

ISSUE TWO

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)

HANDICAPPED RIDING • USING WORLDFENGUR • STARI FRAN BREDHALL

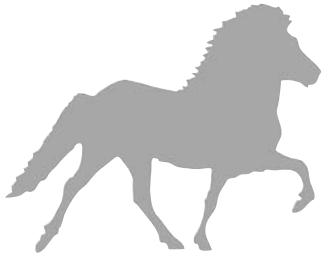
# TÖLTNEWS

AMERICA'S ICELANDIC HORSE MAGAZINE



**FOUR TIMES A YEAR. FULL COLOR. FANTASTIC.**

TO SUBSCRIBE: [WWW.TOLTNEWS.COM](http://WWW.TOLTNEWS.COM)



THE  
ICELANDIC  
HORSE  
QUARTERLY  
Issue Two 2010

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

©2010 All rights reserved.

*The Icelandic Horse Quarterly* is published in March, June, September, and December by the USIHC as a benefit of membership. Membership fees of \$45 per individual (\$35 for youth members) or \$65 per family (2 adults and children) are due on January 1 each year. Renew online at [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org).

USIHC members are encouraged to submit articles and photos or illustrations for publication. Deadlines are January 1 (for the March issue), April 1, July 1, and October 1. See the instructions online at [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org) or email the editorial committee at [quarterly@icelandics.org](mailto:quarterly@icelandics.org). We reserve the right to edit submissions. All articles represent the opinions of their authors alone; publication in the Quarterly does not imply an endorsement of any kind by the USIHC.

Advertising rates and instructions are also online at [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org).

Back issues of *The Icelandic Horse Quarterly* may be purchased for \$5.00 each as available.

*Quarterly Committee:* Heidi Benson, Andrea Brodie, Nancy Marie Brown, Alys Culhane, Anne Elwell, Amy Goddard, Eileen Gunipero, Maike Liekweg, Alex Pregitzer, Chris Romano, Judy Strehler (chair), Thorunn Kristjansdottir, Bernie Willis, Nancy Wines-Dewan

*Graphic Design:* James Collins

Contact the Editorial Committee at [quarterly@icelandics.org](mailto:quarterly@icelandics.org)

# ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y

## 5 NEWS

5 USIHC News

9 FEIF News

12 National News

13 Regional Club Updates

## 19 FEATURES

19 Pleasure Riding in 2009 *Introduction by Karen Olson-Fields*

24 The Training Scale *by Ann-Christin Kloth and Alex Pregitzer*

28 Teachers & Trainers: Who is Ann Christin Kloth? *Interview by Alex Pregitzer*

30 Putt-Putt Ponying *by Bernie Willis*

32 Focus on Youth *by Susan Peters*

34 Book Review: Halldor Laxness *by Chris Romano*

36 The Horse in My Head *by Nancy Marie Brown*

41 You Put the Saddle Where? *by Eileen Gunipero*

## 45 MARKETPLACE

**On the cover:** Heidi Parry, on Seimur frá Ytri-Vollum (US1990103286), and her daughter Amber Parry, on Dagfinnur frá Dallandi (US1993102338), pause to enjoy the view from Campbell Mountain in Collbran, Colorado. Amber was the 1st-place youth winner in the 2009 USIHC Pleasure Rider Program. See her story on page 19. Photo by Bob Gil.



## 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](http://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](http://www.icelandics.org/join).

## QUESTIONS?

Call: 631-TOLTING

Email: [info@icelandics.org](mailto:info@icelandics.org)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sam Castleman

Ásta Covert

Anne Elwell (President)

Kathy Lockerbie

Sara Lyter (Vice President)

Kari Pietsch-Wangard (Treasurer)

Katrin Sheehan

Doug Smith (Secretary)

Cindy Wescott

## 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](http://www.icelandics.org). Contact Asta Covert P.O. Box 1724, Santa Ynez, CA 93460; 805-688-1393; [registry@icelandics.org](mailto:registry@icelandics.org)

## WEBSITE

Visit [www.icelandics.org](http://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

## MAIL

United States Icelandic Horse Congress  
c/o Kari Pietsch-Wangard  
4525 Hewitts Point Road  
Oconomowoc, WI 53066

## COMMITTEES

### Breeding

Katrin Sheehan (706-347-0900)  
[breeding@icelandics.org](mailto:breeding@icelandics.org)

### Constitution Review

Kari Pietsch-Wangard (907-357-4233)  
[constitutional\\_review@icelandics.org](mailto:constitutional_review@icelandics.org)

### Education

Alex Pregitzer (608-436-1751)  
[education@icelandics.org](mailto:education@icelandics.org)

### Membership

Kathy Lockerbie (631-TOLTING)  
[info@icelandics.org](mailto:info@icelandics.org)

### Pleasure Riding

Karen Olson-Fields (801-523-5077)  
[pleasure\\_riding@icelandics.org](mailto:pleasure_riding@icelandics.org)

### Promotion

Cindy Wescott (207-637-2338)  
[promotion@icelandic.org](mailto:promotion@icelandic.org)

### Quarterly

Judy Strehler (763-498-8432)  
[quarterly@icelandics.org](mailto:quarterly@icelandics.org)

### Regional Clubs

Barb Riva (262-594-5152)  
[regional\\_clubs@icelandics.org](mailto:regional_clubs@icelandics.org)

### Sport Competition

Will Covert (805-688-1393)  
[competition@icelandics.org](mailto:competition@icelandics.org)

### Website

Doug Smith  
[website@icelandics.org](mailto:website@icelandics.org)

### Youth

Asta Covert (805-688-1393)  
[youth@icelandics.org](mailto:youth@icelandics.org)



Kevin Draeger (left) riding Glotti frá Saudarkroki and Rachel Ng riding Thor fra Litlu-Sandvik. With Madison Prestine, they will represent the U.S. at the FEIF Youth Cup in Denmark in July.



## YOUTH CUP

The FEIF Youth Cup will be held July 9-18 at the agricultural college Kalø Økologiske Landbrugsskole, Denmark. The Youth Cup is held every other year in a different country. Participants, ages 14 to 17, are coached by experienced instructors, participate in various activities, and go on excursions. The week ends with a competition. For more information, see [www.feifyouthcup2010.dk](http://www.feifyouthcup2010.dk)

This year's USIHC Youth Cup team includes: Kevin Draeger (MN), Rachel Ng (CA), and Madison Prestine (CA). On the waiting list are Cait Nold (CA) and Meagan Milloy (VA).

Kevin was interviewed about his "International Quest" by sportswriter Mark Remme of the Faribault Daily News on April 13. "It will be good to be able to see what other kids are doing and see where the United States stands," Kevin said. "I'm really excited to be able to have the opportunity to compete and be able to represent my country and meet other

people from other countries and learn from other cultures," he added. Read the complete story here: <http://faribault.com/news.php?viewStory=98193>

## SANCTIONED SHOWS

The 2009 show season included eight USIHC sanctioned shows in five states: California (four shows), Vermont, Wisconsin, Virginia, and Kentucky. The total number of entries was 830. The Vermont show was the first FEIF World Ranking competition to be held in the U.S.

The 2010 show season started April 10-11 with the Valhalla Icelandic Horse Show, organized by the Los Angeles Icelandic Horse Association (LAIHA) at Hansen Dam Equestrian Center, scored by FEIF Judge Asa Eriksson. Additional sanctioned shows scheduled are the California Icelandic Association (CIA) Spring Show at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, May 1-2, and the Summerlot Icelandic Horse Competition at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI, June 19-20.

Schooling shows on the USIHC Event Calendar include the Thor Icelandics Schooling Show in Claverack, NY, on May 29-30, and the Klettafjalla Icelandic Horse Club Show in Steamboat Springs, CO, July 23-25.

More shows are in the planning stages; check [www.icelandics.org/calendar](http://www.icelandics.org/calendar) for dates and places.

## SHOW RULES REVISED

The rules and procedures for competing in and organizing USIHC-sanctioned sport competitions have been updated for the 2010 competition season, following the updating of the FEIF guidelines. All competitors and show officials should review the new rules available online or for download as a PDF file at [www.icelandics.org/sport.php](http://www.icelandics.org/sport.php). The new rules take effect as of April 20, 2010.

According to USIHC secretary Doug Smith, here are the major changes to the Sanctioned Show Rules & Procedures:

- All tracks must be marked showing the beginning and end of the long sides. The middle of the short sides may be marked as well.
- As of 2014, any tests including flying pace will be prohibited on tracks less than 250 meters unless there is an attached pace track.
- Show organizers have 15 days to file the required Show Report with the Sport Leader. Failure to do so will incur a \$5/day late fee and may put having the show results included in the National Ranking at risk.

And the major changes to the Competition Rules:

- Four experimental tests have been created to make starting to compete easier. Two of the tests are aimed at Beginning

Horses and two are aimed at Beginning Riders. The rules are the same, with the entry qualifications being the only difference. The tolt test is any speed tolt shown on both hands with only the long sides judged. The rider has the corners and the short side to fix any problems with the horse with no deduction from the judge except for extreme rough riding. The four gait test calls for any speed tolt, trot, medium walk, and medium canter. In addition the riders are given an extra section to “fix” any problems with the tolt or trot. In this section, the rider may choose to ride either gait again. If the marks are better than the first attempt, they replace the previous marks. If they are not better, the previous marks stand. As with the tolt test, only the performance on the long sides is judged.

- Only snaffle bits are allowed in Novice and Beginning tests.
- Any rider 14 years and older may ride in tests involving flying pace.
- The number of tests a horse is allowed to start is now limited by FIPO section 2.1.
- FIPO no longer includes the F3 test. In response, the F2 test has been changed from an Open Group test to an Intermediate test for National Ranking purposes. The F3 award will be retired.
- FIPO changed the requirements for V3. Now the last section is a “medium to fast tolt” and none of the marks are dropped when computing the overall mark.

## EQUINE AFFAIRE

Gudmar Petursson’s eight-horse “Knights of Iceland” performance team gave a great show at the evening Fantasia show during the Ohio Equine Affaire, April 8-10. First they did a complicated drill team routine, with fast and slow tolt and a nice short spell of walk. Then came a classic beer tolt (this time with Viking drinking horns). The show concluded dramatically with five horses pacing through a double line of fire in a darkened arena. Watch it on YouTube here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yU8-koA9Qxg>

Said Dawn Bruin-Slot, “Equine Affaire was so much fun this year! Gudmar and his Knights of Iceland Show Rider Team did a great job on the day demos and at Fantasia. There was lots of interest in Icelandics and lots of talk about them.” Adds Cindy Wescott, chair of the promotion committee, “There were a lot of brochures handed out at the USIHC booth!” Nearly a hundred thousand people visit Equine Affaire in Ohio each year. For more info, see [www.equineaffaire.com](http://www.equineaffaire.com).

## PA EXPO

Curt Pierce and Knutur Berndsen managed the USIHC booth at the Pennsylvania Horse World Expo in Harrisburg, PA, February 25-28. The Icelandics were among 18 breeds or disciplines giving demos at the show. The Icelandic group gave four demos, showing walk, trot, tolt, and canter. The PA Expo includes 500 booths and draws over 10,000 visitors. For more info, see [www.horseworldexpo.com](http://www.horseworldexpo.com).

## FEIF FLAG

USIHC has received a gift of a FEIF flag. It is available for regional clubs to use for events and demonstrations and would make a nice addition to the breeding evaluations that are being held now on a regular basis in the U.S. The flag is 5 feet by 8 feet and, while it is made for display on a flag pole, it also works well mounted on a wall as a banner. To borrow it, contact Cindy Wescott ([promotion@icelandics.org](mailto:promotion@icelandics.org)).

## REGISTRY FORMS

The forms required to register an imported or domestic-bred Icelandic horse have been updated. The new forms are easier to fill out and can be completed online, printed, and mailed to the Registry with the required supporting documents. The new forms and all other registry documents can be downloaded from the website at [www.icelandics.org/regforms/php](http://www.icelandics.org/regforms/php). The breeding committee and the registration committee jointly developed new registration forms. Thanks especially to Martina Gates, Andrea Barber, and Asta Covert for their excellent work.



Rose Breen, age 11, passed the Riding Badge Level 1 exam in March on the stallion Kjarkur fra Haholti.

## RIDING BADGE

Another successful participant passed the Riding Badge Level 1 exam. Congratulations to eleven-year-old Rose Breen of Kirby, Vermont! Rose was instructed by Sigrun Brynjarsdottir, FT Trainer. The examiner was Jason Brickner. Classes and exams took place at Solheimar Farms in Tunbridge, Vermont, and Rose passed her test on the stallion Kjarkur fra Haholti. For more information on the Riding Badge program, see [www.icelandics.org/education.php](http://www.icelandics.org/education.php).

## NATIONAL RANKING

The Sport Committee and a number of generous sponsors have maintained the National Ranking awards for the past several years. The Ranking uses the average of the best two scores for each rider over a two-year period to determine the standings of riders in the 12 sanctioned competition classes required at all official competitions. The Sport and Web Committees are please to announce a new National Ranking Page ([www.icelandics.org/ranking.php](http://www.icelandics.org/ranking.php)) on the USIHC website. The new page gives the current, detailed standings for all ranked riders, as well as a history of the annual awards and a description of the program. This page will be updated after the Sport Leader approves the results from official competitions throughout the season.

---

## LANDSMOT AMBASSADOR

The USIHC was asked to name a U.S. Ambassador to Landsmot 2010, the national Icelandic horse show, to be held June 27 to July 4 at Vindheimamelar in Skagafjörður. The U.S. Ambassador functions as a representative in the U.S. to answer questions regarding the event, and is a symbolic figure for the country at Landsmot, including riding in the opening ceremonies and participating in other official segments of event. The Board of Directors unanimously chose Asta Covert to be the U.S. Ambassador to Landsmot 2010.

## EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR

The USIHC Education committee is offering a new type of educational seminar July 31-August 1. According to Alex Pregitzer, committee chair, the seminar was developed to be "suitable for any horse and any rider, no matter what your or your horse's level of training and experience are." Alex continues, "The seminar is emphasizing the horse's conformation in correlation with its training, riding, and performance. The clinic includes theory sessions about the conformation and gaits, practice judging of conformation and gaits, ridden presentations by trainer Gudmar Petursson with explanations by breeding judge Barbara Frische, as well as having the trainer and breeding judge work with each horse and rider to explain the horse's conformation and to give advice on riding with conformational challenges in mind."

The seminar will be held at Marianne and Jim Welch's farm close to Louisville, KY. Clinicians are Gudmar Petursson (FT Trainer) and Barbara Frische (International FEIF Breeding Judge). Everybody is welcome to participate, with a horse or without, as lease horses are available and auditors welcome. Cost is \$275 for two days, based on a minimum participation of 12 riders. Audits are \$100.

Says Alex, "We are very proud to offer this one-of-a-kind seminar and hope that it will find much interest and that we will be offering it in further locations throughout the U.S. What is so wonderful about it is that it is really suited for

any rider and any horse, no matter what their knowledge or training. It is a huge learning opportunity for pleasure riders, competitors, breeders, and professionals alike. Two extremely knowledgeable experts were with the participants all day long sharing their knowledge and helping horses and riders to gain a better understanding of one another. How much better does it get?"

For more information, contact Alex at [education@icelandics.org](mailto:education@icelandics.org).

## WEB SPONSORS

The website sponsorship program has been a huge success. "We have far more sponsors than anticipated," webmaster Doug Smith reports. The current program allows for payment quarterly, semi-annually, or annually, with a discount for the longer terms. Most sponsors have renewed at the annual level. Says Doug, "The website is starting to close the gap with late stallion reports for being the biggest money maker for the Congress!"

## WEB PHOTOS

The majority of the photos on the website have been replaced with a new collection of donated images. Says Doug Smith, "The photos rotate on a daily basis to keep the look of the site fresh without being distracting. All new photos are added including a photo credit on the side of the image to show our appreciation to the photographers." Thanks to Gayle Smith, Dawn Shaw, and Ásta Covert for their help with this project. An even bigger thanks to the photo contributors: Andrea Barber, Carol Townsend, Chantal Jonkergouw, Cheryl Shelton, Christopher Nees, Dawn Shaw, Doug Chandler, Doug Smith, Emily DeWan, Gayle Smith, Heidi Benson, Ian Shaw, Kari Pietsch-Wangard, Kimberly Hart, Kristin Lundberg, Mic Rushen, Morgan Venable, Sandy Solberg, Shari Nees, and Vince Verrecchio.

The website committee is always looking for more images. Says Doug, "Our overall goal is to convey the spirit of the Icelandic horse and the USIHC to website visitors who have little or no knowledge of either."

Here is the committee's basic list of criteria for what would make a good photo submission:

- Photos must feature the Icelandic horse or the USIHC.
- The image must be well lit—not over- or under-exposed—and the subject must be in focus.
- Horses in the image must appear lively, bright, and happy.
- Try to avoid posed compositions. Action or candid shots are much better.
- Almost any resolution is acceptable. We can always make them smaller for the web site.
- You must own the rights to the image and must grant the USIHC unconditional permission to use the image on the website.

Send your photos to [web\\_photos@icelandics.org](mailto:web_photos@icelandics.org).

## PRESS RELEASES

Is there a clinic, competition (schooling or sanctioned), evaluation, or other Icelandic horse event coming up that you would like to see published in a calendar of events? Do you or one of your students/clients have a story that you would like to share? If so, then send them to Juli Cole at [press\\_release@icelandics.org](mailto:press_release@icelandics.org) or (412) 779-2679.

The current list of media outlets includes *Equine Journal* and *The Yankee Pedlar*. If there are any papers or magazines in your local area that you would like to suggest to add to the list for press releases, please forward their contact information—or at least the name of the paper/magazine and the city and state it is located—to Juli Cole at [press\\_release@icelandics.org](mailto:press_release@icelandics.org) or (412) 779-2679.

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Board accepted Susan Peters' resignation at the April Board meeting. Susan is starting a new business and feels the Congress would be better served if she resigned her offices and duties. Doug Smith

---

was invited to rejoin the Board, completing Bernie Willis's term through the 2010 election; he will resume the duties of Secretary. Ásta Covert will act as Interim Youth Leader until that position is filled by the Board.

The Board invited Sam Castleman (MD) to assume Susan's seat and serve until the 2011 elections. Sam grew up on the East Coast and attended the University of Washington, earning a B.S. in Forest Management. In 1994, he became Executive Director of ThorpeWood, where select "at-risk" students are given the opportunity for personal growth through customized academic support and personal development programs. Sam delivers the equine therapy element in each program using ThorpeWood's herd of eight Icelandic horses.

Earlier in his career, Sam worked for Union Carbide, the U.S. Department of State as a Protocol Officer, and the City of Dallas, as Director of International Affairs. He was Deputy General Manager of Blair House, the President's Guest House, and an usher at The White House.

## BOARD MEETINGS

Highlights of the February, March, and April 2010 meetings of the USIHC Board of Directors are summarized below. Full minutes of the Board meetings can be found at [www.icelandics.org/bod/minutes.php](http://www.icelandics.org/bod/minutes.php).

Discussion continued at the February and March meetings on the best method

for translating the German Trainer C educational materials into English, including questions of costs and the ownership or copyright of the final translation. The Board recommended that the translation and the contract with the German IPZV be limited to translation of the bullet points in the German study guide and that the USIHC Education Committee put thought into compiling a more detailed study guide compiled from the notes of students who have previously taken the course. At the April meeting, the Board learned from Education Committee chair Alex Pregitzer that the IPZV had approved the terms of our translating materials for the trainer courses, and that she would be beginning the work as soon as possible.

Changes to the Riding Badge Program were discussed, and the Board decided that the USIHC should open up the Riding Badge Program to non-members, provided that they pay the applicable USIHC non-member fee. The Board also decided that Riding Badge candidates will be permitted to take the applicable examination without previous participation in the associated seminar. This change is limited to level 1 and 2 Riding Badges only.

At the March Board Meeting, Kathy Lockerbie reported that the new Membership Committee is beginning to take shape; one project underway is a membership directory.

The Board approved a commitment of up to \$1000 to support the new Correlation of Conformation and Training Seminar organized by the Education Committee.

The results of the tryouts for the FEIF Youth Cup were announced; all youth participants achieved the qualifying level. The parents and young riders will begin meeting by conference call to plan.

Several adult USIHC members have applied to be Team Leader and Country Leader; each was asked to submit a letter describing their experience with Icelandic horses and youth competitions. The Youth Committee is considering each candidate. While at the FEIF conference, the Youth Leader met with possible candidates who might provide a training facility for the team prior to the Youth Cup.

The Youth Committee plans to discuss with the Regional Club committee the possibility of holding a national youth day. The committee is also seeking proposals from farms that would like to hold the 2011 national youth camp.

The Board approved by email the list of permissible examiners for Trainer C retesting.

