

50th Issue Retrospective

by Yvonne Welz and 15 famous barefoot advocates...

This issue marks the 50th edition of *The Horse's Hoof Magazine*! This is quite the milestone for us, and to celebrate, we'd like to share some insights from some of the most influential barefoot advocates who have been our supporters throughout the many years. Here are their insightful answers to 3 very interesting questions (see each person's details at the end of this article):

1) What do you remember about the general state of barefoot hoof care back when we released *The Horse's Hoof—News for Natural Hoofcare Issue #1* in the fall of 2000?

Yvonne Welz: Barefoot was a “fringe” idea at that time, considered really out there, and not something that a typical horse owner would do with their riding horse! So the people who first became involved tended to be, like me, desperate horseowners with a very ill horse. Outside of Strasser's and Jackson's materials, we had very little support—or proof—at that time.

Dr. Hiltrud Strasser: The question “barefoot or shoeing?” was actually quite rare, because “naturally” the horses were always shod!

Dr. Robert Bowker: Barefoot was just getting into the press and the minds of people to move forward with this idea. Initially, “barefoot” was outside of the thought processes of most horse people and professionals (vets and farriers).

Dr. Robert Cook: In view of the tremendous interest that had, by this time, been shown by many horse owners in Strasser's work and their early adoption of its application, it seemed possible that veterinarians were in danger of rendering themselves obsolete on the topic of equine podiatry. When owners appealed to their veterinarians for help with a transition from shod to barefoot for their horses, veterinarians were not only unable to help but often discouraged the idea. As a group, U.S. farriers were even more positively opposed to the barefoot movement and the President of the American Farriers Association wrote many articles in which he expressed a dissenting opinion.

Pete Ramey: I remember way more horses being euthanized for laminitis and caudal foot pain. Lowering the heels on a foundered horse was quite radical and quite backwards from conventional thinking at that time. Today, it is much easier to find veterinary support and scientific backing for most of what we do—way less legal worries (not that they ever slowed us down).

Cindy Sullivan: Keeping horses barefoot has always been around, but in 2000 we began to see what we now refer to as the “modern barefoot movement.” In 2000, people began to converge and coalesce around some core principles that served as a foundation for a paradigm shift in understanding that moved “barefoot” from simply not putting on shoes, to a holistic management system that began to change the way people think about equine husbandry.

Gretchen Fathauer: Barefoot was less mainstream in 2000 than it is now. It used to be that the only people who kept their horses barefoot were mainly interested in economizing on hoof care. That's no longer the case. Back in 2000, the two leading barefoot advocates were Dr. Strasser and Jaime Jackson. Many more people have entered the field since then. Conflicts arose between people doing more of a Strasser clinic-style trim, and people doing more of a Jaime Jackson-style trim.

Cheryl Henderson: Back in 2000, Strasser was appreciated by veterinarians and the earlier adopters of the barefoot movement. This quickly changed because of a backlash from the farrier community. Dr. Strasser, Martha Olivo, Jaime Jackson, Gene Ovnicke and KC La Pierre seemed to dominate early on with barefoot information, hoof help, and trimming techniques.

Sabine Kells: To my knowledge, barefoot hoof care as a method was pretty much nonexistent in North America. 2000 was the year Dr. Strasser and I did our first North American barefoot seminar tour, organized for her by Jaime Jackson, who was thrilled to have found a veterinarian who promoted the barefoot horse. The majority of the public seemed to be coming to our seminars because they had a horse in trouble to some degree, and barefoot offered a solution, often one that conventional veterinary medicine had not been able to provide. In other words, barefoot seemed the last-ditch resort for those with a horse who had a conventionally “incurable” problem.

Claudia Garner: To be accurate, I came onto the barefoot hoof care scene in 2001. I was a professional trainer for sport horses with 30+ years of experience. The change came after I read *A Lifetime of Soundness* by Dr. Strasser and was absolutely taken by the logic provided in this book. At that time, the goal was to get as many horses out of shoes as possible. Just spreading the word about barefoot hoofcare and natural lifestyle was an all-consuming task. *The Horse's Hoof* was (and still is) the only magazine dedicated to bare hoof care. At the time, there were only two schools of thought: Jamie Jackson teaching the Wild Hoof Model and Dr. Hiltrud Strasser teaching hoof care from an Anatomical Perspective. In the beginning, the two frontiers seemed to work well together; Mr. Jackson even had Dr. Strasser's work mentioned in his *Founder* book (1st edition).

Greg Sokoloski: I got started in barefoot hoof care in 2003. I researched our Unit's horses and found a lot of useful info that led to us starting barefoot hoofcare with our police horses. Soon after that, I started researching the horseshoof.com for more info and guidance. It was a tremendous help, and still is.

Darolyn Butler: Year 2000 was the year that I also discovered “barefooting.” Once I got on the bandwagon, I quickly discovered that it was quite controversial. My indoctrination was so immediate I that I never questioned “barefoot was better.” Little did I realize that there would be incredible resistance, balking, making fun of, shunning, biased treatment, etc. in my sport (Endurance) and in general.

Garrett Ford: I felt like a leper, and the barefoot/booted horse was often scoffed at. We were promoting that the barefoot horse should use hoof boots when needed. It was a tough message, as we were the only one doing it.

Carole Herder: Back then the information highway was still in its infancy. Support was uncommon, and if you wanted your horse barefoot, you often had to go it alone. The idea of barefoot was revolutionary. There were very few resources available, and it all seemed awfully serious and intense. It was a complicated journey fraught with pitfalls, like trying to read very expensive text books that were next to impossible to understand, and driving half way across the country to attend a trimming clinic in the middle of nowhere with other people just as confused as us.

Joe Camp: Sorry to say we didn't enter the horse world until 2005, and when we did, we knew absolutely nothing. But the traditional advice we were getting seemed to make little sense. Fortunately we were more influenced by our research, which included THH, than by the local advice we were getting, even from our vet. Thankfully, by the time *The Soul of a Horse* came out, our vet was recommending barefoot.

James Welz: The dedicated barefoot hoofcare professional did not really exist at that time! The conversation was pretty much dominated by Dr. Strasser—that's who *everyone* (involved in barefoot) was talking about.

2) What stands out to you as the biggest “ups” and the biggest “downs” in barefoot hoof care since 2000?

Yvonne Welz: Ups: everyone who took what they learned from our founders, and ran with it, and created their own fantastic and inspirational successes! Downs: We’ve been drastically hindered by politics, and negative disagreements that have created chasms between various barefoot groups.

Dr. Hiltrud Strasser: I remember the years 2002-2005 with high numbers of students in North America. The barefoot movement did start out very emotional. The Strasser barefoot movement was often attacked by farriers, but it was going “up.” The conference at Tufts University (2002) was an “up” because it made the barefoot movement known in North America. Some farriers wrote a lot of bad things about us, but this helped to spread the idea of barefoot horses. It was a “down” to recognize that Jaime Jackson used my material for his own book. Another “down” was when one of my SHP’s moved away from us and created an “internet education” of her own. It is never good when people divide instead of being a big and strong group!

Dr. Robert Bowker: Downs: the barefoot community is still arguing within itself and needs to get over it, and the “special” or “unique” things that different people have or use to trim their horse’s feet. I believe a mm here or there on a 1000+ pound animal is not that significant, but different people make it out as crucial to a healthy foot! People need to read the farrier science history of trimming, etc. in the late 1800’s! History is repeating itself here! Ups: the movement is growing around the world. Once people realize that they can do many things to get the foot to improve itself with trimming, diet, etc., both the owners and horses benefit: owners as they realize that they have to take responsibility for their horse’s care; horses as their feet are getting healthier! We all need to stop “marking the bushes”!

Dr. Robert Cook: Ups: The success that these leaders have had in establishing the barefoot management as a worldwide reality. Also, the determination, dedication and sheer hard work of so many enthusiastic horse owners who have studied and adopted barefoot management in spite of the hurdles they have been faced with. Downs: The continued resistance to barefoot management by veterinary practitioners in general, but also Vet Schools and the faculty at these schools whose research is hoof-oriented.

Pete Ramey: The biggest “up” is that through research, education and constant badgering by us “natural types,” horse care has improved across the board, almost worldwide. The biggest “down,” in my opinion, is the overall lack of hoof boot use by many “barefoot practitioners.” Every time a barefoot horse goes on a half-trail-ride or hobbles around a boarding facility, it hurts everyone in this

fight—regardless of the true reasons for the lameness and regardless of that practitioner’s reasons for not providing boots.

Cindy Sullivan: The biggest “up” to me was the rapid spread and wild enthusiasm the “barefoot” concept received, as more and more practitioners held clinics and the horse-owning public embraced the concepts. An additional big “up” has been the emergence of some of the brightest minds, digging deeper and deeper for truth and understanding. The “down” has been largely due to some of those same “bright minds” who lead with ego and began to break off to mark their turf. The initial organic “open source” community working together to learn became fractured into several competing camps, each with its resident “expert” touting their method as better than that of others.

Gretchen Fathauer: The biggest up is that barefoot is gaining traction for rehabilitation, and for performance horses. It is no longer the province of backyard horses exclusively. In terms of downs, some people were going too far on less-is-more approaches. I think we will start turning away from magical thinking like “the hoof will tell you what it wants” because it’s a blind alley for people who lack experience doing dissections. Or an unquestioning faith that natural wear and self-trimming will work in all cases—it won’t work if the horse is living and working on soft ground.

Cheryl Henderson: Ups: Barefoot is accepted more in the professional arena, and awareness about hoofcare has succeeded in becoming mainstream. Downs: Some trimming camps become hostile towards others, trying to one-up others, even with lies and underhanded efforts, and people accepted hoof information without really thinking it through and would parrot hoof myths like they were truths.

Sabine Kells: Ups are the many barefoot horse victories, shown in the pages of THH over the years. Every time a barefoot horse wins a race, or places first in a class, or barefoot horses outnumber shod entries in a competition, it’s a huge “up.”

