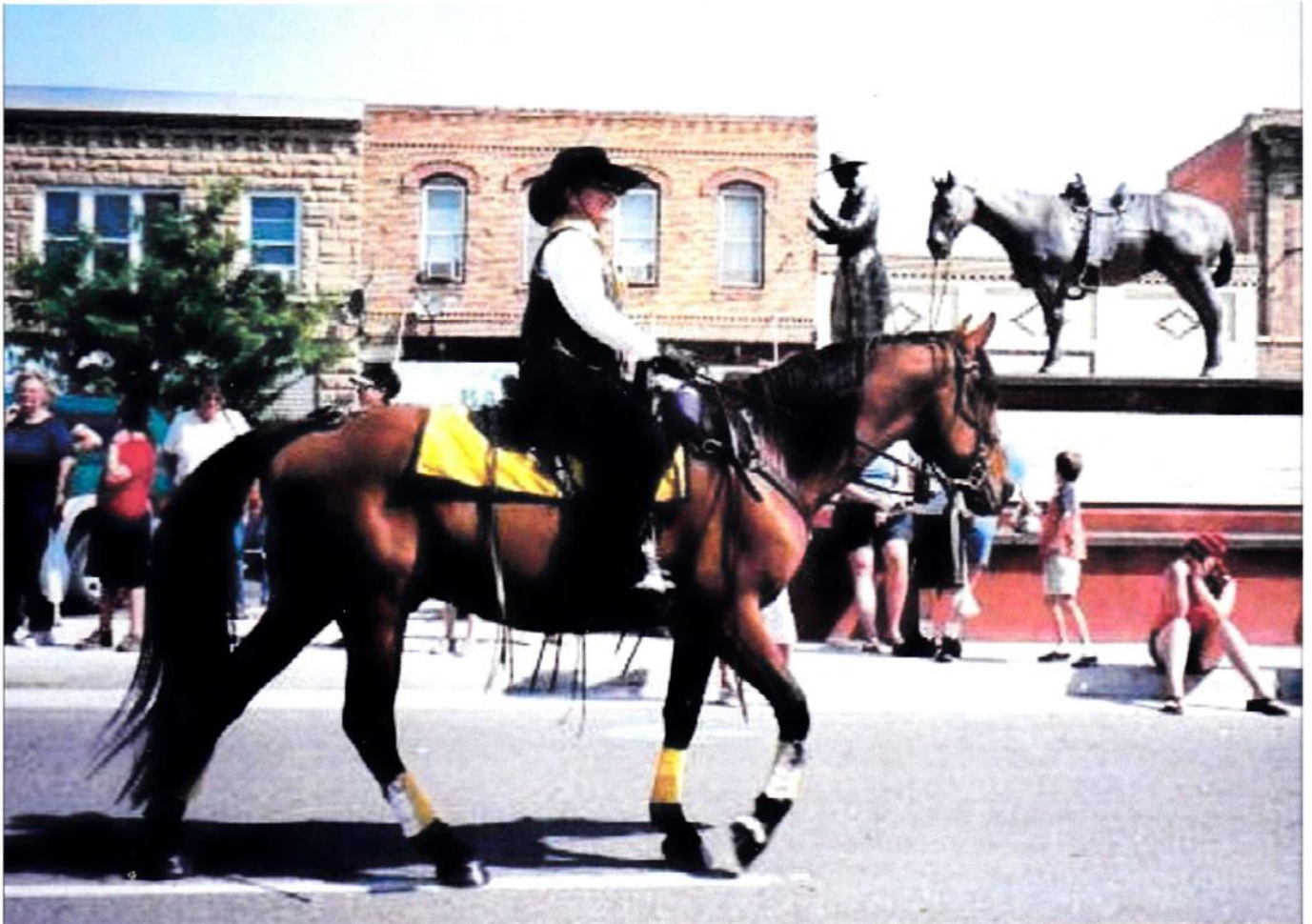


NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2008
VOLUME XXXII No. 6



Walking Horse

News



DEDICATED TO THE PLAIN - SHOD TENNESSEE WALKING HORSE IN CANADA

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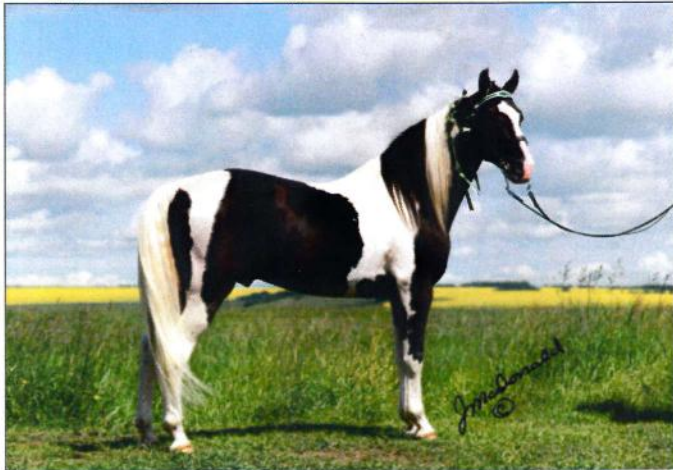
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On Our Cover

"On Saturday, August 2/08,
Spook and I rode in the
parade at Thermopolis,
Wyoming.

I'd brought Spook's
parade colours and the
children just loved him!"
See T'Lara's story on
pages 5 & 6.

Photos and story submitted by
T'Lara Joy Freedom,
Balzac, Alberta

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for Jan/Feb issue
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for Mar/Apr issue
MARCH 7

for May/June issue
MAY 7

for July/Aug issue
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Volume XXXII, # 6 November/December, 2008

Dear Subscribers,

A big 'Thank You' to all the people who have written stories and sent photos for this issue - and all year long. It's always so interesting to open the mail or download the email to see what new chapter of the Walking Horse story in Canada has just come in. This month we have a story about how harness training led to a very fit TWH who then went out and competed well in an endurance ride. Who'd have thought of that connection? Another subscriber took part in a ride in Wyoming, and another took the time to write a tribute to well known B.C. stallion, Go Boy's Diamond Chief. There were reports on a TWH clinic, a display, and news from across the country. There's an article about the importance of the pre-purchase exam when buying a horse, and a really frightening story illustrating the importance of wearing a helmet. Allanna Jackson has a most interesting article about how the rider's posture influences the horse's gait, and we'll look forward to another of Franne Brandon's articles next issue. We appreciate hearing from you all. There would be no *WHN* without you.

Thank you to all the regular advertisers who support *WHN* so loyally. But I'd also like to make a plea for more advertising from the rest of you. *WHN* ads are inexpensive but they keep your name and contact info in the one magazine that's devoted to TWH in Canada. Can you afford NOT to be there? There is a new offer for a year-long classified ad, and a classified that includes a linked photo for those who want to advertise their horse in colour on the web. See the classified ads for details. Please consider these options. If no one knows you're there, they won't get in touch!

WHN also needs new subscribers and people to spread the word about the magazine. We offer a free introductory copy to those new to the breed. Just send in the person's name and address and we'll send a copy in our next mail-out. An extra special thanks to those of you who always buy gift subscriptions for your customers. That is most generous - it introduces the new owner to the Walker world and helps *WHN* too.

While I'm asking for this much, I'll also ask everyone to be sure to renew promptly. Right now half the people whose subscriptions expired in October have not renewed. It is a lot of extra work to send out a special reminder letter - and you will miss at least one issue. So please - just *DO* it - right away when you see Jo's renewal slip on this front page!

Please support the only magazine for
Tennessee Walking Horses in Canada.

Best wishes to you all this holiday season,

Marjorie





WHN makes a great gift!

Walking Horse News

December, 2008

“DEDICATED TO THE PLAIN-SHOD TENNESSEE WALKING HORSE IN CANADA”

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HISTORY & HERITAGE PROJECT

"CANADIAN TIMES OF THE TWH"

WHAT WE DO WITH OUR WALKER

by Pam Sargent & Greg Veillard, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan



We purchased our Tennessee Walker "Cruise" (Double Play's BC Connection) in 2005. My husband's arthritic hip was getting worse, and his big-trotting horse was no longer an option for him. After trying out the "glide ride" on our friends' horses we were hooked.

Cruise has become a huge part of our lives. He is such a versatile horse, and we thought we would share a couple of pictures and some of our experiences with him.

Cruise was trained under harness this spring. We love the option of coming home after work, hitching him up to our Meadowbrook cart and "toodling" around the valley, catching up on the day's events with each other. The great thing about carting is that we have many friends who love our horses but would never venture to get up in the saddle. However, we sure have a long list of those who are waiting for an invitation to come out for a cart ride!

Shortly after his harness training

this spring (and because he was in such great condition from that) I decided to join a friend of mine on a 30 mile endurance ride in Saskatchewan's Qu'Appelle Valley. It was a very well organized ride, with a number of vet checks throughout the day, and I'm happy to say Cruise finished with an overall rating of A-. He was the only gaited horse on the ride; the majority of the mounts were Arabians, and Cruise had his work cut for him. I was so proud of him for the great job he did carrying me up and over some pretty serious hills, and for finishing the ride.

He is a big strong horse who loves to get out on the trails. One day recently I was out for a ride with him and upon reaching the top of a pretty big hill he stopped, looked around and let out a big sigh as if to say, "Wow, what a view!"

We hope everyone had a great summer doing lots of fun and interesting things with their Walkers.



Go Boys Diamond Chief

April 3, 1981 – October 15, 2008



Chief was a remarkable stallion well known in both British Columbia and Alberta. His breeding was pure foundation going back on both sides to Allan F-1. His blood is of multiple World Grand Champions such as “Merry Go Boy” (dam) and “Midnight Sun” (sire). With such a gentle and kind temperament children could approach him in his paddock without worry. As for his gaits... they were spectacular, particularly his running walk! Anyone riding a non-gaited horse would soon be cursing as they tried to keep up!

