



Mechanicsville Riding Club

The Hitching Post

Issue 64

SEPTEMBER 2008

2008 Officers

President	KAREN H
Vice President	DONNA H
Secretary	CINDY G
Treasurer	DEBBIE W

September Birthdays:

Jane B, Chip B, Deb D, Wanda H, Theresa J, Diane K, Mike K, Ronnie M,
Richard W

Club Editor- **Bunny H**
Web Editor- **Diane T**
Ways & Means – **Bethany M**
Historian – **Judee C**
Parliamentarian – **Nancy M**
Publicity – **Diane T**
Show – **Barbara H, Debbie M, Deb D**
Special Events – **Jim R & Bev C**
Activities – **Maria S**
Membership/Telephone Tree – **Joan B**
Parade- **Nancy M, Carolyn D**
Activities 17 & under – **Linda L**
Corporate Secretary- **Paula H**

Next Club Meeting will be Sept. 24th at the Mechanicsville Little League Bldg. Social will begin at 7:00 and our meeting will start at 7:30. Our speaker will be Rebecca Precious. Hope to see everyone there.

2008 Board Meeting Dates

(2nd Wednesday each month at 7pm)

Sept 17 (change) Nov 12
Oct 8 Dec 10

All members are welcome to attend board meetings. Locations to be determined, details will be e-mailed prior to meetings

CHUCK WAGON:

Determined by membership roster order

SEPT: Maria S & Diane T

OCT: Debbie W & Mary W

NOV: Kathy A & Sandy B

Please let us know as soon as possible if you can't supply Chuck Wagon.

From Editor:

I hope everyone has had an enjoyable summer. I'm taking my Mom for a trip to Hawaii so I'll miss the Club Picnic and Sept meeting. The **Picnic** is Sept 21 at Dorey Park and you need to let Diane know if you're bringing guests. Remember to bring a covered dish and be there by 1 pm. The games will start at 1:30. The Va. Dressage Association will do an exhibition at 3:00. Dinner will be at 5 pm. Have Fun!! I also want to remind everyone to get those sponsors for the **Horse Show**. It is next month!!

Heads Up:

Remember to bring Southern States feed proof-of-purchases to the meetings. They help with our horse show.

ANY MEMBER OF MRC MAY SEEK APPROVAL TO ORGANIZE AND CO-ORDINATE A TRAINING CLINIC OPEN FOR THE FULL MRC MEMBERSHIP. GUIDELINES WILL BE DISCUSSED AT MEETING.

If anyone would like to share their bio please send me your info...especially new members. It'll help us get to know each other. MRC Membership bio guidelines:

- Name:
- What is your riding interest or discipline?
- How did you develop your connection with horses?
- Tell about your early experience with horses?
- What are your goals and interests for you and your horse?
- Tell about the greatest achievement for you and your horse.
- How has your riding experience enhanced your life?

FOR MRC PLANNED EVENTS

September 21st Club Picnic at Dorey Park

PLEASE CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE:

WWW.MECHANICSVILLERIDINGCLUB.NET

MRC also appears on Woodside Equine Clinic website now...



PERSONAL ROUND-UP:

Let's continue to keep all our recovering members in our prayers.

Send your BIO to the editor and let us know more about you and your horse interests

"COWBOY QUOTES"

The Great Will Rogers Quotes

- Never slap a man who's chewing tobacco.
- Always drink upstream from the herd.
- There's two theories to arguing with a woman. Neither one works.
- Never miss a good chance to shut up.
- We can't all be heroes because someone has to sit on the curb and clap as they go by.
- Never kick a cow chip on a hot day.
- If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.
- I never expected to see the day when girls would get sunburned in the places they now do.
- The best way out of a difficulty is through it.
- There are three kinds of men: The ones that learn by reading. The few who learn by observation. The rest of them have to pee on the electric fence.
- What the country needs is dirtier fingernails and cleaner minds.
- Diplomacy is the art of saying "Nice doggie" until you can find a rock.
- An onion can make people cry but there's never been a vegetable that can make people laugh.
- If you're riding' ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there.
- Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier'n puttin' it back.

Random Cowboy Quotes

- Don't squat with your spurs on.
- If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging.
- It don't take a genius to spot a goat in a flock of sheep.
- Never ask a barber if you need a haircut.
- Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance.
- You live in hell? HA! I ride him everyday.
- Grass is for bulls, what do you ride?
- "A gun is a tool, Marion, no better or no worse than any other tool, an axe, a shovel or anything. A gun is as good or as bad as the man using it. Remember that." -- Shane
- Talk slowly, think quickly.
- Sometimes you get and sometimes you get got.
- Never approach a bull from the front, a horse from the rear, or a fool from any direction.

