

YOUR NEIGH-BORHOOD HULLABALOO

## COURSES WITH HORSES

### How a Horse Whisperer Helped my Mental Game

By Bob Carney, Golf Digest September 2017

Even for a guy who has tried hypnosis, meditation, Extraordinary Golf, Rolwing, and assorted sessions with Bob Rotella and Gio Valiante, all in an effort to escape mediocre golf, the idea that a horse could make me a better putter seemed far-fetched.

But that was the deal: Putt. Meet a horse. Putt again. Reflect.

Now, I'm not a horse person. Have never been on a horse. I've read enough about them to know they are able to sense fear. Kind of like that old saw players had about Jack Nicklaus. I know I'm afraid, they know I'm afraid, and I know they know I'm afraid. My only comfort stemmed from the fact that a player I greatly admire, major champion Anna Nordqvist, swears by it.

So on a hot morning in Mesa, Ariz., I follow Debbie Crews, the Arizona State University sport-psychologist consultant who worked with the 2017 NCAA champion women's golf team, to a little tent next to a horse corral. She hands me three balls and an off-brand putter that's about 20 years old. I'm to putt

along the artificial-turf carpet and make three in a row from each foot marker, progressing as far as I can in five minutes. I clear six feet without a miss, flub a couple, finish with middling results. Debbie gives me a short questionnaire and one of the questions is: "Name three descriptors of your putting." I write, "Relaxed, thinking, old tips."

There are five or six horses in the corral. Most are combinations of brown and black, and one looks bigger than a Budweiser Clydesdale. "Choose any one you like, put this on it, and walk it out the gate," Debbie says, handing me something I'll later learn is a bridle. I've had my eye on a white horse that seems gentle and—I'm no dummy—is near the gate. She's a draft horse called a Percheron, originally a French breed. I, of course, know nothing about this. I don't even know her name is Nellie. I'm simply using the singles-bar standard: She's attractive, seems approachable and doesn't look like she'll bite. Her back is about level with my shoulders, and she's as wide as a golf cart. When I fumble with the bridle and Nellie lowers her head to help me, I know I've chosen wisely. It takes forever to get the bridle on, but eventually we're heading out of the corral. "OK now, here we go,"

I say, faking confidence. "That's the way!" I almost add "girl" but at this point I'm not sure if Nellie is a girl. (I know, I know.)

During the next hour I groom Nellie, hold up her hooves to clean them (terrifying), and lead her up and down a lane, asking her to "giddy up," "ease up," and "whoa." As we walk, Debbie first asks me to direct Nellie using only the rein. Then only words. Seriously.

I knew going in this pseudo telekinesis would be part of it, but I don't feel any less confused. How the heck is this horse going to just do what I think?

I let go of the rein entirely.

To my surprise, for a few steps I feel a connection that might allow such communication to happen. I walk her to the barn, turn, and think, This is going well. I want it to end that way, so I hurry to the finish, hoping she'll follow. Maybe I really am in charge?

I lose Nellie. "When you're not there, she senses it," Debbie says. "Horses are mirrors. They know you, and they don't lie. Keep the connection. Stay present. She'll tell you if you lose it."

With Nellie back in the corral, we revisit the questionnaire. Did you pick the horse? Yes. Did your horse pick you?

*Continued on page 11*

# Wildwood Farm CLIPS & CLOPS Oak Harbor

## JANUARY 2021

## MAGNETIC THERAPY for Horses

The metabolic function of the body is extremely complex and the physical effects of magnetic fields are not completely understood. Though magnetic therapies have been used for centuries and basically have no known side effects, they have been shown to relax tense muscles, relieve muscular and skeletal pain, and accelerate the healing process.

Today, horse owners are using magnets to aid healing by using them in boots, wraps, and even blankets.

A magnet attracts electronically charged blood particles to the applied area. The blood is drawn to the magnet at an accelerated pace and in the process, oxygenates the blood cells. Benefits include:

- Enhanced circulation
- Dilatation of blood vessels
- Draws oxygen and vital nutrients, thus promoting healing.



Magnets themselves do not heal, but the fact that increased blood flow reduces pain is well established.

Magnets are thought to reduce pain because increased blood flow helps carry away toxins and bring white blood cells, both of which help reduce swelling, inflammation, and pain. The magnetic field generated by the magnets in a magnetic rug or boot relaxes the capillary walls and surrounding muscle and soft tissue.

