



# Summer 2025 ICAA Newsletter

## From the Arena Fence

We are currently in the middle of an awful heat wave across the eastern half of the country. Try to keep your horses cool by whatever method you can come up with. This heat is no joke, and some have sadly lost horses.

Notice our new Knowledge Corner! Send us your tips to include in future Newsletters!

The ICAA Annual Membership Meeting will be held via Zoom on Saturday, October 18, 2025 at 12:00 EST (11:00 CST, 10:00 MST, and 9:00 PST). We do hope everyone can attend! This is the time to offer your thoughts and suggestions where they can be heard by all attendees. We value our members and value your input!

*Sharon January, Chairman*

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## Varnish vs Roan vs Gray By Sharon January with helpful edits by Joanne Jordan

There seems to be a great deal of confusion when defining the appearance of some Appaloosas. We hear all the time "the horse is graying" or "the horse is roaning" when it is in fact varnishing. We hear all the time the horse is a "bay roan" when in fact it is a bay that is varnishing. These are three distinct colorations with each caused by a specific gene, neither relating to the other.

### Varnish

In Appaloosa horses, "varnish" refers to a specific characteristic of the Leopard Complex (LP gene). It's not a true roan, but rather a progressive, sometimes patchy distribution of white hairs mixed into the base coat. Varnish is often confused with classic roan (Rn) and/or gray (G). Varnish generally starts in a horse's face and eventually will spread over the entire body, including through the mane and tail. Not all Appaloosas will varnish. Some may not at all, and some varnish so much that they lose their coat patterns, while most varnish somewhere in between.



Stars Satinka (F2) as a foal.



Stars Satinka (F2) as an adult. As you can see, she has varnished a lot from when she was a foal. You can still see where her blanket is but as she ages, it's unlikely this will remain visible as the varnish progresses. She will, however, never lose her spots.

Unlike gray, horses never lose their spots to varnish, as the spots do not varnish. In fact, as an n/LP horse varnishes, more spots may show up that were not visible prior to varnishing, but they were always there. If a snowcap varnishes to the max, they can go from a beautiful snowcap to a mostly white horse and you can't see where the snowcap blanket ever was. When a horse varnishes considerably, it generally leaves some of the base color on the bony areas of the face, legs, points of their hips, etc. Many times this will help determine whether a horse is gray or varnished, as a gray does not leave behind these "varnish marks". Varnish is usually fairly evenly spread over the body, but it can create some wild coat patterns at times. Foals can be born with "goggles" that can be mistaken for gray. These foals will generally varnish quickly, changing drastically when they shed their foal hair. In general, the only Appaloosa coat patterns that do not extensively varnish are fewspots and nose-to-toes leopards. Blanket, snowcap, near-leopard, near-fewspot, and LP carrying solids are all susceptible to varnish. Genetics for an Appaloosa, unless a non-LP solid Appaloosa (which will not varnish), would be n/LP or LP/LP.



Smooth By Design (F4) as a foal.



Smooth By Design (F4) as an adult. As with Stars Satinka, she has varnished to the point where you can barely see where her blanket was. She does have the typical varnish marks generally seen. She has varnished through her tail but still shows a lot of color in the ends. Note, unlike a gray whose tail turns white in this area first, varnish leaves it dark or mixed with white.



BCA Tofoz Fudasan (F5) as a young mare.



BCA Tofoz Fudasan (F5) as an older mare. Since her little blanket started out so small, it's not very noticeable anymore with the varnish. She has varnished in a bit of an odd fashion, looking almost dapple. She will continue to varnish as she gets older, getting lighter and lighter.

## Roan

Classic roan is a white coat patterning characterized by intermixed white and pigmented hairs spread evenly throughout the body, while leaving the head, lower legs, mane and tail fully pigmented. To the untrained eye, classic roan can appear remarkably similar to varnish. Roan horses are born roan, although it may not be obvious in a foal until they shed their foal hair. Roan is not progressive. These horses do not change over their lives, although they may appear lighter or darker sometimes with the seasons.

Can a horse have both varnish and classic roan? Yes, absolutely (we have no photos of those). Would this be desirable to the majority of horse owners? Not likely. Buyers want clearly defined coat patterns with clean white backgrounds. Both varnish and roan blur the sharp edges.



