TWHA proudly presented 2 films at our first Night at the Movies at the Pacific Film Archive Theater at UC in Berkeley on Tuesday, Feb 15th. 105 people attended plus filmmakers and crew from both films.

The first movie shown was *Cowgirls: Portraits of American Ranch Women*, a 1985 documentary about modern-day women aged six to sixty, who ride, rope and tough out the elements just as well as their more famous cowboy counterparts. As noted on the You Tube film excerpt, *Cowgirls* spans three generations, telling the real life stories of two women and two little girls. It begins with Norma Hapgood of Nevada, a rancher who faces life with a smile and boundless energy. The film then moves to Wyoming, where Melody Harding, age 34, works as the foreman for a large cattle operation. A private, vigorous person, Harding prefers the company of animals to that of people and endures many

Continued on next page

*Melody Harding (above) was one of those featured in Cowgirls: Portraits of American Ranch Women, while The Highly Exalted showed us one of the last mobile chuck wagons.*

by Becky Mertens and Morris Older

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hours of strenuous ranch work alone. Next we meet two young ranch daughters, Cricket and Nondi Long, ages 9 and 6, who take pride in the strength and abilities they learn on their parents’ ranch in Oregon. Cowgirls presents inspiring, positive role models for women of all ages from every type of background. The film is about women who are living their own dream come true existences and inspires both men and women to pursue their dreams.

Director Nancy Kelly, editor Kenji Yamamoto, and cinematographer John Knoop (all local filmmakers) took questions from the audience after their film.

The second movie was The Highly Exalted, which, the film’s web site notes, documents the life of working cowboys on the last horsedrawn chuckwagon in modern America. Shot against the spectacular backdrop of northern Nevada, nine cowboys and their cook tell colorful stories of six months roaming the half million acre ranch where they work. These are some of America’s last true cowboys. They are horse-back specialists: men unwilling to do the haying and maintenance work and who are not looking for job security or a permanent home. The Highly Exalted presents a vestige of the past, a portrait of a nearly extinct way of cowboy life. Director Kim Shelton of The Highly Exalted could not attend, but sent her husband Bill Shelton and he was joined in a Q&A with John Knoop, who shot both films.

Attendees included members of the Orinda Horsemen’s Association, TWHA, the Ocean Riders of Marin, the San Ramon Valley Horsemen, Metropolitan Horsemen, Tri-Cities Horsemen, the Tri-Valley Trailblazers, and other riders from as far away as Sonoma County. The event was organized by TWHA Board member Becky Mertens, who is the Pacific Film Archive’s Theater Manager. The audience unanimously expressed delight and so we hope to host another such event this coming year.

In the interest of helping the horse world keep pace, following are some abbreviations for common phrases to use every day when texting riding buddies or family...

OOH - out of hay!
OOM - Out of money
LAS - lost a shoe
FOMHL - Fell Off My Horse Laughing
FTC — Forgot the carrots
MIHA — Mare’s in heat, again
ITTI — I’ll take up tennis instead
LWW — Lesson went well
MSMBO - mud sucked my boot off
HAO - Hay All Over
HIMB - Hay in My BRA
PISS - Poop Induced Sudden Stop
SBGR - Stuck Behind Green Rider
UD - Unplanned Dismount
PTTDG - Prayed to the Dirt God
MMM - Master Manure Mucker
R2R - Ready to ride
HGR - Have a great ride
MHTS - More horses than sense.
BAHHFDP - bought another horse; husband filed divorce papers
GBBF - got board bill, fainted
GFBF - got farrier bill, fainted
HRHCF - husband realized horse costs, fainted
Arroyo Trail has always been a favorite of mine in Tilden Park. Starting at Big Springs on South Park Drive, this single track meanders uphill creekside, parallel to the wider Big Springs Trail, and then veers North, ending at Seaview near the intersection with Lupine Trail. During a mid-1990s National Trail Days giant work party in Tilden, while others rerouted Grizzly Peak Trail and rehabbed Selby Trail, I was with a group that created the switchback through the Eucalyptus Trees on Arroyo. A bit later TWHA created another switchback on Arroyo just below that, both switchbacks replacing badly eroded trail that just went straight uphill the steepest way possible.

Over the past ten years the East Bay Hills rides have included Arroyo Trail, and TWHA has removed brush encroaching on the trail on our trail work days, one of which was rained out last October. A month later I sadly discovered on a hike that most of the trail was badly eroded, gullied, entrenched and quite difficult to walk on. In the winter it became a stream of its own. I walked the trail with Tilden Park Supervisor Sergio Huerta and since it clearly was a project much bigger than TWHA could handle on its own, talked to the Regional Trails Department and V-O-Cal about mobilizing the resources needed to get the job done.

Serendipity struck the next day. The California Wilderness Coalition, which was looking for a volunteer trail work project in the Berkeley or Oakland Hills, called the EBRPD’s Regional Trails Department. Arroyo seemed like a perfect match for an

Ivan Dickson Trail workday with this group. The Park District brought in a Sweco trail tractor for 2 days, and then on Friday, May 6th, 100 volunteers who work for outdoors camping companies in the Bay Area showed up for one of the Conservation Alliance’s 8 nationwide “Backyard Collectives.” These were volunteers from REI, North Face, Mountain Hardwear, Camelbak, JanSport, Clif Bar and Annu, and they were joined by TWHA members Kim Abbott, Eddie Reiter and Jane Binder. I was one of the crew leaders and we hiked up there and worked for 3 hours filling in cracks, removing berms, adjusting the upslope and downslope on either side of the trail, building drainage
TWHA Supports Tilden Trail Work

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dips to guide water off the trail when it rains, and trimming bush as needed. In the morning, we were sure there would be enough work left on Arroyo for TWHA’s spring trail work day on Arroyo, but by the end of the day, there was little left to do.

