

The Horse's Hoof™



In this Issue:



| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Choosing the Right Boot ...2 | AANHCP Clinics14 |
| From the Editors3 | UK Barefoot Conference .15 |
| Joe Camp, cont.4 | Spunky's Story-Founder .16 |
| Horses First Racing6 | Coffin Bone Rotation17 |
| U.S. Barefoot Racing7 | Charlie's Story-Navicular .18 |
| Eventing Barefoot7 | Puncture Wounds.....20 |
| Barrel Racing in Boots8 | Shock Absorber21 |
| Reining Champions.....9 | Order Form21 |
| Trim Apprenticeship.....10 | Professional Corner.....22 |
| Wild Horse Hooves11 | Resources23 |
| Trimming Insights.....12 | Slicing Dissection24 |

www.TheHorsesHoof.com

Barefoot Hoofcare Magazine

Issue 28 – Summer/Fall 2007

Spreading the Barefoot Word with Joe Camp

Empty stalls and naked feet... that's the heart of the message that Joe Camp is trying to spread to all the horse lovers of the world.

And even if Joe's name didn't ring a bell, you probably know who he is: remember Benji, that canine superstar who pulled on our heart-strings? Is it any wonder that the man who created the Benji movies would find that special connection to horses that draws one towards natural horse care?

A lifelong animal lover, Joe entered the horse world quite recently. His fresh eyes soon scrutinized traditional horse care practices. His compelling story is best told in his own words, available soon in his upcoming new book—but here's a preview below, from my conversation with Joe.—Yvonne Welz

Yvonne Welz interviews Joe Camp:

Yvonne: Please share with us the story of how you first became aware of, and then involved in, natural hoofcare.

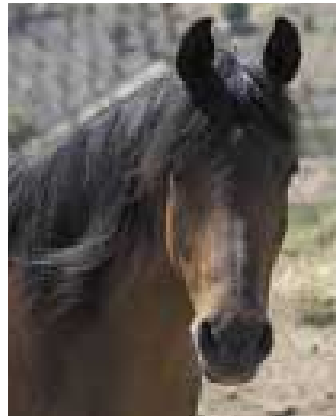
Joe: Kathleen and I were rank novices with no idea what we were doing when we took our blind leap into the world of horses. That was just two short years ago. Our first three went straightaway into stalls, wearing shoes, eating from table-high bins. We were told, "that's the way it's done." Who were we to question? We were blank slates. But as our journey unfolded, and we began to peel back the layers of this truly enigmatic horse world, we found ourselves mystified at our discoveries.

Most of the early information we gathered about traditional horse care, when applied against a body of logic, didn't seem to make any sense. We seriously began to scratch our heads and say *what's going on here?* Why, for example, is it okay to put a beast who has been running on the plains for fifty million years into a 12x12 cage. There have to be some genetic issues with

All photos courtesy Joe Camp

that. Why does a flight animal, who has survived on his own, without humans, all that time, need metal shoes?

The folks we asked would generally shrug and, again, say, "that's just the way it's done." Fortunately, along the way, we stumbled onto Monty Robert's Join Up as a way to begin a relationship with each of our horses. When my horse, Cash, willingly made the choice to walk up behind me in the round pen and nuzzle my shoulder, he was saying *I trust you*. And that changed everything. Literally. I was no longer an *owner*, but rather a trusted leader. I realized that I not only loved this horse, but I was truly responsible for his happiness and health. And that left me no choice but to do the work, to gain the knowledge, to make the right decisions for him, and all our horses. I was now emotionally involved, and that meant commitment.



Cash, an 11 yo Arab, is the clever star of Joe's new book "The Naked Horse." Right: Cash's hooves. "He dances up the rocks of our natural pasture like a mountain goat."



We dug deeper, consuming books, articles, and DVDs until I thought my head was going to burst, cramming at light speed to make up for all the years of experience that we didn't have. To learn what makes these wonderful animals tick. There had to be better answers.



"Our 1 1/2 acre natural pasture was created inside a perimeter chain link fence, utilizing an inexpensive Premiere 1 electric fence system that creates a big circle around a smaller circle, in which hay is distributed morning and evening. They pretty much move around this large circle all day long."

It wasn't long before I began reading everything I could find about feet, because Cash had come to us wearing only two shoes, on his fronts. I wanted to know why he didn't need shoes on his rear feet, as well. After all, it was at least a quarter of a mile walk on asphalt to the local horse club arena. And his feet *must* be protected, right? I hadn't yet discovered wild horses, but I was about to. I came across a magazine article that began by saying: *a horse's hoof is supposed to flex with every step taken. Huh?*

The article went on to say that the simple act of the hoof flexing is just about the most important thing for a horse's good health and long life. It provides shock absorption for the joints, tendons and ligaments, acts as a circulatory (cont. on page 4)

Choosing the Right Hoof Boot

by Yvonne Welz

One of the most frequent questions that I hear from horseowners is, "How do I choose the right boot for my horse?"

When I first became involved in barefoot, there wasn't much to choose from. There were only a couple of boots available, and they tended to be very difficult to use and/or very expensive. One of the most exciting developments over this past decade is the widespread availability of a large selection of highly effective, reasonably-priced, easy-to-use hoof boots. This is such a boon for horses and owners! However, newcomers to hoof boots can find themselves literally overwhelmed by the selection.



The Easyboot Epics are now my personal favorite boot, because they are so versatile. They work really well for both lame horses and performance horses, and they don't rub.

There are many good brands of boots out there, so be sure to read up on them all. If you have friends with boots, take a close look at their boots, and actually try them out, if you can. My personal boot experience is mainly with the EasyCare brands of boots. I was an initial user of the Australian Old Mac's Boots when they first came out in 2001, and EasyCare now manufactures a couple versions of Old Mac's, several variations of the Easyboot (including the Epic, Bare, and Grip), as well as the Boa Horse Boot.

My first recommendation is that a barefoot horseowner have a pair of boots on hand to fit each of



The Easyboot Bares are similar to the Epics, but with a concave outer sole and a different front adjustment system. They are initially a little more difficult to fit and apply.

their horses. But your horses don't need boots? That's great! However, one day when you least expect it, something will come up—almost guaranteed—and it is much better if you are prepared ahead of time. Case in point: my warmblood mare with near-perfect hooves stepped on something odd in the warm-up arena at a show, and developed an acute abscess in that foot one week later. I had never even fitted her for boots, but luckily I had a pair on hand that happened to fit. Because of the boots, she was comfortable enough to continue on with lots of exercise, so the abscess resolved quicker than a blink.

Here's a few things to consider when choosing a boot for your horse:

Will the boots be used for casual trail riding, performance, or for a lame horse? Any riding style boot will be suitable for casual riding, but performance riding may require some special features, depending on your discipline. For a lame horse, boot comfort will be a top priority (especially if they will be on for long periods of time), and there are some special boots available specifically for lame horses, which are not really intended for riding.

If used for riding, what distances do you plan to ride in the boots? If you intend to ride lots and lots of hours in the boots, including long-distance and endurance riding, you will want to pick out a boot that has been proven to excel in distance riding. Check with the manufacturer to find out distance recommendations for their boots. EasyCare recommends that their Boa's and Old Mac's be limited to less than 25 miles per week or per ride, while the mileage for the Easyboot models is unlimited.

Will the boots be used frequently, or infrequently? Will the boots be used only rarely—sort of a spare-tire for emergency situations, or perhaps only used for that once- or twice-a-year rocky trail ride? In these cases, the durability of the boot may not be as important a factor, and ease of use may be much more important to you. If boots are used frequently and you want something that will really last, one of the Easyboot models may be a good choice for you, because all the separate parts are replaceable.

How important is ease of use? Are you comfortable making lots of adjustments to a boot every time you ride, or do you want something that you can literally slap-on-and-go? Old Mac's and the Boa Horse Boot are both incredibly easy to apply. Easyboot models have always been a little more difficult to apply, but the latest model of Epic is very user-friendly. The Bare boots are more difficult to apply at first, but once broken in, many people just love them.

What shape are your horse's hooves? If your horse's hooves are wider than they are long, you

Photo copyright The Horse's Hoof



If possible, have a professional fit your horse's boots for you, and show you how to use them.

should choose a boot such as the Old Mac's Originals, which are designed for a wide foot. If your horse's feet are equal length and width, or just a bit narrow, you will find that most boots can fit. If you have a horse with excessively narrow hooves, you will want to look for a boot that can adjust the fit to that extremely narrow shape.



Photo courtesy EasyCare Inc.

The Old Mac's Boots are one of the easiest boots to use and apply. However, rubbing is always a possible problem whenever a boot covers the coronet area. The Old Mac's Originals are made for wide hooves, while the G2's (shown above) are designed for slightly narrow hooves.

For more helpful tips on choosing a hoof boot, please visit this page on EasyCare's website, which includes charts and boot comparisons:

<http://www.easycareinc.com/education/whatboot.aspx>

Remember to always put a foam cushion pad into the bottom of your boots, to reduce peripheral loading! See page 23 of this issue for a listing of hoof boot websites.

Photo courtesy EasyCare Inc.



The Boa Horse Boot, with a unique dial lacing system, is extremely easy to fit and apply. I find they work best on horses that have a slightly upright pastern/h hoof conformation.

The Horse's Hoof™

Barefoot Hoofcare Magazine Issue 28 – Summer/Fall 2007

©2007 by The Horse's Hoof. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any means whatsoever without the written permission of the publisher and the author.

The information contained within this magazine is intended for educational purposes only. Readers should seek advice from their veterinarian and qualified help from a barefoot trimmer/farrier before attempting any trimming of hooves.

Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

Editor/Publisher

Yvonne Welz

Technical Editor/Publisher

James Welz

Contributors

Joe Camp
Kelly Baker
Sara Minsk
Brita Rizzi
Johnny Holder
C.J. Holdren
Eddie & Tiffany Drabek
Rhiannon Fugatt
Dr. Hiltrud Strasser
Jaime Jackson
Bruce Nock, Ph.D.
Gill Nash
Jennifer Vallieres
Sheri Fischer
Sandy Judy
Pete Ramey
Frances Guthrie
Sabine Kells
Karen Chaton

Editorial Office

The Horse's Hoof • P.O. Box 40
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340-0040
(623) 935-1823 • Fax (623) 935-3572
website: www.TheHorsesHoof.com
email: editor@TheHorsesHoof.com

Subscription Rates

The Horse's Hoof is published quarterly. Annual subscription (4 issues) is \$25 US/Canada, \$35 Foreign, and \$15 Acrobat PDF. Please send payment in American currency by check or money order, or Visa, Mastercard, Discover and AMEX.
Order Toll Free 1-877-594-3365.

Editorial Policies

Submissions are encouraged, including photos, articles and stories about barefoot horses. If you would like to contribute, please contact us. Material that is published does not reflect endorsement by The Horse's Hoof or any of its staff.

The Horse's Hoof is a generic barefoot resource that supports all hoof care which creates functional, healthy hooves. We believe technology can be useful, and we believe in compromise. We advocate more natural living conditions for all horses. We encourage all styles, methods, and techniques of hoof care that promote healthier hooves.

The Horse's Hoof is a division of Wishing Welz Equine, LLC.

We respect privacy. We do not sell or distribute any subscriber information. If you would like to contact a contributor or author, please send your contact info to The Horse's Hoof, and we will forward that on to the appropriate person.

From The Editors

Who says God doesn't have a sense of humor? Well, let me explain...

James & I have been riding together for 20 years now. In all that time, we've never had a single riding injury. Sure, we've had our share of spills and thrills, but we try hard to be safe—though I know we were often just plain lucky.

Right after the last issue went to press in the first week of May, I landed on my butt in the dirt. Okay, more specifically, I landed on my right hip and was knocked unconscious for a few minutes! Belle must have had a gleeful moment and forgot about me as she took off bucking. Normally, not a big deal, except that I was recovering from a flu, and probably should not have been riding, after all.

Luckily, my friend was there to transport me to the hospital (when I awoke, I jumped up and said, "I'm okay!"). My head was catscanned (thank goodness for my wonderful Troxel helmet—I didn't even have any symptoms of concussion), and my very sore right hip was x-rayed. Nothing broken, but it was news to me that I had an old, healed fracture of my pelvis! Must have been that time I was bucked off nearly 20 years ago, when I got right back on and kept riding like nothing happened!

Well, this time around, it took a while before I was back in the saddle again. Okay, I did get on and walk around for a few minutes just 5 days later (and paid for it with severe muscle spasms for days after!)—but I really couldn't ride for about a month. The injury was pretty bad, probably the worst I have ever been injured in my life. It was enough to have me reaching for the pain pills! James even bought me crutches, because the first couple of days, I could hardly even walk.

But that's just the beginning of the story. Exactly one week later, James lands on his butt in the dirt. I know—this sounds too weird to be true. He was riding Kendra around bareback with a neckrope, like he often does, when she decided to take off at a wild gallop—very unusual! He knew he couldn't stop her, so he decided he would bail. And he landed—you guessed it—on his right hip. I honestly don't know how he made it back home, because I think he was in worse shape than me. He got into bed and couldn't get up again for 3 days!

Well, at that point, what is there to do but laugh? Every time I looked at him, I would burst

out into hysterical laughter—the situation was too ridiculous. How could we **both** be injured? I was still hobbling about, barely able to get around myself, and now my caretaker was worse off than I was! And since I had a bruised rib, and James had a few broken ribs, it was very painful to laugh, but we still kept laughing!

For a little background information, James and I share a **lot**. Maybe too much, as this situation points out. We even share the same exact birthday—yes, day and year!

James' healing followed the same pattern as mine—I could literally predict what would happen and how he would feel, based on myself. He was just one week behind me, with nearly identical injuries. At one month out, each of us was back riding again, albeit slowly and carefully. By two months, we were pretty much normal. Kendra and Belle, both good-natured, well-trained horses, are doing wonderfully, totally unaware of any commotion they caused.

Just 6 weeks after my accident, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to take a trail ride on a Tennessee Walker while we were visiting the Dallas, Texas, area for one of our clinics. Here I am right before our ride, on Alice Morgan's gelding, Jubilee:

Photo copyright The Horse's Hoof



James & I figure that we are now both "pre-disastered" and good for another 20 years...

Be Safe! Happy Hooves!—Yvonne Welz

Barefoot Article in Western Horseman Magazine!

