

ISSUE THREE

THE

2016

ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y



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



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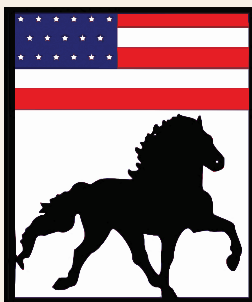
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Yes I/We are attending

Member Name(s) _____

Contact Information: phone or email _____

Please submit so we can begin planning for lunch, beverages and fun times.

Email Juli Cole: juli2875@yahoo.com or send by USPS to Juli Cole, 109 Germanski Lane

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with Þorgeir Guðlaugsson

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For everybody...

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and their gaits from

non-riders to professionals

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Have fun



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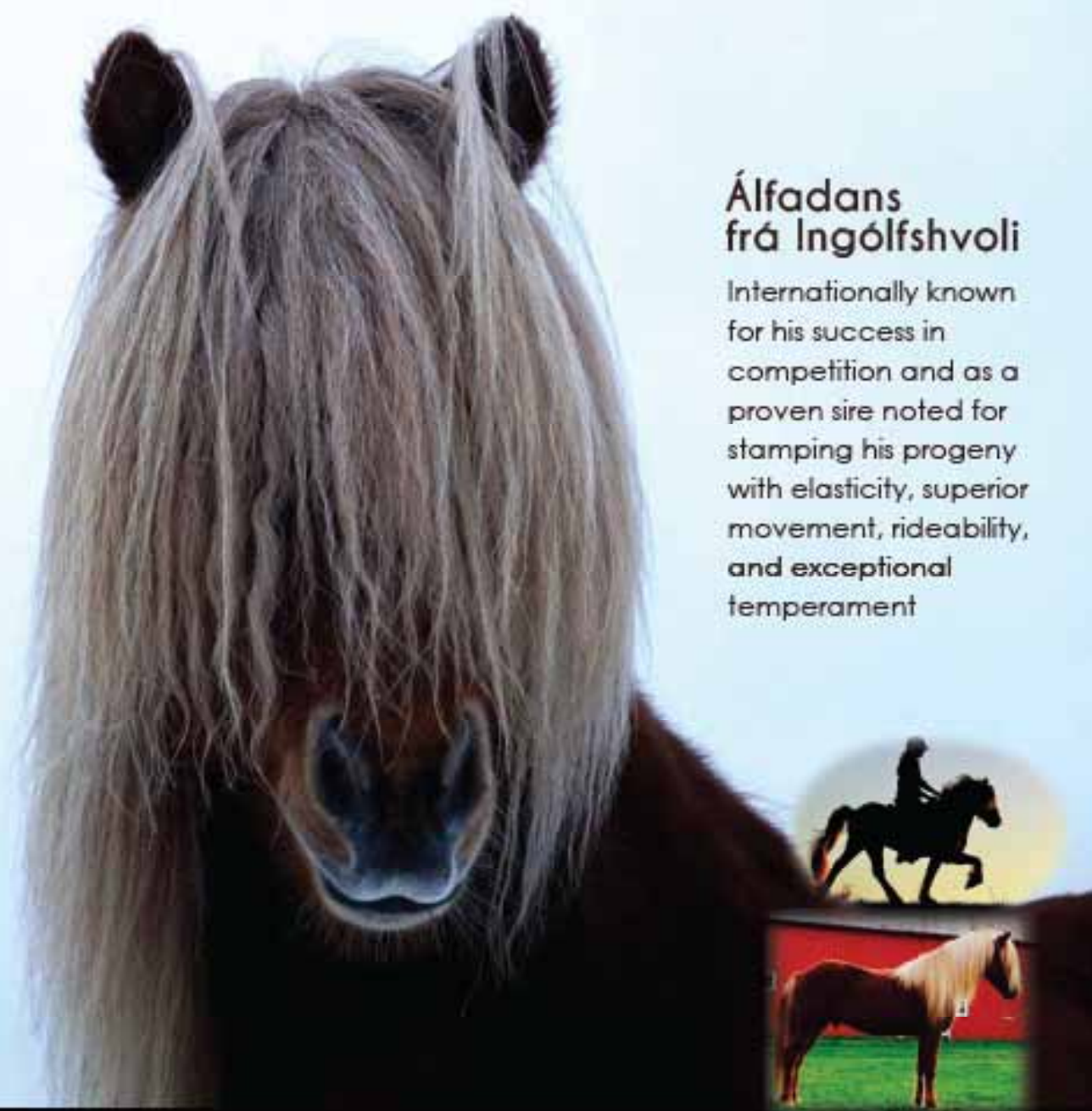
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THE USIHC MISSION

- To promote the knowledge of the Icelandic horse within the United States and its correct use as a competition and riding horse.
- To keep a registry of purebred Icelandic horses in the United States.
- To facilitate communication among all USIHC members.
- To represent the United States in FEIF.

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 Brodie

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 certified trainers who are USIHC members and can help you get the best out of your Icelandic horse. In 2014, the Education committee began offering yearly Sport Judges Seminars for those wanting to learn to judge competitions.

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. Beginning in 2016,

the USIHC Board has set aside \$9,000 per year to fund regional club events and schooling shows. For more information on how to apply for funding, contact the Regional Clubs Committee chair.

USIHC Youth members can apply to participate in the American Youth Cup or the international FEIF Youth Cup or Youth Camp. These are great events designed to bring young riders 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 interna-

tional 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*.

The USIHC Breed Ambassador program rewards members who take their Icelandic horses to all-breed events and shows.

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 everybody, members or non-members, 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. Regional Clubs and private farms can also organize Young Horse Assessments for foals to three-year-olds. These assessments also qualify for USIHC funding; contact the Breeding Leader.

In accordance with FEIF rules, the USIHC has adopted stringent tests before a foal can be registered as a purebred 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?

Requests for funding for special events and programs that do not qualify under the Flagship Event Funding Program can be submitted to the USIHC board of directors and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Contact the USIHC president for more information.

JOIN US

There are only about 5,800 registered Icelandic horses in the U.S. and the USIHC, at about 625 members, is still a small "pioneer" organization compared to our counterparts in Iceland and Germany. Our committee members and board of directors are all volunteers. Please join us so that the USIHC can, as FEIF's mission states, "bring people together in their passion for the Icelandic horse"!

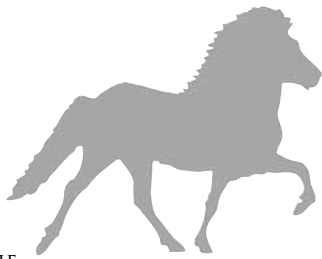
Yearly membership for an adult is \$45; youth memberships are \$35; or for a family (two adults, unlimited kids) it is \$65. Mail in the form in this magazine or join online at www.icelandics.org/join

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
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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

THE
ICELANDIC
HORSE
QUARTERLY
Issue Three 2016

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On the cover: The palomino geld-
ing Draumur from Destiny Farm
(US2002103450) shows off in his
beautiful fancy trot at liberty, playing
with his owner Katherine Faraday.
Kathy's husband, Bert Bates, cap-
tured this photo in the magical light
of a California evening in La Selva
Beach earlier this year. Kathy is the
founder of a new and exciting training
concept called "Intrinzen", which
she develops together with trainers
Steinar Sigurbjörnsson and Annie
Aston. (See article in this issue).

10 NEWS

- 10 USIHC News
- 13 FEIF News
- 15 Regional Club Updates

26 FEATURES

- 26 What is Intrinzen? *by Nicki Esdorn*
- 30 On the Bit *by Gabriele Meyer*
- 35 Handling Heel Pain *by Alex Pregitzer*
- 37 The Blood Profile Project *by Andrea Barber*
- 39 The Active Stable *by Karin Daum*
- 41 A-Hunting We Will Go! *by RJ Argenzio-West*
- 43 Horseplay *reviewed by Nicki Esdorn*

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FROM THE EDITORS

WANTED: WOW PHOTOS

One of the best parts of being on the *Quarterly* committee is the cover vote four times a year. We, the editors, Nancy Marie Brown and Nicki Esdorn, are always on the lookout for great shots: on Facebook, on the web, or from what arrives through the *Quarterly*'s email in-box. We have some "regulars" who often send us their best shots. Then we pick out a few and submit them (anonymously) to the committee for "the vote." Sometimes we have a clear winner, sometimes it is a heated competition. It is always great fun!

Do you take pictures of your horses? (What a stupid question!) Do you want to see your photo on the cover of the *Quarterly*? If so, send it in! You don't need any special equipment to take a cover shot; your smartphone can probably do it. All we require is a high resolution photo (with a file size of at least 1 MB) in a square or vertical format that makes us say "Wow! What a great shot!" You can email it to us at quarterly@icelandics.org. We are right now beginning to gather images for the March 2017 cover vote. The deadline is January 1, 2017.

Here are some helpful tips from our professionals:

- More than just capturing a nice coat color or a pretty head, try to capture the spirit and attitude of the horse. Let the picture tell a story.
- Play with different angles. Try taking the photo from below, above, or behind the horse.
- It is great to have an assistant to help get "the ears." The assistant could shake a can with grain in it, or wave a flag, or show the horse a mirror.
- Notice the light. There is "magical" light right around dawn or sunset.
- Get up close. Notice interesting and beautiful details.
- Try action shots. Photos of horses in motion usually look best with their weight supported by the hind end and a light and expressive front end. When framing an action shot, leave room for the horse



This is not a "wow" photo. This is just us—Nicki Esdorn (left) and Nancy Marie Brown (right)—after a fun ride in the country. Photo by Charles Fergus.

to "run into." Practice to develop good timing, but trust your luck and your eye.

- Look for interesting backgrounds that help create a mood.
- Sometimes there is a photo within a photo. Try cropping it to create an interesting composition.
- Take photos in different weather, not only on bright sunny days. Snowfall or fog can be mysterious, wind adds drama and a flying mane.
- Keep the photo session brief and fun, and reward the models.

We recommend two excellent books on the subject: *Horse Photography* by Carol J. Walker and *A Finger on the Shutter: A Sharpshooter's Guide to Action Photography* by Elisabeth Haug (who has recently contributed two *Quarterly* covers).

Need some more inspiration? Check out the September 2016 issue of *Horse Illustrated* magazine. The newly designed magazine features a large spread of Icelan-

dic horse photos by USIHC member (and professional photographer) Martina Gates. Congratulations, Martina!

We do have a few nitpicky requirements: The shot must feature the Icelandic horse (though other breeds of horse can appear in the background). All Icelandic horses must be registered in a FEIF registry; we prefer USIHC registered horses. If there is a featured rider in the shot, he or she must be a USIHC member, and all riders must wear helmets and proper footwear. Tack and shoeing of Icelandic horses must conform to FEIF and USIHC "best practices," as determined by the certified trainers in the *Quarterly* committee. Caption information should include the name and farm name of the horse(s), the name of the rider(s), the place or event where the photo was taken, the date of the photo, and the name of the photographer.

Keep your cameras and smartphones within reach and capture your favorite horses! We can't wait to see your images.

—Nancy Marie Brown and Nicki Esdorn

ANNUAL MEETING

The 2017 USIHC Annual Meeting will be held in Pittsburgh, PA on January 14, 2017. The meeting will have officers' and committee reports, presentation of annual awards, and some guest speakers (to be announced). The USIHC will treat attendees to lunch during the meeting. Plans are also in the works for a fun, informal Friday night "meet & greet" and for a Saturday evening group dinner (both events at individual cost, but at a venue with reasonable prices).

The meeting will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel at the Pittsburgh International Airport, and a block of rooms



USIHC youth member Ayla Green qualified for and competed in Iceland's national horse-show, Landsmót, this year on Freisting frá Holtsenda 2. Ayla is beginning the equestrian program at Hólar University College in Iceland this fall. Photo by Martina Gates.

has been reserved at the special discounted rate for USIHC members of \$105 per night. Amenities included with this rate are free shuttle service from and to the airport, true suite-style rooms with a galley kitchen, Wifi internet service, a hot, cooked-to-order breakfast each morning, and a two-hour evening reception for hotel guests that includes complimentary snacks and beverages. Rooms are available to be booked now at this special rate, and members are encouraged to make their reservations early, as only a limited number of rooms is available at the discounted rate. A direct website link is available for making reservations—please see the ad in this issue of the *Quarterly* for the link.

The meeting is being organized by the Ohio Valley Icelandic Horse Club; for more information, contact Juli Cole at juli2875@yahoo.com or 724-667-4184. We look forward to seeing you in Pittsburgh in January 2017!

SPORT JUDGE SEMINAR

The Third USIHC Sport Judge Seminar will take place at Léttleiki Icelandics in Shelbyville, KY in association with the Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show, October 6-9. The seminar will be led by FEIF International Sport Judge Þorgeir Guðlaugsson. Says Education Committee chair Alex Dannenmann, "Þorgeir is highly experienced and qualified, having judged more Icelandic Horse World Championships than any other judge. He was the chief judge at the 2015 World Championships in Denmark.

"Þorgeir is also an enthusiastic and caring instructor," Alex continues. "He is extraordinarily ambitious and has a great range of professional knowledge. His enthusiasm about the subject makes it easy to listen to and enables participants of all levels to acquire or improve their knowledge."

The seminar is open to anyone who is interested in learning about Icelandic horses. Pleasure riders or non-riders who want to learn more about the different gaits and to recognize beat or balance problems, as well as to find ways to solve those problems, are as welcome as

competition riders who are interested in the assessment of gaits and want to learn how to judge shows.

The seminar includes lectures, video presentations, and practical judging during the Kentucky show. If requested, a voluntary test at the end of the seminar will be offered in order to qualify as a U.S. Sport Judge C or B, depending on the results.

The seminar costs \$400 for early-bird registration before September 14. Regular registration (paid after September 14) is \$450. \$100 of the registration fee is non-refundable.

For more information or to register, contact Alex Dannenmann at alex.dannenmann@gmail.com.

REGIONAL NEWS

Leslie Chambers, chair of the Regional Clubs Committee, reports that the Maine club has disbanded and has donated their remaining club funds to the USIHC. "Although we hate to see a club dissolve," Leslie notes, "we greatly appreciate them remaining true to their mission in supporting the Icelandic horse."

LEISURE RIDERS

Lisa McKeen, chair of the Leisure Riders Committee, writes: "To date, I am waiting for committee members to weigh in on a proposed budget and to volunteer for specific structure support. We have members who want to have the Pleasure Riders Program back and to combine the Ambassador Program with the Leisure Committee. I will wait for others to weigh in before any action will be taken."

SHOW RESULTS

The complete results of three USIHC-Sanctioned competitions held this spring have been posted on the USIHC website at <https://www.icelandics.org/showresults.php>.

The Kraftur Sponsored Sanctioned Show was held March 26-27 at Mountain Icelandic Farm in Watsonville, CA. The judge was Hulda G. Geirsdóttir. In addition to the standard tölt, four-gait, and five-gait classes, the show featured the ever-popular beer tölt and a ride-a-buck competition. The highest scores were earned by Laurie

Prestine in Tölt T3, Allison Moerer and Hannah Bailey in Tölt T7, and Olivia Rasmussen in Four Gait V3.

The CIA Open Spring Sanctioned Show was held April 30-May 1 at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. The judge was Florian Schneider. The highest scores were earned by Ásta Covert, Christina Granados, and Heidi Benson in Tölt T1; Ásta in Tölt T2 and Four Gait V1; and Laurie Prestine in Tölt T3.

The Frida Icelandic Horse Sanctioned Show was held May 21-22 at Frying Pan Park in Herndon, VA. The judges were Alexandra Dannenmann and Alexandra Pregitzer. The highest scores were earned by Carrie Lyons Brandt and Caeli Cavanagh in Tölt T1; Carrie in Four Gait V1; and Leslie Chambers in Pleasure Tölt.

