



# SERA NEWSLETTER

SOUTHEAST ENDURANCE RIDERS ASSOCIATION

## SERA CONVENTION ISSUE

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## Newsletter editor-

Nancy Sluys

## President's Message

Happy 2018 Season!

Here's hoping you have either already been to a ride or have one on your sites.

We in the SERA region have a wonderful array of rides to pick from. From flat can be fast rides to mountainous challenging rides, we really have it all.



SERA started off the New Year in grand style at the Convention held at Amicalola State Park Lodge January 12 and 13, 2018. If you weren't able to attend, let me just say you missed a fabulous time all the way around. We had outstanding speakers, from Dr. Jose Castro who kept everyone entertained for 3 (!) hours, to the requested repeat performance by Lara Worden on Nutrition and analyzing feed, to Clare Summers and Rachel Land making us all jealous of their Mongolian Derby experience, to Meg Sleeper's secret weapons for Endurance. Then, of course, there was the usual celebrating at the awards and banquet and dance party. Also this year we were able to raise an amazing amount of money to beef up the general fund coffers. Thanks to everyone who donated and participated in the in house silent auction and the online auction. A huge shout out of thanks to Stephanie Langefeld who created and managed the platform online, and to Laurie Underwood who came up with this brainchild.

I hope if you've never been you'll consider next years' Convention: it's a chance to socialize with all your peeps without the scurry of a ride. And learn a few things. Next year's Convention is January 18 and 19, 2019 held again at the Amicalola State Park Lodge.

A reminder: If you haven't renewed your membership to SERA, please do so. We need and appreciate every member. If your dues are current as of March 1, all your points count toward year end awards. You can renew online via our Paypal account on our website: [seraonline.org](http://seraonline.org).

## President's Message continued....

Looking ahead.....

2018 promises to be one heck of a year for endurance. We have the AHA Region 12 50 mile Championship to be held at Big South Fork September 8, 2018, the AERC National Championships in our region, to be held at the Biltmore Estate on September 20 and 22, 2018, the AHA Distance Horse National Championship ride to be held in conjunction with Spook Run in Henryville IN on October 26, 27, 28. The AHA has sanctioned with SERA for this ride, so all your points will count toward year end awards. AND if all that isn't enough, we have the World Equestrian Games in our backyard at Tryon NC. The test trial will be held April 26-28, 2018. The Games start September 11, 2018 and last until September 23, 2018. You can find more details at the website:

[tryon2018.com](http://tryon2018.com).

So best of luck to everyone as you get your year underway and thanks for making the Southeast the best region!!

Sudi  
SERA President

**TIME TO RENEW!!!!**

**SERA Needs You!**

**Please take a moment to renew or become a member!**

**You can renew online at**

**[Seraonline.org](http://Seraonline.org)**

**Individual membership is \$25 Family is \$30**

**Thank you!**

## EDITORS LETTER -

Hi Folks, Here we are easing into another endurance ride season. This year looks bright for me as all my current mounts are sound and going down the trail. Sure hope I didn't jinx anything by saying that! My year did start off with a pull at Gator Run but mostly that was my fault and didn't compromise my horse Snap. I went into the ride with a back injury and thought I could tough it out but my poor riding caused Snap to have to compensate. Lesson learned here (again!!). Snap will have another chance at South Mountain with another rider while I bring my solid mare, Zanie, back into competition after 2 years. I

hope to have her fit and ready for the AERC National Championship 100 in the fall. To start off and get back into the swing of things we did an LD at Take No Prisoners. The trails were very muddy and I wanted to ease her back into competition with little impact and to just see where she was at, since we hadn't been able to condition much due to bad winter weather. I rode with friend Holly Schenk and her mare, Rushcreek Cloudy. We kept a nice steady and careful pace on the first loop, increasing the energy a bit on the second loop for a good training workout. She felt solid, sound and ready and we were surprised with a top 10 finish and I had my answer that Zanie was ready to make a comeback!

I'm spending lots of time training the mules, Danny and April, and they are teaching me so much! You cannot rush a mule, they will tell you when they are ready. Look for Danny on the trail this year starting with Leatherwood, from there I'll see where he takes me!

