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November 2013

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The Valley Equestrian News

Your local resource for equestrian events, news and information.



Anna Twinney On Horses

Hope Rides

by Fran
Lynghaug
and
Vollie
Heitkamp

Natural Habituation

by Anna
Twinney

7 Things Your Horse Wants You to Know

by Anna Twinney



Roots of the Light Horse

by Janice
Ladendorf

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Jelly Bean



Jelly Bean is being offered for adoption at Hightail Horse Ranch and Rescue. Every couple of years we seek a family home for one of our therapy ponies, and then begin the training process on another rescue. Jelly Bean's turn has come. He is a 32" brown and white paint gelding, we think approximately 12 years old. He has been to nursing homes, group homes, birthday parties and numerous events where he has given many, many rides. He travels well, loads easily, is used to pretty much anything town has to offer, and is super well trained for leadline riding. If his rider understands cues, he can be ridden independently as well. The adoption fee for Jelly Bean is \$400, and the proceeds will go to house and feed other horses in our rescue program.



She is a very high energy horse with a ton of go! Bonnie was kicked by her mother when she was very young and her elbow was broken. This was surgically repaired successful-

Editor's Note: Many wonderful horses are available from rescue organizations who have provided a home for one or several unwanted, neglected, starved and possibly seized horses. These organizations need volunteers, money to care for the horses, and most have a lengthy wish list. If you are in the market for a new horse, a companion for your horse or just need a pasture ornament, check out your local rescue first -- or keep them in mind when it comes time to consider your charitable donations.



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This beautiful girl is Bonfyre--a 2008 Arabian mare who stands approximately 15 hands high. Bonnie was foaled at MHARF; her dam WSA Wildfyre (KA Kaliente x AKSAR So-maia), was pregnant when she came to us during a humane case involving several Arabians. Her breeding is Egyptian and you can certainly tell this by looking at her!



ly at the U of M and she is entirely sound. However, as a preventive measure

lated injury (also now fully healed). She has recently had a refresher course with a trainer but we would still call her green broke and in need of an experienced rider. Her ground manners are quite nice. She has been pronounced 100 percent sound and is ready to find a new home. If you love Egyptian Arabians, please consider this drop-dead gorgeous horse. She has been with us for a long time and we would love to see her find her forever home with the right person. Adoption fee is \$750. Please call (763)856-3119 or email info@mnhoovedanimalrescue.org if you'd like to meet her!

we wouldn't recommend extremely high impact sports for this girl--mainly jumping or barrels. The bandage on her leg in the photo is from a laceration and is now healed.

Bonnie was started for the 2012 Trainer's Challenge but did not compete due to another unre-

Bonfyre

For more info please contact the
Minnesota Hooved Animal Rescue
PO Box 47, Zimmerman, MN 55398
(763) 856-3119 or info@mnhoovedanimalrescue.org

A Unique Path to "Perfection"

By Kari Hagstrom

If you ever have a conversation with Cindy Besser, owner and founder of Roasted To Perfection horse feed, brace yourself: She is a dynamo of energy, with knowledge, humor, compassion, and conviction. Her experiences have led her on a unique path, and her knowledge has been earned.

Raised on a farm with a love of horses from youth, Besser rode the wooded trails near her Minnesota home as a young girl. Horses returned to her life when her daughter, Robyn, then 14, said, "Can you and I get horses, because Dad and Blake are always hunting and fishing?" A year of 4-H then some barrel racing led Besser to quarter horse racing and an adventure the family would not have imagined when it all started.

Her daughter later bought a quarter horse brood mare, Hemeness (Bailey), which the family bred. The family owns all seven of her babies. In 2001, Besser saw an ad for a young stallion, Feature Mr. Jess. "I fell in love and told my husband, Lorin, 'If ever I could have a [foal] it would be by him!' Lorin asked, 'What would you do with it?' 'I would race it!' He said, 'I would love to have a race horse.'"

"So far, three [of our horses] have been sent to the race track and all are money winners. They have paid their way," said Besser. "One race season we had 5 races, 4 wins, one second place and a new track record (on my birthday!)."

Mixing good experiences with the not-so-good, and demonstrating that one thing does lead to another, Besser's range of experience changed when one of her young horses fell ill. As a testament to her love of horses and to her persistence in not giving up on the young horse, she struggled for over a year-and-a-half to find a healing treatment for young Fritz. When many people

would have given up on Fritz because it was too expensive, too hard, too time-consuming, just too much to deal with, Besser persevered in daunting circumstances.

"I started feeding roasted horse feed because a horse we own is allergic to mold. Fritz struggled with diarrhea for a year and a half before we figured out why. I spent thousands of dollars on vet bills, tried every product that 'claimed' to cure diarrhea."

"[Fritz's] belly was always bloated and he passed tremendous amounts of gas. He would lie in his stall and groan. ...Fritz's manure never got better than a firm cow pie with some loose form of horse apples. I washed his butt so regularly, that he would turn it to me when I went into his stall. ...On Wednesday morning before Thanksgiving, 2005, he started with [a bad bout of] diarrhea. By Friday morning his tail was completely frozen with manure. He could not lift his tail to go anymore, manure just squirted out, ran down his legs, and onto his sheath. Our neighbors have a heated indoor arena; I went there to clean him up. I spent over four hours soaking and scrubbing Fritz; I went back on Saturday and spent another four hours. I wrapped his tail in a towel and vet wrap and spent the next two weeks going to the barn five to six times a day washing him and changing the towel, before he was back to 'his normal' cow pie."

"My husband was sure Fritz would die after he shed his stomach lining." Besser tells about the experience of finding the stomach lining: "I was cleaning his stall and found what I thought was a snake skin, before the rational side of me kicked in: snakes hibernate this time of year. I called two vets and was informed he shed his stomach lining. They said he would probably die. For weeks I held my breath when I went into his stall to see if he was still alive or had passed."

"Roasted To Perfection's uniqueness is evident the first time you open a bag, look, feel, and smell the feed. Roasted to Perfection started as an answer to some of the mold and mildew problems facing horse owners. One is digestibility. A horse is

Fritz had a mold allergy, Besser learned. "There is mold and mildew on grain when it is harvested. Mold grows at 45 degrees and runs rampant at 90 degrees. I spent hours and hours researching, trying to figure out why Fritz had diarrhea."

"...In December, 2005, I heard about roasted feed, something I had not tried with Fritz. ...I ordered a pallet and...the results were overwhelming, life-changing for Fritz. Within four days his manure started looking like a horse's. By the end of two weeks his bloated belly was gone; he looked like a tucked-up race horse. He had a normal pile of manure. He started to play with another two-year-old, ...something he had never done before.

"After ten days of eating roasted feed, my husband asked what else I did to Fritz. I told him, 'Just that feed.'" Besser became a dealer of the roasted feed, but a few years later the manufacturer was sold, the feed was eventually changed and later discontinued.

"My family, friends and customers encouraged me to make my own feed. ...I met with Eric Nelson from Form A Feed to discuss roasted feed. I created Roasted To Perfection and mixed up the first batch in February 2010. I am so appreciative for my customers to give RTP a chance. Many have told me it is better than the other feed I sold!

"I would say 100 percent of my new business is word of mouth from horse owners who see results. I do some print advertising, but, people cannot 'see' why RTP is different, unique, what sets it apart from traditional horse feed."

"Roasted To Perfection's uniqueness is evident the first time you open a bag, look, feel, and smell the feed. Roasted to Perfection started as an answer to some of the mold and mildew problems facing horse owners. One is digestibility. A horse is

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a grazing animal with a small stomach. The food travels from the stomach to the intestine and cecum relatively fast. If the site of digestion takes place in the stomach, it is easier for the horse to process and utilize the grain, vitamins and minerals. Changing the site of absorption also means more balanced energy levels for the horse," explains Besser.

"We feed all our horses RTP: mares, babies, old geldings and the race horses at the track. Our babies have straight, strong legs and start nibbling when a few days old. They wash RTP down with a drink of milk. We do not worry about the babies eating because RTP is 91 percent digestible. ...Roasting reduces that amount of gastric acid needed to break down the food; the hard outer shell is removed from the digestive equation. The volume of grain can be reduced because of the increased digestibility," because it doesn't pass undigested through the horse's system, exiting in the manure.

"...When I met with the head nutritionist at Form A Feed, I wanted to develop a feed that 75 percent of horses could eat. We added all the stuff a normal healthy horse should have in their diet. If a horse has a specific issue, the owner can address it as needed. A coffee can full of RTP weighs about two pounds; we feed by half a can as needed to our horses twice a day. The race horse eats three times a day when in training. We had four babies born in 2012, two colts and two fillies. When they shed out as yearlings, the colts were thinner than the fillies so we increased the colts to one-and-a-half cans twice a day and left the fillies at one can twice a day. The colts played much more than the fillies so they needed more food. It's no different that children growing," Besser said.

