

F E R G U S

FEATURES

Member Newsletter ♦ Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc., Lewistown, MT ♦ www.ferguselectric.coop

Montana's Dr. Dolittle

Kris Miller uses holistic approach to healing animals

Story by **CHARLIE DENISON** | contributing writer

"It's a privilege to help the animals help themselves."

Kris Miller, a Healing Touch for Animals Certified Practitioner in Roundup, keeps this motto in mind every time she's presented with an opportunity to work with a wide variety of animals. She may be the one offering the healing, but when the work is done she finds it also puts her in a place of peace.

"It's quite magical to watch an animal once timid and spooked by everybody turn around, relax and enjoy life," Kris said.

A lover of animals all her life, who grew up farming and ranching in South Dakota, Kris said she comes by this vocation naturally. It quickly became a passion she's very intentional about making time for outside her longstanding career in workplace safety and health leadership.

Ambitious and hard-working, it didn't take long for Kris to start to climb the ranks, completing four levels of the Healing Touch for Animals practice, studying directly under founder and Director Carol Komitor.

"I fell in love with the discipline," Kris said, "and I've been on the journey ever since. Just recently I finished an advanced proficiency course and I am looking forward to attending another one. I'm always learning."

The work Kris does on animals, she



Kris Miller is a Healing Touch for Animals Certified Practitioner based out of Roundup. Her clientele can include any type of animal. The work she does essentially helps animals help themselves. | **PHOTO COURTESY OF RENEGADE PHOTOGRAPHY**

says, is similar to massage, as her goal is to help the animal relax. As she uses her hands to do so she watches for relaxation responses, such as yawning and a head drop.

"These relaxation responses help the animal release endorphins and release toxins to regulate their immune system," she said.

Such techniques help initiate physiological relaxation response cycles and provide the animal with an overall sense of well-being and security.

This works by opening and balancing the animal's system.

"Allowing the relaxation responses assists the body in righting itself," she

said. "Healing is not always a cure. In circumstances where an animal is dealing with a terminal illness or aging, then this process helps provide the best quality of life for the time remaining. It can also help ease the transition in the end-of-life process."

When working with the animal, Kris makes it a priority to help the animal access its instinctual wisdom, which is reminiscent of the low-stress animal handling technique used in stockmanship.

"The science behind the work that I do is the same science behind

See Kris, page 7



MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Carson Sweeney

WELCOME, November! The previous month doesn't have a history of being my favorite. October 2, 2017, brought a winter storm to Montana's Hi-Line that destroyed more than 350 NorthWestern Energy power poles. Two weeks later we had all power restored and a disaster of poles, wire and damaged fields to clean up. An event like that leaves a lasting impression in one's memory.

Unfortunately, this October also had an event that won't soon be forgotten by several of our local members, including me and my family. On October 4 a fire started in the South Moccasin Mountains, and within hours my family was evacuated from our home on the north side of the mountain. Teams of people worked tirelessly to combat the fire to protect homes and property. Their effort saved our home, along with many others, and I want to graciously thank everyone who participated. Neighbors from far and wide offered assistance in many ways and we greatly appreciated their help. Sadly, thousands of acres of pristine property were destroyed. Our thoughts and prayers are with those members who lost a great deal in this fire.

Fergus Electric Cooperative's powerlines were minimally impacted by the fire, mostly because the lines were buried underground. Going forward we will continue to bury powerlines in heavily forested areas, when feasible, as aged overhead powerlines require replacement.

Aerial drone overhead facilities inspection

In another part of our service territory, we recently conducted a pilot program engaging the talents of a drone operator to visually inspect our overhead facilities in the White Sulphur Springs area. We called our members in advance to notify them and soon after the operator launched his drone and spent the next several days flying the aircraft from pole-to-pole recording video footage. In reviewing the aerial footage, we were impressed with the clarity and detail shown. From the drone's vantage point, we can identify various maintenance concerns that need addressed, such as chipped or broken insulators, loose or missing hardware, and vegetation issues. Using the information gleaned from the videos, we create service orders based on priority of the maintenance items. Our operations team then schedules a crew to take care of the maintenance. I expect that we will continue to use this technology going forward to help inspect the powerlines across our service territory. It will make our day-to-day maintenance work much easier. Patrolling powerlines can be time consuming. In the future, crews can drive directly to the

South Moccasin Mountains



Fire in the South Moccasin Mountains. | PHOTO BY BRIAN GODBEY

identified trouble spot and make the necessary repairs before we have serious problems on our powerlines. Piloting a proactive line inspection program and maintaining our lines on an ongoing basis helps to ensure reliable service for years to come.

Thankful for Veterans, family and friends

We want to thank all the veterans and their families for their service to our great country. We owe you a huge debt of gratitude. Happy Veterans Day!

It has been another tough year due to a lack of moisture and the pandemic. Even so, I hope this Thanksgiving our members can gather with family and friends, eat good food and give thanks. Happy Thanksgiving! RM



the low-stress animal handling technique,” she said. “Both areas of study help the animal help themselves and make production activities safer for animals and humans.”

Kris relies on the animal’s instinctual wisdom to assist them in all the work she does, be it illness, injury, pain management, competition, emotional trauma, anxiety, stress reduction, disease prevention or other conditions.

