

SCCHA Newsletter October2023

From: Santa Cruz County Horsemen's Association (sccha@wildapricot.org)

To: lindsayao@yahoo.com

Date: Thursday, October 5, 2023 at 12:35 PM PDT

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President's message:

Autumn has crept in—fuzzy horses are back, the first drizzle of what will become mud season blanketed the pasture this morning. And I'm reminiscing about what a great summer we've had at the Showgrounds and planning a robust calendar of fun for next year.

The Parade of Breeds at the Open House was so popular that we've already added it to next year's calendar. Saturday, September 7, 2024. Mark it on your calendar to participate and let your horsey friends know to start texting me now to get in the lineup (Robin at 831-331-5067.) We are going to have the Parade of all Parades! I know one group already planning their matching attire.

The Showgrounds and SCCCHA have also established firm footing in the growing sport of Working Equitation, thanks to the remarkable dedication of Darren Hawks. We're going to continue growing the sport along with adding more obstacle competitions and kids play days next year. (There's a good chance SCCCHA will host the California obstacle championships.)

We asked you about how to improve/change our monthly membership meetings, and boy, did the collective you have great ideas! We heard clearly that Tuesday in-person evening meetings are tough, for a lot of reasons. As a result, we're going to add Zoom call meetings, some Saturday meetings, and some very cool topics you suggested.

The Open House we held in September was very successful, in large part because we partnered with San Martin and Santa Clara County Horsemen's Associations. The idea is that each of the clubs will host an Open House. Santa Clara Horsemen's Association will host its Open House on October 14. (Details in this newsletter.) Please try to go and support our sister club.

A few SCCCHA members met with planners for the Big Basin Re-imagining effort to talk about what equestrians need in the expanded park when it re-opens. The conversation was limited to facilities only, not trails, but the planners were very open to our suggestions for separate equestrian parking. We worked on details of the access, location, size, and minimum number of horse trailer parking spots that we would think are necessary. We will continue to be involved as the trail planning gets underway. They also reassured us that the Waddell horse camping is not going away. The campsite will reopen when the trails reopen—which they estimated is still several years out.

Feed the last of the apples to your horses. Prepare your barn and property for a heavy winter, and enjoy the Fall.

—Robin Musitelli



Important Dates:

- 10/7 San Martin Co Horsemen Trailer Backing
- 10/8 BHMI Healing with Horses/Private Event
- 10/14 Summit Riders Playday
- 10/14 Santa Clara Co Horsemen's Open House

Remember:

At the Showgrounds →

**All Dogs Must Be Kept
ON LEASH
at All Times!**




For more information, click the links below:

Don't forget to check the SCCCHA website for more events and for archived photos of past events:
<https://sccha.wildapricot.org/>

and our FB page: <https://www.facebook.com/people/Santa-Cruz-County-Horsemens/100057818433171/>

Healing With Horses



BHMI Advisor, horsewoman, and SCCCHA member Aniko Kannas-Milan hopes to connect the Santa Cruz County Black Health Matters Initiative (BHMI) Youth Ambassadors junior group with nature and horses at the Showgrounds. BHMI programs focus on finding happiness, peace, belonging and mental/physical/spiritual wellness outdoors. Historically, access to outdoor recreation has been restricted for people of color. SCCCHA welcomes the opportunity to make horses more accessible to this great group of young people! Please remember that this will be a private event.

SUMMIT RIDERS PRESENTS FALL PLAY DAY

SATURDAY OCTOBER 14 2023



ON-SITE REGISTRATION OPENS 9 A.M. - SHOW START 10 A.M.

FUN & GAMES PLUS COSTUME CLASS- RIBBONS & TROPHIES
\$75 FOR THE DAY ON-SITE (OR PRE-REG \$70, \$65 MEMBERS!)
INCLUDES LUNCH (WITH VEGGIE OPTION)!

REGISTRATION AND DETAILS:
WWW.SUMMIT-RIDERS.COM

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Advance registration discount!

Help younger generations connect with horses.

*Children are the future guardians of
humanity, the environment...and horses.*

COME AND EXPERIENCE The Wonder of Horses!

