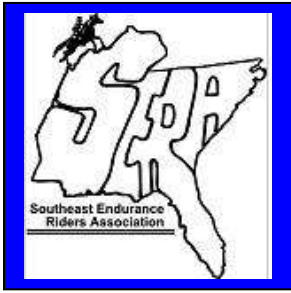
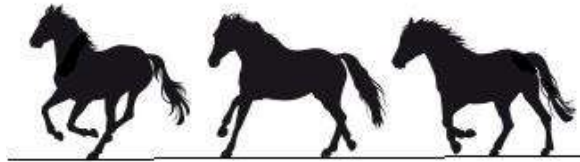


July
2012
Newsletter



Southeast Endurance Riders Association



WHY SHOULD I JOIN SERA?

In the Southeast region of the **AERC**, teamwork is synonymous with **SERA**. The Southeast Endurance Riders Association was founded when endurance riding in the Southeast was in its infancy. Today endurance riding in the Southeast is only behind the West region in number of opportunities for our members to participate in the sport. In the Southeast there are riding opportunities for riders interested in all aspects of our sport from LD to Multidays. While the opportunities for riders to participate in the historically foundation of endurance - the one-day one hundred mile ride - have declined to an alarming low level in the rest of the country, **BUT** the Southeast has maintained a steady number of eight over the last 10 years.

SERA has been a big factor. **SERA** promotes endurance riding, supports riders and ride managers. The **SERA** team is the members that ride the rides and the managers that sanction their rides through **SERA**. In addition to the horse scales, a speaker system, flood lights and blood analyzer, **SERA** will have at many rides their projector and screen available to display whatever you want the riders to see pre-ride (trail maps, ride schedule, etc.) and/or post-ride (awards, etc.). If you have pictures (from previous years, or of the ride-site facilities or of significant trail intersections, or even from the ride photographer), we can put up a slide show during registration and/or the meals, for example. You can email Joe Schoech what you want to display beforehand or put the data on a thumb(zip)-drive at the ride. Documents can even be scanned directly into a display at the ride site. We can also hook the projector up directly to your laptop, if you wish. If you want to show movies, just provide the DVD (no Blu-ray) and we can have a "night at the movies", if you like. We just need a little setup time and then we can make all or any of this happen. Please contact Joe Schoech for the A/V availability.

If you want to be a part of the team that promotes the growth of endurance riding opportunities - you should join **SERA**. If you want to have the access of resources, scales to

monitor your horse's weight and a blood analysis machine to help you understand the metabolic capabilities of your horse so you can better manage your horse you should join **SERA**. If you want a stable system of quality trails for not only running endurance rides but also for training and just hacking around you should join **SERA**. **SERA**'s goal is to make endurance riding in the Southeast region the best it can be. If this is what you want you should join **SERA**.

Remember, you can easily join/renew by going online @
www.seraonline.org/new_membership.htm

THANK YOU to our SERA Year end Awards Sponsors

SERA would like to thank the following for their generous sponsorships of our awards:

New Sponsors

Jana Smith - in Memory of Steffanie Waddington - sponsor of the LD Mileage Champion
Foster Olson and Lela Nielsen - sponsor of the Freshman Rider of the Year
Red Barn Run (Cheryl and Steve Perry) - Freshman Horse of the Year
LBL endurance Ride-LD Best Condition

Current Sponsors

Running Bear/Teddy Lancaster - Consistent Condition
Christo and Lori Dinkelman - Grand Champion Junior

Please remember that some SERA awards require nomination by December 15th (see SERA's website at www.seraonline.org for more details).



President's Message~ Dr. Ike Nelson

It's that time of year when most of us are not spending much time on a horse. Between the kid's summer activities, vacation to be taken, and much yard and garden work to take care of, the main reason is that it is just too dangd hot!! Having said that, I am reminded of a small plaque that Rebecca has on her dresser that says "Time spent on a horse is never wasted". I had that come to mind this past week when I took a neighbor on a trail ride. This young man is 15, and according to him, used to ride with his aunt before she died from cancer. He is helping us around the farm this summer with some of the projects that never seem to get done. The ride was one that I don't experience much anymore in that we rode for 2 hours and maybe trotted and cantered for 2 minutes of that. I had forgotten how much I enjoyed the time spent on a horse, even at a walk. In the heat of competition it is easy to put that in the back of your mind. I was thankful that this ride gave me a chance to re-create that mindset. We do what we do because of that love of horses we have. I won't soon forget that look on Sann Barte's face when she was telling me about her riding Suzie Anderson's Red, around camp at GERA. That's what draws all of us, even the vets, timers, and other volunteers, who are always there at rides. Remember, Will Rogers once said "There's something about the outside of a horse that's good for the inside of a man". Don't get so caught up in the competition and process of doing an endurance ride that you forget why you are there in the first place! So, while it's so blasted hot, take that horse and go for a nice slow trail ride, so you can remember.

SERA News

At the SERA membership convention this past January, the membership voted to revoke the "8 year old rule". **Which means that SERA no longer requires that all riders be at least 8 years old in order to sanction with SERA.** The decision is up to the Ride Management if they wish to enforce *any* minimum age limit at their sanctioned rides.

