

ISSUE ONE

THE

2010

ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y



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

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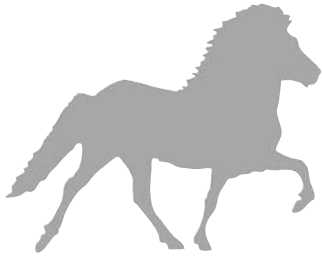
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THE
ICELANDIC
HORSE
QUARTERLY
Issue One 2010

Official Publication of the United States Icelandic Horse Congress (USIHC), a member association of FEIF (International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations).

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Advertising rates and instructions are also online at www.icelandics.org.

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ICELANDIC HORSE

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ON THE COVER: Two three-week-old foals bred by Andrea Brodie in Central New Mexico. At left, Orri from Lough Arrow II [US2008103965], who is owned by Kathleen Simler; at right, Glymjandi from Lough Arrow II [US2008103964]. Both foals are sons of Prúdur frá Nedra-Ási II [IS1984157014], owned by Martina Gates. Photo by Andrea Brodie.



FEIF AND THE USIHC

FEIF is the international association dedicated to the protection and promotion of Icelandic horses. Comprised of the National Breed Associations of 17 European countries (including Iceland), Canada, and the United States, it governs competition activities and regulates the breeding and registration of Icelandic horses throughout the world outside of Iceland. See www.feif.org for more information.

The United States Icelandic Horse Congress was formed in 1987 by representatives of the U.S. Icelandic Horse Federation and the International Icelandic Horse Association to meet the FEIF rule that only one association from each country is allowed to represent the breed. As a FEIF member organization, the Congress maintains the Registry of Icelandic Horses in the United States, sponsors U.S. participation in international competition, and regulates breeding and competition activities in the United States in accordance with FEIF rules. USIHC also sponsors activities, events, and educational programs in the United States which are beneficial to the overall interests of the breed. Yearly membership is \$45 (\$35 for youth members); family membership, \$65. For more information, see the Congress website at www.icelandics.org/join.

QUESTIONS?

Call: 631-TOLTING

Email: info@icelandics.org

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REGISTRY

The Congress maintains the Registry of Icelandic Horses in the United States in accordance with FEIF rules. The Registry Rules and all forms needed to register an Icelandic Horse in the United States are available on the Congress website at www.icelandics.org. Contact Ásta Covert P.O. Box 1724, Santa Ynez, CA 93460; 805-688-1393; registry@icelandics.org

WEBSITE

Visit www.icelandics.org to update or renew your membership, download the electronic Quarterly, subscribe to RSS feeds for the Events Calendar or web updates, register for WorldFengur, find a Regional Club or USIHC registered horse, join a committee, download USIHC guidelines and forms, submit a proposal, and learn more about FEIF and the USIHC

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Anne Elwell writes: I sometimes feel as though I've been in this organization since the beginning of time. For those who don't know me, I was a founding member of the USIHF Board in 1986, of the USIC during the years that umbrella organization existed, and of the USIHC Board from 1993 through the end of 2008. During most of those years I was the secretary, editor of the Quarterly, and chair of the Breeding Committee. I have imported Icelandics, bred Icelandics, competed with Icelandics, put on clinics, started exhibitions in Equine Affaire, spent a lot of time learning about Icelandics in Iceland and Europe, and been a dedicated pleasure rider in all kinds of weather and terrain.

At the end of 2008 I retired from the Board, planning on spending my time on more pleasure riding, more dressage training in North Carolina, and more gait riding in Germany. But I guess this Board stuff is in the blood for some of us, and so I have come back as of January 1. My sabbatical year enabled me to see the Congress from a different perspective and gave me the opportunity to clarify my understanding of where I believe the organization to be and my vision of where I would like it to head.

The present Board of the Congress is made up of people who seem to me to share many elements of my personal vision and understanding, and I am really pleased to have such a terrific group of individuals to be working with this year. In the past, I have been fortunate to have shared being on the Board with a number of other founding members, extraordinary leaders who forged this organization—its Registry, its Competition Rules, its Breeding Evaluations, its bonds with FEIF, its ever-expanding inclusion of the membership in the activities and decision-making of the organization—and out of enormous personal sacrifice accumulated the funds to enable it to grow as new needs emerge. The present Board inherits a great legacy from such people as Caryn Cantella, Sara Conklin, Betsy Covert, and Ed Hilgaertner, and certainly has the commitment, knowledge, energy, and dedication to develop that legacy further.



Anne Elwell (left) competing at the 2007 Vermont show. A founder of the USIHC, Anne was elected president at the January Board meeting.

In the final analysis it is the membership who continues to define the organization. Whatever the past has created, the present and future will change. One of the primary responsibilities of organizational leadership, therefore, is to provide education and activities which will develop the knowledge and experience of the membership and encourage them to be involved in the life of the organization.

My focus this year is going to be on the Congress bringing valuable information to the membership. As limited as we are in knowledge and experience, we are the member association of FEIF and the knowledge and experience of those in FEIF is vast and available to us. We are extremely fortunate in having an International Breeding Judge, Barbara Frische, resident in the United States for a couple of years. She has already started doing Young Horse Evaluations in various part of the country, as described in this issue. There will be more of these in 2010. We are developing seminars with her and with various U.S. trainers for several parts of the country in 2010 that will be aimed at helping all of us pleasure riders understand what our horses have difficulty with and why and how to increase the enjoyment of that trip down the trail for both of us. We are also putting together in 2010 opportunities inside and outside the U.S. for our serious young riders to develop more intensely and quickly.

We are extremely fortunate to have our Quarterly and Website (www.icelandics.org) to get the word out on all of these ventures. The Quarterly publishes articles and activi-

ties from the entire membership (and is always looking for more). But generally, by the time you read about something in these pages, it's already happened. That makes our Website even more important to the organization. The Website keeps us up-to-date with the accurate and timely information we need to work together efficiently. I recommend that every USIHC member check the "Bulletin Board" and "Events Calendar" on the Website frequently—at least once a month! Our new Membership Committee will be working on additional ways to connect with members, to learn your ideas and to help us plan for the future.

A lot of us are excited about 2010. We hope you share it: that is what keeps us going.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Kathy Lockerbie writes: A new Standing Committee was formed by the Board in February devoted to increasing membership in the Congress and getting ideas about how the organization can better serve its members and live up to its own mission statement. If you are interested in helping us with these goals, or just have some good ideas how to do this, we want to hear from you.

The Membership Committee is still being formed. The best way to reach us has not yet been determined, but for now you can email me, Kathy Lockerbie, at info@icelandics.org or call me on the Congress info line at 631-TOLTING. In the near future, the Membership Committee will be looking for better ways to connect with current and potential members. We know you have lots of great ideas for the future. Please take a moment and send me some of them.

If you think you might enjoy working with other members who are addressing membership issues and planning the future of the Congress, please let me know. We are looking for members from every discipline and interest. From those of you who ride with friends on weekends to the serious competition rider. From those who breed many foals each year to those who want to breed their favorite mare only once. We think we can help you. We share your passion and we want to hear from you.

THANK YOU BERNIE!

The Education Committee sent the following thank-you note to our outgoing president, Bernie Willis: Thinking of Bernie's work as a member for the USIHC education committee and his position as the president of the USIHC feels a little bit like a mix of what people describe as the phenomena of seeing the highlights of their own life in fast-forward and of viewing a preview of an upcoming movie.



Photo by Gigja Einarsdottir.

Bernie Willis at the 2009 Kentucky Show.

The movie highlights show Bernie in Alaska preparing a trip to Iceland to participate in a breeding seminar at Holar; Bernie flying in from Alaska all the way for a one-day trip sitting with Barb Riva and Alex Pregitzer in Barb's kitchen over coffee, tea, and cookies discussing the Riding Badge Program.

There is Bernie at the USIHC Annual Meeting speakers' desk, in front of a Power Point presentation, presenting the president's report. Bernie at the Kentucky show announcing the ribbon class as if the riders were the reigning world champions in five-gait. Bernie explaining classes to those watching. Bernie with Barbara Frische and Katrin Sheehan evaluating a young horse at Creekside Farm in a breeding seminar. Bernie across the table in Susan Peter's meeting room, answering Marlise Grimm's questions about the

judging guidelines. Bernie checking out a prospective clinician in Washington State, Bernie and Sara Lyter at Basselthof participating in the first international trainer's seminar in Germany—where nobody but them was non-German and so German was the main language in the course. Bernie in Iceland discussing with veterinarian Systa Bjornsdottir and her husband the possibility of coming to the next USIHC annual meeting to give a lecture.

There is Bernie seeking a personal conversation with members at a sanctioned show at Winterhorse Park, Bernie building sleighs and thinking about the intern judge's program development, later typing a guideline for the website and writing a letter for the Quarterly.

Here is Bernie writing reminders about upcoming board meetings and his face showing disapproval of other views in a lengthy discussion in the education committee ;-). That picture does not last long and gets replaced by a happy-looking Bernie exchanging long philosophical emails about horses, education, and the welfare of the horse.

At the end of all pictures, big letters say "STAY TUNED."

Effective January 1, 2010 Bernie has resigned from the board to spend more time with his family and horses and to commit to other things that are important in his life. Fortunately, Bernie will still be a part of the education committee [editor's note: and the Quarterly committee!] within the USIHC. So we stay tuned for more education ...

Bernie was our board liaison and, given the nature of the game, we all worked together very closely. It was a great cooperation and we wanted to say thank you, Bernie—and vielen, vielen dank! Thanks for your support, your patience, and all you did for us. We will miss you as a board liaison and are happy to have you as a great committee member!

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual USIHC members' meeting was held in Reston, VA, January 16, 2010. See our report in this issue. At the meeting, six amendments to the USIHC Constitution were approved. The updated

Constitution is available on the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org/constitution.php.

NEW OFFICERS

At the January meeting of the Board of Directors, the following officers were elected: President, Anne Elwell; Vice President, Sara Lyter; Secretary, Susan Peters; and Treasurer, Kari Pietsch-Wangard.

SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED

The Sport Judge Training program information on the USIHC website has been updated to include details of a \$10,000 scholarship program for aspiring judges. See the Education Committee's Sport Judge Training page at www.icelandics.org/Education/sportJudge.php.

PA HORSE WORLD EXPO

Several USIHC members organized an Icelandic horse booth and demo at the PA Horse World Expo in Harrisburg, PA, Feb. 25-29. Knutur Berndsen set up and manned the booth, which was sponsored by the USIHC. Curt Pierce and Kelly Burlingham Lengle organized the demos, which displayed walk, tolt, trot, and canter.

YOUTH CUP

The FEIF YouthCup 2010 will be held at the Kalo Okologiske Landbrugsskole in Denmark, July 10-18. In the beautiful Danish scenery, Icelandic horses, teamwork, and cross-cultural friendships will be in focus. Information for American youths can be found at www.icelandics.org/yc2010. Deadline for applications was February 15.

THE ROYAL WINTER FAIR

Gudmar Petursson and Gigja Einarsdottir led a performance at the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, Canada, in November. This is the biggest fair in North America, with about 300,000 people attending over 10 days. The Icelandics did a breed demo on the last Saturday and a performance on Sunday for the final show. Writes Gigja, "The Royal Winter Fair was quite impressive altogether. The facilities are



beautiful and huge—we were on the second floor of the barn! Our performance went well. We did a beer tolt, a drill team, and a pace event, and then Throstur and Pegasus did their sparkler thing. Who knows, maybe the organizers liked it enough that we will be there for a week next year?”

FIND A COMMITTEE

Do you want to contact a USIHC committee by email, but don't know where to begin? Outgoing secretary Doug Smith put together the following tips.

Writes Doug: There are two email addresses for each committee. The address published in the front of each issue of the Quarterly (for example regional_clubs@icelandics.org) goes to the committee chair (or co-chairs). These messages are not saved on the USIHC server and there is no restriction placed on who may send email to these addresses. This is the place to go with general committee questions from members or non-members. These addresses are published for two reasons. First, people don't have to keep track of individual email addresses. For example, I know I can reach the Sport Leader, Will Covert, at sport@icelandics.org. I don't need to do any research to find Will's personal email address. The second reason for these addresses is to make it easy on the membership when a committee chair changes. When Barb Riva took over the Regional Clubs from

Annette Coulon, the rest of the world didn't need to lift a finger. The USIHC secretary took care of the change.

If you are a member of a USIHC committee and want to address everyone on the committee, you will want to use the committee's second email address. For example, for the Regional Clubs this address is regional_clubs@lists.icelandics.org. The important part is the “@lists.” This address is the discussion group for the committee. The messages sent here are forwarded to all committee members and saved in the message archive on the USIHC website. The archive is open to all current committee members and contains all the messages sent over the past 14 months (or since we moved from Yahoo). The archive also contains the attachments, unlike the old Yahoo service, so we are able to keep a committee's entire history. When you visit the archive, you may view messages by subject, date, or discussion thread. Finally, each list is fully searchable, so you can have the server do the work of finding a particular message or topic for you.

If you send an email to one of the “@lists.icelandics.org” addresses and it is returned to you, check to be sure you are sending the email from the address you use to login to the Congress website (i.e.

your user name). Because these mailing lists are restricted to active committee members the server checks to be sure the email is coming from one of the known email addresses. If you need to change your email address, you may do that yourself on the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org/renew or you may send your request to the Congress Secretary at secretary@icelandics.org. If your email address is right, next check to be sure you are listed on the committee roster. If you look at the page for the committee you are trying to email and your name is not on the list, you should send an email to the committee chair reporting the problem. In most cases, this is a simple administrative oversight. The page www.icelandics.org/committee.php lists all of the committees with links to their individual pages.

If you still need help, forward the returned message to webhelp@icelandics.org and someone on the Web Committee will have a look at the problem and get back to you with a solution.

2009 TRAINER SEMINARS

In March 2009, Creekside Farm in Georgia offered their annual FEIF Trainer Level 1 course. The host was Katrin Sheehan; Nicole Kempf from Germany taught the seminar, and Marlise Grimm from



Katrin Sheehan competing on Thokki at the recent Kentucky show. Scores for all USIHC shows are posted on the website at www.icelandics.org/showresults.php.

Germany flew in to conduct the exams, together with Nicole. Three of the participants passed all exams to get certified by the USIHC as a FEIF level 1 trainer:

- Coralie Denmeade
- Kari Pietsch-Wangard
- Florie Miller

In September 2009, Janet Mulder passed her exam at Arcticarrow Farm in Alaska to become a USIHC-certified FEIF trainer level 1. The host was Bernie Willis, the examiner Will Covert.

We would like to congratulate all the participants. We thank Katrin for hosting the seminar and exam and also Bernie for hosting another exam at his farm. Thanks to Nicole, Marlise, and Will for their time and effort teaching and conducting exams for the trainer courses.

Having FEIF trainer seminars in the U.S. is a great opportunity for anybody wanting to work with Icelandic horses professionally or to further their existing knowledge. If you are interested in hosting a FEIF trainer seminar at your farm or in participating in one of the seminars, see www.icelandics.org/Trainers/seminar.php.

RIDING BADGE REVIEW

In March 2009, Winterhorse Park in Wisconsin offered a Riding Badge Level 1 clinic. The hosts were Barb and Daniel Riva, the instructor was Ann-Christin Kloth, and the examiner was Anne Heemann from Germany. Eight young riders passed the exam for level 1:

- Kevin Draeger
- (Kevin took a seminar without exam in 2007 and came for the exam only)
- Setareh Saeian
- Summer Saeian
- Elisabeth Everson
- Jessica Elmblad
- Savannah Brauer
- Libby Hartzler
- Rachel Kurlwski

We would like to congratulate all participants and would like to thank Barb and Dan for offering a wonderful learning opportunity. Thank you to Ann-Christin Kloth and Anne Heeman for a great job.

If you are interested in hosting a USIHC Riding Badge seminar at your farm or in participating in one of these seminars,



Nicole Kempf working with Florie Miller on lungeing at the 2009 FEIF trainer course.

information is available at www.icelandics.org/download/USIHCridingRules.pdf.

BOARD MEETINGS

The USIHC Board met in October, November, and December 2009. All minutes can be found on the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org. A summary of the December minutes follows. Ásta Covert (left call early), Kathy Lockerbie, Susan Peters, Kari Pietsch-Wangard, Doug Smith, and Bernie Willis were present. Cindy Wescott was excused. Dawn Shaw, Juli Cole, and Katrin Sheehan were observers.

Secretary: Membership as of 12/7/09, was 414. The policies document on the website has been updated to include the procedure for designating a member "not in good standing" and the list of sanctions to be applied to so designated members.

Treasurer: Checking account balance as of 11/30/09 is \$5,816.91. The Money Market account balance (including the Youth fund) as of 10/31/09 is \$95,544.03.

National Ranking: The competition season is over. The final shows of the year have been approved and the 2009 National Ranking is ready for the awards

dinner at the Annual Meeting.

Trainer Guidelines: The FEIF trainer seminar guidelines have been added to the USIHC web site and the Education Committee is working on some of the details.

Intern Judges: The USIHC intern judges need to prove that they are up-to-date with their currencies. For this purpose, the education committee has developed a form which is now available online. Kari asked the board to authorize Alex Pregitzer,





Education Committee Chair, to deactivate the current status of any intern judge who does not meet the currency requirements by December 31, 2009. All except for Susan Peters voted in favor.

Pleasure Riders: Karen Olsen-Fields has agreed to continue to serve as the Pleasure Rider Program Chair. She requests the Board assign a liaison.

Youth Advisory Board: The Youth Advisory Board is up to six members and has met twice. They have requested that Susan, as their liaison, inform the Board of a planned request to reduce the minimum age to compete in pace events in the U.S. from 16 to 14. The advisory board is formalizing their proposal. The Board requested their proposal be shared with the Sport Committee before it is presented to the Board for consideration. The Youth Committee is also working on the design of the guidelines for dispersing monies from the Youth Fund. The Committee has established a task force to consider a National Youth Camp in 2011 and a National Youth Cup for 2012. Kari, as Treasurer, requested formal direction from the Youth Committee to designate the profit from the 2009 Youth Camp as part of the Youth Fund. The Youth Committee is actively soliciting donations for the silent auction at the Annual Meeting to benefit the Youth Fund. The content of the Annual Meeting / Youth Letter / Renewal Reminder mailing was approved

by the Board.