As a result your horse will benefit from improved oxygen and blood flow which will help to promote healing and speed up the recovery process.

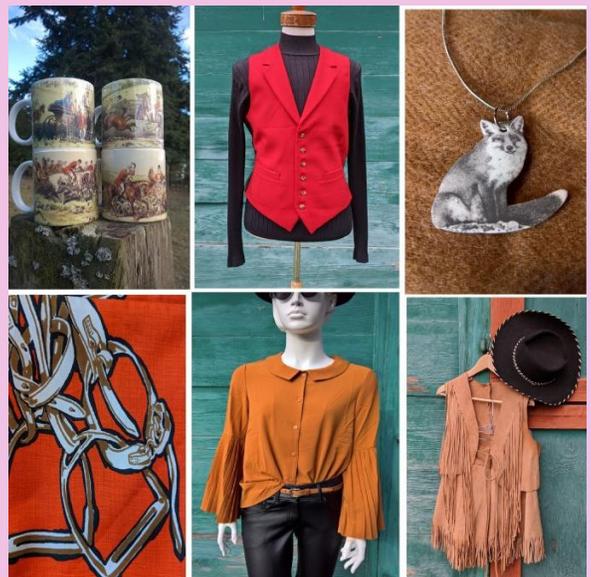


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## New Items for January





**DID I WON?**



Hold onto what makes you happy  
If it tries to buck you off,  
just hold on even tighter.



**SENT MY WIFE FOR MILK & COOKIES...**

**MEET MILK & COOKIES!**



"Relax, this will make you feel much better."



**I DON'T TAKE ORDERS &  
I BARELY TAKE SUGGESTIONS,  
BUT I'M CUTE LIKE THAT.**



**YOU HAD**

**ONE JOB**



**AND THEN I SAID**

**CATS ARE PETS FOR POOR PEOPLE**



SO...LET ME SEE IF I UNDERSTAND THIS  
CORRECTLY...AN OBJECT TOO FRIGHTENING  
TO APPROACH AT A WORKING TROT IS  
ACCEPTABLE WHILE GRAZING?

WHAT  
OBJECT?



**OH HEY,**

**...YOU'RE HOME EARLY**



**WHERE DID ALL MY MONEY GO?**

**OH YEAH, I'M RIDING!**



**FANTASY: I WILL FOREVER  
BE LOYAL TO MY RIDER AS WE RACE  
THE WIND, OUR SPIRITS FREE  
FROM WORRY AND DOUBT FOREVER...**

**REALITY: LOOK MOMMA!  
I BLEW A BUBBLEZ!**

# WILDWOOD FARM B&B



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Today at Wildwood Farm B&B



**An Entrepreneur**  
*Came one step closer to letting her smile change the world, instead of letting the world change her smile.*

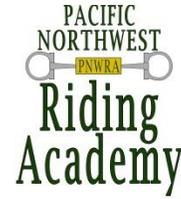
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Come experience the power of possibility with these magnificent creatures and explore the abundance of silent repose.

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Allow yourself to fly without wings?



**WILL YOU?**  
Allow yourself to be loved by a horse at least once in your life?



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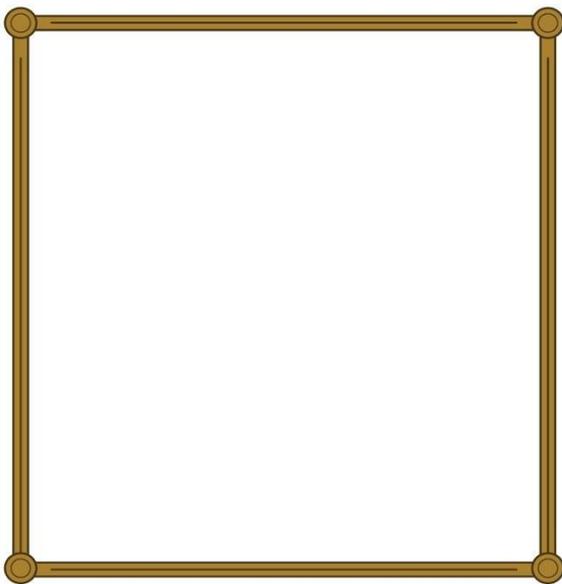


# Hippocamp



The hippocamp is a mythical beast that lives in the Mediterranean. It is the horse of the sea, with the head of a horse, the tail and fins of a fish, and a green scaly body. The Greek god Poseidon was known to drive his sea-chariot with a team of hippocampoi.

