

User Comments

regarding The BITLESS BRIDLE, from 2006 to 2012

Mary, December 01, 2012:

I wrote to you a while back because after I'd ordered a bitless bridle for my Icelandic gelding, Odinn, I was injured in a (non-horse-related) accident, and couldn't ride for a few weeks. You very kindly said you'd extend the warranty time until I could actually try it out.

Yesterday was my fourth ride with the bitless bridle. Although I haven't taken him out on the trails alone yet, I've done trail and road rides with 1-3 other horses and riders, and some solo work in the arena. The most noticeable thing is that he's not getting wired up. I had been riding him in a jointed snaffle and tried always to be very gentle on his mouth, but he would often head shake and if he did have to be slowed,, such as not to crowd the horse ahead or for any other reason, I could feel the tension building. When riding alone he would often start gathering momentum until the only way to keep him from taking off was to ride tight circles. Although it's only been four rides so far, the tension just seems to have evaporated. Yesterday it was extremely windy. I expected him to be nervous, maybe even unrideable. Instead he was calm and relaxed enough for us to ride the road to the woods and then the trail through the woods. No problem!

The local Icelandic club has their winter meeting at the beginning of February, and I would love to share information about the bitless bridle at the meeting. Would it be possible for you to send me some brochures I could make available there? I watched the video of Icelandics on your website before I rode in the bridle myself, and it was so neat to see that horse toting strongly just as if he was being ridden in a regular bitted bridle. I'm excited to try a solo ride on the trails, and will let you know how that goes, as that's the ultimate test.

Elizabeth, November 24, 2012:

For 7 years, my Morgan mare has been fighting the bit, making our rides less than enjoyable! I've spent hundreds of dollars on bits and thousands on training all in an effort to put 'brakes' on her. Thanks to this new bridle, the head tossing is gone, she stops on a dime, seems genuinely happy wearing this bridle and is a joy to ride. I've ridden more since this bridle arrived 2 months ago than I have in years! This Bitless Bridle is Revolutionary!! It has completely changed my horse-she is happy and looks forward our rides. I am looking forward to many adventures with her....

Donna, November 17, 2012:

Hello Carole, I'm so sorry it has taken me this long to get back to you. We have had some pretty unpleasant days, so not much riding. I just had a wonderful hour and a half ride with Charlie and I have to say I don't know how I ever rode without the BB. If I had only known that riding could be this effortless. This bridle was made for us. Charlie simply loves it. He is so amazingly comfortable in hand. We have struggled with our canter depart for almost 2 years (remember I don't ride in the winter) but with the BB we have absolutely no issues whatsoever. All I can say is Thank You so much. We could not be happier.

Christina, November 01, 2012:

Finally I get some time to email you and thank you for this wonderful product. I have a 5 year old Trotter broke to ride last Fall. On the track in the jog cart he was a complete runaway. No bit (no matter what sev jog or train him any more. When I broke him to ride I used a regular half-cheek snaffle, but was always constantly fighting the bit, throwing his head and grabbing the bit. Strangely enough I would ride him bare would be a total gentleman. This gave me the idea to try your Bitless Bridle. I am totally amazed! No throwi work great!! I like to go on long hacks with him, but did not feel safe with a bit. With the Bitless Bridle I fee horse that is not controllable with a bit! The only downside is this: I have started showing my Trotter in the allow the bitless bridle, but as soon as you reach first level.....no shot! I wish more people would put pressur so that this bridle will be allowed and even promoted. I am able to teach my horse to get into a frame a whereas with the bit he is too busy fighting it. Have you tried starting a petition?
Thank you again for inventing such a wonderful product!

Anna, October 08, 2012:

Love it!!!! We participated in a local hunter/pace event. An 8 mile timed event. I was so proud to ride my horse bitless and have the control needed in a competitive trail event including but not limited to: horses running up from behind, trotting around corners to find horses and riders, crossing rail road tracks twice, ribbons and more ribbons fluttering from the tress, deer startled from their slumber, killer leaves falling from the sky, mysterious dirt mounds and horse eating squirrels :)

Pamela, October 04, 2012:

I have been meaning to send in a testimonial about your bridle for quite awhile. This bridle is so amazing; it deserves the highest praise. It is important that more horse people become aware of just how damaging the bit is to our horses and how many evasions are caused by this one piece of equipment. I attached my testimonial. You are welcome to use it as needed. I have also written about this bridle on my blog page:
<http://goodhorsekeeping.blogspot.com/2011/04/bitless-bridle.html#comment-form>
Thank you for such a valuable piece of equipment for our horses.

My testimonial:

I have been using the bitless bridle for about 2 years now. I am so impressed with the function of this bridle that I doubt I would ever go back to using a bit on my horses again. Everything you claim it can correct is very true.

I have a 19H Hanoverian. He is a dressage horse. For some time while bridling him, he started to put his head up in resistance and getting very nervous, causing a diarrhea attack. He has always been very accepting of the bridle and would drop his head in submission allowing him to be bridled. His change of behavior became so pronounced that under saddle he would be lame.

Searching for a cause I came across your website and decided to give the bitless bridle a try. I was hesitant simply because of his size, not too sure I would have enough control should I need to handle a difficult situation.

I was quite amazed at how the opposite occurred. I found I had more control, more

stopping action and a much quicker response to the bitless bridle than with a bit. With the first bridling once he realized there was no bit all of the nervous behavior stopped. He now lowers his head to drop it into the bridle.

The bridle lameness disappeared. His gaits and rhythm became very supple and forward. The bridle allows him to travel correctly without the interference of the bit. He can track straight and respond to my aids without the normal resistance that is often seen with bitted horses.

I was so impressed not only with what it did for his movement but for his mind. He is much calmer and is more willing to work. He has no problem moving forward and going into the bridle taking a contact and moving off the leg aids

Speaking of leg aids, using this bridle, allows the rider to become better skilled by keeping the horse moving off the leg and seat aids and not hanging on to your hands. There is nowhere for a rider to hang onto and there is nowhere for the horse to grab and lean.

The results were so impressive I bought another one for my other horse. He is a 16.3H Oldenburg. When I bought him 2 years ago I learned he had a bad habit of turning into a bucking bronco when he didn't want to move forward. He was a master at it. I decided to try him in the bitless bridle.

He tried to do his bucking act and realized there was no bit for him to grab hold of, he quickly stopped. The look in his eye was of surprise. It was quite amazing to witness changes in him. The other bad habit he had was curling behind the bit. He no longer does this. The results were pretty dramatic.

I had another horse that I was training for a friend of mine. This horse would curl so much behind the bit that he would practically touch his nose to his chest trying to avoid the pain the bit was causing.

As a demonstration I first lunged him with side reins and the bit. The instant I hooked up the side reins he curled his head in became extremely fidgety and then would bolt forward and run in a panic style trot.

I then stopped him, took the bridle off and put on Dr. Cook's bitless bridle. I hooked up the side reins. There was no fidgeting and he held his head in the proper position with no curling. I asked him to trot and he trotted off in a beautiful suspended trot with his head slightly in front of the vertical. This was quite a transformation and instant.

I would highly recommend anyone to try Dr. Cook's bitless bridle. The results will astound you. When starting your horse using this for the first time it is important to lunge them first to give them a chance to figure it out. It won't take long. As a rider you will still use the same leg and seat aids that you normally do. Nothing changes and the results speak for themselves.

Ralph, July 10, 2012:

I received my bridle today and tried it out this evening. Seldom do you get a product that surpasses all its advertised promises but wow! Horse and rider found immediate and incredible results! I am so pleased - thank you so much for such a great product!

Janice, July 6, 2012:

Please thank Dr. Cook personally for me. His bridle has done absolute wonders for my gelding. I was concerned about the "whoa" factor and was happy to learn I have great brakes! He responds so well now to all my cues. In all my years on eBay, I have never come across a seller so helpful and patient. Thank you for this great product and stellar customer service. I will be sure to spread the word.

Lynn, July 03, 2012:

I give lessons and train horses. I have to say this bridle has worked on every horse. I have a gelding that hates bits and would fight and resist. When you try to stop him he would get stiff and actually speed up and fight you. Well not in this bridle he is like a pussycat. Remember I work with racehorses that want to run. He stopped pushing, stops great and is not throwing his head. He didn't like the hackamore either but it was the best option until this bridle. I can put beginners on him and not worry.

My little mare is very chuggy and would also push and get stiff with a bit "pain". She was soft and responsive in the bitless bridle. Stopped great, turns on a dime and was much more relaxed. I wanted something that would be good for beginners to ride in because they are usually too heavy handed and I was always worried about my horses being hurt. So I would sound like a broken record stop pulling, stop pulling... Not in this bridle the horses are happy, riders and instructor.

My four-year-old mare has had all kinds of issues: rearing, bucking, and throwing her head. She hates any kind of "pain". She is very sensitive and smart. She took to this bridle right away and I am going to send you a video of her running barrels in it. I had her in the lightest hackamore I could find and she still would give me trouble in it. Many people would have given up on her and say she is too dangerous. I know she is not a mean horse; I just had to figure out what would work for her.

Lynn, July 02, 2012:

I am a professional barrel racer and trainer. I have found this bitless bridle to be gentle and give clear communication without resistance. My horses are more responsive and happier. I really didn't think it would give enough control but it does. Love it.

Denice, June 9, 2012:

I just wanted you to know that I have now owned my bitless bridle for over a year. I originally purchased it because my mare has melanoma in her mouth, so my snaffle bit, nor any bit was a good option. I am SO GLAD and SO SATISFIED with my purchase that I just had to tell you again. Soft works well with this bridle; and, we all know that soft hands make for quiet and flexible mounts. My mare is a 21 year old Arabian (going on 5) and thanks to this fantastic bridle, we can continue to spend many wonderful riding hours together. My veterinarian was looking for a bitless bridle for one of his clients. I was very happy to show him mine and explain how and why it works. Thanks again for all your help. Think I'll be getting one for my Morgan too.

Janie, June 05, 2012:

My name is Janie and my horse is J.D. J.D. was originally a ranch horse until he suffered a leg injury, then he was a schooling horse owned by my trainer. My trainer gave him to me as a gift three years ago because we loved each other. He did have a habit of throwing his head and shaking his head. He actually managed to shake his bridle off his head one time while on the trail. I did switch to a different bridle and snaffle bit and he was somewhat better but I was always worried about his response to the bit and attended workshops and researched different bits trying to educate myself on the best solution to make our riding a good experience for J.D. and me. I saw an advertisement in Horse and Rider magazine for Dr. Cook's bitless bridle and after reading testimonials from other riders I decided to give it a try. I received my bitless bridle about three weeks ago and have been riding with it several times a week. I started out slow, working at the walk just to get him used to it. J.D. and I did a lot of turns, figure eights, and circles to make sure he was comfortable. We moved on to the trot and canter and he has responded so well, I can't believe it. I am telling everyone at my barn about it. J.D. is so relaxed. He is paying better attention to my cues. We are working together like a well oiled machine. My trainer is very impressed too. I haven't taken him out on the trail with it yet, but I am totally confident that he will do so well on the trail. I have no worries. Thank you so much Dr. Cook for developing this bridle. J.D. and I are very grateful.

Kathrin, May 8, 2012:

I am writing to thank you for the bitless bridle! I purchased the bridle several years ago for my older mare who has dental issues. She was diagnosed with idiopathic line fractures in 2008 and has had extensive dental work done in the following years. It has been a lifesaver for us, I can continue to ride her even after the diagnosis. She has never been so happy to go out on a trail ride or work in the ring. My mare's tense moments with a bit in her mouth have been replaced with suppleness and relaxation followed by a wonderful and relaxing ride.

The bitless has become popular at the barn, every horse at the facility is ridden in a bitless. From the quarter horse to the sport horse and standardbred, each one has had a positive experience in the bridle. I enjoy sharing our success with others and can't thank you enough.

Amanda, February 16, 2012:

Just wanted to give you some feedback after buying 2 Dr Cook's bitless bridles for my Quarter horses. I purchased a QH gelding last year who is quiet but I'd noticed he was head shy and would toss his head with his mouth open when I tried a variety of bits on him. Even though I'm very light with my hands, he always seemed to be in pain when there was pressure from the bit (turning and stopping). I only had snaffles but nothing seemed to make him happy. I had his teeth done (no problems there), and he's fine to worm and play with his mouth but there were definite issues with the conventional bridles and bits I was using.

So, I tried riding in my rope halter to give him a break, but I found him quite pushy with it and he leaned on it. If he'd wanted to take off I wasn't sure how well I could stop him, even though I've ridden for years.

After reading Dr Cook's book and another book explaining just how cruel and

unnecessary bits are, I decided to purchase your bitless bridles. Well, after 2 rides, I have a different horse - one that doesn't lift his head sky high when putting it on, and he's so light in hand too (he was so pushy before). He responds to turning and stopping really well.

I rode my old mare this morning in the bitless (though she has always 'tolerated' a bit) and she acted like a horse half her age (she's 22). No naughtiness, just wanting to keep on going and going rather than looking toward home. I will be riding my endurance mare in one of your bridles too.

I am very happy with the results and won't be riding with bits any longer. The proof is there with my happy horses. Thanks! (and a BIG thanks from my horses).

Nicole, February 15, 2012:

I just wanted to email to say I am so glad to have discovered the Dr Cook Bitless bridle. My daughter's pony is just amazing now in the bitless bridle, he responded straight away like he had been in it forever. We are shocking everyone around us who told us to get rid of him, but my heart knew there had to be another way!!! No one can believe how well he works in a bridle with out a bit, they can't believe he stops now with out a bit even!!!! He is one happy pony and so are we. Thank you I am so glad I found you. It would be great to see bits become BANNED! Warm regards and lots of appreciation of what you endorse.

Grace, January 24, 2012:

Hello! I just wanted to give you an update. Velvet used to lift her head really high at bridle time and clamp her teeth. But now as soon as she sees your bridle she puts her head down and forwards! Yesterday I was standing in front of her holding the bridle up and checking nothing was twisted and she got sick of waiting for me and came up and put her head in it!! How funny is that?!

She no longer walks off while I'm getting on. Yesterday she even stood still on a "spooky" bridle path while I climbed on a fence to get back on! The best result is she no longer walks off as soon as I turn her back out in the field. She comes back to the gate for cuddles!

So a very big 'Thank You' from Velvet! She is a very happy horse now!

Kristina, January 19, 2012:

I have now received my bitless bridle, it fits perfect on my horse, and he is very happy with it! He used to throw himself away and dance and step when I came with his old bridle with bit. (His previous owner wasn't very careful with his mouth.) Now I just hold the bridle, and he himself puts his head into it. It took nearly an hour the first time, we took it in millimeter steps, but now he just loves it. He is also very relaxed when we are riding. I'll never change back!

Lynda, January 09, 2012:

I ordered this bridle for my horse about a month ago. I was a little hesitant to ride him with it outside of the small pasture that I have due to the fact that he (9 year old Tennessee Walker, 16+ hands) is very spirited and sometimes hard to handle. But yesterday I took my chances and put it on him... AMAZING!!!! He was HAPPY ? He held his head up high, no throwing it around... brakes worked!!!! (which was my biggest concern)... THANK YOU SO

MUCH for this wonderful bridle. I walked out this morning to his stall and held it up and he actually put his nose in willingly!!!!!! which has never happened with a bit... THANKS AGAIN.

Becky, January 08, 2012:

Just wanted to say that we had our first session on our bridle today and my just 6 year old Standardbred that is new under the saddle rocked it! I've only had him for 5 weeks (one month trial and just purchased him) and I've been blogging his progress. Today's blog is a big fat commercial for bit less bridle among other things. I was SO pleasantly surprised!!! Check it out at www.beckyaud-jennison.blogspot.com. I'll see if I can link it to your FB page.

Loren, January 03, 2012:

I tried my BB today for the first time. Simply AMAZING!!! My 9 yr old warm blood mare was happily moving forward, collected, more balanced, relaxed. It was a superb ride. On the bit she used to move her head up and down when she was collected. That was solved with the BB. I cannot wait to use it again and continue to see progress. I regret all the years I have been using the bit, but I am glad I discovered this wonderful piece of equipment.

Other people at my stables were amazed to see me ride with the BB today. Some even got on my mare to try it and they loved it!

Gunter, September 19, 2011:

I have received the Bitless Bridle and tried it on both of my horses with great success. I am one of the horse people that believes you can learn every day. I own horse since 1963 and always wondered about the use of "Bits" and how the horse must feel having that piece of metal in their mouth.

I took both of my horses out for a trail ride, about three hours, and found that the horses indeed were very relaxed. One of my geldings was always giving me a hard time when I wanted to get back on him after a break. NO MORE. It's amazing he just stands there the way I had trained him to do. If you do not mind, I will keep informing you of my ongoing experience as time goes on.

Bruce, September 07, 2011:

I ordered a BB for one horse with a tongue injury from bit and could ride immediately. He normally is challenging but actually was better behaved with the BB than bit. We have tried these on our entire fleet with immediate positive results. This has made quite the impression on our riders and students, encouraging them to switch in time. We have shown the effectiveness to members of the hunt and are encouraging them to switch as well.

We will be ordering more so our entire fleet has their own and to keep on hand for loaning to friends and students to try on their horses. Next year I'll demonstrate at team penning, but don't have much hope for dressage.

Leslie, August 30, 2011:

The only horse on the trail ride that was relaxed and "not on the bit" or

jigging. I researched your bridle when I found a tumor on the inside corner of Dallas' mouth. He is a very happy camper now. Thank-you!

Pete, August 26, 2011:

I am expounding on the benefits and ease of use of your bridle to everyone I know. I'm involved with a donkey/mule rescue and, as such, have contact with a lot of different people involved with equines. I can't rave about your product enough.

A friend of mine just placed an order yesterday for her bridle after seeing my boys (both my donks) react so well to the Bitless Bridle. Attached are [a couple of pictures](#) of Tumbles with his Bitless Bridle (small with x-small noseband) and a little wagon. He gets so excited when he sees the bridle because he knows he's going for a drive.

[These pictures](#) represent the first time he was harnessed to this little wagon (weight about 85 lbs...me, a little more. LOL) and he did fantastic. This is only his 6th or so time driving ANYTHING and he responds effortlessly to the bridle with very little input needed from me. No pain, no fear, and he loves it.

Holly, July 23, 2011:

Thank you, Carole. I tried the bridle for the first time today and LOVE it. It really seems to make a difference when I'm cantering. My horse seems much more relaxed!

Robin, July 21, 2011 12:

Dear Dr Cook and company, Wanted to thank you so much for such a wonderful product. I love this bridle!! Even had an opportunity to compare it to the Nurtural Bitless and yours is the superior bridle. I'm 49 and have ridden most of my life. Did take a break to raise the kids and then my husband bought me a horse! Been riding Belle bitless for over a year now and have no intentions of going to the bit ever again with her. I got her when she was 3 1/2 and she had been started in a french snaffle. Over the next couple of months she worked "ok" in it, but seemed over sensitive to the bit at times no matter how gentle I was. Granted, being an Arab/Saddlebred she's just plain sensitive to everything, but I thought if anyone could go bitless, Belle could.

Now I know the Nurtural Bitless is a competitor, but I had the opportunity to borrow one just to see if going bitless was an option and observed some interesting differences between their bridle and yours, so keep reading... Belle is only 14.3h, but has many "frisky" days.

Day One--we stayed in the paddock. As gentle as I was, there was lots of head tossing, pulling her head to the opposite side when I would ask for a turn, and sometimes she'd just flip her head at me and give me the evil eye!! Remember she's very sensitive. Had my doubts, but then remembered she reacted to the bit the same way when I first started riding her... so... we persevered.

Day 2--she was a different horse in it, relaxed and responsive. I didn't expect that big of a change so quickly, but there it was! So we headed out in to the field for a "field" test. In the days and weeks that followed we encountered deer, spooky things that only a three-year-old filly can see, blustery blizzard conditions (January in NY state!), and playful antics. Through it all, she always respected the bridle. **However**, the widget that the makers of the Nurtural brag

on so much was a problem. I would start out with the widget set properly loose and by the end of **every** ride the widget had tightened down. Day after day I checked this and the results were the same. Belle would be strong on the rein on those blustery winter days and my green horse wasn't getting the release I wanted to give her to encourage her to settle down. I had already decided on a Dr Cook BB, but this just confirmed it. Incidentally, by the time the Canadian postage is paid, the Nurtural nylon bridle is more expensive than the Dr Cooks beta...and the beta material is far superior to the nylon!

A few weeks later I had my Dr Cook's on her with even better results than the Nurtural. We've ridden down the road encountering cars and trucks, in farmers fields, and down trails. I've had some wild rides on my silly mare over the past year +, but Belle (now 5) continues to respect this bridle. Her carriage has vastly improved and continues to improve as we both learn together. This summer we're working on schooling, seeking contact with the "bit"/rein (mmm...need new term for that!) by lowering her head, straightening, rounding her back, and ultimately collection... we're doing it bitless!

I have the beta, and though I was a die hard leather person, the beta won me over. Soft, supple, easy to clean, almost indestructible. If I could get my Freeform saddle in beta material, I'd do it. My daughter and friend are now riding in Dr C BB's!! My friend's horse is a former gaming horse, but is working beautifully in the bitless. That's a whole other story, though, and I bent your ear enough.

Cynthia, July 19, 2011:

My name is Cynthia Jorgenson and I am the co-founder and president of Mountain Ridge Animal Rescue Foundation in Davenport, Washington. I recently had the pleasure of using your bitless bridle on several of our rescue horses. Wow! What a wonderful product. I purchased the synthetic bridle from the Tack Trunk in Spokane Washington last year and this spring I began to use it on the rescues. One mare in particular has been very hard to handle with a bit and of course with the hackamore that she came with. (All hackamores have been discarded by the way!) At first she didn't know what to think about the feel but it didn't take her long to appreciate it. She is a much calmer horse now, which says a lot for an arabian. LOL

The second horse is another arabian that was supposed to have been ridden with a snaffle bit all her life. Well, it's hard to believe as she acted like she didn't know what to do with a bit in her mouth and she was very prancy. The bit spent most of the time under her tongue instead of where it was supposed to be. We switched her to your bitless bridle and she was a dream. Our trainer said she would put her 4 year old daughter on her and feel confident that she would be safe.

The third horse is a 26 year old QH who has been very hard to ride. She constantly throw her head up, down, sideways etc. She never seems to enjoy her rides. Not with the bitless bridle. We see a definite difference in her demeanor. Thank you so very much. We have 15 other rescue horses just beginning their training here and are very anxious to put the bitless bridle to work.

www.mountainridgeanimalrescue.org

Melanie, June 13, 2011:

I just wanted to send you a little note to thank you for a wonderful product. I ordered

my BB a few weeks ago and have been using nothing else since. My five-year-old Haflinger mare has become much more responsive and willing, and I don't feel guilty about riding her anymore!

This is my first horse and I have only had her about four months, and from the beginning I sensed that the bit was bothering her immensely. She's a good girl and tries to please, never bucked in protest, but I could tell she was unhappy and consequently I came back from our rides disappointed and unsure of both herself and me. But now we ride four times a week and are having a blast, she shoves her head right in the bridle when she sees it! This is one horse who will never have metal in her mouth again.

Thanks again!

Sister Laura, May 2011:

[Here is a photo](#) with The Dr. Cook Bitless Bridle that we use for the Best Bardigiana Daina (an Italian horse race). The Bitless Bridle is fantastic and we are very happy to have the hosts of the Eremo use it. We will also use it on our fantastic female mule in the mountains!

Greetings to you and to Dr. Cook, and thank you for this wonderful discovery!

Sister Laura - www.associazionemonteluce.com

Carole, June 06, 2011:

I just received my second Bitless Bridle in record time! Shipping between you and my location in northern WV is well served by UPS! I ordered one day and got it the next.

My first Bitless is used on my bit shy Percheron. I lunge him and ground drive with it and he really responds well in it. I do not ride him at this time because of an accident I had in 07. I cannot risk being off work again! Falling from him is quite a bit further than with my other horses. Had I been using a bitless on him in 07, perhaps the accident would not have happened. I won't say that for certain as it was largely a mounting accident involving a stepladder but I will say that he is a better horse because of Dr. Cook!

My most recent purchase has been used on my Haflingers to ride and lunge. They have done well with it. I was not having trouble with them but they are happy and why use a bit if you don't have to! I am going to try it on a horse I am riding for friends that has a nasty habit of dropping her head and banging herself in the mouth with the bit. I have tried little or no contact but she just does it to herself. I think being used as a lesson horse has created this issue. Keeping my fingers crossed that Dr. Cook will help!

I did not think I would like Biothane but I love it. It is particularly nice when using it on several horses as one can easily clean it. No worries about oiling and saddle soap! Now I'm going to work on saving for my next Dr. Cook purchase. Thank you for the great product and wonderful service.

Trudy, June 03, 2011:

Just a quick note to let you folks know how much I enjoy trailriding with my new bridle. My horse is happy... I'm happy... what a great way to ride. In fact, I first ordered the English style "leather" and liked it so much that I turned around and ordered the "synthetic" one for a backup. But I was pleasantly surprised to see that the synthetic one looks as good as the leather one!!!

Thanks again for coming up with something so wonderful.

Sue, May 2011:

I have particularly decided to write my feed back for the horse owners that think a bitless bridle would not be of any use for " their particular horse " I own a 17.1 Irish hunter, I've had him 3 years. He has never been an easy horse from day one. He is as temperamental as they come, he can nap and spook for England, he's very sharp and is the strongest horse ever known in an open space. He's extremely quirky and nervy and grumpy, he can go from relatively calm to explosive in a nanosecond and will then remain that way for the rest of the ride. He knows every evasion of the bit ever invented. Might I add this horse is extremely well schooled, professionally so.

After a 5 month injury rest, I decided to research the BB as we have never really been able to find a bit that works, and as far I was concerned he just was not happy. I must say I was intrigued at reading the users comments and it got me interested, I decided against every ones better judgment that I was going to give it a try, I had serious concern from friends due to his temperament, that they thought I had "finally took leave of my senses, and that I was on some sort of death wish" I am now 8 weeks into riding bitless, and I have to say that it was one of the best decisions I have ever made. He is a much calmer horse all round, yes he still naps and spooks but he gets over it instantly, the incidents have reduced by 70%. The antics in wide open spaces have also reduced, I knew this area was going to take time for him to realize that all his tricks were not going to work any more (and boy he has tried them all) and finally with patience and consistency he's getting there!! This week he has walked... yes walked across open fields, been lighter in hand, cantered so beautifully across the clover, I just cannot believe it's the same horse. I would urge any one to try the BB and particularly so on this type of horse, don't expect a miracle on day one, but give your horse the time he deserves to settle into this new concept. I cannot thank Sheila from BB enough for her time in talking to me, and her advice given. Also Dr Cook for a brilliant bridle. I never thought I would see the day I rode this horse bitless and no martingale. If any one would like to talk to me I would be more than happy to do so. What are you waiting for - open your mind and give it a try. Never will my horse be bitted again.

Denice, May 13, 2011:

Got the bridle already today. I was easily able to fit it perfectly, and it was SO EASY to do. It will fit my Morgan too. After fitting it, I tried it out. At first, the mare looked a little confused. But after about 3 seconds of requesting with soft tugs on each side, she got it! Whoa was no issue. Light hands really work. I am 68 years old and have owned horses since I was 11. THIS IS THE BEST bitless I have ever used. Thank you so much for being so helpful and responsive to all of my questions. Happy customer...

Cindy, May 02, 2011:

Attached you will find [several photos](#) of my horse, "GI's Silver Streak," AKA/Buddy, being ridden for the first time in his beta Bitless Bridle, which I purchased at Equine Affaire in Columbus Ohio in April of this year.

Buddy is a 17-year-old Tennessee Walking Horse. I've owned him since he was 7 years old, and have ridden him in numerous types of bits commonly used on Walking Horses, all with

at least a 4" shank and a curb. Over the years, he has always tried to put his tongue over the bit, and has fussed with the bit, no matter what type of bit we used.

For the last couple of years, he's developed the habit of "chewing" with and without the bit, working his jaw from side to side, etc., and opening his mouth, almost like a yawn. I've had my vet check his teeth twice each year, and he hasn't needed floating.

This spring the vet told me that he thought Buddy might have a slight case of TMJ, and explained the procedure for injecting him to correct it. My gentleman friend, Randy Dixon, found an article on the Bitless Bridle on Facebook, and began researching it.

We also own a 7-year-old Tennessee Walking Horse Mare, Sassy, who has a very soft mouth. Since I have a tendency to be hard with my hands, we decided to buy a bitless bridle, and fortunately, upon measuring both horses, we found that we could use one bridle for both of them, and I purchased one.

In addition, I recently completed training for the Five Rivers Metro Parks Volunteer Mounted Patrol in Montgomery County (Dayton), Ohio, and our instructor told us that the park district had bought Bitless Bridles for their stable horses (which are rented out to the public to ride trails in the parks), and they'd had great success with them.

David, May 05, 2011:

I just wanted to share my experience with you that I had with my brown western Cook's Bitless Bridle that I recently purchased. First I must say that my horse Belle' loved it...no more trying to stretch out of the bit after 20 minutes or chomping on the bit or anything and the **control was phenomenal**. I loved that I could neck rein or direct rein when called for and she stopped on a dime. I had a very little adjustment period where I had to figure out how to cue her gaits. I found that the bridle allowed enough release for Belle' to understand that I wanted her to Foxtrot and if she started to drift toward a hard trot I only needed brief light pressure to remind her. Very nice!

I have never liked biting my horse. I have always just thought that it was necessary and strived to use a gentle hand and a mild bit but I have always known that a bit cues with pain and as mild as I can be with a bit the best I can hope for is to make my horse merely uncomfortable.

I do sincerely thank you for offering this option for us and believe me I tell everyone I know how much I love riding in your bitless bridle and I make sure that I correct them when they call it a side pull. It is so much better than a side pull or bosal.

Denise, March 07, 2011:

Denise from Australia touching base. Sorry, have been meaning to for some time. You did send the questionnaire, but I don't believe I can give you any meaningful data as we had embarked on multiple journeys. During the same period we went shoeless, treeless and bitless and now have happy hippy horses. Since November last year, we have also started barefoot trimming, which I am now very, very excited about. The changes I can see in a short period of time are truly amazing, Jed had sacroiliac pain for an old injury and I can see this freeing up. Immediately after the first trim was completed, he crept up behind me and held his face gently against the small of my back for a minute or two, then respectfully stepped back. Whenever I handle his feet now, for want of a better expression, he "gets five legs".

I digress. When I first got Jed, we had behavioral issues; he just got so wired up and stressed. The longer the ride, the worse the behavior. He would breakout in a nervous

sweat, try to spin and bolt, plunge and pound in a straight line trying to bolt. Jed had been used in full time stock work, - he is Quarter Horse / Aussie Stock cross, very powerful little horse. The poor, poor man has a massive overreach injury where the actual coronet was damaged, consequently hoof growing in to separate sections. (This is healing with the barefoot trim!). I am convinced this happened at the same time as his sacroiliac issue, and was caused by him being so stressed and frightened of his mouth he scrabbled/slipped around and struck his forefoot with his hind.

I was told to get rid of the horse because it was dangerous. But it was too late, I loved him. I started trying different things, and I discovered that he was much happier in a halter and a bareback pad. Consequently, got on the net, discovered The Bitless, it made more sense to me than anything I had ever heard of. Our horses are both in your bridle, and we use Barefoot Treeless.

I now am truly blessed to have the most wonderful pleasure horse, last weekend was a real milestone, we walked home for about 6 kilometers on a loose rein, relaxed and sweat free. The same weekend I "let him out" I stayed in the saddle so it got a bit rough, but he pulled up with voice and gentle pressure. He was "fizzy" for 5 minutes or so, but calmed and relaxed.

Stacy, February 28, 2011:

Your beta bridle, thusfar, has been the most amazing thing to happen to Norma. There's a lot to share about her in her discovery - but I will sum up by saying she has had nine Good Days in a row. Norma has never had more than two Good Days in a row since the day I met her.

Every one I know will soon be ordering one or more of your bridles, and I could not be happier. I will use, and recommend, nothing else.

Carol, February 24, 2011:

I thought I would write and let you know how pleased I am with my Bitless bridle. I use it to ride and also do carriage driving in it. However, I am getting a lot of pressure to put a bit in when I go carriage driving or they will not let me compete or enter into any of the fun rides. I have my principles so I have now declined to accept that my horse is not in as much control as theirs are.

I own a 15 hand cob and she loves riding and driving with your bridle, I cannot recommend it enough. I am sure that people who are against not having a bit are just fearful that their horses/ponies are just going to take off with them and kill then.

I am delighted to be one of your users and am starting up a campaign in the UK for driving without a bit. Not many insurance companies will insure you for public liability which is also a shame. I feel like all car drivers, people who ride or drive a horse should undergo a test and then pass or not.

Thank you for letting me rant and rave.

Karen, February 10, 2011:

The weather here finally broke and we put the Dr Cook Bitless to the test. We have a very young and green Rocky Mountain Gelding who has really only had a couple months of

saddle work and riding. He hated the bit, head bobbing, mouth always moving and was spooky. I ordered this and you were kind enough to send 2 sizes of nosebands... to get the perfect fit! We tried them both and the smallest worked for him. I have a video I want to share with you that I took of Red coming down the hill with my husband riding him where his head is held high, ears forward and RELAXED. He loves this bridle. He stopped on a dime, backed up, right, left... it took him no time to understand what the tugs and nudges of this bridle meant. I was so happy for both my husband and Red. My husband is now able to go on 30 min to an hour rides. Red is definitely more relaxed in this bridle. It has made 1000 percent difference in his behavior. We have even gone back to the breeder and told her of the change in his behavior! Thank you for your patience in finally getting to try it on him. Never again will this horse have a piece of metal in his mouth! I have a baby Icelandic that will be going for training in April and she will never have metal in her mouth either. No need for it... Thank you again! A Dr Cook Bitless Fan forever!

Rob, Feb 1, 2011:

Our nearly 5 yr old gelding, Tobie, performed flawlessly on his first bitless ride. A day later my wife rode him with the same results. As novice riders with a green-broke horse, we really feel more confident than ever. Goodbye crunching, grinding, slobbering noises, forever!

Lee, January 28, 2011:

Mom just received my Dr. Cook bitless bridle and found it quite easy to put on me. She did a lot of research on why my tongue always remained hanging out while she rode me. One day my tongue was almost frozen after a ride. She took a chance on this bridle and my tongue stopped hanging out and remained in my mouth while we went on our 2-hour trail ride. Thanks for saving the blood vessels in my tongue.
Genger, Tennessee Walker

Rainer, January 25, 2011:

My wife and I have been using your Bitless Bridle for about 18 months with our 8 year-old Trakehner mare. She has become much calmer, there is no more head tossing, and bridling is easy. She responds willingly to the slightest of signals. With this bridle, the aids can be really 'smooth' - for the horse. As riders, we feel absolutely secure because if our girl exhibits any dissent we can correct her without hurting her. On the other hand, if we make a mistake, she does not feel punished as she would if she was bitted. As a result, we - who are in no sense master horsemen - can enjoy a spirited and self-confident horse. If we don't need a bit - who does?

Its time for riders to recognize that use of a crossunder bitless bridle is not just sentimental humanitarianism (sometimes we are looked at as though we are riding a pink horse.) but that crossunder bitlessness has a valid scientific basis and is preferable to a bit.

I have asked riders why they think a bit is necessary, and their most common answer has been: *"With a bitless bridle the aids will be less smooth, riding will become rough, and 'four finger' riding is not possible."* When I asked "smooth for whom?" - they simply did not understand the question. They cannot absorb the idea that a leather strap hugging and nudging the head will be more gentle than the mildest of pressure from a piece of steel in the mouth.

I think what many riders really mean by the phrase "smooth aids" or "gentle aids" (in German we say "feine Hilfen") is that the 'gentleness' is for them, not the horse. Riding with invisible aids is considered elegant and confers a feeling of power to a rider that has a big animal like a horse 'at their fingertips.' But the so-called 'gentleness' relates not to the horse but to their facile dominance of a powerful animal. It has nothing to do with their wish to avoid hurting the horse.

These are not bad people. They probably love their horses. It is simply that they do not understand what they are doing.

Jen, January 17, 2011:

I purchased my first bitless bridle from your company around 8-9 years ago! It worked wonders with my horse back then. I have since acquired a new horse who had issues such as head tossing / shaking. Avoiding the bit in trot and canter by running with his head in the air like a llama! I changed him to a bitless bridle - one of yours that my friend wasn't using due to the horse retiring. Now he's no longer head shaking, doesn't grab the reins from my hands and is even starting to collect - on his own in the trot and canter. I thought it was a brilliant invention all those years ago and still to this day it doesn't disappoint.

What is even better is both my Robert Cook bridles are around 8-9 years old and still look good and feel like new.

Chloe, January 14, 2011:

Just wanted to say thank you for my bitless bridle... I have now had 5 rides in it has worked better than I ever imagined... my horse is so much happier and whilst it has not been a 'quick fix' for all our problems, its certainly improved most of them :) I am proud to say he is now barefoot, bitless and happier than ever.

Lynne, January 03, 2011:

I wanted to let you know that the bridles I purchased are a hit! The mare I really wanted it for most took to it right away with no adjustment period and she has stopped throwing her head back when trying to bridle her and she is no longer tossing her head when you ride! The other mare just needed a few minutes on the lunge line to learn the new bridle, but is doing fine. Thanks a bunch...it certainly makes riding more fun for everyone when you don't have to get into a battle to tack up.

Nadia, January 02, 2011:

I was always a strong skeptic of bitless bridles. I always thought it was for your calm, dead broke horse. I have an 8 y.o Amercian Saddlebred. He has always been a spooky horse but I have been having a lot of trouble with him lately. He lifts up his head when bridling and riding almost becomes a game of tug of war (and he always won). So, I gave in and decided I would give this Bitless Bridle a try. The first 10 min. my horse, Casanova was pretty hard and was testing out the new concept but after the 10 min. All it took was a squeeze from my hand and he would respond. WOW! I am so excited. His stride in the trot changed to. I got off after the

trot, thinking something was wrong with his leg but he was fine, and a few min. later I realized his stride was more "free". He collects better actually! Also, instead of constantly fussing with the bit, he was licking his lips (as a sign of being relaxed). His ears were more relaxed, and he every once in a while he would breathe out a calm breath. This is an amazing bridle and I will definitely be purchasing 2 more for a mini pony and a Clyde. I'm hopefully going to start training. I will recommend this to all my friends and the only time I'll put a bit in my horses mouth is for a show. Thanks and God Bless!

Britt, November 29, 2010:

I have a 15.2 hand green broke Belgian mule I recently got and I am a pretty inexperienced rider till recently. I'd just ridden my very well broke horse for about a year now, mostly trail riding. I had been using a snaffle bit on him. I could NOT get him to stop, or when I did, it would only last a moment and this was after excessive pulling. Turning had also been quite a struggle, his head is so massive he could easily use it as leverage to work against the bit.

After attending a couple clinics with him, I was about to purchase a pretty harsh bit as everyone was recommending, or just telling me that it would be the only way to control him. Before doing this I luckily remembered a friend with a snotty Arabian who loves her bitless bridle and always uses it with great success on her horse. I did a little research, though I couldn't find much for suggestions with mules.

When I started reading into how the bit works through pain, I remembered an experience I had with my mule when I first got him. When he first needed his hoofs done, I called my usual farrier (for my horse), thinking he should work just fine for the mule. My mule was not so good with his feet at this time, not mean about it, just wouldn't let you hold them for long before he would start to hop around. My farrier at the time then tried techniques that work just fine on a horse, smack his side, jerk on his halter... but it seemed the more pain my farrier gave the mule, the more he resisted. I stepped in and tried a clicker method (that I've used on my dogs) with pets, a little reward mostly verbal and a punishment of yelling at him (not sure why, but he really responds to being yelled at, kind of like a dog) and suddenly he was standing perfect. This is what really started me thinking bitless, if pain is the method of the bit, then maybe this is why he becomes worse and worse the more I asked him to do with it just like he did with my old farrier.

After that thought, I ordered one right away. The large worked for him, though the noseband just fits, he has a very large head, but is very narrow around the nose. I also decided to order one for my horse, he's never had an issue with the bit and responding to it, but I found he has been chewing on, or clenching the bit because of marks in his bit that made jagged edges. I tried it on my horse first, it was just like using a regular bridle, he neck reined great and stopped immediately. I brought him to a canter and asked him to stop and it was a quicker and easier stop than with a bit. Next I threw it on my mule, I spent about 45 seconds on the ground asking him to turn and stop with it, then got on and he stopped! I couldn't believe it, I took him out on a quick ride to check that he wasn't just being good in the pasture. Again and again he stopped and stayed stopped till I asked him to go. This is a miracle device!

I still need to work with him more on turning, but he turns much easier and responds to this bridle better than the bit. He also is not able to use the leverage of his head to out weigh me with this bridle like he could with the bit. I've since taken both on several trail rides. My horse is much the same as before, but stops better and stands much stiller for it to be put on. I

am still in shock by the amount of control the bridle has given me on my mule. He and I no longer have any issues with stopping and our turning is getting better every day, we're going to start neck reining soon. Thank you so much, both my mule and I have benefited immensely from this bridle, we're never going back to the bit!

Luiz, November 29, 2010:

I have played Polo as an amateur for over 30 years - on and off. Recently, my pony's headstall broke during a game and a spectator lent me one of your Bitless Bridle headstalls. I played an entire chukka in the new bridle and ended up by scoring! My horse was smooth and compliant like I had never felt before. When I switched horses I had a terrible experience, because my bitted horse was resisting my commands. Since then I have used your headstall exclusively and my horses are more willing to play. I have just ordered one for my other horses, especially my Mustang. I'll see if it works too with my TB Stallion and give you a feedback later. Thanks for your great work!

Lillie, November 26, 2010:

We always knew that the Cook Bitless Bridle had been the salvation of my ultra-sensitive Racking Horse mare: she went from a cantankerous bitted horse to a happy bitless one literally overnight eight years ago. It stunned not only us but everyone else who'd ever seen her toss her head repeatedly whenever she'd been in her old conventional bridle.

But what surprised us a lot more this fall was the Bitless' effect on our new six-year-old half-Arabian. She'd been trained to a snaffle by her breeder from the start, supposedly with no trouble. After a week of our riding her in her own snaffle, just on a hunch we one day put the crossover Bitless on her. She was a different horse! Her nervousness (which of course we'd attributed to her being in a new barn) decreased dramatically. Her neck relaxed. Her gaits opened up. She was so obviously much happier.

I'll never again make the mistake of thinking the Bitless is only for horses who show blatant dislike of the bit in their mouths. Apparently they're simply the demonstrative ones. All horses -- even those who seem to be successfully bitted -- should have the opportunity to show their owners how much better they'll go in a Bitless.

Lucia, November 7, 2010:

I wanted to update you on my pony. He hated having a bit in his mouth and was just about unable to control. I knew this when we bought him about 3 weeks ago. I really liked him and was willing to take a chance on him, so my instructor came over and tried to ride him with a bit. There was no way she could ride him, so we took bit out and put the bitless on him. In about 20 minutes he was under control and listening to her. We put an 8 yr old on him and she did fine. We were amazed. I think my trainer was even more amazed, she never used one before and I think she kind of doubted that it would work. So now we will be teaching him to neck rein. I was just so excited and wanted to let you know. I will keep you posted if you don't mind on his progress.

Jennifer, November 4, 2010:

I have a 17.1 hand, 1400 lb TN Walker. When he rides in the bitless, he readily stops and turns and relaxes his head. To have such a huge horse be so responsive to this bridle, I'm a really big fan. When I hold the bridle, he drops his head into it and is happily bridled -- he is really happy to be bitless!

Madeline, October 21, 2010:

To anyone considering or contemplating a bitless bridle: I have an OTTB who had a lot of less than ideal behaviors when I got him from a rescue. He carried his head so high, and tossed it frequently no matter how steady and soft my hands were. He clocked me in the face once pretty good. He also showed his unhappiness by crow hopping, bucking, and suddenly leaning into the bit with so much force that I truly had very little control. His mouth would always be gaping open and he would always fuss with his bit.

After a year of being patient and working with these behaviors with minimal progress my trainer suggested using a running martingale and a flash/drop noseband. I told her I felt like clamping his mouth shut and keeping his head down might mask the problem. She told me he might learn from it and then be able to go without these extras. She assured me it wouldn't hurt him. We tried it, for another six months or so. He did go better in it but when I took off the flash/drop noseband and running martingale his mouth opened wide, he messed with the bit, he carried his head high, and luckily there was less bucking but there was definite pulling my reins from my hands.

On the ground my horse has perfect manners and was described by my vet as 'well mannered, alert, smart, and with a good disposition'. I decided to try the bitless bridle. I was very skeptical and I really only tried it because of the money back guarantee. The first time we tried it he was perfect at the walk and trot and still tried to throw his head at the canter. The second time he barely tried to do this. By the third time the high head stopped, the bucking stopped, the crow hopping stopped, tossing of the head stopped, and the mouth was closed, AND his ears were forward. He was actually happy!!!! His manners under saddle began to reflect his personality on the ground.

He now uses his bitless bridle exclusively with no additions (martingale, extra nose band, etc). He is significantly more responsive to my hands, his transitions have improved immensely, and we are working as a team on a much more functional level. We enjoy riding together. I'm sure he's even more grateful for the bitless bridle than I am!

If you're even remotely considering trying the bitless bridle, DO IT!!! You have nothing to lose but \$12.00 shipping, and you probably can't even buy another bit to try with that much!

Zelda, October 15, 2010:

My name is Zelda and I live in Kuwait. I guess my story is pretty much the same as every one, results are stunning as long as you're doing the proper training in advance: respect, respect, respect both sides. I'm not a professional trainer, it is not my job but my passion, both horse and who ever want to follow me, so I have a bunch of kids and friends as well as horses, babysitting horses most of them are hanging around like my lovely little tribes. We are happy this way and that is what matters.

My master is a wonderful Kuwaiti horseman who knows the ancient Arabian way to train human and horse together in a very spiritual but down to Earth technique. Horse is a horse, man is a man, no transfer, no self-created fairytale to avoid reality and signs. It is all

about signs and dialog, many type of dialogs. So bitless is somehow "freeing the mouth (mind) to talk" the spirit to blossom, the feeling to spread, the connection to be solid. So no horse feels the urge to run away from us, in contrary they are glued, secure and well balanced physically and mentally.

Most of the horses are still very young, the youngest is 4 by now, stallions for the majority and live together among mares and other horses. They are also blooded Arabians and English racehorses with a heavy pass for some of them. The big German jumper is a babysitting I turn him bitless in few days, the pictures were taken at his first bitless day, and he was absolutely fantastic. He used to be a bit anxious at the fens, I guess "the pain."
Sorry for my english , I 'm French.

Catharine, October 12, 2010:

You should know that I ride my older stallion with The Bitless Bridle and am also training one of my Lipizzan mares with the same bridle. I absolutely love it and don't seem to have any control issues. That is why I want this special colt to be trained as well in the same way.

Anita, October 07, 2010:

I am creating a mini groundswell of interest with my BB. I rode over to my next-door neighbor's place yesterday. She is a competitive dressage rider. She was just finishing up from a training lesson on her horse and I suggested she try the BB before she put her horse away. Result... she wants one and is taking my BB to an unofficial dressage competition tomorrow to show and demonstrate it. Yee-haa!!!!!!

This bridle has changed my attitude towards riding and has helped me overcome a very difficult time with my riding. I now ride with confidence and it has made such a huge shift in my personal beliefs as to my riding capabilities. I am 60. I have been riding for about 20 years on and off, mostly cattle work.

Margaret, October 7, 2010:

I can't tell you how much I love this bridle and how much my horses love it. Both of them do so well with it. My big boy is 1400 pounds and sometimes stubborn and people can't believe that I use a bitless with him! It just goes to show though doesn't it that a bit is not the answer!

Linda, October 04, 2010:

I have used your bitless bridle for a year an a half now. I have a 7 yr old running QH and he loves it too. His previous owner used it and that is how I found out about it. So my horse has never had a bit in his mouth.

I have 50 plus years of riding experience. And when I was a kid I used to ride with a rope or a halter all the time as I liked the idea of less is better. But as I got older, I found that I couldn't do all the corrections I needed to do with those tools. I went to a hackamore or a bit. But I never really felt good about putting a hard piece of metal in my horse's mouth. This is the best tool of them all. I ride in trail competitions, sort cattle and do some Natural

horsemanship drills in the arena. This bridle does it all and with a young horse.

I get a lot of questions about this bridle when other riders see it. I just tell them where to find it and that I love it. I tell them how it works and they seem to understand why it is so good. But some people are still stuck in the idea that you have to have a bit for total control. So all I can do is keep smiling and lead by example. Thank you for making this wonderful bridle.

Pamela, September 29, 2010:

When I ordered the bitless driving bridle for my mini it really was mostly out of curiosity and I probably wouldn't have ordered it if it hadn't been returnable. Well, I wouldn't give it up for a price! It's that good. My mini has a very tender mouth and this was just the answer for him. There was absolutely no breaking in time except he was just so much happier in the bridle. Stop, turn, back all go smoothly.

Thank you for a wonderful product! And thank you for making it available on trial.

Lisa, September 27, 2010:

We love our Bitless Bridles. My feisty Arabian went from a rowdy, bit biting, head-tossing wild man, to a calm, cool, collected fella. He is so responsive to subtle cues from the bridle. This product is perfect for us.

Sharon, September 27, 2010:

I just wanted to share my story about my horse Shiloh. I have had him for 7 years and he was only 4 when I got him. He always tossed his head and was always very annoyed with a bit in his mouth and very heavy in the forehand. I tried every bit there probably was at one time I think I had a total of 9. I rode him one time with just a bridle and he went so nice, so when I saw the bitless bridle at the Equine Affair one year I started thinking about it and decided to try one. I started with the nylon one and it worked so well I bought the leather one, in fact I have two leather ones, one brown and one black. I dabble in a little bit of dressage and pleasure riding and he goes so nicely. I wish that he could show in these bridles, maybe that will happen down the line. Any way my horse loves his bitless bridle. Thanks for listening.

Bridie, August 11, 2010:

My name is Bride and my horse is Beau - I am 12, Beau 10. I ride Beau in the arena, on trails, and shows. I love the Bitless Bridle as it doesn't hurt my horse. I have LOTS of control as Beau can be very strong sometimes and has a mind of his own!

I am in a horse 4H, and as my yearly presentation I am going to teach all the 4H kids about the Bitless Bridle. I want to tell them how it's better than using a bit and what the bit doesn't do and the Bitless Bridle does. I wish all the kids that ride would learn about going Bitless so we could teach the adults and future riders that metal in a horses mouth is BAD.

Mandi, August 7, 2010:

Thought I'd share a couple of pics of myself and Splash doing sj and at an eventers

challenge - we're Bitless, Barefoot, and Treeless :o)

I've recently bought a second Dr Cooks BB for use with a rescue horse I took on. He'd been so heavily bitted with tie-downs and an awfully fitting saddle that I've had to leave him to learn to be a horse in the field for the last 3mths but with help from the physio and simply 'being', he's coming on a dream. But the first thing I did with him was take everything off and put him in the Dr C BB - oh boy what a transformation.... he relaxed instantly. I can't wait till he comes good and we can get out and about with him.

Susan, August 09, 2010:

Gee, Caroline, my trainer said she has NEVER seen Madeline be so "soft" in 5 yrs! Honestly, she ADORES the bitless bridle! Cannot wait to get it! My friend Shan Friddle (mother of Burt) is who got me interested in trying your bridle! I think M is IN LOVE with me for doing it, even when I go to whoa her, I just sit down more and she stops without a word or a tug ! All I had to do with reins was keep a little hold on them and slightly lift her head when we were going downhill over outside lines. I am THRILLED TO "BITS"

Katie, August 06, 2010:

I love the bitless bridle; my mare instantly offered me a fuller stride, and picked up her weaker canter lead without problem. I didn't even know that we had 'issues' due to the bit, I switched simply because the argument that the bit is inhumane resonated with me. I will never use a bit on any of my horses again, and encourage all of my future clients to use the cross-under. Thanks for all of your work! I am excited for the day when people who think bits are inhumane aren't 'extreme' and for when dressage trainers stop telling folks to pull on the mouth for 'contact'.

Christel, August 03, 2010:

I have used the bitless bridle on two of my horses, an ex trotter racehorse and a young norwegian workinghorse. Both took to the bridle immediately and have been absolutely wonderful to work with. The racehorse stopped running out on me and the youngster relaxed so much more than with a bit. I am now riding the young horse with only a rope halter, the way to achieving this is much do to the bitless bridle. A fantastic product and I am so glad I am able to get a hold of here in Scandinavia.

Rick, July 26, 2010:

Two months ago we brought our 2 four year old draft crosses to finish their under saddle training. The trainer said nothing when we told him we wanted to not use a bit. After a month he said, "They made a believer out of me". Don't know if he would ever switch but at least he gets it. If only the "Show World" would! I will continue to lead the Dr Cooks Bitless Bridle charge in the meantime.

EJ Peak Performance Equine, July 24, 2010:

Just want to let you know that I continue to recommend Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle to

students/clients and I know several of them have purchased the Bitless. I always tell them to get the original, not the knock off, as Dr. Cook is the one who did all the research and developed the bridle.

Your bitless continues to be very helpful, especially in retraining horses who've had some not-so-good hands attached to the reins; for horses who have or have had problems with their teeth/mouth; and as a welcome break for horses in general. I always say, "if your horse goes well in a bitless, then why not ride him in one." They are generally so much happier! Understandably, some of the show people, particularly my dressage clients, want a bit in the mouth. I know you've been working on getting the USDF to accept competitors using the Bitless. Best of luck to you with this endeavor!

FYI, I'm training a horse now who displaces (DDSP) when ridden with a bit (a plain snaffle or a French link) but does *not* when ridden in the Bitless. I'm going through Dr. Cook's book Airflow Factors in the Racehorse to see if I can find a possible explanation. I'm thinking of all the TB racehorses I galloped who displaced and wondering if instead of tie-back surgery, galloping and racing in a Bitless would have been the answer. Wondering if Dr. Cook has any input on this subject and the current phenomenon I've encountered . . . Again, thank you for all your help and generosity.

EJ (Steerforth) Hemingway
Peak Performance Sports Fitness, Inc. Peak
Performance Equine
Ocala, FL

Katelyn, July 22, 2010:

Whiskey was virtually uncontrollable when I acquired him, mostly due to abuse by his previous owners. He was sent off to a "trainer", and I use that term loosely, for 30 days and came back absolutely ruined- he had whip marks covering his hindquarters, spur marks almost under his belly, his lip was ripped on one side and his tongue had been slit with a knife. I have no idea what possessed that "trainer" to do that. His owners then tried to re-home him 2 weeks later, and I came to look at him- after all, he was free, why wouldn't I? I decided to take him home, but not before those horrid people let me know they were going to ship him off to slaughter if I didn't. From what I've told, I assume you can guess that he had problems. He wouldn't move forward, was very spooky and had a rearing problem. I couldn't afford a Dr. Cook's for a while, but I saved up and managed to find a used one, and I snatched it up as fast as I could. Since then I have been able to get Whiskey hacking out alone on trails, crossing water, learning collection and overall being a wonderful boy. I am so grateful for my horse, and thankful for all the effort you're putting into making the horse world a more humane place!

Megan, July 21, 2010:

I am attaching a photo of my American Quarter horse, his name is Tardy's Royal Pine, Tardy for short, wearing his Bitless Bridle at a horse show.

Tardy and I have been riding and showing at local horse shows, in the Bitless Bridle for the past ten years. If it was not for the bitless bridle, we would not have been able to show at all.

Elizabeth, July 21, 2010:

I just wanted to take a moment to let you know how wonderful your Bitless Bridle is...simply love it! I have an Andalusian mare who was always so nervous when I bridled her that she would "pop" her lips from the moment I slipped the bit in her mouth to after the ride when I un-tack her. I was surfing the web and found your product and saw your trial period guarantee, so I took a chance. She loves it! She immediately stopped popping her lips and is now more focused on what I am teaching her. It's made a huge difference in our relationship.

Leigh, June 08, 2010:

Josepha Guillaume from the Art of Natural Dressage just posted your press release celebrating 10 years of the iron-free horse. Several years ago (maybe five?), inspired by my rescued former grand-prix jumper Stardust who had a complete meltdown about traditional tack, I ordered my first Bitless Bridle from you. Our little herd has since grown to include Circe, a young Haflinger mare (who does turn men into swine, incidentally), who has and never will have iron in her mouth or on her feet. We have been having wonderful fun learning about what it means to have a human on her back without any idea of pain in her mouth.

One of my great pleasures about all of this is that our work together has made several riders at our boarding facility curious enough that they, too, have become Bitless Bridle users.

On this anniversary, I wanted to take a moment on behalf of not only myself but also those with hooves and no opposable thumbs (so their typing skills are not that great!), a resounding thank you!

I truly believe that you have ushered in a new era for horses. I know that change comes more slowly than it should and am sure that at times it's extraordinarily frustrating to have the world inch its way towards understanding why a horse shouldn't have much other than carrots placed in their mouths by humans, but your tireless advocacy has and will change the lives of many, many horses. Some day, I truly believe that bits will live in museums, and your work has helped immeasurably in heading us in that direction. Thank you and congratulations.

Jo, July 05, 2010:

I recently bought a black English leather BB from you. When I read about your 30 day trial, you also said you welcomed ALL feedback about the bridle, so here goes:

I am British, but currently live in the Czech Republic for my husband's work contract. I have ridden competitively in the UK in eventing for the past few years, and when we moved here found myself buying a 4-year-old Hanoverian mare. She was not the second horse I should have been looking for - she had never been turned out, never been hacked, never spent social time with other horses, was fed on oats 3 times a day, cooped up in her box for 23 hours a day and ridden in the indoor school for 45 mins. She was a nervous wreck, as you would expect.

Two years on and her flat work is nice, she jumps a small course at home, hacks for miles across open countryside and in the heaviest of traffic. She spends most of her time out in the pasture in a small social group of mares and she is generally much happier and settled.

She does not appear to 'hate' having a bit in her mouth. She was ridden in a KK snaffle for all her work and a cavesson noseband. She was obliging to tack up and was light in the hand when schooled. However, although generally a pleasure to ride, she is sharp, and can be spooky and easily distracted. She will always be a quick thinking horse, it's in her nature, but I have

worked very hard on asking for relaxation from her, not only in the arena but also out hacking.

