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# SERA NEWS

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[seraonline.org](http://seraonline.org) | SouthEastern Riding Association|

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## **ALL RACES ARE HARD, SOME ARE JUST AWFUL!** By: Rachel Land

I crossed the finish line of the Mongol Derby August 17th, of last year. The race was challenging to say the least. It stretched me beyond my known ability, but after twenty-eight days away from my home state, and 8.5 days of riding, the race was over. I then jumped on a plane and headed for the States.



Photo by: Maria Phillips

I've got to be honest, just as soon as my feet hit American soil my eyes were set on "The Beast of the East", the Old Dominion, arguably the hardest 100 mile race in North America. Rewind with me to the summer of 2016, I was crewing for my mentor on her first attempt at the Old Dominion 100. It was my first time to learn of the Cavalry Division and it inspired me. So I decided then and there to come back in two years to ride that very same race. In the Cavalry division, you and your horse are not allowed to accept any kind of assistance from anyone, at any time. If anyone, other than vets, even touches your horse, you are disqualified from Cavalry.

Over the next two years my horse Tawny and I trained. We conditioned long, slow distances on varying degrees of hills near my home in South Carolina and North Georgia. We entered a few more 50 milers and even completed our first 75 mile race.

Months before the Old Dominion ride I started my research to find the best way to prepare myself and my horse for the ride. I've always been a person who believes in the advise of the daring. The great adventurer Nelly Bly said it best, "Energy rightly applied, and directed will accomplish anything." (She should know!) So I decided to follow her advise... I had the energy, I just needed the "directing." I began to ask people I met along the way for advise about this great Beast. I asked crew, farriers, ride mangers, past riders who had completed the race and some who had failed. I really wanted to be prepared for whatever lay ahead. I highly recommend asking others for help. Ask questions, and seek out a mentor; these things have greatly shaped me and I'm grateful for all of it!



### **Kudos kudos kudos!**

The following Southeast teams were selected to represent the USA at the World Equestrian Games:

Rae Schumate-Tyser  
and her 9 year old  
gelding DM  
Michaelangelo

Kelsey Russell and  
Fireman Gold Valery  
Kanavy and Wendy  
MacCoubrey's 8 year old  
gelding.

Additionally these  
amazing Southeast  
teams are alternates for  
the World Equestrian  
Games:

Erin Champion and her  
15 year old stallion  
Kongtiki.

Cheryl Van Deuson and  
her 14 year old gelding  
Hoover the Moover.

Photo Credit: [USEF.org](http://USEF.org)

## **www.SERAOnline.org**

When I was first asked to become the SERA website caretaker (2011?), I literally knew nothing about designing or programming for the web. Since that time, I have learned that the more I think I know, the less I really know. I DID know I was not an editor - as is evidenced in this short article! - and that content needed to be someone else's responsibility (thank you Nancy and Stephanie). But I have a question for you the SERA members.

What can we do to improve the website or web services for you?

Since the rise in popularity of social media -mostly Facebook- the SERA website has gone from the "face" (pun intended) of SERA to a repository of SERA information. Including easily referenced information such as:

- SERA Ride Schedule
- APEX repository
- Catalog of SERA newsletters
- Information regarding SERA Awards
- Annual Convention information
- Contact information for the current SERA Board of Directors

Also available are processes that cannot be performed via FB:

- SERA Membership applications
- SERA Ride Sanctioning
- An initial locator for prospective members.
- Web services offers SERA Ride Mangers a simple ride related website (\$25 initial set up charge)
- Access to SERA OnLine Entry (SOLE) form and SERA Leaderboard (via ERIC V2)

I am always open to suggestions. My contact information is:

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Facebook: Eric Rueter

I knew going into this race my battle would look different than most riders because I ride a heavier, more muscular purebred Appaloosa, Tawny. I studied maps, elevation changes, loop distances, hold times, everything you can think of and more. I started to feel more confident, I had all of the information I needed. Midway through training I even changed up our conditioning techniques to better prepare Tawny for the steep, long, rocky climbs we would encounter. I payed attention to the weather and tried to condition in similar temperatures and humidity levels so Tawny and I would be used to it. I even started riding in a full kit of everything I would carry during the ride so she would be accustomed to the additional weight.



