ICELANDIC HORSE





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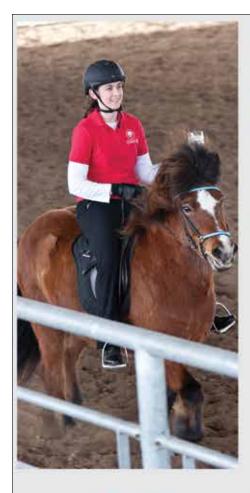
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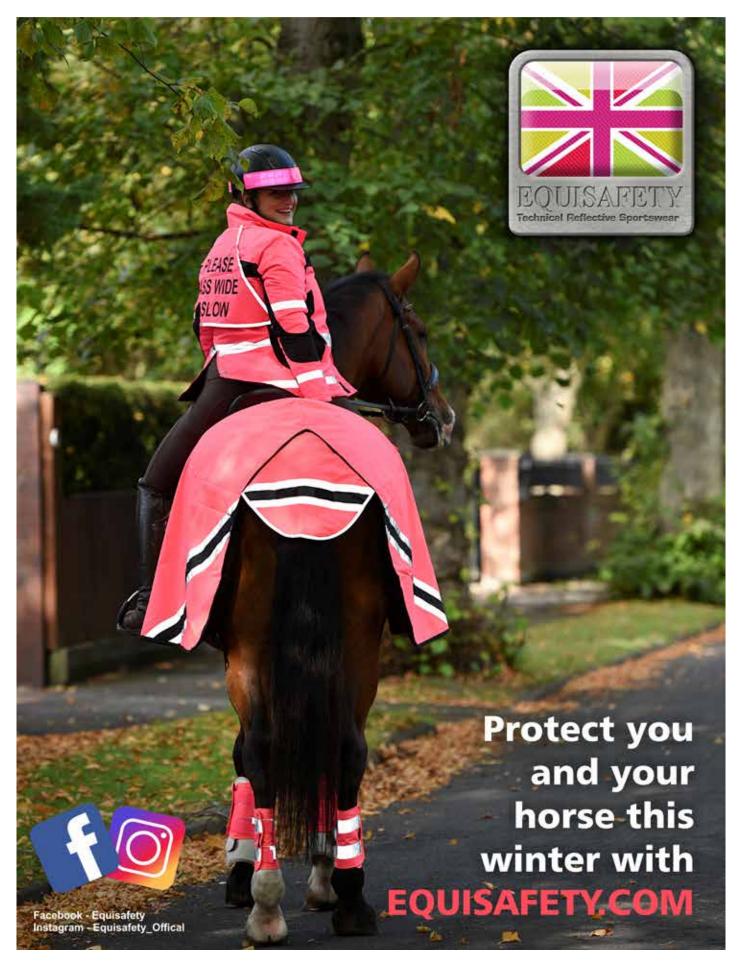




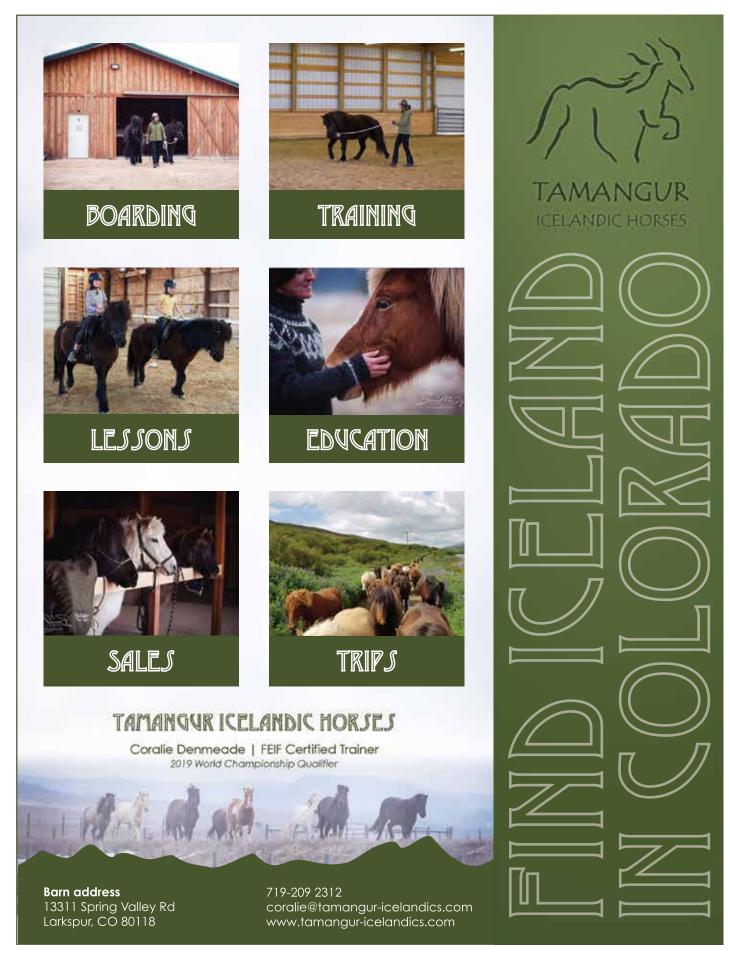












UNITED STATES ICELANDIC HORSE CONGRESS • WWW.ICELANDICS.ORG

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.



s 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 for 14 affiliated clubs: 13 regional clubs and an activity club for professional trainers. 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 Program, 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."

hoto by Helmut Ziewers



CELANDIC HOF

THE ICELANDIC HORSE QUARTERLY

Issue Four 2020

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

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On the cover: The first snowy day of winter is always cause for wonder and celebration. Jean Ervasti (middle) on her beautiful mare Sigursól frá Álfhólum (US2011205226) and her friends Lisa Hall (left) on Ofeigur and Laura Evans on Korgur really lucked out, as it had just begun to snow when they set out on a trail ride on the Bedford Riding Lanes in Westchester County, NY. Their smiles say it all! Winter riding is awesome on our Icelandic horses. Photo by Luis Marroquin.

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USIHC NEWS

FALL VIRTUAL SHOW

Following the success of the first USIHC Virtual Show, which had 123 entries, the USIHC Sport Committee held a second Virtual Show in the fall. Both shows included National Ranking (sanctioned show) classes and Schooling Show classes. The summer videos were judged by FEIF international Sport Judge Þórgeir Guðlaugsson. The fall show had five FEIF judges for the National Ranking classes (one for the Schooling Show), with the lowest and highest scores dropped and the middle three scores averaged. The fall show judges were: Þórgeir Guðlaugsson (the Netherlands), Nicolai Thye (Denmark), Lutz Lesener (Germany), Hulda Geirsdóttir (Iceland), and Asa William (Sweden).

Riders could upload videos of their tests and pay their entry fees electronically through a portal on the USIHC website. The videos had to follow this format: The videographer stood in the center of the riding area and continuously recorded the performance from the time the horse entered the track to when it left, keeping the horse and rider in the center of the frame with no zooming in or out. No edits, music, or commentary were allowed. For complete entry rules and descriptions of the classes, see https://icelandics.org/ virtualshow/. For results of both Virtual Shows, see https://icelandics.org/sanctioned-show-results.

BREEDING MANUAL

The USIHC Breeding Committee, led by Virginia Lauridsen, has been hard at work writing a breeding manual for potential breeders in the United States. Virginia explains: "The future of the Icelandic horse here in the U.S. depends largely on the growth of quality domestic breeding. Americans have imported some superb breeding lines and are now poised to breed talented horses. The breeding manual was developed primarily to help first-time breeders navigate the unknowns, but we are hoping everyone will find it interesting."

The committee consulted with veterinary experts in equine reproduction, equine scientists, breeding and sport judges, and veteran breeders. Topics included in the manual are: breeding plan and goal, the DMRT3 gene, the



Thinking spring: Kathy Rekers of Cincinnati, OH is a Leisure Rider of the Month this quarter. Her horse Thokki from Two Sisters was imported in utero from Iceland and born on Kathy's sister's farm (thus the "Two Sisters").

importance of the mare, record keeping systems, insemination, care of the pregnant mare, foaling, training, Worldfengur, Virtual Mate, BLUP, foundation bloodlines, assessments, registering your horse, and ethical responsibilities.

The goal is to have the document published by the end of 2020. All stallion owners will be sent manuals to distribute to owners of mares bred to their stallion. USIHC members can also request a copy, which will be available in digital format on the USIHC website, as well as in print.

LEISURE RIDERS

The Sea 2 Shining Sea Rider of the Month for July was Kathy Rekers of Cincinnati, OH. She is the owner of Thokki from Two Sisters and enjoys trail riding and "the wonderful feeling of sharing the love of Icelandic horses with others." She recently took a dressage clinic at Léttleiki Icelandics in Shelbyville, KY. "It was wonderful. I'd never had formal dressage training before, but learning while tölting is the way to go."

The August Rider of the Month was Lauren Murphy of University Place, WA. She owns Andi and joined the Sea 2 Shining Sea Virtual Ride because "I liked the idea that we could just do our weekly riding and that it would count toward a goal. It is fun to know how far we have traveled, even though we have never left our state. I am proud to be a part of a great community of riders."

CLUB BANNERS

As of August, the Sirius and Hestafolk clubs had received their new club banners, while Cascade, Klettafjalla, CIA, and Flugnir had requested them. All Regional Clubs are encouraged to take advantage of USIHC funding to have a banner made. Contact Promotion Chair Em Potts through this link: https://forms.gle/xft-GYzruoDMWAmkB6

USIHC PARTNERS

Smartpak became a USIHC Partner in August, providing six \$50 gift cards to the

S2SS Virtual Ride and 10 \$50 gift cards to the USIHC Virtual Fall Show.

Other USIHC Partners are Scoot Boot and Flying C Ranch, which each offer USIHC members 10% off all purchases (with some exclusions).

For information on the USIHC Partners program, see www.icelandics. org/partners

UNREGISTERED HORSES

Following up on the plan to create a pathway for presently unregisterable Icelandic horses to be registered, Lucy Nold communicated with Rebecca Bellone, director of the UC Davis genetic testing laboratory. She recommends that the USIHC become a client of the lab and that all DNA sample submissions be routed through the USIHC. This will give the Congress ownership of the sample database and allow testing samples from assumed unregistered horses to identify possible matches.

The laboratory provided a draft contract for the board to consider that would allow the USIHC to own the Icelandic horse DNA database. A DNA Registration Committee, comprised of Lucy Nold (chair), Virginia Lauridsen, Emily Potts, Ásta Covert, and Kristina Behringer, will develop a business plan and budget to offer these DNA testing services to the membership.

The committee will also work on a recommendation for how to give DNA-proven, but unregistered Icelandic horses a "participant" status, allowing these horses access to non-sanctioned classes and events such as S2SS.

U.S. TRAINER CERTIFICATION

A subcommittee of the Education Committee has been meeting regularly for the past several months to put together a trainer certification program for the USIHC. Minutes of their meetings are attached to the monthly Board Meeting minutes and available online at icelandics.org/minutes. As of October, the committee was reviewing the test questions, compiling study sources for each topic, brainstorming ideas for the testing format, discussing options for judging and judges, and compiling a trainer code of ethics. They hope to schedule their first "fast track" testing and certification of U.S. trainers for the fall of 2021.



Janet Mulder on Prins rides the Lemonade Tölt at the Alaska Icelandic Horse Association's September Fun Show. Photo by Bryan Mulder.

FEIF CENSUS

According to the 2020 census report submitted to FEIF, the USIHC has 767 members. The Regional Clubs affiliated with the USIHC have 668 members, not all of whom have joined the USIHC. If Regional Club members who are not dues-paying USIHC members are added to the count, the total is 953.

Affiliated Clubs Chair Leslie Chambers explains the difference in these two census numbers: "Originally, the census number reported every year to FEIF only included USIHC members. In 2017, FEIF decided to allow us to also count members who belonged to regional clubs, but not the USIHC itself. This counting method allowed us to increase our voting power in FEIF. However, it created a problem with how the USIHC was billed for WorldFengur-basically, we were being billed for the additional members who, because they were not USIHC members, actually had no access to WorldFengur. Therefore, in 2019, the USIHC Board decided to report the number of USIHC members only to FEIF."

ELECTION

Three seats on the USIHC board of directors were up for election in 2020. The call for nominees was issued August 31 by the Election Committee: Caeli Cavanagh (chair), Alex Venable, and Elizabeth Robertson. No nominations were received by the October 1 deadline. Following Article 5 Section 7 of the USIHC constitution, the remaining board members will recruit and appoint member(s) to fill any vacancies.

BOARD MEETINGS

The USIHC board of directors met by conference call or Zoom on July 14, August 11, September 15, and October 13. Complete minutes, including the monthly Treasurer's and Secretary's reports and the annual budget, can be found online at icelandics. org/minutes. USIHC members are encouraged to listen in on the board meetings. The agenda and information on how to call in are posted on the USIHC website the weekend before.

In addition to the topics reported on above, the board agreed that non-U.S. citizens holding work visas could become USIHC members if their primary residence is in the U.S. (i.e., they live here for a minimum of 6 months and one day of the calendar year).

The Board also added the following text to the Board's Code of Conduct and to the USIHC Policies and Procedures: "Ensure the right of all association members to appropriate and effective services without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, gender, race, disability, religion, or sexual orientation."



Leisure Rider of the Month Lauren Murphy on Andi from Evans Farms (right) joins RJ West for a trail ride at Joint Base Lewis McChord.

FEIF NEWS



DELEGATES ASSEMBLY

Due to Covid-19, the member countries of FEIF have decided to hold the 2021 Delegates Assembly as a virtual meeting on February 13, 2021 and to move the annual meetings of all departments to autumn 2021. For details watch www.feif.org.

YOUNG LEADERS

The Young Leaders' seminar scheduled for January 2021 is postponed until the following winter. Moving the event online was briefly considered, but all concerned felt strongly that the essence of a leadership seminar is live and real interaction with other people: learning by doing, rather than learning by watching. The next seminar will still take place in Vienna, organized by the dynamic and progressive Austrian Youth Work team.

WC SPORT JUDGES

FEIF has appointed the chief sport judges for the 2021 World Championships in Herning, Denmark. Porgeir Guðlaugsson will be Chief Judge, assisted by Will Covert as Deputy Chief Judge. The chief judges are appointed by the Board of FEIF upon recommendation by the FEIF Sport Committee. Those with the right to nominate the chief judges are the FEIF member countries, the Sport Judges Committee, the Sport Committee, and the FEIF Board.

VOLUNTEER

Do you want to spend some time next summer with other Icelandic horse enthusiasts? Join the team of volunteers at the 2021 World Championships for Icelandic Horses in Herning, Denmark, for the experience of a lifetime! Volunteers are an essential part of this great event. For more information or to register, visit the World Championships website: https://vmdenmark.com/

VIRTUAL RIDE

The 9th FEIF Virtual Ride, "Returning to Herning," got off to a great start this summer. As of October, 92 riders were registered, and together they had covered just over 3000 km. Two teams, having already covered the distance from their home to Herning, were looking for a new challenge. They will probably join forces with riders from North America, Australia, or New Zealand to help out with their pretty serious distances. That is what the FEIF Virtual Ride is all about: meeting new friends in unexpected quarters and celebrating your passion for the Icelandic horse wherever you live.

Why don't you join us? The idea is simple: (a) calculate the kilometers from your home to Herning, (b) register here: feif-virtual.weebly.com/, and (c) start riding! Every month send in the total kms ridden, and step by step you'll make your way to Herning. Riders may form teams to collect ridden kilometers together.

So where is all the fun? First and foremost in the saddle, of course. But a lot of joy can also be found on our closed Facebook group, where riders exchange their laughter and tears, triumphs and yes, those less than glorious moments. Participating makes you realize there is a really big Icelandic horse world out there!

HORSES OF ICELAND

The International Day of the Icelandic Horse was celebrated on September 12 in a rather unusual way. Instead of open stables, Horses of Iceland (HOI) called for photos. A total of 684 photos were entered into the competition. All featured a special moment with the Icelandic horse in beautiful nature. People could vote for their favorite and 9,361 votes were counted!

The photo that received the highest number of votes, 1,343, was "Soulmates" by Sveinn Orri (@svenoreo). HOI would like to thank everyone who participated. Take a look at the other entries here. https://www.horsesoficeland.is/about/news/winners-of-art-and-photo-contests-announced/1236

In Germany, the day was celebrated on September 11 with an award ceremony and the opening of an exhibition of artwork entered in IPZV's Icelandic (Horse) Art Competition, which 465 artists from 16 different countries entered. The ceremony was held at the Embassy of Iceland in Berlin. Twelve artists' works, selected by an international jury, will be published in IPZV's calendar for 2021.