It was quite a surprise to see a natural hoof care article featured on the cover of the July 2007 *Western Horseman* Magazine. The article by Heidi Nyland, "Barefoot Every Day: Is It Right for Your Horse?" features master farrier Gene Ovnicsek describing the benefits of barefoot. Accompanying photos clearly demonstrate that desired heel-first landing. Gene suggests that even shod horses should spend part of the year barefoot (and he does utilize his own specialty shoes). Environment and daily care are emphasized as crucial components of barefoot success, and Gene finishes with this recommendation, "It's not just about taking off your horse's shoes. Ride your horse as much as you can. That's the best maintenance."

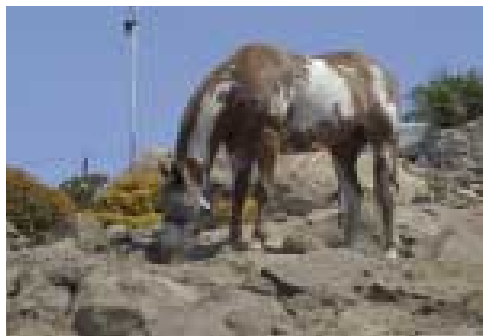
(cont. from cover)

pump for blood in the hoof mechanism, and helps the heart get that blood flowing back up the leg. And with a metal shoe nailed to the hoof, no flexing can occur.

I was dumbfounded. Logic has always been my long suit. So how could this have escaped me? I scurried to the internet and found Jaime Jackson's wild horse research, and Pete Ramey, and Eddie Drabek, and this publication. And in a heartbeat, I was asking the same questions most of your readers must be asking. *How have we humans been so misguided for so long?*

The next day, Cash's front shoes came off, and he received my kindergarten version of the wild horse trim. Fortunately, we soon found Marci Lambert, our new natural hoof care specialist, and Cash no longer had to put up with my fumbling. Over the next few weeks, the shoes on our five other horses came off, and we've never looked back. To steal Pete Ramey's phrase, we are now the proud parents of twenty-four "rock-crushing hooves."

Yvonne: It seems like so many folks just ignore the available information about barefoot and natural care, unless they are actually seeking help for a lame horse, usually suffering from severe founder or navicular. One of our missions here at The Horse's Hoof is to reach people WAY before disaster strikes—to reach the ordinary horseowners before the hooves crash. Why do you think that the barefoot concept really clicked for you, so



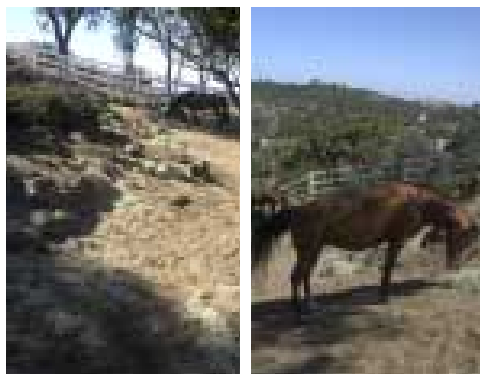
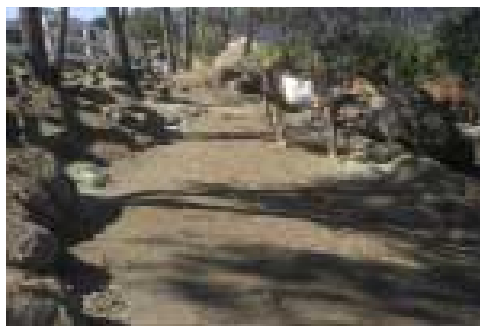
Scribbles, an 8 yo Paint gelding, at home in his rocky pasture. After de-shoeing, his hooves took 7 months to regrow into a healthy, strong form.



quickly, when you had no real hoof problems with your horses?

Joe: I'm not so sure most folks are ignoring the information. I don't think they know it's available. When we began this journey, we weren't even sure that wild horses still existed. We certainly didn't know that they had been around for fifty-five million years. So, like most, we had given no thought to how they had survived all that time with

All photos courtesy Joe Camp



Scenes from Joe's natural pasture, which is based upon Jamie Jackson's model in his book "Paddock Paradise."

no assistance from humans. We had never read Dr. Strasser, or Jaime Jackson, or Pete Ramey, or sought out your website or publication, so we didn't know about all the research into the amazing health and soundness of wild horse hooves. So, of course, it follows that we had no idea why it was so. We simply had no knowledge of any of it, so how could it apply to us? Which, unfortunately, is the case with most of the folks we've run into. Even those with years of experience. They haven't been exposed to it, so there's no relevance to them. We need to be more tenacious about making sure they're exposed to it.

For us, I suspect that coming at it with a clean plate had a lot to do with being receptive. We had no past filled with bad experiences. And once my brain was pried open, the logic was irrefutable. It made sense. But so many folks who we've tried to convince have had some negative experience that they *believe* is evidence that shoes are best. Like the lady who said to me, "When my horse's shoe falls off, he starts limping almost immediately. And when the shoe is nailed back on, suddenly he's fine. Doesn't hurt anymore. Proof that the shoe is better for him than barefoot."

I asked her if she had ever crossed her legs for so long that her foot went to sleep? We all have, and we all know what's happening. The leg cross cuts off the circulation to the foot, and with no circulation, the nerve endings lose their sensitivity and fail to work. The second you uncross, or stand up, the circulation returns, as do the nerve endings. *Ooohh! Ouch!*

The same thing happens to a horse when a metal shoe is nailed on. The inability of the hoof to flex removes its ability to pump blood, virtually elimi-

nating circulation in the hoof mechanism. Without proper circulation, the nerve endings quit transmitting, and the horse no longer feels the "ouch." When the shoe falls off, the circulation returns and suddenly he can feel again. Feel, in many cases, an unhealthy hoof that has been deprived of circulation while the shoe was nailed on. And, of course, when the shoe is nailed back on, the circulation diminishes and the nerve endings quit transmitting again, and voila, the horse feels better. But for all the wrong reasons.

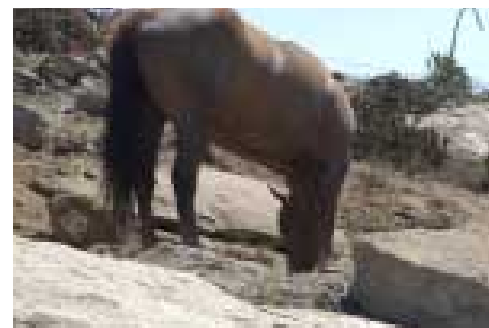
The lady went away scratching her head, hopefully at least thinking about it. And that's what we all need to do, for the horses. Know enough of the answers to get folks to start digging on their own. If we can just get owners into it, introduce them to the availability of the information base, then I believe knowledge and logic will prevail.

And, again, for me, what I hope to spread is the new emotional responsibility I feel toward Cash, which is what made me start digging in the first place. When you truly *feel* responsible, and care for your horse's happiness and health, how can you not do the best for him?

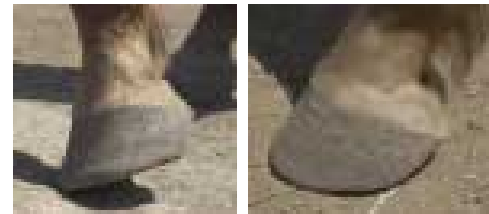
Yvonne: What are all the changes you've seen in your own herd since taking them barefoot and switching to the natural lifestyle?

Joe: They are happy campers! Their feet are virtually maintaining themselves now. They're good to go on any surface. All six of them. And they're all healthy. Scribbles was first into the natural pasture. He's our quiet one. A gorgeous paint, but charisma is not his long suit. Lazy would be a merciful understatement. He has the best *whoa* of any of our six, because it's his favorite speed. No reins needed. Just sit back a little, then hold on for the screech of tires.

Which is why his first venture into the natural pasture left me with my mouth hanging open in astonishment. As the halter fell away, he spun and was gone like a bullet. Racing, kicking the air, tossing his head, having the best time I'd ever seen



Pocket, a Paint mare, boasts four healthy, rock hard feet—just like all of Joe's horses.



him have. This was not a horse I had met before. He went on for a good ten minutes, with me just standing there, grinning like an idiot. That was the beginning of a new way of life for Scribbles and his five herd mates. And they all thank you “spreaders of the information” very much!

Yvonne: Your natural pastures—you have really set up a pretty spectacular living arrangement for your horses. Tell us all about it.

Joe: Not spectacular at all, really. Very simple and straightforward. A natural pasture, or as one person recently called it, “a Rock Spa.” Not the music kind. It’s very steep. No grass. The outer perimeter is sort of a lopsided oval surrounded by an electric fence on three sides and a six-foot chain link on the fourth. The fencing encloses maybe an acre and a half. In the center is another lopsided electric-fenced circle that keeps the horses off the steepest portions of the native boulders and prevents them from taking too many short cuts, because the whole point is to keep them moving.

Each horse gets half a scoop of Strategy and maybe two pounds of alfalfa in the morning and evening, right out in the open, in the pasture. They all know where their tubs are. Then we climb in the Gator and spread half a bale of bermuda, morning *and* evening (a full bale a day), into more than fifty small piles scattered all the way around the pasture, with the heaviest concentration being near the bottom, and very little near the top.

Most of the herd will make at least four full circles during a twenty-four hour period, sometimes twice that. The herd pecking order creates virtual constant movement, except when they’re resting, because the grass is always greener on the other side of... well, pretty much anything. There’s a smaller circle up the hill that we use to enclose our older guy for an hour or so morning and evening, because he gets a special diet that the others would love to steal. When the gate is opened, three of the group are always waiting to go in and clean up the dregs before heading down the hill.

They all get lots of terrific exercise. Lots of hoof flexing and circulation. And everyone gets their REM sleep, which will usually never happen outside of a herd environment. To get REM sleep, the horse must lie down, all the way, on his side, head down; and usually this will never happen without a herd mate to guard the sleeper. Another reason to keep them out of stalls. All six are in the pasture 24/7. Except, of course, when they’re out with us. (There are photos and a video on our website, nakedhorsemanship.com). The whole thing was amazingly simple and inexpensive to put together.

And it can work with much less space. Before we finished this pasture, the herd was divided into threes in two much smaller, steep, rocky turnouts. Each turnout was maybe 60' x 50' and operated under the same concept. Not as much room, but so much better than being caged in a stall.

Yvonne: What do you think it will take to convince horse owners that horses truly do NOT need—and are far healthier without—both stalls and shoes?

Joe: Lots of attention on the subject. Over and over and over. And a concerted effort to say the right things that will trigger enough curiosity, or guilt, or emotion, to cause folks to dig it out on their own. Most of us with barefoot horses came to it on our own because somebody or something motivated us enough to examine the facts, and the research. Not just because someone said it’s better.

Case histories are good. Tales of success. Conversation about how some horses take a while for their hooves to heal, just like we do after a knee operation. The pain will go away as we heal and become healthy again. Articles, books, and websites are terrific because the written word is usually non-confrontational. There is no debate. Just knowledge, and emotion to stimulate motivation. Folks who have made their horses unhealthy for so long because of the shoes they wear feel like they must defend what they’ve done. How else can they live with themselves? This makes it difficult for us, but worth the effort. That’s why my new book was written, and why it is not a technical book. It’s an emotional and entertaining journey that will, hopefully, cause readers to feel the issues, to renew their relationship with their horses, and to realize the responsibility they have accepted. And to want to do the very best for their horses. When that happens, they will change. They will accept the challenge to spend the time. Like most of us, they won’t be able to help themselves.

Yvonne: Tell us more about your book!

Joe: I’ve spent most of my life trying to lure folks into the heart and soul of a dog... and now I’m trying to lure them into the heart and soul of a horse, because I believe from there, from that perspective, the need for the changes we’re all trying to bring about will be felt the most.

It’s a true story... a love story to *our* horses, because we discovered that we humans have taken this majestic animal who has survived on the planet for some fifty-five million years, fully capable of keeping himself in the best of health and condition, and stripped him of his genetic ability to do so—to take care of himself.

The journey of discovery was pretty astonishing. The more digging we did, the less sense any of it made. Kathleen said this is either really amazing, or we’re certifiably nuts, because what we seemed to be finding was that not many folks had any more of a clue about what is best for the horse than we did.

That’s when the book was born. It’s a dual tale. The story of a wild herd that parallels Kathleen’s and my journey, written for everyone who has ever loved a horse, or even loved the idea of loving a horse.

All photos courtesy Joe Camp



Kathleen Camp with her beloved horse, Skeeter.

Yvonne: What would you most like this book to accomplish?

Joe: To help horses everywhere. And to help people, because we found that the lessons the horses have taught us are fantastic lessons for life among humans, as well. We’re told that it’s a terrific read for non-horse owners, as well as horse-owners. Which, hopefully, means that we’ll be leaving a residue with folks who might have horses later on. Encouraging them to begin in a way that is best for their horses.

Yvonne: How do you think we can get this message across to all the ordinary horse owners of the world? And what can the average barefooter do to help spread the word?

Joe: We can, by presenting the story to the average horse owner from the horse’s perspective, cause them to *want* to do better for their horses. When you or I say it, it’s often taken with a grain of salt. When the horses say it, I think people will listen. *Here’s something amazing that my horses have taught me.*

And we should put special emphasis on newcomers, like Kathleen and me. We were untarnished, so to speak. We knew nothing. So we were very receptive to the logic, and the facts, and the research.

The average barefooter can keep talking. Everywhere, all the time. To everybody. That influence can be amazing. The average person in this country has the opportunity to influence more than one hundred people during the course of one week. Think about that. By actual study, a hundred people! And chances are most of your readers are not average. Think of the difference we can all make if we just keep talking. I know it gets frustrating. But if you only win one in ten, do the math. It won’t take long for the flood of good news to spread. 🍌

*Joe Camp’s new book will be published by Random House Harmony Books in 2008. (The current working title for the book is **The Naked Horse**, but that title is likely to change.) For more details, please visit Joe’s website at: www.nakedhorsemanship.com*

See page 16 for more information about the Ramey/Bowker clinic, hosted by Joe Camp, to be held in Valley Center, California on Nov. 10-13, 2007.

“Horses First Racing” Blazes a Barefoot Trail

by Kelly Baker

It is a time of great change and excitement at Horses First Racing (formerly known as Simon Earle Racing) at “The Beeches” organic farm, in Sutton Veny, SW Wiltshire, in the UK. New trainer Jeremy Gask is about to join us from Australia (where he was in the top 5 trainers every year for the past 5 years, and trained 50 wins from 30 horses last season). New horses, as well as new training methods, are about to be put in place, and the establishment looks set to go from strength to strength.



