

The Indian Horse News

The Newsletter of the American Indian Horse Registry



*Colonial Dream
O-5652
2026 Hall of Fame and
Supreme Hall of Fame*



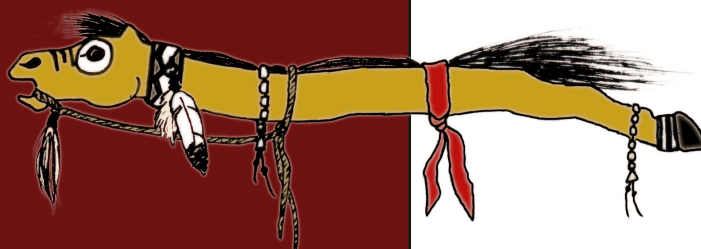
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Detonate With Style

A-7011



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The Gateway Registry

by Tomlyn Grey

“unity

[yoo-ni-tee]/ 'ju nɪ ti /

noun

1.the state of being one; oneness.

2.a whole or totality as combining all its parts into one.

3.the state or fact of being united or combined into one, as of the parts of a whole; unification.”
--source, Dictionary.com

I come from a very unusual background. I didn't just grow up in horses or the horse industry, I grew up in rare horses – Colonial Spanish Horses to be exact. I grew up going to horse shows and learning pedigrees like some people have to go to church and read their bible. They weren't just any shows though – they were Indian Horse shows. And while they were never big – the largest AIHR National on record had 80 horses in it – they were always warm and welcoming. I never knew the petty environments that events like Barrel Racing, Western Pleasure, or Dressage can breed. That's never been what Indian Horse was or is about. We were always about helping each other, cheering for each other, and supporting our horses. But I had to take on this new mantel to understand just how deep that need for support really goes.

Many of my friends and family are not horse people today. They aren't even farmers or ranchers. So the concept of registration of an animal is totally foreign to them. I've lost count of the number of times I've been asked what a registry is. This question floored me the first few times I heard it. After all, even if someone isn't into horses, how can they not understand an animal registry? Dog shows have been televised



*Chairman of the AIHR Board, Tomlyn Grey,
and Meet Virginia, O-3396
2007 AIHR National Show*

on network TV for decades; Cat fanciers have essentially taken over the internet. But it turns out most people don't really understand the point. Well, the point is simple: it's to keep track of the lineage of a domesticated animal. That's the long and short of it. It can also be used to prove ownership. For those of us in the States, think of your horses papers as a combination birth certificate and car registration; they essentially prove that your horse exists, their lineage, and who owns and bred them.

Believe it or not, AIHR's primary focus is on the Colonial Spanish Horse, or Spanish Mustang – what we classify as our “O” horses. These are the horses that are the Original Indian Horses, and there are less than 2500 breeding individuals of these horses left today. Most

horse breeds have one, maybe two primary registries. However, the politics in the CSH have always been so extreme that there are 5-6 main registries for this breed. That's far too many. And even the youngest of these has at least a decade of operation under their belt – the oldest about 70 years of experience. And virtually every single one exists because someone upset someone else. So...why? Why do we still need Indian Horse?

There are actually multiple answers to this question, but for the sake of simplicity, for this article we'll only focus on a couple: AIHR naturally breeds community and is, to my knowledge, the only registry to recognize a unique part of equine history in the New World (or in the World in general).

Virtually everyone reading this is doing so in memory of Nanci Falley, who ran and led AIHR from 1979-2025 until her death. Not many people realize Nanci was not the first owner of AIHR. The founder was a Native individual from I believe California who wanted to have a registry for mainly reservation horses in 1961. Even today, a great many of our registrations are from reservations. This is also why we have refused to change our name – he was the one to dub the registry “American Indian Horse”. Admittedly, were the registry formed today, it would probably be called “Native American Horse”, but when a Native man named and founded it himself, it's fairly hard to argue. I'm fairly sure that it was him who created the classification system we still use today, though it's been redone a few times.

