

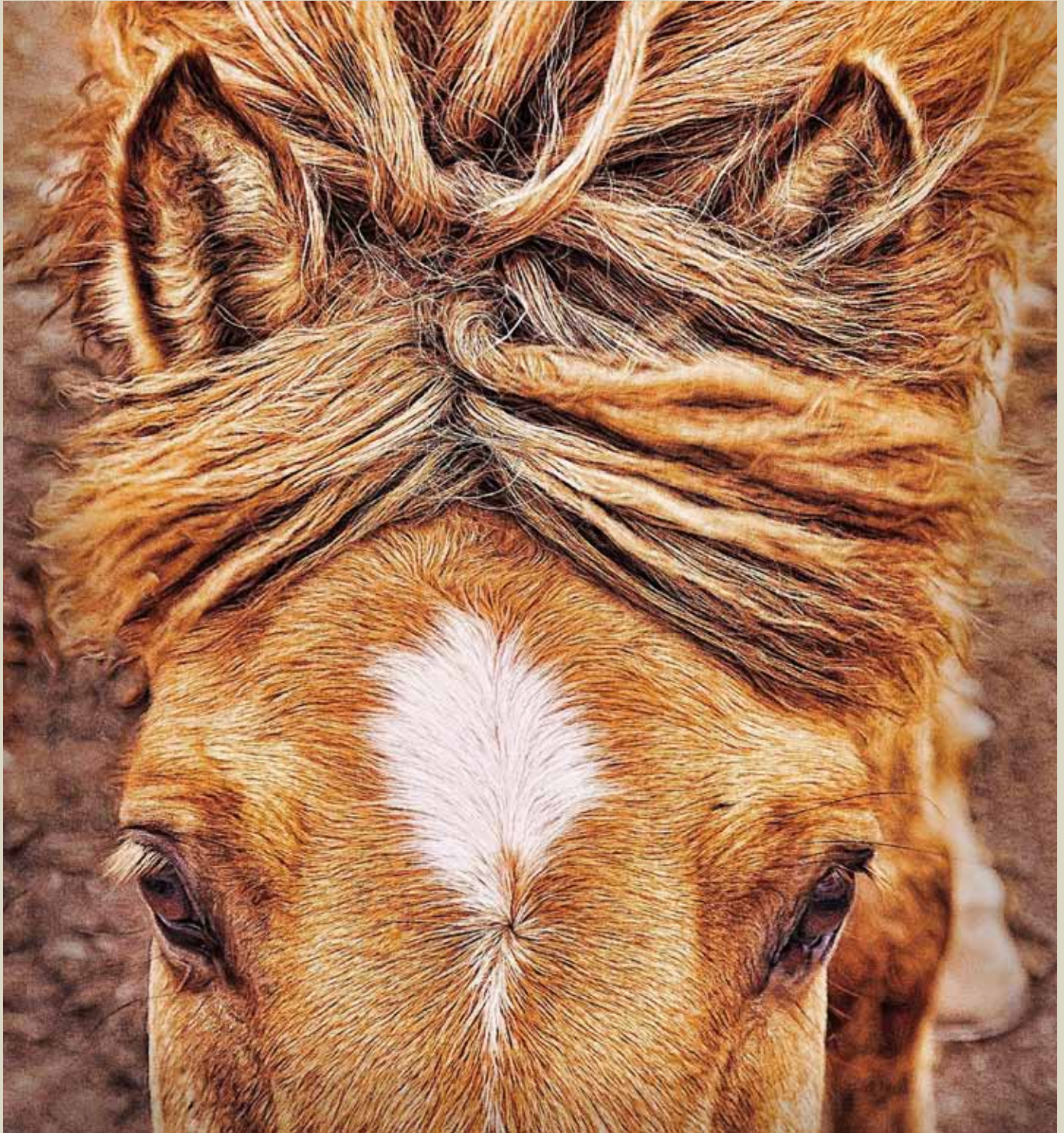
ISSUE THREE

THE

2015

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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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), 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.

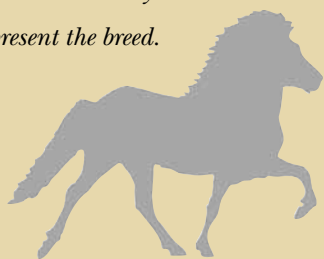


Photo by Andrea Barber

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 2014, the Education committee began offering yearly Sport Judges Seminars for those wanting to learn to judge competitions.

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 12 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. USIHC Youth members can apply to participate in the American Youth Cup or the international FEIF Youth Cup or Youth Camp. These are great events designed to bring young riders together for a week of fun, learning, and competition.

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 shows are eligible for funding under the Flagship Event Funding Program. 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.

Only USIHC members can join the U.S. team at the Icelandic Horse World Championships, held in a FEIF country every other year. 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 and are National Ranking events: 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.

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

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.

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 private farms. Breeding shows are eligible for funding under the Flagship Event Funding Program. All rules and regulations are supplied by the Breeding committee from the international FEIF rules and are available on the USIHC website. Regional Clubs and private farms can also organize Young Horse Assessments for foals to three-year-olds. Beginning in 2015, these assessments also qualify for USIHC funding; contact the Breeding Leader.

In accordance with FEIF rules, the USIHC has adopted 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 2015, \$8,000 is budgeted. Contact the USIHC president for more information or read about the grant program in Issue Three 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 our counterparts in Iceland and Germany. Our committee members and board of directors are all volunteers. Please join us so that the USIHC can, as FEIF's mission states, "bring people together in their passion for the Icelandic horse"!

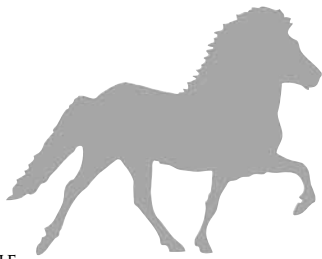
Yearly membership for an adult is \$45; youth memberships are \$35 or for a family (two adults, unlimited kids) it is \$65. Mail in the form in this magazine or join online at www.icelandics.org/join

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

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



ICELANDIC HORSE

Q U A R T E R L Y

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ICELANDIC
HORSE
QUARTERLY
Issue Three 2015

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On the cover: In this compelling
photo titled "Textures," author/pho-
tographer Elisabeth Haug captures
many attributes of the Icelandic
horse: beautiful color, a silky coat
contrasting with the wind-twirled
abundant mane, fine fuzzy ears, and
a soft and kind eye. Elisabeth, from
Cambria, CA, took the photo in Ice-
land. See more of her work at www.facebook.com/elisabeth.haug.12

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FROM THE EDITORS

In this issue you will find results from the 2015 USIHC Survey. We thank the more than 302 people—members and nonmembers—who took the time to help us shape the future of the *Quarterly* and the USIHC.

This survey is a direct outgrowth of the discussion at the 2015 USIHC Members Meeting, organized by the Flugnir Club and held in Minneapolis, MN. Thanks go to everyone who attended the meeting, as well as to Kathy Love, Emily Hackett, and Anne Elwell for nudging us toward an online survey, and to Board member Doug Smith for taking the survey itself from vague idea through data collection. The questions were written by Quarterly Committee members Nicki Esdorn, Nancy Brown, and Anne Owen, and cartoonist Chris Romano created our ad. We're very pleased with the success of this effort to reach out to Icelandic horse owners and riders in the U.S. and to hear your thoughts, and we hope to repeat the survey next year. If you'd like to help, contact the Quarterly Committee.

If you have other ideas on how to improve the Congress, please attend the 2016 USIHC Members Meeting, which is being organized by the Cascade Club for January 15-17, 2016 at the Radisson Hotel PDX located in Portland, OR.

In this editorial we will respond only to those questions that refer to the *Quarterly*; in the December issue, we plan to print a response from the Board to the other survey questions. Your many thoughtful comments will inform our editorial decisions as we plan upcoming issues. But first, some explanations: Like the rest of the USIHC, the *Quarterly* is a volunteer effort. We don't pay our writers, photographers, or illustrators. Because of that, we don't commission stories—we print what you, the members of the Icelandic horse world, send us. Each member of the Quarterly Committee is asked to suggest story ideas—with the understanding that she (we have no male members, but would like some) is responsible for either writing and illustrating the story or finding someone who will. The committee is open and any USIHC member can join. We also accept ideas from the Board and other USIHC Committees, but again, our ability to print those stories depends on someone



How to improve the *Quarterly*? "Print more cartoons," said one reader. We're happy to oblige. Thanks to Chris Romano for the smiles.

volunteering to write and illustrate them.

We welcome submissions from USIHC members and non-members alike. Each story is critiqued by members of the Quarterly Committee, who may raise questions or make suggestions. Submissions are also edited for length and style. Very few submissions are rejected. Stories submitted through other USIHC committees are given priority, if space is tight. As the official publication of the USIHC, we further the Congress's mission to:

- 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 survey results show that Icelandic horse owners in the U.S. overwhelmingly want to read stories about Training (basics, groundwork, training methods, clinic reports, and fitness) and Horse care (keeping, grooming, health issues, and feeding), and that they would like those stories to be written (or at least checked) by a professional. Those topics have long been a priority for the Quarterly Committee as well. We have two certified Icelandic horse trainers on the committee and would welcome more. We

are always open to articles from Icelandic horse professionals, and print as many as we can. All articles and photos are reviewed for "best practices"—as defined by FEIF and USIHC policies—by the pros on our committee, and occasionally we do reject submissions on those grounds.

According to the survey, your least favorite stories are those about vacations with Icelandic horse riding, profiles of USIHC members (not trainers or breeders), and youth essays. Funny, but those are the categories most of our submissions fall into. In addition, two are the result of initiatives in other USIHC committees: the Leisure Riding Committee is contributing a series of profiles of leisure riders, while the Youth Committee has long organized the publication of youth essays (these are entered into the contest for the yearly Spaeri Award). To complicate matters even further, in the survey's comments we found many versions of these remarks: "The vast majority of riders (of any breed) are pleasure riders; although not an exclusive focus, more time and attention [would be] well spent in supporting this broad base of owners" and "I always enjoy the member stories and real life adventures."

As we on the Quarterly Committee figure out how to respond to your criticisms and wishes, you can help. Join us.

—Nancy Marie Brown and Nicki Esdorn,
Quarterly Committee co-chairs

PLEASURE RIDING PROGRAM

Deb Callaway, chair of the Leisure Riding Committee, updated the USIHC Board in June on the committee's efforts to rework the Pleasure Riding Program. Said Deb, "My personal goal is to make the PRP as simple to administer as is possible and still keep it interesting for the participants." The Board has requested that the Leisure Riding Committee specify exactly what the various levels of achievement for the new program will be and also specify the prizes to be awarded for each level of achievement.

PROMOTIONAL BROCHURES

A new supply of USIHC promotional brochures is now available for distribution to members and Regional Clubs for use in promoting the breed and the Congress. The brochures are 8 1/2 x 11 inches, tri-fold style and in full color. Along with general information about the breed, all USIHC Regional Clubs are listed. The brochures are available in multiples of 50. There is no charge for the brochures and the USIHC will also pay for standard USPS First Class shipping. Requests for quantities of 500 and above for use at events such as trade shows must be made at least four weeks in advance. Contact Juli Cole, chair of the Promotion Committee.

EDUCATION

The Education Committee, chaired by Alexandra Dannenmann, has several projects in the works. Editing of the Riding Badge materials is continuing. A subcommittee, aided by videographer Lisa Keller, is working on creating a promotional video. A new subcommittee of German-speaking people is currently being formed to help with translating the IPZV Trainer C materials. And a Sport Judge seminar is being planned for October 2015 (see below).

COMPETITIONS

Three USIHC-sanctioned shows were held this spring, and one is scheduled for mid-July, while this issue of the *Quarterly* is at press. Hulda Geirsdóttir judged the MIF Spring Show on April 18-19; Hulda and Florian Schneider judged the FIRC



Rósa from Dalalíf and Auðna frá Álþólum heading back home after a morning ride in Wilder Ranch State Park. Their riders, Kraftur Club members Pilar Milot and Elizabeth Robertson, enjoy a great view of the Pacific Ocean north of Santa Cruz, CA. Photo by Pilar Milot.

Show on May 16-17; and Elisabeth Jansen, Marlise Grimm, and Magnús Magnússon judged the Kentucky Spring Show on June 7. The judge for the NEIHC Open, scheduled for July 11-12, is Hulda Geirsdóttir.

Three USIHC-sanctioned shows are also scheduled for this fall: The Flugnirkeppni Icelandic Horse Show will be held September 5-6 at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI. Contact Kevin Draeger at shows@flugnir.org for information. The Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show will be held October 10-11 in Shelbyville, KY; contact Margaret Brandt at maggie@letteikiicelandics.com. The CIA Open Fall Show will be held October 24-25 in Santa Ynez, CA; contact Ásta Covert at info@tolt.net or see www.ciaclub.net.

Results of all USIHC-Sanctioned shows are posted on the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org/showresults.php.

JUDGING SEMINAR

A USIHC-sponsored Judging Seminar will be conducted by Þorgeir Guðlaugsson on October 8-11, in association with the Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show at Léttleiki Icelandics in Shelbyville, KY. The seminar will include lectures, video presentations, and practical judging.

"It is a great seminar for riders interested in competition and those wishing to

better understand the judging system," says Education Committee chair Alexandra Dannenmann. "It also explains the theory and practice of judging, how to watch and evaluate gaits, and how to assess the technical factors behind the scores. The content is also aligned to last year's seminar, so that the participants can improve their skills and extend their knowledge."

The preliminary program includes:

Day 1: Theoretical lectures—basic (suitable for those not attending last



Gloria Verrecchio, shown here on a pleasure ride, won a 2014 USIHC Breed Ambassador Award for riding her stallion Fönix frá Syðsta-Ósi in a demo at the Blockhouse Steeplechase held in Tryon, NC. Photo by Vince Verrecchio.

year's seminar)

Day 2: Theoretical lectures—advanced (suitable for those attending last year or Day 1 this time)

Day 3: Practical judging at the Kentucky Show, including practising the equipment and health checks during the show.

Day 4: Examination (if requested) or more practical judging

The cost: \$100 non-refundable registration fee. Early bird registration by September 14 is \$300 for the seminar plus \$50 for testing. After September 14, the cost is \$350 for the seminar and \$50 for testing. Please contact Alex Dannenmann at alex.dannenmann@gmail.com.

U.S. YOUTH CUP

The USIHC, in cooperation with Léttleiki Icelandics, offered the first U.S. Youth Cup on July 21-26 in Shelbyville, KY. Modeled after the FEIF Youth Cup, this event gave young riders ages 12-17 the opportunity to receive ridden instruction and to compete on unfamiliar horses. The event included a USIHC-sanctioned show, held July 25-26, that was open to all riders regardless of age. Of 28 Youth Cup applicants, 20 received invitations and eight received letters encouraging them to strengthen parts of their resume and to apply again for the next U.S. Youth Cup.

BREEDING SHOWS

The USIHC breeding evaluation held at Léttleiki Icelandics in Shelbyville, KY on May 27-28 was small but successful. Two horses were presented for a full evaluation, three for conformation only. Chief judge was Marlise Grimm, the second judge was Elisabeth Jansen, Margaret Brandt was show manager, and Katrin Sheehan was staff. Brá frá Fellskoti (IS2003288471), owned by Creekside Farm, received a total score of 7.66. Maídís from Hanging Valley (US2010204560), owned by Léttleiki Icelandics, received a total score of 7.55. Nýpa von Birkenlund (DE2009234357), owned and bred by Barbara Frische, received a conformation score of 8.11. Svás frá Raunsbjerggaard (DK2009200292), owned and bred



Getting comments from the judges at the Kentucky Spring Show, which saw 36 horse-rider combinations from as far away as Colorado, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Virginia, and Maine. Photo by Shaila Ann Sigsgaard.

by Shaila Ann Sigsgaard, received a conformation score of 7.91. Baldursbrá from Winterhorse Park (US2010204419), owned by Lori and Sharron Cretney, received a conformation score of 7.64. The full results are available on the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org/evaluationresults.php and in WorldFengur. Due to the small number of horses, a “mock” evaluation was also held, which proved very educational. See the article in this issue of the *Quarterly*.

A young horse evaluation was held at Léttleiki Icelandics on May 29; judges were Marlise Grimm and Barbara Frische. Thanks to Lanny Carroll of Northstar Icelandics, Curtis Pierce, and Kathy Love for supporting the event. The highest evaluated youngster was Ástjarljós from Pegasus Flughestar, sired by Pegasus frá Skyggni on the mare Salka frá Frostastöðum, bred and owned by Kathy Love.

REGISTRATION REVISION

Several months ago, USIHC Registrar Ásta Covert alerted Breeding Leader Andrea Barber to a discrepancy between the registry rules and the imported registration application form. The Board unanimously approved a simple change to the registry rules to correct this, as recommended by the Breeding Committee.

Below is the revised section:

Section 2. Requirements and procedures for the registration of imported horses.

A horse imported into the United States is eligible for registration if the following requirements are met:

- a. the horse is of pure Icelandic blood.
- b. the horse has registration papers and/or a Certificate of Origin, if a separate document, issued by a registry recognized by FEIF. Horses imported from Iceland after June 2002 must include the Certificate of Ownership. The original registration or Certificate of Origin must be sent along with the application and it will be stamped and returned. The passport may also be sent to be stamped and returned, but this is optional.
- c. an application for registration of the horse on the imported horse form provided by the USIHC Registry has been completed, signed by the owner and filed with the Registry.
- d. the horse, unless a gelding, has been DNA tested and the record of DNA, if performed outside of the United States, placed on permanent record with an agency designated by the Registry; a copy of that genetic marker is to be sent in with the application for registration.
- e. the registration fee has been paid.

SPAERI AWARD

The Spaeri Award is given annually to a youth member who clearly demonstrates a commitment to and love for Icelandic horses. The recipient of the award will be chosen from USIHC youth who submit articles for publication in the Quarterly during the calendar year. Deadline is December 31. See www.icelandics.org under "Youth" for details.

ELECTIONS

Elections for the USIHC Board of Directors are guided by Section 2 of Article IV (Voting and Elections) of the Constitution of the United States Icelandic Horse Congress (see www.icelandics.org/constitution.php). The current President, Sara Lyter, appoints an Election Committee comprised of Congress members to administer the election. For 2015, Lynn LaPointe Wiese has been appointed as the Election Chairperson.

The Current Board: There are nine Board of Director positions, each with a term of three years.

Sara Lyter (President, current term started 1/1/13)

Lori Cretney (VP, 1/1/13)

Kari Pietsch-Wangard (Treasurer, 1/1/15)

Juli Cole (Secretary, 1/1/14)

Andrea Barber (1/1/15)

Will Covert (1/1/15)

Anne Elwell (1/1/13)

Katrin Sheehan (1/1/14)

Doug Smith (1/1/14)

Unless a current director declines to run for re-election, he or she is automatically nominated.

In further accordance with Section 2 of Article IV of the Constitution the Election Committee shall: Accept nominations until October 1, 2015. Prepare and mail ballots to all voting members by October 15, 2015. Accept voted ballots until December 1, 2015. Provide the tabulated results to the President no later than December 15, 2015.

How To Nominate Someone: The upcoming election shall select three directors, who will serve for terms of three years starting on January 1, 2016. In accordance with Section 3 of Article



Martin Nielsen and Máni frá Eskiholti II won the PP1 Pace Test at the Kentucky Spring Show. Photo by Shailla Ann Sigsgaard.

VII (Board of Directors) of the Constitution: Nominations for the position of director shall be in writing. The nominee, the nominator, and two seconders, all of whom must be voting members of the USIHC, shall sign nominations. The nominator and seconders shall not be of the immediate family of the nominee.

Nominations should include the email address and telephone number of the nominee. Nominations must be received by October 1, 2015. Send them to Lynn Wiese, 248 Arbor Springs North Dr., Newnan, GA 30265.

If by October 1, 2015 there are three or fewer nominations, as detailed in Article IV, Section 3 of the Constitution, the nominees shall be considered accepted by the membership and there will be no need to prepare ballots for an election.

Getting to Know the Candidates: All candidates are requested to submit short statements giving their backgrounds in relation to the Icelandic horse and reasons why they should be elected. These statements are disseminated with the ballots so the membership has an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the candidates.

2016 ANNUAL MEETING

Planning for the 2016 USIHC Annual Meeting is progressing well. This year's meeting is being organized by the Cascade Club and will be held in Portland, OR on January 15-17, 2016 at the Radisson Hotel PDX, located 2.5 miles from the airport overlooking Lake Colwood. See www.radisson.com/portland-hotel-or-97218/portarpt.

To receive the special conference room rate of \$98 a night, make your hotel reservations as soon as possible through Rebecca Bliefertnich of Peak Travel, 800-544-2395 or rbliefertnich@PeakTravel.com.

Cascade Club president Susan Wellington reached out to the USIHC membership in June, asking us all to collaborate with the Pacific Northwest Icelandic horse owners and riders to create a meeting that will be fun and successful. "The proposed agenda has many details to be determined," she wrote, before outlining several possibilities and inviting comments by June 25. "Is this an interesting format for a meeting that you would like to attend? What might be added? Can you make that suggestion happen?" she asked. To volunteer to help with the meeting, contact Susan at Susanleewellington@yahoo.com.

BOARD MEETINGS

The USIHC Board of Directors met April 21, May 20, June 10, and July 14. The meeting minutes can be read online here: www.icelandics.org/bod/minutes.php.

CORRECTIONS

Readers caught two errors in Issue Two 2015 of the *Quarterly*. We thank them for their sharp eyes and we regret the mistakes.

The photo on the top of page 14, congratulating Gloria Verrecchio on winning a Breed Ambassador Award, did not, in fact, show Gloria; pictured was Pat Curtin riding her mare Von. Photo by Vince Verrecchio. Please see the photo we should have run on page 11 of this issue.

On page 20, the youth rider shown in the picture of "Horses on Fire" at the Colorado Horse Expo is Biven Chapman of the Klettafjalla Club, and not Zoe Johnson as we reported.



WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Icelandic Horse World Championships 2015 took place in Herning, Denmark, from August 3-9, while this issue of the *Quarterly* was at press. See <http://vm15.com/index.php/en> for the results. World Championships are organised every two years (in uneven years) in one of the member countries. The 2017 event will take place in Oirschot, Netherlands.

This year's championships were organized by Nordiska Islandshest Forbundet (NIF), a Nordic association made up of the national Icelandic horse associations in Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

The U.S. will be represented in the sport competition by two riders and one reserve horse: Chrissy Seipolt with Dreki vom Wotanshof (DE2003134634) and the reserve horse Fókus frá Sólheimum (IS2001156505) and Jennifer Melville with Lýsingur frá Eystri-Hól (IS2004180622).

The results of the tryouts for the U.S. World Championships team are available on the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org/showresults.php and have been included in the National Ranking. Congratulations also to Carrie Brandt and Terral Hill, who qualified for the team but will not be attending

According to the FEIF website at www.feif.org, a national sport team at the World Championships can comprise of up

to seven rider/horse combinations and a reserve horse, a reserve rider, or a reserve rider/horse combination. In addition, up to three extra eligible rider/horse combinations can be added to the team, provided that the extra riders are at least 16 years old and not more than 21 in the calendar year of the event.

Only one horse per rider is allowed in the World Championships sport competitions. The rider/horse combination cannot be changed after the final entry, except when the reserve is entered in accordance with the rules. Horses must comply with the specific rule about eligible horses in the FIPO and be 6 years or older in the calendar year.

SPORT JUDGES TEST

The test to become a FEIF Licensed Sport Judge or National Sport Judge will be held from September 28-29, 2015 at Kronshof, Dahlenburg, Germany (near Hamburg). The test requires registration before September 1, 2015. If you are interested please contact your national sport leader.

YOUTH SEMINAR

The combined FEIF Education and Youth seminar will take place November 27-29, 2015 at Gut Pöllndorf, Weistrach, Austria. The focus will be on didactics, development, and equipment. The program includes lectures, demonstration, and

practical sessions, with plenty of time for questions.

FEIF YOUTH CAMP

Youth Camp, the first youth event organized by FEIF, started in 1986 when an "international youth week" was arranged by FEIF in the Netherlands. In 1988 Germany hosted the newly named FEIF Youth Camp and ever since this camp has been run every second year.

The goal of FEIF Youth Camp is to bring together young people from different countries. All should share a passion for the Icelandic horse, and the participants will also learn something of the horse cultures of the host nation. In order to take part in the FEIF Youth Camp, riders do not have to own (or bring) a horse, but they should be interested in Icelandics, and have some riding experience. Throughout the week a range of activities, with and without horses, are offered.

The 2015 Youth Camp was hosted by Germany and took place in Berlar from June 28 to July 5 (see <http://www.reitschule.berger.de/>). Representing the USIHC were Brooke and Haley Wehrheim from Alaska, with their mother, Jane, as the Country Leader. The Wehrheims are active members of the Alaska Icelandic Horse Association. For more information on future Youth Camps, contact the USIHC Youth Committee at youth@icelandics.org.

REGIONAL CLUB UPDATES

FEIF YOUTH CUP

The 2016 FEIF Youth Cup will be hosted by the Netherlands and take place in Exloo. Youth Cup is an international event for approximately 80 young riders from all over the Icelandic horse world combining intensive training with a competition. It is held every second year and lasts for a week. Participants can bring their own horse or rent one on location. During the week, they will be coached by experienced instructors, participate in various activities, and go on excursions. The Cup closes with a competition in international youth classes. The focus will be on all-around skills, working in groups, sportsmanship, and horsemanship.

If you are a member of USIHC between the ages of 14-17, you can apply to be one of the three representatives of the United States. Please see the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org/youth.php to find the application and requirements to apply. These include submitting a flash drive containing video of a Tölt and a Four Gait program that will be judged by a FEIF judge, your resume, and an application fee. The deadline is December 1, 2015, and participants will be announced January 22. Questions can be directed to Colleen Monsef, USIHC Youth Committee Chair, at monsef@comcast.net or 408-390-9307.

WORLD RANKING RULES

FEIF maintains the World Ranking program to offer a global level playing field for all Icelandic horse riders to compete for the top recognition in their sport. To keep this program fair, all tournaments offering World Ranking tests must follow the rules as published in FIPO / FIRO. Any national or local adaptations of the rules are not allowed. This point was agreed upon by the national Sport Leaders at the annual meeting in Copenhagen in February 2015. Any adaptations of the rules might result in FEIF declaring the results of a tournament or a test at a tournament invalid and removing those results from the World Ranking. Organizers and riders are invited to contact their national sport leaders or the FEIF Director of Sport, Doug Smith, at sport@feif.org with questions.

There are 12 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>. Contact information for each club can also be found there. The following clubs filed updates on their activities this quarter.

CASCADE (PACIFIC NORTHWEST)

BY SUSAN WELLINGTON

With the outbreak of EHV-1 virus in Oregon this spring, our participation in public events has plummeted and club events have had limited attendance. Many members of the Cascade Icelandic Horse Club rode their horses on trails around the Pacific Northwest. Icelandic horses were seen at Milo McIver State Park, Mossy Rock Riders Club, Shephard Road Mountain Trail, Willamette Mission State Park, Whipple Creek Horse Park, and Battleground Lake State Park and member Candy Carr's home, to name a few.

Six members of our B-Team—Susan Wellington, Janella Radetich, Claudia Rancore, Kathy Lamb, and Mark and Glenda Josey—met under the leadership

of Karin Daum and Linda Eddy. Our horses did well at the close-quarter work of drill and the riders learned a lot too. The riders and observers enjoyed a potluck lunch together at Schwalbenhof Farm.

Play Day in The Dalles, OR had three horses using the excellent facilities at the Fort Dalles Rider Club grounds. Mark and Glenda Josey and Lisa Brandenburg warmed up their horses in the large arena with sand footing and then took their horses to the obstacle course and introduced them to bridges, gates, step-ups, and the curtain.

The first Schooling Show the club has held in a long time took place at beautiful Red Feather Icelandics in Trout Creek, WA. Ann-Christin Kloth from Wisconsin was the judge.

FIRC (MID-ATLANTIC)

BY RICH MOORE

The Frida Icelandic Riding Club had numerous activities in the spring of 2015. Events included a sanctioned show in mid-May, riding clinics with Steinar in May and June and with Brandon West in June, and trail rides, while the FIRC drill team



Cascade Club member Lisa Roland helps Lisa Brandenburg introduce her horse to the curtain at The Dalles Play Day. Photo by Susan Wellington.



Members of the Frida Icelandic Riding Club enjoyed a clinic with Steinar Sigurbjörnsson in June in West Virginia. Riders shown (left to right) are Suzi McGraw, Sam Castleman, Antje Freygang, Hedy Sladovich, Joy Smile, Pat Carballo, and Mitch Martin. Photo by Sandy Newkirk.

continued holding monthly practices.

Pat Moore writes: "Frying Pan Farm Park in Herndon, VA was the site of the fourth annual FIRC sanctioned show. Hulda Geirsdottir and Florian Schneider judged, assisted by Susan McPhatter and Kathy Love as scribes. IceTest was handled by Curt Pierce, aided by Amy Goddard of the NEIHC and Sverrir Bjartmarz. Sara Lyter, president of the USIHC, stepped in when the announcer was unable to attend. Fourteen riders from seven states and the District of Columbia rode in over 30 classes, including USIHC required classes, experimental classes, and a full array of fun classes. Scores are available on the USIHC website. Mark your calendars for the fifth annual show, tentatively scheduled for May 21-22, 2016 at the same venue."

Laura Colicchio writes: "I organized a joint trail ride with the TROT club (Trail Riders of Today) on April 25 in Rosaryville State Park, MD. We had 11 riders, four riding Icelandics. It was a cool day, and we rode for about 2.5 hours up to historic Mt. Airy Mansion, replete with cherry and apple trees in full bloom; the wild wisteria was almost at peak. Everyone feasted on BBQ at the Colicchio's afterwards. I must say this was one of our best rides so far, based upon how well the Icelandics, Thoroughbreds, quarter-crosses, and many other breeds worked together. Everyone rode in unison with the group. My black

Icelandic gelding, Raven, led the bunch and was a big hit: the TROT riders commented on his leadership abilities and his

big stride despite being a small guy. What a memorable ride it was for me and such terrific feedback was received from the TROT



Judi Debeuf on Neisti from Solheimar winning a second blue ribbon at the FIRC Show in May. Photo by Rich Moore.

riders. One rider's wife commented that her husband just would not stop talking about the ride all weekend.

"The next joint adventure with TROT was a two-hour ride on May 30 at the C&O Canal along the Potomac River. There were 11 riders; six on Icelandics. A potluck lunch followed on the picnic grounds near the river. It was a hot day, but the abundant shade trees along the trail made it much cooler. This was another successful ride integrating the two groups.

