

ISSUE THREE

THE

2012

# ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y



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

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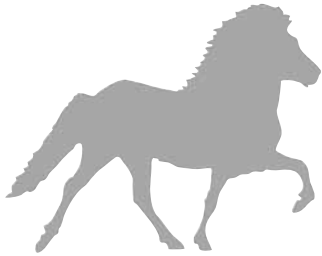
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HORSE  
QUARTERLY  
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# ICELANDIC HORSE

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**On the cover:** To mark 2012 as the "Year of Harmony," FEIF established a new international list of "Good and Harmonious" riders. Topping the list of 65 riders for the most citations is USIHC member Ásta Covert; her riding was cited 12 times across 3 events. Ásta has also reached the top of another international FEIF list: In Tolt (T1) competition, Ásta's World Ranking is #1. Here she rides Dynjandi frá Dalvík in the May CIA World Ranking Show in Santa Ynez, CA. Photo by Sarah Ziller.



## 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; foreign friends, \$70. For more information, see the Congress website at [www.icelandics.org/join](http://www.icelandics.org/join).

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## REGISTRY

The Congress maintains the Registry of Icelandic Horses in the United States in accordance with FEIF rules. The Registry Rules and all forms needed to register an Icelandic Horse in the United States are available on the Congress website at [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org). Contact Ásta Covert: P.O. Box 1724, Santa Ynez, CA 93460; 866-929-0009; [registry@icelandics.org](mailto:registry@icelandics.org)

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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, and learn more about FEIF and the USIHC.

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## IN HARMONY

The USIHC is proud to have two riders on the new international FEIF list of “Good and Harmonious” riders—Ásta Covert and Elisabeth Monsef. Only 65 riders worldwide have received this distinction so far. The USIHC also has the most recognized harmonious rider: Ásta’s riding was cited 12 times across 3 events. See <http://www.feif.org/FEIF/GoodandHarmoniousRiding/tabid/534/Default.aspx>

Elisabeth, a youth rider, was singled out by the judges of the USIHC-sanctioned CIA World Ranking Show on May 12 for her riding of Hólmsteinn frá Garðsauka in canter in the Four-gait (V6) final. On the official record her scores are highlighted in green to show that they were increased by the judges “for especially good and harmonious riding.” In addition to the increased scores, a “plus card” was shown by the judge and announced to the rider and spectators at the event to further call attention to the good riding.

Ásta, riding Dynjandi frá Dalvík, received two “plus” scores in Tolt (T1) at the World Ranking show held May 11; five in Tolt (T1) on May 12, as well as one in Four Gait (V1); and five in Tolt (T1) on May 13.



Elisabeth Monsef, shown riding Hólmsteinn frá Garðsauka in tolt, received a plus card for “good and harmonious riding” in canter at the May 12 CIA World Ranking Show.



Ásta Covert, shown riding Dynjandi frá Dalvík, is now the #1 tolt rider in the world. She received plus cards at the May CIA World Ranking Shows for “good and harmonious riding” from the judges in all gaits. Photo by Sarah Ziller.

## ÁSTA #1 IN TOLT

At the close of the three USIHC-sanctioned CIA World Ranking Shows held May 11-13, Ásta Covert was ranked the #1 Tolt (T1) rider in the world. She was also the #1 ranked Four-gait Combination rider (T1 and V1 combined).

The three back-to-back shows were held at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA and sponsored by the CIA regional club (see [www.ciaclub.net](http://www.ciaclub.net)). Judges were Florian Schneider, Nicolai Thye, Þorgeir Guðlaugsson, Rune Svendsen, and Will Covert.

Ásta, riding Dynjandi frá Dalvík, received scores of 8.57, 8.80, and 8.80 in Tolt (T1) in the three shows.

The overviews of the three CIA World Ranking Shows are available in the show history archive of the USIHC website, [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org). The US National Ranking has been updated to reflect these shows. The three CIA competitions also contributed to the FEIF World Ranking on [www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org), where Ásta’s world title can be found.

## FIRC 2012 SHOW

The Frida Icelandic Riding Club put on its first USIHC-sanctioned show May 19-20 in the indoor arena at Frying Pan Farm

Park in Herndon, VA. Riders came from as far as Vermont and Georgia to join the FIRC members; in all, 23 horses competed. Results are available in the archive of the USIHC website, [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org); the National Ranking has been updated to include these results. See also the FIRC Regional Update in this issue.



Mitch Martin and Jökull frá Austvaðsholti, winners of the T5 Tolt at the Frida Icelandic Riding Club’s first USIHC-sanctioned show, held May 19-20 in Herndon, VA. Photo by Susan Milloy.



Kristján Kristjánsson presented Revia from Vinland (US2007203569) at the Northeast Icelandic Horse Club's USIHC-sanctioned breeding show, held June 1-3 at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY. Photo by Betty Grindrod.

## NEIHC BREEDING SHOW

The Northeast Icelandic Horse Club sponsored a USIHC-sanctioned breeding show at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY on June 1-3. The judges were Barbara Frische and Herdís Reynisdóttir. At a seminar before the show, Barbara and Christine Schweizer, a reproduction veterinarian from Cornell University, each gave a lecture: Barbara spoke on "The Breeding of Pleasure Horses," while Christine's topic was "Equine Reproduction: The Mare's Cycle." Fourteen horses were evaluated for both conformation and riding ability; another five were evaluated for conformation only. The results from the NEIHC Breeding Show are available as a PDF in the breeding show archive of the USIHC website, [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org). See also the article in this issue.

## FEIF YOUTH CUP

Youth riders Ayla Green, Madison Prestine, and Quinn Thomashow represented the USIHC at the 2012 FEIF Youth Cup, held July 7-15 in Verden, Germany. The country leader was Jasmine Ho, and team

leader was Perry Ostrow. Each youth rider received a stipend of \$500 from the USIHC, with the remainder of the costs paid by the participants' families. The FEIF Youth Cup is a seven-day competition for riders aged 14-17, held every other year in Europe. Riders are formed into international teams after four days of training with prominent Icelandic horse trainers. See the next issue of the *Quarterly* for a report from the Youth Cup riders.

## SPORT RULE CHANGE

In April, the USIHC Board approved the Sport Committee's recommendations for updates to the USIHC Competition rules for 2012. These rules are being followed at all 2012 sanctioned shows. The complete rules (including a link to the updated FIPO) can be found at [www.icelandics.org/rules.php](http://www.icelandics.org/rules.php). The most significant change to the rules is as follows: The number of tests a horse may be ridden per day is specified in FIPO Section 2.1. Horses, riders, or combinations thereof may start in more than one tolt or gaited test at the same competition as long as

the rider satisfies the divisional eligibility requirements. Horses may not start more than the number of times specified in FIPO 2.1. In the event a rider participates in more than one gaited or tolt test at the same event, only the most advanced test (lowest test number) in each category will be considered for the National Ranking.

## CHANGE OF CHAIRS

Barbara Frische and Katrin Sheehan switched committee chairs following the June meeting of the USIHC Board, with Barbara becoming Breeding Leader and Katrin heading the Education Committee; both will remain as members on both committees.

According to the Board meeting minutes, "Barbara certainly is the most educated breeding person, when it comes to Icelandic horses and FEIF, here in the US. She has served on the German Board of Directors in the same position. She is in the judges panel of FEIF, where all decisions are formulated and, after the formal way of discussion and voting, implemented. It will be easy for her to apply her knowledge as the chair of the breeding committee.

"Katrin and Alex Pregitzer (former Education Committee Chair) have been working together for a while and Alex will be Katrin's back-up person. There are a lot of loose ends and new ideas that need to be addressed in the education committee, with a good communication flow to breeding, youth, and sport committees and their chairs when topics cross over."

## GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of the General Meeting held May 12 in conjunction with the World Ranking competition at Flying C Ranch in California are available on the USIHC website under Board meetings. Seventeen USIHC members attended, including the secretary (Doug Smith), youth leader (Laurie Prestine), sport leader (Will Covert), and registrar (Ásta Covert). Doug explained the change in the format of the meeting from the old-style "annual" event to a gathering in conjunction with a host event. Doug also explained the constitutional limitations on voting on the

15 proposed amendments. Chiefly, the assembly was only empowered to approve or reject each item. There is no opportunity to revise any of the amendments or introduce new ones.

Two of the proposed amendments were rejected. In the case of #1 (change to election deadline language), the assembly agreed the current language is vague but believed the amended language would be overly restrictive. In particular, the exclusion of electronic mail as an option for ballot submission was a widely held concern.

In the case of #15 (dissolution clause), the assembly felt there should be some language to guide or limit the Board's choice of a 501c3 organization to benefit from the remainder funds.

The constitution has been updated to reflect the 13 of 15 amendments approved by the assembly.

During the general discussion, three items were advanced: procedures for making suggestions to the Congress, proxy voting at general meetings, and adjusting the Riding Badge Program to accommodate disabled riders (this question was forwarded to the Education Committee).

## QUARTERLY CIRCULATION

The June issue of *The Quarterly* was delivered to 362 households (via US Mail), 184 members (via electronic notice), and 42 members of the FEIF community (via YouSendIt link) including the Board of FEIF, the FEIF office, and all the association magazine editors and chairpersons.

## FIND US ON FACEBOOK

The integration between the USIHC website's news and calendar pages and Facebook has been restored. Explains webmaster Doug Smith, "Facebook made a change at some point in the past that broke the passive connection between our site and theirs. We now have an active connection that immediately posts items to Facebook as they are added to our news or calendar pages. Anything posted on our site is communicated to the membership in three ways: (1) on our site (home page and either the news or calendar page); (2) via the RSS feed



Correction: The Quarterly forgot to credit the beautiful cover photo of our June issue to Hazel Meredith of Meredith Images.

to which members may subscribe; (3) via Facebook."

## KENTUCKY SHOW AND MEETING

The 10th annual Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show will be held October 20-21 at Locust Hill Farm in Prospect, KY. Judges will be Petur Jokull Hakonarson, Will Covert, and a third judge to be announced. Lessons will be available all week. For more information, contact Kathy Love at 612-840-7296 or kathylnlovemd@gmail.com, or see [www.gudmar.com](http://www.gudmar.com). At the July 17 Board Meeting, the USIHC Board announced plans to hold a General Meeting in conjunction with the show.

## BOARD MEETINGS

The USIHC Board of Directors met on April 19, May 12, June 12, and July 17. Minutes of the meetings can be found at [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org), under the tab

"The Congress." In addition to the items already mentioned in this issue's News section, Secretary Doug Smith reported that total USIHC membership is now 399, while Treasurer Kari Pietsch-Wangard submitted a complete financial report. The Promotion Committee has a draft of the new Booth Rental Agreement for the Board to review at its August meeting. Kathy Lockerbie was asked to chair a subcommittee to design a replacement to the current promotional brochure. The idea of a Breeding Evaluation Handbook was withdrawn, since all information is already on the USIHC website; the Breeding Committee will make recommendations on how to make the information easier to find. The Constitution Review Committee is looking into the necessary changes to permit electronic voting, while the Pleasure Riding Committee is investigating online fill-in Pleasure Rider forms.

## YOUTH CUP

The 10th FEIF Youth Cup was held in Verden, Germany, from July 12-14, 2012, with 78 14- to 17-year-old riders competing in 13 international teams. Judges were Carsten Eckert, Fi Pugh, Florian Schneider, Frauke Walter, Hendrik Gepp, Högni Froðason, and Lutz Lesener. Five participants received the Eva Maria Gerlach Award as the most versatile riders (in alphabetical order): Carolin Nase (Cavallo Champions), Johanna Kirchmayr (Fast & Furious), Lisa Kroon (Hurricane Horse Riders), Seraina Stalder (Cavallo Champions), and Vanja Roulin (Draumur). These riders also received a free entrance ticket for the World Championships 2013 in Berlin. The complete results are available in the download section of the FEIF website: <http://www.feiffengur.com/documents/YC%202012%20Results.pdf>

## FEATHER PRIZE

The FEIF Feather Prize is awarded once a year to one rider at a specific event. This year, the judges at the FEIF Youth Cup 2012 awarded Snorri Egholm Þorsson (IS) the FEIF Feather Prize 2012. The aim of this prize is to encourage good riding and good horsemanship, a tribute to featherlight riding. The awarded rider sets an example to the Icelandic Horse World. Previously awarded riders are

Anne Stine Haugen, Bo Cavens, Guðmundur Einarsson, Ástríður Magnúsdóttir, Lena Trappe, Andrea Balz, Stian Pedersen, Þorvaldur Árni Þorvaldsson, Frauke Schenzel, and Stephanie Nielsen.

## YEAR OF HARMONY

FEIF has declared 2012 to be the Year of Good and Harmonious Riding. FEIF Judges at Breeding Shows and World Ranking Events are requested to name riders because of their fine riding style, independent of marks given. These names are published on the FEIF website, as a reward for their riding style. The first list, with more than 25 riders, youth and adult, was published on June 23, 2012. The list is updated on a daily basis.

## HOOF STUDY

Data collection for the FEIF Hoof Study, run by the Vejle Equine Clinic of the University of Zürich, started this year at the International Breeding Show in Denmark on April 19. The second part of the Hoof Study took place at Landsmót in Iceland on June 25 to July 1.

Special shoeing practices are used for Icelandic competition horses to enhance the expressiveness and regularity of a gait. In order to establish a database of the current shoeing situation among Icelandic competition horses, the FEIF Delegates Assembly decided to randomly select a

representative number of Icelandic sport and breeding horses for an in-depth hoof assessment at four different events in 2012.

The aim of the study is to understand how current shoeing practices affect hoof health by measuring and x-raying the hooves of a representative number of animals. The data will allow an evaluation of the current FEIF rules regarding trimming and shoeing for their ability to ensure hoof health and thus to guarantee horse welfare and fair competition.

At each event, the researchers will randomly choose 30 horses. The assessment is carried out after the standard shoe check and trot-up. The identities of the horses and riders and the results will remain anonymous.

So far the studies performed in Denmark and Iceland went well. The owners and trainers of the horses were very positive, and the veterinarians Michael Weishaupt, Nina Waldern, and Sara Mikkelsen, and the farrier Michael Kjær were satisfied with the start of the project. A video was made by Kari Baklund showing what the horses go through during the 20-minute hoof check.

Data collection will continue at the Nordic Championships in Sweden and the Mid European Championship in Germany.