*Open To
The Public!
All Are
Welcome.*



FALL FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 14th
Time: 3-6pm
Location: Clubhouse & Arena
20350 McKean Road
San Jose, CA 95120



Come join our Fall Festival Open House in the countryside. Our drill team will perform and a variety of horse breeds will be on display. Participate in fun crafts, games and grooming station. We'll have a seasonal photo backdrop for individuals and families. Click the 'register' button below, so we can plan enough food and craft supplies.

*Interact With Horses
Family Fun
Great Food + Activities*

Register for the Santa Clara County Horsemen's Fall Festival here:

<https://horsemens.org/event-4576502/Registration>



Wrapping Up the Season...

What's Next?

Working Equitation (WE) had a grand start at SCCCHA in 2023. We started with a talk at a membership meeting in May, which led to three playdays to introduce the WE obstacles and the Ease of Handling phase of WE. The playdays became known for the support and encouragement of the volunteer coaches as well as the development of a sense of community in WE.

Add to that the two clinics with our own local (Sunnyvale) but nationally ranking WE competitor and clinician, Ali Kermeen. The clinics with Ali stepped it up a few notches but held on to that sense of support, community, and fun! Just talk to anyone who went—the feelings of enthusiasm are rather contagious!

So, we got new people hooked on WE. People loved challenging themselves while developing a greater partnership with their horses. Our Bay Area Working Equitation (BAWE) Facebook group grew from 0 to over 450 members in a matter of months. Missions accomplished!

Plans for the future, you might ask? Well, we do have plans! For the fall/winter we want to start informal get-togethers to practice 2–3 obstacles as a cooperative venture, using Ali Kermeen's book, *The Working Equitation Training Manual* to guide us. Add group support and some video, and I bet we can have fun and make some progress over the "down" season.

Other goals include posting WE training tips and rules on the BAWE Facebook page, as well as continuing to build a supportive WE community. Watch the BAWE Facebook group as we put these ideas together.

Coming into spring, let's start with a Spring Tune-up with multiple SCCCHA coaches to help with square halts, backing, moving laterally, and just generally getting your horse's feet to move in a directed way.

Then we want to start adding some more dressage principles to the obstacle work with the eventual goal of doing some beginner dressage tests (with no pressure or intimidation). For sure let's add in a garrocha (pole dancing; see photos) clinic with Ali Kermeen.

For the summer, how about more playdays and clinics? And by the end of the summer, how about our first low-key schooling show?

There you have it! Where we started, where we are, and where we're going with WE at SCCCHA. We have a goal to make SCCCHA a destination place for Working Equitation!

For more information, contact
Darren Hawks (831) 234-9080
morgansrule@sbcglobal.net



Frank "Lud" McCrary Jr. 1928-2023

Businessman, rancher, outdoorsman, veteran, and amateur historian, Lud McCrary co-founded Big Creek Lumber Co., which became renowned for sustainable forestry methods, but many of the people of Santa Cruz will best remember Lud for his generous spirit. In times of natural disasters or emergencies, Lud was there to lend a hand to his community.

An avid horseman, Lud and his wife, Barbara, built and maintained trails and rode mounted patrol for State Parks. Lud was well-known in the endurance riding community for his support and promotion of the sport. He and his family managed the Castle Rock 50-mile and the Swanton Pacific 100-mile endurance rides on their ranch. Lud was a big supporter of SCCCHA, especially the Fireworks endurance event, and he made sure the water truck was in place along the course. He will be missed.



Lud McCrary and his horse Grey going over the famous Cougar Rock during the 1978 Tevis Cup (photo courtesy Big Creek Lumber).

Are You Ready for Winter?

Don't wait for the first downpour to find out.

Stock up. Get hay, bedding, and footing delivered now while the ground is still dry.

Hay. A ton (about 20 California 3-string bales) will last the average 1,000-lb horse about 2-3 months. Hay must be kept dry. Store it off the ground on pallets, and under cover where no moisture will spoil it. A good barn cat will keep rodents away. Use a scale (feed 1.5–2% of body weight/day) and a slow feeder to prevent hay waste.

Bedding. Bagged pellets are easier to store and will fluff up when moistened, but all types of bedding can run out, so stock up now while supplies last.

Footing. Keep gravel and sand ready to raise low, muddy spots and keep your horse high and dry.

Fix Up. Get tools and sheds in working order.

