

ISSUE THREE

THE

2013

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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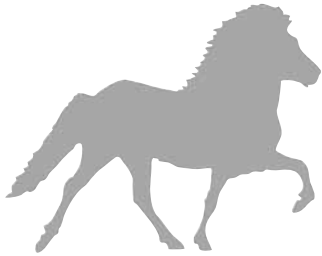
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THE
ICELANDIC
HORSE
QUARTERLY
Issue Three 2013

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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ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y

5 NEWS

- 5 USIHC News
- 8 FEIF News
- 10 Regional Club Updates

16 FEATURES

- 16 Got Ideas? Need Money? *Introduction by Sara Lyter*
- 19 A Visit to Winterhorse Park *Interview by Carol Andrew*
- 24 What Is Bone Spavin? *By Pamela S. Nolf*
- 30 Go the Distance *Book Review by Alys Culhane*
- 32 Youth Days *By Amy Goddard*
- 35 Youth Essays *By Quinn Thomashow and Anja Stadelmann*
- 37 Hunter Pace! *By Nicki Esdorn*
- 40 Carrie Excels at Hólar *By Laura Benson*
- 42 Genetics Behind Gait *By Ann Staiger*
- 43 Letters

44 MARKETPLACE

On the cover: "Bliss." Carol Downs and Albina share a sweet moment before a riding clinic. Carol was in western Iceland this summer for an America2Iceland "Educate and Rejuvenate" trip. All the participants on this trip were students of Heidi Benson of Centaur City Icelandics in California. Photo by Rebecca Bing.



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 Asta 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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GENERAL MEETING

The USIHC Board of Directors invites all members to take part in the 2013 General Members Meeting, scheduled for September 20 at 5:00 p.m. before a hosted pizza party at the NEIHC Open Show at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY. The meeting is an opportunity for the membership to engage directly with the Board on any topic of interest.

NEW USIHC BROCHURES

A USIHC subcommittee consisting of writer Pamela Nolf, designer Christine Vowles, and chair Kathy Lockerbie has created a new USIHC brochure to be handed out at events to promote the Icelandic horse. The brochure highlights the gaits, temperament, colors, history, and versatility of the Icelandic horse, and gives

The Icelandic Horse



The new USIHC brochure is available now from the Promotion Committee. Cover photo by Martina Gates.



Young rider Madison Prestine prepares her horse Straumur frá Enni for the World Championship tryouts in California last May. Madison qualified for the U.S. team that competed in Berlin in August. Photo by Will Covert.

information on the USIHC, FEIF, and the U.S. Regional Clubs. Photographs were contributed by Chris Bancel, Andrea Barber, Will Covert, Martina Gates, and Kathy Matthews. Brochures are available through the Promotion Committee; contact Juli Cole (promotion@icelandics.org or 724-667-4184).

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2013 Icelandic Horse World Championships took place in Berlin, Germany, from August 4-11, while this issue of the *Quarterly* was at press. Representing the U.S. were USIHC members Ásta D. Bjarnadóttir-Covert, Shannon Hughes, Chrissy Seipolt, and young rider Madison Prestine; Katrin Sheehan qualified but decided not to compete this year. The U.S. team leader is Doug Smith. For more information, visit the official website at www.berlin2013.de. We will be reporting on the championships in the December issue.

Tryouts for the U.S. Team were held from May 25 to June 1 in California, in Georgia, at two locations in New York, in Germany, and by video; the judge was Thorgeir Guðlaugsson. Fifteen riders competed, some on more than one horse, with 10 of the riders competing

for “scores only”—meaning they had no intention of attending this year’s World Championships but wanted the experience of competing in elite company before an international judge. Of those 10 “scores only” riders, three scored high enough to qualify for the team.

U.S. EVALUATIONS

A FEIF International Breeding Evaluation was held May 14-15 at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI. Judges were Johannes Hoyos and Barbara Frische; show manager was Barb Riva. Riders presenting the horses were Guðmar Pétursson, Gunnar Eggertsson, Katrin Sheehan, and Steinunn Reynisdóttir. Eleven horses were shown for full evaluation, five for conformation only. Seven of these horses were bred at Winterhorse Park (*see the story in this issue*). There was also a young horse evaluation.

The highest judged horse overall was the six-year-old mare Revia from Vinland (US2007203569), owned and bred by Martina Gates. Revia’s total score was 8.12, with 8.14 for rideability and 8.08 for conformation. Revia was presented by Guðmar Pétursson. Revia is a daughter of the stallion Stigandi frá Leysingjastöðum



Revia from Vinland, bred by Martina Gates, proudly shows off her champion's ribbon. Revia was the highest judged horse at the U.S. Evaluations at Winterhorse Park in Wisconsin in May, with a total score of 8.12. Photo by Steven Steele Cawman.

and the mare Ósk from Helms Hill, who currently is the highest judged domestic-bred horse in the U.S. Her daughter Revia is now the second highest judged domestic-bred horse and qualified for the Icelandic Horse World Championships in Berlin this year.

EVALUATIONS IN CANADA

A FEIF International Breeding Evaluation was also held by our sister organization, the Canadian Icelandic Horse Federation (CIHF), on June 15-16 at Fitjamyri Icelandic Horse Farm in Vernon, British Columbia. Judges were Sigbjörn Björnsson and John Siiger Hansen. Twenty horses were shown for full evaluation and four for conformation only, plus there was a young horse evaluation. Three of the horses shown were bred in the United States, one was from Iceland, and the rest were Canadian-bred.

The four-gaited Canadian-bred mare Sida from Fitjamyri (CA2005202281), owned and bred by Trace Faber, earned the highest overall score at this evalua-

tion: 7.99. Sida scored 7.82 for rideability and 8.26 for conformation. She was presented by Vignir Siggeirsson.

2013 SHOWS

The 2013 show season is in full swing, with the Sumarmót Icelandic Horse Competition, a USIHC-sanctioned show, held at Winterhorse Park Icelandics in Eagle, WI, on July 20-21. The Flugnirkeppni, another sanctioned show, will be held at the same location on September 7-8, sponsored by the Flugnir Regional Club. Contact Kevin Draeger (toltkid@hotmail.com) for more information.

The same weekend, September 7-8, the Frida Icelandic Riding Club (FIRC) is holding a schooling show with judge Katrin Sheehan at Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon, VA. See the FIRC website (firc.us) for details.

The Northeast Icelandic Horse Club (NEIHC) is holding an open sanctioned show on September 21-22 at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY. The judge will be Will Covert. Contact Thorunn Kristjánsdóttir (thorunn designs@gmail.com) for more information.

The 2013 CIA Open Invitational Triple World Ranking Event, a USIHC-sanctioned series of shows organized by

the California Icelandic Association, will be held at Hunivellir in Santa Ynez, CA on October 18-20. See www.tolt.net for information or contact Ásta Covert at 805-688-1393.

YOUTH CUP TRYOUTS

As in the past, tryouts for the 2014 FEIF Youth Cup will be open to Congress members of all ages who wish to submit videos (DVDs) for scores; these scores will be judged by the same FEIF judge and can be used for National Ranking. For complete information, see the FEIF Youth Cup information page on the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org/youth/youthcup2014.php.

Tryout videos must be made between January 1, 2013 and November 27, 2013. The tryout entry deadline is December 1, 2013.

Congress members aged between 14 and 17 are eligible to compete at the 2014 Youth Cup, to be held July 11-20 at Hólar in Iceland. For full details on how to prepare your application—including the tryout video, an “experience” essay, and two personal references—see the FEIF Youth Cup information page on the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org/youth/youthcup2014.php or contact Ame-



Kevin Draeger rides Ari frá Nordurstjarna in the T1 Finals at the Sumarmót Icelandic Horse Show, held at Winterhorse Park, WI. Photo by Maggie Draeger.



Freyja from Lone Cedar, owned and bred by USIHC member Dawn Shaw, was one of three U.S.-bred horses to be evaluated at the CIHF Breedshow in Canada in June. Freyja received 7 for rideability and 8.11 for conformation. She was presented by Jelena Ohm. Photo by Dawn Shaw.

lie Brewster (ameliebrewster@yahoo.com or 646-709-2526). Finalists will be notified by January 17, 2014.

Information on volunteering to be team leader and country leader is also available on that page.

BOARD MEETINGS

Minutes of the USIHC Board of Directors' meetings held in May, June, and July, along with the monthly treasurer's reports, are available on the USIHC website (www.icelandics.org) under The Congress, Board of Directors.

In May, the board approved the budget for the breed evaluations at Winterhorse Park; approved the content and appearance of the new brochure; decided to ask Thor Icelandics for permission to hold a general meeting at the NEIHC sanctioned show in September; approved revisions to the Booth Use Agreement (for the Promotion Committee); and suggested revisions to the Youth Cup Tryout forms and procedures (for the Youth Committee). The FEIF SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis document, already discussed in April, was forwarded to the Regional



Ásta Covert scored highest at the U.S. World Championships team tryouts in May and June. She was one of 15 riders who competed at four venues; 10 rode for "scores only" from an international judge. Photo by Will Covert.

Clubs chair to seek club input.

In June, the secretary reported USIHC membership has topped 400. The Breeding Committee reported "a vigorous discussion regarding abolishing the stallion report" and plans for a new foal evaluation tour. The Website Committee reported that the Horse Search feature now draws directly from WorldFengur. The Registrar also now has the ability to print our *Certificate of Registration* from the website, based on WorldFengur data. The Promotion Committee presented cost estimates for printing 5,000 copies of the new brochure, and the Board asked that the design subcommittee sign off on the proof before the copies are printed. The Board approved revisions to the Youth Cup Tryout forms. They discussed the minimal response of the Regional Clubs to the FEIF SWOT analysis request; the request will be posted on the USIHC website and Facebook page to gain member input. The Web Committee and the Youth Advisory Board were both disbanded. The Board approved the new Grant Funding Policy for individual grants to members or Regional Clubs, with initial funding for 2013 of \$8,000 (see the article in this issue of the *Quarterly*).

In July, the secretary reported that the Registry Office would be closed from July 22 to August 19 because of the World Championships. The treasurer noted that her monthly financial statements (available in the Board Meeting minutes on the website) now include a detailed breakdown of the cash owned by the Congress. The Promotion Committee reported that a new production manager volunteered to oversee printing of the brochure; the design subcommittee made small corrections to the proof; a new printer was selected and a new quote received. The Board approved the printing of 5,000 copies by KB Offset, the printer who produces the *Quarterly*. Revisions to the new Grant Funding Policy were approved. Nicki Esdorn was approved as co-chair of the *Quarterly* Committee.

WORLD RANKING RULES

After 15 years of WorldRanking the FEIF Sport Committee has decided that it is time to renew the requirements for WorldRanking Events. The changes will help organizers ensure that events meet international standards. The aim is still to keep results comparable and to see that judging is done in a proper way. For many organizers the changes will not have any effect, as these requirements are already being met. The changes include:

- three instead of two international sport judges in WorldRanking tests, with at least one judge having his or her residence in another country;
- to ensure proper judging, the time the judges are judging must be limited to reasonable hours;
- equipment and injury checks must be done on all horses in the finals and on at least 25 percent of the horses in the preliminary rounds in WorldRanking tests;
- in order to keep the results (especially in Five Gait F1 and F2) comparable, only 250-meter oval tracks are allowed (no 200 meter tracks or P-tracks);
- the speaker must announce in English (as well as in the home language of the event) or at least in a language that all judges (and preferably all riders and the public) can understand

FEIF YOUTH CAMP

The 2013 FEIF Youth Camp, for young riders ages 12-18, took place July 22-28 at the Icelandic horse farm Stall Kjersem, in Romsdal, Norway (online at stall-kjersem.no). It was sponsored by the Norwegian Icelandic Horse Federation and the local riding club Vestnes. The program included hiking and riding in the magnificent Norwegian mountains, a clinic on starting and training young horses, training for a local horse show, a visit to World Champion Stian Pedersen's stable, a dip in a wood-fired hot-tub, shopping in the city of Ålesund, and a sightseeing trip to Geiranger Fjord. For information on future FEIF Youth Camps, contact



the USIHC Youth leader Laurie Prestine (408-354-2828 or youth@icelandics.org).

OPEN SPORT JUDGES' TEST

To become a FEIF Licensed Sport Judge or National Sport Judge, candidates must pass the FEIF sport judges' test. The next one will be administered on October 3-4, 2013 at Kronshof, Dahlenburg, Germany (near Hamburg). Contact the USIHC Sport leader Will Covert (805-688-1393 or competition@icelandics.org) if you are interested in taking the test.

WORLDFENGUR

The 2013 WorldFengur workshop will take place in Malmö, Sweden on October 25-27 and is open to the WF registrars of all FEIF member associations. It will take place at the same time and location as the FEIF committee meetings. The aim of the workshop is to improve the "know-how" of the registrars, to introduce new features in WorldFengur, and to further develop it.

EDUCATION SEMINAR

The 2013 FEIF Education Seminar will be held in the Agersta Icelandic Center near Uppsala, Sweden on September 6-8. A number of proficient and well-known instructors, among them Mette Manseth, Stian Pedersen, and Magnús Skúlason will demonstrate how they work, which teaching techniques they use, and will explain their goals in their work. And there will

be enough time for discussions and questions and other interesting topics like the "pace gene." For information on future seminars, contact USIHC Education leader Katrin Sheehan (706-997-9011 or education@icelandics.org).

SPORT JUDGES

About 50 International Sport Judges from Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and Austria attended the International Sport Judges Seminar in Berlin on April 5-6. The main item was practical judging (and discussing judgements) based upon selected video material. The evening program contained lectures about invisible rough riding and doping procedures. Furthermore the judges discussed the next step in the new guidelines, based upon a system connected to the key elements in judging: riding skills/connection, beat/balance, suppleness/relaxation, physiology/locomotion, and execution of the test elements. Judges with an international license are obliged to attend such a seminar at least once every three years.

BREEDING HORSE TRAINERS

The third FEIF seminar for breeding horse trainers was held at Skeiðavellir, Iceland in April with 18 participants from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, and Iceland. "It was a very interesting seminar



with a group of young riders very eager to learn," said the organizers. The topics of the seminar were conformation and presentation (Svanhildur Hall and Magnús Lárusson), presentation riding assessment (Sibbi frá Lundum and Guðmundur Björgvinsson), training of pace (Davíð Jónsson), horse shoeing (Sigurður Sæmundsson), and young rider / experience (Ásmundur Ernir). Then all riders presented their horses to the judges and trainers and got tips on how they could improve their marks the next day. On Saturday evening the whole group went to Reykjavík for the show at Fákur in Víðidalur. A great weekend with a talented group of riders whom we will certainly see on various breeding tracks in the future.

DOPING CASE

The independent arbitration council of our German member association IPZV has come to a verdict in the doping case at the 2012 Mid European Championships against the Austrian Rider Petra Reiter-Tropfer. The rider is suspended for a period of seven months and has to pay a fine of EUR 2000. Reiter-Tropfer's horse, Sjarmi frá Skriðuklaustri, tested positive for the prohibited substance mefenamic acid. Mefenamic acid is included in the list of prohibited substances of the Deutsche Reiterliche Vereinigung (FN), the general authority for horse sport in Germany. As Reiter-Tropfer had already been suspended in Austria in October 2012, the German arbitration council decided that, based upon the penalty of a seven-month suspension, she is no longer banned. This means that Reiter-Tropfer is now allowed to compete in all FEIF member countries. The board of IPZV had asked for a ban of 12 month plus a fine.

NEW MATRIX

The revised FEIF Instructor and Trainer Matrix, launched by the FEIF Education Committee, now includes the list of skills it takes to become a young-horse trainer. Every instructor or trainer at levels 1-3 who has qualified in one of the FEIF member states is entered into the list of instructors on the FEIF website. This list

can be searched by country and by the level of qualification, providing a good overview of the instructors working in each geographical area. The matrix summarises the minimum skills, experience, and knowledge that can be expected from a qualified instructor or trainer at a given level.

FEIF CODE OF ETHICS

The Board of FEIF presented the FEIF Code of Ethics to the Delegates' Assembly in Strasbourg, France on February 8. The Code of Ethics focuses on fair play, friendship, respect for others, and respect for the horses. The members of the Board were the first ones to sign the Code of Ethics. Members of committees and other persons connected to FEIF will be invited to sign as well. Member associations are asked to follow this initiative.

Any activity organized within FEIF or its member organizations is a social and cultural activity which enriches society and friendship between nations. Sport and breeding events are recognized as activities which, if played and conducted fairly, offer the individual the opportunity for self-knowledge, self-expression and fulfilment, personal achievement, skill acquisition, and demonstration of ability, social interaction, enjoyment, good health and well-being, and the joy of working together with the horses. Joint activities, whether relating to sport, breeding, or leisure riding, promote involvement and responsibility in society and the environment through a wide range of clubs and individuals working voluntarily. In addition, responsible involvement in some activities can help to promote sensitivity to the environment.

Fair play is defined as much more than just playing by the rules. It incorporates the concepts of friendship, respect for others, and respect for the horses. Horsemanship and sportsmanship are defined as ways of thinking, not just ways of behaving. Fair play requires everyone to strive to be a role model in his or her own capacity and incorporates issues concerned with the elimination of cheating; the use of unfair strategies while respecting the wording of the rules; doping and



misuse of nutritional supplements; physical or verbal violence, sexual harassment, and abuse of children, young people, and women; unethical exploitation or treatment of the horses involved; and excessive commercialization and corruption.

LEISURE RIDING

The FEIF Leisure Riding Committee has launched a survey of member countries on the possibilities for riders to access nature. The survey was initiated on the basis of the discussions at the recent FEIF conference in Strasbourg. Two major issues were discussed then by the Leisure Riding Committee: 1) What characterizes the ideal leisure riding horse? 2) How do we preserve the ability to access nature for riders in the future? Both issues seemed to be highly relevant to all participating member countries. The results of the survey will be useful in identifying solutions and approaches to securing access. The Leisure Riding Committee hopes that responses will be received by the end of September for further processing. Meanwhile the committee will continue discussions on the characteristics of the ideal leisure riding horse.