Law of Attraction, 2 year old colt by Street Cry.

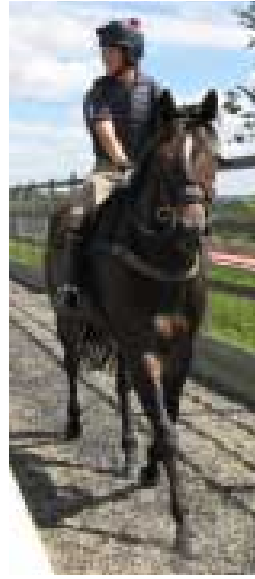
We have some incredibly talented barefoot horses in training, the most impressive of which is possibly our 2 year old colt by Street Cry, Law Of Attraction. Street Cry is enjoying tremendous success as a sire. His son, Street Sense, easily won the Kentucky Derby and he has a large number of very talented offspring, including Street Sound and Street Magician, who are adding to the stallion’s already impressive reputation as a top class sire. We are delighted to have been sent one of his sons, and to make it even better, our colt’s female line means he is related to the Spinning World family, as is the Belmont winner Rags to Riches. With such impressive blood on both sides of his pedigree, and stunning good looks to match, the hopes are high for his future.

Law Of Attraction has been going on our Softwalker and doing regular work in our sand and rubber-based school to develop his feet and fitness. Although he was shod for a short while before coming to us, his feet are structurally very good, and he should have no problem racing barefoot. His work will be slowly increased as we build him up towards racing fitness. Without doubt, he is worth keeping an eye out for, as all the signs so far point to him becoming the most high-profile and successful barefoot racehorse in the world.

Godolphin are one of the biggest players in the world of horseracing and know a nice horse when they see one. Maidanni, in their eyes and words, qualified as a very nice horse with a big future ahead of him. They raced him on the flat, where

All photos courtesy Kelly Baker

he won nicely before breaking down in front. He was sold and broke down again before being given to us to transition to barefoot. Both our vet and natural hoofcare practitioner agree that Maidanni’s leg is healing well and, with his feet also developing nicely, there is no reason why he shouldn’t make it back to the track this year with improved feet and legs. The horse will probably go jumping (top jockey Frankie Dettori got off him and said the horse would be at home going around Cheltenham) as he is a big, tough guy who is built for the job. He has a real attitude and, with the proven talent to match, should soon be making a name for himself barefoot-style on the track.



Maidanni is a very talented horse that broke down, so he was transitioned to barefoot.

There is no doubt that going barefoot has saved the careers of some of the horses at The Beeches, and this is very true in the case of



National Hunt Racing top contender Jahash faced a career ending injury—until the shoes came off. Now he’s back on the racecourse. Notice his lovely heel-first step!

Jahash. This lovely chestnut gelding reached the highest levels of National Hunt racing, competing against the crème de la crème of steeplechasers at the Cheltenham Festival where he finished a credible 4th, beating some of the country’s top horses. Not long afterwards, he developed problems with his hind tendons and the owner was told that he wouldn’t race again. Refusing to believe the horse’s racing days were behind him, Jahash was sent to us and transitioned to barefoot. His feet were in a bad condition and would

have undoubtedly played a major role in the leg problems he had been experiencing. Off came the shoes, and the hoof conditioning process began, with the horse using our walkers and school and also doing plenty of work on tarmac. Eventually his feet improved, and Jahash made it back onto the racecourse. His previous trainer, a very talented and successful man, couldn’t believe the horse was back on the track, and actually said that he didn’t believe there was another racing yard that could have revived the horse’s career. We look forward to having a successful season with the horse this winter, and he may well be heading back to the dizzy heights of Cheltenham.

Although he doesn’t have a Cheltenham Festival to his name, Cap Classique is every bit as special as Jahash. When Jahash had problems with his hind legs, it was his career in jeopardy; with Cap Classique, it was his life. The temperamental bay gelding, who is so highly-strung that he is trained mainly from the field, had won impressively in a bumper (a flat race for jumps horses) and shown plenty of ability in his following races before sustaining an injury. That spring, he had repeated hind foot abscesses and never came sound. The farrier found increasing difficulty in getting shoes on his front feet and said they were beyond shoeing properly. The vet was of the opinion that the horse’s stance in the field indicated his hind suspensories were degrading to the point that they might not function properly again, and recommended euthanasia. This was not an option the horse’s owner, Deborah O’Brien, was willing to consider. Deborah comments “I took the view that if shoes were a problem, then going barefoot had to be a possible solution, and remained convinced that there must be an underlying issue causing him to deteriorate so quickly from sound racehorse to cripple. The people and facilities at The Beeches were his only chance of useful life.”

(cont. on page 7)



Cap Classique is a very special horse that nearly lost his life due to hind leg problems. He was sent to The Beeches for rehabilitation, and became sound after only a few months.

Barefoot Racing Success in the U.S.

Sara Minsk and her husband, Brian, own **Nine Maple Farm** in Mendon, Massachusetts. Sara writes, "I believe we were the first ones in the U.S. to breed, train, and race barefoot, as we started in 2003 with Thoroughbreds. We created a particular environment for our horses to allow their hooves to develop to their fullest potential. At the time, barefoot was NOT in fashion, and we were quite the outcasts. It is great to see more people like Simon Earle joining the fight! However, us small farm owners have been doing the barefoot thing for a good bit now!"

These photos feature their homebred Arabian gelding, NMF Benraz Halim, aka "Benny," trained by Leslie Bickel. Sara says, "He has trained and raced barefoot with zero training-related physical setbacks. He has never worn shoes. He races and trains on concrete hard American dirt tracks. He was stakes placed as a Juvenile and just placed 2nd in the Michigan Derby Stakes Race on July 28, 2007. He has 10 starts: 1 win, 4 times second, (including 2 stakes races), 1 time third." Sara and Brian have had racing success with both Arabians and Thoroughbreds. Visit their website at www.ninemaplefarm.com

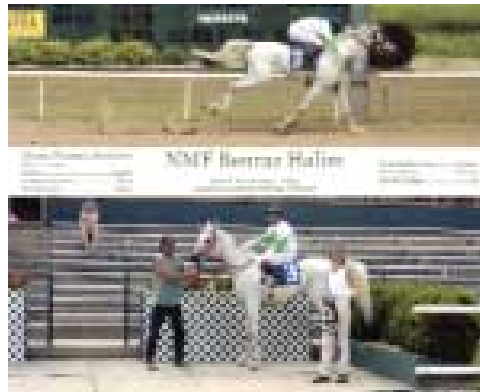


Benny placing 2nd in the 2006 Michigan Juvenile Stakes Race. Photo by Terri Holst.



Benny winning a Junior Championship in halter.

All photos courtesy Sara Minsk



Benny winning the race on June 17, 2007.



Benny leading the pack out of the gate (as usual)...who says Barefoot horses have no traction!!!! Photo by Terri Holst.

Horses First Racing, Cont.

(cont. from page 6)

In August 2006, Cap came home to us for his rehabilitation. His story made him a perfect Horses First Club horse (see www.horsesfirst-club.com for more details) and so he was given to the club free of charge. He arrived at the yard very lame behind and generally uncomfortable through his body. He obviously had multiple physical problems, and so we turned him out in the field and allowed him to get better. Our chiropractor treated him for a twisted pelvis and withers, and his shoes were taken off to start the barefoot transitioning process which would improve the quality of his feet, in turn helping his legs.

After a good few months, the horse became sound. His feet were progressing well and it was time for him to start work. The Softwalker and Seawalker (a walker designed by us in which the horses walk and trot in chilled salt water) greatly aided the horse's rehabilitation, and he built up to progress from the sea to the sand, doing some trotting and cantering on the lunge in our school. The horse is now in ridden work and progressing more every day. We are very proud at Horses First of being able to give him the chance he undoubtedly deserves. The day he returns to the track will be a very emotional one, with plenty of people cheering this courageous horse home.

For more news about Horses First Racing, please visit: www.horsesfirsttracing.com

Dressage



Cross-Country



Stadium Jumping



Eventing Barefoot!

My Morgan, **Mariah**, was a rescue case—2 weeks away from starvation when I bought her at 2 1/2 years old. I first trained her through 2nd level dressage, but she got very bored with just the flat work, and took to eventing like a fish to water (she loves the cross-country).

I lived in Vermont for 15 years and had her shod in the summers. When we moved to North Carolina a year ago, I got into barefoot trimming. The barn owner where I board has done a lot of seminars with Pete Ramey, and is trimming all her own horses' feet. She taught me how to do a lot of it myself, but we still get a Barefoot Farrier (his name is Gil Goodin) out every 6 weeks, to do the majority of the work. He used to be a traditional farrier, but converted to barefoot trimming. He will be part of a new "Barefoot Teaching Center" opening soon.

Mariah had some onset of Navicular disease, which has now totally gone away, and she has been absolutely sound since being barefoot—with a heavy eventing show schedule. I found out that Navicular is a "man-made" disease, and shoes are the culprit of it.

People actually ask me at shows, "how you can go cross-country without shoes and studs?" I think horses do a lot better barefoot, feeling where their feet are, and I never once had Mariah slip or take a bad step. —Brita Rizzi, www.barefootsaddles.net

Photos from the June 2007 Lumber River Horse Trials in Southern Pines, N.C., where Brita & Mariah won their division. Photos courtesy www.picsofyou.com

Barrel Racing in EasyCare Boots!

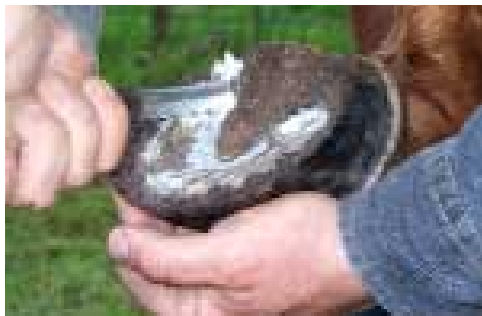


C.J. Holdren and her horse "Chuck" at a Barrel Racers of Texas (BRAT) race held in Alvarado, TX, on April 22, 2007. Johnny Holder pulled Chuck's shoes and fitted him in EasyCare Epics about a month before this race. C.J. did her part by continuing to ride and train and gain confidence in his new boots. C.J. placed 5th in the 3rd division, with a time of 16.514 seconds.

by Johnny Holder

Barrel racer C.J. Holdren became interested in natural hoof care during a barrel race in Glenrose, Texas, early this year, where I met her by chance. I had been discussing natural hoof care with farrier Coty Cooper and C.J.'s friend, Mike Newkirk. Mike was surprised that Coty agreed with many of the principles of natural hoof care, and said "C.J. needs to hear this." We were introduced, and I explained some of the benefits of barefoot.

When C.J. and Mike went home, Mike enrolled in a Pete Ramey clinic and began learning the natural trim technique. C.J. began her own studies of natural hoof care and decided to take the plunge. On March 30th, I pulled the shoes off C.J.'s horse "Chuck" and gave him a set-up trim. Chuck is a fourteen year old Thoroughbred that C.J. has owned and barrel raced for several years. Chuck was a little tender on his new bare feet, so I fitted him in EasyCare Epics. The EasyCare boots allowed C. J. to continue to ride, train and gain



Chuck's first barefoot trim.

confidence in Chuck and his ability to handle himself without shoes.

On April 22nd in Alvarado, Texas, Chuck was wearing his Epics when he carried C.J. to a money-winning finish in the 3rd division of a B.R.A.T. (Barrel Racers of Texas) race. Hopefully, this accomplishment will inspire others to kick their steel shoes and get into the healthy alternative of natural hoof care.

After long years of being shod, Chuck's feet have some issues. C.J. understands that it will take time to heal Chuck's feet and is committed to transitioning Chuck to truly healthy, natural feet. On July 2nd, I gave Chuck a slightly more aggressive trim, in hopes of speeding up this transition process. He did become just a bit tender again, but this wasn't a problem for Chuck, because C.J. has no problem riding him in EasyCare boots.



Close-up of Chuck's Epic boots after his run.

On July 22nd, C.J. raced Chuck wearing Old Mac's Boots at the "Intervet Race For The Truck" in Guthrie, Oklahoma. Chuck again made a successful run that placed him in the third division, however it wasn't a money-winning placement.

Congratulations to C.J. Holdren for being one of the pioneers in using boots to race in, while her horse is transitioning to healthy bare feet. I am proud to have been a part of these history-making events that will eventually lead to longer, healthier, and sounder lives for performance horses, as more and more people realize that they don't have to sacrifice health for performance.

About the author: Johnny Holder and his wife Liz live in Weatherford, Texas, where they raise and train barrel racing horses. They race all

All photos courtesy Johnny Holder



C.J. and her friend Michael Newkirk celebrate her winning run.

their horses barefoot. Johnny learned his trimming through much self-study and practice on their horses. Johnny says "I chose the wild horse hoof as my model soon after I first started trimming and before I had heard of Pete Ramey; however, when I did discover Pete, his techniques brought my trimming to a new level." Johnny has attended Pete Ramey's clinic, Dr. Bowker's seminar, EasyCare's hoof booting clinic, James and Yvonne Welz hoof trimming clinic and is an EasyCare dealer. Johnny can be reached at (817) 597-0129.



Above: CJ and Chuck after their run in Guthrie Oklahoma, July 22, where Chuck raced in Old Mac's Boots (close-up below).



Reining Champions: From Navicular to Bare Front

by *Tiffany Drabek*

Reining horses must be shod on the rear hooves with sliding plates in order to achieve the exaggerated sliding stops, so they aren't technically barefoot all around. However, several natural-trimmed horses competed at a popular reining show recently, the 2007 National Reining Breeders Classic in Katy, Texas. In particular, a couple of these horses were past navicular cases!



All photos courtesy Angela Guy (www.horsephotoguy.com)

Ribs was navicular and "hopelessly lame" at age 4, but with natural hoof care, he is still going strong in the show ring at age 7!

Ribs

Ribs (Mister Millenium) went lame and was shod by "the best of the best" farriers and vets at Texas A&M and, while there, had nearly \$8000 spent on him, trying to help him. His x-rays showed holes in the navicular bone. They truly tried everything traditional: injections, pads, corrective shoes, even shock therapy, and finally said he just had "bad genetics" and was hopeless. They told his owner to either have his nerves cut and put him out to pasture, or put him down.

