



The Voice of NATRC Region One Competitive Trail Riding

The Leadline

Direct Rein

A method of using the rein in which the rider communicates directly to the horse via his mouth

*Angie Meroshnekoff
Region One Chair*

Ode to Junior

Colby Vanvalkenberg

I learned to ride at White Dog Ranch

When I was only ten;
Junior was the horse's name,
And he soon became my friend.

His gentleness was so sincere
As he watched with big brown eyes.
He didn't go to college
But oh he was so wise...

Many girls learned to trust him.
He followed instructions to the
letter.

He wouldn't buck or rear or bite;
He seemed to know better.

One day Junior just got sick.
For colic there's no known cure.
I prayed he would get better,
But my prayer seemed unheard.

They say that when you're talking
To the Big Guy upstairs,
His greatest gift is often
The gift of unanswered prayers...

My tears have stopped flowing,
My sorrow is somewhat eased;
I know that Junior is resting,
So Junior, rest in peace.

So when you're feeling sad and
grieving
Or having a difficult day,
Just remember that Junior
Is in heaven eating hay!

—Angie

Spring/Summer 2007

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Region One
North American Trail Ride
Conference
www.natrc.org

REGION ONE 2007 RIDE SCHEDULE

Ride Management System

May 5	Mt. Diablo Ellen Pofcher Sec: Martha Flannery	Clayton, CA (925) 672-3733 (925) 673-9858	"B" O/N/CP quincy68@aol.com
May 19	Mt. Quarry PDF entry RMS	Auburn, CA (530) 885-4819	"B" O/N/CP mhunter@onemain.com
May 26 -27	Gilroy Hot Springs Jim Jeffers Sec: Mary Atwood Website: www.smhorse.com	Gilroy, CA (408) 779-4722 (408) 779-9594	"A" O/CP; "B" N sleeeker@garlic.com smha@garlic.com
June 23	Georgetown NATRC Helen Steenman Sec: Tracy Brown	Georgetown, CA (530) 333-4364 (530) 885-5847	"B" O/N/CP hlnbak@foothill.net
July 14 - 15	Swanton Emma McCrary Sec: Carol Chambers	Davenport, CA (831) 423-4365 (530) 273-3547	"A" O/CP; "B" N iemma@pacbell.net swanton@inreach.com
July 28-29	Challenge of the North Lezlie Wilfer Laurie Knuutila	Fairbanks, AK (907) 474-4631 (907) 378-9190	"A" O/CP; "B" N wilfer@acsalaska.net wildroseph@ yahoo.com
August 25	Jackson Forest Steve Meroshnekoff Sec: Maria Pilgrim	Ft. Bragg (707) 743-9973 (707) 795-8163	"A" O/CP; "B" N iambrewing@aol.com wolves1961@sbcglobal.net
Sept. 8-9	Mt. Diablo Mary Christopherson Sec: Martha Flannery	Clayton, CA (925) 625-4842 (925) 673-9858	"A" O/CP; "B" N quincy68@aol.com
September 29	Almaden Valley R1 Benefit Ride Judy Etheridge Sec: Barbara Berlitz	San Jose, CA (925) 862-0232 (831) 372-6251	"B" O/N/CP misxfire@yahoo.com Barbaraberlitz@yahoo.com

REGION ONE RIDE RESULTS

Mt. Diablo Spring

5/5/07; B-O/N/CP Total Riders: 52
Chairman: Ellen Pofcher
Judges: Greg Fellers DVM & Nancy Kasovich-O/CP, Leroy Burnham DVM & Jamie Dieterich-N
Open Sweepstakes: Desert Rainbow/Meroshnekoff, Angie-100
Novice Sweepstakes: Diamonds Forever/Doub, Kathleen-99

Open Heavyweight

1/2 Bazuby/Spoor, Bob
 2/1 Porter BL/Schroeder, Eric

Open Lightweight

1/1 Desert Rainbow/Meroshnekoff, Angie
 2/3 Quellow/Dross, Tricia
 3/2 Fiora Elation BL/Frey, Ute

Open Junior

1/2 Kaylee/Armstrong, Olivia
 2/1 Shayla/Grasso, Bill

Open DO (Distance Only)

Solstices Soleil/Sands, Anne
 Zeal/Kramlich, Christina
 Billy the Sid/Arnold, Mary-Ellis
 LB Shahs Premier/Paige, Richard
 Perry/Schuler, Cassandra
 SSA Hrocket Star/Etheridge, Judith