Barn Tools. Forks, rakes, wheelbarrows, and manure containers should be ready for wet weather. Cover manure until it can be composted or hauled out.

Roofs/Downspouts. Make sure all the rain will be diverted away from your animals.

Tune Up. Get your truck and trailer ready for whatever nature dishes out this year.

We're all hoping for a manageable winter but, as many members know, evacuations and emergencies happen. Here's to a safe season for all of us and our four-legged families.

**A horse is a prey animal,
a human is a predator.**

**We are the horse's evolutionary enemy.
How can we form a close relationship?**

No where else in nature do we see such a collaboration between two such dissimilar minds. A horse is hypervigilant, has an exquisitely sensitive nervous system, and communicates with energy and subtle body language. This complements a human's ability to think abstractly and make executive decisions. A bond forms when both horse and human trust and respect each other.



San Martin Horsemen's Association Trailer Backing Clinic

Saturday, October 7
Blomquist Arena, Gilroy
Registration 10:00 am
Clinic 10:30 am–3pm
Members: \$50 / Non-members \$60

Bring your trailer and learn safety skills from experienced instructors. You will take home easy-to-remember tips, and have plenty of time to practice.

For more info, and to register, click the link below:

Register for the San Martin Horsemen's Trailer Backing Clinic here:

<https://form.jotform.com/23290681249158>

If you can't access the link, call Karen Luke: 408.203.5730

Dominance Theory is Dead

Your horse does not view you as the alpha.

Horse people's commitment to believing dominance theory/"Alpha" theory, despite the lack of evidence showing it to be a real thing, is incredible to watch.

There is currently very little, if any, evidence suggesting that horses have a static herd hierarchy in natural environments and that, even if they did, that said hierarchy would apply to how they view humans.

The man who initially perpetuated alpha theory with research on wolves later rescinded his entire belief system due to said study being impacted by the stressors of the domestic lifestyle in addition to the fact that wolf packs are generally family groups... meaning that the older, more experienced wolves did take on leadership roles to educate their younger pups... but not for the purpose of exerting dominance.

Now, horses are not wolves but similar findings have been reported. Much of what is viewed to be attempts of asserting dominance in domestic horse herds is actually resource guarding. A horse guarding a perceived lack of resources does not mean that the resource actually has to be lacking.

Reduced space, infrequent hay feedings, environmental frustration, and general stress can increase the aggression we see in domesticated horses.

In feral herds, horses don't spend much time engaging in aggressive behaviours because such behaviours are expensive physically and risk injury. Sure, we see lots of photography and video of this happening but those tend to be the more "exciting" shots and thereby more popular, not necessarily more common.

Even in instances where feral stallions are actually fighting, it isn't an attempt to be the "alpha." It is an attempt to protect and/or secure resources such as breeding rights to mares, space etc.

In addition to this, young horses, especially male horses, will practice fighting behaviours in play and this can be mistaken for real aggression.

Dominance theory is used by humans to label horse behaviour as "naughty" or "disrespectful," which is then often used to justify use of physical punishment.



Shelby Dennis, <http://MilestoneEquestrian.ca>

The issue with this is that much of the behaviour we label as dominant behaviour from horses towards humans stems from fear, frustration, confusion, pain, and general stress.

Escape behaviours are merely a horse trying to evade an undesirable situation, not an attempt to exert dominance. Horses are natural peace makers and would generally prefer to not put up a fight. But, so much of horse training in the human lens involves disciplining fear-based behaviours, creating more fear and then blaming the horse for responding with stress.

We create the very types of environments that make it more likely to see what we perceive as "dominant" behaviours and then blame the horse for it.

The vast majority of undesirable domestic horse behaviours are directly caused by, or at least contributed to by, human influence.

So, it's about time we reflect inwardly, get with the times and accept the fact that research doesn't support the idea of dominance theory.

The level of attachment people experience with this theory despite the lack of evidence I think speaks for how desperate many of us are to justify our use of force in horse training.

It is such an odd hill to die on, and the level of ferocity that people who speak out on the myth of dominance theory are met with I think exemplifies the crux of the problem: a desire for complete control at any cost rather than a desire to understand and communicate.

Communication and partnership will get you a lot further with horses than dominance, despite what much of traditional horse training may have taught you.