Having nothing else to lose, the owner finally decided to give my husband, barefoot professional Eddie Drabek, a try trimming. Ribs was back



Ribs in a slide. Reining horses need "sliding plates"—special rear shoes that help create the desirable long slides. It is hopeful that a hoof boot may soon replace these shoes.

in training within a few months and back in the show ring by 6 months! That was nearly 3 years ago—he is 7 years old now, and obviously, since these photos are just a couple months old, he's still going strong!

Coffee

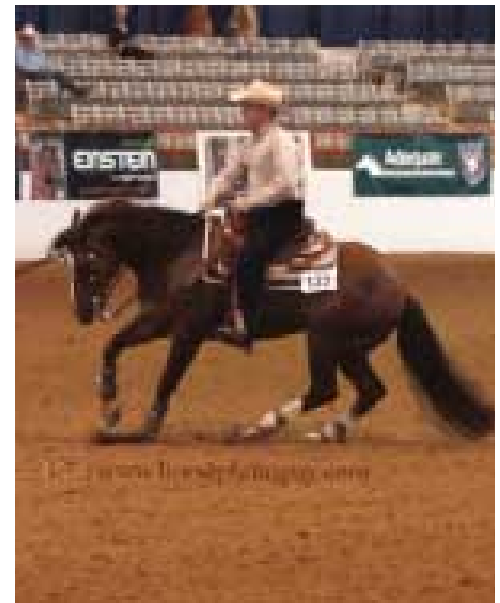
Coffee (Custom Coffee) had started showing signs of navicular, so with the success of Ribs, they decided to go barefoot with him, as well, and several other horses in their training barn...and more and more followed!

All the Reining trainers that Eddie trims for keep their horses barefoot all the time on the fronts, and as much as possible on the rears. They are now getting healthy front hooves and more healthy, balanced rear hooves, despite the shoes, and as much barefoot time as possible in-between competitions, which is far more than what they were getting before. The health of the hooves and horses and their performance all show great improvements! The trainers have also made many changes in their horsekeeping practices, like diet changes, more natural alternatives to medications/supplements, and greatly increasing turnout time.

This is the only equestrian sport we've found where, unfortunately, the rear shoes are necessary. Without them, the horses will rub/burn their heel bulbs and back of their hooves in the spins and slides, plus they won't be able to achieve the same distance of slide, as those with sliders. While I may not agree with having to use "adaptive equipment" in order to perform a task, I'm glad a natural trimmer can at least do their part to make these reining horses as comfortable as possible, as much as possible. With the development of the Marquis Sliding Boot, Eddie hopes to greatly decrease, and hopefully



Coffee, like Ribs, was a past navicular horse. Here he is competing barefoot in front at the 2007 National Reining Breeders Classic in Katy, Texas.



Reining trainers now have the option of keeping their horses barefoot in front, and shoeing the hinds only part time, mainly for shows. This greatly increases the health of the hooves and the horses!

one day eliminate, the amount of time the rear hooves have to be shod at all. 🙌

About the author: *Tiffany Drabek resides in Texas with her husband Eddie (a natural trimmer) and their 2 children. They are "owned" by 7 horses. Tiffany grew up on a racehorse training/breeding farm, which gave her a lifelong love of horses that, thankfully, rubbed off on her husband...and his hoof obsession rubbed off on her! She was a Therapeutic Riding Instructor for nearly 9 years, but, for now, is a stay-at-home mom. She and Eddie can be reached at drabektx@hotmail.com*

My Bare Hoof Trimming Apprenticeship

by Rhiannon Fugatt

It's been over a year now since that first trimming lesson. The experience of learning and working with barefoot professional Phil Morarre provided me with a lot more than just the basic knowledge of how to trim an already healthy hoof—Phil and I developed a wonderful friendship, as well. We worked on hooves with just about every problem and saw the healing results of what correct bare hoof trimming has to offer. Phil was extensively informative about how to deal with many hoof lameness issues, and he helped me to see each horse's hoof as a very unique experience. I feel that learning and being out in the field offered more than I expected, and exposed me to some lessons that one needs to experience first-hand to learn.



Rhiannon with her daughter Fionna, and Snickers, the Icelandic pony that started it all.

For me, becoming a natural bare hoof trimmer began a year ago when my family got our Icelandic pony, Snickers. He came from a rescue with a sprained fetlock joint. The rescue had stalled him for four months, he had shoes on, and was pretty much living on a donation diet. I'd already been doing pasture trims on all our horses for two years prior to Snickers coming into our lives, so I pulled his shoes immediately.

He had second stage laminitis and refused to walk on anything except very soft dirt; even then, he moved slowly, as if in pain. Here is a list of his symptoms: white line separation at the toe that was one inch spread apart, swollen RF digital flexor tendon sheath, both heels pinched and contracted at least one quarter of an inch. His feet looked like elf shoes and were extremely flared out at the toes. I started trimming him, but I didn't see his foot issues getting any better with just a pasture trim.

I have been a holistic therapist working with people for over seventeen years, and I knew there

had to be a different way to go about getting his feet back to a healthy shape. About this same time, a good friend of mine told me about Phil Morarre, so I called him. While we were on the phone I went out to Snickers and cleaned his feet, while Phil asked questions and gave advice about what and where to trim. He was very thorough about what was going on in the feet. We also discussed Snicker's diet and living conditions—I needed to change his diet to a grass hay/no grain diet, as we've found him to be insulin-resistant.

That same day, with this new information about how to deal with his hooves, I trimmed Snickers again. That's when I decided to seek more training. I was totally intrigued and felt ready to embark on a new career adventure. I wanted something new, but similar—something holistic. Something that emphasized the connected whole self of the horse, not just perceiving the horse as separate parts that are unrelated. Phil told me if I was good with the tools and caught on quickly, I could do an apprenticeship with him, and learn the profession.

Phil requested that I attend one of his clinics or take a private lesson before beginning my apprenticeship. I chose the lesson, and took Snickers and my horse Fearn out to Phil's house to spend the day trimming them, and learning as much as possible. Fearn had started a slight limp just a day before. After we finished trimming her, we watched the bones of p1, p2, and p3 in her back left leg realign themselves into their correct position, and the limp was gone! Snickers also responded positively within a week after his first trim.

Desensitizing the horses to the angle grinder happened more quickly than I previously thought it would. I learned that you should never approach a new horse with the angle grinder like it's "some big deal" or something to be afraid of. You should always remain calm and relaxed, like it's just normal and nothing to be afraid of, and use approach and retreat methods until the horse is relaxed around the noise. Then, hold the leg and hoof while rubbing the angle grinder disk on the hoof and repeatedly firing it off for short periods of time, until the horse is accepting of it.

Using the angle grinder came quite easily, as I already had experience using smaller power tools (dremels, drills, carving tools, etc.) while doing



Rhiannon trimming Snickers, while daughter Fionna watches on.

wood carvings as a hobby. I have seen some people who only trim their own horses take some time getting used to the grinder, so it might not be easy for everyone. It is definitely much easier than using a rasp and nippers. Getting balance correct wasn't too difficult, as I also have a good eye for dimension and balance, having spent much of my life involved in various artistic pursuits. I found that trimming the right side of the horse with my left hand proved a little more difficult, as I hadn't built up the muscles in my left arm for that yet. But, as time went by and I continued trimming regularly, things got better.

After my first day of training, I did as much research as I could, via the internet and books, and began going with Phil to learn, observe, and, eventually, assist and do some of the trimming. I also joined the naturalthorsetrim and abrasivetrim e-mail lists, which I found very help-

(cont. on page 11)



Rhiannon's previous experience in woodworking aided her greatly in her trimming application.

Barefoot Hooves

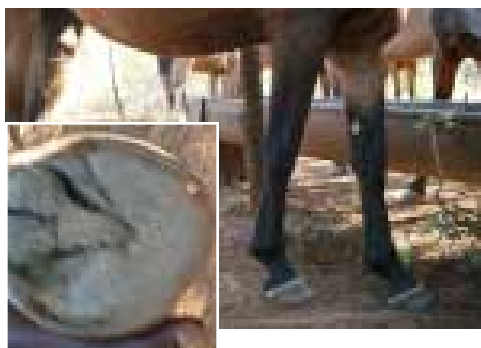
Wild Horse Hooves

by Dr. Hiltrud Strasser, translation by Sabine Kells

In the course of their evolution and during their interaction with humans, horses have become adapted to many climates and many different types of terrain, though hard and dry ground is probably the closest to their original habitat.

In North America, most of the terrain on which wild living horses are found seems to be dry and rocky. Accordingly, many people look at the hoof form found among these horses and think, "The hooves of our domestic horses should be as similar to these wild horse hooves as possible; so, as barefoot trimmers, we should reproduce the hoof form of the wild mustangs." And the hooves of these mustangs are similar to those of the Lusitanos in Spain, for example, since the terrain is similar there.

I would like to point out that horses' hooves become adapted to various terrain conditions via various hoof forms. As such, when trimming domestic horses, it is not enough to consider the form of a wild horse's hoof—one must also take into consideration the terrain the domestic horse lives on.



Horses living on dry, sandy terrain.

Photos courtesy Dr. Hiltrud Strasser



Above & below: a wild horse hoof capsule found in New Zealand. This horse lived on sandy terrain.



Photo courtesy Dr. Hiltrud Strasser

For trimming, it is not so important that the hoof looks pretty from the outside, but that the hoof can accomplish its functions properly, and this is only possible when its form is in harmony with the terrain.

Furthermore, it is important that hoof care assures that the coffin bone is ground-parallel. Only then can the hoof capsule be loaded evenly, with no part of the coffin bone suspension overstressed, and the hoof capsule will

not become deformed over time.

The accompanying photos of wild horses in areas with sandy and soft terrain clarify how variable hoof form can be. This makes hoof care more difficult, since we must be able to consider the deviations from the norm in connection with the origin of the horse, or the terrain in which it lives.

About the author: With her doctorate in veterinary medicine, Dr. Strasser has researched the horse's hoof for over two decades. She has studied the hooves of wild horses in Syria, South Africa (in areas of completely different terrains, with completely different hoof forms), New Zealand, Australia, England, Northern Germany and Mongolia; and she has studied the hooves of self-trimming horses in Scandinavia, Turkey, Namibia and Germany. She finds it of interest to note that the old farrier textbooks in Europe still show uncontracted hooves, the way they would be formed by natural wear in Europe.

Photo courtesy Dr. Hiltrud Strasser



Photos courtesy Dr. Hiltrud Strasser



South African wild horse hooves living on soft, sandy terrain.

Apprenticeship, cont.

(cont. from page 10)

ful. When I first began learning from other horses Phil works on, I observed and asked questions about anything I didn't quite yet understand. I also started working on my friend's horses, and more often on my own horses, having amazing results. I worked on Snickers once a week for four months after that. Being able to work with such a variety of horses with different behaviors helped me to learn some new techniques to help get the trim done.

During my studies, I continued to encounter results that confirmed how the return of circulation to an unhealthy hoof hastened the healing of lameness. It only took four months for Snickers to heal and be perfectly comfortable

walking on gravel again. I saw how the blowing out of an abscess during healing can release pressure and remove necrotic materials from the hoof. I saw how scooping the quarters got rid of the unnatural arching in the hairline. I witnessed how the time that healing takes in different horses is affected by different prior conditions (shoes, how long shod, poor trimming, neglect, etc.).

I kept thinking of an old friend of mine, an acupuncturist, who once told me about how our own feet pump blood in the arches, and how high heels and arch supports are bad for you and stop circulation. This brought to my mind the concept of the "Second Heart," which is how I decided on a name for my new business, "Second Heart Hoof Care." I am proud to say that I am now a Certified

Softouch Natural Horse Care Practitioner, and I look forward to doing more for our bare hoofed equine family.

About the author: Rhiannon Fugatt lives with her family and four horses near Chico, California. She is a certified barehoof trimmer through Soft Touch Natural Horse Care, as taught by Phil Morarre. She has also been a massage, bio-energetic, and acupressure/Shiatsu therapist for eighteen years, as well as an attuned Reiki Master with much work in Chinese Medicine. She has spent most of her life doing various forms of art, is licensed in permanent cosmetics, and has a good eye for balance. She has spent countless hours working with wood, carving burl wood, oak bowls, etc.

Barefoot Trimming

Trimming Insights

by James Welz

My trimming decisions are based on a combination of my past education, trial and error throughout many years, and some theories I have developed along the way. It is not enough for me to see a technique work—I need to know how and why it works.

The theories that form the basis for my trimming decisions were featured in my article in THH 27, “A Different View of Hoof Mechanism.” This article provided a “cliff notes” summary of these theories, which I hope to expand upon further in future articles. For now, I will examine their practical application.

Like many, I often trim using my instincts. When you are trimming in the field, it usually isn't necessary to explain your decisions, or to describe your course of action. So while I gave much thought to the cause and effect of trimming techniques, I gave little thought to the continuity of exactly what I did—how it related to steps that could be communicated to others. It was not until I began giving clinics, that a pattern began to emerge. This article will describe the way I currently trim, and will hopefully provide helpful information for owners and professionals from all backgrounds.

Target the problem area

The first thing I do with a foot is assess what the biggest problem area is, and work from there. I locate areas of deviation from normal, and consider those to be my target areas to correct. The steps below are provided in an ordinary and logical sequence, but I will often work out of sequence when addressing problems. Note: each separate hoof is trimmed individually and uniquely. One of the biggest errors people can make is to attempt to trim hooves to “match.” Each hoof will have its own different problem areas to work on.

1) Heels

The typical first step in my trimming is to establish the desired heel height. In most cases, and certainly with a healthy hoof, heels are trimmed to just above the level of the live sole. Live sole, or new sole, is usually quite easy to distinguish from the flaky old sole. I am quite insistent about keeping the heels to a comfortable height: it does no good to over-shorten the heels and cause the horse to stand on its toes.

2) Wall

From the solar surface, I even out the wall as needed. This includes removing protruding walls (wall overstand). Some horses that don't work on hard ground can tolerate a slight wall overstand, while others cannot—I judge this by the stress lines in the hoof wall, and the coronary band connection.

3) Bars

I am very picky about trimming bars. When trimming bar, ONLY the bar should be touched. One of the biggest mistakes that people make is to trim sole at the same time as they trim bar. Another mistake they make is to not touch the bars at all, with the idea that the bars will magically take care of themselves. If the walls need trimming, the bars probably need trimming, too. Bars are an extension of the wall—neither the walls nor the bars should bear too much weight. The same signs of peripheral loading that I can now readily recognize in weight-bearing hoof walls, are also becoming apparent in weight-bearing bars. The bar has a distinct function, which I believe is to limit excessive hoof mechanism, and in order to perform their function, they must be shaped properly.