Novice Heavyweight

1/6 Apple Jack/Mullens, Damara
 2/4 Phamtom Dusk/Boicelli, Gene
 3/ Tura Lura/Cannon, Linda
 4/3 Shadow/Fitts, Gary
 5/ Molly/Fortine, Joe
 6/5 Jed/Behr, Linda
 /1 Stealth Knight/Boicelli, Victoria
 /2 GLFall Keyed Up/Upton, Robert
 Molly D/Dezzani, Rudy
 Bailey/Pimental, Joe
 Shine/Wolf, Sage

Novice Lightweight

1/6 Diamonds Forever/Doub, Kathleen

2/3 Karena/Konst, Sarah
 3/ The Terminacre/Tavare, Alice
 4/ Cobay/Wolf, Jeanine
 5/5 Kamiko/Lieberknecht, Kay
 6/1 Royal Prancer/Pimental, Michelle
 /2 Deux Chaussettes/Jones, Mary
 /4 Martina BL/Jones, Cristine
 Renno/Ballard, Tanya
 Maique/Lee, Janet
 Charlie/Abelson, Donna

Novice Junior

1/1 DM's Mingo/Johnson, Summer
 2/3 Piper/Isgrigg, Kayshe
 3/2 Cayenne/McBride, Marissa

Novice DO (Distance Only)

BMM Nike Heir/Berkey, Janet

Competitive Pleasure

1/2 Symplicity Sue/Bacon, Nancy
 2/ WW Steeleasen+/Dillard, Ashley
 3/1 Avalonn/Dockter, Susan
 4/ Dundee Playboy Bunny/Berwick, Robyn
 5/ Cimarron Al/Coe, Deborah
 6/6 Autumnstar/Simas, Danine
 /3 Majnu/Dillard, Joe
 /4 Morgaine de Faye/James-Ryan, Stacy
 /5 Marilyn/Flagg, Sue
 Ala Cowboy/Armer, Jean
 El Nabiyyah/Foote, Debra
 Lisette/Murphy, Debbie
 Rafelmo Bey/Skoog, Kris

Mt. Quarry

5/19/07; B-O/N/CP Total Riders: 35

Chairman: Vickie Myers
Judges: Larry Goss DVM, Dale Lake
Open Sweepstakes: Shayla/Grasso, Ben-99
Novice Sweepstakes: Ibn El Barak/Berkely, Claire-100

Open Heavyweight

1/1 Phantom Dusk/Boicelli, Gene
 CO/2 Shine/Wolf, Sage

Open Lightweight

1/1 Desert Reinbeau/Meroshnekoff, Angie
 2/3 Kamiko/Lieberknecht, Kay

3/2 That's Our Fancy/Baldwin, Dana

Open Junior

1/1 Shayla/Grasso, Ben
 2/2 Kaylee/Armstrong, Olivia

Novice Heavyweight

1/4 DM's Mingo/Beauchemin, Danielle
 2/ Appie Jack/Mullens, Damara
 3/2 GLF All Keyed Up/Upton, Robert
 4/6 Stealth Knight/Boicelli, Victoria
 5/5 Brownie Phoenix/Robledo, Debra
 6/1 Bailey/Pimentel, Joe
 CO/3 Tura Lura/Cannon, Linda

Novice Lightweight

1/1 Deus Chausetes/Jones, Mary
 2/4 Shania/Warren, Sherry
 3/2 Ytok Coppi/Stackpole, Karen
 4/6 Martina B.L./Jones, Christine B.
 5/3 Jamal B.L./Upton, Linda
 6/ Cobay/Wolf, Jeanine
 /5 Royal Pracers/Pimentel, Michelle
 Maique/Lee, Janet
 P Tobey/Berrieford, Julie

Novice Junior

1/1 Ibn El Barak/Berkely, Claire

Competitive Pleasure

1/1 Formalatii/Dockter, Susan
 2/4 Symplicity Sue/Bacon, Nancy
 3/ WW Steeleasen+//Dillard, Ashley
 4/5 Dundees Playboy Bunny/Berwick, Robin
 5/ Cassa Nova/Stillman, Susan
 6/ Ala Cowboy/Armer, Jean
 /2 Majnu/Dillard, Joe
 /3 MJ Abiad Amir/Ferris, Jim
 /6 Lisette/Murphy, Debbie
 Autumnstar/Berkely, Laura
 Morgain de faye/James-Ryan, Stacy