It was nearly a year ago when I read about your bridle. I love reading about new things (I ride in a Saddle Solutions treeless dressage saddle since moving here) and it intrigued me. I wondered if it might help my horse Fee to relax more, become more attentive and less reactive. I kept reading about it. I read about it for a whole year. I read about your 30-day money back guarantee. What did I have to lose? But something inside me didn't believe the hype. I wanted more evidence of competitive people using the bridle for dressage and collection, not just roaming around the countryside. I didn't believe it could be that effective or precise for schooling work. Anyway, against all my gut feelings, I finally took the plunge and ordered one a few weeks ago.

So it arrived. I looked at it and wondered, when I sent it back, whether you would really keep your refund promise. Anyway, I tacked her up, went over to the arena and climbed on board. I've ridden her in a natural hackamore before so was fairly confident she wouldn't do anything too daft with me. I had no expectations at this stage whatsoever - such a skeptic!

As I picked up my reins and asked for trot she went to look up sharply at something on the edge of the arena that had caught her eye, I closed my hands around the reins and she gave quite a dramatic reaction, forgot what she was spooking at and slammed on the brakes, throwing her head in the air. From that moment on I had the lightest, softest, most relaxed horse I think I've ridden in the two years I've known her. The BB has surpassed any expectations, or should I say just proved me so wrong, as I didn't have any expectations!

Really, she is much less spooky, still light in my hand, relaxed and swinging over her back. I have hacked, jumped and schooled in it and she goes better in the BB for all three. My only problem is that when we return to the UK this year I would like to start eventing her, which means she will have to do the dressage phase in her snaffle. For this reason I still school her once or twice a week in it so that it doesn't come as a shock! Unfortunately, since using the BB, our work in the snaffle seems so much more effort - to get her relaxed, to stop her spooking, and to ask her to soften and stretch over her back. I know when we return to the UK people will look at me riding in this strange bridle and think I'm maybe a little weird. When they do, I shall hand them my bridle and ask them to try it before they judge.

I'm so glad I took the plunge and bought this bridle. It's the best purchase I've made in a very long time. For all the competitive people out there who will be just as skeptical as I was, the bridle can be used successfully for schooling and I would certainly recommend it for hot or spooky horses - it's really helped in this area. Now I just have to get British Eventing to ok it for the dressage phase! I have attached some pics of us working at home - this was her second session in the bridle. Many Thanks!

Aisha, July 03, 2010:

How are you? hope life's treating you well =D. finally got the BitlessBridle from the UAS!!!! I cant tell you how excited I was putting them on the horses, the poor things, they were so confused and kept opening they're mouths! its been a week and what a change. Here's our story and how I found out about your wonderful bridles. Thank you!

Harry, my connemara pony who is currently 7yrs old, was always labeled as the "Lazy" one, wouldn't move, wouldn't want to canter, his best command was the "Whoa".. I looked into it, and found nothing, just feed him high energy foods, they said, keep him in the stable and dont put him in the paddock so he wont lose energy, imagine that! Then I came upon Joe Camps book and was blown away, how come I didn't know that shoes were bad?!?! How come

I didn't know that they needed to keep moving almost 18hrs a day? That changed my life, I followed Joe Camp and when he posted going bitless on his website, I researched the website, and after what I read I immediately called Carole, and thank god she picked up and put two orders of the bridle. As for Diablo, the 15 year old German warmblood, does not whoa he will keep going and going, with his mouth wide, wide open, and his neck twisting to the side, when we first put on the bitless bridles, Harry was immediately on the bit (haha) HEAD down with good contact! Gonna have to get used to saying that! Amazing contact without the bit! WOOHOO! And way more energetic, & no huffing and puffing =D and as for Diablo he has shown more respect, and will stop and put his head down and BACKS UP! I wanted to thank you AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN. Please let me know when you will be visiting the UAE, I will be glad to show you around all the new places and we can educate people over her about the bitless phenomena!

Ellen, July 03, 2010:

I love the Dr. Cooks bridle, and I use it on every horse I work with. Thought I'd show you a couple of horses I use it on. Shown here is my bay mare, Gaia. I rescued her from a meat farm when she was 2, she had already been trained for harness racing but wasn't fast enough. When it came backing her I had long thoughts about what bit to use, and in the end decided I didn't want to use one at all. I then found the Dr. Cooks bridle and it was perfect. I started her in that, and she's never had a bit in. Unfortunately she has developed arthritis in her hocks because of the intense harness training at a young age, and we are very limited in what we can do. She will probably be retiring completely soon, however, the time we have had we have enjoyed bitless!

Kim, June 29, 2010:

My horse Khlassy and I have come to love our Bitless Bridle. I originally bought one as I began living my life-long dream of having a horse. It took 57 years, but I made it. Then I needed to learn to ride. I was green, and Khlassy put up with a lot from my heavy hands until I saw an ad for the Bitless Bridle in a horse magazine. Was Khlassy ever pleased with my purchase. Five years later we are quite the happy team. The picture is of the two of us on an ACTHA ride. We're learning to meet those trail challenges and having a great time bitless. Thanks for a great product.

Kimberly, June 27, 2010:

I absolutely love the Dr Cook bitless bridle. When I first bought my horse he rode in a snaffle bit. With me being a lot green ...just getting to live my 32yr old dream of owning my own horse... I realized that he wasn't liking the bit. My hands where not as gentle as they should have been and at times I could sense his anxiety depending on what I was asking of him. He would chew on the bit a little and stretch out his neck to pull and stretch his mouth and loosen my hands. Plus there was this deep desire to be as natural with my horse Razor as I could possibly be. Well the shoes came off and then eventually we started working on going bitless. I tried several rope halters and Bosels.. I had some success but not what I had hoped for. Well, I bought a used English saddle from a friend's friend and had mentioned wanting a Dr Cook Bridle. Oh my...wouldn't you know the lady sold me the saddle and tossed

in her used Dr. Cook Bridle she wasn't using anymore. I instantly fell in love with the bridle. He began immediately to ride more quietly. He rode well to begin with but I could instantly tell the difference. We trail ride and jump shoeless and bitless. I also have two other horses that my daughters ride in a Dr. Cook's bitless bridle.

Thomas, June 21, 2010:

I just want to let you know what a major improvement I instantly saw in my horse Scooter from the first time I used the bitless bridle. Scooter is a reining horse who has shown signs of discomfort with his bit, primarily stretching of the jaw and showing his pearly whites. This would happen regularly from the beginning to end of our rides. I have tried various different bits, as well as having his teeth floated, none of which slowed down the "yawning" type behavior. On top of this, he would become agitated and hot at times, as if he couldn't work through a certain instance because of the nagging pain the bit was causing.

When I first put the bitless bridle on Scooter, he stretched his jaw, because he thought a bit was coming. As soon as he realized that there was no bit in his mouth, he started to lick his lips. He responded beautifully to the bitless bridle as if he has worn it forever, and not once did he stretch his jaw while out on our hour and a half long trail ride.

I thought it would reduce his bad habit, but not eradicate it completely, which it did. Thank you for bringing this product to market. Scooter will never have a bit in his mouth again.

Lorna, June 17, 2010:

I wanted to tell you that this new one is for my husband to use with his horse. I have been using one of your BBs on my horse, PJ, for about 3 months and we LOVE it. My horse has some energy, so stopping was my main concern. No problem! Now that he's wearing the BB, he slows or stops when I change my seat!!!! (sit down heavy or lean back) I hardly ever have to use the reins to slow him from a trot to a walk now. With the bit, I used to have to wear gloves to protect my fingers from all the pulling I had to do to try to control him. Now with the BB, I don't need to wear gloves and my fingers are never sore or worn. Your product is wonderful! I can't thank you enough.

Remey, June 17, 2010:

Just wanted to see if you have any used BBs for sale? My barn friend tried my BB on her TB the other day and really liked how he went, but does not have a lot of money, so I thought I would just check to see if you have any used that you would like to discount.

Heehee So I think I have converted her, and another TB owner is ready to try it, too! Dakota continues to be fabulous, we have now shown and trail ridden off property, and everyone comments about how wonderfully calm he always is! :) He is never high headed or rushed anymore. Period.

I also began riding the barn "rogue", who has not been ridden for nearly a year and has a history as a crazy horse and a buck. He took to the BB like a fish to water, and two rides in, he has yet to act up or do anything "bad." He's still a little worried someone will slam his mouth, but we are making progress! This may well save his life, as he was soon to be headed to auction. Yay for the bitless bridle! Changing human and equine lives, one person and horse at a time!

Penny, June 16, 2010:

I already have two of your bridles, and I need one more for my guest horse. NO MORE bits in my horses mouths. Happy horses make happy riders. I love it., they bend there heads way down to let me put on the bridle. Most amazing.

Mala, June 02, 2010:

I just ordered another bitless bridle, this time for my aunt's OTTB. I'm hoping we'll see a big difference in his attitude under saddle once we get rid of the metal in his mouth! But I wanted to share with you that I'm now on my second horse who is winning gymkhana championships in his bitless bridle!!! I'm hoping that someday, other riders will see that bicycle chains in their horses' mouth is not working.

Linda, May 30, 2010:

I wrote not too long ago to ask about the length of time for your return guarantee & you kindly offered to extend that time. I am now happy to report that your Bitless Bridle is by far THE best investment I've made in my horse since I splurged on a Bates Innova saddle a year ago. Kraven is a different horse with his new bridle. I've ridden him in it only a few times, but after losing much of our prior progress when I was unable to ride for several weeks, we have made huge strides in little time.

The first time in the Bitless Bridle included some of the stiffness & resistance I was accustomed to with the bit, but it didn't last long. Since then he has been happy, cooperative & a pleasure to ride. He was never a truly difficult horse, but we'd had an ongoing power struggle that had to be refought every ride. When I rode him last night there was NO resistance, no stiffness, what a delight. My friends at the barn are intrigued.

Brian, May 24, 2010:

My horse, Rio, is a true Mustang, directly off the Nevada High Desert Range, and when I first put the Bitless Bridle on him, he took to it immediately. I was absolutely amazed. I have never used a bit on him, nor would I, however, I have always used a hackamore and am relieved that I can get rid of the hack and finally go to your product as it is so much more gentle yet effective without any unnecessary pain associated w/the hack and especially the bit!!

Excellent product, I can't say it enough and I have continuously told all the horse folks I know!

Darlene, May 15, 2010:

I just wanted to write a note to let you know how wonderful I think your bitless bridle is. I had issues controlling my horse with a bit and the more we fought each other the more I lost him mentally. I am sure because of pain. Since I have started using the bitless bridle I have much more control over his head and I feel much more secure when I loose him mentally. I have been working with him to "fix" his poor or lack of prior training. I have a different horse. The ladies I have been in clinics with noticed an extreme difference in my horse after 3 only

months. He is calmer and more responsive (he will now turn when I gently move 2 fingers). I can regain his mental state easily which with a bit I could never get him back. He did throw a "fit" at first when he realized I did have control and he couldn't "tuck his head out of the bit" but that has passed. I feel we are more of a team now. Most important, I am no longer causing him pain.

Remey, April 21, 2010:

I just wanted to add my experiences with the BB! I own a very sensitive mustang with a good deal of "get-up-and-go." For the two years that I have owned him, Dakota has always had a very rushed trot and canter, complete with head thrown into the air and back hollowed. He is very poor backing up, yielding his head, and just generally unhappy being ridden. He had three speeds: walk, fast trot, and fast canter. Very uncomfortable. After two years with no improvement (I love to work with a horse and better them) I knew that something had to change. Dakota is a very sensitive and willing horse, and I am an experienced rider with very soft hands. I just felt that we were never going to make any progress without a big change. I figured that with a 30-day satisfaction guarantee, the product had to be worth a try!

So, I ordered my bridle, and it was shipped THE SAME DAY! Awesome! By this time I was very excited to try it, and very pleased by the speedy shipping. It arrived wrapped in tissue and in plastic packaging like a high quality product. The beta is very nice, though initially I was worried that it was "sticky" in that the rubber might hold too tight and not allow proper release through the rings. I am happy to say that this was not the case! The material is super soft from the start, and it looks new when hosed off.

First ride was ok. We spent the first ten minutes at a canter (intended to be a trot), and Dakota didn't really yield to the "stop" cue...so I began to cue with a pull-release, then immediately circled if he did not slow. Ten minutes later, he "got it" and realized that the pressure was a cue to slow, which he began to do easily. There was some head-tossing, snorting, and a little irritation, but I expected it, as Dakota is sweet but does not always appreciate new things.

A month and a half later, you could not pry my BB from me! No horse of mine will ever wear a bit! Dakota has become a far more willing horse, and I get teary at how much difference this has made for us. When we start now, at a walk, he stretches his neck and head down and heaves a happy sigh. He looks like a western pleasure horse! We are still working on the trot, but he is beginning to relax his head down there, and he's got the canter down. His gaits are much calmer and more pleasant, and I now have three speeds within each gait!! He backs much better, yields his head beautifully, and stops on a dime...literally. He improves by leaps and bounds each day! His concentration has improved dramatically, too. He is always "listening" to my body more closely now. He is beginning to collect himself, on a loose rein, naturally. I have NEVER seen a horse do this without bit contact.

The hardest part was convincing myself that I would be able to stop him on trails (he has bolted twice in the past.) And, the first day out, he did get very strong. But, it forced me to realize something. My horse had a hole in his TRAINING. He was Barn SOUR. Period. The bit had effectively "camouflaged" this, and he only acted out at certain times. So, we did some training exercises, and I'm now fully convinced of the bridle's effectiveness. Twice, when he has spooked, the spook is less exaggerated and he calms much faster afterward because no bit has been slammed around in his mouth.

One day I fell off (from a normal shy), and I landed with my hand still clenched around

the reins. Had I done this with a bit, Dakota would have yanked me senseless and bolted back to the barn. Instead, he was standing there calmly, head low, waiting for me to hop back on right after a spook. Holy Cow! If I wasn't convinced before, I was with that! I now ride four times per week, instead of once a week, because we both enjoy it so much.

I know I keep going on, but I can't stop! The other day a friend bolted past us on a trail, towards the barn. I can verify, with complete certainty, that previously Dakota would have bolted (the barn sourness is getting better, but not completely fixed yet.) at a flat gallop. I was sure that he was about to. And all of his muscles tensed... and... he stayed put. Did not go anywhere. I attribute this to his no longer being upset by a bit, which just made things worse. The BB is definitely a more calming influence. I cannot tell you how much better I feel because I softly "ask" for things instead of forcing them with a bit. And Dakota never fails me. It's true, my horse really is so much better than I thought.

I am trying to spread the word at my barn, but I get the "that wouldn't work on MY horse" excuse. But we will keep working towards it. If you are on the fence about trying the BB, please try it. If you're like me, you'll never go back to a bit. The only few caveats I would add are these: know the one rein stop, and be willing to work through a few initial issues with natural horsemanship methods, instead of assuming that "it doesn't work". This is a training tool, and does take a little bit of exploration to settle into. And enjoy the best rides that you've ever had...(lol though those didn't happen in the first week!)!!!

Please feel free to post this. Thank you SO much!

Barbara, April 20, 2010:

I am "re-training" my 24 yr. old quarter-horse gelding, after not riding for quite a few years. I put the Bitless Bridle on him last night, and he was "looking" for the bit! His tongue was going all over the place - ha! When I stopped him, I pulled harder than I really needed to (still need to get used to this) and he backed up for me by a few steps! He seemed so excited that the bit is gone, and was interested in what I wanted him to do. He listened very closely. I can't wait to get more familiar with the Bitless Bridle so I can enjoy more time with my boy, Prince.

I will definitely recommend this to anyone looking for a bridle. It's well worth the cost in just one day of "playing around" with it. Thank you so much for a gentle bridle for my gentle friend, Prince J

Kimberly, April 14, 2010:

I am a student of dressage, and have been riding my non-competition horse in the your bitless bridle in parallel to the competition mount that I use a 2-link snaffle type bit.

The effectiveness of the bitless bridle is wonderful, and I was wondering what your thoughts were on organizations like USDF, FEI, or US Equestrian ever accepting bitless bridles in competitions in the future?

I am moving my horses from their winter home back and had to give my beta bitless bridle to the barn manager, she used it once, and fell in love. We ordered 2 beta's a few years ago to see if they could be a better way. I never put a bit in that horses mouth since the day I received the bitless bridle in the mail.

I will be purchasing a leather bridle from you this week (with the lunging attachment, which is brilliant btw), and continue to show dressage in it (non-qualifying shows unfortunately).

I show in the bitless bridle in schooling shows locally on the back-up horse (Andalusian), and first the people are drawn in by the beauty of the breed, then they see that this magnificent creature is bouncing around so gracefully without a bit in his mouth... I end up selling the bridle more than the horse ;-)

Thank you for the wonderful tool to better my equestrian communications.

Antonio, April 05, 2010:

We are Nuria & Antonio, from Madrid Spain, recently we bought five of your Bitless Bridle for our horses, we work with a natural horsemanship model and before meet you we use a snaffle bit for our horses, reading your book (and Dr. Strasser), we understand what ignorance we are about horses...

Now we ride with your bitless bridle and our horses smile us... thanks for open our minds. In our country like you can suppose every body use a snaffle bit and also others more painful ones, we want change this tradition, and we want promote the use of your bitless bridle, so we can help you in the commercialization of your products if that will be interesting for you. Thanks again in our name and in the ours friends SSiPPi, Legend, Piano, Tommy and Geart.

Edward, April 02, 2010:

What can I say...but WOW. I was, of course, a skeptic from the beginning. I thought that there might be some truth to the bitless system, but I was tentative all the way up until the time that I first got on Sheila with the bitless bridle on her! She had started to become a bit of a mess. Throwing her head wildly and the startings of a buck...not able to focus on anything for more than a few moments. She would do this four or five times on each trip out. I was trying to think of anything that had spoiled her, and surely blaming myself for the total of our shortcomings.

I ride on a large ranch outside of Park City, Utah called the Roger's Ranch. This is part of a sprawling 38,000-acre ranch that includes so varied terrain that I cannot even summarize. Take it to say that it is some "rough country". Sheila is a champ in this terrain and fantastic with the cattle...except for her obvious discomfort--or to the human eye...her lack of concentration.

My horse had suffered a shuffling of owners over the past few years until we wound up together. I kinda took to her for several reasons, but one of which was, I was really one of the only people that wanted to ever try riding her.

Like I say, she is a seven-year-old mare with a history of "pasture-itis". First owned by a couple of loving girls, she had been professionally trained and then forgotten, as the fun 'pony for Christmas' must have worn off. A Morgan/Mustang mixture, she is one of the heartiest little horses there is around. She is gaited and yet has the spirit of a Mustang. Wicked smart, yet sometimes detrimentally instinctual. Tough black feet and thick mane. Strong and compact, can turn on a dime. Great stable and trailering manners. Easy to catch and easy to shoe. Such a go-getter, that she is misunderstood.

Well, she had then been picked to be owned by a neighbor of mine that could quite honestly own any horse he wants. She stayed there for about 3 months and then she was labeled as a psycho horse and discarded. The full shuffle. By the time I got to her, she was pretty much angry and known as a hayburner, and quite honestly only a few steps from a sad demise.

I need a working horse, we run cattle and I ride fence and also we have guests come and enjoy trail rides. So my own horse has to behave. I felt like things had slipped past reconstruction with her until I tried the bitless bridle on her... and what a huge difference.

I tried not to make too big of a deal out of trying it out around the other men at the ranch for fear of their scoffs and remarks at such an unprecedented piece of tack. Little did I know, they were actually quite interested in it and all remarked at the obvious change. Not a miracle over-night cure, but a fantastic tool to turn the tide in favor of a working and wonderful relationship. It has made me want to work with my horse again and if anything has kinda given me new hope for our training. The bridle is well constructed and obviously quality made, but the price was a little shocking. That sticker shock rubbed off immediately though when I realized what a difference the equipment has made! Thanks for a great product!

Teresa, March 25, 2010:

After nearly 10 years using your bridle, it is still my sole headgear. My black Paso Fino, Razz, has been in dressage training for 7 years, which helped in his recovery from EPM. He will bridle himself, if I hold the bridle and ask: "Do you want to go ride?"

I took in an 18 year old chestnut Paso gelding as a companion. He was a national winning show horse, not rideable due to hysterical and dangerous behavior. That seems to happen a lot with show Pasos. I suspect the spade curb bits.

After agreeing never to get on Aviador's back, I got on him bareback with your bridle and have been riding him for 4 years.

Both horses and I receive ongoing professional training. They love lessons, parades, trail riding, drill team, and obstacles. Razz has Search and Recovery training and participated in Texas Equi-Search's attempt to locate a missing child last year.

I know the reason I am so happy with my horses is that they are happy with me. The first and best choice I made was the bitless bridle.

Beverly, March 01, 2010:

Love the beta bridle I bought a few years ago. It is one of the best investments I've made. His head tossing is no where near the issue it had been and his whole personality is willing instead of resentful. I actually have a lot more control than with a standard bit (and I feel like I had bought every one on the market). I honestly can't understand why more people aren't open-minded enough to try it. I've only come on the horse scene as a senior citizen, so being a rank beginner can be frightening, but I feel so blessed that I'm not caught in the "that's the way it's always been done" rut that seems to predominate the horse world. Thank you for making such a fantastic product available to us!

Robert, February 17, 2010:

I received my bitless bridle today. I had to go try it out on my 10 year old gelding. I read the directions and then put it on him. We walked over to the arena to try it out. I got up on him and he did everything I asked him to do for me with no problems. I could tell he liked it much more than having a bit in his mouth. He would always pull his head down and shake it with the bit in his mouth and was always biting on the bit. I rode him for 45 min and he never pulled his head down once with the bitless bridle. I will never use a bit again now. I can't believe

anyone would use a bit now that there is the bitless bridle. I love it and Legacy loves it.

Brenda, February 13, 2010:

I wanted to give you feedback on the bridle that I bought in January 2007. I used a bridle with a bit for on my mare for about 9 years and we were in a constant battle. She would shake her head, raise her head and mouth the bit the whole time we rode. It was not enjoyable for her or me. I read about the bitless bridle when I went searching on the internet for alternative methods. From the day I put the bitless bridle on her our riding was enjoyable and she quit shaking and raising her head. She started paying attention to what commands she was given. Others that watched us ride were worried that without the bit she would not listen and might bolt. After doing the lesson my instructor got on and was amazed at how easy she was to ride and control. Thank you for the bitless bridle.

Rebecca, February 12, 2010:

I just got in from the first test of the bridle on my 6 year old Morgan mare. She did great! She was doing a lot of licking of her lips as if she was looking for something that wasn't there--but happy it wasn't there. She accepted the bridle immediately and was steering like a champ *immediately*. She's the type of mare who likes to move out and she doesn't like being asked to halt (she'd resist). Today she stopped with a mere closing of the hands whenever asked. It was wonderful. She's a great little horse and this bridle is going to make her even better! Next up is the client horse. :) I'm really thrilled!

Rebecca, February 15, 2010:

I rode the client's horse yesterday in the bridle; more success. The owner is afraid of the mare so hasn't ridden her in two years so I hopped aboard with the bitless bridle and while the mare is barn sour, she accepted the bridle. It's just soooooo cool!!! So we're two for two out here in the frozen midwest with your bridle. :)

Rebecca, March 05, 2010:

It's been a couple of weeks now and the two mares who now have your bridles are doing fantastically! My mare has become the most laid back, eager to please girl with her new bridle. She used to rush quite a bit but now she's always listening and waiting for the next cue and gives me what I want every time. My client's mare has been the same; a pleasure to ride. They were both sweet before but now they are sweet AND willing AND happy! I bet you never get tired of these emails!

Sarah, February 10, 2010:

Thank you for making such an excellent product! We are currently using our Dr. Cook's bridles on both of our OTTB. Our newest horse, Caddy, came right off the track (you can still see he is racing-thin) [*pictures in our online customer photo gallery*], and we took him everywhere this summer in the Dr. Cook's bridle! I rode him on trails, hacked him out around the commotion at shows, rode in the ring...he took to it right away! Copper, our other OTTB, loves it, too! I thank you, and our horses thank you, too!

Betsy, February 01, 2010:

Hi, I know that you've gotten hundreds of e-mails, but I just wanted to add that I love the bridle! My instructor was skeptical, but last week I rode a chestnut mare who's main goal in life seemed to be trying to buck me off. We tried the bridle on her - it was like a dream come true! She actually listened, behaved, and we had a great lesson. I'm so happy because I think the horse was headed for the glue factory if she didn't shape up...the bridle saved her, she's being used for lessons and everybody is happy! Thank you so much :-)

Joan, January 29, 2010:

Thank you so much for this great piece of equipment! I got the bridle about one week ago and both Ruby and I love it!

While I'm a bit older than some starting out (I'll be 65 in June and have been riding 5 yrs) I never wanted my lovely 10 yr old mare to experience discomfort while being ridden. I was concerned because it did seem like there would be less control. As you know quite the opposite is true. It took Ruby two rides before she got it. The first ride was only a few minutes-when she turned correctly I congratulated her and got off. The second ride going forward was a challenge to me. Today she totally got it. A visitor at the barn said how relaxed she looked. She not only looks more relaxed she IS more relaxed. She seems to be MORE receptive than with a conventional bit. As if the bit was such a concern her attention was split. Can't wait to ride tomorrow!! Thank you!!! (from Ruby and me)

Kelsey, January 26, 2010:

Here are a few pictures of my Quarter Type gelding "Kings Ransom" and I [*pictures are located in our customer photo gallery*]. He's been my loving companion for over 6 years and we've enjoyed the Bitless Bridle for almost as long. Ransom was ridden in a variety of disciplines (Including 3-Day Eventing and Western Pleasure) before I bought him, and suffered a great deal of wear and tear because of it. Ransom has always been a challenging ride, but the transition to the Bitless Bridle was seamless and changed our relationship forever. He has become much easier to handle and when he does act up, the Bitless Bridle offers the pain-free control I need. What surprises people the most is how soft and supple Ransom is when I ride him without a bit. I believe it has taught him that being ridden doesn't have to be a pain in the mouth. Another benefit we have enjoyed is the reduced need for teeth floating; my vet is astounded that he hasn't needed this service for over 2 years! Ransom turns 21 this year, but you'd never know it; he enjoys retirement, happy and bit free.

Geri, January 26, 2010:

On Youtube you can see many pictures of the horse Paddy Kilkee. After riding the horse 7 years on bit, it wasn't possible to continue this way, because Paddy Kilkee was very dangerous (bolt and shy). After one year training on The Bitless Bridle, it is a very great pleasure to ride him!

<http://video.aol.co.uk/video-detail/galerie-gb-horsemanshipwmv/2942902800>

Diana, January 14, 2010:

Just a quick note to let you and Dr. Cook know how absolutely wonderful the Bitless Bridle works for my Shire mare Trish. She has always been ridden bitless using a mechanical hackamore (with curb chain removed and replaced by a simple leather strap). I had her trained to even ride some dressage in it. However, using the Bitless Bridle we can do so much more "finessy" things. Also, with her being not only a 1900 lbs and very spirited horse always ready to speed up, I certainly need control and be able to direct her enthusiasm to move. With the Bitless Bridle Trishy and I have the best of all worlds!

Teodora, January 03, 2010:

Teodora, Croatia. Stud, Thoroughbred, no problems. It actually solved the one problem I had with him, his head bobbing, and pulling the reins out of my hands. Amazing.

Heidi, January 01, 2010:

I'm a veterinarian in Greensboro NC and recently started my new endurance horse with your Bitless bridle. He took to it so easily and now eats and drinks wonderfully on the trail. I don't recommend anything else. I enjoyed reading about you on the website and I'm thankful for this practical and humane alternative to a bit.

Candy, December 07, 2009:

I bought a Beta Bitless for my husband's horse and a leather western version for my own horse and they both took to the "bitless" like ducks to water. They are so much happier & more relaxed and my husband's horse who was a VERY hollow/resistant little thing just smiles a lot & makes "little pig noises" while being ridden...the "grunts of contentment."

I eventually replaced the Betathane bridle with a leather one and sent the Betathane version to a friend in another state. Her horse also is quite happy in it.

With ALL these horses they seem to listen better to our legs/weight without the "noise" of the bit to interfere. And stopping is no problem. In fact I deliberately set up a situation that SHOULD have caused a bolt/spook and without the pain/fear thing going on it was a non-event.

We are ALL quite happy. My only regret is that I waited so long. In my case it was ALSO the "controversy" raised by the "Horse Journal" flap that prompted me to say, "I want to see for MYSELF" if the Bitless Bridle lives up to its claims.

It does. Unequivocally.

Vicki, December 05, 2009:

After some mouth issues a few years ago I decided to get Phoenix a bitless bridle, unfortunately due to back problems I didn't get to use it. Now after two years of recovery/enjoying being a horse time he's back in work and doesn't fuss with his head, doesn't pull at my hands and is a calm and relaxed horse.

Nancie, November 24, 2009:

I wanted to make sure I sent a "thank you" for donating a headstall to a recent trail ride. I attended the Jerl Nielsen benefit scholarship ride held Saturday, October 3rd in Southampton, Mass. I was very pleased to win the head stall as I had been eager to try one on my 8 year old paint mare. The very next day I put it on and have been using it ever since, even on large group rides. She's relaxed and it is working well for us. I was on a ride with 77 horses and someone said "and you don't have a bit on that horse!" I hope to be able to help spread the word for you.

Larry, November 24, 2009:

Just a report on the BB. Dono (El Senor Donoso deDulce) welcomed it. He had, for some reason, begun to fight having the bit placed. It had been all right for three years but suddenly there was a problem. Had the vet check his teeth and no problems. Knowing him, he just decided he wasn't going to be happy anymore with a piece of steel in his mouth. He accepted the BB easily and responded almost as well as to the bit...and even that has improved with use.

I try to train him to anything new in the arena. The more I "practice" there the easier the transition on the trail. Have worked on softer application of the aid and made sure I flexed him laterally a lot in the beginning so he wouldn't resist moving his head laterally with light pressure.

So far we are happy customers...both. He actually sticks his head in the BB when I offer it to him. Haven't had a really strong "spook" to check it out under emergency situations but I am confident it will work.

Still trying to figure a way to add some silver to the BB. His saddle has a fair amount as does his breast collar. We may not be good but we are flashy.

Mickey, November 23, 2009:

I absolutely LOVE this bridle.

I am riding on a 14 hand POA that is very well trained in a basic D ring snaffle but very sensitive in the mouth. We do a lot of "fun" things like barrel racing and pole bending and even when I try to be careful about her mouth I feel like I am possibly putting her in unnecessary pain. She is SUCH a good pony.

I got the bitless bridle on a recommendation from Jessica Jahiel. The first night I put it on we had a bit of head tossing and lip smacking to deal with but I only rode for about thirty minutes and then took it off. I went riding again last night for over an hour and one half and she did GREAT!!! She was extremely responsive - no head tossing, and very comfortably paced at all her gaits. My husband was so impressed that he wants me to order one for his horse.

Wendy, November 08, 2009:

I had recently (3 weeks) bought a horse that had been traumatized and reared at any opportunity with a bit or even just handling her head. I had very poor brakes and terrible manners in general and she thought she "ran the show".

I had her checked out and trimmed to barefeet and fitted for tack but found out she was sound, just frightened of the bit. I had used the Bitless Bridle yesterday and if I could have

video taped it- you would have seen about 3/4 of amazing improvement that got better over my hour long ride. I previously had a mess to deal with and now she's not scared or in pain so she actually SITS for as long as I want her to and we are on voice commands and seat position to actually stop!!!!

It took me from a dangerous horse project to a willing partner to ride with instantaneously. I am not over exaggerating in any degree. I went from a broken finger from Callypso and I's very first meeting to a horse that follows me around and does what I ask by voice commands (yes, voice commands and she didn't want to go back into the paddock - lol).

After 4 rides with a bit I had very little to no improvement with very dangerous behavior (putting the bit in was an hour long process of some coaxing) and it was instantly with Dr. Cooks Bitless Bridle. Within the first 10 minutes of the bitless bridle I have to say I was almost in tears with how impressed I was and how great of a horse I actually had that the prior owners nearly couldn't give away because she was so dangerous. WOW.....

Now I have an amazing horse that I feel guilty for buying for \$250.00. I couldn't have as nice of a horse without the bridle in every aspect of her handling. Dr. Cook, I cannot understand how any person could feel that they are safer with a bit or that using one is humane when there is a clear answer for any horse in any stage of training. You have created a very powerful and safe tool for equitation that is amazing and I say that very modestly.

Andrew, November 05, 2009:

I have had my Bridle for going on three years now. My horses ride with nothing else and we all enjoy it immensely. That Old School thinking of bits and metal in the mouth are so lame and past their time; there is nothing that China won't do or anywhere that she won't go because she can relax and enjoy the scenery as much as we do since she isn't focused on what is in her mouth. The Uwharrie Forest can be pretty intense and an extreme workout for horse and rider. The forest service plants fescue meadows along the trails and it is nice that China can easily get a snack and recharge without a bit in her mouth. Thanks again for such a great product and keep up the fight for change.

Joanna, October 20, 2009:

My name is Joanna Christion. BrownChicken BrownCow StringBand and I are planning a 700-mile music tour on horses. The tour will go through Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi and is scheduled to begin in April 2010. I have been researching tack for the tour and originally thought I wanted hackamores for the horses. However, while researching hackamores on-line, I came across an article about the bitless bridle. I was so excited about it that I ordered one right away and had it shipped up to Alaska, where I worked this summer. I was riding a lady's horse up there after work and on weekends and I tried the bitless bridle out on her. Day One there was a lot of head shaking, but after that she did great.

So I have one bitless bridle and I am writing to ask if your company would be interested in sponsoring our tour with 4 more bridles? We would love to have you as sponsors and we would thank you as such during our shows, radio and newspaper interviews, in our other various media as well as around campfires with local folks. I would be VERY happy to spread the word about the bitless bridle whenever possible. I love that it is a non-pain based way of communicating with your horse. We will be seeking out media coverage of our tour, locally as well as nationally if we can.

The band's website is: www.bcbcsb.com. Thank you so much for reading this and considering us for sponsorship!

Sue, October 18, 2009:

I've been riding in Julie Leidl's nylon bitless bridle until mine arrives, I CAN'T BELIEVE how different my horse is – AMAZING!!!!!!!!!!!!!! No more head bobbing, no reefing the reins out of my hands to bend down and eat grass, better turns, better stops, etc, etc, etc. I'm so excited!!!!!!!!!! I do have a better horse than I thought. We all can't wait to get our hands on the new bridles!

Ashley, October 05, 2009:

Could you put links to those responsible for rule changes at the FEI/USET/etc. on your website? I am going to look up the info myself, but I think more people would be able to express their concerns to the ruling parties if the info was more accessible. It's insane that all manner of bits can be used, sometimes quite harshly, but that a BB is prohibited in certain competitions. I'm not competing at that level now, but after my horse's first time in the BB, I NEVER want to put a bit in his mouth again. I introduced it on the ground, hooked my finger through the ring and BARELY moved my finger towards his hip-he IMMEDIATELY moved his hindquarters. 1st try. He didn't even have to think about it, your bridle sends such a clear message. This horse was only long lined in a snaffle once, and ridden in a rope halter twice. I remember the resistance, head tossing, and confusion when we introduced the bit, but with the BB he just GOT IT! I LOVE YOUR BRIDLE!!!

Stacy, October 02, 2009:

I constantly tell my horse friends how much I love these bridles. I bought four of them, one for each of my horses. I think this may be the single best piece of equipment I have ever purchased for my animals! Thank you!!!

While on a cattle drive a couple weeks ago I heard a friend say he was having trouble with the Arab he rides. He was tossing his head and giving him problems. I asked him to use one of my bitless bridles and he didn't have a problem all day.

I am working on becoming a Barefoot saddle dealer and I will definitely be linking to bitless bridles on my website and recommending them every chance I get.

Leanne, October 01, 2009:

I swear I am starting to become an ambassador for Dr Cook as I have just convinced my friend to sell her Nurtural Bitless since its just can't match the Dr Cook for quality and design ! I personally have 2. Now that she has sold her Nurtural, I contacted the Canadian Distributor here in New Brunswick Canada to get her a Dr Cook of course!

Tracy, September 13, 2009:

I just wanted to send a note thanking you for the great bridle! My Thoroughbred looked so uncomfortable with a bit in his mouth and would do some severe head tossing, after

having him for a month, I new we had to try something different. I purchased your bridle and the change in him was immediate. He is a happy horse and is much more comfortable! Ruckus says, Thank you! I am also using the bridle to train my other horse. He has never had a bit in his mouth and I intend to keep it that way thanks to you! Ransom thanks you for the comfortable training experience! Thank you for the great experience! I will be purchasing another bridle soon!

Kris, September 10, 2009:

I am a 55 yr. old woman who got her first horse 3 months ago: a 16 yr. old Morgan gelding who wore a high port bit and needed to always wear a tie down. His ground manners were good, but when he would get his bit in his mouth, he became what I consider extremely anxious and when riding him, he did lots of head tossing and rubbing his face on his forelegs. I had been told by his former owner not to change his bit, no matter what. So, being a new rider, I started thinking I didn't know anything about my horse and how to "manage" him because he was so fidgety. He wouldn't stand still to be mounted, he wouldn't stand still when stopped, and if I tried to trot or canter him, he took off like a cannonball.

Four days ago, I rode him in Dr. Cook's bitless bridle. I still used the tie down because I was nervous not to. He was a calmer horse immediately. In fact, he was so good, the next day, I eliminated the tie down and he was great. No more head tossing. He still keeps opening his mouth and checking to see where that darned bit is at and it is pretty funny! Anyway, he is so much more responsive and in such a much more relaxed mode, that learning can now take place. Now, when we go out together, both of us have a good time. Ten thousand thank-yous for this device. I made a promise to my horse that I would never again put a bit in his mouth.

Jessica, September 07, 2009:

I have owned BB's for a few years now (I have two western BB's) and I couldn't imagine using a bit ever again, on any horse. Once I purchased them, I swiftly sold or disposed of all of the bits that I had lying around. I have used my BB's on about 5 different horses over the years, and it never crossed my mind, it was like second nature to be bitless. It amazes me still that I could be out on a ride and people are utterly shocked when they don't see a bit! "How do you stop them"? They ask.

Just the other day, I was on my first trail ride with my new horse, his first time in a BB. One lady who was riding with me said that he's only doing well in it because he was already so well trained. Oh boy, did I bite my tongue! Sometimes it's better not to get into that debate while out on the trails. What she didn't know is that I had a horse that was not well trained, and in fact, maybe a little dangerous on the trail, and I still rode him in that bridle. Not once, ever being concerned that I wasn't going to be in control.

I constantly cringe when I see horses with bits in their mouth, especially when the owner is constantly pulling and jerking on their mouth. I don't understand why the bitless concept is so hard for people to get!

Something that recently happened to me is that I was planning on joining the local volunteer sheriff mounted patrol, and I was told that I would have to use a minimum of a snaffle in order to join. Well, I guess I won't be doing that anytime soon! Just think if they would've found out that my horse is barefoot and I ride in a treeless saddle! What a freak! ;)

Anyway, I signed the petition to get these bridles legal to use in shows, and although I

don't show, I'm just a trail rider, just think how that could expand into the rest of the horse world. I could join the mounted patrol without a bit, imagine that! I also passed on the videos of your bit vs. bitless study to my skeptic friends. Good job and thanks for helping horses have a happier life!

Charles, August 28, 2009:

I am finishing up a tour in Iraq. I went home in July for some much needed R/R. I read about your product on your web site. I have used a mechanical hackamore on my horses they seemed to like it better than a bit. But I just was not satisfied. So I ordered two of your bridles and they arrived at my house just before I did. I got deployed in October and my horses had not been ridden since then. All I can say is I was amazed at how good your bridles worked. I tacked up my Quarter horse first and rode him in the paddock just a minute or two he seemed to love it and I had the best control I have ever had. I have and will continue to recommend your bridle.

Tammi, August 22, 2009:

I used the bitless for the first time tonight with my 6 yr old Arab/Mustang. I have only had her 3 months and she was primarily a pet at her former owner's. I have felt since I met her that she has great potential but she would have at least two tantrums (fighting my direction, head tossing, jumping around, even bucking) every ride. She was jumpy, tense and hard to make come to a stop or stand still. After 5 minutes, and I mean literally, she was a different horse! She even stood perfectly still while I fussed with adjustments to the bridle, I felt like she was thanking me for the change! On our ride she turned smoothly, went where I asked her to go, stopped on command (most of the time), stood and waited while I talked to someone and seemed so much more relaxed. Gone was the head tossing, jumpiness and tension. I felt totally in control and much more at ease than I ever have on her back. We had one small "argument" about which road to take home but nothing near the tantrums she was having in the bit. Thank you, thank you for the wonderful experience we had tonight and the many more we will have now that we are working on a pain free partnership based on communication!

Peggy, August 10, 2009:

My horse is much happier. He would be a good salesperson for your bridle. With a bit he's tense, chews, slobbers & twists his head. As soon as the bit is gone, he's soft, quiet & relaxed instantly. I wouldn't have believed the difference if I hadn't seen it myself

Alena, August 7, 2009:

I am so excited about the change in my horses I wanted to share it with you. I bought first bridle about a year ago for my fidgety Arab who was never happy with any bit I tried in her mouth. She now even lowers her head so I can put the Bitless bridle on!! I decided to try it on my Warmblood and I am very excited about the change in her; she doesn't spook as much when hacked out and her jumping has improved dramatically, she is now jumping 1.2 m combination jumps without any hesitation where before she would put a few stops in before I could get her over them. I can't wait to try her XC in it. Friend and I have just returned from

our horsey holiday and we rode both horses in Bitless bridles and had no problems whatsoever. My horses just looked happy all the time.

Kristin, July 30, 2009:

Mikado and I have done everything from jumping to bareback to trails in his bitless. I have so many riders look astounded when they see that Mikado does not have a bit. They always ask me: "How do you control him?!" I always chuckle and say: "The bitless isn't about control, it's about trust." I am a firm believer in natural horsemanship, and you have helped me to achieve that in my riding with your bridle. Mikado and I thank you from the very bottom of our extremely grateful hearts.

Andi, July 28, 2009:

I have been using your bridle for about a year now, and I would just like to say that I am a true believer now. When I first got your bridle, it was because a couple younger kids were taking lessons on my mare and "water skiing" on her mouth. She was getting a bit hard, and pissy (for good reason) so I thought this might be a good alternative. In no way did I think that a bit was abusive or that it bothered my mare in my hands. I just figured her coughing and high head were normal. I began using the bridle myself after seeing how well the kids did in it, and was surprised at how responsive she was. She still does not collect as well in the bitless, but I have moved my focus away from dressage to trail riding, so it wasn't a big deal. Recently, I decided it would be fun to take a few dressage lessons, so I put the bit back in. She fought that bridle like no other! It was a simple french link, as soft as it gets, and she had no qualms in letting me know how much she hated it! I guess it's a situation of, you don't know what you are missing. Her dislike of the bit was the biggest sign for me...why would I make her use something she hates so much? Thanks so much for giving me a happier horse.

John, June 29, 2009:

Just had to say the bridle is super! I'm using it on a standard bred race horse. His mouth bleeds with a regular bit. I could never find out why, and jogging all week with a bit tears his mouth up. Now he only has to use a bit to race once a week. I'm sure he would race better in this bridle..but I cant legally use it to race. Anyway, I can't say enough, its a godsend for this horse. I am also going to purchase one for our riding horse.

Sue, June 22, 2009:

I thought I'd let you know that after reading the Horse Journal bashing of your bridles and then the rebuttals in the horse journal, it piqued my curiosity and I thought that your company made sense in the article. I had to try them. I have a Tennessee Walking Horse and a Spotted Saddle Horse, both gaited and have always known the idiocy of the myth that they need constant contact on the mouth to effectively gait. They are BORN gaited and they gait in a halter or a bridle. I had a blast putting them in their new synthetic bitless bridles and letting them eat a sloppy, yummy bucket and hosing them off! They responded immediately to the bridles and did everything they've been trained to do. They are lighter than the typical gaited horse because they were trained in full cheek snaffles, without constant contact. All their cues

were there and I rode the first day on trail and in some cases they were more responsive. At no time did I ever feel that control was sacrificed by using the bridles. They like them and so do I. Should've gotten them years ago! Thank you and hopefully, the Horse Journal piqued other people's curiosity so you will get more interest!! Your customer service was great too!

Susan, June 10, 2009:

My 6-year old American Saddlebred loves this bridle. I'm very comfortable riding him both in the arena and outside around the property with it, even bareback. We're working on flexing, and it helps keep me out of his mouth. I think most people thought I was nuts at first, but not much comment anymore since he is so well behaved in it. When I bought him he was in a twisted snaffle and they were tying his tongue down.... he is one happy boy now!

Betty, June 09, 2009:

Just wanted to give you an update on my horses and the use of the BB. My youngest (4 year old Cremello QH) absolutely loves it. He was so incredibly smooth and in frame on this bridle, everyone stopped to watch us ride. He previously tossed my friend with the use of the bit. And of course everyone was shocked he was bitless and only a 4 year old (he has only had maybe 90 days total time under saddle – had previous leg injuries and has fully recovered). I must add that he would not stop at all in the bit (I use mainly my seat but of course have to do a one rein stop til he learns all the aids). He stops on a dime with the bitless. I feel I have better control bitless with him. I have already received my notice that my 2 new bridles are on its way and can't wait. Thank you again for responding so quickly to all my emails. Kudos to Dr. Cook for such a great design. How incredibly sad that the industry is so slow to respond and accept this in the show ring.

Charlie, June 6, 2009:

I just thought I would write to tell you how right you were! My and my mum's pony is a 14.2hh, Irish import. He's a Connemara cross and is the most willing and interested pony I have ever met, not spooky but everything needs to be investigated in his opinion!

On the ground there was nothing he wouldn't walk past, over or through when led. This was tested as I do Parelli with him so I spent a lot of time on the ground playing with and training him. He became soft through his transitions and learnt to think things through rather than just react, impressive for a four year old. Apart from the odd babyish hyperactive moment he was and is an angel!

This however did not transfer to his ridden work. To begin with he had a mild version of strangles straight after we bought him, this involved four months off work. Bringing him back into work after this was challenging, as he had to move yards at the same time. He adapted wonderfully and on the ground his behavior didn't change.

Riding him became more and more stressful however. He was not nasty, naughty, nappy or anything else along those lines, the best way of describing it would be that he was stressed out. He would vary from fizzy and rushing, to lazy and awkward. His canter transitions were nonexistent, rushy and all over the place. This behavior was accompanied at all times by a refusal to accept the contact and head shaking the second he was uncomfortable with anything, he would lean down with his head between his knees, then throw his head up or try and grab

the bit between his teeth and snatch the reins. He never ran off or napped, he was simply trying to escape the contact at all costs, if you dropped the reins he would relax instantly.

He would have his good days, days when I could hold an even contact, sometimes he would even round and soften, only however when I was barely touching his mouth. When we first bought him he loved jumping and would carry you to a jump. Months after coming back into work however he was running past and refusing even tiny jumps.

I blamed myself for this behavior; he had been fine before, what had changed? Me, it must be my fault! I asked instructors and friends, they all said he would grow out of it, or that I needed to be firmer with him.

But despite my self-blame I couldn't shake the feeling something else was the problem. I had ridden him bareback in a halter many times and got nice walk/trot trot/walk transitions from my seat with only one rein! With this experience I found it hard to believe a bit was necessary, or that I should strap his mouth shut.

Then I found your website! I read it over and over, researched other bitless bridles but thought yours sounded the best. I was particularly persuaded by the fact you had articles and papers on your site, there is so little scientific proof in the horse world. As a scientist I was greatly reassured.

My pony showed many of the signs you listed, I already knew I didn't need a bit to control him, but more finesse would be needed to actually bring on his schooling than a rope halter. Your bridle was perfect.

My dad and I bought my mum the beta one for her birthday to try on our pony and he loved it! Within minutes he was trotting round with a spring in his step I had never seen while he was ridden. My mum felt she had control and when I rode him he picked up canter happily and calmly, with not a head toss or shake.

We hacked him and he wasn't naughty and definitely understood it better than a bit. Spooks that would have turned him into a head shaking wreck were manageable and quickly forgotten.

Just to prove me right I have put him back into his simple snaffle bridle twice. He hated it! Both times he went straight back to his old habits! The second time he was rushy, crooked, and mashed at the bit like it personally offended him, which it probably did!

His jumping has come on leaps and bounds literally! He pulls you into jumps with zeal and eagerness, apart from doing a lot of steeple chaser impressions he couldn't be better! Out hacking I have better brakes than many of my friends strongly bitten horses.

I couldn't be happier and neither could my horse! Thank you so much! He will never wear a bit again if I can help it! You have improved my horses living and my happiness!

Tim, June 3, 2009:

I have been using the western headstall since I received the new but slightly used one from you over a month ago. I have to say that I am profoundly impressed how such subtle changes in a traditional bridle can affect the performance and altitude of a horse. The 2 horses of mine that I have been using it on have always used hacks so not having anything in their mouth is what they are accustomed to. The difference I instantly saw was unique to each horse. My lead mare is very headstrong and independent and your headstall has introduced a much higher level of control in all situations sacrificing nothing. The other horse, a scared of his own shadow BLM mustang always had fear in his eyes, threw his head a lot and would bolt in a panic. Don't ask me why, but all of these issues have almost completely vanished. I would now

consider them both to be near bomb proof rides. I would eventually like to convert all of my herd to the bitless bridle. For the meantime I would like to purchase a second one. When another used western one comes available please let me know.

Eve, May 20, 2009:

Our weather has been awful ... today was the first day I got to ride in 2009!

I have put the bridle on Beau three times and got him used to the rein action from the ground. Today I got on his back and he responded perfectly to direct rein turns, stop and back up. We were thrilled!

Here you can see me digging in my pocket for his treat, which was so easy for him to eat without the pesky bit in his mouth. What a happy horse! All thanks to you!

So here's a question - what should people do with our old bits? If we sell them we are perpetuating the use of bits but if we throw them away we're wasting money. Any ideas?

Joey, May 14, 2009:

So far so good with the bridle. Ginger seems relaxed and has a much better whoa. I'm going on our first big mountain ride this weekend. I'll let you know how she does in her new bridle.

[two days later...] What a beautiful ride we had. My mare is usually nervous and chomping on her bit the entire ride. Today she was calm even though she was with horses she has never ridden with. I'm sold! I'll be ordering another bridle for my mule soon.

Rick Lamb, May 12, 2009:

Again, thanks for sending the brown leather Bitless Bridle. It's all I've been using since the day it arrived and I just love it. My wife tried the black one you sent a few years ago and loves it for her Icelandic Horse. So it's official. The Lambs have gone bitless!

Thanks again for a wonderful product. Like most great inventions, the brilliance lies in its simplicity. In fact, that's not a bad slogan ... "brilliantly simple"

Best, Rick Lamb

www.TheHorseShow.com

Corinne, May 15, 2009:

I've had the one of your beta headstalls now for over 10 years. The outside vinyl is beginning to crack but it has held up like iron.

We purchased a big appendix gelding for my daughter two years ago. We waited until he was 3.5 yrs to start him under saddle. I sent him off to a trainer last summer to get him started and figured that a snaffle bit wouldn't hurt for the first year or so... ha! I should have known better!

We brought him home and didn't ride a whole lot this winter. This spring we brought him back out and my daughter began working him. Of course he was bigger and stronger after some time off. He's a sweetheart, but she had to deal with more activity than she liked. This started the vicious cycle of grabbing more on to the bit in hopes of more control. What came

home from the trainer as a steady, compliant horse was quickly turning into a mount who felt like a freight train going down a mountain pass! After about two months of becoming more and more afraid of this sweet horse, my daughter in her teenage wisdom said she was going to try the bitless on him. Two rides into it and he's a different horse. Head down, steady gaits, ears forward.... The only problem now is that she stole my bitless and we'll have to buy another one for her!

Since my daughter was using my bridle, I tried to put the bit back in my mare's mouth.... she was having no part of that. She rode around with her head between her knees and at the canter starting roaring like there was no tomorrow, even with the reins loopy and long. She would have spit that thing out if she could have. After about 3 minutes of that I just got out my halter and two lead ropes and rode in that. You see, after riding in the bitless for a while your horse becomes trained to your seat aids and you really don't need much anything else but something to steer with.

I've used the bitless on my mare for over 10 years. I don't know why I wasn't more adamant in starting our baby on it but I do know for sure now that a horse will run away from the pain of a bit. Even just a little bit of pressure from the bit is too much for some horses. They just check out on you. I feel that a bit for most horses is totally unnecessary but I know that a bit in an uneducated hand is an especially cruel punishment to the horse. All that pain just complicates that training process and prevents a true partnership from developing. There's only one formula that really works: no bit + good training = true partnership.

Shannon, May 08, 2009:

Just a quick note to let you know I used the bitless bridle yesterday on my belgian and what a difference from the other bitless bridle I was using, I barely had to apply any pressure to the reins to get a response. My only regret is that I didn't purchase one sooner. It is definitely worth every penny.

Kandas, May 08, 2009:

Our hot-headed QH mare was a head tossing, erratic speed freak before we tried the bitless bridle. Everyone told us it was a mistake and we would not be able to control her. At first wearing her head tossing vanished. Within a few rides she was turning and stopping better than she ever had with much less attitude.

Paul, May 06, 2009:

All I can say is.....WOW! The bridle came in the afternoon mail yesterday. Could hardly wait until this morning to try it out. After checking, and rechecking to make certain I had all of the adjustments correct, we set off. I am not heavy handed with reins, and Shotgun never fought the bit, but oh my God. What a difference. In all of about 10 minutes. He even turned his head around to look at me periodically as if to say, 'thanks'. Dr. Cook must be a wizard. I am waaaaay happier with this bridle than I had even hoped to be, and Shotgun LOVES it. I'm almost there. Have my Old Mac's for when I do want something on his hooves, Dr. Cook's bitless bridle now, and my Christ Premium Bareback Pad arrives tomorrow. No more pain for my boy, which makes his Pop VERY happy. And to be honest, I never wear the same boots or shoes two days in a row. I think they last longer if they're given a rest to dry out, etc.

Sooooo, don't be surprised if I order another bridle in the next few days. I'll be leaving you the absolute best feedback possible in the short space allowed. Thank you again for everything.

Teresa, May 05, 2009:

I ordered your bitless bridle a couple of months ago for my five year old draft cross. He is a sweet horse, but always fussed with his bit no matter what bit I tried. The bitless bridle has made all the difference in the world! He has stopped bobbing his head and fussing---he seems completely happy. Thank you so much for your concern for horses' comfort and welfare. I have spread the word at the barn where I board and several other people have ordered them as well.

Linda, May 04, 2009:

Just want to take a moment to let you know that we (my horse, Pronto and myself) love the bitless bridle. The first time we tried it we were both a little confused. But the second time everything clicked. I was absolutely amazed!! He now backs without struggling, and our 20 meter circles are real circles. Pronto is so relaxed while we are riding he is now licking and chewing during our training sessions. This is the best piece of tack I have ever owned.

Sandra, April 29, 2009:

I don't know why this happened today, but Rudy and I went trail riding and he was unfamiliar with some of the route. So on the way home he got himself all worked up thinking there were spooks out there. When I blocked his jiggling several times he reverted back to his old standby, bucking. In the past I have not been able to stay aboard a bucking horse but today.... well, I was able to flex his head, sit firmly in the saddle and tell him NO! He instantly stopped bucking and was absolutely an angel the rest of the way. This alone was worth the price of the bridle and more. Thank you very much.

Sandra, April 22, 2009:

Just 10 minutes ago I came in the house after riding my horse Rudy Toot Toot in the bitless bridle. What an absolute JOY!!!!!! I am so excited I can hardly stand it. This horse of mine was a total mess when I bought him. He is probably now 12-14 years old. A bay gelding, part arab, part quarter. He was so abused that he had learned he could protect himself by biting, bucking and not letting himself be caught.

He was head shy to the max and when being ridden he would reach around and bite your foot, not to mention plunging his head to the ground to avoid the bit. Between what I heard about his previous owner and how Rudy acted I could surmise what had taken place.

Apparently the mother and daughter had loved on him as a colt. Then he got to be of an age to train and things went bad. They hired a trainer who got bucked off several times. On the last ride he was being worked in a round pen clockwise when the man pulled him around severely and whacked him over the head with something. Needless to say, poor Rudy has a hard time relaxing.

I have owned him about 4 -5 years and had to start from square one, he wouldn't lead just plunge ahead or into me. Oh I forgot to mention his ears would stay pinned back the

majority of the time. I did lots of groundwork, slow and easy and also used clicker training (positive reinforcement). He has become the lightest horse I have ever ridden, and always strives to please me.

Long story shorter, I have gotten to the point that I can ride in controlled situations. He and I both have developed a huge bond of trust, but those old memories kept coming back to Rudy. And when they did his behavior would cause me to feel close to danger. He and I had a pack that we wouldn't push each other into scary situations. (Truly, it was mutual).

Well TONIGHT was, well, a miracle. After only 20 minutes in the round pen with me on board he realized he could relax. Before his halt was poor, hollowing back and raising his head with nose out. In only 15 minutes we were making huge improvements. The trot was always full of apprehension, frequently getting so fast that I needed to circle him a bit tighter. This time when he got worried and faster than I wanted I applied some pressure and in no time at all he brought himself together and slowed to a relaxed trot. Of course I gave him an "End of Lesson" and we both went back to the barn so wonderfully happy.

I finally got a chance to ride Rudy down our neighbor's road. He has three horses that run free and all sorts of stuff to look at and things that flap in the wind. I felt so at ease, even when he would get a little high headed. It is so nice to know that he can't evade my signals, and in fact when he feels the contact it helps to calm him. With the bit it usually would escalate the nervousness in both of us.

I cannot thank all of you enough. The joy of riding has been returned to me!!!! And the feeling of safety has just soared. I feel like our whole world has opened up.

David, April 23, 2009:

I ordered your b.b. a week ago... Got it this Monday,,,I have been working 100 miles away from home commuting every day, so I haven't had the chance to use it yet. Today when I got home, my wife had been riding her horse, that she has "tried every bit possible" and was not going to try "my" bitless bridle I ordered for my 3 year old. NEEDLESS TO SAY she had been fighting with her horse as she usually does, although not to extreme, when she took a break and used the bitless bridle..{so I need to continue?} when she was somewhat shocked...I had not told her of the reviews from others who had tried it and the problems it solved,,,When I got home she was so excited to tell me of the difference , I thought you had called her and offered her money to testify of the benefits. The only problem is that we have 5 horses we ride; can we trade in old bits for down payment on more bb's???? Thanks for the new dimension of our relationship with our horses, Dave and Julie Miller, Ardoch, North Dakota.