Claudia Garner: Ups: The bare hoof movement really has caught on. There are a lot more horses not just barefoot, but trimmed correctly, getting a better lifestyle, better nutrition. The whole scene has shifted. Maybe not as much as in the “10 Year Predictions” by Darolyn Dial-Butler, but certainly much more than we could have hoped for. There is actually some research into horse’s hooves now; more and better written materials (books) are available. The Internet has brought a lot more discussion to the subject. Many more schools are teaching bare hoof care all over the world. Many horse owners trim their own horses now. Downs: Barefoot hoofcare is not acknowledged often enough as a viable choice for many hoof ailments

by veterinarians. The farrier community still seems threatened by bare hoof care practitioners. Sadly there is a lot of fighting over which trim is right. Many horse owners trim their own horses and soon hire themselves out as professionals without any training.

Greg Sokoloski: Biggest up has to be how successful we have been. Now all of our police horses work everyday without metal shoes, something vets and farriers argued with us could not and should not be attempted. The biggest down was all the negative attacks from horse people, farriers, and vets. The attacks were stunning to me—how they wanted us not to succeed, and some still do not. All based on what they do not know and still, to this day, tell others the incomplete story.

Darolyn Butler: Ups: Back then, the Easyboots was about the only alternate hoof protection there was; now with the different styles of Easyboots, Renegades, Cavallos and a host of others, we have great choices and life is good. Downs: Well, I’m afraid we converts had the fervor of “an obnoxious born again Christian”... Many of us intoned that if all horse owners didn’t convert to barefoot, they were going to “%/#&” or at least their horses’ feet were. I and others did a lot of harm, I think, in trying to force “barefooting” on people, and make them “wrong” if they chose to shoe.

Garrett Ford: Biggest Up: The most difficult 100 mile horse race (Tevis) has been won by barefoot horses racing in hoof boots in 2011 and 2012. The best condition winner in the 2010, 2011 and 2012 events has also been won by barefoot horses racing in Easyboots.

Carole Herder: Ups: From my perspective, the most progressive development has been in hoof boots. We have all these amazing, well-made well-priced boots that really support our barefoot objectives. Downs: Disagreement amongst the factions seems to be a characteristic of our world.

Joe Camp: The biggest ups for us, personally, are the hundreds and hundreds of emails we are continuously receiving from all over the planet which tell us about horses now leading happier, healthier, barefoot lifestyles. The biggest downs are the folks who shut down completely, will not listen to the science, and thereby keep their horses in a manner that diametrically opposes their genetic design.

James Welz: For me, the biggest positive has been the total lack of the typical injuries that most riding horses suffer, for both my personal horses and my clients’ horses. Negatives were created by people going out and making a big to-do trimming high profile horses—then having failure; people doing seminars before they had enough knowledge; and barefoot groups fighting between each other.

(cont. on page 18)

3) What are your thoughts on where barefoot hoof care is now headed in the years ahead—what do you see for the future of barefoot?

Yvonne Welz: I see a future where barefoot becomes more “normal” than shoeing (and I hope one day replaces it completely) for even high performance competition horses. I see a merging between boots and shoes, with a giant trend towards hoof health. I see a time when horses don’t ever need to be “rehabbed,” because they will be raised properly. And I see a point where “barefoot” is not the big deal, but HOW is what really matters, with the development of better trimming techniques to create and encourage healthier hooves in domestic horses.

Dr. Hiltrud Strasser: The never-ending discussions about barefoot or not is combined with questions of boarding conditions. Fortunately in Europe, there is a quickly growing community of open stable horse owners, which makes barefoot possible. I think in the future, more and more people will understand the nature of horses, and more and more will want to give their animals natural conditions to stay healthy! The hardest work is behind us! Now we have to provide really good education for hoofcare professionals, so that horseowners are convinced that barefoot hoofcare is the only right way!

Dr. Robert Bowker: The things we are arguing about now will be moot points when we realize that the overall horse’s health improves through not only better foot care, but also diet, exercise with stretching, etc., and good dentistry—everyone wins!!! Hey, this is what the medical community is talking to us about regarding our own health!!! Hello???

Dr. Robert Cook: In spite of the resistance and inertia from industry groups that might be expected to support the welfare benefits of barefoot management—tremendous progress is being made. The patient gardener’s wisdom about the growth of a tender plant applies, “first year sleep, second year creep, third year leap.” The barefoot movement may have to think in decades rather than years, but it will grow.

Pete Ramey: In the year 2000, in most cases, the only real hope for a foundered or navicular horse was the barefoot practitioner. Now, we no longer have those markets cornered. In 2000, if a horse wasn’t going well in shoeing packages, the only options were generally retirement or the barefoot practitioner. But now the farriers are smarter—better. We caused that, and we should be proud, but it may make us extinct in the end.

Cindy Sullivan: I anticipate more and more “natural” boarding facilities will be established, and they will become the most sought after locations to board a horse. I anticipate an increase in more holistic-minded veterinarians working together with alternative practitioners, embracing the team approach. I anticipate the mindset

that most barefoot trimmers have—that all aspects of the horse’s life need to be addressed—will migrate more and more into the thinking (and teachings) of established equine professions and organizations to become the new “normal” model of “How to care for horses.”

Gretchen Fathauer: Barefoot will continue to gain new converts, both for rehabilitation and performance, because it works, if done well.

Cheryl Henderson: I see the barefoot arena utilizing some of the benefits of farriery with glue-ons, pads and lifts for orthopedic help, and farriery utilizing some of the benefits of barefoot with our knowledge on hoof repair and transition issues and the value of hoof boots.

Sabine Kells: There is so much education and information being disseminated and spread among horse owners, and such good results coming to light for even conventional eyes to see, that I do not believe the truth about shoeing & barefoot will fade away into obscurity again, as it did in Bracy Clark’s day. I think that more and more horse owners will become informed and take responsibility for providing the animals in their care with the basic requirements for health and wellness, rather than letting convenience, ignorance, outdated customs, or financial gain set those standards. With the benefits of barefoot so clear, I would hope that the future will see barefoot horses becoming at least equal in numbers—if not a majority—compared to shod horses, and that good barefoot hoof care will be taught as a matter of course, rather than as an “alternative” method.

Claudia Garner: Bare hoof care will become more sophisticated and more mainstream. It will eventually be recognized by veterinarians and universities. Horses will be treated better, and the day will come where everyone says they predicted this all along. Bigger seminars and conferences will win more people into the bare hoof paradigm.

Greg Sokoloski: We see the future almost everyday. People seeing us at work downtown, in parades, crowd situations, demo’s—seeing what can actually happen with the right information from the right people. We host hundreds of visitors a month, and we show them what a great, healthy police horse can do without metal shoes. I have visited many other units, and it never ceases to amaze me how people will not educate themselves on proper horse care and rely on others to make decisions for them, many times for the wrong reasons.

Darolyn Butler: I think we have nowhere to go but up!!! For the rocky and mountainous terrain, or for really thin-soled horses, the new protec-

tive boots are the answer. There’s just no reason to shoe with iron ever again. It may not happen 100%, some will always hold on to the “gotta be shod” idea... but I think the recreational rider is educating themselves and coming over by leaps and bounds. The professionals are realizing that they can extend the useful working and showing life of horses with good natural hoof care, so I believe you will see the same percentage of moving to “barefoot” that you have seen in the last 13 years.

Garrett Ford: I believe we are going to see longer and longer careers for barefoot horses, and as a result, more equine professionals will take note. I believe the future will bring more products that allow the hoof to function as nature intended, while providing protection, support and shock absorption.

Carole Herder: One very interesting thing I have noticed is a gender transformation. Hoof care practitioners are increasingly women who have started trimming their own horses, then helped their friends and neighbors, and are now making a rewarding career out of a job that was traditionally relegated to men. They are not defending 1,500 years of tradition, so they are out there learning and asking questions. It’s a whole new world in the hoof care arena, and women are finding a niche, as well.

Joe Camp: German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer said, “All truth passes through three phases. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as self-evident.” I believe we are somewhere between 2 and 3, and if we spend the bulk of our time focused on kids and young adults, rather than those so stuck in their ways, we can hasten the process.

James Welz: I’d like to see more top competitors going barefoot, but barefoot has a long way to go before it is generally accepted. We are still greatly outnumbered, and it is really hard to overcome that—but to do that, we will have to stop pointing fingers at others. The people who will make a difference for barefoot are the new folks getting involved right now. Especially, the next generation of veterinarians seem to be a lot more receptive to our ideas. I expect to see healthier, sounder horses without degenerative debilitating diseases, and competition horses that are routinely competing well into their 20’s. 🐾

Please see a special continuation of this “50th Issue Retrospective” article in our Online Extras section, which begins on page 33 of the PDF Online Edition. The PDF edition download info is emailed free to every subscriber, so if you did not receive that, just contact us at email: editor@TheHorsesHoof.com

50th Issue Retrospective is continued, with more detailed replies from several of our authors, in the Online Extras section of the PDF edition, which begins on Page 33...

Dr. Hiltrud Strasser, DVM, PhD: German Veterinarian who developed a barefoot trimming method for riding horses and for rehabilitation beginning in the 1970's, and whose books helped launch the modern barefoot movement.
www.hufklinik.de
www.strasserhoofcare.org

Dr. Robert Bowker, VMD, PhD: Professor of Anatomy at Michigan State University College of Veterinary Medicine who has been researching hoof function since the early 1990's—with all of his discoveries pointing towards bare hooves.
www.coronavistaequinecenter.com

Dr. Robert Cook FRCVS., PhD.: Professor of Surgery Emeritus of Tufts University whose research has been focused on diseases of the horse's ear, nose, and throat, and the harmful effects of the bit. Author of the book *Metal In The Mouth*.
www.bitlessbridle.com

Pete Ramey: Farrier whose barefoot books and DVD sets that have been instrumental in shaping the direction of barefoot hoof care, and founder of the American Hoof Association. His popular website features extensive articles.
www.hoofrehab.com
www.americanhoofassociation.org

Cindy Sullivan: Barefoot hoofcare professional and educator, owner of one of the first barefoot websites, "Tribe Equus" www.tribeequus.com and co-founder of the The Equine Sciences Academy www.equinesciencesacademy.com

Gretchen Fathauer: Owner of the highly popular laminitis website, "Treating Founder (Chronic Laminitis) without Horseshoes" located at www.naturalhorsetrim.com and co-founder (in 2000) of the barefoot yahoo group "naturalhorsetrim."

