

ISSUE TWO

THE

2016

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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Photo Martina Gates



The 4th annual **NEIHC OPEN**

USIHC Sanctioned Show

July 30 & 31, 2016

Judge: Thorgeir Gudlaugsson



NEIHC 2016 Events!

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June: Schooling Show

July 30 and 31: NEIHC Open Sanctioned Show hosted by

Thor Icelandics, Pre-show clinic with Nicole Kempf

August: Games Day!

Check our website www.neihc.com for all info and dates



Come join us!

Photo Heleen Heyning

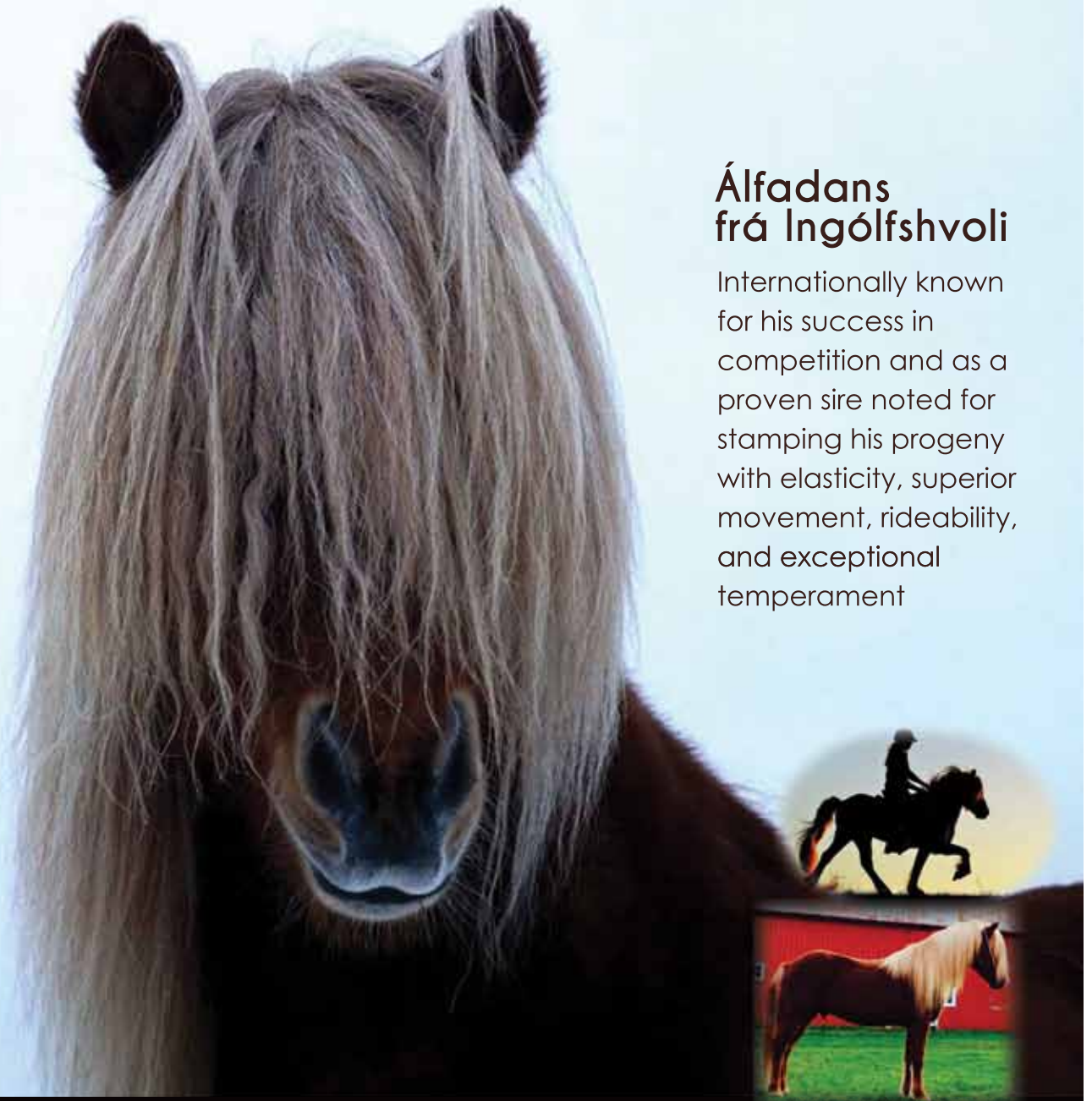
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THE USIHC MISSION

- To promote the knowledge of the Icelandic horse within the United States and its correct use as a competition and riding horse.
- To keep a registry of purebred Icelandic horses in the United States.
- To facilitate communication among all USIHC members.
- To represent the United States in FEIF.

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 Brodie

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 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. Beginning in 2016,

the USIHC Board has set aside \$9,000 per year to fund regional club events and schooling shows. For more information on how to apply for funding, contact the Regional Clubs Committee chair.

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 interna-

tional 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*.

The 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.

And everybody, members or non-members, can advertise in the *Quarterly*.

REGISTER

Whether you plan to breed one mare or have a breeding farm, the USIHC Registry and the Breeding committee provide information and services to help you.

The Icelandic horse is one of few breeds with international evaluation standards, so that breeding horses from all over the world are judged on the same 10 points of conformation and 10 points of ridden abilities, and all scores are entered into the WorldFengur database. That allows you to compare the quality of your breeding stock with Icelandic horses around the world, both past and present.

USIHC-sanctioned breeding evaluation shows for registered adult horses ages four and up are scheduled by USIHC Regional Clubs and 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. 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?

Requests for funding for special events and programs that do not qualify under the Flagship Event Funding Program can be submitted to the USIHC board of directors and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Contact the USIHC president for more information.

JOIN US

There are only about 5,800 registered Icelandic horses in the U.S. and the USIHC, at about 625 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"!

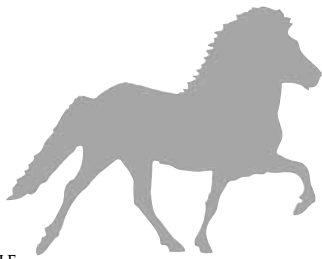
Yearly membership for an adult is \$45; youth memberships are \$35; or for a family (two adults, unlimited kids) it is \$65. Mail in the form in this magazine or join online at www.icelandics.org/join

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

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QUARTERLY
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COMMENTARY

RIDE THE CIRCUIT!

This year, for the first time ever, there will be an Eastern Regional Icelandic Horse Show Circuit and Championship.

This project is organized and powered by a volunteer committee representing the eastern half of the U.S., including Carrie Brandt and Kathy Love from Kentucky, Jess Haynsworth from the Northeast Icelandic Horse Club, Kevin Draeger from the Flugnir Icelandic Horse Club, and Antje Freygang from the Frida Icelandic Riding Club. Together we have worked to create a show circuit and championships that will encourage participation and support for the sport of Icelandic riding in our region.

Our vision is to unite the region, bridging the gap between different riding clubs and states, as riders will be rewarded and recognized for traveling to and supporting more than one show within the region each year.

The following shows are included in the Eastern Regional Show Circuit:

- FIRC Sanctioned Show, May 21-22 at Frying Pan Park in Herndon, VA.
- Léttleiki Spring Show, June 16-19 at Swallowland Farm in Shelbyville, KY.
- NEIHC Sanctioned Show, July 30-31 at Thor Icelandics in Hudson, NY.
- Flugnirkeppni Sanctioned Show, August 13-14 at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI.
- Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show, October 6-9 at Swallowland Farm in Shelbyville, KY.

Please note that the Eastern Regional Show Circuit and Championships comply with all FEIF and USIHC rules and definitions. However, they are not organized by FEIF or the USIHC and are not affiliated with the USIHC's National Ranking program.

We are delighted to announce that, thanks to our generous community, this project has been privately funded. Each division has its own sponsor, and sponsors are also in charge of donating a special prize for the champion of their division—for example, Pegasus Flughestar is spon-

soring the Open Four Gait Division, and the Open Four Gait Champion will win a free breeding to the first-prize stallion Pegasus frá Skyggni (a stud fee valued at \$1,250). Pegasus is a four-gaited stallion with a total evaluation score of 8.32. He has 98 offspring, one of which won the USIHC's Cantella Award in 2015. The top five riders in each division will be recognized and rewarded with smaller prizes as well. For a complete list of division sponsors and their prizes, see our website: www.erihc.org.

In order to participate in the Eastern Regional Icelandic Horse Show Circuit and Championships, riders need only visit our website to sign up, declaring which division they plan to compete in for the season. Riders may only declare and earn points toward a championship in one division per season, but of course they are not restricted from competing in as many divisions in as many shows as they choose.

*Sign up for the Eastern
Regional Icelandic Horse Show
Circuit and Championships
at www.erihc.org*

A division consists of two classes at any given level: a tölt class, and a four or five gait class. The divisions are: Novice, Intermediate Four Gait, Intermediate Five Gait, Group Open Four Gait, Open Four Gait, Open Five Gait, Youth 11-and-Under, Youth 12-and-Up, and Green Horse. Except for the Green Horse Division (which follows the horse and rewards the horse's owner), the scoring system will follow riders, not horse/rider pairs. This means that riders in these divisions may ride as many different horses within their declared division as they choose.

Once riders declare their divisions, their scores at each USIHC sanctioned show within the region will be saved and recorded. Riders who compete in two or more shows within the region will have their best two scores for each class averaged together, and at the end of the sea-



Jess Haynsworth riding Vigri frá Vallanesi at the 2015 Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show. Photo by Shaila Ann Sigsgaard.

son, the rider with the highest average in each division will be Champion. The rider with the second highest score in each division will be Reserve Champion. The top five riders in each division will win prizes and recognition. They will receive their awards publicly at the Kentucky Icelandic Horse Show in October (the final show of the 2016 Eastern Regional Championship season); their names will also be published on our website. Award recipients who cannot be present at the show will receive their awards by mail.

Please see our website for more detailed rules and regulations, and “like” our page on Facebook for regular updates: <https://www.facebook.com/Eastern-Regional-Icelandic-Horse-Championships-800141803447446/>

Riders from all around the country and the world are welcome to participate in the Show Circuit and Championships—no special membership or fees are necessary. Just sign up and bring your enthusiasm and support for the sport to two or more shows within the region! We look forward to an exciting 2016 show season, and can't wait to see who our Champions will be.

—by Jess Haynsworth, on behalf of the
ERIHC Volunteer Committee

USIHC NEWS

SHOW SEASON

Eight USIHC-Sanctioned competitions were scheduled for 2016, as of this writing. They are:

The Kraftur Sponsored Sanctioned Show, March 26-27 at Mountain Icelandic Farm in Watsonville, CA. (Contact Annette Coulon, annette@mountainicelandics.com.) The CIA Open Spring Sanctioned Show, April 30-May 1 at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. (Contact Asta Covert, info@tolt.net or www.ciaclub.net.) The Frida Icelandic Horse Sanctioned Show, May 21-22 at Frying Pan Park in Herndon, VA. (Contact Pat Moore, pat.moore81@verizon.net.) The Léttleiki Icelandics Sanctioned Show, June 16-19 at Swallowland Farm in Shelbyville, KY. (Contact Margaret Brandt, maggie@lettleikiicelandics.com.) The NEIHC Fourth Annual Open Sanctioned Show, July 30-31 at Thor Icelandics in Hudson, NY. (Contact Leslie Chambers, chambers17@comcast.net.) The Flugnirkeppni Icelandic Horse Sanctioned Show, August 13-14 at Winterhorse Park in Eagle, WI. (Contact Kevin Draeger, kdraeger@iastate.edu.) The Kentucky Icelandic Horse Sanctioned Show, October 6-9 at Swallowland Farm in Shelbyville, KY. (Contact Margaret Brandt, maggie@lettleikiicelandics.com.) And the CIA Open Fall Sanctioned

Show, October 22-23 at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. (Contact Asta Covert, info@tolt.net or www.ciaclub.net.)

EASTERN CIRCUIT

The five eastern shows listed above have banded together this year to offer the first ever Eastern Regional Icelandic Horse Show Circuit and Championships. The Circuit will allow any and all riders who compete in two or more competitions to earn points towards Division Championships (and prizes) at the end of the season. For more information, see the Commentary on page 9 of this issue or go to www.erihc.org.

BREEDING LEADER

Andrea Barber has stepped down as USIHC Breeding Leader; we thank her for her years of service to the Icelandic horse in America. Andrea was replaced by Kydee Sheetz, who introduces herself in the story on page 13 of this issue.

EVALUATIONS

Former FEIF Breeding Leader Marlise Grimm will be coming to the U.S. to give a Young Horse Evaluation and clinic at Kydee Sheetz's Aslan's Country farm in Minnesota on July 22-24.

A full Breeding Horse Evaluation is

planned for September 3-4 in Kentucky; the event will also include a Young Horse Evaluation and possibly a U.S. Breeder's Meeting. The first judge will most likely be Þorvaldur Kristjánsson from Iceland, who will also give a seminar on his research on the DMRT3 gene (aka "the pace gene").

For more information on these events, contact Breeding Leader Kydee Sheetz at breeding@icelandics.org.

BREEDING SEMINAR

The Sixth FEIF seminar for breeding horse trainers was held at Skeiðvellir, Iceland April 5-8. The seminar was organized to teach young riders aged 18-30 how to properly show breeding horses at an evaluation.

At its February meeting, responding to a proposal by USIHC members Caeli Cavanagh and Ayla Green, the USIHC Board of Directors decided to offer grants of \$200 to candidates who successfully completed the seminar.

An executive session was called in March to choose the riders and trainers to send. The invitation to the seminar had been publicly posted, with instructions on how to apply; the deadline was February 29. The FEIF invitation stated that each country could send three participants, with the total number of participants in the seminar limited to 22. Four USIHC members applied by the deadline, and as all were deemed qualified by the USIHC Breeding Leader, the board unanimously decided to choose the three participants by random draw. President Will Covert wrote the four applicants' names on equal-sized pieces of paper, placed the papers in a large envelope, shook the envelope, and withdrew three names. The three participants were Caeli Cavanaugh, Ayla Green, and Alexandra Venable. Freya Sturm was placed on the FEIF wait-list.

REGIONAL CLUBS

Anita Sepko has stepped down as chairperson; we thank her for all the time and energy she has spent in filling this role. Anita will remain on the committee, and Leslie Chambers will take on the role as Regional Club Committee chairperson.



Allison Moyer competes on Hrymur at the 2016 Kraftur Show, held at Mountain Icelandics in Watsonville, CA in March. Photo by Maya Mulleneaux.

The Central Washington regional club has dissolved and reformed as the Northwest Icelandic Horse Club; Debby Dillard (dbydill@gmail.com) is the club contact.

The committee submitted a revised proposal for Regional Club Clinic support to the USIHC Board of directors in March. The proposal was approved at the April 19 board meeting. Each club can receive \$500 to support one event in 2016. For how to apply, see the meeting minutes or contact Leslie at regional_clubs@icelandics.org.

LEISURE RIDERS

Lisa McKeen, the new chair of the Leisure Riders committee, submitted the following report: "The Leisure Riders are off and gathering momentum! We now have 10 committee members and are looking into how to go about publicizing the amazing things our members are doing with their horses. I hope you will consider joining the committee or submitting photos and information we can use on our website. Some of the activities we are looking for pictures of are driving, extreme trail competition, ground work, jumping, team penning, trail riding, and more. We are working on a budget and have ideas for how to celebrate the Icelandic horse through drawings, friendly competitions between regional clubs, and individual high point awards. We are working up a budget request for the board and ways to enhance our communication with members and to better publicize our activities. More to come!"

Of herself, Lisa writes, "I have owned Icelandics since 2001. I bought my first mare, Tinna frá Hvammi II, from Al-fasaga. What a journey she took me on. I have learned about the breed, sold all of my 'big' horses, and met so very many wonderful people because of Tinna. Tinna took me back into the world of showing, endurance riding, and so much more. She brought me back to my roots and surrounded me with supportive friends before she left me in 2012 to cross the rainbow bridge. She gave me a deep love and appreciation of the Icelandic horse and a commitment to the community of Iceland



Lisa McKeen, new Leisure Riders chair, with Brimi from Extreme Farms.

dic owners. I now live in Bellingham, WA with my husband and three Icelandics. I am co-president of the Hestafolk Icelandic Horse Club and am retiring this summer from my career in public education. I'm excited to have a role within the USIHC by chairing this committee."

YOUTH

The Youth Committee is working hard on preparations for the 2016 FEIF Youth Cup, to be held July 23-30 in Exloo, the Netherlands. As this issue of the *Quarterly* was in press, arrangements were being made to borrow horses for the U.S. team and for practice time on a farm near Amsterdam the week before the Cup. See the story in this issue, "Off to the Youth Cup," to meet the members of Team USA.

The committee also reports that more time and work needs to be done to quantify the requirements to host the 2017 American Youth Cup. It encourages current committee members and anyone interested in joining the committee to get involved.

Finally, the committee notes a request from the USIHC Board for a one-week review of membership and horse registration prior to any announcements.

QUARTERLY ARCHIVE

The Quarterly Committee is creating a topical index to the online *Quarterly* archive to make it easier for members and visitors to find articles of interest. Articles from 2008 to present are classified under the following topics: Horse Keeping and Health, Training and Riding Instruction, Tack and Equipment, Breeding, Events and Competition, Pleasure or Leisure Riding, Youth, Trainer Profiles, History and Personal Stories, Riding in Iceland and Other Countries, Books and Films, and About the USIHC. Thanks to Nicki Esdorn for leading this project, and to Connie Kollmann for proofreading.

See www.icelandics.org/quarterly.php for more information and to access the *Quarterly* topical index when it goes live.

ANNUAL MEETINGS

The Ohio Valley Icelandic Horse Club (OVIHC) will be hosting the 2017 USIHC Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, PA. Any OVIHC member interested in helping with the organization and planning for the meeting, or who has ideas for the meeting, should contact Juli Cole at juli2875@yahoo.com as soon as possible.

The proposal from the Klettafjalla Club to host the 2018 Annual Meeting was accepted at the April board meeting.



Laura Benson rides her stallion Leiftur from Locust Hill in a Santa Cruz, CA, field. Photo by Heidi Benson.