Chief sired many beautiful walkers. A few of them live in the Lower Mainland and include:

Go Boys April Surprise (M)
Go Boys Chances at Aces (S)
Go Boys Diamond Sun (G)
Sir Zigmund Floyd (G)

Chief was an exemplary Tennessee Walking Horse not only for his breeding, temperament, and gaits but also for his versatility. He was ‘Mr. Showmanship’ when it came to a parade or the show ring. He would collect himself without the use of aids and just start nodding that head as he stepped out. To top this sight was his beautiful full mane and a tail that swept the ground. Chief was also an endurance horse. After showing up 20 minutes late for at 25-mile event, and then getting lost along the way, he ended up in 7th place out of 50 entries. Most of all he was a pleasure horse ridden mainly in Campbell Valley Park and at the family farms.

Chief came to Missing Creek Farm, owned by Rod and Ursula Bolivar, in October 2002. Over those six years he changed from being a timid ‘don’t touch me’ horse to one that loved attention, especially being groomed. Chief needed to trust his new family and with the quality of care (clean shelter, regular veterinarian and farrier visits, nutritious food) along with respect and personal attention/affection it didn’t take him long to know he had a good loving home. What he loved most of all were his mares, Kwatsu and April.

With the cold weather fast approaching this fall and Chief’s health declining the decision was made in conjunction with the veterinarian to put him down. He spent his last day grazing with his mares on a beautiful sunny day; then for two hours he just stood alone and watched the sunset.

*“Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes ever
behold the red and purple sunset”*

Native American Prayer

Chief was cremated in Mission and his ashes will be buried on the farm

so he will always be able to watch over his mares.

May his spirit run free and visit our dreams so we may never forget.

Submitted by Lisa Riedler



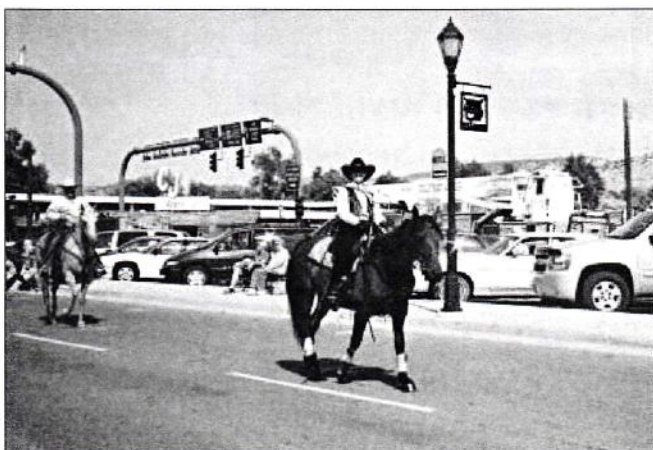
SPOOK GOES TO WYOMING by T'Lara Joy Freedom, Balzac, Alberta

Spook and I went to Thermopolis, Wyoming last summer to ride part of the Outlaw Trail. The weather was fantastic all the way. The highest high was 106 F, the lowest high was 95 F. Spook is the best travellin' horse EVER! Our last multi-day ride was in 2005 and I swear he remembered the drill. Every time he was offered water he took full advantage and tanked up, and same with food. Everyone was always going on about electrolytes, so I bought some in powdered form and put them in Spook's water. He drank it with no problem.

This horse is so wonderful. The day we left on the trip (29 July) I brought him out to a strange trailer, asked him to climb in beside a strange gelding, and he just did it, calm as can be. And off we went.

We spent our first night at a KOA Kampground in Great Falls, MT. They weren't really set up for horses, so we ended up tethering our horses in dense young trees that had spindly trunks and branches sticking out. Spook had never been tethered in a situation like this, and certainly not overnight. But he was calm as calm could be. Next morning, there he was, still calm. The other two horses had walked themselves around and around until their noses were snubbed against the trunks of their trees, but not Spook.

We arrived in Thermopolis the next day, and our horses stayed at the fairgrounds, which was the marshalling area for the ride. On Saturday, August 2, Spook and I rode in the Thermopolis parade. (*Photo below and on cover.*) I'd brought Spook's parade colours and the children just loved him! He was mobbed on the street by kids running up to him and wanting the pet the beautiful horse. Fortunately, for the most part the parents caught the kids before they actually reached us!



Spook was very calm in the parade, and wasn't bothered by the children, but you never know. I was happiest when the little ones were not so close to his hooves. Besides, the other horses in our group weren't as calm as Spook. All the other horses I saw in the parade were dressed for the trail, so I think the kids were attracted to a horse that was a little more 'dressed up'. Only about 10 of our Outlaw Trail group rode in the parade. The two fellows I came down with didn't ride in the parade, so Spook was in the parade without the support of any other horse that he knew.

The next day, Sunday, they hauled us all to the trailhead, which took until about noon. We saddled up, ate, and started the ride at around one. The first day's ride was only about 12 miles. We had been given a list of riders a couple of days earlier and 60 were listed, but I'm not certain that all those people showed up. I know for a fact that at least one person who was at the fairgrounds didn't even start the ride because her horse had problems Sunday morning.

We were divided into three groups, green, yellow, and blue. Spook and I were in blue. In the blue group there were only two other gaited horses: a Rocky Mountain Horse and a Peruvian Paso. The Rocky was a jiggling nightmare, in my opinion. Just watching made me tired. The Peruvian was only slightly better. Both these horses had companion animals they had travelled with, yet they were still all wired up. Even though the two horses he travelled with were not in our group, Spook just walked on down the trail like we did it every day, head level and nodding slightly, tail loose, his whole body relaxed.

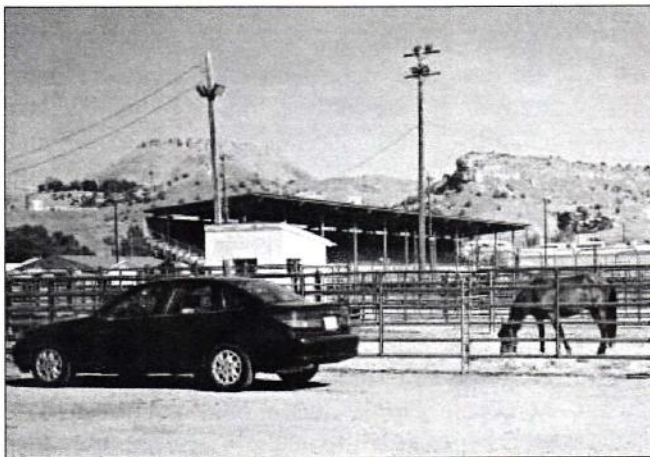
Except when I tried to circle him back to stay with our group. Just as happened in 2005, trying to circle him back distressed him to the point of rearing. So, just as in 2005, a compromise was reached in that we just kept going straight at a relaxed walk, not even the running walk, and shortly we were out in front of all three groups, and had left our group behind. And that's where we stayed.

I met two other Tennessee Walking Horses and one Missouri Fox Trotter (although we didn't ride with them). I met one Arabian and one half Arabian and two Spanish Norman horses (HUGE!). Everything else was Quarter Horse.

There were only four riders from Canada, the two I came with (who were from the Red Deer area), one from Ontario and me. I didn't meet the Ontario

rider and don't know whether he actually attended.

By the end of the first day, Spook hadn't even broken a sweat, aside from under his saddle pad and girth; he was quite fresh and could have gone on and on. Every other horse I saw had more sweat, often just from being nervous, I think. Spook drank like a trouper as soon as I led him down to the river, ate ravenously, and was relaxed on the picket line. I really liked that they fed loose hay on this ride, unlike the 2005 ride, when they fed cubes and I worried a little about colic. I was not impressed with the picket lines, which were of thin cable wire and strung too low to the ground. The picket line Spook was tied to didn't have problems that night, but other lines had been pulled down and horses scraped up on the wire.



Unfortunately, that first day's ride was my last, as my knees (that I've had trouble with for the past year) gave out on me. Spook and I were hauled back to the Thermopolis fairgrounds the next day. However, all was not lost, since after a day's rest (and with maintenance doses of painkillers) my knees were fine to ride up to about four hours a day. And that's what we did the rest of the time we were there. There's no by-law against riding in town in Thermopolis, so we explored the town every day. I had a blast doing this, because it was just the two of us. It brought me back to my teenage years, when I used to ride into town a few times every summer.

Spook was unflappable. My hotel was about two blocks away from the fairgrounds where Spook was. Spook had a spacious corral. (*Photo above of Spook in his corral with my car parked alongside*). The bugs were minimal. I had air conditioning and a divine bed each night. It was great.

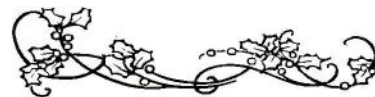
We pulled out of Thermopolis at 6 a.m. Sunday, August 10, and drove straight through except for fuel stops. Spook unloaded at 11 p.m. that night. We were home.

SASKATCHEWAN NEWS

From SHELDON SCHROEDER, LONE ROCK, "I just sent in my subscription for the *Walking Horse News* today. This year went by very fast. I changed jobs and made only one trip to the mountains with the horses. I toured around the USA for 3 weeks on my motorcycle and took in the Sturgis bike rally - and that was it for my summer."

"I do have a couple of new Walkers though. I bought a flashy flaxen sorrel gelding from Laurie Sharp up at Fort St. John, BC. 'Hollywood' is four years old. Also have a new colt, Buckskin Bob, with not a white hair on him. He is supposed to mature at about 15.1 to 15.2 hh. He is a grandson of Gen's Major General. I am hoping he will be a good match for Billy Buckskin."

CLAUDIA DUNCAN, REGINA, wrote, "This year Topaz sired an unbelievably nice curly amber champagne colt from my extreme curly mare, Amber. If you would like to see Topaz's pictures, foals and his new colt, I'll give you the links here: for Topaz: <http://www.rtecurlies.com/stallionstopaz.html>; and for his new son Dancer: <http://www.rtecurlies.com/dancer.html>



NEWS FROM OUR US SUBSCRIBERS

GRACE LARSON, FORSYTH, MONTANA, writes, "We want to keep our web site up with the Legacy pages; Robin's photo and link to the MS Society, and Goldust and Chief's pages. So I would like to keep the High Plains Walkers business card going, with History and Legacy information. There are so many historical photos on our Legends pages and I want those to stay up for the benefit of Walking Horse people who are into the old history."