Bay roan. Note the dark points and head. Sometimes they are lighter over their hips. If they get scrapes, the hair grows in dark in those areas, as seen here, and it stays dark throughout their lives. A roan never changes throughout its life, other than slightly lighter or darker in appearance with the seasons.



Blue (black) roan. As with injuries, if a horse is branded, the hair will grow back in dark, as seen here.

Genetics for a roan would be  $n/Rn$  or  $Rn/Rn$  in addition to their base color. An Appaloosa should never be registered as a bay roan, blue roan, red roan, etc, unless they truly are genetically  $Rn$ . They should be registered as a bay, black, chestnut, etc, with varnish in their description. Per the UC Davis website, "Roan is inherited as a dominant trait but the specific mutation has not yet been identified, so there is no direct test for roan." UC Davis is the only lab that currently tests for roan, and even then, it can be a bit tricky, and it can apparently be helpful to send in hair from the parents as well, and include photos and three-generation pedigrees listing the colors and patterns. <https://vgl.ucdavis.edu/test/roan>

## Gray

Gray is not a color; it's the opposite, a total lack of color. Gray is also a pigment disease that when present at birth, causes the melanocytes to over produce pigment (hyper-pigmentation) to the point they burn out and the horse loses all base color and any patterns or spots that may be present at birth.



Dapple gray. This horse is in the middle of the graying process, but still has a pretty dark mane and tail. Some grays will keep dark lower legs, mane and tail for some time. Note that the ends of his tail are white. At times, some almost appear to have varnish marks, but these will disappear over time, as all grays lose their base color totally 100% of the time.



Another gray, much earlier in the graying process. Again, note the white at the ends of the tail.

A gray will be born any base color. Gray is a dominant gene. Some gray horses fade to a full de-pigmentation making them appear almost pure white. Others may be “flea-bit” gray, with tiny non-faded spots. During the graying process, the horse can appear to have a roan appearance. There have been many gray horses misregistered as roan. Many are born with “goggles” around the eyes. Generally, they will have gray eyelashes as well. Graying generally starts in the face and spreads over the horse, but gray can do its own thing with how the gray progresses. Some horses gray very quickly (typically those with goggles) and some very slowly, with many in between. One of the tell-tale signs of a horse being gray during the graying process is its tail. The ends of the tail will appear to be white. They are born with black skin and hooves that remain black throughout their life. If an Appaloosa is gray, they tend to keep their spots longer than the rest of their base color, but even those will disappear over time. A gray Appaloosa still has mottled skin and striped hooves. When a gray Appaloosa that has turned nearly white is wet, you can see where they used to have a coat pattern and see the mottled skin. Many times the spots of a gray Appaloosa are elongated and closely placed together prior to losing the spots to gray.



Fairly early stages of graying. White at the ends of the tail. As with all grays, he will end up white, although still will be called a gray. A gray should never be called a white horse.



Typical gray goggles. While you can't see it here in this small photo, his eyelashes are gray/white. He will gray very quickly. His blanket will disappear, and eventually his spots will disappear as well. Note the elongated and closely spaced spots.

ICAA does not allow registration of gray horses as it destroys the most beautiful coat patterns. It is expected that at least 80% of gray horses will develop melanomas. The genetics for a gray would be n/G or G/G in addition to their base color. <https://legacy.animalgenetics.com/product/Equine/Gray.html>



This is Mystic Warrior, a 2006 1/4<sup>th</sup> (gray) Appaloosa and 3/4<sup>th</sup> Friesian that went viral on the internet. What most who passed this around failed to realize was that he is gray and he would lose that gorgeous coat pattern. He has goggles. He is also a good example of the elongated, closely spaced spots.



Age unknown, this is also Mystic Warrior, well into the graying process. As you can see, the only color remaining are his spots, which also disappear later in life.



I was lucky enough to be Facebook friends with the photographer of this photo of Mystic Warrior, as well as many others she took that day in 2013. As far as I know, these haven't been seen on Facebook other than the day she posted them. The photographer is **Kristina Simpson** and Mystic Warrior was seven years old. He only has a couple of random spots that still show in his coat. What you might barely see here is dark skin showing through his coat where once there were spots.