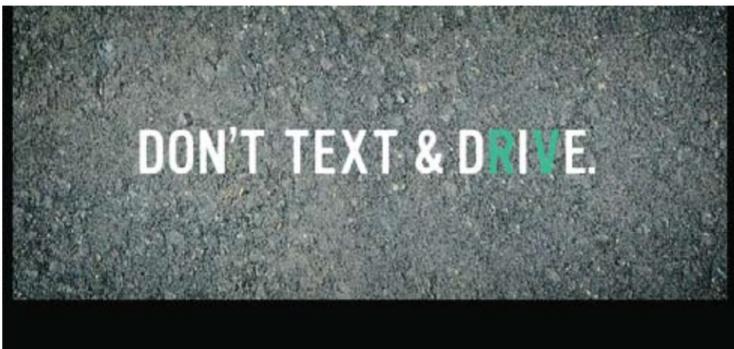
Besser's racing dream began in January 2001, when she saw the ad for the stallion, Feature Mr. Jess. "At that time, we did not own a mare. A couple years later Robyn

came home with Hemeness (Bailey). Robyn bred Bailey to get a new barrel racing prospect. Lorin and I bought both Bailey and the baby from Robyn, when she went to college. Smoke was our first race horse; he won \$18,730 in two seasons.

"We bred Bailey to Feature Mr. Jess and God gave us Mr Hemeness Feature, the first race horse Lorin and I raised. Mr Hemeness Feature was born April 10, 2007, six years after we saw the advertisement. He won a 60-1 long shot race in Oklahoma that Toby Keith had a horse in, and set a track record at Canterbury Park. What a gift God gave us!" explained Besser. "His racing career was cut short from a knee injury. We retired 'Romeo' so he could have an easier career. He is a gentle giant, weighing 1400 pounds. He loves to sneak out of his stall and visit the babies."

Persisting through good, bad, and unexpected ad-

Continued to page 18



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PO Box 64
Sabin, MN 56580
theVENews@gmail.com
(320) 209-8523

Owner/Publisher/Editor
Ley Bouchard
(701) 361-8648
leybou@gmail.com

Strategic Marketing Director
Heather Benson
(605) 660-6599
valleyequestriannews@gmail.com

Marketing Specialist
and Copy Editor
Kari Hagstrom
(320) 766-2620
Kari.venews@hotmail.com

Contributing Writers
Orv Alveshere
John Alan Cohen
Dr. Juliet Getty, Ph.D.
Kari Hagstrom
Vollie Heitkamp
Janice Ladendorf
Fran Lynghaug
Anna Twinney
Charles Wilhelm

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Cover Photo:
Anna Twinney
with Excalibur

Left: Anna Twinney, world renown trainer and animal communicator, with Excalibur, shares her insights with readers in two articles in this issue of the VEN, "Natural Habituation" on pages 8-9 and "Listen to Your Horse," on pages 10-11.
Photos by Lauren Munger

Page 3 A Unique Path to "Perfection," the inspirational story of Roasted to Perfection's founder, Cindy Besser, with her tip for success

Right: Pairing a child to a horse happens when they naturally gravitate toward each other.

Fran Lynghaug and founder, Vollie Heitkamp, tell about the work of Hope Rides on pages 12-13.

Page 6 Cowboy Poetry with Orv

Page 7 Charles Wilhelm:
Horses That Spook



Page 14-15: Bring Back Your Horse's Instincts by Dr. Juliet Getty

Page 16: Roots of the Light Horse Breeds by Janice Ladendorf

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Page 18: Upcoming Events & Classified Section

Page 19: From the Horse's Mouth: Industry News

Editorial Information

The Valley Equestrian Newspaper welcomes free-lance articles, cartoons, artwork, poems, photographs, etc. that we might use in the publication. We accept no responsibility for the material while in our hands. Materials will be returned if sent with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Photographs or graphics electronically submitted should be in color and must be at least 200 DPI resolution and four inches wide.

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Errors: The Valley Equestrian Newspaper shall be responsible for errors or omissions in connection with an advertisement to the extent of the space covered by the error.

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Publisher's Clipboard

Dear Readers,

The weather tragedies in the region have taken financial and emotional toll on families. Some people lost animal friends and many lost their entire herd of cattle as a result of the storms that have devastated South Dakota and Colorado.

Baywatch was the 2012 Badlands Circuit Heading Horse of the Year. J.D. Lord and his son, Eli, won a lot of money on Baywatch and told the Bismarck Tribune, "He was part of the family. You get pretty attached to them after a while."

Bud Ireland of Box Elder, S.D. lost most of his cattle and six horses to the storm that hit the region the first week in October. The emotional havoc is wrenching.

"They're pretty much buried in a 20-foot snow bank, you know, so we have to wait to get them out of there, and can't get their bodies out just yet.

So I'm unfortunately driving by them every day. And it's pretty devastating," Ireland told Kevin Woster, a reporter for Keoland.com news.

The South Dakota Rancher Relief Fund at the Black Hills Area Community Foundation (BHACF) recently announced that funds are available to SD ranchers that need assistance; they may call 877-708-4357 or 2-1-1. Donations to the fund may be sent to: P.O. Box 231, Rapid City, S.D. 57709 and online at <https://www.give-blackhills.org/27677>.

Our hearts go out to the families affected by these severe storms. Please help if you are able.

Thank you for reading this issue of The Valley Equestrian Newspaper. Please patronize the advertisers that made this issue possible.

Ley Bouchard,
Publisher



"One Summer Evening," by Lynn Maderich, St. Paul, featured in the September issue of the Valley Equestrian News and in the recent exhibit at Stillwater Gallery.

Readers' Letters

Bessie is 34!

'My Kingdom for a Horse' Exhibit Huge Success

All of us at the Stillwater Art Guild Gallery want to thank you for your coverage of our art show, My Kingdom for a Horse. If we ever repeat this theme, we will absolutely take out an ad in your publication and return some of the riches to you. Not knowing what we were getting into when we started out, the horse crowd has proven to be a passionate bunch who came out in droves for the gala reception. It is clear to me that an equine art show was overdue! The exhibit room is so, so gorgeous - I think it is personally my favorite show by far.

The star of the show was Roswell, the painting Thoroughbred. As of Tuesday Oct. 8th, Roswell

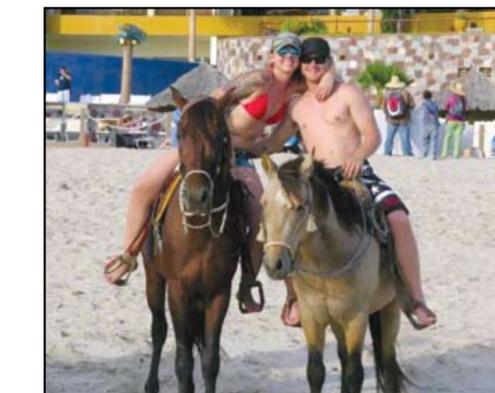
set a sales record of \$1000 from over 80 pieces of art! Last I heard the was a radio show interview and a TV show interview in the works. I know that since then he has sold more.... His owner Jen gives 50 percent of this back to MHAR. Combined with the 5-30 percent the artists are donating we will have a nice check for them.

Thanks again for your incredible support. I saw on line your October issue has some nice images in it - I will be looking forward to picking some issues up at our local feedstore, Houles.

With much appreciation,
Jane Dierberger
Stillwater Art Guild Gallery



Carolyn Duncan and Bessie don their red hats to celebrate Bessie's 34th birthday.



Valley Equestrian readers Brooke Harrison, left, and Eddie Onsgard ride horseback at Puerto Penasco, Mexico, near the Sonoran Sky Resort at Rocky Point Beach..

Fergus BY JEAN ABERNETHY Sponsored by the Minnesota Horse Council



Cowboy Poetry with Orv

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RIDING NEAR AN AWE INSPIRING VIEW OF GOD'S COUNTRY

When I ride up to the crest of the hill, and turn to view God's grand creation, my pony knows ... I want to think things through. We pause to survey the gift of green valleys and vibrant hills. It's nature, blending with the Creator's work, that gives our soul it's fill. If this land looks THIS GOOD, after draught, floods, earthquake and fire, it proves God still watches and cares ... this fact, your faith will inspire. If I'm slightly late this evening, pausing by the creek banks, I was here, marveling at nature's beauty and giving thanks.

RIDING WITH THE KEEPER OF THE HILLS

Riding to the top of the butte, there is a breathtaking view. It's my fav'rite observation point, that I never outgrew. And ponder of God's Construction Company the first six days, The sheer complexity of it all never ceases to amaze My mind. forming the earth, with mountains, valleys, fjords and seas, It's like my private church pew, where I'm pausing and giving thanks.

SIX INCREDIBLE AND WONDROUS CONSTRUCTION DAYS

My horse, my partner and I pause to rest and enjoy the view. The pure white floating, fluffy clouds, drifting through the sky so blue. Those useful clouds bring the moisture, for all living things to grow. We marvel at the order of nature and how God runs the show. We're overwhelmed by the brilliant rocks (like decorating frills), Useful minerals, hidden under pure snow and under the hills. If we tarry you'll know why, we're beside those peaceful creek banks, Where we often sit in quiet meditation and give thanks.

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John F. Kennedy

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Horses that Spook Easily

Sometimes horses appear to spook at nothing. I think that many times spooking is a conditioned response. The horse has learned to spook as a response and when we

change is made, I begin the following ground work exercises.

I start by teaching the horse to go forward and go forward consistently



don't do anything about it - when, in fact we accept that behavior - the horse just seems to think that this is what we want.

