



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Oct. 1

Patrick Spanton jumping clinic

Info: 310-377-3507

Portuguese Bend Riding Club

Oct. 3-4

Gil Merrick dressage clinic

Info: Pam Schachter, 310-749-5823

To be determined.

Oct. 5-13

Wylene Wilson clinics

Info: 310-704-7226

Ernie Howlett Park

Oct. 9, 10, 16, 23

Louise Koch dressage clinics

Info: 310-377-3507

Portuguese Bend Riding Club

Oct. 18

Rebecca Rigdon dressage clinic

Info: 310-377-3507

Portuguese Bend Riding Club

Oct. 20

Dapplegray Play Day

Dapplegray Private Arena

Oct. 24

PVPHA general meeting

Empty Saddle Club

Oct. 25-27

Tom Curtin clinic

Info: Kim Glaza, 310-345-3272

Ernie Howlett Park

Oct. 26-27

Lee Smith clinic

Info: Kim Glaza, 310-345-3272

Ernie Howlett Park

Events listed here are not necessarily sponsored or endorsed by the Palos Verdes Peninsula Horsemen's Association. To add an event, send the information to pvpha2010@gmail.com.

Road to the Mustang Million

by **SANDY VALERI**
SPECIAL TO THE DISPATCH

Palos Verdes rider Cheryl Dair hit the road with her mustang Sierra, and headed to the Mustang Million competition in Fort Worth, Texas earlier this month. Dair and her boyfriend, Chris Linka, drove and trailered Sierra to the Sept. 16-21 event.

The Mustang Million is sponsored by the Mustang Heritage Foundation, whose mission is to increase successful adoption of wild horses from Bureau of Land Management holding facilities. For this event, 1,000 horses were specially designated for adoption at four specific occasions. Only horses adopted at one of these specified auctions could be entered in the competition.

Dair adopted Sierra, a 3-year-old filly, in Norco on May 5. That gave her just over 3 months to transform

a wild horse that had never been touched before into a willing, trusting, show-ready riding partner. This is a truly remarkable feat, made even more incredible by the fact that this is the first horse that Dair has ever gentled or trained by herself from the ground up. The results are nothing short of astounding.

At a recent demonstration, Dair rode Sierra both under saddle and bareback at the walk, trot and canter. Sierra pivoted and side-passed with precision, and walked over a rustling tarp. The filly lay down, allowed Dair to remount while reclined, and then stood back up with Dair sitting on her back. Dair also stood on Sierra's back, blindfolded the horse and rode her, and rode her while facing backwards. These are tricks we are accustomed to seeing in the movies, but rarely are displayed in our own barns.

See MUSTANG, Page 8.

NEXT PVPHA GENERAL MEETING: OCT. 24

Lee Smith headlines October meeting

by **NICOLE MOORADIAN**
DISPATCH EDITOR

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Horsemen's Association general meeting for October will feature clinician Lee Smith. For more information on Smith, see page 2.

Please note the new date for the meeting—Oct. 24. The meeting will still be held at the Empty Saddle Club at 7 p.m.

As a reminder, the Empty Saddle Club requests that meeting attendees leave their dogs at home. U

NEWS BRIEFS

PVPHA board election results

All four incumbents were re-elected to the Palos Verdes Peninsula Horsemen's Association Board of Directors at the August general meeting.

Kelly Yates is the vice president of fiscal affairs; Erin Ryan remains the recording secretary; Michelle Sanborn will continue as treasurer; and Betsy Schoettlin will serve a second term as the vice president of education.

RHE City Celebration, poker ride fun for all

The annual Rolling Hills Estates City Celebration, which took place Sept. 21, featured booths, a corn pit, petting zoo and the annual volleyball game between the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Lomita Station and RHE city staff.

Equestrian activities included the annual gymkhana, a trail competition and a mounted shooting demonstration, as well as the PVPHA Poker Ride.

The poker ride raised more than \$1,000 for the PVPHA and the RHE Peppertree Foundation, with 150 hands sold. The top prizes went to Donna Hilgendorf (veterinary services from Ruth Sobeck, DVM), Lorna Salem (swim party at South Bay Aquatics) and Sierra Ryan (lessons from Rachel Goldsmith).

Special thanks to the multitude of volunteers who ran the booth and passed out cards along the route, as well as those who donated prizes. U

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Trainer Lee Smith's 3-day video clinic to be 'intensive,' 'revealing'

by **BETSY SCHOETTLIN**
VP OF EDUCATION

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Horsemen's Association and Lee Smith invite you to attend a powerful, intense and rewarding clinic that will open the door to meet the horse that lives behind the hide and hair.