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AERC and AHA National Championship Ride:

The AERC National Championship and the AHA National Championship ride is getting nearer. If you are planning on competing, be sure to check you and your horse's qualifying rides. You still have time to qualify BEFORE the event. And an event it will be, please support the ride in some way. Volunteering is a great, fun way to learn about endurance and at this level, you are bound to learn something from these top horses and riders. For more information, please see the ride web site : www.aercatbiltmore.com/index.html

Nancy Gooch's humble beginning to become the timing Queen of the SE region ~ By Jackie Mitchell

Hello, My name is Jackie Mitchell, and in some circles, I'm known as the woman who comes to the rides with Nancy Gooch sometime. In reality, I am Nancy's older sister, and the reason that she is in the sport of endurance riding.

It was the year 1974, and I was 24 years old. I have always wanted a horse, so to get one, I married my husband of now 44 years, David. (That is not the only reason I married David, but it was part of it.) He was the owner of a couple of part walking horses named June and Dixie. We had tried showing horses, but found that we were just not cut out for that. I eventually met a woman named Barbara Rogers. If you have ever ridden down the trail with, or heard

them coming down the trail, think Jody and Joni, only 35 years ago. Jody and Joni are exactly like Barbara and Jody were when out on the trail. David and I were already doing some trail riding, but being the competitors that we are, we were looking for something else to do with our horses. Barbara was stabling her horse where another friend had her horse, and we started trail riding from that barn. Not much in the way of trails, but enough for us to get in a few miles around the cotton fields. Barbara and her husband Jack Rogers competed in an endurance ride in The Bankhead National Forest in 1973, and become friends with the ride manager, Kent Stephens. Kent was the ride manager for the Alabama 50 Miler. This ride was first sanctioned in the first year of the AERC, all the way back in 1971.

Being the salesman that she was, Barbara eventually talked us into training for our first ride. Now keep in mind that this was in the first years of sanctioned endurance riding. There were only 5 rules. The vet holds were all 30 and 60 minutes long, with no gates. (Let me tell you sometime about the fight that it took to get gates into the sport.) All rides must be 50 miles or more in length. (no LD rides) The rides must be open to all equines, must be in control of the vets, and I can't remember the other rule. Anyway, back to our start in the sport.

I started about 6 mos. before the ride to get my horse ready to try an endurance ride. The Alabama 50 was held the Saturday after Thanksgiving. My friend was also going to try to do the ride with me, although she had to work, and eventually decided she couldn't get her horse in shape. David and I had two sons who were aged 2 and 4. One of us had to stay with them most of the time, so I got to do most of the conditioning by myself, as most all of us do. We went on long rides on the weekends with Barbara, Jack and Jody. Sometimes we would condition, but a lot of the times we would just take long trail rides.

Eventually, the weekend of the ride arrived. David was supposed to be my pit crew, but wouldn't you know, one of our boys got sick, so Nancy was elected. We went early in the morning to the ride, since we only lived about 45 minutes away. We arrived, and the ride started. There were only about 25 riders. A far cry from the number attending rides today. I made only the first ten miles to the first vet check, and got pulled for lameness. Nancy was pulling my two horse trailer, so we loaded up June, and decided to follow Barbara and Jack around the course. I think God now that I did get pulled, because on the next leg, 2 horses were killed. Some people from Tennessee had come down with their spotted walking horses and had tried to show off and had ridden their horses to death. The horses died on the trail. I'm really glad that I did not have to pass those horses on the trail. I believe this was part of the reason for the movement to introduce gates into holds. Having straight holds with pulse checks only done at the end of the 30 minutes allowed horses who had just recovered after 30 minutes to continue with horses who were better conditioned and had recovered within 5 minutes after arriving at the vet check. This was a very dangerous situation. The sport has come a long way from the start, and is a lot better now. Gates into holds were not introduced until 1979 or 1980 when I went to my first AERC convention as the SE Regional Director. A position I was honored to have until Susan took over for me.

I digress again. Nancy and I followed Jack and Barbara and helped them at the vet checks, where we learned a whole lot more about endurance riding, especially pit crewing. Barbara and Jack finished 2nd and 3rd, I believe. Nancy and I were hooked. David and I got a new Arabian mare, bred June to Woden, Jacks beautiful Arabian stallion, who we eventually bought, and endurance riding has been a part of our lives ever since.. We still have Arabian horses, but thanks to new knees, don't get to ride anymore. We made a lot of good friends, some of whom have passed on, and got to know a lot of great horses, both from the SE, and the rest of the country as well. I know that Nancy feels as if she is part of a large extended family and gets to see them each weekend. She probably knows all there is to know about putting on an endurance ride. I know there are ride managers who will not schedule a ride until they know that Nancy will be able to come. Smart move on their part. However, we'd rather be playing golf.

I handed Nancy her first clip board in 1976 and told her she was going to be the timer for the Alabama 50 Miler, which we had taken over, because the ride manager was moving. A lot of miles have passed by since, but it's been great. One more thing about Nancy, folks, she has never ridden a horse for more than a few feet. She was afraid of riding, and you know horses can sense that. Every time I tried to get Nancy to ride, she would end up either run into a tree, nearly dumped in a ditch or something else. Believe me, I really tried to get her to ride. But every thing turned out as it should I guess. Nancy is sure doing what she is supposed to every weekend. If a volunteer got credit for the miles, Nancy would have ten times more miles than anyone else in the sport of endurance. I will close with the line I used when I was writing the Ride Managers Forum a few years ago for the AERC Newsletter.

Happy Trails !!!