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NEWS - NEWS - NEWS

BRITISH COLUMBIA NEWS



SANDY AMY, PORT COQUITLAM, writes, "After the many occasions where my picture (or some mention of me) has been in the magazine, I felt it was probably my turn to write. Greetings from the West Coast! First off, I'd like to personally thank you for your excellent magazine. It has easily become my favorite horse publication (and I read more than a few!). I consume every written word and absorb every photo from all issues, and we both look forward (me first!) to the arrival of each new issue. You've contributed greatly to this divine obsession I've grown for horses in general, but especially this wondrous breed we've come to know. And the regular posters and advertisers in the magazine feel like friends and allies. I've had the good fortune to meet some of them, and I look forward to meeting many more. Walker folks *are* different!"

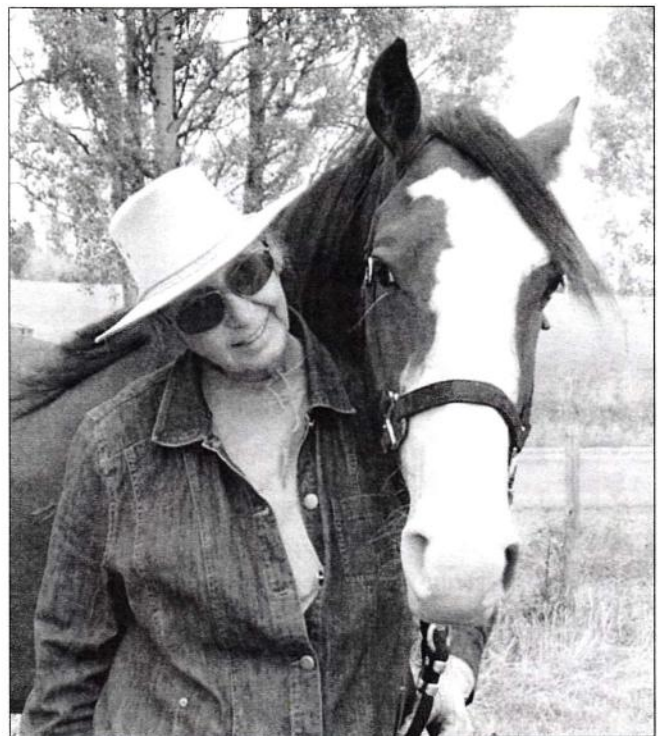
"Our Spring/Summer season was monumental! Genevieve spent 131 days in total between the end of May and early October at our SkyKeep property in the South Cariboo, most of it with the horses. (*I've attached a picture of our first ride on our own place, above.*) I went to a reduced work-week this year, so I also was in the Cariboo just about any time I wasn't required to be at the coast. We managed to make some serious progress on our new "homestead". What with getting the trailer (an adventure in itself), a 40' container (another adventure), and then our power in, building fences (Genevieve built about 1500' feet of fence by herself) and corrals and shelters, knocking down our "beetle-killed" pines, and clearing roadways, on top of Gen's regular "feed-groom-muck" routines, you could say we were busy. However, not so busy that we didn't

get lots of great rides in and around our new neighbourhood. There are literally hundreds of miles of great trails (and dozens of fishing lakes!) all accessible from the end of our driveway - heaven! Leaving our two young horses boarded locally in the Cariboo for the winter (our little herd has grown to 4 now - all TWH, of course!) and loading up Finally and Delite, we were finally chased off the place by the weather and went back to the Coast Oct. 11th."

"We also attended the 2008 HHA Fawn Lake Ride over Labour Day (mentioned last issue). I'd like to take the opportunity here to say a great big Thanks to Lisa and Harry Riedler for all their tireless work to make it a great event for a great cause - the funnest weekend of my Summer!"

"Well, our mission *was* to get base camp established this year, but it seems it grew into more of a dress-rehearsal for us. This year was enough for both of us to know that living with our horses in the Cariboo was where we need to be. Our focus now is to tie up our remaining obligations here on the Lower Mainland, and get ourselves moved to SkyKeep. If we manage to keep to the "fast-track" schedule, we'll be spending our first winter there in 2009. And it's all because of Tennessee Walkers!"

"Keep doing what you're doing, Marjorie. Your efforts are truly appreciated! And Happy Trails to all of you Walker fans!" (*Below: OH Henry & Gen.*)



From DEBBIE SMITH , TOWER RIDGE FARM, MAPLE RIDGE, "Spectacular riding weather this fall! What a gorgeous Indian summer we've had through September and October. The fall colours were unbelievable, trails were dry and in awesome condition... we sure have been spoiled! But it's changed very quickly and will be wet and rainy now until the spring, I am sure."

"Congratulations to Genevieve Amy on her purchase of "Artics End", fondly known as OH Henry! (See his photo with Gen on previous page.) This is our last colt from Artics Kit Kat and Storms Northern Victory. Henry is already deeply missed but he will be enjoying his winter in the cold wintery Cariboo. Thanks for giving our favorite guy a wonderful home."

"Haney Horsemen Association Poker Ride Organizer, Dave Smith managed to have a good turnout of 20 or so horses for our 10th Annual Xmas Toy/ Hamper/Poker Ride on November 2 - but the rain did **not** hold off! We called it the Soaker Ride! Boy, did it pour, but then sun came out... and then it poured again. We raised almost \$200 for the Maple Ridge Christmas hamper fund, had about 100 lbs of food donated and about 4 boxes of new toys collected. The winner of the poker hand walked off with \$200 cash in her pocket, the lucky gal! All participants went home with prizes and The Rocking Horse Pub supplied a delicious lunch for all. The day was grey and wet in weather but not in fun and spirits."

"Wishing everyone a wonderful Christmas and Very Happy 2009."



Above, Genevieve Amy on Finally and Natalie Speckmaier on her special horse, Trigger, riding on Christmas Eve 2007, along Georges Way, Thornhill Trail System, before our big snowfall.



JAYNE WALKER, ROYAL CLASS WALKERS, DAWSON CREEK, writes, "Here's a photo of me with Nancy's Secret Pride this summer. We placed first in both the Pouce Coupe and Dawson Creek parades. Secret loves parades to show off his hat to all! Not bad for a 25 year old horse. I sold him as a four year old and got him back when he was 21, as the lady who had him could no longer ride."

ALBERTA NEWS

From DELORES BOEYENGA, STEP N OUT STABLE, ONOWAY, "Hi all. No, I didn't drop off the end of the world! Well maybe... but that seems to happen when you build a new property and house and the whole thing from a bare piece of land. We are no spring chickens anymore so we have been dead-beat tired for two summers now. Not much time for horses so have been cutting down my herd a fair bit. We have built a log house, 3/4 loft and walk out basement, total 2560 sq. ft. Seems small, but with the three floors there is lots of room. This winter should see the inside of the house pretty much done. We have done all the work ourselves. I am now a jack-of-all-trades and master of none, but it looks super. We have a wonderful view of our land, a lake, and, as we are on three dead ends, we have piles of wildlife in the area. They cross the pastures with the horses, which does not mean when my horse sees a moose on the trail she does not do a cutting horse 180 and take off flat out. I stayed on but that moose would not leave. We rounded a bend in the trail, I was looking some place else, and we almost ran smack into the darn thing. What a scare! They are HUGE."

"Ok, that's one riding trip. On the Kootenay Plains in May, I got bucked off a horse that has

NEVER bucked before... and man, did she buck! My fault, trying to pony another horse, the lead got someplace she could not tolerate and while I was swinging my leg over the saddle she let fly. Monika said she went so high up her four feet touched mid air and came down without stepping on me and took off down the road bucking hard. Me, I was lying on the ground assessing the situation. The horse came back, put her muzzle on me as to say, "OH MY LORD what have I done?" I got up real slow and dazed as I had smashed my head hard on the ground and cracked some ribs (AGAIN). I jumped on that horse though and rode her so I would not be scared and she would get the hint I was not staying off when she did that. She has not done it since. I continued to ride while at the Plains but it took me a long time to heal when I got home. Other than light riding around here I've not gone anywhere. "Next year," I keep saying."

"I have two new horses to get on the trails next summer. My now gelded stallion, Major Power Play and a two year old classic champagne stud colt (who will be gelded soon). He is the darkest shade of classic I have seen, by my Legacy's Goldmine x Fairytale and Cash who is classic champagne. He's a puppy dog; should be a wonderful trail horse."

"Now to thank some wonderful people who bought horses from us: Randy Strader of Okotoks on the purchase of a sorrel gelding; Denise Vlahoos on the purchase of a gorgeous cremello filly who she says is her baby son's babysitter. I have seen video of him riding her. Deb and Garth Hatch for purchasing three wonderful horses from me this summer, a big bay gelding, Winston; a buckskin filly, Honey; and my classic mare Fairytale and Cash. They are all being trail ridden and doing so well. Winston was well broke, but Honey and Fairy had never been ridden. Garth jumped on at the start of a fairly long ride and didn't look back. That's how both were ridden, Fairy on a 230 km ride. Wow, Garth."

"Scott and Helen and kids bought a young filly, Sugar, put 30 days on her and had her at the Kootenays. The kids were doing acrobatics on her back and Helen, who swore never to ride was riding her within a couple days. What an amazing minded horse with gait too. Love having my horses go to families like these. Also I would like to thank Ernest Batiste from Texas on the purchase of two yearlings: A chestnut colt who looks just like his dam, I'm Good As Gold, and walks like his sire, Major Power Play, and a gold champagne colt by Legacy's Goldmine and my direct Generator mare. Ernest has great plans to show these fellows and says they have it in them."

