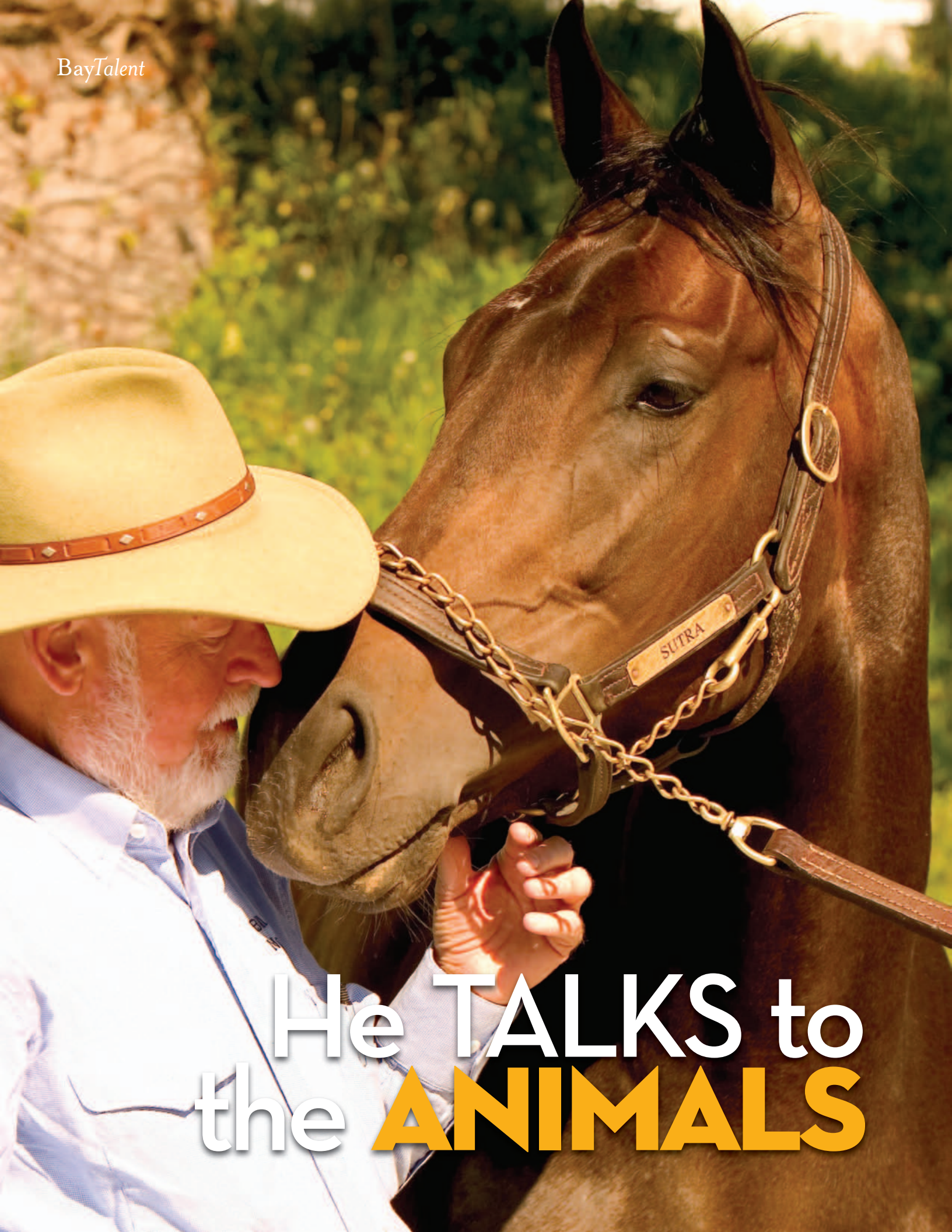


BayTalent



He TALKS to
the **ANIMALS**

Bill Northern utilizes a pendulum to sense a horse's pain.



