flick of an ear or the stomping of a hoof. But I liked Nella so much that direct contact seemed to be immaterial.

My intuitive feelings proved to be dead on. On September 19, 2007, Nella conversed with Siggi, and afterwards, via email, passed on to me

what she observed. It is as follows:

"In the physical, Siggi is solid, balanced, and grounded. But Siggi is much larger, in that he is very connected with the universe. He feels at one with the stars and the night sky and he is so much more spiritually connected with the universe than he is here in the physical. He had the sense of just being and belonging.

"Physically, when Siggi runs he tries to stretch out the upper left leg. I do not know the proper name of that part of the horse. I am thinking left inner thigh just down from the tail. It seems to have been strained at one point.

"He appreciates the neck work you do for him and wants you to please continue. It relaxes him. He likes the connection with you, and feels that if he could carry you and through you, you and he would be even closer to the universe. He would

be proud to carry you, and when you ride him you will be as one. Siggi is there most of the time, so if he appears to be a bit spacey, he is very connected with the universe. Alys, I cannot put to paper well enough the special being your Siggi is."

Reading Nella's response brought tears to my eyes. Here it was, verified, what I'd always known, that Siggi is a special horse. Although it might be true, he did not make note of being in pain, so I presumed that it was not having an adverse affect on his life.

This response, as well as my own intuitive feelings about the matter, were what prompted me to continue to work with Siggi. If, say, he appears unable to handle the weight of a rider and gear, I'll attempt to train him to a cart. And if he appears unable to handle that, he'll be designated Raudi and Tinni's lifelong companion.



Sometimes you reach your breeding goals—and sometimes you don't. Siggi didn't live up to expectations, but has a happy home with Alys Culhane nonetheless.

WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE

by Alys Culhane

Off the grid. These words initially conjured up images of pancakes coming off the griddle. However, the subsequent images of living in a log cabin, with a wind generator and solar panels, sounded appealing. So I bought into what Pete and I now consider to be a sustainable lifestyle-in-progress.

Life here at Squalor Holler has repeatedly brought the clichéd

phrase “necessity is the mother of invention,” to mind. Pete and I are often asked, Why don’t you instead put your time and energy into getting on-the-grid? Our response is that we enjoy the challenges that complement this particular way of life. And, as importantly, we feel good about the fact that we are reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, which are a non-renewable resource.

Watering Horses

Who would have thunk it, that having horses would force us to be even more innovative than if, say, we had

just ourselves to worry about? Here, after some trial and error, is how we are now doing some horse-related tasks. We have a water collection system. The water runs off the sloped barn roof into gutters. The gutter water is stored in a 300-gallon container that we purchased from the now defunct Matanuska Maid Dairy. I give this directly to the three horses, pouring it into three water buckets that are attached to the outside of the barn.

We have occasionally run dry. We used to drive our truck to a nearby



Necessity—and horses—are the mother of invention. Off-grid, getting water to horses can be a challenge, especially when those horses require soaked hay.



There's still time for riding. Here, members of the Alaska Regional Club get ready to set out on a trail ride from Alys Culhane's place in Palmer. Alys rode Raudi, Bernie rode Undrun, and Ruth rode Curly Sue. (Curly has honorary Icelandic status because Bernie got her to tolt).

creek, where we filled 25-or-so five gallon buckets. To counter this, and our having to heat and haul pumped water to the horses, we put two Mat Maid tanks (the brethren and the cistern) in our kitchen addition. We still have to take water to the horses in the winter; however, we've eliminated creek-related fill-up. We also put gutters on our out-buildings, and have recycled plastic garbage cans under them.

Cooling Down

The answer to the question, How do I cool down the horses after a ride if I don't have a garden hose?, came to me last week as I was out on a ride. I found an abandoned kid's swimming pool, brought it home, and filled it with water. I now have the horses step into it, and I sponge them down.

The Lake Effect

Our paddock has an intentional slope, which has eliminated what I call "the lake effect." The runoff enters a spillway, a 20-foot-long by

3-foot-deep pit. Come breakup (late April or early May), I don my Extra Tuff rubber boats and "harvest" the waste-water. The 60-or-so buckets will, in June, July, and August, be used to wet down the garden plants and the compost. I also bucket the muck, which also goes into the garden. Lest you think that this is gross, I do it well before the temperatures climb.

Soaking Hay

I am most pleased with my most recent invention, the hay soaker. Tinni has heaves, which means that he must have dust-free hay. Up until recently, we've fed him hay "imported" from Washington, year-round. Seeing as this was cost-prohibitive, and that we had half a barn full of dusty hay, I sought an alternative. After looking at several designs for hay soakers on the Internet, I devised one of my own. I was given a 70-gallon water trough, which I filled with collection container water. I then drilled one-inch holes in three 5-gallon feed supplement

buckets. I filled each with dusty hay, and put them in the trough. They floated, so I anchored them with rock-filled buckets. I let them soak for six hours (long enough for the mold spores to swell up; they then go into the digestive tract, where they are harmless, not into the lungs). Then I lifted the hay-water filled buckets onto 2x4's, which I laid lengthwise across the trough. This allowed for drainage.

My soaker system enabled me both to feed previously dusty hay to all three horses, and to better monitor hay consumption. (I go by the formula 2.2 pounds of hay per 100 pounds of body weight.) Plus, the dust water is good for the garden. I have since thought that one might rig a similar soaker by using a 50-gallon barrel. And mesh hay nets would complement this particular system. Mine is a seasonal solution. This winter I'll go back to giving the expensive stuff, and cut costs by giving Tinni pelleted feed.

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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 starting spring 2007.

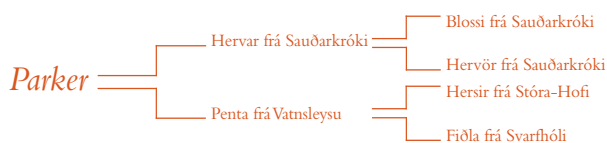
OFFSPRING:

Parker's offspring have already started proving themselves to be beautiful, high stepping, charismatic, good natured and elegant show/riding horses:

Kyrja frá Sólheimum is Parker's first shown offspring. He was only 8 years old when she was shown in 2006. Kyrja received 8.5 for Tolt, trot, gallop, spirit, and general impressions at five. She also scored 8.5 for neck-withers-shoulders and hooves, which shows that she inherited her father's beautiful well set neck and strong solid hoofs.

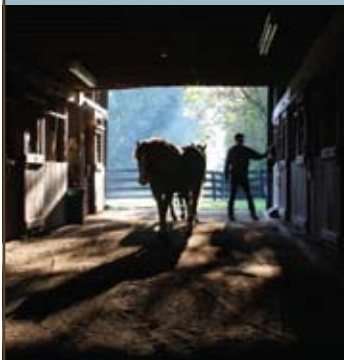
Further, Parker's daughter won the best of show at Blönduós in 2006. He also has some upcoming young stallions and mares that will be shown in 2007.

Conformation	
Head	8
Neck - Withers - Shoulders	8.5
Back & Croup	8.5
Proportions	9
Legs (quality)	7
Legs (joints)	8.5
Hooves	8.5
Mane & Tail	8
Conformation	8.31
Ridden Abilities	
Tölt	9
Trot	9.5
Pace	5
Gallop	9
Spirit	9
General Impression	9
Walk	8
Slow Tölt	9
Canter	9
Rideability	8.44
Total	8.39







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