Results were not yet posted, by the *Quarterly* deadline, for three more summer shows: the Léttleiki Icelandics Sanctioned Show, held June 16-19 at Swallowland Farm in Shelbyville, KY; the NEIHC Fourth Annual Open Sanctioned Show, held July 30-31 at Thor Icelandic in Hudson, NY; and the Flugnirkeppni Icelandic Horse Sanctioned Show, August 13-14 at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI.

Still to come this fall are two more sanctioned shows. The Kentucky Icelandic Horse Sanctioned Show will be



Carrie Brandt competing on Dropi frá Blönduósi at the Léttleiki Spring Show, held at Swallowland Farm in Kentucky in June. Photo by Charlotte Reilly.

held October 6-9 at Swallowland Farm in Shelbyville, KY. (Contact Margaret Brandt, maggie@lettleikiicelandics.com.) And the CIA Open Fall Sanctioned Show will be held October 22-23 at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. (Contact Asta Covert, info@tolft.net or www.ciaclub.net.)

EASTERN CIRCUIT

At the close of the Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show in October, the division champions in the Eastern Regional Icelandic Horse Show Circuit will be announced. The Circuit, created this year, includes the five USIHC-Sanctioned



Showing in Green Horse Tölt at the Léttleiki show were (right to left): Terral Hill and Hrönn frá Árgerði, Caeli Cavanagh and Spurning frá Steinnesi, Katie Graves and Glitnir from Nordurstjarna, Carrie Brandt and Kvika from Four Winds Farm, Robbie Gregory and Mentor from Northstar, and Dustin Hatcher and Sólfaxi from Northstar. Photo by Charlotte Reilly.



The Icelandic drill team at the 70th Annual Blockhouse Steeplechase in Tryon, NC. Riding are Jason Brickner on Markús, Lori Araki on Melkorka, Barbara Claussen on Brenna, Vincent Verrecchio on Annie, and Mathilde DelMond on Tata. Photo by Ivey Sumrell.

shows held Virginia, Kentucky, New York, and Wisconsin. Riders who compete in two or more shows earn points toward a Division Championship (and prizes) at the end of the season. For more information, go to www.erihc.org.

QUARTERLY ARCHIVE

The new Topic Index to the online *Quarterly* archive makes it easy for members and visitors to find articles on topics of interest. Articles from 2008 to the present are classified under the following topics: Horse Keeping and Health, Training and Riding Instruction, Tack and Equipment, Breeding, Events and Competition, Pleasure or Leisure Riding, Youth, Trainer Profiles, History and Personal Stories, Riding in Iceland and Other Countries, Books and Films, and About the USIHC.

You can access the *Quarterly* Topic Index at www.icelandics.org/quarterly.php.

BOARD MEETINGS

The USIHC Board of Directors met on May 10 and June 14; no meeting was held in July. The meeting minutes can be found online at <https://www.icelandics.org/bod/minutes.php>.

At the May meeting, Education chair Alex Dannenmann reported that the editing of the Riding Badge materials is finished and has been forwarded to the Education Committee. It is now in the process of getting the last finishing touches, before it will be published on the USIHC website. Director Andrea Barber reported on the Blood Profile Project; see the article in this issue of the *Quarterly*.

At the June meeting, the board received an update on the Blood Profile Project and opened discussion of the 2017 USIHC Annual Meeting. A proposed change to the Registry Rules concerning the use of farm names was addressed in an executive session.

CORRECTION

The update on the Klettafjalla Regional Club in the last *Quarterly* (Issue Two 2016) was written by Linda McLaughlin and not by Marisue Wells. We apologize for the error.



Kathy Love competing on her stallion Pegasus frá Skyggni at the Léttleiki Show in June. Photo by Charlotte Reilly.

YOUTH CUP

The Netherlands hosted this year's FEIF Youth Cup from July 23-31 at the Hippisch Centre in Exloo, near the German border. The USIHC joined 15 other FEIF member nations in sending a team of young riders, ages 14-17, to compete. This year's Youth Cup included the standard tölt, four-gait, five-gait, and pace classes, as well as a flag race, trail competition, countryside riding, dressage, and in-hand showing. The US team was Alicia Flanigan (ME), Jamie Blough (CA), Jessica Blough (CA), and Olivia Rasmussen (CA).

YOUNG LEADERS

FEIF Youth Work has expanded its remit to include 18- to 26-year-olds, an age where great changes take place in the lives of young people and future leaders emerge. To encourage and support their development, FEIF is launching an annual FEIF Young Leaders' Event.

The first event will take place October 28-30, 2016 near Stockholm, Sweden and be hosted by the FEIF Director of Youth Work and Jannike Bergkvist, Youth Leader of SIF. This year's topic is "Connection and Leadership," and the keynote speaker is horseman and master communicator Perry Wood (see www.perry-wood.com).

During the seminar participants will develop and practice leadership skills in relation to both people and horses. Questions addressed will be: How do I build a team? What is the difference between teamwork and partnership? How do I practice communication at a higher level? The event will be part theory and part practice. Participants do not need to bring a horse. Places are limited, and the maximum number of participants is 30 (three participants per country). Young people who will turn 18 to 27 years old in 2016 are eligible.

Registration is only possible via the national association, and for the 2016 event it was required by July 18. However, if you are interested in participating in next year's Young Leaders' Event, please contact the USIHC youth leader Colleen Monsef at youth@icelandics.org.

DAY OF THE HORSE

May 1 was officially The Day of the Icelandic Horse, celebrated worldwide. Many clubs held open house events, children showed off their riding skills, and individuals enjoyed the day together in the saddle. FEIF received a great number of pictures and videos marked #horsesoficeland, and the organizers thank everyone for taking part in this wonderful event and for making it such a success!

In Iceland, beautiful weather accompanied the large group of horses and riders that took part in a parade in the capital on April 30. Over 100 horses and riders gathered at the national landmark Hallgrímskirkja, where the mayor of Reykjavík held a speech about the amazing horses of Iceland. A choir sang traditional Icelandic songs and opened the festivities with style.

Be sure to continue to share your stories and pictures on these social media platforms:

www.facebook.com/horsesoficeland/, www.instagram.com/explore/tags/horsesoficeland/, www.pinterest.com/horsesoficeland/, www.tumblr.com/search/horses+of+iceland, and twitter.com/horsesoficeland.

For further information about the marketing project, visit www.horsesoficeland.

URSULA BRUNS

With great sadness we report the death of the remarkable horsewoman Ursula



Bruns (1922-2016). It is largely due to her enthusiasm and energy that as early as the mid-1950s the Icelandic horse became established as a much loved and valued leisure horse in Germany and beyond. With the arrival of the Icelandic horse, new ideas of how to keep horses as naturally as possible have influenced the wider equestrian world and greatly improved the welfare standards of all horses well beyond the German borders. In 2005, the German Icelandic Horse Association (IPZV) gave Ursula Bruns the golden diamond pin, its highest award.

WORLD FENGUR

The 2015 WorldFengur Annual Report is now available on the FEIF website at <https://www.feif.org/files/documents/Annual%20Report%202015%281%29.pdf>

As the report notes, 19,060 people in 24 countries subscribe to this database of the Icelandic horse. Among the new features added in 2015 are a better tool for language translation and nearly 300 videos of horses from Landsmót 2014.

Among the interesting year-end statistics, the report notes that 1,360 horses were exported from Iceland in 2015, compared to 1,269 in 2014. The number of foals registered has significantly declined from a high of 16,799 foals registered in 2009 to 11,052 foals in 2014 (not all 2015 foals have yet been registered). The number of breeding horse evaluations have also declined, from a high of 3,785

worldwide in 2011 to 2,155 assessments in 2015 (note that the same horse can be assessed, and counted, twice in one year).

Note that access to the WorldFengur database is free for USIHC members. To activate your subscription, see https://www.icelandics.org/wf_access.php.

VACCINATION RULES

FEIF follows the veterinary rules of the International Federation for Equestrian Sports (FEI) in requiring that every horse taking part in an Icelandic horse event show proof of vaccination for equine influenza. All horses intending to participate in any Icelandic horse event must have at least received a primary course of two vaccinations, given between 21 and 92 days apart; a third dose (the first booster) given within seven months after the administration of the second primary dose; and at least annual boosters subsequently (i.e. within 365 days of the last dose).

If the horse is scheduled to take part in an Icelandic horse event, the last booster must have been given within six months and 21 days of the start of the event (or of entry to the stables, whichever is sooner). No vaccines should have been given within seven days of the event. When the interval between the last vaccination and the event is more than six months and 21 days, the horse does not need to receive a primary course of two vaccinations; one vaccination is sufficient, provided the 12-month interval was never interrupted since the primary course.

All proprietary equine influenza vaccines are acceptable, irrespective of the route of administration. All vaccines must be administered by a veterinarian. The vaccination should be administered according to the manufacturer's instructions (i.e. intramuscular injection or intranasal). The details of the vaccine, serial/batch number, the date, and the route of administration must be recorded in the horse's passport. For more information, see www.feif.org/files/documents/vaccination%20rules%202016.pdf

SPORT JUDGE EXAM

The FEIF International Sport Judges and National Sport Judges exams will take



place at Fákur Riding Club in Reykjavík, Iceland on September 17-18, 2016. The examination will include a theoretical portion covering the rules and judging guidelines, as well as practical judging of live horses on the track. The language for both portions of the test is English. More details, including the registration procedure, deadlines, and costs can be found in the official invitation. Registration is only possible via the national association, though there is no limit on the number of candidates; the deadline for the 2016 test was August 25. To learn about future exams, contact the USIHC Competition Committee chair Will Covert at competition@icelandics.org.

WC JUDGES

In early July the Board of FEIF announced the selection of the chief and deputy chief sport judges for the 2017 World Championships in Oirschot, Netherlands. Þorgeir Guðlaugsson will be the chief judge. He will be assisted by USIHC president Will Covert as the deputy chief judge.

HOME TO HÓLAR

The FEIF virtual ride "Home to Hólar" came to an end with the spectacular Opening Ceremony of Landsmót on June 30. For a whole year, just over 150 riders from all over the world, alone and in teams, counted up their kilometers when riding out, mentally calculating the distance from their homes to Hólar, the

site of the 2016 Icelandic National Horse-show, Landsmót. Together they recorded 67,078 km—one and a half times the distance around the Earth!

On the "way," many adventures occurred and were shared on a dedicated Facebook page, where participants "met," talked about their horses, and shared wonderful pictures of the Icelandic horse in places as far apart as Australia and Switzerland. For a summary of the full story, visit <http://feif-virtual.weebly.com/news-and-score-board.html>.

Because this community of virtual riders is growing, because the whole adventure is a lot of fun, and because it is a wonderful way to make new friends with a common interest, the next FEIF virtual ride "Out to Oirschot" started on July 4, as soon as Landsmót was over. If you are interested in joining this FEIF virtual ride to the next World Championships in the Netherlands, all you have to do is register at <http://feif-virtual.weebly.com/> and start riding.

SAFE RIDING TOURS

This year FEIF is introducing its first Leisure Riding Month, inviting all countries to organize riding tours and other events for leisure riders. The idea comes from our German member association, which has organized a riding tour week each September for the last few years. As a FEIF spokesperson says, "Every leisure rider is an ambassador for the entire horse community; the whole Icelandic horse community will be judged on how individuals behave and treat their horses. It is especially important to bear this in mind in areas where access to riding in nature has become restricted." By following the FEIF standards for safe and harmonious riding tours, published at www.feif.org, all leisure riders can be good ambassadors for the Icelandic horse.

WORLD RECORD

Bjarni Bjarnason riding Hera frá Þóroddsstöðum set a new world record in the 250-meter pace race with a time of 21.41 seconds at the 2016 Icelandic National Horse Show, Landsmót, held at Hólar in July.

REGIONAL CLUB UPDATES

ALASKA

BY JANE WEHRHEIM

The Alaska Icelandic Horse Association has been off to a busy spring and summer of activities. The USIHC Riding Badge Program was a great alternative



Susan Dent rides Skjóna (aka "Blackbird") at the Alaska Icelandic Horse Association's clinic with Steinar Sigurbjörnsson in May. Photo by Claudia Sihler.

to riding this winter, as it was unusually warm and icy. We had four adult members complete Level 2 and three of our youth members complete Levels 1 and 2. We will continue on with this program when the snow starts to fly again.

Steinar Sigurbjörnsson was up over the Memorial Day weekend for a three-day clinic. Twelve riders participated and had a weekend full of learning and fun, with amazing weather to boot! Along with riding, Steinar also lectured



The Tolt Alaska Youth Group performed at Equifest in Anchorage, AK and held a Youth Camp this spring. Photos by Brian Mulder and Hanna Dilts.

and demonstrated the new clicker-training techniques included in his new e-book, *Intrinzen Posture: Getting Started* (see the article on "Intrinzen" in this issue). All riders and auditors walked away with loads of positive information and tools to implement. Our club will also be hosting an Open House and Play Day event in July. In August, we will be offering Trausti Þór Guðmundsson's Tölt in Harmony clinic.

Our youth group, Tölt Alaska, has been keeping up the busy pace as well. In May, they had a booth at our local Equifest, which had information on our horses, as well as a riding demonstration. In June, they had a three-day camp with instructors Hanna Dilts from Baldur Icelandics and Lisi Ohm from Vindsdalur, both in British Columbia. They had lessons, trail rides, and craft sessions, and finished the camp off with their first show, complete with ribbons. All participants have already requested to do it all over again next summer!

CASCADE (OREGON & WASHINGTON)

BY SUSAN WELLINGTON

The Cascade Icelandic Horse Club serves Oregon and Southwest Washington. The geographical range of our club makes it challenging for all our members to get together in one place, but we keep trying. Our April event, The Cherry Blossom Festival Parade, did not come together. In May, seven

members got together for a Play Day at Karin Daum's Schwalbenhof Farm. Our horses enjoyed being together while we worked on drill team patterns under Karin's leadership and enjoyed a stunning potluck lunch. We had a "fluttering toilet paper" lesson and dressed our horses in "waterfall" costumes for more fun. Pictures are posted on our club's Facebook page.

In June, we met at a trail course in Oregon. We dodged the early shower and worked our horses in-hand over obstacles, sniffing hides, and past fluttering flags. We rode in a group to other parts of the farm and experienced other challenges. One member's day was "enhanced" by a wheel coming off her truck while she was traveling slowly. She had a good ride after the wheel got put back on. Again, pictures are posted on our Facebook page.

Our Icelandic horses are recognized at many locations in Washington and Oregon where our members go on trail rides; I won't bore you with a long list of locations. Rest assured, we get around.

Member Karen Brotzman is working on a directory of Icelandic horse breeders. Among the breeders in the club with foals this spring are Red Feather Icelandics, Trout Lake, WA; Eichenhof Icelandic Horses, The Dalles, Oregon; and Schwalbenhof, Hillsboro, OR.



CIA (SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA)



Scenes from the CIA Open Spring Sanctioned Show, held April 30-May 1 at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. At top, left and right: Heidi Benson and Mári frá Kolgerði. In the middle row are two participants in the 2016 FEIF Youth Cup: Jessica Blough riding Hugljúf frá Vatnsholti (left) and Olivia Rasmussen riding Brynjar from Dalalif (right). On the bottom left, Ásta Covert and Dynjandi frá Dalvík and Christina Granados and Hroftur from Hobby Horse Ranch riding Fast Tölt in the V1 fourgait final. Bottom right, Ásta and Dynjandi. Photos by Ásta and Will Covert.



