

ISSUE ONE

THE

2013

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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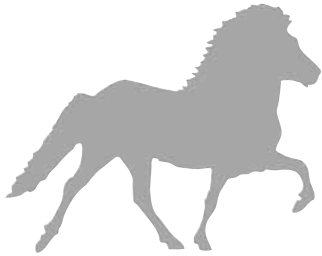
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ICELANDIC
HORSE
QUARTERLY
Issue One 2013

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

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On the cover: The mare Hlökk frá Hofðabrekku (US1994204118) shares a sweet moment with Jóhanna Guðmundsdóttir, showing off her little colt Náttar from Thor Icelandics (US2011104500) in a spring meadow in New York. Photo by Lisa Keller.



FEIF AND THE USIHC

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

The United States Icelandic Horse Congress was formed in 1987 by representatives of the U.S. Icelandic Horse Federation and the International Icelandic Horse Association to meet the FEIF rule that only one association from each country is allowed to represent the breed. As a FEIF member organization, the Congress maintains the Registry of Icelandic Horses in the United States, sponsors U.S. participation in international competition, and regulates breeding and competition activities in the United States in accordance with FEIF rules. USIHC also sponsors activities, events, and educational programs in the United States which are beneficial to the overall interests of the breed. Yearly membership is \$45 (\$35 for youth members); family membership, \$65; foreign friends, \$70. For more information, see the Congress website at 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. Contact Ásta Covert: P.O. Box 1724, Santa Ynez, CA 93460; 866-929-0009; registry@icelandics.org

WEBSITE

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

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2012 SHOWS

Results of seven 2012 USIHC-sanctioned shows are available on the website (look under "Ride"): the Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show (October), the CIA Open Fall Show (October), the Kraftur Show (September), the FIRC Icelandic Horse Show (May), and the three-part CIA World Ranking Show (May). The results of these competitions are used to calculate the annual National Ranking of riders.

Sanctioned shows scheduled so far for 2013 are the CIA Spring Show (April 27-28) in Santa Ynez, CA; the Frida Icelandic Horse Show (May 18-19) in Herndon, VA; and the Thor Icelandics Sanctioned Show (September 21-22) in Claverack, NY. See the Events calendar at www.icelandics.org for more information.

THE 2012 FOAL TOUR

Due to various organizational difficulties, not all U.S. farms with youngsters could be visited by Breeding Leader Barbara Frische in 2012. She proposes that the missed foals can be assessed in 2013 with a special rating suitable for yearlings. The Foal Tour 2013 will be conducted from the middle of September to the end of October. All breeders are urged to sign up.

The following foals received high scores in the 2012 assessments:

1. Balthasar from Creekside Farm (S: Tangó frá Strandarhöfði; D: Lara from Neuenfelde; Breeder: Katrin Sheehan; Owner: Creekside Farm)
2. Mist from Hanging Valley (S: Stígandi



Alice Ryan and Máni frá Saltvík took part in the 2012 Ride for the Cure in Woodstock, VT. Máni was one of three Icelandics among approximately 105 riders. The ride raised over \$57,000 for breast cancer research. The ribbons on Máni's name acknowledge friends who have lost the battle with breast cancer or who are currently fighting it. Photo by Spectrum Photography.

frá Leysingjastöðum II; D: Helena Fagra frá Ragnheiðarstöðum; Breeder: Gary Snook; Owner: Gary Snook)

3. Skati from Hanging Valley (S: Veigar frá Lækjamóti; D: Gunnhildur frá Kollaleiru; Breeder: Gary Snook; Owner: Gary Snook)
4. Maidis from Hanging Valley (S: Lýkill frá Blesastöðum 1A; D: Gunnhildur frá Kollaleiru; Breeder: Gary Snook;

Owner: Gary Snook)

5. Zophonias from Vinland (S: Stígandi frá Leysingjastöðum II; D: Gnótt frá Holtsmúla 1; Breeder: Martina Gates; Owner: Martina Gates)

6. Nikolina from Thor Icelandics (S: Stígandi frá Leysingjastöðum II; D: Osk from Helms Hill Farm; Breeder: Martina Gates; Owner: Martina Gates and Kristján Kristjánsson)

BREEDING EXPERTS

Two important meetings take place in Europe every year: the general meeting of all FEIF countries in early spring and a meeting of experts in the subdivisions of breeding, sport, education, youth, etc., in the fall. Breeding Leader Barbara Frische represented the USIHC in discussions ranging across all topics of Icelandic horse breeding worldwide. Rule changes, issues, and criticism by riders and breeders were considered. The FEIF countries have different goals, which are not always easily reconciled in breeding guidelines. For example the breeding of a great pleasure horse is important in the U.S. This horse is supposed to be safe, comfortable, toltng naturally, perfectly balanced, handsome, big, friendly, cooperative, and always eager to please. However, in Iceland and the European member countries, the competition horse with big movement, great speed, and lots of willingness is sought after. The experts and international breeding judges who make decisions about the rules for breeding shows are hard at work to combine these ideals into a common guideline. This time, issues concerning tack and riding were also discussed. The position of the saddle is often way too far back and can panic and damage the horse. There are different rules concerning bits and cavessons in breeding shows and sport competitions; this has led to confusion. From 2013 on, tracks used for breeding shows must conform to the FIZO rules. The national breeding leaders must submit an exact description of the track to FEIF for a breeding show to be officially recognized. These tracks are currently accepted in the U.S.: Winterhorse Farm (WI), Thor Icelandics (NY), Mill Farm



Jessica Haynsworth on Thor frá Skorrastad 4 (left) and Shannon Hughes on Asi from Mill Farm battle it out in the four-gait A finals at the 2012 Kentucky Show. Photo by Anne Hyde.



Madison Prestine riding Straumur frá Enni at the 2012 CIA Open Fall Show, held at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA in October. Photo by Scott Prestine.

(NY), and Creekside Farm (GA). Please contact Barbara Frische if you would like to have your track recognized.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Applications to try out for the 2013 Icelandic Horse World Championships in Berlin must be received by May 14. A detailed description of the tryout and team selection process is available on the USIHC website.

WC BREEDING SHOW

All horses that take part in the breeding show at the World Championships must qualify in the same year, meaning 2013. Candidates representing the U.S. can qualify in any FEIF country, and all countries set their own mode of qualifying. A FEIF breeding show in the U.S. has been tentatively scheduled for May 14-15 at Winterhorse Park, WI. Contact Barbara Frische with any questions.

HORSE BREEDERS

FEIF breeding leader Marlise Grimm invited international breeders to get to know each other and to discuss their wishes and ideas. Breeding Leader Barbara Frische was among 30 participants. An important issue was the announcement of marks during the presentation under saddle in a breeding show. For example: a five-year-old horse shows a fantastic run in pace and receives a mark

of 9.0. If the rider hears the announcement immediately following the run, he can concentrate on presenting the other gaits and spare his horse. Another topic was Young Horse Evaluations. These need to be streamlined and rules for judging need to be developed according to the linear system. Judges need to be specially trained. For Young Horse Evaluations to be a meaningful test publishable in World Fengur, they need to be conducted according to strict guidelines and not be a “fun event” where horses are shooed around in groups and the applause determines the winner. It is very important for breeders to voice their ideas, wishes, and criticism so that their representatives at FEIF can act accordingly. Please contact Barbara with all questions and thoughts on these two issues.

GENERAL MEETING

A USIHC General Meeting was held in association with the Kentucky Show on October 19. According to the minutes taken Board member by Sara Lyter, six of the nine Board members attended; total attendance was 20 members. During the general discussion, USIHC president Anne Elwell asked for feedback from members. Sara gave a brief description of the board’s recent and ongoing work on funding member events. Discussion followed in which a request was made for Congress to go back to organizing

events for parts of the country which are less experienced. Several board members asked for those wanting help and support to come forward and present ideas, as it is not feasible for Congress to create events without that input from members. Barbara Frische asked, “Who is waiting for whom? The very first step is that we know that the members have interest. We will do our best to help you.” It was pointed out that the recent Foal Evaluation Tour was cancelled due to lack of participation. “If the Board does not know who wants help and support, then how can we help them?” Members were encouraged to communicate their questions and requests to the Board.

Discussing the meeting afterwards at the November Board meeting, the Board felt that the meeting was very worthwhile and that the members felt the outreach was appreciated. Sara observed that there may be a benefit to having a traditional annual meeting in that the members have an opportunity to meet others from around the country in that setting. A sub-committee of the Board (Sara, Anne, and Doug Smith) has been charged with considering the ideas and concerns raised at the October General Meeting.

BOARD MEETING

The USIHC Board of Directors met by conference call on November 13. Attending were Anne Elwell, Ásta Covert, Doug Smith, Kari Pietsch-Wangard, Sara Lyter, and Katrin Sheehan; observers were Juli Cole and Lori Cretney. Secretary Doug Smith reported that the *Notice of Election* was delivered by email to all members and posted on the USIHC website on September 1; on October 1, the chair of the election committee, Lynn LaPointe Wiese, reported having received only one nomination for the open seat on the Board. The election process was suspended and Lori Cretney joined the Board in January. Doug also reported that total USIHC Membership as of November 2012 was 426, down slightly from 430 in December 2011. Treasurer Kari Pietsch-Wangard reported that the USIHC’s combined bank account balances, as of October 31, were \$154,558.05.

The Board approved an increase in funding for the Massachusetts Equine Affair. Since *Promote Iceland* had decided not to attend, the USIHC would pay for one-half of the booth space, not one-third as was expected when the budget was prepared. The NEIHC's insurance will cover both booth spaces. Total cost to the Congress is \$695, which includes booth space plus half of the NEIHC's actual cost for the event insurance.

The Constitutional Review Committee was dissolved, at the request of its chair, as it has served its purpose. The constitution supports a means of proposing amendments that does not require a committee, and ongoing review is not necessary.

Finally, Juli Cole was appointed chair of the Promotion Committee; Anne Elwell will remain the committee's liaison to the Board.



Scenes from the 2012 Kentucky Show by Deb Cook. Clockwise from top, Kevin Draeger riding Ari from Nordurstjarna; Kathy Love and Charlotte Reilly; Milena Frische and Steinunn Reynisdóttir; Guðmar Pétursson (front) and Kevin Draeger listening for their scores in the four-gait final; riders Ayla Green, Jay Riva, and Jessica Emblad and (standing) Dan Riva and Anne Ellwell after the Youth Tolt; Kevin Draeger riding Pegasus; and, center, Guðmar riding Vægar.



PROTECT THE ICELANDIC HORSE

As a result of its geographical isolation and strict import policy, Iceland has remained free of serious infectious diseases in animals. It is our responsibility to take the necessary precautions and avoid the introduction of infectious agents to the country. Therefore, the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority (MAST) would like to convey the following information to all visitors who plan on riding horses in Iceland: Bringing used riding equipment (such as saddles, bridles, nosebands, pads, rugs, whips, etc.) and used riding gloves to Iceland is strictly prohibited. There are no exceptions to this rule. However, used riding clothes other than gloves can be brought to Iceland if they have received proper disinfection. Riding clothes should be washed in a washing machine or dry cleaned prior to entering the country. Riding boots or clothes that cannot be washed or dry cleaned should be disinfected as follows: 1. Rinse thoroughly with detergent; 2. Dry; 3. Spray with a 1-percent solution of VirkonS[®]; 4. Store for at least 5 days prior to bringing the clothes into contact with horses in Iceland.

DOPING RULES

The positive doping/medication test at the Mid European Championships in Wehrheim, Germany, revealed a lack in FEIF's current doping rules. It is impossible for FEIF to act directly in a case like this, as our current rules only apply to the World Championships. Our general rule book, FIRO, refers to the FEI rules when it comes to doping. The FEI is the sole controlling authority for all international events in general horse sport, including the Olympic games. However, FEI addresses sport events in a different way than we are used to. It also only covers sport events, not breeding shows.

Sport events and breeding shows in the Icelandic horse world are for the most part international events. On the European continent it is rather common that riders from one country compete or show horses in another country, without any special procedures or licenses. Our rules



state that membership in one country is valid in all countries. Our WorldRanking and the results from breeding shows are a good example of our international character.

In the FEI rules, however, there is a distinction made between regional and national events, on the one hand, and international events (with riders representing different countries), on the other hand. This leads to a situation where FEI member countries can apply their national doping procedures to regional or national events. FEI is only involved when it comes to international events.

For this reason, the Board of FEIF believes that we must quickly come up with proposals to change our rules to ensure that future cases can be handled swiftly. Our aim is to develop a system where doping/medication cases at any Icelandic horse event are treated the same way all over the world.

In December, FEIF German member association IPZV took responsibility for the case of the positive medication test from the Mid European Championships, in agreement with the Deutsche Reiterliche Vereinigung (FN). As reported on the IPZV website, Klaus Beuse, chair of the arbitration panel of IPZV, confirmed that the German arbitration panel is actively examining the case. Their aim is to have a rapid process, following the rules of the German FN and IPZV and including sanctions if the sample is confirmed.

Any verdict in Germany will be valid for all 19 FEIF member countries.

FEIF CONFERENCE 2013

The 2013 FEIF Conference will take place in Strasbourg, France, from February 8-10. The main themes are Ethics, Rules, and Leisure Riding. The conference includes the yearly Delegates' Assembly, the highest authority in FEIF, plus the department meetings for chairpersons, breeding, sport, education, youth, and leisure riding. It is hoped that as many representatives as possible from each member country will take part in the discussions; they are also encouraged to meet their colleagues and, through that contact, be inspired and be able to benchmark how things are done in other member countries. The conference is organised in cooperation between the French Icelandic Horse Association and FEIF, and is open to all active members of FEIF member associations, members of FEIF committees, and people otherwise connected to the work of FEIF.

YOUTH CAMP

The 2013 FEIF Youth Camp will be held at the end of July (week 30) in western Norway, between Ålesund and Molde. Lodging will be at Stable Kjersem. The preliminary program includes riding tours and hiking in the magnificent Norwegian mountains, a clinic on starting a young horse, a day trip to world champion Stian Pedersen's stable, a bath in a wood-fired hot tub, sightseeing, and shopping in the city of Ålesund, training for a local competition, a visit to Geiranger fjord (a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1995), barbecue evenings, and more! Detailed information will be available after the FEIF conference in February.

GOOD AND HARMONIOUS RIDING

2012 was the year of Good and Harmonious Riding. To stress this, FEIF asked judges to nominate riders for their fine riding style, independent of the marks given. More than 100 riders were nominated. FEIF wants to congratulate Nils Christian Larsen, Stian Pedersen, Eyjólfur

Porsteinsson, and Martin Rønnestad for being nominated at four different events in 2012. The FEIF Board has decided to continue this emphasis on Good and Harmonious Riding. From 2013 on, FEIF International Sport Judges at WorldRanking events will be asked again to nominate riders for their fine riding style. The names of the riders will be published on a yearly list to give all riders a chance to be nominated many times.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

In December, the FEIF Event Committee met with the organising committee for the 2013 World Championships, to be held August 4-11 in Berlin. Major issues discussed included the time schedule, as more youth riders are expected to participate. For the first time there will be separate finals for young riders. Members of the event committee are FEIF President Jens Iversen, Vice President Gunnar Sturlusson, Director of Sport Marko Mazeland, and Roger Scherrer, organiser of the 2009 World Championships in Switzerland. FEIF Director of Breeding Marlise Grimm was present to discuss further integrating the breeding show into the total program.