RIDING BADGE COURSES

The Riding Badge Courses, modeled on the German program, provide a systematic framework for teaching Icelandic horsemanship. Up to now, no written materials were available in English to help riders study for the tests. Some years ago, Bernie Willis (FEIF Trainer Level 1) wrote a study guide for his own students, with the help of Gloria Verrechio, DVM. To make this material more widely available, they approached the USIHC Education Committee. Chair Alexandra Dannemann led the project, with Coralie Denmeade and Nicki Esdorn (both FEIF Trainers Level 1) taking on the extensive job of further editing and formatting. Study materials for Riding Badge Levels 1 and 2 will soon be available as PDFs for USIHC members to download.

BOARD MEETINGS

The USIHC Board of Directors met on January 12, February 16, March 1 and 8,

and April 19. The meeting minutes can be found online at www.icelandics.org/bod/minutes.php.

At the January 12 meeting, the board elected as officers Will Covert (president), Lori Cretney (vice president), Kari Pietsch-Wangard (treasurer), and Juli Cole (secretary). The rest of the meeting was dedicated to the 2016 USIHC Budget, which can be found online here: <https://www.icelandics.org/bod/160112.pdf>. The budget projects a net loss for 2016 of over \$33,000. The budget includes continued funding for Young Horse Evaluations; termination of the Grant Funding Program; expansion of the Flagship Event Funding program; new funds for Regional Club Event Support and new support for Regional Club Schooling Shows.

In February, the board discussed, in addition to items already mentioned in this section, a new proposal from the Education Committee for future trainer education in the U.S., ideas for facilities to

host the 2017 American Youth Cup, and the contract with Cornell University for the Standard Blood Profile Project.

On March 8, past-president Sara Lyter resigned from the Board because of time constraints from other activities in her life. The Board wishes to thank Sara on behalf of themselves and the membership for her service on the Board. Sara remains an active and supportive member of the Congress and many of its committees. (See the story on her work in equine-assisted psychotherapy, "Icelandic Psychotherapists," in this issue of the *Quarterly*.)

CORRECTIONS

The photo of Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir riding Parker frá Sólheimum on page 21 of Issue One 2016 was taken by Jessica Haynsworth, not as reported.

In the photo on the top of page 31 of Issue One 2016, Bonnie Weiss is on the right, petting the horse.

MEET THE NEW BREEDING LEADER BY KYDEE SHEETZ

Editors' note: Kydee Sheetz was named chair of the USIHC Breeding Committee in March. We asked her to introduce herself.

"As soon as I saw you I knew an adventure was going to happen."

For such a simple bear, Winnie the Pooh said some rather profound things. As I sat on the cold ground rubbing dry my very first Icelandic foal many years ago, I knew how Pooh felt. I knew that a great adventure was going to happen! Rispa and I, and the foals that have followed her, have learned much from each other, and it has indeed been an adventure.

My search for knowledge of excellent Icelandic horse breeding has been an exciting journey that has included multiple treks to Germany, Iceland, and various farms around the U.S. I have learned the most from working with my own horses and horses at the farms where experienced breeders have welcomed me with generosity of spirit and an amazing willingness to share what they know. When I look out on my herd, which has improved remarkably in the last several years under the guidance of Barbara Frische, I see living proof of her statement that, "Your horse is your greatest teacher, and she will tell you when you have it right." While I have not yet bred the "perfect horse," I continue to passionately pursue this intangible goal.

I have been blessed with some great mentors in my life. Two of them were surgeons in my profession of orthopedic hand and microvascular surgery. From Dr. Bishop I learned scientific technique and to question the status quo and seek ways to improve upon it, while Dr. McElfresh taught me the importance of critical thinking and having the confidence to make decisions based upon a combination of science and instinct. From these surgeons I also learned the profound impact that a gifted master in a profession can have on an open and enthusiastic student.

Like surgery, breeding horses is a science and art best learned from the masters. My goal is to breed Icelandic horses with the temperament, conformation, gaits, and inner soul that make the breed unique in the world of horses, and I have deliberately sought out great mentors from



Gletta from Birkenlund Icelandics (US2010204664) is a "talented young mare early in her training," Kydee says. "I am really looking forward to showing her this year. She is fearless and sweet and very dedicated to her human." Photo by Robert Frische.



around the world. Several years ago I met Barbara Frische, and her impact on Icelandic horses in the U.S. and on me and my horses specifically has been profound. She has taught us to pursue true excellence in breeding by using proper young horse and breeding horse evaluation techniques and to make breeding and training decisions based upon critical thinking and science, while also acknowledging the art and instinct of truly great breeders. Also, she has given me the courage to question the way things are and to dream of what may be possible. I have been encouraged to seek knowledge from many sources and have been privileged to learn from such masters as Heidi Schwörer, Jens Füchtenschneider, and others.

It was a privilege to be asked to apply for the position of USIHC Breeding Leader and an even greater honor when my application was approved. I am looking forward to the adventure that I know is going to happen. The breeding committee has many excellent and experienced breeder members that would very much like to help the members of the USIHC. I would appreciate hearing from breeders regarding what the Breeding Committee can do to support you in your pursuit of producing the very best Icelandic horses possible. Being new to the position, I would love to know what you're thinking. What programs would you like to see? What educational opportunities would be beneficial for you? For those of you who don't breed but are looking for the perfect Icelandic horse, what would you like to see breeders doing? I'm accessible by email at acicelandics@yahoo.com or breeding@icelandics.org. When I'm in the U.S., I'm also quick to respond to calls and texts at 218-349-2209.

Kydee Sheetz's stallion Álfadans frá Ingólfs-hvoli (US1996104217). In addition to stamping his offspring with exceptional temperament, supple movements, and clear gaits, Kydee says, "Álfadans is unbelievably patient with foals and children and fearless in new situations, such as performing with fireworks, visiting television stations, and guarding his herd from the local wolves and mountain lions." Photo by Susy Oliver.

2016 FEIF CONFERENCE

Every year FEIF organizes a conference comprised of the Delegates Assembly, the annual department meetings for Breeding, Sport, Education, Youth Work, and Leisure Riding, and a meeting of the national chairpersons. This year's FEIF Conference took place on February 9 in Haarlem, the Netherlands. Reports from the various meetings follow:

DELEGATES ASSEMBLY

The Delegates Assembly is the main FEIF meeting, where all the organization's important decisions are made. The FEIF board and two delegates from each FEIF member association participate.

In 2016, the delegates unanimously elected Inge Kringeland (NO) as the new Breeding Leader, as Marlise Grimm did not stand for re-election. Silke Feuchthofen, director for Education, and Lone Hoeglund, director of Leisure Riding, were re-elected for another two years. Jens Iversen (DK) and Cosima König (DE) were elected as members of the Arbitration Council. The position for the director of PR remains open, and the search for a person interested in taking this on continues.

The auditor's report was approved unanimously, and the Board was granted discharge from liability.

The majority of the delegates also approved the new FEIF rules and regulations, as prepared by the FEIF Task Force

over the last few years (see below). The new document combines all the rules and regulations of the different departments and includes previously missing parts, like the non-doping rules, the description of the gaits, and more.

All Sport proposals—among them the length of the hoof, late withdrawals, rein changes in finals, and World Championship track widths—were accepted by the delegates.

The Breeding proposal to change the length of the tracks for judging gaits and ridden abilities to 250m was accepted unanimously.

BREEDING MEETING

The Breeding Leaders' meeting decided to implement a "positive list" of around 8,000 horse names for WorldFengur. All other names must be applied for.

In 2016 the Breeding Judges Committee will propose a list of 10 to 12 head judges; one of these judges should be present at all breeding shows from 2017 on.

Frauke Schenzel (DE) and Marcus Ljungquist (SE) were elected as breeders' representatives to the Breeding Committee, John Siiger Hansen and Sigbjørn Bjørnsen were re-elected in the Breeding Judges Committee.

A working group was appointed to work on a proposal for common rules for approval of stallions in all countries outside Iceland, to solve cross-border problems.

YOUTH WORK

The 2015 FEIF Youth Country of the Year Award was won by Sweden. The award reports, as well as the oral reports from individual FEIF countries, documented the innovative and inspiring youth work that is being done by countless volunteers all over the world.

Possibly the most exciting outcome of the meeting was the unanimous decision to expand the area of responsibility of FEIF Youth Work to the age range of 18-26. The first "Young Leaders" event for this age group is scheduled for October 28-30 near Stockholm, Sweden. To register, contact the USIHC Youth Leader, Colleen Monsef, at youth@icelandics.org or 408-390-9307. Deadline is July 18. See www.feif.org for details.

SPORT MEETING

The Delegates Assembly adopted a total of 13 proposals from the Sport Department on a variety of topics, ranging from editorial changes to simplify repeated text to the final rule change resulting from the FEIF Hoof Study.

The Sport Leaders re-elected Vicky Eggertsson (DE) and Hulda Gústafsdóttir (IS) for another two-year term on the Sport Committee. There was a day and a half of discussion in the Sport Department (Sport Committee, Sport Judges Committee, and Sport Leaders) on issues including formally adopting "C" finals, a review of the selection procedure for World Championship





Judges, and continuing the work to keep FIPO up-to-date with regard to terminology and clear procedures.

CHAIRPERSONS MEETING

The national chairpersons discussed the finances of FEIF, the voting structure, and the consequences for member countries. All chairpersons present gave a short report on the situation and developments in their countries; the Nordic Chairpersons also reviewed their experiences during the 2015 World Championships.

The meeting agreed unanimously on a proposal to increase the fees by 15%; it will be presented to the 2017 Delegates Assembly for a final decision.

During the discussion, the participants realized that individual countries use different systems to calculate the number of members in their associations. There was general agreement about the necessity to use a uniform system, valid for all countries, as the number of members is the basis for calculating fees and distributing votes. The board will issue guidelines for the countries on how to count members.

Further topics discussed were the 2017 and 2019 World Championships, Landsmót 2016, and the new date for Landsmót in the future (from 2018 on, it will be held the second week of July), the European Horse Network, the idea of a FEIF Breeding Mót, and the effects on FEIF and the member associations resulting from private persons or companies being organizers of FEIF events.



EDUCATION MEETING

Karen Rasmussen (DK) and Bert de Rooij (NL) were re-elected as members of the FEIF Education Committee. Future projects within the Education Department will be the finalization of the "Jobbörse," which is planned as a web platform for FEIF licensed trainers, riding schools, breeding farms, etc., to offer or apply for jobs; the development of an award for "Best Trainer of the Year"; and cooperation within the FEIF member associations on exchanging and translating teaching materials. The Education Department agreed to keep in close contact with other FEIF departments regarding joint seminars and such projects as the leisure horse assessment.

Iceland has offered to host the next FEIF Education Seminar in autumn 2017; the focus will be on teaching and training.

AUSTRALIA IN FEIF

At the conference, Australia was officially recognized as the 20th member of FEIF. The national Icelandic Horse Association of Australia (IHAA) was formed in 2009. Records show the existence of Icelandic horses in Australia as early as 1863, but not much else is known of any purebred imports into Australia until the mid 1990s. It was then that eight fillies and a colt were imported from Denmark. After 2000, several horses were imported from New Zealand to start small breeding herds. Imports of breeding horses from Iceland, Germany, and the USA/Canada followed. At present there



are approximately 200 purebred Icelandic horses in Australia. Only a small percentage of these are over four years old and have been started under saddle. There are three larger breeding farms in Australia, with the remainder of the horses spread far and wide over the vast continent.

FEIF RULES ONLINE

The new format for publication of FEIF Rules, agreed on at the 2016 Delegates Assembly, is now available on the FEIF website (see https://www.feif.org/files/documents/FEIF_Rules_Regulations2016.pdf).

What used to be FIPO and FIZO have become somewhat shorter, while FIRO, the General Rules and Regulations, have been expanded. The real innovation of these changes is that from now on our old Sport and Breeding Rules no longer have separate general sections, such as a definition of the gaits, rules on permitted equipment for rider and horse, etc. With the exception of a section on the prevention of doping, overall there are very few substantial changes in the combined document. As before, FEIF Rules are the result of a process of consensus, and are agreed on by vote in the annual Delegates Assembly. All Rules and Regulations apply in all member countries of FEIF.

REGIONAL CLUB UPDATES

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

Many members of the Cascade Icelandic Horse Club (CIHC) were able to attend the USIHC Membership Meeting in Portland, OR in January. It was a lovely opportunity to meet the USIHC Board members and Icelandic horse owners from other regions. There was a lot of support from the Pacific Northwest riders for restarting the Pleasure Riding Program.

In February, CIHC held its Winter Meeting, with its legendary potluck lunch, at Schwalbenhof Farm. We set up a calendar of events for the next several months, to include camping, trail rides, playdays, and a schooling show. We also planned time for some exceptional educational opportunities at Red Feather Icelandics in Trout Lake, WA.

In March, club members presented the Icelandic horse at the Northwest Horse Expo. It took great dedication on the part of the riders—Lori Birge, Lisa Brandenberger, Lisa Roland, Karin and Julia Daum, Debra Mathieu, and Liv Fava—to have their horses in stalls at the Linn County Fairgrounds for three days, to ride in an arena



Members of the Cascade Icelandic Horse Club presented the Icelandic horse at the Albany Expo Center. Left to right: Liv Fava, Julia Daum, Lisa Roland, Lisa Brandenburger, Karin Daum, and Debra Mathieu. Photo by Stephen Franzen.

presentation each day, and to meet the public in between. Did you see their picture on the USIHC Facebook page? Claudia Rancore and Karen Brotzman brought out the red, blue, and white stall decorations, which won second place in the Stall Decoration competition; Claudia and Karen also came back to help with the take down.

Keep up with this active club on the Facebook Page “Cascade Icelandic Horse Club.”

FIRC (MID-ATLANTIC)

BY RICH MOORE

The Frida Icelandic Riding Club (FIRC) was quiet over the winter. While many members continued to ride, there were no organized club riding events. At our January meeting, Pat Moore was reelected president and Antje Freygang became vice-president, Rich Moore continued as secretary, Sverrir Bjartmarz agreed to serve another year as treasurer,

and Curt Pierce became a member-at-large.

On March 3-6, the club had a booth at the Pennsylvania Horse Expo in Harrisburg, where there was a lot of interest in the Icelandic horse. Curt Pierce made the arrangements and provided two horses to greet visitors. Jo Ann Trostle took care of staffing the booth.

A kick-off party for the 2016 riding season was planned for March in the mountains at ThorpeWood Lodge in Thurmont, MD, courtesy of Sam and Julie Castleman. Unfortunately, it had to be canceled at the last minute because of a snow storm.

The club has a series of events planned for the spring and summer, including the Fifth Annual Frida Icelandic Horse Show in May in Herndon, VA. The FIRC drill team began holding practices, and Laura Colicchio organized trail rides for April, July, and October.

FLUGNIR (MINNESOTA & WISCONSIN)

BY KYDEE SHEETZ

While snow is currently falling, I remain confident that spring is coming, as virtually every piece of clothing that I own is covered in horse hair! The Icelandics of Minnesota and Wisconsin, blessed with the wisdom of their ancestors, know that it is time to shed out despite snowy evidence to the contrary. Flugnir members and their horses are starting to get in condition for the many exciting activities—both club-sponsored and privately held—that are planned for this year. At our January brainstorming party, members and non-members had a wonder-



The FIRC drill team practiced in April at Antje Freygang's Montaire Farm in Middleburg, VA. Left to right: Tony Colicchio, Pat Carballo, Antje Freygang, Jacki Curreri Edens, Marjorie Lewis, and Mitchell Martin. Photo by Laura Colicchio.

ful time getting to know each other at the home of some new Icelandic horse owners. We enjoyed great food and fellowship as we discussed ways to promote the Icelandic horse in our region. Our small but enthusiastic club would love to have you join us! So far the calendar includes:

The Minnesota Horse Expo (April 22-24): This year our riding team will be joined by a group of semi-professional Viking reenactors complete with battle gear and authentic attire. The organizers are giving our horses at least 17 appearances in various presentations during the course of the event! We have several professional visiting riders on our team this year, which promises to add to the excitement.

The Doc Bol Fun Show (May 14): We are excited to present our horses to judge Barbara Frische in this relaxed but competitive format. It's a great opportunity for riders to try sport competition for the first time, and it gives advanced riders the opportunity to practice in a no-pressure atmosphere before the first USIHC-sanctioned show of the year. We partner with the Minnesota Tennessee Walking Horse Association to make this event possible.

Barbara Frische Riding and Young Horse Clinic at Aslan's Country Icelandics (May 20-22): This is a well-used idea with a new twist. During the day, competition riders will ride under the tutelage of the incomparable Barbara Frische, while the evenings will be devoted to learning about young horse evaluations, based upon the seminar that Barbara recently gave to breeding judges at Hólar in Iceland.

Tolt 'n' Camp (June 3-5): Fun casual

weekend of camping, trail riding, and socializing in Redwing, MN with Icelandic owners and riders from around the region.

Barbara Frische Riding Clinic at Tolthaven Ranch (June 10-12): Pleasure and competition riders will gather at the farm of Gerald Oliver to learn more about riding and training Icelandic horses. The beautiful facilities make it possible to ride inside, in an outside ring, or on a track, so all riders are able to maximize their learning experience. Deb Cook has even volunteered to bring extra trained horses so horseless riders can experience our amazing Icelandics.

Léttleiki Spring Show (June 18-19): Come to Shelbyville, KY and enjoy the beautiful facilities at Léttleiki Icelandics while competing at this USIHC-sanctioned sport show.

Minnesota Celebration (July 16-17): A great schooling show, where we join our TWH friends for a weekend of competition, education, and fun. It's a great place for kids and inexperienced riders to spread their wings under the watchful eye of judge Deb Cook, while experienced riders can take advantage of the opportunity to prepare for the upcoming USIHC-sanctioned events.

Marlise Grimm Riding Clinic and Young Horse Evaluation at Aslan's Country Icelandics (July 22-24): We are excited to host former FEIF Breeding Leader Marlise Grimm for this new event. Marlise has judged both sport and breeding at the Icelandic Horse World Championships multiple times and will bring her enthusiasm and unique skill to Minnesota for the first time. Since Kydee Sheetz's farm is so close to Lake Superior, excessive heat is rarely a

problem despite the July date.

Flugnirkeppni (August 13-14): Dan and Barb Riva always welcome and host us enthusiastically at the beautiful Winterhorse Park. Come and join us at this USIHC-sanctioned sport show and present your horses to our three-judge panel.

Breeding Evaluations (September 3-4): Come for a great weekend at Léttleiki Icelandics. Watch horses presented on the track to international breeding judges and learn more about breeding, training, and riding your horse to the very best of their ability.