"I also leased my palomino Golden Boy mare

to Windi and Lance and they are expecting a baby mule in the spring. I will get a re-bred and also have a baby mule. That should be amazingly interesting."

"Hope I didn't forget anyone that I sold a horse to. If I did, please remind me. I have plans to sell a few more and get down to maybe 8 horses and no stallion. I would consider selling Goldmine to the right home as I plan to geld him next summer as I don't plan to breed mares anymore. Time to move on to other things."

"Hope you are all ready for winter, hay's all in, and all that. Talk to you all later."



FRAN KERIK, CHRYSTAL STAR RANCH, TWO HILLS, writes, "The fall weather sure has been nice, and we've managed to get lots of outdoor work done, even with Gordon working in Vancouver. With the help of CRTWH who provided a lovely new banner and brochures, and the *WHN* for the extra magazines, I manned a table at the St Paul Harvest Festival. (Above.) The Festival has been held every second year for six years now and I've been to every one of them. Mornin's Miracle was a wonderful ambassador for our breed, hanging her head over the stall for the entire weekend and just lapping up all the attention. Although they didn't have breed demonstrations this year because of time constraints, I did have two of the trainers from the Trainers Challenge ride Mira after they were done. The winner of the challenge couldn't believe how smooth Mira was and is now looking at getting a TWH for her arthritic father."

"I've weaned 3 of my 4 foals - the last one is too young yet - so I am having fun doing their ground work. Eddie, my "bottle baby" from last year, is a great babysitter; he is so mellow and relaxed with anything we humans do that the babies are following his example."

"We also participated in Cattle Sorting (*below*). It's like team penning, but you only have two teammates and must sort the cattle in numerical order with the first number being called out by the announcer in 75 seconds. The pros could do 9 calves; we beginners were lucky if we got in one or two. It was great fun."

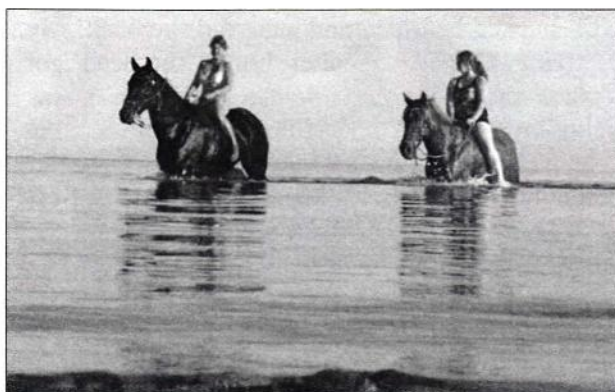


"I had a nice visit from Bob Lamport, his daughter-in-law Phyllis and granddaughter Trina in September. Trina met my son Tyler at a 4-H camp and they came up to see our TWH. Bob imported one of the first stallions into Alberta in 1963, a sorrel sabino horse, Prince Radar, from Ethna Friesen in Montana. Bob still has a few of his descendents on the farm. I brought Mira out and rode her around a bit for Bob. His face lit up when he heard that wonderful 1-2-3-4 thunking of a good run walk. It didn't take me long to persuade him to hop on for a ride. It had been three years since he'd sat on a horse and he enjoyed himself so much. The visit was over much too soon, as they had a long drive back home."

"I've been updating my website, www.twhstar.com, so check it out for our new sales list and the events that we are planning for next year."

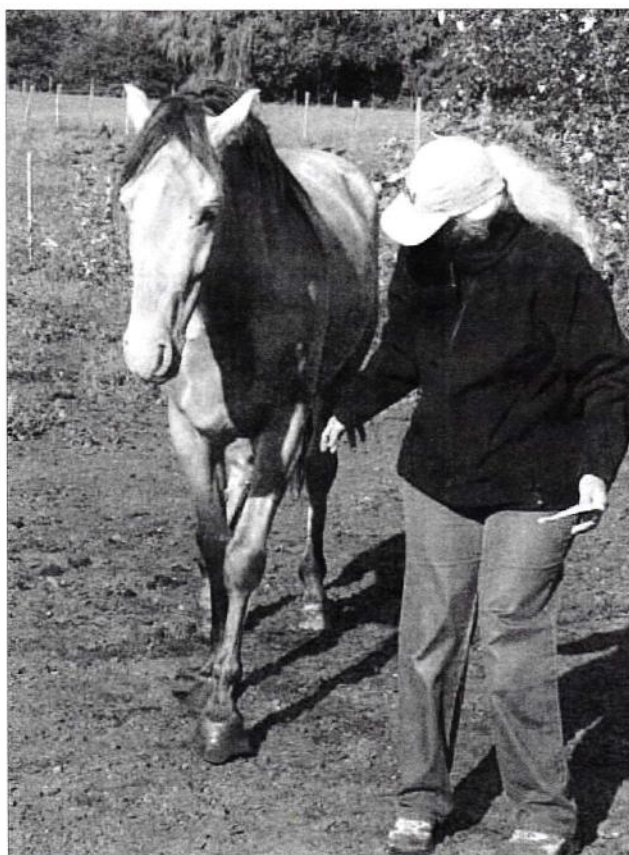
BRENDA L. BAKER, CALGARY, "Here I am, line-dancing? (*right*) with Ullu Zurbruggen's young stallion Frontier's Begora Gold Z. in September when Dave & I stopped in for a quick 'horsey fix' for me after a weekend with relatives. Now I'm pleased to introduce our newest TWH, "Brandy" an amber champagne filly by that same stallion. We purchased Brandy along with her dam, Victorian Ora Bella Z., a 16 hh palomino with a great big walk, from Ullu this fall. Brandy is good company for Starlette, our lonely weaning filly."

"I have sold Chic Magnet, a lovely four year old black gelding to Fran McCurdy of Calgary. Fran is looking forward to many happy days of trail riding with him. Please send her a copy of *WHN*. Thanks."



KARLA FREEMAN, BENTLEY writes, "Hello from RIDE EASY RANCH. Alexandra and I had one last big splash in Gull Lake on October 1st, with my horse Ken, and her fave, Blaze. It was truly re-*Fresh*-ing! I trust everyone has enjoyed riding in the beautiful fall we had."

"Congratulations to Karen and Dalton who purchased Karlas Sahara Treasure, a palomino 2 year old filly. I'm sure she will be happy to join the other Walkers on your farm, and you will have fun with her. Also, thanks to everyone who has sent me updates on horses purchased here. I really appreciate knowing how they are doing. Hope you are all getting set for the festive season (which will be upon us sooner than we want!). Keep on having fun with your horses, and happy trails to all in the New Year!"





**Meredith
Manor**

careers in horsemanship

Pressure is Relative

by Ron Meredith

President, Meredith Manor International Equestrian Centre



When people first start playing with the concept of using pressure and release to show a horse what they want, they often "misunderstand" pressure from the horse's perspective. They may go to a clinic where they watched someone chasing a horse with a lariat or waving a longe whip in the direction of its hocks. They leave with the impression that if they go home and do that same thing with their horse, they'll eventually get the same result as the clinician. When it doesn't work, they can't figure out what they missed.

The problem is that they didn't understand exactly what pressure is and how the pressures we use change as a horse moves up the training tree. A pressure is anything that gets a horse's attention. Pressure can be a very relative thing depending on the horse's personality and its individual degree of reactivity. Horses will react differently to the same pressures relative to their current level of understanding or training and their previous experiences with you or other people.

That horse at home may be on a completely different spot along the startle continuum than the horse they watched at the demonstration. Just a person's presence creates a certain degree of pressure on a horse. But the human presence that might make a mustang harden its nostrils and show the whites of its eyes may not get much more than the turn of an ear from that seasoned pleasure gelding. When you crack a whip, it may be "way too much fuss for one horse and he'll flee the county while another horse may ignore it altogether.

I once read an article about a guy who corralled a herd of particularly wily mustangs by just quietly pushing them from 3 miles back. He'd figured out how to put just enough pressure on them to keep their attention and he knew how to apply that pressure to keep them moving in the direction he wanted them to go. A big part of a trainer's job is to learn how to read each individual horse. You have to figure out what degree of what kinds of pressures are going to be just enough to get the horse's attention without startling him or raising his tension level in any way.

The clinic horse may also have been at a very different level in its training. As a horse progresses through the training tree, we start with *teaching*

pressures that show the horse something we want him to do. Then we introduce *directing* pressures that ask him what we want. Once the horse understands what we are showing and asking, then we can start to tell him what we want. At that point, we can add *enforcing* pressures that are a little more demanding when the horse figures out what we've just told him. So if you were watching a clinician applying enforcing pressures to a horse that was ignoring him, you're going to have a wreck if you go home and apply that degree of pressure to a horse that still doesn't understand the basics of what you are showing or asking him to do.

Emotionally, the horse reacts to anything sudden or unusual the same way he would to an attack by a predator. So if the horse startles or tenses or tries to flee or fight in any way, the pressure you applied was too forceful for that horse in that situation. The horse perceived it as sudden or unusual, as an attack by something predatory, and he reacted. So it's important to introduce any pressure to the horse in a manner and to a degree that keeps his emotional level calm and his body relaxed.

Horse memories are emotional and they relate to the feeling that a particular set of circumstances created in him the last time he encountered it. When that thing or circumstance or person appears again in their environment, they don't stop and think about it. They automatically react with that associated emotion.

People have other levels of memory and thinking that allow them to intentionally control their emotions and how they choose to display them. The horse just reacts. Take the bushes the horse has walked by hundreds of times that just got trimmed way back. The rider sees that the bushes are different and registers a little surprise or curiosity or maybe irritation because he liked the bushes the way they were. But he also realizes it's not a big deal and immediately goes back to just riding along. The horse, however, sees something different and unusual in his environment. It's going to raise his emotional level. Same deal with that new mailbox. The degree to which he reacts is going to depend on a bunch of other things including his personality, the kind of relationship he has with his rider, and his past experience with new things in his environment.