The first thing I do, before I address this as a training issue, is to check the horse's diet. If the horse is on any kind of alfalfa feed, I change the diet to something less hot. If the horse has been on a high protein grain with a lot of molasses or any sugar in it, I stop feeding that. A bland diet like oat hay, wheat hay or grass hay can affect behavior. It only takes about eight to 12 hours for food to go through a horse's system. About 75 percent of the horses that I have seen who pay attention to everything and are concerned about everything, change their behavior when I put them on a bland diet. Once a diet

(see my book, "Starting Baby Jaz"). The next thing I do is teach my horse to stop at a light command. In other words, I just barely take the slack out of the lead line. This may take several days or even weeks, depending on how sensitive or dull the horse is.

Once the horse has learned to go forward and stop, I do the "change of direction" exercise. This is a very good foundation exercise in that it keeps the horse's attention on you and not the scary object. It also teaches the horse that it is a lot better not to be concerned about

the object because being concerned creates too much work. This exercise is usually not too difficult because I have already taught the horse to go forward and around me and to stop his feet. If the horse steps into me, I step back away from the horse to keep myself safe and to give myself room to continue teaching him to change direction.

To do the "change of direction" exercise, I first stop the horse at the furthest point from the scary object. In other words, if twelve o'clock is the scary bush with the teeth, I stop the horse at six o'clock. This location has the least amount of pressure for the horse. At first, I stop as far away from the scary object as it takes to get the horse to relax. I am starting to show my intention, which is to show a visual of where I want the horse to go, and for him to be able to stand

and be comfortable next to the object. Then I have him change direction at this location. We keep moving closer and closer to the scary object, each time having him change direction back and forth, until he will stand next to the object without reacting to it.

I keep repeating this exercise until, finally, the horse just does not care anymore. I may have to repeat this exercise several times for a week or even two weeks. It will finally get to a point where it is way too much work for the horse to react to the fear situation, rather than just to ignore it and walk on past.

You need to be consistent and do the exercise every



time your horse reacts to the scary object. This exercise works because it keeps the horse's feet busy. It takes a negative response - flight -- and turns it into positive energy. It is positive because it is getting the horse's attention on us and not focused on what is causing the fear. Anytime we can

control the horse's feet, we control his mind and establish our leadership. This establishes confidence and trust.

Charles Wilhelm trains out of northern California and demonstrates at many horse expos.

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Natural Habituation

by Anna Twinney

Excalibur, my 3-and-a-half-year-old Spanish mustang, and I had ventured into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains on many occasions together with just halter and lead-rope as our headgear; and bare-back, for both warmth and closeness. In the past our excursions had been kept short and sweet to acclimatize "X," as he is fondly called, to new experiences while growing up. We had enjoyed a number of trails together, some through "Open Space" landscape and parkland in Colorado open to the public and other trips on mountain climbs and forest hikes. These trails were the time for us to connect and I enjoyed watching Excalibur's steady growth.

We began this trip on a glorious autumn day, temperatures rising into the 70s, blue skies, light crisp breeze and sunshine. My friend and I decided we would explore the nearby reservoir together. Sam, a well-seasoned and particularly majestic palomino quarter horse accompanying her, while X and I would enjoy the excursion bitless.

Although Sam had grown up on the show circuit, trail rides were not his expertise and shortly into the ride he became somewhat tense with the occasional outbursts of unpredictable behavior.

For Sam, a number of years had gone by since he experienced the great outdoors. But my friend, Sam's rider, knew his personality quirks and was quite happy and capable to handle the short bursts of energy and "dancing" on the spot.

Meanwhile Excalibur, an inexperienced youngster, proudly and steadily led the way.

En route to our trail we needed to cross the neighboring property. A

rugged barbed wire fence stood between us and our destination. With Excalibur being just short of 14.2 hh, it was obvious that I would be the one to dismount and negotiate this particularly complicated structure. Just as I began to struggle with the barbed wire and the wooden fence, X in one hand pulling to graze, Sam spooked as two rather excited dogs decided to come barging into the picture, barking loudly, tails straight up, letting us know they were in charge of protecting this land. I acknowledged their good deed, confident they would not attack us, and eventually managed to open the gate and get us through, while X remained calm and relaxed.

Our country lane joined a larger country road where traffic was known to travel around 30-50 mph. It would be the first time for Excalibur to experience vehicles passing by at that speed. Previously X had experienced roads surrounded by neighbors sympathetic to riders. I was not sure how these drivers would respond to horses. But amazingly X walked along, ignoring what other horses might see as dangerous contraptions.

Next I caught the faint whiff of cows and I wondered how X would handle this experience. It's a well-known fact that many horses freak-out

at the sight of cows, not recognizing them, or being able to handle their appearance. The herd of cows was situated to our right, some lying down, others enjoyed chewing their grass with the heat of the Colorado sun on their backs. They looked up at us as we rode by, with a fence between us and them; thankfully they remained calm and un-



perturbed and so did both X and Sam in tow.

Shortly after X had successfully navigated the dogs, the road, and the cows, we spotted a coyote, rather close, on his afternoon hunting spree. Unperturbed by our presence he kept an eye on us while remaining focused on locating his evening dinner. I watched as Excalibur acknowledged his presence, looking over with ears pricked in the coyote's direction. Having grown up in Wyoming on over 4,000 acres, a coyote would be a familiar site. With strong survival instincts, Excalibur would know what to do should he feel threatened. However, it appeared as though they

recognized one another's intentions and had no desire for a confrontation on this day.

Then, overhead we heard the strange sound of a motor. Initially hard to make out, it soon became clear that others were enjoying this autumn day by flying remote-controlled airplanes. Up and down they swooped

was the distinct sound of a helicopter closing in. I could literally feel the presence of the helicopter hovering above us. I thought to myself, "What were the odds that this would be a helicopter flight-path, let alone that a helicopter would be flying through the neighborhood at the exact time we would be passing through!" Helicopters are often used by the BLM during roundups to scare mustangs toward the awaiting pens, but amazingly, Excalibur remained cautious but calm as the chopper flew overhead.

As if this series of events wasn't enough, we were then accosted by a rather fast moving vehicle. We all rode over to the grass verge and I asked X to stand and be present with me. Keeping

acrobatically in the sky. I had never before seen remote-controlled planes in Colorado, especially on a ride. Somewhat unsure as to how the horses would respond to this unusual sight, I decided to envision the planes flying the opposite direction away from us, thereby staying in the field rather than actually crossing our path. The thought of them unexpectedly "attacking" us from midair was not something I wanted to ponder. Positive thoughts and energy were the key, and that's what I brought to the situation.

We watched as the little planes began to retreat, but then a new, much louder noise joined them in the sky. This time it

Hoping this would be the end of the day's "excitement," I quickly discovered my hopes were not going to be realized as, just a few strides further along, both Excalibur and Sam stood still in their tracks. Excalibur's body became rigid, his head carriage high just at the same time as he began to run sideways. Keeping his eyes glued on one particular point within the creek surrounded by trees - he snorted. I could feel Sam behind us becoming uneasy as my friend began to soothe him verbally. I followed X's gaze as I saw and heard a large animal fleeing in the creek. With his large tail and at least 80 lb. body, I was grateful that this mountain lion chose a speedy escape over any other course of action.

Just the thought of a mountain lion residing in the area was daunting enough and I wasn't the only one who was concerned. Excalibur's adrenaline was rising, as I could literally feel his heart beat between my legs. It can be very risky to ask a horse to stand and relax, waiting for them to digest a situation, or to ask them to go forward through it. During my younger days of riding young racehorses, I learned not to wait for the explosion, but instead to redirect their purpose. Just at the right time, when Excalibur had time to watch, listen, digest the situation and be in a position to come back to me, I asked him to move forward. And then...

Unbelievably, this was the exact time an Arctic truck came speeding along the road followed by a large cloud of dust. Realizing he was not going to slow down for us, I knew something had to be done quickly.

I rode Excalibur from the verge (where we had end-

Natural Habituation

by Anna Twinney

ed up) onto the dirt lane, just a few feet inwards. Waving my left arm rapidly up and down, signaling for the truck driver to slow down, I looked right at the driver, continuing until I knew he had a foot on the brake. It was essential he acknowledged us, so not to cause an accident. His speed was just too great, spitting up gravel and dust in our direction. Luckily the driver slowed down, allowing us to regain our horses' composure. I was reminded of the gift of horses, living in the moment, and not holding onto the past. You can often tell a horse's intelligence and experience by how quickly they overcome a situation and regain their composure. Both X and Sam showed their amazing ability to defeat this frightful situation in minutes and trust us to lead them through it.



As this unforgettable ride continued, I wondered what was next. It didn't take long until I had my answer. As Excalibur continued along, showing the way as he strolled confidently down the lane to the entrance of the reservoir, I heard my friend say, "Parachute."

My mind didn't even have time to process the meaning of the word. With my helmet's visor impairing my vision, and even before I had finished blinking, a parachute swooped down in front of us. Never in my life had I seen a parachute in mid-air quite so close and this tandem was in full color, closing in at high speed as the people hit the ground running right in front of our eyes. As I was catching my breath in utter amazement, Excalibur just seemed mesmerized by the whole scene.

