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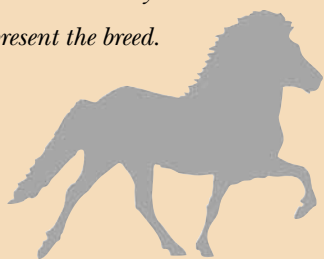


THE USIHC MISSION

- 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 21 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.



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

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. By joining the USIHC, you connect to a worldwide network of experts to help you care for, ride, train, breed, and learn more about your horse.

The USIHC is the umbrella organization of 14 affiliated clubs: 13 regional clubs and one activity club focused on breeding. Our Registry links to WorldFengur, the worldwide database of all registered Icelandic horses (USIHC members have free access to WorldFengur), and we publish *The Icelandic Horse Quarterly*, maintaining an online archive of all issues since 2008.

The USIHC sponsors scientific research on the Icelandic horse, helps promote the Icelandic horse at expos and through social media, supports educational seminars and events like the American Youth Cup, organizes leisure activities like the Sea 2 Shining Sea virtual ride, creates teaching tools like the Riding Badge Pro-

gram, and offers practical and monetary support to organizers of shows and clinics.

The Icelandic horse has international competition rules: You can compete in the same classes and receive comparable scores in any FEIF member country. Likewise, 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 ridden abilities. The USIHC sanctions sport and breeding shows that conform to FEIF rules.

The USIHC is responsible for the U.S. teams at the FEIF Icelandic Horse World Championships, the FEIF Youth Cup, and the FEIF Youth Camp. Through FEIF, the USIHC votes on rules and policies that affect the welfare of the Icelandic horse worldwide.

As a member of the USIHC, your dues and registration fees make all this possible. Our board members and committee chairs are all volunteers. As a member-driven organization, the USIHC grows stronger the more active and involved our members become. Please join us so that the USIHC can, as FEIF's mission states, "bring people together in their passion for the Icelandic horse."



USIHC ANNUAL MEETING

JANUARY 19, 2018 - BOSTON, MA

All USIHC members are invited to explore historic Boston and attend the 2019 USIHC Annual Meeting at the Hilton at Logan Airport.

Hosted by Northeast Icelandic Horse Club

THREE SPECIAL SPEAKERS

Nancy Marie Brown - "Horses in the Sagas"

Common Ground Hoofcare - "Beat and Balance: Shoeing the Icelandic Horse"

Svanhildur Hall - "Setting Clear Breeding Goals and How to Achieve Them"

Updates and agenda will be posted to: www.icelandics.org



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THE
ICELANDIC
HORSE
QUARTERLY
Issue Three 2018

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

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On the cover: Lucy Nold shows her handsome silver dapple stallion Vindur from Dalalif (US2010104354) at the CIA Spring Open. At the 2018 breeding evaluation in Vernon, B.C., the four-gaited Vindur achieved 8.5 or better in all categories other than pace, and so earned a "first prize," with a perfect "10" for mane and tail. Lucy, his owner and trainer at Five-Gait Farm in Oregon, says he is an incredible horse who will give everything on the track and right away relax completely on the trail ride home. Photo by Isaac Dwyer.

ICELANDIC HORSE

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ANNUAL MEETING

The Northeast Icelandic Horse Club (NEIHC) will host the 2019 USIHC Annual Meeting at the Hilton at Logan Airport in Boston, MA on January 19. Watch for more information on the USIHC website (www.icelandics.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/usihc/).

SHOW SEASON

Eleven sport competitions have been sanctioned by the USIHC for the 2018 season—though with one event being comprised of three separate World Ranking shows, the number of shows is actually 13—giving Icelandic horse riders opportunities to compete in nearly all parts of the country this year.

The first show of the year, the CIA Spring Open, took place April 21-22 at Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. On May 26-27, the Kentucky Sport Competition was held at Léttleiki Icelandics in Shelbyville, KY, in conjunction with a breeding evaluation. And on June 23-24, the Sixth Annual NEIHC Open was held at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY.

The Solheimar Open Sanctioned Show, held at Solheimar in Vermont; the Flugnrkeppni, at Winterhorse Park in Wisconsin; and the Kraftur Summer Open, at



Terral Hill and Veigar frá Lækjamóti showing their winning form in Tölt T1 at the NEIHC Open in Claverack, NY. Photo by Jean Ervasti.



Heidi Benson and Strokkur frá Syðri-Gegnishólum ride a victory pace sprint at the CIA Spring Open in Santa Ynez, CA. Photo by Isaac Dwyer.

Coast Road Stables in California, all took place in late July and early August, while this issue was at press.

Upcoming 2018 shows include the Toppur Sanctioned Show, at Harmony Icelandics in Iowa (September 8-9); the AIHA Sanctioned Show, at Alaska Ice Farm in Alaska (September 15-16); the Kentucky World Ranking Event at Léttleiki Icelandics in Kentucky (October 5-7); the CIA Open Fall Sanctioned Show at Flying C Ranch in California (October 13-14); and the Frida Icelandic Horse Sanctioned Show at Montaire Farm in Virginia (October 27-28).

Results of these and all sanctioned shows are available on the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org. For contact information and show details, see the USIHC Events Calendar online.

BREEDING NEWS

In March, a successful Breeding Seminar was held at Red Feather Icelandics in Trout Lake, WA. The instructor was Arnar Bjarki Sigurðarson. Seven members of the USIHC Breeding Committee attended and

were trained in the policies and protocol of a FEIF International Breed Evaluation. (See the article in Issue Two 2018 of the Quarterly.)

Three breed evaluations are scheduled in the U.S. in 2018. The first took place at Léttleiki Icelandics in Shelbyville, KY, on May 23-24, where the judges were Þorvaldur Kristjánsson and Marlise Grimm; Elsa Albertsdóttir also gave a mini-clinic on evaluations during the event.

Five horses were evaluated, four of which were owned by Léttleiki Icelandics, trained by Alexandra Danneman, and ridden by Ásta Covert. They were: IS2011256419 Glitrós frá Kagaðarhóli (total score 7.5), IS2008255021 Glæða frá Stóru-Ásgeirsá (7.47), IS2009282829 Hrónn frá Hófgærði (7.72), US2010204560 Máiðis from Hanging Valley (7.79). The fifth horse, US2010204585 Kvika from Four Winds Farm, was owned by Ron and Sherry Hoover, trained by Carrie Brandt and Terral Hill, and ridden by Terral; Kvika received a total score of 8.16, for a “first prize” (see the article in this issue).

Lori Cretney and Sherry Hoover, who

acted as scribes for the judges, noted that “The judges educated the riders as much as possible and were willing to answer questions.” Lori and Sherry compiled a list of tips and suggestions for horse riders and handlers, show secretaries, and scribes at future evaluations. It can be found in the June Board Meeting Minutes on the USIHC website.

At the suggestion of judge Marlise Grimm, and with approval of the USIHC Board, a new measurement tool for the USIHC Breed Evaluation kit was purchased. The new calipers were developed in Iceland to measure chest, croup, and depth of chest. The USIHC’s current tool, according to Marlise, was off by five cm.

The remaining two 2018 U.S. breed evaluations will take place early in September: the first, hosted by the NEIHC, at Cobbleskill Fairgrounds in New York on September 3-4; and the second, co-hosted by the Toppur and Flugnir clubs, at Harmony Icelandics in Iowa on September 6-7.

Horses owned by USIHC members also attended the Vernon Evaluation, judged by Barbara Frische and Sigbjörn Björnsson at Fitjamyri Farm in British Columbia on June 9-10. There, the four-gaited stallion US2010104354 Vindur from Dalalif, owned, trained, and ridden by



Grímhildur frá Árbakka received a first-prize score for conformation at the Vernon Evaluation in British Columbia. The mare is owned by Kathryn Lockerbie and trained by Freya Sturm.

Lucy Nold, received a total score of 8.16, for a “first prize.”

Two other U.S. horses earned “first prize” scores for conformation only: CA2013102485 Stáli from Fitjamyri, owned and trained by Lucy Nold, received a conformation score of 8.37; US2006204976 Grímhildur frá Árbakka, owned by Kathryn Lockerbie and trained by Freya Sturm, received a conformation score of 8.04.

VIRTUAL RIDE

First place in the 2017-18 Sea 2 Shining Sea virtual ride, organized by the USIHC Leisure Committee, went to the Northeast Icelandic Horse Club’s team, which completed 12,845 miles before the cut-off date of July 3. Taking a close second were the long-time front-runners, the Klettafjalla Icelandic Horse Club’s team, with 12,254.2 miles. The third place winners, the Hell’s Icies Pony Club team, also completed the 10,000 mile course.

For the 2018-19 virtual ride, which officially began on July 4, riders will trace the Pony Express and Butterfield Overland Mail routes, making a large circle around the United States twice for a total of 9,932 miles. (See the article on the route in this issue.) The first to finish will receive a saddlebag donated by Karlslund Riding Equipment by way of Tölt Tack; if the first finisher is a team, up to six saddlebags will be given out.

TOLT IN HARMONY

Tolt-in-Harmony instructor certification courses now fulfill the continuing education requirement for trainers to be listed on the USIHC website. Education Committee chair Alexandra Dannenman reported at the March Board meeting. The requirements for TiH certification are determined by the Tölt-in-Harmony group and FEIF. The first U.S. TiH trainers’ course took



Participants in the Sea2Shining Sea virtual ride, organized by the Leisure Committee, enjoying a May afternoon: left to right, Laura on Stigandi, Lisa on Freyr, and Anne on Gná. Photo by Jean Ervasti.

place in June in Alaska and was taught by TiH developer Trausti Þór Guðmundsson. Bernie Willis, Ellen Halverson, Denise Chythlook, and Janet Mulder were certified as Level 1 Tölt-in-Harmony trainers.

NEW SPORT JUDGE

Lucy Nold passed the exam to become a U.S. Sport Judge B at the fifth USIHC-sponsored Sport Judges Seminar, given by Þorgeir Guðlaugsson at Red Feather Icelandics in Trout Lake, WA in April. Fifteen people attended the seminar, and eight took the exam.

These seminars are open to everyone interested in Icelandic horses. Pleasure riders or non-riders who want to learn more about the different gaits, recognizing beat or balance problems, and ideas on how to solve those problems are equally welcome as competition riders who are interested in the assessment of gaits and how to judge horse shows. The seminar includes lectures, video presentations, and practical judging. Taking the test to qualify as a U.S. Sport judge is voluntary. For dates of future seminars, contact Alex Dannenmann at education@icelandics.org.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The Affiliated Club Committee has been discussing the current and potential benefits of membership in the USIHC, along with ways of increasing our numbers. For the April meeting of the USIHC Board, the committee presented an analysis of the costs of current USIHC benefits, such as the Quarterly, the Registry, access to WorldFengur, membership in FEIF, and various USIHC programs, and investigated additional benefits. For example, after much research, it was determined that it was not feasible for the USIHC to secure insurance to cover our clubs or members. Similarly, the group felt that a cost analysis would be necessary before offering a “lifetime” membership. The committee also analyzed the spend-down of USIHC funds and compiled a list of USIHC policies with direct member or regional club benefit, such as the very popular Policy #31: Regional Club Clinic or Schooling Show Support (2018). Chair Leslie Chambers will continue working

with the committee to create a proposal for a 2019 membership drive.

SPAERI YOUTH AWARD

The new guidelines for the Spaeri Youth Award were announced at the May Board meeting. The Spaeri Award will be given annually to a USIHC youth member under 18 who clearly demonstrates commitment to and love for Icelandic horses through a well-researched and engaging article intended for publication in the Quarterly. The winner will receive a \$50 award and their article will be published. Unless pre-approved by the chair of the Youth Committee, articles must focus on one of these topics: pasture management, infectious disease prevention, principles of training, history of the Icelandic horse, or nutrition and feeding for the Icelandic horse. Submissions must be received



The Sea2Shining Sea Rider of the Month for June was Raven Flores, shown here with Rothadis after nearly 50 miles of technical trail riding—ending with a thunderstorm.

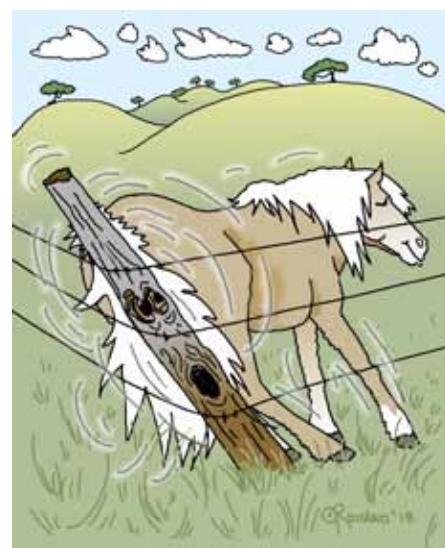
by December 31 to be considered. Send them to youth@icelandics.org under the subject line “Youth Article Submitted for the Spaeri Award.”

BOARD MEETINGS

The USIHC board of directors met by conference call on April 16, May 8, and June 14. No meeting was held in July, as many of the directors attend Landsmót, the National Horseshow in Iceland. Complete minutes, including the monthly Treasurer’s and Secretary’s reports, can be found online at www.icelandics.org/bod/minutes.

In addition to the topics already reported on in this section, the Board accepted a bid from Eternity Marketing in Burlington, VT (<https://eternitywebdev.com>) to revise and host the USIHC website. The goals, as presented by Promotions Chair Em Potts, are to make the website easier to update and manage, optimized for Google and other search engines, with better analytics, and able to take advantage of AdWords and keywords, among other improvements. No data, historical information, content, or files (such as meeting minutes) would be lost in the revision. Eternity will also design three new logo styles, provide technical support and security, and maintain a membership management system.

The Board also discussed a Standard of Conduct (Ethics Code) and approved a new Policy #35: Issue Handling Procedure.



WORLD RANKING

FEIF started the World Ranking system in 1995 as a way to easily compare riders' scores at selected Icelandic horse shows around the world. This October, three FEIF World Ranking shows will be held in Kentucky. For riders and spectators at those shows, here is how the system works:

For a show to qualify as World Ranking, at least three judges must be FEIF Licensed International Sport Judges; one should be a foreign judge (residing in another country). To ensure a proper connection between sport data and breeding information, only the scores and times of horses properly registered in WorldFengur are accepted.

The rider's rank is based upon the arithmetic mean of his or her three best results in one discipline—with any horse and at any World Ranking event. Starting in 2016, a clear distinction was made between the individual oval track tests and the group tests: Tölt T1, Tölt T2, Four Gait V1, and Five Gait F1 became Sport A, while Tölt T3, Tölt T4, Four Gait V2, and Five Gait F2 became Sport B.

To enter the list in Sport A, the rider needs at least three scores of 5.50 or higher in T1, T2, V1, or F1, or the equivalent time in Pace Race 250m P1 (25.60») or SpeedPass P2 (8.70»). In Sport B, the rider needs at least three scores of 5.50 or higher in T3, T4, V2, or F2, or a time of 16.50» in Pace Race 150m P3. A rider can

be ranked in both Sport A and B.

The Four Gait combination is based upon the best ranking in T1 or T2, plus the best ranking in V1 (divided by 2). The Five Gait Combination is based upon the best ranking in T1 or T2, plus the best ranking in F1 and the best ranking in P1, P2, P3, or PP1 (divided by 3).

The World Ranking system also offers a historical overview of the results of each rider and each individual horse, as well as the horse's complete pedigree and the scores it has received at all WorldRanking events. It is a continuous system: Every day a new list is computed. Results are only valid for 730 days, so riders must continue competing to keep their position in the list.

TRAIL RIDING

September is FEIF Leisure Riding Month. As FEIF member countries are increasing their focus on securing access to riding in nature, we recommend taking this month to give our riding habits a sound brush-up and to be sure that all trail riders, newcomers as well as regular riders, are aware that they are promoting the Icelandic horse when they are out on the trail. For riders to be welcome to share trails with other users requires us all to observe good manners and to demonstrate safe horsemanship and harmonious riding. For suggestions, download our "Standard for safe and harmonious riding tours" at www.feif.org.

FEIF has also launched a project in 2018 to establish a network of ancient riding routes, starting in the European member countries of FEIF. This "Viking hoof print throughout Europe" begins with the routes established by the relay riders going from one World Championship to the next and hopefully will spread from there.

NEW APP

AppFengur, in a free beta version, was designed specially for the 2018 Landsmót, held in July in Reykjavík. With AppFengur, users at the show could look up horses, mark their favorites, get the latest results from Landsmót, take and share pictures, and follow the latest news.

AppFengur was designed by Rusticity ehf., in cooperation with the Icelandic Farmers Association, home of WorldFengur. After downloading the app (at the Appstore or Playstore), WorldFengur subscribers can log onto AppFengur with their WF user name and password. (Note that all USIHC members have a free subscription to WorldFengur.) The beta version is free, but once AppFengur has been fully developed, it will become a paid service. The next feature to be added is a connection to microchip readers.