Cheryl Henderson: Initially trained under Martha Olivo, she is a barefoot clinician, researcher, rehabilitator, and the founder of the Oregon School of Natural Hoof Care.
www.abchoofcare.com
www.hoofschool.com

Sabine Kells: The first Strasser-certified hoofcare professional in North America, SHP instructor, translator and publisher of Strasser's books, and co-author of *A Lifetime of Soundness* and *The Hoofcare Specialist's Handbook*. Key figure in the launch of the barefoot movement.

Claudia Garner: Barefoot hoofcare professional and founder of Equine Soundness Inc., a professional educational course.
www.equinesoundness.com

Greg Sokoloski: The Houston Police Mounted Patrol Officer who was instrumental in taking their entire herd of police horses successfully barefoot, beginning in 2003.

Darolyn Butler: World-class endurance rider who was one of the first to go barefoot in 2000; in 2004, her own horse became the first ever to start and finish a World Endurance Championship completely barefooted.
www.horseridingfun.com

Garrett Ford: Endurance rider, owner of the hoof boot company EasyCare Inc., and winner of the Haggin Cup in 2010 and the Tevis Cup in 2012 on a barefoot-booted horse.
www.easycareinc.com

Carole Herder: Barefoot educator, hoof boot developer, and founder & President of Cavallo Horse & Rider Inc. www.cavallo-inc.com

Joe Camp: Best-selling author and movie maker (Benji) turned barefoot educator with his phenomenal book *The Soul of a Horse*.
www.the-soul-of-a-horse.com

James & Yvonne Welz: Owners, editors and founders of The Horse's Hoof, and Hoof Help Online. www.the-horse-shoof.com
www.hoofhelponline.com

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Pete Ramey

1) What do you remember about the general state of barefoot hoof care back when we released THH issue #1 in 2000?

Pete: I remember way more horses being euthanized for laminitis and caudal foot pain.

Around the year 2000, I was contacted by an attorney—I was being sued for negligence and the wrongful death of an expensive horse. A Pete-friendly local vet had referred a foundered horse to me, and on arrival, I estimated a 20-degree capsule rotation and a 30-degree palmar angle. The horse was covered in bed sores and stretched back in the “founder stance,” unable to move. I trimmed the horse, rockering the heels to a 10-ish degree palmar angle, gave dietary, exercise and terrain advice, and left the horse fairly comfortable and very happy in tape-on pads. The owner was thrilled and in tears, thanking me over and over.

The next day, another vet happened to be at the boarding facility attending other horses. When he found out that the local “barefoot whacko” had been on his turf, he asked to see the horse—no charge. The owner happily agreed, since that vet was a well-known, much-acclaimed lameness specialist who worked on the top-horses for top-dollar. He unceremoniously tore off my pads, radiographed the horse, and told the owner that her horse was doomed and that he would gladly testify in court that I had caused the rotation (and thus the horse’s doom) by lowering the heels—that instead I should have raised the heels to lessen the pull of the DDFT. He brought in his farrier—no charge—they wedged up the heels and shod the horse in heart bar shoes. A week later they put the horse down because it could no longer stand. And the horse’s death was, of course, my fault.

When the attorney contacted me, I wrote a letter to him including my initial pictures, sketches and notes showing that the rotation was already present. I also informed him that the previous veterinarian had already diagnosed rotation prior to my arrival. If not for those two points, I would have been taken to court, and I probably would have lost big-time. You see, lowering the heels on a foundered horse was quite radical and quite backwards from conventional thinking at the time. Today, that same vet that tried to hang me treats foundered horses much the same way I did then, and he claims that it is nothing new—he always did it that way. Today, it would be easy to find veterinary support and scientific backing for most of what we do—way less legal worries (not that they ever slowed us down).

2) What stands out to you as the biggest “ups” and the biggest “downs” in barefoot hoof care since 2000?

Pete: The biggest “up” is that through research, education and constant badgering by us “natural types,” horse care has improved across the board, almost worldwide. Sure there are exceptions, but overall, horses are getting a better deal—not perfect, but way better. Farriers, veterinarians, trainers and owners are typically more educated and more considerate of the horses’ true nature and true needs. More professionals look at more problems from a whole-horse-health standpoint. We’ve gotten a lot of bumps

and bruises along the way, but we have made a big difference.

The biggest “down,” in my opinion, is the overall lack of hoof boot use by many “barefoot practitioners.” Every time a barefoot horse goes on a half-trail-ride or hobbles around a boarding facility, it hurts everyone in this fight—regardless of the true reasons for the lameness and regardless of that practitioner’s reasons for not providing boots. In my opinion it is not fair to the horse either. I believe that if every barefoot practitioner had been stocking and routinely fitting boots for the last 15 years, the metal shoe might have been phased out almost completely by now. Instead, the spectacle of the lame barefoot horse has kept us all on the fringe (although the fringe has become much larger).

3) What are your thoughts on where barefoot hoof care is now headed in the years ahead—what do you see for the future of barefoot?

Pete: Like the vet in my story above, countless mainstream professionals are taking high-points from our principles, incorporating them into their own protocols, and claiming that they have always done it that way. Diets are being balanced, carbs are being cut, turnout is being increased, shod horses are getting way more barefoot periods and then at least shod with sole and frog support. Vets are noticing obesity in horses and educating the owners about grass sugars and other health concerns before the horse goes lame. Foundered horses are getting their shoes pulled, heels lowered, pads or boots applied, and turned out in dirt paddocks with other horses. Navicular Syndrome is being treated as a developmental issue and university hospitals are often recommending that these horses be turned out barefoot for a year or two, instead of euthanasia.

Barefoot and booted horses have become a more common sight in competition, on the trails and in the pleasure rings. Countless farriers are stocking hoof boots, and are quite happy to provide “just trims” for their clients (or metal shoes, or plastic shoes, or epoxy work, or casts, or professionally fitted hoof boots—whatever the client wants to pay for). They are more diverse and they have no problem with keeping \$5,000-worth of stock in their trucks at all times, they consider it a normal part of doing business. This is the current mainstream (with exceptions, of course).

So we have been extraordinarily successful—we changed the face of horse care and hoof care for the better—and things will change even more in the next decade, as there is considerable momentum in a positive direction. This is good for the horse, although I am afraid the barefoot practitioner may not fare so well in the future. In the year 2000, in most cases, the only real hope for a foundered or navicular horse was the barefoot practitioner. Now, we no longer have those markets cornered. In 2000, if a horse wasn’t going well in shoeing packages, the only options were generally retirement or the barefoot practitioner. But now the farriers are smarter—better. We caused that, and we should be proud, but it may make us extinct in the end. We each have to keep moving forward, keep learning and keep developing new skills—our competitors and naysayers are doing so, and may yet beat us at our own game. 🐾 www.hoofrehab.com

Cindy “Hawk” Sullivan

1) What do you remember about the general state of barefoot hoof care back when we released THH issue #1 in 2000?

Cindy: Keeping horses barefoot has always been around, but in 2000 we began to see what we now refer to as the “modern barefoot movement.” In 2000, people began to converge and coalesce around some core principles that served as a foundation for a paradigm shift in understanding that moved “barefoot” from simply not putting on shoes, to a holistic management system that began to change the way people think about equine husbandry. However, back then it was still largely about the hoof as the primary focus, with husbandry as the secondary, but growing, focus.

It was an explosion of excitement back then and countless people were having epiphanies, rethinking what they had been taught and finding solutions to help suffering horses, after having tried everything else conventionally recommended. People were beginning to think outside the box, recognize there were other ways yet unexplored, and began to stand bravely between their beloved horses and the dreaded “There’s nothing else we can do, except euthanize.”

Many stood steadfast in some fierce backlash from equine professionals, and even their own riding buddies. Yet they pulled those shoes, changed their horse’s diet, put him outside with other horses and hunted for every source of new information they could find. Many of the most successful barefoot professionals we have today, began because they simply refused to give up on that one horse everyone else had pronounced *incurable*.

2) What stands out to you as the biggest “ups” and the biggest “downs” in barefoot hoof care since 2000?

Cindy: The biggest “up” to me was the rapid spread and wild enthusiasm the “barefoot” concept received, as more and more practitioners held clinics and the horse-owning public embraced the concepts. An additional big “up” has been the emergence of some of the brightest minds, digging deeper and deeper for truth and understanding, which grew exponentially and began to attract the interest of the conventional equine professionals, i.e. veterinarians and seasoned farriers. More and more we became less a “fringe element” and began to work together.

The “down” has been largely due to some of those same “bright minds” who lead with ego and began to break off to mark their turf. The initial organic “open source” community working together to learn, became fractured into several competing camps, each with its resident “expert” touting their method as better than that of others. Nothing wrong with competition, nor with individuality and claiming ownership of one’s intellectual property... that’s a hallmark of liberty. It became a problem when some camps became hostile to one another, and some actively sought to discredit and destroy the others. That caused a great deal of uncertainty and confusion among the horse-owning public, as well as new practitioners. Faced with too much uncertainty, people tend to revert to their comfort zone...the old idiom “better the devil you know, than the devil you don’t know” comes into play and because of that, the “barefoot movement” lost some momentum.

Personally, I have great faith in the ability of the folks to figure things out, see through hype and hyperbole, and choose wisely if just given the truth, the facts and objective evidence. I have been pleased to see that for the most part, they have. The “hoof wars” have settled for the most part.

3) What are your thoughts on where barefoot hoof care is now headed in the years ahead—what do you see for the future of barefoot?

Cindy: Barefoot as we know it today... which includes all the principles of whole horse “natural” care, isn’t going away—much to the chagrin of some shoers I still hear telling horse owners, it’s just a “passing fad.” Currently, we have hit a bit of a natural plateau, as we have moved past the firestorm of excitement over this “new” way of thinking and are gaining more mainstream acceptance.

I do see, more and more, people are learning to trust the power of nature and the ability of the horse (or any creature) to heal itself, if the barriers to natural health are simply removed. They are recognizing that many lameness issues and pathologies we see in the hoof are actually a symptom of conventional domestic practices. They are broadening their understanding to realize that if the whole horse and all aspects of husbandry are adjusted to reflect what is more natural to the equine (much the same way we moved from cages and concrete to natural habitats in zoos), then many of the problems, commonly considered a “foot” issue will improve, regardless of what is, or is not, done to the hoof.