REGIONAL CLUB UPDATES

ALASKA ICELANDIC HORSE ASSOCIATION

BY FRAN BUNDTZEN

After one of the latest springs on record, with snow and freezing temperatures persisting well into May, summer has finally arrived in Alaska. The Alaska Icelandic Horse Association has hit the ground toltng. We were represented by Dick Stoffel riding Karmen and Vickie Talbot riding Hunar in the First Annual MatSu area Trail Trials Competition, held May 11 at the Peters Creek Horse Park. In addition to negotiating the standard obstacles such as gates, mailboxes, walking over plastic sheeting, etc., the horses were required to circle a small pen holding a reindeer. Dick and Vickie both had fun and learned a lot from this competition.

We held a three-day clinic, May 25-27 with Steinar Sigurbjörnsson at Arctic Arrow Farm in Wasilla. All three days had gorgeous weather, with lots of sunshine and temperatures that bordered on too warm for long rides on the horses this early in the season. The clinic was full, with 12 participants, including four new young riders. Steinar provided an outstanding learning environment, offering positive suggestions and instruction for both the experienced and beginning rider. He greatly enjoyed his first trip to Alaska and saw many similarities to his native Iceland. Each rider had two semi-private lessons per day both in and out of the arena. Developing each horse's tolt was a highlight of the clinic, as well as confidence-building for the riders. As always Jeanette Willis offered wonderful meals, and everyone had a chance to visit and update friendships with their fellow riders. We will look forward to another visit from Steinar in the near future.

One of our club members, Alys Culhane, took first place in the Adult Western Pacific division of the USIHC Pleasure Riding Program for 2012. She also made it into the 2500-hour category. Alys and her husband, Pete Praetorius, are planning to complete the second half of their Continental Divide Ride this summer. Two years ago they rode 500 miles from southern to northern Colorado (see Issue 4-2011 of the *Quarterly* for an article about that trip). This summer they will continue on through Montana to the Canadian border with their three



Alaska Icelandic Horse Association member Dick Stoffel and Karmen check out the penned reindeer at the MatSu Area Trail Trials Competition in May.

Icelandics, Raudi, Siggí, and Signý.

Upcoming events include a June 22 clinic by local instructor Gwen Bogart at Arctic Arrow Farm in Wasilla, and two Bill Burke clinics. One is to be held on the Kenai Peninsula, July 17-19, and the second at Arctic Arrow Farm on July 20-21. Bill has been the instructor for several of our clinics in recent years, and we are always happy to have him back.

For more information, see www.alaskaicelandics.org

FLUGNIR ICELANDIC HORSE ASSOCIATION (WISCONSIN & MINNESOTA)

BY WADE ELMBLAD
AND KYDEE SHEETZ

Greetings from Flugnir Icelandic Horse Association of the Midwest. Spring and summer 2013 have been shaping up to be very busy for Flugnir and its members. In May, at the Vorkeppni competition and Breeding Evaluation hosted by Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI, Flugnir provided concession food service as a fund raiser for the Flugnir Youth Fund. Barb and Dan Riva provided their kitchen resources again for the group. A big thank-you to Dan and Barb Riva, Roger and Kathleen Haab, Sharron Cretney, Roberta Rose, and Judy Strehler for covering food



Belle Schloner (youth rider) and Tandri from Aslan's Country enjoying the Flugnir clinic with Laura Benson. Photo by Deb Cook.

costs and providing service with a smile, which allowed our group to clear over \$400 in profits for our Flugnir Youth Fund.

June 22-23, Flugnir members Lori Cretney, Jessica Elmlad, Jaime Ballweg, Wade Elmlad, and Steinunn Reynisdóttir participated in gait demonstrations and general education at the historical living museum of Old World Wisconsin. The museum was holding their Scandinavian Days, and the addition of Icelandic horses was a great fit. Setting up a temporary paddock for our

CALIFORNIA ICELANDIC HORSE ASSOCIATION (CENTRAL COAST)



Scenes from the CIA Open, a USIHC-Sanctioned Show held April 27-28 at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. The judge was Rune Svendsen. Clockwise from top left: Laura Benson riding Stjarni frá Blönduósi; they took fourth in V1 Four-Gait and second in T1 Tolt. Rachel Ng on Kaliber frá Lækjarbotnum on the track during the T1 Tolt finals. Winners of the T1 Tolt A-Finals (from left): Ásta Covert on Dynjandi frá Dalvik (first), Laura Benson on Stjarni frá Blönduósi (second), Christina Granados on Hroftur from Hobby Horse (third), Madison Prestine on Straumur frá Enni (fourth), Rachel Ng on Kaliber frá Lækjarbotnum (fifth), and Heidi Benson on Birta from Icelandic Horse Farm (sixth place), with judge Rune Svendsen. Ásta Covert competing in tolt on Maistjarna frá Ólafsbergi. Photos by Will Covert. The next CIA show will be the Open Invitational Triple WorldRanking Event, held at Hunavellir in Santa Ynez, CA on October 18-20. See www.tolt.net for more information on the show; for information on the CIA club, see www.ciaclub.net.



Dave Loftness riding Una concentrates on Laura Benson's advice at the Flugnir clinic.

four horses close to the festivities and hanging several Icelandic flags on the split-rail fence created a nice visual touch. During gait demonstrations, Shelley Elmsblad answered questions about the Icelandic breed from people in the crowd and handed out Flugnir brochures. Marcia Carmichael, Historical Gardens Coordinator at Old World Wisconsin wrote in an email, "It was our absolute pleasure to have you, your riders, your



Flugnir member Jackie Alschuler introduces Rauðskinni frá Grafarkoti to his fans at the Minnesota Horse Expo. Photo by Deb Cook.



Flugnir members Nick Cook, Sharon Johnson, and Kevin Draeger riding in the Icelandic horse breed demo at the Minnesota Horse Expo. Photos above and left by Deb Cook.

family, and your fabulous horses with us this weekend. Such a wonderful addition to our Scandinavian celebration! Your presence made the weekend extra special for us and for so many of our guests."

In June we had an amazing three-day clinic with Laura Benson. This gifted young instructor brought great enthusiasm to her task of teaching a variety of students, ranging from riders participating in their very first clinic to people with many years of experience. Since the weather was less than ideal and consisted primarily of three days of nearly continuous dense fog with a chilly wind coming off Lake Superior, participants were grateful for the option of riding in the large indoor arena at Kydee Sheetz's Aslan's Country Icelandic Horse Farm near Duluth, MN. Says Kydee, "We kept warm with enthusiasm, hot tea, and lots of fleece!" The riding participants enjoyed a private lesson each day. The first day Laura rode all 10 horses herself and then worked individually with each rider together with his or her horse. The second and third days, Laura continued with lesson plans that she designed in the evenings for each horse-and-rider combination.

The most exciting part of this clinic was the amazing youth participation. Flugnir

experimented with the idea of attracting youth to this clinic by offering them free club membership and free auditing, in addition to providing each young rider who came with a suitable horse. Flugnir members came together in an amazing display of dedication to our breed, with every arriving trailer carrying one or more extra horses for the kids to ride for the weekend. This experiment was a tremendous success, with seven youth riders bringing excitement and energy to the event. To keep the kids interested during the day, they were invited to ride around the property on trail rides when they were not watching the lessons.

The rain made for lots of practice with water crossings! The evenings were wonderful, with hilarious games (ever seen a licorice race?) and obstacle work directed by Dave and Eve Loftness.

Human participants in the evening races ranged from age 12 to senior citizens, and one of the winning horses in the licorice race was an equine senior citizen at age 26. Needless to say, the evenings were filled with laughter, cheers, and fast horses. The tired but happy group teamed up amazingly on the final afternoon, as everyone worked hard to clean up the property, put away the por-

table paddocks, and load up horses, vowing to return another time for more learning, fun, and fellowship.

For more information, see www.flugnir.org

FRIDA ICELANDIC RIDING CLUB (FIRC-MID-ATLANTIC STATES)

BY TONY COLICCHIO

The FIRC club performed a drill team demonstration at the Warren County, VA county horse expo on April 7, led by the FIRC drill team director Rich Moore. FIRC also had a display booth for Icelandic horses. On April 13, Laura Colicchio hosted the annual Wisteria Trail ride in Rosaryville State Park and had a picnic afterwards.

The long-planned second annual USIHC-sanctioned FIRC Icelandic Show was held on May 18-19 and was well attended. The show was held at the Frying Pan Park horse complex in Herndon, VA. Special thanks go to the FIRC show committee members: Pat Moore (show manager), Sali Peterson, and Sverrir Bjartmarz, who pulled off a great show for the region. Other activities for the show included an art show raffle and a show dinner on Saturday night.

FIRC Vice President Laura Colicchio organized the second annual riding “camp” in Prospect, KT, with Guðmar Pétursson at the helm teaching and training. The lucky participants were President Tony Colicchio, Laura Colicchio, Joanne Trostle, Antje Freygang, Charlotte Reilly, Dot Connors-Storer, Mitch Martin, and Anna DeWall, who joined us from Iowa. There were private lessons, drill team practice, pairs riding, semi-private lessons, and a reverse clinic on the topic of “Why things go wrong.” This was a particularly interesting and beneficial clinic, as riders witnessed the “wrong” way of doing things and the resulting influence on the horse.

Future events include a schooling show at Frying Pan Park in September.

For more information, see www.firc.us

KATLA ICELANDIC HORSE CLUB (VERMONT)

BY ALICE RYAN

During the last week of April, six members of the Katla Club and two guests spent a week riding in Akureyri, Iceland. Although



Katrin Sheehan riding Tango at the Frida Icelandic Riding Club's Sanctioned Show, held in Virginia in May. Photo by Susan Milloy McPhatter.



Amanda Grace on Rokkvi and Antje Freygang on Ari enjoying a break during the FIRC's Sanctioned Show in May. Photo by Susan Milloy McPhatter.



Marilyn Tully opens the gate for riders Lynne Wiese on Gipar and Hannah Hofmann on Samur to enter the track at the FIRC's Sanctioned Show in May. Photo by Susan Milloy McPhatter.

the official first day of summer took place while we were there, the entire week brought us full-on winter weather. This altered some of our riding plans, but we still managed to have some wonderful days riding in the Eyjafjörður Valley. Our last outdoor ride included a day of rekstur, exercising a herd, in the Horgárdalur Valley just before an incoming blizzard.

Back in the U.S., the club has a series of schooling shows planned monthly from June through October, which will take place in Waitsfield and Tunbridge, VT.

For more information, see www.katlaicelandichorseclub.com

NORTHEAST ICELANDIC HORSE CLUB (NEIHC—NORTHEASTERN US)

BY AMY GODDARD

Spring and early summer have had their ups and downs with weather, but we've managed to squeeze in lots of events here in the northeast. NEIHC members have been busy!

On May 4, Heleen Heyning and Amy Goddard rode in an ACTHA (American Competitive Trail Horse Association) ride hosted by Rosemary Farm Animal Sanctuary in South Kortright, NY. Amy and Randver placed first, while Heleen and Seima took fourth, in the pleasure division. These rides are incredibly fun, great for your horse's agility, and fantastic promotion for the breed. In addition, 20 percent of proceeds from every ACTHA ride are donated to the charity of the host's choice.

Silver Maple Farm in Tunbridge, VT has been buzzing with events and activities throughout the spring and summer. One of the most popular was on May 18. “It was a photo nature scavenger hunt along the beautiful trails through our hills of Tunbridge,” writes Jana Meyer. “You are here today, a few things to find, so look around, but please be kind! They're natures' treasures—our pleasures. Please take your cameras out, where they are needed.” Those were the first lines on the paper everyone got at our first annual Scavenger Hunt Ride. A clue: ‘We'd like to see 3 shades of red, an animal that's being fed, something yellow or even gold in both your hands you shall it hold.’ On my daily rides down the road and trails, I had



NEIHC members Heleen Heyning aboard Seima (left) and Amy Goddard on Randver cross the road at an ACTHA ride in May. Photo © Rosemary Farm Sanctuary, Inc.

come up with a list of things that participants needed to find and take pictures of. The day before the ride we went out to mark the trails with clues and tasks and to put out letters to be collected and later formed into words. Well, one of my clues was maybe a little too difficult—a couple of groups were chatting away and missed the trail! Four groups, though, managed to find the right trail and came back with wonderful stories to



NEIHC youth member Bailey Soderberg riding Gella frá Kastalabrekku at the World Championships tryouts on the track at Thor Icelandics. Photo by Kara Noble.

tell and great pictures to share. The sun was shining and in the end a great barbecue was awaiting everyone. We are looking forward to doing this again next year and I promise I will improve my trail marking!”

Lianne Thomashow writes: “This summer marks one year of Icelandic horse ownership for me, the highlight of which has been spring riding with my mare Prydi frá Modrufelli. As the snow begins to melt, Silver Maple Farm creates group trail rides through the most beautiful countryside on wonderful varied trails. My respect for these steady, sensible, unflappable horses has reached new heights and each adventure is



Silver Maple Farm neighbors Richard Moses and Cord Benjamin welcomed scavenger hunt riders crossing their farm and obliged NEIHC member Lianne Thomashow on Prydi by forming a human arch for her to ride through. Photo by Terry Toy.

more fun than the last. I don’t believe I’ve laughed as much in a long time as I did during the scavenger hunt ride. My team of three decided to be subversive about the photographs we needed to take as instructed on our cleverly worded, poetic inventory list. We had fun coaxing neighbors to become human arches under which our horses had to travel, and striking silly poses with various sought treasure. Naturally we got lost, had to back-track and raced past other teams. I

think our horses secretly were rolling their eyes at the multitude of times we hopped on and off their backs in order to manipulate our environment for the photo-ops, but they were as patient as can be. The finish line barbecue, shared stories of our day’s hunt, and wonderful prizes made for a perfect day.”

World Championship tryouts were held on May 26 at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY. We congratulate the seven riders who participated that day and rode well, despite the extremely blustery weather: Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir, Caeli Cavanagh, Richard Davis, Sarah Jones, Bailey Soderberg, Quinn Thomashow, and Krista Wescott.

A clinic and schooling show were hosted by Thor Icelandics in early June. The very next day there was a demo. Nicki Esdorn writes: “On June 3, Kristján Kristjánsson from Thor Icelandics and Steinar Sigurbjörnsson came to Greenwich, CT to ride with Nicki Esdorn from High Country Icelandics in a demonstration of the Icelandic Horse at the Greenwich Riding and Trails Association’s Barn Tour. Hannah Huss, Nicki’s student, age 13, also rode on Dagfari, owned by Martina Gates. The visitors, mostly horsewomen from the Greenwich and Bedford, NY area, got to see several gorgeous private stables, and at Steeplechase Farm they had lunch and watched the demonstration. They were invited to stand in the middle of the indoor ring, and so could be very close to the horses—no barriers! Steinar, riding the black stallion Stigandi, also owned by Martina Gates, and Kristján, riding Hafeti, owned by Arsenio Paez, demonstrated all gaits, while Nicki commented and explained why such large men choose to ride such small horses! In the finale, all four riders showed off the amiable nature and spirit of the Icelandic, riding two and four abreast. Afterwards the audience could walk right up to the riders, say hello to the horses, and ask questions. They were impressed by the quality and the sweet character of the horses, especially the stallion Stigandi. A video of the event can be seen on YouTube: <http://youtu.be/XHNiD-Wn0VbE>.”

Nicki and Hannah also rode together in the annual Bedford Riding Lanes Memorial Day hunter pace, taking second place in the Junior division.

The NEIHC’s top goal this year has

been to expose more children to this wonderful breed. Four “Icelandic Horse Youth Day” events were hosted in four different locations in May and June. See the article in this issue of the *Quarterly*.

By far our largest event of the year is quickly approaching: the NEIHC Open Sanctioned Show, September 21–22 at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY. The USIHC Board is hosting a General Members Meeting and pizza party there on Friday, September 20, at 5pm. Every bit of show info you need can be found on our website: neihc.com.

For more information, see neihc.com or contact club president Martina Gates: martinagates@mac.com.

ST SKUTLA ICELANDIC HORSE CLUB (CENTRAL & WESTERN NEW YORK)

BY ANDREA BARBER

The riding season in Western New York Started off with another clinic with Gudmar Petursson on May 4–5 2013 held at the Finger Lakes Equestrian Center in scenic Canandaigua, NY. About half of the participants returned again from the clinic held in the fall, while the other half were fresh recruits. Not everyone was from the local area—several participants traveled from as far as Pennsylvania to attend. In addition, several individuals involved with other gaited breeds came to audit. As always it was a terrific event with all learning a great deal from Gudmar’s extensive knowledge. It was a great way to start off the spring/summer riding season.

But it’s not all about riding—Steven Barber has been busy researching (using all the terrific data from WorldFengur) to perform some interesting statistical analysis. He hopes to have some articles on his findings ready for publication within the next year. Most recently, at the Rochester Institute of Technology’s 5th annual Graduate Research and Creativity Symposium, Steve gave a presentation (one of four he gave on different topics) on a portion of his research entitled, “Could the Height and Hoof Length of an Icelandic Horse be the Best Predictor of its Potential Riding Abilities?” Though

none of event attendees knew anything at all about Icelandic horses, the presentation was very well received and was a hot topic of conversation throughout the day. It provided a nice change from the usual science and engineering topics.

For more information, see <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/Skutlaclub/> or contact Andrea Barber at toltstar@yahoo.com



Right, Guðmar Pétursson instructs Cordy Sullivan, riding her gelding Lýsingur frá Eyjólfstöðum, at a St Skutla Club clinic while the auditors look on. Below, Guðmar, riding Kalman frá Lækjamóti, demonstrates the proper use of the Icelandic bit. Photos by Andrea Barber.



GOT IDEAS? NEED MONEY?