Kim, April 13, 2009:

Thank you Carole for the quick response. I'm also happy to know I did buy a genuine Dr. Cooks bitless bridle:) I bought 4 from your dealer on Ebay and have recommended them to friends. We bought one for each rider in our family and all the horses LOVE them!!!

Bennett, April 11, 2009:

I am writing to let you know how much I like and appreciate the Bitless Bridle, and more importantly, how much my four-legged friend likes and appreciates the Bitless Bridle. I obtained "King's Ransom", (which is what he is worth...yes, I am slightly prejudiced), 4 1/2 years

ago. I was told by many people that I should look at gaited horses due to the fact that I have a bad back. As luck would have it, an acquaintance of ours had two Missouri Fox Trotters for sale. The first one was three years old and my wife and I felt that was a bit too young for me, (I was sixty five at the time). So we chose the second one, (King's Ransom), a beautiful dapple-gray; he was 5 years old at the time.

I told the gentleman that I wanted to try KR for two weeks and then I would decide. I rode him for two days, called the man and said, "I'll take him!". The ride was fantastic. After we closed the deal, the gentleman informed me that KR had *thrown him twice* "and was a bit fussy". I watched him ride his other MFT, using a great deal of spur. I began to understand a few things. Oh, joy. He had given me a "gaited horse bit:" high port, 8 inch shanks, AND a curb chain, (no wonder KR threw him). I decided there had to be a better way. By luck, I found your web site and purchased the Bitless Bridle.

The same day I received it we tried it out. Fifteen minutes in the arena, then out on the trail. Fantastic! My equine friend did everything I asked of him. No "gaping", no head tossing, no fighting the reins, stopped instantly, neck reined, and direct reined, horizontal and vertical flexion, marvelous. He was, and is, a happy boy.

Just a little anecdote: We entered a Western Trail Trials last season. When we arrived, one of the other entrants spotted the Bitless Bridle and asked the judge if it was allowed. The judge's response was; "Oh, no, absolutely not!". When I went to her and asked why, her response was; "Well, it is unsafe, you have no control, plus, it is simply not allowed". Really. I was just a little upset. Soooo, just before the event started, I took "Ransom" up to the course, and much to the sponsor's and judge's chagrin, we went through the course with basically stunned silence as a background. My little MFT went through the course with NO mistakes, with NO hesitation - so much for lack of control. We then turned, looked at everyone, and headed home. "King's Ransom" and I both had a smile on our faces. Thank you so much Dr. Cook. I am not only extremely happy with the Bitless Bridle, (after 4 1/2 years), I am an advocate, and a fan.

Wendy, April 10, 2009:

Thank you so much for all your support and care. Carole has been awesome in helping me with our 4 horses. We have older horses and a coming-up 3 year old. Two Fox Trotters a Tennessee Walker and a Quarter Horse. All have their different needs and reactions to bits. I put my older Fox Trotter in a BB and was immediately impressed! He hadn't been 'out' since September 2008 and in February 2009 we took off across open fields, I was a little apprehensive to start with but needn't have been. TOTAL control and my horse was relaxed and MUCH happier. I have also changed the quarter horse over and WOW! No more head shaking, sweating up or fighting and leaning against the bit. Impressed? You betcha!

My almost 3 year old will also go into one and my TWH is definitely joining the others!! My friends are SO impressed with the changes, they have borrowed a bridle to try and taken the web address to find out more, and hopefully take a the step to happier horses and fun rides. I am a huge advocate of the BB and will certainly work at changing the ideas of my 'struggling with bits & unhappy horse' friends. You know what? It won't be hard. They all know my horses and the BB's speak for themselves. Along with being barefoot, thanks to Dr Cook's Bitless Bridles and Carole's awesome customer support and service (during before and after purchases) my horses are totally metal-less and all the better for it! Thanks again

Mark, April 06, 2009:

I train horses at a horse rescue in Ohio. I'm always pushing for natural horse remedies such as getting them out of their stalls for longer than just cleaning them, socialization with other horses and making them as comfortable as possible if ridden. Being more open minded than my fellow volunteers and coming from California, I tend to get into trouble with the "old school" of training.

I purchased your bitless bridle at the Ohio horse show over the weekend. I had researched it for a while since I knew bitless was the direction I wanted to go and also I knew it would shake things up with "old school". Well, your product was better than I could have imagined.

My ex thorough bred racehorse took to it like there was no tomorrow. The response was unbelievable. I still can't believe it. The best part of the story was when I was done riding, a few of the "old school" came over and I dismounted and walked Angel over to them. As they were checking it out, Angel showed all her teeth and gums as if to show them she had no bit. I had never seen her do that in the year and a half that I had been involved with her. I couldn't stop laughing and "old school" even showed some teeth with a smile. I don't think they will change over, but I sure did. Changing the world one horse at a time. Thanks again.

Sylvia, March 30, 2009:

I am delighted with my bitless bridle for my French Trotter L'Elu de Boulaise. I ride trails in the Brenne, Central France. L'Elu and I were quite comfortable with the bridle from the second day. We might have been on the first day but I tried the bridle out with the bitted bridle as well just in case. As I am riding a couple of hours every day, I moved the noseband up a bit so that he wouldn't get sore where the band was on the first two days. I will put it back in the best (I understand) place after another couple of days.

Lidia, March 25, 2009:

Thanks so much for our new Western bitless. Viola, 10-year-old mare, half Tori, half Arab is loving it! She is so soft and no longer pulls on the bit and I love riding her bareback as well for even closer contact. The trust has been greatly increased from Viola's side as well. Thanks again!

Erika, March 23, 2009:

My husband and I love your bridles so much, and hope that others catch on to such a good thing. I use Facebook and started a fan club for your bitless bridle. Any Facebook member can become a fan by simply searching for Dr. Cooks Bitless Bridle on the Facebook site. It's easy and free and promotes your wonderful work. Perhaps you want to tell others about it on your website.

Wendy, March 17, 2009:

Thank you so much for this wonderful piece of equipment!! I have just purchased my second headstall for my 3 year old.... not yet backed but will be later this year. My first purchase was for my Fox Trotter, Bill. When I purchased Bill a couple of years ago he was in a

harsh bit with at least 2 creases in the corners of his mouth. As soon as I brought him home he went into a Mylar #2 snaffle. This Christmas past I decided to buy him a bitless bridle. It arrived very quickly but I couldn't try it out due to the weather conditions. As soon as we had a break in the weather, my husband and I tacked up our horses and off we went. Neither horse had been out for a couple of months and here we are in open fields with two frisky horses. Bill got used to it immediately, before long we were loping and having a great 'ol time. My husband's Tennessee Walker was throwing her head around (she is in a Mylar) and quite upset. We have decided to try Bill's out on the Walker to see how she does in it, but I wanted to start my youngster off in his own. I think he will do absolutely fine, he is very light and responsive to the halter and lead and totally understands the whole head concept. I am thrilled with mine for Bill. We have been out on a group ride in the mountains since and it's like he's always been bitless. All our horses are barefoot too, so it will be great to have totally metal-less horses. Thank you again, and I look forward to receiving BJ's headstall.

Nancy, March 17, 2009:

Although I ended up selling my spooky horse I can attest that he was more responsive and much happier in the bitless bridle. I switched only 2 weeks before he was leaving and the results were nothing short of amazing. I even tried him on the trails with it and he responded beautifully.

Were I a more confident rider I would have kept him as I felt that if I pulled on the reins during a bolt he would not have pain on top of fear. It makes perfect sense to me. I did email the trainer with the link and urged him to use it on my horse.

Al, March 13, 2009:

The BitlessBridle amazed me. I thought it would take my Mustang (Chance) and me several days to learn the bridle together, but it was a short amount of time for Chance to become totally comfortable with the bridle. It took me a little longer as I was saying to myself, "I need a bit, this is crazy, I need a bit, this is really crazy. I wish I had a bit and bridle instead of this".

My learning curve took almost 45 minutes, before I changed my mind set. It took Chance no more than 30 seconds, if that, to become used to it. I became aware after my own time, that he was grooving on the BitlessBridle long before me. One of the skills he and I developed together with the bit was softness. I realized during my 45 minutes of adjustment to the bridle that I was using a feather-soft touch.

I said to my self, as I often do when I am with Chance, "Self, this horse is smarter than you; it took him a fraction of the time to learn the BitlessBridle than it took you".

I will never go back to a bit again. Anybody at your company in need of a snaffle bit and bridle? Just kidding.

I am now using my mecate reins with the BitlessBridle. The mecate reins and this bridle are a match made in heaven for this horse and rider.

Theresa, March 10, 2009:

I recently purchased the bitless bridle for my 18 year old racing pacer. I have been working on his gaits for some time now, and this bridle has been a Godsend. Being a

standardbred, Dutch is used to grabbing hold of the bit and working off the forehand. Taking the bit out of his mouth has allowed him to balance himself on his rear and we are now working on walk/trot transitions to achieve his canter. This bridle has markedly improved communication between us and I expect great things from it this season. Thank you so much for this awesome tool.

Dale Sue, March 9, 2009:

Just wanted to drop a quick note to let you know how thrilled I am with my Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle. Seldom, if ever, does a product exceed the expectations generated by its advertising copy, but I have to tell you, Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle is the exception.

I have been riding and showing in various disciplines for 37 years and have never been so impressed by a piece of tack! I'm in the process of re-schooling two mares. One is an ex-racehorse with 31 races under her belt. Her tendency is to throw her nose straight into the air and bolt under stress. I've spent countless hours building a relationship with her through clicker training and groundwork, but have been dreading putting a bit in her mouth since that seems to summon some distant memory of racing. We've been riding in a round pen with rope halter, but I've been desperately searching for a way to add refinement and control to our routine.

The first time I put your bridle on Meghen, she seemed to "get it." We started with a tiny bit of groundwork, of course, and she instantly yielded to light pressure, so I hopped on. Our conversation went from, "Can you hear me now?" (before Dr. Cook's bridle,) to one of light, willing communication. It was nothing short of astounding!

Next, I tried it on another little mare once labeled as "a confirmed bucker." The results were nearly identical, though I introduced her to the bridle one day and got on the second day. Again, astounding!

Each horse seemed to experience a sense of relief and joy at being able to communicate through the bridle. If they didn't, I experienced enough for both of us. Even though I no longer show, I will be lobbying to have the bitless bridle recognized as an acceptable piece of tack in competition. It would be a crime not to allow the horse this opportunity for increased communication and expression. Thank you for your innovation.

Susan, March 08, 2009:

I don't normally take the time to send in reviews, but I just have to let you know what the bitless bridle had done for me and my horse.

I thought I was going to have to quit riding my 23 year old mare and put her out to pasture. She began violently throwing her head every time I rode her and it had become a miserable experience for us both. I had her teeth floated again and the vet mentioned that she is missing 3 teeth. I don't know why the vets had never told me that before, but I was already well aware that I was her first owner who kept up with teeth care.

In desperation, I did some research on the Internet and skeptically ordered your product. We road several hours yesterday and I was SHOCKED at my horse's response!!!!

She fought me when I tried to put it on. I think she thought it was the same old bit. However, when we got out in the arena, and she realized we were riding with nothing in her mouth, it was like her whole body just melted. She is a retired barrel racing horse and she was eagerly leading me through the pattern - she was like a kid in a candy store! We then rode through the pasture for about an hour and I swear she was in the best mood the whole way

and was totally relaxed. Her lack of agitation caused our other horses to relax on the ride as well.

I was a little worried about the control issue and that was unbelievable. With just a little pull (really more of a tap) from me she was stopping, backing up, and turning left and right.

Thank you for your product - I have an older, wonderful and well-trained horse that I just about couldn't ride anymore, and now we are both enjoying riding again. I just wanted you to know what a difference it makes. I only wish I had found this much, much sooner - I feel terrible that it was the pain of the bit that was causing all her troubles.

Jennifer, March 7, 2009:

My old trainer flat out refused to even try the Bitless Bridle. This seemed overly dramatic as an ultimatum. My new trainer has no experience with a Bitless Bridle, but agreed with me that the horse we were going to try it out on is an over-educated pet, and the worst thing that might happen would be confusion.

You can add me to your collection of overly sweet Disney-esque stories now: Stryker isn't a bit confused. Stryker shoves his own face into this bridle. He doesn't just like it - he's taken ownership of it as HIS bridle. He tries to put it on himself. He was thrilled to be offered the choice to use slightly different cues and dump the bit entirely. We've used it twice. I learned how to jump in it last night.

As predicted, the bridle does flop, until you get it adjusted correctly. The horse does wave his head around the 1st time (he's trying to figure out what, if anything, will make the bridle hurt). There is a slight delay in whoa and left and right that I'm already becoming used to and adjusting my cues accordingly. And there's also this whole alien feeling of disbelief to have my horse ASKING if it's time to put his bridle on yet.

I did not enjoy paying full price for your bridle. With that said, I'm not sure how to put a dollar value on happiness. It was WELL worth it, and I'm only writing to you because Stryker cannot. Thank you for a lovely invention!

Hrafnhildur, March 06, 2009:

I just wanted to send you my comment about the bitless bridle since I am so happy with it! I'm a friend of Linda Karen (one of your BBAC's) and I've been helping her alot with the sale and customer service and that has really showed me alot. I've seen horses transform with this bridle from being nearly impossible to ride to a gentle and kind riding horses. I find this really great and I just wanted to support you by sending you my comment, if it is does any use. So here it is:

I bought my Icelandic mare nearly 4 years ago. At the point she was 8 years old and didn't know how to perform the gait tölt. The only reason for I bought this mare was because her character was so irresistable and kind and I really liked her alot... when I wasn't riding her.

Later I began to teach her how to tölt, and that didn't go so well. The mare had her head high up, had a stiff mouth and in most cases I couldn't quite stop her or even ask her to turn when doing more than just walking. She was so much against the bit and I saw she hated it, but at the time I had never heard of a bitless bridle. I tried everything, all kinds of different bits and went to a private teacher to try to get the mare of the rein but the mare still didn't improve. Yes, she knew how to tölt, but I couldn't tell her at what speed, usually it got out of

hands and it ended in some mess.

The mare was awesome to be around, so kind and gentle, but as soon as you were on her the mare completely turned in to a monster. It was like this for about two years, riding her was like pure hell and most often I didn't want to ride her, and she didn't want me to ride her also. I was on the edge to give up and sell her, but I knew that few would want her the way she was. Then, in the beginning of the autumn 2007, my friend told me about your homepage and I checked it out. After a little research (maybe too little, I was desperate) I bought it and tried it on her. I could always trust this mare not to do anything stupid when I wasn't asking her for too much (like tölting or collect) but when I asked her for something more she would just flip.

As I tried Dr. Cook's bitless bridle on her I noticed the mare wasn't so annoyed when I asked her to collect and she actually stopped as soon as asked to, it didn't take her half an hour like it used to!

I thought this was a good start and continued to use the bridle and now, almost two years later, I can say that I have a completely different mare!

The problems didn't solve themselves on their own with the bridle though, she didn't just collect by herself and start tölting without problems but the bitless bridle made it possible for me to help her more to do so!

Now, the mare tölts very well, I can actually control her speed, she stays collected and has come of the rein and she's 150% happier, that's so clear that anyone who sees her say it to me. I really think it's fun to ride her now, but like I said before, that was a complete hell to do so only about two years ago.

I continued to go to teachers and improve her, that's always something there's need to be done with a horse, but the bitless bridle makes it so much easier for me to improve her. She listens to it so well and people are often amazed by how well she responds to the bridle.

I can't imagine what I would have done if I hadn't found your homepage and purchased the bitless bridle and I'm sure going to use the bridle to break and train my other three young horses, there's no doubt about that!

Now, I've seen more and more people start to use the bitless bridle thanks to the BBAC here in Iceland, and I must say that the horses transform completely! People are amazed by their horse's change and that's what I love about this! The horse gets much more friendly with you and connects with you.

I guess all I can do in appreciation is to say thanks a lot, since I owe you my mental health but I'm sure I'd have lost it after a little more time riding the mare with bit!

Adela, February 25, 2009:

I just wanted to drop you a line to tell you that your bridle is amazing, but I know you already know that. I guess I have always tried to keep my horses natural as possible (I guess I was Natural before Natural was cool) but the bit always bothered me as well as my equine companions. I found your bridle and truly it saved lives as I said, because the horses I accepted for training were rescued from the killer plant. All three were broken first with bits, but then I found out with my wild little Arab that he was literally throwing his head into my face to avoid that bit. I had your bitless bridle for my fat old bareback mare, and tried it on the Arab. Amazing. What was the coolest was, he was a bucker and a bolter but he couldn't do any of those things! You have complete humane control of the entire horse! And after taking the bit out of the equation, he progressed quickly and was given to a lady who purchased my rescued Saddlebred for her daughter, and then lost her own old Arab to age. They both are now being

ridden in parades, and truly, if they were not broke safe to ride, I am sure they would not have had such a happy ending. The third horse was another crabby old mare who had never been broke to a saddle and had been a fat pasture pet for years. It was my job to get her into tack and get her riding...which I did but she's still with me some six years later! And only ridden in your bridle, and barefoot.

I read another testimonial about a Tennessee Walker with mouth issues, and I got one of those in a year ago too. He was ring sour, terrified of riding indoors or in any sort of paddock or arena, and down right dangerous at times. He also came with a TWH style split mouth curb with 8-inch shanks. After a couple weeks of not enjoying each other at all, I decided to try the bitless bridle on him although to be honest it didn't seem that his mouth was the problem, but guess what!! Different horse!!! I even had a lady who recognized him come up to us at a trail ride last year and ask me if I had a death wish trying to ride him without a "strong" bit and curb chain. I said no, I was pretty sure he wouldn't fall asleep and fall on me until the end of the ride when I got off. No way would I ever put a bit in his mouth again. There's no need to, and he is a loving addition to our family who will be with us for the rest of his life.

Thank you for caring enough about horses to put so much work into your product. I am passing one of my own Bitless Bridles onto someone else who needs it, and will soon be purchasing another.

Mitzi, February 24, 2009:

I have many things to discuss with you, but briefly just wanted to tell you of my latest Bitless Bridle experience. I gave a clinic two days ago at a very nice stable in Pa. (it was heated!) The owner rode a big warmblood jumper that she had had imported from Germany. She did not know how to use her body correctly for half halts, but she also was riding him in a corkscrew bit, which I abhor. Normally I would not allow anyone to ride with me in such a bit, but I felt I had to "pick my battles" so I did a lot of work with her on correct half halts and even rode the horse to show her how to use her body to lighten him and not to pull on his mouth.

It was a busy clinic, so I did not feel that I was really able to get through to her what was necessary. She called the next day to say he had gone better, and that was when I suggested that I come back to her place for free the next day and work with her with a Bitless Bridle. I had her ride him with the bit first, and the poor guy immediately put his head up and opened his mouth. He was also sticking out his tongue at times during the clinic to try to relieve the pain.

Then I put the Bitless on him and it was just awe inspiring! He lowered his head, went slower, came to a halt with her from the trot, and was just SO much happier. She said she could feel the difference. I had a friend taking pictures, which she will soon send to you and to me.

I had her jumping him and at the end he was much better. He had been rushing and quite explosive after the fence before, as he was expecting the pain in his mouth as she pulled on him, but as soon as he realized she was not going to hurt him he was better. I still had to work with her not to use her hands first, but at least when she reverted to pulling she was not hurting him.

I wrote a letter to Centered Riding Level 4 instructors as they were talking about different means of controlling horses, and a few were misinformed about your bridle. I mentioned Kentucky and I mentioned the recent success with this woman. (More on this later).

The woman I helped is going to the Pa. Horse Expo and buying one of your bridles at the booth you are having there.

All my writing has been focused on the non-abuse of horses. I still use bits as I am working with clients who have used them for years and have to show, but I work very hard to have them use their bodies first and contact at the end. I have always been so careful about that. I have been known to yell at people when I judge who have the audacity to yank on their horses. But I am going to concentrate more and more about pushing the concept of a Bitless Bridle. I know one Instructor was writing and mentioned that people in Europe actually are thinking that any bit is cruel and I think, "well...yes!" Of course they are, as you have written so well because you are controlling a horse through discomfort if not pain. It is so evident if we can just get the thinking to change...a change of paradigms.

They [bitless bridles] should be allowed to be used in a show. If people are hesitant to allow them because they do not like a change, well then, do not force riders who know they are hurting their horses to use bits so that they can have the fun of showing. If the Bitless does not work well, well then the people who do not agree with it would not be bothered at all, they will just have better luck at the show. I cannot understand the reasoning of people who would allow a twisted wire snaffle in a show ring, or training with draw reins, and then object to a Bitless Bridle!

Courtney, February 20, 2009:

Garantia and I are training in Dr. Cooks bitless bridle in Chile after a 6-month holiday (I am currently studying in Australia and so she is kept at a stud while I am away). I bought Garantia 3 years ago from my instructor to take me up the grades in the Chilean show jumping circuit. While she is an experienced jumper and is exceptionally honest, she was always full of energy, relatively difficult to control, and had what appeared to be severe headshaking syndrome, all of which my instructor at the time told me could not be fixed.

After one year of struggling with her, I decided to give Dr. Cooks Bitless Bridle a go, and after 1 month, I had a completely different horse. She was much happier, easier to control, her headshaking has almost fully disappeared and she is no longer a bundle of nerves. She has been ridden in the bridle for approximately 2 years now, during which time she has successfully competed in various 1.15-1.20mts classes and championships.

Many of the riders in Chile that were familiar with her thought I was crazy to be riding her with no bit, but after seeing her perform, could not believe it was the same mare. I am eternally grateful to Dr. Cook, as his bridle has helped my mare perform her best.

Caro, February 17, 2009:

The BB arrived right in time, so I got the chance to take my Boy Brago (Thoroughbred/Arab) on a two-day adventure at Glenorchy Mountains. WOW, what a change of a horse, I tell you what he is gorgeous to ride with the new bridle. I recognized that he didn't like to get ridden in a bit, he also hates the hackamore and was just wild and mad the most time. He didn't want to stop or stand still, he walked backwards into cliffs and got frustrated a lot when I took him for a ride, but now - just phenomenal! He is changed in just two days. He is now the horse I hoped him to be...trustful, full of positive energy, easy to ride. He doesn't spook as much, he is easier to stop after a really fast gallop, wonderful! I love the Bridle but much more important, Brago and my relationship found finally a good new start! He realized

that riding has nothing to do with pain anymore! Thanks so much for your help and advice....

Steve, February 16, 2009:

I will be the first to admit I was a doubter, nothin' was changing this cowboy's mind. my skepticism was high and it was at my wife's constant request (not nagging - cough cough) that I try this bridle, and look, here I am in such amazement that I am doing something I never did, writing a note of thanks and listening to "I told ya so" all darn day long. Here is an something for your testimonials if you see fit to use it! Thank you Dr. Cook and thank you to everyone, involved and THANK YOU Camille, your great customer service, your sense of humor really helped lighten things up. My horse is a different horse and I won't be taking advantage of your return policy, in fact we are placing an order for two more! The barn is going bitless. I tried everything with this guy, I even (hate to say it) was thinking of selling him. I was frustrated. To think the whole time that the answer was on eBay. ALL, not some of his bad habits have stopped and he turns on a dime. He is much more controllable and stops perfect. Backs up and stands, I still can't get over it. Listen to me going on and on, well I'm happy. He actually seems eager to work with me now, head high and an all around happier horse. He does everything better now. I encourage all skeptics to give this bridle a try, take it from an old time Texan cowboy, I did all the research for ya, it's the best on the market and I'm not selling you anything, buy here, great customer service and genuine person giving it. You won't be sorry, Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle is the only way to go!

Linda, February 10, 2009:

Well what a difference! I really wish I would have done my research before I made my initial purchase. The [Nurtural] bridle looked so much like yours with the exception of the circle-x I didn't know the difference but there sure is one! As you know, I live in Canada it just made sense to save the addition cost.

I must admit I was somewhat apprehensive to take another turn after my mishap with the stuck crossover rein in the circle x, but I could see by the bridle set up, release was easily achieved so, off I went. Kieria and I had a wonderful ride. The best ride we ever had I think.

Of course she was her normal stubborn self but I noticed she was so much easier to control (she always had a sensitive mouth). Then came my biggest concern "The Woa." No problem, none of the old head throwing and sideways prance which were her signature moves when using a bit! None at all, I couldn't believe it! I can't tell you how happy I am with this bridle. I will be buying another one for my boy Kenna who did equally as well but he has a black saddle and I must match. I'm sure you understand. Kenna has always been responsive but I knew he hated the bit. He slobbered and rolled it consistently. Now he is able to focus.

I don't know what more to say but THANK YOU Camille, not only for the bridle but for all the effort you put in and how quickly you responded to all my emails. The best customer service I have ever had. I will send photos and keep you updated on our progress. I will also spread the word to GO BITLESS (with the Dr. Cook Bridle)

Feel free to use this email in your testimonials, I want to tell as many people as possible how wonderful my experience had been with DR. COOK'S Bitless bridle. There is a difference and sometimes we just get what we pay for, not to mention what I experienced on the trail with that Natural Bridle was dangerous. I was unable to reach the crossover rein to free it and my horse was confused, in circles and uncontrollable!

Dana, February 10, 2009:

We have been working daily and I must tell you, your bridle is working beautifully. We are getting use to what works with Cleo and how responsive she is to her new controls. Cleo seems to actually enjoy her bridle and lowers her head and waits patiently for it to be adjusted. It seems to be the looser reins and the lowering of hand position on the reins that is working for us. To hold her reins at shoulder level is making a world of difference and she never seems uncomfortable. We are now getting positive remarks regarding her bridle instead of snide remarks as we did when I first chose to use it at her stable. Also people are much more unaccepting than horses sometimes. :) I will be forwarding a testimonial and pics to bitless bridle in the near future also. Thank you for your suggestions and the problem solving link also!

Lynn, February 8, 2009:

I had some unexpected expenses come up last week and just sent the check out this am (Sat.). It should get to you soon I'd imagine. I guess I'll just have to go through maybe just one more weekend with bits and then voila! I'll have the happiest lesson horses in the world. The cool thing about what we are doing is that I have so many test subjects... not like just one or two horses that are doing so much better but more like a couple dozen. A few horses are as good as transformed into practically different animals without their bits. It's neat watching the subtle reactions of the horses as they realize their mouths won't be pulled on anymore, and they relax to the poll pressure and round their necks to that. Many of the horses' gaits have improved greatly as well as they relax overall and are willing to slow down. Most of my lesson horses are in a coma but a few of them were way too forward and the bitless has cured that problem as well. Corny though it sounds I just can't say enough good things about it. It'll get really interesting when showing season starts as I don't intend to go back to bits...

Judy, January 23, 2009:

I have enclosed some photos from the judges program that I hosted at my facility two weekends ago. This is the fourth time using the BitlessBridle and it was very interesting to find how easily I could position the head to encourage the horse to stretch down or to collect and raise the poll. The pressure on the reins is barely in ounces, whereas before I felt I was holding pounds in my hands. The horse has completely stopped grinding her teeth and sticking her tongue out of her mouth. I quit needing my spurs and whip altogether. I am now able to concentrate on my position as a rider and just allow my horse to carry herself.

I have now started using this bridle on the rest of my horses, beginning with the horses that I plan to use as school horses – the Connemara pony and the first level draft/cross. I have also started using this bridle on the FEI horse recently imported from Germany. He was affordable due to his “ruined” walk – very lateral. With becoming barefoot (along with the rest of our horses) and using no bit, his walk has become four beat, and he is calming down.

So much is changing. I can't wait to see what happens next!

Jessica, January 14, 2009:

Over the past year, my 20-year old gelding and I have been struggling with his spookiness. He had a few episodes close together, and after that it seemed like every branch cracking and tree blowing concerned him. Everything kind of clicked for me one day when a bird flew towards him and scared him, and I tried not reacting (instead of pulling back, which is my normal response). He reacted first to the bird, and then he reacted again because he was anticipating getting yanked in the mouth. He had learned that when something scared him, not only would he be scared, but that it would be quickly followed with pain from the bit.

After that episode, I began riding him in rope halters and hackamores. This helped his spooking a lot, almost to the point where he wouldn't bolt anymore. He would still kind of look at things, again, anticipating them, but the head throwing and bolting stopped. After about 4 months of riding him in a halter, I decided that I wanted a little more control again. I wanted to be able to collect him, and half-halt him, and bend him, which were all things I thought you needed a bit for. Then, I stumbled upon the web page for the bitless bridle. It is the best horse-invention I have ever found. My horse is relaxed; he doesn't even look at scary things anymore. After not being collected or in a "frame" for 4 months, he was doing it within 3 minutes of having the bitless bridle on. He half-halts and bends perfectly. I didn't expect to have any problems, because I was riding in a rope halter, but the thing that amazed me was that my horse seemed even happier with the bitless bridle on. He listened even better, and I got more control. We're both happy campers now! Thank you! :)

Vicki, January 16, 2009:

Many months have now passed, since we purchased our Bitless Bridle and you replaced it, days after getting it home... But I saved the email so that I could keep you posted on how things went. Here is our story:

We bought Shadow, a rescued Mustang from Nevada, in August of 2007, for our then 9 year old daughter. He was 7 at the time. He was very spooky & protective, he had some trust issues, he had some injuries/nutrition issues to recover from, but he needed a safe reliable home to come to.

We had a hard time getting a bit that he was comfortable in, I borrowed numerous bits from numerous friends! I came across your website and was very interested in your bridle, but needed to know more about it before I made a decision. In the meantime, we did lots of ground work with Shadow, and I did lots of walking, leading my daughter around, since I was not sure that Shadow wouldn't take the bit and run with her... We went to the Horse Expo in Columbus, Ohio last April, found your booth and ultimately bought the bridle.

Shadow, has been using the Bitless Bridle since then. He is a changed horse. He hasn't bolted or ran away with my daughter. He is calm, relaxed and will actually drop his head into the bridle now... before he would lift his head high, so she would have a hard time getting him tacked up. He is the sweetest horse you could imagine. Their relationship has just begun, but I believe having your Bitless Bridle for him to use allows him to trust in her more, knowing that she won't put on a painful bit to make him do one thing or another, has helped to make their relationship a better one. I have never owned a Mustang before, but I feel we have taken the first step in opening up his ability to trust in "humans", and I have confidence knowing they will have a long and happy life together.

Thanks for your patience and help in my bridle mishap... many months ago, and for having such a fabulous product to facilitate new trusting relationships between man (little girl) and horse.

Hilary, January 14, 2009:

I have been using bitless bridles in various forms for about thirty years now, and am a definite convert to the Dr Cook. I rode my four-year-old part Clydesdale in a cheaper imitation brand two days ago, and he was obviously quite unhappy. He was broken in using the Dr Cooks, and he has been very happy and accepting of this bridle from day one. He has been ridden in a bit on occasion, and has no trouble responding to the bit, but it is quite clear that he is happier and more relaxed in the bitless bridle. I also find him more responsive.

My older driving horses also are quite unhappy when they have to revert to a bit for pairs driving. I have just ordered a second driving headstall so that in future we can drive the pair using bitless bridles on both horses.

People are always quite surprised when they realise that we are riding or driving bitless, and always comment on the fact that our horses are so well behaved, relaxed, and happy. Whenever we take an experienced rider for an introductory drive and let them take the reins, they always comment on how responsive the horse is!

I am extremely happy with your product, and have no hesitation in recommending it to anyone. We have used it on old horses who are rather set in their ways, and also on youngsters, and they all respond really well. I use it for riding and driving on all of my horses.

Andrea, January 08, 2009:

I put your bridle on my mare today and it was phenomenal! She has been out of work for some time now as I am recovering from surgery, and has been teaching beginners to ride, so has lost most of her top line, but as soon as she got into the arena she was forward, off her forehead and collecting! I was amazed! I have had the kids riding in a rope hackamore to save her sensitive mouth but this will be so much better for them! I am so excited to get back into dressage with her and this bit.

I noticed on your page that you are looking for bitless footage. I am an intern at a videography company, and I specialize in editing. I could get you some good stuff if you give me a little more information on what you are looking for. Would you like raw footage or a complete compilation? I can set it to music that I do not have the rights to or I can compose something in Sound Studio for it. Just give me some more info and I would love to do this for you. Your bridle has been fantastic! Thanks again for such a great product!

Dagmar, January 07, 2009:

I received the bridle yesterday, and rode in it last night! My horse and I are so happy! What used to be a complete battle to keep her slow and controlled has become a complete pleasure! And stopping???? On a dime!!! After I stopped her a few times, and she stopped so well for me, I tried stopping her with no reins...just leg and seat...and she stopped no problem! It is as if she had been so busy fighting the bit the whole time, now with no bit she can just focus on what she is supposed to do!

Sanna, January 04, 2009:

I finally had the chance to give one of my horses the test. Lady is a 20 year old

Tennessee Walking Horse that has been in a barrel racing family most of her life. She came to us with one of those walking horse curb bits (UGH). Today we made the test. First with the bridle. She was compliant but we saw open mouth and general ill humor especially on halts and the rein back. Her running walk was okay but not great. Then we switched to the bitless bridle. The rider and saddle remained the same and the rider (a sophomore in high school expected that she would be run away with). The first walk halt walk pattern told the story and the request for running walk was absolutely floatingly beautiful. There was a bit of trouble with right/left steering (Lady is very gate/barn sour) but work in the far end of the arena demonstrated that the right/left steering challenge was due to gate/barn sour and not due to bitless bridle. One more success. I had novices watching and they could see the difference.

We'll be trying this bridle on the rest of the horses for test purposes. However, the bridle that you sent me will belong to Lady! I'm pretty sure that as our bridles age and need replacing that we will be contacting you.

Heather, January 3, 2009:

I just wanted to mention that I am a huge fan of the Bitless Bridle. A few years back I committed to transitioning all 9 of my lesson and camp horses as well as personal use horses to bitless bridles. I must say it wasn't much of a process for the vast majority of them. They loved it!! Horses that required frequent training sessions to stay 'good' about being bridled accepted it willingly after the first ride with it. Others who seemed dull were more responsive and those who were always a little tense about being steered by metal relaxed (go figure!), carried their heads lower and softened their necks and jaws. It was really something to see! In hindsight it seems like such an obvious improvement to make. After all, what do horses spend most of their time in generally -- a halter. So what kinds of pressure will be the most reflexive for them to understand and follow -- those that feel like a halter. My horses all understood the bitless bridle by the end of the first ride they had in it.

Natalie, December 28, 2008:

I purchased my TWH mare two years ago. She was 4 and was wonderful in just about every way; her one vice was that she tended to walk down the trails at an angle. We had her teeth checked - no problem. I decided to purchase your bridle. My boyfriend, a seasoned cowboy, thought it was an over priced gimmick. This Christmas his gift request was a Bitless Bridle for his difficult mustang! We went on our first ride the day after Christmas and his horse was amazing! No jiggling, no rushing - he walked like a gentleman the entire 2 hour ride (and this was after not riding for about 6 weeks due to trying to finish our barn before the -40° weather hit). I can't tell you how much WE appreciate your product. My horse has been perfect since the switch 2 years ago. My stubborn boyfriend is now a believer. I just wish I had purchased his bridle earlier. On top of all the obvious gains of going bitless - it's so much nicer not having to worry about a cold bit. We live in Alaska and try to ride throughout the winter, so that's especially important up here. Thank you Dr. Cook for taking the time to care enough to create a product that lets our horses enjoy us as much as we enjoy them. I feel your product allows us to take our partnership to an entirely new level. My mare is my first horse and at age 45, I feel I'm doing it RIGHT thanks to your product.

Meghan, December 21, 2008:

Hi there! I had to drop a line to let you know how much Luna (a 6 year old PMU paint pony mare) and I love the Bitless Bridle! When I first rescued Luna from a tough situation, she was wary of people and very uneducated (if broke at all) under tack. Even in a soft rubber snaffle, she'd toss her head, plant her feet and go backwards. I did some homework, and that's when I found the Bitless Bridle! The difference was instant- she walked forward!! From then on she was more willing to learn and trust. Less than one year later and she's doing great-walk, trot and canter, on the beach and in the snow! A big advantage to the Bitless Bridle here in New Hampshire: no cold metal bit to warm up!

Tricia, December 14, 2008 :

I have loved, owned, trained, shown, driven horses all of my life. I am now 47 years old and only trail ride, I am down to one horse whom I have raised and trained for 15 years. She has been ridden and shown by my children and has always needed a heavy hand. To say the least she has been difficult to stop at times. Since I only trail ride, I wanted to ride without a bit, however, the conventional methods have not been satisfactory, I have been riding her in a mechanical hackamore which causes her to throw her head (she also did this with all different bits that I tried). A friend of mine and I were riding together and she suggested that I go to bitlessbridle.com and see what it was all about, I did, I ordered... I rode my horse in the BITLESS BRIDLE and was amazed at her entire attitude! She was very relaxed and giving, unlike anything she has ever been before. I tried a collected jog, a beautiful quiet canter (she never cantered collected and relaxed before) and then I decided to put it to the ultimate test... an all out race towards home... then I asked her to stop.... and she did! I will never ride her with anything else! I hope everyone learns about the BITLESSS BRIDLE and will do my best to recommend it whenever the opportunity arises.

Amy, December 11, 2008:

My trainer and friend, Peggy Murray, purchased a bitless bridle while at this year's Equine Affaire. We tried it on my 3.5 year old quarter horse, Koko, and it's been absolutely amazing. He's such a responsive horse and so tuned into my daughter and me (and Peggy, of course). Thanks.

Marianne, December 08, 2008:

God Bless you for your humane achievement in creating a bridle that gives me better control and communication with my horses. I bought 2 of your bridles 6 years ago. At that time my Arabian Stallion Stormy Sky was very difficult to ride in any kind of bit, even the most gentle ones. He would roll his tongue over the bit, stick his tongue out to the side and at a full gallop would put his head up in the air and take off. Very dangerous and scary. The moment I put him in a bitless bridle he was a different horse. He physically relaxed, he stopped jiggling and was a delight to ride. Although he is a breeding stallion, I can ride him anywhere. We trail ride around the ranches, I go to numerous parks and ride him at a full gallop with complete control, something I never had with a bit. I can cry when I think of the pain he must have been in so many years before I found your bridle. I have ridden my other horses in the bitless and each

one is more relaxed, under complete control and both the horse and I are very happy to go trail riding. I will NEVER put iron in any of my horses mouths again and recommend your bridle to all the horse people I know. I can't ever thank you enough for your wonderful bridle and hope that many more horses can benefit from its humane use.

Robin, December 06, 2008:

I will soon try and purchase another bitless bridle. I only have one now and have used it on my 20 year old gelding who thinks he is a 5 year old stud, My 9 year old moody mare and a 13 year old barn sour mare. They all did great in it and needed no training for it's use. I have a 10 year old girl riding my moody mare in it. I do not want to ever use a bit again. The kids can ride and learn with no pain to my horses. Thank you so much for your product.

Jessica, December 04, 2008:

I recently bought a western style bitless bridle at Equitana (Melbourne). I have always wanted to give it a go, as I am also into 'Natural Horsemanship'. I put the bridle on, hopped on and rode my horse (Honey) just like normal! She did everything like usual, if not better. It felt great! She collected even nicer, and was just better in my hands, and no longer tossed her head, which she occasionally did with the bit. She is so much happier, always has her ears pricked forwards...etc. We even went out on a trail ride on our own for the first time and she was so happy and fantastic, yet still 100% in control (probably even better then in the bridle!). Thank you so much for inventing this beautiful bridle, it is fantastic! Honey and I both rate it 10/10! :)

Kate, December 02, 2008:

I just had to write and let you know the changes in my horse since using the Bitless Bridle! Sandman is a 5year old appendix quarterhorse. He was never keen to have his bit put in, he would let me but it would take a while of persuading, sticking my finger in his mouth and encouraging him to open it. He was strong to ride and once in trot or canter, would be very hard to bring back to a slower pace, in fact he seemed to speed up. His trot was more like a run sometimes and my fingers had blisters from the reins. He was always lovely on the ground but riding was a battle.

Out on the trail I would only walk as I knew that if we went any faster, he would be off, not bolting, just strong and going at the pace he would decide. I heard about the BB from a link on Joe Camp's website (Sandman is also barefoot and in pasture). I looked at the website and read all the things that people had written about it, wanting to believe that it works but not really thinking it would change him that much. I thought for a while and then ordered one.

The first time I put it on was a breeze (Sandman kept very quiet so as not to give me any clues that I had forgotten his bit!!) I took him in the arena and he was great, much easier to slow up but still strong, I took him on the trail and we trotted and I got him back to walk!! Amazing - for him! It has taken a couple of weeks but today.... he got it!! AMAZING! Lovely slow collected trot and walk, lovely slow canter and walk. Not like him at all. The fact that he was looking so amazing too was great.

I took him out on the trail and we not only walked, trotted and cantered but had another horse ahead of us cantering along (that used to be a race signal to Sandman, catch up and overtake if you can) today, I was easily able to keep him back and he was great. Riding him

is a pleasure now and I don't need to wrap my fingers with band-aids anymore!

Jennifer, November 15, 2008:

I just bought one of your Beta Bitless Bridles for my Icelandic. I absolutely LOVE it! I can't believe how much happier she is riding in it. Before I found this one I had tried a couple of the off brand ones, and was never happy. I ended up just using a halter and a lead rope to ride my girl. My husband was always very worried about us, now after watching us together with the BB on he's completely worry free :) Thanks for such a wonderful product!!!

Michelle, November 24, 2008:

My 13-year old Dutch Warmblood was uncomfortable wearing a bit due to dental problems. After surgery he was more relaxed, but still showed some resistance to his regular snaffle so I decided I would no longer show him and just use whatever bit or hackamore he was most comfortable in. That's when I tried the Bitless Bridle. The moment I took up the reins Moochie was a totally different horse! Previously he would stiffen in his neck and jaw and I would have to spend the first 20 minutes of our schooling session just getting him to relax and soften. With the BB he stayed relaxed right from the start, keeping a soft, elastic feel on the reins and reaching into the contact.

But then we had a setback. I didn't have the BB properly adjusted and Moochie got a rub on his lower jaw. While I waited for this to heal I decided to go back to a regular bridle and was amazed to find that he went as well in a bit as with the BB! I was so encouraged that I took him to a show, our first in years, where he received excellent marks and won his class.

I now school Moochie two days a week in a bit and the rest of the time I use the BB. He has no difficulty switching from one to the other. And he is making such progress! Because he is now relaxed in his neck and back I've noticed some positive changes: he is getting stronger and better balanced with more thrust from behind. Moochie has always been a beautiful mover, but at our recent show he got 9's for his gaits.

I recently lent my bitless bridle to a friend at the barn who has a mare with head-shakers syndrome. The change in this horse was extraordinary. Not only was she relaxed and not shaking her head, but her gaits improved significantly. She went from short choppy gaits with a tight back to lovely flowing strides. And because she was no longer focused on the discomfort in her head, she became much more attentive to her rider and the aids.

My hope is that the bitless bridle will eventually become legal for dressage competitions, but in the meantime I'm delighted to know that I can school in the BB and still ride effectively with a bit when I need to.

Sandy, November 23, 2008:

Thank you for a wonderful product. I am a paid horse trainer that specializes in problem horses. I do not like using metal bits as they torture horses. I had a problem horse here this summer I used the bitless bridle on her and she responded very well. I recommend the bitless bridle now to all my clients. Again thank you

Lisa, November 21, 2008:

I am a casual rider—don't do shows, competitions or even take lessons! I just like to jump on my horse (my friend) and go out onto the trail. I'm not the greatest rider but I love my horse. He has always been very tentative about moving forward and hated putting on his equipment and taking it off was even worse. I decided to try the BB and to my amazement he responded quite well from day one. He was hard to stop at first but we both learned and he settled in within weeks. I've been riding him now a year with the BB and he is much more confident and loves taking **me** out for a ride. What a huge attitude change. I'm so glad that I saw your ad in one of the horse magazines so I could try it out. If anyone is unsure as to whether they should give it a try, don't hesitate, just do it!

Yasmina, November 20, 2008:

I received the bridle yesterday, Friday, and I tried it out immediately. I was a little nervous, it is incredible how strongly our mind is set on "a horse needs to have a bit for control". After working with Max in hand some, I mounted, and I do not have words to describe that.....it is AMAZING!

I have Max since the end of July, and even though he is 14, he probably has never been properly trained, or even ridden on contact. Since I have him, we have been working mainly on contact, besides building his muscles up, and even though he tries really hard and has an incredible work ethic, he was difficult to bring and keep on contact. Since I discovered the Bitless Bridle and started to read about it, I noticed how strongly he fought against the bit. It started with him not liking to accept it (and he often closed his mouth tightly when putting the bridle on!), and when riding, he kept fussing with his head and biting on the bit and snatching it away.

And now, it is a pleasure to ride him! Yes, of course, he still has a lot to learn, so do I! But he is calmer, he is not rushing so much anymore, he goes on contact much more easily, and we can now concentrate on other things than on trying so hard to get him to accept the bit! It is an improvement of at least 60% in one day!!! I had tears of joy in my eyes, when this adventure started.

I am glad I went for the leather bridle from the start, and I would not give it back for anything in the world. It is such a blessing to Max and me that we have discovered the bitless bridle at this time! And now, with a soft tree saddle, a bitless bridle, and soon barefoot.....we are going to get a lot of head shaking in our dressage world, but that is a big so what! The main thing is, we are a happy horse and a happy rider!

Thank you so much for your assistance and all the information you gave me!

Maria, November 19, 2008:

Zagorl is my 12 years old horse (7 years now) and is doing great in his bridle bitless. I use BB one year now. From the first 5' with BB, Zagorl was an other NEW horse. He has always been fussy and difficult when I rode him, especially when we were out alone. No one believe that Zagorl is the same horse. I'm already informing about your bridle to anyone who will listen. Already 3 from my friends use now BB to their horses. We can not take part with Zagorl in any competition in my country without a bit, but I don't care. Now I have the best communication with my horse. Thank you very much, and Zagorl THANK YOU A LOT.

Lissa, November 2, 2008:

I spent about 3 hours with my Arab yesterday. About 30 minutes was in the fitting process, making sure I was doing everything right, per the instruction book. Thanks for making this sizing selection for me; you did good. It is going to work out fine so I won't be returning it. Tried her out with it in the arena for about 30 minutes and she was so mellow I took her out on the trail. We did about 5 miles on the trail with no problem, other than our normal differences of opinion about which way we were going, and at no time did Savanah try to take off with me. She was perfectly responsive; trot, canter, spooks, walk, etc. If I had only one thing to say, I would say she was more centered, more balanced, and easier to ride than with a bit in her mouth. I think I can say for Savanah and myself that we love the Bitless Bridle!

Mark, October 31, 2008:

Thank you. I do not know where to start - for 3 years, 3 long years I have tried everything with my rescue TB gelding, Sterling. He would be dangerous, shaking his head, bolting, spooking at every single thing you could ever imagine. The difference was immediate, there was no period of acclimatization to the Bitless bridle - the results were instantaneous. Sterling went thru his back, carrying his head, he also increased his flexibility and bent; Cadence, Rhythm, transitions, clarity in the gates... Thank you.

Jessica, October 27, 2008:

Thank you so much for creating such an amazing bridle. I found out about it from Wired Magazine who did a write up on it. The very next day I ordered it. I have a 3 year old Thoroughbred I am training, though she wasn't protesting the bit I could tell it was extremely uncomfortable for her, like it is for any horse.

I wish I had found out about this bridle a long time ago! I was getting sick of using a bit but did not know there was an alternative that was so kind and worked. I have used it three times now, and my horse, Celeste, loves it. She feels more relaxed and focused. It's so nice not to feel her grinding against the bit, I feel more connected to her. I was pleasantly surprised at how little pressure you need to get a response. With the three days I have had it two people from my barn will be ordering one. I am looking forward to hacking with it so my horse can stop to eat some grass or drink from a stream, which she cannot do with a bit.

Alison, a new user of the bridle in Australia, completed Dr. Cook's questionnaire. She and her horse had 30 problems when bitted and all 30 were eliminated after 30 days of bitlessness. In a notation on the questionnaire, Alison described her bitted horse as being generally unhappy at being ridden. Her horse was always "anxious for a few minutes" at the start of every ride and then changed to a state of "resignation, every time I rode." This is what Alison wrote by way of further comment:

Alison, October 22, 2008:

I was really surprised by the huge effect it had to remove the bit on my young horse. I am quite experimental (having been a scientist) and I have had a bitless bridle for a while and occasionally used it on a horse but not found a big difference. But clearly, Paco really found the bit blocked out communication and was very stressful as once it was not there (straight away

really) he did all the things he had learned, e.g. bending, turning, shoulder in, walk pirouettes, whatever, but he did it willingly and happily. Until then I had thought he was fairly unwilling to work with me and fairly strong willed but since then I see that he is actually quite a compliant character, now he can hear the instructions clearly and without being shouted at via the bit. He seems to have a lot more confidence now (I filled in the questionnaire 4 weeks after I first used the bitless bridle).

I also have found that there can be a 'contact', I can ask for neck extensions, use the rein effects exactly as if there were a bit and basically the French School Classical riding I do lends itself really well to being bitless as this method is concerned with using the bridle to balance the horse, which is just as easily done with your bridle. The contact I have now with Paco is extremely fine, he is very sensitive to the minutest changes which makes doing the old classical lateral work, travers, renvers, shoulder in, (all either straight or on a circle), very simple to communicate to him. I am very curious now to see how we progress, how we get more collection etc with no bit, a whole new journey of discovery!!

In addition to all this fine control stuff, stopping, either with one or two reins, is easy. Ten minutes after I first put the bridle on Paco, explained to him in 1 minute how it worked, I felt confident enough to take him out on the road with a friend. The friend's horse saw a newly sheared alpaca, freaked out, reared up, threw off my friend and started galloping about crazily. My horse was a bit stressed by it but I had as much if not more control in the bitless bridle as I ever had with a bit. Since then I have been out and about again with another horse that did some panicking, and I felt quite confident with the bitless bridle.

So basically, I am a very happy customer because my horse is happy and we are communicating really well. I have put a mosquero on my bridle, which looks nicely Spanish, and in fact no one notices until I point it out that I have no bit!!

Sarah, October 20, 2008:

I wanted to let you know that Teequila absolutely LOVES her Bitless bridle. She is so relaxed – very round, light and forward.

I think removing the discomfort of the bit frees up the horse's mind so they're able to focus entirely on your body cues and respond willingly without any apprehension. I'm hoping we can compete wearing our Bitless bridle. If not, well, maybe we just won't be competing. ;)

My little mare has always been a good horse, but with our new bridle, she instantly transformed into an astounding horse! We both thank you

Missi, October 13, 2008:

I have had this bridle for about 4 years and love it on my mare, it's made a HUGE difference in her. I've recently started my colt, her baby, and we live in the black hills. When I first let people know I'd be riding in the bitless bridle to start him, they said "you're crazy" and "you're going to get yourself killed" I didn't. Even just being started, and living in the black hills, this bridle offered amazing control and offered partnership with him! He's such a lucky boy... he will NEVER have a bit in his mouth! THANK YOU AGAIN!!

Bonnie, September 29, 2008:

Your bridles have become a very important part of our hunts that I can't imagine not

using them. This was the first year for Steve (our neighbor and also hunting guide) and myself to use them and my mare has always been known as the Hell Bitch :-)) but this year she was fantastic and the only thing we can say is it has to be the bridle. All of us couldn't believe the change in her. Anyway thank you so much again for such a great product and you have 3 very loyal customers.

Nancy, September 25, 2008:

The bridle arrived in record time. I ordered on a Monday and it arrived by Wednesday, from PA to Montana!

I rode my mare in the round pen with the bridle and felt she responded to it very quickly. Initially she shook her head some but soon settled to being very light and responsive.

I took her out for a trail ride with two friends on Saturday. What can I say?! Absolutely no problems. In fact we had a very good time. We rode in what I call cross-country, no trail, just thru the woods on the backside of the 40 acres I own. It is Lodge Pole Pine and grows thick, also a lot of blow down. I was in the lead and navigated the "thick as the hair on a dogs back" thicket with ease on my mare in Dr. Cook's bridle. We then rode down the road to my son's house. We passed an outfitters property with loose horses and mules. My mare is not used to this kind of distraction, I had no trouble with control. We arrived at my son's house and I gave my granddaughters a ride on Foxie. Heading back to the property and up our half mile driveway, I decided to lope and see how the "whoa" would be. Again, no problem at all. We are both thankful for this bridle. My reason for trying it, my mare suddenly got raw spots at the corner of her mouth with the Sweetwater D ring bit I was using.

At any rate, I am very happy with this bitless bridle.

Ann, September 20, 2008:

I purchased 2 Bitless Bridles last year. I knew I would love them on my 21 year old Arab gelding and 13 year old Arab mare, as I have often ridden them in halters and noticed that they would neck rein better. I have owned them since they were babies and did all their training, so it didn't surprise me that much that they are doing so excellently with the Bitless. We mainly do trail rides and endurance.

My husband Bill's mare, though, was an untrained, unbroke 8 year old pasture Arab mare. He trained her himself and now is competing in Cowboy Mounted Shooting with her in a Bitless Bridle! I've attached a photo of them. Thanks for making a great product, from us and our Arabians!

Maria, September 18, 2008:

I just received my bitless bridle today. I LOVE it! I was at ropes end with my pony. Here's the story: I bought this pony off of craigslist in February kinda as a resale project. Needless to say, my boyfriend, myself, and other two horses fell in love with him and we decided to keep him. This pony was severely abused in the past. His tongue is ripped into two pieces. It looks like someone actually pulled a bit through his tongue, and never got it stitched and it just healed into two separate pieces. The corners of his lips are ripped and hang. It also looks like someone pulled back so far through his mouth that it ripped his lips. Because of this he drools more than the average horse, and flies are more attracted to him, so I have to fly

spray him every day to keep them off his mouth. His feet were also so overgrown, that it looked like he had little elf boots on. They also had founder rings everywhere, so he definitely has foundered more than once in the past. He also was severely overweight.

My boyfriend and I both trim, so we were able to get his feet back to looking good, and he's on a low-sugar diet, with 24/7 turnout, with unlimited hay, but the hay bags are designed so he can only get little bites out at a time. He's losing weight and looking good. The reason why I love him so much is he's so willing. He will go anywhere you point him, get into ANY trailer, go swimming, he'll do whatever you ask of him.

But, these past couple of months I was seriously thinking about selling him, because, under saddle, he's a basket case. He can't walk - he either jigs, trots, or gallops. He rears constantly, he has no whoa. He's a mess. He's fine to ride around the neighborhood bareback with just a halter by himself. But, with other horses he loses it, and he HATES being behind another horse.

Every time I'd ride him on the trail I'd constantly be fighting with him, it was stressful for both of us, and neither of us had any fun because we were fighting each other. I've tried bit after bit, because he'll constantly blow through them and run off with me (the vet said he was fine to ride in a bit, even with all his mouth damage). I always felt bad riding him in a bit because I was afraid to hurt him even more, but I didn't know what to do. I eventually had him in a gag bit, because that was the only thing I could get him to stop in. He'd always have his head up in the air - I can't believe he never knocked me out yet with it.

After last week's trail ride, I was fed up with riding him. I didn't know what to do. I went home and talked to my boyfriend about selling him. He talked me out of it saying how much we all loved him. Thank god I listened to him!

I started looking at the bitless bridle because my friend used to ride in one, until it got stolen out of her trailer, and now she just rides in a cheapo rope-halter eBay version of the bitless bridle. Also a few years ago when I was living on the east coast, a lot of people at my barn rode in them. That's when I was in the mindset that bits and spurs and metal on your horse's feet are good for them. Little did I know...

I ordered one the other day and just got it. I took my pony (Chewy) out today for a trail ride with my friend in the desert. Chewy is not the same pony. For the first time today, he walked, not jugged. He carried his head low. He trotted, cantered, and galloped all on a loose rein with a whoa when asked. He walked behind another horse and didn't freak out. He didn't rear, not even once! And I did this all bareback, too. He was calm, and not all sweaty when we were done riding. I had an enjoyable ride with him for the first time, and we didn't have to fight. This bitless bridle is AMAZING!!! I can't wait to try it out on my other two horses! The only regret I have is that I didn't order it 7 years ago when I first started riding.

Rachel, September 15, 2008:

I have attached a picture of my Percheron/Belgian mare Nela and me on a trail ride, and one of her face. She is really enjoying this bridle, and is very relaxed. It makes me feel better about making mistakes in the process of learning if I know that what I have on her head is gentle. Hope you enjoy the pics!

Lori, September 14, 2008:

We love your bridle. We've put together a video (in the mail to you) in hopes of

winning the "free" bridle mentioned on your website (our new pony needs a smaller cob size). Others at our barn have been so impressed by P-Texan's joy in his bridle that they also have ordered from you. Your product is fantastic & you should all feel great pride.

Debbie, September 11, 2008:

I had ordered my BitlessBridle 5-2007. Was very reluctant to use it once I got it. Of course I had the old timers telling me "A horse has to have a bit!" Well I have always disagreed with this.

The only thing I have ever used is a light grazing bit, which to me, was still harsh. My horse hated a bit, she would toss her head, could not really graze with breaks from riding. It was in the way and you could hear her teeth hit it.

Then I went to a hack. Yes, better. But... those long shanks were always in the way and just did not like them. Did not like the pressure it gave to the sensitive nose area as well.

So, I finally got brave and put the bitless bridle on Pride. Now the first day, she loved the freedom so much that she continually wanted to stop and graze, which is a no-no when riding. But by reading the directions several times, I knew how to pull her head up without jerking or being mean. Could not do that anyway.

After that lesson, which was the only one she needed. She stepped out and you could tell the change in her. We both absolutely love it. Now I feel silly for waiting for so long. Now Pride can be headstrong when she wants to be. But never had that problem with this new bridle. Was it because she did not like the others and was uncomfortable?

All I know is that I am thrilled with it. I have better yet softer control on her. She listens and responds well to this bridle. The big test, open her up and see how the whoa goes. Well, that was simple... and shocking. I had her wide open. I barely pulled the reins telling her to slow down, which she did, then whoa... so easily.

Due to her comfort and happiness made my ride more enjoyable then ever. I am so glad I found this. Most folks have never even heard of it. So I've been doing some PR work to let them know just how wonderful this bridle is.

I will never return to a bit or hack again. When this thing wears out, which will take a long time due to how sturdy it is, I'll be back for another one!!

