



Mechanicsville Riding Club

The Hitching Post

Issue 70

MARCH 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 – **Bethany M**
Historian – **TBD**
Parliamentarian – **TBD**
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**

Notes from the President

Hold on everyone---spring will be here before you know it. Along with spring come great trail rides and club events. We have a ride at Petersburg on March 22 and we are planning some fun out of the box club meetings.

Remember those of you who haven't ridden much this winter to slowly condition your horses along with yourself. We all can get a little out of shape during the holidays.

Please also consider volunteering for the

remaining committee positions, Historian and Parliamentarian still need filling.

See you on the trails. That is as soon as I find a new horse!!!!!!

Debbie Middleton

Next Club Meeting will be Mar. 25th at the Mechanicsville Little League Bldg. Speaker will be Allison Boyd/Wings of Hope who will be speaking on "Rescue & Rehabilitation, One Horse, One Child at a Time." 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

Mar: Judee C & Lorrie C

Apr: Donna C & Bev C

May: Joan C & Carolyn D

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

March Birthdays: Theresa B, Lorrie C, Mike G, Joyce C, Frank K, Brook P, Debbie W

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 with any questions or details needed.

Mar 22 (Sun) Petersburg National Battles Fields: Plan to meet by 10:30. Bring snacks to share.

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

Roundup News

Welcome to new club members:

Janet Anderson, Nancy Best and Judy Hailey

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)

MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

Diane T has pointed out an interesting website noting Virginia horses and their gravesites. I couldn't format for newsletter so I urge you to look it up. I also thought it was interesting to look at the other states and their famous horses. Please check it out.

<http://www.tbheritage.com/TurfHallmarks/Graves/GraveMattersFarmNAM.html>

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

FROM OUR FRIEND KATHLEEN DILL:

Part 1

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.

It was pretty clear to me by now that horses control each other by control of space and motion, and, left to their own devices that they try to control humans the same way. Kicking, ear pinning, shoving, stamping, tail twitching and biting are no accidents. They are a clear message: "Back off, Bubba." If you do, and who wouldn't, facing the butt end of a big horse,

the horse immediately absorbs that portion of your space in his mind, if not with his body, and your influence is much the poorer.

That's why there are no random movements among horses. And that's why, to win at Monopony, you must eliminate all of the white noise your own random movements create, so that you say with your body exactly what and only what you wish to say. That way, when W finally focuses on you, he will understand your intentions well enough to be able to respond only with a yes or a no, and not with "I'm sorry, but what did you say?"

We were round penning Little Bit's daddy, Gambler, one day, early on after we had gotten him, basically starting to clarify the rules of partnership that we expected him to understand and adhere to. Gambler came to us as a four-year-old stallion, rude and pushy to the max, but beautiful and well bred. The woman who had raised him sold him to us the year after we had bred Cookie to him, because she was no longer able to handle him safely.

When we got him, he was quite contemptuous of humans. It was as though he had decided, because the people who had previously handled him did not understand Horse, that all people were conversationally challenged. He would as soon drag you off as stand still, and you could just forget about getting him to move willingly in the direction of your choice under saddle. He respected the power of the whip, because that was how his previous owner had finally been forced to get his attention and keep him in line, but he had no idea that he could be controlled off the lead or without physical force.

We always use a 60-foot round pen as a safe place to work out these issues, as well as to re-educate the horse to the connection we wish to pursue in all of our training. Its shape and size are ideally suited for this. It offers a sturdy enclosure for movement at liberty, as well as the perfect distance between horse and human for both communication and control without undue stress or danger to either. On this day, Gambler was in there with my husband, JC, showing his habitually disdainful-to-humans attitude, responding just enough to acknowledge that there was someone in the center with the power to move him, but not enough to accede to JC's very specific parameters of what, where, when and how.

Unlike some who use a lariat in the round pen, we use a lunge whip to encourage movement when we work the horse. We remove the stinger and replace it with a length of soft clothesline rope attached so it will reach the edge of the round pen from the center, a radius of 30 feet. The end is fluffy from being flicked around. With great effort you can make it pop, but it couldn't kill a fly if it had to. What it does is to touch the horse at any time anywhere you want it to, if you have the skill to put it there. Although we can use it to claim space from the horse by flipping it out on the ground behind him, we find the most effective use of it is to flip it so the end of it lays up across the horse's back or drapes around one ear and then let him carry it for awhile, wondering how you can reach that far with your arms.

And, therein lies its usefulness. By touching him (without moving toward him from the center) you have taken control of his space. He cannot understand how you can hold him on this outer circle without being over there. As he tries to figure this out, you have won Round One of the Great Monopony Tournament. You have gained his attention, and getting a horse's attention is the first step toward communication. You can't listen if you are not paying attention to the speaker. **(To be continued.....)**

Tack Safety (an excerpt from the EQUUS magazine 2007)

Regular safety checks of tack and horse can prevent accidents before they happen.