GUNNAR JONSSON

Jens Iversen, former FEIF President, writes that Gunnar Jonsson passed away at the age of 89 on September 25. Gunnar and his wife Marit helped spread the Icelandic horse outside Iceland in a very decisive way—and thus lay the foundation for the Icelandic horse world we have today. Gunnar imported the first Icelandic horses to Denmark around 1965. It quickly became clear to him and Marit that there was a need for an association of Icelandic horse owners in Denmark, which led to the founding of the Dansk Islandshesteforening (DI) in 1968.

With inspiration from Iceland, FEIF was founded in 1969 with Gunnar and Marit among the most active contributors. Gunnar was on the board for several years, and Marit became FEIF president. Important goals for Gunnar and Marit, with the founding of both DI and FEIF, were to ensure the breeding of purebred Icelandic horses outside Iceland, and to keep breeding and sports within the same organization. These goals have been crucial for the spread and use of the Icelandic horse. Gunnar and Marit received the FEIF Award for their lifetime contribution to the Icelandic horse. Gunnar was also honored with the Icelandic Falki Award, given by the Icelandic State to persons who make extraordinary efforts for Iceland.

CLUB UPDATES

There are 13 Regional Clubs and one Activity Club (Sleipnir: the Icelandic Horse Trainers and Instructors Guild) affiliated with the U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress. To find the Regional Club nearest you, see the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org. The following clubs filed updates on their activities this quarter.



ALASKA

by Jane Wehrheim

Alaska's summer normally flies by, as we are busy with events. This year was no different, despite cancelled events and "hunker down" orders. While we all missed getting together for clinics and competitions, we did manage to stay busy. Our horses knew no difference: They were ready and willing to go at any time.

Some Alaska Icelandic Horse Association families gathered in September for a Fun Show for the good of the horses and riders. With Shelby Blades, a local dressage trainer, as our judge, 13 riders participated in various games and demonstrations. The sun was shining and the smiles were rampant as our Youth Group, Tölt Alaska, showed off their hard work.

A mounted archery competition is scheduled for October, with many Icelandic horses participating. It's fun to be a spectator at these events, as it's often hard to tell who is more delighted, the horses or the riders.





At top, Karli Schmutz on Minja (left) and flag-riders Janet Mulder on Prins and Koen Mulder on Viktoria ride in the Alaska Fun Show. Photos by Bryan Mulder. Frida Club member Marjorie Lewis captured this portrait of her new horse, Ljúfa from Tolthaven, on a fine summer day. And Frida member Gray Strausser (at right) sends greetings from Iceland. Photo by Indiana Blurton.

Rolling through our short autumn season, we welcomed new members and horses, as well as ownership transfers. We continue to build on the solid foundation of our enthusiasm for our Icelandic horses and, moving forward, are planning for a full 2021.

FRIDA

by Carrie Laurencot

Even though Frida Icelandic Riding Club events have been put on the back burner for a year, our members in the Mid-Atlantic Region have been busy riding, horse camping, and welcoming Icelandics to their families! Life goes on, and our Icelandics are a very big part of it.

Gray Strausser, a former Junior Board Member, is studying Icelandic at the University of Iceland in Reykjavík. Gray enrolled in this challenging program as a prelude to pursuing her dream to attend Hólar University in Iceland to become a certified Icelandic horse trainer. We are so proud of you, Gray!

Rebecca Supinger is a longtime member of the Old Dominion Equestrian Endurance Organization (with a silver buckle from completing the 100), who competed on Arabs until physical injuries began to inhibit her riding. It only took Rebecca one adventurous trek in Iceland in 2016 to know that she would add an Icelandic to her herd. Enter Katla from Windsong, bred by Ulla Hudson in New Mexico. After hundreds of miles on trails,





Frida Club member Rebecca Supinger entered her new mare Katla from Windsong in their first CTR in September and their first endurance LD ride (25 miles) in October. Photo by Hoof Print Images.

going to obstacle clinics, horse camping trips, and climbing mountains, Rebecca entered this spirited mare in the Chesapeake Eastern Competitive Trail Ride Association's three-day CTR at Fair Hill Natural Resources Management Area in Maryland in September. She and Katla had a wonderful time, completing all three 10-mile rides in under two hours each. The veterinarians loved Katla and took no points off all weekend. Katla and Rebecca returned to Fair Hill for a Limited Distance (25-mile) ride at the Foxcatcher Endurance Ride on October 10. "Looking forward to a fantastic time for us both," wrote Rebecca in September. "Lots of fun riding for me, and tons of yummy goodies for Katla, who can eat like a big horse when she is working. Pounds of carrots and apples to shop for, and endless hay to have ready."

The Frida Club is excited to welcome two mares from Tolthaven farm to the club. Jacki Edens recently purchased five-year old Maja, who spent some time in training with Carrie and Terral at Taktur Icelandics before moving to her permanent home in Maryland.

The other new addition from Tolthaven is Ljúfa, purchased by Marjorie Lewis, who writes: "This year has been a tough one all around, so my time at the barn has been good therapy. At 26, my mare Saga frá Árbakka's spirit is still bright, but her medical conditions have

forced her into retirement. I have been missing those days on the trail, riding with my friends, Saga's long mane flying in the wind. I was just beginning to think about getting a second horse, when I had the pleasure of meeting Jacki's new mare. I was so impressed with Maja's calm demeanor and wide open, inquisitive personality. I wondered, Could I be lucky enough to find one like her? A few weeks later I spotted a picture on Facebook of Ljúfa from Tolthaven, and almost before I could blink, Ljúfa had arrived in Maryland. I don't think I could have found a better match if I had searched for years. Ljúfa was delighted to reunite with her half-sister Maja. Both are by the amazing stallion Álfadans frá Ingólfshvoli, and both inherited his brave, calm temperament and smooth tölt. We are just beginning to build our partnership, which I hope will include participation in future USIHC shows, liberty work, dressage, drill team, trail obstacle, and trail riding. We have already begun exploring our local trails with Jacki and Maja, Pat and Elska, and hope to have many years in the saddle together. Thank you to all the folks at Tolthaven and in the Frida Icelandic Riding Club for your advice, encouragement, and support in making my dream come true. Ljúfa and I are looking forward to seeing you (in person or virtually) soon, smiles on your faces and wind in your manes. Enjoy the ride!"

HESTAFOLK

by Lisa McKeen

What a tornado of a year! The beach ride, which we haven't done for three years, was scheduled for September and cancelled. The fires in Oregon, California, and Washington created situations where people had to prepare to evacuate; some did, others were able to ride it out. Some members' horses were covered with soot. We emailed and texted, watching the Air Quality Index (AQI) across our area and sharing information on what was safe to do at the various index levels. Today in Bellingham, WA, for example, the air has finally dipped into the good category at 47. That means the horses will need a couple of weeks of no exercising, just pasture turn-out and perhaps a bit of grooming and liberty movement. The important thing is to let their lungs clear



Hestafolk member Susan Johnson and Vordis from Silver Creek in The Sisters wilderness area in Oregon.





Top, Linda Wallitner and Logn from Extreme Farm get ready for the obstacle course. Photo by Lisa McKeen. Bottom, Alys Culhane and Hrimmi on a long packing trip in the Bob Marshall wilderness. Photo by Pete Praetorius.

completely before we return to normal activity. I'm just happy to have my windows open and be able to breathe without a mask, as I wander around the property.

Since we are so spread out, we are always thrilled when small groups of club members can gather. Before the fires started, for example, RJ West put together a group for safe, distanced lessons with Freya Sturm at Ricky Roth's place. Lauren Murphy, one of our newest members, was chosen as rider of the month for the USI-HC's Virtual Ride, S2SS. Lauren and Andi from Evans Farms are a great team, and we are so happy to have them with us! She and RJ were able to meet up for a trail ride on Joint Base Lewis McChord this fall. Susan Johnson took a long ride in The Sisters, Oregon area. Her photos are ones the whole club looks forward to. She

gets out on the trail regularly and meets club members in the areas of Everett and north for rides. And Linda Wallitner and I met up at Fire Mountain for a session at the obstacle course and a short trail ride.

It's such a joy to get out and meet up with horse friends. Having other Icelandic riders near by helps us learn and stay motivated. Kathy Lockerbie, Mary Chamberlin, Christine Vowles, and I were able to gather weekly to sit in a very large circle out of doors and just talk. We all found this to be essential to our mental health. We need community especially now, during this chaotic time in America. We are a small but mighty determined group of riders.

KLETTAFJALLA

by Florie Miller

As I'm writing this short update from the Rocky Mountain region, we are experiencing a glorious fall. Summer here in Colorado was very dry and brought some wildfire scares for us, but overall everyone seems to be weathering the Covid-19 storm very well. We have had no requests to use our Club's Covid Support System, but I would like to let our members know that it is still available. As I mentioned in my last update, Klettafjalla board members set up a system for club members to help each other with board, hay, or other services, like taking a horse in for a while.

Some fun and exciting things are



Tvífari frá Eystra-Fróðholti, owned by Klettafjalla member Susan Burns, at Capital Lake, CO. Photo by Florie Miller.





still happening in our club. Ulla Hudson is offering small scale, intensive clinics at Windsong Icelandics in New Mexico. This very accomplished teacher offers personalized instructions in her wonderful indoor arena, as well as accommodations on the premises, making it easy to quarantine.

Coralie Denmeade of Tamangur Icelandics also had some very good news: She has entered into an official partnership with Guðmar Pétursson at Hestaland to provide the best possible service for anyone looking to purchase Icelandics. Carefully selected horses in Iceland will make their way to the U.S., and the new owners can count on support from both these top-notch trainers to make the relationship with their new horse a success. The first shipment arrived in September and have all found homes; the next shipment is planned for November.

A couple of events remain on the

Top, Klettafjalla member Florie Miller teaching the next generation of Icelandic horse lovers, Celeste and Breana. Photo by Josh Mobley. At left, Klettafjalla president Jeff Rose in Iceland. Photo by Coralie Denmeade.

Klettafjalla calendar at this point. The Caeli Cavanagh clinic at Gyetorp II on October 24-25 and the Tolt Tack demo day on November 7. I will report on both events in our next club update!

NEIHC

by Jennifer Bergantino and Phebe Kiryk

This year "spring" was not the usual time between winter and summer, but instead "the season of new beginnings and renewal" was in July, August, and September! These months were filled with new members, new horses, new activities, and new places to ride. As lockdown protocols eased, our bonds with our four-legged companions strengthened and new bonds formed. It was time to take the plunge.

When NEIHC's annual sanctioned show was cancelled, many of our competition riders instead entered the USIHC Virtual Shows, submitting videos of their performances through a portal on the USIHC website. The videos were judged in July and November by FEIF international sport judges. Congratulations to our club's many youth competitors: Abbi Brock, Alexis Mitchell, Amelie Maranda, Arianna Deforge, Brynja Meehan, Kami Brickner, Keziah Dunn, Lispel Kobel, and Maya Fischl. Congratulations, too, to Brigit Huwyler, Erika Tighe, and Leslie Cham-

bers, adult NEIHC members who took home first place medals in the summer judging. We look forward to the next NEIHC Open show, to be held at Thor Icelandics in Claverack, NY, in June 2021, when we will reunite with our friends and compete in person!

Several NEIHC members signed up for the USIHC's Sea 2 Shining Sea virtual trail challenge. Ona Kwiatkowski "spent the summer racking up miles for S2SS!" Leah Greenberger, Jane Gately, and Maren Prenosil teamed up and logged record miles this summer. Andrea Smith, Deb Benanti, Jennifer Bergantino, Nancy Rolfs, and Phebe Kiryk formed Team Merrimack Valley Icelandics, and are currently in 5th place nationally. The MVI team uses the Equilabs app for logging their rides, which lets us record miles by specific gait, find our way home when exploring new trails, and track each other's location when out alone—a terrific safety feature on this highly recommended app!

The club gained lots of new members this season. Many joined lesson programs, decided to lease, or purchased their first horse. A common theme for all was that feeling of being hooked by their very first amazing encounter with an Icelandic horse.

Jennifer Blanchard from Maine grew up riding Quarter horses, but in 2018 she was introduced to Icelandics by Mary Jo Brink and Michael Salmon, owners of Pepper Hill Farm in South Thomaston, ME. "After my first ride on this amazing breed I was instantly hooked. I absolutely fell in love! I have never had so much confidence



NEIHC members Alexis Mitchell, Maya Fischer, and Brynja Meehan were keeping safe from Covid-19 while competing in the USIHC Virtual Show.





on a horse before. The Icelandics truly are versatile, curious, and have an extremely sound mind and character. Being able to combine my passion for photography and my love of the horse is a dream come true."

Experienced hunter-jumper and trail



NEIHC members enjoying some socially distanced horse time: Top, Kate Kalan with newly imported Fífill frá Röðli; right, Jennifer Bechard with Pilatus; and below, Ona Kwiatkowski enjoying Vermont's country roads with Kjarkur frá Háholti.

rider, Joann Hayssen had never ridden an Icelandic before buying her horse, Dropi. Impressed by the one Icelandic she had become acquainted with, she started looking. She saw a video of Dropi on Facebook and bought him sight unseen, after several conversations with Steve Barber of Sand Meadow Farm. Dropi fittingly arrived on Valentine's Day: love at first sight for both horse and rider!

Melinda DeSanctis is leasing a sweet (and sometimes naughty) nine-year-old mare, Tindra, with not much formal training. Melinda is training her with the help of Guðmar Pétursson's online "Ask Guðmar" lessons and the two are making nice progress in tölt.

New member Meredith Vanderminden is thrilled to have just brought home Vónardís from Vermont Icelandic Horse Farm. Greeley O'Connor imported Blaia, and the mother-daughter team Bernadette and Lulu Feeney imported a young gelding, Andvari. Other new NEIHC members include Janet Terhune and Hannah Holt.

At Moonlit Farm in Belchertown, MA, Leah Greenberger's herd is expanding. She is up to a record eight Icelandics! She rides frequently with Jane Gately and

Maren Prenosil, meandering on trails and logging hours for S2SS.

NikkiSue Flanigan, her husband Lee, and their daughter Alicia at Fire & Ice Icelandic Horses in Limington, ME grew their herd by two. One horse captured their hearts while in training and the other is just off the plane from Iceland. The Flanigan family has been busy this summer clearing stumps to install both an oval track and a straight pace track, another arena, and additional pasture space. With the help of new NEIHC member Jennifer Blanchard, they also launched www. FireAndIce.horse. Finally, they announce the opening of The Icelandic Tack Shack, retailing Icelandic gear brands they stand

Jana Meyer at Lunar Hill has been teaching quite a bit, both in the ring and on the trail. She is also a USIHC Education Committee member creating testing content for a U.S. trainer certification.

Ebba Meehan reports that her Merrimack Valley Icelandics in Boxford, MA is always busy! This summer "we spent more time training and enhancing ourselves as riders and trainers," Ebba writes, using online programs such as Gæðinga Dressage and Ask Guðmar, that are "popular and easy ways to pick up tips and methods to improve skills for both horse and rider of any level." Ebba has also been working virtually with expert trainers in Iceland through Fjarkennsla Runu. Finally, she encourages everyone to take advantage of the Hrimnir Community's generosity with free videos that are "well worth every second of your time." Ebba's daughter Brynja Meehan is cross-training, jumping not only her Icelandic gelding, Thor, but also competing on non-Icelandic horses in two-phase events.

Merrimack Valley riders equipped with chainsaws, pruning clippers, and attitude organized a trail clearing party to make the local trails safer and fully rideable. The group also participated in adventure rides, hunter pace events, and guided trail excursions with the broader horse community in the area. We have discovered miles and miles of trails, amazing parks, and forests, including Bradley Palmer State Forest, Willowdale, and Pipestave,

to name a few. Our favorite is Appleton Farms, the country's "oldest continuously operating farm," known for its wide farm roads and over 1,000 acres of open space. It is perfect for tolting. The local horse community has taken notice. MVI's lesson schedule "has never been busier," Ebba notes. "New students want to come ride and experience the amazing Icelandic horse!" This excitement turned into expansion, with Ebba adding stalls and turn-out to accommodate 10 horses and a hive of activity! Never a dull moment, she and her crew are planning costumes for a Halloween hunter pace, low-tide beach rides, and new drill routines, and are even contemplating jousting.

Solheimar Farm in Tunbridge, VT has also been busy. Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir reports that she has imported and sold 42 Icelandic horses this year. The horses have been of every color: blue duns, palominos, yellow duns, pintos, tricolored pintos, silver dapples, and more. All are calm and beginner safe and excellent Icelandic ambassadors. Although she had to cancel her 2020 clinic and show schedule, she and her children, Tristan and Kamilla, stayed busy this summer, riding an average of 50 miles each week through the beautiful Vermont countryside.

Thank you to everyone who shared news and pictures. We have a very active club!

SIRIUS

by Jyl Snyder

Even with the Covid-19 restrictions, the Siruis OH KY Icelandic Horse Club was able to safely hold a dressage clinic at Léttleiki Icelandics in Shelbyville, KY on August 29-30. Paetra Hennigar, head trainer at Léttleiki, planned the two-day clinic curriculum and was the main instructor. One of the clinic highlights was a private lesson with Alexandra Dannenmann, an International FEIF and U.S. National Judge.