Jennifer, September 09, 2008:

My name is Jennifer and I recently bought a new horse. He is a wonderful partner in every way but has some sensitivities in his mouth that we are currently trying to work through. In the meantime, a friend suggested your bitless bridle. I worked with him in it for several weeks then got permission to wear it at a recent dressage schooling show. Not only did he do well, but he took home the **high score of the day!!**

Here is a video clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRVNiue9xdY>

We are just starting out in dressage and I am still prone to an occasional mistake. But, I think my horse did exceptionally well!!! We have qualified for finals in October but, unfortunately, I am not sure we will be able to compete. I am unwilling to do something that doesn't seem to be in his best interest. Until the rules change, our dressage experience may be sadly

limited. This is a terrible shame.

Please keep me posted with any changes. Thank you for developing this beautiful product!!

Faith, September 8, 2008:

Just a note to let you know that my mule Harley and I love the Dr. Cook's bitless bridle. We made the transition pretty effortlessly. He'd been ridden by a child in the past and developed some bad habits to get away from the bit (among other things!). One benefit I've seen is that he would get anxious going down steep inclines (here in hilly WV) and often tried to take the bit in his teeth and rush, even if I wasn't applying the brakes. Now, he is so much more relaxed and walks down grades. I've been using the alternate sawing to get him to stop and stand, and am seeing a big improvement in his responsiveness. Each ride is better and better! I am sold on going bitless!

Beatrice, September 2, 2008:

I am writing to tell you that in my 20+ years of serious riding I have never encountered anything like what has happened to me after I tried your bitless bridle!

I have always known that I had a "bit" sensitive horse in my 11-year-old Thoroughbred gelding. My arsenal of bits could prove that! I have owned him for about 5 years and he is an ex-racehorse from England. He is a lovely and talented horse that I have shown in hunter jumping for several years. He is kind but he is also defensively very aggressive and being very athletic as well, this lead to some scary situations. I did think about selling him several times but as he got older he seemed to mature and behave better.

Over the last 6-7 months, he has become hard to ride. On the flat, he developed anxieties cantering and while doing lead changes, which were never his favorite. He can jump beautifully and easily but he started bolting to his jumps especially the second or third in a line. I had therefore, decided to stop jumping for a while and work him on the flat doing more dressage work to try to alleviate his anxieties.

While things were getting better, any time I pushed him a little beyond what he was comfortable with, his anxiety would return as did his getting over the bit, under the bit, his rooting, his bolting, his grabbing of the bit and his head shaking. It sometimes would take another 20 minutes of hard trot work just to get him back again and sometimes even then we would quit as nothing seemed to improve.

I read an article about bitless bridles and decided to give it a try. I figured, if nothing else, we could do some trail riding and give him a break for the bit. After a particularly bad training day, I took his bitted bridle off and replaced it with your bitless and went back down to my ring. Well, I have to tell you, my horse might as well have had a LOBOTOMY! This was NOT the same horse! He was amazing! He was calm, comfortable, happy and doing EVERYTHING I asked of him including the dreaded work off the inside leg to outside hand! All this in the TWO minutes it took to put the bitless bridle on! He cantered beautifully collected and yet still underneath himself and he made no fuss over lead changes. He has become almost a little boring, as he is nearly perfect in all I ask of him!

The big challenge came today when I decided to try to jump him in the bitless. I was hoping to maintain his happy calm and easygoing manner over jumps as well but I was worried.

I did not need to be. He jumped like he has not jumped in months! He never bolted or ran away from me! He jumped in great form and seemed almost nonchalant about it all when before, he became extremely agitated when we started to jump! This is the reason we had not jumped in the last 3 months. I was ELATED to say the least! I can't tell you what it means to me to have my horse back! I never imagined your bitless bridle could do that for me! I am going to purchase another as my mare loves it as well. My 12-year-old daughter jumped her using the bitless for the first time and she didn't even notice the change!

I want to thank you for caring so much about the welfare of horses to have invented such a wonderful and kind and user-friendly way of riding! Now, I want to write to the FEI as in eventing, we do dressage and I never want to have to use a bit ever again! For now, I hope that he will be calm enough while training in his bitless to not take offense when I have to use a bit for show purposes. I think it is ridiculous that we don't have the option!!

Joanne, August 30, 2008:

Well, I figured it was time to write you to let you know how Fox is going in the Bitless Bridle. The first day he showed marked improvement at ground driving and I was impressed. A few days later he tried his old trick of leaping to the left and trying to turn around. I was prepared knowing that he would test the bridle sometime. I managed to control it into a small leap whereby I could encourage him to move forward. He was a little surprised because it always worked when he was in a bit! He moves very quickly because he is small and agile so it has been hard to stop this annoying habit. He tried it a few more times over the next 2 weeks but found it difficult to evade the BB.

Now, about 6 weeks after the BB arrived he is relaxed and dropping his head to a comfortable level and has become more cooperative. He still sometimes gets upset or impatient when we first start out as I am carefully picking up my reins to start ground driving. He wants to start walking before I am ready and have given the command to walk on. As I restrain him he will move around a little but eventually gets the voice command of Whoa and stands still. When he was wearing a bit it was much worse and any attempt on my part to stop him caused pressure of the bit on his sensitive mouth and he got even more agitated and it was nearly impossible to get him to stand and wait for my command to walk. It is so important for a driving horse to stand while you get in and out of the cart or wait for traffic to clear.

So, overall I am very impressed with the BB and find that it suits my very, very sensitive little boy. I have been using the smaller noseband and brow band for the summer and they fit like a glove but I know I will likely have to switch to the larger size when his incredibly long and dense winter coat grows in.

It has been a pleasure dealing with you and I will gladly sing the praises of the Bitless Bridle to anyone who will listen.

Christine, August 27, 2008:

Well, I was pretty sure the things I had read about the "Bitless Bridle" on your website were untrue, but because we were having such trouble riding our horse, we were desperate to try it. We are new to the horse "world", so my little family is somewhat inexperienced with horses, but we had all ridden with success, and had received some training on how to ride before we purchased our little mare. The learning curve has been quite steep for us in owning her, but we love her and have cared for her to our utmost, always seeking to be gentle.

Our mare had been ridden with success by my daughter's riding instructor, and by my daughter, with a bit that later broke. I believe the bit was very mild, but we had not had success in replacing it, so I found 3 different bits to try that were similar in one respect or another to the original bit. Every single bit we tried seemed to bother her. I tried tightening the headstall, as someone suggested it might be too loose, but that seemed to only cause her more discomfort. She would shake her head, rub on fences, and chew at the bit: whatever she could do to try to get the bit more comfortable, or just out of her mouth, she would do.

Naturally, as an inexperienced rider, I assumed I was being too heavy handed with her, and so focused on using extremely light cues from the reigns, but she would fight me, and then go from a walk to a trot, then from a trot to a canter without my asking for it. Stopping wouldn't happen until we were at the arena or round-pen gate because she was always ready to leave.

When we first bought her, she would put on a bit without issue, but in the last week, she did not want to open her mouth. I think she was saying she had had enough. I didn't want to try a hackamore because I felt I could hurt her with my novice hands. It seemed like her issue was with the bit, but how could I be sure it wasn't the way we rode, or the saddle, or her feet, or anything else.

I received your "Bitless Bridle" in the mail yesterday, and tried our mare with it this morning. On the way to the stable, I told my husband, "I don't think this is going to work, because that would be too good to be true."

I lunged her with it on, and already I could see some difference: she wasn't shaking her head. A little scared, I took the plunge and got on her back. She couldn't behave any worse than she already had, so it was worth a try. We started walking around the round-pen with the "Bitless Bridle", and it took her only a few moments to start picking-up on my turning cues, and I wasn't even using leg cues! Then, she actually stopped, almost on a dime, when I tugged ever so gently on the reigns. I worked with her walking around the pen for about 30 minutes, my husband and I just grinning all the while. Then, I decided to trot for just a minute to see if I could get her to "whoa" with the reigns, and SHE DID! My husband commented on how calm and collected Colleen, our mare, was acting.

This miracle was only witnessed today, our first day, but we are excited that maybe we have stopped causing Colleen pain, and can ride her with confidence again. I will let you know how the rest of the week goes.

Thanks for creating something that we believe has made Colleen a happier, more collected horse.

Ivar, August 27, 2008:

Hello. I got the bridle couple of weeks ago. I just want to tell you that it works really great on my 16 years old mare trotter. She is much more calm with her head, compared to the bit, and the respond is much better. I am very happy with it and I have already become a salesman for you I think....

Cheryl, August 25, 2008:

Thank you so much for a wonderful product and great customer support! I just wanted to drop you this note with a couple of photos of my boy (Cochese) and I. When he was 3 I came across your booth at the Equine affaire in Massachusetts and decided that although

Cochese wasn't started at all yet, I wanted to do it with the bitless bridle. I'm so glad that I did! We started late in his 3rd year under saddle and I'm happy to tell you that every step of his training has been done quietly and gently with your English leather bitless bridle. He took to it immediately, and has made all the same progress that anyone would expect with the amount of work he gets each week. He's now 5 and we've been to 3 local shows doing walk/trot and green classes. He's pinned in EVERY class from pleasure, trail, & pattern to road hack and others. I think the biggest accomplishment has been making a believer out of my dressage instructor. She was afraid to get on him thinking that she wouldn't have any stopping power and that it would be too different from what she's used to. When I finally got her up she was astounded! She just couldn't believe that it didn't feel any different or any heavier than a standard bitted bridle! Thanks again... we're off to get ready for a hunter pace now.

Lee, August 22, 2008:

The third time I used the bridle we went out with three others. Two of the horses are extremely forward going and canter tracks can get a bit hairy! So, I went first for one canter and Filly behaved herself very well. Then I let the others go on and went on together with the other member of our regular riding party. Filly was beautifully collected within half a dozen strides and when I let her go - well - we went like stink (to coin a phrase!) but she came back to a sort of extended canter with hardly any problem at all, and with certainly less effort on my part than was usual with a bitted bridle, and no head shaking! I love it all ready! She walked out beautifully as well and went down a couple of steep hills with unusual ease. Is this something that going bitless would necessarily effect or am I living in cloud cuckoo land? Haven't convinced my friend yet, but we are working on it!

Cara, August 22, 2008:

I received my BB yesterday and couldn't wait to get out there on the trails with Jacs. After work we took a sunset ride and all I have to say about the BB is "UNBELIVABLE"!!!! The comfort and ease this bridle provides is even better than riding in a halter. We were out for over 1 1/2 last night and went up and down some steep terrain. All in perfect harmony. Our biggest challenge has speed control. Jacs came to me with two speeds. Fast and Faster. This little sucker can out walk a Walker and actually has on more than one occasion. Covering ground is sometimes desirable but now I'm encouraging the "mosey" gate. The BB helps me give the cue with the lightest of hands. Wonderful. Deep seat and strong leg cues also helps. Thanks so much for this terrific bridle. It fits perfectly and looks great on her. I'll send pics later.

Kathleen, August 22, 2008:

Thank you for getting back to me so quickly. We just love it. I cannot begin to say enough good things about the BB. It was a lifesaver for my horse. He was so miserable in the bit that I stopped riding him, and had given up hope that I'd ever be able to ride him again. Then someone told me about the BB, and he's been happy ever since. The first time I put it on him he smiled and said, "Yes, *this is much, much better. Thank you! So... where would you like to go?*" He has never once given me any trouble because of the bridle. I keep trying to get others to join us, but it's so difficult to convince most people away from the bit. It's such a shame for the

horses, I feel badly for them. I'll not give up though; one convert is better than none.

Elaine, August 20, 2008:

You probably get many emails like mine, but I would like to thank you for the only bitless bridle that makes sense to me and is gentle and effective on our horses. We have taught our horses to yield to pressure, so the pressure produced by your bridle makes sense to both me and them. When we got our gelding, Cammy, he was extremely difficult to put a bridle on, and it went against my every instinct to force a bit in his mouth. I tried another bitless bridle that I had in my tack room, and although he was a lot happier, I had little control over him and sometimes ended up a lot nearer home than I intended!

Then I saw your bridle in a magazine article along with others and I could see the perfect logic. We haven't looked back! My other gentle little mare shook her head and was most unpleasant to ride; now she is coming on in leaps and bounds. So, thank you from us all, for enabling me to ride in safety whilst the attitude of both horses has changed from endurance to pleasure (you can see it in their faces and general attitude) it's now a pleasure to go out riding.

Susan, August 19, 2008:

My 8-year-old Haflinger, Wesley, and I love our bitless bridle. He was loaned out for Therapeutic Riding and as a school horse and was very heavy on the bit and very unhappy. He now, after only 1 day, has his ears up, he bends and he walks out better than ever and he doesn't trip as much. I think that the stumbling will improve when his feet get in shape now that his LAST set of shoes is off. Thanks for all the great articles and ideas.

Patrick (from France), August 15, 2008:

I first tried the bitless bridle 10 days ago on my 6 y/o horse and I must say it completely changed the way I ride. The horse is now focused on what I am asking. He is quiet and receptive. I must tell you I'm very happy about the product as I ordered a second bridle (in black beta) for my wife this morning. I'll try to send you some pics asap.

Debra, August 14, 2008:

My horse and I thank-you and love you for the bitless bridle.

Sandra, August 11, 2008:

I saw the news section on Ivory Pal, the TWH stallion who is now going bitless. We are a TWH breeder and training farm in Belgium, Europe. 2 years ago I started to use the bitless bridle. At first I was a bit skeptic to go bitless on trails but soon I learned the horses respond so well on it that it really makes no difference to ride bit or -less.

The argument of not being able to get your gaited horse into the proper gait without a bit is not correct. I am very well capable to ride my horses in a correct gait without a bit and without shoes. If you train your horse with dressage basics, you can do it all.

All my riding students learn how to ride a horse with a bitless bridle and they all love it.

Kerry, August 09, 2008:

Hi, I recently purchased a Bitless Bridle from you and I know you probably receive millions of emails like this one – but after using the bitless bridle for two weeks now (and having the best ride ever this morning even tho it was raining!) – I just had to tell you personally how wonderful the bitless bridle is.

Taggerty (the 7 yo TB/WB 16hh horse I bred) and I have had forward problems on a ménage environment for about 18 months now. Didn't want to trot, go forward, ears were back, pigrooting, running backwards from the whip, and when we did go forward we had no elasticity in the paces – he was trotting and fast or slow trot or canter did not come in to the equation. After about 10-15 minutes he would also get very mouthy, opening his mouth, chomping the bit and dropping behind the vertical. On a ride he was more forward but there were still underlying issues.

In my ignorance I kept thinking he must have problems in his back or hind legs or muscles somewhere – there had to be a reason but masseurs and even red light therapy could not find an answer. I have friends that use the Bitless Bridle and I figured what the heck!! Let's give it a go. The only reason I was holding back from trying the bridle is that in Australia the equestrian bodies will not let you compete dressage in a Bitless Bridle (traditional old fashioned supposedly dressage purists).

At first the horse did not understand the Bitless concept, he was biting and pawing out with his front feet while I attempted to do some basic groundwork and keep out of the way of his teeth and front legs. It took 3 or 4 sessions with the bridle to completely eliminate this behaviour. The second session I rode him around the arena at walk doing turns and halts for about 10 minutes, the next session we got longer strides and introduced a trot – I couldn't believe the trot – he started offering trot himself and was going forward (no ears back, tail swishing “don't want to do it behaviour”) – I kept this session short also – about 20 minutes but was starting to get really excited by the results and couldn't wait to ride on the arena the next day.

It took quite a few sessions for us to get straightness and turns (and we still loose this at times) but forward is improving out of sight – he pops into trot and canter now and has much greater elasticity in all his paces – he is so much happier.

Today was the best session of all, he worked straight, with good contact, great turns, and varying speeds within all his paces (and it was raining at the time). I think he has finally “got” it. Taggerty has never worked this good for years I reckon. He is happier, he stretches his neck out, moves forward, is not mouthy (no reason is there) and relaxed. I can't believe the traditional bitted bridle was causing all these problems and preventing him from going forward. The results are truly amazing.

We have gone out for a few trail rides and he does have the odd shy or fright when “ghosts” appear out of nowhere or horses take off across a paddock but control has not been a problem, I feel 100% safe and happy with the Bitless Bridle and can't wait to ride him again the next day to see what other little “successes” we will have with it.

I bumped into my neighbour going out hunting with her horse – she just brought a Pelham to give her greater control of her horse on the hunt field – told I just brought a bridle without a bit!!!!

D., August 01, 2008:

Rode out on trail first time today with BB and when he acted up about some spooky rain washed logs etc. it was great to be able to work him through it and not have to worry about pulling a bit right out the side of his mouth or hurting him. We got through it all and he seems all the happier for it...I know we are!

Just wish they had these when my little Arabian Mare "Shontain" was alive.

Bonnie, July 18, 2008:

Good morning, my name is Bonnie; my husband Dale and I are hunting guides. I bought a bitless bridle for my husband 2 years ago and he has loved it. He said it is the only way to go so I have just ordered one for myself. We ride into hunting camp 35 miles over very rugged country, our horses eat every time we stop and the bridles have worked great. He is also very impressed with the control. I have some absolutely beautiful movies and will be taking more this year. We will be in the mountains for the month of Sept.

Last year we got into early snow and came up over the top with snow up to the bellies of our horses. I saw on your web site that for a good movie there is a chance of winning a free bridle, I'm interested in sending you one.

Thank you for making such a great product and I will be contacting you again.

Jennifer, July 16, 2008:

For years I've searched for a bit that would suit my mare. Phantom has always been somewhat resistant to the bit, worrying and chewing on it. I've heard many riders say if the horse is foaming around the mouth, that it means that the horse is engaged with the bit and listening to the rider; all my experiences are to the contrary. I always felt that she was so concerned with the bit that she wasn't focused on me. Even with other experienced horse folks helping me select and fit a bit, the bits always seemed too big or too small, or too hard on her mouth, and bridling her was becoming an unpleasant enterprise; I'm 5.3 she's 16.1 hands. Ever tried to bridle a giraffe? By the time I finally got the bridle on, I was tired and cranky and riding became less of a joy and more of a chore and I feared that neither of us would ever enjoy the experience of working or trail riding.

My horse is very responsive and doesn't have a hard mouth and my instructor says that I have very light hands, so the issue with the bit really bothered me. I didn't want to hurt her and feared that the bits that I had available to me were doing just that. Then one day my instructor said that she knew someone who had a Shetland that hated the bit and would constantly pitch his young riders to avoid the bit and perhaps "panicky" hands and that the owners switched the pony to a hackamore and the problem vanished. I didn't want to go with a hackamore, seven-inch shanks are scary and I never wanted to run the risk of hurting my mare that I raised from a 9 month old – she just turned 10 on July 1.

I stored that story in my subconscious and after a really aggravating ride, I found myself flipping through a special edition of a local horse magazine and in it was an ad for a Dr. Cook's bitless bridle. I thought, "What could it hurt?" It was inexpensive and had a guarantee that couldn't be beat.

As soon as I received it, I read the instruction manual, fitted it and discovered that mine was too large. Returns were not an issue and it was quickly replaced with a new one. I had to put an extra hole in the noseband so it would fit and then I put it on Phantom and we went out

to the ring. I think that she was pleasantly surprised that this bridle didn't have a bit.

I worked Phantom from the ground first. I wasn't sure how she'd react or how much control I'd have if I were in the saddle; she grasped the concept in less than fifteen minutes. Two days later I did my first ride and it was relatively stress-free as it was my turn to learn the art of the bitless bridle. Now when we tack up, she doesn't hold her breath and she drops her head and allows me to put the bridle on without any fuss at all. I did my first walk trot in a long time and she was perfect. She was collected, her headset was relaxed, and her ears were on me and my hand and leg signals were so subtle that my instructor never saw them. I can't express to you what an awesome feeling this is after struggling for years with various bits.

THIS BRIDLE IS AWESOME!!! I'm never going back to a bit.

Kathy July 14, 2008:

Everything I've learned about and experienced about horses has happened just in the past 11 months as my daughter has taken the plunge and got her first. I've watched her ride (4 yr Standardbred taken out of racing) with few problems but it always bothered me that the horse constantly worked the bit looking very uncomfortable. And I will admit while she did what was asked of her, she seemed to be resisting or distracted just ever so slightly at all times. She looked also looked bored. Our neighbor put her in his bitless bridle last night and I was amazed at the results. The horse immediately looked at peace and responded as trained. She appeared to have shifted from tolerating to participating. There seemed to be an interest in what was going on. She continued to behave in this manner even when our son got on and *began to learn how to ride*.

The horse and rider both would be considered novices. The horse was broken last fall and ridden just a grand total of two times during the winter and has just begun be ridden daily for short periods this month. Our son had ridden once before on a trail ride. My point being that without the bit, I expected her to not respond and really give my son a difficult time as she has done before with riders unknown to her. That was far from the case.

I was shocked and very pleased by the instant results - and yes, that's coming from the third novice in this scene!

Krista, July 13, 2008:

I just wanted to say that I love the bitless bridle. Not that I was having issues with my mare in the first place... but she has always done what I ask of her and I feel really good by not having that bit in her mouth when she doesn't even need it. This bitless bridle is the best piece of tack I have ever invested in. Me and my Horse, "Sweetie" thank you very much!

Gina, July 06, 2008:

Benny is doing FANTASTIC in his Bitless Bridle, Thanks for all your help on the phone you are so wonderful! Honestly the best customer service I have received on eBay thus far! I'm writing to be part of your testimonials, I want to let others know how wonderful this bridle really is and to encourage others not to give in to any fears they may have about going bitless. I was nervous at first and Benny sensed it, I was riding with much heavier hands than usual and he threw his head a lot but after I realized I was nervous about venturing without a bit (I'm 50

years old and have been riding for most of my life with a bit!) I relaxed and so did he! I was ready to toss in the towel and take you up on your return policy but I am so glad I didn't. You were absolutely right! After we spoke and I tried again without all MY apprehension and tension, our ride was nothing short of AMAZING! It was me not him! He was soooo responsive (more than ever) and no longer fidgets or shakes his head or pulls the reins from my hands! It's been heaven ever since! I've noticed I am able to ride from my seat better and our communication is better. I feel we ride together as a team now and he is so happy now! He used to raise his head to avoid the bit when I went to bridle him, now he actually lowers his head for me! That's never happened! So folks, who may read this, GO BITLESS TODAY with this bridle! If you start out shaky make sure it's not you, lol! This Bridle has changed my boy Benny's life and mine. My friends have purchased this bridle after they witnessed Benny's improvement and ALL are doing fantastic. I cannot thank you enough for your sincere assistance and offering this great product on eBay, and Thank You Dr. Cook! Buy with confidence folks, great product and great group of people selling it!

Michelle, July 05, 2008:

The new noseband works beautifully. Moochie and I are both delighted. Discovering your wonderful invention has not only made a huge improvement in our communication, it has given me a whole new lease on life, i.e., riding, which in my case is the same thing. I had become discouraged with our progress and often despaired that I would ever be able to ride him effectively or consistently. It was especially disheartening to know that I was one of those middle-aged amateurs who has a big, fancy horse, but doesn't have anywhere near the ability to ride him. After watching the videos of our lessons this weekend I realize that this has changed! Not only does Moochie look fabulous when my trainer rides him, but he goes beautifully for me as well. Again, I thank you!

I've finished reading your book (and re-reading it). I think it should be required reading for Pony Clubbers and 4-H'ers as well as all riders who say they are concerned about the welfare of their horses. I'm encouraging everyone at my barn to read it and allowing anyone who is interested to try my BB.

I'm currently working on next month's installment of The Blog. In addition to describing a typical SuperPrix! competition, Felicity goes undercover and visits a classical dressage show. Among her startling discoveries (like the poll should be the highest point and that horses are required to actually walk and halt in competition) she learns that bits have been banned and all horses are ridden in Bitless Bridles!

Carol, June 26, 2008:

I am a friend of Michelle's, and I ride with her. Yesterday, she allowed me to borrow one of her bitless bridles to try it on my horse. My mare is a Dutch Warmblood-Thoroughbred cross, and has Head-Tossing Syndrome. She has always been fussy and difficult when I rode her, even when she was not having a bad (head-tossing) day. She often has opened her mouth during our rides.

Yesterday, she was like a new horse. I have never ridden her when she was not tense and fidgety in her body. She was so relaxed, she felt lazy to me. Her head was down into the bridle so well, I thought she must look like one of those western Quarter horses. I realized then that I had never really felt her relaxed before! She loved the bitless bridle from the first

stride.

What's more, she had no trouble picking up the correct canter leads, and was relaxed in them. She even seemed to enjoy the canter! I have worked for over a year to try to get her to relax and stop worrying about the canter. We even tried some more complicated lateral work, and she performed all without any resistance or raising her head. And best of all, she did not open her mouth during our work at all.

What a delight to ride in this bridle! I am most certainly planning on purchasing one for my mare. Thank you for creating such a kind, yet effective, bridle! My mare thanks you, too.

Michelle, June 24, 2008:

You are a genius! I suspected as much, but now it's confirmed. I rode Moochie in the BB yesterday for the first time (I had decided to wait until his broken face seemed to be on the mend). The change in him was miraculous. From the moment I picked up the reins he was a different horse. Usually he immediately speeds up and shows tension in the neck, and we spend the next 20 minutes doing lateral work and bending to get him to settle and take contact. Yesterday he stayed relaxed and actually stretched into the contact from the get go! When we moved into trot he kept the connection and happily responded to half halts, lifting his back and giving me a lovely place to sit. But what really amazed me was that his whole affect was more relaxed, almost to the point of being lazy. Moochie is a very forward, "self-going" horse (as Dr. Klimke used to say) with huge gaits. His movement was still huge, but without the rushing quality he often exhibits.

Our trainer is coming this week for a 3-day clinic. The first day she's going to ride Moochie and I'm going to insist she use the BB. Should be interesting! I'll send you a report. I've only managed to read half of your book so far, but I've already decided that in good conscience I can never put a bit in a horse's mouth again. As I was reading I realized that many of the behaviors that Harvey, my x-puissance horse, used to exhibit when ridden (gurgling, fighting the bit) were bit-induced. How he managed to clear 7'-8" in a 3-ring elevator I'll never understand. It just shows what a truly brave boy he is.

I'm already spreading the word about your bridle to anyone who will listen. And I've decided to start showing Moochie again. Of course we will have to go HC, but the point is to demonstrate that a horse can be ridden without a bit and still do dressage...

Ed, June 18, 2008:

Hi!, this is Ed Campbell. I bought a beta bitless bridle from you a few months ago and I told you then I would get back to you with an update on the results. I love the new bridle. I had a horse that was green broke and having a little trouble with her on control. I switched to the bitless bridle and I noticed a change immediately she started responding to command more readily, she stopped fighting the bridle and she calmed down. I mean now you can rub her all over and even crawl up under her belly without her going nuts. She is easy to catch because she does not dread the bridle and loves to go out.

Christy, June 13, 2008:

I know you hear this all the time, but I just need to say thank you so much!

My AQHA mare, Brianza, who is now 24, and I have been together since she was a four

year old. I broke her to ride, and we've gone many, many trail miles and arena miles together. I know her very well. I've been pretty much her only rider except for occasional guests. So I've been very perplexed with her behavior. A few years ago she started having issues with riding, she's always happy to go but then gets upset part way into the ride and starts to jig, wants to go home, becomes just a handful and no fun to ride. She had never been in any kind of a severe bit, only a light wide bar snaffle. There were times she got downright dangerous on hill side trails and in areas that she needed to have her brain turned "on" so to speak. She had gotten to the point that I was thinking my friend would have to be retired to lunging only, as it was a miserable experience for both of us and I was terribly frustrated for her. I had her teeth and mouth examined and lameness exams, just could not figure out what her problem was but it was obvious as soon as you had to start picking up on the bit she would start getting more and more upset. These last few years have been terrible and I hadn't ridden her much, vying for a "nice" ride on my other gelding, her son Scooter because it was just easier on me, and he was fun, she no longer was.

Well I got my bitless bridle as a last "hail Mary" and let me tell you what a wonderful experience! My mare would come home even from a short ride totally lathered up from head to tail, wide eyed and obviously in distress no matter how quiet I tried to be with my hands.

These first few rides with the bitless bridle were wonderful and an actual "pleasure" as they are supposed to be. She still jogs along some but it's a nice trot you can actually sit. She's got her head low, her eye is quiet and she's comfortable and using her back. Her ears are up, and she's relaxed. She even stops to graze with the other horses on the trail and that hasn't happened in years. I usually have to get off to get her to stay in one place long enough to think about grazing, she seems so "worried". We came home from an hour and a half trail ride yesterday and she wasn't even sweaty, not a bit. And we walked home just calm as you please.

Before we were having arguments all the time, I always tried to stay out of her mouth, but you have to rate them somewhat to keep them from walking down horses in front of you and to keep you safe from being kicked, etc. and the more I asked to slow down the more the head went up and the brain went bye bye and she would totally tune me out and be in fight mode.

Now, she stays calm, so she can "hear" the questions I'm asking, and answer them willingly and accordingly.

I can't tell you how much I appreciate this for her, for both of us. She's just a lovely mare and well trained and a pleasure to ride when she's like this.

I'm so glad to have my partner back!

Edina, June 08, 2008:

I've just read through the comments and found mine too posted in December, 2006. I'd like to tell you how satisfied I am with the bridle. I have a 75% thoroughbred gelding, and endurance-horse-turned-to-be-western horse and this bridle is the first one I have all control on the horse with in every situation! Pretty amazing that this happens without a bit! He loves it!

I used to show him in Trail a couple of years ago one handed and with a curb bit, and now he does everything with this bridle too, even flying lead changes. I'm seriously thinking about sending you a video to show how he is working.

I told a few of my friends about this bridle and some already ordered and one will next week. :-)) I was the first one who used this in Hungary and now there are quite a few people. I'm glad they noticed the difference, too. Keep up the good work!

Linda, June 04, 2008:

I love my bitless bridle! My mustang loves it too. He listens well and does not act "suspicious" when I put it on him. I don't worry about hurting his mouth, either. Thanks so much for the bitless bridle!

Heather, June 11, 2008:

My horse compelled me to write you. He is deeply appreciative of the Bitless Bridle. He has always been a dear of a horse, but now he is just joyous, working in earnest and happy. He does that happy chuckle when I put the bridle on! I was worried that the dressage master would shun this bitless headgear but his superb behavior is 'believing'. With this bridle, more focus is placed on balance, weight and leg pressure. I feel like I am finally really communicating with my horse. It is really quite extraordinary.

After 5 times using this bridle in the ring, over jumps and on the road and trail I am really sold. My horse's attitude is what tells it all. He's a bit of a show off anyway but now he's really the tops. I wonder if it has to do with the fact that this bridle urges him in the direction, rather than makes him out of pain/fear avoidance.

Anyway I digress. I just want to thank you for creating such a beautiful fine product that we very much love.

Karen, June 07, 2008:

I would just like to let you know that my gelding, Dudley, has been transformed by his new Dr. Cook's bridle! He was almost always fractious, spooky and difficult to the point that I decided to sell him. Seeing others have as much trouble riding him as I did led me to try a lot of different things to sort him out on top of the traditional methods I had been using, including a psychic and a chiropractor! Yes, desperate I was!

Today I had my third ride with the new bridle and he is relaxed, happy and obliging! We are having a bit of trouble getting him, ummm, "on the bit", but so what, I CAN RIDE MY HORSE AGAIN!!!! Of course, now I don't want to sell him, which is problematic as I already bought my "new" horse, but what is a little financial tightness compared to a happy horse I can ride?

Thanks for you great bridle, I shall recommend it to anyone who will listen!

Part of a letter from Katarina, a trainer whose teaching is based on the 'Riding with the Mind' program developed by Mary Wanless:

Each horse has presented a challenge but the biggest one here so far has been Little Love. This horse is a 12 year old drop dead gorgeous Oldenburg mare with a wealth of problems starting from running off, bad steering, spookiness, hollow back and holding her head really high with a short neck, tension in the whole body, fear of noises etc. She would be especially bad with her owner who is not a very high level rider. The poor horse had had over ten owners by age six and with the current owner had gone through trainers (and bits) like you wouldn't believe. They had tried everything from a double bridle to draw reins, but nothing

seemed to make the horse "go". I have for months been gently trying to figure out the horse's psyche and have been somewhat successful, but something was still not quite right. Then one beautiful day about a week and a half ago, I got my hands on a BB. I had it only for a day, because it was a loan, so I had to be quick. I rode the two horses I have been struggling with the most and halleluyah; nothing had prepared me for what happened.

Little Love was like a changed horse. Suddenly she listened to my seat, she was sensitive, calm, willing, forward, reaching into the rein, light and I could feel her back come up for the first time ever. I had always known the horse was a "big mover" but in the BB it was like she had been freed from prison. After twenty minutes I had to stop riding as I actually broke down crying. I spent about ten minutes apologizing to the poor animal for not "getting it" earlier. (just for the record, the other horse I rode in the BB that day was also a changed horse. No more head twisting, macaroni body, yanking etc.)

I ordered the BB immediately and received it in just four days. I rode three horses including Little Love in a dressage clinic with it (the instructor could not believe her eyes, the horses were so different than before) and then decided to enter an unofficial dressage competition they were putting on at our barn last Friday. I knew Little Love was not "ready", but I needed to make a point in front of a crowd (I like rocking the boat, so to say). In warm up, I had up to 20 people including the judges staring at me with comments ranging from "I can't believe this, did she take the wrong horse out of the barn?" to "It has to be painful for the horse, why else would she have her head down like that!" I have been the talk of the town since. I rode a lower level dressage test and considering it was the first time the mare had EVER been in the show ring, she did brilliantly. It was like someone had converted my Volkswagen Jetta into a Ferrari. We placed 8th right after all the people who rode the higher level tests (it was an open class so placings were based on percentage).

I have the entire test, as well as the warm up, on video.

I have since ridden every horse I can get my hands on with the BB and I'm convinced that it is the way to go. I will continue to ride more and more horses in it and I have already "converted" three people at our barn to buy the bridle for themselves. The owner of Little Love had a very hard time believing in this, even though she suddenly had steering and breaks! (I told you Swiss people are very slow to change...) but once she went on a trail ride in it and realized that the mare no longer would attempt to run off with her, she said she wanted to buy her own. She even asked me if we could find another unofficial dressage competition where they would allow me to ride in the BB, she would like to see Little Love compete again.

Deborah, June 02, 2008:

My name is Debbie and I had thought about buying the bitless bridle for the last couple of years. I finally made the decision and I am thrilled that I did. I rode my 16 year old Tennessee Walker mare Annie with it recently and had fabulous results. We started in the round pen, then moved to the pasture and then the dirt road in front of the house. I mostly do trail riding and will try her on trail as soon as the snow melts off the Tetons! She has always been responsive and she is just as responsive and very relaxed with the bitless bridle. My only regret is that I didn't purchase it sooner. I am beginning training of my four year old mare Misty and am thinking of starting her in the bitless bridle. If I do begin with a bit, I will move her out of it as soon as I can. If you have any recommendations regarding starting with the bitless bridle I would love to hear about it. Thanks for a great product!

Carol, June 02, 2008:

I wanted to make my comment on your awesome bridles. I ordered mine a year or more ago. We have a lot of horses here at our stable. We tried and worked many of the horses here with this bitless bridle and all of them worked like a dream. We have horses we have bought that had very nasty bits used on them (polo horse, rope horses, etc.). We have taken them down from nasty bits and tie downs to the dog bone bit, but the bitless works so well on these horses also. I just want to let you know, I am a true believer in your very wonderful bridle.

Deborah, May 27, 2008:

I ordered my bitless bridle a couple of months ago and I LOVE it. I am not an expert rider by anyone's standards, but I know enough to know that my horse did not like having a bit in his mouth. I tried 3 different bits on him without much success, so I decided before I put any more money into buying yet ANOTHER bit that maybe it was time to try the bitless. Since you offer to accept a used bridle back if it doesn't work out, I really didn't have anything to lose and possible success to win.

My horse is a sweetie, but it was difficult to even get the bit in his mouth due to him raising his head and clenching his teeth. Then, after the battle of getting the old bridle on, he would do the head tossing thing. He also would somehow get his tongue OVER the bit and sometimes it felt like he was clamping his teeth down on the bit. It was discouraging to say the least.

Today, with the bitless, he drops his head right into the bridle for me. He looks so relaxed now. I have some pictures of him with a bit in his mouth and you can just see how uncomfortable he was. His eyes had a real panicky look in them and his mouth was open. That is hard for me to see. But that look is gone now and I can't thank you enough.

In the bitless bridle, he obeys every command I give him, no problem, no head shaking. I KNOW he appreciates this bridle -- You can see it in his eyes! I took your advice by riding in a small enclosed paddock area the first time I used it. He was perfect. I was still a little nervous about riding OUTSIDE of the paddock, but after a couple of days, I went for it. He was BETTER than he had EVER been with a bit!! I didn't have ANY reason to be nervous after all!

He will never have a bit in his mouth again, at least for as long as I have anything to say about it!

I am now a walking advertisement for you! I am encouraging everyone to give this bridle a try. It really helped my horse! So if this email gets posted on your website and someone who is thinking about trying this bridle is reading this, may I say - GO FOR IT! I don't think you will regret it, especially since you can get your money back if you don't like it - You really don't have anything to lose and a happier horse to gain. And a happy horse is fun to ride, I get to do it every day now! (weather and work schedule permitting, that is). Thank you, Thank you, Thank you! And my horse thanks you!

Jane, May 27, 2008:

I just had to send a note to tell you that I recently purchased Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle and both myself and my dearly loved 21 year old gelding... LOVE this bridle!

I have owned this horse for 5 years and he would frantically rub his head on me after a ride...every single time! I have a total knee replacement so it is necessary for me to use the mounting block when I dismount, and he would practically knock me right off the block from his vigorous rubbing!

From the first time I used your bridle he no longer does this! It is amazing! I have recommended this wonderful bridle to everyone I know!

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! I know my horse is comfortable and very happy! It is just incredible!!

Craig, May 24, 2008:

My name is Craig Rausch and I recently purchased a bitless bridle from you guys. I wanted to drop you a line and let you know what an awesome product it is! I am a new rider having purchased a horse about 5 months ago. He is a 15 year old Tennessee Walker and he absolutely loves it - he is like a completely different horse without that bit in his mouth. He is more lively and my communication with him has improved dramatically. He is responding a lot better to my leg cues - the change is really unbelievable. The people I ride with have even noticed a BIG difference in him. They are so intrigued by his improvement that all of them are now considering trying out your Bitless Bridle as well. In any case, I just wanted to say thank you for improving my horsemanship exponentially! Have a great day.

Donna, May 23, 2008:

The BB is THE ANSWER FOR THE OTTB. I rode today in the park with (2) girlfriends for about 3 hours. I cantered more than ever... Blakjak and I led the group as in the past he has had a tendency to get nervous when left behind. This is something that I know I need to work on...never could work on much of anything on the trail as he was always fussing with the snaffle bit. Today, I had the best ride I've ever had on my horse in the 2.5 years that we have been together. Also a HUGE improvement was that we were actually cantering on a LOOSE rein. That has NEVER happened before. We had collection, communication and most of all FUN.

Blakjak is now showing me that he is starting to pay attention to my cues with the slightest touch of the reins. We were cantering the trails and I could pull him ever so slightly left or right with absolute ease to avoid tree roots, gravel, low spots, high spots or whatever else we had to encounter. He is responding to leg cues today like magic all of a sudden...I have NO issues with stopping at all. When we see a muddy part of the trail, I give him a noticeable tug to slow down and we downshift right away.

I expect that in the future he will anticipate stopping with a slight cue and body language. I am thrilled and excited to have the BB. No more fighting for control of the bit. No more jiggling on the trail. No more nervous chewing on that wretched bit. I truly believe that the reason he was in such a hurry to get back to the barn was that he could not WAIT to get back HOME and get that dreadful thing out of his mouth and be finished working.

OTTB's are extremely sensitive. We as riders and responsible horsewoman and men do NOT need to control our horses with METAL in the mouth. Communication increases between horse and rider when the horse can focus on what the rider is saying to him/her. I have to say I was a skeptic until I read pages and pages of testimonials from others before I made my purchase. Then I thought, "why not try something different than what the majority of riders are doing." I'm very happy I finally found what makes my very special OTTB horse happy

to experience the trail together. NOW if someone would invent a BUG spray that really works - any ideas?

Shelley, May 24, 2008:

I have your Bitless Bridle and I really love it as much as my Morgan horse does. He has always been a very sensitive horse (I call him the Prince and the Pea). Because of this he's been a great teacher because he would let me know instantly when something was right and when it wasn't. He told me when the saddle didn't fit (in no uncertain terms), when the arena sand wasn't even and when his bit didn't feel good to him. He always disliked the bit and it seemed like we were fighting each other. It made me more determined to find just the right bit for us. I never realized the right bit would be Bitless! Once I tried this bridle he is now extremely happy, quiet, content and most importantly responsive.

I ride him in it in a dressage saddle, bareback and out on the trails. I have never had anything but a great experience with this bridle. One of the best parts is that he immediately becomes collected (practically on his own) and even foams at the mouth as if he had a bit.

He is one very happy horse and it has allowed me to concentrate more on me and my aids (seat and legs) and continuing to improve myself. I'm happy to say I found the best saddle for him and bit"less" bridle for him – finally! It just goes to show when they speak and we listen – we can solve problems together. Thank you and for your wonderful invention! You have a customer for Life!

Rick, May 14, 2008 :

You are really great to work with. You really are honest when you say you stand behind your product and that the customer's satisfaction is your highest priority. There is no doubt that we will be dealing with you in the future – if we get more horses. I certainly can't see either the beta or the leather bridle "wearing out." Both are superbly made.

Donna , May 08, 2008 :

Rode Blakjak this past Sunday in BB. Went well, a bit of a handful at times. Rode this past Tuesday, better. My girlfriend stated, "Is that the same horse you rode on Sunday?" He dropped his head, a lot calmer and quiet overall. I bought scissor snaps so I can lunge him with BB, works great, brakes are very good. Blakjak turns WAY better. Seems to be a happier horse already after 3x, once in arena and 2x on trail. Riding again on Thursday and Saturday. I am still interested in the upgrade to trade-up to your VERY best Leather bridle. The only problem is, I do NOT want to spend even a SINGLE weekend without a BB now. Can I purchase and THEN send back BETA one, without going past the time limit?? Let me know.

Thanks to you my horse is getting happier and more relaxed. I had thoughts of selling my horse before I found your bridle. Now I realize that this is a great re-training device for OTTB. I will recommend your bridle to everyone...

Karen, May 01, 2008:

I am writing to tell you how impressed I am with the Bitless Bridle. I'm sure that you are tired of people telling you how amazed they are that your product has excellent stopping

power, but I had to tell you that I've been converted, too!

My husband and I have 4 horses, my retired Thoroughbred jumper, my four-year old Arabian mare, Mystic, that we recently broke to ride, and his two endurance Arabians, Buddy and Blackie. I ordered the Cobb size, which fit the 3 Arabians, but unfortunately was too small for my TB. However, I had excellent results with the remaining three horses, all of which have very different temperaments. Blackie is our alpha horse. Not only is he dominant with other horses, but he tends to spook and gets quite hot. Right away, I noticed that I had brakes, as Blackie was feeling energetic and tried to bolt several times. Not only was I able to immediately stop him, but there wasn't the head throwing and dancing around that usually accompanies an abrupt end to his shenanigans. He also stopped his nervous tendency to chomp at the bit. The other endurance horse, Buddy has always been quite a nervous horse, apt to spook and freeze. You have to keep a very soft hand with Buddy, or his nervousness worsens. This was made quite easy by the design of your product. I found that the Bitless Bridle, while it gave me complete control, was also very quiet. Finally, my mare, Mystic, also had a positive experience, although she hadn't used a bit for very long. I found it a relief to not feel her mouthing a bit the entire time, and just concentrate on learning.

Thank you for designing such a wonderful product that takes so much argument out of the communication between horse and rider.

Barbara, April 26, 2008:

Thank you so much. I'll be another of your customer service fans as well as an advocate for the bridle. I adore the bridle. My Arab was distressing so much with the mildest snaffle (and I have good hands)...gapping, head tossing, having difficulty collecting and just being "antsy" which I wrongly attributed to his being an Arab. Putting him in a bitless was amazing. On his first ride the head tossing disappeared and he collected with ease. WOW! He stops with seat cue and only occasionally needs additional rein support. On the trail he is relaxed and happy (double WOW). I'll soon be starting him in dressage...I'm curious to see how he responds bitless. Thanks again for your wonderful gift to horses.

Eulisses, April 25, 2008:

I am writing you to let you know that I received my Bitless Bridle today and I already used it in my horse. I can only thank you for your wonderful product.

I have a Puro Sanguie Lusitano (Lusitano Pure Bred) stallion and I've always had problems riding him. He seemed to be always fighting the bit and could never relax when I was riding, therefore, I could never relax either. I tried using a rubber bit. It was better but I always felt it could be improved. I tested your product and I will use it with my other horses but from what I've seen in my most nervous horse, I can tell that it is almost perfect for me and my four-legged friends.

I am also writing you to know if you have any interest in selling your product here in Brazil. I love horses and I think that anyone who really cares about their horses would be very interested in the Bitless Bridle, and I would be interested in selling it here in Brazil, if you would choose to do so.

Thank you again for helping me ride my horses almost in a natural state (what I think is the ultimate dream of all real horse lovers).

Dawn, April 24, 2008:

My 9 year old intermediate event mare does all her jumping in a bitless bridle. Her name is Trophy's Legacy and she is Perch/Saddlebred. She has an odd mouth and does not appreciate bits too well. So we stumble through dressage and then soar through stadium and cross-country.

Leah, April 15, 2008:

I am a middle-aged novice, realizing my lifelong dream of horse ownership. I was terribly naive when I bought my first horse Thanksgiving 2006: a ten-year-old bay roan Appaloosa gelding that I fell in love with at first sight. I quickly found out he was a whole lot of horse, and certainly more than I could handle at the time. I invested in training for him and for me, and even the trainer said this horse had issues, one of which was that "foster kid" attitude from having been sold too many times and handed roughly. My trainer lent me a teaching horse, an Arabian gelding the same age as the Appy that I eventually bought. I take the ownership of animals very seriously, and although I knew there was a very real possibility I might never be able to handle him, I have never entertained the idea of selling my Appy.

I have been riding the Arabian but I continued to work with the Appy on the ground, occasionally trying different approaches to working under saddle with him, with not much luck. We have bonded nicely; he's very affectionate and will do anything I ask on the ground, but it's always been a different story under saddle. My best experiences on his back have been bareback, attaching reins to a halter, but fully tacked -- forget it. I have 3 different headstalls and have tried numerous bits and it's always been the same.

Meanwhile, my Arabian seemed to turn on the bit, and began rubbing his head on his legs, and tossing his head, being non-compliant.

I saw the ad for the Bitless Bridle in Horse Illustrated and went to the website. Every single symptom associated with the bit listed on the site applied to one or the other of my horses. In desperation, I ordered a BB, knowing if I didn't like it, I could return it, no questions asked, within 30 days. My Appy has some draft in him somewhere, so he has a really big head, and I was concerned the BB wouldn't fit, but it does, on the very last holes. I only stayed on him a minute or so; he seemed confused, but he didn't fight me. A few days later, I rode the Arabian with the BB and he took to it immediately. When we got back from our ride and I was tacking the Arabian down, the Appy came over and put his head down, inviting me to put the bridle on him! I did, we went for a ride and it was as if he was a completely different horse! I was hoping against hope it wasn't a fluke! I did the same thing yesterday afternoon and he was amazing. What a thrill!

He's still a lot of horse, and I'm sure my challenges with him aren't over, but this is such a huge step for us. I can't thank you enough.

Elizabeth, April 14, 2008:

I started riding both my teamchasers (one intermediate, one open level) in bitless bridles mid February. They both have benefited enormously from the switch, the grey used to make a noise at hard work, especially canter work uphill, his breathing is much improved and he is a lot less resistant when I ask him to stay behind the horse in front, particularly in front of a fence. The brown open horse head shakes so minimally it's hardly noticeable, I'm hoping that in time

the trigeminus will settle down altogether. I've also got steering and brakes, whether he's in front or behind and although he needs a sheepskin cover on the noseband to stop it rubbing, that's just the sort of horse he is, allergic to lots of things, highly sensitive to everything else.

I find that being a regular competitor I get a lot of interest from other people in my bitless riding (also they're both shoeless, which adds to the interest). As I'm a vet and qualified in chiropractic and acupuncture on top of that I wonder if we could cooperate in some way, I'm also designing workshops in which I'll cover tack and shoeing or shoeless as well...

Karin, April 14, 2008:

After my first ride and so far, I am so happy with my recent purchase of the bitless bridle (though I do need to return the reins because they were too short for my half draft) because I liked knowing that I made my horse happier. My ride was no different. I was the same good rider or bad rider that I ever was but Maggie and I didn't have the tug of war over her pulling on the bit and me needing to shake her off. After getting the education from your website and now knowing what is best for Maggie I really hope this works for us.

However, I had the unique problem of causing quite a ruckus by using it at the boarding Dressage barn. Most felt I was an idiot for doing something so unsafe and giving up control of my horse especially since I have been only riding 11 months. The other half rolled their eyes and thought I bought into the latest gimmick and am a gullible novice that has let my interest in silly natural horsemanship go too far. A trainer even said I am putting all others in the arena at risk. As said, my riding was no different than the week before. From the feel, I couldn't even tell the difference of a bit or no bit, though I felt I had better contact consistently.

I just wish for the sake of horses, traditionalists would be more open to fact that there might be a better way for the horse. I just hope that the "new-bees" like me that seek out other ways (especially when the new way has a sound logical argument for it's use) don't put a negative twist on a good product like yours.

Kayla, April 13, 2008:

It took me two years to order my bitless bridle and I just received it. The weather was awful when it arrived but after four days I just couldn't stand it anymore. So I got out and caught my quarterhorse mare and rode bareback. Now mind you I am 53 years old. I just wanted you to know my first impression was "this is Great!" I have used my bridle a couple of times since and I absolutely love it and I don't know why it took me two years!

Nancy, April 12, 2008:

I just got home from riding my horse for the first time with the bitless bridle and I have to admit I was AMAZED!!!! My horse loved it from the first time I put it on her and she was so patient with me while I got it on and fitted. My trainer who has been working with horses and teaching for 30 years also said "WOW" if this was legal for horse shows she would use it on everyone one of her horses it worked that good. Everything I have read seems to be true the "whoa" was great, steering was great, absolutely no head shaking or tossing which she sometimes does with the hackamore. I'm sold and would highly recommend it to anyone who asks, thank you so much and Dr Cook for coming up with something so humane for these wonderful creatures.

Mishel, April 05, 2008:

Recently I purchased a bitless bridle from you over the Internet. I called after I ordered it and spoke to a woman concerning sizing because I ordered a medium for my Arabian. The Arabian bridles were too small and I was concerned that a small would also not fit. She told me that she would put a small noseband on the medium bridle and see if that works. Well it did and the Bitless Bridle from your company was the best money I have ever spent. My Arabian that I purchased was an abused horse and she absolutely hated the bit. I can now ride her without any problems. She does not fight me to put the bridle on and the gentle direction that the bitless gives her is perfect. I would never use a bit in another horse no matter the reason because the bitless bridle controls them without the pain and I cannot see putting a horse in pain to just enjoy a ride on them.

I sincerely thank you for coming up with this product and I am glad that you have a knowledgeable person working for your company because I know the small would not have fit her head but the medium nose band would have been too big now that I have it.

Daniel, March 27, 2008:

My horse is a 17.2 hand home bred 9 year old Hanoverian cross. I started riding him in a mild snaffle as a four year old. He never liked having something in his mouth and even ran away with me a few times. After some Parelli training and riding him in a rope halter I decided to try one of your bitless bridles. I wanted to be able to collect him (put him on the bridle) and play with some moves that require more collection. He has done amazingly well. He is happy, in perfect control, is able to collect without any fuss and behave like a real gentleman. I have thought about showing him in dressage, which requires a bit. He is ok on the bit now but I feel guilty for putting something in his mouth that he does not need or like. I have a nice book of 17 – 18 century horse and riders. One of these paintings show a young horse being ridden in a double bridle consisting of a pair of reins attached to the bridle and the second pair of reins connected with the bit. Apparently in old days they controlled the young horses only with pressure on the bridle, while getting used to the bit. My point is that riding horses in this way was practiced in classical riding. So why are we not allowed to show our horses in dressage competitions with bitless bridles. It is high time that we unite and have our voices heard. Thoughts and comments are appreciated.

Ken, March 18, 2008:

My daughter and I have been using the bitless bridle for about a month now and love it and the horses especially love it! Our horses responded to them without one problem for the very start! Thank you for all the research and work in perfecting the bitless bridle. My daughter takes barrel racing lessons; is it true that competition events do not allow the bitless bridle at their events? Can the bitless bridle be used as well as bit bridles in competitive horse sports?

Sue, March 17, 2008:

I recently purchased my first bitless bridle at the horse expo in Harrisburg. A young

mare I purchased for my granddaughter just seemed to fight the bit and we tried several. She seemed to do better with a hackamore but I was concerned she might not have the control she needs so I was very impressed with the info on the bitless bridle. Well it works wonders with this horse. She isn't confused about the cues and seems eager to respond. She walks when asked and stops when asked. Thank you so much. I am back to your website to purchase 2 more and soon another 4-5 and we will be totally bitless!!!!

Roxanne, March 04, 2008:

I don't usually write reviews on products however I felt the need to let others know of my experience because it was that great. I just wanted to say that the BitlessBridle is amazing. My horse used to constantly play with his bit and pull on the reins, take off, not listen to commands and be spooky on the trails. I always thought he was just that kind of horse and lacked training.

I went to try the bridle and people around me were worried for my life :0) They wanted me to try it in the arena first, but I decided to go straight out to the trails because that's the environment we are always in. Anyway my sisters were amazed at his performance and INSTANT calm nature. I had no idea that a bit in a horse's mouth could cause so many problems. I have a calm and willing horse thanks to your bridle.

And to all who worry their horse won't stop, well I can say from my experience my horse who never used to stop without a fight has never stopped so quickly and willingly. This piece of equipment is almost unbelievable. HURRAY my sisters are now ordering for their horses too.

Erika, March 02, 2008:

My fiance and I recently bought two of your bitless bridles. We love to trail ride, and chose the western style bridle, one in black and one in brown. They are really beautiful. I actually removed the conchos on mine, and all I had to do was simply untie them.

My fiance's horse, a quarter horse gelding, really didn't have any vices. Occasionally he was a little forward, and would chomp at the bit. He was always a little anxious. First time we tried it on him in the ring. He was a little confused, but then he was so happy that nothing was in his mouth. He stopped on a dime, and was it was amazing.

Around that time I was actually in the process of buying a horse. I tried about ten horses and fell in love with a neat little appaloosa mare. First time on her I thought I'd never get on her again. When I went to stop her, her head almost hit mine. She was so scared of the bit that the slightest pressure caused her to dangerously toss her head. She would not stop. She never ran away with me, but instead would continue walking and tossing and shaking her head. First day we used your bitless bridle she was a brand new horse. After she figured it out, her anxiety and fear subsided. She no longer tossed or shook her head. She is the perfect horse for me. My fiance and I told all of our fellow riding friends about your bitless bridle.

So many people are skeptical. If they would only take you up on your 30 day offer. We will never use bits again! Thank you so much.

Kristin, January 24, 2008:

I have used your bitless bridle on 3 horses over the course of 9 years, and have great

results each time. I purchased my first one at the Equine Affaire in Massachusetts, and used it on my then 15 year old off the track Thoroughbred mare. She was stiff, high headed, and behind my leg in any bit I tried. The bitless bridle transformed her in one ride to a much more willing partner, and eventually to a horse that I could confidently ride bareback on trails for hours. I have used this bridle on my 5 year old homebred Connemara/TB cross, and she will only accept your bridle. I have tried several bits in the hope of showing her in the dressage ring, but none of them make her happy. If the USET won't change it's rules regarding the use of bitless bridles, then I guess I won't be showing. The third horse is a spooky 8 year old TB gelding that I purchased as a resale project. He was also high headed and tense, and has made great improvement in the bitless bridle. His new owner won't ride in anything else now, and neither will I! Thank you for such a wonderful way to help improve harmony with these beautiful, noble beings. My horses and I are much happier!

Willette, January 20, 2008:

My Quarter Horse, Jac, was having a hard time with head shaking and when I rode him it was becoming such an awful and heartbreaking experience. I had the vet check his teeth, ears, etc, and he could find nothing wrong. However, the headshaking began after he had floated his teeth for the first time.

I bought your bitless bridle and I have my horse back! He loves it and so do I. He's calm, relaxed, and riding him is sheer pleasure. Thank you so much for developing this bridle. I tried a hackamore and it was not a big help at all. But your bridle has done so much for Jac and me.

Caitlin, January 09, 2008:

I have a 4 year old off the track Thoroughbred who is very sensitive. He liked to champ on the bit excessively and go behind the vertical. I tried switching bits, nosebands, everything...but nothing seemed to make him happy. I had the vet check him for pain and the dentist out for teeth. I even had him massaged. No good. He would still suck behind the bit and chew. If something alarmed or spooked him, the chewing would get worse, and he would sometimes even start to grind his teeth. Once he would reach that point, there was no talking to him. He would go off into his own world, and the rider would have to abandon the ride for the day.

Eventually I switched him to a mullen mouth bit, with a little more success, but it still did not completely fix things. I had bought a Dr. Cook bitless bridle for my other horse with TMJ, and on a whim, decided to try it on my TB. WOW. What a huge difference! Louie is now happily moving forward, paying attention, stretching over his back...just WOW. With no bit for him to fuss over, he now pays attention to ME. And if something alarms him now, while he may still scoot around a little, it is SO much easier to regain his full attention without the bit to champ on. He now trots around the ring with his ears all floppy and relaxed. We are even finally starting canter work again, and without the bit to lunge into (as he was taught to on the track) he is starting to develop a lovely, calm canter.

I do plan on getting him used to the bit again, slowly, as I would like to event with him and he must have a bit for dressage. However, I WILL be schooling mostly in the bitless, and jumping in it as well. Thank you for helping me finally move forward with my Louie!

Emily, January 7, 2008:

I just wanted to give my thanks for your amazing product because without it, I don't think any of us would have found out how amazing this mare really is. Havana didn't have a very nice start. She is an ex standardbred racer who was rescued out of New Hampshire. When she wasn't racing anymore, she was a brood mare, who had never actually been ridden until August of 2007. When we first tried to put a bit in her mouth she COMPLETELY freaked out and we thought it was a lost cause: until we found the bitless bridle. Now she is a quiet trail horse for almost any rider. Thank you so much for your wonderful product. We never really would have known this horse without it.

