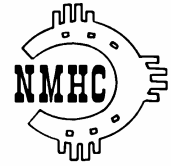


New Mexico Horse Council
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SUMMER 2008

“I shake hands with Phil and his two assistants, wishing them well in their travels. I try to give Running Stag a parting stroke on the nose, hoping his good luck will rub off on me. Instead, the dynamic animal attempts to rip my arm out of its socket, a sure sign that the hotblooded horse is his usual frisky self.” Not By A Long Shot: A Season At A Hard – Luck Horse Track, T.D. Thornton, Perseus Book Groups, 2007.

Calendar

NMHC Board of Directors Meetings (open): July 14, August 4, September 8, October 6, November 3, 6:30 PM. Consult web site or call 345-8959 for location and directions.

July 18: Expo NM hosts a “Pre-Response to a Request for Information” meeting, 10:00 AM. 265-3976.

July 21: New Mexico State Fair Commission Meeting, 1:00 PM, Expo NM. 265-3976.

July 28: Ditches With Trails steering committee presentation to the Mid Rio Grande Conservancy District Board, 1930 2nd. St. SW, Albuquerque. 247-0234, www.mrgcd.com.

August 7 – 9, Town Hall Meeting on Sustainable Transport (including nonmotorized), Hyatt Regency Tamaya, Santa Ana Pueblo. Sponsored by NM DOT and facilitated by New Mexico First. www.newmexicofirst.org.

August 15: EXPO ideas due.

August 15: Special Legislative Session begins.

August 21: Quarterly Meeting of the NMDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian/Equestrian Committee, 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM, Sandia Ranger District Meeting Room, Tijeras.

August 24: Horsin’ Around: An Equestrian Emporium. Presented by the New Mexico Horse Council; 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, La Entrada Park (adjacent to the Corrales Public Library). Kristin Darnell, 400-7438 or Nancy Searles, 792-2846. ★ ★ ★ ★

September 5 – 21, 70th New Mexico State Fair, Albuquerque. Horse shows every day, NMHC tent in front of Horse Arena. For premium, www.exponm.com.

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NMHC directors and others have been informally collecting factoids, both locally and nationally, concerning the current economic strains. Here are some conclusions: (1) almost everything connected with horses has increased in price, sometimes dramatically, *except* for prices of lower level or marginal horses. (2) People are still participating in their favorite activities, but fewer of them – taking the two horse trailer to shows, entering fewer classes, leaving the big trailer with living quarters in favor of a motel room, declining the “three dollar lemonade”. The highest level shows have held entry numbers, lower level shows have declines. Fairs and Expos report lower vendor sales as horse owners defer purchases. The number of unwanted horses is on the rise as feed prices increase. But most of us still find a way to welcome new people and enjoy our equines.



American Horse Council National Issues Forum, June 15 - 17

The 2008 AHC meeting began Sunday afternoon with a State Horse Councils orientation meeting, with AHC President Jay Hickey speaking on the State Horse Councils Committee relationship with the American Horse Council. State Horse Councils are members of AHC and of the State Horse Councils Advisory Committee, but the AHC has no control over them. The AHC is concerned only with Federal legislative and regulatory issues. It will do what its members ask – if they are willing to pay for it – even if “outside the mission”. To that end, AHC has commissioned Equine Economic studies, supervised the formation of the Equine Species Working Group to deal with the National Animal Identification System, and formed the Unwanted Horse Coalition. Currently, it is attempting to form a Speaker’s Bureau throughout the country to speak about the Unwanted Horse.

The American Horse Council is supported by its members, with some larger organizations paying a lion’s share of the operating expenses. The AHC Board of Directors is self-selected, from financial levels much higher than all state horse councils combined.

Holly Davis spoke on the International Equine Summit: how to attract young people to the world of horses? W.E.T.A., the Western English Trade Association, is developing programs called “Fit in the Saddle”, affiliated with CHA and to be made available at horselife.com.

Sunday concluded with an evening reception sponsored by State Horse Councils.

Monday, June 16, was devoted to meetings of the AHC standing committees: SHCAC, the Equine Species Working Group, the Unwanted Horse Coalition, Health and Regulatory Committee, Recreation Committee, Animal Welfare Committee, Horse Show Committee and Racing Advisory Committee. Committee meetings are generally open, but the SHCAC meeting ran from 8:30 to 4:00, so only a few SHCAC members left



to sit in on other meetings. I did attend part of the Equine Species Working Group.