The Constitution committee concluded that a constitutional amendment would not be an appropriate way to create non-member status. It would be simpler to create a special non-member participant status that would allow non-US residents to benefit from lower seminar fees, for example. The name "Worldwide Friends of the USIHC" has been suggested.

Among the other projects underway is one to create a standing blood profile of the Icelandic horse for veterinary purposes. Anne Elwell reported that Katrin Sheehan contacted the University of Georgia. Anne herself had a similar discussion with NC State. At the April meeting, the Board approved the proposed revisions to the USIHC Competition Rules submitted by the Sport Committee (see "Show Rules Revised," above).

At the May meeting, the Board will consider the draft of the revised Schooling Show Handbook and a report from the Education Committee.



New Board member Sam Castleman uses Icelandic horses in the equine therapy program at ThorpeWood.



## U.S. DELEGATION TO FEIF CONFERENCE

FEIF, the Föderation Europäischer Isländpferde Freunde, is the international association of Icelandic Horse associations. This international body governs many aspects of the Icelandic horse world; it provides a common ground for breeding evaluation and competition, and a forum to share ideas and methods for youth support and education. The FEIF member associations gather for a weekend each year to renew friendships, share ideas, and conduct the business of the organization.



The 2010 FEIF Conference took place in Odense, Denmark in February. This year's conference was scheduled in conjunction with the Icelandic Horse World Cup, an exhibition competition held in an indoor arena to showcase many of Europe's top horses for the general public. The Danish Icelandic Horse Association organized the exhibition and coordinated with the FEIF office to incorporate the conference in the same facility. Conference attendees were able to walk from the conference center to the horse show without setting foot outdoors in the often snowy Danish winter weather.

In past years, the USIHC delegation to the FEIF Conference consisted of one or two individuals who expressed our members' opinions, voted on behalf of the U.S. Icelandic horse community, and brought back information from our international colleagues. The 2010 delegation

included seven individuals: Anne Elwell, Katrin Sheehan, Barbara Frische, Susan Peters, Gayle Smith, Doug Smith, and Will Covert. All of these individuals bore the full cost of the conference fees and travel expenses to represent the USIHC in Denmark.

There are two components to the business of the FEIF Conference; these combine to form the process for making any changes to the way the international association operates. The bulk of the conference is spent in committees tasked with detailed discussion and planning for key aspects of the Icelandic horse world: Association Chairmen, Breeding, Sport, Education, and Youth.

The rest of the conference is spent in a single group at which the work of the committees is presented. There are two such sessions. The first, at the start of the conference, is designed to give member associations a final chance to express their opinions of any changes proposed at the previous conference. This session, known as the Delegates Assembly, is in theory closed to all but the delegates and the Board of FEIF. In practice, this session is open to all attendees. Each of the committee chairs presents any changes proposed from the previous year's committee work. Again, in theory, only the designated individuals are allowed to speak. In Denmark, as in Germany last year, anyone in attendance had the opportunity to discuss any aspect of the change. At the conclusion of the discussion, the individuals designated by each member association voted to adopt or reject the proposed change. Each member association nominated a single individual who was given the power to cast a number of votes, as determined by the relative size of the country's membership. For the past two years, Doug Smith (*who wrote this report*) has been the USIHC's delegate. Based on our size, the USIHC has two of a total of over forty votes. The minutes of the Delegates Assembly are available on the FEIF website, [www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org).

The second single-group gathering takes place at the conclusion of the conference, after the committees have met for two half-day sessions. In this second

assembly, the committees present their conclusions from the weekend's work. This affords the member associations an opportunity to comment and have a good understanding of the issues to be presented at the Delegates Assembly in 2011. The member associations have a full year to consider the implications of any proposed changes before they are considered by the nominated delegates.

For the first time, the USIHC's delegation was large enough that it could fully participate in all the committee work. Anne Elwell, USIHC President, attended the Chairmen's Committee sessions, which focus on many of the administrative aspects of FEIF. Katrin Sheehan, USIHC Board Member and Breeding Leader, and Barbara Frische attended the Breeding Committee sessions. Susan Peters, USIHC Secretary and Youth Leader, attended the Youth Committee. Gayle Smith represented Alex Pregitzer, USIHC Education Leader, at the Education Committee meetings. Doug Smith and Will Covert, USIHC Sport Leader, participated in the discussion at the Sport Committee sessions. Following the meetings, the minutes were circulated among the attendees; they are on the FEIF website for anyone to review (and are summarized below).

FEIF and the various member associations warmly welcomed the record attendance from the U.S. Our international colleagues recognize the significant cost and effort required to travel to partici-





pate in FEIF events. They also recognize the unique geographic challenges we face and appreciate our efforts on behalf of the Icelandic horse. Our continued presence, especially as a large delegation, reinforces the USIHC's position in international Icelandic horse community, and increases our influence on the direction of key aspects of breeding, competition, education, and youth involvement.

FEIF has established a three-year goal to bring the efforts of the various committees into closer alignment. For example, Breeding and Sport are working toward better-aligned rules, so horses can switch back and forth between breeding evaluation and sport competition. Another project looks to better align the way trainers and judges are prepared, so that they work harmoniously in preparing and evaluating horses and riders. The four FEIF committees have been tasked with working toward a more unified association in conjunction with the normal growth of their departments. The U.S., as a relatively young and growing association, is in perfect position to help evaluate some of the suggested changes. USIHC members with interest in the growth of both the national and international Icelandic horse community should contact the committee chairs of our Breeding, Sport, Education, and Youth committees to become more involved.

Our best hope for even greater international influence is to grow our membership numbers to have more votes

in the Delegates Assembly and the FEIF committees. As we work toward that goal, we can continue to voice our opinions and demonstrate a willingness to work with the new ideas coming from our international colleagues.

## CHAIRMEN'S MEETING

Eleven countries were represented at the annual FEIF chairmen's meeting. Based upon proposals from the board of FEIF and the chairmen, the following was decided: that FEIF starts a process to decide whether to apply to be an associate member of FEI ([www.fei.org](http://www.fei.org)).

Based upon a presentation from Lone Høegholt, member of the committee for riding in nature in Denmark, it was decided that FEIF should internationally focus on supporting the possibilities for riders to ride out in nature.

A committee headed by Wolfgang Berg, the board of FEIF and chairmen from five countries will look into the possibilities for changing of the structure/ payment of annual fee from the member countries to FEIF.

With reference to the final report from the Future Group, the chairmen's meeting decided to close the group. The work done by group members Göran Montan, Inge Kringeland, Anne Svanteson, Rikke Kromann, Jet Pels, Susie Meilby, John Freemann, and Jens Iversen was very much appreciated, and added important value to the future development of FEIF.

## YOUTH MEETING

The FEIF Youth Camp 2009 was a great success in the U.S., and the USIHC announced that this success has led to an increased amount of youth activities there. The next Youth Camp in 2011 will be hosted by IHSGB in Great Britain.

The FEIF Youth Cup 2010 will be held in Denmark, July 9-18, at the agricultural college Kalø Økologiske Landbrugsskole. The area is surrounded by beaches and forests, with hilly terrain just around the corner. The facilities include newly established stables with direct access to a riding hall, a round pen, a pace

track, and an oval track. The Youth Cup is arranged every second year and lasts for a week. It is an event that creates friendships across borders. The participants, ages 14 to 17, can bring their own horse or they can rent one on location. During the week, they are coached by experienced instructors, participate in various activities, and go on excursions. Finally, the cup is closed with a competition day in international youth classes. The focus will be on all-round skills, working in groups, sportsmanship, and horsemanship. For more information, see [www.feifyouthcup2010.dk](http://www.feifyouthcup2010.dk)

The youth country award was discussed, and it was decided to add a seat on the FY-activity of the year (FYCamp or FYCup) in addition to handing out the trophy to the winning country.

The youth committee has started selling bags, caps, etc in order to make the youth's financial situation better. Tanja will send out information about the items to buy to the national youth leaders.

An international youth exchange "match.com" is starting. The exchange is for youngsters who want to spend 1-2 weeks abroad in another family, learning about the everyday life in another country. Youngsters as well as host families will apply via the national youth leader.

## EDUCATION MEETING

Topics discussed included reports from the countries, the report on the proposed



FEIF Task Force, countries' requirements for future FEIF Education Seminars, and an update about work on the new FIEO (Rules and Information for FEIF Education department). The meeting gave all participants the opportunity to find out what is going on in education within the FEIF countries, and exchange lots of ideas for future cooperation on education projects.

## BREEDING MEETING

The proposal to change the breeding assessment traits has passed the Delegates Assembly. So from this year on, walk will be 4 percent (1.5 before), flying pace 10 percent (before 9), and spirit will be lowered to 9 percent from 12.5 percent. In addition, the quality of slow tolt and canter will have more influence on the final marks for tolt and gallop.

Interesting information about BLUP (by Thorvaldur Árnasson) and new summer eczema research (by Sigurbjörg Thorsteinssdóttir) was also presented. Both presentations can be found in the download section of [www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org).

Kristin Halldorsdottir and Jón Baldur Lorange presented interesting information on WorldFengur developments. It was decided that there will be a strict interpretation of rules concerning missing reports for spavin x-ray results and DNA proof of parentage for stallions this year.

A further step towards a FEIF-wide system for foal assessment was made. Most countries agreed to use the FEIF assessment form and core rules for foal shows. The data will be collected in a special section in WorldFengur to be available for research. A booklet called "Approved information for breeding shows 2010," will be published by the breeding committee and will be available in a downloadable version on the FEIF website and can be used in all countries as printed booklet for judges, riders, and breeders.

It will be a main goal for the next two years in every country that more breeding mares shall have a FEIF assessment. A concept for this action was introduced by Marlise Grimm and discussed. More detailed information will follow.



## SPORT MEETING

A proposal to restructure FIPO to a more logical and understandable document was unanimously accepted. The aim is to give a proper description of the required gaits and tests. At the same time, special tests for novice riders and young horses will be added. However this process will require two to three years, as the descriptions and requirements will be coordinated with the breeding department, trainers, riders and judges.

Different changes in existing tests were discussed and decided upon. They will be proposed to next year's Delegates Assembly. However, two experiments will be performed in 2010: Tolt T2 to be ridden as test for a single rider (like other top level tests; T4 will be added in 2011 as a group test) and judges' marks in steps of 0.1 instead of 0.5. Organizers are required to announce this clearly in their invitations. This will not affect the World Ranking status of events and tests.

## FIPO 2010

FIPO 2010 announces a change in Five Gait F1 and F2. Starting in 2014, these tests will only be allowed on 250 meter tracks or combined oval tracks (P-tracks). The year 2014 was chosen to allow show organizers to adapt their tracks. The reason for this change is that on the shorter tracks, the length of the long side is too short to show proper racing pace.

## NEW ICETEST

A new release of IceTest is available, version 1.1.670. This version includes the changes in FIPO 2010. IceTest is the free software for sport competitions (including World Ranking), provided by FEIF. It may be downloaded from [www.feif.org/software](http://www.feif.org/software).

## SPORT JUDGES GUIDELINES

The 2010 Sport Judges Guidelines are available for download at [www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org). Apart from some small textual changes, the major changes are a better description of deduction marks (like going behind the bit, going on more than two tracks, bent when on a straight line, predominantly swaying or tilting the head) and a clearer description of judging the transitions in/from pace on the oval track.

## SUCCESSFUL SEMINAR

The FEIF Seminar for International FEIF Sport Judges, Trainers, and Riding Instructors (levels 2 & 3), held April 10-11 at Islandpferdereitschule Lipperthof in Wurzburg (Germany), had 100 participants. It was the first time FEIF organized a combined seminar, and it proved to be a success.

On Saturday, the renowned German horse trainer, instructor, and teacher Gerd Heuschmann gave theoretical and practical lectures with a strong focus on harmony and rhythm in training and riding horses, in relation to the anatomy and physiology of the horse. This led to vivid discussions among the participants—and to new terms in our vocabulary, such as "leg movers" and "back movers."

The Sunday program included four lectures about shape and topline in relation to training, judging, and guidelines. Discussions took place in mixed groups, highly appreciated by the participants. To quote one of the participants, it was "the best seminar ever." Participants will receive a DVD with pictures and video fragments of the seminar, sponsored by [isibless.de](http://isibless.de).

## THE STUDBOOK

The first edition of *The Icelandic StudBook—Stallions of North America* began arriving in subscriber's mailboxes all around Canada and the U.S. in March. The magazine had a total of 104 pages, all of which were jam-packed with amazing stallions, articles, and advertisements.

According to USIHC members Martina Gates and Thorunn Kristjansdottir, the founders and publishers of The StudBook, "The response has been phenomenal! Readers have really responded to the quality of the magazine, the articles and ads, and the sheer volume of stallions that are available! The responses have made all of our hard work worth it."

The StudBook has a total of 95 stallions, all of which Martina tracked down (she had the nickname "Sherlock" for a while). At the start of this project, in the fall of 2009, neither Martina nor Thorunn had any idea of how many stallions were here, who was the highest judged tolt, who was the highest four-gaiter, who was the highest pacer, and so on. There was no one source that had all of this data, let alone one source where you could find the majority of stallions in North America—and that was the reason that they decided that there was a great need for a magazine such as this.

Martina said, "If you are serious about breeding, then you *need* to know what is out there! You need to have choices for your mare if you want to breed the best, and you need to know who to contact to be able to breed to those stallions. And until now, unless you knew every other person and stallion, there was no way of knowing what was actually out there."

Thorunn added: "Martina and I are both professional graphic designers and photographers, plus we are horse crazy (as everyone who knows us knows), so this seemed like the ideal project for us. At the start of this, we had no idea how much we would learn—we found that there are some real gems out there, stallions that were seemingly lost. Martina found all of the stallions, which in itself was a feat!"

Thorunn continued, "Our goal is always to promote the horse, and to breed better horses. For this reason we decided

THE ICELANDIC

2010

# StudBook

ICELANDIC STALLIONS OF NORTH AMERICA



to mail this first edition out to over 1,000 people on our mailing list, free of charge. Our goal was to get this in the hands of as many people as possible. We also printed the magazine on quality paper so that everything would look fantastic. Was this all cost effective? No, it certainly wasn't. But this was never about money for us. As any person in the horse 'business' knows, you have to love this business, because the math never makes sense. We knew this going in. We still did it, because we wanted this to be a positive thing, a promotional tool for the horse and for breeding this horse, and so we pledged that our rates would be very reasonable."

Martina and Thorunn have already

begun working on the 2011 StudBook, and they hope that it will be as big of a success as the 2010 one was. They had to make a few minor changes for the 2011 StudBook: the deadline is now November 1 of this year for "studvertising," advertising, and subscriptions; and they are asking for a \$10 mailing / subscription fee, so that they can continue to keep their rates low.

Martina and Thorunn concluded, "We would like to thank all of our 'studvertisers,' advertisers, contributors, and supporters for helping us make this possible. We hope that you have all enjoyed the 2010 edition, and we hope that you will subscribe to the 2011 issue, because we've got some great things lined up!"

---

# REGIONAL UPDATES

---

## THE ALASKA ICELANDIC HORSE ASSOCIATION (AIHA)

*Alys Culhane writes:* Last fall I suggested at a teleconference that we put together a club membership directory. This was after seeing the Maine club's listing. All liked this idea and club secretary Fran Buntzen took on the job of putting it together.

Fran asked Andy Noble, a teenager and aspiring artist, to come up with a cover, and then got her daughter Sarah to assist with the computer work. For the two, putting together this document turned out to be an enjoyable, but time-consuming task. Fran took stock of our current membership by contacting club members in the three core areas, The Kenai, Southcentral, and Interior Alaska. She next got the names, snail mail, email addresses, and phone numbers of all the AIHA members and several non-members, and then along with Sarah, typed the information into the computer and formatted it. Along the way, Fran convinced a few to renew their memberships, and a few more to join up.

There were then repeated trips to the copy center. Fran presumed that she and Sarah would have to spend time stapling the directory together, but the printers inadvertently did this for them, which meant that there was no charge. The completed document was then mailed out to members.

This document is on the way to becoming an invaluable resource for club members. It's already provided us with much-needed demographic information. Here's where the AIHA is now at. We have 11 family, 10 individual, and one associate membership. We also have 10 non-member listings. Twelve listings are in the Interior, 14 are in Southcentral, and six are in Kenai region. The listed individuals own approximately 43 geldings, 26 mares, and four stallions. This is an approximation because one member indicated that she had "several" Icelandic horses and another that she "owns Icelandics." In addition, one member has part ownership of an out-of-state stallion.

As importantly, our directory has made it easier for us all to make Icelandic



The Flugnir Club held an ice-riding exhibition on Oconomowoc Lake, WI, in February. About 75 spectators attended. Shown here are riders Haukur Thorvaldsson, left, on Pia from Winterhorse Park and Dan Riva on the stallion Fjalar fra Bjargsholi. Photo courtesy Elizabeth (Dink) Everson.

horse-related connections. Having this in hand has made the process of preparing for upcoming clinics, breed promos, and trail rides an easier endeavor. It's very convenient, having this information right at our fingertips. Much thanks to Andy, Fran, and Sarah for making this happen!

## THE CASCADE ICELANDIC HORSE CLUB

*Dawn Shaw writes:* The Cascade Icelandic Horse Club had a booth the Northwest Horse Fair and Expo in Albany, OR for the 11th year straight, greeting people and answering questions about the breed. A drill team consisting primarily of club members rode in the breed demos and, as always, made a positive impression on the viewing audience.

Long time Cascade Club member Niels West was given honorary lifetime club membership. Niels was a longtime breeder of Icelandic horses, owning and operating Red Hill Ranch. He continued riding until the age of 90, but unfortunately in 2006, a debilitating stroke forced

the sale of the ranch and all the horses. He has made a remarkable recovery and appreciates hearing from Icelandic horse owners and especially enjoys receiving photos. He can be contacted via email at [westnj@gmail.com](mailto:westnj@gmail.com).

## THE FLUGNIR ICELANDIC HORSE ASSOCIATION OF THE MIDWEST

*Barb Riva writes:* I'm happy to report that Flugnir is going through some excellent revitalization. Our web site is looking good with new updates: see [www.flugnir.50megs.com](http://www.flugnir.50megs.com). We have some exciting plans for a Flugnir-sponsored Breeding Horse Evaluation to be held at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI on June 16-17, along with a young horse evaluation on June 18. Winterhorse will then organize a sanctioned competition on June 19-20.

We have also organized the first Minnesota schooling show at Gerry Oliver's ranch in Pelican Rapids to be held on



Klettafjalla members Florie and Coralie getting ready to ride in the Mane Event. Photo by Sean Denmeade.

May 14-16. We are hoping to introduce the riding and showing of Icelandic horses to a brand-new group of people.

Winter months in the midwest can prove to be a challenge to stay active in the saddle. Steve and Deb Cook took part in the breed demonstration at Equifest in Wichita, KS. On February 13, the Icelandic horse was again represented in the Waseca, MN Sleigh and Cutter parade, with a number of Flugnir members riding their horses. On February 20-21, a handful of members had the opportunity to take part in an ice-riding clinic in Wisconsin. On the second day, approximately 60 spectators enjoyed watching the Icelandic horses perform their gaits on ice at Oconomowoc Lake.

Winter is Thorrablot season. The traditional midwinter Icelandic celebration was again enjoyed by a handful of Flugnir members. Many participants added to the feast with items made from Icelandic recipes. Smoked lamb was the main course, imported from Iceland. Some other dishes were herring salad, spice cake, fish balls, and the Christmas Drink. The festivities started with a trail ride around the Winterhorse Park grounds followed by a beer tolt competition. Games and a great Irish recital offered some fun entertainment.

Finally, we are all extremely proud of one of our youth members, Kevin Draeger, who will be attending this year's

FEIF Youth Cup in Denmark this summer. We've all had the pleasure of watching Kevin progress over the years.

### **FRIDA ICELANDIC RIDING CLUB (FIRC) OF THE MID-ATLANTIC**

*Sam Castleman writes:* What a start to 2010! The snow missing over the last 13 years found FIRC members and our horses this winter (oddly enough "big snow" lost the address of our neighbor club to the north, Northeast Icelandic Horse Club). Consequently, rather than January and February being a time to work out kinks between rider and horse, many instead struggled at accomplishing the most basic of tasks, feeding and watering. The melt started in March and left behind lots of mud but we are all about making up for lost time.

Our spring riding season was launched with a 2010 Kick-Off Party in March—no horses but lots of conversations about them and plans made for the coming year. FIRC members turned out in great numbers and many traveled long distances. We did a live screening of our new members-only information-sharing site, sang Icelandic songs, played Icelandic trivia games, gave awards for service to the club, and ate great food all prepared by club members.

Our 2010 schedule as we know it: April: free clinic and quadrille by club

member, Sandy Newkirk; young horse evaluation with Barbara Frische and Katrina Sheehan; and riding Clinic with Katrina Sheehan. June: Schooling Show. July: Summer picnic and club annual meeting. September: free clinic and quadrille by club member, Sandy Newkirk. October: Private lessons with Gudmar Petursson. December: Christmas Parade of Horses (about 400 horses decorated).

