



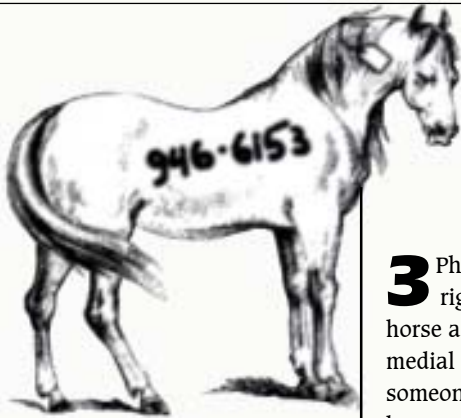
American Medical Equestrian Association  
Safe Riders Foundation

# American Medical Equestrian Association Safe Riders Foundation

Support for The Thinking Rider

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*EDITOR'S NOTE: This article on preparing your horses and barn for disaster was selected some months ago as an item of somewhat peripheral interest in relation to our customary focus on riding safety. Nature has a way of adjusting one's priorities, however, and in view of current events, we have suspended some other topics to allow this one top billing.*

## Long Range Disaster Planning

**1** Familiarize yourself with the types of disasters that could occur in your area. Develop a written plan of action for each and keep the plan with your important papers. Review your Disaster Plan regularly with everyone involved. Post emergency numbers in a visible location in the stable or barn.

**2** Survey your property for the best location for animal confinement for each type of disaster. Identify food and water sources that do not rely on electricity, which could be lost during an emergency. Decide where to take the horses if evacuation becomes necessary.

# 24-Step Disaster Plan

Reported with permission from the **Canadian Horse Journal**, May/June 2005 edition.

**3** Photograph the left and right sides of each horse as well as its face and medial and lower legs. Have someone take a photo of your horse with you in the picture, to help identify the horse as yours when picking it up from the evacuation area.

**4** Record its breed, sex, age and colour and keep copies with important papers. As an option, you can permanently identify your horses by tattoo, brand or microchip. Temporary identification by tags on the fetlocks and halters, painted or etched hooves, or even clipping an ID number onto the horse are also options.

**5** Keep your horse's vaccinations and boosters up-to-date. Record the dates, dosages and types of medications/health products the animal receives and any dietary requirements. Keep copies of this with your important papers and with your Disaster Plan.

**6** Keep your horse trailer or van insured, in good condition, and checked for safety. Keep your towing vehicle insured and in good running order, with gas tank full and spare gas on hand.

**7** Make sure your horse will load! The trailer is useless if you can't get the horse to go in.

**8** Maintain a stock of hay and grain, and keep extra medications and veterinary supplies on hand. Considering keeping a tranquilizer on hand should a horse become panicked during a crisis — ask your veterinarian what is available and what you are allowed to administer.

## Advance Disaster Planning

**9** Have a halter and lead rope designated for EACH horse and hang it outside its stall or on the paddock gates.

**10** Keep extra feed buckets at your barn, to be sent with the horse when evacuated.

**11** Stockpile at least three or more days of feed and hay. Stockpile medications and supplements. Store extra water in large containers, eg: rubber garbage bins. Keep food and medications in an airtight, waterproof container, and rotate them once every three months.

**12** Keep extra bedding, pitchforks and shovels on hand. If space allows, keep an extra wheelbarrow.

**13** Make ID tags handy for your horses (luggage tags will work well) with your name, address, horses's name and description, you vet's name and phone number, feeding instructions and special needs. These can be attached to the halters or manes and tails. Keep these with your disaster Preparedness Kit.

**14** Clearly identify for your volunteers which horses should be evacuated first, in the event that all animals cannot be moved. Make sure all personnel are aware of your wishes.

**15** Compile a portable First Aid Kit and keep it with your Disaster Preparedness Kit.

**16** Obtain a map of your area and the area you will evacuate your horse to. Familiarize yourself with the area around your evacuation barn. Learn the routes. Keep this map with your Disaster Preparedness Kit. Check out the barn you hope to evacuate to in order to make sure that it is suitable.

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## Editor's Corner

Dear Reader,

"In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina..." How many times have you heard or seen this opening phrase recently? As this editorial is written from the comfort of an intact, air conditioned room, I am humbled by the thought that so many have endured untold suffering and loss in the wake of this disaster. At least two members of the American Medical Equestrian Association/Safe Riders Foundation are directly

involved in the relief effort. Rusty Lowe and Pat Maykuth are showing what they're made of in the way that their professions have led them. We wish them strength and courage in the effort. To other members and readers who have surely given of their time, skills, and money, the AMEA-SRF salutes you. And to anyone reading this who has endured loss in the storm, we extend our best wishes and prayers for recovery.