The Board of Trustees met late in the afternoon to hear reports and recommendations from the committee chairs, and the day ended with a reception.

State Horse Councils Advisory Committee Meeting

23 state horse councils were represented, a great feat in expensive Washington, D.C. Chair Dave Howell is working to improve decisions and progress with more preliminary work from the subcommittees. In November 2007, the SHCAC members continued to request subcommittee meetings in groups, valuing face to face discussions. However, at this meeting there were so many issues for consideration that the subcommittee meetings were pushed late in the afternoon and were considerably shortened.

Budget: The SHCAC is the only AHC committee with its own line item budget. Income is generated by registrations and sponsorships at the SHCAC meetings, and the account is now healthy.

Within the subcommittees, the economy as it affects the horse industry was thoroughly discussed, along with the effects on Fairs and Expos and the growing plight of the unwanted horse. And the **Preserving our Equine Heritage on Public Lands** bill (formerly known as the Right to Ride bill) needs co-sponsors. There was preliminary discussion of auxiliary memberships.

Recommendations to the Board of Trustees included asking AHC to request the USDA to allow farmers to grow forage and hay on Conservation Resource Project holdings without losing CRP benefits, in response to the ethanol pressure on horse feed and the floods in the Midwest.

Elected to new terms were: Chair, Dave Howell (IN); Vice Chair, Madelyn Millard (KY); Secretary, Matt Bartlett (UT).





The Fall SHCAC meeting will be hosted by the Minnesota Horse Council and held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Nov. 7 – 9. Fall 2009 is scheduled to be hosted by the Pennsylvania Equine Council on the first full weekend in November, in the Harrisburg area. Anyone is welcome to attend SHCAC meetings, but one voting delegate should be appointed for each state.

National Issues Forum

Tuesday, June 17, featured the National Issues Forum, and the overall theme was “Getting Involved in the 2008 Elections”.

One of the early speakers had a New Mexico connection: Scott Jennings, at the time Karl Rove’s deputy director, was sent to Albuquerque in 2004 to “turn” New Mexico from a Blue to a Red state in the Presidential election. He did it: NM was won by 5388 votes; 50,000 new Republicans were registered; 80 % of them voted; and the winning margin was less than one vote per precinct. He stated that committed volunteers are extremely effective, and that people are looking to be “re-inspired” in the 2008 campaign. The personal squabbling in Washington, and holding on to power rather than solving problems, makes it harder to energize volunteers – but if their candidate wins, they help shape policy.

A panel followed on recreational issues. We need to support other recreational users, reach out to elected officials, educate every potential member of Congress before he or she is elected, and speak with one voice – forget differences with other horse owners or other recreational users to support greater projects.

Congressional Horse Caucus: Lincoln Davis, owner of mules and Tennessee Walking Horses, urged listeners to become more involved in the horse industry to preserve core American values. He also favors “real use” rather than simply preservation of recreation areas. Cliff Stearns, the co chair of the Horse Caucus, is concerned that many involved in the horse industry have limited educational opportunities. He has created an equine studies program at community colleges in Florida, his home state. He asked that people stay in Washington a few extra days, if possible, to



attend a Consumer Protection Committee hearing on race horse health and safety issues.

The AHC distributed a guide for the Horse Industry on “Getting Involved in the 2008 Elections”, and NMHC has a copy. It emphasizes that there are several areas of general concern and overriding importance to the entire horse industry, and that we should “speak with one voice” on these issues.

- Taxes. Horse owners are interested in tax changes that affect their businesses.
- Welfare and Safety. Horse owners are the stewards of their horses and support a safe environment and level playing field for them.
- Immigration. The industry relies on foreign labor and supports broad reform.
- Gaming. Continue state regulation of racing.
- Access to Public Lands. Continued access is important to recreational riders. Do not reduce or close trails or trailheads.
- Movement of horses and disease. Maintaining mobility while protecting domestic horses from spreading diseases is important to the industry and enjoyment of horses.

Van Ness Award Luncheon

Early in the year, the Board of Directors of the New Mexico Horse Council voted to nominate Eldon Reyer for the American Horse Council’s Van Ness award. This prestigious honor is named for the late Marjorie Van Ness, who was an enormously committed volunteer for various equine projects in New Jersey for most of her adult life. The Van Ness Award luncheon is sponsored by the New Jersey Horse Council, the Middlesex Horse Show, and the Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey.

