

ISSUE ONE

THE

2014

# 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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## Building on a Tradition





# THE USIHC MISSION

- Support the use and health of the Icelandic horse according to international standards
- Advance the study, breeding, and exhibition of the Icelandic horse
- Represent FEIF in the United States and represent the United States to FEIF
- Maintain a registry of purebred Icelandic horses

*The U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress is a member of FEIF ([www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org)), the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations, representing the national Icelandic horse associations of 19 countries. FEIF governs competition activities and regulates the breeding and registration of Icelandic horses throughout the world outside of Iceland.*

*The USIHC 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.*



Photo by Andrea Barber

## W H Y J O I N T H E U S I H C ?

### LEARN

As the owner or rider of an Icelandic horse, you chose a very special breed with its own culture and history. It is important to learn about the breed's unique traits, capabilities, and needs, so that you and your Icelandic horse will have a happy relationship and it will live a healthy and long life in a country far from its origin. As a USIHC member, you have a wealth of information at your fingertips and a personal connection to the best experts in the country.

You receive *The Icelandic Horse Quarterly*, a 52-page all-color magazine, four times a year. All issues since 2008 are available online.

You have free access to WorldFengur, the worldwide database of all registered Icelandic horses. About 400,000 horses, alive and deceased, are included, with pedigrees, offspring, ownership, and evaluation and competition results. Some horses even have photos and videos. WorldFengur is an invaluable tool for all Icelandic horse breeders and very interesting for the rest of us. Go to "Search Horses" on the USIHC website

and find any US-registered Icelandic horse by its number, name, or farm name to link to WorldFengur.

You can take part in—and even help create—educational seminars and teaching programs. For example, the USIHC Education committee developed and now administers the Riding Badge Program for pleasure and competition riders of all ages. On the USIHC website you can find links to FEIF-certified trainers who are USIHC members and can help you get the best out of your Icelandic horse. In the past, the Education committee has organized trainer seminars for those wanting FEIF certification.

The USIHC also has a scholarship fund for members who complete their certification to become national or international judges.

### CONNECT

Icelandic horses are social animals, and so are their people. The USIHC is the umbrella organization of regional clubs all over the U.S.: There are currently 14 active clubs. Find the regional Icelandic riding club in your area through the USIHC website, so that you and your horse can ride

with friends. News from the regional clubs appears in each issue of the *Quarterly*.

Join the USIHC Pleasure Rider Program. Through the USIHC website, you can log your equine activities and compete to win patches, medals, or even prizes like riding jackets or stirrups.

USIHC Youth members can apply to participate in the international FEIF Youth Camp or the FEIF Youth Cup. These are great events designed to bring young riders from all 19 FEIF countries together for a week of fun, learning, and competition. The USIHC Youth committee runs the whole process for the U.S. team, from application to participation.

Through the USIHC website, you can sign up for RSS feeds for the Events Calendar or web updates. You can check the membership list to see if your friends are members and when your own membership expires. And you can stay connected through the USIHC Facebook page.

## COMPETE

The Icelandic horse has international competition rules: You can compete in the same classes and under the same rules in any of the 19 FEIF member countries and compare your progress with competition riders from around the world.

The USIHC Competition committee adapts these international FEIF rules for American venues and special circumstances, publishing a new set of USIHC Competition Rules each year. These are available on the USIHC website, along with all the tools needed to put on a sanctioned show, such as entry forms, judging forms, judges' cards, and announcers' cards. (These tools are also useful for organizing fun shows and schooling shows.) Also on the website are lists of prohibited tack and equipment and other necessary information for competition riders.

Sanctioned-show organizers have access to the IceTest software to record show scores so that they immediately appear in the U.S. National Ranking; qualified shows can also send scores to the FEIF World Ranking list. Scores are posted on the USIHC website for everyone to see and compare.

The Competition committee also organizes the U.S. team at the Icelandic Horse World Championships, held in a FEIF country every other year. Only USIHC members can join the U.S. team. If you hope to compete at an international level, see the team recommendations and requirements on the USIHC website. Tryouts for the team

are open: Anyone can ride for scores and to get feedback from an international judge, whether or not you intend to compete in the World Championships.

## PROMOTE

USIHC members promote the Icelandic horse at many equine expositions around the country. The USIHC provides a beautiful display, brochures, and copies of the *Quarterly* and will contribute to the cost of the booth and stall space if certain requirements are met. Often these events are coordinated through a regional club, but individual members can also request copies of the brochure and the *Quarterly* to give to their clients.

The new USIHC Breed Ambassador program rewards members who take their Icelandic horses to all-breed events and shows.

The Promotion committee also prints advertisements in selected national magazines and newspapers, and coordinates the writing of feature stories, the production of calendars, etc.

Trainers, breeding farms, and trekking barns can promote their services through the USIHC Farm List in the *Quarterly* and on the website. Stallion owners can promote their stud services through the online USIHC Stallion Book. And everyone can advertise in the *Quarterly*.

## REGISTER

Whether you plan to breed one mare or have a breeding farm, the USIHC Registry and the Breeding committee provide information and services to help you. The Icelandic horse is one of few breeds with international evaluation standards, so that breeding horses from all over the world are judged on the same 10 points of conformation and 10 points of ridden abilities, and all scores are entered into the WorldFengur database. That allows you to compare the quality of your breeding stock with Icelandic horses around the world, both past and present.

USIHC-sanctioned breeding evaluation shows for registered adult horses ages four and up are scheduled by USIHC Regional Clubs, and occasionally by private farms, around the country as needed. All rules and regulations are adapted by the Breeding committee from the international FEIF rules and are available on the USIHC website. For

the past several years, the USIHC Breeding Leader has also offered young horse evaluations for foals to three-year-olds.

In accordance with FEIF rules, the USIHC has developed stringent tests before a foal can be registered as a purebred Icelandic horse. You can be sure of the parentage of any registered Icelandic horse and know that your registered foals have proof of their value.

You don't have to be a USIHC member to register your Icelandic horse, but by becoming a member you help support this vital USIHC program.

## INNOVATE

The USIHC is a member-driven organization. The more active and involved our members are, the stronger the USIHC becomes. Do you have an idea for a project or event that will support the Icelandic horse in America?

If so, write a proposal. USIHC members are eligible to receive a grant to fund creative projects that meet the USIHC's mission statement. Grant funding is included in the USIHC's annual budget—for 2013, the first year of the grant program, \$8,000 was budgeted! Contact the USIHC vice president for more information or read about the grant program in Issue 3 2013 of the *Quarterly* on the website.

## JOIN US

There are only about 4,500 registered Icelandic horses in the U.S. and the USIHC, at about 500 members, is still a small "pioneer" organization compared to countries like Iceland and Germany. Please join us so that the USIHC, too, can "bring people together in their passion for the Icelandic horse"!

Yearly membership for an adult is \$45, for a family (two adults, unlimited kids) it is \$65, and for young riders under 18 it is *free* until September 2014. You can join online or use the form at the back of this magazine.

## QUESTIONS?

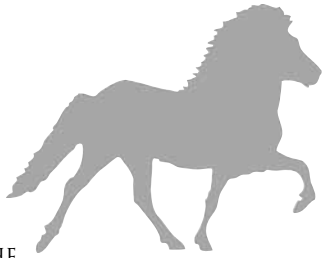
USIHC Board members and Committee chairs are here to answer them. For general questions, call or email our information desk or check the website.

Toll free: 866-929-0009  
info@icelandics.org  
www.icelandics.org

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FEIF'S MISSION: FEIF BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER  
IN THEIR PASSION FOR THE ICELANDIC HORSE

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# ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y

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ICELANDIC  
HORSE  
QUARTERLY  
Issue One 2014

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:** Lucy Nold is working with the handsome young silver dapple stallion Élfaxi frá Oddhóli (US2002103159), owned by Steinar Sigurbjörnsson. Élfaxi just had his spring body clip (necessary in the warm California weather), and is showing off his beautiful dappled coloring. Lucy is currently studying at the University of California, Davis in her second year as an Animal Science/Equine Science major. She is a young trainer/instructor and really enjoys helping young riders and watching them succeed. She will travel to Iceland this summer with the U.S. team for the FEIF Youth Cup as their team leader. Photo by Kathy Sierra.

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# FROM THE EDITOR

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## PUT THE “YOU” IN USIHC

What does the USIHC mean to you? To me it’s a network of friends, riding companions, and experts always on call when I have a question about my Icelandic horse.

I was 37 when I bought my first horse, the classic midlife-crisis Icelandic horse buyer. Except that I hadn’t ridden much before. Never owned a horse. Didn’t have a clue. I liked Icelandic horses because I had read about them in books—I studied the Icelandic sagas in graduate school—and I’d ridden a few times in Iceland. I liked their sensible characters and their smooth tolt.

Now, after owning Icelandic horses for 16 years, I know that my Icelandic friends had always put me on a “grandmother’s horse,” a very safe, secure, toltng machine. That’s not the horse you’re shown when you tell an Icelander that you want two horses, plus shipping, for \$10,000, as I did in 1997. That I not only survived this experience but ended up with two good horses is due to the USIHC.

Before I went horse-shopping, I read an article in *Horse Illustrated* about Icelandic horses. One of the people interviewed was Anne Elwell, past-president (and then

secretary) of the USIHC. I called her up. “What is your agenda?” she asked. My agenda was to buy two good horses in Iceland and write a book about it. I didn’t think to ask what her agenda was.

But she had one. I spent a day at Anne’s farm, learning what to look for in a horse. By the time I headed home, I was a member of the USIHC and had agreed to help set up the Congress’s first website. I began submitting articles to *The Icelandic Horse Quarterly*. Shortly after my two good horses came to the U.S. (Anne having arranged the shipping and quarantine), I became editor of the *Quarterly*.

With a brief hiatus, I’m still here—and thrilled to introduce you to our first color issue. Through the *Quarterly* and the USIHC I’ve learned almost everything I know about Icelandic horses. I’ve met my trainers, my riding partners, and the breeder of my second pair of good horses through the USIHC. I’ve visited Congress members’ homes and ridden their horses—in the U.S. and in Iceland. Some of my best Icelandic horse friends I’ve never met, except virtually.

When my mare turned out to be pregnant (a stallion in Iceland had jumped the fence), USIHC members



Nancy and Gæska frá Syðra-Skörðugili.  
Photo by Jennifer Tucker and Gerald Lang.

taught me mare care, how to register the foal, and why he should be raised in a herd; then they found me the herd. When she colicked, USIHC members were on the phone with me in the barn. Likewise, when my gelding suffered from summer eczema, USIHC members with good advice were only a phone call or email away.

I’ve learned what tack to use (and why the first saddle I bought is the worst one ever made). I’ve learned how (and why) to teach my non-trotting horse to trot. And every issue of the *Quarterly* inspires me with new activities my Icelandic horse and I could enjoy: Hunter paces! Driving! Parades! Shows! Trail Trials! Endurance rides! Jousting! Once I even wanted to ride in the World Championships. (Reality set in.)

What does the USIHC mean to you? It’s what you make it. Without you—without all of us—there is no United States Icelandic Horse Congress. Join us at [www.icelandics.org/join](http://www.icelandics.org/join) or using the form in this issue. Get involved. Join a committee. Share your ideas. Send your story to the *Quarterly*. Recruit new members—just have them send their name and address to [Quarterly@icelandics.org](mailto:Quarterly@icelandics.org) and we’ll send them a free copy of the *Quarterly*. The more of us there are, the more we can do for the Icelandic horse in America.

—Nancy Marie Brown



Iceland’s ancient horse traditions are captured on film in “Herd in Iceland.” See the stories on pages 26-29. Photo by filmmaker Lindsay Blatt.

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# USIHC NEWS

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## NATIONAL RANKING

Results of the 12 USIHC-sanctioned shows held in 2013 are posted on the USIHC website, [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org) (under "Ride"): the CIA Open Spring Show (April), the Vorkeppni (May), the FIRC Icelandic Horse Show (May), the World Championships Tryouts (June), the Sumarmot (July), the Kraftur Show (September), the Flugnirkeppni (September), the NEIHC Open (September), the Kentucky Show (October), and the CIA Triple World Ranking Show (October; counts as three individual shows).

The results are used to calculate the National Ranking, which can be found here: <http://www.icelandics.org/ranking.php>.

Congratulations to our top riders: Carrie Lyons Brandt (F1), Kari Pietsch-Wangard (F2), Ásta D. Bjarnadóttir-Covert (T1, T2, and V1), Dominic Ng (T3), Doug Smith (T4), Mitch Martin (T5), Willy Ma (T6), Colleen Monsef (T7 and V5), Elizabeth Robertson (T8 and V6), Rachel Ng (V2), and Laurie Prestine (V3). For scores, descriptions of each class, and the names of the other award winners, please see the website.

## BREEDING UPDATE

In the fall of 2013, U.S. Breeding Leader and FEIF International Breeding Judge Barbara Frische once again traveled around the U.S. to perform Young Horse Evaluations for breeders across the country. She evaluated the young horses from ages three months to three years according to the linear system of evaluating young horses that she developed and had approved by FEIF. In order to keep the costs of the evaluations more affordable, Barbara discounted her normal daily rate 50%, which was greatly appreciated by all. Some of the farms she visited include: Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI; Tolthaven Ranch in Pelican Rapids, MN; Meant to Be Farm in New Castle, PA; Cornell University in Ithaca, NY; and Sand Meadow Farm in Mendon, NY. A total of approximately 60 young horses were judged.

Breeders received from Barbara not only important information about the individual horses that were presented for



First place in the USIHC National Ranking in Five Gait (F1) competition is Carrie Lyons Brandt of Kentucky. Here she leads Brana frá Lækjamóti (the gray) and Maidis from Hanging Valley at Léttleiki Farms in January. Photo by Shaila Ann Sigsgaard.

evaluation, but also advice on their breeding programs as a whole. These evaluations gave breeders important feedback on their efforts without having to wait many years until their young horses are under saddle and fully trained. Barbara took the time to educate on various aspects of gait, movement, conformation, and character, as well as to review and explain pedigrees. In some locations where there weren't enough young horses to fill a full day, other activities took place, such as theory and riding lessons. The feedback from the hosts of the events was extremely positive.

Currently with the help of Board member Andrea Barber, Barbara is planning for 2014. She will likely be in the U.S. and available for young horse evaluations or other events (clinics, etc.) from June to mid-August and again in October. The requirements to host a young horse evaluation are fairly basic and can

be found on the Breeding Committee page of the USIHC website. The most important requirement is a willingness to learn! The horses presented need not be show or breeding prospects, either: a judgment is valuable information for the breeder or owner of any young horse. If you are interested in having Barbara come to your farm to perform an evaluation, or you are interested in attending one at another farm, please contact Andrea at [tolstar@yahoo.com](mailto:tolstar@yahoo.com).