BY SARA LYTER

Editor's Note: In June the USIHC Board of Directors approved a new grants program for project or event funding, with a percentage of the Congress funds to be given away each year. The amount budgeted for 2013 is \$8,000. The Quarterly asked USIHC Vice President Sara Lyter to describe how the program got started; the official policy appears on page 17.

It's easy to say, "We need to spend more money on activities." I am serving my fourth year on the USIHC Board of Directors and am currently vice president. When I first joined, it was clear to me that funding members' activities was a difficult issue. Though all the directors on the Board agreed it was important to provide funding, it was incredibly difficult to actually do it. Figuring out who gets how much and how often is the problem. No matter what decision the Board made, it seemed there were always some members who felt they were treated unfairly.

I offered to try to develop a policy that could be applied whenever members asked the USIHC for monetary support. After several months of obsessing, imagining all kinds of scenarios and weighing pros and cons, I suggested the idea of developing a grant system, such as that used by many nonprofit organizations. I formed a small subcommittee with Anne Elwell and Doug Smith, both of whom have years of experience organizing Icelandic horse activities for the Congress, as well as a clear understanding of the budget and funds belonging to the USIHC.

BACKGROUND

After consideration, it became clear that the idea of assigning specific set fees to specific activities just did not work. Expenses in various parts of the country are simply too different. For instance, the cost of airline tickets for show judges would have huge variations depending on what airport the judge might use, regardless of it being East coast, West coast, Pacific Northwest, etc. To pay \$400 toward an airline ticket could be more than is needed



Photo by Andrea Brodie.

for someone who lives by a major airport, but not nearly enough for someone who does not.

Also, our membership demographics are too vastly different from one part of the country to another for a set fee to make sense. In many ways, the membership as a whole has similar basic needs. However, it is clear that a group of members in New Mexico, for instance, has different needs and a different audience than a group in Minnesota. And a member who may be the only USIHC member for miles around has a unique situation entirely. Yet all members deserve to have equal access to monetary support from the Congress.

To try to think of every conceivable expense and assign it a value was not

something we wanted to do. It is far more productive for the members requesting the money to determine how they would budget their funds. Therefore, the grant system seemed to be a fair way to handle fund disbursements. A well-thought-out, well-organized proposal will be more likely to receive a grant. The more information that is provided to the Board, the easier it makes our job when considering whether or not to fund a grant proposal. Taking the time to prepare and plan well will lead to a more successful event, so this is a win-win for all.

IDEAS AND EVENTS

The best organization is one in which ideas and energy begin with the membership. The grant system puts the responsibility for getting funding into the hands

THE NEW USIHC GRANTS PROGRAM FOR PROJECT/ EVENT FUNDING

The USIHC is a member-driven organization. The more active and involved our members are, the stronger our organization becomes. With vast differences in locations, population, interests, and needs across the country, your Board of Directors encourages members to develop ideas and organize events that suit their individual needs. Well-thought-out proposals with requests for funding for events that meet our mission statement will be considered by the Board. The Board has developed the guidelines below to be used to assist with preparing proposals for funding requests.

The Board shall include grant funding in its annual budget. Grant proposals shall be considered on a first-come-first-served basis. The Board shall not be obligated to grant all the budgeted funds in any given year. Any funds remaining at the end of the year shall revert to the general fund of the Congress.

What sort of activities or events are appropriate?

Creative projects with impact that meet our mission statement will be considered for funding.

The USIHC has funded a number of events which were determined to be high impact and uphold our mission statement. A few examples are the first Breed Evaluations held in Oklahoma, the Gaits & Conformation Clinic, the Young Horse/Foal Tour, and Equine Affair. Each of these began as an idea, and were developed into an event by interested and active members.

Due to the diversity of our membership and the interests and needs across the country, we have determined that it is not possible to assign a uniform dollar amount for a specific type of event. Therefore, we would like to ask members to request funding using a "grant" format. The more complete a proposal is when describing the event and addressing the guidelines below, the easier it will be for the Board to determine whether funds can be granted and what amount is appropriate.

Our goal is to encourage "out-of-the-box" thinking. New, fresh ideas that

bring activities and events to new areas of the country are desirable. Redesigning existing activities and events in order to attract new participants who may not have been involved previously is also desirable. This kind of expansive thinking, supported by a well-thought-out presentation and proposal will be highly regarded when seeking funding.

This program is intended to help new projects or events on their way to financial self-sufficiency, not to provide ongoing funding.

Who may submit a proposal for funding?

Funding requests can be made by any member in good standing or by a Regional Club. The Board encourages members to utilize the numerous committees and regional clubs currently in place as resources to help in developing their ideas.

Submit your proposal to the USIHC Vice President at vice_president@icelandics.org.

Your proposal must be submitted at least 8 weeks before your event in order to give the Board time for discussion and consideration.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A FUNDING PROPOSAL

First, and foremost, when formulating your proposal, refer to our mission statement:

- Support the use and health of the Icelandic horse according to international standards.
- Advance the study, breeding, and exhibition of the Icelandic horse.
- Represent FEIF in the United States and represent the United States to FEIF.
- Maintain a registry of purebred Icelandic horses.
- Your proposal should include answers to these specific questions:
 - How does my request meet the Congress mission statement?
 - How does this activity advance the Icelandic horse's presence in the U.S. or how likely is it to increase membership in the USIHC?
 - Who does this activity serve, i.e., current members? Potential members? General public?

- How many will benefit/be reached by this activity?

Include a specific dollar amount for the requested funding, including estimated expenses/income.

DISPERSAL OF FUNDS

Funds will be reserved upon receipt and acceptance of the proposal, and disbursed upon successful completion of the event. In addition, the event organizer is required to submit a brief report after the event to summarize how the goals and the mission statement were met, and to provide feedback to the Board. These reports will help track funding and events, and will provide valuable feedback for adjustments and improvements over time.

The follow-up report must address the following questions:

- Did the event attendance match the prediction?
- Did the event achieve the goals in the original application?
- Were the actual income and expenses as anticipated?
- What could be done differently to achieve better results in the future?

THE FUTURE OF FUNDING

The task of funding our member activities and events is exceedingly difficult. Every effort is made to be "fair" and "balanced." This grant system is an attempt to make a level playing field, in which everyone has an opportunity to seek funding. Each request will be considered individually as each will be unique, based on our members' various needs and challenges. In order to make this task less difficult for the Board, bear in mind that well-presented, detailed proposals will receive more attention than an incomplete request that lacks sufficient support for the grant amount that is being sought.

We ask for your feedback as we put this grant system into place. It is a dynamic process that will certainly require adjusting with time and use. Please send any comments, suggestions, criticisms, and feedback to vice_president@icelandics.org so that we are able to make improvements over time.



Photo by Kathy Sierra.

of those who desire it. Any member who has the passion to make something happen—and is willing to put forth the effort to prepare and develop an idea, write up a grant proposal, and complete the follow-through required by the new grant system—will be considered for a grant. This is a way to have an active dialogue between the Board and the members of the Congress, from the beginning, when a grant request is presented and considered by the Board, through the completion, when the follow-up report is submitted.

The follow-up reports will be a critical part of the grant process by providing valuable feedback to both the event organizer and to the Board regarding how successfully the event met its stated goals and whether the monetary support was put to the best use.

We remain true to the USIHC's longstanding policy that ongoing events should have a goal of becoming self-sustaining. This will help to ensure that

we have money available for new ideas and activities in coming years. We encourage creative, new, “out-of-the-box” ideas for events. We will continue to consider grants for traditional events such as shows, clinics, and breeding evaluations, with an emphasis on broadening the scope of each event to involve more members and to reach out to non-members as much as possible.

GUIDELINES

The total monetary amount available in the new Congress Grant Program is a percentage of the money Congress has on hand. The Board has a duty to all USIHC members who have paid dues to put those dollars to the best possible use and to benefit the most members possible. We made the decision to set



Photo by Martina Gates.



Photo by Heidi Benson.

aside this amount with the understanding that we are not required to use it all in the given year. This was to avoid a situation in which at the end of the year we are pressured to disperse unused funds simply to meet that year's budget.

The Board is excited about this new program. It is a dynamic process that I believe will improve and become more efficient with time and use. We welcome feedback, and sincerely hope that members will participate fully in the process.

The official announcement follows. I am currently working on some documents and detailed guidelines to provide a more step-by-step approach for preparing a grant proposal. We will publish those documents in an upcoming edition of the *Quarterly*, but they will be available on the USIHC website before then, so keep an eye on the news column on www.icelandics.org or the USIHC Facebook page.



Photo by Thorunn Kristjánsdóttir.

A VISIT TO WINTERHORSE PARK

BY CAROL ANDREW



The first-prize stallion Fjalar frá Bjargshóli is the foundation of the Winterhorse Park breeding program. Here he is ridden, at age 23, by trainer Steinunn Reynisdóttir. Photo by Jessica Elmlad.

Barb and Dan Riva's Winterhorse Park Icelandic Horse Farm in Eagle, WI is well-known to readers of the *Quarterly* as the site of many events and competitions sponsored by the Flugnir Regional Club. The farm has been importing and selling Icelandic horses since 1998 and also has a small but successful breeding program. For USIHC members who haven't had a chance to visit, the *Quarterly* asked Carol Andrew to interview Barb Riva by email.

Tell us a little about your farm: How many horses do you have?

Over the years our numbers have fluctuated depending on whether we have a trainer here or not. In our area we have difficulty finding trainers who have enough experience and knowledge with Icelandics to start young horses. We try to find people from Iceland or Europe to train here for three-month intervals. This has been one of the great frustrations of raising Icelandics. Since we moved to this property in Eagle, WI in September 2000, we've had up to 50 Icelandics on the farm.

We also offer boarding for Icelandic horses only, and those numbers have increased as we slow down on the number

of mares we breed in recent years. At this point we have 22 boarded horses and 21 of our own. This summer, with a trainer here from Iceland, we had an additional six.

What kinds of activities occur at Winterhorse Park?

We try to hold at least one USIHC-sanctioned competition per year. Our regional club, Flugnir, also organizes a second show here at Winterhorse every year. I tried to add a third competition early this spring; however, it did not draw a lot of participants. I think our winters here in Wisconsin are too long for the riders to train in time to compete.

We try to have a FEIF International Breeding Horse Evaluation every other year, either organized by ourselves or by the Regional Club. It's important, I think, to have evaluations. In my opinion they are the best way to offer breed-specific education. Watching the horses at an evaluation, and understanding the scores they get in the individual areas of conformation and gait, can give people so much good information to apply to the raising, care, and riding of their own horses, whether they are breeders or not. It gives people an image to guide them in all the aspects of owning Icelandics.

What we do the most here at Winterhorse Park is have fun with Icelandics. We have a great group of boarders who ride together weekly on the farm and get together for longer rides on neighboring trails on the weekend. We can ride into the town of Eagle and hitch up the horses while we have lunch, or take a short ride up the road to the trails of the beautiful Southern Kettle Moraine State Forest. We



The pinto Skelmir is Barb Riva's favorite riding horse. "Skelmir is an amazing horse, and we humbly regret gelding him," Barb notes. Photo by Steinunn Reynisdóttir.



The Rivas' best-producing mare is Perla frá Stóru-Ásgeirsá, shown here with her foal by Fjalar, Prins from Winterhorse. Photo by Steinunn Reynisdóttir.

often trailer out to an extended area in the Kettle Moraine and ride back to the farm for lunch. We celebrate monthly birthdays, which always include a ride winter or summer. Every January and February we have our "Soup Sundays," which is a brisk winter ride around our 97-acre farm ending at the riding hall lounge for a warm bowl of soup. Our annual open house has become a traditional Thorrablot. We invite anyone who is available to attend and ride their Icelandics with our group on the farm and on the track, but it's also open to the general public. We often get 4-H groups here to see a new breed and to enjoy our indulgent buffet of special Icelandic foods. Thorrablot is traditionally held in Iceland during the month of February, but with our winters we organize them in March when the weather might be more cooperative.

Tell us about your breeding program.

The foundation of our breeding is our first-prize stallion Fjalar frá Bjargshóli (US90101810). We imported him as a 10-year-old and he is now 23. He is a beautiful black horse, over 14 hands tall with phenomenal conformation (evaluated in 1996 at 8.24), an extremely full mane and tail, and friendly eyes. He is a confident and personable horse and a lot of fun to ride, with five very clear gaits—including a natural tolt. His riding abilities score was 8.23.

We have been completely thrilled with the foals he and our select broodmares have produced. He stamps his foals with good temperaments, beauty and a lot of tolt. The only drawback we have found is that his sons can be very late to mature physically. In talking to Fjalar's breeder, when we visited Iceland in June 2013, he said he had noticed the same thing. We've learned not to push the training on those young colts. As luck would have it, the breaks we need to take because of the lack of available trainers works well with the fact that these Fjalar sons need some extra growing time.

We have two imported evaluated broodmares and one domestic first-prize broodmare of our breeding from an outside stallion, Thröstur frá Innri-Skeljabrekku (US91101511). A few years ago we purchased a young foal, Polstjarna from Circle City Icelandics in Indiana, who was out of the old Hrafn frá Holtsmúla (Hrafn 802) line, with the intent of breeding her to Fjalar. We have one eight-year-old gelding, Skelmir from Winterhorse, out of this line. Skelmir is an amazing horse, and we hum-



Steinunn riding the five-year-old stallion Piltur from Winterhorse in front of the indoor arena. Photo by Jaime Ballweg.

bly regret selling his mother and gelding him. Since training Skelmir, we've been on the search for another Hrafn 802-line mare to match with Fjalar. We now have a very finely built daughter of Pegasus frá Skyggni (US1997103226; a son of Hrafn 802) and we hope she will be a phenomenal match with Fjalar. She is just at the age when we can breed her. We look forward to that foal with great anticipation in 2014.

Do you breed many foals each year?

I don't think I need to tell anyone about the expense of raising and training Icelandic foals. We've downsized the number of mares we breed to about two, possibly three per year. We have two young stallions out of Fjalar and our best-producing mare, Perla frá Stóru-Ásgeirsá (US93201714). Perla is not quite first



Steinunn galloping Piltur from Winterhorse along the track. Photo by Jaime Ballweg.



Steinunn riding Piltur, with a view of the grounds at Winterhorse Park. Photo by Jaime Ballweg.

prize, with a score of 7.94, but what she produces with Fjalar always seems to be headed in that direction. This combination produces exactly what our goal intends.

Fjalar and Perla have already produced a first-prize mare of our breeding, Pia from Winterhorse, now owned by one of our boarders. We also have a five-year-old stallion, Piltur from Winterhorse (US2008103864), that was evaluated in May 2013 with a total score of 7.95. We'll continue his training for another evaluation here in May of 2014, when his trot and pace are more secure. Perla has had one other foal with Fjalar, Prydi from Winterhorse, who is owned by one of our boarders and lives here at Winterhorse with her herd mates. We are thrilled to be able to watch her mature and possibly be evaluated. Perla's foal born this year is another stallion, Prins from Winterhorse. By this time I think you can see the pattern of naming.

What other broodmares do you have?

Our first-prize imported broodmare is actually Dan's personal riding horse. He's always torn between breeding or not, so he can enjoy riding her for the full year. Djásn frá Sigmundarstöðum (US1996202658) and Dan have a very special connection, and she seems to want his attention over any horse in the herd. Between two other businesses and the farm, however, our riding time is limited. We both have difficulty taking the time to ride and therefore connect with a new riding horse.

Djásn has had two foals with Logi

frá Skarði (US1988102019), an honor stallion that stood here at Winterhorse Park a number of years ago. Loftfari from Winterhorse (US2006103478) is a very impressive horse that had initial first-prize conformation scores but has been slow to train. We will most likely geld him this year and continue his training. Tryggur from Winterhorse has that wonderfully special temperament like his mother. Tryggur's new owner boards him here at Winterhorse, and they too have that special horse-and-rider connection.

Djásn's other two breedings were with Fjalar. Fjaladís from Winterhorse (US2009204170) was born on December 23, 2009. It was an odd breeding, where Djásn must have absorbed the first breeding and was then rebred. Fjaladís was evaluated for conformation in May with a score of 7.83. She was started under saddle this summer, a bit early for her age, but she is physically quite big and mentally very mature. She is enjoying the training and getting to our goals for her very quickly. She'll get a break soon, picking up the training again in winter in hopes of continued favorable evaluations scores next May. As I write this in July, Djásn has had her second foal from Fjalar, a black colt, not yet named.

Our other broodmare is Thokadis from Winterhorse (US2002202606), another first-prize broodmare of our breeding. Her mother, Mær frá Grafarkoti (US95201521), was one of our early imports. We bred Mær to Thröstur frá Innri-Skeljabrekku when he arrived in the U.S. After Thokadis became first prize, we bred her to Fjalar, and that produced a

colt in 2012. Thundur from Winterhorse was the top young horse at our evaluations in May 2013, so he will stay a stallion for further evaluations to see how he matures.

How do you select horses for breeding? What criteria are most important to your breeding plan?

Unlike the people of Iceland, or other countries where you can glean experience from other breeders, we seldom have that opportunity. This breed is still too rare in the United States, with too few events and educational opportunities. We have to learn as we go. We get the most information simply through raising our foals, helping them grow and mature in the best possible way we know, and finally watching them go through the training process and seeing first-hand how willing they are to please the trainer and how easily their gaits become balanced under a rider.

The majority of our breedings have been with Fjalar because we always know what we're going to get. He produces a beautiful, first-prize (or very close to first-prize) conformation, with easy natural tolt and good separation of the other gaits. He is so consistent in the qualities he gives to his foals. After seeing and dealing with all his foals, we feel there is no risk in breeding almost any mare to him. We can be confident that they will be beautiful, possess a lot of natural tolt, have good minds, and be easy to train.

