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HORSE JOURNAL

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THE HORSE JOURNAL EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

MANAGING EDITOR
Patti Schofler
schc.pschofler@gmail.com

DESIGN
Kari Ontko
kari.ontko@comcast.net

COPY EDITORS
Eileen O'Farrell

PHOTOGRAPHY
Bill Stacy
www.bluecinnabar.com/Bills-Photos

Marcie Lewis
marcielewisphotography@gmail.com

PRINTING
AD-Vantage Marketing, Inc.
ad-vantagemarketing.com

SCHC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Henry Beaumont
president@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

VICE PRESIDENT
Sahar Bartlett
vicepresident@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

SECRETARY
Elizabeth Palmer
schc.epalmer@gmail.com

DIRECTORS
Diana Hughes
Kim Murphy
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Sonoma County Horse Journal

Six-Time American Horse Publications National Award Winner

Sonoma County Horse Council
Post Office Box 7157
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

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CONTACT US
info@sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org

CONTRIBUTORS



AMY STEVENS grew up in Half Moon Bay riding horses as a trail guide and wrangler on the dude strings along the beach. As a teenager, she rode gymkhana and barrel racing and showed rail and trail horses. She worked for a cutting horse trainer, starting colts, helping in the breeding shed, turning back, and showing. Amy and her husband moved to Sonoma County thirty-eight years ago. Currently, she has a horse she rides on the trail, camps with, and does trail obstacles. The mother of two grown children, Amy has a master's degree in English, taught at Montgomery High School in Santa Rosa and now teaches fitness at Coaches Corner in Sebastopol.



RT GOODRICH CJF, began his career as a farrier 35 years ago in Wenatchee, WA. After lecturing at the Bluegrass Laminitis Symposium in Kentucky, he came to California to accept a job at Pioneer Equine in Oakdale. While on his trip, he stopped by Sebastopol to visit a friend, fell in love with the area, and moved here. Then, he met and fell in love with his future wife, Jessica Lashbrook. Twenty-two years later, he is the farrier science instructor at the Santa Rosa Junior College, a clinician for the American Association of Equine Practitioners vet farrier podiatry short course, a member of the Mustard Prostaff, and a volunteer for Equitarian Initiative.



PATTI SCHOFLER is the managing editor of the *Horse Journal*, a publicist and freelance writer for national equestrian sports magazines. She began her writing career as a reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* and is author of the Lyons Press book on Arabian horses *Flight Without Wings*. Passionate about journalism and dressage, art and travel, she is a graduate of the USDF L Judges Education Program and trains her eleven-year-old PRE Toledano.



DANELLE K. JACOBS, ESQ. is a realtor and attorney. She has lived in West County with her family and herd of quirky rescues for over twenty-five years. She is a lifelong hunter-jumper rider and horse owner with an equine science and English degree from Colorado State University. Besides spending time with her family and herd, Danelle enjoys reading, traveling, meeting new people, and helping them with their real estate needs. She can be reached at danelle.jacobs@cbrealty.com, www.storistables.com or 707-583-1422.



ARIANA STROZZI MAZZUCCHI grew up along the coastal Marin Headlands, training horses and winning champion awards in dressage, jumping, eventing, gymkhana, reining, and working cow horse. She is a successful entrepreneur, zoologist, artist, author, and founder of Equine Guided Coaching. Her passion is to encourage people to heal themselves and the earth. Ariana started her coaching career pioneering Leadership & Horses™ in 1989 and created the Equine Guided Education and Coaching model that now exists worldwide. The author of four books, Ariana also enjoys helping with real estate transactions, where her extensive knowledge of animal husbandry and the local region is a real asset. www.arianamazzucchi.com.



ELLEN GARVIE grew up in Mill Valley. She boarded at Tennessee Valley long before it was Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Over the years, she has started numerous horses and enjoyed eventing and NATRC and Ride 'n Tie, winning best horse and first woman/woman team on her father's Arab/Quarter Horse "Sabre." Today, she keeps three horses in Woodacre and runs a dog daycare and boarding service, Toby & Friend.

LINDSEY CLOSE is the operations and sales manager of Elk Grove Milling, Inc. She holds a certification from the American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists in Equine, and a degree from Fresno State University in equine production. Lindsey has also been a university speaker at the Western States Horse Expo and recently joined Santa Rosa Junior College adjunct faculty as a professor in the agriculture department for equine studies courses. She manages and operates an equine retirement and boarding facility at her home ranch, and competes with her personal horses in a variety of disciplines. Lindsey is a certified equine nutrition advisor through the Legacy Equine Nutrition program, as an independent equine nutritionist PhD.



MICHELLE BEKO, DVM has been an equine veterinarian since 1991. She enjoys spending time with her husband and daughter as well as doing dressage and jumping with her horse Ranger. You can reach her at Empire Equine at 707- 545-3909, empire-equine.com

DO YOU WANT TO WRITE FOR THE *HORSE JOURNAL*? OR SEE YOUR PHOTOS IN PRINT?
Contact Patti Schofler at schc.pschofler@gmail.com

President's Message



JOHN O'HARA PHOTOGRAPHY

Happy New Year!
I hope that this finds everyone basking in the afterglow of a joyous holiday season and preparing for a fantastic year in 2025. Once again, Mother Nature has blessed us with ample late fall rain as a lead-in to what we all hope will be a productive winter snowpack accumulation in the Sierra Nevada. Big snow equals an abundant hay crop in both Nevada and northern California, which, hopefully, will lead to lower prices.

Your Horse Council is underway with organizational details and developing plans for events and opportunities for participation. Please contact *Horse Journal* and the website with items that interest the community.

2025 represents the twentieth anniversary of the *Horse Journal*. It has been continuously published by the Sonoma County Horse Council as a means of providing contact and connection with our membership and those interested in the equine world. It has chronicled the accomplishments of our many talented people and horses through challenges and victories. It has offered suggestions, both homegrown and professional, to drive better outcomes in animal husbandry. It has provided entertainment with personal stories of success. But, mostly, it has helped weave a sense of community among horse owners and lovers here in Sonoma County.