Members in Good Standing: Doug made a motion that the Board consider all persons associated with a membership to be "not in good standing" if at least one person fails to meet the criteria approved in the November 2009 meeting. Further, if a business meets the "not in good standing" criteria, all persons associated with all memberships held by the owners of said business are "not in good standing." All voted in favor. Kari made a motion that the Board instruct the Secretary to silently remove any persons designated as "not in good standing" from the roster of active members on the website and any committees on which they serve. The only public indication of a member's standing shall be his or her inclusion on the member roster *on the website.* All voted in favor.

Regional Clubs Renewal Process: The Regional Club Committee recommends the following changes to the renewal process: (1) Replace the current form, which requires original signatures from persons who are members of both the club and Congress, with a form generated by the membership database. All pre-printed names are confirmed Congress members and are self-declared club members. The club officer completing the form confirms the club membership, which provides a check-and-balance system to make sure the membership requirement

is satisfied without requiring the processing of an excessive number of forms.

(2) Reduce the required number of persons who must be club and Congress members from five to three. Doug made a motion that the Board approve the use of the new procedure for renewing Regional Club standing including the "five household" requirement. All voted in favor. Kathy then made a motion that the Board reduce the number of households required to establish or renew a Regional Club from five to three. Kathy, Bernie, and Susan voted in favor; Doug, Kari, and Ásta Covert against. As there was no majority, the Board instructs the Secretary to include this item on the agenda for the January meeting for the next Board to consider. Further, Doug is instructed to prepare the approved renewal process but not send the notices until after the Board has met in January.

Annual Meeting Seminars: Members have expressed interest in purchasing a DVD of the seminar presentations. Bernie is to contact Systa and see if she would grant permission for the taping and sale of the video. If this is a possibility, someone will need to make arrangements to tape the seminar.

Youth Cup: Susan made a motion that the Board approve an increase of the Youth Cup application fee to \$100 to cover the costs associated with three judges to evaluating the video submissions. Any excess funds are to be allocated to the 2010 Youth Cup Fund. The submission deadline for the Youth Cup application packets was February 15, 2010. The results and team will be announced no later than March 15. All voted in favor.

Katrin Sheehan appointment: The Board welcomed Katrin Sheehan back to the Board to assume Karen Olson's vacant seat. Katrin's term will expire in 2010.

Recognition Awards: The Board voted to form an ad hoc committee consisting of Susan (chair), Kari, and Kathy to make recommendations to the Board regarding individuals to be honored with service awards.



2009 FEIF Meeting

The FEIF secretary, Susanne Frohlich, forwarded the following report on the FEIF meeting held in Haarlem, NL, in October 2009; it was written by Gundula Sharman for our British counterpart: As you know, FEIF, the international umbrella body of the Icelandic horse has four departments—breeding, sport, education and youth. Each of those areas has a committee that decides on, for example, the criteria for judging a breeding horse, the rules governing a sports competition, the level of knowledge and experience a riding instructor should have, or international opportunities for youth.

One of the real achievements of FEIF is that we have a single international system of marks and judging criteria which makes it easy to compare the strengths of a horse bred in Iceland or New Zealand or indeed in Britain. Think about it, one system from Alaska to Italy! Even the language barriers have, to a large extent, been removed from that process. Equally, judges can be invited to come from any participating country, and we can be sure that they were trained to use the same criteria all over the world to look at the merits of a breeding horse.

Up until now these committees arranged their separate meetings and got on with their work. This time the FEIF Board arranged for all committees to meet in the same place at the same time, namely in Haarlem. The advantage of this is that it is so much easier for one committee to consult with another one. Simple? Of course it is simple, but sometimes one has to go a long way in order to stare the obvious in the face.

Each committee got on with their usual work: reforming and refining rules and regulations, organizing training events for judges and instructors, planning future events, but they also held joint sessions with another group. Somewhat to everyone's surprise, the ideas of the different working committees were much closer together than anyone had thought. And this applied to the last detail. For example, the education committee and the sports judge commit-

tee had identified the very same person to invite as a speaker to their respective training courses for 2010. Funny? Yes, because there were a lot of experts to choose from! Reassuring? Yes, two (sets of) minds are often better than one. Sad? Yes, why did we not try this years ago!!!

Of course, meetings that last for longer than a day are not only conducted in the conference rooms but the conversation spills over into meals, not to mention the bar. And often that is when the (seeds of) the best ideas are born.

So, there was an idea to look at "old" things in a new way. On the one hand, the Icelandic horse world is unique in that the governing body regulates breeding and sport. In which other equestrian discipline do you have the same body setting out the criteria for a breed evaluation and the rules governing sport competitions? On the other hand, even within the world of the Icelandic horse, breeding and sport seem to stand at opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to shoeing rules, or the definition of "working tempo" in various gaits. What is acceptable in breeding is not necessarily so in sport, and vice versa. Now, there may be very good reasons for that. But, just for a minute, think about it: What would happen if there were no difference?

The polarity between breeding and sport would disappear, and a new distinguishing element would appear: on



the one hand we have breeding (i.e. the horse) and on the other riding (i.e. the rider). And then, suddenly our biggest concern: How do we serve the majority of our members, the leisure riders, would disappear from the way we think about our membership. Surely, sport riders, breeding show riders, youth riders, and leisure riders are all riders. So, if we follow that line of thought, the whole framework of thinking might change. Instead of focussing on the difference between the happy hacker and the professional competition rider, the new thinking would focus on what they have in common.

At this stage, no one says that there are any answers. But asking these questions is a very exciting thing. And, if you have any thoughts on this, we would love to hear about it. Please feel free to participate in the process. You know, we know, the future is in your hands. Contact me at gundula.sharman@virgin.net.

FEIF Board

The FEIF Board also held its autumn meeting in Haarlem, Netherlands, along with the committees. The main topics discussed were the past and the future World Championships, the planning of the Conference 2010 in February in Odense, the FEIF Youth Cup 2010 in Kalo, Denmark, the future organization of the Board, and the update of our vision-mission document. Potential applications for EU funding and other sources of funding were one of the main items discussed and some possibilities were presented to the participants in the panel meeting on Sunday. In another panel meeting three questions were given to the groups, which were made up of members of different committees: What would I like to get out of FEIF? What do I want for FEIF? What do I think FEIF needs to offer to the Icelandic horse world? Interesting results were presented to the panel and the ideas and suggestions will be part of further discussions in the FEIF Board.

Youth Committee

Preparations for the FEIF Youth Cup 2010 at Kalø agricultural high school in Denmark are running smoothly. The FYCup 2010 will also contain a theory lesson about different kinds of bits and bridles and how they affect the horse.

Education Committee

An important topic on the Education Committee's agenda was cooperation with other departments; this led to a presentation to the plenary session by Karen Rasmussen and Herdis Reynisdottir. Landssamband Hestamannafélaga (LH) submitted a list of Icelandic riding instructors, and during the weekend, the committee worked on ensuring the correct inclusion of the list into the FEIF Education Matrix. There are now more than 1200 instructors in the matrix. The committee plans to submit a proposal to the FEIF Delegates Assembly 2010 for the approval of a rules and information document for the Education Department similar to FIPO and FIZO. The education committee also discussed opportunities for attracting funding for its work through the EU's Lifelong Learning Programme, which supports education and training projects.

Breeding Committee

At the joint breeding committee and breeding judges committee meeting, the past year was reviewed, including the great World Championships 2009. The new time schedule proved to be perfect for the breeding shows and never before were so many very good horses presented to an interested public. The committee scheduled a breeding judges' seminar in March 2010 in Hvanneyri, Iceland, with the purpose of updating judges' knowledge and satisfying the demands required to keep their licenses. The next FEIF breeding judges' examination could take place in spring 2011. The national breeding committees must forward their request for new judges by summer 2010 at the latest. The committee also discussed entering data on evaluations of foals into WorldFengur to be used for research purposes.

Sport Committee

The major item at the recent meeting of the Sport Committee and sport judges committee was the structure of our system of sport tests. At the moment, riders entering in tests like Tölt T8 or Four Gait V6 are judged the same way as the more experienced riders and horses in T1 or V1. There is no way to reflect on the progress of riders and horses, as in other horse sports. For this reason the Sport Committee will prepare a proposal to introduce two additional classes for V5, V6, T8, T7, T6: for young horses (5 and 6 years old) and beginning riders. For these two classes, new guidelines for judges will be developed. It will be up to the riders to decide if they want to enter in these specific classes or in the open classes, with standard judging. In some other classes slight changes will be proposed as well, to create a program of tests with an increasing level of difficulty for both rider and horse. These ideas were also discussed with the other committees present. The Sport Committee started a project to restructure FIPO, in order to make it more readable and understandable. The committee decided also not to change the list of prohibited equipment, and prepared some proposals for small changes in other rules to follow current developments. As in 2009, a separate seminar will be organised for judges wanting to take the test to become a FEIF Licensed Sport Judge, early in September 2010. Another seminar will be organised in cooperation with the Education department, open for licensed International Sport Judges and Trainers with a license Level 2 or higher. The committee also discussed the World Championships 2009.

Delegates's Assembly

The FEIF Delegates' Assembly and the FEIF Conference took place February 19-21, 2010, in Odense, Denmark. It was held at the same time as the WorldCup 2010.

Seminar in Wurzburg

The First International FEIF Seminar for International FEIF Sport Judges, Trainers, and Riding Instructors (levels 2 & 3) will take place April 10-11, 2010 in Wurzburg, Germany, at Islandpferdereitschule Lipperthof. On Saturday the well known Gerd Heuschmann will be the main guest. This part of the programme consists of his theoretical lecture, practical demonstrations, and open discussions. On Sunday the main topic will be Topline & Shape & Collection. Are those elements sufficiently considered in sport competitions, both in guidelines and practical judgments? The invitation and the registration form are available for download on the FEIF website.

Berlin 2013

The World Championships for Icelandic Horses in 2013 will take place in Berlin, capital of Germany. The Board of FEIF has honored the application made by our German member association IPZV. The venue is Karlshorst, a location used for other horse sports as well. Close to the city of Berlin, Karlshorst has ample space for excellent sport competitions, exciting breeding shows, and side programs (culture, entertainment, education). The aim is to bring the Icelandic horse to the people of Berlin and—at the same time—bring the passionate friends of the Icelandic horse to this fascinating city.



REGIONAL UPDATES

The Alaska Icelandic Horse Association (AIHA)

Alys Culhane writes: Spring in Alaska is called breakup, for two reasons. The first is that traditionally, many couples, after holding up for the winter together, then break up. The second reason is that this is the time the rivers again start to flow. In fact, there is a big lottery up in Nenana, one who guesses the exact time in which the tripod falls through the ice wins the pot.

For Icelandic horse owners, breakup is when we look askance at the melting snow, bust out the shedding combs, and make plans for the upcoming year. Our primary means of long-distance information exchange is our quarterly club newsletter. Our editor is Fran Buntzen, her daughter Sarah is co-editor. It contains our teleconference minutes, a photo section which is usually in color, progress reports, informational articles, and personal essays. It, even more so than our website, is the backbone of our club. Our last issue is indicative of what our newsletter is like. The cover story, by Mariann Stoffel, is about the birth of Jokla, their May born filly. Jokla, pronounced Yok LA means “she who knows glaciers,” which is most apt—the filly is, like her mother, destined to be a trail horse.

Fran takes extensive meeting minutes. In December we talked about constructing a membership directory, putting a classified page on our website, finding ways of upping youth involvement in our club, and upping club dues. Fran included a membership form, and Board of Directors contact information.

Robin Near is our far flung correspondent, by virtue of having moved from Alaska to Oregon. In this last issue she wrote about the who, why, where, and what of sand colic. Kim Bowser, who lives in Kasilof, also wrote about going on a caribou hunt with Undrun, her Icelandic mare. Additionally, Lois Rockcastle, who hails from Eagle River, reflected upon the acquisition of her new mare Snerra, who is called Jenna “a much more suitable name for a very sweet horse.”

All the articles contain photos, this included a one-page color insert. The

The California Icelandic Association (CIA)



This issue, the CIA submitted a selection of photos from their recent show, held in November at Flying C Ranch in Santa Barbara, CA. Above, Asta Covert on Grasteinn fra Aesustodum and Jenny Tommelstad on Lokkur fra Habae; photo by Willy Ma. Left, Eileen Ma on Drift fra Ytra-Dalsgerdi; photo by Heather Skopik. On the following page, Jenny Tommelstad rides Thor fra Prestsbakka in pace (top left; Ma); a victory lap by the Tolt-1 and Tolt-3 finalists (top right, Skopik); the same group, from left, Asta Covert on Dynjandi fra Dalvik, Steffi Kleis on Dreyri fra Saurbae, Lucy Nold on Andri fra Solbrekku, Rachel Ng on Thor fra Litlu-Sandvik, and Christina Granados on Hroftur from Hobby Horse Ranch (middle, left; Ma); Lucy Nold on Andri (middle right; Skopik); and Rachel Ng and Lucy Nold (bottom; Ma).

coolest photo of all is of Mary and Erin Gleason, who rode Skvetta and Burkni to the polling place on election day. According to Mary, “Skvetta and Burkni were disappointed that they were not permitted to vote.”

If anyone is interested in seeing a copy of our newsletter or in doing a newsletter exchange, contact Fran at Sarahb@mosquiconet.com.

The Cascade Icelandic Horse Club

Dawn Shaw writes: Members of the Cascade Club attended and brought horses to a young horse evaluation judged by Barbara Frische. Owners and spectators learned a lot and Barbara seemed pleased with the horses we are producing in this area.

The Club hosted our annual winery



ride in September in the Yakima Valley. Participants ride between select wineries, enjoying wine tasting, good company, and stopping for a picnic lunch. The annual beach ride was held in October in Longbeach, Washington. It is always filled to capacity and a great time was had by all. Also in October, club members supported the first annual Icelandic Horse Fall Sale at Red Feather Icelandics in Trout Lake by bringing horses and by showing up to watch and support the participants.

The Club held its winter meeting on January 3rd, and about 20 people attended. Discussions included participation at the Greater Northwest Equine Expo in Albany, Oregon coming up in March. This will be the Cascade Club's 11th year attending, providing a booth and daily breed demonstration.

The board selected a new president after our currently elected one resigned for family reasons. We would like to thank Rachel Knowlton for her contributions during her time filling the office. Our new president, who will complete the remaining year of the term, is Linda Templeton.

The Flugnir Icelandic Horse Association of the Midwest

Barb Riva writes: I think our group has to be proud of the renewed energy brought to Flugnir in 2009. With the new additions to our Board of Directors came



Flugnir youth rider Jess Elmlblad and her gelding Moldi at the sanctioned competition in Kentucky.



Megan Milloy of FIRC on her new horse, Gladur frá Ytra-Vallholti.

some new life and ideas for our group. Hanna Geyer took over the treasurer's position along with putting out our regional club newsletter, The Toltling Times. She's done a great job and we all thank her for her great organizational efforts. Another new Board member, Kydee Sheetz, took on the task of organizing a group campout with our horses. It was quite fun and successful and we hope to attract even more participation for this event in 2010.

I'm sure many of you remember a certain ambassador who wrote that only middle-aged women ride Icelandics in America! Well look out because times are changing. We now have two of the opposite sex on our board. Men really do ride Icelandic horses! Wade Elmlblad joined our board in 2009. He has offered to update our web site with his expertise in that field. He and his wife Shelley and their daughter Jessica have been actively involved with our sanctioned competition last September. Shelley took on the task of recording the scores through the IceTest program. She was up for the challenge and even travelled to the Kentucky show to get a bit more experience in preparation for our 2010 show. Wade organized the concession sales during the show and was able to deposit a nice sum toward our Flugnir Youth fund through those profits.

Ron Rose is new to Icelandics and has offered to help us on the Board for 2010 and I'm sure will find his niche within the club before too long.

At this time we have secured two Flugnir events. We plan a Breeding Horse Evaluation to be held at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, Wisconsin; June 16th and 17th, and a young horse evaluation on June 18th. This will complement a sanctioned show organized by Winterhorse Park the weekend following; June 19th and 20th. Our annual sanctioned competition, Flugnirkeppni 2010 is slated for August 28th and 29th.

Frida Icelandic Riding Club (FIRC) of the Mid-Atlantic Region

Rich Moore writes: The Frida club had a busy fall. About 10 members of the club rode at the Eastern Seaboard Show at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington, Virginia in early October and many more attended as spectators. In mid-October, Magnus Larusson put on a clinic at Suzi McGraw and Sandy Newkirk's farm in West Virginia that was well attended with 15 riders and the same number of auditors. At the end of the month, a number of club members rode at Gudmar Petursson's show in Kentucky. Four members of the FIRC drill team, Susan Milloy, Rich Moore, Marcia Newman, and Curt Pierce, participated in the drill team competition.

The club had a trail ride in early November at the Manassas Battlefield in Virginia with 12 riders. In mid December, the club had planned to participate in a Holiday Equine Parade in Charles Town, West Virginia, but unfortunately the event was rained out. The club helped arrange and was looking forward to participating in the USIHC annual meeting on January 16, 2010 near the Washington Dulles Airport.

The club was pleased with the accomplishments during the year of Megan Milloy, our star youth rider. Megan spent a week in Vermont at the end of June getting horses ready for the Silver Maple show. She won two classes in the show and was chosen the most promising youth rider. In July, Megan and her mother, Susan Milloy, participated in the first FEIF Youth Camp held



Riders mounted and ready to complete the second half of the NEIHC's Turkey Tolt at Rockefeller State Park Preserve. At right, the riders and their thirsty horses take a break at a stream. Photos by Betty Grindrod.

in the U.S. at Barb and Dan Riva's farm in Wisconsin. (Susan went there a week early and was one of the principal organizers of the camp's activities.) In July, Megan was invited by Susan Peters to attend the World Cup competition in Switzerland as a groom with the U.S. team. When Megan returned to the U.S., she went to Georgia for a couple of weeks to train horses with Katrin Sheehan. In October, Megan won four classes at the Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show near Louisville, KY. Again, she was chosen as the most promising youth rider. Well done Megan!

For additional information on club events, please see the FIRC events calendar at www.firc.us.

Northeast Icelandic Horse Club (NEIHC)

Amy Goddard writes: In October, Brian Puntin's Berkshire Icelandics hosted a clinic with Gudmar Petursson. It was filled to capacity and, as usual, enjoyed by all who attended.

