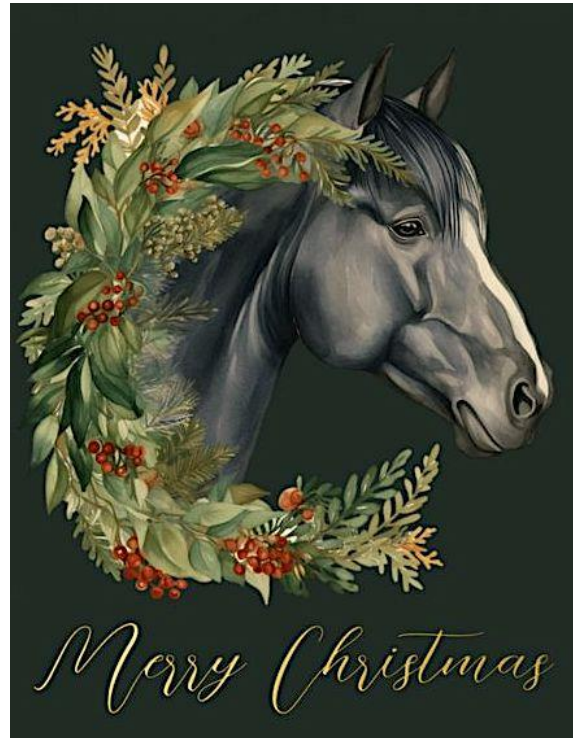


**Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council**  
**Wishing All Our Friends**  
**Happy Holidays 2023**



**“It is the horse’s gift to connect us with Heaven and our own footsteps.”**  
**Ronnie Sweet**

**A CHRISTMAS STORY –**

A little boy begged his parents for a horse or pony that summer. He was relentless in his quest. By Christmas, his father thought that his only solution was to, once and for all, make it clear that his son was not getting a horse or pony any time in the future. Christmas morning came and the little boy ran to his presents under the tree. Upon opening one present, he found a box of horse manure. He turned to his father with a delighted look on his face and said, “With this much horse manure, there must be a pony somewhere!”



**A child’s optimism makes dreams come true.**  
**Never settle for a hamster**

**The RFVHC was established as a Colorado non-profit organization in August of 2005, with having roots originating as the Aspen Riding Club in 1954.**

*THE MISSION of the RFVHC is to provide a unified voice for equine related interests by working to preserve access to trails, promoting charitable involvement in equine related experiences and activities, educating the public on equestrian issues, providing connections and resources for the equine community, and supporting the overall well-being of horses and horsemanship.*

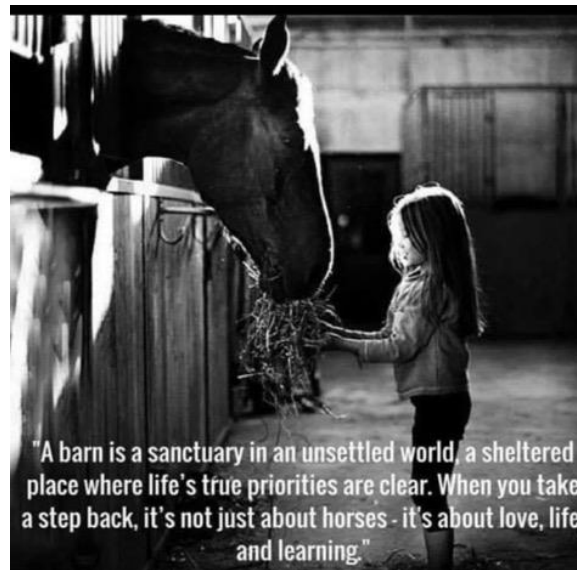
### **These are our non-profit partners**

