



Divide Horsemen's Association

Spring Edition Newsletter

April 2015

Here we are on the forefront of our riding season. However, I can't think that we've had too many days so far this year that we couldn't get out to ride! I hope you'll find our Newsletter full of interesting reading.

There are lots of upcoming events/activities to enjoy. DHA is sponsoring its annual "fun ride" at Cool Hills Ranch on May 16 – a fun time for members to come and play on/with their horses. Then there is EDET's annual Dru Barner fun ride in the beautiful foothills outside of Georgetown on May 24.

And then!! I have to mention the annual Horse Expo on June 5-6-7 at Cal Expo. If you want to indulge yourself in a day or two or three of nothing but horse, horse and more horse, this is the place to be!!

*Happy trails everyone!
Charlotte*

President's Post

Happy Spring to all of you. I am wishing you a season full of good riding! First let me thank you for joining DHA this year. Your dues help support trails and the equestrian lifestyle here on the divide. Most trails around here are feeling the effects of heavy usage - either due to the fee areas that have been recently instituted and/or social media networking which advertises local trails to the greater Sacramento/Roseville communities. I'm sure you have all noticed the circus at the confluence when you drive by on the weekends. Yep, the word is out on our awesome trail system! To help us better understand the pressures and challenges on our trails, Judy Suter will come to next month's meeting to present some of the challenges of multi-use trails - especially if you are an equestrian. Please mark your calendar and join us for this evening (Wednesday, May 20, 6:30 potluck (7:00 meeting). Also note that all members are welcome to come early for the 5:30 board meetings. These are not secret or exclusive in any way. We just meet early to hammer out calendar and event details, and address any problems that may come up during the month. All members are always welcome to attend. We have elections coming up in November and if you are even remotely thinking of getting more involved with the club, now is a good time to come to board meetings and see what drives the organization.

In April or possibly early May, Cronan will be closed for a few days for star thistle spraying. Dates for closure are somewhat unpredictable as the weather dictates spraying. There will also be a pilot grazing program - three hundred sheep with their guard dogs free grazing to keep the weeds under control. Signs will be posted notifying users of these changes, but as far as I can see there may be new challenges as

we ride these trails during grazing times. Please be careful and notify Jeff Horn/BLM of any problems.

Linda Stine and Pam Hanback are scheduling regular trail patrol practice rides and qualifying rides, and we already have a few new trail patrol members. Good work you guys! Please come out and ride with them – this is your chance to practice all the skills you and your horse need to safely patrol the Trails - all under the expert tutelage of Linda and Pam. Call them for the next ride scheduled.

I will be hosting the May 16 fun day at Cool Hills Ranch. This is the day where we all get to play with our horses and build confidence, trust and partnership with our horses. Look for the flyer and sign up. I hope to see everyone enjoying at least one of our offerings. Until then -- Happy horsing around! Katie

Here is some interesting information that Ann Blankenship wanted to pass along. It has to do with the California Conservation Corps (CCC).

We were contacted recently by a representative of our local CCC to ask if any of our members or friends would be interested in helping a few CCC corpsmembers learn a little about horses. Most of the corpsmembers are from urban areas and have never seen a horse up close, let alone groom or ride one. Some of the interested kids would be willing to do a little work around your place in exchange for a chance to groom and maybe even have a little ride on one of your gentle horses. For those of you who don't know, CCC corpsmembers are NOT criminals and are not there as punishment. The CCC is a state program for youth between 18 and 23. They do all sorts of contract work such as trail clearing and fire camp support. These kids are trying to better themselves and do very hard work for a small wage. If you're interested in having no more than two corpsmembers at a time come to your place and spend an hour or two, please contact JR at the CCC. JR's email is Cortez.John@ccc.ca.gov, phone number 823-4075.

Just as a little background, the California Conservation Corps is the oldest and largest state conservation corps program in the nation. But it didn't happen overnight. From a small beginning, the CCC has grown to its current size with residential and nonresidential sites throughout the state.

Modeled after the original federal Civilian Conservation Corps created in 1933 by President Franklin Roosevelt, today's California program was signed into law by Governor Jerry Brown on July 7, 1976. Governor Brown envisioned the program as "a combination Jesuit seminary, Israeli kibbutz and Marine Corps boot camp." You can read more about the Corp online.

None of us likes to think about the prospect of abruptly coming off a horse, but riding such an unpredictable animal does present that possibility. Carole Wade shares her experience and her decision to buy a safety vest.