# REGIONAL UPDATES

## FRIDA ICELANDIC RIDING CLUB

### RICH MOORE REPORTS:

In early May, eight members of the FIRC traveled to Prospect, KY for a week-long clinic at Gudmar Petursson's farm. The trip was organized by Laura Colicchio. The riders were Tony and Laura Colicchio, Pat and Rich Moore, Barb Noble, Curt Pierce, Charlotte Reilly, and Jo Ann Trostle. Curt transported the horses to Kentucky. We had a great time, due in large measure to the excellence of Gudmar's instruction and to the preparations made by Laura. We had lessons twice a day from Monday through Thursday. On Friday morning, we participated in a two-hour drill team practice, which was a highlight of the week. On two days, Gudmar trailered our horses to an excellent oval track about five miles away belonging to the Welsh family. It was a wonderful opportunity to ride the horses at such a facility. The weather for the week cooperated and was dry and mostly cool. The hotel was excellent. Thanks again to Laura for all her hard work!

The club put on its first sanctioned show to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the founding of the club on May 19



and 20 in Herndon, VA near Washington Dulles Airport. The show was held at Frying Pan Farm Park, a Fairfax County Park Authority Equestrian Facility. The classes were conducted in a large indoor arena. Horses were kept in a new and spacious barn adjacent to the arena. Riders also had access to a large outdoor arena and to a warm-up arena just outside the indoor arena.

The show was a great success, especially for the first time putting one on. A large contingent from the FIRC rode, plus riders and horses from Georgia and Vermont. A total of 23 horses participated. Almost all scheduled classes were conducted, with pace classes being the

Scenes from the Frida Icelandic Riding Club USIHC-sanctioned show, held May 19-20 at Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon, VA. Top left, Asta Bjartmarz riding Amur from North Star; right, Sverrir Bjartmarz and Saga frá Árbakka. Middle left, Katrin Sheehan and Tangó frá Strandarhöfði; right, Rich Moore and Glanni from Burns Family Farm. Bottom left, Tony Colicchio and Von frá Stærri-Bæ. Photos by Susan Milloy.

only ones canceled.

Given that the classes were not crowded, the two international judges—Will Covert and Florian Schneider—had the time to speak to each rider after each class to explain the scores they had received. This was much appreciated by everyone.

Riders from outside the club commented on the professional organization of the show, the excellent footing in the arena, and on the spacious, well-lit, and airy stalls in the new barn. All said that they would return next year if another show was held and tell their friends to come too.

The show attracted a lot of spectators—an estimated 200. There were many questions about Icelandics and the USIHC. Large numbers of brochures on the horse, the Congress, and FIRC were taken.

A large group from the club who were not riding volunteered to help administer the show. The show committee—Pat Moore, Sverrir Bjartmarz, Kimberly Davis, and Sali Peterson did a great job. The financial success of the show was made possible in large measure by the generous donations made by Tony Colicchio, Charlotte Reilly, and Sally Thorpe, by all those who sponsored classes, from a club silent auction, and last but not least from the raffle of a beautiful original oil painting done by Sandy Newkirk and donated to the club by her for the show. (The painting was won by Laura Colicchio.)

The FIRC is considering putting on another show in May 2013. If you think you might be interested in participating, please send a note to Pat Moore, the show manager ([pat.moore81@verizon.net](mailto:pat.moore81@verizon.net)).

The club drill team has continued with its monthly practices. Members of the team enjoy formation riding, and the horses seem to agree. Elements of the drill pattern members learned at the Kentucky clinic with Gudmar in May have been incorporated in the routine. Members are looking forward to appearances in the fall.

The club plans to conduct several organized trail rides in the summer including one at the Manassas National Battlefield Park.

## FLUGNIR ICELANDIC HORSE ASSOCIATION

### KYDEE SHEETZ REPORTS:

The theme for the Midwest Horse Fair at Alliant Energy Center in Madison, WI this year (April 20-22) was horse heritage. Our Flugnir participants—Nick Cook, Elizabeth “Dink” Everson, Kevin Draeger, Lori Cretney, Amber Parry, and Jessica Elmlad—all participated in the demonstrations wearing Viking costumes, with an attitude.

The ten-minute choreography highlighted the Icelandic breed and their magnificent gaits. Participants displayed their horse’s strongest gait while holding to the pattern demonstration, then roused the audience with a beer tolt. The conclusion had Lori and Nick exiting the arena at flying pace. A video of the presentation is on our Facebook page, [www.Facebook.com/Flugnir](http://www.Facebook.com/Flugnir).

Educational materials were also part of the program. For our Horse Heritage display, photographs taken by Elizabeth “Dink” Everson were mounted and displayed prominently in the booth. Debbie Cook brought a volcano from Minnesota to help highlight the “Land of Fire and Ice” theme and to support the educational aspect of the display. Photos of our



Barbara Frische instructs Jerry Oliver at the Flugnir clinic held at Tolthaven Ranch, Pelican Rapids, MN.

booth are on our website: [www.flugnir.org/galleries/midwest-horse-fair-2012/](http://www.flugnir.org/galleries/midwest-horse-fair-2012/).

On May 18-19 we held a three-day clinic focused on sport competition with Barbara Frische at Tolthaven Ranch, Pelican Rapids, MN. On Friday morning each horse had its conformation and



Kevin Draeger was one of the riders representing the Flugnir Club at the Midwest Horse Fair in Madison, WI this year.

gaits evaluated, and during the clinic riders had a series of lessons on how to apply this knowledge when presenting their horse on the track. Our attendees varied from new owners to experienced competitors, which made for a great learning opportunity for everyone. As usual at the Olivers' Tolthaven Ranch, the hospitality was amazing and competition among participants to bring the best food possible was intense. Strenuous games of ping-pong provided comic relief during breaks. On Sunday morning, lessons were brief to leave time for an afternoon schooling show. Each rider was scored in an individual four- or five-gait program. The event closed with a group session in which Barbara reviewed the skills of each horse and rider and gave everyone a set of goals to work on before the next event. By all accounts, this feedback discussion was the highlight of the weekend.

In July we will be hosting a series of three exciting clinics, Promoting Partnership with Your Icelandic Horse, near Duluth, MN. While the recent flash flooding damaged the local zoo, clinic participants can rest assured that the polar bear is back in her enclosure, the lions are accounted for, and the seals, which were seen swimming down the main street, have been recovered uneventfully. The washing away of many roads and bridges, as well as virtually every horse trail in the region, has prompted a few changes, but the Promote Partnership clinics on July 19-20 and 21-22, promise to be amazing. Barbara Frische will work with each participant in the arena and/or on the trail, with the goal of improving horse and rider communication based on the natural way the horse travels. In addition, she will teach how the use of natural obstacles such as hills, valleys, logs, and water crossings can improve everything from general fitness to sport competition.

Eve Loftness and Cindy Nadler will introduce interested riders to the exciting sport of competitive trail riding by setting up natural and artificial obstacles around the 100-acre Aslan's Country Icelandic Horse Farm. Clinic registrations filled up so quickly with the initial announcement that we will be facilitating multiple two-



Flugnir member Teri Ingram shares a sweet moment with her young horse.

day clinics to accommodate the demand.

Also on July 23-24 Flugnir and Creekside Farm in Rutledge, GA are jointly sponsoring an event that we are calling "Icelandic Horse University." This educational clinic is directed at professional horse trainers and riding instructors from around the country who want to learn more about Icelandic horses. We plan to offer this two-day clinic at no charge and by invitation only to professional dressage, hunter jumper, equitation, and other trainers and instructors who are interested in the Icelandic horse.

On September 27-30 we are excited to have another clinic at Tolthaven Ranch in Pelican Falls, MN. We are offering a three-day clinic with Gudmar Petursson, followed by a schooling show held on September 30. We are encouraging additional people to audit and then participate in the schooling show. Contact Sharon Johnson for further information or questions. (I assume that the ping-pong tournaments will continue.)

Join Flugnir at Woodside Ranch in Mauston, WI on November 2-4 for a weekend with your horse. Normally, outside horses are not permitted; however, since this is their off-season, Woodside Ranch will allow us to bring our Icelandics for a weekend excursion on awesome trails and

a campstyle breakfast. For more information about Woodside Ranch, please see their website at [www.woodsideranch.com](http://www.woodsideranch.com). You have the option of renting a small cabin for your group or family or a room in their ranch house at the fall season rates. That fee includes your accommodations, all your meals, to include dinner on Friday night and lunch on Sunday before checking out. Meals are served from their family-style kitchen. The breakfast in the forest, cooked on an open wood fire, is the best ever. Keep up-to-date on this event by visiting our site at [www.flugnir.org](http://www.flugnir.org).

## NORTHEAST ICELANDIC HORSE CLUB

### AMY GODDARD REPORTS:

NEIHC members were delighted to watch Martha Stewart ride Martina Gates' gelding Dagfari (aka "Cookie") right into her studio kitchen on the May 9 episode of the Martha Stewart Show—in front of a live audience, no less! Nicki Esdorn rode Martina's stallion Stigandi and gave a very informative overview of the breed while being interviewed by Martha. Video by Lisa Keller showed Nicki, Martina, and Martha riding in New York and also featured Kristjan Kristjansson of Thor Icelandics demonstrating flying pace. Stan Hirson contributed video of horses in Iceland. Still photos (including the cover of the last Quarterly) were shot by Hazel Meredith. What a positive testament to the breed!

FEIF Breeding Evaluations were held at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY June



Lianne Thomashow and Prydi buy stamps at the post office. Photo by Terry Toy.



Aska frá Geldingaá, ridden by Guðmar Pétursson, was the top-scoring horse at the NEIHC breeding horse evaluations in June. She is owned by Susan Peters. Photo by Betty Grindrod.

1–3. Thanks to Martina Gates for managing the entire event, Thor Icelandics for hosting the event, and the riders and volunteers who made it happen. See the story in this issue of the Quarterly.

Susan Peters writes, “Silver Maple Icelandics hosted a Summer Camp for Grownups in early June. The purpose of the camp was to give adult riders a chance to critically examine their riding skills in a relaxed setting. Riders received two private lessons a day, and had the opportunity to take trail rides, relax with massages, and eat good, healthy, locally grown foods. The faculty consisted of Gudmar Petursson, Jana Meyer, and Rebecca Hoyt, assisted by Jessica Haynsworth. We were also fortunate to have Denny Emerson, USEA Hall of Fame rider and author of *What Makes Good Riders Great* attend for an evening to talk about his riding experiences as an eventer. Silver Maple plans on holding another event of this type in the fall when the colors are spectacular.”

Sue Sundstrom has been very successful in convincing several riders to

try—and then switch to—Icelandics. Recent convert Lianne Thomashow has been selling her big horses and purchased her first Icelandic, Prydi, from Susan Peters. (See



Andrea Barber's photo of Steve Barber riding Kalman frá Lækjamóti made the cover of the *Mane Stream*. The issue featured the Saint Skutla Club.

photo of her in the post office, taken by postmistress Terry Toy, another Icelandic horse convert!) Lianne's daughter, Quinn has been taking lessons with Jana Meyer and competed in the FEIF Youth Cup in Germany this summer.

Ten or more NEIHC members attended Landsmot in July, where the weather was perfect while those of us left behind were sweltering in a heat wave in the northeast. We look forward to the rest of the summer and early fall filled with lots of events, such as a youth camp, clinics, schooling shows, and group rides. NEIHC members are encouraged to join the NEIHC Yahoo mail group, check our website, [neihc.com](http://neihc.com), and our Facebook page for news and upcoming events. Or contact club president, Martina Gates: [martinagates@mac.com](mailto:martinagates@mac.com).

## SAINT SKUTLA

### ANDREA BARBER REPORTS:

The Saint Skutla Icelandic Horse Club was profiled in the May 2012 issue of *Country Folks Mane Stream* magazine. The *Mane Stream* is a monthly print periodical that covers the Northeast US equine market. In addition to a generous write-up about the club, several photos of club members and their horses were printed. A photo of Steve Barber and his stallion Kalman frá Lækjamóti participating in a local trail trial was even special enough to make the cover. The feature has proven to be good promotion both for the club and for the breed as a whole. Club updates will continue to be printed in the *Mane Stream* in the future.

# THE NEIHC BREEDING SHOW

BY NICKI ESDORN & NANCY MARIE BROWN

All Icelandic horses are judged according to the same international standard all over the world. This standard defines what the ideal conformation, character, and gaits of the Icelandic horse should be. It includes a tough ridden test, where the horses have to show one gait at a time on a 250-meter straight track in up to ten passes. The judges look for perfection—clear beat, beautiful form, great speed, and lots of charisma.

For the Icelandic horse enthusiast, attending a breeding horse evaluation—or breeding show—is the best opportunity to learn about good conformation and what correct and beautiful gaits look like. For the breeder they are a crucial test to assess how this horse compares to the

world standard of perfection and to determine how successful this breeding was. The marks go from 5.0 (no gait shown) to 10.0 (perfection) with 7.5 being average (but already good). A total score of 8.0 or higher is needed to achieve the coveted “first prize” status.

The Northeast Icelandic Horse Club, led by Martina Gates, organized a well-attended breeding show at Thor Icelandic Horse Farm in Claverack, NY on June 1-3, 2012. The international FEIF breeding judges were Barbara Frische from Germany and Herdís (Dísa) Reynisdóttir from Iceland. Some riders were old pros at showing breeding horses, and for some it was their first experience (see the following interview with first-timer Krista

Wescott). Nineteen horses were presented and two received first prize: the domestic bred stallion Sprettur from Destiny Farms with a total score of 8.09 and the imported mare Aska frá Geldingaá, who received 8.20 (with a 9.0 for a magnificent pace).

Except for four horses, all were domestic bred—which was fantastic. It was the first event held at the brand new show track built by Kristjan Kristjansson and his family at Thor Icelandics. Spectators enjoyed the exciting performances from a viewing hill shaded by trees. Judges and riders commented on the excellent facility, great footing, and well-thought-out location of the 300-meter pace track and 250-meter oval track (not used for this show). The riders also liked warming up their horses on the extensive trails.

The event started on Friday with the measuring of horses for the conformation evaluation, as well as with an educational seminar. Barbara Frische talked about the “Breeding of Pleasure Horses,” and Dr. Christine Schweizer of Cornell University gave a very informative presentation on “The Mare’s Reproductive Cycle.”

Saturday brought the conformation judgments in the morning and the first ridden assessments in the afternoon. Riders, breeders, judges, and spectators talked more about horses over a delicious dinner. On Sunday the horses were presented again on the track, this time in groups (horses have a chance of increasing their marks), followed by a stallion show and the awards ceremony.

Awards were presented to Sprettur from Destiny Farms (8.09) for highest domestic-bred horse and highest judged stallion. Revia from Vinland (7.90) was awarded highest judged five-year-old, Fleygur from Destiny Farms (7.93) received highest judged six-year-old, and Aska frá Geldingaá (8.20) received three awards: highest judged seven-year and over, highest judged mare, and highest judged horse overall. Congratulations to the breeders and owners of these wonderful horses.



