



SERA NEWSLETTER

Southeastern Endurance Riders Association

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Jody Buttram

PRESIDENTS LETTER

Wow! Has it been hot in Alabama!! I suspect you all have been feeling the heat as well. The last couple of rides we have had suffered because of the weather and we have seen a number of horses with metabolic issues. Hopefully this is not going to be much longer that this heat will be with us.

We have a number of rides coming up. The Broxton Moonlight ride and Ky Moonshine will both be held in July and both are night rides to try to get away from the heat. Then in August we will have the Iron Mtn Jubilee ride which usually has decent weather being in the mountains. Then in Sept we will have Big South Fork which also has the AHA Distance Nationals, and the Run for the Horses benefit at Biltmore. All of these rides will need some volunteers but Eric will really need some help because of all that is happening there. So if you are not riding GO HELP!!

I am sure by now that most, if not all, have heard that we had a horse fatality at the new AL ride, the Rock Bridge Canyon Canter. It was one of those hot, humid days and the horse and rider involved were first timers. He thought his horse was in pretty good condition and he would trail ride about 30 miles every weekend, so he thought doing a 25 would not be a big deal. But as we all know even a 25 mile endurance ride is NOT a trail ride! It was also interesting that on both ride days there were a very high number of overtime 25 milers even though the 50 milers rode the same loops as the 25 milers, and there were no 50 milers over time. We all need to remember to watch our horses closely and to help other riders also. We are also trying to educate new and prospective riders before issues arise. One of the ways we are doing this is by having Endurance 101 clinics. Mike and Ruth Anne Everett are hosting one in NC July 11-12. They already have 18 people signed up and we hope all of them will go on to become longtime AERC and SERA members!

Now is the time to be thinking of helping SERA by running for one of the state rep positions or one of the 2 board positions that can be elected from the membership. If you have any questions about serving SERA, you can call, or e-mail me anytime. I hope some of you will consider stepping up and helping out your fellow members for the next year.

Until next time-hope to see you down the trail! Ike

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Nancy Sluys

Editors Message by

Nancy Sluys



Hi Folks, hope you all are having a great ride year so far! I have had to make some sacrifices and have not been to as many rides as I had hoped but the ones I have been to have been great! I have been taking advantage of my local trails and have put quite a few miles on the 3 horses I'm competing while enjoying the relaxed pace. When I have time to get to the rides again the horses will be ready! I'm also busy gearing up for the Iron Mountain Jubilee which I manage with the help of many volunteers. This ride is such an undertaking due to the logistics and it always amazes me how well things come together in the end. This would be a good time to mention how important our volunteers are and that we would not have this sport without them. If you have volunteered for a ride sometime in the past we owe you a hearty thank you! If you have not volunteered for a ride I suggest you give it a try. Maybe you are riding one day of a two day ride or maybe your horse is lame and can't compete or maybe your spouse is riding and you're not, you can still be a part of the action while performing a vital duty. I have always had a great time volunteering and it gives you such a different perspective on the sport and a feeling of satisfaction knowing that your part made a difference. If you have a great story about volunteering at a ride would you share it with us by writing a story for the newsletter?

Happy trails, Nancy

you never know where the trail leads til you get there by Sudi Lenhart

2007. My first endurance ride on my Appendix mare at Leatherwood. We rolled into camp about 3:30 on Thursday had absolutely no idea what anything was about, certainly not a vet check. Fortunately we rented paddocks at the trail barn, gathered up our horses and traipsed over to the vet area. Got that done(somehow). I went to the ride meeting while Nolan stayed at camp. I had no idea of most of what was being said-- just tried to memorize loop colors. That evening back at camp Nolan quietly told me that he was riding his ride and not babysitting me. Hmmm, I thought, ok, I see how this is gonna roll. Next morning, we head over to the start. We watch all the horses take off planning to start at the back. While Nolan has a tarp out taking off clothes and sorting gear and about 8 minutes has gone by, I decide " well I ain't babysitting either!" And take off. What I didn't realize was he did not know the loop colors...he followed the hoof prints and caught up with me about halfway around. We had been doing a lot of unintentional conditioning-- just going out and riding--we ended up 3rd and 4 th. We were hooked.

Fast forward a couple more LDs, and a very muddy first 50 at Trace Tribute. We were ready for a 50 at Biltmore. Now we knew enough to get to camp earlier. We pulled in and tried for the first time to set up a paddock with electric fence. I have a vivid picture of Susan Kasemeyer quietly watching us as we struggled and just couldn't figure it out-- how to make two paddocks with two gates from one roll? After she watched for awhile she quietly came over (I'm sure stifling giggles) and offered some sage advice which made it seem easy.