Bars should taper with the concavity of the hoof, and should bear weight only in the very rear portion. I trim the bars separately, fairly straight, and flat on top. I have had the best results in hoof health when the bars are trimmed to end at the mid-point of the frog. This corresponds with the location where the bar laminae end.

The rear of the bar and heel form a weight-bearing platform of support, or “heel purchase” area. I decided to encourage this after I

observed that most wild horse hooves demonstrated this characteristic.

4) Sole

I want soles to be as thick as they possibly can be. Horses with excess built-up sole will usually present flaky growth that can be “trimmed” with a hoofpick. In most cases, the only sole that is trimmed is a blending in of the area of the trimmed bar. However, when I trim this area, I trim it in a very slightly convex shape, rather than concave. As outlined in my previous article, this matches the actual shape of the underside of the coffin bone, which is really a complex S-curve. The overall concavity of the hoof is evident in the toe area just in front of the apex, which is an area that is not routinely trimmed. I also want soles to be uniform in thickness and not have lumps or unevenness that will cause problems on hard ground.

5) Frog

I usually do not trim the frogs very much, as I want them to be as full as possible. I do, however, trim out the frog's central sulcus, to make sure there is no area for infection.

6) Mustang Roll

My reason for applying the mustang roll is to

All photos copyright The Horse's Hoof



A first time trim (by me) on a 2 yo Quarter horse gelding. The before and afters, all front left, look more dramatic because of the initial excess hoof, but aside from the wall stress and bruising of the quarters from the overloaded walls, these are pretty healthy feet. Notice the relieved quarters in the last photo (scooping)—this is a natural trimming result, which also corresponds with the pushed up hairline at the quarters. With consistent trimming, this will smooth out.



All photos copyright The Horse's Hoof

Measurements: I don't use any measurements when I trim. While originally intended to be useful teaching aids, measurements often cause problems.

Tools: I frequently use power tools to trim, but they are inconsequential to the way I trim. I consider them tools, nothing more and nothing less. I perform the same trim with hand tools or power tools.

It is easy to write down a list of trimming steps—deceptively easy! What is so difficult is conveying the decision process involved—what to remove, when and why, as well as what **not** to remove. It really only takes a few days to learn how to trim a hoof—then it usually takes a few years to learn how to make the complex decisions necessary to trim well. And then, you better be prepared to keep learning, because that never ends.

Another first-time trim on a fairly healthy hoof (left front), which looks less dramatic because less hoof is removed. But this is no less important! Just like the first example, it is consistency in correct trimming over time which will increase the health and improve the form of these hooves.

relieve areas of stress that show up in the coronary connection, and reduce peripheral loading. I have found that the mustang roll, correctly applied over time, will create a thicker hoof wall, greater concavity, and a full, robust, healthy coronary connection.

The first step of the mustang roll is to address the toe. If the toe is too long, I shorten the toe from

the front (never from underneath, as that would remove toe sole). To start, I apply a 90 degree straight cut to back the toe up until I reach the desired location. Then this cut is rounded off evenly, and from there, the top and bottom are beveled a couple of times until the roll is smooth and rounded (beveling the bevel). I roll the entire outer wall, **toe to heel**. When the mustang roll is applied to the entire foot, a natural scooping of the quarters will appear, without any need to trim for that specifically. It is already in the hoof!

The mustang roll effects are so powerful that trimmers can often achieve fairly good results simply by applying a mustang roll combined with short heels and short toes. This kind of trim is often generically termed a mustang or wild-horse-style trim. However, I believe that trimmers will find even greater success by trimming the bars very carefully and precisely as needed, encouraging a heel purchase area, and shaping the sole out from the bars in a very slightly convex shape. In my experience, these elements increase soundness and hoof health.

Notes

Terrain considerations: I've recently traveled around much of the central and western parts of the U.S. and consider the various terrain to be well-suited to trimming to a mustang model. In wet parts of the Northeast and Southeast, as well as other countries, things may be a little different. Nonetheless, I believe it is paramount to minimize the peripheral load on the hoof wall. With hard ground, this means a bigger mustang roll. On softer ground, watch for stress lines in the hoof (sure signs of peripheral loading) and relieve that wall.

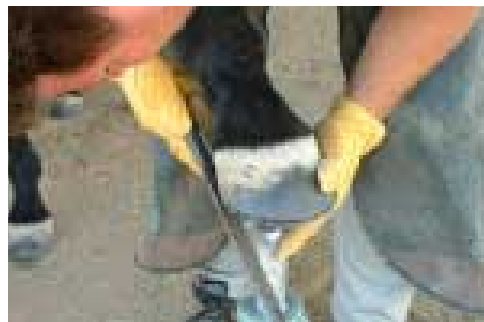


Above: This hoof belongs to a 5 yo gelding that I have trimmed monthly from birth. His feet are so sound, he can be easily ridden over rocks without any conditioning for it. Notice the wide heel bulb—there is no dip at all. This is a very healthy hoof. The “heel purchase” area is clearly visible in a hoof like this.

About the author: James Welz graduated in 2001 from North America's first available year-long barefoot hoofcare professional course (ESHOP/Dr. Hiltrud Strasser). Since then, he has trimmed for a client base of 200 horses per month. These horses (the best teachers) continued his education, which was also greatly influenced by wild horse hooves and the work of Jaime Jackson and Dr. Robert Bowker.



Above: this is the straight back cut I do first, to shorten overgrown toes. If you try to shorten AND round at the same time, you are more likely to make mistakes. Below: this hoof did not have overgrown toes, so it is simply rounded. Here I am, “beveling the bevel.”



AANHCP Clinics: A Resounding Achievement

From the American Association of Natural Hoof Care Practitioners

A Resounding Achievement for the AANHCP Training & Certification Program

Nearly 100 students and certified hoof care practitioners came together in Warrenton, Missouri, from April 20-25, 2007 for the first-time event that came to be known as the “Cluster Clinic”—four accredited orientation clinics, plus a Natural Trim Workshop. Participants came from far and wide within the United States, Australia, Canada, Denmark, Scotland and Germany.

On Friday, Jaime Jackson, president and founder of the AANHCP, started things off with a terrific **Introduction to Natural Trimming and the Wild Horse Model Clinic**. Highlights of the day included tales of fascinating events and pictures from Jaime’s historic expedition into wild horse country.

Participants also handled and inspected wild horse hooves, true treasures from Jaime’s early research. They also watched a BLM video of the AANHCP “model,” wild horses in their natural haunts of the open rangelands of western United States. Nick Hill (CP-UK) also gave an enlightening, entertaining firsthand account of the benefits of **Paddock Paradise**, Jaime’s natural boarding paradigm that is sweeping the horse world.

But for many, the day culminated with trimming. First, participants watched Jaime, an authentic master trimmer and the progenitor of the natural hoof care movement, trim a laminitic hoof. Then, after Ann Corso (CP-KY) gave a brief overview of the Official AANHCP Trimming Guidelines, the participants broke out into small groups to see the guidelines put into action by some of the best hoof care practitioners in the world, including Nick Hill (CP-Scotland), Neal Valk DVM, DACVS (CP-TN), John Graves (CP-CO), Ann Corso (CP-KY), Scott McConaughy (CP-WI) and Kerry Kirkland (CP-MO). It was quite a first day.

Saturday, Day 2: Richard Drewry, vice-president and co-founder of the AANHCP, jump started the day with his newly-revised, highly informative **Horse Boot Clinic**. Richard described why successful booting is so integral to the ultimate success of the natural hoof care movement, the inherent difficulties associated with booting, the advantages and disadvantages of different boot models, and methods for fitting and modifying boots for optimal comfort and protection for horses trimmed to the wild horse model. There were many “Aha!” moments for participants who gained insights that often come only after lengthy trial-and-error.

Saturday afternoon, Neal Valk, DVM, DACVS talked about **veterinarian/hoof care provider**



Jaime Jackson working with his students in his “Introduction to Natural Trimming and the Wild Horse Model Clinic.”

relations and the impact they have on equine hoof care. Topics included veterinary background and training, modern veterinary diagnostics and therapy, and the benefits of an amicable relationship between the veterinarian and hoof care provider. Neal also talked about the importance and benefits of incorporating natural hoof/horse care in the treatment of common equine maladies, and the shortfalls of current veterinary therapy. Several specific examples of common equine lameness issues were also discussed. What a special opportunity this was for clinic participants to listen to a veterinarian that successfully completed the AANHCP hoof care certification program from beginning to end. And participants took advantage, keeping Dr. Valk front and center with question after question at the end of the lecture.



Nick Hill, CP-Scotland, discussing the form and function of a wild hoof with clinic participants.

Saturday evening: Richard Drewry cooked and served up a bunch of Arkansas pork shoulders, potato salad, coleslaw and cake to clinic participants and their guests. It was a great time for people to catch up with old friends and to make new ones. More that 100 people attended. Very cool!

Sunday & Monday morning: Bruce Nock, Ph.D. added an air of cutting edge science to the event in his **Lifeway and the Natural Hoof Clinic**. Bruce kicked off the clinic by explaining that many factors contribute to determining hoof integrity and that hoof health can’t be carved into a foot but must develop from within. Stress is one key

factor in determining horse/hoof health. Participants were led step-by-step from the physiology and biochemistry of stress to the risk of pathological conditions like laminitis. The role of obesity, insulin resistance, reduced glucose availability, atherosclerosis, vasoconstriction, endothelial damage, bone loss and sub-clinical inflammation were all described.

Great stuff, and it was all presented in understandable terms. Quite a feat! The process of joint closure, the biomechanics of movement and riding, and the meaning of the term “natural” were also discussed in relation to hoof care. The importance of saddle fitting to hoof care was also covered. The clinic ended on Monday morning with a session on assessing movement in domesticated and wild horses. All-in-all, the clinic was a unique blend of in-depth information about how a horse’s lifeway can impact hoof health and the success or failure of even the best-trained hoof care professional.

The five-day event culminated in the new **Natural Trim Workshop (NTW)**, an opportunity for participants to dive in and try their hand at trimming cadaver hooves. For some new students, the NTW was their first opportunity to trim a hoof; for others it was a doorway to training with live horses. For certified practitioners and advanced students, it was a chance to show off their stuff, maybe pickup a pointer or two, and hone their trimming skills.

Ann Corso, Assistant Director of AANHCP Operations, started things off with an overview of the **Official AANHCP Trimming Guidelines**. Then, participants broke out into small groups with a NTW clinician: Ann Corso (CP-KY), John Graves (CP-CO), Nick Hill (CP-UK), Steve Johnson (CP-TN), Kerry Kirkland (CP-MO), Monica Meer (CP-WI) or Mike Stelske (CP-WI). Each NTW clinician demonstrated and described the natural trim to his/her group, and then participants were turned loose to practice. All the while, the NTW clinician was there to answer questions and provide expert assistance if and when needed. Some 350 cadaver hooves were trimmed on Tuesday, the final day of the event. All of the CPs who attended the NTW for continuing education and many intermediate and advanced students passed the “three hoof challenge” to become Workshop Qualified. It was a terrific success with Jaime, assisted by Richard Drewry, John Graves and Nick Hill, personally evaluating each and every hoof in detail without knowledge of who trimmed it.

All-in-all, the Cluster Clinic was a great event for teachers and students alike, enjoyable as well as educational. Misinformation and misconceptions were dispelled, and students and CPs headed

(cont. on page 15)

UK Farrier's Conference on Barefoot

by Gill Nash

Worshipful Company of Farriers' Conference in the U.K., April 26th, 2007

A conference day was arranged by the Worshipful Company of Farriers in the U.K., in response to the growing interest in barefoot that some of its members (registered farriers) are reporting. The speakers included two vets and three farriers, as well as two field instructors (Sarah Braithewaite and Nicola Barker) from the UKNHCP—UK Natural Hoofcare Practitioners.

About 250 people attended the conference. While the majority of the audience had a genuine interest in barefoot and was there to learn, there was clearly a small number of dissenters who were there specifically to challenge barefoot.

The accent on the conference was "Trimming for Soundness," with the inference that some working horses could manage very well without shoes, as long as certain criteria was met. The speakers, whether strictly pro-barefoot or not, were well aware that this subject is still controversial in the U.K. and focused their lectures on many aspects of hoof health, including lipid chemistry, bone remodeling, tubule density and different rates of moisture absorption in the hoof wall, and how these influence soundness.

The pro-barefoot farriers spoke, amongst other things, of the importance of correct balance to

achieve a healthy foot with strong lateral cartilages and digital cushion. Speakers from the UKNHCP spoke about achieving performance barefoot and conditioning the foot through appropriate paddock management.

Simon Earle, the racehorse trainer in the U.K. who prefers to race horses barefoot, spoke of some of the difficulties he has encountered in finding the right combination of farriery and veterinary care for his barefoot racers. While some horse owners place their horses in training with Simon specifically because they want them to run barefoot, others find the transition period from shoes to barefoot too long and expensive, and decide to run their horses shod. The fact that many thoroughbreds are shod from the age of two makes transition to barefoot particularly difficult.

Objections were raised by some members of the audience who felt it had been suggested that a truly healthy, functional hoof was, indeed, an unshod one. Objections were also raised to the letters that barefoot trimmers put after names, e.g. EP, EHP, UKNHCP, etc. Some farriers felt that as they train for four years, they had to be more knowledgeable than a barefoot trimmer, whose training was generally only between 1-2 years. They criticized the fact that there is no governing or disciplining body in the U.K. covering all barefoot trimmers. The statement was also made that shoeing had been going on for centuries, and therefore couldn't be wrong.

The law in the U.K. dictates that only a farrier can prepare a foot for a shoe, but some at the conference wanted to have it changed so that trimming a foot and then fitting a hoof boot is tantamount to fitting a shoe, and is therefore an offense. I had a look at the law as stated on the Farriers Registration Councils' website.

Farriery is defined in the ACT as: "any work in connection with the preparation or treatment of the foot of the horse for the immediate reception of a shoe thereon, the fitting by nailing or otherwise of a shoe to the foot or the finishing off of such work to the foot."

This means that "barefoot trimming" i.e. trimming that is not in preparation for the application of a shoe does not fall within the definition.

The key words here are probably "immediate" and "shoe." The dictionary defines a shoe as a metal plate attached to the underside of the foot and a boot as a covering for the foot. But even if a shoe and a boot were legally defined as the same thing (which they are not), provided the boot was not fitted immediately after the trim, the law would not be broken.