Kim, January 6, 2008:

My husband and I are looking into purchasing the stable where I do most of my work. If it is a go, it will be the Natural Horsemanship Center of Upstate NY. All my clients now use the bitless bridle. One still has to use a bit when she goes to Pony Club because of their rules, but she goes bitless at home and in her lessons. It is so rewarding to see the horses with this bridle and how good they all are. It has now been 2 years bit-free for me and I will be ever grateful to my friend, her difficult horse and Dr. Cook. There is nothing that someone can do in a bit that I can't do in a bitless!

Mary, December 31, 2007:

I just wanted to add my positive experience to the other testimonials. My mare, Flicka, has always been a sweet girl. I knew she didn't like the bit because she flung her head, but overall she was okay with it. But, to help her out, I put her in a mechanical hackamore. She has always been a "prancer" though and I began to think that her prancing was exacerbated by the hackamore; she would get nervous and prance from anticipation of the pull of the hackamore. Then I got her your Bitless Bridle, and every single time that I have ridden her since I got it she has improved. There is no more nervous prancing; she trots from a willingness to trot. She is responding beautifully to the Bridle and I love it! I am so happy she is more comfortable now. So, thank you for your wonderful product.

Marna, December 29, 2007:

PRODUCT REVIEW

Opinions of Marna Kazmaier

I am thrilled to be telling you all about a product that I have been using on Abby, my Large Standard Donkey. I know that there are several types of "Bitless Bridles" on the market, I would like to tell you my experience with *Dr. Robert Cook's beautiful and functional Beta Headset*.

The first thing I would like to tell you is that their website answers about every question you might have. When I did email the company, Carole Iverson, the Company President, could not have been any nicer or more helpful. Each of my emails were answered quickly and all my questions were addressed and answered thoroughly. I was impressed with the company before the product ever arrived.

When I received the beta bitless bridle, I was all smiles. The bridle came well packed in tissue paper with an invoice and a user's manual. The manual is very informative and covers Application, The Aids, Harnessing and Fitting, Converting to a Halter, Indications For Use and Maintenance as well as The Bitless Bridle "No-Risk" Satisfaction Guarantee. The User's Guide has helpful photos so that anyone could use this product correctly. I am confident that the average rider could use this product without the user's guide, I would however encourage everyone to read the manual before putting this headstall on your equine. There is more to this product than what meets the average rider's eye, you will be delighted to read about what more this product can do and why it work so well on your equine.

I was really impressed with the quality of the product. I must say that after it arrived we had a few days of rain and then we had some other things that had to be done, before riding, and I felt like a kid at Christmas with a new toy without batteries waiting to try this beautiful item on my Donkey. If a person did not read that this headstall was made of synthetic materials you would be hard pressed to know. It looks like and almost feels like a good grade leather (and I am a leather crafter). The hardware is quality stainless.

I had mailed my equine's measurements to The Bitless Bridle Co. When the headstall arrived it needed very little adjusting to fit my donkey. The adjustments that I did make on the bitless bridle were very easy to do. Not only was it easy to adjust, it looks nice when on the animal. I don't know about you, but having correct fitting, nice looking tack makes me feel good about my animals care and comfort.

I found when riding while my donkey was wearing this nice headstall it did just what I was told it by the company would do. Abby had previously been ridden in a webbing harness and you *pulled* to turn her. With the Bitless Bridle, she turns easily. The headstall "cradles" her head. I also felt the fit was much better then the halter I had been using. The webbing halter tended to slide; I was a bit concerned about that.

After 60 Days Use I must say When I first read The Bitless Bridle's website I saw a quote from another customer that said "this thing is magic" I must say, I understand and agree with that quote now. I can only say... try this great product. They are so confident in the product they build and sell they give a 30-day, no questions asked (but they of course would like to know what the problem was) guarantee. How could you go wrong?

I have been asked many questions about how the Bitless Bridle fits, how it works, how it is built.... After answering to the best of my ability I always tell the person to go to The Bitless Bridle website because it is all covered there. I have found what they have written there to be nothing but the truth. Also, on the website, <smile> they explain it far better then I can.

I guess I can best tell you about this product saying that wish I owned a Bitless Bridle for every equine I own. I like the idea of not having a metal bit in the animal's mouth and getting the same commands responded to well. I especially like the bitless bridle in this cold SD weather. Yes, I recommend this product for donkeys, horses, mules....

Jennifer, December 29, 2007 6:35 PM

Hi, I received your bitless bridle on Friday and on Saturday I lost it to my daughter. She has a 10 year old very well broke horse but his stop has always been weak at best. She saw me working my horse with it, liked the results I was having and ask to try it. Within 10 minutes her horse was showing signs of dropping his hind end and stopping much fast and smoother than ever before.

Anyways, I just bought 2 more we have 6 horses and feel the results will only get better

with each ride. Thanks for coming up with this I have been waiting a long time to get the bit out of my horse's mouth.

Fran, December 28, 2007:

I promise I won't bother you too often, but I thought you might like to know that after a month in the bitless bridle my horse continues to improve. He is now demonstrating lovely movement and natural, contented collection--formerly stiff, angry, and resistant even for professional trainers.

None of the original problems has returned and no new ones have emerged. We are now moving forward with his training at an accelerated pace. As quickly as I can learn it, he can do it.

By the way, our trainer is a highly respected dressage judge in this area, and she expresses the opinion that these bridles should be allowed for lower level dressage performance.

Brian, December 22, 2007:

iQue Pasa! I am convinced that you deserve the NOBEL PRIZE for your design and promoting of your BITLESS BRIDLE!!!!!! I tried it out yesterday with INSTANT and PHENOMENAL results. I have always heard people talking about riding a horse so relaxed and keyed in that it is like "riding on a cloud". Well, I got to experience that for the first time in my life and I'm extremely grateful to you for that. I never thought that anything could compare with surfing when you are in sync and carving out of an over head spitting tube riding like a King.....well, after riding with your product I will have tough decisions to make in the future about what to do with the day.....Wrestle with the sea?or Glide across terra firma on horseback?

I was ASTONISHED how my horse responded to riding with your product.....within 20 minutes of riding....my leg / rein cue's volume had to be dialed down to the point where it seemed my horse was "reading my mind".....if I used the same pressures as riding with a bit my horse would oversteer or over compensate. He is a young 4 year old with boat load of spirit and would brace sometimes at higher speeds and not want to stop....NOT ANYMORE!!!!!!.....he was stopping on a dime, sliding stops, fluid roll backs, high speed lead changes, spinning like a top, smoother gaits and gate changes, graceful side passes and half passes....he rode like a modern highly sensitive sports car !!!!!!!plus....now I can let him graze without worry !!!!! I WILL NEVER USE A BIT AGAIN !!!!!!! I am not into the competition thing.....strictly in it for the fun and companionship of one of nature's most exhilarating animals.....and hope that someday your dream is realized that they allow your product to be used in all types of competitions.

I am a big fan of "at liberty" ground work and feel that a true bond with your horse is the key and that can only be accomplished without ANY physical restraints...causing the horse to move with body language and internal energy.....making training fun without pain and intimidation.....and thanks to your product I have removed yet another negative entity from my horses world.

My wife and I purchased the horse about a year ago from a "traditional" western family (brother / sister) who would always give us guff about our style of training / playing with our horse.....leading him for walks with a halter letting him graze or leading him on pleasure walks

instead of putting him on the hotwalkerplaying ball with him.....turning him out to socialize with other horses for hours.....petting him....massages etc., .stating that we were spoiling all that the horse was trained to do and that some day the horse would "get" us if we don't show that horse who's boss. Well, it has been a year and neither we nor our horse has gotten hurt and the horse has never shown any aggression towards us....but, in their presence his ears go down. He obviously doesn't like them....and FYI....in this past year they have had numerous horses hurt, she was thrown off a horse breaking her foot, he has been smashed in the face having his nose broken by a head flailing horse, their hot walker has been broken in half twice by protesting horses,you get my point.....which would make a great bumper sticker or T-shirt for promotion.....DON'T RIDE WITLESS ! RIDE BITLESS !

By the way, I was referred to your website from the Alexandar Nevzorov site (guy's amazing) and after reading through your material immediately ordered the Western Leather Headstall. It arrived promptly, looked sharp, and is made with quality material/workmanship. Thanks again, for your contribution to both my horse and my life!!!! and to the entire Equine world!!!! Keep it up Doc !!!!!!!!!!!!!

Andrew, December 11, 2007:

I am compelled to tell everyone I know about the Bitless Bridle! My AQH is doing superbly with this bridle! She will be 3yo in January and still a little green under saddle. But since going to the Bitless Bridle last month, she is on the verge of becoming "Bomb Proof". Spooking is nearly a memory, stopping and turning on a dime and a generally happy horse... Now if you folks could come up with a revolutionary saddle pad the stars will align and the universe will be perfect. My Girl China is Bitless and Barefoot and she is becoming the perfect trail horse. She handles steep slides and hills with finesse and is calm and very sure of herself in the woods and fields of the Carolina Sandhills.BUT!!!!!!!!!!!!

The real success story is my wife's Saddlebred Tizzy! She will be 3 years old in March. Last month my wife fell off her when she bolted for the barn and ran through the bit. Tizzy is a very sweet and loving girl, but stubborn on the trail and in the arena. Yesterday I convinced my wife to try my bitless bridle and was astonished with the immediate change in Tizzy. A beautiful gate, responsive stops and turns, and visibly comfortable and happy with the bridle. My wife bought her own bridle last night! We will never go to a bit again.

Kelly, December 10, 2007:

I have been riding in my Parelli natural hackamore for almost 4 years, and really have had no problems. He does get brace on occasion, but this bridle is a dream! The slightest pressure from my pinky finger and he is giving me full flexion. I will also be purchasing one for my daughter after getting some more measurements. I just wish they were allowed for 4-H and open shows. This is the single most reason we pulled out of our 4-H group. The rules are the rules and no one cares how the horse feels about it. So Sad.

Anonymous, November 29, 2007:

My 11 yr TB gelding LOVES this bridle. Here's our story:

An ex-race horse, he came to me from a trainer who rescued him from an abusive, starvation situation. His facial bones are visibly crushed from the brutal attacks that he

endured.

I ride several dressage horses very successfully. I've found this gelding a challenge, however. I've been steadily working for 4 years to achieve dressage lateral movements and other simple maneuvers. In the ring, he was barely cooperative, always stiff, "on guard," tense, resistive, and angry to the point of stamping and squealing (no rearing or bucking though). He yanked and dove into his gaits, and was forward to a fault--he used speed as a way to escape rounding requests. He threatened to bite during bridling, and tossed his head incessantly during the process. Still, this horse is clever and friendly--he quickly learned ground tying, loose-reined trail riding, and longeing with a happy contentment that didn't "fit" his performance in the ring. He always comes to greet me in the pasture, and waits quietly for his halter.

Long story short: a new trainer introduced a Dr. Cook bitless bridle. What happened next is unbelievable. This horse sweetly rounds up, is relaxed, and has become the contented worker in the dressage ring that he's been on the trail. No more fighting at bridling time. He's been in this bridle for 2 weeks. He stops perfectly--much better than before.

My trainer can't believe the change in both of us. It's literally an overnight miracle. I was so discouraged, at the point of giving up on him, but now we are building the team I've only dreamed about. Will this magic last, or will it evaporate and the old behaviors return? I'll assume that it's going to last. Thanks, and more thanks for this WONDERFUL bridle. I'll encourage the use of this bridle in our sport. It is the essence of dressage--it builds teamwork, not fear of pain, between horse and rider.

I'll be happy to provide any other information that you may need in your research. A very happy customer.

Sheri, November 27, 2007:

We purchased one of your bridles for my son's British Riding Pony who had trouble stopping, and would stop at jumps frequently or run out. The pony came to us after a series of harsh bits to slow him down and my son has worked very hard with him to re-school his previous training.

Since purchasing your bridle he has been a new pony, jumping everything and just generally happier under tack. My son even took him foxhunting in it last weekend. Everyone was calling it the miracle bridle. They couldn't believe the difference in the pony. He will be eventing and competing in showjumping in your bridle in the spring. He competed in his 1st showjumping class in September using the bitless bridle and won his class, so we hope for continued success in the spring and at some of the indoors this winter.

Kelly, November 24, 2007:

I bought the bridle a couple months ago, used it with some success above what I'd had with a bit, but then I found my Percheron was getting harder to mount (she would walk away from mounting block), would fight turns and stops. The ONLY thing I could come up with was her beard. Even over summer she had hairs under her jaw that were 2" or longer, and to me, it seemed like they were getting caught in the side O-rings when I'd pull back on reins. I contacted DCBB, and e-mailed back and forth with one of their representatives, who did some troubleshooting with me to find out EXACTLY what the problem was.

First comment she made was that I actually had the noseband a bit low, so I raised it a notch. She agreed that the hair under my mare's jaw could be the problem, and sent me a small

add-on part to help if needed. Well, I used a cheap trimmer, cut her jaw hair so it's about 1" long now JUST in case. Today was the first ride since the trim, and Queen was TOTALLY wonderful! She tried to take us outside the arena (we normally saddle up and go to the trails), but she did NOT have any "issues" like before! The hair pulling has to be the only reason she got picky, and I can't blame her, that would HURT!

I know I'll have to continue using the bridle to make 100% sure, but I'm confident that we've overcome the ONLY problem! Boy, does this beat trying to get a bit in her mouth, and feeling bad because I KNOW it's banging around against her teeth!

Thanks for a great product and for TERRIFIC customer support! THAT was an unexpected gem!!

Holly, November 12, 2007:

I just wanted to let you know how pleased we are with our bridles. I ordered a Bitless bridle for my four year old daughter's pony, Ruby, that we just purchased. Ruby would get nervous with a bit due to rough little hands in her past. I read up on the bitless and decided to try one on Ruby and also on my horse, Chief. Ruby was instantly a happier, more relaxed pony, and my daughter, Chloe can ride her all by herself now. The bridle did not compromise stopping power or turning-- Ruby still neck reins on a dime in it. These bridles are not only good for horses with problems, though. I have had no problems with my horse Chief, and he LOVES being ridden in the bitless, and is more responsive than with a bit. I rode Chief on a 3 1/2 hour trail ride the second day we had the bridle with great results. I know a bitless bridle will not overcome major behavioral problems, but it sure has given us a couple happy horses, and a happy four year old girl!

We will be discarding our bits on trash day!

[Ed. The following is a recommendation from Rafael Valle to a friend]

Rafael, November 05, 2007:

Hi Bonnie,

So glad you are considering the bitless bridle, as it is the one of the best things I have done for Ivory Pal and our other TWHs. The other great thing I did for Ivory Pal was getting him a treeless saddle (the barefoot chyanne). Those two things, the bitless bridle and the treeless saddle, have made Ivory Pal one happy boy.

Surprisingly, it was almost seamless transitioning from the bit to the bitless bridle. As you probably know, we ride more with our seats than with the reins, as you do. So the transition will probably be easy for you too. I has many skeptics saying that Ivory Pal could not do his dressage moves and musical freestyle performances without a bit, well I guess once again, Ivory Pal proved his skeptics wrong because not only can he still do his dressage moves with a bitless bridle, he does them better! As far as control, I think that bits give us a false sense of security. Kind of the more control you think you have over someone or something, the reality is that you have less control with a bit that caused compliance due to pain.

A few weeks ago we went on a trail ride to drive cattle and I didn't realize that Ivory Pal had it in him to be a penning horse. He absolutely loved driving cattle and became very excited, well I felt more control with him with the bitless bridle than with a bit, because I knew that the circles we were doing to bring him back down were done with him just giving to the pressure of the bitless bridle instead of the pain caused by the bit.

In open fields, I open Ivory Pal to full gallops and he has no problem stopping with the bitless bridle, actually stops better with the bitless bridle. Anyways, you know that when I believe in something that will help horses and riders, I full jump into to it. So with this said, I sent in a testimonial to Dr. Cook regarding my experience with the bitless bridle so hopefully others will follow and make life and rides better and more comfortable for their horses. Check this out: www.bitlessbridle.com/dbID/287.html

Valerie, November 06, 2007:

Got my new bitless bridle yesterday and tried it out today. I have a 1/2 appy 1/2 draft that is a bit lazy. He has an incredibly thick, powerful neck and head, and his only bad habit is that when he quits, he quits. He either backs up until he backs into something or he heads for the barn. Before the bitless bridle, there was no stopping him from heading to the barn if he was done. Otherwise he is very gentle and very smart.

His trainer was so intrigued with the bridle she rode him first (bareback!) and my old man had pep in his step and the most beautiful flexion I have ever seen from him! Not to mention that the bridle is absolutely stunning on. Then it was my turn. We rode for a long while; his turns were sharp, he was more responsive, and then the one time I felt like he was ready to quit I just turned him and no problems.

This is one piece of tack that is well worth the money. I think you will be shipping several more to New Mexico!

Eva, November 04, 2007:

About a year ago I bought a bitless bridle with reins. I've been trying it on my horses, but switched back and forth with an English Hackamore, riding mostly with the Hackamore. Then I bought a big (built like a brick) Appaloosa from a summer camp horse dealer, saving him from going to slaughter. He was no good for summer camp - the kids were intimidated by him - (he hated being jerked on his bit) but probably not as much as I would have.

When I brought him home, I made a silent promise to never put a bit in his mouth again. I first used my English Hackamore, and he was fine, but still shook his head when I asked him to stand, for example, and had a hard time relaxing his neck, which he naturally seems to carry high. I believe he may be a PMU horse, and a cross between Appy and draft.

He responds well to my seat and voice, and a soft leg, so I pulled out my bitless bridle and WOW - within half an hour, he was a totally different horse. He now stretches and lowers his neck and stopped shaking his head. He also seems to be more confident. I was riding with friends, and we could not believe the change. He's a great jumper too.

So, I now use it on my Arabian, and have used it yesterday with one of my mares with whom I have had a very bad accident about 4 years ago. I've been riding her since that time with a Myler bit, which is flexible in the mouth but also had a hackamore with rawhide across her nose, to had that "extra" strength if I would need it. She is extremely quick and "opinionated", and - deep inside - she and I still did not trust each other. She was the only one of my 4 horses who still had a bit in her mouth.

So a few days ago I started riding her in my mind, using the bitless bridle, and yesterday - we did it! Within a few turns and strides on the trail, she got it. This was as seamless a transition as possible. She didn't arch her neck like a Lipizzaner, chomping on her bit with tension, but her neck stayed long and relaxed. She and I had the most wonderful time, and I

feel, that after 3 very long years of healing, and trying to rebuild a trust for each other, I have my beautiful mare and best friend back!

I am so happy about the bitless and the easy way the size can be adjusted to any of my 4 horses, from my Arabian Gelding to my draft/Appy cross. I will take a picture of him (I re-named from Pistol to Romeo) and email you the photo. Thanks for the excellent description about fitting and also the great leather, which is soft like butter. It is beautifully made!

Elizabeth, November 04, 2007:

My heart is so full of gratitude to you for all you gave to me and my horse Bebe since I first introduced him to your Bitless Bridle a few short years ago upon coming out of a ten year retirement to become my physical therapy partner and Dressage horse.

As you know I was injured from a riding accident and Bebe waited patiently for me to return to him during that ten years only to then become my schoolmaster from Training to Second Level during 2003 until June 2007 when we were in the process at his age of 26 of trying to complete Second Level. It looked that we would actually make it to Third until he became severely ill in August. His immune and metabolic systems are compromised with Pre-Cushings, multiple allergies to pasture-foods-fly spray-midges leading to chronic skin dermatitis which is unresolvable. Additionally, his right hock does not respond to Adequan any longer and he is now on pain medication to make him comfortable enough to be sporadically and carefully ridden just for his own pleasure, for example, today we went out in the Bitless Bridle as we do every time he is under saddle on a lovely but short trail ride through the changing leaves in Northeastern Ohio. We came back only because I had to turn him back for his own good – he still lives to please me and explore but tires so quickly I have to pace him. His lungs are not functioning well either and he coughs more now during exercise. It is now time that I give him the greatest gift you can give any horse who serves you with the sacrifice of his life for yours – especially, in my case, by giving me back my ability to walk and my will to live - a death with dignity and in peace from pain. Bebe will be put down at the end of November with humane euthanasia with the help of the staff of the wonderful facility we moved him to this last January close enough to our home we could be there in less than a minute to see to his every daily need. You, Dr. Cook, saved my relationship with my beloved lifetime partner with your Bridle so we could spend these last years in a successful union of constant achievement in the beauty of classical Dressage instead of the facial pain, miscommunication and sometimes lethal battles we had being bitted prior to my accident. Bebe simply refused to be bitted from the first day I introduced it to him and without your Bridle nothing we have done would have been accomplished so quickly. What I was able to learn with him I will now take to my new horse's life experience.

Alexandra, October 23, 2007:

I would like to thank you for the best piece of tack I have ever bought. I now have three bitless bridles for my very fizzy Chestnut TB mare called Lucy.

I thought that I had the worst behaved horse at our yard. Everyone thought I had out horsed myself and many times I went to bed crying, knowing that I couldn't control my horse. She broke two bridles and three head collars and would take off with me in fields. I had all the right things checked, Teeth, back etc and still she flung her head into the air and fought me all the way.

I stumbled on your website by accident and, along with the support of Parelli, bought a bridle on 30 day trial. I promise you I was shaking with nerves the first time I tried it out on Lucy and she actually turn her head to look at me as we walked up the track to the fields. Almost as if to say " You so have forgotten something here!"

I took her to a gallop up hill and let her go. She galloped to the end of the field and I asked her to trot and then walk and she did! We walked home on a long rein and she looked so happy and relaxed and I now have a changed horse. She listens to me and actually respects my voice commands. She will follow me everywhere without being tied and stop when I stop, walk when I walk. I can now ride her without any bridle , halter in the menage and she will stop when she feels me stop. Thank you. I have the horse of my dreams.

Marilla, October 27, 2007:

I would like to receive what ever is available to assist in my efforts to promote the usage of this wonderful bridle. Have recently had the pleasure of seeing what it does, first hand, on 6 of my horses ranging from an 18.2 plus warmblood jumper to a 16.0 quarter horse who is a roarer; also an aged warmblood stallion who ceaselessly tried to pull the reins out of your hand unless other equipment is imposed as it is in jumper competition. However, he is a great trail horse as well, but not with the current habit which is most annoying.

Anyhow, I will certainly undertake to voice my opinion with regard to rule changes in USET & the other organizations which showing on the bigger circuits insists I must pay dues to....

Jennifer, October 18, 2007:

I recently ordered a beta bitless bridle and I love it! My horse, Cheyanne, an 8yr old arabian LOVES it. She went completely unbracy the first time I rode her in it. I was able to do leg yields and bending both directions in a straight line the first time! I rode in it twice in the arena, and the third time on a trail at Biltmore in Asheville, NC for 12miles. She moved SO much better.

I rode Cheyanne Saturday in a 25mile endurance ride and it was awesome! I had much more control when I needed it and wasn't worried about pulling on her mouth. She didn't do any of her head shaking except when we were getting close to camp, which was more "Come on let's get back to camp!" *laugh*.

Sandi, October 16, 2007:

Thanks so much! Our neighbors have three of your bitless bridles. I have a horse that was abused and doesn't respond to the bit. We tried one of your bitless bridles on him and it made a different horse out of him. He is more relaxed and he is thinking now rather than reacting and running away.

I worked our gelding today with my husband watching, he couldn't believe the changes in him in just a few days. Really cool! My dream is to ride Mojave in competitive trail rides/endurance. If we are successful, I will forward pixs and info to you...

The neighbors said I could keep the bridle I borrowed, so, I am buying a new one for them.

Marna, October 15, 2007:

First of all thank you so much for such a nice product. I used it on my Standard Sized Donkey and really love it. It works well, fits perfect, easy to put on over her ears and looks nice on her too. I have attached a couple of her photos wearing it.

I wanted you to know I have started my review at the two websites www.doesmybuttlookbiginthesaddle.com as well as www.bibledonkeys.com.

I have sent pictures of Abby wearing the product to a few of the elists I am on. On two of the lists, donkeys and Mammothdonkeys at the yahoo groups elist site, they have talked about your product all week end. Several people say they will be contacting you. BTW, <smile> they are still going on about your product on the mammoth group.

Lulu, October 12, 2007:

I received the bridle yesterday and I have ridden in it twice already. I love it. It's beautiful, soft, and my horse obviously likes it. We didn't follow the rules and went for a trail ride for the first ride, but my horse has seen everything and I ride occasionally in a leather halter. It was perfect. His trot seems a lot easier and bigger. We worked in the arena this morning, and he was so compliant about everything. I normally have to work for at least 15 minute before he will "soften", but he was ready and willing right away. He didn't fight me when I asked for shoulder-in or haunches in, and collected nicely. I am THRILLED! It is so easy to use, and is pretty instinctive. I'll be sending on some pictures when I get some. Thanks for the excellent service.

Kathie, October 09, 2007:

I just wanted you to know that the reason why I personally have purchased three bitless bridles, my friend Laurie Baker purchased a bitless and all three of my boarders purchased bitless bridles (Molly Montgomery, Pam McCallum and Colby McKay) was because of Cathie Hatrick-Anderson. She came to my farm in Duxbury, Massachusetts to train Colby's horse and gave us a demonstration regarding Dr. Cooks Bitless Bridles. We were so impressed with Cathie's demonstration and her sound advice, that all of us decided to buy Dr. Cooks bitless bridles. I myself bought three and plan on buying another so I will have one for each horse. We all love our new bridles and none of us will ever go back to using bits again. Cathie gave us the confidence that we needed to switch from bits to bitless. Thank you for designing such a wonderful bridle.

William, October 07, 2007:

I have used the Bitless Bridle on my horse only two times and already have seen a huge difference. He is much more relaxed and so easy to control.

You must get tired of hearing these reports....but I am truly grateful that you have gone to the trouble of making a bridle that makes the horse and rider so comfortable.

Theresa, October 04, 2007:

Great News! I have to buy myself a new bridle because a friend bought my current one. This friend is starting a new horse, and like me trail-rides, so she has no need to force a bit on

her horse & is choosing not to. I advocate bitless whenever I ride, and my horse is wonderful proof that you don't need to hurt your horse in order to control him. If I apply the slightest pressure to one rein or the other, he turns his head, or stops. Never runs off after other horses. He always listens and responds to my requests. I do not hurt him, so he has no reason to follow the herd. We communicate. I hope Dr Cooks' bridles take over the world. I'm helping one bridle at a time.

Susan, September 28, 2007:

I just want to let you know how happy I am with the bridle. I have a very sensitive 4-year-old mare that was having a very hard time adapting to any type of snaffle. She was always concentrating on the bit and "swallowing her tongue", etc. With the bitless bridle, she is so much happier.

After reading all the info on your web site, I am wondering why I have been using bits for the last 65 years. Going bitless is so much more enlightened. I am truly grateful to Dr. Cook for having come up with such a wonderful piece of tack. Several other people at my barn including the owner/trainer are also very excited about it. I know that you will be receiving more orders from here in the Washington State boonies.

Kelly, September 24, 2007:

I bought 2 bitless bridles from you last year and they work wonderfully. I have a foxtrotter mare who is 7 yrs old. Six months after I started using your bitless bridle on her I had a session with gaited horse trainer, Liz Graves. Liz told me my horse's mouth is too short, front to back, to ever use a bit on her, since the bit would not fit properly in her mouth where it would be comfortable for her. She gaits beautifully in the bitless bridle, contrary to the advice I had received from gaited horse "experts." Anyway, I have posted a link to your website on my website, www.trailridernetwork.com. I think many of your customers are trail riders as I am and would be very interested in knowing about my website. The objective is to help riders find trail riders in their area with whom they can ride. Other resources and information are also provided. I do hope you agree!

Colleen, September 25, 2007:

I wanted to drop another note to you about your wonderful bridles and my recent experience. I bought two of your bridles several years ago for my Paso Fino and Peruvian Paso and have never gone back to bits with them. We love the bitless bridle. Recently, however, I've had my 4 year old gelding in training, and the trainer started him in a bit, understandably reluctant to try something he wasn't accustomed to himself. My gelding has been home for just a few days now, and though I rode him for the first time at home with a bit, I decided quickly that I couldn't justify it. He was clearly unhappy, constantly chewing and shaking his head with it. The second day I decided enough was enough and put him in the bitless bridle. He's stopped the chewing and lip flapping and shaking his head, and his way of going is straighter and he seems a much happier boy now. It's just reconfirmed my already confirmed belief that your bridle truly is one of the best things to ever happen for horse and rider. Thank you again.

Teri, September 24, 2007:

I am so happy with my bitless bridle that I ordered another one for my 3 year old Arabian. I wanted to break her without the bit. She did everything perfectly. An extremely happy repeat customer.

Mary Lou, September 21, 2007:

My trainer and I are very impressed with your excellent customer support. We lowered the noseband and snugged it up, and it is working quite well.

My horse, Gracie, and I want to thank you and Dr. Cook for a wonderful product!

Lori, September 19, 2007:

The first 4 new news articles on your site are VERY exciting!

I've been using my BB now for a few months, on my young (just started under saddle) TB filly. I can't tell you how happy I am with this product. It has turned out to be the answer to my prayers. I hope the price doesn't go up too soon, as I will need more bridles in the future. Do you have any mini, driving bridles?

But, I must say, most people still really DONT "get-it." I can't tell you how much flack I've gotten over it, since I've been using it. I first put it on a horse with a lot of problems... 80% of his problem were gone instantly.

I've been using it regularly on my, young, green, TB filly. I've had people tell me "she will *run-off* with you if you don't put a bit in her mouth, you better get a bit in her mouth" (usually this is from people whose horses drag them all over the place). My response is: perhaps, but I've seen SO many horses in my lifetime "run-off" with bits in their mouths. If you're gonna have a "run-off", then your gonna have a "run-off" no matter what. I think you're best bet is in proper training *before* something happens, not harsher equipment. Here's my theory:

The reason horses run off

1. they spook, or become afraid
2. they are fed up with their rider, they get brace and hard, and the rider actually teaches the horse that he can run off.
3. both above.

1. No matter how well you train, eventually, your horse is going to spook. If the horse spooks or becomes afraid, you are better off (bitless or not) to teach the horse how to deal with his fears... AND if your horse spooks and is immediately hit in the mouth with a painful device (the bit, no matter how mild) then you have just justified the spook. No constructive training there. How can the horse learn to deal with his fears if every time he fears something or gets confused, he gets a sharp pain, or worse permanent nerve damage?

I have a young TB with about 60 days on her. This filly has never known a bit in her mouth. She has only ever been ridden in the BB. This is an *extremely* high spirit horse, yes she is 17 hands of down and dirty, heart pounding, youth.... she has become *extremely* soft in my hands, 100% on the aids. She is happy, agreeable, light and responsive. She gives into every aid I apply without question or debate, with tons of impulsion and forward movement.

I can ride her at night, way out in the fields, and by herself, even bareback sometimes. and now, when she spooks (which young horses do), she doesn't even miss a step. Her biggest spook now is barely a snort (keep in mind the type of horse she is), and most of all, when it is her turn for training, she *runs* to the gate to get tacked up. This is a horse that will have NO baggage.

2. I've never had a horse fed up with me, so I wouldn't have to endure this, but I've seen it. Once again, this does NOT require harsher equipment, it requires proper training. I've seen horses in so much pain that they have all these quirky problems: spooky, can't stand still, bullying, tongues hanging out, lip smacking, foaming, head shaking, etc., etc., and instead of the rider looking at what *they* are doing wrong, they invent a bridle that crosses over the horse's mouth so they can tighten it down over the bit more. These horses are saints because if I were a horse, I would toss anyone who degraded me like that, but these poor horses endure this pain every day. One day, they snap. I understand this, (and I'm just a simpleton at heart), why cant others?

Linda, September 17, 2007:

One of my driving clients stopped up at your facility last Thursday and bought 5 driving bridles (3 regular and 2 mini's) and one riding bridle after months of my "ragging" her to get them.

I fitted them today and we took the team of "Icelandic" horse's out for a drive and extensive roadwork. They performed beautifully and I absolutely love the style of the "driving bridle".

My client was ecstatic that the horse's performed as well as they did and apologized to me for her waiting so long to obtain them. We will work the "mini" donkeys out on Wednesday but I'm sure the results will be the same.

We also had a rider (a cowboy) today that is from Chile that has been training horses for many years in his native country. He rode one of the Icelandic horses (the Icelandics are a delightful gated horse) in the "bitless bridle" and he was absolutely in awe with the results.

I now have achieved 100% of my clients that are now using the "bitless bridle" and love it.

Thanks again Carole for producing a fantastic product and keep up the good work.

Courtney, September 16, 2007:

I cannot express to you how much I love your bridle! I just ordered 2 of your english bridles and used them for the first time today. The results were utterly amazing. One of my mares has always been bit-sensitive...often carrying her head above the vertical, twisting her head to the right/left, and gaping at the mouth (among other things, too). I rode her today with the bitless bridle both in the arena and out on the trail. She was LOVELY!! We did flat work, jumped and also went on a trail ride. When I asked her to trot for the first time, her neck tensed like it normally would, and she instantly went above the vertical (out of habit I am sure). However, when there was no pain to follow, she relaxed and lowered her head!! I couldn't believe it. It took her a few more tries for her to finally trust that what she was feeling was true...she tensed up during a few more transitions, but by the end of the ride we were cantering out on the trail on a loose rein and her head was perfectly level. When I got back

from the trail, we went into the arena and even jumped! All of our transitions were completely fluid. I had PERFECT control and my horse was happy and relaxed.

I own 7 horses and have been riding & showing for 25 years. I own LOTS and LOTS of bits...just like you said in one of your articles...I had become a bit collector...falling for the latest gimmicks, etc. I now want to throw them all away...I am going to ride ALL of my horses in your miracle bridle.

I can't wait to tell you how it goes with my PMU Percheron draft I am currently training. She is 4 and has never had a bit in her mouth...it will be so interesting to see how a "fresh" horse goes in your bridle. I also have a 4 year old appy gelding who has a parrot-mouth. I have been riding him in a halter/leadrope because I worried about a bit causing him lots of discomfort due to his overbite....I can't wait to use the bridle on him, too!

I will keep you posted. In the meantime, please let me know if you have any questions or would like any additional information. I just can't say enough how happy I am to be brought out of the dark ages when it comes to communicating with my horses. THANK YOU!!!!

Judy, September 15, 2007:

Here is a picture of my large standard donkey (53"), Abner, who is being trained under saddle with your bitless bridle (photo at <http://www.bitlessbridle.com/dbID/234.html>). He is coming along very nicely. He is being trained by a friend of mine who has been working with him for about a month or five weeks now. I recently acquired Abner, who is 9 years old but had never been ridden. This is my friend's first training experience with both a donkey (she has Connemaras) and a bitless bridle. She's a very accomplished horsewoman and she is doing a great job with Abner and your bitless bridle! We were put to the test on a trail ride recently when Abner was being bothered by some yellow jackets! Abner turned tail and headed back to the barn, full tilt, trying to leave the bees behind. This was my second trail ride on Abner, and all I could imagine was "Is this bitless bridle going to do anything?!!!". Sure enough, I was able to bring Abner down to a trot, then a walk and finally halt. It was at that point that I became a believer in the bitless system!

Gail recommended your bitless bridle very highly, so I ordered one for Abner. Now Ann has ordered one for her mammoth donkey, Grayson, and Bette will be working with Grayson in the spring.

Thanks, Judy
Save Your Ass Long Ear Rescue

A product review by Stacey Hickling published in the "tried and tested" section of www.horsemart.co.uk 2007.

I was interested to see how much control I would have with a bitless bridle, compared to a conventional bit and bridle. MEL has never liked having a bit in his mouth, and I had tried many different styles and makes but had never succeeded in finding one he was 100 percent happy with.

I was given the Beta bridle made from synthetic leather, which means it can be washed in a bucket of soapy water – so easy! It comes up perfectly. In fact, everyone at my yard thought it was leather until I told them it wasn't.

When I first tried the bridle I was really impressed. MEL was so much more relaxed, and much more forward (he's really lazy), and I had the same amount of control as with a snaffle. He's been hacked out, schooled, jumped, and has done cross-country, all in the bitless bridle, ridden by a 13-year-old, and is far more comfortable than before. I won't go back to putting him in a snaffle, because this one works perfectly for him.

An excerpt from a three-page article by Elizabeth McQuillan published in England's, Ireland's and Scotland's 'EQUESTRIAN' magazines during 2007..."A Bit Different: 10 good reasons to try riding bit-free."

Dubious about the elements of control and sensitivity that the use of a crossunder bitless bridle could bestow, I took the plunge and tried it on my own mare. A great many long-term issues (with physical causes already excluded by the vet) were resolved over very few sessions. These included a complete refusal to give on one rein, reluctance to strike off on the correct leg, a gaping mouth when ridden and leaning and boring down on the hands. With the removal of the bit my mare moved through her back in a more pronounced way and exhibited total self-carriage. She really seemed to be happier and more relaxed in her way of going, and was a joy to ride. From hacking out on a windy day, jumping some cross-country fences to schooling in the arena, I felt very much in control and even the brakes worked perfectly where I was convinced they might fail! Whether it was due to the removal of a source of pain, the increased requirement to use my seat and leg aids more effectively or a combination of both, the results were quite profound. Furthermore, my instructor commented on an improvement in my riding in general with me far less inclined to try to force an outline (I hadn't realised I was guilty of this), and softer with my hands in general.

Rafael, September 07, 2007:

I just want to let you know how much my Tennessee Walking Horse stallion, Ivory Pal, loves his bitless bridle. He is much happier now without a bit in his mouth and he can still do all of his dressage moves despite so many skeptics telling us that a horse needs a bit to do dressage. Not only can he still do his dressage moves, but he does them better with the bitless bridle. Transitioning over from a bit to the bitless bridle was pretty seamless, not only for my stallion, Ivory Pal, but for our other two horses as well. All of our horses are much happier without the bits, as a matter of fact, we have disposed off all our bits. To see Ivory Pal performing bitless, visit:

www.ivoryknollranch.com/videos.html

and wait for the first video clip, "I Believe I can Fly."

Carol, September 02, 2007:

I purchased a bitless bridle from you about 5 years ago. I have used it continually on my gaited horses and they are very responsive. In fact, my TWH mare moves out much better in this bridle than in any bit she had had. I don't ever see us using another bridle for our horses.

Val, Sept. 2, 2007:

I took my bitless bridle with me to ride a horse that I was considering for purchase. The horse's current trainer was so impressed that she wants to buy a bitless herself. The horse was very happy and responsive to the aids during his first experience with your magnificent bridle. I just love turning people and their mounts onto your wonderful creation!

Alice, Sept. 1, 2007:

I have just had a 15 year-old girl at my yard with her pony, who was previously a Blue Chip winner. The pony was part exchanged with a dealer because he could no longer be controlled. Previously, he had been returned to the dealer a couple of times because no one could ride him, even in the harshest of bits.

When he got to his new home, he had a 'nervous breakdown,' because he had been under so much pressure at his last home. Initially, at his new home, where the owner was lovely and sympathetic, he just refused to jump. She has had a few problems with him, including a large abscess on his jaw that kept resolving then recurring. It ended up with him staying at a veterinary hospital for several days. He has scars on his mouth (as well as in it, I am told) and it seems likely that the abscess was due to bits.

He was with me for four days (for rehabilitation in The Bitless Bridle) and the difference was astounding! He had been rushing full pelt at jumps, poles etc, often crashing into jumps or tripping. He had also been going so fast around the corners that the rider would nearly fall off the side, as he would be nearly horizontal. I did some 'Join-Up' and taught him to yield to pressure and lead politely, then went on to long reining in the CBB. The owner said she had tried to lunge him, but that he had just charged off in a straight line, so she couldn't control him. He was a dream to long rein in the CBB: so light on my hands.

The owner then rode him over poles; eight in a line, one stride apart. He kept perfect rhythm, not rushing at all. On the last day, he did several small jumps, with the rider in perfect control. No one could really believe the difference. The pony could relax at last. We did some of the exercises from earlier in the week on the last day. When we finished, he wandered off to the end of the school and instead of rolling, as we expected, he was so relaxed that he laid down for a rest!

I am really sad that the Pony Club in the UK does not allow the CBB because the owner goes to PC camp every year and has been very successful at jumping competitions run by them. We HAVE to change their mind!

Adrienne, August 30, 2007:

Just at your site again reprinting the instructions on how to fit the bridle. I always seem to lose them, but I always seem to be more reassured when I have them to refer to, even though I've been using the bridle I bought from you almost a yr ago. It still is in great condition.

Just a note to let you know that the barn where I board my horse at still is trying to convince me to use a snaffle on a horse that I have successfully trained by myself with absolutely no experience, using your bitless bridle. People actually are amazed at how my horse "loves" me. When they're all out in the field chasing theirs around to "catch" them, mine walks up to me and is glad to see me. They ask me how I did it, and I tell them patience and no pain is the key.

The reason they wanted me to use the snaffle now is I was thinking of getting an "expert" to help me start to learn jumping. She told me that she would not touch my horse unless he knew how to ride in a snaffle bit. (Yes she does have a two yr. college degree).

I must admit that I tried, and I immediately noticed the difference in "Ted". He did let me put the bit in, after throwing his head around and all that stuff. But I can tell he just hates it and he definitely is more tense and upset, and I haven't even put reins on it yet. I've just been lunging him with the bit with the lunge line attached to the nose band.

So again I've decided not to betray our trust and just continue using your bitless bridle(which he has never had a problem with) and forget about using the expert and just read up more on jumping and do it myself.

Thanks again for your product. I knew there just had to be a better way than shoving a piece of metal in a horse's mouth.

A letter published in 'British Dressage'

April 2007, p6.

BITLESS BRIDLES

I am writing to ask for the Bitless cross-over bridle to be allowed in British Dressage competitions. I am a 'grass roots' Class 7 rider who rides for a hobby.

I have used the bitless bridle on three horses now. They have all been much happier in the bridle than in any bit, and once they have got used to it their way of going is much more correct.

The bitless bridle has enabled me to concentrate on much more subtle and effective communication through my seat and leg, leading to a more harmonious, relaxed and correct way of going. This is surely what dressage is all about – working in harmony with the horse. I conclude that no matter how soft in the hand we ride, horses have a highly sensitive mouth and find a bit distracting at best and uncomfortable or painful at worst. The mouth and tongue have an enormous number of sensory nerve endings – any of us will recognize that a tiny sore in our mouth such as an ulcer causes great discomfort, or a small piece of food trapped between teeth is most irritating and drives us to remove it as a top priority.

The bitless bridle is very gentle in its action, it does not use poll pressure to put the horse 'on the bit' (or more accurately 'on the aids'). It is more difficult to fiddle a horse into a correct head carriage – on the contrary, if the horse is not working through from the hind legs properly it is more difficult to achieve the required outline. If anything the bitless gives less control over the horse's head position, meaning that the other more important aiding has to be correct. Once they are truly working through, all my horses take a very good rein contact in the bitless bridle as they work correctly over their backs and topline muscles.

It therefore seems to me that the bridle encourages better riding and happier horses. It is thus most disappointing that I am not allowed to compete in it. Even at unaffiliated events the rules follow BD's rules requiring a snaffle bit to be used. It seems a retrograde step to me to have to put a bit back in just for competitions and then try to work with the problems that the bit causes. The bridle is allowed in every other discipline – from showjumping to cross country events, when horses usually need bits with a stronger action to control them.

Dressage is about harmony of horse and rider, with the minimum of (visible) aiding. The bitless bridle helps horse and rider achieve this by reducing discomfort and sensory input to the horse through the mouth so that it can focus more on the other aids.

- Liz Hayden, Gloucester, UK

Linda, August 27, 2007:

Here is a picture of me and one of my clients at a Foxhunting Clinic this last Saturday at the Potomac Hunt Club. Please observe that both horses are wearing "Bitless Bridles" and both horses performed wonderful in a very large group of other horses as well as the "hounds". Most of the other riders were fascinated by the fact that we were riding "bitless" and our horses were so well behaved and relaxed. Thanks again for a wonderful product. Three more of my clients have converted to "bitless" and are loving the results.

Sara, August 26, 2007:

A few weeks ago I ordered my second Bitless Bridle, upgrading this time from nylon to Beta (the nylon one was lent to a friend who loved it so much I let her keep it!). I know you guys have received literally hundreds of letters saying what a wonderful bridle this is, but I believe in it so much that I wanted to drop you a note nonetheless. I would especially like to address the concern that many horse owners have about the BB not being "enough" to control particularly "hot" horses. As the owner of a quintessentially hot-headed, sensitive, wily Arabian mare who comes from a long line of racing blood, I can say with utmost confidence that the opposite is true. Scarlet, who was bitted up to her eyeballs by the amateur dressage rider I bought her from several years ago, never responded well to even the mildest bits; when she became tense under saddle, spooking and bolting, pressure from a bit drove her over the edge rather than bringing her back under control. Mechanical hackamores, sidepulls, and even a rope halter with a mecate rein produced a similar effect. Since I ride Scarlet almost exclusively out on the trails, you can imagine how dangerous it was becoming to have a horse that would spook and begin to bolt, then become more explosive as I took up contact.

The Bitless Bridle, however, has a pacifying rather than an escalating effect. The gentle pressure from the cross-under straps encourages her to bring her head down to a natural position rather than flinging her nose skyward, which in turn helps round her back and bring her into a more balanced, relaxed posture. I have found that light contact from the BB can de-escalate a spook on the trail in a matter of seconds, whereas if there were a bit in her mouth or a hackamore across her nose, it would be a mile-long wrestling match. As a result of replacing painful means of control with the BB, my "hot-headed" dressage reject is now a calm, soft, brave, careful and responsive trail horse, covering mile after mile with relaxed natural collection. Riding is always a pleasure and never a struggle now. I truly believe that this bridle is a long-awaited new frontier in horsemanship, in which pain-based coercion is replaced with forms of communication that speak in the horse's language.

I've attached a photo of Scarlet and I ready to head out on one of our daily trail rides. We used to only hack out rarely and with much trepidation, but now we happily head out into the woods together almost every evening. You'll notice that Scarlet also has sound, healthy, completely barefoot hooves, and wears a treeless saddle. I think these were natural progressions of the Bitless Bridle as a means of considering the horse's comfort first. I can't thank you enough for this wonderful bridle, and I look forward to many more miles with my trusty trail partner.

Taylor, August 14, 2007:

I just received your product, the bitless bridle 2 days ago and I've already seen a HUGE difference in my horse. Laredo is typically a laid back, easy-going horse. But when it came to landing on the incorrect lead after jumps, the pain came, he would pull so hard my arms felt like ripping out of my sockets. Another problem we HAD was stopping. In a bit, he would throw his head up, stop on his front end and kinda bounce to a stop. But now only 2 days of using the bitless bridle, Laredo gladly changes leads after jumps with no fuss at all. He stops with his head level, and he brings his hind end under him, stopping correctly. I've also seen an increase of control. With a bit, he would try to avoid it by pulling, or doing anything possible sometimes, and it was very hard to regain control since I am only a teenager. I feel a lot more confident in the work we do now. He responds immediately, and for some reason, he's always picking up the correct lead.

I can't thank you enough!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-vQBfGXYHI>

Here's a short video of my horse and I with the bitless for the 3rd time

Sue, August 19, 2007:

My two youngsters are both now ridden bitless and barefoot.

Sassy, my four year old Anglo Arab, has never been bitted and my instructor was sufficiently open minded to let us work bitless right from the start. All her lunging was done with her Dr Cook's.

I have just had my fiftieth birthday and I haven't ridden for four years, getting on a green four year old was a bit of a challenge, and probably not the best of all combinations! but I had no qualms about the bitless as I know she is settled and happy in it.

She never fidgets or throws her head about and while she still has a lot to learn, she isn't wasting any energy in being preoccupied by the bit. She is one lucky horse who will never have to suffer a bit.

My five year old Welsh Section C, Rose, has just been backed and was being ridden in a snaffle. My 17 year old cousin was having some trouble with Rose evading, yawning and taking hold of the bit. I had a Dr Cook's for her and it took a bit of a leap of faith for my cousin to try it, but she has now been converted to bitless as well! The results speak for themselves, a little mare who is now very much more settled, happier in herself, has stopped fidgeting her head and now has brakes. We now have two very happy horses and two calm riders!

Our instructor, who had never seen a Dr Cook's before has even recommended it to another owner whose young mare was unhappy with a bit of any sort, so we have one more convert!

Diana, August 14, 2007:

You had me correctly pegged - skeptic. Because of your money back guarantee I went ahead and ordered your synthetic bridle.

Everything you claimed is true. Much to my surprise I use the bitless bridle identically to the bitted bridle with the same great results - only there is no metal in my horses mouth. Additionally, she foams at the mouth just like when she is "on the bit."

Because she is an upper level dressage horse it was hard for me to visualize how the bridle would work for half halts, flexion (lateral and longitudinal) and fine-tuned

communications. It works exactly the same!

I am a convert and am sharing my discovery with other who care. I also have foregone shoes and am using boots on my horses feet. I am delighted that technology and kindness are finally making its appearance in the horse world.

Thank you for the information on your website and your guarantee that helped get me past my reluctance.

Julie, August 07, 2007:

I am writing to tell you that I finally have begun to use the Bitless Bridle I had written you a while back to purchase one of your bridles. I will tell you that from the moment I put it on I have never looked back it is absolutely awesome. My horse is a very strong willed Haflinger-Hackney cross, built like a tank - a real character. I had trained him with a sidepull as I did not want to use a bit. We tried a bit once but he would have no part of it and then had read about your bridle He goes along beautifully and I am sure he would thank you in person if he could but I will do that here on his behalf. Thank you for taking the time to research and develop this wonderful kind bridle, which helps us to maintain the dignity of those horses in our care.

DeAnn, August 05, 2007:

Thank you for your response to my testimonial. I am honored you took the time to write to me. I meant every word I said and am happy to report we are having more success daily. The BB has a cumulative effect on both horse and rider: each day in the BB builds on the trust, suppleness, willingness and happiness of the day before. Every day we ride I find myself saying, "I can't believe this. The BB is a miracle!"

It's hard to believe such a 'small' change can make such a huge difference!

Not only have we ditched the bit, we've chunked the spurs, too. We just don't need them anymore. With the BB our horse responds easily to light leg aids -- and I know why. Since there is no bit distracting him with fear and pain, he can finally "hear" leg aids. He actually seems to want to do what we ask. And without the iron in his mouth and at his side, his fear is abating in every area.

When I watch my daughter ride, I can see how soft and open Shiggy's eyes are. Where he used to be curious-spooky he is now curious-confident. He used to spy "monsters" around every corner and react with a sudden spooked-out, leg splayed sidehop, his eyes rolling, head high, neck craning to get away; however, he now approaches unfamiliar objects with ears forward, head down, neck nicely flexed and eyes open and soft, stepping forward confidently to sniff the new object.

It's as if his bolting reflex is being realigned, as if he is becoming under saddle the natural horse he is at pasture. I've noticed that horses at pasture rarely bolt; they usually approach unfamiliar things curiously, and only flee when necessary. Our horse now keeps this natural at-pasture attitude and approach to the world when we're out on trails or on busy roads (where cars travel at 55+ MPH). He may blink and tighten up a little when a particularly rattling or loud vehicle comes up behind him, but all it takes is a little BB "whole-head-hug" via slight rein tension and he relaxes quickly and easily -- and he never tries to bolt anymore.

I am working to spread the word to every horse owner I know (so far only one of my friends has purchased your BB), but I'm finding their trainers often get in the way. A horse owner may say, "Oh that sounds great, I'll ask my trainer about it." And then the trainer pooh-

poohs the idea without even considering the scientific evidence you have presented in your website.

Human resistance to change is frustrating. Most trainers are quite content with and defensive about their traditional practices and seem to think there cannot be a better way.

"Oh, that's great for you," they say," but I don't need a bitless bridle. I get the results I want with the bits I've always used."

"I have very light hands and I don't hurt my horses..."

"This is the way we've always done it..."

"It's OK to use a bitless on trails or for schooling riders, but it's not for serious riders."

"They have to get used to bits if they're going to compete..."

The latter seems to be the strongest objection.

Some trainers refuse to believe that all bits in even the best hands will cause pain and fear. If a horse has a problem with a bit, it must be the rider's hands or the teeth need floating or maybe they just need a different bit. Maybe trainers are afraid their clients won't need them anymore if they encourage using a bitless bridle that solves so many behavior problems. Do trainers need problem horses to stay in business?

I read with mounting frustration your correspondence with Michael Stone, but I was not surprised at his irrational responses. Historically, the hidebound powers-that-be have always rejected any scientific and humane advancement in favor of tradition. I consider you to be in great company, Dr. Cook. And I do not believe Stone's "testers" or members of his committee have given the BB a good honest proper try.

Where reason and humanity fail, the market and popular opinion will eventually succeed. Someday the bit will be dropped from common use, but in the meantime, I want to do my part to help fight it. However, I'm finding that going bitless can be lonely. I live in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area and have not yet found other BB users in my area (my friend who bought the BB is in CA). This is a radical philosophical change for many of us and we need support from each other in order to face off against the traditionalists. Would you consider offering a networking or chat area from your website that would allow BB users to connect and possibly organize? Imagine the power that could be generated by a coalition of like-minded "women on horses"! Perhaps such an organization already exists and I have not found it. Do you have any suggestions or can you point me in the right direction?

I'm also interested in becoming a BB representative. I no longer train horses professionally. I am now a freelance writer and editor, and have also done quite a bit of PR and marketing. I've been brainstorming about ways to challenge reluctant trainers to try the Bitless according to your directions for a specified amount of time.

I'm shaking my head and fighting the bit -- just like some of the horses I used to train! It breaks my heart to realize I was causing them pain and fear. I thought they just needed consistent training to accept and submit to the bit. Those ideas make me sick now. Maybe that's why I want so much to be part of helping to create change.

Thank you again for your wonderful message to me. I appreciate all your work and want to do whatever I can to further your mission -- it's my mission too.

Joan, August 05, 2007:

I just wanted to tell you that I ordered 2 bitless bridles a month ago for my 15 year old thoroughbred and 23 year old Morgan. Without any "trial" I put it on and went for a trail ride. I have ridden both horses 6-8 times and they have been wonderful. No more chewing on

the bit or fighting to get the bit in the mouth. What made me decide to get the bitless bridle was that I rode the thoroughbred for 1 1/2 hours and then realized that I never put the bit in her mouth, it was just hanging under her chin and I didn't know it. She turned and stopped as usual. When I saw that, I knew that she could go bitless. Thank you for your great invention!!!!

Susan, August 3, 2007:

Remember me??? I bought a bunch of the Beta bridles not too long ago. I love them, and more important, my horses love them! People that I meet continue to be amazed that I use the Bitless for all of my riding lessons. They simply cannot get past the thought of not having a bit in a horses' mouth....how do you control the horse? It has to be a fully trained, quiet horse, right? Nope....all of them go better, quieter and safer with the Bitless! I do have fun!

I do have the problem of three of my students whom own their own horses. All three of the horses go beautifully in the Bitless, but all three are showing and cannot go in the show ring without a bit. Therefore, they have to train with a bit as well so the poor horses won't come unglued when we put the nasty metal back in their mouths!

Has there been any positive action towards letting the Bitless Bridle be accepted in the show society? It's so difficult to move a dinosaur!

You may certainly add my comments....use me as a reference if that occasion ever comes up! I'd be glad to talk to others!

Susan Deakin
Hidden Farm
625 McFall Road
Apalachin, NY 13732
607-625-5145
sdeakin@stny.rr.com

Marcia, August 01, 2007:

I do want to thank you and Dr. Cook for a wonderful product! I do very well with my horses on a mild snaffle, but I really like not having a bit in their mouth when someone else is riding them. There really seems to be a better control with the bitless bridle and no interference with the mouth.

I have loaned the one I have now to my friend who rides endurance on a 21 year old Arab who has been pulling her arms out of the sockets for years. No more head tossing or arm jerking, my friend is in heaven! Two of this order are for her.

Are you a rider? If so, happy trails to you also!

Donna, August 1, 2007:

I love the article about the "new" breed of bridle in the August 2007 edition of THE HORSE magazine... My trainer (we're all primarily dressage students) introduced all her students to it (after her trainer introduced her to it) in September of 2003.

All of us who use it, don't even think about the bitless anymore aside from the fact that

we don't have to be concerned about a bit in our horses mouth. I can say unequivocally that this/your aid is wonderful.

My only worry is that when the bridle starts to wear out (the holes in the noseband seem to *just* be starting to stretch out a *tiny* bit) that I won't be able to find your product anymore. As I feel that the bitless I got at the end of 2003 probably will last at least another 3 years if not longer, I hope my concern is unfounded.

I can only imagine the number of e-mails you've gotten from your fans about this article. What a hoot!

DeAnn, July 26, 2007:

I was hoping that Dr. Cook's bitless bridle would live up to all the hype, but it didn't. It surpassed it.

I've been using the Bitless for almost 3 weeks now, and every day in it my 6 year old Arabian gelding becomes a better horse. He is advancing faster in his training and has a better attitude, better collection, greater confidence and he keeps giving and giving. He has way more potential than we ever thought he had!

I can trust my horse now — and he can trust me.

Yesterday he did a perfect half-pass with no tail swishing or bit chomping for the first time ever. His attitude in the arena is improving daily and the more comfortable he becomes, the more we are able to improve his collection and suppleness. He is working more "on the bit" in the Bitless than he ever did in his snaffle. I can't believe how easy it is for him to flex at the poll and stay collected without a bit, and he does it with a gorgeous ears-forward-no-tail-swishing headset. He doesn't bore or tire like he used to and keeps rising to every challenge we set him.

I always believed the copper-mouth eggbutt snaffle was the gentlest bit. I believed that in the right hands it could never be cruel. Now I know I was wrong. No matter how light the rider's hands, no matter how "gentle" the bit, the horse will always be fearful of and anticipating pain.

To parrot many other Bitless owners, "I will never, ever put any bit in any horse's mouth again! Never, ever again."

I am very protective of my horses' and children's safety, but now I let kids and horses interact more freely. My teenage daughter rides this same spirited Arabian out bareback on wooded trails and busy roads and he never spooks or acts up anymore. He is becoming so dependable and mellow, I even put my nine year old stepson (who has never ridden any horse alone before) on this same 6 yr old Arab yesterday in an unfenced area and let him ride and "steer" alone! I would never have done that in a snaffle bridle because I have always been so protective of my horses' mouths and also because I couldn't trust a young lively animal with such a green rider.

Of course, I will never become reckless with kids and horses because as we all know accidents can happen, but I just wanted to illustrate the truth of Dr. Cook's slogan, "You have a better horse than you think you do."

Having training horses and riders for over 25 years, I've been in danger of getting a little jaded and worn out. Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle has brought back the pure joy and love of horses and riding I haven't experienced since I was a girl.

