



# HOOFBEATS

EDITED BY HEIDI YOUNG, ENTRIES FROM CLUB MEMBERS ...

Membership forms and previous newsletters and articles and an expanded calendar are all on our website at: [www.gaitedhorseclub.com](http://www.gaitedhorseclub.com)

Facebook: Search for "Southern Comfort Gaited Horse Club" or click this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/636027703108388/> and request to be added. Here, club members can post pictures or share quickly and easily. This is a private group for members only.

Lifelight Insurance: Club members get a discounted rate of \$15 off the \$60/year rate for a family. We all renew together in July for a policy start date of July 31. [www.lifelight.org](http://www.lifelight.org)

Our June meeting will be on Monday, June 13th at Sandy Young's house: 6800 East Greenhurst Road in Nampa; just east of Robinson Road at the railroad tracks. (Cross them to enter her property.)

**Socializing and potluck dinner at 6:30; please bring a dish to share (enough for 4-6 people).** Sandy will have some chicken, tea and lemonade. At 7:00 we will have with a 30 minute lecture on fire safety. Meeting will start at 7:30.

## *July 4th parade in STAR*

*From Heidi Young*

About ten of us are participating in the parade in the town of Star. Some are getting busy with ideas on decorating our horses. Feel free to do whatever you want; there are no uniform requirements, just wear something patriotic. And Lois is making a red serape that says "Gaited Horse Club". I have TONS of ribbon that people can use that morning.



Star is a small-enough town that the parade excitement shouldn't be TOO overwhelming to your horse. We all know our overly-intelligent horses don't appreciate silliness from the sidelines. But if you ever wanted to TRY a parade, here is a low-key venue to see how it goes. If MY horse can do it; YOUR horse can do it!

Line up starts at 9 am, actual parade begins at 10 am and should be over by ... 10:20. Hey, its a small town ! Contact me if you want to join the fun. But more importantly, who is bringing the mimosas for the party afterwards??

## Subtle Abuse: When Aids Become Weapons

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by [Anna Blake](#) on March 21, 2014

My client's mare is lovely; a very well-bred athletic horse. When my client bought her, the previous owner suggested my client get a cowboy to ride her at first as she needed spurs all the time and the horse was 'mare-y'.

My client decided the best course of action was working on the fundamentals. That's where I came in. My initial feeling was that the young mare was pushed hard and fast. She needed some decompress time and although she looked for the familiar spur pain, we took a slow approach to give her time to notice the fighting had stopped.

The mare was absolutely terrified of plastic bags and oddly, because it was an out-of-context fear compared to her wonderful, smart personality in general. She was not at all spooky.

One day my client sent me to the breeder's website and I watched several videos of them with young horses. In each video, the humans were aggressively stepping forward, viciously flapping bags at the weanling's eyes. I got squinty just watching. The young horses were confused more than obedient, and some were truly frightened. The breeders seemed to have no awareness of the response, never gave a release, and of course, there was no reward. It's just bad horsemanship.

In a way, these sale videos showed fearful rescue horses. Worst of all, I saw what my client saw. The impact of this early work had infected the whole training process. Was this where her defensiveness began? Sure looked like it to me.

No, I don't think plastic bags are cruel. They are just bags, for crying out loud. There is no innate wickedness in spurs or whips or side reins, or the biggest one for me, bits. This blog topic is in response to a request from a reader. These are her words:

"I'm not talking about clear and extreme cases of abuse, but rather more subtle cases. Perhaps ones where there are no visible wounds or scars, but the methods used are confusing, unfair, and do not take into account how horses learn. For example, when amateur owner with a "stubborn or challenging" horse meets inexperienced trainer. I add quotes because I believe often the horse is just confused or frustrated. I've seen cases where horses were hit over and over for no reason - no disobedience occurred - for the purpose of "desensitizing", or "teaching" it that the owner could hit it whenever they wanted and the horse had to accept it."

It's a long quote, but I don't think I can say it better. Most of us have seen the same thing.

When we don't get the response we want, rather than checking fundamentals and tuning up the rider's ask and the horse's response, we 'get a bigger gun'. More whip, spurs, a stronger bit. If a little is good, more is better. This is not just a bad idea, it is wrong.

It starts with good intention, coupled with a video recently watched. On top of this, some of us were born with body perception, those of us who were dancers or athletes, but the rest of us don't always know what our hands are doing way down there at the end of our arms. Our brains get attached to the technique we are attempting, we get frustrated we are losing forward so we get a little louder, and by this I mean harder, with our aids. Then we are still stuck in our heads thinking about obedience to our aids, and...