Sincerely, Jackie Mitchell, Nancy Gooch's big sister

Competing on a non-Arab ~ By Amy Dedefoe

She rides one of those "other horses", I hear it all the time as I walk through ride camp. I am fairly new to this sport and I do not ride an Arabian. But I like to think that I have just as much fun as my fellow Arabian owners. You probably do not know MY name, but you may know my horse's name. He seems to have his own fan club at our local endurance rides. As we trot along the trail, I hear other riders cheer him on, "Go Maverick" and "Here comes that little horse!". He is the oddball at the rides, and quite frankly, I am too. Maverick may be able to pass off as an Arabian one day, you just have to overlook his square butt, high cheek bones, tree trunk legs with feathers, long thick tail and his racking gait through camp. He is a little short, too, and that BLM freeze brand is a dead give away. But he does have the right colors, a nice Arabian bay. Maverick is one of those "other horses" that you see at the rides. I want to share with you what it was like to come about riding at an endurance ride with my 'other horse'.

In the world of endurance riding, you will typically see a plethora of Arabian horses. Arabians excel at this sport, they were made to run long distances, and have an amazing capacity for eating up the miles at a high rate of speed. They dance effortlessly up the steepest of climbs, then saunter down the other side while looking elegant and noble. When they come in for the vet check, their DNA allows their heart rate to drop like a rock, thus giving them a decisive advantage against any non-Arabian competitor, otherwise known as those "other horses".

I knew nothing about endurance riding until my trusted veterinarian first laid his hands on my horse and told me that he would make a great little endurance horse. He peaked my interest, to say the least!

I was very new to equines and had just met this horse a week earlier at the rescue where I volunteer, Save The Horses.org. He was brought in because he was found running loose in Floyd County in north Georgia. No one could catch him, and animal control considered shooting him, as he was getting hit by cars when he came out at night grazing along the road side. The devoted volunteers were able to safely capture him and bring him to the rescue barn and found him a stall, but so scared and quick, you could not catch or touch him in that stall. I met his eyes through the stall door as he peered through the boards. He was too small to get his head over the door, so all I could see were soft brown eyes that told me he needed someone in his life. I needed him in my life too. We were both scared, and well, a little lost.

I spent time with him and he watched me. He watched every move I made and paid attention to every sound. I watched him move, and noticed that he had a nice little gait to his step. Someone told me he was a mustang and showed me the freeze marks on the left side of his neck. I had heard of mustangs before, but I really didn't know what they were or where they came from. I was intrigued, so I went home and got on the computer right away and Googled "'mustang". It sounded like they were a hearty bunch with tough feet and a strong spirit. They were real survivors. I could learn a thing or two about surviving in this world too, so maybe we could help each other out.

I called the owner of the rescue, Cheryl Flanagan, and asked her if I could adopt this little mustang. She said "Sure! What are you going to call him?" I didn't hesitate when I said "Maverick". After all he had been through, that was the name for my tough little survivor. We started our journey together. He learned to trust me, and I learned how to earn his trust. I recruited the help of a trainer, Ed Dabney. Ed had just picked up a mustang himself for the Extreme Mustang Makeover competition. He gave me some insight on mustangs, and watched as I climbed aboard mine, wondering when he would have to dial 911. Maverick was becoming a one-person horse, and Ed helped me through our first rides together. When out on the trail I found that Maverick liked to run away with me. Actually, I think he completely forgot that I was on his back, and he just wanted to run...really fast. I'll never forget the words from my veteran trainer, "I guess you are going to have to learn how to ride a fast horse". That was an understatement as he watched me gallop around a field or his arena as I tried to get comfortable with this once-recently wild horse.

I spent the next three months trying to slow Maverick down, and learn not to be in a hurry all the time. He has a very strong work ethic and is always looking for the next adventure to take. I talked to Ed about his personality and he thought an endurance ride would be a good job for Maverick. He recommended I prepare by completing the local trail - twice, and then we would be ready for a 25 miler. Twice! Good grief, it was all I could do to get through it once!

So, we rode more, and more. We practiced every obstacle that I could think of going over, under, through and around. I wanted to find a job that we both enjoyed, so we attended a cow clinic. Maverick really liked herding cows, he would stare them down and chase them all over the arena, turning on a dime; leaving me to hang on for dear life. It was fun, but we both loved being out in the woods exploring a new trail. The confines of an arena made us both grumpy and bored.

I started watching for endurance riders at our local trail head. They were pretty easy to spot, big, athletic horses, with tiny little riders that wore tights. They all had bright colored tack and for some reason, a sponge tied to their funny looking saddles without horns. I didn't know anything about all of that stuff, but I did know that these ladies could ride the pants off most of the men on our Sunday morning ride. Their horses weren't even breathing heavy as we topped the big hills. But then, neither was mine. He was getting fit and stronger every day. I wonder if we have what it takes?

I decided I was going to find the courage to start an endurance ride. I consulted my trusted vet again, and he asked me about our mileage and how fast we travel. We needed to pick up our speed a little, but he thought we could cover the distance. Dr. Marcella looked over Maverick and patiently allowed him to get comfortable with being handled and assessed as he would at a vet check. He gave me a couple of names and numbers of local endurance riders who he thought might help mentor me in preparing for our first ride. I called one of the names he gave me, and wondered if they would have the patience for such a newbie in the sport. Endurance riders are the friendliest, most helpful people in the horse world. I was soon joining my new friend on my first endurance training ride. More words I will never forget from Catherine Capps, "Now, when you can keep up this pace for five and a half hours, you will be ready for a fifty mile endurance ride!". I didn't think I could maintain this pace for twenty minutes, you are kidding, right? My horse, had a different opinion, however, and he trotted, cantered on with his new friends, the Arabians. He ate and drank when we stopped for breaks, and he picked up the pace again eager to succeed at this new challenge. My new friend showed me how to listen to his heart beat after a speedy lap and found his heart rate was just a few beats higher than her horse, "But, he's not an Arabian", more words not to forget. She instructed me on how to prepare, and what to expect. Her daughter ran me through a typical ride, explaining, gates, holds, timers, negative splits, BCAAs, electrolytes and all the new terminology I would soon learn.