Mystic Warrior's backend in 2015. All that remains are dark spots on his skin you can see through a thin hair coat. It's easy to see why ICAA does not accept gray horses in its registry.

**Conclusion**

Classic roan and gray are not desirable in Appaloosas and some people even dislike varnish. While varnish can't be avoided in the Appaloosa world, classic roan and gray can be avoided with simple DNA testing and/or visual clues, parentage, or progeny. When in doubt, always test!



We're proud to announce **BCA Tofoz Pahsimeroi** as having earned her **Production Achievement Award** for producing five ICAA registered foals with beautiful coat patterns. Pahsimeroi was bred by Charles Potts, Blue Creek Appaloosas, and is owned by Daniel Bjergo, Primed~N~Painted Acres.

Stallions can earn their Production Achievement Award by producing 15 ICAA registered foals with coat patterns, and mares by producing five.

If you have questions on how many foals your mare or stallion has produced, ask us to check! We have a number of horses that are getting very close!

**ICAA Horsemanship Program**

This is a unique program not offered by any other registry that we're aware of. It was originally the ICAA Trail Riding Program but was revamped and renamed several years ago. This program allows horses to accumulate time from as early as birth throughout their lives, with the time going with the horse even if sold, at which time the new owner can continue with the already accumulated time. There is a one-time enrollment fee of only \$15. Time can be accumulated for nearly any handling, as almost any handling is training, such as grooming, leading, tying, trailer loading, lunging, and of course riding or driving. About the only thing time cannot be recorded is for training with a professional trainer. This is a great time to enroll with all the new 2025 babies! It can be a good selling point as well, as it shows how many hours have been spent working with the horse. Of course any age horse can be enrolled. Certificates are awarded for milestones as well as patches. Forms are available on the ICAA website's Forms page. Check out our other programs on the Programs page of the website.

## New Registrations



GF Rain Makers Dream (F4)  
Black Mare  
Owned by Danyell, Rising Z Appaloosas



DREA EIDiablo Starburst (F4)  
Black Mare  
Owned by Danyell and Levi Zak, Rising Z Appaloosas



RGT Cherokee Mirage (F4)  
Black Mare  
Owned by Danyell and Levi Zak, Rising Z Appaloosas



DREA Ghostorm Celilo (F4)  
Black Stallion  
Owned by Danyell and Levi Zak, Rising Z Appaloosas



RZA Imnaha Ghostfire (F5)  
Black Colt  
Owned by Danyell and Levi Zak, Rising Z Appaloosas



Dream Makers Damascus (F4N)  
Black Mare  
Owned by Danyell and Levi Zak, Rising Z Appaloosas

## New Registrations



RZA Nuksays Dream (F5)  
Black Colt  
Owned by Danyell and Levi Zak, Rising Z Appaloosas



RZA Summer Celilo (F5)  
Black Filly  
Owned by Danyell and Levi Zak, Rising Z Appaloosas

### Other Registrations

DREA Imnaha Blu Fire (F4)  
Black Mare  
Owned by Danyell and Levi Zak, Rising Z Appaloosas

DREA Imnaha IndianSummer (F4)  
Black Mare  
Owned by Danyell and Levi Zak, Rising Z Appaloosas

Ghostwind R Spice (F4)  
Black Mare  
Owned by Danyell and Levi Zak, Rising Z Appaloosas

### Welcome New Members!

**Helen M Wood, MO**  
**Erin N Fletcher, WA**  
**Forrest Samuels, WA**

### *Integrity*

*Choosing courage over comfort; choosing what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy; and choosing to practice our values rather than simply professing them.*



### District VIII District Representative

Welcome Bre Ramirez as ICAA's newest District Representative for District VIII!

Bre is from Crow heritage and is a part of the "Walks over Ice" family in Montana. She now lives in northern Utah on several acres called ERB Spotted Acres, and hopes to retire someday from her mechanical engineering career with ballistic missiles to live a more relaxed life.

Read more of her bio on the ICAA website under ICAA Officials > Bios.

We're excited to have Bre and we think she is a wonderful addition!

