

ISSUE FOUR

THE

2014

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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Laurelyn Turbes of North Wind Equine Veterinary Dental

Gloria Verrecchio, DVM, a Certified Equine Rehabilitation Practitioner

Barbara Frische, a FEIF International Breeding Judge



Gloria Verrecchio

Watch the USIHC website and Facebook page for details. Or contact Steve & Deb Cook at cookice@frontier.net



THE USIHC MISSION

- 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

The U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress is a member of FEIF (www.feif.org), the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations, representing the national Icelandic horse associations of 19 countries. FEIF governs competition activities and regulates the breeding and registration of Icelandic horses throughout the world outside of Iceland.

The USIHC 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.

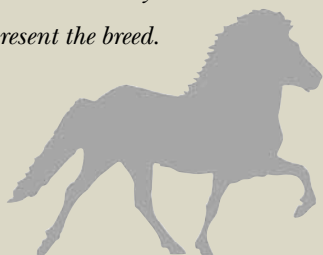


Photo by Andrea Barber

W H Y J O I N T H E U S I H C ?

LEARN

As the owner or rider of an Icelandic horse, you chose a very special breed with its own culture and history. It is important to learn about the breed's unique traits, capabilities, and needs, so that you and your Icelandic horse will have a happy relationship and it will live a healthy and long life in a country far from its origin. As a USIHC member, you have a wealth of information at your fingertips and a personal connection to the best experts in the country.

You receive *The Icelandic Horse Quarterly*, a 52-page all-color magazine, four times a year. All issues since 2008 are available online.

You have free access to WorldFengur, the worldwide database of all registered Icelandic horses. About 400,000 horses, alive and deceased, are included, with pedigrees, offspring, ownership, and evaluation and competition results. Some horses even have photos and videos. WorldFengur is an invaluable tool for all Icelandic horse breeders and very interesting for the rest of us. Go to "Search Horses" on the USIHC website and find any US-registered Icelandic horse by its

number, name, or farm name to link to WorldFengur.

You can take part in—and even help create—educational seminars and teaching programs. For example, the USIHC Education committee developed and now administers the Riding Badge Program for pleasure and competition riders of all ages. On the USIHC website you can find links to FEIF-certified trainers who are USIHC members and can help you get the best out of your Icelandic horse. In the past, the Education committee has organized trainer seminars for those wanting FEIF certification.

The USIHC also has a scholarship fund for members who complete their certification to become national or international judges.

CONNECT

Icelandic horses are social animals, and so are their people. The USIHC is the umbrella organization of regional clubs all over the U.S.: There are currently 12 active clubs. Find the regional Icelandic riding club in your area through the USIHC website, so that you and your horse can ride with friends. News from

the regional clubs appears in each issue of the *Quarterly*.

Join the USIHC Pleasure Rider Program. Through the USIHC website, you can log your equine activities and compete to win patches, medals, or even prizes like riding jackets or stirrups.

USIHC Youth members can apply to participate in the international FEIF Youth Camp or the FEIF Youth Cup. These are great events designed to bring young riders from all 19 FEIF countries together for a week of fun, learning, and competition. Through the USIHC website, you can sign up for RSS feeds for the Events Calendar or web updates. You can check the membership list to see if your friends are members and when your own membership expires. And you can stay connected through the USIHC Facebook page.

COMPETE

The Icelandic horse has international competition rules: You can compete in the same classes and under the same rules in any of the 19 FEIF member countries and compare your progress with competition riders from around the world.

The USIHC Competition committee adapts these international FEIF rules for American venues and special circumstances, publishing a new set of USIHC Competition Rules each year. These are available on the USIHC website, along with all the tools needed to put on a sanctioned show, such as entry forms, judging forms, judges' cards, and announcers' cards. (These tools are also useful for organizing fun shows and schooling shows.) Also on the website are lists of prohibited tack and equipment and other necessary information for competition riders.

Sanctioned shows are eligible for funding under the Flagship Event Funding Program. Sanctioned-show organizers have access to the IceTest software to record show scores so that they immediately appear in the U.S. National Ranking; qualified shows can also send scores to the FEIF World Ranking list. Scores are posted on the USIHC website for everyone to see and compare.

Only USIHC members can join the U.S. team at the Icelandic Horse World Championships, held in a FEIF country every other year. If you hope to compete at an international level, see the team recommendations and requirements

on the USIHC website. Tryouts for the team are open and are National Ranking events: Anyone can ride for scores and to get feedback from an international judge, whether or not you intend to compete in the World Championships.

PROMOTE

USIHC members promote the Icelandic horse at many equine expositions around the country. The USIHC provides a beautiful display, brochures, and copies of the *Quarterly* and will contribute to the cost of the booth and stall space if certain requirements are met. The new USIHC Breed Ambassador program rewards members who take their Icelandic horses to all-breed events and shows.

The Promotion committee also prints advertisements in selected national magazines and newspapers, etc.

Trainers, breeding farms, and trekking barns can promote their services through the USIHC Farm List in the *Quarterly* and on the website. Stallion owners can promote their stud services through the online USIHC Stallion Book. And everyone can advertise in the *Quarterly*.

REGISTER

Whether you plan to breed one mare or have a breeding farm, the USIHC Registry and the Breeding committee provide information and services to help you. The Icelandic horse is one of few breeds with international evaluation standards, so that breeding horses from all over the world are judged on the same 10 points of conformation and 10 points of ridden abilities, and all scores are entered into the WorldFengur database. That allows you to compare the quality of your breeding stock with Icelandic horses around the world, both past and present.

USIHC-sanctioned breeding evaluation shows for registered adult horses ages four and up are scheduled by USIHC Regional Clubs and private farms. Breeding shows are eligible for funding under the Flagship Event Funding Program. All rules and regulations are supplied by the Breeding committee from the international FEIF rules and are available on the USIHC website. For the past several years, the USIHC Breeding Leader

has also organized young horse evaluations for foals to three-year-olds.

In accordance with FEIF rules, the USIHC has developed stringent tests before a foal can be registered as a pure-bred Icelandic horse. You can be sure of the parentage of any registered Icelandic horse and know that your registered foals have proof of their value.

You don't have to be a USIHC member to register your Icelandic horse, but by becoming a member you help support this vital USIHC program.

INNOVATE

The USIHC is a member-driven organization. The more active and involved our members are, the stronger the USIHC becomes. Do you have an idea for a project or event that will support the Icelandic horse in America?

If so, write a proposal. USIHC members are eligible to receive a grant to fund creative projects that meet the USIHC's mission statement. Grant funding is included in the USIHC's annual budget—for 2013, the first year of the grant program, \$8,000 was budgeted! Contact the USIHC vice president for more information or read about the grant program in Issue Three 2013 of the *Quarterly* on the website.

JOIN US

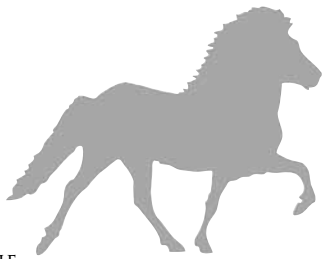
There are only about 4,500 registered Icelandic horses in the U.S. and the USIHC, at about 500 members, is still a small "pioneer" organization compared to countries like Iceland and Germany. Our committee members and board of directors are all volunteers. Please join us so that the USIHC, too, can "bring people together in their passion for the Icelandic horse"!

Yearly membership for an adult is \$45; for a family (two adults, unlimited kids) it is \$65. You can join online or use the form at the back of this magazine.

Questions? USIHC Board members and Committee chairs are here to answer them. For general questions, call or email our information desk or check the website.

Toll free: 866-929-0009
info@icelandics.org
www.icelandics.org

FEIF'S MISSION: FEIF BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER
IN THEIR PASSION FOR THE ICELANDIC HORSE



ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y

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HORSE
QUARTERLY
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On the cover: What looks like a snow monster rising up from the icy deep is the powerful mare Hreyfing frá Minni-Borg (US2002204040). Her owner, Charlotte Kooyman, let her play in freshly fallen powder and her photographer friend Julie Testwuide captured this perfect moment. Hreyfing can also be admired in the NEIHC show pages in this issue. She was shown by a child and a young teen and won Champion in both divisions. Photo by Julie Betts Testwuide, juliearts.com.

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FROM THE BREEDING LEADER

PITCH IN FOR SCIENCE

Even before I started working in academia years ago, first at Rochester Institute of Technology and now at Finger Lakes Community College, I was a great supporter of scientific research. Without the commitment of dedicated researchers, our Icelandic horses would not benefit from the vast scientific knowledge that today allows them to live longer, healthier, and more useful lives.

But the life of a scientist is a difficult one. Researchers need years of expensive and grueling education, usually work for little pay, and toil behind the scenes where glamor's light rarely shines. Time moves slowly for them as they slog through tedious tasks just to gain one more small, but important, piece of data. As much as I would like to be able to do this type of work, I simply don't have the aptitude or patience for it.

That doesn't mean I can't find other ways to be involved. Sometimes my husband and I have simply made a monetary donation, but at other times we've become involved on a more personal level, and each project has proved extremely rewarding. Though most don't end in a giant breakthrough, each has provided science with another piece of the puzzle, and that's really all we can ask for.

The first research project we became involved in was in 2000, when two of our horses took part in a study at the Equine Research Centre of the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. This study looked at the impact of a nutritional supplement (flax seed) on Icelandic horses with summer eczema.

Since then we, and our Icelandic horses, have been involved in a number of projects at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. A few years ago, for example, we allowed our horses to be measured and sampled for Samantha Brooks's gait study at Cornell. The purpose of Samantha's study is to try to discover which genes are responsible for the gaits in horses. Samantha and a team of students came out to take a lot of measurements, get DNA samples from our horses, and take videos of our horses being ridden in various gaits. One of our horses even treated Samantha to her first tölt ride,

which she thoroughly enjoyed.

For several years now we have been involved in Bettina Wagner's study on summer eczema at Cornell (for an update, see my article in Issue One 2014 of the *Quarterly*). Among other things, we've provided blood samples from our own horses, spread the word by writing articles about the study and posting to social media, taken photos of the project's horses, set up an evaluation to get the young horses assessed, and even sponsored and adopted some of the research horses ourselves.

Soon I will be facilitating the USIHC's involvement in a new project with Cornell University to create a standard blood profile for Icelandic horses. Icelandic horse owners and their veterinarians often question the blood test results they get for their Icelandic horses—they are not sure if the deviations from "normal" horse values are due to illness or to characteristics of the Icelandic breed. This exciting project will benefit all Icelandic horses and their owners worldwide by answering those questions. I hope many USIHC members will support and participate in this important research!

So what can you do to get involved in research?

Provide financial support: Conducting research is expensive and funding is scarce. Financial support (in the form of donations of cash, non-cash assets, etc., either presently or through your estate) is always a critical need. In most cases, your donations will be tax deductible; check with the organization or institution you are donating to, as well as with your tax professional, for details.

Provide information: Sometimes researchers have nothing more than questions about the breed. Not sure of the correct answers? Contact the USIHC office and we will be happy to find an expert to help.

Volunteer your horses: Some projects need blood or DNA samples, measurements, or other observations. With their great temperaments, our horses are usually happy to oblige. A side bonus is that it's often great breed promotion, with the researchers coming away with a positive impression of the breed.

Volunteer your time: Perhaps you have a



Andrea Barber riding her mare Löggi frá Laufhóli, who was one of the original breeding mares in the Cornell University research herd. Photo by Steven Barber.

skill you can offer, or just be an extra hand when needed.

Get help: For some projects local veterinary assistance is needed. Ask your veterinarian if he or she is willing to help. Many veterinarians are excited to donate their time and expertise to help a research project by doing things like drawing blood, collecting samples, etc.

Adopt: When research projects are completed there may be animals that need homes. Perhaps you can provide a horse that has given part of its life to research a loving home.

Ask: Make a call or send an email to the researchers and ask how you can help.

Spread the word: Share your experiences with others by word of mouth, social media, etc. Let other people know about the importance of research and how they can help out.

Please remember that without your help, scientific research that will benefit the Icelandic horse has a difficult time moving forward. We all need to pitch in whenever and wherever we can. We owe it to our horses—and to future generations of Icelandic horses—to help provide the best scientific knowledge possible to improve the quality of their lives.

—Andrea Barber

2014 SHOW SEASON

The 2014 USIHC-sanctioned show season wrapped up with the Kentucky Show, held at Locust Hill Farm in Prospect, KY, on October 11-12. Three other sanctioned shows were held since the last issue of the *Quarterly* was printed: the Flugnirkeppni at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI; the NEIHC Open at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY; and the CIA Fall Open at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. Scores from all 2014 USIHC-sanctioned shows are available on the website, www.icelandics.org, under "Ride"; they have also been added to the National Ranking. See photos from the four recent shows in this issue of the *Quarterly*.

NEW INTERN JUDGES

Four people who attended the recent Sport Judging Seminar in Kentucky have qualified as U.S. Intern Judges. Congratulations to Deborah Cook, Alexandra Dannenmann, Barbara Frische, and Sina Scholz. U.S. Intern Judges are permitted to judge schooling shows and to scribe at USIHC-sanctioned shows. In addition to the four new judges, Will Covert, Kathryn Lockerbie, Sara Lyter, Susan Peters, Alexandra Pregitzer, and Doug Smith are qualified U.S. Intern Judges. The USIHC Board of Directors urges members to take advantage of the training these people have received by utilizing their skills at your local events. For more information, or to contact an intern judge, see the USIHC



Christina Granados and Hroftur from Hobby Horse Ranch showing trot at the CIA Fall Open at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. Photo by Heidi Benson.

website at www.icelandics.org/Education/judgeresults.php or contact Sport Leader Will Covert at sport@icelandics.org.

The recent Sport Judging Seminar was held in combination with the Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show, October 9-12, and included lectures, video presentations, and practical judging. It was designed for competition riders, riders interested in competing, and anyone else interested in better understanding the international judging system for Icelandic horses. Topics included the theory and practice of judging, watching and evaluating gaits, and the technical factors behind the scores. The seminar was structured in a way that allowed participants to ride in the competition, as well as attend the full seminar and be able to take the test at the end if they

chose to, but it was also open to participants who did not compete. For more information on such educational offerings, contact Education Committee Chair Katrin Sheehan at Katsheehan@mac.com or 706-347-0900.