It was time to find a ride to enter! I found the information for the Skymont Endurance Ride, and off I went. I packed everything I could think of, and then some. When I showed up after dark due to a wreck on the highway, I was a wreck too. And it was raining. Where do I park, where do I put my horse? How come everyone has these little pens for their horses? No, I

don't have a "crew". I unloaded and tied Maverick to the side of my trailer, his usual and customary camping spot. He was un-fazed by all the commotion and movement around him, ready for his next adventure with me. We had just come back from a month out west riding in Sedona, Arizona, Bryce Canyon, Utah, the Grand Canyon and Fish Lake, Utah. He tackled those rough areas barefoot, but I opted to ride with boots for his first endurance ride. He was ready for Tennessee!

I awoke before dawn to the sound of generators and high pitched squeals of horses all around. I have been horse camping quite a bit, but have never heard so many strongly verbose horses as I heard that morning before the ride. I got tacked up and ready to go, watching as a loose horse tore through camp like a cannon. My 17 year old BLM mustang remained calm and steady.

We got warmed up as daylight was filtering through the clouds and mist. I can see the other horses now. They are strong, lean and full of un-bounding energy. My little guy just doesn't seem to fit here. I was worried that he might get a little eager at the start, so I opted for my worn-in western saddle, knowing that I have survived a few rodeos on his back in this seat. I followed Joe Shoech's advice from the new rider meeting and allowed the crowd to go out first. We started, and Maverick opted to gait through the start area throwing his knees up high giving me a very smooth ride racking down the trail. Now he really didn't fit in here. The timers looked at me with their knowing smiles that I was a first timer, and maybe even a last-timer by the end of the first loop.

Those Arabians can cover some ground fast and I'm not sure what a rump rug is, but they sure look fancy from the back as they fluttered down the foggy road. We trailed behind a group of them and watched them leave us in the thick morning air. Maverick doesn't seem to be able to keep the same speed as these long legged athletes. He trots for awhile, hits a canter, then back to a trot. Okay, a little walking too. We find another rider on a TWH that we keep up with for awhile and I am grateful for her kind words for me "What is he? He's cute!".

As the trail turned technical, roots and rocks were abundant. Now this is Maverick's style, as he quickly gets ahead of the TWH while they stumble a bit. Maverick continues snaking his way around trees, the tight turns seem to bend under him with ease as we follow the ribbons around. He may not float up a hill, but he can make his way down a steep grade in good time and a sure foot, often times gaining ground on his fellow Arabians.

We make it in from the first lap. I find the timer, and she is so helpful at telling me where to go. I find the P&R station and ask for a courtesy check, as I have no idea where his heart rate is at right now. But I know that mine is red-lined. He is almost down, and in another minute hits his mark of 64 beats. I wait in line for the vet. He is soft spoken and walks me through all the things I need to do, listening and looking, poking and prodding my "other" horse.

Maverick is unsure and worried and looks to me for reassurance. We trot out and I wonder if I will make it back to the vet without falling down as I circle the orange cones. We pass! yeah! I watch the other riders going out on their beautiful arabian horses, still so full of energy and enthusiasm! Mav and I head back to my trailer, I tie him next to a hay bag and he nibbles on

some carrots and apples. He eats and drinks, then dozes a little. I leave the saddle on, as it is chilly and I don't want him to think that we are done yet. Time to go out again! Maverick quickly finds another group to fall in with. They are trotting at an uncomfortable pace for us, and we fall back. Another rider catches us and passes by asking "what is he?" but moving too fast to hear my answer. My horse wanting to follow, but quickly realizing these Arabians have a very airy, lofty trot that my little gaited mustang just cannot match. That's okay, Mav, we are going to ride our own ride at our own little mustang pace. When we did, finally, find our own rhythm, things started to get much smoother for both of us. It isn't the same pace as a Paso Fino, or a Morgan, or an Appaloosa, or any of those "other horses". We finished within the time limits and his heart rate drops in a few more minutes. The vet gave us our first completion and we were thrilled! It was time to prepare for our next day's ride and do it all again!

We were ready to go again at the starting line the next morning. The timers knew my number without having to tell them. I was perplexed, how do they know me? Apparently, there are not a lot of other mustangs in this sport. And even fewer mustangs that are gaited. Maverick had a few fans cheering for him today as we passed the timers. We had much more fun the second day as we fell into a nice group that matched our stride. We spent a few miles riding with seasoned veteran Joe Schoech and his wife Tamra. They were patient and tolerant as we tried to follow along. A few more miles and we had our second completion and our fist 50 miles in AERC!

The next ride was another learning experience for us, just as every "next" ride has been. We are developing our own pace and our own strategy. We still hear the same question, "what is he?" as we arrive at a water stop, as no one seems sure what to think of this little horse that gaits and gallops along side them. My non-Arabian horse is learning that he can keep going and going; and can sometimes even keep up with the efficient Arabians with their lofty trot. He is learning not to waste energy getting upset at the start, and I am learning how to manage his energy and keep it moving forward, safely. Our sprint finish isn't pretty or record breaking, but Mav is willing to show other horses how to cross a bridge they are scared of, or get through a rocky stream or manage a drop-off with confidence. We are not always able to ride with the same horses at their speed, but we are managing to find what works for us. I enjoy the camaraderie during the ride, but I know that allowing Maverick to keep his own, unique pace is more important to his well being.

