

ISSUE ONE

THE

2012

ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y



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

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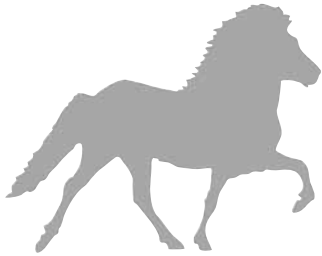
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THE
ICELANDIC
HORSE
QUARTERLY
Issue One 2012

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: "To the Wind - Sorvi" © 2012 Elena Fischer-Greenman, NY
Elena Fischer-Greenman lives in Meredith New York, across from West Wind Farm, an Icelandic horse farm owned and operated by Heleen Heyning. Elena has been photographing and painting these Icelandic horses for the past eight years. "To the Wind - Sorvi" shows Heleen's horse Sorvi enjoying the summer wind at the top of a hill overlooking the valley. Contact Elena at elenafisch@gmail.com. See more of her work at www.elenafischergreenman.blogspot.com.



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; foreign friends, \$70. For more information, see the Congress website at www.icelandics.org/join.

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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. Contact Ásta Covert: P.O. Box 1724, Santa Ynez, CA 93460; 866-929-0009; 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, and learn more about FEIF and the USIHC.

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YOUTH CUP

Youth riders Ayla Green, Madison Prestine, and Quinn Thomashow will represent the USIHC at the 2012 FEIF Youth Cup, to be held in Verden, Germany, from July 7-15. The country leader will be Jasmine Ho and the team leader, Perry Ostrow. The 2012 USIHC try-out videos were scored by FEIF international judge Thorgeir Gudlaugsson; riders needed to score a 4.5 or better in both their programs to qualify.

The FEIF Youth Cup is a seven-day competition for riders aged 14-17, held every other year in Europe. Riders are formed into international teams after four days of training with prominent Icelandic horse trainers.

According to the USIHC Youth Committee, Amelie Brewster's family farm in Germany (45 minutes from the Youth Cup location) has offered to help locate horses for the USIHC team, and the team members and country leader have been invited to train at the farm for five or six days before the start of the competition.

For more information, see <http://www.icelandics.org/youth/youthcup2012.php>.

#2 IN TOLT!

Ásta Covert ranked #2 in the world in Tolt (T1) competition after a triple-header FEIF World Ranking Show in October 2011.

The California Icelandic Association held the competition at the new 250-meter track at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. "It was a great success," says Ásta, who was also an organizer of the show, "and everyone did very well." Four judges came from Europe and one from the U.S. They were: Thorgeir Gudlaugsson (NL), Nicolai Thye (DK), Florian Schneider (DE), Rune Svendsen (NO), and Will Covert (US). Doug Smith was the IceTest guru for the show, keeping track of the scores. The announcer was Henning Drath of Germany, who announced at the 2011 World Championships. Henning blogged about the show on his website isibless.de. You can see videos from the event there.

The show started on Friday and had preliminary rounds in all of the World Ranking classes (T1, T2, T3, T4, V1, V2,



Quinn Thomashow riding Askur fra Austurkoti in her video tryout for the FEIF Youth Cup. Photo by Jana Meyer.

F1, F2, PP1, P2), along with the intermediate classes (T5 and V3). On Saturday and Sunday, all the World Ranking classes were offered again as preliminary classes, in addition to Youth Classes, Novice Classes, Pleasure Classes, Beginner Classes, Green Classes, and Intermediate classes. "We really thought this system offered something for everyone," says Ásta. (For more on the "triple-header" World Ranking show idea, see the story "The Triple Header" in this issue.)

Nine riders achieved World Ranking status by the end of the weekend. Anne-Marie Martin ranks now #27 in the world in Loose Rein Tolt (T2) and Ásta Covert now ranks #2 in Tolt (T1), #5 in fourgait (V1), and #2 in fourgait combination (C4). Other riders who ranked were Cait Nold, Katrin Sheehan, Christina Granados, Madison Prestine, Rachel Ng, Morgan Venable, and Lucy Nold.

The full results are posted on the USIHC website. For the FEIF World Ranking list, check out the FEIF website at www.feif.org. Click on "World Ranking" for more info on the standing in individual classes.

The next triple-header World Ranking shows are scheduled for May 11-13

in California and June 8-10 in Vermont. Check the USIHC events calendar at www.icelandics.org for more information.

SPORT WINNERS

The USIHC Sport Committee has announced the 2011 Sport National Ranking Winners. With their events and top scores, they are:

- F1 Gudmar Thór Pétursson 7.03
- F2 Anne-Marie Martin 5.95
- T1 Ásta D. Bjarnadóttir-Covert 8.89
- T2 Anne-Marie Martin 7.42
- T3 Lucy Nold 7.20
- T4 Morgan Venable 5.90
- T5 Dominic Ng 6.22
- T6 Kari Pietsch-Wangard 5.33
- T7 Laurie Prestine 5.20
- T8 Rachel Ng 6.90
- V1 Ásta D. Bjarnadóttir-Covert 7.97
- V2 Lucy Nold 6.70
- V3 Dominic Ng 6.20
- V5 Ellen Reidy 5.40
- V6 Rachel Ng 7.15



The V3 class finalists: Judge Will Covert with the winner Dominic Ng and Byr frá Enni, Willy Ma and Thór frá Prestsbakka, and Kathy Sierra and Draumur from Destiny Farms. Photo by Dan Robertson.

BREEDING PRIZE

The 2011 Anne Elwell Breeding Award goes to Pamela Ann Merlo for the mare Timbiltá from Destiny Farms. Timbiltá is owned by Kathy Love and was shown at the Winterhorse Park evaluation by Gudmar Pétursson. She scored 8.04 for conformation, 8.12 for gaits, and 8.09 overall. This award for the highest-judged domestic-bred horse of the year is coordinated by the USIHC Breeding Committee.

BREEDING SHOW

The NEIHC is sponsoring a USIHC-sanctioned breeding show at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY on June 1-3. Judges will be Barbara Frische and Herdis Reynisdóttir. Barbara and a reproduction veterinarian from Cornell University will give a seminar on Friday at 4 p.m. As of late January, 21 horses were scheduled for full evaluation, with another six as conformation only.

Breeding shows provide an excellent educational opportunity for all Icelandic horse owners. To see what they're like, watch the general video on evaluations by Stan Hirson at Hestakaup.com and his coverage of the 2006 Mill Farm evaluation: [\[evaluations/\]\(http://www.hestakaup.com/mill-farm-evaluations-2006/\) and \[www.hestakaup.com/mill-farm-evaluations-2006/\]\(http://www.hestakaup.com/mill-farm-evaluations-2006/\).](http://www.hestakaup.com/breed-</p>
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For more information on the 2012 NEIHC evaluations, contact Martina Gates (martinagates@mac.com or 631-421-2290) or check the NEIHC website at www.neihc.com.

ELECTION RESULTS

The final results of the 2011 USIHC Board of Directors election are: Ásta Covert (176

votes); Barbara Frische (175); Kari Pietsch Wangard (166); Sam Castleman (94). The rate of return was 43 percent. Barbara will take Sam's seat effective January 1, 2012. The Board of Directors thanks all the members who voted, and especially the Election Committee: Pamela Nolf (Chair), Wanda Evans, and Lisa McKeen.

PRP IS FREE!

The Board has decided to repeal the Pleasure Rider Program fee effective immediately. Anyone who paid for 2012 will receive a refund. In the Pleasure Rider Program, members compete against each other within their region and age group. Prizes include embroidered badges, medals, T-shirts, riding vests and jackets, stirrups, and bridles. Prizes are courtesy of Tolt Tack. Winners of the 2011 awards will be featured in the next issue of the Quarterly. For more information, see www.icelandics.org/prp.php.

Also, if you change your email address in mid-year, please let the Congress know. Pleasure Riding Committee Chair Ellen Wilson sends several emails throughout the year, and she wants to make sure you receive each one.

EASIER TO SELL A HORSE

The Breeding Committee has designed a new process and supporting form to make it easier to transfer the ownership of a



Top riders in class VI at the CIA World Ranking Show: Asta Covert and Dynjandi frá Dalvík, Christina Granados and Hroftur from Hobby Horse, Madison Prestine and Straumur frá Enni, Katrin Sheehan and Thór frá Litlu-Sandvík and Rachel Ng and Kaliber frá Lækjarbotnum. Photo by Dan Robertson



The T1 class finalists and judges: The winner Asta Covert and Dynjandi frá Dalvík, Anne-Marie Martin and Bragi frá Hólum, Christina Granados and Hroftur from Hobby Horse, Madison Prestine and Straumur frá Enni, Katrin Sheehan and Thór frá Litlu-Sandvík and Rachel Ng and Kaliber frá Lækjarbotnum. The judges in front (from left) Will Covert, Nicolai Thye, head judge Thorgeir Gudlaugsson, Rune Svendsen, and Florian Schneider. Photo by Dan Robertson.

horse. It is now possible to obtain the necessary signatures to transfer horse ownership without having to mail the Certificate of Registration back and forth. The buyer can download the new Ownership Transfer form, send the completed form to the seller, who attaches the completed Certificate of Registration and mails both to the Registrar. The new form and all other Registry-related forms can be found on the Congress website at <http://www.icelandics.org/regforms.php>.

FREE TO BUYERS

Remember that if you sell an Icelandic horse to someone who is not a member of the USIHC, we will happily send that person a free copy of The Icelandic Horse Quarterly to introduce him or her to the organization, no strings attached. Just fill out the form on the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org/magRequest.php.

STUDY GUIDE

The Riding Badge Program study guide for the first level has been completed and used very successfully in a trial seminar in Canada. Gloria Verecchio, DVM edited the material and is now verifying its compliance with the study questions provided on the USIHC website. When this is done and the material has been accepted by

the USIHC Education Committee, it will be submitted to the USIHC Board. Selections will then be published in the Quarterly, as well as links for reading it on the website. Level One of the Riding Badge Program addresses many concerns about the care and keeping of Icelandic horses.

GREAT SEMINAR

A successful FEIF Trainer Level 1 & 2 seminar was held at Katrin Sheehan's Creekside Farm in Georgia November 12-19. The clinician was Nicole Kempf. All five participants passed, three at Level 1 and two at Level 2. The course will be repeated in November 2012. For more information, see the guidelines for trainer seminars on the USIHC website at <http://www.icelandics.org/Trainers/seminar.php>.

NEW PAYMENT OPTION

There are now three ways to pay your annual Congress dues: PayPal Subscription (new), PayPal one-time payment, or by check. The Congress has accepted PayPal one-time payments for several years. Beginning with the 2012 renewal season, we have added PayPal Subscriptions as a third payment option. With this option, you can arrange your payment once and PayPal will take care of renewing your

membership annually. You never have to think about it again. PayPal will continue to make the annual payments from your designated funding source until you cancel the process. In coordination with this option, all Congress memberships now expire on their anniversary, not on January 1 of the following year as previously.

HOW TO PRONOUNCE IT

Are you pronouncing your horse's name correctly? You can now check it on WorldFengur. Access to the WorldFengur database is a benefit of your USIHC membership, but you have to activate it each year through the USIHC website. (Click on "WorldFengur Access" under the "Membership" tab; expect the process to take 24 hours, since a USIHC volunteer has to manually enter your email address.) After you have activated your WorldFengur access, go to www.worldfengur.com and type in your horse's name. Click on the URL (the name of your horse shows up in blue) and you can hear how it is pronounced. If you cannot find your own horse, look for another horse with the same first name. Click on the name and hear it spoken by an Icelander.

ANNUAL MEETINGS?

Last year the USIHC Board decided to change from conducting a traditional Annual Meeting to holding multiple meetings during the year at various locations around the country in conjunction with well-attended Icelandic-horse events.

In 2012 we plan to schedule two of these General Meetings. We will select events expected to draw at least 30 members as participants and spectators, such as sanctioned shows, breeding evaluations, Regional Club activities, etc. Meetings will be in different parts of the country at different times of the year.

At least three Board members will be present at each meeting, and Board members are strongly encouraged to attend a meeting out of their usual area. The Board members in attendance will be familiar with the officer and committee reports of those not attending, so as to be able to answer questions about them.

The events chosen will be posted on



Timbilta from Destiny Farms, shown here ridden by Gudmar Petursson at a 2010 evaluation, won the 2011 Anne Elwell Award for highest judged domestic-bred horse of the year. Photo by Martina Gates.

the website at least 60 days in advance so that members have plenty of time to plan to attend. The time and location of the meeting will be worked out in advance with the event organizer so that everyone can participate in the discussion.

The first of these meetings will be held in conjunction with the triple-Header World Ranking Show to be held May 11-13 at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA.

At the beginning of each year (Feb. 1, 2012 and January 15 in succeeding years) officer and committee reports will go up on the website for members to review. These reports will present what has been done during the preceding year and plans for ongoing and future projects.

The purpose of this change is to expand the opportunity of members in different parts of the country to attend a

meeting at which the activities, past, present, and future, of the organization can be discussed with the Board. As a result the Board hopes to get a better sense of what's going on around the country, while members will have an opportunity to question what Board members and committees do and why.

The awards and prizes that have been a part of the Annual Meeting in the past will be announced early in the year and featured in the Quarterly.

BOARD MEETINGS

The USIHC Board of Directors met on October 25, December 6, and January 18. Minutes of the meetings can be found on the USIHC website, www.icelandics.org, under the tab "The Congress."

In addition to the items already

reported in this issue's News section, two committees have been disbanded: In October, the Membership Committee, following Kathy Lockerbie's resignation as chair; and in January, the Rescue Committee, on the recommendation of chair Sara Lyter.

In December, Doug Smith reported on his attendance at the FEIF IceTest Software Conference in Düsseldorf, Germany. Plans for the next generation of the new 10-year-old software were discussed.



A scene from the November 2011 FEIF Trainer Seminar at Creekside Farm in Georgia. Jumping is part of the level 2 and level 3 FEIF trainer courses, so to warm up, the horses were asked to free jump. "It is a wonderful exercise for them to change up the training," says Katrin Sheehan. The FEIF Trainer Seminar will be repeated in November 2012. Photo by Katrin Sheehan.

Celeste Eversole and her horse Minning enjoying a pleasure ride in the Cascade Mountain Range.



2011 PRP SCOREBOARD

DIVISION AWARDS:

Allstars

1. Nancy Wines-DeWan 451 hours

Youth—East

1. Caleigh Anderson 624

Youth—West

1. Alex Venable 625

Central Mountain

1. Kydee Sheetz 656

2. Cindy Nadler 538

3. Amber Parry 395

East

1. Kathy Haulbrook 309

2. Ellen Wilson 253

3. Walter Davis 134

Western Pacific

1. Alys Culhane 1092

2. Jan Gray 491

REGIONAL CLUB AWARD

Flugnir

HOUR AWARDS:

2500 Hour

Cindy Nadler

1000 Hour

Linda McLaughlin

Jan Gray

Judy Slayton

Lori Birge

500 Hour

Ellen Wilson

100 Hour

Anne Vervaet

Jackie Alschuler

Kathy Haulbrook

Lori Lessley

Helen Lessley

Linda Eddy

Sandie Weaver



BIOMECHANICS

The presentation by Professor Hilary Clayton of Michigan State University at the 2011 FEIF Education Seminar can now be downloaded from the FEIF website at http://www.feiffengur.com/documents/Hilary_Clayton.pdf. In "Biomechanical Research with Icelandic Horses," Clayton discusses her laboratory's approach to gait analysis. For instance, under the heading "Rhythm," she notes, "Presence/absence of suspension phase(s) are related to the strategies used to reduce energy expenditure." While under "Gait Stability" (with a nice photo of Icelandic horses standing in a very tussocky field), she writes, "Lack of suspension phases and having more limbs on the ground gives a larger and more stable base of support."

SPORT JUDGES SEMINAR

The 2012 FEIF Sport Judges Seminar is scheduled for April 13-14, 2012, in Mosfellsbær, Iceland. The themes of the seminar are: How to evaluate the quality of riding (with demonstrations and practical work), Judging ethics, Mouth injuries (presentation of data), and the new setup of the guidelines. The seminar is open for FEIF licensed international sport judges and national sport judges.