Prevailing Partnership—

Lessons Learned While Working with a Deaf Horse

by Ashlyn Moore

"Your horse is on Craigslist – go look", I woke up to a voice inside of my spirit that said just that.

I believe in God, and God has spoken to me before—but spoken to me about a horse? I never would've thought! I jumped out of bed and looked up "horses for sale" on Craigslist; something inside of me was guiding me to one ad, and once opened, I found pictures of a skinny looking white horse, and something inside of me knew, "this is him."

When we had our first ride, there was instant synergy. After bringing him home, I quickly realized there were a lot of holes in his story. We faced challenge after challenge and there were many times when I doubted what I knew inside my heart. He seemed traumatized. He had almost no groundwork, yet had been ridden for many years, and later on I discovered that he was deaf.

In the beginning, I couldn't even use my legs to give him cues, because even with the slightest pressure he would flinch and quickly go from 0 to 100. He didn't know how to just "be" with me. He tried his best to throw out anything he thought was the "right answer", because he was terrified of getting in trouble. Having overcome extreme trauma and abuse myself, I understood the struggle to trust. I think it's something many of us can relate to.

Going to church I'm told I'm supposed to trust God, but I didn't understand how to do that coming from such brokenness. So, God sent me a horse.

Tao had to learn how to yield control—not out of being forced, but out of being led. It was an exchange of trust he would learn to develop with me. That was Tao's responsibility—to trust. As the steward over his life, my responsibility was to act in a way deserving of that trust, and that was built through clear communication and respectful direction.

There was certainly a balance of nurture and discipline to our training, but after the foundation of nurturing was set, it put a different lens on discipline. Boundaries became a method of communication, rather than a set of rules that equated punishment if not perfected. Because he knew he was safe with me, he was willing to try.



Don't get me wrong – it was a lot of work! There were many people who didn't believe in us, but I knew what God had spoken, and I knew in my heart that Tao would get there. So despite the pressure I felt, I didn't give up.

This year, after three years of laying a foundation, understanding where he is coming from as a deaf horse, and pivoting my training to be the partner he needs, we have finally overcome many of the things I used to only dream of doing. Riding on the beach or attending the Working Equitation event at SCCHA was finally in grasp, and we had a blast!

Being in a low-pressure and fun environment was wonderful for his growth. Hitting these milestones with any other horse wouldn't have been the same. I think if my story with Tao conveys one thing, it's that the process to overcoming fear and learning to trust is a worthwhile journey for horse and rider alike. No matter the starting point, there's a beautiful journey to be had when we persevere with courage, and love, and believe in our horses.



—from Baxter Black's
final column:

I like being a person to whom a horse matters. It puts me in such good company, Robert E. Lee, Teddy Roosevelt, Rudyard Kipling, Ray Hunt, Queen Elizabeth, Jerry Diaz, Casey Tibbs, cowboys, Mongols, Gauchos, teamsters, Lipizzaners and vaqueros of all kinds.

Granted being a horse person doesn't make me easier to get along with, better at spelling or richer. *It simply gives me a direct connection to one of the most ancient, mutually beneficial interspecies relationships on the planet.*

For Sale:

Contact:

**laurelharlamoff@
hotmail.com**



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Stories, Photos, Suggestions, Recommendations

Tell us about your horse, yourself, your equine experiences.
Let us know what you'd like to read about in this newsletter.

Send Karen an email:
palmviewfarm@comcast.net



*SCCHA News Submissions:***DEADLINE is the last Tuesday of each month for the following month's issue.****Stories and Articles**

Members, please share your horse interests and experiences with us!

Articles from other publications accepted with reprint permissions. Email copy to editor in these formats; doc, docx, pdf

Images:

jpg, png formats, 72 dpi minimum

Trading Post Ads:

Must be non-commercial and horse-related. Free to members; \$10 for non-members.

Include item, price, name, and contact info. Renew by email each month ad is to be run.

Business Ads:

Must be "camera ready." Email images and/or copy to editor. Ads must be paid in advance to SCCCHA. Send payment to: SCCCHA, 1251 Graham Hill Rd, Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Business Ad Rates:

Business card \$20/mo \$50/3 months

1/4 page \$40/mo \$400/year

1/2 page \$80/mo \$800/year

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