- WindWalkers – <https://windwalkers.org>
- Smiling Goat Ranch – <https://smilinggoatranch.com>
- Ascendigo - <https://ascendigo.org>
- Riding Institute of Disabled Equestrians, Silt, Co. <https://coloradoride.org>
- Surmount Counseling LLC - <https://surmountcounseling.com>
- Equitarian Initiative - <https://equitarianinitiative.org/>
- Aspen Valley Land Trust (AVLT) – <https://avlt.org>
- Wilderness Workshop - <https://wildernessworkshop.org/>
- RF Outdoor Volunteers <https://rfov.org>
- Round-up Riders of the Rockies <https://roundupriders.com>
- Rocky Mountain Youth Corps <https://rockymountainyouthcorps.org>
- Mountain Trekkers Back Country Horsemen - <https://mountaintrekkers.org/>
- Back Country Horsemen of America – <https://bcha.org>
- Roaring Fork Hounds Pony Club (RFHPC) <https://facebook.com/RoaringForkHoundsPonyClub>
- Colorado West Hunter/Jumper Association (CWHJA) - <https://facebook.com/coloradowesthunterjumperassociation/>
- Equine Land Conservation Resource – Lexington KY - <https://elcr.org/>
- Colorado Horse Council- <https://coloradohorsecouncil.com>

We work with other governmental entities to keep horses on trails by preserving and protecting our natural environment on open space lands for all our wild creatures.



## Horses, burros, mules and their owners are our priority!



### SALUTE TO MULES –

**The Great American Horse Race** - The year was 1976.

It was called the Great American Horse Race, and it would span nearly 100 days and 3,500 miles, starting in New York, heading to Missouri, and then following the Pony Express route to California.

The rider who covered the distance fastest would get \$25,000 – worth about \$100,000 in today's dollars.

About 100 riders signed up. Cowboys took a break from rodeos. World War II veterans, finished with their missions on submarines and B-17 bombers, also entered. So did a sheriff — and even an Austrian count.

And then there was Viril Norton. He was one of the oldest riders. He didn't have as big a bank account as most of the others. He didn't have any fancy horse equipment. Or a big crew to help him set up camp or cook or do laundry. But he had a plan.

Viril Norton entered his mule, "Leroy" to challenge the motto – (*The sport of endurance horse riding is won by Arabian horses*) and the motto: "*If you're not riding an Arabian, you're following an Arabian.*" Most of the riders had a crew of two or three to help along the race. Viril only had his 16-year-old son, Pierce Norton for support. Viril Norton was born in Wyoming in 1916. As a teenager, he caught and trained wild horses. He and his family also worked mules on their farm. He learned that mules are slow — generally not a good quality for a race. But he also knew that mules have stamina and durability — good qualities for the 3,500-mile Great American Horse Race.

The race was structured like the Tour de France. There was a set course for each day — usually about 35 miles — and the riders were clocked at the start and finish.

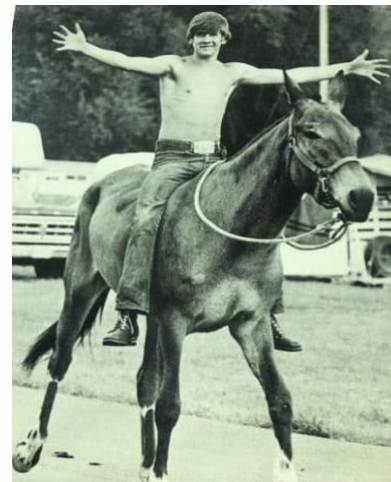
At first, Viril's strategy didn't pay off. "People were going full blast the first day," Pierce says. "Probably rode twice as fast as my dad did. Sooner or later, you start to wonder, you know, 'I wonder if this is a good strategy?' I'm thinking, 'If these guys keep it up, there's no way we're going to be able to make up this time.'"

Veterinarians accompanied the group, and there were mandatory checks throughout the day. If a horse — or mule — showed any signs of breaking down, even if it just wasn't walking right, the horse — or mule — would have to ride in the trailer until it was healthy again. And that meant penalty time for the riders.

So, as the days went on, more and more horses started breaking down. And more and more riders started getting penalty time. While other competitors were partying at night, Viril was completely focused. About a quarter of the way into the race, in Kankakee, Illinois, Viril Norton and Leroy went out ahead of all the Arabians. "He'd always said that he hadn't planned on taking the lead that early. "Everyone ran their horses down a little bit sooner than he thought, I guess," Pierce says. "You know, soon as we got into the lead, there was a long way to go. But we were going in the right direction. The lead was getting longer."

