

## **Holistic Horse: Book on Equine Massage and Acupressure**

**Written by Bruno Matarazzo Jr./Photo by Mark Lorenz**

**Salem News Article on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2009**



Denise Bean-Raymond is a self-described health nut. So when she suffered back injuries when a trailer hauling her horse dislodged and crashed into the truck she was driving, she never took pain medication, not even Tylenol.

*"Physical therapy did help my back tremendously, but still I had some spasms that I couldn't resolve, and that's when I went to acupuncture on a whim,"* Bean-Raymond said.

That's when the light bulb went on.

*"It opened my eyes to the world of alternative therapy and complementary medicine,"* she said.

Bean-Raymond soon went to school to learn massage therapy and acupressure for horses.

Now, Bean-Raymond has written a book for horse owners looking to care for their animals holistically. *"The Illustrated Guide to Holistic Care for Horses"* (Quarry Books, 224 pages) is available at bookstores, [online](#) and at local horse speciality shops.

The Salem News recently sat down with Bean-Raymond.

### **Do horses need a massage and acupressure?**

*They do. They're over 60 percent muscle, so they have a lot of muscle in their body mass. Depending what work they do in life, they could become injured. They go through the aging process just like we do. They have problems like arthritis, just like us. Also, if they keep muscles functioning properly, it can be used to solve or diffuse or minimize any sort of pain they have.*

### **Horses can't talk. So, how do you know where they need to be worked on?**

*It's called palpation. So when you palpate a horse, you put your hand and start to feel around the horse, apply pressure, and start to look at the horse's reaction — and they are very clear on their reaction. If they don't like something, they will kick, they will bite. And when the ears are down, it's a classic sign of anger or unhappiness. As long as you know how to read a horse, they're very clear in their feelings. They're very honest, very open.*

### **And once you find the spot, what do they do?**

*They become very relieved like a human. They yawn a lot, a glaze comes over the eyes, they start to drop the head down, they become very chewy, they'll sigh out loud. They're very colorful in their reaction to what you're doing to them.*

### **When did you start riding horses?**

*I was 5. I'm the only horse person in my family. I grew up in Danvers, and that's where I originally started taking my riding lessons when I was a child.*

**What kind of business do you operate when you are not writing about horses?**

*I do massage therapy and acupuncture therapy specifically and exclusively on horses. I'm also a riding instructor.*

**How are herbs in holistic care different than traditional care for horses?**

*You use herbs instead of or adjunct to chemically-based drugs. You may add supplements to horses' diets. It's a different approach than doing traditional, straight veterinary care.*

**How hard was it to write the book?**

*In some respects, I found writing to come easily to me. In that respect, I loved it. This particular book is extremely factual, precise and clear. I had to do a lot of research while I wrote to confirm things. That takes a lot of time. It's not an easy book to write because it's so focused. In that respect, it was difficult to write.*

**Why do you like horses so much?**

*I remember being a young child and being fascinated and passionate about horses. I wanted to feed them, be with them, and I wanted to ride them. I had horse wallpaper. I remember just being very young and being passionate about them from the get-go.*

*To this day, I still have the same passion. They are awe-inspiring, beautiful creatures.*

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