“Barn Humor”

SAVE GAS - RIDE A HORSE!

Author Unknown

HONEST HARRY'S NEW & USED HORSES

I can save you money on gas!

Alright folks, step right up! You don't want to pay \$4.69 for gas, no problem, I have the perfect vehicle for you. Needs no gas, no oil, or even a battery, just a little grass and water will do these animals fine. Now everyone has different needs, so choose from the following models:

1. **Trail Horse** - Your average run around town animal. Has the energy to get where you are going, the brain to find the best way to go, big enough to carry the normal sized American.
2. **The Arabian** - perfect for those who travel long distances in a day and try to multi task while driving. Although the Arabian may not go to your home or office with out specific instruction, it WILL go somewhere.
3. **The Draft** - Calling all soccer moms. This big guy can carry the whole team, their gear and snacks. Just like the big machines, this guy will require more fuel, and his shoes will be more expensive than the compact model.
4. **The Western Pleasure** - The right car for the high end white collar workers. This animal works harder and requires more special knowledge so only the best can figure this out. Be sure to take your cell phone. You won't be stuck in traffic, you just won't be getting anywhere fast.
5. **The Parelli** - Salesmen, stay at home moms, and high school kids will all enjoy this dream. You can load him down with flapping Wal-mart bags, ask him to walk in places a horse won't fit, and you can dance with him as you listen to the latest tunes.
6. **The Ranch** - The most dependable animal available. He will go where ever you ask him to, at whatever speed is appropriate. You can tie him to the stop sign and he will be there when you get back. Best of all, this model has been specially engineered to be able to go without water for days and stay fat and slick by eating sagebrush and dead prairie grass.

Of course all models are available in base colors (sorrel, bay, black) Special order colors are available (dun, gray, palomino) and for an additional fee, custom paint jobs are also available (overo, tobiano, blanket, leopard).

No horse is sold with a warranty, however maintenance plans are available in the event brakes, steering, or accelerator fail.

HORSE TERMS:

Hock: Financial condition of all horse owners.

Stall: What your rig does at rush hour in an unfamiliar city on the way to a big horse show

A Bit: What you have left in your pocket after you've been to your favorite tack shop.

Fence: Decorative structure built to provide your horse with something to chew on.

Horse Auction: What you think of having after your horse bucks you off.

Pinto: Green coat pattern found on freshly washed light colored horses left unattended for 2 minutes.

Well Mannered: Hasn't stepped on, bitten, or kicked anyone for a week.

Rasp: Abrasive metal tool used to remove excess skin from ones knuckles.

Lunging: Popular training method in which a horse exercises their owner by spinning them in circles until dizzy.

Gallop: Customary gait a horse chooses when returning back to the barn.

Nicely Started: Lunges, but not enough health insurance to even think about riding him.

Colic: Gastrointestinal result of eating at horse fair food stands.

Colt: What your mare gives you when you want a filly.

Easy to Load: Only takes 3 hours, 4 men, a 50lb bag of oats, and a tractor with loader.

Easy to Catch: In a 10x10 stall.

Easy Rider: Rides good in a trailer; not to be confused with "ride-able".

(CONTRIBUTED BY BEV C)

Equine Upselling

I've noticed something odd lately. We all know the cliché, want fries with that? It was the first step in this slow march to sell you something more than what you came in for. But have you noticed how that concept has spread like chickenpox?

Here's what I mean. I go to my favorite fast food restaurant and order a Coke into the speaker. The exchange goes something like this:

"Will that be all?"

"Yes"

"A small Coke"

"Yes"

"Do you want to supersize that?"

"No"

"Ok, one small Coke. Want some fries with that?"

"Nooo, just a small Coke"

"Would you like our new Brain Freeze shake with that?"

(A shake with a Coke?)

"No, Just the one thing I ordered and nothing else!!!"

Clutching my Coke and trying to do my yoga breathing to calm myself down, I go to the bank.

"I'd like to make a deposit"

"Certainly, Mrs. Finn, will you be needing anything else today?"

"No, just a deposit"

"Have you considered a home equity loan? We have very attractive rates."

