

Marin Horse Council

2013 SUMMER EQUINOX NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 115

Marin Horse Council | 171 Bel Marin Keys Blvd. | Novato, CA 94949 | 415.259.5783 | www.MarinHorseCouncil.org

From the Saddle

The MHC is proud to announce that we are making a difference. Thanks to the tenacious efforts of Homer Osgood the MHC funded 7 of the 9 metal spring gates requested by Point Reyes National Seashore. They will replace many of the dangerous wire ranch gates found in the Seashore and on Bolinas ridge in Samuel P Taylor State Park. Next on our list of good deeds is that the \$500 made from our Spring ride, held at 5 Brooks on May 18th, will be donated to the historic Morgan Horse Ranch that is part of Point Reyes National Seashore at Bear Valley trail head. Phil who is the caretaker of the ranch has been working on rebuilding the barn which is in pretty bad shape. Third on the list is a water trough at Olompali State Park to be located in the parking lot. We are currently working with Ghilotti Bros by asking them to dig the trench necessary for the pipe to bring water to the site. The MHC will provide the trough and float. We have the go-ahead from the State Park to make it happen.

Other good things ahead: Talks are taking place to collaborate on an effort between the MHC and MCBC to create signage that is friendly in nature reminding trail users to be courteous and which alerts users to right of way. These signs may span more than one public land to begin a process of creating uniform signage that transects our public trails through different land management agencies.

This brings me to why signage is going to be important. Safety on the trail is the most important aspect of trail management. Some of our trails are and more will become accessible to all users. Therefore it is important that as we share our trails we ride with courtesy and awareness knowing that we have the right to be safe and to ask fellow users for safe conduct as well.

Coming up next! The Marin County Fair! Please stop by and visit the MHC booth located near the arena. Or better yet, ask our Fair Chair, Lauren Terk at eqecav@marinhorsecouncil.org if you can help by taking a shift at the booth. There is a Western show on Friday July 5th and an English show on Sat. July 6th plus equine entertainment and demonstrations in the arena from Thursday July 4th on through the weekend.

The MHC board wants to get the word out about how important it is to be a member of the Council. Watch for us at your barn. We will be table sitting this summer at our local barns asking you what you think the important issues are for our equestrian community and for your help by becoming a member so we can continue to offer political and financial support throughout our public lands, our barns and our equestrian clubs.

We are also actively seeking board members. If you like the direction the Council is heading, have some energy to do some committee work, can come to a meeting once a month and help the MHC be politically active, then we need you! Give me a call Monte Kruger 897-7308 Thank you.

See you out there, Monte Kruger | *President, MHC*



Some of the MHC Board members and speakers at the 2013 MHC Horse Course.

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OUT ON THE TRAIL



Equestrians Against Broom!!!

On April 20, in honor of Earth Day and to support Marin County Open Space, a group of equestrians from Creekside Equestrian Center, Dickson Ranch, and as far away as Penngrove, gathered at the trail head of East Sylvestris Fire Road in the Gary Giacomini Preserve to make a dent in the "pioneer" French and Scotch broom population there. By removing this relatively small area of aggressive and invasive plants, we had a chance of keeping their population contained and even eradicated. Rich Gibson, Supervising Ranger, and his team thought our recommended project was a good one. He was there to welcome us at 9:00 AM sharp with a cooler filled with water, some snacks, tools, and most importantly, small packets of IvyX and Technu to subdue the poison oak we were bound to come in contact with!

Everyone had their own reasons to show up. The youngest equestrian, Jenna Dahlin, 10, who arrived with her grandmother, Sandy,

{continued on page 3}

Adventurous Cowgirls!

Paicines Ranch

At the end of April a group of us "cowgirls" (aka The Wild Bunch!) packed up our horses and drove an easy three hours south east of Marin for a mini vacation on a working ranch which is located east of Hollister.

As we drove through the entry gate and down the driveway we saw beautiful Andalusian mares with their foals and ranch houses and out buildings that make up the historic PAICINES RANCH. Dating back to the 1860's the ranch presently produces 100% grass fed beef and hosts a variety of events including weddings, fundraisers, and overnight stays.

