Issue Four 2023

THE ICELANDIC HORSE

QUARTERLY



Official Publication of the United States Icelandic Horse Congress
Member Association of FEIF (International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations)









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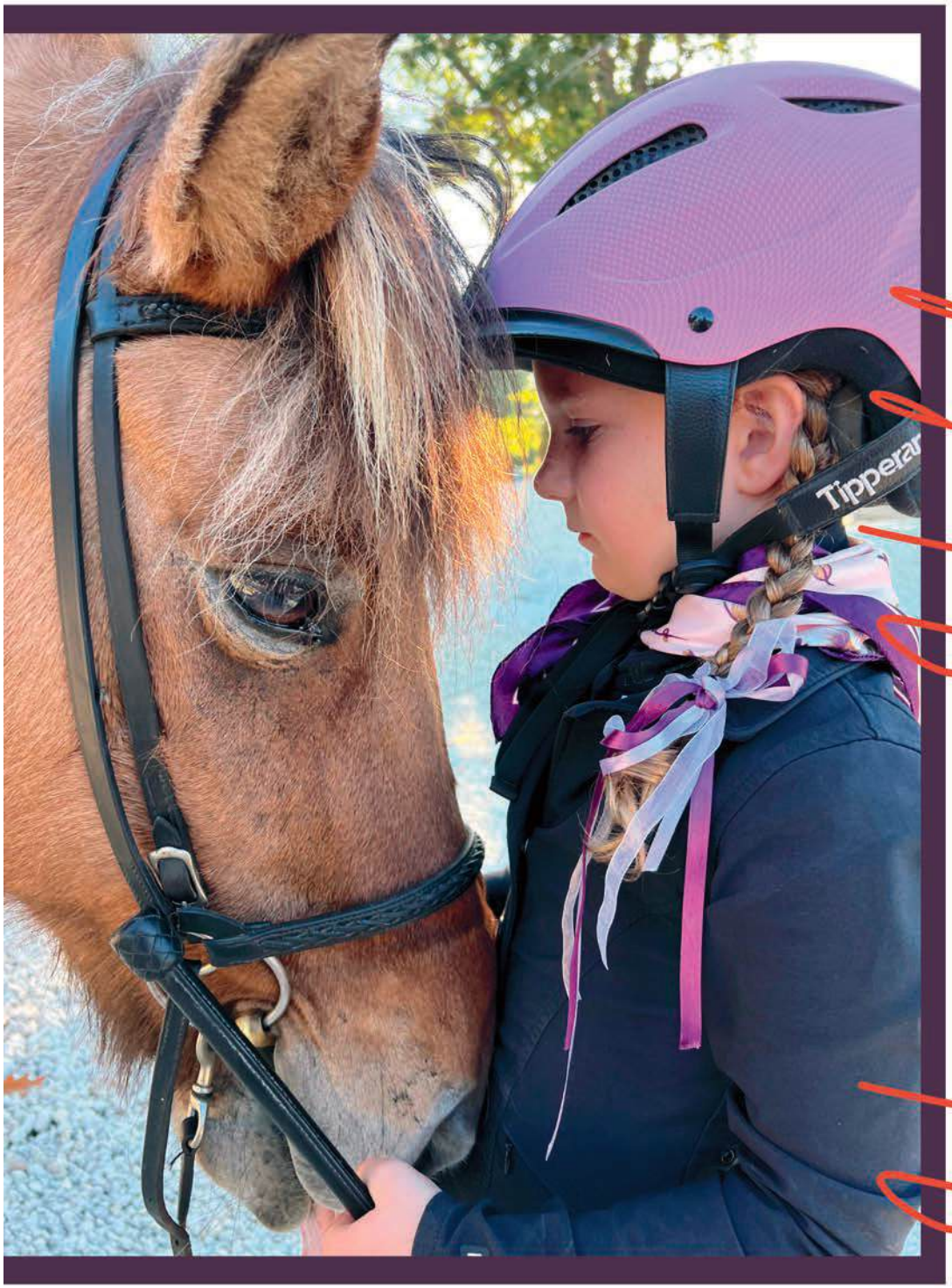
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On the cover: Caeli Cavanagh and her 16-year-old gelding Þeyr frá Ytra Vallholti (IS2007157592) represented the US at the 2023 World Championships in both F1 Five Gait and T2 Loose Rein Tölt. In 2022, he was the nationally highest ranked horse in Five Gait, second highest in T2, and the pair also had the most nominations for good and harmonious riding worldwide! A certified Level 3 trainer and alumna of both Hólar University and Dartmouth College, Caeli is the owner and trainer at Alfadans Equestrian Arts in Portland, OR. Photo by Katie Daly.

ABOUT THE MAGAZINE

The Icelandic Horse Quarterly is published by the United States Icelandic Horse Congress (USIHC), a member association of FEIF (International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations), as a benefit of membership. Renew online at www.icelandics.org. © 2023 All rights reserved. **Article Submissions:** USIHC members and non-members are invited to submit feature articles and photos for publication. Send them to co-editors Nancy Marie Brown and Nicki Esdorn at quarterly@icelandics.org. All submissions are reviewed by members of the Quarterly Committee. We reserve the right to edit or reject any submission. **Affiliated Club News:** Contact your club to submit news items and photos for the Club Updates section. **Letters to the Editors:** All readers are invited to submit letters commenting on articles previously published in the magazine. Send them to quarterly@icelandics.org. All letters are reviewed by the committee. We reserve the right to edit or reject them. **Advertising:** See https://icelandics.org/advertising-in-icelandic-quarterly-magazine for ad rates and sizes. For page availability, contact ad rep Jean Ervasti (917-648-8824 or jean.ervasti@gmail.com). We reserve the right to reject any ad. **Deadlines:** January 1 (for Issue One, mailed in March), April 1 (Issue Two), July 1 (Issue Three), and October 1 (Issue Four). **Quarterly Committee:** All USIHC members are invited to join the Quarterly Committee to review submissions, vote on the cover, and help edit, illustrate, and distribute the magazine. Sign up at quarterly@icelandics.org. **Committee Members:** Carol Andrew, Margot Apple, Andrea Brodie, Nancy Marie Brown, Leslie Chambers, Alys Culhane, Jean Ervasti, Nicki Esdorn, Amy Goddard, Em Jacobs, Kate Kalan, Constance Kollmann, Gabriele Meyer, Anne Owen, Alex Pregitzer, Emily Potts, Chris Romano, Judy Strehler, Lynn Wiese, and Nancy Wines-Dewan. **Graphic Design**: James Collins.

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THE USIHC MISSION

- To promote the knowledge of the Icelandic horse within the United States and its correct use as a competition and riding horse.
- To keep a registry of purebred Icelandic horses in the United States.
- To facilitate communication among all USIHC members.
- To represent the United States in FEIF.

The U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress is a member of FEIF (www.feif.org), the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations, representing the national Icelandic horse associations of 21 countries. FEIF governs competition activities and regulates the breeding and registration of Icelandic horses throughout the world outside of Iceland.

The USIHC was formed in 1987 by representatives of the U.S. Icelandic Horse Federation and the International Icelandic Horse Association to meet the FEIF rule that only one association from each country is allowed to represent the breed.



Photo by Ona Kwiatkowski

WHY JOIN THE USIHC?

As the owner or rider of an Icelandic horse, you chose a very special breed with its own culture and history. It is important to learn about the breed's unique traits, capabilities, and needs, so that you and your Icelandic horse will have a happy relationship and it will live a healthy and long life. By joining the USIHC, you connect to a worldwide network of experts to help you care for, ride, train, breed, and learn more about your horse.

The USIHC is the umbrella organization for 12 regional clubs; activity clubs can also be formed.

Our Registry links to WorldFengur, the worldwide database of all registered Icelandic horses (USIHC members have free access to WorldFengur), and we publish *The Icelandic Horse Quarterly*, maintaining an online archive of all issues since 2008.

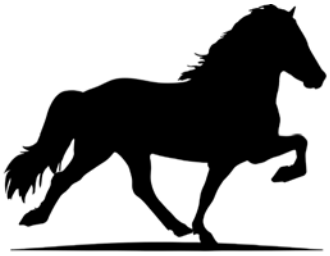
The USIHC sponsors scientific research on the Icelandic horse, helps promote the Icelandic horse at expos and through social media, supports educational seminars and events like the American Youth Cup, organizes leisure activities like the Sea 2 Shining Sea virtual ride, creates teaching tools like the Riding Badge Program, and offers practical and monetary support to organizers of shows and clinics.

The Icelandic horse has international competition rules: You can compete in the same classes and receive comparable scores in any FEIF member country. Likewise, the Icelandic horse is one of few breeds with international evaluation standards, so that breeding horses from all over the world are judged on the same 10 points of conformation and 10 ridden abilities. The USIHC helps organize sport and breeding shows that conform to FEIF rules.

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

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

USIHC NEWS



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WINTER WEBINARS

The USIHC Education Committee is again putting together a series of Winter Webinars. Dates, times, speakers, and topics are as follows:

January 20 at noon ET: Saddle Fitting II, with master saddle maker Guðmundur ("Mummi") Arnarsson of Ástund, and Hólar graduate Guðmundur ("Mummi") Skúlason. This session will look at how to go about selecting and fitting the right saddle for your horse.

February 17 at noon ET: Shoeing the Icelandic Horse II, with Siggi Torfi. This session will be a deeper dive into the shoeing issues unique to the Icelandic horse, including shoeing techniques specific to the horse's unique gaits.

March 16 at noon ET: Endurance riding with the Icelandic horse, with Survive Iceland Best Rider award-winner Sami Browneller. This session will discuss how well suited Icelandic horses are to endurance riding and how to start in the endurance riding world.

April 20 at noon ET: Protecting you and your horse, legally speaking, with Jeff Rose. This session will discuss issues of equestrian liability and how to reduce the same, as well as horse insurance, and proof of horse ownership issues.

RIDERS OF THE MONTH

Each year the Leisure Committee organizes the Sea 2 Shining Sea Virtual Ride (S2SS). This year's route is 2,400 miles long and follows the historical Route 66 from Chicago, IL to Santa Monica, CA. The ride ends on December 31, 2023. To support the S2SS ride, the Leisure Committee randomly chooses a Rider of the Month. This quarter's riders are Terri Mielke of Alaska, Val Moore of Massachusetts, and Jaime Jackson of Ohio.

Terri owns two Icelandics: Dynur from Creekside Farm and Lifri from The Icelandic Horse Farm. Her goals are to continue to build relationships with her horses—and to have fun. "Dynur and I love going out exploring the trails. It is good for his confidence and builds our bond. There is always something to see or challenge us. We spend the majority of our time trail riding, but we also do dressage, trail trials, and obstacle challenges."



The August Rider of the Month is Val Moore of Massachusetts.

Val owns one Icelandic mare, known as "BB." She writes, "My first ride on an Icelandic was on a farm in Iceland in 1970. Never having ridden, I just held on and let this horse take care of me. Many years later, I took lessons to learn how to ride, bought a 'big' horse, and evented, but I always fondly remembered my first ride in Iceland. Twenty years later, I was fortunate to find Ebba Meehan at Merrimack Valley Icelandics and imported my mare. This summer I returned to Iceland, where I trekked with Hestaland. At the age of 74, I feel as if I've come full circle."

Jaime Jackson and her husband own Irena from Klakahross and Kolbeinn from Northstar. "I have always been an avid trail rider and logged my miles for various clubs," Jaime writes. "When I got involved in our local Icelandic horse club—Sirius—it just made sense to join a Sea 2 Shining Sea team. My goal was to have our team log enough miles to reach the end of the S2SS ride—which we did! One of these days, I want to make the top ten list. Just in the last year, I've also started doing some showing. The Icelandic community is pretty welcoming, so it has actually been fun."

BREEDING CLINIC

The Breeding Committee organized a clinic, "How to Prepare Your Horse for a Breeding Assessment," at Harmony Icelandics in Iowa on September 25-27. Internationally renowned Icelandic horse breeder, trainer, and rider Olil Amble presented the clinic, joined by FEIF Breeding Judge Dísa Reynisdóttir.

SHOW SEASON

The Sport Committee oversaw a busy show season in 2023. The year started off in April with the CIA Spring Open in California and the Taktur Gamankeppni in Kentucky. May saw the three world-ranking shows of the Léttleiki Ice Championships in Kentucky and the USIHC Virtual Spring Show, while June brought the Toppur Spring Sport Show in Iowa. The first two events in the Solheimar Triple Crown were held in Vermont in July and August; July also saw the North American Youth Cup in Virginia. September was a busy month, with the Tamangur Icelandic Fall Event in Colorado, the AIHA National Ranking Show in Alaska, the Locust Hill Gamankeppni in Kentucky, the NWIHC National Ranking Show in Oregon, and the three world-ranking shows of the Triple Ice Championships in Iowa. The final event in the Solheimar Triple Crown in Vermont was held in October, as was the USIHC Virtual Fall Show, which closed on October 27.



The September Rider of the Month is Jaime Jackson of Ohio.

The results of all National Ranking shows can be found in the archive of IceTestNG at https://ticker.icetestng.com/archive.cfm?lang=en_US. IceTestNG is also available as a free app, downloadable from the App Store. Competitions are organized by country, designated by a flag icon. You can see current and past competitions, as well as a list of upcoming shows. Just click on the event you are interested in, and you will see the class list. Click on the class to see the scores in rank order. If you would like more detail on a particular rider, click on the + next to their name. You will also get a list of the judges and information about the horse (sire, dam, breeder, and owner). If you are a competitor, you can subscribe to IceTestNG to see the judges' comments for each of your rides. You do not need to subscribe to see the basic results.