Cascade Club member Lisa Roland is owner and breeder of the foal Vakur from Eichenhof; his sire is Vakur frá Skarði and dam is Vordís from Extreme Farm. Photo by Lisa Roland.

FIRC (MID-ATLANTIC)

BY RICH MOORE

In the spring of 2016, members of the Frida Icelandic Riding Club hosted clinics with Linda Pétursdóttir and Barbara Frische, and at the end of May the club hosted its Fifth Annual Sanctioned Show.

Millie Angelino reports, "In April, some Pennsylvania members of FIRC brought Linda Pétursdóttir from Iceland for three days for her first solo training in the U.S. The training was structured with private lessons on Friday and a two-day clinic beginning on Saturday. Fourteen riders from around the area participated in a variety of sessions each day.

"It was clear from the beginning that this training would be different. Linda is warm, friendly, and person-oriented, and a knowledgeable, skilled, and energetic trainer. I worked with Linda in Iceland in October with my new mare Dögun before she was exported, so I was keenly aware of Linda's talents. I had the good fortune of having two private lessons with her on Friday, and I used the first for a much needed ground/lunge lesson. The

clarity with which Linda instructed me was reinforced by the immediate response from my mare. It was amazing to watch my horse work so harmoniously on the longeline (in all gaits!). Within a short time, Linda had me achieving the same

results.

"All of the riders subsequently had the same experience in both their private lessons and during the two-day clinic. Linda took time to talk with every rider to determine her goals. After observing them ride, Linda quickly distinguished herself from many other trainers by asking to ride each horse to assess firsthand what problems or behaviors could be inhibiting the progress of the horse and rider. This approach was not immediately embraced by everyone, but as the consummate professional, Linda was not deterred and continued to work vigorously with each rider on her level. Before Friday ended, she had won the trust and respect of every horse and rider. More than one rider, on more than one occasion, was reduced to tears of joy, because it was clear we were being handed the keys to a better understanding and working relationship with our horses. Some of our horses seemed not so happy at first, as we challenged them to carry themselves in a healthier way and be more responsive to our cues. By Saturday, Linda had ridden all our horses, on some occasions more than once, and by the end of that day she had each of us riding and communicating more effectively.

"This training event had horses and



Icelandic trainer Linda Pétursdóttir helped Millie Angelino (left) learn to work her horse Dögun on a lunge line at the FIRC clinic in April. Photo by Victoria Angelino.



Jo Ann Trostle (left), Tammy Martin (middle), and Mitch Martin (right) warm up in the rain at the FIRC Spring Sanctioned Show in May 2016. Photos by Erna Pomrenke.

riders of all skill levels, ages, and physical condition. Some participants were serious competitors. Linda easily identified whether issues arose from the horse or from the rider. Some of us learned exercises to help our horses develop the necessary balance and strength for proper performance in each gait. We were instructed on proper seat and on routines to help keep our horses supple, responsive, and healthy, regardless of their age. By the time the clinic ended, we had the tools needed to ride and communicate more effectively, and it seemed that maybe our horses even liked us a little better too. Clearly that was the case during the group sessions, when we let our hair down and tölted to pop music at various speeds in a simple drill routine. It was exhilarating!”

Millie continues, “For anyone who would like to know more about Linda, here is a short bio: Linda has been riding horses her whole life, and has been competing since she was seven years old—a career that spans over 20 years. While competing in Junior Class, she achieved

the titles of Icelandic Riding Champion in Tölt T1, and Four Gait VI. Linda has competed several times at Landsmót, taking second place twice in the Junior Class. In 2009 Linda competed in the World Championships in Switzerland for the Icelandic team and achieved the title of World Champion in Tölt T1 in the Young Adult Class. That same year Linda was chosen as The Most Promising Rider in Iceland and Sportswoman of the Year in her hometown of Mosfellsbær, a town near Reykjavík. In 2011, after graduating from Hólar University with a BS in Horse Training and Riding Instruction, Linda became partners with her brother Guðmar Pétursson in Staðarhús, an Icelandic horse training and trekking facility in Borgarnes near the Snæfellsnes Peninsula. Linda has been training horses and riders ever since. Linda is the lead horse trainer at Staðarhús, and is responsible for starting many young horses each year for a multitude of horse farms in the area. Linda is highly sought after in Iceland to train riders of all skill levels. She has experience training in both group and

private settings, as well as offering clinics. Linda has worked at different training stations with other skilled trainers in Iceland, as well as with Guðmar at his Icelandic horse farm in Kentucky. Linda has also performed with Guðmar in his Knights of Iceland troupe, an exciting Icelandic horse show team that performs in a variety of prestigious horse venues throughout the U.S. Last but not least, Linda recently has begun teaching at Hólar University.”

Laura Colicchio reports on the Barbara Frische clinic at Montaire in Middleburg, VA, which she audited for one day. “First of all,” Laura writes, “I would like to start out by thanking Antje Freygang for opening up her facility for this purpose and Suzi McGraw for organizing it. It was a pleasure to meet Barbara and to observe her teaching methods. The watchword of the day appeared to be giving the horse more ‘space’ or breathing room to stretch out and move more fluidly; i.e., simply letting the reins out more, with the appropriate timing, to allow the horse to move forward better and to develop a freer

form. Obviously, this does not convert to throwing the reins away, but you could clearly see a great connection between each horse and rider with Barbara's timing and cues to the rider.

"I really appreciated Barbara's teachings, because I think too many clinics are focused on the hind end and we are losing sight of the front of the horse regarding rein contact, timing of half halts, and not holding the horse, as well as the purpose of the inside and outside rein. As simplistic a concept as this may seem, I think we can all agree on its paramount significance.

"I was particularly fascinated by Barbara's knowledge and application of conformational constraints as they relate to the individual horse's riding ability and level. When Barbara took this into consideration and cued the rider on how to bring out the best in the horse's gaits, it was clear that the horse was striving for better overall maneuverability based upon the horse's degree of collection as asked for by the rider. The evidence was incontrovertible, especially when Barbara pointed out a horse that had a long mid-section and shorter neck, explaining that its degree of collection would be dependent on the rider allowing the horse a longer rein and enabling it to stretch its body out. Clearly the horse moved better when the rider followed Barbara's instructions.

"Barbara customized her teaching to each rider even when two or three riders were in the arena in a class together. I particularly appreciated the way that she allowed the riders to enter the ring and warm up, observing them ride, and then critiqued and offered methods of enhancement, instead of throwing a lot of variables at them before they had a chance to ride around a bit, which can become confusing and frustrating. Her timing of cues seemed to be impeccable, as each rider immediately understood and took her suggestions.

"Barbara also worked with the riders on developing smooth transitions between gaits that seem to 'melt' into the next one with great ease. I think we can all agree on the ultra-importance of

smooth transitions. She had the riders soften their aids by being subtler to enter the next gait without being abrupt and interfering with flowing from one gait to the next.

"Considering the broad spectrum of clinicians, I think it is safe to say that they all seek to paint the same picture; each one is using different 'colors' and 'brush strokes' to arrive at the same finished masterpiece."

Pat Moore reports on the Frida Icelandic Riding Club's Fifth annual spring USIHC sanctioned show, held at Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon, VA. "The most successful event to date was held on May 21-22, with 36 rider/horse combinations competing in over 30 classes on the two days. The show was judged by Alexandra Dannenmann and Alex Pregitzer, assisted by Susan Moore and Kathy Love as scribes. Curt Pierce handled the IceTest software, while Rich Moore announced. We were fortunate to have a loyal and energetic group of volunteers, including the Show Committee members, Sverrir Bjartmarz, Kim Davis, Pat Moore, and Sali Peterson (still helping all the way from California), plus Rich Moore, Jr., Millie Angelino, Kathy Carpenter, and Marjorie Lewis, just to mention a few. The show ended in style with the Tölt T1 A-Final won by Carrie Lyons-Brandt, who was presented with a handsome trophy donated by Thor Icelandics. Next year's show is scheduled for May 20-21, 2017. See you at the show!"

HESTAFOLK (NORTHWEST WASHINGTON)

BY LISA MCKEEN AND KATHY LOCKERBIE

Hestafolk Club Members were busy last spring, with new foals added, new club members, and new activities. April was wet and required us to move several rides. We were able to go out in small groups to the Citrons and to Stewart Mountain with two riders new to Icelandics. The horses did well and even the bike rider we ran into didn't rattle them! The biker shared with us that he had seen a bear a few yards down the trail, but the horses didn't

seem concerned.

Colette Cloutier's mare, Dís, had a colt out of Lani frá Alfasaga. On a visit to the vet, Dís introduced Frodo to a mirror. Icelandics are beautiful and now Frodo has seen it for himself.

The club got together to celebrate one of our members' 70th birthday. She



The mare Dís shows her colt, Frodo, a mirror at the Kulshan Veterinary Clinic. "He was fascinated, and both horses impressed the vet with their calm attitudes," says owner Colette Cloutier, a member of the Hestafolk Club. Photo by Collette Cloutier.

doesn't look a day over 50 and it was fun and filled with music!

On April 16, Fred and Lois Alms hosted a picnic and ride at Cowboy Camp near the Les Hilde wilderness area. We had a group of 15, great rides with water crossings, and a potluck that couldn't have been better. The elk kept their distance. Attendees traveled from Everson, WA to Snohomish, WA. We also celebrated Kathy Lockerbie's birthday; she has been a mainstay of our group!

In May, members attended the BackCountry Horsemen's Confidence Builder Ride. It is a grand event with lots of practice for green and seasoned trail riders, help from horsemen and women, and a broad variety of obstacles and challenges to horses and riders. Water crossings, bridges of all shapes and sizes, trailers, tents, barrels, tarps, gates, and more were there, with time to work at the more challenging obstacles for an given



Hestafolk Club member Judy Skogen on Freya gets a lesson from Eyjólfur (Jolli) Ísólfsson at a clinic at Red Feather Farm in Trout Lake, WA.

horse. A standout horse, Elska from Extreme Farms, led older more experienced horses across water and bridges, thanks to her solid start at Silver Creek Icelandics. Elska was ridden by ten-year-old Willa Herndon Schepper.

Kathy Lockerbie attended a breeding clinic at Red Feather Farm in Trout Lake, WA and brought back lots of information about our horses and their potential. In June, Red Feather hosted a clinic with Eyjólfur (Jolli) Ísólfsson. Kathy and Judy Skogen attended and are sharing their learning with club members.

In lieu of our Eddy's Mountain Ride on June 25, club member Colette Cloutier is hosting a ride up Sumas Mountain. The trail leaves from her property, so members can relax about cars or bicycles.

We have lots of fun rides coming up in the next couple of months. We will be participating in a Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) event and learning about weaponry from horseback, we will make a group trip to Eastern Washington, and will attend a Schooling Show at Red Feather. It's good to have a community and great to have Icelandic horses.

KLETTAFJALLA (ROCKY MOUNTAINS)

BY KRISTINA BEHRINGER AND LEE ANN OTT

Coralie Denmeade, a FEIF-certified trainer and the owner of Tamangur Icelandic Horses, held a well-attended USIHC Riding Badge clinic in June. Our day started with lessons about the Icelandic horse in general, differences in vital signs from

other breeds, veterinary care, feed and supplements, care of the unique Icelandic coat, and of course the gaits.

After the lectures, we took turns riding in pairs, while the rest of the class observed and learned about differences in conformation and how this affects the movement of each horse. The riders focused on demonstrating proper position, cues, and gaits to the observers.

The day went by too quickly, as we were all very interested in learning more about this lovely breed and about our own horses and riding. The Riding Badge clinic is a well-rounded educational opportunity, combining lecture, question-asking opportunities and discussion, as well as riding instruction. We are looking forward to more Riding Badge training!

On June 15-17, Coralie held a second clinic in Utah. We had five students (Marisue and Doby Wells, Barbara Ohm and Stephen Pace, and Lee Ann Ott) participating in the three-day clinic. The first two days were filled with private lessons in a cool indoor arena; the last day was spent at the South Jordan Equestrian Center for two Icelandic classes judged by Coralie and a drill team performance in full Viking costume.

One common theme we all grasped



Trainer Coralie Denmeade and John Dobrosky work on groundwork exercises with Skjóni at a Klettafjalla Club clinic in Utah. Photo by Stephen Pace.



Getting ready for a Hestafolk clinic with Coralie Denmeade are (left to right) Doma, Vængur, Pála, Lýsingur, Siður, and Skjóni. Photo by Stephen Pace.

during our lessons was to drive the horse from the rear end and to catch the energy in the front, enabling him to work through his top line without blocking his flow. We also learned to use our seat more to stop and turn, while keeping our eyes fixed on where we want to go. Lengthening our horse's neck helps him to relax, and moving our hips with the long stride helps the horse move freely. Then when we want to tölt we shorten our reins, slow our hips to the movement, and drive from the rear. And we always try to feel the horse.

We will continue to ride together often and help each other with issues we face. We found watching the videos, which Stephen and Barbara so kindly made for us, and critiquing them helps tremendously, until Coralie comes again. Thank you, Coralie! You are such a great teacher and we keep improving under your watchful eye.

KRAFTUR (NORTHERN CALIFORNIA)

BY CAROL TOLBERT

Kraftur members have been pretty busy this spring and we plan to continue that pace into the fall as well. Too late to men-

tion in our last update (though noted in other areas of the last *Quarterly*) was our Spring Show, held March 26-27 at Mountain Icelandic Farm in Watsonville, CA. We had 17 members riding and many spectators. A highlight from the show was the Easter egg tölt event, which included

horses, riders, bicycles, and a little bit of deceit. Hulda Geirsdóttir came back again this year to be our judge for this two-day event.

Many Kraftur members also participated in a clinic by Guðmar Pétursson, held at Coast Road and Monte Sereno



Klettafjalla Club member LeeAnn Ott riding Doma at the clinic with Coralie Denmeade in Utah. Photo by Stephen Pace.

Stables March 17-20. Typically, these annual Guðmar spring clinics come with rain (much desired and needed in CA these days). The rain held off until the last day, though, when some riders even got to witness a double rainbow.

April proved to be just as busy for Kraftur members. A Trail Trial event was held April 16 at member Laura Hinson's ranch, in beautiful Carmel Valley. A great video of the event was posted on our Facebook page—check it out at Kraftur Icelandic Horse Club. Some members in attendance included Danielle Mayland, Annette Coulon, Ally Moerer, Sara Stern, and Laura Hinson.

The CIA Spring Show was held at the end of April (April 30 to May 1) at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. While this isn't a Kraftur-sponsored event, we make up a lot of the riders. In fact, of the 18 riders, 14 were from Kraftur—we just can't seem to get enough of these shows!

As we headed into the start of summer, we had a mix of events and news. Some members attended an adult horse camp, by dressage trainer Jec Ballou, on May 27-29. Also, we were all very excited with the news that our very own Ayla Green was ranked number 5 in her age group in Iceland and would be riding in the Landsmót Hestamanna, Iceland's

national horsemanship. Posts on Facebook and Instagram kept us all engaged and connected as she competed in this prestigious event. Ayla, you made us all very proud!

On the horizon, and prior to the printing of this September issue, two youth members from Kraftur, Jessica Blough and Olivia Rasmussen, will participate in the FEIF Youth Cup on July 23-31 in the Netherlands, with another member, Jamie Blough, serving as back-up. There was a great article in the last *Quarterly* about these young riders, too. We can't wait to hear all about it.

