



Mechanicsville Riding Club

The Hitching Post

Issue 69

FEBRUARY 2009

2009 Officers

President	DEBBIE M
Vice President	DONNA S
Secretary	WANDA H
Treasurer	DEBBIE W

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

Notes from the President

Thanks to Mary Rader for her slideshow and narration on her trips out West. Sounds like something a lot of us would love to do. Kind of makes us want to get out and ride and with the few great days we have had, I hope some of you did.

Thanks to those who have stepped up and taken on a committee. We still need a couple of positions filled; Publicity, Parliamentarian and Ways and Means. Please think about helping your club by taking one of these positions. Also think of some activities we can do for Ways and Means to help promote our club.

Remember, if you have not paid your dues; please get this done by the Feb. meeting. Also, please keep some of our MRC members in your prayers.

Jenny Boswell-- lost her Father this week.

Leslie Davis—lost her Mom this week.

I hope to see everyone at the Feb meeting.

Debbie Middleton

Next Club Meeting will be Feb. 25th at the Mechanicsville Little League Bldg. Speaker will be Marty Adams/Southern States who will be discussing “Feeding the Aged Horse and Winter Feeding Tips”. Social will begin at 7:00 and our meeting will start at 7:30. Hope to see everyone there.

CHUCK WAGON:

Determined by membership roster order

Feb: Jenny B & Theresa B

Mar: Judee C & Lorrie C

Apr: Donna C & Bev C

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

February Birthdays: Sandi G, Vickie K, Hilary S, Maria S

Heads Up: 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 AND PICTURES FROM OUR PAST EVENTS

PLEASE CHECK OUT OUR
WEBSITE:

WWW.MECHANICSVILLERIDINGCLUB.NET



MRC MONTHLY PLANNED RIDES

Contact Maria S 307-6228

Feb 21 (Sat.) Lake Anna State Park:
Take off time of 10:30am. Cross your fingers for good weather! Bagged lunch social to follow.

Mar 22 (Sun) Petersburg Battles Fields: Time to be announced

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

From Jenny B

Dear Horse,
I love you very much, and I truly cherish your presence in my life. I would never wish to criticize you in any way. However, there are a few trivial details regarding our relationship that I think might bear your consideration.

First of all, I am already aware that horses can

run faster than I can. I do not need you to demonstrate that fact each time I come to get you in the pasture. Please remember that I work long and hard to earn the money to keep you in the style to which you have become accustomed. In return, I think you should at least pretend to be glad to see me, even when I'm carrying a bridle instead of a bucket of oats.

It should be fairly obvious to you that I am a human being who walks on only two legs. I do not resemble a scratching post. Do not think that, when you rub your head against me with 1,000 pounds of force behind it, I believe that it wasn't your intention to send me flying. I am also aware that stomping on my toes while you are pushing me around is nothing but adding injury to insult.

I understand I cannot expect you to cover your nose when you sneeze, but it would be appreciated if you did not inhale large amounts of dirt and manure prior to aiming your sneezes at my face and shirt. Also, if you have recently filled your mouth with water you do not intend to drink, please let it all dribble from your mouth BEFORE you put your head on my shoulder. In addition, while I know you despise your deworming medication, my intentions in giving it to you are good, and I really do not think I should be rewarded by having you spit half of it back out onto my shirt.

Sometimes, I get the feeling that you are confused about the appropriate roles you should play in various situations. One small bit of advice: Your stone-wall imitation should be used when I am mounting and your speed-walker imitation when I suggest that we proceed on our way, not vice versa. Please also understand that jumping is meant to be a mutual endeavor. By "mutual", I mean that we are supposed to go over the jump together. You were purchased to be a mount, not a catapult.