This all comes together under the skillful and accomplished hand of our editor, Patti Schofler. For five years, Patti has orchestrated the content and made it into the finished magazine that we know and love. Patti has organized a legion of contributing writers who come up with a broad variety of subject matter which keep us all reading. For years, Patti was assisted in design and layout by Lynn Newton, whom we lost almost two years ago. Since then, Kari Ontko has taken over design responsibilities and fostered a smart look to the magazine.

Since its inception, the *Horse Journal* has been directed by some well-known names of the recent past in Sonoma County. Previous editors of the magazine included Ed Weber, John Strassburger, JoDean Nicolette, and Patrice Doyle. Each of the people gave the Journal a little nudge in a new direction and each left an indelible mark on its progression. The magazine that we see today is a blend of these people's efforts. Hats off to all who have been involved over the years and worked to give us the product that we have now and for which we can be grateful and proud.

While I am on the subject of those who have steered the Journal, I want to acknowledge another very important person. Laurie Waissman has been in charge of our website content and all social media postings and email blasts that go out under the Council's name. A rider herself since childhood, Laurie has her ear to the telegraph wires and keeps up on all local equine activities. She provides current activity information and works hard to ensure that the membership is up to date. Thank you Laurie!

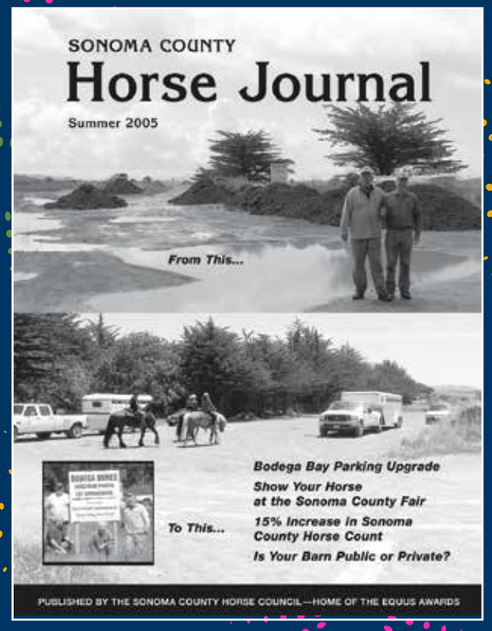
Here's to a happy, safe, and prosperous year.
Henry Beaumont





ON THE COVER
PHOTO BY CORY WEAVER
Stars at the San Francisco Opera presentation of Georges Bizet's Carmen are Gypsy Vanner and resident of Penngrove Drogen and rider Christian Van Horn as the character Escamillo who performs the signature song of the toreador aria mounted on Drogen. The gelding's trainer, Caryn Hoeflein, joined the cast while in costume as she handled Drogen.

Sonoma County Horse Journal Celebrates 20th Anniversary





TRAINERS ON THE MOVE

The training business of **Kalember Equine** is moving! Head Trainer of Kalember Equine Melissa Kalember, a USEF R judge, clinician, and equine sports massage therapist, is leasing a peaceful and beautiful property located in north Petaluma. This facility features a 2100 square foot covered arena, 90 x 100-foot outdoor arena, ample outside living space, and a beautiful barn with large stalls, cross ties, and an indoor hot and cold wash rack. Known as Kalember Equine Training Stables. Kalember Equine will have limited spaces available for training and will be hosting clinics and educational events. 707-363-1258

Robinson-Clarke Equestrian (RCE) is thrilled to move to a new home at Heritage Park in Novato in a state-of-the-art equestrian facility that perfectly complements the RCE program. Heritage Park includes two outdoor arenas with GGT Footing, an indoor arena, property riding paths, two round pens, spacious turnouts, and a new Eurociser. Nestled on 15 scenic acres with access to over nine miles of trails, the facility offers unparalleled opportunities for RCE riders to cross-train and condition their horses. With a dedicated and onsite professional groom and stable staff, RCE is passionate about helping riders discover the joy and harmony of dressage. kendall@robinsonclarkeequestrian.com

EQUINOLOGY CHANGES STRUCTURE

EquiLearn, LLC has acquired Equinology® Inc.'s western USA territory, enabling the company to offer equine and canine bodywork, anatomy, and biomechanics courses to students throughout the United States.

Under this new arrangement, Equinology will continue to operate classes from its Northern California location and maintain its role as the parent company, while EquiLearn will handle the day-to-day operations. Equinology will continue to provide overall strategic direction, and both companies will remain committed to delivering high-quality courses and supporting student success.

"We are confident that EquiLearn will uphold the high standards of excellence that Equinology is known for," said **Debranne Pattillo**, president of Equinology.

EquiLearn is found at www.eli-us.com.

"Equinology® has provided top-tier education for over 30 years, consistently setting and raising the standard for excellence in equine and canine health education," said Debranne.

NEW TO THE HALLECK CREEK RANCH HERD

Halleck Creek Ranch (HCR), Nicasio, welcomes therapy horses Prince and Calvin to their herd, "the heart of our program," said executive director **Molly Scannell**. "Not only are they well-trained and adaptable, but they're also patient, gentle, and deeply intuitive—attuned to the unique needs of each rider."

Prince is a flea-bitten grey Azteca gelding. Before joining HCR, Prince worked at the racetrack as a track pony, offering support and comfort to racehorses as they traveled to and from their stalls and the racetrack. "This has made him an unflappable riding horse for our program. His self-carriage makes him fun to ride and beautiful to watch," described Molly.

Calvin is a Thoroughbred gelding from Southern California who was previously used as a jumping and trail horse. "His favorite things are hanging out with our participants, volunteers, and his best friend, Pepsi," described Molly. "This tall guy is so smooth to ride.

"Sponsoring a horse is an amazing way to get connected to our herd and is an incredible way to donate to our ranch and directly support our programs."



Prince



Calvin



Instructor Jaki Hardy taught the five-year-old Vivienne Mitchell how to hold the reins.

DRESSAGE FOR KIDS

To encourage young riders to increase involvement in the sport, the **Sonoma Chapter of the California Dressage Society** recently offered a dressage clinic specifically for young and junior riders, held at Kildarra Equestrian Center in Santa Rosa. Trainers **Jaki Hardy** and **Katy Martin** donated their time and offered 18 riders private lessons before auditors.