Of course, many fabulous trail rides pepper our calendar between the above activities. Given the large geographic covered by our membership, it is our hope that launching this new share-site will encourage members to post rides in their local areas, inviting other club members to join. For additional information on club events, please see FIRC events calendar at [www.firc.us](http://www.firc.us).

### **KLETTAFJALLA ICELANDIC HORSE CLUB (ROCKY MOUNTAIN)**

*Coralie Denmeade writes:* It was a slow start for the club this year. With two board members stepping down—thank you, Linda McLaughlin and Marisue Wells for all you did!—it took a while to get re-organized. But the new board members, Florie Miller (Secretary) and Judith Ahrens (Treasurer) stepped up to the task. After a few weeks of settling in, the board had to pace itself—there were too many good ideas to fit into one year.



Brandon meeting an Icelandic horse for the first time courtesy of the Klettafjalla Club—and loving it! Photo by Sean Denmeade.

---

Getting a new website and ensuring that we would get as many Icelandic horse owners in the Rocky Mountain region as possible to join us were the biggest tasks. Both have been completed successfully. The website is up and running ([www.klettafjalla.com](http://www.klettafjalla.com)) and should make it easier for club members to stay in touch, as well as for interested people to learn more about Klettafjalla. We currently have 35 members, most of them from Colorado with a few members in Utah, Wyoming, and Nevada. We are proud that we were able to get most of last year's members to sign up again. But there are also quite a few new members and some that we had "lost" for a few years.

Almost immediately after that, the club got an enthusiastic response from the organizers of the Rocky Mountain Horse Expo in Denver, when inquiring if it would still be possible to participate. The expo (March 12–14) was a great success for the club, especially considering that it was the first time, a last-second decision, and required low investment. With an information booth, the breed stall and a small drill team, the club was able to introduce many visitors to the Icelandic breed or give them the opportunity to see their very first Icelandic. Due to the short notice, only two horses and riders were able to make it. The horses did well as breed ambassadors and in the drill. People loved their looks and were impressed by their performance. The drill act got positive feedback all around and was invited to at least two upcoming events. The Horse Expo in Denver is still small, but growing, and the club should definitely consider participating next year, maybe with a bigger drill team and more horses.

With a good start in our pockets, we are looking forward to a busy and exciting year. A clinic with Gudmar Petursson is planned for May 22-23 in Golden, CO. A trail ride in Carbondale, CO, on June 12 is being organized. And everybody is excited for the very first Icelandic horse show in the Rockies. Anne Kruuse and Dave Irish have invited Alex Pregitzer for a schooling show in Steamboat Springs, CO. We are also hearing rumors about



Kraftur member Laura Benson is spending a year teaching and learning at Holar College in Iceland.

young horse evaluations in the area, which are being looked forward to for their informational value. A lot of members have these dates marked in their calendars and they might have to add some more. There are more trail rides and events in the pipeline.

For more information on Klettafjalla and the upcoming events, please visit our new website: [www.klettafjalla.com](http://www.klettafjalla.com).

## **KRAFTUR (NORTHERN CALIFORNIA)**

*Bert Bates writes:* It's been a while since our last update, so let's catch up. Last June, Kraftur members Annette Coulon, Kathy Sierra, and Bert Bates competed in the Los Angeles Icelandic Horse Show, hosted by Valhalla Icelandic Horses. Johannes Hoyas judged the show and offered lots of great mentoring as well.

In August, Doug Smith, Gayle Smith, and Lucy Nold traveled to the world championships in Switzerland to sup-

port (in a thousand ways) the U.S. team. Thanks a million you guys!

In recent years Kraftur members (okay, mostly Annette) have hosted an ongoing series of wonderful clinics, led by such luminaries as "Jolli" Isolfsson, Mette Manseth, Gudmar Petursson, Steinar Sigurbjornsson, and of course our own Laura Benson. Last summer and fall were no exception as Steinar joined us in mid-August to kick our butts once again. In October, Jolli and Steinar joined us again, Jolli at Coast Road Stables and Steinar at the temporarily named "Hilltop Icelandic" farm.

In November, several Kraftur members returned to Santa Ynez to represent northern California in Flying C's Fall Classic.

Every December, Laurie Prestine and Donna Brown coordinate Kraftur's participation in the local Los Gatos Holiday Parade. This year we had 18 horses and riders in the parade. Of all the activities



Maine Icelandic Horse Association members pause during an energizing ride at Popham Beach State Park.

we do, this parade probably represents the single most effective way that we introduce Icelandic horses to the rest of the world.

At the turn of the New Year, Laura Benson departed to attend her third year at Holar. When time permits Laura keeps us current with her successes and tribulations in Iceland; congrats Laura! Doug and Gayle Smith continue to take many trips to survey their extensive holdings in Iceland, and frankly, we can't quite keep track of them.

In Santa Cruz county, with winter comes rain. As always, riding and clinics get harder to squeeze in between rain storms and mud. March saw the beginning of the end of the rainy season, and Steinar returned to help us get the winter cobwebs out of our saddles, our breeches, and our hibernating horses.

Throughout the year, Steindor Thorrisson, master Icelandic farrier, traveled to the Santa Cruz area. Many of Kraftur's

members use Steindor as their primary farrier, and our horses benefit greatly from Steindor's bimonthly trips. Steindor has recently added hot shoeing to his already considerable bag of tricks.

As always, we get together often to ride through Larkin Valley, on the beach at Moss Landing, in various local state parks, and most often last summer at Wilder Ranch, where several club rides were perpetrated. You might know that the state of California is experiencing some budget problems. The Governor has proposed shutting down many of California's state parks as a cost-cutting measure. All of us at Kraftur are keeping our fingers crossed that this proposal won't come to pass, as many of our favorite trail rides would be affected by these closures.

### **MAINE ICELANDIC HORSE ASSOCIATION (MIHA)**

*Jan Fletcher writes:* Since I didn't get a regional club report in for the last

Quarterly, I'll briefly summarize the end of 2009. MIHA members had a busy ending to 2009 with small group trail rides at several state parks and private lands. Bradbury Mountain State Park is a favorite plus Popham Beach State Park. Bradbury Mountain is a small mountain (a hill compared to some of our Western readers' mountain terrain) where we love the little challenges and friendly hikers. Popham Beach is beautiful even when it's cold and windy. The horses were energized with the sounds of surf, the expansive horizon, and their seldom-felt herd excitement. We completed the day with a tailgate lunch. Members also participated in several multi-breed horse events such as a hunter pace, driving demonstrations, Morgan fund raiser, and a pony club fundraiser.

Cindy Wescott was able to host clinics in her indoor arena despite any foul weather. Gudmar Petursson and Steinar Sigurbjornsson were the clinicians for the



spring and fall instruction.

By fall we were eager to finish the year with some group fun. A clinic and trail ride was attended by a large number of members at Acorn Hill Farm. Jen Grady, our instructor, worked on a variety of riding techniques and issues to address everyone's interests. We all enjoyed a potluck lunch and then headed out on the trails.

MIHA's annual meeting on April 17 at Skyline Farm will include a trace clipping demo by Jan Fletcher and Stormur, as well as a talk on Lyme disease and emerging equine health issues presented by Janelle Tirrell, DVM. Also in 2010, Boulder Ridge Icelandics will host three clinics by Sigrun Brynjarsdottir, Gudmar Petursson, and Steinar Sigurbjornsson. MIHA is sponsoring a Saturday schooling clinic and trail ride for July, August, and September at Acorn Hill Farm. Again Jen Grady will work with individual issues for horse and rider. Trail safety and etiquette will also be reviewed. Our last group event will be the Popham Beach ride on October 30.

To check out additional information about MIHA, visit the website at [www.maineicelandics.org](http://www.maineicelandics.org)

## **NORTHEAST ICELANDIC HORSE CLUB (NEIHC)**

*Amy Goddard writes:* Late winter and early spring of 2010 have already been quite busy for NEIHC members, and more events are scheduled for May and June.



Heleen Heyning's festive toltling horse chocolate cake was a crowd favorite at the Northeast Icelandic Horse Club's Thorrablot. Photo by Betty Grindrod.



Amy Goddard and Betty Grindrod flank Bunny Queen, Nicki Esdorn at the Northeast Icelandic Horse Club's Bunny Hop ride in April. Photo by Karen McDonald.

About 40 members and guests attended our annual Thorrablot, which was held on March 6 at Aspinwall Stable in Lenox, MA and hosted, once again, by Brian Puntin. Party organizer Betty Grindrod did a fine job of coordinating the splendid variety of foods brought by members, which included such culinary delights as shrimp, smoked salmon, bruschetta, black bean salad, lamb stew, meat pie, and pickled red cabbage. Delicious desserts consisted of chocolate cake, fruit tart, white chocolate skyr tart, and apple streudel. A highlight of the evening was Eileen Gunipero and Susan Milloy's arrival after driving all day from parts far south!

On March 25, Lori Leo's much-anticipated clinic with world champion Stian Pedersen went off track when Stian was unable to enter the U.S. Heleen Heyning writes: "On Thursday night, we were tucked into bed at the motel, routinely checking email before going to sleep around 10:30pm...hmmm...what's this? What clinic has been cancelled exactly? Customs had requested to see Stian's return e-ticket. Unfortunately, the clinic schedule was stapled to this, which gave away his real purpose to this 'visit.' He was

sent right back home on the same plane he arrived in. We never saw him.

"On Friday morning, leave it to Martina Gates to make lemonade out of lemons. A few calls back and forth to Katrin Sheehan in Georgia, where Nicole Kempf, German trainer and champion, has been staying for several weeks. She's found willing to teach a two-day clinic and is flown to Boston late Friday afternoon. Lori did not have a nervous breakdown after all!

"Meanwhile, while waiting for Nicole's arrival, we decided to practice the drill team demo with about nine horses and riders. Practice we did. Katherine Slattery and Martina relished shouting orders at us from the ground. What fun to complete the sequence successfully! We had a blast! Fabulous dinner at Lori and Mike's for all participants that night, prepared by our gracious hostess herself. (How does she do it all?)

"On Saturday, Nicole taught private lessons all day in the indoor arena. Everyone was very happy with the instruction and learned plenty. Yet another great dinner at Lori and Mike's that night for even more people. Kristjan, Johanna, and Thorunn of Thor Icelandics were visiting,



Nökkvi frá Lágafelli (IS1989184357) pictured here recovering from his major surgery for cancer. Photo by Andrea Barber.

and Kristjan experienced a massage chair for the first time. The atmosphere was wildly animated, with more laughing than some have done in a long time. Nicole was impressed and pleased with the number of very good horses to work with.

“On Sunday, private lessons were held on the outdoor track. Things were good. The clinic was a huge success and a lot of fun. Special thanks to Lori and Mike for hosting this fantastic event, and for Katrin for graciously offering us Nicole.”

The annual NEIHC Bunny Hop ride was held on April 3 at Rockefeller State Park Preserve in Sleepy Hollow, NY. Nicki Esdorn writes: “Thank you all Bunny Hoppers for coming! We had great fun for our first ride of the year. We had 17 Icelandics and three guests with quarterhorses. I went out before the ride and scouted the trails after a lot of rain damage and fallen trees; Rockefeller’s had cleared almost everywhere so we could ride along the beautiful river on the Thirteen Bridges Trail. We had a fast, medium, and ‘late-comers’ group. Welcome to first-timers Rick and Pilar! And welcome back, Amy, who created this ride! Hope to see you all at the Turkey Tolt or before!”

Other news includes a redesign of the NEIHC website by Thorunn Kristjansdottir and more drill team practices and events to be coordinated by Karleen Oosterwal. We look forward to FEIF

evaluations to be held at MillFarm on May 22–23, and a schooling show at Thor Icelandics on May 29–30.

NEIHC members are encouraged to check the NEIHC Yahoo mail group, our website, neihc.com, and our Facebook page for news of upcoming events. Or contact Brian Puntin by phone: 413-528-3003 or email: bpuntin@bcn.net.

## THE SAINT SKUTLA ICELANDIC HORSE CLUB

*Andrea Barber writes:* Spring is here in Central and Western New York! Everything is about two weeks earlier than normal—but we (and the horses) will gladly take it. The horses are turning their noses up at the hay now that the grass is coming in lush and green, shed fur is flying everywhere, foals are soon to be born, and everyone is getting back in the saddle. I’m always amazed every year how a place so stark white in winter can become so green and lush come spring.

Winter was a recuperative one for both people and horses. Several of our members were nursing injuries and several of our horses had various illnesses. But the cold and the snow provide good excuses for lots of rest and recovery. Our club has also expanded with the addition of two new members. Ruth Morford from the Pittsburgh, PA area—which is just south of most of us—has a beautiful buckskin mare named Molda frá Tunguhálsi II (IS1999257896). Chris Soeffner lives just to our north in Grand Valley Ontario, Canada with her two Icelandics, Kinna from Fjalla Vegur (CA2000201506) and Kalsi from Red Pine Ridge (CA2002101624). We are excited to have Chris and her Canadian friends join us on some trail rides and other events this year and to possibly cross the border with our horses and do the same in Canada. We are also hopeful that Chris and other Canadians will soon be able to be either members or official “friends” of the USIHC just like we in the U.S. are able to be members of the CIHF.

Clinics, trail trials, hunter paces, breeding evaluations, shows, and trail rides are all on the agenda for many of us this riding season.

## WESTCOAST CAN-AM ICELANDIC HORSE CLUB

*Kathy Lockerbie writes:* This season has been busy for our members. Over the past year the number of local Icelandic horse owners has increased substantially. We think this is due to the efforts of our membership to “show off” their horses in public. We have participated in demos at horse expos such as the Mane Event in Chilliwack, BC, Canada, and we went Christmas Caroling on horseback in Lynden, WA. There are often a few Icelandic horses at local trail events too. Our club puts on private events for our members as well. In March we had a ladies weekend on Vancouver Island. Ten of us rode in a Provincial Park (State Park) and had lunch at an old English pub. It was our third year for this event.

We are a small club and we are growing. With more members, we have been able to give better support to some upcoming events which are specifically intended for the Icelandic horse. This coming May, some of our members will be attending the Riding Badge course held at Red Feather Ranch in Trout Lake, WA. Red Feather has been the location of many successful events. It is a beautiful facility with everything needed to host Icelandic horse events, including a regulation size track.

In June our Canadian members are hosting two exciting events. A Sport Judging seminar will be taking place which is open to international participants. Starting on June 14 and finishing on the 18-20 with a Sport Competition. The instructor will be Jens Nielson from Denmark. Six Americans are enrolled in the class already. If you need to renew your Intern Judge certification, want to become an Intern Judge, or just want to learn more about judging sport competitions, this is your chance. For more information about the judging seminar, contact Arnold Faber at 1-250-503-0614. Following the seminar there will be a show with lots of classes, including sport, pleasure, and fun. For more information about the Toltally Icelandic Horse Show on June 19–20, contact Nathalie Jones at tuskast@shaw.ca or Kathy Lockerbie at 360-398-2404.

# PLEASURE RIDING IN 2009

INTRODUCTION BY KAREN OLSON-FIELDS, PRP CHAIR

The 2009 USIHC Pleasure Riding Program rode right through the recession! Eighty members of the USIHC signed up for the Pleasure Riding Program. Clearly the PRP is a program that brings Congress members together for a common goal: to promote the Icelandic horse doing what we love to do most, *ride!* Thanks to all who have enrolled despite tough times for the wallet.

This year, eight rider/horse teams achieved 100-hour patches, five teams the 500-hour patch, four the 1000-hour patch and riding vests, and one member the 2500-hour subscription award from *Tolt News* magazine. Our medal winners have their engraved gold, silver and bronze medals, and our first-place winners will be getting their embroidered jackets any day.

The Regional Club award went to the Flugnir Icelandic Horse Association of the Midwest. PRP Flugnir members were awarded fleece scarves with the USIHC logo. The 2010 regional club with the most PRP riders will win the 2010 award. Can Flugnir be beat? It isn't too late to sign up for the 2010 PRP.

Although we lost our last year's sponsor (she no longer is a sales representative for Kerrits and Ariat), I found a new resource. Horse Crazy Equestrian tack and clothing, in Draper, UT, helped provide the 1000-hour vests and first-place jackets. Thanks to Tammy, owner and operator of Horse Crazy.

The 2010 PRP currently includes 68 enrollees, including several new members and youth riders. Welcome "Newbies" and welcome back "Oldies but Goodies."

My goal for 2009 was to establish a community service PRP award. I was not able to make this happen. I dropped the reins on this one. My hopes for the 2010 PRP are to:

- pick the reins back up on a community service award
- recruit committee members who have an interest in updating our web page
- recruit a committee member who will write quarterly PRP newsletters
- recruit more youth riders



Heidi (on Seimur) and Amber Parry (on Dagfinnur) riding through the aspens in Grand Mesa National Forest, Collbran, Colorado. Photo by Bob Gil.

Congratulations PRP winners and dedicated riders! The following are personal stories from our 2009 PRP medal winners. Enjoy!

## **1ST PLACE YOUTH DIVISION AMBER PARRY SAUK CITY, WI**

Last year was a great year for riding! And another has just begun. This was my first time participating in the Pleasure Rider Program, as I had always thought that it would be too hard to keep track of my hours, but that was completely untrue. It was a delight finally being able to see actually how many hours I spend with my wonderful Icelandic horses just in the span of one year. Together we participated in jumping clinics, gait clinics, group trail rides with all breeds (and some with just Icelandics), competitions, expos, and horse fairs ... each one an adventure and great learning experience.

The summer of 2009 was extra

special: My Mom and I took our first ever "horse trip" out west to Collbran, CO (near Grand Junction) and spent almost all of our time riding. Our two geldings really seemed to enjoy the trip. Seimur and Dagfinnur were great and acclimated to the elevation change in the mountains very quickly—much faster than I did! The best part was seeing Seimur's reaction to seeing his very first beefalo when we stopped at Fort Robinson, NB. He wasn't sure if it was friend or foe! Our horses sure know how to make us laugh.

Participating in this program has also encouraged me to stay consistent in how much time I spend every day riding or training my horses. There is a goal: The PRP promotes a happy and healthy relationship between you and your horse by encouraging you to spend more quality time with your horses. Thank you to all who help make this program possible. And anyone who is even considering joining—just do it! You'll have a lot of fun.

## **2ND PLACE YOUTH DIVISION CALEIGH ANDERSON SALTSBURG, PA**

One of the greatest times I had earning my Pleasure Riding hours was at a 4-H sponsored multi-discipline weekend horse clinic, which was a ton of fun for Prins and me.

At the camp there were driving, geocaching, competitive trail riding, and pleasure trail riding sessions. I attended all of those camps—we were the only horse and rider combination to do so! First, my friend Josh, Prins, and I went to the geocaching session. We were handed a GPS and headed out to the trails at Crooked Creek Horse Park with coordinates of various markers (think of it as a horseback scavenger hunt). I got close to the first marker when suddenly I dropped the GPD in the mud. I got off to retrieve it and saw a blue bottle, which was the first thing we needed. I grabbed what was inside and got back on (while Prins waited patiently). Prins started to get excited so I let him tolt at full speed. We left that horse in the dust but since it was a game horse they caught up to us and suddenly we had a horse race going! We passed the second marker so we got our horses under control and found the second marker. We crossed a river and a goose was standing at water's edge. Prins didn't spook but the other horses did. Then Prins tried to play in the water by splashing me. I moved on wet and we



Caleigh Anderson and her very special horse, Prins. Photo by Jeanie Anderson.

found the rest of the markers.

Next we tried competitive trail riding. First a vet checked all the horses to make sure that they were in good health. Prins passed. Prins and I went fast because we wanted to get to the checkpoint first. We did, and Prins's heart rate was extremely good! I was allowed to continue. I finished in fourth place out of 30 other horses. The placing was based on how good shape my horse was in and how fast we finished. I was very happy with Prins. I gave him a bath and then sat down in his stall with my riding log to calculate how many hours I had ridden that day.

The next day was the driving training. I have wanted to teach Prins to pull our antique sleigh for a long time. The

clinician said Prins was a natural with his cadence and collection. I learned how to officially line drive Prins, which he apparently already knew how to do, based on his willingness.

Each session had a different clinician and each was equally impressed with their first-ever encounter with an Icelandic horse. Prins's breed's versatility shone through in every session.

We had another fun time this past winter. We got loads of snow in the month of February (49 inches total). Prins thought he was back in Iceland! The morning of the first big snow I walked down to the barn and got Prins out. We started to make a path to our house. He was unsure about the deep snow at first but he went where I asked him. Prins enjoyed it, after awhile of plowing snow. That day both he and I were tired from walking in the deep snow.

