

Issue One

THE

2023

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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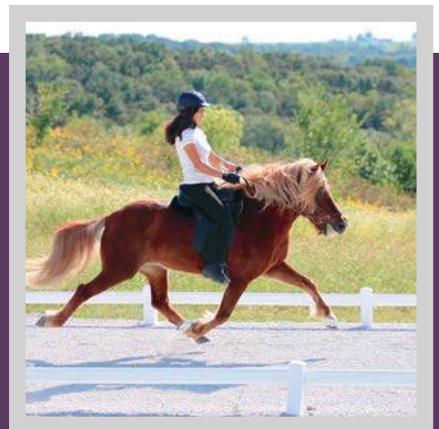
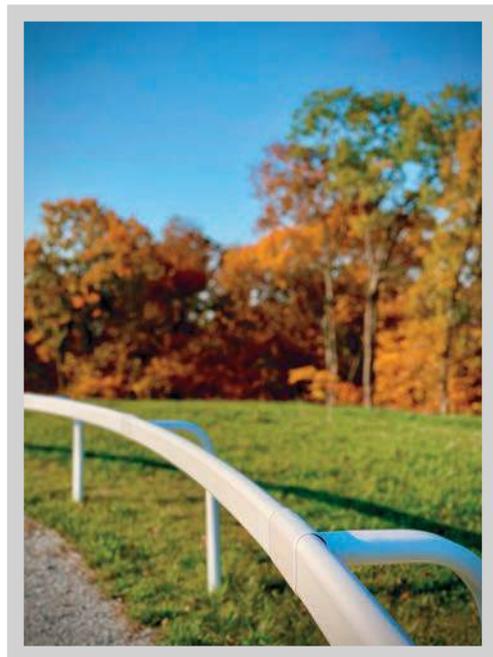
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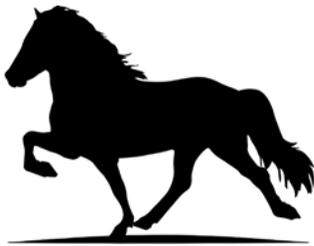
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ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y

THE ICELANDIC HORSE QUARTERLY
Issue One 2023

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On the cover: Muddy Buddies! Two 2022
colts, Valtýr from Sand Meadow (black
pinto) and Kristall from Sand Meadow
(chestnut with splash) dry off after rough-
housing outside in the mud. Born only
weeks apart, they are best friends. Valtýr
was imported in utero; his dam is first prize
Valkyrja frá Lambeyrum and his sire is the
highest evaluated stallion of all time, Viðar
frá Skör. Kristall is the last offspring of Sand
Meadow's beloved first prize mare Sæðis
frá Melabergi and their stallion Strákur frá
Vatnsleysu. We look forward to watch-
ing these special colts mature. Photo by
Andrea Barber.

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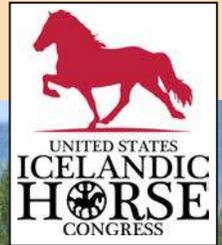
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THE USIHC MISSION

- 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 21 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

WHY JOIN THE USIHC?

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. By joining the USIHC, you connect to a worldwide network of experts to help you care for, ride, train, breed, and learn more about your horse.

The USIHC is the umbrella organization for 13 regional clubs; activity clubs can also be formed.

Our Registry links to WorldFengur, the worldwide database of all registered Icelandic horses (USIHC members have free access to WorldFengur), and we publish *The Icelandic Horse Quarterly*, maintaining an online archive of all issues since 2008.

The USIHC sponsors scientific research on the Icelandic horse, helps promote the Icelandic horse at expos and through social media, supports educational seminars and events like the American Youth Cup, organizes leisure activities like the Sea 2 Shining Sea virtual ride, creates teaching tools like the Riding Badge Program, and offers practical and

monetary support to organizers of shows and clinics.

The Icelandic horse has international competition rules: You can compete in the same classes and receive comparable scores in any FEIF member country. Likewise, 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 ridden abilities. The USIHC helps organize sport and breeding shows that conform to FEIF rules.

The USIHC is responsible for the U.S. teams at the FEIF Icelandic Horse World Championships, the FEIF Youth Cup, and the FEIF Youth Camp. Through FEIF, the USIHC votes on rules and policies that affect the welfare of the Icelandic horse worldwide.

As a member of the USIHC, your dues and registration fees make all this possible. Our board members and committee chairs are all volunteers. As a member-driven organization, the USIHC grows stronger the more active and involved our members become. Please join us so that the USIHC can, as FEIF's mission states, "bring people together in their passion for the Icelandic horse."

TRAINER OF THE YEAR

The USIHC nominated Caeli Cavanagh for the 2023 FEIF Trainer/Instructor of the Year award. Since graduating from Iceland's Hólar University in 2018, Caeli has built one of the premier training facilities in the US, Alfadans Equestrian Arts. There she and her business partner, Alexandra Venable, teach people and horses of all ages and levels how to ride and train in mental and physical balance. Caeli uses both traditional dressage techniques as well as liberty training to hone the bodies and minds of horse-and-rider pairs. This year has been especially busy and successful for Caeli, securing her the highest National Ranking in both Four and Five Gait, as well as second position in T1 and T2. In addition, Caeli received the most nominations in the world in 2022 for Good and Harmonious Riding at World Ranking competitions (see below).

However, what she is most proud of this year was the Trainer's Certification Committee, which designed the first ever United States program for certifying Icelandic trainers into the FEIF Matrix. The Trainer's Certification Committee was the brainchild of Caeli and Carrie Brandt, and was realized alongside the work of trainers Laura Benson, Jana Meyer, Alexandra Pregitzer, and Virginia Lauridsen. Their combined efforts resulted in the first-ever USIHC Trainer Certification exam this past July, which certified three new trainers (including Virginia, who is profiled in this issue) into the FEIF matrix.



Lisa McKeen of Washington was the October Leisure Rider of the Month. Photo by Lauren Murphy.



Caeli Cavanagh leads FEIF's Good and Harmonious Riding list with the most nominations in the 2022 competition season. She was also the USIHC's choice for FEIF Trainer of the Year. Photo by Will Covert.

HARMONIOUS RIDERS

Congratulations to USIHC member Caeli Cavanagh (FT Association member, FEIF Trainer Level 3), who leads FEIF's Good and Harmonious Riding list with the most nominations in the 2022 competition season. Only 140 riders out of the 2,700 who competed at World Ranking Events around the world in 2022 received nominations, which are separate from their competition scores. Caeli, the trainer at Alfadans Equestrian Arts in Oregon, was nominated eight times at five different WorldRanking events.

According to FEIF, "FEIF's continued push to improve riding skills also advances the welfare of our beloved Icelandic horse. This becomes obvious on FEIF's list of riders singled out for Good and Harmonious Riding. These riders—independent of their marks—demonstrate they clearly put the horse first in the presentation. FEIF International Judges are invited to nominate riders because of their fine riding style. These names are published together with the total number of nominations received each year."

Also on the list are USIHC members Laura Benson of Valkyrie Icelandics and Paetra Henningar of Léttleiki Icelandics.

The full list of riders nominated for Good and Harmonious Riding can be seen here: <https://www.feif.org/sport-dept/worldranking/good-harmonious-riding/>.

SEA 2 SHINING SEA

Registration opened in January for the 2023 Sea 2 Shining Sea (S2SS) virtual ride, organized by the USIHC Leisure Committee. This year's route is 2,400 miles long and follows the historical Route 66 from Chicago, IL to Santa Monica, CA. For an additional challenge, teams can reverse the route and return to Chicago, for a total of 4,800 miles. Each checkpoint counts for 150 miles, or about 38 hours of riding. The ride ends on December 31, 2023.

The S2SS ride is open to all USIHC members and is included in your membership. You can participate as an individual or on a team of up to six members. Since the S2SS is designed for leisure riders, you participate by riding or driving your Icelandic horse however you like—so long as you are not being paid for your time. Hours count when you are one-on-one with your horse, not watching someone else's lesson or auditing a clinic. Groundwork (lunging, liberty, etc.) does not count for the S2SS ride. Using the online form, you log your riding (or driving) time each week; that time is automatically converted to distance at four miles-per-hour.

Horses used in the ride must be Icelandic horses, either fully registered or having obtained a participation number from USIHC after being DNA verified. Registered horses do not have to be registered in the United States; any FEIF member country's registry or WorldFengur is acceptable. You do not need to own the horse you ride.

For more information and to register, see: <https://icelandics.org/blog/registration-is-open-for-the-2023-sea-2-shining-sea-ride>. Once you're registered, join the S2SS Facebook page and share photos and stories about your ride at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1866794093559110/>.

VIRTUAL EDUCATION SERIES

In January the USIHC began a four-part virtual series of education seminars. On January 28, Icelandic farrier Sigurður Torfi Sigurðsson discussed leg and hoof anatomy and best practices for shoeing. On February 18, FEIF International breeding judge William Flugge discussed how a horse's conformation affects its movement.

On March 25, Icelandic saddle fitter

Guðmundur Arnarson will discuss the unique physical characteristics of the Icelandic horse to consider when purchasing a saddle. And on April 22, USIHC Sport Judges Jana Meyer and Alex Pregitzer will offer an introduction to the gaits of the Icelandic horse.

For more information or to register see: <https://bit.ly/Harmony-USIHC-Education>.

NATIONAL RANKING

The USIHC National Rank is a system to compare the results of riders at selected Icelandic horses shows, both live and virtual, all over the US. There are classes/tests included at all levels of competition.

The USIHC Sport Committee started the National Rank in 2007. It is a continuous system. After each National Ranking show is closed and approved by the Sport Leader, its scores are incorporated into the National Rank. As of January, the National Ranking list has been set back to calculate scores from the last two years. Moving forward, scores older than two years will be dropped.

Leading the lists at the close of the 2022 show season, with the test and their score in parentheses are, in the Five Gait classes: Caeli Cavanagh (F1, 6.53), Heidi Benson (F2, 5.57), Samantha Harrigan (F3, 5.53), and Jaime Jackson (P2, 12.7 seconds).

In the Tölt classes: Ásta D. Bjarnadóttir-Covert (T1, 7.39), Laura Benson (T2, 6.79 and T4, 7.27), Jeff Rose (T3, 5.90), Lori Cretney (T6, 5.95), Samantha Harrigan (T6, 5.67), Eveline Clark (T7, 5.80), Emelia Stewart (T8, 6.50).

In the Four Gait Classes: Caeli Cavanagh (V1, 6.75), Alexandra Venable (V2, 6.34), Jackie Harris (V3, 5.82), Emelia Stewart (V5, 5.90 and V6, 6.33).

In the US Bred Green Horse Classes: Álfasyrpa from Aslan's Country, ridden by Kydee Sheetz (Tölt, 6.00); Viðar from Five-Gait Farm, ridden by Lucy Nold (Four Gait, 5.77).

For the complete list, see <https://icelandics.org/national-rider-rank-listing>.

VIRTUAL SHOWS

The USIHC Virtual Spring Show is now open for submissions. Riders must register by May 12 and submit their videos by May

19. For more information, see <https://icelandics.org/virtualshow/>.

The 2022 Virtual Fall Show took place from May 21 to November 11. Both National Ranking and Fun Classes were offered, as well as Division Championships. The show featured five judges, including FEIF International Judges Þorgeir Guðlaugsson, Hulda Geirsdóttir, and Sophie Kovac, and US Sport Judges B Alexandra Montan Gray and Coralie Denmeade. The show had a total of 105 entries.

Division Results were: Open Four Gait Champion Asta Covert & Gígur frá Ketilsstöðum and Reserve Laura Benson & Geysir frá Kvistum. Open Five Gait Champion: Laura Benson & Lykill frá Stóra-Ási and Reserve Sara Boehart & Hjálpr frá Ármóti.

Intermediate Four Gait Champion Lori Cretney & Baldursbrá from Winterhorse Park and Reserve Leslie Chambers & Krummi from Thor Icelandics. Intermediate Five Gait Champion Samantha Harrigan & Þeyr frá Ytra-Vallholti and Reserve Barbara Chilton & Sjáandi frá Goðhamri.

Novice Champion Carrie Kozubal & Tigull frá Hrólfstaðahelli and Reserve Katie Daly & Villingur frá Hemlu II. Novice Horse Champion: Paetra Hannigar & Bryndís from Creekside Farm

Youth Champion Finja Meyer-Hoyt & Kænska frá Grafarkoti and Reserve Arianna DeForge & Friða frá Akranesi.

Green Horse Champion: Caeli Cavanagh & Fálki from Red Feather and Reserve Lori Cretney & Harekur von der Igelsburg.

For complete scores, see <https://icelandics.org/blog/2022-usihc-virtual-fall-show-results-and-videos>.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Try-outs for the US Team at the 2023 World Championships in Oirschot, the Netherlands, will be held as part of the Virtual Spring Show. To qualify for the team, riders must achieve the scores used to compete at the master level in Iceland: T1 (6.5), T2 (6.2), V1 (6.2), and F1 (6.0). Riders must qualify on the horse they will take to the Netherlands. For the full US Team Selection Criteria, see https://icelandics.org/client_media/files/docs/2023WCTryouts.pdf.

For more information on the virtual

show format, see <https://icelandics.org/virtualshow/>. For information on the 2023 World Championships, see <https://www.wc2023.nl/>.

RIDERS OF THE MONTH

Each month the USIHC Leisure Committee randomly chooses a rider in the Sea 2 Shining Sea Virtual Ride (S2SS) to be the Rider of the Month. This quarter's riders are Lisa McKeen, Misty Kiana Bohnert, and Lori Birge.

Lisa lives in Bellingham, WA and owns three Icelandics: Elska from Extreme Farms, Salina from Evans Farm, and Vakning frá Ytri-Kongsbakka. Her goals as a rider are "to spend time with my mares moving," she says. "Every step is a positive one in our relationships and physical health." As a trail rider, she likes "teaming with my horses, facing new challenges." She says, "I'm myself completely and wholly on the back of my horses. It's healing, meditative, and joyful." Of her Icelandic horses, she treasures most their "willingness to become a true and respected partner with their human."

Misty lives in Wasilla, AK. She owns six Icelandics, with two "on the way," both offspring of Flugar frá Skálakoti. Her goal as a rider is to be able to train her horses to evaluation level, from start to finish. As a trail rider, she loves pushing herself and her horses. "We jump logs, cross rivers, slide down scree slopes, and climb mountain trials. We go brush popping, picking our way



Misty Kiana Bohnert of Alaska was the November Leisure Rider of the Month. Photo by Ellen Halverson.

over deadfalls and around patches of Devil's Club, while avoiding wandering moose, and learning not to spook at grouse and spruce hens exploding underfoot." She and her horses "build a bond of trust far beyond what you get by just riding in an arena. You have to be able to depend on each other in what can literally be life-threatening situations."

Lori lives in Yakima, WA and has two Icelandics: Geisli from Vermont Icelandic Horse Farm (24) and Kappi from Silver Creek (7). Lori rides mostly in the arena, "so trail riding is a nice change" and S2SS encourages her to get out. At home, she says, "I work with a dressage trainer. My horses have benefited from the training, and I enjoy it. My trainer had never worked with a gaited horse before, but she has learned a lot and ultimately a horse is a horse. We will never ride at Grand Prix level and that's okay, but the training is good for both horse and rider. Our local dressage club offers gaited horse tests, so I have ridden Geisli up to First Level at schooling shows. I have also worked at the Knapamerki tests and passed Level 3 last summer."

