



## Mechanicsville Riding Club

### The Hitching Post

Issue 71

APRIL 2009

#### **2009 Officers**

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

the part of our members. Get your friends and family to register also. See you on the trail.  
**Debbie Middleton**

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**Club Editor- Bunny H**  
**Web Editor- Diane T**  
**Ways & Means – Bethany M**  
**Historian – Judee C**  
**Parliamentarian – Gordon M**  
**Publicity – Theresa B**  
**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**

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**Next Club Meeting will be Apr. 22nd at the Mechanicsville Little League Bldg. Speaker will be Dr. Jenifer Wright/3 Oaks Equine She will be talking about “Cushing’s Disease and other Metabolic Issues.” 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**

**Apr:** Donna C & Bev C

**May:** Joan C & Carolyn D

**June:** Leslie D & Deb D

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

**April Birthdays: Sandy B, Courtney K**

#### **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.**

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#### **Letter from the President**

Hope everyone had a great holiday. We have lots of fun trails rides and club events lined up. Plan to attend our Lasagna/social June meeting. This is going to be an opportunity to mingle and learn about long standing and new club members.

I am encouraging each of you to register your MVP card for the Food Lion Shop and Share program. The Food Lion link was emailed previously to all club members. Each quarter, total sales for all organizations will be reviewed and funds are sent out accordingly. We could earn up to \$350 per quarter, with little effort on

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](http://WWW.MECHANICSVILLERIDINGCLUB.NET)



**MRC MONTHLY PLANNED RIDES**

**Contact Maria S 307-6228 with any questions or details needed.**

**Apr 18 (Sat) Pleasant Grove Park, Fluvanna: Benefit Poker Ride,** Cost will be \$25.00 per person and include lunch.

**May 17 (Sun) York River State Park,** ride time TBA

**Roundup News**

**Message from Diane:** Members should add suggested charities they would like the MRC to consider making a donation to for 2009 on the Saddle Bag Blog on the MRC website. Deadline for doing so is the October Board meeting (10/14). If you do not remember how to log on to the Saddle Bag Blog (Member Only page), please contact Diane Trittipoe between 6 - 8 pm. (328-1472, cell 804-439-0880)

*In loving memory of our "Sammie"*

*Where to Bury a Horse*

*If you bury him in this spot, the secret of which you must already have, he will come to you when you call; come to you over the far, dim pastures of death.*

*And though you ride other living horses through life, they shall not shy at him, nor resent his coming.*

*For he is yours, and he belongs there.*

*People may scoff at you, who see no lightest blade of grass bent by his footfall, who hear no nicker pitched too fine for insensitive ears.*

*People who may never really love a horse.*

*Smile at them then, for you shall know something that is hidden from them and which is well worth the knowing...*

*The one place to bury a horse is in the heart of his master.*

*Unknown*

Mike and I would like to express our thanks for such kind words of sympathy and keeping us in your thoughts and prayers in March. While we will miss Sammie terribly, he will always be our hearts no matter where the trail leads.

*The Gaudings*

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Received an e-mail from Kathleen Dill with this poem by Sue Karges, I liked it and asked permission to use it in our newsletter. She later sent me an e-mail with the message from the author. I hope others will enjoy.

## **Round Pen Reasoning" by Sue Karges**

"I put the words on paper but God put the words in my mind, so the poem is His and of course you may use it."

Sue Karges

For many years I have treasured the task  
Of starting young horses on their life's path.  
As I taught I learned  
As they worked they earned  
My profound awe of what they will try to do  
Simply because we ask them to.

We study bloodlines, dream and plan,  
For them to do things they don't understand.  
We ask them to yield, and flex and bend  
To accomplish goals they can't comprehend.  
We expect their best efforts even when they hurt  
We win our rewards from their tracks in the dirt.

No clearer time do I question this than when  
I first turn a colt into the round pen.  
He comes in scared with his head in the air  
Searching for a hole in the wall that isn't there.  
As his feet go faster his brain is on hold  
And then the mystery begins to unfold.