I ride for fun, not to earn hours, but this year I earned my 1,000-hour patch. I didn't ride all that in one year but I have been working on that patch and now it's mine. I am a proud owner of a 100-hour patch, a 500-hour patch, and now a 1,000-hour patch!

I want to thank my mom and dad for being supportive, my sister Constance for teaching me everything Gudmar Petursson taught her about the proper riding technique for Icelandics, but most of all, my grandma, Mary Burns, for buying me my Icelandic horse!

## **1ST PLACE ADULT DIVISION WESTERN REGION HEATHER SKOPIK LA HABRA, CA**

Riding my Icelandic horse is a pleasure no matter when or where. The Pleasure Riders Program is a great way to log your hours and share your rides with friends. My horse logs a lot of trail hours with me, doing a lot of exciting things. We ride on patrol for the county of Los Angeles Parks Department as volunteers. We participate in River Clean-Up days, security patrol for county functions, and are all-around trail eyes and ears. It's a wonderful opportunity to introduce the World's Best Horse to people hiking and riding in the parks.

We do a lot of training with "desensitizing" materials like cop cars or fire engines with their horns and lights on, walking through flares and dealing with



Heather Skopik aboard Neisti frá Saurbae.

crowds. We participate with large L.A. County sponsored trail events like the Michael D. Antonovich Trail Dusters to raise money and increase trail awareness. The "Antonovich" ride averages over 200 riders twice a year.

Another event we ride a lot of hours in is the AKC Field Trials. This is an amazing event. We dry camp out in the deserts and mountains all over California and watch our hunting dogs (mainly California Brittanys) hunt for birds in competition. We ride long hours for many days following the dogs everywhere. This introduces the horses to new experiences like shotguns, running dogs, and camping on stake-outs. Everyone is always amazed at how strong and hardy our "little horses" are. Many hunters ask us "can that little horse keep up with the big gaited horses?" Unfortunately, it's often hard for *them* to keep up long enough to hear my answer!

Another event we enjoy is weekend and week-long camping with other horse groups like Equestrian Trails Inc. (ETI). We've traveled the Sequoias, the San Gabriel Mountains, Cleveland National Forest, San Joaquin Valley, and Cayumaca. More and more often I am seeing Icelandic horses being ridden in these group events. Whether my Icelandic is packing, ponying, or carrying me along, he's always willing and often out in front leading the way.

I think the secret is out on these guys, they truly are the most pleasurable horse that will ever own us. No matter where we go, my Icelandic is up for the challenge and always makes my life so much more pleasurable. I can hardly wait to ride tomorrow. Maybe we'll see you out on the trail?

### **2ND PLACE ADULT DIVISION WESTERN REGION LORI BIRGE YAKIMA, WA**

My 11-year-old Icelandic gelding, Geisli frá Vermont Icelandic Horse Farm, enjoyed many activities during 2009. We train regularly in the arena at our home in Yakima, WA. In addition, we ride around the neighborhood with his Tennessee Walker buddy, whose running walk can't quite keep up with a tolt. Our neighbors grow apples and pears, and we have permission to ride beside the orchards and enjoy watching the trees bloom, then the fruit grow and ripen.

In addition to local riding, we attended a clinic and schooling show with Alex Prezigter and Svanny Stefansdottir sponsored by Red Feather Icelandic Horse Farm in Trout Lake, WA. We also helped plan and then rode in the annual Cascade Icelandic Horse Club winery ride. This event involves riding between three or four different wineries in the Yakima Valley, tasting the wines, and then stopping for a picnic lunch along the way. Of course, we are always careful to drink only a little wine so that we are safe on our horses.

Some new events that we tried this year were to go on several organized trail rides. Most notable was a fund-raising ride put on by a local drill team. Geisli was the only Icelandic horse and drew a lot of attention with his tolt and cute looks. Another ride was sponsored by the local Backcountry Horsemen group. We camped at White Pass in the Cascade Mountains of central Washington and rode various trails from the horse camp. These were our first experiences with high lining, and Geisli took to it well. Geisli and I also attended a horse expo for the first time when we participated with the Cascade Club in a breed demo at Celebrate the Horse in Puyallup, WA.

I am so pleased with the versatility of my Icelandic horse. He is equally comfortable in a horse show, demo, or trail ride. We look forward to more of the same type of riding in 2010, as well as something new because we joined a newly-formed Icelandic horse drill team.

### **3RD PLACE ADULT DIVISION WESTERN REGION DAWN SHAW GRAPEVIEW, WA**

My primary riding horse in 2009 was my silver dapple mare, Thoka. Aside from lots and lots of trail rides, I took dressage lessons on her, as well as riding her in a couple of breed demos with the Cascade Icelandic Horse Club here in the northwest. We've also done one all-gaited breed competition and a riding clinic. In



Dawn Shaw and Thoka in a dressage lesson.



Lori Birge and Geisli at Red Feather Icelandic Horse Farm in Trout Lake, Washington.

addition to riding Thoka, I started three of my young horses this year. Brjánn, my stallion, Sola (aka Pala), and Freyja, the four-year-old daughter of my beloved Askja, whom I lost to colic in September.

Toward the end of the year I made a decision to buy back Aradis (Disa), a mare from my own breeding. Her mother is Sólskríkja frá Gauksmyri, whom I lost in 2005 after a difficult delivery. Disa continues on into 2010 as my primary riding horse during Thoka's pregnancy and maternity leave.

Some of you may be asking "how can a professional trainer be allowed to participate in the PRP?" My answer is simple. I do not take riding credit for any horse I am paid to train or that I am specifically preparing with the intent to sell. Riding and training my own horses is truly a pleasure and gives me a warm fuzzy feeling. Just because I am a professional doesn't mean I'm not allowed to have fun!

## **2ND PLACE ADULT DIVISION CENTRAL-MOUNTAIN KYDEE SHEETZ PROCTOR, MN**

"Can your pony keep up?" We've all heard the "pony question." The speaker looks down from the back of a big horse and comments that Icelandic horses are "cute." Icelandics are rare in northern Minnesota, and mine are a novelty for most people. My horses and I are devoted to proving how far a well-trained Icelandic can go, whether it be in long-distance riding, moving cattle, or dressage. To that end, in 2009 my horses and I participated in activities ranging from breed demonstrations to Extreme Cowboy racing.

I first encountered the "pony question" at an all-breed fund raising trail ride. Kari was 18 years old. I politely replied that keeping up wouldn't be a problem. After several miles of having to "hang with the herd" in this group ride he was frustrated at the slow progress, so we moved to the front of the line and started an impromptu series of races taking on all comers. He never lost and routinely left his opponents so far behind that they were whinnying. After the group got too tired to keep up, we just galloped the last mile back to camp alone. Nobody questioned our ability to "keep up" after that.

The next person to ask the "pony question" was looking down derisively

from the back of an Appaloosa as we were leaving a ranch house in North Dakota to help round up an Angus bull. My Icelandic did start out a bit slow because we'd just returned from an eight-mile trek in the mountains while the other horses and riders had been eating breakfast. Within a short time, however, we got our second wind and moved to the front of the line as the "big horses" played out traversing the rough terrain. We helped round up the reluctant bull and guided him to a catch



Fonix frá Sydsta-Osi and Gloria Verrecchio take time to smell the flowers on Buffalo Ridge in South Dakota. Photo by Vince Verrecchio.

pen a few miles away. My Icelandic then gleefully galloped and tolled the last few miles into camp and arrived long before the rest of the crew.

Initially, our most adamant critics were my fellow mounted patrol enthusiasts. I am a volunteer deputy sheriff with the Carlton County Mounted Posse. Our primary focus is search and rescue, but we are also called upon to work in crowd control and public relations. Kari's best friend on the mounted patrol is a 2,100-pound Percheron. They make a great pair as Kari's poise in confronting noisy crowds and leading the way through blaring sirens and noisy equipment help his massive buddy to function with confidence and push his intimidating bulk through virtually any obstacle. At our first yearly state-wide mounted patrol competition a few years ago, one stern judge looked critically at my Icelandic

and told me to bring my "real horse" the next year. That year we placed third out of approximately 80 competitors in the obstacle course competition. In 2008 we placed second. That same judge was chagrined when a nearly flawless performance in 2009 compelled the judging panel to award my Icelandic the state championship trophy buckle! We have earned the respect of our fellow competitors. I deliberately bring different Icelandics each year so as to prove that it's

not just one exceptional horse but rather one exceptional breed. That judge is now considering buying a couple Icelandics.

## **3RD PLACE ADULT DIVISION CENTRAL-MOUNTAIN GLORIA VERRECCHIO MARINE ON ST. CROIX, MN**

Many of my pleasure riding hours have been accumulated in training youngsters I've bred, foaled, and raised for the previous four plus years. In 2009 I continued training two of those youngsters; Kappi (five-year-old gelding sired by Fonix) and Aradis (six-year-old mare sired by Holdur frá Brun). Working with each of them stretched my abilities and as ever, they taught me a lot. Kappi sold in March and Aradis in October so now each has their own person.

The best riding of the year, however, was in June (and again in August) when we

and our friends hauled four Icelandics to Veblen, SD, to trail ride on over 2,000 acres at Prairie Sky Ranch. This guest ranch has small cabins that sleep four to six people, or you can get a room in the lodge. The meals at the lodge were excellent and we ate buffalo and other game. There are pipe corrals or stalls in the barn for your horses. I called ahead and received permission to bring our stallion, Fonix. He was so excited to be in a new place and did his best to show off for the resident mare herd. Even so, the folks at Prairie Sky were amazed that he was always so polite and easy. The riding was fabulous. We rode across buffalo pastures, up and down ravines, across creeks, and on dirt roads. The horses, all imported from Iceland, loved the wide open spaces. I think they thought they were back in the old country again! Our guide, Stacy, rode a “big” horse, and that poor horse had to trot to keep up with our walking and canter/gallop to keep up with the tolt. On the last day Stacy took a test ride on Fonix so she could experience tolt. Needless to mention, she loved the ride. We were invited to return with Fonix anytime. So, in August we did just that. This time with six horses, so Stacy could ride an Icelandic on trail with us. That evening at dinner she was bragging up how great the Icelandics were to ride and how much fun it was that day. The next morning at breakfast, the owner’s wife asked to ride with us too. She, too, enjoyed the smooth ride and forwardness of the Icelandics. We hope to return to Prairie Sky in 2010.

In October, I attended the young horse evaluations at Winterhorse Park, WI with Aradis, took lessons with Hali Victorsson, and then hauled Mosi and Sara for more lessons with Hali again in November. The late fall weather cooperated and we were trail riding right into early December. After giving pony rides to our grandchildren, my last ride of the year was around the farm, on Fonix, on a snowy Christmas Eve. The perfect ending to a wonderful year.

**1ST PLACE  
ADULT DIVISION  
EASTERN REGION  
ANNE OWEN  
WHITEHOUSE STATION, NJ**

I love my Icelandic horses Gna and Freyr and the more I can do with them, the better. I have had Gna for six years and I bought her from Iceland. She is the most awesome black mare with a great



Anne Owen and Freyr enjoy a beautiful spring day.

mind and a very fast tolt. She is a real sweetheart and my soul mate (don’t tell my husband). I have had Freyr for two years. He is a little cutie, a golden dun and a natural tolt. So if anyone wants to feel a good tolt, he is your man. I am so lucky to have two great horses with really good gaits. I try to ride every day doing something fun out on the trails or in the arena. I have great people to ride with on Icelandics and other horse breeds. I am also lucky to have a great trail system in my backyard here where I live in New Jersey. Along with miles of park trails, we have generous landowners who give us passage through their properties. Even passed herds of buffalo.

Including trail riding and generally having fun Icelandic style, we also get up to a few other things during the year. We were in five hunter paces last year and placed in each of them with three first-place ribbons and a second and a third in the other. It is fun to watch the hunter jumper riders on their hunters look at the Icelandic horses and compliment the pretty little ponies. Next you have to give a quick history of the breed and educate them not to use the “p” word—and then shock them when you outrun them on the pace! They look so smooth when they

are tolt. Those cute little hairy beasties, they kick some butt.

I also take Gna and Freyr to the New Jersey Horse Expo each year to give an Icelandic breed demonstration and participate in a parade of breeds. We do a meet and greet with Gna and Freyr and hand out USIHC literature. This year our trail association provided a demonstration for local fire departments (five of them) on how to rescue horses from a barn during a fire. It was great to see the firemen in all their gear moving horses around. Most of the firemen had never handled a horse before. The horses had not seen the scary equipment before either, but all did very well.

Each year I try to ride the NEIHC Bunny Hop ride held in the spring, as well as the Turkey Tolt ride in the fall at Rockefeller State Park Preserve in New York. The turnout at the Turkey Tolt last year was great, with about 30 Icelandic horses and riders participating, thundering along the trails. It is an awesome sight to see all the different colors of hairy horses tolt along. I am looking forward to many more miles of riding with Gna and Freyr in 2010. Happy tolting!

# THE TRAINING SCALE

BY ANN-CHRISTIN KLOTH AND ALEXANDRA PREGITZER

**D**id you ever hear about the Training Scale and wonder what it was all about?

If you come from a dressage background, this term will be as familiar to you as a pacey or trotty tolt is to all of us. For many other Icelandic horse enthusiasts, however, it may be a term you have never heard of or one that is shrouded in some degree of mystery.

The Training Scale is the basic foundation of horse training, so it is essential to familiarize yourselves with it. We would like to take the mystery out of it, and explain its components and their applicability to Icelandic horses in a simple way.

Like most things that have to do with horses and horse training, it is a very complex topic and not all of it is black and white. There are whole books on this topic. But for now, we will just take a sneak peek.

## WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

Dr. Thomas Ritter writes in an article published in *Topline Ink* magazine in 2008, and reprinted on [www.artisticdressage.com](http://www.artisticdressage.com):

The Training Scale was initially invented in Germany almost a century ago. It is called “Skala der Ausbildung” and was first formulated in the famous Heeresdienstvorschrift (army training manual) from 1912 (HDV 12) by General von Redwitz and Colonel Hans von Heydebreck. Heydebreck and the last director of the cavalry riding school in Hannover, Colonel Felix Bürkner, were in charge of the last two editions of the HDV (I believe it was 1927 and 1935). In these last versions, the modern training scale was canonized. After WWII, The German FN published its “Richtlinien für Reiten und Fahren” (guidelines for riding and driving) based on the old HDV, including the training scale.

Training horses has to have as its aim to develop the horse’s natural physical and mental talents. The horse’s mental development plays a huge role in its training, and building up a good partnership that is based on trust and respect is the foundation of any other work in training. It goes hand in hand with the physical develop-



Asta Covert and Dynjandi fra Dalvik in a collected tolt at the 2009 World Championships. Photo by Mark Johnson.

ment of the horse.

A horse trained with the training scale in mind will be more likely to respond obediently, harmoniously, and without tension to the rider’s aids. If used correctly, the training scale will also help keeping the horse sound and healthy, avoiding injuries and wear-and-tear through wrong training methods.

It is important to realize, as Ritter says in the same article, that “the training scale does not represent a fixed sequence that must be followed slavishly with each horse. Since there is no simple linear, one-directional relationship between the items on the list, but rather a complex, multifaceted interdependency between them, the order in which they are addressed is flexible, but not random. It is dictated by the horse’s current needs.”

The training scale is a tool that refers not only to a long-term training plan, but that also applies to each individual training session.

## SIX ELEMENTS

There are six building blocks on the Training Scale: *rhythm, looseness (or relaxation), contact, impulsion, straightness, and collection*. All of these are interdependent and interwoven. Each stage should be achieved before moving on to the next. The lower rungs should always be revisited in the process to make sure that any progress you have made is genuine.

The elements can further be divided into three categories:

- Rhythm, looseness, and contact are part of the *familiarization phase*. In this phase, the horse finds its balance and rhythm with the rider’s weight on top of it. The horse is relaxed and seeks a connection to the rider’s hands.
- Looseness, contact, impulsion, and straightness form a second phase. The horse is *developing thrust from the hindquarters*. This phase is important to correctly work the horse to keep it sound and supple.



- Impulsion, straightness, and collection are the three building blocks of the third phase, where the horse *is developing the carrying power (of the hind legs)*. This phase is important to reach collection and an upright carriage.

The following explanations look at these six elements in more detail. The information mostly comes from *The Principles of Riding*, which is part of the Official Instruction Handbook of the German National Equestrian Federation. To it we have added some comments and further information specific to Icelandic horses.

## RHYTHM

The term rhythm refers to the regularity of the steps or strides in each gait: The steps should cover equal distances and also be of equal duration. The rhythm should be maintained on straight lines and turns, as well as through transitions. If the rhythm is not persistent or weak, no movement or exercise can be good, and training is incorrect if it results in a loss of rhythm. In the Icelandic horse world, the word beat is also used as a synonym for rhythm.

Horses can, for example, lose their rhythm when their backs are tense or the rider uses rein aids or driving aids that are too strong. There are other reasons for a faulty beat, such as physical or mental tension, conformation issues, health issues, etc.

The walk is a four-beat gait, the trot is two-beat, the tolt is four-beat, canter is three-beat, and flying pace is four-beat. (Some sources will say that flying pace is a two-beat gait because the hooves on the same side come onto the ground very shortly after one another. Technically speaking, though, it is a four-beat gait.)

## LOOSENESS

Looseness (“Losgelassenheit”) is defined as being physically and mentally free from tension or constraint. It is a prerequisite for all further training and, along with rhythm, is an essential aim of the preliminary training phase. The importance of looseness cannot be emphasized enough.

The prerequisite for looseness is a horse that is free of tension, physically and mentally (zwanglos). This is a state of the horse. Looseness, then, is the reaction of the horse to the rider’s actions.

A horse that is “loose” is cooperative. It has a content, happy expression, swings its back rhythmically, has a closed mouth but is still chewing gently on the bit, snorts (this is a sign of mental relaxation), and swings its tail in time with its movements. Only a loose, relaxed horse can follow the rider’s aids and have an open mind to learn new things.

The rider should try to establish a relationship that allows the horse to

understand and figure out what it is asked to do. The best and most effective system must be based on trust. Looseness has been achieved when the horse will stretch its head and neck forward and downwards in all three basic gaits. A horse working with looseness should swing through its back and move with rhythmic unspoiled natural paces; it should not rush forwards, quickening its steps. It should accept the forward driving aids, and the rider should be able to sit the movement and not be thrown out of the saddle. The energy from the hindquarters should pass forward through the horse’s body.

First the horse needs to be “loosened” mentally, which can be achieved through regular, sensitive care and handling, as well as sufficient exercise. Once the horse is mentally relaxed, the physical “looseness” comes relatively quickly. The rider needs to be “loosened,” too. A tense rider, who does not breathe and cannot move supply, makes it hard for the horse to become or stay “loose.”

## CONTACT

Contact is the soft, even, elastic, and steady connection between the rider’s hand and the horse’s mouth. The horse should go rhythmically forward from the rider’s aids, and seek a contact with the rider’s hands through the bit.

To describe contact as being “elastic” is probably the best description, because “contact” is not a single point somewhere. It involves a lot of dots the rider has to connect from the horse’s mouth to the bit to the reins to the rider’s hands, elbows, and shoulders—a whole circle through the rider and back into the horse’s muscular system. For an elastic contact, the rider has to be relaxed. Without relaxation, the rider’s hand or other parts of his or her body get stiff and cannot move with the horse’s movements. The rider should sit “quietly,” but not be immobile.

Contact should never be achieved through a backward action of the hands; it should result from the correctly delivered forward thrust of the horse’s hind legs.

Too much use of the hands keeps the hind legs from “coming through,” stepping far underneath the horse’s body and towards the center of gravity. With correct, elastic contact, the horse finds its balance under the rider and finds a rhythm in the gaits.

Contact, “getting the horse softly on



A good example of a nice contact at the canter. Photo by Neil Schloner.

the bit” (which is not the same as leaning on the bit), should never be considered as an aim in itself; it should be a by-product and a consequence of correct training. A forced head position with too much rein influence detracts from looseness and the activities of the hind legs and so defeats the object of training.

When the young horse (or an older horse in the warm-up) first comes onto the bit, its head and neck will be in a relatively low position, with the mouth being approximately at the level of the point of the shoulder (this phase belongs to the preliminary ridden training). The horse’s frame will become shorter as the forward thrust develops, and the hind legs engage further under its body.

### IMPULSION

Impulsion describes the powerful thrust from the hindquarters that propels the horse forward. The energy created by the hind legs is transmitted into the gait and into every aspect of the forward movement. However, speed does not necessarily create impulsion, and a rushing horse is more likely to be “flat.” A horse can only have impulsion if its hind legs are engaged, the hocks are carried forward and upwards right after the feet leave the ground, and its elastic back allows the power to come through.

The only gaits that can have impulsion are trot, canter, and flying pace—gaits that have a moment of suspension. At walk or tolt, the horse’s legs never fully leave the ground; the horse has at least one foot on the ground at all times, so there cannot be impulsion in those gaits.

