



# Divide Horsemen's Association

Summer/Fall Edition Newsletter

September 2014

*Here we are at summer's end and fast approaching the crisp days of fall. I think you will find our summer/fall edition of the Newsletter filled with interesting reading, and to that I say enjoy.*

*Happy trails everyone!!  
Charlotte*

## President's Posting



Thank you to everyone who attended our DHA meeting on the 17th – we had a great turnout, and we totally appreciated the folks who drove here from out of the county. Please forward this to other groups in the county so the message gets out loud and clear.

We thank Ken Calhoun, former President of the Divide Chamber of Commerce, who presented the maps and the general outline of the arena proposal. We appreciate the time he took to be with us.

We also thank Howard Penn, running for District 4 County Supervisor, for helping us understand the background and the current issues involved in this project.

We have a lot to 'digest' – **but the bottom line is we first need to ask the County Supervisors to conduct and allocate money for a FEASIBILITY STUDY for the proposed equestrian arena / multi-use recreation facility on the 64 county owned acres adjacent to the Cronan Ranch trails.**

*\*\*\*\* Horse folks – we need to understand that if this proposal has only HORSE facilities in our vision or plan, it will be challenging. Our fellow trail users (bikers, hikers, dog park folks, etc.) will be involved in this discussion, and if we can agree on a vision – there can be a cohesive plan to present, and we will have a better chance in creating a recreation area.*

**WRITE TO our local supervisor - Ron Briggs – District 4 - please do this by October 15 – this is time sensitive!**

However, when we write to him, we want to copy at least three of the others or ALL of them – so they know what we want and they ALL get the message. They all have to agree to do this, so the more the message gets out the better.

I have included their emails and the County office address, in case you want to call or write snail mail.

District I-Ron Mikulaco—bosone@edcgov.us  
District II-Shiva Frentzen—bostwo@edcgov.us  
District III-Brian Veerkamp—bosthree@edcgov.us  
District IV-Ron Briggs –bosfour@edcgov.us  
District V-Norma Santiago–bosfive@edcgov.us  
Board of Supervisors, Placerville Office  
330 Fair Lane  
Placerville, CA 95667  
Local Number:  
(530) 621-5390

## Notes from August 28 Board meeting.

- 1) AFTER MANY YEARS OF WAITING !!! The **Cronan Ranch Equestrian Arena Project** is moving forward **BUT** we need overwhelming support from the horse community here on the Divide. Our next general meeting, **Sept. 17**, will be at the Greenwood Community Center and everyone interested in moving this arena forward should plan to attend. If all goes as planned, Chamber of Commerce folks and county supervisors will be there to share information and answer questions. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to get a public riding arena here on the Divide. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend.
- 2) September 17 meeting will be at Greenwood Community Center 6:30 p.m. potluck, 7:00 p.m. meeting to better accommodate our agenda.
- 3) October 15 general meeting will be at Pam Greer's ranch. DHA will BBQ meat and members will bring accompanying dishes.
- 4) Gymkana clinic still uncertain. Claudia Gibbens will notify club when a date and venue are decided. Look for email as to specifics.
- 5) Still need a point person to organize the October Olmstead ride and pizza party. Contact Katie Y. or Pam Greer if you are interested.
- 6) The next trail patrol practice and/or qualifying ride will be end of September. Contact Claudia Gibbens for date.
- 7) Char Bancroft is planning a Fall newsletter. Please submit via email any items of interest to her for the DHA newsletter.

The year is drawing to a close faster than a galloping horse! We'll have to start planning for winter weather and the holiday party soon. Until then, ride as much as you can and enjoy every little turn in the road.  
(Katie)

Riding the Learning Curve  
(by Katie Yaranon)

What have you learned from your horses lately? One of the most exciting challenges in loving and working with horses is that you always have more to learn. Some months the learning curve might be low and some months the learning curve may seem insurmountable. And oddly enough, the more you learn the more you realize what you don't know. No where is this truer than in our horse life. Because I ride

more in the summer and fall, it's the perfect time for me to assess my riding life and ask myself what have I learned. How did my riding go this season? How can I keep my horses healthier and happier? What can I do better? What did I learn about myself and my horses this past season?

For the past few weeks my learning curve has been high as I introduced my horse, Gracie, to my new trailer. My other two semi-retired mares will hop right into any trailer, but Gracie is a horse who previously had some trailer anxiety issues. I realize everyone's definition of good trailer loading is different, but I define a good loader as a confident, willing horse who will step up and step out of the trailer every time with only a point of my finger. When I bought Gracie three years ago and discovered she was really worried in the trailer, I spent weeks practicing the art of trailer loading – lots of unhurried loading, careful unloading and riding in the trailer. Since I trailer alone most of the time, I had to be dead certain I could easily load her by sending her into the trailer with just a point of my finger. This requires a super confident horse, so my overall goal was to build her confidence loading and riding in the trailer. After a few weeks of intense trailer practice and help from Marta, we had Gracie loading and unloading perfectly – comfortable with all aspects of trailering. For the next two and a half years, Gracie and I happily trailered all over the Divide in my older tan, Logan two horse trailer.