Rusticity ehf. invites all users to contact them, through their website (www.ap-fengur) or via Facebook (www.facebook.com/AppFengur), with suggestions on improving the app.

CLUB UPDATES

CLUB UPDATES

There are 14 Regional Clubs and one Activity Club affiliated with the U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress. To find the one nearest you, see the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org/regionalclubs. Contact information for each club can also be found there. The following clubs filed updates on their activities this quarter.

ALASKA

BY SUSAN TILLY

Many Alaska Icelandic Horse Association members got a late start on their riding season due to icy conditions and a cool spring. After moving many bags of fuzzy Icelandic hair from the horses to their riders, we were ready for our first clinic on June 2-4, with Bill Burke. Bill is a great teacher of equitation and dressage. This clinic provides a back-to-basics start for riders who have taken the winter off, or anyone wishing to refine their riding skills.

Our second clinic included a one-day certification class for Level 1 Tölt-in-Harmony trainers with Trausti Þór Guðmundsson, along with a three-day Tölt-in-Harmony clinic. Bernie Willis, Ellen Halverson, Denise Chythlook, and Janet Mulder are now certified Level 1 Tölt-in-Harmony trainers. Riders in the three-day clinic showed improvements in their scores from last year and will receive a training agenda from Trausti to help them continue to reach their goals.

On June 28 to July 1, our first sanc-



Alaska club members (left to right) Bernie Willis, Denise Chythlook, Ellen Halverson, and Janet Mulder took part in a Tölt-in-Harmony class with Trausti Þór Guðmundsson (far right). All four were certified as Level 1 TIH trainers.

tioned mounted archery competition will be held at Bluff Park Farm, Wasilla, AK. This competition, and much of the practice, was organized by AIHA member Frank Sihler, supported by the Mounted Archery Association of America and the International Horse Archery Association. We are very excited to see how well Frank and the Icelandic horses do in this competition.

FLUGNIR (MINNESOTA & WISCONSIN)

BY LIZ STIMMLER



The Flugnir club presented the Icelandic horse at the Minnesota Horse Expo in April. Riders shown are (left to right) Laurelyn Keener, Dave Loftness, Sharon Johnson, Kydee Sheetz, Jen Hovde, and Gunnar Eggertsson. Photo by Susy Oliver.

Spring got a very late start in the Midwest, with a mid-April blizzard dumping 18 inches of snow during what is usually the beginning of our outdoor riding season. Hardy Flugnir members persevered, the snow melted quickly, and we were ready to represent our breed at the Minnesota Horse Expo at the end of the month. Fifteen Icelandic horses, along with many owners, riders, and volunteers, did a spectacular job of demonstrating the fun and versatility of the breed. Especially entertaining was our enthusiastic group of volunteers warming up the crowd with the Icelandic Viking chant before the drill team horses entered the arena. We had the wonderful opportunity to welcome Gunnar Eggertsson from Klakahross Icelandic Horse Facility, who brought his lovely mare Kátína from Klakahross all the way from Oklahoma to participate. Another highlight: Dave Loftness and Vordis from Moondance demonstrated trust and communication to earn first place in the novice division of the annual Expo Battle of the Breeds Obstacle Course Challenge.

Spring riding continued with a trail ride organized by Tolthaven Icelandics at Maplewood State Park in Pelican Rapids, MN, on May 11 and 12. The participants all had a fabulous time and really tore up the trails (in a good way).

A clinic with Marlise Grimm was held

at Aslan's Country Icelandics in Proctor, MN at the beginning of June. The weather was dodgy at times, but much knowledge was shared and improvements were made.

This summer is sure to present many more riding, and learning, opportunities for our community.

FRIDA (MID-ATLANTIC)

BY MARILYN TULLY

Frida board member, Gray Strausser, age 15, has been selected to go to the FEIF Youth Cup in Axevalla, Sweden from July 28 to August 4. I caught up with Gray in early June to ask her about it.

Marilyn: What are you doing to prepare yourself for the big event?

Gray: Preparing for the Youth Cup is physically and mentally demanding. I keep myself physically in shape by riding as many horses a day as I can. It's impossible to know what type of horse I will

be matched with, so I practice every gait and try to push myself with new concepts. Mentally, I will be away from home in a foreign country for a month. I am working on learning a few Icelandic and Swedish words, as well as giving extra hugs to my family while I still can.

Marilyn: The Youth Cup is only a week. What are your plans for the rest of the month?

Gray: I'm going to Iceland first to do a trek with Guðmar Pétursson. I'll then fly to Sweden with Alicia Flannigan, and we're going to an Icelandic horse farm there together.

Marilyn: How much time will you have to prepare for the competition once the Youth Cup begins?

Gray: Not all of the plans are finalized yet, but we should have Monday through Thursday to work with other trainers and to work with our team and get to know our horses. The FEIF sport competition is on Friday and Saturday, and there are also trail obstacles and other events, so everyone has an equal opportunity to play off of their horse's strengths. So even though your horse may not be the best high-action competition horse, it could be really good at trail challenges. We might also do Tölt-in-Harmony or dressage.

Marilyn: Since most participants in the Youth Cup are from Europe, they bring their own horses. It costs too much to fly horses from the U.S., so how will you get yours?

Gray: There's a really big Icelandic horse competition the week after the Youth Cup, so getting good horses has been difficult, but Carrie Brandt of Taktur Icelandics has really good contacts. She has two good horses lined up for us.

Marilyn: What are your goals for the Youth Cup? What is your biggest hope?

Gray: To make a lot of connections. I really want to try to meet other riders, as well as meeting trainers that maybe I could work with one day as an intern. I just want to get my name out there a little bit.

Marilyn: Awesome! Good luck to you, Gray, and the entire U.S. Youth Cup Team!

Earlier this spring, Frida sponsored a two-day Groundwork and Trail Obstacles Clinic with Terral Hill from Taktur Ice-



Frida club member Charlotte Reilly on Sprettur from Destiny Farms, with their blue ribbon at the NEIHC Show. Charlotte also won the Amateur Adult Featherlight Award at the Léttleiki Show in Kentucky. Photo by Jean Ervasti.



Frida club member Rich Moore demonstrating the Icelandic horse at the Viking Festival in Manassas, VA. Photo by Susan Moore.

landics at Stony Knoll Farm in Pennsylvania. There were 10 participants, and Terral also gave private lessons beforehand. On the first day of the clinic, Terral taught us groundwork exercises: moving the horse's shoulders, hindquarters, and flexing. We navigated an obstacle course—opening and closing a mailbox, an L-shaped back-through, tarps, and barrel jumps, as well as standing on a pedestal—first on the ground, then under saddle. Terral wanted us to understand how groundwork helps build your relationship with your horse, prepares for more advanced work under saddle, and teaches safety with your horse. An evening of fun followed, with dinner at the historic Bay Pony Inn. The second day was devoted to drill team exercises executed to music. Stony Knoll Farm was the perfect host with spectacular arenas, stall board as well as field board, room to park trailers, and delicious lunches.

Club member Rich Moore shared his love of the Icelandic horse on May 12, when he and his wife, Pat, took two of their Icelandic horses, Glanni and Vindur, to the Manassas Viking Festival in Virginia. Rich says, "The festival was created and or-

ganized by Frida member Erna Pomrenke. It featured over 50 vendors showing Viking or Nordic products. There were five Viking reenactment groups, along with raptors, Icelandic sheep, and Icelandic chickens, plus two Norwegian Fjord horses and a full-sized replica of a Viking ship. An estimated 5,000 people attended." Rich rode Glanni at walk and tölt. Sverrir Bjartmarz and Rich also walked Glanni and Vindur through the crowd. Rich said, "The horses were surrounded by hundreds of people who had lots of questions. The horses were well behaved." Also in attendance from our club were Asta Bjartmarz, Susan Moore, and Gernot and Erna Pomrenke.

Two club members received important awards at recent Icelandic horse shows. Charlotte Reilly received the Amateur Adult Featherlight Award, which is given for the most improved riding at the show, at the Kentucky Sport Competition, held at Lettleiki Icelandics in Shelbyville in May. Gray Strausser received the Youth Champion Award at the NEIHC Open at Thor Icelandics in New York in June. Congratulations! We're so proud!

On October 27-28, the Frida Riding Club will be holding the Frida Icelandic Sanctioned Show at Montaire Icelandics in beautiful Middleburg, VA; Montaire is owned by Antje Freygang and her husband, Mike. This is a new location for the show. Montaire has a regulation track for the competition and a large dressage-size covered arena for warmup. The show package and registration form can now be found at www.FIRC.us. A pre-show clinic with Guðmar Pétursson will take place on October 24-25 at Montaire. Clinic space is limited, so please email Curt Pierce at cepinwv@yahoo.com if you wish to sign up for the clinic. Hotel space in the Middleburg area is busy in the fall, so make your reservations as soon as possible. Frida members are looking forward to welcoming everyone to the new show venue. It is sure to be a good time!

GLITFAXA (CALIFORNIA)

BY GABRIELE MEYER

Glitfaxes held its second clinic with Carla Bauchmueller May 20 at Equitopia in

Fairfield, CA. We had five riders on Icelandics (Teresa Halperin, Pia Tucker, Melanie Bartoletti, Julianna DiMiceli, and Henriette Bruun), one on a Rocky Mountain horse (Sandy Johnson), and two auditors (Nicki Esdorn and me).

Carla is a licensed trainer level A (the highest level in the German National Federation), a level 3 Centered Riding instructor, and a yoga teacher. Her unique blend of centered riding, dressage, ground and body work, and yoga makes for a robust learning environment for both horse and rider.

The day started with unmounted exercises combining yoga and centered riding. Mindfulness and body stimulation exercises helped us see how important body awareness is when riding. The group practiced centering their core by visualizing their pelvis as a bowl of water and practicing the effects of tipping it forward or backward versus holding it so that no water would spill out. Breathing was the next exercise; we compared the effects on our posture of our normal breathing versus deep breathing from our diaphragm. We also practiced staring versus using peripheral vision and saw their effects on both our breathing and body tension.

That warmup was followed by group lessons to translate what was learned on the ground into the saddle. The concepts focused on were centering our core, using soft eyes and riding with peripheral awareness, and relaxed breathing. The

riders were amazed to note how the horses immediately responded to the changes in the rider's body when the exercises we had done earlier were repeated while riding.

After lunch, it was back on the horses for individual lessons. Carla's relaxed and interactive, but focused style of teaching allowed each rider to identify the area they wanted to work on most. All attendees watched the individual lessons and learned different concepts based on the rider's requests for assistance.

Julianna appreciated that "Carla helped me get closer to the balance of stability and muscular tension in my body. She also helped me find a compactness in my body while riding that helped me be more stable on Skugga, while also helping her movement too. I liked that Carla talked about how the rider's bodily mechanics will be different depending on the horse's tendencies."

Pia noted the take-home messages she received were how her breathing patterns influenced her horse and "if I could only sit straight, my horse could move straight and much more freely."

There was a wide variety of experience in both riders and horses. Our youngest horse, Solarljós, was a six-year-old attending her first clinic; our oldest was the 28-year-old veteran, Blakkur. It was lovely how Carla accommodated the younger horse by pairing her up with her stable mate to allow her to feel safe and comfortable in the new environment and to have



Centered Riding instructor Carla Bauchmueller helps Teresa Halperin on Solarljós from For-the-Fun-of-It to find her center and sit in a plumb line over her heels at a Glitfaxes clinic in May. Photo by Gabriele Meyer.



Hestafolk club members dressed as Vikings to take part in the great Ski to Sea Race in Bellingham, WA for the fourth year. Photo by Lisa McKeen.

a positive first experience in a group training setting. Carla also provided great tips for future exercises at home to improve the young horse's responsiveness to the reins and rider's position.

For next fall, we plan on attending either the Fall Edition All-breed Gaited Horse Show in Santa Rosa, or a gymkhana in the Novato area. The highlight of the year will be our overnight stay at the Point Reyes Country Inn & Stables, at Point Reyes National Seashore.

HESTAFOLK (NORTHWEST WASHINGTON)

BY LISA MCKEEN

We are racing along through the year, riding, learning with, shopping for, and generally enjoying our horses. Our participants in the Sea 2 Shining Sea ride all received our 7500-mile patches. As of this writing, member Alys Culhane has really been racking up the miles and is in second place overall! We may finish the course at this rate before the July 3 deadline. The patches may be small, but they have given other riders multiple opportunities to ask us what the numbers are for. It's a great way to have an excuse to talk about USIHC and Icelandic horses—and fun!

In April, two members of our Hestafolk 4-H group attended the Whatcom County Youth Fair; one focused on photography and the other on cavies. It was a fun couple of days of learning and laughing. Being at the fair gave the girls experience with 4-H events, and we were able to support young people who are interested in horses.

Trainer Freya Sturm comes regularly

to the Bellingham, WA area to give us lessons and coach us to be more balanced and better partners for our horses. We are able to fill two or three days of private lessons each time she comes, so the desire for learning remains solid in the club.

April 28-29, Guðmar Pétursson was in Canada at Fitjamyri Icelandic Farm, which is only five hours from Bellingham. Two members attended his clinic, Kathryn Lockerbie and Dianne Latona, and they both reported learning lots and enjoyed getting to meet our fellow enthusiasts across the border. We would love to be able to go ride with the folks up there; though the cost of vetting to cross the border is prohibitive at this point, we have offers of horses they will loan us!

May 19-20 found Lisa McKeen, Kathryn Lockerbie, and Freya Sturm attending a clinic by Wendy Murdoch at Karin Daum's Schwalbenhof Farm. The

learning was life-changing. Once again, resetting the motor cortex is possible. If you have struggled with balance, if you have had accidents, if you have noticed a decrease in your abilities—get to a clinic by Wendy, Freya, or Mandy Pretty. It was wonderful to see the changes in people and horses.

On May 26, the great Ski to Sea Race in Bellingham kicked off with a parade, and for the fourth year Hestafolk had an entry. Our full Hestafolk 4-H group was there, plus other kids and family members. Lisa McKeen and Monica Urrutia-Sheehan were the leads for eight kids, all dressed in Viking garb. We took turns carrying the sign, scooping the poop, and riding in the cart drawn by Elska from Extreme Farms. The horses did well, and there's nothing like a parade to build their trust in their riders or handlers. We had fun talking about our horses with the crowds. One



Trainer Freya Sturm with Grímhildur frá Árbakka at the Vernon Evaluation in British Columbia. Several Hestafolk club members attended the evaluations to cheer on the U.S.-owned horses. Photo by Lisa McKeen.

thing that makes me so happy is the number of people who recognize our horses as Icelandic. We met two people who had moved to Bellingham from Iceland, and they were so happy to pet an Icelandic horse! Outreach is something our horses are great at.

On June 9-10, quite a crowd from Hestafolk attended the FEIF breed evaluations held at Fitjamyri Icelandic Farm in Vernon, BC, including Kathy Lockerbie, Freya Sturm, Lisa McKeen, Christine Vowles, and Monica Urrutia-Sheehan. We sat with our Canadian friends, enjoying the learning, camaraderie, and beautiful horses, and cheering when Kathy's mare Grimhildur earned a first prize! How exciting—and how important to know what we are looking for in a breeding mare. The judges were wonderful teachers as they explained the criteria and rationale for the scores.

June 23-24 there was a Freya Sturm Balanced Riding clinic at Claudia Rancore's Wren Hill Stables in Ridgefield, WA. Paddy Argenzio attended and reported enjoying her time with the Cascade Club folks. Freya's teaching style is fair and fun.

We have several more events scheduled this year, including our second club retreat in Leavenworth, WA; more lesson days with Freya Sturm; a club trip to the Marguerite McKinney camp in the Capitol Forest; a display in the All Breeds Showcase at the Washington State Fair in Puyallup, WA; an appearance at the Norse by Northwest festival in Arlington, WA; a Saddle Fitting Progressive Dinner; movie night; and our annual meeting to plan for 2019.

If you wonder whether club affiliation matters, let me tell you a story. We have a young person who met the Icelandics through Kathy Lockerbie. She has ridden a bit with us, but can't afford a well-trained Icelandic. Even though she is shopping for a more affordable horse of another breed, the Icelandic attributes are her basis for judging all others and she is trusting enough of us to allow three of us to guide her as she tries out horses and debriefs with us. That's huge. Unless we are committed to teaching and nurturing the love of all horses, these skills and knowledge will die with us. Here's to the people doing the work of building our horse communities!



Klettafjalla member Lee Ann Ott, on Dama, admiring the Peek-a-Boo Loop Trail vistas in Bryce Canyon National Park. Photo by Marisue Wells.