Photo credit:

[www.olddominionrides.org](http://www.olddominionrides.org)

rode up to our check point, fortunately there were no issues at all vetting in at Bird Haven, what a relief!

The second leg was the worst climb of the day. I'd never experienced such treacherous terrain before. Multiple times I thought I had made a wrong turn somewhere because this couldn't be the actual trail, but it was. Once we got to the top of the mountain I got off to check for missing shoes. Sure enough, Tawny had a loose shoe. I pried it off with my hands and we hobbled down the mountain. Next vet check was Laurel Run and as we slowly checked in I shifted my focus from Cavalry division to simply completing the race. Only thirty miles in and the Old Dominion 100 had already lived up to it's feared name, The Beast of the East.



As I checked in, the farrier quickly put on a new shoe and pad, and checked the other shoes. He observed that another shoe was loose and ready to come off, so he added a couple more nails and we were off!

The next climb was on a gravel road that seemed to go on forever (and ever). It was the hottest part of the day, with scorching sun beating down on us and brief breaks of cloud

cover and a slight breeze. As we started the ascent Tawny got her second wind and even to my surprise, passed a horse who was having “motivational” issues. Who could blame her!



We finally made it to the next check point, Bucktail, and I noticed Tawny pulled another shoe. Fortunately a farrier was at this vet check and quickly put another shoe and pad on. Tawny had pulsed down with 8 minutes to spare and we would need every minute to make in to Big 92 before the cut off. I'd heard from past riders, that if you can just make it to Big 92 it's "all downhill from there". So as the great philosopher Willie Nelson once said, "On the road again."

The sky was filling with dark clouds and rain was inevitable. That's just what we needed - more slippery added to the slopes. In between Bucktail and Big 92 there is a Gate and Go with a 10 minute hold, and then a hospitality stop. At the Gate and Go, I was amazed, volunteers actually went to cooling and stripping tack for me. Waite's Run was like a full service station, without having to tip! They even put a burger on the grill for me. I could go on and on about the volunteers helpfulness at Old Dominion.

When I first got Tawny, I was told she wouldn't excel at the sport of endurance racing because she wasn't an Arab. She was too heavy, too muscular, too slow, and on and on. I was also told several times that she would never complete a 100 mile race. Let's just say no one would bet across the board on her. But she and I both were bound to prove the critics wrong. I knew she could, I wanted to give her the opportunity; after all she loves going down the trail. Yes, our training would have to look different and our pace more tailored to her, but she could do it — I hoped.

The next tricky leg of the race was a section called the Mail Trail. Once again this was a narrow trail with loose rocks so I dismounted to and led my faithful steed up the mountain. As the glow of dusk began, and the darkness of night imminent, I cracked my glow sticks. Just then the rain began to fall. It really started raining. You know, the kind of rain when all the cars on the highway pull off to the side. As the rain continued and night began to fall, the fog rolled in and made it impossible to see past my horse's ears.

As I started the descent, I knew we were getting close to the hospitality stop which signaled I was only four miles from Big 92. When we pulled into the hospitality station I had only one thought, "I need some coffee!" I would settle for any kind of caffeine.

I eventually made it to Big 92. Tawny and I vetted in by the skin of our teeth, with only 5 minutes to spare. The best part of our stop - a volunteer found a half full can of Coca-Cola! I knew for the next leg of trail I would need to pick up the pace. The next 8 mile stretch of trail was almost all downhill and I would be leaving out in last place. Maybe all of the neig-sayers (pardon the pun) were right, maybe Tawny couldn't complete the 100 miles?

