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What's Next for  
American Pharoah  
Pg 2

The Decline of  
Equine Dentistry  
Pg 2  
Sudoku/Barn Pics  
Pg 3

From the Horse's Mouth  
Pg 4  
Don't Miss This Webinar  
Pg 4

Inside

## For the Love of Horses

There is something profound about the majesty of horses. Something that demands respect. Despite their power and obvious weight advantage, it has been my experience that all kinds of horses only want to be cared for and freed from pain. A true bond with a horse can take a lifetime, so how is it possible to gain their trust when you only have 30 seconds? The answer is horsemanship and, above all, leadership.



I am so passionate about the fair treatment of horses that I am sending out this newsletter, in addition to my blogs, books, and videos, in order to educate people that there is a better option for horses. There is no need for every horse to be drugged for every dental procedure. My passion for the subject goes beyond equine dentistry and into the heart of the problem, which is a lack of genuine horsemanship and consideration.

Over the past 31 years I have worked as a veterinarian and equine dentist, perfecting the art of an instant bond with horses. The work I do can be equated to a stranger approaching you silently and attempting to take off your shoe. You're likely to put up a fight until he calmly shakes out the pebbles and replaces the shoe. Once you are no longer in pain, it's possible that you will lift up the other foot and ask him to do the other shoe, as well. Dentistry is the same way. When I first meet a horse, I have less than a minute to earn his trust before working inside his mouth. Though I cannot speak the language of the horse, I speak in ways that he can understand. I am a leader, showing him that he can respect me; I am calm, proving that there is no reason to overreact; and I am kind, showing him that I am there to help.

Even after all of these years, I believe in doing what is best for the horse, and it is that focus that led me to educate people about The Tucker Method of Equine Dentistry. Once I realized that a kinder system worked, it became my mission to educate people about their options regarding horse care. I know that horse owners want the best for their animals, including the best work and the best treatment possible. The truth is, if I didn't see a huge advantage with the natural method of equine dentistry, I wouldn't do it. But, time after time, I have seen the magic take place when a horse learns that we are there to help relieve pain. And the gratitude is not just limited to the horse; I have had more than one horse owner cry after they see a usually uncooperative horse lower its head and press its forehead flat into my chest.

Continued on page 3...



# Life After the Triple Crown

## What's Next for American Pharoah?



Winning the Triple Crown is the pinnacle of the competitive horse world, arguably more prestigious and exclusive than any other sporting title. This honor has only been bestowed upon 12 horses since its inception, because only 12 horses have managed to win the Kentucky Derby, Preakness

Stakes, and Belmont Stakes within one racing season. The rarity of this amazing feat is exactly why millions of people watched with bated breath as American Pharoah thundered down the backstretch at the Belmont Stakes. With every long stride he took, the roars of the crowd grew louder and louder, sending chills of anticipation up the spine. The screaming seemed to build until the final turn when the sound in the stands reached a fever pitch and cries of success were heard around the world. But what happens to a Triple Crown winner after the stands are clear and the track is reset?

At a tender 3 years of age, American Pharoah has already made horse racing history. He is the first horse to win the Triple Crown in the last 37 years, so it's hard to imagine a higher peak to his racing career. Within hours after the race, this remarkable horse was on his

way back home to Louisville, KY, while his owners dreamed of the races to come. In fact, it doesn't look like there will be much rest and relaxation for horse or jockey until the end of the racing season.

Since day one, American Pharoah has proven himself to be an incredible horse. A mere 25 days after the start of his racing career, American Pharoah began a seven-race winning streak that has yet to be broken. Out of the eight career races he's run, he's won a total of \$4.5 million dollars — a pretty tidy sum for his first year. But all his earnings combined don't reach the purse for American Pharoah's next challenge: the Breeder's Cup Classic. This race, held annually in October, has a \$5 million prize and some serious bragging rights.

Many have wondered how he could race again so soon, but owner Ahmed Zayat says that it is his responsibility to race American Pharoah as long as possible. In an interview with the New York Times he said, "I take this very responsibly. I think it's a huge, huge honor and privilege, and we owe it to the sport to do the right thing." Ultimately, it is trainer Bob Baffert who will decide how long the young horse continues to race. Regardless of the rest of his career, one thing is certain: American Pharoah is a legend who has raced his way to being one of the most prized stallions in history.



## A Broken System The Decline of Equine Dentistry

Equine dentistry has been practiced in some form for thousands of years, and in all that time, it has only recently been deemed "necessary" to sedate the horse.

Looking at a brief history of equine dentistry, we see a sad picture of how harmful modern methods have taken the horse world by storm.

Since the domestication of the horse, circa 3000 BC, there has been a need for healthy, working horses. Obviously, the drugs available today are a very recent discovery, so ancient people had to have a relationship with their horse in order to treat their pain. Put simply, since the horse was a way of a life and a means of survival, our ancestors were much better horsemen than many of us are today.

In the 18th century, people became more dependent on the horse, and their jobs branched beyond farming and military uses. The first school of veterinary medicine was founded in France in 1761 to address a growing desire to ensure the health of our equine partners. The success of this first veterinary college was rapidly followed by more than a dozen such schools across Europe and eventually in North America, including my Alma Mater, Cornell University, in 1868.