## ICAA Bi-Annual Membership Meeting

The ICAA Annual Membership Meeting will be held via Zoom on Saturday, October 18, 2025 at 12:00 EST (11:00 CST, 10:00 MST, and 9:00 PST). Please join us and share your thoughts and ideas! Or just sit and listen if you prefer, and see what's going on in ICAA! If you have any proposals, please get them in a few months prior.

### **International Colored Appaloosa Association, Inc**

#### **Dedicated to the Development, Preservation, and Promotion of the Purebred Appaloosa**

- ❖ Foundation was a place to start. The ICAA is building the finished product -- a breed for the future, one generation at a time.
- ❖ Founded in 1991, the ICAA is well established and in it for the long haul.
- ❖ The only registry offering a program to track a horse's training from birth.
- ❖ The only registry building a database of breeders who are producing five-plus generation horses.
- ❖ A "stand-alone" registry that does not require prior registration in another registry if the horse is the product of an ICAA registered sire and dam.
- ❖ The only registry using the full-generational concept of eight-generations plus, with no out-crossing, to produce a true, purebred Appaloosa, following the generally accepted genealogy method of generational identification.
- ❖ The ICAA is partnered with AGI and offers members exclusive pricing options on 6-Panel, color, and pattern testing, as well as DNA Profiling. Parentage verification is free on foals from parents who have been DNA Profiled.

### **Colors of Spring Virtual Show Results**

#### **Open Most Colorful**

1<sup>st</sup> Champagne Fortune/Conny Riedel  
2<sup>nd</sup> FVF Wind Serenade/Sherri Ritter

#### **SR Stallion**

1<sup>st</sup> Champagne Fortune/Conny Riedel  
2<sup>nd</sup> Midas Touched Sunrise/Damaris Smith

#### **Performance Stallion**

1<sup>st</sup> Champagne Fortune/Conny Riedel  
2<sup>nd</sup> Midas Touched Sunrise/Damaris Smith

#### **SR Mares**

1<sup>st</sup> FVF Wind Serenade/Sherri Ritter

#### **Performance Mares**

FVF Wind Serenade/Sherri Ritter

#### **JR Geldings**

1<sup>st</sup> BCA Yamas Blue Heron/Kylee Birdwell  
2<sup>nd</sup> BCA Iron White Hawk/Kylee Birdwell

#### **SR Geldings**

1<sup>st</sup> Mighty War Prince/Jamie Galbraith  
Shown by Kylee Birdwell

#### **Performance Geldings**

1<sup>st</sup> BCA Yamas Blue Heron/Kylee Birdwell  
2<sup>nd</sup> Mighty War Prince/Jamie Galbraith  
Shown by Kylee Birdwell

#### **Open In Hand Trail**

1<sup>st</sup> BCA Iron White Hawk/Kylee Birdwell  
2<sup>nd</sup> BCA Yamas Blue Heron/Kylee Birdwell

#### **Walk/Trot Pleasure**

1<sup>st</sup> BCA Yamas Blue Heron/Kylee Birdwell  
2<sup>nd</sup> Mighty War Prince/Jamie Galbraith  
Shown by Kylee Birdwell

#### **Ranch Riding**

1<sup>st</sup> FVF Wind Serenade/Sherri Ritter

#### **Open Liberty**

1<sup>st</sup> Champagne Fortune/Conny Riedel  
2<sup>nd</sup> FVF Wind Serenade/Sherri Ritter

#### **Fun and Games**

##### **Costume**

1<sup>st</sup> Champagne Fortune/Conny Riedel/Tom and Jerry  
2<sup>nd</sup> BCA Iron White Hawk/Kylee Birdwell/Walking Vet Bill

##### **Jumping**

1<sup>st</sup> Mighty War Prince/Jamie Galbraith  
Shown by Kylee Birdwell

##### **In Hand Jumping**

1<sup>st</sup> BCA Yamas Blue Heron/Kylee Birdwell  
2<sup>nd</sup> BCA Iron White Hawk

**A big thank you goes out to Dana Grafft for doing an amazing job judging, and thank you so much to all those who entered! Hope to see you all in the fall!**



## ICAA KNOWLEDGE CORNER

### Fire Extinguishers for Horse Trailers

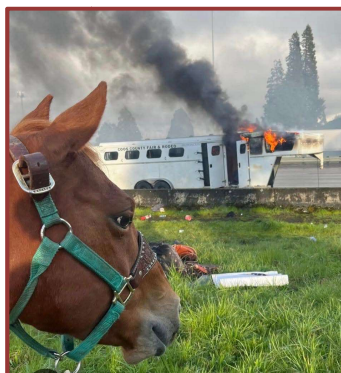
If you haul horses, you need to understand what kind of fire extinguishers to carry, where to keep them, and when (and when NOT) to use them. Your trailer has flammable liquids, electrical systems, rubber tires, hay, and possibly propane—just waiting for the right combination to turn into a full-blown fire.