Continued

Horses are also patternistic. When the same pattern repeats itself over and over during their training, it starts to trigger an expectation of a particular emotional memory. We can use this trait to get the horse comfortable with unusual things in his environment. A trainer can condition the horse's emotional reaction patterns to things in its environment by introducing unusual things (which creates pressure) by tiny degrees making sure that the horse stays calm and relaxed before increasing the pressure and making it "louder." So you can gradually get the horse to the point where he doesn't pay much attention to blowing papers and tarps and bicycles and whatever you want. You can call it sacking out or de-spooking or whatever. You create the feeling in the horse that when he is with you, he is safe, even when something unusual shows up on the horizon. And you create that emotional pattern by never ever putting a pressure on the horse that startles or interrupts or creates tension or raises the excitement level in any way. That's why good training is so boring to watch.

If you use loud pressures, you may get the job done in the short term. You can see examples of that at the end of any horse show if you stand around and watch people loading their horses on trailers. They may get their horse on the trailer but they do not create a calm, relaxed emotional pattern that you can ask the horse to repeat again at any time. In fact, they probably create just the opposite feeling about the trailer than the one they'd like the horse to have.

Keep in mind that anything that gets the horse's attention is a pressure. It might be no more than your presence in the middle of an arena, or a hand motion, or a click or a kiss. It might be a twirl or a flick or the tap of a lariat or a longe line or a whip. It might be a bit or your leg or a spur. Figure out the smallest amount of pressure you need to apply to show or ask or tell the horse what you want. For example, sometimes I'll whistle or hum to remind myself to stay in a particular rhythm and tempo. When I want to get the horse's attention, all I have to do is stop whistling or humming and he notices something is different. That interruption in the pattern creates a tiny pressure that gets the horse's attention.

Every time you go to work with your horse, remind yourself that your basic goal is *always* to have your horse working with rhythm and relaxation. Any pressure that interrupts that feeling of rhythm and relaxation was too strong for that horse at that time. As the horse matures and learns, the kinds of pressures you use and degree to which you can apply them without startling the horse will change. But that basic goal always stays the same.

Ron Meredith is the President of Meredith Manor International Equestrian Centre (1-304-679-3128, Rte 1, Box 66, Waverly, WV 26184; <http://www.meredithmanor.com>), an ACCET accredited equestrian educational institution.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

SMALL & MELLOW?

Recently I've been corresponding with a lady who was looking for a small (no bigger than 14 hh), smooth running-walk gaited stallion. He must be very easy going ("one who'll stand still & chill all day long, if I don't tell it to go forward"). He must also be sturdy enough to carry an adult and preferably be of a dark colour. She has given up on finding this combination in a registered Tennessee Walking Horse. This is what she says,

"A local woman who's been training showing TWH for years told me that she's found that the shorter they are, the HOTTER they are, and so if I wanted MELLOW, that I'd better look for a spotted saddle horse (pony) instead. So that's what I did."

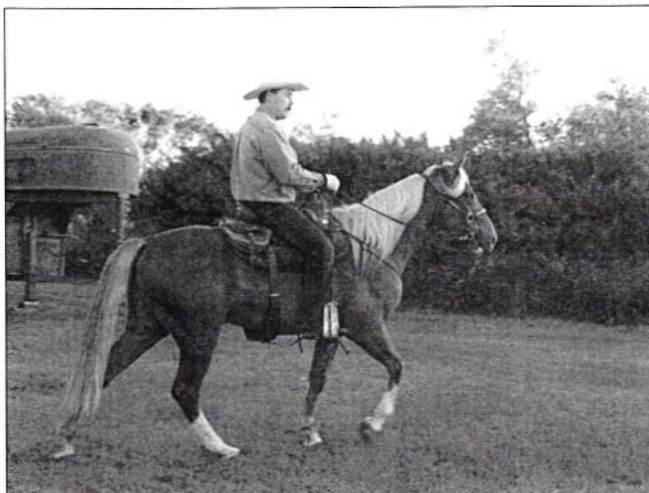
What do you readers think of that assessment? In your experience with TWH have you found that the smaller they are, the hotter they are?

Does anyone have small Walkers of the size she's looking for? Never mind a stallion – does ANYONE have TWH that size?

There were a number of people in Alberta breeding Walking Ponies at one time – crossbred TWH/Welsh – that could be registered with the American Walking Pony registry in Georgia, I believe. How did those crosses turn out? Did they have the small size and mellow disposition? Did they have the walking gaits?

For 20 years Mr. Donald Franks of Booneville, Mississippi bred TWH down in size, until he had some as small as 12:2 hh. Does anyone know what happened to his breeding stock after he died?

Let's hear from all you readers out there. I'll bet you have many of the answers!



Sheldon Schroeder and his new gelding, Hollywood.



PRE-PURCHASE EXAMS by L. Burchill

Pre-Purchase Exams are important - even when dealing with a young horse.

Recently my husband, Doug, and I decided to look for a new horse for him. His tried and true gelding is getting on in years, and Doug decided that maybe he should be looking for the next level horse. So began our search for a horse. We read the classifieds in "The Walking Horse News", checked on the internet, and finally found a flashy young gelding that seemed to have all the qualities that we were looking for. I telephoned the owner and discussed the horse's suitability, health, etc. It seemed that this could be *the one* so we made arrangements to take a closer look and hopefully, go for a ride.

After going over to the owner's place and working with the horse on the ground, we had the owner tie, groom, tack up, and ride him. He had all the buttons and seemed to be off to a good start for a three year old horse. We asked if he had ever been injured and had he always been in good health - to which his owner said, "He has never been injured or ill".

I rode him and then Doug rode him. We discussed getting a pre-purchase exam done on him. Doug was resistant at first but I said it would be a good idea, and so off to the vet we went. I drove from my home to the owner's place as we agreed that I would pick him up there and take him to my veterinarian. The owner followed me in her car with the plan that when we were finished with the horse at the vet clinic, I would drive him home (hopefully mine).

Before we left, I was asked to sign papers to transfer ownership. I did not put any information on his papers as I wanted to be sure that he was 100% healthy. I did sign other documents, which basically stated that the current owner was not responsible for the suitability of the horse for the new owners and that they could not guarantee its health, etc. It was a fairly standard legal form, absolving them of all financial responsibility should things go south. I read the document carefully and, for good measure, added on the bottom of the page beside my signature, that the horse must have a clean vet check prior to the purchase being finalized.

The pre-purchase exam started with the general overall health check: eyes, ears, teeth, respiration, hoof sensitivity, etc. During the hoof sensitivity test, I noted that the horse did not like

having his back legs held for any period of time. Then came the flexion tests. Each leg was flexed twice, and after each time the vet's assistant would "trot" the horse away from the vet and back. It was apparent that both hind legs were "off", one more so than the other. (A level 1 on his right hind and plus 2 on the left hind). I asked if we could have the left hind leg x-rayed, as it was the worse one and the vet complied. After careful viewing of the radiograph by my veterinarian and having it verified by another veterinarian, it was determined that in his left stifle joint where there should be a black hole of fluid, calcification had begun to occur and you could see a cloudy white mass instead.

I gave the owner the news and she also looked at the radiograph. I told her that we would not be buying her horse for the obvious reasons. She didn't seem overly surprised and certainly didn't comment on the injuries. I took the horse back home to her farm and then made the long drive home.

I have not heard from this breeder since that day - not to ask if I have found another horse or if I would like to buy her horse at perhaps a reduced price. I have noticed however, that the horse is now sold. Obviously it sold to someone who did not think that a three year old gelding could have any health issues.

Pre-purchase exams are not cheap, as we all know. I paid \$520.00 for the pre-purchase exam including the two radiographs of his left stifle. But, given the alternative of paying thousands of dollars in yearly maintenance to keep this horse pain free and useable, it certainly doesn't seem like much, does it?! Hopefully, his new owners have the means to take care of this horse and he does not get flipped around, as often happens.

What's that old saying? "Caveat Emptor" - BUYER BEWARE!

Editor's Note: *There are pitfalls to buying anything, so it's important to be well informed. A pre-purchase vet check can be good insurance for both buyer and seller, though it is the buyer's responsibility to pay for it.*

Another area that needs more attention is that of registration papers. Whose responsibility are they - the buyers or the sellers? And what is the law on this? More in the next issue.



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Seasons Greetings



&

Smooth Riding

to All of You in the New Year!

From the Board of Directors of the
Canadian Registry of the Tennessee Walking Horse

SEPT. CLINIC

The September 27-28 Clinic at McDonald Farms near Dawson Creek, BC was well received by both participants and auditors, with comments ranging from "I really, really enjoyed the clinic!" to "The clinic was GREAT! I loved it and can't wait to do it again!" (See facing page.)

Thank you to clinicians Dianne Little and Bill Roy, who showed people how and why Walkers 'Gait From the Ground Up', with everything from saddle fit to tension in the rider's body affecting the horse's gait. The **WHOLE HORSE** must be comfortable and relaxed to produce its best possible movement.

Also thank you to Don & Jo-Anne McDonald for providing the venue and making it happen. We enjoyed it. It was a weekend to remember!

WEB NOTES

The Members Map List has been updated on the website and a new form has gone out to all current members with the membership renewal forms. If you would like to have your name and contact information available on that list, please return the form with your membership.

A n n u a l memberships are due January 1st. As well as reduced fees for registering, transferring or having DNA done on your horses, membership has other advantages. Clinic and Program For Excellence and Training Levels fees are less for members. Your contact info can be included on the website and you will be part of an organization promoting Canadian bred TWH in Canada. Join us!

GATHERING 2008

The Gathering held at Cloudwalker Stables the weekend of September 20-21 provided the opportunity for 5 people to enter 13 horses in the CRTWH Program For Excellence, a great opportunity to have breeding stock evaluated by an IJA Judge trained to look for correct gait and sound conformation.

Three people also entered their Walkers in the Training Levels Challenge. Some were videoed at the Gathering and others sent in 'home made' videos.

All tapes or DVDs are going to an IJA accredited judge for evaluation, and we look forward to announcing the results at the AGM.

