



SERA NEWSLETTER

SOUTHEAST ENDURANCE RIDERS ASSOCIATION

Enjoying the SERA trails!

In This Issue-

President's Message

Editor's Letter

SERA Convention News

AERC Membership

Committee

Finding an Endurance Horse

Danny the Mule

Broxton USA SE Fundraiser

Ride Schedule

Iron Mountain Jubilee

Scenes from SERA Country



Photo by Nancy Sluys



President's



Fall is finally here! Our horses are glad to not be sweating and I hope everyone is getting out on trail in this gorgeous weather.

We have a very important vote coming up soon-- AERC Director at Large positions. I strongly encourage everyone to take the time to cast their votes when the ballot arrives in the mail. You are allowed up to 8 votes but any number up to 8 is permitted. This is our chance to raise the volume of our "East of the Mississippi" voices on the AERC Board.

Here is a list of the candidates:

SE

Tim Worden

Vance Stine

Heather Reynolds

Aubree Becker

NE

Bob Marshall

Natalie Muzzio

Dana Reeder

Dodie Sable

Please do your part to keep AERC truly represented from all regions.

Happy trails!

Sudi

Board of Directors-

President- Sudi Lenhart

Vice President- Patty Gale

Secretary- Laurie Underwood

Treasurer- Tamra Williams

Past President- Ike Nelson
DVM

State Representatives-

Alabama- Troy "Ike" Nelson

Florida - Helen Koehler

Georgia- Patty Gale

Kentucky- Amy Whelan

Mississippi- Jack Price

North Carolina- Ruth Anne
Everett

South Carolina- Patsy Gowen

Tennessee- Sudi Lenhart

Virginia- Lynne Johnson, DVM

AERC Representatives-

Sanctioning Director-

Susan Kasemeyer

Director- Duane Barnett, DVM

Newsletter editor-

Nancy Sluys

EDITORS LETTER

Hi Folks,

Well it has been a long hot summer! Hope you got some good rides in! It has been a light competition year for me due to many circumstances including some lameness issues in my two main horses (both resolving now). It has given me some time to get my younger horses off the back burner and into the forefront. Snap is now an official endurance horse having now completed two 50 mile rides. It is always an eyeopener riding a horse new to the sport after competing a solid 100 miler for years. You have to reevaluate what is slow and what is fast and monitor very closely the condition of the horse to see if he is handling the task, learning what is normal for that horse. When they hit that mental wall on the last loop at the moment they have been farther than they have ever gone before I feel like I am carrying them to the finish line. Rah rah rah...sis boom bah.....you can do it, you can do it!! Then we are there and they are vetting out with all As and the vet is signing the card with a big COMPLETION across the front and it makes it all worth it! The several years of training and conditioning have found their purpose and I feel a great sense of reward for having done a good job bringing them to that point!

Now that Snap and Summer (who is starting with CTR) are well on their way I now have a new project in the form of a mule! Read his story later in this issue where I will outline the progress of his transformation to an endurance equine in a series of articles over the coming year.

I hope you all have something to be proud of in your trail travels this year.

Happy trails!!

Nancy Sluys

Newsletter Editor



January 13-15, 2017 SERA Convention at Amicalola Falls Lodge

Friday:

- 2:00 pm-3:15 pm - Ike Nelson "Chiropractic for endurance equines"
3:30-4-45 pm - Kathy Tow "Massage for endurance equines"
5:00 pm - Appetizers/open bar
Dinner on your own

Saturday

- 8:00 am - GERA meeting
9:00 am - SERA members meeting
10:30 am - AERC meeting
12-1 pm - Lunch on your own
1:00-2:00 pm - Missy Hamilton. " New treatments for our injured athletes"
2:15 -3:15 pm - Lara Worden."Nutrition for the Endurance Horse: Reviewing old and new Wisdom"
3:30-4:30 pm - Dan Hallman/Elysse Rogers. " Our Tevis experience"
6:00 pm - Banquet buffet
6:30 pm - SERA awards
8:00 pm - Men of Soul dance party

Sunday

- 8:00 - 9:00 am - Board of Directors meeting

PLEASE MAKE AN EFFORT TO ATTEND!!!!!!