Although Icelandics did not perform in the Springfield, MA Equine Affaire's Fantasia last November, the breed was well represented by our club. The following six NEIHC members participated in two breed demos held in the coliseum: Brian Puntin, Becky Hartman-Berrier, Marissa Dillon, Rick Houldsworth, Brad Paiva and Alice Ryan. We would like to thank Becky who did a great job of choreographing the routine.

The annual Turkey Tolt group ride

was held on Sunday, November 29th at Rockefeller State Park Preserve. Organizer Nicki Esdorn writes:

"Twenty-eight attended Turkey Tolt on a perfect Sunday! The weather gods were smiling on us – it could not have been more perfect: cool and calm, but lots of sunshine! The trails at Rockefeller State Park are perfect carriage trails, very inviting for spirited tolt! Thanks to everyone who came, some from far away, and a few for the first time!

"This year, I had gone a few times before to explore new trails and planned a route with the help of a new and accurate map. I am always so impressed by the fact that we have twenty-eight horses and riders going along together without a problem. We always have a few stallions in addition to the mares and geldings. Especially at the start of the ride, everyone is a bit excited and the pace is, ahem, lively. But everyone enjoyed the ride, including the horses, and came back to the picnic lunch sweaty, but happy! It was so good to see everyone again! See you all at the Bunny Hop in Spring!"

As of this writing, our Thorablot and annual meeting is in the process of being scheduled for a Saturday in February or March. NEIHC members are encouraged to check the NEIHC Yahoo mail group, our website, neihc.com and our Facebook page for news and info on upcoming events. Or contact Brian Puntin by phone: 413-528-3003 or e-mail: bpuntin@bcn.net.

Southern California Icelandic Riders

Kimberly Hart writes: The Southern California Icelandic Riders club participated in the annual Encinitas Holiday parade. Our youngest rider, Tory Dondanville, who is eight years old, was photographed for the cover of the local newspaper. We placed in three categories with the theme of the parade being a "GREEN HOLIDAY." Our script detailed the gasoline savings by riding horseback, our care and protection of nature and our recycling of horse dung as fertilizer. We placed second in the Green category, second place in Best Performance category and third place overall in a parade with over 90 entries. It was a blustery but non rainy evening. There were 9 riders and 14 participants. We'd like to thank our two poop scoopers, Barry and Gregg, for their entertaining poop scooping.

Our club Christmas party was hosted by Suzie Halletts with over 20 attendants. The food, as always, was fabulous. Our ornament exchange was the highlight of the evening. We are planning our upcoming year and welcome new members to join us at our golf course, beach and picnic rides. Our group has four camping trips planned and are currently working on a trip to the children's wing of Scripps Hospital.

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

BY SALI PETERSON



The herd comes home at Katrin Sheehan's Creekside Farm in Georgia. No horses were seen at the USIHC Annual Meeting (except in photos), but everyone knew that's why the USIHC exists, to support the use and health of the Icelandic horse according to international standards. Photo by Martina Gates.

Editor's note: The USIHC Annual Meeting was held Saturday, January 16, 2010 at the Sheraton Hotel in Reston, VA. FIRC member Sali Peterson attended and filed this report on the meeting, including two of the seminars of our guest speakers, on research into bone spavin and on color genetics.

Imagine Bernie Willis with goosebumps... I parked in the lower 40 and wandered about the perimeter of the hotel, looking for an entrance. Once inside, I met bustling activity everywhere. I found our meeting room, with plenty of time to set up my computer and look around, guessing at the faces behind all the emails from members of my committees.

People began to fill up the room, hugging, laughing, and gathering at tables. Some were more animated than others—morning people who had had their caffeine. Others, discovering no coffee in the room, quickly left in search of it.

Bernie began the meeting by greeting USIHC members and acknowledging the Board members: new, rejoining, and returning. As the outgoing president, Bernie was effusive in thanking his Board, giving well-deserved accolades to each. At one point, he compared Doug Smith to a nine-legged horse. Hmmm, isn't that one more leg than Sleipnir, Odin's horse, speedier than the wind? Bernie praised USIHC founders for putting processes in

place, for toiling unpaid, and for supporting the organization with their own money. They set the foundation for what we have today.

Now, for the goosebumps. Yes, Bernie said he was covered in them when he discovered the Youth Camp in Wisconsin last summer had been recognized by FEIF as the very best so far. The thought, planning, and hard work the Youth Committee dedicated to this event offered participants a well-rounded and unique experience of America. Bernie recognized Susan Peters, Youth Committee Chair, who, during her committee report, recognized the invaluable efforts of Susan Milloy from the FIRC club in Virginia.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Each Committee Chair gave a report, some on the serious side, others fun or thought-provoking. Asta Covert, Registrar, relayed that 4,041 horses are registered and asked that anyone who gelds a stallion send in records to be updated as soon as possible. Katrin Sheehan, Breeding Committee Chair, said that with Barbara Frische now in the country, they are planning several events, including breeding evaluations in 2010 across the country. Cindy Wescott, Promotions Chair, brought up the World Equestrian Games to be held in Lexington, KY. Right now, Icelandic horses do not fit into this high-level event, even in the gaited horse classes, because trot is for us a valued gait. This opened up a discussion about setting up a tent or booth and giving riding demonstrations. Will Covert, Sport Committee Chair, was recognized by Barbara Frische who explained the honor of being a judge at a world-level show, as Will had done at the Vermont show in 2009. Doug Smith, Website Chair, mentioned that the USIHC raised \$1400 for the youth fund through onsite membership renewals—a unique feature of his website crafting. Susan Peters, Youth Chair, in addition to thanking everyone involved in the FEIF Youth Camp, thanked the sport committee and the board for acting quickly on the proposal to change the age from 16 to 14 for pace tryouts for the Youth Cup team. She also spoke proudly about USIHC youth riders passionately raising money to help in the Haiti earthquake disaster.

ANNE ELWELL, NEW PRESIDENT

Yes, Anne is back and ready to serve, rejoining the Board after a brief hiatus. As one of the founders of the USIHC, she brings a wealth of knowledge from the very beginning of the Congress. This will be helpful during Board discussions, especially of process and intentions of the founding members and others throughout the Board's history. One of the first actions of her presidency was to lead discussion and voting on the constitutional amendments. This proved quite exciting, as members held forth, became logical, sarcastic, adamant, and finally abstained or voted passionately for or against. The most contested amendments were #3 and #8.

Amendment #3: No two Directors may be elected or appointed from the

same family. During the first vote, this amendment passed. After checking the rules, and determining that the abstentions were not considered a NO vote, Anne opened the floor to debate. She explained that all this amendment does is apply the rule of “electing” (already in effect) to “appointing” someone who will serve to the end of term of the person they are replacing. Certain members felt this was too limiting. It should be the right person for the seat. What was the point? Brothers and sisters, husbands and wives often had quite different viewpoints. Anne explained that originally the Board wanted a wide distribution of values and attitudes. During the second vote, this amendment did not pass.

The most hotly debated amendment proved to be Amendment #8, requiring the Board to pass proposals to committees of interest before making a decision. One suggestion was to follow Roberts Rules of Order, which requires committees to make recommendations to the Board. Another was to have the membership vote for board members as committee chairs depending on their expertise. A current Board member offered this comment: “Since this amendment was proposed, it has changed the mindset of the Board. We now have greater sensitivity to involve committees, with better results.”

During the discussion, Anne addressed each issue as it arose. Fears included:

It will slow down the decision-making

progress—the Board may come up against a time-sensitive issue and will be unable to act in time if they must kick the information to a committee.

Anne: In 20 years no such issue has come up. If the Board passes a proposal to a committee, they can add a time limit for suggestions.

The Board may not be able to vote on anything without turning to a committee for input.

Anne: Issues sent to the Board are in the meeting minutes and posted on the website. Other committee heads may see how the issue might affect them. They can ask to give feedback.

The Board exists to represent the membership. Not having committee input can be detrimental.

Anne: Management issues exist at both ends. Committees and the Board need instruction and management procedures. We need to find a way to create a communicative organization.

The process is confusing. Committees want to participate, but we need to define an actual procedure before ratifying this.

Anne: The Constitution does not set out procedures it only outlines procedures. The Board puts the process in place.

The Board was unaware of the procedures and unaware they were not up on the website.

Anne: Policies and procedures are not all in writing, but many have been in use for 20 years. Many original Board members have only just left. We have



Attendees at the USIHC Annual Meeting, held last January in Reston, VA. Thanks to the FIRC Regional Club for making the meeting arrangements. Photo by Sali Peterson.

now begun writing the procedures down. Times change. Last year a new Board unfamiliar with set-in-place procedures did not follow them. This is why 27 people, including seven old Board members, voted for this amendment.

Should this be a procedural amendment instead of constitution amendment?

Anne: Even if this Board makes procedural changes and includes this, a different Board could choose to abandon the procedure.

In the end, this amendment did not pass and we went on to address New Business. Rich Moore, current president of FIRC, asked that the function of the Regional Club Committee be put into writing. Kathy Lockerbie, said the committee recently voted to match funds up to \$200/year for drill teams or demos and are now addressing their function in assisting the regional chapters. As the lunch hour was well upon us, Rich Moore said he had arranged a \$15 lunch in the hotel restaurant that included the delicious buffet. At this, Anne motioned to adjourn. Members voted with their feet.

EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS

About 30 people returned to the meeting room for presentations by two veterinarians from Iceland. This session was spellbinding and fact-filled—and lasted for four hours. The time went quickly and brought us right to the start of the reception before dinner.

The first part was Breeding of Healthy Horses, a slideshow and presentation by Sigridur Bjornsdottir, Ph.D., Veterinary Officer for Horse Diseases, MAST Office of Animal Health and Welfare, Iceland.

Sigridur identified three areas of disease: contagious; inherited; and environment, management, and feeding. The first part of her presentation was on bone spavin. The rest included: summer eczema, infertility, abnormalities in the mouth, and longevity. While all these subjects were important and information-filled, I will address only her bone spavin work here.

BONE SPAVIN

Sigridur identified bone spavin as a common disease in the Icelandic horse. It intrigued her because Icelandic horses are extremely healthy in all other respects.

Many horses affected with bone spavin, she said, are not lame. Although

some horses experience reduced abilities in their gaits, many have no signs for much of their lives. Biomechanics is the main reason for the disease. Some horses can be symptom-free even with almost no motion left in the joint. In its initial stages, the joint will undergo cartilage degeneration, then progress to calcification. Calcification is the body's way to stabilize the joint.

Sigridur found that bone spavin has existed in the breed from the beginning—before the year 1000. In her study, she found the disease in the bones of horses buried in Viking Age graves. Continuing her study, she tried to answer these questions: What is its prevalence? Does it have clinical relevance? Is tolt a risk factor because the horses carry the load on their hind legs? Her study included 614 horses: 420 live offspring of selected sires ages 6–12 and 111 slaughtered horses aged 6 months to 6.5 years.

She discovered the prevalence of bone spavin to be about 30% and found it was age dependant. More and more horses get it as they get older. In 20-year-olds she has observed, more than 50% had spavin. One big ramification of her studies is that, if a young horse doesn't have spavin, even if its radiographs are clear, that does not mean it will not get spavin later. For the slaughter-house study, Sigridur studied young specimens, trying to answer how bone spavin starts and why. In some of the horses, the presence of bone spavin was very clear (even as early as one year).

FLEXION/MOTION

One of the tests Sigridur performed during her study was the flexion/motion test. She watched the horse move. Then she raised the back leg and kept it steady for one minute. Afterwards, she checked the motion again. What she found: Work load had no negative effect on the hock. Tolt was not a risk factor. Disease did affect the riding/gaits. Conformation—sickle hocks—did have a negative effect. Heritability is 33%. Horses in the study were symptom-free riding horses. However, the flexion test could aggravate the joints. Horses with early spavin had a lower survival rate; when the lameness became too great, they were put down. She is now studying the reach of the hind legs to see if there is a correlation.

Under exercise, during the pumping motion within the joint, cells are oxygenated. Damaged cartilage cannot repair itself. This happens before radiographs can detect it. This chondronecrosis is common in horses not broken to saddle.

Sigridur will continue the study to see if conformation such as cow hocks is a risk factor. In humans, this is well known. There is no proof yet if it is the same in horses.

A horse predisposed or with early signs can be affected by the disease much earlier and more intensely. Sigridur discovered young horses with bone spavin had poor tarsal conformation, poor architecture of the distal tarsal joints, or high genetic predisposition.



Fun at the 2009 FEIF Level-1 Trainer Seminar in Georgia, organized by the Katrin Sheehan of Creekside Farm. Shown here is Class-C trainer Florie Miller from Colorado.

GENETIC LINKS

Genetic predisposition is the most important risk factor, Sigridur said, although she has not observed any horses born with the disease. Many genes are behind this disease, so the effect of each gene is small. Most horses with the disease fell into a mid-range of the number of genes. Those with few of the genes develop the disease much later; those with more genes develop the disease sooner.

To reduce the risk, she highly recommends not using stallions and mares that show signs of disease early, and radiographing all stallions and mares at age five. She is in favor of World Fengur marking affected horses with a red "S" to warn breeders.

ONGOING STUDY

Sigridur began a conformation study in 2006 that will continue until 2013. So far, she has looked at 38 mares: half with spavin, half without; bred and kept at Holar. Their offspring were born and kept in the same environment at Holar. The experimental horses live for up to three years. She observes the motion of foals, yearlings, and two-year olds. She looks at radiographs and takes blood samples: DNA and markers in serum. She sends leg bones to Sweden for MRIs to get the clearest pictures to study. She has discovered that horses are less prone to cartilage degeneration in any other part of their bodies.

TREATMENT

For a horse with spavin, a good rule of thumb is to keep it working lightly. Determine if the disease is the same on each leg and if the joint is getting stiff. One treatment can include injecting the joint only with cortical steroids to reduce inflammation and pain. This can increase the fusion of the joints. The joint will never be restored. Supplements can also help reduce inflammation.

COLOR GENETICS

Olafur Sigurgeirsson, MS, an agriculture scientist (and Sigridur's husband), presented the next session on the Genetics of Horse Color. Olafur explained that horses have 64 chromosomes: 32 pairs. Alleles are pairs of genes at the same physical location (locus) on chromosomes. There are 15 alleles for color that can occur in a vast number of combinations, resulting in the beautiful array of colorful Icelandic horses.



The guest speakers at the Annual Meeting focused on improving our breeding through research on health and color genetics. Here, two foals from Lough Arrow II, Flúð (left) and Prydi, get to know each other. Photo by Andrea Brodie.

Olafur explained a chart mapping the alleles to horse colors. He knew combination complications were a bit much to absorb in our limited time, so in the last half of his slideshow, he showed beautiful Icelandics in motion, with a chart on each photo showing how the alleles combined to create the colors.

Such a myriad of colors and combinations occur in our horses, especially when unusual genes, such as splash and silver, come into play. The dun gene interacts with other genes to give the typical "primitive" line down the back, along with darker faces. The splash gene is responsible for great areas of white on a horse, the huge blazes that expand past the eyes or create great splashes of color on the body. The cream gene is responsible for colors such as Palomino, and Cremello and Perlino, with their representative blue eyes. The combinations seem almost limitless.

What I remember most of his presentation was watching exceptionally colorful Icelandic horses with fabulous gaits move across the screen, one seeming more beautiful than the last.

THE AMBASSADOR

After the educational seminar, we all walked down the hall to the bar. There is nothing like a bar to warm people to talk and laughter. Rich Moore introduced me

to a couple seated at my table. They were good humored and talked easily. Imagine my surprise when the Icelandic Ambassador was introduced and the man next to me rose to speak.

The ambassador spoke of the seriousness of Iceland's economic recovery. It would take quite some time and it would not prove easy to recoup the losses from the near-criminal actions a few had wrought upon his country. He was continuing his travels giving talks in other countries to increase awareness and good will. The ambassador was positive Iceland was regaining its footing. He left us feeling we were assisting Iceland's recovery efforts by riding and promoting Icelandic horses.

THE AWARDS DINNER

At the awards dinner, so many people on the Board received awards, I couldn't quite keep track! Some were no surprise. Others were thank-yous for hard work. The board honored Secretary and Webmaster Doug Smith for efforts "above and beyond" that will continue to serve the USIHC for years to come. Top riding awards to those present included: Asta Covert, Anne-Marie Martin, and Sverrir Bjartmarz.

One of the highlights of the evening was the silent auction. The table at the front of the room held an array of items to entice bidding to support young riders. Items included USIHC sweatshirts, a carved wooden Icelandic horse, half off a clinic with Knutur Berndsen, a stunning mounted photo of Icelandic horses running against a backdrop of an ice-capped mountain, a month's horse training with Gudmar Petursson, handmade Icelandic wool gloves, and the beautiful flower arrangement with the carved Icelandic horse on a stem that had adorned the table where the Board presided during the meeting.

Periodically throughout dinner, Susan Peters made use of Megan Milloy as the talented young rider representing all those poor kids in dire need of money. It was all in good fun. Megan was a sport to play her part. She alternately looked bashful and resigned to take on the persona of the poor, Icelandic horse-riding street urchin in need of immediate money. Way to go Susan and Meagan. It spurred us all on to step up and support the next generation of Icelandic horse advocates.

NATIONAL RANKING 2009 YEAR-END RESULTS

DISCIPLINE	AWARD SPONSOR	2009 WINNER
T1 (TOLT 1 OPEN)	DAVID AND HEIDI KLINE	ASTA COVERT
T2 (TOLT 2 OPEN)	FLYING C RANCH	ANNE-MARIE MARTIN
T3 (TOLT 3 OPEN)	GRAND VIEW FARM	LUCY NOLD
T5 (INTERMEDIATE TOLT)	FOUR WINDS FARM	KARI PIETSCH-WANGARD
T6 (INTERMED. LOOSE-REIN TOLT)	HULINNDALUR ICELANDIC HORSES	SVERRIR BJARTMARZ
T7 (NOVICE TOLT)	ICELANDIC SPORTS LTD	BERTA GLAZER
T8 (YOUTH TOLT)	FLYING C RANCH	LUCY NOLD
V1 (FOUR-GAIT OPEN)	PEGASUS FLUGHESTAR LLC	ASTA COVERT
V2 (FOUR-GAIT OPEN)	ROBERTS WOODS FARM	LUCY NOLD
V3 (INTERMED. FOUR-GAIT)	CREEKSIDE FARM	RACHEL NG
V5 (NOVICE FOUR-GAIT)	ICELANDIC CREATIONS	DOMINIC NG
V6 (YOUTH FOUR-GAIT)	TOLT NEWS	LUCY NOLD
F1 (FIVE-GAIT OPEN)	TOLT NEWS	GUDMAR PETURSSON
F2 (FIVE-GAIT OPEN)	SUNLAND RANCH	NO VALID SCORES IN 2009
F3 (INTERMED. FIVE-GAIT)	SOLHEIMAR FARM	KARI PIETSCH-WANGARD



Youth rider Lucy Nold, shown here at the CIA Open, is the U.S. high-point scorer in four disciplines: T3 (Tolt 3 Open), T8 (Youth Tolt), V2 (Four-gait Open), and V6 (Youth Four Gait).