For more info on this program see www.crtwh.ca or call Dianne Little at 403-271-7391 or 403-678-4452.



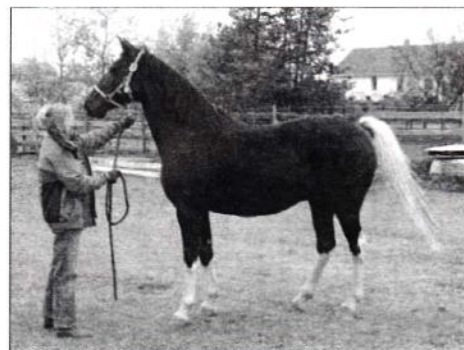
CRTWH CLINIC 'GAIT FROM THE GROUND UP'



I would like to report that the CRTWH clinic held here on September 27-28th was a success. We had enthusiastic locals absorbing the knowledge of the clinicians, Dianne Little and Bill Roy. The weather was reasonable (and I am happy to report that the port-a-potty did *not* blow over on the Saturday - a concern to some that it might do that, especially with someone (them) in it!). I hope that everyone had a good time and took some knowledge home with them that they can put to good use. We are never so smart that we cannot learn something - that is our motto.

I would really like to thank all the local TWH owners who came and supported the clinic. Special thanks to the clinicians, Dianne and Bill, who drove lots of miles to get here and help us out. Special mention and thanks to Karla Freeman who drove Dianne and Marjorie up here and participated in the clinic on local horses. We appreciated your cheery presence and support. We even had one participant who bought a new horse and brought her to the clinic along with her regular mount. With the price of fuel being what it is, it was nice that so many came and took in the show. *Jo-Anne & Don McDonald,*

McDonald Farms, Pouce Coupe, BC



(Below Jayne Walker with 'Flash'.



I had the wonderful opportunity to attend the CRTWH Clinic, Gait From The Ground Up, at McDonald Farms in Pouce Coupe at the end of September. What a great time! I certainly learned much. The highlights were many - from the ground work to the riding, and I am certain that everyone who attended took much useful information home."

"The saddle fitting demonstration by Bill Roy, *(Below left)* was impressive, with in-depth explanation, utilizing different types of saddles and saddle trees, positioning them on the horse, to show how fit *does* make a difference."

"We were also privileged to have Dianne Little provide us with her experience and knowledge, and her never ending enthusiasm to coach each of us specifically to our individual needs." *(Below: Dianne Little, Gail Peters and 'Lady'.)*

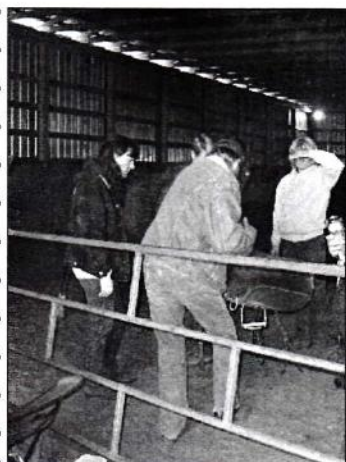
"I met fantastic horses (which satisfied my horse-craving while away from home). Thank-you, All, for letting me play with and ride your horses. And just as important, I met more spectacular Horse Lovers! A very warm thank you, Jo-

Ann and Don McDonald, for doing the work to host this clinic. It was a splendid time."

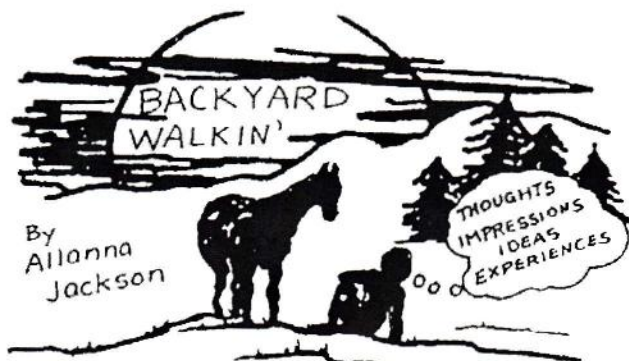
Karla Freeman, Bentley, AB

(Above: Jewels waits patiently while Bill Roy adjusts Cindy Trottier's stirrup.)

Below middle: Maureen Hummel & 'Meg'.



(Photos courtesy Karla Freeman & Jo-Anne McDonald)



Riding by the Seat of Your Pants

©June 2008 Allanna Lea Jackson

When you ride a horse you are sitting on the power control center of the horse's movement. The horse's response to the rider's seat is instinctive. This makes your seat the purest, most natural, and most direct communication you have with the horse. To understand why this is so, let's start with an oversimplified look at the physics of equine anatomy.

Starting with the horse's "engine" (hindquarters) we see that the hind legs are angled in several directions and change angles at every joint. These hind legs act as levers that multiply and direct the power supplied by the horse's muscles. The tendons and ligaments act as the pulleys that apply the muscle power to the bone levers to move the horse. The horse's hind legs are attached to its spine with a direct bone-to-bone connection at the pelvis.

The front legs are straight, except at the pasterns, acting as support pillars for the horse's body. The front legs are attached to the body only by muscles, tendons and ligaments with no bone to bone connection. The horse's body is suspended between the forelegs by the muscles, tendons and ligaments; an arrangement that really is called the thoracic sling. Because muscles, tendons, and ligaments are soft tissue they are flexible and can stretch or contract. The horse can move its body forward and back, side to side, or very slightly up and down within the thoracic sling, all without moving its front feet.

The head is approximately 5% of the horse's weight. The horse's neck puts this weight at the end of a lever, making the head a very effective counterweight for the levers of the hind legs. Because the head and neck are extended in front of the legs the horse's center of balance is in the middle of its body just above and slightly behind the horse's elbows at the heart girth. The thoracic sling makes it possible for the horse to move its center of balance a little bit, but not very far. When we talk about shifting the horse's weight on to his hindquarters the horse actually moves the hind legs forward under the center of balance, more than the center of balance moves backwards. The horse does

this by rounding its loins, tipping its pelvis and stepping further under itself with the hind legs.

The horse's spine is somewhat flexible, like a cable. The spine can flex all along its length and in different directions and places, but the neck is more flexible than the back. The vertical position of the spine at the rear, where the horse's spine and pelvis meet, can be changed only by flexing or compressing the hind legs. The spine is attached in the middle to the forelegs but the thoracic sling makes this attachment somewhat flexible so the spine can arc or sag, within a narrow range. The front end of the spine (neck) with the counterweight of the horse's head, is loose and very flexible. The counter weight (head) can push the cable (spine) down to the bottom of its range of travel within the pillars (thoracic sling) which puts a sag in the cable. Or the counterweight can lift the cable to the top of the pillar, putting an arch in the cable. Moving the levers closer to the pillars also puts an arch in the cable, but at a different place in the cable.

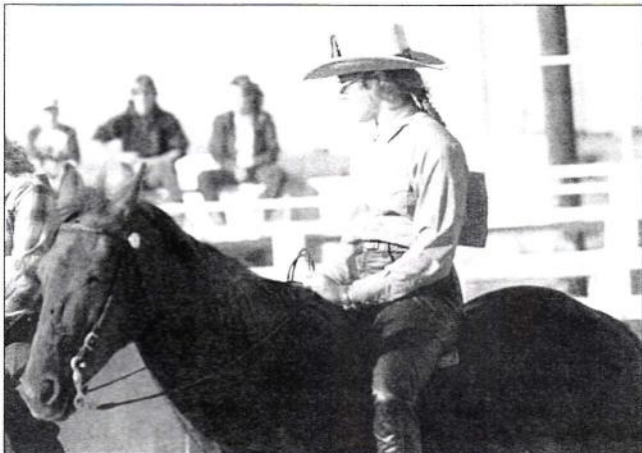
In trotting horses, letting the spine sag or putting an arch in the back merely changes the style and quality of the trot. In multi-gaited horses sagging or arching the spine completely changes which gait the horse does. When the spine is arched to the top of the thoracic sling the horse's movement becomes more diagonal. When the spine sags to the bottom of the thoracic sling the horse's gait becomes more lateral. Because the head is a counterweight a high head position tends to push the cable down the pillar, while lowering the head and arching the neck tends to lift and arch the spine. Remember, the spine is flexible so it is possible for the back to be lifted with the head up. It is also possible for the back to sag with the head low and extended. The spine may also sag at the loins, which also encourages lateral movement.

The significance of all this is that when we ride a horse we are sitting directly above the horse's center of balance, just behind the support column of the front legs. We are sitting on top of the mid-point of the spine where the body moves within the thoracic sling with that free swinging head and neck counterweight in front of us. An adult rider, without a saddle, puts a load of 15% - 25% of the horse's body weight on top of his power control center so everything that you do with your body will influence the horse. The horse can't ignore the rider's body position. The laws of physics won't let him.

This is such a purely natural communication that horses respond to the rider's seat instinctively the very first time they are ridden. We don't have to teach this. All we do is refine it with training. ***It is we, the riders, who need schooling to learn the most effective use of the power control panel in our seat.***

NATURAL BALANCED SEAT

If you've ever ridden a horse bareback you've experienced the natural balanced seat. If you've got a horse that's safe to ride bareback you can try this. Don't think about your position when riding bareback, just relax and enjoy the ride for a few minutes, then make a quiet, easy stop. Don't move! (*Below.*)



Before you do anything to change your position on the horse's back make note of where you are. You'll find yourself sitting directly behind the horse's withers where the shoulder and body meet. You'll be sitting on the 3-point support of your pubic bone and pelvis tipped very slightly onto your rear pockets, with your legs almost directly beneath you, hips open and relaxed, knees only slightly flexed, toes pointed slightly outward and down. If the horse suddenly disappeared you'd only have to raise your toes and straighten up your body to land upright on your feet. A good saddle, regardless of type, puts the rider as close to this natural balanced seat as possible. If it doesn't, you'll always be fighting the saddle in some way.