The more impulsion a horse has, the longer the moment of suspension will be. The movements are absorbed by the horse’s back muscles, so that the rider can sit softly and “go with” the movement; the horse is said to “take the rider with it.” The rider feels almost like he or she is being drawn into the horse’s back.

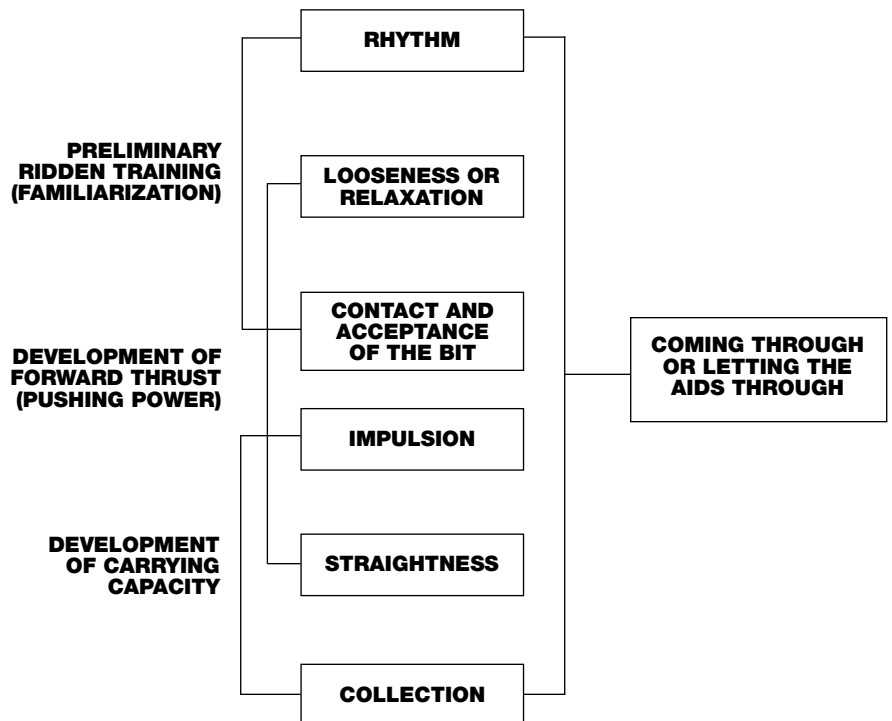
### STRAIGHTNESS

A horse is straight when its forehead is in line with its hindquarters—when the horse’s entire body from nose to tail is in alignment with an imaginary line on the ground. That applies to straight lines as well as to turns, curves, and circles. In order to distribute the weight evenly on all four feet, the horse needs to be straight and bal-



An example of impulsion at an energetic trot. Photo by Katrin Sheehan.

### THE TRAINING SCALE



anced. In order to move straight, the horse needs to be able to use and coordinate the muscles on both sides equally.

Most horses are naturally crooked; this shows in them favoring one side, for example, when riding turns or cantering. Just like right- and left-handedness in humans, most horses are born with one stronger side.

Some horses are more uneven than others. This is called the natural crookedness of the horse. The horse has a so-called “stiff” side and a so-called “hollow” side, which means that the muscles on the “stiff” or strong side are better developed and stronger than those on the “hollow” or soft side. A horse with a stronger right side likes to turn to the left, because it is easier for it to push off his strong side. A horse like this may also favor the left lead canter, too, because it loves to go to the left and needs to push off with its right hind leg to start it.

Straightness is strongly connected to a good balance, which means that all points of the training scale so far are a part of, or lead to, straightness. Without being straight, the horse cannot push equally with its hind legs to optimize the forward thrust and impulsion. If it is straight, all four legs are used equally, which avoids excessive wear and tear on the limbs on the stronger (“stiff”) side. Also the horse is able to respond to the rider’s aids properly, without leaning on one leg or one rein.

## COLLECTION

Collection is a state in which the horse’s hind legs (stifle and hocks) bend more, thus carrying more weight (the horse is basically doing a squat), stepping further underneath its body toward the center of gravity. This lightens the forehand, allowing it to move more freely and to lift up more. The horse feels and looks more “uphill.” The steps become shorter without losing their energy or activity. The impulsion is maintained in full and, as a result, the steps become more expressive.

By nature the horse carries about 60% of its weight on the front legs. With the rider sitting right behind the withers and shoulders, the horse distributes the weight even more unevenly. Most of the times a stumbling horse has not learned to distribute its weight evenly on all four feet. The aim of all training should be to enable the horse to carry more weight on his hindquarters: It makes it safer to ride (better balance) and reduces the long term wear and tear on the horse’s body, hence keeping the horse healthy longer. In addition, the front legs are made to support rather than for pushing, and they can be only strengthened to a certain extend through training.

Collection is only achieved through correctly structured training, patience, and dedication. It is at the end of the training

scale for a reason. It takes a great deal of both physical and mental conditioning before a horse is ready to attempt true collection. In the beginning, it might be only able to do it for a stride or two.

There are unfortunately many false ideas of collection—horses being pulled together, forced onto the bit, with low shoulders, a high head set, a hollow back, and the pelvis in a position where it does not allow the hind legs to step underneath towards the center of gravity. It takes a lot of muscle strength to do collection exercises. It is extremely difficult for the horse, and cannot be achieved by taking shortcuts. A really talented, athletic young horse might reach collection in two years with full intensive training. Many horses need longer than that—as long as four or five years. Not every horse is able to reach collection at all.

A good example for collection can be a horse in slow tolt, with its hind legs stepping far under its body, lowering its haunches, rounding its back, light on the forehand, with a nice carriage of head and neck, the poll being the highest point.

## A FEW FINAL WORDS

The result of the correct training of the Icelandic horse is a horse that is healthy and happy, physically and mentally balanced, with a free spirit, calm, and easy to handle. A horse that does not rush or pull, but yet is energetic and willing to go, wanting to please its rider, safe to ride on the trails or indoors, a horse that has good endurance and reacts immediately to the rider’s aids.

To train a horse is an ongoing project that requires a lot of knowledge, time, love, and patience. Using the training scale as guidance will help you avoid taking short cuts that won’t pay out over the long term.

## SOURCES

*The Principles of Riding*, the Official Instruction Handbook of the German National Equestrian Federation

Dr. Thomas Ritter, articles published in *Topline Ink Magazine* in 2008 and on [www.artisticdressage.com](http://www.artisticdressage.com)

[www.tipps-zum-pferd.de/die-skala-der-ausbildung\\_tipp\\_57.html](http://www.tipps-zum-pferd.de/die-skala-der-ausbildung_tipp_57.html)



A relaxed and happy horse trained according to the training scale is fun to ride. Photo by Nicki Esdorn.

# TEACHERS & TRAINERS: WHO IS ANN-CHRISTIN KLOTH?

INTERVIEW BY ALEXANDRA PREGITZER

## WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND?

I was born and raised close to Frankfurt, Germany, and though my parents are not horse people, they were always supportive, giving me the opportunity to take lessons and putting up with me smelling like a barn. Though horses and riding were always my passion, I decided to go to college after school and graduated in Business Engineering. Afterwards I was working with different companies in Sales and Marketing—my last occupation was with a furniture company as Head of Customer Service. In 2005 I started to work full time with horses, after teaching and training part time for years.

## WHY AND WHEN DID YOU MOVE TO THE U. S.?

It was always my dream to spend some time working and living in the U.S. During my time in college and afterwards (that was in the 1990s), I was lucky to be able to travel a lot in the U.S. In 2005 I got in contact with Winterhorse Park Icelandic Horse Farm in Eagle, WI, and came over for the summer. I liked it so much that I came back a year later, and in that summer I got to know my husband. Well, the rest is history, I moved to the U.S. in December 2007 to work at Winterhorse Park and got married in 2009. In spring 2009 I founded my own business, Gait Ways LLC, in Eagle, Wisconsin.

## WHAT IS YOUR HORSE EXPERIENCE?

I've been riding since I was 8 years old, so that makes about 35 years. From the time I could talk I begged my parents to let me get on a horse. I started with vaulting, because the riding stable nearby would not take kids younger than 10 years old. Finally I was allowed to take lessons. The barn had German Warmbloods and taught dressage and jumping. We went to competitions on a regular basis, and at the age of 15 I started to teach and



Ann teaching her students. Photo by Birgit Geertzen.

helped my riding instructor starting and training young horses.

At 21 I completed my first trainer seminar with the FN (German Federal Horse Association). The seminar was taught by Egon von Neindorff, the well-known "Reitmeister der Klassischen Reitlehre," Master Trainer of Classical Dressage. The same year I started working with an Icelandic horse farm while waiting to get admission to college. And that did it—I fell in love with gaited horses. Besides Icelandics, they were importing and breeding Mangalarga Marchadores, a gaited breed from Brazil. I kept on teaching, training, and starting gaited horses during my time at college and part time while working. I took lessons and clinics with a lot of different trainers like Andrea Jänisch, Einar Hermannsson, Nicole Kempf, Styrmir Arnasson, and Walter Feldmann. I have to say that I learned the most from Walter during my first years in the Icelandic and gaited horse world. He is an exceptional trainer, teacher, and rider.

All those experiences led to the Trainer B license with the IPZV (German Icelandic Horse Association); I got certi-

fied in 2001. Besides owning an Icelandic gelding, I bought a stallion who was a mix between Peruvian Paso and Hackney pony. Highly talented, very shy, scared, highly sensitive, and almost not catchable in the pasture. He showed me my limits and opened a whole new world to me: the world of Natural Horsemanship. I took lessons and worked with Heiner Nordberg and had the wonderful chance to take clinics with Honza Bláha. My stallion came around great. I was able to call him to me in the pasture and I rode him without a bridle.

Those experiences made a deep impression on me, and I started to implement natural horsemanship techniques in my training and riding. I have been very impressed with what natural horsemanship does and how I am able to build positive wonderful relationships with horses.

During my last year in Germany I looked more into the work of Bent Branderup (Classical Dressage) and took lessons with one of his students, Charlotte Hainbuch.

In 2005 I started to work full time with horses. I built up a riding school and training facility at Wildenburger

Hofstadt Icelandic Horse Farm, Germany. After moving to the U.S. and working at Winterhorse Park for about a year I founded my own business in spring 2009, Gait Ways LLC. I work as a traveling horse trainer: I go to people's facilities or barns to train and give lessons in Wisconsin, Illinois, and all over the U.S. and Canada. Like I did in Germany, I train all gaited breeds, which is a lot of fun and keeps me very versatile (though my heart beats definitely for the Icelandic horses—the more I get to know other breeds, the more I love and appreciate the Icelandics). Here in Wisconsin, I take horses in for training and offer professional farm-sitting anywhere in the U.S.

I believe that you live and learn, that is why I continue my education constantly. Getting new ideas on training or teaching and taking lessons and clinics myself is very important to me. Besides learning and developing my skills, I want to put myself in the shoes of a riding student. That helps me to be a better teacher. At the moment I work with a classical dressage teacher and am looking deeper into natural horsemanship.

### **WHAT IS YOUR TRAINING PHILOSOPHY?**

To get to know and evaluate horses, I use a lot of horsemanship techniques. My first approach to every horse is groundwork to build up a relationship and to see their strengths and weaknesses, as well as to

get to know their personalities. Especially in starting young horses or with problem horses, natural horsemanship is essential to me. Even in making them more supple and working on their balance and awareness of their whole body, those techniques are very helpful. In addition I do classical dressage, because a well-trained horse which uses his body in a proper and healthy way will always be the better toler or gaiter and more fun to ride. I like my horses to be light, soft, and responsive. And I like them to be happy and having as much fun working as I do.

I find very often a lack of the basics in horses. Here is an (exaggerated) example: How would you be able to perform the T1 speed changes in harmony and with light cues when it takes you a lot of pulling and a quarter mile to stop your horse or slow it down? So I work a lot on the basics and try to remind myself to always check whether they are still working. And the level of "basic exercises" can change with the level of training the horse has.

### **WHAT IS YOUR TEACHING PHILOSOPHY?**

My first wish is that the horse and rider get along great and that they are safe together, no matter which goals they have or whether they are beginners or advanced riders. Riding should be fun! We have a saying in Germany: "As a teacher you must pick your students up where

they stand." This means that you have to adjust your teaching specifically to the level of your students' skills and their needs and wishes.

Also I try to boost understanding and respect for the horses and their behavior. I make it very clear that the horse is a flight and prey animal and therefore tends to act in a way which we cannot necessarily relate to.

I love to keep people and horses versatile, which means that I like to teach ground work, dressage, gaits, obstacles, trail riding, and jumping as well as competition riding.

Just like in horses, I see some lack of basics in people: a lack of balance and body awareness, as well as having a hard time feeling what the horse is doing underneath them (e.g. beat, use of the different feet, and length of the strides). Also timing is a big issue, on the ground as well as in the saddle. Horses are by nature so much faster in their reactions than we are. The rider should be able to give well-timed light and adequate cues. Just like for horses, there should be a training scale for riders: First comes trust and being free of fear. Next should be suppleness, then balance and rhythm, after that the feel for the movement of the horse and the rider him- or herself, last aids and influence.

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

I hope this wonderful breed will spread and gain more fans here in the U.S. than it already has. As versatile as the Icelandics are, it must be made clear that it takes some skills and training to be able to ride them properly and keep them healthy. I do not believe that this is a breed "anyone can ride." That is a generalization which can be dangerous for horse and rider. No breed in general can be ridden by "anyone." In addition I hope the breed stays pure and keeps the spirit and quality it has had for a long time.

### **CONTACT**

Ann-Christin Kloth  
Gait Ways LLC  
S75 W36395 Wilton Road  
Eagle, WI 53119  
phone 262-470-7103  
email: ann@gait-ways.com



Working on canter. Photo by Sara Lyter.

# PUTT-PUTT PONYING

BY BERNIE WILLIS

Many years ago in Iceland I saw grooves across the wide open spaces that looked like some giant had raked the land with huge fingers. I didn't know of any heavy equipment that would leave such tracks. The tracks in the Arctic of migrating caribou are similar, but more random. Then one day, while riding with friends, the mystery was solved. The tracks were made by ridden horses with multiple additional horses ponied in-hand to the side. The grooves may be centuries old, as the best route from place to place has not changed.

My biggest frustration with Icelanders is their tendency to want to share their story in their own language instead of in mine. On my last trip to Iceland, I saw a children's book with pictures of everyday objects and the words for the object provided in Icelandic, Danish, and English. I wanted this book and was looking for it at a book store in Hafnarfjörður when I saw a new book by Benedict Lindal about harmony with horses. Of course it was published in Icelandic, making it a very hard read for me. But a few days later, while thinking about what to spend my few remaining kronur on at the airport, I spotted Benni's book again, this time in English. I purchased it and was through it the first time before the plane leveled off. Harmony is all about spending time with your horse where it is comfortable and introducing it to new things in a comfortable way. What better way than from another horse. The Icelandic tradition of ponying is well-established, but needs to be thought through. This article is about ponying and the adaptations I've made to it so that it works for me in Alaska.

A good work horse is the basic tool for ponying. This is a horse that is very happy to do as asked, influenced by the rider instead of by other horses. Such a horse can help train another horse. It says it's okay to go where the green horse may hesitate. It goes slow or fast, depending upon the circumstances, and as determined by its rider. If it's told to stop, it does—without asking why—and the green horse at its side gets the message too. Just think of training



Don't try this at home—unless you've done the proper training and preparation. In Alaska, Bernie Willis successfully ponies his horses off an ATV or four-wheeler. Photo by Brian Mulder.

and exercising four or five horses all at the same time. The tracks across Iceland prove it's possible.

## BICYCLES?

A few years ago in Holland at the Icelandic World Championships, if you sat high in the stands for the breeding show, you could see through the trees a trail that was used for exercising the competition horses. What puzzled me was that bicycles seemed to be ridden along with the horses. Finally I walked over to the trail to see for myself what was going on. Would you believe that these high-powered competition horses were being gently led by a person riding a bike? They wore a simple web halter or rope halter. There were no harsh bits, in fact no bits at all. Horses of every gender were going back and forth along this path, with their "lazy" riders pedaling beside them. These horses were not being trained, in the sense of learning new things, but being exercised, without being ridden, because they already knew

what was expected of them. Don't take me wrong. I'm not saying they weren't learning anything, but they were thoroughly trained horses out for exercise instead of being trained to some specific goal. Obviously they had been trained to be ponied from a bicycle.

The next winter I ran into a problem. I had five horses that I wanted to move from their paddock to a pasture for some exercise. I didn't have the time to walk them separately, nor did I trust them to walk together without wanting to race each other. The path was slippery. I imagined a wreck, with me being towed head first through the snow, then letting go of the lead ropes and spending more time than I had wading through deep snow catching the runaways. Then I remembered the bicycle trick. I added a twist. Why not use my ATV, or four-wheeler as we call them around here? It was a risk, but here's what I figured out.

First, I started it up and, from the side, ran a tire right over my foot. The big

balloon tire didn't hurt through my boots, so figured it wouldn't damage a horse's hoof. Next I tried a knot I'd learned from the Back Country Horseman's Association (BCHA). It is a slip knot that allows the rope to come completely loose when the end is pulled, without having to unwrap from the rail or post it was tied around. Now that I was confident a horse wouldn't get hurt from being run over and that if, for some reason, I needed to let a horse loose, I could, I decided to try it with one horse first.

I started with an older horse that had been ponied before from another horse many times. It was so easy. Next I tried a horse that had never been ponied before. It got a hoof rolled over just once and then was good to go. My confidence was moving up fast so the last three got tied to the luggage rack on the back of the ATV, and we were off to the pasture. It worked better than I had expected but the proof of success was still to come.

The new pasture had good grass under about a foot and a half of snow. The horses were not there to forage, but to get out and run, have some fun, and see something new. After a few hours, I went back to get them. I opened the gate, drove in and turned around, turned off the machine, got off and closed the gate, then sat and watched for a minute. I could hardly believe what happened next. All five horses came to me and stood around while I put on their halters and tied them to the ATV. They

showed no fear of the machine, or perhaps they realized that feeding time had come and that eating hay on top of the snow was easier than digging for grass underneath it.

The seven of us went back to their regular paddock without incident. Since that day of discovery, ponying with the ATV has become a routine at Arctic Arrow Farm. This technique has been useful for moving horses from paddock to pasture, as well as from paddock to the shoeing area. Several horses have stayed tied to the ATV, while I trimmed them one at a time. It's been used for exercise along the farm trails and through a local subdivision.

It was on the wide subdivision road that I discovered the training value of what has become known around here as putt-putt ponying. I saw that after a very short time the lead ropes didn't get tightened. When I accelerated, the horses sped up along with the ATV. When I braked or let off the throttle, they slowed. Next I gave a whoa command, counted to three, and braked hard. It took only a couple times, and the horses stopped without the lead ropes tightening. Horses can move straight, on either side of the ATV, or behind. They soon learned how to give space when turning and to allow for the extra space needed when doing a U turn.

Have you wondered how fast your horse can gallop? With an ATV, just go as fast as the horse can go without the lead rope becoming tight and take a quick look at the speedometer. It's easy to see the various gaits your horse does as well. Some rid-

ing arenas have mirrors so you can check-out how you and the horse look. Usually I lose my balance or see very little, but from the ATV I can watch the horse as much as I like. Adjustments can be made to the shoeing for instance, and the result is clear. Each footfall can be analyzed from a couple feet away in real time at eye level. The natural shape of the horse changes with speed and gait. It's all plain to see from the seat of the ATV.

## SOME CAUTIONS AHEAD

This has been a fun learning experience at our farm, and we will continue to do it, but there have been some anxious moments. Here is a list of cautions. Perhaps you can learn from some of my mistakes.

1. Horses on the side of the ATV should be tied so that they cannot go forward of your seat. If they do, they can get tangled in the throttle or brake. When this happens the intended experience is threatened.
2. Horses tied at the back of the ATV need enough room or length of rope to move freely without getting hit by the machine.
3. If one horse is unwilling to move with the rest of the herd, work it alone until it is comfortable. Sometimes a horse is unwilling to go along close to another. This is rare but happens.
4. Remember to start at a walk to warm up and end by walking to cool down, just as when riding. Watch for a horse that is laboring to keep up. Don't allow tight lead ropes but for a few seconds.
5. If a horse gets loose, stop. You can't chase it down. It will return to its buddies so you can retie it.
6. If a horse rears or gets to prancing around, watch out for your head, and pick up speed.

The horses gather around the ATV for an outing now whenever I drive into their paddock. They gather around again when we come to take them from the green grass back to their paddock. They follow along the fence when we putt-putt along on a different errand. From yearlings to old guys, they all like the putt-putt. Maybe you will too.



Once the horses get used to the idea, ponying by ATV becomes routine. Photo by Brian Mulder.