THE 2009 PLEASURE RIDER PROGRAM

100 HOUR WINNERS

ELLEN WILSON
NINA BEYER
HEIDI PARRY
AMBER PARRY
MARY MONTGOMERY
MICHAEL BUTLER
WANDA EVANS
LYNN WEISE

500 HOUR WINNERS

LORI BIRGE
KATHY GLIATTLI
KAREN OLSON
DAWN SHAW
AMBER PARRY

1,000 HOUR WINNERS

CALEIGH ANDERSON
KYDEE SHEETZ
ANNE OWENS
HEATHER SKOPIK

2,500 HOUR & TOLT NEWS SUBSCRIPTION WINNER

NANCY WINES-DEWAN: 2,631 HOURS

REGIONAL CLUB WINNERS

FIRST PLACE	FLUGNIR
SECOND PLACE	FIRC
THIRD PLACE	NEIHC, LAIHA, AND CASCADE

ALL-STAR DIVISION RESULTS

FIRST PLACE	NANCY FLORES	1092
SECOND PLACE	NANCY WINES-DEWAN	772

REGIONAL DIVISION RESULTS

CENTRAL MOUNTAIN

FIRST PLACE	KARI PIETSCH-WANGARD	580
SECOND PLACE	KYDEE SHEETZ	575
THIRD PLACE	GLORIA VERRECHIO	468
	KAREN OLSON-FIELDS	315
	JAN GRAY	256
	HEIDI PARRY	216
	KATHY GLIATTLI	213
	JER OLIVER	138

WEST

FIRST PLACE	HEATHER SKOPIK	811
SECOND PLACE	LORI BIRGE	237
THIRD PLACE	DAWN SHAW	231
	DONNA RICH	224
	JUDY SLAYTON	190
	MARY MONTGOMERY	165
	RONELLE INGRAM	153
	WANDA EVANS	145
	SHARI NEES	96

EAST

FIRST PLACE	ANNE OWEN	974
SECOND PLACE	ELLEN WILSON	392
THIRD PLACE	RICH MOORE	158
	WALTER DAVIS	152
	LYNN WIESE	146
	MICHAEL BUTLER	136
	LIZ HAARTZ	114
	NINA BEYER	100
	JESSICA BUTLER	6

YOUTH DIVISION RESULTS

FIRST PLACE	AMBER PARRY	626
SECOND PLACE	CALEIGH ANDERSON	474
THIRD PLACE	CALLIE RICH	14



Nancy Wines-Dewan won a subscription to Tolt News along with her 2,500-hour badge. She was also second in the All-Star Division, with 772 hours logged this year.

THE 2009 FOAL TOUR

BY BARBARA FRISCHE



In 2009, I visited several farms in the United States to conduct evaluations of foals and young horses. The U.S. breeding leader, Katrin Sheehan, organized the tour and helped me where needed (from driving young horses around the paddock to scribing). It was a good opportunity for her to get to know breeders throughout the United States, and for breeders and Icelandic horse enthusiasts to ask questions, get input, make requests, or offer ideas for improvements to the USIHC breeding committee.

An evaluation of a foal or young horse is a description of the conformation, spirit, and gaits of a horse in its developmental stage at the moment of presentation. While the foal/young horse is running free, the judge comments on which horses come close to the breeding goal in each attribute. The breeders, owners, and observers have the chance to learn about the breeding standards and the positive and negative attributes of each horse, and to hear an explanation of each point.

Yearlings are the most difficult for judges to describe, and often are not in the best phase of their development. Year-

lings are often higher in the rear than in the front, which can result in them not being completely balanced, either in conformation or in gaits. So evaluating a yearling is more or less looking at a situation in time. We all know that a growing horse has better and worse moments, and that some traits or attributes can change (such as the form of the neck) and some will stay the same (the neck position). An experienced judge can still see and describe a lot of details that will be very similar—and sometimes exactly the same—when the horse is an adult.

To find out which attributes of a young horse change and which stay the same, a judge, a scientist, and a registrar have put together a linear system (see “The Linear System”), which describes the animals in much more detail. Each trait or attribute is looked at by itself and graded from 1 to 5. Since we cannot ask a young horse, which is not ridden, “Tolt now, after the corner, pace, please...,” we have to be able to describe the mechanics of the gaits in as much in detail as possible. On no other evaluation sheet are the details described more clearly.

WHY EVALUATE FOALS?

Why do we need an early evaluation of our horses when, later on, we have the ridden evaluation according to the rules of FEIF? The results of a horse shown under saddle depend not only on its genes, but on its upbringing, starting, training—and a good day at the show. A ridden horse, shown twice, can give two extremely different performances. Especially in the gaits, we sometimes see a big difference from show to show, even though the genetic background of the horse has not changed. Keeping this in mind, however, the ridden evaluation is clearly the most important judgment of a breeding horse. There we find out how much of the potential seen in the visual evaluation of a horse’s conformation can be performed by the horse under a rider.

Yet the time until a horse can be shown at a ridden evaluation is quite long for a breeder. At a minimum, it is four years after the birth of a foal, in many cases it is five or six years. This is enough time to breed two horses repeatedly to each other, and to learn that they did not



At the Cascade Regional Club’s young horse evaluation, Tronta (left) from Alfasaga was shown as a two-year-old by Karen Brotzman, while the foal Bryja from Lone Cedar was shown by Dawn Shaw. Photos by Shari Nees.

produce the kind of offspring wanted. The breeder has missed his or her breeding goal or has kept horses in the breeding program that don't produce what was expected. A breeder might have five foals on the ground, none of which match his or her expectations.

WHAT ABOUT BLUP?

But, you might ask, wasn't BLUP developed for that reason? The statistical tool BLUP is a great help for breeders, especially those who are not very experienced. Breeders should use the BLUP information, which is made available through WorldFengur, much more often. However, when you are breeding horses with ancestors who were not evaluated or were evaluated by a different system, the BLUP prediction is less useful. In these cases, it is especially helpful for breeders to have foals evaluated, in order to get a good idea of their current breeding results and if improvements need to be made. With this kind of evaluation it is easy to see, for example, that all foals of stallion "Bob" have a low-set neck, mostly evaluated at 1 or 2. This information is available much earlier than it has been before and future mare/stallion combinations can be looked at accordingly.

Full brothers and sisters have the same BLUP score, but they can still be very different. BLUP is one (big) piece of the puzzle. Evaluating the horse itself is another piece of the puzzle. Only the whole puzzle, with its many pieces, describes each horse. The more pieces breeders can pull together, the more they can understand their own breeding and make the necessary decisions.

Experience tells us that, especially in the German Young Horse Evaluations, many results have been helpful to breeders, pointing them in the right direction. When the first results were scientifically researched in Iceland, the compatibility with BLUP was found to be high.

Judges are not prophets, though. Even though some are very experienced in judging foals and young horses, they cannot foresee the future.

ON THE TOUR

The first stop on our 2009 tour was in Wasilla, Alaska, at the farm of Bernie Willis. We saw horses of very different levels. The best young horse was the three-year-old Njáll, owned by Bernie Willis, out of



Three-year-old Sola from Northstar, was shown by her owner Dawn Shaw at the Cascade Regional Club's young horse evaluation. Photo by Shari Nees.

Prinsessa fra Flugumyri and Adam fra Ásmundarstöðum. He stood out with a good top line, lots of energy, a good gait distribution, and an energetic use of his hind legs paired with a lot of suppleness.

The next stop was the Silvercreek Farm of Kathy Lockerbie in Bellingham, Washington. Only four horses were judged. The yearling Hallastjarni (at the time called Silfur) was the highest evaluated horse. He was very well-developed, quite good in proportions, showing much natural trot with good beat and very flat movements. His breeder and owner is Kathy Lockerbie; Father: Ari from Beavertail Meadows; Mother: Glama from Tail's End.

Then we took a ferry to Orcas Island. Most of the horses we saw there had much natural trot. The best of the group was Salena (F: Domino from Evans; M: Vakning frá Ytri-Kóngsbakka). She has very typical looks and much expression. The breeders and owners of this mare are Wanda and John Evans. One other horse presented itself well, with rhythmical trot and neck carriage and medium-high movements: Skuggi from Evans, a three-year-old (F: Draumur from Evans; M: Glódís from Álfasaga).

After seeing this fabulous piece of earth, we drove down the coast and on to the next event, organized by the Cascade Regional Club for its members.

In comparison to the events before, we saw the highest quality of young horses here. The only-four-week-old foal Leiknir (F: Svartbakur frá Holum; M: Beyla frá Álfasaga) stood out. He is a bay pinto with good movements in all gaits; he showed some steps in pace and has much rhythm and good beat in tölt, is supple with much expression. His breeder and owner is Jean Waller. Very good gaits with high, medium-wide movements were shown by the three-year-old stallion Dynfaxi (F: Glymur frá Innri-Skeljabrekku; M: Tomma frá Kjarri). Much speed, good beat, and much fluent movements were his main characteristics. His conformation is too stocky at the moment. His breeder and owner is George Lowe. Isafold, a three-year-old mare, showed roomy gaits and was well-developed. She showed all gaits and the beginnings of racing pace. Altogether only two horses at this event had gaits that were under average.

The last station of our first leg of the 2009 Foal Evaluation Tour was Linda and Dick Templeton's Red Feathers Farm, in a beautiful natural setting. We saw three young horses here. The most elegant horse, with good neck and head carriage and well-separated gaits, was Funi (F: Frami frá Ragnheidarstöðum; M: Birta Mi). He is lightfooted and, at the moment, a little downhill.



IMPRESSIONS

Gathering all my impressions, I can say that it is remarkable that we saw very few stiff horses and a lot of good natural tölt. The gait separation was good, but we, as breeders, need to work on higher movement and better neck carriage. Some horses already show these traits and are quite promising.

The hospitality everywhere was overwhelming, and it was wonderful to meet so many interested breeders and lovers of Icelandic horses. On the negative side, although all the organizers were trying to make the best of their facilities, not all of them were really suitable for a young horse evaluation. As the horses need to show their gaits, a big enough space is necessary for them to speed up and show what they can do in trot, tölt, canter, and pace.

I want to thank everybody who helped to make this first part of my trip a great experience, especially Kathy Lockerbie, who was our chauffeur. Without her help, the whole trip would not have been so successful and so easy on Katrin and me. I am looking forward to my next trip to Wisconsin, Indiana, Boston, and Vermont.

—Barbara Frische is a FEIF international breeding judge.



At a young horse evaluation, the horses are allowed to run loose in an open arena while the judges observe them. Above, Sola from Northstar; below, Leiknir from Full Moon Farm, owned by Jean Waller. Photos by Shari Nees.

THE LINEAR EVALUATING SYSTEM FOR FOALS AND YOUNG HORSES

“Foal and young horse evaluations” is a pilot project of the FEIF breeding committee. All FEIF countries have some kind of young horse descriptive show. It is only logical to create a unified system, no matter how each country views these events. The data resulting from these events can then be better compared. Plus, once a good system is created and all judges are schooled in it, we can not only collect the data but analyze it.

The linear system described here is the most accepted of all the methods used so far. It is easy to analyze scientifically, it describes the horses very precisely, it is easy to understand for the breeder, and it is well-structured for the judge.

In 2009 this linear system was to be tested in all FEIF countries, so that the committee could make adjustments to the rules or the form by the end of the year. All suggested rules (e.g. fencing, footing, drivers, etc.) were copied from the German system, except for two points. Young horses usually only get shown until they are three years of age, if the specific country allows four-year-olds under saddle in ridden evaluations. To encourage less manipulation and to keep the cost down for the breeders, the international breeding judges of all countries wish (as a proposal) to have young horses up to three years old shown without shoes.

THE JUDGING SHEET:

- There are 5 grading categories in which an attribute has to be marked, unless it is non-existent in the horse (or a gait that is not shown)
- The attributes are described for each criteria (length of neck, form of neck, etc.)
- The descriptions are always in terms of the biological extremes (straight back/ sway back)
- Attributes can differ in their ideals: Sometimes 3 is the best, sometimes 4 or 5
- The ideal category is shaded in gray
- Marks for Interior (Spirit), Exterior (conformation), and gaits can still be given
- The judge’s comments can still be given as usual, but are not mandatory

FEIF INTERNATIONALE FÖDERATION DER ISLANDPFERDE - VEREINE			
Place & Date:			
FEIF ID:	Name:	Colour code:	Colour:

Conformation:				1	2	3	4	5	Mark	Remarks
Head	Expression/Texture	Coarse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fine	5 best
Neck	Length	Short	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long	5 best
	Position	Low	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	High	5 best
	Shape	Deer neck	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arched neck	5 best
Shoulders	Slope	Steep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sloping	5 best
Back	Line of the back	Stiff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Swayback	3 best
	Length	Short	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long	3 best
Group	Slope	Steep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Flat	3 best
	Length	Short	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long	5 best
Proportion	Trunk form	Flat ribbed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cylindrical	5 best
	Trunk impression	Heavy build	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Light build	5 best
	Leg length	Short legs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long legs	5 best
Leg conformation	Tendons	Thin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thick	5 best
	Joints	Small	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Big	5 best
Leg stance	Front legs	Toe out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Toe in	3 best
	Hind legs	Toe out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Toe in	3 best
Hooves	Shape of hooves	Narrow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wide	3 best
Mane & tail		Little	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Much	5 best

Character:				1	2	3	4	5	Mark	Remarks
Courageousness		Fearful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Courageous	3 best
Expression		↓ Expression	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	↑ Expression	5 best
Reaction		Slow	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Too fast	3 best
Willingness		Lazy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eager	4 best

Gaits, type of movements:				1	2	3	4	5	Mark	Remarks
Neck carriage		Low	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	High	5 best
Head carriage		Horizontal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vertical	5 best
Length of strides		Short	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Long	5 best
Height of movements		Low	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	High	5 best
Suppleness		Stiff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Supple	5 best
Speed capacity		Little	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Much	5 best
Type of movements		Heavy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Light	5 best
Beat in		Walk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		5 best
		Tölt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		5 best
		Trot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		5 best
		Pace	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		5 best
		Canter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		5 best

Judges comment: _____

Judge: _____

Placing of horses in a show can still take place with marks, in percentages, or without any points, just by description.

It is up to the breeding leaders and their committees if they want their young horses to have judge’s comments and marks.

WEEKEND WARRIORS

BY ALYS CULHANE WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY NANCY WINES-DEWAN



The setting of the following cautionary narrative is southcentral Alaska, which might prompt some readers to say that the story is a climatologically-related extreme instance. For this reason, I offer a weather-related caveat. The physical and mental well-being of one's horse has to be an ongoing priority, no matter where one lives. Horses are four-legged oxymorons. They are at the same time extremely strong and extremely fragile. Therefore, providing the proper amounts of food, water, and exercise should be an exercise in mindfulness. This high degree of focus should also extend into the realm of one's riding habits. It's unfair to expect a horse to do its job on a moment's notice if it isn't physically up to the task. This is also unfair to other riders, who too must deal with unforeseen consequences. Here's what recently happened in my neck of the woods, and some lessons learned.

RISK TAKING 101

The phone rang and I answered it. My friend Ethel said that she and her husband Fred were on their way over to my place. Earlier in the day, we'd agreed that it would be a good day for a ride. I hauled the last basket of wood into the cabin, donned my winter gear, and met them at the driveway's edge. I glanced at my watch: It was 3:30 p.m. Ethel said they were late because they'd had a difficult time separating Fred's mare, Stedda, and Foli, her seven-month old foal. The pair unloaded Stedda and Ethel's gelding, Bassi. I gave their horses and mine a flake of hay each.

I hadn't given our trail-ride plans much thought. It had been a high-traffic snowmobile day on both our loop road and the adjacent trails. It was the first weekend after a major snowfall, and so the machiners had been out en masse. They came in such large numbers that

the smell of exhaust hung heavy in the late afternoon air. Their sheer numbers had also had an adverse affect on area moose—earlier, while out on Tinni, I'd seen several ungulates in neighboring yards.

Moose-phobic Raudi had been restless all day. She repeatedly sidled away when I went to brush her. I took a few deep breaths and moved in a slower and more deliberate fashion, all the while thinking that time was of the essence. It was 5 degrees F and the temperature was dropping. As a rule of thumb, I don't ride my horses in below-zero weather after 2 p.m.; I like them to get what warmth they can from the sun before it sets. Ethel and Fred were ready to go by the time I'd finished tacking up.

We rode down the driveway to the base of what I call the loop, a mile-long residential road that encircles our neighborhood. I'd decided to go left, which

was a more indirect way of getting to the trailhead. This way, I could more easily ascertain how anxious Raudi might be. If I were going solo, I'd have her expend energy by moving out quickly. This wasn't an option. Ethel wasn't yet up for going at a speed other than a fast walk. She was a returning rider who'd previously taken a few falls. She'd gotten Bassi in September, and had done a few outings with him; however, she still feared being dumped.

I turned left. Fred, turning right, said to us both that he was going directly to the trail. Raudi attempted to follow the fast-moving pair, then when I asked her to whoa, did a little jig. I dismounted, and stood deep in thought. I was once again in a situation where I was indirectly being asked to mediate between the desires of a rider who had no confidence and one who had an overabundance of it. This wasn't the first time that this had happened. On our last ride at our place Fred had taken off up a steep trail, leaving Ethel and me at the base. Then, like now, I decided that it was in Ethel's best interests to do a less strenuous ride. We ended up doing a short jaunt on what I call the Meadow Trail, a relatively flat, treeless, and open stretch of land.

It was 4 p.m. The sun was below the low-lying cloud line. Over the past year, Raudi and I had logged hundreds of hours on the local trails. However, only two of these hours were at night. That evening we'd had a bear encounter. She huffed and puffed and we returned to the safety of the road. The bears were now hibernating, still ... my gut feeling was that I should ride Tinni, who generally moves at a slower clip than does his young stablemate. I returned Raudi to her pen, ran back up to our cabin, swapped out the bridles, ran back, bridled Tinni, hopped on his back, and rejoined Ethel.

