Discover Your Inner Equine

Reprinted with permission from the author
April Clay, M.Ed., Chartered Psychologist

This article originally appeared in the May 2004 issue of “Horse Illustrated” magazine and is reprinted with permission.

“You would think that by now horses have helped us enough — transportation, entertainment, sport and even labor at times. But, perhaps their most important occupation is the one they do most naturally. Our equine friends have a profound ability to act as therapists and teach us about who we are.” - - - - April Clay

The lessons may vary, but qualities inherent in the horse somehow naturally lend themselves to facilitating human growth. Many say horses share attributes associated with effective teachers, therapists and spiritual leaders. Interestingly, it doesn’t seem to matter that horses are not of our species and do not speak our language. When it comes to the task of getting to know ourselves better, there’s

Please see Equine, page 12

Back Country Horsemen of Montana

Mission Statement

◊ perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in America’s back country and wilderness.
◊ work to ensure that public land remains open to recreational stock use.
◊ assist the various government and private agencies in their maintenance and management of said resources
◊ educate, encourage, and solicit active participation in the wise and sustaining use of the backcountry resources by horsemen and the general public.
◊ foster and encourage the formation of new state backcountry horsemen organizations
Bitterroot implements LNT grant awards

By: Fred Weisbecker

The Bitterroot Chapter recently applied for and received grant money to purchase numerous items to create an LNT horse camp display. The club was awarded $3200 by the local Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and another $700 from a local family endowment source. The club has also appropriated another $1000 to finish the project.

Some of the purchases include a 12 x 14 outfitters tent with an internal frame, scrim flooring, tent stove, light weight furniture, bear resistant containers, LNT fire blankets, tree food storage equipment, bear resistant containers, a high line kit, and many other LNT oriented supplies. A new box trailer was also purchased to store all the materials in. The club also voted to make an initial purchase of $500 worth of instructional materials from the National LNT center.

The club has already put their new supplies to good use. The club has given programs the last two years at the US Natural Resources Conservation Service’s two day Conservation Field Day event which involves most of the 6th graders in the valley. LNT food storage classes were given to a Boy Scout group and to our own members at a recent training day session. The club has also voted to have a booth at the county fair this coming September. LNT philosophies will hopefully be a big part of the exhibit.

We encourage other clubs to think about applying for grants to fund their LNT programs too. We found that asking for money to promote the principles of the leave no trace program was an easy sell. We used a lot of information that you can find on the Center for Outdoor Ethics web site to help explain the program.

Horse Travel Requires Permits and More

Submitted by Carellen Smith

(HELENA) -- The amount of horse-related travel into and around Montana increases in the spring, and the State of Montana Department of Livestock (DOL) has guidelines to ensure the health, safety and ownership of all animals involved. The guidelines apply to horses coming into the state, leaving the state, and traveling from county to county within Montana.

Several items are required before a person can bring a horse into the state, according to Montana State Veterinarian Dr. Tom Linfield, and they have certain time requirements attached to them.

A current certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI), also known as a "health certificate," issued by an accredited veterinarian in the state of origin is needed. To be a current CVI, it must have been issued within 10 days of the veterinary exam and is only valid for the 30 days

Please see Travel, page 10
Hi folks!! It seems like only yesterday I was preparing an article for last year’s newsletter. Where does the time go?

We, as a chapter, did accomplish quite a lot in 2004. We started in May with our adopted trails in the Highwood Mountains, followed by the Continental Divide Trail from Rogers Pass to Fletcher Pass in June. Another project in June was rolling up the never ending miles of barbwire in the FWP Beartooth Game Range. In July we spent 10 days working out of the Indian Meadows Forest Service cabin repairing damage from the Snow Talon Fire the year before. A much needed stock tank was installed at the Indian Meadows public trailhead. Later on we worked on the Tenderfoot trail, located in the Little Belts, which is badly in need of repair. We are trying to get as much accomplished as possible each year. It’s a trail that doesn’t have much of a trailhead which makes it difficult to get adequate space to park horse trailers. It’s located in a beautiful part of the country and we’re doing our best to make it accessible for others to enjoy.