As he circles in vain he runs low on air  
And begins to see things that are with him in there.  
His eyes fall on me and the panic renews  
But I stand without threat as his brain gets the news.  
He begins to realize it's just him and me in the pen  
And from there on it's time for his work to begin.

His fear and his own will are what stand in the way  
Of the horse he needs to become some day.  
As I patiently begin to teach him to trust  
I make the "wrong thing" as hard as I must  
Yet the "right thing" will be his full life of reward  
And that's when my thoughts turn to my Lord.

How we humans struggle and circle in vain  
Thinking we are in control as we go round again.  
How tired God must get of our constant willful sin  
Waiting for us to "join up" and come in.  
How we get mad and fight and run into the wall  
Thinking we can ignore God and get away from it all.

What a patient and loving trainer my Lord must be  
That he waited so long in the middle for me.  
Because He knows my purpose and has His own plan  
If I yield to his training and trust to his hand.  
I finally figured out if I give him my reins  
Then I am set free from my fears and my pains.

Every colt that I start is a lesson for me  
As I'm teaching I'm learning what trusting should be.  
The more I ask of them I am learning to see  
That I need to be asking what God's asking of me.  
And most of all, just like the colt in the pen  
Just to take a step at a time as I listen to Him.

When that colt finally turns a soft eye to me  
His eye is a mirror of God's love for me.

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*And on the lighter side from Kathy Russis*

## **HERE A MOUSE, THERE A MOUSE.....**

We all learn lessons the hard way. I knew I should've taken Rambo's blanket down off the hook and put it away for the summer, but laziness got the best of me and I left it hanging in his stall. When I finally took it off the hook, I noticed two big holes in the underside where mice had eaten through it. Little turds everywhere, smelled horrible. I knew I would have to patch the holes and take it to the laundry

mat. Being lazy again, I left it in the back of my Blazer for at least a week.

Before I finish telling you the middle of the story, let me start from the beginning.

It all started around springtime the first year I started boarding with Patti. It seemed anything and everything I touched, mice were involved and since then they seem to haunt me. Me and only me. My two horses had those big green feeding buckets in the corner of their stalls. For some reason mice liked falling into the one in my mare's stall. One day we noticed she was nickering and didn't finish her grain. As I looked more closely, there were 3 live mice running around in it. From then on, at least once or twice a month, Gypsy would let Patti know there was a mouse in her bucket, and Patti had to scoop it out so she could eat. Strange how this big, 16-1 horse was afraid of three little mice. We eventually switched to a regular hanging bucket. Instead of scooping out mice we scoop out the poop she manages to get in it at least twice a week.

I went to get my riding shoes one day last spring; I still kept them in the shoe box they came in. There was a big nest inside the box with about 5 newborn baby mice in it. I didn't have the heart to hurt them, so I took the shoes out, shut the lid and placed it back where it was, hoping in a few weeks they would be gone.

There would be times I went to my tall tack container, open the doors, there would be mice in buckets, mice running around the bottom. Putting decon helped somewhat, but the mice I can handle - one day I opened it up, there was black snake in there, I guess getting it's evening mouse meal in his favorite "restaurant". I immediately shut the door and decided that it was not a riding day.

To finish my blanket saga, one day my husband went out to move the Blazer. When he sat down in the driver seat and adjusted it, he saw a mouse run across the floor. Great, that's all I needed. The only way I can imagine it got in there was from the horse blanket. The little rascal must have been in the blanket when I brought it home from the stable. I immediately took the blanket out and laid it flat across the picnic table for a couple of days to make sure it was "empty" of any more mice.

I looked under the backseat, and there he was, starring right at me. Dummy me thought I could chase him out. I laid across the seat, put a piece

of cheese on the floor, hoping it would come out and I could swat it out when he started eating. Didn't work. I decided to give up, got a mouse trap and set it, put on the back floorboard. Sure enough, the next day I had caught a mouse, thinking that was it.