FEIF YOUTH CUP

The Youth Committee reports that three spots at the next FEIF Youth Cup, to be held July 13-21, 2024 in Switzerland, are reserved for USIHC youth members. The FEIF Youth Cup is a bi-annual event for riders aged 14-17, focusing on teamwork, sportsmanship, improving riding skills, and making cross-cultural friendships. This year, tryouts were held in combination with the 2023 Virtual Fall Show. In addition to a written application, youth members had to submit one tölt video (T1-Youth or T2-Youth) and one gait video (V1-Youth or F1-Youth).

LIFETIME MEDALS

The USIHC webmaster reported that the application form for Lifetime Achievement Medals is now online at https://icelandics.org/lifetime-achievement-medals. These medals acknowledge significant achievement throughout a competitor's or a horse's life on the oval track. Qualifying scores from as far back as 2007 can be submitted, and both horses and riders can receive medals in Tölt, Loose Rein Tölt, Four Gait, and Five Gait.



The July Rider of the Month is Terri Mielke of Alaska.

ANNUAL MEETING

The 2024 USIHC Annual Meeting will be held by Zoom the second weekend in February. The guest speaker is Þorgeir Guðlaugsson, who will speak about the history of the Icelandic horse.

BOARD MEETINGS

The USIHC Board of Directors met by Zoom call on July 18 and September 12; there was no August meeting. Complete minutes, including the Treasurer's and Secretary's reports, committee reports, and the annual budget, are archived at https://icelandics.org/minutes.

In addition to the topics above, the Board heard a report from the U.S. team at the World Championships and discussed amending the try-out requirements, as well as raising money for future teams. The Board discussed organizing the U.S. show schedule to make it easier for members who have to travel long distances, and designing standardized dressage classes. They discussed funding the travel expenses of the country leader at the FEIF Youth Camp, and finding sponsors to supply team clothing for events such as the Youth Camps, Youth Cups, and World Championships. Finally, they approved the purchase of a full-page ad in *Horse Illustrated* magazine's Best of Breeds issue, which has 40,000 readers.







OPEN LETTER ON BLOOD MARES

Ewald Isenbügel, the founding and honorary president of FEIF, sent the following Open Letter on the occasion of the 2023 World Championships for Icelandic Horses in August:

"Since 1968, the Icelandic horse community has celebrated European and World Championships alongside the Landsmót in Iceland. … When the first Icelandic horses came to the European mainland in the 1950s, who could have foreseen the worldwide development of the Icelandic horse—the pioneering in promoting ground-breaking forms of keeping horses in groups, leisure riding, and new and exciting gaits?

"Thanks to the founding countries of FEIF, the worldwide success of the Icelandic horse has resulted in a renaissance of horsemanship, competition, and breeding in the homeland of the Icelandic horse. Furthermore, due to the export of horses and the steadily increasing flow of visitors who are Icelandic horse lovers to the island of the horse's origin, the horse has become an important economic factor in Iceland. For some time now, this success story has been overshadowed by the dark cloud of a cruel exploitation of pregnant mares on Icelandic blood mare farms [to produce PMSG]. Animal welfare is an important premise in the FEIF countries, and it is clearly defined in the regulations for sport, horse management, and breeding. It also forms the basis for the social license to operate.

"The disregard for animal protection laws in the blood mare business has led to increasing resistance in the Icelandic population. Amid all appropriate celebration and sportsmanship, we would do well to remember the dark shadow of 5,000 suffering mares and their foals, which hovers over the world champions as they proudly ride their victory laps amid the fervent applause of the audience. Our common appeal must be for a clear ban, not merely the improvement of the conditions for blood collection, and we should demand this strongly and vehemently. Let's keep in mind that Iceland does not bear this responsibility alone; Germany is the largest importer of PMSG.

"For FEIF, the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations, the welfare of the horse, the respect and responsibility for a living creature, must be paramount and must never be subject to competitive or commercial influences. As the International Federation of Icelandic Horse Associations worldwide, FEIF condemns the practices and the mistreatment of mares on blood farms. We welcome a stop to the import and domestic production of PMSG and support any action taken by the Icelandic authorities to stop the procedure in Iceland completely."

UPDATE ON BLOOD MARES

Following complaints to the EFTA Regulatory Authority (ESA) on the topic of blood mares in Iceland, an official letter of warning was sent by ESA to the Icelandic government in May. In response, the Icelandic Ministry announced that the current regulations will be repealed and that the keeping and collecting of blood from pregnant mares will now fall under Regulation 460/2017.

This regulation is concerned with the welfare of animals used for scientific purposes and aims to ensure that animals used for such purposes are not subjected to unnecessary stress. According to Article 4.1, keeping of animals for the above purpose is subject to authorization, and in the event of infringements the license can be withdrawn by the veterinary supervisory authority. Article 10.1 states that no animal experiment may be carried out if there is another recognized method that does not involve the use of laboratory animals to achieve the desired effect. A first but a very important step!

WEIGHT STUDY

A research team from the Department of Equine Science at Hólar University in Iceland, led by Guðrún Jóhanna Stefánsdóttir, PhD, and masters student Johannes Amplatz, in collaboration with FEIF, conducted a research study before the official start of the 2023 World Championships of Icelandic Horses in Oirschot, the Netherlands.

The aim of the research was to

collect data on the body weight of riders and horses competing at the highest level in Icelandic horse sports. The World Championships were the ideal place for this data collection, as the best riders and horses from most of the FEIF countries came together at an international competition in a standardized environment.

The horses competing at the World Championships are healthy, in good body condition and fitness, and are performing intense exercise. It is therefore of great interest to register the weight of the riders that these horses are carrying. Data on over 100 riders and horses were collected, and participants from all the 17 nations competing took part.

The next step is to analyze the data collected. The results will be published in a master's thesis and, if possible, in a peer-reviewed scientific article. The results will be shared with the public through general media channels.

Scientific research is fundamental, as the issue of animal welfare gains increased attention and industries have to demonstrate their legitimacy (or social license to operate). Instead of using criteria on the ratio between rider and horse from other horse breeds and disciplines, it is necessary to collect data on the Icelandic horse. We believe that this study will contribute to the existing knowledge on the subject and provide further information for these ongoing debates.

FEATHER PRIZE

In the continued push to advance the welfare of our Icelandic horses, the Board of FEIF decided in 2002 to establish a special prize: the FEIF Feather Prize, a tribute to featherlight riding. The aim of this prize is to encourage good riding and good horsemanship. The awarded riders set an example to the Icelandic horse world.

The FEIF Feather Prize is awarded once a year at a specific event to a specific rider. Due to COVID-19 and the cancellation of the FEIF Youth Cup, the award was not given in 2021 and 2022. In 2023, the active judges at the World Championships decided to give the award to Susanne Birgisson from Germany. Congratulations! To see who has won the Feather Price since its inception, go to https://www.feif.org/feif/feif-feather-prize/.

BREEDING COMPETITIONS

The World Championships Breeding Competition takes place before the Sport Competitions. Each full FEIF member association may enter a maximum of two horses per age group. The horses may take part in both breeding and sport classes, but the shoeing may not be changed at all during the World Championships.

A horse may only represent the member association where it was born. All stallions presented for judgment must have proof of parentage, either by blood type or DNA analysis. Stallions and mares are shown in separate classes and in the following age groups: 5 years old; 6 years old; 7 years old or over. A PDF with this year's assessments can be downloaded on the FEIF website at https://www.feif.org/feif/world-championships/.

FEIF PHOTO COMPETITIONS

Would you like to see your photos in the FEIF calendars? Everyone is welcome to join in! Here are the rules: The pictures have to show an Icelandic horse. The picture must be taken by you, a member of your family, or your friend; pictures taken at a professional photo shoot will not be accepted. Pictures with riders on the horse will only be accepted if the rider wears a helmet.

Up to three photos per participant and theme can be submitted, with four theme contests each year. Recent themes, for example, have been "Riding in Harmony" (Spring 2023) and "Horse Friendships" (Summer 2023). The photos must be submitted in landscape format and in high quality. Please send them by email to photo@feif.org.

The winning photos, to be considered for the limited-edition FEIF calendar produced at the end of each year, are selected via Facebook. An international jury selects the best 10 photos—a difficult job, as we receive so many great pictures —and then it is up to you to like the top three photos for each theme on the FEIF Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/FEIF.org.

FEIF VIRTUAL RIDE

This year's FEIF Virtual Ride is called "To Fákur and Fast!" It will take riders (virtually) from anywhere in the world to Landsmót 2024 in Reykjavík, Iceland.The idea is simple: Over the next year, you count and add up all kilometers you ride out from your own stable. The target distance is the distance from your home to the Landsmót venue. Rides can be logged on the FEIF website, and every month the totals are shared within the group. Since for most riders Iceland is quite a long way away, teams can collaborate and add their kilometers together to make it to Reykjavík in time. For free registration and more info, see https://www.feif.org/leisure-riding-dept/virtual-ride/.

Each year the ride also starts a new Facebook group – this is where all adventures along the way are shared. Join in on https://www.facebook.com/groups/1343987773218119. New this year, on Instagram, please use the hashtags #feiforg and #feifvirtual. The FEIF virtual ride is a great way to meet and interact with Icelandic horse riders from all over the world. And in many instances what starts as a 'virtual' contact, soon ends up in real meetings and growing friendships. Happy tölting!

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025

The World Championships will take place in Switzerland in 2025 for the third time, this time in Birmenstorf in the canton of Aargau. The venue, Hardwinkelhof, is located only 20 minutes from Zurich airport. It is centrally located, yet close to nature. Icelandic horse fans and horse enthusiasts can look forward to seeing the world's best horses and riders in Icelandic horse sport and breeding. In addition, an attractive side program with concerts, food stalls, and shopping opportunities will provide an experience for young and old. Unforgettable moments are guaranteed. The 2025 World Championships are organized by the Association Icelandic Horse Switzerland (VIS) and FEIF. The World Championship song, "The Beat Goes On" by Clio Zero, is available on Spotify, as well as on the World Championships website (https://www.wc2025.ch/en).

CLUB UPDATES

There are 12 Regional Clubs affiliated with the U.S. Icelandic Horse Congress. To find the one nearest you, see the USIHC website at www.icelandics.org. The following clubs filed updates on their activities this quarter.

ALASKA

by Ellen Halverson

We have had a busy summer in the Alaska Icelandic Horse Association. In July, three of our youth members participated in the FEIF Youth Camp in Finland. The kids had a great time meeting and getting to know other kids from all over the world who ride Icelandic horses. Our group values the young people who are interested in learning about Icelandic horses and are working toward improvement. The role that their Icelandic horses play in these young peoples' lives is immensely valuable. Youth that ride Icelandic horses are our future. So I am featuring some pictures of the kids and horses in AIHA's September show in this update.

In other news, Janet Mulder gave a clinic the weekend of August 19, at which we met a couple of members new to Icelandic horses. We held our annual National Ranking show on Labor Day weekend, with judge Þorgeir Guðlaugsson. Þorgeir presented a seminar before the show, teaching us what the judges are looking for. He also did a presentation on the history of the Icelandic horse. In their show classes, horses and humans alike dressed up and did their best. It is fun to see the improvements they have made over time.



Dylann Hall at the AIHA show. Her horse, Kappi frá Hellulandi, can still tölt up a storm at age 33. Photo by Bryan Mulder.



Devin Hall was one of five youth riders who participated in the AIHA National Ranking show in Alaska. Photo by Bryan Mulder.

September 16-17, we had Freya Sturm back for her second clinic of the year. This was very helpful, as some of us had made big changes in riding position at her first clinic. Her return led to further changes, building on the foundation of seat and how riders influence their horses with their own body position, as well as how to work on the asymmetries that we all have.

The Icelandic horses of Alaska have owners with diverse interests, as I am sure is true all over. These versatile horses work with their human partners in trail riding, dressage, hunting, and mounted archery, as well as Icelandic sport events. Part of our group tends to go to the clinics and participate in the show, while others do not. One of my friends shared a recent story of a hunting trip in September. Having killed a moose, the hunters and their horses had to spend the night in the mountains before packing the meat out the next day. My friend said that his horse awakened him with an alarm call many times that night. My friend would then hear bears. He would go out and scare the bears away, at which his horse would sigh with relief that the danger was gone and then go back on duty to watch again. That is partnership. While my travels with horses don't usually include bears (but this is Alaska, you know), my horse looks for me, nickers when I call his name, and sometimes he and I share harmony in movement together. We have a connec-



Amelia Wappett of Fairbanks, AK, was one of three AIHA youth who attended the FEIF Youth Camp in Finland.

tion—a partnership, a relationship—that is special and of value to both of us. And I know all you readers have similar connections with your horses. That is why we have them, and why we work to become better riders.

CASCADE

by Silke Roland

Renny Christopher and her eight-year-old mare, Lisa from Silvercreek, passed the Knapamerki Level 3 test at Alfadans Equestrian Arts in Newberg, OR on September 10. They had passed Levels 1 and 2 in 2022, and have been training with Caeli Cavanagh over the past year to prepare for Level 3. Renny has been riding Icelandics since 2021, after a 20-year spell away from horses, and is super happy to have discovered the breed.

A number of our club members from around Washington and Oregon joined our friends from the Northwest Icelandic Horse Club for a National Ranking show at Alfadans on September 23-24. For many horses and riders it was either their first live Icelandic horse show or their first show altogether. There were sanctioned classes as well as fun classes, and everyone did well and had a lot of fun. One highlight was the costume class on Saturday afternoon, where five riders and their horses dressed up very creatively. We want to thank the clubs and especially our hosts and trainers at Alfadans, Caeli Cavanagh and Alexandra Venable.



Hestafolk member Lauren Murphy and Andi from Evans Farm try garrocha at Vinur Farm's Summer Camp. Photo by Lisa McKeen.

HESTAFOLK

by Lisa McKeen

Hestafolk members have been all over the hills and dales this summer. Icelandics as a breed are growing in Washington, as they are well-suited to trails, gaming, dressage, and just hanging out with friends at clinics and on road trips. They are the horse of choice for almost anyone who has the chance to ride one!