But a few weeks ago I went to an emergency evacuation clinic and got spooked about having to evacuate all my horses in case of fire or emergency-I have three horses and only a two horse trailer. So I bit the bullet and purchased a newer, very well equipped white three horse trailer. Finally, I didn't need to lie awake at night wondering how I would possibly get all three of my mares evacuated. I mean which ones would I take? What horse would I leave? I finally came up with the plan of having my husband trailer out two of the mares and I would ride out with the other one. It was a tenuous plan built on a lot of assumptions. Needless to say, I was thrilled to get my three horse trailer and have the ability to load all three of the horses and trailer them out to safety. But, when I got my new trailer home Gracie took one look at it and absolutely refused to get in it! I would point to the trailer (her cue to load) and she would plant all four feet and refuse--stomping her feet as if to say-- "This isn't my trailer. My trailer is tan. I can't get in this trailer. I hate the color white. Where's my brown trailer?" I was having flashbacks to the time when my kids were two years old.

I tried the popular method of leaving the trailer in her pasture and feeding her in it. I thought this would work until one day I saw her carefully walk up to the trailer, delicately sniff the wheels, the door and the windows and then snort, spin and run away bucking as she squealed her displeasure. She absolutely hated this new trailer! It was hysterical to watch-- she was so transparent with her feelings about the matter. My husband was just as transparent.

"Can you remind me again why we took money out of our retirement savings to buy a new trailer that your horse won't get into?"

"So I can get all three of the horses out in case of emergency," I tell him.

"But you can't get Gracie to go into the trailer," he insists. He is a stickler for details.

"I'm working on changing her mind," I tell him.

He looks at me like I have two heads and have just spoken Arabic.

"Women," he sighs and shakes his head. I don't know if he is talking about me or the mares.

And he is so right-- I can't get her to get into the trailer if she doesn't want to. Sure I know how I can **force** her into the trailer, but my goal is to have her change her mind about the trailer and step in willingly because she has decided that the trailer will not eat her and in fact is a pretty good place to hang out. Big learning curve here. It's difficult for me to believe that this is so hard for Gracie. So every day or two I call my neighbor Michelle and ask her to come over and help me load (she holds open the door so it doesn't accidentally swing and hit Gracie in the rump). I fill the trailer feeder with chopped apples (Gracie's favorite). I let her step up and step out when she wants, other times I shut the door and ask her to wait inside the trailer for a few minutes. Sometimes we trailer somewhere and sometimes we don't.

I still have some resistance to the new trailer, but I think I am over the hump as Gracie slowly changes her mind about her new trailer. She is over the scariness part, but she still has a strong negative opinion which will take longer to change. So, this riding season I have learned to give Gracie the time she needs to change her mind, because the mind is where all learning begins. Whether Gracie is scared or stubborn may dictate how I respond, but it does not change my goal of getting her to willingly get in the trailer with just a suggestion of my hand.

As we leave summer behind and edge into Autumn, all the kids are going back to school--they will have new lessons, new friends, new backpacks, new teachers. But we adults, although maybe finished with formal schooling, are not off the hook. Not if you want to be good with horses. So I challenge you all to ask yourselves these questions? What is it that you can learn this riding season? How can you improve your horsemanship? What goals need to be assessed and maybe revised? What do you need to take more time with? So, go get yourself a new lunch box or a new pack of crayons and let the learning curve start climbing.

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### *Here is a recap of DHA's 2014 spring clinics.*

**March 8:** It was a nice sunshine Saturday in March where DHA horse enthusiasts participated in a basic horsemanship clinic held at Cool Hills Ranch. Marta Michilizzi was the clinician and started everyone off with fundamental ground exercises with their horses. It was a good review of the essentials of establishing leadership, respect and obedience from the horse. Once mounted, exercises for riding safety were discussed and practiced. Everyone had the opportunity to learn and practice the principals of good equitation. I for one was happy to again participate in the first of DHA's clinic series for 2014.

**April 12:** It was another of those beautiful spring days in April, making it pleasant for another fun DHA clinic. This time I was the clinic organizer, so didn't participate. However, there is much to be learned from the sidelines too. This was an obstacle clinic given by Samantha March at Cool Hills Ranch. The clinic was divided into two sessions, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. It was another well attended clinic by DHA members. There were a multitude of obstacles for horse "persons" to conquer with their respective mounts. Samantha was there to guide each of the riders over and through the various

obstacles. I think it was safe to say that everyone came away pleased with their successes.