A couple days later I was getting in the truck, heard a rustling noise. I lifted up a couple things in the back and saw 2 more mice running around. I couldn't believe it. I decided to leave the windows open all night hoping they would jump out. The next day I noticed a dead mouse lying on the ground next to the truck. I figured my then-outside kitten, Chester, must have gone in, caught it out and played with it to death, like most kittens do.

Well, I knew I had at least one mouse left. I started thinking again, which usually doesn't resolve many of my problems. I figured I could open the back door, put a piece of cheese on the step and maybe it would jump out. So I opened the back door, put the cheese on the step, while holding my camera I waited. I wanted to catch it on film. Slowly but surely, the mouse came out from under the back seat, went to the cheese and started nibbling. Well, it didn't jump out. Instead, its little friend came out and started eating, too. Then another one came shyly out, looked around and went back into hiding. Mind you, I was video taping this whole thing, wanting proof of the "mouse" I had trapped in the truck, not knowing I was going to capture three mice in the act. Neither one of them jumped out.

This was in the dead of summer, temperature in the upper 90's for days. I decided I would kill them with heat from the high temperatures. Mind you these mice had not eaten or had anything to drink for at least a week, plus leaving the windows shut, this did not faze them. Never found a dead one. I finally resorted to mouse traps, I didn't want to do this, but decided it was better than letting them suffocate from the heat. It took a few days, since they got wise to my antics, but in the end, I finally eliminated them all.

Patti and I were having a "new" stall put up for my other horse this past winter, when I dumped a bucket of old gate latches and snaps, there on the bottom was a huge colony of mice, running every which a way.

I left my horse blanket lying on the tack box for a day or two which was two days too long, every time I would pick it up, two or three mice would

run from under it. Not Sonoma's blanket, or Jake's blanket, but MY horse's blanket. Two days later I picked the blanket up again to shake it, there they were, same three mice (or so I think so) scattering from under the blanket. I'm cursed I tell you, just cursed with these little critters, whether I want to be or not. So, heed my advice, take down that horse blanket and put it away before it's too late and the Mother Rat puts a curse on you, too.

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**FROM OUR FRIEND KATHLEEN DILL:**

## Part 2

### So Who Moves Whom?

**Kathleen Dill, Copyright 2009**

*The answer to this question determines, ultimately, who will own Boardwalk and who will simply pay to land on it.*

My husband is very good in the round pen, and Gambler was out of his league. Of course, JC understood Gambler's message right off, and when he posed the question, "Are you going to move around at the speed I want, starting where I want and continuing with engagement and energy until I say quit?" Gambler's immediate response was "Huh? Are you kidding? What planet are you from, anyway?"

JC grinned at Gambler and increased the pressure behind him to make the horse exit forward, which Gambler did in a very unenthusiastic way. In response, JC flicked the whip and draped the end of the cotton rope up over his back.

Gambler was at first absolutely baffled by how JC could touch him from so far away. Around he went, carrying the rope with him, wondering about this new situation. Being a horse, and equipped with the "gotta-go" instinct, he finally gave up trying to understand how JC had done this to him, and decided that the cure here was just to run away, since even with long arms, a human couldn't possibly be as fast as someone with four feet. Away he went, as fast as he could, and around and around. JC didn't waver; he left the rope on him and just kept sending him on. When Gambler was wild-eyed with the impossibility of his escape, JC removed the rope, turned him, turned him again, and asked for a whoa. Gambler, grateful for the break, stopped and looked at him with amazement. Now we had both attention and curiosity, the precursors of learning.

That was Round Two. Score: JC, 2. Gambler, 0. JC let him catch his breath, and then started out once again, asking for movement at a certain speed, in a certain direction, and with a certain carriage. Again Gambler disdained, so out draped the rope, around went the horse, and a few trips later, Gambler cast an ear in JC's direction while listening to his lungs ask his brain if it was disconnected. Instantly, JC stopped him, and as he stood there, the horse stared at the man intently as if to say, "Who taught you this stuff, anyway? I wanna know if you knew my mama!"

