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August 2009

The Valley Equestrian

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 The Valley Equestrian

About the Cover

Thoroughbreds Joyous Wind and her yearling daughter, Appealing Zephyr, enjoy running at home on a summer afternoon at the Brady Equestrian Center in Downer, Minnesota. Read more about Joyous Wind and her former owner, Curt Johnson, and SEJ Stables on page 10.

Margo Brady is the new owner of all the SEJ Stables broodmares and the stallion Musical Chairs. Her goal is to continue the winning SEJ Stables breeding program for racing Thoroughbreds."

Photograph by Ley Bouchard

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 Polk County Mounted Posse Grant
 Used for Medic Kits



Members of the Polk County (MN)
 Mounted Posse line up and display
 their new medic kits purchased
 through a grant from the MN Horse
 Council.



Jenny Pender rides in her last 4-H
 Show. Story in the September
 issue of the VE.
 More photos on page 9

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BREEDER'S COLUMN

BY DAN DREWLOW OF NORTH STAR STABLES

Stallion Fertility – Testicular Masses

This month's article on breeding comes from how quick things can change in the course of a breeding season.

We were working with a great stallion, seeing no decrease in fertility, and settling mares with no issues. Then when doing a normal collection we found an abnormal mass on a testicle. We needed to find the underlying cause of the mass and make sure the stallion was healthy.

The stallion underwent some diagnostics and found what was believed to be a testicular tumor. Then you ask, "what's next?" After talking to the veterinarians and owner, we developed a game plan.

The stallion was still fertile and settling mares. The owners requested to have a stock pile of semen frozen for later use. Then the stallion was gelded to protect his health and to help ensure that the tumor did not have a chance to spread.

I thought that this would be a good time to briefly discuss some of the most common causes of testicular masses in the horse. There is a wide variety of testicular abnormalities that have been reported. Some will affect the stallion's fertility while others have no impact on sperm production. The correct diagnosis of the issues will aid in the treatment and possible future fertility of the stallion. The common equine testicular abnormalities are:

Anorchia is the absence of testicular tissue, Monorchia is when there is only one testis, Polyorchia is more than two testis, Cryptorchidism is when one or both of the testis have not descended into the scrotum.

Orchitis or inflammation of the testis can arise from trauma, parasites, or disease. The affected testis is usually hot, swollen, and painful. If both testes are involved, fertility is questionable because of the increased temperature and inflammation. If just one testis is affected there is a good chance for return to normal fertility if the underlining cause is treated.

A testicular abscess can be the result of a penetrating wound through the scrotum and testicle or just the scrotum.

Testicular hematoma is most com-

monly caused by trauma. The future fertility of the affected testis depends greatly on the size of the hematoma. Small hematomas can cause small local changes in spermatogenesis where the large hematomas typically cause severe changes in spermatogenesis and then fertility.

Testicular tumors are usually one sided and may reach a substantial size before being found. Most equine testicular seminoma tumors are benign, with castration being the course of treatment. A small number are malignant and they may spread to the opposite testicle as well as to local lymph nodes and organs.

Testicular cysts are uncommon in stallions but have been seen on testicular ultrasounds. There have been no reports of fertility issues with stallions that have testicular cysts. Epididymis cysts are usually first felt during palpation of the scrotum and are recognized by their firm round feel. These cysts have the potential to stop or slow the sperm flow through the epididymis. This condition is relatively free of pain and any systemic signs.

Testicular degeneration is a common cause of progressive infertility in stallions. The best definition of testicular degeneration is decreasing fertility, testicular size and declining semen quality. The fertility prognosis of testicular degeneration depends on the underlining cause and will vary greatly.

One of the best ways to check the fertility and health of the testicles is with the use of ultrasound and manual measuring of the testis which can be used to get an approximate volume of each testis. With the following formula of $0.523 \times \text{Length} \times \text{Width} \times \text{Height}$ for each testis and add the resulting number together, you can get the expected daily sperm output from that stallion. With the estimated daily sperm output value you can then compare that to the total number of sperm collected from the stallion. If the total number of sperm is less than expected from the total daily output, steps should be taken to find out the cause of the difference between the sperm output and the testes size. This difference is an early sign of testicular stress that occurs well before the more common clinical signs of testicular issues.

DAKOTA DRESSAGE & EVENTING
FINAL FRONTIER WINNERS

(BISMARCK, ND) - Dakota Dressage & Eventing (DDE) recently held their annual North Dakota Final Frontier horse shows in Bismarck, ND. The highest scoring adult amateur on both show days was Sally Henry from Dickinson, ND, riding her mare PR Déjà Vu. The highest scoring rider in the 21 and under age division both days was Mimi Stanley of Bismarck, ND. Saturday's high score in the open division was Misty Vandervorst of Summerset, SD, on Fly N' Hy, owned by Mary Policky of Piedmont SD. Sunday's high score in the open division was Emily Zalewski of Cody, WY, riding her horse, B-Dazzle.

Dressage is a French word that literally translates to 'training' and is one of the Olympic Equestrian sports. Dressage, pronounced to rhyme with massage, is divided into a total of ten levels, with each becoming harder than the last. Dressage shows are similar to reining, as each horse competes in the

arena alone, doing a specific pattern, and is scored on the pattern's movements.

"Dressage basics are useful to any horse," states Joann Messersmith, DDE's competition committee chair. "Dressage is really about how light can your aids be - your hands and your legs - and get the desired response from the horse. Dressage could be described as a combination of gymnastics and ballet, as dressage training increases the harmony and understanding between horse and rider. The basics of collection taught to your western pleasure horses are just basic dressage principles, with a western saddle."

DDE offers several competition and educational opportunities throughout the Dakotas, including an upcoming clinic about musical freestyles next month, more competitions in Huron SD in September, and an annual educational weekend to be offered in October. More information about the group can be found online at www.DakotaDressageAndEventing.org or by calling the group's president, Teddie Adamski at 605.280.3827.



Mimi Stanley riding PR Déjà Vu at the DDE Final Frontier show Sunday.
Photo by Marge Schwartz

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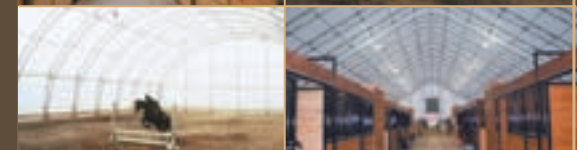
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Dressage Defined: The Thoroughbred - Part 1

By MARGO BRADY

Man o'War. Secretariat. Seattle Slew. These are all household names, even amongst those who are not especially horse lovers. Why? Because the "sport of kings," has grown tremendously in popularity over the past 200 years with the beauty and grace of the Thoroughbred as its greatest influence. Horse racing has existed as an exciting and ro-



Trainer Tracy Tschakert schooling Exuberant Valentino in fourth level dressage. This horse was long listed for the USDF 6 Year Old Young Horse National Championships in 2006, and was the only TB on that list!

mantic past time of humans all over the world for centuries. But it was during the post-Restoration period in England that horse racing became popular as a sport.

The history of the Thoroughbred breed traces back to three very influential stallions:

The Byerly Turk, imported to England in 1689 from Turkey, the Darley Arabian, imported in 1704 from Syria, and the Godolphin Barb, imported in 1728 from Yemen.

Interestingly, these horses were not used for breeding for speed, in fact, none of them ever raced, but instead were imported due to their prepotency as studs. These stallions were able to produce consistency in the form of speed, endurance, and refinement.

The "Blood Horse," as the Thoroughbred is often referred to, gets his name from the purity and quality of his "blood" or origin of "breeding." In France, the Thoroughbred is known as the "pur sang" or "pure blood." One can see the evolution of "pure blood" to "pure bred" to "thorough bred." In Europe, the different warmblood breeds are known as "half-bloods" i.e. Danish

Halfblood, Swedish Halfblood, etc. The term "warmblood" is used in America instead of "halfblood."