Oh, yeah, the horse. Maybe he is over-reacting or maybe he is shut down, but in either case you are just now noticing that his answer. There has been so much focus on using the aid, there was no listening to the horse.

People love to complain that with the internet and smartphones people aren't spending enough literal face time with family and friends. I feel that exact way about training aids. An inanimate training aid never replace an actual conversation where both sides try to understand each other.

If your aid isn't working and you think you need something stronger, try less. When your horse doesn't understand, yelling the same thing louder isn't the solution. Find a way to communicate clearer, use rewards to let the horse know they are getting warmer, closer to the right answer. Remember riding is an art, you need creativity. Lighten up, physically and mentally!

No joke, **whisper the cue**. Use a calf instead of a spur, or release the reins and ask. Use more brain and less brawn.

*"Every aid can achieve the exact opposite of its intended effect through exaggeration and poor timing. The continual rein aid lets the horse get stuck and resistant. The poorly timed or rough driving calf can bring disorder into the legs, the gait. The seat that drives too long and too intensively makes the horse roll away on the forehead."*

Gustav von Dreyhausen, from mid-1800's.

## Three Ways To Help You Ride Through Fear

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From Sass In Boots blog, June 2016

I've been thinking a lot about fear lately. I read a post by Lauren Mauldin who writes a blog called She Moved To Texas and she was talking about the trust bank, a term I'd never heard before, and it resonated with me. The idea behind the trust bank is that for every positive ride you have with your equine partner, you make a deposit in the bank. But every ride that goes awry, gets a little hinky erodes your trust in yourself and your mount. If you have too many of these rides you deplete the trust bank. You can read more about her thoughts on it here.

I think fear is an intriguing emotion. I know that the chemicals released during fear are cortisol and adrenaline for a flight or fight response. The chemical release is caused by our brains, but it seems like in this age, our brains should have advanced in what actually triggers a fear response. At one time someone told me that fear and excitement are the same thing just with different names. I get the sentiment, but excitement has an element of positive anticipation and subsequently the associated positive hormones like dopamine and endorphins.

The horse people I know who struggle with fear (myself included) struggle with little bubbles of fear that float up here and there. There isn't a constant pumping of terror from the entire experience. My little bubbles of fear typically float to the top when I am working at speed, not necessarily just at a lope, but when I'm pushing for a faster lope and into a gallop. Anytime the wind is pushing my hair back my mind starts thinking about all the things that could go wrong. That's not exactly the most productive thing to do with my brain.

I would say 95% of my riding anxiety is centered around loping. I avoid loping horses unfamiliar to me. But I don't feel that I dislike loping, or that I'm afraid of loping, per se. It's that I'm afraid of not being able to stop the lope, that my horse will spook or buck at the lope and separate me from the saddle in an aerial dismount. Some people might shake their heads at this and call me a weenie or say I should just get over it. That's fine if that's their opinion, but I think there are a lot more people out there who struggle with pockets of fear in their riding than we realize. Possibly because they are afraid if they admit their fear they'd be called a weenie.

To me, having little flashes of caution seems like a reasonable emotion to pop up every now and then. We ride animals that are around 1000 pounds with minds of their own and agendas of their own. Occasionally things are going to go wrong. And you hope they don't go so wrong that you get hurt. I recently wrote an article for Northwest Horse Source which you can find [here](#) about traumatic brain injuries in equestrians and tried a new western helmet. In looking at the research around equestrians and the prevalence of traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), there shouldn't be any doubt as to why we have occasional fear. We engage in an activity that accounts for 45.2% of TBIs among adults.

The idea of the trust bank really put into words something that I had come to know inherently: when I have several good rides with my horse, I feel more confident in my abilities as well as in his willingness to mind me. But the trust bank is a concept that allows for the idea that if you're writing a trust-bank check that's about to bounce, you should back off and work on tasks that build the trust back up. Previously when I had a bad ride or when Gangster was being squirrely, I would feel guilty if I didn't lope him. But that's part of the idea of the trust

bank: if you're feeling less than confident, build the bank balance back up with things you know you can do well, and leave the harder stuff for another day. A day perhaps when you and your horse are in a better place. Just make sure that day isn't 6 months down the road. You shouldn't avoid the hard stuff long term.

What's the other 5% of my riding anxiety? That other 5% is when G and I are navigating trail obstacles. Gangster is a little insecure when it comes to trail work and he tends to have dramatic reactions to silly little things on the trail (or the trail facsimile if we are working at a mountain trail show). The little spooks and startles and snorts jack up my anxiety, which causes a negative feedback loop for the two of us: He spooks, I get more stiff and anxious, he feels my anxiety and gets more stiff and reactive himself. My job during trail riding is to breathe deeply and work at being confident enough for the both of us, to be the leader.