After settling our horses into the well-maintained covered barn with pipe paddocks (accompanied by free ranging chickens!) we headed over to the ranch house where we immediately walked into 'another world'. This unique facility consists of a large main house and several restored smaller houses. We rented the main house which easily accommodated the 8 of us and could have handled a few more. The expansive gardens, the surrounding rolling hills and the big white house all made us feel like we were visiting one of California's original Mexican land grants! The main floor of the house was appointed with comfortable furnishings, a lovely living room, well-appointed bedrooms, a grand dining room and a commercial kitchen! We cooked and partied inside and lounged around outside on the expansive porch.

And, oh yes, we rode. The ranch has several dirt roads and trails going through pastures, up hills, over to a lake, and across streams. While the mileage might seem limited to some it was easy to go out for a three hour *{continued on page 3}*

OUT ON THE TRAIL

ride and see wildlife, native plants, ponds and cienegas, all of which made for most pleasant riding.

The ranch managers, Chris and Betsy, were so welcoming that we started having fun the moment we arrived. Besides having a "hands on" experience with Betsy's mares and their new foals, we got to watch a small herd of sheep being sheared and collected fresh eggs from those chickens that were wandering in between our horses' legs. To top off our 'real ranch' experience we drank cool, fresh milk from Betsy's milk cow!

There are a number of houses of different sizes to rent and terrific accommodations for your horse, so consider a visit. Their website looks like they only do weddings and large affairs, but give them a call -- they like to do the Bed and Breakfast kind of thing, too! As they advertise: "Our intention is to preserve and enhance both the natural and man-made features of the ranch and make them accessible to visitors while producing delicious pastured meats."

It's wonderful that ranches like this one are being preserved and, lucky for us, they are being shared with the public. We had a fabulous time and highly recommend trying Paicines Ranch!

Paicines Ranch: paicinesranch.com, 13388 Airline Hwy, Paicines. 831 628-0288

Happy Trails!

- Linda Albion and Vicki Englert

Marin Horse Council Spring Ride

The Marin Horse Council held their spring ride on May 18th at Five Brooks in the Point Reyes National Seashore. We had 30 riders who went out in small groups. The weather was perfect for horse and rider. The views at PTRNS are spectacular and breathtaking. There is no place like it on earth. It is my favorite place to ride. We had around 30 people signed up who enjoyed the day. I couldn't help noticing all the smiles on everyone's faces as they came back from the ride. The horses had a calmness about them too. All were well satisfied. While the horses were treated to apples and carrots, the riders were relaxing in the shade eating a scrumptious lunch served by the MHC board and volunteers. BBQ salmon was served along with grilled portabella sandwiches, homemade coleslaw and other goodies.

What a fantastic day it was! All the proceeds from the ride are going to the Morgan Horse Ranch at Bear Valley. Thank you to all who came out and all that donated for a great cause.

Thank you to all of our volunteers and to the PTRNS for allowing the ride to take place on their beautiful land.

Looking forward, our Fall ride will happen at Dickson Ranch in Woodacre sometime in mid-October. I am hopeful for a large turnout so tell your friends. We look forward to serving everyone then.

- Michael Willin
Ride Honcho



said she came because: "I did it (pull broom) on a field trip and liked it." Meagan Amaglio, a young woman who also rides at Creekside, was there with her mother, Elizabeth. She said she wanted to participate, and that she "...didn't want to see the broom take over." The rest of us were there because we also wanted to give back something to the lands we enjoy on horseback and on foot. Several members of the Open Space Mounted Patrol participated: Delos Putz and his wife, Rena, Vicki Englert, Tracy Engelen, and Linda Novy. Others members of the team included Arielle Ikeda, who assists the Friendly Trails program, Katie Mason and Rebecca Bailin, all from Creekside. From Dickson Ranch, Lisa Capaldini came and also brought a friend. Everyone worked hard to eradicate the broom.