Although the majority of working horses in the U.K. are still shod, the number of horses doing it all barefoot has increased tremendously during the last seven years. The conference was not as pro-barefoot as we enthusiasts would have liked, but I think it is a major triumph that it happened at all. 🌐

AANHCP Clinics, Cont.

(cont. from page 14)

home with a clear, deep understanding of the theory behind the authentic Natural Trim.

Below is a sample of what participants wrote after the cluster clinic:

"Danny [Pryor, Houston Police Mounted Unit, AANHCP Practitioner in Training] and I would like to thank you for a very pleasant experience—and thank all of the other instructors and clinicians as well. What an amazing collection of people from around the globe, all interested in improving the lives of horses. I am looking forward to the new and improved program you have in the works, and look forward to attending that one and more in the future. This organization is one we look forward to being an active part of as we work our way through the certification process and beyond. Anything myself or Danny and the Houston Police Mounted unit can do to help, let us know." Scott Berry, Houston Police Mounted Unit, AANHCP Practitioner in Training.

"Just wanted to thank you for the great workshop. I was very impressed with you as our instructor. You were very good at putting us at ease and



Photo courtesy Jaime Jackson

Hands-on trimming in the new "Natural Trim Workshop."

being sure we understood the guidelines... It was one of the best experiences I have had in the program, and I am on step 9. Just wanted to share my appreciation." Kathy Beagle, Practitioner in Training.

"The clinics were great." Monica Meer, AANHCP Certified Practitioner.

"All of the clinics were wonderful." Debra Edwards, AANHCP Practitioner in Training.

"I am sooooo glad I attended the Missouri event. This is just what I needed to fine tune myself." Gudrun Buchhofer, AANHCP Certified Practitioner (Canada).

"Warrenton is a great place and everything was so convenient. Even the weather cooperated!" Marcia Cummings, AANHCP Practitioner in Training.

The next Cluster Clinic is scheduled for September 21-26, 2007, in Warrenton, MO. It will be a great time to jump start a career in hoof care, complete continuing education requirements, or just come and find out what's new and enjoy the camaraderie. 🌐

This article is available on the web, with lots more photos, at the AANHCP website: <http://www.aanhcp.net/AprilClusterClinic.pdf>

For more information about the AANHCP programs, visit aanhcp.net

Details and registration info for the September clinics are located here: <http://aanhcp.net/SeptClusterClinic.pdf>

Barefoot Rehab

Spunky's Story

by Jennifer Vallieres

Spunky was given to me 2 1/2 years ago, when I moved to Tennessee. He, along with 3 other horses, "came with" the farm my family and I had bought. I didn't have much history on him, except that he was in his 20's, had been chronically foundered in all 4 hooves for many years, and had a history of abuse. He was noticeably lame in all 4 hooves, and walked with tremendous stiffness. His coat was in poor condition, and he appeared to have Cushing's disease. Mentally, he was no longer interested in his surroundings, and very depressed from having to constantly deal with pain. Life was no longer worth living for this little guy, or so he thought.

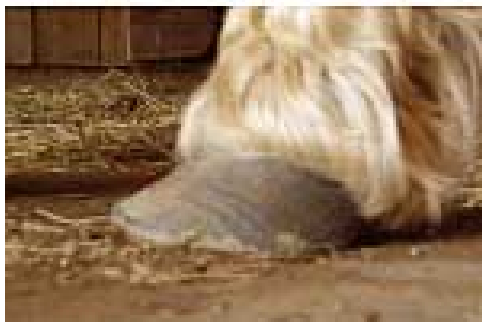
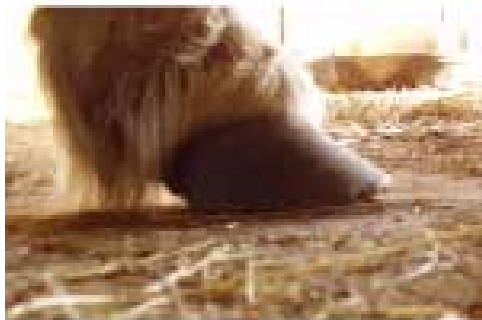
Despite the fact that I had just enrolled in the Strasser Certification course and had very little trimming experience, I immediately began trimming him to the best of my ability, and slowly but surely he began to make progress. As the months went by and I learned more and gained more experience, he began to do even better

and better. A year later, you could catch him trotting and cantering with my other pony, despite the fact that his hooves still needed much work. And talk about a beautiful coat. Wow! This certainly did not look or act anything like the pony that had been given to me just a year prior. He began living up to his name.

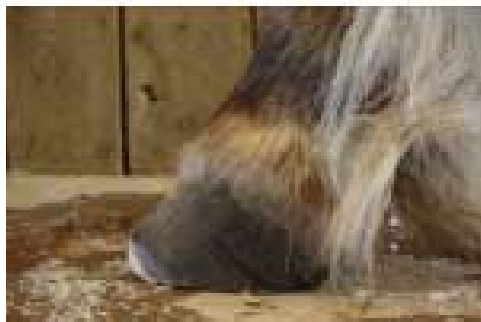
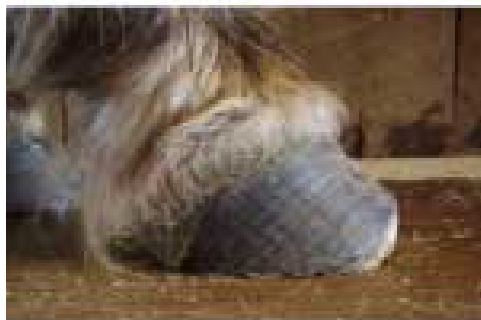
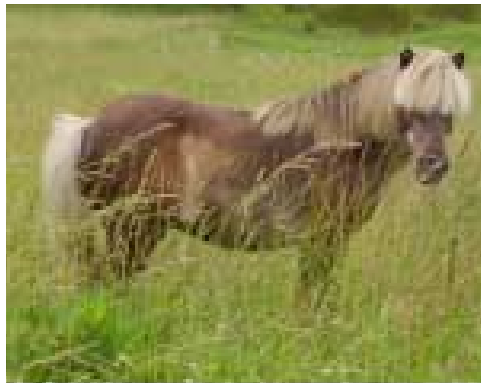
Now, 2 1/2 years later, his coffin bones are completely resuspended in his hinds, and 1/2 way resuspended in his fronts. I have done nothing special for this pony other than to provide him with natural living conditions and apply the Strasser trim on a weekly basis. He still has a little more progress to make on his fronts, but he is certainly getting there. I am very happy to see how much this pony has changed; he has made leaps and bounds, and I thank the Strasser trim for that.

About the author: Jennifer Vallieres is a certified Strasser Hoofcare Professional (SHP), graduated in 2005. She has a ranch in Middle Tennessee, and lives there with her 6 horses, 4 goats, 2 dogs, 2 cats, and 6 chickens.

Spunky Before, Nov. '04



Spunky After, May '07



All photos courtesy Jennifer Vallieres

Don't Miss Event: Ramey/Bowker Clinic in California

Dr. Robert M. Bowker joins Pete Ramey in Valley Center, California—to be Ramey's last Clinic anywhere for at least two years!

World renowned natural hoof care specialist Pete Ramey will be joined by Robert M. Bowker VMD, PhD, Professor of Anatomy, Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine, at his hoof care clinic in Valley Center, CA on November 10th and 11th, 2007. Dr. Bowker will hold his two-day clinic immediately following Ramey's, on November 12th and 13th.

"What an amazing opportunity for horse owners everywhere," said Valley Center resident Joe Camp, one of the three sponsors of the clinics. "These are two of the most knowledgeable specialists in the entire world of hoof care placing their knowledge and experience up close and personal. It's really a coup to get both of these guys in one setting," Camp said.

This clinic will be Pete Ramey's last one for at least two years. Ramey, known the world over for saving horses on a regular basis that others have said should be put down, says "The time spent preparing for and putting on these clinics has severely limited the time I can spend doing research that will benefit horses in my care," Ramey said. "I need some time to do more research, trim horses and write my next book."

At a recent Ramey symposium, an equine vet stood up and announced to the crowd that after four years of vet school, fifteen years as an equine vet, numerous clinics and two trips to the Bluegrass Laminitis Symposium, he had just learned more about hooves from Ramey's clinic than during the rest of his entire career combined. Veterinarians and vet techs can earn 20 hours of Continuing Education credits by attending Ramey's clinics and 16 additional hours of CE credits for attending Dr. Bowker's clinic. (AAVSB RACE Approved).

Ramey brings his Hoof Rehabilitation Clinic to The Oaks Indian Hill Ranch in Valley Center November 10th and 11th, 2007, followed by Dr. Bowker's clinic on November 12th and 13th, both sponsored by Joe & Kathleen Camp, veterinarian Matt Mathews, and natural hoof specialist Marci Lambert, all of Valley Center.

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Nancy Garrett:
nancy@NakedHorsemanship.com
Florence Sperandeo: sperandeo@alltel.net
www.hoofrehab.com
www.NakedHorsemanship.com

Coffin Bone Rotation

by Sheri Fischer

Laminitis, founder, and coffin bone rotation can be intimidating for the horse's owner and very painful for the horse. Once a horse is diagnosed with such hoof conditions, many owners may assume their horse has a death sentence. This does not always have to be the case.

The horse in this article is a 21 year old Arabian gelding. He had been barefoot most of his life. Two years ago, the horse suffered from laminitis. The horse was put on stall rest and anti-inflammatory drugs until the laminitic episode passed. One year after the first laminitic attack, all four of the horse's coffin bones rotated. The horse was still barefoot at this time. He was again put on stall rest, with large doses of anti-inflammatory drugs. Within two weeks, he had stomach ulcers and was put on additional medication.

The farrier was called in and applied standard horse shoes on all four hooves. One month after the first set of shoes were applied, the coffin bones began to rotate again. Orthopedic "corrective" shoes were than prescribed by the horse's veterinarian. Two weeks after administration of the orthopedic shoes, the coffin bones rotated further. The horse's vet was called, and immediate euthanasia was suggested.

The day the horse was supposed to be euthanized, the Fischer Equine Lameness Foundation was contacted. Instead of being killed, the horse was rescued by the foundation. The foundation veterinarian was called in to perform a baseline health assessment, draw blood tests and take fresh x-rays.

Once trimming began, the horse was put on the rubber clinic floor, and the hind hooves were trimmed. X-rays were taken immediately after first trim, to ensure the coffin bones achieved a ground-parallel position. A week later, the right front hoof was trimmed; x-rays were taken immediately after the trim to be sure the leg and hoof bones were in proper alignment. One month later, the left front hoof was trimmed, and x-rays were also taken immediately after the first trim. After the first trim on both fronts, the bone columns were realigned, and the horse was on his way to recovery. The rehabilitation process was facilitated by scans on the Biomeridian machine, which directed the use of homeopathic and dietary supplements.

In just four months of rehabilitative trimming at the Fischer Equine Lameness Foundation, the coffin bones are now ground parallel and the coffin bone rotation is no longer present. The gelding continues to progress and is doing well. 🐾

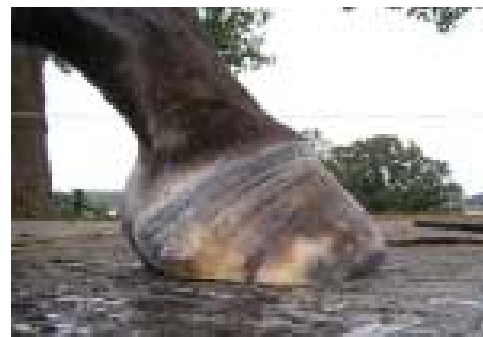
About the author: Sheri Fischer, along with her husband Mark, own and operate the Fischer Equine Lameness Foundation, located near Minneapolis, Minnesota. Visit her website at www.healthehoof.com

All photos courtesy Sheri Fischer

Before



After



Charlie's Story, A Navicular Rehab

by Gill Nash

Charlie is a 10 year old Thoroughbred gelding who used to enjoy regular success in show jumping, eventing and dressage. He was always a willing jumper, but just over two years ago, his owner started to notice a reluctance at larger jumps. At first, this was thought to be a bit of laziness, but, unfortunately in the months that followed, Charlie developed stiffness, further loss of performance, and acute lameness.

The vet was called, x-rays were taken, and he was diagnosed with navicular. Heartbar shoes were recommended by the vet, and with these fitted, Charlie deteriorated further. They were eventually removed, and he was turned out barefoot. During this time, the owner noticed an improvement, but this coincided with a routine visit by the vet, who thought the horse would be further helped by shoeing with wedges. In wedge shoes, Charlie's strides became shorter and more pot-tery, even though he was often on 2 bute a day. In fact, he was worse than ever, and the vet told the owner that the disease was degenerative, and the future looked grim. At this point, there was nothing to lose by trying barefoot.



The intended purpose of wedges (arrows) under the shoe is to support the deep flexor tendon and relieve pressure on the navicular bursa. However, to us barefooters it is common knowledge that they reduce circulation and disrupt the balance between the flexor and extensor tendons. The unnatural angle created by the wedges also causes strain on muscles higher up. How would we feel if we were condemned to walk in high-heeled shoes *all the time*? I've often asked myself this

question: what might it do long term to my back and hips, especially if the shoes were made of rigid metal that stopped my toes spreading slightly when I walked?

So why are shoes with wedges recommended? It is possible that they can afford temporary relief, as the weight is shifted forward onto a less tender spot. But again, I feel you can apply this philosophy to a human situation. If you had a tender spot near the back of your heel and you put a wedge directly under your ankle to relieve pressure on it, you might get some relief at first. But over time, that part below the ankle would also become painful from abnormal loading. If you went back to the shoes that caused your tender heel, you would probably have two sore spots to deal with, rather than one.

Unless the *cause* of navicular is removed, we know there can be no permanent relief from pain or a cure.

In a nutshell, the *cause* is a dysfunctional hoof, either as a result of shoeing or inappropriate hoof maintenance. But why doesn't most of the horse world want to accept this simple explanation? Apart from a human reluctance to accept change, could it be the huge amount of money that is earned by various professionals and the pharmaceutical industry from ignoring the causes and treating navicular in the conventional way?

If a prospective client is unconvinced about barefoot, I try to make them think of the hoof like any other muscle. If its use is restricted, it will get *weaker, smaller and less functional*. Anyone who has had a limb in plaster or spent sometime confined to bed through illness will be familiar with the feeling of weakness caused by an enforced lack of mobility.

