

Canter uses a JENT shoulder release with Misty. (photo submitted)



## Work and passion, horse in hand

*Editor's note: This article was rerun from last month's edition in order to correct mistakes made by the Appointment's staff. We are happy to correct the errors.*

by Barbara Childs

Lelia Canter found mutual comfort transferred between her and her first horse Molly, a gray mare, and back again each time the horse trotted down to meet her at the stable.

Canter said her love for animals and their care mixed with a love for art at a very young age. She often tagged along with her father, a specialty decorator and painter at the many racehorse farms around the Lexington, Ky. area.

As Canter grew older, she would visit her father during summer breaks to help with painting at the farms. Her father also apprenticed with the equine artist Allen Brewer Jr. In the 1950s, painting backgrounds for racehorses, Canter's father rendered the scenery for Brewer's equine portraits.

After marrying and moving to the Asheville area in 1983, Canter pursued a fine arts degree but decided she would need a career with more monetary stability. She spent 17 years as a dental hygienist.

Eventually her career brought her back into the equine field she was always drawn to as a child. After researching schools for equine bodywork, she decided to receive training through Equinology, Inc.

They offered training and certifications from some of the country's leading practitioners. Their programs required the highest contact hours and mandatory externships. Equinology's Ruth Mitchell was the inspiration for this process and Canter completed her EBW certification in 2007 and myofascial release training with Mitchell in 2008. In 2008 Canter also completed her human massage therapy training at the Center for Massage and Natural Health in Weaverville, N.C. and became a licensed massage and bodywork therapist.

Over the next two years, she received further training in craniosacral therapy through the Upledger Institute and studied red light therapy and Reiki, a form of healing, stress reduction, and relaxation developed over a hundred years ago in Japan.

Over the next few years, Canter integrated myofascial release, craniosacral therapy, red light therapy, and Reiki in sessions with humans and horses.

Myofascial release is a three-dimensional application of sustained light pressure and movement into the fascial system in order to eliminate fascial restrictions. Gentle pressure is applied to the areas of restriction.

Craniosacral therapy is a gentle hands-on method of evaluating and enhancing the functioning of the craniosacral system which is comprised of the membranes and cerebrospinal fluid that surround and protect the brain and spinal cord.

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## CANTER

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Red light therapy is the topical application of red light to the skin using 660 nanometers of red light waves to stimulate and repair healing in the body.

Canter noticed there were similar patterns of fascial restriction from client to client. In horses, the fascia would almost always lead her to the shoulders no matter where the initially noted problem areas were located.

In January 2010, Canter was able to study with Dianne Jenkins.

After seeing Jenkins demonstrate Jenkins Equine Neurophysiologic Therapy, the answers to Canter's questions involving patterns of restriction came to light. Canter said she knew JENT was a revolutionary discovery in restriction patterns.

She felt she needed to introduce JENT (already in Australia)

to the United States.

Canter was fortunate enough to complete 330 hours of training from Jenkins. Currently there are only five Jenkins Equine Neurophysiologic Therapists. Four based in Australia, and Canter, the first to be qualified in the U.S.

The JENT system utilizes forms of Myofascial Release to realign soft tissue and fascia resulting in skeletal repositioning, reducing areas of trauma that result in reduced performance, training problems, and eventually lameness.

JENT usually requires three sessions one week apart followed by a re-evaluation and follow up session four to six weeks later.

"It is in helping others - animals and humans - that we in turn brighten our future and existence. It is always a wonder to me to see the relief in a horse's eyes and changes in their bodies after long-standing restrictions have been released," Canter said. "This holds true for humans with

*"It is in helping others  
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our future and existence."*

— Lelia Canter

positive changes they experience after they no longer experience chronic pain. It is a reminder to me that our bodies have a great capacity to heal given the opportunity."

Canter and her husband are collaborating with Dianne Jenkins to develop therapeutic saddle pads for horses.

They are designed to fit various configurations as the horse's posture and musculature changes after receiving bodywork, and to accommodate changes due to training, conditioning, injuries, and aging.

A therapeutic pad for humans is also one of their goals which would help to alleviate chronic

back and hip pain.