News from AERC's Membership Committee - Mary Howell - Committee Chair

- * AERC's Membership Committee is working to reinvigorate our Mentor Program (in case you missed the August EN feature) and are looking for more Mentors from the Southeast region. We're also working to add a "Trail Partners" page under aerc.org's Education tab next to the Mentor listing for those lacking the experience or comfort level to take on the role of Mentor as this time. To follow up on serving as a Mentor or being added to the Trail Partners list for those seeking training buddies, simply call the AERC office or email membership@aerc.org (copy Mary Howell, Committee Chair, at countshiloh@gmail.com).
- * Want to host an endurance seminar in the coming year? AERC's Education Committee has funds available to help cover transportation for Susan Garlinghouse to serve as a top-notch presenter, but her 2017 schedule is booking fast. And if you're considering hosting a SERA/AERC booth at a horse expo or similar event in your state, please contact AERC for brochures and other materials.
- * Current AERC members who renew by Dec. 1, 2016 for the 2017 membership year will be entered in a drawing for a Taylored Tack bridle/breastcollar combo (\$500 value) - details in upcoming issues of Endurance News, winner gets to pick color and design at www.tayloredtack.com.
- * Watch Endurance News for an article about AERC's new equine longevity recognition program to recognize horses with 10, 15 or more years of competition, even if the horse take a year or two off or changes owners. Includes LD-only years but horse must complete at least 50 miles of AERC competition for each year considered (so 2 LDs per year).



Photo by Nancy Sluys

FINDING AN ENDURANCE HORSE

by Heather Wilkerson

A few years ago, I was riding my paint horse, Leo, in LDs. I was training with Patsy Gowen and her amazingly sturdy minded forward, Hero, a grey Arabian. As Leo turned more into a trail horse and less into an eager forward endurance horse, I knew it was time to find an Arabian. Physically, I was ready to move up to 50s and Leo was ready to slow down to enjoy the scenery. I knew nothing about conformation, motivation of the horse, desired age, whether he would eat or drink, pulse down, cooling off, trotting vs. cantering, etc. I just knew I needed an Arabian like Hero. I wanted to feel the energy of consistency, eagerness, willingness and excitement of exploring the nation together.

My husband, who is a Texas cowboy and typically only values the sturdy minds of paint and quarter horses was deployed to Afghanistan. This was the perfect time to locate the Arab!

I considered looking at accomplished 50-mile horses and even tried to travel to the Midwest without success (because of my work schedule and difficulty traveling from the airport in a big city to arriving at a small farm several hours away). I strongly believe in the “ease” of things. If it doesn’t come naturally, it probably isn’t meant to be.

The importance of adopting a rescue was VERY important to me. I knew that I wanted an eager and motivated Arab who was a rescue. I also needed the rescue to take the horse back if it wasn’t the right match. I don’t want animals tossed around. This was my criterion.

I applied to several rescues. I sent letters explaining that I was a beginner endurance rider and was looking for an endurance prospect. Then, one popped up. There was a young grey at a Georgia rescue run by Lori Yonts.

A few weeks prior to this, I had the wonderful pleasure of riding with Patsy and Allison Bailey and some other riders. I was dumbfounded by the incredible horsemanship I witnessed and how their horses eagerly trotted down the trail. This training ride confirmed I was headed in the right direction with the “right” crowd.



I corresponded with Lori about how I might pick up the horse. Another important factor was that I wanted to trailer the horse myself. I wanted to know how he would be handled from the beginning. I told Lori that I would be working in Charlotte, NC the next week, but could drive to Georgia the following week to pick up my horse. Lori just happened to be traveling to Charlotte that same weekend and could deliver him.