"Nope, just want to make the deposit, please"

The teller starts in again, casually, so's I won't notice "When was the last time you had someone look over your retirement portfolio? Can I have one

of the relationship managers call you?" At this point I'm tempted to throw my Coke at him, but then I'd have to go get another one and the whole thing would start all over again.

This is an insidious little practice called upselling. You ask for one simple thing and have to endure a barrage of questions about whether you want all sorts of other stuff you never asked for and don't want. Never, not once, has anyone offered me anything in this process that I really did want.

Why am I going on about all this upselling you ask? Because I know where they get it from, they get it from our horses.

That's right. They got this idea from our horses. Just think back to the last time you rode.

I'll use me and the Yellow Horse as an example. The Yellow Horse is a great Western Pleasure steed. But he's a master at up selling. For example, I'm sitting pretty in the saddle, things are going okay and I ask him nicely, with a bump of the reins to soften and give me his head.

"Soften?" my steed says sweetly.

"Would you like a head toss with that?"

"No, thanks" I say, bumping again.

"Just give me your head".

"How about a hollowed back?"

"Uh, that seems to be what I've already got. Softening and giving me your head will be fine"

"Bit grabbing?"

"No! (bump, bump) Soften up and give me your dang head, that and only that!!!"

See? Upselling.

Or perhaps we're jogging quietly and it's time to lope. Give 'im the old lope cue, we lope off, and I get "Lope, huh? Would you like me to drop my inside shoulder with that?"

"No, No!! Just lope with your inside shoulder up and your body straight"

"When was the last time you checked your speed? Would you like a hand gallop? I have a very attractive hand gallop I can offer you."

ARGGHHH!!! Just like at the bank, I get so frustrated (that's when you are flustered and frustrated at the same time, a common occurrence for me in riding)

that I can't remember what I came there for, which was to have a nice time schooling my horse.

So, we stop, we both take a deep breath – each of thinking how thickheaded the other can be sometime – and we start again.

"Jog" I tell him.

"Jog?" he asks "Would you like collection?"

Finally, someone has actually anticipated my needs and is offering me some upselling I can use!

"Yes" I say. "Yes, thank you, I would LOVE some collection!"

"Sorry – I'm all out."

If I had a Coke and a deposit slip, I'd throw 'em in his dern face.

Author – Ange Dickson Finn, Western Pleasure competitor and retired horse show mom

(CONTRIBUTED BY BARBARA H.)

THANKS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS AND PLEASE KEEP THEM COMING.

From Katherine Dill:

Here you go. Hope you enjoy it. The story is true. I marvel each time I think of it that I was there to observe this great organization in person.

The Game of Monopony, Part 5,

Or, say what you mean

And mean what you say

Horses do not by nature speak Human. The only language they bring to us is Horse. All the rules of Monopony are written in Horse. Mama spoke Horse. Whoa speaks Horse. Humans usually don't speak Horse, except in those rare cases of great sensitivity and natural giftedness for hearing the language of another—you know, those crazy folks who seem to have been born with hooves and a tail. But the rest of us need to learn how to speak it, because Whoa can't speak to us easily unless we do, and we surely can't hear him without it.

I learned a lot about speaking Horse one day when I watched our herd boss, Chief, get everyone organized before coming into the barn at feeding. This story is astounding, but true. Chief is a late-cut stallion, had been used for breeding and is a very ethical horse, happy to accept the rules of good herd order and willing to enforce them. But he is fair; no Napoleon complex here. His own Mama had taught him well. He gives everyone a chance to understand what is expected will even show them and talk it over, and then, after a couple of mild warnings, he kicks butt.

He was so good at inspiring respectful behavior that we built a herd of young horses with him as the leader. Our barn had 12 stalls in it, and we expected all the horses to come in as a group, go to their stalls without fussing, and just wait for us to close the doors. No exiting allowed, no playing in the aisle way, and certainly no stall sharing. Some of the horses respected these rules well, especially the more mature ones who, in the interest of efficiency, wasted no time starting to chow down, but the young ones—now, that was sometimes a scuffle waiting to happen. Nonetheless, we expected this, and informed each horse of his responsibilities, regardless of his age. That was the job, no negotiation allowed.

Chief took keeping me safe as I moved among the horses as his personal responsibility, and never allowed any of the gang to get pushy around me without trimming some tail feathers. I really appreciated this, as I usually worked alone, and I let him know often that I couldn't do my job as trainer without him doing his job as enforcer. We had it going on. It was a good partnership.