# FOCUS ON YOUTH

BY SUSAN PETERS

*Editor's Note: The USIHC Youth Committee submitted an application to FEIF for the 2010 FEIF Youth Award in February. Although we didn't win—the award went to Holland—the application shows just how extensive and exciting our youth programs are. Following are excerpts from the application submitted by youth committee chair Susan Peters:*

**W**e are very excited to report that the USIHC Youth Committee, its membership, and the overall level of programs offered to youth in the U.S. are undergoing a broad transformation. Anne Levander of FEIF can certainly attest to the fact that the USIHC Youth Committee was a bit frightened at the prospect of holding the 2009 FEIF Youth Camp in the United States. But this turned out to be just what we needed to bring people together from across the country. And, by coming together for such a wonderful event, we began to believe in ourselves and found that we can do so much more. So this report is not only a celebration of what we have accomplished this past year, but is also a plan for what we are going to be doing for our youth in the coming years.

The USIHC Youth Committee's



It's fun to braid Kalman's long mane on a visit to Sand Meadow Farm, owned by USIHC members Steve and Andrea Barber. Photo by Kate Ackerman.



It's never too soon to learn about Icelandics. Here, five-year-old Madeline Brisco takes a lesson on Sleipnir fra Ey. Photo by her teacher, Heidi Benson.

major accomplishment in 2009 was, of course, the FEIF Youth Camp. Hence, most of our focus was on ensuring that this event was successful and fun. The rest of the year was spent looking at what we will be able to do in the future. The USIHC Board approved the creation of a National Youth Camp to be held in 2011 and a National Youth Cup to be held in 2012, and then alternating each year thereafter. We have a budget and will be selecting the venue shortly.

## YOUTH AT SHOWS

In the USIHC, we already encourage our young members in many ways. Many of our regional clubs, for example, provide assistance to young riders to enable them to compete at sanctioned shows. They hold silent auctions, raffles, and other fundraising events to raise money to pay youth entrance fees or to otherwise sponsor youth financially at shows. They lend them horses and organize transportation for young riders who might not otherwise have the means to participate.

At the national level, we have encouraged the organizers of sanctioned shows to recognize promising young riders

through the awarding of prizes to the top three young riders at each show. In 2009, these awards were given for the first time at the first U.S. World Ranking Show, held in Vermont in June; the awards were presented to the winners by the Icelandic Ambassador to the United States. Similar awards were given at sanctioned shows held in Kentucky and Virginia.

To make our sanctioned shows more "youth-friendly," we have proposed that show organizers designate a youth coordinator at each show to assist young riders in understanding the rules, selecting competition events, and to ensure that they have someone to work with them in the event they have problems.

## KIDS DAYS

Many of the regional clubs publicize youth accomplishments by circulating email announcements to club members. They provide many opportunities for youth members to socialize in youth-oriented settings. Activities at "Kids Days" at local stables might include making riding videos, playing hide-and-seek on horseback, and participating in kids-only trail rides. There are tack-cleaning days,



sleep-overs at members' barns, and pizza parties. In California, where the weather is a bit better year round, the local club sponsors a children's Christmas parade, in which the horses and riders celebrate the holiday season by dressing up.

The regional clubs also sponsor youth financially at educational events and invite them to dinners with international judges, trainers, and keynote speakers. This is a wonderful way for young riders to learn from more experienced adults. At a recent judges training seminar, two young riders participated for training, even though they are too young to qualify for the exam. The trainer commented that their skills are already as good as many of the adults'!

## RIDING BADGES

The USIHC Youth Committee works closely with the USIHC Education Committee in the Riding Badge Program, where young riders earn badges that represent attaining certain levels in their overall knowledge about riding, horse care, barn management, and other skills. Several young riders earned badges this year, and this program has been highly successful.

## FUND RAISING

We also conduct youth fundraisers at a national level. At the recent annual meeting, we raised \$2000 in a silent auction. Our webmaster, Doug Smith, created an



Ayla Green works with her mare Birta from Icelandic Horse Farm at the beginning of Birta's training under saddle. Photo by Heidi Benson.



The 2009 FEIF Youth Camp at Winterhorse Park was such a success that plans are underway to hold youth camps regularly in the U.S. Ayla Green and Alex Venable attended the 2009 camp last July. Photo by Morgan Venable.

option on the USIHC website to enable members to make a donation to youth causes when they renewed their memberships, leading to an additional \$1200 in donations. The Youth Committee has determined to allocate these funds as follows: one third goes to local clubs to support local initiatives, one third supports national initiatives, and one third will support international initiatives, such as sending riders to the FEIF Youth Cup.

## COMMUNICATION

Youth members of the USIHC have a Facebook page where they can communicate with each other as often as they like. We have also been improving our web design to make it more friendly to young riders by giving them blogging opportunities, adding Q&A with accomplished national and international riders, and chances to further international friendships that began during the FEIF Youth Camp or Youth Cup. We are also looking into holding a "Webinar," using free Internet technology, where young riders could watch a short presentation on the web and then submit questions to the speaker. The first Webinar will be, we hope, with one of the top-ranked riders at the World Championships this year.

In October 2009, we created a Youth Advisory Board. It is comprised of seven young riders from across the country. They meet once a month by conference call and take turns taking minutes. The minutes from each meeting are given to the USIHC

Youth Committee, published on the Facebook page, and will be published on the USIHC website. They are in the process of creating their own newsletter.

## INTERNSHIPS

We are developing an international training program, in conjunction with Birga Wild of Wiesenhof in Germany, where young riders from the U.S. and Germany will train together in an intense program that will give them the opportunity to combine academic study with riding opportunities. This program will be offered for the first time in the summer of 2010. This will be a pilot program; if successful, we hope to create a similar opportunity in Iceland.

We are also exploring the possibility of creating a young rider internship with a farm that facilitates riding for people with physical, mental, and social challenges. This is at the very beginning stages, but we have a lot of interest from young riders.

## YES, WE CAN!

The theme of the 2009 World Championship was "Feel the Beat." We hope that you will feel the beat of our excitement, and we look forward to benefitting from your thoughts on how we can accomplish our goals and do much, much more for youth in the U.S.! To borrow the motto from the recent U.S. Presidential campaign, we have adopted the same philosophy of "Yes, we can!"

Contact the Youth Committee at [youth@icelandics.org](mailto:youth@icelandics.org)

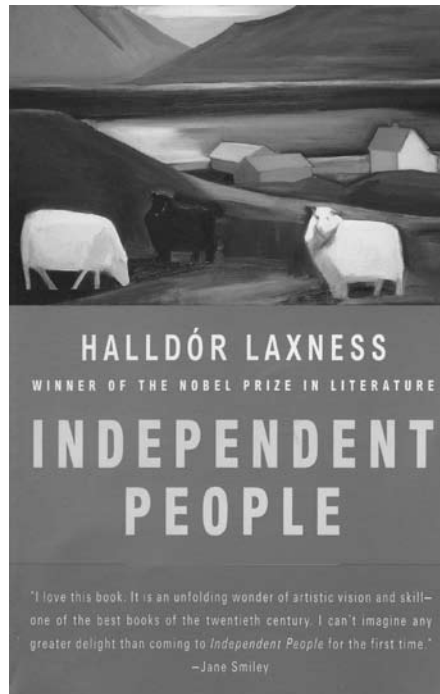
# BOOK REVIEW

BY CHRIS ROMANO

## THE WORKS OF HALLDOR LAXNESS, ICELAND'S NOBEL LAUREATE

Taking up the reins of an Icelandic horse, I found, presents an opportunity to explore Iceland's history through books. Soon after I bought my Icelandic horse, I read Nancy Marie Brown's *A Good Horse Has No Color*, which I thoroughly enjoyed, and I wrote her a fan letter. She encouraged me to join the USIHC to learn more about my horse, and we began corresponding about books I should read to learn more about Iceland. Nancy suggested the works of Halldor Laxness; I found each book to be an engrossing picture of Iceland, its people, and their animals. At least eight of his novels are available in English translations, including *Independent People*, which won the Nobel Prize in 1955 (if you haven't read any Laxness, this is the one to start with). Others are *The Fish Can Sing*, *Iceland's Bell*, *World Light*, *Paradise Reclaimed*, *Under the Glacier*, *Salka Valka*, *The Weaver of Kashmir*, and the one featured below, *The Atom Station*.

The passages I've chosen to quote here show Laxness's affection for the Icelandic horse, which has suffered and prospered along with the Icelandic people since 874, when the country was settled. Iceland created the first parliamentary government in 930 and the best known medieval literature, the Icelandic Family Sagas, in the 13th century. Writing in the 20th century, Halldor Laxness draws upon these adventurous Viking tales, which are still at the nation's heart. But he also brings to life Iceland's history after the Saga Age. Much of that history could be depressing. Iceland was neglected, at best, by its Norwegian and Danish rulers from the mid-1200s to the 1600s, then brutally subjugated and starved by Denmark's trade monopoly until 1847, with Iceland's people considered subhuman by their rulers. When the Laki eruption in 1783 killed nearly a fifth of the population and 80 percent of their livestock, the Danish



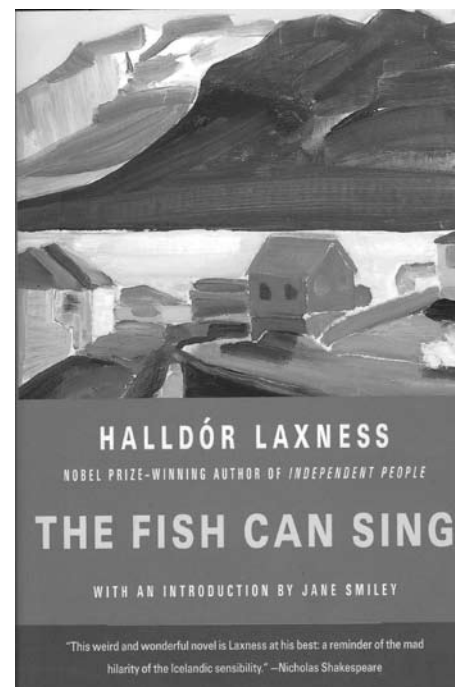
king suggested Iceland be abandoned and the remaining 40,000 Icelanders be resettled in Jutland. The fate of the Icelandic horse was just as hard. During the industrial revolution and ensuing wars, horses were exported to work in coal mines and to be used as meat. Fortunately, since WWII Iceland has been independent, and its standard of living has greatly improved, enabling people to better enjoy their horses.

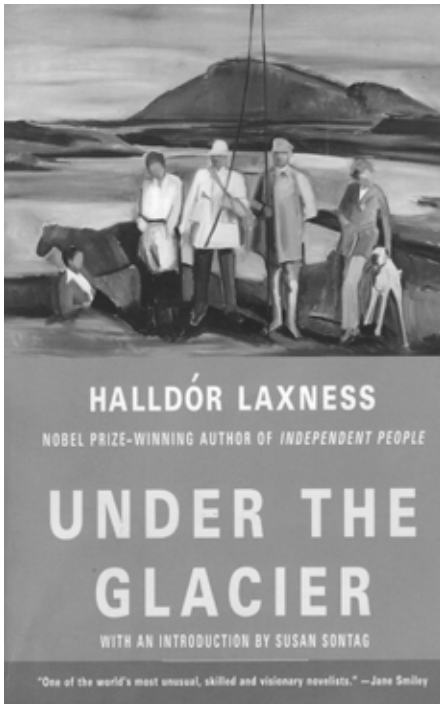
Halldor Laxness's novels are built on all this history, but they're not dry, as here. They're lively and surprisingly funny. He also has a mystical, poetic side, as you can see in some of the excerpts below. Halldor Laxness's works ring true today, when we find ourselves pulled and tugged by the well-intentioned and not-so-well-intentioned powerful economic and political profiteers. He quickly moves his stories, via intertwined plots and characters, to unexpected ends. He portrays heroes and heroines facing irony and lies with irony and truth. By reading the novels of Halldor Laxness, you enter the world that gave you your horse.

## EXCERPTS FROM HALLDOR LAXNESS, *THE ATOM STATION*

"When I discovered some years ago that your father believed in horses, I vowed to myself to do everything I could for him. You see, I once had a religious revelation, rather after the manner of the saints. In this revelation it was revealed to me that horses are the only living creatures that have a soul—with the exception of fish; and this is due, amongst other things, to the fact that horses have only one toe; one toe, the ultimate in perfection. Horses have a soul, just like the idols; paintings by some artists or a beautiful vase." —Doctor Bui Arland (p. 138)

A long time ago there had been a church parish here of twelve farms, some say eighteen, but during the last century the church was abandoned. Now another church was rising here, even though there were only three farms left in the valley, and the third farmer, Jon of Bard, the head carpenter, only counted as half or scarcely that, having lost his wife and with his children away in the south and fire no longer kindled in the farm except for the





fire that burned within the man himself; and his faith the sort of horseman's faith that it would be more accurate to connect with the phallus than with Christ. Bard-Jon never called a church anything but "Gods window-horse," nor the pastor anything but "the stallion of the soul stud," and neither I or others were ever aware that he knew any other prayer than the old Skagafjord Lord's Prayer which starts like this: "Our Father, oh, is that blasted pie-bald foal not tearing around all over the place again..." and that prayer he would mumble to himself all day long. (p. 142)

"I heard it said in the South that you actually believed in wild horses, Father," I said.

"They say the most unlikely things sometimes, our friends in the towns," he said. "But it is quite true, on the other hand, that here in these parts it has long been the custom to reckon a man's worth in horses. No one ever thought much of a man in these parts who did not have a choice of horses if he had had a journey to make. It's a fine sight in summer, the herd of brood mares; and the splendid beast, the stallion."

"It's even harder to understand that men who can use Nature for their privy and who worship horses should build a church before anything else," I said.

"Man is that animal species that rides a horse, and has a God," said my father.

"And builds a roof over God and lets the horses go roofless," I added.

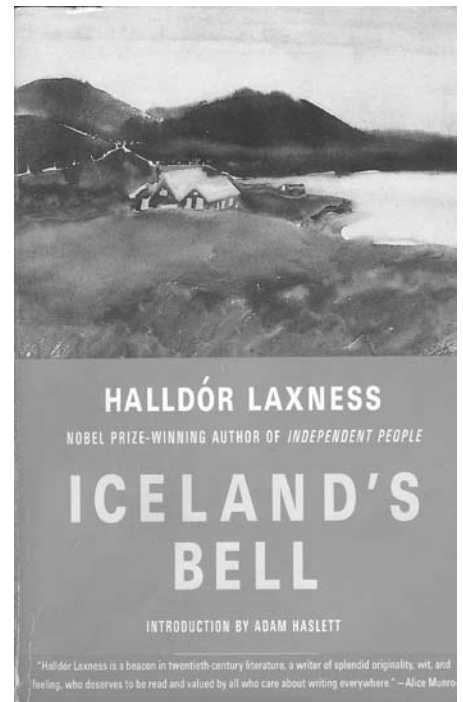
"The herd looks after itself," said my father. "But the God is a domestic animal." (p. 148)

One of the loveliest and most magnificent events that can happen in the country is when the horses take fright, particularly in a herd. A meadow-pipit has flown past. The ponies' fear is at first blended with play, even with mockery, amusement touched with a shudder, not unlike the behavior of the mentally ill. They trot as if they were retreating from a slow-moving stream of fire, but with lightning in every action, storm in every nerve, swinging their heads everywhere as if the front of their necks were made of elastic, gracefully flirting their tails. They can even pause for a moment, and start biting and boxing, with those romantic mating cries of theirs. Then all at once it is as if the fire had started flowing right under these strange creatures, they charge away like a storm incarnate over scree and bogs and landslides, dipping the tips of their toes for a fractional moment into the furnace that blazes beneath their hooves, cutting across waterfalls, gulleys, and boulders, galloping steeply for a while until they stand trapped at last on some ledge high in the mountain-tops, there to die and be eaten by birds. (p. 171)

After further consideration, the herd of horses had left off being frightened at all and had calmed down, and were now grazing in the home-pastures, on the grass fields and gravel banks or in the home-meadow close up to the farm. I stood at the window in that autumn light that makes the dead and the living more sharply discernible than the light of any other season. Yes, what a well-sculptured creature the horse is, so finely carved that even if there were no more than half a chisel-stroke extra the workmanship would be ruined; that curve from neck to rump, and all the way down to the fetlock, is in actual fact a woman's curve; in the oblique-set eyes of these creatures is buried a wisdom that is hidden from men but blended with the mockery of the idols; around the muzzle and the underlip hovers the smile that no cinema

shark has ever been able to reproduce; and where is the female star who smells as wonderful as the nose of a horse? And what about the hoof, where all the world's fingers end: claw and cloven hoof, hand and flipper, paddle and paw, fin and wing. And probably because the horse is such perfection, the horse's token, the horse-shoe, is our token of faith over all our doors, the symbol of good fortune in fertility and woman, the opposite of the sign of the Cross.

When the peace of autumn has become poetic instead of being taken for granted ... the last day of the plover become a matter of personal regret ... the horse become associated with the history of art and mythology ... the evening ice-film on the farm stream become reminiscent of crystal ... and the smoke from the chimney become a message to us from those who discovered fire—then the time has come to say goodbye. (p. 173)



Several of the novels of Halldor Laxness, as translated by Magnus Magnusson, have been reprinted recently in paperback. The four shown here were all rereleased by Vintage International; Vintage has published similar editions of *World Light* and *Paradise Reclaimed*. The *Great Weaver* from Kashmir was just translated by Philip Roughton and published in hardback by Archipelago. The *Atom Station* was published by Second Chance Press in 1982 and Permanent Press in 1983. *Salka Valka* was last printed in English by Allen & Unwin in 1973.

# THE HORSE IN MY HEAD

BY NANCY MARIE BROWN

“So, you want to breed your mare...” When I called Anne Elwell to talk it over with her, she didn’t sound enthusiastic. But as a founder of the USIHC and a breeder of Icelandic horses for 20-some years at Helms Hill Farm in New York, she was more than willing to tell me how she had gone about it and to give me some advice.

The first question she asked was, Why?

Why do I want to breed my mare? Isn’t it obvious? My new seven-year-old mare is perfectly wonderful, I gushed. She has five clean gaits, good bloodlines (or so I’m told), and a great personality. Her trainer assures me she’d score first prize if she was evaluated...

Anne interrupted. “Of course, you love your mare and you want a foal with those perfect qualities. Well, that’s understandable. But consider this: It’s expensive to raise and train a foal. And what if, five years later, he doesn’t turn out to be so perfect after all? There are certain feelings you love in your riding horse, certain ways she moves. How are you going to know the foal has those feelings until he’s raised and trained? I would advise you, instead, to buy an already trained horse. Don’t assume it’s cheaper or easier—or better—to breed your own.”

I wasn’t going to argue with Anne about “easier”: Having a foal was work, but it was fun work. Nor could I argue about “better”: I understood her point about those “feelings.” But of course it would be cheaper, I thought.

Then I took a moment to tally up the expenses. Stud fee: Most stallion owners don’t advertise the price, but one I found was \$1500. From past experience, having kept Icelandic horses on my own property for 12 years, I knew each adult horse cost about \$1500 per year in hay, grain, vet, farrier, and incidental expenses. This is a low estimate: A study presented at last year’s Annual World Agribusiness Forum estimates it costs \$2,340 per year to keep a horse; presumably that’s when you don’t have a barn and pastures behind the house, like I do.

So from conception to age five, my hypothetical foal was now worth up to \$7500—and he hadn’t been ridden. I’m not a trainer, so he would have to be sent to a professional.



When choosing a stallion for my mare, why not pick a palomino? Flygill fra Mosfellsbae, standing at Paradise Valley Icelandics, CA, is not exactly the closest stallion to me, in Vermont, but Anne Elwell warns that you should never make your choice based simply on convenience. Photo by Heidi Benson.

I recently did that with a five-year-old gelding who shares some breeding with my mare: \$5000 later, he’s a fine, level-headed riding horse. He’s not “perfect.” The trainer says he’d be an easy horse to sell—he’s beautiful, practically bomb-proof. She’d price him at \$10,000—\$2,500 less than my hypothetical foal, once fully trained.

So, I had to conclude, Anne was right. Breeding in my own backyard was not cheap; in fact, this foal was going to cost me.

## THE UNWANTED HORSE

And he could cost me a lot. Say my timing is unlucky. The foal is only two or three, and I have a set-back in my career or my health or my family situation. I have to sell him.

The week I talked to Anne about breeding, foals from the farm my mare came from were being auctioned off. The breeder, who had been in the business since 1986, had finally decided to really retire.

She was selling off the last of her USIHC-registered stock in preparation for spending several months in Iceland, where her daughter lives. A two-year-old bay colt, with “large, excellent gaits and a good mind,” sold for \$450 (no, I did not forget a zero). A two-year-old palomino colt, who had been evaluated by Breeding Judge Barbara Frische (she called him a “light-footed young stallion, with wide flowing movements, good beat and suppleness...”), sold for \$525. Horses with some training and a lot of color—a pinto, a silver bay, a yellow dun—went for a little under \$1000.