Seven riders and four auditors attended. With the generous patio space, viewing areas, and spacious grounds at Léttleiki, participants found it easy to maintain social distancing. Léttleiki also provided masks, in case anyone forgot to bring one. The farm's hospitality was



Kathy Rekers ready to ride her dressage test.



Riders at the Sirius Club's dressage clinic included (left to right) Ron Hoover, Shawn Jackson, and Jane Coleman.

certainly a perfect addition to the great instruction.

The first day included a classroom session, explaining why dressage training and techniques improve the balance, quality of the gaits, straightness, and overall agility of all breeds of horses, followed by semi-private riding sessions, with coaching on how to supple the horses and perform the dressage movements.

The second day's riding lessons led up to performing a dressage test of each participant's choice, as though the rider were in an actual competition. Paetra scored the tests, then gave each rider tailored feedback and invited the riders to repeat portions of the test they would like to improve. The scoring team verbally critiqued each rider's movements during the repeat ride. All riders agreed that they learned a great deal about how to help their horses be successful when riding a dressage test and why dressage enhances the physical abilities of their horses. Hopefully next year will be pandemic-free for holding our annual clinic. We look forward to planning it.

While many of our members could not attend the dressage clinic because of the pandemic, some took this year to explore how to better ride their horses through improving their own body awareness. Deanna Sinclair-Parker of Michigan enrolled in the online course Rider Fitness: Rider Body Reset, developed by Anna Bergenstrahle. Because of several past serious injuries and surgeries, Deanna found her body limitations were hampering her riding abilities and affecting how her horses were moving. The course consists of eight instructional modules, and includes video help, video feedback, phone conferences, and a private Rider Fitness Facebook community page. Deanna found the results of the instruction outstanding. She could tell the exercises were working by the way she felt. Everyday movements seemed less restricted and tasks that before caused her discomfort, she could do without pain. The program allowed her to recognize and release past muscle and connective tissue restrictions that improved flexibility and range of motion to where Deanna can successfully



ride again.

ST. SKUTLA

by Molly Weimer

While we have no formal club events to report on, several Saint Skutla members sent in pictures of their activities this quarter. Andrea Barber, for example, submitted one of Steven Barber riding





St. Skulta Club members also enjoyed their fall social distancing: Top, Molly on Gima frá Ytra-Dalsgerði, Debbie on Óðinn frá Miðási, and Andrea on Vífill frá Glæsibæ on the trail; photo by Steven Barber. Middle, Steven Barber, riding Aska from Sand Meadow and ponying Vífill frá Glæsibæ; photo by Andrea Barber. Left, Katherine Goldberg-Forrest takes in the view while Sara enjoys a snack.

Aska from Sand Meadow and ponying Vífill frá Glæsibæ. Here, Steve "enjoys a simple summer pleasure—picking mulberries on horseback—in complex times," Andrea writes. A photo by Steven Barber shows Molly on Gima frá Ytra-Dalsgerði, Debbie on Óðinn frá Miðási, and Andrea on Vífill frá Glæsibæ. "Trail riding is such a welcome low risk activity in these crazy times," they note.

Katherine Collett submitted photos of Mósa enjoying windfall apples and helping to carry home pumpkins from a neighbor's pumpkin patch, using fabric grocery bags as panniers. Katherine Goldberg-Forrest shows herself lounging backwards on Sara, "taking a break during 'round-the-world' after a bareback ride." Amanda Doukellis of Asgard Icelandics shows her herd relaxing with a mini companion in their summer pasture. And Susan Verberg poses in costume with her Icelandic, Greni from Blasted Rock. We wish we had room to print them all!

TOPPUR

by Cindy Niebuhr

The Toppur Icelandic horse club of Iowa has always been known for its ingenuity and ability to work its way through challenging situations. This year was a challenge for all of us, but in true style our membership rose to the occasion. Though we were unable to host or travel to horse shows, participate in demonstrations and clinics, or ride and have group potlucks, we found others ways to feed our crazy horse addiction. We continued to support one another virtually, by email, and phone, turning an otherwise dreary predicament into fun adventures, great memories, educational opportunities, and accomplishments of a lifetime.

Daniela West and Riddari spent the past few months introducing children and their families to the gentle nature and smooth gaits of the Icelandic horse. Kingzlee Osborne and Henna sprouted wings and learned eventing. They started their trials in fall 2020 and Toppur is expecting to see great things from this duo! Liz Clemens and Baldur of Windstar moved to Oregon, where they have been participating in clinics and events involving principles of dressage, liberty training, and the importance of groundwork. We all look forward to her next visit, when she can share some pointers.



Here, Toppur member Kingzlee Osborne and Henna are learning how to jump. They began eventing this fall.

Lisa Blumhagen and Hetja went camping for a week at White Rock Conservancy, trail riding through breathtaking beauty to endless destinations. Lisa has also been participating in horse yoga. She indicated that Hetja has no problem with "downward dog," since she learned a similar move at her last liberty clinic. The team has also spent countless hours trail riding with friend and fellow Toppur member Liz Appel.

Adding to our group of wilderness riders are Theresa Herold and daughter Jessica with their horse Vaskur, and Susan Eleeson on her horse Hnokki. Theresa is amazed at Vaskur's love of the water.

Susan also assists Linda Klein, when she can, with finetuning Eldborg, Linda's horse, on groundwork. Susan and Linda took Hnokki and Glaesa to Truro, IA to spend some educational time with Virginia Lauridsen and her team at Harmony Icelandics. Both horses enjoyed the spa-like experience, which included daily workouts on a treadmill.

Daria Peters-Fuerstenau moved Vörður frá Hallkelsstaðahlíð and Blessun from Harmony Icelandics to her new home in Nebraska. The trio find new riding opportunities daily, and continue to perfect their liberty work. Daria is working on getting Blessun ready for her daughter Leanna.

Lori Cretney and Virginia Lauridsen

have been challenging themselves in the virtual show world. Lori Cretney entered both of her horses, Baldursbrá from Winterhorse Park and Pia from Winterhorse Park, in the USIHC Virtual Summer Show. Baldursbrá showed well, and Pia scored 6.30 in T5 Intermediate Tolt and 6.0 in V3 Intermediate Four Gait. Lori has also been working with Carrie Brandt at Taktur Icelandics on bridleless riding with Pia. They competed in their first International Liberty Horse Association competition, and received a third place in the Novice Bridleless division.

Virginia entered her tried and true stallion, Gosi frá Lambastöðum, in the USIHC Virtual Summer Show, taking first place in V1 with a score of 6.2 and second place in T1 with a score of 6.0. Virginia has been able to work with some of her youngsters as well. She entered Bolti from Harmony Icelandics and her young stallion Mykvi from Miðgarður in Green Horse Tölt, where Bolti received a third place. Bolti also received a second in Green Horse Four Gait. Koldimm and Virginia showed style as well in T2 Loose Rein Tölt, earning third place.

With Cindy Niebuhr, Virginia has also been working on freestyle dressage. They plan to perform at a variety of horse events throughout the coming year to promote Icelandic horses. Cindy has been taking this time to develop and learn the dance and art of dressage with her horses Baron from Creekside and Fangi frá Hallkelsstaðahlíð. She has also hosted several small group learning events with children of all ages at her barn, introducing them to the Icelandic horse and its culture. She has several bookings yet to go this year. Finally, she and club member Roxanne Antisdel dressed the part and accompanied Baron and Fangi in celebrating the International Day of the Icelandic Horse. They waved at passing cars and shared the history and talent of these special horses to all who curiously stopped to question them.

Toppur wishes all of our Icelandic family members health and happiness. We do long for the day we can be together



Toppur member Cindy Niebuhr practicing dressage with her horse Baron from Creekside.

FOCUS ON BREEDING

by Virginia Lauridsen

he breeding of Icelandic horses has a well-documented history, with official breeding shows dating back over a century. Although the breed is still relatively rare in the U.S., potential breeders have the advantage of a thorough genetic database at their fingertips: WorldFengur, the studbook of the Icelandic horse.

Every registered Icelandic horse in the world is listed in WorldFengur, and owners can do extensive research on the bloodlines of their mare or stallion with ease. Assessments and competition results are all available online. (See the articles in Issues Four 2016 and One 2017 of the Quarterly for a primer on using WorldFengur.) Even if a horse has not been assessed, you can look at genetic probabilities using BLUP (Best Linear Unbiased Prediction). BLUP is an algorithm based on a horse's genetic lineage and can be an excellent resource for potential breeders.

PROS AND CONS

When the members of the USIHC Breeding Committee discussed the idea for this article with me, we all agreed that breeding Icelandic horses is a gratifying experience. But it also demands a significant commitment of time, energy, and financial resources.

Potential breeders should ask themselves some important questions before beginning such a venture:

What kind of horses do I want to breed? What is my breeding goal?

Do I own a mare who will produce such offspring?

Do I have a good environment for caring for a pregnant mare and her foal?

Am I prepared to spend the time and money necessary to assure the best care for the horses, even if things do not go as

If you have a clear understanding of your breeding goals and you have the physical and financial resources necessary to create a safe environment for the animals, breeding can be an extraordinary journey.

WHAT ARE THE PROS?

Breeding offers the opportunity to focus on specific qualities of the horse. For instance, if you want a horse with a superb tölt and a calm mind suitable for trail riding, you can



The first-prize stallion Kalman frá Lækjamóti and his weanling daughter Freyja from Sand Meadow (US2006203220) race through the snow. Photo by Andrea Barber.

likely breed that type of horse with careful selection of the mare and stallion.

The experience of caring for a pregnant mare is educational and gratifying.

Witnessing the birth of a foal is awe-inspiring

Young foals are certainly some of the most precious creatures on the planet! Watching them mature into horses is an ideal way to learn about equine development and herd dynamics.

Training a horse you have bred is highly rewarding. You are not only partners, but are also "family."

Domestic breeders make an invaluable contribution to the future of the breed in the U.S. A greater number of quality domestic-bred horses will likely lower the price and increase the breed presence here.

WHAT ARE THE CONS?

Breeding requires a commitment to record keeping, careful supervision, and extra

Things don't always go as planned, and the owner must be prepared for the unexpected.

Even the best predictions of genetics are not always accurate. You may end up with a foal very different from what you had anticipated.

Breeders must develop a plan from start to finish, from insemination through training, and it is a long process.

SHOULD I BREED MY MARE?

The selection of the breeding mare is arguably the most important decision a breeder makes. Both mare and stallion contribute 50% of a foal's genetic DNA, but the health of the mare's womb, her nutrition, and her physical environment also affect the development of the foal. Thus, the mare contributes far more to the development of the foal than the stallion does.

Ideally, breeders should strive to use mares that have been assessed at an official FEIF breeding horse show (what FEIF used to call a breeding evaluation). Unfortunately, with so few breeding shows in the U.S., this is difficult. The USIHC Breeding Committee is working to change that by offering regular yearly assessments.

Having a horse assessed does not change their genetics, but it gives the breeder an objective evaluation of the horse in comparison to the general population of Icelandic horses. We should all strive to breed horses with above average qualities. An assessment will give the owner valuable information to use in selecting a mate. BLUP can also be used effectively in mate selection, but it is a computer algorithm, while an assessment is a concrete evaluation of the actual horse by an internationally certified breeding judge.

Every mare considered for breeding should be examined by a veterinarian. The general health of a mare is not always reflected in the health of the reproductive tract. An otherwise healthy mare might not be suitable for breeding for any number of reasons, including past infections, inflammation, and scarring.

Once a breeder has chosen a promising mare suitable for breeding, they can embark upon the exciting process of choosing a mate. It is best to know the stallion personally, but that again can be difficult in a country as expansive as the U.S. Fortunately, all members of the USIHC have free access to WorldFengur and its extensive genetic database. (You just need to activate your account.) With a clear breeding goal in mind, a potential breeder can search the database for stallions with the specific qualities that will best complement their mare.

COST OF BREEDING

It is difficult to put an exact number on the cost of breeding, because every pregnancy is different and veterinary fees vary greatly throughout the country.

However, it is safe to say that the mare will need extra feed and care, both during her pregnancy and until the foal is weaned.

There will likely be several ultrasounds: to confirm ovulation and then pregnancy, hear a clear heartbeat, check on foal development, and confirm that the foal has positioned itself for a head-first delivery.

If at any juncture something is questionable, a trip to the equine hospital may

be necessary, which can be very costly.

BREEDING ASSESSMENTS

Breeding assessments are just that—assessments. They are not competitions or judgments on the value of a horse. Rather, they are objective assessments of the horse in question compared to the general population of Icelandic horses. They can be fun! Certainly they are always educational and worth the effort. The goal is to help select the best Icelandic horses to use for breeding.

Breeding assessments are done by unbiased and highly trained internationally certified judges, and the process is exceedingly thorough. Normally there are three judges, including a chief judge, who ensures that the current FEIF rules are followed, approves the track, and submits the report to the FEIF director of breeding. When there are fewer than 35 horses to be presented, as has been the case in the U.S., only two judges are required. The specific qualities to be assessed and the judging scale are all discussed in the Breeding section of the FEIF General Rules and Regulations. (These rules are updated each April; the 2020 rules are available here: https://www.feiffengur.com/documents/ FEIF_Rules_Regulations2020%20-%20 breeding.pdf).

On the first day, the horse's conformation is assessed. The judges measure the



Krúna from Sand Meadow (US2019205409) is the offspring of Sporður frá Bergi and Sædís frá Melabergi. Photo by Andrea Barber.



This one-hour-old filly, Dídí from Harmony Icelandics (US2019205428), was sired by Gosi frá Lambastöðum. Her dam is Gunnhildur frá Kollaleiru. Photo by Virginia Lauridsen.

horse's height at the withers, the croup, and the lowest point of the back; the width of the shoulders, hip joints, and points of pelvis; the maximum circumference of the knee and minimum circumference of the front leg below the knee; the width of the leg and tendons below the knee; and the length of both front and hind left hooves from the top of the hoof to the tip of the toe. The judges look at proportions and angles of the shoulder and croup. They check leg correctness and the strength and separation of the tendons. The hooves are inspected for shape, strength, and color. The mane and tail are judged for thickness and length. Stallions have their testicles measured and palpated. Before the assessment, stallion owners must submit a radiographic image which confirms the horse does not have bone spavin. Since good conformation is tied to fluidity and ease of movement, it is important to assess it before breeding the horse.

Each horse is given a score for head; neck, withers and shoulders; back and hind-quarters; proportions; leg quality; leg joints; hooves; mane and tail. The scores for each aspect are fed into a weighted formula, and the horse then receives a score for overall conformation. The conformation score will contribute 35% to the horse's total assessment. A score above 7.5 is considered above average.

Following the conformation assessment is the first assessment for ridden abilities. A track that measures a minimum



Lögg frá Laufhóli proudly shows off her oneday-old colt, Sprækur from Sand Meadow, by Svali frá Tjörn. Photo by Andrea Barber.

of 4 meters wide and 250 meters long is required. The footing must be firm and even with a low rail on either side and a place to turn around at each open end. The track must be marked in the center, as well as 50 meters and 100 meters to either side of the center.

On the first day, the horses are shown individually. Each rider can go a maximum of five times in each direction (ten total passes) to display the ridden qualities of the horse. The horses are judged on walk, trot, tölt, canter, gallop, pace, spirit, and general impression. Once again, the scores for each gait are weighted, and the horse is given a total score for "Ridden Abilities." A score above 7.5 is considered above average. If the owner, trainer, or rider does not feel the horse is performing well, they can stop before six passes and the scores will not be made official.

On the second day, riders are offered an opportunity to improve their horses' scores for "Ridden Abilities." This time the horses are in groups of two to four on the track, and they alternate passes. Each rider can take a maximum of three passes in each direction to display their horse's ridden qualities. The judges may raise the marks for a particular gait from the previous day, but the scores cannot be lowered—except for the trait "Spirit." The final scores for Ridden Abilities are weighted to the second decimal point for the "Ridden Ability"

score. This will be 65% of the horse's total score; it is then combined with the conformation score for the assessment score. A score above 7.5 is considered above average, and a score above 8.0 is considered "First Prize." All official breeding scores are entered into the WorldFengur database. A different rider may show the horse on the second day, which can allow for a varied presentation of the horse.

A horse's score for pace is currently 10% of the "Ridden Abilities" score. This means that four-gaited horses will always have a lower total score than five-gaited horses. In an effort to show a more accurate assessment of each horse within the general population of four-gaited horses, all horses are now given a BLUP score without the consideration of pace. This is an important consideration for breeders who are not striving to breed horses with flying pace.

Preparing for a breeding assessment is a lengthy process and may take years. The horses must be very fit and display clear, quality gaits. There is no specific age requirement for a horse to be assessed. Generally horses are shown between the ages of five and seven, but it is not uncommon to see mares up to ten years or more at assessments. Since horses develop at much different rates, the best guideline is "when the horse is ready"! Very often owners choose to have professional riders train and show their horses. This can be a real boon, but is also quite expensive. Still, since

the scores are entered into the permanent WorldFengur database, many breeders find it worth the cost.