I tell them that as the hoof capsule is unable to flex naturally when the foot is shod, the horse's ability to absorb shock through the movement of the toe bones is greatly compromised. In addition to providing shock absorption, it is this movement of the bones that is responsible for good blood circulation within the hoof, which in turn is responsible for good quality hoof horn and healthy internal tissue. It is the inability to absorb shock as the horse moves, as well as inhibited hoof function, which leads to the internal damage associated with navicular. Unable to grow, flex or exercise naturally with a rigid shoe fixed to its base, the hoof becomes smaller and weaker, pinching and cramping internal structures.

The pro-barefoot vets and farriers (who know that getting those hooves back into functional shape can rehabilitate navicular) explain the causes in slightly different ways, each making a valuable contribution to our understanding of it.

While the views of Dr. Strasser, Dr. Bowker, Dr. Teskey, Pete Ramey, K.C. La Pierre, Jamie Jackson and others will be well known to most readers of *The Horse's Hoof*, I came across this explanation from Dr. Brian McLaren (www.photonictherapy.com.au) given on one of his phototonic therapy CD's.

"True Navicular syndrome is a condition of adhesion of the deep flexor tendon to the flexor surface of the navicular bone. This is the result of continued trauma, improper trimming, prolonged shoeing and when the heels have been left too long. Eggbar shoes or shoes that have been nailed on behind the widest point of the foot prevent proper heel action or expansion and contraction and contribute to this condition by producing primary navicular bursitis (inflammation of the navicular bursa). Left alone this heals with a deposition of scar tissue mainly in the impar ligament. The process is then repeated and repeated until the navicular syndrome occurs.

"There are also small ligaments attached laterally to the wings of the coffin bone and inside the surface of the hoof wall. This means that the navicular bone is an active part of the extension and flexion mechanism of the hoof. As changed pressures reduce the blood flow the body tries to compensate by increasing the flow through the nutrient foramina (natural passages through the bone) to feed the bone. These foramina become larger and show up as lollipop lesions on x-rays. Vets are taught that this increased blood flow through the enlarged foramina is the problem, but it is nothing more than the body's response to the problem and is not the cause of pain."

The two photos that follow show Charlie's left and right foresh immediately after shoe removal. On both feet, the heels have been allowed to slope too far forward (arrows) causing the tubules to buckle, leading to stress cracks in the hoof wall. On the right fore, the farrier has also made the mistake of leaving the bars lower than wall, and placed the shoe and wedges over them, causing the horse additional discomfort.



Left fore, immediately after shoe removal.

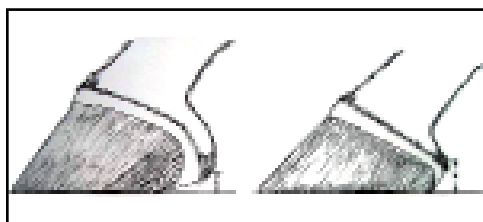
All photos courtesy Gill Nash

Charlie's Story Cont.



Right fore, immediately after shoe removal.

Horn tubules buckled under (left) and normal (right), diagram courtesy of Dr. Strasser:



Right fore, 4 weeks later.

Above photo: right fore, four weeks after shoe removal. A callous has developed on the toe to protect the thin sole. The bars have been trimmed just below the walls, and the position of the heels have been adjusted as far back as possible.



Left fore, 8 months into barefoot trimming.

All photos courtesy Gill Nash



Right fore, 8 months into barefoot trimming.

The two preceding photos show the left and right fores, eight months after barefoot trimming commenced. Notice how the frog and heels have broadened.

Nine months after barefoot trimming commenced, Charlie is now competing and doing everything that he did before he was diagnosed with navicular.

Below are solar views of the left hind one month after shoe removal and nine months later.

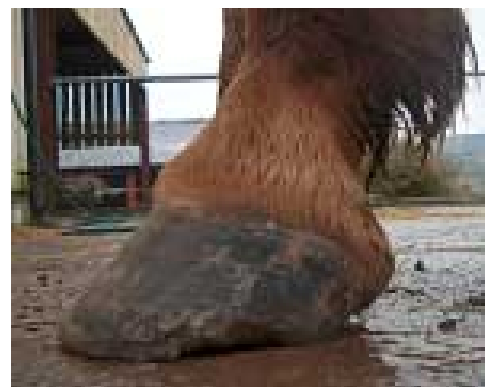


Left hind, one month after shoe removal.

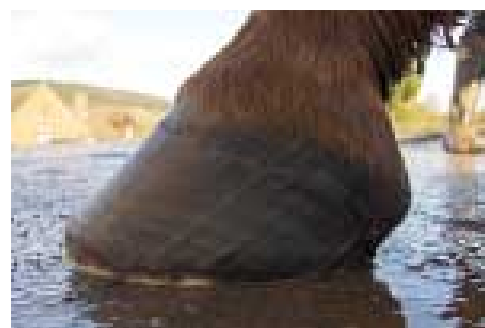


Left hind, nine months after shoe removal.

From the lateral views of the left fore, we can also see how much bigger the hooves have become, now that growth and function have been unhindered by the shoes for nine months.



Left fore, one month after shoe removal.



Left fore, nine months after shoe removal.

The owner says, nobody believes he was ever diagnosed with navicular. The diagnosing vet has also seen Charlie on another issue since his recovery. In spite of the evidence in front of him, he expressed a low opinion of barefoot trimmers.



Charlie is now back competing, doing all the things he did before the navicular diagnosis!

About the author: Gill Nash (age 60) is a Strasser graduate 2004, and takes a keen interest in all barefoot trimming methods. She says barefoot trimming is the most exhausting and the most rewarding job she has ever done. UKNHCP trainee, Wendy Leach, accompanies Gill on many of her rounds and helps to cope with the increasing barefoot clientele. Gill has two Welsh cobs and a small Arab and likes hacking, hunting and 15 mile pleasure rides.

Patrick's Puncture

by Sandy Judy

On November 21, 2006, my friend Lynn rode her warmblood gelding, Patrick, at a foxhound trial in Hoffman, North Carolina, where he came up suddenly lame. Veterinarian diagnosis: strained suspensory ligament. Recommendation: stall rest and wrapping.

Lynn opted not to stall rest and came home. She called me that night, assuming it was indeed a strained ligament, and turned him out in a small paddock with a few other horses. I told her over the phone that the best thing for a strained ligament is good circulation, brought about by good hoof mechanism. I trimmed Patrick the next day.

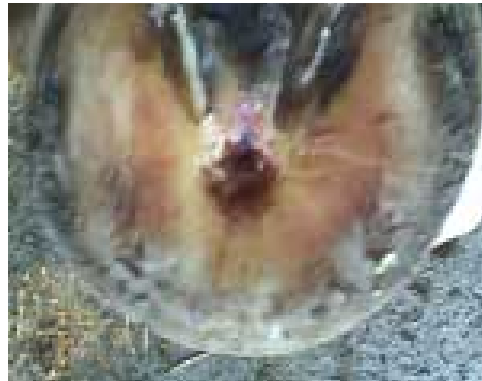
Patrick was profoundly lame and reluctant to put any weight on the foot. Lynn had soaked the foot in water, and said he was feeling somewhat better. As soon as I picked the foot up, the real reason for the lameness was a surprise! My knife revealed a huge wood splinter (3/8 inch in diameter) jammed into the sole, near the tip of the frog. I knew we would need a vet to anesthetize the foot, in order to remove the splinter. The horse would also need a tetanus serum, if vaccinations weren't current. X-rays would be needed to determine the depth.

The vet, new to us, came while I was still there. Lynn and I talked to her about our barefoot horses and discussed our conversion to natural horse-keeping methods. The vet said she was a lameness expert and, in her opinion, some horses "need shoes and wedge pads." After looking at the foot, she decided she must have the horse in her clinic under sterile conditions for surgery and x-rays, but it wouldn't be convenient for her until the next morning. She advised pain-killers and stall rest in a bedded stall, then fitted him with a canvas boot for the night. Lynn felt she had no choice but to comply.

Anyone who has ever had even a small splinter in a foot or finger knows how painful it is. You want it OUT NOW! This horse had already gone 24 hours walking around on this thing. Now he was going to go another 24! Lynn tried in vain to

remove the splinter herself that night, but it was impossible, so she took Patrick to the vet's office the next morning.

The x-ray showed that the splinter went all the way to the coffin bone. The vet wanted the injured hoof to be packed in a salt-based chemical to "draw the infection out." Lynn opted to follow the holistic protocol of soaking in a dilution of apple cider vinegar, trimming for mechanism, and movement, instead. This is what his foot looked like after the vet cut out the splinter:



Patrick's right front after surgery

Do thick soles prevent puncture wounds? Lynn had been leaving the sole thick because she was fox hunting, thinking a thicker sole would offer more protection. The true thickness of the sole was revealed by the vet's excavation. The sole proved to be approximately 1.5 cms thick. Even mustangs with really hard, healthy hooves can sustain catastrophic injuries to their hooves.

Do shoes prevent puncture wounds? My horse that died from a puncture wound ten years ago had shoes on. The shoes did not protect his frog or sole from a puncture wound which led to euthanasia as the final treatment.

Do boots prevent puncture wounds? The prevention for this type of injury might have been boots or pads, or even just avoiding areas that have small trees cut sharply. But it is difficult to know in advance over what type of terrain you might fox hunt! Hoffman territory is sand trails, and generally not a problem for our barefoot horses. Boots are difficult to use in sand, but who knew they would be needed? Since barefoot horses can feel their feet, they will usually avoid putting full weight on a sharp object. Ironically, my own hunt horse, Dewees, also stepped on something while fox-hunting, causing a similar puncture wound injury (more on this in the next issue of THH).

Lynn and I trimmed Patrick and consulted with hoofcare professional Nancy Filbert. We kept up through phone and emails to Nancy, Sabine Kells and Dr. Strasser about the case. I took Patrick for daily walks of 4 miles on the high school's rub-

berized running track near my house. While he was out in the pasture during the over 2 month long healing period, he was kept in soaking boots almost 24/7, changed several times a day.

I trimmed Patrick according to what I learned from the SHP course, along with Nancy's long-distance guidance. I kept the bars very short. I also removed displaced heel horn and set the weight-bearing heel point outside of the bulb. I checked for mechanism, and we were consistent with soaking and walking daily on the rubber track.

A bonus was that Patrick's left front had always been the most contracted. It significantly de-contracted and the sheared heel improved, too. As many may know, when one foot is injured, sometimes the other foot "founders". My plan was to make both front feet as flexible as possible for maximum blood flow, and use this rehab opportunity to our advantage to improve both feet.

Patrick fully recovered and was able to finish out the fox hunting season.

Later I found a research paper, "How to Manage a Penetrative Hoof Wound", written by Italian veterinarian, Dr. Andrea Bertuglia, addressing the XIV European Equine Veterinary Congress in Italy. In it he wrote: "Penetrating injuries of the solar surface are common clinical problems

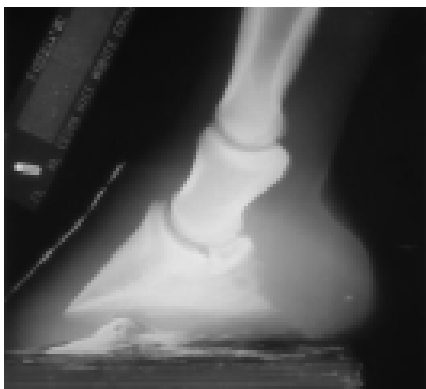
(cont. on page 21)



Patrick's healing puncture on Feb. 15, 2007.



Close up of healed wound on March 26, 2007.



The x-ray showed that the splinter went all the way to the coffin bone.

Newly Discovered Shock Absorber in the Equine Foot

by Pete Ramey

Important note: These are just preliminary observations. They are my interpretation after several conversations about it with Dr. Bowker. The completed research project is coming eventually, but people who went to Bowker's last clinic are buzzing about it, so I thought I'd try to clear it up.

Robert Bowker VMD, PhD has been teaching for many years that the blood flow in the equine foot acts as a hydraulic shock absorber. Most of his focus has been on the back half of the foot, but more recently he's paying more attention to energy-dissipating features in the front half of the foot, as well.

Recent data shows that peripheral loading of the foot reduces hoof perfusion by almost 50%...immediately. This does not necessarily cause tissue death, because the sole's corium is filled with a huge number of micro-vessels—a tremendous amount more than is needed for healthy tissue life. Bowker feels these "extra" blood vessels are for hydraulic energy dissipation, but more recently he's discovered that the entire structure of the sole's corium is a mixture of venous microvasculature surrounded by proteoglycans—an extremely elastic structure (along with a "honeycomb" framework of keratinized sole). This type of structure is known to have "use it or lose it" tendencies. The more

Photos courtesy Pete Ramey



The walls can spread significantly as pressure is applied to P3, and the sole flattens. The thicker corium at the distal border of P3 is compressed, pushing blood to the back of the foot through an energy-dampening network of micro-vessels. Then, when the load is released, the elastic nature of the sole's corium and spring tension in the hoof capsule snaps it all back into place for the next stride. (These pictures are the exact same size, of the same slice, and taken from the exact same range, 2 second time lapse.) Also note that this pressure does not create a separational force on the laminae; they actually compress!!! If the wall was not allowed to expand, the same downward force would stretch the laminae. The thin corium at the center of P3 seems to thicken with weight bearing, as the corium at the outer periphery is compressed.

it is used, the better it develops.

Bowker has noticed that unhealthy or underdeveloped equine feet have a thin solar corium that is fairly uniform all the way across (1-3 mm), but healthy, well-developed feet have a much thicker corium in the outer periphery. This thicker corium may be 3-5 mm thick (or more) in the healthiest hooves.

Aside from a tremendous "Gel Pad" shock absorber, this thicker corium also allows for a great deal of expansion room of the front half of the foot. This is very significant, as many people still think the expansion of the foot only hap-

pens in the back half of the foot, where the foundation for the hoof capsule is cartilage, instead of bone.

Photos above are 10mm thick slices taken 12mm behind the apex of the frog. Notice as I apply hard pressure with my hand, the solar corium flattens, the frog moves to the ground, and the walls spread dramatically. The force required to do this is basically "as hard as I can push." As this is studied more, we'll elaborate, but I thought you'd like to hear about it now.

For more info, please visit Pete & Iuy Ramey's website at www.hoofrehab.com

Patrick's Puncture, Cont.