YOUTH PLANS

The FEIF Youth Committee met in Haarlem, NL, in November and discussed plans for a busy summer. The FEIF Youth Trekking Tour will take place in Sweden from June 18-21, 2012. The 2012 FEIF Youth Cup will be held July 7-15 in Verden, Germany. A FEIF Youth Icelandic Camp will also take place next summer. About 20 youngsters can participate in this camp, which focuses on the Icelandic lifestyle and riding traditions. It will consist of a long riding trip as well as sightseeing and getting to know more about Iceland.

FEIF COMMITTEES

The 2011 FEIF Committee Meetings took place October 28-30, 2011 in Haarlem, NL. The key issue was the development of a common FEIF rule book. A revised draft was presented at the FEIF Conference 2012, held March 2-4 in Malmö, Sweden, for further discussion. The Dutch horse physiotherapist Guy Blom gave an interesting presentation on the topic of hypermobility and hyperflexion which will influence and be incorporated into our rules. Further expert presentations and input from scientific studies in various areas are planned. For instance, a scientific survey on hoofs and shoeing will be performed in 2012 by the University of Zürich.

HYPERFLEXION

For the past three years, FEIF has discussed the issue of hyperflexion or Rollkur. Since the welfare of the horse is one of FEIF's most important concerns, FEIF has started a process of asking for recommendations from veterinarians, physiotherapists, and other experts, the results of which will be integrated in the revised FEIF rulebook. Hyperflexion is not an acceptable method in training, presenting, or showing Icelandic horses. Judges and Ring Stewards are required to act upon all manner of violent behavior towards the horse. FEIF encourages instructors to promote an understanding of the anatomical, physiological, and mental aspects of hyperflexion. This understanding should include the use of bending, flexing, and extension in ways that advance the training of the horse, improve riding skills, and promote the welfare of the horse.

HARMONY

The FEIF Sport Committee declared 2012 the Year of Good and Harmonious Riding. This initiative is supported by the Board of FEIF. In 2012, all judges at sport events and breeding shows will be asked to point out riders for good and harmonious riding. The names of these riders will be published on the FEIF website.

REGIONAL UPDATES



Members of the Cascade Club enjoying their annual beach ride.

ALASKA

Bernie Willis writes: The Alaska Icelandic Horse Association has been very active this past summer. Three educational opportunities were organized, as well as some real adventure rides. We took advantage of the skills of Bill Burke from Oregon and Alex Pregitzer of Michigan at the same clinic. Having two teachers at the same time offered some special insight into riding. We followed the 20-minute routine, but staggered the times with a 10-minute change time in between. The combination of Bill and Alex gave us different perspectives on reaching our goals. Bill, the expert on equitation, emphasized classical riding, while Alex translated that to working the Icelandic gaits on a small training oval. With one teacher working primarily with the rider and the other primarily with the horse we got “the whole deal” all in one setting.

At one event Bill spent a couple days with our Icelandic riders on the Kenai Peninsula about a five-hour drive to the south. On the Kenai we have several new members who are also new to horses. Bill’s reputation as a classical riding instructor also brought several riders with three-gaited horses to the clinic. Though these folk were not members of our club

they were welcomed to the event. They helped spread the costs, as well as reminding us of the reasons we enjoy our breed so much.

Outside of the “riding school,” some of our members took a huge step into the wilderness on horseback. In the last issue of the *Quarterly* there was an article describing the adventures of Alys Culhane and Pete Praetorius riding in Colorado. In Alaska some of our members are participating with the Back Country

Horsemen’s Association. This group had been asked to develop equestrian trails in a non-motorized wilderness area about 60 miles north of Anchorage. The basis for the trail system is an old wagon road originally built by a Mr. Carle to freight equipment into the Hatcher Pass mining area in the early 1900s. Some of the trail can be identified by lines of certain kinds of trees that grow in disturbed soil. In a few places there are old wagon ruts. One section still has a corduroy base. The re-



Linda and Carol from the Cascade Club, bundled up for the windy beach ride.



The Flugnir "Trailblazers," from left to right: Sally Ward, Lori Cretney, Roger Haab, Ron Rose, Roberta Rose, Elizabeth Everson, Steinar Sigurbjornsson, Daniel Riva, Barbara Riva, Kathleen Haab, and Stephanie Astrin. Missing from the photo are Nick Cook, Dorothy Crockett, Terri Gessell,

discovery of the old road has been led by our member Dick Stoffel on his Icelandic horse, Karmen. Kaylene Johnson, a member of the BCH of Alaska, wrote up one of the adventures with Dick for our local paper. Her report appears in this issue of the Quarterly.

CASCADE CLUB

Karen Brotzman writes: October was a busy month for club members. The Ann-Christin Kloth clinic held at Red Feather was full and the participants were extremely pleased with the clinic and their personal results. This clinic had a different twist: Attendees were invited to bring their horse the weekend prior to the clinic, for Ann to get to know it and determine focus areas. Not everyone took advantage of this opportunity, but those who did thought it worthwhile.

One of our most popular events was also held in October: The Beach Ride Weekend at Sea Horse Acres in Longbeach, WA. The first day was a bit rainy, but Sunday was gorgeous! That is a treat in October. We enjoyed lots of good food, great company, and wonderful rides. It was especially good to see Peggy Dulany (Pegasus) at the beach.

Since she and John moved to the Oregon interior, we haven't seen them as often as we would like. I would like to thank Carol Burkhardt for the loan of Koki (Kveikur) for a ride on Sunday. And, a huge thank you to Wanda Evans, who is responsible for me once again having a horse I can

actually ride!

Finally, Lori Birge, Lisa Roland, and others decorated their horses and themselves for the annual Starlight Parade in The Dalles, OR the Friday after Thanksgiving. It's wonderful to see the Icelandics out and about, especially in Cowboy Country!

Our Winter Meeting, our primary planning meeting for 2012, was scheduled for Jan 7. We have plans to host a breed booth and demos at the NW Equine show in March, and possibly at the February Clark County, WA State Expo. A core group of riders have been practicing a drill pattern for the past several months and we will again focus on trade shows, etc. We also hope to plan something new this summer, a joint event with our sister regional club in WA/BC.

FLUGNIR ICELANDICS

Lori Cretney writes: Eighteen riders, including our guest, Icelandic horse trainer Steinar Sigurbjornsson, embarked on a fun journey over the weekend of November 4-6. We arrived just before lunch at Woodside Ranch, one of the oldest guest ranches, started in the 1850s in Mauston, WI. Our first duty was getting the horses settled in. The ranch has two good-sized



Trainer Steinar Sigurbjornsson was the Flugnir Club's guest at the ranch. He gave an impromptu seminar on horse massage, demonstrating here on helping Gimur relax at the poll.



Icelandic horses like dude ranches too—especially when they get leftover pancakes.

paddocks available for our Icelandics, which allowed us to separate the mares and geldings. The one stallion that came was able to use the outdoor round pen. Some of us started right away preparing lunch by the trailers. Hot dogs were cooked on a small grill and baked beans heated on a propane hot plate. Our group brought appetizers, salads, and desserts to pass around. We had fun sitting around the grill in our lawn chairs, watching our horses' reactions to the buffalo herd in the pasture nearby.

After lunch we took the first 2011 ride around Woodside. The horses were excited and zipped along the trails. We traveled through woods into some open prairie areas. It was a fun ride for a warm November afternoon. When we came back, it was time to check in. Some folks opted to stay in the ranch house, while others stayed in cabins set in the woods. (One "cabin" had two spacious living rooms and four bedrooms, two of which had private baths.) At the sound of the dinner bell we gathered for a delicious fish fry. We were offered a hayride or a movie later in the evening. However, these Woodside trail blazers already had plans: We all got into our pajamas and headed for the Trading Post, a cocktail

bar with saddles as barstools, where we played some amusing games. Saturday morning came too early for some of us.

The brisk air woke us up and we quickly got our horses ready for the breakfast ride. Following the smell of the bacon we arrived at the breakfast site. We untacked our horses in a paddock and gathered around the breakfast grill for

potatoes, pancakes, French toast, eggs, sausage, and bacon. Afterward we went for a short ride, looping around a portion of the Woodside trails. It brought us back early enough to catch a Woodside employee feeding the buffalo. Some of us took only a short break and decided to go riding again. After all, Woodside Ranch consists of 1,200 acres and offers a beautiful view of the Lemonweir River Valley. Others elected to stay for lunch (ham and macaroni and cheese). Woodside Ranch offers great food. There are also several activities, such as archery, nature trails, basketball, volleyball, movies, and a fitness center.

Late in the afternoon we tacked up again for a ride into the "Black Forest." Bob, our tour guide, told us about the haunted house. Apparently, someone stole from Al Capone. Some of Al Capone's men came and shot up the house where this individual was hiding, but he survived. We could see the bullet holes in the house. Continuing through the "Black Forest" we could smell the scent of pine. We came upon a couple of ponds. It was very peaceful.

We heard the dinner bell as we were riding back. Saturday night was a cookout on the hillside: buffalo burgers, hamburgers, or brats. Afterwards, we went to one



FIRC riders Rich Moore, Suzi McGraw, Laura Colicchio, and Tony Colicchio performing at a Gaited Horse Festival in Mt. Airy, Maryland in October 2011. Notice how all the horses are in step!



FIRC riders Sverrir Bjartmarz, Rich Moore, Tony Colicchio, Laura Colicchio, and Megan Milloy (hidden) perform at a horse festival at the Frying Pan Farm Park in northern Virginia in December

of the cabins to enjoy a fire in the fire-place until the wee hours of the night.

Sunday morning was warm. Once again we tacked up for the breakfast ride and followed the smell of bacon. Some of us offered our horses pancakes. Most of the them turned the pancakes down, though three of them could not get enough. After breakfast we went on a longer trail ride. On this ride we got to see deer, one of which was an eight-point buck.

After the trail ride we all met in the game room for a horse massage therapy session with Steinar Sigurbjornsson. We learned about working the poll of the horse, allowing the rider to have more control. According to Steinar we tend to overanalyze, which results in us pulling more on the horse. We need to correct our mindset so that the horse is not bracing its poll and jaw. Steinar showed us how to massage a horse's poll getting the horse to relax. He also talked about the shoulders needing to be free on the horse to allow movement. If the horse is holding tension, usually the owner is holding tension in the same area. To open the shoulder one must work with

the horse by using lateral flexion. Lastly, Steinar discussed three books on massaging horses. Steinar volunteered his time for the massage therapy session, which was very educational and helped us learn more about our horses and improve their movement.

After a lunch of fried chicken, we headed back home. If you ask any of the Woodside trail blazers, they highly recommend going to Woodside. Said Roberta Rose, "Extensive trail system, laid out

so you cannot get lost and can explore on your own. Enjoyed the breakfast ride especially." Said Deborah Thiele, "Trailer parking was good and Woodside staff was very friendly. Easy getting in for trailers and good for getting out. Breakfast ride was the best." Added Ron Rose, "Enjoyed trails and nice to be with people. It was a fun weekend—fun to be in a different place and good weather." Said Roger Haab, "Everything—being away from everything. Unfortunately we still had cell phone reception. Enjoyed the breakfast ride."

Please join us at Woodside for 2012 for another adventure. All are welcome. Enjoy the experience of rustling leaves under horses' thundering hooves, the peacefulness of nature, and magnificent trails. To view 2012 Flugnir events and other Woodside photos from our new gallery, visit the new website at <http://www.Flugnir.org>.

FRIDA ICELANDIC RIDING CLUB (FIRC)

Rich Moore writes: FIRC members did a lot of riding during the spring, summer, and fall of 2011. We are grateful to the members who sponsored events such as trail rides, clinics, and breed demonstrations.

Tony and Laura Colicchio hosted two FIRC rides. An annual spring ride known as the Wisteria Ride was well attended. Riders rode through Rosaryville State Park in Upper Marlboro, MD and got to



Cindy Dunne and Bruce Goddard display the new NEIHC banner. Photo by Amy Goddard.

see the beautiful blooming purple wisteria that had taken over part of the park and that hung like grapevines high from the tree tops. Riders also participated in several drill team maneuvers in an adjacent field and rode as pairs around the perimeter of the field at a vigorous trot. After this three-hour ride, members got together at a neighborhood pub known as Grizzly's and had lunch and refreshments. A good time was had by all.

The second FIRC trail ride was dubbed the Spooks and Gobbler's Ride and was held shortly after Halloween. Riders rode through scenic Rosaryville State Park once again, bending and weaving through the glorious trails of gold and red, as the fall leaves were at their peak. The ride was a good mixture of all four gaits, including a brisk gallop up a long hill and some pairs riding as well. After this three-hour ride, everyone indulged in a barbecue at Tony and Laura's house while the horses ran and played in the Colicchio's backyard adjacent to the park.

In addition to scheduled rides, club members frequently got together to ride at such places as the Manassas National Battlefield Park with its 50 miles of prime equestrian trails.

Susan Milloy organized a clinic with Steinar Sigurbjornsson in the spring and a second one with Gudmar Petursson in the fall. Both were held at Rich and Pat Moore's Kilmurray Farm in Catharpin, VA near the Manassas Battlefield. Both clinics were well attended by club members and guests. Steinar and Gudmar were top clinicians, and it was a treat to all participants to have them in the club area.

In April 2011, Marilyn Tully and Charlotte Reilly organized a clinic with Katrin Sheehan at Marilyn's Fox Den Farm in Chadds Ford, PA. This clinic also went well.

In October and December, club members put on several demonstrations. In October, Suzi McGraw and Sandi Newkirk organized the FIRC contingent at a gaited horse festival in Mt. Airy, MD. Club members did an impromptu drill team performance at the trot that somehow went off very well. Megan Milloy then did a great solo demonstration of



Patrice Passaro enjoys a break in the sun with her mare Brá at the NEIHC annual Turkey Tolt ride. Photo by Anne Owen.

trot and canter/gallop. We were told that the Icelandics were the hit of the show. In December, club members repeated the demonstration before several hundred spectators at a horse exhibit at the 50th anniversary of Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon, VA, the prime equestrian facility in Fairfax County. Pat Moore organized the FIRC participation. Again, the riders did very well and got lots of compliments from the audience and the organizers.

The club is looking forward to sponsoring its first USIHC-sanctioned show on May 19-20, 2012 at Frying Pan Farm Park. The park is not far from Dulles International Airport and about 20 miles west of Washington, DC. We will be fortunate to have Will Covert as the judge. The show will use both an indoor and outdoor arena, plus a straight-away for pace. The horses will be housed in new indoor stalls with all the amenities. Please mark your calendars and help us celebrate our tenth anniversary as a club! Pat Moore is the show manager and will be sending out information in the coming months.

KLETTAFJALLA

Karen Olson-Fields writes: This time of year our club has little activity. Most of us are "in" for the winter and stay closer to home with our Icelandic horses. Travel in snow and icy conditions, especially through the mountain passes, is travel one may wish to avoid in the Rocky Mountain region.

The club board continues to meet monthly via teleconference. One of the board's priorities is to choose and begin to plan at least one club event for 2012. Since club members are spread far and wide, it can be tricky to find something central and interesting to the majority. One thought is to combine a trail-riding event and a learning seminar. Our members and any others who have interest, stay posted and don't forget the club website. We all hope to have a big turnout this summer at our club event as well as private events in our areas.



St Skutla Club member Steven Barber and Hrókur frá Hlemmiskeidi-1A having fun out on the trails. Photo by Alyssa Ki.

NORTHEAST ICELANDIC HORSE CLUB (NEIHC)

Amy Goddard writes: Fall and early winter weather has been quite strange so far, here in the northeast. A very early snowstorm in late October caused many of us to cancel weekend plans for Halloween and ACTHA rides.

On October 28th, Martina Gates's horses Klerkur frá Votmúla 1 and Dagfari frá Blönduósi (aka "Cookie") visited New York City's Times Square to appear on Good Morning America. The horses helped promote Richard Wiese's Born to Explore adventure program featuring Iceland, which aired on ABC on Saturday, October 29. See "In the News" in this issue of the Quarterly.

