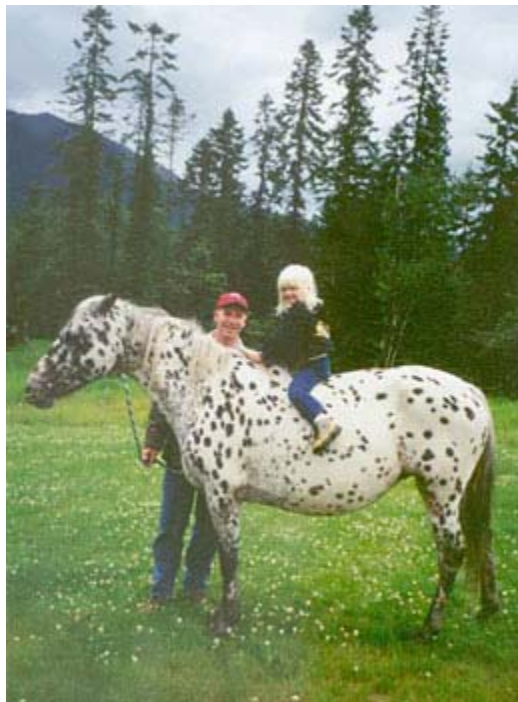


Shuffling Along – With Indian Shufflers
By Cheryl Palmer

In 1987 I bought 2 Ulrich mares from Don Ulrich. I bought several more when Mr. Ulrich had his dispersal sale. I had 5 Ulrich mares, some in foal, when I bought them. Out of the five, two “shuffled.” At the time I did not know they shuffled but I did know they had a different way of going and were very smooth to ride. I dubbed it the “fast forward” walk. Indian Shuffler is defined by me as: A four beat uneven diagonal (fox trot) or uneven lateral (stepping pace), or “even” (running walk) gait, also called intermediate gait. It is a fast ground covering, smooth moving gait to ride. Some old foundation appaloosa lines were found to be “gaited.” “Indian Shuffle” is a catchall word for a gaited Appaloosa that does any one of the above gaits. A lot of people think they have a gaited horse when in reality they don’t. It’s important to have the gaits documented in a video that an expert on gaits, such as Deb Bennett, Annette Gerhart, Eldon Eddie, Liz Graves, or Carmen Micheletti, could verify that your horse is gaited and which gaits your horses naturally possesses.

Pem Meyers, from the Walkaloosa Registry inquired about Ulrich Kitten III, one of my Ulrich mares, as she wanted to buy her. Ulrich Kitten III was a very strongly gaited horse. She would out walk any horse around. My husband rode her for 15 years and what we liked was that she had a calm demeanor and unflappable temperament and was a horse anyone could ride and enjoy. She was an exceptional horse! Kitten III had such a smooth way of going I began a quest to find out where this beautiful gait came from. This was back in the early 90’s before gaited horses became popular.



Ulrich Kitten III She started it all!
My first strong gaited Shuffler

Through my research and inquisitiveness I have come to believe that the confirmation and gait are one and the same. These horses are wired to gait because of their type of body conformation. Ulrich Kitten III, I believe, got her gaitedness from a couple of sources. Morgan's Jungle Kitty was part Morgan and has two legs of gaited pedigree coming from Ranger Snip (Morgan registry), and Kamiak Princess (a Toby line). Another gaited line in the Ulrich horses is Simcoes Sarcee through Bess, a half saddle bred horse. Queen K from Ulrich Rakush goes back to Vechis, a registered Morgan.

If you follow the bloodlines back you can check out the gaited ancestry of your horses. I have found that in gaited Appaloosas they go back primarily to Morgan blood, Saddle bred, Standard Bred, and there were a few documented gaited Arabians.

I wrote to Palmer Wagner, asking his opinion as to where the gait came from. He said it was his conclusion, not based on proven fact, that many of our gaited Appaloosa's have Hambletonian blood (a breed of horses synonymous with Standard Bred). Eight percent of any breed of horses is gaited. At the turn of the century 80% of the Morgan breed was gaited. Much of the gaited blood comes from Narragansett pacing blood. All of our American breeds have Narragansett pacing blood, and some of our registered Thoroughbreds imported from Europe were gaited.

Just because a horse has all these gaited bloodlines doesn't mean they will gait. Deb Bennett says "How they are wired and how they are built go together." She says you can tell whether a horse has the ability or "knack" for gaiting by looking at the way the horse moves.