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## Get to know us

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## AMERICAN MEDICAL EQUESTRIAN ASSOCIATION

### SAFE RIDERS FOUNDATION

A tax exempt 501c3 organization.

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### MISSION

### STATEMENT

The American Medical Equestrian Association/Safe Riders Foundation is dedicated to the philosophy, principles and application of safety of people in equestrian activities. This purpose is achieved through education, research and resource.

▲ EDUCATION of health care professionals, organizational representatives and individuals, including an emphasis on public awareness;

▲ RESEARCH to better define injury patterns and risks, efficacy of safety measures and equipment, and assistance in equipment design;

▲ A RESOURCE of experience and expertise to be shared and utilized for the benefit of equestrian safety.

## A Brief History of Helmet Use Rules in the U.S.

# PART TWO: **Historic Milestones/Key Players**

by **Drusilla Malavase**

*Editor's Note: In the Summer issue of the Newsletter, helmet expert and AMEA charter member and board member Drusilla Malavase described trends and issues with regard to helmet laws. In this issue, our attention is turned to recognize the "movers and shakers" whose work has shaped helmet safety as we know it today. It is notable that the humble author has left her own selfless contributions out of this article. We look forward to chronicling her contributions in a future issue, when we can catch her long enough for an interview.*

1. **The United States Pony Clubs.** Founded in 1954, the organization had always required the use of secured hard hats for its young riders, but these had no impact absorbing liners, and were held on by narrow elastic bands or harnesses which slipped on over the top of the hat. Even the best made 1950s and early '60s helmets had snap harnesses which often gave way on impact. The first USPC volunteers to concentrate on the use and effectiveness of hard hats were Augusta Giddings and Marjorie Kittredge. Mrs. Kittredge was also a founding member of the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association, and was responsible for many of their safety rules. She remains a Member Emeritus on NARHA's Board of Directors, and is a much-esteemed judge for both dressage and eventing.

2. **Rufus Wesson**, when president of the United States

Pony Clubs in the mid 1970s, became personally concerned at the reports of head injuries among its members despite the use of "hard hats."

Mr. Wesson was also on the American Horse Shows Association's board of directors and was a founding member of the New York State Horse Council. He personally visited helmet manufacturers both in the U.S. and abroad, hoping to influence them to modify their products to the point where they might meet the standards of the Snell Foundation, which certifies helmets for several other sports and activities. The only helmet which was Snell-certified for equestrian activities was made by Buco, a Mexican company. It was a modified motorcycle helmet covered with red, green, blue or black velvet, extremely heavy and very unstable on the head; its weight made it impractical for children's use, and it was never put into general production.

AHSA adopted a rule proposed by Mr. Wesson which required the use of Snell-certified equestrian helmets "when such helmets shall become available." This rule never came into use, and eventually it was expunged from the AHSA Rulebook.

3. **Mario Plastino**, the president of Frank and Sons, was inspired by Mr. Wesson, and made a helmet, the Pro 74, which had a smaller profile than the Buco and was considerably lighter. It passed all the

Snell tests but the one for extreme heat. His helmet had limited sales, mainly because the riders who bought it were often ridiculed because the helmet, which was the first on the market with a crushable liner, looked too different from the tiny hunt caps which were in fashion.

4. **Dr. Doris Bixby-Hammett**, pediatrician, trail ride physician, Pony Club District Commissioner and mother of a Pony Clubber had a good friend killed in a riding accident, and experienced the trauma of a severe equestrian-related concussion herself. She became a dedicated activist in encouraging the use of protective equestrian headgear, and began to write articles and medical studies which are still quoted widely today. Because of her work, the American Academy of Pediatrics adopted an equestrian headgear use policy. As the founder of the American Medical Equestrian Association, a member of the Pony Club's Ad Hoc Committee on Protective Equestrian Headgear, as chairman of the USPC Safety Committee, and a member of ASTM F8.53.01, their subcommittee for Equestrian Protective Headgear, Dr. Hammett had a profound effect in getting riders and people of influence to take equestrian head injuries seriously. As a board member emeritus of the AMEA-SRF, she continues to influence all aspects of riding safety and acts as the conscience of less brave activists.

5. **Clark Cassidy**, a member of the board of directors of the United States Combined Training Association (USCTA—now the U.S. Eventing Association) wrote an editorial in *The Chronicle of the Horse* after an American rider, Caroline Treviranus, sustained a serious head injury at the 1978 World Championships held in Lexington, Kentucky. Her horse crashed through a stadium jumping fence, her unharnessed helmet came off her head, and she was hit by a jump pole, leaving her in a coma for several days. Although she was able to return to riding eventually, she was not able to compete again at world class level. Cassidy's call to action resulted in a meeting held in January 1979 in Washington; it was convened by the U.S. Pony Clubs because this was the only organization willing to do so. It was attended by 40 or so people from all aspects of horse sports, and by medical, legal, insurance, engineering and manufacturing experts. The equestrian press was also well represented. The result of the meeting was a pledge by manufacturers to work on improved helmets, an offer for free helmet comparison testing from the Snell Foundation, and a promise from two press representatives to attempt to show only helmeted riders on their pages.