Cindy Dunne designed an exciting NEIHC banner, using the club logo (which she designed) along with one of Martina Gates's photographs. The banner

made its debut at the USIHC/NEIHC booth at Equine Affaire in Springfield, MA November 10–14. Icelandics were well-represented in several events: Gudmar Petursson taught a seminar on "Lightness in Gaited Riding" and opened the Fantasia shows each night, and Susan Peters's Silver Maple Farm demo team presented three breed demos. Again, see "In the News" in this issue of the Quarterly.

Nicki Esdorn writes: "Ten little Indians showed up for Turkey Tolt 2011 at Rockefeller State Park Preserve on Saturday, November 26. We deserved a sunny balmy day after last year's icy ride—and after the killer snow on Halloween—and we got it! It was a wonderful and harmonious ride, we tolled and cantered and also walked a lot and chatted to give our fuzzy horses a break. We had oldsters and youngsters and debutantes. The colorful

group got a lot of smiles from the people walking in the park. Hope to see everyone and then some at Bunny Hop in the spring."

Jenny Tuthill writes: "The Woodstock all-horse Wassail Parade is part of an annual three-day Wassail Weekend held in Woodstock, VT. This celebration has been held for the past 26 years, featuring numerous events throughout the weekend. All the shops, homes, churches, and other buildings in the Woodstock town center are beautifully decorated. On Saturday, December 10, by noon, there were a few thousand people gathered to watch the horses pass through town. There are usually 40–50 horses participating in the parade; this year there were 40 and 10 were Icelandics! A six-horse group from Susan Peters's Silver Maple Farm won the prize for best group overall. My two Icelandics, Stefnir frá Nyjabae and Gydja from Mill Farm were costumed in a medieval/Jan Brett theme. Two other Icelandics participated as individual entrants. For a view of the December 2011 parade, go to: <http://www.thevermontstandard.com/2011/12/video-woodstocks-wassail-parade/>."

The NEIHC will be hosting FEIF breeding evaluations on June 2–3 at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY. Please contact Martina Gates for more information by e-mail (martina.gates@mac.com) or phone (631-662-7755).

The NEIHC annual meeting and Thorrablot are scheduled for Saturday, March 3. NEIHC members are encouraged to join the NEIHC Yahoo mail group, check our website (neihc.com) and our Facebook page for news and upcoming events. Or contact club president, Brian Puntin by phone (413-528-3003) or e-mail (bpuntin@bcn.net).

ST SKUTLA CLUB

Andrea Barber writes: As the calendar is turning 2012, the members of the Saint Skutla Club are finally seeing real winter weather after an incredibly mild fall. The unusual weather allowed for a lot longer autumn riding season than normal. Several members of the club took full advantage of the spectacular weather, enjoying two late fall trail rides.

One group went on a wonderful trail ride in November at the Finger Lakes National Forest. The Forest lies between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes in New York and is composed of over 16,000 acres and 30 miles of trails which traverse gorges, ravines, pastures, and woodlands. There are also areas for horse camping. The group rode the Backbone Trail, which runs about 5.5 miles one way and is a relatively flat, primitive trail through shrublands, pastures, old roads, and many old homestead sites.

Stephanie Sher rode Ögri frá Saudárkróki, Susan Verberg rode Greni from Blasted Rock, Deb Callaway rode Flygill from Vesturbaer, Cordy Sullivan rode Lysingur frá Eyjólfstöðum, and Gail Ingram rode Snerra frá Ketu.

The first part of the terrain was forested, muddy, rocky, and steep in places with many stream crossings. The rest of the ride was through pastures, gentle hills, and fields, and a gorgeous tree-covered dirt lane edged with stone walls. The weather turned from windy to sunny and beautiful. The trail was well signed and taken care of, though the horse bridges over steep ravines were a

bit of a surprise—at least for those riders with a height problem. The group tolted and cantered and had a great time. The group is hopeful about returning again and maybe even camping.

Also this fall, the club was invited by Stephanie Sher to enjoy her beautiful 140-acre Blasted Rock Farm and all the trails on and around it. Cordy Sullivan trailered in Lysingur, and Deb Callaway and Susan Verberg rode Stephanie's horses Flygill and Greni. Unfortunately, Stephanie was not able to join the riders as she had sprained her finger, but the group was all thankful for her sharing her land and looked forward to exploring. It was a good thing Deb had ridden there before, as it's big enough to lose your way—at least for a little while, or until Stephanie's horses get hungry, because they all know their way back, of course.

Blasted Rock Farm has nicely diverse terrain, from open forest to dense thickets, swampy ponds to rocky creeks, and gently rolling to pretty steep dirt trails. After exploring the farm, the group went back down and crossed the road to the open fields and pastures on the other side of the farm and were rewarded with

gorgeous late afternoon sun views of the hills in peak fall color (with one of the rooftops being Stephanie's house, lucky gal!). It was sure fun to see horse butts get covered in tiny puffy white seeds like snow, while making our way through three- to four-foot-tall meadow weeds.

Steve and Andrea Barber unfortunately couldn't find time to attend these rides as they were busy on their own Sand Meadow Farm. In addition to the normal lessons, trail rides, and other activities, they were recently visited by Rochester Institute of Technology photojournalism student Alyssa Ki. Alyssa spent several days shadowing Steve around the farm and shooting him riding, giving lessons, caring for the horses, etc. She then used the results as her senior project, which was very well received. In addition, Sand Meadow Farm was featured in the fall issue of the New York State Horse Council, Western Chapter, newsletter.

The club continued to grow through 2011. As of January 1, 2012 the club has 28 members, most residing in Central and Western New York. We look forward to an active and exciting 2012!



St Skutla member Susan Verberg and Greni enjoy the trails at Stephanie Sher's Blasted Rock Farm in Naples, NY. Photo by Deb Callaway.

AT THE ROUND-UP

BY CHARLES FERGUS



The brilliant snowy landscape of the Gardsardalur round-up, near Akureyri in northern Iceland. Photo by Alice Ryan.

The valley climbed south and east from the fjord called Eyjafjordur, where lay the town of Akureyri, a beautiful small city in northern Iceland. It was the first week in October. My wife, Nancy Brown, had been in Iceland for two weeks, and I had joined her and some friends to take part in a round-up, riding into the mountains with a group of Icelanders to watch them collect and bring in a herd of loose horses that had spent the summer grazing there.

Our party included five Canadian riders and eight from Vermont. Leading our group were trainer and riding instructor

Sigrun Brynjarsdottir and her husband Jason Brickner, a farrier and apprentice judge. Sigrun and Jason run Solheimar Farm in Tunbridge, VT, where the eight of us train and ride together. Sigrun grew up in Akureyri, and she had gotten us permission to join the round-up, using horses owned or borrowed by her friends Lulli (Thorbjorn Matthiasson) and his father, Matthias Eidsson, who owns a farm, Brun, on the edge of Akureyri.

Over the years, I have ridden perhaps 20 times in Iceland, and each ride proved to be an experience unto itself and something I would long remember—whether

for the scenery, the weather, the horse, or the company. I had wanted to see a round-up for some time, and now I had a chance to actually participate in one.

Before I arrived in Iceland, Nancy had emailed me about the stretch of fine, sunny weather she'd been enjoying as she drove around the countryside doing research for a book on Norse mythology. She had viewed the shrub birch and upland heather turning orange, yellow, and crimson red—autumn colors as beautiful in their own way as those back home in New England.

But the weather—always unpredict-

able in Iceland—changed. The day we arrived in the north of the country, six inches of heavy, wet snow fell. It stripped the leaves from the birches and shrubs. It cloaked the steep treeless mountains hemming in the valley, Gardsardalur, where the horse herd had summered. Melting, it muddied the road that led past a gate into the highlands.

Our first day on horseback we rode for about four hours, getting to know the horses that would carry us into the mountains. After picking them up at Brun, we rode on a network of excellent gravel trails through the woods, past the Akureyri airport (the horses hardly noticed the planes taking off right over their heads), and along the river to another farm closer to Gardsardalur, where the horses were kept overnight. I was assigned a black-and-white gelding who stood a good 14 hands tall. His name was Jonas; he was 16 years old and had been a stallion up until a few years ago. Before getting on him for the first time, I did some simple ground work with him, and found him agreeable and cooperative. As we rode through the town forest heading down into the valley of Eyjafjörður, I found he had a nice comfortable trot. He was happy to be ridden at the front of the group, happy to be in the middle of the group, and not unwilling to bring up the rear. A big, sturdy, strong, independent horse. I couldn't have asked for better.

The day of the round-up itself, we 13 North Americans joined a group of Icelanders; together we numbered around 30 riders. It was a cold, breezy day, with clouds and breaks of sun. Approaching the mouth of Gardsardalur, we saw a lot of horses loosely clustered just past the gate that led to the valley. Had the herd already come down because of the snow?

We passed through the gate, which someone closed behind us. Mares and foals and geldings in every color stood on a hill to one side of the road. We learned from our Icelandic friends that we would ride up the valley as planned, to make sure all the horses had come down and there were no stragglers.

Where yesterday we'd been able to trot most of the time on the well-groomed trails in the lowlands, where the snow had melted, now we mainly walked and trotted the horses. The horses were shod but didn't have snow pads or studded shoes,

so the snow built up in their hooves. Jonas didn't much like to trot, but he would do it for short uphill stretches and to keep up with the group. Much of the time, despite the poor footing, he gave me a smooth, if pacey, trot.

We climbed into the broad valley between steep snow-covered slopes. About every half hour or so the riders would stop and dismount, both to give the horses a rest and to enjoy the sociable aspects of riding in a group. Several of the other riders formed duos to harmoniously sing Icelandic riding songs. A fellow named Holmgeir had a beautiful tenor voice. A singer myself (baritone), I leaned across Jonas's broad back and contributed a solo rendition of one verse from the rather appropriate cowboy song "I Ride an Old Paint"—and received a round of cheers for my efforts. Later, several of us sang "Home on the Range," in both English and Icelandic.

I learned several things during the rest stops. First, it's possible to use the steel toe cups of your stirrups to knock balls of snow out of your horse's hooves. I learned to surreptitiously avoid those riders who went around holding out shiny flasks or bottles filled with amber liquid. (When caught, I took the tiniest of swigs to avoid building up too much of a tankful of the Scotch, bourbon, and rum that were making the rounds.)

Back on the horse, I learned to let Jonas pick the way. It was a partnership, and I trusted this big gelding. He knew his job and was good at it. When we needed to climb a slope, I would lean forward and grab his mane and let him figure out where to put his feet and how fast to canter. I learned, also, how those Icelanders looked on and treated their horses. Clearly they held their horses in great affection. But they didn't baby them. They asked them to work, and the horses responded. Because of the way horses are allowed to develop in Iceland—including, during their formative years, spending summers in the uplands as part of a free-ranging herd—they are surefooted and willing to move out. They don't stop when the going gets tough. They just keep trekking.

Heading up Garsardalur, we rode to an old slumped-in turf house and barns: the remains of a highland farmstead that long ago had been abandoned. There we ate sandwiches and sweet cakes and sipped juice from little boxes.

Riding on, we heard ravens croaking and chortling in the sky. Saw a few scattered bands of sheep. Far up the valley, having found no more loose horses, we turned around. Several riders detached themselves from the group and climbed the slope to the south, then followed its ridge line, looking for strays. We rode



A rest stop at the mouth of the valley. Photo by Richard Davis.



A tricky stream crossing, down a deep and slippery gorge. Photo by Richard Davis.

back down the valley, heading for the lowlands, heading for the herd—about 400 horses, I would later learn—milling near the gate. As we neared the mouth of the valley, Sigrun cautioned us to look sharp, to keep our mounts behind other, steady horses, so that they wouldn't take off at a mad gallop as the herd went streaming through the gate. Good advice—if you were lucky enough to pick the right horse to ride behind!

We followed the driven herd down a series of country roads. Cars on the roads stopped to let us pass. Finally we reached a round pen into which the loose horses were driven. The next day, we'd come back (in a steady rain) to watch as different owners separated their horses from the milling, swirling herd. The horses would then be trucked or driven back to their respective farms for the winter.

The round-up was over all too soon. It had been a challenging ride through a stark and stunningly beautiful landscape. We had enjoyed our time and shared conversations with our fellow riders and hosts. Most of us, at least, enjoyed our horses. (Two of our group actually ended up buying the horses they'd ridden.)

I didn't kid myself; we Americans weren't necessary participants in this traditional autumn event. I knew I was just along for the ride—though I like to think that I acquitted myself well on that veteran pinto, that I hadn't caused any problems or slowed the group down or gotten in the way of things. (Hey, they even liked my singing.) My horse Jonas



Watching the loose horses funnel down toward the corral. Photo by Richard Davis.

showed me what I could work toward, with my own gelding back in the U.S.

I found that I had enjoyed every minute of the ride. I also enjoyed and much appreciated, at day's end, the hot tub at our rental house in Akureyri, where we soaked our tired bodies while looking up at Northern Lights that twisted and shimmered above the town. Their sinuous motion reminded me of the herd of particolored horses as they flowed down out of the mountains, headed for that round-up pen.



Jason Brickner of Solheimar Farm in Tunbridge, VT helped sort the herd after the round-up in northern Iceland. Photo by Alice Ryan.



The loose herd appears over the ridgetop, pushed by outriders toward the corral. Photo by Richard Davis.



The narrow chute into the corral. Photo by Charles Fergus.



In a swirl of color, the horses try to avoid going into the pens. Photo by Charles Fergus.



In the corral, the horses wait to be claimed by their owners. Photo by Charles Fergus.

FINDING THE CARLE WAGON ROAD

BY KAYLENE JOHNSON

“I followed a crazy man on horseback up Hatcher Pass.”

That’s how Susan Dent described our recent ride up the Carle Wagon Road. The purported crazy man was Dick Stoffel, a long-time backcountry rider, whose hearty acceptance of rugged conditions outdid that of the rest of us.

The afternoon lay before us like a gem, with the season’s first snow lying lightly on the landscape. Our plan was to ride along the historic Carle Wagon Road. The Matanuska Borough Parks, Recre-

ation, and Trails Advisory Board had recently passed a resolution in support of Back Country Horsemen of Alaska’s development of the trail for equestrian use. We’d reconnoitered this trail to a certain point, but were unsure of the old road’s exact location beyond it. Our goal that day was to further explore the area.

Our group consisted of Back Country Horsemen Dick Stoffel, Susan Dent, and me, along with Susan’s 20-something daughter Colleen Fisk and Dick’s friend Chris Johnson, who was riding a horse for

the very first time. Dick wanted to introduce the young man to horses before a horseback hunting trip they were taking the next day.

The trail sloped gently uphill for a couple of miles, and we commented on the great view. The Talkeetna Mountains are a treasure, and we felt privileged to be there in the company of fine horses, good dogs, and newfound friends. The snow grew deeper and the trail narrower, and I was thrilled to realize we’d intersected a slender hiking trail I’d taken earlier in



Backcountry horseman Dick Stoffel and his friend Chris Johnson scouting for the old wagon road.

the summer.

Our horses worked hard as we climbed a steep ridge. The landscape fell sharply away on either side. This didn't much look like a wagon road. At several points we got off our horses and led them. We'd gotten a late start and mention was made as to when we ought to turn around. But no one wanted to be the one to say, "Let's go back." Besides, on an earlier weekend, Dick had ridden from the start of the trail on Edgerton Parks Road all the way up to Independence Mine and the A-frame chalet, where he'd enjoyed a cold beer with the proprietor of the place, "Hap" Wurlitzer. That sounded like fun.

We reached a snowy plateau at which the trail all but disappeared. Dick said it would take just as long to reach the chalet as it would to go back. Knowing he had a large stock trailer parked at the chalet to take the horses home, we made the decision to press on.

Turns out that—between the lack of trail, additional snow, and impending darkness—it would take us almost twice as long to get to the chalet as we expected. This is where the real adventure began.

The horses traversed the mountain one solid step at a time. We were amazed at their sure-footedness, especially in the places where we got off to give our horses a break on a slope that was increasingly growing steeper. We humans slipped and slid along the hillside. At one point, I slid

directly under my horse's feet, but she was agile enough to avoid stepping on me. For the most part, it seemed safer all around just to stay on board.