**May 10:** This was DHA's "play day" clinic held at Cool Hills Ranch. It was also quite well attended by ardent horse persons willing to conquer the most bizarre of obstacles in and around the arena. I brought my easy-peasy mare (Mia) so we could just enjoy the fun of it all. You see, Mia has a curious nature and found a fascination with the weird objects around the arena – go figure! This was DHA's second fun day clinic (a repeat from last year), and it was fun for both horse and rider. Plus, we all came away with a nice little goodie bag. How can you beat that for a fun day of horsing around???

The August general/barbecue meeting held at Claudia Gibbens' ranch was a huge success as Dr. De La Cruz from Loomis Basin Equine presented critical information on hoof care.

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Just for thought:

Your reward in life will always be in proportion to the risk!!



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### Trail Trials Whoa's...

It was as sweltering a day as I had ever experienced on the trail, but I was determined to ride my second trail trials adventure. I don't regard myself as a novice trail rider, but "novice" seemed the appropriate description for my registration form. And hey, that meant we only had to tackle 10 obstacles. I could feel my enthusiasm wane as the morning sun showed no leniency to those outdoors that day. Even my mare couldn't buy into the adventure that I planned for the day. I thought back to the previous year when it rained the day before, dampening down the dust and clearing the air for a pleasurable ride. What a difference a year can make!

As I headed toward the finish, I had a nice collection of dust and sweat mixture over my body!! Is this how it felt to be on a day-long cattle drive I thought? The last few obstacles couldn't come up soon enough. My poor mare had to wonder, "Just how much further do we have to go?" "Is this woman insane to make me do a figure 8 around those three trees or what!"

Honestly though, all in all, the three of us in our group had a really good time sharing the obstacle challenges together.

Will I do the trail trials again next year? I might...if only in spirit.   
(signed anonymous rider)



### A girl and her first horse – a grandmother's story.

Anyone who inherited the "horse gene" can attest to the obsession they had with horses from a very early age. In fact, we could all almost recite similar stories of when we first identified our passion. As a very young girl I can vaguely remember the neighbor next door who was kind enough to let me borrow his old paint mare. He didn't provide me with a saddle or bridle because I was much too young for that stage of

sophistication of horsemanship. But, he was kind enough to put a halter on the mare and hand me the lead rope, as if to say, go for it kid. Well, that was just half the battle. The rest was left to my own devices of how I might mount this large creature. Good for me that I was able to find some wooden crates that I could stack and somehow make my way up onto the mare's back. She must have been the most patient horse ever to just stand there as I built my box ladder. What I don't quite remember is what I did once I got up on that old mare, if in fact I had actually stabilized the crates to make the climb up!!

Well, as life goes, I actually didn't get my first horse until I was an adult. And, low and behold, out of eight grandkids, I do have one 'horsy' granddaughter (Gabby). It didn't take long to discover that she inherited the "horse gene." I realized that early on when she was a little girl who had to follow the parade through Auburn because of the horse that brought up the rear. Yep, that was proof positive for me!

And so, you're asking where am I going with this story? Quite simply, I submit that a picture is probably worth more than a thousand words. The picture of Gabby and her first horse says it all.



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### Hands On Tips from EQUUS:

Keep a box of tongue depressors in your tack room. They are very useful for applying small amounts of ointment to wounds without getting hands messy.

Save old dog or cat collars for use around the barn. Big collars can be used to hang buckets on a panel or stall. Smaller ones can replace the chest straps that go missing from horse blankets or be used to hang things on your saddle D-rings or tie pieces of tack together for storage.

Use a simple cloth log carrier for carrying hay to your horses. They are very inexpensive and keep the barn a lot cleaner by preventing hay from being dropped all over the place.

Attach a heavy-duty, wide strip of Velcro to the wall of your tack room. After riding, stick your horse's exercise boots on the strip. Just press the Velcro on the boot to the strip. Not only do the boots dry out faster this way, but they are easier to find than when they are tossed in a bucket or tack box.

To clean mud off your horse's fetlocks and pasterns, use a nylon shower puff. It easily cleans the fetlock area, is gentle to the skin, and rinses out easily.

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### Final Reflection

*It is interesting. Why is it that human nature wants to live in either the future or the past? Take your horse for example. To gaze upon him/her evokes memories of what he/she was like when first purchased. Conversely, we start to plan for "tomorrow" – go for a ride, train for a show, ride an endurance competition, etc. But what about today? A*

*glorious day of all days to enjoy the present. A gift of God for this very minute. A glimpse of time that will become our yesterday.*

*The present is a record of your time. It is like a movie of your life, a record of dreams and ambitions. You owe it to yourself to be good to yourself, to be healthy physically and mentally, to do good to those around you, and to live life with passion. Receive the present with all that you can...because life is short. **Now go ride!!***

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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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