Pretty hard work, but a very spirited group, and the result is that what was perhaps the worst trail in Tilden Park is now one of the very best Work was followed by a Cactus Taqueria buffet, and, just before the raffle, I presented the EBRPD’s Ivan Dickson Volunteer Trail Maintenance Program with a check for $2,000, funds raised by last year’s East Bay Hills Trails Benefit Ride and Hike. This year the Ivan Dickson Program has scheduled projects not only on Arroyo Trail, but also in Wildcat (May 14th), Sibley (re-scheduled for July 9th), Redwood (July 16), Briones (Sept 17), and Anthony Chabot Regional Parks (October 15-16 with V-O-Cal).

Group Works to Protect Joaquin Miller Park

Ed Note: One thing missing in this CC Times report is that new trail signs have now been purchased, using money raised by the East Bay Hills Trails Benefit Ride and Hike, and will be installed this year

By Marta Yamamoto, Contra Costa Times

March 31: Tucked in the Oakland hills between Redwood, Roberts and Anthony Chabot regional parks lies Joaquin Miller Park. Comprised of 500 acres of redwoods, oaks, meadows and creeks, the park is home to the Sequoia Horse Arena, Chabot Space Center, Woodminster Amphitheatre, a native plant nursery and numerous historic structures.

A common misconception is that it, too, is part of the East Bay Regional Park District, but Joaquin Miller is a city of Oakland park, created for the people of Oakland as a living legacy to Joaquin Miller. Miller, the colorful 19th century environmentalist and poet moved to Oakland in 1886, and settled on 70 acres where he had 75,000 trees planted.

“The park was created by one man’s concept of trying to save trees at a time when they, especially redwoods, were being cut down for homes,” said Stephanie Benavidez, the supervising naturalist for Oakland Parks and Recreation. “There is no other park that has been hand-planted by a group of citizens.”

Now, a group of people representing varied interests have formed Friends of Joaquin Miller Park in an attempt to continue Miller’s legacy and maintain a park that fits the needs of its users. Formed in 2010, the organization is an offshoot of the Joaquin Miller Working Group.

Between 1990 and 2005, a number of concerns arose over park usage. Originally an equestrian site, an influx of off-trail mountain bikers, off-leash dogs and other parties brought problems to the surface.

“In 2005 we formed the Joaquin Miller Working Group to make sure everyone had equal park access and to make improvements,” said Judi Bank, Working Group member and chair of Friends of Joaquin Miller Park.

With the backing of then Councilmember Jean Quan and staff member Sue Piper, the group tackled the problems of trail, road and freeway signage; opened two fenced-in dog parks; created a brochure and website; improved dangerous trail junctions; started restoration of the Abbey, Miller’s gingerbread cottage; and reinstalled a bicycle trail patrol.

In 2009 it was determined that the group should become its own entity and Friends of Joaquin Miller Park was formed in April 2010.

Though much has been accomplished, a number of concerns remain, including making the park safe, accessible and user-friendly. “Our primary concern is the lack of rangers and the cutback on police officers,” Benavidez said. “Cars are being broken into, and no one is enforcing (against) dogs off-leash, extreme off-trail bike riders and graffiti.”

Another concern is that trail signs have not been installed, making lost hikers a common problem and creating confusion regarding the different park rules as hikers cross between Joaquin Miller and the East Bay regional parks.

Friends of Joaquin Miller Park would like to increase community support and hope their second annual meeting at the park serves as a motivator. On May 21, the varied interest groups that represent the board of directors will be present with activities and programs to highlight different areas of the park. “We’ll report on what was done last year and will officially set the first post of the new trail signage,” Bank said.

For more information, visit Friends of Joaquin Miller Park at www.oaklandnet.com/joaquinmillerpark/Friends-of-Joaquin-Miller. The second annual meeting will be held May 21 at the Horseshoe Picnic Area. Check the website for further details.
Renovating Sequoia Arena

Top left: A typical fence section before work started. Top right: The augur on the rented Bobcat that raised the old posts out of the ground was then used to drill the holes for the new posts. Becky Mertens and other TWHA members helped remove an overgrowth of weeds, below, and Morris and Greg worked on getting the lower rail installed level on uneven ground, lower right. Photos by MHA, Michele Nelson and Anu Sambath

On TWHA’s Ride for the Ridge in 1990, organized to support the Bay Area Ridge Trail, we rode from Tilden Park to Sequoia Arena, which looked really good, with a white fence constructed just 4 years earlier. Over the years, however, the posts weakened, the rails were kicked loose, and The Metropolitan Horsemen’s Association, which hosts the shows there, more and more found itself playing catch-up trying to repair sagging gates and rotted boards. In recent years, a couple of teenager parties got out of hand, sparking bonfires fueled with fence boards.