For fun, we had the annual dinner in January with many prizes and the ever popular Chinese gift exchange. The Memorial weekend is another event that we all look forward to. This time we had a spaghetti dinner with all the trimmings. In August we had the most wonderful time at our annual steak dinner which was held at one of our members “dance hall”. Entertainment was provided by a Nashville singer and several former band members. We even got the ladies to do some line dancing.

Our annual yard sale was a tremendous success. This fundraiser makes it possible for our chapter to send eight delegates to the State conventions. We worked the State Fair for the first time. It consisted of selling admission tickets. Those that worked the gates are anxious to work again this year as this is a good fundraiser for the chapter.

We had our usual pot lucks, pie socials and photo contests. They are always supported very well by our members.

Now, we are looking forward to an equally good year in 2005 as it will be the 20th Anniversary of our chapter.

Hope to see you in the mountains!!!!!!!!

‘2004’…..a busy year for Charlie Russell Chapter

By Joan Crowell
Secretary, CRBCH

EAST SLOPE BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN

http://www.bchmt.org/esbch/
415 31st Avenue South  Fax: 406-452-8039
Great Falls, MT 59405  Email: esbchmt@bchmt.org

April 28, 2005

Back Country Horsemen of Montana

SUBJECT: THANK YOU

The East Slope Back Country Horsemen express our heartfelt thanks to all Back Country Horsemen Clubs of Montana for attending and participating in the 2005 Back Country Horsemen State Convention.

Help from people like you truly exemplifies the word "giving." Your time and generosity contributed greatly toward the success of this year's BCH State Convention.

With many thanks,
The East Slope Back Country Horsemen
What is a “Horseman?”

By Dan Aadland
Beartooth BCH

It was many years ago that I watched him, this old man named Earl, watched as he cinched the knot on the mare’s lead rope with the quick, fluid fingers of one hand. Then, to square the mare’s stance so that we could view her better, his toe softly touched the back of her hind pastern, Earl’s own foot picking up that of the mare and positioning it squarely under her. The mare, though very green, seemed to know that she was under the spell of a man gentle but firm, kind but assertive, a leader she could follow with confidence.

On the way home, undecided whether to purchase the mare, Emily and I commented on the similarity between Earl’s touch and that of her own father Elmer Johnson, and we agreed that we had been watching a horseman. We were not surprised to learn later that Earl was also a musician, that the hands so deft with knots and cinches were also skilled on the mandolin and the organ. In his life he had also finished concrete, hauled fertilizer, milked cows, and more to the point, as a teenager bought and rounded up feral horses for a huge ranch near the Pryors, then trained them for resale to Wyoming cowboys.

Earl, now in his late eighties and legally blind, is still messing with horses, still breeding them, and still occasionally, when his family isn’t looking, getting on a colt. Knowing the likes of Earl tends to make the rest of us humble.

We are members of an organization called “Back Country Horsemen.” Most of us readily understand what backcountry is. Yes, definitions of “backcountry” will vary somewhat (as I discovered in a discussion with my East Coast editor on the subtitle of my most recent book), but I suspect we have a concept in mind with which we’re quite comfortable. But the founders of Back Country Horsemen of America did not name their organization “back country stock users” or “back country riders.” Instead, they used the same term Emily and I used with some awe after watching Earl’s graceful interaction with the mare: horseman.

We all know that “horsemen” is not restricted to men—many of the best horsemen are women—and that is because the term uses older English that describes a species, not a sex, by using the word “man” or “men.” But the term also doesn’t describe just anyone who can sit on a horse. True mastery may not be required (few if any of us will ever be able to claim that), but the term implies an elevated level of skill and accomplishment with horses.

It is a great strength of Back Country Horsemen of America that its chapters draw many members who have little experience with horses. But in adopting the word “horsemen” the organization also took on a responsibility. Simply, it is up to all members to do their level best, within their physical capabilities and mental capacity for acquiring new learning and skill, to live up to the term. And that means lending a helping hand to each other, the more experienced members of the team helping those newer to the game.