Gilroy Hot Springs

Coe Park A

5/26-27/07; A-O/CP Total Riders: 17

Chairman: Jim Jeffers
Judges: Leroy Burnham DVM, Dale Lake

Open Sweepstakes: Desert Reinbeau/
Meroshnekoff, Angie-98

Open Heavyweight

1/1 Phantom Dusk/Boicelli, Gene
2/2 Cheveau Chee/Klentos, Paul
DO-1 LB Shahs Premier/Paige,
Richard
P SW Cisco/Klentos, Erin

Open Lightweight

1/1 Desert Reinbeau/
Meroshnekoff, Angie
2/2 Om El Szogun/O'Brien, Julia
DO-1 SSA Hrocketstar/Etheridge,
Judy

Open Junior

1/2 Kaylee/Armstrong, Olivia
2/1 Shayla/Grasso, Ben

Competitive Pleasure

1/2 Symplicity Sue/Nancy Bacon
2/4 Morgaine de Faye/James-
Ryan, Stacey
3/3 Cassanova/Stillman, Susan
4/ Windy Foot/Dillard, Joe
5/6 Majnu "Tiffany"/Dillard,
Ashley
6/ Ala Cowboy/Armer, Jean
/1 Dundee's Playboy Bunny/
Berwick, Robyn
/5 Ibn Eclipse/Anderson,
Patricia

Gilroy Hot Springs

Coe Park B

5/26/07; B-N Total Riders: 20

Chairman: Jim Jeffers

Judges: Greg Fellers DVM, Jan Jeffers

Novice Sweepstakes: The Terminacre/
Tavare, Alice-99.5

Novice Heavyweight

1/1 Turalura/Cannon, Linda
2/5 Apple Jack/Mullens, Damara
3/4 Bailey/Pimentel, Joe
4/ Stealth Knight/Boicelli,
Victoria A.
5/2 Shine/Wolf, Sage
6/3 Prophets Echo/Simmons,
Barbara
/6 Molly/Fortine, Joseph

Novice Lightweight

1/5 The Terminacre/Tavare, Alice
2/1 Kamiko/Liebergnecht, Kay

3/ BMM Nike Heir/Berkey,
Janet
4/3 Deux Chaussettes/Jones, Mary
5/4 Royal Prancer/Pimentel,
Michelle
6/2 Cimarron AL/Coe, Debbie
/6 Charlie/Abelson, Donna
DO Arrow Dynamic/Humphrey,
Laney

Novice Junior

1/3 Piper/Thurman, Ariel
2/2 DM's Mingo/Johnson,
Summer
3/1 Cayenne3/Hunter, Josie
4/4 Chi/Isgrigg, Kaysha
5/5 Grado/Mullens, Amanda

MEMBER NEWS

I would like to notify
members that Nora Cook broke her
hip, and is now in a rehabilitation
hospital. I am sure she would love to
hear from Region One members who
know her.

Get well cards can be sent
in care of her daughter, Kathy Zilke,
340 Valley View Rd., Pleasant Hill,
CA 94523. —Kathy Nixon

In the Loss of Your Pet

There must be a heaven
for the animal friends we love.

They are not human,
yet they bring out
our own humanity . . .
sometimes in ways
that other people cannot.

They do not worry
about fame or fortune . . .
instead, they bring our hearts
nearer to the joy of simple things.

Each day they teach us
little lessons in trust
and steadfast affection.

Whatever heaven may be,
there's surely a place in it
for friends as good as these.

Author Unknown

Submitted by Kathy Nixon

"KATIE"

(Kathy's Gay Lady+/-)

5/4/77-6/15/07

She will always hold a place in my heart—Kathy Nixon



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See *Hoof Print* for National Board,
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BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Jamie Dieterich

“You only see what you want to see” was said over and over by my instructor, a retired highway patrolman, in a personal safety class. “How many times have you pulled up to a stop sign, looked both ways, pulled out into traffic, and suddenly there was another vehicle coming at you?” As a CHP, he had seen the results of that scenario many times. We don’t want to see that other vehicle, and sometimes we don’t. How many times have you heard, “I didn’t think it was loaded”? Hopefully that hasn’t happened to you, but we’ve all heard it—someone believed the gun was empty and did not see the signs that it was not.

This phenomenon happens many times over the course of a weekend of a competitive trail ride. Human competitors do not see the hazards of their horse being too close to another horse or to another person. The first place this happens is in the line to check in with the veterinary judge where horses are often lined up nose to tail. Another place this happens is when the veterinary judge is examining the horse, and the handler does “not see” the secretaries sitting right there. P&R stops—riders are tired, think the horse is too tired to care, and then let their horse’s rump swing right into the face of another horse. Water stops—the rider allows his horse to crowd right up into the

“space” of another horse and does not see that other horse putting its ears back as a warning. Then at the end of the ride, waiting for the post-ride veterinary exam, horses are really lined up nose to tail, or milling around in a bunch. Riders are understandably tired, and they don’t see the judges’ secretaries sitting right there again.