Other events we look forward to for the remainder of the year include a clinic with Trausti Þór Guðmundsson in August at Mountain Icelandic Farm, our somewhat annual "End of Summer Youth Trail Ride" in late August, the CIA Fall show at Flying C Ranch in late October, our Annual Member meeting in November, the annual Los Gatos Holiday Parade on December 3, and a Christmas Elf Hunt on December 17. Clearly, we will have a lot to write about in the next *Quarterly* issue.

NEIHC (NORTHEAST)

BY JESS HAYNSWORTH

What an exciting and busy spring we



have had here in the Northeast! Finally, our fields have thawed and mud season has come and gone, leaving us with shiny horses and beautiful weather for riding and training! The season kicked off with several fun clinics, from trainers such as Steinar Sigurbjörnsson and Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir.

Amy Goddard writes the following about her experience at a clinic with Steinar: "On May 10-12, five adults and two youth riders attended a clinic with Steinar at Heleen Heyning's West Winds Farm in Delhi, NY. Four riders learned how to work with their horses intrinsically, starting with improving their horses' posture. Steinar coached us in how to motivate our horse's movement without using pressure-release, but by encouraging and rewarding the horse for autonomous behavior. We hope to have a follow-up clinic with Steinar in September." (Also see the article in this issue, "What is Intrinsic?")

Nancy Marie Brown attended a series of Centered Riding clinics taught by Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir of Solheimar Farm in Vermont. She writes the following: "An FT trainer, Sigrún has been working in the U.S. since 1999, but it's only recently that she became involved in Centered Riding (CR), through the influence of her student Richard Davis. Richard



Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir gave a monthly series of Centered Riding clinics in Vermont. Here and in the photo above, she works with Marilyn Blaess on Vængskjöna. Photos by Emily Potts.



NEIHC member Liesl Kolbe with Brooke Greenberg (both age 6) enjoying their rides on Þór frá Skorrastad and Spönn frá Efri-Raudilækur at Mad River Valley Icelandics in Vermont. Photo by Jess Haynsworth

introduced her to Lucille Bump, a Senior CR instructor who apprenticed under the technique’s creator, Sally Swift. For several years, Sigrún and Lucille team-taught a CR for Icelandics clinic each spring at Solheimar Farm. In 2015, Sigrún earned her CR Level 1 certificate and is now working toward Level 2.

“Last winter and spring she taught a monthly series of CR clinics. ‘I believe CR is important whether you are working toward competing or trail riding,’ Sigrún said. ‘The welfare of the horse is always a priority, and CR encourages a balanced, supple, healthy, and happy horse.’

“The work, she emphasized, ‘starts with the rider.’ In tölt, for example, ‘the suppleness of the rider becomes very important. The movement goes from the horse’s right hind up through our right leg and seat bone, diagonally through our back to our left shoulder, and into the horse’s shoulder through the rein and bit. This is a long way for the energy to go, and there are lots of places that can restrict the flow, resulting in either pacey or trotty tölt.’

“The clinic series culminated for me with a lesson on pace. ‘Pace isn’t magic,’ Sigrún explained, ‘it’s just another gait. Riding pace well is an art form. It requires technique, feel, and a lot of letting go’—which is where CR comes in. Through the



Steinar Sigurbjörnsson (in green) and NEIHC members who took part in his clinic at West Winds Farm in Delhi, NY. Left to right are Martina Gates and Stigandi; Amy Goddard and Baldur; Nicki Esdorn with two horses, Álfrún and Jenni; and Heleen Heyning with Duna. Photo by Martina Gates.



NEIHC youth member Alicia Flanigan took fourth place in the A finals in T3 at the 2016 FEIF Youth Cup in Exloo, Netherlands. Photo by Kelly Blough.

CR basics (breathing, soft eyes, centering, building blocks, and grounding), we could locate and release the tension (and fear) in our own bodies, while still providing the energy needed to pace. ‘A pace horse must have positive energy,’ Sigrún said. ‘It also has to be relaxed to be able to let its back muscles lengthen. To pace, you need a straight horse, you need a strong horse, you need a horse that is tension-free but still energetic, and who is obedient.’

‘With a well-trained pace horse,’ Sigrún said, you just pick up a canter, slow your seatbones, lift one rein, and say Hello! Or, more technically, ‘On left lead canter, you shift your weight a little onto your right seat bone and softly support the left rein. If the horse is balanced and well trained to the rider’s seat—which it should be before doing pace,’ Sigrún

emphasized, ‘the direction with the rein is minimal and the seat cue is the most important.’

‘I found it not so simple to pace on the oval track. I needed more work on canter, as my horse Mukka frá Alfasaga is strongly five-gaited. But back home, on a straight stretch of road, I nailed it: Thanks to Sigrún, we flew!’

Following these clinics, the 2016 show season kicked off with the Frida Icelandic Riding Club’s annual sanctioned show on May 21-22. Several NEIHC members made the long journey to Virginia, including Anne Hyde, Jessica Haynsworth, and Caeli Cavanagh from Vermont; Amy Goddard, Heleen Heyning, and Leslie Chambers from New York; and Cindy and Brian Wescott from Maine. Jessica Haynsworth and Vigri frá Vallanesi, and Caeli Cavanagh on Dropi frá Blönduósi competed in V1 (Open Four Gait) and finished fourth and second, respectively, in the final. Caeli and Dropi also finished second in the Tölt T1 final. Leslie Chambers and Thokki from Four Winds Farm won the Pleasure Tölt class, and Amy Goddard and Baldur from Four Winds Farm won the ‘Walk On By’ class. Congratulations to all of our NEIHC members who competed (or helped out)!

We must also thank Curtis Pierce, once again, who offered affordable shipping for Northeast horses to and from the competition. Without his help, sending such a large group of horses and riders from the Northeast might not have been possible.

The Frida show was also the first leg of the Eastern Regional Show Circuit. Many Northeast riders have entered to start earning points toward a Division Championship in the ERSC. Visit www.erihc.org to find out more.

The next show of the season took place at Léttleiki Icelandics in Kentucky on June 19-20. Northeast riders Caeli Cavanagh (from Vermont), and youth riders Isabelle Maranda (from Vermont) and Alicia Flanigan (from Maine) competed.

Alicia Flanigan will be on the US team for the FEIF Youth Cup in the Netherlands on July 23-31. Best of luck to Alicia!

We have many exciting upcoming

events this summer, including our annual sanctioned show. This year, the NEIHC Open will take place July 30-31, 2016 at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY, with Þorgeir Guðlaugsson as the judge. A pre-competition clinic with Nicole Kempf of Germany will be held on July 27-29. This show is always so much fun, and it’s also part of the Eastern Regional Show Circuit, so it’s a great opportunity to keep earning points towards a Division Championship.

NEIHC Games Day will take place on August 27 at Heleen Heyning’s West Winds Farm in Delhi, NY. The event will feature fun mounted games and group riding in a relaxed atmosphere. As always there will be great food, awesome people, and a lot of laughs.

ST SKUTLA (CENTRAL & WESTERN NEW YORK)

BY ANDREA BARBER

Shortly before Memorial Day I saw a plea online for a black or dark bay horse with excellent temperament to be the ceremonial riderless horse in the Memorial Day Parade of the town of Gorham, NY. Gorham is a small town in the heart of the Finger Lakes Region, about 40 minutes from our farm. This was the town’s first time having the riderless horse as part of their parade, and they were having a heck of a time finding a suitable horse. While normally one pictures a regal black Morgan or thoroughbred for the job, I immediately thought we had a dark bay Icelandic that would fit the bill perfectly.

Though evaluated first prize when he was a stallion (mostly for his excellent riding talents), my main riding horse Hergill frá Oddhóli probably wouldn’t win any prizes for his beauty. Plain dark bay with a sparse mane and tail, he could be easily overlooked as an everyday horse. But Hergill’s character is another story. He has never failed to do anything that we’ve asked of him and can always be counted on to perform. This combined with the fact that he had previously lived in big Los Angeles, CA made me confident that, though he had never been in a parade before, he was indeed the horse for the



St Skutla Club member Steve Barber leads Hergill frá Oddhóli as the ceremonial riderless horse in a Memorial Day parade in Gorham, NY. Photo by Andrea Barber.

job in little Gorham, NY.

Hergill is “my” horse so it would seem a forgone conclusion that I would be the one to lead him in the parade. But still recovering from a badly broken ankle last year had me wondering if walking a parade route was really a good idea. Plus my husband Steve had a perfect black suit ready to go. So it was decided—Steve would lead him and I would be on the sidelines taking photos, which is something I enjoy doing almost as much as riding. As it turns out that decision would allow me to get a lot more pleasure out of the event than I could have imagined.

We arrived the morning of the parade with Hergill as clean as he could be—at least on the surface! Thank goodness dirt doesn’t really show on a dark bay horse. All his tack had been polished and the ceremonial boots had been fitted in the appropriate backward position. As Steve led him off I hoped for the best—a lot of people were counting on Hergill, and I

had faith in him. Still it was strange for me not to be the one holding the lead rope.

The headwaters of the parade were a busy mess of organized chaos—marching bands (Gorham is famous for its summer “Pageant of Bands” competition), drill teams, tractors, excited children, etc. This was a lot for any horse to take, especially one without an equine buddy. I used my telephoto lens to span the long distance to check in on how Steve and Hergill were doing. I was happy to see they were right in the midst of it all with Hergill soaking up lots of attention from parade participants.

When the parade finally started, it was Steve and Hergill out all alone leading the way: quite dramatic. I felt a huge sense of pride watching my husband and my horse giving honor to something so important. Though Steve should have tried to be more somber, he had a real hard time not smiling at the waving children on the parade route. I can’t say I blame him. Though I think they were much more

interested in Hergill than Steve.

Of course the people standing around me had no idea that they were watching my husband and my horse march by. So it was especially touching to me to hear their comments. Many said what a beautiful horse Hergill was, also remarking on his good behavior. Others said that they were so happy to see such an amazing memorial to those lost. But the most touching were the people who simply cried to see my horse and the symbol he helped represent. At this point I was very thankful that I chose not to be in the parade, but to be a spectator instead.

Hergill marched the entire parade route without a single misstep and brought a lot of joy to all. No surprise to me as I knew he, as usual, would try his best. As we drove home from the parade with Hergill in the trailer snacking on a well-deserved giant net of hay, I was filled with pride. Job well done Hergill!

WHAT IS INTRINZEN?

BY NICKI ESDORN

About 10 years ago I attended the annual international FEIF conference in Scotland. The highlight was a much anticipated presentation by the great Eyjólfur Ísólfsson (aka Jolli) about the horse training program at Hólar University in Iceland, which he developed and which is by many considered the gold standard. To a rapt audience of passionate Icelandic horse people Jolli described how he had traveled the world and looked at all kinds of training methods, from classical dressage to western horsemanship, and how he had cherry-picked everything he thought would apply and benefit the Icelandic horse and integrated these methods into his native Icelandic training. I saw many heads nodding in approval—and then Jolli said something very surprising: “This program is what we teach today, but if I find something else that I think worthwhile to try out, I will change it all again!” Everyone’s jaw dropped.

It takes a great deal of self-confidence, curiosity, courage, and willingness to leave one’s comfort zone and try



Elfaxi showing off his Intrinzen training in a beautiful collected canter at liberty. The stallion has acquired the strength and balance to perform, and has learned that doing this work makes him feel especially good. All photos courtesy of the Intrinzen team.

new things. If we are already quite good at something, it may be even harder. Whenever we learn something new, we are beginners again. Sometimes it takes real desperation to become willing to try something new and different. My own experience, though, is that it becomes easier! Coming out “on the other side,” having solved a frustrating problem, having learned new skills, is a great feeling! Jolli has encouraged me to look with great interest at new ideas and different methods of training and teaching. My requirements are non-negotiable though: Is the horse motivated, happy, and engaged? Is the trainer/rider considerate, empathetic, and having fun? I always cherry-pick, like Jolli, asking myself, “Will this help me and my horses become happier and better?”

BADASS

A few months ago, I noticed some very nice photos by Katherine Faraday on Facebook. Kathy always takes wonderful photos and videos, but these were different. The horses looked fantastic: proud, strong, and what she calls “badass.” She posted that she, Steinar Sigurbjörnsson, and Annie Aston had been working on



Steinar Sigurbjörnsson working with Elfaxi at the advanced exercise of collected canter departures. Steinar says he has seen a big improvement in his stallion’s health and attitude since starting on this path.

a new method to help horses develop the strength and motivation to collect themselves and to offer some very impressive movements, usually only seen in free play or by very highly trained dressage horses. They were calling this method “Intrinzen.”

I was intrigued. I know the dressage training scale, and this stuff comes at the very top, after years of dedicated training! I also knew that Steinar, the son of the famous Icelandic rider and trainer Sigurbjörn “Diddi” Barðarson, had graduated from Hólar as a certified horse trainer and riding teacher and was a member of the Icelandic training association FT. I had taken excellent lessons from Steinar before. Annie I also knew something about, from her informative and well-researched articles for the *Quarterly*. So I made an appointment with Kathy for an interview. I wanted to see these horses live!

When I arrived at Kathy’s small farm on top of a hill in California, I was met by the whole team: Steinar, Annie, and Kathy. Without more ado or explanation, I was asked to step into the “office,” a garage converted to a tiny arena and film studio, and meet the stallion Elfaxi, at liberty. Steinar helped me cue Elfaxi to assume a very proud, collected, and elevated posture, standing still, which I knew required tremendous effort and strength. I was told to use a small metal clicker the moment I thought it was just perfect. The stallion would immediately relax, and wait with perfect politeness for the treat I was asked to give him with an outstretched hand. He then gave me a look and did the pose again, unasked, showing off, until Steinar said, “Click already!” Wow. Now I got into the game. With Steinar’s help, I was strutting around this small space with a magnificent horse in “panther walk,” a very effortful, coiled-under walk with big movement in the front and back. I could tell the horse was having a great time showing off, and I had a blast. The click always ended the performance, and Elfaxi would stand and gently take his reward.

FREE

Next I was led to Kathy’s outdoor arena with the beautiful view I knew from the Facebook photos. Her gelding Vafi was to be my schoolmaster next. He was completely free, no restraint, and the arena had no fence. He could have left

at any time, and was free to do so, but he didn’t. He did the power pose called the “crunch” on my light cue. He panther-walked, he fancy-trotted, he did sloooow, hiiigh canter departs. It was a rush to work with a horse so willing to work super hard, and yet so easily controlled with a click and a reward.

Then came the saddle! Only a saddle, no bridle, mind you! I put my helmet on and got aboard. Steinar cued the gelding for the movements he had done just before with me on the ground. What an amazing ride! I was thrilled. Big, soft, bouncy movements with perfect collection. Vafi was at all times completely tuned into Steinar’s body language and cues. It was amazing to experience how it all feels on the horse’s back.

BEAUTIFUL

After the ride, I was treated to a demonstration of how Annie had trained her gelding Gerpir. He was described as a formerly very tense, explosive horse with some health issues in his hind end. It was beautiful to watch: Annie’s perfect and subtle body language, the horse fully tuned in to her and performing his heart out. Her timing with the click was clear and unobtrusive, the horse accepting his treat calmly and politely, always ready to do it again, more, better.

I could check off my requirement list after what I had seen and experienced! Is the horse motivated, happy, and engaged? Yes! Is the trainer/rider considerate, empathetic, and having fun? Yes!

How could I learn to do this with my horses? I have a 10-year-old five-gaited mare whose topline I had been working on for years, a five-year-old talented four-gaited mare at the beginning of her training, and a 24-year-old gelding with a long back. I am an ambitious rider in the sense that I want to help my horses be the best and healthiest they can be. The work Steinar, Kathy, and Annie showed me is what every riding discipline tries to achieve, and what we need especially for great tölt: strong abdominals, a great topline with a proudly arched neck, strong hindquarters, light front end, big strides, good energy, willing attitude. Sound familiar? If I could help myself and my horses with maybe an hour a day or less of playing at “going to the gym,” I would surely give it a try!