I know the world is a scary place when your eyes are on the sides of your head, but I did spend a significant amount of money to buy you, and I have every intention of protecting that investment. Therefore, please consider the following when you are choosing the appropriate behavior for a particular situation:

When I put your halter on you, attach one end of a lead rope to the halter, and tie the other end of

the lead rope to a post or rail or whatever, I am indicating a desire for you to remain in that locale. I would also like the halter, lead rope, post, etc., to remain intact. While I admit that things like sudden loud noises can be startling, I do not consider them to be acceptable excuses for repeatedly snapping expensive new lead ropes (or halters or posts) so that you can run madly around the barn area creating havoc in your wake. Such behavior is not conducive to achieving that important goal that I know we both share --- decreasing the number of times the veterinarian comes out to visit you.

By the same token, the barn aisle was not designed for the running of the Kentucky Derby and is not meant to serve as a racetrack. Dragging me down the aisle in leaps and bounds is not how "leading" is supposed to work, even if someone happens to drop a saddle on the floor as we're passing. Pulling loose and running off is also discouraged (although I admit it does allow you to run faster).

I assure you that blowing pieces of paper do not eat horses. While I realize you are very athletic, I do not need a demonstration of your ability to jump 25 feet sideways from a standing start while swapping ends in midair, nor am I interested in your ability to emulate both a racehorse and a bucking bronco while escaping said piece of paper. Also, if the paper were truly a danger, it would be the height of unkindness to dump me on the ground in front of it as a sacrificial offering to expedite your escape.

When I ask you to cross a small stream, you may safely assume that said stream does not contain crocodiles, sharks, or piranhas, nor will it be likely to drown you. (I have actually seen horses swimming, so I know it can be done.) I expect you to be prepared to comply with the occasional request to wade across some small body of water. Since I would like to be dry when we reach the other side of the stream, deciding to roll when we're halfway across is not encouraged behavior.

I give you my solemn oath that the trailer is nothing but an alternate means of transportation for distances too long for walking. It is not a lion's den or a dragon's maw, nor will it magically transform into such. It is made for

horses, and I promise you that you will indeed fit into your assigned space. Please also bear in mind that I generally operate on a schedule, and wherever we're going, I would really like to get there today.

For the last time, I do not intend to abandon you to a barren, friendless existence. If I put you in a turn-out pen, I promise that no predators will eat you, and I will come back in due time to return you to your stall. It is not necessary to run in circles, whinny pathetically, threatening to jump the fence, or paw at the gate. Neither your stall mates nor I will have left the premises. The other horses standing peacefully in adjacent pens amply demonstrate that it is possible to enjoy being turned out for exercise.

In order to reassure you, my dear horse, I have posted the following message on your stall door:

"Notice to People Who Complain About My Horse"

1. I like my horse a lot better than I like people who complain about him.
2. To you, he's an animal; to me, he's a big, hairy, four-legged child --- and you know what they say about coming between a mother and her children.
3. This stall is his castle, and you are expected to treat him as the King he thinks he is.
4. If you don't want him to steal your carrots, don't walk by him with the carrots sticking out of your pockets.
5. Horses are better than husbands or kids. They eat grass, don't smoke or drink, don't expect an allowance, don't voluntarily get their body parts pierced, don't hog the remote, don't waste the whole weekend watching football with their friends, don't talk back to you, don't compare you unfavorably with their friends' owners, don't keep you awake with their snoring --- and no horse ever left the toilet seat up after going to the bathroom.

Finally, in closing, my strong and gentle companion, I would like to point out that, whatever might happen between horses and their

people, we humans will always love you. In fact, our bonds with you help create new bonds among ourselves, even with total strangers. Wherever there are horses, there will be "horse people," and for the blessings you bestow upon us, we thank you.

Most sincerely yours,
Your "Owner"

Contributed by Diane T

By Katherine Blocksdorf @ About.com

Winter Horse & Pony Care Tips

.. Adjust Feeding Programs: As pasture quality or accessibility declines consider increasing hay and concentrates.

.. Help Horses Keep Warm: Horses kept outside need to eat more fodder. Horses produce a lot of heat during digestion. A generous supply of hay helps keep the horse's internal furnace stoked.

.. Add Minerals: If your feeding program does not include a mineral supplement consider adding one.