YOUNG HORSE EVALUATION

A Young Horse Evaluation and clinic with Barbara Frische was scheduled for the Simmons Equestrian Center in Negley, OH, on October 19. The clinic was organized by Juli Cole (juli2875@yahoo.com or 724-667-4184) for the new Ohio Valley Regional Club.

STALLION REPORTS DUE

Breeding Leader Andrea Barber writes: Now that December has arrived it's time for all stallion owners to remember to fill out and file their annual Stallion Report(s). The stallion report provides the USIHC registry with a listing of all mares bred by a stallion for the named year. The Registrar in turn enters this information into WorldFengur. It provides information for the registration of the resulting offspring, but also important data for the breed in WorldFengur.

The Stallion Report form can be found on the USIHC website under Registry Forms. It should be filled out (one for each stallion) as completely and accurately as possible—be sure to list the correct dates of service, as well as *all* the mares bred by the stallion (not just the ones that became pregnant), etc. If you are unsure about how to fill out the form, please ask



Willy Ma and Barbara Downs competing in T5 at the CIA Fall Open. Photo by Will Covert.

for help! The Registrar (Ásta Covert) and I are happy to assist you. The report(s) can be sent to the Registrar either by email (download, fill out, scan, then email) or regular mail.

All Stallion Reports are due by January 10—that means received or postmarked by January 10, 2015. However, you can get them in as early as you like. Stallion Reports that are received on time are free of charge. Late Stallion Reports or Stallion Reports that need to be corrected/amended incur a fee of \$100. So, the choice seems pretty clear—make sure your Stallion Report(s) are accurate and filed on time!

BREEDERS' PAPERWORK

Andrea Barber writes: While you're working on your Stallion Report, here's some more paperwork that responsible breeders need to keep up to date:

—Register all your 2014 foals and imports. Remember that all horses registered within their first year of life, or of import, can be registered for half price, currently \$25.

—Record castrations that have taken place in 2014. There is no charge for this. Simply fill out the appropriate area on the back of the USIHC registration form and mail it in.

—Record microchips that have been inserted in 2014. There is no charge for this. Simply print and fill out the "Register an Identification Mark" form from the USIHC website and send it in via email (scan) or regular mail.

—Notify the Registry of any registered horses that have died in 2014. There is no charge for this. Simply fill out the appropriate area on the back of the USIHC registration form and mail it in. You may also check a box on the back of the form to have a copy of the horse's registration papers sent back to you for your records at no charge.

—Follow up with buyers that you have sold horses to. Have they transferred the horse(s) into their name? Direct them to either the Registrar (Ásta Covert) or the Breeding Leader (me) for assistance if they need help with the transfer process.

—Follow up with mare owners that

bred to your stallion(s) in 2013. Have you signed the "Domestic Application Form" for them? Have they used the form to register the offspring? Remind them of the price difference if they register the foal within the first year of its life. Direct them to either the Registrar (Ásta Covert) or the Breeding Leader (me) for assistance if they need help with the registration process.

Thank you all for being responsible breeders, and best wishes to all for a successful and productive 2015 breeding season.

2015 USIHC MEETING

The 2015 USIHC Annual Members Meeting will be held at the Radisson Blu hotel at the Mall of America in Minneapolis, MN, on March 7-8. A block of rooms is available at a reduced rate by using the following link: www.radissonblumoa.com. Be sure to click "more options" and enter promo code "ICater" to receive our negotiated room rate. The meeting is being organized by Steve Cook and plans are in the works to enhance the agenda with educational topics; watch the USIHC website and Facebook page for more details.

BOARD ELECTION CANCELED

Lynn Wiese, Election Committee Chair, reports there were no nominations received for the election. As all three incumbent Board members are willing to continue to serve and no nominations have been received, the Board is suspending the election process. The Board thanks Lynn and her committee for agreeing to serve had the election been held.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the USIHC Board of Directors' meetings held in August, September, and October, along with the monthly treasurer's reports, are available on the USIHC website (www.icelandics.org) under The Congress, Board of Directors. In addition to the topics mentioned earlier in this news section, here are some highlights:

At the August meeting, the Board responded to a letter submitted by the NEIHC Regional Club in June outlining a



The FIRC drill team practices monthly. Leading here is Mitch Martin with Jökull, followed by Sverrir Bjartmarz with Hetja; unseen are Rich Moore with Glanni and Antje Freygang with Riddari. Photo by Erna Pomrenke.

proposal for a five-year-plan to help fund and develop sanctioned shows, world ranking shows, breed evaluations, youth focused events, trainer certification, and seminars for training judges. The NEIHC's suggestion that the Congress spend \$20,000 per year for five years on these events corresponded to a plan already under consideration to establish the Flagship Event Funding Program. At the July Board meeting, that program had been announced, offering \$15,000 per year for two calendar years (2014 and 2015) to support USIHC-sanctioned sport shows and breeding evaluations. (See Issue Three 2014 of the *Quarterly* for details.)

In August, the Board responded to the NEIHC's other suggestions; their point-by-point response can be read on the USIHC website, www.icelandics.org, in the August meeting minutes. When organizing sanctioned shows and breeding evaluations, the Board noted that, while it can—and has—provided financial incentives of \$1,000 per show, it has "no way to provide the staffing to do the work necessary." The Board repeatedly stressed that, for these or other events, "the drive must come from the local community to succeed. ... There is no way for a national level 'intervention' to create local passion."

In conclusion, the Board noted that

it “has been very financially responsible since the founding of the USIHC. That is one reason we have as much money in the bank as we do. We could easily spend all of these accumulated funds in the next few years. The Board has approved \$15,000 of funding per year for the next two years with a commitment to review the progress and decide how to extend this support. If the financial support does not lead to success in the organization, the Board may change directions again. To be clear, this \$15,000 funding is for the Flagship sport and breeding events and is in addition to the \$8,000 approved for grants to support innovative programs and the longer standing programs for helping Regional Clubs with advertising their events. There is national money available, but the local community needs to come together to take advantage of the support. The USIHC Board hopes this explains our position and that the NEIHC, as one of the most influential regional clubs, will take an active leadership role in implementing some of your suggestions.”

At the September Board meeting, Secretary Doug Smith noted that the free youth membership offer has ended and the normal \$35 per year fee for youth members has been restored. At the October meeting, he noted that membership had increased since September by five households to 477.

In September, Promotion director Juli Cole presented a proposal for funding events where the breed and the organization are promoted and the USIHC display board is used. The Board asked the Promotion Committee to revise its proposal to better define the limits on the funding and to clarify the link between the deposit on the display board and the event funding. The Board also asked the Promotion Committee to make a recommendation regarding the size of the required booth deposit. Lastly, the Board asked the committee to consider whether it was overly restrictive to require the USIHC display board be used to qualify for funding.

Breeding leader Andrea Barber reported that the NEIHC canceled the breeding evaluation it had planned to hold in New York in September due to lack of participation—only four horses were signed up. A breeding evaluation is being planned



Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season from the staff of the *Quarterly*. Let us know what you think of our first year of full color printing at quarterly@icelandics.org.

Cartoon by Chris Romano.

for May 2015 at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI; Andrea is currently working on securing judges for that show.

In October, the Board discussed a complicated issue that arose at the NEIHC's Young Horse Evaluation (YHE) in New York in September. Shortly after the evaluation was completed, Breeding leader Andrea Barber received a communication from NEIHC president Martina Gates noting that, among other things, “It was not brought to our attention that the judge was not versed in young horse judgments and did not have any previous knowledge of the young horse score sheets either that were developed by Barbara Frische. During the judgments no comments were made to any owners and the scores were entered. When we asked to see the scores we were surprised at the scoring. Nearly every horse had a 1 for tolt beat and suppleness as well as pace ability.... The judge was under the impression that he could not give a score for gaits not shown.... This is a very different approach to the scoring Barbara Frische had done previously....” In a follow-up letter, the NEIHC reiterated, “A phone call to our former Breeding leaders Barbara Frische and Katrin Sheehan confirmed that the new FEIF YHE standard was not applied correctly.... The club was not aware that

in fact none of the judges in Iceland had taken any educational courses to be familiar with the new YH judging.” The NEIHC requested that the scores from the evaluation be deleted from the national database and the evaluation be considered “informal and private.”

After talking at length with former U.S. Breeding leader Anne Elwell, FEIF International Breeding Judge and former U.S. Breeding leader Barbara Frische, and FEIF Vice-President and Director of Breeding Marlise Grimm, and thoroughly researching the issues, Andrea sent a decision to the USIHC Breeding Committee with a copy to all the owners/breeders of the horses involved. She noted that the issue “turned out to be more complex than it first appeared.” She continued, “The young horse evaluation system that we here in the U.S. are familiar with (the Linear System) was developed in Germany” and “it has, to date, been up to the individual countries to decide if and how they wanted to adopt this system, in whole or in part. As such judges’ experience with the Linear System varies widely.” In addition, “there is no formal training or testing required by FEIF or any other body.”

Andrea agreed that the scores of the NEIHC evaluation “are not valid and will be set aside. This also means, unfortunately, the event is not eligible for either the new Caryn Cantella Award or the USIHC’s young horse evaluation funding program for this year.”

She added that she was working with Barbara Frische and Anne Elwell to ask the FEIF Breeding Judges Committee to establish a training and certification system for the Linear System and to display a list of judges that have been certified. In the meantime, it will be the responsibility of the U.S. Breeding leader to approve suitable judges for Young Horse Evaluations.

“Although the situation with the NEIHC event was unfortunate,” she concluded, “it has provided us—and hopefully FEIF too—with a great learning experience and catalyst for continued improvement going forward.” These letters and the official letters sent to FEIF can be read on the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org as part of the October Board Meeting Minutes.

WHO IS FEIF?

FEIF has published a new brochure presenting its history and the goals of its five departments: Sport, Breeding, Education, Leisure Riding, and Youth. The trifold brochure can be downloaded and printed from www.feif.org. FEIF is governed by an assembly of delegates from its member national associations, including the USIHC. The delegates assembly meets each February at a conference to which the national representatives of the five departments are also invited, so that FEIF can bring together and learn from its member associations.

Much of the work of FEIF is in Sport: FEIF has developed rules for competitions (FIPO), trained and licensed international judges, and developed the IceTest software, which is available to show organizers for free, to calculate show results. New judging guidelines were recently developed to make judging in competitions more transparent and understandable and to encourage good riding.

In Breeding, an international standard for the Icelandic horse was agreed upon in 1974, but it took a long time to reach agreement on international rules for the evaluation of breeding horses. Today all FEIF countries fully support the breeding rules (FIZO). The breakthrough came with the establishment of WorldFengur, FEIF's breeding-horse database. WorldFengur stores the individual results

of breeding evaluations of all horses judged at approved shows.

The Education Department defines international educational standards to enable qualified horse trainers and riding instructors to operate in any FEIF country. It organizes events where people interested in education can meet and provides a forum for the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

The Youth Department organizes Youth Cup and Youth Camp in alternate years. The two events take place in the different member countries in turn, the camps with borrowed horses, the cups normally with the riders' own horses (though some are borrowed). Both the camp and the cup are important for maintaining the friendly international atmosphere across borders, which is still the main aim of FEIF. Since 1999, youth riders have been allowed to represent their country at the World Championships and they now have their own finals. The Youth Department has also created youth riding tests and rules for youth events that are used, not only for youth, but as "generic tests" at local competitions.

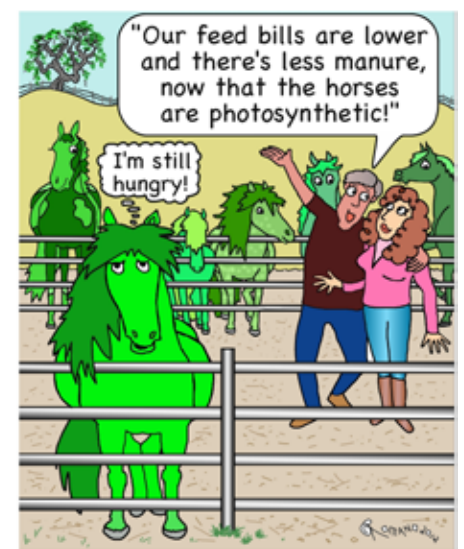
The largest number of riders joining the Icelandic horse world are leisure or pleasure riders. The Leisure Riding Department is working with the national associations to ensure that these riders continue to have access to riding trails out in nature in the future. The department is working on a test to provide information

on the character, gaits, and other relevant traits of good pleasure riding horses.

For more information about FEIF and how you can get involved, see the interview with FEIF Director of Sport Doug Smith in this issue of the *Quarterly*.

FEIF CONFERENCE

This year the FEIF Delegates' Assembly and Conference will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, February 6-7. Written proposals from the countries are due to the FEIF Office at least 10 weeks before the meeting; all incoming proposals, the annual reports of the Board, as well as the final agenda will be forwarded to the business addresses of the member organizations at least eight weeks in advance. Each member organization must nominate its delegates. Written notification of the name of each delegate must be sent to the FEIF Office at least two weeks before the Delegates' Assembly. The number of votes of each member organization is based on the number of its members. The national votes can only be represented by one or two delegates from their own country. The FEIF Board has one vote. Guests and journalists are welcome, but must apply to the FEIF board in advance. They may not take part in the discussions unless specifically invited to do so. Places may be limited. After the Delegates' Assembly, the FEIF Conference will start on Friday afternoon and end on Saturday evening.





CONFORMATION STANCE

Recently the FEIF international breeding judges' group changed the ideal position of the horse's hind legs during the assessment of conformation at breeding evaluations. Horses should now stand evenly on all four legs. The front legs should be vertical and the hind legs should be positioned in such a way that the cannon bone is vertical. (See www.feif.org for photographs showing proper and improper positioning.) The hind legs should not be stretched and should be, as the front legs are, evenly positioned. It is acceptable for the hind legs to be separated by approximately one hoof length. The idea behind this positioning of the hind legs is to increase the consistency in the way horses stand during the assessment of conformation, and thereby in the assessment itself. The new standard stance will enable judges to better evaluate the correctness of the limbs and the topline in the back and croup.