I anticipate more and more “natural” boarding facilities will be established, and they will become the most sought after locations to board a horse. I anticipate an increase in more holistic minded veterinarians working together with alternative practitioners, embracing the team approach. I anticipate the mindset that most barefoot trimmers have—that all aspects of the horse’s life need to be addressed—will migrate more and more into the thinking (and teachings) of established equine professions and organizations to become the new “normal” model of “How to care for horses.” I also anticipate that we may yet go through a period of “show-down” when we reach an event horizon or tipping point, at which we begin to overtake the conventional ideology of equine management, especially as our approaches continue to draw people away from conventional methodologies and even infiltrate the halls of veterinary and farrier academia related to lameness rehabilitation.

As has been the case with other non-conventional modalities (chiropractic, massage, herbal and homeopathic medicinals, etc.) the powers that be are loath to give up their dominion and will push to regulate and make illegal such methods and practices so they are no longer available to the average person—even if they are only practicing on their own animals. We have seen this happen in Europe. In a few U.S. states, it has been a growing concern, as entrenched authorities work to squash practitioners who do not have their “licensed” stamp of approval. Currently the focus is heavy on non-veterinarian equine dentists, but—as in the UK—it will eventually focus on barefoot practitioners if we don’t pay attention and stop it. That said, it is heartening to see that a growing number of veterinary researchers and practitioners are beginning to not only investigate our methods with honest scientific inquiry, but also are willing to stand up and present their positive findings publicly, lending a stamp of “official” credibility to what those of us in the field know to be true.

Stay the course, fellow barefooters. The initial spirited sprint out of the gate has passed, we are now settled into the marathon phase. Stay focused and continue to inspire others. Together we have made life better and alleviated great suffering for countless horses around the world over the past twelve years. It’s an honorable mission with a bright future. 🐾
www.tribeequus.com

Gretchen Fathauer

1) What do you remember about the general state of barefoot hoof care back when we released THH issue #1 in 2000?

Gretchen: Barefoot was less mainstream in 2000 than it is now. The range of hoof boot options has increased dramatically, giving transitioning horses comfort while working until their hooves toughen up more. We are starting to see more performance horses barefoot. It used to be that the only people who kept their horses barefoot were mainly interested in economizing on hoof care. That's no longer the case.

I am hearing about more cases of horses earlier failed by orthopedic shoeing beginning to improve with barefoot hoof care. Some of these are high dollar horses getting very expensive orthopedic shoeing before. It used to be that only backyard horses were being treated for lameness barefoot, often as a last resort. Owners who could afford it opted for very expensive orthopedic shoeing; these same owners, often failed by orthopedic shoeing, are beginning to try barefoot next. What's even more encouraging is that some of them are getting better results barefoot than with orthopedic shoeing.

Back in 2000, the two leading barefoot advocates were Dr. Strasser and Jaime Jackson. Many more people have entered the field since then. Conflicts arose between people doing more of a Strasser clinic-style trim, and people doing more of a Jaime Jackson-style trim. The mainstream barefoot movement moved away from the clinic trim, towards a more minimal approach. However, some people were getting poor results with too minimal an approach, and the pendulum is starting to swing back. My hope is that we end up doing a trim that mimics the shape of the internal structure when shaping the hoof capsule. This will require more landmarks than only using live sole plane, however.

2) What stands out to you as the biggest “ups” and the biggest “downs” in barefoot hoof care since 2000?

Gretchen: The biggest up is that barefoot is gaining traction for rehabilitation, and for performance horses. It is no longer the province of backyard horses exclusively. Some performance horses are doing better barefoot because they are more sure-footed. Many of us know this personally from being able to ride horses more safely on icy ground barefoot than shod, for instance. But it is slowly catching on beyond backyard trail riders.

In terms of downs, some people were going too far on less-is-more approaches. I think we will start turning away from magical thinking like “the hoof will tell you what it wants” because it's a blind alley for people who lack experience doing dissections. Or an unquestioning faith that natural wear and self-trimming will work in all cases. It won't work if the horse is living and working

on soft ground. What I hope to see is more people trimming the hoof capsule to mimic the shape of the internal structure. This takes more study than simply waiting for stuff to break off on its own, or having one standard only, which is often live sole plane, followed by a mustang roll. We need more landmarks than just one. Just waiting for excess wall and bar to simply break off, when the horse is not self-trimming, borders on neglect.

We continue to have warring factions and methods. There is not enough agreement on what is good hoof form. Outsiders, looking at this lack of agreement on something so basic, see it as a reason to question barefoot in general.

3) What are your thoughts on where barefoot hoof care is now headed in the years ahead—what do you see for the future of barefoot?

Gretchen:

- More people are embracing power tools for trimming. This is enabling women to trim more readily. Using hand tools alone requires more strength than a lot of us have.
- Barefoot will continue to gain new converts, both for rehabilitation and performance, because it works, if done well.
- I hope drastic surgical procedures like tenotomies will fall out of favor. Often horses over at the knee will straighten their knees when hoof form is improved. Most often this involves reducing overgrown bars, or reducing frogs that are protruding beyond wall levels. Many of us have seen horses who have had tenotomies still over at the knee post-surgery, if nothing has been done to address hoof form that contributes to heel pain. They simply contract the muscles attached to their surgically-treated tendons all the more, to continue to un-weight sore heels.
- I hope that eventually barefoot will start making more in-roads in the gaited horse community. Organizations like **FOSH (Friends of Sound Horses)** are leading the way trying to free TWH's from soring and big lick shoeing.

While they may not be strictly barefoot advocates, they do educate the public on how soring front hooves is accomplished, and continue to campaign against these abuses. What is interesting is that some gaited horses actually smooth out when you simply trim their bare hooves to mimic the shape of the internal structure. I am hearing rumors that soring is starting to show up in dressage horse classes, too, to give horses a more animated front end. I'd like to see this idea die on the vine! 🐾 www.naturalhorsetrim.com

Cheryl Henderson

1) What do you remember about the general state of barefoot hoof care back when we released THH issue #1 in 2000?

Cheryl: *The Horse's Hoof* was the first publication to promote hoof health and a barefoot lifestyle. Many benefits came from this wonderful publication, making it possible for us to link together, share ideas and keep the message that barefoot is best for the equines. We were fueled by *The Horse's Hoof* to stay the course.

- Back in 2000, Strasser was appreciated by veterinarians and the earlier adopters of barefoot movement. This quickly changed because of a backlash from the farrier community. Dr. Strasser, Martha Olivo, Jaime Jackson, Gene Ovniczek and KC La Pierre seemed to dominate early on with barefoot information, hoof help, and trimming techniques. Some farriers were resistant and offended by owners wanting their horses to have a natural trim. This forced many of us to trim our own equines.

- Pete Ramey's work on the Clinton Anderson show (2005) and KC La Pierre's success with UK racehorse Saucy Night (2005) both really kick-started the barefoot popularity.

- The internet became a huge source of help to the barefoot movement by connecting people and sharing information via yahoo groups.

- Dr. Bowker had started to bring attention to the benefits of the natural hoof.

- There was a lot of animosity towards the barefoot movement by both farriers and veterinarians. Lies went rampant against the barefoot movement. What I noticed the most was how enthused and committed people were becoming to understand the hoof. A strong and unreasonable draw to study and think about hooves was becoming pandemic. Even with adversity from farriers, veterinarians, and horse owners, we couldn't stop our hoof journey, even if we wanted to. It was like the spirit of the equine had grabbed us and set us on a path to serve. One that I thank God everyday that I was sent on.

- There were, and still are, a lot of hoof care professionals that are unknown but to their circle of friends. They have contributed a great deal to the success of the barefoot movement by hosting and sponsoring hoof clinics, writing articles, talking to their friends, encouraging hoof care and working tirelessly without any notoriety. None of those recognized as hoof leaders did it on their own. There are many who deserve to be known for all their efforts helping, but have worked silently behind the scenes for the greater good of our equine.

2) What stands out to you as the biggest "ups" and the biggest "downs" in barefoot hoof care since 2000?

Cheryl: Biggest ups

- Barefoot is accepted more in the professional arena.
- The equine wins, because to have healthy hooves, they must have the right diet, trim and movement.
- Awareness about hoofcare has succeeded in becoming mainstream.
- The quality and simplicity of hoof boots for owners to use when needed.
- Digital cameras, the internet and yahoo groups added leaps and bounds to the knowledge that was missing about the hoof.
- Many of us were the last chance for lame and damaged hooves only to develop methods and understanding how to repair their hooves and help regain quality life.

- Farriers tell us that they have learned more about the hoof since the barefoot movement started than they knew since starting farriery.

- Hooves that farriers and veterinarians gave up on, we barefooters would end up with and we found techniques and results to turn these broken down individuals around.

Biggest downs

- Some trimming camps became hostile towards others, trying to one up others, even with lies and underhanded efforts.

- People accepted hoof information without really thinking it through and would parrot hoof myths like they were truths.

- Learning that some of our leading selling points as to the value of barefoot were not fact-based or proven.

- Some of the written materials about the early adopters in the professional world were misrepresented, and credit was given to others who came later, i.e. introducing the benefits of barefoot hooves to Greg with the Houston Mounted Police was Darolyn Butler—who was the first big name professional equine competitor working with hoof clinician Martha Olivo.

3) What are your thoughts on where barefoot hoof care is now headed in the years ahead—what do you see for the future of barefoot?

Cheryl: I prefer to not use the barefoot word and have been referring to what we are doing as the "Hoof care movement." I think using barefoot as a description of our service and platform divides farriers against what we are doing. There has been hostility and a lot of bad actions, feelings and efforts to discredit both sides against shoeing or not.

I see our group of hoof workers respected for their broader knowledge of the whole horse. More like a physician's assistants with knowledge in helping with diet, knowledge of the body, advanced methods to help heal damaged capsules with disease and deformity.

I see the barefoot arena utilizing some of the benefits of farriery with glue-ons, pads and lifts for orthopedic help, and farriery utilizing some of the benefits of barefoot with our knowledge on hoof repair and our knowledge on transition issues and the value of hoof boots.