Our president, Lauren Murphy, attended two state fairs this year. She does a wonderful job of introducing her Icelandic, Andi, to the public. Lots of folks come back looking for her each year, and many of them share stories of Iceland trips and horses. Meanwhile, our club has been working on revising our by-laws, ethics, and etiquette documents. It has been a hard task, but we have the people who can do it well now. We hope to institute any changes this fall at our annual meeting, which we do in person and over Zoom so all members can be included.

Several members attended clinics this summer at Vinur Farm in Trout Lake, WA. The drive is well worth the effort, as the mountains, trees, and Pahto (Mt. Adams) are restorative all on their own, while the movement exercises we do help us to continue to ride at our best—and the horses are happy to be there, too. We began the season with dressage, then a Feldenkrais and Riding clinic, and a summer camp for adults, with crafts and garrocha, mounted archery, and a visit to an ice cave. There was a trail and obstacle clinic in August, which gave many of us new tools to help our horses overcome fears and to try out new situations with confidence. Another Feldenkrais clinic in September continued our learning.

Monica Sheehan Urrutia moved back to Washington and is developing her farm, Eagle's Roost, in Arlington. Monica attended the Equine Institute and graduated with certification in Equine Fascial Integration. She worked closely with Island Haven Sanctuary and Julie Duke to rescue two elderly geldings from California. Hallegur from Schmalztopf and Odinn arrived tired and hungry. Sadly Odinn passed away, but Hallegur has thrived and has become close buddies with another rescue, Jefe. They are in a herd together now, and Hallegur has become a demo horse for clinics on first aid and massage. Monica's other Icelandics have accepted him and he is living a good life now.

Avondale Farm and Doreen Shoda find amazing ways to impact the Icelan-



Cascade Club members Linda Eddy on Birna from Tuskast and Renny Christopher on Lisa from Silvercreek in the costume class at the NWIHC Show in Oregon. Photo by Randy Christopher.





Left, Salina from Evans Farm shows off the bear bells made for her at Vinur Farm's Summer Camp. Photo by Mary Chamberlin. Right, Lisa Roland and Vakar from Eichenhoff at Vinur Farm's Trail Riding Clinic. Photo by Judy Skogen.

dic horse world. The farm is located in Redmond, WA, just a few miles outside of Seattle and right off the I-5 corridor. Carol Yusem-Myers found herself without a boarding barn, and Avondale took them in for a Summer Camp. They worked at standing at the mounting block, groundwork games, softer transitions, and building a better partnership based on trust and respect. Doreen has a goal of getting folks and their horses out on the trail with other horse friends. We all know how much confidence this takes. Doreen's skill is obvious when you take a look at a rescue horse she has adopted. Ljufur from Pineridge was afraid and aversive to most people, much less things. Now, Uffie is a trustworthy soul—a testament to calm, rewarding learning.

KLETTAFJALLA

by Ellen Lichtenstein

Up in the Rocky Mountain region, the Klettafjalla Icelandic Horse Club had a fantastic summer filled with clinics, shows, and camping. In July, we helped send KIHC member Keira Butler to the North American Youth Cup (see the story in this issue). According to Keira, "The eventful week was packed with engaging team-building activities, daily riding sessions, and expert guidance from seasoned trainers, along with time for making new friends. The culmination of the week was marked by a captivating two-day show. I partnered with a splendid horse named Spurning, and our bond was so strong that I even considered buying her after our week together. During the weekend show, I took the reins for my second appearance at a live, nationally ranked event. I achieved a score of 4.50 in the Youth Tölt and a noteworthy 4.75 in the Intermediate Tölt category." KIHC is so proud of Keira and can't wait to see her continued achievements and progression as a horsewoman.

Also in July, member Kristina Behringer held a spectacular clinic at Gyetorp II, featuring guest clinician Caeli Cavanagh. The three-day clinic focused on the "good and harmonious riding" that Caeli's become known for. The participants had classroom time, individual and group lessons, and lots of chances to absorb Caeli's knowledge over delicious meals.

Next, three members headed to Grand Lake, CO to camp at the beautiful Winding River Resort, with the opportunity to ride in Rocky Mountain National Park. The experience was thrilling, as they were confronted by a mother and





Left, Klettafjalla members Sami Browneller on Lupina from Tamangur and Quinn Denmeade on Vali frá Hofi at Tamangur Icelandics' Fall Event. Photo by Quincy Sondeno. Right, Klettafjalla members navigate a trail in Rocky Mountain National Park. Photo by Ellen Lichtenstein.

baby moose and narrowly avoided being sucked into a deep mud pit. All three riders were grateful to be on such skilled Icelandic horses who kept them safe!

Over the Labor Day weekend, Tamangur Icelandics in Larkspur, CO held its Fall Event, which included a clinic and a Nationally Ranked show. Both the clinic and show were heavily attended, and it turned out to be the largest gathering of Icelandic horse owners and riders in our region this year. With clinician Guðmar Pétersson and judge Hulda Geirsdóttir, our region was honored with an incredible amount of Icelandic horse knowledge.

In other parts of the region, New Mexico member Raven Flores organized and participated in a number of events, both Icelandic-centered and not. She made efforts to educate the public and to represent the breed at everything from distance rides to breed demos. Thanks to Kat Payne and Andrea Brodie, the region was also honored to host a clinic and young horse evaluation with renowned International Breeding Judge Dísa Reynisdóttir.

All in all, there's no question that the Rocky Mountain region and KIHC is a vibrant and active community!

NEIHC

by Jennifer Bergantino

NEIHC members are used to our ever-changing weather. As Mark Twain famously observed, "If you don't like the weather, just wait a few minutes." July brought us rain, August, fall-like temperatures and low humidity, and September, a mixture of all: rain, heat, and cold. Our 190 members found ways to ride between the raindrops and start their fall training early.

Our Block Island riders, Sue Gibbons, Susan Matheke, and Amy Keeler, stayed busy riding trails and beaches, as well as riding on a modified track and working their horses over low jumps. In August, Amy and Susan went on an amazing Iceland trek, while Sue had fun back home doing "pony camp" games with her granddaughter.



Phebe Kiryk and Brenda Nishamaura rode in the Myopia Hunt.



NEIHC member Jess Haynsworth and Vigri frá Vallanesi completed the Green Mountain Horse Association's 100 Mile Ride for the second time. Photo by Nick Goldsmith of NKG Photo

Ona Kwiatkowski and Kjarkur have been exploring the New York trails while ponying pasture buddy Laddie, an adorable mini. Ona reports, "Laddie brings a whole different aspect to riding. Ponying is an exciting adventure, and I love that they both enjoy being out together!"

The riders at Cedar Tree Stables (CTS) in Ipswich, MA were active on the trails, in the ring, and in Iceland. Charity Simard, Jennifer Bergantino, Anna Walstrom, Brenda Nishimara, and Mary Rose Scozzafava joined a trek with Colleen Canon of Women's Quest, hosted by Ólafur Flosason of Iceland. Seven days later, after experiencing breathtaking scenery, amazing horses, the magical light of the midnight sun, Icelandic fairies, hot and cold plunges each evening, yoga every morning, and delicious meals, the group returned to the states, energized and loving life, where Brenda met her new horse. Aevar Orn is a six-year-old Solheimar gelding, and the two could not be happier. Within weeks, Brenda and Aevar joined Phebe Kiryk and her horse Gríma on the Myopia Hunt.

CTS hosted a clinic with Jana Meyer in September. As always, Jana gives her students her all in ring and trail instruction. Later in the month, the group branched out to try extreme mountain trailing at Mountain Lane Farm in Temple, NH. This competitive sport is judged on the horse/rider pair completing a pattern through a course of challenging obstacles, while staying in gait. There were multiple water features, some obstacles that moved when stepped on, one where the horse was deceived by the depth and had to fully trust his rider, narrow stationary balance beams, bridges that sway, platforms that roll, mazes to back through, and layer cakes to both ascend and descend. With their calm demeanor and trusting and curious nature, our horses thrived. They seemed to love the challenge and showed off in front of some highly stimulated big horses.

At Solheimar Farm in Vermont, Kami and Tristan also branched out, competing in a local horse show with well-attended classes. Kami placed second in English Pleasure, and Tristan, third in English Equitation. Their mom, Sigrún Brynjarsdóttir has been busy this quarter. In addition to running an active lesson program, Sigrun received a shipment of 10 horses from Iceland, including two stallions: four-gainted Hringur and five-gaited Heimur. In breeding evaluations, these two gorgeous horses received impressive scores, with Heimur receiving five scores of 9!

On August 19-20, Sigrún was host to The Solheimar Triple Crown II, the second in a series of three National Ranking



Richard Davis competed at the Solheimar Triple Crown Show in August. Photo by Ona Kwiatkowski.



NEIHC member Anne Owen enjoys Shinrin-Yoku, also known as "forest bathing," in New Jersey.

shows. Ona Kwiatkowski reports, "The weekend was filled with excitement, camaraderie, and outstanding performances by 21 horse-and-rider pairs. The atmosphere at Solheimar was electric, as riders and their horses showcased their skills and dedication. What made this event truly special was the participation of eight riders who joined us from out of state, including some from Canada. A highlight of the event was the contribution of Þorgeir Guðlaugsson and Jana Meyer, who lent their expertise as judges. Their insight and knowledge ensured that the competition was fair and of the highest standard. Em Potts also played a crucial role by running the Ice Test software and providing meticulous scribing. The show was not only a celebration of equestrian skill, but also a testament to the unity and enthusiasm of our community."

Many riders from Ebba Meehan's Merrimack Valley Icelandics (MVI) in Massachusetts joined the fun at Sólheimar. After some time off in July, and some judicious clipping so that they would be comfortable working in the heat and humidity, six horses and their riders ventured to Vermont to compete. The team gained experience on the oval track and look forward to The Solheimar Triple Crown III in October! Prior to the show, 12 MVI riders joined Ebba on the annual MVI-Hestaland trek with Guðmar Pétursson. This year, Ebba offered two back-to-back treks, with many riders staying for both. The first week the group visited beautiful Þingvellir National Park. The second week featured beach riding. MVI is now taking bookings for two treks in August 2024.

In early October, Ebba's drill team and demo riders will perform at the famous Topsfield Fair for the 4th year. September saw the group prepare and practice for this well-attended event in Topsfield, MA, known as the country's oldest County Fair, having started in 1818. The fair draws between 450,000 and 500,000 people over a 10-day period.

Jess Haynsworth of Mad River Valley Icelandics in Vermont took part in the Green Mountain Horse Association's 100 Mile Ride. She writes, "In 2021, Vigri frá Vallanesi became the first Icelandic horse to ever complete GMHA's 100 Mile Ride. He has now done it twice, having just completed the 87th annual ride this past September. The three-day Competitive Trail Ride is the oldest competitive 100 mile ride in the country. But this year, it almost didn't happen—Vermont was rocked by '100 year floods' that put entire towns under water, including Woodstock, where GMHA is located. Dedicated volunteers scrambled to put the horse park back together, only to have their work undone by a second flood weeks later. Through incredible community effort, the ride was able to take place, albeit with a modified route and a different format. Instead of 40 miles on day 1, 35 on day 2, and 25 on day 3, they returned to the older 40-40-20 format. This year, Vigri and I finished with excellent vet scores, in second place of the Lightweight Division. By the end of the ride, we had almost all 0s on our vet card, and earned the comment 'little engine that could' from one of the judges. For us, that was better than a win!"



Susan Gibbons, Susan Matheke, and Amy Keeler riding the Block Island beaches. Photo by Steve Miller.

SIRIUS

by Janet Kuykendall

The Sirius Ohio Kentucky Horse Club was named after the brightest star in the sky. Kerstin Lundgren suggested the name when a group of Icelandic enthusiasts were discussing forming a club. Sirius features prominently in our club logo. The artistic genius behind the logo is Kim Rospotynski, a seasoned designer with over a decade of experience in the industry. The emblem beautifully mirrors the grace of these horses while embodying the club's spirit. Member Jaime Jackson digitized the logo and made the t-shirts the club is now selling.

The second annual Sirius Fun Show was held on September 9-10 at Lettleiki Icelandics in Shelbyville, KY. Twenty-one members participated as riders, ground crew, or cheering fans. This is our best-attended activity of the year, and everyone looks forward to it. Our judge, Alex Pregitzer, did an outstanding job, as always! She provided so much feedback that it was like receiving a mini-lesson.



Nancy Radebaugh on a trek in Iceland.

This year's show had a new class called Modified Pace. This was the brainchild of Chris Marks and Jaime Jackson. Each rider enters the ring separately, and the horse is judged on two passes at pace on the long side of the track. Cindy Gray-Stanley planned the potluck and shopped for the show breakfast. Laura Stautberg Glaza acted as the show coordinator and kept everything relaxed and on schedule. Host Maggie Brandt acted as announcer.

The obstacle competition fun classes this year were a big hit, and Shawn Jackson blew everyone away with his score in the advanced division. The obstacles included "Stan the Dummy," who had to be picked up off the ground (with the rider staying in the saddle) and carried to the paramedic; a large podium for the horses to step up onto; a U-shaped cattle chute for the horse to walk through, then back through; picking up inverted coffee cups from traffic cones and swapping them out (4 times); and many, many more. Bonus points could be earned by riders who were willing to ungirth their horses, hold up the girth, then regirth the horses—all while remaining in the saddle.

The show ended with the beer tölt. Although Jaime Jackson was declared the winner, husband Shawn couldn't have been any more than a single droplet behind her. The following morning was the trail ride, then everyone said good-bye until the next club event.

Sirius members Nancy Radebaugh and



Let the beer tölt begin! This favorite event at the Fun Show was a close contest.



Janet Kuykendall conquering the box at the Sirius Club's Fun Show obstacle class.