Take your horse into a round pen or other safe, confined area, saddled with a good balanced seat saddle and his usual head gear and mount up. (I do not condone riding without some kind of head gear on the horse.) Whatever head gear you're using, give the horse a totally slack rein, keep your hands still and try not to do anything to the horse's head. Forget about his head, let the horse show you what your seat is doing to his body and what this does to his gait.

WALKING SEAT (*Right*)

Your natural balanced seat with your thighs open, legs relaxed and draped quietly against the horse's sides, stirrups supporting the balls of your feet in a level position, is the walking seat.

Riders of trotting horses are frequently advised to note that their leg naturally swings into the

horse's side as the horse walks and are told to lengthen the horse's stride by squeezing with the leg in time with the this natural motion. For gaited horses with any lateral tendencies at all, alternating leg squeezes often encourage pacing. Tension in the rider's lower back also encourages pacing. We're looking at the rider's seat, so note that as your horse walks your pelvis naturally moves with the horse. On a gaited horse keeping your legs quiet and upper body relaxed helps the horse stay square, while the movement of your pelvis can be used to set the horse in a steady tempo at the walk and adjust the length of your horse's stride within that tempo. Don't mistake this pelvic rhythm with a sloppy belly-dancing movement at the waist.

STEERING WITH YOUR SEAT

Now try steering with your seat. As your horse walks along the rail turn your head just enough so your eyes can focus straight down a new track 10 feet inside the track the horse is on. Don't do anything else. Just look intently along the new track you want the horse to take. After awhile the horse will drift onto the track your eyes are focused on and begin following it. Magic? No. When you turn your head and focus your eyes you subconsciously shift your body toward where you are looking. This change in your balance on the horse's power control panel tells the horse to move over to the track you are looking at. When the horse gets there you align yourself with where your eyes are focused, which re-balances the horse's power control panel, telling the horse to travel straight along this track.



STOPPING WITHOUT REINS

Now comes the fun part. You can slow and stop your horse just with your seat! How? By using a roll up cue that mimics the natural stop signal horses give each other when playing. From your natural balanced seat straighten your lower back, roll your weight up onto your inner thighs and the front of your pubic bones, tip your pelvis as if you were trying to raise an imaginary tail and close your thighs but keep



your seat deep on the horse. Leave your lower legs loose and away from the horse. Think of sinking your weight through the horse's withers into the ground in front of his front legs. (*'roll up seat' above*)

Your thighs mimic the pressure a dominant horse puts just in front of the withers to stop a subordinate horse. Your pelvis is pushing the horse's spine down in the thoracic sling, directing the flow of power from the hind legs into the ground in front of the horse. The horse will probably drift to a stop the way a car does without throttle or brake. Some horses stop rather abruptly. This roll up cue also discourages bucking and rearing.

Sitting on the horse in a moderate form of this same roll up seat but with your thighs open and relaxed can flatten out a horse that is too trotty. Be very careful with the roll up seat because you are weighting the horse's front feet and putting him on his forehead. Too much 'roll up seat' can very easily turn the trot into a pace.

ROLL UP CUE FOR BACKING

When the horse is standing still, the roll up cue suggests to the horse that he back up. The moment the horse shifts his balance backward you'll have to

lighten the pressure on his withers and shift your own seat to something between the natural balanced seat and the roll up seat. The horse has to round his back and lift his front end to move backward. He can't do that when your roll up cue is gluing his front feet to the ground. Return to your natural balanced seat and walk for awhile.

CHAIR SEAT

Next try a chair seat. (*Below.*) Push yourself to the back of the saddle, sit heavily on your back pockets (the back of your pelvis) and round your lower back, push your legs forward with your feet braced against the stirrups. If your horse has any rack in him at all this position alone may be enough to put him into a rack. If it doesn't a simple squeeze with your lower legs while in this position will. Horses that cannot rack will do some variant of a 4-beat pace when the rider is in this position. When you're through racking, simply straighten up into your natural balanced seat. You'll be surprised at how quickly the horse drops into a flat walk. Go back to walking in the balanced seat for awhile.



CLASSICAL SEAT (Right)

Next sit up a little so that your weight is exactly balanced between pelvis and pubic bone, sit taller, think of getting taller in your body, especially your lower back, keep your seat in the saddle, leave your thighs open and relaxed and gently squeeze with your lower legs the way you'd squeeze a tube of toothpaste. You're now asking the horse to raise his spine to the top of the thoracic sling and trot. As soon as you feel the diagonal legs move together you can begin posting the trot, if you know how, or stand in the stirrups. Don't worry, the horse will not get stuck in the trot. Simply relax your legs, settle into the natural balance walking seat and the horse will immediately drop into a 4-beat gait.



diagonal while allowing the horse's back to sag makes the movement more lateral. The more gaits the horse has inherited the more subtle and precise your seat position needs to be to keep the horse consistent in any one gait. Very minor changes in your position will completely change the horse's gait. Horses that inherit fewer gaits tolerate greater variations in the rider's position and still maintain gait.

Directing the horse with your seat is something you have to learn by feel for yourself. Your horse is your best teacher. Have fun playing with the horse's power control panel. You can't ruin or hurt the horse with this. Influencing the horse with your seat is so gentle, so purely natural, so totally humane and so perfectly horse logical it's built into the horse. ★



MORE NEWS...

I received a new subscription from JANET CLARK of JUNCTION CITY, OREGON. She says, "My Rocky mare and I are gradually getting a straighter, more even four beat gait with the help of classical dressage principles, taught by my instructor, Nikky Stincombe. She's a friend of Diane Sept."

CHARIS COOPER, TURNER VALLEY, AB writes, "Enclosed is my renewal for the *Walking Horse News*. Thanks for the reminder. The horses and I have had a busy summer with parading, trail riding and general work at home. My new horse, Trinkette, and I attended a charity ride at the Bar U Historical Ranch in August, and I've signed up for the STARS Ride in September at John Scott's Ranch out of Longview. The photo is of us at the Bar U ride. I also attended Spruce Meadows using both DeeJay's Peppi Two and DeeJay's Fire And Lace. Happy Trails!"

HANDS AND HEAD

If you're like most riders you **did** do something with your hands, probably without realizing you were doing it. The horse's head follows your hands. When your hands are high, the horse's head will be high. When your hands are low the horse's head will be low. A high head pushes the spine down in the thoracic sling, encouraging pace and rack. A low head makes it easier for the horse to arch the spine within the thoracic sling, encouraging the running walk, fox trot and trot.

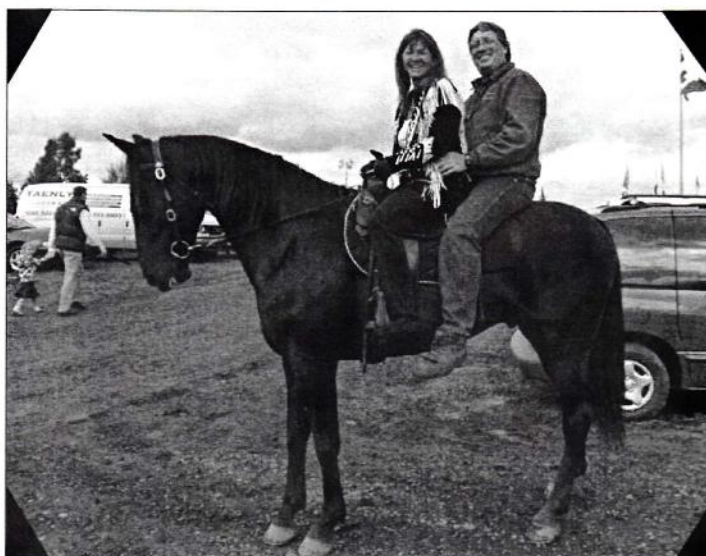
Your hands adjusting the horse's head position puts the final nuances on what your seat is telling the horse to do. This works best on horses that have not had their head set. Horses that have had their head set have been taught to freeze their head, neck, and back in one position. This usually results in a pacey gait.

LEARNING FROM THE HORSE

We can't tell you exactly which degree of which seat position will produce each gait in your horse. This is determined by the horse's inherited gait behavior - and every horse is different. You cannot change the movement the horse has *inherited*. No matter what the horse's inherited gait behavior is, arching the horse's spine makes the movement more



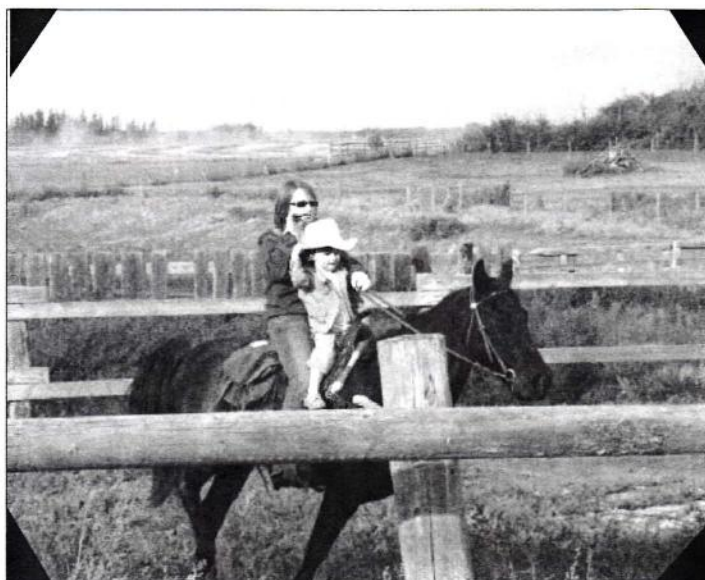
What do YOU do with your Walkers?



These folks were having Double the Fun with their Walkers!

Above: Karla Freeman, Bentley, writes, "What do I do with my Walkers? I picked up a Financial BACKER at Spruce Meadows! A photo of Pat and me doubling on Ken."