A few years ago, MHA decided that the entire fence needed renovation and repair and set out to raise funds to do so. Starting in 2007 MHA’s share of the funds raised on the East Bay Hills Trails Benefit Ride and Hike, which spends 2 days each year, at Sequoia Arena, were set aside for this purpose and, with additional donations added, On May 7th the entire old fence was taken down and the boards sorted so that some wood could be re-used, and 2 rented Bobcats using augurs began drilling new post holes. By the end of the next day, all 160 post-holes had been dug out to nearly 4 feet deep, and 40 of the new posts had been set in place. TWHA members Kim Abbott and Morris Older helped out that weekend. The energy generated was infectious, but the task seemed larger than ever.

A core of people, including MHA President Melanie Diamond, her brother Kimball, and TWHA member Rachel Royce, who is also an MHA Board Member, then kept the work going, anchoring a second weekend of arena reconstruction. TWHA relocated our spring trail work day to Sequoia Arena and a host of TWHA members, including Gary Fitts, Susan Palo, Eric Schroeder, Becky Mertens, Elise Geske, Page Schorer, Elisabeth Cemouni, Morris Older and Jen Rader, arrived on May 15th. By that time all of the posts had been set, and part of the bottom rail attached.

Although TWHA work parties generally end by 12 or 1, a Continued on page 6
number of TWHA members stayed a lot longer than that, and by Sunday evening, all of the available wood on hand had been turned into fence, with a purchase scheduled for more to complete the job. And by the end of the next weekend, the entire renovation was completed.

This was a great community effort, involving dozens of volunteers, including equestrians, family members, and even some people who just joined because they happened by and like the vibe. Greg, one of those, was walking his dog, and ended up volunteering with his power tools whenever the arena work was happening—he even fixed my cordless drill, which hadn’t turned on in a couple of years!

Congratulations to the Metropolitan Horsemen’s Association and all of the volunteers for a job well done!

*Sequoia Arena Renovated*

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*Below: The bottom rail is up on the long side, the top rail at the end. Upper right: Volunteers work on securing the upper rail of the arena fence. Later the tops of the posts, which were sunk 3-4 feet in the ground, were removed. Middle and bottom right: The clean, finished look of the completed arena. Photos by Michele Nelson and Anu Sambath*
by David Whittall

DeQuincey (‘Quincey’) was foaled at Varian Arabians in Arroyo Grande, California on March 21st, 1978. He was sired by Bay El Bey out of Antoniaa and through them carried Polish, Crabbet and Kellogg bloodlines.

Rose Marie Hoffman and Peter Rich bought him and Windseed from Sheila Varian in September 1980 as two year olds. They wanted geldings that would very soon be ready to compete. They trained them at Peter’s Orinda property at 77 Tres Mesas in the way that riders at Bay Laurel Arabians have become accustomed to seeing so many Arabian horses successfully trained. Over the next five years Rose Marie and Quincey put in many miles of trail riding for both competition and pleasure. In these formative years, I am sure that Quincey’s skill, athleticism and appetite to go further, faster, were melded with Rose Marie’s skills as a rider and trainer to create the horse that we all came to know.

In the summer of 1985, Joan Andrews bought Quincey and he moved just far enough over the hill to trade a western exposure for an eastern exposure. Living at the top of Dos Osos, he was close to Kirsten Whitsett and her horses and still had trail access to the park through Peter’s pasture. Traveling over all his familiar trails with Joan Andrews, he was also introduced by her to the high Sierra. Rider Bob Cooper once described to me a multi day trail ride near Lake Tahoe that he participated in during those years. He recounted that Joan and Quincey would sometimes ride the up the steep hills first just so Quincey could get his exercise and then they would come back down and ride them again with everybody else.

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TWHA Horse Stories:
DeQuincey 1978-2011

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Around 1997 or 1998, Kirsten Whitsett introduced me to Joan Andrews and I started to sponsor Quincey. My wife Corinne was sponsoring Kirsten’s Khatabi. The four of us walked up the fence-line trail from Dos Osos, across the Bay Laurel property and into the park for many enjoyable rides together. In 1999 I bought Quincey from Joan Andrews. Joan presented me with Quincey’s “trousseau” which included several blankets, a saddle, books and other horse equipment. I never rode with Joan but I know from the horse I received from her that Quincey’s dozen or so years with her were great ones. He must have taken all the good training and experiences he had with Rose Marie and developed and matured with Joan into the beautiful, well mannered and exquisitely graceful athlete I was so fortunate to know.

We moved Quincy to our own pasture in Orinda, next to Richard Johnson’s ranch on El Toyonal. Quincey lived there with us until 2004 with three other fine Arabians. With his pasture mates, Quincey was friendly and well liked but always aloof from the territorial imperatives that drive pasture politics. He could have had the first flake whenever he wanted. It didn’t interest him. On the trail, however, he was instinctively competitive. At the top of a rise, when other competitors could be spotted in the distance, his muscles firmed and his body quickened. If I had been a more experienced rider in those days I would have held him back, but I wasn’t and I didn’t. With Kirsten Whitsett’s son Kristian, we did ride-and-tie events in San Jose in the Quicksilver series. Quincey was the ideal ride-and-tie horse. He loved to sprint and gallop, especially in the company of other horses, but could be tied to the slimmest stock and let them sew tubes into his eyes. He accepted the medication, eye patch and care that Rose Marie gave him so faithfully four times a day and often at midnight. With no self-pity, no exasperation and no display of frustration at his predicament, he trusted us and waited with us for his eyes to heal. I urged him forward, in his pain, on multiple trips in cold winter weather to Davis, where the best did their best for him. He entered their stocks and let them sew tubes into his eyes. He accepted the messages; the messages of the horse who is so often willing to share his powers if we will only listen. He also trusted in my powers and the powers of other humans who loved him and helped him.