Sprettur from Destiny Farm (US2005103999), owned by Kathy Love and ridden by Guðmar Pétursson, scored 8.09. Photo by Andrea Barber

Readers interested in the scores can go to the USIHC website, [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org) and look under Breed and then Evaluation Results; or to [www.worldfengur.com](http://www.worldfengur.com), click on breeding shows and then select NEIHC breeding show.

“The future of the Icelandic horse in the United States depends on breeding good horses that come as close as possible to the ideal,” says Martina. “Great conformation, great temperament, and four or five great gaits are a very challenging goal. If we do not have our horses evaluated, we run the risk of slowly losing the gaits and with it the spirit and temperament. Breeding assessments help the breeders make educated breeding choices. There are way too few breeding shows in this country for us breeders to evaluate all our mares and stallions. We desperately need more breeding shows to keep us on track. Horses are just potential until they are officially presented and prove themselves.”

## INTERVIEW WITH KRISTA

*Nancy Marie Brown of the Quarterly committee spoke with Krista Wescott by email about her experience presenting horses for the first time at an Icelandic breeding horse evaluation. Krista's mare, Ara from Boulder Ridge, received a total score of 7.22; her gelding, Funi from Boulder Ridge, scored 7.29. Neither showed pace.*

*Q: Why did you decide to have your horses evaluated?*



Ara from Boulder Ridge (US2005202888) owned by Brian and Cynthia Wescott and ridden by Krista Wescott, scored 7.22. Photo by Andrea Barber.

A: I feel that it is important to the breed to have the horses evaluated. And I felt it was another experience to try for myself.

*Q: How did you choose which horses to evaluate? Particularly, what's the benefit to evaluating a gelding?*



Kjói frá Kjarri (IS2006187001) owned by Kristján Kristjánsson and Lori B. Leo, and ridden by Kristján Kristjánsson, scored 7.87. Photo by Andrea Barber.

A. The two horses that I rode in the evaluation were Funi fra Boulder Ridge, a seven-year-old gelding, and Ara fra Boulder Ridge, a seven-year-old mare. These were the first foals born at our farm, Boulder Ridge, in Limington, ME. We raised them, and I trained them from the very beginning. So I felt that the next step for them and for me would be to present them at a breeding show myself.

Even though a gelding is no longer a “breeding horse,” there are benefits to evaluating one at a breeding show. For instance, it's good for a rider like me who wants to gain experience, since there isn't as much pressure when evaluating a gelding rather than a mare or stallion. Another benefit to evaluating a gelding is to bring up the BLUP scores on the mother and father's records. I evaluated Funi for the experience.

*Q: How long did it take you to prepare your horses? How is preparing for an evaluation different than preparing for a competition?*

A. I have been training these two horses their entire lives, but I started training specially for the evaluations about three or four months prior to the evaluation. One difference between evaluating and competing is that in an



The gelding Funi from Boulder Ridge (US2005102889), owned and ridden by Krista Wescott “for the experience,” scored 7.29. Photo by Andrea Barber.



Martina Gates (on left) rides Stígandi frá Leysingjastöðum II (IS1996156333) and Krista Wescott presents Eidur frá Oddholi (IS1992186060) at the NEIHC's Stallion Show. Photo by Betty Grindrod.

evaluation, you are on a straight track and have ten passes in front of the judges, while in competitions you ride on an oval track demonstrating whichever class you are participating in. So training for the events needs to be different. Evaluations are more about the horse, while competitions are about both horse and rider.

*Q. How did you learn what to do to prepare a horse for and to ride in an evaluation?*

A. I took a lot of clinics with professionals. Guðmar Pétursson and Steinar Sigurbjörnsson both have helped me a lot with my riding and horses. They gave me things to work on to make myself and my horses stronger. They both also gave me tips for things to do at the evaluations. And then when I arrived at Thor Icelandics, I used every opportunity to ride and train with Kristján Kristjánsson. He gave me some pointers on conformation handling, and we did a "test run" on the track. I can't thank everybody enough for all the wonderful and overwhelming support. I feel that it was a great start for me for my future horses and training abilities.

*Q. What would you do differently next time?*

A. Start training earlier and practice more. First, I should have practiced on

a track like the one I showed them on. Building a track is hopefully in the future for us at Boulder Ridge. I also should have built up their fitness and stamina more. But the biggest thing was gait training, especially the pace. I need to learn to



Knutur Berndsen presents the five-year-old stallion Valur from Ice Follies (US2007103740), owned by Knutur & Cerise Berndsen, Deborah Plengey, and Trudie Lee, for conformation judging. Valur scored 7.91. Photo by Lisa Keller.

ride it and to be able to teach the horses how to do it as well. I showed them both as four-gaited, but Ara is five-gaited and Funi also has some pace. When you don't show pace at all, you get a score of 5.0. It's really hard to get a good total score with such a low score for pace. I would suggest that anyone who was interested in showing their own horses at a breeding evaluation first take many clinics with Icelandic professionals and learn how to ride and teach pace. Finally, I needed to work more on speeds in tolt, mostly the fast tolt.

*Q. What did you learn about your horses from having them evaluated?*

A. I have learned that they are both great horses, with great temperaments and are fun to ride! And they have a great future ahead of them. Funi, I think, will make a nice competition horse and already is a fantastic trail horse. He has very easy and smooth tolt, and his other gaits are great as well. I'm not sure of our plans for Ara. Probably they will include trail and pleasure riding and maybe some competitions. We don't plan on breeding Ara right now.

*Q. What did you learn about yourself?*

A. That I could do it! I was pretty calm while evaluating the horses. It was a big step for me to try riding in a breeding horse evaluation.

# LANDSMÓT: IT'S ALL ABOUT GO!

BY HELEEN HEYNING



In case you didn't know this about the Icelandic horse, one fact becomes extremely apparent when visiting Landsmót, Iceland's national horseshow: It really is *all about go!* The horses here are, of course, the cream of the crop—but there is no mistaking what they were originally bred for: transportation from point A to point B, as fast as possible. The energy is exhilarating. Even when executing a very slow and collected slow tolt, you can just feel that the horses (not to mention the spectators) are waiting for that moment of letting go to zoom around the oval track. The horses seem to sing and dance: "Forward! Forward!"

Initially, the whole Landsmót affair can be quite overwhelming. There are those unpronounceable names and, to add to the confusion, every competition

horse has its father and mother listed, too. (Breeding horses have *three* generations of both parents included.) Then it takes time to get acquainted with the scoring system and the program itself, organized into a 352-page book.

But what a perspective is offered! The horses here are all surprisingly and strikingly beautiful, and their range of movement is extraordinary. Many show incredible suspension in trot and such high and wide movements in tolt. Is this what our little ponies can do? Is this what they can look like? Can we have this at home? Here's definitely a *wow* factor!

The atmosphere is mostly relaxed and informal, though scheduled events start on time and are announced in both Icelandic and English. Rows of flags are flapping in the steady breeze, children

are playing and tumbling down the slope like puppies, the weather is outrageously beautiful, and the backdrop of Reykjavik is ... well, ugly and decidedly unmagical! Better to look the other way to the snow-capped mountains in the distance.

Half of what goes on at Landsmót pertains to breeding. Obviously this creates all the fabulous competition horses, but as they are also used for pleasure, it's worth taking a good look at the elaborate Icelandic scoring system. The first three days are filled with presentations of mares and stallions of various young ages at the breeding track. Sitting on the hill with book in hand, it's fun to get a sense of who's who, get acquainted with the professional riders and their style of riding, take personal notes, and see how well the young horses do under saddle.





Watching horse after horse go by, it does become clear pretty quickly who stands out. It's like watching an Olympic sport you never watch otherwise: You start picking up on the differences between entries before you know it. Some have that special harmony and willingness, but you may also notice unevenness or breaking of gaits, or a wild temperament. Not a good family horse, we would exclaim!

It's nice to go here with someone knowledgeable. (Strange cities are much more fun with a local friend showing you around!) Putting in the effort to understand what's going on will help tremendously in your ensuing enjoyment of the affair. Adding your own scores before the judges' can teach you how to look and assess how close or far off you are with your marks. Seeing a young stallion, Sjóður frá

Opposite page, the Icelandic colorguard marching in at the start of the Landsmót 2012 opening ceremony. Photo by Lisa Keller. Top left, six-year-old Sigurður Ríkharðsson was the youngest competitor this year. Top right, the Five-Gait finals are always a lot of excitement and the grand finale of every Landsmót. Both photos by Martina Gates. Bottom left, a few of the several hundred club riders that participated in the opening ceremonies. Photo by Lisa Keller.

Kirkjubæ, go from a beautiful, relaxed walk straight into a fantastic pace makes you realize what you might aspire to in terms of good breeding.

As the week progresses, preliminaries turn into semi-finals and ultimately finals. Energy and speed prevail. Even the children are fast. We are swept away by thrilling performances. Throngs of people arrive by the weekend. The hill on which spectators sit is completely filled up. The suspense and excitement are palpable. Horses and riders are practically regarded as rock stars, and the appreciative audience goes wild when someone has a particularly good and fast run. Clapping, whistling, and howling gets mixed with popular music blasting from the speakers surrounding the track. The noise escalates the further along the finals advance. The flying pace at the end of the five-gait program is fast and furious, ridden as if there's no tomorrow...

It's a fitting end to an inspiring week.



Clockwise from top left: At the opening ceremonies. Gallop races returned to Landsmót this year. Alfur frá Selfossi, winner of the Sleipnir Cup—the highest honor for a breeding stallion. All three photos by Martina Gates. Sigurbjörn (“Diddi”) Bárðarson riding on Thursday at the Tolt preliminaries. Another competitor in the Tolt preliminaries. The spectators on the hill. All three photos by Lisa Keller.

# YOUTH: THE PERFECT HORSE

## THE HORSE OF MANY COLORS

BY CAMERON TOLBERT SCOTT

When I see Icelandic horses, the first things that I notice are their mane and colors. Horses have beautiful colors but Icelandic horses have exceptionally beautiful colors. I personally know, because throughout the year my horse has changed colors like a chameleon. The color listed on her papers is “black silver dapple,” but through the past several months she has changed from light brown with a little bit of white stars to a darker and darker color. After she was shaved in the spring, she even turned black in front and remained white in the back. Now she is dark brown and fading into beige.

Icelandic horses are hard to get to know just by appearances alone because their colors often change through the seasons. Elskan frá Bakka is the hardest to identify because her colors have very extreme changes. If you saw her several months ago, you probably wouldn't recognize her today.

I've loved horses ever since I was little, but I never knew what type of horse I wanted to ride. Just about two years ago, I began riding Icelandic horses and fell head over heels in love with them. I couldn't stop begging my parents for a horse of my own. When they finally caved, I found a beautiful 16-year-old Icelandic mare named Elskan frá Bakka. “Elskan” means love in Icelandic. Even better is that my parents gave her to me for Valentine's day this year! Elskan is my first horse and I can't stop thinking about her. She is a real sweetheart. I feel like the luckiest girl in the world to have such an amazing first horse.

I wouldn't even know about Icelandic horses had I not taken lessons with Heidi Benson. Anyone who wants to learn how to ride should look for Heidi or her sister, Laura Benson. Heidi and Laura are amazing! I am fortunate, as they train at a stable that is less than a mile from my house. I also have several great friends at the stables who teach me many things. I just want to say “thank you” for letting me join such an amazing family: the Icelandic Horse Family!

*Editor's note: This issue's Youth Essay writers, Cameron Tolbert Scott and Kajsa Johnson, are both eleven years old and train with Heidi Benson at Coast Ranch Stable in Santa Cruz, CA.*



Eleven-year-old Cameron with her “perfect horse,” Elskan.

## OWNING YOUR FIRST HORSE

BY KAJSA JOHNSON

I looked for the perfect horse for at least three years with the help of the best horse trainer/instructor ever, Heidi Benson. I now have the perfect horse, Visir. He is everything that I wanted.

Owning your first horse is very fun. You get to ride your horse and do fun things with him, but that's not all—it is a big responsibility.

I go out to my horse every day, even if

it is to just feed him his grain and walk him around and let him eat some grass. I go out and clean his stall and check his water daily, making him feel clean and comfortable. I go out and groom him to make sure there are no scratches and to get his circulation going.

Finding the perfect horse really makes you want to work harder for your horse to have a healthy happy life. Your horse will always be happy if you spend time with him and give him all your love and attention.



Eleven-year-old Kajsa Johnson with her “perfect horse,” Visir.

# HOLD YOUR HORSES!

BY NICKI ESDORN

Having a well behaved and responsive riding partner starts on the ground. The same principles I have described in a previous article for Signal Riding are valid: work with the horse's mind, not the muscle. Give a signal once and reward by going back to neutral as soon as the horse obeys. Who is the leader in your relationship? Be aware of your own body language and movements—are you fidgeting and in a hurry, or relaxed and in charge? Does your horse stand perfectly still when presented to the farrier, the vet, or a judge? Does he follow you respectfully when you lead him or do you get dragged around in search of the next grassy spot?

The only tools you need for practicing good holding and leading are a well fitting halter or rope halter, a long lead rope (I like a 12-foot-long rope), and a good stiff dressage whip. The long lead rope is essential for safety—it is dangerous to be too close to a horse that does not respect you. The whip is an extension of your arm and only used for giving signals, never for punishment. A stiff whip is better, as the swing in a boingy whip is hard to control.

## STANDING STILL

To hold your horse and ask him to stand still, you stand about three feet in front of him with the rope hanging in a loop. If the horse stands still, you also stand very quietly and relaxed, and make your eyes soft. This neutral position is the reward, just like in Signal Riding. The horse may look around, but not move his feet. Usually you can tell from his facial expression whether he is about to move. Be quick to correct him with a tug on the rope or a signal with your whip and immediately become neutral once your horse is still.

It is important to respect your horse's space and leave him alone. Problems with standing still are usually caused by the handler—the lead rope or reins are held too short and the horse is constantly disturbed by small tugs. Some people will not leave their horse alone but constantly touch and pet it and feed it treats. This may be a test for your own patience and self-control! You need to stand very qui-



Haukur Freyr walking nicely with me. I keep the lead rope loose and my right hand in front of his nose when leading on the left side. All photos by Angela Jobe of Earth Mama Design.

etly, relaxed, and be attentive yourself.

Now you can teach your horse to stand still while you move calmly about. Walk around to the horse's side and then extend the distance, holding on to the loose rope. Watch your horse closely and correct it, then reward. It is a very useful skill for your horse to be trained and accustomed to stand patiently still on a loose lead rope while being groomed, shod, clipped, or vetted. It is well worth investing the time to practice this in your daily handling.



A well fitting nylon stable halter with break-away leather strap under the buckle.

## LEADING

In his book *Dancing with Horses*, Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling describes three different zones where higher ranking and lower ranking horses drive and control one another. The most dominant zone is in front of the horse. The weakest is next to the neck and shoulder—strangely just the position from where many people lead, or get dragged around. A dominant, but much more advanced leading position is from behind the shoulder all the way back. This position is used, for example, for long lining in classical dressage.