As some of you know, in 2012 I had an awful wreck and didn't ride for two years, because osteoporosis and being on a blood thinner put me at greater than average risk. But, last year I decided that giving up what I most love to do was too high a price to pay even for safety. So I climbed aboard again, though now I ride far more conservatively than I once did. No more galloping up the hills!

I also decided to buy a safety vest, and chose the inflatable Hit-Air. Inflatables are more expensive than the traditional padded vests worn by eventers, but they are also lighter and cooler, which during our hot summers is an obvious advantage. Two friends also recommended the Hit-Air.

The vest has a CO2 canister in a zipper pocket on the front. A cord attached to the bottom of the canister exits from the pocket, and you attach that to a bungee-type cord connected to a horn, pommel, or grab strap on your saddle. When I wear the vest, I hardly know I have it on, and the cords are loose enough that you can post or stand up in the saddle with no problem. Before dismounting, you disconnect first; although, if you forget (which I once did) it's unlikely the vest will expand because you're getting off without the velocity of a fall. In the unfortunate event of an "unscheduled dismount," the cord in the canister will come out with a "pop" and the vest will inflate before you ever hit the ground. I feel it can be a good idea to desensitize your horse to loud sounds. Russ Grossman helped me with this by using a bull whip in the round pen, and it didn't take long. After a fall, the vest slowly deflates. No adjustments in the vest are necessary before using it again, but you do need to replace the CO2 canister (not difficult); they sell for about \$20.

A safety vest will not protect your legs or arms, but it will protect the all-important spine, hips, and neck. I suspect that some riders resist these vests because they don't conform to the usual attire for western or English riding, but for me, doing what I can to decrease the probability of another serious injury takes precedence over making a fashion statement. And, my horses don't seem to care what I wear!

The Northern California rep for Hit-Air, Christine Amber, may be doing a presentation for us at our June 17 meeting, so you can see how the vest works. Her website is www.EquestrianTraining.com. Christine is a certified riding instructor and a member of the United States Eventing Association. In the meantime, if you have questions about my own experience with the vest, give me a ring.

I just love this story from Erin McChesney, and I think you will too. Who would have thought? Her story is entitled "The Wonder of Wood."

I love wood barns. They feel right, smell right, and just seem downright cozy, but as we know, wood and horses can be a challenge.

I've had the luxury of keeping my horses in wood barns all my life, and with few exceptions, have had little damage done from cribbing or chewing... though, the secret weapon to deter the mindless delight horses get from chomping through walls alluded me until a fateful night

coupled with my beloved stallion Abu, *in beaver mode*, my grandmother, a BB gun, and a bar of soap.

My window faced south, looking straight down Norton Ravine from the house in Pilot Hill to the "Lollypop tree" across the South Fork of the American River. In between my window and the south fence was the elongated tin roof of the barn my Dad and I built. Next to my bed was a BB gun full of BBs, above it, the window facing south which I'd pulled the screen off of so that I could slip the barrel onto the sill and "ping" the roof of the barn if the horses were chewing on the wood during the night.

Sadly, I'm a light sleeper, and to make matters worse, I hate having to maintain or replace things. Neither of these facts would matter, except when one of those horses set to chewing on a board in this tin barn. The sound would rattle and hum right into my unsettled ear and set me on fire, because that rattling meant that a board was falling victim to boredom, and I'd be the one replacing it when the damage was too bad; hence, the BB gun. I'd load about three brass BBs in the chamber, pump that sucker about six times, and unleash hell on the roof of the barn (which was usually followed by my verbal outbursts at the horse who was doing the "deed"), always at night, always at odd hours when all would be sleeping. This time though, Grandma was visiting...

Here she came, high pitched, unprofane hollering, wanting to know, "What in the world!" was going on. I explained to her my methods for stopping the chewing, that it worked--mostly, except that the horses were so keen on the sound of the BB gun that I was reduced to crawl to the hallway to load and pump it, that I had to carry it level without the other BBs rolling in the gun or else I'd be found out, and that it usually worked, especially on the third or fourth round pinging off of the roof! She didn't care, wasn't her fight--as it were--nope, she was mad because I cussed, and yelled, and probably woke up the whole neighborhood (*the only neighbor*, next door about five acres away). Nope, she said, "It's your mouth. Needs to be washed out with soap!" And, I remembered the day... I was about five and I'd said the word, "Poop-ee," and it was *as clear as the day is long*... the taste, the smell--like it was yesterday.

