



Mechanicsville Riding Club

The Hitching Post

Issue 74

JULY 2009

2009 Officers

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

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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- Wanda H

Notes from the President

Hope everyone is having a great summer. Folks, remember we will not have meetings in the month of July and August. But there are still plenty of rides and events planned. Please mark your calendar for our club picnic. It will be held at the home of Christine Sweet on Sunday August 30 at 4:00 p.m. Details will be available at a later date. This is always a fun event.

Please start actively collecting sponsors for our fall show. A sponsorship form is included in the newsletter. This is our big fundraiser and we need everyone's help.

Also we need the club tent for our picnic in August. Please contact myself or a board member and let us know if you have this or know who has.

Thanks

Debbie Middleton

Next Club Meeting will be Sept. 23rd at the Mechanicsville Little League Bldg. There isn't a Club Meeting during July or August.

CHUCK WAGON:

Determined by membership roster order

Sept: Susan Ellis and Julie & Mike Gaulding

Oct: Sandi Grata and Judy Haily

Nov: Judith Harris and Karen Hasbrouck

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

July Birthdays: Helen B, Nancy M, Amanda R, Dale R, Phyllis S, Diane T

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.

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 with any questions or details needed.

July 19 Club ride at Petersburg Park

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. (804-439-0880)

MESSAGE FROM BARBARA HOWELL:

Hi everybody, although October is a ways away, its time to start thinking about our horse show. As you may know, the bulk of our profits come from the ads that we sell. So its time to get out there and start soliciting. Bunny has attached a copy of the sponsor form to the newsletter, and please make copies lets all get to work to make this the best show ever!!! I have talked to the rain gods and asked that they give us a break this year so we will see. Remember, even if it rains, and we have a small attendance, our

sponsors are what make it our best fundraiser at the end of the day.

Costs are as follows:

Inside pages: \$25 – 1/3 page, \$50 – ½ page, \$75 – full page

We have chosen to reduce the cost of the full page in order to stimulate more sales and in light of the current economic conditions. We would love to sell the inside and back covers, and if anyone is interested, we can work out a deal on those, it would be more than the full page certainly, but we can negotiate if you have anyone interested. Thanks to you all for your help and support in this endeavor.

Show Committee

FROM OUR FRIEND KATHLEEN:

No More Games: A Thoughtful Approach to Willing Partnership

By Kathleen Dill

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**Grab every chance to expand
the mind with meaningful work,
using focus as your tool.**

For many a horse, being physical has gotten him what he wants, at least with other horses, and since they are his natural models, this becomes his natural expectation: push on it, pull on it and make it go away. If he has been bigger and stronger than others in his herd, and that includes you, he surely hasn't had to rely on his mind to make sense of things that were a challenge to him.

Thinking can replace flight and fight and create stability, ethics, and reliability. That makes it an important part of your job to get that mental growth going. Once he starts using his mind to make things happen, you will have a great tool for showing him how to conquer all of those desires which get him into trouble (like how to get home faster) and how to defuse those situations which make him scared (like those plastic alive-thingies heading straight for him.)

The most important mental exercise your horse can perform is the same one you can perform: absolute specificity and compliance to an idea or goal, to such a degree that he cannot find anything to say but yes or no. You have made such a complete request, in terms of what, when, where, and how, that all of his focus will be on remembering to keep all of the parts straight, and he will be too busy thinking to react emotionally (as in, I don't really like this much or this is too scary) or physically (as in, she's really too little to be making me do this.)

You are in relationship with your horse from the moment he is aware that you intend to interact with him. That makes every moment of that encounter an opportunity to clarify who is in control. Even if you haven't thought of things this way, your horse has. So, get with the program at the very beginning of each opportunity and get busy.

Think of each thing you do with your horse as an opportunity to encourage focus, no matter how small or insignificant the activity. What you are doing is practicing a lifestyle, not scheduling a training event. Seize the time, every time, however short.

The I-Move-You-Move Principle

I-Move-You-Move is the most basic tool of leadership. It requires complete focus and demonstrates willing obedience from your horse. It *want*. Everything a horse does is either a Go or a Whoa, alone or in combination. So let's figure out what we want each one to mean. You is not a foreign concept to him, however; first Mama, and then his herd boss, have been requiring it of him since he figured out that he had hooves.