By breeding our mares to other stallions on occasion, we have learned what was consistent with each mare. Our



Prins from Winterhorse, the 2013 foal of Perla and Fjalar. Photo by Steinunn Reynisdóttir.

main goal is to produce good, evaluated breeding stock. This encompasses what everyone, I think, would want in an Icelandic horse: Beautiful, with a good, thinking temperament. Forward, yet willing to please the rider. Good clean tolt with defined separation of gaits. If we can produce horses like this, then it's just a matter of the right training. Again, that is an issue. Personally, I have seen a lot of good domestic-bred horses that could be even better. The lack of knowledgeable training specific to the breed is a big drawback.

Do you use artificial insemination (AI), in-hand breeding, or pasture breeding with your stallions?

We pasture breed Fjalar. He was used in this way in Iceland and has enough respect for mares to know to stay away from the ones that are not ready. We keep him in a paddock close to the other herds. He is not a stallion that we can keep a gelding with during the winter months, so I think it's good company for him to be able to watch the other horses. New mares are turned out to his paddock for breeding. That paddock has a gate open to a small pasture behind our house where we can keep a close eye on them. There is normally only one mare with him that can be taken out for an additional mare to be bred without some kind of mare politics getting in the way. If owners of outside mares prefer in-hand breeding on a lead line, we can do that also. We like to keep our bred mares in with him for as long as

possible during the winter months. While the mares boss him around a lot, he seems quite content.

Other than a mistake breeding with a mare left in a pasture, we have not yet bred our young stallion Piltur—as a rule, we don't breed our young stallions until they have a first-prize score. The mistake breeding thankfully was not with a mare from the same breeding line. Sadly the foal was born during the extreme heatwave of the 2012 drought and only lived for two days. I'm hoping this mistake breeding will help us with being able to pasture breed Piltur. I like the fact that this process happens naturally without any human hands-on, but we have a lot to learn in this aspect of the business.

I've only tried AI once in the past and it didn't work. From what little I hear from others, it doesn't work well with our breed. Again, I know very little about it and for that reason do not put money into trying it. We tried to have semen collected from Fjalar. Even with bringing one of his mares along for the collection, he just would not do it.

What are your thoughts on how domestic-bred horses compare to Icelandic-bred ones?

When I go to Iceland, I love their riding horses. We just returned from a vacation to Iceland with our 10-year-old grandson in June 2013, and I had such a wonderful time riding for five days over some really beautiful country. We rode five to seven hours a day on some really nice horses. It will be a trip etched forever in my most fond memories of Iceland.

Of course, over the years I have found that I just don't have the ability to ride some Icelandics. I started riding Icelandics in my mid 30s. Now, in my late 50s, I'm afraid my lack of ability will not change. When we were importing horses, we had a lot of help from the farmers in Iceland to find horses that would not be too sensitive for us or unforgiving in our uneducated hands.

I think the horses in Iceland, for the most part, are raised up from foals better. They have the benefit of learning from a herd before being taught by humans. They become good independent thinkers. They seem to have the confidence to go forward at all speeds without losing that good thinking attitude.

How do you incorporate those insights from Iceland into how you raise your foals?

We try to raise our foals in the closest way possible to how they are raised in Iceland. We have a number of different herds on the farm that may change slightly depending on gender and number. Our broodmare herd can consist of up to four breeding mares, any unweaned colts, and the untrained young mares. We usually give the mares a year off after having a foal so they may get moved to a different paddock and ridden. I also keep my first Icelandic horse in this group. She is the matriarch of our farm and, at 30 years old, needs to be able to eat more. She gives foals and rambunctious fillies some good educational discipline and will also stand guard if a mare needs protection from young horses while giving birth. She is still shod regularly and lightly ridden a few times a week. I may also have a few geldings in this group if they are hard to keep weight on. The number in this herd generally hovers around 10 to 12. Their paddock has two shelters and is quite large.

My foals are born outside in the mud, bugs, grass, and weather of the day or night. Wherever and whenever the mare sees fit, in that herd of mixed genders and ages, she gives birth. The foal learns from the herd from day one. I'll go out on the first day to check the health, gender, and overall conformation of the foal. We'll keep an eye on the mare in the herd to make sure she is also healthy after giving birth.

How much do you handle your foals?

We do not imprint our foals. We try not to touch them much at all. Depending on the mare, I may try to reach out and touch the foal's face and ears, but I won't intrude any more than that. We've owned two farms since we started breeding Icelandic horses and we've made adjustments over the years. That's a gentle way of saying we corrected our mistakes! We handled and halter-trained the first few foals that were born at our previous location and lived to regret it.

The horses we hope to produce are ones that enjoy the company of humans without being pushy or obnoxious. I think Icelandics in general are very naturally friendly and inherently very smart. It seems that after their first year of life, they

learn by watching us handle the trained horses and by the little bit of handling they get for vetting and hoof care. We drive our herds from their paddock out to pasture and back again. Our farm is set up with a runway to the pastures, so the horses stay contained while being driven with some kind of motorized vehicle and the help of my Icelandic sheepdog, Grima.

During the first year of a foal's life, when we cannot catch them, we drive the whole broodmare herd into our small barn and stall the young horses (with either their mother or a pasturamate) for vaccinations and hoof trimmings. As soon as the procedure is done, we set them free as a herd to run back to open land. After a few times, they learn that they will survive these tasks and life gets easier for both horse and human. By the third year, they have acclimated to humans enough that we can handle them haltered. By the time the actual training begins, they are respectful and still very interested in working with the trainer and pleasing their handler.

The foals that we had handled and halter trained early in their lives were much more difficult to train. They lacked respect, and it was difficult for them to keep their minds focused on the training. I don't think any trainer enjoys working with that kind of horse, and it really slows down the training process.

How and when do you begin training your horses?

Once our horses become four years old, they are started under saddle. Before any



Thunder from Winterhorse, the winner of the May 2013 young horse evaluation, showing off. Photo by Steinunn Reynisdóttir.

bitting, we make sure their mouths are ready for a bit. Weeks before training, we have an equine dentist do a thorough exam to make sure the teeth are not sharp, there are no wolf teeth, remaining caps, or other mouth issues. Once its teeth have been done, we will bring the horse into a stall daily to eat hay with a three-piece, loose-ring snaffle bit in its mouth.

Then the training for riding begins. The goal for each horse at four years old is to be ridden outside on a trail after three months. The specific gait is not important at this time. We want the horse to accept the rider, the tack, and the basic cues, and to have the experience of balancing a rider on its back. Some horses get to that point early and can even be ridden alone on our farm trails. Others are ridden on the farm trails in the company of other horses. Once they have gotten this initial training, we give them a break. Usually that break is about six to eight months, but it often depends on when we can arrange for a trainer to come to the U.S. After that long break in training the young horses are ready for work, and it's amazing how eager they are for the attention. At that point, their minds are ready for more advanced training. They learn to give their gaits on cue, and we extend their experiences to trail rides off the farm and even some entry-level competitions.

Any suggestions for people interested in breeding their own horses?

We still don't consider ourselves experienced to the point of giving a lot of advice.



Loftfari from Winterhorse, ridden by Steinunn Reynisdóttir. Photo by Jessica Elmlad.

Our decisions on breeding have been very conservative—we still have so much more to learn. If I would suggest anything, it is for potential breeders to attend breeding horse evaluations. Even for non-breeders or potential owners, I think the information you will gain from attending one of these events will be of the greatest help.

If at all possible, have your horse evaluated at least to some level. Breed the mare you enjoy riding the most, the one that is your personal best horse. You will know from having ridden that horse what her strong and not-so-strong gaits are and her strong and not-so-strong attributes.

Breed to evaluated stallions. While breeding to unevaluated stallions is done in other parts of the world, it's too much of a risk here in the United States. It's so early in the world of American Icelandic horses. We do not have the culling practices that many other countries have. Keep in mind that it's very expensive to have a horse trained and better to spend the money on a young horse whose parents have proven potential.

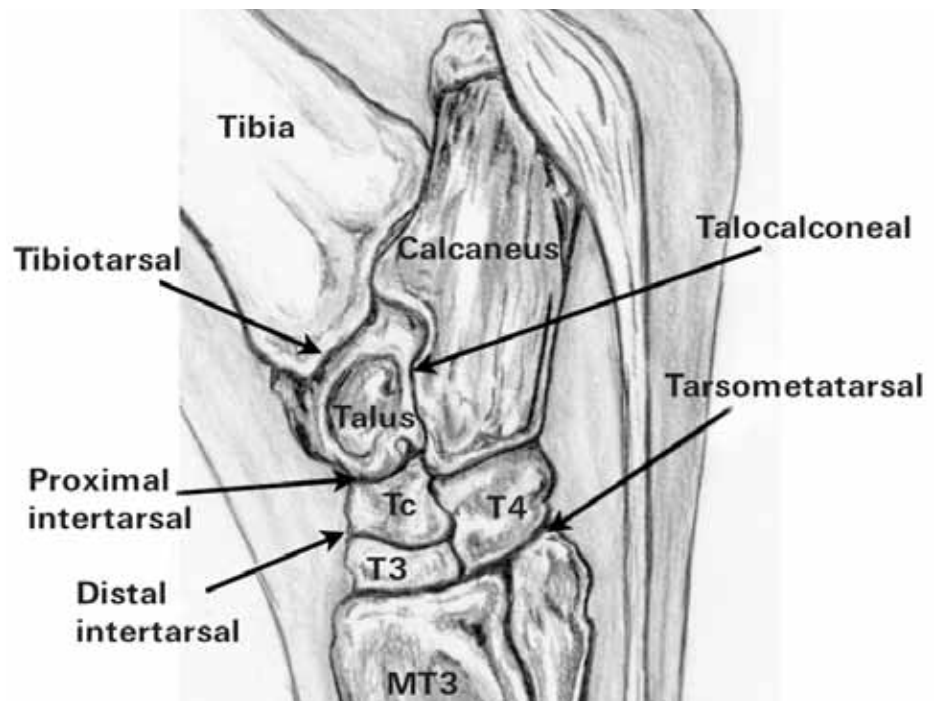
Try to find a stallion that has strong attributes to make up for what's lacking in your mare. Try to produce a horse that will be better than what you already have. Realizing the fact that all horses are not perfect, the goal should be to get an offspring that is a step above what you already have. It's been my experience that even if you produce a foal that is not a step up or not of breeding quality, if you have put a bit of research into the bloodlines and the evaluation scores, what you produced will still be a good Icelandic horse that can be enjoyed by most anyone for years to come.

WHAT IS BONE SPAVIN? BY PAMELA S. NOLF

Bone spavin is probably a term with which many Icelandic owners are unfamiliar. However, an Internet search on the term delivers many research articles about this disease and the Icelandic horse. Based on radiograms of horses in Iceland and Europe, results indicate prevalence rates of spavin as high as 46 percent in Icelandic horses across a range of ages.

Yet spavin does not seem to be a topic much discussed by the general Icelandic horse-owning population in the U.S. Are U.S. owners unaware of the problem? Do we perform less intense riding activities with our horses? Are problems being reported under different names? Is the problem as severe in other breeds but just not studied? Are we accepting decreased performance as part of the normal aging process of the horse? Is the stoic nature of the horse fooling us into overlooking some of the symptoms? Did we import a larger proportion of horses without the problem?

I cannot claim to provide any answers to these questions, but I hope to provide some understanding of the disease and how it may impact your decisions in breeding



This diagram illustrates the five joints in the hock. The top joint, tibiotarsal (or tarsocrural) is responsible for 90 percent of the motion in the hock. Bone spavin usually affects the two lowest joints of the hock: the distal intertarsal and tarsometatarsal joints, which are subject to significant twist. The third joint, proximal intertarsal, is very unlikely to develop bone spavin. Reprinted with permission of SNELL Medical Communication.



spavin in the Icelandic horse breed, list risk factors for spavin, describe FEIF actions to limit spavin in the breeding population, and highlight success by one breed society in controlling this disease.

WHAT IS IT?

The Merck Veterinary Manual defines bone spavin as “osteoarthritis or osteitis of the hock joint, usually the distal intertarsal and tarsometatarsal articulations, and occasionally the proximal intertarsal joint. Lesions involve degenerative joint disease, particularly on the craniomedial aspect of the hock with periarticular new

Repetitive stress on the hock through high-level performance sports such as jumping, reining, roping, or dressage can contribute to the development of spavin. However, good conformation can help mitigate that risk. Here Nicki Esdorn is riding her gelding Fengur in a hunter race. Says Nicki, “Fengur had beautiful X-rays per the veterinarian at the pre-purchase exam when I bought him at age 12. Fengur is now 21 years old and does not have spavin.”

bone proliferation, which eventually leads to ankylosis. Although bone spavin usually causes lameness, this may be obscured if the lesions are bilateral.”

Let’s try to explain that in layperson’s terms. The hock or tarsus is in the hind leg of the horse, above the cannon bone; the fetlock is below the cannon bone. The hock corresponds to the human ankle, but bends in the opposite direction. It is made up of six tarsal bones and four joints. The tarsocrural is the topmost joint and has the most range of motion (90 percent). The other three joints have much less motion, but can experience considerable torsion due to the movement of the leg. Bone spavin usually affects the two lowest joints of the hock: the distal intertarsal (DIT) and tarsometatarsal (TMT) joints. The third joint, proximal intertarsal, is very unlikely to develop bone spavin (Hanson & McCain).

As Bercier et al. (2009) explain, “When wear and tear of a joint occurs, physical and biochemical damage is inflicted upon the articular [joint] cartilage. Enzymes and other agents from the joint lining (biochemical agents) are released inside the joint and destroy the components of the cartilage, triggering tissue inflammation which, in turn, causes pain, effusion, and reduced range of motion. As the cartilage in the joint erodes due to this cyclic insult to the joint, the bones of the joint begin to grind against each other, resulting in further disability and pain.” When the joint is continually overloaded through uneven wear, bone spurs can also develop.

Spavin is also known as Degenerative Joint Disease (DJD) of the hocks. In its simplest terms, bone spavin is arthritis of the two lowest joints of the hock. The condition can be quite painful, causing the horse to alter its gait, to change the way it moves, resulting in back pain, and even to refuse work such as jumping or going downhill that the horse previously did willingly. If spavin is bilateral or occurs in both hocks, the lameness may be masked, since equal amounts of pain occur in each hind leg. Over time, the two joints may naturally fuse (ankylosis), which can reduce or eliminate the pain. The condition can require veterinary care and medical, possibly surgical, treatment (Novick, 2004).

SIGNS OF SPAVIN

Depending on the severity of the onset of bone spavin, the horse may exhibit any of these signs of the disease (Merck Veterinary

Manual; Bercier, et al., 2009; Bone spavin fact sheet; Shoemaker, 2004):

- Dragging of the hind toe
- Shortening of the forward motion of hind hoof
- Less hock action
- Elongation of heel
- Habit of resting toe on the ground with heel raised
- Lameness that disappears after exercise but returns after stall rest
- Stumbling
- Swelling around the joint that last more than two weeks
- Fluid in the joint
- Heat in the joint
- Back pain related to unevenness of gait
- Unwillingness of horse to back up, turn suddenly, or go downhill
- Reluctance to take a specific lead
- Change in behavior such as bucking after jumps or refusing jumps
- Cracking or popping noise from the joint when used (crepitus)

Many of these symptoms can also be the result of an injury, poor-fitting tack, or an entirely different disease. It is easy to see how an owner can become frustrated and spend considerable time and money tracking down the cause of these non-specific symptoms.

If you notice significant changes in your horse’s gaits or performance that last more than a few weeks, check with your veterinarian for palliative treatment. Confirmation of spavin requires radiograms of the affected joints. Multiple treatments—from drugs and injections to surgery—are available to mitigate the pain. Corrective shoeing can help. “However, even with careful management, bone spavin will progressively get worse, and the animal may not be able to continue at the level of competition it was first used for once the lameness is consistent. However, many horses can still be successful in a less-strenuous career. Frequent, light exercise is much better than no exercise at all, and a change of career may prolong the horse’s useful life” (Bone spavin fact sheet).

SPAVIN IN OTHER BREEDS

Individual horses from all breeds can develop bone spavin. Shoemaker (2004)



Incorrect shoeing can increase the stress on the joints of the hock contributing to early onset of bone spavin. Conversely, a good farrier can provide corrective shoeing, which can help ameliorate some of the pain, if the horse already has spavin. Photo by Alex Pregitzer.

reports that “Bone spavin is the most common hindlimb lameness diagnosed at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine [in Canada] and ranks second only to navicular syndrome (caudal heel pain) as the most common lameness diagnosis in the horse.... Osteoarthritis is widely recognized as a significant source of lameness in all disciplines of horse use, although the disease is more often associated with mature performance horses that practice jumping or western performance horses used for reining, roping, barrel racing, or cutting.”

Trauma or repetitive stress can increase the possibility of developing spavin. As Novick states, “Among all the sports medicine problems faced by the horse, bone spavin is probably the most common. It affects jumping and dressage horses, trail horses, endurance horses and backyard horses.” And osteoarthritis or bone spavin is commonly diagnosed as the horse ages. Shoemaker goes so far as to claim that any horse ridden at a fast gallop is at risk for this disease.

Information about actual spavin rates per horse breed is scarce. The Merck Veterinary Manual mentions that bone spavin is prevalent in the Standardbred and Quarterhorse breeds; prevalence rates are



As Andrea Brodie, DVM, points out, you can use WorldFengur as a type of consumer report to help determine the average useful riding life of the offspring and clues as to the presence of inherited spavin. Out of the 173 offspring of this stallion, only 15 have been put down for various reasons, indicating that about 158 offspring are or were considered useful riding horses. This applies only to horses born and raised in Iceland, as any horse with a flaw that makes it unrideable will usually be slaughtered in Iceland, but rarely is outside of Iceland.

not listed. In her overview of research on bone spavin in the Icelandic horse, Sigríður Björnsdóttir cites studies in which radiographs have confirmed signs associated with bone spavin in German sport horses, young trotters, and Dutch warmblood foals, but she does not list actual spavin rates. In their study, Björnsdóttir et al. (2000) calculate that the percentage of Icelandic horses showing signs of bone spavin as confirmed by radiograms is similar to that in a study of German riding horses, and that the calculated heritability factor of bone spavin is close to that shown by a study of Standardbred trotters in Norway. Because of the multiple factors involved, they caution that “heritability estimates for lameness need therefore to be interpreted with care.”