6. The Ad-Hoc Committee for Equestrian Protective Headgear was formed after that

Continued on page 4

meeting by the USPC, with Dru Malavase and Dr. Bixby-Hammett as co-chairs. Other members included Margaret Taylor, another longtime helmet and equestrian safety advocate and then chair of the USPC Equestrian Trails Committee. In 1980, the committee, borrowing from football and polo helmet standards, developed draft testing specifications and manufacturers began submitting helmets for testing. In 1981, the committee published its first list of products which passed the tests. In 1983, a USPC rule went into effect requiring that its members wear only helmets on the recommended product list.

The American Horse Shows Association (AHSA, now USEF) and the USCTA had agreed to endorse similar rules, but backed out on the agreement, mainly because their members didn't like the appearance of the new helmets. As is usual with any sports group when a helmet use rule is proposed, the complaints were that the helmets were too hot, too heavy, too restrictive, and represented an infringement on their civil rights. The hats which were so vilified in 1983 were wildly praised when helmets made to the ASTM F1163-standard were required by USPC in 1989. Even today the "item of apparel only" helmet with no protective qualities is the choice of many show riders—the same riders who are currently threatening a class action suit against the USEF for requiring (12/1/05) ASTM/SEI helmets for adult riders over jumps.

#### 7. The American Society

**for Testing and Materials (ASTM)** in August of 1984 convened the first meeting of a new committee, F08.53.01, at the request of the USPC Board of Governors. Dru Malavase was the original chair. The USPC had seen the complications of an informal standard, and agreed that the testing program needed to be put on a more businesslike basis. The ASTM committee had a similar makeup to the Washington group, with the addition of equestrian and human biokineticists, a representative of the Standardbred Racing industry, many more engineers, including one specialist in human factors, and an expert on labeling of products. This committee met at least twice a year (with task groups meeting more often), and by September of 1988, ASTM F1163-88 went into effect. Eventually this standard became the basis for ASTM-F1446, a standard for the testing of all sports helmets whose advocates then write specific additions for their particular sports. ASTM requires that all standards be revisited every five years, but in the case of F1163 it has been revised and improved many times since its adoption. The latest edition as of this writing is F1163-04a.

8. The Safety Equipment Institute (SEI) sent Executive Director Tom Aughterton, and later President Patricia Gleason to ASTM meetings when F1163 was being developed. By agreement, SEI became the certification body for equestrian helmets, and its name and seal became part of the rules governing the use of F1163 Certified helmets. SEI contracts with

testing laboratories in several countries, oversees the Quality Assurance audits required for certification, and assures that the manufacturers carry a minimum amount of liability insurance. SEI handles any complaints about products, and oversaw the one product recall since 1988 using the guidelines of the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission.

#### Who requires or allows the use of F1163/SEI Certified Helmets in their rules?

1. **The British**, thanks to the efforts of Jane Davies and the Mark Davies Injured Riders Fund, have grudgingly allowed the use of ASTM-Certified helmets, and have initiated independent comparison testing by the Transportation Research Laboratories in which the few U.S. products tested were highly rated.

2. **The Australians**, whose leading manufacturer, Equine Science Marketing Party, was one of the early companies to become SEI-Certified, lists F1163 as an acceptable standard under their horse sports rules.

3. **The Canadians**, who had several members on the committee which drew up F1163, and whose Jocelyn Peddar from Biokinetics, Inc. in Ottawa wrote most of the first draft of the standard. The Canadian Equestrian Federation commissioned independent testing from Biokinetics to compare ASTM F1163, British PAS 015 and Australian standards products. The results of the study were that the British and ASTM standards were found to be acceptable for Canadian use.

4. **The Federation Equestre International (FEI)** which oversees international horse sports, and whose rules are used for the World Championships and Olympic Games, requires the use of British, Euro, Australian or ASTM helmets for eventing.

Because equestrian helmets are part of a world market, many manufacturers now certify their products to more than one standard, depending on where they intend to sell their products. The standards writing bodies have borrowed liberally from one another, and as a result products have continued to improve as all the usual rider objections (other than the civil rights issue) have been addressed. Standards committees may have members from several countries serving on them; with the advent of email, committee members from different countries communicate and compare notes. As the sometime voice of the equestrian interests on the ASTM Committee, the author has given information to helmet activists and standards writers from Sweden, Germany, France, the UK, Ireland, Australia, Canada, Taiwan, Korea and China. Thanks to the fact that rules exist requiring their use, the market has grown, which gives manufacturers incentive to improve their products with an eye to gaining a larger market share. At this writing there are rumors of new materials and methods which will further improve riding helmets, and there are stringent new standards tests being proposed in at least two countries. Certainly the industry remains volatile and vital!