You can establish yourself as the leader by keeping the hand holding the rope in front of your horse's head. Do not let your horse run ahead but raise your hand or use your whip like a wall. Insist on having your personal space and give the horse his own. If the horse comes towards your side, raise your hand or your whip for reinforcement. Elbowing the horse out of the way is not signaling, but manhandling and will reinforce impoliteness.

Ask your horse to walk on with a gentle forward tug on the lead rope and a voice command like "walk," and immediately let the rope hang loose as the horse walks. If your horse does not follow immediately, reach behind you with your whip and touch it on the barrel where your leg



The rope halter transmits even the lightest signal easily and allows more control.

would be asking from the saddle. It may be very helpful in the beginning to enlist an assistant to gently encourage your horse to follow you with a whip signal if your horse does not respond to a light tug on the rope or reins. Your assistant can also give you feedback about your body language: Are you walking forward nicely yourself?

### STOPPING

To stop, give a tug on the lead rope, possibly reinforced by the raised whip handle, and a voice command like "Whoa." The horse is supposed to stop squarely by obeying the signal, not by being pulled to a stop. If your horse ignores this signal you can reinforce it by stepping ahead and toward your horse as you raise your hand and say whoa. When the horse stops, the handler must also stop and remain motionless, immediately allowing the lead rope to be loose.

### BACKING

You can back up together with your horse or have the horse back away from you. Standing next to the horse's head facing back, tug gently backward on the lead rope and walk backward with your horse, tugging and immediately releasing for every step, together with a voice command like "baaack." You can use a gentle pressure signal on the front of the shoulder for reinforcement.

It is a strong signal of dominance to ask your horse to back away from you and should be used with caution and only when necessary. It is best trained first in a narrow aisle, like between some hay bales and a wall, where the horse would like to back out of. You lead your horse in, then stand squarely and energetically in front of the horse, facing him. As the horse starts to back, probably all by itself, reinforce the movement by raising your hand, wiggling the lead rope, and stepping toward him and giving a voice command. If your horse backs away from you with a high head and hollow back, it is wrong! It means he is afraid, tense, and reacting rather than responding (that is, thinking and obeying a signal). Never push or shove the horse, and reward by relaxing, stroking, or even with a treat.

### PRACTICE

If you practice this consistently every time you lead your horse anywhere in your daily routine, the horse will quickly learn to respond to ever lighter signals and become an attentive and polite partner. A horse that leads well on a loose rope and follows soft signals is a joy to deal with. I like to go on fun and interesting walks with my horses, leading them from both sides. As you and your horse get more in tune, you can try trotting, serpentines, going over obstacles, around trees, even checking out scary things.

Exercises like standing still, turning around away from you and towards you,

disengaging the hindquarters, stopping, going backwards with you and away from you, and yielding sideways all reinforce respect and leadership while practicing the movements the horse will also do under saddle. Many well known trainers have written books and made videos about this important training aspect. The communication style you practice on the ground will carry over to your riding. When you think about it, you need these skills all the time in everyday life: bringing your horse from pasture to barn, moving



Never ever wrap the lead rope around your hand or coil it so that it will pull taut around your hand or arm.



If you want your horse to stand still, you also need to stand in a neutral position: quiet, relaxed, with soft eyes.

him over in the barn aisle, going through a narrow gate, trotting him out for the vet for a lameness check, asking him to wait patiently tied to the trailer before a ride—all easy tasks with a horse well trained in “signal groundwork.” Such a horse is a pleasure to hold!

### SOURCES

*Islandpferde Reitlehre* by Walter Feldmann and Andrea-Katharina Rostock

*Dancing with Horses* by Klaus Ferdinand Hempfling

*The Seven Games* by Pat Parelli

Training Video *Harmony* by Benedict Lindal

*Improve Your Horse's Well-Being* by Linda Tellington-Jones



Trotting with my young mare Alfrun fra Hrafnstodum. I try to do everything also on the right side of the horse.

Top to bottom, Haukur Freyr responds with his right hind leg to my “Walk on!” signal. To stop, I tug the lead rope, raise my whip handle, and say “Whoa.” To back up, I reinforce the slight backwards tug on the halter with a signal from the whip to Haukur Freyr’s chest and he backs away softly.

# WONDERFOAL

BY ALYS CULHANE

I remember the day well—the mid-October wind sent the last of the fall leaves skittering across the yard. Dr. Kevin Wellington pulled the latex glove off his right hand, gave Signy a pat on the rump, and smiled.

“Is she?” I asked.

“She is!” he said.

Our beloved mare Signy fra Dareag Dair was pregnant. My husband Pete later told me that I looked stunned. He was right. Up until this point I’d been in denial about the fact that Signy had a foal in utero. This wasn’t a planned event. Rather, it happened like this: The previous winter Pete and I headed south, with the intention of riding our Icelandic horses as far north as we could before fall. We’d decided that we needed a third pack horse, and Andrea Brodie of Lough Arrow II Farm lent us Signy. Two days before our arrival, Andrea attempted to move Signy from one area to another, making her more accessible to us. The mare then broke through a fence and had an unexpected fling with one of her pastured stallions.

Pete and I immediately bonded with Signy, who Andrea had rightly said had a good disposition, was level-headed, steady on her feet, and very powerful. “And,” Andrea added, “where she walks, no ground remains.” It was these attributes that prompted us to purchase Signy at our trip’s end.

Dr. Wellington’s news was initially disappointing, for the upcoming birth would be a travel-related complication. Signy’s conception date was May 11, 2011. The average gestation time for a horse is 336 days. We were to embark on Part II of our trip in May 2012. We’d now have to postpone our ride from Vail, CO to Butte, MT for another year. However, elation trumped disappointment as Dr. Wellington’s truck pulled out of the driveway, for I then realized that if all went right we’d end up with a foal as sure-footed and as strong as her dam. For this, I could forego travel.

## PRIOR TO THE BIRTH

I was hired to teach animal behavior at



Hrimfara from Lough Arrow II at 23 days old. Owner Pete Praetorius walks her and her dam, Signy from Dareag Dair, on a local trail near their farm in Palmer, AK.

nearby Mat Su College in January 2012. On the first day of class, I informed my students that I had a mare who was due to foal in mid-April. This, I said, was most opportune, because we’d be able to chart her progress. I added that I wasn’t a stranger to the vagaries of equine reproduction. I have an associates degree in equine husbandry and, before being hired to teach this course, had taken all the college’s veterinary technician courses. “But,” I added, “like all of you, I have a lot to learn about equine foaling.”

This past winter, I read every single article and book that I could find on parturition, so that I’d both be able to articulate information to my students and also be prepared for the upcoming birth. This proved to be unnerving, for, as I discovered, a great deal can go wrong. For example, there’s dystocia, or difficult birth. If, say, the foal is not in a diving position at stage two of labor, that is, with its nose to downward-facing front feet, then the

situation must immediately be remedied. Some experts advocate walking the mare, and others advocate manually repositioning the foal between contractions. “We’re not going to take any chances!” I said to my students. So we practiced mare birthing, using a pillow, baling twine, a friend’s stuffed horse, and a stopwatch. We also watched innumerable YouTube videos on foaling. What was most revelatory to us all was that a mare who’d previously foaled had an easier time of it. We also all agreed that mares seemed most comfortable when there was less intervention.

On the homefront, I involved Pete by reading him book passages and showing him photos. What stuck in his mind was what many authors said: Mares due to foal should have clean and safe quarters. If we lived elsewhere, this information would have been moot for we’d opt for a pasture birth; however, our situation is unique. We live on a 2.5-acre parcel of land. Our four horses (counting Signy) occupy a

large paddock and have access to two shelters in the winter and a neighbor's fenced-in pasture in the summer. We also live at the foot of Alaska's Talkeetna Range, where snow and cold predominate until mid-April. It would be impossible to honor the time-honored adage, "Put the mare out in the field and let nature take its course."

Come early March, we sectioned off the main shelter area and put plywood walls on the inside of the three-sided stalls interior. Starting in early April, we put Signy in this enclosure at night. This was in keeping with what I'd read in Phyllis Lose's book, *Blessed Are the Broodmares*, which is that putting the mare in the foaling area in advance of her due date reduces risk of infection. Signy, as we noted, was more than okay with this. As her due date drew close, she showed a decided preference for being alone, especially at night.

I assembled a foaling kit in mid-March, and showed its contents to my students. This contained (among other items) two buckets, one for the placenta, and one for washing the mare's rear quarters, a Fleet Enema Kit, K-Y Jelly (called a personal lubricant), a rectal thermometer, a tail wrap, latex gloves, a stopwatch, pen, notebook, and towels. Additional items, per Dr. Wellington's advice, included Mare's Match and IgG, a colostrum substitute. We had the latter two items on hand because Signy had lumps in her udder. I ordered both, keeping the veterinarian's adage, "It's best to be prepared for the worst," in mind.

As I was doing this quasi dog-and-pony show, the veterinarian who taught the large animal veterinary course paused outside the classroom door. I caught sight of her, and invited her in to the class. I took a seat as the students, who by now were Signy's biggest fans, first provided her with the mare's particulars and then began asking questions. This now-humbled horse owner then learned that she was not to put wheat straw bedding in the stall, for mares might eat it and colic. Nor was I to wash Signy's udder prior to her giving birth, for the smell of the smegma guides the foals to the teats. And I learned more than I wanted to know about red bag syndrome (or placenta previa). To summarize: If the bag surrounding the foal appears to be red at the

onset of birth, one must act quickly and immediately assist the mare. Otherwise, the foal might suffocate.

Signy's April 11 due date came and went. I spent the afternoon in the front area of her foaling stall, where I shoveled the sloppy snow rain-mix out into the yard. Signy, standing close by, watched me with great interest. My heart was by now in my throat, for her foaling in this slop would undoubtedly result in complications. That night, Pete and I began what we called "the night watch." This involved checking in on Signy every two hours. One or the other of us would dress, walk down to the pen, headlight on head, take a look around, return to the main cabin, and reset the alarm clock for the next onlooker. Neither of us fell back asleep. Rather, we obsessed about Signy's udder (still flaccid), hindquarters (still firm), and behavior (still calm and eating voraciously.)

Two more weeks passed. Pete and I were by now exhausted. The teacher who at the beginning of the semester was bright and chipper was now a zombie. Being the sort that seeks out teachable moments, I told my students that they might, in the future have to deal with "my kind"—that is, well meaning, but overly emotional animal owners. "And," I added "in such instances the best you can do is assure the owner that things are progressing as they should."

Another week passed. Spring was finally in the air. The snowmelt evaporated

in record time, and the ice in the foaling pen melted. May 1, the last day of animal behavior class, came and went. After, I began getting queries via email from my students asking how Signy was doing. My three word response was "no foal yet." Pete and I decided that from this point on one or the other of us would remain on the premises, just in case. I continued to take Signy out for her twice-daily mile-long walk. We were, as we had been for the past two months, accompanied by one dog, three goats, and Tinni, our older Icelandic horse. By now, Signy was waddling and looking decidedly uncomfortable. Neighbors were chagrined, but I was not.

Pete did a calcium-strip test on May 3 and told me that the one blue square indicated the birth was a few days off. He did a second on May 5 and told me that the four blue squares indicated that the birth would be in 48 hours. Hearing the latter, I breathed a sigh of relief. I'd now get the final course grading done before the big event.

## THE BIRTH

This part of the story is mercifully short. Signy foaled on the night of May 6, around midnight. Pete and I had just finished watching a video. He decided to go down to the foaling stall and look in on Signy. I got ready for bed. Minutes later Pete threw the downstairs door open. "There's a really big foal down there with Signy and it's nursing!" he yelled up to me.

In the time it took for me to get



Hrimfara at 10 weeks. This photo is taken from what we call "the bench," which is about 1000ft above our house. Raudhetta in background.





Hrimfara at three days old with Signy and owner Alys Culhane.

from our cabin to the foaling stall, that is, approximately 45 seconds, a billion thoughts careened through my head. A foal? Nursing? Signy could not have foaled in the time it took us to watch Cadillac Blues. After all, the YouTube video births took an interminable amount of time. I halted in front of the shelter fence and peered in at the sight before me. A huge pinto foal was up on its feet and nursing. And Signy was licking the offspring of Skjor fra Bollastodum dry. I glanced at the foaling kit bin which I'd placed beside the gate. That night, its contents remained undisturbed.

Pete had parked the truck in front of the shelter. We'd figured that we'd sleep in it after Signy foaled. So as planned we climbed in the rear bed and crawled into our sleeping bags. We didn't sleep. Rather, we talked. Our conversation went something like this:

"How long does it take for a mare to pass a placenta?" Pete asked.

"Not long," I said.

"How long is not long?"

"Oh, an hour or so. Or sometimes two."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm not sure of anything."

"Are you sure she's nursing?"

"Oh yeah. Listen. You can hear her gulping."

"What if she doesn't pass the placenta?"

"She will."

Finally: "Look. There it is. It's that stuff hanging out of her."

Pete got up, removed the placenta, and slipped it into a bucket.

At 4 a.m., first light, I looked over the edge of the truck bed and got my first glimpse of the foal we'd eventually name Hrimfara, or Frosty Traveler. Signy was watchful. However, Hrimmi stepped over to her dam's near side and nickered. I looked into her large brown, well-set eyes, and burst into tears. Joy, elation, relief, amazement were at that moment entwined. Pete, referring to the video we'd watched the night before, called the foal his "hoochi coochi girl."

## POSTSCRIPT

Post foal intervention was minimal. We didn't imprint Hrimfara because Icelandics are by nature friendly horses, who if handled too much, have the capacity to become pushy. All we did was give Hrimfara a foal enema and dunk her navel in iodine. Dr. Wellington came by shortly after the birth and took a close look at the pair. His statement, that "this is the most lively and vigorous foal I've ever seen!" was reiterated by Hrimfara, who bucked, kicked, and raced about her enclosure.

A week after the birth we threw Hrimmi a horsewarming party. Approximately 75 people, including a handful of students, came to meet the new arrival. I was repeatedly asked how we were going to go about training her. My response was that we'd figure things out as we went along. Thus far, two months later, Hrimfara's early training has complemented our lifestyle and small acreage. On day four I resumed taking Signy for short walks. A week later, I resumed taking her on twice-daily trail walks. A week after that, I began ponying her. And a week after that I resumed riding her. All the while our fearless trailblazer raced around with great abandon. The adage around here is now, "Little horses do the same as big horses." So, as a matter of course, Hrimmi stands for brushing, gives her feet for trimming, and allows us to put on and take off her halter. She spends her days in the paddock with the other horses, and her evenings with her dam, in her foal stall.