AIHR is the only registry to put an emphasis on the Native American horse and its influence on the modern North American horse. Because of this, that means anything from a grade horse to a registered AQHA Quarter Horse can register with us. Why? Because they are all descendants of the Colonial Spanish Horse. AIHR is also unique in the CSH community in that we are only

one of two registries that will register a CSH crossbred, whether they are half, one quarter, or less Spanish.

I personally always thought recognizing these descendants and crosses were important. I have referred to Indian Horse as the “Gateway” registry – you come to register your modern, and you end up getting into the heritage horses as a result. I've lost count of how many people I've seen do that very thing as well. So, when it comes to preservation and showcasing, that's hard to beat.

Then there's the community. Like I said previously, even AIHR events were full of love, companionship, and support. Shows felt less like competitions and more like reunions. Kids would run amok horseback and parents wouldn't worry who they were with – everyone at a show were typically vetted already and trusted friends. If someone's tack broke, someone else would lend them something. If someone was scared to ride, an experienced



Might B Sleeping In a Bar

M-7002

rider would help them through an event – even if it cost them their own ride sometimes. Young horses were permitted a green year and not expected to do as well against more experienced horses, yet still be allowed to experience the exposure to arenas, obstacles, and even ornate costumes. And if someone did come off, everyone came to help – and about half of them would run to catch your horse first.

The last National Show was in 2017. AIHR is the only CSH registry to have our own show rules, including speed events, as well as judge's requirements and the ability to establish dedicated horse clubs. Most of that hasn't been used in close to a decade now, and it will come back. Eventually. But even despite that, the number of people who have reached out and offered help – especially after the last newsletter – proves that Indian Horse is still a welcoming place. We try to be there for each other. We support one another. We want to help when the times are hard. And we don't like saying no when people reach out.

It's because of this that we have never refused a membership. The only horses we have refused are horses of provable draft descent (and our new "S" classification even gives a few of them a way in). We try to keep our prices reasonable, even during times of economic hardship. And that's why we are moving to become a non-profit as well, so that no one person can have full control and the membership has full transparency.

No matter who you are or what your goals are, you – and your horses – will always be welcome here.

Now and Forever,



AIHR Board Members



***Tomlyn Grey - Chairman
Marshall, TX***

***Chris Hurd
Marion, TX***

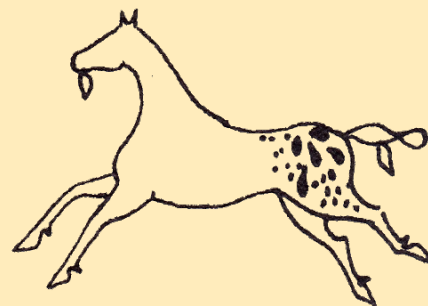
***Thomas Speir
Kilgore, TX***

*Elections and Appointments for new Directors
and Members of Committees will be opening
soon!*

*All currently paid members in good standing
will be eligible for these positions.*

***To contact anyone on the BOD, see the
latest minutes, or for any additional
information, please contact:***

aihrregistrar@gmail.com





Smoke Signals



News and Announcements from Members and Friends

To Share Your News, Email aihrregistrar@gmail.com



Colonial Dream
O-5652

· Colonial Dream, O-5652, (featured on the cover) owned by Kendra Chavez of New Mexico, received her lifetime Hall of Fame and Supreme Hall of Fame award this year! These are AIHR's highest point awards. Congrats Dream and Kendra!



M.M. Dakota Joe, AA-6020
Bred by Joe Regan



Maverick
Owned by Kurt Bartholomew

· Maverick "The Wonder Horse" was approved by MD Anderson to be Kurt Bartholomew's official therapy animal. Maverick saved his owner Kurt's life by alerting to cancer growing in Kurt's neck, and is teaching Kurt's colt Canajo how to alert to cancer smell as well. His doctors now trust Maverick as much or more than their own results. Good job, Maverick!