Tentatively, two official breeding evaluations (for adult horses age four and up) are being planned in the U.S. for next year: one in the spring, probably at the end of May in Kentucky, and the other in the fall in September in New York. Check the USIHC website for more information on these events as their dates become confirmed. Even if you do not have a horse to be evaluated, please consider supporting these important

events, either through volunteering and/or sponsoring them financially, as they are critical to furthering the quality of Icelandic horse breeding here in the U.S.

## PARASITE RESEARCH

Horse parasites can cause devastating health issues in horses—but worms are developing increased levels of resistance to all available dewormers. No new drugs are being developed for use in horses, so the equine industry needs new reliable treatment alternatives.

Some of you may know Martin Nielsen, a USIHC member and Icelandic horse enthusiast who has announced at four Icelandic Horse World Championships, as well as at the two most recent Kentucky Icelandic horse shows. (He also competed at the Kentucky shows.) Martin is an equine parasitologist and veterinarian, originally from Denmark, who now is an assistant professor at the University of Kentucky Gluck Equine Research Center. Together with his research team, he is devoted to providing solutions for worm control in horses. His research team is working with a naturally occurring bacterium, *Bacillus thuringiensis* or Bt, which produces a crystal protein capable of killing intestinal worms without harming the animal. They are now evaluating the effect of this bacterial protein against important horse parasites.

To raise money for their research, the team has launched a crowdfunding project called, “Let the germs get the worms: Testing a novel probiotic compound for treatment of equine parasites.”

You can access videos and educational information, sign up to receive more information on the project, make online donations, and ask Martin questions about parasite control at <http://equine-parasitology.ca.uky.edu/>. The *Quarterly* hopes to report more on this research in a future issue.

## FREE YOUTH MEMBERSHIPS

Young riders under age 18 can join the USIHC for free until September 2014. The new youth members will receive a year’s subscription to the *Quarterly* and other benefits of membership, but will not be allowed to vote in elections.

Youth membership in Regional Clubs doubled in 2013 to 101, but only 70 of those youth were members of the USIHC as of November. Promoting the breed to young riders and encouraging more youth members is one of the main goals of the Youth Committee.

Other youth activities in 2013 include: participation in the Riding Badge program; synchronized Youth Days at several farms across the U.S.; youth classes at sanctioned shows; youth internships at U.S. farms; youth riders performing at the Minnesota Horse Expo, the Midwest Horse Fair, and various holiday parades; youth participation in numerous clinics across the country; a basic first aid vet clinic for youth; a new drill team formed; one young rider competed on the U.S. World Championship team in Berlin; and continued participation in the popular youth essay program in the *Quarterly*.

The Youth Committee also organized

raffles to benefit youth, raised funds for the 2014 FEIF Youth Cup riders, granted youth scholarships for various shows and clinics, and offered free auditing and free loaner horses to young riders at clinics.

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The Quarterly Committee and the Regional Club Committee are also sponsoring a membership drive. Any member of a Regional Club who is not already a member of the USIHC can request two complimentary copies of the new-and-improved color *Quarterly* simply by sending his or her name and address to [quarterly@icelandics.org](mailto:quarterly@icelandics.org). Please alert your Regional Club friends of this special offer.

As of November 2013, the USIHC had reached a high-water mark for membership of 443 member households, according to Secretary Doug Smith.

In conjunction with the membership drive, the Board approved the upgrade to full-color for the *Quarterly*.

## AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

The Promotion Committee has announced a new USIHC Breed Ambassador Program. This program awards prizes via a “drawing” method to USIHC members who submit their entries according to the following rules. Prizes include five USIHC Ambassador T-shirts and five \$50 VISA gift cards. The program will run from January 1 to December 31 each year, with the first drawing to take place in mid-January 2015. To participate:

1) You must be a USIHC member in good standing at the time each event is submit-

### THE TOP TEN YOUNG HORSES EVALUATED IN 2013 BY USIHC BREEDING LEADER BARBARA FRISCHE

Name	Sire x Dam	Breeder	Birth Year	Conformation	Character	Gaits & Movement	Overall
1 Loftsteinn from Sand Meadow	Hergill frá Oddhóli x Gima frá Ytra-Dalsgerði	Steven & Andrea Barber	2013	81.08	91	76.05	80.55
2 Kleópatra from Sand Meadow	Hrókur frá Hlemmiskeiði 1A x Gima frá Ytra-Dalsgerði	Steven & Andrea Barber	2012	83.95	86.33	76.05	77.4
3 Yngri from Cornell	Geisli frá Litlu-Sandvík x Vænting frá Vindási	Cornell University	2013	73.62	89.5	72.96	76.46
4 Stjarni from Tolthaven	Stigandi frá Leysingjastöðum II x Ronja frá Flugumýri	Gerald Oliver	2013	76.4	89.5	70.75	76.19
5 Sokkadís from Sand Meadow	Stigandi frá Leysingjastöðum II x Gima frá Ytra-Dalsgerði	Steven & Andrea Barber	2011	77.13	86.5	70.11	75.49
6 Andvari from Tolthaven	Álfadans frá Ingólfshvoli x Kolfinna frá Litlu-Ásgeirsá	Gerald Oliver	2013	82.3	87.83	66.06	75.29
7 Fær from Roxbury Ridge	Parker frá Sólheimum x Hlóðyn frá Torfastöðum	Amber Parry	2012	75.9	88	69.65	75.2
8 Þryði from Winterhorse Park	Þröstur frá Innri-Skeljabrekku x Perla frá Stóru-Ásgeirsá	Barb & Dan Riva	2010	75.42	91	68.74	75.19
9 Poka from Sand Meadow	Kalman frá Lækjamóti x Sædís frá Melabergi	Steven & Andrea Barber	2011	79.58	91	65.79	74.97
10 Eirikur Rauði frá Keldum	Geisli frá Litlu-Sandvík x Silvía frá Álfróláhljáleigu	Cornell University	2011	80.9	85	67.21	74.88

ted for entry and at the time of the prize drawing.

2) Participating horses must be registered with the USIHC or another FEIF registry.

3) Qualifying events are any organized *all-breed events*. Examples: Open Horse Shows, Parades, Hunter Paces, Trail Rides (including Competitive and Endurance Rides, Poker, Ride-A-Thon, or other fundraising-type rides and Trail Trials).

4) Events that are “Icelandic Horse Only” *do not qualify* for entry. Examples: Sanctioned Shows, Breeding Evaluations, Regional Club member-only Trail Rides, Schooling Shows, Breed Demos, and Drill Team practices.

5) Submit an entry by emailing a photo of you and your horse at the event to [promotion@icelandics.org](mailto:promotion@icelandics.org), or post the photo to the USIHC Facebook page. Photos must include your name, the name and registration number of your horse, the name and location of the event, and a brief description of the event.

6) Each event (not each photo!) counts as one entry in the drawing. There is no limit to the number of entries you may submit each year, or even the number of



Julia Hasenauer on Skuggsjá frá Grafarkoti receives her ribbon from judge Will Covert at the Krafftur Show in September. Photo by Mikayla Reynaud.

prizes. The more events you participate in, the more chances you have to win.

7) Photos must be submitted within two weeks of the event. The final deadline for all 2014 entries is January 5, 2015.

## MEETING MINUTES

Minutes of the USIHC Board of Directors’ meeting held in November, along with those of the Annual Meeting held January 18-19 in Las Vegas, NV, are available on the USIHC website ([www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org)) under The Congress, Board of Directors. There was no December meeting. Barbara Frische has resigned from the Board, but will remain chair of the Breeding Committee. Former Board president Andrea Barber was appointed to take Barbara’s place and will be the Breeding Committee’s contact on the Board. Sara Lyter is now USIHC president and Lori Cretney is vice president; the other officers remain Doug Smith (secretary) and Kari Pietsch-Wangard (treasurer).

In discussions at the Annual Meeting, the following items rose to the top as action items for the Board and committees in 2014: support the new Grant Program; create a “how-to” guide for events; make sure the committees have the basic working knowledge they need; offer a Sport Judge seminar; expand use of Facebook; promote the Regional Clubs and the Pleasure Rider Program; transform the Pleasure Riding Committee into a Leisure Riding Committee along the lines of the FEIF committee; hire support staff for the Registry to resolve procedural difficulties; host webinars on topics of interest to the membership; plan a 2015 Annual Meeting for Minneapolis, March 7-8.



Þór frá Skorrastöðum 4 greets fans during the autograph signing portion of Equine Affaire’s Fantasia. Photo by Augustin Demoncaux.



## 2014 CONFERENCE

The 2014 FEIF Conference was held in Reykjavik, Iceland from February 7-9, as this issue of the *Quarterly* was at press. The conference featured an update on the FEIF Hoof Study and panel sessions on the topics of gaits and embryo transfer, as well as the annual committee meetings.

## ANNUAL REPORT

In the 2013 FEIF annual report, president Jens Iversen remarked that "It is important to remember over and over again that our main focus must be to create the best possibilities for passionate people to be attracted by the Icelandic horse, and to become passionate members of the national organizations and clubs." Total membership in all 19 FEIF national organizations remains steady at 59,000, while the number of clubs and registered horses is growing. "The fact that the number of personal members is not growing significantly is a challenging fact that the member countries, in cooperation with FEIF, will have to act upon." Excerpts from the annual report follow; the complete report is available at [www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org).

## SWOT ANALYSIS

Nine member countries responded to the 2013 request for an analysis of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT); based on these

responses the FEIF board analyzed the international organization. "It has been very fruitful to go through this process," wrote FEIF president Jens Iversen. "This evaluation will lead to a general accepted basis for the board of FEIF to make more specific goal and action plans for the coming years."

## FEIF PROJECTS

The 2013 Annual Report singled out a number of FEIF projects: The Task Force formed in 2009 to revise and restructure the rules in FIRO, FIPO, and FIZO into one "understandable" rulebook has prepared a draft document that was distributed to FEIF committees for review.

A searchable word list containing translations of Icelandic-horse related terms in Icelandic, English, Danish, Dutch, German, and Swedish has been completed and is available on the FEIF website ([www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org)).

In other long-term projects, the board wants to establish a network of veterinarians and specialists to strengthen knowledge on specific issues concerning the welfare of the horse.

The FEIF board continues to discuss public relations issues and wants to improve the visibility of the organization. It is also discussing how FEIF can play a role in marketing and promoting the Icelandic horse.

Pursuit of FEIF membership in FEI

has been put on hold since FEI changed policy and joined with other horse sport organizations in the newly formed International Horse Sports Confederation. FEIF remains in the European Horse Network (EHN), with a goal of getting leisure riding onto the international agenda.

FEIF entered into a cooperative agreement with Mustad in which the horseshoe manufacturers will grant FEIF a total of 15,000 euros over three years; the board has decided to contribute to the FEIF Hoof Study with the financial support from Mustad.

## WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The World Championship in Berlin was the major event in the Icelandic horse world in 2013 and was a great success in terms of sport performances: It had the highest scores ever in the finals, high scores were required to reach the finals in most tests, it included a successful finals for young riders, and there were a large number of visitors. "As such," says the Annual Report, "the World Championship has been a great source of inspiration for riders, trainers, and instructors, even though not all expectations from FEIF and participants were fulfilled." Reports from the FEIF Event Committee and the organizer suggest improvements for coming world championships. The 2015 championship will be held in Denmark.

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## COMMITTEES

The FEIF Committees met in Malmö, Sweden in October; further details on these and other projects were presented at the FEIF conference in Reykjavik, Iceland in February.

The Leisure Riding committee is working with the Education committee on defining “the ideal leisure horse” and developing a way to assess horses with a focus on those elements of importance to leisure riders. The goal is to provide an assessment form, a framework for the process, and a way to standardize the results. The committee has also surveyed member countries on the accessibility of riding in nature and is discussing preparing a web-based “tool box” to deal with related legal issues.

The Education committee is preparing a competition manual for riders, discussing the revision of sport classes to place more emphasis on the skills of the rider, and looking into the possibility of developing an e-learning platform. A joint Education/FEIF Sport Judges seminar will be held March 21-23 in Kronshof, Germany.

The 2013 Youth Camp was organized very successfully by NIHF in Norway, with 35 participants aged 13 to 18 from 11 countries. In addition to planning the 2014 Youth Cup, the Youth committee has organized a youth trekking tour in Sweden for Easter 2014 and developed a youth exchange internet platform. The committee also held its second FEIF youth reunion at the World Championships for all riders who had ever taken part in a FEIF youth event.

The Breeding committee is proposing guidelines for embryo transfer and cloning, further standardization of breeding assessments, and more guidelines on ethics. A working group on “New Markets for the Icelandic Horse” was formed with representatives from leisure riding, education, and breeding. A second Open Breeders Meeting, for breeders, riders, trainers, and officials, is planned for the fall.

The Sport committee evaluated the 2013 World Championships and made recommendations for changes to the



schedule and procedures; it also discussed the progress of the next generation of the IceTest software and the new Guidelines for Sport Judges.

## RIDING IN HARMONY

Seventy-seven riders around the world were nominated for “Good and Harmonious Riding” in 2013. The Danish rider Trine Risvang was nominated most: by nine international sport judges at five different WorldRanking events in Denmark and Germany. Jakob Svavar Sigurðsson of Iceland was nominated at four events by six judges; Frauke Schenzel of Germany at three events by five judges; 14 riders were nominated at two events; and 60 at one event. Of the 77 nominated in 2013, 29 were also nominated in 2012, including Trine. The program will continue in 2014.

## BREEDING JUDGES

A seminar for active breeding judges will take place in Hvanneyri, Iceland, March 28-30. The main topics will be quality control, the evaluation of spirit and character, and ethics for breeding judges. Due to lack of participation, the 2013 FEIF breeding judge seminar and test in Holar had to be cancelled; the next breeding judge examination will be in 2015. The next seminar for young breeding horse trainers, which was very successful in 2013, is planned for Kronshof in Germany in the autumn. Check the calendar at [www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org) for updates.

## WORLDFENGUR WORKSHOP

Twenty registrars and officials from 12 different FEIF countries participated in a WorldFengur workshop in October in Malmö, Sweden. The workshop introduced new features in the international Icelandic horse database and sought to improve how the country registrars work with WorldFengur and each other. The presentation “WorldFengur: The Studbook of Origin” is available in the download section of the FEIF website ([www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org)).