Luckily Steinar was scheduled to give a clinic at West Wind Farm in New York that I could attend. Kathy and her team have produced a beautiful, 131-page free e-book that explains the method and how to get started with the crunches, so I will not go into detail about that in this article. Having studied the e-book, it was



Draumur showing an advanced “crunch”: The gelding’s stomach muscles are engaged, he is carrying his weight on his hind legs, and he is stretching his topline, while raising his withers into Steinar’s softly encouraging hand. This exercise requires a lot of strength, balance, and willingness, but notice Draumur’s soft and focused Zen-like expression.



Draumur has a “downhill” conformation and carries his weight on the forehand in regular walk. The photo below shows how he changes shape when he performs “panther walk” at Kathy Faraday’s cue: He steps under himself with his hind legs, raises his withers and neck, and steps lightly forward.

very interesting to discuss the underlying science and philosophy of the Intrinsic method with Steinar and to actually start doing it with my own horses!

INTRINSIC

The art and science of animal training has made huge strides in the past decades. We now know much, much more about how the brain works and about how we and all animals learn and are motivated. When I got a new puppy after more than a decade, I was amazed at how much dog training methods had changed. I did my research and learned how to introduce a dog, and then a horse, to the clicker. (Only the clicker method was successful

in helping my mare overcome her strange fear of stepping onto a wooden bridge.) I was familiar with the scientific concepts of behavior modification by reinforcement and punishment when I met Kathy. I was also familiar with the work of Amy Cuddy, a Harvard professor, who became famous with a TED talk on how “physical power posing” affects the brain so that people feel more confident and empowered.

Kathy is a well known scientist and programmer, and has published instructional books under the name Kathy Sierra. She actually likes to do in-depth research! She asked herself: Would the “power pose” do the same for horses? We all know what that looks like: arched neck, big, impressive movements. Some horses show off like this when they play with or try to impress each other. Many horses never show it, but why? Kathy’s research in neuroscience confirmed that one cannot be “forced” to feel proud or “badass.” All conventional horse training methods use pressure and release as a teaching method, but force or pressure would not work in this context. So Kathy decided to figure out how a reward-based method could be developed to teach the horse with extrinsic motivation (food rewards) to assume a power pose and to perform big, proud movements. Which, if the research proved right, would make the



Here Kathy practices the same “panther walk” exercise with her horse Vafi.



Intrinzen training has made even tölt at liberty possible for Gerpir, a four-gaiter who prefers trot. Gerpir is wearing barefoot boots, since he is unshod and the ground is hard.

horse feel great about himself, and more confident. The horse would just love it, because he felt so good doing it. And then he would probably show this at play. This is called intrinsic motivation.

It is the combination of highly effortful exercise and its effect on how the horse then feels about himself that makes this training method so special. It uses clicker training, but in a different and very specific application. The clicker is a so-called bridge signal. It is a very clear and perfectly timed signal that what the animal was doing at that instant will earn a reward. It is not a reward itself. A click works better than a word, as it is a sound that never happens otherwise and is always exactly the same. This has to do with how the brain processes, and makes it easier for the animal to learn. The click will end the behavior, since the animal will now stop for the reward. Food is the clearest and most successful reward, which also has to do with how the brain works. Using a reward-based method will activate the brain to seek, to offer behaviors and try to figure out what to do to earn the next reward. The goal in Intrinzen is not to ever skip treats, but to reward increasingly more demanding and complex behaviors. Reward-based training is a challenge, but

a very rewarding one, for the trainer. You have to use good, clear body language to capture and cue the behaviors, and be totally focused to time the “snapshot” of Yes! That’s it! with the click. You have to



Here Gerpir shows a beautiful “panther walk.” Annie Aston cues him with her own effortful walk and matches his energy. Annie says she noticed a marked improvement in her own posture and fitness after doing this work for a few months!

be very disciplined and smart about the reward giving, so the horse stays focused and polite. And that is only the science of it—the art is to see even small beginnings of what you want to teach, to be playful and creative, and to “shape” the final outcome over weeks and months.

HAPPY

My horses are about five weeks “in” as I write this article. I can honestly say that they are doing the crunches with great enthusiasm, and I am learning a lot about fine-tuning my training. I have taken photos of them at the beginning of this journey, and am curious to find out how they will change over the next months. I already can feel a nice effect when riding: My show horse feels strong, happy, and “badass,” and my young mare is confidently offering bigger strides. It will be very interesting to see where this new and exciting training method will take us.

RESOURCES

I am following the instructions given by Steinar and the free e-book and am looking forward to the coming teaching videos and materials to continue. All information can be found on this website: www.intrinzen.com. You can also ask to join a support group on Facebook: Tolt ViberNation 2.0.

ON THE BIT

BY GABRIELE MEYER



This article is Part One in a planned series to take a closer look at general equestrian concepts and how they relate to riding Icelandic horses. Not everybody likes to read books about riding, especially when almost all horse books available are not about riding Icelandics. Maybe there is no Icelandic horse trainer in your area whom you could ask, or if there is, maybe there is not enough time to inquire about the underlying principles of riding while you are in a training session and busy executing the exercises.

This series is meant to be an introduction to these concepts, and I will try to keep it simple and straightforward. After all, not all riders desire to ride in competitions, many of us would rather ride on trails, enjoying nature, the horse, and ourselves. For that, we might think, it is surely not necessary to learn all those formalities of riding. Is it not okay to let the horse move in a shape he chooses himself?

Would that not constitute the most horse-friendly riding of all?

Unfortunately it may not be. Every horse has to learn how to carry a rider and needs to develop the muscles to do so. Riding that does not ask the horse to use the appropriate muscle groups and that does not build these muscles up will, in the long run, lead to problems affecting the horse's health and longevity, as well as the rider's safety. Correct riding, however, improves the horse's carrying power and his psychological and physiological well-being and ensures that he is well equipped to deal with whatever requests his rider might have.

We do not have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to learning how to ride correctly and in a horse-friendly way. We can draw on the knowledge of generations of equestrians that have come before us. Traditional Icelandic riding, western riding, and classical dressage have all contributed

Gabriele shows Askur in walk, on the bit and in a righthand circle, during a clinic. Photo by Lisa Heath.

to how we ride Icelandics today.

This series starts with the concept of "riding on the bit." It is actually quite a complex concept. So, you ask, why start with it, and not an easier concept? The answer is that riding on the bit is a pivotal point in any horse/rider pair's education. As a means of balancing the horse, it helps us to keep our horses healthy and sound throughout their years as riding horses. And, if we are so inclined, it also opens the door to forming the gaits, as well as asking for collection and speed.

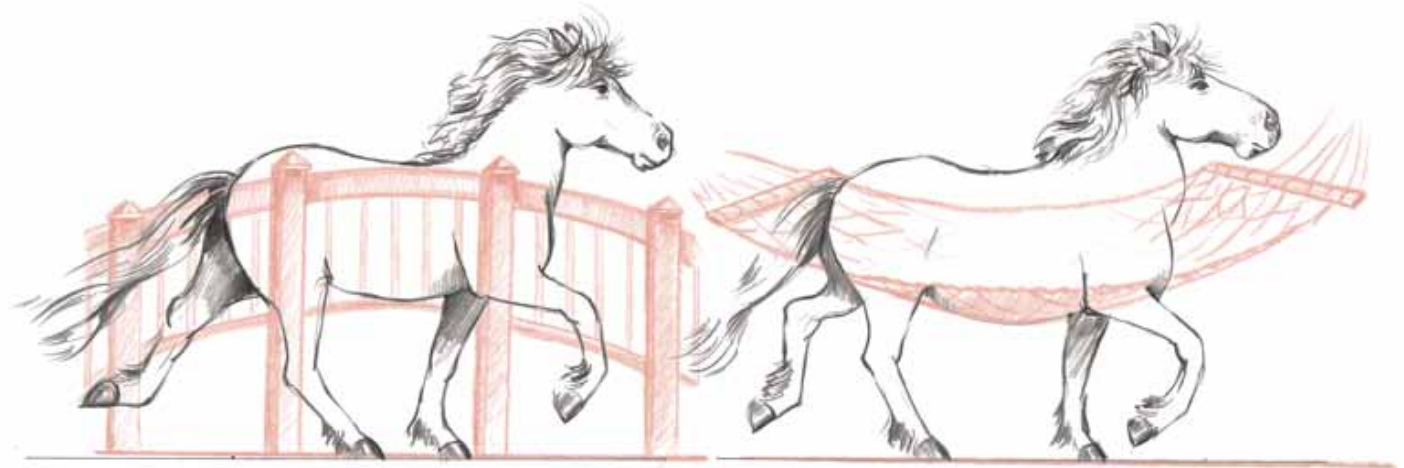
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Horses can be ridden with or without contact. Contact is the connection between the horse's mouth and the rider's hands via the reins and the bit. Through this contact we receive information from the horse and send information to the horse.

Riding without contact is mostly done when riding with a curb bit, or when riding "on the buckle" with a completely loose rein at the beginning and end of a training session or in an otherwise very relaxing setting.

Riding with contact can be either "on the bit" or not. The equestrian term "on the bit" refers to a horse that moves with an active hind end and a swinging back, and that carries his head such that the poll is the highest point and the bridge of the nose is at or in front of the vertical. But equal in importance as these outward signs of riding "on the bit" is the mental state of the horse that comes along with it. Because the horse is dynamically balanced, it feels secure and relaxed, and is mentally able and physically ready to respond to the rider's requests without delay.

The term "putting a horse on the bit" is somewhat misleading, as it suggests that it is through the bit, that is, through the actions of your hands on the reins, that the horse's head takes on the desired position. Nothing could be further from the truth. While a horse's head certainly can be pulled down with the reins, the supple



A horse's back can be like a bridge (left) or a hammock (right). The bridge is anchored to two towers and is designed to span the empty space underneath it. It is solid, and straight—or even bent slightly upwards—to accommodate heavy loads. The hammock also has empty space underneath it, but it will sag under weight. Without instructions by the rider, a horse may choose to work in either posture. Riding a horse “on the bit” tells it to assume the healthier “bridge” posture. Illustration by Nancy Wines-Dewan.

swinging back and the actively stepping hind legs, which are the other characteristics of the horse being “on the bit,” cannot be achieved this way.

Similar (but less often used) expressions are “on the aids” or “connected.” These terms might be better because they shift the focus away from the hand aids toward a concerted use of all aids.

Another reason why the term “on the bit” is misleading is that you can get this connected state and dressage-like outline completely without a bit, as people who use a bit-less bridle, a neck ring, or clicker training show us. We can observe that posture even when horses play. (See the article “What is Intrinzen” in this issue.)

But in this article we will continue to use the term “on the bit” because it is more familiar.

WHY RIDE ON THE BIT?

This question has both a very simple answer and a complicated answer. The simple answer is: Because it is more fun! A horse that is on the bit is mentally ready to listen to you and to respond easily and instantaneously to whatever requests you might have. Speed up? Yes, here you go! Transition to halt? Of course, happy to. Turn on the haunches? Certainly, which way? Open the gate? Sure, I can go sideways, piece of cake! You need to have experienced this beautiful state of connectedness and flow when the horse is on the bit to truly appreciate it (and from then on you will be totally addicted to it).

In contrast, a horse that is not on the

bit is likely to be mentally somewhere else and feels disconnected to the rider. This horse might brace when the rider applies a rein aid or easily become distracted. Ultimately it is less safe to ride.

The complicated answer to this question requires some understanding of anatomy. It can lead to injuries if the horse is allowed to use his body in an unbalanced way for too long. Horses, of course, move in a very well-balanced way on their own, but they did not evolve with us riders in mind! Adding the weight of a rider changes the horse's natural balance profoundly.

As master Icelandic trainer Eyjólfur (Jolli) Ísólfsson mentioned in a clinic, “The horse is perfect without a rider. All education of horse and rider can ultimately be described as learning how to regain balance with a rider.” He further explains, “The unmounted horse carries about 60% of his weight on the forehand. The added weight of the rider is not distributed equally on forehand and hindquarters: More than about two-thirds of the weight of the rider ends up on the forehand.”

Please note that you cannot just put the saddle further back in order to shift the combined center of gravity backwards. The structure behind the ribcage, the lumbar spine, is completely unsuited to safely carrying the rider's weight.

Add to this uneven weight distribution another fact: The thoracic spine of the horse is connected to the shoulder blades by ligaments and muscles only. There is no bony structure to support this junction,

unlike in humans: We have clavicles, yet we don't even normally walk on our hands. It has been shown that the withers of young horses, when they are mounted for the first time, sink in between the shoulders by about 5 cm (about 2 inches), because the muscles that create the sling carrying the thorax have not been trained yet.

Bearing all this anatomy in mind, it becomes clear that we as riders have to help our horses do their job by developing the correct muscles and habits. If we want to be more than just a passenger, if we want to help our horse carry his and our combined weight efficiently and in a way beneficial to his overall health, or if we desire to shape his gaits, we need the horse to be on the bit. Without that connection, it will be harder and maybe impossible for him to find his balance under the rider.

REQUIREMENTS

Several important prerequisites need to be in place in order for the horse to come onto the bit. Your horse needs to be:

Relaxed and in rhythm: The horse is free from pain and tension, and moves with an even beat, according to the gait and speed you are riding.

Forward: The horse understands (and responds to) your driving aids, and he uses his hind legs energetically. The rider needs to know how to apply the driving aids correctly.

Straight: This means the horse's hind and fore legs on either side move on the same track. Looking from in front of the horse, you should see two rows of legs (left



Gait and speed influence the degree of neck elevation and poll flexing. Here Laura Benson rides Stjarni frá Blönduósi on the bit in slow tölt (upper left; photo by Ayla Green) and fast tölt (upper right; photo by Alexandra Venable).

legs and right legs) with the head centered in between. The rider needs to know how to feel and obtain straightness. (Straightness is actually a very complex concept and will be discussed in the next installment of this series.)

In Contact: Good contact depends on the rider having a balanced and independent seat. The contact is even (on both sides, left and right), elastic (with the rider's hands following the movement of the horse's head, such as the forward/backward movement of the hands in walk to allow for the horse's head to nod), steady (with no alternating moments of slackness and contact), and the reins and the rider's forearms should form a straight line (looking from the side and from above).

These prerequisites (relaxation and rhythm, forwardness, straightness, and contact) are parts of the so-called "training scale of dressage." They are the building blocks that have to be in place to make riding on the bit possible. If you and your horse do not know these basic riding principles, you will need to work on them first, otherwise you will end up with a tense and frustrated horse, and create reactions and evasions that will haunt you further down the road of his education.

The building blocks of the training scale influence and interact with each other, and we discuss them one by one only because we have to start somewhere. Fortunately, we can train the basics, to a certain extent, separately and stepwise, and there

are a number of qualified riding instructors who can help you learn them. You do not need any special gait knowledge at this point, so any good riding instructor should be able to help you.

If you have never ridden a horse on the bit, or if your horse is rather young and uneducated, you might want to try it first with a friend's horse that is experienced and with whom you can easily achieve the "on-the-bit-feel." Once you know how on the bit feels, and what to look out for, it will be much easier to find it with your own horse. It also takes much of the guesswork out of the process.

HOW TO RIDE ON THE BIT

How should we approach our first try at riding on the bit? Let's assume the horse has been trained to some extent: He exhibits relaxation and rhythm, knows and responds well to the driving and restraining aids, and is reasonably straight.