We had known many of the projects Eldon was involved in/spearheading/working behind the scenes on – but when he submitted material so we could write the nomination letter, all we could say was “good grief – he did that too?”

We were delighted to be told in May that Eldon Reyer had won the award, and turned our efforts to persuading him and wife Karen to travel to Washington to the ceremony. They did, with





Eldon wryly commenting “there goes the hay money”.

Remarks by Jay Hickey in presenting the award: “A retired Park Ranger, Mr. Reyer has worked in some of the country’s most remarkable parks, including Yellowstone National Park, Mount McKinley National Park, Big Bend National Park and Custer Battlefield National Monument. He went on to be Supervisory Legislative Affairs Specialist of the Southwest Region of the National Park Service, and retired as the Associate Regional Director.”

“He then became an advocate for trails, specifically trails with horses. He was instrumental in passing the legislation that created the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. He was also busy organizing the Santa Fe chapter of Back Country Horsemen and the Santa Fe Happy Horse Coalition. Mr. Reyer and his wife Karen have also been of great service to the New Mexico Boys and Girls Ranch, having recently retired after helping there for 14 years. In 1992, he became President of the Northern New Mexico Horsemen’s Association, where he continues to do great things for the horse industry.”

In accepting the award, Eldon Reyer said “I have built my life around the Park Service and horses. I advocate for the horse. I want to see and preserve more trails so horses can enjoy the trails that I enjoy. Whenever Karen and I and the kids went to a new assignment, we were in a truck with a horse trailer behind us, and our horses in the trailer, because life with horses is wonderfully worth living.”

Unfortunately, Karen and Eldon were only able to remain overnight in Washington. He had to return to Santa Fe to keep organizing volunteers for the Santa Fe Rodeo – which turned out to have doubled in size over last year’s event. He is also Vice President of the New Mexico Horse Council and has recently written a brochure on the emergency evacuation of horses and other livestock. (He has continued to study emergency issues since stepping up to head livestock evacuation in the Cerro Grande fire near Los Alamos in 2000.)



☆ **Congratulations Eldon!** ☆

**Unwanted Horse Issue: What Now?
US Department of Agriculture**

A daylong seminar was hosted by the USDA in the Jefferson Auditorium at the South Agriculture Building in Washington on Wednesday, June 18. Attendance was free, but registration was mandatory, and the tight security meant that many of the approximately 250 attendees missed the first half hour or so. We will give a fuller report when the proceedings are published, but agree with the statement by the presenters that “Regardless of your perspective, the associated issues are not simple, nor will the solutions be.” I would add that any solutions will be costly.

The day covered the historical perspective, the ethical perspective, “Unwanted Horse: fact or fiction” argued by the Humane Society of the United States, the Unwanted Horse coalition and an ethicist. We also heard about carcass disposal, horse slaughter in Mexico and “harvesting” in Canada, and the federal role in possible solutions. Transportation issues were discussed after lunch, and I had to miss the final panel on Potential Solutions and Options because I felt the plane would not wait.

Expo New Mexico

“Ideas to Redevelop the Property at EXPO New Mexico”. Quoting the **Request for Information**, “Governor Richardson is seeking “ideas and information from interested companies, consortiums, associations, firms and/or individuals who could undertake programs of work leading to redevelopment of EXPO New Mexico and the State Fairgrounds into a 21st century showcase.” The 237 acres, within the City of Albuquerque but not incorporated within those limits, occupies the approximate area bounded on the north by Lomas Boulevard, on the south by Central Avenue (with some chunks privately owned along Central), on the west by San Pedro Boulevard and on the east by Louisiana Boulevard. It contains one million square feet of buildings – some historic – and 7,500 surface parking spaces. The impetus for this RFI is the intention of the Downs at Albuquerque Racetrack





and Casino to relocate and build a new facility at Moriarty, New Mexico. Their existing lease at EXPO expires in 2010 and provides about \$2 million of the \$15 million annual budget of EXPO.

