

Southeast Endurance Riders Association

SERA *NEWSLETTER*
The Morgan Horse Issue

May
Volume 1, issue 5



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A Word from our President~ Dr. Ike Nelson

Hard to believe it's the middle of April already and I've only be able to do one ride!! My part time day job has become a full time problem! It's hard to complain though, as God has blessed me to be able to continue to work. Enough complaining!! Rebecca and I enjoyed riding at the McCulley Farm Ride and would highly recommend it. The food there was great and it is a really nice campground area. This was a new ride on the SERA calendar, but hopefully will become a regular.

Speaking of new SERA rides-the Old Dominion ride in June is now an SERA ride!! This is really exciting as it adds another 100 mile option for SERA members and more opportunity to increase points and mileage for open and limited distance riders. Please consider coming up to ride and/or volunteer!

Speaking of volunteers -- it is gratifying to me to see so many SERA members volunteering at rides to help out ride managers. That is one of the things that makes this organization so great! This really helps ride managers concentrate on the things that may come up during a ride, instead of having to help scribe or taking pulse rates at the vet checks.

Speaking of things coming up at a ride -- if you have not been a ride manager, you just can't imagine some of the things you have to deal with at a ride, ranging from food for the volunteers to having to get an ambulance for an injured rider and everything in between. At times it involves interpreting or applying AERC/SERA rules for some situation that occurs. Most ride managers will seek input from one of our AERC directors if they are available. Please be aware that all due diligence is applied to those decisions and they are not always perceived as being "fair" (as a rider, I was personally involved in one of those situations), but please be kind and remember you may not have all the information that was used to make the decision. And above all, WE ARE HERE TO HAVE FUN!!!!

Speaking of AERC directors-thanks to Joe and Susan for all their time spent and efforts expended on behalf of all of us!! Speaking of time and effort-I need to go work my horse! See you down the trail!!

Featured Breed

The Morgan Horse

By Wendy Rosenbek, DVM

On March 23rd, I was enjoying the first loop of the 50 mile course at Red Barn Run in Georgia when I caught up to a small pack of other riders, including Jody Rogers-Buttram. In a scene perhaps unique to the sport of endurance, she recruited me to write an article on Morgan horses, their history and participation in endurance riding, all while we were charging along on our fresh horses at 13 or 14 miles an hour. It makes sense, I guess, that the subject would occur to her at that moment, because I was riding my Morgan gelding, Reuben, and because I'm one of only a handful of riders in the Southeast competing on a Morgan.

One of the things I've loved about the sport of endurance riding from day one is the lack of a dress code. Any kind of tack and clothing is accepted so long as it makes horse and rider comfortable for the long haul (where else can a 250 pound man in lycra be taken seriously outside the ballet?), but show up with a horse that's not at least part Arabian and eyebrows raise. If you yourself have ever arrived at the pre-ride vet-check with another breed, you know what I mean..."What breed of horse is he?" It's like the other riders in camp think you didn't get the memo: you don't have to ride an Arabian to compete in Endurance, but you have to beat one to win. At least in the Southeast region, (where we still raise our children to say yes ma'am and no sir), the inquiries are usually polite. I've only once heard a derisive comment in ride camp with Reuben and figure the gentleman was visiting

from another region of the country, since his “Why doesn’t she get herself an Arabian?”, wasn’t followed by “bless her heart!”

What people notice about Reuben are his huge business-like trot and his size; at 1,140 pounds and nearly 16 hands tall, he’s very often the biggest horse in camp. What has earned him a small fan club is his calm and willing demeanor (and, of course, his rugged good looks). While his height puts him above the Morgan norm of 14’1 to 15’2, his personality is textbook for the breed. The American Morgan Horse Association (AMHA) describes Morgans as “reliable, loyal, tireless and versatile ... intelligent, willing and having good sense.” Individual horses obviously vary some in their personalities, but ask any Morgan horse owner to describe what attracted them to the breed and they’ll give you a version of that same list of characteristics. The AMHA website claim that “the breed exists solely because it pleases people” certainly seems apt.