Colleen's horse was side-hilling when the terrain under the snow suddenly turned slick. I looked back to see horse and rider skiing sideways downhill. At this point, Colleen's mother, Susan, began thinking some choice words about our Sunday afternoon ride. But once again, the horse's athleticism won the day and no one fell.

It began to snow and would soon be dark. As evening turned into night, the horses were our heroes. We experienced first-hand the great partnership between horse and rider as our afternoon jaunt turned into a more serious challenge.

We still had a valley and a slope to traverse before we would see the lights at the chalet. Now Susan's choice words were muttered aloud—and her daughter laughed. A long beaver pond with dams on either side greeted us in the crease of the valley. The only way to cross was to pick our way over the smaller of the two dams. We dismounted and sent our horses across; they tiptoed quickly over the jumbled mass of logs and sticks.

As we rounded the mountainside and the lights of the chalet finally came into view, all of our spirits lifted—even the horses'. My horse put her ears forward and her stride suddenly had new purpose. The chalet was still several miles away

with a wide creekbed in between. Our horses' exceptional night vision helped them find the best footing. By the time we reached the road, we were exhausted but elated that all horses and riders were intact. Cold and hungry, but without a scratch.

Our elation turned to dismay when we discovered a "Closed" sign on the chalet door. Dick knocked and suddenly there stood before us a smiling face. We understood immediately why Dick's friend had the nickname "Happy Jack." We were sure happy to see him. He invited us inside, and we shared what food was left from our saddlebags—a peanut butter sandwich and a couple of Power Bars. Susan checked her GPS. We'd gone nearly eight miles and gained 3500 feet in elevation in five hours.

It was nearly 10 p.m. when we loaded the horses into Dick's large stock trailer. Horses will often balk at loading, especially into a dark unknown trailer with a steep wooden ramp. My horse must have known it was her ticket home because she nearly knocked me out of the way to leap on board.

Dick transported us back to our own rigs and trailers, telling stories of other misadventures he'd had. Was it here that Susan came up with the notion of him being a "crazy man" or was it earlier in the day? And to Chris Johnson, whose first ride he'll likely remember as a suffer-fest—keep the faith. The partnership between horse and rider is hard to beat.



Cartoons by C. Romano

WHAT IS SIGNAL RIDING?

BY NICKI ESDORN

I was introduced to Signal Riding at the FEIF Trainer Level 1 course at Creekside Farm in Georgia. Our instructor, the legendary Walter Feldmann, showed us that this riding style was an essential part of the training of pleasure horses and their riders. Working riding styles all over the world share the elements of Signal Riding: It is not about working the horse, but working with the horse. The horse is not asked to go in a frame with a lot of expression, like in dressage or competition riding. Instead, the rider gives a short, precise, and clear instruction, and the trained horse does as asked until the next signal is given. Once a signal is given and obeyed, the rider becomes neutral and passive. He rides with a loose rein and follows the horse's motion. The horse can freely balance itself and moves in a clear beat, easy and calm. Sounds great, doesn't it?

There are many good reasons for Signal Riding. I love the philosophy behind this riding style: work with the horse's mind, not the muscle. The training and aids for Signal Riding are clear and easy to understand for the horse. When it does as asked, the signal immediately ends, which in itself is a reward. A horse that is trained this way becomes happy and



Nicki Esdorn on Haukur Freyr demonstrates a light seat and loose reins at the canter.

responsive, under saddle and in hand. It is being asked, nicely and clearly, and not nagged or yanked around. Don't we all respond well to that? A nervous horse becomes calmer and a lazy one might perk up. The horse will not become dull to the aids because the reins are loose and there is no nagging. The horse moves naturally in this riding style and can cover long distances more easily and in better

condition. A young horse trained this way becomes a dependable, relaxed, and easily controlled pleasure horse that trusts the rider. A competition horse in training can get a mini-vacation on the trail and recharge its batteries. Signal Riding is excellent preparation for further competition and dressage training; it makes the horse willing, limber, and supple.

Signal Riding makes it possible for the not-so-advanced rider to communicate and control the horse with light aids. Beginners of every age can quickly build a harmonious relationship and have fun with their horse—for many that is already their ultimate ambition as riders. It is also a very good foundation for the aspiring competition rider: He or she will learn to ride less with the hands and become very balanced and articulate with all aids. The first chapter in Olympic dressage rider Lendon Gray's book *Lessons with Lendon* asks the question: "Can you 'Do Nothing'?" The rider must be able to be quiet so that the horse can actually hear when he has something to say. Signal Riding teaches a rider to become aware of asking (give a signal), receiving (the horse responds), and saying thank you (do nothing). Do nothing does not mean "become



Nicki demonstrates the use of an inside opening rein for turning.



Teaching your horse to relax and stand still is a big part of signal riding. Haukur Freyr can

a bag of potatoes,” but rather “become invisible to your horse.” The rider learns to stay relaxed and supple both in a full seat at the walk and in a light seat, well balanced over his stirrups and legs at trot and canter, always in sync with the horse’s motion. Since the horse is ridden with a loose rein and often just one hand, the other hand can hold the mane for added stability. It is a very comfortable and easy way of riding.

An important concept of signal riding is that there is never any extended contact with the horse’s mouth. Signal riding does not attempt to form the horse into a frame by driving with the seat and legs into the holding reins and asking the horse to give at the poll and become more expressive. Asking with seat and legs means forward, a gentle, short tug on the reins means slow down or halt. The horse stays in its natural balance and never gets confused by the mix of driving and holding aids. This is the secret to the horse’s immediate reaction to the lightest aid—it is never ambiguous.

TRAINING FOR SIGNAL RIDING

Training a young horse or schooling an older horse in Signal Riding is best done at first in an enclosed space. A round pen works well, also a portable Icelandic training circle (as described in the last issue of the *Quarterly*). You can create an enclosed oval track in an arena with the help of posts and tape. The goal is to have a continuous path without corners in which the horse could get stuck. This is also a great help for beginner riders, as they can concentrate on seat and aids without steering problems.

STANDING STILL

Being able to stand still without any rein or leg contact is a very important exercise in patience and self control for horse and rider. The horse does not have to stand perfectly square, and it is allowed to turn its head, but it must be corrected by lifting the reins or even a tug as soon as it moves a leg. After the correction, the rein must be loose again and the rider passive. Standing still should be practiced often and every time after mounting. The rider slowly counts to 30 in his head. If the horse moves, the rider starts again after the correction, and as often as it takes until he can count all the way to 30. It will

come in very handy at the next road crossing, when mounting from a difficult spot, or when you have to wait for a friend!

WALKING

Starting at a walk, the rider’s upper body leans slightly forward, the hands move forward a bit towards the horse’s mouth, and he gives a gentle, brief pressure from both legs and a voice command, like “walk.” As the horse walks off, the rider sits passively and follows the motion in a full seat. Should the horse not respond, the rider uses the whip for reinforcement and immediately becomes passive again as the horse starts walking. If the horse walks at a snail’s pace, the rider uses brief pressure from both legs and possibly the whip; as soon as the horse picks up speed in response, the rider becomes passive again, effectively rewarding the horse. No constant nagging or tugging! The horse will very quickly understand at what speed it is left alone and will keep walking at that speed.

TROTTING

Moving off at a trot, the rider’s upper body leans forward into a light seat, transferring the weight from the seat bones onto the thighs and stirrups. The hands move towards the horse’s mouth, and it is a good idea to grab onto the mane in order to not be left behind the motion or catch the horse in the mouth. Both legs give a squeeze, and the rider says “trot” or clucks, aided by the whip if necessary. The rider must learn to follow

the horse’s trotting motion in a light seat, balanced over the stirrups. Some Icelandic horses are secure enough in the trot for the rider to post. The posting is done very lightly, out of the light seat, no heavy sitting down and standing up. It is like swinging with every other step, changing diagonals every so often by gently sitting out a step. Controlling the speed is done just like at the walk. Grabbing legs are a pushing aid, as is a heavy, bouncy seat—if the rider then tugs and pulls on the reins to slow down, the poor horse will get ever more frantic from the contradictory aids. The light seat can be practiced at the walk and in the training ring mentioned above. When the rider can follow the trotting motion in a balanced light seat, the horse will easily settle into a relaxed, swinging trot. This is a perfect choice for covering ground while conserving the horse’s strength and getting it into a nice breathing rhythm. It is a lot of fun to ride once you get the hang of it!

CANTERING

Cantering off should always be done in a calm and controlled way. For the left lead canter, the rider sits in the saddle, takes the left (inner) leg slightly forward and puts more weight onto the left seatbone. The right leg is taken back behind the girth. Using a curve to the left in the arena or trail, the rider uses the left leg, if necessary the whip, and a voice aid like “canter” or a cluck to move the horse off. It is important to give the reins forward and leave them loose! For the right lead,



A light seat at the trot. Nicki recommends holding the reins in one hand and grabbing onto the mane if you need to for balance.



Turning with an opening rein at the walk. Signal riding is not about working the horse, but working with the horse.

it is the other way round. Should the horse move off in the outside lead even though the rider uses the correct aids and a curve, he needs to keep contact with the outside rein just before and during cantering off, so that the inside shoulder becomes free for the longer step necessary for the inside canter. Once the horse is in canter, the rider follows the motion in a light seat and loose rein. If the rider is able to follow the canter motion softly in a full seat, he can do so, but only at a very slow and calm canter. It is a good idea to let the horse canter for a longer stretch and find a nice and even rhythm. It can be helpful for a tense or fresh horse to calm down by trotting for a while before cantering.

TOLTING

The basic rule of Signal Riding says that driving and holding aids must not be given at the same time. However, the aids for tolt are just that—the rider asks the horse to go with seat and legs while keeping a gentle contact with the reins. He does not want to go slower or faster, but wants a different gait. Many Icelandic horses can tolt easily and securely in a passive, light rein contact, and it is possible to ride these horses in a manner like Signal Riding: softly following the motion, relaxed, forward, and in a clear beat. If the horse can only be kept in tolt with strong driving and holding aids, it is often advisable to condition the horse better by riding other gaits and then try tolt again with more finesse.

PACING

Pace cannot be ridden in Signal Riding style. However, Signal Riding can be a good tool for warm up before riding pace and for conditioning and calming a pace racer.

STOPPING

The aids for stopping from any gait are the same: The rider sits back fully in the saddle, tugs briefly and gently on the reins, and gives a clear voice command like “whoooooa.” As soon as the horse stops, the reins are given loose and the rider is passive. If the horse knows the command “whoa” from ground work and longeing, it will quickly and easily obey. If the horse does not stop well, even though the rider gives no conflicting aids with legs or seat, one rein can be taken shorter and the arena wall or the trailside can be used to help stop the horse. The rider must never keep pulling on the reins in order to stop. Standing still should always follow, especially for a young horse.

TURNING

The key aid for riding a turn is moving the rider’s weight toward the new direction. The horse wants to keep the rider balanced on his back and will easily follow. The rider puts more weight onto the seatbone and stirrup of the turn direction (inside), even leans to this side and also places the outside leg gently behind the girth to keep the hind legs from swinging too far out. When riding with two

hands on the reins, a gentle tug is given sideways on the (inside) rein of the turn direction, while the outside rein lies gently against the neck without pressure on the mouth. The goal is to eventually be able to neck rein with just one hand, but it takes a while for a horse to learn to move away only from rein pressure on the neck. It is fun to set up poles or traffic cones and practice turning around them with mostly a seat aid and only the lightest help from the reins. For many it will come as a surprise how much we rely on pulling our horses around.

BACKING

The horse should be familiar with backing from groundwork before attempting it in Signal Riding. For training, use a space where it makes sense for the horse to back out, like a narrow aisle between hay bales. Backing is always done slowly, step by step. The rider gives a light squeeze with both legs and the familiar voice command, “baaack.” At the same moment, a tug on the reins tells the horse to move backwards. To make backing easier on the horse, the rider leans slightly forward. It is important to give the reins forward after each step.

PONYING

Signal Riding makes ponying very easy. The horses are trained to go in a calm and relaxed manner, working with the rider and obeying voice aids. Riding with one hand leaves the other free to hold the pony rope, which is supposed to hang loose unless a signal is given. It is a joy to go out with two horses well trained in Signal Riding.

Many riders have a tough time with their horses, some only want to tolt because they cannot ride a balanced light seat in other gaits, and many never dare let go of the reins. Signal Riding offers a solution to these and other problems. Your horse learns self-control and becomes a delightful and dependable partner. The rider learns to work with subtle aids and to become light on his horse’s back. It should be part of every rider’s vocabulary. Signal Riding can be an end in itself and taken to a high level of understanding or a great foundation for further training and education.

WHO IS BARBARA?

INTERVIEW BY ALEX PREGITZER



Trainer and judge Barbara Frische and her stallion Alfadans.

WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND?

I was born in Germany in 1961 and have been riding since I was six. My horse experience began with an education in dressage and jumping on Warmblood horses, from 1967 to 1976. Then I got my first Icelandic horse in 1976, and I started riding and competing with the help of famous trainers in Germany, like Bruno Podlech, Elisabeth Berger, and others, as well as with Icelandic trainers Birgir Gunnarsson, Hinrik Bragason, Tyri Thordarson, and many more. I also earned my licence as a veterinary assistant and worked as one for 12 years, quite a lot with horses.

I have been an active breeder of Icelandic horses since 1978, earning my breeding judge's license in 1988. I was active in Icelandic horse sports competition from 1983 to 1990 in Germany and Austria. I ran a breeding farm and riding school in Bremen, Germany from 1990 to 2000 (Birkenlund). I was a board member of the German FEIF affiliate from 1988 to 2008, and breeding leader (head of the breeding committee) in Germany for four years.

The main reason I moved to the United States was to help improve the breeding, riding, training, and general knowledge of the Icelandic horse here—and most of all to help improve the market for our fascinating horses. With the help of Katrin Sheehan of Creekside Farm, GA, I moved over in 2009, together with my husband Robert and three of my five children (Milena, Jonina, and Valentin).

WHAT IS YOUR TRAINING PHILOSOPHY?

Every horse is different in conformation, gait separation, and spirit, so I watch them and try to find out which training methods would be the most effective for this individual horse. I also investigate the horse's genetic background, which can help me understand the horse. In the beginning there is always one question I ask each horse: Who are you?

WHAT IS YOUR TEACHING PHILOSOPHY?

I prefer also to work individually with students. I treat them the same way I treat the horses I train. I ask them, Who are

you? What do you like about horses? What do you want to learn? If you have your own horse, what personal goal do you have for your horse? I try to forge a good connection with my students and help them reach their personal goals. I try to find out what they are able to do and to support them as well as I can in reaching our common goal.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR ICELANDIC HORSES IN THE US?

I really hope that more and more people of all ages start loving these horses and so improve the market with more riding schools, more competitions, more pleasure events, more breeding, and more people, in general, becoming fascinated with our outstanding Icelandic horses. I hope we can strengthen the businesses centered around the Icelandic horse in this country and so increase the number of jobs in the Icelandic horse world.

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Barbara Frische visiting with youngsters in the pasture.

THE TRIPLE-HEADER

BY JESSICA HAYNSWORTH

Susan Peters of Silver Maple Icelandics in Tunbridge, VT helped make Icelandic horse history this September when her farm hosted a Triple-Header competition that led to seven U.S. riders qualifying to be world ranked. Never before had a competition like this been held in the U.S., and never had so many U.S. riders (including me) achieved this status at one show.

Before I go into detail, it is important for you to understand what it means to be world ranked.

THE LIST

The World Ranking system is organized by FEIF, the international federation of Icelandic horse associations, which publishes the data on their website, www.feif.org. Looking up a rider's rank is as simple as typing a name into FEIF's World Ranking search engine and hitting 'submit.'

To show up in this database, a rider must have two scores over 5.5 in a given event (on any horse) from a World Ranking competition. Such a rider will be world ranked for one year.

