



Mechanicsville Riding Club

The Hitching Post

Issue 73

JUNE 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 – **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

Our May club meeting was a huge success. Many thanks to the Caldwell family for allowing us to have an entertaining group meeting. Also thanks to all the cowboys and cowgirls that demonstrated team roping for our enjoyment. The opportunity to try a hand at roping was extremely popular. Thank goodness we were not roping anything that moved! Good food, fun, and friendship were had by all who attended.

Now let's make our June Lasagna social a big affair. Please let myself or Donna S. know if you plan to attend.

Debbie Middleton

Next Club Meeting will be June 24th at the Mechanicsville Little League Bldg. Lasagna social for June meeting. Members need to respond for a headcount so we know how much lasagna to purchase. Chuck wagon people for that month will be responsible for bringing drinks only Anyone wishing to bring additional people for the lasagna will be charged \$6.00. Club members are requested to bring dessert.

CHUCK WAGON:

Determined by membership roster order

June: Leslie D & Deb D

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

June Birthdays: Jack H, Bunny H, Mary 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.

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.

June 20 Club ride at Fulfillment Farms.

June 21 Clinic with Kathleen Dill at Dorey Park

Roundup News

Welcome to new member: Cheryl Price

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)

FROM OUR FRIEND KATHLEEN:

Keep the Faith, Baby

Kathleen Dill, Copyright 2009

*If you expect the horse to believe in you,
you must first believe in yourself.*

PART 2

JC and Chief worked together in the round pen twice a day, every day for about a month. During that time, the rules of engagement were established, and the barriers to trust were broken down. Motion was required, and as it was received, more specific requests were made. Chief learned that JC would ask him not only to do something, but to do it in such a clear way that no misunderstandings could be created. Not only the what-to-do would be made clear, but also the where, when and how to do it as well.

Chief learned that he was always given the chance to say no, but never released from the obligations of the circumstance by that choice. He learned that the man would always require, always respect the try, and never punish. He learned that JC believed that he, the horse, wanted to do well enough in pleasing him that his own failure to do so would be sufficient discomfort. He learned that the work was not done until it was done, and that when it was done, well and completely, the reward would be exactly what Chief wanted all along: to be left alone.

Within several weeks, Chief had built some muscle and a shiny coat. His eye was bright, his tail held high, and his pride in movement began to return as his strength increased. Over time, he began to lose his fear of interaction as he settled into the job of figuring out how to do his work well enough to be left alone, and as he did this, he discovered what JC's intention had been all along: to help him realize that he didn't really want to be left alone at all. He began to seek contact with JC, to ask to join up, to walk calmly at his side and to follow him around, and the special connection between man and horse that can only be achieved with complete respect and faith in communication was born. Just as the man had claimed the horse and offered him freedom from pressure and pain, the horse now claimed the man and offered him trust and focus. The riding finally could begin, and though it took several years for his mind to heal and his body to develop, neither gave up on the other. Chief became a master at communication and self control, and his ethics and morality were apparent in all he did, as well as his love and respect for the man who had given him back his life.

Chief came to agree that his personal job was to always remain focused on JC and at his side wherever they went, and that JC's job was to expect him to do that. And so, it was a puzzlement to JC when one day several years later, Chief ran away from him when loading. It was a hot summer morning, we were getting ready to take a fractious horse to the trails for a training ride, the bugs were biting and the time was short. We hitched up to the truck, opened the trailer door, put on halters and lead ropes and stepped up to load.

Now, JC had taken great care to teach Chief to simply walk into the trailer by himself, stand in his place, wait for the partition to be shut and remain quiet from that point on. He had started this as a way of helping Chief to get over the trauma of confinement that he had had before he came to us, and by this time, Chief simply expected that JC would get out of his way and let him do his job. We never tied him once he was in, requiring him to hold himself, and the standard procedure for loading him was for JC to just flip the lead rope over his back and tell him to get up in there. Chief always did just that, with the manners and grace of a perfect gentleman.

For whatever reason, on this particular day, JC forgot to throw the rope up; as he walked up to the open trailer with him, he kept a hold on the rope and stepped up with him. Two hooves in, Chief gave him a horrified look and slowed down. By the third hoof, Chief was wild-eyed. The fourth hoof never made it in; Chief jerked backward, yanked the lead rope out of JC's hand, and took off for the barn at a high rate of speed. This behavior was unheard of for Chief. JC was speechless as he jumped out of the trailer and started out after him at an equally high rate of speed. Three steps into it; he slowed down and shook his head. I watched as off he went into the barn, and out he came with Chief again, apologizing profusely to him. Chief was obedient at his side, but a little unnerved; this was old Top Floor, after all, who knew he had just done something out of order. As he passed me on the way, he stopped, patted him softly on the shoulder, looked me straight in the eye and said, "That was my fault. I screwed up. I told him I would always trust him to do his job, and I forgot. I don't know why I did that, but I broke the faith. What I did tell him was that I didn't think he could hold himself any more, so that's exactly what happened."

Looking very sheepish, they went to the trailer once more. He patted Chief, flipped the rope up over his back, told him to get in and turned and walked away. Chief looked around at him once, checking to be sure the old guy had gotten it right this time, and then calmly got in, stepped up to the front, and settled in. By the time JC got back to fasten the partition, Chief had his lip hung down and was snoozing.