Now, to be fair, I have to admit that I have had some exhilarating top five, Katie-bar-the-door, “I hope I can ride as fast as this horse can run” 50 mile rides on Arabians, and hope to have a few more in my career, but the experience on a Morgan is simply easier. As Gail Thompson (a Morgan owner and rider here in the Southeast) put it, “you know you’ll arrive alive”. That’s not to say that you have to give up speed if you ride a Morgan. Reuben can easily trot along in excess of 13 miles per hour, and speed at the trot is one of the founding characteristics of the breed. Most of the Morgans competing in our sport regularly finish in the top half of competitors and are capable of a sub-5 hour 50 mile ride.

Endurance is another well-established Morgan characteristic, with their reported ability to plow the fields all day and race all comers in town at night. Indeed, the career stats of Hawk's Neapolitan, the Morgan owned by Mary Coleman from the Northeast region, is emblematic, revealing seven 100 mile rides and numerous pioneer rides, (including the 2005 FITS ride where I think he was the only horse to complete all 6 days of endurance) for a lifetime total of 5,020 miles. Another Morgan, Major Ridge Scarlet Debut, owned by Linda Jacobson of Wisconsin, has logged 3,860 miles in the last nine years, including 72 endurance rides, two LD's, five 100's and five BC's. Linda says that if her Morgan's recoveries were better, she'd have the perfect horse. As it is, she takes extra time in the vet checks and then powers by most of the competition once back out on the trail. Like my experience with Reuben, she reports never having to coax her Morgan out onto the trail – even if the ride takes 5 loops out of camp the very same way her Morgan is always willing. One of the most successful Morgan horses in the sport, was

While no one can argue against the Arabian breed's divine suitability for distance riding from a physical and physiologic stand-point, the Morgan breed certainly seems a good alternative choice. After all, if you accept that competitive distance riding has its origins in the military's 5-day, 300-mile test used to select cavalry horses, and considering that entire regiments of cavalymen were mounted on Morgans, it seems they're a darn good fit for the discipline. (I think it's safe to say there weren't many Arabians selected for the cavalry.) According to the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) "a Morgan is distinctive for its stamina and

vigor, personality and eagerness and strong natural way of moving,” all excellent attributes for distance riding.

According to most accounts, the Morgan was the first breed to be developed in America. The entire breed registry can be traced back to one stallion, a horse originally named Figure, owned by a school teacher named Justin Morgan. Born in 1789 and renamed Justin Morgan's horse after the death of his first owner, the 14-hand stallion was legendary for his beauty, strength, speed, hardiness, endurance and gentle disposition. In Vermont where he spent most of his life working in harness, he was known as the horse that could out-walk, out-trot, out-run and out-pull any other horse. Figure's origins are not exactly documented, but he is thought to have had Dutch, Thoroughbred or Arabian roots, and he was prized as a breeding stallion because of his ability to pass his desirable attributes through to his foals and grand-foals. One of his best known sons was Sherman, grandsire of a stallion named Black Hawk (born 1833) that was influential in the establishment of the Standardbred, American Saddlebred and Tennessee Walking Horse breeds. Indeed, Morgans are thought to have been used to develop most of the light breeds in America, including the Quarter Horse and Missouri Fox Trotter, and in England they were imported to help establish the Hackney. Ethan Allen, great-grandson of Figure was harness racing's "World's Fastest Trotting Stallion" in the 1800's. Both Union General Sheridan and Confederate General "Stonewall" Jackson's mounts in the Civil War are thought by most scholars to have been Morgans. An entire line of the breed was developed to do the work of the Western settlers, (including cow work) and many a hopeful prospector rode a Morgan to California in the Gold Rush.

Most modern Morgan owners embrace this versatility, and endurance riding is just one of the things they enjoy doing with their horses. Indeed, Reuben got his “long slow distance” as the sole horse of an Amish family for two years in Tennessee. When I learned that he had more than once pulled the entire family in their buggy “to town and back” – a distance of 80+ miles – I figured he was ready to start carrying me 50 miles. The riders I interviewed were evenly split between those for whom Endurance (presumably on Arabians) came first and those that had Morgans first and then tried out distance riding. In the case of Linda Jacobson, she reluctantly agreed to ride someone else’s Morgan back in the 90’s, almost certain it was going to prove to be a failure. She ended up with thousands of miles on that horse and moved on to her own Morgan mare with which she’s enjoying a very competitive career. Janette Sasena (also of the MW region) just started doing LD’s on her 19 year old Morgan last year and has had great fun and success. She spent five years intrigued by our sport, but daunted by what she thought would be complex training and feeding regimens, only to find that her mare took to the new endeavor without any change in her routines “like she was meant to do it”. Indeed. The AERC records for 2012 show 53 Morgans in Endurance competition (and another 32 Morgan crosses). Morgan owners and competitors like Linda, Janette and Gail think there should be many more.