At three weeks old, Hrimfara crosses Mud-Hole Creek: Heather Ash rides Signy and Alys follows on Raudhetta.

# BITS AND NOSEBANDS FOR EVERYDAY RIDES

BY ALEX PREGITZER

Who can truly claim to be an expert on bits, nosebands, their correct usage, and all the pros and cons of each bit and noseband available to us? I would not even want to try. This article is limited to a small variety of simple snaffle bits and a few nosebands and how they work. These are the bits and nosebands most commonly used by Icelandic horse riders.

## **BITS**

Bits can be divided into two categories: bits with direct influence and bits with leverage. All bits are positioned in the bars of the horse's mouth, between the incisors and the molars. What bit you use or should be using depends on a variety of factors: your horse's preference, the anatomy of your horse's mouth, your (the rider's) level of skill, and the horse's training level, as well as other circumstances such as safety or convenience. There is not one good answer when it comes to choosing the right bit for you and your horse.

## **SINGLE BROKEN SNAFFLE**

The single broken snaffle bit has two pieces jointed in the middle. This bit affects the tongue, the corners of the mouth, and the sidebars of the horse. With a one-sided rein aid, the pressure will be mostly on the side of the tongue and/or on the sidebar, depending on the anatomy of the individual horse's mouth. This bit allows for more freedom of the tongue than a double broken snaffle bit.

Because the one-sided rein aids are transmitted very clearly on the desired side of the mouth, these rein aids may be easier to understand in this kind of snaffle bit than in others; especially, very one-sided horses can sometimes do well in a single broken snaffle.

This bit used to be the most common bit used in riding horses, especially in pleasure riding. In the last decade or so, it has gotten the reputation of causing a so-called nutcracker effect, causing the



Snaffle bits with loose rings can be single or double, and made of several different materials. Top to bottom, a single broken snaffle bit made of stainless steel. A double broken snaffle bit made of stainless steel and aurigan. A double broken snaffle bit made of sweet iron with a copper middle piece. A double broken snaffle bit with a curved middle piece made of aurigan. All photos by Alex Pregitzer.

bit to put pressure on the roof of the horse's mouth when pressure is being applied to the reins. Newer studies now find that the nutcracker effect may be a myth, it may also be true for the double broken snaffle, or it may not be as severe as assumed. What is true and what is not? All the above may be true depending on your horse, your riding, and you. Make

sure you are using the correct size bit. Ask your horse and listen to him. If you ride your horse and he seems happy and comfortable and responsive, chances are the bit is not disturbing him.

This bit may not be as suitable for a horse with a lower roof of the mouth and more suited with a horse that has a relatively high roof of the mouth.

## DOUBLE BROKEN SNAFFLE

The double broken snaffle (also called the three piece snaffle or double-jointed snaffle) has three pieces with two joints. The side pieces are longer than the middle piece. The middle piece can be flat, round, oval, or curved. The double broken snaffle mostly affects the tongue of the horse, rather than the sidebars and the corners of the mouth. On a horse with a very narrow tongue, however, this bit may put more pressure on the sidebars than on the tongue. It allows for less freedom of the tongue than the single broken snaffle.

This bit has become extremely popular and is supposed to be very gentle. According to most studies, there is a smaller chance of the so-called nutcracker effect with this bit.

An oval middle piece is gentler than a flat middle piece (French link). When using a French link, make sure the flat middle piece is not too long for your horse's mouth and is positioned flat on the tongue. With increased rein pressure, the flat middle piece can turn at an angle and the sharp edge will end up on the horse's tongue, which makes it a rather severe bit. Some French link bits are also jointed to encourage that twist.

There are slightly curved middle pieces that allow more freedom for the tongue, there are roller middle pieces to encourage chewing and playing and other variations. A plain oval middle piece lies quietly in the mouth.

## BIT RINGS

All the above bits come with different rings: loose rings, eggbutt rings, D-rings, and full cheeks. For our smaller horses, it can be more comfortable for the horse to use a smaller bit ring that is less heavy than some of the larger bit rings used for bigger horses. A smaller ring also seems less likely to interfere with a dropped noseband.

*Loose rings:* A simple ring runs through the end of the bit pieces. This allows for freedom of movement, but also poses a risk of the horse getting pinched if the bit is older. The side pieces of the bit have holes for the rings to run through. Those holes can get bigger with time and thus make pinching more likely. Check regularly or use rubber mouth guards with this bit.



A single broken snaffle bit with eggbutt bit rings made of stainless steel.

*Eggbutt:* Less risk of pinching, but because the rings are more static in the way they are connected to the bit pieces, the rein aids are more effective—which makes an eggbutt bit somewhat more severe than a loose ring bit. The eggbutt is less likely to slide through the mouth than the loose ring.

*D-rings:* prevent the bit from sliding through the horse's mouth.

*Full cheeks:* provide support to help the horse understand the rein aids and prevent the bit from sliding through the mouth. Especially useful for training young horses. If this set-up is additionally secured with a leather strap to the bridle, it will have more leverage; that may or may not be desirable.

## MATERIALS

All kinds of materials are used in bits: rubber, leather, apple-flavored plastic, and a variety of different metals. Here are some of the more common metals:

*Stainless steel:* very smooth surface, strong material, lasts long, and is rather inexpensive.

*Copper:* On the positive side, copper tastes sweet, which encourages the horses to chew and produce saliva, which is desirable. On the negative side, copper is a very soft material, which means that the bit won't last as long. Most copper is a combination of copper with nickel, and nickel is often combined with aluminum. The combination of nickel and aluminum reduces the advantages of the oxidation, and thus the sweet taste liked by horses. Nickel may also trigger allergies.

*Iron:* Just like copper, the taste of iron encourages saliva production.

*Aurigan:* A type of brass. It uses a high percentage of pure copper without the nickel (about 85 percent). On the positive side, it oxidizes like copper, producing the sweet taste liked by horses, and there is no nickel (an allergen). On the negative side, it is rather expensive.

*Argentan:* "German silver" is made of copper, nickel, and zinc. The copper content is positive; the nickel content gives a higher likelihood of allergies.



A full cheek single broken snaffle bit made of stainless steel.



Left to right, a dropped or Hannoverian noseband made of braided leather. An English cavesson without a flash noseband (often called a plain cavesson or French cavesson). An English cavesson with a flash noseband, sometimes called a “mouthcloser” noseband.

## SIZE

Most Icelandic horses do best with bits in size 4.5, 4.75, and 5. While it is relatively easy to get a 5-inch bit, it is more difficult to find the smaller sizes. A variety of Icelandic horse farms now offer tack for sale, and most of them carry a good variety of bits suited to Icelandic horses.

Bits can be hollow and thus lighter, which would seem like a more horse-friendly version. However, lighter also means that the bit lies less quietly in the mouth and can be literally chewed through. Most common bits are not hollow for this reason.

The thinner the bit, the more severe it is. Medium wide is more friendly than thin, but wider does not always mean better—wider can also simply mean your horse has his mouth too full!

## CAVESSONS

The correct term for noseband is cavesson. Several kinds are also available; which one you choose depends on your circumstances. These are the ones commonly used with Icelandic horses:

### DROPPED NOSEBAND

The dropped noseband can be used with a variety of different snaffle bits. However, not all bits are suitable with this kind of a noseband, e.g. Icelandic shank bit, three-ring elevator bit, full cheek snaffle, and

other styles of bits, mostly shank type bits (see the next article, “Bad Combinations,” to learn why).

This noseband keeps the horse from opening his mouth excessively and prevents a bit with loose rings from sliding through the horse’s mouth when the rider applies pressure on one rein or does a one-rein-stop. If the noseband is used correctly (see the article “Bridling Basics” on how to bridle correctly), the noseband sits loose enough to allow for regular chewing and mouth activity and does not interfere with breathing. The noseband helps keep the bit in a good position and also helps distribute the rein pressure between different areas, mainly the bit and the nose.

The downside of this noseband is that it can interfere with the horse’s breathing if it sits too low and/or is too tight. If the noseband is not the right size, the cheek pieces of it can also get too close to the horse’s eyes and cause discomfort. If the noseband is too loose, it won’t fulfill any purpose. It is especially crucial that this type of noseband fits properly.

### ENGLISH CAVESSON

The English cavesson (also called the plain or French cavesson when not used with a flash noseband) can be used with any bit. The part of the cavesson that sur-

rounds the horse’s nose sits higher than the dropped noseband and thus does not interfere with the bit. If the cavesson fits properly and sits snugly, it prevents the horse from opening his jaw excessively but allows the horse to chew comfortably on the bit and also allows other regular mouth activities. The English cavesson will not prevent a loose ring bit from sliding through the horse’s mouth and should therefore be used on very well-trained, reliable horses that won’t need a strong one-sided rein aid or in conjunction with another bit ring, such as a D-ring bit or a full cheek snaffle. Alternatively, a simple leather chin strap can be added to prevent a loose ring bit from sliding through the mouth.

### FLASH NOSEBAND

The flash noseband is used with the English cavesson. This set-up offers the advantages of the dropped noseband but not its disadvantages. It is more difficult (but still possible) to use this noseband incorrectly and thus cause discomfort for the horse. The horse is still kept from opening his jaw excessively, and the flash noseband prevents a loose ring bit from sliding through the horse’s mouth. On the downside, this noseband seems to be less popular with many riders as it is a little more work to adjust it properly.

## CHIN STRAP

For those of us who don't want to use a noseband at all, there is another alternative. A simple leather chin strap connected between two loose ring bit rings underneath the horse's chin will help to prevent the bit from sliding through the horse's mouth while offering more freedom, less tack, and less hassle. Less does not always mean more friendly though. Chances are if you have a very well-trained horse and you are off to a relaxing ride, this is going to be a nice set-up for you. However, it may not be as safe as using a noseband on a less reliable horse. In addition, rein pressure is going straight to the bit, while in bridles with nosebands, the rein pressure gets distributed over a larger area.

## CIRCUMSTANCES

I usually ride with a dropped noseband or an English cavesson with a flash noseband, as I like to use loose ring snaffles. I don't have the luxury of riding only reliable horses, and thus I want to be relatively safe if I have a run-away or need to do a one-rein stop. Other times, I lunge riders, especially kids and beginner riders, for seat schooling in riding lessons. I prefer lunging with the halter instead of a bridle, but I also want the riders to have reins at times. In those cases, I halter the horse and add a simple head stall with a bit and reins and put it on top of the halter. For safety, that simple bridle will have a chin strap. This way, there is not too much tack on the horse, leaving pressure points or causing rubbing anywhere.

## CHEWING

If your horse does not chew and/or does not produce saliva, there may be tension in the horse when it is being ridden. If that is the case, you might want to try using a bit made out of materials such as copper or sweet iron that encourage saliva production. Another idea is to offer your horse a treat when you put the bit in his mouth. That encourages chewing and saliva production as well. Horses that don't like taking the bit can also feel that this makes for a more positive experience. Especially young horses learn to take the bit with more joy if a little treat comes with it.

## CLEAN & CHECK

After the ride, it helps to clean the bit either with water or a soft towel and to

remove excess saliva or leftover treats so that they don't dry on the bit or bit ring, causing sharp points and making the next ride uncomfortable for your horse. Thoroughly check your bit every now and then to see if there are any sharp edges. These often form where the bits are attached in the middle of the mouth, and they can also hurt your horse. Before the bit is too worn out, it is time to replace it. Bits can be used longer or shorter depending on the hours of riding you put in and on how much your horse chews ... or chomps!

## WHICH BIT IS RIGHT?

Most issues with riding and safety are not caused or prevented by using a certain type of bit: They are a question of the training of the horse and/or the rider.



A simple headstall with a chin strap to keep the bit from sliding through the horse's mouth. top, a close-up of the chin strap.

To assume that we can control an 800- or 900-pound animal simply by using a more severe bit—or any bit for that matter—is the wrong conclusion.

Probably the best advice I ever received with regard to the use of bits and nosebands came from my friend Helga Thoroddsen in Iceland. Helga trains horses professionally at Thingeyrar in Iceland. She likes to use different bridles, bits, and nosebands on the horses because by doing so she eliminates the possibility of pressure points. Swedish researchers who conducted a study on

mouth injuries found out that the worst injuries in Icelandic horses were not severe cuts or other accidents, but severe pressure points and tissue damage caused by ill-fitting tack in mid- to long-term use.

Our horses can't speak, so we can only try to listen to see if we think they are happy with their bit and noseband. But what if they are not telling us? What if they are just too stoic to show pain or discomfort? By not always using one bridle/bit/noseband combination, but having two or three that are suitable and well fitted, we can lower the chances of developing these pressure points.

## CARTOONS

BY CHRIS ROMANO



## BUYING A BRIDLE

By Nicki Esdorn

Usually a "cob" size bridle will fit most Icelandics, but here are some measurements you can take to the tack shop or tell customer service for an online order:

**For the headstall:** Measure from the corner of your horse's mouth all the way over his poll to the corner of the mouth on the other side.

**For the brow band:** If you have one, put a headstall on your horse and measure from the back edge of the headstall leather across the forehead to the other side at the level of the small groove under the ear.

**For the noseband circumference:** Measure around your horse's muzzle at the level of the nose band—either English (one to two fingers below the facial crest bone) or dropped (four fingers above the nostril). The piece over the nose must be short enough not to interfere with the bit rings. Measure the length like for the headstall, starting at the above mentioned side points.

**For the bit:** If your horse cooperates, you can pull a string through your horse's mouth and have a helper mark the ends right outside the corners of the lips. Alternatively, try different bits and measure the inside between the rings: 11 cm or 4.5 inches is a common size, 14 to 16 mm diameter.

Protect your investment and clean your bridle after each ride. The bit can be rinsed in water and the leather should be cleaned with a sponge and saddle soap. Oiling will keep the leather soft and watertight. Sweat and dirt will make it dry and brittle. During cleaning, check your bridle and reins for wear and tear and your bit for sharp edges.