However most of the breed-specific research that I found on bone spavin relates to the Icelandic horse. This could be because the Icelandic breed has been genetically pure for 1000 years and there are easily accessible and extensive breeding records available to researchers. Or it may be that recent research has shown that bone spavin is an inheritable factor among Icelandic horses.

HISTORIC EVIDENCE

Before the conversion to Christianity in 1000 AD, important people in Iceland were sometimes buried with horses sacrificed to the Norse gods. Björnsdóttir, et al. (2004) examined horse bones recovered from pagan graves in Iceland. The researchers examined the bones for evidence of conformational defects and bone disease. Out of the 23 grave sites studied, 10 of the horses exhibited signs of various diseases such as splints; 7 of the 10 had obvious signs of

bone spavin. The researchers have not determined the age of the horses; they hope to do so based on teeth preserved from the graves at some future time. As the researchers conclude, “It is, however, an interesting observation that both diseases [bone spavin and splints] were also common in Icelandic horses 1000 years ago, when the use of the horses for riding and many other environmental factors were very different from now.”

RESEARCH

Around 1985, Sweden began importing large numbers of Icelandic horses from Iceland. Over the next decade, Icelandic horses became increasingly popular, and the horse population grew from around 1,000 to more than 10,000. At the same time, Swedish veterinarians noticed that they were treating more and more Icelandic horses for hind limb lameness. Radiograms confirmed the lameness was due to bone spavin. This observation kicked off a number of large clinical studies in Sweden and Iceland as to prevalence, risk factors, heritability, progression, and treatment of spavin in the Icelandic horse (Eksell, 2004). A few of these studies are summarized below.

Eksell, et al. (1998) conducted a field study to examine the radiographic signs of bone spavin in the Icelandic horse population in Sweden. They studied 379 Icelandic horses located across 11 farms in Sweden. The horses ranged in age from 0 to 19; the mean age was 8.1 years. The researchers radiographed the tarsi of all horses and inspected the conformation of each horse. As confirmed by radiographs, signs of bone spavin were found in 23 percent of the

population. The rate increased to 33 percent for horses between the ages of 4 and 8; the study found no signs of bone spavin in horses less than 5 years of age.

In a study of 508 horses in Iceland, Björnsdóttir, et al. (2000) found that 46 percent of the horses showed signs of bone spavin as confirmed by radiograms or indicated by flexion tests of the tarsus. The researchers deliberately included offspring from 17 evaluated and popular breeding stallions. Owners submitted data from offspring of an additional 83 stallions. Horses with radiographic signs of spavin were four times more likely to be lame.

Unlike the study by Eksell, et al. (1998), Björnsdóttir, et al. (2004) found signs of bone spavin among Icelandic horses ages six months to six years. Signs of early onset of the disease were observed in 33 percent of the tarsal joints that were examined via slab sections. Since so many of the young stock showed early signs leading to bone spavin, the researchers concluded that the onset of the disease is early, with few clinical signs, and that it progresses slowly. Since none of the horses studied had been broken to saddle, the cause of the onset of the disease is unrelated to riding the horse. As they concluded, the development of the early signs of bone spavin in young Icelandic horses “seems to be due to poor conformation or joint architecture rather than trauma or overloading.”

Spavin is the most common reason for culling the Icelandic horse in its native country. In a follow-up study of 508 horses in Iceland after five years, Björnsdóttir, et al. (2003) surveyed the owners to see which horses had been culled (no longer used for riding). Those owners who responded to the follow-up study reported that 19 percent had been culled, 30 percent had been sold or selected for breeding, and 51 percent were still being used for riding. Hind limb lameness (42 horses) was the most frequently mentioned reason that a horse was culled. Other medical reasons for culling were problems with forelimbs and back pain (11 horses), colic (3), digestive infection (1), tumor (1), and laminitis (1). Other reasons included accidents (12), bad temperament (16), and poor performance (11). Note that the decision for culling in Iceland is usually made by the owner without input from a veterinarian. If the horse had shown signs of spavin in the earlier study, it was less likely to have been

sold or used for breeding. As Björnsdóttir, et al. (2003) point out, “The late clinical manifestation of bone spavin in Icelandic horses may prevent natural and artificial selection against the disease and be an important reason for the high prevalence in the population.”

SPAVIN IN THE U.S.

What is the rate of early onset of spavin due to genetic factors among Icelandic horses in the U.S.? No research involving sampling of the Icelandic horse population in the U.S. has been done on this topic. Anecdotal evidence provides some clues but no conclusive evidence.

Trainer Alexandra Pregitzer, who has had experience with many Icelandic horses in this country, provides the following observations: “In my personal experience working as a trainer and having been present at quite a few pre-purchase exams, the number of horses testing positive in a flexion test is relatively high. The test itself is controversial and may not give full disclosure, but out of those clients who chose to have X-rays taken afterwards, the majority of horses who tested positive in the flexion test also came up with a positive result, being diagnosed with some form of osteoarthritis or bone spavin. This is not a statistic or based on any scientific proof, by any means, just a personal experience. The horses we are discussing here were mostly



The veterinarian may choose to perform a flexion test of the hock when trying to determine the cause of lameness. As Andrea Brodie, DVM, cautions, “Flexion tests are notoriously unreliable, as every vet uses a different degree of flexion. If you flex too much you can actually flex a horse lame, even if nothing is wrong.” The only way to confirm the presence of bone spavin is through a radiogram.

WORLD FENGUR The Studbook of Origin for the Icelandic horse		ASTUND		TEIGUR															
181984187014 - Þróður frá Nedrakali II																			
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating score record</th> <th>Feeling score record</th> <th>Horse owner</th> <th>DOB/foal</th> <th>Health record</th> <th>Location</th> <th>Remarks</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Genetic information</td> <td>Photo</td> <td>Assessment</td> <td>Identification mark</td> <td>EUH Evaluation</td> <td>Outgoing</td> <td>Participation</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Rating score record	Feeling score record	Horse owner	DOB/foal	Health record	Location	Remarks	Genetic information	Photo	Assessment	Identification mark	EUH Evaluation	Outgoing	Participation
Rating score record	Feeling score record	Horse owner	DOB/foal	Health record	Location	Remarks													
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FEIF ID number	Name	Name of the farm (last name)	Conformation	Medical status	Total	Total score	Competition												
0219022227	LF	von Vandrór	7.85	8.21	8.97	130													
021904120432	Pylkur	von Wulfr				97													
02190626267	Rauka	Íg Sérland				92													
02190610202	Fax	Íg Bebe-Aa				90													
021906258200	Kúja	Íg HHC				90													
021906287647	Fngg	Íg Vagnbjörn I				90													
021906185368	Hiall	Íg Yr-Skjötavik				89													
021906104416	Em	Íg Garðar 2				86													
021906202385	Ódla	Íg M-Sarvax	7.75	6.39	7.80	79													
021906206667	Sól	Íg Karna	7.65	7.33	7.46	81													
021906102770	Fosalla	Íg Ódla Dal	7.85	7.57	7.71	93													
021906169620	Hn	Íg Kjalneskúm				93													

Since 2006, FEIF has required the owner of a stallion being evaluated at a breeding show to submit radiograms of the horse’s hocks. Only pre-approved veterinarians can examine these radiograms for signs of spavin. You can check the results by looking up the horse’s health record in WorldFengur.

bred in Iceland or—more rarely—Germany, some in the U.S. They came from different breeders and different parts of the country. The horses were usually somewhere between 8 and 18 years old, mostly pleasure horses, some competition horses.

“Many of my clients and friends never had a vet check done when they purchased their horses and never had X-rays of their legs taken. So unless these horses start showing some symptoms, it would be impossible to know if they do have osteoarthritis or not. While working in Iceland, I also went to Hólar University to have some horses vet-checked to be exported to Europe and the U.S., and some of those young horses (ages 5-8) came back with positive results for bone spavin and were thus not going to be exported. But because we don’t know how the horses feel and what their pain levels are, and because there are many horses that are lame and clearly in pain, I personally would be very happy if we were able to reduce the number of cases of bone spavin by making good choices with regard to breeding, training, and use of the horses.”

RISK FACTORS

Veterinary science and research have determined several risk factors that are related to the development of bone spavin in the general horse population. Age is a major factor. Like the development of arthritis in humans, the older the horse, the more likely it is to develop this disease. Another major risk factor involves poor conformation. The conformational defects known as sickle-hocked and cow-hocked result in uneven loading of the joints and thus increased risk of developing spavin. Uneven trimming or shoeing of the horse over time

is also a risk factor (Bone spavin fact sheet). Frequent use of shoes with outside trailers or calks can lead to the development of bone spavin (Shoemaker, 2004).

Any activity that regularly overstresses the hocks puts the horse at increased risk of spavin. “Types of activities, such as dressage, show jumping, hunting and racing, which require much hock flexion or where there may be excessive concussive forces acting on the hock joints, may contribute to uneven or repeated loading of the lower hock joints, and thus bone spavin” (Bone spavin fact sheet).

Several research studies have examined risk factors specific to the Icelandic horse. Björnsdóttir summarizes these risk factors:

As horses age, their chances of developing bone spavin increase approximately 6 percent each year from ages 6 to 12.

Horses with larger tarsal angles have lower prevalence of spavin, probably since the reduced angle alters the biomechanics of the tarsal joints.

Horses born in the north and south of Iceland had a lower rate of spavin compared with other areas of the country. “This is most likely an indirect genetic effect because of clustering of dams in the specific regions.”

Certain sires had significantly higher (or lower) prevalence of bone spavin in their offspring, supporting the genetic predisposition of this disease.

Workload, as indicated by age of breaking to saddle at age four versus age six, and entry into breeding shows did not impact the prevalence of bone spavin.

The mean height for sound horses as measured at the group was six mm

higher than for lame horses, as measured by flexion tests. Although this difference was statistically significant, the researchers regarded the height difference as too small to be of value.

Four-gaited horses showed significantly fewer signs of lameness during a flexion test than five-gaited horses; however the researchers caution that the ability to perform flying pace may be impacted by the onset of bone spavin, therefore artificially reducing a five-gaited horse to a four-gaited horse.

Neither the use of a professional versus an amateur trainer, ability to tolt, temperament, or action of the front limbs impacted the prevalence of bone spavin.

As Björnsdóttir summarizes, “The genetic predisposition for the disease stands out as the most important aetiological [causal] factor. It was presumed that the presence of RS [radiographic signs] is a quantitative threshold trait with an underlying normal distribution of multigenetic effect. The genetic contribution can be, at least partly, via the conformation of the hock or the shape of the distal tarsal joints. It is suggested that the medium high heritability estimate reflect an inherit variation in conformation or stability of the distal tarsal joints, resulting in predisposition to the disease.”

FEIF GUIDELINES

In 2006, FEIF published rules aimed at reducing the prevalence of inheritable spavin among the Icelandic horse population. At the horse’s first breeding show, the owner of a stallion must provide radiographs of the hocks from four different angles from at least age five. This radiograph is examined by selected veterinarians in each country for signs of spavin. The results are recorded in WorldFengur.

As the FEIF rules explain, “Breeding selection based on radiographic examination of the distal tarsus is therefore expected to reduce the prevalence of bone spavin in the population. It is most important to exclude stallions and mares that develop RS [radiographic signs] early in life, as they are likely to have the highest predisposition for bone spavin” (FEIF, 2006). Readers can refer to the FEIF website (www.feif.org) for a more complete description of the requirements for submitting radiographs for bone spavin at breeding shows.

Nathan Dykes, senior lecturer in the Section of Veterinary Imaging, College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University, has

been engaged by FEIF to interpret the required radiograms submitted by horse owners as part of the breeding evaluation process for Icelandic stallions. He explains that, “In a small sample of Icelandic horse radiographs examined at Cornell, the incidence of osteoarthritis of the tarsus (‘bone spavin’) is low. Sample bias may falsely lower the true prevalence of spavin in this breed.

“As far as the true prevalence of spavin in the Icelandic horse,” Dykes told me in an email exchange, “I don’t believe that I have examined a large enough sample. Further, I am only sent those radiographs taken by other veterinarians on horses not lame. I don’t examine tarsus radiographs from lame horses or radiographs that may be diagnosed with spavin by the primary veterinarian. This is why my sample is likely biased. If you wanted to get a true prevalence, you would need to examine all horses, sound and lame, and not select only the studies from the ‘good ones’ to put into the stud book. There are many examples of this bias in the veterinary literature. Breeders are probably unwilling to submit the radiographs from horses with signs of spavin, so those stallions don’t get counted. Their veterinarians can easily see the signs of spavin, so may advise them ahead of time not to submit the exam.”

As Alexandra Pregitzer cautions, “Years ago, it was not common knowledge that the likelihood of developing bone spavin could be inherited. Now we know more, and I am so glad that FEIF took some steps. What I do not understand is why we don’t have mares tested as well? Would that not eliminate the chances of spavin developing even more? Would the mares not give that genetic trait to their offspring? I know mares don’t produce as many offspring as stallions but still ... would it not be even better to test both mares and stallions?”

SUCCESS STORY

Officials of the Dutch Warmblood Society were alarmed at the relatively high prevalence (5 percent) of spavin in their breed in the early 1980s. Studies of the Dutch Warmblood in that timeframe showed that there was a strong correlation between poor conformation of the hock (especially sickle hocks, extended hocks, or outward rotation of the hock) and the incidence of spavin. Other researchers estimated that the heritability of bone spavin in the Dutch Warmblood was between 0.20 and 0.35, meaning that a stallion with inheritable spavin would sire 1.6 times more offspring with this

disease than a sire who did not carry this trait (Barneveld, 2004).

By strengthening the conformation standards and requiring radiograms for approved breeding stallions in the Royal Dutch Warmblood Studbook (KWPN), the society reduced the prevalence of bone spavin in the breed from 5 percent to less than 1 percent. “In fact, nowadays bone spavin can be considered a rare disease in the riding horse that hardly plays a role in pre-purchase examinations” (Barneveld, 2004). This success story can certainly serve as an inspiration to Icelandic horse breeders.

MOVING FORWARD

FEIF has taken an excellent first step to reduce the incidence of spavin in the Icelandic horse population by requiring radiograms of breeding stallions. The results published on WorldFengur provide useful data that you can take into consideration when selecting a younger stallion to breed to your mare. If you are thinking of breeding to a stallion who is not evaluated or whose evaluation predates 2006, WorldFengur may provide the names of owners of the stallion’s offspring whom you can contact to discuss occurrence of spavin. And if you are purchasing an Icelandic horse, you can take the same steps. When selecting a horse you will want to pay particular attention to those conformational defects—such as sickle hocks and cow hocks—associated with early onset of spavin. If you are concerned about how spavin may impact the long-term rideability of your investment, you can talk to your vet about taking radiograms as part of the pre-purchase exam. Let us all look forward to the time when spavin in the Icelandic horse, just as in the Dutch Warmblood, need no longer play a role in pre-purchase examinations.

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IS IT SPAVIN?

BY ROBIN NEAR

We'll never know what caused both of our geldings to begin having problems in their hindquarters. Is it genetic, poor saddle fit, lack of some essential nutrient, over-riding when young? Or none of these? Falki, our black gelding, has had issues with his hips, such as weakness and skipping with one hind leg when he gaits, for years. Because he also has skin allergies (itching & rubbing) every summer, and now in winter too, I don't ride him very often, so it was easy to overlook his weird-moving hindquarters.

When Drago, our red bay, began to also demonstrate a "hitch" in his left hind at age 16, I became even more concerned. What in the world was going on? I hired an equine chiropractor who drives the 280 miles from Butte, MT to Coeur d'Alene, ID once a month to work on horses. He said they needed adjustments, but unfortunately couldn't give us any information regarding what caused the problems or what to do to prevent further damage.

So I found Krista Porter, a local chiropractor who is also a veterinarian. My first thought was that treed saddles were the culprit, even though we had converted to treeless a few years ago. She helped relieve my anxiety by stating that she didn't think treed saddles could cause problems of this nature, as one or two short rides per week during the warm months is considered light riding. She said to stop blaming myself for every little ache and pain the boys experienced. She was hesitant to use the term bone spavin and instead used osteoarthritis, as she explained arthritis is arthritis whether it's centered in the hips, the hocks, or elsewhere. We decided to forego the expensive radiograms and spend the money instead on actual treatments. Krista began adjustments on Falki and Drago every other week, then monthly, and now three or four times a year.

In the last year, Drago has continued with monthly Adequan shots, and we do a series of stretches before and after a ride. The plan is to try Pentaussie in lieu of Adequan beginning next month, as I've heard good things about its benefits too. Drago still gets chiropractic adjustments every three months. Falki has fared better and doesn't seem to need the chiropractic adjustments



Robin Near and Drago.

or the glucosamine shots.

I've learned that just like Falki's allergies (see my article on page 16 of the last issue of the *Quarterly*), Drago's arthritis issues are complicated and expensive. Have you ever heard someone say that "Icelandic horses don't have health issues like other horses"? Our experiences have shot a hole in that idea. Icelandics are not all super-horses when it comes to health issues! Perhaps because this breed has unique qualities and are enjoyable to ride and care for, we tend to forget they are after all, horses. And horses can and do have health issues.

If we weren't so bonded with our horses after having had them for 13 years, we would have sold them long ago. One has to ask if having one or more horses with disabilities is worth the financial and emotional stress it creates. What can you do? Especially with an older horse that has issues; you can't sell it and if you find a good "free" home you'll always worry if that person is taking proper care of your special needs horse. I am always researching and looking for answers and continue to try and do what's best for our horses.