· Long time AIHR Breeder, Joe Regan, is prepared to retire. He and his wife, Barbara - now passed - specialized in Cheyenne Reservation horses (mostly A and AA). These horses can trace their ancestry to the horses of Chief Joseph. He is located in Baker's City, OR. For Joe's contact info, please reach out to the registry.



Equine Trail Sports
Logo

· Equine Trail Sports, or ETS, is still hosting a tournament for any AIHR registered horse! The tournament is one through Dec. 31st, 2026 and includes in-person and virtual events. Go to <https://www.equinetrailsports.com/tournament/11238/standings> for more info, or to [equinetrailsports.com](https://www.equinetrailsports.com) > Tournaments > American Indian Horse Registry (Under Breed Association)

A Year Since Nanci's Passing...

Nanci Helen Falley

October 19th, 1938 ~ May 28th, 2025

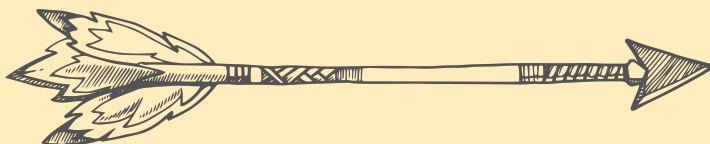
*AIHR President, Registrar, and Owner
1979-2025*

*Friend and Advocate for Animals of All
Shapes and Sizes...*

...Always

At the time of this newsletter's release, it will be close to Nanci's second Heavenly birthday. Please celebrate with us by hugging your horse and, only if you're able, donate to your local animal rescue or non-kill shelter in her honor. She would love it if you read a new book in her memory, too.

Nanci left us with a treasure trove of knowledge in her articles and poetry. We're proud and honored to be able to republish her work periodically, including the piece below, in her memory. We miss you, Nanci.

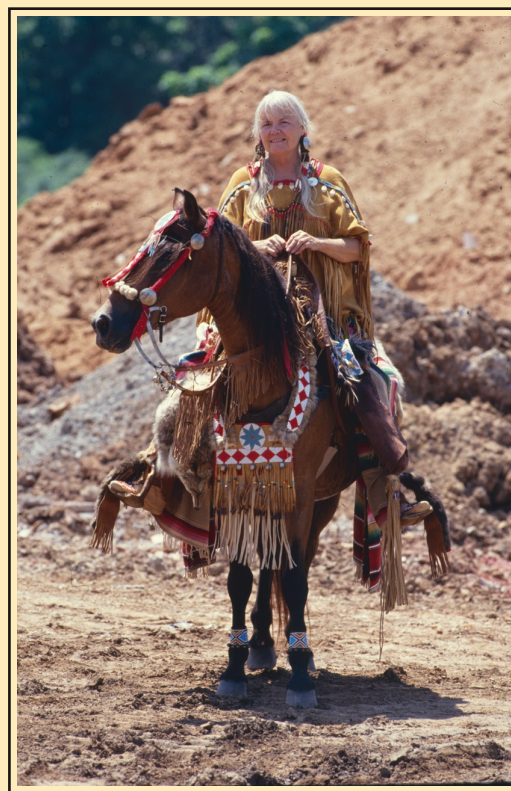


SIZE MATTERS – NOT!!!!

By Nanci Falley

When I was 15 years old I got my first 'registerable' horse – a beautiful and tough little roan mare who stood 14.1. When she was inspected by the then brand new AQHA, she was deemed a pony and lacked 1" being tall enough to register with the budding registry. This totally made no sense to me – she was a winner at barrels and roping – we practiced our roping skills and following ability in the South Texas brush country by chasing jack rabbits. No, we never caught one, but we tried and she learned to track and stay with them. And she was a great contender in Ribbon Roping at youth events in our part of the world, as well as barrel racing.