## 24-Step Disaster Plan Continued from page 1

**17** Put all the emergency phone numbers in your Disaster Preparedness Kit.

**18** Check to ensure that all your advance pre-planning is still valid.

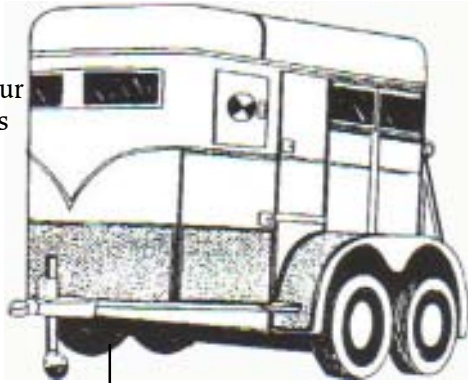
### Prior to Evacuation

**19** Get a Ziplock bag and put in the copies of your horse's registration papers, insurance papers, the photographs you have taken, copies of the identification papers (write "copy" across the papers.) Fill out an index card with the same information as on the ID tag (given above) and wrap this around the horse's halter with duct tape. Do not put original registration papers in the bag. Remember, during an emergency not everyone is honest.

**20** Braid luggage-type tags with the same information as on the index card into the horse's mane and tail (do not tie around the tail).

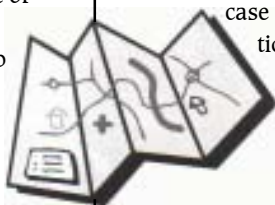
**21** If your horse is not permanently identified with a microchip or brand, use small animal clippers and clip your phone number onto your horse's neck. Spray paint or etch the hooves. If your horse is being trailered to the evacuation site by someone other than you, an ID number may be drawn onto the horse with an auction crayon.

**22** Pack into your trailer all the extra buckets, feed and hay that you have stockpiled for your horses' evacuation, including the portable first aid kit.



**23** Transport or prepare to transport your horse to a safe evacuation site. It is best to do this before it is an emergency, even several days in advance. Do not wait until the last minute to remove your animals. Write down and keep in a safe place, the address of the location your horse has been evacuated to.

**24** If you are unable or unwilling to remove your horse, make sure all the preparations to keep them on the property are in place — that someone knows that you are on the property and have your horse with you. If you are staying with your horse on the property, take two plywood boards and spray paint on one side of the board: "Have Horses, need help!" and the other side: "Have horses, OK for now." Keep these in the barn or near the house. Use them to keep rescue and emergency personnel informed in case the communication lines are severed.



The above Disaster Preparedness Information is courtesy of Horse Council BC. Reprinted with permission of the *Canadian Horse Journal*, May-June 2005.

# Horse ICE

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

*Most readers have probably heard about creating an "in case of emergency," abbreviated "ICE," listing on your cell phone contact list. USRider, the highway assistance company for traveling equestrians, has come up with what we think is a brilliant idea...read on.*

## To Protect Your Horses, Use ICE

LEXINGTON, KY (Aug. 3, 2005) — Say you're traveling with your horses and are involved in a serious accident. If you're incapacitated, how will first responders know who to contact? How will they know what to do with your horses?

USRider is advising horse owners of a new initiative that has been receiving a lot of publicity recently — ICE, which stands for In Case of Emergency. This very simple program has been designed to aid emergency responders in identifying victims whose identity is unknown and in determining who needs to be notified.

USRider is a nationwide roadside assistance plan created especially for equestrians. It includes standard features such as flat-tire repair, battery assistance and lockout services, plus towing up to 100 miles and roadside repairs for tow vehicles and trailers with horses, emergency stabling, veterinary and farrier referrals, and more.

Implementing ICE is easy. Program your emergency contact information into your cellular phone and designate it with the acronym ICE. For example, if your brother John is the person you want to have

alerted in the event of an emergency, insert the letters "ICE" before his name in your phone's address book, creating an entry such as "ICE — John."

For those who regularly travel with horses, it's important to make it easy for first responders to know who to contact for information on handling your horses. To do this, program an entry called "ICE — Horse" with the contact information of someone with the authority to make decisions about the care of your horses if you are incapacitated.

The idea for ICE was conceived by Bob Brotchie, a clinical team leader for the East Anglian Ambulance Service, after years of trying to reach relatives of people he was treating. With ICE, paramedics or police can swiftly find the number or numbers and reach relatives or friends who could help identify deceased victims and treat injured ones, by providing vital personal information, including details of any medical conditions.