That's when it hit me! Soap! Soap would fix the horses from chewing the barn! I hugged and kissed Grandma, thanked her for the inspiration, grabbed a bar of Ivory soap and bolted out to the barn at 2:00 a.m. I danced, sang, cussed and pointed at those horses! Delighted in the knowing that I'd foiled them forever from chewing another piece of wood in their lives, in this barn or any barn, that I'd sleep the sleep of cherubs from hereafter knowing I'd never have to replace another 2x6 again! The horses stood away from me, staring wide-eyed and wary, studying my frenetic gyrations to cover every edge and wall... and can you guess what happened? They didn't chew the boards again. My BB gun gathered dust, my mom put the screen back on my window, and Grandma didn't have to wash *my mouth* out with soap again. And the neighbors didn't have to laugh with my folks about my determined outbursts, at ridiculous hours, intended to startle and stop my horses from chewing that wood lined barn!

So that's why my horses are still in wood barns. They feel right, smell right and are downright cozy... and if a visitor rubs a finger on one of those wood edges, there will be the smooth slick feel of Ivory soap with nary a chew mark in sight.

Tim Thomas would like to share his "take" on Pigeon Fever.

I strongly suspect the entry point of the pathogen is often the tender, raw patch that summer flies sometimes cause on a horse's belly, usually located on the ventral midline at a point too far back for horse to reach with muzzle and too far forward for the tail swish or hind hoof to reach it, often located just behind girth. I have seen people treat this condition with "Swat" ointment. In my experience a better treatment is to attempt to dry and callous the wound rather than moisturize and soften it. I've had luck with a product called "Warpaint," an insecticide/repellent available from Valley Vet in a "deodorant stick" type applicator.

You may be interested in the following article entitled "Cleaning up Our Act" that came out from the Equestrian Trail Riders' Action Committee (ETRAC). Their mission is to promote the creation and maintenance of a comprehensive, regional trail system for equestrian riders on the Peninsula. Website: etrac-equestrian.com

Future Public Equestrian Access Depends On These Two Manure-Removing Habits.

Manure is something all equestrians are familiar with. For better or for worse, it's something that is intimately associated with horses and riding. While we all might wish our horses were housebroken and never defecated anywhere but a single corner of their stalls or pastures, they don't do this. Horses go while tied to trailers, they go on the trails, they go right in the middle of a busy intersection or right on a new bricked driveway of a nice looking house.

While horse people are so used to manure that this doesn't seem like a big deal, we have to look at it from the non-rider's point of view. Dog owners are expected to bag and remove their dogs' feces, and don't understand why equestrians get away with leaving much larger piles around.. Kids are raised with video games and hand-sanitizers instead of mud and livestock, and parents are worried about germ-ridden horse feces in our public parks and trails. Bicyclists view horse manure (never mind the actual horses) as a trail safety hazard, as riding through it can foul bike brakes.

Why should we care what dog-walkers, parents, or bikers think of horse manure? We should care because there are many, many more of them than us. When the non-equestrians visit parks and trails, they complain to park/land managers and neighborhood associations. They work to keep horses off their hiking and biking trails. The land managers' job is to balance the needs of everyone, and since equestrians are such a minority of users, the hikers and bicyclists would be granted their wish of manure-free trails. Equestrians will lose current trail access and be denied new access to trails and trailer parking. So our manure really is our problem at this point. We have to change our own view on manure from something that's goofy and harmless, to something truly dangerous for us to leave behind.

There are two major manure-related changes we will all do to keep our trails. The first is to diligently keep trailhead and trailer parking areas manure free. Pick up manure and put it back in the trailer both before you ride, and also before you trailer home. Many of us already do this, but we all need to get on board with it. The second new habit, and this is a larger change, is to actively move our horses to the side of the

trails before they defecate, and actually dismount (yes, dismount!) to kick manure off paved areas like driveways and sidewalks.

While horses do slow down and can be stubborn before raising their tails, this gives us a chance to feel that the manure is on its way and we can use leg to move our horses over to the side of a trail. Horses can be trained this much to get to the side of a trail before defecating--believe it or not they do housebreak therapy ponies, so don't let your horse convince you s/he HAS to go right in the middle of the trail or driveway. It might take strong leg at first, but they will get the idea.

The second thing for suburban-trail riders is, if your horse does happen leave a pile on a driveway or sidewalk, is to actually dismount and kick manure off the pavement. For those of you thinking that dismounting on the road for a silly pile of manure is not safe or practical, imagine if a horse started limping after walking over some gravel. We'd all think it was worth it to dismount to pick the rock out of our horse's foot, even though we'd need to find a place to hop back on or mount from the ground. If you can't get off and on your horse while trail riding, this is a real safety issue, manure or not. We have to see a pile of manure in a driveway as something just as risky to our trail riding as a rock in the hoof, because those piles will make trail easements and horse access disappear.

Some equestrians feel like all we need to do is educate non-riders on the facts of manure. We can teach that unlike dog feces, there are not significant numbers of human pathogens in horse manure. Or we can point out that the nice winterized trails in Huddart and Wunderlick Parks, the town trails in Woodside, and the Clarkia Trail in Edgewood Park, are maintained by the equestrian community and everyone benefits from that, even with some manure added. These things are true, but that is only part of keeping horses on our trail. We have to change our own ways as much as we change others' thinking.

We're at the point where the hikers and bicyclists so outnumber us that if we are going to keep our access to trails and public easements, we really do need to clean up our act. That means shoveling manure back into our trailers before and after we ride, and actively preventing horses from leaving piles on the middle of trails and driveways. Let's enjoy our trails and our trail horses for many years to come!!

You have heard the expression that there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, right? Well, for the equestrian, I submit the following:



Photo by Pam Greer

DHA member Debbie Lind finds the article on this website to be a good reminder of what trail etiquette is all about. Check it out.

<http://eclectic-horseman.com/basic-trail-etiquette-stay-safe-and-have-fun-on-your-next-trail-ride/>

True riding mastery can only be reached by the person who, for years and years, has kept his mind open to new ideas, and even he should always be prepared to admit that there is still much to be learned (Wilhelm Museler, Riding Logic)

Classical Riding for Every Equestrian



Western Dressage is taking the nation by storm! It is now recognized by the USEF and is becoming a popular choice in competitions and at home as a method of progressive training.

Western Dressage is all about classical horsemanship as a foundation for any discipline and is designed to help western riders learn to use the training scale to provide a step-by-step progression for training and relationship building.

Whether you are a pleasure rider, jumper, barrel racer, or trail rider, Western Dressage promotes long-term soundness and enhances the relationship between horse and rider.

Western Dressage is not just another class to enter, not just another skill to learn. Western Dressage is bringing the English and Western worlds together through the time-tested methods of Classical Dressage.

Whether we ride in a Stetson or Breeches, whether we work to perfect the shoulder-in or sliding stop, we can all benefit from teaching our horses to carry themselves in a more balanced fashion.

Western Dressage can be done by every horse regardless of breed, color, sex, size, talent, or level of training.

- It requires no special equipment nor a lot of money
- Western Dressage builds confidence and will help you become a better rider
- Western Dressage builds muscle-tone and will make your horse stronger and healthier

The definition of "dressage" is merely "training". What horse can't benefit from better training? The lower level concepts of Western Dressage will help improve a horse's performance for every discipline. As you advance, you may choose to make Western Dressage your primary discipline or move on to another sport.

DHA member Nadine Giboney has started a Western Dressage group in Auburn Lake Trails. If interested in learning more about the group, you will find her telephone number listed in the 2015 DHA Directory.

As equestrians, we all know the importance of keeping our equine friends in good condition for riding. However, how often do we give consideration to our own fitness. I give you the following to contemplate.

An important lesson that horses teach equestrians of any style, any level is that there is always some more to learn about riding. Horses around the world speak a common language that is clear, uncomplicated, direct and for the most part, silent. They rely primarily on a language of body movements, expressions, and postures. Using the body to communicate is one of the first lessons the horse teaches any person learning to ride. This the essence of riding and a rider's most challenging task. (excerpt taken from Yoga for Equestrians)

Why yoga for the rider?

- 1) Body and muscle awareness. Riding requires advanced control of your body mechanics.
- 2) Breathing. There are many physical and mental benefits of controlling your breathing.
- 3) Mental focus. Riding requires intense mental concentration, feel and focus for awareness of your horse's movement, breathing, and mental/emotional state is easy when your mind is calm. The rider has the responsibility to remain mentally flexible.
- 4) Core strength. The core muscles are constantly at work when the body is seeking balance and are vital for balance while riding.
- 5) Flexibility. Do your horse a favor and get supple.

As an equestrian, I leave you with this thought:

Never, never, never, never give up.



Happy riding!!!!



A bit of humor from Tim Thomas

Be sure to mark your calendar for the third Wednesday of the month and join us at 6:30 p.m. at the Greenwood Community Center for the DHA meeting/potluck!

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