Left: From Sheldon Schroeder, Lone Rock, SK. "Here's a picture of Dwayne & Lynne Molle's daughter, Deana, with their granddaughter, Hanna, out for a Sunday ride on an old reliable Walker."



What could be better than going riding with your son on a lovely autumn day?

Right: Brenda Baker, Calgary, writes, "Here I am with our son Brandon after a fine fall ride. He is riding Holy Smokes (note the colour co-ordinated sweater and horse!) and I am on Doubly Delightful."

Send your photos to
WHN, Box 7326, EDSON, AB T7E 1V5
or
whn@telus.net



PLEASE - WEAR A HELMET

"Riding is a partnership.
The horse lends you his strength, speed
and grace, which are greater than yours.
For your part you give him your guidance,
intelligence and understanding,
which are greater than his.
Together you can achieve
a richness that alone neither can."

Below is a story of a friend's tragic weekend. I'm sending it as a reminder as to how fragile life is and how quickly it can be lost. We all take many things for granted when working with our horses. Yes, a helmet would have helped, but from what she described, the people with the spooked horse should NEVER have got on it in the first place. It's much safer to work with a spooked horse on the ground!
Steve

No Helmet

Hello All,

I am writing this letter to each of you tonight, Monday, November 03, 2008, after having witnessed a horrible accident this past weekend. It happened in New York on a weekend "get away" with family reunion and a wedding we were attending. But the best thing was that we were meeting with friends I've made over the years back where I was raised as a kid. I couldn't wait. We all met at Mendon Ponds to ride together. We never got to ride. A series of calamities happened that forever changed our lives and snuffed out the life of one of our riders. She never got to go home to her son.

One of the horses had had a bad time in one of the trailers, so a couple of the other horses were spooked. One of the riders, Patty O'Neal got on her horse to try to settle it down and ride it down a bit before we rode off. She was not wearing a helmet. Another horse, the one who'd had problems in the trailer, bucked his rider off. In doing so the saddle slipped, and the horse went flying around the parked vehicles, close to a road and eventually, as the saddle was still hanging under its belly, took off for parts unknown. (Later he was caught and has some lacerations, but otherwise survived). Patty did not. Somehow, her head was smashed against a low limb on a tree. The next thing we knew, she was lying on the ground. What we thought was her breathing was actually her blood pumping out of her body as her brain was no longer functioning to tell the rest of the body to shut down. We didn't know all that and of course did everything we could, thinking she was still alive.

Why am I sending you this message? Because those of us who were her friends and those who were there, are still mourning this tragedy. Could it have been avoided? We don't know. But what we do know is that a helmet would at least have protected her head - and multiple head injury was listed as the cause of death.

So, the next time you think that wearing a helmet is *not cool* or *for sissies* - try to stop being so selfish about your beauty and think about what an accident like this does to everyone else around you. Thank God she died, as there wasn't much brain left on her left side. Does this sound gruesome? I hope so, because as I'm writing this, I'm crying so hard I can't read what I'm writing. Please, wear a helmet when you ride. The image of Patty lying on the ground with bits of her brain splattered around in a pool of blood is an image that will be with me for years. Please, put on your helmets. Think of those who will find you, those you leave behind, your friends and relatives. They care. Maybe you are doing what you want to do, but there are those of us left who need to go on with our lives who will be left forever with a bloody, gruesome scene that will never go away.

PLEASE - WEAR A HELMET.

Margie Smith, PA

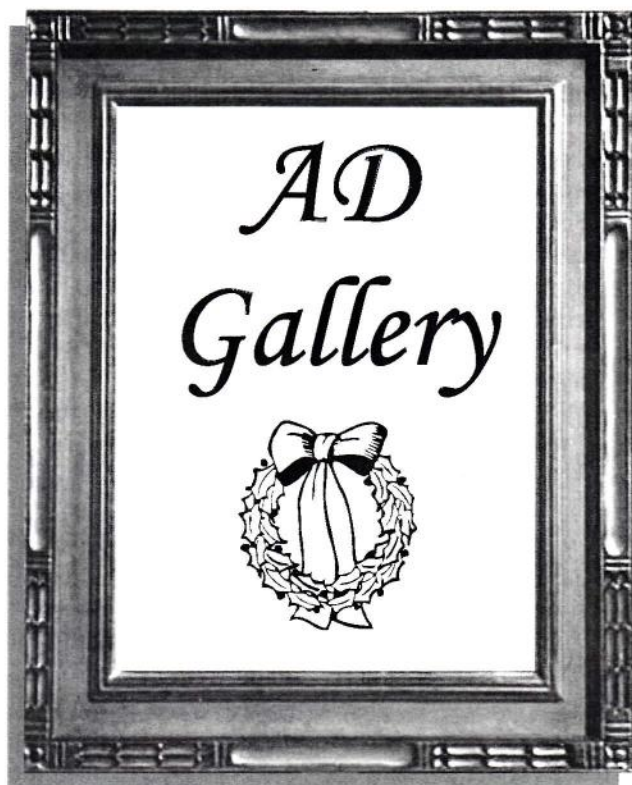
Editor's note: the above was sent to me by Dianne Little who knows the first writer, Steve, who sent it on to her. It's a very graphic reminder that horseback riding can be a dangerous sport. Use your best judgment to decide if it's safe to get on your horse, and never let ego or the opinions of others stand in the way. It can be a life or death decision.

AAEP WANTS END TO SORING

The American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) announced in August that it wants an immediate end to the cruel practice of soring. "As an organization with the primary mission of protecting the health and welfare of the horse, the AAEP is strongly opposed to soring," says AAEP President Dr. Eleanor Green. "This wonderful breed must be preserved and protected in a climate in which its future is not challenged by the practice of soring. The true measure of success will be that soring no longer exists because the Tennessee Walking Horse industry itself brought it to an abrupt end."

The AAEP is calling for immediate institution of drug testing at every competition and a re-evaluation of judging standards at Tennessee Walking Horse events, along with the establishment of a corps of independent veterinarians to conduct horse inspections and impose sanctions for violations.

- Toni McAllister



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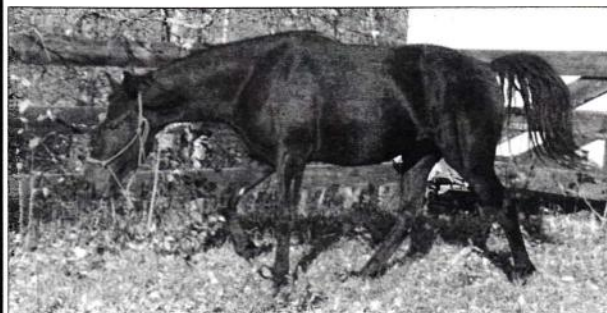
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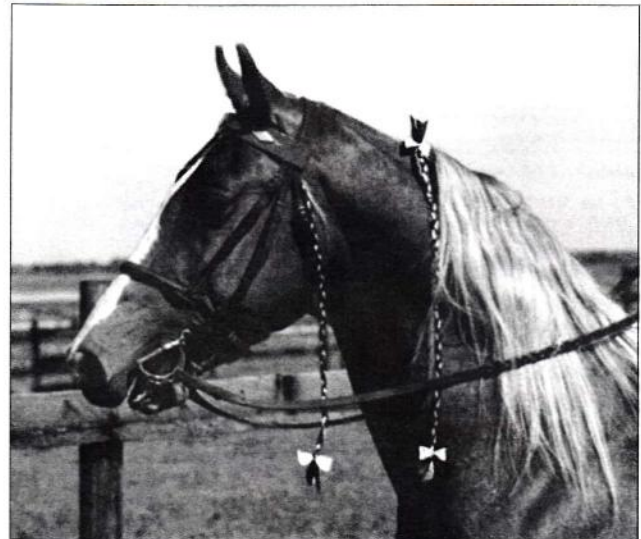
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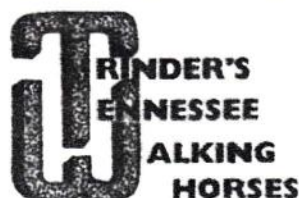
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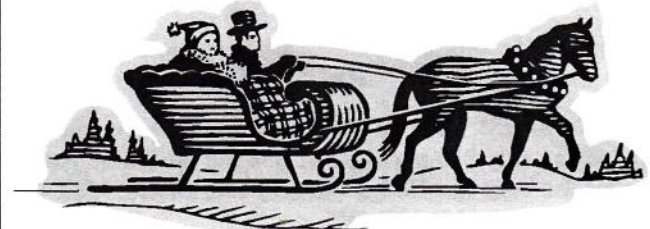
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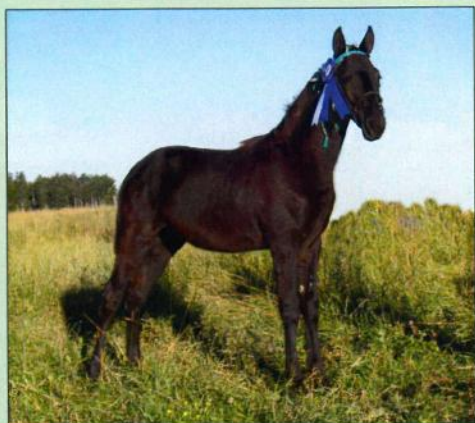
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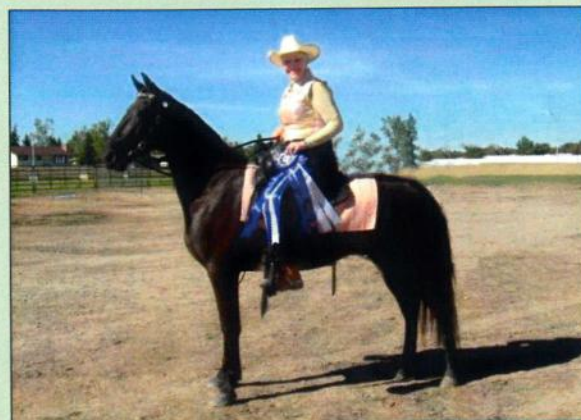
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