USRider strongly encourages the public, especially those who travel with horses, to participate in the ICE initiative.

"This is a simple way to ensure that emergency, ambulance and hospital staff can quickly find out who your next of kin are and be able to contact them," said Mark Cole, managing member of USRider. "In addition, those people could provide pertinent information about your horses in the event of an emergency."

Continued on page 6

# Stop!

by Ginny Holsman

When you drive a car or any other vehicle, to slow down or stop, you release the gas and press on the brakes. Everyone knows this. Every vehicle is designed to move when the gas is depressed, stop when the brake is depressed, and otherwise remain still at idle. If the vehicle does not stop, then there is something wrong with the vehicle.

However, horses are not recreational vehicles; they are living, thinking, emotional animals.

They do not know that pulling on the reins means to slow down or stop unless they are taught this, and only to the extent and in the manner they are taught; and even then may stop only if/when they are willing to do so. If your horse does not slow down or stop when you gently pull on the reins, this does not mean there is anything wrong with your horse.

There is no point in pulling the reins more forcefully. Take a look at your arm compared to their neck. You cannot make a horse slow down or stop if he

doesn't want to. They are much stronger. You can threaten to harm your horse if they don't; but that won't mean much if they do not see you as boss. You can use a harsher bit; but that will not communicate what you want any better than a light tug on the reins.

The bridle is not a tool to force a horse to slow down or stop – it is merely a means of requesting that you would like them to slow down or stop. This can be just as easily communicated with seat or leg cues. If a horse is going to slow down or stop when you ask them to, then a very light tug is sufficient rein cue. It is pointless to yank on the reins!

A horse must be trained to slow down or stop when the rider signals them to do so. The rider must learn to signal the horse in the manner that the horse understands means to

slow down or stop. Even more importantly, the horse must be anxiously willing to please you, regardless of who else he may obey.

This is where most people make a big mistake. They think if a horse has been trained to slow down or stop by tugging on the reins, then it should do so for them; and if not, then the horse is being belligerent. Not so.

It could be you are not giving the same cues this horse learned to slow down or stop. Also, just because a horse is anxiously willing to obey the trainer, or someone else, does not mean it will be anxiously willing to obey every rider that climbs on it's back.

When you buy a horse, no matter how well trained it may be, the first thing you must do is gain this horse's anxious

willingness to please YOU. This cannot be accomplished by demanding, or forcing, or threatening. It is not something someone else can train your horse to do. It is something every rider must learn how to do in order to effectively handle their horse. No amount of training will make a horse obey you, unless they want to.

No matter how good a rider you are, handling your horse well is entirely different. If your horse does not slow down or stop whenever you ask, nicely; then you need to consult an equine expert to learn how to gain your horse's anxious willingness to please you, and to see you as boss. This will not occur by reprimand, punishment, or tugging.

© 1981-2005, all rights reserved by **Ginny Holsman**, Equine Expert, South Sound Equitation™, 718 Griffin Ave. (315), Enumclaw, WA 98022,

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*Thanks to AMEA-SRF Administrative Officer Wanda Franks for suggesting this article.*

## Horse ICE *continued from page 5*

Before putting someone's name in as an emergency contact, be sure to discuss it with the person first and ask for permission to do so.

"While we recommend that USRider members carry their USRider Membership at all times, we would like to recommend that they use their cellular phones to program the emergency contact number and membership ID number on their card into their cellular

telephone as well, such as 'USRider-800#' and 'USRider-ID#' – so they have it in an emergency."

In conjunction with these recommendations, USRider recommends that conscientious horse owners prepare a durable limited/special **power of attorney** document relating to any treatment and care of their horses in the event that the owner is incapacitated. A

sample power-of-attorney form is available online at [www.usrider.org](http://www.usrider.org).

"While these are not pleasant subjects," said Cole, "this is part of good animal stewardship, and conscientious horse owners should take steps to see that their horses are properly cared for in an emergency."

An additional safety precaution is to secure emergency contact information to your

horse trailer. USRider has created exterior emergency decals and interior information placards that are included at no extra cost in the USRider membership kit. Non-members can request copies of these decals from the USRider website by entering the site's guest book.

For more information about USRider, call toll-free (800) 844-1409 or visit [www.usrider.org](http://www.usrider.org).

*Reprinted with permission.*

# President's Report

Hi Everyone:

In place of a President's letter in this issue I refer you to the letter from our editor. Eve articulates what so many of us have been feeling. Our hearts and hands go out to the many affected people.

