



Volume 4, March 2008 Looking to Spring

## ***Touching Grace***

*Horse hoof-prints and human footprints – Each step is a blessing and each breath a prayer as we walk together in harmony upon the Earth. In the awesome presence of these majestic beings, we meet ourselves in an expanded sense of freedom and awe. In relationship with horse, we touch Spirit and experience the grace of being human.*

Jackie Lowe Stevenson

## ***Spring is always a time of growth and renewal***

Thank you for celebrating with us the power of horses to awaken the human heart by connecting more deeply with ourselves. We invite you to respond to our newsletters and share your thoughts or horse stories in future editions.

## ***Contendor; The Eye of the Soul***

The photo of Contendor's eye greets you on the opening web page for Personal Development. They say that when you look into a person's eye, you can see their soul. When you look into Contendor's eye you might see your own!

Contendor is a 9 year old male Paso Fino, who is ultra sensitive to all sorts of energies including: sensing when someone comes onto the property; what mood you enter the barn with, even what emotions you are feeling. For a small horse, his energy field is very large. Those of you who have experienced our energy demonstrations and exercises to determine the size of a horse's energy field would agree that Contendor's is larger and more sensitive than most of our other horses.



Contendor is a very proud horse and takes his responsibilities of defending his herd very seriously. He is the protector of four females: Papi, Dancer, Aria and Paris.

Over the last year and a half he's grown into his role of teacher and guide. He has learned to communicate with the co-facilitators to ensure a full engagement with the participant. And he loves to show off his flashy stride!

Contendor likes to be with people. If you are congruent and connect with your heart, he will follow you anywhere (sometimes too closely!). If you disengage, he stops immediately. However, in his stall, he is shy and wants his privacy in 'his' space.

The Paso Fino as a breed has a fascinating history. They are descendants of the first horses brought to Latin America during Christopher Columbus' second voyage. They served as the foundation stock for the Conquistadors and the wild mustangs are known as the ancestors of the Paso Fino.

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## **Horse Spirit Connections WORKSHOPS**

Join our ten horses in the country as spring brings the sun, new growth and the cheerful chirping of birds. The horses are excited to bring forth their teaching and healing abilities after the long winter. Our intimate workshops are limited to 6 people in order to provide you with the best possible experience.

### **Discover Your Inner Self**

March 29 – 30. Only one space left.

April 12 - 13

Interactions with the wisdom of the Horse offer us new perspectives and insights to move in rhythm with our authentic self.

### **Horse Medicine**

May 30, 31 & June 1

Discover the mystery of Horse Medicine. Our focus will be on Spiritual growth grounded through the Wisdom of the Horse.

### **Authentic Leadership**

May 24 – 25 - FULL

This unique workshop helps build dynamic leaders. Using the horses' sound sense and unerring judgment, you can refine your leadership style and develop new skills.

### **NEW Workshops for 2008**

#### **Empowerment**

May 3, 2008

In this magical workshop, we invite women to deepen their connection to their authentic self. Once you feel and experience your heart's intent with clarity, you will be able to access your goddess power.

#### **Conscious Connections for Couples**

June 21 - 22, 2008

Together with the horse couples will explore how to communicate cleanly, clearly and effectively. Learn how to support each other in vulnerability, both individually and as a couple. Sensitive facilitation and the magical presence of the horse will help you become aware of patterns and behaviours that separate you from your partner.

Visit [www.HorseSpiritConnections.com](http://www.HorseSpiritConnections.com)



WHERE HORSE INTERACTION LEADS TO HUMAN INSIGHT.

## *Contendor; The Eye of the Soul (continued)*

The Paso Fino horse reflects its Spanish heritage through its proud carriage, grace and elegance. (Paso meaning pace or step and Fino meaning fine.) They carry themselves with much pride or 'brio' and are noted for their smooth gait as well as their agility, intelligence, intuitiveness and hardiness.

Contendor denotes his heritage and is a magnificent example of a 'sentient' being.