Smith started riding young, but it was when she met Ray Hunt that her outlook and approach with regards to horses really changed. Her training philosophy is based on Hunt's teaching and emphasizes working from the horse's perspective.

"If you could see what I see, then you'd know what to do," says Smith.

The video clinic—the most intense and revealing of all Smith's clinics—allows the student to learn to do just that! This all-day event, with limited rider participation and little groundwork is the most effective for personal growth.

The Oct. 25-27 clinic will be a three-day clinic with two riding sessions each day. Smith will film all of the riders each morning, have a review and coaching session where each rider will be evaluated in a classroom setting through lunch, and close each day with a coached riding session.

The clinic costs \$600 for three 9-to-5 days of riding and learning at Ernie Howlett Park, and there are only 15 spaces available. A deposit is required to reserve your space, and limited overnight stabling is available at the park.

For more about Lee, see her website at leesmith-diamonds.com. For more information about participating in or auditing the Lee Smith Video Clinic, please contact Kim Glaza at 310-345-3272. U



CONTRIBUTED

Lee Smith.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Shetland ponies Cookie and Sugar hustle out of a timed obstacle with Catherine Starr and Nancy Wildman.

Combined driving events grow in popularity

by CATHERINE STARR
SPECIAL TO THE DISPATCH

Nancy Wildman and Catherine Starr recently competed with two enthusiastic Shetland ponies in a combined driving event in Wilton, Calif. Wildman acted as navigator of the tricky 14-kilometer marathon course while Starr drove.

Combined driving events, or CDEs, are held over three days. The first day is compulsory figures on an enlarged dressage court. The second day is the marathon, which must be driven within a time frame that's fast enough to show the equines are fit. Within the marathon are maze-like obstacles that must be driven at speed. The third day is "cones," in which the horses must be driven fast between about 20 sets of cones with tennis balls balanced on top and tight wheel clearance.

There is a growing interest in the sport of horse driving, particularly in combined driving. All kinds of equines, including mules and minis, compete.

A surprising number of CDEs are held within a reasonable driving distance of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. At most competitions, entry level classes with easier requirements are designed to encourage novices. The higher-level classes attract drivers with awesome skill. Lots of people go just to watch. You have not lived until you have seen horses race full speed through a tight maze, carriage skidding behind them.

If you are interested in learning more about driving or CDEs, the American Driving Society has a helpful website. Of course, feel free to contact Wildman or Starr. U

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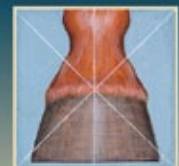
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Trainer's positive reinforcement is 'On Target'



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Shawna Karrasch developed her On Target Training while working with orcas at Sea World in San Diego and later with horses at a farm owned by John and Beezie Madden.

by **BETSY SCHOETTLIN**
VP OF EDUCATION

Shawna Karrasch's On Target Training is a proven positive reinforcement training technique. Used by professionals and Olympic-caliber riders as well as amateur riders, her unique system dramatically accelerates the training process for any breed or discipline by unlocking a horse's natural desire to perform. What results is an incredible bond between human and horse—a partnership based on success.

Karrasch spent nearly 10 years working to perfect her training skills not with horses, but in the pools at Sea World in San Diego with orcas, dolphins, sea otters and other marine mammals. While working with sea mammals, Karrasch refined the art of motivating them to participate and learn in a positive environment with boundaries, not just for tricks but for safety and health management. After all, you can't force a killer whale to do anything unless it wants to! Just try to get a blood or urine sample from one. Yep, that's right—she trained a whale to pee in a cup. And you thought worming a horse was tough!

After John Madden discovered Karrasch's On Target Training, he invited her to work at his world-renowned training facility with his wife, Beezie, an Olympic and international show jumping team member.

The Madden farm became Karrasch's proving ground for adapting and fine tuning the On Target Training process from sea mammals to horses. Beezie Madden soon found that her horses "began to have an idea of when they were doing something right, and then they clearly had

Portuguese Bend Riding Club
Upcoming Clinics and Events

Hunter/Jumper
Rob Gage: September 27-29 Patrick Spanton: September 24 and October 1

Dressage
Louise Koch:
September 25 and 26 October 9, 10, 16, and 23 November 6, 7, 13, 17, and 20

Rebecca Rigdon: October 18

Trainers:
Hunter/Jumper: Jen Hannink
Riding School: Mary Hirsch
Western: Callie Bell

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the desire to do the right thing!”