Back then, horses were the main focus of veterinary care because they were needed on the farm and the battlefield. The modern dentistry methods of drugging and traumatizing a horse could not have been implemented, because a sore, drugged horse meant wasting precious farming time. One of the first scholars on equine dentistry, A. Merillat, wrote, "The principle objective of dentistry is to promote the general health (of the horse) by improving mastication and relieving pain."

Everything changed in the 20th Century with the invention of cars. The horse was cast aside, and instead of horsemanship, we saw the rise of the 9-5. Time became a precious commodity, and a connection with the horse became secondary to time and money. Here we see a rise in drugging and hanging a horse's head — the job gets done, but at the expense of the horse's trust and well-being.

This method became so common that horse owners today no longer protest or question its usage. I've even had people come up to me and say that what I do is a "new" style of dentistry, when really my method has been around since man first sat atop a wild horse. It's not their fault; our society has simply normalized doing things the easy way over the right way.





## sudoku

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## Cover Continued...

Once I'm done removing all of the sharp edges of the teeth, I rub the horse's cheeks as they lean their head against me, eyes half-closed with relief.

That moment when a horse realizes that we are there to relieve his pain and he becomes an ally is the reason I do what I do. I know people want to take care of their horses, and I want to make sure that the best options are available to them. So, in addition to this newsletter, I am committed to posting articles, videos, and blogs about horsemanship and equine dentistry. I encourage you to question the modern methods that take shortcuts, and explore a deeper relationship with your horse by taking the time to listen.

*DocT*



**Sunday, June 14, 2015, 8 a.m.** I am working on three horses that have been with me for a very long time. The owner and I got to thinking about how long. To do this, we thought back to events, then asked if we knew each other back then.

September 11 was the first event I thought of. Yes, we knew each other then. That was 14 years ago.

The owner then recalled that she had purchased the farm in 1997. Then I remembered that I had worked on her horses at a boarding barn, and I recalled her telling me about the new farm which was on a road with a name that was the same as the name of a road I knew as a little boy — Hardscrabble Road. That move was 18 years ago. The horses are now 21, 22, and 31 years old.

A month ago, the owner had her veterinarian out to look at one of the horses. He had brought a new assistant along, and they performed a complete physical that included the teeth. To their surprise, they announced that the teeth were in remarkably great shape!

There is more to this story. For a long time, two of these horses required sedation and pain medication to work on them, and one of these two needed Valium. Today, however, when I work on their teeth, I need no drugs, as they offer little resistance when I address the slight edge they've worked up over the past year.

The routine maintenance requested by this horse owner every six months for 18 years is what has caused these teeth to never be an issue in the lives of these horses. I see this



repeated everywhere I work on a consistent basis for five or more years. The teeth straighten as if they are wearing orthodontic braces. The mouth remains healthy. There is never a need for feed changes.

At the end of my visit, I realize there is one thing I forgot to do. I needed to take pictures of these horses' incisors. I have never touched the incisors and it would be a good thing to document their wear because they also are worn evenly. This would help me to prove my theory that angled incisors are created by altered jaw and tongue movement, influenced by pain, thus producing sharp points on the cheek teeth.

Instead, I will need to be satisfied that the great shape of the teeth has been verified by an independent third party who was looking for some work and found none. Thanks to all of you who believe in preventive dentistry and have it performed every six months, before it becomes a painful issue. It really makes a difference.

## Looking for Knowledge From a Professional?

**Don't Miss My Webinar! Tuesday July 28<sup>th</sup> 7 PM**

Go to <http://www.thehorsesadvocate.com/webinar/> to reserve your place

Here's what I'll be covering ...

- An evening with a horseman who is also a veterinarian, passionate about teaching.
- An opportunity to hear something different than the stuff written in magazines.
- Opinions based on facts that are discussed in an easy-to-understand way.
- Learning that is fun and can be understood by any person, at any age, at any level of horse experience.
- Why exactly a low-toe and long-heel hoof conformation on a horse is hurting your horse. See it in a way never explained to you before — I guarantee it. Leave with the simple knowledge needed to talk with your farrier.

- How to tie a horse to a solid structure so that if he ever decided to pull backward, you could easily untie him with one hand and NEVER let go of the lead.

- What it means when your horse is cast. How to make it preventable so you can sleep at night, not worrying about leaving your horse in a stall.

- Learn the answers to how you can control parasites in your horse. Do you currently use chemicals, or do you test and wait to see if there is a problem? I have a better solution!

- Finally, let me ask you this about your horse: Is there some watery discharge along with the fecal balls that covers the stall wall or his legs? Does he object to being brushed? Does he object when you tighten

the girth? Does he hate being ridden and shows it by swishing his tail, objecting to work, or even bucking when asking him to do more? Is he difficult to load and trailer? Is he just not nice to you? Many of these are signs of inflammation of the hind gut, and grain is the number one cause.

Find out the "Outside the Box" answers to these problems that all horse owners face everywhere in the world.

These topics will be covered in this webinar as a way of introducing you to a source of trusted information about your horse; a place where you can learn and start doing the right thing for your horse; a place where you can become The Horse's Advocate™.