Again quoting from the RFI, *“EXPO New Mexico also currently provides the only public equestrian venue in the region and hosts the majority of state events and finals. If and when a new state-run equestrian center is built, Economic Research Associates does not anticipate that the market will be able to support two equestrian venues. Consideration shall be given to the possibility of the State Equestrian Facility being collocated at EXPO New Mexico or relocating to another site.”*

The Governor has set a deadline of **August 15, 2008**, for detailed responses of up to 20 pages. They are to be submitted to:

Cynthia Romero
DFA – Local Government Division
410 Don Gaspar
Santa Fe, NM 87504
(505) 476-1095
Cynthia.Romero@state.nm.us

Send five hard copies and one electronic copy.

Since many NMHC members show in or work at events at large venues in other states, we are well aware that designing a good equestrian facility is difficult, and building one suitable for multiple equestrian uses is very tricky. One wonders (a) what the Mesa del Sol timeline is; and (b) if they expect support from the equestrian community without involving any of the future users in the planning process. While Tingley Coliseum at Expo NM is well planned for livestock, the price is prohibitive for most. The Horse Arena is not inviting for spectators, and the Dairy Barn less so. No wonder only the relatives attend shows.

NMHC submitted a letter to EXPO manager Judith Espinosa at the July 18 pre-response meeting, and Elsie Shollenbarger will stay actively involved. About a third of the people at the meeting were self-identified as developers, and others were a mix of equestrian users,

neighbors, and supporters of the Fairgrounds. While some had concerns about specific issues (“Keep the State Fair where it is, but have more handicapped parking”), no one seemed to want it to move. According to manager Espinosa, the State Fair Commission solicited a report within the last two years from Bullock, Smith and Partners exploring other states proposing to change the location of their Fairgrounds. One, Nebraska, will move its grounds to Grand Island, 110 miles away from the present site. Espinosa promised to have the text of the report available at the EXPO web site, but it is not yet accessible.

Our letter included the following suggestions: (1) Make Tingley Coliseum a “dirt in” rather than a “dirt out” arena. This would save equine event managers thousands of dollars. (2) Aggressively solicit other national horse events. (3) Involve the horse community in planning. (4) whatever mix of ground leases, residential communities, “world class Expo facilities”, a “theme park”, retail malls, or other uses is chosen, leave the barns, Tingley Coliseum, the Horse Arena, the Dairy Barn and the warmup arenas alone – except for maintenance.

This is in line with the conclusions of the State Fair Task Force report in 2005. A diverse group concluded that the Fairgrounds should remain at its present site and that a professional Fair manager (rather than a political appointee) be selected to manage it.

The worse possible outcome is that we lose what we have now and that the Mesa del Sol center is never built, or is incomplete.

Note: I listened to a radio call-in program on “what to do with the Fairgrounds” and the majority of callers thought a water park – with surf! – in place of the race track would be a terrific idea. With state funding and taxpayer dollars behind it instead of private money, it would surely not fail!

Some serious work has recently been completed on horse facilities at EXPO. During the LOEC miniature horse Spring Fiesta, we could not help noticing that the footing in the Horse Arena had been removed and scraped flat about a foot lower. This was fine for the minis, although startling for





people used to walking through the paddock area, not jumping down a bank. Since then, new dirt has been added and the footing has been praised by the users. Perhaps the Dairy Barn is next? A new large tractor with a Kaiser drag is at the north end as well. The Palomino Barns, one of the very first structures on the Fairgrounds, have been completely renovated and are just now open, in time for the Arabian Youth Nationals beginning July 23.

New Mexico State Fair: 70th Anniversary

The NM State Fair is one of the largest in the nation, attracting over 700,000 visitors during its seventeen day run. Horse shows have always been popular, and by the time this newsletter is out a complete schedule and the entire premium should be posted at www.exponm.com.

State Fair NMHC Tent

The New Mexico Horse Council intends to offer again the **NMHC Tent** in front of the Horse Arena. This is a fantastic way to promote your activity, the NMHC, and horses in New Mexico! NMHC provides the tent and tables, and the stall has been donated in the past. We will also provide a trailer parking pass and two individual admissions; additional passes may be purchased from the Fair. We give preference to NMHC members, but you do not need to have a specific breed – it can be an interest group. In the past we have had trails groups, horse rescue, horse therapy, a race horse, Valles Caldera Reserve. Here are the simple rules:

- If you reserve a day, plan to have an equine in residence. Please don't take a day and then be a no-show. **WITHOUT AN ANIMAL (HORSE, MULE, DONKEY, MINI, DRAFT HORSE – EVEN PUPPIES) THE BOOTH IS A BUST.**
- You will need a health certificate to bring your horse on the grounds, and will need to move your horse trailer to the parking area off the fairgrounds.
- There is a storage room in the south end of the Horse Arena where brochures and promotional materials can be stored for the day.

