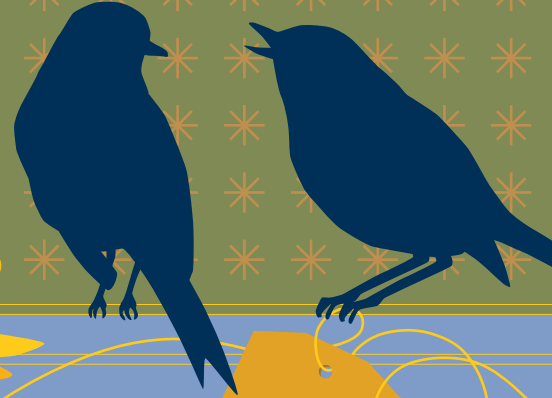


STABLE CONNECTIONS

ZINE



CONTRIBUTORS



ABBY HANC is a myofascial release bodyworker for horses and humans, functional movement coach, and lifelong horsewoman based in Sonoma

County, California. She works in myofascial release, somatic movement, and biomechanics – with horses and the riders who love them. Her work is rooted in the belief that riding challenges are rarely just about riding. When something isn't working in the saddle, I look at the whole picture – the body, the mind, the history, and the horse. That's usually where the path forward begins. You can learn more at abbyhanc.com



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DIANNE ADEL comes to horses through decades of somatic healing and bodywork with both humans and horses. She is a Certified Massage Therapist,

certified in many therapies. She is also a Certified Masterson Method Practitioner and sees equine clients in Marin and Sonoma counties.

Dianne is the author of the novel *Path to the Priestess Temple* (available on Amazon). She is currently completing her second novel, *Daughter of the Bees*. She also sings lead vocals in the Glory Dayz Band with her husband, Frankie Adel.



CAREY SWEET With nearly three decades writing about food, culinary travel, restaurants and the chefs that make them happen, Sweet contributes

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CARA GEREAU is a somatic psychotherapist and the founder of Equine Somatic Pathways, a training that brings together somatic modalities

and relational work with horses. She volunteers with the Marin County Parks Mounted Patrol and enjoys taking her mares into the hills of West Marin. Her Equine Somatic Pathways program is open to anyone drawn to this work; horse owners exploring their own patterns, as well as equine professionals, coaches, and therapists who want to bring this approach to the people and horses they serve. Learn more at equinesomaticpathways.com



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TATJANA ZIEMER is a Northern California-based Public Relations and Communications professional who grew up in Sebastopol, California. With

more than 15 years of experience in the equestrian industry, horses were the first horsepower in her life before she later built a career in motorsports PR and communications. Her background across both industries has shaped a strong interest in sport culture, media, accessibility, and the evolving relationship between tradition and modern visibility. Through her writing, she aims to explore thoughtful conversations within the equestrian world and beyond.

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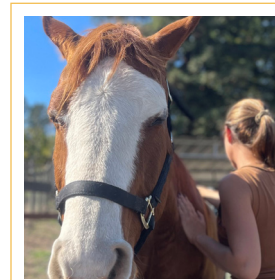
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STABLE
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ZINE

SUMMER 2026



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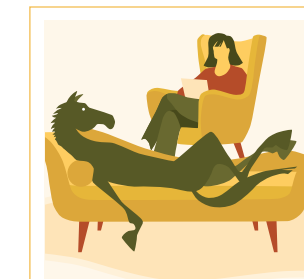


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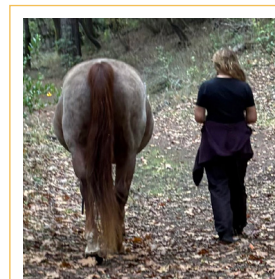
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ADVICE STRAIGHT FROM
THE HORSE'S MOUTH

The quiet beauty of a summer evening capturing the connection and bond between horse and rider, and the strength of the horse itself. Together, they tell a story of trust, freedom, and the moments that feel timeless.

—SYDNEY JAI PHOTOGRAPHY



What's Fascia Got to do With It?

BY ABBY HANG

Fascia has become a bit of a buzz word these days and for good reason. It has gone mostly overlooked for far too long and now we are realizing that addressing this matrix could be the missing link to you and your horses comfort, performance and overall health.

SO WHAT ACTUALLY IS FASCIA?

Fascia is a three dimensional web of connective tissue that surrounds and permeates everything in the body. Every muscle, every bone, every organ, every nerve from head to hoof. When it's healthy, it slides and glides freely, allowing the body to move with ease and absorb force without strain. When it becomes restricted – from trauma, surgery, repetitive movement patterns, chronic stress, or old injuries it hardens and pulls. And because everything in the body is connected through this web, a restriction in one place can affect somewhere else entirely.

Fascial restrictions don't show up on X-rays or ultrasound and a horse can pass a lameness exam and still be carrying significant fascial tension that limits their movement, dulls their performance, and makes them quietly uncomfortable.

Think of it like this – trying to release a muscle that is being held in restriction by tight fascia is like trying to unknot a shoelace while someone is still pulling both ends taut. You can work that knot all day long but the tension that created it is still there.

I learned this firsthand through my horse Stella. Born intersex, she carried a quiet complexity in her body and her spirit that I came to understand more deeply over time. She endured major surgery at five years old, colic surgery later in life, and a diagnosis of chronic Lyme disease that left her body carrying layers of restriction, compensation, and scar tissue that conventional treatment alone couldn't fully reach and

she also hated being touched. Hard pass on grooming and even harder pass on soft tissue mobilization work. Lyme disease causes a lot of inflammation and full body tenderness/discomfort so I was determined to find a modality that she would be receptive to. After completing the course on Equine bodywork I jumped into the next available one which was Myofascial release and immediately became obsessed with it. My first session with Stella sold the modality to me. Her body softened, her movement changed and she stood motionless while I gently worked on her. No side eye and no tension. It's what sent me down this path, and it's what keeps me here continuing to learn and work.

HOW FASCIA IS TREATED DIFFERENTLY

If fascia doesn't respond to force, then how do you treat it? The answer is time and patience. Myofascial release uses sustained, gentle pressure held for a minimum of 90 seconds to several minutes in a single area. That sustained hold is what allows the fascial tissue to soften, hydrate, and release at a cellular level. You are not forcing the tissue to change. You are waiting for it to change, creating the conditions for release rather than demanding it.

This is why MFR sessions can look like almost nothing is happening from the outside. A practitioner's hands might barely seem to be moving. And then the horse shifts, exhales, drops their head, releases through the back and walks out of the session moving in a way they haven't been able to in months or longer.

The other thing that makes fascial work different is that it follows the tissue rather than a predetermined sequence. A restriction you find in the shoulder might lead you to the ribcage, and from there to a glute because you are tracing a three dimensional web through the body.

In my experience, addressing both soft tissue and fascia gives the best results. But only if both parties are coming to the bodywork table...including the one holding the reins.

THE MIRROR YOU'RE SITTING ON

Your horse is the most honest mirror you will ever encounter. What you see and feel in them – the crookedness, the resistance and the tension is often a faithful reflection of what is happening in you which is not as a criticism – it's just information.

Consider the rider who broke their collarbone years ago (this is me – by the way). They did their physiotherapy, got the all clear, moved on but fascia has a long

memory and there is still a subtle pull through the left shoulder with a slight collapse. Their horse falls left on the shoulder, resists the inconsistent contact on the left rein, and carries chronic tension through the neck. Despite ongoing bodywork sessions for the horse, the issue keeps coming back...because the restriction started above the saddle.

Or the rider with one seat bone sitting fractionally heavier than the other. Not even dramatically, just enough. Over months and years the horse develops a compensatory holding pattern through one side of the back and struggles to bend one direction often coming



“Your horse is the most honest mirror you will ever encounter.”

up braced in transitions. The horse gets bodywork, improves, reverts then gets bodywork, improves, reverts. Because the rider gets back on and the old pattern begins again. It's a tricky cycle.

This is not about blame at all and we know horses are generous beyond measure. They carry our bodies, our histories, our nervous systems, our unresolved injuries and our unexamined anxieties without complaint, for as long as they possibly can. It's our job to understand the feedback loop between horse and rider and have the tools to make changes that can sustain for the long term.

WHAT YOU CAN ACTUALLY DO

The most powerful shift you can make for your horse's body is to also look at your own.

If your horse has a recurring issue, ask yourself when you last had your own body and fascia assessed. If your horse braces, rushes, or struggles to soften, stop and ask yourself where you are holding in your own body and where that might be coming from. If the bodyworker keeps treating the same area with temporary results, consider booking yourself a session in the same window of time. Horse and rider working through restriction together gives the new pattern somewhere

LEARN MORE AT ABBYHANG.COM

My Passion Project for Horse Lovers



BY LINDSAY ALEXANDER

My love of horses started when I was kid – not just the riding kind of love, but the day dreaming kind... the kind that sends you down rabbit holes of books and movies, and as I got older, even veterinary manuals – just because I couldn't get enough. In my late teens, life got in the way for a while, as it can, but in 2019 I finally bought a horse. Life had hit a steady rhythm. I was working for myself and it felt like the right time. Within three months of making the decision, I had gotten my gelding... and "horse girl math" did the rest – and soon, a second horse found its way to my life.

I'm a graphic artist and photographer who spent the last decade working in the construction industry – but I never let go of the creative side. I never stopped reading light, judging images, thinking about how a crop changes everything. A few years ago, those threads – the horse kid, the artist, the person who has always loved making things – came together in an unexpected direction: engraved jewelry. Specifically, photo jewelry. Pieces that carry the likeness of a loved one, a beloved animal, something you can wear and keep close.

It began, as many things do, with a problem I wanted to solve for myself. I wanted my own custom pet jewelry. My animals are everything to me and I was a proud horse and dog mom. I wanted to wear items that reminded me of my animals. I had picked up a little engraving machine at a second hand shop and been playing around with it. I was having fun with it, making gifts, etc. Simple things, brass name plates, keychains. But I kept thinking about photographic jewelry – the idea that you could capture not just a line drawing, but an actual photograph, rendered in metal. I spent a few months figuring it out and trying to dial in the settings on my machine, ran test after test, and eventually landed on something that I was happy with. A tiny rectangle of metal – roughly the size of a postage stamp – that looked like a little mini photograph. I started posting pictures of the samples online and people were interested. Soon, I had orders coming in.

The people who seek me out are usually looking for memorial jewelry. Which is a whole genre unto itself, and I've come to feel the weight of that responsibility. When someone chooses me to create a piece honoring a loved one they've lost, I don't take it lightly. Sometimes I'll finish a piece and sit with it for days, looking at it in different light, comparing it again to the photo, asking myself whether it does justice to the subject. The customer never sees this part of the process. They just see the finished piece, never knowing what a crazy Virgo perfectionist they have hired. I'll remake something multiple times if I'm not satisfied, even when no one would know the difference but me. That's just how it has to be.



I ask my clients to send me a few photos to choose from. They have the final call of course, but I like to have some input also. I'm looking for a photo that will crop well around the head, has an interesting pose or angle, and hopefully catches a glint of light in the subject's eye. When I'm working on a piece that's only an inch or so across, the photograph has to earn every millimeter. I know I've gotten it right when the messages I receive are overwhelmed with emotion. Sometimes it's pure joy. Sometimes there are tears wrapped up in it.

I think a lot about the relationship between photographs and memories. I remember hearing something as a kid that always stuck with me: if your house burned down, almost everything in it could be replaced. Electronics, furniture, clothes, all of it. But family heirlooms and photographs are irreplaceable. We're lucky now, in the digital age, to have backups of photos on hard drives and phones. But scrolling past a photo on your phone isn't the same as holding something in your hands. There's a tactile quality to physical objects that our brains just respond to differently. When you wear a piece of jewelry that carries the likeness of a loved one, it's not just a decoration. It's a memory you can touch.

A few months ago, I started making a different kind of jewelry that grew straight out of my own history with horses: Mustang freeze brand jewelry.