Shellie Greyhavens embarked in late August on a four-day trek with Islandshestar. Their chosen expedition was the Snaefellsnes Beach & Mountain Ride, a thrilling blend of ancient lava fields and sweeping beaches. For two days, they traversed the surreal landscapes of Hitardalur Valley, where they encountered lava fields, ancient craters, and ash from bygone eruptions. The next two days saw them tolting along the pristine sands of Longufjörur Beach. "I couldn't stop smiling. It really was the adventure of a lifetime," said Nancy.

"We rode with a loose herd of about 75 horses for two of the days. All of the horses were impeccably mannered, smooth, willing, and fast!" said Shellie.

"I was really impressed with their level of athleticism," said Nancy. "The first day we rode about 25 miles and the horses barely broke a sweat—and that was riding at a fast tölt nearly the entire way!"

They both also enjoyed meeting other riders from around the globe (and Nancy got to practice her rusty French and German). Their group consisted of about a dozen women and one man. They stayed in a simple but comfortable cabin and were treated to decadent homemade traditional meals prepared fresh by their Icelandic hosts, who also shared fascinating bits of Icelandic lore. Every day on their rides, Nancy and Shellie would look at each other with huge grins and shout in unison, "Best day ever!"





Left, Sirius Club members receiving the final instructions for the obstacle course at the Fun Show. Right, Christine Stewart Marks gets feedback from judge Alex Pregitzer.

TOPPUR

by Liz Appel

What a busy few months Toppur has had! Membership has grown, and the love of the Icelandic horse is spreading. In May, we got together with Roland and Norma Newton at Virginia Lauridsen's Harmony Icelandics in Truro, IA. Roland, with his interest in geology, and Norma with her vast experience with horses, had combined their interests conducting Mounted Search and Rescue. From there they discovered Competitive Mounted Orienteering. For the past 15 years, they have been competing in this sport and are happy to share their passion. For CMO, one needs a horse, a compass, some trails, and planted "plates" to find. With some instruction, we all learned how to use a compass, had a bit of practice on foot; then we hit the trails on our own trusty steeds. Who knew you could have so much fun with a compass?

In August, at Gean Acres in Colfax, IA, member Brandi Gean taught us about the three different types of liberty training: Foundation Liberty—moving freely in every gait, changing direction, and transitioning smoothly, using tools, body position, and hand signals; Natural Liberty—using rope and halter to do simple or complex maneuvers, eventually diminishing tool use and progressing with more clarity; and Purest Liberty, which is all about connection. Brandi demonstrated with one of her horses. We all enjoyed a potluck lunch and then got to try our hand with our own horses. It was quite an eye-opener! Liberty training takes patience, persistence, and consistency.

In October, Toppur sponsored a clinic at Harmony Icelandics with Olil Amble, who was born in Norway and is now living in Iceland. She has over 30 years of experience teaching internationally and has been the trainer of many national teams in Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Germany. She has won titles in Iceland for both Breeder of the Year and Competition Horse Breeder of the Year multiple times, the most recent being in 2022. Eleven participants took advantage of her vast knowledge and teaching abilities. We all came away with many golden nuggets of information to further our riding journeys.





Left, Olil Amble teaching a breeding clinic at Harmony Icelandics. Right, Toppur Club member Virginia Lauridsen enjoying Competitive Mounted Orienteering.

At The Youth Cup

by Suzi McGraw

To the casual observer it looked like a typical well-organized Icelandic horse show. But in reality it was the culmination of an incredible week-long event that brought together 19 young riders ages 10 to 17 from across the United States and Canada.

The riders, selected by application, had been placed in four teams led by Mouse Hedrick from California, Maria Octavo from Kentucky, and Karli and Robyn Schmutz from Oregon, along with assistant team leader Matti Armstrong. They had spent the week, from July 10 to 16, taking lessons and attending lectures with four renowned trainers: Jana Meyer of Lunar Hill Icelandics in Vermont, Alexandra Venable of Alfadans Equestrian Arts in Oregon, Lucy Nold of Five-Gait Farm in Oregon, and Guðmundur ("Mummi") Skúlason of Hallkelsstaðahlið in Iceland.

The show, on the final day of the 2023 North American Youth Cup at Montaire Icelandics in Virginia, was a demonstration of skills acquired during an intense week focused on understanding our unique breed of horse. There was clearly a spirit of competition at the show, but also a palpable feeling of support for each horse-rider team throughout the day.



New best friends Emelia Stewart (age 10) from Oregon, riding Halldór von Birkenlund, and Finja Meyer-Hoyt (11) from Vermont, riding Ísak frá Møllenmarken. Bringing youth riders from across the continent together is a key goal of the North American Youth Cup. Photo by Maria Octavo.

FEIF International judge Nicole Kempf provided insightful feedback to help the riders improve in the future. The show began with gait classes on the oval track. Of particular interest was the team competition, in which different riders from each of the four teams demonstrated four gaits (walk, trot, tölt, and canter) or five (adding flying pace).

As show announcer, Jana Meyer did an incredible job. She combined her normal duties of announcing rider order, setting spacing between the riders, and calling for the start and end of gaits with educational information for the specta-







Left to right: Joie Kozubal (16) from California rode Gráfeldur frá Syðrigegnisholum; Joie was awarded the Horsemanship Award. Iris Smith (12) from Vermont rode Dögun frá Borg. Hailey Carballo (13) from Maryland rode Myrkvi frá Ketilsstöðum. Photos by Sara Stewart.





Left to right: Jade Trostle (16) from Pennsylvania rode Brak frá Hranholti; Jade was awarded the Future Team Leader Award. Team leader Maria Octavo and Emelia Stewart (10) from Oregon. Miette Jennings (14) from Vermont rode Viður frá Lækjamoti: Miette was awarded the Horsemanship Award. Photos by Sara Stewart.

tors about what was to be shown and what was expected. She artfully set expectations (when needed) as to why a judging mark might be lower than desired.

After the gait classes came the dressage tests, followed by a fabulous lunch of delicious tacos—and an ice cream truck—for the participants, their families, and spectators. The positive feedback was unanimous!

In the afternoon, a trail course was set up in a primarily shady area on the beautiful Montaire grounds. The horses and riders (and spectators) greatly appreciated the opportunity to work in a cooler area on that hot and sunny day. The course featured obstacles that riders would be likely to encounter when out on the trail, along with a less-often-encountered obstacle in which the rider dismounted, bobbed for apple slices, and paid their mount with the retrieved treats.

How did this wonderful day come about? And what does it mean for the future of Icelandic horses in the United States? I and other members of the Frida Icelandic Riding Club reached out to the hosts, volunteers, team leaders, and the young riders themselves to find out.

FROM THE LEADERS

"In 2021, Mouse and I shared a heartfelt desire to support the initiation of the next North American Youth Cup," said Maria Octavo. "We had met at the first Youth Cup, held in California in 2017, and this event had a very special place in our hearts. Unfortunately COVID put a stop to the whole world, canceling the 2021 Youth Cup and putting all plans for future ones on an indefinite hold. This left a large group of our youth riders without the opportunity to attend, as at the time the age limit for the camp was from 12 to 17."

In December 2022, USIHC Youth Leader Lucy Nold reached out to the two women and asked if they were still interested in organizing the next Youth Cup. "Naturally, we jumped at this great opportunity," Maria said. "We were so excited at the thought that this may really be happening. With less than a year to plan such a large event, organizing it was pretty stressful sometimes and very time consuming. But it was all worth it, seeing the participants learning and making new friendships that they very likely may never have made without the Youth Cup.

"I think Mouse and I ended up with a really unique perspective. As both organizers and Team Leaders, we not only got to be a part of the chaos of organizing such a huge event, but also got to see our efforts pay off from a front row seat," Maria said.

"We were very blessed to have this year's Youth Cup on the grounds of Montaire Icelandics in Virginia. The top-of-the-line equestrian facility, paired with the quiet scenery, was the best possible choice of location.

"One thing that is important to point out," she added, "is that this event would not have been possible without the support of our amazing Icelandic horse community. From the donated horses and transportation assistance, to other trainers and past organizers offering their advice and support, to the sponsors, volunteers, and many more—without them all, these young riders wouldn't have been able to learn and make the memories they did back in July.

"What stood out the most to us," Maria concluded, "was how the kids bonded over the course of the week. The first day most of them tended to stick with others from their area or barn, but by the end of the week, riders coming from opposite coasts were practically inseparable."

FROM THE RIDERS

The following young riders shared their thoughts with Millie Angelino, one of the many volunteers who made the Youth Cup such a success:

Joie Kozubal, a 16-year-old from California who won a Horsemanship Award, rode Gráfeldur frá Syðri-Gegnishólum. "My favorite thing about him was his personality and how willing he was to try anything I asked him to do," she said. "It was his first show and my first time competing in an Icelandic show, so we were both

learning throughout the week. He was a total champ and gave me his best every day. I feel really privileged to have been able to ride a horse as talented and kind as he is—while being coached by amazing professional trainers. Each trainer taught me something that helped me improve as a rider. The fact that so many people worked so hard to provide this experience for a bunch of kids is really impressive and shows how dedicated they are to this special breed."

Emelia Stewart, a 10-year-old from Oregon, rode Halldór vom Birkenlund. "I loved the whole experience," she said, "meeting a new horse and learning to ride him, even with the challenges. I fell in love with Halldór and loved learning with some new trainers. I had never learned dressage before, and I really enjoyed that." Emelia added, "I met a new best friend. We became so close that she flew from Vermont to Oregon to visit me just a week after the Youth Cup."

That friend was Finja Meyer-Hoyt, an 11-year-old from Vermont, who pointed out that she flew to Oregon all by herself to visit her "really really good friend" Emelia. At the Youth Cup, Finja rode Ísak vom Mollenmarken. "I loved Ísak's spunky personality and fun gaits," she said. "He is a really forward horse and really fun to ride."

Jade Trostle, a 16-year-old from Pennsylvania who won the esteemed Future Team Leader Award, rode Brák frá Hraunholti. "I really enjoyed working with my horse, because she was not easy and I had to work harder for things and improve myself to be able to ride her well. I liked this about her because it was that much more rewarding when we got things figured out."

Iris Smith, a 12-year-old from Vermont, rode Dögun frá Borg. "One thing I loved about her is how sweet she was. She was amazing and all my lessons were so much fun. I am so happy that I got her for the week. I miss her and hope I get to ride her again someday!"

Hailey Carballo, a 13-year-old from Maryland, rode Myrkvi frá Ketilsstöðum. "The highlight of the week for me," she said, "was definitely building a bond with my horse. Every time I came to him in the stall or in the field, he would come right to me. He made me feel special. I learned so many things, but especially improved my knowledge of the tölt and of the footfalls of all the gaits—kudos to the cardboard horses for that! I think that this camp was especially special because of the building of relationships with people who have the same interests as you."

Miette Jennings, a 14-year-old from Vermont who won a Horsemanship Award, rode Viður frá Lækjamóti. "I loved my horse's character. He was extremely sweet, willing, and gentle. The Youth Cup



The "Green Gaiters" won the Team Spirit award, as well as taking first place in both Team Gait and the Cardboard Horse competition. Photo by Sara Stewart.



The four teams pose at the Montaire Icelandics gazebo. Thanks to the outstanding generosity of Antje Freygang and Mike Padgett of Montaire Icelandics in Virginia for making the 2023 North American Youth Cup such a success. Photo by Sara Stewart.

was such a special experience because I got to meet incredible people who share the same passion I have. I made lifelong friends."

FROM THE HOSTS

"We loved hosting the event," said Antje Freygang, who runs Montaire Icelandics with her husband, Mike. "It was a first for us, for sure, having so many young people around. It really brought the property to life. Even our next-door neighbor texted and commented on how much she was enjoying her evening listening to the kids laughing and playing."



Kentigern Octavo (17) from Kentucky rode Svarta Nótt frá Dalalíf.

Antje continued, "The event was well-organized. The team leaders did a fabulous job overall with planning and with team building, both within each team, but also among the four teams. There was lots of interaction and play throughout the week. The team leaders did a great job building their teams with games and fun activities like movie nights, complete with snow cone machine and popcorn, etc. On Friday, they all went whitewater rafting. The organizers kept the participants busy all the time—those kids were asking for naps!

"Everybody was safe, too, and took great care of their horses and themselves. We saw some incredible growth in confidence, skills, and friendship throughout the week. Lasting friendships were formed, and many tears were shed on Sunday, when the participants were homeward bound. The barn was full of people crying, so sad to leave their friends and their horses behind. It was a unique experience, where kids who are often isolated in their Icelandic horse pursuits came together."



Brooklyn Knowlden (12) from Oregon rode Pálína frá Ketilsstöðum; Brooklyn was awarded the Feather Prize.

RESOURCES

For information on the next North American Youth Cup, scheduled to be held in Iowa in 2025, contact USIHC Youth Leader Lucy Nold at youth@icelandics.org.

Microchips 101

by Andrea Barber

In the past, Icelandic horses endured invasive and unsightly identification methods, such as ear marking and freeze-branding. Fortunately, technology has ushered in a significant advancement in permanent identification: microchips. In this article, I will delve into the world of microchips, exploring what they are, their benefits, the implantation process, and the revolutionary Bio-Therm microchips.

Microchips are tiny implantable devices that store unique identification information about an individual horse. About the size of a grain of rice, these microchips are typically constructed from biocompatible materials that pose no harm to the horse's body. Each microchip bears a distinct alphanumeric code, serving as an indelible means of identifying the horse. The cost of both the chips and the implantation procedure is relatively affordable, with many veterinarians charging less than $50 for the service.

The benefits of microchipping are many. Microchipping offers permanent and tamper-proof identification throughout a horse's life. Numerous low-cost databases, in addition to the USIHC registry, allow horse owners to register their microchips, providing ownership information. In scenarios involving natural disasters, accidents, or theft, identifying and reuniting horses with their owners can be a daunting task. Microchips simplify this process by providing instant access to the horse's identification details.