BREEDING SEMINAR

The 2014 Breeding Horse Trainer seminar took place in August at Kronshof, Germany; 17 trainers from six countries (Denmark, Germany, Norway, Austria, Sweden, and Switzerland), ages 18 to 25, attended. Teaching the seminar were Marlise Grimm, Sigbjörn Björnsson, Agnar Snorri Stefánsson, and Frauke Schenzel, whose family also hosted the event. The



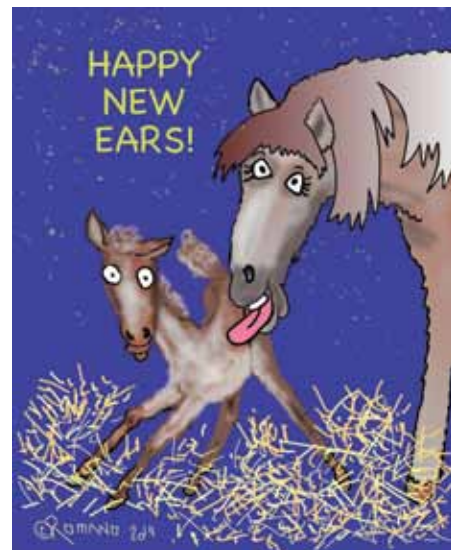
participants had the opportunity to present horses for both conformation and ridden assessments while receiving tips from trainers and judges.

YOUTH CAMP

The 2015 FEIF Youth Camp will be hosted by Germany and will take place at Reitschule Berlar (see www.reitschule-berger.de) from June 28 to July 5. FEIF Youth Camp is organized for youngsters aged 12 to 18 who share a passion for the Icelandic horse. To participate you do not have to own an Icelandic horse, but you should have some riding knowledge. The activities involved in each camp are up to the host country to decide. They include riding, along with anything from hiking to sight-seeing. More details will be available in early 2015; contact USIHC Youth Leader Colleen Monsef at youth@icelandics.org or 408-390-9307 if you are interested.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2015 Icelandic Horse World Championships will be held in Herning, Denmark, from August 3-9. Tickets, booking of hotel rooms and campsites, and information on volunteering for the event are available on the new website at <http://vm15.com>. The chief judge, selected by the Board of FEIF with input from the Sport Committee, Sport Judges Committee, and several member nations, will be Þorgeir Guðlaugsson; the deputy



chief judge is Einar Ragnarsson. National teams have to confirm their participation by March 13, 2015. Names of the rider and horse combinations that are most likely to participate in both sport and breeding must be submitted before July 20. Watch the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org for information on the World Championship tryouts to be held in various parts of the country this spring.

NORDIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2014 Nordic Championships (NM2014) were held in Herning, Denmark in September as a "rehearsal" for the World Championships, scheduled at that venue in August 2015. More than a hundred riders from the six Nordic nations competed for five days, with Norway emerging as the "most winning nation," while Denmark received the most gold medals, thanks to its talented junior and youth riders. According to World Championships press coordinator Vibeke Grøn, "Not everything was perfect at the NM2014, and the joint Nordic organizing committee is aware of it and is working seriously on the challenges. That's how it ought to be—striving to be better and better each time."

REGIONAL CLUB UPDATES



Ásta Covert riding Dynjandi frá Dalvík in loose-rein tolt at the 2014 CIA Fall Open. Photo by Will Covert.

There are 12 Regional Clubs affiliated with the U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress. To find the one nearest you, see the USIHC website at <http://www.icelandics.org/regionalclubs.php>; contact information for each club can also be found there. The following clubs filed updates on their activities this quarter.

CIA (SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA)

BY ASTA COVERT

The CIA Open Fall Show was held on October 4-5, 2014. It was a hot, but fun, weekend. The majority of the riders came from the Kraftur Club in Northern California. Nicolai Thye traveled from Germany to be our judge, and his girlfriend Freija Puttkammer helped us out with scribing and gate duty, along with Christina Granados, Laurie Prestine, Laurie Pollock, and Laura Benson. Will Covert and Doug Smith took care of the IceTest. And of course Keith (aka Roger Niner) was our announcer and DJ and made sure we had great music going the whole weekend. Everyone looked like they were having a great time while riding their horses on the track.

See more photos from the show in the article in this issue of the *Quarterly*. Full results can be found on the USIHC website at: <http://www.icelandics.org/showresults/pdf/CIAOpen1014.pdf>

Our next event is a clinic with Olil Amble in December at Flying C Ranch. See <http://www.ciaclub.net> for information or contact Ásta Covert at asta@tolt.net or 805-688-1393.

CWIHC (CENTRAL WASHINGTON)

BY DEBBY DILLARD

Members of the newly formed Central Washington Icelandic Horse Club gathered together for a meeting on April 7, 2014, at Greg and Debby Dillard's Makani Farms, LLC, to discuss and review the club's goals and purpose, to plan some events, and to elect officers. The new officers are: Debby Dillard, President; Patti Erickson, Vice-president; Judy Parker, Secretary-Treasurer. The purpose of the CWIHC is to promote the knowledge of the Icelandic horse and its correct use as a competition and pleasure horse in accordance with the policies of FEIF and the USIHC. Good food and great Icelandic horse conversation were enjoyed by all in attendance. The majority of the CWIHC members are new Icelandic horse owners and all are ready and willing to learn all they can to understand, support, and promote the breed.

Despite the high temperatures, CWIHC held their first event in August 2014. A successful clinic, hosted by Greg and Debby Dillard of Makani Farms, LLC, located in Ellensburg, WA, was held with Kim Andersen of Glacial Horses leading the clinic. The club was thankful to Kathryn Lockerbie for being instrumental in bringing Kim to Central Washington for the day. There were five participants and horses in attendance: Greg Dillard, Debby Dillard, Judy Parker, Gabrielle Stryker, and Faye Doyle, as well as auditors who enjoyed the day. The clinic was informative and educational, and all the horses and their owners saw quite a bit of progress throughout the day. There were many laughs and a lot of water was consumed to keep us hydrated.

CWIHC is looking forward to hosting more events in Central Washington and to adding new members to the club. For information, contact Debby Dillard at dbydill@gmail.com or 253-677-2946.



Members of the Central Washington Icelandic Horse Club met for a clinic with Kim Andersen of Glacial Horses at Greg and Debby Dillard's Makani Farm.

FIRC (MID-ATLANTIC STATES)

BY RICH MOORE

The Frida Icelandic Riding Club had a busy summer and looked forward to more activities in the fall as this issue went to press. Events included a breed demonstration in Virginia in July, a trail ride at the Manassas Battlefield in August, a schooling show in Virginia in early September, and a dressage clinic in Maryland in late September. In the fall and early winter the club planned a clinic with Steinar Sigurbjörnsson on October 10-12 in West Virginia, a trail ride in Maryland in November, and a holiday party in Maryland in December, along with monthly drill team practices in Virginia.

The drill team did a breed demonstration in Virginia at the Fairfax County Equestrian Center at Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon, VA on July 19. The team was invited as part of the Center's Rider Appreciation Day. The riders were: Antje Freygang, Mitch Martin, Rich Moore, and Sverrir Bjartmarz. The team first rode a drill team pattern at tölt. Then team members in pairs demonstrated trot and canter. Mitch showed fast canter/gallop. The demonstration went well. The director of the Center told the team later (perhaps too kindly) that it had been the best drill team and breed demonstration that she had ever seen!

Members of FIRC enjoyed a two-hour trail ride at the Manassas National Battlefield Park in Virginia on August 24. Sverrir



Tammy Martin and Kvintett frá Torfunesi at the Frida Schooling Show. Photo by Erna Pomrenke.



A scene from the Frida Schooling Show at Frying Pan Park in September, with Marilyn Tully on Nina Pia (left) and Suzi McGraw on Zara. Photo by Erna Pomrenke.

Bjartmarz and Mitch Martin planned the ride. The riders divided into two groups. A canter group was led by Mitch and a tölt/trot group by Rich Moore. Other members in attendance included Tony and Laura Colicchio, Antje Freygang, Jacki Edens, Lesley Presnicak with her friend Claire, Pat Carballo, and Tammy Martin. The trails were in good condition, and everyone had a good ride. Afterwards, riders enjoyed a picnic at the pavilion near the trailer parking area.

The club held a schooling show on September 6 at Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon, VA. It was a great venue for a show. The show was held in one of the two large outdoor arenas. This year 12 horses were entered in the 14 classes offered. Three were Tölt in Harmony classes sponsored by the USIHC. Some of the 10 riders rode multiple horses in different classes, so there were 13 rider-horse combinations. Alex Pregitzer came from Michigan to be the clinician and judge and did a great job. Susan McPhatter of Virginia was the scribe. The riders learned a lot and had a good time, despite the unusually warm weather. The show was organized by Pat Moore, Kim Davis, Sali Peterson, and Sverrir Bjartmarz.

A clinic on classical dressage con-

ducted by Brendan Wise was organized by Laura Colicchio and held on September 27-28 in Rosaryville, MD. Riders and horses included Tony Colicchio on Von, Laura Colicchio on Raven and Sonnet (a Thoroughbred), Sali Peterson on Onyx, and Mitch Martin on Jo Jo. Private lessons were held on Friday and a two-day clinic commenced afterwards.

"Brendan Wise studied under John and Josh Lyons and follows the French light-seat techniques taught by Suzanne Marshall," reported Laura Colicchio. "The best way to describe his teaching and the end result is phenomenal. I was totally blown away by this young 'horse whisperer.' His method is simple, but powerful. The reins must never move backwards, only upwards. The inside hand of the rider acts in a scooping motion to maintain bend. Reins may be moved slightly sideways in unison to control the shoulders. He takes the horse as a blank slate every time he deals with that particular horse and never stereotypes the animal. His doctrine is that one should never 'hold' or mechanically induce a horse into a certain carriage or movement; we are there merely to guide the horse into the correct action. Hence, I witnessed supple, freely moving horses



Lesley Pesnicak and Gigja at the Frida Schooling Show. Photo by Erna Pomrenke.



Sverrir and Asta Bjartmarz rest their horses Amur, Hetja, and Thokkadis during the Frida Schooling Show. Photo by Erna Pomrenke.

stretching out more and more to receive the bit, completely balanced, with ‘measured’ and lighter footfall instead of rushing, and in beautiful and natural bend.”

Laura adds, “Riders worked on bend and counter-bends, voltes, shoulder-in, shoulder-fore, and figure-eights, all with proper rein contact that was featherlight and upwards. His teachings are simple and easy to understand. Consequently, all riders comprehended and carried out his riding techniques with ease. I found Raven to be straighter than ever, not falling in on the inside shoulder as much, and stretching upwards and forwards more, as well as lifting the back and topline to meet my seat. In conclusion, I think I speak for all the riders there in saying that we would like to continue learning from this incredibly talented horseman who is also humble and unassuming. I

encourage all riders to reap the benefits of his teachings at such time when a future clinic is planned.” For more information, see the FIRC website at <http://firc.us> or contact Pat Moore at pat.moore81@verizon.net or 703-754-0883.

KRAFTUR (NORTHERN CALIFORNIA)

BY CAROL TOLBERT

Our quarterly update starts with a re-cap of the Youth Trail Ride we held to end the summer in style. We had 10 young riders, two trainers, and one parent. Six of the riders came all the way from Los Gatos to participate. A big thanks to Laurie Prestine for hauling all those horses and kids over to Santa Cruz for the day. The weather on August 9 was a little grey in the morning, but the sun finally

appeared, allowing our young riders stunning views of the Pacific Ocean from “Cowboy Trail.” A pizza lunch capped off the day, and the vote was unanimous: the “End of Summer Trail Ride” needs to become a tradition. Riders included (in order of the group photo): trainers Heidi and Laura Benson, Madeline Pollock, Jamie Blough, Gabrielle Pollock, Jessica Blough, Julia Hasenauer, Emily Benito, Cameron Tolbert-Scott, Elizabeth Robertson, Jasmine McCrae, Madison Prestine, and parent Dana McCrae (not in photo).

Kraftur members are not all under the age of 20, though. We had some events involving our more seasoned riders, too. A first of its kind in the U.S., our members held a Tölt in Harmony event at Mountain Icelandic Farm on August 17. The “Tölt in Harmony” website states that the aim of this program is to “help move forward toward a more horse-friendly sport with more rideable horses.” (See <http://toltinharmony.wordpress.com/tihinternational/>)

One of the main coordinators of the competition, Katherine Sierra, claimed it to be a “wonderful riding/learning experience.” The format worked better than they were expecting, too. “We all learned quite a lot, including the fact that riding these patterns in tölt looks way easier than it turns out to be.” The mix of horses and riders ranged in both age and experience. Regardless, it seems they all came away learning a great deal about this exciting event. (See the comments of youth member Julia Hasenauer in the Youth Essay in this issue.) Annette Coulon



Youth members of the Kraftur Club took an end-of-summer ride from Coast Road Ranch to Wilder Ranch. Riders included (left to right): trainers Heidi and Laura Benson, Madeline Pollock, Jamie Blough, Gabrielle Pollock, Jessica Blough, Julia Hasenauer, Emily Benito, Cameron Tolbert-Scott, Elizabeth Robertson, Jasmine McCrae, Madison Prestine, and parent Dana McCrae (not in photo). Photo by Eleanor Anderson.



Elizabeth Robertson leads the group on the Kraftur Youth Rider Trail Ride. Photo by Carol Tolbert.

thought it was a “fun and amazing” event. “I never thought it would be as difficult as it was to ride the figure eight with smaller circles inside of the figure eight!” Kraftur certainly plans to hold another Tölt in Harmony event for 2015 (maybe two!).

Speaking of planning, we held a Kraftur Board meeting recently to discuss upcoming events for the fall and into 2015. We’ve found that it’s just too difficult to discuss every topic electronically or even on the phone. Meeting in person for a couple of hours worked well, and we got a lot accomplished. By the time this issue is in your mailboxes, we’ll hopefully have completed most of these great events. First up in the fall is a Youth Halloween event to include costume and riding competitions. We’ll

have great photos to share in the March issue. Another photo op for our Icelandic horses (and riders) will be the annual Los Gatos Holiday Parade in early December. Always well attended, it’s a great venue to show this special breed to the public. We’ll end the day with a party to celebrate the holiday season and the end of the year. Prior to the parade, we’re planning a general membership meeting in conjunction with a tack swap and another trail ride (weather permitting). We’re hoping that by combining the meeting with other optional events, we’ll get a strong turnout for the day. We’ve also tentatively planned a few other events for the coming year.