Key takeaways:

- Carry an ABC extinguisher (dry chemical) in your truck for engine, brake, electrical, and fuel fires.
- Carry a water-based extinguisher in your horse compartment. Never spray horses with dry chemical!
- Living quarters trailers? Have extinguishers near the kitchen AND propane tanks. Know where your generator fuel is stored.
- Kitchen fires? Use a fire blanket first, then ABC. Don't use water on grease or electrical fires.
- Hay fires? Use water only—dry chemical contaminates feed.
- Brake fires and tire fires can burn under your horses—time is everything.

If a fire ever breaks out, your decisions in the first 30 seconds could mean the difference between a bad day... and a tragic one.

Stay safe and be prepared.



### Tips and Tricks for Bug Season Dan & Stachia Bjergo Primed and Painted Acres

We are not quite done with winter yet in Northern Minnesota and we are getting ready for Bug Season already. Our horses will start spending most of the day in their lean-tos, first tip, Bugs won't go into the dark areas so making sure that the lean-to is dark inside. We hang over the lean-to opening, old carpeting or here in MN we have Mill Felt available which works the best as the weather does not erode it. You will want to put a split somewhere in the middle of the covering for the horses to go in and out as they wish. You can also spray with a bug spray so they wipe themselves as they go in and out.

Tip 2, we use a generic Noxzema and wipe the horses under jaw, over their ears, under their bag/sheath on their chest. The Noxzema has a smell that the bugs do not like, it will soak into the hair/skin and hold the smell for several days and not get greasy or dirty. If the horse already has bug bites in these areas, the Noxzema will soothe the bites and keep from new bites. You can find generic Noxzema at a Dollar Store or other discount stores.

### ONLINE PAYMENTS

WHEN PAYING FOR ANY SERVICES ONLINE, PLEASE ONLY SEND PAYMENT THROUGH THE ONLINE PAYMENT PAGE OF THE ICAA WEBSITE! DO NOT SEND TO THE ICAA EMAIL ADDRESS. PAYPAL CHARGES US FEES, WHICH ARE INCLUDED IN THE ONLINE PAYMENT PAGE'S PAYPAL BUTTONS. IF MONEY IS SENT STRAIGHT TO OUR EMAIL ADDRESS, PAYPAL TAKES OUT THE SAME FEES AND WE LOSE MONEY.

**You do not need to own an Appaloosa to be a member and support ICAA.**

***Memberships can be paid for and submitted online.***

***Registrations and other work can also be paid for and submitted online  
if paperwork is quality scanned and emailed.***

**As always, thank you for supporting the best breed and remaining true to the Appaloosa!**

***All letters to the editor, materials submitted for publication, and advertisements should be sent to***

***[icaa@icaainc.com](mailto:icaa@icaainc.com).***

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## Contact Information

Need to contact ICAA? Here's how!

Send snail mail to:

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Call Sharon at 575-607-9737,  
or email us at [icaa@icaainc.com](mailto:icaa@icaainc.com)

Visit our website at [www.icaainc.com](http://www.icaainc.com)

Like us on Facebook (type International Colored Appaloosa Association in your Facebook search engine)

## Remember

Current members get discounted rates on registrations, transfers, and genetic testing through AGI. Members can also enjoy the benefits of free advertising on ICAA's website and inclusion in teleconference meetings!

Advertise your ICAA stallions for free in the Stallion Showcase!

Advertise your ICAA sale horses for free in our Sale File!

Show off your ICAA horses on the ICAA Facebook Page!

Sheer Beauty

The  
ICAA  
APPALOOSA



BCA Yamas Yellowhawk (F7)  
Owned by Sherri Ritter



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED