

Nuts about Horses

Spring 2010



boarding
training
lessons

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Happy 2010! Welcome to the first issue of the Wacky Nut Farm Equestrian Center newsletter that we'll be sending you periodically throughout the year. We're excited about now being open to the public, and look forward to sharing some highlights of WNF activities and other goings on in each issue of this newsletter.

Our newsletter will provide you with **Barn News** to keep you informed about the people who ride and work at the farm, and the horses who live here. Each newsletter will feature a **WNF Profile**, which shares an in-depth look at someone affiliated with the farm. This newsletter features an interview with Ulla Boysen, manager and dressage trainer at Wacky Nut Farm Equestrian Center. She shares her history with horses and dressage training, and explains her approach to training riders and horses.

Our **Upcoming Events** section will ensure you are current on upcoming workshops and clinics for riders and visits by equine dentists, chiropractors and massage therapists. We will also include information about how to sign up for these events. Riding slots for the March 20-22 clinic with Danish clinician and dressage trainer, Henrik Johansen, are now filled, but a waiting list has been established. There is still space for auditors. You are invited to join us for our monthly potlucks; look inside for details.



Useful Tips will be a featured column to provide ideas and inspiration for improving your riding or the care of your horse.

Finally, our last section, titled **Reminders**, will provide you with updated information on ways to make your experience at WNF safer and more enjoyable.

To keep you up-to-date on activities at the farm, please check our new website, www.wackynutfarm.com for the current Arena Lesson and Use Schedule, as well as information on upcoming clinics and much more. Also, click on "Guest House" and learn about our lovely guest quarters on the farm, which offers three guest rooms and lodging for those taking riding lessons, attending an equestrian training clinic or out of town owners of horses boarded here or in training.

We would appreciate your feedback or ideas about the content of future newsletter articles. **We look forward to a wonderful year ahead.**



Barn News



Meet Sam

"Sampson," a 15 year old, 16.2 hands, Oldenburg gelding, is our featured horse in this newsletter. Sam, as he is better known around the barn, was sired by the SWB stallion Juvel, a US Dressage team participant for the Pan American games

and reserve for the Seoul Olympics. Sam is trained through FEI advanced level and has shown successfully at many competitions. A sweet, sensitive, and willing partner, Sam is a pleasure in the barn as well as in the arena. On trail rides he is curious about everything. Rumor has it that his previous owner used to read a book while out riding Sam for hours on the trails. Sam is currently half-leased by John, who keeps a steady supply of mints on hand – Sam's favorite treat. Sam is also used for dressage lessons with other riders.

Who's Who in the Barn

A number of people work to make Wacky Nut Farm a safe, fun, and pleasant place for horses and people alike. In addition, the Farm places strong emphasis on environmental stewardship (achieving "Farm of the Year" award from Kitsap County in 2009). Below is a brief introduction to the faces you are likely to meet in and around the barn:

Ulla Boysen :Farm Manager, dressage trainer & instructor. E-mail: ulla@wackynutfarm.com. Office: (206) 780-1617.

Jo Wallace: Assistant Manager & beginner-leson instructor. E-mail: jo@wackynutfarm.com Cell phone: (206)353-3358.

Erin Zuchero: Stall tech & feeder.

Sue Tusnadi: Stall tech & feeder.

Stella Ley: Bookkeeper, feeder and project manager emeritus.

Len Beil: Tractor driver extraordinaire; vegetation expert and community garden manager.

Jamie Straw: Assists Ulla with riding & instruction.

Wacky Nut Farm Resident Horses and their Owners



"Freark"

Friesian, 8 y/o Gelding
Owner: Kathy



"Jethro"

Quarter Horse,
7 y/o Gelding.
Owners: Karen & Megan



"Kobe"

Pinto, 7 y/o Gelding.
Owners: Cindi & Sarah



"Midge"

Paint, 10 y/o Mare.
Owners: Maddie & JoAnne



"Peregrine"

Swedish Warmblood,
15 y/o Mare.
Owner: Ulla



"Poppy"

Oldenburg, 9 y/o Mare.
Owner: Jean



"Quigley"

Paint, 7 y/o Gelding.
Owner: Wacky Nut Farm



"Rhumba"

Dutch Warmblood,
12 y/o Gelding.
Owner: Debbi



"Sampson"

Oldenburg, 15 y/o Gelding.
Owner: Wacky Nut Farm.
Half leased by John.