And so, days before the finish, it became clear that a mule was going to win the Great American Horse Race. "There was a whole bank of press photographers and cameras flashing and going off like crazy. And some of the other competitors put my dad up on their shoulders and ran him around the fairground a little bit," Pierce says. "I don't know if we ever really had a kind of moment where we did a high-five. He wasn't that kind of guy. He could just look over and nod at me and I would know that he was satisfied with the job that I did."

In 1976, Viril and Pierce Norton and their mule, Leroy, proved to America that they weren't just good. They were great.



## 2023 RFVHC Events

- WindWalkers RFVHC Kentucky Derby Party



<https://www.rfvhorsecouncil.org/2023-kentucky-derby-gallery.html>

- Snowmass Rodeo - The oldest rodeo in Colorado – new design for 2024  
<https://www.rfvhorsecouncil.org/snowmass-rodeo-update-2023.html>

- 2023 Harvest Party – Winter Blanket Sale -

<https://www.rfvhorsecouncil.org/2023-harvest-party-gallery.html>



Spring Tack Sale – Save the date May 2024

## HISTORY



Harvesting wheat with a 16-horse combine.

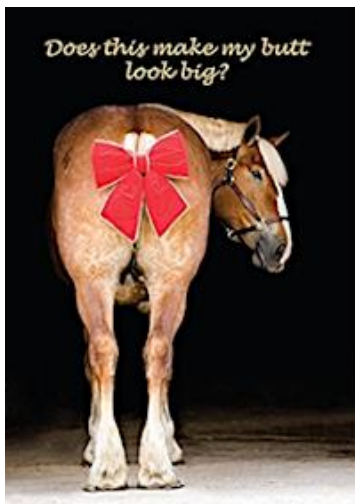
Whitman County, Washington 1936

Photograph by Arthur Rothstein

Agriculture, like every major industry, has a history of relentless innovation in search of efficiency. The combine harvester is named for its efficient combination of formerly separate, labor-intensive tasks of reaping, threshing, gathering, and winnowing grain. The countless field hands displaced from their arduous labor harvesting grain were replaced by a smaller number of workers with new skills. Some fed, drove, outfitted, and cared for horses (and later, tractors) while others designed, built, and maintained the latest in combine technology.

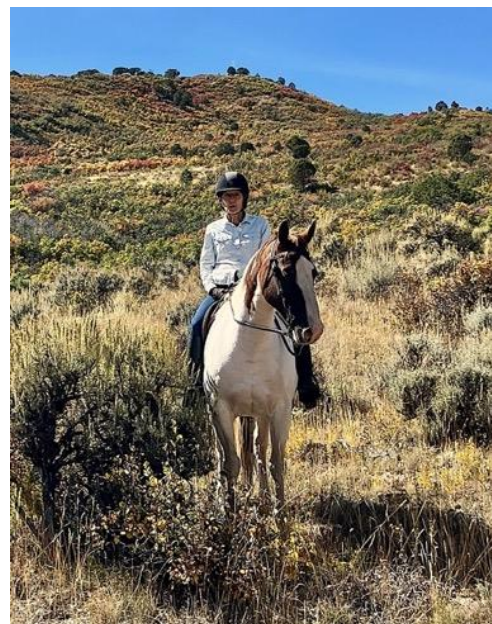
By 1936, tractor-powered combines were available, but bank failures and the challenging market conditions of the Great Depression slowed investments in innovation. During the 1930s, many farmers continued using horse-powered combine technology that had been in widespread use since the 1860s. America's horse population had peaked at about 25 million in 1920, but power provided by tractors finally exceeded "horse-power" on North American farms by 1945. When new technology displaces workers today, we are reminded of these earlier waves of progress.