## **EGEA CONFERENCE**

By Victoria Poe

The Equine Guided Education Association's BIG SKY HORSE CONFERENCE took place in Northern California at the end of January. Wendy, Andre and I took part in this amazing event.

Ariana Strozzi coordinated the 4th annual conference, an inspirational, educational and collaborative event where over 100 people gathered to explore horses as sentient, spiritual beings who teach us about humanity and the interconnectedness of all things. Speakers included Linda Kohanov from Epona Equestrian Services and Ginger Kathrens, an Emmy award-winning producer/director who vividly details the perils faced by Montana's wild horses, through her film *Cloud: Wild Stallion of the Rockies*.



Linda Kohanov at the EGEA conference

The Integral Horse Mapping workshop after the conference was led by Gerhard Krebs from Germany and David Harris from England.

During the Integral Horse Mapping workshop, a group of 12 participants worked together to discover leadership insights with Ariana's horses. We also were able to reflect on our personal and professional goals and challenges, creating structural constellations in the arena, observing from different perspectives. My ah-ha – By being present and allowing, opportunities are created and clarified. I appreciate Ariana's vision of facilitating this learning opportunity and conference community.



Following the two day workshop, Wendy, Andre and I enjoyed riding through the magnificent country side, basking in a cathedral of redwoods and tasting wine within the beautiful Sonoma county of California!

I was inspired to write the following poem.

### **TRUST**

Ariana's herd,  
holding courage, yet curious,  
greet fire.

a member,  
kneels down in the earth  
and rolls lovingly.

scanning the perimeter,  
she embraces respect  
and non judgement.

she enters water with reflection,  
breathes opportunity  
that ripples outwards.

the horses embody the elements, mindfulness  
and become witness -  
listening from the heart.

## ***Messages Behind Emotions***

The fear of feeling blocks self-knowledge and our true connection with others. Being with Horses teaches us how to treat emotion as information.

In each newsletter we will focus on a different emotion. For this month it is 'anger'.

Linda Kohanov has developed the Emotional Message Chart based in part on Karla McLarin's insights and on realizations gained directly from horses.

Anger is usually the emotion that we feel when someone has overstepped a boundary – it could be physical, emotional or spiritual. That boundary can be crossed unconsciously or consciously. If we learn to recognize that surge of energy, it will help you stand your ground when someone pushes your boundaries. This takes courage and awareness. *(Continued next page)*

### *Messages Behind Emotions (Continued)*

Horses are great for teaching this neglected art. As non-territorial beings, they illustrate that healthy boundaries have nothing to do with social status or material ownership. A horse's size motivates his handler, simply out of safety, to command respect. Once someone learns appropriate ways to hold her own with a thousand-pound horse, their ability to set boundaries with their family members and friends comes much easier.



**Anger**

**Message**  
*Someone has stepped over a physical or emotional boundary with the (conscious or unconscious) intention of bending you to their will*

**Intensification**

**Questions**  
*What must be protected?  
What boundary must be restored?*

*Rage, Fury  
Shame, Guilt  
Boredom, Apathy*



Due to a number of situations when I was a young girl and woman, I set huge walls to protect myself. I thought I was being very strong. However, all I did was create a wall that prevented me from receiving love from others and myself.

Instead of creating a wall I should have set a boundary. A boundary is a flexible physical or psychological buffer zone that, if respected, allows you to relax and feel safe in someone's presence leading to greater trust & intimacy.

Unfortunately dominance-submission still rules in our relationships.

Even more so in our family ties. Do you remember when you were a small child and you were at a big family reunion? And Aunt Bertha, whom you haven't seen in years and you really don't remember, comes rushing over to you to give you a big sloppy kiss. You shy back from her suffocating embrace. Then your mother orders you to kiss Aunt Bertha. Ugh! And so we are taught to tolerate dominance disguised as love.

We can create a dominance situation unknowingly with our children, our dog, and even our cat – if it will let us!