Kentucky Horse Show (October 8-9): The biggest USIHC-sanctioned sport show of the year! People from all over the U.S. are encouraged to bring their horses to compete at Léttleiki Icelandics.

Farm Open Houses around Minnesota and Wisconsin: While the dates and locations are yet to be announced, this popular idea, which we tried last year, is great for drawing new people into the breed.

We invite all Icelandic horse enthusiasts to join us. We guarantee a fun time at every event. Remember to follow our website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed for updates and more information.

HESTAFOLK (NORTHWEST WASHINGTON) BY LISA MCKEEN AND KATHY LOCKERBIE

The Hestafolk Icelandic Horse Club has had a great start to the year. Kathy Lockerbie attended the Back Country Horsemen of Whatcom County's New Year's Day trail ride with two of her Icelandic horses. We had our first meeting on January 9 to plan for the



The Flugnir club's demo team at last year's Minnesota Horse Expo. This year, joined by a group of Viking reenactors in battle gear, they will appear in 17 presentations during the event. Photo by Susy Oliver.



Hestafolk members Kathy Lockerbie, Lisa McKeen, and Judy Skogen attended the “Rider in Balance” clinic with trainer Freya Sturm at Red Feather Icelandics. Photo by Kathy Lockerbie.

year’s activities and are so excited to start this year with a club logo designed by Christine Vowles—are we ever shopping for gear!

Kathy Lockerbie and Lisa McKeen (club co-presidents) attended the USIHC annual meeting in Portland, OR. Our club and the Cascade Icelandic Horse Club were able to explain how important the USIHC Pleasure Rider Program is to those of us spread out across the country, and the broad variety of activities we do that help the U.S. market understand the talents of the Icelandic horse. Lisa McKeen has volunteered to chair the USIHC Leisure Riding Committee (see the news item in this issue), and the committee will be revamping and re-introducing the Pleasure Riders Program. Contact Lisa at leisure_riding@icelandics.org to volunteer



Willa Mae Herndon Schepper, the youngest Hestafolk member, does groundwork with Brimi from Extreme Farms. Photo by Lisa McKeen.

to help out.

The Hestafolk Club met on February 29 for a potluck dinner at Susan Seaton’s house, where Icelandic owner and veterinarian Sharon Hoofnagel taught first aid for horses on the trail.

So far this year, we have had two rides at the Citrons, a private property with 100 acres of lovely trees, fields, organic vegetable gardens, and trails along the Nooksack River. Members Judy Skogen, Kathy Lockerbie, and Lisa McKeen attended a Balanced Rider Clinic with Freya Sturm at Red Feather Icelandics in Trout Lake, WA. Other activities we have been participating in are trail rides and joining in on community rides at the local fairgrounds. Club members are looking forward to clinics, trail rides, and shows in the coming months.

KLETTAFJALLA (ROCKY MOUNTAINS)

BY MARISUE WELLS

It is still winter here in the Rockies, but the weather gave us a break just in time for the the Rocky Mountain Horse Expo. Held in Denver each March, the Expo is the biggest horse event in the Western states and draws horses and horse lovers from all over the west—and the Klettajalla Icelandic Horse Club was there! Our well-decorated booth was located in the Event Barn on two of the main aisles, next to the stalls of the two lovely Icelandic mares Coralie Dunmeade brought.

Coralie has been part of this event for the

last several years. This year Kristina Behringer, Angie Calve, and Jim and Linda McLaughlin were there to help Coralie with the booth, which promoted both KIHIC and Tamangur Icelandic Horses.

The amount of interest shown in Icelandic horses was just wonderful, and we would like to think that this points to more Icelandics in the Rocky Mountains and more members in our club. We got 15-20 people to sign our guest book with their names and e-mail addresses. Using this information, we will contact them to share more information on the Icelandic horse and on our club and its activities.

The highlight of the Expo is the Mane Event, where horses and their people produce wonderful performances in dressage, natural horsemanship, drill teams, and vaulting. Coralie Denmeade, who is a FEIF International Trainer Level 1, and her Icelandics have been a hit every year and are automatically included in the Mane Event without the need to apply. This year, to show something different, Coralie showed Freydís frá Fitjamyri and Michelle Wolf showed Pretty Boy, a quarterhorse stallion, in a routine choreographed to Alice Cooper’s “Poison.” In a Romeo and Juliet inspired theme, they came together, separated to showcase their very different talents, came together again, and left the arena separately (as it had to be) with Pretty Boy showing a monstrous gallop and Freydís a fabulous flying pace. The crowd loved it.

We are all looking forward to the

events we have in store for the warmer months, including a May clinic in Utah and another one in New Mexico, a June clinic and gaited horse show, also in Utah, an Icelandic horse retreat in Colorado in July, a three-day trail ride along two separate portions of the Colorado Trail in August, another clinic and schooling show in September, also in Colorado, and to end the year, a trail ride in Moab, UT in October. Fun, fun, fun!

KRAFTUR (NORTHERN CALIFORNIA)

BY ANNETTE COULON

Kraftur and Mountain Icelandic Farm in Watsonville, CA hosted a clinic by Sindri Sigurðsson and Friðdóra Friðríksdóttir in February. It was a wonderful experience riding under Friðdóra and Sindri. Both are FT Trainers who have graduated from Hólar, the agricultural college in the north of Iceland. They also teach, show, and judge different types of disciplines in Iceland, such as the Knappamerki Educational Program, Sport Competitions, and Gæðingur Competitions.

We had private lessons from Tuesday to Saturday, then all participants were welcome to ride in the Schooling Show on Sunday to see how they had improved over the week of lessons. Several people participated in the event and were thrilled with the instruction that they received. We were so very lucky to have Friðdóra and Sindri for a whole week.

There was a wide variety of people and riding levels in the clinic, and it proved to be very successful—so much so that we will be making this an annual event in February. The participants from Kraftur were: Annette Coulon, Emma Erickson, Lona Carter and her daughter Jelena, Julie High, Danielle Mayland, Robynn Smith, Leslie Johnson, Sara Stern, Isa Moe, Allison and Abigail Mollerer, Lorrie Thompson, Julie Ryan, Henriette Bruun, Pia Tucker, and Lucy Nold.

Thank you to everyone who participated, and a special thanks to Friðdóra and Sindri for coming all the way from Iceland to help educate us.



Klettafjalla member Coralie Dunmeade, a FEIF International Trainer Level 1, performed a Pas de Deux with Michelle Wolf in the Mane Event of the Rocky Mountain Horse Expo, held in Denver in March. Coralie rode Freydís frá Fitjamryi and Michelle rode Pretty Boy, a quarterhorse stallion. Photo by Bianca McCarty.

NEIHC (NORTHEAST)

BY JESS HAYNSWORTH

The snow is melting, the horses are shedding, and all over the Northeast, our members are pulling on their rubber boots and getting their horses back in shape for the upcoming spring season!

On March 5, the NEIHC's Annual Meeting and Thorrablot party took place in Connecticut. According to Nicki Esdorn, "Between 30 and 40 NEIHC members attended the event and brought delicious potluck food. A special thank you to hosts Catherine and Bob Slatery, who kept the fires going and the wine flowing!" Attendees also enjoyed a slideshow of photos of NEIHC members enjoying 2015 events with their horses, set to music and cut together by Nicki. They also watched a video from the NEIHC's 2015 Games Day, recorded and edited by Jess Haynsworth.

The newly elected board met for the first time, and selected its officers for the following term. They are: Martina Gates (president), Brigit Huwyler (vice president), Leslie Chambers (treasurer), Kara Noble (secretary), Jessica Haynsworth (youth and Quarterly reporter), Emily Potts (promotion), and Caeli Cavanagh (social media). After the meeting, the board selected a youth representative,

Hannah Huss. We look forward to an exciting two years with our new board of directors!

At the meeting, Caeli and Jess skyped in, thanks to Kara Noble's tech skills. The board then discussed everything from the treasurer's report to club events. Some of those are:

In March and April, Jana Meyer gave a clinic series called "Fit Into the New Season: Clinic series to improve your seat" at Echo Ledge Farm in Vermont.

In May, Guðmar Pétursson joined Ebba Meehan for a clinic sponsored by Merrimack Valley Icelandics in Massachusetts; Steinar Sigurbjörnsson gave a clinic at West Winds Farm in New York; Boulder Ridge Icelandics gave a breed demo at Safe Haven Farm in Durham, ME; Ebba Meehan hosted a schooling show in eastern Massachusetts; and some NEIHC members made the long journey to Virginia for the FIRC Sanctioned Show at Fryring Pan Farm Park.

In June, Guðmar Pétursson is offering a three-day clinic (June 11-13) at Boulder Ridge Icelandics in Maine. On June 16-19, some NEIHC members will attend the Léttleiki Icelandics Sanctioned Show in Kentucky. That same weekend, Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir is offering a Women's Equestrian Retreat at Sólheimar Farm in Vermont.



Left, a scene from the Kraftur clinic with Sindri Sigurðsson and Friðdóra Friðríksdóttir at Mountain Icelandic Farm in Watsonville, CA. Photo by Sara Stern. Right, a highlight of the 2016 Kraftur Show was the Youth Four Gait. Left to right, Eden Hendricks on Lilja took first place, Abigail Moyer on Igull was second, and Eva Dykar on Fjöllingur came in third. Photo by Maya Mulleneaux.

On July 16-17, there will be a schooling show at Silver Maple Farm in Vermont, and on July 30-31, our club's annual USIHC-sanctioned show, the NEIHC Open, will take place at Thor Icelandics in New York.

NEIHC Games Day hasn't been scheduled yet, but will likely take place in August. A second schooling show, at Boulder Ridge Icelandics in Maine, is also in the works.

This year is shaping up to be our fullest season of competitions and fun events yet, so our members have lots to look forward to. Happy riding!

NORTHWEST (WASHINGTON)

BY DEBBY DILLARD

The now-dissolved Central Washington Icelandic Horse Club was organized primarily to accommodate many of the new owners of Icelandic horses from Extreme Farms in the central area of Washington State. Now that many of those horses have moved into other areas of the U.S., the Central Washington Icelandic Horse Club will be replaced by the Northwest Icelandic Horse Club, which will encompass all of Eastern Washington and other areas of the Pacific Northwest.

The formation of the new club was made in anticipation of gathering a broader group of current and/or new Icelandic horse owners who are interested in promoting the breed and enjoying

more activities with their horses. NWIHC would also like to open the door to non-Icelandic horse owners who may be interested in the breed.

Newly elected officers of the NWIHC are: Debby Dillard (president), Linda Templeton (vice president), Dick Templeton (secretary), and Greg Dillard (treasurer). Lori Birge and Freya Sturm were also instrumental in the formation of the club.

The club is looking forward to gathering enthusiastic members from across the Pacific Northwest, to supporting the other regional clubs in the region, and to honoring the Icelandic horse. We plan to organize events that will provide people with an opportunity to learn more about

Icelandic horse culture and to enjoy the Icelandic horse in various disciplines. Among our recent and upcoming club events are:

April 22-24: Arnar Bjarki Sigurðarson, a FEIF international breeding judge from Iceland, will give a lecture with live horse assessments on Friday and Saturday, and offer young horse evaluations on Saturday and Sunday.

Participants will learn about the history of Icelandic breed assessment and how it has and is changing, and can have their own horse assessed to understand the connection between its conformation and its talents.

July 23-24: a schooling show judged by FEIF Sport Director (and USIHC



NEIHC members enjoyed an Easter fun ride at Echo Ledge Farm in Vermont. Photo courtesy of Kim Dull.

board member) Doug Smith.

Stay tuned for upcoming events at www.nwihc.net. Interested in joining or have questions? Email Debby at dbydill@gmail.com or Linda at lrtempleton@prodigy.net.

OVIHC (OHIO VALLEY)

BY JULI COLE

The OVIHC will be hosting the 2017 USIHC Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh, PA. Any OVIHC member interested in helping with the organization and planning for the meeting, or that has ideas for the meeting, should contact Juli at juli2875@yahoo.com as soon as possible.

Membership in OVIHC is free for any USIHC member in good standing; however, a membership application still needs to be submitted so we have your name and contact information for our records and mailing list. Membership applications can be found at <http://www.ovihc.com/>

ST SKUTLA CLUB (CENTRAL & WESTERN NEW YORK)

BY ANDREA BARBER

Club member Steven Barber led the Investment Club of St. John Fisher College (SJFC, where he is a professor of finance) of Rochester, NY to Iceland for five days during spring break to gain a firsthand appreciation of the economic, political, and cultural differences between Iceland and the U.S. Most of the funding for the trip was generously donated by a local entrepreneur who recently returned as a student of SJFC himself after a 35-year hiatus. Besides visiting the Icelandic Stock exchange, the Blue Lagoon, Thingvellir National Park, Svartsengi geothermal power plant, a fish processing plant, and the famous Gullfoss waterfall, the nine students were introduced to the unique story of the Icelandic horse by a trip to the Fákasel Horse Park.

Fákasel's signature 45-minute show, "The Legends of Sleipnir," describes the horses' important role in Icelandic culture by weaving together Viking mythology, Icelandic history and folklore, and exhibition riding to showcase the Icelandic horse's



A new Board of Directors was elected at the NEIHC Annual Meeting and Thorrablot party. Left to right they are, Kara Noble, Brigit Huwyler, Caeli Cavanagh, Jess Haynsworth, Leslie Chambers, Martina Gates, and Emily Potts. Jess and Caeli Skyped in from afar, thanks to Kara's technology skill. Photo by Heleen Heyning.

unique beauty and character. The SJFC students enjoyed the large-scale multimedia experience and the special effects, while learning about the horses' special relationship with humans to overcome the challenges of Iceland's rugged environment. After the show, they ate a traditional Icelandic meal of roasted lamb and got a chance to meet the horses and riders up

close, guided by Steve's friend Guðmar Pétursson, who is the artistic director of Fákasel. Even though most of the SJFC students had never even been near a horse, they were impressed with how gentle and approachable the Icelandic horses were. They left Iceland with wonderful memories and a newfound respect for its special people and horses.



St. Skutla Club member Steve Barber led a group from St. John Fisher College to Iceland—and of course introduced them to the Icelandic horse.

ICELANDIC PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY VINCENT VERRECCHIO

Two teachers, Donna and Andy, stand just inside the gate of more than three acres of fenced pasture. They have volunteered to participate as clients in an Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) session at Hulinndalur Farm in Columbus, NC. Each is a bit curious, wondering if today, after 25 years together, they will discover something new about themselves, or if they will simply have fun experiencing something far outside their norm. Neither are “horse people,” so the whiff of manure, ever so slight, is almost as interesting as the five Icelandic psychotherapists relaxing as far away from them as possible. Seemingly oblivious to the human presence, the horses concentrate downward, noses in the grass, manes draped down their necks. The sky is overcast, but probably no rain, which is a good thing since there is no therapist’s office for shelter. There is also no desk, soothing lighting, or cushy chairs, and no couch.

Hitched to a four-wheeler at the left of the couple is a wooden cart overflowing with poles, plastic cones, and hoops, a saddle, PVC pipes, and seeming odds and



The EAP team gathered around pieces of the “Cluttered Alley.” Left to right, Donna, a client; Mufasa frá Saurbae; Sara Lyter, certified equine specialist; Bobbie Shannon, licensed mental health counselor; and Andy, a client.

ends from a yard sale. To their right are two women, neither in a dark suit or white smock, neither holding a notepad. One is in riding breeches and the other wears a baseball cap.



The couple calmly pursued the horses, which mostly strolled away, pausing only for an occasional touch. Pursuit, however, was unnecessary to fulfill the instructions.

Definitely not conforming to the common perception of psychotherapy, EAP brings together the client(s), a two-person team of a mental health professional and an equine specialist, and any number of horses from one up to eight. The team assigns to clients a horse-based activity that requires no equine experience or riding. At Hulinndalur, 20 out of 21 Icelandic horses are available. Many are from Iceland, but as with all horses they are adept at sensing mood, interpreting body cues, and responding no matter what language is spoken.

Bobbie Shannon, with more than 20 years’ clinical experience, is the licensed mental health counselor for the session. She is certified for EAP by the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA). She says, “EAP is effective when clients are open to the experience of what happens in ground activity with a horse. There is no right or wrong conclusion to the activity. The point is the process itself. It can bring up feelings that the client may be unaware of. It encourages clients to exercise creative thinking and problem-solving skills, and to view themselves from outside their

box. This box could be substance abuse, depression, anxiety, attention deficient disorder, or any emotional or relational issues that limit happiness and fulfillment.”

Sara Lyter, the EAGALA Certified Equine Specialist in the team, is better known to readers of the *Quarterly* as the past president of the USIHC. Sara brings more than 20 years of riding and equine work to training and maintaining the program’s horses. The farm and most of the herd are hers. She says, “Whether you’re riding a horse, or just being with one, the experience can always be a lesson. A horse picks up on the client’s energy and emotion, and reacts honestly. While the clients interact freely with the horses, Bobbie and I look for themes and patterns of behavior. Afterward, we help clients think about what happened, and what they felt, as a metaphor for their lives outside the fence.”

HORSES AS GUIDES

Founded in 1999, EAGALA is now in 45 countries. The organization reports that its rapid growth is due to the strong outcome of its unique team approach.

For session participation, each client identifies a personal issue to be addressed. Donna, for example, felt that she needed more confidence. Andy said he lacked organizational skills. Bobbie and Sara assigned them one of many possible EAP activities: the “Cluttered Alley.” The objective was to “use anything within the fenced area to build a path wide enough for a horse to pass through.” Each word was purposefully selected. Bobbie and Sara find it informative to observe inconspicuously how clients demonstrate their interpretations of the instructions.

Using only objects from within the cart, Donna and Andy jointly carried pipes and other items to a site selected by Andy. Neither thought to look for a halter hanging on the inside of the gatepost. Andy directed the design and personally positioned the clutter. The couple then calmly pursued the horses, which mostly strolled away, pausing only for an occasional touch. Pursuit, however, was unnecessary. The instruction was that the path be wide enough to allow passage; not that horses had to actually go through. Even though no horse even considered the pathway, the teachers still came away with lessons. “The more time that I spent near the horse, the calmer I felt,” said Donna. “When you have

calm, you feel more confident.” Andy concluded, “I learned that I can be organized when I put my mind to it. I felt good acting it out. I didn’t feel aggravated when the horse wouldn’t follow—I enjoyed touching her soft nose.”