FEIF Director of Leisure Riding Lone Høgholt was present as well, to describe the relay ride from different countries through the Brandenburg Gate. So far, nearly 400 riders have been registered, with most horses coming from Germany;



25 horses will come from Iceland, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria, and the Netherlands. The relay riders and their horses will be presented on the oval track during the opening ceremony on August 4. Afterwards, the audience will enjoy "Horse Power," a fascinating show by worldwide superstar Lorenzo and his Lusitanos, Belgium's Thunderguys, jumping, dressage, races, Friesians, Roman chariots, and much more. Tickets for "HorsePower" are now available through the WM 2013 website: www.berlin2013.de.

ICETEST NEXT GENERATION

After the 2011 FEIF Software Conference, a committee was formed to develop the next generation of the sport competition software, IceTest NG. The first steps have been taken to create the new software, based upon the requirements and functionality defined so far. A progress report will be presented at the 2013 FEIF Conference, along with a call for people willing to join the project. The planned release date is 2014.

SPORT JUDGES TEST

The test to become a licensed FEIF International Sport Judge will take place October 3-4, 2013, at Kronshof in Dahlemburg, Germany. At the same time, FEIF will provide the service to member associations to have their judges tested to become a judge at a national level. Islandpferdegestüt Kronshof (fam. Schenzel) is located in the northern part of Germany, easy to reach from Hamburg airport. Registration of candidates is only possible through our member associations.

WORD LIST

Ever asked yourself what the word "Hraðaukning" means, or "Kardätsche"? Some years ago an enthusiastic group of people published a small booklet with the translation of common terms in the Icelandic horse world in several languages. This booklet has been updated and is now online at www.feif.org; look for "WordList" in the lefthand column or search under Youth Work. Type in any word in English, Icelandic, Danish, Dutch, German, or Swedish to get the



translation. Of course such a project needs active input and support, so send your comments, corrections, or additions to wordlist@feif.org.

HORSE NUMBERS

According to the latest FEIF statistics, there are 250,000 Icelandic horses in the world, of which almost 80,000 are in Iceland, 65,000 in Germany, and 32,515 in Denmark. Member associations of FEIF are 18 with 58,962 registered members, most of whom, or 24,075, reside in Germany. Iceland follows with 11,183 members and Denmark comes third with 7,577 members, visir.is reports. According to these statistics, there are 7.2 horses for every Icelandic registered in a horse association, 2.7 for every member in Germany, and 4.3 for every member in Denmark.



REGIONAL CLUB UPDATES

CASCADE

BY KAREN BROTZMAN

The Cascade Icelandic Horse Club had a busy fall: a Steinar clinic, club officer elections, a trade show, drill team formation and practices, the annual Christmas parade, the annual beach weekend, and loads of trail rides and dressage shows. And we've got many activities on the calendar for 2013 too!

In September, ten riders from Oregon, Washington, and Canada attended a clinic given by Steinar Sigurbjörnsson at Red Feather Icelandic Horse Ranch in Trout Lake, WA. Steinar customized his instruction to the level of the horse and rider combination. Riders worked both on the ground and under saddle, learning to encourage their horses to be more supple with lateral bends to move away from our legs, circling around cones, and changing position in a moving line of horses at tolt. As an added bonus, he introduced us to a drill team movement, which we have incorporated into our drill pattern and affectionately named "The Steinar."

Also in September, we joined an event called the Waldo Hills Heritage Ride. Ten members of the club rode in the ten-mile ride organized by Oregon Equestrian Trails. It was challenging and fun, with a number of water crossings and steep hills. There were a total of 250 horses on the ride, and people really enjoyed seeing our Icelandics.

In mid-October, we enjoyed our annual beach ride weekend in Ocean Park, WA.



Cascade Club member Lori Birge shows dressage on Geisli during the Gaited Training Level III test at the Wine Country Equestrian Club's 2012 Championship show in Granger WA. Geisli's score for this test was 67%. Photo by Janet Boggs.



The Cascade Club Beach Ride group photo (left to right): Linda Eddy, Susan Wellington, Janella Raditich, Karen Brotzman, Carol Burckhardt, Claudia Rancore, Pat Coulter, and Jean Waller.



Linda Eddy (left), Karen Brotzman (in the distance), and Pat Coulter tacking up for the Cascade Club's beach ride. Photo by Kathy Lamb.

We've rented this facility (Seahorse Acres) each fall for at least 10 years now and it usually fills up each year. This year was interesting: We enjoyed sunshine, hail (that covered the ground), wind, clouds, and rain, all on the same day. Luckily, we had ample opportunity to ride on the beach during the "good weather" times. And, as usual, we ate a lot of really good food and enjoyed a lot of fun and laughter. It was loads of fun.

The Christmas Parade (or Starlight Parade) was held on November 23 in The Dalles, OR. This year saw an exponential growth in participation. Lisa Roland has been bravely representing the Icelandic horse at this venue for several years, with limited help. This year, there were nine horses in the parade! As Susan Wellington noted on our club list, "Every horse had reindeer antlers and a glowing red nose on their bridle or halter. There were stockings,

lighted, hung by the saddles (with care), and lighted serapes hung over their rumps. Four riders and five walkers (six counting Mark Roland), charmed the crowds lining the long parade route, in spite of the cold and rain. Someone in the carriage in front of our group inquired, 'Where do I get one of those horses?' Way to go team: Lisa, Mark, Sasha, Alex, Susie, Linda, Jean, Diane, Janella, and Susan."

This month also marked the changing of the guard, as the club elected new officers. The board (which serves two years) is comprised of: President Lori Birge, VP Linda Templeton, Secretary Linda Eddy, Treasurer Claudia Rancore, Membership Director Lisa Roland, and Members-at-large Janet Boggs and Karin Daum.

This past year was the best yet for our members who show in dressage shows. Linda Eddy, Lori Birge, and Lisa Roland have attended shows for a couple years now, and their hard work is earning both them and their horses some serious recognition. Several of us are getting the urge to at least take lessons, since we now understand our horses can do it. Congrats to all three for blazing the trail.

Finally, our drill team had their first practice in Ridgefield, WA with both A and B teams well represented. Many thanks to Lori Birge for creating the pattern and making it all happen. Our second practice was held in mid-December in The Dalles. We're making good progress and looking forward to the Washington State Horse Expo in February and the Albany show in March.

FRIDA (FIRC)

BY RICH MOORE

The Frida Icelandic Riding Club had an active fall, with a trip to Iceland by club members, two clinics, an organized trail ride, a drill team demonstration, preparations for the second FIRC show to be held in May, and a holiday party.

In September, FIRC members Nancy Adler, Antje Freygang, and Charlotte Reilly took part in the sheep round-up in Iceland, through a tour run by America2Iceland and Guðmar Pétursson. (See the story in this issue.)

Guðmar gave lessons and conducted a riding clinic at Kilmurray Farm in Catharpin, VA on October 5-7. Participants were Nancy Adler, Millie Angelino, Laura Colicchio, Tony Colicchio, Mitch Martin, Susan Milloy, Curt Pierce, Charlotte Reilly, Barbara Robinson, Marilyn Tully, and Joan Waller. The clinic was organized by Rich Moore, Pat Moore, Rich Moore, Jr., Susan Milloy, and Donny McPhatter.

Susan Milloy reports, "On Friday, Guðmar gave a full day of private lessons in the arena and focused on any issues or concerns the rider (or horse) was having. Saturday began with a talk with Guðmar about 'leaving our horses alone,' i.e., to ask or correct as you need to, and then release as soon as they have it right. Small reminders and quick corrections keep us on track, but constant nagging becomes noise—a lesson we could use in all walks

of life. Guðmar did an excellent job of teaching us how to embrace the 'go' before asking for 'stop,' as well as lateral work, stretching, and tailored exercises for our individual horses. Lessons were given in the arena in groups of three with similar riding goals. The day worked out great and finished with a fun group dinner out.

"On Sunday, we channeled Iceland and took spirited lessons in groups of two in the cold rain on the track. Before the lessons started, Guðmar gave an excellent demonstration on Gláður about preparing for the gaits, releasing quickly, and how the gaits should look. On the track, Guðmar focused on moving forward and gave show tips to those who would be competing in the Kentucky Horse Show two weeks later. It was amazing how brave we all were when we had a supportive, yet challenging, trainer running the show!

"Spirits were high throughout the weekend. Guðmar kept riders engaged and encouraged; the participants were cheerful, ready to learn and share friendships; and the facility was awesome. The riders and horses were great students and showed much improvement by Sunday afternoon. We are blessed to share this special horse with great friends and a gifted trainer/friend such as Guðmar."

Steinar Sigurbjörnsson trained horses and conducted a riding clinic at Stoney Lick Farm at ThorpeWood in late October 2012. Participating were



Nancy Adler concentrating at the FIRC clinic with Guðmar Pétursson, held at Kilmurray Farm. Photo by Susan Milloy.

mostly FIRC members and some potential members: Pat Carballo, Sam Castleman, Gigi Castleman, Antje Freygang, Amanda Grace, Nancy Green, Suzi McGraw, Mitch Martin, Tammy Martin, Sandy Newkirk, Barb Noble, Julie Parlamán, Charlotte Reilly, Hedy Sladovich, Sally Thorpe, Jo Ann Trostle, and Jean Swartz.

Sam Castleman reports, "Steinar spends much of his time traveling about the U.S. giving clinics, participating in shows, and providing training. In 2012, the East Coast was fortunate to have eight Steinar clinics and one schooling show. Two of these clinics were at Stoney Lick Farm (SLF) at ThorpeWood, Thurmont, MD in June and in October. The clinic from October 26-28 was most interesting in that, preceding the clinic, Steinar was available for horse training and private lessons from October 16. Many clinic participants took advantage of this opportunity and brought their horse or horses for several days of tune-up prior to the clinic. This provided a platform for making more progress during the clinic. Since the clinic was limited to eight riders, having



FIRC club member Gigi Castleman, riding Thokkadis, works with Steinar Sigurbjörnsson at a clinic held at Stoney Lick Farm at ThorpeWood, Thurmont, MD. Photo by Julie Parlamán.



Mitch Martin practicing canter at the FIRC clinic. Photo by Susan Milloy.

access to Steinar’s training and lessons prior to and after the clinic provided an opportunity for those not in the clinic to have similar exposure. Several FIRC members brought horses for multiple days. They would watch Steinar train their horse (and other horses) in the morning and take private lessons with him in the afternoon.

“The format of Steinar clinics at SLF are more accurately described as a day of back-to-back private lessons—one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Not only is it wonderful to have Steinar’s undivided attention twice a day, but some of the best learning moments come when one is hanging on the fence and listening to the lessons of others. Can you imagine the intensity? Icelandic horse lessons eight hours a day for three days. I love this format,” Sam concludes.

Antje Freygang reports, “What I appreciated about the Steinar clinic was how Steinar looked at the whole horse and rider as a package. He took into account the horse’s history, temperament, confor-



Charlotte Reilly at the FIRC clinic. Photo by Susan Milloy.

mation, and muscle development. Then Steinar focused on the rider’s abilities and empowered us from stretching exercises to riding tools. The ultimate goal was always to create harmony between horse and rider. At the end, each rider left with lots of homework!”

We look forward to having Steinar return to Stoney Lick Farm for another extended training/lesson period in May 2013 (two weeks prior to FIRC’s sanctioned show, May 18-19) and again in August for an even longer period.

Laura and Tony Colicchio hosted a trail ride at their home in Maryland in early November. Laura reports, “FIRC’s annual Halloween Ride was held November 3 in historic Rosaryville State Park in Upper Marlboro, MD. The park encompasses approximately 2,600 acres of equestrian trails encased in protected state-owned land held in a conservancy/historical trust. Five riders (Laura Colicchio, Tony Colicchio, Ante Freygang, Mitch Martin, and Rich



Joan Waller and Millie Angelino at the FIRC clinic. Photo by Susan Milloy.

Moore) rode for approximately two hours and afterwards feasted on a barbecue for riders and their guests.

"This was a particularly fast-paced ride with some tolt, but mostly at fast trot, canter, and gallop. Riders galloped up a long, steep hill and negotiated winding twists and turns in the wooded forest as well as making many stream crossings. Despite Hurricane Sandy the week before, the trails were mostly in good condition. Golden fall leaves still clung to giant oaks and beech trees. Every member of the FIRC who has ridden at Rosaryville State Park has been bedazzled by the lovely trails and the grounds of the plantation.

"The ride went past Mt. Airy Mansion, which is steeped in historic significance. Originally constructed in the mid 1600s, the mansion was built for Lord Calvert Baltimore and used as his hunting lodge. When the British converged on the property during the War of 1812, the occupants hastily buried treasure deep within a lily garden. Folklore has it that a headless horseman still rides through the plantation. A ghostly apparition of a young girl is said to be seen peering out of one of the mansion's many bedroom windows. Several slave shacks still sit on the site. Most of these structures are directly behind the Colicchios's property on a trail that runs parallel to their barn.

"The next planned club trail ride at this location will be held on April 13, when lavender wisteria can be seen in giant bunches growing in abundance in a

section of the park, creating an absolutely magical array of perfumed purple bliss. We have dubbed this section of the park Tarzan's Jungle because of the height of the trees and the lush hanging green vines draped over them."

During the fall, the club drill team continued with its monthly practices. Six riders, Sverrir Bjartmarz, Antje Freygang, Marsha Korose, Mitch Martin, Rich Moore, and Curt Pierce put on a breed drill team demonstration at Frying Pan Farm Park, VA on December 1 that went well and was appreciated by the spectators.

Laura Colicchio wrote a nice article about the FIRC that was featured in the fall edition of Tolt News. Most of the photos of club activities used in the article had been taken by Susan Milloy and Donny McPhatter.

The club held its annual holiday party on December 15 at the home of Barbara Sollner-Web and her husband Dennis in Laurel, MD. There was a good turnout of club members, who brought lots of great food. One of the events at the party was a silent auction to raise funds for the show in the spring.

The Second Annual FIRC show, to be held on May 18-19, has been sanctioned by the USIHC. Ann Winter has agreed to be the judge. The show will be held again at Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon, VA in the Washington, DC area. Given the success of the first show, the club is anticipating another great event. The

show committee, made up of Pat Moore, Sverrir Bjartmarz, Kim Davis, and Sali Peterson, has been meeting regularly to plan the event.

KRAFTUR

BY HEIDI BENSON

The last half of 2012 was busy for the Northern California Icelandic Horse Club. In October, Kraftur members from Los Gatos, CA attended the CIA Fall Competition held at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. On December 1, a group of 23 members participated in the Annual Holiday Parade in Santa Cruz, CA. December 5-10, a week-long riding clinic with Guðmar Pétursson was hosted by Laura Benson in Los Gatos, CA and Heidi Benson in Santa Cruz, CA. December 14-16, Kraftur members attended a riding clinic with Olil Amble at Flying C Ranch, hosted by Will and Asta Covert. 2013 promises to be a fun and informative year for the Northern California Icelandic Horse Club, with more riding clinics, schooling shows, and competitions just around the corner.