I personally had not found a need for hoof shoes until this last year. I never ruled shoes out, because I never wanted to compromise any animal with a zealot barefoot heart. I was fortunate to help many extremely damaged hooves to health barefoot. My observation was I never saw the shoe lame or cause a short life. I have, however, seen lameness from bad trimming and hoofcare practices, as well as owner negligence cause joint damages, damaged capsules creating chronic lameness problems that claimed their lives too soon.

I am not saying hooves should be shod for a general application, but if a time comes that it is needed, it is a good tool. I think the farrier will begin to think more about the benefits to the equine without shoes and make a professional choice as to why a shoeing would be preferable in that situation. Shoeing should be a short term solution, not a standard part of their lifestyle.

I blanket myself in "Truth Prevails" and the benefits of barefoot to the capsule; lifestyle, rehabbing, and comfort to the horse barefoot will become the standard. The hoof movement has done a great service to educate the owners so they can be proactive in the fate and conditions of their equine friend. 🌐 www.abchoofcare.com
www.hoofschool.com

Sabine Kells

1) What do you remember about the general state of barefoot hoof care when we released THH issue #1 in 2000?

Sabine: To my knowledge, barefoot hoof care as a method was pretty much nonexistent in North America. Jaime Jackson had just recently published a book showcasing the beautiful bare hooves of the mustangs, but did not yet recommend barefoot for working domestic horses. There was no formal training established for barefoot hoof care, no method or type or system of it in existence on this continent or any other, that I was aware of—there was only Dr. Strasser’s hoof clinic and school in Germany. By the year 2000, she had been teaching seminars and certification courses in her method of barefoot hoof care for years, and had several how-to books on the subject of general and orthopedic barefoot hoof care in print for well over a decade.

Around the turn of the millennium, people in my local area kept horses barefoot usually only if they weren’t going to ride them for a while (for example, during the winter season). Some few with “especially tough” horses did ride them barefoot, though often under the caustic eye of other riders who took “proper care” of their horses’ hooves by getting them shod. And this seems to have been a fairly common state of mind throughout most of North America.

2000 was the year Dr. Strasser and I did our first North American barefoot seminar tour, organized for her by Jaime Jackson, who was thrilled to have found a veterinarian who promoted the barefoot horse. During those seminars, I met more people who already rode barefoot horses than I had in my entire life, and many already knew about good, natural horse boarding, which was awesome. But the majority of the public seemed to be coming to our seminars because they had a horse in trouble to some degree, and barefoot offered a solution, often one that conventional veterinary medicine had not been able to provide.

In other words, barefoot seemed the last-ditch resort for those with a horse who had a conventionally “incurable” problem.

2) What stands out to you as the biggest “ups” and the biggest “downs” in barefoot hoof care since 2000?

Sabine: Ups are the many barefoot horse victories, shown in the pages of THH over the years. Every time a barefoot horse wins a race, or places first in a class, or barefoot horses outnumber shod entries in a competition, it’s a huge “up.” Ups are the fact that books on barefoot hoof care (at least, in as far as Dr. Strasser’s books are concerned) are selling all over the world, from Australia to South Africa to Israel to Norway to Russia and every spot in between, having been translated into more languages than I can keep track of. Ups are that people are taking barefoot semi-

nars and hoof care training in just as widespread an area. Ups are that horses are growing up and being ridden barefoot without ever having had a piece of metal nailed to their feet.

Downs... I’ve learned over the years to try not to focus on those, since paying attention to unwanted things only gets you more of them. So, sorry, no “downs” that I can list off the top of my head :)

3) What are your thoughts on where barefoot hoof care is now headed in the years ahead—what do you see for the future of barefoot?

Sabine: Hopefully, we will see more of the “ups” that we’ve already seen in the last 13 years. There is so much education and information being disseminated and spread among horse owners, and such good results coming to light for even conventional eyes to see, that I do not believe the truth about shoeing & barefoot will fade away into obscurity again as it did in Bracy Clark’s day. I think that more and more horse owners will become informed and take responsibility for providing the animals in their care with the basic requirements for health and wellness, rather than letting convenience, ignorance, outdated customs, or financial gain set those standards. With the benefits of barefoot so clear, I would hope that the future will see barefoot horses becoming at least equal in numbers—if not a majority—compared to shod horses, and that good barefoot hoof care will be taught as a matter of course, rather than as an “alternative” method. There are already more and more equine veterinarians becoming aware of healthy hoof physiology and the effects on it by the shoe, bad hoof form, and poor lifestyle; hopefully this trend, too, will continue and gain momentum.

The end of 2012 was supposed to denote the end of an age (not to mention, some thought the end of the world), and the time we are now moving into has been called the time of awakening, the age of enlightenment. While I’m sure similar claims have been made throughout history, it is my hope that some of that “enlightenment” will entail widespread awareness of the biologically correct, barefoot care of the world’s domestic horses. 🐾

Carole Herder

1) What do you remember about the general state of barefoot hoof care back when we released THH issue #1 in 2000?

Carole: Back then the information highway was still in its infancy. Support was uncommon, and if you wanted your horse barefoot, you often had to go it alone. There were so many horses with problems, yet few people seemed willing to look at the possibility that the lamenesses, ailments, signs of discomfort and disease could be a result of our practices. But when we'd done everything and heard all the advice we could find or afford; when our horses were still lame after the vet bills and the inconclusive radiographs and various supplements, pain killers, anti-inflammatories and changing farriers; after we'd tried everything, that's when we remembered we heard someone talking about barefoot and as a last resort, we began to investigate.

My passion for alternative health care had me embracing this new idea with the fervor characteristic of many seemingly radical initiatives. I liked things the natural way and I wanted the best for my horses. So I took it on and studied everything available. I remember reading I could increase the hoof width and widen the frog by removing those "hooks" that restricted the heel. It made sense to me, but my execution of it made my horse bleed! Twice! Things were just not that simple. The authorities Strasser and Jackson seemed to have opposing opinions. If the experts didn't agree, how were we supposed to know what to do?

It was a crazy time. The idea of barefoot was revolutionary. Questions spiraled in our minds. Weren't metal shoes meant to protect the hooves? Aren't farrier practices essential to the health and well-being of horses? What is this wild idea that is drawing unconventional thinkers in? There were very few resources available, and it all seemed awfully serious and intense. It was a complicated journey fraught with pitfalls, like trying to read very expensive text books that were next to impossible to understand, driving half way across the country to attend a trimming clinic in the middle of nowhere with other people just as confused as us, and then spending the next week scrubbing skin painfully raw, trying to remove the stench of the reeking hoof cadavers we'd been handling. The steep clamber up the learning curve was not for the faint of heart. Messy and sometimes severe mistakes were made.

2) What stands out to you as the biggest "ups" and the biggest "downs" in barefoot hoof care since 2000?

Carole: UPS: The Horse's Hoof publication stands out as a cornerstone, a focal point, a consistent calm in the stormy seas of controversy. Always there and improving every year. It offers the support of social proof. We can read the stories about someone who "cured" their horse by implementing a proper barefoot program. Real life success stories are hard to argue with. We now have the evidence and a perfect resource to access it.

Assistance and information is improving. Chat rooms burgeon with advice on various land layouts to increase movement, strategic feed programs to emulate a natural environment and barefoot trimming tips that take care of seedy toe, thrush and other nasty afflictions.

People no longer suspect negligence when they see a barefoot horse. We are accepted as weirdos or "greenies," but not cast from our horse tribe. Knowledge is increasing in leaps and bounds. Even traditionally mainstream veterinarians are coming out with pro-barefoot statements.

From my perspective, the most progressive development has been in hoof boots. When we first introduced Old Mac's into North America in 2001, they were the first boot that could comfortably be worn for riding. They were so much more than the "spare tire" to get you home if your horse threw a shoe. So then Easycare improved their boots. And in 2006, to perfect an all-terrain multi-purpose boot, Cavallo made the Simple Boots, followed closely by Sport Boots. Renegade is a great boot, too. The thing is, if there's a need, it will be fulfilled—the law of supply and demand. So now we have these amazing, well-made well-priced boots that really support our barefoot objectives.

DOWNS: Disagreement amongst the factions seems to be a characteristic of our world. English or Western? Alfalfa or Timothy? Heels down or relaxed? Saddle over the withers or further back? Bitless? Barefoot? Pete Ramey or Strasser? So it's yet another thing that separates us from the rest of our community. When we are busy defending our point of view, when being right is more important than learning something new, evolution stops. The best example of this is that we have been nailing metal shoes into live tissue for a very long time and only now are starting to think differently. If we put our egos aside, we can stop using all that energy defending our practices and instead open up to advancement and the development of new knowledge. We still lack adequate support and information on the road to barefoot success. We need to learn and expand and that's hard to do when we are occupied by trying to prove ourselves right.

3) What are your thoughts on where barefoot hoof care is now headed in the years ahead—what do you see for the future of barefoot?

Carole: One very interesting thing I have noticed is a gender transformation. Hoof care practitioners are increasingly women who have started trimming their own horses, then helped their friends and neighbors, and are now making a rewarding career out of a job that was traditionally relegated to men. They are not defending 1500 years of tradition, so they are out there learning and asking questions. It's a whole new world in the hoof care arena, and women are finding a niche, as well.

It is an expansive time for us. In five or ten or even fifteen years, we will look back and say "Do you remember when we used to pound metal nails into horse's feet?" Just like smoking on airplanes, using asbestos in buildings, burning "witches," etc., we'll ask "What were we thinking?"

Oh and I speak from direct experience: hoof boots will get much better, more simplified, more user-friendly, better quality and more interesting designs. I know because at Cavallo, we are working on some very exciting developments—changing the world one horse at a time. 🌐 www.cavallo-inc.com

Darolyn Butler

1) What do you remember about the general state of barefoot hoof care back when we released THH issue #1 in 2000?