Breeding assessments are an invaluable tool for breeders. The only way to know if you have really been successful in your breeding goal is to raise a foal to adulthood, train it, and have it assessed. A highly assessed foal will raise the BLUP of its mare and sire. Conversely, if none of a horse's offspring are assessed, its BLUP score will be lowered. The reasoning is that breeders will make the effort to have highly talented horses assessed. For the BLUP score to be truly accurate, all horses would need to be assessed—even geldings. If a high percentage of a horse's offspring are assessed, the accuracy of its BLUP is increased. You can see the accuracy percentage of a horse's BLUP when using Virtual Mate, as described in the next article.

We need to breed all kinds of horses for our vast market of riders with different skills and needs. Still, we hope to inspire breeders to choose the best of their horses for breeding. Good conformation leads to better gaits. Robust health leads to greater longevity. Good character leads to greater success as a riding horse. If a horse does not have the necessary qualities to be used, it will likely be culled or become a pasture ornament. By breeding to the highest standard, we increase the likelihood that the offspring produced will be well cared for and used productively.



Venus from Sand Meadow (US2014204898) and her dam, Sædís frá Melabergi. Her sire is Hergill frá Oddhóli.

VIRTUAL MATE



Andvari from Beat N' Branch (US2019105414) is the third of three foals bred by Ron and Sherry Hoover from their mare List frá Hrafnhólum (IS1998225081) and the stallion Sporður frá Bergi (IS2005137340). How does he compare to his full siblings, below and on the next page?

I'm going to start this article by asking you to think about your siblings. You've probably noticed over the years that you have similarities and differences, even if you have the same parents. The same is true for multiple breedings of the same mare and stallion. Hold onto that thought for a moment.

Let's say you'd like to breed your mare. How do you find a stallion that will improve her foal's conformation and gaits? Without needing to travel across the U.S. and Canada visiting breeding farms, you can choose a stallion through WorldFengur, the studbook of the Icelandic horse. Through our membership in the USIHC, we have access to this amazing international database with information on over 440,000 Icelandic horses.

KNOW YOUR MARE

Before we search for a stallion, we need to know a little about your mare. Let's look up her BLUP score on WorldFengur. This score gives you your mare's predicted conformation and gaits based upon all the ancestry records of her lineage and all the assessment scores of her lineage. The higher the BLUP accuracy % score, the more accurate your mare's BLUP is.

BLUP is just a prediction, so you need to look critically at your mare. Does she match her BLUP score? Was your mare assessed at a breeding evaluation show? If she was, you will find her assessment scores and the judges' comments under the breeding assessment tab on her WorldFengur information page. What do you see as her best qualities? What areas do you hope to improve in her offspring? Perhaps you will want to seek a second opinion from an experienced breeder or trainer to assess your mare's qualities.

After you tally up your mare's good qualities and her shortcomings, you can formulate your breeding goal and make a plan of what qualities you hope to improve with breeding.

FIND A STALLION

With this plan and your mare's qualities in hand, you are ready to sign into World-Fengur and find the stallions that will help you reach your breeding goals.

Open your mare's information page on WorldFengur. Look for her FEIF ID information. On the right side of the FEIF ID number you will see a red and blue DNA double helix. Click on that symbol to enter Virtual Mate.

The screen that opens gives you breeding choices, such as restrictions on inbreeding, country location of the stallion, minimum accuracy of the stallion's BLUP, and the number of stallions you'd like to choose from. Your mare's BLUP scores are copied at the bottom of the page. Also look for the "Help-Explanations" link. Clicking on that link will take



Hríma from Beat N' Branch (US2017205263) and her dam List frá Hrafnhólum.



List frá Hrafnhólum and her foal Flugnir from Beat N' Branch (US2015105058).

you to a page that explains the various sections of Virtual Mate.

Please note that the list of stallions that will come up only includes those with a FEIF breeding assessment (what used to be called a breed evaluation).

Why is that important? A breed assessment is a two-day event where an Icelandic horse is evaluated by international breeding judges who use the same international Icelandic breed assessment form, whether they are in the U.S. or anywhere else in the world. This standardized testing eliminates the bias between countries and ensures the purity of the Icelandic horse's breed standards throughout the world.

Let's stop for a moment and think about this assessment protocol and its relationship to breeding. It means that the best available stallions in Virtual Mate are those that have been assessed and are known to have qualities that complement those of your mare, using the specific search criteria you have chosen.

THE VIRTUAL FOAL

Now the fun begins! The colorful list of stallions (see the chart) shows the top stallions for your mare, based upon the chosen Virtual Mate search criteria. You will also see a green chart of the foal's possibilities.

Click on the first stallion's FEIF ID. Now you will see the virtual mating results of this stallion and your mare: These are the predicted qualities of your foal.

Yes, it is always fun to see the color combination possibilities at the bottom of the page, but why did we start this search? Ah, yes, to improve the foal's conformation and gaits. Look at the BLUP of the potential offspring of this mating. Have you improved the foal in the areas where your mare was deficient?

Now look up the chosen stallion's assessment(s). On the Virtual Mate page, look for "mating between sire" followed by the sire's FEIF ID. Click on the sire's name, and WorldFengur will take you to that stallion's information page. Click on the Assessments tab.

Some stallions have been assessed at multiple breeding shows. Choose one of the breeding show assessments by clicking on View, at the far right. Next, choose the printer icon at the top left to open the actual assessment form used at the show.

Look closely at this stallion's assessment scores and at the judges' comments. Remember that assessment scores are not the same as BLUP. BLUP is a computer prediction. These scores were given by a team of judges applying international breeding standards to assess this horse at a certain show on a certain day.

What areas were highly regarded by these judges? How did the judges describe the stallion's conformation and gaits? Did the virtual mating of your mare and this stallion improve your foal's outcome in the ways you'd hoped? Does this possible foal meet your breeding goals?

And what about all the other stallions listed? You can choose any (or all) of the stallions on the list and look at their information and assessments for your potential foal.

After much deliberation, you choose the stallion that you believe is the best match for your mare and that will best help you reach your breeding goal.

Just a few more questions before you sign the breeding contract: Have you contacted the stallion owner? Have you had the opportunity to actually see and meet the stallion? What if the stallion is far away? Is artificial insemination (AI) a possibility?

The list of stallion possibilities can be daunting, but critically searching for the best breeding match is worth the time involved. When will you know for sure this was an excellent match? Not until after the foal is born, and even through the years ahead of nurturing and training.

MY EXPERIENCE

My husband and I are breeders without an assessed stallion. This gives us the opportunity to choose the best possible stallion for our mares. Our breeding mission statement is: We want to breed to the best stallion available in order to have the best possible foal.

We believe using Virtual Mate, a tool backed by BLUP data and FEIF breeding assessment scores, helps us choose the best stallion to improve the outcome of our foal's conformation and gaits. We also believe that using five-gaited stallions improves our foal's predisposition for all gaits. For us, though, it is also important to see and meet the stallion that we have chosen with the help of Virtual Mate.

Our mare, List frá Hrafnhólum (IS1998225081), has a current BLUP of 92; she has never been assessed at a FEIF breeding show. Her qualities are her good proportions, balanced gaits, and height. Plus, her sire is the honor stallion Kormákur frá Flugumýri II. When choosing a stallion for List, we looked for a stallion that has been assessed and that has higher scores in pace and leg quality.

The stallion Sporður frá Bergi (IS2005137340) has an assessment conformation score of 8.18, and his ridden abilities score is 8.28, for a total assessment score of 8.24. The BLUP of his offspring with our mare List have a 97

for conformation and 102 for rideability, for a total score of 101. By comparing the BLUP scores of List and Sporður, you can see the areas in which this match has improved the outcome of the foal's BLUP.

Why did we choose Sporður? You'll notice he's not the first horse on the Virtual Mate stallion chart.

We chose Sporður because we had the opportunity to not only see him and meet him, we were able to see him perform at several Icelandic shows at Léttleiki Icelandics. He impressed us with his conformation, gaits, and easy-going personality.

Travel distance in the U.S. is always a factor when choosing live cover (not AI) for breeding. We reside in Ohio, and Sporður is at Léttleiki Icelandics at Swallowland Farm in Shelbyville, KY. The trailering distance is an easy five-hour drive.

Why have we bred to him three times? We were impressed with the size of the foals, their temperament, and their gaits. Oh, yes, it is also fun to add the possibility of color, but as we all know you can't ride just color!

Let's look back at the beginning of this article. Remember your siblings and you?

Now it is your turn to use the in-

formation from this article. Look at the photos in this article of these three foals from our mare List frá Hrafnhólum and their sire, Sporður frá Bergi: Use their registration numbers to look them up in WorldFengur. Where do you see the similarities and the differences in these three siblings?

The stallion Sporður frá Bergi (IS2005137340), standing at Léttleiki Icelandics, sired all three foals of Ron and Sherry Hoover's mare. Are they as alike as your own brothers or sisters? Below is a list of stallion suggestions from WorldFengur's Virtual Mate for the Hoover's mare List frá Hrafnhólum (IS1998225081). Was Sporður the right choice? Which stallion would you have chosen?



The BLUP table for the mare IS1998225081 - List frá Hrafnhólum

Height	Mane	Slwt	Walk	Head	Neck	Back	Prop	Legs	Corr	Hoof	Tölt	Trot	Pace	Gallop	Form	Spir	Conf	Rid	Tot
1.4	101	105	96	101	100	106	110	89	103	107	103	105	101	103	103	103	104	103	104

Rank criteria and restrictions: Criterium: BLUP Total score | F%: 5 | R_{Ti}: 60 | Country: CA / US

Rank of max 50 possible stallions - Click on a link (in the first column) for inspection of any potential mating

			Foal									
FEIF ID	Name	Farm (location)	Criterium	Conformation	Rideability	Total score	R _{TI} %	Criterium	Conformation	Rideability	Total score	F%
IS2007187661	Strokkur	frá Syðri- Gegnishólum	121	108	121	121	81	112.5	106.0	112.0	112.5	3,619
IS2012186822	Seifur	frá Neðra-Seli	118	113	116	118	78	111.0	108.5	109.5	111.0	1,907
IS2007188906	Hrókur	frá Efsta-Dal II	117	121	113	117	85	110.5	112.5	108.0	110.5	1,745
IS2005137340	Sporður	frá Bergi	116	107	116	116	89	110.0	105.5	109.5	110.0	3,318
IS2001187041	Þröstur	frá Hvammi	116	120	112	116	93	110.0	112.0	107.5	110.0	1,034
IS2010176189	Stúdent	frá Ketilsstöðum	116	109	115	116	77	110.0	106.5	109.0	110.0	2,015
IS2004186688	Vigri	frá Holtsmúla 1	115	114	113	115	78	109.5	109.0	108.0	109.5	2,013
IS1998186693	Hjörtur	frá Holtsmúla 1	113	108	112	113	80	108.5	106.0	107.5	108.5	1,527
IS2009125291	Galdur	frá Reykjavík	113	112	111	113	76	108.5	108.0	107.0	108.5	3,944
IS2010135936	Lykill	frá Stóra-Ási	112	118	108	112	77	108.0	111.0	105.5	108.0	0,97
IS2006175485	Smári	frá Tjarnarlandi	112	108	111	112	81	108.0	106.0	107.0	108.0	2,489
IS1996156333	Stígandi	frá Leysingjastöðum II	111	100	113	111	97	107.5	102.0	108.0	107.5	1,814

RIDING TRANSITIONS by Gabriele Meyer art by Nancy Wines-Dewan

s we all know, developing our riding skills takes a lifetime, and however good you are, there is always more to learn. Recently I realized that for the longest time I'd missed a crucial part of the 10,000-piece puzzle called "How to ride."

That puzzle piece is what happens in between gaits, during those few seconds when I attempt to change from one gait to another. These gait changes are called "transitions" in the equestrian world, and, oddly enough, I seem to have never paid much attention to them. I just seemed to muddle through, applying the aids somehow until I found myself in the gait I wanted. Some transitions were easier than others. Some I never tried. Most, to be honest, didn't feel particularly good.

There is much more to riding transitions than I once thought. They are extremely helpful, multi-purpose tools that can be used way beyond just changing the gait. Well-ridden transitions help to activate and balance the horse and make all the gaits better.

This article reports on what I learned during my quest to ride better transitions.

DEFINITIONS

A dictionary will tell you that transition means "the process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another." In riding, a transition means changing your gait or your speed.

Transitions can be upward to a faster gait (walk to tölt for example) or downward to a slower gait (canter to trot). There are also transitions that skip a gait (like walk to canter, or tölt to halt). The horse generally changes the footfall pattern of his feet (the rhythm), and in order to do this he needs to change his energy, balance, and speed.

Transitions can also be ridden within one gait. In this case, the sequence of footfalls stays the same, only the length of a stride and the rate with which the horse moves its feet changes. Medium walk to free walk, or slow tölt to fast tölt and vice versa are transitions within a gait. Some trainers even consider walk to tölt (and tölt to walk) to be transitions within a gait, since the footfall doesn't change.

There is no riding without transitions. Anytime we hop on a horse, we start



For any good transition, the rider stays upright, neither leaning back nor falling forward. Gabriele likes to think of herself as being the pole that holds the carousel horse in place.

with a transition from halt (hopefully) to walk (probably). We might walk for a few minutes and then proceed to tölt or trot, depending on the terrain, the situation, and the horse and rider's disposition. We might then switch gears again and ride a canter, or simply go back to a walk.

You get the idea. Every time we change tempo and/or gait we perform a transition. These transitions arise from necessity, so to speak-without them we wouldn't be able to ride at all.

ENERGY & BALANCE

But that is not the only reason why transitions are so important. Transitions can be used to deliberately affect the way the horse moves. We can use transitions to influence his energy level and to balance him from back to front.

The better the transition, the better the following gait will be. And the opposite is true too: The better the quality of gait before the transition, the better the transition will be. This is classical dressage knowledge, and Icelandic horse trainers concur. As Trausti Guðmundsson mentioned during

one of his Tölt in Harmony clinics, "The gait will be only as good as the transition into it."

Upward transitions activate the hind legs. Any time a rider feels that the horse has lost energy, she could make an upward transition. What she should feel is a distinct push from the hind legs. Upward transitions increase the pushing action of the hind leg during its stance phase (see illustration on next page).

Downward transitions are a collecting exercise. Downward transitions bring the hind end under the horse's body. The hind legs step closer to the horse's center of gravity and at least one of the hind legs will be supporting more of the horse's weight and be slightly bent. When correctly executed, downward transitions increase the carrying action of the hind leg during its stance phase (see illustration).

Transitions strengthen the hind end. A third reason to ride transitions, besides necessity and balancing, is that they can also be used to strengthen your horse. Think of every transition as being like a squat you

might make in the gym. During the transition, the horse has to take more weight on one of his hind legs for a moment and then push the weight up and forward again. This action strengthens his hind end, which is the motor of the horse.

All riding, no matter the breed or style, is the effort to balance a horse between your reins, seat, and legs. We balance the horse from side to side to improve inherent asymmetries, and we balance the horse from back to front to counter the fact that the horse (without a rider) naturally carries about two-thirds of his weight on the forelegs.

When a horse also tries to carry his rider's weight on his forelegs, he feels unbalanced, and being unbalanced frightens a horse. A horse that is balanced correctly under the rider in both the side-to-side and back-to-front dimensions is in a much better mental space. To the rider such a horse feels supple and maneuverable and thus is way more fun and much safer to ride. Most importantly, riding in correct balance also helps to avoid long-term damage to the horse's body.

USING YOUR AIDS

At the beginning of a young horse's education as a riding horse, simple and unambiguous aids are used. Legs mean forward, reins mean slow down. But when the horse leaves primary school and enters middle school, these leg and rein aids are put into a sequence that allows for more complicated movements.

At this point many misunderstandings can and do occur. If we drive and restrain at the same time, the horse can feel conflicted, trying to be obedient to both: Shall I go or shall I stay? Can't she make up her mind? Help! The horse might become confused and tense (if he is more forward) or dull to the leg (if he is on the lazy side).

Therefore, the use of the aids needs to be explained to the horse systematically and skillfully during the education of a young riding horse. Caeli Cavanagh, an FT-certified trainer in Newberg, OR, advises: "Never apply driving and restraining aids at the same time in the beginning! Rather use those aids alternately, and the less experienced a horse is, the more time is needed between those aids."

Why, you might ask, do we want to use leg aids when slowing down at all, if that bears the risk of provoking these conflicting feelings in the horse?