I needed a place for my horse to stay while I completed my work project. I asked Patsy if she knew of anyone and she suggested I ask Allison with whom I had ridden 2 weeks prior. Without hesitation, Allison obliged. Remember how I mentioned the importance of the “ease” of things. Too easy! Allison and Holly were there when my horse, Ghost, a grey Arabian arrived.

Along with the ease of things, I’m a strong believer in the Law of Attraction, meaning you receive what you attract through your thoughts and feelings. I had created a vision board with pictures of endurance riders and their horses (mostly greys (unknowingly)). I believe that I attracted my grey Arabian while trotting down the trail mile after mile with all of the other grey Arabians.

Since Ghost’s arrival about 2 years ago, we have completed 4-50s and several LDs. We have some hiccups to work on, but the process is only creating a greater bond between myself and this grey Arab I call Ghost.

In closing, every time Ghost does something crazy (which is most of the time), my husband says, “Do you know who wouldn’t do that? A paint horse.”



Photo by Nancy Sluys

The Adventures of Danny the Mule aka Jet's Danny Herlong

by Nancy Sluys

As many of you know, Garrie Bates (aka the mule lady) passed away earlier this year. She was my neighbor for 25 years, living four miles away by road or trail. She was a mule rider and the person who mentored me and introduced me to distance riding (NATRC at the time) in the early 1990s. In her later years she switched to riding mostly horses but to me (and others) she will always be the mule lady!

A few months after her passing I became consumed with the idea that I needed a mule in my life and started pursuing the idea by contacting Jody and Joni Buttram, who had bred two 1/2 Arab mules that we had been hearing about a few years back. Not having read any posts in quite a while I asked Joni what she was doing with her mule April (who had finished 2 50s previously). Being a college student she was keeping her on the back burner until she had time to spend with her but that April's younger brother (who they had named after and then sold to Danny Herlong) might be for sale.

It took me a while to contact Danny but when I finally did he was overjoyed that someone was interested in his mule who would want to do endurance on him as he had not had the opportunity to do so. He wanted to give me the mule but he had just traded him to a guy for a debt. After some negotiation with the current owner I purchased the mule for the debt owed and Jet's Danny Herlong became my mule. When I went to pick him up he already seemed to know as he watched my trailer drive up intently and then literally jumped into it when asked!

Now this was no ordinary mule! He is an endurance bred mule, out of the fabulous mare of Jody Buttram's, Jet's Gaelic Storme. Here is what Jody wrote about his breeding - "Not only is their dam a proven 100 miler (including OD and Big Horn) but their grand dam has over 3000 miles, with nine 100's, including two ODs. They have a great uncle that did the ROC, eight 100's, over 5000 miles and had nearly a 100% completion rate.





A great aunt that won and BCed the Biltmore 100, another great aunt that won and BCd several 100's as well. I bought their horse sister back not long ago, she's done seven 50's and I plan to do the Biltmore 100 on her in May. He was born on May 10, 2008. Oh and I searched for over a year to find the right jack to create these mules. Straight legs and the perfect size to make riding mules.” So you see Danny is something special! I think Garrie sent me this mule!

Danny didn't take long to work his way into the herd with his non confrontational personality and pretty soon he felt at home. Danny had a good foundation and had been started and ridden a little but he had been out to pasture for a few years so would need some refresher work. Not having Garrie around to consult, I skimmed through a few mule books and they all said the same thing, that mules are different than horses and think differently and they are very smart but not one was specific about explaining that so I would have to find out for myself!

Right off, when I started doing some ground work, things became apparent that Danny had some different language than my horses. As I tried to longe him, all he wanted to do was face me. Everything I tried did not work at sending him out away from me, in fact only caused him to back up....really fast! I switched my tact to just hand walking him around the property to get him used to things, then I ponied him around a few times. He seemed to be adjusting well and took everything in stride. He didn't spook at anything we came across and moved well down the trail.