Something happened to Tawny when we were resting at Big 92. Maybe she got the right amount of electrolytes, maybe she was feeling my doubt and wanted to prove me wrong... but when we launched out of there she felt good, really good! For the first time in 70 miles,



we actually did a nice hand gallop. She started to up her pace, her adrenaline began to pump and we were passing other riders one after the other.

As we were heading to Bird Haven we passed another rider and vetted in just fine. The hold here was only 20 minutes so I quickly saddled up, thanked the farrier who showed up to help me find food for Tawny and cool her down, and was on my way.

We continued on alone. Just me and my never-quit Appaloosa. The trail was pitch black and heavy fog everywhere. This was the point in the race where we actually got a little lost. Once I had realized I didn't see any more glowsticks, I retraced our steps and got back on trail. This was the path to the finish line. We were so close I could smell it! Literally could smell it, remember the turkey farm from the start, I smelled it and I knew we were close to the finish line. I'm pretty sure Tawny recognized that smell too because she perked up and increased her pace.



Photo by: Tom Sayvetz

I've got to be honest, my feelings can be so conflicting when I cross a finish line. I mean I love riding so much that a part of me gets sad when I realize the race is coming to a close. There's another side of me that loves being greeted by the surge of relief and cheers from supporters. And then it hits me, "There's one more vet check." After all of the months



planning and training we could fail this last check and not complete the race. As I crossed the finish line with only one vet check to go, and in the midst of the excitement, I began to think about the possibility of failing our last check in. It all rushed back like a highlight video - the grueling climbs, terrible footing, exhausting heat, thick humidity, thunderstorms, heavy fog, shortage of food, multiple pulled shoes, and even getting lost... it was very possible we could fail our final vet check.

With fingers crossed and hope still in our tired eyes, we made our way to a water trough so I could douse and scrape Tawny for the last time. It was time to vet

in. I wanted Tawny's heart to slow down yet mine began to speed up. I really wanted us to complete this race.

After vetting and getting the thumbs up on Tawny's physical condition, I was both relieved and excited to have completed one of the hardest races in America. An even bigger surprise came when they announced we placed 12th. Tawny had passed 6 horses in the last 30 miles on her way to the finish line. I gave her a big hug.

**This was a horse that didn't know the meaning of "quit."  
She was out to prove the doubters wrong and inspire the underdogs.  
Yet again, this atypical endurance horse pushed hard and finished the race!**

# UP COMING

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## Southeastern Rides

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### September

09-07 & 09-08 [Big South Fork - Aha Region 12 50 Mile Championship](#)

Big South Fork NRA Oneida/Jamestown, TN

09-20-2018 - 09-22-2018 [Aerc National Championship Ride](#)

Biltmore Estate - Asheville, NC

### October

10-05-2018 - 10-06-2018 [Skymont Endurance Ride](#)

Skymont Scout Reservation, Altamont, TN

10-13-2018 - 10-13-2018 [Sand Hills Stampede](#)

H. Cooper Black

10-18-2018 - 10-20-2018 [Meadow Creek Mingle](#)

Meadow Creek Mountain Ranch

10-19-2018 - 10-20-2018 [Fort Valley](#)

Fort Valley, VA

10-20-2018 - 10-20-2018 [Hunting For Bigfoot](#)

Desoto National Forest- McHenry, MS

10-20-2018 - 10-20-2018 [Scenic Spruce Creek Fall No Frills](#)

Doris Leeper Spruce Creek Reserve-New Smyrna Beach, FL

10-26-2018 - 10-28-2018 [Distance Horse National Championships](#)

Henryville, Indiana

### November

11-09-2018 - 11-10-2018 [Broxton Bridge - Usa Se Fall Fundraiser](#)

Broxton Bridge Plantation - Ehrhardt, SC

11-24-2018 - 11-24-2018 [Carolina](#)

Patrick, SC



## Letter From the President

-Sudi Lenhart

I've been struck lately with so many of our members who have had losses. Some of horses they had big dreams for; some of dear pets that left too soon; some of personal unexpected injury that sidelines them for awhile.