Bill Northern, "Animal Listener"

written by CAPT. BOB CERULLO . photography by KEN LEWIS

If I could talk to the animals, just imagine it ... chattin' with a chimp in chimpanzee. Imagine talking to a tiger, chatting with a cheetah. What a neat achievement it would be!

So went the musical lament of Dr. John Dolittle played by Rex Harrison, in the 1880s English town of Puddleby-by-Marsh. Dr. Dolittle, who learns from his parrot, Polynesia, how to talk to animals, was the fictional creation of the fertile imagination of author Hugh Lofting.

There is nothing fictional about a man born and raised in Warsaw named Bill Northern. He is very much a real live person who first learned to listen to animals from a neighbor's horse named Freeholder. Northern often brought apples to Freeholder. He said "I walked into the barn one day and Freeholder was on the right, in the first stall. I heard this voice say, 'I didn't get my apple today.' It was just like I hear you talking. I snuck over to the stall because I knew someone was playing a joke on me. But there wasn't anybody in there so I started walking away thinking I was really going crazy now. Then I heard it again, 'I didn't get my apple today.' I looked in the next stall and there wasn't anybody in there either. I then called down to the end of the barn to Bernice, a lady who helped out at the barn, and I said 'Freeholder says he didn't get his apple today.' Bernice

said 'He did to. He is just playing with you.' I started to walk away and I heard this whiny voice say, 'No I didn't either.' I questioned Bernice and she remembered that he actually did not get his apple." Bill says he heard the horse Freeholder talking to him just as clearly as he heard my voice during our conversation.

I asked Bill if he ever encounters people who are skeptical about his ability to actually communicate with animals. He said, "I run into skeptical people all the time. I just don't worry about them anymore. Once we do an animal for them they are generally convinced." It would appear Bill Northern's critics are outnumbered by his supporters. The *Ashburton Guardian*, a New Zealand newspaper, quoted horse trainer Lester Morris, who was initially skeptical. The *Guardian* said, "Lester learned how to communicate with horses from Bill five years ago and swears by the skills he has picked up. 'It has certainly helped my business. I have more winners as my horses are healthier because they are happier.'"

Bill told me about his teaching an equine dentist in Middleburg how to get a horse to tell him where it hurts. In fact,

Bill says a horse can actually tell him which tooth hurts. Bill holds classes three times a year for people who want to learn to become horse listeners.

I asked Bill Northern how his work differed from the work of the famous horse whisperer Monty Roberts, played by Robert Redford in the 1998 movie by the same name. He said Monty Roberts spent a lifetime learning to understand the movements of horses. Roberts, he said, can just watch a horse move and knows by their body language if there is a problem and what needs to be done. Northern told me he works with his eyes closed most of the time. He has a conversation with the horse. Sometimes it is verbal, while other times it is just a kind of telepathic exchange of information.

Northern told me about a case he was called in on where the horse refused the bridle. The horse told him that the bridle hurt the right side of his mouth. The owner said that was nonsense until Northern measured the bridle and found the right side was an inch shorter causing the bit to rub on the horse's mouth.

Northern spent most of his business life in the office supply industry. After experiencing some office plumbing problems in his business, he decided to attend a school where he could learn how to find underground pipes and wires using diving rods. While attending a school in Vermont to learn dowsing (the art of finding underground water using divining rods), he first learned about the concept of listening to horses. It was a demonstration involving horses at the school for dowsing that led Northern into his career of listening to animals. Having owned and raced standard bred horses for many years, he estimates he spent, on average, about \$2000 a month for veterinarian bills. He concluded that if he could learn to communicate with horses he could save money on vet bills.

Northern says he also communicates with dogs and cats. He told me about a misbehaving cat who was unhappy about her owner bringing two new cats into the home. The disgruntled cat refused to share her litter box and wanted her own litter box. When she got it, she returned to being a wonderful cat. He also told me about a dog who confided that he misbehaved because his owners neglected to replace his favorite squeaky toy when it was lost.

Bill Northern spends a great deal of time at the Thoroughbred Center in Lexington, KY, an area where he estimates there are at least 15,000 horses. Many of them are thoroughbred race horses. His ability to quickly identify the source of a problem with a horse has made him the go-to-guy for big breeding farms and horse owners who often call him before they call the veterinarian.