During the lunch break, friends and riders had a blast making horsey holiday ornaments. A pony patiently stood quietly while the participants learned how to properly braid a mane for the show ring.

Carol Fricke, owner and trainer at Apple Creek Training Stables in Sebastopol, brought three students and their ponies to the clinic. "My students did better here than they do at home. The trainers were excellent, fun, and inspiring."

"Ranging from five to eighteen years old, this diverse crowd gave us much hope for the future. We were thrilled with the interest and enthusiasm and plan to hold these again," said **Lisa Thomas** of the Sonoma Chapter.

YOUTH RIDER GRANTS

What a great opportunity. We at the Sonoma County Horse Council are so excited to offer grants in amounts up to $500, which are available for member-sponsored kids 18 years old and younger. The grants are designed to support young riders in horse-related activities, including riding lessons, fairs, summer camps, horse shows, clinics, tack, and riding gear. Applications for the grants are available online at www.sonomacountyhorsecouncil.org. Questions can be directed to Tracy Underwood at 707-975-2097. The Youth Rider Fund is made possible through generous funding by Todd and MJ Kaplan.



HORSE COUNCIL AT HOLIDAY MARKET

Sonoma County Horse Council (SCHC) enjoyed the fun at the holiday fair held by Chocolate Horse Farm and Flying Cloud Farm. Welcoming shoppers and horse lovers were SCHC board members **Sarah de Sanz** (left) and **Sahar Bartlett**.

HORSE BRAIN SCIENCE SEMINAR

A cutting-edge equine neuroscientist and passionate horseman, **Dr. Stephen Peters** is a renowned expert on how horses' brains learn and process information. At the Horse Brain Science Seminar at Highland Springs Equestrian Center, Kelseyville, Dr. Peter will present a strong scientific process to horsemanship that has revolutionized the modern understanding and training of the horse.

By explaining the horse's brain neurochemistry and how it functions, Dr. Peter will teach how to help horses reset their nervous system, self-regulate their behavior, and deepen their relationship with humans by creating an environment built on trust and feeling safe.

The popular seminar, sold out last year, will be held April 25, 26, and 27. The cost for the three days is $400, with a $50 discount for purchases through March 30. For more information, call the Highland Springs Equestrian Center at 707-484-6615.

FOCUS ON THE WELFARE OF LESSON HORSES

University of Guelph of Canada researchers revealed the results of a study suggesting the variability in injury and death rates among lesson horses across different barns. This study suggests that management practices play a significant role in the horses' health and longevity, with larger lesson facilities reporting higher incidences.

The study showed that riding lesson horses have poorer welfare compared to pleasure horses when comparing incidences of abnormal behaviors, physical injuries, health issues, aggression towards humans, and postures reflecting depression.

University of Guelph researchers conducted an online survey targeting owners, managers, and coaches of Canadian riding lesson facilities. Responses from 153 facilities, representing 1501 lesson horses, were analyzed.

The study found that the average number of horses per lesson facility was 10. Facilities with fewer than six lesson horses reported lower proportions of horses exhibiting reactive behaviors when tacked up, such as biting handlers and pinning their ears. This suggests that smaller facilities might be able to provide more individualized care, potentially reducing stress and conflict behaviors in horses.

Lesson horses from respondent facilities worked an average of two hours per day. Longer working hours were associated with higher incidences of horses bucking under saddle. Additionally, facilities with herds of thirteen or more horses had longer maximum working hours per horse than those with smaller herds.

The use of restrictive equipment was also linked to conflict behaviors. Facilities that reported greater use of side reins saw increased reactivity when tacking up, as well as pawing, kicking, and pinning ears while under saddle. Similarly, the use of flash nosebands was associated with higher incidences of horses bucking under saddle compared to other types of nosebands. Conversely, facilities with a higher proportion of horses not wearing nosebands reported fewer horses who bucked.

Equine Guelph is the horse owners and caregivers' center at the University of Guelph in Canada. For further information, visit **www.equineguelph.ca**.

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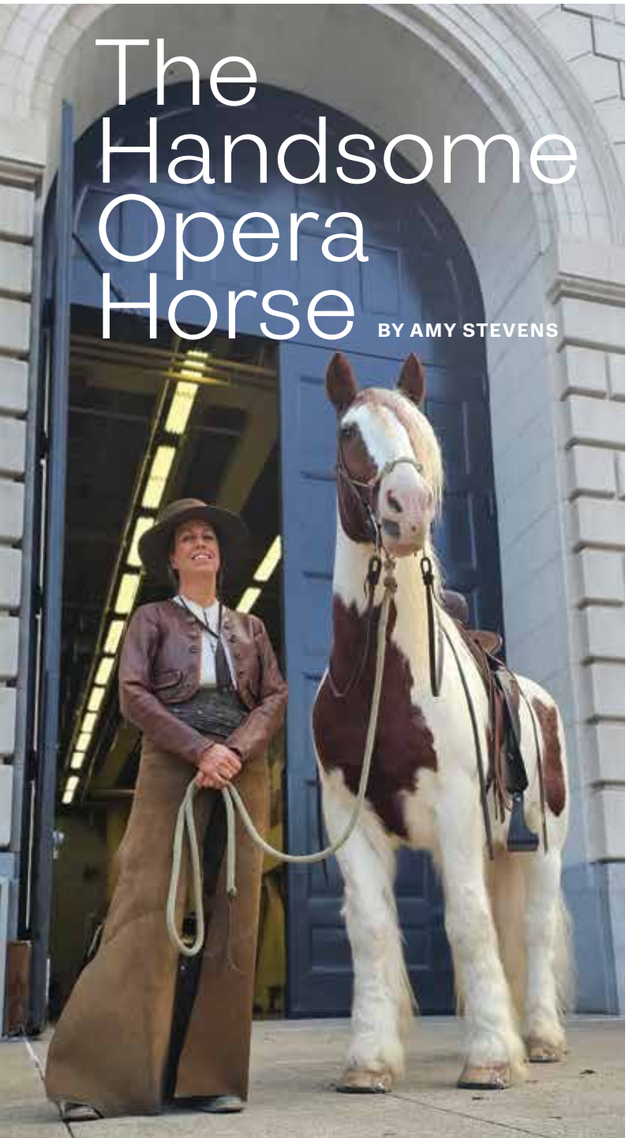
The Handsome Opera Horse

BY AMY STEVENS



In the fall, the San Francisco Opera's performance of *Carmen* included an all-star cast: the handsome Christian Van Horn as the toreador Escamillo, the beautiful and talented Eve-Maud Hubeaux as seductress Carmen, and the gloriously beautiful Drogen, our Sonoma County Gypsy Vanner.