Standing and gazing into the distance he somehow knew there

was more to come as the second parachute entered the picture. At first I was convinced I needed to dismount before the realization struck Excalibur of what was occurring, but my body casually sat still in the saddle. Instead, I decided to handle the inner conflict and began breathing to help my mind relax. My young colt certainly

A gentle embankment

didn't feel a need to worry and so why was I? Even with all the desensitizing I had done with Excalibur nothing could have quite prepared him for today. As I followed my breath, again allowing my colt to guide me on all levels, I just watched the drama from the sideline.

We passed by a leashless Rottweiler and his companion; hardly an issue compared to everything else we had encountered on the day, before finally arriving at the reservoir. This would be the first

time Excalibur and I would be walking through water larger than a puddle. In recent months he had gained natural experience in crossing streams together with his herd out at pasture. Now he would bring his newfound confidence and skills to our trail ride.

With my new Australian saddle and a fresh breeze, the thought of bathing didn't exactly sound appealing at that moment. Dipping his head into the water and obviously overjoyed with the whole experience, X took his time to stand back up again. Our first experience was a success and yet it was important he learned not to take advantage of the situation with a rider on his back. We entered the water a couple of extra times just walking in and out for him to clearly understand that this was not his time to bathe, but instead for us to enjoy the experience as a team.

In comparison to our outward bound journey, our homeward bound trip was truly a casual stroll. We encountered a couple of vehicles and a silent cycle I caught out of the corner of my eye. I was able to warn my friend, as well as cue Excalibur to check out the unidentifiable whooshing sound from the rear.

As we returned through the rather challenging barbed wire gate, X's ears

pricked up. Completely focused on what was in front of him, neck braced, body tense, just as he had done with the mountain lion. Both he and Sam began to spook. This time his fears were to be confirmed. Snorting loudly, to warn Sam it was time for them both to flee. X made sure he also warned the predator out front of their presence. He felt their presence way before they showed themselves. Engaging his hind end without any further hesitation, he chose his flight path.

Just as he decided it was time to depart the area, out flew... some pigeons from the stream...at least half-dozen of them. I couldn't believe my eyes. Here was my young colt absolutely taken aback by birds he saw daily, birds that share their environment with him and even land on his back. They would drink together, eat together and hang out together. With all that he had encountered in one

day, without any undue reaction, this was to be the cause of his trouble? It took X a moment to regain his composure, while I had to chuckle to myself at how nature had finally spooked X.

Nothing could have totally prepared us for that day's adventure, and yet all that led up to the ride created the trust-based partnership we have today. I was thankful for our experiences together and the relationship we clearly have. We were tested on that day and we both passed with flying colors.

Anna Twinney
Photos by
Lauren Munger

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Listen to Your Horse

By Anna Twinney

I am privileged to work with people and horses from all over the world and whether it is as a Natural Horsewoman or an Animal Communicator, I often hear the same requests. But these requests don't come from the humans, they come from the horses. Here are seven things your horse would

like you to know:

1. The horses speak in a silent language unique to them, namely the language of Equus. Through intricate body language gestures they communicate within their herd and often the whisper can be captured in their eye. The energetic connection and

inter-species communication cannot necessarily be seen, but can be felt and received by us. Learn to listen to your horse's whisper.

2. As a social species horses live naturally in herds to feel safe. For the herd to run smoothly they all have specific roles, be

it to: learn, grow-up, play, nurture, protect, reproduce, guide etc. Friendships and bonds form with other animals, but there is no real substitute for their own kind. Consider your horse's need to bond and connect with other horses.

3. It's not about the destination, it's about the journey. Enjoy the process of learning about your horse's needs. Embrace every opportunity to watch, listen and learn. Your horse wants you to be an active participant in his everyday care from

but are unable to cry to the same extent that we can. When you feel yourself about to cry and you know the tears are not your own, let the tears flow for you can become a conduit. You may experience releasing tears for the horses.

6. Our thoughts can be picked up by our horses. Our riding posture and imbalances can be reflected in our horse's movements. Our emotional challenges can be reflected in our horse's behavior. Our physical issues can be

unique and comprehensive equine training program in the world. She is known around the globe for her highly acclaimed work as an Equine Specialist, Natural Horsemanship Clinician, Animal Communicator and Karuna Reiki Master. Her work has been featured on U.S. and international television, radio and internet programs, including "Martha Stewart's Living," the BBC fly on the wall documentary "Living in the Sun" and the French TV Program, "Echappées Belles."

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RTP Began With a Very Sick Horse!

I purchased Fritz in 2004 as a weanling. About two months later, he started with bouts of diarrhea. Over the next year and a half, I spent many hours and thousands of dollars consulting with veterinarians, and on trying different medications and remedies (yogurt, pro-biotic, dry pro-biotic, different herbs for digestion, aloe-vera gel, monthly wormer, several commercial products, Dionne Kaolin, seven or eight different kinds of feed). Fritz's belly was always bloated, he passed tremendous amounts of gas, and when he did, the liquid would just dribble out of him, down his legs and onto his sheath. His manure never got firmer than a loose cow pie, or occasionally a loose form of horse apples. I washed his butt so regularly, that he would turn it to me when I went into his stall.

Just before Thanksgiving 2005, he started another severe bout of diarrhea. He finally shed his stomach lining, which looked like a snake skin, when I found it in his stall. The vets said he would probably die. For weeks, I didn't know if I would find him alive or dead in his stall. Then in December, I heard about roasted feed, and ordered a pallet.

The results were overwhelming, life-changing for Fritz. Within four days, his manure started looking normal. By the end of two weeks, his bloated belly was gone, and he looked like a tucked-up race horse. He had normal manure. He started to play with other horses, something he had never done before. After ten days of eating roasted feed, my husband wondered what I had done to Fritz: I told him, "Just that feed."

I became a dealer, but after three years the manufacturer was sold, the feed changed, then discontinued. My husband and customers encouraged me to make my own feed. I thank God for providing me with everything I needed to develop Roasted to Perfection. Today, Fritz is healthy and well. He has not had a bout of diarrhea in all this time. We are very careful about mold or dusty hay, and he still likes his butt rubbed!

Cindy Besser, Founder and Owner, Roasted to Perfection

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exercise, hoof care, nutrition, dentistry, healthcare through to a personal exercise program. For the good of your horse be "present."

4. Like us, horses express themselves through their actions. Actions often speak louder than words. In order to be understood and heard many will show their physical limitations, fears, concerns and pain through behavioral challenges. When the whisper is not caught, these actions appear to us through evasion, resistance, anxiety, anger and "acting out." Realize when your horse is not himself he may be in pain.

5. As humans we are able to release our emotions through tears. We are able to cry to the extent of sobbing. We can lean on others to help us through the hard times and they are willing to take on our heart-ache and pain. Horses can also shed tears,

taken on and manifested by our horses. Horses are our mirrors, be sure to look at the reflection.

7. There is no such thing as a coincidence. Each animal crosses our path for a reason and your horse is no exception! Open your mind and listen to your heart to discover the lessons brought to you by your horse - the life lessons. The horses remain your best teacher.

Anna Twinney is the founder of Reach Out to Horses® - the most

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Hope Rides

By Fran Lynghaug and Vollie Heitkamp

A young girl stood shyly in a group of inner city teens that just arrived at Hope Rides, a place where youth come to visit and connect with horses. The 14-year-old hung back, desperately trying to fade into the shadows and not be seen. There was a definite heaviness pouring out of her that Vollie Heitkamp, founder of the program, couldn't help but notice when she greeted the group and walked with them to the pasture. These teens had come from some of the toughest areas of Minneapolis where their very lives at times were at risk.

Vollie shared with them about the horses, what each of their stories were, and how they had come to live at the ranch, many from desperate situations. As they approached the horses, she relished the moment the youths caught sight of them. It was always the most interesting part of the visit, when children and horses have their first connection. As they come together, Vollie gets an idea what each child is working through simply by observing how they and the horses gravitate toward each other. During this special moment when no words are spoken, volumes can be learned.

After several minutes of allowing the youths to interact with the horses, the process of pairing each kid to a horse began. Among the group was an unassuming Welsh pony named Slick who seemed to blend into the group without drawing any attention to himself. Slick was low in the pecking order of his herd and he always tried to stay out of the way so he wouldn't get picked on.

It was clear that Slick and the shy girl shared some similar attributes in their approach to survival. Both the she and the pony stood behind their groups while horses and kids paired up. Then it happened - they looked at

each other. She reached her hand out ever so slightly and he lowered his head and stepped toward her. They stood quietly together as if they were one person with six legs.

Vollie helped the girl groom and prepare Slick for work and they talked about him. Vollie asked her simple questions about herself. The more the girl's hands were on Slick, touching and interacting with him, the more her sadness faded and she seemed a bit overwhelmed with the new feeling of joy pouring into her dark space. At one point during the grooming, Slick pushed his head up next to her chest and she whispered something in his ear. As she did, he nuzzled her with his upper lip.

She and Slick were glued to each other for the entire visit, as if they had been friends for a lifetime. As she and Vollie groomed, she talked a little about some of the horrendous situations in her life and it was clear she felt trapped beneath the burden of them. At this moment, it was evident she just needed to be loved and encouraged: she needed to feel hope. So during her time with the girl, Vollie did all she could. A little hope to someone who is in a dark place in their life can be enough to light the way to freedom.