NEIHC

BY AMY GODDARD

Northeast Icelandic Horse Club members enjoyed several brisk rides and exciting events last fall and early winter. Nicki Esdorn writes, "Eleven Icelandic Horses, a Thoroughbred, an Appaloosa, a Morgan, and a Friesian dressed up in fantastic costumes and met for a Halloween ride



Trick or treat! Fifteen Bedford, NY riders and their horses were rewarded with donuts, carrots, and hot cider for their fanciful costumes, all of which included a helmet. The colorful group included 11 Icelandics, an Appaloosa, a Thoroughbred, a Friesian, and a Morgan. Photo by Jacob J. Goldberg.



Tinna, owned by Sue Rovinski and Bruce Card, with Dr. William Short during filming of the introduction to a DVD series on Viking combat training. Photo by Bruce Card.

just before Hurricane Sandy was to strike. The riders met at my farm, High Country Icelandics, and tolled and trotted over the Bedford, NY trails to neighbor Martha Stewart's Cantitoe Farm. Martha's horse manager, Betsy Perreten, greeted them aboard a magnificent Friesian and led the ride across the beautiful grounds. Then the whole group was invited for Halloween treats at Bedford Riding Lanes Association chairman Bob Torre's home a short ride away. Great fun was had by all!"

Not one, not two, but three Turkey Tolds took place over the weekend after Thanksgiving! In total, 14 horses and riders participated in rides organized at Rockefeller State Park Preserve in NY, Natchaug State Forest in CT, and Huntington State Park, also in CT. Nicki Esdorn writes, "A small but mighty group of four riders met on the chilly Saturday after Thanksgiving for the traditional Turkey Tolt at the Rockefeller State Park Preserve in Tarrytown, NY. The horses loved the cold weather and were all flying in tolt, chasing after the stallion Stigandi over the smooth and endless trails of the park. The exhilarating ride reminded the riders why they love their little 'sportscars' so much!"

Alice Ryan writes, "Icelandics were well represented at the Wassail Parade in Woodstock, VT on December 8. Solheimar Farm of Tunbridge, VT had six horses and riders dressed in Christmas decorations, including lights; Silver Maple Farm, also of Tunbridge, VT, had ten horses with riders dressed as Ice Angels." Alice also rode her Icelandic horse Mani in the Third Annual Ride for the Cure at Green Mountain Horse Association in Woodstock on October 11.

Susan Rovinski writes, "The Higgins Armory Museum in Worcester, MA is a world-class museum of armor and weapons from the ancient period through the early modern age. While armor is showcased, their mission also includes education on the context and cultures in which the armor was used. They have several culture specific programs, one of which is on the Vikings. Dr. William Short, Higgins research fellow and Hurstwic Viking instructor, has been studying Viking culture and weaponry for years. He is an expert on this subject and has appeared in and been a consultant for many documentaries about the Viking age. He has written several books and regularly travels to Iceland to speak at schools and conferences. He is

working on a Viking combat DVD series, demonstrating and teaching Viking fighting moves from the sagas.

"For the introduction to this DVD series, Short and his Vikings did some filming at an Icelandic horse farm in Connecticut, with Tinna (Sue Rovinski and Bruce Card's Icelandic mare). In the scene, Short discusses and shows the fate of a DVD pirate. Short and the Vikings spent some time after that filming doing some combat footage. It was a great experience for us and we'd like to thank Short and his associates for the opportunity to help with his project!"

Upcoming NEIHC events include: the NEIHC Annual Meeting and Thorrablot (March 2), Bunny Hop group ride (April 6), World Championship Tryouts (tentatively May 18), and NEIHC Youth Day (June 15). NEIHC members are encouraged to join the NEIHC Yahoo mail group and check our website, neihc.com, and our Facebook page for news and upcoming events. Or contact club president, Martina Gates: martinagates@mac.com.

SAINT SKUTLA *BY ANDREA BARBER*

On November 17-18, the club hosted a riding clinic with Guðmar Pétursson at the Finger Lakes Equestrian Center in Canandaigua, NY. It was a significant event for the club, as it was the first Icelandic riding clinic held in the area. The clinic was actually overbooked by one, with 13 horses and riders, and was rounded out by several interested auditors. Steve Barber also assisted Guðmar, which was a big help with so many participants. Though the Center had a nice indoor arena, the weather was very mild for so late in the year, which made travel much more pleasant for the participants. Several traveled three hours or more just to attend the clinic.

After the clinic I made the request on the club's e-mail chat list for everybody to share at least one thing they learned from the clinic. Here are a few of the many responses:

How to ask a horse to stop by first using the upper leg, then sitting more deeply in the saddle with chest out slightly, then pulling back on the reins and releasing



Guðmar instructing Ruth Morford on Molda frá Tunguhálsi II. Photo by Ryan Chiappone.

when the horse has stopped.

Riding between the aids by taking the loop out of the reins and moving the hands with the horse to maintain a small but steady contact.

How to transition into a tolt by taking the reins to stop the horse, giving the reins when they stop, then taking the reins again while sitting back to ask the horse to start to backup, then when they start to backup to engage the lower leg while shortening the reins and raising the hands a bit while keeping contact on the reins (whoa and go).

How to control the speed of a tolt by thinking of it as a speed scale from 1 to 10 with 10 being the fastest. If the horse is at 8 then slow the horse to a 6 so that when you release they will be at a 7 (Steve helped me

quite a bit with that one).

How to hold the reins properly without closing the hands too tightly and keeping the elbows close to the side but relaxed.

I learned that my horse knows a lot more than I thought he did – and me a lot less. I have been over-riding him. I need to get out of his way. He works very well with verbal and seat commands and for now, I need to let his head be.

The kimberwick bit I use should not be necessary. Even though I have the reins at the most neutral spot, it still has a leverage effect Guðmar is not happy with. He recommended I get a (double break) snaffle instead.

Body position on the horse was something I continually need to work on and was glad to be reminded of that, especially in the tolt.

Most importantly for me, I accomplished my goal of experiencing a clinic with my horse and addressing her needs/ reactions to a very foreign environment. I feel I have added new tools to my box for helping her feel at ease and focused, which is always my priority.

I learned that a lot of nice people ride and own Icelandics!

The club is planning another clinic with Guðmar May 4-5, also at Finger Lakes Equestrian Center in Canandaigua, NY.

In other news, Susan Verberg and Greni from Blasted Rock entered the

Musical Movement Event at Carriagehouse Saddlery on December 2 dressed up as Icelandic Vikings. They performed a basic dressage pattern on the song “Hounds of Winter” by Sting and they won best music selection! Next year they plan to elaborate on the pattern, as Greni was very calm and cooperative (not so in the outdoor warm-up arena with ripping winds from all directions). But their goal was to participate, hopefully successfully, which they did with flying colors and a lot of positive remarks.

Susan wore a period Viking female costume (with split skirt to accommodate riding) and braided Greni an eight-strand breastband and a six-strand headstall from orange bailing twine (for one time use) to color-coordinate with Susan’s outfit. Susan took a week to accustom Greni to the costume, especially the skirt. (It was a no-go on Susan’s hooded cape.) But they tried the routine pattern only once, as they do not have access to a marked and flat arena. Which was fine with Susan, as long as she knew where they were going. Greni, like most Icelandics, does not like to practice something done well more than once anyway. Fellow club member Shari Shapleigh was at the event to check it out, and it looks like Susan and Shari will do a double routine with Icelandics next year. Maybe even add some sparklers... A video of Susan and Greni’s performance can be found on YouTube at: <http://youtube/faSMgh-9c9M>.



Guðmar Pétursson instructing and Steve Barber assisting, with Susan Verberg on Greni from Blasted Rock, Shari Shapleigh on Hildi Mae, Ruth Morford on Molda frá Tunguhálsi II, and Christine Schweizer on Súla from Pheasant Field Farm. Photo by Ryan Chiappone.

AN UPDATE ON CORNELL'S RESEARCH

BY ANDREA BARBER

Editor's Note: As we reported in our June 2012 issue, 15 pregnant mares from Iceland went to Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, in February 2012 to take part in a research study. Bettina Wagner, Ph.D., an equine immunologist in the College of Veterinary Medicine, is working with collaborators at Cornell and in Iceland and elsewhere to unravel the mystery of neonatal immune development. Wagner's group investigates specific antibodies called immunoglobulin-E (IgE), which can go astray in allergic diseases, reacting to harmless stimuli and causing inflammation. One question she hopes to answer is why domestic-bred Icelandic horses seem to be less susceptible to summer eczema (or sweet itch) than imported Icelandics. USIHC member Andrea Barber has been following the study for the Quarterly. Here she interviews Bettina:

What is your background?

I got my DVM in Hannover, Germany, in 1990. Afterwards, I worked on my doctoral thesis on "Immunoglobulin Isotypes of the Horse" and got interested in summer eczema (1990-93). I worked in immunology and equine genetics at the Veterinary School in Hannover and the Institute for Genetics in Cologne (both in Germany) until 2002. Then I came to Cornell for one year—I'm still here. I worked at the Baker Institute with Dr. Douglas Antczak until 2006 on horse immunology and allergy. In 2006, I became assistant professor in the Department of Population Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences and Director of Serology at the Animal Health Diagnostic Center at Cornell. Also in 2006, I finished my habilitation in Germany (an equivalent degree to a PhD) with the title "Antibodies of the Horse." Currently, I'm associate professor in Immunology (since 2010) and still Director of Serology.

What brought you to Cornell University?

The collaboration and shared interests with Dr. Antczak. He works on pregnancy immunology in horses. He is a very famous, world leading horse



Punktur from Cornell visits with researcher Bettina Wagner. Photo by Andrea Barber.

immunologist. After a very short time at Cornell, I was attracted by the spirit of the university, the multiple opportunities for collaborations, and overall the great scientific environment. So I decided to stay.

How did you get interested in studying summer eczema (SE)?

That happened in Germany right after I finished my DVM. Another famous immunologist, Dr. Andreas Radbruch (of the German Rheumatism Research Center, Berlin, Germany), was an enthusiastic Icelandic horse owner and rider. He had a horse with SE. He initiated, in collaboration with Hannover, the thesis I started in 1990. The original idea was to investigate SE, which did not happen that quickly because of missing research tools. Thus, the thesis was on a more general topic: antibodies. Nevertheless, I worked on IgE and SE basically since 1990. This has never been a well funded disease (neither in Europe nor in the US), so I always did other projects besides SE. However,

we made some progress. By now, we have published almost 20 scientific articles that are related to equine IgE and/or SE.

SUMMER ECZEMA BASICS

Can you explain what exactly summer eczema is?

SE is an allergic disease in horses. It is characterized by extreme itchiness and loss of hair on the mane, tail, and other body locations. It often leads to skin irritation and secondary infections of the affected areas. It only occurs during the summer months and disappears in the winter. An allergy, in general, is a hyper reaction of the immune system to a harmless substance. Allergies are often induced by an environmental substance (like pollen or dust), by food components (peanuts or strawberries), or by insect bites (bee stings). Only a few individuals react allergically, while others don't. In case of SE, the allergic substances, called allergens, are components in the saliva

of biting midges, the so-called *Culicoides* midges. The midges inject their saliva during the bite into the skin of the horse. Horses with SE overreact to these allergens and develop clinical signs of allergy. Non-allergic horses show no major reactions to the midge bites.

Why do imported Icelandic horses in particular seem so prone to it?

Iceland is free of *Culicoides* midges. Horses in Iceland do not develop SE. However, imported horses (born in Iceland) develop SE more frequently than horses that were born in the US. The phenomenon is well documented by several epidemiological studies. Depending on the study, 50 to 70 percent of the imported horses develop SE, while only 5 to 15 percent of the domestic-bred horses are affected. The reason(s) for the clear difference in SE prevalence in imported horses is not yet known.

We believe there are two possible reasons: (1) Environment: The time of first exposure to the allergen may modify the immune reaction of the horse. It is known that the immune systems of very young horses react differently than those of adults. If foals are exposed early after birth, their immune systems may react to these allergens and initiate a response that prevents disease later in life. If horses are first exposed after export, i.e. as young adults, they may more frequently overreact to harmless allergens. (2) Maternal immunity: The transfer of maternal immunity may influence the immune response of the foal. Mares in the US usually have antibodies to *Culicoides*, even if they are not allergic, because they have been bitten by the midges several times in their lives. These antibodies may direct the foal's immune response after birth and after exposure to the midges during their first summer. Foals born in Iceland never get these maternal antibodies because their mothers never got exposed to *Culicoides*. Their immune systems may thus miss the initial "training" effect that prevents their immune system from over-reacting.

The answer could be a combination of (1) and (2). Note that it is still hypothetical that domestically born Icelandic horses have SE with a much lesser frequency than imported horses. We don't know the answer yet and want to find it out during this project.

How can I tell if my horse suffers from SE and not another allergy?

We do this by an in vitro assay on their blood cells. In the lab, the cells of the horse are incubated with *Culicoides* allergens. If the cells have *Culicoides*-specific IgE antibodies on their surface, they release inflammatory substances in response to the *Culicoides* challenge. One of the inflammatory substances is histamine, which can be detected afterwards. The amount of the histamine release in response to *Culicoides* determines if the allergy is induced by the midges or not.

Another accepted alternative to confirm SE is intradermal skin testing with *Culicoides* allergen. This is probably less sensitive than the blood test and takes more effort, requiring multiple injections into the horse's skin. Serum antibody tests or IgE tests (such as ELISAs or other tests) are not appropriate to confirm SE and should not be used for this purpose.

If I was planning on importing a horse from Iceland, is there anything I could do to lessen the chance my horse will get SE once here in the US? Is there any way to test a horse in Iceland to see if it will develop SE once exported?

To my knowledge, currently no. Not with the existing methods.

Is there currently, in your opinion, any viable treatment for SE?

No. The only reliable option is allergen avoidance by managing pasture time, using Boett blankets, or relocating the horse to a *Culicoides* free region. All available treatments that somewhat help, such as systemic steroids, or cleaning and treating affected skin areas with ointments, only treat the symptoms. They do not cure the disease. One should be careful with "wonder" drugs—they mainly help the company who is selling them. Hyposensitization (injection of many small allergen doses) is questionable for SE for many reasons, and the success of this treatment has not yet been shown scientifically.

How come a horse can have been in the US for years in the same environment and then suddenly develop SE having had no sign of it previously?

Horses can be sensitized to the allergen (and often are) without clinical signs. Sensitization always precedes clinical allergy. However, not all sensitized horses will develop allergic disease. Some of them may be clinically healthy for life. Think about clinical allergy as a scale influenced by many parameters, such as sensitization to *Culicoides*; environmen-



Three of the domestic-born foals being studied: Vaskur from Cornell, Lysa from Cornell, and Úlfur from Cornell. Photo by Andrea Barber.

tal factors, especially allergen pressure (many or not so many *Culicoides*); the genetic background of the horse; and any other circumstances that may influence the horse's immune system in any given summer. In the case you describe above, one or several of these parameters increased enough to finally initiate clinical signs.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

How did you get the idea for the study?