KLETTAFJALLA (ROCKY MOUNTAINS)

BY KRISTINA STELTER

Klettafjalla has had a busy second quarter: clinics, board changes, new foals, festivals, trekking vacations, and successful stallions!

First, we regret to report that our hard-working president, Kristina Behringer, has resigned. She has had a wonderful influence on the club, and has worked tirelessly to get Klettafjalla to where it is now. We wish her the best of luck in her new endeavors and hope she gets some much needed R&R! Kristina Stelter will be taking over the role until the next election.

The Icelandic Association of Utah held their annual "Fire and Ice" festival, and Klettafjalla made an appearance with horses in tow! Stephen Pace and Barbara Ohm brought Lysingur and Pála, and Marisue Wells brought Skjoni. Our representation at the festival not only adds flavor to this small cultural celebration, but also adds a hands-on experience for folks already within horse country who may not know of our breed or its abilities. We love it, and the horses get lots of attention!

Klettafjalla also completed a vacation trek in Bryce Canyon National Park on the Peek-A-Boo Loop Trail! The trail begins at Bryce Point and drops to the canyon floor, with a total elevation change of 1555



Klettafjalla members Kristina Behringer and Iris Heidberg attending a cow clinic. Their horses, Andi and Vina, did a great job herding, proving Icelandic horses are up for any task.

feet. Lee Ann Ott rode Dama and Marisue Wells rode Punktur. The ride is listed as strenuous, but the vistas go on forever.

Heidi Benson's stallion, Strokkur frá Sydri-Gegnishólum, has had a successful first breeding season here in the U.S., with five mares covered in California, and six mares covered in Colorado so far. His daughter in Iceland, Pláneta frá Varmalandi received a first prize this quarter, with a total score of 8.14 in her first evaluation. That said, we are thrilled and excited to see what Strokkur does here! (See the article on Heidi's breeding program in Issue Two 2018 of the Quarterly.)

Coralie Denmeade held a successful clinic this quarter in Oakley, UT. A wide breadth of topics were discussed, with riders receiving private lessons, as well as learning a drill team exercise at the end of the day. Videos and pictures of the clinic were shared on our group's Instagram @klettafjalla.

Kristina Behringer and Iris Heidberg completed a cow clinic and now have Icelandic horses who can cowboy up! Need some cattle gathered? Their horses are up



Kraftur member Kajsa Johnson riding Lólita from Valkyrie at the CIA Spring Show in Santa Ynez, CA. Photo by Isaac Dwyer.



Fun and games at the CIA Spring Show: Riding bareback in sundresses in the pairs class are Kraftur members Eden Hendricks (left) on Hugljúf frá Vatnsholti and Eva Dykaar on Mári frá Kolgerði. Photo by Isaac Dwyer.

for the challenge!

Stephen Pace completed a clinic on equine massage therapy, so if your horse needs to relax, Stephen is your guy!

Many of us are visiting Iceland and attending Landsmót this summer, so look forward to pictures next quarter, as well as on our Instagram @klettafjalla!

KRAFTUR (NORTHERN CALIFORNIA)

BY HEIDI BENSON

Since the beginning of the year, Kraftur has been actively working to offer more educational events, as well as to increase our membership. Members have participated in two clinics with Freyja Amble Gísladóttir and Heidi Benson focusing on training the balance and quality of the horse's gaits and giving riders tools to implement a successful training structure in their everyday riding.

Kraftur youth member Eden Hendricks qualified for and will be attending the FEIF Youth Cup in Axevalla, Sweden from July 28 to August 4, and Kraftur member Ayla Green qualified for Landsmót Hestamanna, the Icelandic National Horseshow, held in Reykjavík, Iceland on July 1-8. Ayla will compete in the Young Adults division in four-gait on

Herdís frá Lönguhlið.

Twenty-one Kraftur members participated in the CIA Spring Open competition, judged by Þorgeir Guðlaugsson and hosted by Will and Ásta Covert of Flying C Ranch in Santa Ynez, CA. We all had a wonderful time and everyone rode exceptionally well in their classes.



Kraftur member Ayla Green qualified for Landsmót, the Icelandic National Horseshow, on Herdís frá Lönguhlið. Photo by Isaac Dwyer.

NEIHC (NORTHEAST)

BY JESS HAYNSWORTH

Summer is finally here, the days are long, the horses are shiny, and the busiest riding season is upon us. The NEIHC kicked off the season with several fun events. On May 5-6, Carrie Lyons Brandt taught a clinic at Thor Icelandics in New York. May 19-20, Jana Meyer gave a trail riding clinic at Lunar Hill Icelandics in Vermont. On May 27, Solheimar Farm hosted a schooling show in Vermont. June 1-3, Carrie Lyons Brandt and Laura Benson taught an “Art of Icelandic Riding” clinic at Lunar Hill Icelandics in Vermont. June 9-10, Jana Meyer gave a clinic at Boulder Ridge Icelandics in Maine.

The biggest club event of the summer was the 6th annual NEIHC Open show, our club’s USIHC-sanctioned sport competition. It took place on June 23-24, with a pre-show clinic with Carrie Lyons Brandt held June 20-22. Once again, Thor Icelandics hosted the show on their beautiful facilities in Claverack, NY.

There were 41 horse/rider combinations, and 29 classes with 126 entries total. Will Covert and Alexandra Dannenman were the judges. While stormy weather was predicted for the weekend, it held off and stayed mercifully cool and overcast



At the NEIHC Open, Leslie Chambers on Thokki from Four Winds and Sue Sundstrom on Vikingur from Adirondack Icelandics compete in the pairs class. Photo by Jean Ervasti.

for most of the competition—with the exception of a downpour during the final class of the show, the T1 final. The rain fell so hard that we all felt like we were back in Iceland, and even the horses seemed to find some extra spirit! The judges decided

to give the final scores and awards in the tents back at the stabling area instead of standing in the rain on the track.

Champion of the Open Division (T1 and V1) went to Terral Hill, who won both classes on Veigar frá Lækjamóti. As this was Terral’s third year winning T1 with Veigar, he got to keep the special traveling trophy donated by Thor Icelandics in honor of Einar Oder.

Reserve Champion of the Open Division went to Jess Haynsworth and Vigri frá Vallanesi, who took second place in both T1 and V1.

The Intermediate Division Champion was Leslie Chambers and Thokki from Four Winds Farm. Reserve Champion went to Sue Sundstrom and Vikingur from Adirondack Icelandics. Great to see two domestic-bred horses competing so successfully!

The Novice Division Champion was Beth Timlege and Freyr frá Thingeyrum. Jennifer Bergantino and Katrin from Mill Farm took the Reserve.

Champion of the Youth (12+) Division was Gray Strausser and Snævör frá Hamrahóli. Isabelle Maranda and Míla



Terral Hill (center) took home the Tölt trophy, after winning the Tölt T1 class at the NEIHC Open three years in a row on Veigar frá Lækjamóti. The trophy was donated by Jóhanna Guðmundsdóttir (left) and Kristján Kristjánsson (right) of Thor Icelandics in honor of Icelandic rider Einar Oder. Photo by Leslie Chambers.

frá Skridu took the Reserve. It's worth noting that both Gray and Isabelle will be representing the U.S. at the FEIF Youth Cup in Sweden later this summer! We are so proud of our NEIHC Youth riders!

Isabelle Maranda and Míla frá Skridu were also the Green Horse Champions, with Sue Sundstrom and Víkingur from Adirondack Icelandics taking the Reserve.

This year, a dressage schooling show was held in tandem with the USIHC-sanctioned sport competition. Jana Meyer and Alex Pregitzer judged two special dressage tests, in which riders could show tölt or trot and could receive feedback from the judges following their tests. A dressage ring was created in a spacious field above the oval track, with gorgeous views of the Catskill Mountains. The "D-01" test had 11 adult entries, and one youth entry. Harriet Shipman won the youth section. In the adult section, Sophie Zustrassen won the class on Svalur frá Árbakka. Ellie Pittman took second on Freyja frá Skor. Anne-Mette Nielsen and Svarta vom Forstwald took third, Becky Dadonna and Svadi from Solheimar finished fourth, and Maria Octavo and Rós from Helms Hill Farm finished fifth. The "D-02" test had two riders; Brigit Huwyler on Prinsessa from Four Winds Farm took the blue ribbon.



Champion of the Open Division at the NEIHC Open was Terral Hill, riding Veigar frá Lækjamóti. Photo by Jean Ervasti.

We have tentatively planned the 2019 NEIHC Open for the same weekend next year, June 22-23, so stay tuned. We hope to have another dressage schooling show in tandem with the USIHC-sanctioned show

next year, as it was clearly very popular.

The NEIHC Open owes its success to all members in attendance, and especially to the many people who volunteered their time and energy, contributed to our silent auction, sponsored classes, and helped pay for our ever-popular air-conditioned "Ritz" portable bathrooms. Together, we make this event the highlight of the year, and we are so grateful to our wonderful community. See you next year!

We have several more exciting events this summer. On July 27-29, Carrie Lyons Brandt and Caeli Cavanagh will be teaching a Knappamerki clinic at Thor Icelandics. Also from July 28-29, Solheimar Farm will be hosting a USIHC-sanctioned sport competition in Tunbridge, VT.

September will bring us the first FEIF International Breeding Evaluations we have had in the Northeast in several years, to be held at the Cobbleskill (NY) Fairgrounds September 3-4. The judges will be Nina Burgholtz and Jens Füchtenschneider.

We look forward to all of these events, and hope many of you will join us!



Gray Strausser on Snævör frá Hamrahóli (left) and Keziah Dunn on Munkur frá Steinnesi in a victory lap after the Youth (12+) Four Gait at the NEIHC Open. Gray was champion of the Youth Division. Photo by Annie Kemp.

SIRIUS (OHIO & KENTUCKY)

BY FRANCES ROSPOTYNSKI

Sirius had their first trail ride at Deer Creek State Park on June 18. We had hot weather and a wonderful trail, with lots of areas for tölt. We even cantered and paced—it was lots of fun. Saturday morning Kevin Kay, Larry Miller, Sherry Hoover, and Ron Hoover rode 11.5 miles. After a delicious potluck lunch with lots of good conversation, Larry, Sherry, and Ron rode again in the late afternoon on shady newer trails and covered 5.5 miles. Larry and the Hoovers camped both Friday and Saturday nights. Sunday morning we were on the trail by 8 a.m. to beat the heat and rode another 5 miles before heading home.

On August 25, our club is camping and trail riding at beautiful Malabar Farm Park in Lucas, OH. (See www.malabar-farm.org.) Our third planned trail ride will be at Beaver Creek State Park in East Liverpool, OH on September 28-29.



SAINT SKUTLA (NEW YORK)

BY CARRIE NORTON

I've always wanted to try a mountain trail challenge course. So when I saw that Salmon River Horse Park in Altmar, NY had built one, and that the first clinic was being taught by the founder Mark Bolender on June 12-13, I signed up with my Icelandic horse, Gigja from Windstar. I was nervous but excited, not knowing really what to expect.

The course was amazing. When we first saw it, I was sure that we wouldn't be able to do half of the obstacles. Day One was all done "in hand," with the 12 horses in the clinic. The horses were allowed to work each obstacle until they were comfortable, and Mark was there to ensure success. We did high bridges, suspension bridges, teeter-totters, balance beams, water crossings, water boxes, steps, and logs, to name a few of the obstacles.

Gigja was a superstar; honestly there wasn't anything that she wouldn't try. I was super proud of her—and of course she is



St Skutla club member Carrie Norton took part in a mountain trail challenge course with Gigja from Windstar. On the first day, the horse negotiated the obstacles in-hand; on the second, under saddle. Photos by Terrie Carter.



very quirky, so everyone fell in love with her antics, such as dropping down in the middle of the clinic and rolling herself down the hill because she was hot.

Day Two was riding the obstacles. In the morning, we all just rode through the obstacles that we had done in-hand the day before. In the afternoon, we did patterns—a series of obstacles, in an order and at the speed that Mark chose. Gigja did great in the morning, going over everything with minimal fuss. She isn't good at standing around and waiting her turn, though, so when we did the patterns in the afternoon, she decided at what speed—and once again she decided she needed a good roll. But we accomplished everything the course had to offer.

As with most Icelandics she gives 110%, has a practical streak to just get it done (with style and flair, of course), and is a wonderful breed ambassador. I highly encourage anyone to give a mountain trail challenge course a try. It is super fun, and you'll find out quickly what your horse (and you) are made of.

TOPPUR (IOWA)

BY LINDA KLEIN

Our club is growing! Starting out with five members, we have increased our membership to 21 in a very short time! Along with this growth has come a lot of fun, as we get to know each other better and share our passion for the Icelandic horse. We have continued to pursue new learning and activities to keep the enthusiasm going.

A trail ride was planned for Memorial Day weekend, but had to be canceled due to rain and slippery trails.

At Harmony Icelandics in Truro, Iowa on June 9-10, we hosted a Gæðinga Dressage clinic taught by Laura Benson from Valkyrie Icelandics in California and Carrie Lyons Brandt from Taktur Icelandics in Kentucky. Laura and Carrie shared their tremendous wealth of knowledge and expertise in Icelandic horse training and riding. They spent a lot of time explaining the importance of using routine dressage exercises to keep our horses supple and flexible and to achieve



Just like in Iceland, Gigja from Windstar and rider Carrie Norton brave an obstacle in a mountain trail challenge course. Photo by Terrie Carter.



The Toppur club hosted a Gæðinga Dressage clinic taught by Laura Benson of Valkyrie Icelandics (left) and Carrie Lyons Brandt from Taktur Icelandics in June. Photo by S.K. Eleeson.

the Icelandic goal of “gæðingi” or quality in our horses and riding. The Gæðinga approach to riding focuses on the importance of the horse and rider experiencing balance and happiness by working together as a unit, achieving quality of movement. Quality of movement involves speed control and directional control, and is supported by dressage exercises. It does not happen in a step-by-step process. Rather, it is movement in and out between speed, direction, and exercise, and is based on the feeling and communication between horse and rider.

Laura and Carrie used the term “flow” to help describe quality in movement. Laura explained that “flow is not something that the rider controls, but rather it is a spontaneous conversation between the horse and rider, resulting in joy, synergy, and freedom.” Flow simply means that the movement is uninterrupted and improvisational, based on the feel between horse and rider at any given moment. It is not about the rider controlling a horse. Laura used a famous quote from the Greek philosopher Xenophon to summarize her thoughts about flow: “Nothing forced can be beautiful.”

The new arena, Harmony Hall, was the perfect, cool setting for individual riding lessons with Laura and Carrie on the first day. Carrie and Laura helped the participants practice and perform dressage exercises and movements that support comfort and flexibility for the horses. The exercises can be used on any type of horse and can be used on the trail or in the competition arena. Clinic participants were able to practice and learn how to perform the dressage exercises that help the horse keep supple and flexible. The challenge at the end of the day was for each rider to develop an individual program incorporating the exercises and movements that had been practiced in the earlier riding lessons.

On the second day, the participants were divided into two groups. Guided by Laura and Carrie, each group of riders participated in a drill team exercise which proved to be very challenging! At the end of the day the riders performed their individual 5- to 6-minute riding programs,

which were videotaped. The clinic ended with reviews of the individual performances. At the end of the weekend, all nine participants left with valuable information and exercises to make their horses happier and to improve their riding skills.

In addition to all the excellent information and training that were provided, clinic participants enjoyed a barbecue and camaraderie at Virginia Lauridsen’s

beautiful setting in Harmony Lodge on Saturday evening.

Lisa Blumhagen has agreed to represent our club on the USIHC Leisure Riding Committee and will coordinate events with the club internally and on the national level. She is already busy working on the next activity, trying to encourage interest in the Sea 2 Shining Sea Pony’ Express ride. (See the article in this issue.)



Trainers Laura Benson (left) and Carrie Lyons Brandt coached drill team exercises during their Gæðinga Dressage clinic for Toppur club members. Photos by S.K. Eleeson.



WHO IS CAELI?

INTERVIEW BY ALEX PREGITZER

Editors' Note: Caeli Cavanagh received a B.S. in Riding and Riding Instruction in June 2018 from the Equine Science department at Hólar University in Skagafjörður, Iceland. Soon after, she began working as trainer-in-residence at Linda and Dick Templeton's Red Feather Icelandics in Trout Lake, WA. Alex Pregitzer interviewed her for the Quarterly's continuing series on certified Icelandic horse trainers working in the U.S. For interviews with other certified trainers, see the Topic Index of our online archive at www.icelandics.org/quarterly/topicindex

WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND?

I was born in Boston, MA. My family moved to Vermont when I was 15 years old to start Silver Maple Icelandic Horse Farm, and my life has largely centered around horses since then. My family always had a strong focus on academics and science, and I inherited that passion. I went to Dartmouth College and did an undergraduate degree in psychology, with an emphasis on organizational and abnormal psychology; I also enjoyed researching visual perception.