Another note: The Thoroughbred is considered a "hot-blooded" horse referring to his agility, speed, and spirit. In contrast, a "cold-blooded" horse is a calm, slow, heavy draft type. The "warmblood" breeds are therefore, theoretically, a mixture of the two, not in pedigree, but in type and temperament. In fact, many warmblood breeding programs regularly incorporate a select infusion of Thoroughbred blood to insure elegance and lightness. It is not uncommon to have a registered warmblood who is by an approved stallion of that registry and out of a Thoroughbred mare.

The United States was the first country outside of England and Ireland to breed Thoroughbreds and now boasts the largest registry in the world with close to 40,000 foals registered each year with the Jockey Club. The majority of Thoroughbred breeding is for racing, but the Thoroughbred has also proven himself to be an outstanding competitor in jumping, eventing, and dressage. In fact, many horses retired from the track



Trainer Mindy Cook riding her Off-the-Track Thoroughbred, Aferd's Key, at the Alpha Equus English Rider's Club's dressage show on June 20, 2009. This horse was actively racing in summer 2008!

begin a new life in one of these disciplines.

The photo of North Dakota trainer Mindy Cook on Aferd's Key extolls the grace and elegance of the Thoroughbred in dressage. It is hard to believe that less than a year before this photo was taken, Aferd's Key was racing on the track! Melissa Williams, judge for the June 20 AEER dressage show exclaimed,

"What an absolutely outstanding Off-the-Track Thoroughbred!"

Minnesota trainer Tracy Tschakert chose her horse, Exuberant Valentino, as an individual who was never raced and comments that the Thoroughbred is her favorite breed. She has schooled Vally through 4th level dressage and training level eventing. She states, "The pros for choosing Thoroughbreds for dressage are their willingness to work hard, lightness off the hand and leg, they tend to be smart and agile. Most of the TBs I have had have been very playful, which makes training fun. The main downfall comes with collected work, in that they tend to be level or downhill, with their balance over their front end. This makes collected work a bigger challenge."

Brooke Leininger, Head Coach of the University of Minnesota Crookston Equestrian Team, has specialized in re-training Off-the-Track Thoroughbreds for 10 years. She states, "I think that a good Thoroughbred dressage horse can beat any other breed as long as the trainer has taken the time to develop them correctly. Because they are extremely sensitive, they take a lot of patience and time! I think Thoroughbreds take a lot longer to mature mentally, too, so they take a rider who is patient and consistent." She continues, "I enjoy riding a horse that is powerful and alive, and the Thoroughbred is a very forward horse with plenty of energy. I love the energy that a Thoroughbred has!"

Next month: more on the Thoroughbred in dressage and introducing Eventing!

Margo Brady began studying dressage in 1986 with Anne Mouen-Stahl, Grand Prix rider and Apprentice to Carole Grant (double Gold Medalist 1983 Pan Am Games) and Jan Macafee from Australia.

She has ridden with Bo Jenå, Head Riding Master and Director of the dressage program at Flyinge, the National Stud for the Swedish Warmblood in Sweden, and also with Denis Robet, Head Trainer at the Volte-Face Equestrian Center in the French Alps.

She currently studies with Lisbeth Bengtsson of Sweden, now in Wisconsin, and clinics with International Grand Prix competitor and 'R' dressage judge, Ulf Wadeborn, formerly from the Stromsholm Riding Academy of Sweden.

Margo is the owner of the Brady Equestrian Center in Downer, MN, where she breeds Swedish Warmbloods and stands the Swedish import stallion Bayron 885. She has upper level dressage schoolmasters available for lessons and lease. Call (218) 789-7704 for more information.

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Questions?

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Read All About It! The September issue of the VE is featuring Arabians! See Page 4 for contact information to submit information or buy an ad today!

DORIS RINDT RODE AN OLD HORSE

BY ORV ALVESHHERE

RIDES AT RODEO GROUNDS

The Rodeo Announcer welcomed us, "The U.S. Flag is being carried around by Doris Rindt at a fast pace on her 26-year-old horse." She was the wife of Rodeo Producer Bob Rindt in the mid-Dakota hills at mid-century.

How old is 26 years in horse years? In our opinion, that's many, many loyal, dependable years. The horse's name has been lost from our memory, but not the sudden burst of speed on cue and the perfection of sudden stops. To the sound of fast twirling lariats and Bob's whistle, her horse bolted down the midway through the spinning rope. They performed several repeats. Again they rode through, but the following trip came to a sudden stop as Bob roped, or caught the exiting horse's tail. Her dependable horse would halt as Bob roped his wife, while the announcer quipped, "Nice catch!" Their tricks were coded, i.e. that was the 'B3' trick.

GOT FOOTING?

Daring is an emotionally charged term, with examples of Bob, then Doris, standing on their two horses as they galloped in a circle like ancient Roman times. Yes, you heard right, standing with one foot on Bob's horse and the other foot on Doris' 26 year old horse.

GOT NERVES?

Give Doris Rindt her due, standing with an unlit cigarette in her mouth while Bob split it with his blacksnake. Then holding a poker card near her posterior, that whip snapped it in two. Those two tricks came after Bob wrapped the blacksnake around Doris.

Doris performed several riding tricks, leaning back and expecting her trained 26 year-old horse to make a gentle stop. She would do

turn-arounds in the saddle, again at full gallop. A thought comes to mind: it was amazing to watch her old horse perform with the stamina of younger equines. We marveled at the willingness of her horse to gallop through a fast spinning rope. If you think your horse would try that, guess again.

GOT TALENT?

The COWBOY CHRONICLE (ND Cowboy Hall of Fame) printed a quote, "Mr. Rindt could do just about anything." Our verification came at a ND Horse Show in Rugby, where we watched a paid professional perform two-thirds of Bob's riding and roping tricks.

Nostalgia overtakes us as we claim those mid-century rodeos to be our favorite. We readily admit that the competitions were the topics of conversation for the following month.

The last rodeo event was announced, "Folks, please stand as our respected flag is carried around by Doris Rindt. Look at that old 26 year-old horse go!"

Among the unsung heroes that helped Bob produce those entertaining rodeos was his wife, Doris, who dug post holes, tamped posts and made posters. (Bob was a school teacher and mild-mannered Doris was a dorm house-mother where our sister attended.)

(Not expected to be the oldest horse, but perhaps one of the most talented old horses.)

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by Orv Alveshere, Fargo, N.D.

WHAT'S A FEW TRIPS AROUND THE RODEO GROUNDS?

National Show Horse Registry to the Rescue

The National Show Horse Registry (NSHR) announces the opening of the National Show Horse Foundation to accept donations in support of their program for the rescue/re-homing of National Show Horses.

In addition to financial assistance the NSHR will accept pledges to provide:

- Pasture board for retirees
- Stabling and/or training/re-training for potential re-homers
- Veterinary/Farrier services
- Horse care supplies
- Feed

Owners of National Show Horses and Show Horse Alliance enrolled horses unable to care for them may apply for assistance on our website. A special form will be posted soon.

The ability to help will be totally contingent upon your generosity. When properly funded the program will provide assistance on a first come-first served basis to approved horses.

The NSHR looks forward to expanding the program to include NSHs found at auctions or abandon.

Information on Corporate sponsorships to this program will be released soon.

Donations to support The NSHR Rescue/Re-homing Program may be sent directly to:
National Show Horse Registry
10368 Bluegrass Pkwy
Louisville, KY 40299

For donations of services or materials please contact NSHR Chairman David Mikosz through the website www.nshregistry.org or email nshowhorse@aol.com.

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Advertise your Arabian Horse Business
in the September issue of
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See Page 4 for contact information.

Renewable energy and crop maturity concerns to be focus of U of M Farmfest display

ST. PAUL, Minn. (7/23/2009) – Visitors to the 28th annual Farmfest next month will have opportunities to learn about crop maturity concerns, renewable energy and farm program decisions at this year's University of Minnesota exhibit. Mark Seeley, University of Minnesota Extension climatologist, will share data on the prospect that August and September weather will be warm enough to allow crops to catch up before frost. Cooler than normal temperatures have sparked concerns that crops may be behind schedule. Farmfest, the state's largest farm-related gathering, takes place on Aug. 4, 5 and 6 at the Gilfillan Estate in Redwood County, Minn. Other U of M displays will include a include a working small scale gasifier that can convert cornstalks, wood and other biomass into gas, as well as an exhibit featuring the more than a dozen raw materials that the University is using to make energy. Crop specialists from the University will be on hand, along with farm management experts who

can advise farmers on cash rent trends and making a decision about signing up for the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program that is part of the new farm bill.