Think about the geography of the Mediterranean. What other mythical creatures could live in the sea and the shoreline? Think of 2 animals and combine them to create your very own composite sea-dwelling creature.



Draw your creature above!

What's the name of your creature?

What two animals did you choose, and why?

**Vocabulary Box:**

Chariot - a small, 2-wheel carriage pulled by horses, used in ancient warfare and races.

Composite - made up of multiple parts

# Nutrition Corner

## Vitamin K Function in Horses

Like many other essential micronutrients, the dietary supply of Vitamin K (VK) is allocated to different tissues according to survival priorities. For an animal to survive (and reproduce), the most important function is blood clotting. Accordingly, the first Milligram (mg) or so ingested by a horse each day is allocated to the liver to convert to K2 which activates clotting proteins. Dietary levels above the first mg are distributed to other tissues to activate other important structural proteins.

While 1mg will allow a horse to survive, at that level the vitamin K deficiency will show compromised bone, cartilage and blood vessel strength. Research has shown that the ideal level of VK is 7mg per day, giving optimal strength to these structures.

VK deficiency is widespread in non-free-range animals, including horses and humans and it has 3 major forms: K1, found in fresh green leaves; K2, which is synthesized in the liver (and by various bacteria); and K3, the artificial form which is added to most stock feeds. Until recently it has only been considered for its role in blood clotting, but it is now known to have a role in bone metabolism, cartilage and joint integrity and major blood vessel health.

Vitamin K1 is a transient instantaneous product of photosynthesis in living green leaves and is destroyed in cut leaves of all plants by light. When fields are cut for making hay, the K1 level falls very quickly, and the higher the UV index, the more rapidly it disappears. Being a fat soluble vitamin, and tightly bound within the chloroplasts (the photosynthesis part) of leaves, it is poorly absorbed, particularly in low-fat diets.

The best source of VK is, therefore, found in fresh pasture and the depth of green in the leaf color and the percentage of fresh green in the sward give a good approximation of the amount of vitamin K in the pasture. We are fortunate to have green grass almost year round in the Northwest, but what about the horse who does not have access, or cannot have access to pasture?

Triple Crown feeds utilize Menadione Sodium Bisulfite Complex which is a synthetic version of Vitamin K and also known as K3; through the proprietary alkylation process it is converted into an active, organic K2 that can be utilized by the horse quite well.

**WILDWOOD FARM AND TRIPLE CROWN FEEDS.**  
Our partnership with Triple Crown began in 2014 through a promotion with the USEF encouraging farm members to compare their current feeding programs with Triple Crown products. We have found the TC products to be superior over other products primarily because of the EquiMix technology and the research support of a leading edge team including independent representatives of Equine Universities, Medical clinics and top level riders and trainers

## MEET LEONODUS (Leo)

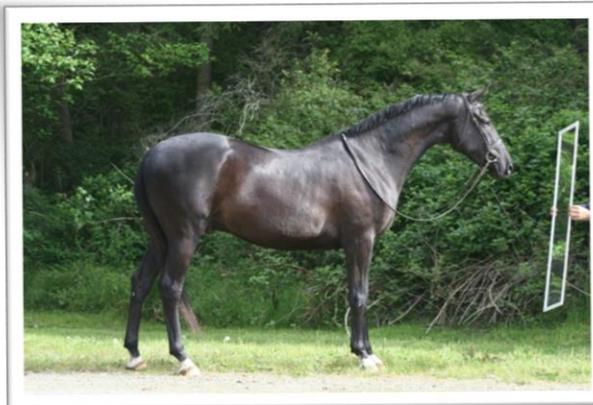
Leo was born at Wildwood Farm in 2007, out of the beautiful Thoroughbred mare Jabila Slew (Tiffany) and by an imported Akhal-Teke stallion named Super Star.

From the day Leo was born we knew he was an aristocrat – refined and elegant with a fabulous disposition and instant connection with humans. His mother was the first mare Wildwood Farm had in our breeding program, and he was her 3<sup>rd</sup> foal.

Leo was a very well-behaved foal, one of 5 that we had bred that year, and was incredibly easy to train and although the stubbornness that is often seen in the Akhal-Teke breed did show from time to time, he was a model youngster. He was sensitive, however, so the name Leonodus may have been a bit of a reach!