The next week I threw a leg over to see how he felt and he was fine with it. We went for a little ride in the woods for about 10 minutes and he enjoyed the adventure. I started riding him with a snaffle bit and he seemed to understand giving to the side when I put pressure on one rein, his stop wasn't pretty but after a few strides he would come to a halt without too much pressure. I put about 5 or 6 little rides on him around my property and we seemed to be getting along fine as long as things were quiet and uneventful. He seemed to be listening to my cues for the most part.

I was just about to think I could take him somewhere to ride when he gave me a very good lesson. Although I had done a little ground work with him, I had not gone through all the steps to be sure he was totally safe to ride and to be sure that our bond and trust were complete. With a horse I could have gotten away with this but not so with a mule I am discovering.

Our first clue was when I was riding down a power line trail and he was snatching grass in kind of a rude way. I had a little switch I was using to flick flies off his ears and I gave him just a little pop on the rear. Well I think he thought it was something that came up from behind and not me. He started running forward, I caught him right away and bent him in a circle but he kept going faster, just in a circle. "What now" I thought, so I turned him up the hill and let go and he stopped and went on like nothing had happened. That should have been my hint to go back to square one but I guess I'm more hard headed than the mule.

The next incident was after we had been away for 10 days and when I got back I decided to ride him with my friend Holly and her new horse, Renny. We were on a trail on the back of our property and Rennie was behind and jiggling because he was nervous. I don't think Danny liked the energy so he put his head up and tried to run off again. I got him turned and thought he would stop but he just ran that way too, turned him again and he still wanted to run but this time a tree was in the way and he stopped just enough for me to jump off. I shook the reins and looked him in the eye and got back on and he went on like nothing had happened. So, I made the decision that we were going back to kindergarten and working our way back up again until he learned to respond to my cues every time, every situation!

Next time I worked him we did it in the round pen and worked on turning and gait changes. Then I went back to longeing but I still had the problem of him always wanting to face me. I had to find the right language! Slowly I worked it out in my mind what I would have to do to get him to take a step sideways and I repositioned my body and he took a step in the right direction. We quit right then. A few days later I got him out and asked and he went directly out on the end of the rope just like I wanted. Boy he really was smart, he just had to think about the lesson for a while first. Of course when he got out there he didn't know what I wanted so he put his head up and tried to run off, which I have discovered is a very typical mule thing to do. I quickly disengaged his hindquarters and did a little give and take on the rope until he came around in some sort of a circle and then stopped for the day. We're starting to get a real conversation going now.

So this is where I leave off.....Stay tuned for the next installment of the Adventures of Danny the Mule!!



GRO at Broxton's Moonlight Ride

by Lori Nelson

photo by Becky Pearman

In the heat of July, Cheryl van Deusen and her dedicated group of volunteers put on this night ride to raise money for the USA Southeast Endurance Team. We are very lucky to have a strong FEI contingent in the Southeast, with Cheryl van Deusen managing about six rides a year to help fund her activities with young and senior FEI riders. I've gone to volunteer at this July ride before, but usually don't ride as it's blazing hot. But this year I wanted to go just to see if my mare Penny would stay sound. She's completed about half of her entries in the last year, including a 100-miler at Big South Fork and been eliminated from half. So one last test to see if she really has an issue or if it has just been management mistakes.



Having had my truck in the shop most of the summer, my friend Melanie Wonneberger kindly volunteered to pick Penny and me up from my ranch south of Atlanta to head to Broxton. We had so much fun traveling together to this ride. I've really been enjoying what I call GRO's this summer – Girls Rides Out. I get more sore now from laughing than from riding! This was a one-day ride with two back-to-back LDs planned and one Open 50 in the evening. The ride day started with a heartbreaking fall by Jane Moss when mounting before the LD start, and we late sleepers were awakened by alerts to come hold our horses while the life flight helicopter landed in the adjacent field. Jane has recovered a good deal from her head injury and broken ribs, but she gave us all a good scare. We waited desperately for updates about her progress throughout the weekend.