Some assertions and suggestions:

1. Those of us lucky enough to have had an Earl Jones or an Elmer Johnson in our background must never assume a superior attitude toward those with less experience. True horsemen tend to be modest—they know

2. We must all be “works in progress” where horsemanship is concerned. Most of us can look back five or ten years and get red around the ears recalling a mistake we made with a horse. And, five or ten years hence, we’ll look upon our current level of accomplishment equally critically. That’s as it should be; that’s because we’re always learning. We owe it to our horses and to our organization to learn everything we can, to never get complacent about our abilities.

Please see Horseman, page 6
Annual Family Fun Ride  
Club Fund Raiser

Date: July 9, 2005  
Registration: 8:00 am to 10:00 am  
Place: Gold Creek, MT

(Exit 166 off I-90, follow the signs, 5 ½ miles)  
Approximately 4 hour Ride. And we will go through a  
Historic Ghost Town and Gold Dredge

Children under 12…………………………… $7.00  
Ride & BBQ …………………………… $15.00  
Poker Hands (18 yrs & over)……………… $5.00 each  
50/50 Tickets…………………………… $1.00 each or 6 for $5.00

BBQ starts at 3:00 pm and Drawings for Door Prizes to follow.

Everyone Bring Your Horse or Mule and Have Fun!

Absolutely NO Dogs on Ride!  
Dogs in Camp must be on leash!

For More Information Please Contact:

Patrick George            Wendy Micu            Karen Haubbert
560-1670                  846-3499              846-1088
3. We should share what knowledge we do have whenever appropriate, particularly when it involves safety (which, with horses, is most of the time). When you see someone saddling by fastening the breast collar or back cinch first, there is nothing wrong with saying gently, “My grandpa drilled into me ‘main cinch on first, off last.’” Less chance of a saddle down around the belly if something happens in between.” Yes, you could ruffle feathers. But is it better to stand off to the side feeling superior, or worse, fail to prevent a possible accident?

4. Our goal as members of an organization bearing the name “Horsemen” should be a reputation for love of the backcountry, service to it, stout defense of our right to be there with our animals, and exemplary competence in handling our horses.

A past president of Beartooth BCH, Dan Aadland raises cattle and Tennessee Walking Horses on his ranch near Absarokee, Montana. He’s a regular columnist of The Trail Rider and Equus magazines and recently saw release of his latest book The Complete Trail Horse: Selecting, Training, and Enjoying your Horse in the Backcountry.
A Rare Encounter Indeed

Submitted by Bob & Sue Flacklam

Two weeks ago the East Slope Backcountry Horsemen went into Green Fork Cabin to replace a 30-foot bridge. After a beautiful ride in up Straight Creek, we settled in comfortably at the Hantavirus Hilton and the surrounding meadow. We unloaded our 150 pounds of cast iron and commenced ta cookin’. We whipped up some rib steaks, poked pork loin and fajitas--just to name a few items.

Saturday cranked up hot so the troops didn't quite get the bridge done but went back Sunday morning and put the coup de grace on that big sucker. I can honestly say that, in staying with the East Slope's history of high quality, this bridge is another one we can be proud of!

On the way out and after our usual juggling-for-speed-and-pecking-order shuffle, we were all cruisin' down the trail at a nice little clip. Ries’s and Fred riding Fred were well up the trail ahead. Then came I followed by Connie with her string of little baby horses (They were so cute!). Dana and the rest of the gang were behind them. About half way out we ran into something on the trail that makes our trips to the back country all worthwhile. Shortly after passing a slide area... I’d better stop here for a moment and explain what I’m riding. It’s an appy and if he were a person, he'd be a blonde from North Dakota with Polish ancestry! This big bugger is spooking and flying sideways at every rock, stump, and chipmunk on the trail. Nothing like a nice relaxed ride...

Back to the story... We’re steppin’ on down the trail when out of the brush on the left side came a young grizzly bear. That’s right! Ursus horribilis on the hoof! Being somewhat of a bear afficionado, I was duly impressed. But what I was impressed with the most was the appy's staying in control and moving forward. I was so proud of him I could just spit. The bear came out and headed down the trail ahead of us about 60 or 70 yards. He was absolutely beautiful; his back had blond and silver tips as he headed down the trail with a slow, lumbering roll. It was obviously a two year old at the most—probably just kicked off the sow because he wasn’t very big. As a matter of fact, as grizz go, he was downright small.