The answer is that using rein aids without seat and leg aids in downward transitions is like stopping a bicycle with your front brakes only and no rear brakes. If you try that at high enough speed, you will somersault over your bike. On the horse, if you try to stop by using only your reins, his croup will rise and he will fall onto his front end, getting heavy on the bridle. It doesn't look pretty, nor is it biomechanically sound riding. It is better to use your seat and legs before the rein aid, encouraging the horse to step further underneath his body. Here—and only here—can his hind legs act as rear brakes, so to speak. The horse can stay balanced when using his entire body to respond promptly to the rider's cues.

Alternately, you might ask, why would a rider use a rein aid if she wanted to ride an upward transition? Isn't that counterproductive? The answer is that you might get away with not using your reins if you have a three-gaited horse: You essentially speed up from the walk to get trot and speed up further to get canter. But even that might be tricky. Maybe he feels frisky and offers a canter right away from walk, even though you wanted trot.

The situation is more complicated in an Icelandic horse that is capable of trotting as well as tölting. Just speeding up leaves it up to the horse to decide whether to tölt or trot. Clearly, the rider has to do something other than just drive forward if she wishes to transition into a certain gait.

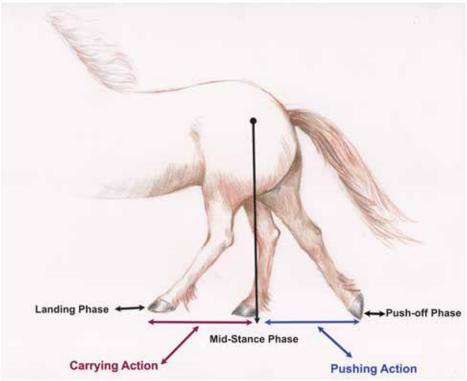
Gaits are generally connected to and dependent on specific energy levels and states of balance. The rider creates those specific balance and energy situations in her horse directly before the transition by using all three types of aids—reins, legs, and seat—in a coordinated way. As a result, the horse is more likely to transition into the gait the rider intended—while it still seems to the horse that it was his idea to do it.

IN PRACTICE

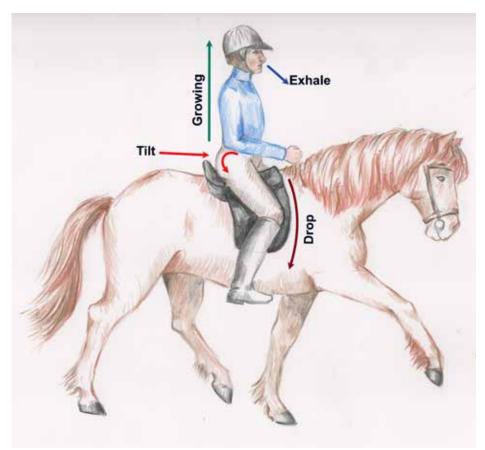
For the sake of this article, let's assume the horse is experienced, knows the individual aids as well as their combined use, and accepts them without becoming tense or dull.

Let's focus on the rider's part. How can a rider learn to use her aids correctly and appropriately for the situation? Riding does not follow a cookbook. No recipes tell us to take X ounces of seat, Y ounces of leg, and Z ounces of rein and you will slow down to a halt.

How much of each aid—reins, legs, or seat—you need to apply depends on many factors. Every transition is different. Every horse is different. On every single day the horse might be different, and we might be



Understanding the stance phase of a gait is the key to a good transition. Do you want to increase the pushing action of the horse's hind leg (with an upward transition), or its carrying action (with a downward transition)? Are you using your aids at the right time?



In downward transitions, Gabriele tilts her pelvis slightly backward, grows taller in the saddle, and lets her knees drop. She also exhales, mentally directing her breath into her feet. This makes her hips "melt" down the horse's sides.

different, too.

The general idea is to apply as much of each aid as is necessary, but to use as little as possible. To come back to the cooking analogy, you might add a little salt here, a little sugar or dash of lemon juice there, until the dish tastes right.

Or, as classical dressage trainer Thomas Ritter explains in his Topline Challenge, "Finding the right measure for the aids is like watering young plants with a garden hose: You need enough water pressure to reach the plant, but not so much that you uproot it."

I am not one of those naturally talented riders who just seems to know intuitively what they are doing. I need to understand and internalize every little detail. The insights of Centered Riding have been mentioned in the *Quarterly* many times, and I think CR is geared exactly toward a learner like me! Being able to work with a wonderful CR instructor locally here in the San Francisco Bay Area helped me a lot to develop the necessary knowledge and body awareness.

I now know that a correct transition

consists of a sequence of actions that need to happen in a certain order. I divide them up into three phases: preparation, execution, and release. Preparation is the longest of the three phases: It may last as long as it takes for you to be confident that the time is right for you to actually give the aids. The execution phase (giving the aids) is short—maybe a couple of seconds. The release happens immediately upon execution.

To prepare for a transition, I check one more time if my seat, my energy level, and my rein contact are okay, and if my horse is reasonably straight. If not, I fix those things; otherwise the transition will not turn out well.

I reorganize my body to suit the gait I intend to transition to, adjusting my own posture and energy level. At the same time, I adjust my horse's energy level and outline to fit the gait intended. This change of balance makes it easy for the horse to change into the new gait.

The actual execution of the transition obviously differs depending on the kind of transition. But in every case, the rider stays upright, neither leaning back nor falling forward. I like to think of myself as the pole that holds the carousel horse in place.

DOWNWARD

For downward transitions, I was taught to use my seat and leg aids first, and only then add the rein aid.

I tilt my pelvis slightly backward, without pushing my seatbones into the saddle. A big mistake in riding transitions is pushing the seatbones into the saddle with the intention to "sit heavy." The horse will dip his back away from the pressure of your weight and will brace against your seat. His hind legs, in this case, will not be able to step underneath and effectively apply the braking action.

I grow taller, as if somebody is lifting me up by the hair. The lengthening of the rider's spine upward lightens the seat and invites the horse to lift his back. Only then can he step more under with his hind legs and, again, use his rear brakes.

Breathing techniques are important tools for proper transitions. In downward transitions, I exhale down into my legs (not literally, of course). Mentally, I direct my breath into my feet, which induces a feeling as if my hips could "melt" and drip down along the sides of the horse. My seat and thigh muscles relax, creating a soft and wide connection to the saddle.

At the same time as I breathe out, I allow my knees to drop. This helps give my upper calves a good contact on the horse a little behind the saddle girth. Depending on the transition, I might have to close my legs more or less.

The perfect rein aid consists of a mere closing of the hand in the rhythm of the gait. The closing is quick, and the immediate opening of the hand is a little slower. Great care needs to be taken to not keep the hand in the squeezed position and to not inadvertently pull on the reins.

The timing of the rein aids is crucial. Generally, a rein aid addresses the hind leg of the same side, and the horse can translate the aid into a braking movement only if the hind leg is before the vertical during the stance phase. In this position the rein aid bends the hind leg and encourages it to take on more weight in order to apply the brakes.

If, however, the hind leg is in the second part of its stance phase, a rein aid has no meaning for the horse. Even worse, as Thomas explains: "The hind leg that is on the ground and behind the vertical is

PRACTICE YOUR TRANSITIONS

Walk to halt: This transition is slow enough for you to learn how to feel the correct timing of the rein aids. Before the transition, ask for an active but not rushing walk. Feel the movement, following it with your seat. Then tilt your seat backward and stop following the motion. Close your legs at the girth to encourage the horse to bring his hindquarters under his body. Apply your outside rein aid the moment your outside seat bone is in its most forward position, just about being lifted up. This is the moment when the horse's outside hind leg has just touched the ground; it is the carrying/ breaking phase. Your hands soften immediately after the horse has halted. Thomas Ritter says: "To keep the horse in a good balance during the transition, it should neither be too abrupt, nor dragging out over too many steps. I do them on the count of four steps." Sally Swift emphasizes the importance of this transition: "If you can do good walk-halt transitions, you can do down transitions at any gait."

Walk-tölt and walk-trot: Icelandic horse riders use these two transitions the most, and they differ from up-transitions in the three-gaited horse world. In many clinics I've attended, the most frequent question is how to differentiate between these two transitions. A gaited horse cannot just be sped up, because he could transition to either trot or tölt. To end up in the gait you intend, you need to do something else.

Caeli Cavanagh explains: "For tölt transitions, you have to access the back in a different way, feeling into the lateral part of the gait. The walk I use to prepare for the tölt transition is shorter strided and a bit more elevated. I am tilting my pelvis, almost sitting on my pockets,

growing taller, and find the balance between driving and restraining aids without pulling on the reins and making the horse tense."

She continues: "Restraining aids are not used in the sense of slowing down, rather in the meaning of taking the energy and going up. An image many of my students like is creating a ball of energy with the core and seat, and then catching it with the hands."

Walk-trot transitions require a different seat. You sit light and slightly in front of the vertical, your reins are a little longer and you hold them a little lower, to let the horse reach into a longer outline. Your leg aids consist of little impulses on both sides. The second the horse steps into trot, your reins need to be softly following the horse's movement.

Caeli explains: "At first, these transitions are ridden from a more lengthened frame. Later, when the horse is more experienced, you can also ride them from a more collected walk."

Tölt-walk: The rider needs to take care that the horse doesn't lose energy and fall into trot before the walk

Tölt-trot: This transition can be used sparingly to help very five-gaited horses find a bigger trot. Trot-tölt: You should avoid this transition so as not to confuse the horse. It is problematic in horses with a not-so-strong trot, because it teaches the horse to evade into tölt on the slightest weight of rein.

Canter-tölt: Canter to tolt is a good means to elevate the shoulder of a horse.

Canter-trot: While this transition is widely used in three-gaited horses for suppling, it is sometimes not easy to ride with a gaited horse. If the rider has just a little too much body tone and rein pressure, the horse will end up in tölt instead. But Caeli adds: "These transitions are good exercises for improving the canter. Think of going upward into a trot rather than downward."

Canter-pace: Flying pace is only accessed via a canter-to-pace transition, never from tölt so as not to confuse the horse.

A series of transitions can help a horse find the right energy level and correct rhythm:

Walk-tölt-walk-tölt helps if a horse needs hind end activation.

Tölt-halt-tölt or tölt-walk-tölt-walk can lead to an increased shifting of weight to the hind end (collecting the horse) and thus clear up the rhythm of a horse with a diagonal tendency in tölt (trotty tölt).

For a horse with a lateral tendency (pacey tolt), it can help to ride a series of walk-töltwalk transitions in shoulder-in.

A series of halt-canter-halt-canter transitions increases the energy, Caeli says, "like coiling a spring."

Tölt-canter-tölt-canter transitions bring the inside shoulder up and can make the tölt more energetic. "But they bear the risk of the horse ending up with a canter roll in the tölt," Caeli adds, "because the inside leg steps more under than the outside leg. However, if you have a horse with the tendency to roll, let's say, in the left lead canter, you can use this transition sequence on the right lead to correct it."







Good transitions take practice! On the left Gabriele demonstrates a bad transition from walk to halt—see how stiff she is? In the middle is a really ugly transition—she apologized to her horse for this one, she says. On the right is a good transition. Both horse and rider are soft, relaxed, and balanced.



In upward transitions, Gabriele imagines she has an inflated balloon in her mouth and doesn't want to let the air out. This increases her core tone, which helps to stabilize her seat and create the energy she needs for the faster gait.

pushing the body forward. Its joints are extending and therefore the horse is unable to comply" with your rein aid.

From this we can conclude that rein aids for downward transitions should be given only with one rein, not with both reins simultaneously-the other rein will always hit its corresponding hind leg at the wrong time. Indeed, Thomas warns: "Using both reins at the same time frequently leads to a bracing of the underneck of the horse." Furthermore, if the rider is successful in stopping one hind leg, the other will automatically follow, and the downward transition will lead to a smooth rebalancing of the horse. Because the inside rein is responsible for the bend (if you are riding on a circle), it is usually best to give the rein aid for transitions with your outside rein.

How can a rider feel the correct timing of the rein aid? As it happens, when the hind leg we wish to address is on the ground, the horse's opposite hind leg has just pushed off and begun to swing forward. That movement is quite easy to identify: Your hip is dropping and moving forward. You can feel for that movement in your hip and use it to time the rein aid with the opposite hand.

Good downward transitions feel like

landing an airplane. The front of the plane is slightly up, the wheels under the wings touch the tarmac first, and only then does the nose wheel follow and touch the ground as well.

UPWARD

In upward transitions, I learned to add core stability to stay in the vertical position with my upper body. I exhale forward as if I had an inflated balloon in my mouth and don't want to let the air out. This increases my core tone, which helps stabilize my seat and creates the energy I need. Then I give a little squeeze or tap with my calves.

The moment I feel that the horse is going to accelerate, I open my fingers slightly (without giving up contact) to allow him to move forward. I pretend I'm pushing a shopping cart. This image engages my triceps muscle, behind my upper arm, instead of my biceps, which could make me accidentally pull on the reins.

Finally, it is very important to be prepared to move with the horse when he moves out with more energy. If the rider accidentally comes behind the vertical and pulls on the reins, the horse will perceive that as punishment, and he will be less inclined to be obedient to your legs the next time!

A good upward transition feels like an airplane on the runway that is about to lift off, with the forward energy coming from the hindquarters of the horse. A bad upward transition feels like the horse is pulling itself along with the front legs instead of using his hind legs.

The release comes as soon as the horse has transitioned into the new gait. All aids are ceased momentarily, to indicate that the job is done, and the horse is allowed to move freely in the new gait.

PRACTICE

As Walter Zettl states: "Transitions are some of the most important and most difficult exercises in all of riding." The classical riding masters advised their students to perform many transitions, even hundreds, during any single training session.

I understand now that many repetitions are required so that riding correct transitions becomes ingrained in the rider's brain and she can begin to use them automatically, without having to think about every little step.

In the world of Icelandics, compared to that of big horses, two things make riding perfect transitions even more challenging. First, there is an added layer of complexity brought in by the additional gait(s), and second, the comparably fast movements of the legs of a smaller horse make timing the aids particularly difficult.

That doesn't mean we shouldn't try! Riding good transitions requires you to be present, attentive, and in close communication with your horse, listening to his feedback and adjusting your aids as needed in the moment. It takes practice.

FURTHER READING

Sally Swift, Centered Riding I and II (1985)

Susan E. Harris, Horse Gaits, Movements and Balance (revised edition, 2016)

Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir, "The Road to Collection," The Icelandic Horse Quarterly, Issues Two and Three 2020

Erik Herbermann, Dressage Formula (fourth edition, 2008)

Walter Zettl, Dressage in Harmony (1998)

Thomas Ritter, Dressage Principles Based on Biomechanics (2010)

Corinna Lehmann, Bausteine Dressurreiten (2009)

by Danielle Walton Fulsher

DISTANCE RIDING

istance riders are the toughest riders out there, dealing with wind, rain, snow, sleet, hail, heat, and cold for hours at a time, putting their beloved horse first before their own needs. What would possess a sane person to want to deal with that?

Distance riding takes you away from the craziness of our little world and slows things down. Everything becomes simple. You just follow the trail. No arenas. No track. Just 10, 15, 25, 50, 75, or 100 miles or more of riding is ahead of you. In the morning the birds are singing, and everything smells fresh. Sunrise is always beautiful and peaceful. Just you and your horse. No need to be on your phone or computer. Maybe a couple of friends, all grinning, sharing the same experience. The people at these rides are almost always friendly, helpful, and love to talk about horses. Stories are passed around, advice is given if needed, and there are lots of laughs.

Because of the countless miles and hours you spend together, the relationship you develop with your horse is like no other. Trust between you and your horse increases. You come to know your horse inside and out. That's not just a saying. You know their resting heart rate, respiratory patterns, mucous membranes, any swellings, all their scars, their mood, what's normal and what's not, etc.

Distance riding is about setting a goal, whether it's improving your horse's trail knowledge or putting your horse's fitness plan to the test. Some people are more competitive and want that coveted Best in Condition award. But others just want to go to a new area and enjoy planned trails, following the ribbons to a destination, then have a delicious meal and socialize. Distance riding brings people and horses together. Your goals are up to you.

SUCCESS STORIES

The most common types of distance riding are Endurance and Competitive Trail Rides (CTRs). Are Icelandic horses good at these disclipines? Take a look at these statistics of some successful current and past riders and their Icelandic horses:

John Parke and Remington (USA)

- Inducted into the American Endurance Ride Covention (AERC) Hall of Fame
- 11,500 career miles
- 22-year veteran of the sport: Currently the longest team in endurance riding
- Completed a 50-miler when Remington was age 31
- Has the most career miles of any gaited breed in history.

Susan Dugas and Lappi (USA)

- Completed three 50-milers so far; one was the Moonlight Ride, which is considered the second hardest endurance ride in the U.S.
- Several Limited Distance (LD) rides of 25-30 miles and 3 Top 10 achievements
- Almost 365 competitive miles currently
- Lappi did all his miles after a broken leg: An unlucky kick shattered Lappi's splint bone and fractured his cannon bone
- Currently, at age 22, training for 50-mile endurance rides for the 2021 season.