In the Icelandic horse world specifically, WorldFengur's recent requirement for microchipping new horses has led to a requirement by the USIHC that all horses be microchipped for registration.

Finally, microchips now enable the tracking of crucial medical information about the horse, making them invaluable tools for both owners and veterinarians.

IMPLANTING A CHIP

To have a microchip implanted in your horse, start by finding a licensed veterinarian who is experienced in equine microchipping. They possess the necessary knowledge and equipment for a safe and efficient procedure.

Before implantation, a thorough examination by the vet ensures that the horse is in good health and is suitable for the procedure. Next, the chosen area—typically the left side of the horse's neck—is cleaned and sterilized to minimize the risk of infection. Many veterinarians administer a local anesthetic to enhance the horse's comfort during the procedure. Then, using a special syringe-like device, the veterinarian inserts the microchip into the horse's muscle. This process is quick and minimally invasive.

To confirm the microchip's correct functioning, the veterinarian uses a scanner to read its unique code.

The next step—record keeping—is up to you: Maintaining records of the microchip number and the associated database registration is essential. This information should be readily accessible for emergencies or when transferring ownership of the horse.

BIO-THERM MICROCHIPS

In recent years, the equine industry has witnessed a groundbreaking development in microchip technology—the introduction of Bio-Therm microchips. These state-of-the-art devices offer an exciting feature that sets them apart from traditional microchips: They have temperature-sensing capabilities.

Bio-Therm microchips are thermosensitive, enabling horse owners and veterinarians to easily monitor the horse's body temperature. This innovation eliminates the need for traditional thermometers, as well as the waiting game: Taking your horse's temperature becomes as simple as scanning its neck.

Monitoring your horse's temperature regularly is crucial, as sudden temperature spikes can signal health issues like fever or infection. Early detection can be vital for prompt treatment. Furthermore, the temperature data collected by Bio-Therm microchips provides valuable insights into your horse's health over time. By tracking temperature trends, you and your vet can proactively identify and address potential health issues.

To use Bio-Therm's temperature-sensing capabilities without a veterinarian's assistance, you must purchase a microchip scanner, typically costing around $300. While this may seem a bit pricey, it's a one-time investment that will serve you over the course of your horse's life. Additionally, the same scanner can be used for other pets, such as dogs and cats, if they have microchips with the same technology. Larger farms may want to explore the additional health and location tracking capabilities offered via the EquiTrace app (subscription required) that can be linked to the scanner.

Microchipping has become an indispensable tool in modern equine management, offering permanent identification, proof of ownership, and enhanced security for horses. The introduction of Bio-Therm microchips represents a significant leap forward in this technology, providing not only identification but also real-time temperature monitoring and health insights. Embracing this advancement ensures that our Icelandic horses receive the attention and care they deserve.



Reading a Bio-Therm microchip is as easy as gliding the scanner over the horse's neck. The display switches between the horse's ID number and its body temperature.

Does Your Saddle Fit?

by Nancy Wines-Dewan

Finding a saddle that fits both you and your horse can be a daunting experience. Twenty years ago, when I bought my first Icelandic horse, a nine-year-old gelding, I was told he needed a narrow gullet Icelandic saddle and was offered the opportunity to purchase the saddle that the previous owner had used on him. I did so, and rode him in that saddle for several months before he began exhibiting odd (to me) behaviors: bucking unpredictably, refusing to tölt, lameness, etc. After three vets examined him, including a chiropractor, as well as an acupuncturist and an equine massage therapist, and couldn't find any cause for his symptoms, I talked to a saddle fitter. "Classic saddle-fitting problems," she said. So the search for the perfect saddle began.

After trying several saddles, I found a dressage saddle that my saddle fitter thought would be a good match for my gelding. I sent measurements and drawings to the saddle maker and they produced a saddle they said would fit my horse. The saddle was never very comfortable for me, but my horse seemed to approve. So I put my narrow gullet, flat seat Icelandic saddle in storage and used my new dressage saddle for a long time.

When it came time to find a saddle for my two young mares, there were no local saddle fitters near my farm, so I once again took measurements, sent drawings, and hoped for the best. For my narrow, short-backed mare, I decided on a treeless saddle. It worked for her, and it was sure comfortable for me—like sitting on a living room sofa. My younger mare is broader, and slightly longer, but also short-backed. More measurements, more drawings sent in to another saddle maker resulted in the purchase of a dressage/trail saddle. My mare didn't complain, no white hairs appeared on her back, and I was happy—except that she had a hard time tölting. After talking to a few trainers, I got suspicious—could the saddle be a contributing factor?

Last fall, I noticed white hairs on my now 29-year-old gelding. Even a well-fitted saddle needs to be checked periodically.

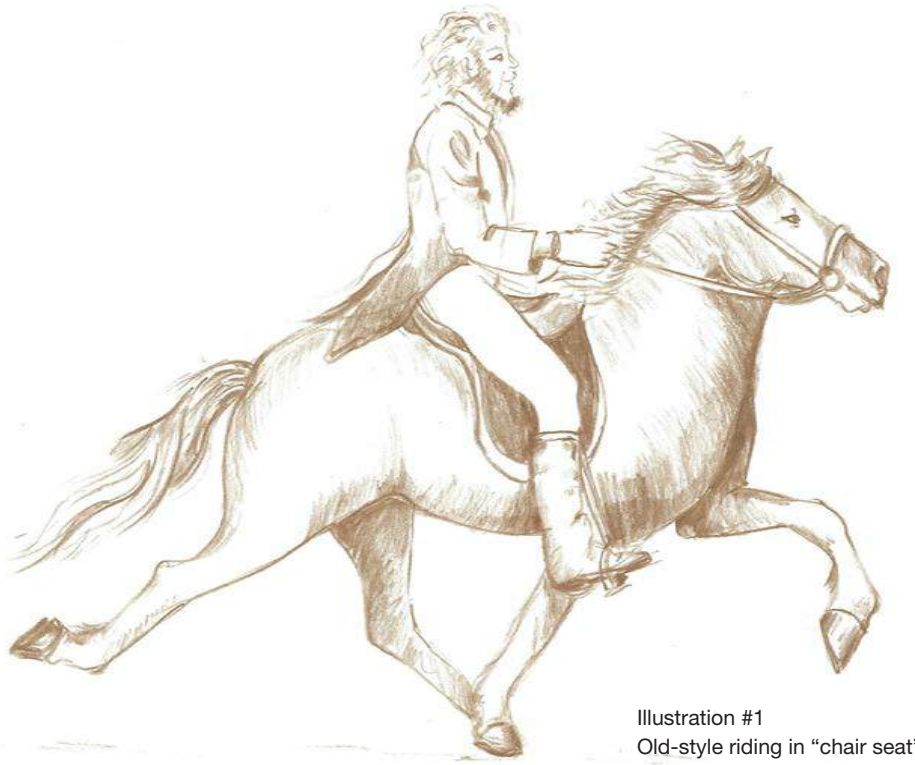


Illustration #1
Old-style riding in "chair seat"

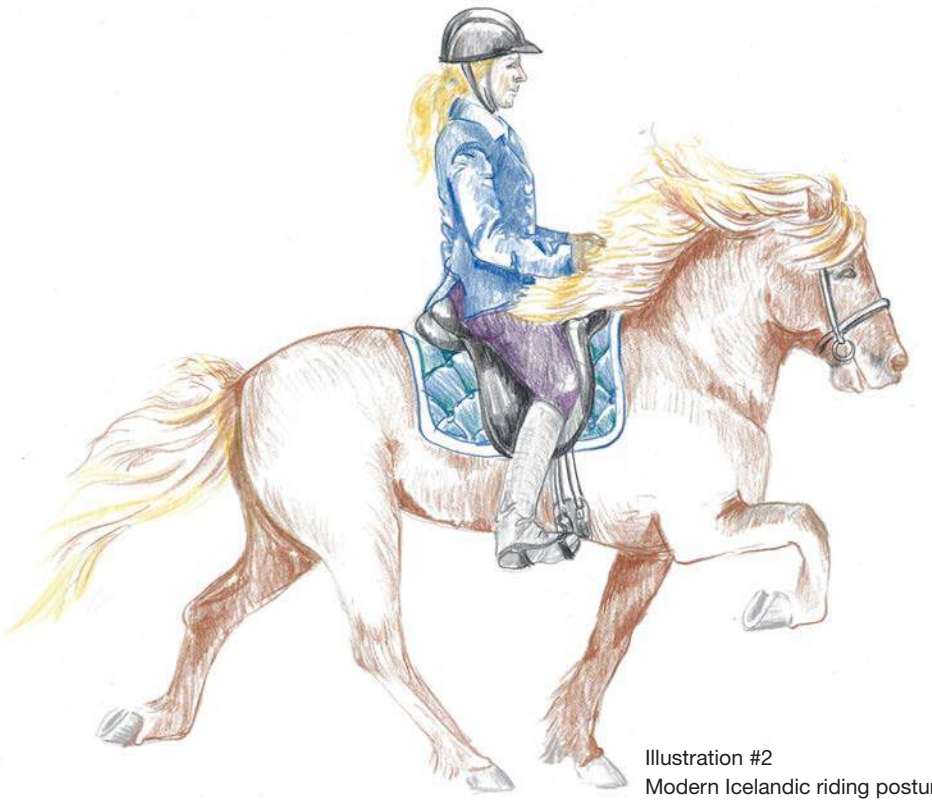


Illustration #2
Modern Icelandic riding posture

Those with wool stuffing may need to be reflocked, the wool replaced or renewed. Foam padding flattens out over time and usually can't be repaired.

I decided it was time to revisit my saddle choices with a professional saddle fitter. These are highly trained individuals. Some represent a specific company, others work with any brand. There were still no local saddle fitters near me, but I did learn of one who travelled to Maine a couple of times a year. Imke Maring works for the Schleese saddlery of Canada, which was established in 1986. Imke was scheduled to be in my area last fall, and I made arrangements for her to come to my farm to measure two of my horses.

The results were eye-opening! So much has changed in 20 years!

NEW SEAT, NEW SADDLE

In the old days, the proper posture for the rider of a gaited horse was determined to put the rider's weight (seat) at the back of the saddle and the lower legs forward. When I first rode an Icelandic horse, this is what I was told to do. Forget all the instruction I had received about proper English equestrian posture—Icelandics were ridden differently so they could tölt!

To allow for this riding style, saddles were made with flat seats (so the rider could move back and retain freedom of movement for tölting), with wings at the back of the saddle to support the rider, and a narrow front (so it wouldn't slide). This design pushed the rider toward the back of the saddle, putting weight beyond the 18th rib. The saddle then leveraged down in back, pushing the rider's legs forward and producing the "chair seat" or "farmer's seat" that was the accepted riding posture at that time.

But as Guðmundur Arnarsson ("Mummi") points out, in the traditional farmer's seat, the rider is behind the movement of the horse.

Mummi is the manager of Ástund, the Icelandic saddlery; he is also a professional trainer and riding teacher with a degree from Hólar University. Earlier this year, he gave a webinar on saddles and saddle fitting in the USIHC's online education series. He also recorded a series of interviews with Guðmar Pétursson, now archived on Guðmar's Patreon page. This article is based on that series of interviews (I was unable to attend the USIHC webinar), as well as my own recent experiences with the professional saddle fitter who came to my farm in Maine.

Over the last 20 years, Mummi said, he and other saddle makers (along with riders and trainers) have been questioning and experimenting and changing their ideas about what is best for the Icelandic horse. Riding posture has become more upright: Riders now are sitting in the center of the saddle, with their shoulders, hips, and heels lined up. Icelandic saddles have also begun to look and function differently.

In the mid-1980s, Ástund developed an Icelandic saddle that had a deep (rather than flat) seat, more like a dressage saddle. The shape of the seat, however, resembled a "U" rather than the classic "V" of a dressage saddle. It was felt that the "V" shape tilted the rider forward, so a "U" was better suited to gaited horses. There were no more wings (or fans) at the back of this saddle, so the saddle support area was more aligned with a shorter-backed horse. The position of the stirrups was adjustable by means of the stirrup bars. Stirrups could be placed on top rather than underneath the saddle flaps. A knee roll was added to support the rider's knee and upper thigh. The balance point was now in the middle of the saddle's seat.