Fortunately, most of the time there are no serious implications. But—I have been at rides where a competitor was kicked in the stomach by the horse in front of him in the check-in line, where a P&R volunteer was kicked by a horse aiming at another horse, and where horses have been kicked at water troughs. A horsemanship judge in another region was kicked and sent flying like a rag doll by a horse being examined by the veterinary judge.

We can’t naively think “my dog doesn’t bite” or “my horse doesn’t kick.” We put our horses in a whole different situation when we take them to a competition. The air is filled with excitement before and during the competition, and is often filled with grouchiness at the end as both horses and riders lose their personality reserves. It’s “normal” to only see what we want to see.

Like any skill, learning to be aware of our surroundings, of things we might not “want” to see, takes practice. Situational awareness can help keep us, our horse, and others safe during a competition, and might also save our life someday.

*HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE
NATIONAL BOARD OF
DIRECTOR'S MEETING
FEBRUARY 22, 2007, RENO, NV*

To help the membership better understand **NATRC's financial status**, a report of the previous year's income and expenses will be published in Hoof Print. This report was seen in the 2007 Special Edition Yearbook that came out after the National Convention.

Diane Lesher of Equisure addressed **NATRC insurance** questions. She explained that our accident policy covers workers but not participants, that our liability insurance covers NATRC, ride managers, workers, riders, landowners if additionally insured, and that our policy does not include auto-related coverage.

Sanction Chair, Patsy Conner, reminded us that NATRC sanctions the rides but is not financially responsible for the financial success of a ride.

The Ride Management System is being used by all regions now. There are still some details to work out with compatibility and security.

The Ad Hoc Drug Committee is working on revising **NATRC's drug policy** and is working closely with AERC who is also revising theirs.

The **Riders's Manual** is being updated, and is almost ready for printing.

The **Judges Committee** discussed several things including the safety issues of portable corrals (see proposed rule changes), cross judging (see article in Hoof Print), and the signing of score-cards—does it mean the judge is assuming responsibility for the comments and scored on the card? Or simply that the judge was in attendance? Larry Goss, DVM, and Carol Meschter, DVM, R1, have been approved as veterinary judges. There are five veterinary judges and two horsemanship judges in the apprentice process (see listing in Hoof Print).

The **Judges Seminar** was a power point presentation on trail safety and courtesy.

Jim and Lind Ward, chairs of **National Fund Raising**, reminded us all to visit with our sponsors at the convention and for ride managers to make sure to recognize our sponsors (**Specialized Saddles, Smooth Stride, Gulf Coast Trailers, Easy Care**) at rides.

The 2006 **Championship Challenge** in R5 had twelve competitors, incurred a financial loss, and will not be able to repay the \$500 seed money from National. There is a proposal for the 2008 Championship Challenge to be hosted by Regions 5 and 6, September 26-28, at Land Between the Lakes in KY.

The **Board of Director's Guidelines** has been replaced by what we are now calling Standing Rules and Administrative Procedures (subject to change). The new master document is more comprehensive. Portions in the previous document that applied to ride management will appear in the new Ride Managers Manual; those things that pertain to judging will appear in the next edition of the Judges Manual.

Proposed Rule Changes to be covered separately.

The **2008 National Convention** will be held in Denver February 14-17.

Jamie Dieterich

RIDE PHOTOS BY *SILENT EYE PHOTOGRAPHY*

Photos from the Mt. Quarry CTR May 19th have been posted
to the Silent Eye Photography web site at:
www.printroom.com/pro/silenteyephoto

Click on the gallery group titled Mt. Quarry CTR May 07. Five galleries will display. Click on one of the galleries to view the photos. To see a larger view of a photo, click on the photo.

Photos for the Georgetown CTR scheduled for June 23 will be posted within a week after the ride. Sample prints from the Mt. Quarry CTR will be available for viewing

If you have any questions about the photos, please contact
Silent Eye Photography at silenteye@hughes.net.