(cont. from page 20)

encountered in practice and are often a challenge for the veterinarian... The fact that the structures of the distal limb are contained within the hoof capsule can make both diagnosis and surgical procedures extremely difficult. The foot is always contaminated by environmental dirt and feces. ...Clinical approach needs to be guided by the rule that even the smallest most innocuous looking wound in a critical site of the sole may prove fatal." (translation excerpt)

I contacted Dr. Bertuglia via email and he wrote me saying, "I really agree with your strategy of treatment, because I guess that a good circulation in the palmar/plantar portion of the equine foot is the key to success (also) in many other diseases other than puncture wounds of the sole."

This kind of **potentially fatal** injury can be healed IF horse owners would embrace the barefoot holistic approach to horsekeeping.

About the author: Sandy Judy lives in rural North Carolina with her husband, son, and horses. She is an equine portrait artist and also worked as a scientific illustrator for a science and health education company. She was a student in the 2005-06 N.A. Strasser Hoofcare Professionals course and consults on hoof care and horse behavior.

The Horse's Hoof Order Form

Please mail this order form with your check or money order (All payments in US Dollars). Make checks payable to The Horse's Hoof. Visit **The Horse's Hoof Store** online at www.TheHorsesHoof.com

The Horse's Hoof • P.O. Box 40
Litchfield Park, AZ 85340-0040

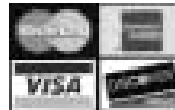
Toll-Free Phone: 1-877-594-3365
Order by Fax: (623) 935-3572

Here are just a few items we sell:

| Quantity | Each | Total |
|----------|--|---------------------------------------|
| _____ | THH Magazine Subscription 1yr Printed | \$25 US/Can; \$40 For _____ |
| _____ | <i>Making Natural Hoof Care Work for You</i> by Pete Ramey | \$26.95 + shipping _____ |
| _____ | <i>Paddock Paradise</i> by Jaime Jackson | \$26.95 + shipping _____ |
| _____ | <i>Horse Owner's Guide to Natural Hoof Care</i> by Jackson | \$29.95 + shipping _____ |
| _____ | <i>A Lifetime of Soundness</i> by Dr. Strasser | SALE! \$35.00 + shipping _____ |
| _____ | <i>Shoeing, A Necessary Evil?</i> by Dr. Strasser | \$39.50 + shipping _____ |
| _____ | <i>Who's Afraid of Founder?</i> by Dr. Strasser | \$39.50 + shipping _____ |
| _____ | <i>Barefoot Stories</i> Edited by Yvonne Welz | SALE! \$15.00 + shipping _____ |
| _____ | <i>Secret of Happy Horses</i> by Sabine Kells | \$15.95 + shipping _____ |

Payment enclosed:

- _____ check
_____ money order
_____ credit card:



Visa Mastercard Discover AMEX

Account Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Order Online at: www.TheHorsesHoof.com

Book Shipping Charges

USA: \$7.00 for 1 or 2 books, + \$2.50 each add'l.
Canada: \$10.00 for 1 book, call for price on more.
Foreign: \$15.00 for 1 book, call for price on more.

Subtotal \$ _____
AZ State Residents 8.8% sales tax \$ _____
Book Shipping Charge \$ _____
TOTAL PAYMENT \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Country _____

Telephone _____

e-mail _____

Advice, news, & information—for professionals and serious hoof enthusiasts.

EasyCare, Inc. Announces Scholarship Program for the Equine Sciences Academy

EasyCare, Inc. and the **Equine Sciences Academy** are pleased to announce that EasyCare will be offering a total of eight first-term scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 to the Equine Sciences Academy. Four scholarships will be awarded to the Fall 2007 class, and four to the Spring 2008 class.

Each scholarship has a \$1,000 value and will be applied toward first term tuition. EasyCare will reimburse the student for the scholarship amount once they have successfully completed their first year studies.

Applicants must first apply to and be accepted into the Academy. Once accepted, students may apply to EasyCare. Recipients of the first-term scholarships may also reapply for a second scholarship in the spring. In the event that a student receives a second scholarship, the award would be applied to the second term tuition.

"As the field of natural hoof care continues to grow, so will the demand for qualified professionals. EasyCare is excited to be able to assist those looking to make natural hoof care a career. We are currently working on expanding this new scholarship program to include additional programs and organizations that educate and train qualified applicants in the natural care of horse's hooves", said company president Garrett Ford.

For more information and application requirements, please contact the Equine Sciences Academy at: <http://www.equinesciencesacademy.com>.

Information about the Academy:

The purpose of the Equine Sciences Academy is to educate students in all key aspects of the care and custody of domesticated equines based on the study of the life of the wild horse.

A university format includes comprehensive studies on all required coursework, practical instruction, rigorous testing, and practical exams. The goal of the Equine Sciences Academy is to be the most comprehensive and professional training program in natural horse and hoof care available.

The program will basically follow a distance learning university format, with the exception of required practicums. The program is designed as a two year course, but actual completion time may vary based on a number of factors including, but not limited to, scheduling, ability to pass all required elements before progressing, prior experience etc.

EasyCare, Inc. has been a leader in the hoof boot industry for years, beginning with the invention of the Easyboot back in the early 70's. Since then, the need for boots has grown tremendously as more and more horse owners see the healthy advantages of pulling shoes and switching to natural hoof care. EasyCare is excited about being part of this growing trend. For more information please contact EasyCare, Inc., at 1-800-447-8836, e-mail: admin@easycareinc.com or visit our website at www.easycareinc.com.

American Association of Natural Hoof Care Practitioners "Cluster Clinic" - Six Concurrent Accredited Clinics

When: September 21 - 26, 2007

Where: Warrenton, Missouri (about 45 minutes west of St. Louis)

Considering a career in hoof care or just want to know more about the natural hoof care movement? This is a great opportunity to jump start your education.

September 21: Jaime Jackson, Introduction to Natural Trimming and the Wild Horse Model Clinic.

September 22: Richard Drewry, Horse Boot Clinic.

September 22, PM: Neal Valk, DVM, Veterinary Affairs Orientation Clinic.

September 23: Neal Valk, DVM, Introduction To Natural Hoof Care Clinic. (This clinic is specifically designed for veterinarians.)

September 23 & 24 AM: Bruce Nock, Ph.D., Lifeway and the Natural Hoof Clinic.

September 24 PM, 25 & 26: Ann Corso, Natural Trim Workshop.

Clinic Attendance Is Limited To Registered Participants

For more information about the AANHCP programs, visit aanhcp.net Details and registration info for the September clinics are located here: <http://aanhcp.net/SeptClusterClinic.pdf>

American Hoof Association (AHA)

by Paige Poss, www.ironfreehoof.com

I am one of the founding members of the American Hoof Association. I was kindly asked by Pete Ramey to join and help develop a new organization. AHA is not your typical hoof care organization because it is not a teaching certification. AHA is about forming alliances and resources. We do not want to be just another list of trimmers, but an organization that promotes sharing amongst peers.

Over the months, we have tried to define an AHA trim. After many attempts, we realized that there is no such definition. Because of our varied experiences, we all approach the hoof differently. We then realized it is not the actual trim that unites us, it is the trimming philosophies. We tend to be a humble group of trimmers that realize there is always more to learn. Horses are our teachers. Because we willingly share our experiences and differing perspectives, we are essentially increasing our experience. Collectively, we have seen more horses, more living conditions, and more health issues. While less is often better when it comes to trimming, more is better when it comes to gathering experience.

Organizing and developing this association has been a larger project than we anticipated. We are finally accepting applications, but have not completely worked out all of the bugs. Have patience, we are working hard to become an organization that benefits both the member and the horse owner.

For more information on the AHA, please visit: americanhoofassociation.org

Hoof Care Professional Courses

This is just a sample list of some of the hoof care courses currently available:

American Assoc. of Natural Hoof Care Practitioners (AANHCP)
<http://www.aanhcp.net>

Equine Sciences Academy
<http://www.equinesciencesacademy.com>

International Center For Equine Arts
<http://www.internationalcenterforequinearts.com>

Institute of Applied Equine Podiatry
<http://www.equinepodiatry.net>

Oregon School of Natural Hoof Care
<http://abchoofcare.com>

Strasser Hoofcare Professional Course
<http://www.strasserhoofcare.org>

UK Natural Hoof Care Practitioners UKNHCP
<http://www.uknhcp.org>

Barefooters: what you need to know, and where to find it.

Hoof Boot Websites

This is a sample list of some hoof boot websites, listed by boot name, alphabetically. (EasyCare boots available at The Horse's Hoof store.)

Boa Horse Boot

Very easy to apply boot, with a unique dial lacing system, from EasyCare.
<http://easycareinc.com>

Castle Hoof Boots

Slip on boots with a velcro closure.
<http://www.castleplastics.com/hoofboots.htm>

Davis Manufacturing

Makers of Davis Barrier Boots and soaking Horse Boots. (Soaking boots available at The Horse's Hoof store.)
<http://www.davismanufacturing.com>

Easyboot

The original performance horse boot, invented in 1970, from EasyCare.
<http://easycareinc.com>

Easyboot Bare

Easyboot model with gator, concave sole and unique bungee adjustment system.
<http://easycareinc.com>

Easyboot Epic

Easyboot model with gator and low profile comfort strap.
<http://easycareinc.com>

Easyboot Grip

Essentially the Easyboot Epic with an aggressive sole and traction tread pattern.
<http://easycareinc.com>

EasySoaker

For soaking or medicating, from EasyCare.
<http://easycareinc.com>

Hoofwings

Lightweight, easy to use boots.
<http://www.horseneaker.com/hoofwings.htm>

Horse-Mocs

Custom made from hoof tracings.
<http://www.horsemocs.com/index2.htm>

HorseSneakers

Custom-made hoof boots, made to your horse's individual measurements.
<http://www.horseneaker.com>

Marquis Supergrip Horse Boot

Boots with an ergonomic fit provided by unique air chambers. All parts are replaceable. StrideEquus, Vernon, BC, Canada.
<http://www.marquisboot.com/>

Old Mac's Original Horse Boots

Very easy to use boots. The Originals are great for horses with very wide hooves.
<http://easycareinc.com>

Old Mac's G2 Horse Boots

The G2 boot is a new and improved version, with a sleeker design, more narrow in shape.
<http://easycareinc.com>

Sabre Sneaker

Cushioned, lightweight boot for sore hooves. Laces up the front, like a sneaker.
<http://www.sabresneaker.com>

The Simple Boot

A boot that is simple to measure, fit, and apply. From Cavallo Horse & Rider.
<http://www.cavallo-inc.com>

Soft-Ride Equine Comfort Boots

Hospital-type boots provide comfort to lame horses—include removable, washable orthotic insert cushions.
<http://www.soft-ride.com>

Swiss Horse Boot

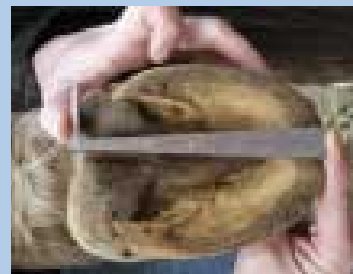
Official USA website, includes information about the boot and links to locate a fitter.
<http://www.swissboot.com>

FREE Hoof Boot Sales/Swap Page

Bought the wrong size? Have some extras to sell? Maybe you can sell or trade them from this page, on Gretchen Fathauer's website.
http://www.naturallhorsetrim.com/boot_swap.htm

New Hoof Care Tool

The Precision Pick combines both a measuring device and a hoof pick in one! Laser cut from durable steel and sealed with a zinc coating, the Precision Pick has a 1/8 inch measurement scale etched on both sides of the handle and tip of the pick. You can use the tool to measure heel height, concavity, collateral groove depth, check for flares, etc. Lots more photos are available on their website:
www.precisionhoofpick.com



Pete Ramey DVD Series Coming Soon

"Under the Horse" is a 16 hour hoof rehabilitation DVD series (10 disks) set for official release on September 21, 2007.

This video is designed to teach equine professionals and horse owners new ways to recognize and treat hoof pathology. It focuses on the ability to identify and recognize a truly healthy equine foot and demonstrates steps taken to drive a pathological hoof towards a healthier state. The combination of contemporary veterinary research with practical, real-world field work presented will enable viewers to arrive at sound, valuable protocols that can be used immediately to benefit the horse.

Includes 9 hours of classroom instruction and 7 hours of live trimming on 11 different horses with a wide range of hoof problems. The DVD set can be pre-ordered on Pete's website www.hoofrehab.com, and will be carried in The Horse's Hoof store.

EasyCare, Inc. Seeking Name for New Hoof Boot Design

EasyCare, Inc. is currently in development with a new innovative hoof boot design. This new horse hoof boot will be a lower profile version of the Easyboot Epic. The totally new hoof boot design will feature a lower fitting shell, a new fastening system and a low profile flexible gaiter that will conform to the heel area.

The first person to submit the winning name for the new boot will win a one year supply for one horse of the new hoof boots once they are released. Entries may be submitted beginning on August 1st and the contest will end on September 15th. There is no limit to the number of name suggestions that each person can submit, however there will be only one winner. Submissions will be reviewed from September 16 through the 30th and the name of the new hoof boot will be announced on October 1st.

To submit a suggested name for the new boot simply send an email to EasyCare at this email address: entertowin@easycareinc.com. In the subject header put "New Boot Name Suggestion."

EasyCare, Inc. website: www.easycareinc.com.

Holistic Horsekeeping Book

One of our favorite books is Dr. Madalyn Ward's book, *Holistic Horsekeeping*. This very comprehensive book has wonderful recommendations for more natural horse care, including nutrition and supplements, hoof care, joint health, homeopathic remedies, vaccinations, parasite control and holistic first aid. Covers equine disease and illness, and the holistic approach to their treatment. Includes a special section on performance horses. This book is excellent, both as an introduction to holistic horse care, and as a comprehensive handbook for the more advanced natural horsekeeper. Now available in The Horse's Hoof Store for \$19.95.

Hoof Slicing Dissection

Here are some photos from a hoof slicing dissection, during one of our clinics. Dissecting a hoof in this way has many benefits—not only do the slices provide a very detailed image of the inner structures of the hoof, but the slices themselves can be re-frozen and saved for future study. We started out with a frozen hoof capsule, for easier cutting. A bandsaw with a sharp blade was used to slice the hoof capsule, starting at the heel, in about 1/2 inch vertical slices. These photos were taken after every slice, beginning at the heel, and travelling to the toe.—THH

All photos copyright The Horse's Hoof



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14