- We ask that you also set out New Mexico Horse Council brochures and promote NMHC as well as your breed or group.
- Groups may share a day, and it may be possible for a group to rent a nearby stall if horses need to rest away from the crowds.
- Sound like a great opportunity? Contact director Jan Henfling, jkh@att.net, but only until August 4. From August 5 onwards, use the NM Horse Council newsletter email, valcole@flash.net.

The Equestrian Center at Mesa del Sol

NMHC has tried to keep abreast of this proposed center at Mesa del Sol, south of the Albuquerque Sunport. It is not easy. We are told that the design process is ongoing; that the cost will be \$20 million to \$60 million; that 150 acres is dedicated to the center; that HOK Smith Forkner has been selected to design it. (That last is true; a partner of the firm attending the American Horse Council convention in Lexington, KY in November 2007 confirmed it.) Since rumors do fly, we also hear that those using the movie studios already built at Mesa del Sol are not thrilled about their proposed equestrian neighbors. And most recently we heard that the “design process is closed and there is a task force working on it.” Members of the task force? “Ask the Governor’s office.” We do know from a meeting last year that there will be an exit from I-25 and that careful attention is being given to routes in and out of the equestrian facility.

Trails and Land Use

NMHC now owns two resources for Equestrian Trails Design: Recreational Horse Trails In Rural and Wildland Areas, authored by Gene Wood and published by Clemson University, and Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads and Campgrounds, produced by the USDA, Forest Service, US Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration. We can lend the former for short periods, but your tax dollars produced the latter. Order your own at www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/trailpub.htm.





New Mexico Horse Council Program Update, Plans, Member Update

Horses In Action Recap. The event was held May 3 in the Horse Arena, Expo NM, in conjunction with the NMQHA Horse Fiesta in the Dairy Barn. It was a great presentation, and we cannot thank our participants enough. Here's what too many people missed: The **APD Horse Mounted Unit**; with Sgt. Jimmy Collins; the **Equestrian Theater of New Mexico** (Lyn Bosey and friends) with several rides; Vaulting by the **Albuquerque Vaulters**; Trick Riding by **Darah Bybee**; "What's Really involved in owning a horse" by **Ginger Gaffney**; terrific driving demonstrations by the **Enchantment Driving Society**; a talk and riding demonstration by Chy'a Johnstone, reigning **State Fair Queen**; a presentation by the **New Mexico Horse Rescue Coalition**; a demonstration by the members of the **Rio Grande Mule and Donkey Association** and their longeared friends, the miniature horse three ring circus by the **Land of Enchantment Miniature Horse Club**. Then we went on to a stunning **Pas de Deux (pair dressage ride)** by Jose and Mary Beth Soto of Tonaya Farms, riding Friesians owned by Camelot Friesians. This was followed by a Draft Horse demonstration with pairs of Belgian horses owned by **Harry Touloumis** of Rio Grande Carriage Works. Liz Manning and friends presented **Gaited Horses** including Peruvian Pasos, a singlefooter, a fox trotter and a Rocky Mountain Saddle horse. Paula Holmes and the **Rockin' Wranglers**, a Special Olympics equestrian team, demonstrated one form of equine assisted therapy. Dick Hensleigh and other riders from Hensleigh Quality Horses wowed the crowd with **American Saddlebreds**, followed by **Reining freestyles** by Dave Dillman of Dave Dillman Performance Horses in Santa Fe. The afternoon concluded with a rousing and noisy demonstration by Cowboy Mounted Shooters with the **Single Action Shooting Society**. Aren't you sorry you missed it? Those who came were very happy with the performances; many had heard of the event through a great radio ad produced by American General Media. Unfortunately, the income from the event did not cover the expenses, and therefore the Council cannot sponsor a Horse Fair next year.

Trail Ride. Last September, NMHC and its members hosted the Valles Caldera Preserve exhibit for one day in the Fairgrounds tent. The Council wrote letters supporting interim camping in the Preserve (which is intended to be self supporting) hoping to have an overnight trail ride in Fall 2008. Although the decision in favor of camping was recently announced, the details are yet to be worked out. Since NMHC members and directors are busy with other projects this fall (state fair tent and the horse emporium to mention two), directors recently decided to defer a trail ride until 2009.