Wild Mustangs rounded up by the BLM receive what's called an alpha angle brand, a series of angular marks that encode information about the horse using the International Alpha Angle System. To the uninitiated, it looks almost alien, like a symbol from another world, and I say that as a compliment. It's striking. Geometric. And when you learn to read it, it tells you something real: where that horse came from, when it was processed, what herd it came from.

I've always been fascinated by mustangs and their stories. When I was a kid, I regularly rode a mustang mare named Savannah. She was born in captivity and had no freeze brand. She'd changed hands a few times, and nobody could remember what mustang herd she had come from, what state, nothing. That gap always stayed with me.



I mentioned getting a second horse... my mare. She's a mustang from Nevada. I actually know her story in remarkable detail. I learned of a photographer who followed her herd just outside of Las Vegas and I actually have photographs of her from when she was just a couple of months old. I have photos of her dam and her sire. I know all about when and why she was rounded up. She has a freeze brand. In the winter months, it disappears under her woolly coat. Come summertime, she sheds out and she rocks her mustang neck tattoo.

Of course, I had to make myself some jewelry to celebrate her origins.

The mustang freeze brand is long, horizontal, with a certain structural beauty. I use elongated pieces of metal that let the alpha angle characters breathe. People who don't recognize the characters always ask what it is. That's part of the fun of wearing a mustang freeze brand. You get to share the story.

There's something about metal that feels right for this kind of work. It doesn't fade. It doesn't get lost in a folder on your phone. You can wear it every day, pass it down, hold it in your hand when you need to. Whether it's a photograph etched into a small rectangle of steel or a series of angular marks that tell a wild horse's origin story – what I'm really making is a memory with some permanence to it. Something that lasts. And if someone stops you to ask what you're wearing, well – us animal parents never get tired of talking about our kids.

LEARN MORE AT [SEPTEMBEROAK.COM](https://www.septemberoak.com)

BY DIANNE ADEL

It's a typical May afternoon at the private barn where Beau lives with 20 other horses among the sweeping Petaluma hills. The midday heat is at a peak, so there's not much going on. Horses are shifting on slow feet, moving in a lazy meander. Some are grazing, some under the flat roof of stalls or under tree branches blocking the sun. The ranch dog is side-lying in the cool shade, one ear on the entrance, in case she's called to bark-duty. The massive walnut tree in the center of the circular driveway provides the perfect amount of shade for us. Beau's brown eyes are at half-mast, his hip dropped with his hind toe resting on the dirt. His red-roan booty – why we often call him Big B – is a round pillow of dappled white and chestnut softness. Tipped at an angle with his leg cocked like that, his spine looks spilled from the rise of his long tail, snug between his robust Quarter Horse hips. His ears gently follow the occasional chirps of the nearby Gold Finches and Spotted Towhees. A colony of honey bees swarmed out of a hole high up in the tree's thick body not long ago, and left the tree trunk to the squirrels. It seems several bees remained and still hover, high up in the branches. They move in languid ease.

TODAY IS *A Good Day*

I balance my own booty on one of the narrow bricks that are laid at ground-level and encircle the giant tree's base. Beau's nose hangs so low to the ground that his muzzle rests on my hair. Every few moments a fly flickers across his nose, interrupting his reverie, yet waking him enough for him to offer his lower lip to groom my head before he resumes his slow, huffing, nap. His breath blows a single one of my hairs to a gentle sway back and forth. His whiskers tickle my forehead.

Beau's friend Tilly – a sweet, paint mare – stands with her person, MaryKay. They huddle under the same shady reach of the walnut tree's enormous canopy. Tilly's hind leg is cocked like Beau's, and MaryKay bends low at the waist with one hand resting on Tilly's ribs. With her cheek resting gently the old mare's flank, MaryKay fires her fingers to and fro on a sweet spot in the center of Tilly's roundest belly curve. The happy mare's neck is craned, head arched and twisted to the side, lower lip quivering. She blinks in bliss at every swipe of relief.



I close my eyes as the shared current of calm melts me. There's no need to speak.

It wasn't my plan to stop in the driveway, under the shade of this expansive tree. Beau and I had come from a walk in the woods, me leading him in relaxed ease. His swinging steps were rhythmic and if I'm not mistaken, carried the perfect beat of a downregulated heart. A heart that strives for nothing but the pleasure of moving together, the scent of the bay trees and the sun on the grass. When we came off the trail, I intended to head to his paddock, but Beau had other plans.

He spotted Tilly and asked me to halt. He craned his neck around to see what she was about – just standing there like that with her person crouching under her belly. When Beau figured it out, he backed up next to them and dropped a hip.

And just like that, we were all in the zone. I was happy to honor Beau's call to stand in deep rest with Tilly. It gave me the chance to be in silent stillness with him, as I have been making a point to do every day for the last eight months.

In October, Beau got diagnosed with renal failure. He is carrying a watermelon sized mass in his left kidney. Moments like this one with Tilly and MaryKay

could not be more relevant to me. Although I valued connection before his diagnosis, moments such as these, when he nods off with his nose in my hair, hold far greater meaning now.

It has always been possible to have this value and the art of stillness as part of our training. There are clinicians and trainers I have admired and worked with for years who are aligned in this way and Beau and I created a long standing foundation in softness together. I aspired to bringing that intent and awareness into everything I did with him. Little did I know we were setting the stage to hold space for him to simply be a horse living with kidney disease.

There are no good solutions for his situation. Proper vet care, love and a community of amazing people where he lives have all contributed to giving him the best life possible. He's off pasture with the herd and the possibility of injury, since the last thing he needs is a swift kick in his watermelon. He's less likely to gallop when the herd moves off, although we've seen him canter in turn-out alone for a few strides after a good roll and even popping out for a gleeful kick of his heels. In general, keeping up with a herd can't work anymore. He needs access to his own drinking water, since he's now consuming at least twice as much as other horses. I never thought a stall and paddock would make this 19-year-old gelding so happy. But he wakes up with a smile on his face, delights in room-service three times a day and loves his three mares with whom he shares





a roof. Always mellow anyway, he can wander the ranch with the lead rope thrown over his back to pick his favorite grazing areas, and visit his old pasture mates over the fence.