6

Passed over the Rainbow Bridge

Desert Image, known to those who loved him as “Junior”
Born April 1st 1982; died May 30th 2007

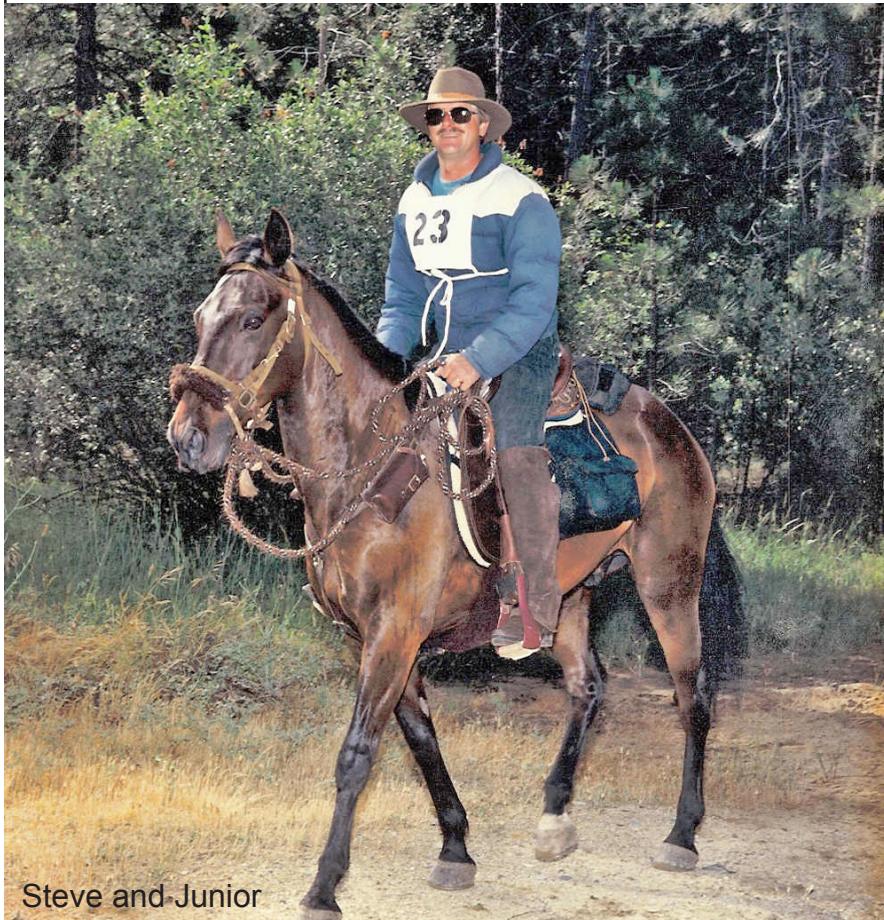
Junior was owned by Steve Meroshnekoff and graciously loaned to wife Angie for most of his life. His accomplishments included High Point Novice Horse and completion of over 3000 NATRC miles, most of those in the Open division ridden by Angie.

Junior's second career was as a dressage horse where he once again excelled, often catching the attention of judges and top-level clinicians. His specialty was as a Dressage Quadrille horse performing in a number of winning Quadrilles.

Junior's third career, and the one he was most loved and famous for, was as a trusted and solid lesson horse. Many times he was the first horse a small child ever rode; other times his solid and gentle nature was the cure for an adult rider's fear after a bad previous experience. Just the day before he died he took a very tiny child to her first Gymkhana, and it was awesome to watch this little girl—who started the day asking to be led into the ring—finish the day cantering Junior all by herself easily through the turns like they had been paired for years.

Junior was the cornerstone of our lesson program. The number of lives he touched cannot be counted—but if the tears shed, stories told, and memories held by those he taught are any indication, he was a giant influence.

Rest in peace, Junior—we miss you more than we can say.



Steve and Junior

DISTANCE ONLY (DO) TRIAL CONTINUED FOR 2007

The DO (Distance Only) class will continue on a trial basis in 2007 ride season. Distance Only horses and riders ride for mileage only. They will receive a scorecard, but will not be placed.

The DO Trial will follow all rules under HDC (Hors de concours, or “outside of the competition”) section in Rulebook with the following exceptions:

1. Both Horse and Rider must ride DO.
2. DO entries have the option of riding one or two days of an 'A' CTR.

When choosing to ride one day only, they must ride the first day. A DO rider must notify ride management of their intent not to ride a second day after post ride checkout but before 8 p.m.

DO entries will receive the standard mileage allotments for each day ridden.

HDC will remain as it is to accommodate those who wish to enter HDC in Horsemanship but have their horse eligible for placing.

Competitors participating in HDC or DO must follow all the rules that apply to the other competitors with the exception that HDC and DO horses may use boots such as splint boots, bell boots, or other types of boots that cover the coronary band.