By the time he was 4 he found his home in the hunter world with his elongated gaits and tubular, sleek body and was sold in 2011 to begin his jumping training.

Interesting to note that he was the only horse that passed his vet exam with an absolutely clean exam – including all his x-rays. He is still on the hunter circuit today in California and has won many championships for his proud owner.



## The Akhal-Teke Horse

The Akhal-Teke is a Turkmen horse breed who has a reputation for speed and endurance, intelligence and a distinctive metallic sheen. The shiny coat of the breed led to their nickname "Golden Horses".

These horses are adaptive to severe climate conditions and are thought to be one of the oldest existing horse breeds. There are currently about 6,600 Akhal-Tekes in the world, mostly in Russia, although they are also found throughout Europe and North America. Akhal-Teke is the name of the line of oases along the north slope of the Kopet Dag mountains, once inhabited by the Tekke tribe of Turkmens.

## Patrik Kittel on why dressage should be fun

Watching Patrik Kittel ride is nothing short of a tremendous treat. The abundance of ease and elegance we witness no matter what horse we see him working with is of course a result of hours and hours in the saddle. But Kittel's great finesse also seems to stem from a sense of playfulness and a profound joy of riding – a joy he is not afraid to either show or share.

Currently ranked both 9th and 10th in the FEI World Rankings, Patrik Kittel is not only an absolute audience favorite but also one of the world's best competing dressage riders. He moved us to tears with his 80.560% victory ride at London Olympia, not to mention his celebratory gallop where he high-fived spectators on his lap around the Grand Hall, quite unlike any dressage rider previously seen.

"I think most people have experienced, especially as a kid, watching a dressage test and as soon as you express the tiniest bit of excitement you are shushed from all sides. Afterwards you stay completely quiet but even then, people shush you. We have to change that. We have to make dressage fun to watch," Kittel noted at his clinic during the recent show days last month in Herning, Denmark.

The Swedish rider has indeed made dressage fun to watch. Moreover he has also opened a discussion about the approach to dressage by proposing that spectators shouldn't have to be dead quiet even before the judge at C has signaled with the bell. We got the chance to catch up with Patrik Kittel about his daily routines, his thoughts on dressage and his future hopes for the sport.

### **Can you tell us about your horses' weekly schedules and their daily exercise?**

All of our horses have their own routines. Some of them need to work a little more and some of them a little less. It's very important to us that all of them are treated and exercised individually. Common for all of them are that they come out seven days a week and that we, very carefully, make schedules for them. These schemes take all their activities into account: exercising, farrier, physiotherapy, shows, you name it.

### **What do you do to stay in shape, both physically and mentally?**

I have a small gym in my basement where I strength train, run and row. Moreover I have a great osteopath, Leon, who takes care of my body, and Kjell Enhager, an outstanding mental coach who cares for my head. It is crucial to eat and live in a healthy way. Last but not least it's important to me to keep reminding myself that I am in a very lucky position, doing what I love every single day.

### **You have previously noted that dressage requires feelings. Can you explain what you mean by that?**

I think we need to professionalize it more, not unlike in football where you have both champions tour, first and second division – a classifying system. We need shorter classes with good riders, bigger prizes and more media coverage. We don't have to change much of the dressage itself, but we have to make it more exciting and increase the quality of it. Not to distort the classical fundament dressage is built on, but to preserve and develop our wonderful sport.

### **You have also argued that it is important that the audience is engaged. Can you elaborate on that a bit?**

When people go to events they want to have a good time. They should be allowed to show their emotions, be happy or sad, to "ride with" us, feel that they are part of the family. We, as riders, do also have to give something of ourselves; laugh, wave, meet up with people, do interviews. Make people think that dressage is magical, just like it actually is!

### **How do you think dressage has changed over the course of the years you've been riding and where would you like to see it go in the future?**

The riding and the horses have developed incredibly. You see very fine riding on harmonious, sensitive horses. I hope that the sport will continue this way and that new ideas will make it even better and evolve it into a bigger joy-spreader than it already is.



# 'Mustangs of Las Colinas'

Irving, Texas

This strategically-placed fountain creates the magnificent illusion of mustangs galloping across a river.



THE **DALLAS** SUBURB OF IRVING is home to a very clever sculptural fountain.