"Brendan Wise came to our farm in Rosaryville, MD on June 5-7 for private lessons and a two-day clinic for Icelandics, a thoroughbred, and a Missouri foxtrotter; riders were Tony and Laura Colicchio, Hedy Sladovich, and Linda Reed. Brendan is absolutely amazing. He works well with any breed of horse and has been indoctrinated into the world of Icelandics. He is studying the breed online and working at mastering the tölt. His expertise and depth of equine knowledge affords him the ability to work with any temperament a horse may exhibit. He has the innate ability to concentrate on exactly what a particular



Suzi McGraw on Zara frá Álfhólum winning a ribbon at the FIRC Show in May 2015. Photo by Rich Moore.

horse needs, and explains his ideas in easy-to-digest and concise segments. Brendan's methods are both understandable and easy to follow to get the best out of your horse.

Anyone curious about what Brendan is all about should come to the Timonium, MD and Harrisburg, PA Horse World Expos, where he gives many demonstrations. It is crystal clear watching him that he is gifted, humble, and able to relay his horse-whispering techniques to the average rider."

Suzi McGraw writes: "Steinar Sigurbjörnsson gave two back-to-back clinics in May before the FIRC annual show at Antje Freygang's farm in Virginia. Riders for these two clinics included Mitch and Tammy Martin, Pat Carballo, Jackie Edens, Bob Shoemaker, Carey Laurencot, Merja Kantola, Nancy Green, Allie (Nancy Green's 10-year-old student), Nancy Adler, Suzi McGraw, and Antje Freygang. Steinar came back to the area in June to work with riders at Sandy Newkirk and Suzi McGraw's farm in West Virginia. June riders included Mitch and Tammy Martin, Sam Castleman, Joy Smile, Hedy Sladovich, Pat Carballo, Antje Freygang, Merja Kantola, and Suzi McGraw. Steinar worked with each horse/rider team individually, diagnosing specific needs and matching training strategies and exercises for improvement. Steinar returns to the area for a clinic August 28-30, giving riders the opportunity for ongoing, developmental coaching."



Mitchell Martin on Bjarki frá Kjarri receiving comments on his performance from Judge Hulda Geirsdóttir at the FIRC Sanctioned Show in May. Photo by Rich Moore.

FLUGNIR (MINNESOTA & WISCONSIN)

BY JACKIE ALSCHULER
& DAVE LOFTNESS

The Flugnir Club was proud to host the USIHC Annual Meeting in March. The previous issue of the *Quarterly* contains details on this fun-filled, productive, and educational event.

In April, Flugnir members continued their annual tradition of riding in the Midwest Horse Fair in Madison, WI, and the Minnesota Horse Expo in St. Paul, MN.

Lori Cretney writes: "Flugnir has participated many times in the Midwest Horse Fair, however this time we had new barns, beautiful weather, and record-breaking attendance. The new New Holland Pavilions encompass a total of 290,000 square feet and replace nine agricultural barns. Attendance for the 2015 fair, held April 17-19 with the theme Galloping Into the Future, was 61,000. Several things helped make this event a success for Flugnir and the Icelandic horse. Discussions occurred on how to incorporate the theme into our booth, breed demonstrations, and costum-



Flugnir members riding six abreast during a breed demonstration in the Coliseum during the 2015 Midwest Horse Fair. The riders were Lori Cretney, Sydney Horas, Sóley Elsa Magnúsdóttir Blöndal, Helga Rós Nielsdóttir, Margaret Flanagan, and Jaime Ballweg. Photo by Tori Ballweg.

ing. The six riders that participated in the two breed demonstrations—Jaime Ballweg, Margaret Flanagan, Sydney Horas, Helga Rós Nielsdóttir, Soley Elsa Magnúsdóttir Blöndal, and Lori Cretney—designed a drill that would be entertaining and fun to perform and spent time practicing. We received many compliments on the drill,

and several people stopped by the booth to talk with us and to see the horses. The booth this year featured stunning photos of Icelandic horses. Thank you to Andrea Barber Photography, Amber Perry, Verrecchio Joyride Photography, and Gigja D. Einarsdóttir for letting us display their photos. Thank you also to the volunteers, in addition to our six riders, who helped make this year's fair come together: Winterhorse Park (Barbara and Daniel Riva), Wade Elmlad, Tori Ballweg, Jessica Elmlad, Sharron Cretney, and Susan Ballweg."

At the Minnesota Horse Expo, Flugnir riders rode in the daily parade of breeds as well as riding in the ever-popular afternoon breed demonstrations. The demonstration opened with an exciting enactment of the Saga of Sigurd and Brynhild, followed by a pair of riders showing off their beer tölt skills. Then the experienced eight-person drill team took the stage and gave a stellar and crowd-pleasing performance. The demonstration concluded with a beautiful flying pace by Kydee Sheetz on her mare, Leiðsögn frá Fossi.

Other highlights included: Eve Loftness rode Una frá Kvíabekki in Craig Cameron's Extreme Cowboy Obstacle Clinic and Challenge; Dave Loftness and his gelding Demantur from Nordurstjarna took part in the Shawna Karrasch Positive Reinforcement Clicker Training



Flugnir member Kydee Sheetz with Alfadans frá Ingólfshvoli at the Minnesota Horse Expo. Photo by Deb Cook.



Eve Loftness and Una frá Kviabekk represented the Flugnir Club in Craig Cameron's Extreme Cowboy Obstacle Clinic and Challenge at the Minnesota Horse Expo. Photo by Deb Cook.

clinics; and Kydee Sheetz and her stallion Alfadans frá Ingólóshvoli rode in the Jec Ballou Exercise and Conditioning clinics. In each clinic the Icelandic horses made quite an impression on the "big horse" people.

The Minnesota Walking Horse Association invited the Icelandic riders to partake in their annual Doc Bol Memorial Spring Fun Show in Hinckley, MN. Eve and Dave Loftness write: "Saturday, May 9 was a beautiful day for a horse show, near 70 and everyone was sun-kissed. The event was outdoors at the Washington County Fairgrounds near Stillwater, MN, easy to get to, with a large oval arena. This was a great opportunity for a spring tune-up with our horses, and the Icelandic classes offered were simple novice and intermediate levels. Our esteemed judge Debbie Cook offered great commentary, as recorded by her trusty scribe Terri Ingram. Debbie has recently earned Regional Sport Judge credentials so this was a great chance for her to apply her learned skills.

"There were ten Icelandic horses at the show with ten enthusiastic riders, all Flugnir members: Jackie Alschuler with Leo; John and Pat Curtin on Dreyri and Von; Diane Hovey on Lilla, Eve and Dave Loftness rode Una, Spyrna and Demantur; Cindy Nadler on Andri; Kat and Judy Payne with Bleiktoppa and Kafteinn. The

tenth rider was ten-year-old Kaellie Young. Fellow Icelandic horse owners Linda Fog and Pam Hanson stopped by to cheer. For some of the riders, it was their first experience in a judged competition. Kat Payne's mom Judy had a great time as a rookie rider, realizing the importance of putting the first 'track' experience behind her to look forward to the next event. Kat herself rode both her horses well in the Icelandic classes, besting her own previous score in one. She was the only Icelandic horse rider to venture into open gaited breed classes against walking horses, capturing a blue ribbon to make us all proud. The open gaited breed obstacle courses challenged several of our riders, particularly the enormous ball that was bigger than our horses. It was impossible to move the ball without some human assistance, but our persistent horses did not shy away from trying.

"A highlight of the show was a new youth rider, Kaellie Young. The Icelandic rider group at Riverbrink has been providing instruction to Kaellie over the last few months, even coordinating lessons for her

with Barbara Frische. Kaellie has impressed us all with her natural abilities and overwhelming eagerness to learn. At the show, she rode Demantur calmly to a blue ribbon in the youth obstacle challenge and then rode Andri to first place in youth tólt and an open gaited breed class against a walking horse. Amazingly, this was perhaps her tenth time ever on horseback. Kaellie will undoubtedly continue to impress us."

A clinic by Barbara Frische was held at Aslan's Country Icelandics on May 22-24 with additional clinics by Barbara scheduled for July 3-5 at Tolthaven Ranch in Pelican Rapids and July 10-12 at Aslan's Country.

We are proud to write that Jay Maio, grandson of Dan and Barb Riva and Flugnir member, was accepted to the American Youth Cup at Léttleiki Icelandics in Kentucky in July.

Another upcoming event includes the second annual Minnesota Celebration for Gaited Breeds, scheduled for July 17-19 in Hinckley MN, in concert with the Minnesota Walking Horse Association. This is



Flugnir members Terri Ingram riding Ljúfa from Nordurstjarna, Sydney Horas riding Magni frá Reykjavík, Eve Loftness riding Una frá Kviabekk, and Lauralyn Turbes riding Ari from Nordurstjarna after a demo at the Minnesota Horse Expo. Photo by Deb Cook.

a schooling show for the Icelandic classes. Last year there was a large turnout of Icelandic horses and riders with participation in the Icelandic classes, obstacle events, and many fun classes such as licorice race, team water relay, and magazine race.

The annual Flugnirkeppni competition is scheduled for September 4-6 at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI. The judge will be Will Covert and entries are being accepted until September 4. For more information, please visit our website at www.flugnir.org.

KLETTAFJALLA (ROCKY MOUNTAINS)

BY JULIA ANDERSON & LEE ANN OTT

Julia Anderson writes: "Ulla Hudson of Windsong Icelandics in New Mexico hosted internationally known clinician Steinar Sigurbjörnsson in June. Steinar has been riding, training, and improving the well-being of horses his entire life, growing up on one of Iceland's finest horse farms, Oddhóll. The tone of the entire weekend was set Thursday evening with a Prosecco 'meet and greet' with Steinar and a tour of the beautiful Windsong Icelandic Horse farm. Patrick and Ulla Hudson had been working very hard to prepare for this clinic. The beautiful fenced track was completed just in time! It was exciting that we had people attending from Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado.

"The three-day clinic started with

checking tack, looking at the horses' feet, and getting to know the primary focus or needs of each of the riders and their horses. Riders then progressed to in-hand work to establish better communication between them and their horses. This appeared to start slowly for a riding clinic, but Steinar built on each exercise, integrating the groundwork and riding exercises. Steinar was very hands-on and appeared to be tireless when focusing on each of the horse-and-rider teams.

"Each day after lunch Steinar would lecture on theory and demonstrate stretches to do with our own horses. Ulla Hudson also did riding demonstrations with the beautiful stallion, Glymur.

"As an auditor, I was very impressed with the visible improvement in the horse-and-rider teams from one session to the next. Both riders and horses had



Coralie Denmeade, shown here with Hela, gave a clinic for Klettajalla members in Utah. Photo by Lee Ann Ott.



Klettajalla member and Windsong Icelandics owner Ulla Hudson on Glymur frá Englihlíð, owned by Mimi Hillenbrand, and Amelie Probst on Löpp from Morningstar, owned by Ulla, enjoy the clinic with Steinar Sigurbjörnsson. Photo by Jane Burward-Hoy.



Steinar Sigurbjörnsson working with four riders on the oval track at Windsong Icelandics in New Mexico, in a clinic organized by Klettajalla Club member Ulla Hudson. Photo by Ulla Hudson.

fun learning and were able to effectively integrate the new information and techniques from Steinar. In keeping with the lovely tone of the weekend, there were chair massages available ring side. Riders noticed that they felt better and were looser for their next riding session!

"Windsong Icelandics' goal is to be The Icelandic Event facility in the South West, and they look forward to hosting more Icelandic horse events. This



Susan Burns and her gelding Sonur from Dalalif getting hands-on help from Steinar Sigurbjörnsson during the clinic at Windsong Icelandics. Photo by Ulla Hudson.

clinic was such a success that Steinar has been scheduled for a follow-up clinic in October of this year. Go to WindsongIcelandics.com for more information.”

Lee Ann Ott writes: “The first of many Coralie Denmeade clinics was held in Wanship, UT, June 27-28. There were many smiling faces despite the 100-degree heat in the small arena on Saturday. We learned and witnessed the importance of extending the neckline of your relaxed horse (and rider) and how that contributed to a better carriage. Oh, and energy, energy, energy! Our horses are carrying themselves better. Sunday, we beat the heat in the Oakley Indoor Arena. Coralie made believers out of us. We will no longer think ‘reins first’ in our response to our horses’ movements. The answers to most of her questions are circles and half-halts. But, one word of advice: know why you use them. Thanks Coralie, and come back soon.”

NEIHC (NORTHEAST)

BY JESSICA HAYNSWORTH

What an exciting and busy spring we had in the Northeast. The season kicked off with three NEIHC members heading down to the FIRC Sanctioned Show. Amy Goddard writes: “NEIHC members Leslie Chambers, Heleen Heyning, and Amy Goddard took a road trip to Herndon, VA for the annual FIRC Sanctioned Show, May 16-17. We enjoyed meeting new friends and re-connecting with old ones, especially Pat

and Rich Moore and their daughter, Susan McPhatter. Amy was able to brush up on her IceTest skills, thanks to Curt Pierce and Sverrir Bjartmarz. In hopes of dethroning “Beer Tölt King” Sverrir, Leslie managed to earn a third-place finish in a very challenging Beer Tölt class, while Sverrir took second, and Suzi McGraw got first. Thank you, Tony Colicchio, for lending Leslie your wonderful mare, Von. Curt Pierce has offered us a very reasonable price for trailering multiple horses to the Kentucky Show, October 10-11, and also to next year’s FIRC show. In addition, we look forward to partnering with FIRC to host future FIRC/NEIHC events.”

Nicki Esdorn, Charlotte Kooyman, and NEIHC youth rider Mike Kooyman rode as a team in the Bedford Memorial Day pace. It was the first hunter pace Mike participated in with his own young Icelandic gelding,

Vikingur, and both really loved jumping the logs! The team finished with a 7th place ribbon; well done!

NEIHC youth rider Alicia Flanigan made waves at the Kentucky Spring Sanctioned Show at Lettleiki Icelandics, where she won the Featherlight Award for good and balanced riding. Congratulations, Alicia!

The NEIHC’s second annual Games Day was a fun and well-attended event. Nicki Esdorn and I (Jess Haynsworth) were the clinicians, and since the feedback from last year was that riders enjoyed learning fun skills that they could use and apply at home, we decided to focus on one of our favorite training techniques—ponying! None of the riders had previous experience ponying, and some of the horses were new to the practice as well. We began on the ground, showing riders how to use positive



Caeli Cavanagh practices liberty training with her mare Soldís at Thor Icelandics in New York. Caeli, a member of the NEIHC, will attend Hólar University in Iceland in the fall as the third American to do so. Photo by Martina Gates.



NEIHC member Jess Haynsworth and Vigri frá Vallanesi enjoying a good spring gallop near their home in Vermont. Photo by Augustin Demonceaux.

reinforcement to teach their horses voice cues—very useful for the in-hand horse to know! Next, riders mounted up and learned to steer through a course of cones without using their reins, just seats and legs, in preparation for riding with only one hand. Finally, riders paired up and took turns ponying each others' horses, both at the walk and tölt/trot. All of this was in preparation for a fun obstacle course which included gait transitions, steering through cones, ground poles, a narrow gate, and (for riders over the legal drinking age) riding up to a table to take a shot of Brennivín. Every single rider completed the obstacle course, and there were smiles and laughter all around! The day finished with a beer tölt challenge and drill team-style group ride



NEIHC member Alicia Flanigan competing on Salvör frá Grafarkóti at the Léttleiki Spring Show in Kentucky, where she won the Youth Featherlight Award. Photo by Shaila Ann Sigsgaard.

outside, after a delicious lunch prepared by our host Heleen Heyning. We look forward to next year's Games Day.

On the same weekend as Games Day, NEIHC members Sue Sundstrom and Matt Foley organized their annual "Thokki Ride," a fun group ride on Mount Tom held in honor of Silver Maple Farm's beloved school horse, Thokki. NEIHC member Kim Dull reports, "the Thokki ride was fun and fast!" Fourteen riders participated in an exciting ride on the aptly named "roller coaster trail" and afterwards enjoyed a picnic.