And as the broom came out, we discovered a diverse palette of California native plants struggling to survive amongst the invasive broom. Some of these plants included: Western Buttercup, Douglas Iris, Pink Honeysuckle, Sticky Monkey Flower, Coyote Brush, and Oak, Toyon, and Madrone seedlings. By removing the "competition" (the broom), we were giving these native plants a chance to grow and add to the beauty and bio-diversity of the Preserve.

We'll all have the pleasure of watching this area develop as we ride and hand walk our horses along the Fire Road, and who knows, perhaps we'll take the time to stop and pull out some of the remaining or re-sprouting broom plants. As equestrians, we have the opportunity to not just add our horses' hoof prints and fertilizer to the trail, but to demonstrate reciprocity. Next time we have a broom pull, we hope you'll join us and contribute some sweat equity to our beautiful Open Space Preserves.

- Linda Novy

Park Phone Numbers

MARIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT:
Mike Swezy - 945-1190

MARIN COUNTY OPEN SPACE:
Matt Sagues--507-2686

PT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE: 464-5137
SAMUEL TAYLOR STATE PARK: 488-9897

A Close Call on The Olema Trail

I felt her slipping under me and going down.

It was March, just a few months ago, and we were headed toward Dog Town from Five Brooks on the Olema trail. My plan was to take Olema to the end, cross the highway, ride up McGurdy Trail and return via Bolinas Ridge and Randall.

This time of year I usually avoid Olema Trail heading south after the Bolema trail because it is too wet. I decided to go because it hadn't rained for several weeks. Philly and I had just passed the Environmental Center when the trail got steep and very slippery. She has great balance and has never fallen on wet terrain. I could feel her slipping and it felt like she was going down so I jumped off.

My quick move, coupled with her sliding, really scared her. She recovered and abruptly abandoned me. I knew she would run back to her home at Five Brooks.

Fortunately, I wasn't hurt except for a few nettles in my hand. I was also close to Highway One that parallels the Olema trail. Rather than walking all the way back, I walked ten minutes and hitchhiked back to the stables. The very first car picked me up. It was a family from Europe with kids looking for something fun to do. I told them about the Pony Ride at Five Brooks and they eagerly drove me to the stables. The kids loved it.

I knew that I would get back before Philly so I waited for her on the part of the Olema trail that is near the stables. Words can't describe the look on her face when she saw me. If she could talk I think she would have said, "How in the world did you get here before me"? She seemed impressed and happy to reunite.

- Dennis Portnoy is author of *Riding the Point Reyes Equestrian Trails: A comprehensive guide*. Available online at www.createspace.com/3444575

Trail Tales

It was back in August 2011 when I got a phone call from Jim McDermott of Marin Stables. He passed on the news that the huge old wooden water tank up on Bolinas Ridge on Shafter Bridge Fire Road was in such disrepair that MMWD planned to dismantle it. This meant that the horse water trough alongside (the only water source along Bolinas Ridge) would dry up. The question from MMWD was: would the Marin Horse Council be interested in paying for repiping the natural spring in order to retain the water trough?

I jumped at the chance to try to save it. The Horse Council agreed and set aside money for the project. Marin is scarce in water sources along any trail, much less a trough with good water. I contacted Carl Sanders of MMWD to discuss the project. At first, it was thought that it would be necessary to rebuild the spring box and then clean accumulated mud out from the metal pipe with a jet of water. Adam Gallagher of Roto-Rooter gave us a bid for that part. Then rainy season set in and work stopped.

In 2012, Carl went onsite and, using considerable ingenuity on his part and equipment from MMWD, rebuilt the spring box, cleaned out the pipe, and used pipe on hand to reconnect it to the trough. Jessica Lashbrook donated a new float, but Carl salvaged the one already there and will save hers for another trough in the Water District. In appreciation for his outstanding work on the project, the Horse Council donated \$500. to the Watershed Fund of the MMWD in honor of Carl Sanders.

A few weeks ago I rode by that spot. The trough was full of clear water and my horse took a long drink. Although the water is not tested, hikers, bikers, or thirsty wildlife won't mind that when needing a splash of refreshing water. Project is a success!