In the *Carmen* archetypal story of passion, first presented in 1875, military officer Don José falls completely in love with the seductive Carmen and leaves everything for the enchanting gypsy. But when the handsome toreador Escamillo rides into town on his beautiful horse Drogen, Carmen quickly loses interest in Don José.

Drogen, with his flowing white forelock and mane and his lovely feathers, enters in the second act with the handsome Escamillo aboard. It is the full-throated baritone of the toreador song that turns Carmen's head. No one on stage or in the audience can take their eyes off this handsome man on the even more handsome horse.

Drogen, an 18-year-old Gypsy Vanner associated with the Romani people, is ever the professional. He exits the stage with his handler and trainer, Caryn Hoeflein of Sebastopol, who is in costume on stage and takes him back to his trailer to calmly wait for his next scene in Act IV. During this break, Caryn puts Drogen in the trailer packed with shavings so he can relieve himself. In 19 performances, Drogen did not once sully the stage.

For Act IV, Caryn, dressed in rough-out chaps, a bolero jacket, and a gaucho hat, rides Drogen to his mark. Set assistants quickly move in with a set of stairs that are placed just off-stage. Carmen strides in, climbs the staircase, turns her backside to Drogen's rump, adjusts her skirt, and calmly balances the side saddle behind the rider. Her aria begins. In the final scene, Escamillo, the toreador, kills his bull in the ring just as the love-crazed Don José fatally stabs Carmen.

How possibly does a horse nonchalantly accept a dark echoing stage, multiple loud arias, a full orchestra, dancing and stomping, throngs of children with twirlers, confetti falling from the sky, spotlights darting to and fro, moving sets, and a woman in a full skirt sitting side saddle on his rump? Not to mention trailering from home in Penngrove to San Francisco and back several times a week for rehearsals and performances. It begins with the right trainer and the right horse.

Caryn Hoeflein has been riding and training horses for most of her adult life. She began riding with Novato Junior Horsemen as a young teenager, quickly graduating from their horse course to gymkhana and barrel racing. She moved into reining, cow horse, and ranch versatility from there. Today, she focuses on obstacle challenges and the intricate, subtle challenges of ranch riding. Caryn has long ridden with the Petaluma Riding and Driving Club Drill team and is one of the head coaches.



Drogen is gorgeously groomed as he enters his special stage entrance at the SF Opera House.

Like many good trainers, Caryn loves to learn. "The more I learn, the more I realize I don't know much," she explained. "And everyone has something to offer. I have taken little things from so many people along the way." She understands that in horse training, every horse is different, and every situation is different. Knowing when to change gears and to be able to read a horse are crucial. For Caryn, there is a reason a horse avoids what is asked, if it's either broken communication, fear, or a physical restriction (lameness, ulcers, chiropractic issues etc.).

Drogen, a quiet-minded Gypsy Vanner, turns out as the right horse. Caryn's client Eugene Power was looking for a horse large enough for his size, who was mellow but not lazy, and one that was capable of going on trail rides and horse camping trips with the Trailblazers, the Reno Sierra Riders, and other organized riding groups. Caryn found Drogen, the strout 15.2 hand, 13-year-old, and took him on a trial basis. He started out trying some bad habits he had learned but quickly gave them up when confronted with Caryn's kind, consistent training methods. Drogen proved his worth, packing kids around for lessons, serving as a good mount for Eugene, and making his debut in the Petaluma Butter and Eggs parade. Soon after, it was *Carmen* on stage with the San Francisco Opera.

Drogen and Caryn made it to the opera with the help of one of Caryn's mentors, the late Gary Sello from Novato Horsemen's Association. Years before Gary had provided horses on stage for the SF Opera. He was their animal connection and called him about *Carmen* in 2019. Gary, who was in his eighties, gave Caryn their contact information. He took to the rehearsals, sound checks, and prop practices with a quiet, yet professional dignity. As horses go, consistency is key. Drogen seems to understand what's asked of him and follows the routine down to the millisecond.

"He really seems to like being on stage," said friend Melynda Silvashy. "He would stand backstage and swing his head toward the stage entrance. He would take a few steps to convince Caryn it was time to go on stage. He was comfortable with everything as long as Caryn was there; he knew he was safe. Nothing bothered him. You could see how much he trusted her and their special bond."

This unique, once in a lifetime opportunity has happened for two separate runs of the play *Carmen*, which is performed every five years. The first time, Drogen was 13; this time, he is 18. Throngs of adoring fans crowd around after the show to get a glimpse of San Francisco's famous opera horse. We know exactly where he and Caryn will be in five years when he enters his 23rd year.



Caryn and Drogen wait for their stage cue outside the opera house.



Who Made The Impact?

BY RT GOODRICH

North Bay farrier RT Goodrich traveled to South Dakota to demonstrate to the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Indian Reservation horse caregivers the effect a farrier can make on horses, as most horses there had never been touched by a farrier's rasp. Instead, these ancestors of warriors, hunters, and expert horsemen showed so much to RT, making a large impact on the visitor.

RT had joined the team of voluntary veterinarians, vet students, and farriers from the non-profit Equitarian Initiative (EI) that arrived at the reservations last summer and fall to help horses and to educate the people on the importance of equid health.

The 922,759-acre Rosebud Indian Reservation stands in large areas of Ponderosa pine forests, grasslands, steep hills, and deep valleys. The Rosebud Sioux Tribe is more properly known as Sicangu Lakota Oyate. The Pine Ridge Reservation encompasses more than 2.8 million acres and was established in 1889. It is home to the Oglala Lakota, a tribe of the Sioux people.