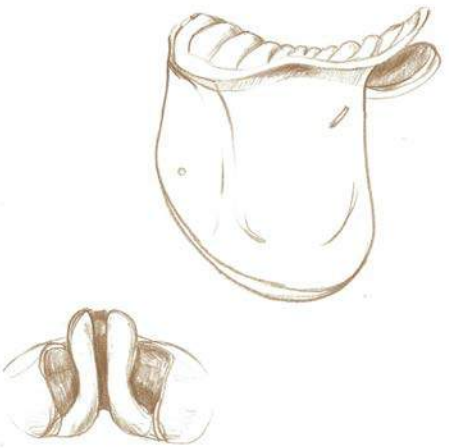


Illustration #3
Old-style Icelandic saddle
with long panels & narrow gullet

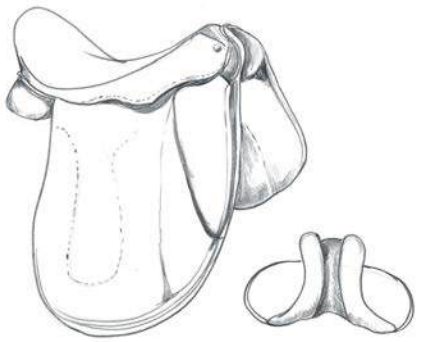


Illustration #4 - Modern saddles

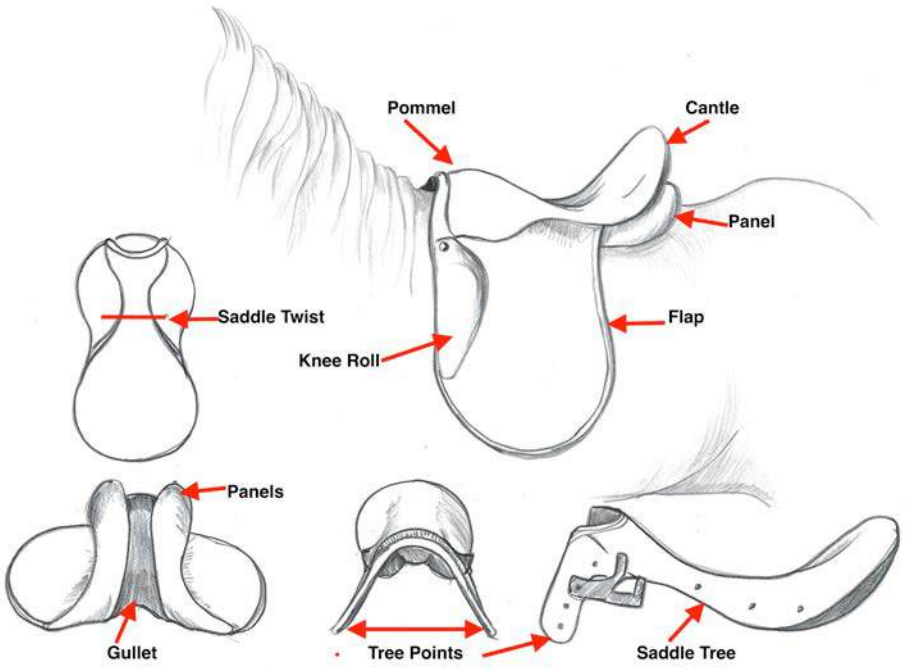


Illustration #5 - Parts of the saddle, labeled

FITTING THE HORSE

A saddle fitter will need at least three main measurements to fit a saddle to your horse: 1) in front of the shoulder blade (scapula); 2) behind the scapula—this is where the Tree Points will be (see the illustration); 3) the 18th rib—this is where the weight-bearing part of the saddle will end.

The distance from #2 to #3 is the Saddle Support Area. The width and angle of the horse's shoulders determines the shape and width of the saddle tree at the pommel. A flexible curve (aka a French Curve) is used to create a pattern for the saddle maker.

In addition, another tool is used to create a three-dimensional representation of the horse's back. It is placed on the horse's back and bent to conform to the curvature of the horse's topline.

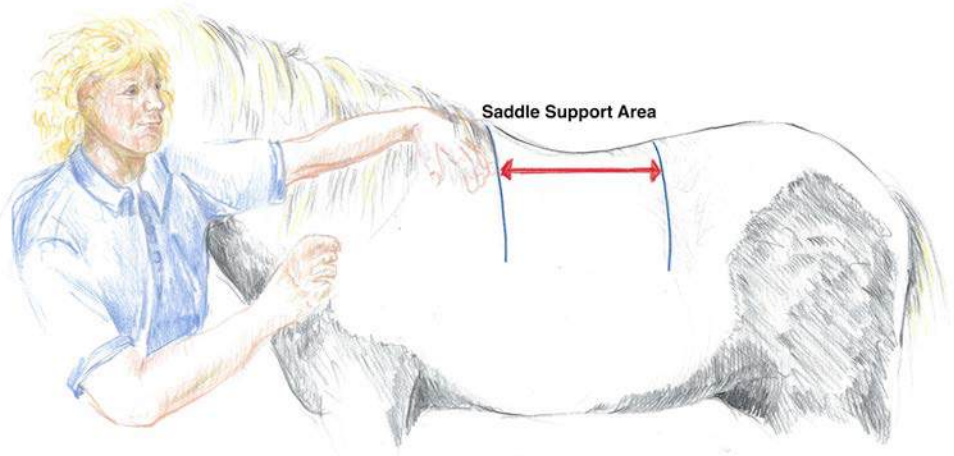
Mummi also considers the horse's age and any prior injuries or ongoing treatment with a chiropractor or an osteopath when he fits a saddle.

For an ideal saddle fit, there should not be any pressure on the horse's spine. If the saddle rocks from front to back, there is pressure in the middle. The saddle should also not "bridge"—that is when the front and the back of the saddle touch the horse, but not the middle.

The saddle also needs to be the correct length: If it is too long, the weight-bearing surface of the saddle will extend beyond the optimal 18th rib onto a weaker portion of the horse's back. Panels can be used to extend the saddle length to make room for the rider's seat, but these panels should not change the saddle support area. The length of a mature horse's back (the saddle support area) normally does not change, although weight and musculature changes might occur. Saddle fit should be checked periodically and adjustments made as needed. If the saddle slips forward or back, this may mean that the horse has changed shape and the saddle needs to be refitted.

In addition to being the correct length, the saddle needs to be the correct width: If it is too narrow, the saddle will tip back, forcing the rider into a farmer's seat. If the saddle is too wide, it will tip down in front, and the rider will fall forward. A shim can be used on a saddle that is too wide, but it is not an ideal permanent solution. The width of the







Illustrations #6, #7, #8 - Measurement locations for saddle fitting

saddle may be able to be adjusted, either narrower or wider, with a saddle tree machine. Some saddles today also come with exchangable gullets to easily make the saddle wider or narrower. However, Mummi believes that the exchangeable gullet only addresses one necessary adjustment: the flocking must also be changed in order to re-fit a saddle. Mummi has found that there tend to be more problems with the fit of the front of the saddle, near the withers, than in the back, near the 18th rib. White spots, which are the result of pressure, are most often found in the front, he said.

For the best fit, the saddle fitter should watch the rider ride the horse—the back of the horse gets bigger as it moves. This also enables the fitter to watch the movement of the horse's shoulder to make sure that the saddle doesn't interfere with this motion.

FITTING THE RIDER

A saddle has to fit not only the horse, but also the rider. Mummi believes that, of the several measurements that could be taken, the most important one is the length of the rider's leg from the knee to the middle of the hip. This measurement, rather than the rider's height or weight, determines the correct seat size. Unlike many other saddles, Ástund saddles are made in only two lengths: 17" (short) and 17.5" (long). Mummi indicated that a tall rider, or a rider with very long legs, would take a long (17.5") seat. The short seat would work for adults the size of Guðmar (about 5'9") or shorter, or even a child. Mummi doesn't feel that there is a need for a separate "kids' size" saddle.

Imke, the saddle fitter who came to my barn, follows the fitting process developed by Schleese Saddlery. She includes a number of additional measurements to fit the saddle to the rider: 1) the top of the pelvis to the bottom of the heel; 2) the knee to the bottom of the heel; 3) the circumference of the thigh at its widest part; and 4) the circumference of the hip at its widest part.

Both Imke and Mummi agree that a saddle should help the rider get into a proper seat—it should not force the rider into an awkward position. Adjustable stirrup bars can help you achieve this goal, Mummi said. If the saddle seat is a little too short for your leg, you can move the stirrup bar forward. If you tend to tip forward, you should also move the stirrup bar forward. If you tend to sit with your legs out in front (that old farmer's seat, again), you should move the stirrup bar back.

CONCLUSION

Imke came out to my barn for a second time this summer to fit two of my Icelandics: My gelding had been measured eight months earlier, but these measurements needed to be revisited to make sure they were still accurate. I purchased a dressage saddle for him, which was custom-fitted at my farm. My mare was a bit of a challenge for my fitter, because her back is only 14" long—definitely the shortest saddle support area of any of my three Icelandics. A few weeks later, Imke was able to locate a short saddle that she will adjust to fit my mare's measurements. In a few months, she will be back in my area again and will be able to check the fit on both of the saddles.

As a result, I have three beautiful saddles that fit each of my three Icelandic horses—and three very good saddles that fit none of them!

RESOURCES

- Mummi's saddle-fitting videos can be watched (by subscription) here: https://www.patreon.com/gudmarpetursson
- Ástund Saddles: https://astund.com/astund-saddles/
- Schleese Saddlery: https://schleese.com



The final result of a saddle-fitting exercise? A happy horse and a happy rider. Here, Nancy and 20-year-old Sinna from Icelandic Magic explore Acadia National Park in Maine.

Bodywork By Ezra

Interview by Jess Haynsworth

As a trainer and behavior consultant, the two most common reasons I am brought in on a case tend to be unwanted behavioral issues or gait abnormalities, such as horses struggling to perform or maintain a particular gait. The more we learn about horses—their behavior, their biology, their biomechanics—the more we learn that many of these problems can often be tied to discomfort or pain.

Equine bodywork is a diverse and growing field, and many trainers like myself have begun to team up with bodyworkers to troubleshoot cases holistically. This past summer, I had the opportunity to work with Ezra Cackler, a USIHC member who came from Oregon to Vermont to complete an internship with me at Mad River Valley Icelandics in R+ and distance riding.

Ezra has a unique insight due to their interest and experience with both riding and competing on Icelandic horses. This allows Ezra to consider the horse from more than one perspective: as a rider, trainer, and bodyworker.

These points of view intersect to inform Ezra's bodywork practice, and I could see that it's paying off. My own Vigri frá Vallanesi was able to complete the Green Mountain Horse Association's 100-mile ride this year for the second time, despite wildfires in Quebec creating the smokiest air quality conditions we've experienced in recent history triggering his chronic respiratory allergies all season long. Ezra's lymphatic drainage techniques worked wonders to help Vigri clear that inflammation and feel his best, in spite of these challenges. Meanwhile, another of Ezra's longterm patients, Þeyr frá Ytra-Vallholti, was dancing at the World Championships with Caeli Cavanagh (see the story on the U.S team in this issue).

I interviewed Ezra to learn more about how their Icelandic horsemanship has informed their bodywork practice.



Ezra Cackler massaging Vigri frá Vallanesi at Mad River Icelandics in Vermont. Photo by Jess Haynsworth.

WHAT ARE YOUR OFFICIAL CERTIFICATIONS, & WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

I am certified through the Northwest School of Animal Massage in large animal massage and small animal massage (LAMP and SAMP). This means I have completed at least 300 hours of schooling in each of these certifications, as well as at least 25 case studies for each class (two classes per certification). I took the rehabilitation specialty in both areas, as the majority of my patients, especially at first, were referred to me as part of their treatment plans with the veterinarians I worked for.

Regulations on animal massage vary greatly within the United States. In some states it falls strictly under the scope of practice of a veterinarian and absolutely no one else can practice animal massage. In my home state of Oregon, patients need to be cleared for massage treatment by a veterinarian, but there is no regulation on the education of the person actually performing the massage. Washington state is the only state that has a licensing program where bodyworkers can practice under their own license.

Animal massage is frequently defined as soft tissue manipulation with the goal of reducing muscle tension, though legal definitions vary. This one is most common, because it defines a scope of

practice (a massage worker can identify and reduce muscle tension) while excluding similar practices with different, higher levels of regulation (e.g., veterinary spinal manipulation).

WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND WITH HORSES?

My grandmother and mother grew up on ranches with Arabs, and my mom did everything she could to keep horses a part of our lives throughout my childhood. We ended up with a pair of thoroughbreds that we jumped, did dressage with, and took on trail rides and camping. Showing was too expensive for the most part, but I also didn't find it particularly motivating. I was pretty frustrated with my lack of progress in my technical skills, but found dressage deeply boring. I liked the rush of jumping, but wasn't rewarded by it. Trail rides were amazing, but also difficult with a flighty green thoroughbred. I felt guilty because I could see how much everyone around me loved riding and horses and, while I also did, I couldn't shake a feeling of disconnection and discontent, though I could never pinpoint the source. I left for college and didn't pursue horses any further, continuing to show dairy goats and chickens as my outlets for livestock fun.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO GET INVOLVED WITH BODYWORK AND PURSUE MASSAGE SCHOOL?

In college, I became severely ill and required the use of a wheelchair and a service dog. Recovery has been long and difficult—I stopped using a cane full time in 2018, but it's really only in the last two years that my health has gotten to the point where I can keep up with people my own age and start working towards fitness goals rather than just mobility goals. I am incredibly lucky that I have been able to recover so completely though, and massage was essential to keeping me as comfortable as I could be through this whole process. I found it to have much longer-lasting effects than chiropractic or acupuncture treatments, especially when combined with physical therapy exercises.

When I started working in the vet field, I worked with a vet who encouraged me to get my massage certification to add my services to her veterinary spinal manipulation and acupuncture practices for equines for similar reasons—there were always patients she thought would benefit more from muscle manipulation than either of the two modalities she practiced, and she wanted to offer a more affordable way for clients to treat their animals as well.

During this time, I had also started to ride again—whatever ride I could get for free or trade! It became clear very quickly that the vast majority of amateur-owned horses I encountered were in some amount of pain, many of them to a point where it was causing behavior issues that owners were frequently unwilling to see as pain-related. Many of them felt that their only options were either to stop riding the horse or spend a lot of money on vet bills and medications that wouldn't address the root of the problem, and I felt that this blinded them to the realities of the pain their horses were in. No one wants to think their animal is in pain and they can't do anything about it, so why not attribute it to "He's grumpy" or "She just doesn't like being groomed" or "He just has to get a few bucks out then he's fine." These experiences were what finally pushed me to want to learn more about bodywork, to increase the tools available to me when confronted with difficult horses.

HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED WITH ICELANDIC HORSES, SPECIFICALLY?

I ended up training my service dog myself via Paws4people, which was my first real introduction to clicker training. I was instantly in love with positive reinforcement (R+) training: What a clear, intuitive, rewarding way to interact with animals! I was able to communicate on such a clear and complex level with my dog and to shape complicated behaviors shockingly quickly. As I learned more about learning theory and the application of the four quadrants, I started to wonder, Is anyone doing this with horses? If this theory is cross-applicable to animals as diverse as chickens and tigers, surely it could be applied to a domesticated species with a long history of close human contact.