Here's a Pt. Reyes Seashore trail alert for two trails not yet cleared from winter growth. The Woodward Trail, on the NE side of the hill, has Douglas firs happily growing across at the level of a rider's face. The Bayview Trail, west from the trailhead at the crest of Limantour Road, has thick growth obscuring the path. Neither trail is impassable, but exercise caution and ride with care!

- Connie Berto

Trail Closures at Point Reyes National Seashore

Storms through the year have blown down trees through the wood sections or have flooded trails in PT Reyes National Park. If you encounter any downed trees, please report them to Bear Valley Visitor Center 415 464 5100, ext. 2, or to me at 415 464 5145. Please provide as many details as possible, including exact location of the tree on which trail. Also describe type of tree, (bay, fir, pine, etc.), whether it is bush or straight, its size and diameter, if on the ground or elevated and if equestrians can get around it. As of now, Morgan Horse Trail is open with a detour around the multiple hazardous trees that have blocked the trail.

For up to date trail information, please visit:

http://www.nps.gov/pore/planyourvisit/hiking_guide.htm#trailclosures

- Shawn Maloney,
"Acting Trails Branch Supervisor", Point Reyes National Seashore



Saved by the Marin Mounted Sheriff's Posse

"I received a call that a horse had fallen into a well in San Rafael. I arrived with my gear along with two other members of the Marin County Mounted Posse, to find the horse completely submerged with just his nose and eyes out of the water. The well was 12 feet across, 20 feet deep and the water was 4 feet from the top. A halter and lead rope was the only thing keeping the horse from drowning. The horse had been in the water over an hour and was exhausted from trying to swim and get out. Marin Fire and Sheriff's Departments were already on scene and someone had called a vet and local crane company to respond.

Two things began to happen. A fire department tanker began to pump the 600 gals of water into the well to help get the horse closer to the surface. The three members of the Marin County Mounted Sheriff's Posse especially trained in large animal rescue began to slip their slings under the horse to stabilize him from sinking and help him calm down. With the well now filled and his jaw resting over the top of the well, rescuers were able to hold the horse stable. It was obvious that the horse knew we were there to help as his eyes began to soften. As the crane arrived and attached its cable to the sling straps going under the horse, the lift out began to happen. Concerned for the horse's reaction, caution was utmost in case he began to scramble once out of the water and his feet touched the ground. The horse remained calm the entire lift and once his feet touched the ground, he calmly stepped out over the straps as if he had done this before. It was a very rewarding feeling, almost as much as finding a lost person. Other than a few scrapes on his legs and face, vets said he would completely recover. The Marin Sheriff's Mounted Posse also provides aid in search and rescue of lost persons and has been certified for large animal rescue since 2004. The volunteers provide their own equipment and time to assist in all types of rescues be it overturned horse trailers, all types terrain and wells and septic tanks. The posse felt the need to be able to assist different departments by specializing in large animals and to make the community more aware of their ability if such a situation arises."

- Marty Ganulin

Sketch the Morgan Horses of PRNS

PAUL MILLER

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

9:30 AM – 2 PM, \$80 (\$70 MEMBER)

Join expert artist and horse enthusiast Paul Miller with instruction in sketching and drawing the horses at the Point Reyes National Seashore Morgan Horse Ranch. The class will include a short lecture about the ranch history, about Morgan Horses and about the basics of drawing almost anything quickly. Students will be shown simple techniques of creating horses on paper that are in proportion, convincingly rendered, and that look animate. Weather permitting most of the drawing will be outdoors around the Morgan Horse Ranch pastures and if available, visitors' horses at the horse trailer staging area at the head of Bear Valley Trail. All levels welcome. Also open to youth (age 15-17) with attending adult.

To register please call 415-663-1200 x 373 or visit our website at www.ptreyes.org.

- David Seyms
Point Reyes Field Institute Director

Equine Donations to the PRNSA

The Marin Horse Council donated \$4843 to the Pt Reyes National Seashore Association for two upcoming projects at the Park. \$500 of this money is for needed repairs of the barn and fences at the Morgan Horse Ranch. A portion of this funding came from the Spring Fundraising Ride. The majority of the work will be done by Phil Stroub, the manager.