# BAD COMBINATIONS

STORY BY JULI COLE AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY NANCY WINES-DEWAN

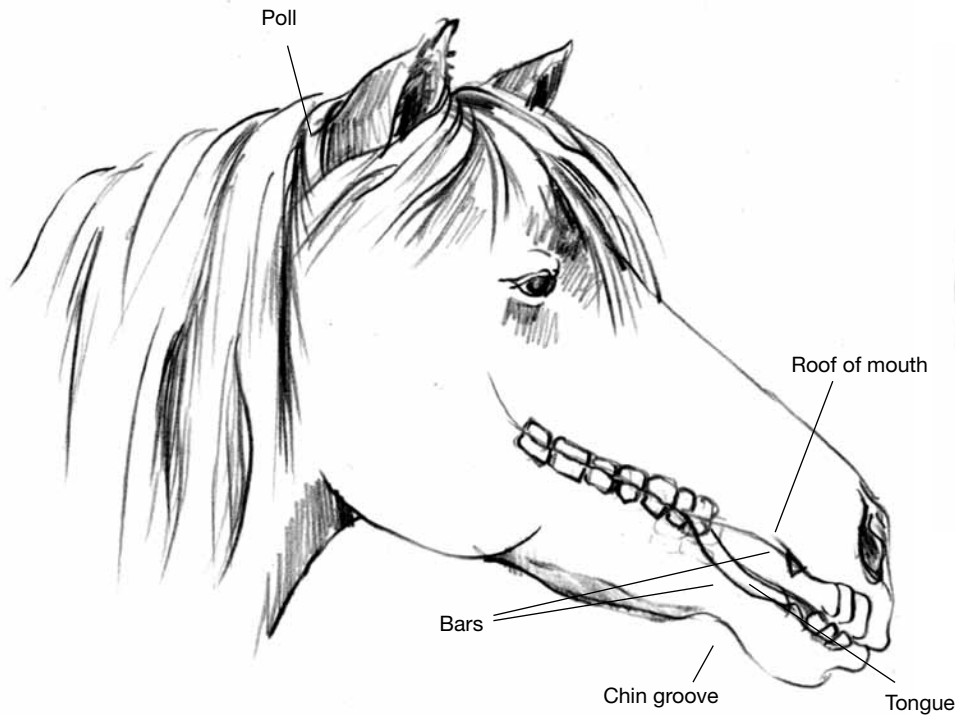
Many topics in the world of horses start passionate discussions and heated debates. Bits and nosebands—especially how they should be used together—is certainly one such “hot button” topic.

Lately at the *Quarterly* we’ve had to reject otherwise beautiful photographs

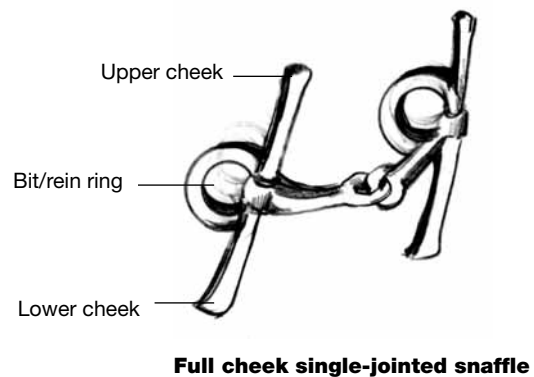
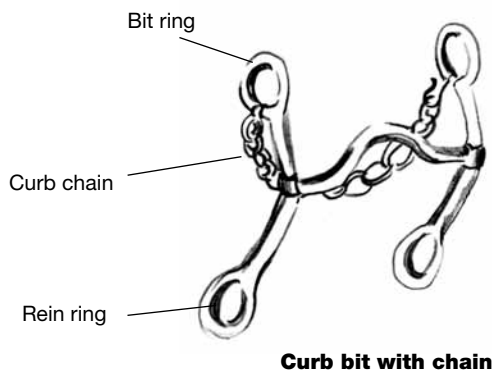
because the horse was wearing a bit-noseband combination banned by FEIF from Icelandic horse competitions. You can find the FEIF list of prohibited bits and bit-noseband combinations in FIPO, the Sport/Competition rules, on [www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org).

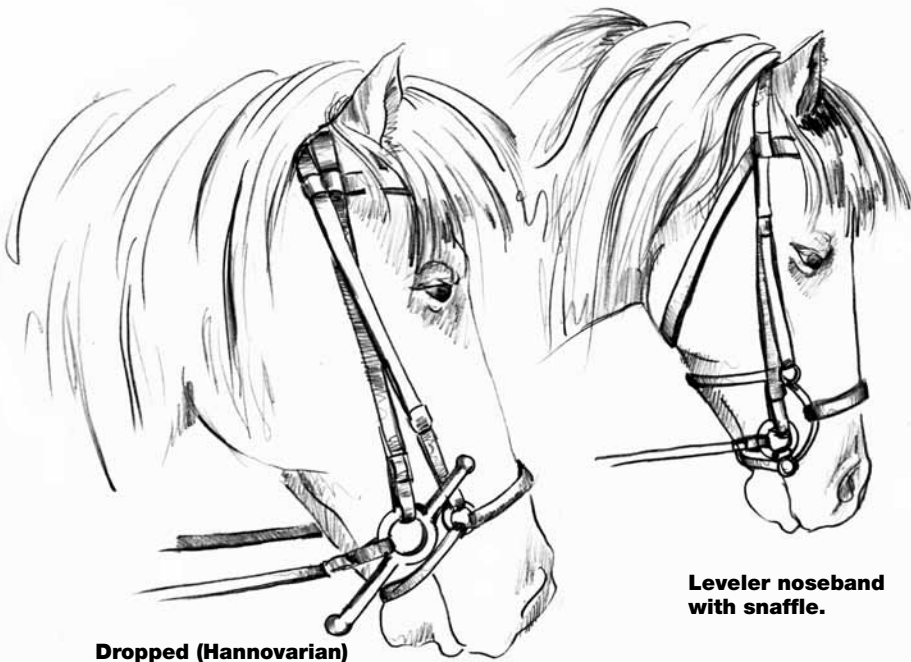
This article is intended to explain why these bit-noseband combinations are

prohibited in Icelandic horse competitions, and how these combinations are also not practical for use by the recreational rider. Understanding how the various bits and nosebands work individually will help you visualize why they do not work well together and can often cause pain for the horse.



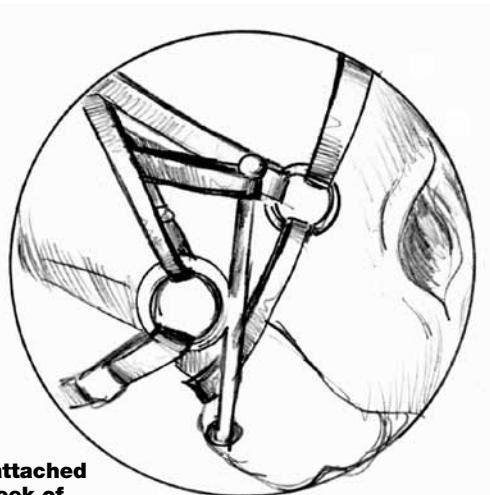
Leverage action of a curb bit



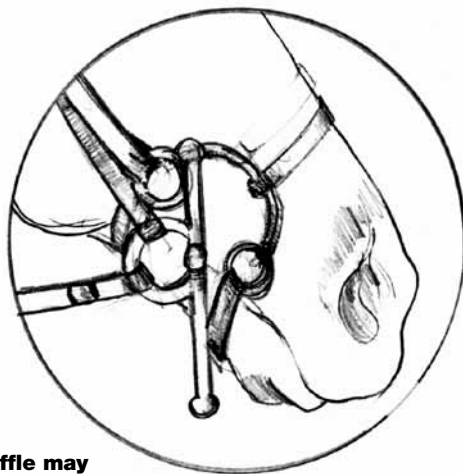


**Dropped (Hannovarian) noseband with full cheek snaffle.**

**Leveler noseband with snaffle.**



**Bit keeper attached to upper cheek of a snaffle imposes pressure on a poll when reins are used.**



**Full cheek snaffle may catch on rings on either side of a horse's head.**

## THE CURB BIT

Any bit designed to be used with a curb chain or strap works on the principle of leverage or indirect pressure. When the reins are addressed, the bit applies pressure to the bars of the horse's mouth, the tongue, and (in those bits with ports) the roof of the mouth. At the same time, pressure is also applied to the horse's poll via the part of the bit attached to the cheek pieces of the bridle. Finally, and again at the same time, the curb chain is engaged upwards to make contact with the horse's lower jaw.

There are many varieties of curb bits, both shanked and non-shanked, and the intensity of the pressure depends on the overall design of the bit, along with the strength of the cue given by the rider when the reins are addressed.

Because of the leverage action of these bits, the amount of pressure felt by the horse will always be greater than the same amount of pressure applied to a snaffle bit.

## CHEEKED SNAFFLE BITS

Some snaffle bits have "cheeks," which are a straight arm of metal that is part of the ring of the bit itself. The cheeks may extend both upwards and downwards from the main ring (full cheek) or in only one of those directions (half cheek).

The purpose of the cheeks is to help keep the bit in place in the mouth; they do not necessarily have any effect on how the bit works. However, full cheek snaffles are often used with a small leather "bit keeper" that attaches the upper arm of the bit to the cheek piece of the bridle. While mainly used for added stability, the bit keeper also works to create pressure to the poll via leverage.

True snaffle bits come in many varieties of mouthpieces attached to rings; these rings also come in a variety of shapes. A snaffle bit works on the principle of direct pressure to the bars, tongue, and lips of the horse. The amount of pressure applied when the reins are addressed is the total amount that the horse feels. It is not multiplied, as it is with a curb bit.

Attaching a curb chain or strap to a true snaffle bit does not create any type of leverage.



**NOSEBANDS**

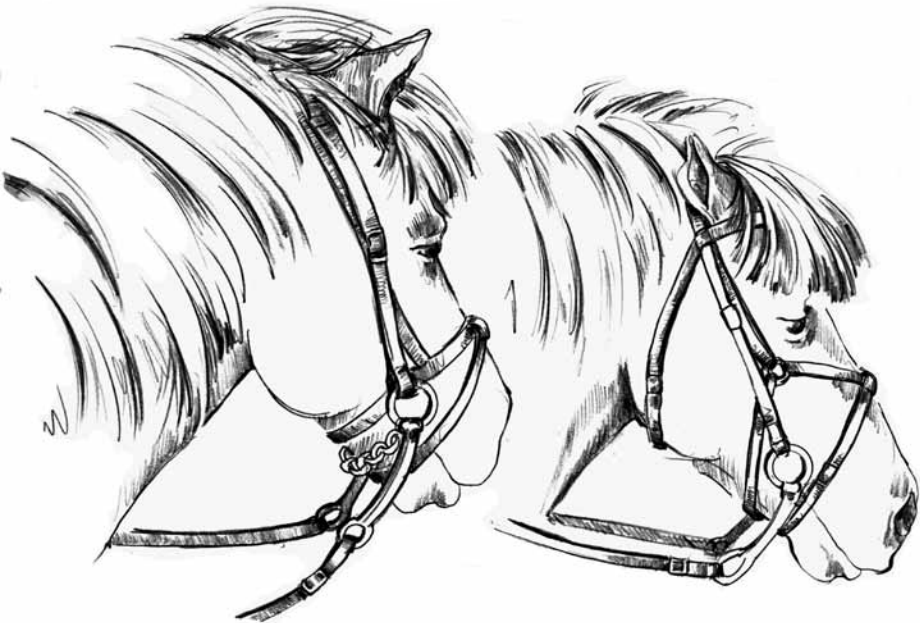
There are many types of nosebands or cavassons. For this article, I am going to focus only on those four that are listed as FEIF as being prohibited in combination with curb bits: the drop, the flash, the Mexican (also known as a figure 8 or a grackle), and the leveler.

These four nosebands, while different in appearance, all have one main function—to hold the horse’s mouth closed. Each has a strap designed to fit and be tightened against the horse’s lower jaw, just behind the chin. This is the exact same area that comes into contact with the chain of a curb bit when the reins are addressed. If a curb bit is used with any of these nosebands, the skin on the horse’s lower jaw could be pinched in between the curb chain and the chin strap of the noseband, creating a painful situation for the horse.

Also, the action of the noseband holding the mouth closed prevents the horse from being able to find any relief from the pressure applied to the bars, tongue, and possibly roof of its mouth when the reins are addressed. Keeping in mind that the leverage action of a curb bit multiplies the amount of pressure given by the rider, it is easy to imagine the horse having its head trapped in a vise grip of pressure.

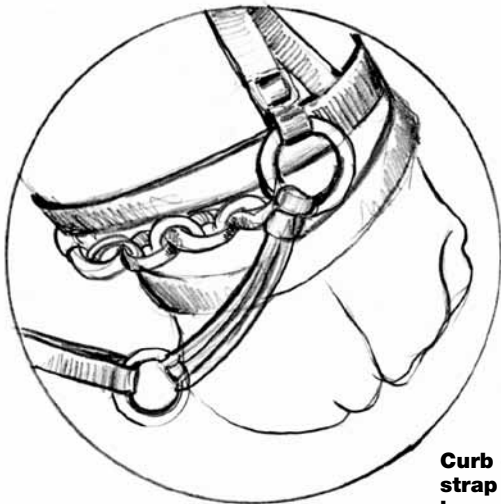
A different problem arises if a cheeked snaffle bit is used with either the drop or leveler nosebands. Both of these nosebands have metal rings on either side of the horse’s face to bring together the various straps. The arms of a cheeked snaffle bit come very close to these rings, and it is possible for them to be caught in the rings.

These bit and noseband combinations are not recommended for the recreational rider for the very same reasons that they are prohibited for use in competition riding by FEIF. The problems and discomforts and pain created are the same whether the horse is on the track or on the trail.

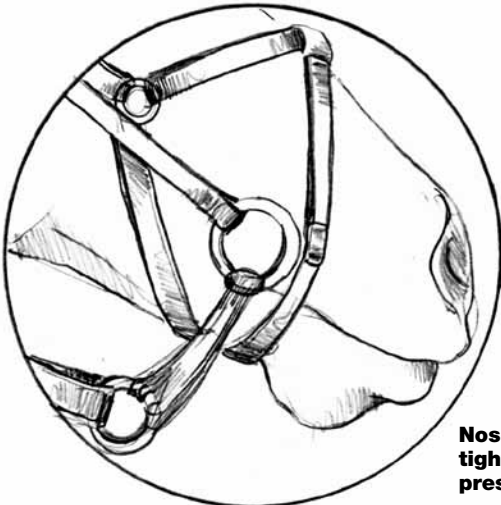


**Flash noseband with curb bit.**

**Mexican noseband with a curb bit.**



**Curb chain and chin strap may pinch the horse’s chin.**



**Nosebands close the horse’s mouth tightly and do not allow relief from pressure of leverage bits.**

# BRIDLING BASICS

STORY BY NICKI ESDORN AND PHOTOS BY ANGELA JOBE

**T**he Icelandic bridle has been developed from trekking and riding with many horses through the countryside. All parts are easily removed and interchangeable, making it easy for riders to change horses and equipment. In this photo essay, I show how to put on and fit a basic Icelandic snaffle bridle.



**1.** First I approach Haukur Freyr with my bridle and noseband draped over my left arm. I put the reins over his head about a third of the way down his neck so I have something to hold him with if I need to after I take the halter off. I hang the halter over my right arm so it is out of the way.