The very first **Horse Council Flea Market** was held on April 26, 1992, in tents loaned by the National Guard at the Horsemen's Complex, La Boca Negra Park. The stated intent was to raise money for the State Fair booth, and it was very successful – so successful that many other organizations have since seen tack swaps and horsey flea markets as a useful project. Our last two have earned small amounts of money for the Council and for the Foundation. Therefore, Kristin Darnell and Nancy Searles, with an energetic committee, have conceived, will produce and hope you will attend



An Equestrian Emporium

“Featuring a Full Array Of Very Cool Stuff”

Come and join us for a day in the Park (La Entrada Park, adjacent to the Corrales Public Library). NMHC, various local merchants and vendors are pleased to announce the First Annual Horsin' Around event that will offer a day of Equestrian related activities, demonstrations, vendors, food, entertainment and lots of fun kid stuff! For general information, contact Kristin Darnell, (505) 400-7438; vendors





contact Nancy Searles, (505) 792-2846. We would like members of the Horse Council to donate an item to our sales table as well.

NMHC thanks **Cheryl Whelchel** for serving as a director; she has resigned so she and husband David can devote their time to different horse activities. We welcome new directors **David Kreger** of San Isidro – David has already offered to audit our books – and **Harry Touloumis** of Corrales, always ready to help at Horse Fairs and other events. **But** there are still positions open on the Board. You need to be a member of NMHC, and be able to commit to at least some of the Board meetings, currently held on the first Monday of most months. Email President Rusty Cook at rustycook4412@msn.com, or call her at 877-1456 if you are willing to work.

We welcome our latest **Lifetime members**. **Susan Blakely** now lives in Brick, NJ, but is a long time NMHC member and was a popular announcer at the NM State Fair and other horse shows. **Elizabeth (Betty) McElvain** and Rancho la Querencia have also been on the membership list as Betty has bred quality Holsteiner horses here in NM for many years. They bring our total of life members to 18. Current club and commercial members are listed on the web site, but we do not publish addresses and contact information for individual members – only their names.

Liability Signs. We have a new shipment of 100 signs, and the price has remained steady for over 3 years – we can still sell them for \$16 and make our dollar profit. However, with the rise in **postal rates** it now costs \$4.58 to mail one sign to most Zip codes; we will need to charge \$5.00 to ship the first sign and stay at \$1.00 for additional signs. It won't guarantee safety – only you can promote that. Horses CAN hurt you, and although the following may be unpleasant reading, horse people need to be aware of these facts.

“Animal-Caused Fatalities in New Mexico, 1993 – 2004”

Sarah L. Lathrop, DVM, PhD, working through the Office of the Medical Investigator at UNM Health Sciences Center, was kind enough to share

her research in this area. Since New Mexico is largely rural, with opportunities for people to interact with both wild and domestic animals, she wished to expand beyond earlier investigations into dog bites and farm related injuries.

Between 1993 and 2004, 63 deaths caused by animals were reported in the state. 14% were caused by cattle, 5% by dogs, and 5% by venomous animals, while one death was attributed to a bear.

However, the vast majority (43 of the 63, or 68%) were due to a person being thrown from, crushed, dragged or kicked by a horse. Her review suggests that some accidents may have been prevented by protective gear, better education of those interacting with horses, or, in some cases, a lower concentration of blood alcohol. All deaths were classified as accidental, and deaths from animal-motor vehicle collisions and diseases spread by animals were excluded.

The majority of people in the study died either immediately or within an hour. However, some survived several years with paralysis or seizure disorders, eventually to succumb to complications.

The longer people work around horses, the more they realize that even the quietest, kindest, most “kid-friendly” animal can be unpredictable, with possibly lethal consequences. Dr. Lathrop's conclusion: “measures should be taken to increase awareness of the need for both caution and helmets when riding”.

(I would add: choose a horse that fits your abilities, take lessons, and keep your horse's training and manners current while benefiting from your ride or drive. Dress properly, carry a cell phone [except in the ring during a USEF show] and enjoy. The outside of a horse is good for the inside of a person!)

Just remember, when it weighs a half a ton it doesn't have to be angry or vindictive – just startled. Or in the words of the pony Lucy in the Non Sequitur comic strip as she dumps her rider Danae and hides behind a tree after mistaking a tiny lizard for a dragon, “I believe in worst case scenario first, reality check later”.

