Halls Of Fame Welcome Six New Members

Three farriers and three equine veterinarians from around the world are honored for their passion and dedication to promoting hoof care

By Michelle Sauer, Assistant Web Editor

The 2012 classes were inducted into the International Horseshoeing Hall Of Fame and the International Equine Veterinarian Hall Of Fame at the 9th annual International Hoof-Care Summit, Feb. 1 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The new members of the Halls Of Fame are farriers Clark Beckstead, James Findler and Rob Sigafoos. Inducted equine veterinarians include James Belknap, Amy Rucker and John Stewart.

The International Horseshoeing Hall Of Fame

The International Horseshoeing Hall Of Fame was started in 1993. This year’s three new members have all left their mark on the shoeing industry through hard work, dedication and a passion for equine footcare. A common thread in their careers is their willingness to share knowledge and help others in the industry improve the overall state of hoof care and soundness. Current members of the Hall served as the electors for this year’s nominees.

The late Clark Beckstead, who passed away March 14, 2011, was a highly respected farrier in the Santa Barbara, Calif., community. He received many nominations praising his work, a true testament to his lasting impact.

Clark Beckstead’s son, Justin, receives the Hall Of Fame honors on his father’s behalf.

Beckstead’s son, Justin, receives the Hall Of Fame honors on his father’s behalf.

Beckstead’s wife, Karen, and son, Justin, are overjoyed to see Clark’s career honored in such a prestigious way. Justin says that the most rewarding part of his father’s career was the many young and ambitious farriers he had the opportunity to share his knowledge with. The greatest satisfaction at the end of each day for his father was when those he mentored would describe to him the many things they had learned that day.

On behalf of his father, Justin says, “This honor is the crowning achievement on the career of a man that did not seek out accolades or notoriety, yet I know … he would be beaming with pride.

“I also know that he would have heartfelt congratulations to the other inductees and a sincere appreciation and humility to be amongst the elite in this trade.

“As his son, it gives me great pride to know that his legacy will continue on. In the words of one of his favorite country music artists, Vince Gill, ‘Go rest high on that mountain, son, your work on Earth is done.’”

James Findler of White Rock, British Columbia, has been shoeing horses for over 30 years.

The idea of becoming a blacksmith originated from his grandfather. A short time later, in the fall of 1982, Findler enrolled in the Kwantlen College farrier program.

In no time, his life was completely consumed with shoe making and learning all there was to know about...
the horse and hoof. He is grateful for his great mentor and instructor from the start, Hank McEwan (another International Horseshoeing Hall Of Fame member).

Findler’s achievements have also been some of his most memorable experiences. In 1993, he won the Top Ten Horseshoeing at the World Championships in Calgary, Alberta. He also became Forging Champion at the Calgary Stampede in 1996, as well as having the Best Shod Foot at the 2005 Calgary finals.

Having traveled and competed on the Canadian Farriers Team and judged the World Team Championships in Stoneleigh, England, in 1996 and the World Championships in Calgary in 2002, it’s no surprise to those that nominated him that he is now a Hall Of Fame member. But to Findler, it is “definitely one great surprise.”

“I would like to thank all my great mentors, including Hank McEwan, Bob Marshall and Dave Duckett,” he says. “I am thankful for all my horseshoeing friends around the world.”

Rob Sigafoos of Kennett Square, Pa., has had an extensive career,
with nearly 25 years as Chief of Farrier Services at the University of Pennsylvania’s New Bolton Center until 2006.

He grew up in Northern Virginia and went to high school in Washington, D.C. His interest in horseshoeing developed while working for a local polo club. “I was fascinated by the lameness problems these horses were experiencing,” he says.

At first he considered veterinary school, but at that time the veterinary profession wasn’t able to offer horses much in terms of progressive remedies. Farriery, he felt, was the most direct road to innovative therapeutic intervention.

Looking back, Sigafos says the most rewarding part of his career has been learning from some of the most talented and knowledgeable farriers and veterinarians in their professions.

“My father … strongly believed that the best measure of a teacher is when his student goes on to surpass the teacher in their contributions.” In that light, Sigafos considers himself a good teacher and was one of the pioneers in working with glue-on shoes.

Humbled by his Hall Of Fame induction, Sigafos says, “At first I was sure that I had been confused with someone who really deserved this honor. But when you grow up with such a mouthful of a last name, you rarely get confused with anyone.

“Seeing others who have also been inducted, I realize what an honor this is to be included in such a group.”

The International Equine Veterinarian Hall Of Fame

The International Equine Veterinarian Hall Of Fame was established in 1997 to recognize equine practitioners who have contributed to furthering the knowledge and recognition of proper hoof care. Previously elected members of the Hall voted on this year’s nominees.

Columbus, Ohio’s, James Belknap is a valued member of the Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, and an associate professor in the Galbreath Equine Center at Ohio State.

