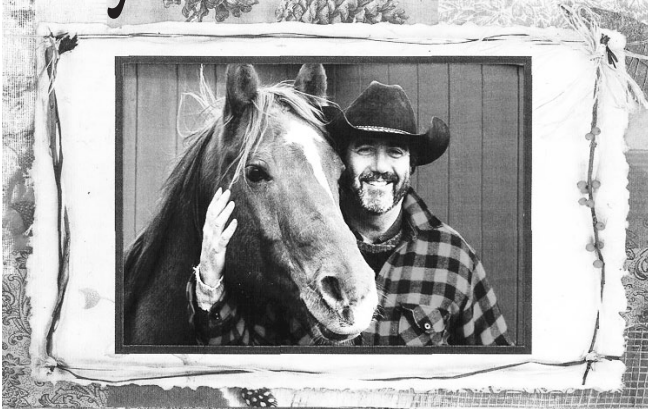


# Hayes Is for Horses™



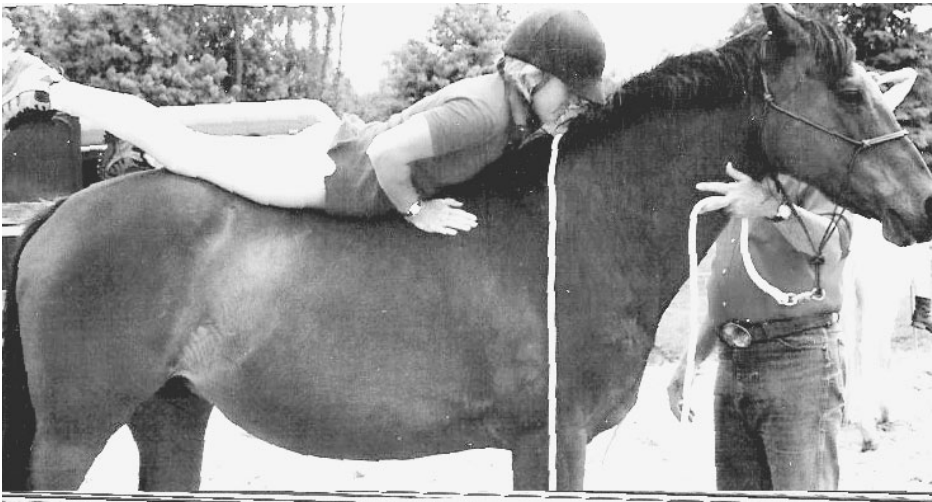
## Getting Hurt by Gentle Horses

By Tim Hayes

If you're alive, sometimes you're going to get hurt. If you interact with horses consistently you are choosing to participate in a life threatening activity. This is also true with skiing and many other fun activities. However, with every activity other than horses, you will never be injured because your "equipment" spooked. If we eliminate playing Frisbee with our dog, horses are the only animals we partner with in athletic events.

The unfortunate reality is that most humans are accidentally injured interacting with gentle horses they love. The most common cause of horse related injuries is a combination of:

1. Lack of knowledge
2. Lack of communication skills
3. Treating a horse like a big pet.



Mutual Trust exercise at Tim Hayes Clinic; Accord, NY, June 2004.

### 1. LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

In the beginning I was lucky to survive years of lack of knowledge. Not knowing how or where to stand around horses caused me to be stepped on many times (you know when your big toe turns purple then black). A more serious exam-

ple occurred with me showing off to a pretty instructor what I thought was the correct way to stand at an open stall door and get a horse to turn and face me. As I demonstrated my skill the horse kicked out with both feet and shoes. One caught me on my left elbow the other in the most humiliating location a man can be kicked. I was lifted into the air and thrown five feet out into the aisle. (I'm fine now)

### 2. LACK OF COMMUNICATION

In the lack of communication department I've had my share of misunderstandings. Early on much of my knowledge had come from watching others. During one trail ride I decided to ask my horse to canter. I took my long western reins and just like in the movies I spanked *his butt*.

Not like in the movies he asked me to leave. He bucked and the hard dirt trail spanked *my butt*.