The whole time, Connie was behind me and was squealing with excitement. Grizz didn't stay with us long. As he turned to duck back into the brush on my left, I could clearly see that dished-in face, those teddy-bear ears and that unusual band across his muzzle. Now, that didn't look quite right.

It was then that it dawned on me that it was truly a Marmota flaviventris or yellow-bellied marmot, alias a rock chuck. Well, he surely fooled me; but he was a really big one-probably would go way up in Boone & Crockett record book! Six to eight pounds, I bet.

The next time I might tell you about Gary Manning's and my fishing trip out to Vancouver Island fishing for 300-pound Pacific halibut and 70-pound king salmon!

Love,
Bob Facklam
Precautions Against WNV Advised for Horse Owners

Submitted by Carellan Smith

(HELENA) - Even though mosquitoes and summer picnics may be a few months away, horse owners are encouraged to begin taking precautions against West Nile virus (WNV) now.

“There are USDA licensed vaccines available to help prevent equine cases of WNV encephalitis, and for horses not previously vaccinated, two initial doses given three to six weeks apart are recommended,” said Dr. Tom Linfield, Montana State Veterinarian with the Montana Department of Livestock.

Following the two initial doses of vaccine, the vaccine manufacturers also recommend an annual booster, and some veterinarians recommend two boosters each year, particularly in high-risk areas.

Combination vaccines are also available. Combination products provide protection against multiple diseases including West Nile virus; Eastern, Western or Venezuelan equine encephalitides; and tetanus.

For horses that contract WNV, an equine-origin antibody product that aids in the treatment of equines requires a serology test that can be conducted at the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in Bozeman.

Clinical signs of encephalitis in horses include loss of appetite and depression, in addition to any combination of weakness or paralysis of hind limbs, muzzle twitching, impaired vision, incoordination, head pressing, aimless wandering, convulsions, inability to swallow, circling, hyperexcitability, or coma.

“These are also clinical signs of Western and Eastern Equine Encephalitis, viral diseases that affect the nervous system and can cause severe complications and death in horses,” Dr. Linfield said. In addition, rabies cases may also present with similar neurological signs, and should always be considered as a differential diagnosis. These diseases also affect humans.

Vaccination and mosquito control continue to be recommended as methods to help protect horses against the virus.

In 2004, WNV was confirmed in 11 horses in seven Montana counties, and five horses died or were euthanized. Only one of the 11 horses was fully vaccinated, and that horse survived.

Montana also confirmed two human cases of WNV in 2002, 228 cases in 2003, and six cases in 2004.

The disease is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected by feeding on infected birds. The virus does not appear to spread from horse to horse or from horse to person. Person to person spread, though extremely rare, may occur by means of organ transplants or from infected mothers to their infants through breastfeeding.

To diagnose WNV in equines requires a serology test that can be conducted at the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in Bozeman.

For mosquito control, thoroughly clean livestock watering troughs on a regular basis, remove any potential sources of water in which mosquitoes can breed, dispose of water-holding containers such as discarded tires, and do not allow water to stagnate.

If possible, horses should be stabled inside from dusk to dawn to reduce contact with mosquitoes.

Horse owners are encouraged to contact their local veterinarian for more information regarding WNV vaccine and treatment. More information is also available at the Montana Department of Livestock website at www.mt.gov/liv <http://www.mt.gov/liv>.

The dedication reads as follows. “We would like to dedicate this book to future generations, that they too may find the same peace and beauty that we now enjoy in the back country, and to the dedicated people who are working diligently to keep it unchanged by human hands.”

There originally were three purposes to the organization. (1) to perpetuate the common sense use and enjoyment of horses in Montana’s roadless back country and (2) to assist the various government agencies in their maintenance and management of said resource and (3) to educate, encourage and solicit active participation by various members of the general public in the wise and sustaining use of horses and people, commensurate with our heritage and the back country’s resource.”