It's an interesting thing to hold space for an illness like this in a beloved four-legged companion. I've always been intrigued by the term Kahu, a Hawaiian word that describes someone entrusted with the safekeeping of something precious. Hawaiians prefer to say they aren't pet owners, but a Kahu. I love this message. It brings home how none of us really belong to each other, leaving room for a deep honoring that whatever presents itself can be met with love and gratitude, through the privilege of being trusted and together.

With Beau going through what he is, the ability to safeguard his well-being brings me peace. My heart belongs to his welfare, and rather than to me, he belongs to his journey. He seems to know I will support him every moment of every day, facing what comes with patience and presence. I have always looked at my role in Beau's life as one of doing no harm and inviting him to be content and feel good about what we do together. This is what we're doing together now.

I've chosen not to ride him anymore. I went through that grief quietly. It's a loss I still feel, especially when we hike the trails where he lives, where some of our happiest moments happened. Yet, this choice leaves spaciousness and an unhurried quality of life, for however long we are able to be together. And so, moments like the one we shared with Tilly and MaryKay under the shade of a massive walnut tree, matter more to me than ever before.

When people ask me how things are, I say "today is a good day." It doesn't take much to appreciate the truth of it.

FEEL FREE TO CONTACT DIANNE FOR HUMAN OR EQUINE BODYWORK AT 415-847-6878

(CHECK OUT) THE NORTH BAY BUSINESS FINDER

@ StableConnectionsThePodcast.com

(SPOTLIGHT ON PODCAST 137)

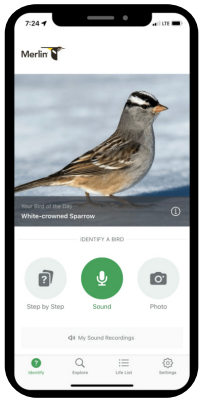


ANOTHER RIDING DISCIPLINE YOU WOULD LIKE TO TRY?

Working Equitation

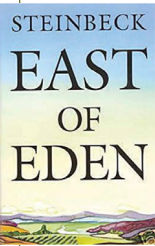
FAVORITE APP?

Merlin Bird ID app by Cornell... no matter where I travel I can sit quietly I identify most of the birds



BEST BARN HACK?

Wyze cameras in every stall



BOOKS ON YOUR BEDSIDE TABLE?

Current books on my bedside table are East

of Eden by John Steinbeck, Back Mechanic by Stewart McGills & Theo of Golden by Allen Levi

WHAT'S ALWAYS IN YOUR FRIG?

Sweet Bread & Butter pickles



DOG OR CAT LOVER?

Dog Lover - current dog I love is Little Ann, my gorgeous female Giant Schnauzer

FAVORITE HORSE?

Grade gelding Roosevelt, an appendix gelding, from the Parker Ranch in Hawaii



(LESTER BUCKLEY)

My desire is to help people and their horses from all walks of life and disciplines to gain insight into the horse's point of view and how we can be the best stewards of all aspects of their life with us.

FAVORITE EQUESTRIAN BRAND?

My favorite English brand would be my beautiful Solo bridles & double bridles from Canada with KK Ultra bits from Germany.

Favorite Western brand would be Jeremiah Watt bits, bridles & saddles



FAVORITE WAY TO RELAX?

To read a good hardcover book under a nice lamp & drift off a bit

FAVORITE CURRENT SONG?

Samuel Barbers Adagio for Strings



FAVORITE TRAINING MOMENT?

Hmmm...so many. I guess when I whistled for Roosevelt after more that a decade apart & he immediately nickered for me & left his herd to come to me

FAVORITE GETAWAY ESCAPE?

Cabin in the woods near a stream or remote river

GREATEST EXTRAVAGANCE?

Importing a lovely Warmblood from Germany & spending over a decade studying with my riding masters in Germany... thats quite a feat for a ranch kid from Texas



FAVORITE FOOD TO EAT AT HOME?

West African ground nut stew over rice or Santa Fe Stew





We Take Our Beasts to the Beach

BY CAREY SWEET

It's the stuff of dreams: riding a horse on a beach, the horse galloping, its glistening mane and tail flowing as it splashes through the surf. You get bonus points for a cinematic sunset and a salty ocean breeze, and win the jackpot if you ride alongside your romantic partner (the both of you wearing billowing white clothing, of course).

From someone who ridden her fair share on beaches, I can attest to the magic. At the same time, I know the realities. First, where do you park your trailer? Second, is a beach known for its rolling surf, or more for crashing waves? And most importantly, how do you keep things safe? Handling a powerful equine in such a setting can have its challenges, from sharing the beach with kite fliers, loose dogs, large, colorful-scary shade canopies, and quick moving kayaks in the water.

For extra-expert advice, I turned to Silvia Szabo, a Sonoma County horse trainer and educator who offers classes to all levels of riders at her Westwood Acres ranch she opened in 1992 in Santa Rosa. Students include young riders starting out, with many advancing to jumping or dressage in show rings.

To break up the demands of arena practice, she often leads her students on park and vineyard trail rides and excursions to Sonoma coast beaches. Off-property field trips bring spirit-lifting enrichment to both riders and horses, she explains, and also are valuable ways to enhance training through exposure to different landscapes and experiences.

Szabo started riding at age five. "My entire family was involved with horses, so it was just natural that I rode at such a young age," she says. "But my mom was actually riding when she was pregnant with me, so you could say I started really, really young."

SAFETY IN THE SAND

Szabo takes all ages on her rides, after she has determined they are experienced and confident enough. "But I'm not a horse rental company," she says. "They actually have to be a weekly student of mine." And no matter the level of experience, she has strict rules to keep horses and riders safe and having fun.

- Wear a proper fitting, professional helmet
- Wear shoes or boots with a proper heel on them
- Bring plenty of water, and snacks are a good idea, too
- Wear sunscreen
- Know the tide schedule before you go. Try to hit low tide because it gives you a lot more room to dodge people, dogs, kites, etc.
- Don't gallop in deep sand, where horses can trip
- Know your horses fitness level well. Fatigue can happen quickly while riding on the beach due to deeper sand

Favorite Beaches in Sonoma County

DORAN BEACH, BODEGA BAY

"I love it here because when it's low tide, it's perfect for lots of galloping," Szabo says. "There are also many chances to see beautiful sea and wildlife frolicking."