I volunteered in the vet check during the two LDs that Saturday, taking horse rectal temps, which was an additional parameter added by the vet panel as a precaution in the extreme heat. The day was blistering hot, and taking temps made it easy to spot a horse that needed to slow down and receive extra cooling. It was a successful day and most horses didn't mind the very personal intrusion. We had no metabolic eliminations all weekend. I took Penny on a walk or two during the day, as we all hoped the weather would hold for us and not be too blazing hot or stormy. With an evening start, everyone had time for a little visiting with friends and an afternoon nap and meal. I had lined up a ride for my usual crew person Shawn Polke on a gelding brought down by my trainer Marvin Brangman, and I helped him get his saddle fitted. They were there to put a 50-mile completion on two horses I'd sold last fall that were still boarding at my ranch - my stallion CD Prince Kamal and Anam al Shaqab a/k/a Ammo. The veterinary crew and volunteers thought Ammo's name seemed appropriate as he acted like a kite in the vet check. He was having no part of getting his temperature taken, and I suggested to the vet to make an exception for him before someone got hurt (and just for the record, neither Marvin nor I trained Ammo). We got lucky with the threat of a storm looming, which caused a delay in our evening start time to around 6:30 pm. Instead of a storm, the heavy clouds just cooled off the evening. Everyone was delighted with that result.

The ride started pretty easily, but within a mile my friend Taylor deBeer came off when her horse spooked behind me. Her horse bolted past me and was caught by Cheryl van Deusen. I jumped off and went back to make sure Taylor was okay. It looked like she hit the ground pretty hard because she didn't just jump right up. I tried to convince her to mount up and continue, but her horse has mounting issues and even with help from Marvin it began to seem precarious, so Taylor decided to walk on back to camp and call it a day. We continued on, intending to just have a casual ride.

Photographer Becky Pearman was out on trail that day and got this great pic of Penny and me on the first loop. The first vet check was uneventful – I was crewing for myself and since Penny doesn't require much crewing, it was pretty darn easy. She's just full of drama so no interaction with her is completely uneventful. She can try your every fiber with her shenanigans. Off to the second loop, night fell and I found myself riding with Cheryl van Deusen and Jody Buttram.

Cheryl was riding a young grey mare, Nazeefs Flashy Rose, and Jody was riding her walking horse Heart-Throb Hotel. Since Penny was the more experienced horse, she led the group. Also, I insisted on using my headlamp, so they were glad I was in front, not to be aggravating them with the light. You can think you're fairly experienced in this sport until you ride with two folks with each over 15,000 miles and over thirty 100-mile completions. Sorry, ladies, I don't have that kind of night riding experience, to be comfortable with riding in the pitch black, able to see absolutely nothing in front of me. Maybe I'll get there someday. I relied on my light. About midway through this loop my stirrup leather broke. My riding partners were kind enough to patiently wait while I replaced my stirrup leather by headlamp with the spare biothane sponge rope I keep in my saddle pack in case of just this kind of emergency. Nothing like being prepared! It worked wonderfully.