“The backcountry is one of the few remaining sanctuaries for modern man. Away from his everyday tensions a person can make an objective evaluation of himself or a situation and gain a firmer sense of true values. Perhaps man needs an occasional reminder of what an insignificant creature he really is when viewed in comparison with the magnitude of nature. Today’s young generation will be the guardians of the resources of tomorrow, and we could offer them no finer course than a lesson from nature’s schoolhouse on a backcountry trip.”

“Basically we are environmentalists as well as horsemen and we cannot allow our resources to suffer the consequences of benign neglect, either by the administering agency or an uninformed public. Our desire to reduce adverse impact while continuing maximum enjoyment leaves no room for either apathy or indifference. The Back Country Horsemen was organized as a service group to our roadless areas.”

These words and their sincerity echo from the canyon walls, creek bottoms, and mountain summits. We hear them clearly.

The Back Country Horsemen of Montana have believed deeply in these concepts and purposes, and will continue to follow their guidance and enthusiasm!

Our year consisted of many programs and work projects throughout the year of 2004. We pride ourselves in the many diversified members that belong to our club. As a club we take great pride in the fact that we are one of the most active clubs in doing work projects in our National Forest (Lewis and Clark) and the wilderness areas that are included in the forest, the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Scapegoat Wilderness.

The work projects for 2004 started at our adopted trailhead, the Swift Dam Public Park and Trailhead. This years work project consisted of painting of the camp building at the park, this building was left after the rebuilding of Swift Dam in 1964 and is used for many activities throughout the year, by many people. We also repaired a section of the trail that skirts along the cliff to bring you above the dam and take you along the south shores of Swift Reservoir. This consisted of dragging three 8 inch diameter pipes 14 feet in length up the trail and anchoring them into the side of the mountain with steel pins.

The next project that we completed was the clearing and signing of the Arsenic Creek trail behind Gibson Dam on the North Fork of the Sun River; this particular trail does not see a lot of attention because it is used mainly by hunters in the fall of the year. It took considerable clearing and re-tread work to reestablish the trail in areas. The highlight of the project was the grizzly bear encounter that happened; the young bear must have just been weaned off by its mother and it was looking to adopt a bunch of back country horsemen. Unfortunately the horsemen did not want any part of this proposed adoption.

Further up the trail we encountered two people putting barbed wire on trees for the DNA studies, they asked if we had seen any bears.

Benchmark Trailhead was our next work project it consisted of clearing trails up Renshaw Mountain and Fairview trails, these meet on the backside of Renshaw Mountain at Renshaw Lake. The work project was going good when the two groups met up at the lake and each continued on each others trails to check on the others work. The one group that had come
**Check It Out!!!**

Cudos to **Dan Marsh** for doing such a great job with the BCH of MT website. Dan has a slide show of the convention on the website. To see the slide show, go to the state home page (www.bchmt.org) and click on 2005.

If you need a farrier.....

www.farriersearch.com

or

![Horse](image)

**Travel**

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following that exam before bringing a horse into Montana.

A negative equine infectious anemia (EIA) test that has been performed in the past 12 months is also required. The negative EIA test results, test date, and the name of the laboratory conducting the EIA test must be included on the CVI.

A Montana import permit, issued by the DOL, is required and can be obtained within 10 days prior to transporting a horse into Montana by calling the DOL at 406-444-2976. This is a 24-hour service.

In addition, a brand inspection is required for horses entering Montana, as well as those traveling within Montana. If the state of origin does not have a brand inspection available, one may be obtained upon arrival in Montana by contacting the local sheriff’s office for referral to a brand inspector.

For complete brand laws and requirements, and a list of brand inspectors, horse owners can call the DOL’s Brands Enforcement Division at 406-444-2045. The information is also available on the DOL web page at www.mt.gov/liv <http://www.liv.state.mt.us>.

For Montanans leaving the state with a horse and returning, a CVI is needed for the horse. This certificate must be issued by an accredited Montana veterinarian and is valid for 30 days to one destination. A current negative EIA test, a re-entry permit, and a lifetime brand inspection are also required. A lifetime brand inspection is valid for crossing state lines and is recognized by most states. The annual brand inspection is valid for crossing county lines within the state only. An annual re-entry permit is also available for those taking multiple trips outside the state each year. The annual permit is valid for a calendar year and expires on Dec. 31.