One result of the horrific weather on the Gulf Coast is that the USEA has moved its Annual Convention, and the AMEA/SRF will move with them. The meetings will be in Charlotte, North Carolina December 1-4 for the United States Eventing Association. The Annual Meeting of the AMEA/SRF will be at 2:00 p.m. EST December 1 in Charlotte, North Carolina at the Charlotte Marriot Center City Hotel. The AMEA/SRF Board of Directors

Meeting will be at 12:00 p.m. EST preceding the open Annual Meeting of members. I hope that as many of you as possible will be at the Annual Meeting and that our whole Board can make it to the Board Meeting.

Obviously, the programs we were planning will have to change, so I refer you to the Website for updates on what your organization will be hosting at Charlotte.

My thoughts are with each one of you as you move through your particular circumstances. I am reminded of the old Arabic curse: "may you live in interesting times." Well, we do.

**Jeffray Ryding**  
President AMEA/SRF

## IN MEMORIAM

Robert O. (Bob) Dawson (1939-2005) of the American Association for Horsemanship Safety (AAHS) lost a lengthy battle with lung cancer and died at home on February 26, 2005, in Fentress, Texas. Our sympathy is extended to his wife, family and friends. Memorials have been asked to be made to AAHS.

Bob maintained the AMEA website for years and through his University of Texas Law School website, the archives of the AMEA/SRF News are maintained by the school.

**Be Smart! Ride Safe.**

## The Importance of Wearing a Helmet

**Key points about why you should wear a helmet and how to choose one that fits properly.**

In recent years, the use of helmets for bicycle riding, inline skating, and other sports has become more prominent. Safety is obviously more important than a fashion statement! Wearing a helmet around horses is no different.

Recent studies have shown that over 17% of horse injuries impact the head and 60% of those result in fatality. Unlike what most people think, these injuries occur not only when riding. A horse's kick or quick jolt of the head can be just as dangerous.

During the last three years, local, national and international groups have passed rules and legislation requiring the use of approved riding helmets. All junior competitors in Hunter, Jumper and Hunt Seat Equitation Divisions must wear helmets while mounted anywhere on horse show grounds. New York and Iowa have enacted statutes requiring all riders to wear an approved equestrian helmet while riding a horse. Other states are expected to enact statutes requiring the same.

Wearing protective headgear will reduce the severity of potential injuries by absorbing the impact. Effective helmets approved by ASTM/SEI follow basic safety standards of a shock-absorbing liner made of expanded polystyrene and covered with a hard shell. When choosing a helmet, fit is the most important feature.

Now that you know why

you need a helmet, here are some tips to help you get the right fit:

1. Make sure the helmet is level.
2. Check that the helmet fits snugly around the head (no sliding back and forth).
3. Fasten the harness and see that the helmet fits comfortably over the ears.
4. The brim of the helmet should rest at 0.5" to 1" above the eyebrows for full coverage.
5. Make sure that the chin strap is snug.
6. Minor adjustments can be made with fitting pads.

There are many different helmet styles available



### KUDOS to State Line Tack

for the promotion of helmet safety as well as offering the products themselves.

# Safe Return to Play Guidelines

## Debbie Stanitski

Debbie Stanitski, MD, is a pediatrician and equestrian living in Georgia. She is a regular contributor to AMEA-SRF's safety education efforts.

There is currently a great deal of focus on concussions and safe return to play guidelines. As an orthopaedic surgeon, eventer and subject of a severe closed head injury in the not too distant past (1999) I am speaking to you as someone whose entire life changed due to my head injury. Trying not to use this opportunity to harrange about use of properly fitting ASTM-SEI helmets and harnesses, suffice it to say that I sustained a cerebellar (lower brain) injury below my helmet. According to all involved from the EMT to the neurosurgeon, they agreed that I would have died without a proper helmet.

A concussion is an alteration in brain function which can occur without losing consciousness. In fact, most concussions occur without loss of consciousness. The brain is basically suspended in the bony skull and if it is shaken, consequences can occur. Return to play guidelines, which go into effect July 1, 2005, cover sanctioned USEA events but should be implemented at all times, whether competing or riding at home. The bottom line is that a rider who sustains a concussion is usually not aware of the seriousness of such an injury whether or not the rider ever loses consciousness.

If the brain is not allowed time to recover after an insult such as a concussion, serious

coordination and/or intellectual sequelae may occur. This is the reasoning behind the return to play guidelines. If one puts themselves in a situation in which another injury could occur soon after the original injury (e.g. sports), the brain may suffer a second injury, the so called "second impact syndrome" which can be fatal and is not related to the severity of the second event.