NEW TRAINER

Congratulations to Alex Venable, who passed all requirements for FEIF Trainer Level 1 certification. As reported in the last issue of the Quarterly, the first fast-track exams for USIHC trainer certification were held last fall. Candidates who did not pass all 13 exams on the first try have the opportunity to be tested again in the subjects they missed, and Alex succeeded upon a retest.

The US trainer certification system was developed by a task force within the USIHC Education Committee. This Trainer's Certification Committee consisted of five certified and experienced trainers—Laura Benson, Carrie Brandt, Caeli Cavanagh, Jana Meyer, and Alexandra Pregitzer—with Virginia Lauridsen as liaison to the USIHC Board and overall manager. In addition, Nicole Kempf and Silke Feuchthofen from Germany (both FEIF Trainers Level 4), master trainers Mette Manseth and Eyjólfur Ísólffsson from Iceland, and FEIF International Sport Judge Will Covert provided guidance.

By successfully conducting the first



Lori Birge of Washington was the December Leisure Rider of the Month. Photo by Deb Mathieu.

fast-track FEIF Trainer Level 1 exams in 2022, the committee reached an important milestone. Future goals include offering fast-track testing at least once per year, with rolling applications on the USIHC website and tests offered based on the applicants' locations and the availability of host sites. A second goal is to continue to review and improve the exams. A third goal is to develop educational modules for all parts of the exam. Finally, our own team of judges and educators needs to be developed in order to certify our trainers.

BREEDING

In its fall meetings, the USIHC Breeding Committee discussed opportunities for offering foal and/or young horse evaluations. They are working on an unofficial and flexible approach, where the organizer can choose the setup, as long as the judge is experienced in foal and young horse evaluations. Unless the organizer chooses to use the FIZO-defined setup for these evaluations, the effort would most appropriately belong under the purview of the Education Committee.

DRESSAGE AWARDS

2022 was the second year in which the USIHC took part in the U.S. Dressage Federation's All-Breeds Program. Designed to recognize the accomplishments of specific breeds in dressage, these awards are

presented to horses declared for a participating registry/organization with the USDF. Two USIHC members received 2022 awards in the Open First Level: Virginia Lauridsen with Herkúles from Dalalíf, and Paetra Hennigar with Ísak from Four Winds.

For more information on the USDF All-Breeds awards, see <https://icelandics.org/usdf-all-breeds-awards> or email Janet Mulder at awards@icelandics.org.

YOUTH CUP

Lucy Nold reported at the December Board Meeting that a group of organizers is working on plans for an American Youth Cup in the summer of 2023. For more information, contact Lucy at youth@icelandics.org.

USIHC ANNUAL MEETING

The 2023 Annual Meeting was held by Zoom on February 25, beginning at 12 pm EST. The guest speaker was Henning Drath.

BOARD MEETINGS

The USIHC Board of Directors met by Zoom call on October 10, November 15, and December 15. Complete minutes, including the monthly Treasurer's and Secretary's reports, committee reports, and the annual budget, can be found online at <https://icelandics.org/minutes>. USIHC members are encouraged to listen in on board meetings. The agenda and information on how to connect are posted on the USIHC website the weekend before.

Newly elected board members were welcomed in January. Virginia Lauridsen was elected president and Sara Stewart volunteered as secretary; Ásta Covert became chair of the Sport Committee. See the article "Meet the Board" in this issue.

At the December meeting, the Board discussed two Sport Committee proposals to change the way scores count toward the US National Ranking. The first idea was to introduce a new rule that scores should involve more than one judge. The second idea was to change the data collection period to one year. While the Board was sympathetic to these proposals, a software update to implement the new rules would cost at least \$4,000-5,000, and concerns were raised whether the benefits would justify the cost.

THANKS WILL COVERT!

The USIHC Board of Directors would like to acknowledge the time-honored leadership of USIHC President Will Covert and to congratulate him on his recent election to the FEIF Board of Directors.

Due to this well-deserved achievement, Will stepped down in December from the USIHC Board, as FEIF board members may not fill a comparable position in a national association.

Notably, Will has held numerous leadership roles in the USIHC: Sport Leader (2008–2020), member of the Board of Directors (2015–2022), USIHC President (2016–2022), and Education Co-Chair (2019–2022).

Regarding his activities and accomplishments, Will guided the Sport Committee to developing a stronger connection and working partnership with the Education Committee. Specifically, he was instrumental in developing the Sport Judge Seminars and served as an advisor to the Trainer Certification Committee; both initiatives have led to continued education and certifications for sport judges and trainers in the US.

His connections in the Icelandic horse world have also greatly benefited our membership, for example by increasing rider education through recruiting high-quality sport judges for National Ranking events. Additionally, Will worked to improve the process of qualifying for the World Championship



Above, Will and Bella Covert enjoy a father-daughter ride in 2021 on the competition track at their Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. Middle, Will judges at the first American Youth Cup. Below, Will won the gold medal at the 1999 World Championships in Loose Rein Tölt (T2). It remains the only gold medal won by a US rider.



team, in order to support and elevate opportunities for riders here in the US.

As USIHC President, Will's leadership style encouraged people to present new ideas or to expand upon existing ones. In the process, Will accomplished things both collaboratively and quietly in the background, with a constructive and solution-oriented mindset. He has been an invaluable resource and mentor, and his extensive knowledge of breeding, sport, and education has strengthened USIHC's efforts regarding our mission to promote the knowledge of the Icelandic horse within the United States and its correct use as a competition and riding horse.

We are grateful for Will's leadership, for his generosity with his knowledge and time, and for the international connections he has facilitated for the USIHC. While he acted in numerous roles for the USIHC, it was consistently evident that we were all colleagues and friends working toward the same goal. We look forward to his impact internationally, while he serves on the FEIF Board of Directors, and his continued work for the Icelandic horse.

With gratitude,
the USIHC Board of Directors



COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The 2022 FEIF committee meetings took place from October 14-15 in Haarlem, the Netherlands. Below is a summary of the discussions in the different committees. The committee meetings were also the start of the FEIF strategy process, to make sure that there is a clear view of the future of FEIF.

The Breeding and Breeding Judges committees used their joint meeting to finalize the proposals for the Delegates' Assembly in 2023, as well as to prepare proposals for the annual Breeding meeting. The welfare of the horse, as well as further standardization, were the main topics for discussion, regarding registration in WorldFengur, equipment, and presentation at breeding shows. Further agenda points were the requirements for the breeding judge exam, ensuring the highest quality of judging, and the organization of seminars for new judges, representatives of national breeding committees, young breeding-horse trainers, and ringmasters.

In the Education committee meeting, participants attended both in person and via Zoom. The two most important topics were the FEIF strategy and the "social license to operate," as well as preparations for the annual Education meeting in February. Details were worked out for the joint Trainer/Instructor seminar, organized in cooperation with the Sport department, to take place in Iceland in March. Seminars in cooperation with the Youth department are being planned for autumn/winter 2023 and spring 2024.

In addition to its usual operational work, of which the FEIF photo competition was a particular success, this year's focus of the Leisure Riding committee was on the strategic direction of FEIF and leisure riding for the coming years. After a general introduction, the FEIF Vision, Mission, and Goals for leisure riding were re-evaluated, so that further work could take place at the FEIF Conference in Stockholm.

As in the past years, the Sport committee and Sport Judges committee had a very long agenda. As for all other committees, the sport committees addressed the FEIF strategy and how our sport should develop over the next years. Several equipment questions and topics were discussed and,

in a combined effort with Breeding and Education, a new proposal on allowed bits is currently being worked out. Proposals that were initiated in the 2022 Annual Sport Meeting, as well as new ideas, were further discussed and prepared for presentation at the FEIF Conference.

The Youth committee focused on recruiting and further integrating young members, 18-26 years old, into FEIF work. The difficulty is how to reach out with information to young people; thus the FEIF strategy of how and what to communicate on social media was also considered carefully by the committee. Beginning in December 2022, it is possible for new young committee members to submit applications to join the FEIF Youth or Education department. Seats on these FEIF committees became available in February 2023, and successful nominees were to be confirmed at the FEIF Delegates Assembly. All details and how to apply can be found here: <https://www.feiffengur.com/documents/young%20com%20member%20invitation%20Oct%202022.pdf>

2023 CONFERENCE

The 2023 FEIF Conference was held in Stockholm on February 3-4, and will be reported on in the next issue of the Quarterly.

The keynote speech by Michael Weishaupt, from the University of Veterinary Medicine in Zurich, introduced the participants to the topic of the "Social License to Operate." More and more horse associations all over the world have started discussions about the "Social License to Operate," which includes the concern for the welfare and use of horses, the changing societal attitudes regarding animal use, the increasing public unease about the use of horses in sport, and the horse welfare concerns among equestrians. The speaker explained why this topic is important in the Icelandic horse world, how we should address it, and what the most important questions to keep in mind are as we talk and think about this topic, not only at the conference but also for the future.

Another topic at the FEIF Conference focused on sexual harassment, the unacceptable behavior of making unwelcome and inappropriate sexual remarks or

physical advances, intended or not, in any professional or social situation. This presentation and workshop was run by the Friends Foundation, together with representatives of the Swedish Equestrian Federation, and offered the opportunity to share ideas on how to address this topic in a systematic and structured way and to prevent and handle any issues.

YOUTH CAMP

The 2023 FEIF Youth Camp will take place July 14-17 in the south of Finland. The Equine College near Ypäjä offers training for all sorts of horse-related professionals, including riding instructors, saddlers, and farriers. The Youth Camp will offer a glimpse into all sorts of aspects of the horse world, offering theoretical classes and hands-on workshops. Participants of the camp will not need to bring their own horses, but the program includes at least one ride out into the Finnish countryside. The common language during the camp will be English. For more information, or to register, contact the USIHC Youth Leader, Lucy Nold, at youth@icelandics.org.

SEMINAR IN ICELAND

A combined FEIF Sport Judge and Trainer/Instructor seminar will be held March 24-26 at the Fákur facilities in Reykjavík, Iceland. The weekend seminar is aimed at international sport judges and trainers or instructors who are listed on the FEIF matrix. High level competitions and shows with both professionals and equestrian students from Hólar College will give them the opportunity to put new theoretical knowledge about shape, biomechanics, and movements—and the rider's influence on them—into practice. The program will include presentations, lectures, demonstrations, and master classes, as well as the Grand Show of Fákur.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The selection of Sport Judges for the 2023 World Championships is complete. The following judges will be judging in Oirschot, the Netherlands, next summer (in alphabetical order by first name): Birgit Quas-nitschka, Hinrik Már Jónsson, Jacqueline Wahlström, Kristinn Bjarni Þorvaldsson,

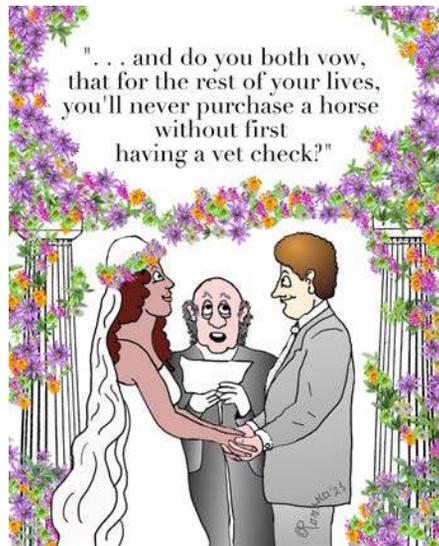


Lise Brouér, Lutz Lesener, Malin Elmgren, Nicolai Thye, Peter Häggberg, Roger Scherer, Sophie Kovac, and Stefan Hackauf. Chief judge will be Þorgeir Guðlaugsson and deputy chief judge will be Susanne Braun. For more information on the event, see <https://www.wc2023.nl/>

BLOOD MARES IN ICELAND

It is now one year since disturbing images from Iceland, taken by the Animal Welfare Foundation (AWF) and Tierschutzbund Zürich (TSB), showed frightened Icelandic mares, while a disproportionate amount of blood was drawn from them. Blood taken from the mares is sold to an Icelandic biotech firm, which extracts from it the marketable hormone PMSG. (For more information, see the article "About Blood Farms" in Issue One 2022 of the Quarterly.)

Following the release of the film footage, *Samtök um dýravelferð á Íslandi (SDÍ) / Animal Welfare Iceland* was formed as new Icelandic animal welfare association to focus on the issue of blood mares. The animal welfare associations SDÍ, Animal Welfare Foundation, and Tierschutzbund Zürich, the Icelandic Association of Horse Trainers (FT), and the National Association of Icelandic Equestrian Clubs (LH) were all in favor of a ban on the blood mare industry. The Association of Icelandic Veterinarians called for a comprehensive, independent, scientifically based, and publicly available blood count study to ensure that pregnant mares were not harmed by



repeated blood loss.

But obviously the pressure from the industry was too strong, and there have been hardly any improvements to the situation, neither in the amount of blood drawn nor in the control mechanisms.

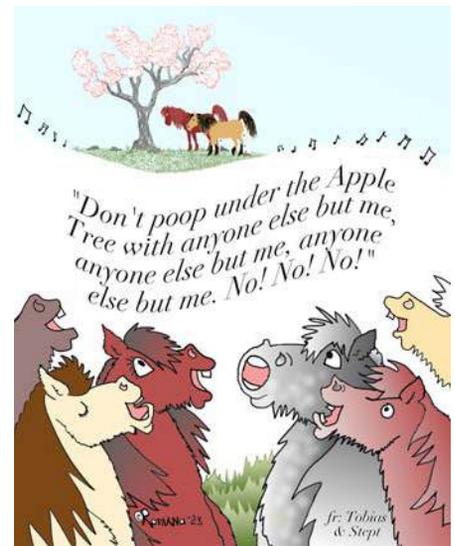
What's next? The Icelandic animal welfare group SDÍ will continue to press for the protection of blood mares and will plead for the abolition of this trade. An appeal handed to the appropriate government ministry, stating the obligation to ensure the mares' health and well-being, was endorsed by more than 30 Icelandic veterinarians and medical doctors, but has not yet been commented on by the ministry.

FEIF condemns the practices and the mistreatment of mares on blood farms and supports the approach of the animal welfare associations. FEIF will continue to use every possibility to stress our position on the production of PMSG, to stop the import and domestic production of PMSG, and to support any actions taken by the Icelandic authorities or welfare organizations to stop this procedure in Iceland completely.

Please consider signing these petitions:

Petition for the abolition of PMSG to the EU Commission: <https://www.thepetitionsite.com/de/336/366/084/pregnant-mares-are-suffering-on-blood-farms-the-eu-must-help-stop-this/>

Petition to the Icelandic government: <https://www.thepetitionsite.com/de-de/404/965/528/?z00m=33019408&redirectID=3213730138>



BLUP UPDATED

Recently, the BLUP breeding values have been re-estimated and published in the Studbook of Origin for the Icelandic horse, WorldFengur.com. In total, breeding values for 479,960 Icelandic horses are currently available. This number includes all horses registered in WorldFengur that have a "valid" FEIF ID, i.e., an ID that includes information on both country and year of birth and the gender of the horse. The breeding value estimation is based on a total of 35,091 breeding evaluations. Furthermore, the testing of 1,000 horses was considered for the Gait keeper gene (DMRT3). The breeding value prediction is divided between the following countries: Iceland 21,949, Sweden 4,370, Germany 3,643, Denmark 2,744, Norway 1,246, Austria 374, Holland 298, Finland 291, USA 226, Canada 117, Switzerland 102, and Great Britain 39. The BLUP indices for the virtual mate selection has also been updated.