ABOVE: Farrier RT Goodrich (left) gives tips during the training at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The bay on the left is the horse that Cruz rescued and carried home on his lap. The chestnut mare towards the back is the one that accepted the orphaned filly. PHOTO COURTESY OF RT GOODRICH

RT GOODRICH SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE

Cruz, a young man in his 20s, brought his small herd to me. Among them was a beautiful two-year-old bay filly. A couple of years ago, Cruz was riding through the bush when he came across a foal abandoned by a wild herd. He thought they would return for her, but when he later checked on her, she kept following him, though she had difficulty walking. Cruz picked her up, lifted her onto the saddle, mounted up, and took her home. He had a chestnut mare with a foal at her side. Cruz carried that baby to this mare and asked her for help. He put the baby down, and the mare immediately let this orphaned foal suckle.

Cruz's filly was among over 350 horses on our first assignment. Veterinarians and vet students performed castrations, wound care, dental vaccines, and dewormings. We three farriers trimmed feet and helped wrangle the horses.

These horses are extremely important in the Lakota culture, and today, rodeos and racing are very popular at the reservation. Those we met were incredibly healthy and beautiful Quarter Horses and Paints. Many, including the young stallions, were feral and, until we arrived, had never been touched by a human. They are owned, but they are not handled. Once the stallions were gelded, vaccinated, and wormed, they went to training as riding horses. The mares and babies were turned back out.

With these feral horses, we farriers held legs, trimmed feet, and coached some of the local young men so they could trim on their own.

With the EI's help, these young people can now start training horses to ride. Some of these young people were so talented with their horses and they showed so much love and respect for their animals.

In the fall, we held classes. The veterinarians give presentations on wound care and nutrition. We four farriers had 28 students on the first day and 18 on day two to learn basic trimming. All participants could do hands-on. None of the horses were shod.

WELCOME FOR DINNER

Another gentleman had his corral right next to his family cemetery. He had suffered many losses. His son, gunned down by another young man, was buried there. He had 29 young stallions that we worked on, and when we finished, he told us that his grandparents taught him as a young boy that when people visit your home, you offer them food. And you must do your best to prepare it yourself. He had smoked a brisket overnight for us, and two of his neighbors brought side dishes. He fed all of us and fed us well.

Before the meal, he prayed in his native tongue as he prepared a spirit plate that he took into the family cemetery and left on a little table in the middle of the cemetery. He knelt and prayed at every gravesite. Several times we were fed, and every time, they would pray in Lakota, using enough English to let us know they were glad we were there. It was beautiful.

Percy White Plume is instrumental in organizing these EI visits. This summer, he took us to the killing fields of Wounded Knee. He showed us the draw where the cavalry led the natives after they surrendered. The cavalry set up howitzers on a hillside overlooking the village. He explained that many of the soldiers were just kids themselves doing what they were told. They unarmed all of the natives. One brave was deaf, and he didn't know what was going on. They grabbed his gun, and two young soldiers tackled him. Somebody's gun went off. The soldiers on top of the hill opened fire, killing nearly 300 unarmed men, women, and children. They also managed to kill and wound several dozen of their own soldiers. It was a very somber explanation, but Percy said he did not want us to feel sad or angry. He just wanted us to understand that two cultures couldn't understand how to get along.

I read *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown when I was in school, and I thought it was a great story, but it didn't mean anything to me. When I returned from Pine Ridge last summer, I read it again and had a very different understanding.

When I went to private farms to work on horses, all the family became involved. Grandpa and Grandma would sit on the bale. Mom and Dad would gather horses, and the kids would climb all over them. I think they learned how to ride at a very young age, and watching some of these young people communicate with these horses was absolutely inspiring. They seem to have a very calm, natural way about them, and the horses respond favorably from what I saw.

The voluntary help we give to these horses means riding programs that operate here can spend more money directly helping children find a positive path in life. I have honestly never been around people who were so appreciative. It was a life-altering experience for me.



Sinta Gleska University Horse Ranch on the Rosebud Indian Reservation is a stop we made on both visits. They have a children's riding program. The employees at the horse facility are young men and women who have chosen an alcohol and drug-free lifestyle and dedicate themselves to showing the kids a better path.

The young man is Tavish Bartlett. He recently went to farrier school in Oklahoma and helps maintain the horses at the ranch. The young woman is Summer DuMarce, one of the talented vet students who volunteer with EI.



SCHC Carousel of Horses



The Sonoma County Horse Council treated the 2024 Sonoma County Fair visitors to the mastery of horses and their many talents.
A. Petaluma Riding and Driving Club Junior Drill Team
B. Ringmistress Tracy Underwood and clown Meaghan King
C. Jesse Saldana, western pleasure
D. Mia Delos, jumper
E. Equi-Ed Therapeutic Equestrian Program
F. Alice Simpson, driving









I Love Lucy & Ethel



BY PATTI SCHOFLER

The Nextdoor message read, “Two beautiful ponies on our property. Bodega Ave., Petaluma. Does anyone recognize them?”

The two were ripping around Larry and Sandy Edwards’ two acres, neighing and laughing. They could be petted, but any chance to grab them left the ponies off running and neighing.

Names for the two girls off for an adventure? Lucy and Ethel. Perfect.

“I had been checking our fence, and found a little wire sticking through one of the posts, indicating a gate latch had been there. I saw there was a gate. I just closed it. Then a couple of days later, I was watching the football game. I looked out the window, and there were two ponies in our yard,” said Larry.

The secret gate had swung open, and Lucy and Ethel found it.

“One neighbor responded to the Nextdoor message that the ponies belonged to our other neighbors, Bob and Kathy Alvarez. Kathy came over within a few minutes. She didn’t know there was a gate; they’d been there about 30 years.”

For one and a half hours, they tried to herd the ponies back through the gate, even tempting them with oats, but they weren’t buying it. They had come for adventure and curiosity.

Ethel is the white and brown pony, and Lucy is the dark one. Lucy is usually in charge, according to Kathy, but Ethel was having the most fun. “Ethel was watching us, and she’d get close, and she’d give a wiggle of her little behind at us,” Sandy described. “Then I’d try to catch her, and she would run off, neighing. We just loved it. It was an hour and a half of great fun.”

After all settled down and the ponies were at their home, Kathy sent a message to the Edwards on Nextdoor: “Thank you, and we apologize profusely for their shenanigans! Lucy and Ethel, however, are not sorry at all and had a great time galloping throughout your yard.”