In fact, Karrasch’s training helped fix a water jumping issue that Madden’s horse, Judgement, had previously developed.

Few visitors at Sea World ever got to see the remarkable training process that built the necessary trust and understanding between animal and trainer, actually unlocking the animal’s desire to perform.

The On Target Training system is safe, highly effective, and easy to use. It’s just as appropriate for problem solving and training issues as it is for safety training, bomb-proofing, tricks and just plain fun.

Olympic medalists Sue Blinks and Flim Flam and world-champion driving team Randy Caldwell and Kabam are Karrasch’s clients.

In addition to being a fabulous trainer, Karrasch is a fun and bubbly person who teaches On Target Train-

ing internationally. Come to the PVPHA meeting on Nov. 21 and find out for yourself!

Karrasch will also be teaching a two day clinic with live demonstrations of her techniques on Nov. 22-23. Please contact Kelly Yates at jerseyj2@cox.net or Betsy Schoettlin at elizabeth.schoettlin@gmail.com to sign up for the clinic. Auditors are welcome!

For more information on Karrasch, visit on-target-training.com and shawnakarrasch.com. U




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Shawna Karrasch at Sea World

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AFTER THE FALL:

Trainer Devon Gibson details recovery

by DEVON GIBSON
SPECIAL TO THE DISPATCH

On February 22, 2013, while showing in a hunter classic, I asked my horse to leave long and he scissored the jump, and flipped. I hit the ground face-first, but my body “scorpioned” over itself. In other words, my body curled over my head like a scorpion tail. Upon impact with the ground, I was conscious but paralyzed from the neck down.

I couldn't feel my legs or arms, and as I lay there, I thought to myself, “Is this what my life will be from now on?” That's when the stars started to align.

Being only two miles away, the paramedics arrived and immediately packed my spine from my head down in ice packs. Luckily, I had a paramedic who was up on spinal treatment, as it is not standard protocol for California paramedics. The paramedics called for a medevac helicopter. It was refueling at the airport right next door to the show grounds, so there was no waiting and only a seven-minute helicopter ride, versus 45 minutes in bumpy ambulance to the hospital. The hospital is a relatively new Level Two trauma unit in the Coachella Valley with a team of neurosurgeons who specialize in spinal cord injuries.

My injuries included a fractured C4 and 5 vertebrae, and destruction of all the supporting ligaments. I also destroyed my disc between C3 and 4, and fractured L1. The paralysis came from the fractured C vertebrae; however, the spinal cord injury was “incomplete,” meaning it was bruised and swollen but not permanently damaged.

The surgery included having a rod inserted on each side of my spinal cord from C3 to C6 with a screw in each vertebra to stabilize my neck, and a laminectomy of C3 and C4 (a procedure to remove part of the spinal vertebra to alleviate pressure on the cord). After the procedures, my surgeon felt I had a 95 percent chance for a full recovery, thanks in part to the paramedics' actions, so I took that ball and ran with it! Soon after the surgery, I could wiggle my hands and feet—a great sign and a great feeling for me, but a tough road still lay ahead.

I remained in ICU for 10 days to stabilize my blood pressure and continue to recover. However, during that



PHOTO COURTESY SEAHORSE RIDING CLUB

UNDATED FILE PHOTO: Devon Gibson soars over a fence years before the accident.

time I had a steady stream of visitors, both from home and from the horse show. The show grounds were 40 minutes away and knowing what a long day most had, I was amazed at how many people came, brought me food, fed me (my hands still didn't work yet) kept me posted on the horse show and just made me laugh! It kept me going. That warmth and support was so unexpected and so unbelievably inspiring!

Due to the injury and no movement or exercise for so long, my muscles atrophied to almost nothing. I was transferred to an acute rehab center, the Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center in San Pedro, CA. It's one of the best facilities in the country, and the reason I was admitted so quickly is because a former student of mine is an occupational therapist there (another star aligned). She pushed to get me in.

When I arrived, four of my friends were waiting and sat with me until I was settled. Therapy was terrifying to me. I had no idea what to expect, but right off the staff was welcoming and wonderfully helpful and supportive.

My daily therapy was hard, but at the end of the day it was so gratifying because the therapists never let me get down; every day I was getting better. They made me realize that everything they asked of me to do—I could do. (A lot like teaching riding.) I wanted so badly to get better, and to have some semblance of normalcy back.

