

Morgan Dressage association

Dedicated to promoting and supporting Morgan Horses in Dressage.



GRAND PRIX MORGANS— EFM DESPERADO: BECAUSE WE COULD

By Bernadette Stang

No one had Grand Prix in mind when EFM Desperado (EFM Odin x Woodside Celebrity) was put into dressage training. “Desi” didn’t have the size associated with FEI dressage horses, being “vertically challenged” at just shy of 15 hands. Nor did he have the conformation the experts look for, as he was built somewhat like a “cube”. Desi did not have huge, lofty gaits nor were changes easy for him. He didn’t come with a lengthy European pedigree. What made EFM Desperado a successful Grand Prix competitor was something even more important and harder to find—the heart, determination and that “never say die” spirit that makes a good horse great.



EFM Desperado and Kathy Casey


Desperado’s career started as a combined driving horse for his owners and breeders Laura and James Smith; initially broke to drive by Babs Verdugo of Grass Valley, California. To help improve their driven dressage scores, the Smiths began taking lessons from a local dressage trainer, Kathy Casey. When Desi was three-and-a-half years old, the Smiths decided to have him started under saddle by Casey—following the example of Larry Poulin who routinely schooled dressage ridden as well as in harness. Sending Desi off to be trained also allowed the Smiths to focus more time on their fledging business. The long-term plan was that Desi would stay with Casey for a year or two until the Smiths had more time free to pursue combined driving again. No one then predicted that a couple of years eventually would stretch to nine and a new career path for Desperado.

As a young horse, Desi “looked like a deer” according to Laura Smith as he had not yet developed significant muscle and maturity. Starting his training, Casey originally had some doubts that Desi would be strong enough for the

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News and Reminders:

- Check out [Page 12](#) for **new Classified** listings—they are growing!
- Find Us, Like Us and  Friend Us on Facebook!
- It is **past time to renew your MDA Membership** for 2012—but never too late! Be sure and fill out the [application](#) on Page 14 and mail it in **today!**
- Been getting your new email newsletter, “MDA Extensions”? No? [Let us know](#) so we can get you on the list!

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Spotlight on the Members



Bill Broe and Rosevale Leggo

*I have been working with and training horses for more than 30 years. I started out in the driving world and then into riding, dressage to be specific, and breeding my Morgan Stallion **Rosevale Leggo**. The education I got from all the professionals I schooled with while training myself for dressage and my stallion for competition in dressage was invaluable to me as a trainer and instructor for both driving and riding. It has made a better horse for driving and riding and has given me a broader understanding of the horse and its needs. This journey has also made me a believer in Equine Sports Massage and the benefits of regular static stretches in the horses program. Leggo and I have ridden through Third Level with many Championships and HOY*

*awards and we have enjoyed the same success in Combined Driving. As a result of my ridden Dressage, I have developed a driving technique called "The Balance Seat". It has been very successful for my students who compete in Driving and in the cross training of horses in general. Articles about "The Balanced Seat" can be seen on my website, www.AHorseDrawnAffair.com. **Bill Broe***

*ATMF **Hocus Pocus** and I go way back. I met her the day she was born and bought her at age two, and we've been together for 18 years. Since moving to California seven years ago, we have not been showing, but in Oregon she showed at Second Level in schooling shows and was successful at First Level in recognized shows. Now we just ride for pleasure, although we train each week with Lynn Brown and ride in clinics. We board adjacent to a large state park (Folsom Lake) and spend time on the countless acres of trails over hills and around the lake. She's a wonderful, willing, capable horse who has given me many good rides in the arena and on the trails. My younger horse, **Vintage Valentino**, has just started showing at First Level with his trainer, Marty Courtney, and is doing well.*

Ruth Crowley



ATMF Hocus Pocus and Ruth Crowley

Looking for something to visit over the fence about? Have an interesting story you want to share? A little (or big) brag? Well here is your chance!