I had the opportunity to chat with Jenifer De Vault, a licensed professional counselor, about fear as it pertains to riding. Before we got started talking about how to work through the fear, she mused about the fact that possibly part of the challenge in riding is the reconciliation that must happen of a strong-willed and commanding person to allow themselves to be a little vulnerable and trust in their horse. I thought that was a pretty interesting observation, I mean truthfully, I can't say that I know any meek horse women.

So what can we do to help ourselves ride through the bubbles of fear and continue to grow, in both our trust and abilities? I combined Jennifer's counseling recommendations with my equine knowledge and came up with three tips.

## Tips For Riding Through Fear

1. Accept that you are not in absolute control. I think Jennifer's thought about riders allowing themselves to be vulnerable is an important point to recognize and consider. There is vulnerability in what we do, we slip a leg over the saddle and give our horse's their head and put ourselves in the way of both a beautiful and potentially injurious experience. Not to say we don't have some control and influence over what's happening, we are not helpless, but we do have to accept that there is a lack of total control.

2. Acknowledge the fear. Jennifer advises to really acknowledge the feelings of anxiety rather than trying to ignore that stress in the body. Note the way it makes you feel physically and why. Using my loping as an example, stopping my lope, and thinking about the way I'm feeling (stomach ache, intrusive negative thoughts about what could go wrong). I can acknowledge those feelings and sensations, and then get back to work, knowing that the feelings won't necessarily go away but that they can be part of our work and not derail our riding.

3. Shut down the ticker tape of negativity. Sometimes our anxiety and fear is all in our head. Or rather, it starts in our head and then becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Horses do not anticipate spooking at a wheelbarrow parked in a new spot, a tractor or even a pile of garbage. But people do. And when you start thinking that your horse might spook at that wheelbarrow, you make subtle but distinctive changes in your riding position, stiff, more forward, your breathing may get shallower, you may be looking directly at what you're anticipating your horse is going to spook at. So let's take stock: You stiffened your body, your breathing got shallow, you're eyeing this piece of equipment that's in a new spot. You're all but telling your horse he should be

alarmed by this new item. So, go back to the beginning, stop the negative internal dialog about the wheelbarrow/tractor/pile of garbage and if you need a mantra to chat rather than repeatedly thinking "he's going to spook at that, he's going to spook at that." Think "we are safe and I trust my horse." Because you *are* safe. Nothing has happened, a wheelbarrow is just in a new spot. Take a deep breath, roll your shoulders back, sit on your pockets, and relax your legs. Make an audible sigh, tell your horse what a good boy he is. The same cues that gear your horse up for a spook, can also tell your horse you feel safe and relaxed and happy and he should too.

Riding is such a freeing activity that I hate to see anyone encumbered by doubts or worry. If even one person can take the pieces I've come to learn, and the advice that Jennifer De Vault shared, and make it work to their advantage, I'd be happy to help.

I'd be happy to be called a weenie by admitting I have pockets of fear, if that means someone else feels a little less embarrassed by their own bubbles of fear.

If you haven't seen this incredible video of a moving CGI horse, in all its layers; GO CHECK IT OUT ! Its on Facebook so if you're not - sorry. Its not perfect (the mouth is open, on the wrong lead) but its pretty cool.  
<https://www.facebook.com/StableExpress/videos/1177583812274163/>





# Classic Western Riding: the Natural Way with Lawrance Valdez

Idaho Horse Expo 2 years in a row:  
Breed Challenge winner



**What:** Two full days of training on:  
**When:** June 11 & 12, August 13 & 14, Sept. 24 & 25  
**Where:** Birt Arena at 2520 Lewis Lane, Nampa, Idaho  
**Cost:** One day is \$90 (either day) or BOTH days for only \$160.  
**Auditors:** \$30 per day or \$50 for the weekend (and you still get lunch)

Have you wanted to have a better relationship with your horse? Do you want to take your horsemanship skills further? Maybe you just want your horse to be more willing? How about lighter? And happier? These are ALL possible – I guarantee it.

Come join us for two fun days of learning and applying natural horsemanship techniques to your western riding. You'll learn how to communicate clearly with your horse and be a better partner. We'll work on softening, dealing with obstacles, and even some equitation. We work in small groups so you and your horse will get plenty of individual attention.