Amy Wilson, writing in the *Lexington Herald-Leader* (November 3, 2006) cites several instances where Northern helped race horse trainers understand their horse's problems. Sutra, one of Northern's horse 'clients,' told him she not only wanted to

said, "Horses pick up on things like that and they might object to an odor at any time."

Northern says horses often tell him when their bit is uncomfortable. He says they don't know the names of the various bits but they are able to tell him when and where they hurt. Northern told me about a recent client who could not get the bridle over the horse's ears. He said, "When I went over to him (the horse) he was showing me it really hurt right behind his right ear." In that instance Bill Northern was doing the listening remotely while on the telephone with the client in another part of the country.

Northern often talks to his client over the phone while simultaneously moving one hand over a clear plastic, model horse. In the other hand he holds a pendulum, closely watching its movements. When the pendulum starts to swing rapidly that indicates he has "touched" on the area of soreness, remotely associated with the model. He told me "I can tell

where they need to be." Northern related the story of a reluctant brood mare that told him she just didn't like the stallion to which her owner was trying to have her bred. He said, "Last year there were three different mares that just didn't like that stud horse and wouldn't get in fold with them. When they were bred to different stallions, everything worked out well."

Since I have had some experience owning a horse with novicular problems, I asked Bill how a horse like mine could communicate that his novicular bone was damaged. He explained that the horse would not use a term like novicular but he would indicate where he felt the pain.

When I first heard about someone who could talk to horses, dogs and cats I was frankly skeptical. I was surprised to discover there are literally thousands of 'horse listeners' around the world who enjoy great success.

Many very successful horse trainers, veterinarians and horse owners seem to have great respect for the ability of some humans to actually communicate with animals. Bill Northern struck me as a very sincere and honest man who truly enjoys his work and seems to be able to somehow communicate with horses in ways most people cannot understand. Northern has had a lifelong interest in the paranormal and feels he has the ability to communicate telepathically with animals. Bill Northern considers himself an animal psychic and animal communicator.

I do not claim to understand how Bill Northern communicates with animals but then again I don't really understand how invisible electrical current moves through wires, powers motors and can provide a powerful jolt if not accorded the proper respect.

However he does it, just as the Dolittle tune says, *And if you just stop and think of it. Aint no doubt of it. I'm gonna win a place in history. If I could walk with the animals. Talk with the animals. Grunt and squeak and squawk with the animals. And they could squeak and squawk and speak and talk to me!* 🐾

Learn more about Bill Northern at www.billnorthern.com and at www.horsetalk.co.nz. Information on other animal communicators at www.animaltalk.net/consultlist.htm.



Bill Northern conducts a remote session listening to a horse's complaints.

run but knew she could win. Encouraged by what Northern had learned from the horse, the trainer took Sutra to Belmont Raceway where she won the \$400,000 Frizette Stakes.

I asked Bill Northern how he rated the intelligence of horses. He said, "Horses are very intelligent. They remember. One nice thing about animals is they don't hold grudges. They will forgive you very easily." Northern contends that "Horses are often like children. They will tell each other about how they are treated or mistreated." In our conversation I brought up the book by Richard Adams titled *Traveller*, a story about General Robert E. Lee's horse. The story is told as if Traveller was speaking. In the book, General Lee's horse complains about the odor of General Jeb Stewart's cologne. Northern

how bad it is by how fast the pendulum swings."

Bill Northern says that when he looks deep into a horse's eyes he can tell if they have a problem seeing. "I can tell you if they see things blurry at a distance or up close. I am able to help show-horse people by informing them to tell their horse everything they see on that horse's blind side. It won't be long before the horse gets enough confidence to know that the rider is watching and it doesn't bother them at all."

I asked Bill Northern if he could tell if a horse had a sore back or a pain in the area of the kidneys. He said, "That is a common issue. What will happen is the horse will somehow get my eyes to just automatically go to that part of their body that hurts. All of a sudden my eyes will be