## EDUCATION SEMINAR

FEIF will host a joint seminar for judges and trainers at Kronshof (in Dahlenburg, Germany) on March 21-23. The seminar is open to all trainers (level 1-3), FEIF International Sport and Breeding Judges, National Judges, and trainees (space permitting). The seminar will take a closer look at the interaction of conformation, physiology, locomotion, and riding style in training, competition, and judging. The new sport judging guidelines will be presented at the seminar. Speakers include Susanne Braun (judge, equine chiropractor), Michael Weishaupt (FEIF hoof study), and Elisabeth Jansen (Holar, international breeding and sport judge). See [www.feif.org](http://www.feif.org) for more information.

## NEW JUDGING GUIDELINES

The document containing the new Sport Judges Guidelines was in the last stages of review as this issue of the *Quarterly* went to press. The working group was busy with the last changes, edits, and tests, which were partly live tests to practice judging with the new guidelines. The guidelines will be published on the FEIF website after approval by the Sport Judges Committee and the Sport Committee.

# REGIONAL CLUB UPDATES

There are 14 Regional Clubs affiliated with the U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress. To find the one nearest you, see the USIHC website at <http://www.icelandics.org/regionalclubs.php>. The following clubs filed updates on their activities this quarter.

## **FRIDA (FIRC) (MID-ATLANTIC STATES)**

BY RICH MOORE

The activities of the Frida Icelandic Riding Club (FIRC) in the last quarter of 2013 were highlighted by a trail ride north of Baltimore, lessons from one of the top riders from Germany, and our annual holiday party.

*Laura Colicchio reports:* On October 19, five FIRC members rode the Northern Central Railroad Trail (Torrey C. Brown Trail) just north of Baltimore, MD. The trail was an old abandoned railroad alongside the lovely Gunpowder River, mainly flat, and made of crushed stone dust. It was charming, rustic, and picturesque. Stately old trees lined the trail, as well as fascinating rock walls. Rolling hills with horse farms traversed the length of the trail, which runs over 40 miles from Hunt Valley, MD to York, PA. We rode for two hours, up to a working railroad station and then back. The pace was fast, as riders rode several long stretches of gallop and canter. There was also a lot of tolt because the trail was great for it: flat,



The FIRC drill team performing at the Icelandic Association of D.C. picnic. Left to right, Mitch Martin on Jökull, Sverrir Bjartmarz on Amur, Rich Moore on Glanni, and Antje Freygang on Riddari. Photo by Susan McPhatter.

straight, and with excellent footing. The fall weather was fabulous, and the trees colorful.

This was our second organized ride on this trail in 2013. The first was held in June. The trail was nice and cool because it was well shaded with many grand oaks stretching their boughs skyward. The horses went “swimming” in the Gunpowder River on that particular ride—as did one of our FIRC riders. After the ride, we met at the Silver Mining Saloon in

Cockeysville, MD for a delicious dinner. I will be organizing another FIRC ride on the NCR trail in 2014.

*Antje Freygang reports:* November 19-21, Nicole Kempf shared her riding expertise in Olney, MD with Antje Freygang, Nancy Adler, Charlotte Bucknell Reilly, and Marilyn Tully. Nicole held multiple German Championships in T1, T2, P1, P2, and PP1. Nicole won both the silver and bronze medals in the World Cup in T2 and the World Cup bronze medal for young horses. Not only is she experienced in training young horses, she is a recognized International Icelandic sports judge, a Trainer A, and a German national breeding judge. Since there was a small group of riders, Nicole was able to provide in-depth instructions not only on riding, but on what judges are looking for. We were fortunate to have her with us and look forward to her return in 2014.

The FIRC annual holiday party was held on December 14 at the home of Barbara Sollner-Webb and Denis Webb in Laurel, MD. About 20 members attended and had a great time. A silent auction raised several hundred dollars to support the Third Annual FIRC Sanctioned Show, to be held on May 17-18, 2014 in Herndon, VA. For information, see the FIRC website at <http://firc.us>.



Susan McPhatter with Pokkadís frá Traðarlandi at the FIRC Schooling Show. Photo by Sean Kelley.



Rich Moore with Glanni from Burns Family Stables, getting ready for the Green Horse Tolt class at the FIRC Schooling Show. Photo by Sean Kelley.

## **KATLA (VERMONT & NEW HAMPSHIRE)**

*BY ALICE RYAN*

The Katla Icelandic Horse Club is very excited about the November groundbreaking for a regulation track at Solheimar Farm in Tunbridge, VT. It will not be completed until spring, due to an unusually heavy snowfall in early December.

In northern Vermont, our group held several trail rides this fall at the Groton State Park, and one out of Lyndon during October.

The Fourth Annual Komen Ride for the Cure in Woodstock, VT was attended by members on October 14. This 10-mile fundraiser for breast cancer is held at The Green Mountain Horse Association, which has lovely trails; the foliage was beautiful.

The club was also represented by members at the First Annual Townshend Christmas parade in southern Vermont. Over 20 decorated horses of all breeds participated, and next year promises to be much larger, hopefully with more Icelandics included.

We have our winter shoes on and our snowsuits ready: We are up for some winter riding! Come join us! [www.katlaicelandichorseclub.com](http://www.katlaicelandichorseclub.com)



Katla member Pam Allembert on her recently imported mare Hryna frá Bakkagerði. Photo by Nick Goldsmith.



Katla members Alice Ryan on Kostur frá Koldukinn (left) and Pam Allembert on Hryna frá Bakkagerði at the Townshend Parade, December 7, 2013. Photo by Gerri Weeks.

## **KRAFTUR (NORTHERN CALIFORNIA)**

*BY LAURIE PRESTINE*

Kraftur members love to ride. We spent 2013 riding, organizing, teaching, traveling, developing, training, and encouraging! This fall we focused on providing variety and ease of participation. We are proud that our club calendar included exciting competitions, sparkling holiday parades, educational clinics, and relaxing trail rides. Kraftur members and their horses are resting and relaxing on the trails now. We are looking forward to a successful 2014 with plenty of clinics, shows, trail rides, parades, performances





Kraftur members Ayla Green on Mari and Elizabeth Monsef on Viska making a lovely turn in sync. Photo by Laura Benson.



Kraftur member Barbara Downs riding Tígull frá Hrólfstaðahelli at a clinic with Olil Amble. Photo by Ásta Covert.



Kajsa Johnson riding Vísir frá Syðri-Brennihóli at the Kraftur Show. Photo by Mikayla Reynaud.



Micky and Minnie Mouse (aka Kraftur member Katherine Monsef and Fleygur from Destiny Farm) in the Halloween tolt at the CIA World Ranking Show. Photo by Colleen Monsef.



World Championship competitor Straumur frá Enni shows he is mellow and smart enough to join his rider, Kraftur club member Madison Prestine, for a holiday parade. Photo by Mikayla Reynaud.

and educational events. If you are in the Bay Area, come ride with us. Here are some of the highlights of 2013:

Barbara Downs, Heidi Benson, and Ayla Green attended a wonderful educational clinic with Olil Amble held at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez.

Our sanctioned show at Mountain Icelandic Farm was a huge success thanks to many hours of hard work by the Kraf-

tur community. We had approximately 25 Kraftur riders, including Annette Coulon on Þokka from Mountain Icelandic Farm. We all loved seeing Annette's mare showing off on the track, as many of us have seen her grow up. Will Covert did an excellent job as our judge, and Doug Smith was stellar in his role as scribe and IceTest master. We couldn't have done

it without the expert announcing and music provided by Keith Houston. Lucy Nold, Jennifer Denning, and their family were in charge of facilities management, and we appreciated their help in setting up stalls for all the guest horses. We were lucky to have Ásta Covert and Willy Ma travel from Southern California to ride with us.



All smiles before the Kraftur holiday parade. Left to right, Leiri frá Póreyjarnúpi, Laura Benson, Keith Houston, and Laurie Prestine riding Stjarni frá Blönduósi. Photo by Charlie Irons.

Another show highlight was our youth classes. Our club members worked hard to include our young riders by offering transportation and financial assistance and then loaning competition horses. Our talented Kraftur youth included: Abigail Moerer, Allison Moerer, Cameron Tolbert-Scott, Clara Chilton, Elizabeth Monsef, Elizabeth Robertson, Emily Benito, Emma Erikson, Gabrielle Pollock, Jamie Blough, Jessica Blough, Julia Hasenauer, Kajsa Johnson, Katherine Monsef, Madeline Pollock, Madison Prestine, and Olivia Rasmussen. They all impressed us with their enthusiasm, good sportsmanship, and willingness to help out. Trainers Laura Benson and Lucy Nold added their expertise to the mix and never had a spare moment to sit down.

Fifteen Kraftur members traveled to the CIA World Ranking show in October. We had a wonderful time meeting five international judges, interacting with the show organizers Ásta and Will Covert, and riding on the beautiful track in Santa Ynez. This year's Halloween Tolt was a howlin' good time. Kraftur members Jamie Blough, Jessica Blough, Elizabeth Monsef, and Katherine Monsef dressed themselves and their horses in exceptionally cre-

ative costumes. Young riders Ayla Green, Elizabeth Robertson, Emma Erickson, and Madison Prestine also competed in the show. Fun was had by all.

We took the Los Gatos Children's Holiday parade by storm with 22 riders and a posse of volunteers. Our creative captain was Laurie Pollock with her wildly popular sweatshirts "Keep Calm and Tolt On." The day before the parade, the organizers traveled around the bay area with their trailers and picked-up nine Kraftur Kid horses and brought them to our parade headquarters in Los Gatos. Thank goodness Icelandics can easily be stalled together! Friday night, the kids had a blast trail riding and going to a club sleepover hosted by Kelly and Marvin Blough. Morgan and Alex Venable came over from Coast Road Stables in Santa Cruz and met us Saturday morning. They helped out by hauling their own horses, member Sierra Kenville's horse, plus one extra they loaned to Gabrielle Pollock to ride. Donna Brown surprised us by arriving at the parade on horseback. Colleen Monsef inspired us with her beautiful keepsake show ribbons to decorate our horses. Jean Marie Scott and Carol Tolbert kept us warm and fed with

hot chocolate, coffee, and snacks. Heather and Ron Rasmussen did a fantastic job of organizing and delivering lunch and drinks. Andy Pollock brought water buckets for the horses. Lin Campbell and Carol Tolbert led us with our Kraftur banner. Laura Benson was an amazing asset to have with us, as her calm manner and expertise with the horses and riders kept us all safe and happy. Parade spectator Scott Prestine said, "Kraftur was amazing!"

We had a festive holiday party and gift exchange attended by around 40 people after the parade hosted by Colleen and Eric Monsef. Club members came from all over, including Gabriele Meyer, who did an amazing job organizing many events this past year.

Heidi Benson adds: My Centaur City Icelandic Riding School in Santa Cruz saw a record number of new students in January and February, on top of an already thriving group of regular students. In February, Kraftur members participated in a week long clinic of fun and learning with Guðmar Pétursson both in Los Gatos and Santa Cruz. In March, some of the kids were lucky enough to have instruction from master trainer Eyjólfur Isólfsson, who came to teach a clinic at Coast Road Stables hosted by Kraftur members Gabriele Meyer and Laura Benson of Valkyrie Icelandic.

In April, Guðmar returned to work with Madison Prestine and her trainer Laura Benson on preparing for the World Championship tryouts, and was coerced into doing a very helpful competition preparation clinic at Coast Road Stables just prior to the CIA Open Spring Show at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. The spring show in April had a record number of over 20 youth riders, many of whom were first time competitors on their first horses.

Centaur City hosted summer riding camps in May and June for beginner riders and riders new to Icelandic horses. In June and July a group of students went to Iceland for a week-long riding clinic and the adventure of experiencing the Icelandic horse in its place of origin. July and August back in California were full with more summer riding camps for intermediate

and advanced youth riders, keeping me very busy all summer long.

In November 5 youth from both Santa Cruz and Los Gatos were busy preparing essays and tryout videos for the 2014 FEIF Youth Cup.

The population of young riders in Northern California has continued to grow throughout the year and shows no signs of slowing down in 2014. With the continued support of the teachers, trainers, mentors, and organizers in our local and national organizations, the future of our beloved breed in California and the U.S. looks to be in good hands. For more information, see [www.kraftur.us](http://www.kraftur.us).

## **NORTHEAST (NEIHC) (NORTHEASTERN U.S.)**

*BY AMY GODDARD*

The winter has been bitter cold and snowy so far and, as I write this, it is only early January! We remember fondly—just a couple of short months ago—a wonderful fall, filled with lots of activities with our horses! Here are highlights of some recent Northeast Icelandic Horse Club (NEIHC) activities:

In early October, over 20 riders participated in Silver Maple Farm's Fall Foliage Ride and Potluck Dinner.

That same weekend, another special occasion occurred. Nicki Esdorn writes: "NEIHC members Steven Steele Cawman and Dr. Arsenio Paez were married at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY, on a brilliant October afternoon. The ceremony was held at the beautiful competition track in the woods, where the guests were seated inside the oval and the pastor waited at the decorated judges' platform. The couple tolled in on their horses, escorted by four close friends also on horseback! They circled the track a few times to music, dismounted, took their helmets off, and got married. Unforgettable!"

Nicki organized her annual Halloween Ride at High Country Icelandics in Bedford, NY. Nicki writes: "Eleven riders in full costume went on a great ride over the Bedford trails to Martha Stewart's Cantitoe Farm. Martha's trainer Betsy Perreten on Rinze, a beautiful Friesian,

guided them through the farm. Everyone was treated to coffee cake and homemade cider, served by Martha herself. See the photos on Martha's blog—a great advertisement for the Icelandic horse—at: <http://www.themarthablog.com/2013/11/icelandic-horses-and-a-halloween-ride.html>."

NEIHC youth member Bailey Soderberg writes: "In November at the Equine Affaire in West Springfield, MA, the drill team from Silver Maple Farm performed in the night show, Pfizer Fantasia, for three nights. (See the story on the team in this issue of the Quarterly.) We had practiced every weekend since the beginning of September. Some of our team even traveled long distances in order to make practices each weekend; I commuted from Cape Cod every weekend on the Dartmouth Coach, and Jess Haynsworth traveled from Boston. Our performance had a story behind the patterns that we performed: It was a battle between good and evil. We had two 'evil' fairies riding five-gaited horses that paced in and out of the arena, and six horses that were ridden by 'good fairies.' Of course, good conquers evil, and while the evil fairies

chased the good fairies in, they were run out of the arena by the good fairies in the end. The drill was revised various times, resulting in one choreographed by Jana Meyer that conveyed the 'fairy tale.' The costumes were handmade by members of our team, with flowing wings and streaming skirts, as well as heaps of glitter sprinkled on the horses.