Regarding this and all other sessions, Sara elaborates on her role as Certified Equine Specialist, “Bobbie and the clients rely on me to know the moods and habits of my horses—how they will respond in different situations—and to identify the signs when they are stressed. To do this and be certified by EAGALA requires three levels of certification training.”

The prerequisites for Equine Spe-

cialist Certification are 6,000 hours of hands-on work with horses and 100 hours of continuing education in subjects such as equine psychology and interpreting equine non-verbal communication. For the Mental Health Professional, the three-level certification training is post-graduate work building on a mental health degree, licensure, and adherence to laws governing the professional’s practice.

“While any breed of horse or donkey can be used in EAP,” Sara continues, “I particularly like using my Icelandics, not only because I know them so well, but also because of the breed’s typical demeanor and their inviting size—and mostly, because



The two teachers, Donna and Andy, carried pipes and other items from the tool cart to a site for building their “Cluttered Alley.”

they are so smart. For example, they often seem to know when to be patient. I've seen horses lower their heads and stick their nose into a halter for clients uncertain of what goes where. I've seen horses who like to play the 'catch-me-if-you-can' game suddenly stop and approach a client, or watch and wait."

HORSES AS SYMBOLS

Sara goes on to discuss one of her Icelandic therapists, Silja vom Engelsbachhof, a 17-year-old mare imported from Germany who is a complex combination of opinionated and nurturing, brave and a homebody.

"Silja was standing alone, head down, fading into the background some yards away from the client: a woman with a history of trauma and abuse. Immediately after the client said, 'I want to be proud, strong, and beautiful,' Silja lifted into one of the most gorgeous and powerful stretches I have ever seen: shoulders raised and up, looking a foot taller, one hind leg reaching powerfully out behind—showing off all that could be done with what she had. The client saw this quiet little brown horse transform as if on cue into a symbol of enormous pride, beauty, and grace. When the client cried, I knew it was a meaningful moment for her, and knew that this is what EAP is all about."

Sara continues, "Silja is one of a herd. I keep different herds. Before each session I observe how each is doing and decide which horse or group of horses to use that day. If a client has developed a relationship with a specific horse, I will continue to use that horse until it is no longer relevant to the client's story. It helps to have multiple horses, but if someone were interested in developing an EAP program, one horse would suffice. A covered arena is good for rainy days, but not necessary for an effective program.

"Of all the Icelandic horses that my sister and I have here, there is only one that I wouldn't use. She's still too young, learning her boundaries, simply too in-your-face playful."

REAL HORSES?

Teresa Lyter works together with her sister Sara to keep the herd in good health and shape and to keep the facilities and property running smoothly. In addition to the 21 Icelandic horses, there is a rescue herd of 13 mini-horses, two miniature donkeys,



One of 20 Icelandic psychotherapists at Hulinndalur Farm, Silja vom Engelsbachhof is a 17-year-old mare imported from Germany. "The client saw this quiet little brown horse transform, as if on cue, into a symbol of enormous pride, beauty, and grace," recalls Sara Lyter, an EAGALA certified equine specialist.

and Fritz the Quarter Horse. Then there are the riding arena and track, stable, multiple fenced pastures, and on-site riding trails. With equine and riding experience since 2002, Teresa is working to become a Certified Equine Specialist and steps in as a substitute when needed.

"There are always questions about the horse's size and mane and forelocks," she says. "For the most part, clients that I've worked with find Icelandics to be very approachable and are drawn to their steady and friendly nature." Teresa pauses and smiles before adding, "There was, however, this one guy who asked if he could work with a real horse."

Sara notes, "During certification we are trained in client relations and 'untrained' regarding our own feelings and concerns. We have to keep our stuff out of the session, to be neutral and non-judgmental."

A NEW ARENA

After the session with Donna and Andy, and the pair had left smiling, Bobbie explained that EAP not only helps couples, but groups such as business people trying to improve teamwork. It is also intended for individuals, and I was then invited to participate.

My initial reaction was to wonder what I was willing to reveal about myself in print.

I acknowledged an issue common to many people of my age and temperament. An emotional need to work had carried me through more than 40 years in advertising as a copywriter, art director, photographer, creative director, and ultimately agency owner. For many of those years, I was also active with horses of many breeds. Now, after selling my agency, I felt adrift, floundering for a sense of purpose, even though still involved with riding Icelandic horses.

My assignment was to organize anything within Sara's covered arena to represent my past, present, and future, and to move three mares through whatever I created. The cart of tools was there. Two steel round pens, side by side, filled the width of the far quarter of the arena. The gates were open.

After removing halters, I waited to see what the mares would do without my influence. Two walked into a pen. I gestured to coax the third to follow her companions. She was nice enough to comply. After closing them in, I placed two plastic pipes from the cart at the base of the gate as a visual chute. I re-entered and shooshed them out. They dashed past the pipes, dispersing, exploring, and acting as if they had been suddenly freed after extended confinement.

The pens were my past; the chute, my present; the arena, my future. The article you have just read is evidence of what the EAP session reaffirmed. I was already on a course of renewed purpose, doing the writing and photography that I had always enjoyed, but now within the openness of a big new arena.

In addition to riding his mare Annie from Penridge through the Blue Ridge foothills, Vince Verrecchio is a frequent contributor of articles and photographs to a regional magazine, assists his veterinarian wife Gloria in her equine rehabilitation practice, and helps promote adoptions and donations at the local humane society with photography and ad creation. He considers himself lightly retired and can be reached at verrecchio@windstream.net. His Facebook business page is Joyrides Photography. For more information on the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association, see www.eagala.org. Contact Sara Lyter through Facebook at www.facebook.com/Hulinndalur or call 828-712-8658.

ARENA FIGURES: PART 2

BY ALEX PREGITZER

Arena figures are tools to supple and strengthen your horse and to practice your aids. Don't let the name confuse you. Although the patterns are called arena figures, we can use them without an arena too. Any suitable outdoor surface will do, with a little bit of imagination and some practical items like a bucket or a fence post, a cone or a barrel. Nature itself offers a great variety of useful helpers—stones to use as markers, the edge of a field to use for straight work, trees or bushes to circle around and weave through. Those of us lucky enough to have an indoor or outdoor arena available may still like to try these exercises in a field or on the trail. It's fun!

In the last issue of the *Quarterly*, I wrote about why arena figures provide a good training tool and how to ride them. I explained three figures in depth: riding full school (simply riding all around the arena, although if done correctly it turns out not to be so simple after all), changing rein across the diagonal, and riding a 20-meter circle. In this article, I will introduce two additional arena figures: the three-loop serpentine and the serpentine to the centerline, also known as a simple serpentine on the long side.

THE TRAINING SCALE

But first take a look at the diagram on this page of a typical small dressage arena and familiarize yourself again with some of the terms I will use.

I'd also like you to give some thought, before you begin working on arena figures, to your goals as a rider. Maybe you want your horse to learn a shoulder-in. Or maybe you want your horse to be able to canter on a 20-meter circle. Or maybe you want to work on a faster tölt. Or a correct bend. Or you would really like your furry friend to stand still while you mount. Whatever your goals are, it is great to pursue them and rewarding to see the outcome!

Whenever we work with our horses we train them. We train them in an individual training session (a trail ride with friends, ground work in the arena, a clinic weekend, or any other ride), but we also train them over the course of years.

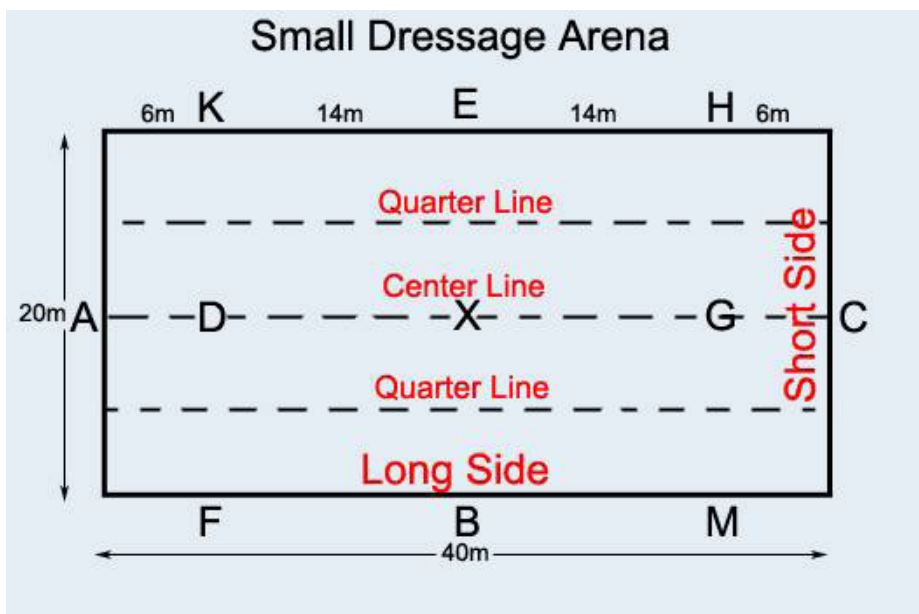
No matter what your personal goals are, we all look for these outcomes:

A good *rhythm* to achieve a correct beat and to ride at an even speed.

Relaxation and suppleness to have a relaxed, happy horse that is supple, elastic, and willing.



Rachel Clark practices arena figures with Björk from Tolt Away at Claudia Rancore's Wren Hill Farm in Ridgefield, WA. Photo by Matt Clark.



A correct *connection or contact* with our horse: acceptance of our aids and acceptance of the bit.

Impulsion for good quality movements and energy through thrust.

Straightness for correct alignment and a well-balanced, healthy horse.

Collection (in varying degrees) for lightness, proper self-carriage, and good quality gaits.

These goals are pretty much recognized worldwide when we look at horse training. The sequence is known as the

training scale, and it shows the order in which the goals should be achieved. One is based on another, and they are all connected. The first and second steps of the scale could be interchangeable: A correct beat often needs relaxation, and relaxation can also come with a correct beat.

What does this training scale mean for us when we ride arena figures? It means that we aim to follow these steps. For example, it does not make sense to try and ride your horse properly on a 20-meter circle (that would be working on straightness and collection), if he has not yet understood the aids (connection or contact in the training scale). A horse that has not learned to yield to the leg and to flex its neck and bend is not yet ready to ride a correct circle, as the general idea of rein and leg aids has to be trained beforehand.

3-LOOP SERPENTINE

With that in mind, let's learn some new patterns. I would encourage you to visualize the patterns and walk them first before you ride them with your horse. It will help you to get a good idea of what you are trying to do and will better prepare you for your ride.

The first pattern, the three-loop serpentine, uses the whole arena to ride three equal loops: Your goal is to ride smooth changes of direction. The trick, as with all these patterns, is to ride the figure *correctly*—and that is not as easy as it looks. Riding this pattern teaches:

Precision: You have to follow the lines

exactly.

Timing: The faster you ride the more difficult it will be to time your aids.

Correct use of the aids (for both horse and rider): The rider has to use seat aids, leg aids, and rein aids, and the horse has to respond to each of them.

Focus (both horse and rider): It is only possible to ride it correctly with a horse that is on the aids. Both horse and rider need to be fully focused, as there is not much time between the change in bend.

Obedience: The horse must yield to the inside leg and listen to seat and rein aids.

The three loops in this serpentine can be viewed as three half circles. Just like riding a circle, they help keep the horse supple and athletic while improving the horse's rhythm. Riding the serpentine loops can also help to slow down a horse without pulling on the reins.

How do you ride a three-loop serpentine across the center line? Let's assume you are riding in an arena that is about 40 meters long (about 120 feet) and about 20 meters wide (about 60 feet). That would equal a standard size dressage arena. Take a look at the diagram on this page to help you follow these directions:

Throughout this exercise, your horse won't be straight other than for a few steps crossing the center line of the arena. This will require good timing and focus.

Altogether, you will ride three loops (imagine them to be three half circles) and pass the center line twice (riding across the arena from one side to the other twice).

Coming down the short side of your riding arena, you will pass A in the middle of the short side. Get ready to ride deep into the corner of the short side and bend your horse to the inside of the arena. In this example, the inside is the left side.

Bend your horse correctly to the inside by positioning your outside leg about a hand's width behind the girth; at the same time, ask gently for a slight flexion with your inside rein. The outside rein gives enough to allow the flexion, but don't forget to keep a steady contact on the outside rein. Together with the use of your inside leg, this will help you and your horse stay on the rail, rather than drifting into the inside of the arena.

As you pass F, your horse will still be bent to the left. You will now ride across the center line toward the other long side of the arena (loop number 1 on the diagram). Before you get to X, you will have to change your bend, as you will be changing direction. There is some time between the long sides to gently straighten out your horse and then prepare for the bend in the other direction. Once you cross the center line, make sure that you are already preparing for your next turn (shifting your aids from riding straight into a right turn).

Getting close to the other side, you are now well prepared to ride a half circle to the right. Your horse is already bent to the right and you should be getting very close to the rail at E. Continue your half circle (loop number 2), guiding you toward the center line as you aim once again at the other long side of the riding arena. This is the second time you ride across the arena.

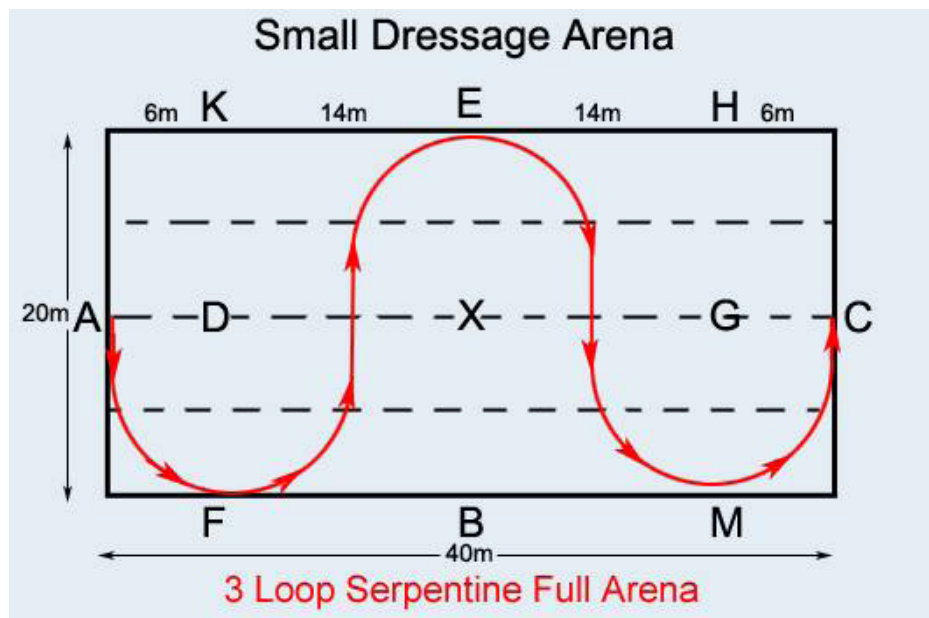
Straighten out your horse as you come out of the turn and ride straight for a few steps.

Once you pass X, get ready to prepare for a left turn (gently bending your horse to the left) to ride loop number 3.

You should be getting very close to the wall at M; ride deep into the first corner of the short side, completing your last loop.

This exercise can be ridden on either rein (direction) with letters and aids changing accordingly.

Do not be tempted to force the flexion and bend the horse with your hands. Changing your seat bones (your leg position) and rein aids fluidly and gently



through the movement are essential.

Start out riding this exercise at the walk. If you trot, please remember that you will either have to sit the trot, do an Icelandic trot (slightly forward seat), or change your diagonal when posting depending on where you are. You would be posting the diagonal of right front leg and left hind leg as you start out at A (rising as the right shoulder swings forward) and change your diagonal close to X as you ride straight (sit for one beat). Then change back the next time you cross X. The slower you go, the easier it will be to ride the exercise precisely.

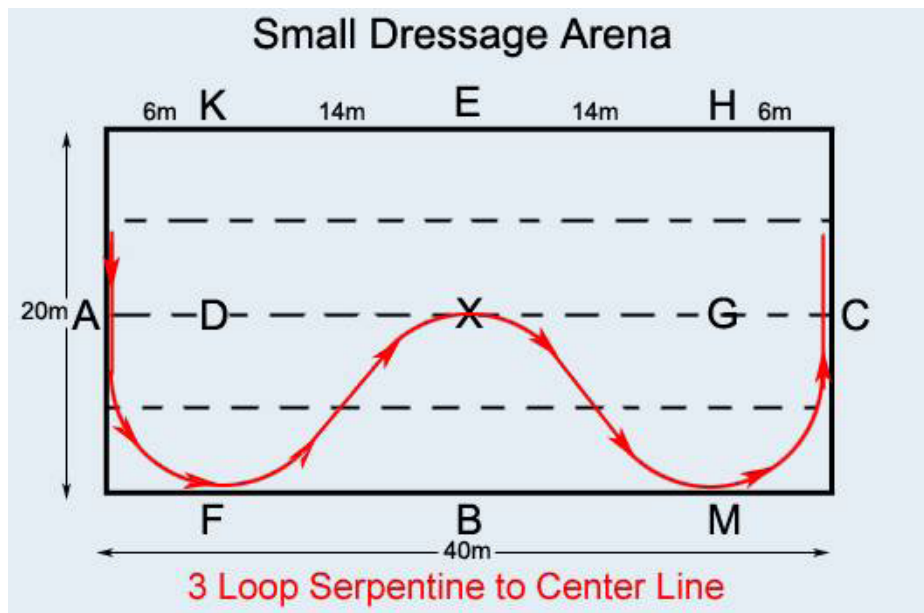
SERPENTINE TO CENTER-LINE

The second figure I want to introduce in this article is a variation on the first: the 3-loop serpentine to the centerline, also known as a simple serpentine on the long side. This serpentine is ridden on one of the long sides of the arena and is more difficult than the serpentine described above. Riding this pattern teaches the same principles and requires the same aids. The only difference is that you have less distance, and thus less time, in which to change direction. Take a look at the diagram, and adjust the directions above to fit the smaller space.

DIFFERENT GAITS

If you read part one in this series on arena figures, you are already familiar with the 20-meter circle, change of rein, and riding full school. In addition to combining those three figures with the two patterns described above, you can try out different gaits to ride the patterns in and use the patterns to practice transitions. Obviously, riding the patterns at the walk will prove to be less challenging than riding them in a faster gait, and it's a good idea to start out at the walk and make sure you and your horse fully understand an exercise and are able to execute it properly. Once you have it down, though, you may want to speed things up. Depending on your horse's gait distribution and how agile and balanced your horse is, you may be able to ride the arena figures at the trot, but maybe not at the tölt, or vice versa. The three loop serpentine is not as suited for a canter as are many other arena figures.