We post our events on our club website (www.krafturclub.wordpress.com) and will

post photos there as well as on our club Facebook page. For more information, contact Gabriele Meyer at gm@proryders.com or 650-867-6188. Here’s wishing you all a very happy holiday season and a spectacular 2015!

NEIHC (NORTHEASTERN U.S.)

BY JESSICA HAYNSWORTH

The NEIHC had a busy summer full of clinics, shows, and fun! On July 18-20, Thor Icelandics hosted a clinic and schooling show with Steinar Sigurbjörnsón. The schooling show was not only fun, it also helped prepare riders for the NEIHC Open, a USIHC-sanctioned competition in September. About 20 horses and riders participated in the clinic and show, including three youth riders. Thorunn Kristjánsdóttir writes: “These clinics and schooling shows are not just helpful, but also fun, and they give those with the competitive spirit a chance to hone their skills, work on their programs, and get great feedback from Steinar.” For those who are less competitively inclined, it was a great chance for feedback and for fun. And because it was a schooling show, Steinar was able to talk with the riders while they were on the track, sometimes during their programs, and help them to improve their performance.

In July, five NEIHC riders performed in a breed demo in front of 450 spectators at the Katonah Museum of Art. Nicki Eisdorn writes: “This summer the Katonah



Jamie Blough, Gabrielle Pollock, and Jessica Blough smiling after the Kraftur Youth Rider Trail Ride. Photo by Eleanor Anderson.



Martina Gates on Stígandi frá Leysingjastöðum and Kristján Kristjánsson on Revía from Vínland at the Katonah Museum of Art demo. Photo by Scott Mullin.

Museum of Art had a beautiful exhibition called *ICELAND—Artists Respond to Place*, showcasing contemporary Icelandic artists. On Sunday, July 27, the museum invited the community to a family open house with demonstrations on many things Icelandic: food, wool, sagas, and Icelandic horses!” Led by Nicki, the riders were supposed to show off the great personality, beauty, and gaits of the Icelandic horse on a grassy lot behind the museum. “However, when the horse trailers rolled in,” Nicki says, “the skies opened and a biblical deluge turned the lot into a pond. Riding seemed impossible—but then the sun came back out after a while and the riders and museum staff decided to hold the event anyway on the lawn right in front of the museum, among sculpture and visitors! It turned out to be fantastic.” The riders were Michael Kooyman, age 11, on the 22-year-old gelding Fengur frá Litlu-Asgeirsá (by Orri frá Þúfu), Jessica Haynsworth with her first prize mare Glæta frá Brekku, Martina Gates with the well-known stallion Stígandi frá Leysingjastöðum, Kristján Kristjánsson on Stígandi’s first prize daughter Revía from Vínland, and announcer Nicki on her talented young mare Álfrún frá Hrafnstöðum. They rode together and individually, showing off beautiful gaits and great temperament. Then the spectators were invited to come up close and talk to the riders and pet the horses.

Margaret Moulton, the Public Pro-

grams Manager at the Museum, thanked the riders in an email: “Thank you so much for making our Midsummer Icelandic Day such a success. Truly, if it weren’t for you and the Icelandics, we wouldn’t have pulled in half the crowd. But because of you, many people (about 450) visited the Katonah Museum of Art and had a really wonderful day. I think Icelandic horses attract a very nice group of people, from the riders to the owners to the spectators. We had a lovely crowd yesterday, all of whom happily adjusted their expectations, and were simply thrilled and grateful to explore new things.” Over all, the event was a rousing success and a large photo of Martina and Kristján on their father-daughter pair of horses made the front page of the local weekly Bedford Record Review.

On September 17-19, Steinar Sigurbjörnsson returned to Thor Icelandics for a three-day camp to prepare riders for the NEIHC Open that weekend. Thorunn Kristjánsdóttir writes: “This is the second consecutive year that Steinar has come to Thor Icelandics prior to the NEIHC sanctioned show in September, to help riders and competitors. On Wednesday through



Leslie Chambers lets two young horse lovers try her mare, Herdís, at Thor Icelandics’ July schooling show and clinic with Steinar Sigurbjörnsson. Photo by Heleen Heyning.



Jess Haynsworth and Glæta frá Brekku at Thor Icelandics’ July schooling show, judged by Steinar Sigurbjörnsson. Photo by Heleen Heyning.

Friday this year, Steinar helped over 20 riders in both private and group lessons. He helped them specifically prepare their programs for their classes in the show, working individually with the rider and horses. This has proven very successful and popular, giving competitors up to three extra days at Thor to practice with Steinar’s help.” Some riders also arrived early at the facility to use the tracks to practice.

September 20-21 was the much anticipated second annual NEIHC Open. This is a USIHC-sanctioned competition held annually by the club, and this year Hulda Geirsdóttir was the judge. A total of 33 riders participated, and 41 horses were shown, some with multiple riders. Overall, 45 horse and rider combinations competed. There were 140 class entries, 24 preliminary and pleasure classes, and six finals. This year, the NEIHC decided to award champion and reserve champion titles for each division: open, intermediate, novice, green horse, beginning rider, youth, and junior youth. In order to be eligible for these awards, riders had to compete in one tölt class and one multi-gait class in a given division, on the same horse for both classes. A Feather Prize and Youth Feather Prize were also offered, for good and harmonious riding.



Jenny from Thor Icelandics, owned by Nicki Esdorn, was the highest judged horse in the NEIHC young horse evaluations in October. Photo by Martina Gates.

Results can be found on the USIHC website, www.icelandics.org, under "Ride."

This show was also the first time that the "Acoustic Tölt" class, in which the judge is blindfolded and scores horses solely on their clarity of beat, was offered at an official competition. Riders took turns on the track, so the judge could hear each horse individually. The NEIHC received very positive feedback on this class from riders and spectators. Judge Hulda Geirsdóttir was particularly enthusiastic about this class, and said that she would like to see it held in Iceland.

Many thanks to all who made this event a success, including our class sponsors, silent auction donors and supporters, raffle ticket buyers, show donors, and volunteers.

The NEIHC Open was supposed to be followed by a breeding evaluation, but that had to be canceled due to lack of participation. Martina Gates writes: "The breeding show had to be canceled because nearly all the participants canceled on us. We therefore decided to have informal conformation judgments for three horses and a young horse evaluation. The highest judged young horse was Jenny from Thor Icelandics. Unfortunately the

judge had limited knowledge of the new linear young horse assessment, which was reflected in the percentage scoring. The breeders and owners have therefore asked to have the results excluded from the national ranking."

On November 13-16, after this issue goes to press, the Silver Maple Show Team will be performing in the Fantasia shows at Equine Affaire in Springfield, MA. All members of the Silver Maple Show Team are proud NEIHC members, and the team looks forward to showing off their horses' fantastic gaits and characters, and spreading awareness about the breed.

NEIHC members are encouraged to join the NEIHC Yahoo mail group, check our website (<http://www.neihc.com>), and our Facebook page for news of upcoming events. Or contact Nicki Esdorn at nickiesdorn@mac.com or 914-826-5159.

OVIHC (OHIO VALLEY)

BY JULI COLE

On October 19, the Ohio Valley Icelandic Horse Club held its inaugural event: a Young Horse Evaluation and Mini-Clinic/Riding Lessons with International Breeding Judge Barbara Frische. The day was cool and crisp, but the sun was shining and so were the young horses, who had been meticulously groomed by their owners.

The day started with the Young Horse Evaluations. Eleven horses were evaluated, ranging in age from six months to four years. The auditors were treated to the vast array of colors that Icelandic horses come in, as there were grays, blacks, pintos (both silver dapple and black and white), bays, buckskin, and even a silver bay. Volunteers took care of moving the young horses around (many thanks to the Bathke family) so that the owners could stand next to Barbara and concentrate on what she was saying about the horses and ask her any questions they had. Thanks to the sound system supplied by the venue, Simmons Equestrian Center, all auditors could easily hear Barbara's comments about the horses. Everyone from the owners to the auditors were quite pleased at the detailed comments Barbara gave on each horse, and how she engaged the

spectators. All found the experience to be very interesting and educational.

After the young horse evaluation and a short lunch break, nine riders took to the arena. Originally the idea had been to have small groups of two to three riders at a time, however on the morning of the event Barbara decided that she preferred to give each rider individual attention, so they received a wonderful one-on-one lesson with her. Once again, everyone was more than pleased and said they came away with valuable information and goals to work toward.

Overall, the event was a great success for this newest USIHC Regional Club and the participants are already planning for a similar event with Barbara next year for an entire weekend. The club members also want to have clinics with other instructors/trainers, trail rides, schooling shows and much more, so this promises to be an active and fun club!

Membership in the Ohio Valley Icelandic Horse Club is free to any current USIHC member, and as the saying goes, the more the merrier, so we invite you to join us! Contact Juli Cole at 742-667-4184 or juli2875@yahoo.com.

ST SKUTLA (CENTRAL & WESTERN NEW YORK)

BY ANDREA BARBER

Being that most of our club members are primarily pleasure riders, sometimes it's not easy to get educational opportunities that really focus in on pleasure riding. So when I learned about FEIF International Breeding Judge and Trainer, Barbara Frische's Pleasure Rider Clinic I thought this would be a perfect fit for our club and booked Barbara to come to Sand Meadow Farm at the end of July. This was the first time Barbara had held this clinic, which is very popular in Europe, in the U.S.

Once scheduled, I was happy to see that the demand for the clinic was strong. In fact, we had riders come not only from within the geographic area of our club, but also from as far away as Maryland and Ontario, Canada. It was great to see that a total of 10 riders were willing to brave

the summer heat and bugs to participate in the clinic. Clearly a focus on pleasure riding was what many were looking for!

The riders and horses were quite varied. Some riders were relatively new to the breed, while others had significant experience riding Icelandic horses for many years. The horses ranged from fairly green, to very experienced senior horses. In fact, Barbara noted that it was great to see so many horses aged 20-plus participating in the clinic and still going strong. There was also a great range in abilities of the horses, from some that had significant gait difficulties to others that had achieved first prize status at breeding evaluations and/or had been successfully shown, in addition to being trail ridden.

After spending some time getting to know the individual horse and rider combinations in the morning, Barbara spent the second half of the day looking at and explaining each horse's conformation in detail. To me, this was probably the most interesting part of the clinic. Too often I think it's easy for pleasure riders to focus on the horse's color and personality, but conformation also plays a significant role. We learned what to look for in the legs to ensure long-term soundness, what to look for in the back construction to aid in



St Skutla member Steven Barber riding Gima frá Ytra-Dalsgerði. Photo by Andrea Barber.

a supple ride, what makes a good quality hoof and why that's important for a trail horse, etc. It was very interesting to see where one horse might have a significant problem in one area that was overcome by a strongly positive conformational trait in another area. We also saw at least one horse that, from its back conformation,

should have had a lot of trouble with tölt, but as her rider found out in the clinic, it was actually capable of a terrific speed range in the gait. So it was extremely interesting to see what Barbara's eyes as a breeding judge could teach us about our trail horses.

Learning about the individual horse's conformation and the rider's desires then helped Barbara work the next day to help each horse and rider make realistic goals. Through Barbara's teaching, the riders learned that even to ride "for fun" means that you sometimes have to do some work to keep the horse performing well. So sometimes that does mean exercises in the arena, etc. Though this might seem boring to most leisure riders, it is important to be able to maximize the pleasure from your horse! To make things more fun, Barbara also had each group do some drill team sessions which both the horses and riders loved.

Both participants and spectators really enjoyed the clinic and began to look at pleasure horses, and pleasure riding, in a new light.

For information, see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Skutlaclub/> or contact Andrea Barber at tolstar@yahoo.com or 585-624-4468.



St Skutla members Ruth Morford riding Flygill from Vesturbaer and Deb Callaway riding Fenja from Rocking R. Photo by Andrea Barber.

FEIF'S DIRECTOR OF SPORT

AN INTERVIEW WITH DOUG SMITH

BY CAROL ANDREW

The U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress is a member of FEIF, the international body representing the national Icelandic horse associations of 19 countries. But how many USIHC members know what FEIF does—or what that acronym really means? Now that we have a “direct line” to FEIF headquarters, the Quarterly decided it was time to find out.

USIHC secretary Doug Smith is the first American ever to be on the board of FEIF. He was kind enough to answer some of our questions about how he got involved with FEIF, what he does in his role as Director of Sport, and how FEIF affects the USIHC in promoting and protecting the Icelandic horse.

FEIF, he explained, grew from a group of Icelandic horse enthusiasts into a representative body on the European continent nearly 50 years ago. Once the U.S. and Canada joined, FEIF transformed itself into a global body governing the Icelandic horse breed. That transformation included changing the official name from “Föderation Europäischer Islandpferde Freunde” to “International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associa-



Doug Smith, on Flygill frá Mosfellsbae, rides with fellow Kraftur Club member Laura Benson, on Punktur frá Stekkjarholti, on the beach at Moss Landing, CA, in January 2008. Photo by Heidi Benson.

tions” and changing the name of the biannual Sport competition from the “European Championships” to the “World Championships.”

Doug, how did you learn about FEIF and why did you want to get involved?

My first direct contact with FEIF came when I was sent as the USIHC’s delegate to the annual FEIF Conference and Delegates Assembly five or six years ago. I’ve been to every annual FEIF Conference since then, representing the United States and, in particular, our Sport Committee.

FEIF is structured as a representative body with a board of directors managing

the day-to-day work of a small number of standing and ad hoc committees and with the national association representatives making the final decisions. Each member nation is entitled to be represented at both the department and delegate level. All decisions are made through this two-level representative system.

You are the Board member responsible for Sport. What does this entail?

Actually, I have several responsibilities on the Board of FEIF. The most prominent responsibility is the Director of Sport. I also chair the FEIF Gæðingakeppni Committee and the World Championships Committee.

The FEIF Sport Department is an extremely well established part of FEIF and the Director’s job is quite well defined. As a matter of fact, all the departments in FEIF have the same basic structure so understanding how Sport works explains how the whole of FEIF works.