What do our horses want from us? They want us to believe in them. They want us to tell them that we know that they know that we know what Mama told them, and that we believe they will do for us just as well as they did for her. They want us to release them when they comply, and to have enough faith to believe they will do it. How do we do that? By making a plan that uses Mama's principals, one that communicates what is going to happen in a way that is meaningful to them in terms of their basic Horse nature, and then to follow it ourselves. *And to keep following it.* Horses get very confused when we expect them to think about things the way we do, to respect our human habits and contrivances, and to make sense out of contradictions in our behaviors that we can't even make sense out of—in short, when we don't give them a clear, well-defined path to follow, one that stays the same from moment to moment and day to day. If we want them to want to work with us, which is a genuine example of respect, we need to be respectful and worth emulating. That's Mama's way. It just works best that way, for both of us.

From Wanda Hazzard

"Summer Syndrome"

contributed by Ron Hall, Farrier

Happy Hoofing!

Summertime weather spells potential problems for horses in Georgia and the surrounding south. Years ago I realized the overall condition of horse feet improved in winter and deteriorated in summer. Let's look at why it happens.

Many barn managers turn out at night during hot weather for obvious reasons: no flies, the sun doesn't bleach hair coats, and frolicking all night keeps them quieter during the day. This summer "program" seems very good, yet there is a down side to this regimen of care. During summer evenings, grass is very wet with dew. When horses are out all night their hooves stay wet most of the night. While during the day, the horses are stalled in shavings, worked in sand rings, and generally kept in dry conditions. The exposure to moisture during the night causes

the hooves to swell slightly, while during the day moisture evaporates, and they dry out and shrink. The shoes stay the same size throughout. Think about that fact!

To compound the problem, horses have to contend with flies during the day. They in turn stomp their feet. Foot stomping isn't so bad if they are shod with stout steel shoes with clips. With the horses wearing training plates (light steel), Queens plates, or aluminum wide webs, a condition may emerge which I call "Summer Syndrome". Depending upon the severity of your horse's problems, some trade-off's may be necessary:

1. Eliminate night turn-out, substitute several shorter day periods.
2. Shoe with pads (although pads hold moisture against the sole of the foot, they also keep the moisture constant!).
3. Shoe with steel instead of aluminum. (If your horse moves better in aluminum, then have your farrier spring temper, harden, light steel shoes for summer.)
4. Switch to titanium wide webs during the summer. (Titanium is very hard, yet very light and an excellent replacement for aluminum. Considerably more expensive, yet titanium can be set several more times.)
5. Use fly repellent daily to reduce foot stomping to a minimum.

We have defined the problem, cause and effects, and discussed some mechanical and managerial options as solutions. Now let's look at some topical applications that can help.

I have been shoeing for 30 years and I have tried all the gimmicks and keep coming back to good logic to solve problems. The periople at the coronary band of a horse's hoof secretes a wax-like substance much like what a duck uses on his feathers when preening. On a horse's hoof it is unmistakable. It is the natural, healthy shine we see on barefooted pasture horses. The wax is a way of preserving a moisture balance within the hoof. Naturally! On the other hand, we alter our horse's environment, rasp on their

hoof walls, and expose their feet to abrasives, (sand, granite dust, etc.). Obviously, none of these are natural. To compensate, we use hoof dressing, and some are good -- some are useless! Years ago, I discovered paste floor wax worked as a moisture barrier. But I had my doubts about the compatibility of the chemicals with horses' hooves. The best hoof dressing I have found have a high wax content. The four brands that are best formulated to provide hoof seal are:

1. Corona Ointment and Corona Liquefied Hoof Dressing by Summit Industries.
2. Hoof Maker by Straight Arrow.
3. Hoof Saver by Farnam
4. Vita-Hoof by Race Horse Veterinary Products.

These products all provide excellent protection against excess moisture in the hooves.

I recommended avoiding petroleum based products in the summer months. These are more soluble in water and attract dirt. Hoof dressings should be applied then wiped dry (or to a wax-like shine) on the exterior hoof wall. Dressings should be applied more liberally on the sole and the frog of the hoof where most of the moisture is absorbed. Hoof dressings are most effective when used just prior to the night turn-out, hosing, bathing, or anytime your horse's hooves will be exposed to excessive moisture.

We have talked about "Summer Syndrome" and its causes. The two questions I am most commonly asked are: "Does my horse have thrush?" and "Are my horse's feet too dry?" My answer is "YOUR HORSE'S FEET ARE TOO WET!" We'll leave the question of thrush for another article.

Obviously, hooves do get too dry in drought conditions or on high ground clay turn-out where there is little grass. This situation is more uncommon than over-moist hooves. It is important that hoof dressings do not soften hooves; at best they maintain moisture already present in the hoof.

When hooves are too dry, we need to provide a source of moisture. The most effective way to do this is to poultice the feet. Poultice powder mixed with water to the consistency of thick oatmeal is best. The poultice can be pre-mixed in a plastic pail and sealed with saran wrap for later use. A hand full applied to each sole of each hoof, then covered with some type of wrap or poultice boot to keep the moisture securely against the hoof, will provide treatment for the dry hooves. Another way to poultice the feet is to put the mixture into a bread bag or a zip lock bag and slide the hoof into the bag and tape securely around the pastern. A handful of poultice on each foot covered with a square of brown paper will also work (Poultice will stick to the hoof; paper will stick to the poultice but not the bedding). Enough poultice will remain on the hoof to provide necessary moisture. It is best to use poultice when the horse will be confined in a stall for several hours. Hooves will absorb moisture and soften after several days of treatment. Once moisture is regained, then use the wax-based hoof dressing daily to maintain moisture in the hoof.

In conclusion, many factors influence the hoof health factor: nutrition, conformation, hoof substance, farrier care, and stable management. Given all of the above at acceptable levels, moisture content is still critical. Remember, water softens dry hooves and wax maintains the moisture balance.

FROM ROPING DEMO



“HAPPY TRAILS TO ALL”