During my five weeks in therapy, I was once again visited constantly by friends from home and the horse show world. My Sundays were filled from morning until evening with visitors who brought me goodies and laughter.

I feel that so much of my successful recovery was fueled by the unending and unselfish support from everyone. I was constantly getting texts, cards, phone calls, and visits. I have also become a believer in the power of positive thoughts and prayer. I never felt alone.

After seven weeks of hospitalization, I went home. I remember one of my therapists saying to me when I had messed up an exercise and I started to say, “I should have...” he chimed in, “Don’t ‘should’ on yourself,” with a smile. My life at home has been inspired by that expression. I make sure at the end of the day there are no “should haves” in my day.

I started driving and teaching again at 10 weeks; got on a horse at 12 weeks; and at 15 weeks, I could swim without sinking. At four-and-a-half months, I could swim and tread water, walk one-third of a mile, ride at the walk for 30 minutes and am just starting to trot again. I have been to multiple horse shows where I instructed my riders and it just keeps getting better each day!

Want to know what I have learned from all of this? While watching a show on TV, which involved a woman who was struggling through a tough battle with cancer, she asked a Reverend, “Why am I going through this?”

His response was, “To learn of the goodness and graciousness of humanity.”

How true! U

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PHOTO COURTESY SEAHORSE RIDING CLUB

UNDATED FILE PHOTO: Seahorse trainer Devon Gibson, mounted, chats with colleague Christie Arbuckle years before Gibson's accident.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Cheryl Dair purchased Sierra, a 3-year-old “wild” mustang filly, at auction in May. In September, the pair competed in the Mustang Million competition in Fort Worth, Texas.

MUSTANG: Local woman had about 100 days to train wild horse

Continued from Page 1.

Dair was characteristically humble about her accomplishments, giving all the credit to the horse.

“People say that I trained her, but I say she trained me,” she said. “It never felt like training—we were just playing together.”

Her training program is based on relationship and trust. It took two days before Sierra willingly allowed Dair to touch her, but 12 short days later she was on the filly’s back, taking her first ride. She was gratified by how smoothly it all went—a testament to the preparation and ground work that came first.

Most of her subsequent training took place on the trail. She stated that they both found the arena boring, whereas the trail provided many more learning opportunities.

At the Mustang Million event, Dair competed with hundreds of seasoned horse trainers, and most of them are professionals, including some well-known clinicians. While she would have loved to come home with a prize, she was truly excited for the opportunity to share what she has done with Sierra, and see what other trainers have done with their horses.

Dair is looking to re-home Sierra, and find her a great new human partner. Dair admitted adjustment will be difficult and sad, but it is part of the process and absolutely necessary so that she can adopt another wild mustang and do it all over again. U

Local rider wins big at Portuguese Bend

by NICOLE MOORADIAN
PALOS VERDES PATCH

Both local equestrians and the Peninsula Committee Children’s Hospital won big at the 56th annual Portuguese Bend National Horse Show in Rolling Hills Estates this weekend.

Lindsey Douglass, a Palos Verdes resident who attends school at Stanford University, won the \$10,000 Barby Hartwig Hereford Junior/Amateur Owner Jumper Classic and earned the second-place spot in the \$15,000 Seahorse Jumper Classic aboard her horse Butterfly Tibri Z.

Douglass was also named the Best Adult Rider at the show, according to official results.

Marnye Langer rode Legis Rockstar to the win in the Seahorse Jumper Classic, and Ransome Rombauer won the annual Pacific Coast Horsemen’s Association Horsemanship Finals. Numerous local riders took home other prizes.

Though the PCCH, which hosts the annual horse show as a fundraiser for Children’s Hospital, does not disclose the amount of money raised from individual events, publicity chairwoman Caro Miguelez said the organization has raised more than \$13 million since its founding.

Miguelez said she also believed that this year’s horse show raised more money than last year’s event.

“We certainly had fabulous attendance,” she said. U

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NICOLE MOORADIAN

Lindsey Douglass and Butterfly Tibri Z.

Why I ride in clinics

by **KIM GLAZA**

SPECIAL TO THE DISPATCH

A clinic offers a unique opportunity to spend concentrated time with my horse with plenty of other horses around, and a world class horseman teaching me. A clinic helps me see where I am having trouble with my horse, as well as places where I didn't even know we needed improvement. Clinics also offer a chance to learn from difficulties other riders are having with their horses.