### 3. TREATING A HORSE LIKE A BIG PET

Like most people it's almost impossible for me to be close to a horse and not want to touch him. It's like my arm has a mind of its own. "I must touch that horse!" Years ago when I first fell in love with horses I wanted to rub, hug, pet and kiss them like big teddy bears.

I thought it was great. They rubbed their heads on me, licked me and nibbled my shirt just like a big puppy. That was up until one lovingly bit down on my thumb. It was purple and it hurt for about two weeks. As with lack of knowledge and communication, touching and or treating a horse like a big pet is a common set-up for injuries, sometimes very serious ones.

Natural Horsemanship teaches us what's natural for the horse. How the horse experiences the world and responds to it. If I can communicate to him in his language that I understand how he sees, thinks and feels, then as Tom Dorrance use to say; I can "offer him the best deal possible". I can help him out if he gets frightened, frustrated or willful. I can reassure him and allow him to keep his dignity, earning his trust and his respect. I can become his leader because *he* wants me to be his leader. This is why groundwork is so important. It's how horses communicate with each other.

If I expect my horse to let me ride him I must be in control of both of us in order to stay safe. Then if he's happy and goes too fast, I can speak to him physically to help him slow down. If he's afraid I can communicate with him emotionally to help him relax. If he's disrespectful I can communicate with him mentally to help him have a better attitude.

### CHOOSING THE RIGHT BIT FOR CONTROL & SAFETY

#### 1. A BIT OF KNOWLEDGE

When my horse gets afraid and spooks I get anxious. When I get anxious, I make my horse anxious. When my spooky horse gets anxious everything becomes more dangerous.

Horses are only afraid of *one* thing – being eaten by predator

animals. Horses cannot get eaten by anything on Long Island. Therefore I *never* have to be afraid when my horse spooks. With this knowledge I can stay relaxed and always reassure him. He will relax; reaffirm his trust in me as his brave leader. I will help both of us from getting hurt.

Continued on page 32

*Track Talk continued from page 10*

with Survivalist was followed by a victory in the mile-and-an-eighth \$100,000 Next Move Handicap on Good Friday with Daydreaming, a four-year-old filly he trains for the Phipps stable. "She broke very sharp and was right up there. She did it mostly on her own," said jockey Edgar Prado, who rode three winners that day. Bank Audit won the seven furlong \$150,000 Distaff Breeders' Cup Handicap March 26. The four-year-old was ridden by Richard Migliore, his second win of the day. Sensibly Chic was second and Travelator third, besting the even-money favorite, Cativa, in the field of seven.

Jorge Chavez won his 4,000th race in January at Gulfstream Park. Chavez was a leading rider in his native Peru before coming to the United States in 1988.

Dick Hamilton is retiring as communications officer for the National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame. He joined the staff in 1995 after retiring from his position as a New York Racing Association steward. He plans to work on special projects as a museum volunteer. Dick has always been tremendously helpful in providing information, and we wish him well.

Post time for racing on Aqueduct's main track is 1p.m. For information call 718-641-4700.

*Southaven Stables continued from page 17*

of advisors felt was as important as I did, safe stalls, and a 124x200 indoor. The cost, is \$661,000. A company will come out and check over guarantee work once a year and report to the county on the condition of facility. The county needs this type of feed back. It doesn't employ horse people and doesn't know about the care and upkeep of a horse facility. They do have a new committee of horse people and other advisors, and that was the best move they made.

The County did say in newspapers that they are willing put in \$500,000 in repairs and put it out to bid again. Perhaps a larger corporation with finances and experience, with a team of trainers in all disciplines will step forward this time to put in a bid for a workable facility.

No one wants to see Southaven stay open more than I, my family, my ex-boarders, students and friends, but it is dangerous in its present condition. Bidders and those interested should go for a new facility, or the county should go for their \$500,000 plan. That will work. They will have to ask for more from the bidders this time. As horse people, we could help by doing fund raisers like they do in New Jersey for the Horsepark. Unfortunately, that will not happen on LI. Perhaps we should push for Southaven to be home to the Olympics as it's certainly big enough. Some state and private funding could become available for that.