It was now 4:15 p.m. I told Ethel that because it was getting dark, we should just ride the loop. She seemed relieved to hear this. We rode quietly and engaged in idle chit-chat, mainly about horse care. I'd become her horse mentor shortly after she acquired Bassi. We'd spent the fall doing groundwork, mainly TTeam training. Bassi had lived up to expectations, both on the ground and in the saddle. Ethel mentioned to me that she and Fred were concerned because both Bassi and Stedda were a bit on the thin side. I told her to

get a scale and weigh their hay, explaining that the standard unit of measure is 2.2 pounds of hay per 100 pounds of body weight. I added that lactating mares and performance horses need more, and that idle horses need less.

Ethel was the first to see the three moose. They stood quietly as we passed; the horses, while not bothered, let us know that they were there. Bassi glanced to the right, and Tinni snorted. Our moose-musings were interrupted by the high-pitched whine of two snowmobiles. The drivers came around the distant bend fast—too fast to talk much about what we ought to do. I leapt off Tinni and grabbed Bassi's bridle. Our mounts stood calmly as the riders passed. I, who was riding bareback, had to get back on Tinni. I couldn't get on him directly from

Ethel was the first to see the three moose. They stood quietly as we passed; the horses, while not bothered, let us know that they were there. Bassi glanced to the right, and Tinni snorted. Our moose-musings were interrupted by the high-pitched whine of two snowmobiles.

the road; my Refrigerware suit was too bulky. I walked over to and mounted from a snow berm, a process that ate up an additional five minutes of daylight.

We'd now ridden three-quarters of the loop and were at the base of the trailhead. It was somewhat dark; however, the snow illuminated the road and the nearby banks. I surmised that it was too dark to ride on the trails, and so I instead suggested to Ethel that we go down Murphy Road. This, the road that leads to the loop, is slightly winding but like the loop road, relatively untrafficked. I pulled my headlight out of my snowsuit pocket and fastened the strap around my helmet. I remarked to Ethel that it was just by chance that I had it on hand; I'd slipped it into my pocket after doing my morning chores. We continued on and were passed by a handful of cars, some of which were going to our place. We turned for home

a half-mile later, at the furthest bend in the road. Tinni, who knew that he was heading back to the barn, began hoofing it in a more energetic fashion, with Bassi following suit. By now it was very dark and I could barely see the road. The batteries on my headlight were running low; I repeatedly tapped on it with my crop to get it to work better. I cursed as the strap slipped upwards and entire unit popped off my helmet. It fell to the ground; once again I got off and back on Tinni.

We turned back on the loop road. I hopped off Tinni and unfastened his girth, and Ethel did the same. I then did what I called a sweat check, feeling both horses' chests and backs. Tinni's front was slightly damp, Bassi's less so. Their backs were dry. My toes and fingers were now cold; this, my own form of temperature assessment, indicated that it was about -5 degrees F out. We arrived home. I put Tinni away, helped Ethel untack Bassi and then trudged back up to the house. Several friends had gathered, and a pizza party now was in full swing. I laughed about the jokes that centered around our not having enough power to blow dry my horse, and towel in hand, headed back outside.

Fred returned shortly thereafter. He tied Stedda to the trailer, unsaddled her, and went to check out the festivities. I dried Tinni off and blanketed him. I also scooped some poop and gave my horses their evening hay. We water our horses by hand, which required me to make yet another trip up to the cabin. I poured the warm water on the woodstove into buckets and listened to Fred tell our guests about his ride. He'd gone up the trail that leads to what we call the bench; it's a fairly steep mile-and-a-half climb from the trailhead to this, the foothills of the Talkeetna Range. I asked him how Stedda did, he said that she quivered a bit going downhill, but otherwise did fine. I then asked him if he wanted me to give her some water. His response was no, that she'd eat snow. I said that I'd at least check on both horses.

Bassi was okay, but Stedda was hurting. She was sitting sternal, on her uneaten hay. I knelt down next to her. She had a dazed expression and her usually upright ears were flopped to the side. The ears were also cold to the touch. I felt her thick coat; it was sopping wet.



I dashed back up to the cabin and asked Fred if Stedda always lay down after a ride. He said no, this was very unusual. Fred threw on his boots, grabbed his coat, and headed out the door to check on his much-loved horse. I was on his heels. He agreed with my observation that Stedda was colicking. I ran to grab my one extra blanket, a fleece cooler. Fred pulled Stedda to her feet and then went to get what he had on hand, a wool saddle blanket. Fred walked the wobbly horse up and down the driveway. I ran behind and picked up the blankets, both of which repeatedly slid off Stedda's broad back.

Fred handed me the horse and pulled out his cellphone; he called Lucy, Stedda's half-owner, Mariann, and their veterinarian. I listened in and at the same time did TTouches: ear slides, belly lifts, and zig zags. These TTouches had worked well when both Siggie and Raudi had digestive upsets. The consensus was that Fred should take Stedda to the veterinarian's clinic. My suggestion, that

we walk Stedda around the loop fell upon deaf ears. Instead, he loaded her into the trailer. The last thing he did before heading off was to hand me Bassi's lead. I suggested that he and Ethel should take him with them, but Fred feared that the gelding would be hurt if Stedda lay down. I considered putting him in the small pen adjacent to my larger paddock but backed off on this idea when I realized that I'd have to put Tinni in with Siggie. (I separate the pair at night. Tinni once bit Siggie and it took two years before the wound to heal. I didn't again want this to happen again.) I acted on the second-best option, which was to tie Bassi to our hitching post. I checked on my horses, returned to the cabin, and visited with our guests.

The Gentrys returned three hours later, telling us that the veterinarian was keeping Stedda at her clinic for the night. She said that the mare's energy reserves were down because she was nursing a seven-month-old foal. Stedda was dehydrated, and the vet was giving her intra-

venous fluids. She advised the Gentrys to wean the foal. Fred and Ethel were fairly sure that Stedda would be okay. They ate the remaining few slices of pizza, loaded up Bassi, and returned home.

LESSONS LEARNED

Human beings are the only animals who have the gift of hindsight. We can learn from our mistakes. Those of us who don't learn make the same mistakes over again. The goal should be to become more astute horse owners. This was why, over the next few days, I talked at length with Ethel about what had happened immediately before, during, and after our impromptu trail ride.

Ethel readily admitted that she and Fred got off to a late start because they'd had a hard time separating Stedda and Foli. We all agreed that right then, we should have acted on our second option, which was to go cross-country skiing. My observation, that doing some groundwork with the mare and foal would later save

on time and counter possible human and equine stress-related issues was well-received.

The three of us also concurred that pre-ride preparation and planning is an excellent idea. The bottom line is that Ethel and I were lucky. Nothing bad happened, although we were setting ourselves up for an accident. Tinni was stiff at the onset of the ride. Doing some body work on him prior to the ride would have been in his best interests. And my putting a saddle on him would have been in my best interests.

I repeatedly said that I wished we'd talked about our ride plans in advance of taking off. What remained unsaid was that the trail conditions were questionable; the day before I had gone out at dusk and punched through a soft patch of trail. Raudi went up to her chest in snow, and I was pitched over the top of her head onto the packed trail. And like then, the late afternoon snowmobilers would also be returning to the parking lot. There was a cutoff trail that led back to Loop Road. My thinking was that if the three of us had elected to ride this, we'd all have been back on the road before dark. Fred's departure forced me to explore other options. His argument might have been that he was an experienced rider and backcountry guide who knew what he was doing, that the trail was fine, his horse was used to snowmobiles, and he'd done more than his share of night riding. He also had a cellphone on hand. My counter-argument was that it's always best to err on the side of safety. It would have taken a while to get Fred and Stedda medical assistance had she gone down on the trail.

I didn't err on the side of safety on my side trip with Ethel. I rode a black horse and was wearing dark clothing. I own three reflective vests. I should have put one on and lent my other two to my friends. I hadn't planned on bringing a headlight along, I just happened to have one in my pocket. I'd also failed to let my husband, Pete, know where we were going, which is something I usually do.

Fred didn't warm up or cool down Stedda, which contributed to her distressed condition. I felt as though I did right by all the horses after the ride. I was hungry, cold, and tired when I got back, but I made it a priority to tend to Tinni.

To me, horse ownership doesn't have boundaries. This is why I offered to give Bassi and Stedda warm water. Eating snow contributes to dehydration because the body burns energy in its attempt to warm itself up.

There was considerable confusion as to what should be done with Stedda, some of which could have been avoided. Keeping one's cool when a horse is ill is difficult in the daylight, and even more so when the sun's gone down. Light or dark,

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it would have been in her best interests if Fred and I had taken a moment and talked about the situation. At the time, I was somewhat dubious about Fred's decision, which was to take Stedda directly to the clinic. This particular veterinarian had once told me that taking a colicky horse for a trailer ride is a good idea. My veterinarian agreed with me: mildly colicky, yes; extremely colicky, no. Stedda was unsteady on her feet, and on the trip to the clinic could have fallen down and hurt herself. If it were my horse, I'd have insisted that the veterinarian make a housecall. In the meantime, I'd have monitored her vital signs, taken her for a walk, given her a warm mash, and continued doing body work. However, Fred did do what at the time he thought was best

for his horse, based on his knowledge of such things.

Actually, Fred also did what he thought at the time was best for his other horse, by putting Bassi in my care. However, we should have talked about this beforehand. It was fortuitous that we had a hitching post, because I wasn't about to risk Bassi or my horses' safety by quartering them close together at night. Even so, Bassi's ability to stand tied up at night, in an unfamiliar place, was an unknown variable. It was another instance in which luck played us a good hand. He neighed repeatedly for Stedda and was agitated, but didn't attempt to break free. I gave him additional hay and water.

The Gentry's place is a half-hour's drive from mine, hence the lack of preparation. But I'm now convinced that even short trips require advance planning. If the group ride is at my place, I'll do some serious pre-ride planning. And if the ride is elsewhere, I'll also make sure to find out where we're going and how long we'll be out. Lastly, I intend to be very picky about who I choose to ride with. My horses and my own welfare mean too much to me to have it any other way.

A POSTSCRIPT

I recently attended the annual Solstice party at Bernie and Jeanette Willis's Arctic Arrow Farm. I always look forward to this event, because it is as a party should be. The Willises live on the edge of a lake. Some sleighride, some dogmush, some cross-country ski, and some hang out by the bonfire. This year, Fred and Ethel came with their horses. The pair rode out onto the lake, walking side-by-side, and then, after properly warming up their horses, tolled.

After a short bit, they again slowed to a walk, returned their horses to their trailer, blanketed them, and watered them. The two had obviously talked at length about what had happened at my place, and had decided it ought not happen again. And Fred talked at length with Bernie about it, going into great detail about how he'd erred. The question that repeatedly came to mind as I wrote the above article was, can people really learn from their mistakes? I'm glad for all involved to say that the answer is yes, most certainly. As I watched my two friends from the lakeshore, my faith in human nature was again restored.

TEACHERS & TRAINERS: WHO IS KATRIN SHEEHAN?

INTERVIEW BY ALEX PREGITZER

WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND?

I was born and raised in Germany, went to school there, and got a banking degree. I have lived in Budapest, Hungary, in different cities in Germany, in Iceland, and in the U.S. My parents were not into horses or farming, but supported me with my riding ambitions early on. After the age of 16, it became more or less my own responsibility, and their support became less until I had to manage everything on my own in my early 20s. I moved to the U.S. in January 2000 for work. I was managing a country club. I left the Icelandic horses I owned at the time in Germany and Iceland.

WHAT IS YOUR HORSE EXPERIENCE?

I've been riding since 1973. It all started with Shetland ponies during summer vacation, then volting and dressage lessons, and in 1980, through a friend, I started to ride Icelandic horses. Since 1981, I have been competing on Icelandic horses. I was German youth champion several times. In the early 90s, I started only riding pace races, and I got fairly addicted to it. I traveled to Iceland and helped for three summers on riding tours around Lake Myvatn and on the big Sprengisandur tour. These tours were very demanding: 23 days in and out of the saddle for up to 25 miles a day. Since 2007, I have had my own farm in Rutledge, Georgia. I breed, train, and sell Icelandic horses, and give riding lessons and clinics.

WHAT IS YOUR TRAINING PHILOSOPHY?

The first thing I do with any horse I am training is give him or her a thorough physical check, often with a vet, to make sure that the horse is sound and that there are no problems with training him or her. Then I start at the basics: I take every horse into the round pen first and ask the horse, "Who are you?" Usually within a couple of minutes, the horse shows me



Trainer Katrin Sheehan and a friend.

what his personality is, what condition he or she is in, and how much the horse has been trained. They already show which side of bending they prefer and how well they can flex their bodies. In the next step, I proceed to fit equipment to the horse and start riding, always keeping in mind what condition this horse is in, physically and mentally. Generally speaking, I teach each horse to be respectful and reactive on the ground, fast but

comfortable in reaction to leg, seat, and rein aids, and I try to make all training fun enough for the horse to be looking forward to the next training day.

Every horse is an individual. They all have different personalities and need different approaches in training at times. I like to have enough time to spend with each horse so as not to rush things or take short cuts in training. It won't pay off. Crash courses have never worked with

me either. I studied for a test, probably passed pretty well, but I have not retained that knowledge for long. The poems I had to learn in elementary school, on the other hand, I still know by heart.

WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY IN TEACHING?

I don't have a particular way of teaching, or maybe you could say I have an uncommon approach to all of my students. And it is a different one, usually, with each student. My first question usually is: What do you want to learn? What is your long-term goal? I always ask a lot of questions to try to fully understand what idea my students have and what their experience so far is, and what they think needs to be done to reach their goals.

After evaluating both their riding and their horses, we will start talking about the problems of the horse and what they want to achieve with this horse. Then we analyze the riding.

Together we'll set up a plan of what can be done in the time frame set for the lessons/clinic and how to possibly proceed after that. What is very important to me is horsemanship. I am extremely persistent in looking after the well being of each and every horse, and I try to give that knowledge to all my students. A horse that does not feel well, for whatever reason, cannot perform well without discomfort.

Every person is different, not only in their riding skills but also in their experience, in their ability to feel the movement of a horse, in their ability to move their own bodies, in their trust in their horse, in their stress level, in their capacity to listen, in their ability to use new knowledge and apply it to old patterns ... the list goes on. Often I find out later that things I said were understood slightly differently than I had tried to relay them. It works very well for me to show a lot of what I mean in person—which of course makes for a lot of funny moments during lessons. Also, I use a lot of analogies to explain my point. I take every student very seriously, and age has nothing to do with that. Young people especially have a very easy time learning. They are often like sponges when it comes to new information and experiences. That is the most fun, when teaching.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR ICELANDIC HORSES IN THE U.S.?

I hope that this breed will stay within its breeding standards and will quickly grow in numbers. We still have a lot of work to do in the Congress to accommodate thousands of new members. Especially the education system has to be solid and well-organized to be able to teach as many people as we can reach about good horsemanship, riding, and care of horses. This nation has the best of pretty much everything. There is no reason why we cannot be the largest participant of FEIF, breed the best horses, compete at the highest level, and have the happiest trail riders in the world. I am ready, are you?

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Above, Katrin picks up Snudur from quarantine in Maryland, happy to be going home, and looking forward to new adventures. Below, training at Creekside Farm in Georgia.



ELDUR'S STORY

BY CAROL ANDREW

I was waiting for a lesson at Solheimar Farm in Tunbridge, Vermont, and was watching Jason Brickner work a chestnut gelding in the indoor arena. He was a handsome horse, with beautiful gaits and a well-raised tolt. I noticed that Jason was riding him with a natural horsemanship halter. Although he had the bit in his mouth, there was no rein pressure being given to his mouth. This intrigued me, since the horse was moving so beautifully. I began to talk with Jason about the horse, and he told me an amazing story which I thought I would like to share. There are some important lessons in this story for all of us.

Eldur came from California to Solheimar in February 2008. He was one of 15 horses who had been sent as a group because the owner was having a difficult time feeding them and caring for them. He was still a stallion at six years old. He was found to have cryptorchidism (one undescended testicle) and was gelded soon after arriving in Vermont. He was halter trained, but had no other training. He was put on pasture after he healed from his surgery and had a free summer, playing with the other geldings on the farm. He was able to tolt well in the field. He had good gaits in free movement and cantered smoothly. He is a handsome chestnut color and grew well that summer on the readily available green grass. He appeared healthy at that time, and soon a trainer called who indicated that there was a client who might be interested in taking Eldur. He was sold very cheaply, as no training had been done with him at that point. Jason and Sigrun Brynjarsdottir, the owners of Solheimar Farm, did not hear anything about how he was doing for a year.

In May 2009, they received a call from Eldur's owner, who said that Eldur had been sent to two different trainers and both had indicated that he was not trainable. He was said to have a very large scar, almost like a "hole," at the junction of the neck and shoulder, which was interfering with his gaits. He was reported to have no forward mobility of



Jason Brickner and Eldur.

the right shoulder and this caused him to have a lurching quality to his movements. A veterinarian was asked to look at him in May 2009 and indicated that he was "unlikely to improve with time or training, considering that he has an old chronic injury." The owner was obviously upset and insisted on returning the horse to Solheimar Farm.

NOT TRAINABLE?

Jason and Sigrun took Eldur back and put him out on pasture for some vacation.

He cantered down into the field with the other young geldings and spent a couple of months on grass, resting and relaxing. There was no sign, in free movement, of his injury although it was possible to see the "hole," where there was apparently some scar tissue and adhesions. He was able to canter on either lead immediately and was able to tolt freely in the field. After a couple of months of adjustment time, Jason decided to see what the horse could do in training since he was able to move so well in the field.

Jason and Sigrun had been told that some training had been done while Eldur had been gone for a year, and so they started by working him a bit in hand and then a little later by putting a saddle on him. Eldur was extremely upset by the saddle. He acted scared out of his mind. So they decided to start him again from the beginning. It was evident that he had experienced something negative in the year he was gone, and they began by just building trust. Jason talked with him a lot, stroking, desensitizing, and building a relationship with him every day. He did a lot of ground work, teaching him voice commands, getting him to tolerate a variety of things on his back and worked slowly and carefully, building up his confidence and trust. Eventually Jason got to lunging him without a saddle and soon with a saddle, making sure he could move freely without any pain or restriction in a circle. He moved beautifully and evenly. Although his gaits seemed fairly smooth, Jason massaged him often, with particular emphasis on the right shoulder to try to release any adhesions which might interfere with good movement. Eldur was a quick learner and, as is the case with many Icelandic horses, really wanted to please once he gained trust in the person working with him.

