



## Mechanicsville Riding Club

### The Hitching Post

Issue 75

AUGUST 2009

#### 2009 Officers

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

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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- **Wanda H**

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#### Notes from the President

It's picnic time. Hope to see all of you MRC members and families at our annual picnic. Bring a dish and your lawn chair and be ready for some good food and company. I even think there will be fireworks after dark!!!

Also please make it a priority to sell at least one sponsorship per member to help make our Oct horse show a big success.

There will be a show committee meeting soon and if you have any suggestions please plan on attending or pass them onto the show committee.

Hope everyone is enjoying their summer and managing to get some riding time in.

**Debbie Middleton**

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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 Sandi Grata

**Oct:** Judy Haily and Judith Harris

**Nov:** Karen Hasbrouck and Wanda Hazzard

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

**Aug Birthdays:** **Janet A, Joan B, Donna C, Julie G, Theresa J**

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



## MRC MONTHLY PLANNED RIDES

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

**Aug 22** Club ride at Lake Anna State  
Park. Plan to ride at 9 am, bring a bag  
lunch

**Aug 30** MRC Picnic at Christine's house.  
Fun starts at 4 pm!

### Roundup News

2009 Donations – Please go to the MRC  
Member Only page to suggest charities  
for 2009 donations. Deadline is August.  
Contact Diane Trittipoe at 439-0880 in the  
evening if you need help logging into the  
Member Only page.

### **FROM OUR FRIEND KATHLEEN:**

#### **What's WHOA Worth to You?**

**Kathleen Dill, August, 2009**

What does every horse want from life? Yeah,  
yeah, I know, munchies, scratches, green grass  
and some space to run and play. Time for a  
snooze. Sex every now and then. A buddy to  
nibble withers with. And some shelter from the  
sleet. You are right; every horse probably wants  
those things in pretty much equal measure. But

there is also one other thing that every horse  
wants more. Care to guess what it is?

Every horse wants to be left alone. Or better  
put, every horse wants to escape the pressures of  
the world around him. Pressures? On your  
friendly little farm? Yes. Every single thing in a  
horse's world exerts some sort of pressure on  
him, simply by virtue of occupying space. Any  
space occupied by something else is not space  
available for running away to. And running  
away has been for eons the most popular and  
productive way for a horse to survive being  
eaten.

Horses live in a world of intense awareness of  
space and motion. Their perceptual abilities are  
finely honed to allow them to be acutely  
conscious of every single thing in their  
environment that could have an influence on  
them, precisely because they have been on the  
dinner menu for so many years. To a horse,  
what you don't notice *can* hurt you. Because of  
this, horses spend a lot of time just being aware  
of what is going on around them. To you, he  
may just be snuzzling around in the grass,  
looking for the good stuff. To him, though, he is  
recording every incoming perception and ranking  
it as to its beneficial or detrimental effects. The  
trees over yonder that might hide a panther. That  
rock up ahead, you know the one, with the scary  
shadow. The plastic bag in the ditch that  
jiggles and wiggles and might sprout wings at  
any time. The hiker with that thing on his back  
that is following him everywhere he goes. The  
fence over by the road which he knows will keep  
him in, but might not keep the neighbor's Harley  
out. And the tarp, oh my, the tarp flapping on the  
neighbor's garage roof, that blue plastic devil  
writhing and grinning right at him.

To remain the eaters and not the eaten, horses  
for eons and eons have had to make an accurate  
assessment of every occupant of the space  
around them and every movement that occupant  
makes, in enough time to react to anything  
unpleasant that might come up. Open spaces  
might seem to reduce the stress a horse  
experiences just being a horse, but they actually  
present a unique problem to him. With enough  
space, a horse can maneuver and react to  
unexpected guests with big dinner forks. He can,  
if he is agile enough and lucky enough get away

from the bad guys. But, the detriment of open spaces, especially when he is alone, is that he has so much to watch and be wary of as he goes about all those things he likes to do, and he can be ganged up on very easily. For horses, the job of survival comes first, and that's really why they like to have a pal around, because then, hopefully, only one of them will become the entrée. Even better would be to have a bunch of pals around, so the bad guys have a big choice for tonight's meal.

Hence, the herd. Horses spend a great deal of time working out their social status in the herd. That's why the game of Monopony originated. They do it by using motion to control space. Horses will fight hard to maintain their right to determine who moves whom. Remember fight, flight or focus? Well, the guy who can control the motion of the other horses is the guy with the highest number and the least chance of being tonight's dinner selection. He has proven that he, more than anyone in the herd, can require movement or restrict it, all according to his whims or his needs.

Of course, horses do that to one another without physical restraint. The boss horse says do it, and the other horses move themselves around to do it, or the boss horse shows them that they had better, and quickly. Never does the boss horse use a rope or a halter or a fence to restrain or redirect his herd. He expects them to understand what he wants, and then to hold themselves in obedience to it, or to leave. No ropes, no halters, no ties—except for the tie of biological need itself.