I am breeding for gaitedness in my breeding program. Gaitedness is a recessive dominant gene obtained by breeding gaited conformation and by breeding gaited to gaited to lock the gait in. I am trying to do this within the Appaloosa breed, as I don't want to lose the foundation legacy, character, and bloodlines by out crossing to other breeds. I don't want to create a new breed of horse. I just want a good, even-tempered, gaited, all-purpose horse with

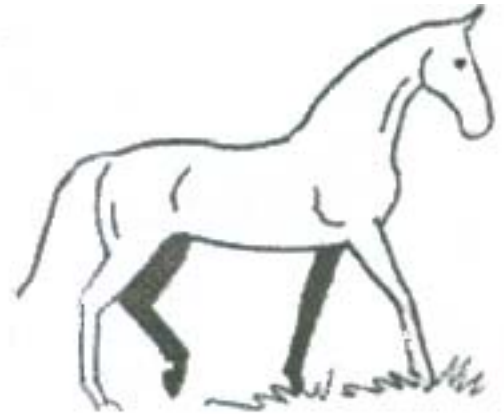


Fig.1 Fox Trot - the fox trot is a "broken trot, i.e. the diagonal fore foot sets down an instant before the opposing hind foot.

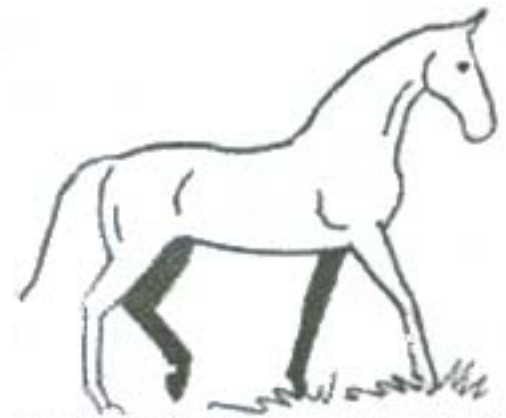


Fig.2 - The Amble - The amble or stepping pace, is similar to pace, except that hind lateral foot sets down before the fore foot. There is no suspension, fore or hind.

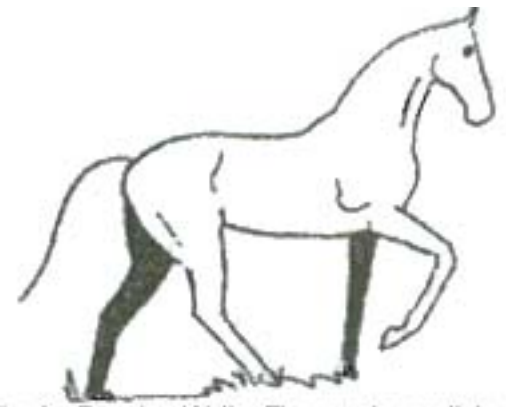


Fig. 3 - Running Walk - The running walk is similar to a regular walk but with greater overreach and speed. The hind foot over-steps the track of the fore foot by several inches, and the head nods vigorously.

foundation bloodlines. It is easier to breed to a Tennessee Walker, Morgan, Walkaloosa, Paso Fino, etc. to get a stronger gaited horse, but I have done this without out crossing. I have had 4 or 5 strongly gaited Appaloosa's verified by experts. Gaited breeds in recent years have become more specialized and by breeding them to Appaloosa's it will take away from the Appaloosa character, and Appaloosa genetic pool. Gaited Appaloosa's are out there but it takes time to search them out.

I currently have two stallions, D&M's Redman, and Cowboy Jack, who are gaited stallions and foundation bred. Redman has 4 legs of gaited ancestry (El Morrocco, Mane's Blue Eagle, Raseyn (gaited Arabian through Bay Bob), Easter Twilight Morgan #10404). Redman has a beautiful long stride and ground-covering walk. His shoulder is very well sloped, typical of Saddlebred's and Morgan's. His body is very compact and he has a very sturdy structure. He has a magnetic presence that is very appealing. My other stallion, Cowboy Jack, is a great grandson of Renner's Pepper, a gaited Appaloosa. He also goes back to Paisano, who goes back to Red Wings, a Morgan. Cowboy has a beautiful head and the typical conformation of a gaited horse.



DM Redman "Big bold movement—thrilling to ride shuffle gait"

If you are interested you can call me at (406 837-4419), or access my web site (www.leopardappaloosa.com). I plan to write an upcoming article on what I look for in the conformation of a gaited horse. My knowledge of gaits is evolving and I am learning new things all the time. Some of the things I currently believe will be altered as I get new information and insights in my quest for understanding gaitedness.

Cheryl Palmer

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