"Star"

Tennessee Walker,
17 y/o Mare.
Owner: Sally



WNF Profile: Ulla Boysen

Prior to coming to WNF, Ulla has taught dressage in California and in the Pacific Northwest for more than 30 years. She is originally from Sweden, where she trained as a dressage instructor. In addition to being the resident instructor/trainer at WNF, Ulla clinics throughout Washington and other states. Together with Henrik Johansen she is the co-founder of "Positive Riding" – a logical and systematic approach to classical dressage. They hold clinics for riders and trainers across the U.S. We have presented Ulla with a number of questions and she has promised to address one or two of these in each upcoming newsletter, starting with this issue.

Ulla's teaching areas at WNF include: **dressage lessons for horses and/or riders through advanced levels, longeing, long reining, cavaletti group, and free jumping.** In addition, she accepts **horses in training.**

For further information about Ulla's training philosophy, please contact Ulla and visit the Positive Riding website: www.positiveriding.com

How did you get started with horses?

My first memory of horses and riding begins at age 3 or 4 at the pony rides at Skansen, a cultural museum and zoo in Stockholm where I begged to be taken time and time again. As I grew older I kept asking for lessons but my father (a master mariner who grew up on a farm with draft horses) kept putting me off saying "You have to watch out for those animals, they are big!" I listened to this for a few years, but my interest in horses grew stronger, so finally one day when we were living on the island of Mallorca in the Mediterranean I went out on my own and rented a tall, black horse from a neighboring farmer. He didn't ask any questions and kindly put a saddle and bridle on the horse for me. This was a good thing, as I would not have known how to do it myself! So off I went through the almond orchards on a

beautiful sunny day. It didn't take long before the horse was trotting, then cantering, then full speed ahead dragging me through the trees. It was inevitable that I would fall off. But I managed to get back on and ride back to the farmer who looked at me strangely but didn't say more than thank you and "Adios!"

When I returned home my father, who also looked at me strangely, met me. "What have you been doing? Your shirt is all ripped and you have bleeding scratches all over your face and arms!" Oh! I hadn't even realized that. It was a dead giveaway I had been dragged through the trees! So, I had to confess—I had gone out and rented a horse without asking permission. My father looked me up and down and responded, "Well, if you are that serious about riding, I think we will have to find a stable where you can take lessons then!" And that was the beginning of my involvement with horses. I was 13 years old.



Ulla riding Falcon 9017
Swedish Warmblood Stallion
Imported by Ulla from Sweden
and father of Peregrine at WNF

What initially attracted you to dressage?

To start with, this was the way that everyone rode in Europe for basic flatwork and as preparation for jumping and advanced dressage. So I was immersed in it naturally, especially since Sweden has a long history of riding, especially dressage. Then over time, even though I did quite a bit of combined training and cross country jumping, I came to understand that this way of training horses is what makes the most sense both physically and mentally for the horse. It is based on a system that allows riders to work the horse in such a way that the horse is able to carry a rider while developing the correct musculature, strength and frame without riders having to resort to force or artificial contraptions like draw reins or sharp bits.



Upcoming Events

WEEKLY

Saturdays 11:30 AM-12:30 PM:

Group Cavaletti class.

Taught by Ulla, this class encourages horses to develop flexibility and muscle strength in a format different from their daily work.

Cost: \$35. Sign-up: No advance sign-up required for boarders.

Mondays 8 -10:30 AM: Free Longeing/Jumping.

Managed by Ulla and Jo, this workout allows horses to exercise without physical restraints in a controlled setting while Ulla teaches them to obey voice commands for direction and pace. For advanced horses, this includes some jumping. Open to all horses at WNF on a space-available basis. Cost: \$30. Sign-up: Advance sign-up required – contact Ulla or Jo.

Group Dressage Lesson: Tuesdays 4 – 5 PM

Open to all levels of riders/horses. Each week will cover a specific topic of interest to riders of all disciplines.

Cost: \$35/rider. Check main whiteboard for details and to sign up.