FACTS AND FIGURES

The Icelandic Norwegian Horse Festival concluded a great 2022 WorldRanking season. Twelve countries registered a total of 110 WorldRanking events, where more than 2,700 riders with almost 4,000 horses participated. There were 47 International Breeding Shows in 2022, at which more than 2,350 horses were assessed, including 1,819 full assessments.

CLUB UPDATES

CLUB UPDATES

There are 13 Regional Clubs affiliated with the U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress. To find the one nearest you, see the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org. The following clubs filed updates on their activities this quarter.

AIHA

by Ellen Halverson

We wish to welcome two new additions to the Alaska Icelandic horse population: winter foals from Alaska Mountain Horses. Both Blessun and Tundra are thriving and are great additions to the Coverdell's herd. The Alaska Icelandic Horse Association has started the planning process for the summer riding season, with clinics, kid camps, and a fall show in the works.

The winter is a challenging time for riding and for the horses here, as it is for many of the northern states. But it does allow for a bit of down-time for both riders and horses, time for shovelling and dealing with nature. Here's how we think of it: Roses are red and violets are blue, / Alaska this winter poses a challenge or two, / Records snows, gale force winds, and 27 below zero, / On Donner, on Blitzen, whoops, those are Santa's reindeer, / It's Tryggur, Bjalla, Alda Dis, with Valkyrja and young Viktor too. / Dashing (tölting) through the snow, Icelandic horses bringing good cheer to all!



Blessun from Alaska Mountain Horses. Photo by Dan Coverdell



Farewell to Karen Brotzman, the founding member of the Cascade Club and owner and breeder at Alfasaga Icelandic Horses. Below, a howdy from the Flugnir Club.

CASCADE

by Lisa Roland

It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to one of the greatest ambassadors of the Icelandic horse breed in the US. Karen Brotzman was an incredible resource for everyone who was curious about Icelandics. She brought over fantastic stallions and great mares to establish her Alfasaga farm and breeding line. Many of us have an Alfasaga horse, or know someone with one. Her horses have ventured as far as Australia. Being the founding member of the Cascade Icelandic Horse Club in the Pacific Northwest, Karen drew many people to this wonderful breed. I remember our first club call-in at one of the USIHC meetings, our first parade participation as a club, and her farm's booth at the Equitana. Most importantly, Karen was an amazing friend and wonderful person! She will be thoroughly missed in our horse community.

We finally scheduled a Cascade Club trail ride, for the first time since the pandemic, and had a wonderful turnout! Preceding our summer meeting, 12 Icelandics hit the trail at Milo McIver State Park near Mount Hood in Oregon. There were no bees (as there had been on a memorable previous ride), and we had well-behaved horses and a wonderful time.



The Cascade Club participated in the breed demo at the Northwest Horse Expo in Albany, OR. It was a team effort with Alfadans Equestrian Arts of Oregon and the Northwest Icelandic Horse Club.

Two of our members who are active in search and rescue continue to take part in regular "Equine Air Scent Training" in Sisters, OR. This June, we also had two Canadians come with their Icelandic horses to participate in the training. Our club is working on offering training next summer for an exclusive group of Icelandic owners, if we have enough interest. It is a fun activity, even if you don't do search and rescue. We are looking forward to a new season of trails, seminars, and great companionship.

FLUGNIR

by Ellen Parker

We are in the cold grip of deep winter here in the north, but club members were busy enjoying their horses. Several members attended shows at Harmony Icelandics and Léttleiki, coming away with new friends, new skills, and some personal bests. There were some great clinics and events in our area as well, including a working equitation clinic, a six-mile urban trail ride with the Minneapolis Mounted Police, several hunter pace rides, a few 10-25 mile endurance rides. Some members strapped on their skis and learned skijoring skills. Many members are already planning for spring events. Katie Livingood is working on a series of educational opportunities, including a visit from Carrie Lyons-Brandt of Taktur Icelandics. As we collectively continue on our journey to become better horse people, we encourage everyone to participate in local events, push out of your comfort zone, and bring our lovely, fuzzy horses out into the world to introduce others to their unique qualities.

Clinician Nicole Kempf (kneeling, in red) taught a full clinic to Frida Club members in Virginia. Shown are (left to right), Barb Robinson, Suzi McGraw, Tony Ortiz, Sophie, Julia, and Isabella Hutter, Hanna Sydow, Marjorie Lewis, Pat and Leah Carballo, and Montaire owner Antje Freygang (kneeling).



Frida Club members (left to right) Julia, Isabella, and Sophie Hutter and Leah Carballo attended the clinic taught by master trainer Nicole Kempf. Photo by Suzi McGraw.

FRIDA

by Pat Carballo, Suzi McGraw, & Marilyn Tully

Several Frida Icelandic Riding Club members from around the mid-Atlantic region participated in a clinic held at Montaire Icelandics in Middleburg, VA. The clinic was led by Nicole Kempf from Germany. Notes Suzy McGraw, "Nicole is one of the

highest credentialed Icelandic horse judges, trainers, and instructors in the world. Her achievements in and contributions to the world of Icelandic Horse Sport are so extraordinary that she has been granted the rare O-1 visa by US Customs to share her expertise through clinics, lectures, and demonstrations here in the US. She is one of only 31 individuals in the world to have a FEIF Level 4 Certification, and as such is a





The Frida Club clinic ended with a fun beer tölt. Here, Antje Freygang poses with Marjorie Lewis on Ljúfa from Tolthaven.

key figure in the design of FEIF education, training, and trainer certification programs.”

Pat Carballo, who attended the clinic, writes:

“Members of the Frida Icelandic Riding Club were thrilled to gather again at a clinic sponsored by Nicole Kempf. Her practiced eye, experience, and ability to communicate with horse and rider alike insured a weekend full of aha moments, progress, and fun!

“Riders worked with Nicole both individually and in groups. Her expert instruction was tailored to meet the needs of each rider and their horse. An added bonus was the presence of trainer and judge Alex Pregitzer, who shared her expertise with auditors as they watched the lessons. There was wonderful camaraderie among the attendees, who ranged in age from 10 to ‘a lot older than that.’

“In addition to the mounted instructions, participants enjoyed ‘lunch and learn’ lectures. The first session focused on the tölt, presented by Nicole and Alex. An explanation of the footfalls of the tölt was followed by a series of videos, in which the attendees had to distinguish a trotty versus pacey tölt. Another session focused on demystifying the FEIF sport judging and scoring process.

“After working in the covered arena, riders challenged themselves to try their new and improved moves on the regula-

tion oval track. Nicole directed the riders through their gaits, while providing guidance and encouragement. Alex conducted a mock judging session for groups of riders, providing individual feedback while applying the FEIF scoring system that she had explained in the lunchtime lecture.

“Of course, no Icelandic horse gathering would be complete without a fun, final event. Two accomplished riders and their steady steeds wowed the crowd with their smooth moves as they circled the track holding brimming beer mugs aloft.

“Montaire clinics and events never fail to please. It is an idyllic equestrian facility that provides opportunities for the growth and development of horse and rider. Warm hospitality, expert instruction in a beautiful, well-appointed setting, and wonderful Icelandic horses—it has it all!”

Frida lost one of its longtime members in the last quarter. Suzi McGraw writes: “It is with heavy heart that I am writing to share the sad news of the sudden passing of club member Pat Moore. Pat and her husband Rich were among the founding members of our club. She served as president, board member, and coordinator of the annual horse show committee for many years. The entire Moore family has donated countless hours in support of our club throughout the years. We are so very, very grateful for all they have done and so very sorry for this terrible loss.”

Hestafolk Club members enjoying a scenic trail ride at Mount Adams in Washington last summer. Photo by Judy Skogen.



HESTAFOLK

by Lisa McKeen

What a year! We did a full year of monthly meetings on Zoom. This has been so awesome for the club and our horses! The most exciting thing was the annual club meeting with Zoom, so more people could attend. Covid-19 really had a strong impact on our club, but we’ve learned that Zoom is a good way to address how far apart we live, here in Northwest Washington and British Columbia, and our mission of continuing to learn and grow.

We are maintaining membership numbers, and our youth group is experiencing a growth spurt, thanks to Ashley Perigo’s leadership and commitment. Our Facebook page has 99 members and is open to people seeking information and contacts that will help them learn about the Icelandic horse. Hestafolk Youth have met regularly, including a meeting where they made and put together Christmas Cookie Decorating Sets. They will use the funds from sales to help organize horse camps and to attend shows or clinics.

Club events we are planning for 2023 include: the Washington State Fair, Vikingfest, Feldenkrais clinics, club trail rides, and Zoom meetings. We will hold our annual meeting on Veteran’s Day Weekend.

Our new officers, who also serve as our board, for 2023 are: Lauren Murphy (president), Lisa McKeen (co-president and USIHC rep.), RJ West (secretary), Christine Vowles (treasurer), Lisa Heath (trail boss), Mary Chamberlin (membership), and Ben Sizemore (member-at-large).



Klettafjalla's second "Fun Keppni" of the year at Tamangur Icelandics in Colorado had an excellent turnout, with 12 adult and six youth riders.

KLETTAFJALLA

by Ellen Lichtenstein

The final quarter of 2022 was a fun one for members of the Klettafjalla Icelandic Horse club in the Rocky Mountain region. We held our second "Fun Keppni" of the year on November 12 at Tamangur Icelandics in Colorado. We had an excellent turnout, with about 12 adults and 6 kids. Club members spent the day competing in games and timed events. Abby Hickock served as our esteemed judge and timekeeper, ultimately awarding every participant a certificate honoring their best achievement of the day.

In Wyoming, Kristina Behringer's farm, Gyetorp II, hosted a working equitation clinic taught by FEIF trainer Alex Venable of Alfadans Equestrian Arts in Oregon. This two-day clinic encompassed the history and growing popularity of working equitation. Alex has trained and competed on Icelandic horses in working equitation and she has done very well! The participants enjoyed learning yet another way Icelandic horses can be ridden and trained, and the benefits of this approach. This is a fun opportunity to show off our breed and compete with other breeds (even in tölt!).



The NEIHC's Block Island contingent enjoy the beach.



New NEIHC youth member Dylan Casey, riding Baldur from Four Winds Farm, jumps a cavaletti in New York.

Susan Gibbons and the Block Island contingent spent the fall “logging trail miles for S2SS (Team Solheimar), practicing our jumping, teaching Falki to tolerate some lunge lining (think flying monkey on a rope), giving a few beginner lessons to a granddaughter, and rehabbing a minor suspensory strain for Odinn.” The group also enjoyed beach rides!

The riders at West Wind Farm in New Delhi, NY enjoyed their horses and each other. Amy Goddard reports, “After a three-year absence due to Covid-19, trainer Steinar Sigurbjörnsson returned for a clinic. Great friends, awesome horses, fantastic food, and a masterful trainer: We are truly blessed!”

At Cedar Tree Stables in Ipswich, MA, the season started off with a Centered Riding clinic taught by master teacher Lucile Bump. One foundational skill, that Lucile teaches, is “following hands.” To demonstrate, you dance with your human partner, trading off following and leading, and then

NEIHC

by Jennifer Bergantino

Fall in the Northeast is a wonderful time. Last fall we were blessed with near perfect weather, breathtaking colors, and some truly excellent riding conditions. Our club was active. We had many hours logged by S2SS virtual ride participants: miles and miles of trail rides, ring work, and time spent enjoying our horses. We participated in the USIHC Fall Virtual Show, had an in-person show, and learned in lessons and clinics all across the Northeast region.

NEIHC member Anat Stemmer reports that she and her Icelandic horse Birta have been “working on a number of routines—we start with liberty and continue to walk, tölt, and trot in various ways (extending, running, medium), speed transitions within and between gaits, and directions (circles).”

Nancy Woods is active, as always, traveling and riding in nearly every location she visits. With a thirst for learning, Nancy reports that she is “working on my Centered Riding technique with Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir at Sólheimar Farm in Tunbridge, VT. Sigrún is such a good instructor and tunes right into your issues in adapting Centered Riding to your body.”



NEIHC member Nancy Woods concentrates on finding perfect balance at a Centered Riding Clinic taught by Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir at Solheimar Icelandics in Vermont.



NEIHC's Booth at Equine Affaire in Massachusetts, with Leah Greenberger (right) and Pórdís Anna Gylfadóttir from Horses of Iceland waving hello!

following with one hand and leading with the other. It's what we do every day with our horses. Lucile has been studying and teaching centered riding for over five decades! She is an amazing teacher.

Cedar Tree had two additional clinics this past season with Jana Meyer, who came in October and again in December. She, too, is an amazing teacher. The growing group at Cedar Tree also enjoyed logging hours for S2SS and long trail rides, with celebratory grazing breaks for horses and Prosecco breaks for their riders! Cedar Tree is home to eight Icelandics and even more Icelandic riders, as the stable group "converts" big horse riders to our amazing mounts.

Merrimack Valley Icelandics (MVI), in Boxford, MA were busy this fall. Ebba Meehan reports: "This past fall went by like a blur! Many exciting adventures!" In October, Ebba's herd grew by two, as MVI welcomed Oddur and Amor, two pinto geldings. In addition, the group performed at the Topsfield Fair in Topsfield, MA. Eight horse-and-rider pairs performed. The

group, with coach Erika Tighe, performed a drill, a breed demo, gaits in harmony, and beer tölt (always a crowd favorite). Ebba reports, "We had a good crowd, and the horses met many new fans."

Despite a busy start to the fall season, seven MVI riders competed at Sólheimar Farm's "Changing of the Colors" show in Tunbridge, VT on October 15-16, entering both FEIF and fun classes, with Alex Dannemann judging. Shortly after returning home from the show, the riders at MVI began preparing for breed and mounted demos at Equine Affaire. MVI also hosted a three-day clinic with trainer Guðmar Pétursson from Iceland, had fun on the beach, and spent an evening in "Solstice Tölt under the moon!"

Equine Affaire in Springfield, MA is a fall favorite of horse people from all over. NEIHC participates with breed demos, mounted gait demos, and a booth. It is no small undertaking. This year, the NEIHC crew led by Emily Potts was outstanding. The booth saw tremendous foot traffic, and

the demonstrations were well attended. Emily reports, "This year was one of our best years, with so many demos, presentations, seminars, and performances featuring Icelandic horses!" Everyone on the Equine Affaire crew answered questions, engaged with attendees, and made sure our brochures and materials were well stocked. Leah Greenberger managed our incredible team of display booth horses. She brought her own superstar Skati and coordinated with Ebba Meehan's Merrimack Valley Icelandics and Guðmar Pétursson's Knights of Iceland performance team to ensure we always had a horse at the booth. All of our horses were friendly, personable, and unflappable throughout the whole weekend—a true testament to the breed's character."

Finally, our club is excited to congratulate NEIHC youth riders for their Youth Division sweep in the USIHC Fall Virtual Show. Finja Meyer-Hoyt was Champion and Arianna Deforge was Reserve Champion, with Liesl Kolbe just .04 points behind. Remarkable! Our club is so proud of you!