My friend Sara Engsberg (a past winner of the Tevis ride) once said to me, “as if Endurance isn’t challenging enough, you choose to do it on a non-Arabian.” When I recounted the story to Gail Thompson, she laughed, as if to say it was just the opposite: to ride a Morgan is actually easier. As I set out

to write this article, I really examined my own experience of doing endurance on my Morgan and I have to agree that my least-stressed, always most relaxed rides have been with Reuben. The fact that he does take more time to dissipate body heat than an Arabian has made me much more relaxed and patient at the vet checks; his kind and willing confidence as a partner during a ride invites more attentive care from me as his rider. Competing with Reuben has made me a better, more responsible endurance competitor. On a Morgan, our sport's motto "to finish is to win" rings true for me, and it means doing so in comfort, confidence and quite a bit of style. If you know a Morgan owner who has not yet tried Endurance, suggest it to them. As Gail Thompson said when a friend suggested she try it, "my Morgan can do anything, so why not?" If you've got a Morgan at home that you're using for everything but distance riding, consider bringing him or her to the next ride. You might just have the time of your life.

Candidate for that Cover Photo!

by Becky Pearman- Endurance Ride Photographer

The Reason

It's early morning, and the sun is just getting up above the southern pines. As you canter down the trail on the first loop of a 50 mile endurance ride, you are all bunched up in a pack of fresh horses. And there, down the trail, is that old familiar yard sign- "photographer ahead, please spread out"!

"Darn" you think as you start hauling back on your horse. Sound familiar? As aggravating as it may be to have a photographer hiding out in the bushes, I'm here to offer a little insight from a ride photographer's view, to help those riders who wish to have their great ride memory captured forever.

To me, a ride photograph is stopping a moment in time which will never happen the same way again. A picture of a horse and rider floating down the trail sums up the whole story of endurance. The horse loves what he is doing and the rider may be attaining a goal he or she set for themselves months or years prior to that moment. Now I realize that not every rider wants a photo on trail, but most will want to savor the essence of what they felt that day at that moment on that horse's back. Through my lens over the years, I've captured young horses on their first ride, to the old veteran who just achieved a "decade" award with his rider. I've seen young girls grow into remarkable riders who now compete at the FEI level. I've captured wrecks and I've captured victories; and sadly even, the last photo ever taken of that horse. To some people, that ride photograph means the world, and to others, just another picture.

The Nuts & Bolts of a Good Ride Photo

The most important factor in capturing that great trail photo is for the riders to spread out. A good action photographer only needs a half-horse length to separate them out, but it is the one piece of our work on trail that we have no control over. This is entirely up to the rider, so even if you don't want a picture, be courteous to the rider in front of you as it will always be the front rider's photo which gets ruined by having another horse's nose or body in the shot. That rider may be the person on their first endurance ride who really wants that memory.

Secondly, we are always happy to see you, but unless you really feel that you just have to wave, in general it does not make for a flattering ride photo. The best look is either to look at the camera and smile, or look ahead to where you are traveling while maintaining a smile, laughter, or a serious-but-having fun- look! Many riders look way too serious, and in the photo it can look as if you are not having a good time. And even if you are not having a good time, try to "put it on" for that few seconds as you pass the camera.



The gait you choose to ride for your photo is purely a personal preference. Some horses are smoother or "braver" at the trot, where some look like fire breathing dragons at the canter or gallop which can create a really dramatic image. Unless your horse is tired or really scared, I recommend at least trying to trot by. Some riders even prefer to stop and pose if there is time and not a back-up of horses. This is especially good if you have two or more riders who want that group portrait. If you want to have your picture taken with two or more riders at a trot, it is critical that you stagger the horses with the farthest horse from me being farther forward in the lineup (see illustration photo)



Lastly, how to look slimmer on a horse. (And I'm only covering this because women always ask)... Mostly, it's just not fair that women's hips look larger than men's when in the saddle. Fortunately, this fact can be handled with clothing for the most part. Try to wear shirts or jackets that fit snug and at the hips and not the type that billows out. I

used to trim my T-shirts in a "V" or "U" shape so they followed the contour of my hips and belly. This works wonders to make us look slimmer in the saddle. But mainly, don't fret it. You are who you are, and you are darn tough to be out there riding a horse for 25-50-75 or 100 miles; so don't sweat it!