In addition, new trail gates are required. MHC is donating seven trail gates totaling \$4343. The gates are being built by Martin Ranch Supply. MHC members also donated trail gates. Les Cleasby donated three gates, totaling \$1861. Jenny Gregger donated one trail gate, which is \$620. This project should be completed by late fall.



Dear Murray

Dear Murray,
I am confused about leads. First my person wants me to go the right way on the right lead, then it's the wrong way on the wrong lead, then she wants me to change from one to the other for no good reason. How do I know which lead to be on?

- Confused

Dear Confused,
If it feels like your rider is having a spastic fit on your back, chances are it's time to change leads. That's about all the sense I can make of it. Another rule of thumb; just keep changing leads until the man in the middle of the ring stops yelling at you.

Reprinted with permission of Misfit Designs. Murray now has his advice column online! Search for "Dear Murray" on facebook and "like" his page. You can get Dear Murray "murrchandise" here:
www.cafepress.com/JLWdesigns/8499502
- Jody Werner



MHC Day of The Horse, April 6, 2013

This was a interesting day of horse health care presentations at a great new venue, The Civic Center Theater! It was a chance to meet local horse related non-profits and venders and an equine art show completed the event-filled day.

The event began with a tribute to Homer Osgood. His name or face is familiar to many as he is often seen riding his Arabian mare Zina on the trails of Marin. The MHC was established in 1981 and Homer became one of its Charter Members. By 1989 he joined the Board of Directors becoming our treasurer in 1993. He retired about 15 years after that, but he is still one of our most active Advisory Board members.

RECOGNIZING THE HORSE IN PAIN -- Dr. Joanna Robson DVM, Inspiritus Equine
If your horse is biting, bucking, or bolting, cold-backed and stiff, crooked, resistant to aids, post-dental or surgery, head-tossing, losing muscle, developing lumps and bumps, and having problems with leads...your horse is in pain. One cause for pain can be an ill-fitting saddle.

A horse is very sensitive to touch. He feels the weight of a heavy saddle with your weight, but can also feel a fly on his back. Chances are that if your horse is biting when saddling up and tightening the girth, or refusing jumps and tripping, he is not being bad but is most likely in lots of pain.

Kicking harder, smacking your horse thinking he is not listening, is not the solution. Have a saddle fitter evaluate your saddle and equipment. Have a trainer watch you ride.....you may be the problem. Before you think of selling your horse, ask for help.

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AT THE BARN

THE ABC'S OF EMERGENCY HORSE CARE- Dr. Casille Batten DVM and Dr. Cameron Thompson DVM

When you arrive to feed or ride your horse what do you see? You know your horse best, what is his "normal". Is he laying down, unwilling to rise, pawing or looking distressed? Does it look like a colic? Is he drinking water? Has it been cold? If you pinched the skin, does it take longer than two seconds to return? What color are his gums? Can you walk him out of it? If you see a few bleeding wounds, can you clean and bandage them? Sometimes you can solve problems yourself, but if there is any doubt, call the Vet.

You should call the Vet if your horse is reluctant to put a limb down. Perhaps he stepped on a nail. If you do find a nail in his hoof, do not pull it out unless you think it will go deeper. Tell your Vet the location. A horse in pain can be dangerous so move it to a safer place with no dogs. Did he injure his eye? His condition can deteriorate quickly so call now. Is he bleeding profusely? Perhaps the injury damaged a blood vessel. Does it look contaminated or infected? Keep the wound clean and only give banamine. These are all reasons not to wait to call your Vet.

EQUINE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING-- Dr. Beverly Kane MD Horsensei Equine-Assisted Learning and Therapy.

Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL) and Therapy is an interactive growth process that draws upon the strength, sensitivity and the magic of the horse to teach humans basic life skills and transformative attitudes. Some great examples are therapeutic riding programs for children with autism and other special needs, or at-risk teenagers. The Veterans Hospital in Palo Alto participates in a "Horses for Heroes" program at the National Center for Equine Facilitated Therapy in Woodside, CA, that helps returning veterans with traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Stanford School of Medicine conducts an EAL course called Medicine & Horsemanship, which teaches interpersonal skills to improve bedside manner, team work, and leadership. Another Stanford program, Somatic Horsemanship, combines yoga, t'ai ji, and mindfulness medication in working with horses on the ground and on horseback.