"We never know how a single moment or experience in time can affect someone," says Vollie. "I have seen it not only change a person, but save

their life, and I believe that was the case in this situation." When it was time to go and Slick was put back in the pasture, the girl reached through the fence to give him one last stroke and whispered to him, "I will be back, Slick. I promise to come back." With that she beamed a smile and asked Vollie to please remind him that she would be back as they walked together to the van where her group was waiting.

This episode between



child and horse is one of many that happen at Hope Rides. Vollie recalls another time when a different kind of youth came to the ranch, a belligerent, six-foot-tall teen with wild hair, piercing all over his face, hat on sideways, and pants riding his hips. When Vollie invited him to help with a task, he shrugged a cool, "Sure." After they spent a little time with the horses, he took a liking to a horse named Joker, so they led him to the barn and began brushing and preparing him for a short ride.

As the boy brushed Joker, everything about him softened. His touch became lighter and his eyes reflected a surprising care for the horse. When Joker began chewing on

a plywood board in front of the tacking area, Vollie showed the boy how to gently correct that behavior. She explained how it could become a long term, unhealthy effect for the animal and the boy quickly assumed responsibility to correct Joker.

As the boy continued visiting the ranch, his relationship with Joker progressed and their friendship was evident in their groundwork and riding. Yet there were a host of situations where the

and don't want him to get hurt or sick."

Vollie smiled, "Makes sense to me. Given how you feel about Joker and what you just told me, I think you will understand when I tell you that I care about you like you care about Joker, and because I care about you, I cannot ignore it when I see you acting in ways that are harmful to you or anyone else." They had a conversation that redefined the perspective and approach he brought to the ranch.

After that, he began to develop correct behavior skills and apply them in his life beyond the ranch's boundaries.

Vollie has seen many similar changes that happen between kids and the horses

boy's outward behavior with other people at the ranch was out of line. He told Vllie that he struggled in school and had spent time in programs designed to help with behavior issues for youth. The next time he came, he had an altercation with another child who was visiting the ranch. It was obvious he was struggling with boundaries and how to be acknowledged by others. In his world, negative attention was better than none. He didn't know how to get attention without acting surly.

Vollie asked him what he does when Joker chews on wood and he responded, "I correct his behavior." When Vllie asked him why, he said, "Because I care for him

she has rescued since she founded Hope Rides in 2006. Hope Rides is a nonprofit organization that provides horse related mentoring programs for youth. It could easily be confused with the ranch of the popular book "Hope Rising" by Kim Meeder which is about rescued horses that help support and encourage people. Beside the similarity in names, the premise behind Hope Rides is the same - rescuing horses and ponies, rehabilitating them, and offering their special companionship to benefit children. The horses and ponies have a lot to offer and they read and understand each child more efficiently than humans ever could.

"We all have a history or experiences that shape our perspective and when we are in a situation that looks familiar, we have a set of patterned behaviors that we resort back to in efforts to cope..." says Vllie. "Oftentimes we have not learned healthy coping skills so we are paralyzed in our ability to move forward; we feel victimized which further builds our case for reasons to quit. We also see this in relationships between horses that come to live at the ranch after coming from a past of neglect and abuse. They have to learn new skills, just like the youth who come from abusive backgrounds."

Before founding Hope Rides, Vllie started a family and worked in corporate America, but soon felt displaced and returned to her roots with horses. As a child, she had been active in 4-H, WSCA and the show circuit. Later when she left her job, she felt directed to start a youth ranch - a safe, loving, nurturing place where kids could come to spend time with horses and be encouraged to grow into their fullest potential - a place called Hope Rides.

Hope Rides has two ranch sites, one in Mayer, MN and the other in Stacy, MN. The facility in Stacy has 20 acres and includes an indoor barn, an outdoor riding arena and a round pen. The Crow River flows about 500 feet behind the property. The atmosphere is one of peace and harmony to encourage adults to relax and watch as their children play with the horses.

A typical session at the ranch is 90 minutes long. The youth that come participate in a simple farm chore and then are paired one-on-one with a horse and a session leader. The

Continued on next page



Bottom left: The simple task of brushing a horse helps to validate a boy and girl as being important and fosters a caring attitude in them. Photo credit: www.shelleypaulson.com

Top left: The joy on this boy's face expresses his delight as he and Vllie Heitkamp give a high-5 to celebrate his success riding a horse. Photo credit: www.shelleypaulson.com

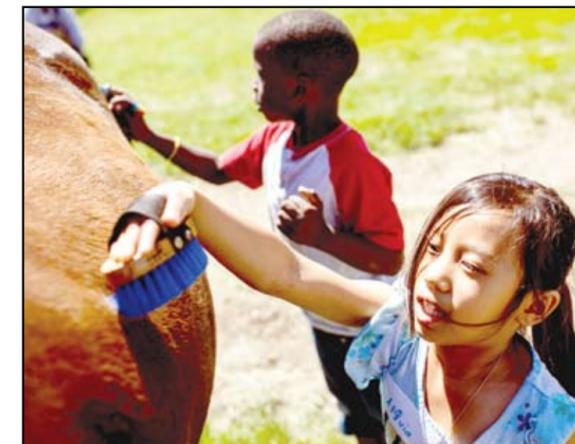
Opposite page: The first connection between child and pony is a very special moment.

Top right corner: The smile on this girl's face is one of unmistakable joy on her first ride.



one-on-one pairing allows each session to be catered specifically to the needs of the child at that moment. This allows each session leader an opportunity to discern what they might do during that time to encourage and support the child.

Even with large groups, there is an organized agenda where each child interacts with a horse and a session leader. Vllie believes



it is fundamental to work side by side with a child to best provide the most teachable and supportive experiences. Her desire is to meet people right where they are at and every aspect of the program is built on a framework of love.

The ranch has a team of volunteers without whom the ranch's purpose wouldn't succeed.

There is no paid staff and all the funds that come into the ranch are needed to support the program. There are no fees for those who utilize the ranch because those who need it the most would never come if there was a fee. The only requirement is that a child wants to be there. Kids range in age from 5 to 18.

Hope Rides also hosts various clinics and events for those

through it and with that energy comes a connection that all living things share," remarks Vllie. "As humans, we have a higher degree of complex and cognitive thinking which I believe makes us responsible to care and be good stewards over those who cannot do that for themselves. Hope Rides strives to encourage, inspire and lift people up. (It) validates children and gives them an opportunity to share in a place that exists specifically for healing and restoration.

"The connection between the kids and horses is amazing. The horse...has herd and prey animal survival instincts which provide countless opportunities for us to learn valuable life lessons and develop relational skills that are applicable to every aspect of life. It is not uncommon to see people come to the ranch (who) are often emotionally and spiritually bankrupt. When they get here and experience the ranch, something happens: spiritual seed is planted and nurtured in them. People... start to feel hope and realize that they are NOT their circumstances. They

interested in improving their equine skill and knowledge. These help to raise money to support the horses, kids and programs. While Hope Rides is a relatively small organization, the number of requests to visit the ranch grows each day.

"Everything in this world that is alive has an energy pulsing

become empowered and are able to explore new possibilities for their lives.

"It is like that with the horses too. As they come here they are often broken down and beat up. Yet with time, love and nurture, they flourish and become capable of reaching back and giving something to those... who need encouragement and hope. It is amazing to watch as these two creatures who are broken and imperfect... become perfect together. To watch a moment happen that was especially created for them and an opportunity for healing and growth to take place is a miracle. To see two creations of God come together and become so perfectly whole together is wonderful!

"There are so many people who are hurting and in need of someone to take notice of them and simply extend a hand to offer help. We hope the ranch will be like a greenhouse that fosters everything living here - that volunteers (as well as visitors) are propelled forward to movement and growth. We believe fully in the uniqueness that each person has and we desire that this place serves as a refuge, a safe zone, a place where people can come and know that they are loved and valued. Everything we do here is built on the framework of love. We hope to encourage kids to be

able to love themselves, their neighbors, their friends, their families and if they choose, to love the Author of love.

For more information, contact: www.hoperides.org 612.310.6350

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Fran Lynghaug is co-author of "Dennis Brouse on Horse Training," author of "The Official Horse Breeds Standards Guide" and "Horses of Distinction." Learn more on her website: www.equestrian-horses.com

Vllie Heitkamp is the founder of a faith-based organization called Hope Rides, a youth ranch located in Minnesota that seeks to mentor hurting youth through the use of horses.



Bring Back the Horse's Instincts

A Letter from Juliet M. Getty, Ph.D.

The issue is free choice forage feeding.

I respect and honor the way horses are made – they are different – unique, really. In a suitable, native environment, they are quite capable of taking care of themselves. They are free to eat and roam and, well, be horses. Domestication involves removing them from their natural setting, but that doesn't change who they are. Horses have physiological and mental needs and those needs are being ignored.

I have very deep convictions on allowing a horse's instincts to take hold. Many horses have lost their ability to express them, but they can resurface. Last month, I wrote about the stress of forage restriction. Some have said that what I am describing appears to be a road to increased obesity and an increased risk of laminitis. But they are grossly mistaken.