Farmfest is also about fun: visitors can have their pictures taken with Goldy Gopher, win prizes and test their knowledge of agriculture, food and renewable fuels, all at the University of Minnesota tent.

In addition, nearly 73 Minnesota families will be honored by the University as 2009 Minnesota Farm Families of the Year, for their contributions to agriculture and their local communities. Gov. Tim Pawlenty has proclaimed Thurs., Aug. 6 as Farm Family Recognition Day. The families will be honored at a ceremony beginning at 1:30 p.m. that day in the Forum Tent.

For more information about the Farm Family of the Year program, visit the website at mnfarmfamilies.cfans.umn.edu/. For more information about Farmfest, visit www.farmshows.com/ffst.

NDSU Loaner Horse Program

The North Dakota State University Equine Studies Program offers a unique opportunity to local horse owners called the Loaner Horse Program. This program is a cooperative effort between NDSU and horse owners, in which horses are leased to the university in exchange for full care of the horse throughout the school year. The program has been a huge success in the past benefitting both the Equine Studies Program as well as the horse owners. The Loaner Horse Program benefits owners and their horses because it significantly decreases the cost of horse ownership in addition to giving busy owners a way to keep their horses conditioned throughout the year. In

exchange for use of the horses, NDSU takes over full care of the horses including feeding, vaccinations, farrier care, and basic veterinary costs from September to May. NDSU benefits from the program because equine classes are not offered during the summer at NDSU so this program has helped to alleviate some of the management costs, space needed and time that go into caring for horses when they are not being used for classes.

Horses leased to NDSU are used for teaching purposes and utilized for classes, clinics, and demonstrations. As mentioned earlier, the lease agreement runs from September until May when the horses return home for the summer. It is the

goal of the program to provide horses for the students that will help them learn a multitude of equine skills including handling, horsemanship, and general care and management. Horses in the program are ridden by beginner to advanced level riders and must be able to adapt to diverse experience levels. Horses leased to the program must be broke, healthy, and sound. They should have good ground manners which include standing tied, picking up their feet, leading and handling easily. In addition, horses must know their leads, be able to back, pivot, sidepass, and neck rein. Horses are required to come into the NDSU Equine Center with a required list of vaccinations, their feet trimmed,

and teeth checked. Horses that are accepted into the program come in on a 30 day trial period. During this time, horses are evaluated to ensure positive adaptation to their surroundings and situations presented to them. Once accepted into the program the horses are used on a regular basis for classes as well as other student learning experiences. Horse use is managed by faculty and horses are only available to students during faculty monitored classes and activities.

For more information about the program please contact Tara Swanson at tara.swanson@ndsu.edu or 701-231-8865. If you have a horse you feel would be a good fit for our program, please send a recent,

within 1 year, videotape or DVD to the following address: NDSU Department of Animal Sciences, Attn: Tara Swanson, Department 7630, P.O. Box 6050, Fargo, ND 58108. The tape should include the horse walking, jogging/trotting, loping/cantering, stopping, backing, pivoting, and anything else the owner would like to add. The video will be evaluated within 2 weeks of receipt and you will be contacted at that time. Thank you in advance for your interest in the NDSU Loaner Horse Program.

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By Kathy Grimes

TALKING HORSES

Now that summer has arrived, I was thinking about asking some of my horse friends if they had some advice for new riders. Of course they did and here is what they had to say.

Toledo wishes that his rider would wear the gloves that he is going to use in the show ring. "The feel is different and we both get nervous in the ring. I want us both to have fun and his instructions are not clear when he has the gloves on." Joey wants his human to get new rain gear. "Kathy, do you know how noisy rain gear can be?"

I responded, "No, I don't." "Well, it can be very loud and annoying." He said. "I remember a time when he tried to take the rain gear off while he was still in the saddle. It was so spooky that I almost threw my human. So tell them to wait until it stops raining to get off the horse and remove their rain gear."

Julian said that her new owners took her to a different barn. Now every other day she gets groomed. Since her old owners hardly ever groomed her, she is not sure if she likes this new activity.

"Sometimes, they use too much pressure. I put my head up and my ears back and now my new owner use a lighter touch right away. Tell the new riders that some horses, like me, hurt when groomed. So pay attention and your horse will tell you what you need to do. Don't think you know it all like my old owners."

Toledo asked, "Do our humans smell the leather like we do?"

"I know, Toledo, that I don't smell it as well as you do," I said.

"Oh that is too bad; sometimes it smells so good." Toledo responded. "I can always tell when they clean the saddle and when he gets new boots. He had new boots on when we went for a trail ride last week. It was fun. I like that he left his dog home this time. Tell new riders to leave their dogs home or at the barn because they are often spooky."

"Oh, the other day, on our ride we went down a hill. I got to go faster and faster. It was really fun. I was first in line and I got really far ahead of everyone. My human and I work together going down hills but Molly, the

horse behind me, and her human did not do as well. Molly's human did not give her enough rein and Molly almost lost balance. I guess we should have slowed down a little," Joey said, "but it was so much fun."

"I don't like riding single file," Toledo said. "Our trail rider wants us to be about two horses apart. I think we could be closer. What do you think Kathy?"

"Most of the time we try to keep one-and-a-half horses apart on the trail rides that I have been on." I responded. "I find that feels like a good distance."

I hope that these hints from my horse friends will be helpful. Now that summer is here, blessings for many wonderful hours with your horse friends.

Kathleen Grimes has been doing both animal communication and energy work since 1990. She studied animal communication with Carol Gurney and Morning Star. As an energy worker, she uses various techniques; among them are Quantum Touch and Healing Touch for Animals. Learn more about her work on her web site: www.brotherwolfandfriends.com. Direction questions to Kathy Grimes, anonymously if you wish, to (952) 270-4306 or email her to have your questions answered in the Valley Equestrian at: kgrimes@brotherwolfandfriends.com



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PROPERTY TAX APPEAL OPTION FOR HORSE BREEDING OR BOARDING

BY KRISHONA MARTINSON, University of Minnesota Extension

ST. PAUL, Minn. — There has been an unprecedented amount of legislative activity surrounding horse breeding and boarding operations. The Minnesota Legislature determined that the best course of action would be to delay any immediate action and require the Commissioner of Revenue to undertake a study of the treatment of properties used for horse breeding and boarding activities for property tax purposes. This study will examine the current treatment of these properties and will result in a report providing recommendations for potential changes to law.

In order to quell numerous taxpayer and assessor concerns, the legislature further provided for an appeal option for taxpayers for the 2009 assessment year. The legislature provided this appeal option only for taxpayers with property used for horse breeding or boarding activities if the property was classified as agricultural for the 2008 assessment. If the use between 2008 and 2009 assessments did not substantially change, but the classification was changed, the taxpayer may appeal in writing to the Commissioner of Revenue before Sept. 1, 2009. If you have questions concerning the provision, please contact proptax.questions@state.mn.us.

There have been several other key horse related bills in both the Minnesota House and Senate as well as national horse related bills. None of the listed bills passed, but it is assumed most will be reintroduced in the next legislative session.

Here is a brief description of each bill: Minnesota House of Representatives Bill 797 (HF 797). Horses and other equines clarified as livestock; raising them is an agricultural pursuit.

Minnesota Senate Bill 755 (SF 755). Horses and equines definition clarification.

Minnesota Senate Bill 775 (SF 775). Agricultural products definition for commercial boarding of horses modification.

Minnesota Senate Bill 133 (SF 133). Resolution urging the U.S. Congress to oppose federal legislation interfering with the ability of the state to direct the transport or processing of horses.

Minnesota Senate Bill 2007 (SF 2007). Adding lottery gaming (slot) machines to Canterbury and Running Aces. Also known as the Racino Bill.