Please note that one of the proposed rule changes (see the Hoof Print magazine) would simply change the name of HDC to DO. If you have an opinion on this, please contact your Region One Board or National Board members.

The rules governing HDC can be found in Section IV.4. C. of the 2007 Rule Book.

BLUE

Kay Lieberknecht

I'd met this horse before! His name was common but not his looks. He was a sturdy, old-fashioned Appaloosa, with skimpy mane and tail, dark splotches on gray, and the Roman nose of draft horse influence. My eyes went straight to his hooves, splayed and broken. I used to trim them, until his people went broke, about a year before. Now they had donated him to the Boys and Girls Club, for a camp mount.

He would have made a great kids' horse, except the horse-woman who had accepted him on behalf of the Club noticed one thing after she'd picked him up: he appeared to be totally blind. I confirmed that he'd been pretty blind already a year ago.

Oh well, I thought, he's really confident following this other gelding; all they'd have to do is ride that one and pony Blue with a kid on his back. So I took him out to Camp.

The Camp vet and wranglers said "no way." So I set about locating a home for a good-natured, gorgeous gelding who was well-trained but blind. I finally found a young woman who had a corral but she just needed to build a shelter. I agreed to take Blue at my ranch for a couple weeks till she got her place ready.

The woman had a good feel for Blue, riding him on trails with me nearby. I was really impressed by how tuned-in she was, to play

his eyes. He acted nervous but obedient, and definitely coordinated, to stay on his feet up and down hills and through ditches.

Then the woman disappeared. No response to the phone calls, no mail pick-up, nothing. What could I do but keep the horse?

I work with a lot of kids, using horses to help them learn, grow, and heal. Blue quickly became an important horse to teach the kids compassion and good communication. Led on Blue, kids who had serious difficulties with ADHD were able to take the responsibility to remain alert and focused and be reliable as his eyes.

I know any horse can step on someone's toes, and that's why I love boots. When another horse acted up, I had a boy hold Blue and I paid no attention as he led him away. Blue ran into a wheelbarrow, then side-stepped it onto the boy's foot. Extremely painful for the boy but without serious damage, that was a hard lesson for me: I realized that no unskilled person should lead a totally blind horse without close supervision.

Fortunately, I have others working with me who help prevent problems. Once a girl wanted to ride Blue with just a bareback pad, going on the trails. I was waffling about whether to let her, when my assistant firmly declared, "No." I inquired as to her reasoning, and she described how Blue vigorously puts his nose to the ground if he hasn't been warned about a serious change in the terrain. Without a pommel

in front of her, the girl could be pulled over his head. Wow, thank-you.

It would seem that Blue wouldn't be safe to go on hilly trails, crossing creeks, walking over logs. Wouldn't he fall, or at least stumble a lot? He does neither! He's got a fast walk, with relatively high steps that avoid the little surprises of bumps. When we approach a major dip or rise, we have the rider do a half-halt, and the leader will kick the spot. With that warning, Blue doesn't put his nose down, but just slows and steps higher. The kids just love to feel his trust in them.

Blue can be ridden without being led, and he can trot and canter well on consistent terrain. He can be the leader of the group, be in the middle, or be a quarter-mile behind. When another horse laid her ears back and swung her head at him, he quickly moved away, even though she never came closer than a foot from him. Did he hear a tail swish? Did he feel air move off her head? Or did he read her mind, or possibly the mind of his rider who saw the aggression begin?

I am looking forward to learning to teach interactive vaulting—essentially gymnastics on horseback with a socializing purpose—and I think Blue may be the ideal horse. He's broad-backed, kind, steady, attentive, and obedient. And he's not at all nervous anymore. He now has a wonderful second career (I wonder what his first one was?) and he is returning the love and trust of the people who employ and enjoy him.

100 Mile 6-Day East Bay Hills Trail Ride

To Benefit Bay Area Trails

Wednesday, Aug. 29-Monday, Sept. 3

Ride Labor Day week with members of the Tilden-Wildcat Horsemen's Association and the Metropolitan Horsemen's Association in the East Bay Hills. Ride up to 100 miles in 6 days, or 14-18 miles each day in small groups at your own pace. Join us for one, for more or for all 6 days. The ride will follow and/or parallel the S.F. Bay Area Ridge Trail much of the first 3 days, and then move to Mt. Diablo for the final 2 days. We will spend 2 days riding from each of 3 different campsites.