I got to realize my biggest goal in 2015 when I was accepted to Hólar University, in their bachelor of science program in Riding and Riding Instruction. I graduated in 2018, receiving First Class with Distinction and the award for the highest combined score from riding,



Caeli showing Dropi frá Blönduósi in a four-gait competition. Photo by Phil Corke.



Trainer Caeli Cavanagh is most well known for using liberty work to isolate the mental training of the horse. Here she asks Sólís from Sólheimar to perform the Spanish walk. Photo by Martina Gates.

riding instruction, and academic classes. I am the third American to graduate from Hólar, and I am proud to follow in the footsteps of Laura Benson and Carrie Brandt. I want to wed my love of psychology and horse training to help people and horses find peak performance in both mental and physical balance.

I recently moved back to the United States after three years in Iceland. I always knew that I wanted to return to America after school, not only because this is my home, but also because there is so much spirit, talent, and room for growth in the Icelandic horse world here. There has been an explosion of new talent and initiatives in recent years, all rooted in the hard work laid down through previous decades. It would be my honor to be a part of this country's continued evolution.

WHAT IS YOUR HORSE EXPERIENCE?

The Icelandic horse has led me on a journey across the country and around the world, working for and with amazing trainers. I have competed every chance I could get. I also was a tour member of the Knights of Iceland, performing in shows around the country. During the North American Apassionata tour, I developed a love of liberty training, which I have since incorporated into my training practice.

I have been riding since I was eight years old, about 18 years now. The earliest evidence of me on a horse was a pony ride I had when I was three years old, on a pony named Bibit. Every time they took me off, I screamed "back see pony!" My parents probably should have seen that as an omen!

I rode at jumping and eventing barns until I was around 13. I loved being a total barn rat. I would spend every spare moment at the stable, taking lessons, working off the cost of a lesson, or just hanging out in the hayloft with my friends.

When I was in my early teens, I went to Iceland with my family to see where my father's grandparents came from. I tried the Icelandic horse, and I fell in love with the feeling of freedom and softness and speed they gave me. When I got home, my mother and I found a stable in Vermont that had Icelandic horses. We started spending as much time there as we could. I began working at any Icelandic horse farm that would take me, and I tried to learn as much as I could.

After my mother started Silver Maple Icelandics, I garnered experience in training, breeding, and instruction, working for and with many amazing Icelandic horse trainers. I also got the chance to cross-train with the Dartmouth Intercollegiate Dressage Team, as their first level rider and team captain.

WHAT IS YOUR TRAINING PHILOSOPHY?

My philosophy considering training is best summed up by a phrase from Gerd Heuschman's Balancing Act: "in dubio pro equo," which is Latin for "when in doubt, for the horse."

As trainers, we act as physiotherapists, psychologists, and teachers of the horse. It's a responsibility we cannot take lightly. We have a duty to build up the horse systematically, fairly, and in accordance with equine biomechanics, irrespective of our personal goals. Such training is as important for a pleasure horse as it is for a competition horse. A horse that travels with mental and physical balance in a correct posture is happier in its work; it is healthier and has fewer injuries. A well-trained horse is more enjoyable and fun to ride, and horse and rider can become better partners when they have the tools they need to accomplish their goals.

To that end I apply a lot of classically rooted dressage techniques and philosophies to the goals, mindset, and gaits of the Icelandic horse. As a branching off point, I use the training pyramid developed by Hólar, keeping in mind that each horse may have slightly different needs. In this model the horse systematically progresses through stages, and the stability of each step in the pyramid provides the foundation for the next step in the horse's progress. These stages are, in order: relaxation, rhythmicity/forward thinking, suppleness, straightness, roundness, impulsion, collection, and finally extension.



Caeli showing the five-year-old mare Sæla frá Kjarri in slow canter at a competition in Iceland. Photo by Stefán Á. Sverrison.

I also believe in using a variety of methods to achieve these goals. This not only allows me to introduce diversity and to break up monotony in my training, it also allows me to isolate various mental and physical parts of the horse. In this way I can leverage the horse's strengths to work on its weaknesses, and so allow the horse to reach its full potential.

I am most well known for using liberty work as a way to isolate the mental training of the horse. Teaching the horse to respond to subtle signals and to perform maneuvers such as bowing, leading without a line, lying down, or spinning, can put horse and handler more in tune with each other. The benefits are different for each horse. An introverted horse, for example, might gain confidence and interact more positively with the handler, while an extroverted or pushy horse might learn self-discipline and control. I have found it to be a lot of fun to use this method in my training.

WHAT IS YOUR TEACHING PHILOSOPHY?

I have worked with students from beginners up through national and international competitors. Regardless of the rider's skill level, I want to give my students the tools and knowledge they need to be independent stewards of their horse's physical and mental health, and to pursue their own equestrian goals.

I want to produce thinking students and lifetime learners, who can solve problems within a classical framework. I think sometimes as instructors we make the mistake of giving our students short-term solutions without addressing the underlying issues and their gaps in knowledge. If we focus on the root issues and teach our students to solve problems themselves, we can increase the safety and welfare of both horse and rider.

For competitive riders, I focus on developing a partnership between horse and rider so that they conquer each challenge as a team. My job is to ensure both members of the team have the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. This preparation must be both mental and physical. I want to make sure my riders are confident in their performance and their skills, so that they can experience the pride of showing a well-trained, positive athlete, as well as showing the bond that they share with their horse.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR ICELANDIC HORSES IN THE UNITED STATES?

My hope for Icelandic horses in the United States is the continuing growth of the breed as pleasure horses, performance horses, and breeding horses. Our breed is versatile, fun, and comfortable, a breed in which a horse can win a national competition and then be a best friend to a small child. Our horses are incomparable and priceless. Our horses are our best advertisement, and if we continue to put them forward our breed will only grow.

I think the one thing that will really take us to the next level, for the welfare of our horses and the safety and pleasure of our riders, is to increase education in the United States. There are people doing great things in this country to increase education, but the country is so broad that for people in areas far from a trainer, education can be fragmented and can lack consistency. The use of a systematic education system could be really helpful to give people goals, fill in gaps in their knowledge, and increase the welfare, safety, and enjoyment of horse and rider. I really loved working with the Knapamerki (Icelandic Riding Badge) system while I was in Iceland, and I would love to bring that system here to the United States.

I would also love to have a trainers' and instructors' guild. This would be similar to the role that FT plays in Iceland. A trainers' guild is comprised of certified trainers and instructors who come together to protect the rights and interests of trainers, as well as providing for their continuing education. This can include defining industry standards or creating educational opportunities specific to the needs of certified trainers, such as conferences, lectures, and clinics. It also creates a sense of community that can be difficult to obtain in our vast country. It would be trainers supporting trainers in developing our Icelandic horse economy, through offering more qualified, diverse, and standardized services and networking.

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A FIRST-PRIZE MARE

BY SHERRY HOOVER

Editors' note: In May, Léttleiki Icelandics held a FEIF International breeding horse evaluation at Swallowland Farm in Shelbyville, KY. The judges were Marlise Grimm and Elsa Albertsdóttir. As is standard for an Icelandic breed evaluation, each horse was scored on a scale of zero to 10 for conformation as well as for ridden abilities. Five horses were fully evaluated (for conformation as well as ridden abilities); of these, one received a "first prize," an informal designation for a combined score over 8.0. This new first-prize domestic-bred mare is owned by Sherry and Ron Hoover of Beat'n Branch Icelandics in Litchfield, OH. We asked Sherry to tell us about their experience.

Our journey to owning a first-prize mare started in August 2011, when we saw in the Quarterly the notice for the NEIHC/USIHC Breeding Seminar with FEIF International Breeding Judge Barbara Frische and trainer Kristján Kristjánsson. Off we went to Kristján's farm, Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY, with our promising young colt sired by Þróstur frá Innri-Skeljabrekku (IS1991135551) and two of our riding horses.

Two years in a row we attended this seminar, and each year we enjoyed meeting new NEIHC friends and learning more about breeding and riding Icelandic horses. Due to the distance between our farm in Ohio and Kristján's in New York, we would arrive a day early and stay overnight after the seminar. Our extra time at Thor Icelandics became Kristján's opportunity to educate the Hoovers. While we were enjoying his wife Jóhanna's cooking and a drink or two, Kristján would pull out his Icelandic studbooks and begin flipping through the pages, teaching us about the characteristics of really good, well-bred Icelandic horses. We listened and learned about great stallions and great mares and their offspring. At that time we had been breeding one mare, our very first Icelandic horse, to the best stallions near us in Ohio and Kentucky. In the two years we attended the breeding seminars, Kristján taught us that our fledgling breeding program needed a good foundation mare.



First-prize mare Kvika from Four Winds, shown in pace at the Léttleiki Evaluation in Kentucky by trainer Terral Hill. Photo by Shaila Sigsgaard.

A GOOD MARE (OR TWO)

In 2013, Kristján and Ron had several long phone conversations about breeding and, specifically, about the young mares available at Thor Icelandics. Ron was looking for a three-year-old that he could begin starting that winter. Once again we traveled to Thor Icelandics. Jóhanna walked us through the pasture, pointing out the three-year-olds that Kristján and Ron had discussed on the phone.

That first night in our camper, Ron studied the World Fengur database of Icelandic horses on the web and listed the pros and cons of each young mare he had seen. By the next morning, we had narrowed our choices to two of them. Again we walked the pasture, and Kvika from Four Winds Farm (US2010204585) became our final choice.

As we were finalizing the purchase, Kristján told us more about Kvika's pedigree. Her breeder, Lori Leo of Four Winds Farm in Massachusetts, had had the foresight to purchase Kvika's dam, Kamilla frá Efri-Rauðalæk (IS2005265495) in Iceland and, before importing her to the U.S., to breed Kamilla to the stallion Þóroddur frá Þóroddsstöðum (IS1999188801). "She's one-of-a-kind," Kristján said of Kvika. He

predicted that some day we would share a drink over this mare.

Being the horse trader that he is, Kristján couldn't allow us to travel back to Ohio with just one horse in a three-horse trailer. So we added another excellent mare to our breeding program: List frá Hrafnhólum (IS1998225081).

TRAINING

Kvika's training began that first winter, with Ron ponying her around our farm. The next spring and through the summer, she was introduced to the saddle and went out on the trail for short rides. In the fall of 2014, Ron and Kvika attended a young horse evaluation and riding clinic with Barbara Frische. We were pleased when Kvika scored well during the young horse evaluation. After the riding portion of the clinic, Barbara encouraged Ron to continue training her for even gaits with light aids. Barbara ended their riding session by telling Ron that he had a special horse with excellent potential.

The spring of 2015 started with another new experience for Kvika, when Ron rode her in our local St. Patty's Day "Dress-in-Green" ride. She did great, with lots of other horses (of several breeds) and riders in costume.

Ron continued to train Kvika, who was now five, and we began thinking about a future breed evaluation. Guðmar Pétursson, who had come to Kentucky to give a riding clinic, advised Ron that if you train for a breed evaluation you have to be willing to go all in. “You have to commit to going through it,” Guðmar said. We decided to go for it.

We called on Carrie Brandt and Terral Hill of Taktur Icelandics in Kentucky to begin working with Kvika for a few months before winter. Carrie had studied with Guðmar for many years, before completing the equine science program at Hólar University in Iceland.

In the spring of 2016, Kvika again returned to Carrie and Terral, but this time she spent half a year in training. Unlike the previous fall, this time her training also involved competing. At the end of the Eastern Regional Icelandic Horse Championships season, Carrie and Terral had successfully shown Kvika at several shows and she ranked fourth in Green Horse Tölt. Her future looked promising.

NO EVALUATIONS?

Time passed. Throughout the spring of 2017 there were hints of a possibility of a breed evaluation being held in the U.S. that year. The last American breed evaluation had been held in 2015: They were costly, and hard to organize, and it was hard to justify the effort of flying in international breeding judges if only a very few horses would be shown. Farms with the necessary track and facilities tried to gauge interest. Finally, the disappointing news came that there would be no U.S. breed evaluation that year.

We sadly took Kvika home from Taktur, with the goal of keeping her in shape in case a breed evaluation occurred the following year. Kvika enjoyed the summer, growing in stature and maturity. She was now steady on the trails, and she and Ron covered many miles. As fall approached there were more hints of a breed evaluation in the planning stages for 2018.

In chilly November, Ron and Kvika participated in a clinic at Léttleiki Icelandics in Kentucky that was designed to prepare horses and riders for a (potential) breed evaluation. Our presenter and trainer for the weekend was the famous Eques saddle designer, trainer, and competition rider Rasmus Møller Jensen.

We learned all about breed evaluations in the international Icelandic horse world, including the training and riding that it takes to be successful. We enjoyed videos and instruction about the horses that performed at a high level, as well as stories of some that were not as successful. Next it was the riders’ turn to mount up and be put to the test. Ron and Kvika worked hard at the clinic on gaits and especially at preparing for clean pace.

Rasmus complimented us on our mare and said that she had possibilities of being successful. After hearing his compliments we were hoping there would be a breed evaluation in the U.S. Late in the fall of 2017 the word came that, yes, there will be a breed evaluation—maybe even more than one—in the U.S. in 2018.

MORE TRAINING

Early in 2018, we again turned to Carrie and Terral to prepare Kvika for the evaluation to be held in Kentucky in May. Carrie and Terral were the only choice we considered for Kvika’s training. They knew where she was in her progress, and where she needed to be to be successful. They also understood her big personality. So we just stepped back and allowed them to do what they know and do best.

Of course, we checked in and received videos and photographs. After all,

Kvika was Ron’s special horse. We also saw each other at the Ohio Equine Affaire, where the Sirius Ohio Kentucky Icelandic club (of which Ron and I are members) sponsored the stall at the Knights of Iceland booth. There, we spent several days talking about Kvika. Guðmar Pétursson, who developed the Knights of Iceland performance team, was also there.

Guðmar has shown many horses in breed evaluations in both the U.S. and Iceland. He gave us the fatherly talk about how Kvika could do well, but that there were some areas of concern. We understood. We knew by then that May was only our first opportunity—amazingly, there were two more breed evaluations planned for the U.S. this year.

At the end of April, off we went to Taktur Icelandics in Kentucky to see Kvika’s progress. I loved watching the wireless headset interaction between Carrie and Terral. They truly are a team, watching each other ride Kvika and discussing what one saw while the other rode. Later that day, we saw horses in training at Taktur Icelandics go through water treadmill training. Yes, we answered, when Carrie asked us if that would be something we would be interested in for Kvika. We left Taktur pleased with the progress we saw and confident that their team approach was the best thing going for Kvika.



Kvika from Four Winds received 8.5 for slow tölt at the Léttleiki Evaluation. She was ridden by trainer Terral Hill. Photo by Shaila Sigsgaard.



Ron Hoover (left) and Kviká from Four Winds are congratulated by Leslie Chambers after competing in the beer tölt—not part of the evaluation process, but a fun event for any Icelandic. Photo by Sherry Hoover.

FIRST PRIZE

The evaluations at Léttleiki Icelandics began on May 22. That night was measurement night. The usual two-day schedule for a breed evaluation had to be changed a bit, due to the very hot weather predicted for the riding days.

Kviká's team had grown since April. Now Laura Benson of Valkyrie Icelandics was right there beside Carrie and Terral prepping Kviká. Laura had also "interned" with Guðmar before earning her degree at Hólar; she and Carrie worked together seamlessly.

Since we were staying at Léttleiki in our camper, we volunteered to feed Kviká at night and in the morning. Terral gave us our instructions: Kviká was to receive at 6 a.m. a certain measured baggie of grain, and at 10 a.m. hay, and she was to be walked. Wow, I thought, she is eating and training like a true athlete.

Wednesday, May 23, was the conformation judging and the first day of the riding test. Conformation went smoothly, since Kviká's team was so well prepared and ready. When the scores were an-

nounced, we were delighted to hear Kviká had received a conformation score of 8.28!

Next, before the heat came in, was the riding part of the test. Terral presented Kviká on the track, completing all 10 passes while our cameras snapped and we shot endless videos with our phones. As the individual gait scores were announced, Ron plugged the numbers into the Smart Rider app—since some scores are weighted more than others. Yes! Kviká, her team of trainers, and rider Terral Hill were first prize!

Part Two of the riding test, on the next day, saw Kviká's scores rise in four of her gaits for a ridden abilities score of 8.08, making her total score (combining conformation and riding) 8.16.

It's difficult to explain how excited we are, and how very pleased we are with the whole team who helped Kviká perform her best. We listened to Kristján. We listened and learned at clinics with Barbara Frische, Rasmus Møller Jensen, and Guðmar Pétursson. And we trusted our trainers, Carrie and Terral, and their team to know Kviká.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Kviká's first-prize score is a measure of her physical and mental abilities, along with the training that she has received. It is a moment-in-time assessment determined by international judges who judge according to the FEIF standards for the Icelandic horse. For us the assessment confirmed Kviká's BLUP score and validated Lori Leo's breeding decision and our mare's training. Had Kviká not attained a first prize, the assessment would not have been a waste of time or money as her scores would have indicated areas that need improvement. At that point we would have had to make the decision of whether or not to breed her, as our farm goal is to create foals that improve the next generation of Icelandic horses in the U.S.