A horse with a well-balanced tölt will



be able to handle all the patterns at a slow tölt. A horse with a well balanced trot will be able to handle them at a slow trot.

If neither is the case quite yet, you can easily mix things up and combine the walk with a tölt or trot for parts of the pattern. For example, you can ride faster before you get to the serpentine, slow down for it, then speed up after you complete the three loops. Or, if you are a more advanced horse-rider team, you can combine the tölt or trot with some cantering before and after the loops.

DIFFERENT TALENTS

I hope you enjoyed learning about these arena figures and have tried the patterns for yourself. You may have noticed that your horse (and you) do better on one side than on the other. Hopefully the exercises will help you become more even. Did you have fun, but found it difficult to ride the exercises correctly? Ideally, you would have a riding instructor to work with, but sometimes having a friend on the ground can be very helpful, too. Some riding instructors offer online help and are willing to discuss videos you may send them. The nice thing about arena figures is that they are not limited to a certain equestrian riding style. Any knowledgeable instructor will know them by heart and will be able to help as needed, no matter what their discipline is (Icelandic, Western, English, etc.).

Whatever you do, please keep in mind that every horse is different and has

different talents. It can take many years for a horse-and-rider team to execute these figures properly. Be patient with yourself and your equine friend and be proud of any progress, no matter how small the steps may seem. And don't forget to enjoy the ride!

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Alexandra Pregitzer is an IPZV Trainer C, certified in Germany. Find Part One in this series in Issue One 2016 of the Quarterly. For more information on Icelandic horse trainers and riding instructors, and their certifications, see www.icelandics.org/Trainers/index.php.

TÖLT 101

BY NICKI ESDORN

When friends ask me why of all breeds I chose the Icelandic horse, my answer is always, “I ride Icelandics because it is the most fun I have ever had on horseback!” Why is Icelandic riding so very much fun? Because of the amazing tölt, of course! When people experience tölt for the first time, their faces say it all—from a sweet grin to loud laughter, they are having fun! When they describe the gait, they use words like smooth, comfortable, happy, bubbly, exhilarating, like dancing, beautiful, and “it feels like a million bucks!” No wonder the Icelandic horse’s ability to perform this wonderful gait is the main reason we get hooked, and then we fall in love with all their other great attributes, too.

This article is called “Tölt 101” because it is meant as an introduction, explaining the gait and how to ride it on a fully trained Icelandic horse. It is not addressed

to competition riders who are working on advanced skills like improving movement or speed changes. It is also not addressed to leisure riders who have a young or untrained horse, or one with beat problems; if that describes you, you should ask a trusted professional for help training your horse or correcting its tölt. And I recommend that everyone, no matter your discipline, take riding lessons to improve your horse’s tölt!

WHY DOES AN ICELANDIC TÖLT?

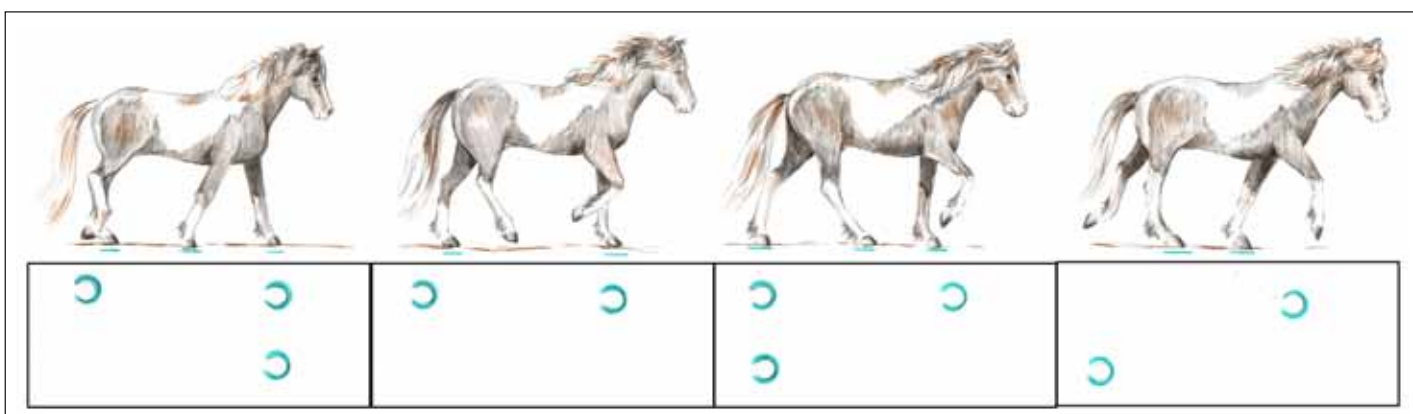
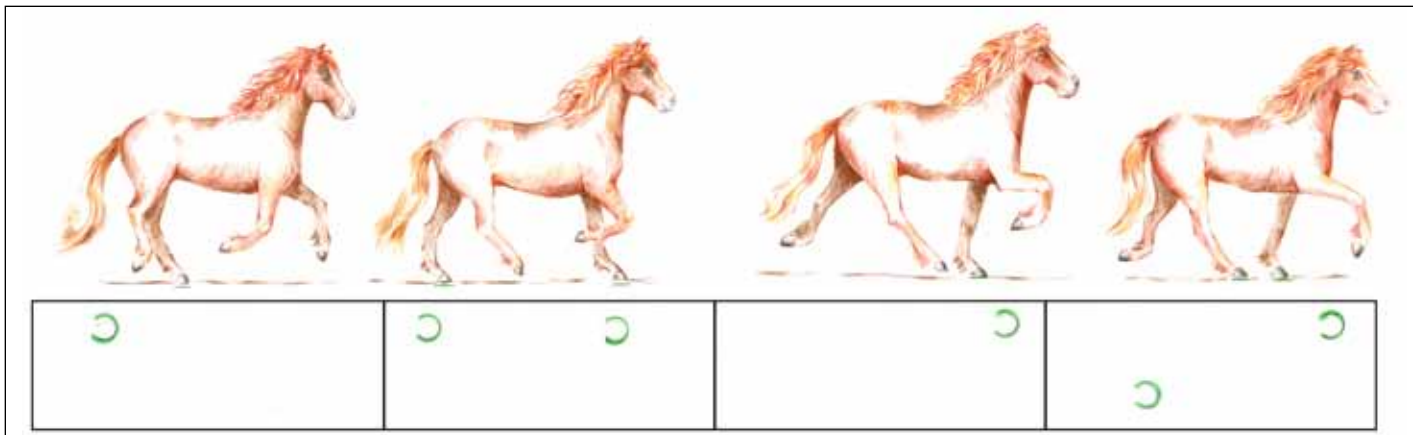
Much simplified, a horse needs one copy of a certain gene to be able to tölt, and two copies of this gene to be able to also pace. Without it, the horse will be three-gaited and only be able to move in walk, trot, and canter. (For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the reading list below). In the Middle Ages, smooth-gaited horses called palfreys were prized for traveling

on rough roads. Later on, as the roads got better and riding in a carriage became the preferred mode of travel, faster trotting horses were used. Trotting horses were also needed for riding in military formation. Over time, the gaited gene was lost from the genetics of most breeds. However, other breeds with gaits very similar to the tölt still exist, for example the Tennessee Walker, Rocky Mountain horse, or the Paso Fino. Having the gene determines whether the horse can tölt, but how well the horse can perform the gait depends on other factors: Some are genetic, like conformation and temperament, but others are environmental, like training, and shoeing.

HOW DOES AN ICELANDIC TÖLT?

While we enjoy riding this smooth, wonderful, and seemingly effortless gait, we should not be oblivious to the amazing mechanics

Both tölt (above) and walk (below) have eight phases, and each gait has the same lateral footfall. But in tölt, the horse has to support its (and your) weight on just one foot. In order to tölt, the horse must be fit, strong, supple, and balanced. Illustration by Nancy Wines-Dewan.



of it! During tölt, the entire weight of horse and rider is sometimes balanced on one of the horse's four feet—on the tiny surface of one horseshoe. The tölt is a smooth gait, without suspension, so the horse needs a lot of strength for impulsion. In order to tölt in a clear four-beat rhythm with a rider, the horse must be fit, strong, supple, and balanced.

Walk and tölt have the same lateral foot fall, without suspension: left hind–left front, right hind–right front. In walk, the weight is balanced on two or three feet at any time. In tölt, the weight is balanced on one foot, then two lateral feet, then one foot, then two diagonal feet, then one foot, then two lateral feet, then one foot, then two diagonal feet, and so on. It is a four-beat gait with eight phases. Each of the phases takes the same length of time. If the horse is not strong, supple, and balanced enough to support its (and your) weight well on just one foot, it will try to extend the phase spent supported on two feet. If those are the lateral two feet, the gait turns pacy. If those are the diagonal two feet, the tölt becomes trotty. Instead of a clear 1-2-3-4, the gait sounds more like 1-2–3-4. In other gaited breeds, some of these variations in

rhythm are allowed, but in Icelandic horse riding only a clear, even four-beat tölt is correct. It is also the most comfortable to ride.

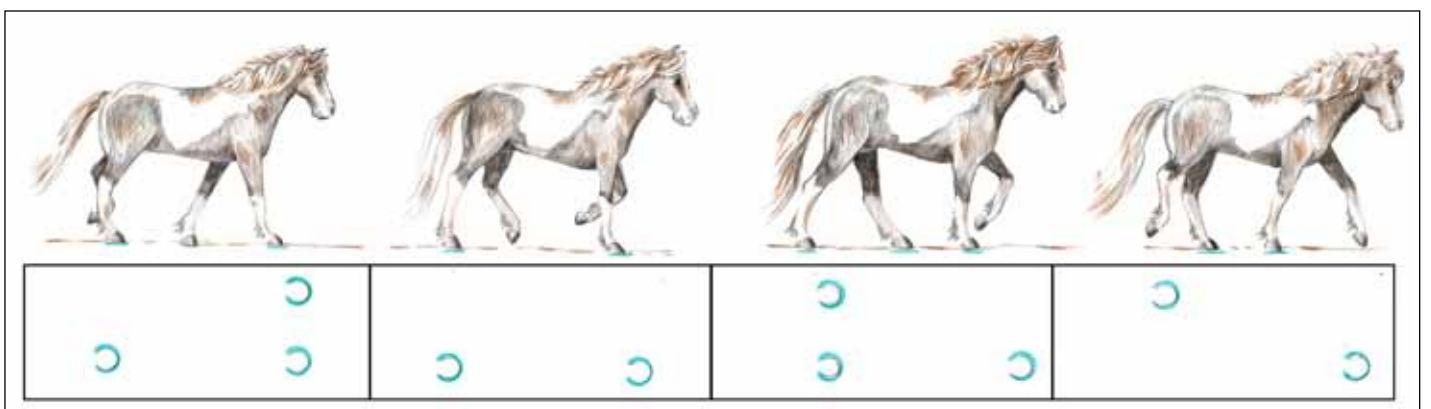
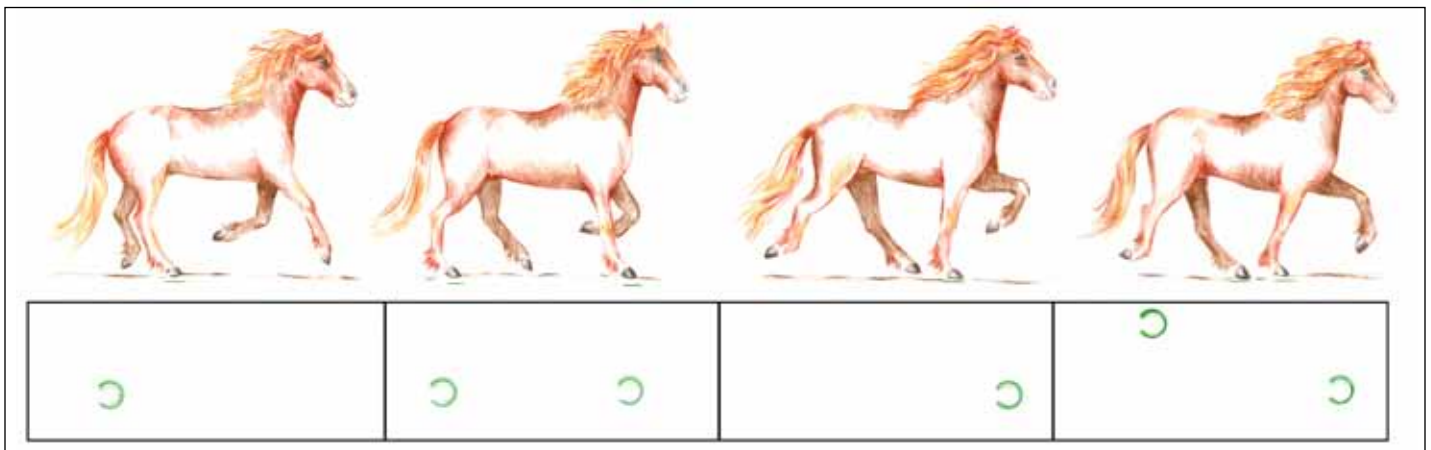
HOW DO WE RIDE TÖLT?

Tölt is a difficult and demanding gait—and our horses perform it with such seemingly effortless grace! When I first experienced riding tölt across the wide-open Icelandic landscape, I was just exhilarated with the joy of movement in my horse. What a feeling! The horse must have a willing, forward-thinking, even exuberant temperament to perform tölt. Dead quiet and tölt are mutually exclusive! People new to the Icelandic horse may be surprised by this fact. If the horse's happiness and energy in tölt are met with fear and stiffness in the rider, the ride can quickly turn ugly and the joy is extinguished. The horse may respond by going anxiously ever faster, resulting in accidents and a vicious circle. The horse may also submit by shutting down and becoming sullen and lazy.

Riding good tölt starts with the rider's attitude. You need to mirror what you want to see in your horse: a happy, lively energy, a good mood, and willingness to go forward. Tölting is a bit like dancing. The energy in horse and rider should match: not too tense,

not too relaxed, but a happy medium.

The rider must be physically able and fit enough to sit up straight and in balance without getting tense or stiff. The stomach muscles do most of the work by stabilizing the rider's core, while the lower back muscles are softly holding the pelvis, allowing the rider to follow the movement in the horse's back. Even though tölt is very smooth, there is still a lot of small movement in the horse's back. If the horse feels the rider as stiff and unyielding, it makes it so much harder for him to tölt—which is hard enough! A stiff rider inhibits the horse from using his back effectively, causing bracing, beat problems, and pain due to stiff muscles. Breathing is really important: Imagine breathing deeply, all the way down to the seat bones. The rider's weight is equally distributed on both seat bones, the pelvic bone, and the inside upper thigh muscles. Knees and ankles function as shock absorbers for the rider and need to swing with the horse—no tight gripping with your knees and calves! The correct stirrup length is important. Let the leg hang down without stirrups, raise your toes, and adjust the stirrup iron there. From the seat up, the rider should mirror the proud and





An early spring ride with two good tölters is double the fun! Nicki on Alfrún frá Hrafnstöðum and Leslie Chambers on Thokki from Four Winds Farm. Photo by Frost White

happy bearing of the tölting horse. The shoulders are relaxed, the chest is open, and a smile does wonders! The arms hang down and the elbows have a nice bend, forming one line from elbow to hand to horse's mouth. The fingers are softly closed around the reins, with the thumbs held like a roof. Open fingers are not a soft hand, they are a dangerous nothing. The horse can certainly feel the difference between a clenched hand and a closed one, and a softening without opening the fingers.

It is a terrible myth that in order to ride tölt you have to hold your hands high and pull the horse's head up! That may result in a tölt-like gait, but the horse will be stiff, inverted like a banana, with tensed back muscles and a broken-apart feeling. He cannot keep this up for long before pain and injury catch up with him. Correctly ridden tölt is an awesome feeling of being carried along on a wave, the shoulders and neck rise up in front of you, while you are carried from behind. The connection to the horse's mouth is soft and light, a friendly conversation. Ridden this way, the horse will be happier, healthier, and last longer!

RIDING A TRANSITION

Now that we know how to ride in tölt, how do we get there? What is different from asking a horse to go into trot?

Both gaits are faster than a walk. To tell the horse which one you want, prepare him by riding the walk either more trot-like or tölt-like. For trot, which is a much calmer gait, ride the walk on a longer rein, with

calm, long steps. Be relaxed. Lighten the seat, give with the reins, give a squeezing signal with the legs, maybe even put light pressure in front of the withers with your hands, and keep the energy calm as the horse trots off. Remain in a light seat or post.

For tölt, however, start by riding the walk with a shorter rein. Ask for shorter, more energetic steps and more alertness. Sit back in the saddle, engage your stomach muscles, and push gently with your seat. Close and soften your fingers on the reins repeatedly, asking the horse to lift up the shoulders and neck. Give a fluttering, squeezing signal with the legs and support with a clucking or kissing voice aid. When the horse lifts up into tölt, keep the energy lively and forward thinking!

Most horses have a favorite speed in tölt, unless they are very talented and well trained. For most five-gaited horses this is often a medium speed, and many four-gaited horses are easiest to ride in tölt at either very slow or very fast speeds. It is very important to ride tölt in a clear, even four beat. Most horses do this best, or even at all, at their favorite speed, so the rider should know what this speed is and find it. When the horse tölts consistently well at this speed, the rider can try to slow it down or extend the tempo a bit, but still keep the clear beat.

And how do we stop tölting? Not by pulling on the reins! A well-trained, balanced horse will react to an easing of the energy and tension of your body. While keeping your seat engaged, and closing and softening your fingers, exhale and let the tension flow out of your body. A voice aid like a long, low "whooooo" is helpful! It is important that the horse does not "trot out" by stretching forward and falling on the forehand into trot before it walks. Instead, it should slow the tölt steps and move into a balanced walk supported by the hind legs. As soon as you are back in walk, relax and soften the rein contact.

MAKE TÖLT FUN AND EASY

Tölting is easiest on firm, even, and a bit grippy footing, that is either level or very slightly downhill. Tölting uphill, in deep mud or sand, or in very uneven footing is difficult for the horse. Riding tölt on very hard footing, like asphalt, is dangerous and can lead to slipping and injuries. It is much better to ride shorter stretches in good, clear tölt, than to make the horse struggle along

in a faulty beat.