As a club, we wish to congratulate NEIHC member Caeli Cavanagh on her acceptance to Hólar University in Iceland. Caeli will be the third American to attend Hólar for the school's famous equestrian program, which she will begin in the fall. Good luck, Caeli!

As I write this, many NEIHC members are preparing themselves and their horses for the NEIHC's third annual Sanctioned Show, to be held July 11-12 at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY. Hulda Geirsdóttir will judge, and the show will be preceded by a three-day clinic with Steinar Sigurbjörnsson, July 8-10.

We are also excited that four of our members will be attending the American Youth Cup in Kentucky at Léttleiki Icelandics, July 21-26: Emese Dunn and Hannah Huss from New York, Alicia Flanigan from Maine, and Isabelle Maranda from Vermont. Congratulations to these four riders! The NEIHC has been fundraising

for this event, and thanks to our generous members we are proud to say that we were able to be significant contributors.

We look forward to a great summer full of fun, friends, and fast horses, and hope to see you all at these upcoming events.

ST SKUTLA CLUB (CENTRAL & WESTERN NEW YORK)

BY DEB CALLAWAY

Everyone loves a parade! And lots of people dream of riding in one. It was my privilege, with the help of Stephanie Sher of Blasted Rock Farm, to make a wish come true for her brother, J.W. Ellsworth of Hawaii. J was visiting Stephanie in Naples, NY during the last week of May 2015. Naples holds a wonderful Memorial Day Parade, and many folks attend, young and old alike. Stephanie loaned us two trusty mounts, Flygill from Vesturbaer and Sproti frá Skarði. Flygill and Sproti were wonderful representatives of their breed, carrying us and greeting the spectators, being very patient as the parade moved slowly through our little town. There is nothing quite like following the marching band snare drum corps and flag team to check your horses, "flap-ability"! Come back next year, J!



St Skutla Club member Deb Callaway took part in the Memorial Day parade in Naples, NY. Photo By Dave Callaway.

THE 2015 USIHC SURVEY

In June, the USIHC Board and the Quarterly Committee sent a survey to all active USIHC members, to all former members for whom we had an email address, and to people who have never been members but who have registered an Icelandic horse. We also distributed the survey via the USIHC website and Facebook page, and encouraged people to share it. The survey was written and designed by Nicki Esdorn, Nancy Marie Brown, and Anne Owen of the Quarterly Committee, and webmaster Doug Smith; this subcommittee also prepared the following summary.

First, thanks to the over 300 people who responded! Reading the full set of responses (47 pages long!), it's clear that Icelandic horse owners in the U.S. value many USIHC initiatives and programs, that they have good ideas on improving them or starting new ones—and that they are reluctant to step forward and volunteer to help.

Unfortunately, if more individual members do not get involved, little progress can be made in turning this organization into one that all Icelandic horse owners in the U.S. are inspired by. This survey and the innovation grant program established in 2013 are acknowledgments by the 16 USIHC members who serve on the Board and as committee chairs that we need new ideas and—even more—new energy and talent to put new programs in place or to improve our current ones. Think about what skills you can contribute, and work to see that your interests are met. The contributions of individual members are what make USIHC programs succeed.

Contact information for all committee chairs and board members are printed in each issue of the *Quarterly* and are available online, as are contacts for all the Regional Clubs. To those of you who shared your thoughts, again thank you—but don't stop there! Please join a committee (or establish a new one), nominate yourself (or a friend) for the board of directors, and bring your ideas to life. Remember, the survey was anonymous, so even if your ideas are terrific, we have no way of contacting you.



Svipur from Nordurstjarna, ridden by Nick Cook, leads the Flugnir Demo Team into the arena at the Minnesota Horse Expo last spring. Deb Cook, who made the sweaters for Nick and two of the other riders, was the breeder of four of the ten horses used in the demo this year. Three of them, including Svipur, are sons of the mare Gullbrá frá Vatnsleysu, who died last year at the age of 31. "Svipur was the first Icelandic horse born in Minnesota," says Deb. "He is very striking and photographs well." Photo by Deb Cook.

SURVEY RESULTS

1. How many horses do you own or lease?

Most of our respondents own or lease 2-3 horses (37%). The next highest category is 6+ (22%), then 1 (18%), 4-5 (17%), and 3% owned none.

2. How many are Icelandic horses? Most have 2-3 (33%) or 1 (32%) Icelandics, 14% have 6+, 12% have 4-5, and 6% of our respondents have none.

3. Do you belong to a USIHC Regional Club? Nearly half of our respondents (49%) do not, and we neglected to include a comment box so they could explain why; we'll put that question on the list for next year. Clubs represented in our survey are NEIHC, Flugnir, FIRC, Klettafjalla, Alaska, Cascade, Kraftur, Saint Skutla, CIA, Hestafolk, and OVIHC.

4. What kind of riding do you enjoy?

Most of our respondents are leisure riders (92%); only 28% are (also) competition riders, about the same number (27%) who participate in events with other breeds. About half (52%) participate in clinics, 30% take occasional lessons, and only 18% take regular lessons.

In addition to horse agility, drill team riding, parades, driving, and horse soccer, Icelandic horse owners participate in expos, hunter paces and foxhunting, horse camping, competitive trail riding and other trail trials, endurance riding, therapeutic riding, jumping, dressage, team sorting, extreme cowboy races, obstacle courses, liberty work, sidesaddle riding, police and park ranger work, search and rescue, and equine-facilitated learning.

Among the more unusual responses were, “I dance with my horses. I have taught them a number of moves. It tickles people when they watch” and “[In] parades [I] shoot darts with an atlatl from horseback.”

5. *Where do you keep your horse(s)?* At home (64%); boarded (31%).

6. *What horse-related news and articles do you think are important to include in The Icelandic Horse Quarterly?* Readers of the *Quarterly* overwhelmingly prefer articles on Training and Horse Care, with over 80% of respondents finding these topics “important” or “very important.” Next come USIHC News, the history of the Icelandic horse, and Regional Club Updates (over 70%). Over 60% of respondents found FEIF News, the Farm List (which is a paid advertisement), articles on Breeding and Sport Events, and Trainer Profiles to be “important” or “very important.” Farm profiles, the Editorial, and Icelandic horse Vacations were chosen by over 50% of respondents. The least popular stories in the *Quarterly* are Member profiles (42%) and Youth essays (28%).

7. *Please tell us what The Icelandic Horse Quarterly could do better.* Many suggestions reinforce what the Quarterly Committee has been striving to achieve, such as: be inclusive; show the versatility of the horse; cover the whole country; remember most of us are leisure riders; include more photos, more letters, more advertising, more contact information, and more cartoons.

Other ideas are ones we hope—with your help—to be able to follow up on, such as:

- more articles from professional trainers
- a yearly summary on breeding, including the number of foals, popular sires, number of horses evaluated, etc.
- more information about tack, health concerns, basic horse care (and caring for the older horse), new products on the market, how to choose a horse, horse behavior
- articles on Icelandic horse vacations and camping opportunities in the U.S.
- an annual or online index of past Quarterly stories
- and we’d really like to interview people doing unusual things with their horses (atlatl shooter, please contact us!)

A good suggestion was to “repeat general knowledge roughly every 4 years to catch new Icelandic owners.” One we will

not be able to follow up on, due to time and money, is “go monthly.”

8. *Do you have any suggestions or comments about the USIHC’s website?* “Website is wonderful,” “easy to navigate, lots of information,” “user-friendly,” “quite functional,” “great about keeping it updated,” “awesome”—these were some of the positive comments we received.

Other respondents found it “occasionally not intuitive,” “too difficult to find things,” “not user friendly,” and “old and not easy to navigate, especially on a mobile.”

Suggestions included:

- add more contact information (our current privacy policy precludes this)
- add video
- update basic information on tack and training
- make benefits of USIHC and how to join easier to find
- make the search feature more prominent
- add “a help section for a trainer to assist those of us too far for a regular lesson”
- include an index to *Quarterly* articles
- promote it more
- needs a mobile app

9. *What do you value about your USIHC membership?* For most respondents, the USIHC’s most valuable service is providing access to a network of Icelandic horse enthusiasts and professionals: 79% said this function was “very important” or “important,” while only 4% found it “somewhat important” or “not important.”

The USIHC’s second most valuable service is the *Quarterly* (78%).

Three other USIHC services were valued highly by respondents: Support in promoting the breed (73% found it “very important” or “important”), the Website (71%), and Seminars and educational events (71%).

The National breed registry and Support for regional club events were each “very important” or “important” to 68% of respondents.

Of less importance were World Fencing access (56%), Stronger influence in FEIF (49%), Access to international events (38%), and Reduced fees at national events (34%).

Some comments reinforce what the

USIHC Board and committees have been striving to achieve, such as:

- The *Quarterly* is “a great marketing tool.”
- “[Our regional club] really appreciates the financial support we got for our show under the flagship event program, which made it possible to get an Icelandic judge.”

Other comments target systemic problems the board and committees are well aware of, but haven’t found a solution for, such as:

- “There are no events/regional clubs in our region of the country.”
- We need “a way for members to locate each other.”

Still other comments reinforce the idea that more individual members need to get involved to help organize the programs and services they believe are necessary:

- Seminars and educational events are “important, but how does being a member help with this?”
- Need “an ask an expert [program] where [people] can have a question about the breed answered”
- “Events that require air trips are not feasible... How about webinars?”
- “Breed promotion is important at national and local levels. Here the Congress and the clubs should be working together.”
- “Too difficult to get a grant”; “this grant program is useless.”
- “Tough to answer these questions correctly because I value all these things, but they are not necessarily implemented fully by the USIHC.”
- “New owners ask what you have to offer [if they are not] planning to breed or show.”
- “I found the [Riding] Badge program awesome; it seems to me it lost momentum?”

10. *Will you renew your membership?* Yes (67%); no (7%); maybe (19%)

11. *If you are not a member (or don’t plan to renew), please tell us why.* Some respondents left the USIHC because they sold their Icelandic horse or stopped riding due to their own (or their horse’s) age or health.

Some members left because their favorite USIHC program was discontinued, their favorite riding discipline was not



Northeast Icelandic Horse Club members Charlotte Kooyman, Mike Kooyman, and Nicki Esdorn competing in the Bedford Spring hunter pace on Memorial Day in Bedford, NY. Photo by Kathy Mathew Photography.

well supported, or they disagreed with the USIHC's competition, breeding evaluation, or registration rules.

Some did not like being a member:

- “The USIHC was not helpful when I needed help.”
- “Not being a breeder or competitor, I didn't have a purpose to join.”
- “Paid the membership but got very little in return.”

Some simply forgot to renew, or found it too difficult or expensive to renew their membership. One non-member said, “I have never been asked and I just never thought about it. We just trail ride.”

12. *If you have or are planning to leave the Icelandic horse world, why?* The choices we suggested fit very few people's situations: only 3% find Icelandic horses too expensive to purchase; 2% have stopped riding completely; and 1% find Icelandics too expensive to keep or say other breeds are easier to find. Most people who answered this question (7% of the total number of survey respondents) checked “Other.”

In addition to their own and their horse's age and health, their reasons included:

- “sweet itch and adjustment problems”
- “these horses cannot tolerate high, humid temperatures, and they develop all types of problems—notably heaves and

skin problems—when exposed to such climates”

- “extraordinarily expensive [to get] quality lesson assistance and horse training”
- “There are not many other Icelandic owners near me, and very few events ... I can attend.”
- “insistence that Icelandics must be ridden in English or Icelandic tack”
- “The most expensive breed to maintain. Too many health issues.”
- “Other breeds are inclusive!”

13. *If you have or are planning to leave, what would it take to get you back to the breed or the USIHC?* Comments included:

- “How about making the Icelandic horse community friendly and supportive to all members, not just those who show on the track?”
- for the USIHC to “take equestrian sports and equine science seriously and exist for everyone who has an interest in the breed”
- “Better communication and connection with [USIHC] members.”
- “More leadership presence on the West Coast.”
- “More great horses. It's hard finding well trained and talented horses, especially in the U.S.”
- “A reasonably priced Icelandic.”

- “Regional events that I can reach.”
- “Lower annual fees.”
- “Reinstate the Pleasure Riding Program.”

14. *Is there anything else you would like to tell the USIHC Board or committee leaders?*

Excerpts from some representative comments are:

- “I believe the USIHC will not grow until they take more interest in what the average owner is doing. Then do what it can to support them.”
- “Provide affordable educational opportunities.”
- “the largest sector of horse owners are in it for the love and fun we have with our beloved horses. Do not forget this large, often quiet, and usually overlooked group of owners.”
- “build a broader community that allows people who have similar interests ... to interact with each other and form sub-groups.”
- “Your support in regional events is crucial not only by financially helping clubs sponsor an event (which actually makes them happen) but also showing your continued involvement/encouragement.”
- “It might be time to focus on the role of a national association. There are some clearly ‘national’ things like the Registry... However, much of what is happening is local. ... Perhaps now is the time to accept the national organization would be better as an association of regional clubs. This is the model in many of the other FEIF countries.”

• “Try things you haven't tried before; even if they don't work, you keep motivation high.”

• “You need us and we need you. Thank you for creating this survey so that we have a voice.”

• “Thank you for preserving our extremely special breed. Just because your organization doesn't serve me, doesn't mean it isn't important.”

• “I so appreciate all the work you do.”

• “I have met so many wonderful people through this organization and have learned a lot about the Icelandic horse.”

In response, the small group of us who have put together this committee have a simple request: join us. Volunteer your time, talents, money, and ideas and help us make the USIHC the organization you would like it to be.

JOYRIDES TO ICELAND

BY VINCE VERRECCHIO



A joyride is bolting toward a lava rock field on a muddy horse and soaked saddle while wearing wet rain pants. It's when the stinging cold of the North Atlantic flows in over the edge of your boots and your bobbing horse struggles to turn back. It's the dancing feet of your mount as a herd of 500 surges toward you and your job is to turn the thunder.

Every ride is a learning lesson, every ride a challenge of some degree. That's why every ride is a joyride. A horse can take you where few venture, beyond the limits of a car, beyond the endurance of many hikers, and into yourself. Joyrides stimulate the senses to help you better appreciate the experience of living. You can more readily entertain the proposition that if heaven is above, you are closer to God on top of a horse. And literally, from the saddle, you can see just a little bit further beyond the horizon of what others can see from the ground.

BOLTING TOWARD LAVA

The rain splattering on my orange plastic hood drowned all other noise; even the hoof beats of the 60 or so horses trotting in behind us. My boots splashed in a puddle when dismounting. Heavy water drops quickly pooled on the empty saddle. I would be exchanging Nesti, my sure-footed 22-year-old bay, for one of the dripping fresh mounts.

It had started raining very innocently at first—borrowing the words of Halldor Laxness, Iceland's Nobel Prize winner for literature. But, as he wrote in *Independent People*, "Drops grew bigger ... to fill the whole world."

It was 1997, our first trip to Iceland.

My wife Gloria and I were two of about 20 riders trekking north across moorland and desert plateau between glaciers on the 124-mile Kjölur Trail. Keeping Langjökull to the left, we roughly knew where we were. Horses were in such numbers to assure everyone a fresh mount. Color was luck of the draw.

On this rest stop, we ate damp ham and cheese sandwiches that had been compressed in saddlebags. Laughter and good-natured sarcasm shrugged off our plight. Each horse, stripped of tack and herded into low-walled concrete paddocks, rolled in the mud and short grass.