None of us want bad things to happen to anyone....least of all ourselves. Yet life and the powers that be sometimes throw what feels like daggers into our plans and dreams.

So what is needed in the tough times? First off, I think it's for us all to realize that we are unique and what we may need to get through the tough times is unique to us. Sometimes in an effort to help, friends may offer suggestions of how to go on. Well meaning for sure. But if it feels like advice that doesn't fit for you, then it doesn't fit. Some people lose a loved animal and need to go right back out and find another one to fill the void. Other people need to grieve in a space that allows the empty spot to just be there. Everyone's grief is different. Some people grieve in private and really don't want to talk about it. Others need to tell the story over and over to process it.

With injuries, the hardest thing for us athletes is to step back and slow down. To allow our bodies to heal. To put all ride plans, exercise plans, horse plans on hold for a bit to allow our bodies to mend. This could be a great time to get someone else to ride your horse--not only does this keep the horse going, but it gives an opportunity for another person's view of your horse's fitness, attitude readiness for his/her job.

Maybe the hardest thing after a personal injury is to let yourself do what you need when you are ready to ride again. Being able to listen to what you need to rebuild your confidence. Maybe it's not getting right back on your superfit Arab who likes to go go go. Maybe it's to get on an older horse who doesn't spook or do anything silly. Maybe it's to just piddle around for awhile with a slow short paced ride.

Maybe its to bow out of what you thought were your season's goals and take a deep breath. Us driven endurance riders can be amazingly hard on ourselves, especially when we don't measure up to our self created goals.

And here's another thing....this can be the hardest thing of all. Ask for help. Never mind that you were the one that always had your stuff in order . Never mind that you don't like asking for help. Interestingly enough, most people like to help. Especially when they have an inkling of what you've been through.

And Remember....We all love this sport, We all love our horses and our other dear pets. It's what makes us a tribe. Let's honor that. Happiest of trails....

# SAVE THE DATE

January 18-20, 2019

Amicalola Falls, Georgia

# SERA CONVENTION

....captivating speakers....mountains...endurance riders without horses and helmets....dance party....silent auction....more details to come!!!







## Journey to WEG

Jane Waterman Moss

When Sudi asked me to write a story for this issue about my journey to WEG, I had just finished a similar story for a podcast. I decided to include the narrative here too, so if you have heard pieces of this before, it's me not you!

My background is I grew up in Ireland doing pony club, gymkhanas, onto eventing and fox hunting which I still love to do, and only got into endurance about six years ago. I was introduced to the sport by a colleague at a hippo-therapy facility. She would always limp in after her amazing weekend away with stories of adventure, mishap and general hilarity, and I have to admit I was more than a little drawn in and envious. I had 3 small children & a job working as a university lecturer, it sounded like my kind of fun and the Walter Mitty aspect of it all was very appealing.

I decided that I would crew for my friend at a relatively close-by race and see if I liked it, ...well need I say anymore? Within six months I had bought two 5-year-old Arabians and was training two more Arabians whenever possible and did my first ride which was a 50 mile race about six months after I got the bug. I did my first race on a friend's horse, as Lilly, a quarab was a seasoned 50 miler and my young geldings were just starting off, and there's the fact that I hadn't a clue what I was doing.

It took us two years to learn the basic ropes and then we graduated to 50 mile races I have since dragged my daughter and several juniors into the sport as well.

One of my horses is a very talented athlete and he became my hundred mile horse 2 years ago. The day of his first hundred mile race in May 2016 I was approached by a fellow Irish FEI official at the Biltmore to know if I would be interested in representing Ireland at the 2018 world equestrian games. I just laughed and asked her what she was smoking.



Two months later I had a serious accident at an endurance ride and I was lifeflighted to a Charleston hospital in North Carolina with a brain injury and a punctured lung and several broken ribs so that was the end of that.