I have much more to say about this bridle on other horses, but this email is already too long. I will write more another time.

A Very Happy Horse Trainer in Stillwater, MN who is busy spreading the word!
P.S. My Arabian gelding "Shiggaion" (aka., "Shiggy") sends his thanks to Dr. Cook!

Linda, July 22, 2007:

I just wanted to share some comments on the bitless bridle. I train young horses and work to correct problems in older horses.

I train ponies on up to Drafts and cover most all disciplines both English, Western and Driving. I started using the "bitless bridle" about a month ago and use it on ALL of my client's horse's. Out of all the equipment I have this is by far the best piece of equipment in my training arsenal. I have used it on young horses up to a 22 year old Thoroughbred and have had no transition issues from the bit to bitless. Quite the contrary, the horses have responded beautifully especially the "off track" Thoroughbred's that I work with. I have had to do a little convincing to the "diehard's" that insist that their horse will not work without a bit and when they see the improvement they are amazed. Almost all of my clients have now converted to bitless and couldn't be happier with the results.

I will continue to urge future clients and friends to switch to this wonderful product for the betterment of their equine partners

Cheryl, July 22, 2007:

Thank you for the pony bitless bridle, it fits my pony perfectly and he really likes it. I usually ride in rope halters, so the horses I use the bitless on seem to take to it immediately with no re-training or adjustment period needed. I just wanted to shoot you an email to tell you I appreciate your promptness with my order and the quality of your product! Thanks!

Alison, July 05, 2007:

I have a 20 yr old thoroughbred mare that has always gone along willingly in an ordinary snaffle bit. She would do alot of head tossing especially on the way home from a trail ride. That has stopped since I changed her over to the bitless bridle. She was never hard to bridle, but now she jams her nose into the headstall trying to put it on by herself! What I really appreciate is the easy conversion to a halter -- that is *really* convenient.

I tell everyone about the Bitless Bridle. They can't believe I'm riding a thoroughbred without a bit. It's the best thing I could have done for my mare. Thank you for a truly great product.

Karleen, July 03, 2007:

Last year I bought a six year old Saddlebred show horse, with the idea of training her to be a trail horse. She was very nervous, afraid of everything and resistant to change. She even bucked me off the first time I brought her into a field!

This spring Cathie Hatrick-Anderson introduced my mare to Dr. Cook's bitless bridle. After a few lessons with Cathie, my horse became relaxed, supple and cooperative. We had our first trail ride Friday. She was confident and responsive! I cannot say enough good things about the bitless bridle and Cathie's method of training. I am looking forward to a great summer of riding!

Teri, June 26, 2007:

My horse was abused before I got her and she was terrified of the bit. I tried the bitless bridle and loved it. She was a different horse. She actually enjoyed the ride and so did I. Thank you.

SueEllen, June 23, 2007:

Thank you for a wonderful product! I have been riding for 45 years, am a certified Horsemaster and have trained many horses (one to Prix St. Georg Level). Three years ago I rescued a National award-winning 2nd Level horse who had gone sour, stiff and sore-backed. When I had him vetted, the vet pointed out to me that his tongue had been cut half-way through and that it had healed leaving quite a scar. It took a LONG lay-off and lots of complementary medicine to bring this horse back from pain and despair. He had literally given up and decided that people were something to be endured. I spent countless hours with him doing hands-on healing techniques, ground-work in a round pen with no tack, and took him back to basic baby work under saddle. He made steady progress back to a healthy state of mind and body, but he was never happy with a bridle, though he accepted it. He just wouldn't go forward and carry himself even on a loose rein. When I came across your bridle, I had to try it!

He is a truly happy horse now! He is willing to go forward now without being pushed. I have always ridden with my weight as my primary aid and find that your bitless bridle takes the horse's focus off of what is happening in his mouth and puts it on my seat and legs where it belongs. He is so focused on my aids now that I can do shoulder-in, even pirouette at the walk much more easily than I ever felt using even the gentlest bits on the market.

Dressage was a martial art and this bridle makes me feel that I could actually ride into battle and use a weapon with my hand(s) because my horse and I are truly together in harmony now. We are learning to do more each day. I will keep you posted on our progress.

Nelya, June 21, 2007:

Your Bitless Bridle not only releases horses from awful pain, but also helps people realize how horses are so high-souled. People are surprised when they see a horse ridden in a bitted bridle trying to buck his rider off, yet this same horse without a bit doesn't even try to get rid of its rider, but just performs as asked.

John, June 18, 2007:

I received my Western BB and reins about a week ago, and I'm very happy with the quality of the product. Trooper, my 5yo QH gelding didn't really have any problems with a bit, but I feel going bitless must be more pleasant for him than having a chunk of metal in his mouth. I've only been riding for a couple of years, and just had my first horse since February this year, but I was able to transition him into bitless and confidently take him out solo on the Warburton Trail on the first day. Since then he's been able to do everything a bitted horse can do in and out of the arena, and there doesn't seem to be any lack of control.

It's great watching the second glances you get from other riders when they notice the missing bit, and it's even more fun when they admit they were initially sceptical but are slowly becoming

converted to BB believers.

I'm even able to take him out of a canter when he's trying to keep up with a bunch of other riders, with the same amount of effort it would have taken with a bit.

I can't see any reason why I would ever return to a bit again. Thanks for the wonderful product and service.

Catherine, June 18, 2007:

I just wanted to write to say thank you. Your customer service is amazing and the bridle is incredible. We used it for the first time this weekend and my horse, Dusty, was soooo happy with it. She instinctively understood what I wanted her to do even though she has never had a bridle like this before. The only time we had any problems was when I tried to steer her back home, she didn't want to go because she was enjoying our outing so much. Normally, she can't wait to get home to get her gear off, but she was so happy, she wanted to stay out and ride longer. It was wonderful. I have been trying to find a solution that would make her enjoy riding more, and I think I have found it with your bitless bridle. Thank you so much for everything. You can use all of this on your website to advertise the bridle if you want. If there is somewhere else you would like me to post to promote you, let me know.

Joseph, June 13, 2007:

I purchased my first Bitless Bridle some years back (maybe 3 or 4) and I absolutely love it -- as does the horse I bought it for! And, so too do other horses on whom I've used subsequent purchases. My best story of success, however, concerns an older gelding named "Dusty".

Dusty slipped on some mud one day and, while he was down, was kicked in the mouth by another horse. The kick broke one of Dusty's front teeth. Needless to say, Dusty wasn't at all receptive to a bit in his mouth following that injury; or for quite some time afterward. Thankfully, though, I had just purchased a couple of spare Bitless Bridles that I had stashed in my car. With the Bitless worn outside of the head, no pressure was placed anywhere near Dusty's injury and we had no trouble riding him as his gum healed. While that "save" was quite an impressive win for the Bitless, it's not the best part of this story.....

Once Dusty's injury healed, his owner insisted on reestablishing a bit in Dusty's mouth. This was so that Dusty's various riders could feel they had the "control" they thought they needed. [Bitless is a hard-sell to some people!] While I went along with the change, Dusty was never really pleased about the decision. He could be quite stubborn in general, day-to-day dealings, but as regards the bit, Dusty quickly established his reputation as a head-tosser whenever anyone tried to insert it. For the next year-and-a-half or so, that is how things went along.

Then, one day I decided to use Dusty as the lead-horse for my trail-ride group. No way did I want to use the bit to ride him. Why? Because I thought he just didn't need it. And, because I thought the Bitless the better choice.

As I stood next to Dusty, stretching open the Bitless straps, readying the bridle for his head, the most remarkable thing happened -- Dusty actually turned his face in toward me and the bridle and was 100% accepting of my placing it over his head! Here now was a horse who ALWAYS and CONSTANTLY tossed his head in protest of a bit, actually saying to me "put that thing on me!" After a year-and-a-half of not seeing it, Dusty remembered the

Bitless Bridle and, in his horse language, was telling me he liked it and wanted it! What an absolutely astounding moment and feeling that was for me! And what a super validation of the Bitless Bridle's effect on a horse! Wow!

Fortunately for us both, other people witnessed this event and were as astonished by it as I was and I am happy to report that Dusty is still wearing that Bitless Bridle for anyone and everyone who rides him. And... he turns his head in toward it each time he's asked to wear it! Great work folks!

P.S. I have trouble referring to my use of the Bitless as "bridling". Instead, I say to my horse, "Ok. Let's put your 'face' on!" It's my own little quirky way of making the Bitless special!

Petur, June 11, 2007:

The best thing I ever put on a horses head. I have a horse that has been running around half mad for over 3 years but with your bridle is calm and very controlable and jet willing to run if I ask him. So thank you very much for the bridle.

Jennnifer, June 09, 2007:

Today I rode my 23 year old retired thoroughbred jumper in the bitless bridle for the second time. I can not tell you what a joy he has turned into! Boy, I thought I had a great horse before! He has always been a bit of a challenge under saddle. He tossed his head, held it sideways, was more up and down than forward and just never relaxed. The first day I used the bitless bridle I felt a completely different horse beneath me. He started his usual holding his head to the side thing. Then he looked confused and put it back straight. I could see the wheels in his head turning. He tried it again, and again, no pain. One last time convinced him something was different. And he liked this change. A big sigh went through him and he relaxed completely for the first time under saddle. A friend that was riding with me just stared at him with her mouth open and said he was a completely different horse. I rode him today for my mother who has always been into horses with me. She noticed a change right away. I offered to let her try him. She has ridden him before but was a little hesitant because he didn't have a bit in his mouth. I assured her it would be fine. So she got on and was very impressed. She couldn't get over how responsive he now is, how little it takes to stop him and his whole attitude. I don't know where in history it became written that a horse HAS to have a bit in his mouth to control him. What rubbish! My horse is walking proof of that! And not only have I noticed a change under saddle. He is quieter walking to and from the arena with bridle on. He doesn't dance and misbehave anymore. And tacking him up used to be a exercise in dodging teeth, hooves, snaking head and pinned ears! But today, I tacked him up for the first time ever without wondering "Hmmm....will my insurance cover a bitten off finger?". Yep, he stood like a dream and seemed to be really eager to be ridden. I wish I had known about this product a long time ago! I won't ever ride him in anything else again. You have made him and me so very happy. Thank you for a wonderful product and showing me that the horse of my dreams is even better than I could ever have imagined.

Rose, June 03, 2007:

I purchased your bitless bridle back in Jan/Feb of 2007. I live in West Chicago. I didn't

get a chance to use it for about 6-8 weeks after I received it because of our weather. I thought it might not work for my horse and I'd be stuck with it. The first time I tried it on my horse I couldn't believe how well it worked. I could tell right away that my horse was happier & I had better control & we had taken a new step forward in our trust. I have been riding in your bridle now for 6 weeks and each time our ride is more and more enjoyable. I had actually sent an e-mail off to you after the first time I used the bridle to let you know how wonderful I think it is- I thought maybe it was a fluke. I told you guys I would write again to let you know our progress. Well... your bitless bridle is the best thing since sliced bread!!! Thank you so much for creating this wonderful bridle! Thank you! One very satisfied customer.

Suzanne, May 31, 2007:

I purchased one of your bridles in December of last year, and have now had a few months to evaluate the bridle. It has definitely been a life saving experience for both me and my horse. This piece of equipment was (and is) the beginning of a beautiful transformation of my horse. I would be more than happy to complete one of Dr. Cook's questionnaire's if you could sent it to me. I am always telling my friends about the bitless bridle and they are all so skeptical. They are truly amazed when they see how responsive and soft my horse is becoming. It just gets better everyday. Thank you so much for giving me my horse back.

Theresa, May 23, 2007:

Not that you need another testimonial, but...I am even converting the ppl I ride with. My 5 yr old QH was broke w/ a halter & bareback. I rode that way for a yr. I was going to start training with my Endurance friend and she told me I needed to have a good whoa before I came. I was saddened, until she sent me your website and offered to loan/sell me an extra she had in the barn.

It was wonderful; I had much more control, but didn't cause pain. I retired that bridle to my 25 yr old Morab and he behaves better now than he ever has. I bought a chestnut Beta for my QH and then realized it doesn't look that great on a chestnut horse. NO Problem, I've made a new horse friend, who like me, trained her horse in a halter and wants to stay out of his mouth. He is a Paso Fino. All his brothers and sisters are high strung and spooky but they are in bits. He is calm and laid back.

Unfortunately the local show group, Mason County Saddle Club requires a bit for showing :o(but on all the trail rides he is happy as a clam.

I have another friend who just emailed me today about how I like mine, she was thinking of purchasing... I said Go For It! I let people borrow my bridles all the time so they can see for themselves how wonderful it is. A happy horse makes for a safe ride. If I have my way, most of Northwest Lower Michigan will convert to bitless. I will be buying my third one next payday. Thank you so much for a perfect product.

Jerome, May 22, 2007:

I wanted to let you know that I showed Breezey in her new bitless bridle and we won 3 classes and placed in the other 7 we competed in. You can't imagine how pleased I am with this bridle. Thank you so very much!

Leiana, May 18, 2007:

We're pretty happy with the bitless bridle, my old boy is always eager to go whenever he sees me coming with the bridle, and drops his head to let me put it on. He's silly though because he sometimes tries to open his mouth and take a non-existent bit or one of the crossunder straps in his mouth. Considering his dental problems, anything that helps me be able to ride him, and for him to enjoy our riding gets an A+ from me. He's a happy 30 year old, and still loves to get out and go.

Carole, May 17, 2007:

After reading the info on your website, the bridle sounded almost too good to be true, I looked at the user comments and figured that many people must be on to something. I ordered one for my OTTB. Bug has been a project, head tossing, nose diving. Huge change with our first ride, we both love it. The big surprise was with my son's quarter horse gelding. Nugget is a very well trained well-behaved child's horse. Always does what he's asked to. He's never seemed very happy though in the 8 months that we've owned him. He doesn't like arena work and it takes a lot of leg to keep him moving. On the trail he pokes along. I tried the bridle on him yesterday and he perked right up, he was happy to move out and even volunteered a trot. That is not something he ever does. I just placed my order for his own bridle. I never would have thought such a change was possible. Thank you so much.

Traci, May 14, 2007:

I wrote to you a few years back to tell you how impressed I was with the bitless bridle and what a difference it made in my mustang gelding Shiloh. Well I am writing this time to tell you I have purchased my second bitless bridle to use on my new addition, a three year old POA mare. This little mare had been started in a bit before I bought her so when I took her out the first time I placed a bit in her mouth. She jigged, was high headed and was not relaxed at all. I put off riding her again until I could order and receive a bitless bridle for her. When the bitless arrived I spent about ten minutes on the ground with her doing some bending and flexing and then put the bitless bridle on her and climbed on...she took to it like she had never been ridden in anything else. She had a nice low head set, was bending and flexing in her neck, and walked off nice and easy. She stopped with just a shift in seat and a slight pick up on the reins, and backed like a pro. I just wanted to share my second experience with your product and to again thank you for giving horses and owners a tool that doesn't cause pain and takes all the problems out of riding and training. Why anyone would ride with a bit is beyond me, its barbaric and so not needed. I hope my comment added to the hundreds of other user comments will help convince even one person to give it a try. Thank you again from me and my horse!!!!!!

Deeann, May 07, 2007:

Just wanted to let you know how much I like this new bridle. I just received it last week and from the 1st day it has been wonderful!

I have a Percheron-Friesian cross and the draft size fit him perfectly. I had been using a hackamore, which was working but was cumbersome. My horse is responding very well with

this bridle much better than the hackamore. I will be ordering this for my other horse.
Thank you for coming up with this great invention.

Tanya, May 02, 2007:

The horse featured in the pictures [see the online customer photo gallery] is "Steven James," a South African Thoroughbred, whose story is a genuine 'rags to riches' fairytale with all the ingredients of a best seller: drama, suspense, a meteoric rise to fame, hundreds of fans – and the character to match all of this!

He reached the very top of the grades in SA show jumping with a brilliant young rider on his back – Karen van der Burgh. Amongst his numerous accomplishments he is the only horse to date in South Africa to hold both Junior and Adult SA show jumping titles. He was the 2000 SA winner of the FEI World Cup qualifying series, 2002 Adult show jumping champion of SA and twice horse of the year.

Although he no longer competes in graded events your bitless bridle has given us the opportunity to demonstrate that harmony and communication between horse and rider is not dependent on a bit or any other artificial aid. He is very forward moving with incredible power and strength. He was previously competed in a Portuguese gag with flash and running martingale. Jumping him in your bitless bridle has been a fantastic experience for both myself, Steven James and for the people who have seen us in action. Although it is easier to jump a horse [that] already has great rhythm and striding in a bitless, he is by no means an easy ride! He has responded to the bridle extremely well and his rounds feel more relaxed and his head much steadier. The feed back from the people who know him has been excellent and the show was a very emotional event, as this exceptional horse went around the course in beautiful style in a bitless bridle.

Jill, April 23, 2007:

I used my friends bitless bridles on both of my horses at first they did not know how it worked but afterwhile it was the best ride I have had for years on any of my horses past and present they actually had a smile on their mouths after two rides I am going to buy one I love it and will never go back to a bit ever.

Pablo, April 23, 2007:

04-16- 2007 saw the ad on Practical Horseman. For the first time of my life. (got very interesting)

04-17-2007 order two bitless bridles (the very top of the line English Leather Headstall (padded)) I think I really believe in you.

04-19-2007 e-mail you regarding my order, Carole answer... It is already deliver

04-21-2007 the new bridle arrive to my country (Colombia South America)

04-22-2007 I try them on the Horses:

Guatapury: (Jumper) Very strong 4 year old (Very Big warm blood stallion) mounted for the first time mid January 2007:

He really love the bridle I could say that we advance in our flat work 5 months in 30 minutes. Now he is super soft and using all the power into the jump, not against my hand... all that happen in 30 minute. I know it sounds pretentious... please believe me.

Dictador: (Jumper) Super natural Grand Prix jumper 10 year old (Warm blood). Super soft and super sensitive. We had show on Saturday so we only had a walk with the new bridle on Sunday... tell you more in a few days.

PS. I didn't have problems with my Horses I only try the bridle because the compassion and thankful that I am with my Horses. Ja ja Ja please excuse my English...

Cheryl, April 23, 2007:

I volunteer for a horse rescue and within one week I had two horses that the bitless bridle really helped with.

One horse is an awful cribber. Believe it or not he would try and crib on the bit. He is a Standardbred gelding who took to saddle so easily after coming off the track. He was wonderful except he would play with the bit something awful. We usually just use a D-ring snaffle. On the trail, it sounded like he was burping and no matter what we did he would get his tongue over the bit. So after some frustrations I wanted to try a bitless on him. It worked wonderfully!! He was awesome and even helped me herd a horse in that had gotten out!

The next one is also a Standardbred gelding that is off the track. He had a different problem. He was just all over the place. He is also a high-headed horse. We tried a few different bridles on him and bits and we just couldn't get a good fit for him and his head. He has a tiny head compared to some of the others. So after dancing around and not having a good stop with him at all I tried the bitless. Much better in one walk. His head dropped down, he was more responsive and finally he had a good whoa.

We just got a Belgian draft in who needed a heavier hand with the bit. I want to try the bitless on her too I just have to see if I can borrow a friend's draft bitless. I will let you know how it goes.

Thanks for such a wonderful product. As our horses get adopted we always offer them the website here and tell them to order the bitless for them. They really do work.

Terri, April 18, 2007:

I trialed the BB bridle today with my Walker mare, Corazon. WOW! She thought the chin tightness was weird...but I made sure I could get one finger underneath. Once she got used to that, we had a great ride. Serpentine, Circles, different gaits, sidepass, haunch turns etc. She spooked just a bit and was quickly calmed down again. All in all, despite 50 mile per hour winds, we did great! I look forward to our next rides this weekend. But so far so good!

Thank you for such a wonderful idea!

Jennifer, April 17, 2007:

I purchased my Bitless Bridle a year ago, and it has truly been the best tack purchase I ever made! Last night I went for a trail ride at sunset, BAREBACK, and never felt like we were out of control or that a battle was brewing. I would not have tried it two years ago! Thank you for making all the difference in the world for me and my horse!

Jennifer, April 13, 2007:

All I can say is "WOW!!!" I received my new beta bridle yesterday and couldn't wait to

try it out on my 9 year old Tennessee Walker. I've ridden her in a mechanical hackamore and a full cheek snaffle bit. She really hates the bit and the mechanical hack is too severe.

I read thru the booklet on how to fit it on a horse and went out to the pasture to try it on. It was getting late and was going to be dark soon so I didn't have time to saddle her up. After I fitted the bridle (which was very easy to do) I decided to just ride her bareback in the pasture for a few minutes. So I did and she responded beautifully to this bridle. Turns and stops were great. My little 10 month old filly was running around us being silly and there were a couple of times I thought Rosie would try to bite at her or take off or something, but thru this bridle I had nice control of her.

I can't wait to try it out on a longer ride outside of my pasture. What a great product!

Brent, April 09, 2007:

Here is my report on the bridle. Horse: Rocky, 7 y/o gelding, Quarter Horse/Arabian cross.

General:

The bridle feels and functions as if it were a snaffle. The horse should adjust to the lighter aid quickly. For a heavier aid, the bridle does put pressure on the poll. For horses that need extra aid at the head, I recommend a close-clipped bridle path. Teaching your horse the one-rein stop is recommended for emergency situations.

Hunter Jumper Use:

I use the brown western style version, as it is less expensive than the English version. For English equitation, a patient application of rein aids will teach the horse to go "on the bit." The movement and position of the hands is the same as with a snaffle bit.

The bridle is superior to a snaffle for approaching fences as the design closes the horse on both sides from the corner of the mouth to the occipital orbit making "ducking out" less likely. It is superior going over fences because it is not possible to catch the horse's mouth with the bit. Not having to worry about this eases rider tension and therefore equine tension at the jump. This relaxed state of mind increases the prospect of hitting the gap and releasing correctly.

One change is necessary if switching from a snaffle. It is taught that one should give some outside rein if necessary after a jump to keep the horse at pace and collected. With the bitless bridle, inside rein with lighter outside rein to keep the horse from turning-in should be used.

Doma Vaquera Use (Traditional Spanish Equitation for Cattle Work):

I use the black western version as black is required for all Doma Vaquera tack. Black hardware is also required, so one must paint the buckles flat black and remove the conchos. The last two feet of the reins are to be stitched together and tied in a sausage knot.

The bridle works in the normal way at the walk, trot, canter, and gallop. Advanced Doma Vaquera equitation requires lateral work – turn on the haunches, turn on the forehand, half-pass, full pass, rollback, and spin. For half pass "inside leg to outside rein" is taught. However, for schooling with the bitless bridle, change the aid to "inside rein to inside leg." For schooling turns on the haunches and forehand, full-pass, rollback, and spin, also use more inside rein with good outside rein contact, adding emphasis to the seat aids. Doma also requires a fast

stop (not a sliding stop). The only change here is to add emphasis to the seat aid.

In competition the reins may be held in the left hand only. At this point thorough schooling and maintaining good contact on both sides with excellent seat aids is required.

Trail Patrol Use:

I use the black synthetic version for National Park Service Patrol because it is washable and tough. I recommend adding scissor-snaps to the reins. Attaching the lead rope as recommended in the literature works very well. Otherwise all of the recommendations above apply, as needed.

Francesca, April 4, 2007:

Eighteen months ago I bought a 7 year old thoroughbred gelding who was announced to be a confirmed bolter. This was the only reason I bought him as it meant he was very affordable as he was being sold for meat money - £400. I really wasn't in the market for a new horse but I'd met this chap a few months before his behavioral demise and had felt something...

When the dealer's lorry turned up at our yard I half expected to see some half-crazed beast, foaming and plunging its way down the ramp – but not a bit of it. Rushie, (for so he was called) walked calmly and happily towards us in a friendly, curious attitude and I knew immediately that this was a 'good sort'. He looked well kept with a shiny coat and pulled mane but there was a puniness about him – as if he lacked substance. We turned him away with his 4 new field companions and watched as he made a place for himself in the 'herd.' I couldn't get near him for the next 3 weeks though I tried every day. Friendly though he was he was more terrified of what may happen if he re-entered the world of two-leggers. I had determined to wait for him to overcome his fear and come to me but my impatience eventually won and we herded him in with all the others. Once in his stable I plied him with carrots & apples and put a lightweight field-safe head collar on him.

Those first few months with 2Sox, (his new name) were very challenging, (and rather expensive in carrots & apples!) - 3 steps forward, 2 back - but I won't go into the whole story here, (I'm in the process of writing a book about my journey with 2Sox, and boy how slow is that process!). It was 9 months before I felt he was ready for me to sit on him and our first steps, and later outings were done bareback in a Parelli rope halter. Later we added a treeless saddle, a bosal and a pair of Old Mac's for his front feet – one very happy horse & rider! Then I heard about your bridle and it felt like the most natural next step. I ordered one a month or so ago and we love it. There is nothing we would not do and no place we would not go in your bridle. Three girls from our yard have now tried my western style Dr Cook and they are all on the point of ordering one for themselves.

Sgt. Amanda Young, March 23, 2007:

I found an ad for a horse trainer last June in the Want Ad I stole from my dad to look at the horses. Just as my father was wrestling it way from me so he could look at trucks I ripped out the page that caught my eye. God's honest truth I have the ad in front of me right now. It says, "Horse Trainer. Specializing in starting colts & problem horses." The lines that caught my attention were, "I won't break your horse. I'll gentle him." I thought about it for a day or so and I placed my first call to Cathie Hatrick-Anderson.

I told Cathie I had a horse that everyone had given up on. No one wanted to ride him because he was scary; He was dangerous and unpredictable. His biggest thing was running into fences. He would just get scared and run. You could try to turn him and even with his nose to your knee this horse would just run full speed into the fence. This horse is Taco.

Taco came to the Massachusetts Army National Guard in November 2005. He is the safest and sweetest horse on the ground. It's when you got on his back you flipped a switch. He was a six-year-old quarter horse with a face you could read like a book and you could watch his personality fade away when someone got on his back. I couldn't figure out how a horse with such a big heart could change so much just from my feet being in stirrups instead of on the ground.

I was sure Cathie would tell me there was no hope and I would have to give in and concur with everyone else's recommendation to retire Taco from the National Guard. She told me just the opposite; for the first time there was hope again. Cathie came out and worked with us for a few hours the first day. We did all groundwork using a rope halter and bringing him right back to basics. Cathie taught me the basic concepts and left us a lot of homework and we started studying. I had invited the Officer in Charge to come out and watch or at least hear what Cathie had to say about Taco and the initial review was promising. Unfortunately I had to go away for a few weeks due to work but we didn't lose our focus. Taco seemed to pick right back up where we left off.

It was about a month or maybe six weeks later when Cathie came back out. During the large break Taco and I became masters of the skills we needed to polish up on from our previous session and I had procured a substantial amount of financial backing to see Taco through training. The training sessions were scheduled weekly. We continued groundwork and introduced Taco to the bitless bridle. After a few sessions ground driving with the bitless bridle Cathie rode Taco. For the first time since I have known him he was calm as could be. The nerves weren't there. His focus was on Cathie and not on getting rid of her. It was refreshing. I got on too and Taco did the same with me. When I un-tacked him he hadn't even broke a sweat like he used to just because of the nerves. We continued to build on basics until Taco was injured putting him out of the game for about a month.

I took advantage of the opportunity to have Cathie get Lacy, the Shire-Thoroughbred I ride, going in Dr. Cook's bitless bridle. She tends to get heavy on my hands but working her in the bitless bridle softens her up again and she seems less distracted by her mouth. It is easy to get her round and moving forward in the bitless bridle.

When Taco was healthy again we were nearing the end of our training but our progress was mounting. I could walk and trot Taco in a large arena without fear he would charge into a fence. Honestly I couldn't ask for more. When Cathie's time training us came to an end I was both sad and scared. We had developed a friendship over our weekly training sessions and I think she came to enjoy watching Taco's progress as much as I did. While I loved doing things hands on with Cathie there so she could tell me what to do next if I was met with an unpredictable situation. Quite frankly I was scared for when she wasn't there but her pep talk made it all OK. She just told me I could do it; and so far she has been right. She is not like so many other trainers that don't want to share their secrets or teach you anything. Cathie taught me everything she did. Since we have finished I have been able to refine the groundwork of other horses through the skills I took with me. Cathie made me a better horseman through this experience.

Today Taco is an active member of the Massachusetts National Guard's Mounted Platoon. Taco has performed Military Funeral Honors at three funerals to date. He canters, and

more importantly stops, and loves to go on nice easy trail rides. Taco is still ridden exclusively in the bitless bridle. If taking the bit out of his mouth has made the difference in his mind that I am not going to hurt him I have no intention of changing. Cathie managed to give Taco a second outlook that holds a much brighter future, for that I am eternally grateful.

Please feel free to ask me questions or send me comments at amanda.young@us.army.mil. The Massachusetts Military Horse Foundation, Inc. supports the horses of the Massachusetts National Guard's Mounted Platoon. Please view their website at www.mamhf.org.

Adriana, March 20, 2007:

I'm writing just to say that the headstall is fabulous. It's just what I have always wanted for my horses (NO BIT). I'm being asked alot of questions but unfortunately nobody uptill now has asked to use it on their horses. I have been telling everyone I can about it but the news is spreading out slowly.

Well as I said before it is great. The first time I used it on my jumping horse I went directly out into the pasture and put it on him and went out bareback without any problem at all. Now we have been using it for around 6 weeks on this horse, which had no particular problems and have noticed that he has changed in details which I thought were normal but now I can really see the difference. He stops, turns and jumps alot better and also is much more relaxed. He has made a lot of progress in little time.

I also used it on my 5 year old mare who hadn't been mounted for more than 2 months without any problem at all. She stops and turns great, taking into account that she hasn't had much schooling yet. Next month she will start being schooled for jumping and with the bitless of course. I also will be using it on my foul and filly when the time comes and I still have to use it on my other jumping horse which has quite some issues, when he comes back, he is now being boarded at another jumping school.

I'll keep you informed on the progress of my other horses.

Teresa, March 18, 2007:

I purchased your BB end of last summer. We LOVE it!! I really can't say enough nice things about your customer service and your BB. I was little nervous about using it the first time, I used it on my 5yr old QH gelding who with a bit throws his head alot and just acts up in general. He did great!! No head throwing, no acting up at all. It was wonderful!! We instantly bought another one. Many people see us ride in the BB and have many questions about it. We have bought horses that have never been in anything but a bit and instantly put them in the BB and have NEVER had a problem. We bought a horse about 3 weeks ago and as we were test riding him in a bit, I got out my BB and put it on him. The owner at the time said " I wouldn't try him in anything but a bit." I said politely, "Too late, he is already in a BB." The owner was stunned. I was very pleased. Thanks for such a wonderful product!!!! We will NEVER ride any of our beloved horses in a bit again!!!!

Carol, March 15, 2007:

Tristan loves his bitless bridle. I have been using it on both my horses for well over a year. He actually bows his head for me when I put it on. He yawned a lot when I first got him

and the bitless bridle but haven't seen him do this for awhile. Both my horses are also barefoot horses. The little guy loves his bitless bridle too.

Tingie, March 10, 2007:

Well I was pleasantly surprised when my bridle showed up Friday one week after I ordered it! I ordered two but one of them is nylon so it will be a few weeks before it arrives. I was a little nervous about trying the bridle out so my daughter who is waiting on hers said she would try it on her mare first. Boogie goes well with a snaffle but has some issues with tossing her head and standing still for mounting. She also tends to get fidgety as the ride goes on and seemed uncomfortable in the bit.

My daughter asked me to hold Boogie while she mounted but I stood there and did not have to hold her once. She stood very still. :0)~

Amanda said walk with me around the field until I feel comfortable with the bridle. Amanda said she was very nervous. I walked beside her for a short time before Amanda said okay we are fine. I watched as she took Boogie around the pasture and trotted her. As the ride went on I could see my two girls more relaxed than I had ever seen them before. Amanda was full of smiles and I have only one problem with bridle. After her ride she got off and said Mom what are you going to use until mine gets here? So having only ONE bridle is definitely a problem! :0)~

I am thinking about ordering a black leather one for Amanda so that we can both ride bitless next weekend. Its not like having three bitless bridles would be a problem, as my daughter works at a stable riding there ponies and we may have to lend that third one out a bit to spread the word on your wonderful bridle!

I am going to ride Hercules in it tomorrow and he is very green. He does go well in a snaffle but we have problems with spooking and bucking and bolting. I will write you and let you know how things go with him.

Tingie, March 12, 2007:

My biggest problem right now with your bridle is only having one bridle and two horses! I just ordered another bridle and it will be here in 3 days so we can both ride at the same time. :0)~

Today Amanda begged to go for another ride in your bridle and so while I washed Hercules she rode around the property and was amazed at how wonderful Boogie did.

My horse (the paint in the pics) is only 5 years old and very green. I was very anxious about trying to ride him and he was being so wild and full of himself today I kept wondering if I should even attempt it. He has had issues with bucking, rearing, bolting and under bit he would do okay at times but he was very uneasy and would NOT stand still when asked to just stand. Instead we would have to work circles and I would try to get him to listen to me.

Well I got up the courage and hopped on. At first Herk acted a little confused but than walked right out and we rode around the property. I was waiting for Herk to act up so that I could test out how much control I had in the bridle. He never did anything silly though instead he listened and was such a good boy! When I walked over the grass he went to try and put his head down but than realized I was in control and moved forward like I asked. There was a couple times when he wanted to do something else and I encouraged him to do what I asked and he did. When he saw the neighbors new horses for the first time he really was wanting to go see them but listened when I asked him to move out. He was more relaxed than I have

ever seen him. Standing still was not a problem either! I really felt connected to him today and like he really enjoyed our ride. THANK YOU so much for our bridles!

Alessandra, March 11, 2007:

I was at a loss with what to do with Lucy (16hh TB Chestnut mare). When I hacked her out with more than one horse she would have to be in front, where she would then fling her head about and tug at the bit, battling to go as fast as she could. I was in a no win situation, as the more I tried to draw her back to a walk the more she would fight me, throwing her head down and ripping the reins from my hands, backing into traffic and jiggling on the spot. The less I held on to her the more she would take full advantage and shoot off like a cannon. I was so fed up of being the only one in the group to be constantly jogged till my eyeballs rattled. Nobody wanted to hack out with us - Lucy just fizzed up all their horses and would arrive back at the yard as if she had been sprayed with foam! I had her teeth checked, back checked, bought her sheepskin noses bands and the Pee-Wee bit which she liked, but did nothing to control the head throwing, then I saw the article about the Bit-less bridle. Surely that would give me even less control? But I was desperate and tired and very stressed so bought one on the 30-day trial. When I put it on Lucy and took her into the Menage, she kind of looked at me and said, "Umm, think you may of forgotten something here." I took her into canter half circles and on both reins, which she did perfectly without any battles and head throwing. Her ears pointed forward and her whole body relaxed. I then took the plunge and took her around the block and took her into trot when she knew that we were heading home (a sure thing for speeding up) and she went straight into walk on leg and voice command. I simply couldn't believe the change in her. MY legs and body relaxed, and she relaxed. Gone was the head throwing and tugging my reins. She simply had nothing to fight, so stopped fighting. We ventured out on a four-horse hack and she was as good as gold. She still wanted to be first in everything but then that's an ex-racehorse for you but the battle is gone. She actually listens to me and I think a bond has been created. I will not be returning my Bridle and I WON'T be giving her a bit again. Thank you. It works. We now work together and have a pact of not hurting each other.

Rose, March 11, 2007:

I recently purchased your bitless bridle and I had to let you know how happy I am with it!! I purchased the bridle at the end of January 2007. I live in the suburbs of Chicago. We got quite a cold snap here for the end of January & the entire month of February. Today (March 11, 2007) was the first chance I had to try out the new bridle. I hadn't ridden my horse (blackjack) since November! I read all the information I was supposed to before trying the bridle on jack. I thought, ok I'm going to have to lunge him first, then adjust the bridle to him, possibly lunge a little more, then maybe try to ride him and see how he is. I had my plan- off to the barn I went. Today was so beautiful that when I got to the barn I found myself grooming and tacking Jack up right away- no lunging (on a line or off) the bridle was very easy to fit. (I only had to make several adjustments after I rode for a bit) Jack was wonderful!! I know it was just the first time & we only rode in the indoor arena for about an hour, but I'm very satisfied with your product!! I will keep you guys posted on our progress. Thank you for a wonderful bridle!!!

Kim, March 07, 2007:

Thank You so much. I have never dealt with such a wonderful company! I will definitely sing your praises. I am saving up to buy one more and then I will have one for each of my riding horses!

Ella, March 02, 2007:

This bridle does everything it claims and more! My 5 year old mare and I have been together for almost 3 years now and we definitely had hit a plateau in our riding program. I rode her in a french link snaffle and half the time she would pull through me, especially at the canter and approaching a jump. Even though I consider her to be a naturally lazy horse, she would have a tendency to spook and take off on me. This would lead me to tense up and escalate her anxiety. The first day that I tried the bitless bridle in February, I saw an immediate change in her movement, demeanor, and personality under saddle. She actually waits for my cues now and is so much more relaxed when we ride. Her spooks are minimal at best now and yet the brakes are better than ever with her.

My trainer was skeptical at first, but after watching the transformation of my horse and my riding, she decided to get on herself and try it out. She confirmed that my horse is so much happier and responsive. She no longer looks for reasons to spook and take off. We've tried flying lead changes and jumping in it and the outcome has been nothing short of phenomenal. Many people at my barn have shown interest in the BB as I always rave about it and the change it made in my horse. I expect there will be more converts in the near future. Thanks again for bringing this bridle to us...my horse and I are both extremely grateful.

Cindi, February 26, 2007:

I thought I would give you some feedback on the Beta BB. The true test was this past weekend. I belong to the Chino Mounted Posse and we had a group of 13 riders out in the area that I board in, so I was the leader of the group. Anyway, my horse, GG, is usually a little more amped up in a big group. But, I really wanted to see how she would do with the BB in a large group. She did amazingly well. She was perfect. She was happy the whole ride and was easy to work with. In fact, some of the other posse members want to buy a BB now. Another girlfriend of mine just ordered one last week and tried it over the weekend and she loves the BB too. In fact, she's going to order a leather one. I think we'll like the leather one even better. I'll probably return the Beta and get another leather one. I need two total, one for the tack room and one for my trailer (of course).

I'm so glad I came across your website. I have been very pleased working with you and I absolutely love the BB.

I'll let you know what I think of the leather BB when it arrives. This is the best thing I have ever done for my horse. I wish I discovered the BB sooner.

Christina, February 20, 2007:

I want to say that a trainer at the barn I work at finally gave in and let me show her the reason I love your bridle and she was amazed. Our hot advanced level horse was turned into a walk/trot babysitter in 2 rides! I love your bridle and so does she! We will be telling everyone we know about this bridle. Thank you!

Roxanne, February 19, 2007:

I can't understand the science behind how this has worked so well, but my horse is utterly transformed after using the bitless bridle. It seems miraculous, and I know folks think I am very much exaggerating when I speak of it, but I'm not! I don't understand how it changed not only his overall happiness of not having to take a bit, but his gaits, his willingness, his spookiness, his -- what I thought was a sore-ish back, stopping him is no trouble, his response to cues is better than ever, and his misbehaving is over. He is a Missouri Fox Trotter and he had been constantly stepping out of gait, lowering his head, rounding his back and doing this awful trot and I thought it was a saddle fit or back problem, but that behavior is gone and he keeps his neck comfortably up, head bobbing, teeth-a-clacking, ears perked, and this sweet, happy expression is on his face and he goes forward now in his smooth gait without trotting. He stops with no trouble, I mount him and he stands with patience-- HE STANDS -- never happened before. I can clearly see how not having a bit would change a horse to be freer in their head movements, thus happier overall, but how did taking the metal out of his mouth change ALL those attitudes I mentioned, especially him acting like his back was sore? I just don't understand it, but wow, am I thrilled, as is my horse, I am sure! I just feel horrid for having used a bit on him before, and on my past horses, not having known better, but I am young, and I have only had this guy for a year, so we are off to a wonderful, long, and happy future and I will never use a bit again, on any horse. I gush to all horse owners I speak with of the transformation, and I hope to show many more the wonderful, natural, correct method simply by how well my horse behaves on trail rides this summer.

Thank you so very much, Dr. Cook, for spending your life in researching this topic and helping to transform so many horse and rider dynamics and for caring this much to better the quality of horses' lives.

Leah, February 15, 2007:

I just wanted to write a rave review for my new bitless bridle. I stumbled across this site in December of 2006, and while skeptical, it had many glowing reviews. I'd owned my off the track TB for about 5 months at the time, and we didn't seem to be making a lot of progress, so I decided to take a chance. I ordered my bitless bridle, and waited anxiously for it to arrive. When I first tried it out on my horse, I was a little disappointed. I hadn't measured his head, but assumed that the horse size would fit him. Unfortunately, the noseband was way too big. For 24 hours I tried to think of something to fix it, and eventually emailed the company. I cannot stress enough how helpful they were. They immediately offered to take it back and install the cob noseband for no charge. I shipped it back, and they installed my noseband and shipped it back on the same day. Needless to say that even before I tried the bridle out for real, I was SO impressed with their service.

I was a little apprehensive to try it out for the first time, because my TB is a handful even under the best of circumstances, so I lunged him to tire him out before I tried it out. The first time I used it, I noticed a huge difference. He didn't trip at all (something he had done frequently in his snaffle) and he seemed much more interested in what was going on. I have continued to alternate the bitless with my normal bridle, and I can't tell you the difference it has made in 3 weeks. My horse is much calmer and collected in the bitless, and responds to my slightest tug on the reins. I finally got the courage up to canter him in my new bitless (something we've done infrequently in a regular bridle because of his tendency to revert to

racetrack mode) and it was a dream! He picked up his lead and calmly cantered around, then smoothly transitioned down with the slightest pressure.

The first 5 months of my TB's training I can't tell you how many days I went home so completely frustrated that I seriously wanted to get rid of him. And in 6 weeks, it's like riding a different horse. And while some of it was just hard work, the bitless bridle has made a huge difference! My mom balked about spending the money for the bitless, but she rode him in it last weekend, and she loved it! And you have no idea how hard it is to please my mom! So I just wanted to recommend it to anyone out there searching. It was possibly the best customer service I've ever received, on top of a 5 star product. I am still going to use my regular snaffle for some of the more difficult training, but its so nice to just slip on the bitless and jump on bareback and not have to fear for my life. I HIGHLY, HIGHLY recommend this bridle to people in any and all disciplines.

Thank you so much for helping me turn my horse Jack into the horse I've always wanted. I am going to continue to recommend this to all my friends, and I look forward to inviting the skeptics to ride my horse in it! :-D

Marjorie, February 15, 2007:

I just wanted to give a comment about the bitless bridle. I think that your product is great! I am breaking in a new colt and she would not respond to a bit at all, in fact I got thrown off of her twice due to lack of control. She is a very flighty horse and control is a big deal. So I tried the bitless bridle, and now I have complete respect from her. The slightest request to stop and she is perfect, even in the height of being afraid. You guys have done a wonder full job!

Autumn, February 14, 2007:

I've owned a wonderful Arab mare for 15 years now, my best friend and greatest teacher of the horse world. I used to show her hunter/jumper back in the good ol' days of her prime. Around 7 or 8 years ago, she developed an allergy in the corner of her lip/mouth that made it very irritating and painful to use any bit. So began my enlightening journey of knowledge into the world of bits and hackamores.

She has always responded just fine to hackamores and even just a simple halter and lead, but sadly her showing days were over. My development into the horse world continued to grow, and "A" shows began to interest me. My mare unfortunately will never see the inside of an "A" show ring, even though she responds and behaves perfectly with a bitless bridle (if not even more efficiently). She now is semi-retired, and at almost 25 years young (her birthday is this march) is my right hand horse when it comes to teaching this generation of young riders the importance of bits, biting, and especially the use of soft hands.

I am a CHA certified riding instructor, and trainer of all breeds specializing in Arabs. Many horses I come across in training and re-training have biting issues, not always but sometimes easily resolved by either temporarily or sometimes permanently, fitting them with a bitless bridle or hackamore. Sadly the first thought when these horses respond to this wonderful tool is "they'll never make it to a show ring." And yet more and more I'm seeing riders in the show jumping and western world use hackamores. Now I'm just waiting to see the day when all aspects of the horse world will permit the use of bitless bridles.

Thank you to all who have tried, tested, and opened your minds to using a bridle without the traditional use of metal in your horses mouth. It's not for everyone, nor is it for

every horse. But it is a wonderful alternative for those like my mare, who can still be ridden and used everyday just the same as a "normal" horse!

Jane, February 12, 2007:

I sure DO NOT want to ever use a bit in his mouth again. He likes the BB very much and is doing really well with it. A lot of people think I'm crazy for not putting a bit in his mouth, they say I can't control him but I can. Even when spooked he is under control; I use the one rein stop taught by Clinton Anderson. Pull one rein around to flex his head to one side or the other and he can't go anywhere but in a circle. He stops quickly!

I am VERY satisfied with your bridle!!! It's also nice to know that if I have questions or need help you or someone is there to help.

Karen, February 03, 2007:

Wanted you to know how much my mare and I enjoy our new Bitless Bridle. First time on and NO PROBLEMS WHATSOEVER. Steering and speed was very easy to control. 'Lacey', a 12 year old Quarter Horse, is pastured at The Horse Park at Woodside, Woodside, California. There is a terrific gallop track there. She performed BETTER with the Bitless Bridle than with her conventional English Bridle with a snaffle bit. The quality of the leather is top notch. The sizing was true as I ordered a Cob size; fit PERFECTLY.

Courtney, February 02, 2007:

Hello. My name is Courtney and I recently purchased a stunning holsteiner mare, Garantia, who I keep in a club in Santiago, Chile, South America, where I currently live. When I bought her from my instructor I knew she was an extremely talented and experienced showjumper, but she was a terrible head shaker. Despite her minor problem, I bought her and we competed successfully in 1 meter classes for 2 months. Although we were winning classes together, her head shaking was becoming a problem when the jumps were raised as she would start shaking her head right before a jump and so I couldn't get her to the right take off point because she was so head strong (resulting in knocks). We tried various bits with her but my instructor told me that she would never stop as it was a bad habit and that I would have to learn to live with it. Despite his statement, I was determined to see if I could stop the problem as I had big plans for her. While searching for hackamores online I came across this website and I decided to give it a go....the best decision I have ever made. From the first day I put the bridle on her, her head shaking disappeared completely, her gaits became much smoother, she responded to the slightest cue from me, jumped with more scope (which I didn't think was possible) and she is generally much happier and eager to please. I have been competing her now with it for 2 months and I don't have the words to express how grateful I am for this bridle as we have moved up a category and going strong.

Barbara, January 29, 2007:

My 5 year old connemara pony, Balmullo's Swamp Fox was fairly green when I started riding him. He's a bit wound up tight, very attentive and intelligent--he doesn't miss anything. He's very forward and not a small amount bratty. He's agile as a cat. The person who had

been training him had been working him from the ground for 2 years -- he sat on him once or twice, having convinced his previous owner that he was so high strung he was dangerous; would likely bolt and hurt someone and needed to be taken along very slowly (I'll say!). When I started riding him he hadn't had the chance to develop any bad riding habits however he did start "rooting" on the full cheek snaffle I rode him in. I learned about and switched to the bitless bridle fairly soon after starting to ride him, which is mostly trail riding. He is VERY responsive and light, he stopped "rooting" soon after I switched to bitless. I have never felt at all out of control in the varied things I've taken him on in the year I've been riding him, including a 5 day cattle drive and a fox hunt. I love the feeling that I've been able to accomplish so much with this very talented pony without the discomfort and physiological interference associated with a bit. Given the convincing arguments regarding the problems bits can cause, I would be willing to do extra training in order to go bitless. The fact that extra training ISN'T necessary and that horses go even better in Bitless is just fabulous! My friend has started riding her mare in my beta bitless bridle and we are watching some neurotic behaviors disappear. Bitless rocks.

Susan, January 27, 2007:

I run an equine therapy center with ponies, quarter horses and thoroughbreds. All of these animals have been in standard bits of one form or another for several years. Upon learning about the bitless bridle and researching it extensively, I decided that this set would be best for all of my animals.

Each horse gives lessons five days a week, and are so patient in many ways. I felt that this bridle would be another way of thanking them for their time and effort. Each horse responded to the bitless bridle favorably. We now have them going around the arena in complete control, using only our thumb and forefingers as control mechanisms on the reins. They seem so happy and literally put their heads into the headstall each day before working. This fact alone shows me that it is comfortable for them. Their performance each day verifies what I thought to be true ... that they appreciate this set. As I continue to acquire horses, I will continue to purchase bitless bridles for each new animal.

Susan Wiloth

Wiloth Equine Therapy and Riding Center

www.wilothenterprises.com

Dawn, Friday, January 26, 2007:

I have been using the BB on my mare, Rylee, for a couple of years now. She used to be difficult to tack up, bridle, mount, was jiggy and did an awful lot of head tossing. I tried several different bits all to no avail. Then I discovered the BB. What a difference using the BB has made! Virtually all the problems I was having with her disappeared. I have the beta and leather BB and which one I use just depends on the weather. Happy Trails are all we travel now. Thanks so much.

Judy, January 26, 2007:

I ordered and received my BB about a week or so ago and LOVE it! I've only owned my horse about a month and was told he will not take a bit at all and was being ridden in a hackamore. He rode fine in the hackamore but I like the look of the traditional English bridle

which prompted my search on the Internet and brought me to your website. He has done wonderfully in the BB from the moment I put it on him.

The first time I rode my horse in the BB we went for a trail ride (against the advice of my riding instructor) and he was so responsive and well behaved I was amazed! **Even when my friend's horse took off cantering (uncontrollably) towards home I was able to keep him at a walk with very little rein pressure!** I am so impressed by your BB that I've been telling everyone about it!

Debbie, January 23, 2007:

Just a note to tell you how much I love your bridle! I bought one first for my Paso Fino. I ride her with her original training Jacima/Pisador, which she handles ok with, but I always felt as though I'm pulling on her face too much. I didn't get the light directional feel with it. I am amazed at the difference using your bridle. She responds with just the lightest touch! I don't feel like I'm abusing her now.

I just ordered a second one for my Tennessee Walker. He is a finished horse, knows everything but must have been trained in a shank cause he pretty much doesn't know what to do with a snaffle. Problem is he has some issues that I need to go back to basics with him, and the shank isn't the tool for the job. I am really looking forward to using your bitless bridle on him. I'll keep you posted on how it works with him.

I have to mention too, since we've gotten our horses, I have the usual "tack store" as my husband puts it. The first day we rode and I just loved this bridle, his comment was "well I'm glad you finally found something that worked the way you thought it would the first time!" My husband is the skeptic, he thinks I'm too easy, but the explanation of how your bridle works just made sense to me. And it does work just like you said it would. I will highly recommend it to others, I already have!

Ashleigh, January 19, 2007:

WOW, what can I say. I rode Tilley again today and wow, what a change! The BB has shown me what Tilley can really do. I lowered the noseband as required and it worked like a dream. I only had to touch an outside rein slightly and she would turn without hassle, it used to be a struggle to turn. She also stops really good. Since the first time I tried the BB on Tilley I noticed improvements straight away, now even her improvements are improving! I even decided to put an information sheet at my agistment centre so people can understand it more. I have already had someone come and confront me about it when I was taking it off Tilley, she seemed really interested. You might be getting a lot of interest very soon (lol). I chose a Beta BB because it looks more like leather and it is perfect for what I wanted. Tilley doesn't shy at anything anymore while I ride her nor does she get all huffy puffy when I ask her to do something. Today she even walked to the gate of a 60-acre paddock from about 500m away before I even got to the gate. She was so good I love her to bits, I can't believe how good it has made her just from removing the bit!

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to see the horse I knew she could be.

Ann, January 17, 2007:

I ordered a BB a month ago. I own Arabians and do pleasure/endurance trail riding with them. I have trained all of them myself, and while they are very well trained and well mannered, I found sometimes that my gelding, Bask, would not respond great to neck reining and would sometimes do a very choppy lope. He would rein much better in just a halter, but he could easily ignore it if he wanted to and not slow down or collect as nicely as he should. I have ridden him in a Tom Thumb, full cheek snaffle, and lately a port bit in order to get him to rein better and collect more nicely.

My little mare, Rain, also would not neck rein as well in the snaffle bit as she would in a halter. She is a much more forward moving horse than Bask, so collecting in the halter wasn't always great. Plus, if she felt "full of herself", I had really no control at a canter to keep her from kicking up her heels.

I tried the BB on Bask first, as he is a bit on the lazy side and gets distracted very easily, and when he loses focus, he is oblivious to the bit. He did wonderful in the BB! I rode him in the yard and practiced figure 8s, side passes, collected trot and canter, and lots of neck reining. The next time I rode him was at a nearby state park. He did wonderful again, and was seemingly less nervous about being in the lead as he sometimes is. He is more responsive and I am sure happier in the BB. He is collecting better and stays in his frame much easier.

Rain I knew would be terrific in the BB, since she is a super horse anyway. I went straight on the trail with her. As I mentioned, she is very forward and loves to go. She waits for my slightest signal to trot or canter and she is on GO! She tried to kick in to a full gallop, which I didn't ask for, and all it took was a tiny squeeze on the reins of the BB, and she calmly returned to a nice canter with ears still forward and no head rooting or tossing trying to evade a bit.

I am not all that surprised that my horses are doing great in the BB as I mentioned earlier, they both reined better in halters. I love the BB because not only do I get the response I expect, it is very light and calmly executed. I am going to let my boyfriend try it on his Arab mare, Opal. He just got Opal a few months ago as an 8-year completely untrained horse. She's very sweet and smart, and after only 3 training sessions in the round pen, he began riding her with no problems. She has since been out on the trails being ridden in a halter and he just started her in a full cheek snaffle, but she is not happy with it. I know once he tries the BB, he will love it and Opal will be very happy. I am also going to let my niece, who owns Rain's mom, try it out. Her mare, Sahara, I used to own and trained her to ride as well. She has always disliked contact with the bit and is difficult for my niece to collect. I am confident they, too, will be ordering a BB soon! Thanks for the great product. I hope one day the BB will be allowed in the show rings.

Tracy, January 13, 2007:

This has been one of the best tack investments I have made! My horse responds better with it, he stops quicker and turns without hesitation. He seems much happier and more spirited than I have ever seen him before while being ridden. There is more sparkle in his eye like as if he is telling me, "Wow, mom! Finally you've figured it out!"

Lori, January 09, 2007:

I GOT IT!!! I LOVE IT!!!

This bridle is BEAUTIFUL and VERY well made, I was surprised at how nice looking it is and the leather has a nice feel to it.

I rode my horse with it and at first she was slightly confused. But, she has only about 16

rides on her anyway, so everything is still confusing her right now. still, it only took her about 20 minutes to figure it all out.. I get the feeling that she appreciates my efforts. when I get more money, I want to get the matching reins to it.

Thanks for such a great product. IRON FREE HORSES RULE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Jennifer, January 03, 2007:

Hello! I'm just writing to tell you what a dramatic improvement your bridle has made in my horse's life, and my relationship with her.

My mare, Sally, is a BLM mustang mare who was captured in Nevada in 1988. I have owned her for approximately two years now. I'm not sure who trained her, but several years after being gentled and broken to saddle she ended up at a children's riding camp, where she was ridden twice a day. After about five or six years of this, the camp leased her out to a lesson program, where she was forced to pack children over fences from 7 in the morning to 7 at night. A tendon injury forced the program to let her go sometime in 2002. She spent all of 2003 in convalescence back at the riding camp. By the time I had purchased her in the fall of 2004, she had some serious emotional baggage to deal with, mostly due to being manhandled in the mouth by young, uneducated hands. For one, she was terrified of contact. Every time I picked up the reins, no matter how gently, she would clamp down on the bit and tuck her nose defensively into her chest. She would remain in this position for the entire ride, which caused her to develop extreme tension through her neck and back. Because of this tension, every time I asked her for an upward transition, she would explode into a fit of bucking. I can't tell you how many bits I tried on this horse - French links, kimberwicks, pelhams, you name it. No matter what, every bit incited the same defensive reaction in her. I was saddened and frustrated by my mare's condition - what I considered to be a fun, stress-relieving activity (riding), my partner viewed with fear. Then, I discovered your bitless bridle in the spring of 2006, and Sally's transformation began. The very first time I rode her in it, she softened to contact and lowered her head WITHOUT pinning her nose to her chest. The second time I rode her in it, she was bending, and cantering buck-free.

People cannot believe the way she is going now, compared to when she was being ridden in a bit. She travels lightly, with confidence and ease. I am almost in tears as I write this - you have no idea how much it means to me, to have a horse that now enjoys riding as much as I do. Never again will I ever subject any horse of mine to the discomfort and miscommunication caused by a hunk of shaped metal resting on sensitive flesh. Your bitless bridle has made a new horse of my mare, and improved my horsemanship twofold. I tell everyone I can about the bridle; I would love to see the entire concepts of "bits" and "bitted bridles" sink into obsolescence.

Thank you so much for being a wonderful company with a wonderful product.

Ian, January 02, 2007:

We spoke several weeks ago about my recent purchase of the Bitless Bridle. I live in Scottsdale Arizona and Star is a 16.3 9yr old Quarterhorse buckskin gelding from Wyoming. He's fast, powerful, incredibly responsive with a gentle disposition. I trust you've heard this innumerable times, but without question this has entirely transformed both my riding experience and his.

I've enclosed 2 photos: one of STAR in the arena and another of a good friend Mike

Glick riding him with the Bridle. Mike is one of the truly great western horseman, from Idaho. I deliberately waited until he visited with us for the weekend to try the bridle just in case there were problems or unexpected reaction. It took quite literally 5 minutes for STAR to be comfortable riding with the Bitless Bridle and Mike had him running at a full gallop, stopping faster and with less resistance than he's accustomed to. His incessant head tossing has stopped virtually from the moment we made the change.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the unsuspecting rider is the vast community of instructors & trainers. Star's unceasing head tossing was always explained as "rude behavior" that needed discipline and obedience training. I knew intuitively this was absurd and that my horse was both physically and emotionally distressed, attributable only to the bit in his mouth. The discovery of the Bitless Bridle is certainly vindication and gratifying however it took far too long for me to search for the alternative because (not unlike physicians) the trainers and instructors are notoriously adverse to change and especially innovation, although you would think that the horse's comfort and health is paramount for all.

The most important feature for me is that it can be used as a halter and lead rope as well, so if, as happens often on the way to the barn from the arena, while leading him he is spooked I can quickly gain control as I would with a halter and lead rope without tearing at his mouth with a bitted bridle as I was previously doing – thus making a volatile situation even more dangerous. All of this gives me command and control even in the most precarious of situations which we all have learned to expect.