These little stories are just to give a snapshot of my start in endurance.....probably just like a lot of folks. I didn't know much, knew less about what I didn't know. But that's how we all learn--just keep on keepin on. And it's easy when you are that new person in the sport to look around and think everybody else was never where you are right now.

So my goal with this article is to plant some seeds of appreciation and some seeds for challenge. I appreciate every one who has helped me along the way, and are still mentoring me. I appreciate riding all the distances and those who ride all the distances. We all know what makes us tick and trips our trigger. If you've found your niche and are happy as can be where you are-- great! Keep on truckin...But if there is a tiny little voice that says " I wonder if I could do more? I wonder if my horse can do more?" Then maybe some of my thoughts can stew around in your head.

Things I believe to be true:

Sudi's article continued.....

1. Moving up in distance isn't about having all the answers-- it's about listening for the next question and not being afraid to ask. And then letting yourself sift thru the answer(s) to keep what fits for you and your horse.
2. The opportunity for you and your horse to learn how to pick each other up increases as distance increases. Things you would have never seen (good and bad) start to show up. You figure out how to lean on each other.
3. It's all about the journey, not the destination. Seems to me if you are racing to win or top ten no matter what distance, the goal is the destination(finish line). All the other pieces are just cogs toward that end. With longer distances it's about the journey. The slower pace allows time to notice those flowers you might blow by, and those grass stops allow a few deep breaths for you and your horse. The finish line is too intimidating to think about in the beginning-- I find my mind completely in the present of each loop.
4. If your horse has solidly handled their current distance they can likely handle more. If you are riding 25's and you want to do 50's, keep conditioning like you have and try a slower than your 25 mile pace 50. If your horse has finished fiftys feeling good and especially if you think he/she still had gas in the tank at the end, consider a 75 or a 100. I condition my guys the same for 50's and up. The pace is slower in longer distances which I think doesn't tax them the same way faster rides do.
5. Some horses find longer slower distance less stressful. Of course in any distance things can go wrong and it's our job to try to recognize and take care of our horses, but mentally the slower pace sometimes helps them not have race brain and stay relaxed through the ride. Many horses who were poor drinkers or eaters do better with taking care of themselves when they can't sense the front pack.
6. Hidden gem: the timers see everything (at least our SE timers do). They don't offer unsolicited advice unless you are really screwing up but if you ask it is amazing what they can offer. They know if you are keeping a consistent pace, negative split pace, start fast and fade pace. They know if you are riding like you normally do or if you have succumbed to race crack. Lots of times if they've seen your horse at numerous rides they know if your horse looks like his/her normal self or if something ain't right.
7. Find a mentor. If you take the leap to let it be known that you are thinking about a new distance you will be amazed how much encouragement is out there. You will know who your people are-- the way they perk up when you ask questions, the " I can tell you my latest thoughts but I'm learning too" attitude they have. The best riders are always on the learning curve and proud of it!

South Mountains Endurance Ride by Nancy Sluys

When I heard that Mike Everett was going to hold an endurance ride at South Mountains State Park in Conley Springs, NC I was very excited about it. I used to do an NATRC ride there years ago and had not been there since then, at least 10 years. I used to love those trails for their rugged beauty and challenge. I had many memories of the Fox Trail and it's steep climbs and the cool breezes along the creek. I was also looking forward to seeing what they had done to the system as I had heard that they realigned a lot of the trail to sustainable standards. Several of the rangers there had taken the AERC Trail Master course which inspired a lot of the work. It was especially timely as I am involved with the trail realignment process in the Mount Rogers NRA in Virginia and was looking forward to observing the sustainable features at South Mountain to take back ideas to our rangers.

I was amazed at how much work had been done to get the trails off the fall line and onto the contour and out of the water. Much use was made of rolling grade dips to shunt water off the trail and prevent erosion. Trails that used to go straight up the mountain now gently switched back and forth on the contour and made for a safer and more environmental trip up the hill. It was incredible how much gravel had been hauled in to harden the trail bed and reinforce the grade dips. This really is the future of trail construction, to strive for sustainability so our trails will be able to handle traffic, last for generations and be easier to maintain.



Photo by Becky Pearman

Mike and company did a great job on this test ride and it looks like our crowd impressed the park rangers enough to open the way for more rides. I would encourage anyone who wants to see a real sustainable trail system to visit South Mountains State Park either for one of Mike's rides or just on your own. It is a real eye opener.