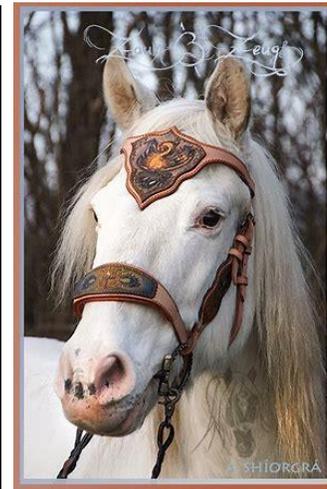
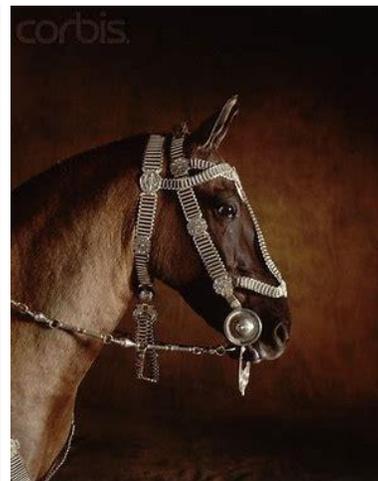
Designed by Kenyan sculptor Robert Glen and installed in 1984, "Mustangs of Las Colinas" depict a herd of nine bronze mustangs galloping across a river, splashing water. This breathtaking illusion is created by small fountains strategically placed beneath the horses' hooves, not to mention the lifelike details of the wild animals.

The work commemorates the state's mustangs, who represent the unfettered lifestyle that was fundamental to Texas during its pioneer days. The plaza setting for the sculpture won a National Honor Award from the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1985.

Adjacent to the sculpture is the Mustangs of Las Colinas Museum, which displays the eight years of work Glen invested into the sculpture. The museum also showcases a short film on the making of the sculpture and other works by Glen.



## The Most Beautiful Horse Bridles



# Tin Horse Highway

## Kulin, Australia

There's a lot of horsing around on this lonely stretch of Australian highway.

**IN THE VAST OPEN SPACES** of Western Australia's Wheatbelt, merino sheep roam and the roads stretch long and lonesome. But meander deeper into the region, and you'll find a surprising tableau of anthropomorphic horses rearing out of the golden landscape, striking poses for awed, enchanted drivers.



Known as the Tin Horse Highway, this open-air kitsch gallery begins in the small town of Kulin and extends seven miles, ending at the junction for Jilakin Rock. Begun in the '90s, the first tin horses were created as part of a community art project to bolster interest in the annual Kulin Bush Races. Residents scoured local farmyards and collected any and all junk they could find. With big imaginations and an excellent sense of humor, they went to work crafting horses caught in all manner of wild shenanigans.

The project was an instant hit, and today the Tin Horse Highway is one of Western Australia's most beloved roadside attractions. Take the drive, and you'll see horses with toothy smiles swigging cans of Emu Export, taking a police car for a joy ride, doing headstands, bucking cowboys into the dirt—just to name a few.

There are more 70 horses to see along the highway, the herd's number growing each year with Kulin's annual tin horse competition.

### **Know Before You Go**

The Tin Horse Highway is free and open year-round. The Shire of Kulin requests that anyone driving the highway please apply caution while viewing the sculptures and be aware of slow moving vehicles and other tourists.

*Courses with Horses contd from page 1*

Maybe.

My second putting session feels slower, but isn't. I finish by canning three 10-footers. Probably the best I've ever putted in my life. "Wow," Debbie says. "That's better than some tour players I've had."

My three descriptors this time: Relaxed, focused, determined.

Horse therapy has been around since the ancient Greeks. Hippocrates wrote of riding's beneficial effects for the physically disabled, hence the other name for Equine Assisted Therapy (EAT): Hippotherapy. More recently, equine interaction has been used by psychotherapists, often with autistic children. The intelligence, warmth and imposing size of horses tends to engage patients fully. Improved self-esteem is one of the most often-mentioned benefits.

Applying EAT to athletics is yet to become widespread. But Crews thinks it's a way to undo mental scar tissue.

"I've found that when athletes are doing their sport they have so many coping strategies, denials, automatic patterns that don't serve them," Crews told me. "The horses help you see what's really going on inside."