In his final months, this trust was absolute. He allowed us to take him, in his pain, on multiple trips in cold winter weather to Davis, where the best did their best for him. He entered their stocks and let them sew tubes into his eyes. He accepted the messages; the messages of the horse who is so often willing to share his powers if we will only listen. He also trusted in my powers and the powers of other humans who loved him and helped him.

Quincey was a gentle and sensitive horse. He let my children ride on him, climb on him and walk around him and near him from their earliest ages. He never put his ears back at me and I never saw him put his ears back at another horse or human. I never saw him kick another horse or even swing his backside in another horse’s direction. In 2005, when we sold our Orinda home and Quincey moved back to Bay Laurel Arabians, he welcomed many new riders and showed them the same gentleness and courtesy. He was sensitive in other ways and had the important sense of self preservation that we all value in our horses for it so often leads to our preservation. On one occasion I was riding with Quincey and he stopped at a blind corner. I urged him forward but he would not budge. Only with the most extreme reluctance did he drag his insistent master around the corner to encounter the shaggy, mangy and quite possibly rabid coyote that his horse’s sense had much earlier perceived. This was one of Quincey’s many gentle lessons to me. Quietly he taught me to read his messages; the messages of the horse who is so often willing to share his powers if we will only listen. He also trusted in my powers and the powers of other humans who loved him and helped him.

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Tenth Annual East Bay Hills Trails Benefit Ride
Wednesday, Aug 31--Monday, Sept. 5

*Ride:* up to 100 miles in 6 days, in small groups at your own pace the week before Labor Day. Join us for one, for more or for all 6 days. Follow and/or parallel the Bay Area Ridge Trail much of the time, on both fire roads and single track trails, over both flat and hilly terrain traversing East Bay Hills open space, with views of the Bay Area, across the valley and beyond into the central Sierras.

*Trails and Camps:* Camp 2 nights each in Tilden Regional Park, Joaquin Miller Park, and Anthony Chabot Regional Park. We will be sharing these campsites, and meals, with the the fourth annual 5-day Bay Area Ridge Trail Through-Hike from Martinez to Castro Valley.

*Food and Evening Entertainment:* Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be provided for riders and hikers, and hay, carrots and water for the horses. Evening programs will include a visit to the Chabot Space Center, a naturalist presentation, a drill team performance, and other surprises.

*Costs/Benefits:* The $65/day fee, with a discount for 6 days at $350, covers your camping, food and horse provisions, trail maps, and all evening programs. There will be a raffle and silent auction, and optional fund-raising to help raise funds for the Ridge Trail and other East Bay trail projects.

*Camp Rules:* Riders will be responsible for stabling their horses at each camp. You may tie to your trailer or bring your own portable corral or picket line. Stallions will not be allowed on this ride and we will enforce restrictions on generators after dark. No dogs will be allowed at this year’s ride. SEI-certified helmets are required for the safety of all riders.

*Questions:* Contact Judy Etheridge, at misxfire@yahoo.com or at 925-862-0232, or Morris Older, at ebhillsride@comcast.net or at 925-254-8943, for more information or to volunteer. More info at http://www.twha.org--click on events. Sign up for the hike at www.ridgetrail.org
East Bay Hosts California Trails and Greenways Conference

The 26th Annual California Trails and Greenways Conference was held in San Ramon this April. Over 400 park professionals, land-trusters, non-profit employees and volunteers gathered to discuss trail issues, including maintaining, expanding and sharing trails.

The conference theme was Youth and Diversity, and TWHA and the East Bay Area Trails Council both offered scholarships to encourage youth to attend. Since the conference was held on school days, however, only one high schooler emerged to take advantage of this offer. He was very enthused by the goings on.

The Bay Area Ridge Trail won an award for the joint REI-Ridge Trail Service Day last November, when over 500 volunteers came to help on 13 trail projects the same day around the bay. Volunteers for Outdoor California won an award for its San Francisco trail-building project at Corona Heights. Ridge Trail Board member Michael McInerney accepted an award on behalf of the NorCal Mountain Bicycle League. Ridge Trail board member Michael Kelley, who won a lifetime achievement award, helped, with equestrians Marie Grisham and Diane Offutt to organize the multi use trail day, which drew about 40 horses, 20 bicyclists and 20 hikers to Sunol Regional Park the day before the conference started.

TWHA members Morris Older, and Mariilyn Terstegge attended the conference and TWHA member Judy Etheridge joined them for the trail ride and picnic.

Picnic and trail photos courtesy of California State Horsemen's Association.
Volunteers Build New Trail at Acalanes Ridge in Lafayette

by Morris Older

On Friday, May 20th, there was only a series of pin flags traversing Acalanes Ridge, overlooking Lafayette, Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill, but by Sunday there was a brand new trail nearly a half mile in length, built entirely by the Volunteers for Outdoor California, assisted by a $2,500 donation from TWHA of funds raised by the East Bay Hills Trails Benefit Ride and Hike.

This was land that had been slated for development more than once over the years, and the community had fought hard to preserve it, culminating in the purchase of the property last year by the Muir Heritage Land Trust, using funds allocated from Measure WW among other sources. The property, west of Pleasant Hill Road across from Lafayette Ridge, has extraordinary 360 degree views of Mt. Daiblo, Briones Park, Walnut Creek Open Space and neighboring cities.