.. Have Teeth Checked: Make sure your horse's or pony's teeth are looked after by an equine dentist. The inability to grind food properly will prevent a horse from getting all of the nutrients and energy it needs--especially if energy needs increase during colder weather.

..Prevent Snowballs: If snow packs into your horse's hooves try smearing the bottom with petroleum jelly.

. If You Ride Frequently: Drying a horse out after a workout is difficult. Consider clipping a heavy hair coat. A clipped horse, without natural insulation will require stabling and blanketing to keep warm.

..Add Insulation: Consider blanketing during wet, very windy, or frigid weather. A wet coat loses its loft--like a wet down jacket, and won't hold body heat. Windy weather pulls warmth away. Some horses are comfortable during very cold weather; some will be more comfortable in a warm winter blanket.

. Provide Shelter: Even if your horses are stabled over night, provide them with a windbreak or shelter especially if you are away most of the day.

..Banish Bots: Plan to deworm after the first heavy frost. Use a wormer that includes medication to kill bot larvae.

.. Continue Deworming: Continue a regular deworming program throughout the winter months.

..Don't Let Hooves Get Overgrown: Keep you horse's hooves clipped. Clipped hooves will chip less, hold less snow, and will provide a bit more grip on slippery ground.

..Check Under Blankets: If your horse or pony wears a winter blanket (or rug) during the winter remove it daily and check for chaffing and irritation. Daily grooming keeps coats cleaner and your horse more comfortable if he wears a blanket.

.. Make Cleaning Frozen Water Buckets Easier: Rubber buckets are easier to knock the ice out of if they become frozen. Plastic buckets used as water buckets can shatter when they freeze. This can create a hazard and wastes money when replacing them. Rubber buckets may cost more initially, but last longer.

From Barbara H

[Since we are animal lovers](#)

Excerpts from a Dog's Diary...

8:00 am - Dog food! My favorite thing!

9:30 am - A car ride! My favorite thing!

9:40 am - A walk in the park! My favorite thing!

10:30 am - Got rubbed and petted! My favorite thing!

12:00 PM - Lunch! My favorite thing!

1:00 PM - Played in the yard! My favorite thing!

3:00 PM - Wagged my tail! My favorite thing!

4:00 PM - Licked myself everywhere! My favorite thing!

5:00 PM - Milk bones! My favorite thing!

6:00 PM - Oooh, Bath. Bummer.

7:00 PM - Got to play ball! My favorite thing!

8:00 PM - Wow! Watched TV with the people! My favorite thing!

11:00 PM - Sleeping on the bed! My favorite thing!

Excerpts from a Cat's Daily Diary...

Day 983 of my captivity.

My captors continue to taunt me with bizarre little dangling objects.

They dine lavishly on fresh meat, while the other inmates and I are fed hash or some sort of dry nuggets. Although I make my contempt for the rations perfectly clear, I nevertheless must eat something in order to keep up my strength.

The only thing that keeps me going is my dream of escape. In an attempt to get to them, I once again vomited on the carpet.

Today I decapitated a mouse and dropped its headless body at their feet. I had hoped this would strike fear into their hearts, since it clearly demonstrates what I am capable of. However, they merely made condescending comments about what a 'good little hunter' I am. Bastards.

There was some sort of assembly of their accomplices tonight. I was placed in solitary confinement for the duration of the event. However, I could hear the noises and smell the food. I overheard that my confinement was due to the power of 'allergies.' I must learn what this means and how to use it to my advantage.

Today I was almost successful in an attempt to assassinate one of my tormentors by weaving around his feet as he was walking. I must try this again tomorrow ----- but at the top of the stairs.

I am convinced that the other prisoners here are flunkies and snitches. The dog receives special privileges. He is regularly released - and seems to be more than willing to return. He is obviously retarded.

