

Equine Awareness

Refuge RR for horses fundraiser at Chez Maurice on Saturday

Linda Glasgow

Special Contributor

Do you love live rock and pop music, dancing, drinks and raffles? Then come and see the incredible band Sonja Ball and the Chain, a great rock and pop music band who will play live at Chez Maurice, for a fundraising party on Saturday, May 28 at 9:30 p.m. This DANCEFEST Fundraiser is being organized by the Refuge RR for Horses and all animal lovers.

Organizers wish to clarify that it is not limited to the equestrian community! In fact, the focus is to raise funds for a good cause while having a fun evening with great memories, music, raffles and drinks.

For those who are not familiar with the Refuge RR for Horses, this is a chari-

table organization which has rescued and rehabilitated horses, dogs, cats, farm animals and birds for 20 years. There are over 60 horses at the

refuge and a total of 400 animals including dogs and cats.

In addition to the four-legged residents, the Refuge places between 70 to 100 horses per year in foster homes. With the increasing demand for saving abused and neglected animals, the refuge only accepts horses who have suffered abuse or neglect or will be sent to slaughter.

The refuge survives only with donations and fundraising. Every dollar the refuge receives goes directly to the animals.

For those who have horses that they no longer want to keep, although the refuge cannot take them, they try to provide

links to organizations or other homes that can assist them. The refuge works hand in hand with organizations like the SPCA Montréal or the SQ when called upon for seizures across the province.

This is a cause for all animal lovers and people with great hearts!

Chez Maurice: 1897, Ste-Angélique, Saint Lazare, QC (450) 455-3544.

Tickets: \$15 per person. Drinks can be bought at the bar. Raffle tickets with prizes will be sold all evening. Tickets can be bought at the following locations, on site and on-line: <http://www.barchezmaurice.qc.ca>; Jerrilyn Tack shop (450) 424-9459, Sandridge (450) 458-5502, and Crazy Carrousel (450) 458-2430.

For more information on Chez Maurice's Fundraiser for the Refuge RR for Horses, please call 514-457-6254.



Refuge RR for Horses survives solely on donations and fundraising.

A deadly mouthful

Cynthia D'Errico

www.groundmannersnovel.com

"On ne mange pas son ami!" shouted the citizenry of Montréal at a raucous demonstration held around Christmas time in 1759 after the Catholic Church had enjoined parishioners to eat their horses during a time when beef was scarce. "One doesn't eat one's friends" arose from a set of rural values which held that your horse was essential to your livelihood as a farmer—as necessary to your survival as agrarian-friendly weather.

Still, traditional recipes passed down from one generation to the next show that at least some Québécois ate their horses, for whatever reason, at some point in Québec history.

In the early 1950s, my own mother's obstetrician ordered her to eat horse-meat to "enrich her blood", the very lean meat considered a natural remedy for anaemia. Today, proponents of horse slaughter for human consumption argue that horse meat is healthier for you than beef, and at the end of his life, a horse can serve yet another human purpose: to feed the hungry. Often, they have in mind people in other countries. And, after all, horse slaughter in this country is a multi-million-dollar export business*.

The proof of the pudding, however, is in the eating. Horses in our culture are not raised as food animals; if they were, the same drugs banned in animals destined for human consumption (cows, pigs, sheep, etc) would be banned in horses. That's not the case. Throughout their lives, horses—especially high performance sport horses—are ad-

ministered drugs like phenylbutazone (PBZ), known simply as "bute." Bute was banned shortly after 1955 by the USDA once it was discovered, that, although an efficacious treatment for rheumatoid arthritis and gout, it could actually cause aplastic anemia, among other fatal diseases in humans. Over 95 per cent of patients who developed bone marrow suppression as well as those who developed a liver hypersensitivity associated with bute administration died. As a result, bute was taken off the human pharmaceutical market. Yet it found a use, particularly in the racing industry where Thoroughbreds were prone to musculoskeletal injuries. As a relatively inexpensive NSAID (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug), bute has been administered so regularly to horses that its nickname is "horse's aspirin." And why not? Horses, like dogs, are not raised for our dinner table. It gets worse. According to a Food and Toxicity Report** published in 2010, bute is permanently retained in the carcasses of horses, in the muscles and in the bloodstream. Methods of exsanguinating a rendered horse fail to prove that all blood is removed, so if any remains, so do traces of bute.

There is no such thing as a "safe" amount of bute which can be part of the meat you eat**. Put another way, any ingestion of bute by human consumers is disease-causing, life-threatening and sometimes can be fatal. And the only animals allowed to be given bute are horses and dogs. Because of this, as well as the other banned drugs given to North American horses which have never been, and cannot be, accurately tracked over the horse's lifetime, the European Commission last year refused to accept any shipments of horse-meat from Canada (nearly 60 per cent of horses slaughtered in Canada in 2009 were US imports). The CFIA responded by requiring Equine Information Documents

(EIDs) for all horses, but this has created new problems, not the least of which is horses left in quarantine holding areas for far too long, unable to receive treatment if they fall ill.

Whether you care about horses or not, you need to care about the obvious dangers of serving horse-meat to your family or ordering it at a five-star restaurant, and more globally, to wonder whether Canada has been exporting poisoned meat abroad. Horse owners and breeders need to think about not over-breeding in the first place (those who are looking for another Secretariat). As May is also the beginning of the Triple Crown, note that three years ago, 35,000 Thoroughbred foals were born to be old enough to race in 2011. Only twenty raced on May 7th at the Kentucky Derby, the first leg of the Crown: what happened to all the others? Please visit www.defendhorsescanada.org and support May Equine Awareness Week.

Cynthia D'Errico is the author of *Ground Manners*, a novel of part ro-

mance, part adventure, part animal rights advocacy. Cynthia is a former ESL teacher and business editor and has always felt a special empathy with animals, especially horses. Due to "Equine Awareness" she is bringing forth information that will interest any animal lover, specifically the equestrian community. "Cynthia D'Errico has done her research and will compel the reader to learn more about Quebec's rich history and of course, *Le Canadien*, the National Horse of Canada!" Shelley Grainger, Vice President, Canadian Horse Defence Coalition (CHDC)

* see Press Release by Equine Welfare Alliance (EWA) on the CHDC site. More specific information is also available on site.

** Association of phenylbutazone usage with horses bought for slaughter: A public health risk. Nicholas Dodman, Nicolas Blondeau, Ann M. Marini. *Food and Chemical Toxicology* 48 (2010) 1270-1274.



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