V-O-Cal has built new and rehabilitated old trail all over the Bay Area, including projects in the East Bay at Joaquin Miller Park, twice, Sky Ranch and Fernandez Ranch in Martinez, Brushy Peak in Livermore and Las Trampas in San Ramon, as well as projects in San Jose, Calistoga, Marin, San Francisco, Angel Island and elsewhere. This was the fourth time that the East Bay Hills Trails Benefit Ride has donated funds to V-O-Cal to support the trails they build.

A hardy group camped out and the next morning, after group exercises and the presentation of the TWHA check, about 85 volunteers split into 9 groups, each bound for a different section of soon-to-be trail. The first job was to clear the tall grass and thistles to create bare ground between the pin flags, and then to turn that into a nearly level, comfortable walking surface.

Hiking the trail it was obvious how much harder some of the other sections were than others, with lots of rock and steep slopes that required major digging on the uphill side, in some place 2 to 3 feet deep, to create a level walking surface. After finishing an easy section

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Trail Building in Lafayette

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at the very top, my crew went to the end section of the trail, where there was a switchback to be built.

This section was steeper than our first one, with a significant amount of rock that had to be dug up or busted up to make a decent walking tread, and so this section took the rest of the day. One of the neighbors came by with his 2 kids, so we set them to work on one section—with him cutting trail and Gavin and Amelia, 9 and 11, raking the dirt and rocks he had dug up.

Mid afternoon another crew joined us and worked down below at the bottom end where the new trail hooks into the Briones-Mt Diablo Regional Trail and thus the whole regional trail system. The only bad moment all day was when someone disturbed a bumble bee nest—and, unfortunately, Amelia and Gavin, working just downhill from there, got stung on their faces., so dad had to take them home.

By the time we were done, the entire trail was nearly completed, and the V-O-Cal party started with a keg of beer, and some jazz guitar but the wind was blowing intensely. We took a stroll down Peaceful Lane (the turn past Secluded Place) to the home of a neighbor, where V-O-Cal was preparing dinner.

Walking through his gates we were in another world. The fence provided significant shelter from the wind, an instant relief, and chairs were arranged around the amoeba shaped swimming pool and hot tub finished in blue tile. It was really too cool for anyone to go swimming, but just the idea that we might have, had it been warmer, was instantly comforting. A wrap-around deck offered splendid views of the surrounding area, including the part of the trail that my crew had worked on most of the day. Through the glass panels flanking the door, and through the house, Mount Diablo was visible from the other side. The neighbor, Tor, came out and mingled some with us. David McGee played his guitar, and dinner—chicken/broccoli or tofu/veggie curry with couscous, was served, and of course the keg had been brought down. Dessert was home-made cookies, quite good, and there was some good Napa wine.

Sunday morning 50 volunteers, including some fresh faces, went out in groups to fine tune various sections of trail built the day before. Mostly this was widening, smoothing, cutting back the upslope on the uphill side, minor tweaks, although some people took on some bigger jobs, like enlarging the switchback, removing some major rocks that made the trail narrow in a few places, and cleaning up some drainage dips. On the hike back to camp late morning, I ran into Tor, hiking the new trail with a couple of neighbors—one of whom I had worked with, who had camped out 5 minutes from his own house.

The rain held back the morning of June 4th just enough for the dedication of the new open space to proceed, attended by trail builders, land trust supporters and neighbors, including Tor, Gavin and Amelia, who had long since recovered from their stings and seemed quite proud of the new trail they helped create.
Wildcat Parking Expansion Proposed

Late last year a number of TWHA members attended a public hearing concerning proposed changes at Wildcat Regional Park. After years of complaints from neighbors about inadequate parking, just 17 spaces inside the park, for the hundreds of visitors entering Wildcat from the Alvarado Park side in Richmond on many weekends, the East Bay Regional Park District proposed a Land Use Plan Amendment to address the problem.

EBPRD proposed to open up more parking inside the park on pavement that was put there to further private development before the park was acquired. The room was filed with cowboy hats, who noted a lack of parking in the plan for horse trailers; the few equestrians at this meeting, including TWHA members Page Schorer, Clara Nichols and Morris Older were pleased by the changes, although neighbors were not.

Neighbors argued, simultaneously in some cases, that the parking would subject them to all kinds of noise, including cell phones, radios and truck engines, that they would overhear in their nearby properties, and also that nobody would use those parking areas because it would be too long a walk to the picnic tables in Alvarado.

The proposed Land Use Plan Amendment is posted online at http://www ebparks.org/files/EBRPD_files/planning/wildcat/11_Draft_Land_Use_Plan_Amendment_for_Wildcat_Canyon_Regional_Park.pdf

Some TWHA members have written letters endorsing equestrian parking as part of the plan,, noting that currently there is no way for equestrians from outside the area to go riding in Wildcat Park, other than to ride from Tilden, where there is also a lack of trailer parking spaces. The plan was presented to EBRPD’s citizen Park Advisory Committee, which endorsed it, a couple of weeks later, simultaneously asking the board to reaffirm its commitment to creek restoration.

And on June 15th, the East Bay Area Trails Council endorsed the plan, also asking for a reaffirmation of intent to restore the creek. The plan will be discussed by the EBRPD Board soon, most likely in July. In the meantime, neighborhood activists who opposed the plans in May’s hearing have dug in, secured support from the Sierra Club on the grounds that somehow striping existing pavement will degrade the creek, and are lobbying to derail the plan as currently envisioned. A recent Contra Costa Times article quoted their views extensively so more letters of support to ejames@ebparks.org, and an equestrian presence at the Board meeting will be needed to ensure that equestrian parking is included in the final plan. TWHA will keep you posted.

German Teen and Her Jumping Cow

By Veronika Oleksyn

LAUFEN, Germany (AP) April 6— When Regina Mayer’s parents dashed her hopes of getting a horse, the resourceful 15-year-old didn’t sit in her room and sulk. Instead, she turned to a cow called Luna to make her riding dreams come true.

Hours of training, and tons of treats, cajoling and caresses later, the results are impressive: not only do the two regularly go on long rides through the southern German countryside, they do jumps over a makeshift hurdle of beer crates and painted logs.

“She thinks she’s a horse,” the golden-haired Mayer joked on a recent sunny afternoon as she sat atop the impassive brown-and-white, grass-munching cow.

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And the Cow Jumped Over the...  

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It all started about two years ago, shortly after Luna was born on the Mayers’ sprawling farm in the hamlet of Laufen, just minutes from the Austrian border.

They started off with walks in the woods during which Luna wore a halter. Then Mayer slowly got her cow more accustomed to human contact and riding equipment.

About six months later, it was time to see how Luna would respond to a rider on her back. Mayer sat in the saddle, and all went as planned—at least at first.

“She was really well behaved and walked normally,” said Mayer, decked out in riding gear. “But after a couple of meters, she wanted me to get off! You could see that she got a bit peeved.”

---John Muir, via Access Adventure

Saved by Her Helmet

By Nancy Jaffer

February 8, 2011—The scenario is becoming frighteningly familiar: A U.S. dressage star has a horrific fall and is taken away by ambulance. The 2010 accidents of Courtney King-Dye and Guenter Seidel led to long hospital stays, but Debbie McDonald, Courtney’s 2008 Olympic teammate, was far luckier last week.

Although she was flung into the ground when a client’s 6-year-old had a bucking fit, she was saved by her Charles Owens helmet.

“I don’t know what provoked it,” she said of her mount’s behavior at her winter training base in Thousand Oaks, Calif. “I’d been riding him for 15 minutes at least and all of a sudden, he threw his head up on the air and threw his head down like a bronc and started bucking really, really hard.

“I knew I was coming off and I kept thinking about Courtney and Guenter and wondered if I was going to be okay. That was the last I remembered. When I came to, I heard the ambulance coming up.” Eyewitnesses later told Debbie “he shot you 30 feet like an arrow into the ground.”

A look at her helmet showed the severity of the fall; the brim was covered not with footing, but with the base of the

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ring. The interior shell of the helmet had shifted as it protected Debbie’s head. She was treated and released at the hospital after doctors determined her brain wasn’t bleeding. But she still gets headaches and her lip is split, with a flap of skin that separated. She has a black eye, lacerations and a bruise on her forehead, as well as having suffered a concussion and whiplash.

She fared far better than Courtney and Guenter, despite the severity of her fall. Courtney, her 2008 Olympic teammate, was riding without a helmet last March when her mount tangled his legs and she hit the ground. She is still in rehab and working on regaining her speech and motor skills, though she is back in the saddle in a therapeutic riding program.

Guenther, Debbie’s 2004 Olympic teammate, was saved from even more serious injury by his helmet when U2, his regular ride, began bucking while they were training in Germany. He hit the ground hard and broke his pelvis, but his head, protected by the helmet, was okay. The accident meant Guenter missed the trials for the World Equestrian Games. He got back to riding late last year.

“Until Courtney, I never rode with a helmet,” Debbie recalled. Now she has made it a rule that all of her students must wear one too, not only for lessons, but also in the show ring. “People worried about how their hair is going to look with a helmet, they have to get over that. The sport isn’t about what’s on your head,” said the Olympic and WEG medalist, now retired from competition.

“If everyone wore a helmet, you wouldn’t think twice about it and it would just be the way it is. People are making it such a big deal when in reality it’s just a matter of being smart,” she commented. “I can’t believe for all those years I was so lucky and never wore a helmet and didn’t have a severe accident. Especially as you start to get a little older and you hit your head like I did, it changes your perspective. When you see that helmet, you’d take a look at it and go, ‘Oh my God’ that it took that much concussion away from my head.”

Her husband, Bob, was in northern California and flew down to spend the night with her after the accident. Her protege, Adrienne Lyle, is helping her and working the horses as Debbie continues to improve. Despite her aches and pains, Debbie is focusing outward in her belief that everyone in her discipline should wear protective headgear.

“I’m definitely on a little journey to try and get the word out, because I never was a believer. But because of Courtney’s injury, I said ‘Why not start wearing it?’” She said while she began wearing the helmet “in honor of Courtney and Guenter,” after she started she said, “This isn’t so bad, and it’s a smart way to go. You put on your boots and you put on your helmet.” For people who are worried about “the look,” she has one word: “stupidity.” The look, she noted, “isn’t going to save you.”

Debbie is the latest high-profile equestrian to get on the helmet bandwagon. The pro-helmet movement continues to gain strength in the wake of a Florida symposium last month put together by the Riders4Helmets group formed after Courtney’s accident. It was a prelude to the U.S. Equestrian Federation’s passage of mandatory helmet rules for eventing, requiring at national competitions that everyone wear a helmet at all times on the grounds, and dressage. That rule requires everyone under 18 to wear a helmet, in both national and international competition in this country, and everyone over 18 to wear a helmet in national classes and even in Prix St. Georges, if they’re riding a horse also entered at Fourth Level.

“Because there was a groundswell coming from within the membership, we said, ‘Now is the time to do it,’” USEF President David O’Connor, an Olympic eventing individual gold medalist, explained about the new rules. He feels very strongly that “from the federation point of view, we will support everything we can do to make helmets...mandatory when you’re sitting on a horse at a horse show.”

He points out, “We’re at a time in the road where the hard decision has to be made...We as a sport are still defending something that is undefendable. If you have the technology, you have to use it. We need to change the rules. It’s going to

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happen.”

Following passage of the dressage and eventing rules, the USEF announced it will discuss helmets for dressage riders competing in breed competitions with Arabians, Friesians, Andalusians and Morgans.

Will we ever see helmets in western riding? Don’t forget that bull riders often wear helmets far less-glamorous looking than the hunter/jumper/eventing helmets. David thinks use of helmets for skiing, snowboarding and hockey can influence equestrians who aren’t covered by protective headgear regulations at this point.

“I don’t see how we as a sport can stand outside and say, ‘We’re not like that.’ I think that is what will happen in the long term,” he commented, though he’s not putting a date on the moment when everyone participating in USEF shows has to wear protective headgear.

“As people get more educated about concussions, they’ll make the decision to go forward,” he believes. “We’ve asked the breed organizations to talk about it.” While helmets would be “a huge cultural shift” for western riders, he sees the movement in that direction starting with young people, and including everyone from that point eventually. “It might take a little bit longer, but I can predict people will get there,” he commented.

-Reprinted from the Tri Valley Trailblazers Newsletter

Congratulations to all of you who have renewed their TWHA membership. If you have somehow forgotten to renew, please print out and use the form on the final page of this newsletter—it’s never too late to support equestrian advocacy and get your discounts at local tack shops.

Congratulations to TWHA Member Jane Binder, whose twin grandchildren Alexis and Grant, each topping 7 pounds, were born on March 15th in Southern California. And to TWHA Member Gailyn Johnson, who married Neil Riley on June 10th, 2010. They are looking for an easy-going riding horse for Neil—let Gailyn know if you have a good lead.

Also looking for horses: TWHA members Doug Ross and David Whittal, who both have new spaces in the Orinda Horsemen’s Association pasture.

Condolences and heartfelt wishes for a speedy recovery to TWHA members Alice Brown and Pam Bullen, whose horses spooked in the OHA pasture, depositing them roughly on the ground. Also to TWHA member Heather Hafleigh, who said farewell to her horse Monte, for many years an OHA pasture resident, and to TWHA Founding Member Jock Anderson, who said goodbye to his horse Beau, both earlier this year.

For many years, the TWHA Newsletter has been blessed by the occasional artwork of TWHA Founding Member and Grizzly Peak Stable manager Debbie Young. Just recently she has made her equestrian, wildlife and botanical prints available on line, and they are guaranteed to spruce up your décor. At http://grizzlypeakstables.org/index.htm, click on Art Gallery and take a look.

And TWHA member Kim Zvik reports that she Cooper completed 100 miles at 20-Mule-Team Feb 26 on Cooper. fin-
Member News

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ishing at 1:30 a.m. “The front running horses completed at 7 p.m.!” she notes. “We got lucky as the severe wind and rain storm the day before the ride blew itself out and we had a beautiful wind-free ride with snow etching all the plants by our side. We had to do 35 miles in the dark and there was no moon until 2 a.m. so I was glad I duct-taped a “green” flashlight, which won’t interfere with the horse’s eyesight, to my helmet at dinner!” She reports seeing one jackrabbit at midnight…

This just in from longtime TWHA and OHA member Renee Benoit. “It’s time to say good-bye. Marty and I have found property in Tracy where we can have all our horses, so with great sadness I find it time to move on. It’s been a great ride. Let me tell you that I will never ever forget days with Jane Binder and Lisa Culin hacking all over the hills. I’ve ridden and worked side by side with many of you from time to time.” We wish Renee, Marty and their horses the very best luck in their new locale.

And if you would like to share your news with other TWHA members, please send a note to newsletter@twha.org

Coming in August: Meet a Horse Day in Tilden Park

TWHA is working with East Bay Regional Park District to host an event encouraging canine park users (and their owners) and bike riders to come and practice being around horses so that when we meet up on the trail our future encounters will be harmonious ones. Attendees will have the option of having their picture taken with a horse as incentive!

Members of EBRPD canine and mounted patrol will also be present.

Equestrian Trail Safety Guidelines

The following guidelines and suggestions have been compiled by the Tilden Wildcat Horsemen’s Association to encourage safety and harmony on the trail for both horses and equestrians and in encounters with other trail users.

When encountering other trail users:

Be calm and positive – assume that hikers and bikes will pass you with little fanfare.

Speak to the other user – the sound of your voice and the other’s response will reassure your horse.