GO THE DISTANCE

BOOK REVIEW BY ALYS CULHANE

Go the Distance: *The Complete Resource for Endurance Horses* is a must-own for Icelandic horse owners who have an interest in doing long-distance rides. Although author Nancy Loving's audience is competitive endurance riders, there's much here that will also be of use to non-competitive trail riders and long distance trekkers. She provides a wealth of information on the subjects of athletic foot care, nutrition, conditioning principles and training philosophy, fitness evaluation, cooling strategies during training competition, metabolic health and soundness, and trailering.

Loving, who herself is a veterinarian and regularly judges and competes in endurance riding, has written several how-to books on the subject of endurance riding, including: *All Horse Systems Go*, *Conformation and Performance*, *A Veterinary Manual for the Performance Horse*, and *First Aid for the Horse and Rider*. Loving also writes regularly for *The Horse* and *Horse Illustrated* magazines.

Early on, Loving indirectly asserts that Icelandics are not the ideal breed choice when it comes to doing competitive, long-distance rides. This, I learned, is primarily because of the Icelandic's body shape. For



Taking a horse's pulse. Photo by Pete Praetorius.



Taking a horse's temperature. Photo by Pete Praetorius.

example, Loving notes that a narrow body works as a better heat radiator and is easier on the rider who must sit astride for 50-100 miles of competition. Loving adds that "a barrel-shaped body is uncomfortable to straddle over the long term, and it tends to retain more of the horse's body heat. The bulkier the torso of the horse, the more depth blood vessels must travel to bring heat from the core to the skin."

After reading the above, I presumed that perhaps I'd erred in thinking my round-bodied horses were suited to what I most like to do: go long distances. But I was, and still remain, dubious. Like noted endurance rider John Parke, I am of the mind that "we really have no idea yet as to what Icelandic horses are capable of, particularly as this relates to their extraordinary levels of endurance." However, I continued reading (because I'd purchased this book new!) and considered Loving's observations in relation to my horses' supposed physical drawbacks. The end result was that I further assured their well-being while out on the trail.

For example, Loving notes that in the competitive trail ride and endurance worlds, there's a phrase "fit to continue." This means the veterinarians have decided that the competitive horse is in good health and is ready to continue on its way down the trail. I have committed this phrase to memory

and now use it as an on-trail assessment tool. This, along with careful monitoring of vital signs, enables me to be attentive to my horses' supposed distance-related strengths and weaknesses. What follows are much-needed particulars as these relate to pulse, temperature, respiration, and capillary refill time. I now am judicious in monitoring these vital signs, both on and off the trail. At the same time, I've internalized Loving's vital sign-related particulars.

TEMPERATURE

A horse's normal body temperature is 99-101 degrees Fahrenheit. According to Loving, using the effective temperature, or Heat Index (HI), lets you predict how safe or dangerous it is for your horse to work in hot and humid conditions. The score for the Heat Index is found by adding together the ambient (air) temperature (in degrees Fahrenheit) plus relative humidity (%). For example, a 70-degree day with a 65% humidity has an HI of 135.

If the HI is less than 130 F, your horse should be able to effectively cool him or herself. If the HI is 130-135 F, you probably need to assist the horse in cooling by sponging him down with water. If the HI is greater than 150 F, it's very difficult for your horse to shed heat, especially if the humidity contributes more than half this score. An HI of

160-170 dictates that you reduce your horses' speed in addition to using cooling strategies. Finally, an HI greater than 180 creates an impossible situation for an exercising horse to cool itself, even with supplemental cooling techniques.

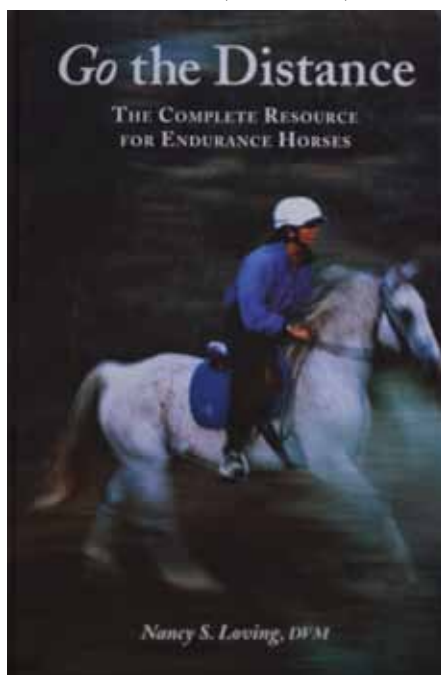
PULSE

A horse's normal pulse is 28-44 beats per minute. A horse's heart rate is expected to rapidly recover (after physical exertion) to less than 64 beats per minute, says Loving, indicating adequate circulation and oxygenation of the tissues. A fit horse that's ridden appropriately for the terrain and climatic conditions usually recovers to 64 beats per minute within 2-10 minutes of arriving at a vet check. In very hot and humid climates, the horse's heart rate remains between 56-60 beats per minute, and his or her rectal temperature should be less than 103F.

A horse with a persistently elevated heart rate is exhibiting warning signs of the following problems: fatigue, dehydration and electrolyte imbalances, and an inability to rid the body of excess heat generated by working muscles. An elevated heart rate indicates that the horse has been ridden too hard for the environmental conditions, or for his or her level of fitness.

RESPIRATION

A horse's normal respiration (breathing rate) is 10-24 breaths per minute. The respiratory tract can contribute as much as 33 percent of the horse's ability to cool the body. This is significant in very hot and humid conditions and, in addition, it's not



Normal circulation returns a pink color to the gums within two seconds. Photo by Pete Praetorius.

uncommon to see a horse panting once forward movement stops. Loving reiterates here that heavily muscled breeds have a greater difficulty in ridding their bodies of internal heat and therefore tend to pant.

On the other hand, a horse that's gasping with deep and frequent breaths is suffering from an oxygen debt. In an attempt to fill its lung with air and oxygen, an oxygen-deprived horse takes very obvious gulping breaths.

CAPILLARY REFILL TIME

The time it takes for capillaries in the gum to again become pink in color after being pressed upon with a thumb is two seconds or less. The mucous membranes provide a wealth of data as to how quickly blood is able to perfuse the tissues. You can also examine the mucous membranes lining the eye or the vulva of the mare. However, examining the horse's gums is the quickest and safest way of gaining this information. Pressing a fingertip to the gums pushes the blood out from that spot, making it easy to note how quickly blood returns to the blanched area. Normal circulation returns a pink color to the gums within two seconds because of adequate blood pressure and circulating blood volume. The pink of normal gum color resembles the color seen under your fingernails. Bright red, or a bluish cast around the gum margins indicates trouble. Yellow can mean the horse is jaundiced, although this color may be visible if your horse has been eating

legume hay.

GUT SOUNDS

Normal sounds in a horse's gut are gurgling, gaslike growls, tinkling sounds, and occasionally roars. This is called borborygmi. Waves of intestinal movement (peristalsis) are accompanied by noises heard through the stethoscope placed over the flanks. These sounds indicate that the intestinal contents are being mixed and moved along the intestinal tract in a timely manner. The character and frequency of the rumbles is as important as the presence of sounds themselves.

Problems develop when there's an absence of intestinal noise and activity. A stagnant intestinal tract promotes fermentation of feed, rather than normal digestion. This encourages gas and fluids to build up in the bowel, leading to colic, intestinal displacement or twists, or laminitis. All are life-threatening to the horse. An absence of intestinal activity, or ileus, is often a direct result of dehydration or electrolyte imbalances. With diminished intestinal activity, a horse is less able to absorb water, electrolytes, or energy from the bowel. Dehydration then escalates, endangering the metabolic health of the horse.

Loving goes into greater depth on these and related topics. For this reason, I recommend that those who read this book become familiar with its contents and read it multiple times, until important information is internalized.

YOUTH DAYS

BY AMY GODDARD

In the summer of 2012, the Board of Directors of the Northeast Icelandic Horse Club (NEIHC) started brainstorming about how best to introduce the Icelandic horse to children and spark more interest in this wonderful breed. Yes, we wanted to increase our club's youth members, but more importantly, we wanted to figure out the best way to expose more kids to the fun that we were all having with our horses. We decided to sponsor Icelandic Horse Youth Day on June 15, 2013, concurrently in as many northeastern locations as possible.

Four farms signed up almost immediately: Boulder Ridge Icelandics in Limington, ME; High Country Icelandics in Katonah, NY; Silver Maple Icelandic Horse Farm in Tunbridge, VT; and West Winds Farm in Delhi, NY.

The next step was to raise funds to help support each host site's Youth Day advertising and activities. NEIHC members donated 11 extraordinary prizes for a raffle that was held at our Thorrablot in March, raising over \$1,000. In addition, a very generous anonymous donor pledged to donate the cost of 10 new youth memberships at each site. The NEIHC Board donated t-shirts and jackets for raffle prizes. Our NEIHC Youth coordinator, Jana Meyer, composed a helpful guide for the Youth Day host sites, containing goals, how and where to advertise, and suggested activities. We were on our way!



Three young visitors pause for a photo at the Boulder Ridge Farm paddock gate. Photo by Deb Ricker.



Katina greets Boulder Ridge Farm Youth Day guests. Photo by Deb Ricker.

BOULDER RIDGE

Cindy Wescott, owner of Boulder Ridge Icelandics, decided to hold her Youth Day on May 18—one month prior to the “official” Youth Day—in conjunction with Maine Open Farm Day. This proved to be a wise decision, as over 60 people visited her farm that day and enjoyed a colorful herd of friendly horses, gait demos, games, prizes, and a delicious barbecue lunch.

WEST WINDS

I helped Heleen Heyning, owner of West Winds Farm, with the advertising and planning of her event. We placed a quarter-page ad in the May and June issues of the *Mane Stream* monthly equine newspaper, along with a listing in their events calendar. We hung flyers in local feed stores, veterinary offices, food markets, and restaurants. We requested RSVPs so Heleen would have an idea of how many people to expect in order to plan accordingly with horses and food.

After a stretch of cool and rainy weather, Saturday, June 15, dawned clear and dry. We could not have asked for a better day: Sunny skies and 35 friendly visitors, including 14 kids ages six to 16. Our schedule looked like this:

- 10:00: Welcome. Sign in, get raffle ticket and a name tag, and register for a free NEIHC membership.

- 10:15: Meet the horses. A paddock and barn tour.
- 11:00: Gait Demo—listen to Dorothy. Heleen and I rode a short three-minute demo while our friend Dorothy Lyman read a script I'd prepared about the Icelandic horse. The kids were instructed to listen very carefully to Dorothy so that they'd be able to answer the questions in the Big Tolt Game that immediately followed.
- 11:30: Big Tolt Game. The kids lined up at one end of the arena while I read questions taken from the demo script. Each correct answer allowed that child to take one big “tolt” step forward. The child answering the most questions correctly won a t-shirt. Every child received an Icelandic horse pin.
- 12:00: Lunch and video. Hot dogs, veggie dogs, corn-on-the-cob, salads, brownies, and cookies.
- 1:00: Groom the horses; learn about tack and shoes for Icelandics.
- 1:30: Ride an Icelandic horse. All 14 kids—and one grandma—rode an average of 10 minutes. We used two or three horses simultaneously; four horses total.
- 2:50: Raffle (Congrats to Emily Valerio, who won the jacket.)



Heleen Heyning amid a group of West Winds Farm's Youth Day attendees with horses Prins and Seima. Photo by Amelie Brewster.



Heleen answers questions from the crowd following the West Winds Farm Youth Day gait demonstration. Photo by Amelie Brewster.

Many thanks to Dorothy Lyman, Kevin Hodne, Amelie Brewster, and Margo Barrows for all their help.

Heleen adds: "After days of downpours,

the sun shone brightly and the temperature was just right for horse activities. This certainly helped with the feel-good attitude prevailing throughout the event. Of course



Father and daughter enjoying the day at Silver Maple Farm's Youth Day. Photo by Jana Meyer.



Caeli Cavanagh and her talented mare, Soldis during their liberty performance at Silver Maple Farm's Youth Day. Photo by Sarah Priestap.

people arrived early, as is the custom around these parts. This made it possible to stick to our schedule and Amy's brilliant planning. The Landsmot 2011 video was running continuously in the tackroom and got a lot of viewers, educating them to Icelandic riding styles. Four horses in the arena gave all the kids a chance to try out some Icelandic gaits. (Maica Quinn-Crandall, age six and having ridden for only one year, kept asking for more speed.) Now we can only hope we'll have some return visitors."

SILVER MAPLE

Jana Meyer writes: "The Youth Day at Silver Maple was a great success. It was a wonderful day filled with lots of big smiles and happy kids and parents. Everyone here at the farm helped to make it an unforgettable day.

"Parents could hang out by the BBQ in the shade under the trees while their kids went off to learn about the Icelandic horse and the NEIHC, in the form of an info scavenger hunt. They painted horseshoes, made horse-hair bracelets, participated in a raffle, and got their picture taken while trying one of our wonderful horses. When it was time to watch the Silver Maple drill team perform, even the parents left their seats and meandered to the track. Another big highlight were Caeli Cavanagh's liberty performances with her mare Söldís—a great way of showing off the fabulous character of these horses. The grand prize of the raffle was a jacket sponsored by the NEIHC. Abigail Mattoon, who won it, had never ridden an Icelandic before but was immediately hooked. She has been here many times since, helping out around the farm to earn some lessons.



Dagfari listens very well to his rider, 10-year-old Michael Kooyman, at the High Country Farm Youth Day. Photo by Julie Betts Testwuide.



Bareback drill team practice at High Country Farm's Youth Day. In front, from left: Michael Kooyman on Dagfari (Cookie) and Hannah Huss on Fengur. In back, from left: Mama Charlotte Kooyman on Hreyfing and Megan Switzer on Fidla. Photo by Julie Betts Testwuide.

"It was a fun day and it is always a pleasure to introduce more people to this magnificent breed. I am looking forward to future Youth Days and want to say a big 'thank you' to the NEIHC and the generous sponsor of all those free youth memberships."

HIGH COUNTRY

Nicki Esdorn, owner of High Country Icelandics, hosted a mini-Youth Day at nearby Beaver Dam Farm. Nicki writes: "At the beginning of 2013, there were no children or young people riding Icelandics in the Bedford area. The kids here usually start riding at a hunter/jumper barn and enter an organized system of lessons, leases, and shows.

"An e-mail from Germany to the USIHC changed that picture. It came from 13-year-old Hannah, whose father was being transferred to the New York area. She was looking for a chance to continue riding Icelandic horses. So Hannah, already a good intermediate rider, began a happy relationship with my gelding Fengur, and I had my first young student.

"Then my friend and Icelandic horse convert, Charlotte, was looking for a chance to get her 10-year-old son Michael out of the hunter ring and onto our beautiful trails. At the same time, Martina Gates's wonderful gelding Dagfari came to High Country. I had a horse for Michael and a second student.

"Next, my friend Julie invited the

13-year-old daughter of a friend to come ride one of her horses, but Megan, a beginner, also needed lessons. Now there were three!

"I had identified four necessary 'ingredients' for a good children's program in my article, *Where Are the Young Riders?*, in the June *Quarterly*:

- A qualified, dedicated, and enthusiastic instructor who is willing and able to put effort, time, money, and her/his own horse into a youth program. Check!
- Suitable, safe horses, and the means for their upkeep. Check!
- A good and safe facility with an arena or other enclosed area to teach beginners, a competition track to teach more advanced riders, and access to trails. I have a round pen in my pasture, Julie has an outdoor ring, we have a track on our trail system, and we have great trails. Check!
- Lots of volunteers who are willing to give time, transport, horses, food, and financial support. This is where the mothers and friends come in. Check!

"The kids, the moms, and I decided we had to do something fun to celebrate the NEIHC Youth Day and to get to know each other better. Since the three kids had very different levels of experience, I did not want to do competitive games. We would hold the event at Julie's outdoor ring next to her barn. To make just walking more fun, I first of all put everyone on bareback. We started our ride with a round of obstacle and skill ex-

ercises: Walk serpentine around cones, forward and backward through an L formed by pool noodles, speed up and slow down the walk, riding next to each other. So everybody was tuned up when the music started and they became a drill team! Everyone who has ever done this knows that it is harder than it looks to ride two and four abreast and ride clean and good lines, mirroring and meeting each other. Charlotte joined the kids, so we had four riders, and lots of giggles and great cooperation to make 'thread the needle' and 'four abreast down the line' work out. The drill ended to thunderous applause from the spectators.

"The finale was the only race of the day: the carrot race. Four carrots were stuck upright into the arena sand along the fence and the riders lined up on the other side. They had to walk toward the carrot, ask their horses to put their head down and find and eat the carrot, which Megan, the beginner, and her mare Fidla won handily.

"Refreshments and lunch were served by the volunteers, including a cake in the shape of an Icelandic horse. The grown up spectators commented that this was a lot of fun and that they were very jealous and wanted their own special day with fun and games and music and cake, too!"

The NEIHC registered 25 new youth members as a result of these events. But now the real work begins: How to keep those kids coming back? Stay tuned for a future article...

YOUTH ESSAYS:

WORLD CHAMPIONS?

BY QUINN THOMASHOW

Someone once told me, “If you want to be the best, you have to ride with the best.”

At first I wasn't really sure that was the case. Riding at high levels can be intimidating. You are surrounded by people who know much more about horses and who ride much better than you can. You feel like you are being swarmed by a bunch of giant beautiful butterflies, yet you are that one caterpillar.

At the World Championship Tryouts at Thor Icelandics in May, that is how I felt. I felt like I would be a disaster compared to the riders I was competing with. Most of them were much older than I am and had much more skill and experience. So why was I there? I went because I knew it would be something I could learn from. An experience that I could hold onto for the rest of my life.

My horse, Orvar from Mill Farm, hadn't traveled much at all and hadn't been shown until I bought him almost a year ago. So, it was a new experience for him as well as for me. He was worried about not only the competition but where he was and what was going on. This added a bit more stress and discomfort. I had never shown my horse in an Open program before. He had only gone in Green Horse and Novice programs. He was new to being shown, and his tolt and walk weren't very strong gaits. But thankfully, I wasn't actually trying out for the World Championship team, I was just riding for scores, so that kept the pressure off a bit.