U.S. House of Representative Bill 503 (HR 503) and U.S. Congress Bill 727 (S 727). The 2009 Prevention of Cruelty to Equines Act amends the federal crimi-

nal code to impose a fine and/or prison term of up to three years for possessing, shipping, transporting, purchasing, selling, delivering, or receiving any horse, horse flesh, or carcass with the intent that it be used for human consumption. Reduces the prison term to one year if the offense involves less than five horses or less than 2,000 pounds of horse flesh or carcass and the offender has no prior conviction for this offense.

It's important that your voice as a horse owner is heard, whether it is in support or opposition of legislation. Both the Minnesota House of Representatives (<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/>) and Senate (<http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/>) websites allow people to track the status of the bills (while the legislators are in session) as well as find and contact local Representatives. Enter the bill number in the "Get Bill" sections of these websites when the legislation is in session.

Krishona Martinson is an equine specialist with University of Minnesota Extension.



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Above: Mariah Lewis, age 8, competes on Peaches in the 4-H Show for the Cloverbuds July 11 at the Clay County, Minn. Fair in Barnesville. Below: Exhibitors awaiting their turn at the Clay County 4-H Horse Show.

Photos by Margo Brady

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LIVING THE DREAM: CURT JOHNSON, S E J STABLES

BY LEY BOUCHARD

It reads like a rags to riches story, the life of Curt Johnson, 72, owner of S E J Stables in Detroit Lakes, Minn. He grew up knowing hard work and living without many of life's creature comforts.

As a young boy living the rural Minnesota countryside, the Johnson family was dirt poor. He and his family performed farm labor. "We picked potatoes and onions; one time that was all we had to eat: onions, mustard and old bread." His mother died when he was a young boy. He was not able to graduate high school but entered the army and finished high school later.

But for a man starting life on the poor side of the tracks (no pun intended), Curt Johnson certainly found his way to the winning side. Johnson learned a trade and used his education to start a plumbing and heating business, J-Berd Mechanical Contractors.

While stationed in the army, Johnson developed a love of horse racing, spending time at Pimlico in Baltimore, Maryland. He learned how to read the racing forum and learned to handicap the races. It wasn't a huge leap to owning and racing Thoroughbred horses.

S E J Stables is named for the love of his life, Sharon Elaine Johnson. Together the couple has seven children. Their oldest son, Jeremiah, is a trainer at Canterbury Park. Curt loved to bet on the horses; Sharon's dream was to own horses. Curt says of S E J Stables: "She's the owner when we try to sell out, but when we're doing well, I'm the owner."

The first two mares the Johnson's purchased were Slew's Image and Joyous Wind - both out of California from Phillip Paine. They had the appropriate bloodlines to breed to Musical Chairs, his Thoroughbred stallion at the time. Then they got a few more...

After owning about 60 horses at one point, Johnson says, "We're down to about 25 horses now, I just want to sit back and retire; this is more like a job, it's a big job. We're doing well." He continues, "We have two Minnesota bred and both run tomorrow at Canterbury Park (Minnesota). We have seven horses running at Turf Paradise (Arizona) and some in Texas."

Where they run their horses depends

on time of year. "Canterbury works well with Arizona," he said, "because of the schedules."

I asked if they travelled a circuit. "Somewhat -- we're not into the San Anita but we're always open to that. Magdalina Chase is a really good horse; she runs a 100 Beyers, according to her trainer," Johnson said. "A guy named Beyers started it, this rating system," said Johnson. A real top horse gets 114-116 rating but that doesn't mean a 105 can't beat him. At Canterbury an 80 would be very good."

In a recent interview, trainer Justin Evans was quoted as saying that Johnson has gotten sharper about the busi-



Curt Johnson gives the thumbs up after a win with Downer-by-theMeadow at Canterbury Park in Minneapolis, Minn.

ness. I asked Curt what Evans meant. "Probably that I don't let the trainers fool me as much. They tell you everything you want to hear. You have to get on the back step and learn the things you don't want to hear. Horses that pull a muscle somewhere and they want to get the horse well again."

"I grew up on a farm with horses and actually farmed with horses and then when I got older I bet on a lot of them. I read the racing forum as well as anyone did. And then someone talked me into buying a stallion."

I asked him about claiming races: "You have got to have a good eye, read the racing forum and we claimed a couple horses in the last couple years," said Johnson. "We claimed a horse, Eagle Storm ... we were the only ones in a \$75,000 race and he won that! Now to raise the horse to do the same thing it would be a very long shot. We did that in three years."

"We were the leading winner in Canterbury for three consecutive years, 2006-2008. This year we won't be cause we have a lot of horses in Texas."

I asked Curt what the most important thing he learned from his childhood and he said, "Motivation probably - just keep going."

His motivation served him well. Even so, he still enjoys onion sandwiches and says, "There's still nothing like it."

Getting in the Ring

BY BROOKE LEININGER

I have always been in awe of those riders who sit atop perfectly mannered mounts at the in-gate. After a quick grooming and tacking, they mount their horses and put them through their paces, then head to the in-gate to watch and prepare for the task ahead. Oh, how I wish my horse would watch and learn!

I recently bought a three year old Thoroughbred that I call Toby. Bred to run but born and raised as any horse might be – out in pasture that is – Toby had an excellent start in life with a competent owner and trainer who began working with him as a two-year-old. So when I became his proud owner a mere two months ago, he was already going well under saddle but had never been off the farm.

It was love at first site, and we instantly became best friends. Mind you, Toby must be the kindest, most honest three-year-old on the face of the earth. Did I mention forgiving? But I knew that I needed to get him out, and get him out a lot, during my summer off because he was going to be my show horse. He threw a temper tantrum if a horse that was in the arena with him left, or a new horse came in. He had no sense of independence and I knew that this was going to be a serious problem down the road. So I became determined to make him confident in the horse show scene so that when I was REALLY ready to show him as he got older, he would have the miles already under his belt (or girth, perhaps). Toby had to realize that his world was not going to come crashing down if he left his comfort zone.

I took him to a three-day Centered Riding clinic just two weeks after purchase, with the hope of getting confident with my new horse in a new environment. As I unloaded him from the trailer and he grew from his 16.1 hands to at least 18 hands and began prancing around like a stallion, I began an all-afternoon hand walk where I kept telling myself that he had to eventually relax and settle in. I was much too optimistic.

The first morning I went to tack him up, it took me an hour (and lots of breathing to calm myself) to get him brushed off, hooves picked, boots on, and tack adjusted. I gave up after the second hoof, deciding that it wasn't a fight I was going to have before my ride. In the arena on a lunge line, he wheeled around and took off, yanking the line through my hands and galloping around the arena in a state of pure victory and joy as he jumped the fences that sat in the middle of the arena, lunge line dragging behind him. Out of breath and frustrated beyond words, the clinician showed up and started lecturing me on how my Herm Spring-er stirrups didn't give me the proper feel of my legs. I hadn't even got in the saddle yet.

It was a rough three days, but at least by Sunday Toby didn't even seem to mind the new barn and the chaos of it all. I imagine it was from all of the running around he did as he got loose... this had become part of our warm-up routine! I left feeling like I had spent hundreds of dollars to walk and trot a couple of circles, but hey, at least my horse had experienced his first big outing. Next time would be a breeze!

The following weekend, I took Toby to a schooling show that was a horse trail, but you could just do one or two of the phases if you so desired. Since it was at the same facility I had just spent three days riding at for the clinic, I thought that it would be a perfect place to start my young dressage mount. I entered



him in three dressage classes – Intro A, Intro B, and Training Level Test 1 – with the hopes of staying on and in the arena for the whole three to four minutes of performance. With my fiancé in tow, I had a detailed plan of how to quickly tack Toby up and lunge him before riding him in this new environment. But when he stepped off the trailer once again as King of the Horse Show, I had to turn to plan B. So what if he had some dirt on his rump? So what if his hooves weren't polished? My goal became to survive long enough to get on his back (and hopefully in to the show ring, but that was a bonus at this point). Once I got on his back, Toby became a new horse and settled right in to his work. We went in to our first two tests and earned a 64 percent and a 68 percent, placing us second and first in Intro A

and B against seasoned horses. I was ecstatic! Training Level Test 1, however, ended after a left turn at C when a horse on the cross country course galloped by and Toby decided that he needed to get as far away from him as possible, jumping right out of the ring. Things then turned from bad to worse when I took him back to the dreaded horse trailer for a dreaded un-tacking. As I removed the bridle, he decided that this was his one chance for escape and took off to the warm up ring, bridle between his front legs and halter around his neck. No big deal, this was a regular occurrence these days! He must have realized that this was his moment to finally become a race horse, and he flew through the show grounds like he was headed down the home stretch. Once back in my possession, I started to wonder... did I have one of those horses that everyone hopes won't come to the next horse show? No, not my sweet Toby! I loaded him up and started thinking that the Fair show might be the perfect next step.