SIRIUS

by Janet Kuykendall

The Sirius Ohio Kentucky Horse Club has been fortunate to have a cadre of excellent officers. Sherry Hoover, our president, has been and continues to be a dynamic force working for the benefit of the members. She may stay in the background, but she works tirelessly on activities and money-saving ideas for the club. Last quarter, we said good-bye to outgoing officers Kerstin Lundgren, Kathy Rekers, and Constance Wilmoth. We say hello to newly-elected officers Laura Stautberg, Nancy Radebaugh, and Shellie Greyhavens. Let's get to know a little more about them!

Laura Stautberg, our new vice president, has been actively riding and studying horsemanship for the last 11 years through leasing, taking lessons, and going to clinics. She first became involved with Icelandics in 2019 and immediately knew they were the breed for her. She bought five-year-old



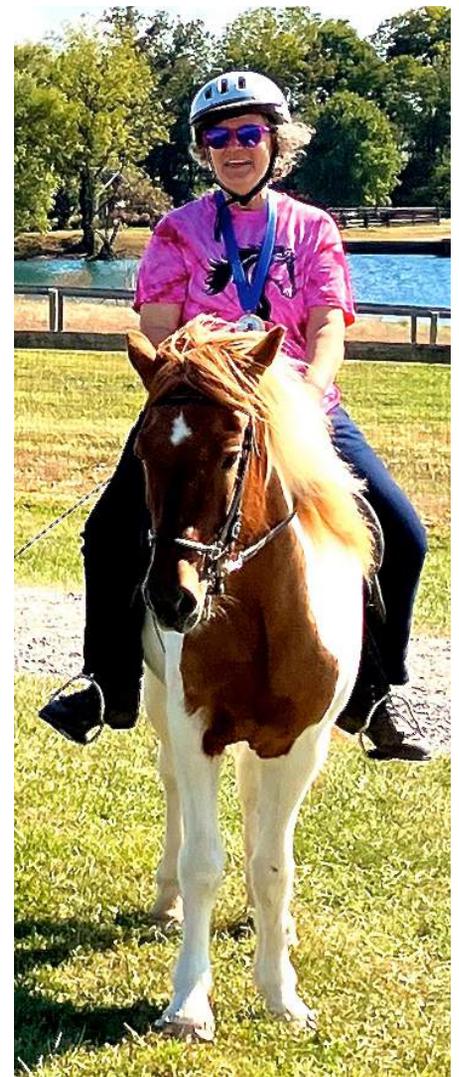
Above, Carly Conley at the Spook Run endurance ride. Below, Jaime Jackson and her mom, Janet Kuykendall, rode in their first Icelandic horse show. Jaime (left) was the show's most improved rider.

Dagmar in 2021, and the pair are enjoying trail riding, showing, liberty, and archery. Although Laura doesn't have any experience leading a club like Sirius, she is very enthusiastic about the breed and her enthusiasm is contagious. Laura also has mad computer skills and has already enhanced our membership tracker spreadsheet.

Our new secretary is Nancy Radebaugh, who has been a horse owner for 46 years. Although Nancy has only owned Gunnar, her Icelandic, for three years, she feels as though he's been part of her for her whole life. Nancy and Gunnar have won awards in numerous parades, participated in too many clinics to count, and they go on daily trail rides. This past summer, they've even been accompanied on their rides by a mini-donkey, much to the enjoyment of

Facebook page viewers. Nancy is also an accomplished photographer, and Gunnar has been the subject of many award-winning photo contests. As a new officer, Nancy has already contributed a list of activities to keep the club members engaged over the winter as well as setting up a new clinic.

Our final new officer is treasurer Shellie Greyhavens. Shellie retired from the accounting firm she started so she can spend more time enjoying her Icelandic gelding Bjarmi. Together, they enjoy obstacle challenges, trail riding, and liberty work. Shellie lives on a farm, where she raised Icelandic sheep, Nubian goats, and Great Pyrenees dogs. With the sheep and the goats now gone, Shellie has more time for "horsey activities." She especially enjoyed the club's fun-show last year. We are so lucky to have an accountant volunteer to be club treasurer! Shellie is already keeping busy processing memberships and working with Laura to keep the membership tracker up-to-date!



The new officers, with the support of the outgoing officers, are planning a fun-filled year of Sirius Club activities. The Zoom clinic was so popular last year that the officers are working to schedule two Zoom clinics for 2023. The new trail ride schedule has a wonderful array of rides on public and private trails. Plans are also in the works for another fun show, since last year's show was our best-attended event, as well as some exciting clinics in the spring and summer. Also, be on the lookout for club t-shirts, which will make an appearance before Equine Affaire in Columbus, OH in the spring.

Sirius members have been busy individually this past year. Here is a short recap of some member highlights:

Congratulations to club member Paetra Hennigar, who traveled to Colorado to participate in the USIHC Judging Seminar. Paetra passed the very challenging test and is now a certified Level B Sport Judge for Icelandic horses. Jeny Feldner Schreiber also attended the seminar, where she earned her scribe certification.

Youth member Julian Felder started riding at an early age. The above-mentioned Jeny Feldner Schreiber is Julian's mom, and she remembers putting him on his first Icelandic when he was 11 months old. By the age of three, Julian was riding and competing. When he was 11, Julian won three championship ribbons in a national show! So, it's no surprise that Julian placed first in the USIHC National Ranking

in Novice Tölt T7 for 2021, with a score of 5.15. Julian received a beautiful glass trophy donated by Icelandic Sports, LLC, as well as a recognition letter from the USIHC. Julian has competed for the last two years on Hvatur, the first horse ever bred by his family. He helped start Hvatur and did most of the riding and training. Julian plans to pursue a career in training Icelandic horses.

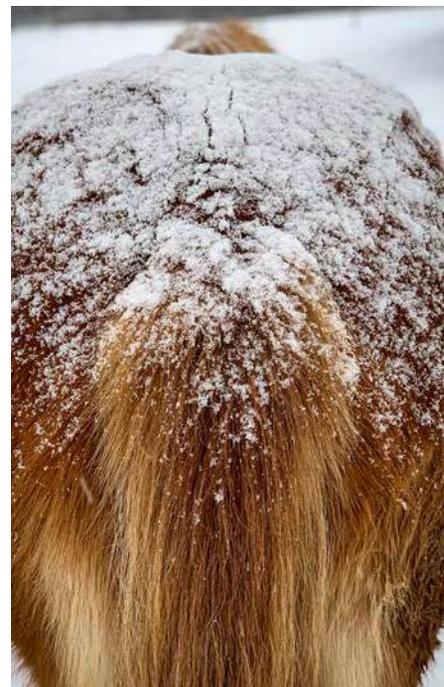
Member Carly Conley and her horse Solon competed in an endurance ride in Henryville, IN, in October. They came in 14th, and Carly was pleased that they pulsed down quickly and vetted in with all A's. Carly says, "We rocked it!"

Several Sirius Club members competed in the Triple Ice Show at Léttleiki Icelandics in Shelbyville, KY, in October. There are many ways to enjoy the show, in addition to riding in the classes. An army of volunteers helps with the show, and it's fun just to watch the classes and make new horse friends. The usual excitement filled the air, and there were too many amazing horses and riders to name. However, two highlights of the show were: 1) The Beer Tölt, which was "handily" won by club member Joanna Lewallen, who is apparently ambidextrous and can just as easily hoist a beer mug with her right hand as her left. Joanna won some pretty impressive bragging rights! And, 2) the show's most improved rider, chosen by unanimous vote of the judges, was Jaime Jackson. Jaime won a gift bag full of Icelandic horse goodies.

ST. SKUTLA

by Andrea Barber

For many in our club in western New York, the first quarter of the year brings limited riding time. Short days, bad weather, and holiday commitments make for the perfect storm. It can be depressing and frustrating not to be able to do anything but clean tack



(not that it doesn't need to be done). Because of this, we wanted to offer a way to keep the learning going, without having to brush all the mud and snow off our horses.

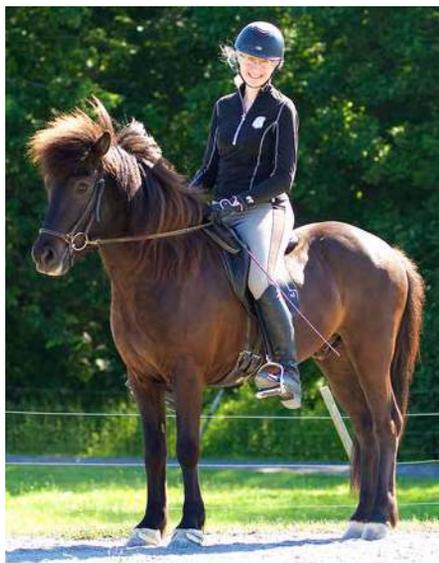
To meet this need, Steve Barber and I at Sand Meadow Farm decided to offer a Winter Lecture Series with Carrie Brandt of Taktur Icelandics in Kentucky. Carrie has been doing both in-person and online clinics for our club for several years, and we were excited when she agreed to do some winter lectures via Zoom on a variety of subjects. The first, in January, will be "Gaits of the Icelandic Horse" and will cover biomechanics, breed standards, training, and beat faults. It's a topic that's basic enough for newbies, but one that can always be reviewed by the more experienced. The Zoom format allows us to reach our most distant club members and to also keep the participant cost low. We are looking forward to this fun event to break up our winter blues!



Left, St. Skutla member Katherine Forrest and Njola from Cornell at the Locust Hill Hunter Pace in Hyde Park. Above, a common sight on an Icelandic horse farm in upstate New York. Photo by Andrea Barber.

MEET THE USIHC BOARD

Overseen by the USIHC Election Committee—composed of Caeli Cavanagh, Alex Venable, and Robyn Schmutz—the 2022 election selected four directors: Virginia Lauridsen and Lucy Nold were reelected to three-year terms; Ásta Covert was elected for a term of three years; and Sara Stewart will serve for one year to fill Will Covert's seat, which became vacant when Will was elected to serve on the FEIF Board of Directors. Below are biographies of our current Board of Directors:



LESLIE CHAMBERS

Leslie is a retired research scientist and lives in New York. She bought her first Icelandic horse in 2009 and currently owns two, both from Thor Icelandics. She joined the Northeast Icelandic Horse Club early on and has served as the club's treasurer and board member since 2012. From 2013 to 2022, she organized the NEIHC Open show. She joined the USIHC Board in 2016 as chair of the Affiliated Club Committee, as well as liaison for the Quarterly Committee. She organized Sport Judge Seminars in 2016 (New York) and 2019 (Vermont). She joined the USIHC Sport Committee in 2020 and helps coordinate the USIHC Virtual Shows.

ÁSTA COVERT

Ásta has been an active member of the USIHC since 1999. She started as the secretary for the registrar in 2000 and took over the registry in 2007. She was a



member of the board of directors from 2007 to 2015. She is an active trainer and riding teacher and has been a member of the US national team at the World Championships five times, receiving medals in tölt, four gait, and four gait combination. She was a founding member of the CIA affiliate club and has hosted many shows at her Flying C Ranch in California, as well as helping with IceTest for shows all over the US.



LORI CRETNEY

Lori has been a member of the USIHC Board since 2013 and has served as chair of the Youth Committee, as vice president, and as treasurer, the position she currently holds. She lives in Wisconsin and has been an active competitor in the USIHC Virtual Shows, earning Intermediate Four Gait Champion and Green Horse Reserve Champion in the Fall Show. She is Nationally Ranked in Tölt T6. She is active in the Flugnir Icelandic Horse Association and has helped organize educational seminars and breeding shows for the USIHC and Flugnir.

VIRGINIA CROSKERY LAURIDSEN

A classical singer by training, Virginia has been involved with Icelandic horses since 2013, when she imported four from Iceland. Her Harmony Icelandics, in



Iowa, boasts a FEIF-sanctioned oval track and a breeding track, and has hosted shows, evaluations, and clinics. Virginia was instrumental in founding the Toppur Icelandic Horse Club, and in 2022 was certified by the USIHC as a FEIF Trainer Level 1 (see the article in this issue). She is an active competitor in both FEIF classes and in first level dressage. She has served on the USIHC Education and Breeding committees and is the current president.



JANET MULDER

Janet began riding Icelandic horses in 1993 and participated in the FEIF Youth Cup in Sweden in 2002; she currently operates a riding school in Alaska. She is a USIHC-certified FEIF Trainer Level 1; a Tölt in Harmony Level 1 Trainer; a Nationally Ranked USIHC rider; a USIHC Intern Judge; and has ridden her horses in first-level dressage, receiving Champi-

on and Reserve in the Alaska Finals. In 2015 she formed the youth group “Tölt Alaska” and became the youth director for the Alaska Icelandic Horse Association. In 2018 she joined the USIHC Board as chair of the Leisure Committee and currently organizes the Sea 2 Shining Sea virtual ride.



LUCY NOLD

Lucy has ridden Icelandic horses from a very young age. She began breeding, training, and competing as a teenager, and has received many national ranking awards. At 14, she attended the FEIF Youth Cup in Switzerland, and was the US team leader for the 2014 FEIF Youth Cup. She holds a B.S. in Animal Science from the University of California, Davis, with a specialization in equines, and owns and manages Five-Gait Farm, a training and breeding operation in Oregon. Lucy is a USIHC Sport Judge B, and rode one of her stallions to become the highest evaluated US bred four-gaited stallion in America.



EMILY POTTS

Emily (far left, above) was introduced to the Icelandic horse at age 14 and grew up as a member of the USIHC and the NEIHC. Her professional background is in digital media and marketing. She resides in Vermont, and enjoys trail riding with her three Icelandic horses. In 2017 she joined the USIHC Board as chair of the Promotions Committee. Soon after, she managed the rebranding of the USIHC and the migration of its website to a new platform, as well as transitioning to a new membership management software. She continues to manage the USIHC website and social media and to provide tech support for the Virtual Shows. She has served on the NEIHC board since 2016 and is the current president.



JEFF ROSE

Jeff, a lawyer, has been a board member of the Klettafjalla Regional Club. He started riding Icelandic horses with his parents at Winterhorse Park in Wisconsin, and now boards horses with Tamangur Icelandics in Colorado. He is a Nationally Ranked rider and active in the USIHC Virtual Shows. In 2020, three seats on the USIHC board of directors were up for election. As no nominations were received, two board members were automatically reelected and Jeff was recruited to fill the empty seat. Since then, Jeff has served as vice president and as chair of the Education Committee.

SARA STEWART

Sara (far right) was first introduced to Icelandic horses three years ago and now lives on a 182-acre farm with 14 Icelandics. Her daughters are both avid competitors. Nine-year old Emelia ranked first in the 2022 National Ranking in T8, V5, and V6. Five-year old Louisa is sure to add some accolades of her own very soon. Sara is living her dream as a stay-at-home mom, home-schooling her girls and tending the farm. She is excited to offer her organizational gifts to the USIHC and to serve as secretary.

HORSE INSURANCE FAQ by Ellen Lichtenstein



Fengur (age 31) and Sophie (4). Photo by Jak Wonderly Photography.

Most people have a love-hate relationship with insurance, if not an outright hate-hate one. It's understandable, given how complicated and frustrating the US's health insurance system is. Since that's the type of insurance we have the most frequent interactions with, it can color our opinion of insurance as a whole. Often, insurance feels like a necessary evil—required by your mortgage lender or your state—that won't actually be there to help you when you need it.

Despite the industry's bad reputation among some consumers, the vast majority of insurance policies do pay out claims according to their contractual obligations. It's also a heavily regulated industry, meaning that if policyholders have an issue with wrongly denied claims or other misconduct on the part of an insurance company, there are avenues to seek correction. Check out

your state's department of insurance (DOI) as a starting point, if you're having issues.