Horse owners should always check the brand and health requirements for the states they will be traveling to prior to departure. “During certain times of the year, there may be disease outbreaks, either in Montana or destination states,” Dr. Linfield said. “If travel includes one or more states where disease is occurring, additional restrictions may apply to enter those states and for return to Montana.” In addition, some states require a negative EIA test within 6 months, rather than within 12 months.
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up Renshaw and back down to the lake had done so in the morning, and the other group had to climb to the top of Renshaw in the heat of the day. It was on the way down that two of the horses in the group were overcome with heat stroke. This proved that it is very important to know what to do under these kind of circumstances, both horses turned out fine.

Our next order of business was the tearing out and reconstruction of a thirty foot plus puncheon bridge on the National Continental Divide Trail #212 near Green Fork Cabin in the Scapegoat Wilderness. The US Forest Service (Rocky Mtn. Ranger District) provided the food, and said we could not complete this project in one weekend. Well now if that does not sound like a wager, I don’t know what does? And having a bunch of ambitious back country horsemen hear that, you can guess what happened. That is one hell of a nice bridge! Hope you can travel it yourself sometime.

Last, but not least, was our trip into Gates Park in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This is a trip that we have taken for quite a few years. The views going over Headquarters Pass are some of the most spectacular that you will ever see on the East Slopes of the Majestic Rocky Mountains. It was on this particular trip that some of our members took off from Gates Park to the Bob Marshall’s most spectacular sight, the Chinese Wall. It was on this trip that unexpected misfortune and God’s intervention prevailed on their trip. They happened upon, a fellow back country horsemen, Mike McClelland (Back Country Horsemen of East Tennessee) who had a tragedy of his own. His wife, Betty had been fatally kicked by a horse. It was on this misfortune that fellow horsemen, not knowing each other became friends, joined forever! And truly became Back Country Horsemen of America.

Natural Peace

The firelight flickers on a calm summer’s night.
The stars twinkle and shine, like diamonds so bright.

By the rippling stream small creatures sing their song.
The chirping of the cricket, the croaking of the frog.

Out in the distance a lonely wolf howls.
Above in the tree, sits a wise, old owl.

Peace is what nature brings to people like you and me. Leave the city toil behind, see what life was meant to be.

—L.M. Larson
something about the horse that just, well, works.

Mirror, Mirror in That Stall.....

A mirror reflects and reveals—unless it is flawed, it shows exactly what is there. We could argue that horses are much less flawed than we are since they don’t lie, manipulate or have hidden agendas.

They relate to us in direct response to how we approach them. And if we keep on approaching them in the same way, they keep responding with the same information. This is the mark of a clever and patient teacher—the ability to stand back and show us what patterns appear in our behavior.

Sure, people can do this for us at times, but we do possess certain imperfections. We have hidden motivations, ways of behaving that may muck up our ability to communicate what we want others to know most. This is why it is impressed upon most therapists that they recognize and take care of their own issues before endeavoring to assist others.

My last horse was an effective mirror. Carleton was a big Thoroughbred with a less-than “forward” attitude. He was a bit hard to motivate, and I complained about this regularly until my new trainer pointed something out to me. He asked me to consider if I was contributing to the way Carleton behaved, if maybe there were similarities in our behavior. “No way!” I thought, but my trainer encouraged me to keep pondering this.

On closer examination, it seemed Carlton and I were both cautious, and I was always looking for perfection. Like an overprotective parent, I shielded him from mistakes, making his world as orderly as possible. He became more and more tentative and fearful of unfamiliar events.

My trainer said that if I rode through tough situations, my horse would learn how to handle himself, and so would I. When I did alter my approach, we both grew in confidence, knowing we could handle a variety of situations. The really great part was how I was able to implement this lesson in my nonhorsey life. It allowed me to experiment more, to get out of my own way when it came to learning. This experience proved for me the old Arab proverb “the horse in your mirror.”

Issues have a nasty way of following riders to the barn. Just as an artist reveals part of himself in his work, your relationship with your horse says a lot about you. Anger management, passivity, avoidance, uncertainty—these and other traits will show up in your horsemanship. Of course, as effective as the equine mirror can be, you must first be willing to look.