I entered his first ever flat classes at the fair show for day one, and dressage for day two. Since he was doing so well with other horses in the arena at home, and in the warm-up arena, I figured he would be a star in a few walk-trot classes. Oh, was I wrong again! This time,

Toby was much more at ease when we arrived at the show, and even took the pig barn and Ferris wheel in stride. But after an iffy first class, I went into the second walk-trot class with hopes of merely going straight on the long sides and not running home for the gate! This was about the time he decided that he was a herd animal, and that passing other horses was surely unacceptable. He felt it was necessary to SLAM in to every horse in the ring, just to humiliate me for putting him in those silly braids I'm sure. The schooling that ensued after that incident and before the next class reminded him of who was riding whom. The day ended

with a great win (in a Hunter Pleasure class, mind you) and a well deserved second place. Finally, his career was on track! The next day, after much fuss to get his tack on and him out of the barn, I walked him right in to the warm up and hopped up on his back, like an old pro. Finally, it was as though he gave in to the fact that he was a show horse and he must perform, even if the loudspeakers are blaring or the cows are bawling. We won third, second, and first on our three classes, winning Training Level Test 1 with a 69.5 percent! I guess perseverance does pay off.

As I packed everything back up in the trailer and looked over the shirts to be washed, the breeches to be dry-cleaned, and the horse to be unbraided, I wondered if anyone else at the show was as exhausted as I was. Maybe by next year he'll be enough of a pro to stand at the gate and nap in the sun as I go over the dressage test in my head. Or perhaps be quiet enough that I can unbridle him without two helpers. But, though I complain about the pains of showing a young horse, I can't believe the patience I have come to learn over the last few months. Rome wasn't built in a day, right?

Brooke Leininger is the Head Coach of the Women's Equestrian Team and an instructor of Equine Science at the University of Minnesota, Crookston. She is an avid competitor in hunters, jumpers, and dressage when she is not coaching or teaching. She can be reached at marcu047@umn.edu.



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TRNP WILD HORSE AUCTION IN OCTOBER -- WHICH ONE WILL YOU BUY?



Editor's Note: The photo spread below is the first of three The Valley Equestrian Newspaper will run in the August, September and October issues leading up to the Theodore Roosevelt National Park sale of approximately 90 wild horses from the park this October. Eileen Norton and others have worked four years photographing and documenting the wild horses of TRNP. In upcoming issues of the VE, we will feature the work of Marylu Weber, TRNP wildlife biologist Mike Oehler along with another 60 of the wild horses that will be available for sale.



Eileen Norton, a native of Minnesota, first visited Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) in 1980. While there, she saw the wild horses that live in the park running across the tops of the buttes. Wild and free, she never forgot that image.

Twenty five years later and now married and living in San Diego, she convinced her husband to take a trip out to this special place. The same feelings filled her as she once again saw the horses running wild and free.

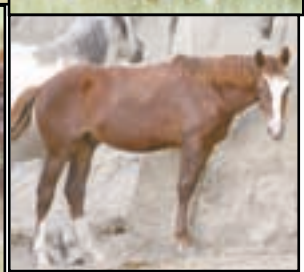
One horse in particular caught their attention: a black and white Overo stallion known to many as Curious George. He was a proud and noble stallion who would keep his herd of four mares and four babies in public view for all to see. Curious George was born in the park, captured his first herd as a four year old and held them for 10 years. Unfortunately, last year, at age 14 he lost his herd to a young four year old stallion. He won back a few of them throughout the summer but by fall, eventually lost them all. He is now 15 years old and the oldest stallion in the park. He can still be

seen walking through the park and is often joined by other young bachelor stallions.

Having returned five times in recent years, Norton, Marylu Weber and a small group of enthusiasts who share their passion for these wild horses have photographed and documented every horse in the park. Although the TRNP does not support naming the wild horses, they have chosen to attach names for the purpose of easy identification.

There are currently approximately 160 horses in the park. A round up is scheduled for October 2009 and the horses will be available for sale at public auction in Dickinson, N.D. These horses have survived severe weather and wild conditions each winter and come out strong each spring. It is the hope of Norton, Weber and others, that the public will show up to the auction and provide homes for these wonderful horses who have lived and survived in the wild for years.

For more information contact Eileen Norton at emnorton@aol.com or Marylu Weber at horsetracks@btinet.net



Eileen Norton with her horse, Dryden, warmblood/thoroughbred cross. "He was a reserve champion medal horse in Madison Square Garden as a youngster and was a schoolmaster by the time he came to me," said Norton. "He taught me how to ride and was the love of my life."

THE WELL-ADJUSTED HORSE

BY DR. MOE SARAH SMITH, D.C.

Chiropractic care for horses is not a new phenomenon. It has however been gaining rapid recognition and legitimacy in the equine world. People no longer need to settle for the uneducated, poorly trained faux chiropractor. Most states now only recognize chiropractors that are certified and licensed to work on horses. There are extensive course training requirements for certification and ongoing continuing education for continued licensure.

Where ever I go there seem to be two prevailing reactions to my services. Either people flock to me, relieved that they have finally found someone that is willing to travel and has openings, or people seemed shocked at the notion that you would ever consider chiropractic for a horse. The difference between the two responses is great, but understandable. The idea of a person being able to move horse's bones is a little bizarre at first. People who have had chiropractic work done on their horses are the best advocates, as it has dramatic and quick results.

Why would someone spend their hard earned money on getting their horse adjusted? What is chiropractic care? How do you actually adjust a horse? Why would you adjust a horse, with what can it help?

Chiropractic care is manual therapy which enhances the health and performance of an animal. It focuses on biomechanical dysfunctions of the spine and almost all joints which affect the nervous system throughout the body. The nervous system controls every aspect of function and every system in your body. Cardiovascular, digestive, endocrine, musculo-skeletal, immune, etc. are all 100 percent governed and regulated by the nervous system. There isn't a cell in your body that does anything without input from the nervous system. Chiropractic brings homeostasis and proper function to the nervous systems, which then brings harmony to the body.

When the body and its joints are moving correctly, correct nervous system function is restored and the body does what it was intended to do. Chiropractic can often eliminate the source of acute or chronic pain, make all internal organs function better and improve immune systems and even impact behavioral issues.

Our horses are exposed to many situations that can damage their spine and other joints. Trauma, narcotics, transportation, birthing difficulties, lack of

movement, bad shoes, bad saddle fit, age and performance demands. I have never met a horse that has not encountered at least one of these situations.

Symptoms may include: abnormal gait rhythm, stiffness, muscle atrophy, brushing or interfering, engaging difficulty, lameness, asymmetry, behavior changes, or impaired immune systems. The list is endless, pain can result in almost any response, and horses are masters of compensation, hiding symptoms and fluctuation.

The adjustment is a relatively simple procedure. After gait analysis, history, palpation and visual examination, the adjustment is performed. Large bails are used to stand on and realignment is made with a quick, short thrust along the plane of the joint. It is very specific, high speed, low force, causing the affected joint to motion within its normal range of motion with out going beyond its normal anatomical integrity. Even though horses are very muscular, the joints are flexible and as long as the exact angle is respected, the joints move quite easily.

The results are often immediate. Range of motion is usually immediately improved, gait instantly changed. Pain responses usually change within seconds. The number of treatments required is different for each case, most times more than one treatment is required, but improvement is usually achieved after the first time - most horses show significant improvement after one to four treatments.