Speaking of regulation, this is a good time to note that I'm not a licensed insurance agent. The information contained in this article is provided to the best of my knowledge based on experience, both as a long-time horse owner and horse insurance policyholder, and as someone who's worked in communications for the insurance industry for the past nine years. So, I do know a little bit about insurance and how it works, but you should always consult a licensed insurance agent or your insurance company and policy documents directly when seeking advice or clarification.

With that disclaimer out of the way, I know lots of people have questions about horse insurance. This article aims to answer some of the most common ones I see.

WHAT IS IT?

There are several types of horse insurance—or what people think of as “horse insurance.” When we say “horse insurance” most people are referring to a medical and mortality policy for their horse, with possibly a loss of use clause. Below, I go into more detail about what each of these policies is and what you can expect them to cover, but it's worth mentioning here that “horse insurance” is not a liability policy that will pay out for property damage or bodily injuries your horse causes. This is an entirely different topic, and not the focus of this article, but it's a type of insurance coverage that's not a bad idea for a horse owner to have, so I'll briefly describe it too.

Mortality Insurance: This is like a life insurance policy on your horse, because for many people the initial purchase price of a horse is a very large investment. What it costs and how much it pays out will depend on the exact policy you buy, and the coverage options you choose. At its most basic level, a horse insurance policy may pay you the value of the horse if the horse dies.

Major Medical/Surgical Insurance: Usually, you need a mortality policy first, before you can add other types of coverage. The most common type people add is major medical and surgical coverage. This is intended to help you pay large vet bills if

your horse has a serious injury or illness, or requires surgery. It may be possible to find a medical policy alone, but my experience has been that it's sold in addition to a mortality policy.

Loss of Use: Another type of coverage you can add, on top of your mortality and medical coverage, is loss of use, or in some cases even “limited loss of use.” This type of insurance protects your financial investment if your horse has a vital job that, without the ability to perform, renders it of little-to-no value. A good example of this is a broodmare. If the horse's primary or sole use is breeding, and she develops uterine cancer and has to undergo a hysterectomy, a loss of use policy could pay her value so the owner could buy another broodmare to replace her. A loss of use policy can also apply to a competition horse who may become mildly lame and is no longer able to compete, but still could be used for children's lessons. Basically, if you've got a horse with a very specific job, it might be worth looking into a loss of use policy for times when the horse doesn't die but can no longer perform its job.

Liability Coverage: This bears repeating—horse insurance policies (mortality, medical, loss of use, etc.) are not liability policies. If your horse escapes its paddock and destroys your neighbor's fence, kicks your neighbor's car, or kills your neighbor's dog, your horse insurance policy won't



Bruce Goddard and Baldur from Four Winds Farm in 2012. Photo by Jean Arledge.



Kingzlee Osborne with Henna frá Eystra-Fróðholti at a 2019 Toppur Club event at Harmony Icelandics in Iowa. Photo by Jody Roback.

help. However, you can often add in a liability policy from the same carrier that offers your horse's medical insurance, and it's not as expensive as you'd think to obtain \$300,000 or \$500,000 in liability coverage.

FINE PRINT

While these may not be universally true (depending on your policy), here are some things I've learned along the way that I wish I'd known sooner.

Every year when your policy renews, your insurance carrier will ask for a statement on your horse's health. You'll have to explain any non-routine vet visits and might need a signed statement from your vet. This means even if you don't file a claim, you still have to inform your insurance carrier of any accidents, illnesses, or injuries.

Insurance may cover the initial diagnosis and treatment of a chronic condition (like ulcers or navicular syndrome), but it will likely exclude coverage for ongoing treatment of that condition once the policy renews the following year. If your horse

has a medical condition that's excluded from your policy, it might be possible to get the exclusion removed after a few years of continuous insurance coverage without any recurrence of the medical condition. But you have to ask for this—your insurance carrier isn't going to volunteer it.

You can request an increase in your horse's value over time if you've invested in training, or the horse has won competitions, or other situations arise that can substantiate a higher value than what you paid. Insurers may or may not approve your request, but you can always try.

Your horse will age out of insurance at some point. Carriers will refuse to cover elderly horses, because they are 100% likely to suffer serious medical conditions or to die while covered. Think of your horse mortality policy as a term life insurance policy, not a whole (permanent) life insurance policy. I've seen age limits ranging from 16 to 20 years old, after which a policy simply can't be renewed.

Read your policy carefully when it comes to life-ending injuries and euthanasia. Some (not all) policies will require you to contact them for approval before putting your horse to sleep. Some policies will only pay out your mortality benefit if two equine vets sign off that euthanasia was necessary. Some policies won't pay out your mortality benefit without an autopsy. There's a lot of fine print when it comes to paying out a mortality benefit (because, keep in mind, these benefits are tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars). So, make sure you fully understand what your policy says, because not adhering to what's in the contract can mean denial of benefits when you need them.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Horse insurance works more like your auto insurance policy than like human health insurance. This means it's for major issues (like a car crash), not for general maintenance (like an oil change). In horse terms, it may cover the cost of colic surgery, but

not the cost of annual vaccines or if your horse needs an antibiotic.

Generally speaking, you'll have a deductible that applies for each new injury or illness. Depending on your policy, the carrier may reimburse you for 50%, 80%, or even 100% of your costs after you meet your deductible. While this sounds great, it's important to know the ins-and-outs of your policy, because coverage may not be as robust as you think.

In my own policy, for example, the insurance will not cover vet call charges, emergency upcharges, travel fees, or vet tech services. So, when I had to call the vet for an after-hours emergency and I racked up a \$1,200 bill, my insurance didn't even consider \$400 of that to be "eligible," because it was composed of emergency call fees, distance/mileage charges, and vet tech assistance.

After subtracting the ineligible \$400 and my deductible (\$300), my insurance reimbursed \$500 of a \$1,200 bill. For some people, this may not be worth the price of the premiums—or maybe you wouldn't have even filed a claim in this case.

The good news is that once you open a claim, you only have to meet your deductible once. In many cases, the claim can stay open for a long time (120 days in my policy). This means that if the situation becomes more complicated and requires more treatment, you can continue to get reimbursed. Of course, it's not unlimited: Your policy will have a maximum annual benefit (something between \$5,000 and \$10,000 is pretty typical), and you can choose a lower or higher level based on your needs and how much you'd like to pay in premiums.

WHO SHOULD GET IT?

People have very different tolerance levels for risk. I prefer to pay insurance premiums and know that I'd have coverage in a very expensive medical situation, or if my horse died. I certainly couldn't afford to buy another horse now, after spending every bit of money I had on my first three Icelandics! Can anyone else relate?

On the other hand, my annual premiums for three Icelandics aren't cheap, and I may never receive any benefits if my horses all live to be 30 and lose insurance coverage long before they die. Some people would rather take the money they would spend in premiums and put it into an emergency savings account. It all depends on your risk



Ellen Lichtenstein and Tilraun frá Pulu in 2022, at their first Competitive Trail Ride. Photo by Rachel Clark.

tolerance and on how much money you have on-hand if you had to pay for your horse to stay in the hospital or have surgery.

Bottom line: Horse insurance might be a good idea for you if you have a highly valued horse and would like to recoup the purchase price if it passed away. It also may be a good idea if you have limited savings or limited credit and couldn't just swallow a \$5,000 to \$10,000 medical bill. For many people, it's easier to think about paying \$100 each month than to wonder if you'll be able to find \$10,000 on a moment's notice if your horse is severely ill.

OUT-OF-POCKET

Here's a question I hear a lot: Do I have to pay out of pocket for my vet bills if I have horse insurance?

This is not the insurance carrier's decision, but will largely depend on your vet's policy. If your vet requires payment immediately upon providing services, then you'll have to pay out-of-pocket and submit a claim for reimbursement with your insurance carrier. If your vet invoices you and gives you 30 days to pay, you can likely get your insurance claim submitted and have cash-in-hand before your vet bill is due.

As a general rule, you should expect to pay your vet fees like normal and to receive reimbursement later. Horse insurance doesn't work like human health insurance, where the insurance company coordinates

with your provider to pay them directly. You have to do the coordinating yourself.

TIME TO BUY

When is the best time to buy horse insurance? Based on my experience purchasing insurance for four horses over the past 15 years, the best possible time to get your policy started is as soon as you legally own the horse. Most policies will require a vet exam stating the present condition of the horse, and you can accomplish this with your pre-purchase exam (PPE).

Here are a couple of things to consider:

If your PPE uncovers something (we've had everything from arthritis to a cataract), your insurance policy will most likely exclude those conditions from coverage. There's really no way around this, because your insurance will require a vet exam prior to binding coverage. So, whether it's a PPE, or an exam at a later time, anything found will likely be considered a pre-existing condition and not be covered. Your best-case scenario is getting insurance in place immediately after a very clean PPE.

If you don't get insurance in effect the day you legally buy the horse, and a week later your horse requires vet treatment, it's likely that this condition will be considered pre-existing when you do go to get insurance. This isn't the case for something like a cold or a sinus infection that's not going to be ongoing, but if your horse develops ulcers before you buy insurance, you can expect ulcer treatment to be excluded by your policy.

This is why I prefer to get the insurance started as soon as I own the horse. One of my horses ended up needing \$2,500 of diagnostics and treatment just a few weeks after I bought him. His insurance policy more than paid for itself that year.

WHEN IMPORTING

What about importing a horse? If you're an Icelandic horse fan, you may already own a horse that came from Iceland (or another country), or it might be on your wish-list to import a horse in the future. Importing a horse can be scary and stressful (not to mention expensive!), so it's natural you'd want to protect your investment with insurance.

The good news is, you can absolutely get your insurance coverage in effect before your horse travels to the US. This is where working with a licensed insurance agent really comes in handy, because they've done

it before and can provide good guidance.

In my case, I was able to get insurance on my horse starting the day I legally owned her, even though it would be two months before she traveled to America. There was an additional premium to cover her for the time she wasn't in the US and during travel, but it was small (about \$120) compared to the cost of something happening to her and her being uninsured.

Through my own process, I also learned that you can include a percentage of your import costs in the insurable value of your horse. This can be a big help, when you might spend almost as much on the price of import as the horse itself costs. With my insurer, they considered 60% of her import costs, in addition to her purchase price, when calculating her value. Make sure to save all your receipts—from transport in Iceland to quarantine to cross-country transport in the US—so that you can prove your horse's value based on the true cost of getting it to you.

Remember, all of these facts are based on my experience with my insurer (The Hartford), so there's no guarantee that every horse insurance carrier will be the same. It's worth shopping around and comparing the prices and coverage options before making a decision. Or again, working with a licensed agent. Which brings me to...

HAVING AN AGENT

Why work with a licensed agent for horse insurance? It's absolutely possible to go straight to an insurance carrier if they offer direct-to-consumer sales. I did this with my first horse and didn't have any complaints over the years he was insured. But when I later worked with a licensed agent, I definitely realized some benefits. Here are a few of them:

Agents have to be licensed by the state for each line of coverage they offer. So, while it's possible to find an agent who lives far away and is still licensed in your state, you're more likely to work with someone who's local to you. An agent in your state will be familiar with the different insurance products offered specifically in your state by different carriers and which one might be best for your situation.

Your agent should be someone you trust and can count on for unbiased advice. Independent insurance agents work with multiple carriers and, while they may have a preference on which ones to work with based on their experience, they should



Marilyn Blaess and Richard Davis await their scores at the 2008 Schooling Show in Tunbridge, VT. Photo by Nancy Marie Brown.

be unbiased when showing you different options.

An agent is someone you can get on the phone. You shouldn't have to call an 800-number or wait on hold to speak to a customer service representative who's not familiar with your situation.

Your agent can advocate for you when it comes to getting pre-existing conditions removed, increasing the value of your horse, and other things that might pop up. Your agent should have a good relationship with the insurance carrier, based on doing a large volume of business with them, so they get further than you would trying to make a request from your carrier alone.

You don't pay higher premiums by working with an agent. Agents are paid commissions by insurance carriers, but that doesn't change the price of the policy the consumer pays.

If you don't like the agent you're working with, you can always switch. As long as the agent you want to switch to works with the same carrier your policy is written with, you simply change your "broker of record" and it doesn't change anything about your policy.

COST

How much does horse insurance cost? There's no real answer here, because it depends on many factors. If you buy only mortality insurance, it will be a lot less

expensive than medical/surgical and mortality combined. If your horse is young and healthy, it'll be less expensive than if your horse is older, with a long list of medical issues. Remember that insurance rates are based on risk, so lower-risk horses get lower rates, and the rates will increase as the horse ages and its risk level gets higher.

Just to give some examples, one friend recently insured an 11-year-old mare valued at \$20,000; her mortality insurance costs \$600 and medical/surgical insurance costs an additional \$800, for a total of \$1,400 per year. Another friend insured a 13-year-old mare valued at \$14,000; in this case, \$900 per year covered mortality, medical/surgical, and limited loss of use coverage. In a third example, insurance for an 8-year-old gelding being imported from Iceland, and valued at \$25,000, costs \$750 for mortality and an additional \$800 for medical/surgical; there's also a cost for "worldwide coverage," since he was in Iceland when first insured, of \$63, bringing his total insurance price-tag to a little over \$1,600 per year.

MORE INFO

If you're looking for a horse insurance quote, your local horse community probably includes someone with experience who can recommend an agent or carrier. Everyone will have their opinions (and their horror stories), so keep that in mind as you search. Hopefully, this article has given you enough

RIDING THE PYRAMID 3 & 4

by Guðmar Pétursson. Illustrations by Margot Apple

Editor's Note: This article continues our series with Guðmar Pétursson on how to use the training pyramid taught in the equestrian program at Iceland's Hólar University. You can read about Step 1 and Step 2 in Issue Four 2022 of the Quarterly. Here we cover Step 3 and Step 4, condensed from videos originally created for Guðmar's online educational community "Ask Gudmar." The videos are now available on Guðmar's Patreon page at <https://www.patreon.com/gudmarpetursson>.



Guðmar Pétursson and Friðsemd, who is in training to become a competition horse. Photo by Louisa Hackl.

Keep in mind, as Guðmar pointed out, that while it's important to go through the training pyramid step by step, "You want to understand the step, not be a perfectionist. Think of the size of the step in the drawing as being equal to the amount of time you should spend on it."

The purpose of the pyramid "is all about gaining control over the horse's body and mind. Not because you take control, but through communication and trust the horse gives you that control." Your end goal is "the feeling of being in harmony with the horse."

Here are Guðmar's lessons for Step 3 (Supple and Flexible) and Step 4 (Straight) of the Hólar Training Pyramid:

STEP 3: SUPPLE AND FLEXIBLE

In Step 3 of the training pyramid we are going to focus on the energy that flows from back to front. We'll also go deeper into contact—not only rein contact, but contact in general through the rider's aids to the horse. As we say, "Ride the horse between your aids." And we'll start really focusing on how the horse carries herself and what we need to do to help her do that correctly.

Here's a good time to remind ourselves that horses are not born or built or meant to be ridden. They are flight animals. They are very good at running, but carrying doesn't come naturally to them. Our job is to make sure they carry us correctly, in a way that they stay healthy and get stronger every time we ride them.