I’m OK, You’re OK

This classic self-help book title might better be rephrased by the horse to read “I’m OK, You’re OK, Unless You Are Trying To Kill Me.” Thank you, Mr. Horse—we forgot you were a prey animal. But when not fighting or fleeing, horses are accepting and gracious companions, and they can point us in the right direction while remaining neutral and supportive.

Horses have a unique comforting presence—a way of accepting people for who they are. In therapy circles, this concept is referred to as “unconditional positive regard” and thought to be crucial to therapeutic success. A person has to feel accepted to work through tough issues. Horses naturally provide this, and when combined with traditional therapy, it’s a winning team. Referred to as EAP, or equine assisted psychotherapy, this method is taking the horse experience to the nonhorsey set.

EAP is one of the new nontraditional therapies. It involves clients being directed to interact and complete exercises with horses. Depicted in the movie “28 Days”, an addict in rehab, played by Sandra Bullock, is directed to gain the cooperation of a disinterested equine and convince him to lift his foot. Her repeated struggles with this EAP exercise reveal an aspect of her personality that needs a little work: She has difficulty asking for help from others. Only when she “gets it” is she successful both with the horse and with kicking her addition.

EAP is often used with adolescents, as horses seem to facilitate a much needed bridge between patient and therapist. A lot of troubled teens have never had the experience of feeling love or competent. Horses prompt these feelings in teens because animals don’t judge or discriminate. And of course there is

Please see Equine, page 15
About your newsletter!

*Back Country Horsemen of Montana News* is published three times a year by BCH of MT, PO Box 5431, Helena, MT 59604-5431.

Publication dates are June 1, October 1, February 1. Deadline for submission of advertising and articles is the 10th of the preceding month (May 10, September 10, January 10).

The newsletter has three main emphasis areas: (1) issues (2) club activities/volunteer projects (3) light material (i.e. Humor, history, etc.). Please submit a copy that is typewritten or legible handwritten copy is acceptable. Photos should be prints only (no negatives or proofs). Black & white or color is acceptable. Please do not cut or write directly on the photos.

Submit articles, photos, and advertising to Linda Brewer, PO Box 31837, Billings, MT 59107. Phone: (406) 698-5880 e-mail: lbrewer@vikingcable.net

BCH Chapters are once again responsible for submitting articles for publication in this newsletter. Chapter divisions and deadline date for articles is as follows:

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If YOU HAVE MOVED OR PLAN TO MOVE

| NAME: ________________________________ | PHONE NUMBER: __________________________ |
| ADDRESS: ______________________________ | CITY/STATE: ___________________________ |

Please complete this form and mail to Linda Brewer, PO Box 31837, Billings, MT 59107.
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For residents and horses traveling within the state, a brand inspection is required to cross county lines. The inspection may be either a trip permit, an annual inspection that expires 12 months from the date it is issued, or a lifetime brand inspection that is valid for the entire time the listed owner retains ownership of the horse.

For imported horses, a current negative EIA, or coggins test, is required because of the severity of the disease and because the disease is contagious. EIA, also known as Swamp fever, is a viral disease, most often transmitted by biting flies, such as horse flies or deer flies. The disease is characterized by intermittent fever, depression, progressive weakness, weight loss, edema, and progressive or transitory anemia, as well as occasional neurological manifestations. The virus causes a lifetime infection in horses and there is no cure for EIA.

“It is also recommended that a buyer obtain a recent negative EIA test on any horse purchased,” Dr. Linfield added. An EIA test is not required on change of ownership within the state, but will help prevent inadvertent spread of the disease. In addition, some shows, events or sales within Montana may require that participating horses have current negative EIA tests.

For more information contact:

__________

Karen R. Cooper, APR
Public Information Officer
Montana Department of Livestock
PO Box 202001
Helena, MT 59620-2001
406-444-9431
406-444-4316 fax
kcooper@mt.gov

From the Editor…..

I still need updated membership listings from Missoula and Upper Clark Fork chapters.

Please take just a moment to forward these to me either by e-mail or snail mail.

Thanks
Linda

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nothing like the feeling of working successfully with such a powerful creature. When these kids work something out with a horse, they often feel their own power for the very first time.