Its all about the horse in this sport, more words I won't forget from Joe Schoech. It's all about Maverick, whether he be a Mustang, Morgan, Paso Fino, TWH, Standardbred, or the other breeds of horses that enjoy this sport. You don't have to own an Arabian to have a passion for endurance. It does help to have a horse with a big heart and strong spirit. You won't experience a closer bond with your horse until you try one of these rides with your favorite steed, no matter what breed. Enjoy your journey, one hoof beat at a time.



RIGHT: Maverick at his first ride, Skymont, 2011, where he did two back to back LD rides.



Photo Credit: Becky Siler Pearman

LEFT: Maverick at the Land Between the Lakes Endurance ride, where he again did two Back to back LD rides. He placed 6th and 4th. Since his start in endurance last November, he Has completed 300 endurance miles and 150 LD miles. He is now qualified for the AERC National Championship Ride to be held in Sept. on the Biltmore Estate.

A Reunion of Family; My Ride Back ~By Terry Wyatt

The first weekend in May, Tara, my wife, and I were attending the Biltmore ride. I was attempting to complete my first 100 mile ride. I was very excited. My horse was ready and the trail conditions were super. The evening before the ride, I suffered a stroke! While I knew something was very wrong, I was in the saddle the following morning and heading down the trail. Needless to say, I was not able to complete the ride. Thanks to Tom and Gina Hags during the first loop for getting me back to camp. I was a little fuzzy, but, I remember everyone helping tremendously, namely Lance McCoy, who scooped me up and took me to the ambulance. Cheryl Newman and her management group were super.

That was May 5th. I immediately started therapy the following Monday. It was determined that the stroke left me with speech apraxia, which causes a deficit with motor skills in word formulation. While this was a little frightening, the long term prognosis was great. With work, I would recover to 100%! The doctors told me that I could go right back to riding, with a partner, of course. During this recovery process, my wife was, and is, the BEST partner in the world. Things like this event, while not desirous, help us recognize what's important. I can't describe how special a "partner" Tara is.

Two weeks into the recovery, armed with therapy homework, Tara and I trekked to the Leatherwood Mountains to ride 50 miles. Mike Everett had put together a beautiful ride. Tara and I thoroughly enjoyed the ride "together". The trails were challenging and, at times, breathtaking. The ride was exactly what we needed. The reception we got from our "Endurance Family" was overwhelming. In the end, all we have are friends and family. Endurance is more than riding. It's about caring for one another and lifting up one another. I know now the true meaning of "To Finish is to Win".

Right: Terry Wyatt and his horse, Emmanuel Batty, back enjoying the trails together. The team finished in 20th place. Photo Credit: Jessica Willis

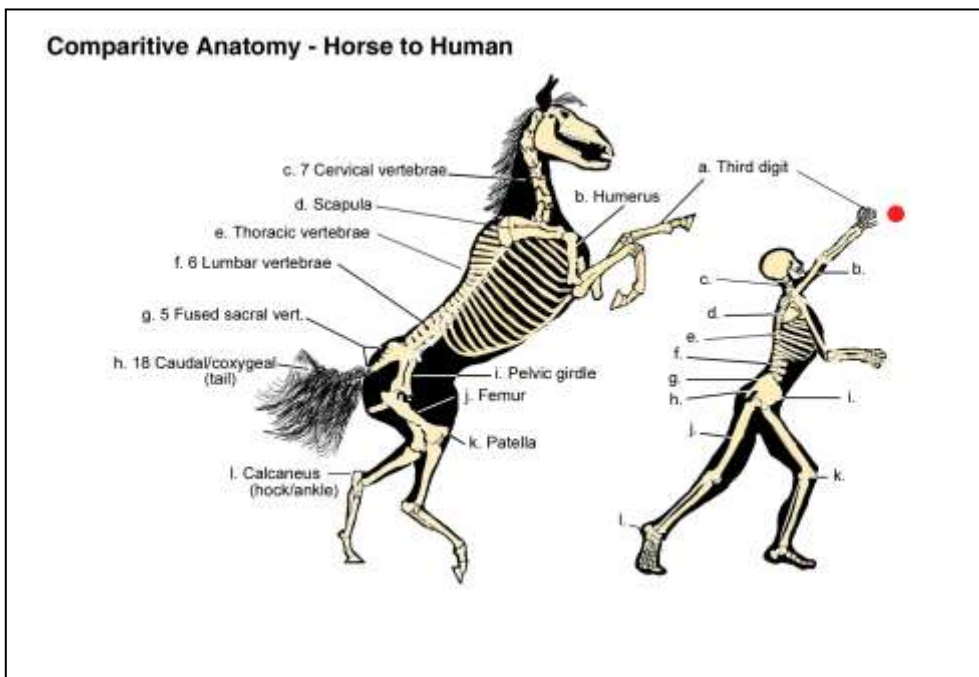


Sport Horse Performance I ~ By Michael Beesley LMT, CNMT, CEST.

Hello everyone, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to you all in this way. I have been working as an equine sports therapist since 1983 and have had the pleasure of carriage driving, dressage and endurance racers as my clients. During this time I became aware of the vital importance of balance as it relates to good performance. I have seen how imbalance can lead to poor performance and injury.