Try to catch a quiet time in the arena, or find a level place anywhere—it doesn't need to be big. Start with your usual warm-up routine. Ride your horse forward and, if necessary, establish a good response to your legs. Don't ride just in straight lines, also ride big and medium circles in both directions, all the while being very conscientious about your seat and hands. Riding arena figures helps tremendously when working on these fundamentals (see the articles about arena figures in Issues One and Two 2016 of the *Quarterly*).

Establish a nice contact by following the horse's head movements softly with your hands. Your forearms and the reins form a straight line, your elbows and shoulders allow for forward movement, and there are no moments of slack or increased tightness in the reins. Your horse moves in an even rhythm and with good energy. Both your seat bones carry an even weight.

Once all these pieces are in place you are ready to give it a try: Drive for two steps and then, for a short moment, squeeze your hands as you would squeeze a sponge, and slightly delay the forward movement of your hands, which normally allows for the head nod. (This rein aid should not have the quality of pulling backwards; it is rather an offering of support). Then let your hand become soft again. This is a 1-2-3 sequence lasting maybe four to five seconds altogether. The hands' closing-opening action of this sequence is like close/o-p-e-n (the opening is slower than the initial squeeze).

Upon the opening of your hands, the horse will release his jaw and yield at the poll. You will feel a lightening of the rein contact, a slight upward shift of the horse's spine, and a renewed balance situation that feels elastic and floating. This is what we are looking for! Enjoy this fabulous moment of harmony, and reward your horse by doing nothing—just stay in an upright seat, keeping a soft contact, without using your legs.

After a little while, you might need to remind your horse by applying the same



In trot, the influence of speed is even more pronounced: Laura again rides Stjarni frá Blönduósi on the bit in slow trot (left) and fast trot (right). Photos by Ayla Green.

sequence of aids again. If he responds well, do nothing again. “Riding is the art of doing nothing,” as Eyjólfur frequently mentions. The horse likes this feeling of harmony, balance, and freedom from the aids as much as you do and, with a little patience and practice, he will offer to stay in this state of connectedness for longer and longer periods of time. At this point, it is essential to remember to frequently allow your horse to relax by riding him in a free walk, where he can stretch forward and down.

In short—and I want to repeat this, because it is essential—after an appropriate warm-up and with the right preparation, the horse goes forward without tension or stiffness and stretches himself forward into the bit. Upon feeling your momentary rein aid, he will yield at the poll, thereby coming more toward the vertical with his head, arch his neck, and lift his back a little to exhibit a swinging back. In other words: Coming onto the bit is a voluntary movement of the horse; it is not forced by the rider’s tinkering with the reins!

For some horses, responding properly to your request for him to come to the bit is easier when you are riding on a circle. Ride a medium-sized circle with light contact, and bend your horse around your inside leg. When seat, energy, rhythm, and bend all feel correct, drive for two steps with your legs, then close your outside hand and squeeze the inside rein a few times. Once the horse gives at the poll, go

back to light constant contact (without losing the contact) and praise him.

Reward your horse frequently in-between, and as a final cool-down, by letting him chew the reins softly out of your hands: Gradually open your hands and invite the horse to stretch his neck forward and down, while he is walking with a swinging back and active hind legs.

PROBLEMS AND ERRORS

Common problems arise when the basics listed above are not established first. Or the horse becomes defensive in the process, because he cannot let go of the tension in his poll. It is helpful to recruit another pair of eyes that can help you check from the ground to see if your aids are given correctly and with the right timing. We always have to ask ourselves if we are doing the right thing at the right time, or if we are demanding the horse learn too much too fast.

I want to mention some common problems that can occur, without offering much of an explanation of how to remedy the situation. If you have any of these problems, you need a riding instructor to carefully assess the situation and help you work through them.

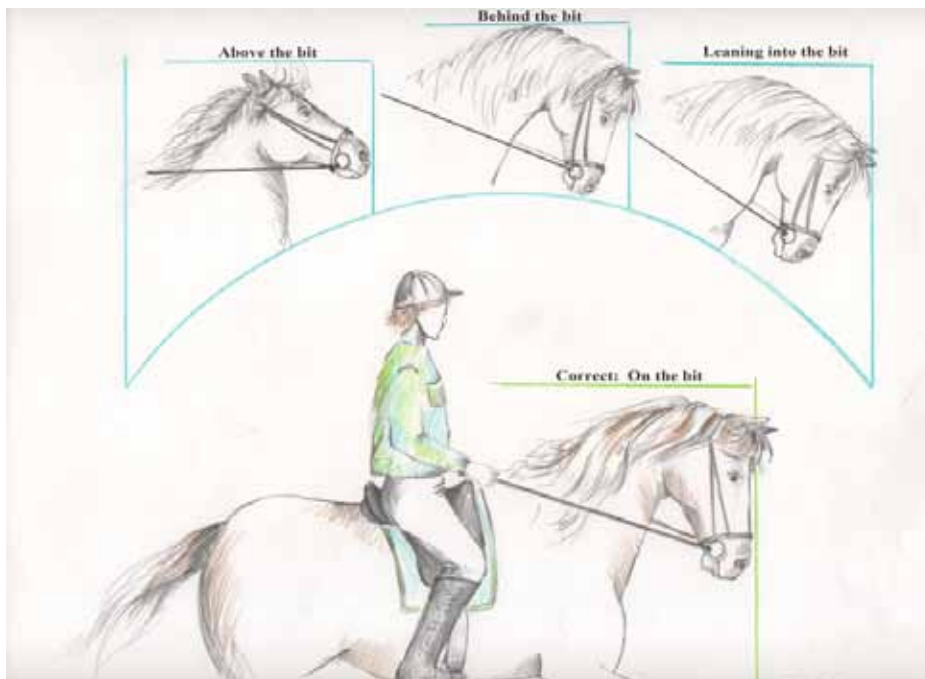
“Above the bit” is when the horse lifts his head up and becomes hollow in the back. This posture is fairly typical for a green horse at the beginning of his education. But even an educated horse can get into this posture if he loses his balance; in this case, it will not last for long. If it is on-

going, the horse is either not being ridden correctly or is fighting the bit due to tack issues or other bodily discomfort. This is a major concern that needs to be addressed with the help of an experienced horse trainer or riding instructor.

“Behind the bit” means that the horse’s neck has rolled in and his head is behind the vertical. The highest point is not the poll, but the third vertebra. This mistake usually occurs if the rider’s hands are too strong or if the reins are too short for the situation, and as a result the horse tries to avoid the pressure of the bit. This mistake should by all means be avoided.

“Leaning” means just that: The horse is leaning into the reins and tries to use the reins as his fifth leg. His center of gravity has moved toward the forehand and he is lacking so-called “self-carriage.”

“A good exercise to determine if a horse is truly on the bit is called *Zügel überstreichen*,” explained Eyjólfur in one of his seminars. Unfortunately, there seems to be no English translation for this German equestrian term, but the exercise goes as follows: For a short moment, the rider goes forward with one or both hands along the crest of the horse’s mane. By doing so, she temporarily gives up the contact completely; the reins are slack. A horse that is on the bit and in self-carriage will keep the same rhythm, speed, and frame for a short while—though, of course, not forever, as the horse will soon stretch down in search of the bit.



“On the bit” is a complex concept—and the term is somewhat misleading, as it implies that the actions of your hands on the reins are most important. This misunderstanding can lead to the common faults of above, behind, or leaning into the bit. Illustration by Nancy Wines-Dewan.

TÖLTING ON THE BIT?

Classical dressage has a very long history. While we tend to think that dressage was developed for three-gaited horses, this might not be entirely true. The early Greeks and Romans, the medieval Germanic tribes, and famous equestrians such as Grisonne, Pluvinel, and de la Guerinière in the 16th and 17th centuries all treasured gaited horses. Countless old paintings and drawings depict horses in lateral gaits. Spanish Jennets were popular during the Middle Ages as gaited mounts for armored knights and noble ladies riding in sidesaddle. Both groups of riders required horses with exquisite training. It can therefore be assumed that we are not the first generation of riders applying classical concepts to gaited horses.

So, does the concept of riding “on-the bit” apply to tölt? The answer is yes. Laura Benson, a certified FT trainer in Santa Cruz, CA, explains that classical dressage in general also applies to Icelandics. However, she cautions, you might have to be somewhat more creative in your approach, due to the complications that the additional gaits bring. The extent of neck elevation and poll flexion a horse will offer depends on the gait and the speed (see the photos of Laura riding Stjarni), but also on the horse’s conformation and training level.

During a training session, Laura starts with a warm-up on a loose rein in walk and trot, after which she works into a contact and then into connection. Laura prefers the term “connection” to “on the bit.” She points out that the rider always needs to adjust her riding to the temperament of the horse. From a connected walk, Laura then proceeds to a connected trot or tölt, depending on the gait distribution of the horse. It is important, she says, that the rider is always willing to adapt the process to the situation. On the trail, Laura also rides in connection, but in a somewhat longer frame than she would use in the arena. At the end of her ride she lets the horse cool down in a loose-rein walk.

Pórarin (Tóti) Eymundsson also advocates riding on the bit. Tóti is an instructor in the equestrian program at Hólar University in Iceland—though he is probably better known as the rider of Kraftur frá Bringu in the film, *The Last Ride*. In an interview with the German online magazine *Töltknoten*, he quotes Gustav Steinbrecht’s famous words: “Ride the horse forward and make it straight.” He also recommends riding with an extended topline, enabling the back to be free so the horse can move without tension. “Thorough training is necessary from the beginning,” says Tóti, and adds, “A rider who has not really understood what ‘on the bit’ really means,

will not know how to achieve suppleness.”

Lastly I want to quote Trausti Þór Guðmundsson, the Tölt in Harmony instructor known in the U.S. through his recent clinics (see Issue Three 2015 of the *Quarterly*). In the Icelandic magazine *Eiðfaxi* he wrote: “When a horse under saddle has visible charisma, it is obvious that he can easily handle the tasks we set before him. He needs little help from the rider, and does not need a lot of corrections. He clearly is well concentrated and well on the rein, his neck is bent softly, his upper line is domed, and he makes himself look wonderful. All movements are light and strong, and it is clear that the horse is supple and soft everywhere. He is perfectly at peace with his role and his task—he is strong and robust. His psychological balance is good, he concentrates, and he listens to the rider. His ever-moving ears, mostly pointing forward, and his glad eye bear witness to these facts.”

Beautifully put, don’t you think?

Charisma, light but strong, supple, at peace, concentrated—who would not like to ride such a horse! Admittedly, it is quite a journey to get there. Are you ready to give it a try?

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HANDLING HEEL PAIN

BY ALEX PREGITZER

In the fall of 2014, my husband and I attended a one-day clinic with our horses Svafnir and Kraftur. The clinician ran a traveling obstacle parcours: She takes obstacles of varying degrees of difficulty to a farm and teaches riders how to approach them with their horses. After a long, fun day we noticed that Svafnir seemed a little tired. Andreas, who worked with Svafnir, had noticed that he was not quite as enthusiastic as usual.

We checked his vital signs. Everything was normal, so we gave him a couple of days off and kept a close eye on him. I was thinking that his fall vaccines could have made him feel a little unwell. Over the next few days he looked fine and healthy. The following week, he started to stop randomly while he was being ridden. Svafnir is a very willing horse. He is the first one to come to the gate when he spots me; he is always happy to work and loves to go trail riding. Clearly, this was not normal.

WHAT IS WRONG?

It was the beginning of a long journey. Nothing seemed really wrong with him, and the first tests our veterinarian performed all came up negative. Some days Svafnir would be happy to be ridden, other days he would start out happy and all of a sudden stop and refuse to move on. I quit riding him. We took more blood samples and found out that his thyroid levels were off. He was put on a thyroid medicine, and I started working him lightly after some weeks off. The random stopping continued, so he got a long vacation while we tried to figure out what was going on.

We examined his bladder—it seemed at times as if it took him a few tries to pee and he would move on after that—and pursued some other ideas. In the meantime my happy horse started obsessively chewing his lead rope whenever he was haltered. He would still come running to the gate and be happy to socialize. But then he became somewhat anxious in the cross ties. Clearly, something was not right, and I felt it had something to do



Alex and Svafnir enjoying a ride on a good day. Normally enthusiastic and willing, suddenly Svafnir began refusing to go forward. What was he trying to tell Alex?



Horses do talk. We just have to listen.

with being ridden.

Even though he had never been lame, the vet suggested a thorough lameness evaluation including x-rays of all four hooves. The x-rays and a nerve block showed signs of caudal heel pain syndrome, also known as navicular syndrome. This diagnosis finally provided an explanation for Svafnir's behavior:

He had severe pain in his heels.

The navicular bone is a small bone located deep within the hoof at the rear junction of the short pastern bone and the coffin bone. There is a lot of soft tissue around this bone, including ligaments, tendons, and the navicular bursa.

This little canoe-shaped bone has the function of providing a smooth surface for the digital flexor tendon. Usually with caudal heel pain syndrome, there are a variety of abnormalities leading to pain in this area of the hoof. Here are some examples of the pathology known to be related to this syndrome:

- enlargement of the vascular channels within the navicular bone
- lesions within the navicular bone
- mineralization or calcification of the ligaments associated with the navicular bone
- bone disease affecting the coffin joint in the area of the navicular bone
- degeneration of the flexor surface of the navicular bone
- degeneration of the flexor tendon in the area of its passage over the navicular bone
- fractures of the navicular bone

TREATMENT

While caudal heel pain syndrome cannot be healed per se, it can be managed—often with excellent results. A few decades ago, the treatment of choice was digital neurectomy, a nerve cut of the digital nerve in the low pastern area to eliminate the pain.

Nowadays popular treatment options are either medication for pain, combined with anti-inflammatory drugs, or a newer class of medication, called bisphosphonates, with the brand names Osphos (a U.S. product) or Tildren (an English product). Much of the pain associated with caudal heel pain syndrome comes from the breakdown and resorption of the bone. This is called osteolysis. The bisphosphonates are a class of drug that work at the cellular level to slow down or prevent bone loss.

Another very common treatment that usually goes along with the medication is therapeutic shoeing. Svafnir's vet, Dr. John McIlmurray, and his farrier, Bill Krause, worked together to try to take the stress off his heels and to provide him with a faster roll-over.

Overall, the horse's response to therapy can be unpredictable. It's best to make gradual changes, starting with a more conservative approach. Many horses seem to respond well to therapeutic shoeing along with medication, and it is beneficial to have a good team of professionals working hand-in-hand together with

the horse's owner to provide relief. After Svafnir was treated with bisphosphonates, his chewing of the lead rope, as well as his sudden stopping while being ridden, ceased. The treatment with bisphosphonates is supposed to last 4 to 12 months.

There is no way to tell if my horse is now pain-free, but he looks happy and plays endless hours with his buddy, rearing up and playing rough, especially in the snow. Svafnir came to us as a lesson and sales horse on loan from a very generous friend, and he has been the best lesson horse I could possibly imagine. He is now part of our family. He has never had to work very hard (only giving two or three lessons per week and some trail riding), and at 20 years old he now gets ridden very lightly.

I know when the medication starts wearing off, as Svafnir tells me so. He starts chewing on his lead rope—and I stop riding him with no other signs than those. I guess horses do talk, we just have to listen!

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Andreas noticed Svafnir seemed "a little tired," beginning a long journey to diagnose Svafnir's caudal pain syndrome.

THE BLOOD PROFILE PROJECT

BY ANDREA BARBER

For many years the USIHC's information line has received questions both from horse owners and from veterinarians caring for Icelandic horses wondering if some of the odd values they were seeing in blood test results were due to illness, or were simply breed-specific normal values.