Here's where the system gets confusing. If you look for my name on the website, you won't find it at first. Why? There are two sets of world rankings: the general ranking, which, as FEIF sport judge Thorgeir Gudlaugsson explains, is "based on the three best results achieved over a period of two years," and the annual ranking, which is "based on the two best results from one year."

Simply searching the World Ranking list will only show you riders who have qualified to be ranked for two years (not one), by getting three scores (not two) over 5.5 in a given event at World Ranking competitions. Riders with only two scores, like me, are still ranked, but you have to type their names into FEIF's more advanced search engine to find them.

THE SHOW

In order for a show to be "World Ranking," five judges must be present for each event. According to Thorgeir, two of



Shannon Hughes and Asi from Mill Farm earned their World Ranking at Silver Maple Farm's Triple-Header Competition in September. Photo by Elizabeth Everson.

these judges need to be internationally qualified FEIF sport judges, and at least one must always come from abroad. The scores of these five judges are averaged together, with the highest and lowest dropped, to give the rider his or her overall score for a given event. That score is the one that goes toward the rider's World Ranking. In the U.S., we do not have enough domestic judges that qualify, so U.S. farms that wish to hold a World Ranking show must fly judges in from Europe. This expense is the main reason why there have been so few World Ranking competitions in the U.S.

"The biggest issue is geography," said Susan. East Coast riders rarely ship their horses to West Coast competitions, and vice versa, so it is not cost effective to fly in five judges for a competition that only a handful of riders would make it to. After speaking with Thorgeir at Silver Maple's

World Championship tryouts last year, however, Susan thought of a way to make a World Ranking show that was more worth the cost.

THREE-IN-ONE

Thorgeir told Susan about the Faroe Islands, which has a similar geographical problem. While judging a show there, he and some others discussed a new concept for getting the three scores needed in a more cost effective manner: hold a three-day-long competition, with each open-level event happening every day, and no finals. This way, riders could compete every day, and by the end of the show would have three separate scores for each event. If each score was over 5.5, those riders would achieve a two-year world ranking in only one long weekend.

Susan realized this plan could work in the U.S., but only if the USIHC rules for sanctioned shows were modified. The

rules stated that each open class must have a final, and that finals would take place the day after the preliminaries. The USIHC Competition Committee was open to Susan's idea, and the rules were changed to allow for triple-header World Ranking competitions.

SHOWTIME

The results of the September show were impressive, proving that the U.S. has many international-level horses and riders who were just waiting for a chance to strut their stuff. "The judges were very impressed with the quality of the horses at the top levels," said Susan.

Of the riders competing in the open division, Caeli Cavanagh and Sigrun Brynjarsdottir were already World Ranked; they improved their rankings considerably by the end of the weekend. Shannon Hughes qualified to be on the two-year world ranking list; and Susan, Dan Slott, Lori Leo, and I all qualified to be on the one-year list. In all, seven riders achieved

World Ranking scores at this competition, which was a great triumph for the U.S. Icelandic horse world.

Susan said that Thorgeir had showed her the results from some World Ranking shows in Europe: None of those competitions had qualified more than one rider as World Ranked at a time. "For us to have seven was really quite remarkable," said Susan, a sentiment that was echoed by each of the judges.

THE FUTURE

Shortly after Silver Maple's competition, Will and Ásta Covert of Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA, held a World-Ranking Triple-Header show of their own—at which Ásta raised her world ranking to #2 in the world in tolt!

I believe these competitions benefit everyone in our sport, even those who have no desire to compete. If the U.S. is seen as a place where good horses and good riders are developing regularly, then everything will improve in our sport, in

my opinion. More people will want to come and give clinics here, more U.S. riders will qualify for the World Championships and will show their talent worldwide, the U.S. will become more respected in the sport, more riding and training opportunities will open up for everyone, and there will be a better market for people to make a living in this business.

The introduction of World Ranking competitions will not mean the end of novice and pleasure classes—on the contrary, it will mean better judging and more exposure for these classes, which are just as important to our sport as the open divisions. Riders who had no desire to compete at the top levels enjoyed the Silver Maple show, socializing with other Icelandic horsepeople while getting an idea from their scores of how they are doing as riders.

"One of the drawbacks of calling a show 'World Ranking' is that riders who don't intend to compete at the top levels are scared away," said Susan, who thought some riders may have initially been intimidated by the prospect of appearing in front of five judges. "The judges were very friendly, and they took the pleasure classes as seriously as they took the top sanctioned classes," said Susan. "The people who competed in the novice and intermediate classes commented to me that the judges were extremely supportive, very encouraging and approachable."

Sue Sundstrom was one such competitor. "The judges motivated me to get my act together and focus on what I was doing," she said. "Each day I learned a bit more, tried a bit harder, and perhaps, got a bit luckier, and my scores improved. The nice thing was that because the judges were tough, I knew that if my score improved, I probably earned it and because of that I am all the more motivated to continue to work." Of the environment of the competition, Sue said, "I thought it was pretty relaxed, the judges were accessible, and the competitors very friendly and helpful."

The biggest drawback to hosting a World Ranking Triple-Header is still the expense. Until more U.S. judges are internationally qualified, judges have to be flown in from Europe or Iceland. According to Susan, the cost of plane tickets and daily fees came to about \$2,000 per



Jessica Haynsworth showing canter on Thor fra Skorrastad-4 at the World Ranking show in Vermont. Photo by Anne Hyde.



The judges doing a tack check after the open four gait. All of the riders pictured improved upon or achieved their World Rankings at this competition. Photo by Anne Hyde.



The oval track and the judges' tents at Silver Maple's World Ranking show. Photo by Anne Hyde.

judge. Silver Maple's September show lost a tremendous amount of money, and if we as a country do not find ways to make these competitions more affordable, they simply won't happen. Susan urges riders of all levels to compete at the shows in order to support them financially, and expressed hope that, in the future, other farms and organizations might sponsor classes or plane tickets for judges. The financial burden of hosting a competition is always a gamble, but "you have to be willing to take those positive risks for the sake of advancement," Susan said.

Susan's hope for the future, and one that many riders echo, is that ultimately the USIHC will be able to support at least one World Ranking Triple-Header per coast per year, with additional competitions made possible by regional clubs generating interest and by everyone coming together to support these events.

If these Triple-Headers have shown me anything, it is that we in the U.S. absolutely have the quality of horses and riders required to make ourselves noticed internationally. What we need now are more opportunities to do so.

CANTER

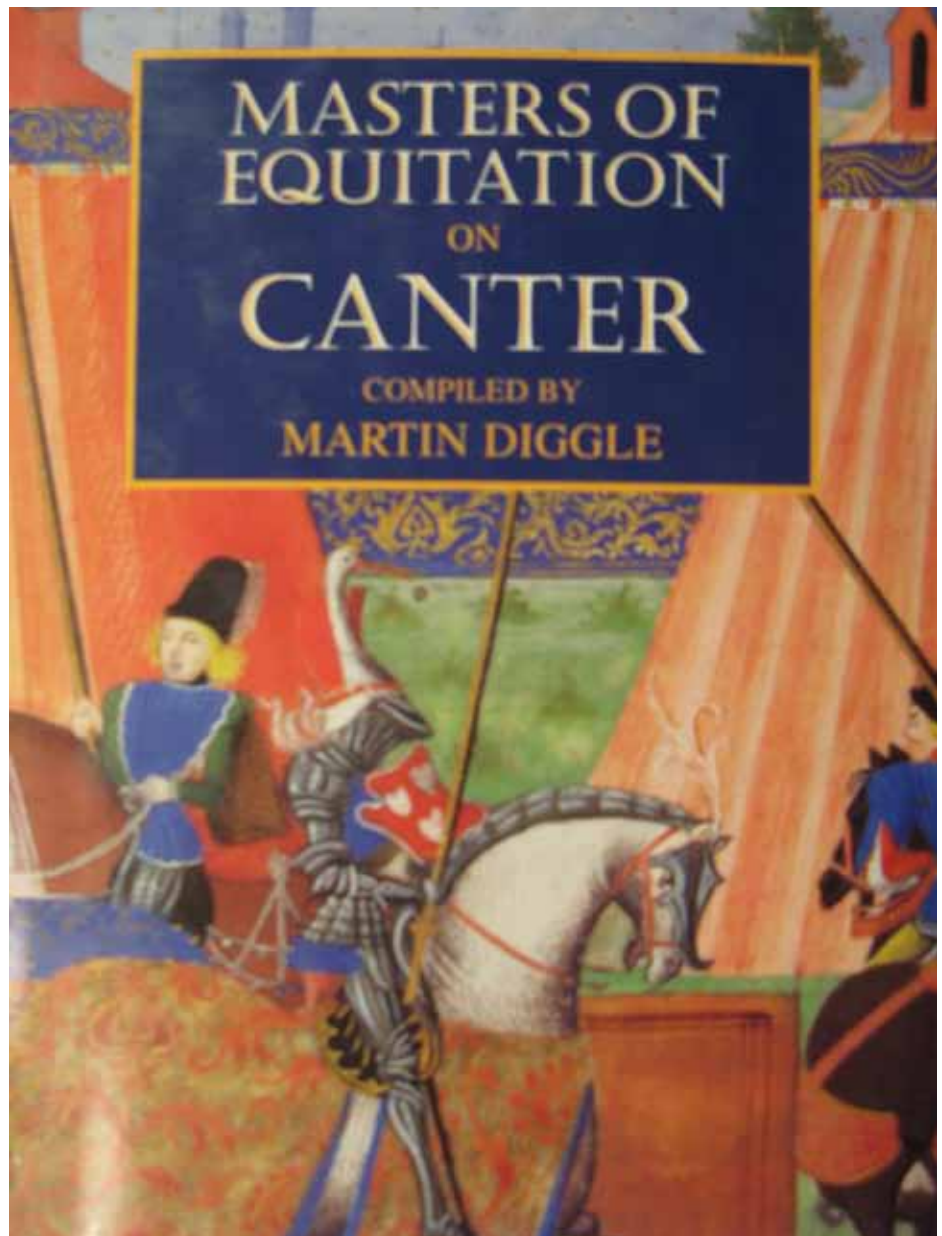
BOOK REVIEW BY BERNIE WILLIS

Canter is another book in the series *Masters of Equitation* compiled by Martin Diggle. The source material for this small volume is from riding masters: Albrecht, Baucher, Belasik, Burger, Brooke, Decarpentry, and several others. Following an introduction, the text is divided into five sections: the value of canter, introducing the canter, the canter aids, developing the working canter, and faults in the working canter.

“The canter is a soft rhythmic pace, and its rocking-like movements can be followed agreeably by the rider.” This sentence on the value of canter is followed by techniques for introducing the horse to the gait. The discussion at this point is similar to what is found in modern riding clinics. The various “authorities” disagree on which is the best way to ask a horse to canter. Some emphasize the aids on the inside, while others prefer the outside, or think both sides is best. Some say it is best to bend the horse to the inside, and others say the outside is best. There is a concern expressed about keeping the horse straight in canter, discouraging the use of lateral movements to initiate the gait. What they seem to agree on is that a horse is not ready to canter with a rider until it can be ridden in trot on the bit.

Unlike trot, where trotting improves the gait, canter is improved through upward transitions from trot, walk, or halt. A flat canter is a sign of weak hindquarters, and extended riding in the gait only fatigues the horse instead of strengthening it. Seunig puts it like this: “(1) Its movements lose their lively springiness and become flat and dragging. (2) The rider no longer is pulled forward in the saddle by the horse’s elastically pulsating back. As a result his inside leg no longer clings without effort to its place alongside the horse’s ribs, which fall inward somewhat. (3) The feel becomes dead or uneven in the rider’s hands and jerky in his seat.”

In another reference from Seunig, the timing of canter in the training is emphasized. “If galloped too early in the riding hall, a horse without poise would begin to hurry and run away, so that the rider would have to use restraining controls willy-nilly to hold it down and thus impair all its training.”



It had been my opinion that the Icelandic horse, especially the five-gaited ones, have issues with canter because of their lateral tendencies. Apparently this is not true, because the horses in this book are all three-gaited and still have the same potential problems, such as wrong lead, disunited canter, four-beat canter, and crookedness. The variety of solutions is like a salad bar. There is something for every appetite.

The rider has a tremendous influence upon the canter. Besides a few pages on rider errors, there is a very good description of how the rider should move with the

horse. According to Harris, a student of Podhajaky of the Spanish Riding School, they are: “(1) The immediate lowering/sinking of the seat. (2) Floating forward of the seat. (3) The gentle floating forward/upward following a ‘comfortable concave arc.’” He suggests that the rider should flow with the horse as if his or her pants were stitched to the saddle.

In all it is only 119 pages, but it is filled with the wisdom of many, many superior riders of the classical and modern era. It can be found at amazon.com and other bookstores specializing in horse books.

ACROSS THE OCEAN

BY THORGEIR GUDLAUGSSON



“Ponies for export.” A collodion print shot in Reykjavík ca. 1900 by photographer Frederick W.W. Howell. Now in the Fiske Icelandic Collection, Rare & Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. Used by permission.

It was not until 1851 that British traders got permission to buy and export horses from Iceland. Trading was modest to begin with, but took off quickly. At its peak, more than 3,000 horses were shipped abroad annually. In spite of these numbers, these business dealings kept a very low profile for a long time. A certain shame was attached to this trade, since it mainly supplied pit ponies to English coal mines. But recently it has been discovered that the market was increasingly interested in other characteristics of the Icelandic horse. The horses were used for a variety of purposes, and some horse dealers were quick to sell the Icelandic horse all over the world. Here are a few of these stories of incredible journeys and amazing destinations.

TO AUSTRALIA

When the horses arrived in Britain they

were traded at auction. Just like any other commodity, some of them were sold and sold again, until they fetched the highest price. The imports from Iceland arrived at a time when the trading might of the British Empire reached the furthest corners of the world, as did the realm of Queen Victoria.

A few Icelandic horses traveled a long way. In the autumn of 1862, four of them were taken onto the *Venus*, of the Mersey Shipping Company in Liverpool. Heavily loaded with all sorts of goods and commodities, the *Venus* set sail on October 30th.

It sailed south and, 39 days later, the ship crossed the equator. Then it set a course for South America, before turning east across the Atlantic, past the Cape of Good Hope, and onwards across the Indian Ocean. Finally, after having been at sea for 89 days, the *Venus* dropped her

anchor in Hobson’s Bay off Melbourne, Australia on January 27, 1863.

All the newspapers of Melbourne reported on the arrival of the *Venus*, and *The Argus* specifically states that on board were four horses from Iceland, all in very good condition. A few days later, another local paper reported that the horses were sold by the horse traders W.C. Yuille & Co, and fetched 21 pounds on average—and that was an excellent price. It is not known if these were the first Icelandic horses in Australia, or whether more horses arrived after that time. There is no more mention of this in any of the contemporary sources.

TO NEW ZEALAND

A little later the first Icelandic horse arrived in New Zealand, in the year 1868. And no horse from Iceland can possibly travel any further than that!

On December 22, 1868 you could read in Auckland’s *Daily Southern Cross*:

“We observe that Captain Logan, of the s.s ‘*Hero*’ has brought with him from Sydney a beautiful little Iceland pony, which no doubt he will be willing to dispose of should he get a sufficient offer. The animal is well worth inspection by any person who has a taste for horses in miniature, and as it is warranted to be perfectly quiet in harness, suitable for either lady, or gentleman, we have no doubt that Captain Logan will find a purchaser before leaving again.”

Two days later, on Christmas eve, an advertisement in the same paper announced that the horse would be for sale by auction. The description runs:

“THIS DAY, THE HAYMARKET: For sale This Day (Thursday), at 12 o’clock, Ex ‘*Hero*’, from Melbourne, AN IMPORTED ICELAND PONY, Strong, Hardy, and Active; a good Hack and excellent in harness. ALFRED BUCKLAND.”

Nothing further is mentioned about the sale in the local paper, but it is not unthinkable that the horse ended up as a wonderful Christmas surprise at the home of one of the good citizens of Auckland.