Darolyn: This is actually quite interesting, as year 2000 was the year that I also discovered “barefooting.” Once I got on the bandwagon, I quickly discovered that it was quite controversial. A laminitic National Champion Endurance Horse of mine sparked my introduction and after luckily meeting some local Barefooters that assisted me in treating the horse, a boarder admitted she had a copy of *A Lifetime of Soundness*, which she would be happy to loan to me. Afterwards, I chided her for not sharing that book much earlier. She said she was “afraid” to, that I might spurn the idea, make fun of her, etc. My indoctrination was so immediate I that I never questioned “barefoot was better.” Little did I realize that there would be incredible resistance, balking, making fun of, shunning, biased treatment, etc., in my sport and in general. Many times I joked that the farriers of the surrounding counties of Houston had a price on my head. After being shamed at the local farrier supply store by the owner, that I was taking men’s livelihood away from them, I began to realize the magnitude of what one or two active people could do in a small area. We had a burgeoning nest of “barefooters” in S.E. Texas.

I was fortunate to be able to attend 3 Strasser Seminars, and multiple Martha Olivo Seminars in those first few years. I held many clinics at my ranch and even made it to the World Hoof Conference in 2003 in Germany. I and others just couldn’t get enough information. Back in the fall of 2000, when I received my first Web Page touting “Barefooting,” I just was going to load it on to the computer and look at it some other time. As words like founder, laminitis, abscessing, etc. rolled across the screen, I became engrossed in the subject, since I had an active laminitis case in progress. I had recently “fired” my fabulous farrier for being fabulously undependable, so I wasn’t afraid to ask a new young guy if he could do this trim off the “12 Step Trimming” (from Cindy “Hawk” Sullivan) that I found on the I-net. And at that time, you could pretty well read everything on the I-net about “barefooting” in about four days... Which I did. Shedding tears through much of it as I read of similar cases to mine. The big difference was, horses were being saved, while the three of mine had been treated in a conventional fashion and were eventually put down. Then the thought occurred to me, if this cures the most insidious hoof disease ever, how could it not be beneficial to the healthy foot?

I quickly ordered *Shoeing a Necessary Evil*, then Jamie Jackson’s book, which I found really helpful with some of the basics of how to stand and pick up a hoof, etc. Realize, in my 50 year life with horses, I had only cleaned a hoof, and directed my farrier to either pad or not, or clip or not. If one of my Endurance horses, or in a past life, one of my barrel horses, had thrown a shoe, they just went on a shelf until the shoe was replaced. I was totally immersed in the idea of “if a horse works, it must be shod.” But with more knowledge, I remembered Coney, that Welsh/Hackney pony that I had gotten at 9 years old.

He died at 32, having taught both my daughters to ride, and as I remembered, had been shod only once in his life. I thought a lot

about him... that would have been 1959 to 1991 era. Long before barefoot thoughts had infiltrated the U.S. Borders, and I rode that self-trimming pony a lot during my younger years, and his feet were always beautiful.

Then as I visited with other people that also had had a horse in their life of equal “Barefooted Soundness”... Hmmm, maybe this idea isn’t all that hard to believe. Other than the couple that helped me with the laminitic horse and my boarder with the book, there was really no one in my area that had heard of it, or much less was practicing it. Soon I bit the bullet and did a 50 mile Endurance Ride on a mare that was young and had never been shod. It was a ride in Oklahoma, and fairly rocky. The veterinarians and the other riders thought I was crazy. I finished! Eureka... IT CAN BE DONE! Never, ever would I have believed that to be possible.

Luckily, I live in a fairly sandy area, so in December 2000, I sponsored the first of many Hoof Clinics, and then I de-shod all 20 or so of the horses on my place. Boarders got on the band wagon, and of course, all of my own... then we really went overboard, and several of those horses went on to do a 50 mile Endurance ride only 10 days later. I was convinced, and I couldn’t spread the word fast enough.

The farrier crowd laughed and said, “She’ll be back, it’s just a passing fancy.” Their blogs were filled with nasty and sarcastic comments about me. I would get texts from fellow trimmers telling me to quick, go look at some chat line, as the guys on it were really throwing off on me... I laughed, I didn’t have time... I was trying to cut down my trimming time from an hour a hoof, to something a little more reasonable. I was buying books by the dozen and passing them out to my horse friends, getting boxes of *The Horse’s Hoof* to hand out, and I was planning more seminars at my ranch, and trying to work with others that were emerging on the scene. It was like outer space—always had been there, but what a lot to discover. Then in 2005, I leased a wonderful little Arabian to a Japanese rider that completed the first BAREFOOTED (no boots) 100 mile (160 km) World Championship Endurance Ride ever. It was in Dubai, UAE. We then caught the International eye!!! And yes... there were vets rooting for him by the end of the race. By the way, he set his own personal speed record that day, as well, and he was featured as the cover story for THH Issue 19, Spring 2005.

Then in 2010 at the World Equestrian Games, my ranch produced 6 horses that ran in the World Endurance Championship. Some ran barefooted, such as Aces Comett (THH 41, Winter 2010) who competed for Sweden with rider Cecilia Engquist/owner Kattie Shah. He was from Cypress Trails, as were all three of the Namibians, one for Columbia, and one U.S. horse that I had top-tanned the year before on the pre-race course barefooted (but shod by new owner). However, DJB Juniper was the only USA horse to complete.

2) What stands out to you as the biggest “ups” and the biggest “downs” in barefoot hoof care since 2000?

Darolyn: Well I’m afraid we converts had the fervor of “an obnoxious born again Christian”... Many of us intoned that if all horse owners didn’t convert to barefoot, they were going to “%^#&” or at least their horses feet were. I and others did a lot of harm, I think,

(continued on page 45)

TEN YEAR PREDICTIONS for THE BAREFOOT MOVEMENT

(Written Summer of 2002)

Ten years from now, I predict a good many farriers will not only be doing the "barefoot trim", but tout that they always supported it. (True)

Ten years from now, I predict most upscale vets will have a "Natural Trimmer" on the payroll to quickly assist navicular, club footed, laminitic and foundered horses. (True)

Ten years from now, I predict 95% of all "back yard pleasure horses" will be kept barefoot. Ten years from now, I predict cutters, reiners, roping, barrel, and race horses will be allowed the choice of performing barefooted, and as more and more of them win money and have longer performance careers, the field will grow. (Getting pretty close)

Ten years from now, horse museums will house metal atrocities called therapeutic shoes on their walls, and people will look at them in disgust and amusement that man could have been so ignorant of how the foot actually works that they would attempt to cure those ills with shoes, knowing what nature could heal much quicker and better left on its own. (Some of the really awful stuff is showing up there)

Ten years from now, 10,000 trimmers will have saved 1,000,000 horses from retirement and/or death by giving them healthy feet. (I think we might have done that)

Shoeless, Not Clueless!!! 70 Barefoot horses racing, working & playing everyday.

Darolyn Butler * 35,000 Endurance Miles 5 Time National Champion

Darolyn Butler, cont. from page 44)

in trying to force "barefooting" on people, and make them "wrong" if they chose to shoe. On my endurance chat groups, it got to the point that I was afraid to mention or promote barefooting, because I would get such a barrage of negative confrontations. We had to back up, and just let the movement prove itself by performance. Make people curious about it. Like when I would have 8 barefooted farm horses be in the Top Ten at a local endurance ride. Then it became a little more acceptable, and then a lot more... and now sometimes, I start reading the Ride-Camp yahoo group, and I have to roll to the top to read the list name—I'm convinced that it's a barefoot "group." Just amazing what kind of sharing and promoting is going on.

I did 10 predictions in 2002 for what the next ten years would bring. Oh I know, it was a little cocky and implied "barefooting" would be saving the horse world... it went Internationally viral in our barefoot world and the farriers had a hey-day with it... but here it is, just as I wrote it then (above).

Last year was the 10 year anniversary of the predictions; not all has totally happened, but it's pretty interesting to see what has. Now there are young horse people around that have always been exposed to the "barefoot" idea. They have no idea of the wars that were fought over this outlandish idea starting 13 years ago.

Strasser was literally barbecued at one of the Universities on the East Coast, and I, myself, took her to Texas A&M to speak to the student veterinarians on a Wednesday night. The Head of the Department stood in the back and rudely snickered throughout her talk. I was given permission to do an ongoing experimental trim on one of the donated "lame" horses as sort of a trial for the school. This same "head guy" had the horse killed when it started making progress after two trims, saying that it was in terrible pain. Now who is going to argue with him... the students, other vets under him??? That was one of the times I cried, and cried. I felt like I was going to save this horse, and it was snatched away just to prove that no such therapy could exist in the world of science. Thank goodness there were vets like Bowker, and Pollitt that were making incredible inroads by using "Science" to prove it up.

Most Endurance vets were very skeptical. One vet even remarked to a good friend of mine, "I don't know why she insists on doing that barefooting thing... there's not even any money in it." Of course, he had been a farrier before he got his DVM, and will tout to this day that a good shoeing never hurts a hoof. And back then, the Easy Boot was about the only alternate hoof protection there was; now with the different style of Easy Boots, Renegades, Cavallos and a host of others, we have great choices and life is good.

Darolyn Butler, cont. from page 45)

3) What are your thoughts on where barefoot hoof care is now headed in the years ahead—what do you see for the future of barefoot?

Darolyn: It's really fun to answer that question today, 'cause today a young lady that owns 8 horses came to me to be fitted in some protective boots. I'm a dealer you see... laughingly... there is a little money now! I taught this young lady to trim about 6 months ago. She wanted to bring a couple of her horses over for a look-see. Their feet were beautiful! We discussed and corrected a little flare, but overall, they were great. I've been beaming for the last 6 hours... I've trained 6 "lovingly called" BARN BRATS, to trim over the last few years, including my daughter and my son-in-law. Some of them are making their living at trimming now. I'm 62 now; I picked up my first hoof knife at 50. I'm the perfect example of anyone can do it if they just want too. The education is growing by leaps and bounds. You have Yvonne and James Welz, Jaime Jackson and Dr. Strasser still at it, Cheryl Henderson's ABC Hoofcare, Pete Ramey, and a host of others that have contributed in the past and continue to do so. The I-net is amazing as pictures and videos abound. Europe is on the program, too. There is such an amazing network now, there's just no stopping it.

Martha Olivo and I were instrumental in getting the Houston Mounted Police all barefooted. It actually may have saved their organization. The program was going to be dropped due to needed budget cuts... But when it was brought to their attention that the department had already saved itself \$50,000 annually by converting to barefooting (a handful of officers trim all 40 horses themselves), it was decided to let it stay. Not to mention their vet bills



Darolyn riding DJB Ransom is in his pink Renegades on a rocky 75 mile ride called "Ride the Storm" over near Austin, Texas.