These junctures are critical for a rider of any level & this change has been a huge success, with your guidance & assistance

Katie, December 20, 2006:

About an hour after I e-mailed you asking for the tracking number the package showed up! This bridle is just wonderful. To give you a little background on my horse Steele, which I have owned for 3 years now. Before I owned Steele my riding instructor owned him and Steele was ridden mainly in a full cheek snaffle with bit keepers but was sometimes also ridden in a three piece loose ring snaffle with a german martingale to remind him to "collect". I had been riding with this riding instructor for 8 years by the time he was ready to retire Steele. Therefore when my riding instructor decide to retire Steele (mainly due to his medical expense as he would colic several times a year as well as due to him being close to 17 and being grumpy) we decide to take on ownership of him due to the bond that we had formed after he had colic surgery several years before. Not much is known about his history before my instructor had except that he would boss his "owners" and other companions around. After we bought him we changed his feed, reduced his amount of work, and the colic became less and less frequent. Everything seemed to be going smoothly until last fall when Steele came lame with a shoulder injury and was on stall rest for about 3 months -- he came back more energetic -- but then about 3 or 4 months after that he came up with a suspensory ligament injury and has been out of work for 9 months. Well just before I ordered this bridle (which I had been wanting to get since I saw and add for it 2 years ago, but didn't have the money for at the time) I got the ok to start riding Steele at the walk -- well for some reason the bit we had been using (a rather thick D-ring single jointed snaffle) he was acting sluggish and it had started to rubbed his face so I decide that now was as good as time as any to switch to the bb. So I while I was

waiting for the bb to arrive I rode Steele in my rope hackamore and he had a little more pep to his step but he was harder to control. So when the bb arrived to day I couldn't wait to try it on him. Steele took to it right away, it took me awhile to realize that my signals actually needed to be lighter than they are with the bit and hackamore (with the bb I had more than control with the others and if not more pep in his walk). He collected almost instantly when I asked him (which considering this was only the 10th time riding him in 9 months I was ecstatic). The only time I had a slight problem was when we were going to the left he kept flipping his head up, but he has always been a little worse regarding flexion going to the left plus he does like to test his limits esp. with new pieces of tack. Thanks for the wonderful invention -- if the bb fits the horse I am going to ride in our barn's Quadrille team I will be able to test it above the walk and if not I will keep you updated on Steele when we get the ok to trot and then canter.

Louie', December 11, 2006:

My husband and I received our new bridles and we are SO happy and grateful to you and your company taking such good care of us! We will share with others our positive experience with our bitless bridles and how helpful you were to us.

Edina, December 12, 2006:

I got the bridle I've ordered 4 (!!!) days ago, thank you very much! Thank you for being this fast. I was simply amazed because I live on the other part of the world, in Hungary. Nobody else has been this fast yet. Thank you very much. The bridle is going to be my Christmas present and my mom was worried before that we were not going to receive it until Christmas. She was very surprised too and asked me to tell you you did a great job!

Corrine. December 05, 2006:

My non-horsey boyfriend described my first bitless bridle experience as a non-event, he was expecting "bolting, fireworks and general mayhem!" but instead the more I asked of my horse the bigger my grin became. After 20 years of competitive riding I feel as though the "penny just dropped!" I decided to try the BB after watching a pretty horrifying and brilliant horse movie on Natural horsemanship by the Russian horseman Nevzorov. It literally took 5 seconds on my horse to realize that riding was never going to be the same! The immediate feeling I got was his elastic and free stride, his acceptance felt incredibly light, collected, expressive and receptive. I found his quarters engaged beautifully and his willingness and concentration of my slight aids vastly improved. I would like to thank everyone who took the time and energy to develop an alternative control (communication) method, I believe change is near and I will endeavor to express this to everyone I know.

Corrine, December 06, 2006:

It was so inspiring receiving your email, I admit I felt a little "star struck." It came at a fantastic time as I had just returned from a meeting where a group of us are trying to introduce a "Bitless Bridle Dressage Class" in our local show. The photo I sent to you is from a show I entered recently after using your bridle 4 times! It was a little daunting and I unfortunately caused quite a stir amongst the judges, show organizers and my instructor, even though I had pre-warned them and entered HC. After all the commotion and by-standers offering me their

rubber snaffles the organizers eventually allowed me to compete bitless. My results exceeded everyone's expectations and the look on people's faces was worth more than a hundred red ribbons! This has caused quite a stir amongst our community. One of our very popular riding instructor's came up to me yesterday and announced that she had just ordered 3 of your bridles for her ponies!

After much deliberation I finally got up the nerve and "sheepishly" phoned my instructor who had left the show very suddenly when all the commotion started. Her reaction on the phone was surprisingly positive, after 10 minutes of convincing her that I *had not* fallen on my head whilst hacking out on my horse, she decided to get to the bottom of this and requested all the material that had left such an impression with me. I rushed to her home and gave her Alexander's film and all the articles I could find that you had compiled. My instructor is on the Provincial Panel of judges and highly regarded in the South African dressage fraternity. She is flying to another province over the weekend to Judge the Junior Dressage Champs" and so I will only get feed back from her next weekend. I will let you know of her comments.

I would be honoured to be associated with your quest in the advancement of the welfare of horses, please find the higher resolution picture. I realize that I am a small "blip" on the radar but please let me know if there is anything else I can do to help. I have been reading of your requests with FEI and was wondering if there has been any further development?

Denice, Dec. 5, 2006:

Just wanted to let you know Wynter my Perch/TB cross baby and I are just loving the bridle. This is so cool because the "crutch" has been taken away...people get lazy with their training they think they can just force with the metal bit.

The synthetic material is awesome. At first I thought you messed up and sent me a nice suppld leather bridle. LOL!

Ron, December 05, 2006:

First, a thank you. I am sure you have received thousands of these since developing and making available your Bitless Bridle but I would still like to add my personal thank you to the list. Your Bitless Bridle is a marvelous product, which I know all my horses like. I have two Arabs and a QT Horse and have been using your Bitless Bridle on all three for over 3 years now with great success. Shortly after introducing each one of them to their Bitless Bridle they all three "help" put their bridles on whenever we tack up. I simply show them the bridle and they practically put it on themselves. This was never the case when I used traditional bitted bridles. Knowing that my horses are comfortable as well as fully controllable using your Bitless Bridle gives peace of mind rarely provided by products of any kind let alone tack for horses. Thank you.

Renee, Dec. 4, 2006:

Fabulous Product. I cannot begin to tell you the difference this has made with my 9 yr. old Tennessee Walking Horse .I had been using a very mild snaffle but every ride was a constant struggle no matter how small the task I was asking.The difference defies description he is so light and is far more focused on me than that thing in his mouth.My excercise riders love it as well.I can't thank you enough for giving me my horse back.Brilliant design!

Julie, December 02, 2006:

I am so impressed with your company that I thought it was time I sent in my testimonial! I first tried your bridle about 18 months ago on my 6 year old Egyptian Arabian who was always tossing his head and inverting himself no matter how "lightly" I used my reins. Your bridle was absolute MAGIC on him! He quickly stopped the head tossing and starting working off his back end, paying attention and clearly grateful. He then had about a year off due to a lameness problem.

During this year I foxhunted my appendix quarterhorse. His behavior was also "sassy" so I ordered another bridle from you. I galloped this horse to a first place finish in a hunter pace after only one day of working with him in the bitless bridle. My only concern was that he would not stop from a full gallop with just your bridle. I was totally wrong. He was much more "in tune" with me because he could just stop worrying about getting hurt in the mouth and concentrate on the task at hand. Just to clarify, both of these horses were only ridden with simple snaffle bits prior to this.

After a year it was time for my Arab to work again. I didn't hesitate to go straight for the bitless bridle when I started foxhunting him. He has been PERFECT! If you have never experienced a full cry gallop in the hunt field you can't truly appreciate how phenomenal it is to be riding a horse with no bit in his mouth during one. He is completely focused on the task at hand! When folks in the hunt field finally notice he has no bit they are amazed. I sing your praises and tell them about your 30 day trial. Foxhunters are generally very traditional, but the bottom line is I don't think they trust their horses enough to try one out! I would like everyone to understand I actually feel SAFER with a bitless bridle now because the horse doesn't try to evade it and I can't hurt him with it. The horses naturally start paying more attention to your body than your hands, making them more relaxed and responsive. And just to clarify, I am 45 years old and did NOT grow up riding. I am no accomplished Parelli member and have no secrets to whisper in my horses ears. I am an average rider with relatively young, green horses. We ride rocky, steep terrain at a very fast pace. The secret I have to share is with other riders and that is this, "Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle is Magic!" If anything about your horse's behavior (while riding) worries you, TRY ONE. You will never send it back!

Emily, November 29, 2006:

Howdy. I just thought I'd tell you all how much I love my new bitless bridle. Although I've only ridden in it three times so far, I know I'll never go back to the bit.

My horse, Sarge, hated the bit. It took a good twenty minutes to get him to take it. And once I got on him he would toss his head and show other signs of discomfort. He would misbehave and fight me all the way. So when I found out about the bitless bridle I just had to try it. So my first attempts with the bitless were total failures. But I found out that I hadn't fitted it properly! Hah. So I tried it once more and this time fitted it correctly. He was an angel! He seemed much more relaxed. And it seems like our communication is sooo much better. I used to have problems getting him to back up for me... he acted like he was confused and he would get angry. But I tried it with this bridle and he was perfect! I was really amazed when he backed up just like that for me. And his stopping has also greatly improved!

Anywho. I think this is the best bridle ever and I'm very VERY satisfied. I can't wait to take him out on a trail ride and show off his bridle. (:

Shawn, Nov. 27, 2006:

I don't think that I will ever ride in anything else. I do, on occasion, have my horse wear a bit...usually when my bitless has been loaned out. He takes a bit just fine but appears to be distracted by it. He spends so much time playing with it that he loses focus on the task at hand. My daughter also rides bitless. She is only 11 and quite an advocate. When she rides other horses she takes her bridle along and is quick to show that a bit is not necessary - even on the big, wild boys.

I can't thank you enough for continuing the "quiet revolution".

Bill, Nov. 23, 2006:

Got back from the ranch Sunday night, the bridle you sent got there fine, took about a week. I waited for the right time to try it and to decide which would be the best horse. The choice was a 4 year old mare that had some training with a bit but had not been ridden on the trails much at all. I rode her about 12 miles on a trail ride with a group, with a bit, to get some feel for what she was like. She was OK, about what I would have expected.

A couple of days later I rode her in the arena, secretly, for about an hour, first with a bit and then with the BB. Rode a little while, she was fine, relaxed, good control, good brakes. Got off for about 15 minutes, she just quietly stood with me. Got back on and it was like she needed that time to figure out that something was new and she was as good as could be. Walked, trotted, loped, ran with no issues and always with good control. Next day I decided to just jump in the deep end and take her on the trail in the BB. Wrangler was totally against it, no support at all but the woman that owns the ranch was OK and said if I felt she would be fine to try it. Ride was real good - no problem at all. Best part was, we were a little late getting back to the ranch for lunch and about a mile out the wrangler rode out on a 4-wheeler, very unusual, no doubt expecting the worst but likely disappointed to find us walking along, very relaxed, about 30 yards behind all the other riders. The wrangler didn't even talk to me for the rest of the day. Took her out the following day, same deal, alone or with the other horses just a very nice ride. Completely positive experience for me, will be tough to convince some others.

Another event (non-event) on my second day of riding with the BB on the young mare was we had a deer jump out right in front of us, not more the 8 ft away. We were alone in a real brushy area, potential for a problem. She jumped about a ft sideways, no more, and just watched the deer run away. I was impressed and my thought was that because she was so relaxed, more so than with a bit, it just wasn't a big deal.

Robin, Nov. 20, 2006:

I just recently purchased the black "beta" bridle at the Equine Affaire (11/10/6) in MA. I originally bought it to try on my QH "Power" like his name he is "all there". Total muscle, he is an Impressive bred. He had 6 owners in the first five years of his life, none of them for long enough to train him to do much.... He at one time was "tongue tied" probably to go into a trailer (my vet suggested), he still has "issues" of immense fear when loading...any way I NEVER felt comfortable about having a bit in his mouth so I tried everything from a Tom Thumb to low port curb, to a hackamore, but he would still "root", not steer well, and his mouth was always

gapping. So I put him in the "bitless" three times alone on a groomed track, then once with another mare he was familiar with and finally on a three hour trail ride with 6 other horses that he was unfamiliar with, and they were all "full of it" to say the least. All within a week.

I can't tell you enough how much I really enjoyed my ride and so did he!!! We actually had FUN!!

I sang its praises to another of my friends on the way home from the EQ(without even knowing if it would work) and she purchased one as well. We both rode on that same 3hr. ride and she too can't say enough about the "bitless bridle". I board with 17 others and they all want to try it!!! So there you have it. I do think I may upgrade to a leather bridle for him.

SO>the next day I took my Standardbred out for a couple of hours with 3 other horses and used it>he went perfect!! He never had anything like this before (he was a trotter) so they had a driving bit as well as a racing bit in his mouth!! How nice he must have thought.....

Thanks in advance for the comfort my QH and STB feel,

Michelle, Nov. 19, 2006:

I just got my beta headstall two days ago, I've ridden with it twice and I am not going back to the bit. I love looking at my horse's cute little mouth and know I'm not hurting it. When he gets excited he doesn't listen as well and found I was pulling a lot on his mouth. This way, when he gets excited I know I'm not hurting him. I can still hold him back, make him do circles if necessary, have him perform the I-rein stop. I can do all that with your bridle. I just love it.

I'm going to be pushing this bridle like you wouldn't believe.

Laura, Nov. 14, 2006:

I recently purchased a bitless bridle from you and absolutely LOVE it. We had a flighty-head-tosser and a bucking-ear-pinner, and now we have two horses that are fun to ride. It's amazing how much both have relaxed and become responsive rather than evasive from the instant the BB was introduced. We even use the bitless on the horses with no prior problems because it makes them happier. And why good horses should be punished with a bit is beyond me! All bridles with bits in our tack room now have spider webs attached to them. :)

Cindy, November 05, 2006:

I want to thank you for the development of this perfect bridle. I bought mine this September and have had great success. My trainer didn't believe me at first that it would even work. I have a very powerful Quarter horse that loved to throw his head and did not like a bit in his mouth as well. Now he no longer throws his head and he even holds still to put his Bitless Bridle on. He turns on a dime and stops on one too. His trainer loves it and I love my horse. That's why I bought it for him. I'll pass on the good word.

Kristin, Nov. 3, 2006:

I want to thank your company for the great service I received when I ordered a bridle. I also wanted to tell you that I had a different horse when I first rode her in your bridle. Lilly, my paint mare used to get nervous, flighty and always would go faster than she was told. If I wanted her to walk, she would trot and we would get into an argument the entire ride. Since I have used The Bitless Bridle she is calm, relaxed, and enjoys being ridden.

I'm an endurance rider and the synthetic bridle has stood up to the elements.

Theresa, October 30, 2006:

I bought my Bitless Bridle earlier this year and I absolutely love it! As soon as I put it on my horse it was like he knew exactly what to do! I felt comfortable enough after a few turns in the round pen to ride him on the trail and I have gone bitless ever since! My horse no longer causes trouble when it is time to take the bridle on and off; he enjoys wearing the bridle. My only complaint is that you don't have a blond leather color so that I can match my new western saddle!

Lisa, October 27, 2006:

Hi , About 6 years ago you donated 2 bitless bridles to our rescue, R.E.A.S.O.N. I am writing again to tell you what a wonderful invention these bridles are!!! We take a lot of standardbreds off the track and retrain them to saddle. Well, when they come off the track they tend to be very "mouthy" with the bit because the majority have had their tongues tied. We have had great success using the bitless, the horses love it and so do we. A lot of horse people would say "No bit? Where is your control?" My answer is always the same: you have way more gentle control with this bridle. We NEVER have had a horse run away with us while using the bitless and we have started over 200 standardbreds to saddle. We tell all of our potential adopters about the bitless and encourage them to use it!!

Kim, October 25, 2006:

Let me begin by saying THANK YOU for developing the bitless bridle! I have been using it for about a year now and have personally used it or observed it on almost 40 horses from Arabians to Quarter Horses to a Percheron to a Thoroughbred to a Standardbred etc. Every horse responds as well or better to it! I recommend it to all my clients and it is the only bridle I use in teaching lessons. It works beautiful with my natural horsemanship philosophy.

Risa, October 19, 2006:

Good afternoon. I received your bridle last night and put it on my horse this morning. One word, BRILLIANT!

First of all, the quality is exceptional! I ordered the padded black English bridle. Superb quality.

Second, my ten year old rescued thoroughbred seemed quite confused when I put the reins over her head to walk her out of the barn (after already putting the bridle on earlier). She looked at me with an expression that clearly said, "haven't you forgotten something?" It was very amusing.

My first source of joy was in not having to put a cold bit in her mouth and fighting as she raised her head to the ceiling (she doesn't fight much usually, but it was nice not to think about it at all).

Next I had someone "spot" me on the ground and stand by her as I mounted not knowing what to expect. She walked off as if nothing was different. I walked for quite a while and she occasionally flipped her nose as if to say, "why aren't you yanking on me?" When I

began to trot she seemed very soft and really stretched out her neck. I also noticed a greater response to my leg.

Curiously, she flipped her head at the same moments she always does, transitioning down to the walk from a trot, turning left when she knows the gate is to the right. However, her head seemed to be in the perfect position when circling right or left.

She seemed so relaxed overall, it was truly amazing. Stopping was silly as she nearly through me forward coming to such an abrupt halt! Something she never did with a bit in her mouth! AND imagine her surprise when she halted and I called her name and had her turn her head to get a carrot!!! She really had to think twice about accepting it, it was very funny. I haven't cantered yet as our ring was very muddy and slippery today, but I am looking forward to it. She has never run off with me although I have only had her for two months and we haven't even been on the trails yet, but in the ring she canters quietly although periodically flips her head.

In any case, I was thrilled and overjoyed that I wasn't yanking on her mouth or hurting her in any way and what fun to let her come out of the ring and eat grass when we were finished. Exceptional product!!!!

Lee, October 16, 2006:

I ordered a Bitless Bridle and reins after I was bucked off my horse while using a soft hackamore. I wasn't able to ride as soon as expected after the accident, so that is why I am just now returning the reins for a refund. I love the bridle (and ordered one for my other horse) but the reins are just too short for my use.

I am promoting The Bitless Bridle to all my riding friends. After my accident, I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't found The Bitless Bridle. My horse will not take a bit (nor do I want to use one) and this is the perfect solution. It gives me 100% more control and confidence than the soft hackamore and my horse responds very well to it – there was no learning curve from the soft hackamore to The Bitless Bridle.

Emily, October 10, 2006:

I bought a bitless bridle three months ago. I had bought a Paso Fino who seemed to hate bits. He had been trained in a pelham bit, but a new owner used a spade bit and apparently injured his mouth. He was one unhappy horse when bridled! I tried your bitless bridle and was amazed at the transformation in my horse. He no longer buries his head to avoid a bit. He seems much happier - and I am, too!

Mick, October 08, 2006:

After buying my new horse, I found out why they sold him to me. He would fight a bit big time. So I didn't make him use it and waited for my bitless bridle. At first he didn't like me trying to put it on him, I think he was waiting for the bit. So I put it on, and left it on for a little bit, then took it back off for a little bit, and put it back on... now he doesn't mind when I put it on him, and he rides very well with it. It saved me lots of prob with this horse. Thanks a lot.

Steve, October 6, 2006:

We used to fight each other when he was in a tom thumb snaffle and I would never have foregone a saddle when working him. As you can see it is only a Bitless Bridle and a set of reins in the picture. Additionally he and I are beginning police training (for control only) and the Bitless bridle is working great for him bending at the pole and dropping his head. Only problem is that there is no bit for him to "give to". But, we are getting around that just fine.

When queries arise about the use of The Bitless Bridle they mostly occur either before the maiden voyage or within the first few days. The following exchange of correspondence is of interest because a problem did not arise until after two years of good progress.

Valerie, October 01, 2006:

Firstly, I am delighted that more and more people are discovering the beauty of your bitless bridle.

My 6 yo has been wonderful through these past two years of training (using your bitless at all times) altho today, when we began doing some jumping and event training, he felt very heavy in hand and extremely powerful. His behavior was good, but I did have to use every ounce of energy within me to keep him from becoming overly excited and explosive in between jumps. My trainer said he did remarkably well considering he had no bit in his mouth, but now, she is recommending that I try a bit if I am to continue with eventing.

What do you think? I hate the thought of introducing metal to him again, but if I were to do so, can you recommend a bit that is the least severe? I would only use it for cross-country jumping and would continue with your bitless for every other discipline.

[Dr. Cook responds, 01 October, 2006:

First, many thanks for the kind words.

Secondly, please on no account revert to a bit. The pain of a bit can only make your horse even more excited and explosive.

But you shouldn't have to use so much energy to control him so there is something wrong. My first suggestion is that you should check that you have the noseband at the correct low level. This is by far the most common reason why riders have to work too hard. My second suggestion is to get his teeth checked. The development of sharp enamel points on the premolars could account for this change.

Pain on landing could, of course account for this behavior and have nothing to do with the bridle. Check saddle fit and think feet.

I am attaching a file with other items for you to double check (a generic "Problem Solving" file that we have developed to help us answer customer's queries). Please let me know how you progress.

PS: One other thought. If this is the first time you have put your horse over jumps, it may be that he is just enjoying himself so much that he is displaying joie de vivre. This may disappear as he gets more accustomed to the new training. A horse when out in the hunting field is often a quite different horse from the one at home!]

Valerie, 04 October, 2006

Thx, Bob, for your prompt response and suggestions. I'm ashamed to tell you that indeed my thoroughbred's bridle was not adjusted properly. I had washed it and was not careful enough to fit it to him correctly. I lowered the noseband at least an inch so that it's

now 2 finger widths from the corner of his mouth again. And quel difference! He's far more responsive to my aids now and he wasn't as heavy in my hand. I'll have to send you a video of him jumping. Joie de vivre ...mais oui!!!!

The real test is when he's out in the field with a bunch of high energy equines. I bet he'll be just fine!

Thanks so much for your help. Your support is so helpful especially when many people are trying to convince me to get back into the crazy world of bits. If not putting a bit back in my horse's mouth keeps me from entering the show ring, then so be it. Speaking of show rings, is your bridle any more accepted in the show arenas?

If there's anything I can do further to help you promote your bridles in the show ring or anywhere else, please let me know. And thank you again, so very much!

[Dr. Cook responds, 05 October, 2006:

I am so glad that you have solved the problem. May I add this correspondence to our collection on the website, as I know it will help a number of people? I am in the process of collecting footage for a video I am planning so, yes, please do send me a video.

The bridle is still not listed as permitted equipment for FEI sponsored competitions other than show jumping and the cross-country phase of eventing. We need people like you to submit proposals for a rule change for the disciplines in which they are interested. These proposals have to be funneled through the national federations, so the USEF is the organization we have to first convince in the USA.

I am attaching a file that provides some background information and explains the steps but you have to be a member of the USEF to do this and it helps to gain the support of a USEF committee member. All this requires time and effort but, at the present moment, it is true to say that the USEF have only ever received one such proposal. This was a couple of years ago for the discipline of eventing, so that The Bitless Bridle could be used in the dressage phase as well as in the other two phases. Sadly, the request was rejected. But repeat applications need to be made in order that the USEF comes to recognize the strength of the support for such a change.]

Valerie, 06 October, 2006:

Thanks for all of your info. Am not sure whether I'll join USEF as I have done so little showing and probably won't do much in the future. We'll see. Maybe at some other time. How about if I just write to them with my positive experience with the bitless...wouldn't that have some clout?

In any event, I will continue to spread the good word about this wonderful bridle. My horse is a living example. In fact, I'll be doing a hunter pace clinic at the end of the month so that should bring more exposure to it, for sure.

I'll also take some more current video clips and will get them to you before long. The video will include a young woman (who rode in the Junior Olympics at the age of ten) jumping my horse this summer when my foot was broken. Then I'll get some current clips of my horse and me as we've just begun to jump together (I've got 49 years on my 7 yo thoroughbred and I feel safe jumping him in a bitless bridle...imagine that!)

Nathalie, October 01, 2006:

I bought a Bitless Bridle from one of the suppliers in the UK for my 5yr old TB x WB Mare. She is my first horse; childhood dream come true and I'm as proud as punch! Thankfully the creation of your Bitless Bridle has allowed me to do what is right for my horse; and all

others I believe. Jessie has only been with me for three months now. She was imported from the Netherlands and arrived at my yard somewhat flighty. She hated the bridle and the schooling whip (I think she must've received some serious telling off in her past). Initially I used a full cheek, straight bar, happy mouth bit, but it didn't take me long to decide that even the mildest bit wasn't making her happy. She raised her head well into the air when I approached with the bridle. She was strong and heavy in my hands when ridden. I was quickly trying to sniff out an alternative to the bitted bridle, and bumped into your bridle on the internet; and haven't looked back since!

Jessie doesn't flinch at all or bat an eyelid when I approach with the Bitless. In fact, I think she looks forward to being ridden now. She has also learnt that the schooling whip is not something to fear, provided it is in the right hands. I am able to work her in an outline, where as before, with the bit in her mouth, she would fight the contact, tossing her head regularly. I actually find her lighter to ride without a bit. Her walk has improved, for which I am very grateful. I believe the walk to be a very important pace. She takes lovely long strides. I used to find her difficult to stop with a bit in her mouth. It was as if she were rebelling against the bit. She seems a lot more co-operative now.

I have to face others on my yard who just don't seem to get it. They ask me, "How do you control your horse without a bit? What will you do if she bolts." I reply, "I don't need to control my horse, I merely ask her to co-operate, which she willingly obliges to do."

I went out on a hack with some others recently, and one rider had strapped his horse down with draw reins. Need I mention that his horse was the most disobedient; bucking and proving to be the strongest in canter, whilst Jessie walked briskly along, on a loose rein, listening to me when I gave her the gentlest of signals.

Thank you Dr Cook, you are a genius. If horses could talk they would say "We love you!"

(ps: I would like to mention, for the benefit of your other customers, that Jessie needed her teeth rasping before she accepted the Bitless Bridle comfortably. Sharp tooth edges will probably cause head tossing and shaking because of the whole-head-hug effect of the Bitless, pushing the soft flesh of the cheeks against sharp teeth. Once her teeth were done, hey pronto; she loved the new bridle.)

Corinne, September 28, 2006

Dr. Cook,

I have been a user of your wonderful bridle for years. I think my beta bridle is about 10 years old now and still perfectly fine. I raised my daughter, who is now 13 years old, on my horse and my bitless bridle. She has heard me preach about the harshness of bits, particularly in inexperienced hands. Needless to say, she has never been allowed to use a bitted bridle on my beloved horse (I primarily do dressage so from time to time I've needed a bit to compete or take a clinic).

Now my daughter, Lauren, is not a bold rider but the other day I was blown away by something that happened at our barn. She was going to ride someone else's horse bareback for a quick hack around the outdoor. 20 minutes later a friend of hers comes running up to me and says "Lauren needs the bitless bridle", although really surprised I gave her the bridle and sent her on her way. After Lauren's ride, Lauren told me that the horse was almost rearing when she had the bitted bridle on and was just refusing to do anything including just simply walking forward. The slightest pressure, including just picking up the reins, was causing adverse

behavior in this horse. She put the bitless bridle on, got back up bareback and ended up having a pleasant bareback ride around the farm. When I saw her on the horse, Lauren said "Look mom, you can pull on this thing all day and it just doesn't bother him. He was almost rearing on me in the other bridle."

I am continually amazed at how quickly this bridle "fixes" big problems and in this instance I was surprised at my daughter's faith in your bridle. Despite being on a different horse, despite the initial behavior of the horse and despite her lack of boldness, she put your bridle on and jumped back on. Again it demonstrated to me that the tack that we put on our horses has a deep and immediate impact on their ability to perform and to do it healthily and happily!

Cyndi, September 23, 2006:

I just got my bitless on Thursday and I am so incredibly happy with it. The horse that I'm training has been a terrible head shaker for a while now and has actually hit me a couple of times from tossing it so badly. To add onto that, he has a tongue that's split to look like a snake's that he had when we bought him. For a while I suspected the bit to be pinching his 'tongues' so I wanted to put him in a hackamore. I had tried one of your bridles before but was unable to keep it. This time I'm definitely keeping it!!! He rode beautiful, listening to everything I asked and when jumping, was the happiest that I've ever seen him!! Thank you so much!

Justine, September 23, 2006

I just wanted to say how happy I am with my bitless bridle that I bought for my 7-year-old part morgan (Tia) last year. When I first got my horse, she was green, unpredictable, and known all over the area for being unsafe to even attempt to ride. After learning a lot, and hearing about this bridle, I worked with my horse, and now, she is a reliable, trustworthy mount. She is relaxed, and very responsive, and I believe that it is all because of this bridle. My horse never fights or rears her head up to put it on like she did with the regular one. I truly believe that every ride is enjoyable for her, as well as for me. Now I don't have to worry about hurting her. I would recommend ANYONE to try out this bridle. Trust me, I swear by it!! This really works!!

Jeannie, September 23, 2006

I wanted to say hello, and tell you two things! First of all, my Danseur is still very happy with his BB! He is still great with it, and I never use anything else. Occasionally, a friend of mine who is a very good rider rides him for me with a snaffle bit, just to put him on the bit once in a while, and he finds that Dansy is très bien, AS USUAL!!! I had a girlfriend ride him the other day who was very pleased with the BB too. This is a lady who is an excellent dressage rider, whom I've known for years, and who has previously owned several Lusitanian stallions. She had never ridden my Dansy before. Well, at first I always let him walk for a long time with the reins completely loose, then let him trot with the reins loose for about 5 or 10 minutes, just to let him warm up and put his head in the position that he wants. Then at a trot, I slowly start taking up the reins, and then he places himself very nicely. When she saw me warming him up with the reins floating, and his head was up a bit at first (which is normal) she told me right away that she didn't think that she would enjoy riding him that way!! She thought that that's how I rode

him with the BB!! I laughed and told her that it was simply a good warm-up, since Dansy is now 15, and I think that a warm-up is important, even at any age. Well, then I collected him, and he was super. She then rode him for about 35 minutes, and was very pleased with his performance with the bridle. She was exhausted after she rode him, LOL, as everyone is, because Dansy always looks pretty and easy, but in fact he needs a lot of leg and tends to be lazy at first. But I can do everything with him and with the BB.... leg yielding, changing gaits, hands, etc. figures of manège, shoulder in, etc! I just wanted to tell you that now tons of people in Maisons-Laffitte know about the BB, and I am spreading the word as best I can!

The second thing that I wanted to tell you, is that last weekend I was at the HARAS DE LA CENSE, near Rambouillet, and they had a seminar on natural horse methods. There was a man there, an Australian, who gave a demonstration on various things with his son. His name is Andrew Maclean (see web page on top of this email) and at the end of his session, I had a few minutes to talk to him. When I started talking about the BB and asked him if he had heard of it (telling him about my Danseur) he broke out in a big smile, and said that he has been using it for several years! He told me that I could tell you, FROM HIM, that he thinks that the BB should be MANDATORY and especially for young horses!!!! I told him how happy I was with mine. So you see, you are making everyone happy!!!

Françoise, September 14, 2006

It took some time but here I am with some news about the bridle I bought with you in July. I must say it is a real revelation. I don't feel any difficulty of any kind because she doesn't have a bit in, on the contrary. She is an islandic mare of about nine years old who has been used as a brood mare for many years. I mounted her once with a bit, the first time, because I didn't have the bitless bridle at that moment. Of course it was the first time but anyhow she moved her head around and didn't quite agree with this metal thing in her mouth. Since then I only mounted her with the bitless bridle and she is adorable. I know she has a good character, but she is quiet strongheaded. I used to ride horses about twenty years ago so for me it is also a kind of adjustment too. But it is really going very good. I have been riding her now five times, and the last time we went for a walk for about an hour and everything went alright. I really recommend the bridle to everyone because it makes a huge difference for the horse but in riding the horse you don't really feel it (by this I mean the control over the horse is the same). I just can say she is much more relaxed and I feel this really very good when I'm riding her. My English vocabulary is limited otherwise I could express it much more detailed, but I really wanted you to know that the bridle is fantastic and I hope I can convince other people doing the same because I surely believe that the horse feels much happier with it. I can see it in her eyes. She doesn't throw up her head when I put the headstall on, for her it's like a halster. It's wonderful, my mare Caramelle is happy and I am too!!!

I wish you all the best with the bridles and really hope a lot of people buy them because it's a God's gift!!!

All the best from Belgium

Peter, September 13, 2006

I wanted to drop you a quick note telling you how well the Bitless Bridle has worked out. I have a Warmblood/Paint out of a fairly well known horse named Art Deco. Mac, my horse, has always been a solid citizen and done well in both the ring and trails. In addition to

the usual hacking and trail riding, Mac and I fox hunt (chase would be more accurate in 2006).

Over the past year or so I had begun to consider putting something less harsh in Mac's mouth. His generally good manners seemed to warrant my experimenting with something like a hackamore. However, before I ever got too serious about the hackamore I saw your ad for the bitless bridle. Upon receiving the bridle, I immediately started to experiment with it. I wanted to know how Mac would respond to it in all situations. I rode him in fields, jumped him in the ring and took him on aggressive trail rides. In every situation he has responded perfectly. He flexes without sawing or pulling by me, jumps without yanking me out of the saddle and stops when asked without undue or harsh tugging.

Finally, the big test was in the hunt field with the fox hunters. In this environment, I would have to feel confident that Mac would be completely under control at all times. At any given time the hunt field may include over 40 horses, 30 or more hounds, Hunting Staff riders and natural conditions like deer, deep mud and other obstacles. After hunting him several times in the bitless bridle, I must report that it has worked out perfectly. Mac is completely within my control, yet relaxed and well mannered enough to be put on the buckle when the situation allows. Given the speed and uncertainty that comes with fox hunting, my fellow riders thought I was insane to take the bit out of Mac's mouth. However, after giving Mac the opportunity to show his stuff without a bit, your bitless bridle has proven to be everything you advertised. My horse and I thank you for bitless bridle,

Jennifer, September 08, 2006

I can't believe it! I bought my (off-track) Thoroughbred gelding, Duncan, just over a year ago. When I bought him, I was aware that he needed some dental work to file down his large hooks and ramps in his mouth. I assumed at the time that the head tossing I experienced while trying him out would resolve after his dental appointment. The equine dentist did a great job and checked his mouth for other problems and found none. I was confident that our next ride would be much different.

I was very disappointed in the months to follow. After trying many bit/bridle combinations, I was pretty much resigned to having to accept this annoying habit. I had never heard of a bitless bride (except for a hackamore) and even when I read about it, I was skeptical that my very (I mean VERY) spirited Thoroughbred could be controlled without a bit. Although he is very well disciplined in the ring, I had been introducing him to trail riding and, I suppose like many riders, it scared the heck out of me to give up what I assumed to be the only tool I had to stop my horse if he were to spook (which happens fairly regularly).

I decided, with butterflies in my stomach, to give it a shot. I ordered the bridle and the day I got it, I put it on him and we rode around the pasture. It is kind of funny looking back because I had my husband standing by in case things got hairy. To my surprise and delight, Duncan walked, trotted and loped around the pasture with more collection than he ever had. NO HEAD TOSSING what-so-ever. At the end of the ride he didn't rub on me and he just seemed happier. My riding buddy came over the next day (she couldn't believe I was riding him without a bit and not getting killed) and she was amazed. She noticed immediately a difference in the way he carried his head and how much more relaxed he seemed.

Well, inside a confined area is one thing, the trails are another. I decided to give it a try. Believe it or not, I was still nervous about being out in the open without a bit. I even brought his other bridle in my saddle bag just in case. We went out for about three hours with 2 other horses. It was a hard trail for my green trail horse. We ended up having to bushwhack

and go through some pretty bad terrain. He was awesome. There was definitely no time that I felt I didn't have control and even when he was scared of something. He also seemed to handle 'scary' situations differently and did not panic or try to bolt once. I can't believe it!

Neither can my friends, they thought I was nuts. Now I have to make a list because they all want to borrow it!

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THIS TERRIFIC PRODUCT

Jennifer & Duncan

Samantha, September 06, 2006

I am pleased to say that the bridle came today and my horse did so very well!

I have a 20 year old QH/Arab mare. I have only had her 4 months and she was given to me because she needed a loving home. My experience with horses is very limited, so we have taken a few months to get to know each other. She was a barrel horse and came with a horrible bit that had long 5 inch shanks. She has also not been handled much the last year. After the vet checked her out this summer and her teeth floated, I tacked her up to ride and it was miserable. She bolts, shakes her head, chews the bit, rubs her face on her front legs, and does not listen to any command. Stopping her would require full pressure on her mouth. On my third ride she started stumbling.

I found your site while searching for another bit. As a novice I find the number of different bits available to be overwhelming! I read your book and pondered the information. It sure made perfect sense to me, but I think this is where my "lack" of horse experience has helped me most. I will try anything if it will help.

My mare, Sierra, stood still when I mounted and walked calmy. She still shook her head and rubbed her face, but I think that is an ingrained response to her bit abuse. She also spent a few minutes chewing for her bit, but several times she let out huge blows of breath through her mouth. I think she was relieved and my confidence has grown. Stopping was no issue and she turned fine. She was rather curious and looked around at her surroundings the whole time. I perceived it as a new found freedom. I did not expect too much and just mostly let her walk where she pleased.

Thank you! My one and only bit is in the trash!

Thanks again from Samantha and Sierra

Leiana, September 1st, 2006 -

I have to admit, when I first heard about the Bitless Bridle, I was a bit skeptical, but after seeing how my gelding goes in it, I think it was a sound investment to make. I've got a 29 (going-on-30) year-old TB gelding that's still riding sound for very light ring work and casual trail rides. I'd been riding him in a mild snaffle for the arena work, and a jumping hackamore for the trails so he can graze. But recently due to dental issues, we decided to take the bit out of his mouth entirely. I decided to give the BB a go since I didn't think the jumping hackamore was all that great for schooling and lateral control (especially since my horse associated the freedom to graze with it), and the old man seemed to have new energy. My horse is very willing, always ducks his head to take the bit, even when there isn't one there, and he's got a spring in his step even at his advanced age, and he probably feels much more liberated without metal in his mouth. I like the BB enough, I sprung for the extra amount and ordered a good old-fashioned leather one. Maybe I'll keep the beta around if I can't send it back in time as a "loaner" for

people at my barn if they want to try it out.

Sandra, Thursday, August 31, 2006

I just want to let you know how I am so pleased with the bitless bridle. I had purchased a 10 year old Arab/quarter mare. She let me bridle her with a bit before I purchased her. After she arrived she refused to have the bit put in. I ordered one of the western leather bitless bridle from you. I can now ride her anywhere. We have now such a complete bond-one of those special ones-finally she said someone has listen to me about the bit. Thank you again for inventing such a wonderful bridle to give horses like Kira to have a wonderful life.

Leslie, Sunday, August 27:

When I ordered the bridle I really didn't expect to be writing to you. How good could it be? Well, it's amazing - like magic. I've been riding my horse (Rebar) in a hackamore for years so the no bit part didn't concern me. I don't have any big problems with Rebar - I just felt we could do better. One problem I have with him is that he yanks his head down to get at grass and practically pulls my arms out of their sockets. He likes being ridden on a loose rein and I am happy to oblige, but he does take advantage of it. Then we engage in a tug of war which he normally wins or we just end up getting annoyed at each other.

So, anyway, I got my new bridle, put it on him and we went out on a trail ride. What an amazing difference! He got it right away and seems so much happier. He never liked a lot of contact - seemed to resent it - and he hates having his head pulled on. Well, now there's no pulling! It seemed to surprise him. I don't know why no one ever thought of this before. It's so logical. Whenever I work with Rebar on the ground I always push him to get him to do what I want him to do - I never pull him.

At the end of the first ride I realized there was no tug of war - there was nothing for either of us to pull against. Our tug of war has turned into the push of peace!

Many thanks from Leslie & Rebar!

Lynn, August 26, 2006:

I ride a Columbian Paso Fino I purchased 30 days under saddle, wild as could be, and not fully bitted. I refused to bit him and rode him with the Spanish training head gear until I saw your add for the bitless bridle. I purchased one just to see what would happen and it is like a miracle. He loves it and works so well that all the other boarders at our barn ask how he does so well with no bit. I am a long time supporter of the no bit ride, and now I can share it with my friends. I just ordered another bitless bridle for a new horse I just bought. He really fights a bit and I am hoping this will be the answer for him also. Thanks so much for this wonderful product.

Nancy, Friday, August 25, 2006:

I am a volunteer with Kent Association of Therapeutic Riding, Inc. (KART) in Kent County, Maryland. Our program has been using bitless bridles for over a year now and we are very pleased with them. At first, we used the bridles on only our calmest horses but soon found that they worked as well or better than bridles with bits on all of our horses. We feel these bridles

are especially beneficial for our horses since handicapped or inexperienced riders often jerk on the bit or use the bridle to balance themselves causing a lot of stress on the horse's mouth.

Many of the owners at the stable where we board our horses have borrowed our bridles to try and have ended up buying their own.

Thanks for making a product that can make horse's life much more comfortable while he is working in the service of his human friends.

Cherry, Wednesday, August 23, 2006:

Just thought I would forward a photo of my 17.1 h Gelderlander 'Norman'. He goes brilliantly in his bridle and I will never put a piece of metal back in his mouth! I took him to Thetford Forest in Norfolk for a weekend of sublime riding. He was so relaxed, we had a ball. Unfortunately, I have not had any success promoting the bridle to Darley. I think I'm too small a 'cog' and they are not prepared to listen. However, I continue to sing the bridle's praises whenever I get the opportunity!

Cheryl, August 23, 2006:

My horse, Pippa, is thankful that I have only used the Bitless Bridle on her, and she shows her thanks by doing whatever I ask of her. The owner of the barn where I board my horses was very skeptical about not using a bit in her mouth, and told me that I may have to use a bit if she wouldn't "give to the bit". Well, I knew he would be amazed when he saw how well Pippa "gave". Each time I work her, he shakes his head in astonishment at how quickly she is progressing in her training. Thank you Dr. Cook!

Charlotte Conn, Tuesday, August 22, 2006:

Thanks so much. Mt. Cleverest and I love the bridle. I like the control. He likes the freedom. It's THE BEST!!!!

Charlotte Conn

Membership Coordinator

United States Dressage Federation

Susan, August 14, 2006

I first started using the bitless bridle on my horses in 2001 when I left a trainer whose training methods caused my horse to start rearing - a combination of draw reins and a twisted snaffle. I went out on my own for a while to work out the issues, and somehow came across Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle. I think that even the first day that I used it on my horse, I got a comment from another trainer on the property about how nice and relaxed my horse looked. I used it exclusively on him for a while while I gradually introduced a bit back into our repertoire (since I'd need a bit for hunter shows, unfortunately). Since then, I have used it on all my other horses, with the same level of success. I have also since changed disciplines and am now competing in horse trials where I use the bitless bridle exclusively for cross-country and stadium. I only wish I could use it for dressage! Both my current horses perform better in the bitless bridle than with a bit in their mouths. I've had better success of resolving their jumping issues (rushing the fences) with the bitless bridle than with a bit. I have heard comments from

friends and fellow competitors that my horses are so quiet and rateable out on the cross country course! They are soft and forward and willing, and I'd much rather have them in the bitless bridle out on trail rides; I feel like I have more control and there's nothing for them to "lock onto" if they want to take off (which they actually never do, but just in case!). Which is why I'm ordering another one. I want both my husband and I to be able to use the bitless bridle while we're trail riding together!

I recommend the BB to everyone who asks about it - I event and only wish I could use it in the dressage phase also! All of the horses I have put it on have only improved with it and it is always my first choice of bridle if I can use it (schooling at home, or jumping in a show). Both of my current horses are much more happy and relaxed with the BB than with the bit!

Dan, August 09, 2006

It is 11:15 PM and I just had to write and to tell you how things went tonight. My mare was a completely different horse tonight. We almost did not ride her in the Bitless bridle because so many folks came to watch. The owner made some adjustments before he put the bridle on and then did another small adjustment after it was on and we had my reins on before we put the bridle on. I use a special reins because of my injuries that reflect in my hands. They did not let me be close to them while they tacked her up and put the bridle on. She did not bat an eyelid just accepted it as if she had been using it forever. But the owner still had me back. The military and government consider me as totally disabled. And they do protect me. He rode her with the Bitless bridle on in the ring for less than 5 minutes and told me I could ride her that he was sure she was fine with it. I rode her all evening, she was so easy to ride and do anything. I did figure 8's and tear drop circles and had no problem what so ever at stopping. He did say, use your body aids we have been working on, legs and proper seat. She responded perfectly and she is not schooled, we are learning together. I won't keep you and make this long but I am really excited how well she did. I heard comments around the ring that she did not throw her head like she had been doing with the hackamore and that her stride was much better. They say I have a very soft hand on the bridle and I had to hardly use the bridle at all to stop even from a slow trot. I did try to use the aids they are teaching me as I said but what a great experience. My mare did want to stretch out and go a little faster but a very gentle pull like a saw and sit back a little and she was right back to a nice trot. I have no idea what I am talking about, I am repeating what the trainers that were there were saying. Everyone was so happy for me and how the bridle worked. Thank you so much. I do not have the strength as most adults and don't need it now.

Jodi, August 07, 2006

I have recently purchased and put to use two of your bridles. I don't know where to start. The difference in my three Welsh Cobs (two Sec D mares and one Sec D stallion) was amazing and instantaneous. All three suffered the same symptoms when put to work in a bit. They would walk way above the rhythm, head toss, over react to ANY correction no matter how gentle the contact. They resisted standing still sometimes to the point of backing up. Our stallion would gape his mouth wide open the minute a bit was introduced. We always had to use a flash on him. So, after resisting buying a BB for the longest time, I saw someone posting about their experience on an equine list. I decided it was time to try something new.

We tried Breeze first 8yr old Sec D Welsh Cob mare. The difference was immediate.

The fast walking never started. She will stand still forever now. No head tossing or anxiety at all. She is even interacting with me when I'm sitting on her. She plays with my feet when we stand still. This is a mare who had little personality in the past. She looks happy under saddle now. I've even got my 8yr old advanced beginner (at best) student riding her.

Then came Bunny, 4 yr old Sec D Welsh Cob mare being ground driven in preparation for breaking to the carriage. She's another one who walks fast... at times too fast for my husband to keep up with her ground driving. When he couldn't keep up and would try to half halt her she would throw tantrums. There was NO getting Bunny to stand at halt in the lines. Those days are over. She is happily ground driving in the BB. No fast walking, no pulling the lines out of our hands and she will halt and stand quietly.

Last is my stallion. Willow Oak Evening Comet, 9yr old Sec D Welsh Cob. I've tried every bit in the book on him. He's been anxious always from the minute we bridle him. I've NEVER been able to ride him on the buckle without him getting fast and breaking to a trot. After one session with the BB he can now quietly walk around the round pen on a totally loose rein. He picks up a quiet trot in a pleasant training level frame. No more bracing against the bit. He's even licking his lips while we work.

What fun this is!!!

Margaret, August 06, 2006

My bridle arrived last Monday. I put it on my 5 year old Tennessee Walker, Zak, Tuesday morning and rode bareback in the round pen for 20 minutes. My first impression was that he was more relaxed and steering was very smooth. Stopping was very quick and backing was okay. The biggest difference came when I removed the bridle. Normally, Zak is desperately trying to rub his face on my back as I remove his wonder bit. This has been a battle for the 2 years I have had him. I have tried many different ways to correct this behavior. He did not even move toward me as I removed the Bitless Bridle! I was so excited. Our second round pen experience was similar ... except he refused to back up. We worked through that, but I don't think it was related to the bridle.

I just finished a 2 hour trail ride with friends I ride with often. I didn't say much about the new bridle. After about a 1/2 hour my friend commented that Zak seemed very content and relaxed. Usually he moves from one place to another in the group. He moved beautifully and was very quick to respond. He even backed up perfectly. When the ride was finished and I moved to take off his bridle, he just stood very calmly. Needless to say, after just 3 rides I am very excited about my Bitless Bridle.

Julie, August 02, 2006:

This is just a quick note to say "thank you thank you thank you" for inventing this wonderful bridle. I had purchased it 8 months ago, but had not tried it on my mare as yet. On a recent pleasure ride in S. Woodstock, VT, she decided she did not like to take the bit anymore... It was a fight to get it in the morning and at the lunch stop I did not take it out for fear of not getting it back in her mouth.

After returning from Vermont, I decided this was the best time as any to try it out. A little background on my mare... she is a great horse, not a mean bone in her body, however - very nervous, spooks all the time and rears when she get scared or encounters llamas, cows, etc. On my first ride out we left from the house and had a nice ride (she was putting her head high

up thinking I was putting a bit in her mouth - which by the way was a very soft rubber snaffle bit - boy was she surprised). Since that first ride I have never gone back! She still gets nervous - we are working on that, but have had no problems stopping, turning - I feel she actually listens to my seat better with your bridle, and has made me a better rider using my body, not the reins. Still have not encountered strange animals, will cross that bridge when we get to it, but I am sure she will get better and better using the bitless.

Jeri, July 31, 2006:

I just wanted you to know that I am so happy with the way both my Tennessee Walkers have responded to the bitless bridle that I have ordered a second bridle and reins so when my husband rides with me both horses can be bitless.

This is the answer to my horses and my prayers.

Denise, July 07, 2006:

Dear Dr. Cook, I have a Quarter horse that is very competitive with other horses when we ride. He thinks he is in a race and the harder I pull on him, he just gets stronger on the trails. Would the bitless bridle have an effect on him to calm and collect him? I ride by myself most of the time and he is fine, but it would be nice to ride with one other person without the fight. Thanks for listening...

[Dr. Cook responds, July 8:

The simple answer is 'Yes.' There is a high probability that the Bitless Bridle will calm your horse, reduce his resistance and make him more compliant. I strongly urge you to give it a trial. You have nothing to lose and a great deal to gain.

If you browse through our Users' Comments online, you will see plenty of reasons to banish the bit. Let me know how you progress.]

Denise, July 29, 2006:

Hi, just to let you know how happy my horse (Teddy) and I are about this bridle. It's the best investment I made in along time. He seems happier and I'm not fighting with him as much when he is with another horse. I think he'll always be competitive, although by himself he is excellent. I wish more people would know about your product, I've been telling everybody I know, even people who don't own horses.

Tracey, July 27, 2006:

I haven't read many comments already posted, but wanted to make sure I commented on it. We have two Tennessee Walkers, one of which has been trained for show, and the other one is a huge, strong, energetic gelding with a lot of testosterone flowing. He also has a hard mouth. We didn't have issues riding either one with a bit, but wanted to give them the opportunity to ride without a bit as we love them and want to be as kind as we can. I just wanted you to know that despite all the hullabaloo about needing bits with long shanks to make Walkers "walk," these two boys gait just as well with these bridles, and are happy as they can be. A natural gait, is just what it says "natural" as in "no help needed." These boys now happily rack on a loose rein and respond to the lightest touch for direction change and speed control.

No tossing of the heads, no straining against the pressure, no balking. We're sharing the bridle between them right now, but will be purchasing two more for the other horse and our son's pony. LOVE IT, LOVE IT!

Blondie in Atlanta

Kathy, July 20, 2006:

Just wanted to let you know that a couple of weeks ago I took a group to Smoke Rise Ranch in Gloucester, OH.

A few of us participated in their Ranch Rodeo in our bitless bridles and did we cause a stir there. We were bombarded with questions. One lady had already purchased one, but hadn't felt comfortable enough to try it and a few others said they were definitely going to get one now that they saw how our horses responded.

Then, last weekend I scribed at a local Dressage Schooling Show. One of my students rode and when she entered the ring the judge said "What does she have on that horse? Some kind of hackamore?"

"No", I replied, "It's a bitless bridle."

"Why would someone in a Dressage Show use something like that?"

So, I explained why I like it so much, gave her your web-site and said that when she had time she should do some research.

Vanessa, July 16, 2006:

I had purchased a beta bridle for my 2 year old draft warmblood horse about 6 months ago. It is the only bridle he has ever worn. As my gelding is still developing mentally and physically, I am careful to limit our training time and exercises.... basic long-lining, some cavaletti work, in-hand dressage work, and an occasional free lunge to condition. My horse is 1,400 lbs at 27 months and well over 16.1 at the withers. He is very strong and very muscled taking a size 94 sheet. Because of his innate gentle temperament and my ability to spend a fair amount of time with him, and because I have trained him in short sessions without overdoing it, he is generally very happy to work and most often I have to sort of "throw him out" of the schooling arena and end a session.

Your bridle is the perfect tool for training this horse as I have found that he reacts much more willingly and naturally in frame when I take the slack out of the reins and make direct contact with his head. He does not tense in his back nor lift his neck and head like a horse in bit would. I have had no problems bringing him down to tempo when he spooks or wants to canter and it has not been called for. Most of all, I feel that I am being responsible in keeping him in your bridle as it is gentle, yet effective, much kinder than any other side-pull or hackamore mechanism, and for those who may school in a halter and leadrope....obviously the subtle communication is so far enhanced with the bitless bridle.

I intend to show this horse and he may very well be an AHSA prelim. jumper. If I need to use a bit for the ring, I intend to attach the bit to the curb rein and ride primarily off the bitless ring. This should suit everyone and tradition and rule books. Will order in leather in the next couple months to upgrade though the beta is in perfect shape...material is leather looking and very soft and so easy to care for....appears unused!

Anyway, sounds like more and more are moving out of the iron age philosophy of breaking and biting and so on..... hopefully it is the next big mega trend in all areas of the show horse world.

Thanks, Vanessa in Colorado

Leslie, Kansas City, July 13, 2006:

I have a very young foxtrotter who just turned 3. She is willing and wonderful and sensitive to commands, and I have plenty of stopping power with her. She never refused the bit in any way, but on the trail often tossed her head -- whether in impatience or in discomfort, I couldn't tell. She had been trained using a mild curb bit, and had no bad habits or discomfort of any kind that I could identify. I had no reason to switch bits other than believing that "less is more." I therefore tried, in succession, a traditional curb with even shorter shanks, a broken low-port curb, an O-ring snaffle, and a D-ring snaffle. Then I tried the bitless bridle, which I had actually purchased some months before but didn't think she was ready to use.

The results are remarkable. She never tosses her head, stops on a verbal command accompanied by gentle pressure, lowers her head to accept the bridle -- all the things I read about in your literature. I couldn't be happier -- and neither could she. Everyone takes the use of a metal bit so much for granted, and I actually had no reason not to accept traditional wisdom on the subject except that everything in your literature made so much sense. But this little girl will never have metal in her mouth again! I ordered a new bridle for our other horse, also a very young foxtrotter gelding, this very morning. Thank you, thank you.

Jeri, July 02, 2006:

I bought my Walking Horse at the age of three. He had been started too young and forced (brutally) by show horse trainers. My big boy was afraid of everything. I have spent thousands on trainers, clinics and products to address his many "issues".

I bought the bitless bridle after reading about it in Trail Rider magazine. Needless to say, the bitless bridle has made a huge difference with my horse. I am absolutely delighted!

Thank you for a product that enhances the communication between me and my beloved Walking Horse.

Alice, June 23, 2006:

I received my new bitless bridle on Wednesday. I rode in the ring Wednesday afternoon with it and was very happy with the bridle. At first my horse was full of it. She thought I didn't have any control, but once she realized that I did have control she was fine.

Thursday afternoon I took her for a two hour trail ride and she was great, very well behaved and she seemed much more comfortable in the bridle. She didn't fuss with her head like she normally does.

I have a yearling paint that I will train with the bitless bridle when she is ready!

Thanks for a great bridle!

Logos, June 17, 2006:

Permission to use my pictures and stories. I would also be happy to be your spokes-person, ordinary person, and ordinary horse, with simple Bitless Bridle and still achieve the ultimate finished of Tevis. It was our first 100, and first Tevis. And only 2 seasons into the sports of Endurance. The Bitless Bridle is our turning point in getting my horse to relax, breathe better,

eat easier and most of all move better. She went from an uncontrollable horse to a more enjoyable ride. Thanks again for inventing this bridle.

Eleanor, June 15, 2006:

I received the cavesson for the headstall you sent to me. Thank you so much for sending it so promptly. The size is perfect now. Following is my testimonial to the effectiveness of the Bitless Bridle. Please feel free to use it if you'd like.

As a freelance instructor and trainer I work with many types of horse breeds and temperaments. A common problem I encounter has to do with the fact that many horses have had negative experiences in the past with bits and are anxious about any sort of contact. The problem is made worse when the current owner of the horse has less than perfectly steady hands and is inadvertently bumping the horse in the mouth as he or she rides. I was extremely pleased to discover the Bitless Bridle and to find how very well it works with every horse on whom I've tried it. It is nothing like a sidepull, bosal or hackamore (which are often far too severe) in that the horse responds immediately, softly, and without any headtossing or resistance. Several of my clients have now purchased the Bitless Bridle and are very happy with it.

I am very thankful that Dr. Cook designed this excellent piece of equipment, and there are many horses who would agree with me wholeheartedly, as well.

Diane, June 08, 2006

Thank you, Carole, for your rapid reply to my e-mail, and indeed, the bridle did arrive yesterday. I tried it out this morning and am thrilled with the way my little Arabian responded to it. He was so relaxed and settled as we rode - we couldn't be happier. Your Bitless Bridle is worth the price.

Katie, June 6, 2006:

Just wanted to let you know how amazing the bitless bridle has been for my horse and his happiness. Sparky is a sensitive soul and was always spooking and soft work only came periodically.

I have only used it 3 times but the difference is night and day. I am communicating with my horse properly for the first time since I've had him (5 yrs) and I can feel how relaxed his body is beneath me. His spooking is not as extreme, as obviously he's not getting jabbed in the mouth so much. Very few of us have perfect hands!

It's the best £100.00 I ever have spent on my horse and to know that my horse might even be enjoying being ridden is such a great feeling. I honestly didn't expect these results; everyone should try it.

Francoise, June 05, 2006:

Three weeks ago I received my bitless bridle. The next day I went riding for 10 minutes in the paddock. The next day I went to the forest it went very well my horse does not pull anymore and is very relaxed, I want you to know that I am very happy with my bitless bridle. I tell it to many people so maybe in time they will also go bitless.

greeting from Holland

Steve, June 02, 2006:

Thanks for all you have done and for your concern of the well being of our horses. I feel that the bitless bridle is the best invention for horses in many years and I'm a true believer in the bridle. Bullet had a real problem taking a bit; he would turn away, put his head in the corner of his stall and even try to raise his head high so I couldn't reach it.