It was seeded many years ago in Germany during my work with Andreas Radbruch, and developed further in collaboration with Doug Antczak at Cornell. Over the past couple of years, we discovered that maternal IgE is transferred to foals with the colostrum, and we got some ideas about what the functional meaning of this IgE transfer might be. Finally, we had a workshop on "Allergy in Horses" at Holar in Iceland in 2007. That's where I met my current Icelandic collaborators on the project, Dr. Sigurbjörg Torsteinsdóttir, an immunologist at Keldur, Reykjavík; Dr. Vilhjálmur Svansson, a virologist at Keldur; and Dr. Sigríður Björnsdóttir, the veterinary officer for horse diseases, Holar. In 2009, I was honored with an endowed professorship at Cornell and became the Harry M. Zweig Assistant Professor in Equine Health. The title came with some research funds for horse research, which I used to initiate the project in

Iceland in 2009.

What exactly do you hope to discover?

We will show if maternal IgE or early-in-life allergen exposure (or both) prevent the development of SE in horses. This can lead to new preventive management strategies, probably to new diagnostic tests to evaluate the risk of developing SE, and potentially also to new treatment options.

How long will the study last? How will it work?

The study will last from 2010 (the first breeding of the mares) to 2016 (when the third foal group is three years of age). We will analyze the immune development and clinical allergy in the foals after birth and until they are three years of age. We will use three groups of horses: One group will not get maternal IgE and will get exposed to *Culicoides* at two years of age; these foals will be born in Iceland and exported at age two. A second group will not get maternal IgE and will be exposed to *Culicoides* from birth on; these foals will be born at Cornell from non-exposed mares. The third group will get maternal IgE and be exposed to *Culicoides* from birth on, which is the normal situation in the US.

The unique thing about this study is that we will work with full siblings, that is, all the foals are from three breedings of the same mares to one stallion. This is important because allergies are known to

be strongly influenced by genetics. Working with full siblings allows us to minimize the genetic differences in the study and to determine whether maternal IgE, early-in-life allergen exposure, or both have a preventive effect on SE development.

How did you choose the specific horses for the study? How are they kept?

Icelandic horses from Iceland were a must, because we needed the non-*Culicoides* exposed mares for this study. They cannot be found in the US. Other than that, the mares were four to 10 years of age when enrolled to make sure we could do the three breedings without major problems. In addition, the mares were chosen for their character by our Icelandic collaborators, to allow us the best possible handling for research purposes. The stallion, Geisli, was selected because he already had offspring and was affordable. That he had good evaluation scores was an extra gift, which can be seen in many foals.

The horses are kept at Cornell University on a 30-acre pasture with run-in sheds. They are housed outside 24/7. For sampling procedures, veterinary care, hoof trimming, etc., they are brought into the barn for the time it takes. All the horses get optimal veterinary care at Cornell. They are routinely vaccinated and dewormed. We also check regularly for various clinical parameters and equine infectious diseases.

The project is liked a lot by everyone who is involved. There are some very labor intensive times, like the foaling season, and we work with a large team of helpers and volunteers during those times. Thus far everything—foaling, breeding, handling, repeated sampling—has been very easy with the horses. It is a very rewarding project.

Will you use the horses in other research studies?

We are considering using some of the horses for other studies. For example, horses with clinical allergy could be involved in a follow-up allergy treatment study. We are also using the horses for many other small research studies that are not in conflict with the main project. The horses from Iceland have not been exposed to many common US pathogens and are thus immunologically naïve to many important equine infectious diseases. We use their immune status to



Members of the Cornell research herd: Hreyfing frá Bakkagerði, Jóra from Cornell, Vænting frá Vindási, and Kleina from Cornell. Photo by Andrea Barber.

learn more about the vaccines available for these diseases.

For example, we follow their vaccination titers to West Nile Virus and test for how long these antibodies last, if they cause a conflict with the diagnostic tests to identify infection with the virus and if our horses are protected from infection. We also test if current equine herpesvirus vaccines induce cellular immunity, and we monitor the horses with our new Lyme Multiplex assay for infection with this tick-transmitted pathogen. The latter is used to determine antibody patterns during natural infection and, in case horses get infected, to treat them early. The foals are also constantly monitored for their immune system development, which will help to develop normal values for many not yet established immune parameters in foals of various ages.

Will the results of your research be publicly available?

Yes. The final results, including clinical signs, will likely be available in five years. However, parts of the project, such as the immune response development in foals and the direct effects of maternal antibodies and early *Culicoides* exposure on the foal's immunity and (sensitization status) will become available earlier, in two to three years.

We also expect to publish quite a bit of information from the project beyond SE. For example, the normal health parameters for foals which are not yet available (or are very old and were performed with older non-sensitive methods) and the vaccination studies, since long-term studies are usually not performed for equine vaccines.

Have you learned anything surprising so far?

Yes. It seems that the Icelandic foals, at least in the absence of maternal immunity, react with increased immune responses to *Culicoides* compared to the non-Icelandic Cornell foals (from mares housed at Cornell for many years). This supports our idea that maternal IgE reduces the reactivity to *Culicoides* in foals early in life. It will be interesting to see if this initial trend is indeed true. Next year's offspring group born at Cornell will show us if the immune response in foals that received maternal *Culicoides*-specific IgE is different from the response of foals that did not get maternal IgE. We will also import the first foal group from Iceland

SOUND FAMILIAR?

BY ROBIN NEAR



Editor's note: How to manage summer eczema—even how to diagnose it—is a common topic of conversation when Icelandic horse owners gather. Here's Robin's experience with her black gelding, Falki, above:

Our gelding, Falki, has experienced skin allergies (itching and rubbing) every summer since we left Alaska. We've spent over \$2,000 trying to "cure" him with blood tests, immunotherapy, special insect repellants, shampoos, homeopathic concoctions, skin care products, drugs, etc. Is the allergic reaction (rubbing) caused by pollen, mold, dust, weeds, grass, insects, or maybe something different every year? The experts stated the same thing, "We don't know!"

He tested negative for allergic reactions to the saliva of *Culicoides* gnats, commonly referred to as "Sweet Itch" or "Summer Eczema," yet another vet stated that blood tests for allergies are often inconclusive. For two summers we kept Falki on vet-approved Benadryl (Diphenhydramine HCL) when the rubbing first appeared in early spring until it ceased in late fall. We've tried other suggestions, such as fly masks and sheets, which were nothing more than challenges to be pulled or rubbed off.

No matter what the blood tests revealed, we're now convinced Falki's allergies are insect related. Last summer, he was sprayed down morning and eve-

ning with a homemade insect repellent formula I found online (2 cups apple cider vinegar, 1 cup Avon's Skin-So-Soft bath oil, 1 cup water, and a couple of tablespoons of citronella and eucalyptus essential oils.) I don't like using petroleum products on horses, but without Skin-So-Soft, the spray only lasted a couple of hours. To soothe areas Falki still rubbed, we used Equi-Spa's "Peppermint Summer Protection," which contains witch hazel, coconut oil, and essential aromatic oils. So Falki remained drug-free last summer and only lightly rubbed his head, shoulders, and hind end—clearly our best summer in the last nine years. He even took me on a few short trail rides.

We've also been using ABC Plus (made by Advanced Biological Concepts Company) for the last couple of years. It's a pelleted product that improves a horse's digestion by supplying enzymes and friendly bacteria; it's advertised as providing resistance to colic, reducing feed requirements, and enhancing hair, coat, and hoof development. We feed the minimum amount year 'round to both geldings and have been very happy with the results, as it seems to help calm Falki's itchy skin.



The stallion of the Cornell research herd, Geisli frá Litlu-Sandvík. Photo by Andrea Barber.

this spring and will closely follow their immune activation through the summer. By the end of 2013, we should know much more about the immunological differences in our three foal groups after initial exposure to *Culicoides*.

HOW TO HELP

Is more money needed for the study? If so, how can people contribute?

Currently our funding comes from the Zweig Memorial Fund for Equine Research at Cornell. As mentioned above, SE is not on the high priority list of any funding agency in the US, and funds are difficult to obtain for this disease. Nevertheless, we hope that other horse funding bodies will get involved in the future, especially because the horses are in the US now. We have grant applications pending and hope to get more support.

But we definitely need additional funds to finish the project. There are different ways people can help. Direct support is one option. The other option is to buy a horse that is no longer needed for the study. In the near future, as early as November 2013, some of the mares will become available for sale. We would like to make sure that they don't have severe allergy before we give them to private owners. People can also adopt a foal by contributing to the monthly housing costs and thereby obtain

ownership at the end of the study, when the horse is three to four years of age.

There may also be the option of adopting a horse at the end of the study. I'm maintaining a list of people who are interested in adopting a horse and will get back to them in case a horse leaves the project.

Another important thing is to spread the word about the project. Maybe other people would like to support the project or get a horse after the study ends. One major goal for us besides the science is to find a

good home for the horses after the project is done.

Are the horses registered with the USIHC?

The paperwork has been sent for the mares and Geisli. All offspring will be registered as well.



Naggur from Cornell. Photo Andrea Barber.

ICELAND VS. PORTUGAL

BY LAURA BENSON

This story is about a classical dressage clinic that recently took place in California and how it came to be.

This past year was a very exciting one for me with the rise and fall of *Apassionata* (see my article in the last *Quarterly*) and all the encounters that came along with it. I made many wonderful friends and connections and was able to begin blazing a path into a world that I have long sought to be a part of: the world of Portuguese riding and baroque dressage. Many aspects of this riding style were incorporated into my schooling at Hólar University in Iceland, and over the last few years it has become not uncommon to see a riding clinic in Iceland offered by Julio Borba, a Portuguese trainer who now often works with the Icelandic horse.

SPIRIT AND FIRE

I also have a deep love of the Lusitano horse, who has the same spirit and fire as the Icelandic. When I graduated from my final year at Hólar in 2010, I asked my teacher, Mette Manseth, if she knew of any trainers in Portugal I could study with. I



Laura with a Lusitano stallion in Portugal. Like Icelandic horses, Lusitanos are prized for their spirit and fire. Photo by Léa Forge.



Carlos helping Laura and Stjarni work on shoulder-in at a trot. Photo by Ayla Green.

wanted to become more knowledgeable in this style of riding so that I could improve how I ride and train my Icelandics. She gave me the names of some trainers and places she had visited; unfortunately they did not take working students at the time. I let the dream fall to the back of my mind.

Fast forward to 2012: I find myself performing in *Apassionata*, among some of the best-trained riders in the world from the riding school of Luis Valença on their magnificent Lusitanos. We became good friends, and I was so lucky to spend time with them and their superb horses. Saying goodbye was not easy, but I knew that Portugal was in my future and I would see them again.

MEETING CARLOS

Upon my arrival home from the *Apassionata* tour, a friend sent me a link on Facebook to a classical riding clinic in Petaluma, CA with Portuguese trainer Carlos Carneiro. I jumped at the opportunity and drove north to audit the clinic.

From his bio on the website classicalequines.com, I knew that Carlos

managed a stable of 35 horses in Lousada, Portugal, and had studied since 1996 with some of the great masters of classical dressage. He had also performed in many international shows. In Petaluma, I talked for some time with him and found out that he had studied with Luis Valença and rode in *Apassionata* in Europe: He knew many of the same people as I did. What a small world! Later I visited and rode with Carlos at his farm in Napa and mentioned to him the idea of doing a clinic with Icelandic horses. Unlike some dressage trainers from other breeds, he said he would be delighted to!

The first Portuguese-style Icelandic clinic with Carlos was held at Monte Sereno Stables in Los Gatos, CA. Thank you so much to Laurie Prestine and everyone else in the neighborhood for letting me put on this event. We had seven riders on Icelandic horses and two riders on a Trakehner and a Warmblood. Carlos spent two wonderful days with us, working in-depth on suppleness, balance, quiet hands, and riding from the seat.



Laura and Stjarni working on the half-pass. Photo by Ayla Green.

UNREAL SENSATION

I got to work with my horse Stjarni on a lot of lateral work in trot (half-pass, shoulder-in) and beginning work in counter-canter and piaffe. These are exercises that I have often been told (even recently by a renowned riding master of classical dressage) that Icelandics are not capable of doing. Stjarni didn't seem to have a problem with it at all! When I felt him take his first step of piaffe, his hindquarters bouncing upwards in one sequence of trot, it was a brief but unreal sensation. I knew that the impossible can be reached through practice and repetition. We have a ways to go, but it's closer than I ever thought.

The funny thing is that when I was on tour with my Portuguese friends, they helped me teach Stjarni the Spanish walk, which apparently he likes to do when we ask him for piaffe. So I will have to set Spanish walk aside for now so that he is not confused. One thing at a time I guess, which means patience! It's amazing to see how hard this horse tries. Who knows, maybe we can even master the capriole? For now, we will continue our diligent work and see how far we get...

CLASSICAL ICELANDIC

I am now going up to Napa on a consistent basis to train Lusitanos with Carlos. We work with horses of all ages and abilities. Everything from colt starting, in hand prep for piaffe, and even working some highly schooled horses. This has

been such a great training for me and also a unique insight into how another breed progresses throughout their training. There are many similarities and also many differences. But above all, one thing remains the same. The training is about trust, consistency, and understanding between horse and rider. As long as these things are kept in mind, it does not mat-



More trot work for Laura and Stjarni. Photo by Ayla Green.

ter what method you use to obtain your objective. We should always be willing to try new things to improve our communication with the horse.

Carlos will be coming to do more "Classical Icelandic" clinics with me and I will continue to work with him and his Lusitanos. Also, since I originally wrote this story, I have spent some time in Lisboa, Portugal with my friends from the Luis Valença riding school which was an incredible experience. But that is another story...

Editor's note: This story was reprinted from Laura's blog, valkyriechronicles.wordpress.com.

A DEBATE ABOUT ROUND PENNING

BY PAMELA S. NOLF

“Round penning” is a method used by many horse trainers in which a horse is driven forward in a round pen at multiple gaits. Some trainers use flags to drive the horse; some use body language. For example, Monty Roberts is world renowned for his Join-Up® technique. Based on years of observation of horse behavior, Roberts says he uses his body language to drive the horse away just like a dominant horse would. When the driven horse exhibits signs that he is willing to cooperate, Roberts adapts his body position to encourage the horse to approach him and create a human-horse bond.

Some recent research has called into question the dynamics of this process. Researchers at the University of Sydney developed an experiment in which a radio-controlled toy car was used in place of a trainer in the round pen. When the horse stopped moving away from the toy car, the horse was rewarded by having the toy car stop following it. By using the radio-controlled toy car to apply or take away pressure, the researchers were able to train the horse to approach the car—hence “mimicking” the human bonding process of Join-Up®. Since no human-horse bond was possible, the experiment demonstrates that the horse responds due to operant conditioning and not from the creation of a human bond through the use of body language.

As Cath Henshall (University of Sydney, 2012) states, “Put simply, pressure-release works because the horse finds the pressure applied unpleasant and therefore the removal of the pressure rewarding.... Although neither Monty Roberts’ method nor ours uses pressure applied directly to the horse’s body, both apply a form of emotional pressure by scaring and then chasing the horse. Our results indicate that because these methods rely on fear and safety, the horse is forced to choose between being repeatedly frightened or remaining with the trainer. We



How would an Icelandic respond to a radio-controlled toy car? In this test, Blessi just stared at the car at first, but quickly decided to check it out. Photo by Pamela Nolf.

question whether it is humane to rely on fear and its termination to train horses.”