Danielle Fulsher and Hrima (Canada)

- At 14 years old, Hrima has 300 competitive miles in 25-mile CTRs and LD completions
- Almost always in the top 5 placings in CTRs
- 1st and High Point Champion in the Rocky Mountain Rumble
- 4th (out of 69 entries of all breeds) in the Rattle Snake Round Up, the most difficult and technical CTR in Alberta
- Currently training for 50-mile endurance rides for the 2021 season.

Carrie Wilson and Brimi (Canada)

- 2016 MB High Point Horse CTR Training Division
- Placed in the top 5 in almost all their 25-mile CTRs
- 2017 Top Bred CTR Horse in Manitoba
- in 2019, won 2nd place in two novice CTRs (25-milers)
- in 2019, won 1st place and Best in Condition in an LD (30-miler)
- 485 competitive miles to date
- Currently training for 50-mile endurance rides for the 2021 season.



Carrie Wilson and Brimi have logged 485 miles in distance competitions. Here they compete in the Birds Hill Flat Fast Forest Endurance Ride, where they won first place and Best in Condition. Photo by Darius Whyte.

John Parke and Skjoldur (USA)

- Was the first horse of any breed in history to achieve 1,000 miles in a 30-day period.
- Skjoldur only did 50- and 100-mile rides
- 4,400 lifetime competitive miles.

Christine Marks and Thokkadis (USA)

- At 19 years old, Thokkadis has completed several LDs in good time and has a high completion rate
- 50-miler completed in 2019
- Currently training for 50-mile endurance rides for the 2021 season.

Denise Fissel and Blidfara (USA)

- Currently 440 competitive miles at 14years old
- All LD completions
- 3 Top 10 Finishes



Christine Marks and Thokkadis show their spirit at the Cracked OAATS Crunch Endurance Ride. Photo by Robert Komjathy.

Rachel Miller and Skeifa (USA)

- Currently 80 competitive miles at 22 years old
- 2017 John Wayne Cross State Ride (230 miles)
- 2019 John Wayne Cross State Ride (230 miles)

ENDURANCE RIDING

What's the difference between an Endurance Ride and a Competitive Trail Ride?

Endurance Rides are often multi-day events. You have 6 hours to finish a 25-miler, including one "hold"; 12 hours to finish a 50-miler, including 2 holds; and 24 hours to finish a 100-miler, including 4 holds. In addition, there are introductory rides of 10 or 15 miles for people wishing to get experience, to learn how endurance riding works, and to school their horses.

Vets determine the length of the hold based on the weather and the trail's difficulty. Riders have 30 minutes to get their horses to pulse down at each hold.

The pulse criteria to measure fitness is set by the head vet, and is usually 64 beats per minute (bpm). Once the horse pulses down, the mandatory hold begins. So the faster the horse pulses down, the quicker the rider can get back on the trail. If the horse just makes the criteria, or fails to pulse down within the 30 minutes, the rider is then told to see the vet, as the horse may be in distress. The vet then issues instructions.

All types of tack, leg boots, and hoof boots/shoes are allowed in Endurance Riding. You can use anything you want to cool the horse down, including liniments and ice boots for cooling the tendons.

There are no minimum time limits in an Endurance Ride, meaning you can go as fast as your horse is fit for. Speeds are generally 5-16 miles per hour, and a speed of 5 miles per hour (which means lots of trot and a fair amount of walking) will get you a completion in each distance. At any point during the ride that you need to hand-walk your horse, you are allowed to do that.

The first horse that crosses the finish line, pulses down the fastest, and receives a "fit-to-continue" vet card is the winner. There are no deductions for bad behavior from the horse. Lameness, lesions, etc. are not counted against the horse for points in completion, but they will count in the Best in Condition (BC) award.

BC is the coveted prize of the day. The top 10 horses compete for best in condition. Each horse receives a score that is tallied from their vet cards. The horse that, at the end of the ride, looks like it just walked out of the pasture is the horse the judges are looking for. Riders have to trot their horses in a straight line, back up, and then trot circles in each direction. The crowd often cheers the riders on to help them do this. (After a 50- or 100-miler, you want to die a little.)

COMPETITIVE TRAIL RIDING

CTRS are 25- to 50-mile rides, with multiday events totaling up to 100 miles over 3 days. The speed is around 5.5 to 10 mph, and riders must go the required minimum speed or be disqualified. No hand-walking (in forward motion) is allowed, and no dismounting during the final 2 miles of the ride. Forward motion must always be kept. You must arrive at the finish line within the half-hour window decided by the ride management; deductions will be taken if you

are either early or late. Novice rides are easier, with slower speeds and no weight divisions. Any kind of tack is allowed.

The winner is determined by the total points after the final vet check. There's a High Score award in each division, and an Overall High Score for all divisions.

The horse must pass an initial vet check. At subsequent vet checks, the horse has 5-10 minutes to pulse down, depending on the state or governing body's rules. The horse's pulse must be below 12/15 or 48 bpm at each vet check, otherwise points are deducted. At each check, a vet also looks for soreness, metabolic issues, change of energy or attitude, lesions, and missing hair or bruising. Poultices, liniments, and herbal supplements are prohibited.

Protective leg boots receive demerit points or may be prohibited (as they are here in Alberta). Points are deducted for bad behavior. Vet checks can take a long time depending on the line up, so pacing is important.

YOUR CHOICE

So basically, if you like structure, go with CTR. If you are a more free-spirited type that likes to do your own thing, go with endurance.

Or do both! Icelandics are very strong at CTR, with their solid temperaments, soundness, and good metabolics. In endurance, they currently tend toward being high-mileage horses, but with so few competing, it's hard to say. They can be speedy in the LDs, with top 10 finishes possible-even wins.

So far only two Icelandics have been consistent 50-milers and 100-milers. Both were mid-pack, turtle-type finishers. That's not saying that we can judge the breed based on them. We are finding that with the right training, heat management, and good planning, Icelandics can do very well at distance. A handful of us are currently very active in competing, and four of us are training towards 50-milers. There are currently 12 Icelandics in AERC history that have successfully completed a

Can our breed do distance riding? Yes! They were bred for it by the Vikings. Since the Viking Age, the Icelandic horse has been the beloved vehicle for Icelanders to take to get from point A to point B across treacherous terrain and through wicked weather. The Icelandic horse is



Danielle Walton Fulsher and Hríma have logged 300 miles in distance competitions. Here they ride at Whereabouts Ranch. Photo by Carol Papworth.

the Icelanders' trusted companion and best friend, bringing the family across the highlands to their chosen destination with spirit and joy, tossing their full manes in the wind.

Our breed is special, in that they've been bred for distance riding for a thousand years. Our horses are tough, intelligent, hardy, and have endurance running through their veins from their ancestors so many years ago.

But all breeds have negatives, when it comes to distance riding. For my Icelandics, I find it's mostly heat management—but heat management is a very small thing to put up with, when I get to enjoy a trusting, steady, intelligent partner that will get me through anything nature throws at us.

KEEP COOL

The Icelandics are a cold-weather breed, so we do have to do extra work to keep them cool in hot temperatures.

Their cold-weather breed attributes are: a heavy, wiry mane and tail; thicker skin, with veins further away from the surface; a thicker, oilier coat; a thick fall, winter, and spring coat; feathers on the legs; and a digestive system that creates a lot of heat from eating.

Some horses from the older Icelandic breeding lines have small nostrils, a small wind pipe, and a short neck. These horses often pant with exercise. The purpose of this conformation is to prevent the lungs from freezing, by allowing less air in with each breath.

In comparison, the Arabian horse, for example, has large nostrils, a long thin neck, a thin mane and tail, a thin hair coat, veins right at the surface, no feathers, and a tail held high. This is why they do very well at endurance.

But, like all breeds, Arabians have negative attributes and weaknesses where our horses shine. Arabians are famous for being "attentive to their environment," turning on a dime for things that move (and for things that don't move). They often have trouble pulsing down because of anxiety or excitement, or may refuse to eat or drink, causing metabolic issues. They can have lameness issues, and, being very hot tempered, can be difficult to ride—though there are always exceptions to every rule.

Icelandics tend to lead other horses through difficult scary areas—they are a calming influence on other breeds. They tend to conserve energy very well, because of the lack of over-blown excitement, and they last for miles and miles and miles. This dependable soul will stay healthy and sound. This breed of horse is your best friend, and will be there for you when the chips are down.

Despite our northern horses being not really designed for North American summer heat, they do very well if good heat-management practices are used. Braiding the mane and the forelock gets the heavy hair off their necks, which is a major cooling area for them. There is a big vein that runs along the esophagus: This needs to be clear of excess hair to allow the wind to cool their blood.

Shaving this area (even in summer) also helps to cool them. Their summer coats are thick compared to the coats of other breeds. You should also shave other heat dissipation areas: the chest area, shoulders, under the belly, and on the inside of the gaskins and forearms (major veins there).

Braiding the tail is another big plus. The Icelandic's tail is very thick and wiry, meant to hold in heat to help the horse stay warm. In comparison, the Arabian's tail is thin and held high to maximize cooling.

Do your research on cooling your horse down, and your horse will thank you.

STAY HYDRATED

Hydration is probably one of the most important factors when distance riding with Icelandics. Our breed sweats a lot. Because they are built for Iceland's weather, our breed's best performance days are rainy, cold, and windy. Icelandics shine in weather that causes Arabians and other popular distance breeds to shiver, spook, buck, and pull muscles. But on hot days and or under high humidity, they sweat, sweat, sweat. So it is so important to know how to keep your horse hydrated.

Did you know that a horse loses 0.8 gallons of water per hour when trailering? That the horse is 1% dehydrated after 90 minutes of travel? After an 8-hour trip, the horse is 5% dehydrated, having lost 6.25 gallons. Dehydration is life threatening at 12-14%.

Here is how thirst works in a horse:
1) The brain detects an increased saltiness in the blood or a drop in blood pressure.
2) Sweat production decreases. 3) Urine production decreases. 4) Blood is redistributed away from less vital organs (that is, the GI tract and the skin). 5) Eventually thirst increases. Horses won't drink until they are 1-2% dehydrated.

Horses are not like us, in that when we detect saltiness in the blood, we get thirsty right away. Horses take a while to get there—so don't take chances on it. Do your research and find out the best way to keep your horse hydrated for these rides.

Among the solutions are: feeding electrolytes, soaking all their feed (including hay), salting their feed, and encouraging them to drink at any and all water opportunities (training this prior to a ride is imperative).

What happens if your horse gets too dehydrated? Tying up and colic are the most common problems, and you don't want to have to mess around with them at a ride.

Can our breed compete on hot and humid rides? Yes ... but a heavily muscled, thicker-built Icelandic will struggle the most. The lighter-built lean-muscled Icelandics do better.

Many other breeds, including the Arabian, have individual horses that struggle with heat and humidity. It is very depen-



Denise Fissel and Bliðfara have logged 440 miles in distance competitions. Here they compete in the Wild West Pioneer Endurance Ride. Photo by Gore/Baylor Photography.

dent on the specific horse. Susan Dugas's Lappi, for example, is a heavily built Icelandic horse, but he handles the high humidity in Vermont extremely well.

SOUNDNESS

Distance riding is not for every horse. Icelandic horses are well known for their soundness, but if they do have issues in distance riding, they tend to have them with their suspensory ligaments. Their fetlocks flex down near the ground when they take their full weight on their legs, which puts strain on their suspensories. Hyper-mobile horses, with too much flexion in the joints, for example, can hurt themselves after 5 to 10miles. If you freeze-frame the motion of one of these horses in a video, you'll see that the fetlock almost touches the ground when fully load-bearing.

Even if your horse is not hyper-mobile, a balanced shoeing or trim is a must. Their hooves must not be too high in the heel, but they must definitely not be as low as other breeds are trimmed. Do not chop off the heels, as this increases the strain on the suspensories. Also make sure their hooves are short. Breeding show hoof lengths won't work for distance riding. No thick 8-mm or 10-mm shoes either. We are going for the comfort of the horse and for soundness, not for flash and flare. Flash

and flare are fancy in competition, but they will not keep your horse sound after 25 or more miles every second weekend, year after year. The least amount of concussion, the better.

In terms of conformation, straight legs are best. Our horses have a different rider-to-horse weight ratio from big horses, so there is less room for error. Crooked legs add strain and, depending on the horse's conformation, they sometimes cannot take the concussion of long distance rides. Watch your horse's legs closely after work-outs and, again, the day after a work-out. If there is stocking up on a regular basis, consult with your vet as to whether your horse can stay healthy in their legs or not.

There are things everyone in distance riding tends to do that can help you keep your horse's legs sound and healthy, such as cold hosing the tendons after rides of more than 10 miles, poulticing and using standing bandages, liniments, etc. All this can be proactive in keeping your horse's legs healthy, by removing heat and inflammation after a ride.

Also be careful of concussion. Hard ground can bring on problems. One of the great benefits of our breed? We can tolt downhill, which is less concussive than trotting!

Here's a story about a ride Hrima and I were on. It was a hot day in the beginning of October. The ride was tough, with big hills and hard, rocky footing. All the horses had some winter coat, but Hrima's was the heaviest. My clippers had broken as I was starting her clip job, and I didn't have time to replace them. Knowing I was going to have to do careful heat management on that ride, I fed Hrima up on soaked hay and sloppy mush meals days before the

On the ride there were numerous puddles and small streams, so I kept stopping to soak my sponge and drench her thick fall coat. It was humid, as well as 25 degrees C (77F), so her hair actually held that water for long periods of time.

I watched the footing carefully, and kept her on the softest footing during the ride. At the end, Hrima was one of the few horses that trotted out sound and was not dehydrated. There was a tie between us and an Arab. The vet broke the tie and declared us the winners, because Hrima's recoveries were consistently better despite

the late season heat and Hrima's winter coat. Not only that, we also won High Point Overall Champion.

TO FINISH IS TO WIN

We don't know exactly what the limit of the Icelandic horse is, because of a lack of numbers competing in distance riding. But I do know one thing: Never underestimate the Icelandic horse.

An FEI vet once commented on an Icelandic gelding I was riding in an endurance ride. We were surrounded by these stunning Arab athletes competing for Team Canada at the World Equestrian Games. The vet laughed, as my 13.3-hand gelding tossed his head in the trot-out and said, "This horse is fit to continue." He then added, "If I had to get to a burning building miles away to save a child, I would choose to ride an Icelandic horse, because I know the Icelandic horse would get me there through anything, safely, no matter what."

I will leave you with a story of one of the greats of the breed: Borkur was born in Iceland. He was three-gaited, and was apparently the laziest horse ever known. He was shipped over from Germany for the Great American Horse Race in 1976. He was the only horse out of 200 horses of all breeds, including Arabians, Quarter horses, thoroughbreds, mules, etc., to start and finish the 3,500 mile race—and to do every single mile. He was never sick or lame on the ride or ever in his long lifetime. During that race, they rode 6 days a week for 3 months. Borkur passed away in 2002 at the Icelandic Horse Farm in Vernon, BC, at age 35.

The famous motto for the American Endurance Ride Congress is, "To finish is to win." Borkur won over each and every breed in that race.

CONTACT

If you are interested in distance riding with your Icelandic horse, join our Facebook group: Icelandic Distance Riders North America. We are a very positive and active group focused on support with the breed in distance riding.

Or contact me directly at Wild Rose Icelandic Horse Farm, Alberta, Canada: wildrosetraining@yahoo.ca or www.wildroseicelandichorsefarm.com.

THE ROAD TO COLLECTION, PART 3

by Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir art by Margot Apple

efore Covid-19 hit, I had planned a series of clinics called "The Road to True Collection" at my Solheimar Farm in Tunbridge, VT. These clinics would combine Centered Riding (I'm a Level-2 instructor) and my knowledge of the tölt (I'm an FT-certified Icelandic horse trainer with 35 years of experience). My ideology is deeply based on training the rider to become balanced and light in order to help the horse be his best.

In the previous two issues of the Quarterly, I summarized the topics covered in my January and February clinics: what affects a horse's ability to learn collection; some classical dressage exercises I use to supple the horse, to isolate his body parts, and to put him into a more-collected frame or "box"; and how Centered Riding can help the rider achieve "flow," among others.

When I had to cancel my clinic series, my students Nancy Brown and Chuck Fergus asked me to help them continue along the road to collection; this article is based on lessons they took when we were once again able to meet up.

True collection, I need to stress, takes years of effort. Based on the horse's conformation and character, true collection may not be possible at all.

But if we ride our horses in tölt, we need to follow the road to collection. Taking steps along this road teaches the horse to carry himself correctly under saddle and lets him enjoy a longer and healthier life.

ULTIMATE COLLECTION

What's our goal on the road to collection? What is ultimate collection? For me, it's when the horse reaches underneath with his hind legs as far as he can—meaning as far as his strength, balance, and flexibility allow.

So it will be different for each horse, and different for the same horse at different times.