Icelandic horses react strongly to whether and how they are shod. The beat and length of stride are affected by how much weight is affixed to the hoof, how long the hoof is, and how it is trimmed. The front feet are more reactive than the hind and will react to even small changes. The tölt can be shod out of a horse with a bad shoeing job! A discussion of shoeing is beyond the scope of this article; however, it is extremely important that the horse owner works with a good farrier experienced in trimming and shoeing gaited horses.

As strange as it sounds, riding all gaits will make the tölt easier and better! The walk is an excellent gait for warm-up and cool-down. Trot is a calm, ground-covering gait and well suited to improving the horse's general fitness and stamina. A canter or gallop loosens the back, makes the horse strong, and inspires forward-thinking and fun. Make frequent transitions from halt to walk, between gaits, and between different speeds.

Bending and stretching exercises that help the horse stay strong and supple are also very important. These can be ridden anywhere, not just in an arena. Riding serpentines and circles around trees, leg-yielding from side to side of the trail, even some shoulder-in, can be incorporated into every trail ride.

Riding in groups is a real tonic for horses and riders alike! Icelandic horses are very social creatures and really love going out together. If you can find a nice group of like-minded friends to ride with, your horse will thank you by tölting even better and longer!

Which brings me back to the fun factor: Tölt is a gift from the gods, and we are blessed that we get to experience this piece of heaven on the backs of our good horses!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

See nice tölt in action on YouTube here: Super Tölt on an Icelandic Horse by Stan Hirson. https://youtu.be/-7rWeWymjDw?list=FLssDrFc-r3BJQYjdH_EEt_g

Here's another fun video of tölting in Iceland (it always gets me in the mood to go tölting!): Riðum sem fjandinn by Þorhallur Guðlaugsson. https://youtu.be/kfVoU_n97k8?list=FLssDrFc-r3B-JQYjdH_EEt_g

Learn more about genetic testing for Icelandic horses, see: www.capiletgenetics.com/en/synchrogait/icelandic-horses

OVERCOMING FEAR ON YOUR OWN

BY THERESA J. JORDAN

This article is the third in my series for the *Quarterly* on the psychology of riding. As a clinical psychologist and a rider of Icelandic horses, my purpose is to discuss the kinds of anxieties horse people experience and to explore ways of coping with our fears. In my previous articles, “The Fear of Riding” (Issue Two 2015) and “How to Handle Risk” (Issue Four 2015), I suggested that if my techniques for handling risk do not work for you, and your anxiety levels continue to impede your joy in riding, you might want to consult a mental health professional.

Yet I am well aware that the vast majority of psychotherapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists are not elite equestrians. Most are not even skilled enough to understand the rudiments of riding, let alone the complexities of riding an Icelandic horse. You may not readily find a therapist who seems right for you.

This does not mean that your emotional health must be pushed aside. Nor does it necessarily mean that it’s time for you to hang up your tack and give up on something that you have loved doing. Remember that even the best therapist can spend only a very small amount of time with you, compared to the time you will spend living—and riding—in the interim from session to session. Trying to cope with the aftermath of a scary spook and dump might best be helped by daily psychotherapy—an impossibility for most riders and even most therapists.

In this article, I’ll explain what you might expect to accomplish on your own, as well as when working with your riding coach. I will also help you distinguish which things might strongly suggest the need to consult a psychologist, a life coach, or even a therapist who practices via Skype or social media.

Many therapists like me provide guidance and even homework assignments to help you make the best use of your healing time away from treatment. Psychological health is not achieved through weekly treatment sessions alone! It is the product of, and the reward for, all the work you



“Maistjarna, my incredibly brave mare, who had been ridden through fire at the Kentucky Horse Park, should have been fine with the birdbath in front of our ranch,” Terry says, “but I noticed riding past that she wanted to avoid this strange object either through speed or swerving away.”

do along your path to wellness. A good therapist can be your guide, but you are the person doing the emotional hiking, climbing, struggling, falling, and finally reaching your summit.

This article shares some of the most useful self-directed tasks that I and many other therapists use to empower their patients in the search for peace, joy, and growth. It is not a “self-help” article, as such. Nor is it a substitute for working with a competent therapist. It is a collection of professional approaches specifically outlined for riders of Icelandic horses. These are approaches that you can turn to when you are between therapy sessions, when you have not yet found a therapist—even when you are not yet certain that working with a therapist is the next step to take in your life.

If you are presently working with a

therapist, ask her how she thinks you might integrate some of these activities into her treatment plan for you. Keeping communication open about the resources you are using is the best policy for a successful alliance. Most therapists today recognize that their patients seek and use many books, articles, and media on their own time. In the same way, if you are working with a riding coach, do not hold back on explaining to her what is troubling you.

Through decades of working as a psychologist with different types and ages of people, and with riders at all levels of proficiency, I have learned that people work at different speeds and prefer different techniques depending on their backgrounds, their personalities, and other forces in their lives. Work through these suggestions at a pace that suits you—fast enough for you to

feel that you are getting somewhere, but slow enough to keep the process comfortable. While these tasks are meant to be worked on in sequence, feel free to skip any parts that are troublesome. You can always return to them later. Spend the most time with the sections that help you. I will also provide guidelines on understanding what your specific kinds of comfort and discomfort about riding can teach you about yourself.

KEEPING SAFE

When working on any type of fear, the most important starting point is to make sure you are as safe as possible. Working with and around horses will always involve an element of risk. So, while you are trying to reduce your anxiety, remember to be a good risk manager: Wear all essential safety gear, especially a high quality helmet, riding or paddock boots that provide grip and protection while allowing for easy release to prevent a hang-up during a fall, and breeches with a seat that prevents you from sliding. If you have back or thoracic injuries, consider using a safety vest to provide some body core protection.

Now think about your horse. Are you riding the right horse for you? If you feel over-mounted, let your coach know immediately so she can help you decide if, in fact, you are riding above your capability. If differences in mood trouble you, think carefully about whether a mare who shows strong mood changes associated with her heat cycles is right for you. If you are considering a stallion, think about how his attention can change when around mares or other stallions.

After considering the horse you will ride, next think about how you will interact with her. When training in Germany, I was taught always to groom my own horse, all the way from her face down to her hooves. By doing this not only do you check your mount for injuries, but you also develop a sense of your horse's mood that day—as well as your own. Even at the World Championships, my coach sternly forced a well-meaning groom out of my mare's stall. Not only did she expect me to engage in the bonding that accompanies grooming, she warned me that someone else's mood can strongly impact how my horse would feel when I prepared to ride.

The same goes for tacking up: If you are preparing to ride your own horse and



“Maistjarna has a 10-minute free run in my roundpen before we work,” says Terry. “Maija is a bit of a bullet, so some warming up playtime makes for a more loose and relaxing ride, whether at speed or a slow walk. She responds to voice commands, so we can get all gaits (except pace) in the round pen.”

have selected your tack for the day, do a good job of checking it, even if you used the same tack the day before. And learn to read your horse's responses to being tacked up. A horse who seemed quiet and comfortable yesterday, is today showing some tail swishing and stomping under the same tack. If she is a mare, consider where she is in her heat cycle, and whether the girth that felt comfortable to her yesterday is binding a more sensitive belly today. If your horse has begun to avoid her bridle during the past few rides, consider the state of her teeth, as well as any points that might have begun rubbing her lips. You can learn a great deal about how your ride is likely to go as you bond with your horse and assess each other during the preparation period.

Should you ride out alone or always arrange to have a companion? The conventional wisdom is that you should always ride in a group or with a companion. There are so many arguments on both sides of this question, that I will offer here only a few important points: When you ride alone,

prepare a safety plan. This should include letting someone know where you will be riding, how long you expect to be gone, and, if possible, the names (or a map) of the specific trails you expect to follow.

Also consider not only carrying a cell phone (on your person, not in your saddlebag, in case you become separated from your horse), but also one of the new devices that can be used for run-of-the-mill assistance as well as a true 911 emergency. (See the article in this issue on emergency preparedness, “Ready for an Eventful Ride?”) For her sixteenth birthday, I took my daughter on an unguided ride in the wilds of Ireland. At one point during that wonderful, intimate trek for two, a massive storm blew up as we were about to ride down into the sea to cross into an area made famous in a poem by Yeats. What had looked spectacularly wonderful suddenly became clearly dangerous as black waves smashed against the boulder-lined coast. There was no safe way to turn back. I pressed the “emergen-

cy” choice on my device. Within minutes, my husband back in the U.S. had received a call and was able to identify our location—within three meters—on his computer. Simultaneously, calls had gone out to the farm that had leased us the horses (along with a good map), as well as to the local first responders. Having a horse trailer come to our aid, along with a first response vehicle, provided an excellent feeling of safety.

CHART YOUR FEAR

Within the field of psychology and the practice of psychotherapy, there are many approaches to treating anxiety. Some of these cannot be utilized without a professional, while others lend themselves to working on one’s own. I particularly favor Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy as approaches that show successful outcomes for alleviating anxiety, while providing tools and techniques people can use with, as well as without, a therapist. Most of what follows is taken from these two approaches.

To begin, make a chart that lets you see the patterns of your anxiety. This will keep track of your progress in a process known as behavioral self control. How do you know you are anxious? There are many different kinds of symptoms. You may think about terrible things that could happen when you ride, like falling off and getting very badly injured. Other symptoms of anxiety are physical, such as sweaty palms, shaking hands, stomach problems, headaches, dry mouth, and hyperventilating. You might feel your heart racing, pounding at a much faster pace than is typical for you. One rider describes feeling the need to repeatedly run to the bathroom before she mounts a horse she is fearful of riding. There is an intimate connection between psychological and physical experiences. (Just be certain that your physical experiences are truly the result of anxiety, rather than of a medical problem that has not been diagnosed.)

Once you have identified your symptoms of anxiety, for each day on your chart score the highest anxiety you have felt that day; zero means no anxiety at all and 10 means the worst anxiety you have ever felt related to horses and riding. Briefly note what you believe caused your anxiety to peak. For riders who see and

perhaps ride their horse multiple times per week, a weekly chart tends to be most helpful. It can look something like the chart on this page.

Note that this chart is a sample from a real week in an anxious rider’s life. It includes both the anxiety scores he provided as well as his brief notes about what was going on during this week. Combining the levels of his anxiety with his notes, you can find meaning in the chart. For this rider, his anxiety increases as he moves toward the weekend, when he has set aside time to ride. His highest anxiety peak is on Saturday, the day of his weekly lesson. While his anxiety is high on Sunday, this is the day he sets aside to practice on his own in an enclosed arena, which seems to be a bit less anxiety-provoking for him. He also shows an anxiety increase on Wednesday, when the only horse-related activity he reports is having thought about the possible purchase of a Western saddle, which he thinks might be a safer choice than his typical flat Icelandic saddle.

Once you have made a habit of charting your anxiety, observe whether the patterns change or remain the same from week to week. Learn to explore and understand the kinds of activities that appear to be related to your emotions, and understand that other life events can create emotions that might spill into your chart. Use the chart to help identify which activities are most troublesome for you. Think about this rider’s tasks on Wednesday: Perhaps it was his anticipation of a job talk, rather than thinking about saddles, that triggered a higher anxiety score midweek.

IDENTIFYING TRIGGERS

Here are some examples of things that trigger anxiety in other riders.

- Looking through horse magazines
- Watching instructional videos about riding
- Getting dressed to ride
- Going to the barn where your horse is housed
- Cleaning your tack
- Grooming your horse

Instructions: For each day, make one checkmark to score the highest anxiety you felt at any time during the day. Zero (0) means no anxiety at all. Ten (10) means the highest anxiety you have ever felt.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Day 1			X								
<i>Relieved that riding days are over</i>											
Day 2			X								
<i>Relieved that riding days are over</i>											
Day 3							X				
<i>Thinking about buying a western saddle. Doing a job talk at work</i>											
Day 4				X							
<i>Nothing in particular</i>											
Day 5						X					
<i>Starting to think about my lesson</i>											
Day 6							X		X	X	
<i>Worried about my riding lesson this afternoon</i>											
Day 7							X	X			
<i>Worried about my free arena time</i>											



“As with the birdbath,” Terry says, “I decided to hand walk Maistjarna past the inanimate threat of this statue in our lawn, until she was ready to touch it with her nose. It would have been easy for me to become avoidant of this part of my property if I had not helped her explore the spooky things together!”

- Tacking up your horse
- Mounting up to ride
- Riding in a closed arena
- Taking a lesson
- Riding in a local show
- Participating in a clinic
- Riding out on the trails at a quiet walk
- Riding out on the trails at fast gaits, including canter
- Riding through a spook
- Riding through a run-away

After thinking about which of these seem problematic for you, make your own list and add to it any other riding-related triggers you can think of.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TRIGGERS

Write a paragraph that describes the kinds of activities that most trouble you, as identified by your list of triggers. Is your anxiety most clearly related to riding in public, as in a lesson, a clinic, or a

show? Or are you most fearful of riding out on trails, particularly when you might ride at speed, or risk a spook or bolt? Do you find that even remote activities such as getting dressed to ride or reading horse magazines trigger your anxiety?

People who most fear riding in public are troubled by performance anxiety—looking foolish or inadequate to others or performing poorly at a competition. These are people who might also fear such activities as public speaking.

People who most fear riding at speed, or being out of control during a spook or bolt, typically are troubled by physical anxiety—falling or getting injured while riding. These tend to be people who avoid physical risks and challenges, such as extreme sports or adventure travel.

It is also common for people with anxiety about riding to have both physical and performance anxiety—one type does

not exclude the other!

Finally, people with fears that are remote from actual riding, such as fears induced by reading a riding magazine or donning riding clothes, are experiencing an extreme type of anxiety which might be related to Post Traumatic Stress. If you are troubled by these kinds of triggers, consider whether you have recently suffered a traumatic event. This might be an injury sustained around horses, or a non-horse injury in a car, or having seen firsthand a street crime or a military tragedy. The context of our life events can make us more vulnerable to riding anxiety than we would otherwise feel.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR THOUGHTS

If you have carried through with the above tasks, I hope you will have begun to find some clarification about the kinds of triggers that are related to your own anxieties. The next point to understand is that triggers alone do not have the power to create anxiety. Albert Ellis, the founder of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, famously stated that “it is not things themselves that create painful emotions, but rather the meaning we make of them.”

Consider this situation: Two riders who are merely acquaintances are thinking about going on a group trail ride to which they have been invited to celebrate Thanksgiving Day at their barn. Each year on this day, tiny corsages are made for the riders to wear, and small festive browbands are given to the horses. At some point on the ride, the riders and horses are greeted by a wagon with cider for the riders and apple treats for the mounts. For each of the two riders we are considering, the triggering event is contemplating the celebratory ride. Here are the emotions experienced by the two riders as they prepare for the ride:

- Rider #1: Excitement, happiness, enthusiasm
- Rider #2: Anxiety, nervousness, fear

Since the triggering event is the same, what accounts for the difference in the two riders’ emotions? The difference in their emotional responses lies in their thoughts. Here are the thoughts revealed by the two riders:

- Rider #1: “I can barely wait to go out on the trails today. I enjoy the crisp

weather—and my horse really likes tölt on the firm footing. The syn-copated sound of the group of horses tölt together seems to encourage my horse to move along beautifully without breaking gait.”

- Rider #2: “When all the horses tölt together, I get really scared that I’m going to lose control of her speed and her gaits. It would be a catastrophe if my horse sped up, and I fell off. I just can’t stand the idea that I could get hurt riding.”

Now think of thoughts as bridges between triggering events and emotions: trigger—thought—emotion. Without their different thoughts, the two riders above would not feel different emotions. Rider #2 holds what we call irrational beliefs. Demanding that one ought to be able to ride without any risk of ever falling off or of ever losing control of the horse’s behavior is not possible in the real world of horses and riding. Riding is a sport in which bumps, dumps, and bruises are commonplace. However, these are very rarely catastrophic.

IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

While the example above involves a celebratory ride on Icelandic horses, the thoughts and emotions could as well apply to non-Icelandic horses and their riders. However, there are also irrational beliefs specific to riders of Icelandic horses. Consider some of the beliefs below, and decide if you hold any of these about your mount.

Because of their breed, Icelandic horses will always remain calm and cool on the trail regardless of unexpected events. Note the use of the word always in this belief. Nothing is ever 100% secure in this world. And Icelandic horses are horses, no matter what their breed. While they do seem to be less likely to spook on trails, they are prey animals who will run from some dangers. This can sometimes work in our favor. Years ago on a solo trail ride, my mare and I heard a very loud crack, almost like violent thunder immediately above us. She leaped forward dramatically, then galloped quickly to a bend in the trail. Looking behind, I saw that a large, old tree had broken, and the top had landed precisely where my horse and I had been standing! Yes, my mare had reacted out of instinct, more rapidly than I could ever have done on my own, running out of my

control, but saving both of us from being crushed by the tree.

If my Icelandic horse bolts under saddle, or accelerates far beyond the speed I want, she must not be the right mount for me, and I must consider a different horse. Here, notice the use of the word must. There are many reasons for unintended acceleration. Your horse might be fresh from Iceland and might not yet have the concept of “American” brakes. The ways you might have been trained to use your body to achieve leg yields or shoulder-in in dressage, or to signal a water jump in English riding, are likely to represent very different requests to your four- or five-gaited Icelandic horse. Another scenario is that your horse is a highly scored, high performance animal who interprets your subtle, even accidental, movements as signals to show

Demanding that one ought to be able to ride without any risk of ever falling off or of ever losing control of the horse’s behavior is not possible in the real world of horses and riding.

speed. Before deciding that she must be the wrong horse for you, talk with her trainer and review any scores she has received. My first Icelandic mare, young and fairly fresh from Iceland, scared me more than any horse I had previously ridden, because I had no idea how to stop her—she was five-gaited (a concept new to me) and merely shifted into a flying pace when I sat deep to try to stop her gallop (not knowing I was signaling her to pace). My coach persuaded me to give her a longer trial period, convinced that we would be a perfect pair after she worked to “tone down” the horse’s hot responses and to show me appropriate ways to stop. From this first Icelandic horse, I learned that my must would have led me in the wrong direction, away from the first horse who truly taught me love, trust, and respect.