Equine-assisted experiential learning is ideal for people who would otherwise not have horses in their lives.

SERRA -- SONOMA EQUINE RESCUE REHAB & ADOPTION--Laura Ponter

Serra volunteers serve as advocates for horses of all kinds who have become abandoned or abused. Interestingly, 30% of people who volunteer have been abused. There are many reasons horses become abused, starved or abandoned and end up in rescues. Some owners have lost their jobs, and perhaps also their home, some become disabled, older and cannot care for their horses.

The three most over-bred horses in our area are Quarterhorse, Paint and Thoroughbred and are found more in rescues. Serra's objective is to inform people of the importance of ongoing proper training, good nutrition and care for both the horse and adopter.

EQUINE NUTRITION- Bar ALE Feed

Bob Baylor spoke about the different formulations and varieties of horse feed. The name, Bar ALE is actually the company's livestock brand and was used when business included a beef cattle operation. ALE is an acronym for Ash, Lewis and Epping, the three founders of the company. Today it is owned by the members of the Lewis family and is operated by Mr. Ash's grandson.

Although a big focus is on horse products they also provide feed for sheep, beef and dairy cattle and also the small ones--rabbits, goats and swine.

- Marina Eisenzimmer



Marin County Pony Club

Our best show ever! Marin County Pony Club would like to thank everyone that came out and enjoyed our show on Sunday May 26, and who sponsored the variety of classes from "Sit -a buck" to the Founders cup beginner novice cross county course event. We had a record turnout for this our 35th year.

Many graduate Pony Clubbers, both riders and parents from years past, brought their children and grandchildren to ride in the show. Special thanks to Natalie Guion and her students from Sonoma Coastal Equestrian Center for hauling in and joining in the fun and to Pat Duffy for loaning them some ponies. Also, cheers to Katie Moore from Santa Rosa Pony Club who brought her lovely daughters in and has come so many times she is now family. We had beautiful weather, great BBQ and a lot of thrills and laughs. Because of the support from all of you, this fabulous organization will continue to provide one of the best youth equestrian programs in all of California. For more photos and information about our program go to our web site: marincounty.ponyclub.org or friend us on facebook.

Tally ho ! - Lisa Herbert



DRESSAGE IN THE WINE COUNTRY

Dressage in the Wine Country returns to the Sonoma County Fairgrounds, Santa Rosa, Ca., Sept. 7th for a day of wine tasting, shopping, equine demonstrations, and top flight equestrian entertainment.

Sponsored by the Sonoma Chapter of the California Dressage Society, and now in it's 31st year, DWC has become an eagerly anticipated event of our local community and we would like to invite you to be a part of this wonderful day.

An afternoon of wine and beer tastings will feature 20 plus award winning wineries and microbreweries. Among the trade fair vendors will be saddle makers, equestrian fashion and horseware shops, artwork, glass sculptures, and barn and ranch equipment suppliers.

Jousters from Reveler's Ranch, Quadrilles, and Combined training are just a few of the evening's performances.

Bring your appetite and grab a bite to eat from the many food vendors.

Doors open to the trade fair at 2pm. with the wine/beer tasting starting at 4pm, and the equine performance starting at 7pm.

For tickets and information visit the Sonoma Chapter website:
www.winecountrydressage.org
or call 707-536-1842.

Come and join us for an evening of equestrian entertainment at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds!



A Dangerous Flaw in the Horse's Behaviour

There are a lot of things a horse can do that are dangerous to the rider or handler.

I believe that in the top ten or even the top two, is a horse that will not yield to pressure; especially pressure of the rider's leg to mean move forward. Horses naturally move into pressure. So, we teach them to move away from pressure, so that the tied horse will not pull back. Pulling back is moving into pressure. Using our leg to move a horse over often results in the horse kicking out on the same side. This too is moving into pressure. When we ask the horse to pull his chin to his chest, the first response from the horse is often a rooting of his nose, sticking his nose out and forward, which is the horse moving into pressure also.