**2.** If your horse is well trained and easily accepts bridling, you can use this position at left. The photo above shows the position in which I have the most control over the horse's head. I stand next to my horse's head on the left, facing forward. I take the bridle with my right hand and place the bit onto my left. If my horse does not open his mouth as the bit touches his lips, I rub the gum at the part without teeth with my thumb until he opens his mouth. I pull the bit up with my right hand, never sticking my fingers in the horse's mouth. I am careful not to hit any teeth with the bit.



**3.** This is the hardest part for many people: hair and ear management. Many horses are sensitive about their ears, and there is a lot of forelock and mane on many Icelandics. Once the bit is in the mouth, I pull the bridle up without hurting the horse's elastic lips. I am holding the crown piece with my left hand and gently tuck Haukur Freyr's right ear under it. Always the right ear first! It is helpful to have mane and forelock separated while grooming, the bridle will then lay smooth on top. Then I gently tuck the left ear under the crown piece.



**4.** Now I can easily pull the whole forelock out from underneath the brow band. The brow band lies in the groove under the horse's ear and should fit smoothly across the forehead. A brow band that is too long can slide down the bridle and rub on the delicate bony part and even slide across the horse's eye. The brow band is mostly decorative and often embellished with a bit of "bling" to be seen when the forelock flies up at speed.



**5.** These photos show how a snaffle bit should fit. A small wrinkle is pulled up on the lip, the bit sits on the space of gum without teeth and will not hit teeth or molars when the reins are pulled, and the width fits snugly without pinching the lips. Examine your bit for sharp edges and wear and tear. A comfortable bit that fits just right provides a quiet and good connection with the rider's hand. A bit that is too long can be pulled too far out of the side of the mouth with the middle joint even coming onto the gum. A too thick bit is uncomfortable and does not leave enough room in the horse's mouth for the tongue. Having the bit too low in the mouth makes the fit sloppy and loose and the bit can be pulled into an uncomfortable position. Fitting a bit to horse and rider is an art and a respected professional's opinion should be sought.



**6.** If the noseband is not attached to the bridle it should be placed behind the crown piece in order to not interfere with the horse's eye. The length of headstall and noseband should be examined often for correct fit. Leather stretches with use and care and sometimes horses have a heavier hair coat in the winter. A dropped or Hannoverian noseband must fit four fingers or a handwidth above the nostrils in order not to impede the horse's breathing. The nosepiece must be short enough not to hang down over the nostrils; it needs to be at a right angle to the cheek piece. The joint must not interfere with the bit ring; a smaller bit ring often works better with this kind of noseband. Two fingers must fit easily under the nose piece with the chin strap closed, so the horse is able to move the jaw and "chew" on the bit. If it is too loose, however, it has no function. The chin strap fits neatly in the chin groove—make sure no hair gets tangled in the buckle. Well fitted, this noseband prevents the horse from opening the mouth wide and ensures that the bit stays correctly and quietly in place on the horse's gums and tongue so it can feel and react to gentle signals from the rider's hand.



**7.** On the left is an English cavesson combined with a flash noseband. The English cavesson must be well padded and not too tight as it lies across the delicate bony part of the head. Alone, it is less effective for stabilizing the horse's mouth than the dropped noseband. Therefore it is often combined with the flash noseband. The buckle must lie on the left side. This can be a lot of leather on a horse's head and it is less attractive than the dropped noseband.

# JOUSTING FOR SUCCESS

BY PAMELA S. NOLF



Knights of the Myst joust. Melinda Leach and Stephanie Printy, on their draft horses Mikie and Bob, thunder down the list. Photo by Ellie Reutlinger.

**N**ow, said the King [Arthur], I am sure at this quest of the Sangreal [Holy Grail] shall all ye of the Table Round depart, and never shall I see you again whole together; therefore I will see you all whole together in the meadow of Camelot to joust and to tourney, that after your death men may speak of it that such good knights were wholly together such a day. —from Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D’Arthur*

For many of us, our vision of jousting has been shaped by such tales of chivalry. As a teenager, I saw myself sometimes as the fair damsel bestowing my token on the handsome knight in the jousting lists—and sometimes as the knight (in disguise, of course) riding a great dappled gray destrier charging down the tilt to unhorse the evil Black Knight. And all these dreams came back when I spotted the following posting on Craigslist “Medieval Games Clinic ... to prepare you to move on to the actual sport of jousting.”

Recent reality shows feature jousting as the next “extreme sport” of uncho-

reographed combat. I have an “extreme avoidance” to risk and pain both for me and my Icelandic horse, Blessi. So I called one of the event organizers, Shannon Depew, to discuss how the event would be conducted. Shannon is one of the “Knights of the Myst,” a group sharing a mutual interest in medieval games and draft horses, who come together to develop their skills in jousting.

Although some jousting organizations are into unscripted mayhem, she assured me that the Northwest Jousting Association’s paramount concern is for the safety of the horse and rider. Their style of jousting focuses on scoring technical points for striking the opponent’s shield in designated places and no extra points are scored for unhorsing the rider. Since Blessi and I are novices to the sport of jousting, we would be coached in building skills at spear throwing, ring jousting, and quintain—all games leading up to jousting. So I registered for the clinic.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF JOUSTING

*So the duke departed, and Sir Gareth stood there alone; and there he saw an armed knight coming toward him. Then Sir Gareth took the duke’s shield, and mounted upon horseback, and so without bidding they ran together as it had been the thunder. And there that knight hurt Sir Gareth under the side with his spear. And then they alighted and drew their swords, and gave great strokes that the blood trailed to the ground. And so they fought two hours.* —from Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte D’Arthur*

The first rules of jousting were written by the Frenchman Geoffroi de Pruelli in 1066. Ironically, de Pruelli died in his first tournament. During the Middle Ages in Europe, jousting became a way to practice the skills required in heavy cavalry attacks and to settle disputes between individuals.

From the 11th to 14th centuries, jousting was a duel between two heavily armored, mounted riders. They started the competition by charging at each other with lances, usually smashing the lances, and then continuing the fight on foot with

sword or mace until one rider yielded or was so hurt (or dead) that the fight could not continue. Horses were frequently maimed or killed. Influenced by the tales of chivalry, jousting gradually became more of a knightly tournament sport with rules, tilts to guide the horses, and specialized heavy armor to protect both horse and rider.

In 1559, King Henry II of France died of wounds incurred during a tournament. His death essentially brought an end to jousting as a noble sport. In the early 1600s, equine activities at royal courts centered around horse ballets or carousels, which were displays of a large number of elaborately accoutered knights riding in patterns and showing off their equestrian skills. Ring tilts or ring jousting continued as a sport until the 1700s.

Surprisingly the horses used in medieval jousting were not draft horses. Current historical research indicates that the destrier, or war horse of the Middle Ages, used for jousting would have commonly been a 16-hand stallion with short back

and powerful hindquarters suitable for springing forward and making quick turns.

### ICELANDIC HORSES IN VIKING WARFARE

*Thrain had fifteen house-carles trained to arms in his house, and eight of them rode with him whithersoever he went. Thrain was very fond of show and dress, and always rode in a blue cloak, and had on a gilded helm, and the spear—the Earl's gift—in his hand, and a fair shield, and a sword at his belt. —from Njal's Saga, translated by George Dasent*

Historically, the Icelandic horse was not used in battle. From approximately 700 to 1100 AD, the Vikings raided across Europe. Disembarking from their well built ships capable of sailing both ocean and rivers, Vikings pillaged monasteries and villages. Armored in mail or leather and carrying axes, spears, or swords, the Vikings would ransack and terrorize. According to writer Grant Nell, "As they spent much of their time sailing to different destinations the use of horses was impractical. Most Viking armies were relatively small and thus they did not seek



Blessi gets to approach the practice shield on his own. The monkey sticker indicates where the opponent will try to strike for maximum points. Photo by Ellie Reutlinger.



Carved of walrus ivory perhaps in Skálholt, Iceland, in the first half of the 13th century, the Lewis chess pieces depict what armed Viking warriors may have looked like at that time. Some of the pieces are riding Icelandic-like horses. The pieces were found on the Isle of Lewis, Scotland, in 1831. The Lewis Chessmen © The Trustees of the British Museum. Used by permission.

open battle willingly ... they preferred sailing along a stretch of coast, raiding, looting and enslaving before disappearing over the horizon. Their best weapon was the advantage of surprise." War horses would have taken up too much space in the Viking ships and been of limited use on quick slash and grab raids. However on home ground, the Vikings rode horses to a battle but dismounted and fought in a shield wall.

### AN ADVENTURE IN SPAMALOT

*"We are no longer the Knights who say Ni. ... We are now the Knights who say ... Ekki-Ekki-Ekki-Ekki-Ptang. Zoom-Boing. Z'nourwringmm." —from Monty Python and the Holy Grail*

Blessi and I were accepted into the jousting clinic. It seemed like a good idea to practice some of the skills involved before showing up, so I bought a ten-foot wooden pole to serve as a practice lance. On the ground, I carried the pole as I walked with Blessi—tapped it into things, dragged it on the ground, swung it over Blessi's head, etc. We even charged (trotted) down the center of the arena as I was shouting knightly oaths such as "Gadzooks" and "For St. George" and "We are the Knights of Ni" as we pretended we were really jousting against the Black

Knight. (Sometimes it is good to be at the stable by yourself.)

Blessi had no problems with any of this. We stopped frequently for a carrot break. At one point, I put the “lance” on the ground, and Blessi tried to pick it up. I think he thought that just walking with me as I was doing crazy things with a pole was not challenging enough to earn carrots so he was trying to figure out he could earn more carrots. He also started spontaneously bowing at times like he was saying, “Look how good I am” or perhaps he was just trying to increase the carrot distribution rate.

As we practiced on the ground, it quickly became apparent that handling a ten-foot wooden pole requires some skill and strength—especially in the wrists—which I have not developed. For Blessi’s sake, I decided to use a pool noodle when I actually got into the saddle.

Blessi was a bit leery of the noodle nodding over his head—he raised his head by about three inches and braced a bit—but this lasted for about three minutes as he realized that riding with a pool noodle above his head was just another stupid but harmless thing Pam was doing.

He quickly relaxed, and we walked around the arena practicing turns while carrying a pool noodle as I tried to change direction using just my seat and legs (works when I go to the right, but not so easy going to the left).

Note to self: Don’t ask Blessi to turn in the direction of the pool noodle. Second note to self: Don’t get distracted and bop Blessi on the top of the head with the noodle. He doesn’t mind but it is rude.

So after riding around, I decided to pretend the pool noodle was a lance and try to spear the mounting block that I had moved to the middle of the arena. Once again, we walked down the center line and I shouted warlike cries such as “Tallyho” and “Into the Valley of Death.” (Okay, I was having a bit of a multi-tasking issue—balancing a pool noodle, avoiding bopping Blessi in the noggin, riding with my seat, watching for people coming to the arena, and thinking of knightly sayings at the same time.)

One of the things about pool noodles is that they don’t fly very far but they do slide along the ground for long distances. Thanks goodness Blessi is used to me dropping things from the saddle—



Pamela and Blessi toss a lance at a target for the first time coached by Stephanie. Pamela’s expression shows that it is harder than it looks. Photo by Ellie Reutlinger.

he never flinched and continued walking calmly as I launched said pool noodle and it skittered across the arena. When I asked Blessi to stop, he came to a very soft stop, and I gave him a big hug for indulging me. When you practice silly things like this in the arena nobody gets to see you make a fool out of yourself but then nobody is there to help you pick up the “lance” for another round or help you if you get tossed off the back of your horse for silliness. So I called it quits for the day.

## TOURNAMENT GAMES

*The address of the riders recovered their steeds by use of the bridle and spur; and having glared on each other for an instant with eyes which seemed to flash fire through the bars of their visors, each made a demi-volte, and, retiring to the extremity of the lists, received a fresh lance from the attendants. —from Sir Walter Scott, Ivanhoe*

My goal in attending a jousting clinic was not to learn jousting, per se, but to work on my horsemanship skills. Participating in medieval games like quintain and ring jousting require that you practice and learn how to ride with your seat and legs since one or both hands are needed to handle a lance or sword. (Nicki

Esdorn’s article, “What is Signal Riding,” in the Quarterly (Issue 1 2012) was extremely useful to prepare for this clinic.)

As Melinda Leach, Liege of the Knights of the Myst, explained, “In gaming or competition of any sort, you have to be confident and have a good relationship with your horse, and that begins with knowing how to communicate with natural aids and learning to trust.” You achieve a huge leap in faith in your horse when you drop the reins and he continues in gait while you spear something. You need to be precise in your cues. And the horse really seems to like having a job—a reason to put all those dressage skills to use. Suddenly the horse can see the purpose for a sidepass—get closer to the target, line up more accurately for the ring joust, get around the tilt, etc.

So here is a description of the games that we learned at the clinic. I have to give kudos to the Knights of the Myst. They were exceedingly welcoming, supportive, and helpful to a nervous novice rider.

## JOUSTING

Description: The purpose of jousting is to have two riders thunder down the lists and attempt to break a lance by striking

the opponent's shield. Points are scored by how far back the lance shatters and where the shield is struck (how points are awarded varies by jousting organization). The lance may have a balsa center to reduce impact. Some organizations such as the Society for Creative Anachronism require that beginners use a Styrofoam-tipped lance. At the clinic, Melinda Leach and Stephanie Printy, on their draft horses Mikie and Bob, demonstrated a joust in all of its breathtaking glory. Of course, any equine-related activity involving real armor and weapons can potentially be very dangerous. There is a good reason that the steel helmets and thigh guards worn during the joust are made of heavy gauge steel and lined with padding.

**My experience:** Of course, no responsible organization is going to give a newcomer a ten-foot lance and let her and her horse charge at other living creatures. Shannon DePew did persuade me to don an 18-gauge steel helmet and pick up a lance and wooden practice shield to practice working on the ground sans horses. Wearing a helmet means that your entire field of vision is reduced to a ½-inch horizontal band across the visor and a few airholes. When you hold up the shield to protect yourself, even that limited range of vision is cut in half. Shannon showed me how to hold the lance with an open palm so that when it strikes a shield, the lance moves backwards and reduces the amount of impact. Of course, the first time I hit Shannon, she pretended to scream in pain, but that is just the Knights of Myst humor. Shannon even persuaded me to take a hit. Surprisingly the impact was fairly minimal since the much of the force of the hit was disbursed between the shield and my bent arm.

## QUINTAIN

**Description:** A shield is attached to a movable arm which is anchored to the ground. Carrying a lance, you charge down the tilt and try to strike the shield which causes the arm to rotate. The more rotations, the higher the score. The better placed the hit, the higher the score.