THE ICELANDIC CONTEXT

The International Icelandic Horse Yahoo Group (IIHYG) recently discussed this research, and list posters gave examples of some of the drawbacks of using escalating pressure in a round pen with Icelandic horses. As Robyn Schulze explains, “I’ve never seen the value in round penning a herd of horses waving and flapping a flag at them. How terrifying! I think most people put way too much pressure on horses, and this is why round penning fails. I think we as riders and trainers need to truly learn to be soft, using very little pressure.” A friend of Robin’s sent a horse to a nearby trainer who “round penned the colt, put more pressure on the colt when he failed to respond ‘correctly,’ and finally the colt went over the round pen, busting a panel in the process.”

Andrea Brodie had a similar experience when round penning one of her Ice-

landic mares. She explains, “Needless to say I immediately stopped round penning and opened the door and let her leave. I never attempted to round pen a horse since. I have longed Icelandics without a longe line in a fenced off circle. That was never a problem, and they responded nicely to body cues. But they never had the feeling of being locked in without a way to escape, if necessary.”

Andrea Barber points to these examples as to why people may choose to send their horses to trainers familiar with the Icelandic horse. “Most think the only reason to send their Icelandic to an Icelandic-specific trainer for training is because of the gaits. Not so! The character of the horse is the real difference. Time and time again I have seen people take their horses to non-Icelandic trainers, in other words trainers not familiar with the breed, and then be utterly confused as to why they are not getting the desired results.”

Another set of researchers, D. Koster and A.C. Wegert, et al. (2009), also looked at round penning to see how much horses exhibit chase-and-bond behavior among themselves. They put mares and their offspring into a round pen to see how often the mare “round penned” her offspring. Very little of such behavior was observed. From the center of the round pen, mares chased offspring for about .27 % of the test period, which works out to 3.9 minutes in a 24-hour period. Mares tended to pursue colts more than fillies: “The results of this and other studies have shown that the responses elicited from human-horse interactions in round-yards are not reflected in horse-horse interactions.”

VERB OR NOUN?

The round pen is just a tool, and not all trainers use it in the same way. As the trainer John Lyons (2006) states, “Training in a round pen means different things to different people, and there are plenty of misconceptions about it. The reality is that there’s no mystical connection with a horse in the round pen. A round pen is simply a corral without corners.” Lyons recommends using the round pen to teach the horse specific cues, such as go to the left or go to the right—not for running the horse around until it is tired.

Kathy Sierra pointed out in the IIHYG discussion, “Round penning as a verb—a thing you do with (or often, to) the horse—is distinct from round pen as a noun—a space you use for things other than ‘round penning.’ Certainly some of the Icelandic master trainers have no problem using round pens in certain scenarios. My favorite is the Icelandic practice of putting a small round pen inside the arena, and then using the outside of it as something to go around either in-hand or riding. Plenty of Icelanders use round pens all the time with no big deal, but I have only rarely seen an Icelandic do ‘round penning,’ and then never with a young or untrained horse. Longe work in a round pen, riding in a round pen, all of that I have seen Icelanders do.

“As for liberty work or longe work,” Kathy continues, “I know both Jec Ballou [a classical dressage trainer] and Steinar Sigurbjörnsson [an Icelandic trainer] do not want a horse running around looking to the outside. They do not ‘crank’ the horse’s head in, but use a longe cavesson



Within minutes, Blessi adjusted to the movement and sound of the car. He actually started pushing it around when it stopped. Photo by Pamela Nolf.

and long bamboo or some form of wand to touch the horse at the shoulder or hip, staying close to the horse, if needed, depending on the size of the circle, to keep the horse moving ‘straight’ in the circle, that is, with the hind feet following in the tracks of the front. Both these trainers appear to see high quality ‘straight’ circles to be excellent work for strength and balance. But I have never seen either of them do high *quantity* circle longe work or what we think of as ‘round penning.’” Kathy points out that when doing liberty work, it is important to be close enough to work with the horse to keep it straight, prevent the shoulder from falling out, and keep both hind legs working.

FREEDOM TO TRY

Within the ranks of horse trainers, there is considerable difference in how round penning is used. In the IIHYG discussion, Adam Till compared Buck Brannaman’s methods to Monty Roberts’. “Buck Brannaman’s methods are designed to get results fairly quickly, so they can superficially seem similar to Monty Roberts’. Examined closely, however, they are very different in intent. For example,

the reason Buck pens a herd together is that he feels the horses learn better in a group, as they draw comfort from their own kind. Additionally, he can work more than one horse at once. When driving them like that however, his goal isn’t ‘submission,’ it’s learning to move out freely in response to pressure. Softening to pressure (building draw) is then done one-on-one.”

When working with his Icelandic horse, Adam prefers to use the methods of the trainer Josh Nichol. “What I’ve been taught to do instead is to first show a horse what we want his response to pressure to be when pressure is encountered in any form, rather than just applying pressure to create a change in behavior. In a nutshell, we want them to think (act human) rather than react (act horse), and that thinking is most often expressed as softening or releasing.”

As Josh Nichol elucidates, “The first thing folks should work on in the round pen is understanding their horse’s thoughts. Unfortunately, a great many people have been taught that the first thing you do in the round pen is ‘show

the horse who's boss' by forcing the horse's body to do various movements. This completely ignores the brain of the horse, shuts him out of any conversation, and often leads to a frightening and exhausting experience for him. All of this is exactly the opposite of what I want to be in my horse's mind. I want my horse to know that he has the freedom to try to find the right answer when I ask a question, and that even if he doesn't get it right immediately, that's truly okay. I want him to know that if I use any pressure, it is only to help guide him towards the right answer—something horses really do understand."

ALTERNATIVES

There are alternatives to the pressure-release or avoidance systems of training. As an example, Meg Fiegenschue singled out Mark Rashid who, although he uses pressure, tries to avoid a dominance model. "He uses the passive non-dominant leader. He has interesting points and I'd prefer to fashion myself after his example of a leader." In Rashid's approach, there are two types of leaders—the alpha and the passive. The alpha rules by force and dominance; the passive, by example. Most

herd members prefer to follow the passive leader. And as Fiegenschue explains, methods that focus on dominance point to licking and chewing by the horse as a sign of processing. However, recent research shows that "licking and chewing" may be the horse coming down from a fear response.

One method that works well with in conjunction with passive leadership is clicker training. In clicker training, a horse gets an audible signal, usually a click, and then a treat when the desired behavior is exhibited. Using positive rewards, the behavior is shaped toward the desired end. Fiegenschue uses a lot of clicker training with her Icelandics. "What I love about clicker training is the first time a horse really gets it and the light bulb goes on over his head. 'What I just did was good and I'm going to get a treat? Now what did I do?'" When a horse has been trained using pressure-based methods, it reacts for different reasons. "He thinks, 'If I don't do what they say, then I get pain.'"

As this discussion demonstrates, it is important for Icelandic horse owners to understand how round penning is being

used as a tool and why a horse is responding: Is it due to positive reinforcement, release from pressure, or avoidance of fear? As D. Koster and A.C. Wegert, et al. (2009) summarize their research, "The welfare of horses being subjected to round-yard training methods may often be jeopardized by trainers having unrealistic expectations based on incorrect assumptions that the behavior exhibited mimics that of the horse-horse interactions in more natural environments."

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After being fed a carrot off the top of the car, Blessi "bonded" with the car and started following it around. Results will vary depending on the temperament of your horse. Photo by Pamela Nolf.

THE USIHC STALLION BOOK

BY ANDREA BARBER

Spring is in the air, and for those considering breeding a mare, it's time to start looking for that perfect stallion. But where to look? The USIHC Stallion Book, which is located on the USIHC website at <http://www.icelandics.org/sbook.php>, is a great place to start. Although the USIHC does not specifically endorse any of the stallions listed, all that are included in the USIHC stallion book must meet the following criteria: 1) The stallion must be fully registered with the USIHC, 2) The owner of the stallion must be a current member of the USIHC, and 3) The stallion must have a full FEIF breeding evaluation. Therefore, you can select from any of these stallions with confidence that these requirements have been met.

Each stallion's page includes a photo, pedigree, evaluation scores, the breeding options available (live cover, AI, etc.), and contact information for the stallion's owner or where the stallion is standing at stud. Much of the information provided is pulled directly from WorldFengur, the international Icelandic horse database. In



Solfaxa from Seigur Icelandics a few hours after birth. Photo by Kathy Sierra.



The first step to a foal is to match your mare with the right stallion. Here Kleópatra from Sand Meadow frolics in the grass. Photo by Andrea Barber.

addition, if you click on the stallion's registration number, it will link you directly with the stallion's listing in WorldFengur—remember that a full subscription to WorldFengur is included in your USIHC membership! (See www.icelandics.org/wf_access.php for details.) On WorldFengur, you can find a lot more information on each stallion, including a full pedigree, all evaluation results, competition results, registered offspring, additional photos, etc.

For the most current list of stallions always check the website. More information on all the individual stallions can also be found by contacting the stallion owner via the information provided.

Perhaps you have a stallion that meets all the requirements and would like to see him listed as well. If so, log on to the USIHC website and go to this page: http://www.icelandics.org/sbook_add.php

Happy matchmaking!



Currently, fifteen stallions are listed in the USIHC Stallion Book. They are (in alphabetical order):

Álfadans frá Ingólfshvoli

Five gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.20
 Chestnut light mane and tail
 Rutledge, GA

Eiður frá Oddhóli

Five gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.45
 Chestnut with star
 Limington, ME

Fjalar frá Bjargshóli

Five gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.24
 Black
 Eagle, WI

Flygill frá Mosfellsbæ

Four gaited
 Evaluation score: 7.83
 Palomino with blaze
 Watsonville, CA

Fönix frá Syðsta-Ósi

Five gaited
 Evaluation score: 7.83
 Silver dapple/Bay
 Marine on St. Croix, MN

Frami frá Ragnheiðarstöðum

Five gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.37
 Bay/Dark
 Santa Cruz, CA

Glæsir frá Húsey

Five gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.04
 Bay pinto
 Evansville, IN

Hágangur frá Sveinatungu

Five gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.03
 Palomino
 Rutledge, GA

Hergill frá Oddhóli

Five gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.08
 Bay
 Honeoye Falls, NY

Hrafn frá Garðabæ

Four gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.24
 Black
 Santa Ynez, CA

Kalman frá Lækjamóti

Four gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.16
 Bay
 Honeoye Falls, NY

Óskar frá Litla-Dal

Five gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.54
 Black
 Rutledge, GA

Stígandi frá Leysing-jastöðum II

Four gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.27
 Black
 Lloyd Harbor, NY

Tangó frá Strandarhöfði

Five gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.39
 Brown/Black
 Rutledge, GA

Pór frá Prestsbakka

Five gaited
 Evaluation score: 8.24
 Blue dun/Light
 Santa Ynez, CA

AI BREEDING

BY JULI COLE



Thalia from Thor Icelandic (sire: Bjartur vom Hof Osterkamp; dam: Pekking frá Hólum, a daughter of the famous Prá frá Hólum) enjoying the spring sunshine. Photo by Lisa Keller.

Breeding your mare via artificial insemination (AI) provides many benefits, such as being able to keep your mare at home while breeding to a stallion in another state or even another country. However, many mare owners hesitate to use AI breeding due to concerns about success rates and expense. Here are some steps that you and your vet can take to help ensure a successful experience with AI breeding.

HEALTH CHECK

First, make sure your mare is in good physical condition for breeding. Not only should the mare be in good health herself, you want to make sure that her reproductive system is in the optimum condition to conceive and carry a foal to term.

To make sure the uterus is healthy, have a uterine culture done by your vet. The vet uses a swab on the end of a long

pipette to collect a sample of cells from your mare's uterine lining. Everything from the glove the vet uses, to the swab and pipette, must be sterile to avoid any foreign contamination being introduced to the sample; the mare's external organs should also be thoroughly cleaned prior to the procedure.

The sample will then be sent to a lab, where it will be tested for any contaminants that may be present inside the uterus. Results are typically available in 3-5 days, so it is very important to have the sample taken well in advance of any planned breeding. If contamination is found, you'll need time for it to be appropriately treated and the mare recultured prior to ordering a semen shipment.

Many people believe a maiden mare's uterus does not need to be cultured. This is a fallacy and can end up costing the mare owner much grief and money in the long run. Mares can have certain

conformational conditions that allow for contaminants to be introduced into the uterus, such as a rectum that is recessed, which allows manure to be drawn into the vaginal opening when the mare passes manure.

For this article, it is going to be assumed that your mare has a "clean" or negative culture, meaning no contaminants were found and treatment and repeat culturing is not necessary.

TRACK HER CYCLE

Another extremely valuable step to take to ensure successful AI breeding is to "track" your mare's cycle in advance of ordering a shipment of semen, especially if this is the first time the mare is being bred artificially.

Successful AI breeding is all about timing, and the semen should be ordered at the right time to allow for insemination to occur just prior to ovulation. To

help pinpoint ovulation on a mare being bred by AI for the first time, your vet can monitor her through a heat cycle via ultrasound, measuring the growing follicle until ovulation occurs.

All mares are individuals and you should never assume that your mare will follow what is considered “the norm” for her breed. For example, while most of the Icelandic mares that I have bred via AI have ovulated on follicles measuring in the mid to upper 40’s (as measured in millimeters), I have one mare that reaches follicle measurements in the low 50’s prior to ovulation, and this mare is considered to be of average or normal size for an Icelandic.

It should not be necessary for a vet who is familiar with breeding to check the mare via ultrasound every single day of a heat cycle. Other changes outside of follicle growth indicate to the vet if ovulation is imminent, such as increased edema in the uterus or the shape of the follicle. While it may sound expensive to have two to three ultrasounds done just to find out when your mare will ovulate, in the long run it will save you money by



Nikolina from Thor Icelandics is a very highly evaluated and utterly charming filly (see page 5, the 2012 foal tour). Photo by Martina Gates.



Zophonias from Vinland, here with his dam Gnótt frá Holtsmúla, received very high scores by Barbara Frische at last year’s foal tour (see page 5). Photo by Martina Gates.

helping to reduce the need for multiple shipments of semen.

ORDER THE SEMEN

Prior to ordering a semen collection and shipment, you must completely understand the agreement you are making with the stallion owner. Communication is paramount. You should not hesitate to contact the stallion owner to clarify what days the stallion is available for collection, what type of carrier service will be used, and so on.

The combination of knowing when your mare will ovulate (or as close as possible) and understanding the stallion’s collection and shipping requirements will help ensure a successful AI breeding. It may be that a cycle will have to be skipped due to a holiday or weekend. However, it is better to skip a cycle and save the time and money for a shipment that may arrive too late.

INSEMINATION

The mare is ready and the semen has arrived, now it is time to inseminate your mare. Prior to insemination, your vet will once again clean your mare’s external organs to prevent the introduction of any contaminants. All materials used for insemination, such as gloves, pipettes, and syringes, should be sterile.

An ultrasound is normally done prior

to insemination so that the vet can appreciate, or see, the size of the follicle and the edema present.

Typically, a shipment will consist of either two syringes or two whirl packs of semen. Depending on what the ultrasound shows the vet, the vet may choose to use only one of the “doses” and save the second dose just in case the mare does not ovulate within 24 to 36 hours of the first insemination. Once the mare is inseminated the vet will often give the mare a hormone injection to help induce ovulation. The vet will then check the mare the following day to make sure ovulation has occurred. If it has not, the mare will be inseminated with the second “dose” of semen.