"The NEIHC had a booth at Equine Affaire and we took turns rotating in and out to talk to people interested in Icelandic horses and encourage them to come and watch us in Fantasia. Being on a team of riders was a wonderful experience, and I loved the feeling that we had grown to become a family. For me, as a 16-year-old youth rider, riding in Fantasia was a dream come true. I had grown up watching all of my idols in the night performances, and to ride alongside them seemed like a fantasy. Though we told a tale of fairies and legends with our drill, the experience had a magic all its own."

Three Turkey Tolt rides took place on the weekend following Thanksgiving: one in Huntington State Park in Redding, CT; one in Rockefeller State Park Preserve in North Tarrytown, NY; and one



A wedding on horseback: NEIHC members Arsenio Paez, left, and Steven Steele Cawman entering the track at Thor Icelandics. Photo by Alicia King Photography.



Turkey Tolt Too riders in Goddard State Park in Warwick, RI. From left, Leslie Chambers on Vikingur, Mary Sommer on Herdís, Phil Rutledge on Tata, Jane Rutledge on Princessa, Vikki Burnett on Tryggur, and Sheryl Gasper on Bíbi. Photo by Susan Burnett.



From left: NEIHC members Susan Peters on Óskadís from Mill Farm, Becky Hoyt on Natan from Solheimar, Bailey Soderberg on Gella frá Kastalabrekku, Em Potts on Pumall frá Áslandi, Jana Meyer on Von frá Hjallanesi 1, Quinn Thomashow on Askur frá Austurkoti, Jess Haynsworth on Þór frá Skorrastöðum 4 and Caeli Cavanagh on Aska frá Geldingaá. Photo by Leann Soderberg.



NEIHC member Quinn Thomashow signs autographs for admiring fans following the Silver Maple Demo Team's Fanstasia performance at Equine Affaire. Photo by Leann Soderberg.



NEIHC blizzard riders Carrie Croton, left, on Stígandi and Anne Owen on Ronin. Photo by David Owen.

at Goddard State Park in Warwick, RI. We look forward to our upcoming Annual Meeting and Thorrablot on March 1, which will be hosted by Sue Sundstrom at her home in Woodstock, VT. NEIHC members are encouraged to join the NEIHC Yahoo mail group, check our website, [neihc.com](http://neihc.com), and our Facebook page for news and upcoming events. Or contact club president Martina Gates at [martinagates@mac.com](mailto:martinagates@mac.com).

## ST SKUTLA (CENTRAL & WESTERN NEW YORK)

BY ANDREA BARBER

As I write this, the St Skutla Club area is in the grip of a plunging polar vortex which is making for air temperatures in the negative single digits and wind chills between -20 and -30. Yet while other breeds of horses in the area are being kept in barns layered with blankets, our Icelandics are out playing in the frigid temperatures like this is no big deal. Just another one of the many reasons we love our Icelandic horses: They are perfectly suited to our snowy and cold New York winters.

However, these temperatures have made for a significant lack of club activities. Our members are busy sharing pho-

tos of summer trail rides on Facebook, baking horse cookies, cleaning tack, and planning for next year's events. Those that live in warmer climates may think we find it depressing that we can't ride—and to some extent that's true. But it also gives us, and our horses, a much-needed mental and physical break. So when we get

back in the saddle come spring, we are refreshed and ready for new adventures.

One of the things I turn to this time of year is my other passion: photography. This fall I was honored to win second place in the black-and-white division of the annual photography contest run by one of our local magazines, *Life In*



"Snow Girl," aka Sædís from Blue Farm. Photo by St Skutla club member Andrea Barber (who thinks it's kind of funny printing a black and white photo in the first color issue of the Quarterly).

# THE CORNELL RESEARCH HERD

BY ANDREA BARBER



The second highest judged horse of the day was Eiríkur Rauði frá Keldum (D: Sívía frá Álfhólajáleigu), one of the research foals brought over in utero from Iceland. Photo by Andrea Barber.

A few years ago Cornell University in Ithaca, NY purchased 15 mares plus one stallion in Iceland and brought them to the U.S. to be part of Bettina Wagner's research study on summer eczema. Bettina, an equine immunologist in Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine and a USIHC member, became interested in studying summer eczema soon after she received her DVM in Hannover, Germany in 1990. An Icelandic horse owned by one of her colleagues there suffered from the rubbing and itching of the disease.

Bettina worked in immunology and equine genetics at the Veterinary School in Hannover and the Institute for Genetics in Cologne, Germany until 2002, then came to Cornell. In 2006, she became assistant professor in Cornell's Department of Population Medicine and Diagnostic Sciences and director of Serology at its Animal Health Diagnostic Center. Also in 2006, she finished her "habilitation" in Germany (more rigorous than a Ph.D. thesis), with the title "Antibodies of the Horse." Currently, she is Associate Professor in Immunology and Director of Serology at Cornell.

Bettina and I have written three previous articles about the Cornell summer

eczema study for the Quarterly, in Issue 2 2012 and Issues 1 and 2 2013. (You can read them online at [www.icelandics.org/quarterly/equarterly.php](http://www.icelandics.org/quarterly/equarterly.php).) The sidebar to this article provides a summary and update of the study, which could have important benefits for USIHC members, helping us

treat and prevent the intense itching of this well-known health problem for Icelandic horses in America.

Having owned horses with bad summer eczema problems, I've been following Bettina's research with great interest. However, the question of what to do with the research horses when the study ends was never far from my mind—nor Bettina's for that matter. In addition to the original 16 horses, there are now 44 offspring on the ground for a total of 60 horses in the herd. As the horses complete their role in the study (in staggered groups) each of them will become available for purchase or adoption—and all of us who have gotten to know these horses want to ensure that they have the best possible chance to find good, appropriate homes when their time comes.

For starters, I knew registration would be important. After I discussed it with Bettina and walked her through the steps, she quickly got the mares and stallion DNA tested and registered with the USIHC. All the offspring have had their DNA testing done and hopefully by the time this article is printed their USIHC registrations will have been completed as well.



Pálína from Cornell and her dam, Brá frá Dýrfinnustöðum. Photo by Andrea Barber.



The foal judge Barbara Frische nicknamed “spitfire”: Ylfa from Cornell (D: Perla frá Hvalnesi). Photo by Andrea Barber.

The young horses are also being raised in as close to an ideal environment in the U.S. as you will find. They are on a separate farm from most of the University’s facilities for quarantine purposes (this is necessary for the nature of the study). The farm has large pastures and the horses are out 24/7 in groups according to their age. They are handled regularly for the blood testing necessary for the study, as well as hoof trimming, etc., and are used to people, but are not overhandled. They spend the majority of the time living, learning, and playing with their herd mates.

However, as ideal as their lives are now, I saw a big challenge ahead. Of course all these young horses look cute—but how to know which horses had good potential for what jobs? Good looks would only get them so far. In this case pedigrees are of little help, as the original horses were not selected for their pedigrees or ridden talents. In fact, other than the stallion (now gelding) Geisli frá Litlu-Sandvík, who was both trained and evaluated, most of the mares had never been ridden and some were barely handled at all when they arrived from Iceland. I knew the only way we were going to find out something about the true potential of these horses was through an experienced eye.

### EVALUATING THE HERD

There was really only one person that I could think of to give us the information we needed: FEIF International Breeding Judge and

U.S. Breeding Leader Barbara Frische. Barbara had in fact created the linear evaluation system for young horses recently accepted by FEIF and for the past few years had traveled around the U.S. in the fall evaluating young horses. As I knew Bettina did not have the funds in her research budget to pay for a formal evaluation, I contacted Barbara and appealed to her to help out: Would she be willing to donate one day of her time to evaluate the young horses in the study? She graciously agreed, and early in the cold gray morning of November 2, 2013 we were on the road to Ithaca, NY.

What Barbara had agreed to was a daunting task for sure: evaluate 44 young horses in a single day. Luckily, Bettina had rounded up a great group of volunteers—mostly other Cornell veterinarians and graduate students—to assist. The horses were well used to being run in and out of the barn for their testing, so this was also a big help. Barbara started very early and finished the last horse just as the sun had set and the rain really started to pour down. It was a long, cold, wet, but very rewarding, day.

The task was an interesting one both for Barbara and for all the volunteers who got to assist and watch. It was a rare opportunity to see three sets of full siblings (the same stallion paired with the same mares) spaced one year apart. There was a group of two-year-olds that had been born in Iceland in 2011 and imported in the spring of 2013, a group

of yearlings that had been born at Cornell in 2012, and a group of foals that were still with their mothers, having been born this past summer (2013). None of these horses had been bred with any purpose other than creating horses that would serve in the summer eczema study.

The idea of evaluating each of the horses was not so much to look for future breeding horses, but to try to assess what potential the young horse would have as a future riding horse. Was it four gaited or five gaited? Did it have a lot of natural tolt, or would tolt training be a challenge? Did it have a calm and easy-going character, or was it sensitive and full of fire? This information would really help potential sponsors/adopters assess which horse might be right for them.

### THE PROOF IS IN THE OFFSPRING

The sire of all the young horses, Geisli frá Litlu-Sandvík (IS1996187590), is a four-gaited stallion (now gelding) with a lot of Ófeigur frá Flugumýri blood on his sire’s side. He was fully evaluated and scored a 7.69 for conformation, 7.82 for rideability, and 7.77 overall. He is a blue dun with a long mane and a proud character. On the positive side, many of Geisli’s offspring are well-developed, friendly, courageous, and easy-going—and of course approximately 50% have inherited his beautiful dun coloring. On the negative side many of his offspring have rather coarse ears, short necks, and flat hooves.

The first group Barbara looked at was the two-year-olds. All of these young horses were born “frá Keldum” in Iceland in 2011 and imported in March of 2013. Barbara took her time explaining all the aspects of conformation that she was critiquing to a very interested crowd. Some of the young horses showed their good character during this portion of the assessment by standing very quietly and patiently. In this group there were a few horses such as Dúfa frá Keldum that have potential as low-level show horses for intermediate riders. Eiríkur Rauði frá Keldum, for example, was the second highest scored horse for the day. He was found to be a well-developed, strongly built four-gaited gelding. He is a little suspicious of people and will need an owner he can bond with and learn to trust. He has enough tolt in his transitions and may be suitable for lower-level showing.

Others such as Jór frá Keldum and Huginn frá Keldum were very calm and laid



Ófelia from Cornell (D: Galdranótt frá Bakkagerði) being judged for conformation. Photo by Andrea Barber.

back, with enough natural tolt to have potential as solid pleasure or trail horses. Fáfñir frá Keldum showed himself to be extremely laterally oriented with no trot and a very tolerant and cooperative character. Though he will never be a show horse, for the right person that wants a slow and smooth mount he may be priceless! There were also others that, while they had very nice characters, had little natural tolt and may be better ridden as three-gaited horses.

Next Barbara assessed the foals born this past summer (2013), who were shown with their mothers. In this group she saw the highest scoring horse of the day: Yngri from Cornell (D: Vænting frá Vindási). A young filly, Ylfa from Cornell (D: Perla frá Hvalnesi) was also found to be quite talented.

Barbara was particularly excited about Yngri. She found him to be five-gaited with a lot of natural tolt. His tolt has good beat and suppleness. He also has very good gait separation. Though he will most likely be too sensitive and reactive for a beginner rider, he will probably be a super fun horse for an intermediate rider, either for sport or pleasure. Overall Barbara proclaimed him a very good horse and one of the best young horses she had seen in the U.S. in 2013! In fact, he is third place in the overall rankings

of all the young horses evaluated in 2013. (You can find these rankings in the News section of this issue of the Quarterly.)

Ylfa, a spunky black filly, was also an interesting horse. Though Ylfa may not have as nice conformation as her half-brother Yngri, she was talented in her gaits. She is five-gaited with lots of natural tolt, with good height to her movements, and much speed. She is sensitive and a bit reactive, but for the right person who likes a bold, forward ride she should be a very fun mount, either for show or pleasure. She is quite the spitfire!

As in the two-year-old group, there were several foals, such as Pálína from Cornell, Tölta from Cornell, and Þór from Cornell, that showed good potential as low-level sport prospects. Others, such as Ölvaldi from Cornell, Stella from Cornell, and Andri from Cornell, look to have bright futures as pleasure or trail horses. One foal, Ófelia from Cornell, has a very special and rare color: smoky black dun.

Next Barbara turned to the yearlings, all born at Cornell in the summer of 2012. Unfortunately, as it had been raining on and off during the day, the footing in the arena the yearlings were in was not ideal. It had become extremely slick, so it was difficult for them to really show their best. In addition, yearlings are at the stage of

development that can be the most difficult to judge. In this group there were more horses that were lacking in natural tolt and willingness (“go”) than in the other groups. This could have been due to the footing and weather, but it’s hard to say for sure. Therefore it is possible that many of the horses will improve in time with better conditions. Still Barbara continued to work tirelessly to give an accurate picture of each horse’s potential.

Overall, the results from the whole day were that there were a couple of very talented individuals, some low-level show prospects, many good potential pleasure horses, and a handful of horses with difficulties, either because of poor conformation, poor gaits, or character issues. What was most interesting to me was that mares with absolutely no pedigrees behind them had consistently produced some very nice horses. Clearly their pedigrees did not show what their genes could produce. As Barbara said to me, if every breeding decision was made upon known pedigrees, probably nobody would ever have taken a chance on Hrafn frá Holtsmúla (probably the most famous sire in modern Icelandic horse breeding), who came from two relatively unknown horses! Just goes to show you that the proof is always in the offspring.



## THE HERD'S FUTURE

Barbara's assessments, which Bettina can supply for each horse upon request, give a good picture of each young horse's potential. They include not only the scores, but some general comments about the horse. This is an invaluable tool for anyone thinking of purchasing or adopting one of the young horses.

All of the horses are located in Ithaca, NY. They will leave the study in staged intervals: The mares and stallion (now a gelding) will be available early in 2014 (probably they are already available at the time this article is published). The young horses will be available when they are in the fall of their third year: one group of youngsters in the fall of 2014, the next in the fall of 2015, and the final group in the fall of 2016. Some of the horses that are not sold or adopted may be used in further research studies at Cornell.

When they leave the summer eczema study, each horse will be up-to-date on all customary vaccinations, hoof care, etc. As the purpose of the research is to study summer eczema, each horse should have a known summer eczema status. All horses will be sold with USIHC registration papers. Arrangements can be made for Coggins

tests and health certificates. The purchase price of the horses will vary depending on a number of factors, but all proceeds will stay in the study and be used to offset the staggering costs of funding the research. Even if you don't want to purchase one of the horses, donations (which may be tax-deductible) are always welcome!

Many thanks to Bettina Wagner, Barbara Frische, and all of the volunteers who made this event possible. These horses are giving so much to us through this valuable research on summer eczema. We need to give back to them by ensuring that they have the best possible lives after their critical contributions end.