I'm looking forward to lots of miles on the SERA trail and you will have to keep guessing on who I'm going to show up to ride on!! I look forward to many adventures and will write about them but I hope some of you want to write about your adventures too so I can keep this newsletter varied. I could really use some help filling these pages! So..... if you have a great ride, an awful ride, a tough ride, a fun ride, met some great folks, etc,etc. go ahead and jot it down and send it in to me at [minglewood@surry.net](mailto:minglewood@surry.net)

Thanks and Happy Trails, Nancy Sluys - SERA Newsletter Editor



photo by Becky Pearman

**Please help me out by sending me some contributions to this newsletter!! It is a community effort and everyone would love to read your story!! It can be about a ride, experience on the trail, a tip you want to share with others, or a story about your amazing horse. Thanks y'all!!**

**Please send stuff to me at : [minglewood@surry.net](mailto:minglewood@surry.net)**



## SERA Convention Recap by Laurie Underwood, photos by Miles Cary

I don't think I've missed attending an SERA Convention since I joined SERA in 2001. I have seen Convention from all angles - as an attendee, as a planner and the last couple of years, as a former planner who still has some involvement in the party planning. It is easy to take Convention for granted when you don't see all of the behind the scenes planning, hiccups, headaches and decision making involved. There are so many moving parts! Big shout out to Sudi Lenhart and Jana Smith who have been planning this party for the last 3 years, to Ike Nelson who has been ordering awards for probably 7 years, and to Nina Barnett, our extremely quick and efficient points keeper, for keeping score. You all have taken the Convention to the next level!

The Convention for the 2017 ride season was held at Amicalola Falls State Park in Dawsonville, Georgia, which is a gorgeous venue at the top of the Georgia mountains. Even with fog and rain the views are stunning. Convention officially kicked off at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, January 12, 2018 with three extraordinary presentations by Dr. José Castro of the University of Tennessee.



Convention officially kicks off on Friday, January 12, 2018 with three extraordinary presentations by Dr. José Castro of the University of Tennessee.

I normally am unable to sit through 3 straight hours of anything, let alone a lecture, but Dr. Castro managed to combine his talks on diagnosing lameness, back injuries and acupuncture with charm, good humor and great information. I hope he agrees to come back!

Sudi and Jana added a Friday night get together to the normal Convention line up. It's like a pre-party to the Saturday night main event, and I wish I had thought of doing it. New blood, new ideas - change can be a beautiful thing.



*Bonni & Gary Hannah - Friday Night Cocktails*



*Ginee Ritter & Jana Smith - Friday Night Cocktails*

On Saturday we had to pause the fun to get to down to business. Sudi presided over the SERA members meeting and Susan Kasemeyer and Duane Barnett kept us up to date on the latest and greatest news in AERC.

Back to more fun. The Southeast had FOUR riders attempt the Mongol Derby in 2017 (Logue Williams, Julia Fisher, Clare Summers and Rachel Land). Clare and Rachel finished the epic, 630+ mile journey on semi feral ponies, and they treated us to a slide show with some Go Pro video of one part of the wild ride and some very interesting and entertaining stories. Note: I could have lived without the close up shot of the sheep parts dinner!

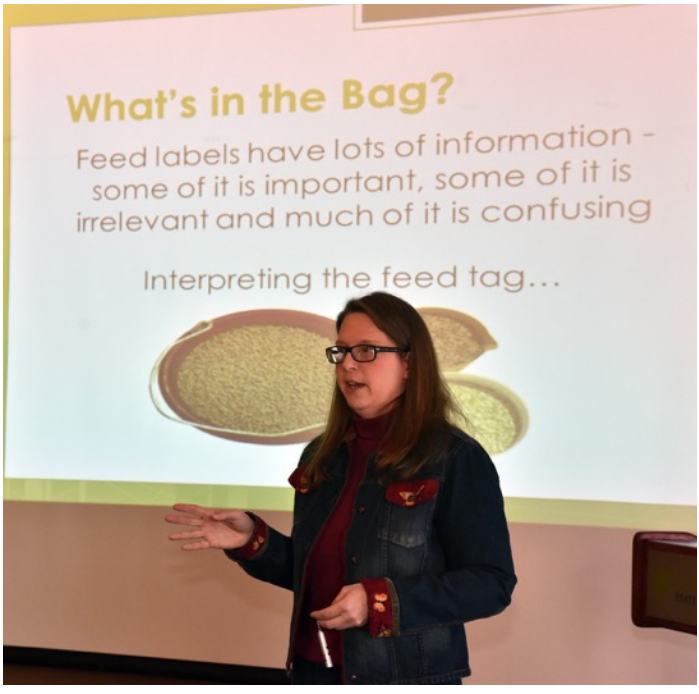
Clare has over 11,000 miles with 14 1 day 100s. She thinks nothing of riding a 50 on day 1, followed by a 100 on day 2, and makes it look easy. She is definitely one of the toughest riders in South Carolina.