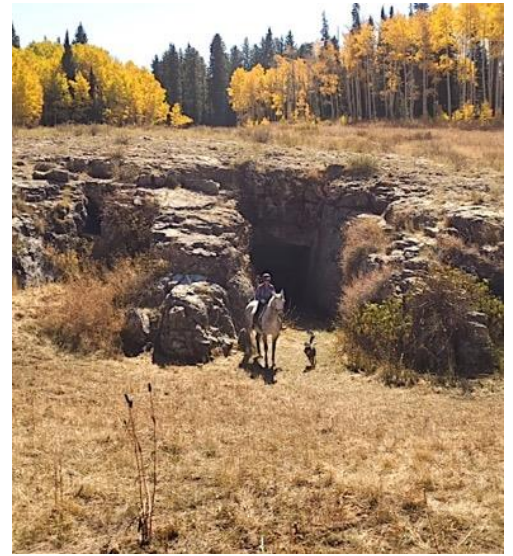
There is always a laugh to be had in our equine back yards.



Seriously - Winning!

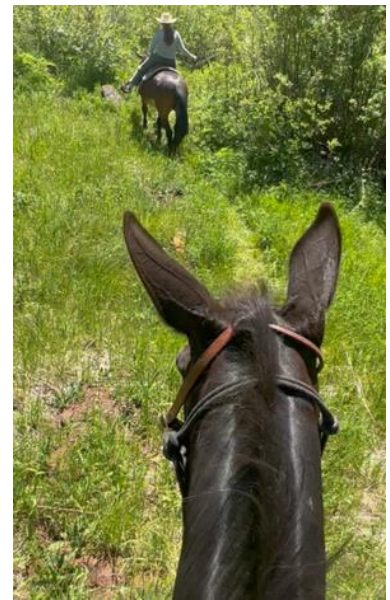
TRAILS 2023

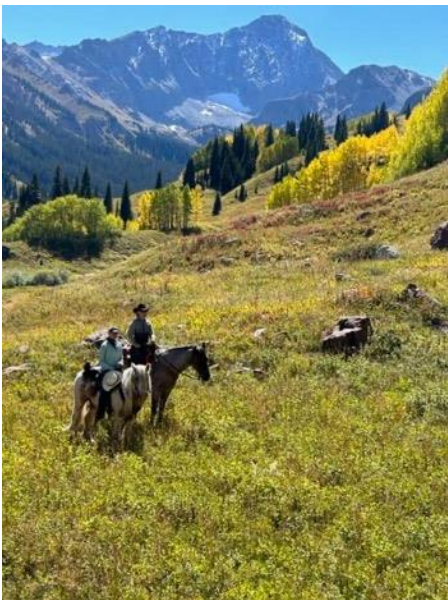




Cameo – “Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse” area.

<https://www.blm.gov/programs/wild-horse-and-burro/herd-management/herd-management-areas/colorado/little-book>







**TRAILS SAFE PASSING PLAN (TSPP) – STOP! SPEAK and STAND BACK** is a safety action plan on what to do when encountering people with horses on the trails, allowing all trail users to safely enjoy our shared trails, including horses, dogs and children.



**STOP:**  
Horses are prey animals and naturally can be afraid of unfamiliar people and objects. People with horses should pass at a walk while other trail users remain STOPPED, until passed. When approaching horses from behind, please STOP! SPEAK to announce your location and pass slowly when the people with horses are prepared. STOPPING allows TIME for everyone to prepare for safe trail passing.

**SPEAK:**  
Please ANNOUNCE your presence.  
Please SAY "Hi" when we pass by.  
Speaking helps horses identify you as a person and will help keep them calm.

**STAND BACK:**  
Please STAND BACK with your whole group on the same side of the trail.  
Please contain children and dogs.  
Please do not hide or stand behind a tree, as these actions may cause horses to fear you are a predator planning an attack.

**SMILE:**  
Enjoy the safe, happy trails! Please contact the Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council for the use of the Stop! Speak and Stand Back sign at: [RFVHC.Colorado@gmail.com](mailto:RFVHC.Colorado@gmail.com)

Thank you: Equine Land Conservation Resource (ELCR) [elcr.org](http://elcr.org) for helping promote The Trail Safe Passing Plan (TSPP)



Look for these RFBVHC-TSPP signs when you next hike or ride a Roaring Fork Valley trail or other trails throughout the United States and Canada.