Unfortunately, we've never had any good answers to give them, as no standard blood profile for the Icelandic horse exists. But based on the number of inquiries over the years, plus experiences by members of the USIHC Board with our own horses, various members of the board over the years speculated that there were indeed some breed-specific differences in normal blood values which should not be interpreted as anomalies—but without a scientific study we couldn't be certain.

Several times in the past the idea came up to try to get a standard blood profile for the breed to deal with this problem. Unfortunately, cost and logistics always made the project impossible to complete. However, after having worked on other health-related projects with Dr. Bettina Wagner, a USIHC member at Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine, I thought she might be able to help us with this one. Bettina's primary research interest is equine immunology, and she is currently studying summer eczema in Icelandic horses through her Wagner Laboratory at Cornell. The lab is home to a large herd of registered Icelandic horses owned by Cornell University that participate in the study. The USIHC was thrilled to learn that Bettina was willing to assist, and so began the journey to finally make a standard blood profile for Icelandic horses a reality.

Although the USIHC is committed to completing this daunting project, we could use additional support. Please see below to find out how you can help.

WHY IT'S NEEDED

Why would a standard blood profile for the Icelandic breed be beneficial? Currently, no standard blood profile for Icelandic horses exists in the U.S. Thus,



Bettina Wagner of Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine, shown here with Gefjun frá Keldum, leads the USIHC's Blood Profile Project. Photo by Andrea Barber.

when any lab runs tests on blood from Icelandic horses, the resulting values are compared to a standard that has been set by other breeds—most often thoroughbreds. This can make it difficult for veterinarians to interpret whether a deviation is symptomatic of illness or simply a breed-specific normal value that just differs from the respective value in thoroughbreds.

Having a standard blood profile would allow veterinarians to compare the blood test results they are getting with those that are specific to the Icelandic breed. This in turn should allow for more accurate diagnoses and treatment of Icelandic horses.

THE RESEARCHERS

Who are the researchers at Cornell Univer-

sity who will be conducting the study? Bettina Wagner, DVM, Dr. Med, vet. habil., is Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Education and Associate Professor of Immunology for Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine Department of Population Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences. The primary focus of her Wagner Laboratory at Cornell is on research in equine immunology. For several years that research has included studying equine summer eczema using a large herd of registered Icelandic horses owned by Cornell University. Bettina is also a member of the USIHC.

Working with her is Tracy Stokol, DVM, PhD. Tracy is a Professor in the Department of Population Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences at Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine. She is a veterinary clinical pathologist with roles in teaching,

professional service, and research. The main focus of her current research is the role of tissue factor (coagulation factor III) in hemostasis (particularly thrombotic disorders) and cancer metastasis. She is dedicated to conducting research that has direct applicability to animal health.

THE TESTS

How many horses will need to be tested? A standard blood profile requires the testing of 120 horses that meet very specific criteria. Ideally, the horses that meet these criteria should also vary in age, sex, and location. Forty-five horses from the Wagner Lab have already been tested, which leaves us to have 75 more tested to complete the data collection portion of the project. I am currently working on contacting owners with potentially suitable horses about including their horses in the study.

What tests will be included in the panel?

- Automated Hemogram (CBCA)
- Large Animal Panel (LAP)
- Bile Acids (BAF/BAP/BAR)
- Alkaline Phosphatase (ALP)
- Tryglicerides (TRIG)
- Lactate Dehydrogenase (LDH)
- Total Protein by Refractometer (TPREF)

THE RESULTS

How will the results be shared? It depends on the outcome of the data analysis. If the researchers do find that there are Icelandic breed-specific normal values (and preliminary results look very promising), they will first pursue a peer-reviewed academic pub-



Tracy Stokol, a veterinary clinical pathologist at Cornell, is working with Bettina to test the 120 horses required to create a standard blood profile of the Icelandic horse.



USIHC member Stephanie Sher visiting some of the youngsters in the Cornell research herd (right to left): Ylfa from Cornell, Palina from Cornell, Andri from Cornell, and Yngri from Cornell. Photo by Andrea Barber.

lication. Such a publication would become available to veterinarians all over the world and would give them a detailed explanation of the researchers' findings.

However, such a publication, while extremely valuable to veterinarians, probably won't be easily read by the average person. So the researchers have also agreed to provide a more readable article that will appear in the USIHC *Quarterly*. If they do decide to pursue an academic article the *Quarterly* article will appear after the professional article is published. However, if they decide to forgo the academic article, the *Quarterly* article will be a priority.

What's the timeline? Good, sound scientific research takes time, and things in the academic world tend to move rather slowly. However, we would like to get the project completed as quickly as possible. We hope to get all the testing done during calendar year 2016, with the analysis completed shortly thereafter. Crafting the article(s) will then take more time.

We hope to provide updates on the USIHC website, the USIHC Facebook page, and in the *Quarterly* as the project progresses.

HOW TO HELP

Should I send the USIHC blood test results I have on my horse(s)? No. In order to provide valid results for the study, the samples have to be collected from horses that meet very specific criteria, they have to be handled under a set protocol, and the tests need to be performed only at the Cornell University lab within a certain timeframe.

If your horse is needed to be tested, I will contact you directly with more information.

So how can I help? The biggest help to further this project is to donate funds. Although the USIHC has committed to Cornell to fund the entire project (\$14,000+), the USIHC Board is really hoping that members will help offset this high cost to help the breed. Plus, since donations go directly to Cornell, which is a not-for-profit entity, they can be considered tax deductible!

Here's how to make a donation:

Make a gift online via credit card using Cornell Veterinary College's Online Donation form, at this web address:

<https://securelb.imodules.com/s/1717/alumni/index.aspx?sid=1717&gid=2&pgid=403&cid=1031&pdid=38>

- Select "gift designation" (a box with options pops up)
- Select "Other-Vet"
- Hit Continue
- In the box below the designation, type "Icelandic Normal Blood Value Project"
- Complete the form as appropriate

Or call 607-253-3745 any day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Eastern time) to make a gift via credit card. Again, reference the "Icelandic Normal Blood Value Project."

Or, by mail, make your check payable to Cornell University, and reference the "Icelandic Normal Blood Value Project" in the message line. Send it to:

Cornell University
College of Veterinary Medicine
Box 39
Ithaca, NY 14853-6401

QUESTIONS?

Please contact me, Andrea Barber, at bproject@icelandics.org.

THE ACTIVE STABLE

BY KARIN DAUM



This odd-looking stall is actually an automatic grain feeder designed for the HIT-Active-Stable. A horse with a computer chip tied to its mane (below) can come in up to 10 times a day for a small bit of grain. The owner programs the chip to determine the total daily amount. Photos by Karin Daum.

I brought my nine-year-old Icelandic mare with me from Germany when we moved to the Pacific Northwest in 2009. With the stress of moving, I made a hasty decision and picked the nearest barn to our house. The day my mare Lukka moved into that barn, my 12-year-old daughter stood there with tears in her eyes and said to me, “This is like a prison for horses.”

Lukka had come from a big farm in Germany where the horses live in groups of 10 to 20 horses, have room to move around and search for food, and are able to interact with each other. Lukka stood now in a 12-by-12 stall, with no exercise run, and had only two hours of turnout five days a week. After 18 months, I found another barn where the stalls at least had runs and the horses were given four hours of turnout a day, weather permitting.

By that time I had rescued an Icelandic gelding, Spakur, that had foundered. He suffered from ulcers and, because of the laminitis, was not allowed to have much pasture time. I went every day to exercise my two horses, because I knew that

standing in a stall was not in their nature. We began to look for a piece of property of our own, so I could decide how much turnout my horses would get.

We found a farm that had enough pasture space and a barn with stalls. We renovated the barn, making the stalls bigger and adding automatic hay feeders to each of the six stalls. These hay feeders are called “stable grazers.” The name is very fitting, since eating every few hours is more like what horses do in the wild. A small battery-operated timer makes sure that my horses get fed a portion of hay every four hours. The benefit for me is that I have to fill the stable grazer only once every 24 hours. Less time, less sweeping.

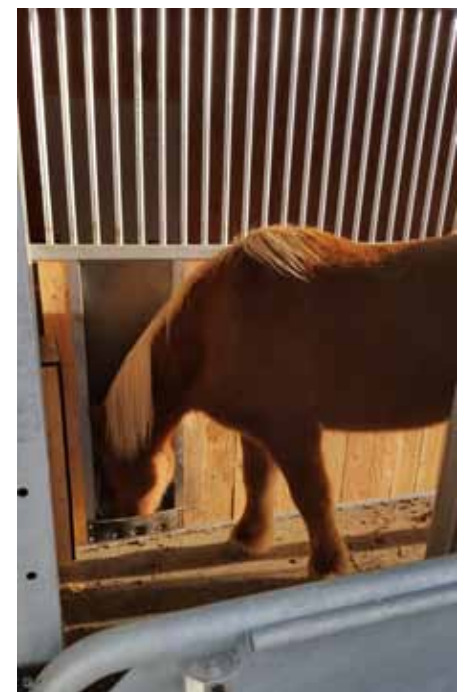
I still wanted more pasture time for my horses, but it turns out that Lukka gets fat just looking at grass and Spakur, with his previous laminitis, is not supposed to be on grass at all.

GET THE HORSES MOVING

I started searching the internet for dry lot options and ideas on how to keep the horses busy and occupied.

Good thing I could search in two languages, as I stumbled upon an article by a German company on the “active stable” concept (see www.active-stable.com). The main idea is to get the horses to move around and to feed them several meals over the day. In the wild, horses constantly search for food and may walk up to seven miles a day doing that. The HIT-Active-Stable method spreads out a drinking station and different feeding stations as far as possible from each other.

Similar to the stable grazer idea, the designers of the HIT-Active-Stable invented automatic feeders that dispense a certain amount of feed spread out over 24 hours. To feed grain, they adapted an already existing idea from the dairy industry: Every horse gets a chip tied to its mane, and a grain-feeding computer dispenses the food for that individual horse up to 10 times a day. All you have to do is to type into the software the total amount of grain you want your horse to get. Every serving is only a small amount, and the horses have to take turns. No horse can get two servings in a row, and they can only eat once an hour. That makes the horses come in to constantly find out, Is it my turn again?



You can't imagine how fast my horses figured this system out. They step into a cabin that looks like a one-horse trailer, an antenna recognizes their unique transponder chip and dispenses a small amount of food. To prevent a higher-ranked horse from chasing the other horse away, there is a rubber flap that closes behind the eating horse. When the horse is done eating, it exits at a right angle, with no backing up necessary.

At the other end of the dry lot is the hay feeding machine. It opens and closes up to 12 times a day for however long you program it. Mine opens six times between dusk and dawn, for a total of 220 minutes.

The horses walk back and forth constantly between the hay feeder and grain feeder, checking to see if it is their turn to get a few ounces of grain or if the hay feeder is going to magically open again. On the way, they may take a drink from the automatic waterer, scratch their butts on a post, or roll in the sandy area.

MANY DIFFERENT AREAS

My two-acre dry lot is now the home of six Icelandic horses and could easily accommodate 10. They love the different areas: Some prefer to hang out under the trees, others in the shed, while the very patient ones wait in front of the grain feeder until it is their turn again. But when they hear the soft humming sound of the hay feeder door opening, they all come running.

Since my dry lot is very sloped, we terraced it with railroad ties. The horses



The idea of an active stable is to keep the horses moving. Here a mare accesses the automatic hay feeder, while below three horses meet at the drinking fountain. The water is purposely far away from the other eating or resting areas to give the horses a reason to walk. Photos by Karin Daum.

run and jump, up and down these steps, and are very sure-footed. The same goes for a retaining wall we had to put in: They use it to balance on, and jump up and down it.

The HIT-Active Stable designers also suggested offering a big variety in footing. In front of the hay feeders we put rubber mats, which are easy to sweep. To prevent everything from turning muddy in the wintertime, we created one big walkway that loops through the area: It was packed

with gravel, and then we put a plastic grid, called "Hoofgrid" on top of it. The grid got filled and covered with pea gravel. The rest of the two acres are covered with hog fuel, a mix of coarse chips of bark and wood fiber. The manufacturer of the grid said that if the horses have a choice, they will stay out of the mud. After two winters of experience, I can say that this is true. My hog-fuel areas get used a lot in the summer, for wandering around and taking naps, but the horses avoid it when we get into the rainy season.

Besides the fact that this dry lot is now a wonderful area for the horses to live in, it made my life a lot easier and saves me a lot of time. I fill the hay feeder once a week; no hay gets spilled and wasted by the horses. The grain feeder needs to be filled once a month, depending on how much grain you give them. And the daily mucking chore is easy, picking the poop out of the pea gravel or hog fuel. The best feeling, though, is to know that your hay feeders are dispensing food while you sleep in.

SOURCES

For more information, see www.active-stable.com or contact Karin at Schwalbenhof in Hillsboro, OR (daumkarin@gmail.com or 503-724 9537).



A-HUNTING WE WILL GO!

BY RJ ARGENZIO-WEST



Fox hunters ride all sorts of horses, including Icelandics. Here the Hilltoppers take a rest while fox hunting on Joint Base Lewis McChord near Tacoma, WA. “The big Clydesdale was right behind my Icelandic and kept up a brisk trot to our easy tölt,” says field master RJ Argenzio-West (in red).

Fox hunting has been a big part of my life. I began hunting in Virginia, where I grew up, on Rusty Shotgun, a 16-hand bay of questionable ancestry who could jump anything. From Virginia we moved to South Carolina, where I got my colors fox hunting with the Middleton Place Hounds. After 10 years, Rusty came west with me to Washington, where we were lucky to be an hour from the only fox hunt in five states.

After Rusty retired, I hunted Cowboy Up Dee Bar, a registered Paint, for more than 20 years.

Agile and cat-like weren't adjectives you'd use to describe him, but he was solid and dependable. I'm getting older and had planned on retiring with Cowboy. However, the week after Cowboy's last fox hunt, I was honored to be named a Joint Master of Fox Hounds. My retirement plans went on hold.

But finding a new horse is like find-

ing a new man—and just as hard. I found Arthur, another bay, but after a year or so he made me realize that I am not 20 any more and that my sedentary office life was catching up with me. I found him a more suitable home and began my search again.

ENTER GLOINN

In the process of cleaning out my tack room, I sold my sidesaddle to Pam Nolf, a wonderfully enthusiastic Icelandic horse owner. She couldn't tell me enough about her Icelandic horse, Blessi (who is well known to readers of the *Quarterly*), and we talked for over an hour standing in a parking lot. After that, I just had to ride an Icelandic horse.

I was eventually referred to Dawn Shaw, who owns Lone Cedar Icelandics in Grapeview, WA, about half an hour away from Gig Harbor where I live. I made arrangements to ride a horse she had for sale, named Gloinn. I hadn't had that much fun

on a horse in years!

But I didn't think I could fox hunt on an Icelandic. They seemed too small to keep up with the warmbloods and off-the-track thoroughbreds. I boarded my horse and couldn't afford both an Icelandic and a hunt horse, so it was back to driving around the state riding strange (and stranger) horses, on the “hunt” for the perfect guy. (Sorry, I couldn't resist the pun.)

Then my fox hunting friend, Andy Lorig, closed her barn and moved her horses to the hunt club. Andy very generously offered her hunter, Percy, a New Zealand warmblood, to me for the season. I have fox hunted with Andy and Percy for years, and fox hunting on Percy was my dream. And being able to hunt Percy meant I could buy an Icelandic for fun and still have a horse to fox hunt! I bought Gloinn from Rivendell, a six-year-old chestnut gelding from Dawn Shaw. As soon as he arrived at the barn he was dubbed “The Hobbit.”