I feel that new facility bidders must ask for 15 plus 5 plus 5 year contract for good behavior to help work out a time schedule to pay off building costs. In the long run a bidder would be better with a new building, or at least improved building for \$500,000. If a bidder put up the \$500,000, the County should include a clause stipulating that they may, at anytime or in 10 years, sell the business to a county approved bidder. This way they would have some security for their initial outlay. It's better than walking away in 10 or 20 years with nothing.

Beside high insurance rates, this is the problem that stops more business people from putting in a bid.

If we had an advisory committee, it would check the facility once a year, report to the County of needed repairs. A little help may have encouraged more investment from the licensee. If we had all were involved and helped, horsepeople and the County — this site would be in better shape now.

The County should have kept a better watch on the facility. Horsepeople should have come forward and helped the County by telling them what we want and what is safe. Instead of getting involved every 10 years when the bid comes up, get involved every year with county facilities. Run fundraiser shows, and get involved. Yes, these facilities are privately run and they have a right to make money. You, as horse people, have the right to en-

joy the facilities. The only way your going to secure that right is by helping them all the time. Not only when the bid comes up. This is your park, too. We all should take care of it.

We had a great year with lessons, shows and clinics and if we can get that inherent risk law past, insurance will be a lot easier to get for hack rides in NY State. The horse business is \$112, billion dollars a year business in the US. Long Island is responsible for \$1 billion of that by itself, and has more recreational horses per square mile than any place in the nation. We need a horsepark we can be proud of. Ask for a new facility. In the end the new management will make more money, and the County will have a fresh start, with greater knowledge of the horse business with their committee to help them. The new facility will be around for your great-grandchildren to enjoy.

I'm glad to be going home, and confident that the County will do the right thing. Have faith they know what we want.

*Hayes Is for Horses continued from page 28*

**2. A BIT OF COMMUNICATION**

When my horse is blind with fear he will run. He will be using the instinctual "right side" of his brain to survive. He cannot think or respond nor can I communicate with him in this state. Communicating physically by pulling harder on the bit will cause him pain. The pain will only confirm to him that he's still not safe. He'll run faster. To begin to communicate I need to turn him left or right and disengage his hindquarters.

To disengage (cross over) his hind legs he needs to use the thinking part, the "left side," of his brain. His brain will automatically switch from the right to the left side in order to cross his legs

The right brain release of adrenaline will subside as will his fear. He will begin to calm down. His focus and attention will shift back to me. I'll pet and reassure him. We are both safe.

**3. A BIT OF BOUNDARIES**

Humans and horses both have physical boundaries called comfort zones. Entering one's comfort zone and being accepted with total safety requires love, trust and respect. If I allow my horse close to me and treat him like a big pet, he'll treat me like a friendly horse.

Horses always play dominance games with each other to establish a pecking order (who's the leader). Most horses are about 7ft. long, 5ft. high and weigh 1000 pounds or more. They bite, bump, kick, swing their heads, and push each other around. The horse that moves the other horse away first is the winner. Being of equal size allows them to physically interact this way and not get seriously hurt. Being of unequal size and interacting with my horse like I might with my dog, I can get seriously hurt.

Before I allow my horse into my personal space, appropriate physical intimacy rules must be established. He only enters my space when invited, respects me physically and does not treat me like another horse

With the arrival of spring my horse Austin and I will be conducting demonstrations, seminars and 2-Day Natural Horsemanship clinics at barns throughout Long Island, Upstate and New England. I teach people of all levels and disciplines how to teach horses to create partnerships based on mutual love, trust and respect. The results are amazing and will help to dramatically reduce the possibility of getting hurt from your gentle horses. I hope to meet you and your horses this year.

All my events are listed in the event section of this magazine and on the net at LLequine.com. To host a clinic, demonstration or for more information visit: [www.hayesisforhorses.com](http://www.hayesisforhorses.com), or call Tim at 631-329-5840.