Send us a short (two or three paragraphs) tale about yourself and your Morgan horse (with a picture, of course!) and we will be happy to share your story with the rest of the MDA Membership on our "Spotlight on the Members" page. You don't have to show or be a breeder—just a lover of dressage and Morgan horses! Come on, don't be shy...we would love to hear from you! Send your story and photos to sally@montanasky.us





Morgan Dressage Association 2011 Scholarship Awards



MARGARET BAILEY-MILLER

Margaret's 20-year history with Morgans is closely intertwined with the history of Kennebec Morgan Farm, where she learned to ride and worked as a trainer. Her partnership with Kennebec Ladyhawke began there, and their path together has included carriage driving, eventing, and open shows in addition to dressage. It is clear from Margaret's description of Ladyhawke on her scholarship application that theirs is a close and special bond. Margaret and Ladyhawke have an impressive show record, including MDA Awards of Excellence at First, Second, Third, and Third/Fourth Level free-style. She has won USDF regional and Adequan©/USDF All-Breed Championships at Third Level in both Adult Amateur and Freestyle categories, and have been AMHA Open Competition Champions at both Second and Third Levels. She is involved with dressage as a show manager, coach, intercollegiate competitor, and L-judge program participant. Her plans are to use her scholarship money to study with Gerrit Claes Biernbroodspot, former head instructor of the National Dutch School for Instructors and former trainer and coach of the Dutch Junior/Young Rider Event Team.



Margaret Bailey-Miller
and Kennebec Ladyhawke



Spencer Prouty and
Black Velvet Cassandra

SPENCER PROUTY

Spencer is a young man of fourteen, who has been riding his family's Morgans at Faith Ranch Morgans since he was three years old. His current mount is Black Velvet Cassandra, and he also rides FRM Amazing Grace. Spencer started his riding career in Western tack, and showed in training shows, then switched to dressage. He enjoys trail riding, and has trained his horses himself, relying on lessons and practice for guidance. He is a D3 Pony Clubber, and events on his Morgans. He is schooling Cassie at First Level and showing at Training Level, as well as bringing along other young horses. His plans include taking more lessons with his MDA scholarship funds, and competing in at least two recognized shows. He wants to attend clinics with Olympian Zakir Abdoukadyrov. It is impressive to note that Spencer's goals are focused more on improving his horse's suppleness and responsiveness than on success in the show ring.

BIRGIT VILLEMINEY

Birgit, a native of Germany, has a 20-year history with Morgans, and is currently showing Sunup Nightshade at Third Level, and schooling Fourth Level, while bringing three-year-old FRM Flower of Remington along as his dressage journey is just beginning. Birgit is focused on promoting Morgans in the sport horse world. She writes of her dressage experiences with Morgans for the AMHA's promotional literature and for the USDF Connections magazine, as well as writes the blog <http://MorganUpTheLevels.blogspot.com>. Her competition record includes USDF All Breeds Awards Vintage Cup, a Season Series Adult Amateur Championship, a USDF Bronze Medal, AMHA Bronze Medallion, the German Bronzenes Reitabzeichen (Bronze Medal) and placings in the AMHA Open Competition and Midwest Dressage Association Year End Awards, among many others. Birgit trains with Grand Prix rider and trainer Sandy Tull, and plans to spend her MDA Scholarship funds training with USDF President George Williams in Ohio.



Birgit Villeminey and Sunup Nightshade

Muscle Diseases in Morgans: PSSM/EPSSM

By Beth A. Valentine, DVM, PhD, Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Pathologists, College of Veterinary Medicine, Oregon State University

Have you noticed that low starch and sugar diets are becoming the “norm” for horses? When it comes to equine feeds these days, grain is definitely “out” and fat calories are definitely “in.” If you own a Morgan, though, you may not be feeding grain at all.

Many hardy Morgans are easy keepers and can easily gain unwanted weight. So the idea of feeding fat to a Morgan may sound rather odd. But, I am going to tell you that, for some Morgans, a fat supplemented diet is essential to keep their muscles healthy.

For the past 16 years or so, I have been working with horses that are “metabolically different” and prone to developing a muscle disorder known as Equine Polysaccharide Storage Myopathy (EPSM, also called PSSM and EPSSM). Horses with this type of metabolism store abnormal amounts of glycogen and a glycogen-related complex polysaccharide in their muscles. Glycogen is the muscle cell storage form of glucose (sugar), and glycogen is normally broken down to glucose to provide energy to fuel muscle activity during exercise. Although we still don’t know the exact problem in the muscle cell metabolism of horses with EPSM, we do know that glycogen builds up to abnormal levels, that EPSM muscle lacks energy and can undergo an “energy crisis,” and that feeding a high fat and fiber and low starch and sugar diet can greatly alleviate or even eliminate clinical problems associated with EPSM.