We all arrived into the vet check together and vetted through close enough that we all left together and continued on into the dark. Later in this loop while trotting along at an easy pace, we suddenly hear a rustle in the trees, the horses jumped, and then came a loud thud, the awful sound of a rider hitting the ground. A pig had darted out of the woods right behind Penny in front of Cheryl's mare. Cheryl's mare spooked badly and dumped Cheryl on the trail very hard. Tough as Cheryl is, she jumped right up and tried to retrieve her mare, but her mare ran off. We stayed put, in hopes that the mare would turn right back around and come back to those she'd been traveling with, but no, she had other ideas. As Cheryl walked and called after her, she just took off into the night. When we caught up with Cheryl, there came a cry from afar. Cheryl headed in that direction, across a dark field, hoping the cry meant someone had caught her horse. They had. Theresa Carroll, running in front on her last loop, had caught the mare and held her until Cheryl arrived to fetch her. Theresa still won the race and Cheryl was able to ride back to camp. We continued on and finished our loop, but at this point Penny was showing up a bit lame, so we were done for the night. Cheryl was hurting and rider optioned, and I think her horse was feeling a bit done for the night too. Since it was already 3:00 am, I must say I was glad to get to go to bed at that point. Jody continued on and completed that evening. I did have my vet come and perform a lameness exam on Penny after this ride, and he found she needed her hocks injected and then she'd be fine. So Penny is running around more comfortably, and I am hoping her fall season will be more successful. Cheryl is healing from her second bad fall this year, and Jane Moss is riding again. Marvin and Shawn completed their 50s. A good time was had as usual on yet another GRO. Looking forward to many more.

Remaining 2016 SERA Sanctioned Rides

- 10-22-2016 - 10-22-2016 * [Hunting for Bigfoot](#) - Desoto National Forest- McHenry, MS
- 10-28-2016 - 10-29-2016 * [Fort Valley I and II](#) - Fort Valley, VA
- 10-29-2016 - 10-29-2016 * [Sand Hills Stampede](#) - Sand Hills State Forest - Patrick, SC
- 11-11-2016 - 11-12-2016 * [Broxton Bridge Plantation: USA SE Fundraiser](#) - Broxton Bridge Plantation - Ehrhard, SC
- 11-18-2016 - 11-19-2016 * [Blackwater Boogie](#) - Blackwater Equestrian Center - Milton, FL.
- 11-18-2016 - 11-19-2016 * [Blackwater Boogie](#) - Blackwater Equestrian Center - Milton, FL.
- 11-26-2016 - 11-26-2016 * [Carolina](#) - Patrick, SC



**USA SE Fundraiser
at
Broxton Bridge
Plantation**

Tom Rajala



Jane Moss



photos by Becky Pearman



IRON MOUNTAIN JUBILEE by Nancy Sluys

The weekend of the Iron Mountain Jubilee is usually the weekend it cools down from the summer and the weather is usually quite pleasant. This year, however, it became clear earlier in the week that we were going to see the highest temperatures in the 9 year history of the ride, predicted to be around 90 degrees. In preparation for the hot weekend we increased our water stockholds. Much of the water at this ride is hauled in, some with the help of the Ivanhoe Volunteer Fire Department who we rent the camp from. All said and done over 8000 gallons of water was hauled in to provide water for the camp, vet check and out on trail, a monumental feat for our hardworking volunteers.

The riders respected the hot weather and slowed their overall pace, bringing in the horses in good shape. At the vet check at Triple C the constant breeze helped cool the horses after the challenging loops. The riders were treated to cold drinks and healthy food in the form of breakfast burritos and chicken salad sandwiches. Volunteers were available to hold horses for crewless riders and help them out in other ways.

Back in camp the riders and horses cooled off in the New River after the day's ride. The Fire Department served up some great food with chicken on Friday and BBQ on Saturday. The gathering around the bonfire on Saturday honored Garrie Bates, a distance riding icon who passed away earlier in the year. Music and stories reminded everyone what a special lady she was.

If you want to treat yourself to a late summer vacation then you will want to put the Iron Mountain Jubilee on your ride calendar!

photo by Nancy Sluys



Scenes from SERA Country!

photo by Becky Pearman



photo by Becky Pearman



Pearman Photography

photo by Becky Pearman



© 2016 Becky Pearman Photography



photo by Nancy Sluys



© 2016 Becky Pearman Photography

photo by Becky Pearman



photo by Nancy Sluys

Please be a contributor!!

If you don't see a story about your favorite ride it's because you didn't write one!

Please send me yours!!

email- minglewood@surry.net

Deadline for the next issue

November 15

Thank You, Nancy Sluys

photo by Nancy Sluys