*For more information, I have set up a website with photos and short descriptions, based on Barbara's scores and comments, of many (but not all) of the young horses: <http://sandmeadow.smugmug.com/Events/Icelandic-Horse-Breeding/Cornell-University-Young-Horse>. Horses that have already been reserved will be removed from the site. If you have any problem with the link, feel free to email me directly at [tolstar@yahoo.com](mailto:tolstar@yahoo.com). Anybody seriously interested in one of these horses should contact Bettina Wagner directly at [bw73@cornell.edu](mailto:bw73@cornell.edu) or 607-253-3813.*



Yngri from Cornell (D: Vænting frá Vindási) was the highest evaluated horse of the day. Here he is as a newborn. Photo by Laura Patterson.

## ABOUT THE CORNELL SUMMER ECZEMA PROJECT

BY BETTINA WAGNER

At Cornell University, my study on summer eczema investigates the development of allergy by studying the immune system of the young horse.

My research group hopes to identify how environmental exposure to the proteins from midges early in a foal's life influence whether or not the foal will get summer eczema later in life. We are also testing to see if the immune transfer from the mare to the foal prevents severe summer eczema. We are looking for key immune parameters that can be determined long before the horse shows clinical signs of allergy. Our goals are to develop new tests to identify horses who are at risk for summer eczema early in their lives, and to find treatments that prevent the disease.

The young equine participants in the Cornell study are three groups of 15 full-sibling Icelandic horses that were born in 2011 (in Iceland), and in 2012 and 2013 (at Cornell). We are analyzing the immune reactions of these horses in a long-term study until they are three years of age. Our study will identify in detail how summer eczema develops and which immune reactions prevent it.

The first horses in the Cornell herd that showed clinical signs of allergy in 2013 were the dams of the foals. They were imported to the U.S. in the early spring of 2012. As expected from former studies in Europe, about half of the mares developed clinical allergy during their second summer in the U.S. We also looked at the immune development of the mares over the past two years. This showed us that currently available testing methods are not suitable to identify whether or not a horse will become allergic. These results further underline the need for new innovative tests and preventive treatments for summer eczema.

# HERD IN ICELAND

INTERVIEW BY NANCY MARIE BROWN

In 2013, Lindsay Blatt and Paul Taggart released their 28-minute-long documentary film *Herd In Iceland* about the horse roundups in Iceland. As they write in the film notes, “It’s a breathtaking tradition that unites the country.” They funded their project partially through Kickstarter, and I was proud to be one of their (rather minor) backers. At a screening of the film at Iceland Affair in Winchester Center, CT in July, I met Lindsay and, shortly thereafter, interviewed her for the *Quarterly*.

*Tell us a little about your background. What made you want to become a filmmaker?*

I grew up in Arizona, just outside of Scottsdale. I was fortunate to attend an elementary school that had horses on campus, and this is where I had my first experience with horses—I was five years old. I obviously fell in love with them. When I was around 11, I started to compete in everything from endurance riding to equitation. After attending an arts high school, where I studied photography, I went to the University of Arizona in Tucson and had to leave the horses behind. In 2001, I transferred to Pratt Institute in New York City and received a degree in photography. For the next 10 years, I held a lot of different jobs in photography before finding my way into film. I worked in the Brooklyn Museum of Art’s photo studio and was a photo editor at Newsweek, Vogue, and UNICEF.

*How did you discover the Icelandic horse?*  
When I was growing up, most of my time outside of school was spent at the stable. I had Saddlebreds and Tennessee Walking Horses, and knew of the Icelandic horse’s five gaits. But growing up in Arizona, I never saw an Icelandic—it’s not really the most comfortable place for them. (Though I have heard that more people are raising them there these days.) Aside from that, I’ve always had a visceral reaction to the word “Iceland.” All the ideas I had about it were full of beauty and open space. A few years ago, while coming



home from Europe, I had a stopover in Iceland. We didn’t even leave the airport, but just seeing the intense landscape from the plane confirmed what I had always known. I was definitely going to travel in Iceland. Little did I know I’d be spending several years working on a film about the special horses and people of this tiny island nation.

*What inspired you to make the film?*

After learning that Icelandic horses spend several months each year in the mountains, and that they are collected by horseback, I knew there was a story there. It just seemed like in these modern times, how could there even be enough space for so many creatures to roam and enjoy? How could they be herded back to their farms by horseback, and not by helicopter or ATV? Well, the answer is because the Icelandic people enjoy the annual tradition of collecting their horses from the highlands. They see it as a way to connect with the land and with their families. It’s a beautiful thing, and I really wanted to share it. I was feeling so disconnected from living in a city, where the opportunities to be in nature are so hard to come by.

*Tell us a little about the process. What obstacles did you have to overcome?*

I definitely entered the world of film in a

very non-traditional way. I tried to use my experience in photo research and licensing to break into the documentary world. It wasn’t happening as quickly as I wanted, so I decided to make a short film. I asked Paul Taggart if he’d like to collaborate, and about two months later we landed in Iceland to shoot our first roundup. I thought we’d be really lucky if we could put together a 10-minute short, something to use in a reel so that I could get hired on to other filmmaking projects.

After shooting the first year’s roundups, we came back and started to look at the footage and edit it together. It didn’t take long for Paul and me to realize it could be a much bigger project. Which meant a second trip! Both of these trips were completely funded by me and Paul.

We were anxious to get an editor to work with the footage, and after an exhausting search, finally found Michelle Mizner. Things moved a bit slowly, because she is based in Boston, and we had a lot of back and forth emails about how the teaser should look, and then the trailer. But I think this process worked well for everyone, as it meant that we needed to be very clear about what our expectations were and the motives for making each change. Conveniently, my boyfriend, Joshua Camp, is a composer.

His ideas for how to score both the teaser and the trailer were spot on.

During this part of the process, we started to realize how much work it was going to take to edit the whole movie. We decided to do a crowdfunding campaign in July 2012 to raise money for the editing. When the Kickstarter appeal launched, there were posts on *The New York Times's* Lens blog, Yahoo!, and several other amazing blogs. We surpassed our initial fundraising goal and ended up with a connected and supportive group of *Herd In Iceland* fans. This gave us a lot of energy to finish editing the movie, which took another four months or so.

It was important that the musical score help to showcase the beauty of the terrain and the tradition, without overpowering the footage or the characters. Joshua gave each character his or her own theme, and created an ethereal soundscape using folk instrumentation to evoke the landscape and the lifestyle of the people.

I feel that the most difficult obstacles have come since "finishing" the film. With my full-time job as a photo editor at *The New York Times*, it can be a challenge to find time to navigate the intricacies of the film world. I'm learning as I go, and meeting so many helpful people along the way. But everything from marketing to submitting to festivals, to trafficking the material for screenings, and searching for and fielding distribution and broadcast opportunities... It can get overwhelming.



Lindsay Blatt filming in Iceland. Photo courtesy "Herd in Iceland."

*What surprised you most about making the film?*

What surprised me the most was how receptive the Icelandic people were once they recognized how devoted I was to telling this story. They were so warm and welcoming. The families that we worked with were what made this movie possible. I am forever grateful, and hope that they are proud of the record that's been created.

The other surprising thing about the making of the movie was the horses themselves. I've been around a lot of horses in my life, but each day I was out shooting in Iceland I would meet a new favorite. The Icelandic horses are known for having unique personalities and it is so true!

*What reactions have you had from Icelanders? from Americans?*

So far the biggest thrill was winning Best

Documentary Short at the Black Hills Film Festival.

The movie has yet to screen in Iceland, but I'm hoping that won't be the case for much longer. The Icelanders that have watched the film seem to enjoy it. I heard many times from Icelanders that the roundups are their favorite time of year. I think having this movie available means that they can relive it for the other 50 weeks out of the year.

Americans are always blown away by the fact that these horses spend the summer in the mountains. It's not something we would ever do here, and land rights are far too complicated to set up something similar. I believe there is a way to look at how the horses and land are kept healthy with the summer grazing, and see if there is a way we can use some of these techniques with the wild horses in the United States.

*What are your plans for the future?*

For now, the plan is to continue showing at festivals and to find a partner for broadcast. Though I'm working more with video and creating smaller pieces with my company Archerfish Productions, I'm incredibly lucky to be employed at *The New York Times*. I'm interested in storytelling in all its various forms, and to be able to do this for *The Times* is a privilege. It is exciting to be able to take what I learn from print and apply it to film, and vice versa.

Go to <http://www.herdiniceland.com> under Info for the up-to-date screening calendar.



Stills from the film "Herd in Iceland," here and on previous page, courtesy Lindsay Blatt.

## FILM REVIEW: HERD IN ICELAND

BY GERRI GRISWOLD

It was my pleasure to have Lindsay Blatt present her stunning film, “Herd in Iceland,” at The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Iceland Affair in Winchester Center, CT on July 20, 2013. Lindsay and Paul Taggart’s documentary is the first of its kind. In the autumn of 2010, the team ventured to Iceland to chronicle the annual horse roundup, a very special time of year when farmers and city folk alike set out on horseback, on foot, in ATVs, and by any other mode of transportation imaginable, to collect horses from some of the most remote places and spaces this dramatic landscape can plate up.

Each summer farmers drive their horses up into the mountains in a tradition that has stood steadfast for centuries. Their purpose is to protect the land at home. Arable land clings only to the edges of Iceland. Without the interference of horses, crops can be planted (in a few spots) and winter hay can be grown. The horses, with no natural predators, are left to graze on grasses, mosses, and fragrant wild thyme, to roam, to be free, and to develop the special personality that defines the breed.

Through wonderfully clever and thoughtful camera work, “Herd in Iceland” carries you aloft, takes you on horseback and by foot to the spectacle of collecting hundreds perhaps thousands of horses, driving them into round pens, and sorting them out. You are swept up in the pure elation of Icelanders singing and dancing, eating, laughing, and celebrating the Icelandic horse. You are *hugely* jealous that Lindsay and Paul thought of this project and you did not!



Stills from the film “Herd in Iceland,” courtesy Lindsay Blatt.

Although “Herd” focuses on the roundup there is certainly much more to the film. Behind every horse is an owner, and every owner has a story: There’s the beautiful story of a May-December couple, and one the farmer with a remarkable herding dog which has survived several painful encounters with flying hooves. Perhaps the most touching story is one of a father and daughter. Here is a man who built his life around a single broodmare and who for decades has made the Icelandic horse the center of his universe and his beautiful 15-year-old daughter who is torn between her love of horses and being a country girl and the seductive bright lights of the city of Reykjavik and what the future might have in store for her off the farm.

Blatt and Taggart’s film is delicately and thoughtfully crafted. So much is packed into this 20-minute gem of a journey. The original score by the brilliant musician and composer (and also super nice guy) Joshua Camp is a little traditional and a little Sigur Rós. Every note lends itself beautifully to the film.

The jaw dropping, mind-blowing, utterly breathtaking backdrop for “Herd in Iceland” is, of course, Iceland itself. Blatt and Taggart deliver Iceland, its special horses, and special people into my living room, into my life, and for a blissful 20 minutes beam me up to a world I feel we sadly lost here in America decades ago.

The Icelandic world is chock full of families working and playing and enjoying each other in nature. Front and center is the deep affection and respect Icelanders have for the Icelandic horse, an animal that for centuries has hugely elevated the human condition as a beast of burden, a source of food, and an utterly awesome five-gaited brilliant companion.

Room on Viking ships was sparse, so only the finest horses were brought along on the journey to Iceland. Then for a thousand years watery borders have isolated the Icelandic horse. This glorious beast, small in stature but possessing the strength of a giant, ferried passengers surefootedly across Iceland’s deserts and plains, through fields and over highlands, across rivers and landscapes which to this day conjure up images of trolls and elves, ghosts and hidden folk. The Icelandic horse faced ungodly winds, driving rains, blowing snows, endless nights, and everlasting days to emerge today as Iceland’s most beloved creature, as tenacious as the remarkable people who inhabit this tiny island nation near the top of the world. Today the Icelandic horse holds a very prominent position in culture and art and tradition in Iceland—and rightfully so.

*Gerri Griswold is owner of Krummi Travel LTD and organizer of The Iceland Affair. For more information see [www.icelandaffair.com](http://www.icelandaffair.com).*

## FILM REVIEW: OF HORSES AND MEN

BY DAGMAR TRODLER

Like a little will-o'-the-wisp the trailer of the Icelandic film project *Hross í oss* (*Of Horses and Men*) has been wandering around the net since last year and arousing attention, in spite of its bizarre movie poster. What in the world had they been working on?

The premiere revealed—after comedies, thrillers and subculture—that the movie was about what has always been close to Icelanders: horses and nature. However, *Hross í oss* is no ordinary horse and nature film, but rather a keyhole peep into Iceland's past.

In the seventies, life in Skagafjörður was still quiet, predictable, and calm. People on remote farms communicated with each other by light signals, and binoculars were an important tool in daily life. Together with his actors and some amazing Icelandic horses, director Benedikt Erlingsson has created a masterpiece.

The crew had to deal with dangerous situations during the shooting, Erlingsson admitted to the Icelandic newspaper *Morgunblaðið*, and as a spectator you feel the intensity of danger and survival. However, no horse was harmed or tortured, thanks to the great work of the eight horse trainers, led by Benedikt Línadal.

*Hross í oss* is the essence of Iceland. The movie tells of oddities in life and love affairs, and how both are tightly connected with nature—be it in the sexual intercourse of stallion and mare or of man and woman. Wherever the story itself seems a little weak, pictures of incredible strength and poetry capture the eye of the beholder. And because they do so with such immensity, the film needs no spoken words. You need not understand the Mongolian sailor caressing the horse on the suspension bridge. And the grandeur of the Swede Johanna with her six hand horses deserves nothing but reverent silence.

### ICELAND IS WILD AND TENDER.

*Hross í oss* masterfully weaves together parables; negative passion, such as breach of peace, drunkenness, or vengefulness are punished, the positive passion finds reward. The film also describes the experiences of



Stills from the film "Hross í Oss," courtesy Benedikt Erlingsson.

two foreigners, deeply touching as acts of initiation, although they could hardly be more different from each other. In a bizarre way, it shows how men lose face, in a double sense, and how in the end everything is gone with the wind. Iceland has no real memory, because people are facing the wind and not the past, and because you don't run down your neighbor. No wonder the priest chooses the same words of praise at any funeral: *XX var skapmíkill maður* (XX was a man full of passion).

### MAN IS WILD AND TENDER.

Horses are everywhere in this movie. Strong and fast, life-giving, overwhelmingly wild and yet tender, and always at people's side, up to the last breath. In the static nature shots horses are the moving elements. They move people. They move the soul. At the same time they are the stationary ele-

ment, as if to indicate, "Why are you going mad?" They represent beauty, power, and eternity in this loving story that does not condemn ugliness and weakness.