Over the next several months I shall be writing about the issues that I see the most and how you can assist yourself and your horses to increase performance and decrease debilitating ill-health issues. I shall be making reference to equitation and particularly the training foundations that are available in Combined Training, the precursor to dressage. The information is not rocket science and all you need are three basic attitudes: Sincerity – you really want to do it; Patience – you know that it will not come all at once but you are willing to learn and press on; Perseverance – you are strong enough to find a way to continue despite all obstacles.

The first topic of our conversation is back pain, (please feel free to contact me with questions: intouchwithhorses@att.net / <https://www.facebook.com/MCBeesley>). The horse and human share very similar musculoskeletal anatomies, see diagram below:



As you can see, the bones are in the same places doing the same things. The difference is only in size, shape and quantity. In the foreleg, the 'knee' is comparable to the wrist, the cannon bone is the middle bone buried in the web of our hand (metacarpal III) and over the millennia the equid has lost four digits and prefers to balance on the middle finger. There are more ribs (18) and one more or less lumbar vertebra (according to breed). The same is true for the muscular system; the same muscles are in the same places doing the same things. Failure of these systems follows the same rules;

similar situations injure the same structures for the same reasons. In my practice, I have noted the horse and rider share the same injuries in more cases than chance. We adjust our posture to be comfortable with our aches and pains and this causes the horse to change posture to balance us without falling over. This change in posture puts the horse in the same position and thus picks up the same injuries due to postural distortion.

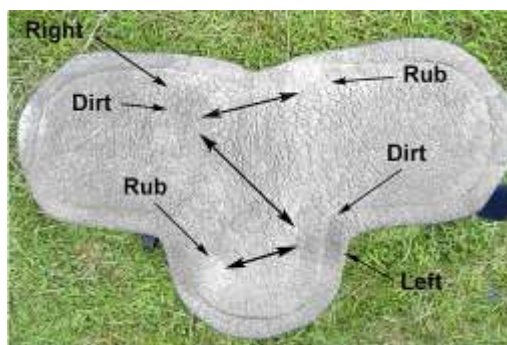
So, back to the back. Injuries to the back are caused by ill-fitting tack and loose accoutrements (pads and bottles etc); inappropriate pads - seams in contact, rough surfaces and sometimes artificial materials; gait and conformation choices – high head = hollow back = muscle compression and, weightbearing – particularly when off centred. The injuries include:

Bursitis from rubbing across the spine or something bouncing against it. A swelling will appear on top of a spine from the inflammation of the fluid filled bursa that is a cushion on top of the spine. The cause needs to be found and removed and the area iced until the inflammation abates. Gentle compressions to the area might help but the danger is in adding to the injury – only compress if there are no winces when doing it and only do it three or four times for five seconds per application. Always be very slow and gentle, despite their size the horse feels the same way we do, so never do anything that you wouldn't do to yourself or a child.

Contusion from repetitive forces. This can come from the back of the saddle exactly under the cantle if the rider is posting too far back or slightly over to one side. The cantle rocking backwards that is caused by riding with the legs too far forwards or from a saddle that needs re-flocking. Cantle interference can occur when ascending or descending a hill with the head held high. Collecting the horse (rounding the back upwards) will correct this. A bouncing pad or water bottle (I have even seen this issue caused by an uncapped bottle where the tethered cap was bouncing on the back). Enlist a friend to check on your leg and seat position, be cognisant of tack condition and observe good practices of equitation.

Compression. The pressure from one of the rider's seat bones or one side of the saddle if sitting off centre. The pressure of edge seams on saddle pads if they are fitted one on top of the other. The pressure of the saddle if the girth is too tight – the back muscles will enlarge when warmed up and if the girth is tight to begin with the added blood pressure will tighten it even more so. Many of these situations can be alleviated by observation of exactly where the flinch is in the back and what is going on directly above it.

Subluxation. This is a skeletal issue where a bone slips out of place. This can be due to a slip/fall, sudden twist or a tight muscle group on one side pulling the bone out of place. Flinches in the soft tissue can be gently rubbed out and a chiropractic adjustment can be made to replace the bones if the muscle manipulation does not allow it to slip back into place.



**Note the dirt patterns on the underside of the pad.
This rider weighted the left stirrups showing up on the left rear of the pad and was offering weight to the right foreleg during the post.
Riding in this manner will develop the muscle behind the scapular spine (infraspinatus), such that it can appear twice the size of its partner on the other side.**

Treatment

Flat fingers along the spine with firm but not hard pressure will show exactly where a problem resides. Using the width of the hand as a guide slide the hand alongside the spine from withers to croup and again a hand's width away and once more, until the entire back has been palpated. Stop at the flinch area and examine what is there. Is there heat, inflammation, a lump or bite or a wound in evidence? Treat heat and inflammation with ice in a wet cloth or cold water for 20 minutes on followed by warmth. Repeat this 3x and leave alone. Try to determine the cause and eliminate it. Lumps may require a professional opinion. Treat wounds with the appropriate medications.

Flinches that have no visible pathology may be due to muscle strain. The flinching may occur elsewhere than the hand position. This is due to a reflex action where the nerve sends a message along its track to the spine. The exact spot where the flinch occurs is where the problem lies. To alleviate the trouble, gently move the skin over the tissues with light pressure in a circular fashion. This is called circular friction. After a half a minute firmly sweep the area with a flat hand to flush out fluids and repeat.

Do not cause flinching as you work as this will only exacerbate the problem. Palpate for flinching again and continue the treatment until there is no more flinching. This should take only 3- 5mins. If there are no other inflammatory problems you can check the area(s) again on the following day and retreat if necessary, otherwise, wait for 3 days for the kidneys to flush out the material that has already been sent into the system.