When we see images of wild horses running free, we all experience the hush, the chill, and the awe of their power and majesty. That is Nature at her best – allowing these incredible animals to live as they are intended. Why is it that we don't see our own domesticated horses in the same way? Why is it that we think we can confine them to a small area for hours at a time, give them a few "square meals" each day and expect them to be right, physically and mentally? Are they not the same horses that long ago lived a different life?

It's been said that our horses have become different – that horses living in the wild don't suffer from the ravages of insulin resistance, the main cause of laminitis. Yes, it's true -- we don't see laminitis when horses are free to feed themselves. But we do see insulin resistance, and that's a

blessing. Insulin resistance is the body's way of avoiding starvation. During a harsh winter, when the food supply is sparse, horses will hold on to body fat to help them survive. They do this by having an elevated blood insulin level. When insulin is high, the cells cannot release fat. This is a survival mechanism.

We duplicate this when we restrict forage. The horse responds the same way – he is in survival mode! And he holds on to body fat.

Anything that causes insulin to rise will keep a horse fat. Hundreds of studies with humans confirm the connection between elevated insulin and obesity. Stress causes obesity in humans. Why? Because cortisol (the stress hormone) causes insulin to rise. At the cellular level, the same is true for horses. We have equine studies to show how insulin rises during stress. So why isn't this being extrapolated to obesity in horses?

Perhaps it's because it doesn't seem to make sense that eating more causes weight loss. But we know that humans best lose weight by eating small meals throughout the day – grazing, if you will. And we also know that starving oneself will result in weight loss (mostly muscle loss) but will slow down the metabolic rate so dramatically, that the weight comes back on with far fewer calories than it originally took to maintain one's weight. Yet the studies we choose to do using horses involve starving the horse to get him to lose weight. Which he does. And we celebrate. The conventional advice appears to work: Give the horse hay equal to 1.5% of his body weight, keep him in a stall much of the day so he cannot graze, and he loses

weight! And if he doesn't, reduce the amount of hay to 1%! The idiom, "not seeing the forest for the trees," comes to mind. What is the big picture? What are you left with? A horse with less muscle mass, stressed to the max, with a sluggish metabolism so he will never live a normal life of grazing on pasture again. Never.

We have forced our horses to abandon their instincts.

They no longer get the in-



Wild horses from the Theodore Roosevelt National Park near Medora, N.D.

Photo by Ley Bouchard

ner signal that tells them to stop eating. To help you appreciate this, I'd like you to think about your childhood. When you were a toddler, you ate what you needed, and when you were no longer hungry, you stopped eating. Yes, you were coddled to finish your green beans, or no dessert! So you ate more to get that reward. But your instincts (yes, you had them back then) were to eat only what your body required. As you grew, you discovered that eating has more rewards than just getting dessert; eating is comforting, it cures stress, boredom, or disappointment, and is just plain fun! You likely don't eat only when you're hungry; you eat whenever you gather with friends or celebrate a special occasion. And guess what? Now that you're grown, those instincts to

eat only what your body needs have long faded.

Horses are a different story. They do not succumb to the pressures of society to influence their appetites. But when they are forced to eat on our schedules, they quickly become out of touch with that innate ability to eat slowly, a little at a time, and stop when satisfied. Instead, they eat quickly, ravenously, with barely a breath in between each bite, because they do not

a steady flow of forage running through it. The cecum (the hindgut where forage is digested by billions of microbes) has both its entrance and exit at the top, thereby requiring it to be full so material can exit, lest it become impacted.

I appeal to you to look at this logically.

You should not put your horse in a dry lot or a stall with no hay. You should test your hay, make sure it is suitable for the horse (low in sugar, starch, and calories) and put it in lots of slow feeders, placed everywhere you can – encouraging your horse to move! Exercise, even a small amount will make a difference. A larger amount will make a bigger difference.

When a horse loses weight the right way, his metabolic rate stays sound and he will be able to graze on pasture again. Perhaps you will have to limit it a bit, but maybe not. Some supplements may be helpful. I have seen

hundreds of cases over the years where horses have returned to a normal life – healthy, full of vigor, with no grass restrictions.

Let your horse tell you how much he needs to eat.

Show him that he can start trusting his instincts – that's the strong message you want him to understand. And you do that by being invariably trustworthy about feeding. Start by giving him more hay (that you've tested for suitability) than he could possibly eat – enough to last all day and enough so there is some left over in the morning. That means he needs to always have forage available. If he runs out, he will never get the message and will continue to overeat and continue to be fat.

Let me repeat that... If he runs out, even for 10 minutes, he will never get the message and will continue to overeat and continue to be fat. And worse, the hormonal response to this stress can induce a laminitis attack or relapse. I've seen this more times than I can count.

It may take a few weeks (though most of the time it is far shorter than that) for the magic moment to occur – when he walks away from the hay, knowing that it will still be there when he wants it. And then, watch his instincts start to return... just like yours were when you were a small child... where he will eat only what his body needs to be healthy. (You'll notice a beautiful change in his behavior, too.)

I have many, many clients who have put their trust in me and done this for their horses with success. It is not easy to do at first – I understand that. But when done properly, it works – the overweight horse loses weight. The horse with chronic laminitis doesn't suffer any more. The horse with Cushing's disease can live a longer, healthier life. Equine metabolic syndrome becomes a thing of the past. And the owners... ah, the owners... can throw away all that worry and experience the sheer joy that horse ownership can bring.

I know that I am a trail-blazer.

This seems like something new. Actually, if you think about it, it is so old, that it is new! But that's how change happens. We used to feed oats to horses – gallons of oats every day. We now know that a large amount of starch is detrimental. I am encouraged by this change, not only because of its own value,

Continued on next page

Horse's Instincts

Continued from page 14

but because it tells me that there is every likelihood that feeding forage free choice will also come to be accepted as mainstream.

I am doing everything I possibly can to help horse owners and professionals understand this basic, foundational concept. I have 7 years of post-graduate study in the field of animal nutrition. I work completely independently of feed, supplement, and pharmaceutical companies. My approach is based on observation and years of excellent results. There is no better science than that.

New forum offered for free choice feeding

For the growing community of horse owners and managers who allow their horses free choice feeding, I have set up a special forum for you to share your experiences with each other and to let me and others know how you're doing. It is a place for support, celebrations, congratulations, and idea

sharing. Go to jmgetty.blogspot.com.

Please share this article with your fellow horsemen and women. Permission to reprint this article is granted providing that full credit is given to Dr. Getty and publisher informs Dr. Getty about the use of the article. No editorial changes may be made without her approval.

Juliet M. Getty, Ph.D. is an internationally respected, independent equine nutritionist who believes that optimizing horse health comes from understanding how the horse's physiology and instincts determine the correct feeding and nutrition practices. She is the Contributing Nutrition Editor for the Horse Journal, and is available for private consultations and speaking engagements.

Keep learning with Dr. Getty! At www.gettyequinenutrition.com, sign up for her informative, free monthly newsletter, *Forage*

for Thought; browse her library of reference articles; search her nutrition forum; and purchase recordings of her informative teleseminars. You can also pick up copies of her books, including *Dr. Getty's comprehensive reference, Feed Your Horse Like A Horse* along with the various volumes in her *Spotlight on Equine Nutrition Series*, the latest of which—on horse digestion—will be published this fall.

Dr. Getty will be presenting at *Equine Affaire*, in West Springfield, Massachusetts on November 9 and 10. For schedules and other information about *Equine Affaire*, visit www.equineaffaire.com/massachusetts. Contact Dr. Getty directly at gettyequinenutrition@gmail.com.

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ROOTS OF THE LIGHT HORSE BREEDS Iberian Horses

By Janice M. Ladendorf

The tarpan is thought to be one of the main ancestors of most of our modern breeds of light horses. It is an extinct species of wild horse that originally ranged over the Steppes of Eastern Europe and western Russia. Modern archeological research suggests that horses had been domesticated in this area by 5000 B.C. The konik of Poland is believed to be directly descended from the tarpan. The last tarpans were exterminated late in the nineteenth century, but some efforts have been made to re-create their species. Influential as the tarpan may have been, ancestors of our modern breeds also came from Iberia, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

In Spain, prehistoric man left behind many cave paintings. Two types of true wild horses have been identified from these paintings, but only one resembles a tarpan. One is a pony with a dish face and a round eye. The modern garrano pony of Portugal resembles these paintings. The other type is a small horse with an almond shaped eye and a straight or convex nose. It is similar to the tarpan and thought to be the

prehistoric ancestor of the Iberian horse. It has been recognized as one of the true species of wild horse. Some remnants still exist in Portugal and possibly in our feral herds. They have been given a breed name, the Sorraia.

Some experts argue that the horse was tamed in Spain as early as 25,000 B.C. Spanish cave painting dated at 5000 B.C. shows horses being led by humans. By 2000 B.C., the Spanish Horse had been well established as a type. An infusion of oriental blood may have been used to give the prehistoric sorraia more height and refinement. Historically, any oriental breed has often been described as Arabian. This includes the barb and the turkmenian horse. Today we use Arab to describe a specific breed that did not exist in classical times.