When time to go, Einar, the 30-ish Icelandic guide, presented me with a white-eyed witch of dark color and dubious temperament. Holding the mare by the bridle, he shouted above the whinnies, downpour, and chaos to "get your saddle." I

Riding the Kjölur Trail across the center of Iceland: "Keeping Langjökull to the left, we roughly knew where we were." All photos by Vince Verrecchio.

tried to wipe the mare's soggy back with my hand and forearm but she jerked away. Water ran inside my sleeves. My feet slipped, once, twice, and again, as I tried to settle the saddle in place. Blowing rain from my mustache, I estimated and aimed for where the moving target would pause next.

Finally girthed, ears flat back, she yielded to the guide. Einar, braced directly in front, legs spread, held both sides of the bridle. I mounted as smoothly as shying would allow, settled as gently as possible, but with no certainty about the traction under my pants. I gathered up the slippery reins, intent on not displaying misgivings to Einar, who was either squinting against the weather or scowling at me. The horse



Writes Vince: "Our course lay to the west over what, in a short time, would be the sea."

between my legs was revving like a 390 V8 Mustang. Straight ahead, chunks of lava littered the field.

"You ready?" he called.

He took my confident nod at face value and let go. I rode directly into a lesson.

In hindsight I imagine leaving a rooster tail of mud and water behind as my mount exploded forward. Thinking to avert disaster, my left hand went to her shoulder and my right arm drew back. Perhaps, a good idea for another day, but she snapped 90 degrees, and I didn't. The saddle slipped a bit, and I hydroplaned off the leather. The suspense of rotating in free fall and looking up into the overcast seemed to be a perspective from someone else's slow-motion movie. It wasn't happening to me.

After about five seconds on my back, blinking at rain, I concluded that the placement of rocks on the ground had been to my advantage and that the only injury was to my ego.

Struggling up in the baggy rainwear and standing, I could see my horse, stirrups flapping, on a fast trot up a slope. Einar trailed behind. Closer by, I could see a grim 40-something fellow on a bay spiraling to an uncertain finish. Beyond him, a young German woman balanced on a high-stepping



Riding on the Snæfellsnes Peninsula: "On a twisted trail through threatening rock, we at last reached the shore."



At a rest stop to change horses, Vince says, "each horse, stripped of tack, rolled in the mud."

gray, pulling taut on the reins, weaving away through mounds and dips. Another guide filled my field of vision and yelled from within the shadow of her hood to take the fully tacked chestnut she was leading.

The lesson of this joyride was to never let oneself feel rushed or be distracted when girthing in a storm, especially when your horse believes you don't have enough sense to get in out of the rain.

FORDING THE ATLANTIC

On a twisted trail through threatening rock, we at last reached the shore. It was 2002, and our second visit to Iceland combined a buying trip for our horse business with treks on beaches as test rides. We changed mounts where grass met the wet sand. Our course lay to the west over what, in a short time, would be the sea. Our goal, outrun the incoming tide.

The gallop of my light gray mare was lengthening, each hoof digging deep, each leg pushing forward with increasing enthusiasm, her dark mane furling with a building rhythm. The rippled wet sand blurred beneath us and puddle splashes were still in the air after we were strides ahead. The riders had been asked to hurry across the tidal flat and stop at the channel on the far side. I was savoring the wind in my face and the taste of salt on my lips. There was no one between me and that unseen gully somewhere ahead filling with the Atlantic. Those behind were forgotten in the exhilaration of just me and this mare who was smooth, fast, and not to be passed.

Perhaps, you are thinking the adventure of this episode is that she ignored my

whoa, hurtled down the bank, and parted the water at full speed. Actually, she slowed sanely and stopped. My first thought was "she's willing and sensible." My second thought was to question how we were going to get across the current that was wider than I could skip a stone and deeper than I wanted to ponder. The tide was well in and we seemed out of luck.

Our guide apologized for the miscalculation and explained three rules of swimming. First keep your stirrups out from under the horse. Don't want any hooves caught. Second keep the horse moving steadily forward. Third, don't get too close to other horses. I anticipated no problems with my brave mare, but while everyone else splashed into the current, she spun to go back the way we had come. I could neither cajole nor trick her until she realized she was circling alone on the shore. Then she rushed to catch up, churning almost onto a rump. A half halt was enough of a brake and her first gambit to turn back was half-hearted.

Perhaps there were moments of lift or bobbing as she pushed forward, but at no point, that I can remember, did it seem her hooves were unable to touch bottom. For sure, though, when the water flowed in over the tops of my boots, I thought about the movie *Titanic*. As the ocean wicked up my breeches to the waist, I thought about how the film hero Jack described the pain of icy water. Then my nervous Nelly began tossing her head in a more determined effort to spin. At that point, I forgot to be cold and concentrated on more serious guidance,

leg, and tone of voice.

Joyride? Of course it was. I learned that there is pleasure in the simplicity of clear thinking. I also learned that my camera bag on the pommel was adequately water-resistant, though I did not have much opportunity to shoot. And, I learned that breeches hoisted on a schoolhouse flagpole dry more quickly than leather boots fitted heels-up over the pickets of a fence.

TURNING THE THUNDER

The last of our four joyrides to date in Iceland was in 2005. It was primarily a buying trip for an American client, and we were invited to ride our final two choices in a fall horse round-up.

A Scandinavian proverb claims, “It is the great north wind that made the Vikings.” In that case, Gloria and I became honorary Vikings while waiting on the plateau for the next 400 horses to join the 100 that were already there behind the fence. The barrier of wire mesh with a top strand of barbed wire extended left and right disappearing into a rising terrain of high-contrast black earth and white snow. The wind drove crystalline grit into our faces and wiped our noses before they could drip.

A black line started as a tease in the distance, rolled slowly toward us, and eventually resolved itself into a parade. Gloria and I rode a hasty walk down the slope to wait on the other side of a wooden bridge that spanned a falls and powerful water. There, our job was to turn the herd. Her chestnut, my bay, and the mounts of a handful of Icelanders were steady and relaxed until the herd funneled onto the bridge for the crossing. The lead horses hit the planks and the sound spurred their pace and pumped my pulse. Not just countless hooves pounding thunder, but the wind and water flooded in as one with the raucous protest of mares, colts, fillies, and geldings.

Now our horses floated on quickening feet. Muscles flexed and ears flicked. The 500 would spearhead at us coming off the bridge. I was still securing my camera in the saddlebag when we engaged. I can never say for sure if at that moment I was in control or merely had enough balance to go with the rush. There was no choreography, only the chaos of a horse running at the left, another cutting in front, another swerving around from behind on the right after a close encounter, then a mare and foal veering away to set a new course. There



The new mount offered Vince was “a white-eyed witch of dark color and dubious temperament.”

was no sense of gait, no distinction of trot, tölt, or gallop, just a swirl of adrenalin and momentum that was definitely not a walk. And no photos.

Not long thereafter, on a relatively flat stretch, a two-point gallop stayed with the flow of traffic. A horse length ahead to my right, at about one o’clock, an Icelander stayed in his seat thanks to the forbearance of his horse. The black mount shifted balance on the run to stay under his rider, a jovial broad-shouldered blond who leaned left or right with every tip of his cognac bottle. Even without a swig, upright was a transitory position. To my left, at about 11 o’clock, another Icelander in a plaid wool shirt demonstrated comparable flexibility galloping on an equally supportive horse.

I was gaining on the pair and for an instant debated whether to take the slot between or go around. My decision to drop back was made when the rider to the right leaned across the front of my horse’s nose to pass the bottle. It was snatched with glee by the plaid rider and tipped to his mouth with such gusto that he leaned into an extraordinary angle over the loins of his horse.

My lesson for the day as rider/photographer was that sometimes it is okay to miss a few once-in-a-lifetime shots.

WHY WE DO IT

My sister who loves cruises once said that we couldn’t pay her to take the vacations that Gloria and I take. Why do we do it? I could try to explain a feeling of accomplishment in getting on multiple strange horses and for the most part staying there. Icelandics,

Russian Orlovs, Lusitanos, Boerperds, Thoroughbreds, and more, have had lessons to give. Then there’s the addictive stimulation of the senses that comes with riding. I could also quote St. Augustine: “The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.” I could go on to fill a book of my own but will conclude for now with Per Petterson. This Norwegian author of *Out Stealing Horses* expressed it as the joy of “the body exposed to the threat of the physical world and at the same time being at home in it.” To that I would add, “And feeling so alive in the moment.”



When not working in advertising as a copywriter, art director, photographer, creative director, and finally agency owner, Vince Verrecchio has been riding with camera at hand—conditions permitting—in North America, Europe, and Africa. His breed of choice after riding many is the Icelandic horse. Now lightly retired from advertising but not from riding and photography, his recent work is on Facebook at Joyrides Photography. He would like you to “like” his page and would be happy to say hello on email from Landrum, SC: verrecchiomc@windstream.net

THE SIMPLE THINGS

BY SANDIE WEAVER

Editor's note: In Issue One 2015 of the Quarterly, Helga Thordarson introduced us to the Tölt in Harmony philosophy, when Trausti Þór Guðmundsson, a master riding instructor and one of the originators of this new discipline of Icelandic riding, made his first teaching trip to North America. Sandie Weaver, who attended that first clinic, picks up the story with a report on the second clinic held at Kimberly Hart's Sunland Ranch in Encinitas, CA, last May.

In September of 2013 I was able to attend the FEIF Education Meeting in Uppsala, Sweden. I'm not a certified Icelandic horse trainer, but I have attended about 30 clinics given by Icelandic trainers so I was given special permission to attend. At the FEIF Meeting we were shown an exhibition of Tölt in Harmony. Top level Icelandic horse riders had practiced the Level 3 pattern, but felt they were not yet proficient at it so they decided to show the FEIF trainers the Level 2 pattern.

Leading up to the exhibition, while watching it, and even afterward, I was not a fan of Tölt in Harmony. It looked to me to be very much like dressage and, in my mind, it was not nearly as exciting



"A circle's not a circle unless it's a circle," Trausti reminds Michelle Takata, riding "Charlie." Photo by Susanne Koch-Hoover.

to watch as Icelandic Sport Competition. I was fearful that if we introduced this sort of competition into our Icelandic horse world, riders would ride incessantly in circles and figure eights and not ride their horses out on the trails as the Icelandic horse was meant to be ridden.

CHANGED THE WAY I RODE

In Southern California, we have about two Icelandic horse clinics a year, and I try to go to all of them. So, when the Tölt in Harmony clinic was offered in the fall of 2014, I signed up. I was very hesitant about going, and truth be told, I almost cancelled a couple of days before the clinic. I talked myself into it by thinking that "I can always learn something new from an Icelandic horse trainer."

I took my trail horse, Aska, and showed up at Kimberly Hart's Sunland Ranch. As Helga Thordarson so eloquently wrote about the clinic in the *Quarterly*, it was short of spectacular. It was *not* about riding in circles—although that's what we did. It was about control of the rider's body and how the rider's body influences the horse. It was about doing the simple things correctly.

What I loved about the first Tölt in Harmony clinic was that we were encouraged to ride everything we had learned out on the trail. We were not even shown any test patterns at the first clinic. I saw that this approach is meant to keep the Icelandic horse a horse to be ridden out in the country—only ridden there in a more controlled, beautiful way.



Kimberly Hart, shown here on Raudi, organized the series of Tölt in Harmony clinics at her Sunland Ranch in Encinitas, CA. Photo by Susanne Koch-Hoover.

At the end of the first clinic, Trausti felt we needed more practice on our own before we could even do a practice Tölt in Harmony test. We were given personal instructions to work on via Trausti's web site until the next Tölt in Harmony clinic scheduled for the following May.

I must say that knowing I would be held accountable for improvement in my riding changed the way I rode. No longer did I just ride out and enjoy the blue skies and lovely scenery. I had small mental goals every time I got on my horse. Don't get me wrong, my rides were still very enjoyable, but I knew I was going to have to report back to Trausti.

Unfortunately, I could not bring Aska to the second clinic as she was still recovering from a dog attack, and I was very disappointed at not being able to have Trausti assess our improvement. However, I brought our 27-year-old mare and she was a very good teacher for me. Trausti actually made a point of telling us that if horses are well taken care of and well trained, they can continue to grow and change until they are no longer healthy. The horse that impressed him most recently was a 21-year-old horse owned by an older woman in Norway. She rode him a lot on the farm, not in competitions—though Trausti said she could have won many awards with this horse.

WORKING SHAPE

Tölt in Harmony, Trausti explained, is about having control. Riding a horse is not like riding in a bus, it is more like driving a car. You have to concentrate in the beginning, and then it becomes automatic. A well-ridden Icelandic horse has even speed, good shape, and clear beat. Riding is serious business—but also lots of fun!

Trausti then placed us into classes of two and addressed each horse and rider's level. Our sessions in the saddle went something like this: To begin your ride, Trausti said, think of the horse as a car. Sit in the car and close the door by putting the horse into "working shape." Working shape uses the horse's stomach muscles and increases its carrying ability.

Then start to drive. Be very clear, or your horse will not know what you want. You have to be very definite. How you use your body as a rider is very important. The shape of your body is your tool to bring the horse under himself. Use your legs lightly to tell him to go and to shape him correctly. The energy ends up in your hands. Take and give the rein, and use light signals from your fingers. Always close your hands when you make a transition. Close your hands when you have to, but open them when you can.

Now slow the horse down and make higher energy. You get paid for every suc-



Master riding instructor Trausti Þór Guðmundsson is one of the originators of Tölt in Harmony. Photo by Susanne Koch-Hoover.

cessful half-halt you do: The payoff is the tölt. When you ride through corners, use collection. Focus on the small things and breathe!

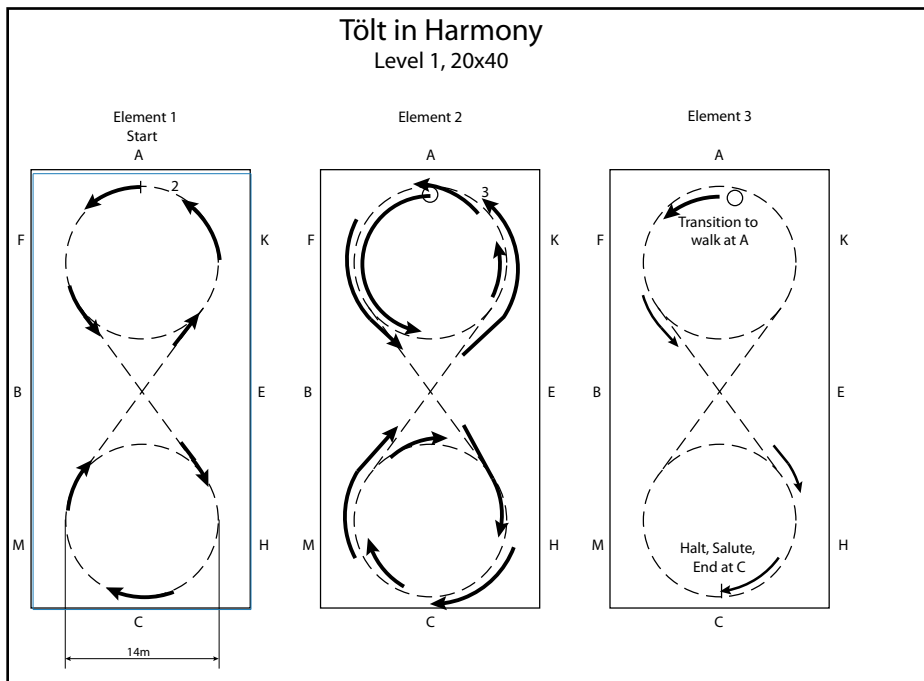
THE TEST

The second afternoon of the clinic was the day we would ride our Tölt in Harmony practice tests. Trausti talked to us about adrenaline. He said it can be used in a good way and a bad way. The best way to handle it is to know what to do—what to do with your hands, your seat, your whip, and your voice. He said to close your eyes and practice mentally what you are going to do.