By Jayne Pedigo

Avoid Murphy's Law

I'm sure you are aware of Murphy's Law. You know, the one that states "Anything that can go wrong, will go wrong". Well, with horses never a truer word was spoken. You'll be protecting your safety and your horse's comfort by taking a few extra minutes and performing these simple safety checks before each ride.

Start with your saddle

1. Before you put your saddle on your horse's back, check that the tree is in good shape. The way I do this is to put the saddle between my knees and, holding it on either side, close to the pommel at the very front of the saddle, squeeze the sides together firmly. There shouldn't be any movement. If there is, or if you hear a grinding, it indicates a weakness in the tree, or framework, of the saddle, that can seriously damage your horse's back if you continue to ride on it. No saddle with a broken tree should ever be used on a horse.
2. If the tree passes muster, continue your check by looking at the bars of the saddle, where your stirrups attach. Make sure the bar on each side is secure and that no rivets are working loose. Get physical with it, wiggle it and pull firmly on the stirrup leathers.
3. Next look under the flaps and check for weak stitching on the girth billets (those straps that your girth attaches to). This is probably one of the most important checks you can make as far as your own safety goes!
4. Check the billets for dryness and wear -- do this by flexing and twisting the straps. If you notice cracks in the leather, it would be wise to replace that piece before it tears all the way through.
5. Check the girth itself and the elastic ends too, if your girth has them. Check the pieces that hold the buckles in place for wear and also the buckles themselves, to make sure they are not bent or rusting through. If you notice any problems you should replace the girth before it fails. We have all seen those comedy films where the rider puts his foot in the stirrup to mount and both he and the saddle end up on the ground. However, it is far from a joke if something breaks as you are galloping full tilt toward an open ditch!

6. Check your stirrup leathers for dryness and wear, especially at the points where the leather folds. Use the same flexing and twisting technique that you used to check the billets. Replace any stirrup leathers that are worn in these areas or that show cracks in the leather.
7. Also be sure and check the stitching on the stirrup leathers and make sure that any stitching that is starting to unravel or wear is repaired or the stirrup leathers replaced.

On to the Bridle

1. Check all the leather in the bridle, using the same flexing and twisting technique you used on the billets and stirrup leathers. Give extra attention to areas of strain, such as where the rein wraps around the bit. Any cracking or separation in that area is a danger signal telling you it's time to invest in a new set of reins.
2. Check all the stitching, especially on the reins. If you have the tools (I purchased an awl at the local tack shop for this purpose and practised on old pieces of tack until I had perfected the technique) you may be able to make simple repairs yourself. When in doubt, consult your local saddler for repair work.
3. Check the bit itself for rough edges that will damage your horse's delicate lips. Replace any bit that shows signs of roughness and wear immediately.
4. As you go over the bridle, check the buckles to make sure they are not rusting through and that the tongues are not bent, allowing the buckle to work undone when not in use.

And Don't Forget the Rest

The same safety checks that you make on your saddle and bridle should be made on any other equipment you use - be it martingales, breastplates, or a complete harness for driving horses. Keeping the leather work clean and in good shape will

lengthen its useful life span and will be more comfortable for your horse.

9. What would we do if a horse were unable to continue the ride, and had to be treated, hauled out, or--worse-case scenario--put down?

9 Questions to Ask Before You Set Out on a Trail Ride

Prep safely for a trail ride with this list of important pre-ride questions.

By Juli S. Thorson

Before you head out, make sure you're well-prepared for weather, terrain and other trail variables.

No one likes to go trail riding in the name of fun, only to suffer injuries and other problems that could have been avoided. Add some be-prepared insurance to your next trail outing by asking these questions, and preparing accordingly:

1. What potential weather or terrain hazards might we encounter (precipitation, altitude change, cold, wind exposure, rocky terrain, etc.)?
2. What mishaps might these cause to horses and/or riders?
3. How well supplied and experienced are we, in order to cope with these issues?
4. What are the unique dangers of our destination (wild animals, roadway traffic, insects, remoteness, etc.)?
5. What problems might these cause to horses and/or riders?
6. What gear and strategies would we need for coping?
7. Who in our party is responsible for the first-aid supplies, and who knows how to use them?
8. How would searchers know when and where to start looking for us, if we're lost or detained?



Cowgirl in Heaven
[David R. Stoecklein](#)

**I HOP ON MY HORSE
I HOP ON MY HORSE,
AND I RIDE LIKE THE WINDS.
NO ONE CAN STOP ME,
NOT EVEN MY FRIENDS.
HOOVES POUND LIKE THUNDER,
EYES WIDE WITH FIRE.
I RIDE FASTER AND FASTER,
ON THE WINGS OF DESIRE.
MY HORSE SLOWS DOWN,
FEELS LIKE HES GONNA DROP.
MY HEARTS STILL RACING,
NEVER WANTING TO STOP.
I PULL UP THE REINS,
AND OPEN MY EYES.
AND WHAT DO I FIND,
TO MY SURPRISE.
IT SEEMED SO REAL,
BUT WAS ONLY A DREAM.
MY HORSE WAS MY SOUL,
SO REAL IT SEEMED.**
wrote by:john h.veinot