**My experience:** Blessi and I had spent several sessions at the home arena practicing carrying a ten-foot pole and knocking it into things—sometimes planned and sometimes not. However, there was no way to simulate a ten-foot tall



Pamela and Shannon work on introducing Blessi to the lance striking a quintain. Photo by Ellie Reutlinger.

quintain. When led to the quintain, Blessi promptly walked up to it to see if there were treats. For safety reasons, Shannon walked with us as I rode Blessi on our first passes by the quintain. I knocked it and moved it with my hands, and Blessi acted like he had done this since the Middle Ages. In a real attempt, you start off with a ten-foot lance on your right side, move the lance over the horse's left ear to strike the quintain, and then reposition the lance to your right. And there are some new commands to learn. Protocol says that you pause at the entry to the tilt and command your horse to "Set." When you are ready to make your try at the quintain, you tell the horse "Charge On." At the end of the run, you say "Come About" as you turn the horse.

## SPEARS

**Description:** In spears (or javelin), the rider throws a spear as the horse canters or trots by a target, usually a bale of straw.

**My Experience:** I have to admit that this was my favorite game. When I was practicing from the ground, I surprised myself with a fair degree of accuracy. The secret to this activity is to hold the spear and let the horse's momentum carry it into the target. However, Blessi was con-

vinced that the bale of straw was edible. In fact, he almost dragged me to the bale. When I threw a few spears while riding Blessi my accuracy was reduced but I still managed to hit the hay bale.

## RING JOUSTING

**Description:** Rings are suspended from a cross pole or standard. The diameter of the ring can vary from six inches to one inch. Carrying a sword or lance, the rider attempts to spear the ring using the lance. Believe it or not, ring jousting has been the official sport of Maryland since 1962.

**My Experience:** I rode Blessi up to the standard and touched a few rings. I wasn't ready to ring joust but Blessi was more than ready. Several of the Knights of the Myst borrowed Blessi to experience a tolt. He did very little trotting and a lot of loose rein tolt resulting in several people displaying the typical grin exhibited by a first time rider of an Icelandic horse.

## OTHER MEDIEVAL GAMES

Modern tournaments today include other equestrian games such as mounted archery, pig sticking, behead the enemy, pato (in which two teams battle for a "stuffed duck"), and many more. These games would be great exercises during



play days staged by Icelandic horse clubs. Blessi and I can certainly attest to the fun involved.

## PREPARING YOUR HORSE

*“Sir Knight! I come hither alone and sit at your side to learn of ye some skill”*—from Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

One of the best ways to prepare your horse for any new activity, including jousting, is to use the Tellington TTouch method of “chunking down” the process. Analyze the new activity and determine what is new—sight, sound, smell, movement, etc. Take each new step and expose the horse gradually. Only move up to the next chunk of information when the horse is totally comfortable with each small step. Let your horse control the speed of the introduction.

Let’s take the example of carrying a shield while riding your horse. Below is one way of chunking down the activity.

Let the horse see and smell the shield and encourage him to touch it.

Move the shield slightly and eventually touch the horse with the shield.

Tap the shield to make a noise and gradually increase the noise.

Lead the horse and gradually increase your movement with the shield—moving the shield over the horse’s head.

Drop the shield and have the horse step over and around it.

While in the saddle, practice having someone hand you the shield.

In the saddle, work with the horse at a standstill to get the horse familiar with objects over his head and moving about his body.

In the saddle, work with the horse at a walk to get the horse comfortable with carrying a shield.

Replicate the steps with a lance and then practice carrying both items.

It might seem like you are over-analyzing the process, but horses can surprise you. The horse may be totally comfortable with dragging a pole by his side but may freak out if you accidentally drop the pole. Chunking enables you to build the horse’s confidence. And I have found that feeding the occasional carrot piece when the horse has been particularly brave really helps keep the horse engaged—a method that seems to be especially effective with Icelandics.

## SUITABILITY OF ICELANDICS



Custom-made armor worn by the Knights of the Myst when jousting. Dings and scratches explain why the armor is made of heavy gauge steel. Photo by Pamela Nolf.

Gaited horses have a distinct advantage in almost all the medieval games except for jousting. In fact, two Tennessee Walkers dominated the ring jousting circuit from 1966 to 1986. One Walker named Misty won four National Championships in ring jousting. I personally believe that Icelandics with their above average intelligence and general calmness and smooth gaits can bring a great advantage to these games.

The Knights of the Myst provided the following comments about their first time experience riding an Icelandic: “Blessi was amazing! He was the perfect gentleman: curious, but not at all apprehensive. Our Lady Knights had to take a turn on Blessi (of course we did) and we were very impressed that he was not funny about strangers passing him around, so to speak, and all the equipment and noises didn’t even seem to bother him.”

At the end of the clinic, the Knights of the Myst gave Blessi doughnuts and a stash of granola bars for the ride home. As we left the clinic, members yelled, “Blessi’s invited back to future practices,” “Make sure Blessi comes back,” and “Oh, Pamela, you are invited too.”

## SO YOU THINK YOU CAN JOUST

*O just and faithful knight of God! / Ride on! the prize is near.* —from Alfred Lord Tennyson, “Sir Galahad”

If this article has interested you in trying these medieval equestrian sports, there are multiple organizations you can contact. The following organizations may

offer clinics in your area:

National Jousting Association—VA, MD, PA, WV

Northwest Jousting Association, WA, OR, ID

International Jousting Association—covers entire US

The Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA), an affiliation of “kingdoms” of historical re-enactors across the US, usually has equestrian guilds within each barony. Their web site is <http://sca.org>. These guilds schedule monthly practice sessions and stage weekend events based on these tournament games. In addition, a web search will locate schools of jousting in which you can train for eight hours a day for a week or more.

Based on Blessi’s and my experience with The Knights of the Myst, these organizations welcome newcomers interested in their passion. And you will certainly be able to showcase the wonderful gaits and personalities of your Icelandic horses. Charge on!

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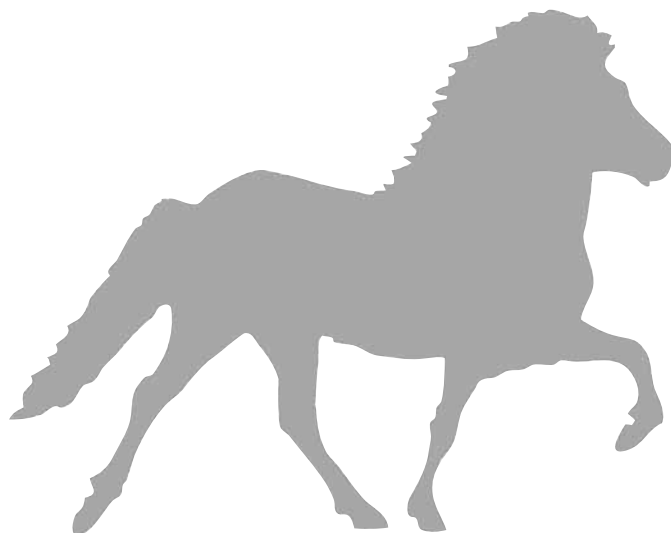
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Flying C Ranch  
Will & Asta Covert  
3600 Roblar Ave.  
Santa Ynez, CA 93460  
(805) 688-1393 (phone)  
(805) 688-0629 (fax)  
info@tolt.net  
www.tolt.net

Mountain Icelandic Farm  
Annette Coulon  
620 Calabasas 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) 472-1626 (phone)  
(858) 759-8577 (fax)  
kmbryhrt@sbcglobal.net  
www.sunlandranch.com

Valhalla Icelandic Horses  
Stina & Steinar Sigurbjornsson  
17498 Santa Rosa Mine Rd  
Perris, CA 92570  
(818) 808-8089 (phone)  
(818) 890-4569 (fax)  
valhallaicelandic@mac.com  
www.valhallaicelandic.com

Valkyrie Icelandic  
Laura Benson  
1 Duane St. #33  
Redwood City, CA 94062  
(321) 278-0250 (phone)  
leiri91@aol.com  
www.valkyrieicelandic.com

## COLORADO

Hanging Valley Ranch  
Garry & Sharon Snook  
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1555 Nettle Creek Road  
Carbondale, CO 81623  
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(970) 963-3503 (fax)  
snookcolorado@gmail.com  
icelandicmountainhorses.com

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

Lough Arrow Icelandics  
Andrea Brodie, Dvm  
22242 County Road 46.0  
Aguilar, CO 81020  
(505) 238-0896 (phone)  
fiddlinvet@gmail.com  
tinyurl.com/3xn3yys

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  
3170 Double Bridges Road  
Rutledge, GA 30663  
(706) 347-0900 (phone)  
(706) 997-9011 (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  
www.windstarranch.com

## KENTUCKY

Gudmar Petursson Icelandic Horses  
Gudmar Petursson  
1800 Halls Hill Rd  
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)  
info@bricelandics.com  
www.bricelandics.com

Grand View Farm  
Charles & Peggy Gilbert  
137 North Road  
Dixmont, ME 04932  
(207) 257-2278 (phone)  
(207) 941-9871 (fax)  
grandviewfarm@midmaine.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

## MINNESOTA

Crow River Icelandic  
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

## NEW YORK

Icelandic Sports, Ltd  
Daniel Slott  
P.O. Box 113  
281 Rotue 3  
Ancramdale, NY 12503  
(518) 329-0185 (phone)  
(518) 329-0188 (fax)  
dslott@icesport.com  
www.icesport.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  
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372 John Weaver Rd  
Columbus, NC 28722  
slyterz@yahoo.com

Suncrest Farm  
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docnshop2@aol.com

## OHIO

Cytraas Farm  
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Call For Appointment  
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johnhaaga@gmail.com  
www.cytraas.net

## 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  
Juli & Steve Cole  
109 Germanski Lane  
New Castle, PA 16102  
(724) 667-4184 (phone)  
juli2875@yahoo.com  
www.meanttobefarm.com

## SOUTH CAROLINA

Black Creek Farm  
Sarah C. Elkin  
449 Jewell Boone Rd.  
Pelion, SC 29123  
(803) 894-4514 (phone)  
bigdoglady@pbtcomm.net  
web.me.com/blackcreekfarm

## 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

## 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  
451 E. Murray Road N  
Grapeview, WA 98546  
(360) 275-7542 (phone)  
iceherd@hotmail.com  
www.lonecedariclandichorses.com

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

## WEST VIRGINIA

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

## WISCONSIN

Winterhorse Park Icelandic Horse Farm  
Barbara and Daniel Riva  
S75 W35621 Wilton Rd.  
Eagle, WI 53119  
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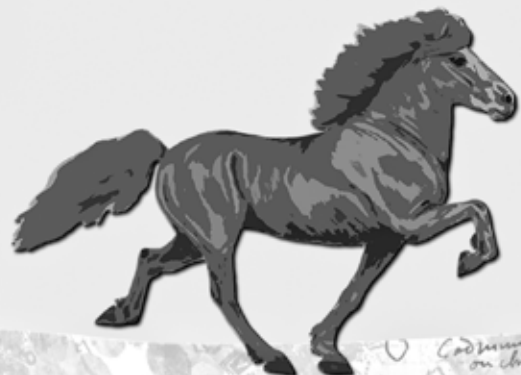
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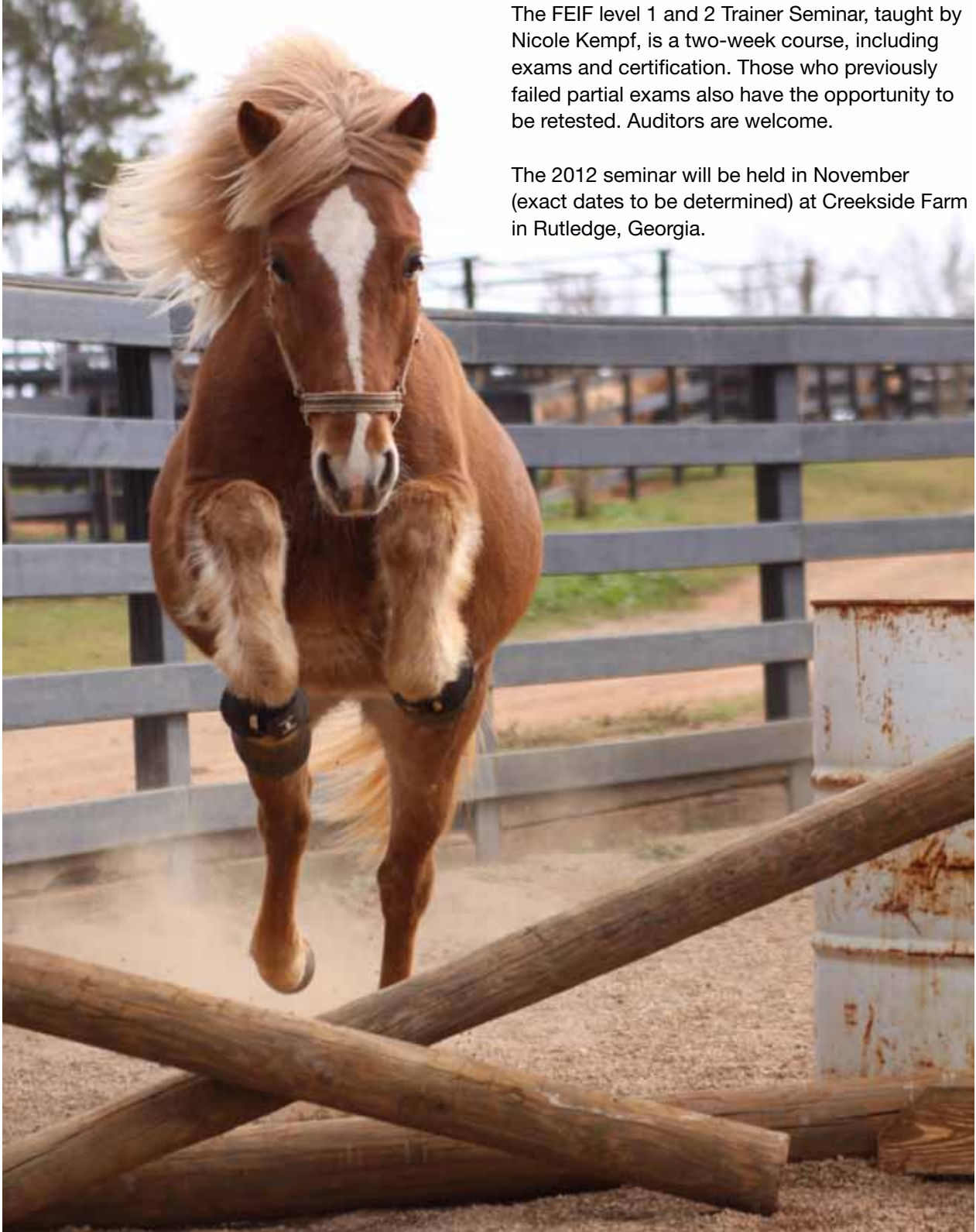
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