Most of us ride for an hour several times a week. In a clinic, I am with my horse for several hours both morning and afternoon for at least two days. This amount of time and effective teaching creates an environment for very concentrated learning for both my horse and me. Several hours spent together allow us to settle into working together. With the amount of time we usually spend with our horses, they can usually put up with us treating them how we want. But if heading home isn't going to happen after 40 or so minutes, our presentation of what we want from our horse needs to fit them better. There are also more horses in a clinic than we usually ride with, offering lots of activity, which can be upsetting for some horses. Having the time and the help of the clinician to work through this upset is amazing.

A lot of riding people do is in limited places and limited ways. We have all heard, "Oh, my horse won't go on that trail" or, "We only ride in the arena if there are less than two other horses." We usually hear these things because the rider doesn't want to upset her horse; she is trying to control the external environment for the pair. In a clinic, you don't control the environment—with the help of the clinician, you use the environment to help you and your horse. Being able to work through something that usually upsets your horse gives both of you confidence.

With a group of riders, everyone is working from a different place, which offers more opportunities to learn. I might not have a problem slowing my horse down right now, but I might need help with that in the future. If I watch someone else get help with that particular problem, I will have the tools when I need them.

Not being too close to a situation offers a clearer picture of the problem and how to fix it. When it is our own horse having issues, we are sometimes too emotionally

involved to understand the help being offered. When we watch someone with the same problem, we can see the help more clearly. Both of these opportunities are only available in group—not private—lessons.

I ride in clinics to continue learning about myself, my riding and my horse. Everybody should continue to learn, but learning is limited without coaching. For example, I have ridden horses for about 32 years, but just this spring I learned a better riding position at a clinic. This change has dramatically improved my communication with my horse, but it would not have come if I has not been riding in a clinic.

I ride with clinicians that are excellent horsemen as well as excellent teachers—two abilities that do not always go hand-in-hand. There are good riders and horseman, but if they can't teach me how to do what they do so that I can do it with my horse, it doesn't help me. For me, a good teacher is able to break things down and communicate ideas and actions clearly so that I can try them with my horse. A great teacher is able to adjust to fit all horses and all riders. It is important to note that good horsemanship applies to all disciplines, all horses and all riders.

I watch clinicians handle the horses as well as the people. Do the horses that they are handling look happy? Or are they just getting a job done. Do the horses swish their tails and chew the bit? I want more than someone that can force a horse to do something. There are lots of people and devices for forcing horses. I want a clinician that can do and get more from the horse by doing less. I want to leave a clinic with more understanding about me and my horse than I came with.

Riding your horse in a clinic isn't always easy, but it's well worth it. U

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Dispatch edited by Nicole Mooradian.

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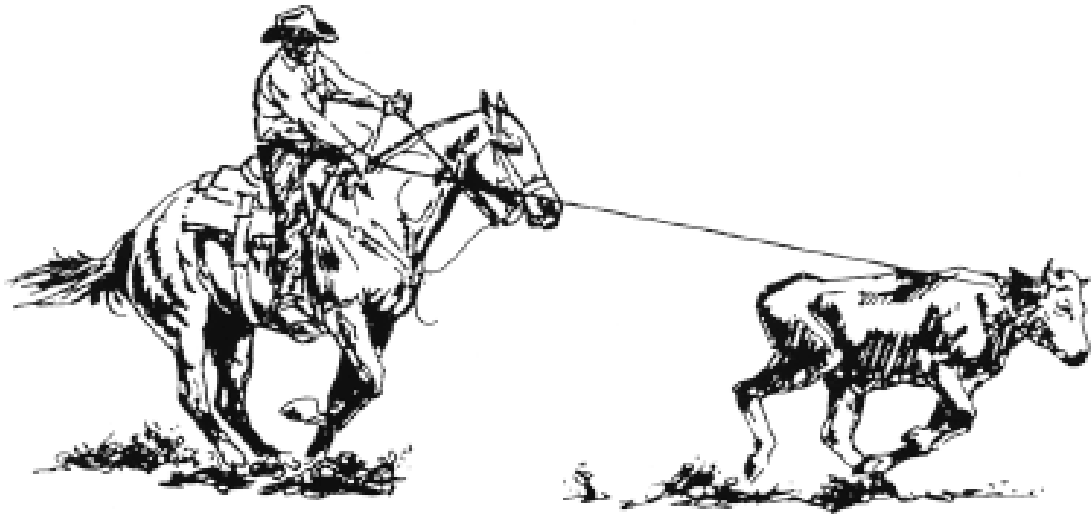
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