Icelandic horses should never buck, run, or try to dump the rider. Remember that within any given breed, there are

individual differences among animals, with personalities sometimes overriding breed qualities. Your horse might buck because of discomfort under saddle—have a good saddle fitter check to see if you need your saddle restuffed or traded in for another. Have your horse’s back examined by a good vet for any issues that could cause back pain when ridden. If your horse fusses at the bit, have her teeth checked and floated as needed. Find out if your horse shows the same behavior when your coach rides, not only with you aboard. A wonderful new mount who showed no vices under a coach repeatedly threatened to buck off her owner. With observation, it became obvious that the owner was holding her thighs too tightly, pinching the horse’s sides. Additional lessons on other horses taught the rider how to tölt with loose legs, which solved the problem. The word should is a key to irrational thinking that can lead to anxiety and misunderstanding your Icelandic horse’s behavior.

SUMMARY

Anxiety, like most distressing emotions, is caused, not by events or triggers, but rather by the meaning we make of them. When we feel beset by anxiety, we can work with a mental health practitioner or we can begin by using techniques that enable us to track our anxiety patterns, learn to identify our triggers, and, most importantly, find the irrational thoughts that create our anxiety. In the world of horses, we will always confront some risks. If these risks are unacceptable to us, even with the use of safety gear and other reasonable precautions, perhaps it is not the sport for us—or perhaps it is time to consult a mental health specialist who can take you far beyond the tools that are offered here.

Theresa J. Jordan, Ph.D., the author of Overcoming the Fear of Riding (Breakthrough Publications, 1997), is a clinical psychologist practicing at the Aiken Counseling Group in Aiken, SC. She keeps Icelandic horses and a Swedish warmblood at her Red Mares Ranch; contact her at 862-250-7515 or redmares@aol.com. Find Terry’s previous articles in this series in Issues Two and Four 2015 in the Quarterly archive (www.icelandics.org/quarterly/equarterly.php).

THE RIDE TO RED FEATHER

BY KAREN BROTZMAN



The barn at Red Feather Icelandics, with Mount Adams looking picturesque in the background. Photo by Linda Templeton.

As a fellow Icelandic horse breeder in the Pacific Northwest, I've known Linda and Dick Templeton of Red Feather Icelandics for many years—and I thought I knew them pretty well. However, after spending a few hours interviewing them for the *Quarterly*, and then meeting the new horses they have recently imported from Iceland, I realized I'd hardly scratched the surface.

Many people think that Linda is somewhat new to horse breeding, so let's start from the beginning. Linda Hereford was born into a prominent Standardbred horse breeding and racing family. Her father, Gene Hereford, had a humble start, born into a family of six boys in a home with no running water or electricity. As an adult he created a farm near Madison, IN, where he produced some of the most successful racing and breeding horses, including the winner of the Breeders Crown. But even that was not the start of horse breeding in the

Hereford family. Linda's great-grandfather, a doctor in Appalachia, rode what we now know as Rocky Mountain horses to make his rounds to patients in very remote areas. Breeding a sturdy and comfortable riding horse was a necessity for him and other rural doctors at that time.

Linda herself has been a horsewoman since a very early age—though she didn't start riding until age 50! Her family's horses were trained to drive and pace, but were never ridden. As a child, Linda was involved in groundwork, driving, and other chores. She left the farm to go to college, obtaining an MBA from Columbia Business School in New York, and beginning a long period of her life away from horses.

Fast forward 20 years. After working for many years as executives in New York City, Dick and Linda decided to start a new life in the Pacific Northwest. They started a gift shop in Hood River, OR, turning it into a successful business. They then purchased

a farm (Red Feather) in Trout Lake, WA, north of the Columbia River, which gave them room for dogs, horses, and people.

A NEW LIFE

Their entry into the Icelandic horse world began with the little black mare Vor Morgan (US2001202684). The Templetons' visit to my farm of Alfasaga, from which the little mare came, started an educational process that continues today.

Though Red Feather Farm began as a hobby, the Icelandic horse (as we know) stirs passion, and Red Feather quickly became a training facility for both horses and people. This passion led to the closure of the Hood River business and a fulltime focus on breeding, training, and education. Today Red Feather is a fully grown equestrian operation, including a regulation track and an indoor arena with a viewing area and a sumptuous kitchen/lounge. Additionally, the Templetons purchased an adjacent



Sinfónía from Wolf Willow, born in late April, is the newest addition to the Red Feather herd. Her dam is Cara Moser's mare Kolfinna frá Selfossi and the sire is Konsert frá Hofi.

farm, where Freya Sturm now lives. Freyja, an IPZV Trainer C, works as the fulltime trainer at Red Feather.

While Linda and Dick have owned evaluated mares for years, including Drottning frá Oddsstöðum I (IS1993235714) and Nótt from Flying C Ranch (US1997201335), which are both ranked second prize, and the first-prize mare Yrsa frá Torfastöðum (IS1996288501), they recently decided to purchase more highly rated mares and to look around while shopping. Their trip to Iceland in 2015, and the horses they imported afterward, got a lot of attention from Icelandic horse breeders in the U.S. The additions to the gene pool now available to

our breeders and the increased potential are exciting.

Personally, I wanted most to find out how their new stallion, Þröstur frá Hvammi (IS2001187041), was settling in at home in Trout Lake. With evaluation scores of 8.53 for conformation and 8.63 for rideability (total 8.59), Þröstur is currently the highest-rated stallion in North America! Like a few of my European horse friends, I was wondering, "How on earth did he end up in Washington State?"

But first, I had a few basic questions:

What is your goal? Answered Linda, "A breeding line that can do it all."

What do you regret? "Not closing the gift shop earlier."

What draws you to Icelandics? "Their soulfulness."

What do you most desire in your horses? "Good temperament, tölt, and talent: the three T's."

THE THREE T'S

I asked Linda to describe that momentous trip to Iceland in her own words: "When we started looking at improving our breeding lines," she said, "we realized that we needed some good mares to establish a strong foundation for our program. We headed to Iceland with spreadsheets on 30-plus mares and more appointments than were logistically possible. We were greeted warmly and tested with coffee and cake everywhere we went. We were amazed by the natural beauty of the land and the openness of the people.

Our quest to find that right mare, with the right temperament, tölt, and talent, was taken up by many people, with calls being made and appointments moving to the 10:00 and 11:00 p.m. time frame. Dick and I agreed that there would be no drinking before shopping and no checkbook handy.

"We worked with too many wonderful people to list," Linda continued, "and formed friendships that spanned continents." They found their perfect mare, Kolfreya frá Auðsholtshjáleigu (IS2008287053) and bred her to Hrannar frá Flugumýri II (IS2006158620)—the third highest-rated stallion in the world, with a total score of 8.85. "We are eager to see that foal this year," Linda said. They also partnered with a friend to breed the mare Kolfinna frá Selfossi (IS2011282714) to Konsert frá Hofi (IS2010156107), who has a 10 for tölt and a total evaluation score of 8.72. Finally, they bred Elska from Rock Ranch (US2003202833) to Örm frá Tjarnastöðum (IS2012182898), a son of Spuni frá Vesturkotí (IS2006187114), the highest-rated stallion in the world, with 9.25 for rideability. "So our summer kindergarten should be filled with superstars!" Linda said.

But what about that stallion, I asked? "Well," said Linda, "one of those friends we made called. She said, 'You keep stressing your three T's—temperament, tölt, and talent—and every time I see this stallion I think of you!'

"Not buying a stallion," I said.

"Well, I'll just send you his registration number and a little video.

"Out of money," I said. So of course, I looked at the video and at his scores and his offspring. I called a couple of good friends and asked, 'How'd you like to buy a third of a great stallion?'" Those friends, Greg and Debby Dillard in Ellensburg, WA and Cara Moser in Canada, said yes—"And now he's grazing on Red Feather pasture!"

Þröstur frá Hvammi (IS2001187041) is that horse, and he joins the other new arrivals at home in Red Feather, this beautiful, peaceful oasis at the foot of Mount Adams, in the Cascade Mountains of Washington State.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Linda Templeton
Red Feather Icelandics
24 Whitewater Drive
Trout Lake, WA 98650
phone: 541-490-0975
linda@redfeathericelandics.com



Red Feather's new stallion, Þröstur frá Hvammi, is shown here performing at the 2006 Landsmót in Iceland.

REHOMING ROSTI

BY DAWN SHAW

I didn't want to pay for Rosti. I felt that I was taking a risk buying him because I didn't know whether or not there was something seriously wrong with him.

But he needed me, or at least he needed someone like me.

And I needed him, or at least I needed a horse like him. I run Lone Cedar Icelandic Horses, a small farm in Washington State where I do a little breeding and a little training, but mostly I just enjoy my horses. In 2015, I sold six horses, leaving me with six mares and one lovely black stallion named Sindrason, aka Sindri. Sounds like a fun situation for Sindri, right? But I can't leave him in with the mares all the time, as much as he'd like it. And since I don't believe in keeping horses alone, because they are herd animals, I decided to keep an eye out for an inexpensive Icelandic gelding to keep Sindri company.

ON CRAIGSLIST

I'd created the Icelandic Horse Rescue and Registration group on Facebook, so I got notified right away when an Icelandic gelding named Rosti appeared for sale on Craigslist. He was 23, trained to ride, registered, imported from Iceland—and underweight. The ad stated that he had issues that prevented him from digesting hay



Rosti immediately made friends with Dawn's stallion Sindri. Here the pair is in November.

and needed to be given senior feed. The ad also stated that they didn't use him enough to justify the extra expense for the feed, so they'd decided to sell him. To the owners' credit, they portrayed this horse as honestly as possible. It also turned out that a friend of mine, Karen Brotzman of Alfasaga, had been the one who'd imported Rosti from

Iceland. She'd sold him to this family about a year or so later, and they'd had him for 15 years. He was friendly, personable, and a bit spoiled from being handled a lot by children.

But I was worried about what the owners may not know. What might be hidden inside the horse's fragile digestive system? Sure, I could have had a pre-purchase veterinary exam done, but that could easily have doubled his cost, and the horse was elderly so there were bound to be some issues anyway. I decided to take my chances: I sent the \$500 asking price to the owners via PayPal and he became mine.

Karen picked him up for me from the owners' farm in late September. I was grateful, as it would save me about four hours of additional driving, plus she knew the owners and knew right where to go. He was thin but not emaciated, yet he was wobbly, and she was worried about him during the trailer ride back to her farm in Battleground, WA. By the time I picked him up two days later, he had perked up considerably. Karen was feeding him well, and he was eating well. This was encouraging.

And yes, he was rude and pushy, but I could deal with that in due time.



As advertised on Craigslist, Rosti frá Hítarnesi was quite thin on September 28, when Dawn picked him up. Her friend Karen Brotzman, whose farm Alfasaga had originally imported Rosti from Iceland, holds him here.

JACKPOT?

Not only was I taking a risk regarding his health, but I also wasn't sure how he would get along with Sindri. I'd had problems with my other geldings being a bit rough with my 20-year-old, non-aggressive black stallion. Thankfully, I hit the jackpot. Rosti and Sindri got along famously, and still do. Big sigh of relief.

Shortly after I brought him home, however, I noticed Rosti was standing in his pen sweating. The weather wasn't especially warm. In horses, this is a distinct sign of distress. He kept kicking at his sheath, and my friend Susan, who happened to be visiting, asked if maybe he had a "bean" that was giving him trouble. (A bean is made up of dirt and excretions that harden inside the penis; it can actually cause blockage if allowed to get big enough.) I had reservations about handling his private areas, as some horses really don't like that and it can be dangerous if they start kicking. After 18 years with Icelandic horses and some excellent mentorship, I have the knowledge and skills to try certain things myself, but I also know my limits. With some gentle probing, though, I discovered that Rosti was quite receptive to having me feel around down there and, sure enough, I squeezed out a bean about the size of my thumb. The results were almost immediate: He stopped sweating. A few days later, I pulled out another bean about half the size of the original.

As for all that senior feed I was supposed to be giving him, I wondered if he might—in addition to being a "senior"—be suffering from ulcers. I'd had a similar experience with my stallion. I'd had Sindri for about a year and had trouble putting weight on him. A fellow horse person

suggested he might have ulcers and that omeprazole, a medication that reduces stomach acid, was an inexpensive, low-risk way to treat them. I looked into it, and a couple of months after completing a 30-day cycle on the drug, Sindri really started gaining weight. The same happened with Rosti: After he was put on omeprazole, he gained enough weight that I could slowly cut him back to just hay with a vitamin supplement. So far he's doing just fine.

A BARGAIN

I was told by his previous owners that Rosti was a brat to ride; that he wanted his own way. I chalked that up to being ridden by children. But when I finally rode him in February, I was pleasantly surprised. He did everything I asked, no problems. I'd had body work done on him about a month after I brought him home, and there had been a lot of things out of alignment. Add to that the possibility that he'd had discomfort from ulcers, and who knows how long that bean in his penis had been a painful issue for him. When a horse is in pain, of course he is going to act up.

When I rode Rosti on the trail the next day, he expressed his opinion a couple of times, but otherwise behaved perfectly. He has an energetic walk that is pleasant to ride. I did have trouble pushing him into anything faster than a walk, but when I did, he offered tölt easily, even if it was a bit slow. But I also have to consider that this is an older horse who is very out of shape and lacking muscle. Now my friend Susan, who is a less experienced rider, is enjoying him as well.

I have recently learned that shortly after he came over from Iceland, Rosti spent six months as the Icelandic horse



This cheap Craigslist horse, it turns out, was the Icelandic breed representative at the Kentucky Horse Park for six months. Says Dawn, "He's about as experienced as they get."

breed representative at the Kentucky Horse Park, where he was ridden almost daily. Until I learned this, I'd been unsure of the amount of training and exposure he'd had. I now know that he's about as experienced as they get.

A horse I was reluctant to pay for so far has turned out to be a bargain. I'd weighed the possibilities, realizing I might be paying \$500 for a horse I'd then have to put down. I'm grateful it didn't come to that. I now have an older, somewhat opinionated gentleman who is a great companion for my stallion and is turning out to be a safe riding horse. Sometimes it's worth taking a risk.

*Dawn Shaw is a FEIF International Trainer Level 1 and owner of Lone Cedar Icelandic Horses in Grapeview, WA. See www.LoneCedar-IcelandicHorses.com or contact her at iceherd@hotmail.com or 360-275-7542. A version of this story originally appeared on her blog at www.facinguptoit.com/blog/. As a disclaimer, she notes, "I am not a veterinarian and the suggestions I've made are not meant to be taken as medical advice. I have merely shared what has worked for me and my horses in their situations and make no guarantee they will work in all similar situations." In 2015, Dawn won the USIHC's Sleipnir Award for her work rescuing and rehoming Icelandic horses; see the story in *Quarterly Issue Two 2015* in our archive at www.icelandics.org/quarterly/equarterly.php.*



Dawn purchased Rosti to be a companion for her stallion Sindri. Here they enjoy the April sunshine.

READY FOR AN EVENTFUL RIDE?

BY ROBERT EVERSOLE

It seems just yesterday that I had the privilege of speaking at the 2016 USIHC Annual Meeting in Portland, OR. As owner of the web's largest horse trail and camping guide, www.TrailMeister.com, I love sharing my passion for trail riding and camping with anyone who'll listen. Having the opportunity to chat with fellow Icelandic horse enthusiasts was the "Icing" on the cake, so to speak! My wife's Icelandic, Minning from Alfasaga (foaled 2002) is not only a great riding animal, but also a better mountain and pack horse than many I've seen, including my main riding beast, LT. Minning's calm demeanor, goatlike surefootedness, and willing disposition are exactly what I look for in an animal that can deliver me to and, more importantly, return me safely from the high mountain back country that I call home during the summer months. Last year Minning and I spent 32 days in wilderness areas throughout the Pacific Northwest, where we helped pack in crews and equipment for maintenance projects.

I don't know about you, but my favorite type of ride is an uneventful one. Memorable rides are glorious, but I'll gladly pass on the "eventful" ones. If only we had the final say about when an "event" happens. To help me prepare for that potential eventful occurrence, I take the time and make the effort to pre-plan each ride, no matter how long I think I'll be out, and I always take a few items that can help me get through a long miserable night on the trail should the worst happen. After all it is never "just a trail ride."

Ask a Search and Rescue (SAR) professional what causes most emergencies, and eight times out of 10 you'll hear that most rescues could have been prevented with a bit of planning and preparation. Taking a few common-sense safety precautions before your ride can mean the difference between life and the unfortunate alternative. While it's impossible to plan for every emergency situation, proper planning can help to minimize the impact and lessen the severity of the consequences, should an unhappy incident occur.



Robert Eversole aboard his handsome Tennessee Walker LT, packing with Minning frá Alfasaga in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex in Western Montana. Photo by Celeste Eversole.

THE ESSENTIALS

The point of carrying these essentials, adapted from a list of items traditionally carried by mountaineers, is to give you the ability to respond positively in an emergency and to allow you to safely spend a night out if needed. During an uneventful ride you may use only a few, or none, of them. You'll probably never fully appreciate the value of these essentials until you *really* need one. These ten essentials are not optional:

1. Navigation (map and compass)
2. Insulation (extra clothing)
3. Illumination (headlamp, flashlight, and extra batteries)
4. First-aid supplies (and know how to use them) and any daily medications you take
5. Fire (lighter or candle)
6. Repair kit and tools (multi-tool, knife, and duct tape)
7. Nutrition (extra food)
8. Hydration (extra water)
9. Emergency shelter (Mylar blanket or garbage bag)
10. Communication (cell phone, personal locator beacon (PLB), Satellite Messenger System (SMS), and/or whistle)

The eleventh and most important essential is knowledge. The essentials are simply equipment. The skills necessary to use the equipment only come with knowledge and experience. For example, first aid training is much more important than simply carrying a first aid kit. Matches are useless if you don't have experience finding dry wood in wet conditions. Practicing map and compass skills is vital to being able to return to camp in time for dinner, and so on. Learn how to interpret a topo map before you're lost. The ability to read a topographic map will also put a tremendous amount of information at your fingertips, from how hard your animals will be working on the trail, to where to find water, alternative routes, and much more.

Before you lead your horses out of the trailer at the trailhead, you should have a pretty good idea of what to expect and what will be required to successfully complete the ride. Most trails are rated, and there are a multitude of online trail databases. On mine, I include free trail maps and I verify the trail information with the land managers before my description of any trail area goes live.

STAY CALM AND STAY PUT

Getting lost is easy to do. A bit of fog, an elk path you thought was a trail, an engaging conversation—all can lead you astray. It happens to everyone. When you become lost, don't panic. Instead remember the acronym STOP (Stop, Think, Observe, and Plan.) These four simple steps will help you stay on track:

Stop: If you feel that you've gone off course, just stop. It's very tempting to "keep going just a little bit further." Don't fall victim to the temptation. If you do, you stand a good chance of becoming even more disoriented.