(Warning: If you do one of these programs, beware liberal friends. "Oh, great," one of mine told me. "Now all the horses that were supposed to be helping needy kids are helping rich golfers!")

Crews is associated with the Hunkapi program in Phoenix, which conducts equine therapy for children and adults with physical and emotional problems. The program's director, Terra Schaad, explained why horses are effective. "Horses aren't distracted. They're present all the time. If it feels good, they go forward; if it doesn't, they go back. If a horse moves away from me, and there's not another reason, like food over in the corner, I ask myself, 'What's the sensation I'm feeling?'"

Schaad described one recovering abuse victim, who, after much coaxing, finally managed to approach a horse. "She put on the bridle, and it was tears. That feeling of being home, being accepted, of being loved, even . . . she felt all of that at once." We might live whole days without that kind of engagement, Schaad says. "Whether you are one of our clients or an athlete, the idea is to re-create that. To be present, to sense what your body is doing. And the horses help you."

### **HORSES ARE MIRRORS. THEY KNOW YOU, AND THEY DON'T LIE.'**

Crews has put cerebral sensors on humans and horses as they interact and has found that as the engagement deepens, the brain patterns of the two beings enter a complementary state. She also uses these sensors to help golfers re-create this state of focus—or flow—when playing. The headset I used was connected to a tablet playing music. My job was to will the volume lower, and when the music got soft, Crews suggested, I was ready to putt. I'm not sure how I made that music softer, but I did. And I was.

Louisianan Robert Merrill Jr., an instructor with Athletic Motion Golf—he led the 2015 Louisiana Mid-Am after two rounds before turning pro—recently completed Crews' Better Your Best program. It included the headsets, the horses, archery and darts. The equine interaction, he says, was life-changing. "I guess it's kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy because I wanted it to work, but my wife will tell you I'm a different person," Merrill says. "I used to power through things. I had a lot going on. If need be, I left people behind. You can't do that with a horse. You can't power a 2,000-pound animal. You better have a connection. I've read all the sports psychology you can get and done some of the programs, but looking back, they were Band-Aids. There was always a squirrel in the attic of my golf game. Now I feel the way I did when I was a kid. The squirrel's gone."

Anna Nordqvist completed the horse element of Crews' program the week before she won The Founders Cup, her seventh LPGA Tour title. "There are things you can measure, like with TrackMan, and things you can prepare for," Nordqvist says, "but if it were all about preparation and measurement, there would be many great golfers. Sometimes the situation is not one you could have prepared for. You've got to figure it out, and the experience with the horses told me I can do that. It comes back to me sometimes on the golf course. I go, 'Hey, you had no idea what to do then, and you figured it out. You can do this.'"

# Wildwood Farm CLIPS & CLOPS Oak Harbor

2326 Happy Valley Rd  
Oak Harbor WA 98277

For her, interacting with the horses is about leadership, hers included. "I'm like a recovering perfectionist," Farr-Kaye told me. "I'm always worrying, Have I done enough? Have I said the right thing? But after that session with the horses—it took me forever to choose the perfect one—I was like, Wait, the team knows. The horses know. Let it be. You've done what you can."

Each of those high-achievers, it turns out, chose Feathers, the male Alpha in Debbie's corral. "Do you know where Nellie stands in the pecking order?" Crews asked me. "Middle?" I guess.

"Last," she says. "But she's the one who has learned everything we've ever asked her to. Who can handle all kinds of work situations."

Am I a better golfer for having met Nellie? I hope I'm a more adaptive golfer. My notes from my day with Crews: "Patience! On the golf course I often want to escape. I play fast, I play hurried. When a goal is in sight, or after bad shots and it's out of reach, I hurry. If shots don't feel right, I drop out. To fix it I repeat mantras: Bear down. One shot at a time. Enjoy the moment! I lay positive words over the negative ones. The mountain gets higher."

Merrill told me he has consistently played two or three shots better since his session in Mesa. My first round back was frustratingly normal: high 80s. Then I played two nine-hole rounds that were, for the first time in months, under 40. The second, during which I hit the ball only OK, was one under par.

My takeaway is that there is no talking oneself into good golf. There is only noticing when you're fully with it, fully there, and re-creating that sense when it's absent. A golf round is like a walk with a horse. If that sounds too Yoda-ish for you, and way too hard to accomplish, remember Crews' words: You'll know.

And, yes, I'm sure Nellie chose me.