Lynn Thomas and Greg Kersten, founders of the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association, a nonprofit organization to promote EAP, have more than a few favorite stories about horses helping people. One involves a teenager who had suffered numerous setbacks on his road to being drug free. At one point in his therapy he seemed drawn to a particular horse that had never accepted being tied. He was determined it could be done. “He did this by starting with the basics and going one step at a time,” Lynn says. “He first taught the horse to ground tie, just laying the lead line on the ground. He worked many days on this. The horse stood still and would only turn around to keep his eyes on the boy. Then the boy moved to placing the line over a hitching post without tying it. He eventually tied it, leaving enough slack so the horse could easily turn his head and watch. The relationship and struggle with the horse made a huge impact on this adolescent. Not only did the horse learn to tie, the boy learned the basics of respectful relationships, trust and taking things one step at a time. He’s now in his 20s and has managed to stay sober since his treatment with this horse.”

The Best Feedback

People, however, don’t always do this. For example, a person with poor boundaries may not tell you to back off when you intrude. A horse, on other hand, cannot help but let you know. He is, after all, hardwired for survival and if you get in the way—watch out.

Effective feedback is an essential element of the learning process. Nonverbal feedback, the type horses offer us, may be the most reliable. Consider a scowling person with crossed arms who says, “I’m not mad at you.” The nonverbal cues are a much more accurate indication of how to read this person’s message. Horses naturally watch and respond to nonverbal communication.

Consistent nonverbal feedback can have quite an impact. Bev, an amateur rider, heard her horse’s message coming through loud and clear. “I had been leasing a lovely older Arabian, Rollie, for more than a year. At first Rollie dutifully did what she was trained for, but then, she gradually learned that I was passive, and I would let her get away with a lot (thinking I was being kind!). She pushed her desires over my directions more and more. A trail ride we used to enjoy together was suddenly full of imagined hazards, and she would balk, escape or run against my directions back to the barn. She was in control! I finally realized I had to step out of my comfort zone and become a firm leader.

Bev knew she needed to work on her assertiveness skills, but it was her horse’s gradual assumption of control that knocked the issue home. “I looked at her, and then I looked at the people around me, and I couldn’t believe all of them were sending me the same message.”

When we relate to horses, we are using our whole selves to communicate. As a result, how we are perceived by our horses tends to be quickly apparent. These trial-by-fire tests tell us what we need to change—in a swift and direct manner. Horses will not hesitate to challenge us if what we’re doing isn’t clear to them. Through their actions they will tell us, “I don’t understand, try something different.”

Role Model Horses

Horses are unfailingly honest. People? I’ll let you draw your own inferences. You always get the straight goods from horses, because they don’t know any other way. As a result, they respond honestly and directly to how they are approached. The skills of effective communication are the same, whether you are relating to person or equine. The nature of interacting with the horse forces you to start considering and altering your behavior to meet your goal. You have to become self-aware.

Arianna, a first-time EAP participant, learned this lesson well. She repeatedly tried to get a horse to do what she wanted by being nice. It didn’t work. Eventually, she was forced to consider another way. “I found the way I interacted with the horse very much reflected the way I interact with people. I don’t like displeasing people or getting in their way. I found I did need to be more assertive in getting them (horses & people) to do what I wanted or no progress would be made. I learned that while being nice is nice, it is not the way to get things done!”

Horses don’t get what they want by being nice either. They get it by being clear, honest and assertive. All great qualities for us to consider developing more of, don’t you think?

And...horses show us respect—they look, they listen. They attend closely to us because they have to; their survival depends on it. Too bad we don’t think of respect as more important to our own survival. Whether you are a recreational, competitive or casual rider, even a nonhorsey person, the horse has something to tell you—about you. We would all do well to strive to be more horselike, whether we spend our days in their company or not.

April Clay is a psychologist, EAP practitioner, and former competitive rider residing in Canada. She is the author of “Training From the Neck Up: A Practical Guide to Sport Psychology for Riders.”
**MONTANA BACK COUNTRY HORSEMAN STATE CHAPTERS**

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If you would like to join, please contact a chapter in your area.