Eldur turned out to be a very sensitive horse, but this sensitivity has worked well for training because he pays complete attention to the person on his back while ignoring things in the environment which might be distracting for other

horses. Jason talked about the first time he rode Eldur. "When I got up on his back, Eldur turned and looked up at me, as if to say, 'Okay, let's go.' He was very responsive and aware of the light cues that I gave." They were the same cues that Eldur had learned on the ground from Jason, a person he could trust. This gave Eldur confidence. It was a very windy day, and the door of the indoor arena was open. Suddenly a tarp blew across the floor. Eldur did not flinch at all, because he was paying so much attention to Jason.

Now Eldur is so delighted to be ridden that he comes to Jason whenever he arrives with halter in hand. He has learned shoulder-in, side passing, and turning on haunches, and has turned out to be a terrific trail horse. The first time he went on a trail ride, which included roads with vehicles and lots of new things to see, Eldur was calm and relaxed because he had faith that Jason would be in charge and take care of him. He walked calmly with his head down in a smooth ground-covering walk, only listening to Jason's cues.

Jason thinks that Eldur was anxious and sensitive, and that his nervousness caused him to act out and try to intimidate. Building a relationship with Eldur before asking anything else of him seemed to be key to his education (as is true for most people as well as for horses!).

SEE THE GOOD

There are a lot of lessons in this tale:

Injuries which are not taken care of promptly may result in some chronic con-



An injury made Eldur seem "untrainable." After months of rest, rehabilitation, and training, Jason tolt him down the snowy lane of Solheimar Farm, VT, last January. The happy ending? Eldur now "tolts all day." All photos by Sigrun Brynjarsdottir.

ditions which need special rehabilitation. Horses deserve prompt medical attention and the opportunity for that rehabilitation.

Icelandic horses are very intelligent and learn quickly what works to make them comfortable, even if it is negative behavior.

They seem to really count on a trusting relationship with their owner/rider in order to perform.

Beginners should not take an untrained horse and expect to ride it in a hurry without making a close relationship with the horse.

Beginners especially should not skimp on the training needed to make a safe and healthy relationship between

them and their horse.

A "cheap horse" will not be a good buy unless you are extremely experienced with this breed of horses and very patient with the training process.

Each horse has potential, which can be achieved with a calm, persistent, slow approach. Horses need someone to believe in them, to stick with them, and to give them what they need as individuals. Building muscle systematically through exercise, massaging to release adhesions, getting to know Eldur before making demands (some of which might have caused pain or discomfort in a sensitive horse), all came together to give this story a happy ending. Eldur canters on either lead symmetrically and will "tolt all day," Jason says, with good lift and suppleness. He has no apparent pain, and the "hole" in the muscle is filling in nicely.

Eldur is now a handsome seven-year-old horse with beautiful gaits and a willing temperament, after about nine months at Solheimar and about four months of training. He still will need to make a relationship with whoever ends up with him. As Jason says, "It is up to us—horse owners, riders, trainers—to see the good in every horse, to give them the chance. If they can't achieve, we need to look carefully at what we are doing. It is up to us to understand their needs, to keep them safe, and to build their trust."



BASIC POINTS OF SADDLE FIT

BY EILEEN GUNIPERO WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRIS ROMANO

So often I feel almost desperate to be able to do something that doesn't require a manual, a continuing ed class, a teaching video, or anything other than basic common sense. Alas, just like my cell phone, camera, and even my GPS, saddle fitting is not one of those things.

I sometimes cringe when I introduce myself as a "saddle fitter." It seems a bit pretentious. I don't feel especially enlightened or more able to see the mysteries of angle alignment, panel balance, or any of the other various and sundry points of saddle fit than the next guy. But, I guess, the difference is that at some point I got geeky about the process and "read the manual" from cover to cover, and I continue to search out new thoughts and ideas about the elusive perfect fit. Maybe some people are meant to be able to program my newly acquired remote weather station with digital readout and some people are meant to be able to see if a saddle fits.

I think the most daunting part of assessing a fit is the responsibility to the horse. Every one of us who cares enough to look at the compatibility between equine and tack is doing it because we care about the comfort and health of the wearer. Without a voice, the horse relies on us for its comfort and well being. It is as important as it is intimidating.

While many voluminous books have been written on the subject of saddle fit, it makes sense to consolidate the subject to a few key points in this article. Any of these points can be dealt with in greater detail, and I encourage the reader to do research on any aspect of interest or to better answer any questions not adequately addressed here.

Again, in consideration of space for this article, I will assume that the horse has been assessed and found to be healthy and without major physical issues. Also, it is assumed that the saddle has been evalu-



Bridging - no contact in the center causing pressure points

ated and found to be sound, balanced, and suitable to the discipline for which it is intended. Both issues are subjects for additional articles.

1. POSITION

The first step is to get the saddle in the correct position. Checking that the horse is standing square, place the saddle somewhat forward of the withers. Put one hand on the seat of the saddle and the other on the pommel. Slide the saddle back towards the rump until you can feel it "seat." Do this several times to insure that where it stops is the same place each time. If the saddle doesn't seat, but rather slides continuously over the rump, you know right away that this saddle doesn't correctly fit your horse. If you can't get the saddle back far enough to allow enough room between the edge of the scapula (shoulder blade) and the points of the tree (the finger-like extensions that form the pommel) to allow movement without interference, again, the saddle doesn't fit. If you are feeling particularly brave, and have an assistant to help catch the saddle should it slip, you might place the saddle on your horse—ungirthed—and walk her around a bit. Should the saddle not natu-

rally settle into place, but rather slips or shifts, it probably does not fit. Ideally, the girth should act to stabilize the saddle, not tie it on!

2. POINTS OF THE TREE

The second step is to look at the relationship between the angle of the points of tree and your horse. The points are on either side of the pommel, often housed in leather pockets just ahead of the stirrup bars. They should lie parallel to the withers. Check both sides. One shoulder is usually a bit larger than the other. The deviation from the slope should not vary more than 10 degrees or about half an inch. You can physically assess fit by placing your hand, palm up, between the saddle and horse. Run it from top to bottom under the points, checking for consistent, pinchless pressure.

3. PANEL PRESSURE

You can then slide into the third step and begin to feel panel pressure by moving your hand from front to back under the length of panel (the wool or foam stuffed "pads" on the underside of the saddle). The entire length of the panel should contact the horse's back, allowing for optimal weight distribution of the rider. A gap in contact in the center of the saddle is referred to as bridging, which forces the rider's weight to be placed on four distinct—and painful—areas on the horse's back. If the bridging is caused by a need for additional flocking, this is easily remedied. If the bridging is a result of a tree that is too narrow, the saddle clearly does not fit. Narrow tree points will cause the saddle to sit too high and will pinch the trapezius muscles. Tree points that are too wide will cause the saddle to sit too far down on the horse and may pitch the rider forward. It can cause the pommel to sit on the withers. Check for "rocking." Put a hand on the pommel and a hand on the cantle. Alternate pushing down on

each to see if the saddle shifts excessively. An incorrect tree size could be the culprit, but so can uneven flocking or panels with an unsuitable shape.

4. LENGTH

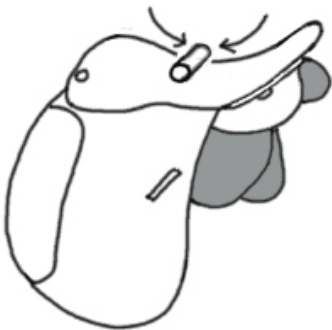
Check the length of the saddle as the fourth step. The panels should not extend past the last rib, or the eighteenth thoracic. Past the last rib there is no solid structural support, only muscle and soft tissue. Icelandic horses vary greatly in the actual length of back. Palpate to feel for the last rib, and then follow the curve up to where it connects with the spine. Some horses are surprisingly short-coupled.

5. POMMEL TO CANTLE

For the fifth step, observe the pommel-cantle relationship. Looking at the profile of the saddle, the cantle should rise higher than the pommel; the difference should be somewhere between one and two inches, depending on the depth of the seat and the model of the saddle. In any case, if the cantle is even with, or lower than the pommel, the fit is incorrect.

6. LEVEL SEAT

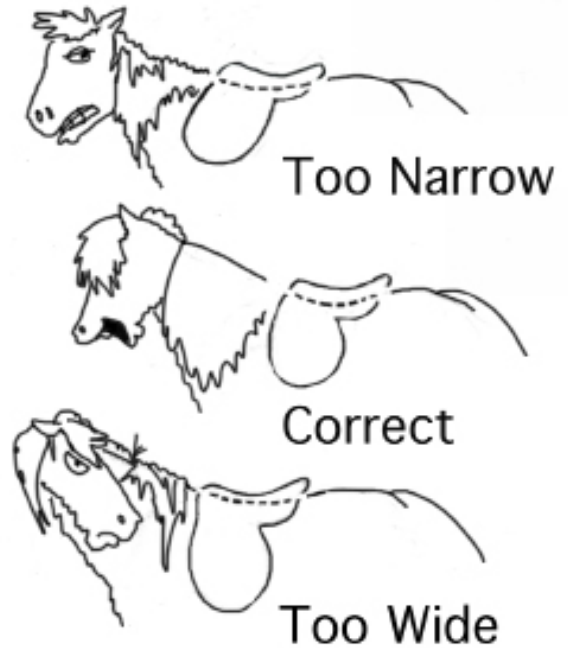
Checking the levelness of the seat is step six. The goal is to have the deepest part of the seat in the middle of the saddle and parallel to the ground. It's handy to use something like a chapstick or some other small cylinder and place it on the saddle so that it can roll from pommel to cantle. Where it settles makes the lowest part of the saddle very easy to see. If the deepest part of the saddle is too far forward or too much in the back, it will profoundly effect the balance of the rider and effect the saddle fit as well.



Step 6 - Finding the Balance Point

7. POMMEL CLEARANCE

Observe the pommel clearance as step seven. It's practically gospel that the clearance needs to be three fingers between the pommel and withers. Not only has the industry shifted its collective opinion of this mantra, but with the Icelandic breed it often makes no sense. The design of the saddle and the panel angles influence the clearance. If there is adequate clearance with the rider mounted, then there is adequate clearance. The gullet channel should never come in contact with the spine or the soft tissues that lie on either side of it—a width of approximately 2.5 to 3 inches (and in some cases even greater).



8. CANTLE CLEARANCE

Note also the clearance at the cantle, which will be step eight. Make sure that with the rider mounted the saddle has enough structural integrity to support the rider's weight throughout.

9. LATERAL STABILITY

Step nine is to check lateral stability. The saddle should not shift excessively from side to side. Remember that if the shifting only occurs with the rider up, it may be a function of the rider's symmetry and not the saddle. If the saddle shifts without the rider, you may need a qualified fitter to help you assess the problem.

10. THE HORSE'S RESPONSE

While the horse's response is often listed as step ten, it should be monitored consistently throughout all the steps. Watch your horse's body language. Does she try to avoid the saddle? Does he get antsy when girthed? Do you notice a distinct change in movement from liberty to being saddled? Many Icelandic horses tend to be a bit more stoic, and so your detective work has to be that much more keen. Relax, breathe, and trust your instincts. This really is not rocket science and is not meant to cause anxiety. It is a skill set most horse people can master at the basic level. Get a piece of paper and make an outline of the ten steps to take with you to the barn. Make notes alongside each step. You can do all ten steps at once or you can break it up into a couple of sessions. I strongly recommend going through

the entire process more than once. And always remember to check both sides! Horses have physical anomalies and asymmetrical development just as we do.

Keep your notes and check your saddle fit every six months or so. Horses change with muscle development or loss, weight fluctuations, and seasons. Saddles are dynamic as well. Leather wears out, stitching weakens, and flocking compresses. By monitoring saddle fit you take a proactive role in protecting the health of your horse and the quality of your riding experience. It's another tool in your good horsemanship toolbox!

ALL WHOA, NO GO?

BY KATHY SIERRA WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRIS ROMANO



In the U.S., we have a problem not often seen in Iceland: the horse with not enough “go.” I’ve heard much speculation as to why, including: “They export those horses” (usually said with a smile). Others explain that the way young horses are brought up in Iceland, in large herds, makes them goey. Or that the landscape in Iceland permits long, expansive open rides that inspire forward motion in any kind of horse. Or that Icelandic riders simply never ride without forward energy. The incorrect application of “natural horsemanship” and/or dressage techniques, they suggest, gives a horse too much practice in non-forward movements.

Whatever the reason, a lot of what I call “non-forward” Icelandic horses have ended up in the U.S. In our Northern California club, at least 30% of the horses are less than forward. We all need help! Solving this problem has become crucial for me since we moved to a horse property with only a dressage arena. We do have hills and some trails that we make heavy use of, but in the rainy season those opportunities go away. Previously I was at a barn with multiple huge arenas and trails. Now, I have the use of a small dressage court. For the non-forward horse, I’ve found, problems are inversely proportional to the size of the arena!

FORWARD OR NOT?

“Icelandic horses don’t like the arena the way other breeds do.” Only after I had heard this generalization did it make sense to me why some of the big Icelandic-horse barns, including Arnold Faber’s in Canada and Gudmar Petursson’s in Kentucky, had arenas in disarray. They were overgrown with weeds—the opposite of the superbly-groomed, fancy-footing dressage arenas I see out here in California. Both Arnold and Gudmar are fortunate to have plenty of other places to work. And even Steinar Sigurbjornsson in California, despite having an amazing arena, tries as much as possible to work his horses “out.”

But when I talk about a non-forward Icelandic horse, I’m not referring to the breed’s general dislike of arena work. I have both types of Icelandic horses—forward and non-forward. The difference between these horses on the trail or on the beach is rarely noticeable. The difference when you step into an arena is drastic, regardless of who is riding and what they are doing.

Forward horses appreciate moving for the sake of moving. Training them in an arena is more a matter of channeling that energy properly and in interesting ways. A skilled, creative rider can do productive arena work despite the horse’s low tolerance for boredom, desire to be out, and strongly-held opinions about what is and is not fun.

The non-forward Icelandic horse changes the equation completely. He would prefer not to move unless there is a really compelling reason. It’s not that he doesn’t enjoy movement. But he puts qualifiers on when he’ll bother to bring up the energy. Forward thinking and moving are not his default—even in the pasture. He’ll conserve his energy for something that’s “worth it.”

It’s pretty amazing to see these horses when they do get fired up. Once the switch is thrown, it suddenly hits them: “Wow! This is awesome!” Then they act

like all the other Icelandic horses. But trying to get them to remember how much they love movement is a challenge, and the environment matters deeply. At the beach on a crisp day, with the horizon stretched way out in front? No problem. In a group with a couple of energetic horses acting competitive? Usually not a problem. Alone in an arena? It’s like they’ve been given a sedative. Not that you can’t bring them to life, but motivation becomes by far the most significant part of the session.

WHY RIDE AT ALL?

When I mentioned this problem to the Quarterly committee, Anne Elwell commented: “Being forward is something I see as an Icelandic breed characteristic, and I am having difficulty envisioning an Icelandic ‘that would prefer not to move unless there is a really compelling reason.’ This is leading me to another question (one that I suspect is going to get me into trouble): Why would one want to ride an Icelandic horse that doesn’t love to move? Isn’t the rider’s and horse’s shared joy in movement what riding Icelandics is all about?”

That is an excellent question! In our Northern California group, there are many reasons. If you’re a timid beginner, or frightened from a prior catastrophe, this kind of horse can make you feel safe.



That “surge” we all eventually want can be extremely intimidating, especially if you’ve come to associate that feeling (from some other non-Icelandic horse) with dangerous, mindless bolts.

Or, you may not have a choice about what kind of horse you ride. This is the horse you have, for whatever reason.

It may be that your horse was not always like this. Quarterly committee member Andrea Brodie noted, “As these horses think a lot, they can also be killed in spirit. At first they will offer all: They are curious, excited, and willing. If this is promoted and gently but firmly directed, then you get the perfect trail horse. He will happily carry you wherever you go. He will have fun and will provide you with fun. If the horse is constantly told to slow down, to walk, never or rarely gets to run and be a free spirit (yes, that is possible under saddle, too), he will get dull. He may even give up and just do his thing, hoping to get back to the pasture as soon as possible. He loses his spirit. It is almost impossible to rehabilitate a ‘goey’ horse whose spirit was killed by making it slow.”

Other circumstances in his life or care or health can have the same effect. He has forgotten that it feels good to move. The injury has healed, the condition no longer applies, but the horse has not rediscovered his previous desire to go. This was the case for one of my own horses, an Oddur fra Selfossi son who had been bred for speed and forwardness. It took seven months with Steinar doing some pretty extraordinary rehab to light his fire again.

I completely agree with Anne’s beautiful statement about the “shared joy in movement.” Fortunately, most of the non-forward Icelandics I know do spring to life once they are outside the arena. Try two 20-meter circles and a few feet of shoulder-in and you get bucks and refusals. The more obedient ones will do what you ask, but they’re phoning it in with no useful energy. Yet five minutes later, you’re out on the trail, and the horse suddenly becomes more upright, ears forward, and you get the most lovely energetic fast and balanced tolt and that swinging walk that makes you realize this horse does, in fact, have hind legs.

I love my horses dearly. So I’m committed to finding ways to motivate them to be the most athletic, supple, vibrant

creatures they can be. But working in a confined space—the place where the classical / training scale exercises are more easily done—is a challenge.

THREE AREAS

If I had not seen a skilled trainer make a major change in a non-forward horse, I’d not have believed anything could be done. It requires a big effort in which three areas are addressed. Working on only one or two often fails. They are:

- the horse’s physical fitness,
- his mental fitness, and
- his emotional “spirit.”

I’ve been in two clinics that specifically addressed the non-forward horse: one with Eyjolfur (Jolli) Isolfsson, the head riding teacher at Holar University in Iceland, and the other with Mette Manseth, also of Holar. But working with Steinar Sigurbjornsson of Valhalla Icelandic Horses in Lake View Terrace, California, has been the biggest eye-opener.

It’s partly a behavior problem—a question of hierarchy. But there is a subtle line between “I don’t like this, so I won’t do it” and “I don’t like this and I can’t find the energy.” There’s also some cause and effect. Some of the behavior problems are caused by the horse’s lack of forwardness (which in turn could be at least partly due to still other factors, from poor posture to a subtle stifle problem).