Now we are back to listening and learning, as we study the lineage of the stallions available in the U.S., as well as their assessments and offspring. We will use Kviká's evaluation scores as a guide to choosing the best stallions in the U.S. to breed her to. We will look for stallions that match or improve her scores. In conformation, we hope to improve her offspring's head, ears, and neck set. With Worldfengur's "Virtual Mate" tool, we can see the possible potential of the BLUP score for the foals. When those foals are old enough to be evaluated, we hope that our breeding choices will be confirmed at a breeding evaluation.

LEARN MORE

For general information on the evaluation of Icelandic breeding horses, see <https://www.icelandics.org/breeding/>.

WHO TACKED UP FENGUR?

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MARGOT APPLE. TEXT BY ALEX PREGITZER AND NICKI ESDORN

Alex Pregitzer and Nicki Esdorn are both Icelandic horse riding instructors. Together they have been teaching people to ride Icelandic horses for decades. They put together a list of ten mistakes they've seen their students make over the years when tacking up their Icelandic horses.

They asked illustrator Margot Apple to tack Fengur up that way.

Poor Fengur!

He was pretty unhappy about it. So Margot, being a good horseperson herself, took all the tack off again and put it on the proper way.

That made Fengur happy.

When you compare Sad Fengur (top) to Happy Fengur (bottom), how many changes do you find?

Write your answers down, then turn the page to see if you are right— and why.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

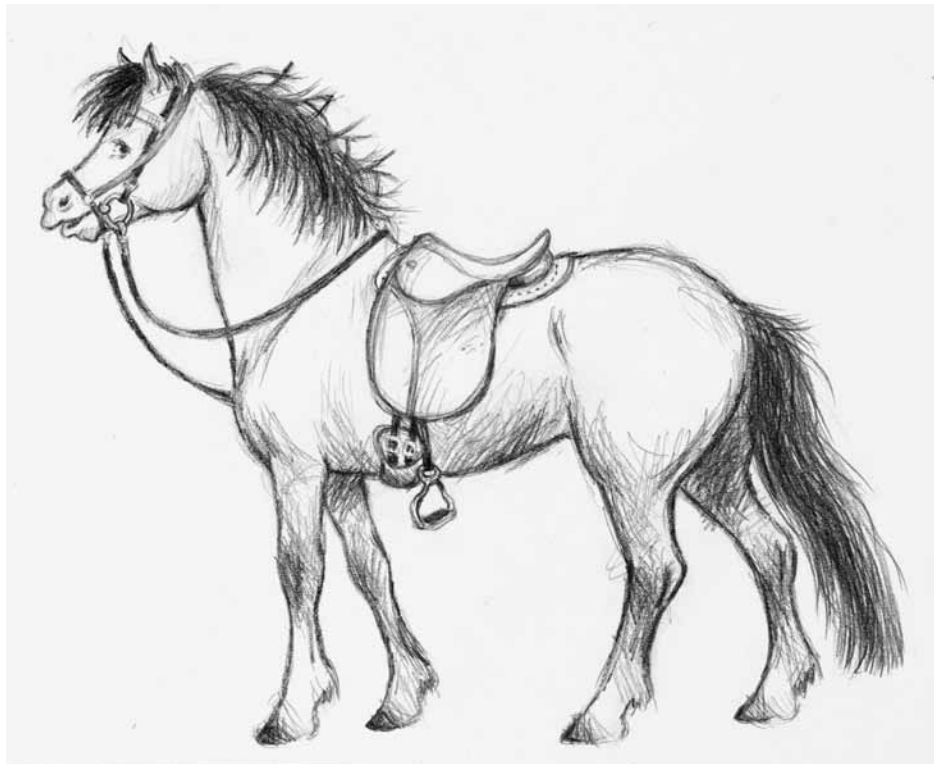
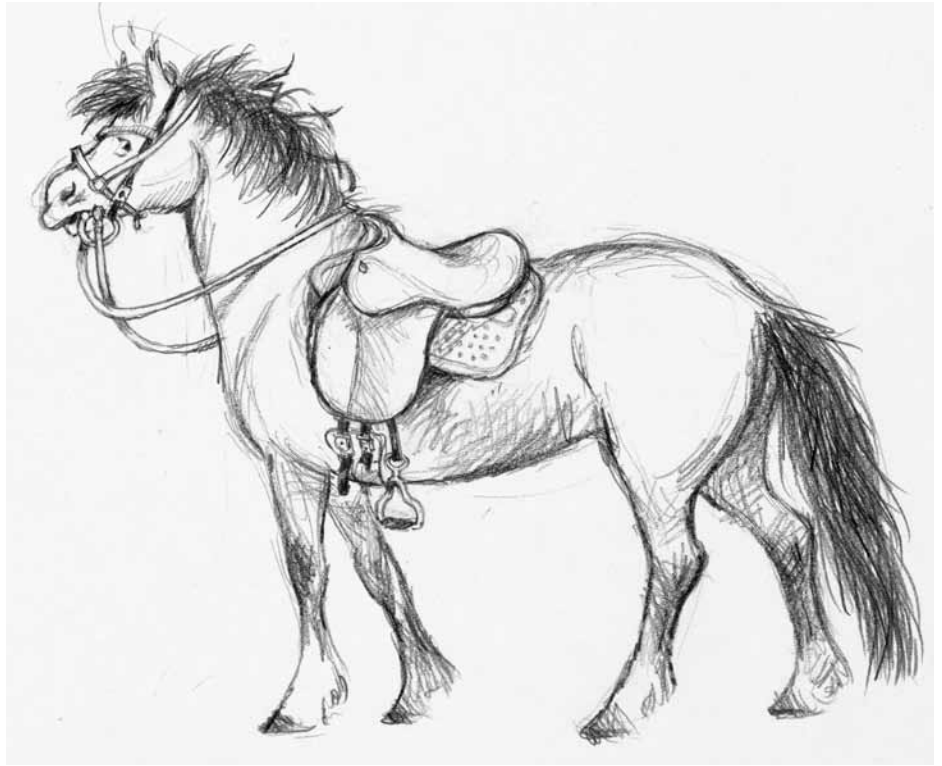
6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____



ANSWER KEY

1. The brow band is too low and crooked! It covers Fengur's right eye and rubs on the bony area above his left eye. Ugh! He likes it in the groove under his ears.

2. The dropped noseband is too loose, too high, and it is fastened underneath the headstall! It should sit on top of the head stall, four fingers above his nostril and be loose enough so two fingers fit between it and his nose.

3. What a mouthful! The bit is too wide and sits too low! It's banging against Fengur's teeth and he may start putting his tongue over it. It sits comfortably when you see one little smiley wrinkle. To be sure, take a peek into his mouth.

4. The reins are clipped on in the wrong spot! They should be attached underneath the headstall.

5. Left? Right? Fengur can't tell which is which when the reins are crossed!

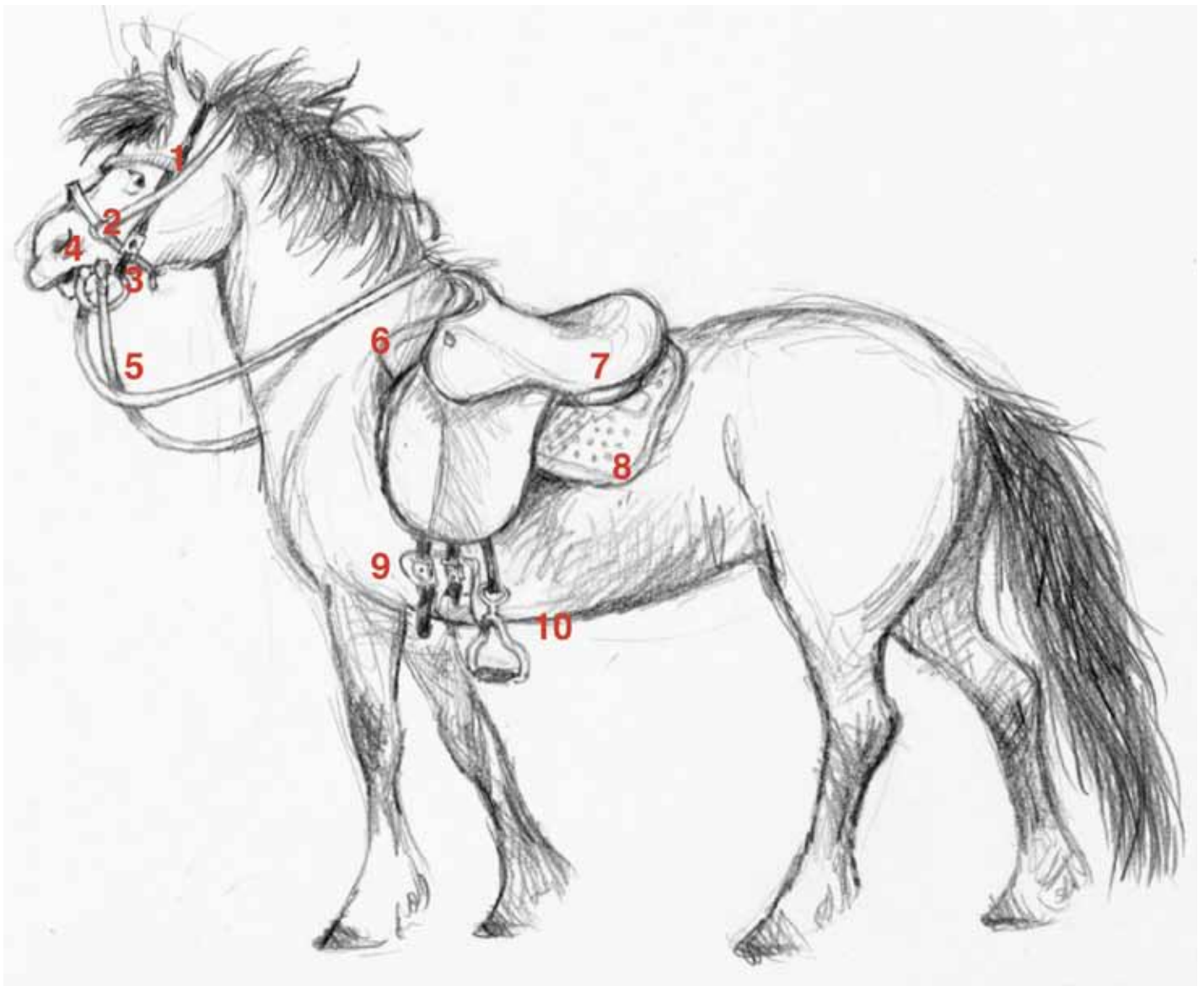
6. Ouch! The saddle is too far forward and feels like a clothespin pinched tight over Fengur's shoulders.

7. Fengur gets worried when his saddle hangs to one side—his rider might fall off!

8. Fengur loves a soft saddle pad, but not like this! It is uncomfortable when it does not lie smooth under the entire saddle. Plus it will slip right out when he starts moving.

9. Red alert! Broken billet strap! No riding in this saddle until it is repaired.

10. A safety stirrup is only safe if the bulge curves away from your foot (there is a left and a right stirrup). Turned the wrong way, it becomes a hook to catch your foot! You could get hurt!



SELF-CARRIAGE: A BALANCING ACT

BY GABRIELE MEYER

“He is leaning!” Jolli was shouting across the arena, and I wondered what he meant. Jolli, aka Eyjólfur Ísólffsson, our clinician that day, is the legendary trainer and former head instructor in the equestrian program at Hólar University in Iceland. You have read about him in the *Quarterly* many times. He is someone to listen to.

“He ... is ... leaning!!”

I heard the urgency in Jolli’s voice, but I didn’t know what he meant, never mind knowing what to do to remedy the situation. My horse felt somewhat like an ocean liner, but leaning? To where? With what? Feeling frustrated, I stopped and asked Jolli to elaborate. My horse wasn’t leaning to the left or to the right, he explained, “He is leaning into the bit and using your hands to balance himself.”

Aha, my horse was out of balance and doing something we do not want our horses to do. Now, exactly what do we want him to do, and how can we achieve that?

Needless to say, there wasn’t an easy way to fix this problem. The rest of the three-day clinic with Jolli was just the first, tiny step toward my having a “non-leaning” and well-balanced horse. Now, eight years later, we still have relapses from time to time, but for the most part we manage to be moving together in good balance.

If you think about it, all riding ultimately comes down to balancing the combined body weight of horse and rider over the horse’s feet. Because we live in three-dimensional space, the horse needs to be balanced in all three dimensions. I talked about the left-to-right balance—and the horse’s inherent asymmetry—in Issue Two 2017 of the *Quarterly*. In this article, I want to shed some light on the front-to-back or horizontal balance.

THE HORSE IN NATURE

A horse’s natural balance is to be heavy on the front, or forehand. Horses are designed to graze most of the day, slowly moving forward in search of the next morsel. Researchers think that wild horses

spend about 16 hours per day doing just that.

Occasionally, they get startled and lift their heads way up to explore what is going on. Sometimes they feel threatened and run off at top speed, settling back into their grazing routine as soon as they feel safe. There are social interactions as well, like grooming, playing, and showing off to the opposite sex. Here is where the horse’s potential becomes visible: a floating trot, an arched neck and back, a proud tölt, an impressive canter, rearing, or bowing down to nip the opponent’s knees. Fighting, playing, and showing off creates that excited demeanor we so love to watch in our horses.

But this is the exception. Most of their

time, horses keep their heads down to graze.

It is said that form follows function, and therefore it doesn’t come as a surprise that horses carry about 60 percent of their weight with their front legs and 40 percent with their hind legs (see illustration 1). A quick look at any horse picture shows that there are fundamental differences between the anatomy and function of front and hind legs. While the hind legs are angled and muscular, creating the thrust that moves a horse forward, the front legs are straight, much less muscular, and act to bear the weight of the horse.

ADD A RIDER

When a rider sits on a horse, her weight is not evenly distributed between the horse’s



Balance in fast tölt: Here, at the end of the one-leg stance phase of the gait, Álfrún frá Hrafnstöðum is balancing her own and rider Nicki Esdorn’s weight on the very small surface defined by her right front foot. Photo by Martina Gates.

front and hind leg pairs; rather, the rider's weight lands disproportionately on the front legs. When a horse is backed for the first time, two things will happen. First, the horse will contract his back muscles, triggered by the unaccustomed weight. If this is not taken care of, it will lead to a stiffening and hollowing of the horse's topline over time. Eventually, if it goes on for too long, the back muscles will atrophy and the horse will become sway-backed.

Second, the withers section of the horse's spine will literally sink down a couple of inches between the shoulder blades. Horses have no collarbone, so there is no boney structure to hold up the spine between the front legs. This lifting work is entirely performed by a sling of muscles, upon which the horse's thorax rests in between the right and left scapula. These muscles are not visible from the outside, as are, for example, the muscles of the horse's hind end. But they also need to be strengthened by appropriate training. Otherwise the horse will struggle with his horizontal balance and be heavy in the front. This can lead to an overload and increased concussion of the front legs (which carry more load anyway, even without a rider), possibly causing acute or chronic lameness.

For these reasons (and others), most training systems strive to teach the horse to lift his back and to shift his weight backward onto his hind limbs. The result of such training is a horse that is beautiful to look at, because he has just the right muscles in just the right places. Under the rider, he looks happy. He is light on his front feet and easy to maneuver. In a way, we try to restore the balance he would have without a rider.

The ancient Greek general and philosopher Xenophon (430-354 BC) left us with a treatise called "On the Art of Horsemanship," among many other works on politics, warfare, and history. Xenophon is seen by many people as the founder of the science and art of horse training. His insights are astonishing, and have lost none of their importance—quite to the contrary. While many passages in his treatise are worth quoting, this one is my favorite: "When you bring a horse to carry himself in the manner in which he himself displays when he is showing off as much as he can, you prove that he is enjoying his work and is magnificent, proud, and spectacular."

A CLOSER LOOK AT SELF-CARRIAGE

Self-carriage is one of those basic equestrian concepts that seem a little vague at first. We all have a different vision of what constitutes self-carriage. Also, it can look different in different body types or breeds. Is it what we see in a high-level dressage horse? Is it what we see in the comparatively high head position of tölt? How about the flying pace? What is the difference between self-carriage and collection?

To be in self-carriage a horse needs to balance his body (and that of his rider) in a way that is appropriate for the movement, gait, and speed. His hind legs are engaged and his spine is free from excess tension. He is aligned so that his weight is not falling forward or to either side. He maintains his rhythm, speed, stride length, straightness, and engagement alone or with minimal aids from the rider.