<<< Phil Tresenrider and Ziggy, national champion agility dog and border collie.

PHOTO BY MARCIE LEWIS

>>> RT Goodrich and Django, a mix who was dumped as a wee pup 13 years ago at Marin Tack & Feed and has been with RT ever since. At the time, RT was playing percussion in a gypsy jazz band, so he's named after Django Reinhardt. "They both have the same little mustache."

PHOTO COURTESY OF RT GOODRICH





FARRIERS & THEIR WORK PARTNERS



>>> Vita Rodocker and Ruby, an eight-year-old pot-belly pig who Vita met at a farmer's market when Ruby was a piglet. She built a platform in the truck to give Ruby her own space.

PHOTO BY WILLIAM STACY



Steve Swanson and Rae Ann, a three-year-old fox red labrador retriever who has learned the farrier trade since she was a puppy. She follows a long line of labs in the Swanson family.

PHOTO BY PATTI SCHOFLER

We Mean Roosters

BY DANIELLE JACOBS

It started with a "few rescue horses." Then a few chickens. Then sheep and pigs and…today, Rooster Run Foundation is home to approximately 32 sheep, 16 goats, 9 pigs, 20 horses, 110 roosters, and 15 to 20 hens, plus Slider the cow who is retired from the San Francisco Zoo petting zoo.

Dr. Carrie Schlachter never intended to have an animal rescue. Having served as a veterinarian for 23 years, she was busy enough with her veterinary practice, Animals In Motion. That quickly changed once she bought her property in Penngrove in March of 2020, just as Covid hit.

Once word got out that there was a new rescue in town, she was inundated with needy animals. She was surprised at how many there were. As people were losing their jobs due to the pandemic, they became desperate for solutions for the pets they could no longer afford.

"Some people even put animals over our gate in the middle of the night," she said.

Now, Dr. Schlachter works as a vet out in the field three and a half days a week. The rest of the time, she and her team dedicate to caring for the rescued residents of Rooster Run.

"Freedom, Friends, and Forage" is the guiding principle at Rooster Run. To some extent, all animals have the freedom to choose where they want to live. All animals are provided with friends, and they all live in appropriate herds. And, of course, they all have the appropriate food. The team does their best to listen to what the animals tell them they need.

For example, one horse was not doing well in the herd. They put him in a separate space and periodically opened the gate so he could mix with a herd of sheep. Whenever the gate was open, the gelding chose to hang out with the sheep. So that's where he lives now. If roosters are not doing well on Rooster Hill, they can live and wander freely up by the barns, clinic, and house. They can stay as long as they do not become aggressive towards people. Some goats wander freely, serving as "greeter goats" to all visitors.

Of course, the animals are also provided with all the veterinary care they need. Dr. Schlachter focuses on animals who truly have nowhere else to go. This is especially true of the horses. Of the 20 horses, 10 are rescues and 10 are clients' horses. A condition of boarding at Rooster Run is that you sponsor a rescue horse. Further, by virtue of being able to provide all her own vet care, the horses benefit from a full range of therapies, including shockwave, therapeutic injections, and bodywork techniques.





When asked "What do you think people do not realize about rescue?" Dr. Schlachter answered twofold. First, most people are aware that retired racehorses can quickly fall into bad situations. What people do not realize, and what she did not realize in the beginning, there is a large number of unwanted pet farm animals – sheep, pigs, goats, and especially roosters.

Secondly, there are a large number of unwanted sport horses, that is horses who have career-ending injuries and so are no longer "useful" to their riders, or horses whose riders are moving up the levels, beyond the horse's ability, and the rider can only afford one horse. These animals, just like retired racehorses, can quickly find themselves in desperate need of a soft landing.













Dr. Carrie (right) feeds a giraffe at the San Francisco Zoo.

The most difficult part of running a rescue, Dr. Schlachter quickly defines, is "turning animals away." She reports that she turns away at least one pig every week and a rooster every other day. Beyond that is the cost of feeding so many animals.

Dr. Schlachter envisions a bright future for the Rooster Run Foundation. She constantly has an eye out for more property. She imagines 1,000 acres, divided into huge pastures, where rescues can live their lives safely, cared for, and as they choose. Further, she aspires for owners to educate themselves in care and injury rehabilitation and for the public to learn about the vast number of animals that are in need.

Rooster Run is inspirational not only because of the homing of the animals but also because of the passion and dedication of Dr. Schlachter and her team. To donate or become involved, visit www.roosterrunfoundation.net. Just don't bring any more roosters!

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Letting Go of the ‘Shoulds’

BY ARIANA STROZZI MAZZUCCHI

It was a warm fall afternoon when I first met Sheri. The barn was full of distractions the day she arrived for her riding lesson. Stacy was grooming her bay mare near the tack room, and Jane had just finished working on her yearling filly. I busily saddled Sadie for Sheri’s riding lesson. As Sheri began to share more about herself, I realized that perhaps she had not come to ride after all. I suggested we sit in the shade of the old oak tree and get better acquainted.

“What would you like to gain from our work together?" I asked.

“I don’t know. I saw an article about you in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and it seemed right to schedule a session with you. I have a horse named Sterling. He is an incredible horse. He has become a wonderful jumper and currently competes in show jumping. I don’t show him myself. I have him with a trainer who works with him and shows him.”

As she continued sharing her relationship with her horse, and more overly, her trainer’s relationship with her horse, she revealed that she was confused about what to do with her horse. She lived in Marin and drove the one-hour trip up to Sonoma two times a week to ride him.

Tears started spilling down her cheeks as she confessed that she was afraid to ride him.

“I don’t know why,” she blurted out. “I have always been a good rider. I used to be a successful competitor. Sterling is such a wonderful horse.” She sobbed a few more tears.

“I don’t know if I should ride him anymore.” A long breath followed, “But it is important for me to ride.

“I don’t know why I am so emotional about this?” More tears spilled down her cheeks, smearing her makeup. “I just want Sterling happy. He is such an amazing athlete. He should be on the show circuit.”

And there it was. The gold mine of doubt. The keywords ‘should be’ tipped off my intuitive detective hat, quietly mining for the source of hidden pain, not spoken but felt between the words.