Chiropractic is not a substitute for veterinary care. It is an adjunct and complementary care. It can be used for chronic and acute issues, help in recovery and prevent secondary symptoms. It improves the quality and performance of the horse and cuts down on cost long term as a preventative measure. Chiropractic aims to treat the cause, not the symptoms, of joint and back problems.

Dr. Moe been working on animals for 9 years, licensed as a chiropractor and animal chiropractor in Minn. She received her doctorate from Northwestern Chiropractic College and was a graduate of Options for Animals, an AVCA (animal veterinary chiropractic association) program in Wellsville, Kan., in January 2009. Moe owns a clinic in Minneapolis and travels statewide for equine care.

Not All Horses Should Graze

By KRISHONA MARTINSON, University of Minnesota Extension

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Recently, there has been significant interest in the sugar content of forage grasses. Pasture induced laminitis (founder) can be triggered when susceptible horses ingest high amounts of sugar or fructans that are naturally found in forage species commonly grown in Minnesota.

Susceptible horses include, but are not limited to, overweight or easy keeping horses, ponies, horses with metabolic syndrome, and horses that have foundered in the past. These horses should have limited grazing, or no grazing at all.

Sugar content depends on the weather, plant stress, forage species, species maturity, time of day and time of year. Any time forage species are photosynthesizing (producing energy from sunlight), the plants are producing sugars. When plant growth is limited from temperatures lower than 40 degrees or from drought, sugars normally used for growth will begin to accumulate in plants.

During these plant stresses, susceptible horses should not graze. Minnesota's cool spring and fall weather can cause sugar accumulation, and increase the risk of pasture-induced laminitis for susceptible horses. Any time forage species are using sugars for rapid growth during warm weather or during respiration (using energy during dark periods) is a better time to graze. However, laminitis in susceptible horses can still occur if overeating is allowed. Better times to graze include cloudy days and dark hours.

If the grazing is tied to exercise, consider using a grazing muzzle to limit the amount of forage the horse can ingest, and restrict the grazing to periods when the sugar content should be lower. Specifically, graze between 3 a.m. and 10 a.m., on cloudy days, and during periods when the night temperatures are above 40 degrees. Grazing in areas shaded by trees or buildings may allow longer access to grass as sugar accumulation will be less. Allowing pasture grasses to become more mature should also reduce the sugar content and will result in less (and a slower) intake.

Grazing during these times or scenarios do not guarantee the sugar content will be lower. There are other factors to consider that contribute to sugar content. Some pasture species have a higher genetic potential to accumulate sugars under stressful conditions than others. These species include timothy, bromegrass, orchard grass, and most cool season grasses that are commonly used in horse pastures in Minnesota. Most forage species store sugars in the bottom 3 to 4 inches of growth.

Making sure pastures are not overgrazed will help avoid laminitis. Forage species store sugars when they are under stress. Make sure pastures are properly fertilized, and avoid grazing susceptible horses during drought and in the fall when nights are cool (less than 40 degrees).

Krishona Martinson is an equine specialist with University of Minnesota Extension.

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Sun. Noon - 5pm

AUGUST EVENTS AND BEYOND

Call before you haul -- The Valley Equestrian is not responsible for changes to scheduled events

August 1: Summer Sundown Shootout hosted by Wild Rice PeaceMakers Cowboy Mounted Shooting at the Twin Valley, Minn. riding club arena ¼ mile east of Twin Valley on Cty. Highway 29. Contact Wayne Gwin at 218-584-5577

August 2: FM Posse Horse Show at 9 a.m. at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds in West Fargo, N.D.

August 1-2: Treasure State Miniature Horse Show at Great Falls, Mont. - contact Clif Hanson at (406) 965-3157

August 5: Sioux Empire Fair Arabian Show in Sioux Falls, S.D., at the Expo Building

August 8: St. Croix Horse and Carriage Society Drive at 120th St. W and Dodd Road in Rosemount, Minn.

August 8-9: N.E.W. Miniature Horse Show at Pulaski, Wisc.- contact Tom Kuczer at (920) 822-3706

August 8 & 9: AQHA Show, Ft. Ransom, ND; contact www.sheyennevalleyteampenning.com or call Diane at (701) 252-4020

August 9-10: Strait Rail "Up North" Cutting Show at Strait Rail Ranch, Nevis, Minn. Dava Scribner Phone: 651-462-1803 for more information

August 9: Mississippi Valley Miniature Horse Show at Dav-enport, Iowa - contact Dottie Olander at (309) 927-3588

August 11: Sioux Empire Fair Miniature Horse Show at Sioux Falls, S. D. - contact Josephine Waldner at (605) 693-3820

August 15-16: North Dakota Fall Classic Open and Appaloosa Show at the Winter Show Arena in Valley City, N.D. starting at 8 a.m. daily; contact Lisa Feldner at (701) 214-3709 or secretary@ndaphc.org

August 28-30: Musical Free-style Clinic with Karen Robinson at the Westridge Equestrian in Crooks, S.D.; call Joanne Messersmith at (402) 639-3575 or email: joann@yournextsport-horse.com for more information

August 29 -- Wisconsin Pinto Horse Show -- 6 judges. Jefferson County Fairgrounds, Jefferson, WI. For complete information, email wisconsinpinto@aol.com, call Jim Archer at (708) 258-3276 or visit our website at www.Pinto.org/wisconsin/

Sept. 12-13: Strait Rail Ranch "Special Events" Cutting at Strait Rail Ranch in Nevis, Minn. Dava Scribner Phone: (612) 845-1270

Sept. 12-13: Charity Cup Ride at Pillsbury State Forest 1 mile east of Pillager, Minn. on Highway 210; contact Lisa Powell at (320) 309-9075 or email: horselady1@yahoo.com

Sept. 14-18: Big Sky Draft Horse Expo at Deer Lodge, MT with a mule and draft horse show, team driving, working teamsters classes, kids stick horse race, quilt and carriage show; contact Marion Barton at 406-846-2854 or go to www.drafthorseexpo.com

Sept. 18-20: Rocky Mountain Horse Expo at Ignacio, CO; see www.rockymountainhorseexpo.com

Sept. 18-20: Spirit of the West Festival CMSA Cowboy Mounted Shoot; \$3,000 Chuck Wagon Cook-off; Contact: Mike Whitehead, 605-261-9766, www.daktms.com. Also a Chuck Wagon and Dutch Oven Cook Off held at this event. www.spiritofthewest-festival.com

Sept. 18-20: RHRA Harvest Run Barrel Race at Red Horse Ranch in Fergus Falls, Minn.



Aug. 15-16: UMECRA Thistle Down Run at Frazee, MN, with added AHA events; contact Teresa & Dale Fett at (218) 334-5711 or email: fettbros@loretel.net

August 16-18: AMHR approved show at the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines, Iowa - contact Jen Cannon at (515) 262-3111(245) or email: jcannon@iowastatefair.org

August 21-23: NBHA State Finals, Red Horse Ranch Arena, Fergus Falls, MN, 218-736-3000, rhra@prtel.com www.Red-HorseRanchArena.com

August 22: Cabela's \$500. Dutch Oven Cook-off Competition in Mitchell, S.D. Call (605) 743-5270 for more information
August 22: WDMS Fun Show, Red Ridge Ranch, Mauston, WI. Show begins at 10 a.m. See www.widonkeymule.org for more information

August 22-23: Minnesota Miniature Horse Club I-90 Show in Sherburn, Minn. - contact Jeanne Bragagnini at (269) 979-3392

August 27-29: "Royal Flush" Limited Age Event at Simon Arena in Cannon Falls, Minn. Dava Scribner Phone: 651-462-1803 for more information

Aug. 29-30: Northern Highland Endurance and Competitive Rides at Boulder Junction, WI; contact Kathy Schauer at (920) 583-2233 or email: kschaue@nconnect.net

August 30: Sheyenne Valley Team Penning at the Lisbon, ND Fairgrounds contact: www.sheyennevalleyteampenning.com or call Diane at (701) 252-4020

Sept. 4 or 5: South Dakota State Fair Cowboy Mounted Shoot, Huron, SD; Fairgrounds; Contact: Mike Whitehead, 605-261-9766, www.daktms.com

Sept. 11-13: MN Pinto Horse September Celebration & Slot Bonanza at Red Horse Ranch Arena in Fergus Falls, Minn. contact Kameron Duncanson at (763) 355-9541 for more information

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September 19: AQHA show with the Sheyenne Valley Team Penning at Lisbon, ND; visit www.sheyennevalleyteampenning.com or call Diane at (701) 252-4020

Sept. 19-20: Colorama Classic Endurance Ride at New Prospect, Wisc., contact: Jill Feller at (920)948-9502 or email: jfeller@nconnect.net

Sept. 25-27: Benefit Trail Ride and Ranch Sort at Birch Coulee Arena in Morton, Minn. Proceeds will go to various children programs; go to www.mnqha.com to download forms or contact Midge at (651) 260-6354 or email: mnride06@yahoo.com

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Horse taken from rodeo recovering

BY DAVID MONTGOMERY, July 14, 2009
Reprinted with permission of the Capital Journal, Pierre, S.D.