Set within the Doran Regional Park, the beach spans a wide, two-mile stretch, with horses welcome on a one-mile parcel at the east end. With a south-facing, semi-protected bay, waves here are typically calmer than elsewhere on the Sonoma Coast, making it easier and safer for horses to dip their hooves in the water.

Start your ride in the dunes next to the access road, then head to the waterfront, with its stunning views of glittering blue ocean and craggy cliffs. Keep your eyes peeled for western snowy plover, a threatened species bird under the Federal Endangered Species Act, plus harbor seals, seasonal migrating gray whales, sea lions and dolphins.

Two small lots are open for trailer parking (the second lot past the entry station includes restrooms), and it's important to note that the park is almost always busy on holidays and summer weekends, so to get a space, it's advisable to get there as soon as possible after the 7 a.m. park opening. Bring some orange traffic cones, too, to block off a bit of space in front and back of your trailer; some drivers, trying hard to find a space, may park too close for you to exit.

DETAILS:

201 Doran Beach Road, Bodega Bay, 707-875-3540, www.parks.sonomacounty.ca.gov

Parking is \$8 per vehicle or free with an annual Sonoma County Regional Parks pass purchased for \$69



SALMON CREEK BEACH

"I like it because it's a nice long walk in deeper sand to get to the ocean, which is a little bit more of a workout for the horses," Szabo says. "Plus, it's very pretty with great views."

Set in Sonoma Coast State Park, Salmon Creek is one of several beaches on a 17-mile stretch separated by rock bluffs and headlands. Take care to get to the correct beach, since most of the other beaches are closed to horses due to the Federal protection of the snowy plovers. Look for the Bodega Dunes trail system accessed through the back side of Bodega Dunes campground via Bay Flat Road - horses are allowed on the beach south of the day use road and beach entryway.

Like most north coast beaches, Sonoma Coast is not for swimming, or putting your horse in the water. Strong rip currents, heavy surf and sudden ground swells make riding dangerous below the highest water-line mark.

In winter, this is one of the best whale watching spots in California, and the craggy coastline features secluded coves, rugged headlands, natural arches and tide pools.

DETAILS:

116 Bean Avenue, Bodega Bay, 707-875-3483 www.parks.ca.gov

Parking is \$10 per vehicle or free with a California State Library Parks Pass



If Your Horse Could Consult with Your Therapist,

The Game Would Change

BY CARA GEREAU

It's the moment of inevitable tension that arises. We are here for our horses, day in and day out, all kinds of weather, medical, expenses, and inevitably we hit some emotional wall. We may go into blame, other or self. This horse is dumb! He hates me! I should be riding more, doing more, showing more, braver. Whatever way we work with horses will bring us to our edge. This is where the gold lies, as our trigger pattern is there before us, and if it's coming up with our horse, it's coming up everywhere in our life.

This often feels like we have failed, done it wrong. Then our own pattern begins; it can look like the inner critic having a field day, trying to prod us on into better, stronger, more capable. Then we might go into our own version of fight, flight or freeze. Flight could look like maybe I should sell this horse, stop riding. Fight might look like I will show this horse who is boss. Freeze might look like avoidance. The problem is we often believe these parts of ourselves and the story to be true. But the story is typically an old story.

Landing on that old story isn't a sign the horse is wrong, or that we are wrong, or that something isn't good enough. It's a relational gold mine where our edge becomes visible. If it's coming up with our horse, it's coming up in all our relationships at some level. How we do anything is how we do everything. The horse just shows us the pattern in neon lights.

This is where, if our horse could sit down in the chair across from our therapist and have a little chat, we might be able to untangle our patterns a bit more quickly. As a psychotherapist, I know all too well that therapy can default to validation. We can be really good at sharing our side, at having empathy and compassion be the medicine, and of course it's a wonderful starting point. We all need that starting point. But our relationships would benefit if we looked at our part in the patterns, even if that part is not having boundaries, is placating, is over caregiving as a form of intimacy.

When we stay in self righteous blame of others, including the horse, it feels good. We are so RIGHT. Others agree with how RIGHT we are! While it feels

good, it's a protective stance that helps us not feel what is vulnerable underneath. The part that doesn't feel capable. The part that wants to be good, liked, approved of. Those are all miles away, and we are dancing in our rightness. It's a bandaid, and the festering wound underneath eventually flares when we least want it to.

As horse people, we are always looking at various patterns. We can get curious about our own. What are the phrases that aren't so kind that we repeat about ourselves, others or our horse? Notice the impulses in charged moments. If it's a judgment, if it's harsh, what if instead of immediately reacting we paused and got curious. Whose words are those? Where did we learn them? What are we carrying that isn't serving us in relationship?

This can often be a first step to relief and more connection in our relationships and patterns. Sometimes we have worked on these patterns within ourselves, but as equine professionals we see them come up in clients and don't know how to support them. Slowing down, getting curious, stepping out of blame are all great starts. We can lead a client or ourselves in taking in the glorious

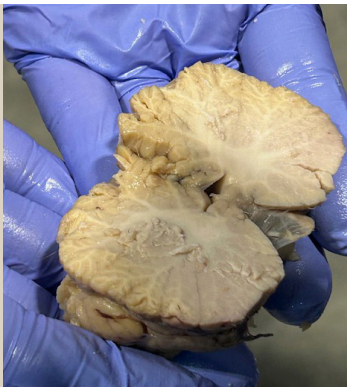
Every relationship has a gift for us in the depths of becoming more of our whole self. Our horses seem to have the unique grace of offering a clean slate as soon as we refresh our pesky patterns holding us back. It's often the receiving of that gift that is the hardest part.

sensory environment of the barn. What are five things we see right now? Four things we hear? Can we slowly touch three places on our horse's body? We can recognize the pattern coming up in human clients is a form of dysregulation, and all that might be needed in that moment is a simple way to ground and connect in order to shift.