Here's what I-Move-You-Move means: when I move something to claim space from a horse, his correct response is to yield to that pressure immediately, by moving in a direction I have determined by my own plan and preparation, thus adjusting his position so he can remain in the defined relationship to me.

In I-Move-You-Move, we each have a separate job. I am responsible for choosing my movements carefully to indicate what his should be, and I am also responsible for executing them without pushing or pulling on him. He is responsible for responding according to my definition, which will put him in the right position relative to me.

I don't do his job, and he doesn't do mine. I don't hold him in position. I hold me and he holds himself. I move me and he moves himself. I stop me and he stops himself. This is the expression of willing

partnership, because you ask and he does, and you both are satisfied.

Obviously, what you want your horse to do must not only keep him safe, but make him feel safe. Good horsemanship respects that need, so that is the obligation of your leadership role. No horse will willingly put himself in a situation which he deems dangerous very many times without expressing his opinion about your leadership choices. If you want him to get it right and do so willingly, the job you want him to do has to be physically safe and psychologically sustaining, from his point of view.

For the games to stop, your horse must believe not only that you want him to do something more than he *doesn't* want to, but that when he gets it done, he will still be around to do it another day. Once he will give you his focus willingly, he is demonstrating to you that he believes you will keep him safe. He *willingly* submits to you only because he believes that you will be strong enough to keep the bad guys away even if your choices require him to do something he would rather not.

Take a look at something you do
a lot, so you can assess
where your horse is, in terms of focus.

For your horse, learning to walk with you, follow you, stop when you do, and even just stand around without being held while you do things is very meaningful work, and right up his alley. Can he do it? Can he do it well? Take a look through dispassionate eyes at how you and he manage this.

Do you have a tight, short grip on the lead rope? Does he pull you around? Do you pull him around? Does he walk beside you in the correct position without you reminding him to stay there?

When you say Whoa, does it mean stop or just pause a moment or maybe in a minute or what? What does he do? What does he keep doing?

When you stop, does he? When you stand, does he? Where is he in relation to you?

Do you need to tie him to keep him from visiting the neighbors while you reach for that brush or comb?

When you stop and stand in tempting situations, does he? Who waits for whom?

If what you are observing is not what you wish it to be, then you need to change something. You need a new way of looking at the task at hand, so you can make something different happen.

First, define what you get what you expect, so make sure what you expect is what you want.

For me, whoa means everything stops, ears to tail feathers, right here, right now, in good square carriage, and you stay whoa'd until I ask you to change something. *Without* my help. Unless you have that, you don't have whoa, in my book.

Go means move something and keep moving the way I specify until I tell you to change something, and do it without me having to pull or push around on you to get it done. Unless I want the horse to decide what to move, where to move it, when and how, I have to specify that, too. If your definition doesn't specify all those things, you are not done defining yet.

Next, figure out what your job is and what his job is, according to your definition. This becomes your plan.

In my plan, I ask, release the pressure immediately and wait to see what happens. He does something in response. I clarify and ask again, he does, I say thanks, and he waits for the next thing. Better put, I construct and convey, he focuses and complies. I do my part first, and then he does his as a response to mine. My movement is to indicate intent, his is to indicate compliance. This is the exercise of focus, because he must think about what you want in order to react correctly, and you must think about what you want, in order to ask correctly.

Third, present the job, but do only your part. Let your horse do his. Apply the definition and see what you get. Then reward, repeat or adjust. This is the essence of meaningful mental work, for both of you.

Break each step of the job into its most basic task, and work on that. Your concept of the job will determine his understanding of it. If you leave something out, you will get less than you wanted. If you complete the plan without holes, then he will have no choice but to say yes or no.

Reward the yes with a release from pressure. Don't punish the no, but replace it with another try. Don't ask harder when he doesn't comply; ask sooner and with more clarity.

Be sure, however, that you have made appropriate movements to clearly communicate your definition so no misunderstanding was possible. Keep at it until the right response is the only one which gets release. When you get it right, he will, too.

I WANT TO EXPRESS SPECIAL THANKS TO KATHLEEN DILL FOR A GREAT CLINIC. BUNNY