Self-carriage is not limited to a mere biomechanical process. The horse's head and neck position mirrors a certain state of mind and must be seen in context with the horse's back and hind end. Typically, a horse exhibits a high neck position when he sees something new and exciting, or experiences fear. Beyond a certain point, an elevated neck will result in a bulging base of the neck, dropped withers, and a hollow back, which in turn prevents the hind legs from reaching under the horse.

Karen Rohlf, whose training concept is called "Dressage Naturally," emphasizes the mental and emotional aspects of self-carriage: "The horse understands what is required of him and so is able to organize his body for the task. There is no lack of balance due to him not being sure where he is going or what he is being asked to do. ... [The horse] is comfortable and calm and so feels no need to escape where he is, or be anywhere else. He is not fearful of making a mistake and therefore can be looser and more supple in his body. This will allow him to make the subtle adjustments necessary to remain in perfect balance. He trusts that he can settle into what he is doing, knowing he will always be given a warning when something new is going to be asked."

Though every horse can be in self-carriage at will without a rider, the development of self-carriage under the rider takes years. There are no quick fixes. If we try to speed things up or use improper riding

techniques (for example, trying to hold the horse's head up with the reins or trying to force the horse into a certain frame), we will not reach our goal of a horse that moves in balance and carries himself freely. On the other hand, if proper riding techniques are applied, even a horse with less-than-perfect conformation can be transformed into a beauty by developing muscles in the right places.

THE STRUCTURES INVOLVED

You might have heard about the "ring of muscles" that the horse uses to gain horizontal balance. It is called a "ring" because these muscles circle the trunk of the horse. They include the sub-lumbar and psoas muscles, the abdominal muscles, the long back muscle, the thoracic sling muscles, and the muscles supporting the lower curve of the neck. Here's how they work:

- the sub-lumbar muscles lift the lumbar area of the back,
- the psoas brings the pelvis into the right position, allowing the hind legs to swing forward,
- the abdominal muscles lift the thoracic spine,
- the long back muscle releases and allows for a swinging back,
- the thoracic sling muscles lift the withers,
- the muscles supporting the lower curve of the neck lift the base of the neck.

An additional component of the carrying apparatus is the so-called nuchal ligament (see illustration 2). This cord-like structure attaches to the back of the skull, to some of the cervical vertebrae, and to the dorsal spinous processes of the thoracic vertebrae in the withers area. It then continues along the horse's back (changing its name) and finally attaches to the sacrum. The nuchal ligament helps to carry the horse's head, especially when the head is in the grazing position, and contributes to stabilizing the head during movement. It also is thought to contribute to raising the horse's back.

Obviously, self-carriage is very complex. Many of the biomechanical details in obtaining and maintaining it are not quite clear to-date. The interactions of the structures involved are still being discussed by scientists, trainers, and veterinarians.

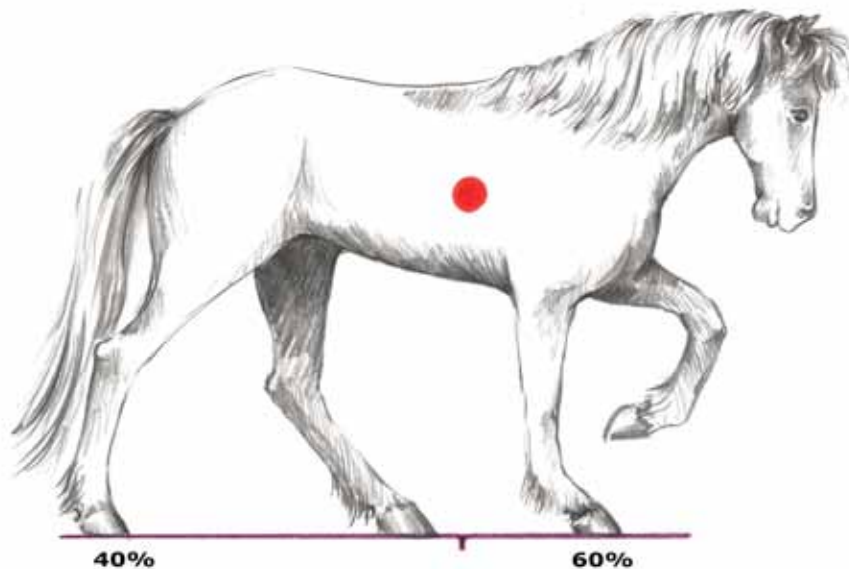


Illustration 1: The natural balance of the horse. The horse's center of gravity is located a little behind and above the elbows (red dot). The horse carries about 60% of its weight on the forehand and 40% on the hind limbs. This illustration depicts a horse with a nice conformation. It is easy to envision that a conformation that might be of less quality will greatly affect a horse's natural balance.

Please refer to the publications by Deb Bennett, Gerd Heuschmann, and Karin Leibbrandt listed in the reference section of this article to learn more.

For our day-to-day riding, however, the particulars might not matter much, as long as we agree on what balance and self-carriage look like, and train with that goal in mind.

CONFORMATIONAL ASPECTS

As is true for all horses, each Icelandic horse is born with conformational features that determine its quality and potential as a riding horse.

Horses that are built "uphill" (withers higher than croup) are easier to train for self-carriage than horses built "downhill." The relative heights of withers and croup are determined by genetics, and are a function of the lengths of the spinal processes of the vertebrae and the relative lengths and angulations of the limbs.

Special attention should always be paid to the conformation of the neck and the way it is attached to the chest. The neck is an important tool for the horse (ridden or not) to balance himself by shifting his body's center of gravity forward or backward. The action of the neck is amplified by the leverage effect of the horse's head, which weighs about 10 percent of the horse's total weight.

Alexandra Dannenmann, IPZV trainer B and FEIF International Judge (and recipient of the 2017 FEIF Trainer of the Year Award) explains: "A good conformation is always helpful and should not be underestimated. It happens way too often that we ask our horses for performances they cannot deliver due to their conformation. The consequences are frustrated rider-horse combinations and unhappy horses that try to please, but can never satisfy their riders. It is essential that we learn to pay attention to conformation, to realize possible difficulties and develop

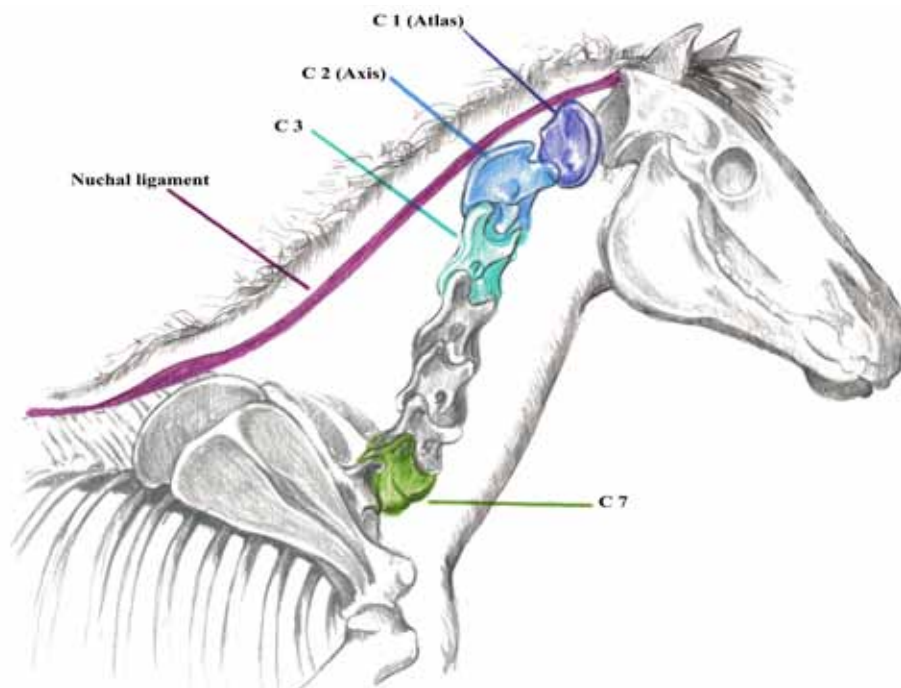


Illustration 2: A schematic drawing of the horse's neck (simplified). The cervical vertebrae, the neck muscles (not shown), and the so-called nuchal ligament act together to elevate or lower the horse's neck.

The nuchal ligament is a cord-like structure that attaches to the back of the skull, to some of the cervical vertebrae, and to the dorsal spinous processes of the thoracic vertebrae of the withers area. It then continues further back (while changing its name) and finally attaches all the way back to the sacrum. It is thought that the nuchal ligament supports the function of the upper neck muscles, pulls forward the dorsal spinous processes of the withers, and ultimately helps lift the horse's back.

The neck part of the spine is comprised of seven vertebrae, which are arranged in an

S-shape. The upper curve is formed by C1 (atlas), C2 (axis), and C3. The lower curve is formed by C7 and the first thoracic vertebra.

The neck vertebrae are stabilized and moved by a host of muscles, some tiny, some large, some deep down, some visible from the outside. The details of their concerted action are not well understood to date.

But we do know that it is these two curves of the vertebral column that a rider needs to take good care of when riding with rein contact. The proper alignment of the vertebrae is easily disturbed by inappropriate actions of the rider's hands, resulting in a false bend at C3 (so that the poll is not the highest point) or in a bulging under-neck line. Both are considered severe riding faults in almost any type of riding.

understanding and proper, fair training methods that help our horses perform as best as possible within their individual capabilities.”

LACK OF SELF-CARRIAGE

If a horse's weight is on the forehand, it almost feels to the rider as if his front legs were stuck in the ground. The horse becomes hard to maneuver, and changes of direction, speed, or gait become glue-like and effortful. The horse might not like to go forward. Conversely, the horse might increase his speed, running through the bridle. Have you ever heard, “He is running away with you!” from your instructor? I have.

Rhythm problems in tölt (like pacy-ness and trotty-ness) point toward lack of balance and self-carriage as well. If you envision for a second the diagonal two-leg stance phase of an isochronous tölt (please check out my article “Beyond Tölt” in Issue One 2018 if you forgot what that is), it is easy to imagine that the horse needs to be in near perfect balance to not fall onto his forehand because the area defined by the two supporting legs is so very small. It is almost like balancing a pyramid on its tip! If the horse falls onto his forehand, the rhythm will not be an even four-beat any longer.

A horse without balance is mentally not focused on his rider and needs constant aiding and correcting. Surely this cannot be much fun for either horse or rider. In contrast, a horse in self-carriage is a content and happy horse. To the rider, he feels “on the seat,” meaning that the rider's seat and weight aids become the main means of communication. The horse manages his speed, cadence, and frame without much intervention by the rider. Such a horse is a dream to ride, and the rider most likely will have a big smile on her face.

WORKING TOWARDS SELF-CARRIAGE

When developing self-carriage, it is helpful to start with examining the horse. Does he carry himself well when moving freely without a rider? How is his current muscle development? Does his overall demeanor tell us that he is free of pain or discomfort? Are any conformational issues visible? Do his hoof trimming and shoeing allow him to perform in balance? Is his tack appro-

priate and does it fit?

Alex Dannenmann explains: “The prerequisite for self-carriage is a well-muscled and strong horse which has the ability to carry the rider's weight in a proper and healthy way by putting weight on the hindquarters, accompanied by a strong core muscle complex. Therefore, building up muscles is the foundation; this is usually best realizable by combining groundwork with classical dressage exercises. The focus here must be a proper use of the back, achieved by a healthy head carriage.”

Ground work has the tremendous benefit that you can actually look at your horse while working with him. It requires knowledge, an experienced eye, and good body coordination on the side of the handler. Skillfully conducted groundwork allows the horse to learn new movements, explore his balance, and develop his muscles without the added weight of a rider. (The article “Groundwork 101” in Issue One 2016 has more information on this topic.)

In recent years, different styles of liberty work have become very popular and successful. The reasoning behind liberty training is that the horse can develop without the constraints that might be imposed on him by a rider's aids. Modern liberty work is done with incentives rather than with conventional pressure-release cues; this is fun and motivating for the horse. The horse can develop his self-awareness, balance, and strength on his own, and neither his body nor his mind are compromised in the process. Some extremely interesting liberty work has been done by Steinar Sigurbjörnsson and Kathy Sierra, who developed a training system that employs movement science and motivation science. (Read more about their methods in Issue Three 2016, “What is Intrinzen,” and Issue Four 2017, “The Horse as Hero.”)

THE RIDER'S TOOLBOX

Before we start thinking about how to teach the horse self-carriage, however, we should take a critical look at ourselves.

Is my seat such that it enables my horse to carry himself? Am I sitting straight, and is there a plumb line from my ear through my shoulder, hip, and heel? Is my seat balanced, so that I can give the aids correctly? Do I have a clear picture in my mind of what aid to give at which exact

time? Can I follow the horse's movements? Can I feel unnecessary tension in my own body parts and can I release it? Can I generate and maintain the appropriate muscle tension in my core and limbs?

Alex Dannenmann again: “All exercises are useless if the rider has problems with his own balance. Therefore, we initially have to work on an independent, balanced rider's seat before we can start to improve the horse's balance.”

We should be with our horse as much as we want him to be with us. Being frustrated, giving nagging leg aids, and hanging on the reins (as I was in that clinic mentioned above) does not give the horse a chance to carry himself properly. Depending on the horse's character, he might either decide to run, or to become numb, effectively ignoring the rider's confusing aids in both cases. Self-carriage of the horse cannot be achieved without the rider being able to control her emotions and her seat, or without knowing the aids and being able to apply them at the correct time.

Generally, we use certain tools to improve balance in the horse. The more tools you have and the more tools your horse knows, the better.

Over the years, I have taken several clinics with Jolli, and he has explained again and again that you “first make a tool, and then you apply that tool.” While this sentence sounds very logical at first, it took me a while until I truly understood the concept and was able to incorporate it into my day-to-day riding. A tool is a means to an end, not an end in itself. A tool can be an aid, such as the forward-driving leg aid for example. If the aid doesn't work properly, the tool was either unfamiliar to the horse or he has become numb to it (assuming the aid was executed correctly). In the first case, you need to properly teach him the tool, and in the second case it needs sharpening before you can use it again.

But a tool can also be a certain movement, like, for instance, the shoulder-in. You would first teach the horse how to do a correct shoulder-in; then you can apply the shoulder-in as your tool any time you feel you need it to improve balance. As classical dressage trainer Thomas Ritter emphasizes in his clinics: “We always need to ask ourselves if the quality of the gait is indeed better after the exercise. If it is

not, we either didn't use the appropriate exercise, or the exercise was not executed correctly."

Shoulder-in is the poster child of the classical dressage exercises. It is sometimes called "the mother of all exercises." Shoulder-in does it all: suppling, straightening, and collecting. During shoulder-in, the horse is slightly bent to the inside and travels at a certain angle forward and slightly sideways along the rail. A correctly executed shoulder-in establishes the correct balance between the inside driving leg and the outside rein. It frees up the inside shoulder and encourages the inside hind leg to step under the belly toward the center of gravity. It is the first of the lateral movements, and is usually developed from its predecessor, called a shoulder-fore.

Backing-up (also called "rein-back") is not an exercise meant to teach the horse to move backward; he already knows how to do that. Again, we need to teach him to do it upon being cued, so that we create a tool that can be applied when needed. During backing-up, the horse moves his feet in diagonal pairs backwards in a straight line. This can be done for one or two steps at first, then for a longer stretch once the horse is accustomed to it. A correct backing-up is executed with a soft mouth and fluid movements. The horse's weight shifts to the hindquarters, the hind legs bend, and his back comes up.

Transitions are wonderful tools to increase balance, if done correctly. Transitions can be either up or down into a different gait, or they can be within a gait (medium tölt to slow tölt, for example). Though it sounds simple, riding good transitions is very demanding. Good transitions are balanced and have the quality of being fluid and effortless. Without proper feel and preparation, they will be too slow or too abrupt, and nothing is gained.

Alex Dannenmann remarks: "Good exercises are those that activate the haunches: Collected walk and tölt, shortening and extending the steps, speed changes, moving and drifting the haunches on circles, etc. When doing these exercises, it is essential that the horse remains light on the bit. The rider has to ensure soft and light rein aids at any time to avoid the horse from supporting itself through the rider's hand and falling on the forehead."



In these two photos, Gabriele demonstrates "Zügel überstreichen," during which the rider temporarily gives up all rein contact. A horse in self-carriage will maintain his gait, speed, cadence, energy, and straightness for two to three horse lengths. Photos by Margaret Longstreth.