TO THE INDIAN OCEAN

In 1908, the Norwegian firm Storm, Bull & Co. from Christiania (renamed Oslo in 1925) entered into a contract with the French brothers Henry and Rene Bossiere over the fishing rights around the Kerguelen Islands. This island group, which had been in French ownership since the late 18th century, lies in the southern Indian Ocean, about halfway between Australia and South Africa. It comprises about 300 islands and a total of 7,000 square kilometers, partly hidden under glaciers. Due to its barrenness and formidable climate, the archipelago had no indigenous population and there were no permanent settlements. The Norwegian brothers planned to hunt whales in the region, and to build a whaling station and a processing plant. To that purpose they established the whaling company A/S Kerguelen. The company bought the steamship Jeanne d'Arc and some of the necessary equipment, and on August 25, 1908 the ship left from Tønsberg in Norway. The next landing would be at South Shields on Tyneside, where the ship took on more coal and other provisions.

The fact that the Norsemen were off again, to build a settlement on some remote and inhospitable island, caught the imagination of The Scotsman, which published a long article about this venture on September 1, 1908:

"The Norwegian steamer Jeanne d'Arc, owned by the Kerguelen Whaling Company, Christiania, has attracted considerable attention since her arrival in Tyne Dock, where she is taking in goods and coal prior to a very interesting voyage to Desolations Island.... There will be formed quite an interesting little colony, at the instigation of the daring and enterprising company.... The steamer is laden with miscellaneous cargo, material for building huts, machinery of all sorts and description in connection with extracting the oil from the blubber, boiling it &c.; indeed, it is a very valuable cargo. Besides there are on board two Iceland ponies, twenty sheep, four pigs, a number of hens for breeding purposes on Desolation Islands, which are, however, it may be stated, not barren by any means, as there is plenty of sport. The islands are inhabited by wild goats and ducks."

The ship sailed from Britain on September 1st and made two landings on the

way south, first in St Vincent, Cape Verde, and then in Durban, South Africa. In Durban a further 60 white and 24 black workers came on board, who were hired on a two-year contract. The journey concluded in mid-October, and they quickly build a harbor settlement, which was called after the ship Port Jeanne d'Arc. By November, when the spring had fully arrived the whaling operation was in full swing.

Not much is known about the Icelandic horses after they arrived on the Kerguelen Islands. They are briefly mentioned in a short article which Henry Bossiere, one of the brothers who had purchased the hunting rights from the French government, had written for the journal L'Illustration and which was published in September 1909. Here it is stated that there were three horses, not two. Bossiere, who had only lived on the islands for a few months wrote:

"The ground is covered by edible plants, which are similar to chickweed. All the animals are quite keen on it: the three horses, and the pigs which had been brought along even more so, they all graze it with great appetite, and don't seem to want anything else. The sheep, which had come from Iceland and had been released at Langey (France) to be left semi wild and without any housing, had all lambed when I left for home, and the lambs were skipping cheerfully all over the countryside."

As we can see, the Norwegians had not only taken Icelandic horses with them to the Desolation Islands, but also Icelandic sheep, specifically 20 ewes and two rams.

In an article published by the Bossiere brothers in the Bulletin of the American Geographical Society in 1910, they are full of admiration for the hardiness of the Icelandic sheep. The ewes looked after themselves over the winter and showed no signs of suffering. Most lambs survived, even though it was turning to autumn in the southern hemisphere when they were born, and the numbers soon doubled to what they had been in the beginning. This was such an impressive performance that the Bossiere brothers started a huge sheep-farming enterprise themselves and imported 1150 sheep to the islands in 1913. But these sheep, which came from South America, had none of the hardiness of the Icelan-

dic sheep and most perished in the first winter.

TO SOUTH AFRICA?

The Norwegians built whaling stations in more places than the Kerguelen Islands and took horses there. There were horses in various Norwegian whaling stations on South Georgia in the South Atlantic, but it is not known if these were Icelandic horses. One of the reasons why this particular company, A/S Kerguelen, took Icelandic horses and Icelandic sheep to the Desolation Islands may have to do with the fact that the station manager, Petter Ellefsen, might have been a relative of the well-known entrepreneur Hans Ellefsen, who had many business interests in Iceland at the turn of the century.

Hans Ellefsen, who built the whaling station at Sólbakka in Önunarfjörð and later Asknes in Mjóafjörð was an Icelandic citizen and a well-known man all over the country. He was a good friend of Hannes Hafstein, the first and only appointed Icelandic minister at the time, and it is believed that Ellefsen gave him his luxurious residence when he left Sólbakka for the East fjords. Hannes took the house to pieces, moved it to Reykjavík, and re-assembled it in Tjarnagata. This house became the residence of the president of Iceland for many years, and today it is still called the President's House.

Hunting whales off the Kerguelen Islands was not as successful as had been hoped. Over three seasons they only caught 442 whales, mainly humpback whales. But to make up for this they brought in a lot of elephant seals and produced oil from their blubber. Whaling stopped in 1911, but the hunt for elephant seals continued for a few years. With the beginning of World War I, the whole operation came to an end, the factory itself, the machinery, and all other equipment were dismantled and shipped to South Africa. It may well be the case that our three Icelandic horses ended their days in Africa. But this is where our trail disappears—and nothing more is known of their fate.

USING THE P-WORD

BY CHRIS ROMANO

*Lo! the goddess shows her power,
Sets me on her palfrey gray,
Makes me ride unto her bower,
Bids me welcome every day:
All her words some comfort bringing,
Vowing ever to befriend;
In my ears soft sounds are ringing,
Still that music knows no end.*

Helgi's poem about his dream wife comes in Chapter 16 of *The Saga of Gísli the Outlaw*, translated here by George W. Dasent. In the poem, the word palfrey means a docile horse used for ordinary riding, especially by women. My 1971 American Heritage dictionary has a section in the back on Indo-European roots, where I stumbled upon this word. Palfrey's origin is archaic, Middle English, from Old French palefrei, from medieval Latin palefredus, late Latin paraveredus, from Greek para "beside, extra" plus Latin veredus "riding horse." If you are a lady with a gentle riding horse, this is the word for you. If you have a bolting, balky, behaviorally challenged mount, palfrey may be added as sarcasm to your emitted expletives.

It's funny how loaded one word can become. Such a word in our Icelandic horse community is pony. The diction-

ary definition of "pony" is a small horse under 14.2, with the Latin root pullus, meaning foal. That's not the whole story. Some experts say the word "pony" derives from the name of the Celtic goddess Epona. According to the Dictionary of Celtic Myth and Legend by Miranda Green (1992), "The name Epona derives from the Celtic word for horse. Epona was a Celtic horse-goddess whose iconography was inextricably linked with equine symbolism.... Much of Epona's imagery displays the symbolism of fertility and the earth's abundance.... In addition, there seems to have been a definite association between Epona and the Mother goddess.... Here was a goddess who guarded her devotees throughout this life and into the next world. She was a patroness of horses, cavalrymen, and the craft of horse breeding at one level; at another, she reflected the deep mysteries of life, death, and rebirth." It is interesting to note that the pre-Roman Celtic culture once extended over much of Europe.

Why today are Icelandics adamantly termed horses rather than ponies? In his historical novel *Paradise Reclaimed*, the famous Icelandic author Halldor Laxness hints at the answer. The late nineteenth-century king of Denmark has invited the Icelander Steinar to Denmark, because Steinar has given the king his finest horse. Arriving in Denmark, Steinar asks if anyone takes the horse for a good gallop. The king's answer: "In Denmark it is considered cruelty to animals if adults ride ponies. Quite recently someone was convicted in court because he had been seen riding an Icelandic pony through Copenhagen" (Vintage Books 2002, page 97). Might there have been such a law, and could that be the reason Icelanders insist on using the term "horse"? Remember, Iceland was a colony of Denmark for centuries. Denmark imposed a monopoly on trade. Iceland had little but wool, fish, and horses to trade for goods needed to survive, like flour. If you wanted to sell ponies to your Danish overlords to ride, and

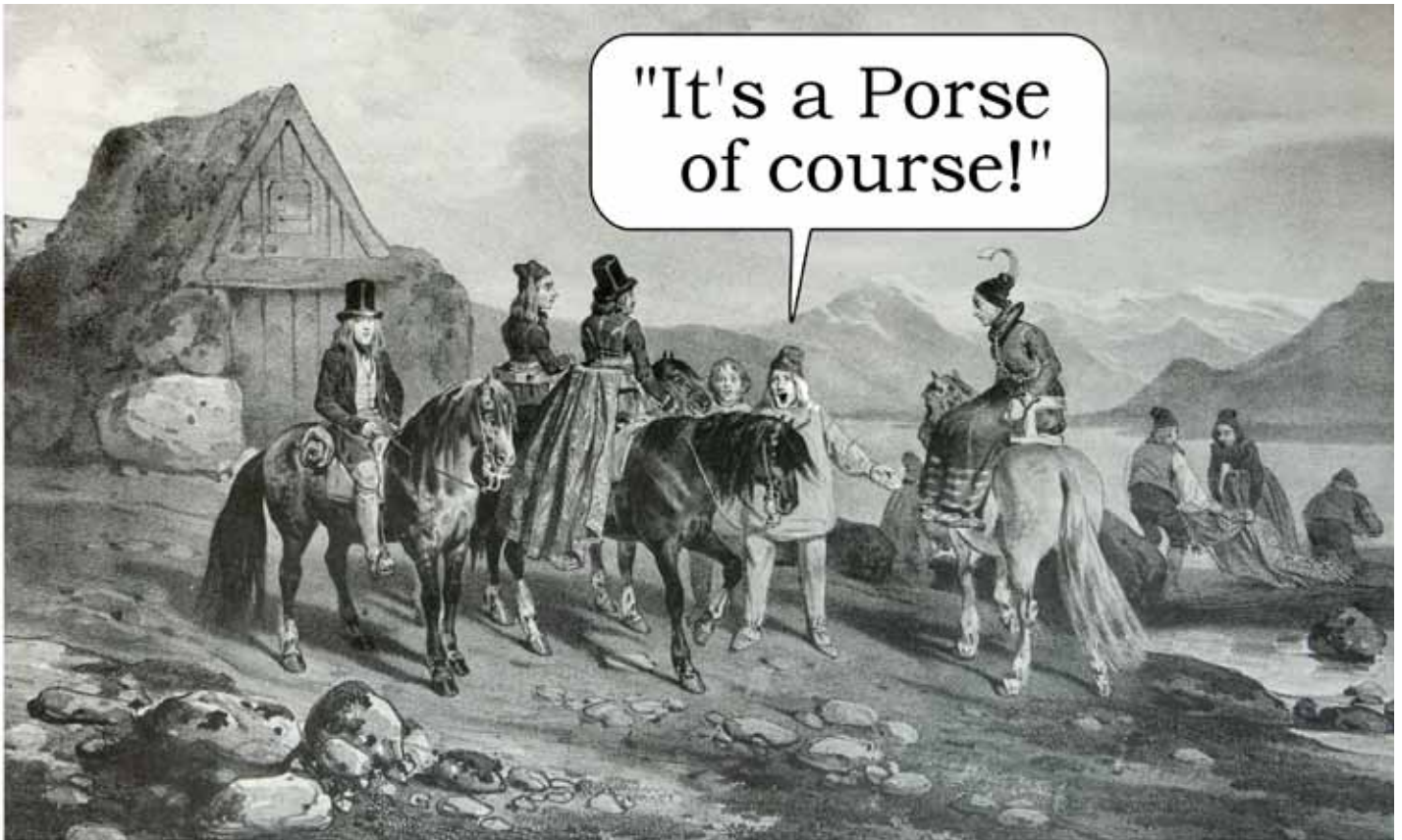
that activity was made illegal, wouldn't ponies need to be termed horses?

Today, use of the term Icelandic pony instead of Icelandic horse occasions a sound rebuke for "disrespecting the horse." Please consider that this defensive insistence on exclusively using the term horse may be negatively impacting promotion and sales of our beloved breed. Owners of other breeds have tentatively mentioned to me how they were scolded for benignly using the P-word in reference to an Icelandic. It's sad, because those people did not have a positive experience. They remember being lectured and are now wary to engage with Icelandic owners and their Icelandic equines. True, rude trainers or individuals have used the P-word in reference to Icelandics in a demeaning manner, but why overreact, especially when dealing with the general public?

When someone comes up to me with a big, happy smile asking, "Is that a pony?" that person has a vision or happy memory of "pony." What they're hoping is that what they're seeing is a pony. They love ponies. It is so hopefully a pony that they are asking if it is a pony. I'm not going to contradict, confront, or lecture them, because their whole experience with my Icelandic should be positive. Am I lying? No. In America, any horse of any breed that stands less than 14.2 hands is often termed a pony. We needn't change the name of USIHC, just allow the P-word to be uttered freely.

Late in 2012 the first movie based on J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* will be released. It will feature Icelandics as mounts. I don't know if the movie will refer to Icelandics as horses or ponies. What matters is that this movie could bring publicity long sought by those of us who have promoted the Icelandic to date. In the 1990s Taco Bell TV ads featured Chihuahua dogs, popularizing that breed throughout the U.S. For good or ill, *The Hobbit* movie may have the same effect on Icelandics. How our community greets





and models this potential interest may greatly determine future success or failure in breed promotion.

For those of us who view ponies as superior to the horse in every possible way, we're incapable of understanding the horse vs. pony controversy. Awesome strength, frisky vitality, independence, intelligence, and patience, along with being "cute" defines pony for me. In short (no pun intended) there is no such thing as "just a pony." Again, looking at Icelandics from a commercial sales point of view, what do you think is the better term, a small horse or a Super Dooper pony? Think of all those kids who watched My Little Pony or had plush stuffed ponies or rode ponies. Some are now in the market for an equine companion, what does it really matter if they want to use the P-word?

There are, of course, other reasons to call your horse the P-word, one being that pony rhymes with more words than horse. This can be very helpful if one enjoys making up songs or poems while riding. I suppose we can compromise and use the term Porse or Horny, which will generate most interesting limericks. Silly, yes, but since you love the breed, care-

ful consideration of how not to put off potential owners is essential. It is my hope that our community will be more flexible on the horse vs. pony terminology issue. Be proud to call your Icelandic a horse, a pony, or if applicable a palfrey.

RESPONSES

When reviewing this essay for the *Quarterly*, editorial committee member Helga Thordarson had these comments: "Icelandic has so many beautiful words for 'horse' and yet we tend to get hung up on the binary distinction of horse/pony. Many years ago I gave up on making the distinction and started telling people with a smile that we just call them 'Icelandics.' As I do when educating people about my falconry bird, I explain firmly that my horse (or hawk) is a performance athlete, not a pet. Both sports require intensive training, partnership, and athleticism. I am surprised how many people rarely or never ride their horses. For some, owning an Icelandic seems to be all about some quality of cute fluffiness, which is both infuriating and heartbreaking. When an opportunity to point out a different (not 'pet') perspective on the

beloved animals with which we share our lives presents itself, I seize it. I feel strongly that we owe it to our horses to honor their God-given natures."

Alexandra Pregitzer commented, "In my own little world, the word 'pony' is not minor. I would say it is equal or superior to 'horse.' I grew up with ponies, learnt riding on ponies, and always loved ponies. In my adult life I rode big horses, but later those big horses were polo ponies. That breed is a horse by definition, but is called a pony by breed. Just the other way around compared to Icelandics. Polo is a tough game and the horses are unbelievably athletic, agile, and loyal, with great temperaments. They are called ponies, and riders and breeders use that word with a lot of pride. The first thing that struck me when I met Icelandics was the pony-like look. Here was my dream come true, a pony I could ride as an adult. I did not even care about the gaits at that point and did not know anything else but that the looks of these horses totally fascinated me."

What do you think? Send your comments to quarterly@icelandics.com.

ICELANDICS IN THE NEWS



Gudmar Petursson and his sister, Linda Petursdottir, opening Equine Affaire's Fantasia in Springfield, MA. Photo by The Republican/Michael Beswick.

Icelandics were in the news surprisingly often in 2011, both in the usual places (like Equine Affaire) and some very new ones (like Hollywood movies and TV). Many of these accounts were sent to the Quarterly by the NEIHC regional club; others were spotted by Quarterly committee members. We'd like to continue this series in upcoming issues, so if you hear of an Icelandic horse in the news, let us know at quarterly@icelandics.org.

