

[Scot MacGregor posted in For the Tennessee Walking Horse\(R\)](#)



**Scot MacGregor** 5:30pm Aug 9

A letter from Marty in his own words. I see a man in discovery of reality and understanding it pretty well!

Dear Friends:

Over the past few days, after an earlier email I sent to the TWHBEA International Board, a debate began. I won't bombard you with all of the previous emails (but will send them if you request unless they are marked confidential), but I thought my last response would give you some things to think about, and hopefully help spread the message from an understandable and rational point of view. When you have time, please read below.

Please feel free to share if you desire. I hope this at least makes some people think.

All the best,  
Marty

All:

What a healthy debate, one we should have had long ago. Let me make a few more points:

1) When I was at Waterfall a man called one day to breed two mares to Jose' Jose', and ran \$9,000.00 on a credit card to pay the stud fees in full up front. The two mare were sired by Merlin The Magician, and I believe the man was from Canada. During this time 2005-2007 there were many, many other breeders who did the same. The man was breeding solely for flat shod horses and had no intentions of making the foals padded show horses. Over time, and because of the negative image the padded horse has drawn to our breed these people left. They left because they could not sell Tennessee Walking Horses to anyone due to the negative stigma. Yes, economic factors are to be considered, but when it comes to horse people, most don't consider economic factors until they are at the end of their rope. Today, everyone in Germany is breeding strictly for flat shod, and someone told me a few hours ago about how they bred 5 mares to ship to Chile. These were all flat shod. Have you seen any of the horses Hannah Pulvers had with the name "wicked" in them? How many of them were bred to be padded horses? How many World Champions have come from this line. Last year's Sire of the Year was of course "Wicked Gold." The breeders are out there, and they are waiting. They know we have the best horse, but they have to sell the colts to keep breeding more.

2) Mr. Kakassy mentioned Emotion. Who in their right mind would spend the time and money we all have on horses if it weren't for emotion? Even at the height of breeding horses when the yearlings were selling high, the overall numbers of the majority of breeding farms were break even if they were lucky. We must base our decisions on educated information, but without emotion, there may not even be a TWH.

3) The law. The law does today say that pads & chains are legal, but lets look at the law. Has the law stopped the majority of padded horses from being sored or "fixed," "touched," etc? Yes, Gojoe is against the law and is considered soring. Now someone will say "but there are sound padded horses in the ring." Yes, there are, and I once made the same statement in front of the entire International Board. Then lets ask ourselves "Even if these horses are sound, what training methods were utilized to get them to this stage?" For more than a year I pondered this question, and came to the conclusion that I could not find one single padded horse who had not been sored, fixed, or touched at some point, and the majority of them had been "trained" with these methods when they were "broke" or "started." So I ask how did the sound padded horses that do exist get to the point where they perform the exaggerated gait they do?

4) A few days ago, a good friend and I discussed the points in item #3 above. He asked, "okay, well is it alright for a pro-athlete to train on steroids early on, even though they do not and meet the drug testing requirements the major league rules have set in place?" I replied "I don't watch sports, but the difference between the athlete, and the horse is that the athlete has a choice to do those things to their body, and the horse does not." The horse was put here on earth for us to enjoy, but be treated well, and we are stewards of the horse who should treat the horse with respect, and kind care. The horse has no voice, so those who stand for the Whitfield Bill, before me, and now myself along with other newcomers have become that voice for the horse.

5) The new law. Many people are for the new law, and I can tell you that at least 10 to 1 in phone calls, emails, messages, "our people" have expressed they are for the new law as well. Many of these people are not necessarily against padded horses that are sound, but they want the negativity away from our breed, so they can sell their colts. If the negativity is gone, and we focus on the positive aspects such as the World Versatility Show (which continues to grow year after year), then they will breed, and they will be able to market and sell their foals. This is just plain smart business, and marketing. My Dad mentioned earlier that he is not going to breed flat shod horses, and that is his choice, but Dad....do the math on the successful flat shot horses you have bred and raised, and the number of blue ribbons they have won, versus the successful padded horses and number of blue ribbons they have won over the past 15 years. I already know the answer, but you should calculate it on your own.

6) A comparison. "Seat belt laws." Remember when everyone hated the fact they were "forced" to wear their seatbelts

and said "hell no we won't go." Dad, I remember you instilling me how important this was, and I didn't want to wear one. The laws were passed despite what I wanted, because they were for the greater good, and today nearly every vehicle makes a "ding ding" noise about the seatbelt, and we buckle them without a second thought. How many lives has this saved?

7) The Tylenol Crisis of the 1980's. In college, I studied Public Relations. The most studied and famous case is the Tylenol Crisis. For those of you who don't know the story, google it and read about it. A number of people died because bottles of Tylenol were poisoned. For a period, while investigating Tylenol suffered major losses. It was discovered that an individual did this, and Tylenol was not at fault. Tylenol, for the greater good, implemented the "sealed top bottle" on all of its products. Look what that has led to. How many bottles of anything do you buy at the store that don't have a sealed top under the cap? Would you buy one if the seal was gone or broken? When the Jackie McConnell video hit the news, I immediately thought of this and what I had learned. Over the past 15 months I have applied these principles, and will continue on this path. Many shout "Oh no, why would you partner with HSUS?" I ask, why would you not? In comparison, the Whitfield Bill followed the McConnell case, and so did the laws that require sealed tops on consumer products.

8) We tried. For nearly two years myself, Ron Thomas, our current, and past EC's tried to get the performance horse people to change the package and action device. At first I said "hell no, we won't go" because of who I surrounded myself with, and because I only saw the perspective from the Southeast and not the global perspective. Today, many people still say "hell no, we won't go," but they are a minority, and the focus has been on the minority. We must shift that focus. Since then, and as I have progressed, my perspective has grown, and I see what it will take to market and sell out breed around the world. For this to happen, we must focus on the positive aspects and versatility of our breed. I would hope we could ALL AGREE we have the best horse and breed on earth, that nearly anyone can ride. What other breed can say this? You all have heard my comparison of the "big green dial phone" versus "today's cell phones" and what sells.

9) Money. AQHA reports there are more than 600 active millionaires participating in the cutting, reigning, roping, pole bending, and pleasure sectors of their breed. How many do we have? How many would we have if the pads and chains were gone. Remember when Zsa Zsa, Elvis & Pricilla, George Foreman, and others had Tennessee Walking Horses? Today, they wouldn't touch us! Ask yourself what would the TWH breed be like if soring, pads, and chains, never came into our breed, and where we would be. Imagine it. Close your eyes and think about it. Look at AQHA, and their numbers, they are the largest. They are Microsoft and Facebook of the equine world. We all know we have a better horse, and we can be the Microsoft and Facebook of the equine world, if we change.

A few weeks ago, a longtime friend who I have only spoken to three times in 5 or so years called me. He is a farrier in Mobile, Alabama, and shoes very few TWH's. He doesn't keep up with things, and he called about a horse he had that I bred. Our conversation led to current events and I said "We tried, and tried to save the performance horse, and now it is about saving the breed." He replied "Shouldn't it have been about saving the breed all along." WOW. That said a lot to me.

You are all good people, with good intentions, but I ask you just try to think outside the box, think about our horse's future, and close your eyes and imagine it if that is what it takes. You will see in time.

Long live the Tennessee Walking Horse,  
Marty