Most of my horses since that time (which was a long – looooooong time ago) have been about her size – and they have routinely excelled at any activity we took on, from rodeo in the early days to trail riding to working cattle to whatever we needed to do around the ranch or when we hired out to



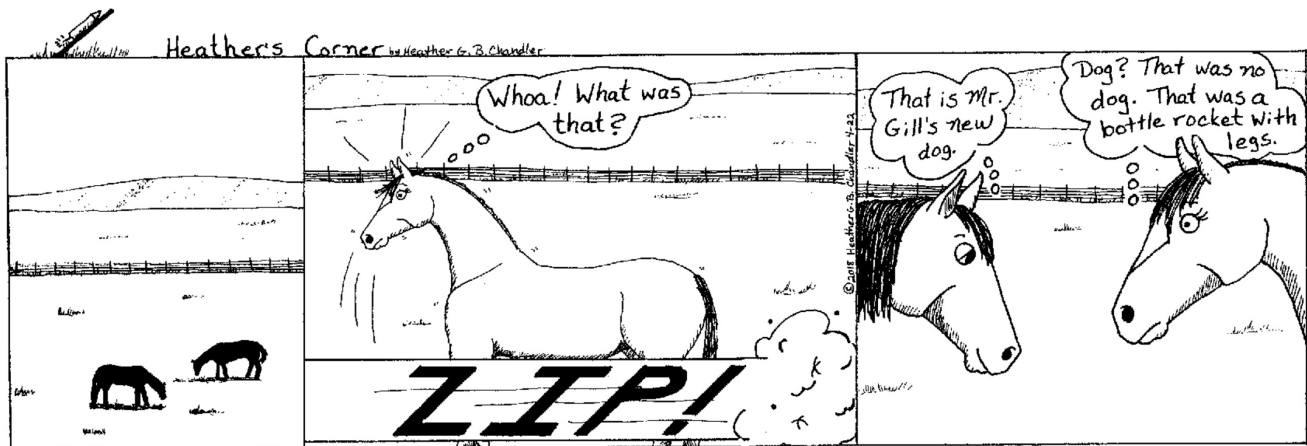
*Nanci Falley and
Choctaw Star, O-494*

help neighbors on their ranches.

Over the years I have been told repeatedly that I am too big for my horses – I am after all 5'8" in my bare feet.

Luckily I never fell for that line because I knew the truth in spite of the criticism from people who did not know what they were talking about – me and my little horses fit one another perfectly. And, just as luckily I have never been taken in by the “how it looks, not how it is” crowd – and I feel sorry for people who do fall for that and listen to the idiots out there who do subscribe to that way of thinking. They do not know what they are talking about!

There is a wonderful Spanish proverb that I think says it all – “Admire the tall, and ride the small.”



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Ilo Belsky's Phantom Valley Ranch

By Ilo Belsky

Edits by Gretchen Patterson & Sarah Holland

Cattle ranchers devote much of their time, often, most of their lives handling cattle. A “best for the purpose” cow horse is the working ranches’ backbone and ranchers should constantly upgrade their stock on Spanish strains. Always on the alert for outstanding species among horses, I have always known, from experience, with the most practical ranch type cow horses, that the modern, high-strung, stylish stock horses are not the most desirable work animal. Even though they show evidence of various types of breeding, and pedigree claims, their backgrounds breed characteristics that indicate any strain except purebreds.

A percent of “cold” blood, either draft, or plain scrub cayuse will gear down hot bloods to appear levelheaded and sensible enough for their particular type. I knew years ago, you can recognize a superior Spanish horse easily by their expressive, blazing eyes, sharp pointed, alert ears, sturdy legs, firm body, and other noticeable points. Few average people realize or seem to notice the undesirable traits when selecting their foundation stock.

Again, I have always known that the best cow horse had a mind of its own, soon understood



the work that was expected of them, and completed their task with positive action without becoming excited, rattlebrained or unruly when fast action was required. Leaning

on the bit and jig-jogging most of the day, as hot-blooded animals are inclined to do when driving cattle all day, soon proves to be a miserable nuisance and grind on their riders as well as on the horse. The one right species...The more natural working horse, regardless of how



fast the action is, would soon settle down, calm and relaxed, as soon as the hard, fast work is done. They are also the ones that understand when the time comes to turn on the top running speed, as well as immediate stops, quick starts and fast turns—all at just the right, is most important if their task is to be accomplished in practical cow horse work. Patience is necessary while moving a slow herd of cattle in hot weather. Most cattlemen want their livestock moved as quietly as possible. Here the horse must mosey along, keeping alert to the animals lagging furthest behind without effort on the rider’s part. The intelligent and understanding cow horse can be a pleasure to ride and work.