While recuperating from my accident I spent several months at an outpatient clinic and was incredibly blessed that Atlanta has one of the top spinal & brain injury centers in the world - The Shepherd Center. One of my endurance students' parents is a quadriplegic from horse riding accident and has been an outpatient there for many many years and it was through the grace of



God that she got me into Shepherd almost immediately despite the six weeks waiting list because she was personal friends with Ms. Shepherd. Horse people are good people!

I had cut back on my university work & began to get a little bit more serious about my endurance riding. In the back my mind I remembered Claudia asking about representing Ireland and I decided to at least get my horses their Irish passports, as despite the country of

residence, FEI horses have the same nationality as their owners. It was a good exercise in executive function for my injured little frontal lobe, if nothing else!

My hope was to try to qualify during 2017. Long story short one horse didn't get through his 2 star after two attempts but Streak Afire (that's Baz to all who know and love him) my hundred miler did really well and by the end of the 2017 season we had him qualified for WEG, with a fairly spectacular end to the season at Broxton where we got our COC in dramatic fashion by galloping in the last furlong as we were challenged at the end of the 100 or 160k in FEI parlance. My 100 mile riding buddy that day Jerry absolutely refused to be passed and so we ran in. That was my first and last race-off and Baz crossed the line by a head with Jerry close behind & our challengers from Uruguay a split second back. We made our COC by the skin of our teeth, thanks Jerry!! We ended 2018 ranked #2 in the world in combination rankings for FEI horse and rider pairings. I was more surprised than anybody, but Baz deserves all the credit, he is an amazing horse!!

2018 has been about wrapping him and cotton wool and at the same time keeping him fit and his head in the game. So we've done some regional rides in the lead up to the WEG test event at Tryon in April. And it sure was a test. The Irish team rode together and it was faster than I normally ride my first loop. Between that and the stress of the environment Baz tied up. We learned what not to do and how to avoid as much stress as possible and how to be a little bit more organized. I am in the process of making some subtle changes in his diet also.



Photo Credit: [USEF.org](http://USEF.org)

We are back on track with training now, so wish us luck for the big dance!

Cheer on all of our endurance friends from all over the WORLD!!!!

# From the Editor:

**Who Was That?**  
**-Stephanie Langefeld**

During the summer of 2010, I took a job as the Animal Activities Director for Aldersgate Camp in Ravenna Kentucky. Amy Whalen long time endurance rider provided horses for the camp to use during the summer. I had never heard of Endurance before meeting her. **But, Amy was enthusiastically optimistic that I would love it, if I tried just one ride. Try a 25 miler she said, it will be fun, you can take enough ibuprofen to get you through...Welp, I LOVED IT.** Shortly after my first ride, my career as a nurse sent me packing all over the United States traveling to different hospitals when they needed extra staff. They call this "travel nursing". My initial plan was to travel to a huge list of states. No boyfriend, no husband, no kiddos, no dog, I could go anywhere and do anything... **But then I met and fell in love with a horse named Indian Aura (Indy), I choose horse over travel, and my traveling nurse days were over..** Owned by Bob and Beth Marshall I met Indy (and Bob and