His career began in his younger years on a livestock farm in Goshen, Ky., where they had “horses (cheap ones) and ponies (cheap, mean ones).”

However, moving to Colorado in high school and working with a mixed animal veterinarian really convinced him that he wanted to work with large animals. He went to veterinary school at Colorado State University.

Belknap’s real fascination with feet came during his internship at the University of Georgia, where a great deal of work on laminitis was being performed. Over the years, Belknap attended more schools, conducted a large deal of research and began collaborating with many individuals throughout the world.

He was later recruited to Ohio State University to perform soft tissue surgery, lameness and podiatry in the clinics, while continuing his laminitis research. He still researches at Ohio State, as well as at Auburn University.

Being recognized for his work by groups and individuals he has a great deal of respect for has meant much to him as a researcher — knowing that he is having a practical impact.

Belknap says even with all of his contributions, he feels that the farriers he has collaborated with have taught him much more than he taught them.

As a new Hall Of Fame inductee, he says, “Thank you. It’s a great honor.”

Amy Rucker of Columbia, Mo., has a long-held interest in footcare, which started to take shape for Dr. Steve Tornberg in Harrisburg, S.D.

Not long after she arrived at her first job with Tornberg, she was pulling shoes during one of her first lameness exams. She says she was so lucky to land that job because “everyone at the clinic and all the local farriers had a way of building you up as you learned.”

Many of her valuable lessons came from Dr. Ric Redden. In 1990, her life changed when she referred a laminitic horse to the Kentucky veterinarian. She said goodbye to the horse and sent him to Kentucky, but he returned 2 months later and his recovery was “amazing.”

She visited Redden to learn how to continue the horse’s care and returned with 44 pages of notes and three rolls of film.

But it was her second visit with Redden, during a blacksmithing lesson, which gave her the edge she needed to make it in the business.

Rucker says, “A year later I called him and asked him if he really thought I could learn to shoe. Doc said, ‘It’ll be like learning to drive. You’ll run off the road a few times, but eventually you’ll get where you’re going.’

“He taught me to sweat the small stuff because the details are the difference between a horse being able to walk or run. He also taught me to have vision.”

She is very humbled by her Hall Of Fame induction and thanks every person and horse she has ever met because each taught her a new lesson.

“I’ve always felt fortunate to be included in this industry that feels like a family to me,” she says. “I feel like I’ve still got a long road ahead of me.”

ANTISEPTIC BARRIER
SAV-A-HOOF SPRAY forms an ANTISEPTIC BARRIER between healthy tissue and infection. Bonds to hoof protein for long lasting protection. For treatment and prevention of white line disease, seedy toe & thrush.

www.sbsequine.com/sav-a-hoof-family/

Select No. 299 on Reader Service Card or www.americanfarriers.com/tff/products
John Stewart hails from Dumfries, Scotland. He graduated from England’s Cambridge University in 1977 and was in a mixed animal practice until 1992 when he set up his own veterinary practice, mainly equine.

In 1998, however, he became really “fired up” in laminitis research after Dr. Chris Pollitt’s presentations at the British Equine Veterinary Association (BEVA) Congress. Since then, he has been on the path to researching the complex laminitis puzzle.

After attending a weekend course given by Dr. Hiltrud Strasser — a barefoot proponent — in 2002, Stewart found himself agreeing with some things, disagreeing with others and found a large section in the middle that he didn’t really know much about.

He set up his website, www.johnthevet.com, to post his research, articles and provide an open forum for people to contact him, and is currently writing a book for horse owners about horses’ feet, which will be out later this year.

Stewart says, “I find it particularly rewarding when someone contacts me on the website to say a light has been switched on and they now understand.”

He has spoken at the International Hoof-Care Summits in 2007 and 2008, and says the IHCS is “a great place to get new ideas and to discuss old ones. I come away every year with questions, take a year to investigate and believe I have found the answer by the next year’s Summit only to find more questions … and so it goes on.”

Stewart is truly honored by his Hall Of Fame induction, and says, “I do believe I can contribute to the knowledge and understanding of horses’ feet and laminitis. I was very surprised and delighted to find that there are others who believe I can too, and have faith in me and my work to elect me into this prestigious group.”

Nominees Sought For Class Of 2013

The deadline for nominating worthy individuals for either the International Horseshoeing Hall Of Fame or the International Equine Veterinarians Hall Of Fame is Aug. 31, 2012. Inductees of the Class of 2012 were announced during the 9th annual International Hoof-Care Summit in Cincinnati, Ohio.

To nominate a farrier or equine veterinarian for these awards, send a two- or three-page letter highlighting the candidate’s career accomplishments to “Hall Of Fame Nomination,” American Farriers Journal, P.O. Box 624, Brookfield, WI 53008-0624. Nomination letters can also be faxed to (262) 782-1252 or emailed to info@lesspub.com.