Please note that NSAIDS will prevent the realignment of collagen fibres in tissues that are damaged from strain/sprain and thus must only be used sparingly and only when absolutely necessary when all other interventions have failed to provide relief.

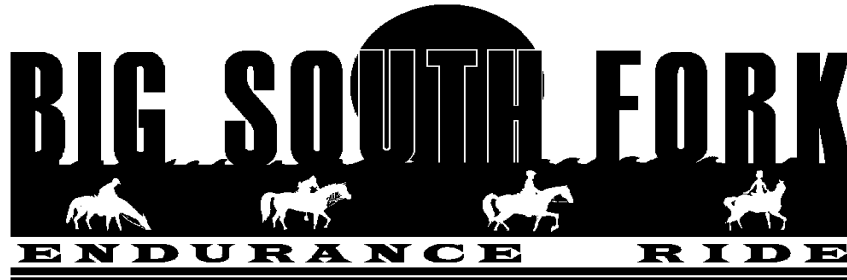
Prevention

Check your tack for design and wear and tear. Measure stirrup lengths and hole positions for stretching (esp leathers). Arrange packs tightly and bind up loose items. Check girth tension after warmup and adjust to at least a couple of fingers or warmup on a longe line with loose girth or no tack for 20 minutes. Be cognisant of riding with both squared shoulders and hips. Post from the seat and ride with the feet under your hips and a straight back at the trot, slightly bend forward and yield the back with the heels under the barrel for collection (seek training advice for the correct procedure).

This information has been edited from:

“Equine Performance Therapeutics – A Guide for Muscular Health.”

By Michael C. Beesley LMT, CNMT, CEST.



TWO Day Endurance Ride

AND RIDE & TIE

September 07-08, 2012 ♦ BIG South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Oneida, TN

SANCTIONED BY: AERC, SERA, AHA AND RIDE & TIE ASSOC.

You are invited to the 17th annual Big South Fork Endurance Ride. The Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area is a 120,000-acre park, which straddles the Tennessee-Kentucky line 80 miles northwest of Knoxville. The defining feature of the area is the Big South Fork of the Cumberland River. The land is woodland plateau that has been sculpted into rugged rocky bluffs and deep gorges. The sandstone has been carved into fascinating formations of cliffs, rock shelters, arches and pillars. This is one of the most beautiful areas in the southeast to ride! **This year because**

of the timing and close proximity of the AHA/AERC National Championship rides there will only be two days of competition, and NO 100-mile ride – the BSF ride will return to “normal” in 2013. Both days of competition will include a 30-mile and a 50-mile ride. You may mix and match horses and distances, as you desire. **This ride will be a great “tune-up” for the National Championships!**

The trails that we will use this year will be the “South” trails on Friday and the River Crossing on Saturday. The South trails include the “White Oak Loop”, and the “O&W Rail Bed” along White Oak Creek, with all vet checks in camp. These trails are mostly, abandoned logging roads, with very little gravel involved. The Saturday river crossing is a mix of abandoned logging trails and graveled road. The river crossing is about 40 yards wide and between 2 and 3 feet deep. For the 30-mile ride there is one away vet check, the 50-mile ride has two away checks at the same location. We supply horse water at the vet checks and will haul vet check bags for crewless riders to the away check.

There will be a 30 and 50 mile Ride and Tie held on Friday and Saturday and an 8-mile “fun run” on Sunday. Ride and Tie is a competition among teams of two people, one horse and 10, 30 or 50 miles of trail. Ride and Tie’s are lots of fun and you don’t have to be in great shape to do it. Really. For more information and entry forms for the Ride and Tie, contact Joanne Mitchell at 423-337-6194 (before 10 PM Eastern Time).

Visit our new website BigSouthFork.SERAOnline.org for more information and entry forms. If you don’t have internet access, call Eric Rueter at (865)986-5966 or email eric@fleetfootfarm.com.

Volunteer Spotlight: SERA

You may ask what drives a group of volunteers to give up several Saturdays a year; battle ticks, chiggers, extreme heat; and spend the day digging roots or removing large limbs and other obstructions from a trail. If you ask that question of Tamra Schoech, member of the Southeast Endurance Riders Association, the answer is simple, “Working on the horse trails is a great way to give back to the sport we love, combined with the fun of being outdoors and a feeling of accomplishment at the end of the day.”

The Southeast Endurance Riders Association, or SERA for short, is a non-profit organization designed to promote endurance riding, encourage better care of endurance horses through rider education, and assist ride managers in producing quality competitions. SERA has been in existence for more than 20 years and is 200 members strong in 9 southeastern states.

According to Lesley Hodge, Recreation Manager for the Shoal Creek and Talladega Ranger Districts, SERA is a god-send. “We just could not keep our horse trails up to standard without the dedicated volunteers of SERA,” she said. This year alone, Tamra and her crew of hardy volunteers will produce more than 560 volunteer hours over the course of 8 work days at the Warden Station Horse Camp and trail system.

“We couldn’t do it without the volunteers from SERA,” said Hodge. The work is not easy. Volunteers often have to use saws, shovels, and digging tools to clear roots out of a trail. They trim back brush and handle erosion problems on the trail thus improving safety along with preventing unnecessary re-source damage.

For 11 years, volunteers from SERA have been doing work on the horse trails such as: building bridges, closing user created trails, installing high ties, posting trail signs, installing culverts, removing downed trees from the trail, and restoring trail tread. They also have generously donated funds to hire professionals to layout and construct trails, to purchase high ties for the campground, and to purchase signs for the trail.