MONTHLY

April 7th: Dr. Michael Salewsky, Pilchuck Veterinary Clinic partner and head of the Alternative Medicine Department, is our equine chiropractor. We are fortunate to be able to have him come to Wacky Nut Farm on a regular basis. To schedule an appointment, please contact Pilchuck Veterinary Clinic, or contact either Ulla or Jo. *

March 20th – 24th:

Mark your calendar! **Henrik Johansen** is returning to WNF for the first of this year's Positive Riding clinics series in the U.S.. Clinic riding slots are full, waiting list available. Lesson cost: \$180/hour. Auditing cost: Free for boarders. All others \$10/day. For more information and to sign up, please see the flyer in the barn or e-mail Ulla. ulla@wackynutfarm.com

May – September:

Ride and review competition clinics series with clinicians who are also judges. We will have a different clinician/judge for each date.

One each month. Exact dates, entry fees, clinicians, etc to be announced.

These clinics give the rider an opportunity to ride through a test under the same (but more relaxed) circumstances as in a competition. Each rider is judged and scored, then the clinician/judge works on specific issues or parts of the test with the rider. After that the rider may ride through the test or parts of it again, using the newly learned information. Each lesson is 30 minutes. Riders will receive their score sheets at the end. To maintain the similarity to a competition we will give an award to the high score ride at each level.

This kind of clinic is also an excellent training/learning opportunity for riders that are not interested in competing.

For more information: ulla@wackynutfarm.com

** Owners are required to be present to hold their horse while it is being treated. Or WNF can provide this service for a fee of \$20. Please see Ulla or Jo for details.*

Monthly WNF Potluck: 7 PM on the last Tuesday of every month. Sign up sheet on the white board in the barn.

You cannot train a horse with shouts and expect it to obey a whisper.

- Dagobert D. Runes





Useful Tips

To blanket or not to blanket?

As you look around the barn, you will see several different answers to this question. Horses naturally grow a winter coat, starting around the fall equinox, which can withstand almost any winter day in the Pacific Northwest. While our winter temperatures are usually mild, cold wind and cold rain are two conditions that need to be considered when blanketing your horse.

Cold wind causes horses the greatest discomfort and more rapidly saps their energy because it whips away body heat faster than any other condition. Cold rain is a close second, chilling the skin through conduction and flattening of the hairs' insulating loft. Meanwhile, frigid temperatures and snowfall are not particularly chilling to horses already adapted to colder regions. Since all horses at WNF have cover, and can get out of the wind & rain, it is not a must to blanket at our barn in order to keep the horses warm. And in case of a major cold spell, like the one we had in December, the stall doors to the outside paddocks can be closed.

A number of factors play a role when deciding to use blankets, and most have to do with the owner's convenience and peace of mind. A horse with a heavy winter coat sweats quickly once he starts working (or playing in the turn-outs!), requiring lengthy cooling-out time or drying time, before he is put back in the stall. A roll in the mud also takes a lot more work to get off their winter coat, than when covered by a blanket. Daily grooming also takes considerably longer with a heavy coat. Many owners decide to clip their horse in the fall to avoid these challenges, making blanketing a necessary part of the horse's routine. In addition, some horses with limited flesh on their bones, might require blanketing during bad weather. Finally, if your horse decides to stand outside in the pouring rain without a blanket for an extended period, he will get chilled, unless you are there to dry him off.

When to blanket?

A good choice is to begin nighttime blanketing with a light waterproof cover when overnight temperatures hit 50 degrees or less. When daytime temperatures drop down to the low 40s, it's time to start blanketing with a medium-heavy waterproof blanket. (If you clip your horse prior to this temperature, you will need to switch to a warmer blanket at that time). In addition, a cooler blanket (fleece is inexpensive and easy to wash/dry) works well as an extra insulating layer for particularly cold days.

The same guideline serves in reverse when it's time to put the blankets away in the spring. Most owners begin weaning their horses of their layers during the daytime and ultimately celebrate the end of blanketing once nighttime temperatures remain above 50 degrees.

The perfect fit:

Blankets are sized by length, measuring from the center of the horse's chest back to his tail. Standard sizes range from 64 inches for small ponies to 90 inches for large draft horses. Careful measuring of the horse you're clothing is the key to selecting a blanket that gives him full, comfortable coverage. Withers fit is critical to the horse's comfort and the blanket's stability. A well-fitted blanket rests comfortably over the withers and shoulders and produces no pressure or rubbing as the horse moves or reaches down to graze or feed.