THE LONGEST WAIT

For me, the longest wait is the 15 days from insemination and ovulation to when the mare can first be checked for pregnancy. On or after 15 days from ovulation, the vet will be able to detect a conceptus if the breeding has been successful.

While this article is very brief, hopefully it will help alleviate some of the concerns you may have about using AI as an option to breed your mare. AI is a wonderful tool that allows for diversity of bloodlines and strengthening of the breed’s genetics, especially in a country as large as the U.S.

MARE CARE

BY JULI COLE

This article is about how I care for my broodmares in foal. My way is only one of many different ways of caring for a mare in foal. As with any topic that concerns horse health, you should remember that if at any time you have a question or concern about a health-related issue, the best information will come from the veterinarian that attends to your horse.

Breeding a mare is just the beginning of an 11-month journey to a healthy foal and dam. Unless you, as the mare owner, also own the sire, there are many costs involved for stud fees; boarding during breeding; or collection, shipping, and vet fees if the mare is bred via artificial insemination. One of the most heartbreaking things for a mare owner is to pay all this money and wait 11 long months, only to have no foal in the end. So what can you do to help ensure a healthy foal arrives?

ULTRASOUND

Pre-natal exams done by a vet are one way of helping to ensure that all is going well with the mare's pregnancy. With an ultrasound machine, a vet can check the



At 15 days, the sonogram shows that the breeding was successful.



Blanda frá Hátúni is here taking care of another mare's foal. Blanda stole the foal, Solný from Lough Arrow II, at birth and fed her own baby as well as Solný. "We saw Blanda stealing the foal and lifted Solný up to her mother Drífa from Lough Arrow's udder, so she would get the colostrum," notes breeder Andrea Brodie. "Thus Solný had two milk bars to choose from." Photo by Andrea Brodie.

progress of the developing embryo at regularly spaced intervals during the first two months of gestation. Aside from the initial check at or slightly after 15 days post breeding, I have my mares checked at 30 days, 45 days, and 60.

While this may sound like a lot of vet visits and ultrasounds, the first three months of a pregnancy are when the pregnancy is most likely to be terminated by nature for one reason or another. Having ultrasound checks done at regular intervals during the first 60 days will let the mare owner know as quickly as possible if the embryo has been lost. This will allow for time for rebreeding in the same season instead of needing to wait for the

following year.

The ultrasounds will also help to determine if the mare has conceived twins, especially in live cover breeding where it is likely that the mare was not checked for follicles and ovulation as she would be with AI breeding. It can be very dangerous for a mare to carry twins to term. One or both foals could be lost, and it can even be fatal to the mare herself. Also, if the mare was bred to an "outside" stallion (one not owned by the mare owner), and by a miracle both foals survive, then the mare owner will most likely owe a second stud fee to the stallion owner to be able to register the second foal.

If twins are discovered early enough

in the pregnancy the mare owner then has options, such as having the vet “pinch off” one of the embryos, allowing the other to develop. Or the entire pregnancy can be terminated by the vet and the process can start anew.

Ultrasound is not very useful once the mare has reached 65 days of gestation, as the embryo will be magnified so much that the vet sees only a dark screen. The vet can still continue to monitor the progress of the developing foal, however, by doing rectal palpations. What the vet will be able to feel or determine on palpation can vary depending on the stage of gestation. In the earlier months, the vet will be able to tell by the “tone” or feel of the uterus if the mare is in foal; in the later months of gestation, it is not uncommon for the vet to be able to feel the foal moving around.

VACCINES

The American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) has established a set of guidelines for vaccinations recommended for a pregnant mare during the various months of gestation. If you use the AAEP-recommended schedule, you will help decrease the chances of the mare aborting the pregnancy due to exposure to EHV-1 or other diseases. Having your vet perform a rectal palpation at the same time will also confirm the mare is in foal and the pregnancy is progressing well.

The vaccine for Equine Herpesvirus type 1 (EHV-1) also known as Rhinopneumonitis, is one that is recommended for pregnant mares, as this disease can cause the pregnancy to be aborted. The following information about the EHV-1 vaccine comes from and can be found at the AAEP website (<http://www.aep.org>).

Several inactivated vaccines are available. Those licensed only for protection against respiratory disease currently all contain a low antigen load. Two that are licensed for protection against both respiratory disease and abortion contain a high antigen load. The performance of the low-antigen load vaccines varies, with some vaccines outperforming others. Performance of the high antigen-load vaccines is superior, resulting in higher antibody responses and evidence of cellular responses. When cost is not a factor, it's better to choose the high antigen-load respiratory/abortion vaccines for that reason.

Pregnant mares should be vaccinated



Hlökk frá Hofðabrekku and her colt Náttar from Thor Icelandics. Photo by Lisa Keller.

during the fifth, seventh, and ninth months of gestation using an inactivated EHV-1 vaccine licensed for prevention of abortion, according to the AAEP. Many veterinarians also recommend a dose during the third month of gestation, and some recommend a dose at the time of breeding.

Giving mares an inactivated EHV-1/EHV-4 vaccine four to six weeks before foaling enhances the concentration of immunoglobulins in the colostrum, the mare's first milk. Maternal antibodies that are transferred to foals in the first milk may decrease the incidence of respiratory disease in foals, the AAEP notes, though “disease can still occur in those foals and infection is common.”

In addition to the EHV-1/EHV-4 vaccine, the AAEP recommends that pre-foaling booster vaccines be given for the following diseases in the tenth month of gestation: Eastern Equine Encephalitis, Western Equine Encephalitis, Influenza, and Tetanus. As mentioned above, one benefit of the pre-foaling boosters is that the foal will receive immunoglobulins providing some protection from these diseases in the colostrum when it nurses the first few times after birth.

These vaccines and palpations may be viewed as unnecessary by some breeders. In a country such as Iceland, for example, it must be taken into consideration that many, if not all, of these diseases are simply not present on the island. In the United States, where these diseases are known to exist, and where outbreaks have been confirmed

in very recent history (such as with EHV-1 and EEE), it is prudent to consider your mare's risk factors. Is your geographical location close to a confirmed outbreak? Is your mare in a herd or facility where there is frequent movement of horses in and out, such as hosting or going to clinics or shows? Again, as with any other health-related issue, the best person to consult for advice about vaccines is the veterinarian who attends your horse.

NUTRITION

Nutrition is another important area you need to take into consideration. As with all other areas of horse care, there are differing opinions on what a mare does and does not need, or what she should or should not do when in foal.

It is important to remember that the mare will need extra nutrition, especially in the final trimester of gestation, to help keep her at a healthy weight while the fetus is developing. Just as with humans, the mare is “eating for two.” This does not mean she should be fed so much as to become obese. Instead, it means she needs to increase her feed intake enough that she does not lose condition. Good quality hay and/or pasture are essential. Some breeders may choose to supplement with grain, and some may choose to give extra vitamins, similar to a human mother-to-be taking pre-natal vitamins. As long as the nutritional needs of the mare are being met, so that she remains in good condition, there is no right or wrong way.

The breeding and foaling season for 2013 is ready to begin in full force. May all of you who have mares due this year have healthy foals and dams, and for those who will be breeding, may all of your mares settle in foal.



Hlökk and her foal, Náttar from Thor Icelandics. Photo by Lisa Keller.

MEASURING LONGEVITY

BY CHRIS ROMANO

One selling point for the Icelandic horse is its long potential lifespan. Viewing the deceased stallion on the cover of Issue 4-2011 of the *Quarterly*, Prúður frá Neðra-Ási II (IS184157014), brought a question to mind. How well do high-scoring horses age? How well did Prúður frá Neðra-Ási II age? How structurally sound a horse remains can determine how long and happy a horse-human partnership will be. That same issue contained an excellent discussion on breeding concerns in the context of scoring at FEIF evaluations. If you missed it, “Would You Breed to Spuni?” is worth a read, because it also deals with measurement, the topic I want to bring up here.

Our world would be a dim place without measurement, and the FEIF scoring method developed for assessing Icelandic stallions and mares is a very well-thought-out and useful tool. That said, the method only measures young horses, which is a limited time frame. The method also focuses on specific qualities, some of which *may* end up having negative implications for the breed in years to come. Measuring only young horses may ultimately exaggerate certain features of the breed.

A breed is like a nation or business. Sometimes a nation or business goes into debt to achieve a specific goal; sometimes that debt causes the nation or business to succeed and sometimes to go bankrupt. I’m suggesting that without long term measurement, horse breeds can incur debts—genetic debts. That is a risk all breeds face.

Risk management is all about identifying aspects of uncertainty as they refer to the success or failure of a system, such as a nation or a business. In the case of analyzing how scoring affects a horse breed, a risk manager might ask: Can scoring only young stallions or mares possibly lead to exaggerated traits? Could those exaggerated traits cause risk factors for the breed’s health and longevity? I’m asking you to view these exaggerated



Prúður frá Neðra-Ási II (IS184157014) at age 26. Prúður left a legacy of 172 offspring, many of them great riding and competition horses, including foals bred in his last year. He was euthanized at age 27 because of a leg injury. Photo by Andrea Brodie.

traits as genetic debts. I’m suggesting that these genetic debts can pile up, just like the debts of nations or businesses.

These genetic debts can occur very quickly, since horses breed at an early age, and some breeders work hard to isolate and exaggerate specific traits. In the 1980s I saw Quarterhorses that were specifically bred to have tiny feet, inevitably causing health consequences. A big body on tiny feet is not a good idea. I see that as a genetic debt. Sadly, I’ve seen some Paso Finos becoming tight wind-up toys, with competitive breeders emphasizing the tiny Fino step over a balance of Largo, Corto, and Fino gaits. To some the Paso Fino is now considered weak, with a genetic debt that’s leading to bankruptcy.

I wonder, have any of the high-scoring Icelandic stallions or mares been re-evaluated in a standard way? Since Icelandic horses can have a longer partnership with their owners than other breeds, the option of some sort of second

standard evaluation at an older age might be useful. Having both the young and older stallion’s and mare’s scores, along with comparison photos at both ages, might be a valuable database. That’s my proposal. Anyone who owns a stallion that’s been scored when young, consider having the horse scored again at age 15 or 20, or some other agreed-upon age. If your stallion or dam still scores high and still has a great constitution, that could be important information for the breed. If their offspring’s data were included, that would be an added bonus for future breeding.

In closing, I’d like to suggest that systematically collecting data on stallions and mares, both in youth and as they age, will better help evaluate how well they age. Adding their offspring’s data will compound the value of the original data. Collecting this additional age-related information in a standardized form might spare the Icelandic horse community the

genetic debts caused by focusing on short term fashion and profit, at the expense of long term breed vitality. I'm really thinking long-range here: centuries, not decades. This information would be for the breed's future benefit, nothing more and nothing less.

Please note: The author is indebted to all those who commit to continue breeding the Icelandic horse. The author does not breed horses or compete, but she does enjoy riding her 25-year-old Icelandic gelding.

COMMENT BY ANDREA BRODIE

The official FEIF Icelandic Horse Breeding standards (FIZO) do specify breeding for health and longevity. Under "General breeding goals," FIZO says, "The official breeding goal is to breed a healthy, fertile, and durable horse—a robust Icelandic horse." Unfortunately somehow that part of the standards often gets overlooked when musing about where the breed is going.

I can tell you that Pruður aged extremely well. At 27 he looked like an older stallion, but not like a geriatric one. His conformation was still as good as when he was 11 at the World Championships in Switzerland in 1995. He had no swayback, he had strong legs, and he had an absolutely charming and lovely personality. Pruður would have lived a much longer life if he had not had an accident

in the field which, combined with an old injury that rendered him unrideable years before, caused us to euthanise him.

But I have six of his offspring here in my fields. All have very strong conformation: They are no giants, but look more like the older type of Icelandic, while still very elegant. All have well separated gaits and friendly characters.

I think stallions should be judged in a combination with their offspring. There are stallions whose offspring are not nearly as promising as the stallion was, and then there are stallions whose evaluation was just above average, but who have excellent offspring. It is not all black and white. Breeding is gambling. You can improve the odds by choosing the mare and stallion wisely. But in the end there are millions of combinations, and it is pure luck which sperm meets which ovum.

COMMENT BY ANNE ELWELL

The problems that have been created in Quarterhorses and most American breeds are largely the result of these horses being competed so heavily on the basis of appearance alone. When horses can compel enormous stud fees based on winning halter classes alone, with no requirement to perform under saddle, it is not long until conformational fads counterproductive to the ability to move soundly take over. The FEIF prohibition against any kind of halter classes in Icelandic compe-

tion is our best protection against this particular human-created piece of breed destruction.

Icelandic horses are scored young because the goal is athletic ability, which is best developed and manifested in the young, just like it is in baseball players. The condition of those baseball players when they are 60 to 70 is probably affected somewhat by genetics, but I would bet that it is affected much more by diet, exercise, smoking habits, drug and alcohol intake, sleep habits, and a whole lot of other variables in the decades following their peak years.

That said, I agree that human beings' attention is all too often on immediate gratification rather than the long-term consequences of things: on what is readily at hand rather than on what is hard-won through enormous thought and work, on bling rather than substance. Responsible breeding, like responsible anything, requires paying attention to the long-term results of what we are doing.

I personally believe that the evaluation of horses at the age when they have the most opportunity to express their abilities makes sense. I don't believe that evaluating them at some substantially later age (i.e., 20) is useful unless you can control all of the variables that affect the retention or loss of those abilities. But I agree that focusing on horses who can continue to be sound and healthy into their old age is an exceedingly important goal and identifying conformational points that help or hinder that should be done.

I have four of my breeding horses still with me: the stallion Sindri (age 28) and three mares (now 34). They are all in terrific shape, tear around the pastures with regularity, and continue to be as wise and entertaining as they ever were. The old Hrafn frá Króggólfstöðum was hot to breed mares at age 31, and while I don't know exactly how old Hrafn 802 was when he died, I climbed about two miles of Icelandic pastures to see him out with a herd of mares during his last breeding summer and he took my breath away.

Editor's note: Do you have an opinion on the subject of measuring the longevity of the Icelandic horse? If so, let us know at quarterly@icelandics.org.



The mare Gletta, at age 30, just after being clipped. "Old horses often cannot shed out properly, be it due to Cushings disease or for other reasons," notes owner Andrea Brodie, "and they need to be clipped. Gletta went from not moving and hardly eating to acting 20 years younger after she was clipped." Photo by Andrea Brodie.

IDENTIFYING BY EYE

BY SALI PETERSON

How do you identify your horse? If you have only a few horses, it's easy. You know what each one looks like. But what if you have hundreds? Or you need to prove to someone—a buyer, a seller, a breeder—you have the right horse?

Icelandic farmers used to mark their horses' ears. A visitor to Iceland a hundred years ago complained about "a beautifully made creature" who'd been branded by "slitting his ears into ribbons, which danced and quivered in the most ludicrous manner when the animal was in motion."