Can we completely change the way the horse steps under himself? No. Each horse has X amount of flexibility. Can we increase it? Yes, by using exercises that

make him cross over and stretch his legs. We can train his balance a little bit at a time, teaching him to rock back on his haunches and to use his hind end more. We can increase his strength the same way, by making him use the right muscles.

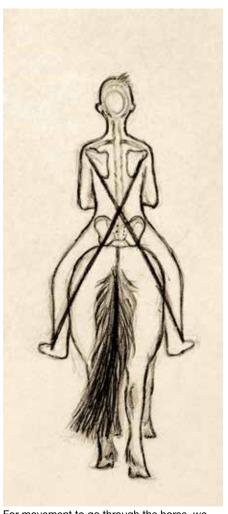
But the right muscles don't get used by pulling a horse into tölt. They don't get used by us forcing the horse into a frame with our hands. When a horse braces against the reins, he hollows his back and his hind legs don't go as far underneath as they should. The right muscles only get used when we, as riders, use our seat and legs properly to drive the horse's haunches underneath him and to elevate his shoulders.

To train collection, I break it down into three stages. First, we need to make sure our horse is supple and bendable on the sides and that we can move the haunches or the shoulders independently. Second, to keep the horse straight, we need a lot of forward energy. Third, to elevate the shoulders we create an imaginary box. At first, the box is big and roomy. We don't ask the horse to round too much. We don't want the horse to curl his head under—that drops the shoulders and leaves the hind end behind. Just using our reins is not the answer. We have to drive the haunches under and free up the shoulders. As the horse becomes stronger, more flexible, and better balanced, we can make the box smaller in front, asking the horse to become more rounded at the poll.

DEAD HAND

What's important in this scenario is your rein contact. I think rein contact is probably the hardest thing about riding. What kind of contact do we have? If it's too much, it's no good. And if it's too little, it's no good either. How do we know if it's correct?

Here's a Centered Riding exercise I like. It's called "dead hand." Take one hand and make it dead: totally relaxed. Pretend your other hand is the horse. When the horse-hand pulls on the first two fingers of the dead-hand, you should feel



For movement to go through the horse, we have to allow it to flow through us. We control the flow by riding on our X and not tightening any muscles to hinder the movement.

that pull between your shoulderblades. That pull is the horse asking to come down onto the bit. If you can't feel it, try to release some muscles. Start by lengthening the back of your neck. You need to be able to access that area between your shoulderblades. Breathe into it.

Next, have a friend be the horse. Hold her hand as if you're holding the rein. Sit up tall. Let your hips hang loose. Center yourself and allow her to pull your hand gently forward a few millimeters, then gently back. Don't you pull your hand back, let your friend move it back. You're



When the horse asks to come down onto the bit, you should feel that pull between your shoulderblades. Practice with a friend until you can access that area.

not doing anything. You're completely neutral. Do you feel the motion between your shoulderblades? Breathe and relax until vou can feel it.

Then ask your friend to become a naughty horse and pull harder. You now have to let go of your neutrality and ground yourself. Don't let her straighten out your elbow. She's only allowed to move you a few millimeters forward and back. When she goes too far, imagine you are dropping weight from your triceps down into your heavy elbow. Breathe. Drop your shoulderblade into your opposite seatbone. Roll your center back. Soften your eyes.

Your friend (the horse) has to feel the need to settle into your hand and be comfortable there. If the contact is too loose, it's like holding a noodle—it's not comfortable. But she should not feel you pulling against her, either. Your hand just gets heavy. You're saying no.

A heavy hand isn't a stiff hand. It's heavy because you've released the muscles, not because you've tightened them. A heavy hand means no, but it's a quiet hand. It's steady and comfortable. She should not want to brace against you, but just settle into the contact.

Practice this with both hands. It will help you understand that forward energy doesn't mean speed.

RIDING ON THE X

What did I mean, in that exercise, by dropping your weight, rolling your center, grounding? It's all part of what I call "riding on the X." I introduced this concept in my last article, but let me go into a little more detail.

What does it mean to ride on the X? In order for movement to go through the horse, we have to allow that movement to flow through us.

The tölt is a supple gait. It's fluid. The horse's back is moving, waving. All the muscles are working. The movement starts in the rear end of the horse and in order for it to travel correctly into the front end of the horse and into the bridle, it has to flow through your whole body. It flows up from your right hip to your left shoulder, crossing between your shoulderblades. It then goes down your triceps, into your elbow, down your forearm, and into your hand. If you are holding tight anywhere anywhere!—the movement will stop there.

That's why people have issues with tölt. They are stopping the movement without realizing it.

What can we do to help the horse tölt better? First, we have to figure out where in our body we are stiff. Where are we holding. Riding on the X means riding on your skeleton. It means you're not tightening any muscles to hinder the horse's movement.

GROUNDING

To ride like this, you first need to be grounded. My instructor, Lucille Bump, once told me that Sally Swift, the inventor of Centered Riding, thought about having grounding be one of the basic elements. But then she realized that grounding is central to all of the elements. Each one of the four elements of Centered Ridingbreathing, soft eyes, building blocks, and centering—entails grounding. When you breathe properly, you ground yourself. When your eyes are soft, not hard and focused like a laser beam, you ground yourself. When your building blocks-your ankles, hips, shoulders, and head-are stacked properly, you ground yourself. When you find your center, you ground yourself. Grounding is crucial for every element. It can't be a separate element.

Here's how I do it. When I first get on my horse, I make myself just relax and let my legs hang loose from the hips. They are like a blanket draped around the horse, swaying with the movement. I think about my seatbones having suction cups attached to my horse's hind legs. I think of my feet growing roots into the ground.

Like a lot of people, what I really want to do is to stand in my stirrups, to push against the stirrups. But the stirrup is a floating thing. It has to float with the horse's movement. So instead I think about wearing rollerskates. If you're on rollerskates, and you're pushing on your toe, what happens? You fall on your face. If you're pushing on your heel, you fall on your butt. That's not balance, is it? Balance is when your weight is over the middle of your foot.

Being grounded and relaxed in your lower body is important because your seatbone and your leg bring the horse's haunch underneath. That's where the tölt movement starts.

I've found that, for me, the key to being grounded is keeping my knee bent and soft enough that it's like a shock absorber in a car. When I have a heavy knee, when I feel like I'm walking on my knees, my whole body moves nicely, softly, and my horse tölts cleanly. When my knee is not bent and heavy, everything is stiff. I lose the horse's hind end. Then I get a horse with a stiff back and a pacey or trotty tölt.

So before I start doing a lot of dressage exercises or circles or anything, I warm myself up by letting the horse move me. My muscles take a break. I allow the horse to warm me up and get me loose.

It's a good way to realize, too, where I'm not moving. If my horse starts leaning to the right, what does that mean? It means I'm locked in my right hip and the horse is not able to move his right hind leg.

So when I first get on my horse, I really try, I consciously try, to let go. To relax. This is a really hard thing for me to do, as I'm kind of a control freak! But it's really important.

BOUNDARIES

Once I'm loose and warmed up, I start setting boundaries. I start making the "box." I think about putting my hands where they should be, about an inch above the withers, so I have a bent, heavy elbow right in front of my hip joint. I think about my wrist being nice and soft and supple, because if I'm bracing in the wrist, it goes straight to the horse's poll and locks up the poll.

I let my horse walk and I think about the movement going from his right hind diagonally across my back into my left shoulder, down my left arm, into my heavy elbow, into my left hand, and into the bridle. I think about it going from his left hind diagonally across my back into my right shoulder, down my right arm, into my heavy elbow, into my right hand, and into the bridle. I don't let it fall through my hands, though. I set a boundary.

What's my goal? I want the horse's haunch to come under and for that movement to flow through my whole body into my hands. My steady hands set a boundary in the front, so the energy stays in the horse. When the hind comes under, the horse then elevates his shoulders. He gets tall. He's light. He's uphill. He's not just barrelling around the arena on his forehand. What I'm looking for is a horse that is self-carrying. Self-carriage means that the horse is sitting on his haunches, elevating the front end, but the rein is soft. He's collected. He's dancing.

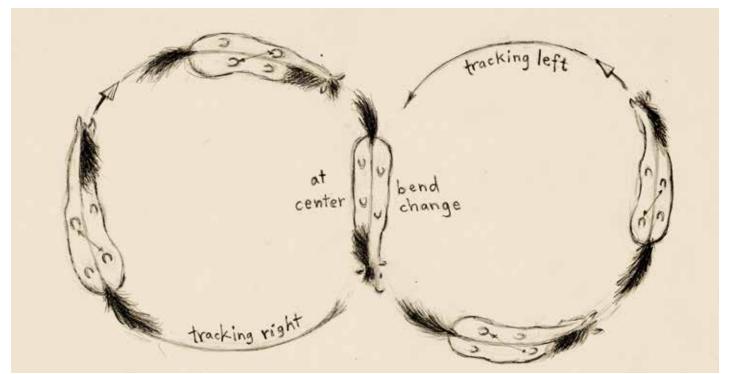
Once I've set a boundary, I'm ready to ride a figure-8. I start by thinking about driving the horse forward. I think forward—because without forward energy, we really don't have anything to work with. But forward does not mean fast. In order to get a good connection between the horse's hind end and his front end, I use a very slow walk on a small circle, with a lot of leg pressure and little squeezes on

the reins and a good bend at the ribcage. When the horse's hind leg comes forward, I squeeze the opposite rein a little bit.

I imagine tying a string between his left hind leg and his right front leg, and another string between his right hind leg and his left front leg. If the horse gets too uncollected, too strung out, that string connecting the diagonals will break. Then I start again, tying a new imaginary string. I slow him down by dropping my center, tightening my hand a little bit, squeezing with my leg, and holding steady on the rein until he comes down onto the bit. When he's on the bit, the distance between his front and hind feet gets shorter. He rounds his back and uses the muscles needed for collection.

When a horse is just beginning along the road to true collection, those imaginary strings will be pretty long. The farther along the road he is, the shorter they will become. But remember that the strings connect the diagonals. You want him to step fully underneath himself. Tölt may be a lateral gait, but the horse needs to be able to balance his whole body—and yours—over one back foot.

It's also important to keep the horse square. His feet should all stay "inside the box." They should travel in a direct line, not stepping out of the boundaries I've established. My goal is to connect the



When riding a figure-8, concentrate on getting a good connection between the horse's hind end and his front end. Imagine you've tied a string from one hind leg to the opposite front leg. Don't let that string break!



When your horse is tölting in a collected frame, with her hind legs reaching far underneath her and her shoulders elevated, your reins can be very soft-almost slack. It feels like dancing.

diagonals. When I circle to the left, I'm connecting the left hind with the right front. I milk my inside rein, squeezing and releasing, and my inside leg is on the girth, poking his ribcage, and pushing his inside hind toward the outside front. My outside leg is on the horse, just slightly behind the girth, to prevent him from swinging his hind out too much. If my outside leg is not on, he falls out of the circle, loses his balance, and begins to rush. My outside leg helps him balance better.

The reason a horse starts rushing is that you lost one hind leg. You need to tighten your boundary a little on the opposite rein. So if you lost the right hind, it means the horse is leaning on the left shoulder. You will have to slow down or half-halt the left shoulder, and then drive the right hind underneath to regain the balance from the rear. If the horse lost the left hind, it means the horse is leaning on the right shoulder. You will need to slow down or half-halt the right shoulder and then drive the left hind underneath the horse to regain the balance from the rear.

What does my outside rein do? My outside rein prevents the horse from stepping out too much on the outside shoulder. If you lose the outside front, the inside hind has no way to catch up. You've broken the string that connects the diagonals and the horse, again, loses his balance. That means my outside rein has to be very steady. It's really important that even though the outside rein is setting a boundary, it's welcoming. The horse feels comfortable coming into it-not going through it, but coming into it. We send the horse into the outside rein.

STABILIZE

The key, again, is rein contact. How do you make sure your hands are steady and you're not always changing the rein contact?

The answer is grounding. You ground yourself by releasing your muscles and finding your own balance. Let your elbow get heavy. Then soften the forearm, because if the forearm is stiff, your hand will bounce.

Think of your X. How do you stabilize your X? Let your shoulders hang loose. Lengthen the back of your neck and sit tall. Your head should be loose on your neck. Release the bottom of your right shoulder blade into your left hip. Release the bottom of your left shoulder blade into your right hip—and not just into your hip. The release goes all the way down through your heavy knee into your heavy foot, into the roots growing from the bottom of your foot into the ground. Do you feel it?

When your horse pulls on your left

rein, drop your left shoulder blade into your right hip and stabilize. When he pulls on your right rein, drop your weight into your left hip and stabilize. Use your X.

All you have to do is stabilize. An unsteady headset means the horse hasn't found his balance. You have to stay steady so he can find his balance. If you start bobbing with him, nobody will find their balance. But if you stay steady and grounded, the horse gets grounded.

It's not something you do just once, when you first get on your horse. I think about grounding myself a million times when I'm riding.

For instance, when I'm standing on the ground—just standing, not riding—I have to be really careful not to lean onto my right foot. When I ride, I know I want to lean too-that's my inclination. I go to my right foot too much. But horses are very sensitive to our weight. When I lean too heavily on one foot or on one of my seatbones, my horse goes in that direction. So I have to think about being in balance. When I ground myself, I have to consciously think about balancing on both feet so I'm even on both sides. I have to think about balancing on both my seatbones. I have to put my rollerskates on.

And as I ride—I find it happens all the time—I will lose my X. I have to constantly come back to it, constantly think about it and use it to rebalance myself. I have to let go of the tension in my neck and shoulders, by releasing from the bottom of each shoulderblade, one at a time, diagonally across my back into my hip, hip into knee, knee into heavy foot. And then I release from the other shoulderblade. I have to do this over and over and over again.

For in order for movement to go through the horse, we have to allow that movement to flow through us. In order for the horse to tölt, we have to figure out where in our body we are stiff, where we are holding tension, and we have to release it. The horse can work through it if we're not 100% perfect. The horse can work through it if we're only semi-right. But we can help the horse. We're never going to be perfect, but we can all be better.

When I first started learning Centered Riding, it was really difficult for me to just let go. But the reason I went into Centered Riding is that I understand that if I can't fix myself, I can't fix my horse. My horse is a mirror image of its rider—and that's me.

HORSE BRAIN, HUMANBRAIN

by Alys Culhane

orse Brain, Human Brain: The Neuroscience of Horsemanship by Janet L. Jones, Ph.D. (published by Trafalgar Square Books, 2020) is a must-read for Icelandic horse owners. Icelandic horses tend to be more stoic and averse to training methods that involve endless repetition, and Janet Jones's science-based understanding of the horse's vs. the human's brain complements their non-reactive and people-friendly natures.

As we all know, we're in the midst of an information explosion in relation to all things equine. On the heels of natural horsemanship, with its emphasis on dominance and use of pressure/release, we're now seeing a more cognitive emphasis when it comes to horse training. The doors seem to have been flung wide open, and those people (like me) who've been attempting to make a horse-to-human cognitive connection are finding themselves in exciting territory. The new term, coined by Stephen Peters (a neuroscientist and horse brain researcher), is "evidence-based horsemanship."

The list of equine practitioners who are expanding their horizons this way includes Warwick Shiller, a noted natural horsemanship clinician who as of late has taken a more cognitively-based stance. In his podcasts, you'll hear him talk about the polyvagal nervous system and the dual roles of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

Numerous books on horse cognition have also come out. I've read *Horse Head: Brain Science & Other Insights* by Maddy Butcher (with Stephen Peters), *Evidence Based Horsemanship* by Stephen Peters and Martin Black, *The Mind of the Horse: An Introduction to Equine Cognition* by M.A. LeBlanc, and now *Horse Brain, Human Brain* by Janet L. Jones.

PARTNERSHIP

If you want to develop your working partnership with your horse, I suggest you first read Janet's book. Janet Jones is a cognitive scientist who writes in an accessible fashion about two equally complex areas of study, horse brain science and human brain science. Her anatomical and physiological information complements specific how-to



Book in hand, Alys attempts to figure out trailer loading prior to learning indirect training methods. Photo by Pete Praetorius.

practices. Additionally, she uses anecdotal accounts to support her assertions.

Janet believes that becoming more familiar with how horse or human noggins function will enable us to forge stronger, longer-lasting communicative bonds.

A case in point: Humans have a highly developed prefrontal cortex, conversely, equines have no prefrontal cortex. In humans, this mass of brain cells rests just above our eyes. This area, she says, "is responsible for executive function, which allows us to plan, organize, and evaluate."

Executive function provides us with the capacity for forethought, time management, decision making, and risk determination. Consequently, we have a longer attention span than do our equine partners, one that enables us to change our behavior to meet new demands. Our brains are wired for goal achievement, which is why we tend to insist and demand, rather than allow and ask. Horses lack a prefrontal cortex and therefore lack executive function. Horses, who can't conceive of goals, either comply or resist when a task is beyond their comprehension.

WORST CASE

This difference between the horse brain and the human brain explains one of the many dangers of relying on what Janet Jones calls direct commands—commands in which the horse is presented with only a single option.