Rachel was the SERA Freshman Rider of the Year in 2016. She already has 330 miles, including 2 one-day 100s. Rachel must be tough if Clare is her mentor!



Susan Kasemeyer and Duane Barnett

Lara Worden - "What's In The Bag?". NOW I understand what you've been trying to share with us on Facebook! Lara is a "science girl" who has a Master's in Animal Nutrition and is an Area Agricultural Agent for the Gaston County, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. Lara has over 2,800 miles, including 2 1-day 100s, and 1,500 LD miles.







Meg Sleeper, DVM, shares her considerable knowledge and expertise explaining Exercise Physiology/Conditioning for Endurance. Meg has over 14,000 miles, has completed 71 one-day 100s in the US and has competed as a part of the US Squad for the United States in international competition, to include the World Equestrian Games.

Sometime last year Sudi and I decided we would hold a silent auction fundraiser for SERA. I had an idea that we would ask for tack donations and auction them at convention. It didn't take long the donations started coming in. Before long I half-jokingly told Sudi that I was going to need to rent a van in order to bring all of the donated items to the Convention site. Wednesday before Convention I had some serious doubts about how I was going to fit everything in my car. It was close - and had I been pulled over for a traffic violation, it would have been interesting because accessing my registration would have required unpacking my car! We also had several donations which required no shipping and we decided to auction them online. How hard could it be, right? I was thinking we could do it through Facebook or email, which turned out to be complicated and impractical. Thankfully Sudi had already asked Stephanie Langefeld if she would help us keep track of the auctioning on Saturday during the meetings and guest speakers. Stephanie rocked it! She figured out the bidding site, then uploaded the online items and started the process. We watched the bidding wars unfold before Convention, and could not believe our eyes. SERA members and nonmembers alike were bidding like mad. At Convention there were also some serious bidding wars going on over the onsite items. When it was all said and done, the SERA silent auction raised a little over \$3,000! The other amazing thing that happened came via a surprise from Eric Rueter. At the end of the SERA members' meeting on Saturday, Eric stood up and quietly announced that the Knoxville Arabian Horse Club, which has long been big a part of putting on the Big South Fork ride, decided to donate \$2,000 to SERA. He handed the check to Tamra, and it got real quiet for a moment as we sat there in stunned silence. Thank you KAHC!!



The party kicked into high gear on Saturday evening with awards, dinner and then The Men of Soul. My personal favorite part of awards this year came at the end when Sudi named Carol Thompson as the Lawton Johnston Award recipient. We started working on this idea at the end of summer last year, and Susan Kasemeyer was our willing co-conspirator. Carol lives in the Daytona Beach, Florida area, and that is a long way from Amicalola Falls. Susan was instrumental in getting Carol to Convention, and it was so much fun seeing her win this award. Samm Bartee and I have long considered Carol to be our “secret” weapon. She is our night owl who stays up for the 100s, and her willing heart brings her to almost every endurance ride the Southeast has to offer.



Lawton Johnson Award  
Winner  
Carol Thompson



If you didn't attend, see what and who you missed! Put this one on your calendar for 2019. If you did attend, thank you for coming. I may be prejudiced, but I am convinced that the Southeast is the best region in AERC. Y'all make that happen.

*Susan Kasemeyer and Sudi Lenhart- the heart of SERA!*



**SERA AWARDS RECIPIENTS - 2017 RIDE SEASON**

**100 Mile Club**

Clare Summers on Mardi Gras Tuesday

**Bronze Level 100 Mile Achievement Winner**

Jane Moss and Streak AfireTTF

**Silver Level 100 Mile Achievement Winner**

Cheryl Van Deusen on Hoover the Mover

**Best Condition - Open Division**

Hoover the Mover and Cheryl Van Deusen

**Consistent Condition - Open Division - SPONSORED BY RUNNING BEAR – TEDDY LANCASTER**

Chico (owned and ridden by Jane Lee)