One needs to allow any sequelae from the initial injury to resolve completely before resuming sporting activities to avoid the risk of the "second impact syndrome". If there are any symptoms following the first incident such as fatigue, difficulty with routine memory issues, headaches, balance loss, visual changes, or concentration problems with increased exertion, one must return to rest for at least 2-3 days. If such symptoms persist or keep recurring with exertion, medical care should be sought. The USEF brochure "Wake Up to Concussions" is a great resource, especially for symptom descriptions. Additionally, an EMS palm card grading concussions (1,2,3), gives management recommendations, listing common symptoms and a simple mental status exam. Remember, returning to exertion of any kind can be deadly if one is not symptom free and the brain fully rested.

# USEF Hurricane Relief Fund — Make a Donation Online Now

(Lexington, KY) – The United States Equestrian Federation has established the Hurricane Equine Relief Fund to assist those agencies working directly with the equine victims and refugees from Hurricane Katrina. The money will be used to support efforts to deliver food, veterinary services, and shelter for horses and ponies in the hurricane stricken areas. All donations are tax deductible.

If you wish to pay by check please make it out to the **USEF Hurricane Equine Relief Fund** and sent it to:

The United States Equestrian Federation  
4047 Iron Works Parkway  
Lexington, KY 40511

To Donate by Fax: 859-231-6662

Online: [www.usef.org/relief/index.php](http://www.usef.org/relief/index.php). This site also has an exhaustive list of stabling and veterinary resources, animal and human evacuee locations, and more.

# RESOURCES FOR RURAL HURRICANE RELIEF\*

Federation of Southern Cooperatives  
Land Assistance Fund  
2769 Church Street  
East Point, GA 30344  
Phone: 404-765-0991  
[www.federationsoutherncoop.com](http://www.federationsoutherncoop.com)

This organization benefits black landowner/farmers.

Cooperative Development Fund

Katrina Cooperative Relief Fund

[www.cdf.coop/katrina.html](http://www.cdf.coop/katrina.html)

Supports rural recovery efforts in LA, AL, and MI. Website claims that no administrative fees are retained from donations.

RFD-TV

"24-Hour Television Network for Rural America" is matching donations to its Katrina Relief Fund made via the website, [www.rfd-tv.com](http://www.rfd-tv.com). Farm Aid is administering this fund.

Farm Aid Hurricane Relief Fund

[www.farmaid.org](http://www.farmaid.org)

follow links to Hurricane Relief. Yes, this is the organization headed by Willie Nelson.

RFD-TV is matching donations in some cases; information available at [www.rfd-tv.com](http://www.rfd-tv.com)

\*AMEA-SRF posts this information as a resource only. These selections do not indicate preferences or recommendations for any form of relief. Please research for yourself and donate wisely.



# Healing the Invisible Wounds: Caring for Yourself After Emotional Trauma

by **Eve Flanigan, LPC**

This article is intended to help adults identify and cope with normal reactions to trauma. It is not to be construed as diagnostic or personal medical advice, nor does it necessarily apply to children. If you are concerned about your own or a loved one's emotional health, please seek help from a local licensed therapist or psychiatrist.

## What Happens after Trauma

We live, largely, in a world of assumptions. Thanks to the routine of everyday life, we assume that we will head off to the place we work, and return to find our loved ones and home, with all of their respective quirks and problems. We assume that the corner grocery will have ample supplies of affordable food, and that tomorrow will be not unlike today. When events happen to rock the foundation of a number of these sort of daily assumptions, minor as they may seem individually, trauma often ensues. Everyone experiences and expresses trauma differently. Our past experiences and beliefs serve as a unique filter for traumatic events. Armed with knowledge of the signs and symptoms of a traumatized mind, we can better prepare to help ourselves and others cope with the problems that affect us.

Emotional trauma—the psychological and biological impact that may result from

experiencing or witnessing a threat to one's life or mental/physical integrity (can be induced by a number of avenues. Whatever the source of stress—information that comes through the media, direct contact with disaster victims, listening to information about traumatic experiences, or surviving a traumatic event itself—trauma happens to virtually everyone to some degree. The following are some common reactions to trauma in the days and weeks following the event:

- Marked change in appetite, energy level, and/or sleeping patterns
- Hypervigilance and/or increased startle response
- Intrusive recollections of the event—may be limited to sights, smells, or other sensory stimuli
- Inability to express connectedness with family or friends, or;
- Excessive clinging behaviors to loved ones
- Resurfacing of “old” grief and loss issues
- Avoidance or distress in the presence of symbolic reminders
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability

This list is not inclusive but a selection of very common symptoms. It is vital to remember that experiencing some or all of these symptoms is *a normal reaction to an abnormal occurrence*. As the

mind searches to make sense out of events that often make no sense at all, the body reacts with changes to vegetative function.