The Houston Airport Rangers barefooted group at the big Macy's Thanksgiving Parade in 2012. That's the Houston Mayor in red in the middle. Darolyn is at the far right on DJB Black Al Badi, a 15 year old Pure Arabian that just raced in the President's Cup in Abu Dhabi on Feb. 16, 2013.

were cut by more than half. I encouraged Bob Byrns, the Mounted Calvary Director of Texas A&M, also to barefoot. He came and brought students to our clinics. They have an infinity barefoot track and about 30 to 40 young men and women are being trained in the art of "Barefooting" every year.

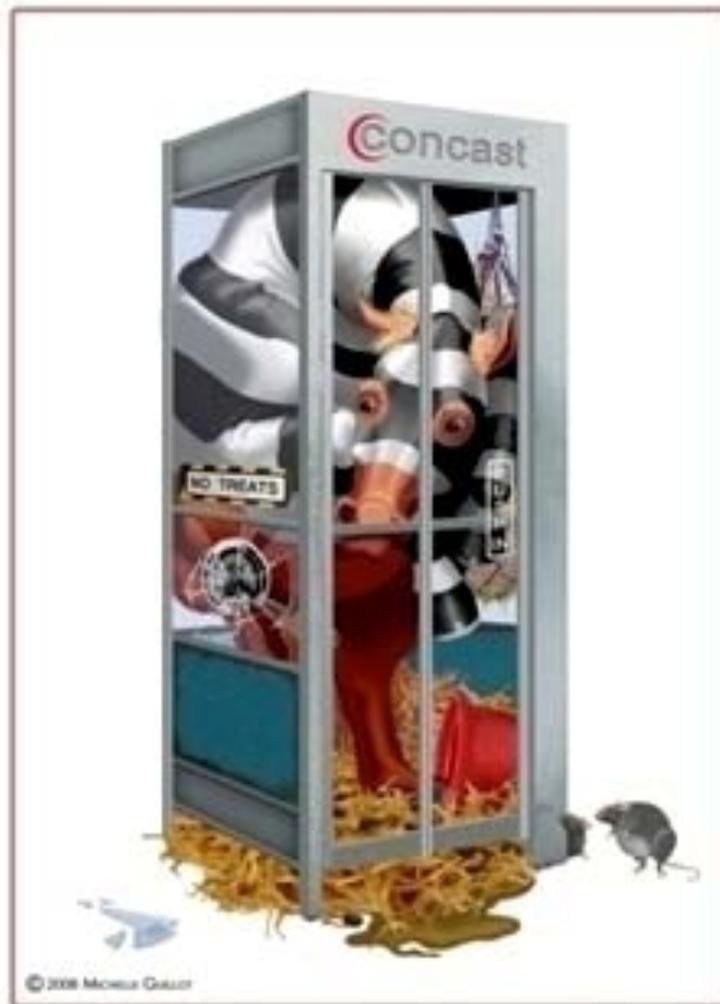
All of those horses are used on pavement in their work and parades. I take around a dozen horses 3-6 times a year into community parades, including the HOUSTON LIFESTOCK & RODEO Parade. They even still have a rule on the books, that the horses must be shod... NEVER in over 12 years has anyone said anything to us regarding our beautiful bare feet. They can't, they are neater than the shod horses.

I think we have nowhere to go but up!!! For the rocky and mountainous terrain, or for really thin soled horses, the new protective boots are the answer. There's just no reason to shoe with iron ever again. It may not happen 100%, some will always hold on to the "gotta be shod" idea, but I think the recreational rider is educating themselves and coming over by leaps and bounds. The professionals are realizing that they can extend the useful working and showing life of horses with good natural hoof care, so I believe you will see the same percentage of moving to "barefoot" that you have seen in the last 13 years. I'm still learning every day. The yahoo groups are like "Continuing Education." I still love trimming and am as excited as ever about the good things it does for a horse. How can any open-minded person not see the value of a beautiful natural hoof? It's just going to get better and better. 🐾 www.horseridingfun.com

THE BAREFOOT HOOF MOVEMENT, 1978-2013: Some personal jottings

Robert Cook

In 1978, the retirement of a farrier triggered the start of the modern barefoot movement. Unable to rely on the successor keeping his appointments, Dr. Strasser began to trim her own sound and pasture-kept horses. As she wrote 32 years later, *"I soon noticed the difference in usability between my own barefoot, naturally-living horses and my shod, box-stall-kept patients."* From the studies she subsequently carried out, based on this critical observation and the energy she invested in spreading the word, the care of the horse's hoof and the health and quality of life of the horse has undergone a reformation. Horse owners around the world owe a debt of gratitude to Hiltrud Strasser, a veterinarian in Germany and also Jaime Jackson, a farrier in the USA, for their pioneering work. The persistence of obsolete medieval methods has no place in the 21st century. Horseshoes are unlucky for horses. Julian Huxley expressed the essence of the barefoot message when he wrote, "... false thinking brings wrong conduct."



A golden cage is still a cage – Mexican proverb

PAST HISTORY

In 2000, my article “A solution to respiratory and other problems caused by the bit” was published in Germany and read by Dr. Strasser (Cook 2000). I received a letter from her soon after, expressing her pleasure in learning about another veterinarian who was also advocating the elimination of equine iron. She enclosed copies of “A Lifetime of Soundness” (Third Edition, 1998) and “Shoeing a Necessary Evil” (1999). I have these in front of me as I write and my marginalia remind me of my mounting excitement as I read each one. After a short and quickly passing period of shock, surprise and incredulity, I realized that her research and results provided me with convincing answers to so many questions about the horse’s hoof that had bothered me since I graduated from the Royal Veterinary College, London in 1952. The bonus of ‘A Lifetime of Soundness’ was its appendix, introducing me to the remarkable work of Bracy Clark (1771-1860), who was probably the very first student to graduate from my own school, The Royal Veterinary College, London in 1795. If I had any doubts about the validity of Strasser’s findings, which I didn’t, this appendix would have certainly won me over. I was unable to attend Strasser’s first international conference but was glad to contribute an article on the bit for the conference booklet. In turn, this introduced me to Alexander Nevzorov who did attend the conference and who, quite independently, had been a critic of the bit for many years.

In January 2001, I nominated Strasser for the International Equine Veterinarian’s Hall of Fame; an award run by the American Farrier’s Journal. Sadly the selectors did not share my enthusiasm for her 20 years of pioneering work and the nomination was rejected. I resubmitted a reinforced nomination in 2002, by which time Strasser’s magisterial textbook had been published (her 9th or 10th book), but once again it was silently ignored, without even an acknowledgment of its receipt on either occasion.

In 2001, concerned that my veterinary colleagues were not making use of Strasser’s research and were ignoring it in the literature, I wrote an article with the title, “Educated Owners and Barefoot Horses: An open letter to veterinarians” that was published in the Journal of Equine Veterinary Science.” (Cook 2001) In view of the tremendous interest that had by this time been shown by many horse owners in Strasser’s work and their early adoption of its application, it seemed possible that veterinarians were in danger of rendering themselves obsolete on the topic of equine podiatry. When owners appealed to their veterinarians for help with a transition from shod to barefoot for their horses, veterinarians were not only unable to help but often discouraged the idea. As a group, US farriers were even more positively opposed to the barefoot movement and the President of the American Farriers Association wrote many articles in which he expressed a dissenting opinion.

In 2002, I persuaded the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University to invite Dr. Strasser to present her work at a two-day conference on the campus, “Hoofcare for the Millennium: Exploring the Strasser Method.” The Conference was attended by veterinarians, farriers and owners. The owners did not get much chance to contribute to the discussion but one owner summed up the situation for me by stating quietly when an opportunity arose that she was “*not satisfied with what veterinarians and farriers had to offer.*”

Between 2000 and 2010 I published 17 articles in support of the barefoot movement (see References). Two articles published in the Veterinary Times, UK prompted personal attacks in an ensuing published correspondence from three veterinarians, all of whom had connections with the Worshipful Company of Farriers. I answered their protests with two rebuttal letters.

The Veterinary Times article of 2008 was illustrated with cartoons drawn by Michelle Guillot of Pennsylvania. One example emphasized my précis of the three principles of the barefoot movement, “neither shoe, stable nor stagnation” and another characterized the tournament between the knights of the iron shoe and the knights of the barefoot. The point was made in the article that, as neither veterinarians nor farriers had published any evidence to rebut the barefoot evidence, the knights of the barefoot were victorious in the scientific method ‘jousting.’ Shoeing was compared to the practice of footbinding and this gave Michelle another opportunity for one of her excellent cartoons.



Considerable time was spent helping hoof trimmers in the UK defend themselves from law suits filed against them for cruelty by the RSPCA

I prepared a poster presentation for a joint meeting of the British Veterinary Association’s Ethics Committee International and the University Federation of Animal Welfare at the Royal Society in London on ‘Quality of Life.’ The poster carried the heading, ‘Bits and Shoes are Reclassified as Cruel.’ The only feedback I received was that the poster had made one veterinary academic angry. Yet the heading was justified by the definition of cruelty ... *the infliction of avoidable pain or suffering*

PRESENT SITUATION

THE ‘UPS’:

- The joy of seeing a horse with four healthy hooves.
- The leadership of veterinary researchers and practitioners like Drs. Strasser, Bowker and Teskey, and of a farrier, Jaime Jackson. A second generation of leaders is ready and able to

take the baton on to the next stage. I think of people like Sabine Kells, Peter Ramey, Claudia Garner, Cheryl Henderson and others.

