



Spring 2014

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Jane Simone
University of Pennsylvania

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Recommended Citation

Simone, Jane (2014) "Layounne: A Testament to Colic Surgery Success," *Bellwether Magazine*: Vol. 1 : No. 81 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://repository.upenn.edu/bellwether/vol1/iss81/3>

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Fresh from a bath, *Layounne* enjoys the open air at Brushwood Stable.



A TESTAMENT TO COLIC SURGERY SUCCESS

Layounne

BY JANE SIMONE

Once upon a time, when a horse's veterinarian confirmed a diagnosis of colic, many an owner shuddered with fear. Colic, the general term for a gastrointestinal problem, has been the leading killer of horses for centuries. Fortunately, veterinary medicine has progressed by leaps and bounds in the last half-century, matching human healthcare today in terms of sophistication, technology, and the skill of its practitioners.

Penn Vet's New Bolton Center claims a verifiable leadership role in equine veterinary medicine advances, including the care and management of serious colic cases. An impressive example of post-colic surgery survival is *Layounne*, a now 18-year-old Thoroughbred mare purchased in 1996 by Mrs. Elizabeth Moran, owner of Brushwood Stable in Malvern, PA.

A PRESTIGIOUS PEDIGREE

Layounne was bred by the esteemed Harbor View Farm, which raced Triple Crown winner *Affirmed*. Her sire was *Mt. Livermore* and her dam was *La Affirmed*, whose sire was the great *Affirmed*. *Layounne* was foaled in 1995. Among other names in her impeccable pedigree are *Della Francesca*, a multiple graded winner in Europe and the US; *Bernstein*, a graded winner who stood at stud at Castleton Lyons in Kentucky; and *Country Cat*, a graded stakes winner who is by *Storm Cat*.

Layounne raced for Brushwood Stable under the careful tutelage of trainer Bill Mott. Unfortunately, she made only two starts, resulting in a second and third place finish in a pair of maiden races on the New York circuit, before her career was cut short. The discovery of a stress fracture of her right tibia led to her retirement from racing. The injury, however, did not affect her future as a brood mare, and she was bred to *Danzig*, son of *Northern Dancer*. *Danzig* is acclaimed as the leading sire of the second half of the 20th century.

Layounne's first foal was a colt, born on April 3, 2000. She was bred back to *Danzig* after delivering. But in December, while carrying their next baby, she colicked and was rushed to New Bolton Center, eight months pregnant.

CAUSE FOR CONCERN

Brooks Adams, Brushwood Stable's longtime manager, remembers that the first signs of *Layounne's* distress were not very severe. She was pawing the ground, out of sorts, and curling her lip. Her primary care veterinarian treated her with routine colic medications, but when it was clear that she needed more serious help, the decision was made to take *Layounne* to New Bolton Center.

On a cold December day, Brooks loaded *Layounne* onto a trailer and traveled the 40 minutes to New Bolton Center. Upon arrival, Brooks found an attentive and prepared clinical team waiting to greet them and evaluate the mare. She was diagnosed with an impaction and, soon afterwards, taken to surgery. Because *Layounne's* pregnancy was advanced, Brooks was concerned about her prognosis, but recalls that she did very well.

Following a 10-day stay at New Bolton Center, *Layounne* returned to Brushwood Stable under Brooks' watchful eye, to await the arrival of her second foal. That foal was born by caesarean section on April 2, 2001, almost four months exactly after *Layounne's* colic surgery.



Mrs. Elizabeth Moran poses with Dr. Dean Richardson. Mrs. Moran has been a loyal client and supporter of New Bolton Center for many years.



A LASTING LEGACY

Layounne's nerve-racking experience with colic, followed by her caesarean section and the safe delivery of a filly (which she had to give up to a nurse mare), did not take her out of commission. She was successfully bred back to the legendary *Storm Cat*, and in April 2002, gave birth to her third foal, a bay colt. Thus began a heartwarming history of Thoroughbred motherhood.

Since 2000, *Layounne* has delivered 11 healthy foals, five colts, and six fillies. Their sires include such well-known names as *Storm Cat*, *Pulpit*, *A.P. Indy*, *Hard Spin*, *Raven's Pass*, and *Gio Ponti*.

Her latest baby is by Phyllis Wyeth's *Union Rags*, a Pennsylvania horse that carried the hopes of many in southeast Chester County as a contender in the 2012 Kentucky Derby. He failed in his bid to win that coveted title, but went on to win the Belmont Stakes, the third race in the Triple Crown series.

Layounne's success as a brood mare is a wonderful testament not only to her own strength and resilience, but also to the astuteness of her on-farm caretakers, namely Brooks Adams; the skill of her primary care veterinarian, Dr. Gerald Auman; and the dedication of Mrs. Moran to her horses.

Says Brooks Adams, "Mrs. Moran wants her horses taken care of quickly and by the best." The combined expertise of the New Bolton Center surgical team who carried out *Layounne's* colic surgery and those who performed the caesarean section just four months later, ensured a happy ending to what might have been a tragic story.

Thirteen years later, *Layounne* is going strong, with a *Gio Ponti* filly at heel and a *Union Rags* baby due in March.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF COLIC REMEDIES

Layounne's case is an excellent example of remarkable progress in veterinary medicine. Ancient colic remedies, many of which were either dangerous or downright cruel to the horse, were passed from horseman to horseman over the years, with little or no effect on the ability to resolve or prevent the condition.

As an example, one of the less frightening therapies included a bolus of "Barbados aloes" (the juice of which is used in certain pharmacological preparations) for the relief of impaction colic. The highly respected textbook advocating this procedure was first published in England in 1877. But even in a 1970 edition, the treatment advice still included dosing with this purgative, and noted that "in cases where prostration is marked, a full dose of whisky or brandy (maximum dose: 4 oz.) can be added to the foregoing." Another amusing comment about the Barbados aloes treatment stated that: "As a rule in England, the maximum dose (for a cart-horse) is 6 drachms, but horses in Scotland require larger doses."

In discussing "unfortunate consequences" of overdosing with Barbados aloes, the textbook's veterinarian author offered this pre-empting advice: "Nobody can be held responsible should the animal exhibit an idiosyncrasy after administration of this, or for that matter any other drug used, in the course of the treatment of an animal."

SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

Because of its significant caseload (one of the largest among North American veterinary teaching hospitals), New Bolton Center's clinicians and students have access to data on a wide variety of colic cases that is both rich in depth and scope.

Dr. Louise Southwood, Associate Professor of Large Animal Emergency Medicine and Critical Care at New Bolton Center, is engaged in a number of studies of long-term colic surgery survivors, including *Layounne*. The purpose is to show that a successful outcome should be the norm today for colic patients and their owners.

Layounne's outcome, and that of all the horses in Dr. Southwood's study, shows how far equine veterinary medicine has progressed in just two or three decades. Colic surgery no longer means that an animal's useful working life is over. Rather, it can often mean a return to an active, competitive life and the possibility of great athletic achievements. New Bolton Center's Emergency and Critical Care department has an outstanding record of success in the management of colic cases. *Layounne* and her babies can attest to that. 🍷