Volunteering at an Endurance Ride

From the perspective of an old Green Bean

By Beth Cochran

Yes, I'm an old green bean. I'm sure you are aware of the Green Bean movement in endurance riding. Well, I was exposed to endurance riding for the first time about 30 years ago, when I was a veterinary student. A small group of us travelled to several rides to do "P and R", back when pulse and respiration had to both meet criteria before the horses could go back out. And, yes, we took pulses, didn't listen to the heart rate with stethoscopes. Beyond that, not a whole lot has changed.

One of my first experiences, and one that stuck with me through the years, was of almost losing two horses, poorly conditioned, and poorly ridden by new-to-the-sport owners. They made a novice mistake of electrolyting the horses, who then refused to drink. Both horses made it, but needed treatment. On the next ride, an experienced rider's horse got quite dehydrated, and needed IV fluids. A LOT of IV fluids, and we were barely able to stabilize him in the field.

What has changed, a lot, I believe, in those 30 years is the level of knowledge available about nutrition, electrolytes, conditioning and other aspects of horse husbandry.

Fast forward 30 years, to the present. I quite unexpectedly found myself with a horse after 18 horseless years, who seems suited to endurance, and friends getting into the sport, so, I jumped in, cautiously. Being the type of person who likes to gather a lot of information and get some real idea of what I'm getting myself into, I decided to volunteer at the Yellow Hammer ride last fall. I'm not the least bit shy, so I emailed the ride manager, Tamra Schoech, and asked to volunteer, telling her that I was a small animal vet, and though my liability insurance and lack of equine veterinary experience wouldn't allow me to act as a veterinarian, I would be happy to take heart rates and help out any way she needed me. I also asked if I could bring my mare to practice camping, and ride her out on some of the trails. The answers were "yes" to all.

So, I loaded her up, and off to Alabama we went. I pulled onto the grounds, and was met by friendly faces, all happy to direct me to parking, and where to find Tamra and her volunteers. We got camp set up, and my mare settled in. Thankfully, she camps like a pro, and I didn't have to worry about her. I introduced myself and attended the ride meeting. Everyone was very friendly, and I got to see in "real life" some of the things I'd read about.

I spent the night in my trailer, and got up early to head over to the pulse box area. The awesome volunteers took me right in, and immediately made me feel like family. What a great group of folks. I met Samm Barte, and we talked dogs and dog training, and found we had a lot in common. She took me under her wing right away. I also met several other folks, including Dr Otis, Dr Dee Dee, and Dr Ken, though seemed to work with Dr Otis the most. He, too, made me feel like part of the family right away. I watched, I helped, and I learned. I listened to stories of the old days (yes, the folks volunteering used to compete, and they know their stuff), and stories about horses and riders. I met some riders, and I got a pretty good feel for how things work. I definitely knew what to expect at the vet check on my first ride!

Now, skip to my first ride, where I'd entered the LD. Skymont. It sure was great to see the friendly faces I'd met volunteering at YH working the vet station there in TN. I felt really comfortable asking greenie questions, and they knew I was a greenie, so offered some great tips. continued..... 6

So, why should you volunteer at a ride?

- Volunteers are always needed and appreciated, and it's a way to "give back" to the sport
- There is a great opportunity to learn things you will not learn by just riding
- You will meet many people with a lot of experience in the sport
- The vets are always willing to let you pick their brains
- They feed you and give you a T-shirt!
- It's just a lot of fun

So, you don't know how to take a heart rate? Well, it's super easy to learn, and there are always plenty of people to help you or verify you are hearing what you think you hear. And, you will get plenty of practice at the ride. You can also learn how to listen for gut sounds, and learn things from the vets that will benefit you and your horse.

You don't have to do heart rates to help out. You can "scribe" for the vets-write down their comments during the trot outs, etc at the vet check.

So, just get out there and do it.

SERA VOLUNTEERS ROCK!!!!



Photos by Nancy Sluys



Conditioning Harley by Jody Buttram

Wow, what a difference three months can make in the training of an endurance horse !!! I believe Harley had done only a few short training rides of 4-7 miles each, and one day “out” with some friends for her very first 11 mile ride in the first installment. And that ride was very slow, but a good test for her brain and how she was going to handle things. Now, Harley has logged 205 miles. And boy, are they smoooooth miles.