Experienced trainers generally have more success with direct commands, because they give the horse clear cues, have sharp balance, and have trained and strengthened their bodies in a way that enables them to ride well. In the hands of inexperienced trainers, direct commands have their drawbacks, in that fearful horses become averse to human insistence.

How might an over-reliance on direct commands affect our day-to-day relations with our horses?

Here's a hypothetical worse-case scenario: My prefrontal cortex indicates to me that time is of the essence. I live in Alaska, where in the winter it gets dark early. My riding buddies are planning on going for a short late-afternoon ride. If I'm not there on time, they'll leave without me. I insist that Rauðhetta gets on the trailer. I'm in

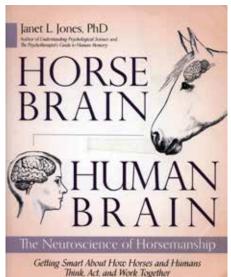
a hurry, which is why I refuse to take no for an answer. I repeatedly whack her on the hindquarters with my handi-stick, then breathe a sigh of relief as-nostrils flared, eyes wide, and ears flattened—she leaps into the trailer. I'm on time for the ride, although a bit harried. Afterward, five strong guys appear and shove the hapless mare back into the trailer. I win, Rauðhetta loses. Or did I win? I now have an even more trailer-phobic horse.

INDIRECT TRAINING

In Horse Brain, Human Brain, Janet Jones presents an alternative to this kind of reliance on direct commands: indirect training. This is a step-by-step process that allows the trainer and horse to follow the path of least resistance. She says, "This is partly a process of teaching your mount to depend on you for pre-frontal decisions."

After reading Janet's book, I focused on the distinction between the role of my existent prefrontal cortex and my horse's non-existent one. I internalized key terms: for example, "direct" and "indirect." I was then able to act upon multiple, related options. That is: (1) I made learning fun, (2) I relied upon the use of trailer-loading-like tasks, (3) I created an associative learning environment, and (4) I acted on a long-term, well-thought-out plan.

Reading further, I found my new understanding of indirect training solidified



Target training worked well for Rauði and her not-so-hapless owner. Rauði is happy to walk into a confined space, knowing she'll be rewarded for touching her nose to the target. Janet Jones's Horse Brain, Human Brain explains why such methods work. Photo by Pete Praetorius.



by Janet's description of two additional brain regions: the thalamus and the basal ganglia.

She explains that, in humans, both brain regions work with the prefrontal cortex to allow us to decide how to respond to a stimulus. The thalamus collects incoming information that is sense-related: sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and non-verbal cues. The basal ganglia then prepares the body for movement in response to this information. At this point, the prefrontal cortex intervenes to consider the new data and how to react.

In horses, the thalamus collects information, and the basal ganglia prepares the body for instant movement. There is no prefrontal cortex to hold those reactions back. The horse perceives somethingand reacts without a second thought.

BEST CASE

Here's a best-case scenario: I work with my trailer-phobic horse well in advance of my next riding date. I have her walk over tarps in our Playground of Higher Learning (my backyard arena), through poles laid sideways on a barrel, and under an awning.

I experiment, by first working with Rauðhetta off-lead and then on-lead. The former provides her with the time she needs to explore her options, and the latter provides her with more guidance.

What is that flapping flag attached to the cross poles on the makeshift "trailer" in our Playground of Higher Learning? What is Rauðhetta to make of this-and what am I to make of her response? I

freeze; Rauðhetta prepares to flee. I take a few deep breaths, focusing on the exhale. Rauðhetta gradually slows the rate of her breathing. We stroll around the yard, return, and again approach the dreaded flag-monster. This time, on my request, Rauðhetta walks right into the makeshift enclosure, despite the flag. When she touches the target (a foam cylinder), I click my clicker, give her a reinforcer, and praise her repeatedly. We then go for a short ride.

A few weeks later I lead my now more-confident horse up to the (real) trailer and ask her to get in. Rauðhetta makes a beeline for the target (I'd put an orange cone inside the trailer) and is rewarded and praised. Ours is a win/win situation.

A caveat: This story is an exaggeration with some basis in reality. Yes, early on Rauðhetta was slightly trailer-phobic. I tapped her on the rump with a crop, and she complied and hopped in to our straight-load trailer. A few years later we purchased a slant-load trailer and led her buddy Tinni in first. But I did build a Playground of Higher Learning in my yard and began using positive-reinforcement training techniques, including clicker-training.

But it was only after reading Janet Jones's book that I made the connection between my earlier, unsuccessful, and later, more successful efforts. Horse Brain, Human Brain enabled me to offer a solid rationale to people who had voiced skepticism about my use of indirect training methods with my Icelandic horses.

ZOE GOES FOR THE GOLD by Nicki Esclori

oe Johnson is one of those humans born with the horse bug—an incurable condition. She started asking for a horse, and for riding lessons, when she was three years old. At age six, her parents gave in. A lucky coincidence brought her to Tamangur Icelandics in Colorado ten years ago, and Zoe became trainer Coralie Denmeade's first little student.

In 2015 Zoe's dream of having her own horse came true with the arrival of Prins (US2009104961), who has been her perfect partner ever since. (See Zoe's article in Issue One 2015 of the *Quarterly*). Zoe and her family now have three Icelandics. She works with them every day. She rides in shows and drill teams, goes on trail rides around the state of Colorado, does liberty work, and she even taught Prins to pull a

buggy.

Zoe qualified for and participated in the 2017 American Youth Cup and the 2019 North American Youth Cup, and she qualified for the 2020 FEIF Youth Cup team. (Sadly, that last event was canceled due to Covid-19.) In 2018 she qualified for and rode her Icelandic with the Pikes Peak Rangerettes, a Western Drill Team of 20 girls who perform at rodeos. She was part of the Tamangur Drill Team, representing the Icelandic horse at the 2019 Rocky Mountain Horse Expo. She loves being part of the Icelandic community at Tamangur, and she keeps in touch with her friends from the Youth Cups via social media. Zoe has passed the exams for USIHC Basic Riding Badges Level I and II, and Competition Level II.

But Zoe is not only a horse-crazy



Zoe poses with her "perfect partner," Prins, and shows off a heavily decorated sash with badges and pins for all her accomplishments—like her bronze and silver award and many years of Girl Scout cookie sales!



girl—she's a Girl Scout going for her Gold Award.

THE GOLD AWARD

Zoe joined the Girl Scouts in first grade and has been in a troop with some of her best friends ever since. It started out as a fun social thing to do, but the community service part really appealed to Zoe's sense of empathy. As a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador (the two highest badge levels), you can earn the coveted Gold Award only if you have also earned a Bronze and a Silver award in the previous levels. The Gold Award is similar to the Eagle Scout award, in that it is the highest honor in scouting, but the Gold Award requires more of a focus on community service and has a wider scope.

Every summer Zoe's family travels to Iowa, her mother's home state, and Zoe attends the local YMCA summer camp. It's a fun camp that includes horseback riding, to Zoe's delight. She rode a horse for the first time there. She knows how meaningful and special it is for kids to have the experience of interacting with and riding horses there, since many of them would



In her horsemanship handbook, Zoe demonstrates how to bridle a very cooperative Prins.

never get the chance otherwise.

Yet as Zoe's horsemanship skills and expertise grew over the years, she noticed that the quality of horse care at the camp was not what it should be. She saw horses standing saddled in the hot sun for hours. She saw horses becoming obese from being put out on lush grass too long. She noticed that hoof care was neglected. She realized this was happening not from ill will, but from a lack of knowledge by the staff. The camp struggled to find staff with good horsekeeping experience, and training newbies was difficult.

Zoe very much wanted to help. So she decided to create a handbook to help with staff training and to use for quick reference throughout the summer. This handbook became her Girl Scout Gold Award Project. It fulfills very stringent requirements: It must be an independent service project, not a troop activity. It has to be sustainable and last beyond her involvement. It needs to have a national and/or global measurable impact. It must take at least 80 hours to complete (Zoe is way beyond that). And it must be a "new and needed" service to a community.

MORE THAN HORSING AROUND

Zoe set to work compiling the handbook, using her knowledge from studying for

the USIHC Riding Badge levels and online sources.

The result is a handy 20-page booklet, with a supporting video on YouTube, called More than Horsing Around: Learning the Basics of Equine Care and Safety.

For example, Zoe shows how to tie a horse safely, with good photo instructions for a quick release knot, and what to pay attention to when grooming, reminding the reader to always clean out the horse's feet. It is important to know the names of the body parts of the horse, in case you need to describe something to a veterinarian in an emergency call, so she included a detailed description. Weight management and correct feeding are a major issue, so Zoe gives us the basics on how to find out if our horse is in good shape and how much to feed. She tells us how important hoof care is-for the horse's and our own safety-and what we must do. Do you know what your horse's vital signs are and how to find them? It's in the book. Zoe also covers common equine illnesses like colic, how to treat common smaller injuries, and when to call the vet (with information on the vitals!).

In addition to her Girl Scout mentors, she had the handbook reviewed by professional horse trainers and a veterinarian.

She sent the finished handbook to the director of the YMCA Camp in Iowa, who has already worked it into the staff training program there. Zoe plans to distribute the handbook online to many more camps throughout the U.S. She hopes it will also be a helpful resource for new riders and horse owners, so she approached the USIHC Education Committee, asking for help distributing it to the Icelandic horse community. It is a handbook for all horse breeds, but with special mention of Icelandic horse requirements.

What did she hope to achieve with this project? "Ultimately," Zoe says, "I just hope that this helps at least a few people become more knowledgeable and confident about horse care and safety, and hopefully it can also ensure these horses are taken care of the best they can be!" While this issue of the Quarterly was at press, Zoe had the final Girl Scout review of her Gold Award project. We wish her success!

SOURCES

More Than Horsing Around: Learning the Basics of Equine Care and Safety can be found on the USIHC website (www.icelandics.

org). It is free to download and print out as a handy reference.

If you want to learn more about Icelandic horse care and riding, you can order the USIHC Riding Badge Program textbook for \$12 plus shipping and handling (see https://icelandics.org/ riding-badge-program). This 58-page booklet covers general knowledge, keeping, feeding, care and health, hoof care, grooming, tack, riding, and gaits.

For a great in-depth course, look for The Icelandic Riding Levels by Helga Thoroddsen, published by Hólar University College and available from several Icelandic tack stores in the U.S. These booklets are the study material for the Icelandic "Knapamerki" riding level exams. The first four booklets in the series are now available in English. About 100 pages each, they cover everything from general Icelandic horse history and knowledge to horse care and riding and training.

The Complete Guide to the Icelandic Horse is a big book by Lex Van Keulen, Vanda Oosterhuis, and others. Available at several Icelandic tack stores in the U.S., it covers all major topics of breeding, keeping, training, and riding the Icelan-



She also demonstrates how to hold and clean a hoof-one of the most important grooming



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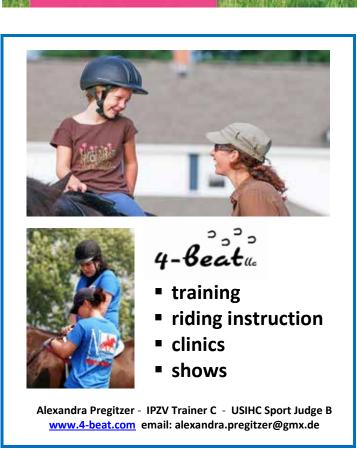
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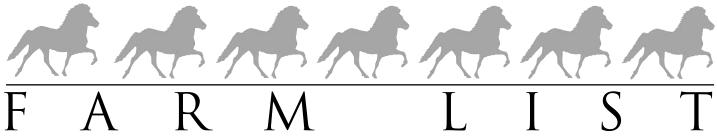
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Gravity Hill Ranch Rebecca Lynn 5307 Lichau Road, Penngrove CA Penngrove, California 94951 415-794-9990 rebecca.a.lynn@gmail.com

Valkyrie Icelandic Laura Benson 1 Duane St. #33 Redwood City, California 94062 6502814108 invaderlala@gmail.com www.valkyrieicelandic.com

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

Lough Arrow Icelandics

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Tamangur Icelandic Horses Coralie Denmeade 5775 Best Road Larkspur, Colorado 80118 (719) 209-2312 coralie@tamangur-icelandics.com www.tamangur-icelandics.com

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Taktur Icelandic Horses
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carrieandterral@gmail.com
taktur.horse

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Fire & Ice Icelandic Horses Alicia Flanigan & Nikkisue Flanigan 32 Putnam Ridge Limington, Maine 04049-3643 +1 (207) 615-8556 icelandics17@gmail.com www.fireandice.horse

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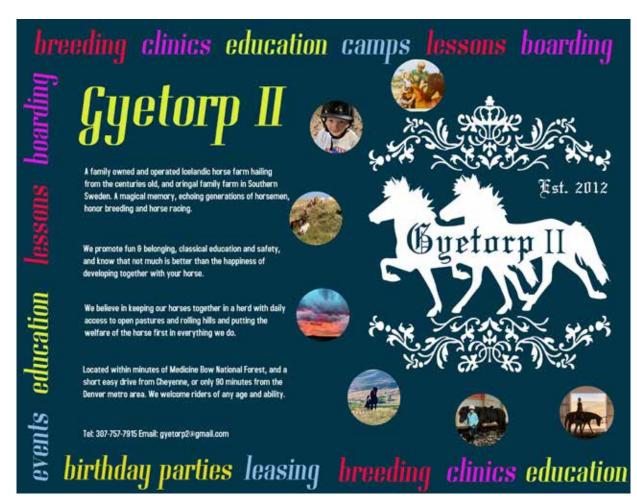
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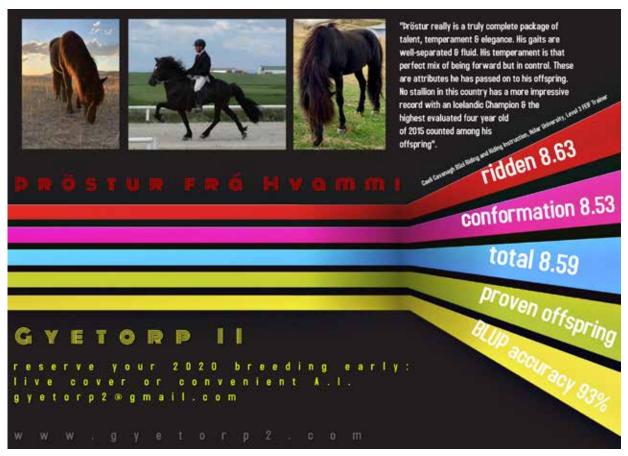
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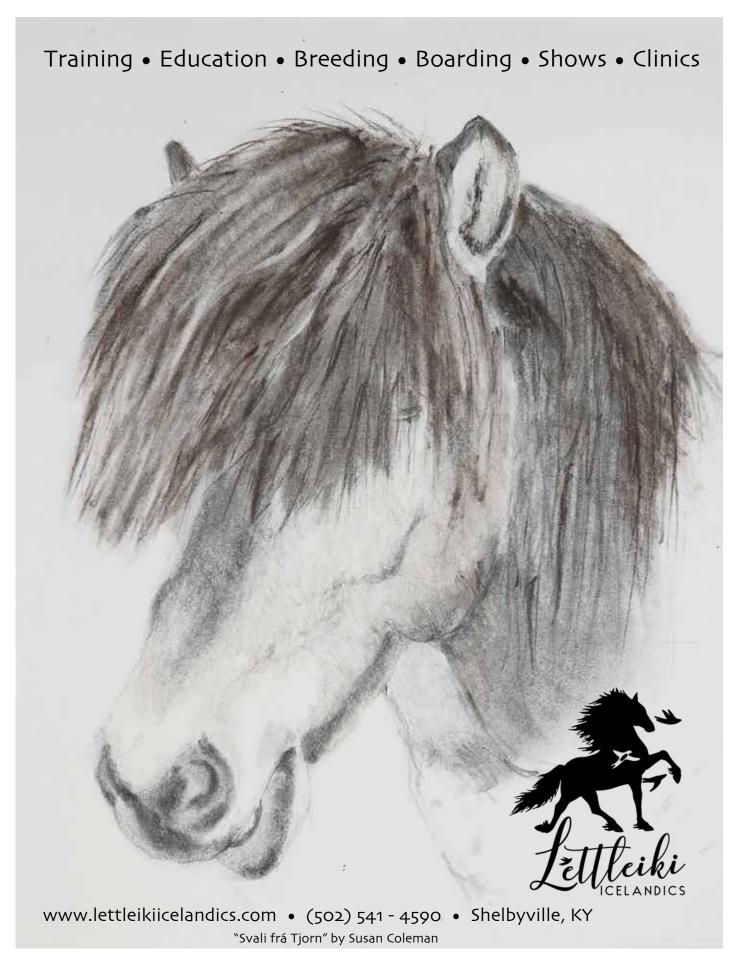
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