TEST FOR SELF-CARRIAGE

The standard test for self-carriage is known by the German term "Zügel überstreichen," or "Überstreichen" for short. During this exercise, the rider moves one or both hands forward along the crest of the horse's neck, until her arms are totally straight, thereby temporarily giving up all rein contact (see photos 1 and 2). If the horse is in self-carriage, he will maintain gait, speed, cadence, energy, and straightness by himself. After about two to three horse lengths, the rider carefully picks up the reins again. This test can and should be done in every gait, including canter.

The rider needs to take good care of her seat, so that she does not change her position during the exercise or lean forward. The rider's stretched-out arms act like levers and her core and chest/back

muscles need to stabilize her upper body and abdomen, while at the same time her hips remain flexible enough to follow the horse's movements.

As Centered Riding instructor Carla Bauchmüller points out, "We should always have the impression that we could do Überstreichen, even if we are not doing it all the time."

SELF-CARRIAGE IN TÖLT

In the FEIF publication "The Gaits of the Icelandic Horse" (available at www.feif.org), it says: "Characteristic of true tölt is suppleness and fluid movements. The horse should move in balance, with a strong and active back and active hindquarters. The movements of the front part are light and free. The horse's rhythm is a pure four-beat rhythm, which runs fluently

through the horse.” Clearly, this is a horse that displays self-carriage.

Alex Dannenmann explains: “In general, tölt is a gait with a natural disposition for self-carriage, since there is always at least one leg on the ground and the horse carries neck and poll naturally higher than in other gaits. This is very helpful because it allows some kind of natural self-carriage even without a rider when moving freely.”

Many years ago when we learned to ride tölt, we were told to just shorten the reins, hold the hands higher, and sit back in the saddle—the horse would tölt. The results of that style of riding can be seen in many older books and magazines: Icelandic horses exhibiting a bulging underneck or horses that are being forced into the gait by a rider with high hands and much tension in the reins. Even today we still see many horses being ridden in this out-dated fashion, as a quick image search on the internet will demonstrate. But fortunately, this riding style is disappearing, as the classical principles have been recognized and adopted by the international Icelandic horse community.

While classical dressage was primarily developed for three-gaited horses that could walk, trot, and canter only, these training principles also apply to tölt. The precision and the progression of the exercises build up the muscles and balance needed for the horse to tölt, and they also generate a willing and cooperative partner. Many trainers have experienced that once a horse has learned to deal with the rider’s weight and has developed strength and balance, starting him in the tölt is easy. The training might take longer this way, but the horse rewards us with being strong, healthy, durable, and safe.

SELF-CARRIAGE VS. COLLECTION

Self-carriage and collection are similar and intertwined, and one cannot exist without the other. Yet, they are not identical. Different riding styles seem to use the terms “self-carriage” and “collection” slightly differently, although some people use both terms interchangeably.

In classical dressage, collection describes the state in which the horse has shifted his weight toward the hind end, thereby elevating his front end in relationship to his hind end. This can be a rather subtle shift, only detectable to a trained

eye, or it can be more pronounced. In the latter case, it becomes clearly visible by a lowering of the croup through the increased angulation or bend of the hind legs and the relative elevation of the forehand—think of a levade as the highest form of collection. The horse’s hind legs stay way underneath his body in this process and do not extend far backward during the push off phase. With increased collection, a horse will slow down, until its forward movement has ceased altogether in the levade. The horse’s ability to collect increases with his training. Sometimes we also hear or read the term “gradual collection,” which emphasizes the fact that collection is on a sliding scale rather than being a state that is on or off.

Self-carriage describes a certain quality of balance in which the horse should move. Self-carriage is either there or not, there is not much in-between. Self-carriage does not necessarily need collection; it can also be seen in a horse that moves in a natural horizontal balance, without flexion of the hind leg joints.

On the other hand, self-carriage is the prerequisite of a true and unforced collection, because in correct collection the rein contact becomes lighter, not heavier: the horse is not merely “pulled” together. Self-carriage is not dependent on the speed of the horse; it is there in correct collection, and it is also a requirement for extended gaits. A horse with good self-carriage can seamlessly transition from a more collected gait into its extended version and back.

Another misunderstanding comes from the ambiguous use of the term “to collect.” If a trainer asks you to “collect the reins,” he or she might simply mean to shorten the reins in order to shorten the horse’s frame. A short frame is not identical with collection, because it doesn’t require the weight shifting toward the hind quarters.

Neither self-carriage nor collection means that the head has to be brought into a vertical position. The head position is a consequence of self-carriage and collection, not the prerequisite.

One of the great misconceptions in riding is that one just needs to shorten the reins and apply driving aids to collect the horse. If the reins are shortened the horse will have a shortened stride without taking on weight with the hind legs. If you simultaneously apply driving aids, the horse

will get tense. Such a riding style inflicts tension and discomfort on the horse and may have unwanted consequences, like stiffness, resistance, and even lameness. The proper way of obtaining collection is to systematically teach collecting movements that help the horse shift his center of gravity backward. This process may take years and requires patience and systematic thinking by the rider.

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SPORT 101 PART 2

BY ALEX PREGITZER

In the first part of this series, published in Issue Two 2018, I discussed two of the most popular classes in U.S. competitions, T7 Novice Tölt and T8 Youth Tölt. Speaking from a judge's standpoint, I tried to explain what the judges are looking for and how you can prepare. Here, I will take a closer look at the different five-gait classes. The reason I chose five-gait classes is that a brand new five-gait class, F3, is being offered this competition season. As usual, in writing this article I have relied on input from my fellow sport judges. A big thank-you to Will Covert and Frejja Thye, who have generously given their time to help make sure what we print is correct.

To start out, let's review some general information. Each year FEIF, the International Icelandic Horse Association, publishes the rules and regulations for Icelandic sport competitions. In order for a U.S. show to be sanctioned, certain FEIF classes have to be included. FEIF also publishes the Sport Judges Guidelines. It is not only the bible for sport judges around the world, but also an interesting read for anybody interested in learning more about the scoring system. Taking a look at the USIHC-Sanctioned Show Rules and Procedures and the USIHC Competition Rules is also a good idea: We have different rules about eligibility for FEIF classes than do some other countries, for example. See the links to all of these resources below.

FEIF classes usually have a number rather than a name. T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, and T8 focus on the tölt and no other gaits: T stands for tölt. V1, V2, V3, V4, V5, and V6 are four-gait classes (the German word Viergang lent the V here); all classes starting with a V ask for walk, trot, canter, and tölt. F1, F2, and F3 are five-gait classes: walk, trot, canter, tölt, and flying pace. All of the T, V, and F classes are shown on an oval track (or in a suitable arena). There are also classes ridden on a straight track, in which the riders show only flying pace: P1, P2, P3, PP1, and PP2. FEIF also offers an official trail class (TR1) and dressage classes (FS1, FS2, FS3), as well as a flag race (FR1) and countryside riding (CR1).



Caeli Cavanagh paces Aska frá Geldingaá at the NEIHC Open in 2014. Photo by Martina Gates.

The prime judging criteria are the same for all FEIF classes. That means all classes are judged by the same standards, no matter whether it is an easier class or a more challenging one. Children and youth riders are judged the same as professionals. This is different than in many other equine competitions and important to know. Four-gaited horses and five-gaited horses are judged by the same standards as well.

When assessing your performance, the judges look at the key judging elements: riding skills and connection, beat and balance, suppleness and relaxation, outline and movements, and correctness and precision of the execution. Each of these elements was described in detail in the first article in this series.

USIHC RULES

In the U.S., we follow the FEIF rules with some slight variations and some additions.

FEIF classes in the U.S. are grouped into divisions and a name or abbreviation is added in the show program to provide information about the classes in each division:

- Green Horse division: no FEIF classes, U.S. classes VGH and TGH

- Beginner Rider division: no FEIF classes, U.S. classes VBR and TBR
- Youth division: FEIF classes T8 and V6
- Novice division : FEIF classes T7 and V5
- Intermediate division : FEIF classes T5, T6, V3, and F2
- Open division: FEIF classes T1, T3, T2, T4, V1, V2, and F1

The most important rule modifications are:

- Riders can ride more than one tölt or four-gait or five-gait class per day.
- In Novice and Beginner classes, only snaffle bits are allowed.
- In Beginner and Green Horse classes, riders are judged only on the long sides of the arena.
- Once a rider-horse combination receives a certain score a certain number of times, they have to move up into the next division.

You do not have to qualify for any classes in the U.S. to enter them initially (other than following the age requirement for youth classes). While there are

restrictions on professional riders (they are limited to certain classes), non-professional riders can choose to ride in any class they wish, until they score out.

F3 FIVE GAIT

This new class was approved by FEIF last spring. The requirements in the pace section of the class are more forgiving than in the other five-gait classes (F1 and F2), which makes it a great entry-level class for riders or horses new to five-gait programs. In the U.S., F3 is offered as an optional class in 2018 and will be an intermediate five gait class in 2019.

Intermediate classes are open to all non-professional riders who have not achieved a score of 6.0 three times, riding the same or different horses, in a specific discipline at USIHC-sanctioned competitions. Once a rider has achieved a score of 6.0 or higher three times in a specific discipline, he or she must compete in Open Level classes thereafter in that discipline.

How is this class ridden? Unless you are the only rider who signed up for F3, you will be riding in a group of riders. There won't be more than three riders on the track at once. If more people sign up, there will be several groups.

Your group will be asked to show: 1. Slow to medium speed tölt. 2. Slow to medium speed trot. 3. Medium speed walk. 4. Slow to medium speed canter. 5. Pace (pace in Icelandic horse competitions is always flying pace, so as fast as you can go). Riders show all gaits together, except for flying pace. Pace is shown one rider at a time.

If a final is offered (which is up to the show organizer), the procedure is the same as above, except that the scores for each element of the test are announced in between. The horses walk while the scores are being announced.

THE GAITS SHOWN

What does slow to medium speed tölt mean? "Slow to medium speed" in any gait means that the rider can choose the speed the horse is best at, from very slow to working tempo to medium speed—just not too fast. The horse should go in an even four-beat rhythm, which runs fluently through the horse's body. The neck should be arched, the back should be active and rounded, the topline should be



Laura Benson riding Rimma frá Saurbæ in flying pace at the 2011 Kentucky Show. Photo by Heidi Benson.

free of tension. The hindquarters should be engaged and the movements in the front should be light and free.

What speed tölt is best for your horse? The horse should be in balance, with a strong and active back and hindquarters, and be supple and fluid in the movements. If you have an experienced trainer or riding instructor, ask for their feedback while you are riding. Am I too fast? Too slow? The more feedback you get, the better your own feel for the best speed to show will be. This way, you develop your own muscle memory and won't need to rely on any help during your test. Once you find the right speed, make sure your speed stays even. Speeding up and slowing down is not desired.

What does slow to medium speed trot mean? Not a fast trot, but it should be rather energetic. The horse should go in a clear two-beat diagonal rhythm with clear suspension. Ideally, the horse has an arched neck and is rounded with a relaxed topline, going forward in balance and with suppleness, impulsion, and roomy strides. The back is elastic and the movement runs through the horse's body.

What does medium speed walk mean? The judges like to see a focused horse that is moving energetically forward in an even four-beat rhythm. The horse should have a long neck and a rounded, relaxed top line and go forward with suppleness, impulsion, and roomy strides. The back is elastic. The movement of the walk should go through the whole body with the horse clearly resting in the steps and not rushing.

What does slow to medium speed canter mean? Canter is an even three-beat gait with a clearly visible moment of suspension. The horse should have an arched neck, a rounded, relaxed topline, and be actively engaged in the hindquarters. The forehand is light and unconstrained.

What does pace mean? The pace should be an energetic two-beat lateral gait with a clearly visible moment of suspension, performed at high speed—the faster the better. The horse should lift its back and extend the head and neck forward. In the moment of suspension, the lateral front and hind leg pair is stretched far forward and the opposite leg pair is stretched far backward.

COMPARING F1, F2, & F3

F1, an Open class, is an individual program: Riders compete one at a time. The rider chooses the order in which he or she performs the five gaits, and the announcer does not instruct the rider. The gaits shown are the same as in F3: slow to medium tölt, slow to medium trot, medium walk, slow to medium canter, and pace. All gaits are shown for one full round, except walk and pace. Walk is shown for half a round. Pace is shown once on each long side of the track (which means pace is shown twice). To get a score for pace, riders have to show a minimum of one full long side of pace. Every pace attempt is scored individually. The final mark for pace is based on the average of the two attempts. For the total score, the marks for tölt and pace are doubled.

In F1 Finals, the finalists show the

gaits together as a group, as instructed by the speaker. Pace is shown one by one, and there are three pace runs per horse/ rider combination, each shown on one long side. The scores for each element of the test are announced in between, with the horses walking then. The scores for both tölt and pace are again doubled.

F2 is in the Intermediate division. It is ridden as a group, with a maximum of three riders on the track at a time, and with instructions given by the announcer. The gaits shown remain the same. Pace is shown one by one, three times on one long side; the riders choose the side by majority vote. To get a score for pace, riders have to show a minimum of one full long side in pace. Each of the three pace attempts is scored individually. The final mark for pace is based on the average of the two best attempts. The worst attempt is not taken into account. In F2, the marks for tölt and pace are doubled.

In F2 Finals, the finalists show the gaits together as a group, as instructed by the speaker. Pace is shown one by one, and there are three pace runs per horse, each shown on one long side. The scores for each element of the test are announced in between, with the horses walking then. The scores for both tölt and pace are again doubled.

The new F3 is also ridden as a group, with a maximum of three riders on the track at one time, and with instructions given by the announcer. The gaits shown remain the same. Pace is shown one by one, two times on one long side; the riders choose the side by majority vote. To get a score for pace in F3, however, riders only have to show one half of one long side in pace. In addition, in F3 the transition area for bringing the horse from canter into and out of pace is eight meters longer than in F1 and F2. Again, every pace attempt is scored individually. The final mark for pace is based on the average of the two attempts. And the marks for pace (but not tölt) are doubled.

In F3 Finals, the finalists show the gaits together as a group, as instructed by the speaker. Pace is shown one by one, and there are two pace runs per horse, each shown on one long side. The scores for each element of the test are announced in between, with the horses walking then. And only the scores for pace are doubled, just like in preliminaries.



Nicole Kempf, the German record holder in speed pace, flies above the ice with Brynja frá Grindavík. Photo by Krijn Buijtelaar.

WHAT ARE THE JUDGES LOOKING FOR?

To assess a performance, the judges break it down into five elements: 1. Correctness and precision of the execution. 2. Riding skills and connection. 3. Beat and balance. 4. Suppleness and relaxation. 5. Outline and movements. (For more details see Issue Two 2018)

In any five-gait class on the oval track, the transition into pace and out of pace, as well as the length of the pace performed, are looked at. Aside from the quality of the pace itself, the technical execution is an important part of the assessment. The transitions have to be smooth and harmonious, and the horse has to be brought into pace from canter. If the horse is not brought into pace from canter (for instance, if the transition is from tölt to pace), or the transition does not occur in the correct part of the track, the judges will deduct up to two points.

The transition area is usually marked. In F3, it is longer than in either F1 or F2, and the total distance that the horse has to be in pace is shorter. As Freija explains, “What’s the most important in my view is that the horse has to be straight when it’s put into pace, as you do not want the horse to pace around the corner. So the perfect spot for the transition depends on how you ride the corner. If you are on the outside

of the track, your transition can be earlier. If you are on the inside, then it’s later.”

After the pace sprint, the horse must be slowed down gently by riding into the curve in a controlled manner. If the horse takes up a disunited canter, the judges will deduct one to two points. The exact deduction depends on the reason for the cross canter. The maximum deduction will be made if the horse has been ridden recklessly at high speed into the curve.

RESOURCES

Links to all the rules needed for sport competitions in the U.S. can be found here: <https://www.icelandics.org/rules/>

Download the FEIF manual, containing both the General Rules and Regulations and the Sport Rules and Regulations, at:

https://www.feif.org/files/documents/FEIF_Rules_Regulations2018_sport.pdf

(Note that the Sport Rules and Regulations begin on page 80.)

The U.S. modifications to these rules can be found here: https://www.icelandics.org/competition/competition_rules_2016.pdf

Download the FEIF Sport Judges Guidelines at:

https://www.feif.org/files/documents/sj_guidelines2018.pdf

RIDERS WANTED!

BY LORI CRETNEY

Back in 1860 it was common to see an advertisement like this one, which ran in the Sacramento Union on March 19: “Men Wanted: The undersigned wishes to hire ten or a dozen men familiar with management of horses, as hostlers, or riders on the Overland Express Route via Salt Lake City. Wages \$50 per month.”

For the next season of Sea 2 Shining Sea, the virtual ride organized by the USIHC Leisure Riding Committee, our route covers the Pony Express and Butterfield Overland Mail routes, making a large circle around the United States twice for a total of 9,932 miles. We started riding on July 4, 2018 and will continue until July 3, 2019. (See www.icelandics.org/s2ss for information on how to sign up.)