As Orvar and I settled down on the first day we arrived, I was starting to feel more at ease. Everyone was helping me bring water to the horses and feed them and move them around. People were so willing to talk, and help out whenever possible. This helped my state of mind a huge amount. I felt as though I had known these people for much longer than just one day. And, I started to worry less about everyone judging the way that I rode the next day and if I would mess up.



Quinn Thomashow aboard Orvar from Mill Farm showing tolt at the World Championship tryouts at Thor Icelandics in May. Photo by Kara Noble.

The time for the competition came. I got my horse out of his field and nervously brushed his soft, shimmering coat. My fingers shook around the brush. I tried to take deep breaths to calm myself down. Slowly but surely my hands stopped shaking, and I began to relax.

Before going onto the track I remembered something my trainers Jana Meyer and Becky Hoyt at Silver Maple Farm in Vermont had told me: “If you don't go in with a positive mind, then you aren't going to do well. Be confident and do your best, that's all anyone can ask of you.” So that's what I did. I told myself to do my best.

The outcome isn't always what you had hoped for, and sometimes it isn't even good. But pushing yourself to ride at the highest level can only help you to gain something. When you stay positive, and you give yourself the confidence you deserve, then you can be the best. You just have to believe in yourself and learn from everything that you experience.

Quinn Thomashow is 15 years old and lives in Strafford, Vermont. She has been riding Icelandics for three years.

NÓTT DOES DRESSAGE

BY ANJA STADELMANN

I am 14 years old and have been riding seriously for the past three years. Three years ago my grandmother, who had always wanted an Icelandic horse, bought Nótt from Rocking R. Although she was green, Nótt was sweet and gentle and had a lot of potential. My grandmother had planned to ride her, thinking her tolt would be easy on her back, but soon after she bought Nótt my grandmother had major back surgery and Nótt became mine to ride, and then officially mine on my 14th birthday.

When I started riding Nótt, and realized she had never been trained to canter, go in circles, or even trot correctly, I never would have imagined that we would be where we are today. I was an inexperienced rider at the time who had only ever really learned to fall off my elderly Shetland pony! Together Nótt and I learned the basics of dressage (and a little tolt), and today we have a bond that feels like it can't ever be broken. We have come to understand



Anja Stadelmann and Nótt from Rocking R competing in Training Level Test 3 at the New Hampshire Dressage and Eventing Association's Spring Show. Photo by Stephanie Lesko.

each other, and through the confusion and naughty behavior we have had to overcome in the past years, I have advanced farther than I thought I could have in this short time span.

Today, Nótt and I compete at Training Level dressage and are pushing for First Level at the end of the year. Last year, we earned the New Hampshire Dressage and Eventing Association Reserve High Point award for Introductory Level. On July 12, Nótt and I will be competing as part of the New Hampshire Dressage and Eventing Association Junior Dressage Team at the Lendon Gray's Dressage 4 Kids festival in New York. Hopefully, Nótt and I will make a statement and continue to bring attention to all the incredible talents and diversity of the Icelandic horse!

As well as having four lovely gaits, Nótt has also proven to be an enthusiastic jumper! (This new skill wasn't brought to my attention until she jumped out of a four-foot stall at the NEDA Fall Dressage Festival!) While we know now that Nótt has the skill, I am a relatively new jumper and we are working our way up, currently jumping about two feet for fun and diversity. I fall off regularly, but Nótt always does her best to

take care of me (when she's not ducking for grass right after the landing).

Nótt is like a big cuddly dog that you can take anywhere. We love the trails. We have even gone with a large group on a beach ride. From these experiences, I can boldly say that everyone should absolutely try new things with their horses even if they might be nervous. Nótt and I will definitely continue to try as many new things as we possibly can.

While Nótt and I may try many different things on our own, I attribute much of our success to my dedicated and enthusiastic trainer, Katherine Dow, who pushes us both to do our very best. Without Katherine, a USDF bronze medalist, I doubt Nótt or I would ever have achieved what we have in dressage or basic horsemanship. I don't know what I would do without the coaching and support from Katherine. On the note of trying as many different things as possible, I have also taken lessons with dressage legend Pamela Goodrich and, through the New England Dressage Association, I have taken lessons with Mary Howard and Martina Morris.

No biography of a rider would ever

be complete without an unending list of challenges and obstacles accumulated along the way. Overcoming these challenges is part of the fun of riding for me. As I look back to where we started, I feel a true sense of accomplishment and gratitude toward Nótt and the people who have helped us along the way.

The Icelandic horse is a unique and very special breed that has tremendous potential in a number of disciplines. After competing at Dressage 4 Kids and possibly riding First Level at the end of the year, I am planning to pursue gaited dressage. I would love to take some lessons from gaited trainers, and Nótt and I would also love to talk to anyone with an Icelandic horse looking to pursue dressage.

Anja Stadelmann is 14 years old and lives in Dunbarton, New Hampshire. Nótt is the first Icelandic horse she has ridden.

HUNTER PACE!

BY NICKI ESDORN

Full is in the air and I start dreaming about one of my favorite things to do: I am riding along the most beautiful trails with one or two of my friends, across meadows with natural jumps, through a creek, and up and down hills with great views. It is early morning and a mist rises over woods and fields. We trot and tolt and canter, and we fly over some of the jumps. We are just having the best time riding across country, but if we do well and get lucky, we might even get to take home a ribbon! I am riding a hunter pace.

WHAT IS A HUNTER PACE?

Hunter paces are based on the sport of fox hunting. Historically, hunt clubs organized them as a way to ride together in the off season and to train green horses to run and jump cross country. Many hunt clubs developed into local trail associations, groups whose mission it is to maintain a trail system and an equestrian lifestyle in an increasingly challenging environment. They realized that putting on a hunter pace was a great way to showcase their trails, recruit new members, and raise funds for their work or benefit a good cause.



A colorful team of four is making a big entrance at the finish line of the Memorial Day hunter pace in Bedford. Nicki on Haukur Freyr, Ashleigh Bancel on Sjarmur, Caroll Bancel on Topas, Julie Testwuide on Gyllir. Photo by Chris Bancel.

There is no overseeing governing body for hunter paces, and the rules tend to vary according to location, terrain, number of teams, and concerns of the organizers. Teams of two to four riders ride along a marked trail from start to finish. Their ride is timed. However, a

hunter pace is not a race! Usually, an experienced rider on a fit hunter rides and jumps the course very early in the morning, at a pace “as hounds run” and sets the optimum time. The optimum time remains secret until after the pace is over. The team with the time closest to the optimum wins, whether that is faster or slower. So yes, one has to be a bit lucky to win. The goal is rather to have great fun riding and to show good horsemanship.

Many paces are divided up into several categories. It used to be hunters and non-jumping “hilltoppers,” but usually it is now “hunt” (fastest, jumping), “pleasure” (slower, jumping optional), “western” (team must have at least one western style rider, no jumping), and “junior” (teams must have at least one junior rider under 16 or 18, slower than pleasure, jumping optional). The optimum times for the slower categories are usually set by the organizers. At a pace that runs for about an hour for the hunt category, the pleasure time may be about 10 minutes slower than the optimum hunt time, and the junior and western times 20 to 25 minutes slower. No rules, though.

Icelandic horses are perfect for hunter paces. They are fast enough to



Nicki and her young mare Alfrun enjoying a good gallop at the Bedford pace. Photo by Kathy Mathew.



Haukur Freyr and Fengur really enjoy jumping and it shows! Nicki and friend Carolyn Abernethy at the finish line jump of the Bedford Pace. Photo by Kathy Mathew.

win a ribbon even in the hunt category. They are sure-footed and love going across country. Many enjoy jumping and they naturally excel at going as a team. The spectators love to see us tolt close together all abreast across the finish line!

HOW TO RIDE A PACE

When I first started riding hunter paces, a good friend and experienced hunt rider told me “you canter where you can, walk where you must, and trot everywhere else.” This simple rule works. Riding an Icelandic, of course, you also get to tolt. I used to ride hunter paces with my friend on his big hunter: My spirited Fengur kept up just fine in tolt with their ground-covering trot.

Horses of all kinds of breeds and riding styles come together at a hunter pace, no longer just field hunters. In a real hunt, the faster rider has the right of way and the slower ones must get out of the way quickly. Most hunter pace organizers have changed this rule for safety reasons. Many horses get excited and nervous when others come up behind them at a fast pace and then gallop away after passing. It is good horsemanship to approach slowly, ask for permission to pass, and then ride off at a calm trot. If a faster team approaches, one should take the next opportunity to stand aside and let them pass.

The course is clearly marked with arrows on brightly colored signs. The jumps have a white flag on the left and a red

one on the right, and all have go-arounds. Some paces have mandatory walk areas to give the horses a break. Others will have a check point, sometimes even with a veterinarian present, to make sure the horses are okay to continue.

The trail organizations are proud of their events and will lead the course over their very best terrain. The Bedford Pace in my area usually has over a hundred teams participating, and they serve a delicious catered lunch under a big tent. Other hunter paces are much smaller and laid-back, with chili served to riders sitting on haybales and rocks. One hunter pace is run around Halloween and just about everyone comes in costume. There is a sense of fun and camaraderie as everyone is enjoying the ride.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR HORSE

First of all your horse must be fit enough for a one- to two-hour fast trail ride. Build up stamina over several weeks and months, increasing trot and tolt intervals and including a long canter and some gallop in your rides.

Practice riding in a small group, alternating positions as first, middle, and last rider. Practice passing one another, leaving and returning to the group. Practising standing still is useful for the wait at the start and check point.



Tolting abreast across the finish line ends the hunter pace in style, with Nicki on Alfrun and Hannah Huss on Fengur. Photo by Christoph Huss.



Matching Icelandic sweaters are a handsome outfit for a hunter pace on a cool fall day. Nicki on Haukur Freyr, her niece Lina on Fengur, and friend Caroll Bancel on Topas. Photo courtesy Greenwich Hunter Pace.

All Icelandics can jump over small obstacles and some really enjoy it. Start by walking over logs and then begin trotting low jumps in a light seat. If you have never jumped before, take lessons!

Make sure your horse is familiar with all kinds of natural obstacles like creeks, bridges, and mud. They should be safe crossing streets and walking along traffic.

The horse should be used to trailering and be calm with many other horses milling around.

PACE ETIQUETTE

What to wear? If not sure, call the organizer and find out. Most hunter paces just mandate a certified safety helmet and boots. Hunt or show attire is not necessary; it is usually a much more casual event. Most teams come dressed in breeches, boots, and matching shirts, sweaters, or vests. I like to wear long Ice-

landic riding pants, jodhpur boots, and a polo shirt. Just neat and clean, including the horse and tack!

Arrive punctually at the start, at the time given to you when you signed up, as teams are started every few minutes. There are often several teams in the start area waiting to go. Consider that the horses will be excited and other breeds can be less social than ours. Keep a safe distance and beware of horses with a ribbon in their tail! They kick.

On the course be polite and safe, especially in a passing situation. Enjoy the ride and have a great time! The trail organization will appreciate it if you tell them you did.

CARRIE EXCELS AT HÓLAR

BY LAURA BENSON

The progress the Icelandic horse has made in the United States in the last 15 years is quite phenomenal. New training centers and full-service facilities are constantly showing up throughout the country; there are more sanctioned competitions, more expos and promotional opportunities, way more youth riders, and more certified Icelandic horse trainers living in the U.S. This year, Carrie Lyons-Brandt joins that list. She, like me, is an American who studied at Hólar University in Iceland.

When I moved to Iceland in 2001 to begin my journey toward becoming the first American to graduate from Hólar, it was a very daunting task. I felt so uncertain about how I would master the language, immerse myself in a new culture, and be the “outsider”—not only as an American, but as a woman. It was an unforgettable experience. There were many ups and downs. There was a lot of pressure, and sometimes mockery, because of where I was from, but it only made me want to try harder. Let me tell you, if anything ever pushes me to succeed, it’s the thought that someone has told me I can’t.

I returned to Hólar for my final year in 2010, and through hard work and perseverance I ended up (quite to my surprise!) graduating at the top of my class with the High-Point Rider or *Reiðmennsku* Award, which meant a lot to me because it was the same award that my mentor, Icelandic “brother,” and business partner, Guðmar Pétursson, had won when he graduated from Hólar.

And this year, Carrie Lyons-Brandt, the second protégé of Guðmar and the second American *girl* to graduate from Hólar, received the same honor: the *Reiðmennsku* Award.

Throughout my years at Hólar, through all the hardships, Guðmar was always there, encouraging me. As he was for Carrie, I know. Carrie also called me when she had questions about projects or ideas, and it was always fun to talk to her and come up with new ideas or teaching methods for her tests. It was a great collaborative



Carrie Lyons-Brandt was introduced to *Quarterly* readers in 2010 as “the next American Valkyrie.” Here she poses with Langfeti frá Hofsstöðum. Photo by Laura Benson.

flow between friends and peers.

I remember when Carrie came to take her entrance exam at Hólar back in 2010. (See my article in Issue 2 2010 of the *Quarterly*, “The Next Valkyrie.”) How nervous she was! I remember that feeling so well from my entrance exam. I also remember thinking how much fun she would have with the whole experience, how it would change her, how she would meet so many new people and be involved in all kinds of exciting new experiences. And here we are, three years later: Carrie has now graduated, with her name on the same award alongside Guðmar’s and mine, and venturing out on a wonderful mission to promote the education and success of the Icelandic horse in the U.S.

I know how hard it was for her to leave Iceland, I miss it dearly myself. But I am really looking forward to the exciting opportunities we can create for the Icelandic horse and its people in this country. I asked Carrie some questions about her experience, and here is her response:

Why did you decide to go to Hólar rather than to take an Equine Science B.S. degree at an American University?

My passion is Icelandic horses and learning how to train their five gaits and helping others learn to do the same. I wanted to attend a college that was Icelandic horse specific. There is no other college in the world that is as recognized as Hólar for aspiring Icelandic horse professionals.

Formerly Hólar was a trade school. I was part of the first class to graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree. What I love most about Hólar is that the school prepared me through a variety of practical classes for my dream career as an Icelandic trainer and riding instructor and gave me the opportunity to learn from some of the top trainers and teachers in the Icelandic horse world. Hólar definitely changed me as an equestrian. After I graduated I also realized that Hólar gave me the gift of a community of friends and potential business partners with the same passion for the Icelandic horse.

What does the Hólar program cover? What did you study?

At Hólar we always talk about the program in terms of the first, second, and third year. The first year of Hólar was all about the rider. At Hólar they believe that in order to be a good trainer you have to be in mental and physical balance. They focus on correcting the rider’s seat and how the aids are applied through seat exercises on the longe line and dressage lessons. The teachers at Hólar often claim that Hólar’s school horses (which we ride during the first term) are the main teachers during the first year. Classes during the first year included stirrupless dressage, riding in Icelandic *stangir* bits, training at fast speeds (*yeehaw!*), and teaching beginner riders. We also did a variety of equine science courses, such as horse behavior, nutrition, anatomy, and history of the horse.

The second year was all about practical experience in training horses. Each student had about six horses that they trained

each term. The classes included starting young horses, beginning gait training, and training older “problem” horses. Then in the spring we left Hólar for our internship, where we trained and also taught a clinic giving us even more practical experience.

The third year was the most challenging and exciting year at Hólar. The focus during the third year was on training, competing, and teaching on a high level. We were required to have a five-gaited competition horse, which we trained throughout the third year. I was blessed to have the amazing Sporður frá Bergi as my horse. We also had a class on breeding evaluations, which ended in the showing of a breeding mare or stallion. I loved the third year because of the focus on precise and light horsemanship and the chance to study more difficult dressage exercises. The most exciting part of the third year was the pace! Hólar has about 15 pace horses that we train, giving us the opportunity to learn how to pace a variety of horses and also to have a blast! We also learned the skill of holding ridden demonstrations and learned how to teach private and group lessons for advanced riders.

My favorite part of Hólar was the practical classes, but I also appreciated that

the program is now a B.S. program. I found courses such as genetics, physiology, and sport psychology especially interesting. As my final B.S. project I did a qualitative study on a sport psychology concept called “flow,” researching its occurrence in Icelandic horse trainers and instructors.

As an American, what difficulties did you face?

Doing everything in Icelandic was a challenge, but after the first term things got easier. The teachers sometimes let me answer tests and write papers in English, and most of the reading materials were in English, which helped me out a lot. I think the trick is jumping in headfirst: Try to do everything in Icelandic and then it slowly gets easier and easier.

How did you learn Icelandic?

I was very lucky to live close to Guðmar Pétursson here in the U.S., which gave me the opportunity to begin to learn Icelandic at an early age. I also went to Iceland two summers in a row, working first for Ísolfur Lindal and then for Anton Páll Nielson, before I went to Hólar. After the first summer I could get by, then after the second summer I was basically fluent.

What would you recommend to other Americans who see Hólar in their futures? Would you do anything different?

Visit Iceland as often as you can to start learning Icelandic and study every Icelandic learning book or course you can get your hands on. Get experience at showing, take part in clinics, do internships with professional trainers, and ride every horse you can get your legs around! All the experience you can get with good trainers and a variety of horses is valuable.

Tell us about the award you won at graduation. Was it a goal or a surprise?

I won the Reiðmennsku Award given out by the newspaper *Morgunblaðið*. Reiðmennsku means “horsemanship,” and it’s basically the award for the best riding or most success in the practical courses throughout all three years. It was an honor to receive such an award, especially among a group of such accomplished riders. I knew Guðmar and you had received a similar award when you were at Hólar, so of course it was a dream of mine.

How do you plan to utilize the skills you have earned? Do you have plans for the future in Iceland or in the U.S.?