There is nothing that seems more ridiculous to me than a worthless scrub cayuse, with cold, blank, gawky walleyes referred to as the original Spanish cow pony. However, nearly all crossbreds with part Spanish Barb cannot help but result in a somewhat improved individual. Therefore, one can easily say that the Spanish types are responsible for the best there is in about any breed in America. While I may be a poor hand at writing, there are so many errors on the part of modern horse people

who fail to take into consideration, either educated or otherwise, that stand out so clearly to me, would seem a crime even in this day and age, that need to be disclosed comparing various species. (I) would rather see the Spanish strains remain as they once were and registered separately from cayuses or scrubs among Indian ponies years ago. (It) seems odd so many people on TV, especially in eastern states who imagine that droves of Texas cattle are no longer driven north in search of pasture means we no longer have use for cow horses. How is a modern rancher supposed to handle cattle without learning to appreciate cow horses?

Few people ever learn to understand and use horses properly at cow work even when they own the best for (that) purpose. Not only this present generation, but I know the majority among the elders were just as much at fault else they would know (that) speeding across country is not the only advantage. The cow horse is a necessary tool for handling stock on ranches. Some cattle feeders in eastern states have also discovered how useful such a horse can be.

Gilbert Jones sent me a picture of a roan appaloosa mare who was of the Copper

Bottom strain who were great cow horses. I doubt they had appaloosa blood in them which shows up some in (the horses) he now owns, especially *Chief Pushmataha*, SSMA-60; SMR-47. This makes him so unusual when compared with the average run of appaloosas there were years ago. Like the other breeds or species, all have since become mixed and bred beyond description from those (in the past) which few today could verify. So many assume (that) all Spanish horses were of exactly one type which I know myself is an error. ~Ilo Belsky~

Editor's Note: In 1969, Robert E. Brislawn, Sr. and Gilbert Jones traveled to Nebraska and inspected Belsky's thirty head of working ranch horses. Belsky owned the Phantom Valley Ranch, located north of Eli, Nebraska. Brislawn approved the entire herd for registration with the Spanish Mustang Registry (SMR) established in 1957. The Belsky strain of horses came up from Texas trail to that country in 1885. Belsky called them "Spanish Barbs" and bred for conformation and a smooth gait like the ancient Spanish Jinete horse. These three small bands (Gilbert Jones, Weldon McKinley, and Ilo Belsky) broadened the genetic pool accessible to other interested Spanish horse breeders.



Emmett Brislawn and
Chief Pushmataha
Photo by Josie Brislawn

Do You Know What Your Registration Number Means?



AIHR has 5 classifications for horses registered with us. Those classifications are "O", "AA", "A", "M", and "S". To know how your horse is classified, check your horse's registration number. The number will have their classification category first, followed by a dash, then their actual number in which they were registered.

But what do those classifications actually mean? Here's a quick summary of what each of these letters stand for:

- **Class O** horses are not bred to conform to popular current standards, but to preserve original bloodlines of native American Indian tribes. Class O horses registered since 1979 have bloodlines that trace back to various American Indian tribes and families. These horses may be known as Spanish Mustangs or Colonial Spanish horses. (Most horses registered with the SMR, HOA, SSMA, SBHA as well as other "Mustang" registries, qualify for O classification.)

- **Class AA** horses are at least half-O in breeding or are of exceptional O type. BLM horses may qualify for AA classification. To be inspected and to qualify as AA on inspection, a horse must be at least 4 years of age.