Info: <https://rfvhorsecouncil.org/trails-safe-passing-plan-tspp.html>



**Equine & Business Services RFBVHC Directory Page** – This directory is being created to help horse owners and equine-related business owners in the Roaring Fork Valley and surrounding areas to connect with each other. It serves as a resource for products, services, educational opportunities and other entities necessary to all equestrians, as well as an affordable vehicle for those entities to make themselves known and build their customer base. **Use this source to find who or what you need:**

<https://www.rfvhorsecouncil.org/directory.html>

**BECOME A BUSINESS DIRECTORY MEMBER - \$125/ 3 yrs.**

<https://www.rfvhorsecouncil.org/business-registration.html>

## TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

RFVHC works to improve trails with the “Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC), Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers(RFOV), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Pitkin County Open Space and Trails (PCOST), Roaring Fork Transit Authority (RFTA) with funding from Round-Up Riders of the Rockies (RRR) and Mid Valley Trails Committee (MVTC).



RMYC crew Light Hill access from Rio Grande trail at Emma




Sutey Ranch barbwire removal



RFOV crew - Glassier new route to Nancy's Path

## THE CSU / GALLOWAY EQUINE COLIC RESEARCH FUND

A new RFVHC Lifetime Membership Family started this donor supported fund a few months ago after being devastated by the loss of several beloved horses to colic over the years. The RFVHC hopes that you will join the Galloway family, in contributing to the Galloway Equine Research Fund administered by the CSU Equine Veterinary Hospital to eliminate colic, this killer of our horses.






THE GALLOWAY EQUINE RESEARCH FUND

**Equine Colic**

Colic, or abdominal pain, is the number one cause of death in horses. Abnormal positioning of the large colon (e.g., colonic displacement) due to movement from a variety of unknown causes, leads to more severe colic and is one of the leading causes of horse hospitalization and surgery. There is currently no adequate model to study the underlying causes of colonic displacement. Many horse owners are impacted by colic, such as Judy and Ronald Galloway. The Galloways' beloved, horse, Drifter, was treated for cervical osteoarthritis. The expertise and dedication provided by Dr. Nout-Lomas inspired the Galloways to create the Galloway Equine Research fund, which supports the continuation of Dr. Nout-Lomas' important research related to equine colic.

**Harnessing the Future**

Through pilot research, researchers were able to demonstrate the successful detection of implanted microchips in the large intestine of a healthy horse that allowed accurate identification of various parts of the colon within the abdomen, thus telling them in real-time, how the colon is positioned in the abdomen. This process was accomplished with no negative effects on the horse, and researchers readily demonstrated that certain parts of the colon move around in the abdominal cavity daily. The purpose of the currently proposed study is to implant microchips in the colon of 5 horses over a longer period to monitor colonic movement in relation to various stimuli. These stimuli will include studying the effects of changes in housing, changes in feed, changes in feeding frequency, the effect of rolling, the effect of exercise, and the effect of stomach fluid expansion. Studying the movement of the colon in response to these stimuli can help to recognize potential environmental and dietary risk factors and preventative methods for colic due to large colon displacement. Findings from this study may prove to be highly valuable in the prevention of colic due to large colon displacement and may positively impact treatment methods to reduce the risk of the need for surgery.

“ It has been devastating to lose some of our beloved horses from colic. This has lead us on a journey to find a way to prevent colic in horses. In partnering with Colorado State University we will find the answer. ”

-JUDY GALLOWAY



To learn more about supporting the Galloway Equine Research fund, scan the QR code or visit <https://advancingcolorado.edu/GALLOWAY>

“ Our team is so grateful to the Galloways, whose foresight and dedication to the need for research into the prevention of colic will benefit so many horses in years to come! ”

-YVETTE NOUÏ-LOMAS, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF EQUINE INTERNAL MEDICINE



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:  
 Gillian Townsend, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations  
 College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences  
[gillian.townsend@colostate.edu](mailto:gillian.townsend@colostate.edu) | (510) 673-4464



COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE  
AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Through research, we can find the answer to both the cause and prevention of equine colic. More than 64,000 horses die of colic-related problems each year. Horse owners want answers.