FORT PIERRE — Dually, the rodeo horse found injured July 5 after being taken from his pen at the Stanley County Fairgrounds, is still alive and slowly improving, owner Wendy Halweg said Monday.

"He's recovering," Halweg said. "The horse is not going to die. But his ability to ever perform again is in question."

Halweg said Dually is still under veterinary care after suffering rope burns and cuts on his legs and face. Dually's legs are still slightly swollen, Halweg said, making it difficult to tell how severe the damage is.

Halweg said she remains hopeful Dually will be able to fully recover and compete again.

"It's going to take some rehab, and then we have to go from there," Halweg said. "It is going to take a lot of time, just like a person."

No arrests have yet been made, Stanley County Sheriff Brad Rathbun said Monday. Rathbun said he is waiting for a judge to sign arrest warrants after giving his department's investigation to the state's attorney Friday.

Editor's Note: The Valley Equestrian will provide updates on their Facebook page or in next month's issue when more information becomes available.

NOTICE

A \$500 reward is being offered by

the South Dakota Rodeo Association for the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for unlawfully taking a horse belonging to Wendy Halweg from the Stanley County Fairgrounds and severely mistreating him following the 4th of July rodeo. Anyone that can provide information is asked to contact the SDRA office at 605-374-7731.

A special account has been set up at the First National Bank in Mitchell for the support of Wendy and Dually. Contributions can be mailed to: The Dually Benefit Account, PO Box 1366, Mitchell, SD 57301



disaster relief. Funds the MN Horse Council donated to help assist equine owners during the 2009 Red River Valley flood were greatly appreciated. Other details on the Minnesota Horse Council can be found on their website www.mn-horsecouncil.com.

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Polk County Mounted Posse Grant Recipient

The Polk County Mounted Posse received a grant from the Minnesota Horse Council to purchase first aid horn bag kits, EquiMedic USA, as well as kits for walkers and 4-wheeler searchers. The \$2650 grant was awarded in February 2009 as part of the \$225,000 the Council received from the Minnesota Horse Expo.

The first aid kits were purchased in an effort to standardize the contents of first aid kits so all members would be familiar with first aid supplies available on any search and rescue mission. The kit contains supplies for both the human and the horse.

There is adequate room to add other supplies and survival items in each saddle horn bag, for walkers, and 4-wheeler searchers. The kits include items such as water bottles, fresh nutrition bars, etc.

The PCMP is a non-profit and funded through donations and proceeds from special projects, such as when they perform security and car parking at the Polk County Fair.

There are 26

members in the PCMP currently; members are involved in rodeo, barrel racing, 4-H showing with their children as well as mounted shooting.

The PCMP participates in the Crookston, Minn. Ox Cart Days parade and The East

Grand Forks, Minn. Heritage Parade held every year as well as many other events.

The MN Horse Council awarded \$80,700.00 in "seed money" grants to 23 equine groups and facilities from the \$225,000 received from proceeds of the 2008 MN Horse Expo. The MnHC also awards college scholarships and funds other activities including



L-R: Lannis Bergsgaard and Donna Malakrey riding Woody and Hot Rod, demonstrating the kits purchased with grant money from the MN Horse Council

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Check out and become a fan of the "The Valley Equestrian Newspaper" Facebook page to see what's coming in the next issue, see more content including photography, press releases and get updates during the month.

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THE POLITICS OF HORSES

Point / Counterpoint

BLM Defends Implementation Plan

AHC SEEKS TO DOCUMENT EQUESTRIAN ACCESS ISSUES ON PUBLIC LAND

The American Horse Council has launched a new effort to collect information on access issues equestrians are experiencing on federal lands. The center piece of this effort is an online form equestrians can use to report their personal experiences regarding trails and federal lands that have been closed to them or other access issues.

Americans who use horses and pack stock enjoy a unique experience when they ride on trails and public lands. It is an experience that ties them to the "pioneer" era and provides not only a way to connect with America's vast and unique natural resources but a link with America's history and traditions. It is an experience that cannot be enjoyed without a trail system, trailhead access and areas for camping. It is an experience that Americans enjoyed even before there was a national park system and an experience they want to continue.

Unfortunately, equestrians are seeing an increasing loss of access through trail restrictions, trail closures, and use restrictions. Riders and stock users are being excluded from areas that they have historically traveled through and indeed first opened up. It is a loss of opportunities for riders, families, persons with disabilities, school groups and others. There seems to be a management environment less open to these traditional forms of use. Sometimes restrictions on equestrian use are done intentionally through management plans that reduce, restrict or eliminate horses, horse facilities, camping or grazing restrictions, cross-country travel restrictions or closures. Sometimes the restrictions are indirect though a lack of trail maintenance, or over regulation, or lack of services to the public like facilities

that provide saddle and pack animals or parking for horse trailers.

In order to better combat this disturbing trend the AHC is asking equestrians to document examples of trails or entire areas that have been closed to equestrians on federal land (National Forest Service, National Parks Service, and Bureau of Land Management, etc). The AHC is seeking all relevant information concerning these closures such as the reason for the loss of access, details concerning any public process that was involved and the history of equestrian use on the closed trail or area.

The AHC is also interested in examples of attempts to bar equestrian access that have been defeated.

"The reduction of trails, trail heads and the closure of public lands to horses and pack animals is a continuing problem for equestrians. However, there is no centralized, comprehensive database that documents any loss of access and even fewer specific examples," said AHC President Jay Hickey. "We hope by giving equestrians a place to report their experiences we can get a better picture of the problem and use that information to fix it."

The AHC is asking all recreational riders to visit the AHC website and report any access issues they have had using this electronic form <https://www.horsecouncil.org/survey.php>. This will be a permanent feature of the AHC website.

"The AHC is committed to preserving equine access to public lands. It is very important for these efforts that we have evidence that demonstrates the extent of the problem and the need for action on the part of Congress or the federal land agencies," said Hickey.

The Cloud Foundation published a press release in July headlined, "Documents Reveal BLM Secret Plan to Destroy Wild Horses" which makes claims about the Bureau of Land Management plans to destroy healthy, wild horses. The BLM documents were obtained via the Freedom of Information Act by the Conquistador Program.

The press release states: "BLM employees as well as a USDA veterinarian held weekly 'Implementation Team' meetings beginning in July of 2008 in which they discussed and developed strategies aimed at ridding BLM of thousands of mustangs. In October they completed a 68 page document entitled "Alternative Manage-

ment Options" ... The BLM team created scenarios for killing mustangs using barbiturates, gun shots, or captive bolts. Bodies would be disposed of through rendering, burial or incineration. They discussed killing 1200-2000 wild horses per year. The document states that "the general public would be prohibited from viewing euthanasia." Additionally, the Team felt that "increased support from public relations and management staff would also be needed to insulate those doing the actual work from the public, media and Congressional scrutiny/criticism."

BLM spokesman Tom Gorey, responded to the Cloud Foundation press release in a telephone interview with the Valley

Equestrian. Spokesman Tom Gorey said, "The document released was a draft document, it was created and produced for the purpose of looking at ways to manage the increasing size of the horse herds on public range lands. Management requested the staff take a look at and plan how it would be implemented, if the decision was made by the BLM to humanely put down horses held on public grounds. What would be the potential consequences, ramifications and processes ... it wasn't a document predicated with making a decision to go forward."