## What You Can Do

While it is often not possible to completely withdraw from the situation after the “peak” of a traumatic event, taking some relatively simple steps will increase an individual's ability to resume relatively normal, safer function. So long as the above symptoms persist, one should strive to:

- TALK about the event with a trusted friend, family member, or therapist. This alone is the single most effective means of recovery.
- Exercise—simply walking, or any other form of exercise, releases endorphins, resulting in improved mood.
- Refrain from increasing use of alcohol or drugs—or abstain completely.
- Use extra caution when, or refrain from, operating a car or heavy machinery.
- Take a leap of faith—those who observe spiritual beliefs or rituals tend to be more resilient after traumatic situations.

If the traumatized person is a friend or loved one, be aware of these symptoms, and consider the absence of healing activities under the “What You Can Do” heading as risk factors. Trauma survivors are at

greater risk of accidents and suicide. The outlets listed above can save lives.

Should symptoms persist for more than three to four weeks post-trauma, or if the person experiences inability to conduct normal daily activities as a result of them, seek help from a psychiatrist or licensed therapist.

More information on this topic can be found at the website of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation: [www.icisf.org](http://www.icisf.org)

Eve Flanigan is a Licensed Professional Counselor in New Mexico. She is a certified Advanced practitioner of Critical Incident Stress Management services. Her background includes work with first responders, industrial workgroups, and family violence survivors. Flanigan now owns and operates Flanigan & Associates Grant Writing & Consulting.

## Editor's Corner

*Continued from page 2*

If Katrina has shown us one thing, it is that good preparation for disaster lies, at least in part, in the hands of those affected. In her report *Redefining Readiness: Terrorism Planning Through the Eyes of the Public*, Roz D. Lasker identifies that people will not necessarily behave the way disaster planners assume they will in a crisis, however, when the factors that they care about (like knowing that loved ones will follow a safety plan) are addressed by each family and workplace with seriousness, the potential for loss of life is greatly decreased.

As horse people, this report indicates that we must plan for disasters in much the same manner as we plan for that midnight foaling, the last-minute trip out of town, or the possibility that rain might decimate our supplier's hay crop. We expect no help other than that we devise ourselves, perhaps with the inclusion of our neighbors and friends. This issue's cover story, *A 24-Step Disaster Plan*, outlines a process that ALL of us need to think about using or adapting for use in the next disaster, whatever it is. Furthermore, if we each take it upon ourselves

to plan as a community of equestrians, regardless of discipline, we will have in our hands the potential to include our strategies in the work of government planners if we choose to take up this cause in our own communities. There's been no study that I know of to confirm this hypothesis, but I suspect that if we have in place the methods and means to care for our animals in a disaster, we are less likely to risk our own lives as well. Katrina has offered much food for thought — to not act on what we have learned would be a disservice.

There are many other news items here that we hope you'll find interesting. The new Honorary Membership plan is something we hope you and the groups you represent might consider. And of course, we always welcome new dues-paying members and feedback on what the AMEA-SRF is doing in your equestrian neighborhood!

**Eve Flanigan**  
Editor

Lasker R D. *Redefining Readiness: Terrorism Planning Through the Eyes of the Public*, New York, NY: The New York Academy of Medicine, 2004.



## **AMEA-SRF ANNUAL MEETING**

**Everyone Welcome!**

**2:00 p.m., Thursday, December 1, 2005**

**During the USEA Convention**

**Marriot City Center Hotel**

**Charlotte, North Carolina**

# Champions of our Cause

Thank You!



The following Competitions/Organizations support the American Medical Equestrian Association/Safe Riders Foundation:

The Event at Rebecca Farm  
Montana Equestrian Events, Inc.  
Becky Broussard and H elen  Erickson — Whitefish, Montana

The Event Derby<sup>®</sup> California Series  
Organizer Wendy Wergeles — Los Alamos, California

Coconino Horse Trials Summer 2005 Series  
Organizer Alice Sarno — Phoenix, Arizona

The Event Derby<sup>™</sup>  
The Event Organizing Committee — Galisteo, New Mexico

Wayne DuPage Horse Trials, Inc.  
Organizer Dan Kowalewski — Wayne, Illinois

American Medical Equestrian Association  
Safe Riders Foundation  
P.O. Box 91883  
Albuquerque, NM 87199

Send application and dues to:

Enclosed:

( \$ 50 )

Organization (100 or less members)

( \$ 100 )

Large Organization (more than 100 with

( \$ 250 )

staff)

Other donation

Application for: Member

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The AMEA/SRF is a  
501 c3 not-for-profit organization.

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# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Your membership fees fund our work and help in the production of the newsletter which is available online at [www.ameaonline.com](http://www.ameaonline.com). If you wish to have the newsletter mailed to you, please check here .



American Medical Equestrian Association/  
Safe Riders Foundation

P.O. Box 91883  
Albuquerque, NM 87199