A runaway horse is moving into pressure - the harder the reins are pulled, the faster he goes.

Imagine the need to get your horse away from a threatening situation. You apply the leg and the horse ignores the cue. It is like being stuck in quicksand as the threat overtakes you.

So, how do we change his mind about the useful response to pressure? The answer is quite simple. It is to hold the pressure or repeat the pressure until the horse gives us the response of moving away from that pressure. There is a great benefit to the horse for the correct response of moving away - he gets relief from the pressure. The pressure goes away when the horse yields.

The removal of the pressure, called the release, is usually the handler's responsibility. A tied horse that pulls back will immediately feel the release of pressure when he stops pulling back. But, in most cases, the horse that is frantically pulling back in complete panic is in full self preservation mode and will not yield, especially if he has never figured out that yielding gives a better result.

That brings us to our responsibility as handlers and riders to teach the horse to move away from pressure. Patience and persistence and consistency from us will cause the horse to think of a better way to respond to pressure.

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AT THE BARN

I had a student whose horse completely ignored the leg cues. In most cases, like these, spurs are resorted to. Then, when the horse begins to ignore those, the whip or crop is brought out.

This rider entered the arena for a lesson with said spurs and crop, ready to "learn more". He complained that his horse was often cranky and was really sluggish to move out. You wonder how that could be with crops and spurs in the scenario. I asked him to trot the horse out on a loose rein. The first thing this student did was lift his heels into the horse's side. His heels were grinding up and down for a response. The horse had a sour look on his face and ears back. So, the rider turned his toes out and put the spurs into the horse's side. The horse raised his nostril in discontent. After no significant response to move into a trot, the rider taps the horse in the ticklish spot on the flank. It was really a tickle more than a spank, which it should have been. Then he got the now cranky horse moving into a ho hum trot.

Does this description sound familiar? All or parts of it? By the time the horse was trotting, the rider was ticked off because of all the things he had to do to get moving. The horse was now in a bad mood because of all he had to endure. I, as the teacher, had my plan to eventually have a forward moving horse and a meaningful rider.

My first request to the rider was, "Choose the crop or the spurs, but not both." Of course, (you heard this coming) he said that he needed both to get the horse to move out. I asked again, "Which one do you choose?" He chose to keep the crop. This is the usual answer because it is the last thing used by the rider that caused the horse to move forward.

By the middle of the lesson, I had the rider even drop the crop. The leg was now the only cue to mean move forward (the seat can also do this). When the now less cranky horse still did not respond energetically to the leg cue, I asked the rider to lift his legs up to the level of his hips and let his legs fall on the horse's sides. To the horse, this meant, "I really mean for you to move forward when I press my leg on your sides!!!" If this sounds harsh, please know that I learned this verbatim from the great Tom Dorrance. By the end of the lesson, after as many "reinforcements" as it took, the horse responded cheerfully, with ears forward, to the first leg cue alone.

Lessons like these, will need repetition and consistent reinforcement from time to time. As a famous horseman states, "It is not so important how you begin the ride, but how you end the ride."

My former crop and spur-carrying rider, now left the lesson with a smiling horse and a new appreciation for "as little as it takes but as much as necessary to get the job done."

This can be your experience to convince your horse to respond to your leg pressure. It is your responsibility to be consistent with the reinforcement. If you do your reinforcements as necessary, you would never need spurs or a crop 99% of the time you ride. I ride with spurs because they look cool. And, they are there for the 1% of the time that I might need them. If I use them 3% of the time for cues, then I should take them off to revisit the leg cue reinforcement lesson.

So, be consistent with the reinforcement of your cues. Horses always will test us from time to time with this question, "Do you really mean what you are asking for?" When that question arises, be ready to simply answer, "Yes, and I will remind you with a reinforcement so you don't forget." Reinforcement will perpetuate the reality of "as little as it takes" to get the job done.