### HORSES ARE WILD AND TENDER.

*Hross í oss* is an ode to the Icelandic horse. It celebrates in a captivating way the horse as the only reliable truth besides human banter and trifle, it straightforwardly makes plain: Without the horse you people are nothing in this country.

*Hross í oss* is poetry in moving pictures.

Dagmar Trodler writes for *IcelandReview.com*, where this review first appeared. Reprinted by permission. See [http://www.icelandreview.com/icelandreview/reviews/Of\\_Horses\\_and\\_Men\\_0\\_402637.news.aspx](http://www.icelandreview.com/icelandreview/reviews/Of_Horses_and_Men_0_402637.news.aspx)



# ADVENTURES AT AGE 70

BY DONNA MILLARD

After a riding accident two years ago, I decided that it was time to retire my saddle. I was 68 years old, taking a Western Pleasure class, when Brownie decided that he had had enough of me and bucked me off. The doctor indicated that I had at least four broken ribs—he said he stopped counting at four. I had ridden primarily English before then, although I did some Western riding as a teenager. This was my first Western class. My riding and lessons had always been through a public county stable—sadly I had never owned a horse—and I decided it was time to quit.

I soon discovered, however, that continuing to volunteer for a local Therapeutic Riding Program could not replace the magical connection between human and horse while mounted. It became apparent to me that life was not complete without riding my four-legged friends. At the suggestion of a friend, I visited Tolt Farm in Whitehouse, NJ. The warm and welcoming facility, with its immaculate red barns and beautiful spacious paddocks where Icelandic horses lazily grazed, erased any lingering doubts. Instantly the decision was made. I was ready to ride again.

A few days later I met Freyr, a gentle senior Icelandic with a quiet personality. I had scheduled a short lesson, with the option to extend it if I felt comfortable. The first half hour flew by and without hesitation the lesson continued. Freyr's wonderful tolt and easy canter left me longing for more. Over the ensuing months, trail rides combined with lessons in Icelandic equitation became a joy and a blessing. Life was once again complete.

The Icelandic horse was a perfect transition for me. Being used to other breeds of horses, I have watched in amazement the Icelandic's ability to traverse and enjoy terrain which those other breeds refuse to attempt. I'm grateful that Icelanders recognized the great gift bestowed upon them and have protected, promoted, and shared their wonderful treasure with the world.



## OFF TO ICELAND

After riding Icelandic horses for a few months, it became apparent to me that the next chapter in my saga was a trip to Iceland. Thus this year, at age 70, I headed to Iceland with my friends Anne Owen, Carrie Croton, and Sandy Perkins. After a brief stay in Reykjavik, we traveled north to Hvammur Farm near Blonduós. The family and staff at the farm were warm, welcoming, and eager to make our visit memorable.

After lunch, we proceeded to the barn and were assigned horses for our first ride in Iceland. I was introduced to Skvísa, a beautiful blue dun mare. Her quiet manners and wonderful gaits, coupled with the beautifully rugged landscape of Vatnsdalur Valley, were the prelude to the wonderful week ahead.

The following morning we began our first full day in the saddle, accompanying a herd of 80 horses, which included our afternoon mounts. We tolted along the black sandy beach of Hop Lagoon, soon learning that an errant mare had decided to break from the herd and return to the barn with a few of her Icelandic friends. As we waited for the farm staff to return

with the escapees, our job was to keep the herd contained near the shore. Skvísa knew and performed her job beautifully, as we cantered or tolted after potential deserters, enjoying this unexpected adventure. We all slept well that night.

As we mounted our horses the following day, anticipation was high. We were to experience a major highlight of the tour—crossing Hop Lagoon on horseback. I expected the crossing to be leisurely, but was thrilled when our guide transitioned to a canter for the two kilometer crossing. As water splashed on either side of us, it was obvious that Skvísa was enjoying the adventure as much as I was—at age 70 I was cantering across a tidal lagoon in Iceland! What a joy! We later lunched in a beautiful meadow high above the lagoon, while our horses lazily grazed and we marveled at the amazing vista below.

The final day of riding did not disappoint me. This trek included a deep water crossing over Lake Húnavatn. Jónas, my afternoon mount, was perfect for the job. Taller than Skvísa, he made the long crossing with little effort, even though the water rose to mid-calf on me. After the crossing we watched as the herd followed, joining us on the opposite shore of the lake. These images of the magnificent Icelandic horses in the land of their origin will remain treasured memories.

Shortly after returning home from our Icelandic adventure, two teams from Tolt Farm participated in a local Hunter Pace. We were the only Icelandics among the entrants and, not surprisingly, our four-footed friends performed to perfection. Our teams won first and second place.

My first riding ribbon is proudly displayed. The memories live on and continue to multiply. It is with much anticipation that I look forward to many more years of fun and adventures with horses.

*For more information on Tolt Farm, see [www.toltfarm.com](http://www.toltfarm.com); for Hvammur Farm, see [www.isdirect.de](http://www.isdirect.de).*

# GREAT GAITS AND A HAPPY SPIRIT

BY CAROL ANDREW

The USIHC Breeding Committee sponsors an award each year, called the Anne Elwell Award, for the domestic-bred horse that receives the highest judgment at a FEIF breeding evaluation in the U.S. This year's award went to the six-year-old blue dun mare Revía from Vinland (US2007203569). Revía received an overall score of 8.12 at the May 2013 evaluations at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI; the judges were Johannes Hoyos from Austria and Barbara Frische from the U.S. Quarterly-committee member Carol Andrew interviewed Revía's breeder, Martina Gates, by email.

*Tell us a little about your breeding program: How many horses do you have?*  
My two main broodmares are Osk from

Helms Hill (US1999201258) and Þekking frá Hólum (IS1994258300). Osk is a first-prize mare, daughter of the honor stallion Galsi frá Sauðárkróki (IS1990157003). She has had four foals so far, with Revía being her oldest. Three of her foals are from my stallion Stígandi frá Leysingjastöðum II (IS1996156333). This combination has been exceptional.

Guðmar Pétursson showed Revía at the evaluations in Wisconsin this year. She arrived there stressed and exhausted from the long trip, but still made first prize. She is currently the second highest judged domestic-bred horse in the U.S. and qualified for the 2013 World Championships Breeding Show in Berlin, Germany. Unfortunately my husband was in a bad car accident right after the Wisconsin

evaluations, and so Revía was not able to go to the World Championships. We will be showing her again next year, as she still has a lot more to offer.

My mare Þekking frá Hólum is a first-prize daughter of the famous honor mare Þrá frá Hólum (IS1978258301) and honor stallion Angi frá Laugarvatni (IS1982187035). It is a rare chance to own a mare with such great breeding lines. Some of the best breeding mares in Iceland are out of Þrá. Unfortunately Þekking is 20 this year, and I have only been able to breed her twice so far. One was an exceptional filly from Bjartur vom Hof Osterkamp (DE2005134115), the other a very promising colt this year from Stígandi. Hopefully she will give me a few more foals.

I also own four mares in Iceland, at Koltursey, but have not bred any of them. They are all young with great bloodlines and are currently being trained.

*Since you don't have your own farm, where do you keep your horses?*

I am very fortunate to keep my breeding horses at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY, which is about a three-hour drive from my house. It is an Icelandic horse center that all of us in the northeast come to. Kristján Kristjánsson and his family have an open door policy and graciously invite all Icelandic horse enthusiasts—it is not uncommon to see guests on any given day.

Thor Icelandics sits on over 70 acres and has two tracks, with one of them being a regulation competition track. Trails throughout the property are used daily. Kristján and his family host clinics, shows, breed evaluations, and NEIHC regional events, as well as taking in horses for training. They have a small breeding program with a few foals born every year. For me, it seems a perfect place for my young horses to grow up in a herd environment. There is lots of great pasture and hills to strengthen the youngsters, and there is plenty of room for them to run and play.



Kristján Kristjánsson and Revía received the highest scores for trot at the NEIHC Sanctioned show in September 2013. Photo by Martina Gates.

But the biggest bonus to me is having Kristján there. He trains all the horses himself and his horses are all light in the hand. He is a true master and we are very lucky to have him in the U.S. He trained Revía for me and has brought out the best in her.

*How do you select horses for breeding? What criteria are most important to your breeding plan?*

Interestingly enough, I stumbled into breeding. I have always been fascinated with bloodlines, but not having a farm of my own made it impossible to think of breeding horses. I was planning to sell my mare Osk at a breeding show some years ago and thought she would interest more buyers if she were in foal. So I bred her to my stallion Stígandi, knowing how successful the Orri-Ófeigur bloodline combination has been. Breeding horses that have honor stallions (IS1986186055) Orri frá Þúfu í Landeyjum and (IS1974158602) Ófeigur frá Flugumýri in their bloodlines have produced some extraordinary results. This combination has brought forth great gaits and great breeding horses. Here are just four of the many great horses that were produced with this combination: IS1997186183, Sær frá Bakkakoti (honor stallion 2008), IS1998187054: Gári frá Auðsholtshjáleigu, (honor stallion 2011), IS1993187449: Markús frá Lang holtsparti, (honor stallion 2012), IS2001185028: Víðir frá Prestsbakka, (1st prize for offspring 2012)

Osk was already pregnant at the show and ended up making first prize, with 8.43 in rideability, but surprisingly there was no interested buyer. Kristján heard about my plan and advised me to keep the mare and foal. I boarded Osk with Heleen Heyning at her West Wind Farm in Delhi, NY, which has plenty of large pastures, which were essential. Revía was born the following spring and stayed at West Wind until Thor Icelandics was up and running. She was a great looking foal with beautiful movements.

Since then I have been able to continue breeding on a small scale at Thor Icelandics. When I select horses for my breeding, I look at bloodlines first. These tell me a lot about the horses' heritage, their gaits, and their character. Then I look at temperament. It is maybe the most important aspect for me, because ultimately these horses will be trained and



Revía showed talent and a lovely character already as a young foal. Here she nuzzles her proud breeder, Martina Gates. Photo by Gillian Gates.

ridden. Lastly, great gait ability is a must. I prefer to breed with proven bloodlines and horses that have been evaluated. And of course I discuss my ideas with as many knowledgeable breeders as I can, to get their feedback. In horse breeding there are unfortunately no guarantees, so a lot of it is gut feeling and a lot of luck.

*BLUP stands for Best Linear Unbiased Prediction and is a controversial mathematical method aimed at predicting the outcomes of the breedings of certain horses. Higher BLUP scores are thought to indicate the best breeding horses, although there is a lot of discussion about this in the Icelandic horse world. Do you have any thoughts about using BLUP when choosing which mares to breed to a particular stallion?*

BLUP is a nice tool to look at breeding potential. That being said, I have learned the hard way that straight BLUP breeding is not always successful. The BLUP predictions are simply mathematical calculations that show the possible genetic strength of a trait. BLUP becomes more reliable in horses that have had judged offspring, and the accuracy percentage will reflect that. However, picking the right mare and stallion combination should not be done just on paper. Temperament and character are not reflected in the BLUP, and are of the highest importance. There are breeding combinations that have produced great horses, even though the BLUP might have indicated otherwise. In general, I feel the dam is just as important as the sire, and no stallion can make up for the flaws of a mediocre breeding mare.

*What are your thoughts about the advantages and disadvantages of domestic-bred Icelandic horses as compared to Icelandic-bred horses?*

The greatest disadvantage for domestic horses is the breeding pool. Iceland has endless breeding stock to choose from, where we have a limited supply. But domestic-bred horses have come a long way in the past 10 years. We have brought in some excellent mares and stallions that have produced some very promising offspring in the past few years, as we have seen from the young horse evaluations and the full breeding horse evaluations.



Revía being shown for conformation evaluation by Guðmar Pétursson. Photo by Martina Gates.



The greatest advantage is the elimination of summer eczema in domestic-bred horses. It seems that first and second generation domestic horses are not afflicted. This not only makes keeping them easier, but it also causes much less suffering.

*How does the environment for raising and training foals in this country compare to Iceland?*

Iceland, of course, is the optimal place to breed, raise, train, and show Icelandic horses. Nothing compares to the vast gene pool, the large acreage, and the nutritious grass. The large number of trainers and shows there make it a heaven for any Icelandic horse breeder. However, we have seen some great Icelandic horses come out of other European countries, so there is a way to produce great horses in alternate environments.

We are fortunate in the U.S. to have some very large farms where young horses have the chance to grow up strong. Our biggest disadvantage is the lack of trainers. Even if we breed the most talented horses, they need to be trained correctly. Fortunately there are a few excellent trainers in this country. They are the key to bringing out the best in our horses. I strongly believe in planning ahead from conception all the way to training and evaluation. Without good trainers it would be impossible for me to breed horses successfully.

*Do you prefer artificial insemination (AI), hand breeding, or field breeding methods?*

AI is a wonderful way to use a stallion in another part of the country without having to ship your mare a long distance. Artificial insemination in Icelandic horses seems to have the greatest success with chilled semen. Frozen semen has had a low success rate, due to the mares' often rejecting the extender fluid that preserves the semen. I have had semen shipped to many destinations. However, the vet performing the insemination needs to be well versed in AI, as the timing is often missed.

I prefer live coverage, as it is a more reliable method. That said, hand breeding is safer than pasture breeding, as injuries can easily occur in the herd.

I offer breeding to my stallion Stígandi via AI or hand breeding. Stígandi is at Thor Icelandics every spring for breed-



Revia's dam Osk from Helms Hill is shown in flying pace by Þórður Þorgeirsson at the breeding evaluations at Mill Farm in 2006. Osk was already a few months pregnant with Revia when this photo was taken. Photo by Martina Gates.

ing. Mares can be sent to Thor Icelandics, and their owners can pay a daily fee for mare care during the period they are there. If you're interested, see Stígandi's website for details.

*Any suggestions for people interested in breeding?*

Breed with the best horses you can. If the mare you own is not top quality, then lease one. I know Katrin Sheehan at Creekside Farm in Rutledge, GA always has first-prize mares available for lease, and I am sure there are other farms and mare owners who might be interested. I think too much emphasis is put on the stallion and too little on the mares. I have seen a huge number of genetic traits passed on from the mares to their foals.

If you can't afford great breeding stock, then instead of breeding your own I would advise you to buy a foal already bred from great parents. Breeders often have great foals for sale. That is how I got my mare Osk: We purchased her from Anne Elwell when she was only a few months old. She had incredible bloodlines, and I knew her mother Gæfa frá Þverá, Skíðadal (IS1992265801) was a horse with great gaits and a happy spirit.

Today Osk is a first-prize brood mare, the highest judged domestic-bred horse in the U.S., and has produced four incredible foals.