- **Class A** horses are horses with unknown bloodlines, but who are definitely Indian Horse type. Most A horses qualify for A registration as well as many so called grade or backyard horses. Class A horses are eligible to be inspected at age 4 or over and may be passed to Class AA.

- **Class M** horses include breeding of modern type. They may have parents registered with the AQHA, APHC, APHA, APA, etc. Such ancestry will be shown on the registration certificate.

- **Class S** is for ponies and Colonial Spanish/Draft or Warmblood crosses of Indian Horse type. Eligible ponies include those with Galiceno, POA, etc, in their pedigrees. Ponies of unknown ancestry may also qualify. Any draft/warmblood crosses must also have a registered Colonial Spanish ("O") parent. Any horses registered in this class can never have progeny cross back into either AA or O.

You can also find this information on indianhorse.com and clicking "About"

My Mustang Sally

By Kelly Garcia Troxel

My journey with Spanish Mustangs began over 30 years ago. One resides in my pasture now. I had been curious about BLM mustangs, though. My friend Laura, was always talking about how great they are, and she has several she has trained that are excellent horses. I just never thought about actually owning one—until this year.

Back in May, I was traveling for work when I passed by the Elm Creek BLM facility in Nebraska. I decided to satisfy my curiosity and drop by “just to look.” Apparently, that was the first lie I told myself. After all, I surely didn’t need a third horse. Smoke and Topaz get along well enough, and adding a third can be tricky.

Finding the place was easy, and Joe was right outside ready to chat. He told me where the yearling fillies could be found and left me to drive around all of the holding pens. I told myself that it wouldn’t hurt anything to look at the fillies. There were so many beauties there—a paint, bays, a black or two and greys. Several were at the round bale chomping on hay. I saw a fuzzy greyish butt, and for some reason, that was the one I wanted to take a closer look at. I started talking to them hoping to get her attention. Lo and behold, there she came, sauntering over without a care in the world! A few others were curious enough to meet me at the fence, so I was happy to pet them all. I thought to myself that this little filly would be sweet. Had I removed my rose colored glasses, I might have realized that she would, in fact, be quite bold (as Laura pointed out to me later). I took down her tag number and went back to the office. I had questions, but I wasn’t really planning to buy her. I was just curious, that’s all.

Joe was patient, and it was obvious he wanted these horses in homes. Her papers listed her as grey, but I still think she’s a bay roan. Her paperwork also said she was from Dishpan Butte, Wyoming, but she was born in a holding facility in March of 2025. Her hooves had been trimmed and vaccinations given, so she was comfortable with humans.



Mustang Sally
at the adoption lot

Joe let me know I could put my name on her “just in case” and if I changed my mind, all I had to do was call and let him know. No problem. I put my name on her thinking I’d give him a call later after my husband squashed the plan of horse number three. That filly was so cute and friendly, someone would surely adopt her soon.

I ran the possibility of buying this yearling by my husband. He raised some good objections, made several valid points and fought a good fight. End result: we went to Tractor Supply for

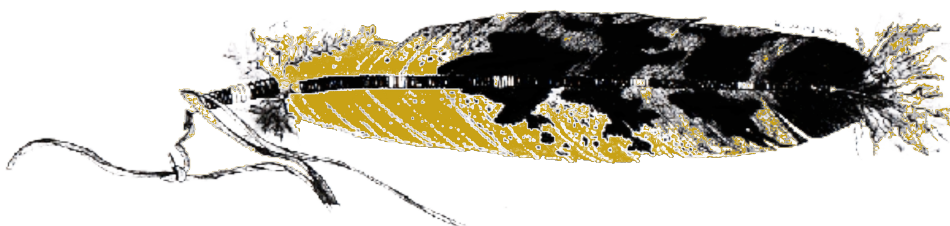
panels for a round pen. I rationalized it by telling my husband (and myself) that I needed a round pen if I wanted to practice some things with Smoke. She needs some refresher training anyway. We discussed it for a few more days before I decided to call Joe and ask him to email me the paperwork to sign.