Proper adjustment of the fasteners is critical to blanket safety. Adjust the surcingle so that you can slide your flat hand between it and your horse's belly. If it's hanging down four to six inches, a horse can easily stick a foot in there when he lies down. The hind-leg straps require some room to allow the horse freedom of movement, but if they are hanging down to the hocks, they, too, can catch on things. To prevent the leg straps from rubbing the gaskins, and to make the blanket more secure, secure the leg straps through one another before fastening them on the same side.

Blanketing after work:

It's best to blanket your horse only after he has cooled down and his hair is dried. Unless the blanket is permeable, it will trap the moisture closer to his skin, slowing the drying period and lengthening the time it takes for a hot horse to return to normal body temperature. To speed up the drying process you can rub him down with a dry towel. Another tactic is to cover the cooling horse with a wool or acrylic cooler as you walk him, the equine version of a sweatshirt that draws moisture away from the horse's hair and into the fabric, where it then evaporates.

Excerpts from EQUUS Magazine, December 2001.





Reminders

We are hosting a **monthly POTLUCK** for boarders, riders and friends of WNF. Bring a favorite dish, a good horse story, or an interesting horse DVD, and meet us in the guest quarters. Watch for sign-up in the barn. Our next gatherings will be on Tuesday March 30, April 27, May 25.

ROLODEX We are putting together a collection of contacts in the Rolodex located in the back tack wash room. This allows boarders and riders to easily connect with each other. Please fill out a card with the following information: your name & horse's name/ phone number/ e-mail address.

FIRST AID KITS WNF has an emergency first aid trauma kit for horses located in the tack room. Please familiarize yourself with its location. Contents are reserved for emergencies! Please notify Ulla or Jo immediately if you remove anything from the kit (and we ask that you replace used items ASAP). A first aid kit for people is located in the kitchen above the washer/dryer. Contents are reserved for emergencies, and items should be replaced ASAP.

LONGEING In order to keep our footing in the arena in great shape, please remember to move around the entire arena when longeing your horse (- allowing the horse to move alternately on a straight line and in the circle pattern is much healthier/better for the horse's joints as well!). This rule pertains to both indoor and outdoor arenas.

BARN BUDDIES We have set up a "Barn Buddy" account with Smartpak for all the WNF horses that receive worming and/or supplement products from this company. This allows us to pool shipments, saving us all money! Horses currently participating include: Poppy, Pere, Rhumba, Freark, Sam, Star, and Quigley. If you would like to add your horse to the Smart Pak Barn Buddy list, (a great way to take care of the required worming program), please contact Jo.

If you wish to allow others to ride your horse on the Wacky Nut Farm property, please remember they **MUST** sign a **release form** and submit this to either Ulla or Jo **PRIOR to riding**. Forms can be obtained from either one of us.

A reminder that your **monthly Board payment is due by the 1st of each month**. There is a drop box located in the kitchen/wash room on the right side of the little desk. Payment must be received in full by the 10th of each month, in order to avoid a late charge.

STORING & CLEANING YOUR HORSE BLANKET

- Clearly label horse blankets with your horse's name.
- Each tack locker has an upper shelf to store extra blankets.
- If your horse's blanket is wet and needs to dry, you can hang it in the T-section. Please transfer it once it's dry to your horse's stall or to the top shelf of your locker.
- If you would like us to switch blankets on your horse, leave the blanket hanging outside the horse's stall.
- WNF has arranged for blankets to be picked up for washing on Thursdays. Blankets must be ready to go (bagged up and labeled) by the previous Wed – there is a minimum of 3 blankets for Blanket Express to pick up. Please see information in the T-section (where you will also find labels to secure to your blankets).



INDOOR ARENA CLOSURES

- **Mondays** 8 -10:30 AM. Free jumping followed by harrowing.
- **Tuesday nights** 6:30 -8:00 PM. 4H dog training.
- **Saturdays** 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM. Cavaletti group (see Weekly "Upcoming Events" for details).
- **Clinics** Closed times will be announced on main white board well ahead of time.
- **WNF Hosted Clinics** The arena will remain open for riding before 9 AM, at mid-day for 2 hours, and in the evening.

You can check the **Arena Schedule** by going to our website **www.wackynutfarm.com** and click on "Schedules" to bring up a current arena calendar.