Setting a boundary says that I respect myself and I will protect myself. By understanding my personal space and

respecting others, we can develop a relationship based on mutual respect and understanding.

Humans have an involuntary physical response to proximity. Highly sensitive humans feel safer and become more responsive to others when their need for personal space is acknowledged. Have you gone into a party and picked up all the negative energies?

We use the horse as a therapist so that people can learn to be aware of their arousal level. Once you become aware of the feeling in your body, you can learn to set the appropriate boundary.

With the horse you learn to feel when your arousal level is rising or your breathing gets shallow or stops altogether! For myself it was a common occurrence to stop breathing.

We have discovered a simple boundary rule that leads to a safe, respectful and connected relationship with the horse and others in your life.

***WHEN THE HORSE APPROACHES YOU, YOU SET THE BOUNDARY***

***WHEN YOU APPROACH THE HORSE, THE HORSE SETS THE BOUNDARY***

This boundary will be different horse to horse and day to day just as your life changes moment to moment.

Here's the key: When setting a boundary, you do not need to punish or herd the horse or the people in your lives. If you habitually chose either one of those options, the horse would never learn what a boundary is. You simply ask, and if necessary, insist, that he give you the space you need to feel safe in his presence. And when he does, sigh in appreciation. If he moves away, make no move to correct him. You only require that he stay out of that buffer zone. Being assertive and dominant are two different things.

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### *Messages Behind Emotions (Continued)*

A lot of times we are fearful of enforcing our boundaries. We think we will be abandoned or the person will not respect us. This is the total opposite of what happens.

I had a private session with a client who was excellent at free lunging a horse at a walk and trot. Free lunging a horse means that the horse is moving on the outside of the round pen without a halter or rope to guide him. You are using your body language, your voice, your energy, your visualization to guide and move the horse.



The client was a good student and learned quickly. However, Lady the horse, started testing the boundaries. The horse quickly realized that when she pushed the client, the client backed down and the horse could do what she wanted. My client realized that this was a common pattern in her life. We worked this aspect of boundary setting so that she was being firm with Lady and not allowing her boundaries to be crossed.

A lot of times we are fearful of enforcing our boundaries. We think we will be abandoned or the person will not respect us. This is the total opposite of what happens. Lady became very respectful and quietly did what was asked of her. This is true of the people in your lives. Clear and consistent boundaries allow both people to feel safe enough to engage in an interaction that is mutually beneficial.

These are the kind of things you can learn about yourself at Horse Spirit Connections.



## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **HOLISTIC WORLD EXPO**

March 14, 15, 16, Toronto

This is our second year of exhibiting at this exciting show. We have a corner booth and we will be giving a talk about the magic of horses on Sunday from 3:15 – 4. Please come and join us.

The Holistic World Expo:

- Features International leaders, speakers, authors, healing music performers, hundred(s) of exhibitors and countless hands-on demonstrations that present a fascinating worldview of holistic health benefits.
- Provides information for individuals who want to enhance their health, de-stress their lives and focus on their spiritual wellbeing.
- Embraces the relationship between traditional medicine and complementary treatment options as it contributes to overall greater health for people today.
- Guides you towards integrating the mind, body and spirit, staying healthy and avoiding illness while living happier, fuller lives.

#### Show Times

Friday March 14th 5pm – 9pm

Saturday March 15th 10am – 8pm

Sunday March 16th 11am – 7pm

\$10.00 Daily Exhibit/Speaker Hall Pass

### **CALEDON TRAINING PROGRAM:**

August, Caledon

We are excited to be chosen to provide leadership training to the young people of Caledon. Participants of Caledon's Leader-in-Training, Level 2 program will partake in an advanced leadership experience at Horse Spirit Connections in August, 2008.

### **CANADIAN EMPLOYEE RELOCATION COUNCIL**

September 21 – 23, Vancouver

Victoria and I have been asked to present a workshop at this 'Leadership for Workforce Mobility' conference. Relocation and human resources managers from some of Canada's largest corporations will attend the CERC 2008 Conference.



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