No one does this anymore. But my biggest objection to the method we use today to identify our horses—microchipping—is still its invasiveness. Microchipping requires the use of a large needle to insert the chip, or transponder, into the horse's neck. A major drawback of transponders is that sometimes they simply stop working—which means you need to implant a second chip. Nor is implanting a chip correctly as easy as you might think.

In this article, I'd like to introduce you to another way. So far there is no plan for the USIHC to adopt this technology for use in identifying Icelandic horses, but I think it's something we should contemplate for the future.

IRIS SCANNING

Your horse's eyes are unlike any other horse's eyes. In fact, your horse's eyes are as unique as your fingerprints. Irises have unique complex random patterns. Take a moment to look at your horse's, dog's, or cat's eyes. Look in the mirror at your own. You will see each iris is wondrous, with a myriad of patterns and colors.

The technology for iris identification has been around for roughly 25 years. A digital video camera captures an image of the iris's patterns. The iris scan is put into an iris recognition computer program that uses algorithms—mathematical pattern recognition formulas—to identify the scan and compare it to



Kolbrá's eye. Photo by Kara Noble

a library of electronically stored digital photo imprints, or eyePrints™. Human iris identification systems, or biometrics, are used today by millions of people around the world as quick identification at border crossings and airports. The major advantages of iris recognition biometrics include: it's noninvasive; the iris is protected, yet offers easy accessibility; matches are made with lightning speed; and there are few false matches.

Can the system be fooled? Perhaps, but programmers are continually creating and updating the digital templates encoded from iris patterns. Databases of iris templates are searched by "matcher engines" that can check millions of templates per second. So it is highly unlikely a mistake could occur. Of course, one SciFi movie comes to mind: In *Minority Report*, Tom Cruise has an eye transplant to change his identity and uses one of his original eyes to gain entry into a security system. Not an easy operation to contemplate.

BENEFITS

- Accurate, noninvasive
- Takes seconds to identify or verify a horse's identity
- Ties into secure eyeD Equine National Database
- Permanent digital records accessible by any computer

- eCoggins certificates, health records and treatments, performance history, registration papers, pedigree, photos, transport, evaluations, etc., can be linked to the eyePrint
- Access 24/7 by vets, owners, and authorized personnel
- Vets and owners can upload and attach information through a secure site
- Protects against information loss: paper can get lost, damaged, or stolen
- Lessens the need for paper-based horse registration; owner registration; proof of ownership; and proof of Coggins, shots, and health certificates at shows
- Aids in recovery of stolen horses

EARLY ADOPTERS

Currently, only one equine iris identification system, eyeD, is available. It is the product of years of exploration and a collaboration of several companies. Merck Animal Health markets and sells eyeD. SRI International developed the current algorithms. Global Animal Management was an early marketer; the U.S. Equestrian Federation tested the system; and Iristrac developed the algorithms and demonstrated eyeD at the World Equestrian Games in Lexington, Kentucky, in 2011.

Early adopters of this system include Stachowski Farm in Ohio, with more than 200 Arabian and Saddlebred horses. The Colorado Horse Rescue uses eyeD for identification and record management.

Since benefits are quickly spreading, many horse groups are holding iris identification events at their shows. For example, the 2012 HITS Desert Circuit in California offered owners the opportunity to get iris identification for their horses. In my area, Clarke Equine in Northern Virginia has brought iris identification technology to local horse trials/three day events, horse shows, and special events, with more to come in 2013. Horse associations taking the lead in introducing the iris identification system at shows include: the American Quarter Horse Congress,

the Ohio Quarter Horse Association, the American Paint Horse Association, and the National Cutting Horse Association.

Iris scanning has become an integral part of a new program at the Reichert Celebration, the world's largest multi-breed horse show and futurity. This 10-day extravaganza draws participants from across the U.S., Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Sweden, and Switzerland. In 2012 for the first time, eyeD used iris scanning at the yearling sale on over 150 horses and ponies. In this four-year program, these same equines will be verified by eyeD scanners in 2013 through 2015 prior to entering classes at Reichert Celebrations.

From niche horse breeding groups to the Jockey Club, many horse organizations are moving toward using iris scanning in their registries, including the American Paint Horse Association, the second largest equine breed association in the world. The National Reining Horse and National Cutting Horse organizations are also discussing adding an iris identification section to their registration forms.

EYED HOW-TO

The eyeD camera and software are only available to veterinarians to purchase and use. The American Association of Equine Veterinary Technicians, which holds continuing education labs in Kentucky at Hagyard Equine Medical Institute, featured the eyeD camera for equine iris identification in June 2012. As of December 2012, 30 veterinary practices in 15 states across the U.S. offer this service.

Individual horse owners can have a vet scan their horse's eyes and place the scans into the vet's local database and into the eyeD Equine National Database.

The fee is \$50 to scan, have the system create a unique 15-digit identification number, and enter the horse/number into the national database. National Database Inclusion Renewal is \$2.00 a year. Individual owners and their vets do have the ability to update information and upload records into their horses' file in the national database.

When a breed registry embraces iris scanning as identification, it is given a profile by eyeD. Using this profile, the registry has access to the eyeD Equine National Database, including the ability to link to the database and to update and share information with other organizations. The registry links to the eyeD Equine National Database through a secure backend database using cloud services. As the makers of eyeD routinely work with the U.S. government, including the USDA, they must ensure that their databases are secure. The eyeD Equine National Database for Horse Identification is housed on Tier 3 servers stored in Long Island, NY, the same as databases for credit card companies.

There are no licensing fees for horse registries to access the eyeD Equine National Database, and eyeD offers a well-developed process for organizations like the USIHC to create profiles that allow access to the database. It is doubtful there would be additional costs. If a registry has special requirements necessitating unique programming, eyeD would create a proposal for the cost of development.

EYED AND ICELANDICS?

Again, there is currently no plan for the USIHC to adopt this new technology for use with Icelandic horses. But if Icelandic horse owners want to embrace iris iden-

tification, they have a number of choices available. Individual horse owners can work with a local vet with iris-scanning capabilities or join any event that offers the service. Or USIHC Regional Clubs could hold iris identification events or tie into an event at one of the horse expos. Or USIHC-sanctioned shows across the country could include iris identification events.

If there were enough interest from members, the USIHC could incorporate iris identification into the registry and link to the eyeD Equine National Database. Perhaps the first step would be to allow the use of iris scans in Icelandic horse registrations in addition to DNA testing—just add a section on the registration form for the horse's eyeD 15-digit identification number. This move would be similar to the move away from having a vet draw blood for blood typing, to pulling out horse mane hairs and mailing them off for DNA reports. All three reports—iris scans, blood typing, and DNA testing—are backed by reputable organizations.

Eventually, in addition to accepting freeze branding, tattoos, and microchips as identification at Icelandic horse evaluations, iris identification could be included. A vet with iris scanning equipment could be at the evaluations to scan and enter each horse's iris identification number into the eyeD Equine National Database or verify the authenticity of the horse's identification.

If USIHC linked into the eyeD Equine National Database, all this information could be easily shared. If FEIF or any of the other 19 individual FEIF member countries were interested in adopting iris identification technology, information for evaluations and recordkeeping could be shared. Eventually, all FEIF countries could link each of their national eyeD databases to WorldFengur.

While this may sound daunting, just look back over the past few years to see how far technology has taken us.

RESOURCES:

The eyeD Equine Identification System
<http://www.eyed.com/>

Equine ID and Verification videos:
<http://www.eyed.com/video-gallery.php?id=MyRLj7oBj6Q>

Iris Scanning and Biometric Scanning video: <http://www.iristrac.com/movie.html>



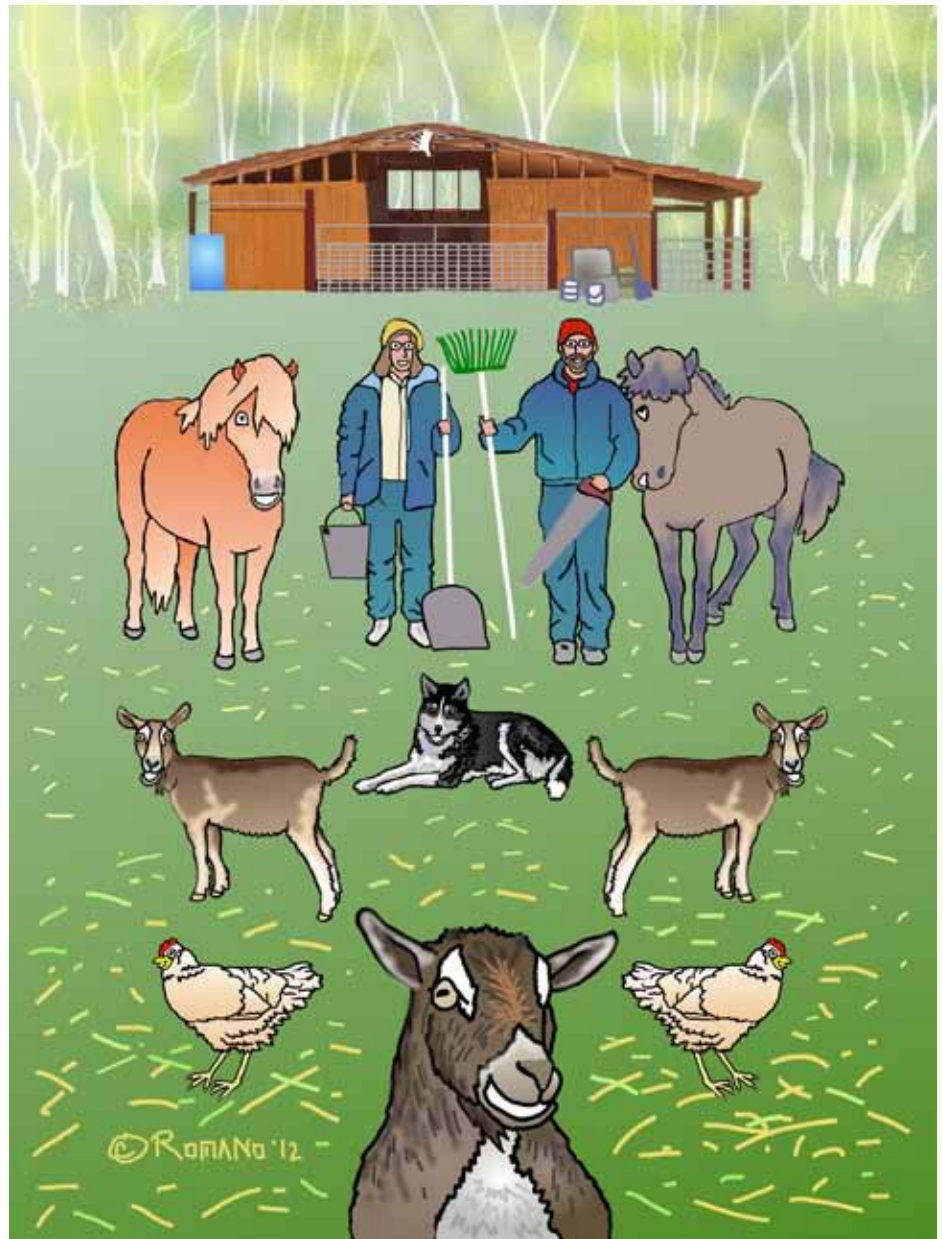
Equine vet using the eyeD camera to capture images of a horse's iris into the eyeD camera. Photo courtesy of eyeD.

CREATIVE CONNECTION

BY CHRIS ROMANO

To me one of the amazing aspects of the USIHC is that, through this national organization, I've been able to meet other Icelandic horse lovers and collaborate with them in ways I could never have imagined a few years ago. For instance, I joined the Quarterly committee in 2006—it's open to any member. To think we can marshal nationwide talent, enthusiasm, or both to create this magazine, and all on the web, is astounding to me: I grew up typing on a manual Royal typewriter. Most of us on the committee have never met. We interact almost entirely through email, discussing articles that were submitted by USIHC members and making sure the ones we write ourselves are focused and factually correct. As an author, I'm grateful to be mentored by those who know far more than I do about the Icelandic horse, training, tack, Iceland—or writing and editing.

This interaction has also led to some unexpected long-distance friendships. Alys Culhane joined the Quarterly committee in 2005, the year before I did. She's a writer; I'm a cartoonist. We didn't have much to do with each other until 2009, when Alys asked me to draw some cartoons to illustrate her article "The Story of Raudhetta's Runoff." After this collaboration, we met once for a brief



afternoon, when she was visiting relatives near my town. She rode my Icelandic and gave me some pointers on tölt. We discovered we both liked going on expeditions: In 2011 she and her husband took their Icelandics on a months long, 500-mile pack trip on the Great Divide. My husband and I have packed into the Sierra Nevadas with our horses, though on much shorter trips.

So last year, when Alys asked me to illustrate a book she was writing, I said

yes. I live in California and she lives in Alaska. You'd think the logistics alone would present an overwhelming challenge to production, but with our mutual experience on the Quarterly committee and our expedition experience I figured we could complete the project. With both endeavors, it helps to be reliable, adaptable, self motivated, and organized. Alys dismissed my overanalysis. She said, "It's a no brainer. We can work together because of our love for the Icelandic horse."

Nonetheless, we headed out into months of work, with little prospect of finding a publisher or any possibility of compensation. In the end we decided to self-publish *Raudi's Story* as an e-book.

As soon as I opened Aly's draft of *Raudi's Story*, I was hooked. Each horse in the story has a developed personality, and when the horses converse, their conversations mirror what we humans have observed in horse behavior. The human characters shone as well. There is the loving Ben, who when Raudi is gravely ill from eating birdseed, stays in her stall for hours singing to her. There is Katie, who runs a schooling stable and tells Aly what she doesn't want to hear about training a young horse. (The book is dedicated to Katie, who now has advanced Alzheimer's disease.) Aly sent me photos of some of the characters, and I tried to figure out how to show the various personalities involved.

Depicting Alaska was my next challenge: It's a place I've only visited via nature shows. It was important to select an aspect of each chapter that would enhance the story. The illustrations were drawn using the application Corel Painter, an electronic drawing board, and a stylus all powered by an old Mac G5-OSX. Fortunately, working on a computer allows me to magnify what I'm drawing, and that makes up for my limited eyesight. I began to send Aly drafts, and she sent back her encouragement. It all took place via email, and slowly this story of a novice horsewoman tackling the challenges of learning to train her filly became a reality.



REVIEW

BY FRAN BUNDTZEN

R*audi's Story* by Alys Culhane is a short book of 90 pages; I finished it in two reading sessions.

A 13-year-old horse-crazy kid would eat this book up, with its simple, straightforward writing style, but it would also entertain a horse-crazy adult (like me), or an Icelandic enthusiast of any age. It is illustrated by Chris Romano, whose cartoons regularly appear in the *Quarterly*. The gorgeous color illustrations head each chapter and bring *Raudi's story* to life.

The book is written in first person, from Raudi's point of view. She is a lovely chestnut Icelandic mare: smart, talented, and she knows it. She is also, according to Alys, strong-willed and opinionated, and she is eager to take advantage of someone whom she regards as a pushover. That someone is usually Aly.

During her early days at the farm where she was born, Raudi receives a lot of good advice from her dam, Gerjun, and the other Icelandics in the herd. They tell her that her purpose in life is to become a spirited but controlled riding horse, and if she wants to be a happy horse it is best to be obedient and cooperative with her handler. Humans always win in the end. Raudi, like any youngster, has her own ideas about how to train a human to do what she wants. Raudi provides insights into the physical and mental challenges she meets along the way. A green trainer-rider in combination with a green, willful horse can result in real challenges for both.