Think: Put the panic aside. Stay calm and approach the situation in a rational manner. Think about what made you realize that you were lost: a trail that vanished, a landmark that wasn't where it should be. Stay put while you consider the situation: Moving will make things worse.

Observe: Open your eyes and analyze your surroundings. Think about what landmarks might help you orient yourself. Compare those observations to your map to further help pinpoint your location. Think about the weather, what time it is, and what supplies you have on hand. Use all of these factors to develop an action plan.

Plan: Think through some potential next steps and then decide on a plan. If you feel confident that you can get back on your trail, do so. If you do not feel that you can safely make it back, then staying put and waiting for help is a very good option. If help is on the way, continued movement will only make things worse.

CALL FOR HELP

When in need, call for help. Don't be shy, macho, or any other flavor of wrong. Having a means to call for help is a very important issue to consider. Here in 2016 we have a number of tools available to us that weren't in existence only a decade ago. These high-tech tools can add a reassuring measure of safety to many situations:

Cell Phone: 911 calls are routed to the proper authorities, but if you have no cellular reception they're not much good. Cell signals may be reliable in the front country, although not always. Check the provider's coverage map.

Personal Locator Beacon (PLB): Emergency use only, no messaging. No ongoing subscription fees. Strongest alert signal of all devices.

Satellite Messenger System (SMS):

The sweet spot for outdoor folk. Can be an emergency beacon if needed, but can also send non-emergency updates, which equal peace of mind for loved ones at home. The Delorme InReach can send and receive messages, which is very handy, especially if you lose your truck keys!

HELP SAR HELP YOU

A detailed itinerary or emergency plan will help Search and Rescue personnel help you. Creating and leaving a detailed trip plan with reliable, responsible, and trustworthy people is a good idea. Make sure that they know your route, start date and time, and when you'll return. If you don't get back as expected, they should have detailed instructions on who to contact—for example, the ranger station near the trailhead. If your plan changes, let your contact people know. One of the first places Search and Rescue teams will search is the vehicle you left at the trailhead. It's a good idea to leave an extra copy of your itinerary or emergency plan in your vehicle, so that Search and Rescue teams know exactly where they should be looking and who they are looking for.

At a minimum your trip plan should include the following information:

Panic time: If you have not heard from me by (time) ___ on (day) ___ of (month) ___, call 911 and report me as overdue.

Information about yourself and your riding partner(s), including name, age, medical issues, and level of outdoors experience.

Information about your trip, including the trailhead name and county, the land manager's contact information, your planned trails and route, camping locations and sites, your backup plan, your time of departure, and your expected time of return.

Information about your animals and gear, including your horses' color, gender, and if they are shod; your vehicle's make, model, color, and license plate; your trailer's make, model, color, and license plate; and the emergency equipment you carry.

I hope that all of your rides are memorable and that you never have to endure an "eventful" trip. I've found that by planning for the worst outcome, while hoping for the best, I have fewer issues and more great rides. There's a reason contingency planning consultants are in high demand!

Robert Eversole shares his knowledge of trail riding and equine camping with horse groups around the nation as a clinician, lecturer, and regular columnist in equine publications. He is also a registered instructor with PATH International and volunteers at Free Rein Therapeutic Riding in Spokane, WA. For more information, see www.TrailMeister.com.



Minning frá Alfásaga takes Robert's wife, Celeste Eversole, safely up a narrow mountain path amid spectacular scenery. Photo by Robert Eversole.

OFF TO THE YOUTH CUP

BY KELLY BLOUGH

In July, the United States will send a team of young riders to Exloo in the Netherlands to participate in the FEIF Youth Cup. The USIHC receives three confirmed positions for its team, and in past years has also been able to send an alternate or two to the event. For the 2016 Cup, eight young riders applied. Their applications included recommendations from their trainers and videos of them competing in Four Gait (V1), Five Gait (F1), and/or Tölt (T1) programs, which were judged by FEIF International Sport Judge Þorgeir Guðlaugsson.

The top qualified scorers were chosen for Team USA. Team members (in alphabetical order) are: Jessica Blough of Monte Sereno, CA; Alicia Flanigan of Limington, ME; and Olivia Rasmussen of Santa Cruz, CA. The team has one alternate: Jamie Blough of Monte Sereno, CA. Joining them to serve as country leader is Kevin Draeger of Elko New Market, MN. Their stories follow.

JESSICA BLOUGH

In 2014, I traveled to Hólar, Iceland for the FEIF Youth Cup. To this day, I consider the few weeks I spent at Hólar and training beforehand to be the best weeks of my life. I could not have had a better experience: I rode a great horse, trained with some of the best trainers in the world, and connected with both my international team and my U.S. team.



Alicia Flanigan aboard Funi from Boulder Ridge.



Jessica Blough posing with Hugljúf frá Vatnsholti before a Knights of Iceland performance. Photo by Kelly Blough.

Each member of my international team, the Fantastic 7, brought some quality or skill to the team that allowed us to work hard, ride well, and bond, and thanks to social media we've kept in touch. I also got very close with Team USA. I still consider those girls to be my best friends, even though we don't always get to see each other. I'm very excited for another summer of team building and friendships.

I'm also excited to see how this Youth Cup will improve my skills as a rider. I've been lucky enough to ride two incredible horses at the FEIF Youth Cup and the American Youth Cup: Blíða and Svali. Both horses taught me about patience, gentleness, and perseverance. I hope to keep an open mind and a humble attitude going into this event, so that I can learn as much as possible.

Thank you to the USIHC for this amazing opportunity. I plan to represent Team USA as a professional who is friendly and passionate about the Icelandic horse. Thank you also to all of the people who made this possible for me, especially my trainer, Ásta Covert of Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA, and my family.

ALICIA FLANIGAN

Last summer I was fortunate enough to be chosen to participate in the first American

Youth Cup held at Léttleiki Icelandics in Kentucky. It was one of my best experiences to date involving Icelandic horses. When I learned that the FEIF Youth Cup was this year and I would be eligible to try out, I knew I wanted to take a shot.

I was very nervous trying out, as I would be one of the younger applicants among a lot of very talented riders. My trainers and I worked very hard to put together my video application, and I was super excited to be chosen as a member of Team USA. I am very excited to meet new people and to make new friendships with my teammates, as well as with kids from other countries who share the same passion as I do for all things Icelandic.

I will admit that I am a little nervous about what horse I will be given to ride and whether we will be a good fit. I will be spending June and July interning at Léttleiki Icelandics in Kentucky, working at being a better rider. A week prior to the Youth Cup, I will travel with Team USA to a farm in the Netherlands to get acquainted with my horse and get in some practice time.

I am very proud to be a member of Team USA and will do my very best to represent the USIHC. I want to thank my family and my trainers for making this possible, and I hope to make them all proud. So much of what I have accomplished so far is due in

large part to my trainers and the positive environment they provide. I am very fortunate to train under Carrie Brandt and Terral Hill of Léttleiki Icelandics in Kentucky, Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir of Solheimar Farm in Vermont, and Guðmar Pétursson and Pernille Møller when they are in the States. Without them, this would not have been possible for me. They have all helped me to be where I am today, and I can't thank them enough.

OLIVIA RASMUSSEN

As soon as I was aware of the application process for the 2016 FEIF Youth Cup, I began preparing, in hopes of making the U.S. team. Last fall, with the help of my trainer, Heidi Benson of Centaur City Icelandics in Santa Cruz, CA, I spent several weeks collecting videos to submit. I continue to train by riding six days a week.

I am thrilled to be given the chance to compete in the 2016 FEIF Youth Cup for many reasons. I love to travel and to experience a different culture, and this will be my first trip to the Netherlands. I think the Youth Cup will enable me to grow as a rider. I am excited to get to know my fellow team members even better and to form friendships with riders from other cultures. Finally, I am proud to represent the USA in an amazing competition with outstanding horses and riders.

I am a little anxious about having to learn to ride a new horse so quickly and then proceed to compete. However I find that this small amount of anxiety is pushed aside by my excitement for this outstanding oppor-

tunity to grow as a rider. I believe each horse I ride teaches me something new, therefore this process will be especially beneficial. This July will most certainly be a memorable one. I anticipate returning home with another view of riding, improved abilities as a rider, and cross-cultural friendships.

JAMIE BLOUGH

Last summer, I had the chance to participate in the American Youth Cup in Kentucky. Two summers ago, my family traveled to Iceland to watch my sister, Jessica, participate in the 2014 FEIF Youth Cup. Since those two experiences, I have been very excited (and nervous) to try out for this summer's FEIF Youth Cup.

The filming and putting together of the videos was a very long and nerve-racking process, but it was fun to be able to watch myself and to take that into consideration while I rode. My trainer and I worked very hard to create the videos, and I was nervous sending them in. I am currently the first alternate for the U.S. team.

As first alternate, I am very hopeful that I will be able to participate. If I am fortunate enough to get a position on the team, I am looking forward to creating friendships and improving as a rider. Two years ago when my sister participated, I was able to watch and hear about the amazing relationships she built. She still keeps in touch with friends from Iceland, the Netherlands, and many more countries. Hopefully, similar lasting friendships will come out of my experience.

I am very lucky to possibly have the



Alternate Jamie Blough riding Viður frá Lækjamóti at the American Youth Cup. Photo by Colleen Monsef.

chance to ride and create a bond with a new horse. To receive a new horse and train for a show in less than a week is very challenging, and I know it will cause me to improve greatly as a rider.

Although I am nervous about many things, and I am not sure yet if I will be a part of the team, I am hopeful and looking forward to an amazing time at FEIF Youth Cup 2016. I cannot wait to represent the United States team and the USIHC as a rider. Special thanks to my family, and to my trainer, Ásta Covert, for making this a possibility.

KEVIN DRAEGER

Last summer, I had the great pleasure of being a team leader for the first American Youth Cup. I hadn't considered being a leader at the FEIF Youth Cup, but some of my team members from the American Youth Cup encouraged me to apply. I represented the U.S. at the FEIF Youth Cup in Denmark in 2010 and really valued my experience. I am looking forward to seeing this year's team experience the same excitement of an international event. I hope that I am able to help them have an awesome experience and to excel at the competition. I believe we have an extremely talented team this year and I can't wait to see our youth make our country proud!

For more information on the USIHC's and FEIF's youth programs, see www.icelandics.org/youth.php or contact committee chair Colleen Monsef at youth@icelandics.org or phone 408-390-9307.



Olivia Rasmussen riding Brynjar from Dalalif. Photo by Kajsa Johnson



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

[] New Application [] Renewal

Membership Type: [] Individual [] Family [] Junior

[] Foreign Friend of the US Icelandic Horse Congress

Name:

Address:

City: State/Province : Postal Code: Country:

Phone: Email:

[] Keep my name and contact information private.

[] Never use my email address instead of the US Mail to notify me of official USIHC business.

[] I prefer **not** to receive a copy of the *Quarterly* magazine in the US Mail.

Regional Club:

If you have selected a Family Membership, please complete the following for the second adult and any children to be included in the membership (use the back of the page to add more family members):

Name	Year of Birth (juniors only)	Email (optional)	Enroll in Pleasure Rider Program (optional)

[] Farm Listing.

Paid members of the USIHC may opt to include a farm listing on the Congress's web site (www.icelandics.org). There is a \$110.00 annual fee for the farm listing in addition to your membership fee.

Farm:

Owners:

Address:

City: State/Province : Postal Code: Country:

Phone: Email:

Fax: Web:

Membership Fees & Restrictions			
Individual	\$45/year. One adult. One vote.	Membership Fee:	\$.....
Family	\$65/year. Two adults and unlimited children living in the same household. Adults vote.	Farm Listing Fee:	\$.....
Junior	\$35/year. One child (under 18 years). Not eligible to vote.	World Championships Donation:	\$.....
<i>Members in the categories above with non-US mailing addresses must be US Citizens</i>		Youth Fund Donation:	\$.....
Foreign Friend	\$70/year. One adult non-US Resident/non-US Citizen with limited benefits. Not eligible to vote.	(optional support for youth programs)	
		Total:	\$.....

**Make checks to "USIHC" and mail to the MAIN OFFICE address.
Congress memberships are for one year. Your membership is active on receipt of payment and expires one year later.**

MAIN OFFICE: 300 South Sawyer Road, Oconomowoc, WI 53066
Phone: (866) 929-0009 [extension 1]

Email: info@icelandics.org



WHY REGISTER YOUR HORSE WITH THE USIHC?

Photo by Martina Gates

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, FEIF Youth Cup tryouts, American Youth Cup 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.

CALIFORNIA

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

Mountain Icelandic Farm
Annette Coulon
620 Calabasas Rd.
Watsonville, CA 95076
(831) 722-8774 (phone)
annette@mountainicelandics.com
www.mountainicelandics.com

Valkyrie Icelandic
Laura Benson
1 Duane St. #33
Redwood City, CA 94062
(650) 281-4108 (phone)
laura@valkyrieicelandic.com
www.valkyrieicelandic.com

COLORADO

Hestar Ranch
Monika Meier-Galliker
P.O. Box 1744 / 30420 C.r. 500
Arboles, CO 81121
(970) 883-2531 (phone)
m.meier@hestar-ranch.us
www.hestar-ranch.us

Lough Arrow Icelandics
Andrea Brodie, Dvm
22242 County Road 46.0
Aguilar, CO 81020
(719) 680-2845 (phone)
fiddlinvet@gmail.com
www.coloradoicelandics.com

Tamangur Icelandic Horses
Coralie Denmeade
P.O. Box 2771
Monument, CO 80132
(719) 209-2312 (phone)
coralie@tamangur-icelandics.com
www.tamangur-icelandics.com

FLORIDA

Florida Icehorse Farm
Beerihomes Llc
10551 Deal Rd
North Fort Myers, FL 33917
(239) 223-5403 (phone)
floridaicehorsefarm@gmail.com
www.floridaicehorsefarm.com

INDIANA

Windstar Ranch
Bonnie Windell
4845 Warrenton Road
Evansville, IN 47725
(812) 983-4125 (phone)
bonniewindell@yahoo.com
www.windstarranch.com

IOWA

Harmony Icelandics
Virginia Lauridsen
1401 Casady Dr.
Des Moines, IA 50315
(515) 556-3307 (phone)
virginia@harmonyicelandics.com
www.harmonyicelandics.com

MAINE

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

MASSACHUSETTS

Merrimack Valley Icelandics
Neil and Ebba Meehan
282 Main Street
Boxford, MA 01921
(781) 521-0841 (phone)
ebbameehan@me.com

NEW YORK

Sand Meadow Farm
Steven & Andrea Barber
300 Taylor Road
Honeoye Falls, NY 14472
(585) 624-4468 (phone)
toltstar@yahoo.com
www.sandmeadow.com

NORTH CAROLINA

Hulinndalur
Sara Lyter
372 John Weaver Rd
Columbus, NC 28722
slyterz@yahoo.com

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

OHIO

Common Ground Farm and Kennel
Jim and Laurie Blakey
12698 Mantua Center Rd.
Mantua, OH 44255-9368
(330) 995-9273 (phone)
commongroundfarmandkennel@gmail.com
poodlepony.com

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

PENNSYLVANIA

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

SOUTH CAROLINA

Black Creek Farm
Sarah C. Elkin
449 Jewell Boone Rd.
Pelion, SC 29123
(803) 894-4514 (phone)
bigdoglady@pbtcmm.net
blackcreekfarm.us





VERMONT

Silver Maple Icelandic Horse Farm
Susan Peters
106 Gilley Road
Tunbridge, VT 05077
(802) 889-9585 (phone)
susan.peters@gmail.com
www.silvermapleicelandics.com

Vermont Icelandic Horse Farm
Karen Winhold
3061 N. Fayston Road
Waitsfield, VT 05673
(802) 496-7141 (phone)
(802) 496-5390 (fax)
horses@icelandichorses.com
www.icelandichorses.com

WASHINGTON

Evans Farm-Orcas Island
Wanda & John Evans
P.O. Box 116
Olga, WA 98279
(360) 379-4961 (phone)
evansfarm@orcasonline.com
www.icelandichorsesnorthwest.com

Five-Gait Farm
Lucy Nold and Jennifer Denning
15 Foster Lane
Centerville, WA 98613
(831) 332-5328 (phone)
fivegaitfarmicelandics@gmail.com
fivegaitfarm.com

Lone Cedar Icelandic Horses
Dawn Shaw
P.O. Box 524
451 E. Murray Road N
Grapeview, WA 98546
(360) 275-7542 (phone)
iceherd@hotmail.com
www.lonecedaricelandichorses.com

Red Feather Icelandics
Dick and Linda Templeton
24 Whitewater Drive
Trout Lake, WA 98650
(541) 490-0975 (phone)
redfeathericelandics@gmail.com
www.redfeathericelandics.com

WEST VIRGINIA

Deep Creek Farm
Curtis Pierce and Marsha Korose
537 Fjord Rdige Dr
Mathias, WV 26812
(304) 897-6627 (phone)
cepinwv@yahoo.com
www.deepcreekfarm.com

Icelandic Thunder
Denise & James Taylor
550 Hackers Creek Rd
Philippi, WV 26416-7198
(304) 457-4238 (phone)
icywoman@msn.com
icelandicthunder.com

WISCONSIN

Winterhorse Park Icelandics Horse Farm
Barbara and Daniel Riva
S75 W35621 Wilton Rd.
Eagle, WI 53119
(262) 594-5152 (phone)
(262) 594-2720 (fax)
winterhorse@centurytel.net
www.winterhorse.com



Did you know?

If you are promoting the USIHC or the Icelandic horse, you can request free copies of **The Icelandic Horse Quarterly** to give away. Quantities are first-come, first-served, as they are available.

Send your name & address, the name of your business or event, and the number you'd like to request to:

Quarterly@icelandics.org

Dear USIHC Youth Fund Donors,

Thank you very much for contributing over \$11,000 over the past six years! Over 200 people have sent individual donations ranging from \$5 to \$1,000. You have helped to send 15 young riders to the FEIF Youth Cup in Europe, and another young team from the USA will be supported this summer.

Your generosity inspires and motivates us to become better riders, better people, and better champions for our beloved Icelandic horses. We are truly grateful for your support, you have helped make our dreams come true.

Please continue to help us! The USIHC Youth Committee needs more of you to give your time, talents, and suggestions on how we should spend the money!



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