“Who said he should be showing?” I asked inquisitively.

“Well, my trainer thinks it is important.” She quickly defended the ritualized history of the competitive horse world.

A gold mine indeed. But not a fun one. Not a mine full of riches, but rather a mine full of booby traps, disposable horses, and lost souls.

The songbirds in the old oak tree went silent. I suggested we take a long in-breath and feel the breeze tickling our faces. After a long pause, I asked, “What do you, Sheri, care about? Sterling is your horse. What kind of relationship do you want to have with him?”

She rushed in with more defensiveness. “You know, I used to show a lot myself. Competing was such an important experience for me. It taught me about focus and being assertive. I consider myself to be an assertive person. I don’t understand why I am so confused now. I don’t feel assertive at all.” She sighed.

A few more tears fell toward the dusty floor, smearing more makeup on her face as she continued, “I don’t feel confident like I used to.

“But I love to watch him be shown by this young trainer. And I really want to support the sport that I love and has done so much for me. I love giving this young woman a chance to ride a great horse.”

I wanted to say so many things, but I waited. I listened to her tears fall as her breath got slower and deeper. Finally, her spirit-self spoke authentically from the heart, “Oh wow, I have forgotten about me. I have forgotten why I love horses in the first place.”

By the end of our first session, she was able to see the pieces of the puzzle before her:

- She loved her horse.
- He was a great athlete.
- She didn’t feel safe riding him.
- She liked giving the young trainer’s career a step up.
- And she loved her horse.

What mattered more? Her relationship with Sterling? Or his talent?

Over the next few sessions, she realized that just because Sterling was a great show horse, didn’t mean he had to be a competitive show horse. Once this was in clear view, she began to address her fear of riding Sterling. Was he too much horse for her? Maybe he was too much because he, himself, didn’t want to jump either, or perhaps he could feel her fear, which made him fearful in return, which in turn made her feel unsafe to ride him.

We discussed that regardless of her fear of jumping him, Sterling was her horse, and she could choose whether to have him compete or not and whether she wanted to ride him anymore.

“What other relationship could I have with him besides riding for show? Just because the trainer wants to show him doesn’t mean I have to follow her plan.”

This was a huge revelation for Sheri. Her whole reality of horses was about competition and winning ribbons. After spending time with my ranch horses and seeing them grazing with each other day and night, she began to see a whole new world open up for her and Sterling.

She finally saw what her intuition was whispering: “The most important thing is my relationship with Sterling. I can do this in so many more ways than I could have imagined a few weeks ago.” I smiled as I imagined Sterling taking a huge sigh of relief.

When Sheri had a secret conversation with Sterling about this new possibility, she could hear Sterling in a whole new way through her newfound awareness.

“He told me that he didn’t care whether he showed or not. He enjoys our time together even more. He says he loves to spend time being groomed and taking walks.”



Relationship PHOTO BY JANE WINSLOW

She ultimately decided, rather than forcing herself and Sterling back into the show ring because of old expectations, she would focus on forming a new, more authentic relationship with Sterling, not planned or subscribed by anybody but herself.

Once she allowed this new possibility and explored her options, she practiced taking a stand with the horse trainer and the other people at the barn. What had started out as a whisper in our conversation, as if to keep a secret no one should hear, had grown into a courageous call to action, to change the paradigm of what her relationship with horses was, especially with her horse. Sterling was no longer a servant meant to perform for power and prowess. Nor was she.

Thank goodness we live in a time when horses can be friends, partners, healers, and teachers. Perhaps we can recalibrate the rich and numerous roles horses can play in our lives and how we can be of service or stewardship to them. I think of it as honoring the horse for all its heart, patience, will, and feedback, as it repeatedly tries to understand and partner with us.

The concept of the horse as healer and teacher has been present throughout history, back to the writings by Greek General Xenophon. The horse waits patiently for us one by one as we find a new way to honor and respect them for what they give us when we let down the old walls of an outdated dominant, sub-ordinant perspective and transform into a way of being that creates oneness with horses.

CHOOSING A BOARDING FACILITY TAKES FOCUS

BY ELLEN GARVIE | ILLUSTRATION BY KARI ONTKO

There are endless variations of horse facilities. For some, the ideal living situation is a rolling green pasture. For another, the horse does best in an indoor environment. One owner seeks a training barn, while another covets a Sunday trail rider barn.

When checking prospective barns, you will consider your personal priorities and goals. However, we all consider certain basics when making that important decision of which barn to pick.

1. Emergency evacuation plan: Does the facility have one in place? A barn manager actually told me, "Fires don't happen out here." Within two months, a fire was two hills away, requiring retardant planes.

2. Cell reception: This can be crucial in emergencies, and you don't want to discover after the fact that the place has no reception. Consider, too, if there is a landline available.

3. How well is the facility maintained? Good maintenance prevents accidents. Check out how the barnworkers are treated. Are they expected to live in substandard trailers, or do you find the living conditions okay?

4. Security is a concern, especially with the spate of recent car break-ins. Most facilities are very open. At some, there is zero security and anyone can walk in off the street. Others are fully gated with a passcode. This keeps horses from running onto the road and hopefully keeps out the undesirables.

5. Another aspect is physical layout. How efficient is it to get from Point A to Point B in all sorts of weather?

6. Where is water sourced? If it's a well, you are at the mercy of drought.

7. Find out the policies regarding how, when, and where you and others can or can't ride. Clearly, the specific hours of operation are a high priority. Does it change with daylight savings? Horse people live for long summer evenings. On the other hand, we often forget winter conditions, such as the dark at 5 p.m. Are there buildings where you and your horse can get away from rain in winter to tack up or clean up?

8. Is there a way for you to turn out your horse to run, buck, and play?

9. Consider if the culture of the barn jibes with you. What is the ability level of the average boarder? Do many young kids and ponies work for you, or are you looking for a competitive adult environment? Consider spending a weekday and a Saturday to see the ebb and flow of activity.

10. What discipline is the facility focused on? If you're an ambitious rider who wants to train and compete, but the facility is more Sunday trail riders, you won't be happy. Do the trainers have a solid program with a full roster of students and horses? Does the facility have regularly visiting clinicians?