The 14<sup>th</sup> International Colic Symposium, Edinburgh, Scotland will be held July 10<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024. CSU veterinarians, Dr. Yevette Nout-Lomas and Diana Hassel will attend.

Current Colic Facts from the University of Edinburgh -

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/imports/fileManager/dvepfactsheet-colic.pdf>

### The Galloway Family story -

Judy and Ronnie Galloway have always had horses. Originally, they ranched in the Divide Creek area, where they had a 300 cow/calf operation, sometimes up to 1,000 head of yearlings and 30 horses. Now living near Mesa, Colorado, they used their Percheron horses to work their ranch and put-up hay. Their other horses help move neighbor's cattle and they enjoy trail riding in the surrounding Mesa National Forest. One of their previous trail horses had a mystery problem and local veterinarians recommended a CSU diagnosis.

Judy had previously been a CSU graduate, so it was like old home week, when they arrived with their mystery candidate. Cervical osteoarthritis was diagnosed as the problem.

The CSU's Johnson Family Equine Hospital is the one of the most respected acclaimed Equine Teaching hospitals in the United States with state-of-the-art technology and outstanding veterinarian surgeons.



Galloway Draft Horse Farming in Colorado –

Left – Judy and Ronnie Galloway at their ranch near Mesa, Colorado.

(DOW - Wildlife Conservation Easement property)

During their CSU visit, they connected with Equine Internal Medicine specialist, Dr. Yvette Nout-Lomas, the Dean of CSU Vet School, Dr. Sue VandeWoude and CSU President Amy Parsons became involved with the Galloways in discussing a way to fund Equine Colic Research.

The Galloway Equine Colic Research Fund was created to help horses and their owners around the world. Causation of colic is not always understood successfully. We believe through research we can find the answer to both the cause and prevention of Equine Colic.

The RFVHC asks members, equine veterinarians, and all horse lovers to support this research initiative by donating to this cause.

Go To: <https://advancing.colostate.edu/GALLOWAY> or scan this QR code

COMING SOON!

The RFVHC will host an educational -  
sit down dinner event for the Galloway Fund –  
August 2024 -Location TBA



**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**  
**Gillian Townsend, Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations**  
**College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences**  
[gillian.townsend@colostate.edu](mailto:gillian.townsend@colostate.edu) | (510) 673-4464



## IN MEMORIAM

Jill Soffer

March 1, 1959 – October 3, 2023



Remembering Jill Soffer –

My friend Jill Soffer passed away October 3rd, 2023 after her long struggle with lung cancer. She was a kind, generous humanitarian, who made a difference in this world. She touched many lives of those she never knew. Jill was on the board of the “Sierra Club” and was a fierce protector of wildlife and the habitat that they depended upon.

In 2023, Jill placed conservation easements on 285 acres of her land, to protect this prime wildlife habitat between Spring Park Reservoir and Basalt Mountain. She loved her horses and all creatures great and small. Her property became a special place of peace for people and animals alike. Jill was one of my heroes. She was humble, unassuming, yet a force to be reckoned with. There is a great sadness and emptiness in the loss of her large personality and her loving soul.

Farewell dear friend. You are greatly missed.

*Tribute by Holly McLain*



## END OF DAY



As we close our Holiday Newsletter, we ask that you reach into your hearts and help fund some of our Roaring Fork Valley non-profit organizations. Become a RFVHC member, donate to a worthy cause and remember to protect and preserve our fragile environment for the wildlife and future human generations.

*It is up to all of us!*



*The Roaring Fork Valley Horse Council is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization*

<https://www.rfvhorsecouncil.org/memberships.html>



**HAPPY HOLIDAYS**



**ROARING FORK VALLEY HORSE COUNCIL**

P O Box 127

Snowmass, CO 81654

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

[www.facebook.com/keephorsesontrails/](https://www.facebook.com/keephorsesontrails/)

[rfvhc.colorado@gmail.com](mailto:rfvhc.colorado@gmail.com)

RFVHC Holiday Newsletter by Holly McLain