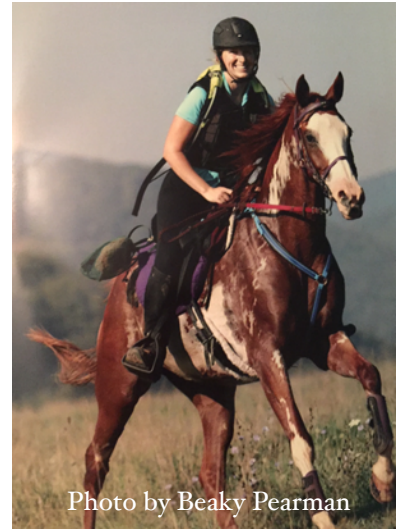


Photo by Beaky Pearman

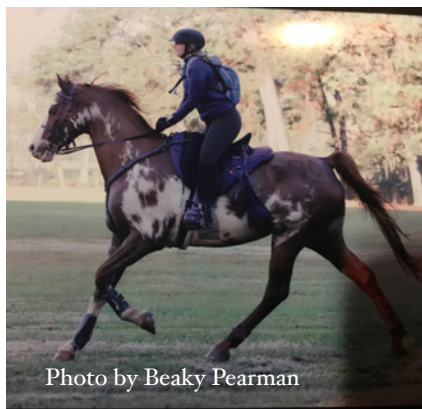


Photo by Beaky Pearman

Beth) for the first time at Iron Mountain Jubilee August of 2016. In 2017 Indy and I completed over 500 Endurance Miles together, 11 consecutive finishes, and countless training miles. Indy herself has over 2000 Endurance Miles with a number of different riders. It became comical to me at each ride we would go to people would say "Hi

Indy!", "Oh there is Indy", "How is Indy?". Then it hit me, everyone knew who "Indy" was, but no one seemed to know or remember who I was. I was training a grey gelding for someone recently at the Biltmore Estate, and as I was riding away I heard one of the women say, "who was that". So, here is your chance to get to know your interim editor and the girl who rides the pretty horse... See you on trail!

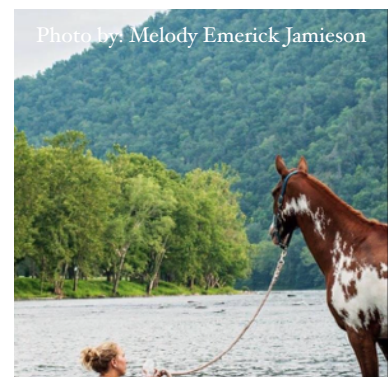


Photo by Melody Emerick Jamieson

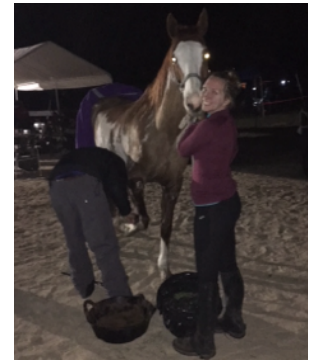


**My name is Stephanie,** I was born and raised and live in the Mountains of Asheville North Carolina. Like many of us, it was love at first sight when I met my first horse. On my first birthday I was given a rocking horse that made real horse sounds... But mom really made a mistake when she let me *ride my first real horse* (with the aid of my cousin). Mingo was his name. He was my Aunts Tennessee Walker, who was living at my Grandma and Grandpa's. From there on it was near impossible to keep me from being around horses... If my parents only knew all the times I had



snuck out to a barn to brush a horse. Good thing my Aunt had her saddle hidden away, because I'm pretty sure I was determined enough that I would have figured a way to saddle the horse no matter how small I may have been! My determination to work with horses has led me to some exciting

careers and experiences like; being a Wrangler in the Grand Tetons, working on a thoroughbred race horse farm in Lexington Kentucky, riding intercollegiate Saddle Seat in college, and volunteering for Central Kentucky Riding for Hope. When I'm not riding, I'm working as a nurse at Mission Hospital. Fun fact, when I was in college learning to become a people nurse I worked at Rood and Riddle Equine Hospital as a "horse nurse" in their medicine barns (learned a ton!). I've contemplated going back to school for my Family/Pediatric Nurse Practitioner. But, who has the time for that when you can be riding? As I said before, Indy has convinced me that my travel nurse days are over, so I am currently shopping for a small farm of my own here in Asheville. My ultimate dream career would be owning and operating a therapeutic riding program for at risk youth.