Trails and Camps: Camp opens in Tilden Regional Park Tuesday, the day before the ride. On Wednesday enjoy sweeping Bay Area views from the trails in Tilden and Wilcat Parks. On Thursday we will follow the Bay Area Ridge Trail from Tilden through Sibley, Huckleberry, and Redwood Regional Parks and EBMUD Watershed, followed by a scenic ride in Joaquin Miller Park, where we will camp on Thursday and Friday nights at Sequoia Arena. Friday's ride will pass through Redwood Park to Canyon on the way to Upper San Leandro Reservoir. Saturday's ride will include all of the French Trail in Redwood Park. Saturday afternoon we will move to Mt Diablo and camp at the Concord-Mt. Diablo Trail Ride Association's grounds. On Sunday and Monday we will be riding on Mt. Diablo.



Food and Evening Entertainment:

Breakfast, lunch and dinner will be provided for riders and campers, and hay, carrots and water for the horses. Swimming and showers will be available at Tilden and at Mt. Diablo. Evening programs will include a visit to the Chabot Space Observatory (5 minutes from Sequoia Arena), a harp concert, and/or trail updates, naturalist talks, a veterinary presentation, cowboy music and dancing, cowboy poetry and a drill team.

Costs/Benefits: This ride will help raise funds for the Bay Area Ridge Trail and for equestrian improvements on East Bay trails. The Bay Area Barns and Trails Trust will match the first \$5,000 raised for the trails. The cost will be \$60/day, with a discount for 6 days at \$325. This fee includes camping, food and horse provisions. For visitors, dinner in camp will be \$15/night. We also have an optional program allowing riders to solicit pledges from friends, neighbors and other trail supporters to benefit the Bay Area Ridge Trail and other East Bay trails.

Volunteers: If you can't ride, join us in supporting the East Bay Parks and the Ridge Trail by volunteering to help with any of a range of important tasks that will make this ride happen.

Camp Rules: Dogs under control are allowed in camp but not on the trail rides. Riders will be responsible for stabling their horses at each camping area. You may tie to your trailer or bring your own portable corral or picket line. Stallions will not be allowed on this ride and we will enforce restrictions on generators after dark. Helmets are strongly suggested for all riders.



Reserve Your Space Now: before we fill up. We are limited by the available space for trailer parking, and last year we ran out of space. Use the entry form on the reverse of this flyer. If space permits, we will accept last minute entries, particularly for the last few days..

Questions: Contact Morris Older, at 925-254-8943 or at ebhillsride@comcast.net, or Martha Mikesell at 925-833-9279 or at martha.mikesell@sbcglobal.net if you would like to volunteer or have any questions about this ride. More info at <http://www.twha.org--click on events>.

GOOD TRAIL NEWS FOR REGION ONE BENEFIT RIDE

On Saturday June 2, National Trail Days, two new trails were opened at Rancho Canada del Oro Open Space Preserve in Santa Clara County: the Llagas Creek Loop Trail, a one-half mile whole access trail, and the multi-use Mayfair Ranch Trail.

The Mayfair trail adds a nice four-plus mile loop from the Casa Loma staging area. Fellow NATRC riders, Susan Stillman and Richard Paige, plus several other equestrians tried out the trail. This trail is newly constructed, so the first mile or so was dusty, which was hard on the hikers and mountain bikers and not all that great for horseback riders either. That part has a lot of switchbacks, and occasionally the line of sight is not good, so mountain bikers and equestrians need to be cautious. The trail is very well constructed and brushed and has several sturdy bridges over drainages. Open Space Ranger and NATRC competitor, Doug Reynaud, told us that more trails are planned in the Preserve.

Trails in the Open Space Authority are used as part of the Region One Benefit Ride at Almaden Valley which stages from the adjacent Calero County Park. In previous years, the Open Division has had to return to camp for lunch; this year all divisions will lunch at the Casa Loma staging area.

In the next few months I will be pre-riding and timing the Benefit Ride, and hope that some NATRC members can join me. If anyone is interested, please email misxfire@yahoo.com or call 925 862-0232 and I'll notify you when I will be riding there.

Judy Etheridge
Region One Benefit Ride Manager

Trail's End

Jill Owens, Editor

In winter of 2006, Gypsy was laid up with a stifle injury and I had time on my hands. Sparked by Corrine Davis's enthusiasm about a barefoot trimming clinic she'd just attended, I started researching the natural hoof care method and the barefoot trim. I read books by Jaime Jackson, Pete Ramey, and Hiltrud Strasser. I learned that after extensive study of wild horses, these experts have pronounced them to have the best feet in the world and virtually no lamenesses. Out of this research has emerged a strategy of diet, activity, and barefoot hoof care that promises greatly improved health and longevity for our domestic horses.