Canter established HeartSong Artworks in 1994, when she began creating acrylic paintings that incorporated history and legends from her heritage. Canter has always been fascinated by cultural legends and began using paintings as a way to illustrate the history and culture of her ancestors.

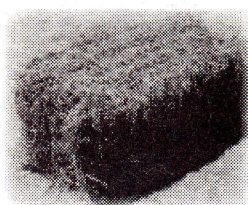
Canter began an equine series to explore the history and culture of horses.

She chose the name HeartSong because it illustrates the expression of the heart's song and kept the name when she started her practice, HeartSong Bodyworks.

Canter spends her personal time with an 18-year-old Morgan/Quarter horse cross named Lilly.

Lilly is a former school horse Canter became acquainted with during her equinology externship at the Biltmore Equestrian Center.

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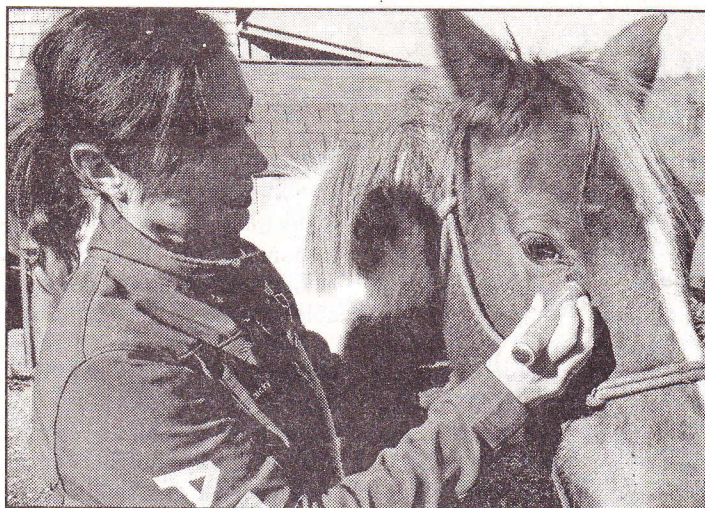
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Canter uses red light therapy with Misty – a lesson horse that had received a cut below her eye. (photo submitted)

Canter said she is solid, beautifully red-headed and opinionated. Lilly enjoys trails, hunter paces, natural horsemanship training and schooling in the lower levels of dressage and jumping.

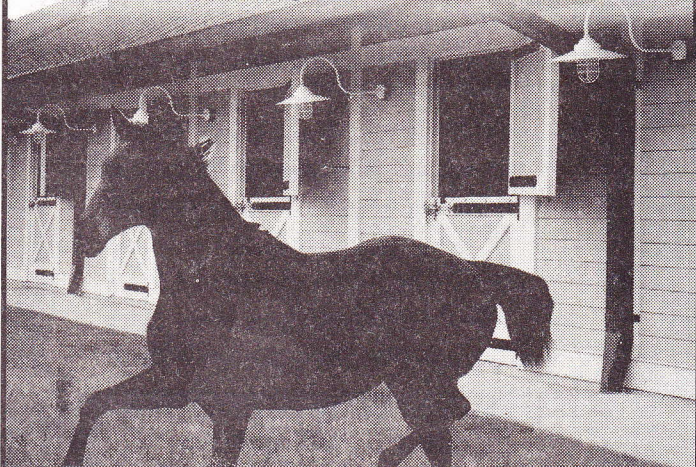
Away from horses and her

career calling, Canter loves to do her artwork and run with her chocolate lab and red heeler.

She also enjoys hiking and rock climbing, which help her focus on balance for riding, as well as providing images for her artwork.

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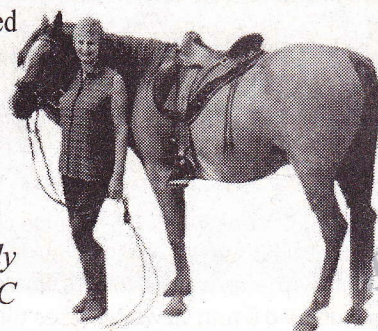
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