Enter the human. What is the first thing humans do when we want to influence a horse? We put a halter on him. What is the second thing we do? We start pushing and pulling on him to get him to move somewhere. What do we do when we get there then? We usually tie him up.

So here is poor Whoa, needer of space and motion, confined by the halter, limited by a lead rope and pulled or pushed around into a place that offers no escape. Whoa, who has learned to hold himself in the herd, is suddenly deprived of not only the power to do so, but also of the reason to do so. Small wonder that horses

struggle to trust humans and develop habits to counter the stress of modern horse-human relationships. It's not that domestication is necessarily detrimental; we provide feed, shelter, medication and protection from the wolves. This, however, is not always enough. For our horses to be truly comfortable in association with us, we must also provide relief from the instinctive fear a horse has of being dinner.

What prompts a horse to allow us to become his protector? It is his willingness to submit to authority which is clear in its expectations, consistent in its demands, energetic but sensitive in its application, and constant in its presence.

It is actually quite hard for people to realize that horses want from you what you want from them. They want you to listen to their opinions, release them from unnecessary pressure, be aware of what scares them and what makes them feel safe, and not blame them for the misstatements you make which promote their unacceptable behaviors, and to help them feel that you are worthy of partnership. I submit that you want the same thing from your horse, if you are a dedicated horseman or horsewoman. You want your horse to listen to your opinions. You want him to move, stay out of your space, to respect your smaller body but larger mind, to not blame you for the lions and tigers and bears of the horsie anxiety closet, and to try to work with you in this horsemanship thing.

So here is Whoa, tied up. Have you got a whoa? Not really, since the rope and the post are holding him, not the strength of your leadership or his willingness to focus on and submit to your plan. Actually, until Whoa will stand *without physical restraint* in that everything-stops whoa, you don't have a "whoa." You have a "hold." You can never hold a horse, if he doesn't want held. You can tie up his body, but you won't have his mind. And his mind, just like your mind, is the most important thing he brings to your relationship.

Often, the process of getting a complete whoa is a challenge never quite accomplished. Your horse may stop a little, but the complete whoa, the everything-stops whoa, is pretty hard to get. We humans make it even harder than it has to be, however, by trying to hold the horse in place.

The problem with relying on the I'm-gonna-make-sure-you-can't-get-away system of whoa is that the time will come sooner or later when the post or the tree or the trailer or the gate isn't there, and you need Whoa to...well, whoa. What do you do then, when the thing that holds him is gone, and he hasn't learned to hold himself there in respect of your wishes?

A proper whoa—the everything-stops-and-stays-stopped-all-by-itself-until-I-say-move whoa--is the ultimate expression of a horse's willingness to focus on you. Think about it: it is the tool which allows us to give Whoa just what he wants most—to be left alone. Next time, we'll explore some ways to show Whoa that you really do understand what Mama was trying to teach when she expected this of him, and that you expect him to offer it to you just as easily as he offered it to her.

## TO BE CONTINUED NEXT TIME

### Diane Trittipoe Scoop:

Check out the survey, very interesting info

<http://www.virginiahorsecouncil.org/downloads/Trails/08VHCTrailsTourismSurveyHighlights.pdf>

### “BARN HUMOR”

### Husbands vs. Horses

Natalie, Olney Md

#### Good Things about Husbands:

Husbands are less expensive to shoe. Feeding a husband doesn't require anything that even mildly compares with the hassle of putting up hay. A lame husband can still work. A husband with a belly-ache doesn't have to be walked. Husbands don't try to scratch their heads on your back. They're better able to understand puns. If they're playing hard to catch you \*may\* be able to run them down on foot. They know their name. They pay their own bills. They apologize when they step on your toes. They seldom refuse to get in the vehicle. They don't panic, yelling and running all through the house when you leave them alone. (Unless you left the kids too) For a nominal fee you can hire someone else to clip them.

#### The Horse's Advantage:

If they don't work out you can sell them. They don't come with in-laws. You don't have to worry about your children looking like them. You never have to iron their saddle pads. If you get too fat for one you can shop for a bigger one. They smell good when they sweat. You can repair their "clothes" with duct tape. It's possible to keep them from "jumping the fence". You can force them to stay in good physical condition...with a whip if necessary. They don't want their turn at the computer. They turn white with age, but not bald. They learn to accept restraint. They don't care what you look like, as long as you have a carrot.

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### Fun and Fast Horse Facts

Dick, Williamsport, Md.

#### Fun and Fast Horse Facts

The oldest horse on record was named Old Billy, a Cleveland Bay that lived to be 62 years old.

Adult horses only sleep 3-4 hours in a 24 hour period.

The tallest horse was named Samson back in the 1850's. Samson stood at 21.2 inches high.

The smallest horse in the world is Thumbelina (aptly named). She stands at just 17 inches tall!

A horse can see in all directions except for directly in front and directly behind him.

The highest successful jump ever was made by a horse named Huaso in Chile. He jumped 8 feet!

A mule is a cross between a male donkey (known as a jack) and a female horse (mare). Mules are always sterile.

Horses cannot breathe through his mouth.