I started to look into it, and it turned out that there was a trainer doing R+ work with horses only 20 minutes from my house, and she turned out to specialize in gaited breeds. I started taking lessons with her in ground work and driving, and I started to feel like I understood the disconnect I had felt growing up with horses. There were so many times that I was in a position where neither I nor my horse knew what we were doing or why! I was just asking her to do something new in a very imprecise way and getting frustrated when she couldn't understand and then, even if we succeeded, I wasn't feeling the reward because I didn't really understand why I was doing these things.

Obviously, positive reinforcement doesn't fix these problems right off the bat, but as I learned more about bodywork and the use of ridden exercises to improve posture and muscular health, as well as how to break down individual behaviors in order to teach them in an R+ style, I suddenly felt like riding horses had the potential to be much more purposeful and mutually beneficial than I had ever realized.

That trainer had an Icelandic horse that I really loved, and I decided I wanted to do more with both R+ and Icelandic horses. I started riding at Caeli Cavanagh's barn, Alfadans Equestrian Arts, learning more about Icelandic sport and dressage. I have really fallen in love with the breed and hope to continue to learn and grow in my horsemanship with them.

DO YOU OBSERVE ANY PARTICULAR TRENDS OR NEEDS SPECIFIC TO YOUR ICELANDIC PATIENTS?

Icelandics are a very diverse breed with a lot of variation in conformation and use. Those are the two factors (lifestyle and conformation) that I find to be more informative of patterns of tension.

In terms of horses competing in Icelandic sport, I tend to find a lot of tension and overdevelopment in the lower neck and shoulder areas, sometimes continuing into the chest and ribcage areas (deep pectorals). They do tend to have fairly loose lower backs and well-developed abdominal muscles. Caeli Cavanagh's Þeyr has the most buttery smooth lumbar spine I've ever felt! It was a treat to work on him leading up to his World Championship campaign.

I do feel that Icelandic horses might be more susceptible to the muscular patterns associated with stalling. Normally I would recommend that horses get at least 12 hours of turnout a day, to reduce the amount of tension they develop from standing around all the time, but consistently with Icelandics I see those tension patterns in horses that would seem to be

getting an adequate amount of turnout and exercise. Jess Haynsworth's Vigri is one of these, a horse with excellent turnout and lots of long slow walk work in his regimen, but he still has some tension in his locking apparatus—at which point I'm tempted to say it's conformational and his excellent management is preventing it from affecting his performance. These patterns tend to reduce the ease and comfort of extension of the forelimb from the elbow and to reduce both flexion and extension of the stifle. So it seems like as much turnout as possible really is important for these guys! Handwalking every day is a good way to make up for shorter periods of turnout time.

In terms of conformation, the flaws I see most commonly in Icelandics are tilted pelvises, narrow chests, and cow hocks. Tilted pelvises can be influenced a little with bodywork and trot work. Narrow chests call for development of the pectorals or other thoracic sling muscles via forelimb abduction; bodywork can help to make sure that whichever muscles being used to compensate for a weak thoracic sling can be relaxed. Cow hocks are the trickiest: Sometimes working on the straight and hillwork is most important, and hindlimb abduction can be helpful too, but sometimes all you can do is really stay on top of the hoof angles in trimming and keep an eye out for signs of discomfort (which bodywork can help address).

HOW DOES RIDING AND PARTICIPATING IN EQUINE SPORTS INFORM OR ENHANCE YOUR BODYWORK PRACTICE?

To me, riding is in many ways the physical therapy equivalent for horses. I now have much more appreciation of dressage as "yoga for horses." Work outside of the arena is very parallel to my own recovery, which included many miles of walking slowly on mostly even ground and increased in difficulty as I recovered. I think competition, at its best, challenges us to do better by our horses, to evaluate how they are functioning and then to work to improve it.

Bodywork allows me a very precise way to evaluate in what ways a competition is stressing the horse, which specific muscles are tight or weak or painful, and then I'm able to address it quickly and efficiently in the moment, as well as having more data for how to strengthen that area or change that tension pattern in the future. And every time I can solve a problem on a horse that I'm riding, I have more experience to address a problem that a client's horse might be having.



While in Vermont, Ezra rode Spönn frá Efri-Rauðalæk in a Competitive Trail Ride organized by the Green Mountain Horse Association. Photo by Nick Goldsmith of NKG Photo.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ICELANDIC HORSE OWNERS LOOKING TO IMPROVE THEIR HORSES' SOUNDNESS AND LONGEVITY?

I think, in general, that Icelandic owners seem to be more aware of their horses' bodily comfort than owners of other breeds. My feeling is that this is because, despite the breed overall being fairly stoic, many Icelandics have quite particular needs when it comes to picking up a specific gait or being able to maintain that gait, and that makes it easier for owners to pick up on than more subtle signs of pain. I would encourage owners that have horses with very particular needs—for example, he can only pick up trot on a small circle, with heavy outside rein pressure and boots—to explore why they might be having such issues. When we use increasingly complicated methods to get them to pick up a gait, it's time to look into pain or balance issues.

Of course, sometimes it is truly a training issue, where the horse has a large number of antecedents they require before they understand what is being asked of them. And sometimes balance issues can't be fixed. But it's worth looking into, and it seems common in the Icelandic horse community to accept a lot of these things as "quirks" of an individual, rather than as something that can be improved.

I am also a big proponent of preventative and maintenance bodywork. Especially if a horse is being stalled regularly, that is something their physiology is simply not optimized for and bodywork can help them cope with those stressors. If a horse is being trailered and competing regularly, then, just like any other athlete, they likely require bodywork. A bodyworker can also help you catch the very earliest signs of trouble, as we go over the entire body slowly, inch by inch.

Finally, discussing soundness is never complete without discussing feet. I'm not a farrier, but we did talk extensively in school about the dangers of keeping long toes or letting heels run and how uncomfortable feet affect the whole body. So it's a team effort: You, your vet, your farrier, your trainer, your bodyworker, and your saddle fitter all have pieces of the puzzle of keeping your horse comfortable for the long term.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU, AND YOUR MASSAGE PRACTICE? I'm back in the Pacific Northwest now. I will be continuing to practice in the greater Portland area in Oregon, though I will be living in Vancouver, Washington and may be pursuing certification there as well. My website is https://hoofandclawbodywork.com/ and is the best way to contact me. I also have a Facebook page under the name Hoof and Claw Bodywork.

World Champions

Photos by Katie Daly

Last April, we received the following letter at quarterly@icelandics.org: "Hello! I'm a current member of USIHC and absolutely love receiving my quarterly publication that includes updates from around the country about all things Icelandic! I am also an equine photographer who enjoys capturing the Icelandic horse, both in nature and at competitions. I know the World Championships [WC] are coming up this year in the Netherlands, and I was curious if the USIHC was sending any photographers to cover the competition? If so, I would love to be considered for this amazing opportunity. I have experience shooting during competitions both indoors and outdoors, along with catching those special in-between moments right before the rider enters the ring and after they've completed a difficult routine when the elation sets in. My portfolio can be found on my website at www.katiedalymedia.com. Please let me know if you have any questions."



Caeli Cavanagh and Þeyr frá Ytra-Vallholti competed in T2 Loose-Rein Tölt (scoring 6.30), F1 Five Gait (4.53), and PP1 Pace Test (2.71) at the World Championships in Oirschot.



We, of course, said yes, and sent Katie the information on how to apply for a press pass. Soon we learned that Katie's friend and trainer, Caeli Cavanagh, would be one of the five riders representing the US at the WC in Oirschot, the Netherlands, on August 8-13. Joining her were Laura Benson, Fleur Brown, Alex Dannenmann, and Jenny Melville. The US team leader was Jana Meyer. The team was also supported by an official team coach, Sigvaldi Lárus Guðmundsson. In addition, each of the riders had an assistant or groom, and Mackenzie Durbin from Sálmur Icelandic Horses took on the role of the team's social media coordinator.

THE US RIDERS

In July, Laura and Caeli journeyed to Kentucky to train their horses, the 11-year-old stallion Geysir frá Kvistum (IS2012181964) and the 16-year-old gelding Þeyr frá Ytra-Vallholti (IS2007157592), at Taktur Icelandics before flying them to Europe. Geysir is owned by Catherine Luo; he and Laura led the 2022 FEIF World Ranking in T4 (Group Loose-Rein Tölt) with a total score of 7.265 (see their photo on the cover of Issue Two 2023 of the *Quarterly*). Þeyr was Caeli's school horse when she attended Hólar University in Iceland and has been with her ever since; in 2022, the pair received the most nominations by judges for Good and Harmonious Riding worldwide. Both Laura and Caeli hold degrees from Hólar, and both are currently working as trainers and riding instructors in the US. Laura runs Valkyrie Icelandics, now based in Washington, while Caeli runs Alfadans Equestrian Arts in Oregon. In Kentucky, they were coached by Hólar graduate Carrie Lyons-Brandt, who runs

Taktur Icelandics, and who accompanied them to the Netherlands to support them in any way necessary.

"The WC was an amazing opportunity to represent US Icelandic horse riders on an international stage," noted Caeli. "I feel truly blessed to have been so supported by the United States community on our journey. I would additionally like to thank the USIHC for their international work that makes our participation possible. I look forward to representing our community in the future and taking what I have learned into further bettering myself as well as the horse community I serve."

Alex is a FEIF International Sport Judge and an IPZV Trainer B. She owns Global Icelandic Horse Services, helping people and horses in the US and all over Europe, and won the FEIF Trainer of the Year award in 2017 while she resided in Florida. Ára frá Langholti (IS2012287405), an 11-year-old mare owned by Léttleiki Icelandics LLC in Kentucky, had recently been imported to Germany from Iceland. Alex was in Germany, competing and working with a group of horses for Léttleiki, when Ára turned out unexpectedly to be a highly promising candidate for the WC in Oirschot. That was how the WC journey started for Ára, Alex, and Léttleiki. Alex was accompanied to the WC by her partner Florian Schneider, a FEIF International Sport Judge, who assisted her as coach and groom.



"Being part of the US team at the WC was a great experience," Alex said. "Apart from our individual challenges and experiences with our horses, we managed to be a good and supportive team. Jana organized several team meetings in which we discussed everything we needed to know, and she was at our side whenever needed. It was a learning experience in many ways for all of us. Thank you to everyone who supported us for making it all possible."



Alexandra Dannenmann and Ára frá Langholti competed in V1 Four Gait (scoring 6.27) and T1 Tölt (6.00).

Fleur Brown was born in the Netherlands to a German mother and an American father; raised in France, she now lives in Germany and will be studying law in October. She began riding as a child, doing show jumping and dressage, before discovering gaited horses and beginning to compete on Spinho, a Brazilian Mangalarga Marchador. In 2020, Ás Eyfjörð frá Bakka (IS2008165035) came into her life, "and I knew immediately that he was my once-in-a-lifetime horse," she writes. "In the last three years, we have been able to learn a lot from each other. He has become not only my team partner, but my best friend."

Jenny Melville is based in Europe as well, and brought two horses to the championships: her 15-year-old stallion Feykir frá Ey 1 (IS2008184726) and her 12-year-old stallion, Hljómur frá Gunnarsstöðum I, as a reserve horse. Jenny has represented the USIHC at three previous World Championships. A professional horse therapist for osteopathy and physical therapy, she manages an Icelandic horse farm in northern Germany and breeds horses in Iceland.

LEADING THE TEAM

Trainer Jana Meyer of Lunar Hill Icelandics in Vermont took on the responsibility of being the US Team Leader. As she reported to the USIHC Board in September, "First, I would like to thank the USIHC on behalf of the team for the generous support they granted this year. It was very much appreciated!

"As the team leader, some of my responsibilities before the event included reading and filtering through the many documents from FEIF and the organizers, gathering all the necessary information from the riders and team members, and registering and booking everything in a timely manner.

"A few days before we traveled to the Netherlands, we had an online workshop with an equestrian performance coach. We got some helpful tips on how to prepare mentally for such an important event, and it was great to hear everyone's reasons for why they wanted to participate, their worries—but also their hopes and dreams. The workshop also presented the first opportunity for the riders to grow together as a team.







Top, Jenny Melville and Feykir frá Ey I competed in T2 Loose-Rein Tölt (scoring 6.60) and V1 Four Gait (6.13). At left, Fleur Brown and Ás Eyfjörð frá Bakka competed in T1 Tölt (5.43) and V1 Four Gait (4.43). Bottom, Laura Benson and Geysir frá Kvistum competed in T2 Loose-Rein Tölt (6.00) and V1 Four Gait (5.47).

"Upon arrival in Oirschot, the mood of the team was very good. Everyone was open, kind, and helpful. We had a short team briefing each day, where we talked about training times, shared information, and discussed things that needed to happen.

"The official events started with the fit-to-compete and shoeing check, which all of our horses passed without any concerns. Once the competition started, everyone went a bit more their own way, but the riders always watched each other compete, as long as the schedule allowed.

"I think, all in all, it was a very valuable experience for everyone, and we all learned a lot. Everyone got inspired and all of our minds got working on ways to enhance future US team participation in upcoming World Championships."

THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S EYE

"It's been a whirlwind of a month!" wrote Katie Daly on Facebook. "I was fortunate enough to attend the 2023 World Championships with a press pass on behalf of the USIHC. I believe my final count of photos was around 9k? So it's been quite the challenge to wrangle them into some kind of order. I'm incredibly proud of what I was able to capture, how much I learned, and all of the amazing fellow photographers I was lucky enough to rub elbows with. I am already making plans for WC2025 in Switzerland.

"The World Championships for Icelandic Horses was held in the gorgeous town of Oirschot in the Netherlands, among leafy trees and a shining sun. The stands were packed with fans cheering on their favorite riders, with newly acquired swag piled next to them. (I can neither confirm nor deny if I partook in shopping when not photographing.)

"My first day at the show, I was still trying to figure out where everything was. After getting a little lost in search of the press tent, I was able to watch this gorgeous white (yes, I know, he's officially grey but just go with it) stallion float by on the track. Before I could grab my camera, their run was done and they were leaving. I had no idea I had just missed Jennifer Melville and Feykir frá Ey I's V1 performance! It's the hardest part about being a horseshow photographer. You get entranced by the performance and forget you're there to take photos.