- Susan Tomasini, Tomasini Training Center

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FOR MORE INFO:

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Tamalpais Trail Riders Annual Trail Test

Tamalpais Trail Riders Annual Trail Test will be held at Novato Horsemen's Arena:

600 Bugeia Lane, Novato

SEPTEMBER 22, 2013

Events start at 9 A.M. Sign ups at 8 A.M.

Coffee, donuts, lunch available.

ENTRY FEE: \$40.00

Cash awards through 6th Place, Ribbons. Top 5 compete for buckle.

Separate Juniors Division, 14 & Under

CONTACT: Dana Allen 415-609-7760
danalsa@comcast.net



Horse Health Training

Dr. Jim Steere's 'The Horse Course' entered into a new era this year at Circle Oak Equine in Petaluma, CA. After resurrecting the course last fall Dr. Carrie Schlachter and her team took the class one step further and offered the first in a series of more advanced courses. The first class focused on an obvious topic for Circle Oak Equine to cover – 'The Acute Lameness'.

With a smaller class size and a more intensive time period this class could be even more clinically based. Friday night with dinner there was 3 hours of lecture reviewing the concepts of lameness and multiple videos reviewing the different kinds of lameness. Then bright and early Saturday morning the class split into 2 groups for a lower leg anatomy and palpation lab. Dr. Ashley McCaughan came in at this point to help teach. The 16 participants split into 2 groups all had a chance to handle and identify structures in fresh anatomical specimens. The palpation lab was a bit more intensive as they all learned how to palpate anatomical landmarks and how to palpate a lower limb for injury and digital pulses.

After a short break the groups split into 2 again – this time each group was given a horse and a doctor and asked to 'work the case up'. The participants were responsible for deciding what they wanted to see done and discussed what the findings were as they watched the horse move. They had to judge the comfort of the horse, grade the lameness, find the lame leg, and point the doctor in the right direction within the leg.

Then the groups switched and worked up the other case.

The final hour was spent presenting and discussing the two cases. The participants (and the doctors!) got to experience firsthand how different people look at a case differently and how different experiences can influence how an individual sees a lameness case.

Above all the participants walked away with a formula that will help them address any acute lameness case they come across. This in turn will help their veterinarian guide them more appropriately down a diagnostic and treatment path.

With the success of last falls 'The Horse Course' and this springs first 'Advanced Course' you can be sure Circle *{continued on page 11}*

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Oak will offer more educational opportunities soon. The next two on the list are 'Advanced Course – Lameness II – The Chronic case' this fall and the original "The Horse Course" again next spring. Future topics for the advanced course include farriery, nutrition, rehabilitation, gait analysis and diagnostic imaging.

Don't forget to 'Save the Date' for Circle Oak Equine Annual Equine Health Fair – this is an all-day free event open to anyone interested in horses. This year we will hold it on Saturday, October 5th. If you have any questions about the courses or the Health Fair please visit our website at www.circleoakequine.com or like us on Facebook for updated information.

- Dr. Carrie Schlachter

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Help MHC to better serve you -- tell us about yourself. The MHC never shares or sells its members' information.

Occupation _____ Affiliations _____

- Own a horse?** Yes No
- Your interests:** English Western Trail Riding Endurance Show Jumping Dressage
- Rodeo Eventing Driving Breeding Animal Welfare Other _____

- MHC needs volunteers! Please indicate if you can help us with:** Finance, Communication, Membership, Barn Liaisons,
- Government Affairs, Horse Course, Eq Evac, Events committee, Marin County Fair, Volunteer Co-coordinating

Your membership in the Marin Horse Council helps support the Council's many activities on behalf of Marin's equestrians and equines. Donations are also welcome. Fees and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Thanks for joining! Mail your check to Marin Horse Council | 171 Bel Marin Keyes Blvd. | Novato, CA 94949-6183 06/13

Thank You!

The Marin Horse Council depends on the continued generous support of Marin's horse lovers. Thanks to all members, and in particular, thanks to those who join or renew at Lifetime, Golden Horseshoe, or Silver Buckle membership levels.

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