But it’s more complex than simply a training or respect issue. My horse, Draumur, was raised and trained by one of the most competent and experienced Icelandic trainers in the U.S.: Gudmar Petursson. He was under the care of a second Icelandic trainer, and then a third: Steinar Sigurbjornsson. Draumur bucked and kicked out—at least a tiny bit—even with them. They did not consider him dangerous or severely disrespectful, though certainly he was a horse with strong opinions. They did not say, “This horse must be trained to never buck.” They said, “This horse must not be allowed to learn that bucking works.” Most importantly, they said, “This horse must be trained in such a way that it just isn’t likely to happen.” It was not so much, “Only ride him where he’s happy,” but “Only ride him where he’s happy and gradually enlarge the set of circumstances where he does feel happy.”

Jolli Isolfsson once said that when



people come to him and say, “I have this big problem when I ride my horse on the trail,” his first response is always, “Then don’t ride him on the trail.” Find something that does work, and then progress from there.

We had a three-day clinic with Jolli, with several non-forward horses. Jolli said many of them could be “reignited.” But they would never be the kind of horse to bring into high-level competition, regardless of their physical ability, unless you could provide the right environment for it during training. Like Gudmar and Steinar, Jolli agreed that this was not simply a respect issue—though he wished it were. He said he had a pace racer in Iceland that he eventually resorted to training with buckets of grain at the end of the track: Within a couple of months he was winning competitions.

Steinar is of the same mind. While the behavior issue must be addressed, he believes lack of forwardness should also be viewed as a symptom of something more, especially in a horse that is otherwise not so disrespectful of the rider’s leadership. You need to recognize that the horse is making a serious statement.

With regard to one of my non-forward horses, I was curious how Gudmar had managed to ever train him. One of the girls working at Gudmar’s at the time finally told me, as if it were the most obvious thing in the world, “He almost always worked him with at least one other horse and rider.” And, apparently, almost always outside the arena. He simply found a way to set the horse up for success by borrowing forward energy external to



the horse—either from another horse or from a more expansive, stimulating environment.

IN THE ARENA

As for finding stimulation in the arena, that has been our biggest project of the last several months! Here are some suggestions from Steinar (incorporating things from Jolli and Mette Manseth of Holar as well):

- Keep sessions short. Always stop before he's even tired. (Jolli's words were, "Wet a bit behind the ears, but no more.")
- Do two short sessions a day, rather than one longer one.
- Have zero-tolerance for pokiness. Take no leisurely walks with these horses, ever. If you must go slowly, then get off. Every step in walk should be power walk.
- Find alternate ways to build fitness and strength (since you don't have the duration). Do quick sessions using ground poles or cavalletti. If you have access to a hill, put a bucket of grain at the top and one at the bottom. Anything to get them thinking that moving is good—and their own idea—rather than associating it with the human nagging, prodding, or forcing (which you are usually doing).
- Do tons of super-fast, creative transitions with very little rein contact. Go this way, that way, speed up but then instantly slow down. Stop, back a step, go go go. Turn, turn faster, turn again. Have no concern for quality of gait until after you get the energy. All that matters is that they move.

- Always put obstacles in the arena, and keep rearranging them each day: poles on the ground, cones, big plastic jump holders, even tarps. Things the horse must pay attention. Sometimes—randomly—head him right toward it and either go over it or turn at the last second. He is simply never allowed to zone out. He doesn't have to be energetic, but he does have to pay attention and be alert. Often the energy starts to come up as a side-effect.
- Never kick. Ever. Don't even squeeze. Use the whip, use your voice. Use whatever you have, but not your legs until after this energy problem is fixed.
- Allow nothing but passive contact on the bit until you get the hind legs swinging and energy coming from behind. Even when you do get that energy, the window for doing more collected or concentrated frame and lateral work is quite short. (Though it does get longer over time.)
- Under the right circumstances, use treats. Especially use them after the horse has gone really fast. A treat after getting his energy up (even if it wasn't pleasant to get it there at first) helps amplify the excitement. The treat by itself does nothing for his energy. Moving quickly does something. The combination of moving quickly plus a treat can be very stimulating.
- Do super-fast super-crazy in-hand work: With halter and lead rope, the human runs around like a maniac, expecting the horse to follow. Make rapid, unexpected changes of direction. Look out, there's a jump! Careen around barrels, etc. Even if it's just for a couple of bursts of five minutes and that's it. Think fun and exciting, not pressure.
- Never, under any circumstances, end a session not on a high-energy note. If you walk the horse, be sure he walks fast, and at the end, either make him come to a screeching halt or just spin his hindquarters away fast and then halter off, done. Every moment with the horse is moving moving moving.

Obviously you can't do these things forever. But the idea is to find ways to stimulate the horse in hopes that he will eventually begin to think forward on his own out of habit (and fitness). Jolli thinks it takes six to eight weeks if nothing else is physically wrong with the horse. Steinar says it can take six months to a year if you're really rebuilding a horse from the ground up, body, mind, and spirit.

For the first three months of Draumur's rehab, Steinar did not even ride him. Attempts to lunge him in a round pen, etc., were disasters. He ponied him with the fastest horses he had. He ran with him in hand. He had him free-jumping.

Steinar's advice—which does seem to be helping quite a lot—was less about acting like a firm leader (although that was crucial), and more about being lively all the time you're with the horse. He does not even allow me to just stand there holding the horse on a lead rope for more than a few seconds. If the horse starts to look around or just get bored, I am to do something—anything. Jumping jacks. Run ten steps and stop. Spin him around. Anything. Steinar does not have me do this with our two more-forward horses, which often can benefit from "just standing here doing nothing." We can basically hang out all day with those horses, but with the non-forward horse, everything is short, sweet, exciting, fast, fun, and then over. Like a theme park ride.

Wow—it's making me tired just writing this! I can see why someone who never has to deal with it would never want to. But when you love these horses, it can truly be an interesting challenge. And seeing a horse whose spark has been extinguished come to life again brings tears to your eyes. The first time, running in hand, that Draumur shook his head, reared up a bit, bucked, and put up a little nano-argument was the happiest day of my life with him. He was rediscovering what it feels like to be a horse.



LANDSMÓT 2010

BY THÓRUNN KRISTJÁNSDÓTTIR WITH PHOTOS BY MARTINA GATES



The four-gait winners take a victory lap at the 2008 Landsmót. The competition is the premier Icelandic horse show in the home country.

The countdown to one of the biggest (if not the biggest) Icelandic horse events in the world began a year and a half ago. At the time of this writing, there are only about 150 days left until—drum role, please—Landsmót! In many people's opinion, the Landsmót National Horse Show may even be considered larger than the Icelandic Horse World Cup, because this event has been held 19 times in Iceland since 1950, and it is held in the homeland of our beloved Icelandic Horse. This year, Landsmót celebrates its 60th birthday.

As the press release from Landsmót states, "The Landsmót National Horse Show in Iceland is a festival. There riders, breeders, horse owners, and horse lovers from all over the world gather together in anticipation and joy. Landsmót brings together different groups of people, regardless of age, nationality, class, and rank. Everyone has the same goal: to have

a good time, enjoy the show, and see the Icelandic horse in all of its glory."

Landsmót will be held in the north of Iceland in 2010, at Vindheimamelar in Skagafjörður. It will start on June 27 and it will run for one glorious week, until July 4. The best horses, riders, and breeders in Iceland are to be found at Landsmót, and this event is therefore considered the highlight of Icelandic horsemanship in Iceland. It is no wonder then, that all Landsmót-lovers around the world count the days till the next Landsmót begins. At the commencement of each Landsmót, the speakers even ask the audience to not get too melancholy, because there are only X number of days till the next one. And if anyone is wondering how many days till the next Landsmót, all one has to do is go onto the official website at www.landsmot.is and there one will immediately find the countdown meter.

THE FIRST LANDSMÓT

The first Landsmót was held at Thingvellir in 1950. A total of 133 horses were shown and judged by a few well-known and respected riders. Breeding horses were evaluated, while the racers and *gædingar* competed. At that time, *gædingar* only competed in one *gædinga*-class, the five-gait class, and this was in addition to racing, and breed evaluations.

The attendees of the 1950 Landsmót traveled from all corners of Iceland. Today Icelandic horse enthusiasts travel from all corners of the world to get to this event. Just a minor change, right? In 1950 many of the attendees rode there on horseback, bringing with them their tents, food, and sleeping bags. Today the attendees fly, drive, and ride on horses to get there. Some still bring their tents, others bring their top-of-the-line RV's, while others stay in hotels, or in homes close by. Regardless of how they got there or where

they are staying, they are all filled with anticipation, excitement, joy, and sheer love for this amazing and one-of-a-kind horse.

CHANGES NEW AND OLD

From 1950 until 2000, Landsmót was held every four years. With the 2000 Landsmót, which was held in Reykjavík, the four-year tradition changed, and Landsmót became a biennial event, being held every other year. (I am sure that this helped those Landsmót-lovers who couldn't wait four years between shows!) As a result, we now have a Landsmót during the even years, and a World Cup during the odd years. This will be the sixth biennial Landsmót.

Quite a number of other changes have been made since the first Landsmót in 1950. At the first one, the track was simply a rough field, where the track was portioned off with rope. In the 1980's the oval track was introduced. Now these tracks are some of the best in the world! As are the facilities for both horses and riders, as well as the audience. Thousands of people descend on every Landsmót, and to accommodate everyone, villages are erected for this event. In these "Landsmót villages" one can find anything and everything, ranging from a loaded SS pulsa (Icelandic hot dogs are notorious) with a coke and Prins Polo; to a wool sweater and socks; to saddles, boots, and bits; and even to horses that are for sale, depending on where you go and who you talk to. That's right, you can find it all!



Above, The famous stallion Eldjárn frá Tjaldhólum at the 2008 Landsmót. Below, the five-gait winners award ceremony.

One of the recent changes to be made was extending Landsmót. This year, the event will start on Sunday, on the aptly named "Youth Day." The Sunday activities will consist of a rider's meeting, kids and teen preliminary competitions, and entertainment for everyone.

THE EXCITEMENT

With Landsmót being only a few short weeks away, preparations are in full swing at Vindheimamelar. They are expecting up to 15,000 people this year. The Icelandic horse community in Iceland has been a-buzz all winter, getting ready for this spring. You see, during the final winter weeks into the days of spring, and until the final days before Landsmót, that's when some of the horses and riders compete to ascertain their position, and right, to show and compete at Landsmót. But at this great Icelandic horse show, one will see the absolute best: horses, riders, and breeders. If you are an Icelandic horse lover and enthusiast, you must go to at least one Landsmót in your lifetime, preferably more. If you are an Icelandic horse breeder, you must go. Because at Landsmót, you see the stars of today, and the future superstars of tomorrow. At Landsmót, dreams come true.

See you at the top of the world, at Vindheimamelar, in June.



BOOK REVIEW

BY BERNIE WILLIS

Tug of War: Classical versus “Modern” Dressage by Dr. Gerd Heuschmann. ISBN 978-1-57076-375-5



This is the first in a series of book reviews for the *Icelandic Horse Quarterly* prepared by members of the Quarterly and Education Committees. This review will cover the book mentioned above, the companion video, *If Horses Could Speak*, an interview with the author, and some personal observations.

I was introduced to the book by my riding mentor Bill Burke, a three-day event competitor, horse judge, and owner of Berkshire Equestrian Arts in Gaston, Oregon.

Dr. Heuschmann's objective in *Tug of War* is to guide riders to develop their horses in a way that is healthy over the potential life span of the horse. As a practicing veterinarian and experienced rider, he has seen too many trainer-induced injuries to ignore. He is on a mission to reverse the trend of performance for immediate reward. He accomplishes this by providing elaborate and easy-to-understand illustrations of the anatomy, bone

structure, and muscles of the horse, and how they work together with the action of a rider. He condemns the use of techniques that give immediate results at the long-term expense of soundness. He acknowledges that in the world of dressage, many riders do what judges reward, which ultimately makes the judges responsible for some unhealthy techniques.

The 130-page book draws your attention to the importance of the spinal structure of a horse. From the base of the skull to the end of the tail is a series of bones and muscles that were not designed to carry a rider, but that can be strengthened to do so. Since we don't listen well to what horses are saying, we often demand they do things that actually hurt them. The expert observer can see the result in the action of the neck, back, croup, tail, and legs. You may be able to see it too, as a result of reading this book and watching the companion video. The bibliography and recommended websites are a wealth of fascinating information.

The book is more than a condemnation of negative training. Heuschmann also offers training techniques that positively affect the horse. As an auditor of his recent clinic in Battle Ground, Washington, I saw his skills in practice. The clinic format was new to me. We auditors sat in stands at one end of an indoor arena. Each riding participant entered the arena at their scheduled time and introduced their horse and proceeded to ride it for about 10 minutes, demonstrating its abilities in forward and lateral movements. Heuschmann watched intently and then asked if he could ride. Some of the owners were experienced dressage riders, others were riding instructors, and a very few were ordinary horse owners. The cost was \$275 for an hour session. The breeds were varied from a mustang and Halflinger to thoroughbreds and Friesians. When Heuschmann mounted each horse, it was

as if the horse had found a friend. His seat and contact were so light as to make one wonder how the horse knew what he wanted. Most of his work was done on a 40-foot diameter trail of sawdust spread near our observing stand. He explained what he was doing and why, then before our eyes we could see the horse's hollow back come up, its hind legs reach further forward, and the neck bend nicely at the poll. An oft-repeated phrase was, "Don't ask the horse for something, but take what he gives." Heuschmann's real ability was shown when the owner mounted the horse and, instructed by Heuschmann, could demonstrate what he had shown.

The German dressage scale—Rhythm, Looseness, Contact, Impulsion, Straightness, and Collection—was referred to often. There was special emphasis on rhythm and looseness as prerequisites to the following elements. During several of the breaks, Dr. Heuschmann and I discussed the Icelandic horse and the need for some level of tension in the back for the lateral movements involved in tolt and flying pace. It is his current opinion that the Icelandic horse benefits from the same looseness others horses do, but that it can learn to adjust the level of tension as necessary for the desired gait. Further for the benefit of the horse, its whole range of gaits need to be used, especially stretching forward and down for relief from the tension of the lateral gaits. He is interested in learning more about the uniqueness of Icelandic horses and will be working with Thomas Haag, the author of the popular Icelandic training book *Dream Team*, in Switzerland in January 2010. He provided contact information so I can learn the results of this winter project and share them at a later time.

AN AMERICAN AT HÓLAR

BY LAURA BENSON

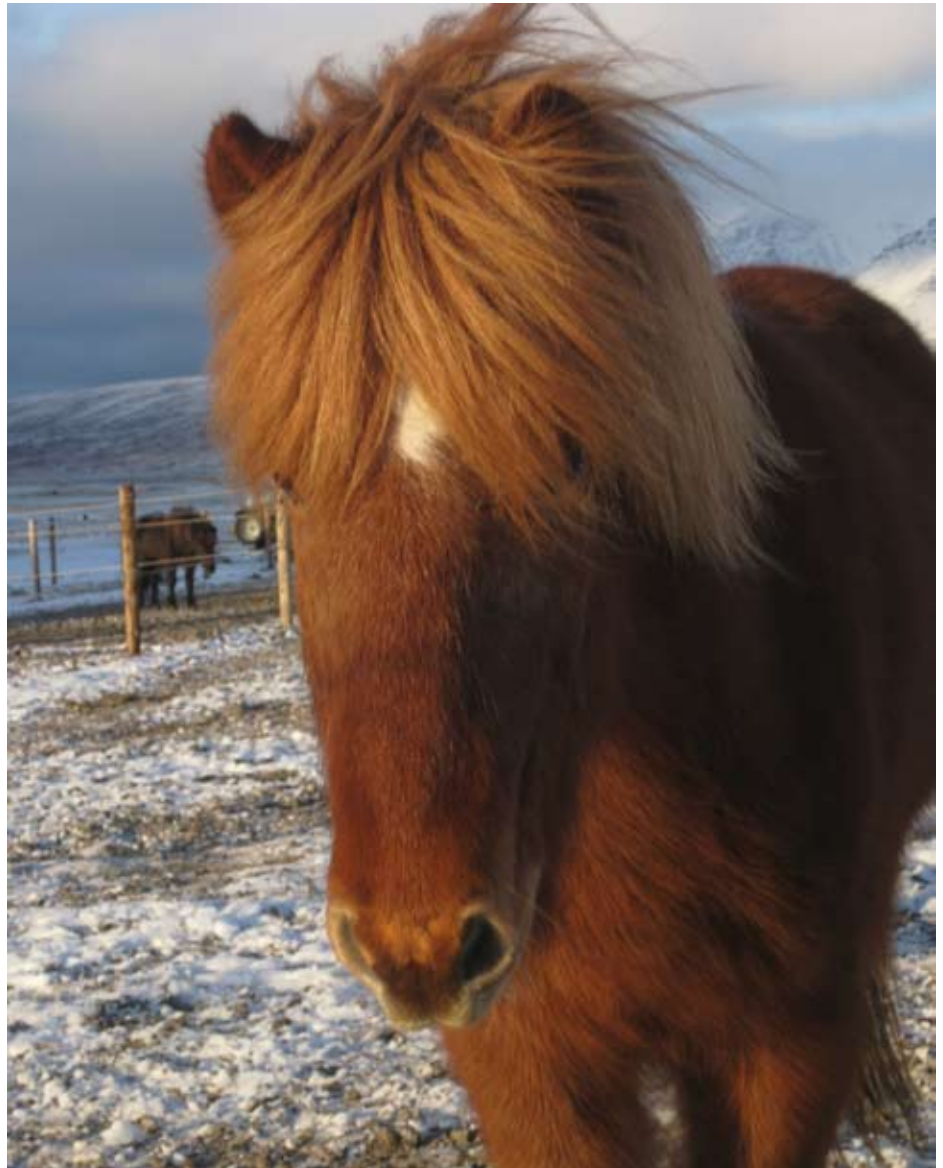
Editor's note: Laura Benson, the first American to take the two-year sequence of classes in Equine Science at Hólar University College in Iceland, has returned for a third year of study. For those USIHC members who have always wondered what they teach at Hólar, check out Laura's blog at <http://valkyriechronicles.wordpress.com/>. Here are excerpts from one of her first posts:

Both of my horses came off the trailer wide-eyed and excited. They have both been here before, Stjarni with Linda throughout her first year at Hólar and Rimma as a pace teacher for third year students last winter. I got them situated in their stalls, gave them treats and kisses, and went back home to bake a pizza.