EQUINE AFFAIRE

Equine Affaire 2011 in Springfield, MA took place over a four-day period in mid November. As usual, it drew thousands of people; it was covered by the Springfield-based newspaper, The Republican, and featured on their website MassLive.com.

"The Icelandic breed figured prominently throughout Equine Affaire," notes Susan Peters of Silver Maple Icelandics of Tunbridge, VT, who helped organize the USIHC presence. "The most spectacular event was, of course, the ever-popular

evening Fantasia. Gudmar Petursson riding Aska fra Geldingaa and his sister, Linda Petursdottir riding Pegasus fra Skyggni, opened Fantasia this year. To the delight of all, Aska and Pegasus wore sparklers on their feet, entered a dark arena, and tolled around the coliseum in beautiful formation. They then re-entered the Coliseum to perform a precision drill that ended with flying pace."

What the crowd did not see, Peters notes, was the precision team offstage, comprised of Andrea Hanson Carr, Caeli Cavanagh, Petur Jokull Hakonarson, Bill and Diane Hatcher, Susan Peters, and Brian and Cindy Wescott, located at either side of the Coliseum, who lit the sparklers and then removed the equipment for the second phase of the show. "It was a pit crew worthy of a NASCAR race."

Fantasia was not the only event at which the Icelandic horse took the spotlight. Breed demos were put on as part of a cooperative effort of the USIHC, the NEIHC, and Silver Maple Icelandics.

Thursday's drill team consisted of Rebecca Hoyt riding Natan from Solheimar Farm, Caeli Cavanagh riding Gella fra Kastalabrekku, Susan Peters riding Aska, and Sue Sundstrom riding Bending fra Holar. "Bending, in particular, was a real trooper," Susan says, "because she had only recently arrived from Iceland and had no experience with crowds." This drill took place in the smaller arena, where the riders showed all gaits except pace. Gudmar Petursson gave a history of the Icelandic horse, as well as a running commentary on the gaits.

Gudmar also showed the versatility of the Icelandic horse in an individual demonstration, riding Veigar fra Laekjamot without a bit or bridle and only a rope around the horse's neck to guide the horse. When that rope unexpectedly broke, Gudmar turned the situation around by showing that he could bring his horse back under control using his seat and voice, while re-tying his rope. You can see his performance on YouTube, courtesy



Linda Petursdottir riding Pegasus fra Skyggni at Equine Affaire's Fantasia in Springfield, MA. Photo by The Republican/Michael Beswick.



The Good Morning America host hopped on Klerkur with no warning, says Martina. Luckily Richard Weise had a good hold of the stallion's bridle.

of Stan Hirson and his Hestakaup.com website. Go to

<http://www.youtube.com/user/shirson?feature=mhum#p/u/11/DxpBx-1UiWXA>

On Saturday evening, Caeli Cavanagh, who was selected from 50 entrants to ride in the Versatile Horse and Rider competition, attempted to beat her standing from the previous year where she came in 18th out of 36 riders. Her ride was well executed, with flying lead changes and an unperturbed Thokki fra Hrafnholi managing all of the obstacles very well, Susan says. "Unfortunately, at the very end Thokki refused the last jump, and Caeli did not place."

The following day, a larger drill team consisting of the riders and horses described above, together with Mark Bromley riding David fra Oddholi and Heather Jenkins riding Thokki did a precision drill in the Coliseum. The larger arena enabled the riders to provide a better demonstration of the gaits of the Icelandic horse, from a six-horse drill to individual riders showing the best gaits of their horses. Said Steinunn Gudbjornssdottir, the representative from Ishestar Riding Tours in Iceland, "It was good to show ordinary people riding their horses well and showing the versatility of the Icelandic horse." The event was capped by Gudmar on Aska exiting the arena in a dramatic flying pace.

Thousands of visitors passed through the Icelandic exhibit in the breed pavilion and enjoyed chatting with Hulda Geirs-

dottir, representing the Iceland Farmer's Association, and Steinunn from Ishestar, as well as Gudmar, Cindy, Andrea, Heleen Heyning, Petur, Bill and Diane, and others manning the USIHC and NEIHC booth. Says Susan, "Even in these tough economic times, it was exciting to see the level of interest in the Icelandic horse. Many thanks to all who volunteered their time and horses to make Equine Affaire a great success!"

GOOD MORNING AMERICA

"On October 28, 2011 at 6 a.m.," says Martina Gates, "I loaded up my two Icelandic horses, Klerkur and Dagfari and headed for Manhattan." They were about to be guests on the Good Morning America show that featured the host of Born to Explore, Richard Weise. Richard had just finished filming two segments in Iceland, one of them being about the Icelandic horse and sheep round-ups, which aired in January 2012 on ABC.

Three weeks earlier Martina had received an email from Visit Iceland asking if she had two horses that would be suitable to take into Manhattan on a busy Friday morning. About a week later ABC called and said they had decided that one horse would be enough and picked the stallion Klerkur to come on the show. "Everything was fine until the day before," says Martina. "I got another call from ABC. This time they told me that they had decided that the host of Good Morning America would be getting on the horse. That was a

problem. I was very worried that Klerkur alone was going to be less relaxed than he would be with his buddy Dagfari, and in addition to the noise of Times Square, the cameras, and the commotion, now a guy who knows nothing about horses or riding would be mounting up. In my panic I decided to bring them both. Even if Dagfari was not on-camera, Klerkur would be more relaxed seeing his buddy nearby."

Martina pulled up to the studio and parked right on 43rd street. She went up to the ABC studios to sign in and met Richard Weise. "He was a really wonderful guy who was simply in love with Iceland and the Icelandic horse," says Martina. "He came to see Klerkur, took him down 43rd onto Times Square, and started getting him used to all the cameras and the clapping audience. I was watching Klerkur slowly get more and more agitated. The police sirens, the screaming audience, the cars honking: It was pretty loud and unfamiliar. I decided to get Dagfari out of the trailer to help calm the situation. Dagfari was thrilled to get out. He had been tied up in the trailer alone and was not happy. But together the two of them were quite content there on this cool morning on Times Square. Richard decided it was best to take them both on camera, and so they ended up together on the segment."

All Martina was worried about now was the Good Morning America host getting on Klerkur. "In mid-sentence he



Born to Explore host Richard Weise is "simply in love with Iceland and the Icelandic horse," says Martina.



Rick Lamb of RFD-TV's *The Horse Show* joined America2Iceland and their clients on the "Vacation of a Lifetime" package, resulting in two television episodes and two radio shows.

suddenly dropped Dagfari's lead rope and heaved himself onto the stallion and clamped down with both legs into his sides. The poor horse had no idea what was happening. He whirled around, and Richard Wiese luckily had a good grip on Klerkur—otherwise he might have been down Broadway at high speed."

"All I can say is that I was very proud of my two guys. They handled all that commotion and strangers jumping on their back with the typical strongmindedness of an Icelandic horse. It is in moments like these that their incredible character shows up. The segment went well, but I must admit I let out a big sigh of relief when we pulled away from the studio."

You can watch the video at <http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/video/richard-wiese-born-explore-richard-wiese-born-explore-14834076#.TqsEzca7Rf1.email>

THE HORSE SHOW

This past summer, *The Horse Show* with Rick Lamb of RFD-TV and radio joined America2Iceland and their clients for the "Vacation of a Lifetime" package. This included an escorted visit to the Icelandic national horse show, Landsmot, a clinic with Gudmar Petursson at Holar University, and a four-day riding trek with Gudmar and the clinic horses. During the visit Lamb and his crew produced two television shows and two radio shows. The experienced organizers of the America2Iceland tours (USIHC members Rebecca Bing and Joe Lusk) ensured that they saw and par-

ticipated in all the best that Iceland and the Icelandic horse culture has to offer.

You can watch *The Horse Show* episodes and see more videos of the trips at the America2Iceland website: <http://www.america2iceland.com>.

THE HOBBIT

According to *The Reykjavik Grapevine* (Grapevine.is), 13 Icelandic horses are starring in Peter Jackson's film based on J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, to be released in two parts in December 2012

and December 2013.

Cali Madincea of New Line Cinema told the *Grapevine*, "The look of the Icelandic horse, which grows a thick coat in the winter, was one of the things that attracted the attention of the producers. Another important aspect of the Icelandic horse is its endurance and strength; they can carry someone weighing up to 120 kilos." She added that the tólt played a part in the decision as well. "This soft gait moves them right along, which helps an actor in full armor stay close to Gandalf, who's riding a large horse." A horse trainer in New Zealand taught the actors how to ride a tólt.

The beautiful horses were provided by the largest Icelandic horse farm in New Zealand, Nedri Bakki Icelandic Horses (see <http://icehorse.co.nz>). USIHC member Nicki Esdorn was recently in contact with a visitor to Nedri Bakki Farm, and hopes to file a report for the next issue of the *Quarterly*. "The farm owners signed a non-disclosure agreement with New Line Cinema agreeing not to talk about the film until it appeared in theaters," Nicki notes. "All they could say was that their horses would be gone for months."

A trailer for *The Hobbit* can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0k3KHtyoqc>. Watching closely, you can glimpse a very handsome chestnut Icelandic with a blaze carrying a sadly clueless Bilbo!



RFD-TV filming at Landsmot, with Gudmar (in the ball cap) providing commentary.



The RFD-TV group also took part in a traditional Icelandic cross-country trek.

GAME OF THRONES

George R.R. Martin’s multi-book fantasy series *A Song of Ice and Fire* has often been compared to J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*—except that there are not purely good versus purely evil characters, notes USIHC member Pamela Nolf. “Martin’s characters are grayer, grittier, and definitely bloodier than Tolkien’s. I have read the first five books in the series and highly recommend them.”

Where’s the Icelandic connection? In 2010, HBO made the first book, *A Game of Thrones*, into a very successful 10-part TV series. Filming has started on part two of the series, and events “beyond the wall,” in the land of winter, are being filmed in Iceland on the glacier Vatnajökull. Fifteen Icelandic horses are included in the shoot, including a 28-year old horse named Randver. “Randver has the right qualities and considerable experience for the part,” his owner told *Iceland Review’s* Daily News service. “He has both been on stage in Reykjavík City Theater and at Hotel Ísland.” See www.icelandreview.com.

EQUINE JOURNAL

“The Unstoppable Icelandic Horse” article in the October issue of *Equine Journal* featured Cerice and Knutur Berndsen of Pangaea Equestrian Services in Amenia, NY. The article opened with a nice photo of Martina and George Gates’ stallion Klerkur. See page 88 here: <http://www.equinejournal.com/FlipbookIssues/October2011EJ/>

HORSEMAN’S YANKEE PEDLAR

Pangaea received additional publicity when a photo by Cerice Berndsen was chosen as the cover image—as well as the image for February—for the *Horseman’s Yankee Pedlar* 2012 calendar. Several USIHC members submitted photos for consideration, after the USIHC promotion committee received a call from editor Scott Ziegler. Both Cerice and the USIHC were credited for the photo.

HORSE ILLUSTRATED

Horse Illustrated featured the Icelandic horse in the January 2012 issue, with a cover photo and breed profile, “The Little Horse that Could.” According to the publisher, the magazine “is the number one all-breed, all-discipline equine publication in the industry.” It reaches over 161,000 horse people each month. The USIHC promotion committee contributed to the text and coordinated placing several ads in the issue. The feature will be reprinted in *Horse Illustrated’s* sister publication, *Young Rider*.

TRAIL RIDER

The January 2012 issue of *The Trail Rider* magazine also has an article featuring

Icelandics. Writer Dan Aadland describes the walk as “snappy” and the tolt as “a smooth, rapid running walk in a four-four time.”

THE SULTAN’S HORSES

Iceland Review reported in January that Oman’s Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said brought six Icelandic horses to his country. They are the first Icelandic horses to go to the Middle East. On January 1, Oman’s National Day and the sultan’s birthday, the horses took part in the celebrations.

As *Oman News* (www.omannews.gov.om) reported, the festivities included the Annual Royal Horse Race Festival held at Madinat Al A’diyat Race Course. The six-round race included five races for pure Arabians and one for thoroughbreds. The Royal Cavalry male and female riders performed to traditional Omani music. Next came a display of horse-drawn carriages, cavalry drills, bareback riding, and (the grand finale as far as the Quarterly is concerned) “a show race by Icelandic horses.”

“The Royal Cavalry seeks through its annual festival to introduce new things,” *Oman News* reported. We hope the Omani audience was suitably impressed by the flying pace.



The *Horseman’s Yankee Pedlar* 2012 calendar, featuring a photo by Cerice Berndsen of Pangaea Equestrian Services in Amenia, NY on the cover.

STIKLA'S YEAR OF THERAPY

BY DAWN BRUIN-SLOT

As we approach the anniversary of Stikla from Windsong's new role as full-time therapy horse at the Therapeutic Equestrian Center (www.tecfarm.org) in Watervliet, MI, I thought I would take the opportunity to reflect upon an amazing year.

Stikla has helped 14 riders gain muscle strength, coordination, courage, and social skills in ways that no other form of therapy can. Some of her riders had never even seen an animal bigger than a dog. I've personally been able to witness some of the most heartwarming moments this past year, ones that will stay with me forever. Here are some of the riders I've had the privilege of working with:

Allie has such a beautiful smile and

infectious laugh, she always puts everyone around her in a good mood. Allie has difficulties with her muscles and coordination, but I was amazed to see how well she retained muscle memory in her legs from riding regularly during her past ride. When asked to stand up in the stirrups then sit back down, her feet and legs automatically went right into the proper position, just like any experienced rider's legs would.

Braden did not want to ride at all initially, but he quickly came around to it. One thing I learned from Braden was how important the right speed is for some special needs riders. Some need to move out a little faster, almost not stopping while they ride. Riding at a fast walk and varying the speed at

the walk seemed to soothe Braden and allow him to relax. It quickly became clear to me how important it is for a therapeutic riding horse to be able to speed up and slow down without hesitation when asked.

Meg is a very quiet and shy girl who has difficulty talking, but she surprised me the last time I worked with her. She started expressing herself much more, and really understood what we needed to do to get Stikla ready to ride. Meg was another rider who taught me how important it is for a therapeutic riding horse to respond immediately to speed changes.

Missy was another rider I'll always remember. Missy is blind and has mild cognitive and physical challenges. She was terrified of Stikla at first, and we weren't sure if we'd be able to get her in the saddle during her session. The first time she even touched Stikla, she had a major panic attack. But once in the saddle, it was almost like a switch had been flipped, and she just sang and chattered with happiness the entire time. It was such a cool thing to see and be part of. I'll never forget Missy squealing with delight, "I found her ears!" while exploring Stikla with her hands during her second lesson.

Jeremiah was another one who was absolutely terrified the first time he rode. He wasn't sure if he even could get into the saddle because of his fear. He literally trembled the first few rides. But he soon became comfortable with Stikla, and after only a few rides he started asking if he could take Stikla home with him at the end of the ride. He so enjoyed coming out to TEC to see *his* horse each week—it was the highlight of his week!

Those who've had the chance to work with Stikla at the Therapeutic Equestrian Center have fallen in love with her. She's become TEC's "go-to-girl" for some of the most challenging riders in the most difficult situations. She's truly found her calling in life as a therapeutic riding horse. As the volunteer coordinator, Beth Drollinger, put it, Stikla's "a gift to the whole TEC family. There is a peaceful energy that surrounds her, and it is so strong that others can feel it." She's making a difference in this world, one rider, sidewalker, leader, and volunteer at a time!



Stikla taking good care of Allie, with Dawn Bruin-Slot leading and a sidewalker ready to help out.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

New Application Renewal

Membership Type: Individual Family Junior
 Foreign Friend of the US Icelandic Horse Congress

Name:

Address:

City: State/Province : Postal Code: Country:

Phone: Email:

- Keep my name and contact information private.
- Never use my email address instead of the US Mail to notify me of official USIHC business.
- I prefer **not** to receive a copy of the *Quarterly* magazine in the US Mail.