JC dropped the whip beside him in the center of the pen, released Gambler with an Okay, lit a cigarette and stood in the middle, smoking it,

ignoring the horse. Gambler, however, did not indulge himself; he stood on the rail sucking air and never took his eyes off JC, trying to figure out what to do next. That was Round Three: we now had attention and curiosity *and* motivation.

**O**ur round pen was used so often that JC built seats on it, up at the level of the top rail, so we and our guests could comfortably watch the training sessions. We spent many an hour observing and learning as we worked horses with each other. That particular day, I was up there sitting with Alex, watching the horse and the man dance their dance, when an amazing thing happened.

While JC was standing there, Gambler started moving toward him, taking tentative steps, as if asking to join up. JC ignored him, turning his back to him, his posture and position telling Gambler that he hadn't asked for this and, truth be known, that he didn't really think Gambler had earned the right of company yet. Undeterred, Gambler walked on into the center, one step at a time, and stopped there behind JC and stared at him. JC stayed where he was, back to the horse. All at once, Gambler reached down, picked up the whip (in its center, amazingly, so it balanced) and carried it to the outside edge of the round pen, where he dropped it. He then walked halfway around the perimeter to where he could see JC's face, stopped, turned and calmly looked at JC as if to say, "Okay, I get it. How about you talk and I listen?" The door to Gambler's mind had been pried open, and he found he had something to say. More

importantly, he found he had someone who would listen.

Wish I'd had my video camera with me on that day. It would have recorded a new beginning. Attention plus curiosity plus motivation led to focus, in the deepest sense of the word, and then to communication. Focus is a mental condition of readiness. No focus, no understanding. No focus, no acknowledgement of leadership, and no focus, no partnership.

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## SAFETY TIP

**Thunder! Take Cover.**

You're out riding when you see black clouds gathering and hear the rumble of thunder. Should you worry?

Yes! Where there's thunder, there's lightning-hotter than the surface of the sun, traveling 90,000 miles per second, packing about 100 times the juice it takes to power your house. And it could strike you and your horse. Here's how to avoid getting hit.

1. Count the seconds from "flash" to "bang." That will tell you how close the storm is, and whether it's coming closer. Each 5 seconds between lightning and thunder equals a mile. If you count 60 seconds, the strike hit 12 miles away. If you count 50 seconds after the next strike, it's 10 miles. If you count 40 seconds, you're in trouble. Lightning strikes can occur 6 to 8 miles apart, so you could be at ground zero for the next bolt.
2. Seek a safe place. Don't wait for rain to start; lightning often strikes ahead of a storm. If you

and your horse can get to a substantial shelter, do it.

3. Next best: Your truck and trailer. Load your horse, close up the trailer, get in the truck, and put up the windows. Keep your hands off metal objects. If lightning strikes, it'll travel around the metal shell of your rig, and you'll be safe inside.
4. Caught in the open? Get away from high ground and open fields. Go to a low-lying area, preferably a spot with brush or scrub for cover. Avoid dry stream beds that might flood in a storm, and steer clear of water, tall trees, and anything metal-wires, fences, pipes, etc. Metal acts like a conduit for lightning strikes, so puts you at risk.
5. Make yourself small. Get off your horse; together, you're one big lightning magnet. Tie or hobble him, and move at least 15 feet away. (If you're in a group, spread out with at least that distance between all horses and riders.) Crouch down with your feet together, so you contact as little ground as possible. (Don't lie down. If lightning strikes nearby, you'll get a jolt through the ground.)
6. Stay put. Wait in safety until the storm is gone. A good rule of thumb is to wait 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder before leaving your safety area. Note: If someone nearby is struck by lightning, use CPR to restore breathing and get emergency help. About 80 percent of lightning-strike victims survive.

*Adapted from information provided by the National Lightning Safety Institute.*

I HOPE EVERYONE IS MAKING THE TIME TO GET IN THE SADDLE. RIDING WEATHER IS HERE. PLEASE SEND ME CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE NEWSLETTER TO SHARE WITH OTHERS. (BIOS, STORIES, POEMS AND SAFETY TIPS)

The editor...