There's a common misunderstanding—at least I misunderstood it for a while—about how the horse carries you. I used to talk about how the horse's back muscles have to be strong enough to carry the rider. Not really. They do have to be strong, but not to carry our weight. The back muscles are supposed to be moving muscles: They move the horse. They keep the horse supple and flexible, and transfer the energy from back to front.

What carries the rider's weight are the two ligaments that run along the topline of the horse from the poll to the tail. We need these ligaments to be strong and taut, not soft. When the ligaments are soft, you have a "hollow back." When the ligaments are soft and not doing their job, we sit on the

back muscles. And then the back muscles cannot do what they're supposed to do—move the horse—and they get tight and tense and sore.

CONNECTION

To avoid this negative cycle, and to get the horse to carry herself correctly, let's first start thinking about the connection from back to front. What we need is contact. The contact always starts with our lower leg, driving the horse forward. So we need to have a horse that listens to the driving aids. If not, we cannot be working on this step of the pyramid. We have to go back to Step 2 (Forward and Rhythm).

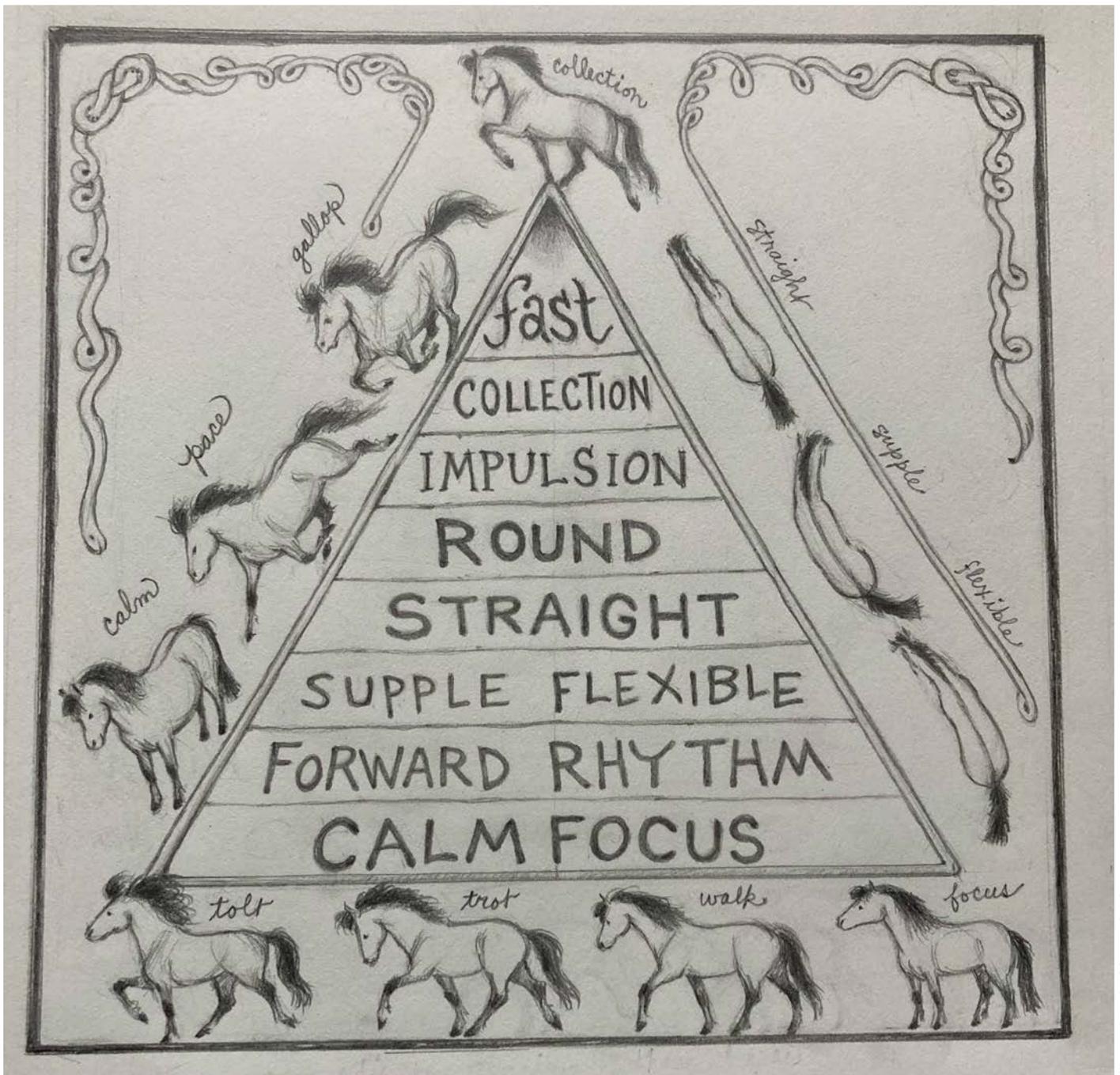
The energy comes from my driving aids: from my lower leg, from my voice command if needed, and maybe even from a crop or stick. The energy goes into my soft, receiving hand. If I feel like I'm losing contact, then typically what's needed is more driving, not more pulling. The idea is not to pull back into contact, the idea is to have a forward energy that drives the horse into my hand.

That does not mean I have a hard hand—it's not a wall in any sense. I want the horse to feel my hand, but I don't want it to feel a pull or a restriction. I want the horse to feel my hand softly: It's a receiving hand.

This is how the flow of energy from back to front works: It starts from my lower leg, and the horse works off her hind end. The energy flows through her moving back muscles, through her topline, and into my receiving hand.

My seat here is very important. A proper seat—a straight seat, with soft hips—is an important part of good contact, first, so that my legs are in the right position to put the driving aids on, but also so that I can follow the horse's movements. Those back muscles, those moving muscles, need to be able to move me around in the saddle. I need to be a comfortable burden for the horse, and a proper seat helps with that. If I'm stiff, if I'm leaning forward, if I'm leaning back, if I'm leaning sideways, I become harder for the horse to move around. Then everything kind of falls apart.

Now the horse I'm riding in the video, Friðsemd, is not too bad on walk. I'm able to keep some contact, keep her forward.



Illustrations by Margot Apple

Many horse training and performance pyramids have been developed over the years, but this sequence of steps—used by Hólar University—was created specifically for Icelandic horses.

I have to remind her a little bit, but that's okay. We have a rather flexible, elastic rein contact. The flow of energy is okay. She carries herself quite well. She has a little bit of roundness to her topline. I think she is carrying me more or less correctly. That's the feeling anyway. I wouldn't say she's great at it, meaning she's not super strong in the topline, but for the most part she carries herself correctly, with a neck round enough to keep those ligaments taut. Her back muscles move me quite okay, and they move

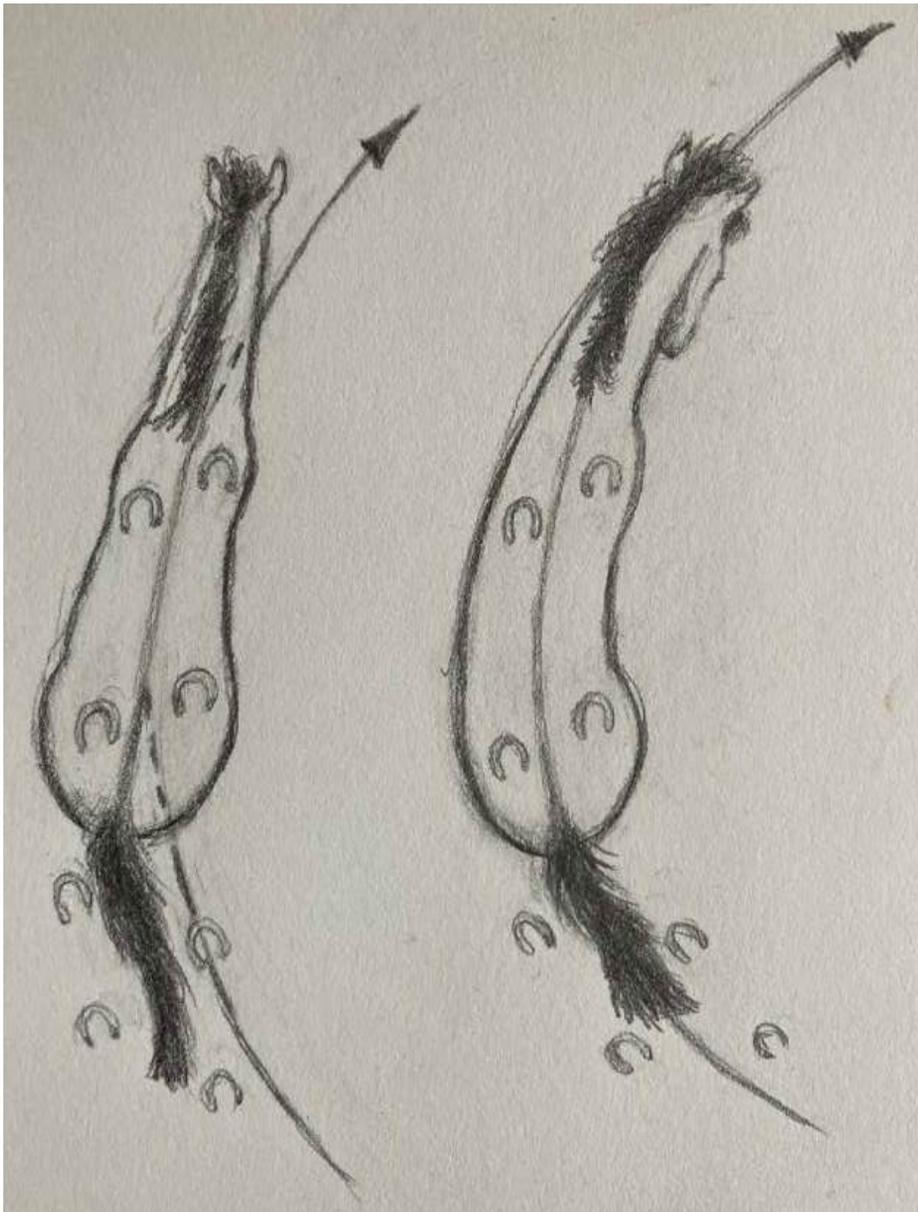
the energy from back to front quite okay. Sometimes she tries to go up with her head and shorten her topline a bit, but for the most part I can affect it. But walking is the easy part.

HOW TO CONNECT

Now let's try trot. I sit in a half seat, and she starts out okay. But if you watch the video, you can see quite quickly she sticks her head out or up, creating tension in her topline. When I ride a circle, she falls on the inside shoulder and gets stiff. There's not a lot of

good tempo here. She's hesitating. And I don't have nearly as good a connection from back to front as I did at the walk.

So as I ride trot, I work toward a little more connection, a little more flow from back to front, and a little less hesitation. I want more consistent contact. I ride a circle to see if I can get the bend under control—the bend can help a lot in improving contact. I make the circle smaller, small enough that I can maintain the bend instead of having her fall onto that inside shoulder.



The stiff horse, on the left, is not bending properly. See how the whole body of the supple and flexible horse, on the right, follows the curve.

At the same time, I drive her forward toward my hand, trying to get the contact, the flow to be a little more steady.

Next, I slow down to walk and do some lateral work. In this step of the pyramid, we use dressage exercises like turn-on-the-forehand, leg yield, and shoulder-in quite a bit. These exercises improve the horse's understanding of the aids, and the connection between the aids, and, therefore, improve the flow from back to front, from my lower leg into my receiving hand.

In the video, you can see that my horse is struggling a little bit with this. She likes to move her front end more than her back end. She's stiff. But she understands me, so it's okay. I cannot expect her to be perfect in

the beginning. But she shapes up better. She gets rounder. She takes the contact from time to time quite well. It's much harder for her to pop up her poll and disconnect her topline, like she was doing before.

Next I try to get trot again. I start on the circle and protect the bend, meaning I don't focus on the size of the circle so much that I lose the bend. If I was trying to ride too big of a circle, I might lose her inside shoulder—I might not have enough lateral control from my inside leg, in trot at least, to correct it. My only option might be to make the circle a little bit smaller so I don't lose the proper bend. In the video, you can see the bend is helping me. I'm getting bigger steps—if she would just keep going forward.

As soon as I lose the forward momentum—as soon as she loses her forward focus—I lose the contact. This is so typical. There can be no proper rein contact if the horse is not going forward. If the energy isn't going from back to front, the rein contact will never be what it's supposed to be. As soon as I lose that respect for my driving aids—I'm driving, and all of a sudden she's not listening to the driving aids—what happens? She falls apart. Contact goes away, head goes up, head goes out, and I've lost the top line. I've lost the connection from my leg to my rein.

She has the same issue in tölt. She sticks the nose up, locks the poll, drops the withers, drops the back, and loses that connection. The flow from back to front, from my lower leg into my receiving hand, is kind of cut. It stops.

As I explained in Step 2, when we were working on rhythm, sometimes it's good to just go a little bit faster. The same thing can apply here, when we're trying to find that connection. I want to find the ideal speed, where I have the best connection from my leg to my rein, so I can get a supple top line—a top line that moves freely with no tension in the neck, no tension in the back. I need her to release the tension in the neck and to accept the soft contact of my hand so that her back muscles can be moving muscles, not carrying muscles.

I want that energy, that flow, to come from behind. It starts from my lower leg, from her hind end, and goes through the horse, through her back, through her neck, and into my hand with no restrictions, no resistance on the way. Just a constant soft flow. That's such a great feeling when you get it.

STEP 4: STRAIGHT

The fourth step of the Hólar training pyramid is called straight. Does that mean the horse is always straight, like a straight line? No, it's more about the horse being symmetrical or even, left and right.

Every horse is born uneven—just like we are born left-handed or right-handed. Every horse will run a little bit crooked or will like to bend more one way and less the other way. You feel this when you start young horses. When you lunge them the first few times, you see a huge difference between the sides.

Interestingly, you will often see this unevenness go together with the mane. On the side where there's more mane, they're less bendable. This is probably connected

to how they were growing inside their mothers—that's one theory. They lay bent to one side in the womb. And therefore they have this kind of natural bend in their bodies, in one direction or the other. The mane falls on one side because they always leaned a little to that side. Something like that.

In modern training, we don't talk about a good side or a bad side anymore. It's not as simple as that the horse wants to bend on one side, so that's the good side, and she doesn't want to bend on the other, so that's the bad side. That's not how it works.

The most typical unevenness we see in horses, by nature, is that the horse is softer to bend from the left rein than from the right rein. The hind end is maybe a little bit to the left, which means she is using the right hind leg under her center of gravity. The left hind leg gets more of a free ride, we could say; it doesn't come under the horse's center of gravity. And the horse likes to lean more on the right shoulder.

It's tempting to say, she bends easier to the left, so the left is her better side. But her right hind leg is the stronger hind leg. In showing, when choosing which direction to ride this horse on the oval track, I would often choose the right side. That's where you have the stronger hind leg, making it easier for the horse to tölt faster through a corner on that side. It's better to think about the sides as being different, not good or bad. The horse can be good at one thing on one side, but good at another thing on the other side.

I think it's great to understand this typical unevenness in the horse—and it can obviously be the mirror image, for sure—but I don't think we should lose ourselves in analyzing it too much. Because, in the end, we need to work with the whole horse.

STRAIGHT ON A CIRCLE

What does straightness mean? What do we want to feel, what do we want to accomplish?

The goal is to make a perfectly even horse. Does a horse ever get perfectly even? No. Perfection here does not really exist. But that's still our goal, to get as close to it as possible.