While Kris is certified in this discipline, she wants it known she is not a veterinarian; she works in cooperation with veterinary and other professionals, such as trainers.

“This work bridges holistic health care with traditional veterinary medicine,” she said. “The techniques enhance veterinary practices.”

Success in the field

Animals can’t exactly articulate how Kris’s practice makes them feel verbally, but they can show physical results, and they do.

This was especially the case with a horse named Scoot.

“I was aware Scoot had a tough past,” Kris said, “so we worked on trauma release. The first visit was so rewarding. At first he was skittish, but as I continued, he was refreshed. By the end he was nuzzling up to me, wanting the techniques. It was very special.”

An athletic horse, Scoot was being conditioned for barrel racing, and Kris said her work played a part in a cooperative effort with the owner to get him ready for competition.

“Previously Scoot was having stress-related issues getting loaded into the trailer. After I had time with him, however, he was more comfortable and was able to conserve his energy for the competition, in which he now routinely gets in the money.”

Scoot’s stablemate, Ice Man, also gets in the money now thanks largely to the partnership between the owner and Kris’s work.

“Ice Man had a similar background



Kris Miller recently performs a bridging technique on a horse named Doc. This technique can be used to help an animal discover its true expression, and it also helps the animal relax. | PHOTO COURTESY OF RENEGADE PHOTOGRAPHY

and was also conditioned for barrel racing,” she said. “He would compete well but on occasion would blow up in the arena. I did some behavior modification techniques with him that helped him relax under pressure.”

Scoot and Ice Man both started to look forward to these sessions, Kris said, to the point where they were both anxious for a turn.

“Ice Man would try to get in on the action while I was working with Scoot,” she said, laughing.

These techniques, Kris said, will work on any animal, be it wild, domestic or exotic.

“And this approach doesn’t just benefit the animal,” she added. “It also benefits the pet owners. My desire is to make a positive difference for everyone I meet. I want to offer something that will make their lives better, offer hope and inspiration. This is the genuine foundation of my practice.”

Kris is aware some people around the state may be caught off-guard by the unconventional approach she

offers. This has happened a few times.

“One time I was working on a horse for a traditional stockman who clearly wondered how receptive his animal would be to the work. The horse was elderly and had some stiffness issues. As I did my work I saw the owner leaning on his tailgate with his arms crossed. The horse was responding well. It was a successful session, and I could tell the owner knew, because I could see him uncross his arms and take notice. He could tell it made an impact because he told me, ‘when you finished the horse looked at you like he wanted to give you a great big hug.’ That’s one of the best parts of this — when people see the positive impact the work has on their animals.”

The impact, Kris said, can be huge, as it’s not uncommon for pet owners to not be aware of a trauma situation that triggers their animal. It is Kris’s job to identify these issues, bring them to light and begin the healing.

See KRIS, next page

Capital Credits General Retirement Checks to be issued in November

OUR board of directors is pleased to report that based on the financial condition of the cooperative they have authorized retiring approximately \$990,000 in capital credits (also known as patronage capital), which includes the balance of the years 1995 and 1996, and 40 percent of 1997. Office Manager Sally Horacek said that Fergus Electric Cooperative will issue capital credit checks in November to current and former co-op members who had active accounts during the years being retired.

IRS reporting requirements for checks \$600 or greater

Fergus Electric Cooperative is required by the IRS to report on IRS Form 1099-MISC any capital credit general retirement checks equal to or greater than \$600. Prior to mailing the checks totaling \$600 or more, Fergus Electric needs a completed IRS Form W-9, Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification, from the recipient of the check. If you receive an IRS Form W-9 from us, please complete and return it to Fergus Electric as soon as possible, so we can mail your capital credit general retirement check to you without delay. If you have any questions, please call Susie at (406) 538-3465.

Pyrah earns journeyman status!

In June 2019, Brock Pyrah joined the Fergus Electric team when he was hired to work as an apprentice lineman in Roundup. After thousands of hours of both on-the-job and required off-duty training, tons of bookwork and tests, Brock's hard work and dedication paid off as he finished the apprentice program and passed his final exam in September 2021, becoming a certified journeyman lineman. Congratulations Brock – we are all proud of you!



Brock Pyrah

KRIS

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"I don't want to see any animal suffer needlessly," she said, "or any person, for that matter. This all goes back to my background of safety and risk management, which I consider 'real help for real people in a real way,' well, the same applies here, in this case for the animal."

Clearing trauma is intensive work, Kris added, and it can take time to reach the desired goal.

"Building trust is critical," she said,

"and may take subsequent visits."

Having recently achieved certified practitioner status, Kris said she takes great pride in the work she offers and looks forward to serving more animals and pet owners in and around central Montana.

"I'm always looking for more clients, and I'd love to work more closely with other veterinarians, trainers and those in the livestock field," she said.

Editor's Note: Kris Miller has received service from Fergus Electric Cooperative since October 2015.



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**Account 318008, Account 396463
Account 319498, Account 43002
Account 347842, Account 393733**

No winner to report for last month.

*NUMBERS ARE DRAWN MONTHLY

Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc.

LEWISTOWN, MT

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

FOR OUTAGES

First: Check the fuses or breakers in the building in which the electricity is off.

Second: Check the breaker below the meter.

Third: If electricity is still out, call a neighbor to see if they have electricity.

Fourth: Call 406-538-3465 day or night or:

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