"There is no change in the BLM policy" said Gorey, "euthanasia is the last resort. We do have current funds in the fiscal year to maintain the present herds," Gorey added.

PRO SLAUGHTER GROUP ISSUES TAINTED SURVEY RESULTS

CHICAGO, (EWA) - *The Unwanted Horse Coalition, a subsidiary of the American Horse Council continues to present a false facade of neutrality on the explosive issue of horse slaughter in America, all the while doing everything in its considerable power to bring back an industry shunned by the overwhelming majority of Americans.*

The Washington D.C. based lobbying group has the support of pro slaughter breeders, ranchers, and others with an economic interest in disposing of horses for profit - no matter the cruelty involved.

The latest AHC/UHC tactic was Thursday's issuance of the results from an obviously slanted "national survey". As an example, the survey reported that 86-88% of participants perceived that abuse was a big problem in the past year while only 22-28% thought it had been a big problem three years ago. This bracketing

conveniently omitted the nearly two year period in which the domestic slaughter plants were closed before the economy collapsed.

The survey results reflected that among the participants the closing of the domestic slaughter plants was considered second to the economy as the most significant contributor to the neglect problem. Clearly this perception cannot be valid given that 134,000 horses were exported for slaughter in 2008; the second highest slaughter count since 1995.

The survey results were held until the senate committee hearing giving anti slaughter advocates no opportunity to respond. The release of this survey in conjunction with the requested GAO study was intended as a stalling technique to delay legislation that has overwhelming congressional support. This is yet another attempt in a long string of such tactics to prevent legislation from going to the senate floor for a vote.

In addition to leading questions, the targeted participants were largely members of pro slaughter organizations. Equine welfare organizations such as the Humane Society of the United States, Animal Welfare Institute, the Equine Welfare Alliance and numerous anti slaughter organizations were not invited to participate.

A major supporter of the American Horse Council and Unwanted Horse Coalition is the American Quarter Horse Association that actively lobbies for horse slaughter. Horses registered to the Amarillo based breed association account for approximately half of all horses going to slaughter as breeders are encouraged by its leadership to breed with no regard to the resulting excess horses. Many of the horses going to slaughter are culls which breeders were unable to sell. Remarkably, only 30% of these "stakeholders" thought this was contributing to the over population and neglect.

The study will almost certainly impact wild horse legislation, HR 1018, as well as anti horse slaughter legislation. With the upcoming GAO study and current BLM budget deficits, Congress must immediately issue a moratorium on wild Mustang round-ups until the GAO study is completed.

www.equinewelfarealliance.org

Editor's Note: The Valley Equestrian Newspaper asked representatives from the The American Horse Council to respond to this press release but they have not.

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Living the Dream: Ashley Wren of Rebel Sky Farms

BY LEY BOUCHARD

She doesn't like to admit it, but she was one of those trouble-maker kids, "too head strong with adrenaline seeking behaviors. I had the desire to party. I didn't have an opportunity that often because I toured the show circuit. Every time I thought of getting out of riding and being more 'normal,' Dixie was there, and I couldn't sell or forget her," said Ashley Wren, owner of Rebel Sky Farms, near Billings, Mont. "And during those hard teenage times she was there to cry on. She didn't judge my hair style, clothes, or anything that is the world of high school. She was and is one of my best friends and at times felt like she was the only one."

Ashley was born in Charleston, S.C., raised in Spartanburg, S.C., and spent much time touring the Southern circuit, where she was twelfth in the Nation in the Marshall and Sterling, affiliated with the American Horse Show Association (AHSA) now United States Equestrian Federation (USEF). She worked with some of the best trainers in the nation. International Riders told her to go pro, work with them and stay in the Carolinas. "I did want to ride International in the Grand Prix," said Ashley, "and ride the Regular Working Hunters in the A Circuit. It was my intention to stay in Montana a few years, but for some reason I felt like I could make a difference," Ashley said. "I want to stick it out in Montana at least until I know things have significantly grown and I did what I feel like I was brought here to do."

Wren and her husband, Chris, built Rebel Sky Farms in 2008, opening operations in November. "I used some my future inheritance and got a big loan to build the farm. I learned how to use heavy equipment such as a front-end loader, became a carpenter on many projects, I stained all the wood in the farm, etc. We put in our blood, sweat and tears into this project."

Their desire in building the facility was to help grow the show industry in Montana, especially the Hunter/ Jumper industry. "We host schooling and state shows, and we also do the normal stable work: I buy prospects that are Thoroughbreds, Warmbloods, or crosses," says Ashley, "then I train and sell them. I have currently one off-the-track, which I have done multiple times in past, and I re-train them as hunter/jumpers so they have a better chance at finding a good home. I am also an agent to help sell other people's horses and/or helping

them find a good match when buying a new horse."

Rebel Sky Farms is a large facility. Both Ashley and Chris work the farm with help from an intern, teenage students who work for summer cash and/or lessons, friends and volunteers. They have a capacity for 32 horses in the main barn, 22 in the small barn, 7 in horse runs, and 20 in portable stalls.

Ashley rides hunter/jumper and incorporates this training into the program up to the third level dressage. They also teach western. In the future, they plan to bring in a high level competitive dressage trainer.

"I always have lived with the philosophy that that you can not judge a person until you have walked in their shoes," Ashley says. "Don't be envious of others' abilities or knowledge, buddy up with those people so you can learn and better yourself from them. So I give full trust until it's broken, then you will never truly earn it all the way back."

Ashley and Chris have a 4 year-old little girl named Zion. She has been riding since she was

born. She has a nine-and-a-half hand Shetland pony named Penny. "Zion will always be allowed to ride as much as she wants," says Ashley, "and I will not force her when she does not want to. When she gets older then she will have small chores to teach responsibility."

The current economic situation has impacted the horse industry but Ashley, with a Scarlet O'Hara attitude said, "Honestly, I don't think about it if I can. History repeats itself if we don't learn from it, and it doesn't look like we have. So instead of going crazy about the big picture I escape and ride. It's the only thing I know to do. It works for me but for most it will not."

Ashley has high aspirations: "Grow the industry, and give back to it since it has given me more than words can express. I would love to start competing in the Hunter Derbies and Grande Prix. I would like more than any thing to see one of my students get the opportunity to compete at Nationals because I know how much it will mean to any one of them."



CUTTING EXTRAVAGANZA

"Red Horse Ranch Non Pro/Amateur Extravaganza" held June 26-28 at Fergus Falls, Minn. brought out many of the region's cutters including JP Bell, who produced the show. Dava Scribner, show secretary, provided the weekend's results:

Top Ten Non Pro/Amateur

- 1) Scott Churchill
- 2) Gary Hansen
- 3 and 4 tie) Catherine Hazelroth and

- 5) Chuck Yahnke
- 6) Ryan Lind
- 7, 8 and 9 tie) Anita Janssen, John Kolar and Sheila Baker
- 10) Mark Larson

High Point Horses were CHAMPION: Cat Fantastic owned by John Kolar and RESERVE CHAMPION: Lorenas Baby owned by Mel Newcomb.

Find more photos of this event at our web site: www.theveonline.com



L-R: Father and son cutting: Travis Barton, 13 years-old, who has been in the saddle since 7 years of age, and who has won at Congress and Tracy Barton, riding his 7 year-old gelding, Doublemint Cash. Both from Northridge Ranch, Pierre, S.D. ,

Check out more cutting photography by Ley Bouchard at the gallery: www.theveonline.com



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Ridden by Alana Bernhardt



Bruno: Swedish Warmblood gelding, age 26 (and still going strong), 16.3 hands; schooled through 3rd level dressage and jumping; great for beginners and for working on position, balance, and rhythm!
Ridden by Megan Donaldson



Tucker: Swedish Warmblood gelding by Galapard; age 13; 17.2 hands; schooled through 4th level and PSG; both the beginner and advanced rider will appreciate this horse!
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