What we are looking for here is a horse that takes even steps on both sides: equally long steps, equally high steps.

We are looking for a horse that bends evenly in both directions. You can ride evenly sized circles. This is a very typical challenge when riding figure eights, for example. It's very hard to make the two

circles the same size. It's much easier said than done.

We want the horse to track up correctly. That means that the left hind leg is following the footstep of the left front leg, and the right hind leg is following the footstep of the right front leg. The horse is traveling on two tracks, two lines.

We talk about the horse traveling on three tracks or on four tracks when it comes to dressage exercises like shoulders-in and haunches-in. Then we purposely want the horse to travel on more tracks, as part of its training. But first we want to be able to ride in a straight line, traveling on two even tracks—meaning one hind leg following in the footstep of one front leg, and the other hind leg following in the footstep of the other front leg.

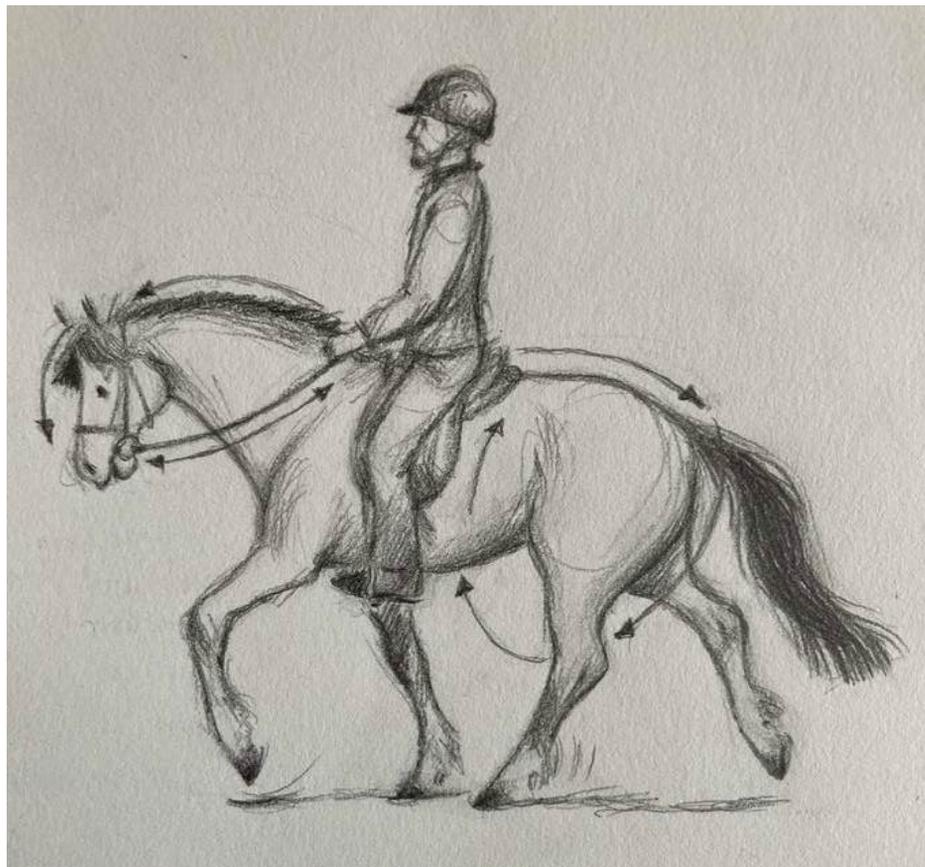
Then there's the term "straight on a circle." What does that mean? It means the horse is following the line of the circle correctly. So if you draw a circle in the sand, her left legs travel on the inside of that line (if you're riding to the left, or counterclockwise), and her right legs travel on the outside of the line. She's tracking up correctly.

Very often you see what my horse is

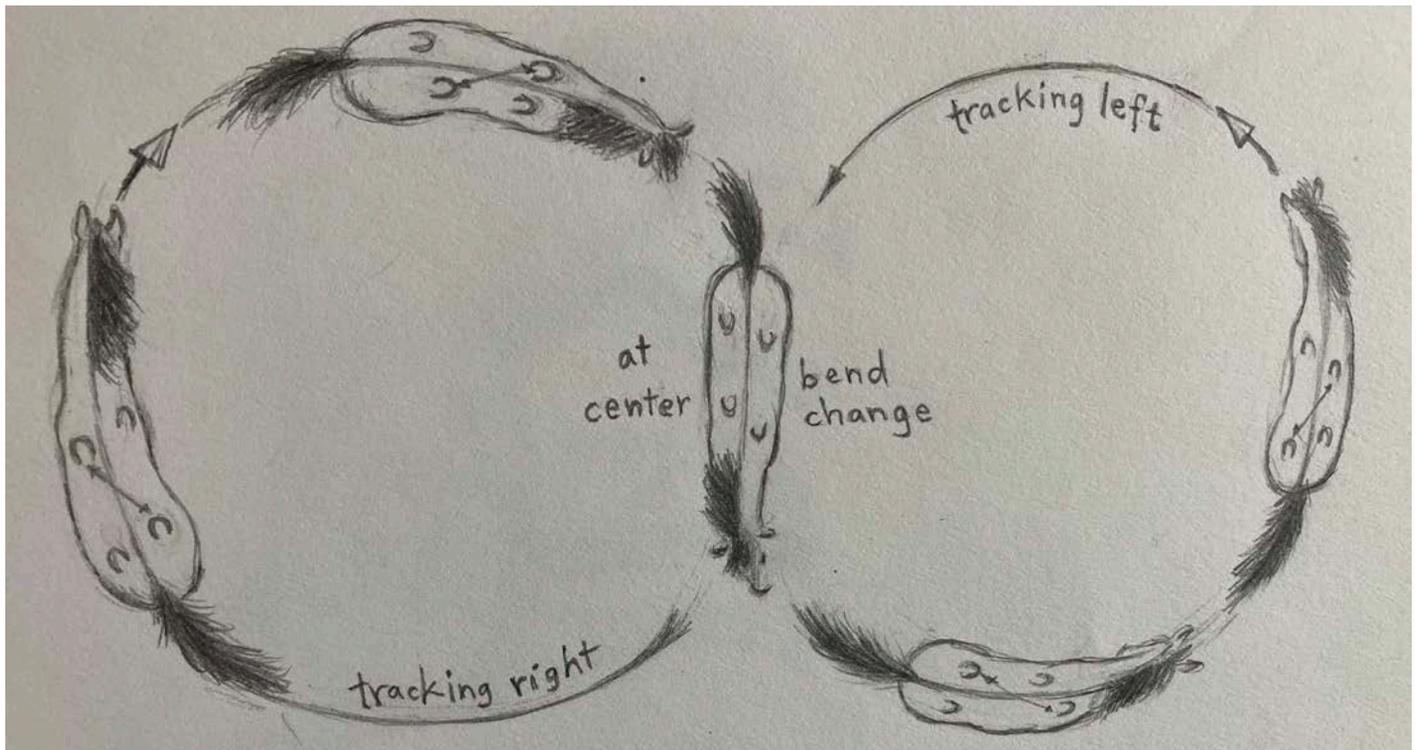
trying to do in the video: She's moving the right shoulder out a little bit, so her hind end comes in. Her hind end is actually traveling on a smaller circle than her front end. She's not straight on the circle. In the video, you can see how she's drifting out of the circle, not so much with the hind legs—so she's not doing a lateral exercise—she's just drifting out through the right shoulder and getting crooked on the circle. Her front legs and her hind legs are not really traveling on the same circle at all.

When I turn the horse around and ride to the right (clockwise), she's does the opposite. She falls a little bit in on the right shoulder and lets that shoulder lead a little bit, so that her front legs now move on a smaller circle and her hind legs are out a little bit, traveling on a bigger circle.

This horse is the typical, uneven horse I talked about earlier. She likes to go through the right shoulder. She likes to step under her center of gravity with the right hind leg, and give a free ride to the left hind leg, leaning on the right front leg a little bit. She's quite bendable to the left, not nearly as bendable to the right.



To get the horse to carry herself correctly, we need contact. The contact always starts with energy from our driving aids and flows from back to front. The horse works off her hind end, and the energy flows through her moving back muscles, through her topline, and into your soft, receiving hands.



What does “straight on a circle” mean? You want the horse to bend evenly in both directions so you can ride evenly sized circles. This is a typical challenge when riding figure eights: It’s very hard to make the two circles the same size.

FEELING EVENNESS

We want a horse that can carry evenly on both hind legs, that can push evenly from both hind legs. As I said before, with evenly long steps and evenly high steps.

If I don’t have this evenness somewhat under control, it is absolutely hopeless to go further, into training collecting power or pushing power, training the horse for extension or speed changes.

If I have a horse that can put his hind end out, or put his shoulder out, and I have no say over it when I start to teach the horse collection, I can forget it. It’s never going to work. She’s going to try to collect on one leg and give the other a free ride, and it’s not going to work. She’s going to lean more on one side, and I’ll end up with a horse that’s tense, and more crooked, and leaning on my one hand—or something like that. It will never, never work.

That’s why the order of the steps in this training pyramid makes so much sense. I need to accomplish this task before I can move on. But keep in mind that accomplishing it doesn’t mean I have to have a perfectly straight horse before I can teach her something else. That’s not the case. I have to have some control over the evenness. I need to at least influence the horse in the direction of straightness and evenness and

have some say over it before I can push on to the next step.

So, how am I going to work with this horse? First of all, I need get a little control over the bend.

On the right side, I’m going to get into my right seat. I’m going to ask for a little more bend and get this horse to yield from my right leg and walk forward in a correct circle. This is not going to work if the horse is hesitant and not going forward, or if he’s not calm or supple. So we need those first three steps of the pyramid to be under control before this step works. Because here I’m riding the horse forward and, at the same time, restricting the forward movement a little bit so I can get my right leg on and create a bend around my right leg. Then I’m trying to get the horse to walk forward in a correct bend.

All the crookedness or unevenness in the body—where does it come out? We primarily feel it in our hands. As a trainer, a very common thing I hear is, My horse is very stiff on the right side, I’ve got to have his teeth done. Or, My horse is very stiff on the right rein, I’ve got to get a new bit. Or something like that. We think because he’s stiff on the right side of the mouth, that we have to do something about the mouth. Of course, it could be the mouth. We do have

to rule that out. Make sure her teeth are good. Make sure she’s happy with the bit. Make sure the bit fits, etc.

But the reason she’s hanging onto my right rein could be a problem in her shoulders, or her middle, or her hind end. It could be anywhere in her body. It just comes out in my hands. The energy comes on from my lower leg, from behind. It goes through the horse’s body into my hands, into a receiving contact. If there’s unevenness in the body, that receiving contact becomes uneven. It could be because the horse is pushing off the left hind leg too much into the right rein—but I don’t need to analyze it that much. I just know that if my horse is uneven in the rein contact, she is not symmetrical, not straight, not even. For me, that’s the key.

So, riding this horse on the circle to the right, I’m in my right seat. I’ve got my right leg on the girth, I’m driving the horse forward, and what I’m trying to accomplish is that the horse walks forward with an even bend in her body and an even feeling on my hands. I might make the left rein a little bit more steady, and the right rein a little bit more playful, because I know she doesn’t like to bend a lot to the right. But the feeling on both sides should still be similar. I don’t want to feel one side being

blocked, being restricted. The horse should walk evenly into both my hands. That's what we're trying to accomplish.

When I turn around and go to the left, it's going to be different. Here, I'm going to try to accomplish more contact on the left rein, less on the right rein, because that's the opposite of what she wants. So I'm not going to bend her too much around my left leg. I'm going to support her with my right leg and right rein, limit the bend a little bit, and try to ride her forward into even contact on both reins again. It would be very easy for me to bend her in this direction and ride her with almost no contact, because that's what she wants, but that's not helping me. I'm trying to get more contact on the left and less contact on the right. To keep her shoulder from going out too much, I put my stick on the shoulder, block it a little with my right rein, and put my right leg on the horse—also my left leg too, obviously—and try to get an even contact on both reins.

Another thing I do is to change directions a lot. One or two circles to the left, then one or two to the right. Just like any other transition, it's always helpful. That's where figure eights come in handy. It's easy for the horse to cheat a little bit if you don't switch directions regularly. If you just go round and round the same way, they may put the hind end in a little bit or out a little bit, and you won't notice it. They'll find a way to make the circle the way they want to, while at the same time pleasing you. When you switch directions often, it's harder for them to come up with those little tricks of theirs.

Another thing you'll notice: When the horse becomes more even, the rein contact becomes better. When she was walking in bad balance, looking too much in, over-bending, falling on the shoulder, I noticed the feeling in my hands was not very good. So the bottom line is this for me: What I'm always looking for is that even feeling in the reins. That the horse feels even, no matter

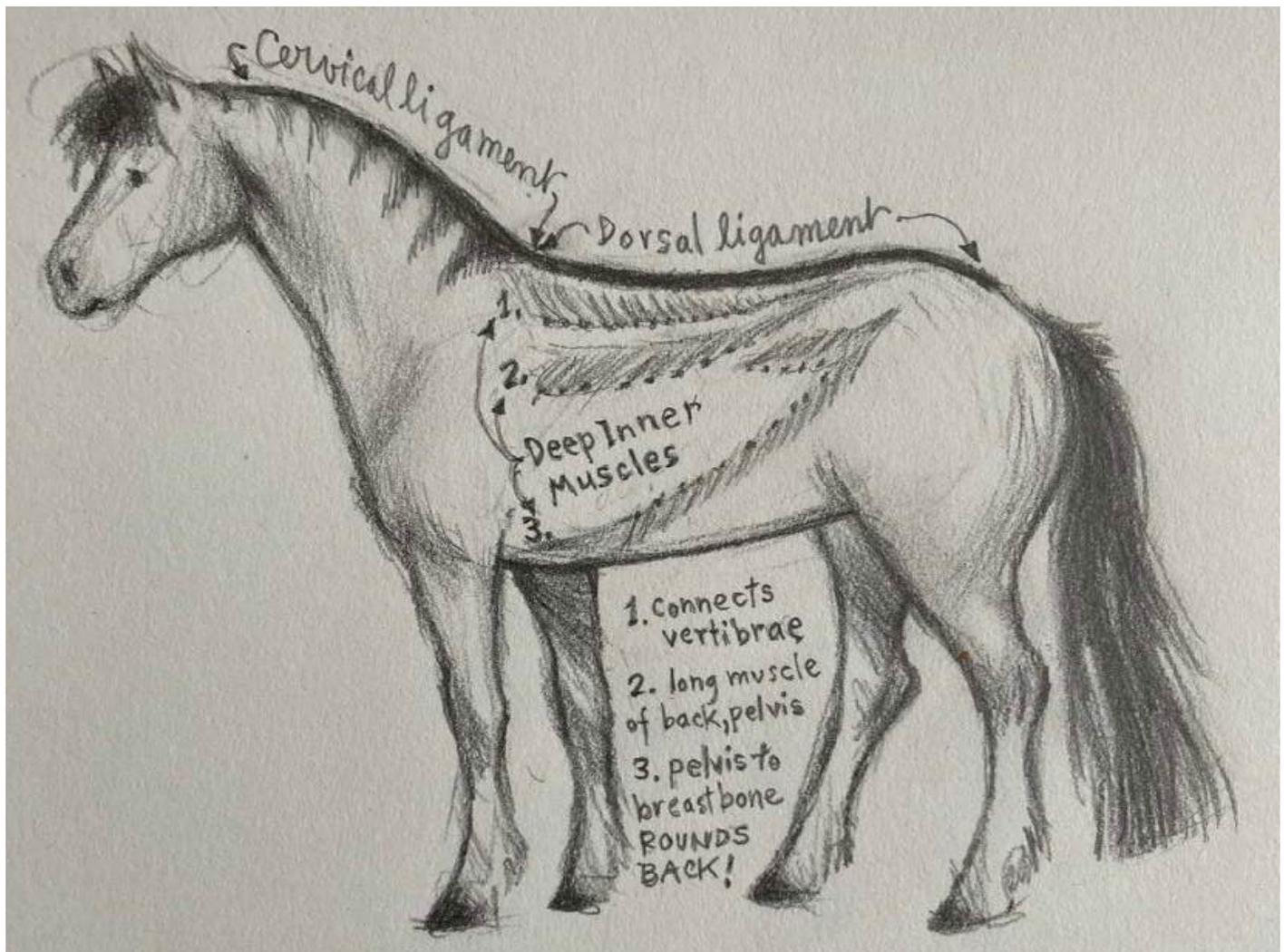
what you're doing.