The Spanish horse has traditionally been used for war, for hunting, for bullfighting on horseback, and for cattle work. These tasks require a high degree of agility. Today the ones from Spain are usually called andalusians, but their registry in Spain is for the purebred Spanish horse. The Carthusian is

one strain of this ancient breed. The Spanish horses from Portugal are called Lusitanos. The "Alter Real" is one strain of the Lusitano. In older texts, Iberian horses were often called "ginetes" or "jennets."

The Spanish horse has a head with a slightly convex or straight profile, olive shaped eyes, and relatively long ears. Their neck is powerful, set deep at the base, and with a natural arch. Their forelock and mane are long and heavy and their withers are relatively high. Their body is short-coupled with a rounded back. Their sloping croup carries a low set, heavy tail. Their natural gaits are typically semi-collected. Their constitution is strong and hardy and they do well with modest feeding.

Another type of Iberian horse has existed for many centuries. It comes from Asturia, in the northwest corner of Spain. Asturians are not war horses, but gaited horses who amble under their riders. The Celtic pony may have been interbred with the Sorraia to create the Asturian. At a later time, some Andalusian blood may also have been introduced to give them more height and refinement.

Over the centuries, horses from Iberia have had an impact on the development of light horse breeds in many countries. Their influence on the barb of North Africa was so strong that it can be defined as one of the Iberian breeds. The primitive

Sorraia probably traveled from Europe to North Africa over the land bridge that once crossed the Straits of Gibraltar. In later centuries, horses were often shipped back and forth between Spain and North Africa. The barb is thought to be directly descended from the Sorraia and the Spanish horse. The modern barb shares many characteristics with the true Spanish horse, but is smaller and lighter. These changes can easily be explained as an adaptation to a hotter climate.

The Romans soon discovered that the compact, powerful, agile, and hardy Spanish horses made ideal mounts for their cavalry. They established many breeding farms in both Andalusia and Portugal. In their day, the Lusitano became known as the son of the wind. The cavalry mounts the Romans bred in Iberia traveled with them throughout their empire. Many of them were stallions and they may have been used to upgrade the native breeds.

During the eighth century, the Spanish were fighting off the invading Moors. To defeat them, the Spanish had to use a fighting style that demanded an extremely fast, handy horse. The invasions began in 710 A.D., and the Moors brought many horses from North Africa with them. At that time, the Arab breed had barely been established so the invaders rode barbs. For traveling fast over broken ground, some experts believe the barb is superior to the Arabian horse. Since Iberian horses existed long before this invasion, the Andalusian could not have been created at this time by crossing Arabs or barbs on a cold blooded horse, like the Norse dun. The Vikings settled in France and may have brought horses with them, but they only raided in Iberia.

By the time the Moors had been driven out of

Spain, the superior qualities of Spanish horses had made them famous. Into the seventeenth century, Spanish horses were in great demand at every court in Western Europe. They were particularly adept at the new art of dressage. Other Iberian horses had also spread into Western Europe. For example, barbs were used as dressage horses and excelled as hunters. Before the Arabian breed reached Europe, Iberian horses helped create the foundation stock for some of our modern breeds, such as the Lipizzaner.

When the Spanish discovered the New World, for a few years they shipped many horses to the Caribbean Islands. These shipments probably included Andalusians, Sorraias, Asturians, and a few ponies. These animals were not always of the highest quality, and only the toughest could survive the arduous ocean voyage. From the islands, they spread all over North and South America with Spanish settlers. Many were stolen by various indigenous tribes or escaped into feral herds. Judging from the modern criollo breeds of South America, they may have received fewer Andalusians there than we did in North America.

When the Europeans began arriving to North America, they found these horses and began crossing the right types with imported European horses. Breeding for type began early; horses were bred for war, for herding cattle, for endurance, for games, for parades, and for ambling gaits. Many of our modern breeds evolved from these crosses. One of the best known examples is the quarter horse.

In the late nineteenth century, the Spanish began introducing some Arab and thoroughbred blood into the Andalusian. Most of them no

longer look like the horses who came here with the Conquistadors. By the eighteenth century, the Portuguese began importing Lusitanos directly to their colonies in Brazil. Since the Portuguese choose not to mix the Lusitano with other breeds, their horses stayed true to the old Iberian type. The modern Lusitano, some of the Brazilian breeds, and the Spanish Mustangs still show the stamp of the ancient Iberian Horse.

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A Perfect 10 for Chester Weber

Ocala, FL - Four-in-hand combined driver Chester Weber made American four-in-hand driving history at the at the Kentucky Classic CDE, October 4-6, at Lexington's Kentucky Horse Park. Team Weber set a new milestone for the sport by winning an unprecedented 10th national championship.

Weber held a 16-penalty lead heading into Sunday's cones phase and, despite drenching rains, orchestrated a 9.06-penalty performance from the quartet of Dutch warmbloods he co-owns with Jane Clark to secure the win and his place in USEF Four-in-Hand National Championship history. Weber finished on a total score of 141.20, reserve went to U.S. driving squads veteran, Jimmy Fairclough, of Newtown, NJ (173.95).

Weber said of his team, "They operated like a dream. I was especially happy with the dressage and cones phases." In dressage, Weber put Boris and Para in the wheel, and Ultra and Splash in the lead. For marathon and cones, it was Boris and Splash in the wheel, and Boy and Ultra to lead.

"Boris," he said of the popular wheel horse, "continues to improve." What also continues to improve is Team Weber's record as the 2014 World Equestrian Games in Normandy next summer draw closer. "Without a doubt, our European experience was invaluable, as it always proves to be, across all disciplines. We finished the season with a record of two wins and two third-place finishes, and I feel that has to leave us as



a favorite for a medal next summer. With that said, winners train and losers complain, so back to training we go."

Training led to a string of success in Europe including wins at the 2014 WEG test event at CAI-Caen, and the CAI-A Saumur, and top three finishes at Beekbergen and Aachen. Add this landmark 10th consecutive national title and Weber's 2013 campaign is sure to go down as one of the greatest ever.

"Our immediate plans include tackling the Florida shows and spending the next season bringing along more depth to the team with Ringo and Zeppelin," he said. But first, four-in-hand's newly-minted 'perfect 10' is judging, October 10-13 at the Shady Oaks CDE in Lodi, CA.

Follow Team Weber and the official Cosequin® Marathon Carriage at www.chesterweber.com and via a link to Facebook.

Photo above: Chester Weber and his team on their way to a tenth National Four-in-Hand Championship. (Photo courtesy of Chester Weber.)

Hay Bank Seeks Donations

The Minnesota Hay Bank, a food bank for horses begun by the Minnesota Horse Welfare Coalition, is seeking funding.



Based on a successful model used in other states such as Michigan and Oregon, the Minnesota Hay Bank works with reputable hay and feed suppliers throughout the state to secure hay and distribute it to pre-screened, qualifying horse owners.

"Our goal is to raise \$23,000 by December," says co-founder Stacy Bettison. "This will help us achieve our fundraising goal of \$30,000 for the year. We are an all-volunteer organization, and every dollar raised goes to getting hay to horses in need."

Launched in December 2012, the Minnesota Hay Bank has an incredible record of success in helping horses. It has received over 27 applications, fed over 220 horses and has distributed approximately \$13,000 in feed assistance since it began.

All applicants are screened to ensure that the hay bank funds are used to

support responsible horse owners. In addition to an extensive application process, on-site visits, reference checks, veterinarian checks, and follow-up phone calls are part of the due-diligence activities.

"We expect high hay prices may, unfortunately, be the 'new normal,'" states Bettison. "This past spring many fields suffered winter injury, and many farmers are planting less hay. The Minnesota Hay Bank will continue to be a critical resource for horse owners who need extra help."

Individuals or companies interested in making tax-deductible donations can get more information at the Minnesota Hay Bank website at <http://minnesotahorsewelfare.org/donate/>

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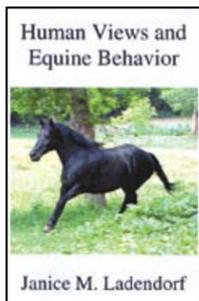
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Upcoming Events

Call Before You Haul

Nov. 7-10: AZ Cutting Horse Assoc. from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Center at Queen Creek, AZ.

Nov. 8-10: Susan Norman 'Riding in Lightness' Clinic at the Timberlein Ranch in Stacy, Mn. Contact: Stacy Blaisdell 612-418-1706 stacyb@bwig.net Trudy Midas 612 210-4489 trudy@espanaproducts.com

Nov. 9-10: Queen Creek Jr. Rodeo from 8 a.m. to noon at the Horseshoe Park Equestrian Center in Queen Creek, AZ.

See your events listed here, email us at: thevenews@gmail.com

Nov. 9: Jackpot Fall UBRA Barrels and Game Show at R&J Arena at 9 a.m. at Verndale, MN. More info at: 218-445-5849

Nov. 9: Game Clinic at Rush Meadow Farm Performance Horses at 10 a.m. in Delano, MN. For information contact: 763-258-4972

Nov. 9: Fun Show, UBRA Barrels and Game Show, Buckle Series, at R&J Arena 10 a.m. at Verndale, MN. Contact 218-445-5849 for more information.

Nov. 9: Cowboy/Cowgirl Luncheon at Hope Glen Farm, in Cottage Grove, MN., at 11:55 a.m. Call 952-758-6849 for more information.