The Sport Department has a working committee consisting of a small number of elected members. These individuals are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the department. As the Director of Sport, I am the chair of the Sport Committee. Additionally, the Director is the chair of the Sport Department meeting at each FEIF Conference. This meeting is where most of the decision making takes place. Each FEIF member nation is entitled to send a representative to each



Doug Smith and his horse Álfapór frá Bakkakoti at the CIA Triple World Ranking show in October 2013. Photo by Heidi Benson.

department meeting. In the Sport Department, the nations normally send their Sport Leader, occasionally with some support people. Each nation is entitled to a number of votes proportional to the size of their membership within FEIF. Any changes to the rules or procedures in a department are discussed in the department meeting and are voted on by the national representatives. Items that have support in the department meetings are referred to the Delegates Assembly the following year for a final vote. The delegates are structured the same way as the departments, with an individual being authorized to vote on behalf of each nation and wielding the same proportional voting power as in the departments.

In addition to the Sport Committee and Sport Department, I also coordinate with the Sport Judges Committee. This is a group of FEIF International Sport Judges that has the duty to advise the Director of Sport and the Board of FEIF on sport judging matters. This is the body that was responsible for the new Sport Judging Guidelines that were adopted this year.

The sport committee is just one of several committees in FEIF. How does it interact with the other committees?

There are five main departments in FEIF: Breeding, Education, Leisure Riding, Sport, and Youth. Each of these departments is structured in the same basic way and all have rather obvious missions. As a matter of fact, the USIHC has structured itself in much the same way, with the idea that each USIHC committee chair would be the logical representative to the corresponding FEIF department.

Most of the formal interaction between departments in FEIF takes place at the Director level. Marlise Grimm, FEIF Director of Breeding, and I work quite closely together on a number of projects.

One of these projects is the ongoing effort to condense FEIF's rules and regulations into a single rule book, instead of the three rule books we currently have (FIPO for Sport, FIZO for Breeding, and FIRO for general rules). There are a number of places where the rules and procedures for Sport and Breeding



Doug Smith's official FEIF "mugshot," with Álfaþór frá Bakkakoti.

should be exactly the same. In the unified rule book that will be the case. Of course, there are also places where we will agree to disagree. It is the ultimate responsibility of the Delegates Assembly to control those differences. However, from a practical point of view, the only way to identify and document those differences is through the Directors and Committees.

FEIF has another cross-department project that touches on Sport, Breeding, and Education and is being led by the three directors of those departments. This project is to provide a single source document for the equipment used in presenting the Icelandic horse. We want a single reference that all stakeholders can use when discussing equipment. To achieve this goal, the Board of FEIF established a working group of profes-

sionals under the co-chairmanship of the directors of Sport, Breeding, and Education. The working group has met in person once and is preparing a draft document for circulation. Eventually, the working group will hand this document off to the three departments. In this case, the document will likely not go to the Delegates Assembly, as it is not regulatory but informative in nature.

How do the actions of FEIF affect USIHC members? For example, could you talk about how the recent changes in judging criteria affect USIHC competitions and riders?

This is a really good question. FEIF's work is to a large degree on behalf of the national associations like the USIHC and not on behalf of the individuals who are members of those associations. But

some of what we do does filter down to the individuals. The new Sport Judging Guidelines are a good example.

The main motivation behind the new guidelines is to put the focus on the harmony between horse and rider. Unfortunately, this is one of the most difficult aspects of a presentation for people new to the scene to identify. It is really easy to pick out the fastest horse, or the one with the biggest movements.

However, it is not always easy to see the horse and rider who are really working well together as a team, but are not quite as fast or don't have quite as much movement. We have been asking the judges to reward harmonious performances for some time now. By changing the design of the Guidelines we are trying to be more clear to all—judges, riders, and spectators—that we are looking for this harmony.

Back to the USIHC members: These changes are most visible if the departments in the U.S. are active. The USIHC Sport Committee and Education Committee are perfectly positioned to use this new tool from FEIF to change the way people think about presenting their horses at shows in the U.S. That said, this is a “lead your horse to water” type of problem. FEIF can establish this framework and work to make sure all the FEIF International Sport Judges are up to speed, but it is up to the nations to take full advantage of the tools and change how people think about showing horses.

FEIF lately has been focused on the welfare of the horse. Can you talk a little about some of the recent FEIF rulings to protect horses?

FEIF has taken the position for a number of years that we should put horse welfare first in all we do. There are a number of things FEIF is doing to promote better treatment of the horses when presented at shows. Of course, we hope the better treatment is also happening in training and leisure riding, but there is only so much we can do off the track.

For example, both the Sport and Breeding departments have lists of prohibited equipment. These lists are managed by the two respective committees, with oversight by the departments. This is the most expedient way for FEIF to stop the use of a particular piece of equipment, as it does not follow FEIF's normal two-year regulatory cycle.

In the middle of the 2014 competition season, however, Iceland presented a request for a ban on all ported curb bits in the presentation of the Icelandic horse. This request was followed by a limited ban in Iceland of only certain examples of this class of bits. The relevant FEIF committees considered the situation and decided, for a number of reasons, to study the problem for the rest of this season. In part, we took this position because we had just published new guidelines and mouth controls. We also felt that the international discussion was leading in a good direction. The FEIF committees will meet in Sweden at the end of October 2014 and this topic is on the agenda.

Another example is the hoof study FEIF commissioned several years ago (see the last two issues of the *Quarterly*). The final outcomes of the study were presented at the FEIF Conference last February. The essential conclusion is that

“The main motivation behind the new guidelines is to put the focus on the harmony between horse and rider.”

we are, at times, presenting horses with longer hooves than are healthy. The Sport and Breeding departments are working through the two-year regulatory process to adapt FEIF's rules to these new findings. Again, following the publicity given to the study's results earlier this year, we are already seeing that the majority of horses at 2014 shows are being presented with a hoof length that will fit into the new standards.

FEIF is quite often seen as being all about rules and regulations. This is, of course, both a curse and a blessing, depending on who you ask. It is important to keep in mind that a good deal of the work FEIF does is educational. We are able to communicate on welfare topics on a global level. It is, to a degree, the responsibility of the FEIF member nations, such as the USIHC, to be actively involved in the discussion and not simply to rely on FEIF to change the rules. In every case

I can think of, the national rule-making process was able to react much faster than FEIF.

I believe that you are actively involved with the IceTest software used at all Icelandic horse shows. Can you comment on this program?

There is an ongoing effort to rewrite the IceTest software suite. The current software is still functional, but it does not take advantage of a number of technological developments. However, as with all the work of FEIF, the re-development of IceTest is being done by volunteers, which makes it difficult to keep on a strict time schedule. Anyone who is interested in actively helping is encouraged to contact me. We need programmers and web designers who have time to be hands-on.

What can individual Icelandic horse owners in the U.S. do to become more involved in FEIF?

The most effective thing for an individual USIHC member to do is be active and passionate locally and nationally. FEIF is ultimately successful when the member associations are active and engaged in the dialog about how to improve the overall sport (with a little “s”) of the Icelandic horse.

If you look at my personal history, I started out actively involved in my local regional club (I was the first president of the Kraftur Club of Northern California). I decided I had some time, energy, and skills to give to support the Icelandic horse in a wider area, so I became active at the national level as a USIHC board member. Two years ago I was approached by FEIF, as Marko Mazeland was considering retiring as Director of Sport.

At the end of the day, the USIHC and FEIF have the same needs as every other volunteer-based organization—we need passionate people who are willing to donate their time, skills, and treasure to a cause.

Without a doubt there is a lot of work to be done. It is safe to say that I average between 15 and 20 hours a week working on FEIF business. I am also still serving on the board of the USIHC, which pushes that number even higher. None of that time is paid in any way.

If you have time, skills, passion, and the spirit to give something to the Icelandic horse world, choose a piece that is interesting to you and reach out to the appropriate local, national, or FEIF leader and offer to help.

BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

As FEIF Director of Sport, Doug Smith is one of three people ultimately responsible for the biannual Icelandic Horse World Championships. We asked him to tell us a little about what goes on behind the scenes:



The 2014 Nordic Championships were held in Herning, Denmark, as a “dress rehearsal” for the World Championships. The organizers need to be ready for anything, including pouring rain. Photo by Matilde Bøgh.

There is a group in FEIF that has the responsibility for coordinating with the World Championships organizers, and I am the chair of that group. When it comes to the execution of the event, there are three people from FEIF with direct responsibilities: the Directors of Sport and Breeding, and the Tournament Leader. In the past, Marko Mazeland took two of these roles. For the World Championships 2015 there will be three individuals for the first time: Marko Mazeland (Tournament Leader), Marlise Grimm (Breeding), and me (Sport).

The process leading up to a World Championships is a four- (or more) year-long endeavor. We are always preparing for at least two World Championships. As we are now less than a year away from the WC2015 in Herning, Denmark, we have constant communication with the organizing committee in Denmark. At the moment, we have infrequent communication with the Dutch organizing committee regarding the preparations for WC2017 in Oirshot, Netherlands.

In the year leading up to the World Championships, the primary focus is split into two major tasks: the preparation of the site and the recruitment of the people needed to run such a huge event. As I wear two hats for the moment, I have involvement in both.

The contract with the organizing committee calls for them to have a test event one year before the World Championships. This event is a dress rehearsal for the main event. Ideally, the test event happens with the same conditions as the World Championships, only on a slightly smaller scale. The year’s test event was the Nordic Championships 2014. The event was very successful in a number of ways, including

identifying some areas that need to be addressed with the site and volunteer recruitment before next August.

While the organizing committee is reacting to the feedback, wearing my Director of Sport hat, I have started the process of organizing the panel of judges for the Sport competition portion of the World Championships. We have a Chief Judge (Þorgeir Guðlaugsson) and a Deputy Chief Judge (Einar Ragnarsson) and will have the full panel of judges and alternates selected by the time this article goes to print.



The event was very successful in a number of ways,” notes Doug Smith of the 2014 Nordic Championships, “including identifying some areas that need to be addressed with the site and volunteer recruitment.” Photo by Matilde Bøgh.

AROUND THE OVAL TRACK

PHOTOS BY MAGGIE DRAEGER, MARTINA GATES, HELEEN HEYNING, WILL COVERT, HEIDI BENSON, AND SHAILA SIGSGAARD

Four USIHC-sanctioned shows were held in the last quarter: the Flugnirkeppni, held at Winterhorse Park in Wisconsin in August; the NEIHC Open, held at Thor Icelandics in New York in September; the CIA Open, held at Flying C Ranch in California in early October; and the Kentucky Horse Show, held at Locust Hill Farm in mid-October in, of course, Kentucky.

Four shows in four very different parts of the country—but all held according to the USIHC Sanctioned Show Rules and entered into the National Ranking, which means that you can compare the scores from each show to all the others. You can also compare these scores to shows from last spring—or last year—and even to shows held in Germany or other countries that, like the U.S. are members of FEIF. The scoring system is the same worldwide.

That's the whole point of competing in a sanctioned show, according to the USIHC Sanctioned Show Rules (as last revised in September 2013 and online at www.icelandics.org/download/sanctionedshows.pdf). "A sanctioned show is one in which the rider's scores are recorded in a national database which enables riders to compare their performances with other riders around the country and, more importantly perhaps, to compare their own performances over time," say the Show Rules.

You are not just competing against the other horses and riders on the track—you are competing against an ideal. For that concept to work, however, "certain aspects of the show must be consistent."

Most importantly, the classes must be judged by at least one FEIF International Sports Judge. Since there is only one such judge in the U.S. (Will Covert), this rule often requires show organizers to import a judge from abroad. Will Covert judged the Flugnirkeppni, Hulda G. Geirsdóttir of Iceland judged the NEIHC Open, and Nicolai Thy of Germany judged the CIA Open, while the Kentucky Show had three judges: Will, Nicolai, and Pétur Jókull Hákonarson of Iceland.

Learning to judge an Icelandic show



Sydney Horas on Randver and Kydee Sheetz on Danni from Aslan's Country ride a victory lap after the Group Open Four Gait (V2) at the Flugnirkeppni. Photo by Maggie Draeger.

takes time and commitment. "Sports judges receive lengthy training in the scoring system. They attend seminars, pass rigorous examinations, and apprentice under experienced judges for many years at shows of increasing size."

Each judge has to learn how to describe what he or she is seeing according to the same numerical scale. For example, as the Show Rules explain, "In a four-gait class the horse/rider combination will receive a score for walk, trot, canter, slow tölt, and fast tölt. The average of these five scores is the score for the class. The scoring system, from zero to ten, has been agreed upon by all the member countries of FEIF and is available for review on the FEIF website under 'Judges' Guidelines.' Each point on the scale takes into consideration a number of factors, such as beat, tempo, movement, etc. These factors and their importance to each point on the scale are also available at the FEIF website" (see www.feif.org).

A Judging Seminar was held in combination with the Kentucky Show in order to encourage more Americans to aspire to become judges. The USIHC also has a Judge Training Fund, as announced at the 2009

Annual Meeting and published in Issue Two 2009 of the *Quarterly*, established by an anonymous gift of \$10,000 to provide financial incentives for prospective Sports Judges in the U.S. to seek FEIF judging licenses. According to the terms of the gift, \$1,000 is payable from the fund when an individual receives his or her license. A second \$1,000 payment is available after he or she judges three sanctioned shows in the U.S. A final \$1,000 is paid when the individual renews the license for the first time.

Because Icelandic show judges are so highly trained, you can be sure "that a horse/rider combination with a score of 6.5 in slow tölt would earn that same score for the same performance in whatever country it is judged."

International FEIF rules cover many other areas of Icelandic horse competition, according to the Show Rules, "from fair treatment of the horse, allowed tack, allowed shoeing, sportsmanlike behavior (toward the horse as well as toward other riders), and prohibited substances, to the physical requirements of official competition tracks and a description of the requirements of each FIPO class, to name a few



of the areas.” Descriptions of the classes in FIPO, the international FEIF competition rule book, as well as the general rules (FIRO), can be read on the FEIF website; FEIF is currently in the process of combining these rule books, along with the FIZO rule book on breeding evaluations, into a single book.