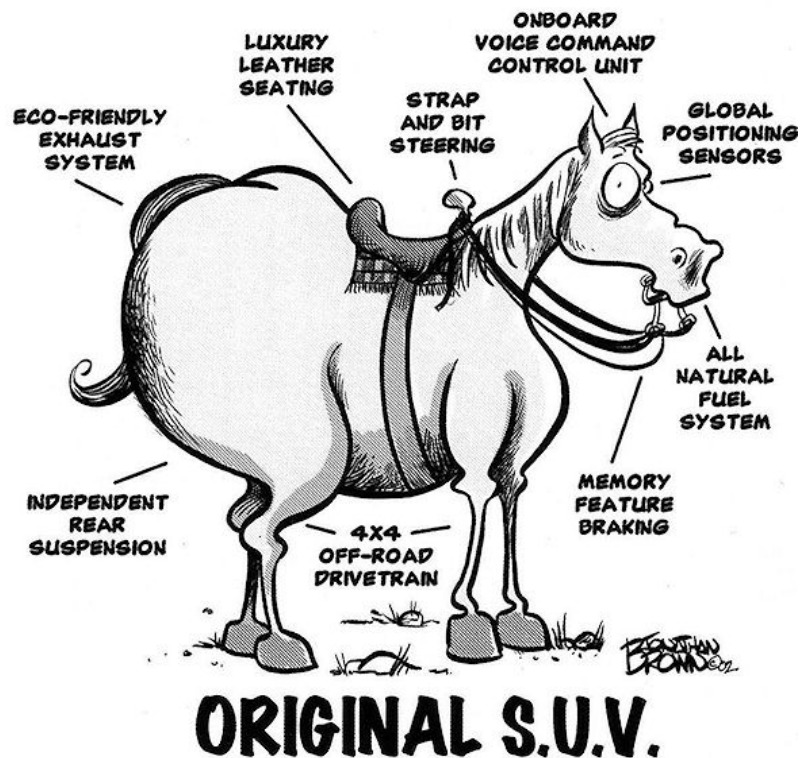
The bird has got to be an informant. I observe him communicating with the guards regularly. I am certain that he reports my

every move. My captors have arranged protective custody for him in an elevated cell, so he is safe....

For now . . .

Contributed by many.....

As the Big 3 auto manufacturers face bankruptcy, we must go back to the old basics. Americans will need to again embrace the original Sport Utility Vehicle:



They come in different colors and only as convertibles.

PLEASE KEEP CONTRIBUTIONS COMING...STORIES, BIOS, IDEAS, HELPFUL HINTS AND I'LL TRY TO INCLUDE THEM

Read My Mind

Kathleen Dill, Copyright 2009

*It's not his fault if there is
nothing in there.*

What does your horse see when he looks at you? I have asked this question before to clinic participants and students, and I get a lot of different answers. They run the complete gamut, from someone who brings him carrots and picks up poop, to someone who has no clue about how to make him mind, to someone who is his guide and his leader, to someone who carries the feed in, to someone who can be yanked around by the lead rope.

Here's what I think a horse sees when he looks at his person. I think he sees someone with a glass head. What? A glass head?

You heard it right. A glass head. He looks at you and sees right into your mind. Whatever is in there, that's what he sees. Like it or lump it, you have no purposes that your horse is unaware of. Privacy? Forget it!

I fooled around with horses for a long time before I realized this. It always seemed to me that my horse could find the littlest reason to do what he wanted and make it into a way of life. I found myself always responding to *his* choices, reacting to what *he* did and trying to undo an opinion that *he* had. I rarely initiated anything successfully on the first try. I really thought that all horses were creatures of determination, and if you wanted to get them to do something, you had to first change their minds about what they were already doing. I loved them, I craved my contacts with them, but I just assumed this was the way it was when you messed with

horses. No matter what program you were trying to run, your buddy was going to make you reboot your computer first.

I was wrong. It was my Texan husband who pointed it out to me one day when we were sitting on our horses in a clearing in the woods, taking a break during a long and busy mountain trail ride. His horse, Chief, was standing quietly with the reins dropped on his neck, head down, feet planted, snoozing. Now, those of you who have heard about Chief know that he is a powerhouse of a horse, volcanic, and a real go-getter. We affectionately call him Top Floor, because that's where he will go without a moment's notice. He likes to move, and he moves with great style and enthusiasm. We had just been scooting through the woods at a high rate of speed not a minute before, and yet, here he was, snoring quietly, reins draped, completely at whoa. JC was sitting with his arms laid across his chest, leaning back, smiling as he enjoyed a smoke.