LEARN MORE AT [EQUINESOMATICPATHWAYS.COM](https://equinesomaticpathways.com)

Horse Brain Science is One of the Most Important Topics We Can Study

BY MELISSA KALEMBERS



When I graduated high school, one of my biggest life goals was to learn everything about the horse. As any equestrian knows, that's nearly impossible — but it's also what makes horses so fascinating. There is always something new to learn. I think that endless curiosity is one of the core things that binds horse lovers together.

I became an Equine Sports Massage Therapist in 1999, and from there I dove deeply into anatomy and biomechanics. I loved learning how the body is put together and why it moves the way it does. Footfall, swing phase, asymmetrical patterns — I was obsessed with all of it.

Later, equine acupressure became part of my education through Equinology. Horses, by design, are energetically attentive animals, and learning acupressure gave me a way to connect with and help them in ways words can't fully describe.

As much as I loved everything I had learned, I still felt something deeper was missing. I kept asking:

- > Why is my horse doing this?
- > Why does restarting horses sometimes feel like reverse psychology?
- > Why do they move two steps forward and one step back?

- > Why do they learn some things quickly and struggle with others?
- > Why is understanding their past so important to helping them in the present?

Then I found Dr. Steve Peters' book, *Evidence-Based Horsemanship*.

I learned that Dr. Steve is a neuroscientist who studies the horse's brain — how it is built, how it is similar to and different from ours, and most importantly, why horses do what they do.

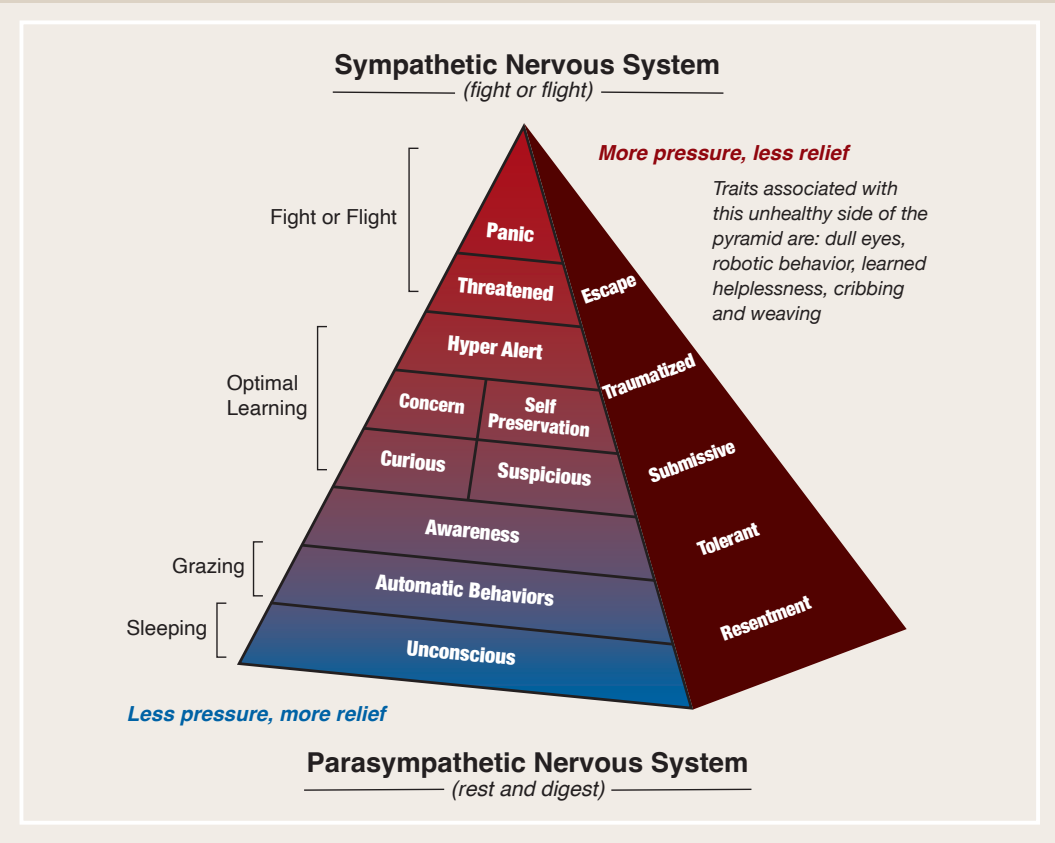
The moment I discovered horse brain science, I knew I had finally found the deeper layer of understanding I had been searching for.

The horse world is full of opinions. I've always tried to stay grounded in facts. That's one reason I love anatomy and biomechanics:

- > The muscle has a function.
- > The body moves a certain way.
- > The facts are the facts.

Horse brain science feels the same way to me. The amygdala has a purpose.

Horses process the world differently than humans. Their brains are designed for survival, safety, and awareness.



You can get close to answering the "why" through bodywork and biomechanics — and absolutely help your horse through those things — but everything inside your horse is connected to the brain and nervous system.

And now, learning about horse brain science and the nervous system makes me feel like a kid again: excited, fascinated, humbled, and deeply grateful to have found the deeper answers I was searching for all along. I've taken Dr. Steve's Horse Brain Science Level 1 clinic three times, hosted him, and completed Level 2 as well.

Once you begin learning the facts about how the horse's brain works, you can never look at horses the same way again.

- > You stop blaming them.
- > You stop taking things personally.
- > You begin understanding them.

Horse brain science gives us the clearest answers to why horses do what they do. And what I love most is:

- > It's not based on opinions.
- > It's based on understanding.

LEARN MORE AT KALEMBERSEQUINE.COM

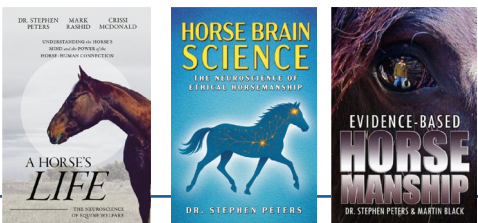
At the end of the day, your horse only wants to feel safe, understood, and helped. I am grateful for the facts that are becoming mainstream. Our horses thank us.