Each country chooses classes for the various levels of riding skills it wants to showcase. In the U.S., a sanctioned show has 15 required classes (descriptions of these can be found on the USIHC website). “Note that it is not necessary for all classes to have entries,” the Rules state. “The only requirement is that they be offered.” Fun and experimental classes can also be added. In addition to the required tölt, four-gait, and five-gait classes, the four most recent shows included such competitions as the Acoustic Tölt, for which the judge was blindfolded, and the perennial favorite: the Beer (or Rootbeer or Bourbon) Tölt.

You can find the scores of all USIHC-Sanctioned Shows online here: www.icelandics.org/showresults.php

The U.S. National Ranking is here: www.icelandics.org/ranking.php



Scenes from the Flugnirkeppni at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI: Top row, left to right, Coralie Denmeade riding Salvor frá Grafarkoti takes a victory lap after winning the T1 Tölt finals, Terral Hill on Sporður frá Bergi pacing in the F1 Five Gait preliminaries, and Carrie Lyons Brandt on Von frá Reykjavík in 100-meter Speedpass. Middle, Eve Loftness on Una frá Kviabekk and Dave Loftness on Demantur frá Norðurstjarna in Beer Tölt. Bottom left, Eve Loftness on Una frá Kviabekk in the Magazine Race; bottom right, Kristján Sigurðsson on Thokadis from Winterhorse and Nick Cook on Svipur frá Norðurstjarna in the Gallop Race. Photos by Maggie Draeger.





Scenes from the NEIHC Open at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY: Top row, left, Martina Gates and Stígandi frá Leysingjastöðum; photo by Heleen Heyning. Feather prize winner Michael Kooyman, right, and Hreyfing frá Minni-Borg; photo by Martina Gates. Middle row, left, Lisa Keller and Loki from Bel Di; center, feather prize winner Caeli Cavanagh and Aska frá Geldingaá pace off the track after winning the Open Five Gait class; both photos by Martina Gates. Right, judge Hulda Geirsdóttir, blindfolded, listens hard for the correct beat in the Acoustic Tölt class; photo by Heleen Heyning. Bottom row, left, Nicki Esdorn with her students Hannah Huss and Michael Kooyman; photo by Heleen Heyning. Right, Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir and Parker frá Sólheimum; photo by Martina Gates.





Scenes from the CIA Fall Open at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA: top, left, Heidi Benson and Tígull frá Hrólfstaðahelli practice loose-rein tolt; photo by Barbara Downs. Center and right, Ayla Green canters Mári frá Kolgerði and poses with Brynjar from Dalalíf; middle (left), nine-year-old Isra Saalisi on Festi frá Kastalabrekku; photos by Heidi Benson. Middle, center and right, Ásta Covert rides Byr frá Enni in flying pace and Bragi frá Hólum in tölt. Bottom, left, T1 and T3 finalists Ásta on Bragi, Christina Granados on Hroftur from Hobby Horse, and Heidi on Tígull; right, Christina and Hroftur in the T1 Finals; photos by Will Covert.





Scenes from the Kentucky Horse Show at Locust Hill Farm in Prospect, KY: Top row, left, Carrie Brandt rides Sváli frá Tjörn in T2 loose-rein tölt; right, Laura Benson competes on Stjarni frá Blönduósi. Second row, the famous Bourbon (or Ice-Tea) Tölt. Third row, left, Kathy Love on Salka frá Frostastöðum, Alexandra Venable on Gloinn from West Cliff, Charlotte Reilly on Sprettur from Destiny Farm, and Linda Sturzenegger on Pála frá Varmalandi after the V2 Four Gait finals. Right, Guðmar Pétursson on Veigar frá Lækjamóti, Laura Benson on Stjarni frá Blönduósi, and Carrie Brandt on Salvor frá Grafarkoti after the V1 finals. Bottom row, left, Martin Nielsen on Von frá Reykjavík, Carrie on Sváli frá Tjörn, Terral Hill on Sporður frá Bergi, and Julia Hasenauer on Máni frá Eskiholti II waiting for scores in F1 Five Gait. Right, Petrine Jakobsen, an 11-year-old guest from Denmark, gets a chance to ride Sváli frá Tjörn. Photos by Shaila Sigsgaard.



WHO IS ALEXANDRA? BY ALEX PREGITZER

Certified Icelandic horse trainer Alexandra Dannenmann recently moved to Florida, and the *Quarterly* asked Alex Pregitzer to interview her for our series of profiles of teachers and trainers. Contact information for all certified trainers working in the U.S. who are USIHC members can be found on the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org, under "Train." Interviews with them can be found in the back issues of the *Quarterly*, online since 2008.

What is your background?

I was born in Munich, Germany, and had an ordinary life until my father fulfilled my mother's desire for a horse of her own by buying an Icelandic mare named Stjarna. This decision changed my life. From that point on (I was six years old), Icelandics played a major role in our family. Although I decided that horses were too big and dangerous for me, my mother and older sister often went riding.

A few years later, at about age eight, I fell in love with Sigandi, a young gelding. After a lot of effort, I persuaded my parents to buy him for me, their condition being that I learn to ride. I did. Riding became my passion; two years later my parents owned so many horses that we decided to operate our own horse farm.

I started competing, as well as taking countless clinics and attending courses with different trainers, including Einar Hermannsson, Haukur Tryggvasson, Silvia Ochsenreiter, Jens Füchtenschnieder, Laura Grimm, Erlingur Erlingsson, and many more. In 2008 I passed the IPZV Trainer C exam in Hannover, Germany, with Marlise Grimm as my instructor; in 2012 I passed the IPZV Trainer B exam with Jolly Schrenk. Just in October, I passed the test at the Kentucky Judging Seminar to qualify as a U.S. Intern Judge.

When did you move to the U.S.?

My parents moved to Florida in 2010. After almost four years of managing our horse farm in Germany by myself—including boarding and training horses and giving riding lessons—I convinced my husband to take a chance on a new beginning in the country we had fallen in



Alexandra Dannenmann and Embla showing canter.

love with on our various visits. In December 2013 we moved our seven horses to Florida, where my parents have established a horse farm.

What is your training philosophy?

My first priority is the physical and mental well-being of the horse. Therefore it's important to have enough time to work calmly and patiently. An overstressed horse is not able to develop and improve its skills. My focus is always on having a good relationship with the horse. Precise instructions combined with patience and praise at the right time are essential. Every horse is an individual and needs different training methods, so I first try to find out what the horse is able to do and then support it accordingly.

I combine Icelandic riding methods with classical dressage, in order to enable the horse to use its body properly. The horse has to be in good shape to prevent or correct physical problems and to ensure loose and clear-beated gaits. Trail riding is equally important, especially for young horses, to encourage the willingness to go forward. Being forward-going is key for a well-educated, even-tempered horse.

What is your philosophy in teaching?

Conveying the fun and joy of riding is one of the most important things to me, regardless of whether I'm teaching beginners, leisure riders, or competition riders. Riding should always be fun for both horse and rider. For this to happen, we need to understand the differences be-

tween humans and horses. Horses think and act completely differently than humans do, and I want my students to learn how to communicate with their horses and treat them properly. Most problems in riding are due to misunderstandings.

In some cases I advocate not doing too much. Riders are often overwhelmed, trying to do everything at once and forgetting that the horse needs to go forward with precise and clear instructions. Sometimes less is more, and it ensures the natural free spirits of our Icelandic horses.

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

I hope that the Icelandic horse community will grow with well-educated horses and with more people, especially trainers who will inspire their students with love for this special breed and who are able to teach them how to train their horses properly. I hope there will be enough interest in competitions and talented riders to arrange more of such events in the U.S. The emphasis should be on breeding horses representing the typical Icelandic character that makes them so special.

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THE RIDER'S SEAT

BY ALEXANDRA PREGITZER

Every other year, the German Icelandic Horse Association (IPZV) requires their certified riding instructors and horse trainers to attend a sanctioned trainer seminar. The goal is to encourage trainers and riding instructors to further their knowledge. The seminar content is specifically designed for trainers and riding instructors, and there is a wide range of topics to choose from, such as dressage, hoof care, presenting horses in breed evaluations, ponying, ground work, first aid for horses, etc.

This year, it just so happened that Ann-Christin Kloth and I were both going to be in Germany at the same time, and both of us decided to sign up for a clinic about seat schooling: common seat problems and their correction. This topic is of much interest to every riding instructor, as most riders tend to need help with their seat. In addition to the promising content, we knew the clinic would be given by two experts working as a team.

Silke Feuchthofen is one of the few trainers in IPZV who is licensed to teach trainers. Silke teaches and trains at Hof Barenstein in Moseballe, Germany. She is also a certified trainer A (the highest certification for Icelandic horse trainers in Germany), a FEIF sports judge, a FEIF breeding judge, was the world champion in T2 in 2003 and 2005, and holds many more titles and certifications. Silke is not only all of that, she is a wonderful person and a great teacher with the gift of knowing how to share her knowledge.

Silke's partner for this clinic was Carolin Kühn, a certified trainer C and a certified physical therapist. Caro has become an expert in regard to the rider's seat; she can see problems and knows how to help the rider correct them. Between the two, this sounded exciting!

THE CORRECT SEAT

The foundation of our seminar was a half-day block of theory. During this half day, we discussed the correct seat of the rider and why it is so important.

What does a correct seat look like?

Here are the main points:

- The rider sits erect, with ears, shoulders,



Ásta Covert demonstrates a good seat in this photo of her "perfect 10" ride on Dynjandi frá Dalvík at the Spring 2014 CIA Open. Photo by Will Covert.

- hips, and heels in a line perpendicular to the ground (remember: shoulder-hip-heel).
- The seat rests relaxed in the deepest part of the saddle.
- The rider's weight is distributed equally over both seat bones and the inner thigh muscles.
- The thighs are rotated slightly inward, so that the knees rest flat against the saddle. The thighs are positioned back under the hip joint as much as possible, the rider still maintaining a relaxed seat with equal weight distribution on both seat bones.
- The knees are slightly bent so that the foot, seen from the side, is underneath the rider's center of gravity. The correct length of the stirrups causes a slight bend in the rider's knee.
- The lower legs slope backwards from the knee, with the inside of the calves maintaining a soft contact with the horse's body (this point is flexible, depending on the proportions of rider and horse).
- The feet rest in a natural position on the stirrup tread; they should be almost parallel to the horse's side, with the tread beneath the widest part of the foot. In movement, the ankle should flex, causing the heel to sink slightly so that it becomes the lowest part of the rider's body.
- The upper body is relaxed and erect. The rider builds up positive tension in order to allow the rider's hips to elastically follow the horse's movement.
- The head is carried freely and erect.
- The shoulders are drawn back slightly without tension.
- The upper arms are relaxed and hang down freely from the shoulders and are positioned just in front of the vertical.
- The forearms are close to the rider's body, the elbows slightly touching the body.
- The elbows are bent in an angle and adjust to the horse's movement, resulting in a straight line from the elbow to the rider's hand and the horse's mouth.
- The hands are closed, but not clenched into a fist. They are carried upright with the knuckles vertical and thumbs resting on top of the reins.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

A balanced seat is a prerequisite for the correct and efficient application of the rider's aids and for harmony between horse and rider. It is important for both horse and rider to stay physically healthy, and it makes riding so much more fun!

Our goals as riders are different from person to person. While some riders aim to achieve perfect harmony with their horses, others want to look good on their

horses to impress their friends or the judges, while others ride as a sport to improve their balance, posture, and muscle tone or get a good cardio work-out. Yet other riders want to train a young horse or to be safe riding out on the trails. In all of these cases, we need a balanced seat.

Achieving a balanced seat is hard work! For most riders, it means regular seat schooling on the lunge line, riding regularly with an experienced instructor giving feedback, and making sure we stay physically fit (by going to the gym, taking yoga classes, or doing other sports).

Another big part of theory class was learning about how students learn. Children obviously learn differently than adults. Adult riders have different degrees of fear or immobility; they have varying levels of motivation and different goals. How a rider learns depends on a lot of things. To be a good instructor also means keeping the motivation of the riders in mind and helping them work toward achieving those goals.

SEAT PROBLEMS

After going over the rider's anatomy, we discussed typical issues with posture. Some examples are: chair seat, fork seat, rounded back, hollow back, hunched shoulders, collapsed hip, hollow knees, clinching knees, elbows straddled, twisted wrists, toes out, and heels up.

Injuries or physical conditions, and the individual conformation of the rider, come into play when we talk about the seat. Not every rider is capable of sitting on the horse "correctly." Young children are still developing, older riders may have had joint replacements or have arthritis. Some riders simply have the wrong idea about their seat or have never been taught to sit properly. The tack may not fit correctly or the rider may be physically unfit. Our trainers wanted us to be well aware of the individuality in both horses and riders, and the need for individual solutions to help improve the seat.

THEORY TO PRACTICE

After the theory sessions, we started the very hands-on practical portion of the seminar. We took out our yoga mats, made sure we were dressed in sports clothes, and went into the riding arena for a good hour of exercises and stretching. We were about to experience first hand what our *own* limi-

tations were and what *we* needed to work on. It was humbling.

Caro made sure to find good challenges for us, and both Caro and Silke proved that they were not just talking about it but actually making sure they themselves were in good shape.

PRACTICE WITH RIDERS

The afternoon was filled with riders—boarders and riding students from Hof Barenstein who were volunteering as our subjects. A couple of riders at a time came into the arena while our group of trainers watched. Afterwards, we discussed their seat problems as a group and suggested how we could help them work toward a better seat.

Silke and Caro asked the riders to dismount and worked with them on a stool called a Balimo chair, which has a unique 360-degree swivel seat. It increases the pelvic motion and can be used to teach students how to use their lower back and pelvis while riding (for example in a half-halt).

We then used exercises on the ground to improve the riders' flexibility and range of motion or to raise their awareness. All these exercises were ones we had experienced ourselves earlier that day.

Once the riders were back on their horses, Caro and Silke gave them exercises that would help them improve their seats. The riders would, for example, make a knot in the horse's reins and do some shoulder rotations backwards with their hands crossed on their chest. This is a great exercise to open up the chest and shoulder area. Or the riders had to circle their toes, swing their legs back and forth, lean forward or backward in an exaggerated fashion, do stretches, etc. Caro made sure they did the exercises properly, so as to get the most benefit from them.

We saw some excellent horses and riders, and everybody was unbelievably nice and patient while we were openly discussing their seat problems. Their will to become better riders and to help us become better instructors was stronger than their concerns about us talking about their problems. We were so impressed with those riders.