Of course, the horse is not going to be 100 percent even, but the goal is to get as close to it as possible. Whether I'm doing lateral work, circles, tölt on the right, tölt on the left, I'm trying to accomplish the horse being even on both sides, walking evenly into my reins.

So work with your whole horse and with the goal of getting her symmetrical and even, walking evenly from both hind legs into both reins. Then you'll be ready for the next two steps of the Hólar Training Pyramid, Step 5: Round and Step 6: Impulsion. I'll discuss those in the next issue of the *Quarterly*, or you can watch the videos on my Patreon page.

RESOURCES

The complete collection of videos can be found on Guðmar Pétursson's Patreon page at <https://www.patreon.com/gudmarpetursson>. Search under "training pyramid."



What carries the rider's weight are the strong, taut ligaments that run along the topline of the horse from the poll to the tail. When the deep inner muscles are not engaged, these ligaments are soft and the back muscles get tight and sore.

MEET VIRGINIA

by Nicki Esdom

Virginia Lauridsen, the current USIHC president, was certified as a FEIF Trainer Level 1 in September, when the first fast-track exams for US certification were held at her farm, Harmony Icelandics in Iowa.

For many years, domestic Icelandic horse trainers and instructors have struggled to find a way to become FEIF certified. Certification within the United States was impossible, with the exception of two successful seminars and exams in Georgia about 15 years ago. The only option was to travel to Germany or Iceland for education and exams, which required a substantial sacrifice of time, effort, and money. Recognizing this problem, the USIHC Education Committee has created a program specifically for America.

As more trainers achieve their US certification, we will introduce them in the pages of the *Quarterly*. In this issue, we present an interview with Virginia, based on questions initially developed by Alex Pregitzer.

WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND?

My background is in classical music. I spent most of my career singing in opera and with symphony orchestras. I was a winner in the Third Luciano Pavarotti International Voice Competition, and have a solo recording on Naxos Records (under Virginia Croskery). I also taught for many years at Simpson Col-



After buying her first Icelandic horses in 2013, Virginia closed down her “big horse” barn and has since become a leading ambassador of the breed. She serves now as president and breeding leader of the USIHC.

lege, which is a small Liberal Arts institution in Iowa. I loved teaching—and still do! I just teach riding now, instead of singing. I know it doesn’t seem like singing should have much connection to riding, but if you think about it, many of the terms we use in riding come from music: harmony, balance, rhythm, pace, tempo. For me, great riding feels like great music.

WHAT IS YOUR HORSE EXPERIENCE?

I started taking riding lessons as a child, but did not get serious about it until many years later. I rode on the AA circuit in show jumping for most of my young adulthood. I competed at Level 4, which is now 1.20 meters. I rode a very large Belgian Warmblood named Porter, who was my partner for 15 years. We also did a lot of dressage and fox

hunted with the Moingona Hunt.

In 2006, I purchased a boarding and training facility and named it Irish Run. It is still in existence, although I sold it in 2017. We had 30 stalls, indoor and outdoor arenas, and a jump course. We also did a lot of trail riding, as the facility abuts the largest city park in the country (Waterworks Park) which is about 1,500 acres, and has many miles of bridle trails.

In 2013, while on a trip to Denmark, I was introduced to the Icelandic horse. I rode for four hours and never stopped laughing! That fall I visited Iceland and came home with four horses (I still have them all). Since then, I have imported dozens more, purchased horses in the US, started a regional USIHC club (Toppur), and have sold and trained many Icelandic horses. I also have a small breeding operation with my stallion Gosi frá Lambastöðum. Gosi has been a spectacular breed ambassador. We love to compete and have earned World Ranking scores in both T1 and VI. We have also introduced thousands of people to the Icelandic horse at the Midwest Horse Fair, the Iowa Horse Fair, and the International Omaha.

I still love to do dressage. My gelding Herkules from Dalarif won the USDF All Breeds Award for Icelandics in 2021 and 2022. I feel that dressage techniques develop excellent foundational riding tools, no matter what discipline you choose, and I use them with every horse. I also teach my Icelandic horses to jump! I still own one "big" horse, which is currently working at the Prix St. George level.

I also really enjoy ground work, which is a big part of my training regimen. Finally, I do some driving with my mule. I think she speaks Icelandic!

HOW DID YOU PREPARE FOR THE EXAM?

I did a lot of reading! Fortunately, since I have been involved with horses for decades, I was already familiar with most of the required training techniques. I also had a lot of help from my trainer in Iceland, Guðmundur Skúlason (Mummi). Mummi is a Hólar graduate and FEIF Level III trainer, and we have worked together for the past 10 years. He usually comes to Iowa for a few weeks twice a year, and I go to his farm in Iceland once a year. I am very fortunate to have a farm with nice training facilities, and several horses with different strengths, so I was able to prepare at home. During



Though a trainer herself, Virginia takes frequent clinics to continue her education.

the past few years, I completed Knapamerki Levels 1-4, which was great preparation for the FEIF Level 1 Trainer exam.

HOW DID THE EXAM ITSELF GO FOR YOU?

As with most things in life, there were some surprises. Most of the tests went well, even better than I expected, but I also had a horse spook in the ponying exam. Fortunately, I was able to get him under control quickly. If you ride a lot you learn to expect the unexpected! The most difficult part for me was the schedule, which was grueling. It was a lot to prepare for and exhibit in three days. I used three horses, so none were pressured physically.

WHAT IS YOUR TRAINING PHILOSOPHY?

As I mentioned earlier, I love ground work and dressage, and they form the basis of my training philosophy. Through ground work, I can establish a solid rapport with every horse. It may take a while, and require a myriad of exercises, but eventually, we learn to trust each other. I always start in the round pen, and return to it periodically if I feel I need to reset our communication and remind the horse who the leader is.

From the round pen, I move on to longeing, ground driving, and basic exercises under saddle. This is where my extensive background in dressage takes over. Dressage exercises, such as circles and shoulder-in, really help strengthen the horse's back and abdominal muscles and release tension in the neck and poll. This in turn enables better movement, as the horse feels more comfortable. Every horse is different, but it can take a long time to build

strength and relaxation. I try to make sure the horse's mind and body are in balance in simple exercises before I move on to more complicated requests.

I love to take horses out on the trail, and believe you can do a lot of excellent training in the open. Most horses love to be out, and I think hill work is terrific. I am careful though. I don't take young horses out alone, and not until they are sufficiently calm in the ring. I often pony the young horses in the beginning to introduce them to working outside of the arena.

I also have a treadmill (built by the Amish) which is used to work on fitness. It is not electric, but powered by the horse's movement. The incline and amount of hydraulic fluid can be changed, which in turn regulates how easily the belt moves. I like that it strengthens the horse's hind end.

In general, I think if you can help a horse move better, and use the hind end for the majority of the work load, then they will feel better, have a better attitude, and last longer physically. Gosi is now 22 years old, but still earned World Ranking scores last fall.

My goal is to communicate primarily with my body position and weight, rather than pressure from my hands on the bit. Almost all of my horses are ridden in a loose ring French link snaffle. I believe you should communicate with your horse in the mouth, but it should be light, like you are gently holding a pinky finger rather than squeezing a hand.

WHAT IS YOUR TEACHING PHILOSOPHY?

First I find out what my students want to do. Then I help them acquire the necessary skills, with an appropriate horse, in order to be successful. This means the first thing I need to do as a teacher is to listen. Then I need to watch. Only then can I begin to develop a strategy for helping them attain their goal.

Finally, one more thing is central to my philosophy of both teaching and training: Never ask the student or horse to do more than they are capable of on that day.

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OUT TO PASTURE?

by Chris Romano

Putting a positive spin on what most of us fear—old age and aging horses—means adapting to changing circumstances at the “tail-end” of life. There are magical opportunities inherent in aging with your horse: the freedom to purely enjoy the moment and be spontaneous, without being driven by agendas. You might be surprised how beauty, friendship, love, and immediacy can prevail each day you and your horse continue to be together.

Since Icelandic horses can live a long time, they make good companions for our later years. My Fudgy is nearly 36 years old, equivalent to 80 or 90 in human years. He lives at our house, and his paddock borders a quiet, dead-end street. For five years he’s lived alone, since my husband’s horse died. Fudgy doesn’t seem to mind a bit. There’s no competition for attention and no stable-mates pushing him around. Grooming is a big part of that attention, because, like many older horses, he has metabolic syndrome, which makes shedding his winter coat a slow process. He needs a trace cut several times a year, to prevent overheating in the San Francisco Bay Area where we live. Happily, his weight is fine, but he has high glucose levels, so I try to give him small bites of carrot. Celery is a good alternative. Sweet feed and sweet horse cookies are out.



Finding good pasture in the Bay Area of California isn’t easy. Fudgy, long retired at age 36, is happy to graze on the neighbor’s lawn.

We are both out to pasture, now, since my diminished eyesight and osteoporosis make riding too risky. Instead, Fudgy and I take daily walks through the neighborhood, where he visits with his many fans. These are walkers, dog walkers, families, bicyclists, and nannies with kids in strollers. All enjoy meeting us on our walks or stopping by his paddock. He always pricks up his ears when he hears children coming. He enjoys these delightful encounters. Often, Fudgy is the first horse local children get to meet, feed, sit on, or ride, with their parent’s supervision, of course.

Fudgy is also allowed to graze a neighbor’s front lawn, and I use scissors to trim what he misses. He gets to graze the neighboring pasture, too, and while he grazes, I weed out thistles and other invasive plants. Over the years, I’ve watched the pasture change from being weed smothered to a tapestry. It has been truly bucolic. Until. . .

FIRE ALARM!

This summer solstice, in the early morning, the vet came and pulled four of Fudgy’s teeth. They’d become loose from reced-

ing gums, and painful when the enlarged roots wobbled at their bases, pressing on nerves. Losing teeth is a routine problem for many, but not all, older horses. One sign of loose teeth is when a horse spits out quids, which are about five-inch long globs of hay or grass that can’t be chewed enough to be swallowed. They fall out of the horse’s mouth and litter the ground. Having fewer teeth means Fudgy now needs to be fed soaked grass pellets and cubes.

The sedation wore off in about an hour, and Fudgy was eager to graze the neighbor’s front lawn, which he now did without spitting out quids. After, he ate his mid-day soaked pellets and napped. Then at 2:20 pm, there was an enormous bang. About a minute later, my phone rang. It was my horsey neighbor friend, yelling, “There’s a fire on the hill! Get Fudgy!” Then she hung up and called 911. She was worried he might be up in the neighbor’s pasture. The temperature was in the mid-90s, so electricity was in high demand. We later found out that a nearby power pole’s transformer had overheated, exploded, and scattered globs of burning mineral oil,



which caused spot fires.

Fire engines roared in, and we had to evacuate. We'd planned for such an event. My husband was to take our truck packed with emergency supplies, and I was to lead Fudgy away from danger. Without any fuss, Fudgy let me lead him through fire hoses, crews, and engines, with helicopters flying above. Fudgy has serious priorities, and he headed back to the neighbor's front lawn, having little interest in the dry grass in the pasture. Neighbors were out on the streets, wondering what would happen. While he grazed the lawn, one neighbor hosed him off, another gave him a bucket of water, others asked if he was okay, and he was interviewed by the local news media. Even



with the fast response, the fire wasn't going out. I'd only had time to grab a bucket of pellets and Fudgy's medications. I had to arrange for him to have a place to stay for a few days. The large animal emergency evacuation group has a place, but it was an hour trailer ride away, too long a ride for old Fudgy on such a hot day. A friend arranged for him to go instead to a local stable with a summer kids' riding program, run by volunteers. Sixteen years before, Fudgy had been there for two summers. He must have remembered it fondly, for he seemed to recognize everything and he settled right in.

After three days, he came home. The air smelled of smoke and wet ash. Half our property is a steep slope of oak and chaparral, now charred. Happily, Fudgy's paddock area and our home were untouched, thanks to great efforts by the fire crews and the windless conditions. Helpful, too, were our efforts to follow the fire marshal's recommendations and maintain a defensible space. Neighbors were relieved that Fudgy was safe and home again. He'd become a celebrity, because many people had seen him on the news or had read about him in the local paper. One family offered him their front lawn to graze going forward. Now, he gets to graze two small lawns! We may not get to go into the mountains anymore, but the lawns are reminiscent of mountain meadows.

Pasture is great for snoozing, too. For an old horse—and an old ex-rider—a good day is one spent walking, grooming, and napping, sometimes with a neighbor's dog along for company.

GRATEFUL

Growing old with your horse is not for everyone. It is an opportunity not a duty. Financial limitations, or the declining health of family members or of you yourself, might limit your choice. And if the horse is suffering from chronic pain, it's best to put him or her down. Too often people struggle with that onerous decision, but it is our responsibility. I've consulted with my vet to make sure Fudgy will be put down here, instead of trying to save his life by taking him away to have some kind of surgery. What I need to do is to make sure Fudgy will be put down if I become incapacitated or die before he does. This needs to be stated in writing, posted, and kept with our other end-of-life documents. The vet needs a copy, too. This decision is one only a practical friend can perform. Family members might be too emotionally involved and loath to complete such a task. If I survive Fudgy, which is more likely, I will be grateful for all the time we've spent together. I'll be able to smile, feeling his essential "Fudgyness" in my heart.

Truly, being devoted to an old horse is sweet. It's enough to go for walks, see the joy and calm he brings to others, and have our simple routines. Each morning I'm surprised to see Fudgy is alive. There he is, at the gate, eyes merry and bright, head up, ears pricked, waiting for his breakfast. Now, that's the beginning of a good day!



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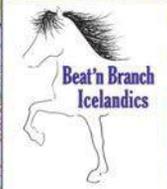




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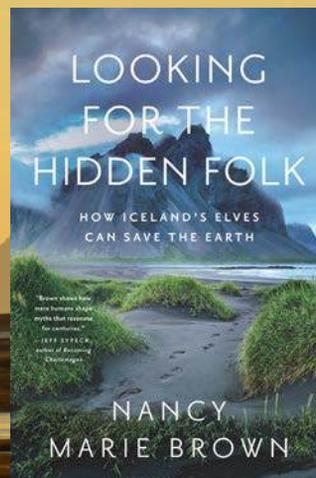


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