"I'm not sure what I admired more about Fleur Brown's gorgeous pinto stallion, Ás Eyfjörð frá Bakka…the bright white parts of his coat (cries in white horse struggles) or how they matched that windblown look during their rides.

"It honestly gave me goosebumps to hear the crowds encourage the riders—and sometimes disagree with the judges…loudly—against the backdrop of the most random music selection I've ever heard at a show. Did you know that each rider gets to select their music to be played during their round? Alex's choice, 'Cry Me A River' by Michael Bublé, stuck with me because it was an amazing backdrop to her V1 ride.

"Lala and Hippo (aka Laura Benson and Geysir frá Kvistum) were clearly having the time of their lives competing in Oirschot. One of the main things I like to capture for my clients during any competition is that moment right after they finish their routine or run, where you can see the tension release and the hugging begins. Lala gave so many amazing poses when she praised Hippo that I can't help but smile any time I look at them.

"My obvious favorite horse and rider pair for Team USA was Caeli Cavanagh and Þeyr frá Ytra-Vallholti. I am so lucky to call Caeli not only my amazingly talented trainer, but also a good friend who I get to spend time with regularly. She was the one who initially encouraged me to apply for a press pass to WC2023 and to submit the application even if I didn't think I'd get approved. And now look where we are! Caeli continues to be an inspiration to everyone she teaches, especially all of us at Alfadans Equestrian Arts. We can't wait to see what she does next!"

WATCHING AT HOME

While Katie was the only representative of the *Quarterly* to attend the championships, our co-editor, Nicki Esdorn, watched from her home in California. She wrote, "The 2023 World Championships were the first ones ever I got to watch. I decided to buy the week package from the Icelandic producer Alendis, so I could watch our US riders compete. It was well worth the 60 Euros—I ended up watching the recordings for hours and hours. I don't really follow Icelandic competition riding, and the last Landsmót National Competition I saw live in Iceland was many years ago. I remember it being mostly fast and furious, with mostly male competitors. What struck me first of all was how many top women riders there were at this World Championships!

"Our US team was women only. I have trained with the wonderful Laura Benson, and I remember Caeli Cavanagh as a fearless 11-year-old, so they were my personal favorites. Laura's joy in competing with Geysir was so infectious! I thought all the riders could use some of that. I knew Caeli had trained her elegant Þeyr herself for years, reaching international level competition in five gaits. Wow! Alex's mare, Ara, was an impressive powerhouse. I did not know the US riders based in Europe, but I rooted for all of them. No one made the finals, but I was glad I got to see them perform.

"I also watched some of the pace races, because I never get to see pace live. Oh, man! I could not believe my eyes when the little old Dutch lady showed up, still racing at over 70 years old. There is hope! Then I watched a little bit of the breeding competition. My eye was caught by the black mare, Paula from Kronshof, presented by the wonderful German rider Frauke Schenzel. I could watch Frauke ride all day: so elegant, so light, so harmonious.

"Then the finals! Frauke won the V1 Four-Gait on the beautiful black mare Jodís vom Kronshof, hotly pursued by Jóhanna Margrét Snorradóttir on the white knight, Barður frá Melabergi. I get goosebumps thinking about it. Barður went on to win the T1 Tölt, with a 9.5 score for his slow tölt. I have never seen anything like it—he has his own unique way of going, or rather, floating!

"The elegant pair of Susanne Birgison and Krona von der Hartmühle won the feather prize for light and harmonious riding. All in all, the women showed up to win, and they won in beautiful style. I was so glad to see riding with finesse and style be successful, while the more hamfisted rides ended up further down the ladder. My favorite of all was the golden fairy horse, Gljátoppur frá Miðhrauni, ridden, this time, by a man, Máni Hilmarson from Sweden. He won the T2 Loose Rein Tölt, which is also my favorite competition. The horses look loose and relaxed being allowed to go 'any speed tölt,' and then just flow and flow on without reins. The golden horse was like an apparition, with Máni looking like he just sat there smiling, enjoying his magic carpet ride."

Golden Riders

by Janet Mulder

It has been said that if you are lucky enough to be in the company of horses, you are lucky enough. These words ring true to me—as to many equestrians around the world. When you become an equestrian, you are joining a group of people who are not limited by language, nationality, gender, race, political beliefs, or age. We are a group of people because of a common understanding, a desire to learn and to care for our equine partners.

As I've gotten older myself, I've begun to wonder about riders who continue to ride—or even begin riding—in their "golden years"? Is riding a dream that we must fulfill before leaving this earth? Is being an equestrian so much a part of ourselves that, like the air we breathe, we simply cannot live without horses? For the senior riders I posed these questions to, that seems to be the case:

Bernie Willis (76) began riding in sport competition with Icelandic horses over 25 years ago. This fall he competed in the Alaska Icelandic Horse Association's (AIHA) National Ranking shows. He is ranked in T1 with his mare Von. Bernie has owned Icelandic horses in Alaska since 1992; he has ridden since he was a boy. He enjoys spending time watching herd dynamics, breeding, training, and seeing how the young ones develop into riding horses. Since 2017, Bernie has opened up his Alaska farm, with an oval track and space for events, to the local Icelandic horse community and AIHA for clinics and shows. Bernie plans to ride Von for a Century Ride in 2027, when their combined age equals 100. "I will ride as long as I am able," he says.



Kate Kalan (73) of Massachusetts bought her first horse at age 70.

Rebecca Supinger (67), from Virginia, has been riding all her life and got her first horse as a teenager. She spent 20-plus years riding rodeo and showing. In the late1990s, she began endurance riding. She purchased her first Icelandic horse, Katla from Windsong, in 2016, after falling in love with Icelandic horses during a trek in Iceland—a bucket-list trip she calls it. In 2021, Rebecca and Katla rode 210 miles in endurance events and won a regional high mileage award (all breeds) from the American Endurance Ride Conference; the pair were also recognized by the Icelandic Distance Riders of North America for having the highest distance among Icelandics.

Christine Marks (70) and her husband Jeff (72) live in Indiana with their Icelandics; they both ride and compete with their horses. Christine has been riding for most of her life in various disciplines, while Jeff has taken on this new adventure more recently. They got their first Icelandic horses in 2016 and compete in endurance rides, pace events, and mounted archery. Christine says riding and being with her horses helps with some of the physical restrictions she is managing due to her age. Being an older rider also offers some advantages, she says: "With age comes patience, a sense of humor, empathy for the horse, and other great things." Both riding and archery have helped her and Jeff retain their flexibility and stamina.



Charles Fergus (72) of Vermont started riding at age 50. Photo by Ona Kwiatkowski.

Kate Kalan (73) had always dreamed of riding horses. On vacations she would ride whenever possible, but not as a serious or educated rider. Once Kate retired, she decided to ride internationally, traveling to different countries and taking riding trips. After her first riding tour in Ireland, she decided lessons were necessary before her next riding trip in Iceland. Luckily, Merrimack Valley Icelandics was close enough to her home in Boston, and she was able to begin regular lessons with Ebba Meehan. In the following years, Kate was able to travel to Mongolia, New Zealand, and twice to Iceland to ride at Guðmar Pétursson's Hestaland. When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, Kate was offered to purchase a horse from among the imports coming to the US that fall. Kate thought it might seem a little crazy



Bernie Willis (76) of Alaska has been competing on Icelandics for over 25 years.



Above, Rebecca Supinger (67) got into Icelandics in 2016, after years of riding rodeo. Below, Christine and Jeff Marks (70 and 72) of Indiana bought their first Icelandics in 2016. Editors' Note: Are you a golden rider? Are you and your horse reaching the Century Ride stage? Share your story with us at Quarterly@icelandics.org.

to purchase her first horse at age 70, but decided if not then, when? Kate made the plunge and found her dream horse, Fifill frá Roði, aka "Dandelion." Kate rode in her first competitions when the USIHC began offering virtual shows in 2020 and has ridden in a few live shows since then. She looks forward to attending more events and is in love with Icelandic horses.

Charles Fergus (72) started riding 22 years ago, encouraged by his wife, Nancy Marie Brown. "Riding offers a great way of seeing nature," Charles says. "The other day, it was three black bears, two of which jumped out of an apple tree. I'm glad to say that my mare, Sædís, just watched." Charles says that riding makes him work on maintaining flexibility and balance and gives him an opportunity to continue to learn. "It's one of the very best things I can do at my age. I give thanks for every ride I take."

Becoming a true horse person requires experience, patience, and curiosity. These are all developed over time. Many trainers will tell you it takes over 50 years to learn to ride. I admire and learn from riders who have been riding for 50 or more years, as well as those who decided to learn to ride when they were 50 or older. As Albert Einstein said, "Do not grow old, no matter how long you live. Never cease to stand like curious children before the great mystery into which we were born.



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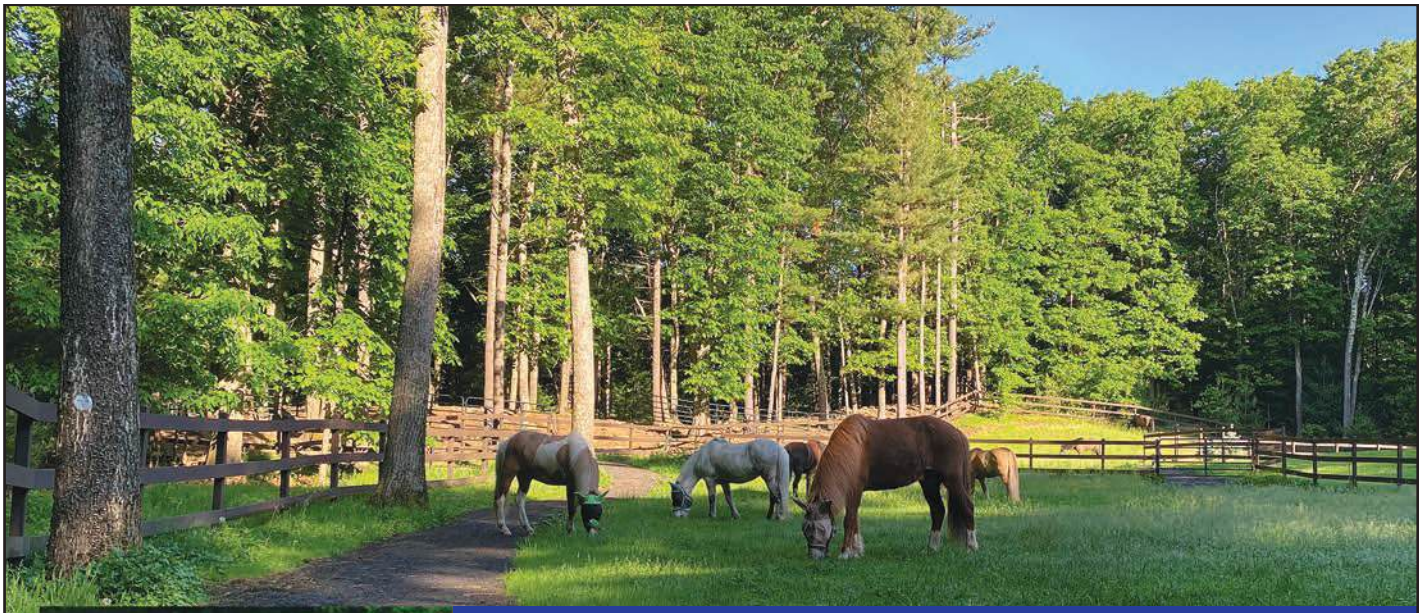
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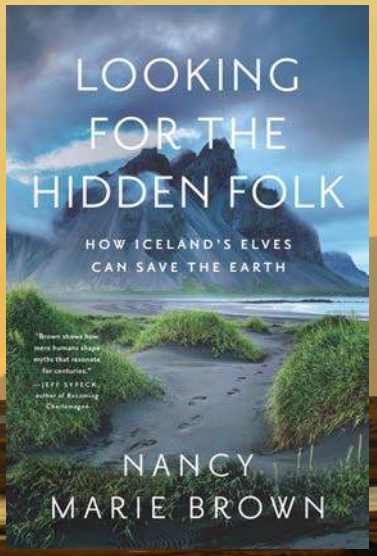
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for Training Solhvit



Andvari from Beat N' Branch
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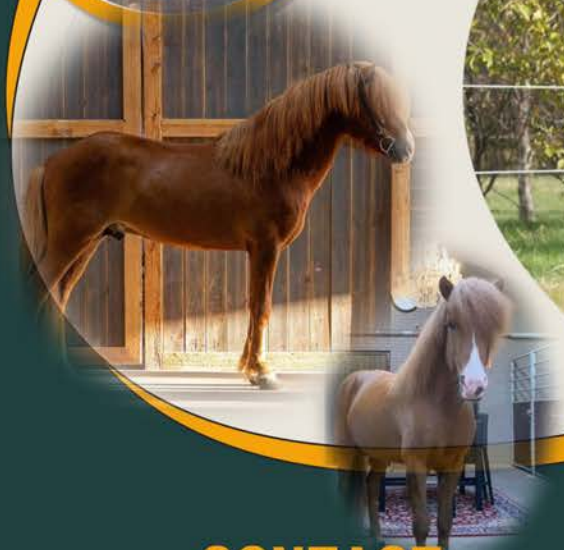
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Þröstur frá Hvammi

CONFORMATION	8.53	RIDDEN	8.63
Head	8	Tölt	9
NWS	9	Trot	9
Back&Croup	8	Pace	8
Proportions	8.5	Gallop	8.5
Legs	8	Spirit	8.5
Joints	8	Gen.Impr.	8.5
Hooves	9	Walk	9
Mane & Tail	9	Slow Tölt	8
TOTAL	8.59		

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