We were impressed with the horses, too. Some of the horses were rather willing, with lots of energy. The beauty was that none of them got nervous during the

exercises; instead, most of them calmed down once the trainer's focus was off the horse. Their gaits improved, more often than not, and their form often did, too. It was amazing to watch those transformations that seemed to be happening all by themselves.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The second day of the seminar started with another hour of exercise for all of us. After that, we saw more horse-rider combinations and worked with them individually, while the rest of the group was watching and learning.

The task was to recognize any potential problems and then to find exercises on the horse and on the ground to solve them. This part of the day was very exciting, as it put each of us in the spotlight and under a lot of pressure to recognize problems fast and in front of so many people watching, then to find a possible solution.

We worked independently, but had Silke and Caro there to help if we needed them. They made sure we did not ask anything of any horse or rider that might not be safe or healthy, and it felt great to be able to build up our confidence in using our new tools this way.

It was surprising to us that all the riders improved. Improving your seat is often not a quick fix, but instead a long-term project. To see immediate results was very rewarding and highly motivating.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of us are not beyond lunge lessons and seat schooling. Taking regular lessons is great for anybody, no matter what level of riders we are. We should aim to improve our seats for the sake of our horses, their health, our health, and the harmony between us.

Finding a good instructor is not easy, but fortunately, the need to have a good seat is not unique to Icelandic horses and any good riding instructor will be able to help with this task. Even a video recorded by a friend can be very helpful in realizing our shortcomings and starting to work on them. Then it's just a matter of making the time!

For more information, see:
<http://www.hof-barenstein.de/ueberuns/index.html>
<http://www.balimochairs.com/>

AT LIBERTY

BY NICKI ESDORN

Caeli Cavanagh and her golden chestnut mare Sóldís from Solheimar are magical. They performed an amazing liberty presentation at the Games Day last June, organized by the Northeast Icelandic Horse Club (see Issue Three 2014 of the *Quarterly*). I had seen beautiful liberty performances in shows before, but they seemed unattainable, done by professionals after a lifetime of training. Caeli and Sóldís danced to music and inspired all of us—and then went on to show us how it all gets started and how everyone in the audience could have their own little piece of liberty magic.

Caeli, a young Icelandic horse trainer based at Silver Maple Farm in Vermont, was invited to ride in the show *Apassionata* with the Knights of Iceland in 2012. The team made friends with all the other performers at the wonderful and varied show. Caeli was entranced by the liberty horses shown by the famous Sylvie Willms. Sylvie's assistant, Lilliane Debade, stayed at Silver Maple Farm for a while afterwards and taught Caeli the basics, among them the Spanish walk and bowing. Caeli found her perfect partner in Sóldís, a lovely, elegant mare with a gorgeous, long, blond mane. Caeli says the liberty training really helped Sóldís find a more positive outlet for her intelligence and expressive nature instead of opening gates and untying knots. Now that she can use her brain for something other than mischief and be a real partner, she is a much more relaxed horse and able to perform better in every respect. The team raked in the blue ribbons at the NEIHC Open USIHC-Sanctioned Show this September, where Caeli was not only Champion of the Open Division, but also received the coveted Feather Prize for light and harmonious riding.

CLOSE THE GATE

So, I asked Caeli, what is the first rule in liberty training? I was expecting something deep, like patience, or body awareness—but no! It is “Close the damn gate!” Everyone is excited to have the horse free, but the biggest mistake is to take the rope away too quickly. If done right, taking the rope away



Photographer Sarah Priestap captures the magic and beautiful connection between Caeli and Sóldís in different moods: Here is a fairytale picture of a walk in the snowy woods.

is nothing special or new, it is just a check of how precise your signals are, so take your time.

Starting liberty training will make a big difference in the daily life of your horse. It gives you and your horse a set of very useful signals. The work can be used as a warm up and limbering exercise, and the light signals will carry over into your riding. I think of Caeli's artistic work as the “dressage” of liberty, and of Horse Agility over obstacles, with the horse running free, as the equivalent of “jumping.” (See the last issue of the *Quarterly* for more on Horse Agility). Both can be combined or practiced separately and at different levels. They will build trust and confidence and make your relationship with your horse more playful and fun. You are only limited by your imagination!

HOW TO START

To begin your liberty work, you will need a well-fitting halter, a long lead line (10 to 12 feet), and a stiff dressage whip.

Make sure your horse is comfortable with all your tools. In a calm and non-aggressive manner, rub the whip and the rope all over the horse's body. Only stop when the horse is standing still, as a reward, then repeat.

Leading is the first building block. We often don't realize how much we pull on the horse's head. The rope is there only for insurance, it should be slack at all times, as the horse learns to respond to signals, not to react to pulling. The horse learns it is his responsibility to keep you behind his eye and in front of his shoulder.

To teach your horse to lead properly, start from a stopped position on a wall. Lean forward and click your tongue. If the horse does not respond, tap him behind you with the whip until he starts walking.

Walk a few steps, say “whoa,” lean back, and plant your feet. If the horse continues, put the dressage whip level in front of the horse's nose to make a “wall.”

Correct a mistake by asking the horse to do it. If the horse steps forward too far, back him up, don't go forward yourself. Or if he walks too slowly, speed him up with a signal from the whip instead of slowing down your own steps. The horse needs to learn that staying with you is his responsibility. Reward all correct responses.

Once you have those two signals down—walk and stop—start to vary what you are asking, take more or fewer steps, vary the speed, walk in circles or serpentine. Always work from both sides as horses

don't easily connect something they learn on one side with what they learn on the other. Make it fun and interesting and praise your horse!

A word about treats: You will have noticed that Caeli, Sylvie, and other liberty trainers always carry a treat pouch. Some people think that is "cheating" or "bribing". Not so—it is just a good and clear reward for correct behavior. It is important to avoid teaching the horse to be a treat monster; if a treat is only given after a correct response and never "on demand" it becomes an excellent training tool and gives the horse an added incentive. They usually really like this work, the treat is just the cherry on top that adds the sparkle.

Caeli is available for lessons and clinics. Contact her at caeli.cavanagh@gmail.com. See her and Söldís perform on YouTube here:

[https://www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Use01oxlZB0)

[watch?v=Use01oxlZB0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Use01oxlZB0)

[https://www.youtube.com/](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVioYq4xWO4)

[watch?v=gVioYq4xWO4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVioYq4xWO4)



Söldís shows off her strength, agility, and balance by rearing. Note how Caeli matches her energy. Below, wearing a beautiful dress is part of an exquisite performance of the Spanish walk. Photos by Sarah Priestap.



LEARN TO BOW A cool first “trick” for beginners is bowing:



1. Start by lifting your horse's front foot by giving the usual signal with your hand. Get him to reach back between his legs by guiding him with a treat just in front of the nose.



2. Teach the horse to lift his foot from a signal with the whip. First lift his foot by hand together with a light tap with the whip. Continue to guide his nose between his legs.



3. Reward him with a treat when he lifts for the whip signal only and starts to reach back with his nose.



4. Don't be greedy with how far you can get the horse to come down. If your horse pulls a muscle attempting this “split,” he will not do it again.



5. When your horse starts to rock back and down, reward with a treat! A full bow is achieved when the cannon bone of the bended leg rests on the ground.



6. A full bow. Caeli rewards a big effort with a treat and a “Good boy!”

YOUTH ESSAY: TOLT IN HARMONY

BY JULIA HASENAUER



Editor's note: In August, the Kraftur Club held its first "Tölt in Harmony" clinic and schooling show. We hope to print more about this exciting new style of Icelandic horse competition in future issues of the Quarterly. But our first submission on the topic comes from Youth Member Julia Hasenauer.

I have to say, the "Tölt in Harmony" class is way harder than any of us thought it would be. Basically it was figure-eights, small circles, and crossing on the diagonal. Put that way it sounds simple and way easy to do right? Wrong! None of these things may sound hard to execute, but believe me, they are!

Even though it was majorly challenging, it was very fun and well worth it. I felt that the playing field was much more equal compared to our normal showing style.

The parts that I had the most trouble with were the small circles and the acceleration across the diagonals. The small circles were very hard to balance correctly on and to follow without going off the line. My horse Skuggsjá and I would slightly overshoot the parameters of the circle. I could feel how hard it was for Skuggsjá to balance herself, because she'd get progres-

sively heavier and heavier on my hands (something she does to get out of holding herself up). And on the acceleration, well, Skuggsjá doesn't open up and lift when she goes faster in tölt. She basically lengthens out and moves her legs faster.

All this aside, I still thoroughly enjoyed "Tölt in Harmony." To those people who are thinking of possibly trying it, please do! You learn so much more about your and your horse's partnership and where improvements need to be made.

On a side note, the drawing I have submitted is a pencil drawing of an Icelandic stallion (whose name I don't know). If you Google "Icelandic stallions," I'm sure you'll see his picture—a dark horse running in tall grass, which is the reason I didn't do all four feet and legs. I used lots of shading with different pencils to try and capture the muscle structure under the hair, and I tried to make him as anatomically correct as possible.



Youth member Julia Hasenauer concentrating hard while showing Skuggsjá.

AT THE YOUTH CUP



Participants in the 2014 FEIF Youth Cup pose on the hill above Hólar University College in northern Iceland.

Five young riders represented the USIHC at the 2014 FEIF Youth Cup, held July 11-20 at Hólar University College in Iceland. They were: Jessica Blough, Emma Erickson, Elizabeth Monsef, Elizabeth Robertson, and Quinn Thomashow. Jasmine Ho was the Country Leader, and Lucy Nold the Team Leader.

The FEIF Youth Cup is a ten-day international Icelandic horse competition held in a different European country in July each even-numbered summer. Teams of riders from different FEIF countries are made on the first day of the Cup. Renowned Icelandic horse trainers then work with the riders for three days. A competition among the international teams is held on the last two days.

According to FEIF, among the goals of the Youth Cup are to promote friendship across borders, allow riders to gain international show experience, and encourage teamwork, good horsemanship, and good sportsmanship.

Colleen Monsef, now the USIHC Youth Leader, volunteered to be our 2014 Youth Cup coordinator. Her primary job was to promote communication between

all the participants of Youth Cup, to collect information, and to submit the required forms to FEIF. She researched horse-rental options and created the team jackets. As she reports, the U.S. team members were all wonderful representatives of the USIHC. "I had great feedback on all of you," she says. "Congratulations on your wonderful rides. You all rode very well and should be very proud of yourselves. I also want to thank the parents for their unending support, emotional and financial. We had bad weather and good weather, we had sickness and health, but not one of the riders wanted it to end—or came home without having made fabulous friends from around the world. What an amazing adventure!"

Noting that the USIHC provided supplemental funds to all the riders, she asked them to share their stories with the *Quarterly*. Below are the reports filed by the U.S. Country Leader Jasmine Ho and riders Jessica Blough and Quinn Thomashow.

COUNTRY LEADER JASMINE HO

As I approached the designated FEIF Youth Cup bus at the Keflavik Airport, I was met

by excited girls and boys in various colored uniforms, eager to begin the six-hour drive to Hólar. "Where are your kids?" was the common question I faced upon introducing myself as the U.S. Country Leader.

Admittedly, although I would have loved to begin this journey as a unified group from the start, I knew "my kids" had wisely chosen to maximize their opportunities in Iceland by visiting barns and choosing their horses a couple of weeks ahead of time. I was eager to finally see my girls, meet their horses, and hear about their experiences in Iceland so far.

Upon arriving at Hólar, the U.S. girls displayed poise and professionalism in introducing their horses to the new surroundings and reducing any acclimation stress. Their positive attitudes also carried over into many areas of the Cup, as they made international friends, learned from training sessions, and participated in group activities with ease. Between attending trainings and completing group activities with the international teams they had been assigned to, they also needed to find the time to care for their horses, while not forgetting to look after themselves as well. It was not long before

I saw tired riders trying to sneak in short naps during the day, so I was even more impressed and proud how our U.S. girls managed these many tasks. Of course they were tired—very tired. But the sheer excitement and their gratitude at being able to participate in this amazing experience—and in Iceland, nonetheless!—pushed them on to soak up every minute of it.

The FEIF Youth Cup represents an opportunity to sharpen equestrian skills, deepen the connection between horse and rider, form new friendships, and juggle being a member of both a national and an international team. I was delighted to see the girls not only make new international friends, but also grow as a U.S. team and deepen the friendships among themselves. They cannot receive enough praise for the mutual respect and constant friendly, polite, and cooperative attitudes they displayed toward one another and others. They truly gained everyone's appreciation during the

Youth Cup's Country Night—an evening for each country to host a presentation or activity for other participants. The U.S. Team's interactive "Alaskan football" game presented an activity that necessitated teamwork from virtually every single person in order to succeed. Needless to say, the game was not only a huge hit among the participants, it attained so much recognition with the organizing committee that it may be introduced as a new icebreaker game at future FEIF Youth Cups!

The weeklong schedule was packed with equestrian training and group activities that culminated in the Youth Cup competition weekend. Once again, our U.S. participants impressed, not only with their immense success at the actual show (evident by all the medals they brought home), but through the entire 10 days they spent at Hólar. Although the competition weekend represents the zenith of the Youth Cup, there are many more aspects to this experi-

ence. As the U.S. Country Leader, I was so proud of all of our girls for their camaraderie and solidarity toward each other and for the immense respect they showed for their horses, placing their horses' well-being ahead of any show rankings. I believe this is exactly the objective of the FEIF Youth Cup: to combine team spirit, ambition, and respect for participants and their horses. In a nutshell, Team USA did just that!

JESSICA BLOUGH

The goal of FEIF is to "bring people together in their passion for the Icelandic horse." After competing in the Youth Cup, I believe that FEIF has fully achieved its goal. Nothing I write in a single article can ever do this experience justice, but I'm going to try anyway.

This year, the U.S. sent five riders to the Youth Cup. After a few days at Hólar, the country teams were split into international teams. My team, the Fantastic 7, consisted of Ólafur from Iceland, Daniel from France, Sander from the Netherlands, Nadia from Switzerland, Satu from Finland, and myself. Our team leader was Christiane from Denmark. From the first hour we worked together, we were laughing with each other and becoming best friends.