That Cover Shot

Overall, just ride your horse the way you do before you ever see the photographer. Try to avoid having tack or clothing flapping around when you pass by. If your horse is spooky, ask me to say something to him. After over twenty years taking professional endurance pics, I've learned what I do that spooks a horse on trail, and more of them spook at my sign than at me.

I want you to get that great shot as much as you do, so smile, sit up straight and ride on!





LBL-Barefoot Run

An endurance story of “nature” and poison Ivy

By Jody Rogers-Buttram

Land Between the Lakes-what a beautiful place to hold an endurance competition. The campground has ANY amenity you can think of, restaurant, farrier, shower houses, electric hookups, stalls, pavilion for the meetings, ice, etc. It is ALL there. And the management for the campground is very easy to work with. I know, I only changed my camping arrangements three times and they didn't try to kill me.

So, the weather was not looking too good for the new ride manager, Aubree Becker to hold this 2-day ride. As a RM, I know how important weather can be. But it turned out fine. She had the support of Dr. Ike Nelson as head vet, and chiro magic maker, ☺ along with Brian and Candice Bourne, former Alabama riders and very experienced timers.

Joni and I arrived in camp on Thursday evening around 5:30 pm. Put the horses up in the stalls, all four of them, and set up our vet check. Fed and off to bed we went, hoping for a good day on Friday to ride the two Bonus Boys, Cash Pony and his bigger/little brother Marty. Day one went great, horses felt good and the weather was perfect....not one drop of rain. I was lucky enough to finish in first place and get Best Conditioned on Most Loved Mr. Marty. Joni took a 4th place

on Cash Pony and he added yet one more 50 to his “post cut” ride record.

That night at awards, and boy were they super nice awards, we received handmade wooden tack boxes for top ten in BOTH rides. Beautiful artwork for First, coiled water hose for BC, and a Purina Hydration bale also went to first place. Hillary Tuttle’s husband, David, worked very hard to make these by the way. And I so appreciate his hard work.

By around 7:00pm, it started to rain. And rain, and rain. I swear it rained steady for 12 hours. That next morning, Saturday, we saddled up the girls, Jets Gaelic Storme, aka Tormy or Heifer, or witch, or lots of other names, and Joni saddled up the \$60 horse Miss Fancy Pants. The very second that we sat down on their backs, the rain STOPPED. Miracle. Not wanting to get wet, we had dressed in full rain suits, the two of us looked like Papa Smurf in our blue attire. Now, many of you may know, that Joni HATES to ride with me. As a junior all those years, she has been stuck with me, and me with her. Neither of us care to be in each other’s company during a ride. But unfortunately, we tend to be attached as the hip because our horses are trained/conditioned together and therefore....pace the same.

The ride had three loops, 21 miles, another 21 miles and then an 8 mile loop. Now, being that my bladder is NOT what it use to be back in my 20’s, or 30’s, or heck going to be 50’s

pretty darned soon....one might need to stop and take a little “potty break” from time to time on these long loops. This is where Joni has her little hissy fits. Having to wait on me, wasting *her* valuable time, just because poor ole mamma needs someone to stick around long enough so that I can get back on a nasty tempered, squirming mare. Storme can be so bad at times about her buddies, that even though Joni has done well with her a ride or two, Joni claims that she will NEVER ride the horse again. Her words were, “I don’t care if she wins/BC’s every 100 out there”. Joni and Storme just can’t get along. Now, I like the horse, she has attitude....MARE attitude. I bred and raised her, and I am willing to put up with her. One of her favorite things to do, is to take you “mule skiing” while leading her. That’s where she takes off and you can’t hold her no matter what on the ground.