**Favorite Band:** Dixie Chicks/  
Jennifer Nettles

**Favorite Color:** Purple

**Favorite Sport Team:** University of  
Kentucky

**Favorite Beverage:** Cab Sav

**Hobbies:** Hiking, Camping, Skiing, Traveling, Cooking, Growing Flowers

**Favorite quote:** "Strength doesn't come from what you CAN do. It comes from OVERCOMING what you once thought you couldn't."- Unknown

**Beach or Mountains:** Mountains

**Favorite Movie:** The Notebook..close  
second.. Top Gun

**Favorite Actress:** Reese Witherspoon

**Favorite vacation:** Seward Alaska



## Ride Fatalities

Troy J. (Ike) Nelson, DVM

Necropsy is the term used for autopsy of an animal. An autopsy is a highly specialized surgical procedure that consists of a thorough examination of a corpse by dissection to determine the cause and manner of death or to evaluate any disease or injury for research or educational purposes. (1) We are going to talk about this even though we all hate to think about it. I hope you, personally, never have to consider having one done on your horse because of an issue that starts or happens at a ride. Unfortunately, it does happen, not very often, but more than any of us want. For endurance being the extreme sport it is, the fatality rate is actually pretty low.

We are talking about this because we need to know more!! AERC, the vet committee and the welfare of the horse committee have been collecting data for a number of years in an effort to understand the problems associated with our sport. We need more information and having a necropsy done on the horses that die is one of the best ways to garner that information.

Sometimes the information we get from a necropsy supports what the treatment vet thought was happening. But other times we get information that sheds a different light on things. There was a ride in the past year where this was the case. With permission from the rider/owner here is an account of what happened.

“K” was an 8 year old Arabian gelding who had been extensively conditioned prior to competing in his first ride. His owner/rider has 2410 endurance miles and 245 LD miles and has been competing in AERC rides for over 15 years. K completed the 55 mile ride in 7 hours and 57 minutes over a mostly flat course of packed sand with temps in the high 60s. K had a history of 3 previous colic episodes, with one of those requiring a 5 day stay on fluids in the hospital to resolve an impaction. K ate and drank well during the ride but at the finish he was very tired with a mild to moderate decrease in gut sounds. Back at his trailer he did not want to eat. He did want to lay down (not rolling). About 1 ½ hours after completing, the owner brought him back to the vet check area to have him looked



at. His heart rate was in the mid 40s, and he was mildly dehydrated with very slow gut sounds. The treatment vet passed a nasogastric tube, did not obtain reflux, and administered oral electrolytes and water. His heart rate remained in the mid 40s but he developed reflux within a couple of hours. At this point he was referred to an equine hospital for evaluation/treatment. He was diagnosed with an impaction by rectal palpation and abdominal ultrasound. After discussing treatment options with the owner the decision was made to

ethanize K. A necropsy was performed and the post-mortem diagnosis was granulomatous, locally extensive, enteritis.

Basically there was a stricture in the jejunum that had caused the impaction. The nodules of the granulomatous growth circumferentially affected about 75% of the intestine partially occluding the lumen. Histopathology revealed the primary cause of the stricture was a fungal like organism consistent with Pythium or Lagendium sp. These organisms are found in warmer climates primarily in wet areas. This finding also potentially explained the previous colic episodes.

The information from this case makes it clear that in some cases it was not just the stress of competition that caused the problem. It is for this and other reasons that we need for you to step up and help us gather more data should you be faced with a decision to have a necropsy performed.

AERC is behind us all the way in helping to gather this data. If you should have to consider this, keep in mind that AERC will pay up to \$300 for a necropsy to be performed on a horse fatality associated with a ride. You can have them billed directly or you can pay for it and be reimbursed. Please call the office at 866-271-2372 if the need arises.

(1)quoted from Wikipedia



**The Southeast Endurance Riders Association (SERA)** 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. The area served by SERA consists of the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. SERA uses the rules for endurance riding as set forth by the American Endurance Ride Conference. SERA supports the Principles for Equestrian Trail Organizations.