Not only has her mileage improved, but her physical appearance is changing as well....and for the better. Her coat is fantastic, her body is filling out, her feet are looking stronger, and her mind is getting more trusting. She really is a sweet horse that has a great work ethic and wants to please. She is starting to trust me, and I can see that she “wants” to trust me. I can now rub her ears, head, and upper neck and have no objections. Kinda helps when it’s fly season.

As you can see, she is starting to shape up a bit, gaining some muscle over the rump.



In these first very important training miles, she has gone from some baby steps, to being a somewhat big girl in the conditioning department. She has learned to sponge. And that was a huge step coming from a horse that was and still is, very jumpy and has some trust issues. I started out with just swinging it around her in the hall of the barn, and then doing the same moves out on the trail in the creek. She accepting it great....but it does help if it is hot outside. When conditions are miserable, doesn't take long for a horse to understand that a sponge on a string with cool water, isn't a bad thing at all.

Her training rides are on an almost every other day basis. I try very hard to keep up that schedule. Day of work, day of rest. Rest is as important as work for the endurance horse. Her mileages have gone up considerably as well. She now is working a steady gait for up to 9-10 miles....with an

occasional longer ride on weekends. She has only a had a couple longer weekend rides, and when she does, she gets two to three days off to recover.

One of her outings was to Rock Bridge Canyon. Those of you that came to the ride understand the difficulty of that trail. She did 15 miles of pretty much nothing but canyons. Rode out from camp, through the canyons, and turned around and came back. That was a workout for sure and it was about 90 degrees that day. We did go slow, she handled it great and wasn't hot or panting. I am hoping to build some more muscle on those hills from time to time in the future with her.

She is learning to eat very sloppy beet pulp, and When it comes to the training part, I do use the GPS

And heart monitor, but when she returns to the

barn

I don't remove the tack, or do anything to help her

recover. I am trying to get base information about how well she is handling the training and the ambient conditions. She is typically taking about 8 minutes to recover to 64, but again with no help. She is standing in the hall of the barn out of the sun. But in this heat, that's not bad. And her average pace is right at 7 mph in training rides.



Here is what part of her training log looks like. I try to take note of the temperature, the humidity, of course the distance and sometimes where I was riding. Such as, was it all in the open field in direct sun, or on trails, what type of hills if any were on that days ride. I also make notes of things like her pulse, was it high or normal that day. This is very handy later when trying to trouble shoot an issue.

One of the main problems that I have had with Harley is the fact that she is a very nervous, anxious horse. Mounting her can at times require one to be very nimble....which I am not as nimble as I once was in the days gone past. If you notice there is a little note in the side that says, "broken rib". Mine, not hers. LOL

But, she CAN stand, it just takes some time, and we are working on it. I have noticed that she will stand much nicer when she is not at home, but rather hauled off to ride. I think she is just very anxious at home.

Harley still has three months to get ready for her first 50, Skymont. I think we should have logged around 350-400 miles by then. That is way more base that I would have put on an arab, but Harley isn't an arab and she not only has to condition her body like a normal horse, but she also has to condition her muscles to hold a gait that can be more tiring. She is definitely getting stronger, she has broken gait about 4-5 times, to a trot, not a pace since I have been riding her. And those breaks were in the very beginning of training, within the first 50 miles. So, she IS getting stronger.

95	8.3 miles	Pulse normal	High
100	8.0 miles	Good Pulse	
110	9.18 miles	loped well	Pulse good
115	7.51 miles	78°/40%	Broken Rib
120	8.15 miles		
125	57°/83°		
130	10 miles		

One thing that I have noticed and learned to love about a gaited horse, is that they are very quick to move through rough terrain. Where a trotting horse will have to walk, and be moving at best at 4 mph, she can walk or running walk at 5-6 mph through the same footing. This means she can make a lot of time on a technical course. Will she be as fast on a flat ride? I doubt it. So, I will use the terrain to the best of HER abilities. She will be doing rides that are more suited to her skills. Rides like Skymont, Rock Bridge, Big South Fork, and the OLD DOMINION !!!!! Yes, I am already planning her first 100 and she hasn't done a 50 yet. But, hey, I'm a goal setter, this gives me something to be aiming for in let's say, 2017?

So, I hope to have another chapter in the series of Harley the TWH trying to be an endurance horse. Stay tuned, go out and enjoy your horses, no matter what breed. Remember, a good horse is a good horse, it just takes work.



IRON MOUNTAIN JUBILEE ENDURANCE RIDE AND RIDE & TIE

August 28-29, 2015

Ivanhoe, VA

<http://www.ironmountainjubilee.com>



Big Things Are Coming to Big South Fork!