“One of the projects we are working on with SERA,” said Hodge, “is to install a handicapped accessible ramp for users to mount their horses.” SERA and the U.S. Forest Service have applied for a grant through ADECA and SERA is providing the matching funds for the work to be done. Over the years, through the continued good work of the SERA volunteers, several portions of the trails around Warden Station have been relocated, reworked, and repaired. Portions of trails have been moved out of boggy areas and away from power lines and roads. In the long run, this work improves the sustainability of the trail and reduces the amount of work that has to be done to maintain the trail in the future.

“We couldn’t ask for better partners and friends,” said Karen McKenzie, District Ranger for the Shoal Creek Ranger District. “It is a wonderful thing to have a group of people, like SERA, that you can rely on year after year to keep our recreation program excellent,” McKenzie said.

A NEWSLETTER FOR VOLUNTEERS

By placing a water bar and gravel, rain water is diverted and the trail is safer and more environmentally sound.



Tamra Schoech installs a 'Share the Trail' sign on one of the Warden Station Horse Trails.



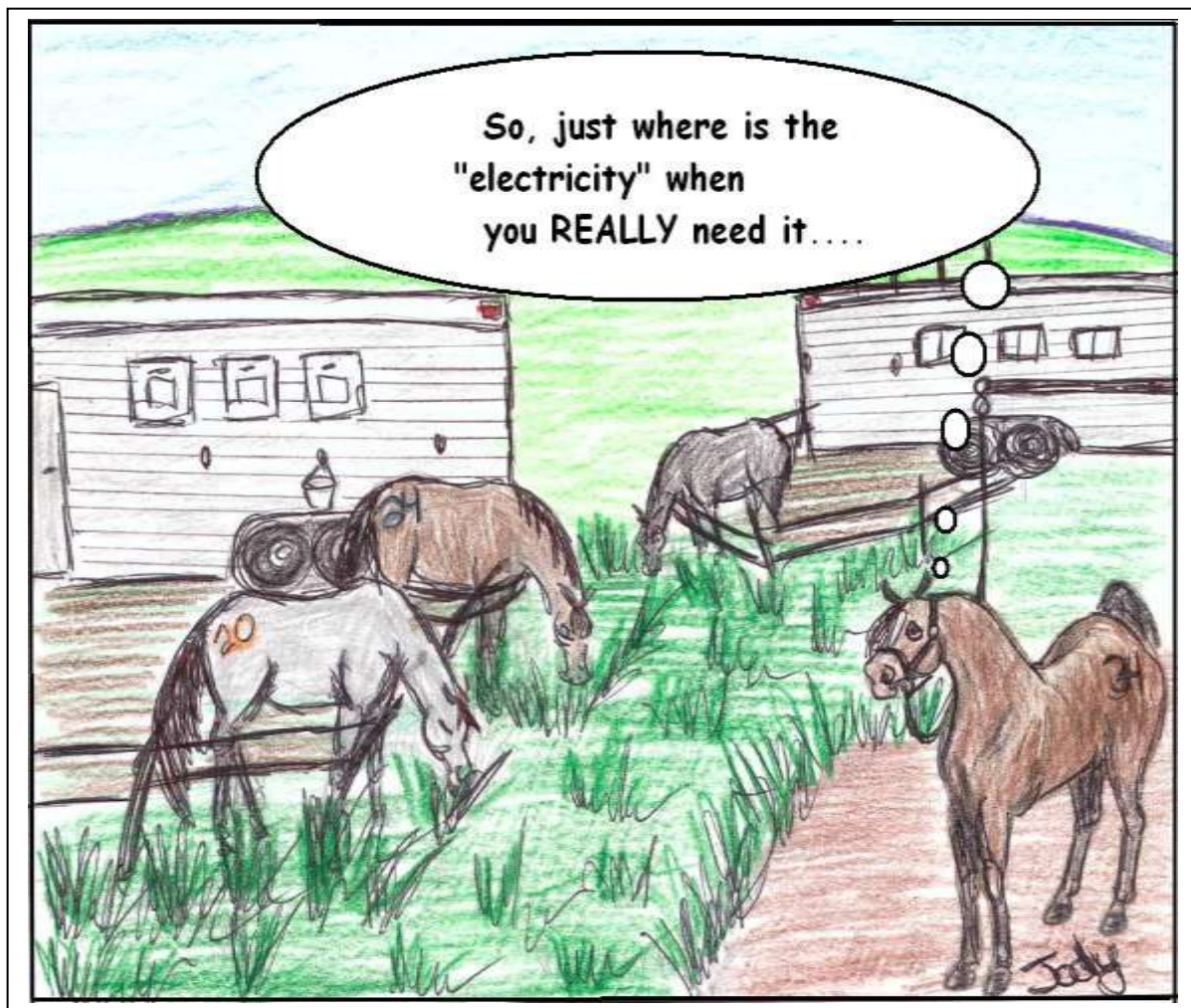
High-ties provide a safe place for equestrians to tie up their horses so the horses won't damage nearby trees.



SERA volunteers repair a portion of the trail impacted by run-off of rain water



The Endurance Adventures of Ms. Sera
By Jody Rogers-Buttram



Please send any write ups, state news, etc, to the editor of the SERA Newsletter by the first of each month in order for your contribution to be in that month's newsletter. The next newsletter will be for the month of September. Thanks !!!!

Send with topic in Subject line "SERA Newsletter"

To:

3jfarm@earthlink.net

Out of here !!!