Now, for several days the kids had been a little pushy waiting to come in, each one trying to be the gate police, and I knew Chief was getting frosted about it. Despite his multiple reminders and pointed glances this particular morning, they were still pretty rowdy waiting for the grub.

When I entered the barn through the side door to get breakfast started, it was clear there was a lot of hubbub out in the corral. Hooves and tails were flying. I ignored this, went about measuring grain and putting out hay up and down the aisle way, and when I was done, I pushed the sliding door to the corral open, stepped out of the way, and waited for today's experiment in instilling order to take place. What I saw astounded me.

Chief had lined the gang up in a line around the edge of the corral, nose to tail, spaced about eight feet apart. This was amazing enough, but then I realized that he had each one standing perfectly still, head and tail included, and staring at him in complete focus. Hmm. Something was indeed going on here. He was at the head of the line,

looking perfectly calm, but if you knew him, you would know that that look could be deceiving.

Well, I gave him the okay to come on in, and he did. *He* did. No one else moved, not a leg, tail or ear. They all remained totally still staring at him. He calmly went into his stall, the second one on the right. He stepped in, went to his grain bucket, took a bite of grain, then deliberately turned, stuck his head out the door, and glared at the gang. No one budged; that look had a death warning in it. He went back in, took another bite, and returned once more to glare. Again, no one moved. He did this one more time, but this time, as he looked out, he gave permission for the gang to advance. One at a time the horses entered the barn, slunk to their stalls and stayed in, parked against the back wall. Chief stared at each one as the entrance was made, and I must say, if he had looked at me like that, I wouldn't have fooled around either.

Here's where it really gets interesting, because I understood that Chief had things under control, and that, if I wanted to work with him as a partner in training this gang, I must do nothing to undo the implications of what he had said to them, which was, simply put, behave or else. He had told them to wait for his permission to move, then to walk in calmly, head below the withers, one at a time, go into the stalls and stay there. No muss, no fuss, no nothing, period. He expected that, and nothing less would satisfy him.

So I had to make a choice. What do I do next? Do I continue the normal routine, and shut the stall doors, or do I reinforce the expectations Chief had so clearly spoken, and leave the doors open, expecting each horse to remain in control because he was told to do so? I thought long and hard about the message I was about to give.

If I closed the doors, I would say, "Good job, now you are off the hook." But if I just left them open, I would say,

"Well, I guess you better hold yourselves, then, until you are released from this obligation."

If I closed them, it would be, "Okay, you did it, but I'm pretty sure you can't keep getting it right, so I will make sure you can't get it wrong." But if I left them open, it would be, "Well, now that you understand the rules, let's just keep practicing following them."

I chose the second option, and left the doors open. To my great happiness, but not really to my surprise, not a single horse even looked out the door until I invited Chief to return to the corral after he had eaten. As he exited, he looked up and down the aisle way, looked at me and then calmly, as though nothing had happened, he walked out. I opened the corral gate so he could get into the field to graze, and off he went.

I went back to each stall, patted each horse, and then one by one, said, "Okay, now you can go." Each horse walked

out the door and straight down the middle of the aisle way, out into the corral, through the gate into the pasture and started grazing. No muss, no fuss, no nothing, period. Peace and order reigned.

No doubt in my mind who won that game of Monopony. And he did it with eleven opponents simultaneously. Wow. My respect for him and the system he used to speak Horse grew by leaps and bounds that day.

And here's what I learned from it. First, that you have to know what you expect. Nothing less or more will do. Then, that you must be convinced that this is a reasonable goal, both fair to all and completely attainable. Third, that you have to communicate what you expect, clearly, completely, concisely and consistently. Fourth, that you have to be willing to enforce what you expect, immediately and with enough determination to make the point. And fifth, that you have to believe that this process will succeed, and allow it to happen.

Chief left no doubts in anyone's mind that he expected peaceful order. He clearly told everyone where to stand, when to move, how to hold their bodies as they did, and where to stop. Then he stepped back and watched to make sure that it happened, ready to turn that death stare into teeth or hooves if necessary. Then, he simply went on about his business, believing that his message was heard and would be attended to.

Chief and Whoa's Mama must have been buddies, because they certainly used the same language. If we speak like this to our horses, we can surely control the game of Monopony so completely that Whoa will lose the desire to play. He will figure out that it doesn't pay to play, or perhaps more correctly, that it costs more to play than he wishes to pay. And we will all be safer, saner, and happier because of it.

[Kathleen Dill, June 2008](#)