Ask them to:

♦ Try to step off the trail on the down-hill side in a place where the horse can clearly see them.
♦ Move so that all members of the party are on the same side of the trail if possible.
♦ If you are worried about a dog, stop your horse and ask the owner to call the dog and hold him; advise the owner the dog can be severely injured if the horse kicks him out of fear or surprise. At the same time, remain calm and let them take the time they need to retrieve the dog.
♦ If you agree that they can approach/touch your horse, give them directions on which side to approach and where to touch your horse.

Remind bike riders: call out when approaching a horse and rider from behind.

Talk to the other trail user about the best way to pass your horse on trail.

Ride safely as an Individual Rider:

♦ Be responsible for the behavior or your horse. Correct your horse as appropriate.
♦ Be aware of the conditions and happenings around you and respond appropriately.
♦ Pass other riders at a slow speed and with their permission.
♦ Be aware of the rules of trail/park you are riding. E.g.: some trails are closed to horses; smoking may not be permitted in some parks; stay on designated trails; no cross-country or cutting switchbacks.

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Equestrian Trail Safety Guidelines

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♦ Respect private property and ride only on trails or in areas where horses are allowed.
♦ Do not ride faster than is safe for the area or situation. Stop or walk your horse if there is any risk.
♦ Tie your horse to sturdy, safe objects. Do not tie too long or leave your horse unattended.

Ride Safely in a Group:

♦ If you have designated a trail boss, that person has the authority to run the ride. Stay behind the trail boss, unless you receive permission to go ahead.
♦ The trail boss should know the trail, preferably having pre-ridden it.
♦ The trail boss is responsible for telling the riders about trail conditions, obstacles, etc.
♦ If there is no designated trail boss, the front riders are responsible for informing other riders about upcoming conditions, other trail users, obstacles, etc. The riders in the back are responsible for telling other riders what is approaching from the rear like traffic, dogs, and other trail users.
♦ Warn other riders if your horse has a tendency to kick and consider using red ribbons in the tail.
♦ If you have to leave the group, tell the trail boss and/or other riders.
♦ Stop your horse if riders are on the ground, watering their horse, adjusting their tack, or crossing a bridge. Ask before leaving.
♦ For safety, do not crowd into streams, creeks, or around troughs.
♦ Ride at the speed and gait that everyone in the group is comfortable with. Continue at the same speed going up hills or indicate that the gait is slowing. No increase in the speed or racing unless everyone agrees.
♦ Do not crowd the horse in front of you; at least one horse-length is advisable.
♦ When schooling your horse move to the back. If your horse is persistently unruly, consider splitting off from the group with a friend.
♦ If you see an unsafe condition, bring it to the other riders’ attention.
♦ Call back trail obstacles, like a low branch, to the rider behind you.
♦ Avoid letting branches snap in the face of the horse and rider behind you.
♦ If the riders behind you are out of sight, bring it to the trail boss’ or other riders’ attention and consider stopping to let them catch up.

Courtesy and Good Citizenship:

♦ Do not dip cleaning sponges in water troughs.
♦ Take your garbage with you.
♦ Do not leave horse manure or hay in a parking lot or public area. Dispose of it appropriately or take it with you.
♦ If possible, step off the trail when your horse is going to relieve himself/herself.
♦ Leave livestock and wildlife alone.
♦ Leave gates as you find them.
♦ Be conscious of the state of the trail. In wet weather, do not ride a trial if horse’s hoof tracks will damage the trail.
♦ Note location of hazardous conditions (tree down, broken culvert, etc) and report them to responsible agency or party upon your return.
East Bay Area Trails Council
Annual Picnic
and Trail Excursion
at Point Pinole,
Sunday, August 7

A rare opportunity for trail users of all stripes to get together and celebrate the beautiful open spaces of the East Bay, and get to know each other better, a chance to celebrate what we all have in common: a deep and abiding love of trails, the outdoors, and taking a little trip through the same. Sharing trails is the essence of our message, and actually doing so in a highly cooperative, and fun-loving way can lower barriers faster and more effectively than any other activity.

Hikers, cyclists and equestrians join us
at the Palms Picnic area just off Point Pinole Road a Point Pinole Regional Shoreline.
Join us for a guided hike, bike ride or horseback ride, followed by a BBQ lunch and gathering.

10:00 AM--
hike or ride
1:00 PM--
barbecue lunch

Thanks to East Bay Regional Park District for providing the picnic site, for waiving the usual parking fee, and for providing lunch.

Please RSVP to 510-544-2631 at between July 18 and August 4th

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The TWHA Newsletter aims for bi-monthly publication- Written and photo Contributions gratefully accepted--see email address above. Please reprint anything herein, but do give us credit.
**TWHA 2011 MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Name(s)________________________________________________ ____new or ____renewal
Address________________________________________________ Phone: ________________
City, State, Zip______________________________________________________________
Email_____________________________________Do you have a trailer?_______
Check here if you would NOT like to receive TWHA emails_______
Names/Birthdays of equestrian members________________________________________________
Horse name(s)_________________________________________________________________________
Events or projects you may be able to help with _____________________________________________
2011 Dues Enclosed; $20 individual___ $25 family___$10 junior_____
2011-12 Dues Enclosed; $35 individual___ $45 family___$15 junior_____
Send form, and check to: Page Schorer, 625 Liberty, El Cerrito, CA 94530 (old_cowboy@lmi.net)

**Saturday, July 9- Trail Work Day in Sibley Volcanic Preserve**
--sign up at http://www.rei.com/event/25155/session/31029

**Wednesday, August 31-Monday, Sept. 5- EB Hills Trails Benefit Ride and Hike**