He had all of us hold hands and recite, "Today is Tölt in Harmony Day. We are going out and doing the Tölt in Harmony Test. And at the end, we will feel good and so will our partners!"

We all went out, helped mark the Tölt in Harmony course with sawdust and sprinkled it with water so it wouldn't blow away. Then we followed Trausti walking the course.

The Tölt in Harmony Test #1 is ridden in the pattern shown here. The rider chooses music and determines its volume (low, medium, or high). The horse is equipped with a saddle (with or without a tree), snaffle bridle, reins, and four shoes. Other permitted equipment is: noseband and saddle pad. Boots on feet/legs or



The Level 1 Tölt in Harmony test has three elements, combining figure-eights, circles, and straight lines. A clear beat, an even speed, and a working shape are emphasized. Illustration by Denni Hauksson.



Sandie Weaver riding 27-year-old Sara frá Rauðamel in the clinic. If horses are well taken care of and well trained, they can continue to grow and change until they are no longer healthy, Trausti said. Photo by Susanne Koch-Hoover.

other protective equipment are prohibited. A whip is not permitted. (We were only doing a practice test so we did not have to wear show attire and Trausti chose the music.)

The pattern is ridden as follows:

Element 1: Figure of 8. The rider begins in working to medium tempo tölt and nods at A. The rider rides one complete figure 8. It is important to keep an even rhythm (beat and speed). Returning to A, the rider starts element 2.

Element 2: Circles. The rider rides at any speed, which has to be kept even. At A, the rider makes a circle, then follows the diagonal line across to the other short side and, at C, does another small circle. The rider then follows the diagonal line and continues on to the large circle. When the rider reaches A, he or she starts Element 3.

Element 3: Diagonal in walk. At A, the rider makes a transition to walk and rides across the diagonal in a relaxed, but still energetic walk with rein contact. At C, the rider halts for three seconds and nods to indicate the end of the test.

Each rider was given 10 minutes to ride the test. Then we dismounted and walked over to Trausti and Kimberly, who had acted as secretary, to receive our scores. We were judged separately on the three elements, as well as for seat and aids, and each element had a section for comments.

BIG CHANGES

Am I glad I attended both Tölt in Harmo-

ny clinics? You bet! Here are some post-clinic comments from other attendees that underline the usefulness of the Tölt in Harmony concept for Icelandic horse riders. Said the clinic organizer, Kimberly Hart, "Trausti gave me helpful advice and baby step instructions that were clear and applicable. My horse and I benefited from his expertise. I would love to host another Tölt in Harmony clinic at my farm."

Liz Christensen added, "I am a novice rider who enjoys trail rides with my 22-year-old Icelandic. I joined the clinic at the request of my husband, a more experienced rider who is always looking to improve. I learned so much in one weekend! Not small details like 'sit this way,' but big changes like how to ride with

more energy all the time, so that when I ask for tölt my horse is already listening, and how to keep his attention when I get what I want. I also enjoyed the camaraderie of the other riders and how all of us at various levels could come together in one clinic—not competing with each other, but just trying to improve ourselves."

Said Lena Koch Hoover, "I'm a new member of the USIHC and I've been riding Icelandic horses since I was seven years old (I'm 13 now). Last year I audited the clinic and was inspired to work more with my Icelandic horse, Drifandi. This year I got to ride in the clinic to work more on the relationship between me and my horse. Tölt in Harmony was perfect to achieve this! Tölting on a circle pattern taught me to pay attention to my posture and seat, while keeping the horse collected and in an even tölt. It was very fun to ride with Trausti and to learn new things from other riders and horses, not just my own. Riding in Trausti's clinic inspired me to practice regularly in the arena and perfect my horse's tölt."

Visit Trausti's Riding School at <http://traustis-ridingschool.weebly.com>. See the Tölt in Harmony patterns in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo2qYQTRzAE>. If you are interested in scheduling a Tölt in Harmony clinic or test, contact the Tölt in Harmony (TiH) association chairman, Denni Hauksson, at info@iaodenni.nu for more information.



Tölt in Harmony is not about riding in circles—it's about control of the rider's body and how the rider's body influences the horse. Here Trausti coaches Helga Thordarson on Eyvindur frá Oddhóli. Photo by Susanne Koch-Hoover.

WHY A CLINIC?

BY JANET BOGGS

Riding is not just about hopping on your horse and going for a trail ride or working in the arena. It's about understanding your horse, and Icelandics with their extra gaits are more complicated than most. Does your saddle fit properly to encourage all gaits? How do you train the tölt? What do you do if your horse won't trot? How do you correct a pacey tölt? How do you train pace? Is your riding interfering with the horse's gaits? How does the training of a four-gaited horse and a five-gaited one differ?

Learning the answers to questions like these improves the health and happiness of your horse—and makes riding a joy. Some of us are lucky enough to have Icelandic horse trainers nearby, but many of us rely on clinics to further our education.

Take, for example, the three-day clinic last May with Eyjólfur Ísólfsón at Red

Feather Icelandics in Washington. Jolli, as he is called, is the chief riding instructor at Hólar University in Iceland and a master trainer. The first two days were devoted to hour-long lessons for eight riders. After lunch on these two days, Jolli lectured on the theory of training the Icelandic horse, sharing the training scale he has developed. (These lectures will be the subject of a forthcoming DVD in the series.) The third day consisted of a 25-minute lesson in the morning and a 15-minute one-on-one session with Jolli in the afternoon.

BREED STEWARDS

"We were very excited and pleased to host a clinic with Jolli," said Linda Templeton, who owns Red Feather with her husband, Dick. "He has an encyclopedic knowledge of the Icelandic horse, and he's a skilled teacher."

Red Feather sits at the foot of Mt.



Many of the exercises Jolli taught were at the walk on a 20-meter circle. "Do lots of transitions and exercises in walk for a better tölt," he recommended. Here, Christine Vowles concentrates while riding Tobbi. Photo by Linda Templeton.



Mount Adams rising above the barn at Red Feather Icelandics. Photo by Linda Templeton.



“Everyone who came to the clinic took home new tools,” said Linda Templeton. “That makes the effort that goes into organizing a clinic like this rewarding for us.” Here, Jolli works with Janet Boggs and Koki. Photo by Linda Templeton.

Adams, a wedding-cake slice of a mountain, in the Trout Lake Valley. Each summer the Templetons offer a series of clinics there. In addition to the May clinic with Jolli, they hosted Ann-Kristin Kloth (an IPVZ Trainer B), who also judged a schooling show for the local Icelandic horse community. In September, Trausti Þór Guðmundsson will conduct a Tölt in Harmony clinic. Through October, Steinar Sigurbjörnsson will give monthly lessons.

The farm has a regulation oval track, a pace lane, and an indoor arena with attached schoolroom and viewing area, as well as covered bleachers for participants to watch the lessons. There is a sound system for both the arena and the track. Camping facilities are available.

“We consider ourselves and everyone who owns an Icelandic horse stewards of the breed,” said Linda. “That’s why we built this place. So we can come together as a community to improve ourselves and the horses we love.

“People ask me all the time why they should come to a clinic like this one,” Linda continued. “The answer I give them is this: A clinic is not just a riding lesson. It’s an opportunity to learn how to train from watching an instructor work with other riders and horses, especially if that rider is dealing with an issue you have with your

horse. Something just clicks, and you now have a new training tool to improve your riding and better your horse.

“Everyone who came to the Jolli clinic took home new tools. That makes the effort that goes into organizing a clinic like this rewarding for us.”

To give the rider’s perspective, we asked three participants in the clinic with Jolli to share what they learned. Here are their responses:

LORI BIRGE AND GEISLI

I brought my 15-year-old gelding, Geisli from Vermont Icelandic Horse Farm, to the clinic. Geisli and I have been working with a dressage trainer for the past three years, but I depend on clinics with Icelandic horse trainers for more specific education for my horse and myself. This was Jolli’s first time in Washington. His reputation is huge, and I was not disappointed. Jolli prefers doing private lessons, and he was a master at customizing each lesson to the horse and rider. I don’t think I have ever worked so hard in a 40-minute lesson.

When Jolli asked me what my goals were for the clinic, I told him I wanted to improve the quality of Geisli’s gaits. After watching us in all four gaits, Jolli decided that the best way to improve Geisli’s gaits would be to work on getting Geisli to stretch his neck and lower his head. This would allow Geisli to free up his shoulders, leading toward collection and self-carriage. He showed me how to tell from the saddle if Geisli was leading with his forehead. Jolli stressed that I should work on exercises to help Geisli lower his forehead and not rush him to do more until he does so consistently. Otherwise, he could become confused about what I expect.

Many of the exercises were in the walk on a 20-meter circle. We worked to move Geisli’s hindquarters or shoulders toward or away from the center of the



Eyjólfur Ísólffsson or “Jolli,” the chief riding instructor at Hólar University in Iceland, gave a three-day clinic at Red Feather Icelandics in Washington. Photo by Linda Templeton.



Fifteen-year-old Geisli from Vermont Icelandic Horse Farm at the Jolli clinic. Said his rider, Lori Birge, "I don't think I have ever worked so hard in a 40-minute lesson." Photo by Linda Templeton.

circle. We also bent his head in both directions or kept it straight in some cases to make him more supple while at the same time asking for the lower head.

Jolli also mentioned that Geisli's head position should not change when he moves to another gait. We practiced that by asking for a faster walk that became a "power walk." Geisli did break into a tölt several times, but since he couldn't maintain the lower head, I brought him back to a walk.

After one lesson, Geisli's tendency to bulge at the shoulder was also much improved. Even though we did not have enough time to move on to other exercises, Jolli suggested that lateral work, such as leg yield, shoulder-in, or travers would also be good for Geisli's suppleness, straightness, posture, and balance.

I really enjoyed the clinic. Since everyone's lesson was different, it was a great learning experience for both riders and auditors.

CHRISTINE VOWLES AND TOBBI

One of the things I liked about the clinic was how Jolli structured each riding session to benefit both horse and rider and the audience as a whole. He gave one-on-one advice on how to deal with specific challenges for each horse and rider and had them work on related exercises,

which is the typical format for most clinics, but throughout the sessions he also explained to the audience why certain things might be a challenge to anyone training an Icelandic horse—giving a broader idea of what to think about when riding an Icelandic horse.

I found I didn't want to miss a single session because there was always something new to learn, a memorable quote to write down, and a different way to approach training the tölt. He is a true teacher and knows how to manage his students so they all leave feeling a bit smarter!

Here are some of my favorite "Jolli-isms":

- If you don't have a stop and a go, you don't have good tölt.
- Reward in proportion to the difficulty.
- Feeling control is less about stopping the legs and more about moving the legs the way you want.
- Backing up is good for collection because it makes the horse aware of its legs.
- If a horse leans on the bit, he is putting his fifth leg down, and that makes it more difficult to get the tölt.
- Tölt is a gift from the gods, but it doesn't fall from the sky.

- Don't let your horse decide the tempo.
- All horses should be able to do a slow tölt in an elongated figure-8 to relax.
- Ground work is important because it creates a calmer horse. The horse learns faster without the rider on top.
- Do lots of transitions and exercises in walk for a better tölt.
- Power walk is an important exercise for training the tölt.
- Know when to release the reins. Hanging on the reins confuses the horse.
- Think about being a fly when using your legs—be light!

And I would be remiss not to mention how lucky we were to have Red Feather Farm as the site for the clinic. It is a beautiful farm in a great setting. Dick and Linda Templeton are the best hosts—gracious, fun, and thoughtful. They go out of their way to make everyone welcome and ready to learn. Jolli was very impressed with the facilities—what a great compliment!

DIANE GRAVES AND ELSKA

In my lessons, I was riding Elska, a very talented mare belonging to Red Feather. She was stretching her neck down a bit and falling into trot. To help her, we focused on head and body carriage, transitions between walk and tölt, and staying in tölt once we had achieved the gait.

To collect the mare, we worked her in a very, very slow but energetic walk. Jolli suggested that I imagine I was asking the horse to step repeatedly rather than actually walk. That's how slow Jolli wanted us to go—with lots of little driving aids and little restraining aids, but never at the same time.

We did tons of transitions, mostly speed transitions between backing up, the super slow walk, a more normal walk, a power walk, a few steps of slow tölt. Jolli says you have to do these transitions at least "two million times" when training the tölt.

At home, I have been working on these transitions with my own horses. Only 1,999,950 more times to go . . .

For more information on clinics at Red Feather Icelandics, see: www.redfeathericelandics.com

IS KAPPI FOR SALE?

BY JANET MULDER

“Tell Kappi to ‘walk on,’” I say to Mia. Mia smiles, her young face lighting up. “Walk on!” she says, encouraging Kappi to move forward. Kappi walks obediently next to me, then in a small circle as I lunge him slowly. I ask Mia to show me how she can put one hand on her head, then switch hands. She reaches toward Kappi’s ears, snuggling her face into his thick mane. Kappi’s patience and attention to this young new rider make me proud.

Mia gets bored with just walking, “I want to trot,” she whines. “Hold on tight,” I respond and click to Kappi to urge him into the faster gait. Kappi lowers his head and picks up an easy trot, bobbing his head with each step. Mia holds onto the handle attached to her saddle and focuses on keeping her seat tight to the horse, grinning with the movement of “her” horse. Kappi’s eyes tell me he is happy to oblige and carry this light rider. Kappi is my 24-year-old Icelandic horse. He has been with me for 16 years. He is beyond a doubt the best horse I have ever known.

When people visit my farm and are looking for a horse for themselves or a loved one, I am often asked, “Is Kappi for sale?” I stifle my amusement when I reply, “You couldn’t afford him.” On paper Kappi is average in every sense of the word, a four-gaited chestnut gelding with medium action. But a ride on Kappi is unforgettable. A friend of mine and my 4-H leader told me, “I will always remember the ride you took me on for your 18th birthday, and let me ride Kappi.” She loved riding my horse with the fast smooth tölt. Others have told me, “Kappi is a dream boat,” “Can we just clone Kappi?” and “This is how you get ‘em, one ride on Kappi and people are hooked on Icelandics.” Yes, this is how I share my passion for Icelandic horses, through Kappi my wonder horse.

With the help of my dad, Kappi came to Alaska in the fall of 1999, when I was 15. He was purchased from Kentucky and had been imported from Iceland. He was advertised as a four-gaited gelding that would be good for a beginner-to-intermediate rider and nice on trails. Kappi lived up to this description and more. I didn’t know how



Janet Mulder teaching her daughter Mia, then three years old, to ride Kappi. “This is how I share my passion for Icelandic horses,” Janet says: “through Kappi my wonder horse.” Photo by Bryan Mulder.

much he would influence the rest of my life. Fifteen-year-old girls often don’t accept how much they don’t know. Kappi got along great with the other horses and sure did tölt well on the trails. Kappi did not like to trot, his canter was almost nonexistent, and he hated to go out in front. Other than that he was a perfect horse, and we had our work cut out for us.

Kappi was my daily companion in high school. He was always willing to take me out on the trails and get away from everything else. I first learned to meditate on those trails with my horse. Listening to his hooves as they pounded out *black-n-decker*, *black-n-decker*, *black-n-decker* in a perfect four-beat tölt rhythm. The wave of my body moving with his strides in the saddle, the reins in my hands, and Kappi carrying me effortlessly wherever I wanted to go. It was my freedom from all the frustrating challenges of being a teenager. Kappi needed our rides as well: He gained confidence to ride out alone and developed his other gaits.