Raudi is very confident throughout this process, knowing that she will become the best riding horse in the world. Aly, on the other hand, is often plagued with self doubt about her abil-

ity to do right by this horse and allow Raudi to reach her full potential.

Our collaboration wouldn't have happened unless we'd met through our years of volunteer work for the USIHC *Quarterly*. It has certainly been a year well spent in devotion to the Icelandic horse. Both Aly and I hope *Raudi's Story* will be

Raudi's Story An Icelandic Mare's first five years of Life in Alaska



By Alys Culhane
Illustrations by
Christina Romano
RED HORSE PRESS

ity to do right by this horse and allow Raudi to reach her full potential.

By the end of the book, Raudi and Aly have reached an understanding. Aly has worked hard to improve her training and riding skills, and she is more confident and no longer the pushover she once was. Raudi has finally come to the realization that the advice her dam gave her was worth following. Good behavior and cooperation with Aly will allow them to become a team, and being a team is the path to becoming a happy horse and what she had always assumed she would be: the best riding horse in the world!

Raudi's Story is available on Amazon and Smashwords in an ebook format for \$5.95. Smashwords has the most options and formats, including Nook. The EPUB format looks good on the iPad.

enjoyed by many in the Icelandic horse community in the years to come. We also hope this story of our collaboration encourages other USIHC members to consider joining the *Quarterly* committee.

AT THE SHEEP ROUNDUP

BY CHARLOTTE REILLY



The view from our farm, with resting sheep on one side and resting horses on the other. All photos by Charlotte Reilly.

I got to go to Iceland twice in 2012 with America2Iceland. The second trip was for the sheep roundup in September, along with my fellow FIRC members Nancy Adler and Antje Freygang. I had only been to Iceland before in June and July, so September was a bit of a change. No more 24 hours of sunlight and there were not so many sunny days.

We started our trip with a few days of clinic riding with Guðmar Pétursson. The clinic helped us all get our riding legs in shape, practice getting on our horses in all our winter clothing and then venturing out into the rain, check that our clothing was waterproof, and check our ability to stay on the horse in 30-mile-an-hour winds. We rode across wet, uneven ground, in high winds and rain, with little visibility. We all wondered what we had signed up for, and then we went to the

actual gathering of the sheep.

The farmers had already started gathering the sheep from the mountains, an arduous task, and the weather had been harsh but improved as we arrived. It still rained, but it was not so cold and, thank heavens, the winds had died down quite a bit. We had some amazing rides into the lower highlands and could watch the stream of sheep from afar as the farmers brought them down toward the sorting pens. Flocks of sheep arrived from different parts of the mountains, in a slow progression. Mount Hekla was always in the background, a magnificent sight covered in snow.

On the day before the final sorting, there must have been 5,000 sheep headed into town, shutting down the main road with a convoy of wet, tired riders and horses, dogs and children, and our group

trying to help herd the sheep toward the fields where they would all spend the night and rest before the sorting process began. It was a sight to behold and an experience not to miss.

The day of the sheep sorting itself, the sun came out and everyone from far and wide arrived, young and old, families, friends, dogs, visitors, everyone dressed in wonderful Icelandic sweaters and festive attire. The sorting of the sheep was quite a process. It was so amazing to be there and watch after all the hard days of riding. The sheep flowed into a center enclosure, and then the Icelanders got in with the sheep and started separating them into smaller corrals that looked like pieces of a pie. This sorting process took all day, and then there was a huge party at the end to celebrate. At the end of the day we must have seen 40 horses in the

parking lot of the local liquor store. Some were tied to trees while their owners were inside, some were having shoes fixed (yes, there was a farrier there), saddle bags were being filled with beer and necessities: It was an incredible sight. My sheep roundup experience is something I will always remember. I am going to try the horse roundup next!

Adds Antje Freygang, "Riding these Icelandic horses through the countryside left me with renewed admiration of why and how these talented horses have thrived in this rugged terrain. The sheep herding trek was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, where we rode through rivers, up and down steep hills, through mounds of grasslands and extreme wind and rain, all really fast! We had a blast."

Sheep from many farms graze together in the Icelandic highlands all summer and are rounded up in the fall. They are herded along the main highway toward town and the sorting pens, where the farmers separate out their own and take them home.



OFF THE GRID

BY ALYS CULHANE

“Off the Grid.” This strange phrase conjures up images of Green Acres, with Lisa making pancakes and Oliver nailing them to the roof of the house. On a more realistic level, living (as we do) without a conventional power source, “off the grid” dictates that animal-related chores be done in a more unconventional manner. For instance, this morning I picked up a pen and notebook and, for what seemed like the hundredth time, said to Pete, “Let’s make a weekend list.”

When done, I pushed my list in his direction. It read: “Insulate water buckets. Put pallet gates on new compost facility. Call Andre and ask about swapping out manure trailers. Drain water tanks. Finish filling winter water buckets.” Pete and I glanced at one another. After ten years of near back-breaking work, we had no major building projects. We instead took a few minutes and traipsed down Memory Lane.

We moved from Butte, Montana, to the place we call Squalor Holler in August 2002. We’d spent three weeks traveling the Alcan highway in a school bus that contained most of our belongings, along with one very old and one very young dog. Pete had just taken a job teaching



Alys removes ice from horses’ water bucket while Siggi watches. Photo by Pete Praetorius.

at a local college in Palmer, Alaska. As we discovered, there were no available dwellings in our price range. And renting was out, because most landlords had no-dog policies.

We parked the bus at a colleague of Pete’s and had been camping in the rain for five days, which was why our immediate goal was to find dry shelter. A friend of a friend told us about the place we now inhabit. Through rain-spattered glasses we noted that the 2.5-acre property

consisted of four run-down cabins and an outhouse. Pete was initially dismayed, because the place needed a lot of work. It also lacked conventional power and was (as they say here in Alaska) “trashed out.” However, I saw the place as the ultimate writing retreat. As importantly, it appeared to this returning rider to be ideal horse property. I envisioned a barn and fencing adjacent to the outhouse shed. Plus, there were numerous area trails.

Pete finally agreed with me that we should rent with an option to buy. The rest is history. We had some work and considerable figuring to do. We made the cabins inhabitable and, in July 2004, brought our first two Icelandics home. Raudi and Siggi spent their first summer in what is now our primary garden site. By fall, we’d moved them into their permanent quarters, a three-sided combination hay storage area and shelter with a large, gravel paddock.

The addition of three goats, two dogs, three chickens, and three more Icelandic horses lent itself to even more figuring. Admittedly, we didn’t initially think about how we’d water or feed our animals, or dispose of their waste. Instead we figured things out as we went along. As I remarked to Pete after our trek down memory lane, the hands-on aspect of living off the grid made me what I am today, a live-in animal caretaker.

AUTOMATIC WATERING SYSTEM

We have no water trough or automatic waterers. Rather, I’m it. Early on, we compensated for this lack by putting gutters on our main hay shed and on the combination hay shelters. The abundant rainfall now spills into a 350-gallon tank that we purchased from a local dairy, and also into several 50-gallon plastic barrels. I water directly from the tank and barrels in the spring, summer, and fall.

I drain the tanks in early October and empty them into 50-or-so four gallon supplement buckets, which we store in our kitchen. Come October, we heat the water on the woodstove and, three or so times a day, I take this down to the barn,



Alys turns compost at old compost stations; Rainbow watches. Photo by Pete Praetorius.

in the winter riding the sled down the driveway. I first break the ice with a stick, and then remove the ice with a deep fat fryer. After, I pour the hot water in the buckets. The trick is to keep the buckets three-quarters full, this way I'm able to add more warm water.

In the dead of winter, I ride the sled down to the shelter using one of the buckets as a seat. My method enables me to monitor water consumption. Each horse consumes approximately four gallons of water a day. I habitually monitor dehydration levels by checking capillary refill times and doing a skin pinch test.

SLOW FEEDING SYSTEM

Many horse people are now advocating the use of boxes with grates or hanging hay bags in an attempt to slow down fast eaters. I'm the one who enters our new hay shed (located adjacent to the shelter hay sheds) weighs out the hay, puts it in buckets, and, thrice-daily, doles it out to the always hungry equines. The advantages are as follows: I'm faster than the slow feeders and I sing songs. I'm also able to keep tabs on the horses' eating habits. A horse that's just standing next to a hay pile and staring out into space is either full (not likely) or colicky (very likely).

FOOD DISPENSER

There are no Smart Paks here at Squallor Holler. Rather, I'm the one with the brains in this outfit. I make sure that every horse gets its allotted share of vitamins, Biotin, MSM/Glucosamine, apples, carrots, and ground flax. My tack room (a building that's a combination outhouse, greenhouse, and bear-proof garbage



Rainbow assists Alys as she delivers water to the horses. Photo by Pete Praetorius.

shed) faces the enclosure, so I watch the horses eat their hay as I mix their midmorning rations. As I bound down the steps, the horses head out to their designated eating areas. The advantage is that I can monitor who gets what.

MANURE DISPOSAL UNIT

Again, that's me. When, three years back, we had a three-horse facility, I built compost stations, turned the manure, and passed excess bucketed waste on to gardeners. I suspected that a change was imminent with the acquisition of Signy, but I knew for sure this past May. This was when her foal Hrimfara arrived. After considerable cajoling, Pete began assisting me in building our new compost facility. I dove in, first dismantling our old

compost facility, which consisted of 16 pallet stations. Together Pete and I then built a shed with three separate sections. I celebrated its September 2012 completion by putting horse, goat, and chicken manure into the first bay, and additionally, garden greens and house scraps. As with our other buildings, this one has a rain collection system. In the spring, we'll turn the winter waste with our new tractor. I'll bag and sell the compost to area gardeners.

THE FUTURE IS NOW

A recent visitor questioned the acquisition of the tractor, hinting that it was a sign I was getting older and consequently was unable to do the work I used to do. I replied that I was getting wiser. Pete and I never eschewed the use of labor-saving devices, however, 12 five-gallon buckets of manure a day (and my insistence that we keep all the horses in our herd) dictated that we make this particular purchase. I might add that the tractor has also enabled us to plow the snow out of the hitching area, thus increasing our amount of daily riding time.

I don't mind being an automatic waterer, slow hay feeder, food dispenser, or manure disposal unit. My off-the-grid lifestyle dictates that it can't be any other way. Admittedly, my job *is* time consuming. But I'm now living the life that I envisioned on that rainy August day when I said to Pete, "Yep, this place is ideal horse property."



Raudi watches as Pete moves snow with new tractor; Jena in foreground. Photo by Alys Culhane.

A YOUNG AUTHOR

INTERVIEW BY KELLY BLOUGH

Jamie Blough, age 10, recently “published” a book, *The Icelandic Horse*, as an assignment for her fifth grade class at Daves Avenue Elementary School in Los Gatos, CA. An excerpt of the book is printed below. I caught up with the author today at her barn, following a ride, to talk about her book.

Why did you choose to write about Icelandic horses?

They are such amazing horses and most people have never heard of them or seen one. I wanted my friends and other kids in my class to understand why I am so excited about them and proud of what we do.

How long have you been riding Icelandics?

A little less than two years. Our family was leasing a quarterhorse, and we were considering buying a horse, but didn't know what breed we wanted. After riding our neighbor's Icelandic horses, my parents were convinced!

Tell us about your horse.

I've actually ridden a few different horses, but I think I've found my perfect match in Rán. She's a silver dapple pinto, and my mom bought her from our neighbor last fall. I love riding her because she's calm, responsive, and she seems to love me, too.

Do you ride her in all the gaits?

She's four-gaited, so I ride her in all her gaits. I recently started cantering on her, and it's definitely my favorite gait but I'm a little nervous about riding it in a show.

Have you shown before, and can you describe your show experiences?

Yes. It's kind of nerve-wracking at first. Once I get used to it, it's really fun. The best part is being with all of my friends who love riding Icelandics too. We have such a good time.

Do you have any goals with respect to riding?

I think I may want to go to the FEIF Youth Cup when I get old enough, so that I can ride with other kids from around the world. But I know I have to work really hard between now and then.

What's the one thing you want your readers to get from your book?

I want them to know that Icelandics are not just any ordinary horse. They are awesome!



Jamie Blough shows Rán frá Hofi (right) in the “extremely smooth tolt” at the 2012 CIA Open next to her friend Katherine Monsef on Hólmsteinn frá Garðsauka. Photo by Scott Prestine.

EXCERPTS FROM *THE ICELANDIC HORSE* BY JAMIE BLOUGH

PURE BREED

The Icelandic horse was brought to Iceland 11 centuries ago by settlers. They are a rare breed of horse and they have many differences from other breeds. This breed is so pure that once they leave Iceland they can never go back because the Icelanders are afraid of disease that their horses could get from horses that were in another country. Their bones are 1 1/3 times more dense than the normal breed, allowing them to carry up to 300 lbs!

GAITS OF THE ICELANDIC HORSE

In addition to the original walk, trot, and canter of other breeds, Icelandic horses are also able to do a fast four-beat smooth tolt and the extremely fast two-beat flying pace. These two extra gaits are part of what makes this breed of horse very rare. Although some

Icelandics are not able to perform the flying pace, it is unusual for one to not be able to perform the tolt. Three-gaited Icelandic horses that can only show walk, trot, and canter are never used for breeding. The four-beat tolt gait of the Icelandic is so smooth, in fact, that in some show competitions the rider is able to hold a full mug of beer and not spill a drop! In the tolt there is always one foot on the ground, therefore making it very smooth. The flying pace is a very fast two-beat gait. The horse can get up to 30 mph while in the flying pace! The flying pace speed can sometimes be equal to a full gallop. These two extra gaits can only be performed by the Icelandic horse, making these horses extraordinary. These gaits can also be the best looking gaits that Icelandics can perform.



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THE ICELANDIC HORSE MARKETPLACE



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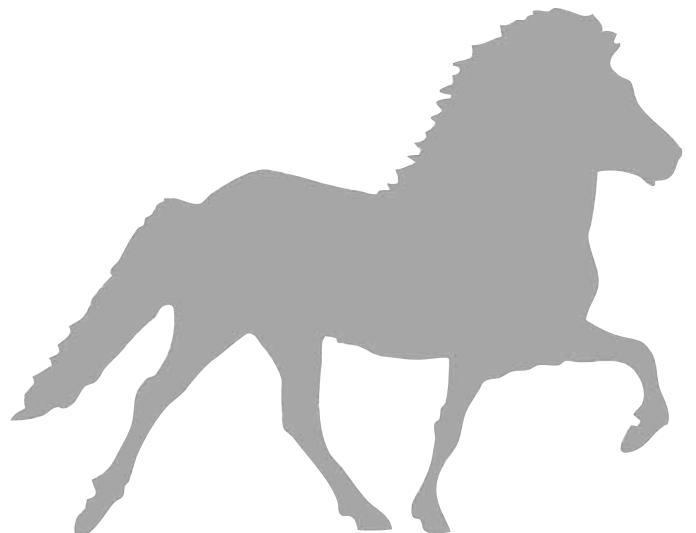
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