I have trouble calling the Youth Cup a "competition" because I never cared about winning. In my memory, the actual competition portion of the Youth Cup was a minor detail that had less impact on me. Instead, I remember junk food binges and the long, sleep-deprived conversations that I had with Team USA at 1:00 a.m. I remember how our Danish roommates played cards and talked about boys with us. I remember experiencing other cultures on country night and dancing in the dressage ring. I remember the taste of the wild berries we picked on the cross country course and the sight of a midnight sunset.

Most of all, I remember my team, the Fantastic 7. I have hundreds of memories of them, from our first time meeting each other to the final goodbye hugs. We clicked from the moment we started making our team flag and the boys spilled glitter glue all over themselves. Through all the seriousness of the competition, we supported each other and always made time to have fun. We laughed when the boys tried to move a "hay ball" by running on it, and encouraged each other to show



Jessica Blough and Hugljúf, in a photo she submitted for the Youth Cup Tryouts. Photo by Kelly Blough.



Quinn Thomashaw (right) clowns with one of the new friends she made at the FEIF Youth Cup. Among the goals of Youth Cup is to promote friendship across borders.

well by making fun of the rest of the teams.

Even though our plan to sabotage the other teams didn't work and we got 12th place out of 13, we could not have been happier. Each person was uniquely themselves and helped me during the show. Ólafur calmed my nerves before my first class by saying, "Kick ass, American style." Daniel's intense concentration taught me to focus, while Sander's energy kept me awake. Nadia's individuality encouraged me to be comfortable with my own personality, and a last hug from Satu right before I left made me shed a tear. Though I am unsure whether I will ever see these people again, I am so thankful for these interna-

tional friendships.

The Youth Cup was truly unforgettable. Through all the awkward, funny, happy, and incredible memories, I made friends and fell in love with the experience. I am honored to have been a part of both Team USA and the Fantastic 7. When I look back now, those few days seemed to last forever. If I had the choice, I'd go back and have the same experience a thousand times. Those were the best days of my life.

QUINN THOMASHOW

I traveled to Iceland on my own this summer only to realize, when I got there, that I was far from being alone. I was there

to work, learn, and compete at the FEIF Youth Cup, an event I had taken part in two years before in Germany. Yet, this time it was different. Being able to integrate myself into the actual culture of a land I had heard about, but still didn't know, helped me to grow as a person and to create friendships and knowledge that will last me a lifetime.

I left home a confused, nervous teenager, eager to learn, but scared of what lay ahead of me. I'm not going to lie: I was homesick the first week in Iceland. Having a new language spoken around me the majority of the time was not easy, and I didn't feel like I really had anyone to talk to about how I was feeling, my confusions, and my worries.

But after that week, I began to realize what was in front of me and I created a "family" within the area where I was living. I learned what it was like to live in Iceland, and what it was like to be part of a culture that was new to me.

I remember going into Reykjavík with friends, never realizing what time it was until we got home and saw that it was already the next morning. I remember riding some of the most talented horses on trails behind the stables, where you could see the snow sitting on the tips of the mountains surrounding you. I remember laughing with crowds of people at Landsmót, the national horseshow, and sleeping in a tent with a girl I had made friends with only the day before.

I think that's what was most valuable to me during this trip to Iceland: It was the close friends I made in the short month that I was there. It was how welcoming people were, and how mature the teenagers were. They were all so enthusiastic, grown-up, and fun to be around. Yes, I traveled to Iceland all by myself, but I left the island realizing that, from the second I got there, I was never alone. I had been supported and loved by many new people who will always be a part of me.

A DEMO? YOU BETCHA!

BY SUSY OLIVER

“Would you like to host your next saddle club meeting at Tolthaven and watch an Icelandic breed demonstration?” The answer came back in true Norwegian fashion, “You betcha!” Members of the local saddle club had “seen Icelandics” but never interacted with them up close and personal. We wanted them to have that experience.

We set the date for August 11 at 7 p.m. It was Kevin Draeger’s last day of training for the summer at Tolthaven Icelandics in Pelican Rapids, MN, so the horses were primed and eager to perform. We rode four horses for the demo on the oval track, beginning with Kevin on Álfadans frá Ingólfshvoli, Barbara Frische’s stunning first-prize, mane-monster stallion, who was here for breeding.

PHOTO OP!

As Álfadans entered the track, smartphones magically appeared out of nowhere. As Kevin later recalled, “I could hear a lot of shutter sounds at every pass.” While Kevin rode, my dad, Jer, explained the gaits and gave the saddle club members a background on the heritage and unique traits of the breed.

As Kevin exited the oval track with Álfadans, Keli from Tolthaven and I tölted onto the track. We demonstrated tölt with speed changes, trot, and Keli’s rocking-horse canter. My dad then joined us on the track with Skila from Tolthaven, and we tölted pairs abreast to fill the time until Kevin could return with Ari from Nordurstjarna for the finale.

Ari came roaring onto the track full throttle in his amazingly fast tölt and joined us to make three abreast. We did several rounds on the oval track as three abreast, three fanned out, and three in a line. We closed with a flying pace pass from Ari on the pace track.

THE “TOLT GRIN”

Back at the barn, we handed our demonstration over to our audience and offered them each the opportunity to try their hand on Skila. One after the next, we watched as the “tölt grin” slowly spread over their faces. “This is really cool” and “It’s so



In August, Tolthaven Icelandics in Pelican Rapids, MN, gave a demo for a local saddle club. Here Jer Oliver on Skila from Tolthaven, Susi Oliver on Keli from Tolthaven, and Kevin Draeger on Ari from Nordurstjarna ride three abreast. Photo by Nate Oliver.

smooth” were some of the comments riders expressed.

We capped the evening with pie and a drawing for a Tolthaven t-shirt. We love introducing people to Icelandics because, without fail, these special horses win their hearts and show them how much fun is possible on board these equine companions.



Kevin Draeger rides Barbara Frische’s stallion, Álfadans frá Ingólfshvoli, during Tolthaven Icelandics’ demo. Photo by Nate Oliver.

A MODEL ICELANDIC HORSE

BY DAWN SHAW



The finished product. This particular version in silver bay pinto was released as part of Breyer's Exclusive Premier Collection and is no longer available for purchase—though Breyer has donated two models to the USIHC-members' drawing. Photo by Dawn Shaw.

When the USIHC Breeding Committee email hit my inbox, asking for someone to act as a liaison with Breyer to create an Icelandic model horse that was true to type, I couldn't hit the reply button fast enough. Breyer, formerly known as Breyer Animal Creations, is legendary for producing model horses since 1950.

For me, this was the fulfillment of a dream.

I've been collecting Breyer model horses for about 40 years. I have lost count of how many I have, but the number is in the hundreds. I may own well over a thousand. I have a room lined with shelves dedicated to my collection, and those shelves are full to overflowing.

A decade or two ago, I was quite heavily

involved in the model horse community, attending and competing in model horse shows. I even judged at some of these events. I credit the production of the Breyer porcelain model in 1992 for bringing the Icelandic horse to the forefront of my mind. Three years later I bought my first (real) Icelandic horse, and the rest is history. I currently have about a dozen horses and manage my own small farm, Lone Cedar Icelandic Horses. I do a bit of breeding, training, and selling, and am proud to have earned my FEIF Level 1 trainer certification in 2010.

After I acquired the living, breathing hay-eating versions, I would from time to time suggest to the decision makers at Breyer, whom I periodically saw at model horse events, that they should produce an Icelandic: something truer to type than

the porcelain version and in their standard cellulose acetate material so that it could be more widely distributed. I pointed out that the color options were nearly endless, and the customizers (artists who put their own paint job on models) would have a heyday. I even offered to help design it. But alas, they ignored my request.

Or else they stewed over it for a really, really long time.

When I volunteered to work with Breyer on this project, I immediately recruited Andrea Barber, the current USIHC Breeding Committee Chair, to help. I understood Breyer, but Andrea has a much longer and more deeply involved history with the Icelandic horse than I do, and I always figure two sets of eyes are better than one.

THE DESIGN PROCESS

My contact at Breyer was Stephanie Macejko, whom I'd met previously at various model horse events. She sent us the artist's concept sketch and asked for our comments. (See Figure A.)



Figure A.

Andrea and I formulated and sent back an extensive list of recommendations. For example, we suggested making the expression softer and more positive with the ears forward, the neck less convex and more arched, giving the legs more substance, making the right hind hoof parallel to the ground rather than with a pointed toe, adding more hair, and giving a more realistic shape to the tail.

We backed up our suggestions with photos illustrating each point we were trying to make.



Figure B.



Figure C.

We made more suggestions after we got the revised sketch (Figure B), and the artist incorporated these into the first clay model (Figure C). We only offered a few revisions this time: a straighter profile, more of an "s" shape to the tail, more fetlock hair, and increased flexion at the poll. This resulted in the second clay version (Figure D), which is the version they took into production.

I learned after the fact that the artist who created the new model is Kathleen Moody, who also sculpted the original porcelain version.



Figure D.



Dawn credits this porcelain model of an Icelandic horse, released by Breyer in 1992, for introducing her to the breed. Photo by Dawn Shaw.

THE PREMIER ICELANDIC

Breyer released the model in August of 2014 as part of their exclusive Premier collection. According to Breyer's web site (www.breyer-horses.com), "The Breyer Premier Collection is a Collector Club program designed to celebrate the artistry of model horses with Connoisseur-level decoration on brand-new, never before released sculptures." They named this silver dapple bay pinto "Falhólf-nir." He was available in matte or glossy, and he sported a hefty price tag of \$175. They also made a single model in "raven black" which was auctioned off at BreyerFest 2014, their annual model horse extravaganza held at the Kentucky Horse Park in July.

While I have not yet been given any specifics, Stephanie had this to say about the new Icelandic model just before this issue of the *Quarterly* went to press: "It will be more widely available in 2015 and also at BreyerFest in 2015."

Andrea and I are pleased with the result and are happy to have been a part of this process. We know the final product isn't perfect, but we hope that it is something that any Icelandic horse owner will be proud to display on his or her shelf.

I'll be making room on mine! Somehow.



Is Dawn Shaw a serious model horse collector? "This is a small portion of my model horse collection," she notes. "Seriously. I have tons more than this." Photo by Dawn Shaw.

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Photo by Kathy Sierra

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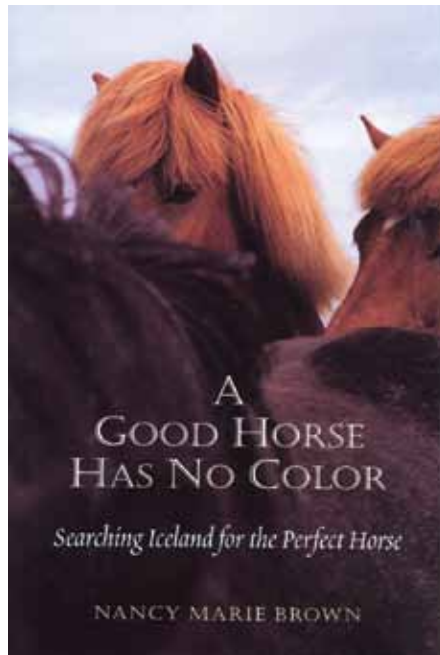
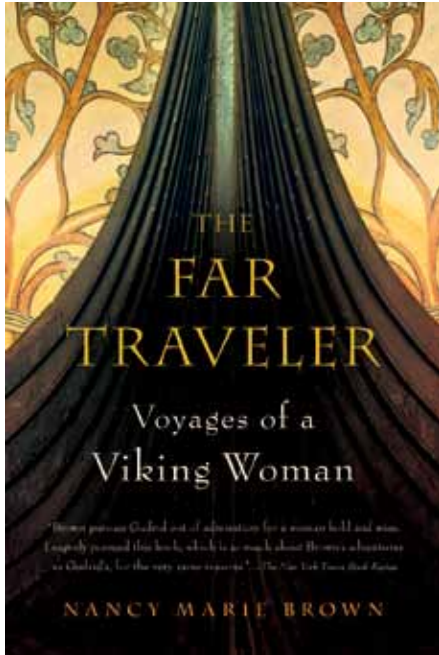
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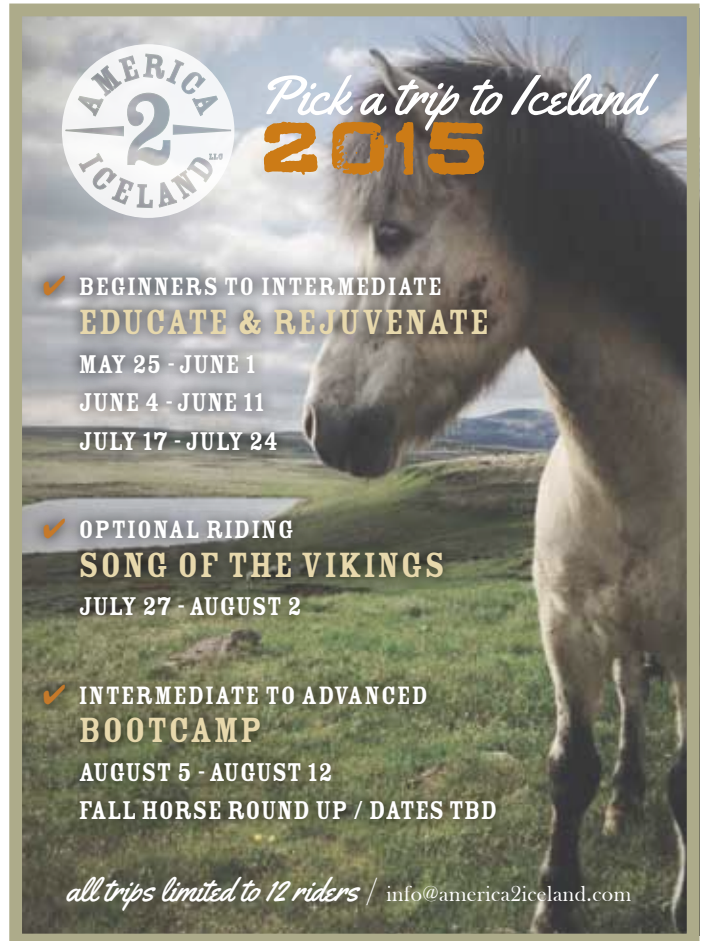
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