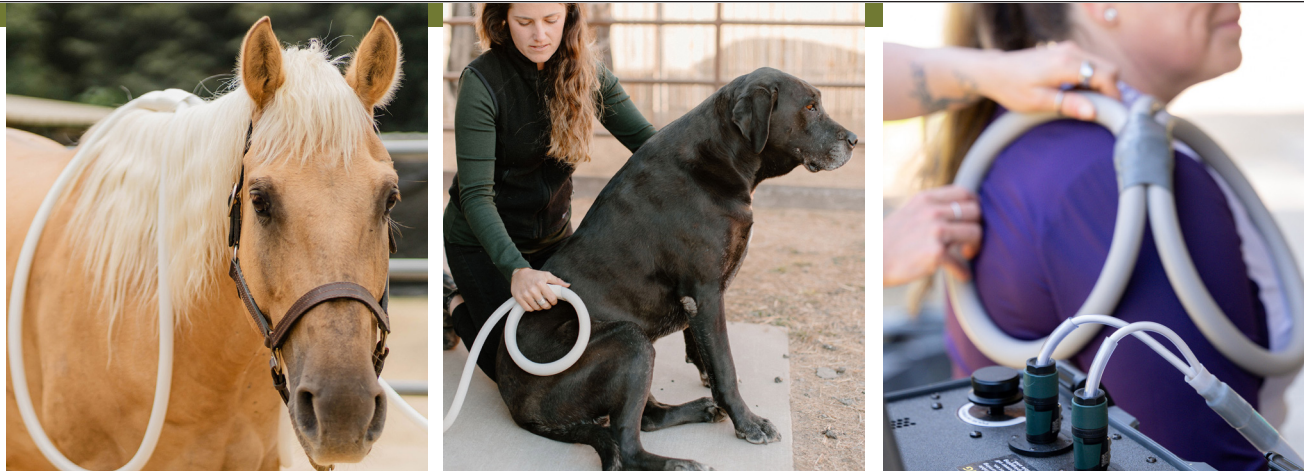
(CHECK OUT PODCAST 141)



DR. STEVE PETERS is a clinical neuroscientist and board-certified neuropsychologist who has revolutionized the equine world by applying human brain research to horse training. He advocates for evidence-based, compassionate horsemanship by helping equestrians understand how horses think, learn, and react to stress.

(ALSO CHECK OUT STEVE'S BOOKS)





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{ The Internet is Now in the Judge's Booth }

The sport has always been public—but not like this. For decades, equestrianism largely existed within its own ecosystem. Conversations around riding decisions, horse welfare, dangerous moments, or mistakes often stayed within barns, coaching circles, steward meetings, or small industry communities. Today, those same moments can be recorded, clipped, reposted, dissected, and debated by hundreds of thousands of people within hours.

Social media has fundamentally changed the relationship between equestrian sport and public accountability.

The discourse surrounding online video is just one example of a much larger shift happening across the industry. What makes situations like these so complex is that multiple truths can exist at once: a rider can make a dangerous or harmful mistake without being a bad person, criticism can be valid without becoming cruelty, and accountability can coexist with empathy.

But the internet is not particularly good at nuance. A short clip online rarely remains just a clip. It quickly becomes a referendum on horsemanship, ethics, professionalism, safety, and character. Spectators no longer simply watch the sport—they participate in judging it in real time. In many ways, the internet now functions as its own unofficial steward's booth.

That reality creates tension within the industry because equestrian sport simultaneously wants visibility and struggles with the consequences of transparency. The sport wants growth, sponsorship, media attention, younger audiences, and broader relevance. Yet increased visibility inevitably brings scrutiny—not only from insiders, but from the general public as well.

And unlike in previous eras, top riders are now public figures whether they intend to be or not. This shift has changed the stakes of public mistakes dramatically. A difficult ride, poor decision, or controversial moment no longer disappears after the event weekend. It lives online permanently, often stripped of context and replayed endlessly. Careers, reputations, and mental health can all be affected by a single moment captured on video.

The effects of this shift are already apparent throughout the industry. Some riders and clinicians

have become increasingly cautious about being filmed or posted online at all. In some cases, clinics now include restrictions around social media and recording altogether. Whether that caution stems from self-protection, fear of misrepresentation, or awareness of growing public scrutiny, it reflects a sport still adjusting to what constant visibility means in practice.

At the same time, the industry cannot claim to value horse welfare and safety while discouraging uncomfortable conversations whenever criticism involves well-known riders. There is an important distinction between harassment and accountability, and the sport will need to become better at navigating that distinction moving forward.

Criticism of a ride should not automatically become condemnation of a person. But acknowledging risk, poor judgment, or dangerous riding should not be treated as cruelty either.

Social media has also shifted how authority and credibility are built within the industry itself. In previous generations, reputation was established through results, mentorship, horsemanship, and years spent developing riders and horses in person. Today, exposure and audience size increasingly influence who is perceived as an expert, educator, or industry authority online.

In some cases, professionals have successfully expanded education and access through digital coaching platforms and online content. In others, popularity can outpace experience, creating a landscape where influence and expertise do not always develop at the same rate.

The challenge now is determining whether equestrian sport is prepared for the cultural shift social media has created. Visibility has democratized discussion in ways the industry has never experienced before. Riders, officials, trainers, sponsors, and spectators are all navigating a landscape where public perception moves faster than traditional systems ever did.

That reality can be uncomfortable. It can also be valuable. Because if the sport wants to continue growing in the modern era, it cannot selectively embrace visibility only when it is flattering. Transparency, accountability, and public scrutiny are now part of the landscape of elite sport—whether the industry is fully comfortable with it yet or not.

EDITORIAL BY TATJANA ZIEMER

WOOLF

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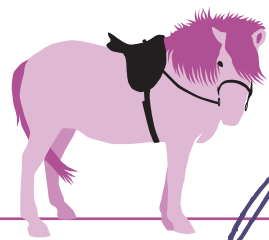
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pony time

My Experience at Rosewood Riders Pony Club

by Keona Jackson

When I started 4th grade, I had little knowledge or interest about horses. Sure, I had done a few horse camps, but that didn't teach me much, or let me bond with the horse I rode. But when I had my first lesson in September, and went to my first meeting in October, I fell in love with Pony Club! Then, in January, I became an official member of the Rosewood Riders. Before January, I had more lessons and I got to know Angel, the pony I ride.