Nov. 15-17: Chasing Cans Barrel Events hosted by SC Productions Show at the Minnesota Equestrian Center in Winona, Minn.

Nov. 16-17: CMSA Mamma Jean's Revenge 1 and II at the Red River Valley Show Indoor Arena in Crookston, Minn.



& Equestrian Centre at Queen Creek, Az.

Nov. 22-24: 5th Annual NBHA Fall Finale at the Iowa Equestrian Center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Call 641-919-8547 for more information.

Nov. 23: Jackpot Fall UBRA Barrels and Game Show at R&J Arena at 9 a.m. in Verndale, MN. Phone 218-445-5849 for more information.

Nov. 23: Fun Show, UBRA Barrels and Game Show-Buckle Series at R&J Arena 10 a.m. at Verndale, MN. Call 218-445-5849 for more information.

Nov. 16: November Tack and Horse Sale at R&J Arena at 10 a.m. at Verndale, MN. Call for more info: 218-445-5849

See your events listed here, email us at: thevenews@gmail.com

Nov. 16-17: Game show at Hi Circle Vee Ranch at 10 a.m. Isanti, MN contact 763-689-4053 for more information.

Nov. 16: Linda Parelli Brown Memorial Roping from 9 a.m. at Horseshoe Park and Equestrian Center in Queen Creek, Az.

Nov. 16-17: Chandler Vacqueros Saddle Club Gymkhana from noon to 4 p.m. at the Horseshoe Park in Queen Creek, Az.

Nov. 23: Wisconsin Girls Barrel Racing Association Fall Tack Swap & Vendor Sale with the Loyal Order of Moose -3606 Curvew Road, at 10:30 a.m. in Eau Claire, WI., call 715-577-5536 for more information.

Nov. 29-Dec.1: Central MN Team Penning at Red Horse Ranch in Fergus Falls, Mn 651-277-1095

Dec. 14: CSMA Winter Series I at the M&D Arena in Anoka, Minn.

Dec. 14: Annual Christmas Special Tack and Horse Sale at R&J Arena at 10 a.m. Verndale, MN. Call 218-445-5849 for more information.

Dec. 21: Game Show at Hi Circle Vee Ranch at 10 a.m. at Isanti, MN. Call: 763-689-4053 - WSCA Qualifying Game Show. Heated indoor arena. Ribbons 1st-6th, High Point trophies, Sidepot Classes. \$5 office fee, \$5 per class.

Jan. 11, 2014: 28th NWHC Sleigh and Cutter Rally at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center in Ashland, Wisc., contact Charlie Singler at 715-682-5544 or Julie Dahlberg at 715-897-2141

Jan. 31, 2014: Bulls Barrels and Broncs at R&J Arena 6 p.m. at Verndale, MN. Call 218-445-5849 for more information.

See your events listed here, email us at: thevenews@gmail.com

Classified Section

Besser, continued from pg 3

ventures, Besser has "been there." Breeding and raising race horses, winning with them, learning about equine health the hard way through prolonged illness, starting a business in a tough market, she's had the experience. Besser knows that starting a business, dealing with challenges, or a new adventure is never easy but believes, "There will ALWAYS be obstacles to overcome. If you are on the path of God, He will provide you with the help you need to overcome." Motivated by a desire to help horses and their owners, she says, "I pray for horse owners that want healthy horses to buy my feed."

Besser hasn't lost her sense of humor, either: "Fritz still likes his butt rubbed."

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From the Horse's Mouth: Industry News

U.S. Stands in Seventh Following the Marathon at the 2013 FEI Pony World Driving Championships

By Helen Murray

Pau, France-The United States sent six drivers onto the marathon on Saturday at the 2013 FEI Pony World Driving Championships and finished the day in seventh place on a total of 426.7. The Netherlands leads the field on a score of 326.2, with Germany currently in Silver medal position on 351.9, and Hungary occupies third place with a total of 370.9.

In the Single Pony Championship, the U.S. was represented by Tracey Morgan and Paul Maye. Morgan (Beallsville, Md.) drove her own Fuego 88 to 17th place on the marathon with a score of 74.61. The 2013 National Champion heads into the cones on Sunday in ninth place on a two-phase total of 123.38. Maye (Fairfield, Va.) and Harmony Sport-horses' Markus stand on an overall total of 135.47 in 20th place after finishing the marathon in 21st place and adding 76.08 to their score on Sunday.

Sebastien Pallen of Belgium was the winner of the marathon in the Singles division on a score of 64.85. Hungary's Martin Holle leads the championship on a score of 110.46

closely followed by Els Broekman of The Netherlands on 112.32 and Great Britain's Rosann Walters-Symons on 113.82.

In the Pair Pony Championship, U.S. drivers Wendy O'Brien and Jennifer Matheson did not have the days they hoped for after



Lisa Stroud (Mary Phelps-phelpspphotos.com)

incurring trouble on the marathons. O'Brien (Aiken, S.C.) and her own pony pair added 97.84 penalties to their overall score after finishing 21st on the marathon. She will head into the cones in 19th place on a score of 151.98. Matheson (Aiken, S.C.) and Katrina Becker's ponies had difficulty early in the course and retired in the second hazard.

Hungary's Kristof Osztertag was the winner of the marathon in the Pair Championship with a score of 68.43. Ewoud Boom of The Netherlands holds to

the lead after the marathon on a score of 107.18, with Germany's Marco Freund second on 112.50 and Great Britain's Anna Grayston stands third on 119.26.

Lisa Stroud and Katie Whaley produced top-12 results for the U.S. on the marathon in the Pony Team Championship. Stroud (West Grove, Pa.) added 93.64 to her overall total after placing 11th on the marathon. The nine-time National Champion heads into the cones on a score of 151.37 in 10th place. Whaley (Paris, Ky.) and Mia Allo's team finished the marathon in 12th place on a score of 93.93 and stands on an overall total of 157.16 in 12th place.

Bram Chardon of The Netherlands won the marathon on a score of 72.60 in the Pony Team Championship. Chardon also leads the field on a total of 106.71, fellow Dutchman Jan De Boer is second on 120.39 and Hungary's Jozsef Dobrovitz Jr. is third with a score of 121.47.

To learn more about the 2013 FEI Pony World Driving Championships visit: <http://www.couleurs-automne.com/en/welcome>

EXPERIENCE THE INCREDIBLE EQUINE ARTISTRY OF MA'CEO!

Enter the secret world of Ma'Ceo, where the age-old fellowship of man and horse is brought to life through mysterious gypsy tales where the swirling winds of passion envelop you. Multiple generations of skilled, graceful performers have led to the creation of Ma'Ceo, an equestrian extravaganza featuring daredevil stunt work of unparalleled splendor combining various equestrian and circus techniques — traditional dressage, aerial performance, Cossack riding and vaulting — performed by world-class acrobats and riders.

"It is our dream to show the world the relationship we share with our horses, and the sheer excitement that they bring to all the lives they touch," explains Olissio Zoppe, Ma'Ceo Show Director and owner of Cavallo Equestrian Arts. Cavallo Equestrian Arts will bring their traveling show to the Midwest Horse Fair in a special performing area. The unique tent,

which will be set up on the grounds of the Alliant Energy Center, will bring a long forgotten art-form back to modern times and will excite audiences of all ages! The amazing and experienced artists from Ma'Ceo have performed



in renowned shows such as Cavalia, Cirque Du Soleil, Arabian Nights, and Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus. Nearly ten different breeds of horse perform the most classic of riding styles, from dressage to gypsy bareback, in

a high-energy, fully choreographed, multi-cultural experience that keeps audiences on the edge of their seats — all set to a rich tapestry of acoustic gypsy music that sets the scene for the action-packed performance. A break from today's age of frills and technology, the world of Ma'Ceo will take you back in time to the roots of gypsy and circus heritage, reveal the traditional and diverse art forms of acrobatics and horsemanship, and unveil the beauty and intensity of the origins of circus performance. Ma'Ceo is truly an unforgettable experience. Ma'Ceo is produced by Cavallo Equestrian Arts, and will be performed twice daily on Friday, April 11 and Saturday, April 12, and once on Sunday, April 13 at the 2014 Midwest Horse Fair. Show times to be announced. A separate ticket is required for admission to Ma'Ceo. Tickets will go on sale January 6, 2014

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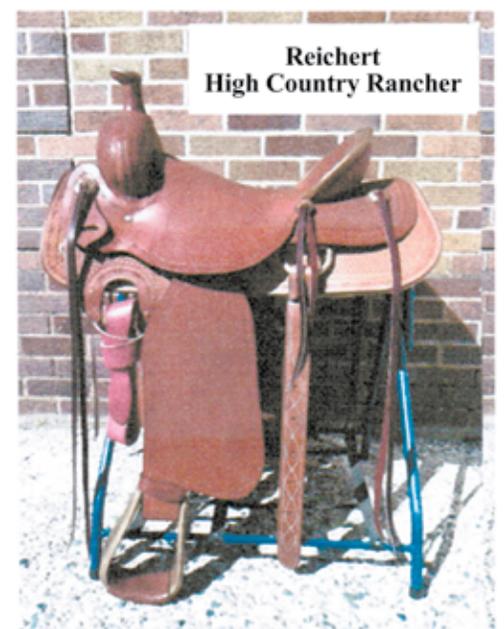
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