At the same time, on Craigslist, someone was selling a “very cute and well broke” four-year-old with saddle and bridle for \$600 (I don’t know if this horse was registered). Someone else was advertising a three-year-old Icelandic stallion (again, no mention of papers) for \$3500: “When he comes four he’ll be that perfect horse

that anyone can ride. The unbelievable part is he is a stallion. If you're looking for temperament in your breeding program he is your guy—his personality has come through beautifully in Coco [another foal being sold on Craigslist], or geld him for the perfect family horse. ... He is tall for an Icelandic—14 hands. Super friendly, loves attention, quick learner... Has a great tolt and is very responsive and light (kids ride him with just a halter)...” For anyone who knows much about how to raise and train Icelandics, this ad waves a couple of red flags. But the important point to me was the price: \$3500. Even without a stud-fee, raising an Icelandic foal to age three can cost \$4500. In spite of her hyperbole, this seller was taking a loss. “I hate to see him go,” she said in her ad, “but I have to downsize by at least one.” He was an unwanted horse.

It's a national problem. In 2005, the American Association of Equine Practitioners coined the term “unwanted horse” to describe horses that were old, sick, lame, injured, unmanageable, dangerous—or too expensive. They are horses that “fail to meet their owner's expectations.” Many of these horses are abandoned. They are not slaughtered—they are simply left to starve. There are no slaughterhouses in the U.S. that accept horses; the only way to kill a horse is by a vet's injection, which costs an average of \$66, according to the AAEP. Add to that the cost of disposing of the body, which can run from \$75 to \$2000, and you see how a person who can't afford a horse might not be able to afford to get rid of one either.

The AAEP partnered with the American Horse Council to create the Unwanted Horse Coalition; many horse associations are now members, including the AQHA, the American Humane Association, The Jockey Club, and the U.S. Equestrian Federation. The Coalition gives free vaccines to horse shelters and rescue operations, and is trying to establish a network through which unwanted horses can find new homes. But there's a problem: As of last count, there are 170,000 unwanted horses in the U.S. The AAEP estimates the current horse shelters can handle no more than 10,000 horses. There are thousands and thousands of horses—admittedly, few are Icelandics—that you can't even give away. (For more about the Unwanted Horse Coalition, see [www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org](http://www.unwantedhorsecoalition.org))

## RESPONSIBILITY

Having learned all this, now it was my turn to ask Anne: Why? Before retiring to North Carolina, she had bred 20 or 30 foals (she can't remember how many). Why did she—a lawyer, not a professional horse-breeder—breed her own mares?

“In my experience, people decide to breed a mare for a number of reasons, many of which are dreadful,” she answered. “They want to replicate the best qualities in the mare, which is exceedingly difficult to achieve. They want to provide the mare with a ‘meaningful experience.’ They want to get something out of a horse that may no longer be rideable, etc., etc. The problem with all of these reasons is the same: The focus is entirely on the needs of the person.

“Most people who want to breed horses,” Anne continued, “want to create something that will reflect well on them. I know I did. I wanted an Icelandic horse to show up in Omaha, and someone would recognize it and say, ‘That's a Helms Hill horse!’ I had a horse in my head.”

She wasn't a neophyte like me when she started breeding Icelandics, either;

formerly, she had bred Arabian horses. She was good at memorizing bloodlines and understood the benefits of selective inbreeding.

“If you're going to breed horses, as opposed to breeding just one mare,” Anne continued, “there are a number ways to go about it. My way was to have in my head the horse I wanted to breed so consistently that it would become a recognizable type. I wanted to breed that horse to have a certain character—strong-minded, bold, confident, and forward, but exceedingly responsible to its rider, generous and forgiving. That was the easiest part, since this is the only character that I am drawn to, without thinking about it, and my breeding horses (except one) all had this character. I also wanted the Helms Hill Horse to be elegant and beautiful—I wanted romantic-type horses with long manes and tails, beautiful necks, heads, and expressions. I mean, why not? Most critical, I wanted then to have excellent gait distribution and flawless natural balance.

“That was the horse in my head. If you breed, every horse that you see you compare to this horse in your head. You



When assessing a stallion, watch him be ridden by both amateurs and professionals, if possible. Here Kristjan Kristjansson of Thor Icelandics rides Hamur from Mill Farm, standing at Icelandic Sports, NY. Photo by Andrea Barber.



Stigandi fra Leisingastodum II, standing at Thor Icelandics, NY, when this photo was taken. Picking the right stallion takes time and thought and a good eye. First you need an unbiased assessment of your mare.

see pieces that fit and pieces that don't, but you're always moving toward that image.

"Breeding a horse is an act of creativity, and exercising creativity is a very satisfying activity," Anne continued. "But creating a life carries with it an enormous responsibility—which is for the most part ignored by people breeding horses. If you create a painting that is unsatisfactory you can throw it away. If you write a book that doesn't sell you can put it in a drawer. When you create a foal you are creating a life. The quality of that life will depend largely on what you put into that foal.

"The character, gait quality, and breeding potential in that foal will to a great extent determine its life—because these traits will determine how easy it is to train and ride, how easy it is to live with and breed from. Those qualities will affect its desirability to people. The more desirable it is, the more likely it will have a good home, good training, good care. If the breeder fails in providing the horse with the qualities it needs to be desirable to people, it is the horse, not the breeder, who pays the greater price. In my opinion, people don't think enough about that."

## BALANCE

That was the key. If I bred my mare, I would want to be sure the foal would have a good shot at a good home, in the event I couldn't—or didn't want to—keep him. But how, just by choosing my mare's mate, could I do that? What is the most important thing to look for in a stallion if I wanted to

breed from the perspective of the horse?

Some people breed for color, some for character. Many people think gait quality is most important when breeding an Icelandic horse. It's not, Anne said: The most important quality for an Icelandic horse is natural balance.

"A horse might have great gait quality, but if he has balance problems," she explained, "he won't be easy to live with. When I bred, I was trying to produce horses that were elegant in appearance—because I liked that. It was the image of the horse that I had in my head. But I also wanted horses with good natural balance, because the key to tolt is balance." Even an average rider can tolt well on a well-balanced horse.

"There is a big difference between a horse in which balance has been created or trained or taught—however you want to think about it," Anne continued, "and a horse which has natural balance. Many brilliant competition horses have balance issues, which have been addressed by excellent trainers and riders. Ridden by people with those skills, these horses are terrific. When ridden by people who do not know how to feel balance issues, much less correct them, disaster in varying degrees is inevitable—and the vast majority of people who will be riding horses bred in North America are this type of rider."

I thought I understood what Anne was getting at, but how exactly do you define "balance"? Anne paused. "It's a feeling I have. If I watch two horses running free, I can tell you which one is more balanced.

Most people can develop the sense. The front movement is balanced with the back. The horse is not heavy on the forehand or the hind end. He is flexible, not stiff anywhere. He can switch leads at canter when running through the pasture. As a foal, he doesn't pace, but has a kind of spidery quality: He can deal lightly and flexibly with all those legs..."

I sighed. Anne is one of those lucky people who has "an eye for horses." She sees things that are invisible to me. I also don't have the privilege of watching a lot of Icelandics—stallions and foals—running free.

But I do have a lot of books. Susan Harris's book, *Horse Gaits, Balance, and Movement* (Howell Book House, 1993), had been on my shelf for some years. Susan teaches Centered Riding and Collected Riding, as well as the Visible Horse and the Visible Rider clinics (see her website, [www.anatomyinmotion.com](http://www.anatomyinmotion.com)), and I knew she was well thought of in the Icelandic horse world. Here's what she had to say about balance:

"A supple, well-balanced horse has control of his balance and can shift it quickly to cope with changes of speed, direction, terrain, or the requests of his rider. A horse that is 'stuck' in a certain mode of balance (for example, one that moves with too much weight on the forehand) has fewer options and less freedom to shift his balance and move well." (pp. 66-67)

She also, helpfully, defined "suppleness" as "the ability of the horse to shift his balance smoothly forward and backward as well as laterally (sideways) without stiffness of resistance."

So far, Susan and Anne were saying the same thing: A naturally balanced horse was athletic, well-coordinated, flexible, and supple, quick on its feet, not stiff—still something you have to have an "eye" for. But a few pages later, Susan helped me fill in my mental picture by describing bad balance:

"Balance problems usually stem from being too much on the forehand and failure to engage the hind legs enough for the movement. Stiffness, fatigue, inexperience, rider problems, and some conformation problems make it harder for the horse to learn to handle his balance." (p. 80)

And she put her finger on why a horse with bad balance might not be easy to live with:

“Fear and tension ... make many horses scramble and speed up when their balance is threatened. This may be poor judgment, but it is the horse’s natural instinct. It can lead to a damaging cycle of fear, tension, speed, and worse and worse balance until either the horse is in real trouble or the rider intervenes.” (p. 80)

It sounded to me like a classic case of an Icelandic bolting.

Susan stressed in her book that a horse that is too much on the forehand is more likely to have a balance problem, and that this way of carrying himself can be a result of the horse’s conformation: “A horse that appears heavy in the forequarters and light behind is likely to move on the forehand ... and a horse built with his hips higher than his withers will have difficulty in collection” (page 115). She explained that the horse’s head and neck are his “balancer”; “an especially large head is more difficult to balance than a smaller one,” while “the way the neck is set into the body” helps determine the horse’s balance.

I asked Anne what she thought of Susan’s description. “On the subject of balance,” she replied, “the stuff from Susan Harris’s book is excellent. There is nothing difficult about this concept,” she continued, “and I am absolutely certain that you can readily assess it in a moving, unridden horse. I admit, it becomes more difficult to assess the natural balance of a horse under rider. The balance issues of the rider can negatively affect the balance of the most naturally balanced horse. On the other hand, a balanced rider with a good feeling for the balance of the horse not only doesn’t screw up that balance, but often improves it so that the horse can use its body more effectively.”

As for how being out-of-balance affects the horse, Anne had this to say: “Try running—slowly is fine—and let your weight go forward for a while and then backward for a while. Note the anxiety that you feel when you are out of balance. This is the anxiety the horse feels. It’s easy to see all of the things that are affected by that anxiety—not just the horse’s overall movement, but its ability to relax, to focus on what the rider is asking, to learn, etc.

“I have come to believe that we do not at all appreciate how confusing and anxiety-producing riding is for the horse. We so readily blame the horse for so many things when the horse is attempting to deal with a

completely baffling situation with remarkably few coping skills.”

## ASSESS YOUR MARE

From what Susan wrote, it seemed to me that the place to begin, if I still wanted to breed my mare, was to look at the conformation scores of each stallion I was considering. This information is available in the stallion’s breeding evaluation scores, which are publicly available on WorldFengur ([www.worldfengur.com](http://www.worldfengur.com)) or in the new *Icelandic StudBook—Icelandic Stallions of North America* (see [www.theicelandicstudbook.com](http://www.theicelandicstudbook.com)).

In an Icelandic breeding evaluation, according to the international FEIF rules, each stallion is graded on 10 points of conformation. Unlike stallions of many other horse breeds, Icelandic stallions are also evaluated on 10 additional points of performance, or “rideability.” The two sets of scores are then lumped together (some weighting factors apply) to give the horse’s total evaluation score. A number over 8.0 is considered a “first prize.” There are 46 first prize Icelandic stallions listed in the new North American StudBook; an additional 49 stallions with less than an 8.0 total score are also listed. That’s 95 stallions in North America for me to choose from.

How, I asked Anne, can a stallion’s evaluation scores tell me about his natural balance?

They can’t, she answered. It’s not that easy. “The conformation scores of a horse tell you nothing more than whether or not

it is pretty. They tell you absolutely nothing about the balance of the horse. There is some correlation between the neck-withers-shoulders score and the tolt score, but not enough to pay much attention to, in my opinion. A person with a really good sense of how conformation is likely to affect movement may be able to tell some things from a photograph—but from the scores? Nothing.”

But certainly, the evaluation scores can tell me something about which stallion to choose for my mare?

“That,” Anne says, “depends on your mare.” Before I started thumbing the pages of the StudBook, I needed to find out my mare’s “specific problems,” so I could stay away from them. “For instance, my stallion Pruthur fra Nedri-Asi II,” Anne explained, “had loin-stiffness issues, so I wouldn’t breed a mare with stiff loins to him. Pruthur had good shoulder-movement, but back in his line was a stallion with very straight shoulders, so I also wouldn’t breed a mare to Pruthur who didn’t have good shoulders and good front movement.”

I frankly didn’t know if my mare had “loin-stiffness issues” or “good shoulder-movement” or what other “specific problems” she might be hiding behind her seemingly perfect exterior. How could I find out?

“Having her evaluated at a USIHC Breeding Evaluation is a good idea,” Anne said gently. “You will get an objective and realistic understanding of your mare’s strengths and weaknesses.”



Parker fra Solheimum, standing at Solheimar Farm, VT. To see if a horse is well-balanced, Anne says, watch him playing and changing gaits in the pasture. Photo by Jason Brickner.

Evaluations were not just for stallions. I knew that. But they were expensive. Not only can the fees and transportation costs run into the hundreds of dollars, my mare would need to be trained and ridden by a professional to show her best—I know my limitations as a rider. I couldn't justify that kind of expenditure for just one backyard foal.

Anne graciously did not reply (as my conscience did), Then maybe you shouldn't breed her.

Maybe I could just use BLUP, I thought. I'd read the article about the BLUP system in Issue Three 2009 of the Quarterly. Most of it, it's true, was way over my head. What I did understand, however, was that you could pick a mare and a stallion and the BLUP computer program would give you a prediction, in numbers, of what their foal would be like. Of course, if the mare wasn't evaluated, the computer didn't have much to go on. And if the mare's mother wasn't evaluated, the numbers would be even more of a guess.

There's another way to learn about my mare's strengths and weakness, Anne said, one that was cheaper and not too technical. "Have her looked at by several trainers. Take her to any USIHC-sanctioned show and ask a bunch of people to ride her and give you feedback. Ride her yourself and ask the judges for their thoughts. They will be happy to help you out.

"What's really the best, though, is to find someone who is incredibly knowledgeable about breeding Icelandic horses," Anne continued, "and send them videos of the mare you want to breed (if they can't see her in person)—both ridden and running free. I was very fortunate to have Bruno Podlech of Der Wiesenhof in Germany do that for me."

## ASSESSING STALLIONS

Once I had an unbiased assessment of my mare, I could begin to look at stallions. It wasn't only a problem of not knowing what traits to look for (besides long flowing manes and beautiful colors—I could do that). "We stallion-owners," Anne admitted, "have trouble being objective about our horses. Our horses get fused with our egos. So when you're interviewing stallion-owners, you need to make it clear what you are looking for. And that, as I said, depends on your mare.

"Here's where the stallion's evaluation scores become useful. First, you can ignore the 'bottom line,' the horse's total score—what everyone here in American pays



Kalman fra Laekjarmoti, standing at Sand Meadow Farm, NY. He certainly qualifies in the "romantic, long flowing mane" category, but would he compensate for my mare's shortcomings? Photo by Andrea Barber.

attention to." It doesn't matter if the horse is a 7.9 or an 8.0 or an 8.6; what matters is how the horse achieved that number. "It's the individual scores that give you the information you need," Anne said. "If your mare has an irregular trot, look for a stallion with a fabulous trot with good suspension."

Certain scores—or combinations of scores—are also revealing. "Say you find a stallion that has a 10 for pace," Anne laughed. "I can't imagine looking for a 10 for pace in this country. Where would you race? But if the stallion has 10 for pace," she continued, "look at his tolt score. If it's very high—and for a five-gaited horse, an 8.5 is high—then fabulous. This is more likely to be a loose, flexible horse. Or look at his trot score. If it's high, that's also good. But a high score for pace, by itself, is not good, in my opinion.

"Here's a second example: You find a four-gaited stallion with an 8.5 for tolt. For a four-gaiter, that is a low score. Five-gaited horses have more natural tolt in them. It's a neurological thing. They simply have more lateral gaitedness. The four-gaited horse, on the other hand, has the body conformation to express the tolt well. A four-gaited horse with an 8.5 for tolt might be a perfectly satisfying riding horse, but is he a good breeding horse? No. A breeding horse needs to put tolt into the mares coming to him. A four-gaited horse needs a 9 or 9.5 in tolt to be a good breeding horse. So if I had a five-gaited

mare with stiffness issues, I would look for a very loose, very flexible four-gaited stallion with 9.5 for tolt." She paused. "That said, I never did breed to a four-gaited stallion."

Scores aren't the whole picture, though. Anne warned, "You can't breed just on scores. I would want to see what the stallion has done since he has come to the U.S. Where has he competed? Who rode him? How well did he do?" You can see any lack of natural balance best, she reminded me, when the horse was ridden by an amateur, not a professional.

## BACKYARD BREEDER?

So... Did I still want to breed my mare? I'm not entirely sure. It would be fun to have a foal in my backyard, but what is the horse in my head? Do I even know what my perfect horse is like? Am I willing to do the work—to learn to see natural balance, to have my mare evaluated (or at least assessed by unbiased trainers and judges), to find the best match out of the 95 stallions in the StudBook? Am I willing to pay whatever it costs to ensure that this foal never ends up as an unwanted horse? Am I willing to take responsibility for creating a life?

Or would I rather benefit from someone else's hard work, and, when the time comes to replace my perfect mare, buy a trained horse that has the feelings I like in a riding horse? It's something to think about.



# THE SADDLE GOES *WHERE?*

BY EILEEN GUNIPERO, ILLUSTRATIONS BY NANCY WINES-DEWAN

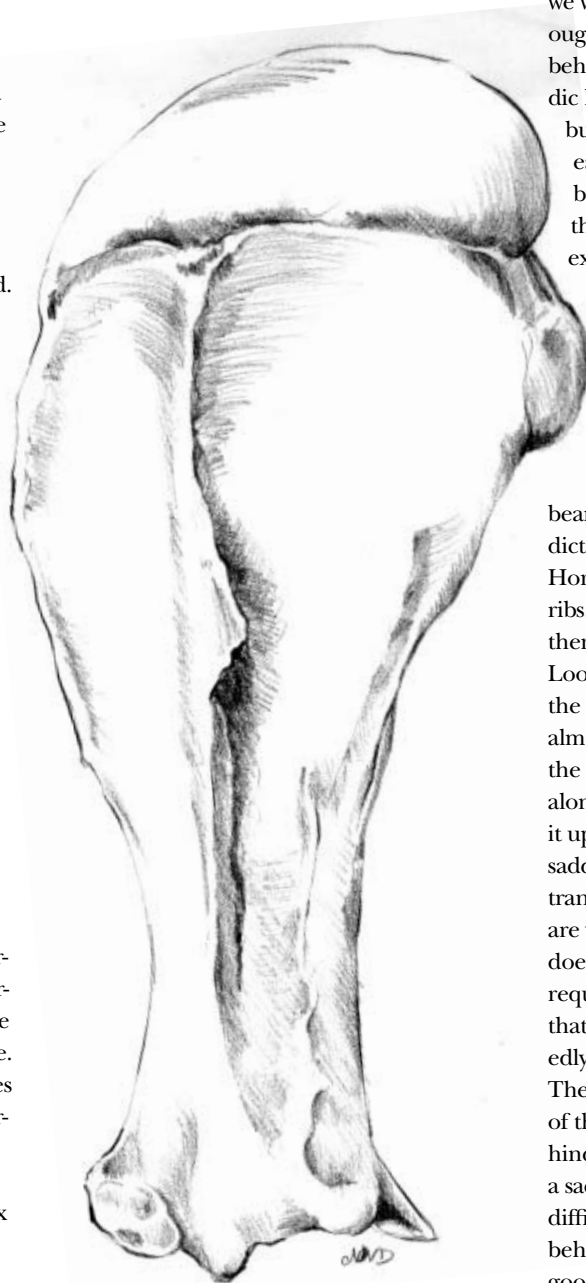
The phrase, “Location, location, location,” is often heard in reference to real estate. But the same phrase very much applies to saddles and saddle fitting. It seems deceptively simple that the saddle goes on the horse’s back. But before you tack up for the next ride, you might want to check your “borders.” And I don’t mean your backyard.

A good place to begin might be with a better understanding of the anatomy of the area directly effected by saddle placement, starting with the shoulder. It is estimated that approximately 80% of horses have larger shoulder musculing on the left. It is similar to most humans being right-handed. It’s a function of nature and usually poses no major fitting issues. Occasionally a horse will be so dominant in one limb or the other, that the more developed shoulder does become a fitting issue, and here we have the birth of a whole other article! The point though, is that one side will have a different fit than the other. It is never prudent to check fit on just one side of the saddle. It’s similar to trying on one shoe.