Strasser has been unfairly vilified because some of her veterinary surgical methods have been foolishly attempted by non-veterinarian practitioners, with sometimes catastrophic results. However, her books, *A Lifetime of Soundness and Shoeing: A Necessary Evil?*, should be in every horseperson's library.

Here are just a few of the ways I have learned that metal shoes are harmful to our horses:

1. Shoes prevent the hooves from flexing with each step and acting as natural shock absorbers. Instead these forces are transmitted up the leg where they can cause strain and injuries to joints and ligaments. Many common lamenesses that are virtually nonexistent in wild horse populations are quite possibly a result of a lifetime of wearing horseshoes.
2. The natural flexing of the hoof acts as a mechanism to pump blood through the circulatory system. In shod horses, overall stamina is decreased, extra strain is put on the heart, and the foot structures are compromised due to lack of blood supply.
3. Shoeing interferes with sensation and ambulation mechanisms in the feet, resulting in an increased chance of injury and loss of stability, traction, and surefootedness.
4. The constant percussion of metal shoes on hard ground causes damaging vibrations in the feet and legs.
5. Metal shoes fixate the horse's feet in a set circumference. When the foot grows, it cannot expand normally and the constricted tissues are damaged.
6. Shoes place the load totally on the periphery of the horses' foot. New research has shown that this drastically reduces blood supply to the tissues and that all the surfaces of the foot—including the sole, bars, and frog—are meant to contact the ground and share the load.

After a lot of research and soul-searching, I decided to take my horses barefoot, and began working closely with my farrier to apply natural hoof care methods. We fitted all the horses with Boa Boots for use while riding during the year-long transition period. During transition, a completely new hoof must grow, along with healthy lateral cartilages and digital cushions and other inner structures that were damaged while the horse was shod.

Now—over a year later—I want to share my experience with you. It has not turned out as I would have expected! Ironically, my quarter horse, a breed not known for their good feet, has made the transition beautifully. We can go long distances on him barefoot over rocky ground and he is never sore. Gypsy, who is a mustang and is supposed to have wonderful feet, is still in transition. I had worked her up to 5-7 miles, but when recently I took her over 8-10 rocky miles, she wound up sore and with bruising on the sole callous. I have her back in boots temporarily while this setback resolves itself. (I do not think Gypsy's feet are inherently bad, but rather have been compromised from years of inactivity before I got her followed by years of wearing shoes. I'm convinced that had she lived her entire life in the wild, she would indeed have naturally excellent mustang feet.)

My third horse came to me very lame with a chronic founder of many years that corrective shoeing wasn't working for anymore. I took her on from my neighbors as a rehabilitation project, and we started her on natural hoof care. I wish I could say her foot has returned to normal now and she is sound to ride, but we got her too late to cure her horribly sunken coffin bone and the bone loss and other damage resulting from years of "corrective shoeing." What we have been able to accomplish is still pretty amazing though. Through natural hoof care, she is "pasture sound," appears to be absolutely pain-free, and we have every hope that she will be able to live out her retirement years in health and comfort.

I still hope that someday Gypsy can do NATRC competitions in her bare feet. But if that never happens, I will not give up my resolve! The Boa Boots I'm using offer a convenient and healthy alternative to shoes, and it's worth it to me for the benefit of my horse's well-being to give up any sport that doesn't allow this choice. I am convinced that barefoot is the best way for my horses, and I hope NATRC and other entities that govern competitions will consider amending their booting rules to support owners like me in their efforts to improve the welfare of their animals.

NATRC

Ride Management System

Jim Ferris

Starting in Ride Year 2007, the Ride Management System (RMS) developed by Region Five is available for all rides, riders, and volunteers to use. I am the Region One coordinator for this system and am willing to answer any and all questions about it from ride managers, individual riders, and workers. The way this system works is that any individual signs up for an account on the system, and, if the individual is a ride manager, they contact me to have their ride manager flag set. Once the ride manager is designated, the ride can be entered. Once a ride is entered, now any person, who has signed up for an account, can enter the ride or volunteer as a worker at the ride.

The beauty of this system for ride management—before, during, and at the end of the ride—is that the system will fill in all of the forms needed for National, provide rider lists, and otherwise keep track of all of the entrants. The ride secretary can manually enter anyone who sends in a paper entry so they then become a part of the system.

For further information on this system, there is a tutorial available. It can be found on the Region Five web site, www.region5.org, and is listed as “Tutorials (RMS).” For any questions or further information contact:

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