Finally, I would suggest anyone who is interested in breeding to seek advice from knowledgeable people—as they have often already learned from their mistakes.

*For more information on the farms and horses mentioned in this article, see:*

[www.worldfengur.com](http://www.worldfengur.com)  
[www.thoricelandics.com](http://www.thoricelandics.com)  
[www.stigandi.com](http://www.stigandi.com)  
[www.winterhorse.com](http://www.winterhorse.com)  
[www.creeksidefarm.com](http://www.creeksidefarm.com)

*Heleen Heyning, West Wind Farm:  
607-746-2306, [heleenheyning@gmail.com](mailto:heleenheyning@gmail.com)*

# A FAIRYTALE RIDE AT FANTASIA

BY JESS HAYNSWORTH

“We were so excited when we saw that the Icelandics would be in Fantasia this year,” says one of many spectators crowding around a horse and rider in fairy garb during the autograph-signing portion of Equine Affaire’s Pfizer Fantasia show. “It just wasn’t the same without them last year.”

The rider signs the woman’s pamphlet and thanks her, smiling. “We’re glad to be here,” she says, patting her horse and displacing a shower of glitter from his mane. Forty-five minutes later, when the crowds have thinned out, the eight riders on Icelandic horses come together again to ride out of the arena in tölt one final time, cheering and waving to the remaining audience members.

For the past several years, Icelandic horses have been a highly anticipated part of Equine Affaire’s Pfizer Fantasia Show in Springfield, MA, in which horses from different breeds and sports give specially choreographed performances set to music. Various Icelandic drill teams have performed at Fantasia in the past, but in 2012 no team could be found, and Icelandic horses were not a part of the show; 2013 marked the beginning of a new show team, The Silver Maple Show Team, and their fairytale horses and riders.



The Silver Maple Show Team dressed as fairies to entertain the crowd at the 2013 Equine Affaire in Massachusetts. Here, two of the bad faeries are lined up perfectly: Caeli Cavanagh on Aska frá Geldingá is hidden by Jana Meyer on Von frá Hjallanesi 1. Photo by Augustin Démonceaux.

## A YOUNG TEAM

The Silver Maple Show Team began performing together at Equine Affaire in November 2012, when they did a choreographed drill for an Icelandic horse breed demo during the day. The team wore Icelandic sweaters and got a good response from the crowd. The following April, they performed again at Everything Equine,

an annual horse expo in Vermont. It was there that the team first donned the fairy wings which were such a hit at Equine Affaire this year.

“The biggest goal was for everyone to have fun,” says Jana Meyer, the team organizer. Team practices began in September, with riders coming from as far as Cape Cod and Boston. Eight riders perform in the drill at one time, but the team always has an alternate rider ready. Riders rotate during practices and performances so that everyone gets to ride. Out of the nine team members, five are under the age of 25, and two are under 18. “I love working with young riders and I love to give them opportunities to do great things,” says Jana.

Audience member and Icelandic horse enthusiast Heleen Heyning was delighted to see so many young riders in the performance. “We need youth,” she says.

Charlotte Bucknell Reilly, another Icelandic horse fan in the audience, says, “I think it’s fabulous that we get a younger generation out there.”

## HELMETS!

In addition to including young riders, the Silver Maple Show Team has made a point of incorporating helmets into the costumes for all their performances. They are the first Icelandic horse show team to do so: Past Fantasia performers have not worn helmets due to aesthetic preferences. Meyer says that including helmets was a must for this team—not only because two team members are under 18 and legally required to wear them, but also because one team member suffered a brain injury from a riding accident in the past. The helmets are specially decorated so that they add to the costumes, rather than distracting from them.

Audience members seem to agree. “I like that you incorporated the importance of helmets, but you made it stylish,” says Charlotte.

Silver Maple Show Team member Caeli Cavanagh, 20, recognizes that not everyone likes the aesthetic of helmets during a per-



At the end of the performance, the good fairies (with green wings) shake their magic wands as they chase the bad fairies out of the arena in fast tölt. Left to right: Jess Haynsworth on Þór frá Skorrastöðum 4 and Quinn Thomashow on Askur frá Austurkoti. Photo by Augustin Démonceaux.



The good fairies ride fast tölt as they banish the evil fairies (not in the picture) from the arena at the end of the show. Left to right: Sue Sundstrom on Bending frá Hólum, Susan Peters on Óskadís from Mill Farm, Bailey Soderberg on Gella frá Kastalabrekku, Jess Haynsworth on Þór frá Skorrastöðum 4, Becky Hoyt on Natan from Solheimar, and Quinn Thomashow on Askur frá Austurkoti. Photo by Augustin Demonceaux.

formance like Fantasia, but she's glad that her team uses them at all times. "I feel sort of naked without one," she says. "Honestly I think they should be the standard when riding."

## FLUID AND EERIE

The Silver Maple Show Team wanted to organize a performance that would stand out from past Fantasia shows and would highlight the wonderful traits of the Icelandic horse. As such, the drill has no narration and happens in one fluid act. The drill is set to the eerie music of Imogen Heap, with beats perfectly timed to fast footfalls, and the horses never stop töltung until the very end. As requested by Equine Affaire, the drill tells a story of a battle between good and evil fairies and ends when the six good fairies, riding in fast tölt, chase the bad fairies out of the arena in flying pace. "I think [the drills] show the energy, spirit, and exceptional character of these horses," says Jana.

Caeli agrees. "The more people can see how much fun our breed is, how powerful, how well mannered, the better," she says. "I know so many people that have said that their first introduction to Icelandic horses was at Equine Affaire. As a breed we are still obscure in a lot of ways, we just need to keep putting our breed out there and showing how amazing they are."

The audience was vocal during the entire performance, but seemed to get especially loud during the faster parts of the drill, such as the "pass-throughs" in which two lines of horses approach each other head on and pass in between each other at speed. These were audience mem-

ber Cindy Wescott's favorite parts. "You just know it's coming, you just know the speed's going to increase. It's very exciting," she says.

Heyning also liked the non-stop movement of the drill, praising the speed and energy which the Icelandic horse is known for. "We loved the music," she says. "It was so different, but good different."

## FAIRY WINGS

"Good-different" was certainly the goal when it came to costume design. The good fairies wore green wings and white costumes, while the bad fairies wore red wings and black costumes. All horses were covered in glitter, and the riders sported

intricate face paint and carried sparkling wands that they brandished during the chase scene at the end. "[This was] the first time that the Icelandics have been taken out of a masculine Viking context," says Andrea Hanson, an Icelandic horse lover in the audience. "It really had this wonderful quality of joyful abandon."

Other audience members agreed. "I loved the costumes because it looked like [they] were floating," says Charlotte. "It accentuated the way the horses really move, which is why we love these horses so much."

During the autograph-signing portion at the end of Fantasia, countless audience members expressed that they would like to see the Silver Maple Show Team again in future Fantasia performances. Their enthusiasm was heard by Equine Affaire, and the Team has been asked to perform at Equine Affaire in Ohio in Spring 2014. While the Silver Maple Show Team still isn't sure if they'll be able to make the trip to Ohio, they will definitely be featured at Everything Equine again this year. That will take place in Essex, VT in April 2014.

Caeli hopes that the Silver Maple Show Team will have many more performances together. "Demo teams like this have the potential to be so important to the growth of the breed," she says. "You never know if the next best youth rider, or breeder, or even enthusiastic trail rider ... is sitting in the stands."

*Appearances will be announced on the Silver Maple Show Team's Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/SilverMapleShowTeam](http://www.facebook.com/SilverMapleShowTeam). The Facebook page is also the best place to find photos, videos, and general updates about the team.*

## THE SILVER MAPLE SHOW TEAM

Caeli Cavanagh  
*on Aska frá Geldingá*

Jessica Haynsworth  
*on Þór frá Skorrastöðum 4*

Rebecca Hoyt  
*on Natan from Solheimar*

Jana Meyer  
*on Von frá Hjallanesi 1*

Susan Peters  
*on Óskadís from Mill Farm*

Emily Potts  
*on Pumall frá Áslandi*

Bailey Soderberg  
*on Gella frá Kastalabrekku*

Sue Sundstrom  
*on Bending frá Hólum*

Quinn Thomashow  
*on Askur frá Austurkoti*

# YOUTH CUP SHOWCASE

BY COLLEEN MONSEF

December 1 brought a flurry of activity for USIHC Youth Committee Chair Laurie Prestine. She received eight applications—a record number—from young riders hoping to represent the United States at the 2014 FEIF Youth Cup, to be held at Hólar in Iceland on July 11-20. She also received three applications for Team Leader and two for Country Leader.

The FEIF Youth Cup is a seven-day international Icelandic horse competition held in a different European country in July each even-numbered summer. The USIHC is allowed to send three riders aged 14-17. Teams of six riders from different FEIF countries are made on the first day of the Cup. Renowned Icelandic horse trainers then work with the riders for three days. A competition among the international teams is held on the last two days.

According to FEIF, the goals of the Youth Cup are:

- Promote friendship across borders.
- Provide awards for teams, individual classes, and best all-around riders.
- Offer many types of classes. (The tests ask for medium skills in riding.)
- Present group lectures and individual instruction.
- Allow riders to gain international show experience.
- Support teamwork.
- Encourage horsemanship and sportsmanship.

A Youth Cup candidate must be a member of the USIHC in good standing. He or she must fill out an application, include two personal character references written by an adult other than a relative, and send a copy of a short DVD showing a Tölt (T1 or T2) program and a Four-Gait (V1) or Five-Gait (F1) program. The DVDs are judged by a FEIF judge, and a minimum score of 4.5 is required to be considered for the team. The FEIF judge also gives seat and aid scores for each ride. The team is chosen first by the riding scores. If there's



Jessica Blough and Hugljúf. Photo by Kelly Blough.

a tie, then the applications are scored by an independent four-person panel. They evaluate the recommendations, experience, and the judge's seat/aid scores.

Across the United States, we had record-sized youth classes this year at competitions in California (at the CIA Spring Open, the Kraftur Show, and the CIA Triple World Ranking Show), Virginia (the FIRC Icelandic Horse Show), Wisconsin (the Vorkeppni, Sumarmot, and Flugnirkeppni), and Kentucky.

The Youth Committee wanted to share with everyone a little about our Youth Cup candidates. I emailed all of them a list of questions about their activities, their experiences, their goals, and their advice for their peers. Here is what these interesting, talented, Icelandic-loving candidates had to share with us:

## JESSICA B.

Jessica Blough (14), Los Gatos, CA: From the moment three years ago when I watched my neighbor, Madison Prestine, galloping her horse, Gjálp, along the trails behind our new home, I realized that Icelandic horses were special. I had ridden and taken many lessons on other breeds over the years, but I had never seen such freedom and such a close bond between horse and rider.

In 2011, my family purchased our first Icelandic horse, Hugljúf. Though she was originally going to be a family horse, Ljúfa and I immediately bonded. I ride her almost everyday at Loma Serena Stables, where we train in the arenas, on the track, and on the trails. I am at the barn every day, riding up to six days a week. I also occasionally ride our other

horses, Rán and Sandur.

Ljúfa and I have participated in seven USIHC-sanctioned shows, including three CIA World Ranking shows. We have shown in Beginning Rider, Intermediate, Youth, and Open classes, in Four Gait and in Tölt. In 2012, I led the U.S. National Ranking in Youth Four Gait. We have also recently begun showing in T6, Loose Rein Tölt.

One of the best experiences I have ever had as a rider was the opportunity to work for the summer at Mountain Icelandic Horse Farm. I worked under the supervision of Lucy Nold, who cared for the farm throughout the summer. Five days a week, I assisted in the care and riding of 25 horses. Riding and training all of those horses, each with different experience levels, personalities, and gaits, was challenging and rewarding. I definitely became a better rider through that process.

I definitely spend more time at the barn with my horse than I do anything else, except for school and homework. I am a freshman at Los Gatos High School and am taking two honors courses, which force me to work hard and divide my time between horses and school work. Community service is very important to me. In 2013, I was honored to receive the Wesley K. Walton Award for Service to the Community at my middle school graduation ceremony. I enjoy working with people and volunteering my services. Every year, I travel to Tijuana, Mexico, to build houses for families who do not have a roof over their heads. This trip changes my heart every time I go. I also am involved at my church. I am a part of the high school ministry, a freshman girls' small group, and the worship team.

If I were to give any advice to a person who has just started riding, it would be to learn as much as you can. Ask questions and don't be afraid of being wrong. I have trained with many people and each person has taught me something new. I've learned so much not only about training, but also about having fun and building the bond between horse and rider. This makes me more independent as a rider. And of course, don't forget to have fun!

### JESSICA E.

Jessica Elmlad (16), Eagle, WI: I have been riding horses for about eight years, although the first time I was on a horse I

was four. I started off taking lessons in English and Western. I have ridden many different types of horses, such as saddlebred and quarterhorses, and can ride any seat. I currently own one Icelandic horse and I have ridden and trained many. I started off taking lessons, then leasing, Dama at Winterhorse Park, before we bought my current horse, Moldi frá Þóreyjarnúpi. Moldi has a lot of energy and character—he can charm anyone and will eat anything! I have learned from many Icelandic trainers from around the world, such as Guðmar Pétursson, Halldór Víktorsson, Carrie Lyons Brandt, and many more. I work my hardest at riding and strive to be the best I can be; for this effort I was recently awarded the Riva Award from the Flugnir Club for the most improved youth rider.

A favorite story of mine would have to be riding in Stockon, IL in the rain on Lori Cretney's horse, Mósi frá Hvóli. There is a farm in Stockon that has beautiful trails with streams, hills, and other obstacles. My friend Steinunn Reynisdóttir and her sister decided to go exploring in the rain on these trails. It was so much fun dodging through the trees and listening to the rain pour around us. Nothing like a good canter in the rain! A very close second favorite story would be training with and competing in the Flugnirkeppni on Leikur from Lonestar, Lori and Sharron Cretney's horse.

Advice that I would have is to never



Jessica Elmlad and Moldi frá Þóreyjarnúpi. Photo credit Wade Elmlad.

give up. A relationship with a horse is something earned, not forced. Work with the horse and be its leader—that is the best way to earn a horse's respect and create an everlasting bond.

### EMMA

Emma Erickson (14), Woodside, CA: I have been riding for seven years and riding Icelandic horses for a year and a half. I own one Icelandic horse named Minning. I also have a quarterhorse named Matilda and an Irish Sport Horse named Jake, and I lease an Icelandic horse named Kani. Aside from Icelandic competitions, I am a CI-rated member of the Woodside Pony Club and compete in Three Day Events at the novice level, with the goal of moving up to training. I take Icelandic lessons from Lucy Nold and ride with an eventing barn called Phoenix Farm. I have had the opportunity to ride a variety of Icelandic horses this past summer while working with Lucy. My goal for my Icelandic riding is to continue my relationship with Minning and to gain more competition experience. I spend around 15-20 hours a week at the barn, approximately 10 of which are devoted to riding, though it varies seasonally. I currently show in Youth Four Gait and Youth Tölt.