He was reluctant to take the bitless bridle at first, so I had the same struggles putting it on him. But after the first time of wearing it and realizing there was no bit, he never gave another problem.

I was concerned about control at first, but Bullett has never failed to respond to everything I asked him to do better than with a bit.

I'm sold on the product and the service, so you have a customer for life.

Sue, Bokchito, OK, May 28, 2006:

I just now ordered my second Western BB. The brown one I just received worked wonderfully on my just recently broke 3 yr. old Palomino Paint mare. She was broke to a bit and did a lot of head shaking and would be so preoccupied with trying to get the bit out of her mouth that she'd either ignore or didn't respond to the voice commands that our trainer and I had painstakingly taught her. Most of her early training was with a sidepull hack with an extremely soft braided leather noseband. I hear a lot of the negatives people and even my trainer say about not allowing her to get use to the bit (used a snaffle bit) but seeing her calm and seeing that I have actually better control of her is proof enough for me! I've just ordered another one that I will use on our 3 yr. old Quarterhorse gelding that our trainer and I are now working with. What a difference in that mare's mood and her willing cooperation when asked to do anything! We will be purchasing another BB for our yearling when the time comes to break him.

Thank you for offering this amazing piece of equipment online.

[Ed.: The following testimonial comes from a Californian trainer, teacher and organizer of three-day clinics, event clinics and horse trials. She has competed through Advanced level throughout the United States and Canada, and is an international technical delegate, and an international eventing judge. She is the co-founder of the Safe Riders Foundation to educate riders about safety around horses and vice-president of the American Medical Equestrian Association/Safe Riders Foundation (MAEA/SRF). Her article, "Drop into Water, Turn to a Cordwood Pile" in the March 2006 issue of Practical Horseman attracted a great deal of interest as, apart from the text and her photograph on the front cover by Nathan Welton, it was illustrated with 15 additional photographs by Welton, showing her negotiating jumps on her thoroughbred/warmblood cross mare, Marianne, in a Bitless Bridle.]

Wendy Wergeles, 5/27/06:

I have always thought that bits were over-rated. Dr. Cook's Bitless Bridle has proven this theory correct to me. This bridle enables and encourages even the most sensitive horses to make use of their head and neck, which is so important to their confidence and especially to their form and use of their bodies when jumping. I use it for everything from starting and

schooling young horses, to galloping cross-country courses. Thank you Dr. Cook for your extensive research to benefit our association with horses and for your book, "Metal in the Mouth." It never ceases to amaze me how little that I (we) really understand.

Anne, 5/24/06:

Hello Carole!

I just wanted to give you some feedback on the bitless bridle. I recently bought a 5 year old Thoroughbred gelding that I named Bob. He is a retired race horse, and a little high strung but one of the sweetest and gentlest horses I have known. I do not have access to an arena, nor any fenced off area where I can ride right now, hence gravel roads and trails is it. I have had some problems with him not wanting to be out on the trails at all, and just making him leave home has been a chore. He also has a huge problem with the bit and he is more focused on it (chewing on it, trying to put his tongue over it, sticking his tongue out, grinding his teeth, shaking his head etc etc) than on me and what I ask of him. So, Friday afternoon I put on the bitless bridle. The first thing that happened is that he walked right out onto the road, no fuss what so ever. Usually it takes me 5 minutes just to get him out of the driveway! For the first time we went on a walk that he actually enjoyed, ears forward, awake and ready. I was worried I would not have enough control if he were to take off, but soon I wasn't even nervous about him trying to take off anyway because he was calm and happy. I have been using the bitless bridle five times now and he is a changed horse, he is happy now :-).

Anyway, just wanted to let you know. Bob thanks you too.

Melissa, 5/24/06:

Thank you for all your research into a better communication tool for myself and my young horse. Being only 3 years old with limited training and experience, my horse took only a few minutes to realize that a bit was not going into his mouth. Because the hands of his trainer were very light and masterful, he never developed any bad habits with the bit, however, I am not a master. We have a wonderful partnership and an understanding of mutual respect (I have owned him since he was 6 months old) and I do not want to destroy that trust. He responds to the slightest touch of the reins. Even during a spooky moment, there is not a hint of any panic afterward... I think he looks forward to our riding. As a team, we feel safe, confident and we can both breathe! It will be an asset to our future. Thanks.

Laurel, 5/19/06:

Hi Carole,

I got the bridle yesterday and rode in it today. It went very well! My mare seemed quite happy. She is a very quiet hunter. For some reason she was seriously over bitted by her previous rider. Still haven't figured that one out since she is never in a hurry to go anywhere. I guess riders sometimes make up for their own inadequacies by over using tack. In any case, it made her rather sensitive to bit pressure even with a plain snaffle.

I thought the Bitless method might be worth trying on her. I'm always up for trying something new, especially when it might make my horses happier.

The bridle is also very nice quality. I admit, I was concerned with it being big and heavy. It looks very nice though.

I'll keep you posted on our progress and how some of the other horses in my care do when I try it on them.

Thanks for the quick shipping too!

Sheila, 5/17/06:

Thank you so very much! I could be a commercial for the Bitless Bridle!

I have an 11 year old Quarter Horse, who was used exclusively as a show horse all his life. He soured and (wisely) refused to go into the ring and run around in circles any more. They sold him---I got him.

He is SO good and willing; his only problem was the bit. He continually stuck his tongue out and shook his head. Still did what he was told, but was obviously unhappy. The vet said there was nothing wrong with his mouth.

I tried every bit I could think of, ever milder and milder. Finally, I said "Oh forget it. What's he going to do? Run away with me? Like a bit ever made a horse stop!"

So I got the biothane version of the Bitless Bridle, and tried it (not without some trepidation) in my field. The first time, he thought I was riding him with a halter, so he could do whatever he wanted. A few easy turns and stops took care of that misunderstanding. I now ride him everywhere in his Bitless Bridle. We take trails some riders say are "too hard". He is so happy and relaxed! No tongue, no head shaking. Very responsive and will go "on the bit" as easily as if he HAD a bit. Pinpoint steering. Instant halts. And a lot of strange looks from people still using bits!

Hence, my recent order for the deluxe leather version. He deserves to look handsome.

Olga, 5/16/06:

I just want you to know that this is the fourth bitless bridle I have ordered. I first ordered the synthetic one in order to see if it would be all it was purported to be. I was so pleased that I then ordered another in leather in the medium size. I had this for about a year and decided it was a little too large for my horse and ordered another in the cob size. This one (the third) fitted him absolutely. About two months ago my husband decided he would like to try a bitless on his horse - a 17hh OTTB. He was very apprehensive as this is his first horse and he is a novice rider. He had however developed quite a relationship with this horse and I felt confident that it would be a successful experiment. Well IT IS! So this last order is for the Western bridle along with the reins as my husband rides Western.

Our horses are happier and I am very, very pleased with the bridles. I have not talked the bridle up as I think performance is the key. After about a year of watching, our stable manager asked to borrow the synthetic one and used it on three school horses - all OTTBs. He was very pleased with the results and now uses one all the time when he rides. However he still teaches beginners with a bitted bridle. But small steps are important. Now if we can only get judges and organizations such as the FEI to accept them, then I think more people will use them.

I made a promise to my horse three years ago that I would never put another bit in his mouth and I have kept that promise. In return he has kept me safe!

Dianna, Helena, MT, 5/15/06

Hi,

Want to thank you ever soooooooooo much for inventing, making, selling the bitless bridle!!! My mare is a very HAPPY horse now.....and so am I!!!

My mare has never had a bit in her mouth. I have been using a mechanical Hackamore. Neither of us liked that "contraption" much, but it was better than a bit!!! I have never liked bits, and have been determined not to use one on this horse cause we don't need it.

Your bitless bridle works beautifully for us. She is more responsive and even softer now. Sirabie and I had a wonderful ride in the woods and hills this morning and we are BOTH smiling!!! (Actually, at this moment she is napping in the sun).....

Thank you.

Karen, 5/11/06:

Hi, Carole!

I know you had sent me an email about some more gently used bitless bridles you have, but I lost the email, since I had a computer glitch. Could you please let me know if you have any full sized horse bridles?

The pony bridle is a miracle worker! I was leery about paying \$100 for a pony bridle, but it's been such a blessing. We got this pony a little over a month ago, and she would always toss her head back. She's in her teens so we were not happy about this, since we got her to be a lesson pony for younger kids. But the bitless bridle is doing its job. We figure she must have had too many beginner kids hurt her mouth, who regularly will "pull" on the reins to balance themselves while they are learning to ride. In fact, it took her a few rides to realize that this would no longer happen. She was "anticipating" pain, but didn't get any, and she's finally now relaxing completely. What a difference!

So, if you have any horse bridles laying around, let me know. I think we might end up being a farm of mostly bitless bridles! Now that we have several boarders on our farm, they're seeing the difference too, and of course, we think they will eventually become customers. We just send them to your website.

Thanks again for all your help.

Gail, 5/9/06:

Hi Carole,

Below is my much more complete comments after a month of using the bridle. You are welcome to use excerpts as you please. As a side note, I am a small animal veterinarian. I spent hours researching the issues surrounding this pony and finally decided to try the Bitless despite extreme doubts from my daughter's riding instructors. (It was either that or sell the pony.) The first time I found the Bitless Bridle website, I almost dismissed it entirely as "snake oil" type propaganda. However, I live in Massachusetts so I was easily able to double check Dr. Cook's credentials with colleagues. I also checked for feedback on unrelated chat lines, etc. Cathie Hatrick-Anderson was wonderful in helping to provide solid foundational work in addition to implementing the use of the Bitless Bridle. Although there will come a time when my daughter and pony will have to use an occasional bit for dressage competitions, right now they are finally developing into the team we thought they could become without the bit!

Thanks for your help -- the change not only meant a lot to my daughter, but it may have saved this pony from a potentially serious fate since she was becoming unsafe for children to

ride.

We tried my daughter's pony in a Bitless Bridle starting a month ago. The pony was purchased from a camp program after my daughter, her instructor and I rode the pony, both in an arena and on trails. Her previous history is murky but we know that she was an A circuit hunter pony with approximately 1 1/2 years professional training at a show barn. At the camp, she was a favorite of the more advanced students, CITs and assistant riding instructor although clearly a fast and very forward pony. (She was ridden 4 to 6 hours daily, 6 days weekly at the camp.)

After purchasing her, we found she was on a slow twist bit that was too large and seemed too harsh for her. She is a generally cooperative, kind and very personable pony with excellent ground manners with absolutely no tendency to bite, kick, or buck. We put her in a properly fitted eggbutt snaffle and found that my daughter could not easily control her. When we tried a Kimberwicke, she got behind the bit. We tried the slow twist again and she was even worse after an initial improvement. We then tried a very mild full cheek snaffle and managed to get a reasonable halt, walk and trot with the help of consistent training and schooling BUT she head tossed, pulled her head out of the reins and could be difficult to stop. Worst of all, as time went on, she started cantering off in all directions whether asked to do so or not. This was despite twice weekly riding lessons, schooling 2 to 3 times weekly and groundwork (lunging and in-hand) 3 times weekly. My daughter typically rides 4 to 5 days weekly. We were ready to sell the pony because it was becoming dangerous. The trainers and instructors repeatedly said that she was a ilot of pony, a quick pony but exceptionally good-natured and didn't want us to give up on her.

After researching the issue, and with the help of a local professional trainer (Cathie Hatrick-Anderson), we decided to try the Bitless Bridle and we have a new pony. Although we thought it might help, we truly did not expect the dramatic change that has occurred. Although the pony is still quite forward, she now always stays at the requested gait and can be rated within the gait without difficulty. The pony is MUCH more relaxed under saddle for anyone, not just my daughter. She is listening and following verbal commands to an extent that never occurred previously. She halts quickly and quietly and does downward transitions without a struggle.

Although we are meticulous about taking excellent care of the pony and we are very attached to her, my first priority was my daughter's safety. Thus, we tried the Bitless Bridle for SAFETY REASONS rather than any other reason. There is such an extreme difference that virtually everyone who has worked with this pony almost cannot believe it is the same pony. As my daughter puts it, the pony has become angelically perfect!

Kathy, May 08, 2006

Greetings! I just purchased your padded ,leather bridle and love it. I met and worked with you at the KHP when we were examining and scoping the guys at the Hall of Champions. I left the park in 1990 in order for my husband to pursue his career with Novartis. We just recently moved back to Ky and purchased a farm where we continue raising thoroughbreds for sport (dressage and jumping.

We have tried the bridle on a very sensitive filly who would grind her teeth and stiffen even with the mildest metal bit and a very large gelding who had previously been owned by a rider with bad hands- we had been working to get him to free his back and stretch down and the bitless bridle has already increased his confidence with only two rides- I am getting ready to

order a couple more and put the entire stable in them. Hopefully we can get the hunter and dressage community to come to their senses and make them legal.

Del W., Medford, NJ, 5/3/06:

I recently purchased your bitless bridle. Each time I tack up, I ride my horse in our paddock before taking him out on the trail. After the second ride, he accepted the bridle like it was an old friend, lowering his head and allowing me to easily put it on. I have now used the bridle three times and have had no problems at all with it. I must add that my horse is not an excitable animal. He is 21 years old and I'm a 63 year old lady. I am very careful. I do not need any accidents as I have many aches and pains from my years of riding and occasionally taking a tumble. I don't want any others. I would love to see this bridle on some of the horses at the arena my girlfriend and I go to each Tuesday evening where she does team penning. Those horses need this bridle. All the yanking with the horses responding with mouths open and resistance could be avoided. One of these nights I hope to take my horse, not to team pen, but just to ride in the arena as they change the cattle. That way everyone can see the bridle and maybe ask me some questions.

Very interesting concept. I especially like being able to allow my horse to graze while out on our rides. And, I can get him to leave the grass and behave fine with the bridle. He can't get away from it, nor does he try.

The real test will be riding with other horses. On occasion my horse has shown excitement with a bunch of other horses around. We'll see and I'll report the outcome. Thanks.

Lori D., May 02, 2006

I own a 18 year old paint gelding. I am a novice rider and began with the bit and bridle given to me when I got my horse. He hated it! Was so barn sour and tried everything possible to get it off after our first couple of rides. So either I hurt him with bit, the bit was not the right fit, etc. I was frustrated as I wanted him to enjoy riding and so did I. With a lot of research of different bits, I gave up on the idea and researched bitless bridles including hackamores, bosals and sidepulls all with pros and cons. Then I came across Dr. Cook's bitless bridle, I had to try it! I had nothing to lose. What a success!! My horse is totally different. The first 20 minutes consist of head shaking and accepting the new feel. Then he settled in real nice. I have used many more times since it arrived a couple weeks ago. Does not shy away when tacking and no more restlessness when going to mount. I love it!!! I just rescued a mare a few days ago that has had a rough time of it. When her injuries heal I will be ordering one for her. There will be no other bridle in my tack room! I returned the one the owner gave me with my first horse. She (previous owner) too has gone bitless with her two horses and will use the returned bridle for decoration only! Thanks so much Dr. Cook for this most humane and safe way of riding. The head control for turning and stops is fantastic!!! Thank you so much.

Jennifer, Brooklyn Center, MN, 5/1/06:

Thank you! Where do we begin?

After waiting 25 years for my first horse, I finally found SUNNY, a 10-year-old mare I loved (and could now afford to purchase and keep). I was privileged to know and ride her for

nearly a year, so I was somewhat aware of her "quirks." However, I attributed them to too much feed (straight alfalfa hay) and lack of exercise (about once a week, if that). Not all of her quirks resolved after a change in feed and exercise though.

About a month ago, we were riding outside when she decided she wanted to run after another horse that was gaiting down the dirt road. I said no, and she "blew up" underneath me. Sunny had always been touchy about her mouth, but this time she really let me know that iwhoa on the bit was not acceptable. I've never been afraid while riding before, but I was that day. Fortunately, I got her to stand still long enough to dismount and go indoors to lunge a while before remounting. That ride prompted a search for an alternative.

One of my fellow boarders rides her horse in a Bitless. I asked about her experience and why she tried it. Then I checked out the website. Another boarder lent me her Bitless to try for a while to see if it would help (I'm too cheap to even spend \$12 on shipping and then returning something if it doesn't work). Was I thrilled!

Sunny now canters with ease no ear pinning, tail wringing, trotting off. And wonder of wonders, she backs up! Before, getting her to back up one step was a huge challenge under saddle. Now she easily (and willingly) will back 5 or 6 steps. She will stop and stand, even in the presence of other horses. She doesn't jig on the way home from a ride out. She doesn't shake her head or scratch her face, or pull on the reins, or "nosedive," or cough excessively, or "gape." She does still try to eat along the trail sometimes, but usually only if it's around feeding time anyway (she loves to eat). She's less spooky, even on windy days, and if she does spook, she spooks with about half the intensity she used to.

Sunny does now respond to less of a rein cue. She does back up. She does canter. She just seems happier overall.

You have given me a new horse!

While we might have a "flashback" in a stressful situation (30 days and counting though!) even if we did, I feel better knowing that I am not hurting her one "bit." All without a loss of control, rather, with an increase in control.

Thank you. I would be interested in completing another questionnaire in a few months. Let's prove the longevity of these improvements!

Kathleen M Hulle, LVT, April 28, 2006

Good Morning Dr. Cook,

Wanted to take a bit of time to update you on our work here with the BB. Currently we have ten horses here at Avelene after the move. We continue to find horses working under stressful conditions and demonstrating symptoms of biting issues that go unrecognized by riders, trainers, and owners. Recently, I was at a regional Pony Club Ratings Clinic and found 70-75% of the mounts demonstrating many bitted behaviors.

Happily, I will report that the acceptance of the BB is growing! We are finding more clients trying and committing to the BB. We have introduced the BB to Kate Athanas-Wilson's saddle fitting clinics (Dutchess Bridle and Saddle LLC). She continues to talk to her clients about her own experience with the BB on her half draft. She recommends it to all her clients that ask about headwear and has been asked to speak in clinics on behalf of the BB!

We were pleased to add to our farm more success stories this year. Bonnie is a nine year old purebred Connemara mare that was returned to the breeder for head behavior issues. Currently, she is beginning her Competitive Trail season in her BB and her Free 'N' Easy saddle after a winter of ground work. She demonstrates profound facial nerve damage (worst case we

have worked with so far). History is unknown of course. Presently, we are only unable to paste worm her. She has accepted all other manipulation and facial contacts including warm kisses. Imagine a pony that would not let you kiss her!

We are not sure we will be able to return this one to the dressage ring. She relapses into head shaking when stressed or nervous. It is early but she is a very determined pony.

We have also been offered the opportunity to work with Virginia and Joe Winkler and their wonderfully breed Connemara ponies at Journey's End Farm in Gardiner, NY. They breed a very hardy, intelligent line with intense performance drive. If you read between the lines.... not for amateurs. We are thrilled. Virginia and Joe are advocates of the BB and its acceptance by the Dressage Association. They are excited to have their ponies started and introduced into the performance world with compassion. We plan to show the ponies in BB's even if we need to do so without recognition. This is an exciting opportunity for the ponies.

Kaleigh continues to mature in her BB. As her work ethic improved, she outgrew traditionally treed saddles. She is massive. Despite her stature, she is still butter in my hands. She also will return to work in and out of the dressage ring now that the move is complete. Since she had the winter off, we will look to the fall before we event her again.

We have retired our Arab/Welsh gelding. He continued to track straight in his BB after twenty years tracking to the right in bits. He remains our strongest spokesman for the BB. No more stumbling for the old guy.

I have found the BB an excellent tool for the OTTB. It has facilitated owner/rider confidence directly improving horse and rider relationship. Most of these horses are trying on intimate relationships with their owner for the first time ever. Increasing handler confidence is instrumental in establishing the compassionate leader every horse dreams of!

I would like to make an important change to the website as my email address has changed and I wish to continue being available to answer questions and offer referrals for the BB. We can be contacted through the follow address: HulleKD@aol.com or by phone 607-387-7402. Avelene is located in between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes in New York. We are a short drive from Binghamton, Syracuse, Watkins Glen, Rochester and a moderate drive from the Buffalo area and Albany area. We offer non-judgmental assistance in troubleshooting relationships between horses and ponies and their handlers.

I hope you are well. We speak of you on a daily basis here. Looking forward to hearing from you again.

Cherry, Darley Stud Management Co Ltd, 4/24/06:

HI - I have recently purchased your leather bitless bridle for my 10 year old, 17.1h Gelderlander. He had been used by a previous owner as a driving horse and since I purchased him in 2004, I have re-trained him to Western riding, which he has taken to wonderfully. I also decided to remove his shoes 1 year ago (he used to loose back shoes fairly frequently and his horn was poor). After a period of adjustment, horn re-growth, bare foot trimming and a healthy diet, his feet are excellent. I had been toying with the idea of bitless riding for sometime and had been practicing riding with just his halter and Western reins. To my delight, I found Dr Cook's website and decided to got for it! Norman has taken to his bridle with ease and appears to be very content. Who said you can't teach an older horse new tricks!!!! An iron free Happy horse and happy owner. Thank you.

Linda Burger, Gilbert AZ, 4/18/06:

Hi, last month I received your bitless bridle, and I must say, I was pleasantly surprised. I am now ordering my 2nd one for the other horse. I had a great opportunity to test this under one of the worst situations, a bolting horse. My horse is not a bolter, not much startles nor flaps him, however, while riding with a friend, both horses were startled by some students practicing lacrosse, with white helmets, and large sticks. Both horses became frightened, I think they were playing off each other more than not, but turned and bolted for home. I have to say I honestly felt this was one of the worst experiences I have had in the 6 years of owning my horse, with regards to his desire to flee, and I had the most control with your bitless bridle. Not only was I able to slow and turn him into a stop faster, and with half the strength, I wasn't pulling on his mouth creating another frightening thing, pain, for him. Very pleased, the husband likes it for his horse as well and so I need another. Thank you again for a well made, thought out product, I am passing on my experiences and have another one of my friends looking at it.

Marlene Baccala, 4/11/06:

I just LOVE my bitless bridle, and my mare thinks it's pretty cool too! My mare just keep licking her lips and snorting. I could just see her thinking "wow, this thing on my head feels pretty nice, and I can eat grass (on the run) much better now." Anyway, I just wanted to thank you for such a great product.

Alexandra, Canada 4/11/06:

He loves it. And I love it, knowing that he's happier. He has a very pleased, relaxed look on his face while wearing it and doesn't fuss while I'm putting it on (he fusses if there's a bit, always has). There isn't an arena where I ride, so I rode him in a circle in the yard and then we immediately went for a hack and he was perfect, as responsive (if not more) than he is with a bit. It's funny, because he can be quite hyper so people are saying "Oooooo, you're brave" putting no bit on him. But I explained that I have just as much control plus he's happier so he's not fussing at all, and they're now thinking of trying one out as well. Plus, there's no bit to clean. :) I've even ridden him bareback with just the bitless bridle.

My pony and I thank you very much -- oh, and I should let you know it fits him perfectly. It's tight on his nose, but I guess it needs to be? It's not so tight he can't eat while it's on, but he can't open his mouth very wide. It's adjusted to the largest size, and he's a medium pony with a fine head, so if people have a large pony, I guess they would need a cob size but I'm pretty sure it's the right size for him. And it looks beautiful on him, plus if I don't point out that it's bitless, people don't really notice at first.

Anyway, very happy here in Ontario -- I'm going to hate putting that bit back on him for shows....

Vikki, 4/03/06:

I just got your Bitless bridle and tried it on my mustang . It really is AWESOME!! I just love it. My husband is thinking of trying it on his Arabian and will order another one. Thanks very much Vikki Kyle Dewey Arizona

Christie, 4/3/06:

Hi Carole-

I had my first ride today with the bitless bridle - it is just great! I only had to make small changes in my rein aids.

It was great at stopping my horse, Thor, who is a very strong and opinionated Fjord horse. He has an old habit of taking off up the hill after he jumps the creek, so that I could see how the bridle worked for stopping him at his strongest.

Well, he stopped on a dime after 3 strides! For him this is far more effective than a bit.

Though I usually ride about 80% of the time with a KK snaffle, I also use a sidepull, a halter and sometimes just a lead rope around his neck. With the sidepull there is not much in the way of brakes, though usually enough but it is hard to get a horses head up when it is time to stop eating grass and to move on. This bridle also stays in place whereas the sidepull had a lot of motion.

I train my horses with dressage but mostly ride in the forests here. I did a bit of schooling work at the trot and was so pleased that he flexed at the poll and got his back up with this bridle. Well, this was just our first ride and I'm sure that there are more good things to follow.

Thanks for making such a great humane product! I am also impressed by your offer of a 30-day refund and the ability to trade up to a leather bridle. In the past I have always bought fine leather (read expensive) bridles and it was really a mental struggle to buy biothane BUT what a joy to not have to worry about cleaning and conditioning. Still thinking about the leather bridle though....

Tommy, Willy and Georgina, 3/29/06:

As a mother of 5 yr old twin boys, safety when riding is paramount. Well-made, effective and safe equipment for our Welsh Mountain pony Jack Lewis is essential. The boys are very young to be riding on their own and first they have to convince me they are up to the job.

We chose The Bitless Bridle after reading 'Metal In The Mouth' and after seeing how Jack Lewis seemed to lean on the bit with his previous 11yr old boy rider who used a Kimberwick curb bit to compete at Pony Club events. We thought we would take the 'fight and flight' out of the equation and see how Jack Lewis reacted.

Immediately we tried The Bitless Bridle Jack Lewis responded with obediences and softness. As we suspected if there was nothing to fight against there was no fight or flight. Both boys practiced their Pony Club sporting events with no problems so we ventured out on the tracks, this will be a good test I though, especially as the less talented of the twins was riding. Jack Lewis went well, on the way home the pony was keen and started to go into a strong trot and even a few strides of canter, I thought well this is it if Tommy can't stop him now then he's done for, but all was well Tommy did not fight him he used lateral flexion to control the pace, the bridle worked brilliantly with the cross over strap encouraging Jack Lewis to turn his head.

I have seen Jack Lewis in a similar situation with the previous owner where he simply leaned on the curb bit and turned his head and stuck his shoulder out and kept ploughing on at a forceful pace. This was completely different, yes he had the energy but he did not fight, he simply responded to Tommy's rein aid and turned in a circle - there you have it a moderately able 5 yr old boy completely in control of a cunningly experienced Pony Club mount.

I must say I was impressed, yes relieved too, it was a true test and the bridle passed with flying colors. We use the bridle all the time at home and would really like to use it at all of the Pony Club events including the One day Events that we thought we would try this year.

Martin, Sweden, 3/27/06:

Beste Bob,

Thank you for answering me, and so fast.

1. The bitless bridle works marvelous. We have tried with three of our horses. My showjump-mare constantly moved her underlip and my wife, who was looking, saw reflections in her face: What is this? Honestly, I never rode her better. She was very constant in leaning, very relaxed, used her back very well en both of the mares I ride have a better, more powerful use of the hind leg. With the showjumper it was from the very first moment as if I had never ridden her else. We 'll order another bitless bridle, so we both have one. My wife is a writer and has a stand Saturday on a fair/market/showday for friendly horse riding en she will show there the bitless bridle.

2. The article about bitless riding is published in 'Bit' nr. 131, april 2006, email: Bit@reedbusiness.nl. You can mail them voor a copy. If this is going wrong, I will send you the story in copy.

3. When I was working at my article about hyperflexion I interviewed several people. One big opponent of hyperflexion is Dr. Ulrike Thiel. Her website is also in English: www.hippocampus-nl.com. I said her for a month ago, before I heard of the bitless bridle, that the main problem in equine sports is the bit. It is a tool for slavery. She said you hardly cannot ride a horse without a bit, because the horse will not give and really use his back without a bit. One of my mares I've ridden with the bitless bridle never gives her back. She is a showjumper and a little bit a stargazer. The only thing I always try with her is not disturbing her in the mouth. And now, with the bitless bridle, she was marching like never before. And that within twenty minutes. My wife was very much surprised and enthusiast. It is a very good horse, with large movements. One can see that when she is free in the paddock or in the land, but not under the saddle with a bit. In the four years I have her, she has only one or two times walked like this, but after an hour riding en with much pressure.

4. The article I'll write in the beginning of may, I think. This will lead to a piece of discussion undoubtedly. And if I have some questions yet I'll surely mail them.

NeCe, Papillion, Nebraska, 3/26/06:

Wow! That is my favorite word for my horses' new bitless bridle! I have a 15 year old former reiner, a Doc O Lena grandson, who just hates bits. My son, an equine vet, suggested the bitless bridle after I had tried everything from a hollow snaffle to just a halter with reins hooked onto the sides. My horse is REALLY broke but still can be a head tosser if he gets annoyed with his anything in his mouth. After just one minute with the bitless bridle he was soft, flexible, and relaxed. But most of all we are both HAPPY. I am ordering another one today for my 12 year old Western Pleasure Paint. Can't thank you enough!

Kathy, MA, 3/23/06:

I attended Cathie Anderson's bitless bridle clinic this past weekend with my 16 yr old

Arabian mare. She has always been ridden in a hackamore and does well without a bit. I was looking for a kinder method to control her, as I feel the hackamore can be harsh across her nose or under her chin. I understand that the bitless bridle exerts control by distributing gentle pressure over a wide, less sensitive area. I hoped to try the bridle in a controlled environment under experienced supervision. I couldn't have been happier with the results! I didn't feel a difference between the hackamore and the bitless bridle as far as control went, and was thrilled to know I could get the same responses from my mare without hurting her. I'm sending in my order for a bitless bridle this week and look forward to seeing how well she does out on the trails.

Three other horses attended the clinic too, two Thoroughbreds and a Morgan. They were three very spirited horses who pranced and danced while waiting to participate. I wish everyone reading this could have seen the difference in these horses after using the bitless bridle. After Cathy worked with them for a little while and put the bitless bridle on, each was like a different horse. One horse that could barely stop moving while bitted, walked docile beside her owner after her session. One of the thoroughbreds needed three people to take his bridle off, but stood still to be mounted and was quietly ridden once he had the bitless bridle on. I saw each of the three horses (that went from bit to bitless) completely stop chewing, tossing their heads, actually relax, and act more controlled then when they were being ridden/handled with a bit.

Honestly, I expected to go from hackamore to bitless bridle fairly easily. I was extremely surprised to see the horses go so easily from a bit to bitless. All horses were trotting, and some cantering in the ring while using the bitless bridle. It seemed effortless and I can't say enough about the experience or the bridle!

Thank you so much, Cathie!

Karen, Monterrey, Nuevo LeÛn, MÈxico, 3/20/06:

My horse has been on the bitless bridle for a little under a month. He is an eight-year-old Lusitano and had been used for breeding, but also is trained for several dressage exercises. The problem is that his training did not include adequate collection, so he has used his large, muscular neck to put his head wherever he desired and avoid collection except for brief moments.

I had his mouth checked by the vet for any evidence of damage, injury, or tooth problems. He has a clean bill of health, and though he tosses his head, there is no evidence of neuralgic pain. He has a lively but very friendly temperament, enjoys have his head handled and approaches me to be petted, brushed, or spoken to.

The reason I ordered the bitless bridle is because I either had no contact with the mouth at all with a bit, or he simply rode through it. As someone who enjoys dressage, I need contact with the mouth through the reins, and it worried me that any clumsiness with my hands would hurt my horse's mouth and be contributing to the problem. And of course with the inconstant contact I was battling with, clumsiness on my part was inevitable.

The bitless bridle is enabling me to train my horse free from worry that I am injuring him. He still is fighting collection from time to time, especially when distracted by where our other horse, a mare, is (he's been gelded but much of this behavior is now imprinted regardless of blood hormone levels), but now it doesn't matter to me because I can work worry-free. Now I have constant, good rein contact with the horse, and I notice progress every time I work with him.

Even though I cannot report a spectacular improvement from the instant I used the bitless bridle, I can report a constant, consistent improvement as I work, and I can also state that the horse took to the bridle as if he had been using it all his life. I would now use no other kind. I feel less tense myself and can concentrate on my riding position and aids. It is possible that my horse's head tossing, especially coming to the fore when he is searching for the mare to make sure she is in view, may never go away completely because this is behavior that is related to his use as a stud, but it is improving. With patience, I believe it can be reduced to a minimum.

Many thanks for this marvelous invention! And greeting from Mexico, where I live! Keep me posted on anything new in the offing.

Charles, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 3/20/06:

Dear Dr. Cook:

I had spoken with you on the telephone a couple months ago. Perhaps you remember that when I am with the horse I ride, I am the one who stated I always ask my horse do to something, including saying "please" and "thank you".

After using the Bitless Bridle, I wanted to share with you the following.

In the last two and a half years that I have been riding, a once a week lesson, I have never fallen off a horse, nor been bucked off, nor been kicked, stepped on or had a physical confrontation with a horse. I do not ride, nor ever will ride, with spurs, of any type. I used to use a crop, only with a most gentle contact, barely a light touch, just to try and remind a horse to activate his hind muscles and start loping or cantering, but which I haven't had to use since the Bitless Bridle. I don't ever hit a horse, not a slap, a nudge. In the stables, if I need to ask the horse I ride to move over, I ask him with human words and then gently place my hand on his side and ever so slightly apply faint pressure. Sometimes just my moving from one side to another he already knows to move to once side of the barn aisle or the other, or just by getting ready my hands to about to apply faint pressure, does he move over. That is all a horse needs, because they want to understand and try and get along. 99.9% of a horse being difficult is either from being scarred, or not understanding what should be done.

Well, I have used the X-Full Havana Brown Padded leather bridle for about 6-8 lessons. Of course, after having studied the literature and writings about the bridle, I was prepared for positive changes, which I know have occurred, so I am very happy, but most importantly, the horse I ride, Ben, is happy.

I must say that he grabs a hold of the reins when I am trying to put it on him, and either he is grabbing hold as an indication, in effect communicating that "yes, I do like this bridle", or what most people would attribute to his years of riding with a bit and out of custom wanting something in his mouth. I prefer to think the former, but I am a dreamer, because we need more people to reach for the stars.

Anyway, my teacher has also noticed a better stride from Ben, and even commented that the "old" Ben was back. And this comes from a teacher who is fairly strict and set her ways, skeptical at best, even telling me when I first asked about using the bridle to be sure to bring along the "destructions", in a play on the word "instructions". So, we may be casting some hopeful light on one quite skeptical person in this case.

I do want to comment that, in line with the suggestion in the instructions, the part where the bridle passes through the noseband O rings, it is important that that section be especially well oiled, using something like a baseball glove oil, because if there is too much

friction at those points, the horse I ride with the bridle, seemed to start shaking his head when at stand still, perhaps trying to loosen the crossover straps. I say perhaps, because this last lesson I had, he didn't do that, but in the previous lesson he was shaking his head. So before the last lesson I really oiled that part of the crossover strap very well, and that seemed to address the issue.

Thank you for offering the bridle and for thinking so considerately of horses, our most noble and endearing four legged friends.

Mary, 3/14/06:

Hi Carole! I'm finally home and the "horse size" bridle was awaiting me. Took it out this afternoon - such a nice day - it fit PERFECTLY! So perfectly that I decided to just get on the beast (he hasn't had tack on since Thanksgiving) and he just DANCED! No more chattering teeth when you asked to go on the bit - no more banging lips together. He's just the nicest fellow, and just wants to please so much - but for whatever reason (and he has dental care 2xyear), any bit I put in his mouth caused these symptoms that I saw as stress. Other trainers would try to "force him" - and I was supposedly the idiot who was "too soft". Hey, I'm 49 and spent over a decade breaking yearlings for the racetrack - not to mention several years as an amateur eventer. I think I know when a horse (especially one I've had since he was two!) is trying to tell me something!

I'm now your biggest fan! This should be required hardware for any horse stuck in a riding school! One good friend (who runs a high end riding school down here - high end dressage) looked at the original cob version I had with total skepticism and scorn - can't wait to take a ride with her later this week!

Anyway. I shall return the original cob version for credit - send it UPS tomorrow and you can credit my card. But if you have some flyers or anything that you would like me to pass out down here - hey, I'm converted! Will go to your website to see about how to lobby the USEA to change their rules for the dressage phase.

Thanks again for all your patience in working with me. Dinl thanks you too! He's gonna be a much happier boy!

Kathy, 3/13/06:

All I can say is "OH MY GOD".

I was apprehensively skeptical, but I just bought this horse and they said she was very light in the mouth and we were having a real struggle communicating. My previous horse was a very head strong hunter jumper, so I was a very heavy handed rider. My new horse and I couldn't find common ground. I tried soooooo hard to be light handed, but she always, as I called it, "jawwed" at the bit. I think you called the symptom Yawning. The only time she didn't react to the bit was at a walk when the reins were completely loose. I came to the conclusion she did not like bits. I tried all different kinds. When I tried to collect her in a trot or a canter it was ALWAYS a struggle. She wouldn't respond to rein jiggling, I was very frustrated and I was worried we were going to have these issues forever.

So, when I heard about this bridle thru my internet research, I thought, why not. I can ride her around the pasture with a halter, and if it gave me more control than that, what could it hurt.

SHE WAS AWESOME TODAY! I tried her out first in the arena. She was collected

and quiet, I think she surprised herself. Then I took her out to the pipeline. We tried different speeds, then I let her go, she's a VERY forward girl. She was very controllable and a pleasure to ride, even fast. I was able to stop her, I think, easier than when she was bitted. Her canter felt more comfortable because she was collected and not thinking about the bit, but moreover, what she was doing.

I gotta tell you, you have a winner here. If you ever decide you want to have reps market this bridle I'd be very interested in being considered. I am a true believer and will not be using a bit on her again!

Thanks for bringing me and my girl closer together!

Tracy, 3/13/06:

Hi Carole

Just thought that I would let you know that I took my horse to a dressage show yesterday and he did his first ever dressage test! I have only had the BB for a month and although we are not 100% in it yet, he is LOADS better than when I used a bit! He is a very well bred Thoroughbred and is always spooky and sharp and although he was excited yesterday (and had a buckaroo in the warm-up ring!) I was absolutely over the moon with him! Obviously he was a bit tense because it was his first time out, but he did all the movements in the test and didn't bolt or do anything drastic!

My trainer was there and my boyfriend (who knows EXACTLY what my horse is like!) and both of them said the BB is definitely the way to go for this particular horse (I have 3 other horses) so I am now looking forward to using it on the cross country course and showjumping in the summer with him!

PIERCE, 3/13/06:

HELLO:

I WAS JUST READING MY CURRENT ISSUE OF EQUUS AND SAW YOUR ADD FOR YOUR BRIDLES AND THOUGHT I WOULD DROP YOU A LINE.

I PURCHASED A BITLESS BRIDLE FROM YOU LAST YEAR. I WASN'T ABLE TO TRY IT OUT FOR SOMETIME DUE TO A MEDICAL PROBLEM. YOU GAVE ME A EXTEND WARRANTY ON IT. LATE LAST FALL, AGAINST MY DOCTOR BETTER JUDGEMENT AND HIS KNOWLEDGE. I FITTED IT UP TO MY HORSE AND TOOK HIM OUT FOR A RIDE IN THE PARK. IT WAS LIKE I WAS ON A HOLE NEW HORSE. I JUST LOVE THE BRIDLE AND MY HORSE WANTS TO THANK YOU TOO. CAN'T WAIT TILL THE WEATHER GETS NICE TO RIDE THIS YEAR. COME ON SPRING.

I HAVE GIVEN YOUR NUMBER AND ADD TO MANY OF MY FRIENDS AND I HIGHLY RECOMMEND YOUR BRIDLES TO EVERYONE AT MY BARN.

THANKS AGAIN

Mary, 3/13/06:

I am very pleased! I got the bitless bridle Friday and rode with it Saturday. WOW what a difference!!!! he was so responsive, light, head was down and in on vertical more, not perfect, but good and I GOT GAIT!!! not sure what it was but it WAS!!!! he got excited then about another horse coming in the arena(which has never happened there before) and got pacy but I

didn't let him do it and did circles and over ground poles. it was funny when I took off halter to bridle him he opened his mouth for the bit.

this is a 20 year old who came with a 7 inch shank and dented nose!! he gets excited easy and was tuned out to pain, just blocked it out over the years and would not yield to pressure. I have had him in a snaffle and wonder bit not using shanks. been working with him almost daily since November when I moved him from my house to board so I could use the indoor when bad weather. Lucky its been mild and I used the outdoor a lot! wish I would have gotten a bitless sooner! I started him on basic ground work in a rope halter and he is so good on the ground until you ask mounted, it wasn't seeming to transfer. Now hopefully we will make more progress! Want to try it on my green broke 6 year old too. Thank you!! neigh!!!from Oncore!..... :-)

Jen (and Doc), 3/06/06:

I know you probably get hundreds of e-mails, but I thought I'd add mine to the list. :) Almost 2 years ago, I was searching for a horse to buy and a man contacted me about a horse that needed a home. "Doc" was a 6 yr old 14.2 hand buckskin of unknown breeding and history, he was rescued from an auction frequented by killer buyers(he didn't even come with a name just a number) He had been abused/neglected and had severe trust issues. I received a pic of the sad-eyed little gelding and fell in love.

July 4, 2004, Doc came home. He was terrified of everyone, strangely enough, he was ok with me and my mom. For the next 4 months, I spent every day just hanging out with him, getting him to trust me. I was able to ride him 5 months after buying him. I had worked with horses for 10 years and had my own ideas on how I wanted to train and ride Doc. I did natural horsemanship with him and rode in a rope halter. He was very responsive, and went well in it.

Doc is very responsive, you don't need to use your reins to turn, you just turn your body and he'll follow. I soon found out that rope halters weren't the best thing and since mine was very thin with knots on the nose, I switched to a regular halter. I didn't even use a bridle(simple copper jointed snaffle bit) for a year. I've only used one a handful of times, I don't like them and Doc despises them (he was ridden w/a tom thumb apparently before I bought him and was cowboied very harshly.) With a halter, we're ok, we only pleasure ride and do trails, so it's not a big deal. But turning was very difficult in a plain halter and he started to rush a bit in the field (we also have a paddock we ride in) and I didn't feel I had enough control over him (he wouldn't bolt or anything but was a bit strong and I was afraid he might one day).

One of the problems Doc has under saddle is ever since I bought him when I ask him to whoa(by using voice/seat aids) he'll throw his head up. I am guessing that b/c of the Tom Thumb he does this (I heard that horses ridden in that bit usually do that as the bit hurts them). Even after riding him for a year and a half w/ no bit, he still would do this. He also would rush at all gaits like he was trying to escape his rider. Also he has always been very rigid when turning, on the ground he's fine, we do flexing exercise but under saddle he's always been tense.

Well I found your site a few months ago and read all the comments, and articles and was impressed and delighted someone had thought to come up with something like this! I decided to try it out for myself and today was our test ride with it on. Doc was very happy as soon as I put it on, I think he thought it was a bridle when he 1st saw it, but when I put it on, he began licking and chewing. He also stood still at the mounting block (another one of his quirks, I was instructed by a trainer to but a bridle on him and crank his mouth until he stood still or if he tried to move slam him with it. I refused so she did it and that was the last time I

was under her instruction and tried that). Well today he walked right up to the block and stood still.

I tried one last time to use a bridle last week. It was the stupidest thing I could have done. It's been a few months since I used it and he was very unhappy and scared. The whole time his eyes were big and scared and I finally got him calmed down and when I got on, he started to walk away so I pulled back, and was able to get on. I guess that triggered something (as I never have had to pull back on him, he's usually that great) and he crouched down and started freaking out, dancing in a tight circle and swinging around everywhere like he was going to bolt but kept it in a circle. I jumped off and he ran away. It's the last time I will ever use a bit in his mouth. Whatever happened to him in his past was very traumatic and he'll never be reminded of it again.

But back to today. I love the Bitless Bridle and so does Doc. The bridle feels very light but I still have nice, gentle contact. It's so easy to put on and take off (no more fumbling with all those darn straps everywhere). Doc accepted it nicely and best of all when were trotted, he didn't rush. He was calm and relaxed. Stopping was awesome, I just had to do a little squeeze on the reins and used my usual seat/voice combo, and amazingly Doc didn't throw his head up! I am still amazed. This is the same horse everytime I asked him to whoa, no matter if it was once or 30 times, would throw up his head. He just raised it a few inches, and that was all. He turned much better today and was flexing his neck instead of moving in squares he was circling.

I already love this bridle. I can't wait to try it out in the field tomorrow. Doc's already barefoot (not just pasture trimmed but truly barefoot), stays outside 24/7 (w/ access to shelter) and is fed only hay/grass, and so now, he's as natural as possible. I am delighted that I finally found a product that is humane and that Doc is comfortable with.

I'm sorry this was so long (and not well put together, I keep thinking of more things to add and I'm so excited), I just wanted to give a little background info so you'd know the extent of his problems. He still only trusts me and my mom, with strangers he's still terrified, but now at least when ridden, he can be nice and happy and relaxed.

I just can't thank you enough for this product. It's really amazing. I can't wait to see how much he improves as I keep using it. Thank you for making like a little easier for a once neglected, mistreated thrown-out gelding, if he could talk, I bet he'd say his life's finally looking up!!

Jen (and Doc), 3/13/06:

I thought I'd give you an update on how Doc (and I) was doing with the BB. I was thrilled after the 1st ride and since then, the success has been very consistent and just as amazing!! He no longer is throwing his head up at all when we "whoa" (he would do that in any style halter I tried and bridles, it didn't matter). It's so cool b/c since using the BB, he hasn't thrown it up ONCE. Also he's had trouble bending under saddle (and using halter wasn't very effective b/c I only used one leadrope and tied it to the ring under his chin b/c when I used 2 leads the snaps were heavy and would smack him in the face). Even in a bridle, he was very stiff when turning to the right (he would stay rigid and there would be no flexion/suppleness in his neck at all). Since using the BB, he has also consistently been able to have amazing flexion/suppleness when turning both ways, but esp. to the left, he can actually turn in a nice curve!! This is all done with a loose rein, I just squeeze the reins to stop (along with seat/breathing aids) and when we turn, I just slightly bend the way I want to go and squeeze the rein and he'll go (he's very responsive).

I just wanted to mention that, to show that in order to ride in the BB, you don't have to constantly be pulling on them to go where you want or to stop (in my case anyway). I am so

thrilled.

I am moving from a barn I rent to a boarding facility in 2 weeks and the people there do a lot of natural based horsemanship and they've already shown an interest in the BB. You can believe a lot of people will be borrowing mine to take a test drive in it.

Thanks again for helping my dear little guy live a more happier life (and his owner feel like she's doing as much as possible to give her horse the best/kindest life possible.) Again, I apologize for the length of the e-mail, I just get a little carried away I guess. :)

Alan Porter, Jamestown, TN 3/06/06:

We ordered two beta bitless bridles for our off-track thoroughbreds, which have been used for trail riding for around the last three years. Both were very competitive runners - good allowance horses who earned around \$150,000 each - and both still have plenty of "go."

We had been riding in a rope hackamore in summer, and a comfort snaffle in winter, when they tend to be even more energetic. We liked the simplicity of the rope hackamore, but didn't like the grosser movements which had to be made when using a leading rein for turns. I also had the impression from the way he behaved when tacking-up, that my horse was actually happier to have the bridle than the rope hackamore.

We have a natural trimmer, and he recommended the bitless bridles. After checking the website, and reading a lot of the articles, we placed an order for two bridles.

This weekend we had an opportunity to try them out. We found them easy to adjust and fit. Not having an enclosed area in which to try them, we just headed out. We didn't find any problem with the horses being over-exuberant or excitable (probably as they had been used to the hackamore). Despite both horses not having been ridden much lately, and being quite fresh, and despite riding in some unfamiliar surroundings, we didn't have any problems, and neither horse was difficult to steady or stop when cantering. I should note at this point, that my friend's horse is big, very strong horse, approaching 16.2, and that she weighs 120 lbs., so this speaks well for the amount of control which is available.

Being an ex-racehorse, and being big, and somewhat lazy in terms of self-carriage, this horse tends to want to go on the forehand and to bore and lean on the bit at the trot and canter. This behavior was definitely less marked in the bitless bridle. My horse continually flips his nose up in a bit when he wants to go, and this was also much better in the bitless bridle.

Overall, I didn't feel that I had given up any control when compared to the bit, and yet the feeling was of being able to retain the subtlety of riding with a bit, as opposed to a hackamore.

It will be interesting to see how the horses continue to progress, but it certainly was a good start!

(Incidentally, I am a thoroughbred industry professional, so the potential benefits of the bridle for racehorses are of great interest).

Lyn, 3/06/06:

Hi there,

Well, two rides in the Bitless Bridle and I am 100% sold on this thing and trying to talk everyone else where I board to get one!

Ride 1: My friend Sharon (bought the western bridle for Charlie) and myself (English Beta for my horse Pharaoh) put the bridles on for the first time and decided to start out in the

arena. Neither horse batted an eyelid. I was pleasantly surprised at the easy 'steering and braking'. I have owned my TB (ex-racer but only raced twice, we just trail ride) for 9 years now and he has never been really happy in a bit. He tends to throw his head to evade or lean in to the bit and I have never managed to get him really 'on the bit', flexed properly rather than stiffly, and using himself correctly and off the forehand. Pharaoh, took to this bridle like a duck to water. One of the reasons I don't like to take him in the arena is because he is always 'fidgeting' in his bitted bridle and constantly trying to grab the inside rein in his mouth. He has never felt so relaxed from the neck up. It was joyous! I had also given up fighting to try and make him back up. He would always just set his head, tense up and say 'no!'. The more I tried the more annoyed he got and would start throwing his head up.

I decided this would be a real test.....1 step, 2 steps, 3 steps! I could hardly believe it! He took 5 steps back with little argument. Amazing!

We decided there was no good reason not to go out around the neighborhood. The horses both behaved beautifully although Charlie did seem a little hard to stop. (Sharon will keep working on that and make sure the bridle is properly adjusted). Charlie is normally a headtoss, especially after a canter or when he gets sweaty, he throws his head up and down, usually covering Sharon's glasses in foam and sticks his tongue out and also tries to grab the shank of his Tom Thumb bit with his teeth.....nothing in the Bitless.....peace and quiet.....Wonderful!

Ride 1 1/2: A young girl (14) who boards at the same place had helped myself and the chiropractor keep Pharaoh positioned while being adjusted. I had to wait for the sedative to wear off and she was getting ready to ride so I asked if she would like to try the Bitless Bridle. She rode in the arena for a good 45 minutes and when I asked her how she liked it she said she loved it and was going to be asking for one for her own horse.

Ride 2: A trail ride around the neighborhood with a different riding partner. Pharaoh seemed even happier and more peaceful this time. It was a great ride. We walked, trotted, cantered and galloped with absolutely no problems, it was just a great ride!

Today I will be loaning it to another girl to try out. Her horse has a tendency to rear but in my opinion the problem is not helped by his rider who tends to jerk him in the mouth and ride with her hands way too high. I am hoping it has great results. She is very interested in trying it out.

As a last note, Pharaoh has always has a tendency to drag and square off both hind feet. Based on all the reviews I have read about the way horses move in this bridle and from the two rides I have already had, I won't be surprised if this goes away.

Anyway, so far I am sold on this bridle. It's great to take the bit out of my horse's mouth. He seems so much more relaxed.

Thanks for such a wonderful invention!

Chris, Holly & 'Casino', 3/05/06:

I just wanted to thank your representative (If it was Carole Iverson, President, Thank you, Carole) who took the time to explain the workings of your bridle. I was undecided whether to purchase The Bitless or Ponyboy's version of your 'bitless'. I did some leg work before and at the expo. My first queries were done online. I am an Ebay'er and look for deals; however, I did a general search on MSN, which took me to your website. I then proceeded to search Ebay. There was another seller, who does make nylon bridles which seem like a great deal (\$43.00, choosing your own colors), however, I don't like the idea of nylon rubbing on his

nose, and the nose band was quite thick; looked too 'hard'. After seeing that you were going to be represented at the Expo I decided to wait and check both The Bitless and PBoy's version in person.

On Saturday, when it was a packed house I'd stopped at your booth, watched the demonstration of how the bridle worked, then went on to PBoy's booth (your rep was surrounded by people). I proceeded to P.Boy's booth and got on line to speak to a rep. about "what is the difference between PBoy's and The Bitless"

The answers from PBoy's rep:

- The horse 'feels'/responds to the rope bridle quicker/better than the beta or leather ('The Bitless');

- PBoy's doesn't have the metal rings that clink and make noise.

- There was also an older gal there promoting the PBoy bridle to me, speaking about her experience with her stud and how much she loved it. She was obviously a big fan and happy with his product.

OK, I will be going back to The Bitless to see about those noisy rings!

A few things that I didn't like about P'Boy's version of bitless: First and foremost the price! Why would I want to pay \$100 for a rope bridle? I really didn't like the idea of purchasing a rope bridle with a famous clinician's name stamped on the nose band for all to see (regardless of how lovely he is to look at or how large his following is)... too commercialized, too expensive for the materials used and looks cheezy too! You don't even have a choice of colors; and, for the price of the type of materials used, the reins aren't even included... shameful cost wise!

Sunday was the day we were going to be shopping (the day vendors have bargains). Our first stop was at your booth. The first thing I did was check out how the bridle was made. There are no metal rings that were going to be clinking together and making noise. (Tisk! Tisk! the PBoy rep. Didn't even check your product to actually know what he was talking about). I was able to see how smoothly The Bitless design works because of the ring. I was also able to speak to your rep. and ask whatever questions that I had. I found that your company is the one that had patented this product, ten years ago... it was an easy decision. This is a semi-major and a serious purchase decision for us at this time; I would not normally pay this much for a bridle; this is not an expense or decision that I take lightly. However, I prepared for the purchase, we were going to be going home with a bitless, who's bitless was the only decision we needed to make. The only question left was which material and color did my daughter prefer The Bitless in.

I appreciate that you have developed a quality product... one that doesn't have to plaster it's name all over their product, and one that has the quality, styles, and assortment of product material that I can choose from... and is durable, lasting, good looking. They are simple designs. My sentiment is always, "Simplicity is Bliss"! I love the 'bling' of a lot of the show tack, but 'bling' doesn't make you a good rider; and, our biggest concern is the health and happiness of our newly purchased 6-year old paint, Casino. He alone, is beautiful; he is 'the bling'; and, once he gets acclimated with your product (which I'm sure he will love immediately) and, we know how to properly apply it, I will be very happy and proud to wear your t-shirt advertising The Bitless. (By the way, Thank you! for the markdown on the T-shirt... \$10 is a good deal for a long sleeve!)

My daughter and I are very excited and look forward to receiving and using the bridle. We do not like to use bits; have always used a snaffle (training type bit) trying to use the least uncomfortable and least harmful bit for the horse's comfort level. We both cringe at the looks

of some of the more serious harmful 'harder' bits.

I hope that this will be our choice of bridle and the last time that we need to think of what type of bit to use! I am a new 4-H leader and be contacting the 4-H extension office (Susquehanna County, Montrose, PA) to inquire about the acceptance of members using this bridle in competition. I am hoping that they do, since... if this works, this is what we will always use!

I will contact you with our results, whatever the outcome is.

Linda, 2/28/06:

My husband and I and Tica are soooo in love with this bridle! I just got it two days ago. I am using it on my 3 yr old QH who just came back from the trainer. I had her trained in the halter and some training in the snaffle. I had researched your bridle while she was at training and thought that this was how we would like to proceed with her. She does not like the bit (who would) and was very head strong in the halter.

We had her back only a week, riding in the halter and decided to purchase the Bitless Bridle. Yesterday was like riding a whole new horse. She was wonderful, engaged and eager to please. Today she was even more relaxed, she really enjoyed our ride. I can't tell you how happy we are to have found this option for riding.

Last night I was sure that Tica was telling me thank you. After I fed her, she stopped eating and came over to me and nuzzled my arm in such a soft manner. I know it was a thank you for figuring out what she needed to enjoy herself when we go out.

I have two draft horses that are going to be trained in the near future. I will definitely use the Bitless Bridle with them.

Thank you for everything!

Tica too!

Roma, 2/28/06:

Dear Dr Cook, this is a short note to let you know that you have one more rider totally converted to your bitless bridle. We have an older horse who we had retired because of navicular and constant head shaking and lowering of the head which we assumed was connected to the pain of the navicular. To cut a long story short we brought her out of retirement after 5 months of going barefoot because her navicular seemed to have vanished - yes, it still has! - but she was still apparently unhappy with her bridle.

After doing much research, I came across your bridle, I had never heard of it before. We ordered one and our horse is totally transformed. Her head tossing and lowering, her tongue hanging out the side of her mouth all have stopped completely. Not just improved, but totally fine. She is happy and obedient and a totally different horse. I want to thank you for giving us our horse back and I hope many more people find out about your bridle. I ride my own horse in one now even though she didn't have any obvious problems, but she too is much happier, has a lengthened stride and behaves better before cantering, no impatient prancing, charging off etc.

Thanks again, I'm telling all my friends!

Sibsie, 2/23/06:

When I first bought Murphy he was barely broken. He'd been backed enough to get through auction without killing anyone, but that was it.

He was rising 4, 16.1hh and growing. There were downsides to having such a young and inexperienced horse but the upside was a soft mouth and no one's bad habits to undo.

I like to ride in a snaffle. I've been around horses my whole life and have never felt comfortable using anything harsher.

My problems with Murphy were most definitely bit related. He would raise his head up when I was bridling which with such a big horse made life difficult and frustrating. When I was trying to school him he would constantly yawn, lower his head to the extent that his nose was on the ground and he would rub his head on his leg. What little schooling we did manage was useless.

At the same time I was looking for an alternative to the bit for my other horse. He'd been treated roughly, had front teeth missing and a chunk of his tongue was gone from someone leaving a tongue chain on him for too long.

Many hours of Googling later and I came upon the Bitless Bridle. I read the science behind it and decided to give it a go.

The customer service is second to none and Dr Cooke himself a Brit, is wonderfully helpful.

My bridle arrived within a couple of days and I tried it out on Murphy. He did the usual head up when he saw the bridle and was a little confused that there was no bit. He hadn't been ridden in four weeks and it took three of us to hold him for me to get on.

The transformation was instant. It was as if someone had taken him away for professional schooling. There was no yawning, no head down, no head rubbing. He was quiet, attentive and happy. Best of all there is none of that rubbing their heads all over you when the bridle comes off.

He now lowers his head for me when he sees the bridle.

I can say with full confidence that I will never ever put a bit in any of my horses mouths again.