## FRONT BORDER

The shoulder, or scapula, is not just bone. A half-moon shaped piece of cartilage sits atop the bony part and is what we see on horses that have visible withers. A saddle that pinches in this area can cause damage to the cartilage. Studies using MRI and CT scans have shown that if the saddle fit is harsh enough, the results can cause the cartilage to be sheared off in places. This information helps to underscore the importance of using a saddle with the proper tree angle. A saddle that fits parallel to the horse’s sides won’t allow the shoulder blade to move correctly once the saddle is girthed up. There should be some space at the top allowing for a proper range of motion. A three to six inch range of motion at the scapula head is what is known to be common in many horses. As far as I know, these are not necessarily gaited breeds. While I don’t have data to support my claim, I would think that Icelandic horses in free, extended gaits

would have shoulder rotation more towards the upper end of that range. Limiting the scapula’s motion translates directly to short, choppy strides, tripping, hesitation to go forward, and a long laundry list of other movement issues.



The top part of the scapula is cartilage not bone. It is this cartilaginous extension that can be seen on either side of the withers as the horse moves.

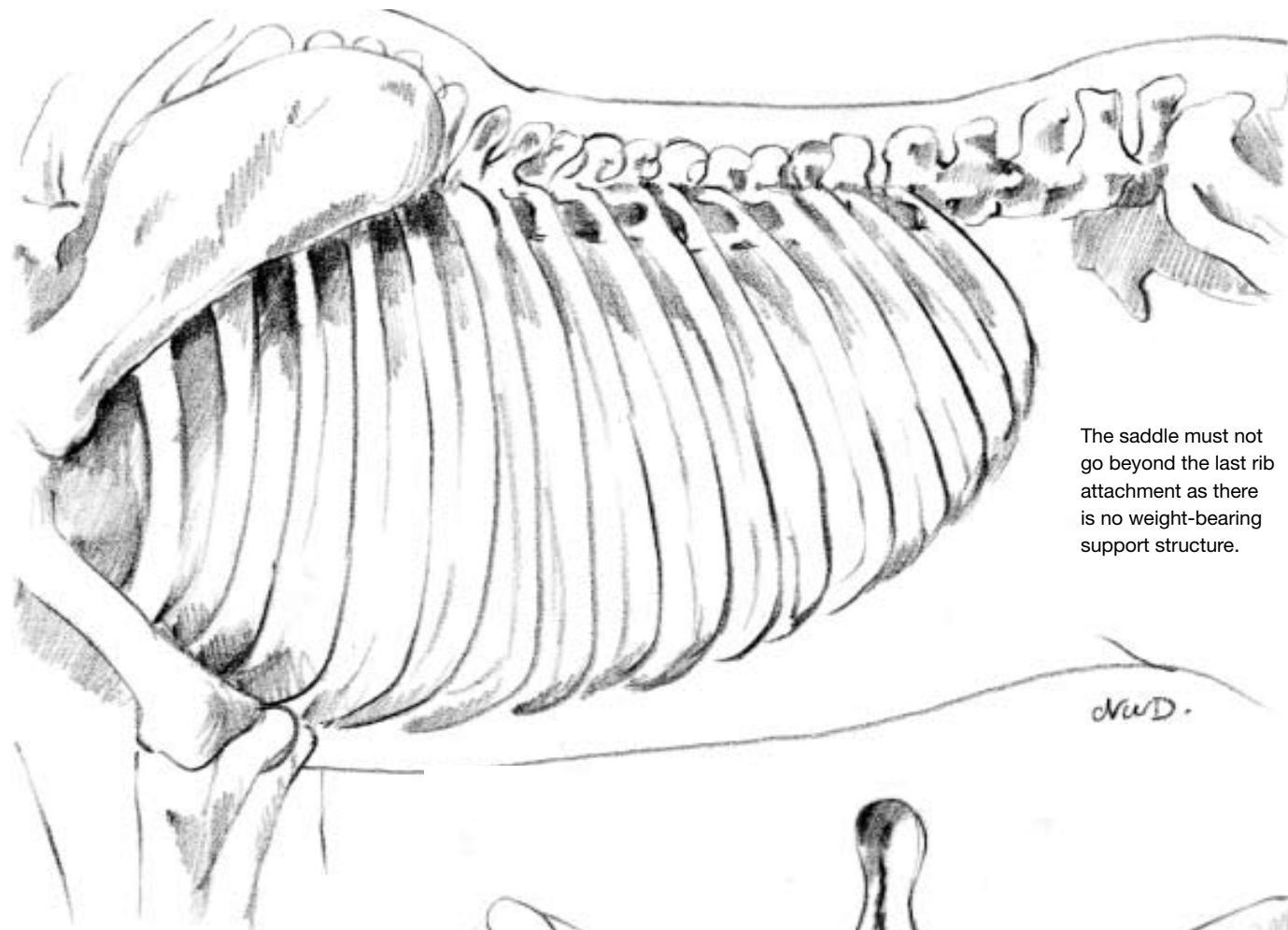
## BONE & CARTILAGE

Because of the shoulders’ range of motion, the location of shoulder nerves and the more fragile cartilage along the top of the scapula, the saddle must be placed a few fingers’ width behind the shoulder muscles. If we were talking about a breed such as thoroughbred, it would be that little hollow just behind the ridge of shoulder bone. Icelandic horses rarely have that visual landmark, but with some gentle palpation, it is fairly easy to locate. Consider this the “front border” of the area where the points of the tree can be placed. Some leather may extend past this border (such as some of the flap), but the foundation of the saddle—the tree and thus the points of the tree—must not.

## BACK BORDER

And where is the back border?

Any horse has only so much weight-bearing surface area. The second border is dictated by the attachment of the last rib. Horses have 18 thoracic vertebrae and 18 ribs. The ribs sort of bow or curve out and then back in where they attach to the spine. Look at your horse’s flanks and note where the hair changes direction. The hairline almost points upward as if indicating where the last rib is located. You can palpate along this line, locate the rib, and follow it up. Where the rib attaches is where the saddle must end. After this attachment, the transverse processes and lumbar vertebrae are without any other support. This area does not have the structure and strength required to bear weight. When a saddle that extends into this area is used repeatedly, “saddle lameness” very often occurs. The thoraco-lumbar junction, the portion of the spine accessed when engaging the hind quarters, should not be restricted by a saddle or rider. If a rider experiences difficulty in getting the horse to “drive from behind,” a closer look at the saddle fit is a good first step.



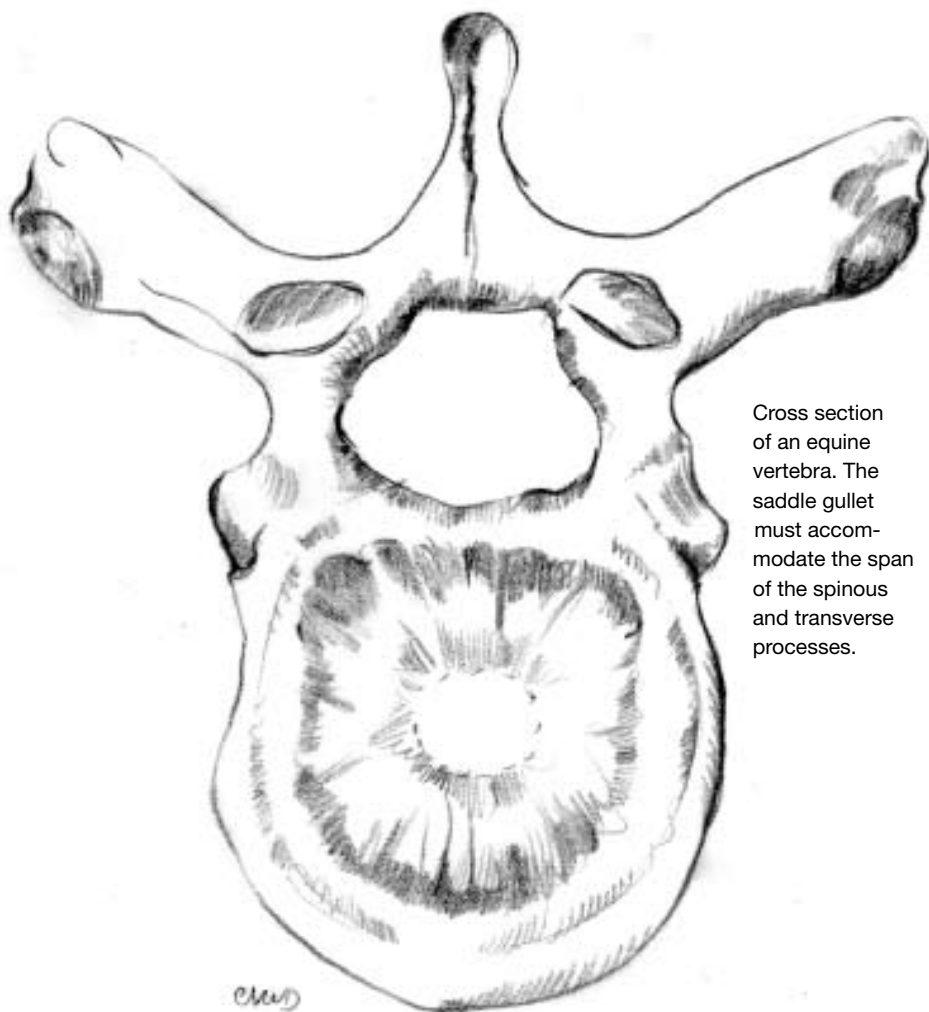
The saddle must not go beyond the last rib attachment as there is no weight-bearing support structure.

## TOP BORDER

Okay, so now we have an idea of the front and the back of the saddle area. There are two other borders to be determined—the “top” and the “bottom.”

The top border of the saddle fit area is dictated by the spinous and transverse processes of the vertebrae and by the paraspinal ligaments. A cross-section of the equine spine looks somewhat like a “t.”

What we feel on the top of our horses’ backs are the spinous processes. Branching off from these on either side are the transverse processes (the cross of the “t”). Running along the channels formed by these bones are ligaments and nerves. Without wordy explanation, you can see why these structures should not be impinged upon. This anatomy is fairly easy to feel, but you may be surprised by how wide it can be. It’s not unusual for the span to be three inches wide or more. The channel or gullet of the saddle must accommodate this width and the top edge of the panel should clear the span by about one-fourth to one-half inch.



Cross section of an equine vertebra. The saddle gullet must accommodate the span of the spinous and transverse processes.

## BOTTOM BORDER

The bottom border is defined by the rib heads and a ridge of muscle insertion. The rib heads attach to the spine several inches below the top of the horse's physical back. The muscle structures that lie along this area are strong enough to handle the weight of the rider and saddle. You can feel the rib attachment if you gently rake your hand with slightly open fingers from the top of the horse's back until you come to a discernable ridge several inches down. This is the rib head attachment. The saddle panels should not extend below the attachment.

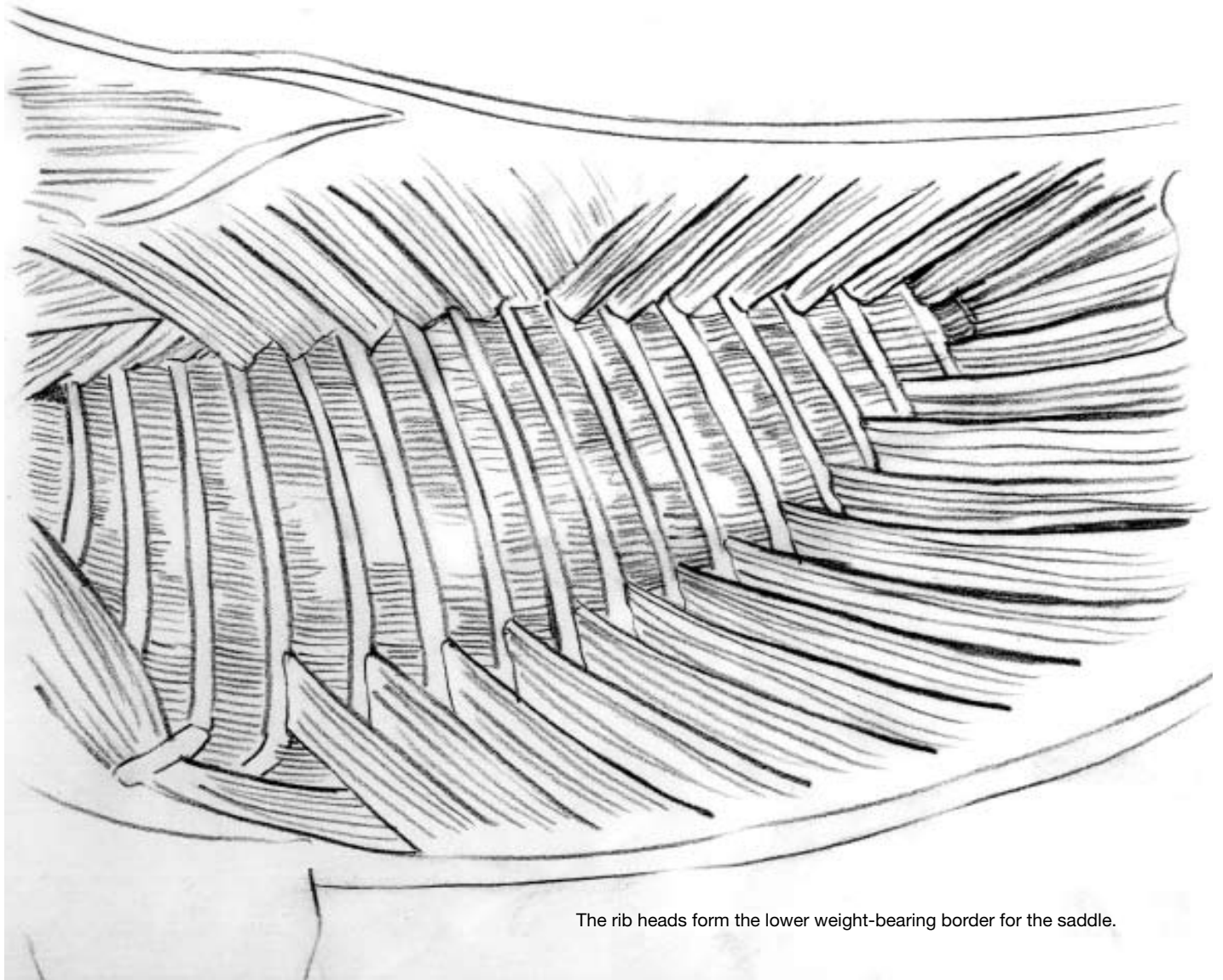
## SEATING THE SADDLE

So now the borders have been established. You can actually mark them on your horse using chalk or washable markers. Take your saddle and lay it on

the neck of your horse. Put one hand lightly on the seat of the saddle and with the other hand held open against the pommel push gently, but firmly, until the saddle "seats" itself. It is a very clear feeling. If the saddle will not seat but rather continues to slide back over the croup, the saddle does not fit. If the saddle seats but the billets do not align with the heart girth (the anatomical groove where the girth should be placed), you might consider having the billeting system changed by a saddle maker. Moving the saddle to accommodate the girth means that the saddle is not correctly seated and so, essentially, doesn't fit. Many saddle fitting problems arise from attempts to force the girth to go further back on the horse than its natural conformation dictates. I'll write on this subject in greater detail in the near future. If your saddle seats securely

within the borders, and you know there aren't other fit issues such as bridging, pinching, etc., do the happy dance and go out and ride.

The back span on Icelandic horses can be quite deceiving. Horses that have been labeled "long backed" can, in fact, have a long spinal column, but the area where a saddle can be supported may be less than on another horse that appears to be "short backed." By palpating and learning your individual horse's anatomy, you get to know your riding partner that much better. Understanding the saddle boundaries is critical to the comfort of the horse and the quality of your riding experience. For a few minutes' time you'll get an amazing amount of useful knowledge. Now go buy some sidewalk chalk and mark up your horse! It's a good exercise for you, and it'll keep the neighbors wondering. Again.



The rib heads form the lower weight-bearing border for the saddle.



**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	
<b>Individual</b>	\$45/year. One adult. One vote.
<b>Family</b>	\$65/year. Two adults and unlimited children living in the same household. Adults vote.
<b>Junior</b>	\$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)	\$ .....
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ .....</b>

**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](http://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](mailto:gaeska513@gmail.com).

<b>RATES AND SIZES:</b>	<b>per issue</b>
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.*

4-beat LLC

teaching & training    [alexandra.pregitzer@gmx.de](mailto:alexandra.pregitzer@gmx.de)    (608) 436-1751    [www.4-beat.com](http://www.4-beat.com)



The search has an end!

# MaxHors GERMANY

Further information? Call Eileen  
919-542-5522 email: [hjalp@aol.com](mailto:hjalp@aol.com)

Further information? Call Eileen  
919-542-5522 email: [hjalp@aol.com](mailto:hjalp@aol.com)



High quality Saddles -  
espacially built for  
horses with proble-  
matic saddle position.



US Distribution:

919-542-5522  
919-542-1077  
[hjalp@aol.com](mailto:hjalp@aol.com)

Dunne & Krumm LLC  
Icelandic Horse  
Tack and Fittings  
Eileen Krumm Gunipero  
975 Pittsboro  
Goldston Road  
Pittsboro, NC 27312



## Berkshire Icelandics

### Brian Puntin

FEIF International Trainer level 1

Training • Sales • Consulting  
Shoeing • Transport • Lessons

P: 413.822.9550 • E: [bpuntin@bcn.net](mailto:bpuntin@bcn.net)  
[www.berkshireicelandics.com](http://www.berkshireicelandics.com)

## 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](mailto:quarterly@icelandics.org) or 763-498-8432.



# 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

A Breeding Farm For Icelandic Horses,  
Schmalztopf  
Nancy & Arvid Schmalz  
9499 Santa Rosa Road, (P.O. Box 67)  
Buellton, CA 93427  
(805) 693-9876 (phone)  
schmalztopf@earthlink.net  
www.icelandichorsebreeder.com

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)  
fourwinds@fourwindsicelandics.com  
www.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@sequoiagroupe.com  
www.robertswoodsfarm.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 Icelandic  
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 HAMPSHIRE**

Icelandic Creations, Inc.  
Debbie Dur  
16 French Pond. Rd.  
Henniker, NH 03242  
(603) 428-8785 (phone)  
ddur54@hotmail.com  
www.icelandic-creations.com

### **NEW YORK**

Icelandic Sports, Ltd  
Daniel Slott  
P.O. Box 113 - Rt.3  
Ancramdale, NY 12503  
(518) 329-0185 (phone)  
(518) 329-0188 (fax)  
dslott@icesport.com  
www.icesport.com

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 Icelandic  
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  
372 John Weaver Rd  
Columbus, NC 28722  
slyterz@yahoo.com

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

### **OHIO**

Cytraas Farm  
John R. Haaga  
Call For Appointment  
Chagrin Falls, OH 44022  
(216) 464-7260 (phone)  
johnhaaga@gmail.com  
www.cytraas.net

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

### **TENNESSEE**

Clear Springs Hollow Farm  
Marianne E. Filka & Ronnie D. Roark  
137 Hugh Garland Rd.  
Jonesborough, TN 37659  
(423) 753-6075 (phone)  
(423) 753-6075 (fax)  
filkaroark@embarqmail.com  
filka-roarkhorses.com

### **TEXAS**

Lonestar - A Texas Icelandic Horse  
Breeding Farm  
Chris E Creighton  
Off Hwy 29- West Of Town  
Georgetown, TX 78628  
(512) 930-7070 (phone)  
icelandichorse.us

### **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)  
gatedgirl@verizon.net  
icelandictunder.com

### **WISCONSIN**

Winterhorse Park Icelandics 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



---

## **Ann-Christin Kloth**

**The Traveling Horse Trainer**



Gait Training  
Lessons  
Dressage  
Natural Horsemanship  
Starting Young Horses  
Trail Riding  
Clinics  
Farm Sitting



**IPZV Trainer B**

**[www.gait-ways.com](http://www.gait-ways.com)**

---

# 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](http://www.gudmar.com) for more info on Throstur.**



*Phone* (502) 243 9996 / *Email* [info@gudmar.com](mailto:info@gudmar.com)

*Barn Address* 9601 Covered Bridge Road, Prospect, Kentucky 40059

# How to Expand your Empire

Step 1. **Drink**  
Step 2. **Conquer**



AdvoCare® Slam™ is a powerful, portable liquid energy supplement that's pre-mixed so it's ready to drink.\* Only two fluid ounces for a quick, convenient shot of energy to help you go out and conquer the world!\* Available in great-tasting Octane Orange and Power Punch.

Just in time for summer, try Lemonade or our new flavor -- Strawberry Blast!!

\* These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

**Order your Slam now!**

**Call Sara at (828) 712-8658**

**Email: [Advocaresl@me.com](mailto:Advocaresl@me.com)**

**Order online: [www.advocare.com/0705193i](http://www.advocare.com/0705193i)**



**AdvoCare® Slam™**  
Powerful, Portable Energy®



[www.gudmar.com](http://www.gudmar.com)