I am very lucky because my parents have partnered with me in purchasing a farm, where we are currently building a state-of-the-art Icelandic horse facility, including a barn, indoor arena, and track. We have established the company Léttleiki Icelandics (Léttleiki means lightness), and my dream is for Léttleiki Icelandics to be an education center for the Icelandic horse. We will be offering training, boarding, and teaching services, as well as sales and breeding. My hope is that it will become a place of learning for both horses and people.

I will also be working with Guðmar Pétursson, who will continue to help me with training and teaching at Léttleiki Icelandics and will serve as my connection in Iceland. Along with him and with you, Laura, I hope to continue marketing the Icelandic horse in the U.S. and educating people about the breed. The Icelandic horse has more spirit and more gaits than any other horse in the world, and I can’t wait to help people discover and learn more about this awesome breed!

Contact Carrie Lyons-Brandt at Swallowland Farm in Kentucky (carrie@swallowlandicelandics.com or 502-409-1924) or see swallowlandicelandics.com.



Carrie riding Straumur frá Enni at Hólar in 2010; Straumur, now in the U.S., qualified for the World Championships with rider Madison Prestine.

GENETICS BEHIND GAIT

BY ANN STAIGER

Why do our horses trot? The discovery of 3.5-million-year-old Hipparion tracks, found encased in volcanic ash in Tanzania, raises the question of which was the horse's ancestral gait: trot or running walk? Comparison of these ancient predecessors of the horse to modern-day horse tracks revealed that the Hipparion gait was similar to the running walk, not the trot which is seen in most modern-day horses.

Since domestication, horses have had different patterns and timing in the way they move; they are also able to switch between different gaits such as the trot, pace, or running walk. Surprisingly, horses are the only mammals found to have such a wide range of locomotion. This diversity in gait was likely enhanced by human selection pressures. *The Horse of America in his Derivation, History, and Development* (1893) by John Hankins Wallace illustrates that horsemen a hundred years ago knew training alone could not transform the trot into an ambling gait; the only way to produce a gaited horse was by breeding at least one gaited parent. If the resulting foal couldn't gait, it was culled from the breeding program. In reality, the horsemen were selecting not just desirable gaits, but also for variations in the genes.

Genes are regions of DNA that code for a specific biological function or characteristic, such as eye color or blood type. Genes have different variants known as alleles; these are responsible for the differences we see among individuals. For example, everyone has the gene responsible for eye color, but some have the allele for blue eyes, others have the allele for brown eyes. The alleles have different sequences of nucleotides or bases, the basic building blocks of DNA. There are four bases: adenine (A), guanine (G), cytosine (C), and thymine (T). Strung together in different combinations on a long chain, the bases provide the code for reading DNA and subsequently the genes.

Gait is influenced by several factors: the conformation and neurobiology of the horse, and to some extent, environmental factors such as human intervention in the

form of shoeing and training. Each of the physiological aspects are influenced by several other components. Conformation is impacted by bone length and thickness, muscle mass, and shoulder and hip angles. Nerve types, calcium and potassium concentrations, and synapse receptors and transmitters control the neurobiology. Several genes influence each of these components; therefore, it is unlikely that just one gene is responsible for gait, but rather a specific combination of genes and their alleles.

Each horse has a unique combination of alleles that can help in the discovery of the genes and the neurobiological interactions influencing gait, especially by comparing them to other horses. At Cornell University, we are attempting to uncover those genes. We have started a study with the initial goal of identifying the genes that are dissimilar between trotting horses and gaiting horses. Once we have found these, we would like to go even further and find the genes responsible for more subtle differences in unique gaits. By identifying these genes, we hope to provide breeders, owners, and trainers with a unique tool to aid in their horses' management. Breeders will be able to use their horses' DNA as a guide in their sire and dam selection;

owners and trainers will have a better idea to which gaits their horses are predisposed and can adapt training and riding style accordingly.

The gait study is looking at all breeds of gaited horses: Icelandics, Tennessee Walkers, Rocky Mountain, Mangalarga Marchador, Paso Fino, Peruvian Paso, Missouri Fox Trotter, Spotted Saddle, Saddlebreds, Standardbreds, and gaited Morgans, to name a few. Rare breeds like the Tiger, Marwari, and Boerperds, are especially important. Participation in this study requires a pulled hair sample, 34 body measurements, profile pictures, a three-generation pedigree, a short video of the horse's intermediate gaits, and a behavior survey. The body measurements are used to capture the conformation of each horse and to help find any correlations between conformation and gait. The videos are used to capture the timing, footfall sequence, and stance duration of each horse's gait and helps in grouping the horses for genetic analysis.

For more information, see our website at http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/brooks/study_desc.html. If you would like to participate in the study, please contact the Brooks lab or Ann Staiger at equinegenetics@cornell.edu or eas347@cornell.edu.



Rachel Ng shows tolt at the World Championship Tryouts in California last spring. New research at Cornell is investigating the genetics behind gaitedness in horses. Photo by Will Covert.

LETTERS

“MEASURING LONGEVITY” (ISSUE ONE 2013)

RESPONSE BY
JESSICA HAYNSWORTH

Most people show horses at breeding evaluations because they intend, or at least hope, to breed that particular horse. Horses are shown at their prime, usually after receiving considerable training, with an emphasis on fitness. These horses are in top physical condition, but once they receive their judgments, they often become breeding horses.

Stallions may not be ridden during breeding season, as it is common in Iceland for a high-judged stallion to live outside in a field where several mares may be brought to live with him so that he can service them all at once. If he's taking the summer off, he'll probably get the winter off too, because many people do not ride in the winter. You can imagine that he would not remain as fit as he was when he was evaluated, since back then he was probably worked close to every day.

For mares, the career switch from riding horse to parent is even more dramatic. Some people may continue to ride a first-prize mare as a competition horse, but many will choose to make her into a full-time broodmare. In Iceland, this means living in a herd, raising foals, and receiving relatively little human handling. A mare may produce foals well into her twenties, but it will certainly change her body. The extra strain on a mare's back from carrying foals, for instance,

might change her conformation, especially if she has many foals well into old age.

Would it be fair to take an old broodmare in from the field, put shoes on her, and expect to evaluate her again, getting the same good results as before? I don't think so. Nor do I think it would be fair to evaluate an elderly stallion, who has been spending his days covering mares and grazing in a field. These horses are no longer riding-fit; they've got new jobs now, being parents. It's unreasonable to expect a mare that has had many offspring and limited handling, or a stallion that has been in light or no work for many years to perform the same way they did when they were seven or eight. I think we ought to allow these horses to enjoy their breeding careers without the stress of asking them to suddenly be riding horses again in their old age.

The WorldFengur database provides information on birth date, whether or not the horse is still living, and in many cases the date the horse died, so if you want to know a horse's longevity or the longevity of his parents, you should be able to find some clues on WorldFengur. You could even contact the breeding farm that the horse came from and speak to them about the longevity of their stock if you were really curious, although I think it bears mentioning that longevity is not necessarily a genetic trait. Good management, feed, hoof-care, and luck are all factors that go into longevity. The healthiest horse in the world could trip in a hole and that would be it for him. I think there are better

ways to determine longevity than by forcing old breeding stock to run up and down a breeding track again.

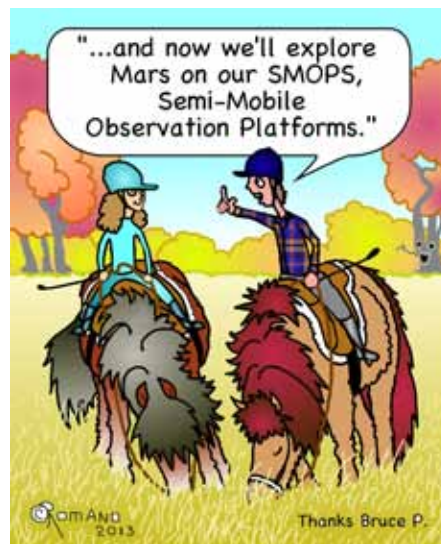
“WHERE ARE THE YOUNG RIDERS?” (ISSUE TWO 2013)

RESPONSE BY STAN HIRSON

Well researched and written! I want to add, though, that from my experience of over 13 years of riding Icelandics in a barn with a very active Pony Club, where many of the girls actually started school Icelandics, it became apparent that they looked at them the way girls regard training bras: They want the real thing as soon as possible. A large impressive horse and, above all, one that jumps! Jumping-Jumping-Jumping is the real deal.

One of the barriers to the acceptance of the Icelandic horse in the U.S. is that they have been imported along with northern European and Icelandic tradition and assumptions, rather than looking at how they might fit in here. We seem to be trying to sell an awful lot more than the horse.

I think we need to examine sports culture. We love baseball which is boring to Germans, who love soccer. Icelanders are passionate about their form of handball, which most countries find as delectable as their putrid shark. The interesting issue might be to understand the psychology of why people ride horses and then look at how that might fit in with national sports cultures. And there are regional factors even within the U.S. Just tossing it in.





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.

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.	World Championships Donation:	\$.....
<i>Members in the categories above with non-US mailing addresses must be US Citizens</i>		Youth Fund Donation:	\$.....
Foreign Friend	\$70/year. One adult non-US Resident/non-US Citizen with limited benefits. Not eligible to vote.	(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: 300 South Sawyer Road, Oconomowoc, WI 53066
 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

RATES AND SIZES:	per issue
Color Pages (7 3/8" x 9 3/4")	\$ 200
Full page (7 3/8" x 9 3/4")	\$ 150
Half page (7 3/8" x 4 3/4")	\$ 75
Third page (7 3/8" x 3 3/4")	\$ 50
Quarter page (3 1/2" x 4 3/4")	\$ 35
Classifieds (text only)	\$ 25

The USIHC reserves the right to reject any advertising at any time. Each advertisement is accepted with the understanding that the advertiser is authorized to publish its contents and agrees to indemnify the USIHC and the Icelandic Horse Quarterly against any loss or expense resulting from claims arising out of its publication.

SPORT:
the icelandic horse



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OPEN**

USIHC Sanctioned Show
September 21-22, 2013
www.neihc.com



PHOTO: MARTINA GATES

Hosted by Thor Icelandics, Claverack, NY



F A R M L I S T

The owners of the farms listed below have offered to have you visit in order to become acquainted with the Icelandic horse. Some are breeders, some importers and some are interested in breed promotion alone. Their listing here does not constitute an endorsement of any kind by the USIHC.

CALIFORNIA

A Breeding Farm For Icelandic Horses,
Schmalztopf
Nancy Vanderbilt Schmalz
Arvid Schmalz
9499 Santa Rosa Road (oo Box 67)
Buellton, CA 93427
(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

Gold Leaf Onyx Ranch
Robert and Patricia Terrell
5731 Gold Leaf Lane
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 957-4226 (phone)
(530) 622-3331 (fax)
potpigs@att.net

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

Om Icelandic
Susan Routson & Cindy Sanchez
4560 Blanchard Road
Ste A
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 295-8257 (phone)
routsonranch@att.net
routsonranch.com

Valhalla Icelandic Horses
Stina & Steinar Sigurbjornsson
17498 Santa Rosa Mine Rd
Perris, CA 92570
(818) 808-8089 (phone)
(818) 890-4569 (fax)
stinabk@mac.com
www.valhallaicelandic.com

Valkyrie Icelandic
Laura Benson
1 Duane St. #33
Redwood City, CA 94062
(650) 281-4108 (phone)
laura@valkyrieicelandic.com
www.valkyrieicelandic.com

COLORADO

Hanging Valley Ranch
Garry & Sharon Snook
Box 66
1555 Nettle Creek Road
Carbondale, CO 81623
(970) 963-3517 (phone)
(970) 963-3503 (fax)
snookcolorado@gmail.com
icelandicmountainhorses.com

Hestar Ranch
Monika Meier-Galliker
P.O. Box 1744 / 30420 C.r. 500
Arboles, CO 81121
(970) 883-2531 (phone)
m.meier@hestar-ranch.us
www.hestar-ranch.us

Lough Arrow Icelandics
Andrea Brodie, Dvm
22242 Cr 46.0
Aguilar, CO 81020
(505) 238-0896 (phone)
fiddlinvet@gmail.com
tinyurl.com/3xn3yys

Tamangur Icelandic Horses
Coralie Denmeade
P.O. Box 2771
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) 997-9011 (fax)
katsheehan@mac.com
www.creeksidefarm.com

INDIANA

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

IOWA

Eagle River Farm
Dr. Bradley and Kimberlee Dewall
2d1985 277th Ave.
LeClaire, IA 52753
(632) 895-699 (phone)
kimberleedewall@gmail.com

KENTUCKY

Gudmar Petursson Icelandic Horses
Gudmar Petursson
1800 Halls Hill Rd
Crestwood, KY 40014
(502) 243-9996 (phone)
gudmarp@gudmar.com
www.gudmar.com

MAINE

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

MINNESOTA

North Star Icelandics
Deborah & Steve Cook
1250 Waterville Rd
Waterville, MN 56096
(507) 362-4538 (phone)
(507) 362-8090 (fax)
cookice@frontiernet.net
www.frontiernet.net/~cookice

NEW YORK

Sand Meadow Farm
Steven & Andrea Barber
300 Taylor Road
Honeoye Falls, NY 14472
(585) 624-4468 (phone)
(585) 624-9361 (fax)
toltstar@yahoo.com
www.sandmeadow.com

NORTH CAROLINA

Hulinndalur
Sara Lyter
372 John Weaver Rd
Columbus, NC 28722
slyterz@yahoo.com



OHIO

Cytraas Farm
John R. Haaga
Call For Appointment
Chagrin Falls, OH 44022
(216) 464-7260 (phone)
johnhaaga@gmail.com
www.cytraas.net

PENNSYLVANIA

Burns - Anderson Stable
Mary Burns, Caleigh Anderson, and Connie
Anderson
1641 Wildlife Lodge Rd.
Lower Burrell, PA 15068
(724) 337-4207 (phone)
caaenglishrider@yahoo.com

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

SOUTH CAROLINA

Aleiga Icelandics
Helen & Lori Lessley
2210 Bermuda Hills Rd
Columbia, SC 29223
(803) 920-1414 (phone)
icelandictreasures@aol.com
www.aleigaicelandics.com

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

TEXAS

Lonestar - A Texas Icelandic Horse Breeding
Farm
Chris E Creighton
Off Hwy 29- West Of Town
Georgetown, TX 78628
(512) 635-0163 (phone)
icelandichorse.us

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)
iceherd@hotmail.com
www.lonecedariclandichorses.com

Red Feather Icelandics
Dick and Linda Templeton
24 Whitewater Drive
Trout Lake, WA 98650
(509) 395-9380 (phone)
redfeathericelandics@gmail.com
www.redfeathericelandics.com

WEST VIRGINIA

Deep Creek Farm
Curtis Pierce and Marsha Korose
537 Fjord Rdige Dr
Mathias, WV 26812
(304) 897-6627 (phone)
cepinwv@yahoo.com
www.deepcreekfarm.com

Icelandic Thunder
Denise & James Taylor
Rr 1. Box 219
Philippi, WV 26416
(304) 457-4238 (phone)
icywoman@msn.com
icelandicthunder.com

WISCONSIN

Winterhorse Park Icelandic Horse Farm
Barbara and Daniel Riva
S75 W35621 Wilton Rd.
Eagle, WI 53119
(262) 594-5152 (phone)
(262) 594-2720 (fax)
winterhorse@centurytel.net
www.winterhorse.com





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for making our show a success

Show Management
Sverrir Bjartmarz, Kim Davis, Pat Moore, Sali Peterson



Schooling Show
Saturday, September 7, 2013

10 am - 5 pm
Frying Pan Farm Park
Herndon, VA



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May 17 & 18 2014
International Judge, Will Covert
Herndon, VA



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2013 - Midwest Competition Calendar



Flugnirkeppni Icelandic Horse Competition

Date: September 7-8, 2013
Hosted by: Flugnir Icelandic Horse Association
S75 W35621, Wilton Rd, Eagle, WI 53119
web: www.flugnir.org



Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show

Date: October 12 - 13, 2013
Organized by: Kathy Love and Carrie Brandt
Locust Hill Farm, 11811 Covered Bridge Rd, Prospect KY 40059
contact: kathrynlovemd@gmail.com

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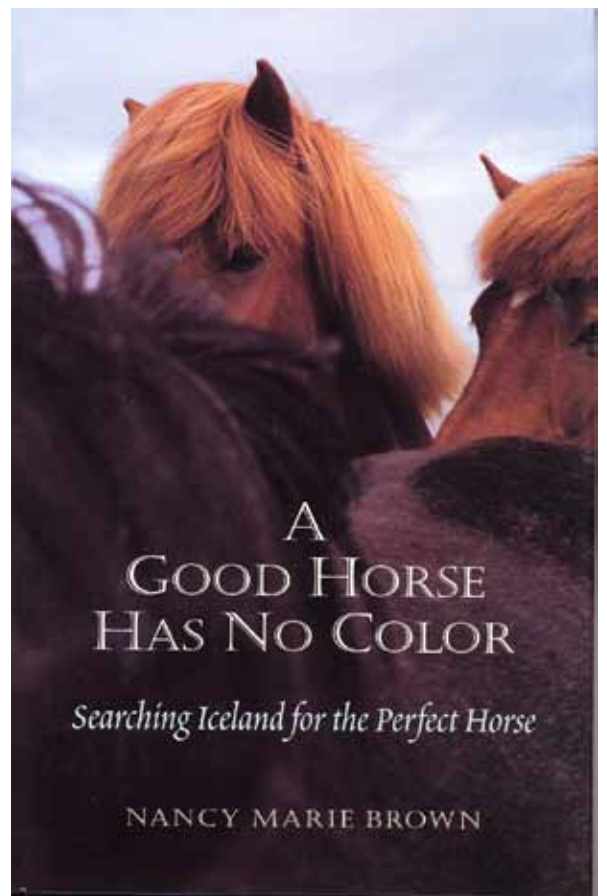
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