The Arabian Horse Association Proudly presents the 2015



Photo by GenieSS, Inc.

September 10-13, 2015



Photo by Becky Pearman

Ride

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Big South Fork NRRA, Oneida, TN
ArabianHorses.org/DNL



ARABIAN BREEDERS SWEEPSTAKES

New for this year is Allocated National prize money! You could win up to \$350, find out more online at ArabianHorses.org/activities/pmp/sweeps/

AHA CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFICATIONS

For **AHA Championship Rides** all Riders and horse Owners must have an AHA Competition Card. Horses (not riders) must have the following Qualifications:

COMPETITIVE TRAIL RIDE CHAMPIONSHIP

Complete 100 miles of an AHA Recognized Competitive Trail Ride(s) or an Open Competitive Trial Ride(s) sanctioned by an AHA Approved Ride Organization or at ride(s) sanctioned by AERC of no less than 25 miles (of which at least 50 miles must be in an AHA Recognized Competitive Trail Ride(s) or an Open Competitive Trail Ride(s) sanctioned by an AHA Approved Ride Organization).

50 MILE ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

For the 50-mile Championship Ride, the horse must have successfully completed 200 lifetime miles.

100 MILE ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

For the 100-mile Championship Ride, the horse must have successfully completed a minimum 300 lifetime miles of which 100 miles must consist of one (1) day or multi-day, one hundred (100) mile Endurance Ride or two consecutive rides of fifty (50) miles or greater over two consecutive days for a total of one hundred (100) miles or more.

For additional information please refer to Chapters 13 and 14 of the AHA Handbook

(www.ArabianHorses.org/membership/Membership_Handbook.asp).

INFORMATION FOR ALL RIDERS

* The **ARABIAN BREEDERS SWEEPSTAKES** allocated payouts are back! If eligible, the Champion will receive \$350, the Reserve Champion \$250 and the remaining Top Ten will receive \$50 EACH. For more information regarding the AHA Arabian Breeders Sweepstakes see <http://ArabianHorses.org/activities/pmp/sweeps/>.

* The Championship rides at Big South Fork are a subset of OPEN rides that are for riders of **any and all breeds**.

* AHA rules will be used for both the Open and Championship CTR. All Endurance rides use AERC rules with the AHA Championships having a couple of exceptions.

* Riders are expected to be courteous on the trail. Highly competitive riders should be given the right of way if they come up behind a slower rider or group.

* Current plans are for the CTR to have an "away" vet check on Day one. The Friday Endurance rides will have all checks in camp. Saturday and Sunday Endurance rides will have two away vet checks (both in the same location and back to back). Management will take crew "stuff" for crewless riders to the away vet checks, and supply horse water.

* There is plenty of parking at Big South Fork. We will be using the "Biltmore Parking" concept. There will be spaces laid-out in order to optimize the available camping, and someone to assure compliance. We will also be asking that some people consider camping in comfort at the "regular" campground (1-877-444-6777 or www.Recreation.gov), and stabling their horses in the Bandy Creek Stables. (www.BandyCreekStables.com or BandyCreekStables@GMail.com). Reservations are required for both, which are located within ¼ mile of basecamp.

~ DAILY RIDE SCHEDULE ~

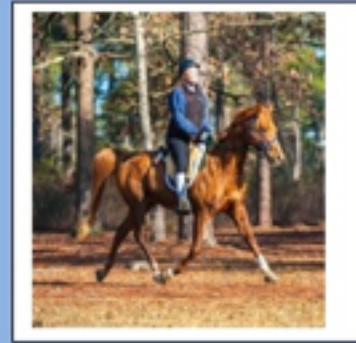
THURSDAY 9/10	FRIDAY - 9/11	SATURDAY - 9/12	SUNDAY - 9/13
DAY 1 OPEN CTR	DAY 2 OPEN CTR	AERC LD	AERC LD
DAY 1 AHA CTR CHAMPIONSHIP	DAY 2 AHA CTR CHAMPIONSHIP	AERC 50-MILE	AERC 50-MILE
	AERC LD	AHA 50-MILE CHAMPIONSHIP	AERC 100-MILE
	AERC 50-MILE		AHA 100-MILE CHAMPIONSHIP

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SCENES FROM SERA COUNTRY!!

Rockbridge Canyon



Biltmore



Old Dominion

Please be a contributor!!
Everyone has a tip or a story.
Please send me yours!!
email- minglewood@surry.net

Deadline for the next issue
August 15
Thank You, Nancy Sluys



Happy Trails!!!

2015 Becky Pearman Photography