Angel is 29 and has 2 children, Mikey and Maraide. Angel and her kids have cushings, so their treats are celery. Angel is so sweet, and I love riding her. Whenever I go to the barn, Angel, Mikey and Maraide know they are getting grain and celery treats. They all stand near the gate waiting for me and my mom, the picture shows Angel staring at me while I'm getting her grain. I love spending time with the ponies!

Pony Club has taught me a lot, not just horsemanship, but speaking skills, leadership skills, and presentation skills. Not only that, but I've made some good friends too. I always look forward to my lessons which are very fun, and I'm learning to jump! Mimi teaches the lessons, and is the leader of Rosewood Riders. Mimi has taught me so much, like how to put a saddle on, horsemanship, and rules of Dressage. Pony Club is a place where everyone belongs.



KIDS

If you would like to contribute an article, drawing, poem, puzzle or recipe to be published in Pony Time contact Shonna at: StableConnections.sb@gmail.com



MILA'S PICKS



MILA: 6-year-old dressage rider & vaulter at Kildarra Equestrian

PONY: Tina, a 9-year-old. Owned by mom since Tina was 3 months old

ASPIRATIONS: Ride off the lead line in a dressage show & to compete in vaulting at the canter



Q: What are your favorite brand of breeches?

A: I like Free Ride breeches because they are comfortable and they fit me well and they come in a lot of colors... My favorite is raspberry.

Q: What brand of gloves do you ride in and why do you like them?

A: My favorite gloves are LeMieux. I like them because they don't flop around and they help me hold onto the reins. I feel like I'm not even wearing gloves and they don't distract me.



Q: Can you tell me about your helmet?

A: I used to have helmets that pinched my chin and squeezed my head. My mom got me a 1K helmet in a custom size and it is comfortable and it looks good. I also decorated it myself.

Q: What kind of saddle do you ride in?

A: Inky Dinky. I like it because when I was a baby it used to have big pads that helped me stay on my pony, and now that I am better at riding, I can use smaller pads that are more like a regular saddle, but I still feel safe.



PRINT ME OUT & COLOR ME!



JULY

July 6-10, 2026
Curious Colts Summer Camp
All the King's Horses, Calistoga, CA
Contact Erin King 415-385-8354

July 19, 2026
Marin Chapter Summer Dressage Show*** / Petaluma, CA
Contact Kathleen Goldstein
415-608-2770, Lv2trot1@aol.com

July 22-26, 2026
Sonoma Horse Park Summer Classic / Petaluma, CA
www.sonomahorsepark.com

July 25, 2026
Woodbridge Dressage Schooling Show / Petaluma, CA
woodbridge-farmdressage.com

July 25-26, 2026
POWER OF PRESENCE Personal Wellbeing Retreat with Horses
Kenwood, CA
Kim & Todd Shook 269-352-9347
staff@ealacademy.com

July 25-26, 2026
Lester Buckley Clinic
All the King's Horses, Calistoga, CA
Contact Erin King 415-385-8354

July 26-31, 2026
Curious Colts Summer Camp
All the King's Horses, Calistoga, CA
Contact Erin King 415-385-8354

July 29-August 2, 2026
Giant Steps Charity Classic Sonoma Horse Park
Petaluma, CA
Contact Lyn Nelson
lyn@sonomahorsepark.com

AUGUST

August 1-2, 2026
Lauren Sprieser Clinic
Alko Equestrian Center, Napa, CA
alkoequestriancenter.com

August 29, 2026
Woodbridge Dressage Schooling Show / Petaluma, CA
woodbridge-farmdressage.com

August 30, 2026
Cavaletti Clinic at Woodbridge Farm / Petaluma, CA
Erika Jansson 707-326-7612

SEPTEMBER

September 2-6, 2026
Sonoma Horse Park Fall Classic I
Petaluma, CA
Contact Lyn Nelson
lyn@sonomahorsepark.com

September 9-16, 2026
Advanced Equine Guided Education / Santa Rosa, CA
Contact Ariana Strozzi Mazzucchi
707-338-9817

September 9-13, 2026
Sonoma Horse Park Fall Classic II
Petaluma, CA
Contact Lyn Nelson
lyn@sonomahorsepark.com

September 26, 2026
Woodbridge Dressage Schooling Show / Petaluma, CA
woodbridge-farmdressage.com

September 27, 2026
Cavaletti Clinic at Woodbridge Farm / Petaluma, CA
Erika Jansson 707-326-7612

OCTOBER

October 23-25, 2026
Freedom Cowgirl Retreat
Santa Rosa, CA
Contact Ariana Strozzi Mazzucchi
707-338-9817

October 25, 2026
Cavaletti Clinic at Woodbridge Farm / Petaluma, CA
Erika Jansson 707-326-7612

October 31, 2026
Woodbridge Dressage Schooling Show / Petaluma, CA
woodbridge-farmdressage.com

NOVEMBER

November 21-22, 2026
Chris Ellsworth Clinic
All the King's Horses, Calistoga, CA
Contact Erin King 415-385-8354

November 22, 2026
Cavaletti Clinic at Woodbridge Farm / Petaluma, CA
Erika Jansson 707-326-7612

DECEMBER

December 13, 2026
Cavaletti Clinic at Woodbridge Farm / Petaluma, CA
Erika Jansson 707-326-7612



ADVICE STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH

★ This is a good day for a good day.

★ Believe in the journey.

★ Staying positive is the only way to learn.

★ It takes two to pull.

★ A nice pat is as good as cookie but a carrot is nice too :)

★ If you're 1% better today, then in a year you'll be 365% better.

★ Many paths lead to the same destination.

★ When in doubt, leave it out.

★ Hysteria does not make things better. Smile!!!

★ If you're getting the wrong answer, ask another question.

★ A well-groomed horse is a happy horse.

★ Sometimes you have to let go to go slower.

★ The score does not necessarily reflect the high level of play.

★ Jump the jump in front of you.

★ Pull up your Big Girl Pants.



If you have a question for Scout, email AskScoutQuestions@gmail.com



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