RJ and Gloinn from Rivendell at the Woodbrook Hunt Club's closing meet in April. RJ is one of the Woodbrook Hunt Masters of Fox Hounds—and the only one who rides an Icelandic.

Sadly, Percy didn't work out for me, and I was a Master of Fox Hounds without a horse to hunt for most of the fox hunting season. I didn't think I could fox hunt The Hobbit, who is young and inexperienced, much less go fox hunting on a horse that is under 14 hands, but toward the end of the winter there was a short fixture (a place where the fox hunt will be held), and it was an uncharacteristically sunny day, so I decided to try.

FOXHUNTING 101

Here are the elements that make up a fox hunt. At its most basic, fox hunting is a bunch of people on horses, following a pack of hounds (never "dogs") chasing a scent.

In a traditional fox hunt the quarry is a fox; in some parts of the U.S., the quarry is a coyote. In these hunts the quarry is occasionally killed, most often when it has killed neighboring pets or livestock. My hunt, Woodbrook, hunts on Fort Lewis, an Army reservation; our quarry is a human dragging a scent (hence the term "drag hunt"). Whether you are on a live hunt or a drag hunt, some days the hounds will follow the scent for several hours and the hunt will ride up to 20 miles; other days, they'll have trouble finding the scent, and the hunt may only walk or trot four or five miles in the same time. The hunt ends when the quarry

"goes to ground" (the scent trail ends).

Then come the hounds: Foxhounds come in colors from white or cream to the traditional tri-color. They are a happy gregarious breed who prefer living outside in large groups. They have keen noses and like nothing in life more than finding and following a scent.

Next, the horses: In hunts where the territory covers working farms, we might want horses who can easily jump three-rail fences for hours, as they jump in and out of fields and pastures following the hunt. Where the territory is more open or wooded without fences (like mine), any breed is fine, from Shetlands to draft horses. In a traditional fox hunt, we put simple English tack on them: flat leather bridles (no bling!) and English saddles. Some hunts, like mine, also allow Western tack.

Lastly, the people: Safety first! We all wear helmets. Most of the riders wear black jackets and tan breeches, but the staff's jackets are red and their breeches white. We divide the people into three or four groups. The Staff is the smallest group. It includes the huntsman, who directs the hounds, and her assistants, the Whippers-in (no, they never whip an animal). They all carry whips, which they crack to get a hound's attention.

The Field, the mounted hunt followers, make up the other groups, which are also called Flights. The first flight is the wind-in-your-hair-bugs-in-your-teeth adrenaline junkies. They will follow the hounds by the most direct route possible and will jump anything in the way and sometimes gallop for miles. The second flight is a bit tamer: A few people jump, but most go around the jumps. The third flight is the Hilltoppers. They go at a slower pace and take some of the easier jumps, or none at all. The Hilltop Field Master (the leader of this group) takes her flight to the best place to watch the hunt. Hopefully they will see the quarry and enjoy watching the hounds puzzle out where he went, followed by the other flights in full pursuit. The best views are from the tops of hills (if you happen to have them handy), thus the name.

HUNTING THE HOBBIT

On Gloinn's first hunt, I was the Hilltop Field Master. The Hobbit was predictably antsy at the Meet, which is when everyone gathers before the hunt leaves. The

horses and riders are excited about the fun to come, and there is a lot of energy in the air. Finally, the hounds were loosed and the riders divided up into their three flights, according to the speed they'd go and the abilities of the horses.

The Hilltoppers is a great place to start a young horse, one that is new to fox hunting, or a horse that is not in shape to keep up with the faster flights. Our flight had to make up a little time to get to the first view ahead of the hunt, and when The Hobbit started tölt and passed the other horses (with their giant strides), I felt like I was on a flying carpet! Not only did The Hobbit keep up with the other horses as they cantered through the forest, he even jumped small logs. Who knew he could jump? Not me!

At Closing Meet, I took my place as the Field Master at the front of the Hilltop field. The Hobbit was extraordinary: bold, calm, and responsive. His tölt set a nice pace for the drafts, warmbloods, and mule in our flight, and we all had a splendid time!

TALLY HO!

Fox hunting is a great family sport. At Woodbrook there are several families with three generations who hunt together. The season is usually in the fall and winter, depending on climate, and is a great way to keep horses in shape during the cold months. Fox hunters are a friendly, social bunch, from all classes and income levels, with all kinds of horses. We have many riders in our hunt who started out riding Western, and several that still ride Western when they aren't fox hunting. While some hunts go over huge fences, some hunts have no jumps. Many hunts have "go arounds," for those who don't want to jump.

There are 163 foxhunts in the U.S. that are recognized by the Masters of Foxhounds Association. Their website, www.MFHA.com, contains a map with locations of the hunts, so it is easy to find how close you are to one of them. The website also has a contact person for each hunt so that you can call and find out about coming as a guest.

I'd love to see more Icelandics go fox hunting. It's such fun! If you would like to try it, but don't know how to start, contact me at raftislandfoxhunter@comcast.net and I'll happily arrange an introduction.

HORSEPLAY

BOOK REVIEW BY NICKI ESDORN

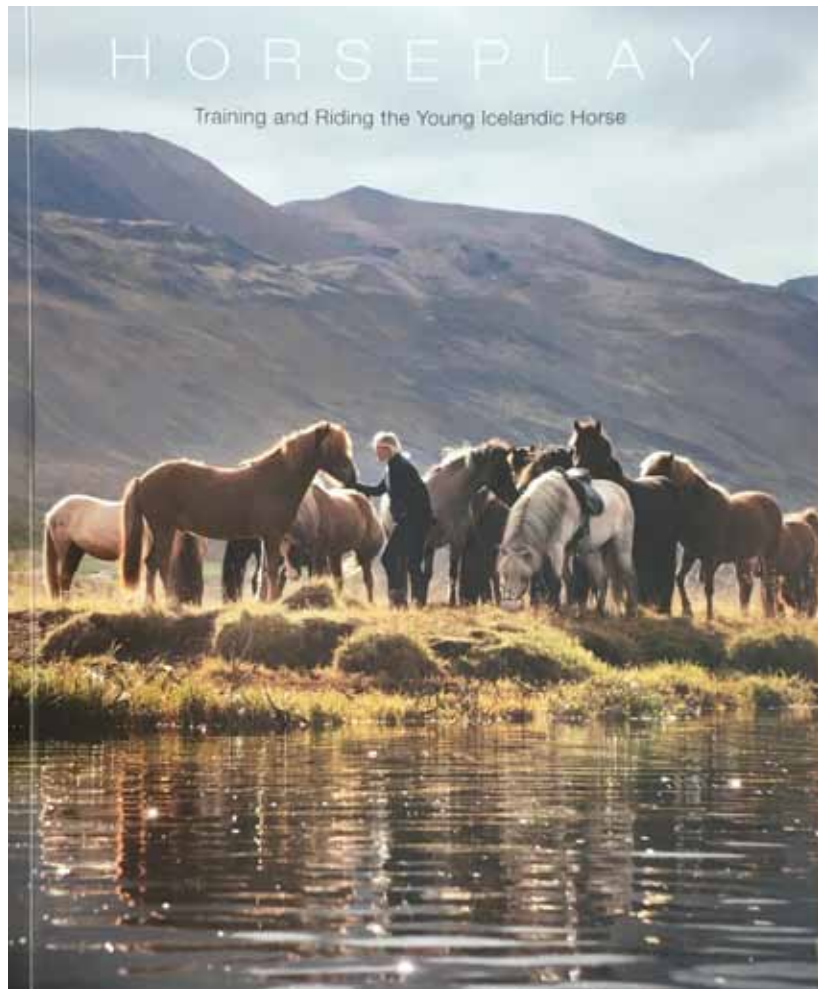
Helga Thoroddsen and her “dream team” have written, photographed, and produced an essential and beautiful book on training and riding Icelandic horses—and it is in English! *Horseplay* is packed with information and tips and gorgeous, detailed photos. But more than that, it conveys a sense of the spirit of Iceland, the challenging, wide-open landscape that is the home of the Icelandic horse. This book is a true inspiration for everyone here in the United States who wants to preserve the unique character and ability of our beloved steeds.

Helga Thoroddsen has been a horse breeder, riding instructor, and trainer in northern Iceland for the past 20 years. She has taught at Hólar University for 12 years and is the author of the instruction books (*Knapamerki*) for the riding levels taught at Hólar. Christina Mai, the young trainer starring in the photos, graduated from Hólar University with a bachelor’s degree in Riding and Riding Instruction in 2013 and has worked with Helga for many years. The photos in the book were almost all taken by Gígja Dógg Einarsdóttir, whose unique work has been featured in many shows and galleries, as well as in *Eiðfaxi*, the international Icelandic horse magazine. Helga’s son Helgi designed the beautiful book, and Helga’s husband Gunnar rounded out the team, as the indispensable “man behind the scene.”

Horseplay is the culmination of a life spent with horses in Iceland, and shows the author’s deep understanding of how the breed was shaped by history and nature, and how it lives today. It also is a reflection of Helga’s kind and excellent method of training.

Helga gives us an entertaining account of the history of the horse and the current state of horsemanship in Iceland. She then devotes a chapter to the “Nature of Horses,” illustrated by absolutely magnificent photos of horses in the wild. She explains all five gaits in great detail, with the footfall clearly illustrated by Susan Harris’s drawings. A general outline for training a horse follows. Her thoughts on “The Rider” should be read and taken to heart by every aspiring horseperson.

The last chapters of *Horseplay* are




a very detailed account of the starting and training of several very different young horses. This section of the book is, however, not just of interest to those people who are working with youngsters, but is addressed to anyone who wants to be inspired to play with their horses and who wants to build a relationship based on trust. Helga and Christina show us how to use our natural surroundings to create interesting and rewarding training and riding situations. The result is a confident, forward-thinking, and well-behaved horse and a happy rider, as the many photos clearly show.

I would like to add a personal note: I met Helga about a dozen years ago on my first visit to Iceland with my mother and daughter. I am forever grateful to her for igniting my passion for the Icelandic horse—she would put my daughter and

me on her beautifully trained show horses and instruct us to “just enjoy the ride and not annoy the horses by asking them to slow down all the time.” As we were tölt along at great speed, grinning and laughing, I could feel lightning strike my heart! Over the years I have visited Helga many times and studied with her. She has always been an inspiration and a kind counsellor, but I received the best instruction from her by just watching her train and ride her beautiful horses. I am very glad she has undertaken to create this book, and proud to have helped a tiny bit by proofreading. I hope she will reach many more people with this book and inspire them in their passion for the Icelandic horse.

Horseplay by Helga Thoroddsen is available at Amazon.com (\$49), or email helga@horseplay.is.



WHY REGISTER YOUR HORSE WITH THE USIHC?

Photo by Martina Gates

Proof of ownership

Registering your horse is proof of ownership, like the title for your car. If the horse you buy is already registered with the USIHC, it means it is registered in the previous owner's name, both in the U.S. and in the worldwide database WorldFengur. In order to transfer ownership to you, the previous owner and you just need to sign the registration papers and send them to the USIHC Registrar. You will receive new papers—proving you are the new owner—in the mail shortly.

Proof of pure breed

Registration is proof that your horse is a purebred Icelandic, and that increases the value of your horse. All registered horses are DNA typed. This is especially important if your horse is a mare or stallion.

Participation

Some USIHC programs and events require the horse to be registered, such as the Pleasure Rider Program, the Ambassador Program, the World Championship tryouts, FEIF Youth Cup tryouts, American Youth Cup tryouts, and inclusion in the USIHC Stallion book. Registration keeps the international Icelandic horse database, WorldFengur, accurate and complete. Not only stallions and mares, but also geldings need to be registered for a full offspring record. The Icelandic horse community and breeders worldwide depend on this source of information, a model that other breed organizations do not have.

How to Register

Registering your horse costs only between \$15 and \$50. A surcharge of \$25 is due for non-USIHC members. The Registry Rules and all forms needed are available at www.icelandics.org, the Congress website. Or contact the Registrar, Ásta Covert, at registry@icelandics.org or 866-929-0009.

Support the Icelandic horse nationally and internationally—register your horse with the USIHC!



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Congress memberships are for one year. Your membership is active on receipt of payment and expires one year later.

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Email: info@icelandics.org



F A R M L I S T

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

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info@tolt.net
www.tolt.net

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

Valkyrie Icelandic
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laura@valkyrieicelandic.com
www.valkyrieicelandic.com

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

Lough Arrow Icelandics
Andrea Brodie, Dvm
22242 County Road 46.0
Aguilar, CO 81020
(719) 680-2845 (phone)
fiddlinvet@gmail.com
www.coloradoicelandics.com

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

FLORIDA

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Beerihomes Llc
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floridaicehorsefarm@gmail.com
www.floridaicehorsefarm.com

INDIANA

Windstar Ranch
Bonnie Windell
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bonniewindell@yahoo.com
www.windstarranch.com

IOWA

Harmony Icelandics
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Des Moines, IA 50315
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virginia@harmonyicelandics.com
www.harmonyicelandics.com

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Grand View Farm
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(207) 941-9871 (fax)
grandviewfarm@midmaine.com

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Merrimack Valley Icelandics
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ebbameehan@me.com

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Windsong Icelandics
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(505) 286-7791 (fax)
ullahudson@mac.com
windsongdressage.com/windsongicelandics.com/windsongtack.com

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Sand Meadow Farm
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www.sandmeadow.com

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Columbus, NC 28722
slyterz@yahoo.com

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ellenhaaga@gmail.com
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daumkarin@gmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA

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Juli & Steve Cole
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(724) 667-4184 (phone)
juli2875@yahoo.com
www.meanttobefarm.com

SOUTH CAROLINA

Black Creek Farm
Sarah C. Elkin
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(803) 894-4514 (phone)
bigdoglady@pbtcomm.net
blackcreekfarm.us

VERMONT

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

Vermont Icelandic Horse Farm
Karen Winhold
3061 N. Fayston Road
Waitsfield, VT 05673
(802) 496-7141 (phone)
(802) 496-5390 (fax)
horses@icelandichorses.com
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evansfarm@orcasonline.com
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(831) 332-5328 (phone)
fivegaitfarmicelandics@gmail.com
fivegaitfarm.com

Lone Cedar Icelandic Horses
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Grapeview, WA 98546

(360) 275-7542 (phone)
iceherd@hotmail.com
www.lonecedariclandichorses.com

Red Feather Icelandics
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(541) 490-0975 (phone)
redfeathericelandics@gmail.com
www.redfeathericelandics.com

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Deep Creek Farm
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(304) 897-6627 (phone)
cepww@yahoo.com
www.deepcreekfarm.com

Icelandic Thunder
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550 Hackers Creek Rd
Philippi, WV 26416-7198
(304) 457-4238 (phone)
icywoman@msn.com
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If you are promoting the USIHC or the Icelandic horse, you can request free copies of **The Icelandic Horse Quarterly** to give away. Quantities are first-come, first-served, as they are available.

Send your name & address, the name of your business or event, and the number you'd like to request to:

Quarterly@icelandics.org

Dear USIHC Youth Fund Donors,

Thank you very much for contributing over \$11,000 over the past six years! Over 200 people have sent individual donations ranging from \$5 to \$1,000. You have helped to send 15 young riders to the FEI Youth Cup in Europe, and another young team from the USA will be supported this summer.

Your generosity inspires and motivates us to become better riders, better people, and better champions for our beloved Icelandic horses. We are truly grateful for your support, you have helped make our dreams come true.

Please continue to help us! The USIHC Youth Committee needs more of you to give your time, talents, and suggestions on how we should spend the money!



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