My horse, on the other hand, had his feet planted, sort of, but there was no snooze in him. His neck snaked around like a lizard, snagging a twig here, a leaf there, some grass way over there, and now and then, nibbling on my foot. While he wasn't really going anywhere, he wasn't really still. But, I thought I had a whoa. Until...

Well, until my hubby asked me quietly, "Why don't you ask that horse to stand still?"

"He is," I said. Only, he wasn't, not really. His feet were still, but the rest of him...well, no way he was still.

JC just smiled at me, and then said, between puffs, "You know, I was at one of John's clinics once (he studied with John Lyons back when John was just starting out) when a lady asked him how the horse was supposed to know what to do. Wanna know what he said?"

“Okay,” says I.

“He said, he’s supposed to read my mind.” Another slow smile. Then he picked up the reins, Chief came instantly to attention and sprinted off down the trail. He left me to ponder his wisdom as I tried to catch up.

Well, I was still pondering a few days later when it hit me. I had been struggling, again, to get my horse to give me a decent whoa. We hadn’t done too well, and frankly, I was getting ready to lose it. After all, I had been working with this horse for several years, and had done a lot of building. He had come to us hollow-backed, stiff-legged, shuffle-gaited, and high-headed enough to drown in a rainstorm. He had changed a lot, and now had much better engagement, good carriage and a nice smooth running walk. But, despite all the progress in motion, we hadn’t done too well with the standing still thing. What is wrong with this picture, I kept asking myself. Why won’t that blankety-blank horse just stand there?

And then it happened. I saw into my own head, and when I checked out the Whoa Department, I found it almost unoccupied. There was just no software running. No wonder my horse did what he wanted when he looked into my mind. He found it...empty. Like it or not, I had to admit that if my horse was going to look into my head, I had better put something in there for him to see. Otherwise, we were doomed, and when we crashed and burned, well, the failure belonged to...you got it, yours truly.

So that day, after choking down a big piece of humble pie, I decided I needed to figure out what it was I wanted my horse to see when he checked me out.

I thought it over and decided that what I wanted when I asked for whoa was for him to stand just like Chief. What that meant, of course, was for

everything to stop. Not just feet. Everything from eyeballs to tail feathers. Everything! Period. And the more I thought about it, I realized that wasn’t all I wanted. I also wanted reins dropped on the neck. I wanted whoa to mean stop, and stay stopped, until I tell you to do something else. No holding needed. Park it and stay parked.

Of course, now I had a little work to do. New software to install, and not just in my horse, if you know what I mean. Next time we halted, I *made* myself drop the reins on his neck, sit still and stay quiet. At the first little twitch of movement anywhere between the eyeballs and the tail feathers, I immediately made a quick, light, one-rein correction and went back to sitting still with the reins on the neck. I had to do this maybe five hundred and twenty three times that day, so most of our ride was just...going nowhere. Finally, though, I got faster at feeling movement about to start and at correcting it, and my horse got slower about trying to reboot my computer, and at last we met in my mind, and he found that for once, I knew what I wanted and I wasn’t going to be negotiated out of it. So he gave it up, and just stood. Amazing.

I counted to 60, and he was still standing, everything quiet from ears to tail feathers. So I thanked him, picked up the reins, asked him to go forward and we rode back to the barn. I unsaddled him, put him away, and as he walked off into the field, he looked back at me as if to say, “Hey, don’t blame me. All you had to do was ask!”

That day was the real beginning of my trainer’s journey, because it was the day that I realized that my head really is made of glass, that my horse really could read my mind, and that if there was nothing for him to see in there, then it wasn’t he who had the problem.

Here's what I learned: if you want something from your horse, make sure the glass is clean and the software is up-to-date, and that you load the right stuff the first time. That way, you spend less time rebooting your computer and more time building your relationship.