So, potty break number one, we were riding with Dr. Wendy Rosenbeck on her morgan....she and Joni were kind enough to stop. So, picture this, edge of a green field, I have a full rain suit on, riding pants and undies of course. About the time I PEAL all these layers, Storme decides to leave town. Yup, jerks me over into the poison ivy. Now, I have never really been allergic to that stuff, so I don’t get too upset about it. Finally all my layers back into position (and that wasn’t easy BTW) and start to try to catch the loose WITCHY PONY. Not too much of a big deal, she isn’t going to leave her friends.

So, grab the grey butthead, mount back up and head back down the trail. Lost about 8 minutes on this little stop. But, guess what, the second loop was also 21 miles long. And guess what again, I need to “go”. So, THIS time, rather than impose on my already grumpy, don’t care if you pee on yourself daughter, and Wendy, I say, “Don’t worry guys, I got this by myself this time”. Famous last words.

Now, I consider myself to be a fairly smart person. So ,on this note, and this second stop, I wasn’t going to let Storme get me in THAT position again. There was a very nice tree...you know the kind that grow up about 3 feet tall, then split into a fork or yoke. I think to myself, if I put the reins through this fork, she will be one side, me safe on the other. So, I snap the reins into the halter of her bridle, I mean, we wouldn’t want to hurt the sweet girl or anything. And I get on the other side of the tree, all the while she is spinning back and forth, but not a problem to me !!!!

When I get ready to get back on, and yes, the rain pants were much easier to pull up without her running away, I reach through the fork of that nice tree to move my reins to the OUTSIDE of the fork. About that time, Storme decides she has waited long enough and is going back to her friends. As she proceeded to drag me into that fork I realized something. Either I was too large to pass between the fork of the tree, or the tree was not flexible enough to allow this act to happened.

What's that saying from the Bible about a camel passing through the eye of a needle. I totally understand that nowfrom the camel's prospective.

So, once again, I am a foot and I watch that grey heifer gallop down the trail, nothing to do but walk and collect her back when she stops at Joni...somewhere. Almost a ¼ mile later, and plucking up my broken, favorite reins up out of a mud hole, I was reunited with my trusty steed.

With the last loop being only 8 miles, I was able to stay on that evil pony of mine until we crossed the finish line. I will say, I haven't had a horse get away twice in one ride....but she did do well, 2nd and BC. Maybe I should let her "stretch" her legs on her own a bit more during rides.

All in all, the ride was great, met new friends, had a great time, didn't ride in the rain and came home with happy poniesOD 100 is next.

PS. I didn't think I was allergic to Poison Ivy, I have since found out otherwise. 😊

New SERA Sanctioned Rides !!!

ONCE YOU'VE DONE THE OD, EVERYTHING ELSE IS DOWNHILL.

Want a buckle of your own, then go get one !!!

Old Dominion Rides, June 8, 2013. 25/50/100



New SERA Rides continued.

The Greenway Getaway

Florida Horse Park, Ocala, Florida

25/50 each day on January 3rd and 4th of 2014

Camp Osborn Summer Slam

5/27/2013

Camp Osborn Boy Scout Reservation, Sylvester, GA

Run for the Horses to Benefit Hope for Horses

9/21/2013

Biltmore Estate, Asheville, NC

The Endurance Adventures of Ms. Sera

~Jody Rogers-Buttram



SERA AWARDS

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 for more details, see SERA's website at: www.seraonline.org



WHY SHOULD I JOIN SERA?

Remember we are on
the Web:
www.seraonline.org

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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 Multi-days. 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 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**.

Please be sure to make THIS newsletter YOUR newsletter !!!!

Send in any pictures, articles about upcoming rides, best way to get the word out about your rides guys!!! Stories of rides in the past that are informative and fun. Advertise you items, such as horses, tack, etc. that you have for sale free.

Send to: 3jfarm@earthlink.net



Outta here till Next time !!!!

OCTOBER 24TH-28TH 2013



CHANDLERVILLE • ILLINOIS



Bob Zimmerman Photo

ARE YOU QUALIFIED TO GO THE DISTANCE?

October 24th: 100 Mile AHA National Championship Ride

October 26th: 50 Mile AHA National Championship Ride

October 27th & 28th: 2-day 70 Mile AHA National Competitive Trail Ride

**OPEN RIDES INCLUDED EACH DAY!
ALL AT THE JIM EDGAR PANTHER CREEK
STATE FISH & WILDLIFE AREA**

**For Qualification & Entry information visit www.ArabianHorses.org or www.AHDRA.org
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