A bombproof horse is hard to come by, but Kappi proved these qualities to me many times. One of the best was a day out on the trails. We had been going down a slight decline at a pretty good speed for tölt when I looked into the trees ahead of us. There sitting among the late summer

berries was a rather large brown bear. I didn’t know what to do, so I asked Kappi to continue along just as we had been. He listened. He took one look at the bear, one ear back at me, and tölted right down the hill. The bear stayed put. Around the next bend in the trail we caught up with two women hurrying up a hill. When they heard the hoofbeats they turned and panted, “Did you see the bear?” “Yes, but he was still sitting there, so I think you’re okay,” I replied. The runners slowed their pace a little when they heard that.

IN THE SHOW RING

I enjoy riding in competitions. When I was younger I rode in 4-H and in local Icelandic horse shows; now I ride in the occasional dressage show. Kappi shines in the show ring. It can be hard to decide whether to compete in Tölt 1 or Tölt 2, because Kappi is great at both. When I was younger, my other horse didn’t have a fast tölt, so Kappi was my Tölt 1 horse, and he won almost every time. We also rode Four Gait and as long as we were able to canter to the right we would win. Left lead canter was our most difficult gait, even on the oval track. Years later I have accepted that I don’t ride as well to the left and am training my equitation

and balance to overcome it. I surprised myself when Kappi and I were able to do simple lead changes on a straightaway just a couple of summers ago.

Kappi went to school with me in Washington State for years. I say that he is the reason I was able to graduate with a bachelor's degree in three years. He kept me sane and mostly out of trouble. When I had a difficult class or the boy I was interested in wasn't interested in me, Kappi was always willing to take me for a ride and bring my focus back to the moment, to the wind and the smell of horses.

A NEW PURPOSE

After college I got married and had children. Kappi wasn't treated as the priority he deserved to be. He was still happy whenever I came to see him and nickered when I approached his corral. He still ate before any of the other horses and still tölted smoothly whenever we went riding. But he was lonely and needed a purpose. My 4-H leader from years ago asked if Kappi could be used in her therapeutic riding program for a few weeks in the summer. She offered to take the best care of him, and I could come see him whenever I wanted and ride him, as long as it wasn't when he was being used for the program. I agreed; he needed to help someone else, and because of his bombproof qualities he was really good for the program. Kappi's height made him a favorite with the side

walkers, his good temperament a favorite among the therapists, and the riders loved him because to them he was perfect. Kappi volunteered for a few seasons with Rainbow Connection therapeutic riding program, then Take the Reins.

In 2014, Kappi earned the Ramblin Gold Memorial Award for being such an amazing horse to the therapy riders. Said Annie Mabry, Path International Advanced Instructor and Region 9 Representative, "Besides being valued as a hippotherapy horse, Kappi was special in that we could put riders on him independently and trust that he would take care of them, despite them not always being able to give clear commands. He instinctively seemed to know that when little Kelsy with Down syndrome, or Kaitlyn with cerebral palsy, wanted him to walk over poles instead of staying on the rail, or step up to a mailbox to retrieve a letter, that that was his job, to do what they asked and keep them safe. The ability to ride independently, to maneuver a trail course and compete in a horse show when so many of these children have so little in their lives that they can succeed at, is very powerful medicine! Kappi gave them the means to succeed and to be special for what they could achieve with their own abilities."

THE TOLT GRIN

It was when I put my own little girl, Mia, up on Kappi at just a year old that I really



When Kappi came to her 16 years ago, says Janet Mulder, "I didn't know how much he would influence the rest of my life." Photo by Bryan Mulder.

knew how special a horse he is. He grew up with me and was there for me through many major life changes. He is still going strong and sturdy with my little girl on his back. Now at six years old, Mia is able to ride Kappi on the trails and she can walk, trot, and tölt him. I trust Kappi with Mia because he has carried me on so many rides and I know exactly how he will react to every situation. Mia loves the freedom of being out on her horse by herself. Sometimes Mia even shares Kappi with her younger brother so he can enjoy some saddle time too.

Kappi is still giving lessons to students enthusiastic about Icelandic horses and will tölt for almost anyone. Every rider who has ridden his tölt gets a huge smile on his or her face. The grin under the helmet is all I need to know that Kappi is changing lives forever. He may not be a world champion, he won't win a pace race, and he can't be bred, but Kappi is priceless. With all the training and experiences he has had, he is the best horse for what he does—which is everything. Sorry, Kappi is not for sale and if he were you couldn't afford him. However, if you ever need a fantastic ride, Kappi will be happy to take you tölting down the trails.

Janet has been riding Icelandic horses for over 20 years. She is a FEIF International Trainer Level 1 and currently owns three Icelandic horses. She lives in Anchorage, AK with her husband and two children, and is the Youth Leader for the regional club AIHA.



Mia, age three, peeks out from under "her" horse, Kappi. Photo by Bryan Mulder.

EXHILARATING FUN BY LORNA LITTLEWAY

In the March 2015 issue of the *Quarterly*, we began a series of conversations with USIHC members, coordinated by the Leisure Riding Committee. Our interviewee this time is Carrie Croton, a 2014 Pleasure Riding Program silver medal winner. We met in 2013 at Tolt Farm in New Jersey, where I would see Carrie very early in the mornings working out horses in the arena. I had the opportunity to get to know her better at a Tolt Farm barbecue where, naturally, we discussed all things Icelandic.

Lorna: When did you start riding?

Carrie: I started riding about 20 years ago when I was in my 30s. I never rode as a kid, but always wanted to. I started taking lessons with a co-worker who found out soon after that she was pregnant. She dropped out, but the bug had bitten me hard and I just never stopped riding.

I learned how to ride hunt seat and took lessons regularly with some great teachers, both human and horse. I rode the trails of Rockefeller State Park in Tarrytown, NY on a leased quarterhorse named Dylan with my best friend and her horse Toogie, a quarterhorse mix. I never had an interest in showing or competition, but loved being out on the trails on horseback.

Lorna: When and where was your first experience riding Icelandic horses?

Carrie: My first experience riding Icelandic horses was during a riding trek with Heklu Hestar on the Hekla-to-Landmannalaugar trail in Iceland in 2000. I don't



Carrie Croton on a trek in Iceland in 2013; below, she meets the foals at Hvammur farm in the Vatnsdalur valley. Photos by Anne Owen.

remember what made me take the trip, but I probably read something somewhere about Icelandic horses being bomb-proof and easy to ride and how beautiful the country is. Even though the volcano Hekla had erupted a few months prior, and I wasn't the most experienced rider in open country, I was determined to go.

I flew into Reykjavik in early June and took a bus to the Austvadholt farm near Hella. After meeting the horses, we headed out over beautiful fields of green grass gleaming in the sun. The next day it rained,

hailed, snowed, and then hailed again. The landscape that day was bleak and dramatic. We were riding over fields of lava and high, steep trails covered in fresh volcanic ash and snow. We were with an entire herd of loose horses, something completely new to me.

My mare Fiðrildi (Butterfly) let me know right away that she wasn't interested in too much input. I couldn't get the tölt, my backside was raw, and half the time I was scared, but I was also amazed at the balance, fitness, and sensibility of these horses in all kinds of terrain and footing. And they had big manes to hold onto (really tight). It was all exhilarating fun, and I couldn't believe I had to leave the horses and Iceland to go back to the U.S.

Over the past several years, I have had the opportunity to visit Iceland several times on riding treks in different parts of the country. I believe with all my heart that anyone who owns an Icelandic horse or is thinking of getting one should try and visit Iceland to experience the Icelandic horse in its original, natural surroundings, enjoy some great riding, and visit some of the most beautiful and unusual geography in the world.

Lorna: What endears Icelandics to you?

Carrie: Since that first ride in Iceland my desire is to only ride Icelandic horses. I am not a breed-centric type of person



(I'm really more of a mutt-centric type of person), but I am completely taken by Icelandic horses: their personalities and the smooth gait of the tölt. In the March edition of the *Quarterly* (Issue One 2015), there was an interview with Stephanie Sher who said she wished she had spent more time with Icelandic horses rather than other breeds, and I agree. I am so impressed that Icelandic horses from Iceland (and as much as possible in the U.S.), spend most of their formative years out on pasture with mares and other foals. Their bodies and minds grow strong, and they learn how to be horses. This is what makes Icelandic horses different from other horses, along with selective breeding over many hundreds of years. These are horses that have naturally developed intelligence, judgments, and opinions. This, in combination with their "go," makes them wonderful companions on the ground and in the saddle.

Lorna: Where do you ride now?

Carrie: My lucky day was when I moved to New Jersey, due to a change in my work location, and found Anne Owen's Tolt Farm in Whitehouse Station, NJ. I have had the opportunity to ride many different Icelandic horses and enjoyed the benefit of Anne's training of both horses and humans. After many years of riding hunt seat, I needed to completely change my body position. Nothing makes me happier than being out on the trails, riding with Anne and her horse Gná, humming along in the beautiful four-beat tölt rhythm. On nippy riding days when the sun is in and out and the horses' manes are streaming in the wind, we like to say "just like Iceland!" (Wishful thinking!)

Lorna: Are you active in any USIHC programs?

Carrie: The USIHC is a great resource for the Icelandic horse in America because its members understand and wish to continue supporting the unique qualities of the Icelandic horse. Best of all, it reminds us to keep learning and to enjoy Icelandic horses to the utmost.

I enjoy participating in the USIHC Pleasure Riding Program and won a silver medal and 500-hour patch for my time trail riding and doing groundwork in 2014 with Icelandic horses on Anne's farm. The PRP (now being redesigned) is a great way to encourage people to be out and about with their horses.

HUNTER PACE

"It was blue ribbons all around," says Anne Owen of Tolt Farm in Whitehouse Station, N.J., when four riders from her barn participated in a May 31 hunter pace at Lord Stirling Stable in Basking Ridge, N.J. At right in the top photo, Anne rides her mare Gná. She and Sandy Perkins (second from left on her horse Aria), came in first in the senior class. Karen Damato, at left, and Marilyn Weiner came in first in the hilltopper class, riding Tolt Farm horses Freyr and Stigandi, respectively. The annual spring hunter pace is organized by the Friends of Lord Stirling Stable, a group that raises money for various activities, including a retirement program for the county stable's school horses. "We have one of their retired horses at our barn," noted Anne.

Below, Anne leads Gná and Stigandi. Anne should have received Second Place in the 2014 Pleasure Riding Program All Stars category, having accumulated 718 points over the year, not as announced on the USIHC website at <http://www.icelandics.org/prpscore>. We apologize for the mistake. Both photos by David Owen.



RIDE TO THE EDGE

BY KYDEE K. SHEETZ WITH BARBARA FRISCHE

Faster? Really? I had already galloped 150 meters down the track as fast as I'd ever ridden at a formal Icelandic event. I was quite surprised, as the judge seemed to be telling me to let my horse gallop like I do at home when nobody is watching or when I'm competing in the horse races at the county fair. This was when I realized that riding in a breeding evaluation is very different from Icelandic sport horse competition. I knew that the rules were different, but it was becoming clear that the goals were different as well.

While watching breeding evaluations in the past, I had been most impressed by the beautifully collected and carefully presented slow tölt and collected canter elements. Participating in a mock breeding evaluation showed me that the forwardness and fire of the faster gaits are also uniquely important. To be successful in sport competition the rider must meticulously avoid mistakes, whereas the breeding evaluation rider needs to ride to the edge of the horse's ability in all gaits and speeds and allow them to make the occasional mistake in exchange for moments of brilliance. Excellence in form under rider with small occasional errors is more highly valued than a ride that is free of mistakes but less impressive.

In May, a breeding evaluation and a sport horse competition took place at Swallowland Farm in Kentucky. The small number of horses participating in the breeding evaluation on Wednesday and Thursday meant that there was plenty of time to do something else. The judges proposed a last minute addition to Wednesday afternoon that they called a "mock evaluation." Judges Marlise Grimm and Elisabeth Jansen invited everyone with the courage to participate to bring a horse to the track and experience what it was like to ride in a breeding evaluation for scores. They would not judge conformation, only the rideability portion of a full evaluation.

Since this was an opportunity to try out the breeding evaluation format without the pressure of permanent scores—



"Riding in a breeding evaluation is very different from Icelandic sport horse competition," Kydee says. She knew the rules were different, but soon learned the goals were different as well. Here she shows her gelding Tandri from Aslan's Country at walk. Photo by Shaila Ann Sigsgaard.

and with the additional advantage of hearing comments from the judges in real time—I decided to go for it and entered my gelding Tandri from Aslan's Country in the event. The USIHC website (detailed below) is an excellent resource for learning more about the scoring system. While I had memorized much of it, including the point system, the rideability and conformation weight percentages, etc., at a breeding evaluation seminar previously, this was an opportunity to experience those scores personally. As this experimental event was a last-minute idea, I had a mere half hour to get ready—which was good, as the limited preparation time prevented me from losing my nerve!

At the brief riders' meeting prior to the event we were instructed in the basic rules, such as the equipment requirements (stricter than in sport competition) and technique for presenting the gaits. We were told to follow the usual breeding evaluation first assessment pattern of presenting either four or five gaits in any order for a total of ten passes

in front of the judges on the straight part of the track. As I headed to the track, I strapped on various electronic devices, including a personal sound system so that I could hear the judges' comments and a signaling device for the robotic camera system that would follow my every move. Being able to hear the judges' comments was invaluable, as it allowed me to adjust my riding during each pass.

To "ride to the edge" in all gaits and to quit focusing on avoiding mistakes made the entire experience fun and challenging. Small mistakes can have a disastrous effect on sport scores but seemed nearly irrelevant to breeding scores. For example, in slow tölt I was supposed to show absolutely as much connection, suppleness, and elevation as possible, even if I might potentially break gait for a moment, whereas in fast tölt I was encouraged to really "go for it" in speed, even at the risk of breaking into canter. Tandri's canter was supposed to be as slow and uphill as possible, whereas his gallop was to be a real gallop like when I race my

quarterhorse friends at home. When I kept encouraging him to go ever more forward at the fast gaits, Tandri seemed pleasantly surprised at being allowed to move at speed on a track, and he reached deep to find the speed and suspension that he normally reserves just for our “crazy wild gallop days.” The judges announced the score after each pass, which made it easy to determine if I was getting closer to the ideal with each adjustment. After we had all completed our rides, the group trooped to the lounge where the robotic camera was downloaded and the recordings played back while the judges gave each rider additional comments and advice. While I generally dread personal video, I found this final session to be a great addition to the event, and it seemed like most of the other riders agreed.

Participating in this mock evaluation was invaluable for many reasons. I very much enjoyed being judged less on my riding ability and more on what I was able to create in the horse. The details of rider seat and position were less important than presenting Tandri in the best possible way. Being able to focus on getting the absolute most out of my horse at every gait and speed, rather than riding so as to avoid mistakes, was refreshing. It is easy to become too careful and to focus primarily on preventing errors, rather than striving to create great things, and this mock evaluation reminded me to avoid that inclination.

Riding in this event was also a great learning opportunity in terms of developing more solid and firsthand knowledge of what judges are looking for when they are watching a breeding horse. Every rider gained information that will help us to watch future formal breeding evaluations with a more educated and experienced eye. I think many riders were surprised by the extent to which the judges encouraged speed and forwardness in each horse. As a former race horse trainer, speed is not particularly concerning for me, but many riders fear riding fast and forward. The circumstances of a breeding evaluation are remarkably safe for working at speed, however, as the track is long and straight, and the track markers encourage even the most recalcitrant horse to simply go forward in a straight line.

So, yes, I did indeed encourage Tandri to be the best that he could be that

day, and I was pleasantly surprised by what both of us learned. My horizons were broadened, as I learned to push the limits of my horse’s ability, and I discovered that he had more to give than I had ever asked for in terms of speed, collection, and beauty. I encourage organizers to consider including this concept in future evaluations whenever possible, as it was both a lot of fun and a great educational experience.