I received a Junior Leadership Award in the Woodside Pony Club in 2013 for my work with younger members and a Miyo Award in the Woodside Pony Club in 2012 for most improved rider. I have received a USEA silver medal for my Beginner Novice eventing record, and finished in four Novice events with my highest placing being fourth. I have also competed in the Pony Club Regional Quiz Rally five times and was the captain of the Junior D Middle California team that placed sixth out of 40 in national championships.

One of my favorite memories is when I was recovering from pneumonia and was very weak. We had just bought Minning. It was my first time riding in a few weeks, and she hadn't been out except for one ride my friend had taken her on. However, even though she could have easily been difficult and high energy with me, she calmly walked around and let me sit on her for 20 minutes or so, at which point I was too tired to keep riding and had to get off. She behaved perfectly for me when I couldn't have handled her opinions, but during later rides she reminded me she had plenty.



Emma Erickson and Minning. Photo courtesy the Erickson family.

## JULIA

Julia Christine Hasenauer (15), Scotts Valley, CA: We found the Icelandic horse breed through my long time friend, Allison Moerer. They, in turn, found the Icelandic horses from an article in the newspaper posted by Icelandic horse trainer Laura Benson.

I compete on the horse that I own, Skuggsjá frá Grafarkoti. I have shown in Open Four Gait, Youth Tolt, and Youth Four Gait, and I am planning on showing Skuggsjá in a pace class in the next show. Before coming to Icelandics, I did a lot of hunter jumper and dressage. I have ridden quarterhorses, thoroughbreds, Andalusians, a Dutch Warmblood, many crossbreeds, an Appaloosa, and a green Haflinger. I currently ride none of these breeds, though I may do so in the future. I have been riding for 9-10 years. I board Skuggsjá at Coast Road Stables. I am a member of the Kraftur Regional Club and have taken part in some of the events it has put on. I have passed the first level of the USIHC Riding Badge program. I ride with mostly Laura Benson, but I also ride with Heidi Benson, Steinar Sigurbjörnsson, and Guðmar Pétursson, and I have been lucky to attend an Eyjólfur Ísólsson clinic. I strive to communicate better with

my horse and I hope to compete in the big leagues one day. I go out to the barn around five days a week, when there's school, but if I have a break then I go and help Heidi or Laura ride and work horses every day.

I don't do much outside of school and horses. But I do volunteer at a ranch up in Aptos, CA. It is an equine therapeutic center. I just walk around with a kid, feed horses treats, and eventually lead the kid on a short trail ride.

## ELIZABETH M.

Elizabeth Monsef (14), Los Gatos, CA: Laurie and Madison Prestine first introduced me to Icelandic horses. I am neighbors and friends with the Prestine family and rode with Madison on her eleventh birthday (I was around nine). I am a member of a mother-daughter charity league volunteering in our community, a volleyball player for Los Gatos High School and various club teams, and a 4.0 GPA student.

I own a pinto mare named Viska. I have ridden 14 different Icelandic horses. I rode with the Stanford Intercollegiate Equestrian Association over the summer in 2013. This was a catch riding program on hunt-seat horses. I train with Laura Benson at Loma Serena Stables (where my horse is boarded) and also participate in clinics with Guðmar Pétursson. I

ride about three to four days a week and spend nine hours a week on average at the barn. I am a member of Kraftur in Northern California.

I am currently showing in Tolt (T1) and Four Gait (V1). I was awarded the Featherlight Award at the 2012 fall Kraftur Show at Mountain Icelandic Horse Farm. I was awarded a judges' green plus sign and score increase for "Good and Harmonious Riding" in my first CIA show in 2012. I was also the recipient of the 2012 USIHC Youth Tolt (T8) "iceberg" award.

I have an incredible bond with Viska. When I am having an awful day or do not feel well, she is there for me. She is my shoulder to cry on. She is also there for a great time.

Here is my favorite experience: At our barn we asked friends for objects from their home they no longer wanted or needed. From these random objects and some open space we created a wonderful obstacle course. I had so much fun with my horse and my friends. Jessica Blough and I took turns timing each other to find out who completed the course the fastest. I love activities like these because I feel relaxed and trust my horse and my abilities. All the younger riders at the barn take the course a little slower; however, they too are on track for success. I love to be with everyone and to



Julie Hasenauer and Skuggsjá frá Grafarkoti. Photo by Alexandra Venable.



Elizabeth Monsef and Viska, with trainer Laura Benson in the background. Photo by Sarah Ziller.

have a good laugh. Last time we ended up with bouquets of flowers in our hair and in the horses' manes. It was amazing.

If I were to give one piece of advice to another child starting out it would be to trust your horse and your barn members. For me this is my family. When I lose trust in my horse I am an awful rider. When I lose trust in my barn I am lonely. Never set yourself up to be lonely. The only reason I got this far is because I trusted my barn. I trusted them the first time I rode Icelandics with Madison, and I never lost trust. They mean so much to me and I love them. In my mind, the best riders have the biggest hearts.

### **OLIVIA**

Olivia Rasmussen (14), Santa Cruz, CA: I found Icelandic horses by accident when I was 12. I was looking for a new instructor and a transition out of ponies, and Heidi Benson was recommended to me. Since Heidi rides and teaches on Icelandics, I was introduced to them and fell in love with the breed.

I started riding with a few lessons at age eight. At nine I found a barn with a mix of ponies and quarterhorses, and I joined the Pony Club. I was lucky because

I did not have my own pony, and this barn, Willow Pond Ranch, was accredited to allow riders on their ponies. After riding ponies for nearly three years, I wanted a change, including trying a new instructor. We heard good things about Heidi Benson's lessons. My parents were ecstatic that Heidi's barn was less than 10 minutes from our house, too.

I am a member of Kraftur and half-lease Festi frá Kastalabrekku from Laura Benson. I am currently showing Loose Rein Tolt, Youth Four-Gait, and Pleasure Tolt. At the Kraftur Fall Show, I won first in Loose Rein, second in Pleasure Tolt, and fourth in Youth Four-Gait.

I take lessons from both Heidi Benson and Laura Benson, and have had a clinic with Guðmar Pétursson. I spend four to five days a week at the barn. On school days, I spend up to two and a half hours a day at the barn cleaning and exercising Festi and, if time allows, other people's horses too. On the weekends, I spend 4-10 hours at the barn, cleaning, exercising, and riding. My goal is to ride to my potential through a combination of instruction, practice, and patience. I hope one day to have my own horse property and barn that I and others can enjoy.

In addition to my equestrian interests, I also play competitive soccer on a club team. During the winter, I enjoy recreational skiing in the Lake Tahoe area.

### **ELIZABETH R.**

Elizabeth Robertson (15), Santa Cruz, CA: My family has owned horses since I was born. I'm fifteen years old and have been actively riding horses for eight years. I own a quarterhorse gelding and an Icelandic mare. I have been riding Icelandic horses for four years, where I have focused my passion. I find it most rewarding to start yearlings, mentor children, and show horses of different personalities and dispositions.

### **QUINN**

Quinn Thomashow (15), Strafford, VT: The first encounter I had with Icelandic horses happened about three or so years ago at a local Fox Hunt. I was riding my Fjord in the hunt and had become friendly with another rider there named Sue Sundstrom. She had an Icelandic horse named Mel, and offered to let me ride her up the road and back. I got on the horse, cantered her up the road, came back, and said to my mom, "Well, I think I am going to start riding Icelandics now." Even on my first ride, without tolt, I was able to feel the connection that I had with this breed. And I am so glad that day happened for me.

Music is my life, I have been singing since I was three years old. It has always been something that I have enjoyed and taken with me through the years. I have done various concerts and written some



Olivia Rasmussen and Festi. Photo by Ron Rasmussen.



Quinn Thomashow and Orvar. Photo by Sarah Porter.

of my own songs. I taught myself guitar a year ago and have been playing since then. I also know how to play the drums and saxophone, but my main interest is singing. This year I competed in a country singing competition in Vermont. Around 50 people tried out and 10 got in; out of those 10, I took third place in the actual competition. It was a life-changing experience that I am very grateful for.

I have owned horses all my life. My first “horse” was actually a donkey that I taught to jump and do dressage. I then moved up to horses and eventually found Icelandics. I rode Icelandics for two years before I finally got my own, and he is the love of my life. I have been training him with help from Jana Meyer at Silver Maple Farm in Vermont, and also with help from Rebecca Hoyt and Caeli Cavanagh in other areas such as jumping, dressage, and liberty work. I work every day after school and all summer at Silver Maple to pay off my board and my lessons. And for a month in the summer I bring my horse home for a break. I have been working at Silver Maple for over three years now, and it has become a part of me. If I am not at home you can bet that I am at the barn, riding and working.

I have just started showing in Open Four Gait (V1) with my horse and am working on getting to higher classes in tolt. But tolt is not my horse’s, or my, strong suit. My team in the previous FEIF Youth Cup got third place over all. And I have gotten multiple ribbons and medals

at the shows here in Vermont and New York.

Through my entire experience with these horses I have been able to make amazing friendships, all over the world. I now have friends in the Faroe Islands, Germany, and Iceland, as well as ones closer by in Cape Cod and California. The friendships I have made through Icelandic horses are stronger than any others in my life.

My advice is to really push yourself for your goals and try not to let fear get in your way. It is important to have confi-

dence in yourself and the horse you are riding. It is important to have good experiences, especially when you are starting out, because it gives you more confidence and enables you to want to do more, and it gives you the mindset to do so. That’s why I love these horses, because they really seem to build confidence in their riders. I would just say to take opportunities when you have them, to do different types of riding, and to see what you like the most. And it’s also not all about competing, so remember to have fun.

### **ALL WINNERS**

On January 13, the U.S. Youth Cup team members were announced: Jasmine Ho was selected as Country Leader and Lucy Nold as Team Leader. Riders are Elizabeth Robertson, Quinn Thomashow, and Emma Erickson. In my book, all eight candidates are winners and great examples of the next wave of U.S. Youth riders. Now you know a little more, you can keep an eye out for their bright future. Many of the trainers mentioned have attend Youth Cup (including Team Leader Lucy Nold) and some have studied at Hólar University in Iceland—you never know who will be next! For more information on USIHC and FEIF youth activities, contact the Youth Committee at [youth@icelandics.org](mailto:youth@icelandics.org).



Elizabeth Robertson competing at the Kraftur Show. Photo by Mikayla Reynaud.





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For more information and to join the USIHC please go to [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org). Or contact youth committee chair Laurie Prestine at [youth@icelandics.org](mailto:youth@icelandics.org) or call (408)354-2828

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Thank you to photographers Asta Covert, Martina Gates, Laura Benson, Jana Meyer, Deb Cook, Nicki Esdorn, and Julie Betts Testwuide





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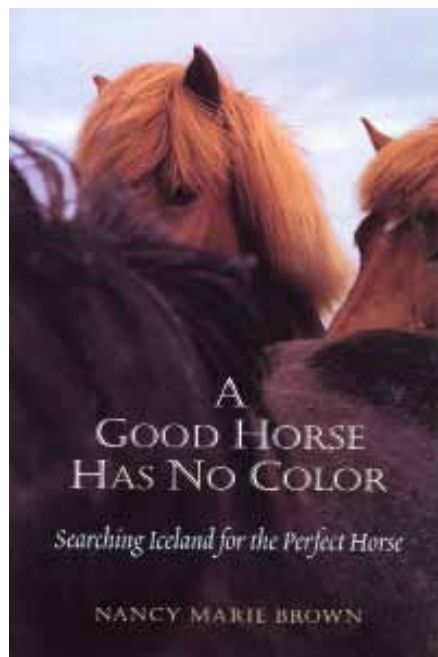
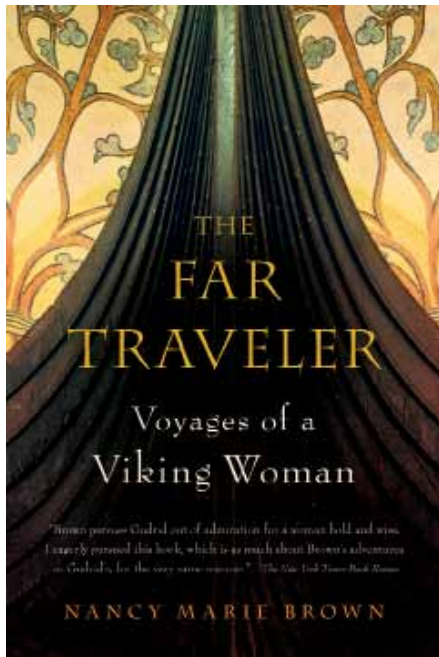
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## WHY REGISTER YOUR HORSE WITH THE USIHC?

*Photo by Kathy Sierra*

### ***Proof of ownership***

Registering your horse is proof of ownership, like the title for your car. If the horse you buy is already registered with the USIHC, it means it is registered in the previous owner's name, both in the U.S. and in the worldwide database WorldFengur. In order to transfer ownership to you, the previous owner and you just need to sign the registration papers and send them to the USIHC Registrar. You will receive new papers—proving you are the new owner—in the mail shortly.

### ***Proof of pure breed***

Registration is proof that your horse is a purebred Icelandic, and that increases the value of your horse. All registered horses are DNA typed. This is especially important if your horse is a mare or stallion.

### ***Participation***

Some USIHC programs and events require the horse to be registered, such as the Pleasure Rider Program, the Ambassador Program, the World Championship tryouts, and inclusion in the USIHC Stallion book. Registration keeps the international Icelandic horse database, WorldFengur, accurate and complete. Not only stallions and mares, but also geldings need to be registered for a full offspring record. The Icelandic horse community and breeders worldwide depend on this source of information, a model that other breed organizations do not have.

### ***How to Register***

Registering your horse costs only between \$15 and \$50. A surcharge of \$25 is due for non-USIHC members. The Registry Rules and all forms needed are available at [www.icelandics.org](http://www.icelandics.org), the Congress website. Or contact the Registrar, Ásta Covert, at [registry@icelandics.org](mailto:registry@icelandics.org) or 866-929-0009.

If you can't reach Ásta, USIHC Regional Club Chair Martina Gates will help you fill out forms and answer any questions about registration and WorldFengur. Contact Martina at [martinagates@mac.com](mailto:martinagates@mac.com) or call 631-421-2290.

***Support the Icelandic horse nationally and internationally—register your horse with the USIHC!***



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