Today was the first day I felt like I was moving towards normality or some sort of purpose. Isó picked me and all my tack up (two giant boxes) and drove me down to the stable. I got the key to my tack locker and began to assemble my saddle, bridles, and all that fun stuff. Got my locker organised, and then it was time to ride. Finally.

SOMETHING AWESOME

It was a beautiful day outside, probably about 40 degrees and no wind. I took Stjarni first. We went into the small riding hall at the end of the stable and did some nice warm-ups. Long rein stretches in walk and trot. Switching between left and right shoulder-in, tölt transitions on a circle, and some back-ups. He was so relaxed, I think he knows he is back at Hólar and he likes the routine. We very quickly went out for a ride into Hjal-tadalur (that is the name of the valley where Hólar is). He was so excited. Ears forward, shoulders raised, we flew down the valley in tölt. He was so happy and forward. He is such a giant ball of energy, I just adore him. I didn't ride too deep into the valley, as I have to be careful not to tire him out before school starts. We walked on a completely loose rein the last yards back to the stable.



Stjarni frá Blönduósi, Laura's four-gaited gelding. All photos by Laura Benson.

Then it was Rimma's turn. When I got her out of the stall, she still was big-eyed and impatient. I think all she thinks about at Hólar is pace: fine with me! I gave her a good brushing and took her into the little riding hall. I started her out in-hand, letting her walk in circles around me, moving the shoulders out, stopping, and changing direction, until her neck began to lower and she began to focus on me a little bit.

I got on her and let her kiss the stirrups. She stood very still and was more patient than I expected, but very perplexed that I didn't have a treat. (Oops!) Rimma is a very funny mare so far. She has a lot of character. She isn't unhappy or angry, but she likes to really let you know how she is feeling. She will swish her tail or shake her head at you sometimes when you ask her to do something, as if to say, "Yes, fine I will do that, but I just want you to know

you are really putting me out.” I like her personality a lot. I think she would be a great horse to work with at liberty.

We started out with circles. Spiraling small and then big again by using samverkandi taumar or neck reining, getting her to move from the pressure on the outside rein, as opposed to “dragging” her with the inside rein. This helped supple up her body and get her to relax a bit. I really like the fact that she stops the same as my horse Hólmi does. When you hum to her, she immediately comes to a halt. It’s really nice. We did some shoulder-in and then did tölt-walk transitions on the circle.

Once she was warmed up, we worked on her trot, stretching from contact all the way down to the ground, first on the left rein, then on the right and then figure eights. She only tensed into tölt twice, but I was able to quickly get her back into trot and she soon began to enjoy the exercise. I ended with some very short speed changes in tölt to lighten her a bit on the forehand. She did very well. She was pretty tuckered out, and I had to get going to the grocery store so I didn’t ride her out today. Tomorrow, however, we are going for a nice ride outside! It was really nice to ride her again, it will be fun to work with a mare.

After I turned both Rimma and Stjarni out and did my barn chores, I went to the grocery store, came back to my apartment, unpacked the food, and then



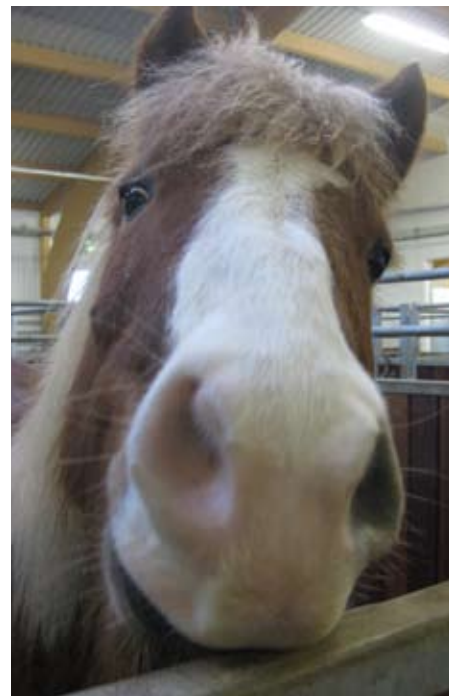
Deep winter at Holar University College, in the mountains of Skagafjord, Iceland, is the time to train horses.

walked back down to the stables because I promised Isó I would bathe his stallion for him. It was 7 p.m. and pitch black, but still considerably warm and no wind. The stars are amazing in this valley, the sky is so big. It was a beautiful walk, and I had a smile on my face the whole time. I won’t always have good weather here, I won’t always have easy-going days and good rides on my horses, but today was a good day, and one step closer to being a part of something awesome.

VERY SERIOUS, VERY FAST

The first week went off fairly smoothly, mostly introductions to all our classes. The overall gist was that things would start off casual and proceed to get very serious, very fast. In other words, they put the fear of God into us from Day One!

As far as the riding goes, we will be having a dressage test on both of our horses after six weeks. Wow! We will be participating in a competition at Saudárkrókur in the spring, and then our final test will be in May, which is a gædingafimi test. This test is performed on an open track (using the center as well) and is a combination of dressage exercises and performance of all the gaits (including pace) on the oval or straight track. We have a list of movements we must perform, but we can tailor the program ourselves. This will be the hardest test, as you must receive a score of 5.0 or more on every exercise. If you fail to show a single gait (if



Nett frá Halldórsstöðum, an extra mare in training.

your horse refuses to pace, for example) you do not pass. Yes, it will be difficult, but I think it is going to be so much fun!

ONLY JUST BEGUN

Week Three is over with. It was quite busy, lots of studying and little sleep. Things have only just begun! Stjarni and Rimma are doing great. We have started riding more and are now riding with bridles a little. I am just using the full cheek snaffle for now, since we are not demanding much. We are working on getting the horses to follow our seat and our “energy” only using leg and voice if necessary. We are also riding with a neck rope (a thin, soft rope around the horse’s neck) and are teaching our horses to back up and stop with it instead of pulling on the reins. We taught them from the ground first and are now doing it under saddle, using our seat and voice first and then, if necessary, the neck rope. My horses are both so sensitive they are responding very well. We have also started asking the horses to yield the hindquarters and the forehand.

We have pretty much been doing our ground work and basic riding from Clinton Anderson’s Horsemanship Downunder. Obviously not everything is the same, but this is where the ideas that we are using at the moment have come from. It will be exciting to see what we do next week.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

New Membership Application Membership Renewal
 Individual Family Junior Membership

Name:

Address:

.....

City: State: Zip:

Phone: Email:

- Keep my name and contact information private.
- When possible, use my email address instead of the US Mail to notify me of official USIHC business.
- I prefer **not** to receive a copy of the *Quarterly* magazine in the US Mail.

Enroll me in the Pleasure Rider Program. Regional Club:

If you have selected a Family Membership, please complete the following for the second adult and any children to be included in the membership (use the back of the page to add more family members):

Name	Year of Birth (juniors only)	Email (optional)	Enroll in Pleasure Rider Program (optional)

- Farm Listing.
 Paid members of the USIHC may opt to include a farm listing on the Congress's web site (www.icelandics.org). There is a \$110.00 annual fee for the farm listing in addition to your membership fee.

Farm:

Owners:

Address:

.....

City: State: Zip:

Phone: Email:

Fax: Web:

Membership Fees & Restrictions	
Individual	\$45/year. One adult. One vote.
Family	\$65/year. Two adults and unlimited children living in the same household. Adults vote.
Junior	\$35/year. One child (under 18 years). Not eligible to vote.

Make checks to "USIHC" and mail to the MAIN OFFICE address.

Membership Fee:	\$
Farm Listing Fee:	\$
Pleasure Rider Program (\$15/adult, \$12/junior)	\$
International Fee: (\$15 for non US addresses)	\$
Total:	\$

MAIN OFFICE: 4525 Hewitts Point Road, Oconomowoc, WI 53066, USA (907) 357-4233 info@icelandics.org

REGISTRY: PO Box 1724 Santa Ynez, CA 93460, USA (805) 688-1393 registry@icelandics.org

THE ICELANDIC HORSE MARKETPLACE



DEADLINES: • January 1 (Issue 1 mailed in March) • April 1 (Issue 2 mailed in June)
• July 1 (Issue 3 mailed in September) • October 1 (Issue 4 mailed in December)

AD FORMATS: Upload only ads that are camera-ready and in Mac-format PDF, JPG, or TIFF. No PC formats accepted. Ads should be full-size, saved at 300 dpi.

PAYMENT: All advertising can be placed online at www.icelandics.org/quarterly.php. Simply click on the link that says "ad purchase and upload page" and you will be directed through the process of buying an ad.

QUESTIONS: If you are unable to access the Internet or have questions regarding advertising, please contact Nancy Marie Brown at 802-626-4220 or gaeska513@gmail.com.

RATES AND SIZES:	per issue
Color Pages (7 3/8" x 9 3/4")	\$ 200
Full page (7 3/8" x 9 3/4")	\$ 150
Half page (7 3/8" x 4 3/4")	\$ 75
Third page (7 3/8" x 3 3/4")	\$ 50
Quarter page (3 1/2" x 4 3/4")	\$ 35

The USIHC reserves the right to reject any advertising at any time. Each advertisement is accepted with the understanding that the advertiser is authorized to publish its contents and agrees to indemnify the USIHC and the Icelandic Horse Quarterly against any loss or expense resulting from claims arising out of its publication.

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The search has an end!

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and our other young
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Nancy Marie Brown,
and Carol Andrew



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F A R M L I S T

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

CALIFORNIA

Flying C Ranch
Will & Asta Covert
3600 Roblar Ave.
Santa Ynez, CA 93460
(805) 688-1393 (phone)
(805) 688-0629 (fax)
asta@tolt.net
www.tolt.net

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

Sunland Ranch Icelandic Horses
Kimberly Hart
3675 Copper Crest
Olivenhain, CA 92024
(858) 759-1626 (phone)
(858) 759-8577 (fax)
kmbryhrt@sbcglobal.net
www.Sunlandranch.com

Valhalla Icelandic Horses
Stina & Steinar Sigurbjornsson
11127 Orcas Ave.
Lake View Terrace, CA 91342
(818) 808-8089 (phone)
(818) 890-4569 (fax)
valhallaicelandic@mac.net
www.valhallaicelandic.com

COLORADO

Hestar Ranch
Monika Meier-Galliker
P.O. Box 1744 / 30420 C.r. 500
Arboles, CO 81121
(970) 883-2531 (phone)
m.meier@hestar-ranch.us
www.hestar-ranch.us

Tamangur Icelandic Horses
Coralie Denmeade
P.O. Box 2771
Monument, CO 80132
(719) 209-2312 (phone)
coralie@tamangur-icelandics.com
www.tamangur-icelandics.com

GEORGIA

Creekside Farm
Katrin Sheehan
411 Old Post Rd.
Madison, GA 30650
(706) 347-0900 (phone)
(706) 342-2026 (fax)
kat@creeksidefarm.com
www.creeksidefarm.com

INDIANA

Windstar
Bonnie L. Windell
4845 Warrenton Road
Evansville, IN 47725
(812) 983-4125 (phone)
bonniwindell@yahoo.com

KENTUCKY

Gudmar Petursson Icelandic Horses
Gudmar Petursson
8901 Hwy 329
Crestwood, KY 40014
(502) 243-9996 (phone)
gudmarp@gudmar.com
www.gudmar.com

MAINE

Boulder Ridge Farm
Brian & Cindy Wescott
1271 Cape Rd
Limington, ME 04049
(207) 637-2338 (phone)
bricelandics@yahoo.com
www.bricelandics.com

Ice Follies
Deborah Plengey & Trudie Lee
159 Lyons Rd.
Manchester, ME 04351
(207) 621-2942 (phone)
debplengey@roadrunner.com
icefolliesfarm.com

MASSACHUSETTS

Four Winds Farm
Lori B. Leo
703 Hanover Street
Hanover, MA 02339
(617) 827-2001 (phone)
(781) 829-2276 (fax)
lori@nepc.com
fourwinds@fourwindsicelandics.com

Roberts Woods Farm
Kathryn & Marc Roberts
P.O. Box 549
45 Art School Road
Monterey, MA 01245
(413) 528-6188 (phone)
(413) 528-6193 (fax)
kroberts@sequoia groupe.com
www.robertswoods farm.org

MINNESOTA

Crow River Icelandics
Sharon & David Johnson
2277 Colbert Ave. N.w.
Buffalo, MN 55313
(763) 682-3815 (phone)
sharonhilljohn@hotmail.com
www.crowrivericelandics.com

North Star Icelandics
Deborah & Steve Cook
1250 Waterville Rd
Waterville, MN 56096
(507) 362-4538 (phone)
(507) 362-8090 (fax)
cookice@frontiernet.net
www.frontiernet.net/~cookice





Penridge Farm
Gloria & Vince Verrecchio
14323 Ostrum Trail N.
Marine On St. Croix, MN 55047
(651) 433-4934 (phone)
(651) 433-2910 (fax)
verrecchio.dvm@frontiernet.net
www.penridgeicelandics.com

NEW YORK

Pangaea Equestrian Services
Knutur and Cerice Berndsen
259 Pugsley Hill Rd
Amenia, NY 12501
(845) 789-1076 (phone)
pangaeaequestrian@live.com
www.pangaeaequestrian.com

Sand Meadow Farm
Steven & Andrea Barber
300 Taylor Road
Honeoye Falls, NY 14472
(585) 624-4468 (phone)
(585) 624-9361 (fax)
toltstar@yahoo.com
www.sandmeadow.com

Thor Icelandics
Kristjan Kristjansson & Family
76 Catskill View Road
Claverack, NY 12513
(518) 929-7476 (phone)
(518) 392-5718 (fax)
kristjan@fairpoint.net
www.thoricelandics.com

NORTH CAROLINA

Hulinndalur
Sara Lyter
415 Bluebird Lane
Marshall, NC 28753
slyterz@yahoo.com

Suncrest Farm
Paul and Renee Smith
1919 Barbee Road
Shelby, NC 28150
(704) 480-0366 (phone)
docnshop2@aol.com

OHIO

Northstar Farm
Lanny L. Carroll
11783 Temple Road
P.O. Box 63
Brookville, OH 45309
(937) 687-7103 (phone)
ohioicelandics@yahoo.com
www.northstaricelandics.com

PENNSYLVANIA

Burns - Anderson Stable
Mary Burns, Caleigh Anderson, and
Connie Anderson
1641 Wildlife Lodge Rd.
Lower Burrell, PA 15068
(724) 337-4207 (phone)
caaenglishrider@yahoo.com

Meant To Be Farm & Sanctuary
Juli & Steve Cole
109 Germanski Lane
New Castle, PA 16102
(412) 779-2679 (phone)
juli2875@yahoo.com

VERMONT

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

WASHINGTON

Evans Farm-Orcas Island
Wanda & John Evans
P.O. Box 116
Olga, WA 98279
(360) 379-4961 (phone)
evansfarm@orcasonline.com
www.icelandichorsesnorthwest.com

Lone Cedar Icelandic Horses
Dawn Shaw
P.O. Box 524
Grapeview, WA 98546
(360) 275-7542 (phone)
theherd@oz.net
www.lonecedariclandichorses.com

Red Feather Icelandics
Dick and Linda Templeton
24 Whitewater Drive
Trout Lake, WA 98650
(509) 395-9380 (phone)
(541) 386-7831 (fax)
redfeathericelandics@gmail.com
www.redfeathericelandics.com

WEST VIRGINIA

Icelandic Thunder
Denise & James Taylor
Rr 1. Box 219
Philippi, WV 26416
(304) 457-4238 (phone)
gaitedgirl@verizon.net
icelandicthunder.com

WISCONSIN

Winterhorse Park Icelandic Horse Farm
Barbara and Daniel Riva
S75 W35621 Wilton Rd.
Eagle, WI 53119
(262) 594-5152 (phone)
(262) 594-2720 (fax)
winterhorse@centurytel.net
www.winterhorse.com





Red Feather Icelandic is pleased to announce the following USIHC Riding Badge events in 2010:

April 2010

Special in-depth seminar featuring Riding Badge theory topics "Health, Safety & First Aid"

May 2010

Exams Riding Badges Level 1 & 2

June 2010

Pleasure Riding Badge Level 1

July 2010

Pleasure Riding Badge Level 2

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

THE USIHC QUARTERLY COMMITTEE IS LOOKING FOR AN AD SALESPERSON (OR MORE THAN ONE).

We're hoping to expand the Marketplace and need someone willing to sell ads for the Quarterly. You would work with Kari Pietsch-Wangard (USIHC treasurer) to organize billing, and with Nancy Marie Brown (managing editor) to develop new sizes and pricing. You'd need to have good people skills; some computer skills would be a plus. Most important, the salesperson needs to be familiar with the USIHC and its members—or willing to get to know them, especially those who own farms and run stores or other businesses. If this sounds like fun, please contact USIHC Quarterly committee chair Judy Strehler at quarterly@icelandics.org or 763-498-8432.



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JULY 8-12 TREK



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Gustar fra Saudarkroki
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 8.3, 7.53

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Ofeigur fra flugumyri
 First Prize 8.52, 7.86
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Throstur frá Innri Skeljabrekka

US91101511 / IS91135551 Father: Kveikur frá Miðsitju Mother: Glóa frá Innri Skeljabrekka

Choose a stallion with proven results

All of Throstur's offspring have:

- Great temperament
- Lots of easy tolt
- Long legs and light build
- A pleasure to work with



Conformation:

Head:	7.0
Neck, withers and shoulders:	8.5
Back and croup:	8.0
Proportions:	8.5
Leg Quality	8.0
Leg Joints:	8.0
Hooves:	8.5

Total 8.22

Overall Score: 8.43

Riding Abilities:

Tolt:	8.5
Trot:	8.0
Pace:	9.0
Gallop:	8.0
Spirit:	9.0
General Impression:	8.5
Walk:	8.0
Slow Tolt:	8.0
Canter:	8.0
Total:	8.57

Throstur is 14.2 hands tall and at the age of 17 he has never been or looked better!

We are happy to announce Throstur's new co-owner, Maggie Brandt. Maggie is the mother of 14 year old Carrie Lyons Brandt. Carrie has been very successful in competitions under Gudmar's instruction these last few years. It will be exciting to watch Throstur and Carrie together as a new pair. **Go to www.gudmar.com for more info on Throstur.**



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