The price was amazing, the filly was adorable, and my round pen was set up! I called Jeannette, another ride or die friend, and she agreed to bring the nameless filly home for me. Meanwhile, I kept reviewing the pictures and videos I had taken at Elm Creek trying to think of the perfect name. Candy? Cinnamon? Canela? My husband liked the obvious choice: Mustang Sally. That's her theme song now.

Sally arrived, and Smoke (Spanish Mustang) immediately went over to impress the baby with her boss mare attitude. Topaz was curious, but not hostile. There were several mare squeals and stomps for the first couple of weeks, but they all three eventually got used to the new arrangement. I put Smoke's jolly ball in the round pen and added a pasture ball not long after. Sally likes to play. She is currently on ball number two after landing on the first one with both front feet. Sally is now out with big girls to learn valuable life lessons before she heads to a trainer later.



*Mustang Sally
home with Kelly and
her horses, Smoke and Topaz*



Training Thoughts: New Place, New Horse

By Kelly Caldwell

Recently, a post came across my Facebook feed, and it's one most of us have seen before: *"I just purchased this new horse. They seemed very happy and rode well at their old place. It's been about two weeks and the horse doesn't act the same. What happened?"*

There's often an assumption that the buyer was swindled. Allegations that the horse was drugged, switched, or misrepresented are unfortunately sometimes true, but most often, it's simply a matter of horses being living creatures with opinions, experiences, memories, and preferences. And man, do Spanish Mustangs have opinions.

The good news? Opinions can change.

A horse's memory of familiar people can last for years, supported by patterns built through routine handling. Research by Liehrmann et al (2021) found that horses with multiple regular handlers, shorter relationships with their owners, and multiple owner changes showed increased reluctance toward novel objects and surfaces. In other words, a horse that was confident in one environment and relationship may need time to find that same confidence somewhere new.

Spanish Mustangs are especially sensitive and soulful horses— some of the very qualities we admire most about them. That sensitivity means that breed preservation isn't simply about keeping bloodlines alive; it's also about helping these horses successfully navigate the human world. Introducing them to different people, environments, and barns can be an important part of that work, but we must give both horse and human a reasonable expectation that the relationship will take time to develop. Think about two people who speak the same language but come from completely different regions: the words may be the same, but the dialect is different. A horse may know how to lead, load, stand, respond to cues... but the new person's timing, body language, and expectations will be completely different. What looks like a regression may simply be a mistranslation.

Planned unschooling can provide an adjustment period. That doesn't mean free-for-all mayhem, by any means. It allows new handlers to observe, explore, and learn how this particular equine student learns best. Before we start drilling the things they supposedly "already know" the horse needs a chance to decompress. Giving them time to adjust while forming new emotional and neural pathways is only fair. These horses aim to please; it's our job to give them a chance to do so.

Kelly and her mare,
RE Kitty Hawk



Are You Paid Up?

Up to date on your membership? Need to register a horse? Want to advertise in the newsletter? Check out our rates below! Additional info available on indianhorse.com or you can email registraraihr@gmail. Special rates for non-profits or herd registrations available upon request.

Membership Fees

Membership Type	Online Fee	Mail Fee
Junior	\$10	\$15
Individual	\$20	\$25
Family	\$30	\$35
Stable/Ranch	\$40	\$45
Lifetime	\$400	

Registration Fees

	Member E-mail Submission	Non-Member E-mail Submission	Member Postal Submission*	Non-Member Postal Submission*
Weanling	\$15	\$40**	\$25	\$50**
Yearling	\$20	\$45**	\$30	\$55**
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**Price includes 1 year individual membership.

Advertising Fees

Ad Type	Member Price	Non-Member Price
Business Card	\$5	\$7
1/4 Page	\$7	\$10
1/2 Page	\$10	\$14
Full Page	\$15	\$20

Most fees can be paid at indianhorse.com. For more information, or to send in your information, forms, or anything for the next newsletter, reach out to:

registraraihr@gmail.com

-or-

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