So, how would you know if your horse has this of metabolism? This problem has only recently been detected, but it has actually been in horses for a very long time – as long as horses have been known to be prone to “tying up,” also called Monday Morning Disease, exertional rhabdomyolysis, and several other names. In fact, any horse that ties up, even once, is an EPSM horse until proven otherwise. But, tying up is just the “tip of the iceberg” when it comes to clinical prob-



Grain is high in starch and sugar, which can contribute to laminitis and colic as well as muscle issues.

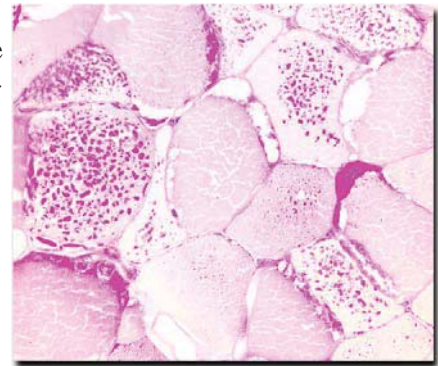
lems. EPSM can also cause horses to have stiff choppy or otherwise mysteriously abnormal hind limb gaits, lack of energy, lack of muscling, and overall poor performance. Some EPSM horses have increased blood levels of the muscle enzymes CK (creatinine kinase; CPK) or AST (serum glutamic-oxaloacetic transaminase; SGOT) when blood is drawn 4-6 hours after a hard workout. Normal levels of these enzymes don’t rule out EPSM, though, as they are only released into the blood from damaged muscle, and EPSM muscle can be dysfunctional (weak, stiff, painful, cramped, etc.) without breaking down.

Does EPSM occur in Morgans? Absolutely yes. Early on, I worked with a registered Morgan with a severe tying up episode brought on by minimal exercise. It was several months before he recovered, and a muscle biopsy was positive for EPSM. He never tied up again once we got him on a high fat and fiber and low starch and sugar diet. We were even able to include him in a paper we wrote.¹ Since then, I have worked with many other Morgan and Morgan cross horses with a variety of EPSM issues.

There is no question that this type of muscle metabolism occurs in Morgans. Feeding grain can exacerbate the problem, so if you are not feeding grain to your Morgan you are less likely to see problems. However, EPSM horses absolutely need fat calories to keep their muscles truly healthy, and so just not feeding grain

doesn’t always do the trick. Without grain an EPSM

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This photo shows muscle fibers in cross section from a horse with Equine Polysaccharide Storage Myopathy. The dark pink material forming aggregates within the fibers is abnormal stored glycogen and complex polysaccharide.



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Membership Form

Membership year runs from January 1 – December 31. Please print out this form, fill it out, send it and a check to: Morgan Dressage Association, Karin Weight, 1069 N. Geneva Rd., Provo, UT 84601. Checks should be made payable to MDA.

Name _____

Farm name (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Telephone _____

Fax _____

E-mail _____

Please list family members participating in MDA programs and note birthdate of any junior young rider members.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Please check your membership category:

Renewal New Jr/Young Rider \$10 Individual \$25 Family/Farm \$35 Patron \$100

Check all that apply: Rider Professional Trainer Breeder Enthusiast

Please indicate if you are willing to help the organization by donating your time and skills. (Check all that are of interest to you.)

Newsletter Membership directory/advertising Write educational articles Awards coordination

Breed promotion Other _____

Professional/Breeder additional information to be included in the 2011 MDA Membership Directory and on MDA web site for an additional \$15 charge. Up to 30 words describing your services and/or program/stallion (Use additional sheet if necessary).

Category (Check all that apply): Trainer/instructor Breeder/Stock for sale

Other _____

Web site url for listing in directory and link on MDA web site _____

If you've already renewed and want your information/listing to be included in the next directory and on the web site now, just send the bottom portion of this form with a check for \$15 and mark: "Already renewed" at the top.

Please be sure your email address is clear and legible; all newsletters and MDA Extensions will be sent via email.

Please make your checks payable to MDA and return this form with membership dues to:
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