



# EQUESTRIAN TRAILBLAZER

## Spring 2023

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## President's Message – Elizabeth Hudson Greetings SRVHA Friends!

It's raining again as I write this. Rain is good. We need rain. Lots of rain provides the moisture deep into the soil that our native plants depend on. "March comes in like a lion and leaves like a lamb". The tradeoff for this bountiful rain was having to cancel some of our scheduled monthly rides and a much-anticipated camping trip in late April at Del Valle. Fear not - we are almost through the rainy season. This year the hills will be green for longer, and the wild flowers are starting to bloom into what should be a beautiful, exuberant display this spring. I'm ready!

This gets me excited about the club events we have coming up.

- April 23 is a free saddle fitting clinic by expert Carmi Weininger, outside at a barn in Walnut Creek that has been part of the equestrian scene forever. This is an opportunity to both learn from an expert and enjoy in person socializing.
- May 13 we'll ride the trails from CMDTRA to downtown Clayton for lunch. An added delight of this "Mom's on Mares" ride is the public's delight at seeing horses up close and personal in town. You can ride or opt to join us for

## 2023 Board Members:

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### Horse Camping Coordinator:

- Deb Johnston:  
[johnston2bit@gmail.com](mailto:johnston2bit@gmail.com)



*Just pull it on up, get on and let's go!*

lunch.

- June 4 is our "Reunion" ride, named in celebration of the ability to reunite in-person after two plus years of COVID isolation. This ride starts at Diablo Foothills and ends up with lunch in a private equestrian backyard.
- July 6-10 is our annual Jack Brook camping trip with cool riding in the redwoods and amenities galore. If you are new to the club you'll get rave reviews from any old timer.

We recognize that while we all share "that horse gene", members can't always ride. That's why we plan many events, like those above, that let the horseless join the riders for a congenial meal or gathering. Flyers will be emailed with details for each event.

So, mark your calendars and join us with or without a trusty steed. And don't forget your camera. The flowers will be blooming.

If you have comments or questions, feel free to email me at [e\\_hudson@comcast.net](mailto:e_hudson@comcast.net). Just make sure you start with "SRVHA" in the subject line so that I pay attention.

**Elizabeth Hudson ~ SRVHA President**



## East Bay Parks Briones Regional Park-- Pilot Project



Get out and ride in the Briones Regional Park Pilot Zone!

We all know the saying, 'use it or lose it', right? This spring is an important time to exercise our rights and enjoy our beautiful regional trails. SRVHA is a trail riding association and trail use in our parks is a growing issue. Equestrians need to speak up and advocate for our needs more effectively.

East Bay Regional Parks District will be conducting a 2-year pilot program to test different trail use rules in Briones Regional Park from the Alhambra Staging Area in late April. One of the new rules being tested will allow only horses and hikers on *even* weekend days, and only bikes and hikers on *odd* weekend days.

There will be trail counters stationed, tracking what type of user is on the trails. One of the best ways to advocate for equestrians would be to vote with your feet, all 6 of them: ***Ride your trails on even weekend days and demonstrate that we treasure riding on safe and conflict free trails.***

The more horses seen on the trail, the more influence equestrians will have on future trail use. The link to the Briones Pilot website is <https://www.ebparks.org/parks/briones/briones-pilot-project>

Please consider sending a comment to staff via the website. Make equestrian voices heard!

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## Equestrian Podcasts to Check Out on Rainy Days



So, what's a rider to do on those rainy spring days after the barn chores are wrapped up? Sure, you could [clean and condition your tack](#). Or... How about you pour yourself a warm beverage, start a fire, and check out some equestrian podcasts! Here are a few to get you started.

### **Straight from the Horse Doctor's Mouth: Dr. Erica Lacher and Justin Long**

Equine veterinarian Dr. Erica Lacher and show host Justin Long discuss horse healthcare, and proper care and maintenance. Whether your horse is an athlete or a lawn ornament, you'll learn something that will help you be a better horse owner!

<https://springhillequine.libsyn.com>

### **3Things from EQUUS**

You've got a lot to do! Focus your horse keeping efforts with the EQUUS Three Things podcast. This monthly podcast will highlight specific areas of horse keeping for the month ahead with a simple list of action items.

<https://soundcloud.com/3things-from-equus>

### **The Ride brought to you by Horse & Rider**

A bi-weekly podcast hosted by Horse & Rider Editor Nichole Chirico. In each episode, Chirico sits down with some of the industry's top trainers, clinicians, and professionals to share inspiring stories, training philosophies, and the importance of living your best Western horse life.

<https://horseandrider.com>

### **Happy Trails, by Jessica Isbrecht**

Happy Trails, the podcast for trail riders, is an entertaining and informative platform for horse enthusiasts to share trail riding experiences and ideas.

<https://rideclimb.com>

Send any of your own favorites to Sheraden @snicholau@gmail.com so they can be featured in upcoming issues of the SRVHA newsletter!



## Five Ways to Improve your Horse's Fitness this Spring

From <https://www.wehorse.com> Newsletter, March 1, 2023

Ready to say goodbye to winter and get ready for spring? Us too!

If your horse has had the winter off from riding, it's important to begin its spring training with its health and current fitness level in mind and make a plan from there.

### Here are five ways to improve your horse's fitness this spring:

1. Gradually increase exercise: Begin with short rides or lunging sessions, then gradually increase the length and difficulty of the exercise.
2. Consistent exercise schedule: Set a regular exercise schedule and stick to it, even if it means getting up early or riding in the rain.
3. Incorporate varied workouts: Include a mix of flatwork, jumping, and conditioning exercises such as hill work and trot sets.
4. Proper nutrition: Ensure that your horse is receiving a balanced diet, with appropriate amounts of protein, carbohydrates, and fats, and that it has access to fresh water at all times.
5. Regular veterinary check-ups: Your vet can provide guidance on your horse's overall fitness and help you develop a plan to improve its fitness in a safe and healthy way.



Visit the [home page here](#).

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## Enriched Stalls for Horses

Full article available at:  
<https://enrichingequines.com/enriched-stalls-for-horses-make-stall-time-better-for-your-horse/>



If you have to keep your horse in a stall, creating the best environment possible is a must for preserving mental and physical health. There's more to a good stall environment than popping in a toy or two and calling it done!

What is Enrichment for Horses?

We usually think of enrichment as toys, or boredom busters. But there's more to the idea of enrichment than colorful playthings or boredom relief for horses.

Enrichment goes deeper than that – it's anything we do or provide that promotes *species behavior*. For horses, this means setting up the environment with objects or features that give horses the chance to do things like grazing, socializing, and moving long distances each day. So, an enriched environment is



one that creates the opportunity for horse to act like horses. Enriched environments, indoor or out, contain enrichment that promotes natural equine behavior... Enriched stalls usually feature:

- Forage available 24/7, such as in a slow feed net (find more on different hay nets\_in this guide)
- Food toys or puzzles given regularly during the day
- Ample bedding for comfort
- Sensory items that offer scents, sounds, or textures
- Self-grooming devices like scratching pads

Read more from this [article here](#).

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## **Horse Slaughter in North America: U.S. Live Exports Fade as Foreign Demand Abates: An Investigative Report on Horses and Other Equines Sent to Slaughter in Canada and Mexico**

Read the report at: <https://animalwellnessaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Horse-Slaughter-Report.pdf>

In 2007, a series of coincident maneuvers in the federal courts, in the Illinois Legislature, and in Congress led to the closing of all horse slaughter plants. At that point, the movement of U.S.-born horses for slaughter shifted exclusively to Canada and Mexico, which had slaughter plants operating not far from the U.S. borders to accept horses of American origin to supplement their in-country supply.



Congress, however, has not shut down the trade with our North American neighbors, allowing this





economically and culturally marginalized industry to limp along. Animal Wellness Action, a national nonprofit organization devoted to legal standards against animal cruelty, initiated a successful, broadly supported amendment in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2021 to forbid live equine exports, but the U.S. Senate did not take up the matter, and it died.

Today numbers shipped have dwindled from 350,000 to 100,000 to 20,000... Congress is now ever closer to passing a bill that will stop slaughter of our horses both at home and abroad.

Read the full [report here](#).

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## **Black Equestrians Want to be Safe. But They Can't Find Helmets**

By McKenna Oxenden for the New York Times, March 3, 2023

Read the full article:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/03/sports/black-equestrians-helmets-safety.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>



Caitlin Gooch on her farm in Wendell, N.C.

For those with natural hair, which for many is a



declaration of pride and Black identity, finding a helmet that fits properly can be nearly impossible, creating yet another barrier to full inclusion. Some are now lobbying for change, mindful that horseback riding is among the leading causes of sports-related traumatic brain injury. The helmet companies say there isn't a simple fix...

Helmet inclusivity is important, Black equestrians said, because it could mean the difference between life and death. [A 2019 study](#) published in the journal *Sports Medicine* found that 70 percent of reported equestrian falls caused a head injury. Wearing a properly fitting helmet helped prevent more serious injuries, such as skull fractures, the study found...

### **People Are Different, Hair Is Different'**

Several prominent equestrian helmet manufacturers contacted by The New York Times said they were not aware that many Black riders struggled with helmet fit. Others said they recognized that it was an issue and were working to address it, while cautioning that bringing a new helmet to market is a costly undertaking that can take years.

The Times spoke with nearly a dozen Black riders, several of whom described searches for properly fitting helmets that dragged on for months or even years. Some said they had been turned away from equestrian stores by employees who said they couldn't help them. A few said they had manipulated helmets by stuffing them or cutting the lining...

"There's a real need to address it and absolutely zero desire to do it," he said. "If you owned a helmet company you could decide to solve this problem tomorrow."

Companies that make equipment used in other sports have taken steps to adapt helmets and other gear to accommodate Black athletes' natural hair.

Riddell, one of the leading manufacturers of helmets used by N.F.L. players, has developed a helmet with customized "precision-fit" padding, [ensuring that any hairstyle will fit](#). And last year, the International Swimming Federation [approved the Soul Cap](#), which accommodates thicker, curlier hair, for use in major competitions... Charles Owen, a popular helmet company that sponsors Olympic athletes, is working on "several solutions" to help customers whose hairstyles often change and expects to introduce them sometime this year, Alex Burek, the company's marketing director, said...

[Read the full article here.](#)



Aderes James, 10, who follows a two-hour routine to get her Dutch braids to fit under her riding helmet