The USIHC website’s “Breed” page (<http://www.icelandics.org/breeding.php>) details the

official breeding standards and goals. You can also download the official handbook, *FIZO 2015: FEIF Rules for Icelandic Horse Breeding from the FEIF site* (<http://www.feiffengur.com/documents/fizo15.pdf>). The 2015 Kentucky Spring Evaluation was organized by Létileiki Icelandics; contact the show manager, Margaret C. Brandt, at maggie@lettleikiicelandics.com or see www.icelandics.org/evaluationresults/KY2015.pdf. Contact Kydee K. Sheetz at Aslan’s Country Icelandics, acicelandics@yahoo.com or 218-349-2209.

BREEDING FOR PLEASURE

The USIHC Annual Meeting, held in Minnesota in March, opened with a fact-filled presentation by FEIF International Breeding Judge Barbara Frische. It sought to answer the question, What does owning or riding a pleasure horse have to do with breeding?

Barbara presented three examples. Mósi, with an evaluation score of 7.4, is a lazy, heavily built gelding that is courageous and has a lot of supple, natural tölt, but no other good gaits. Tinna, a first-prize mare with a score of 8.0, is a spirited, reactive, lightly built mare strong in pace that, nevertheless, is not “the horse for America.” The stallion, Maður, with a score of 8.5, “has it all”, with high marks in all three categories, conformation, character, and gait abilities.” Barbara used these examples (all hypothetical, not real horses) to explain how a horse is judged. She pointed out that an overall low-scoring horse like Mósi might still be highly valued by a pleasure rider who is looking for a calm, smooth horse, while the overall high-scoring Tinna would probably be too spirited, reactive, and challenging for all but an experienced rider.

“Don’t look only at the total score from an evaluation, please,” Barbara cautioned. The important thing about a young horse assessment or a full breeding evaluation, Barbara explained, “is that you get information about your horse: what is good, what is not, and why. You get a really good description of the horse.

“A breeding judgment is much more than just saying something about the horse’s general quality. Mósi could be a super-nice pleasure horse for an older person who doesn’t want to ride fast, and who wants to be comfortable and safe. This low score doesn’t say Mósi is a bad horse. The only conclusion you can draw from this assessment is that Mósi should not be a breeding stallion.”

At the same time, Tinna’s first-prize score doesn’t say she would make either a good pleasure horse or a good broodmare. To learn why or why not, you have to look at the individual traits assessed. “Tinna is super good in pace. She has a lot of willingness, but she needs a good rider to handle it. How is she for a pleasure rider? Not good. If you bred Tinna to Mósi,” Barbara warned, “you could get a disaster—a spooking, hot character, with no gaits.”

To breed a good pleasure horse, you need to use either a mare or a stallion—or both—that shows many of “the qualities we have fun with.” For the American market, that means a nicely balanced, easily tölting horse that also has good walk, trot, and canter. It’s a horse that “collects itself” by naturally putting more weight on its hind legs. “You want a horse with a high-raised neck so it’s comfortable to ride—you don’t feel like you’re sitting on a bar stool.” It’s for this reason that a stallion like Maður, with five good gaits, good conformation, and a cooperative and courageous character, is a good breeding horse—not because he has the number 8.5 attached to his name.

“People say our breeding goal is going in the wrong direction,” Barbara concluded. “It’s not. Of course, I could criticize. I’m not happy, as a judge, with the form we use to judge the ridden horses. But our breeding goal is to breed a super horse that anyone can ride. It is to produce a horse that is loved and enjoyed by many people.” —By Nancy Marie Brown

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

We welcome letters from our readers. Please send them to quarterly@icelandics.org

RETENTION

FROM LAURA HINSON

Editor's note: Doug Smith received the following letter in response to his commentary in Issue One 2015 of the Quarterly. Laura gave us permission to print it.

I always liked Icelandic. I knew nothing about them except they had a gait called tölt and they were hairy and short. I did not know anyone who had one until one day at Pebble Beach, CA, when I was riding my dressage horse and Julie Holt drove up with two of them. I oooed and aahed over them and said, "I wish I had one of these." When she said they were for sale, I jumped and bought Glenna. I was given her papers and I followed instructions to get her in my name. I do not know if I even joined USIHC or just registered her. I had no idea what it the USIHC was. I had to reach out and find others with Icelandics. (Remember, Doug, when I tapped you on the shoulder at a restaurant because you had on an Icelandic t-shirt?)

Lin Campbell found me when I signed up for a NATRAC ride in Santa Cruz, CA. She made it a point to come see me and meet me. I think she found me because I was the only Icelandic registered on that ride. Somehow I found Annette. But it

was many years before I really understood anything about Icelandic, before I figured out who the people were, truly learned about the horses and went to some shows (to watch). So, I was "out there" for years. I may have joined the USIHC on and off, but except for the magazine I saw no value in it.

Now I am more knowledgeable, more involved, and I support the USIHC because I want the breed to be successful. Early on, had someone reached out to me, it would have been a much faster ride to get me involved. And I would have stayed.

So my point is this. How hard would it be to have a process to provide outreach to new owners? The USIHC Facebook page is sort of a bulletin board. Not very warm, and it assumes the page reader is "already in the know."

As a newbie, I knew nothing about anything, so you have to assume that there are others out there as well. I did not even understand the gaits very well. Using that page as an educational tool, as a "Did you know?" or "This person did this blah blah blah," would be far more interesting and would be an educational tool as well as a bulletin board. The Regional Clubs are okay, but there does not feel like a national cohesiveness when it comes to social media.

Which brings me to new horse owners. Here is another idea. When a person registers a horse, if they have never been in the

system before, a *ping* should happen. This is a person who is new and must be cultivated! Have a volunteer reach out and send a congratulatory note to that person and invite them to join. Put them in touch with others in their area and add them to the Facebook page (they can always leave). Offer to send them back issues of the *Quarterly* so they are integrated into the community faster. I am sure in every area of the country, there would be willing participants to reach out and pull that person in. The *Quarterly* is online to members, but why not share some of that information from on social media?

There is a Facebook page called "Icelandic Horses for Fun" that has 618 members. It is very active. Does the USIHC join groups like that and participate with announcements, etc.? Just another idea. Granted there needs to be a person to facilitate this, but there may be willing volunteers.

In addition, go back to the previous members and touch base. Invite them back. Go through the same motions as you would a new member. (See above.)

Okay, that is my story and those are my suggestions. I am happy to be one of those people. Outreach is key. If you have done all this, then these are moot points. But if you have, I have not seen them. And if I have not noticed, who else has not noticed?





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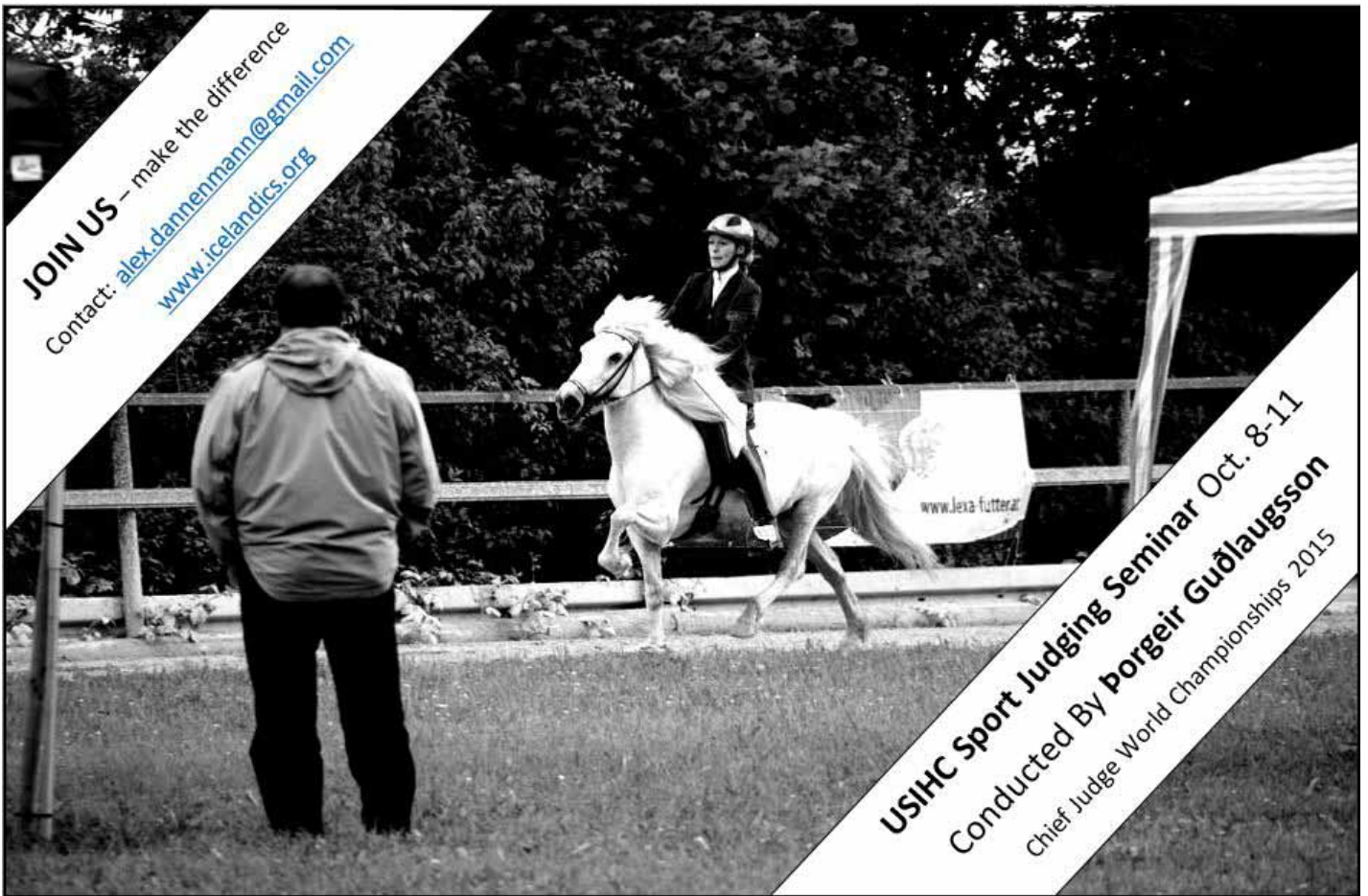
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WHY REGISTER YOUR HORSE WITH THE USIHC?

Photo by Eleanor Anderson

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, the Congress website. Or contact the Registrar, Ásta Covert, at registry@icelandics.org or 866-929-0009.

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



F A R M L I S T

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

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Silver Maple Icelandic Horse Farm
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(802) 889-9585 (phone)
susan.peters@gmail.com
www.silvermapleicelandics.com

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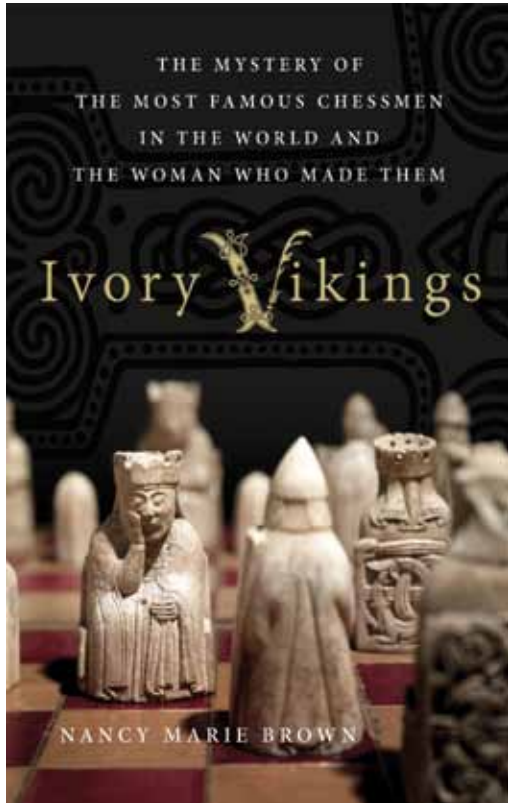


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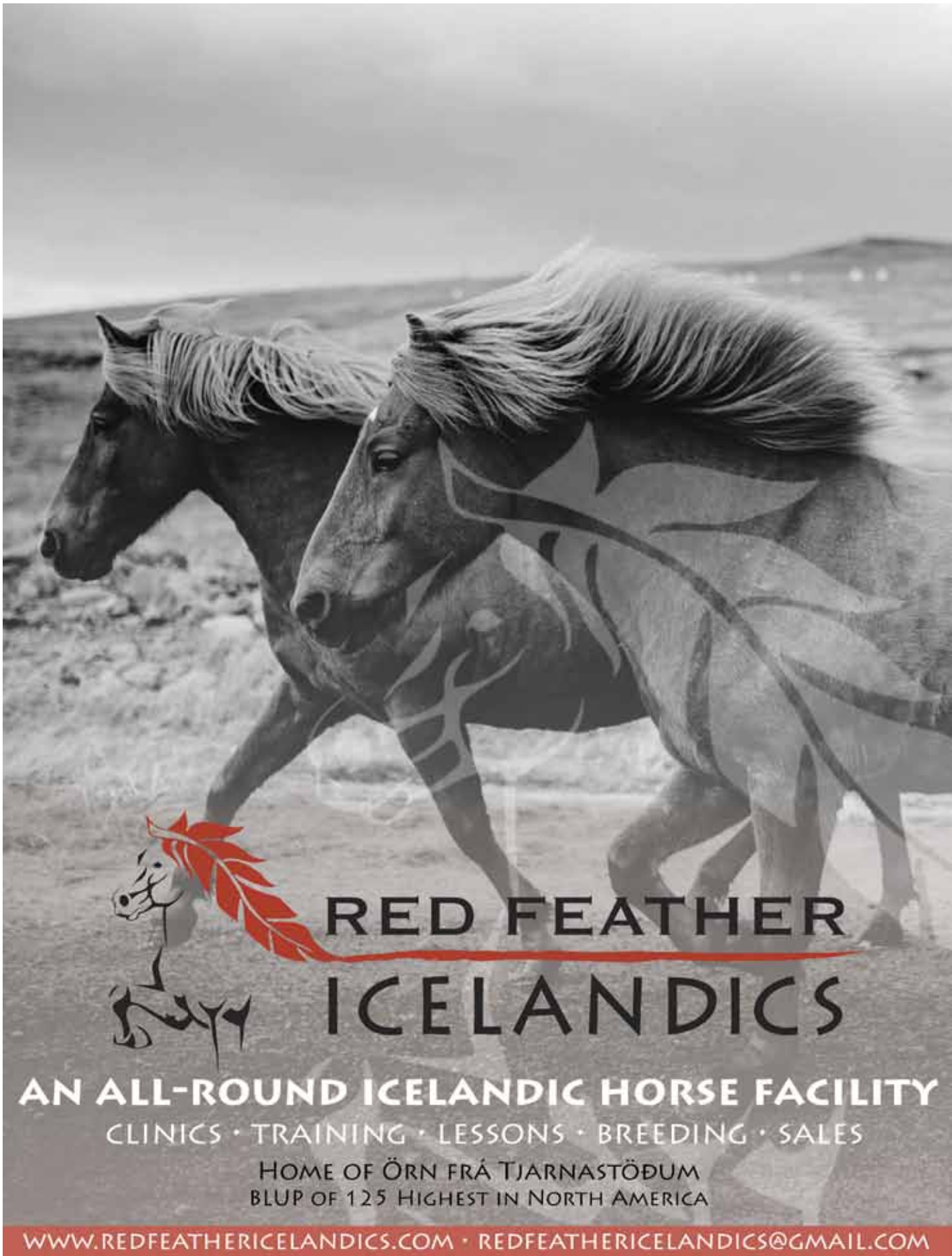
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