11. Who owns the facility? The trainer or someone else? What is their financial stability? Moving into a place just to find out later it's going on the market or involved in a divorce settlement can be very distressing. Some places I've been have absentee owners, and management is questionable.

12. Personnel. For example, some facilities have an in-house farrier. Or, at other facilities, arenas are professionally curried.

13. Sometimes, a place will seem to check all your boxes, and it's not until six months or a year later that you see problems like trailer parking, tack storage, and footing. There are silent, unwritten "rules' of barn etiquette that can take some time to recognize. It takes time to find your place among the varying personalities that make up a barn. It helps if you share common goals based on common needs. Finding the right fit can be daunting and time-consuming.

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USING SUPPLEMENTS

BY LINDSEY CLOSE, PAS



When choosing feeds and the need for supplements for your horse, you have an endless array of options, depending on your horse's activity level, body condition score, life stage, and health conditions. There are many ways to achieve a well-rounded, balanced diet for your horse. Which way will be the best for you?

Complete feeds can completely replace hay in the diet. The highest feed rate should be around 1.5 to 2 percent of the horse's body weight or be used strategically as a hay stretcher in the diet. A complete feed is more than just a hay pellet. It will contain added vitamins and minerals your horse needs but must be fed at a rate that the daily requirements are met.

Ration balancer is a concentrated vitamin and mineral supplement with a low feed rate of one to two pounds daily. Think of this like your own daily vitamin and mineral capsule. This is not a source of fuel or extra calories for your horse but is a great choice for easy keepers or horses on pasture that do not need extra calories but still need a baseline of vitamins and minerals.

Fortified feeds and grains will have a low to moderate feed rate (four to eight pounds) and are a great way to supply extra calories and additional nutrition for the horse. The commercial feeds are fortified differently for maintenance versus performance, so choose the right one for your horse. Cheaper grains, like cob or rice bran, may not be fortified at all. It is important to review the feed tag and see what exactly you're buying and how fortified it is.

Top dress supplements are additions to a ration to help close any nutrition gaps after considering forage and feed choices. They may be marketed towards improvements like hoof quality, skin and coat, joint support, muscle building, calming, immunity boosting, etc. These are your tubs of powder, pellets, or liquid that you add to your grain bucket. With a solid feed foundation, supplements may or may not be necessary.

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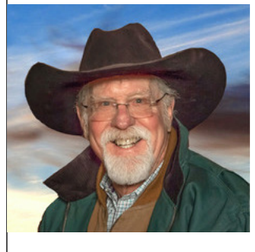

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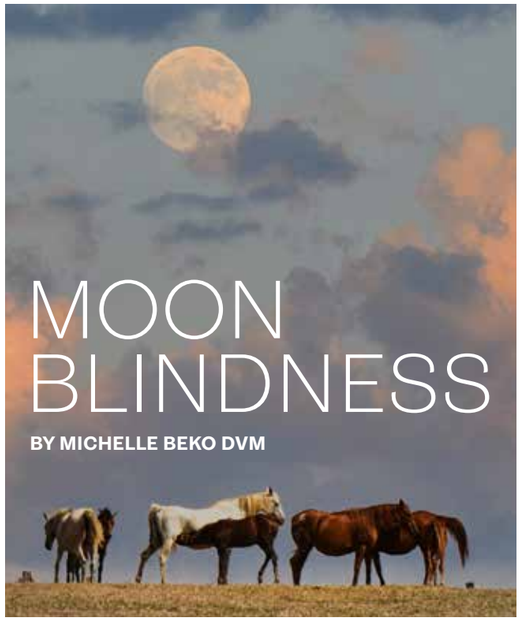

Equine recurrent uveitis, aka "moon blindness," is the most common cause of blindness in horses. Uveitis is an inflammation within the horse's eye. Many horses will get uveitis once, often in conjunction with a corneal ulcer (a scrape on the surface of the eye) that will resolve, and they will never have another episode. Others will have recurrent bouts, which often lead to blindness.

The symptoms of uveitis include squinting, which indicates pain, tearing, and cloudiness of the cornea. Many will have mildly puffy and reddened conjunctiva and a constricted pupil. Since uveitis causes the eye to have less pressure than normal, the affected eye often looks smaller than the other eye.

Uveitis has many causes, including trauma, a previous infection with Leptospirosis bacteria, and a reaction to Ivermectin due to parasitic *Onchocerca* larvae that are killed by the dewormer. Whatever initiates the first episode, recurrent uveitis becomes an autoimmune disorder. Equine eyes are fairly isolated from their immune system, but the inflammation with the first episode allows the immune system access to the inner eye, which it "sees" as foreign and then attacks.

People did not initially know what caused the recurrent episodes and, a long time ago opined that it had something to do with the lunar cycle, hence the name "moon blindness." It is now believed that uveitis is more persistent than recurrent, but the symptoms regress, so we don't perceive that the eye is inflamed.

Appaloosas appear to be particularly affected. They are eight times more likely than other breeds to get it, and one study showed that 100 percent of Appaloosas that have *Leptospirosis* will go blind in one or both eyes.

Treatment includes systemic anti-inflammatories such as Equiox, Phenylbutazone (bute), and especially Banamine, as well as topical anti-inflammatories like dexamethasone ointment or prednisolone drops and often atropine to dilate the constricted pupil. Horses that have had multiple episodes often continue treatment indefinitely. I will often keep them on Equiox to help prevent recurrences. Having cyclosporine surgically implanted in the eye seems to be an effective deterrent.

Recurrent bouts of uveitis can lead to the development of cataracts, retinal detachment, or glaucoma, as well as other problems that result in blindness. Prompt and sufficiently long treatment (at least two to three weeks) will reduce the chance that the horse will go blind. Any horse that is squinting or has a newly cloudy eye should be seen by a veterinarian within 24 hours or less.



This mule has uveitis in her left eye. Notice how it is smaller than her right eye and has no significant swelling, characteristics of moon blindness.

Most horses that go blind in one eye can usually still be ridden. Horses that go blind in both eyes can occasionally be ridden if they can follow another horse. I had a patient who was completely blind and whose owner could ride him on trails if he followed his pasture mate. Amazingly, he could go through the paddock gate into the pasture without bumping into the fence when he was turned out.

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