Enroll me in the Pleasure Rider Program. **Additional fees required.** Regional Club:

If you have selected a Family Membership, please complete the following for the second adult and any children to be included in the membership (use the back of the page to add more family members):

Name	Year of Birth (juniors only)	Email (optional)	Enroll in Pleasure Rider Program (optional)

- Farm Listing.
Paid members of the USIHC may opt to include a farm listing on the Congress's web site (www.icelandics.org). There is a \$110.00 annual fee for the farm listing in addition to your membership fee.

Farm:

Owners:

Address:

City: State/Province : Postal Code: Country:

Phone: Email:

Fax: Web:

Membership Fees & Restrictions			
Individual	\$45/year. One adult. One vote.	Membership Fee:	\$.....
Family	\$65/year. Two adults and unlimited children living in the same household. Adults vote.	Farm Listing Fee:	\$.....
Junior	\$35/year. One child (under 18 years). Not eligible to vote.	Pleasure Rider Program (\$15/adult, \$12/junior)	\$.....
<i>Members in the categories above with non-US mailing addresses must be US Citizens</i>		World Championships Donation:	\$.....
Foreign Friend	\$70/year. One adult non-US Resident/non-US Citizen with limited benefits. Not eligible to vote.	Youth Fund Donation: (optional support for youth programs)	\$.....
		Total:	\$.....

Make checks to "USIHC" and mail to the MAIN OFFICE address.
Congress memberships are for one year. Your membership is active on receipt of payment and expires one year later.

MAIN OFFICE: 4525 Hewitts Point Road, Oconomowoc, WI 53066, USA
 Phone: (866) 929-0009 [extension 1] Email: info@icelandics.org

THE ICELANDIC HORSE MARKETPLACE



DEADLINES: • January 1 (Issue 1 mailed in March) • April 1 (Issue 2 mailed in June)
• July 1 (Issue 3 mailed in September) • October 1 (Issue 4 mailed in December)

AD FORMATS: Upload only ads that are camera-ready and in Mac-format PDF, JPG, or TIFF. No PC formats accepted. Ads should be full-size, saved at 300 dpi.

PAYMENT: All advertising can be placed online at www.icelandics.org/quarterly.php. Simply click on the link that says "ad purchase and upload page" and you will be directed through the process of buying an ad.

QUESTIONS: If you are unable to access the Internet or have questions regarding advertising, please contact Juli Cole at 724-667-4184 or juli2875@yahoo.com

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\$1500.00

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Nancy Vanderbilt Schmalz
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(805) 693-9876 (phone)
schmalztopf@earthlink.net
www.icelandichorsebreeder.com

Flying C Ranch
Will & Asta Covert
3600 Roblar Ave.
Santa Ynez, CA 93460
(805) 688-1393 (phone)
(805) 688-0629 (fax)
info@tolt.net
www.tolt.net

Mountain Icelandic Farm
Annette Coulon
620 Calabasas Rd.
Watsonville, CA 95076
(831) 722-8774 (phone)
annette@mountainicelandics.com
www.mountainicelandics.com

Sunland Ranch Icelandic Horses
Kimberly Hart
3675 Copper Crest
Olivenhain, CA 92024
(858) 472-1626 (phone)
(858) 759-8577 (fax)
kmbryhrt@sbcglobal.net
www.sunlandranch.com

Valhalla Icelandic Horses
Stina & Steinar Sigurbjornsson
17498 Santa Rosa Mine Rd
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(818) 808-8089 (phone)
(818) 890-4569 (fax)
valhallaicelandic@mac.com
www.valhallaicelandic.com

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Hestar Ranch
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(970) 883-2531 (phone)
m.meier@hestar-ranch.us
www.hestar-ranch.us

Lough Arrow Icelandics
Andrea Brodie, Dvm
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Aguilar, CO 81020
(505) 238-0896 (phone)
fiddlinvet@gmail.com
tinyurl.com/3xn3yys

Tamangur Icelandic Horses
Coralie Denmeade
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Monument, CO 80132
(719) 209-2312 (phone)
coralie@tamangur-icelandics.com
www.tamangur-icelandics.com

GEORGIA

Creekside Farm
Katrin Sheehan
3170 Double Bridges Road
Rutledge, GA 30663
(706) 347-0900 (phone)
(706) 342-2026 (fax)
kat@creeksidefarm.com
www.creeksidefarm.com

INDIANA

Windstar
Bonnie L. Windell
4845 Warrenton Road
Evansville, IN 47725
(812) 983-4125 (phone)
bonniwindell@yahoo.com
www.windstarranch.com

KENTUCKY

Gudmar Petursson Icelandic Horses
Gudmar Petursson
8901 Hwy 329
Crestwood, KY 40014
(502) 243-9996 (phone)
gudmarp@gudmar.com
www.gudmar.com

MAINE

Boulder Ridge Farm
Brian & Cindy Wescott
1271 Cape Rd
Limington, ME 04049
(207) 637-2338 (phone)
bricelandics@yahoo.com
www.bricelandics.com

Grand View Farm
Charles & Peggy Gilbert
137 North Road
Dixmont, ME 04932
(207) 257-2278 (phone)
(207) 941-9871 (fax)
grandviewfarm@midmaine.com

MASSACHUSETTS

Four Winds Farm
Lori B. Leo
703 Hanover Street
Hanover, MA 02339
(617) 827-2001 (phone)
(781) 829-2276 (fax)
fourwinds@fourwindsicelandics.com
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MINNESOTA

Crow River Icelandics
Sharon & David Johnson
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sharonhilljohn@hotmail.com
www.crowrivericelandics.com

North Star Icelandics
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Connie Anderson
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caaenglishrider@yahoo.com

Meant To Be Farm
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109 Germanski Lane
New Castle, PA 16102
(724) 667-4184 (phone)
juli2875@yahoo.com
www.meanttobefarm.com

SOUTH CAROLINA

Black Creek Farm
Sarah C. Elkin
449 Jewell Boone Rd.
Pelion, SC 29123
(803) 894-4514 (phone)
bigdoglady@pbtcomm.net
web.me.com/blackcreekfarm

TENNESSEE

Clear Springs Hollow Farm
Marianne E. Filka & Ronnie D. Roark
137 Hugh Garland Rd.
Jonesborough, TN 37659
(423) 753-6075 (phone)
(423) 753-6075 (fax)
filkaroark@embarqmail.com
filka-roarkhorses.com

VERMONT

Silver Maple Icelandic Horse Farm
Susan Peters
106 Gilley Road
Tunbridge, VT 05077
(802) 889-9585 (phone)
susan.peters@gmail.com
www.silvermapleicelandics.com

WASHINGTON

Evans Farm-Orcas Island
Wanda & John Evans
P.O. Box 116
Olga, WA 98279
(360) 379-4961 (phone)
evansfarm@orcasonline.com
www.icelandichorsesnorthwest.com

Lone Cedar Icelandic Horses
Dawn Shaw
P.O. Box 524
451 E. Murray Road N
Grapeview, WA 98546
(360) 275-7542 (phone)
theherd@oz.net
www.lonecedariclandichorses.com

Red Feather Icelandics
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Manadis Fra Shaggy Mountain: US2004202674 Affectionately called our little black wonder! Like her sire, Omur Fra Brun, Manadis is a natural tolt and pacing machine! She is brave and solid on the trail. Because she is such a mover, her rider should have the confidence to match. Don't let her smaller size fool you as she is strong and has stamina. We will only sell her to a smaller rider. She was trained by Laura Benson.

\$9000



Brynja Fra Rhythmill: US200120783 "Big B," is a beautiful 14 hand chestnut mare. She is great on the trail and her walk trot and cantor are top quality. Because her tolt is underdeveloped she is being sold as a three gait.

\$6000



Lilja Fra Shaggy Mountain: US2004202692 Sweet Lilja is a competition quality mare who is also great on the trail. She loves people and is a good size, very pretty and quiet. Her pedigree is no less than royalty. She has been professionally trained by Laura Benson. This very talented mare would be perfect for a beginner or intermediate rider who might want to start showing. She has the talent but is not fiery and very light on the bit.

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Kaeti Fra Shaggy Mountain: US2006203213 Kaeti has it all, beauty, talent, temperament and has a honor prize pedigree that will impress you. Her conformation and elegant gaits are clearly worth having her evaluated. At this time, she is not showing pace. She has been trained by Laura Benson. This last fall, Kaeti attended a 3 day training session with Sindri Sigurdsson and was tolt by the 2nd day. She is very good on the trail, especially for a youngster. However, she is not "finished" in gait training.

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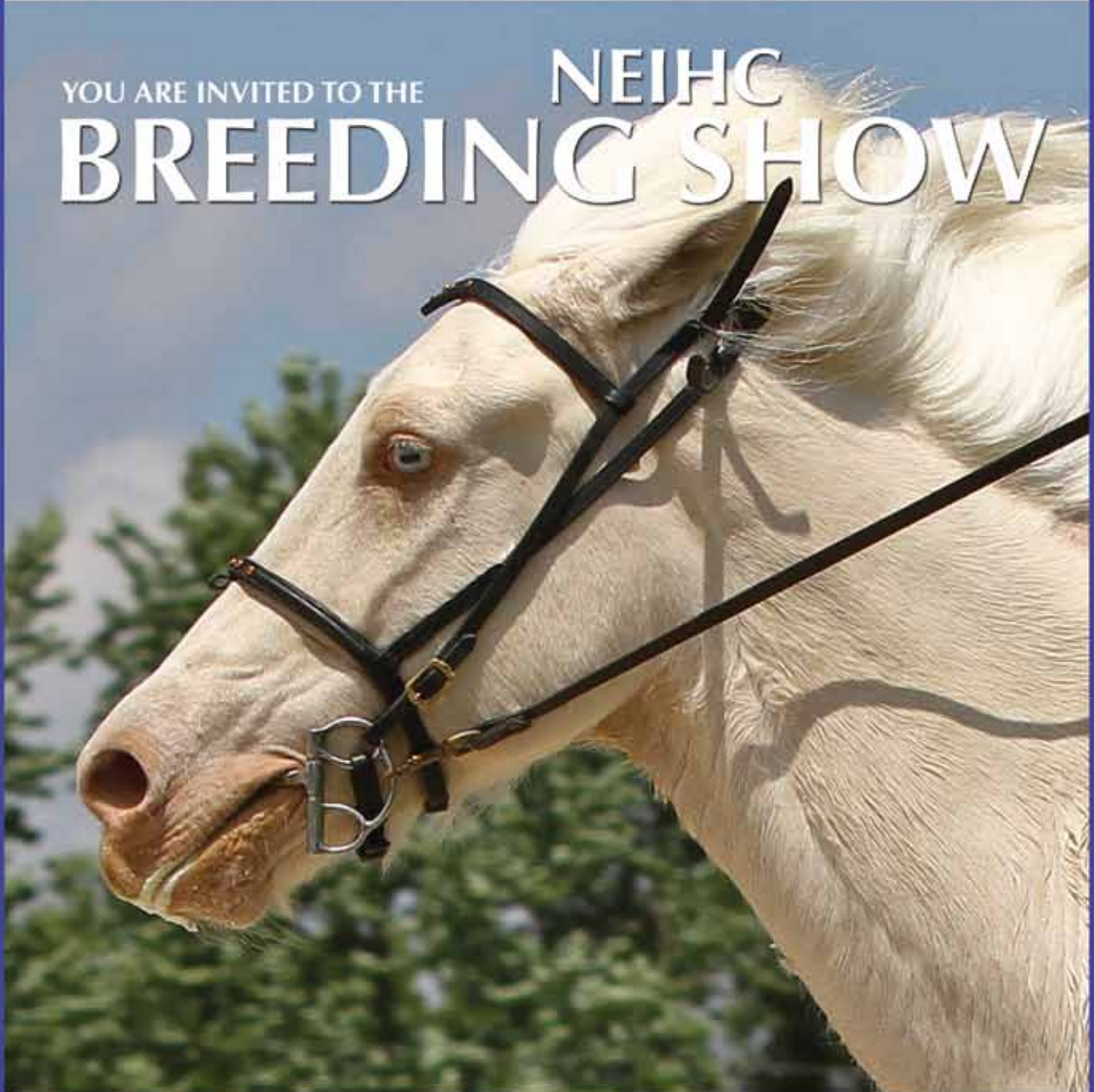
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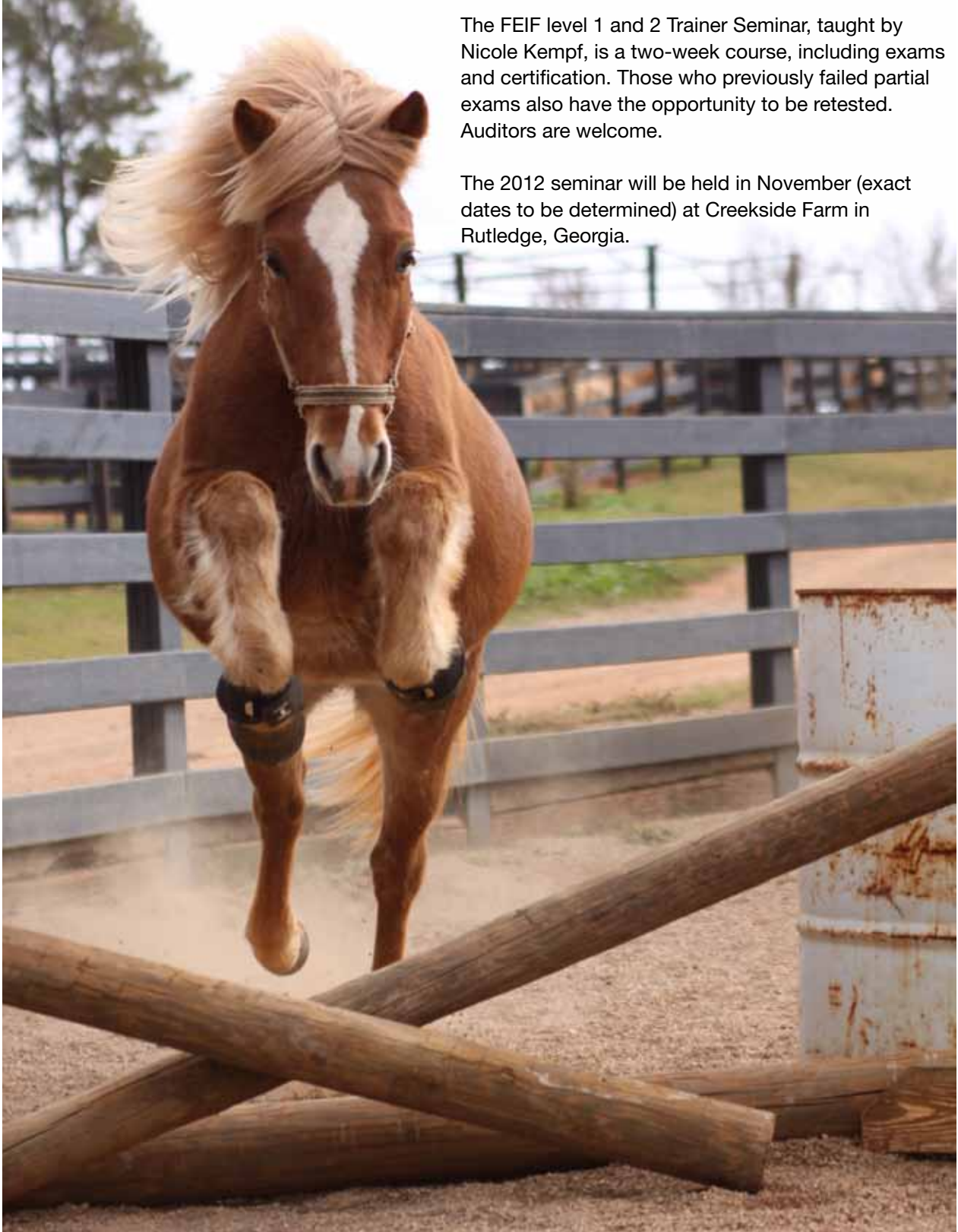
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For prerequisites, restrictions, and other information, please go to <http://www.icelandics.org/Trainers/seminar.php>. For further information, please email education@icelandics.org

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