**Questions?** [MSranchLV@gmail.com](mailto:MSranchLV@gmail.com) 208-300-7039  
**Registration:** [JGarro999@gmail.com](mailto:JGarro999@gmail.com) 208-219-0163

**Deposit:** \$60 holds your spot!!  
 Don't delay, these fill up fast.



*"Lawrance showed me what **this** human needed to do for **that** horse, at that **exact** moment."*



**FROM THE  
Members:**

Tribute's Sky Walker: an 8 year old registered TWH gelding at 15.3+ hands, he is a beautiful smokey black tobiano. He is a great trail/pleasure mount. He walks and, above that, racks. He is friendly, non-reactive and smart. This gelding loves to have a job. Here is a video from a ride in June: <https://youtu.be/Ojt22tunoXo>  
Contact Nya Bates at 208-559-2755.



Pusher's Walking Doc: a 14 year old registered 16 hand TWH gelding; black with chrome. This trail/pleasure mount is a sweet and quiet mount that any level rider can ride. He has great gaits and miles of experience that any level rider can enjoy, anywhere. Located in Gooding area. Video available upon request. To good pleasure home only. Contact Nya Bates at 208-559-2755.



Hardly-used roller spurs: \$50 *Contact Heidi*

**MEMBERS:**  
Do you have something to sell?  
Send it to me to share in this  
newsletter.

As a SCGHC club member, you get a discount at Lifeflight Insurance. Fill out this form and give us a check (written to SCGHC) for \$45 by our July 15th. We will then send one big check to Lifeflight before our term is up on July 31. The \$45 is for a FAMILY.



**GROUP MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**  
Southern Comfort Gaited Horse Club

**MEMBER ENROLLMENT INFORMATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Spouse/Domestic Partner: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Household Members:**

*Includes any dependents claimed on your tax return and elderly or disabled family members living in the same household*

|       | Date of Birth | Relationship |
|-------|---------------|--------------|
| _____ | _____         | _____        |
| _____ | _____         | _____        |
| _____ | _____         | _____        |
| _____ | _____         | _____        |
| _____ | _____         | _____        |
| _____ | _____         | _____        |

**DISCOUNT GROUP MEMBERSHIP RATE**

*This special group rate is valid with a minimum of 10 enrollments and paid with one form of payment.*

\$45 – 1 Year

\_\_\_\_ I am a current member. \_\_\_\_\_ (ID number if known)

Forward this application to your group's Life Flight Network contact.  
A completed application and payment received from the group are required to complete enrollment.

**LIFE FLIGHT NETWORK FOUNDATION**  
P.O. Box 3841 • Portland, Oregon 97208-3841  
Phone: (503) 678-4370 • Fax: (503) 678-4369

*This application is valid through 7/31/17. Please contact the Membership Office for an updated application if this form is expired. New member benefits take effect 72 hours after receipt of completed application and payment. Life Flight Network transports patients based on medical need, not membership status. Medicaid beneficiaries should not apply for membership. Life Flight Network, LLC and Jackson Jet Center, Inc. are the certificated FAA Part 135 air carriers.*

Updated by:



## 2016 Calendar of Events

- June 11, 12**      **Lawrance Valdez: Classic Western Riding,  
the Natural Way: Birt arena in Nampa  
*Drill team practiceS both Friday and Saturday nights***
- Mon, June 13**      **Club meeting: including lecture by Alayne Bickle  
dealing with horse and wildfires**
- June 24 & 25**      **Mann's Creek, Weiser, ID club campout  
(if snow: Bogus Basin)**
- Mon, July 4**      **Star, ID parade; any club member can participate.  
Please contact Heidi if interested.**
- July 9 & 10      *Drill team practiceS*  
Mon, July 11      Club meeting  
Sat, July 16      Stampede Rodeo Drill Team competition all afternoon  
at Ford Idaho Center (air conditioned and FREE)  
3 PM ish: Spanish gaited drill team performance
- July 21-25      Eagle Cap, Joseph, OR club campout
- Mon, August 8      Club meeting  
August 13 & 14      Lawrance Valdez: Classic Western Riding,  
the Natural Way: Birt arena (*Drill team practiceS*)
- Mon, Sept 12      Club meeting  
Sept 21-16      City of Rocks, ID (south of Burley) club campout  
Sept 24 & 25      Lawrance Valdez: Classic Western Riding,  
the Natural Way: Birt arena (*Drill team practiceS*)
- Sun, Oct 2      Club UNPoker Ride fundraiser  
*Possible drill team practiceS*
- October 8-9      Utah State Paso Fino show: drill performance  
Mon, Oct 10      Club meeting  
Sat, Oct 29      Fun Day Show, open to all, discounted to members
- Mon, Nov 14      Club meeting
- December 12      Christmas party (maybe do on a weekend instead of Mon?)