Pete Ramey, for example, is another enlightened 'former farrier' who no longer uses metal. He writes, *"Our goal continues to be for every horse to outperform its former shod self, and the hooves deliver this with shocking consistency that amazes me more every day."*

- The success that these leaders have had in establishing the barefoot management as a worldwide reality. Pioneering 'cells' of barefoot groups are now firmly established wherever horses are kept. Their numbers might be small in relation to the total horse population but they are 'seeded' and they will grow. The snowball effect in the simple passage of time will work wonders. We just have to be patient.
- The determination, dedication and sheer hard work of so many enthusiastic horse owners who have studied and adopted barefoot management in spite of the hurdles they have been faced with (e.g., their inability to get help and support from their local veterinarian or farrier, the peer pressure from other owners who would discourage them from going ahead with such a foolish project, and even legal attack). Their willingness to invest time, money and emotional capital for the good of their horses has been nothing short of inspirational. They have shown, by example, with great courage. The educated owner will have an increasing influence in the years ahead
- The major contribution of The Horse's Hoof in providing a source of diverse, varied and practical information from all corners of the barefoot world. By allowing subscribers to get to know barefoot advocates other than the 'school' they themselves had studied, a beneficial 'brake' has been placed on what otherwise might have fragmented the whole movement.
- Other publications such as The Natural Horse, Horses for Life and Rick Lamb's Radio Show are also making a valuable contribution
- The way in which the Internet has been harnessed by all advocates to spread the word, with excellent educational websites now available in many languages. DVDs, YouTube videos, online forums and Facebook are also a beneficial force for education

THE 'DOWNS':

- The continued resistance to barefoot management by veterinary practitioners in general but also Vet Schools and the faculty at these schools whose research is hoof oriented. The opposition seems mainly to take the form of simply overlooking the barefoot podiatry work that has been accomplished in the last 20 years and pretending that it didn't exist but there is an element of more active opposition from many academics who have strong ties with farriers.
- The more active opposition by farriers in general and by organisations such as the Worshipful Company of Farriers and the American Farriers Association. An owner with a shod horse who is unable to find a veterinarian or farrier willing to help them through the de-shoeing period (to discalceate) should not be blamed for looking elsewhere for help. Yvonne Welz has expressed it well in an article that reviewed the five-year history of the barefoot movement. *"In a crisis, when no veterinarian or*

farrier will help, many an owner has been faced with a choice to either pick up a knife or put the horse down.”

- The failure of the FEI and the racing industry to encourage welfare reform in general. It would be encouraging, for example, to see the FEI or racing's administrators taking a keen interest in reviewing their rules on mandatory shoeing.
- To see the law being *used* to outlaw the work of certified hoof trimmers, especially when this is done under the aegis and with the funds of a welfare charity, e.g., the RSPCA. The veterinary profession and the RSPCA both have a responsibility to further the welfare of the horse. The barefoot management program provides an opportunity to achieve a welfare advance of historic proportion. In order to avoid miscarriages of justice in the future, it is imperative that equine oriented members of both bodies should equip themselves with a proper understanding of the program's overall validity and superiority to the traditional practice of shoeing. Any perceived weaknesses in the barefoot management program are weaknesses of detail such as can be expected in a new method, rather than fundamental flaws. The argument could be made that whereas the barefoot management program may only be 95% defensible, the shoeing program is 100% indefensible. It is not being suggested, at this transitional phase in the history of hoof care, that farriers should be prosecuted for cruelty. They must be given time to continue their further education. They need to abandon a practice that was first introduced in the Middle Ages and which is fundamentally no different now than it was in the 13th century. In the meantime, it ill becomes a farrier, who has been inflicting unnecessary pain to accuse a hoof trimmer of cruelty when he/she tries to correct hoof damage brought about by a farrier in the first instance. It is even more inappropriate when an accusation of cruelty is false, by definition. Shoeing results in the infliction of avoidable pain and suffering and is therefore, by definition, cruel. In contrast, any pain that a horse might inevitably have to endure during the transition from shod to barefoot is unavoidable. As it is unavoidable, it is not cruel.
 - The failure of the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) and the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) to encourage development of the barefoot movement. Again, quite the opposite – some years ago the BEVA even issued some sort of warning to its members (details not checked). Yet nowhere in the literature is there an evidence-based justification for the practice of shoeing. No random controlled trials have ever justified nailing hoops of iron on the solar surface of the hoof. On the contrary, there are many published and cogent reasons for not shoeing.
 - The rather limited adoption of barefoot management by professional riders in the top ranks of competition. Paradoxically, the discipline of endurance riding leads the way by way of example, as there are a number of barefoot competitors. But in other disciplines that do not even demand such hoof stamina, professional riders do not seem to be adopting this proven benefit. Perhaps they are reluctant to allow their valuable horses the necessary freedom time outside a stable. [HOT PRESS: But as I write these notes, some good news breaks in the February issue of Dressage Today. A cover story about the trainer Shannon Peters, a US Dressage Federation bronze, silver and gold medalist and three-time competitor at the national dressage championships. Shannon

and her husband, Steffen, a member of the US Olympic team in 2012, have successfully taken a number of their 65-horse stable barefoot. His Olympic horse, Ravel, was barefoot. The barefoot horses are still stabled but get turn-out time on pea gravel etc.,]



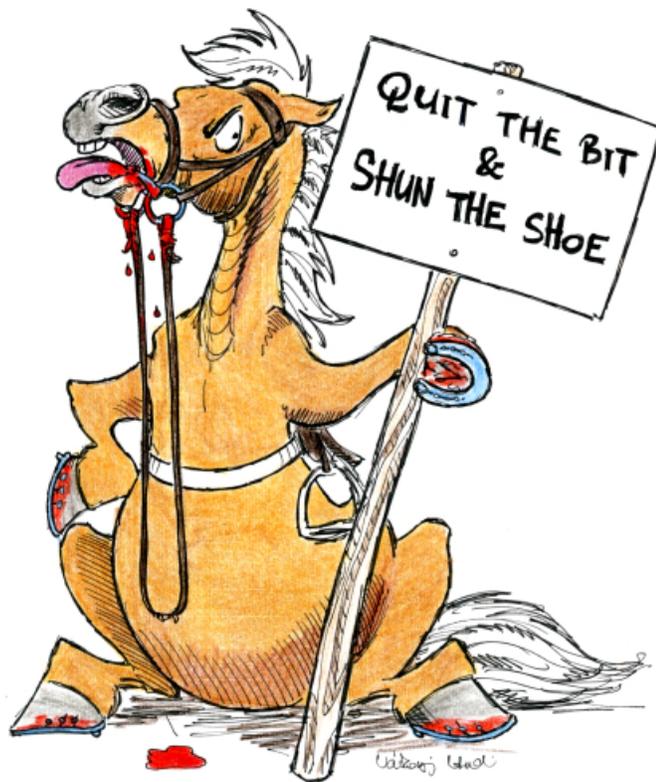
FUTURE POTENTIAL

- For a time, as with smoking, shoeing will persist for political or sociological reasons, simply because old ideas die-hard and horses will still be incarcerated in stables. But gradually, the truth about the hoof will triumph, as there are no physiological reasons or justification for shoeing or stabling.
- In spite of the resistance and inertia from industry groups that might be expected to support the welfare benefits of barefoot management – tremendous progress is being made. The patient gardener’s wisdom about the growth of a tender plant applies, “*first year sleep, second year creep, third year leap.*” The barefoot movement may have to think in decades rather than years but it will grow. James Lovelock considered that it took about 40 years for a big scientific idea to become accepted. If we date the active start of the movement from 2000, rather than 1978, this puts our expectation for a more general acceptance at around 2040. In the meantime, the teenage barefoot army is on the move, gathering recruits and reinforcements at every stage. By 2025, some of these impassioned youngsters will be qualified veterinarians on the faculty of Vet. Schools around the world, others will be serving on AAEP, BEVA and FEI committees etc.



- Pressure must be brought on Vet Schools and Colleges with equine science programs to include barefoot management in their core curricula. Again a glimmer of hope here, as Dr. Debra Taylor at Auburn Veterinary School is working with Peter Ramey and looking for research funding to explore the barefoot idea.
- Welfare organizations should be persuadable supporters of the movement, as should Insurance companies – it is in their interests to reduce ‘wastage’ from navicular disease and laminitis
- Adoption of the barefoot idea by more ‘celebrity’ riders or public figures would help to speed up the process.
- Some philanthropic sponsor might one day provide ‘fighting funds’ for research and publicity. Research funding at the moment, such as it is, goes to those researchers who are working with iron, as referees at the Grayson Foundation and similar organizations are still themselves living in the Iron Age. None of the money that has been donated for laminitis research is being used to explore the barefoot solution. Most of the good publicity is already being given freely, e.g., Joe Camp’s books and influence. Books are already being written that could become the present-day equivalent of ‘Black Beauty.’ Scientific support for the movement is critical but so too is emotional support.
- Claudia Garner is currently in the process of founding the International Barefoot Hoof Organization. In a few years, such a group could wield considerable influence. There is, already, an American (Barefoot) Hoof Association
- Evidence-based barefoot science needs to be made part of the agenda for the annual AAEP and BEVA conferences. When program committees put out calls for abstracts, future veterinary graduates who support barefoot management will be in a position to report their research.

- In order to overcome the counter-attraction of medieval technology, the barefoot message will apparently have to be driven home with some energy. All shoes are harmful to the health of the horse. There is no right way to do a wrong thing. The phrases 'physiological shoeing' and 'therapeutic shoeing' are oxymorons. A veterinarian saying a barefoot horse cannot work is like an engineer saying a bumblebee cannot fly. To nail an iron clamp on a horse's toe is "murd'rous, bloody, full of blame, savage, extreme, rude, cruel, (and) not to trust."



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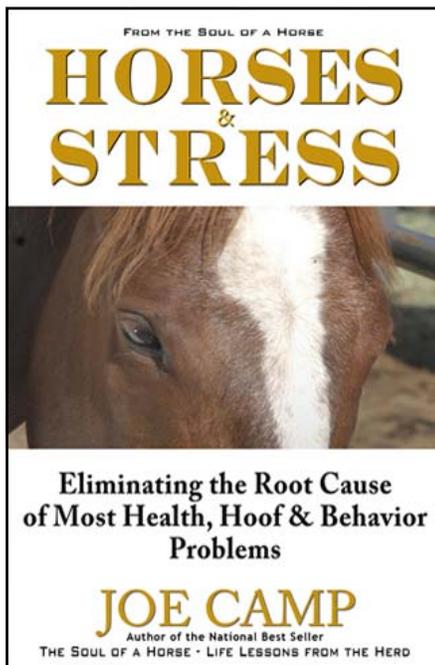
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