The Pony Express and Butterfield Overland Mail routes contain tremendous amounts of American history. In this article, I want to share some of that history, and facts about the stops along the routes, to inspire you to join the ride.

THE BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND MAIL ROUTE

On March 3, 1857, the United States Congress approved a request by Postmaster General Aaron Brown to contract for the transportation of the U.S. mail from the Mississippi River to the west coast. Previously, the U.S. mail—what we know now as “snail mail”—was transported by steamboat across the Gulf of Mexico to the Isthmus of Panama, where it was put on a ship to northern California.

Brown’s proposed overland mail route received its fair share of criticism. The 2,800-mile route was too long to be covered in 25 days, as required by Congress. Plus, water was scarce along the route. But Brown wanted the service provided. He awarded a six-year contract to the Butterfield Overland Mail Company at the rate of \$600,000 per year.

The Butterfield Overland Mail route became known as the “Oxbow Route” because of its shape on the map. It started in St. Louis, MO, dipped southwesterly through Missouri, western Arkansas, and into Indian Territory, then turned west

across Texas, southern New Mexico, and Arizona, before curving north into California to finish in San Francisco, CA.

John W. Butterfield, Sr., had received a loan from Wells Fargo and Company to start the Butterfield Overland Mail Company. With the Postmaster General’s contract in hand, he began setting up stations and purchasing stock and coaches. He also built roads and bridges and negotiated with the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations to cross Indian Territory. The route was initially planned to bring the mail from Memphis to Fort Smith by steamboat. However, Butterfield soon learned that steamboats could not run up the Arkansas River as far as Fort Smith when the river was low. Instead, he ended up contracting with an existing stagecoach company to provide service from Des Arc on the White River to Fort Smith.

Logistically, creating the route was very discouraging. More than 160 stations were needed, most needing to be built from scratch. Butterfield also had to hire stagecoach drivers, conductors, station masters, and superintendents. He needed more than 100 coaches, and over 2,000 horses and mules. And all this needed to be completed within one year.

On September 16, 1858, Butterfield took custody of two mailbags in St. Louis and boarded a Pacific Railroad train for Tipton, MO. Waterman L. Ormsby, a writer for the New York Herald, traveled with him and chronicled the 24-day journey in a series of newspaper articles. Ormsby was the only person to purchase a through-ticket for the first trip west. His passage cost \$200, with tickets that allowed him to stop at stations.

Once they arrived in Tipton, Ormsby wrote, they switched from train to stagecoach, joining five other passengers bound for Fort Smith, AR: Judge John F. Wheeler, his wife Nancy, and their two children, along with T.B. Corbin of Washington D.C. Driving the stage coach was John W. Butterfield, Jr.

In Springfield, MO, the coach was greeted by a large crowd and a gun salute. The passengers changed to a sturdier coach supported by leather straps, rather

than iron springs, and with a canvas top, rather than a wooden one. By the next morning, the stagecoach had reached Arkansas. In the Ozarks, the horses were traded for mules. Ormsby wrote, “I might say our road was steep, rugged, jagged, rough, and mountainous.”

At Fort Smith the mail from Tipton was combined with that from the Memphis coach, and they headed southwest across Indian Territory to Colbert’s Ferry. Ormsby wrote, “To see the heavy mail wagon whizzing and whirling over the jagged rock, through such a labyrinth, in comparative darkness and to feel oneself bouncing—now on the hard seat, now against the roof, and now against the side of the wagon—was no joke I assure you, though I can truthfully say that I rather liked the excitement of the thing. But it was too dangerous to be continued without accident, and soon two heavy thumps and a bound of the wagon that unseated us all, and a crashing sound denoted that something had broken.” The problem could not be immediately determined in the darkness, however, at the next stop the stage driver found the tongue of the coach had broken.

The stagecoach traveled from the Red River across Texas, south to Sherman, due west toward Gainesville and southwesterly to the new town of Jacksboro. From there, the ride continued to the military forts: Fort Belknap, the abandoned Fort Phantom Hill, and Fort Chadbourne. From Fort Chadbourne, the stagecoach continued southwest and then west across Llano Estacado or Staked Plain, through Castle Cap, and down to Horsehead Crossing in the Pecos River Valley. Then the route turned north to follow the Pecos to Pope’s Wells near the New Mexico border.

After a short break and a fresh team, the 60-mile journey continued into the Guadalupe mountains and through south-central Arizona. Ormsby wrote, “I here saw some of the largest cactus plant on the route; they tower up 12 to 15 feet in some varieties. A very excellent and sweet syrup made from them.” The stagecoach made better time through the

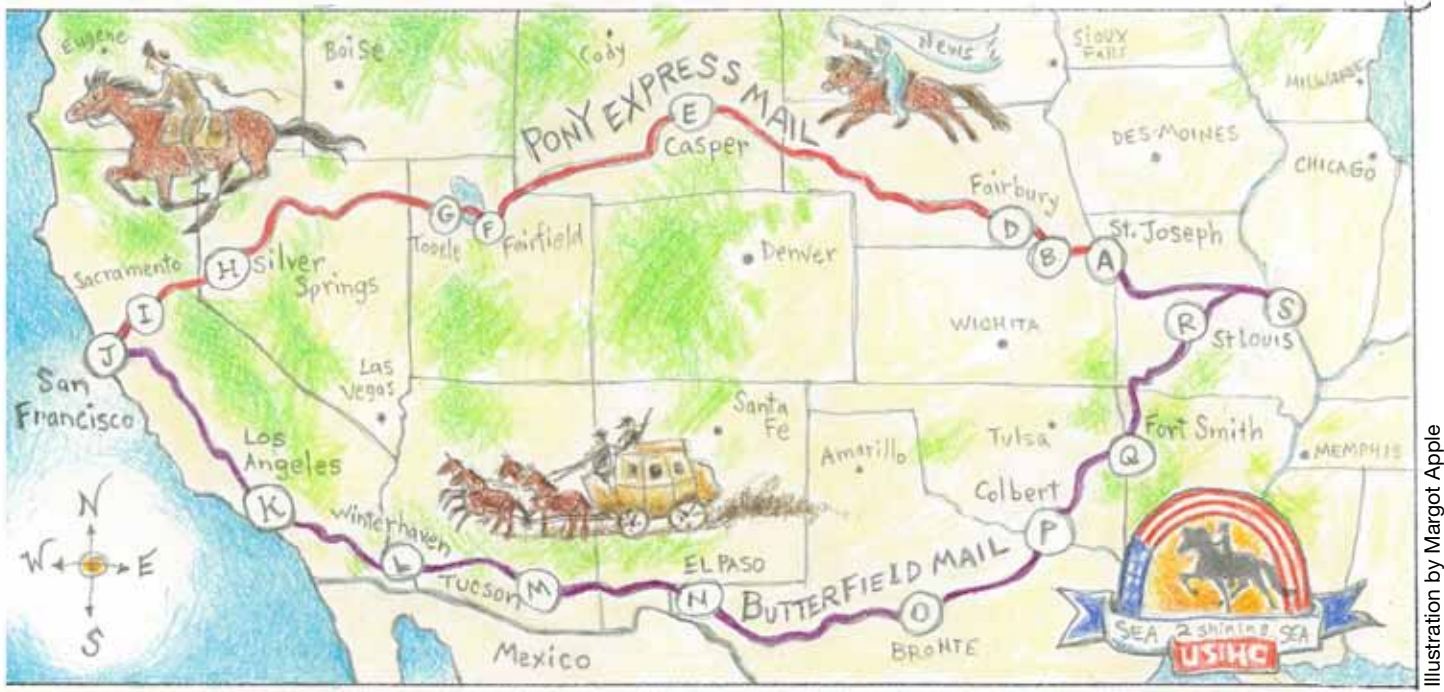


Illustration by Margot Apple

Gila River Valley, eventually reaching Fort Yuma. The route swung slightly south into Mexico and then back north across the sands of southern California.

The desert came to an end in the meadows of the San Felipe Valley and Warner Ranch. The route continued north through the Temecula Valley, along the west side of Laguna Grande. The northern end of the valley along the Chino Hills circled around into Los Angeles. From there, the stagecoach headed north through San Fernando, continuing onto the San Francisco Canyon to Fort Tejon.

Due to the ferry not working at the Kern River, the passengers crossed the river near Bakersfield on a flatboat and boarded a new stagecoach. The route crossed the foothills of the Sierras to Visalia and northwest to Fresno, crossing the San Joaquin River at Firebaugh's Ferry. The stagecoach continued north through Gilroy, San Jose, and the Mission de Dolores, following Mission Street into San Francisco.

It took 23 days and 23 ½ hours to deliver the mail.

In 1860, major management changes came. Wells Fargo and Company took over Butterfield Overland Mail route, forcing Butterfield himself out of the company. Also, the Pony Express started running mail across the Great Plains.

The Butterfield Overland Mail route nearly came to an end in 1861, due to

the Civil War. The United States Congress ordered the route be moved north. Wells Fargo did so. However, battles broke out near the route in Missouri. On August 10, 1861, the first battle west of the Mississippi took place, called the Battle of Wilson's Creek.

To make matters worse, a second overland stage company began running a route between Atchison, KS and Denver, CO in 1865, calling itself the Butterfield Overland Dispatch. The company was started by David Butterfield, who was no relation to John Butterfield, Sr.

Wells Fargo only held the contract for the western half of the main mail route. Ben Holladay held the contract for the eastern half. His Holladay Overland and Express Company charged excessive rates, compared to Wells Fargo, and the two companies did not get along. After Ben Holladay purchased the Butterfield Overland Dispatch, Wells Fargo purchased the complete Holladay Overland and Express Company and operated the whole mail route until the transcontinental railroad took over carrying the mail in 1869.

THE PONY EXPRESS

In 1845, it took roughly six months to get a letter from the East Coast of the United States to California. Nearly half a million people moved across the country. Due to the Gold Rush in 1849 and the Mormon exodus to Utah in 1847, thousands moved

west on the Oregon Trail.

The need for faster mail service beyond the Rocky Mountains was partially filled by the Butterfield Overland Mail Company and other private carriers. But when Postmaster General Joseph Holt decided to scale back the overland mail service, the need for rapid mail delivery increased.

In response, William H. Russell, Alexander Majors, and William B. Wad-dell, the owners of Pike's Peak Express Company, created the Pony Express. It could deliver the mail in 10 days.

The Pony Express only operated for 19 months—from April 1860 to November 1861—but it remains a large part of American history. The Pony Express was the main thread in that era tying together the East and the West. Its route went from St. Joseph, MO to Sacramento, CA, roughly 2,000 miles. Relay stations allowed the Pony Express riders to get fresh horses every 10 to 12 miles. On the eastern end of the route, the riders used existing stagecoach stations, but the company built new stations in remote areas across the Great Basin. The Pony Express purchased 400 to 500 mustangs; 200 men were hired to manage the stations, and 80 riders were signed. Riders had to be small, lightweight, and under 20 years old.

Each Pony Express rider was to average 75 miles a trip, riding three to seven horses. Accidents were common, and it

was easy for riders to lose their way. These delays meant serious trouble keeping on schedule. Meanwhile, the faithful station men, who were often in isolated locations, endured attacks from Indians and bandits. The stations varied from being nice hotels to a simple dugout near a creek.

In St. Joseph, MO, the 140-room Patee House, built by John Patee in 1858, was recognized as one of the most luxurious hotels. There, on the first floor of the hotel, Russell, Majors and Waddell set up offices for the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company in 1860, and there the riders stayed when they were in town. The Patee House still stands on the corner of 12th and Penn Streets; it houses a museum of communications and transportation, which includes the Pony Express office. The nearby Pike's Peak Stable was built in 1858 to accommodate horses and stagecoaches. In 1860, the building was purchased by the company.

On April 3, 1860 when the first Pony Express rider headed west, Mayor M. Jeff Thompson stated the following to a crowd: "This is a great day in the history of St. Joseph. For more than a decade, she has been the portal through which passed the wagon trains for the great west. Now she is to become the connecting link between the extremes of the continents. For the first time in the history of America, mail will go by an overland route from east to west. ...Citizens of St. Joseph, I bid you three cheers for the Pony Express!"

Today, tourists still enjoy the Pony Express route. The Pony Express Trail is a national historic trail designated by the United States Congress in 1992. People can hike or take automobile tours, consisting of structures, graves, landmarks, and markers left on the landscape. Visitors centers and museums are also available.

Important stops along the way include the Marysville Pony Express Barn, which was built in 1859 by Joseph H. Cottrell and Hank Williams. Russell, Majors, and Waddell leased the barn as a livery stable for the Pony Express in 1860. This livery stable also served as the local blacksmith shop.

The Hollenberg ranch house in Hanoover, KS was built on Cottonwood Creek around 1857 by Gerat H. Hollenberg. This ranch house was the neighborhood

grocery store, tavern, and unofficial post office. Three years later it became a home station for the Pony Express.

The Rock Creek station in Fairbury, NE was established in 1858 to sell supplies and other services to emigrants; it became a relay station for both the Pony Express and the Overland Stage.

Fort Caspar trading post in Casper, WY was built by Louis Guinard in 1859. It was used as an overnight stage stop and became a Pony Express station. Riders would cross the North Platte River on Guinard's Bridge, then ride along the north bank of the river to Red Buttes Crossing, where another Pony Express station was located. The station was named after Lieutenant Caspar Collins after his death in the Battle of Platte Bridge in 1865. The fort closed in 1867 and all salvageable materials were used to build Fort Fetterman.

In 1858, Camp Floyd was named after the Secretary of War and commanded by Albert S. Johnson. It was the first military installation built in Utah and formed the third largest community in the state. Troops from Camp Floyd provided protection for the Pony Express and kept the trail open.

Simpson Springs in Tooele County, UT is named after Captain James H. Simpson. Simpson was a Camp Floyd topographical engineer who stopped in this location while laying out the overland mail route between Salt Lake City and California. The station was very important to the Pony Express due to its easy access to water in the desert.

Fort Churchill was built in Silver Springs, NV, near the Carson River, on July 20, 1860 by Captain Joseph Stewart and his troops. The fort had a stone foundation and is now part of an historic park.

The Pony Express route passed through the City of Sacramento, heading for the B.F. Hastings Building. This building housed the Pony Express office, the California Supreme Court, and Theodore Judah, the engineer who was responsible for the development of the transcontinental railroad. From there, the Pony Express mail was sent to San Francisco by ferry.

The Pony Express was a financial disaster from the start. The national telegraph system was built very quickly, outdating the need for riders. Also, unlike Butterfield Overland Mail Company, the

Pony Express never signed any government contracts for delivering the mail. Some investors lost \$200,000 in the undertaking. The U.S. Postal Museum notes that the Pony Express lost up to \$30 for every letter it carried, and only ever made \$90,000 in revenue.

The Pony Express would not have existed if not for an abundance of coolheaded, hardened young men. These men did not know fear. They were experts (though sometimes in vain) in all the arts of self-preservation practiced on the old frontier.

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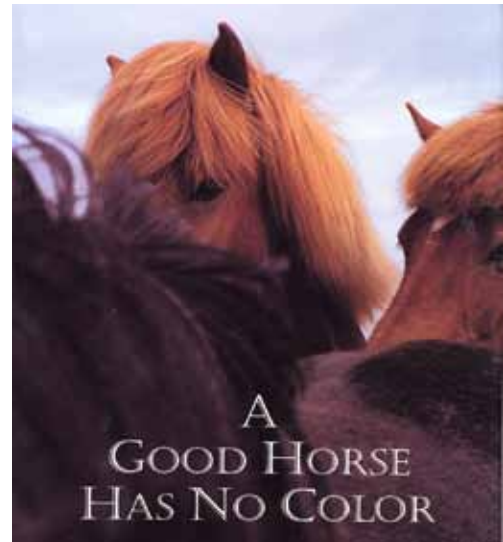
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MF: IS1996187052

Glaumur frá Auðsholtshjáleigu

MM: IS1982237004 Iða frá Brimilsvöllum



Hríma from Beat N' Branch

US2017205263

F: IS2005137340 Sporður frá Bergi

FF: IS2001187660 Álfasteinn frá Selfossi

FM: IS1994237335 Hrísla frá Naustum

M: IS1998225081 List frá Hrafnhólum

MF: IS1991158626

Kormákur frá Flugumýri II

MM: IS198422508 Löpp frá Hrafnhólum



Þori from Beat N' Branch

2018 registration pending

F: IS2001187041 Þröstur frá Hvammi

FF: IS1989184551

Þorri frá Þúfu í Landeyjum

FM: IS1985287026 Löpp frá Hvammi

M: IS1999237400 Glóð frá Brimilsvöllum

MF: IS1996187052

Glaumur frá Auðsholtshjáleigu

MM: IS1982237004 Iða frá Brimilsvöllum

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