**Limited Distance Best Condition – SPONSORED BY BAREFOOT RIDES - AUBREE BECKER**

Indabah and Melissa Hamilton

**65 PLUS – SPONSORED BY LARRY MITCHELL**

Jane Larrimore

**Open Mileage Champion**

Streak Afire TTF and Jane Moss

**Reserve Open Mileage Champion**

PW September Hero +/- and Patsy Gowen

**Limited Distance Mileage Champion – SPONSORED BY JANA SMITH IN MEMORY OF STEFFANIE WADDINGTON:**

Pocita De Cosa Dulce and Lindsay Campbell

**Top Ten Open Division**

1. Cheryl Van Deusen
2. Clare Summers
3. Annie Whelan
4. Jane Moss
5. Sudi Lenhart
6. Tina Cochran
7. Nicki Meuten
8. Claire Godwin
9. Erin Champion
10. Bonni Hannah



Clare Summers  
11,000 Mile Award



Alisa Waxman -  
6000 Mile Award



Sudi Lenhart - Top 10 Open



Claude Brewer 14,000 Mile Award

**Top Five Limited Distance**

1. Melissa Hamilton
2. Lindsay Campbell
3. Dana Reeder
4. Elise Rogers
5. Sarah Hunt



**Freshman Horse of the Year - SPONSORED BY DAN HALLMAN**

Royce (owned and ridden by Sarah Hunt)

**Freshman Rider of the Year – SPONSORED BY FOSTER OLSON AND LELA NIELSEN**

Megan Grant

**Freshman Rider of the Year -- Reserve– SPONSORED BY FOSTER OLSON AND LELA NIELSEN**

Maddie Rogers

**JUNIOR AWARDS**

**Junior Grand Champion – SPONSORED BY LORI NELSON**

Reine Pagliaro

**Open Distance Champion**

Abbey Kay Moore

**Limited Distance Champion**

Savannah Sheppard

4th Place - Maddie Rogers

5th Place - Aubrey Williams

6th Place - Emma Lakatosh



Elyse Rogers- Top 10 LD



Freshman Horse of the Year - Royce- Ridden by Sara Hunt

**10 Consecutive Finishes**

Streak Afire TTF (owned by Jane Moss) Coup (owned by Gayle King)

Spirit (owned by Tina Cochran)

Ariannah (owned and ridden by Jen Cleere)

Rockette Survivor (ridden by Lela Nielsen)

MA Jaxxon (owned by Jane Larrimore)

Rusty (owned and ridden by Dan Hallman)

Fine Tune (ridden by Vickie Stine)

Chico (owned and ridden by Jane Lee) Pocita de Cosa Dulce (ridden by Lindsay Campbell)

Koweta Call Me Dakari (owned and ridden by Kim Williams)

Southern Motion (owned and ridden by Terry Price)

PW September Hero +/- (owned by Patsy Gowen)

Skyfall Micah (ridden by Theresa Carroll)

RA Cash the Check (owned by Joni Burden)

Hoover the Mover (owned by Cheryl Van Deusen)



**350 Miles in a Season**

- Jane Larrimore and MA Jaxxon
- Clare Summers and Mardi Gras Tuesday
- Cheryl Van Deusen and Hoover the Mover
- Jane Lee and Chico
- Sarah Hunt and Royce
- Kathy Torgesen and Jasmine(3)
- Caroline Guy and Grey Hawk

**Lawton Johnston Award**

Carol Thompson



Stagg Newman - 9000 mile Award



Jane Lee - Consistant Condition Award



Terry Price - 10 Consecutive Finishes



Jane Larrimore & MA Jaxxon-  
65 Completions in a Row!!



Jen Cleere- 10 Consecutive Finishes



## MY FIRST 100 by Gwen Douty

I can be a knucklehead; therefore, when I announced my intention to try and ride a horse for 100 miles to my family, they stared at me in disbelief and then asked "why". Why? Good question! I wonder about this myself, because I seem to have a very strange reaction to competitive events. I bonk. For those of you unfamiliar with bonk, it is simply when your body either physically, mentally, or both, shuts down during extreme stress. My first LD: bonk. My first 50: bonk. My first 75: bonk. I bonk when I run, I bonk when I cycle. It's so common for me to bonk after a ride that my friends bought me a bumper sticker that reads: "ride till you puke". Very funny- unless you are the one losing your cookies every time. It's frustrating! But despite this, try this I will!

My friend Hilary Tuttle agrees to crew for me, and we proceed to devise a plan to give us the best chance of succeeding. Hilary suggests that I don't trot my own horse out for the vet so I can conserve my energy, and I agree. We find out when we get to ride camp that the 100 will have 4 vet checks with holds in camp, and 4 away stop and go's with trot by's. We decide to crew from the back of the truck, so Hilary can easily drive back and forth between the away and the in-camp vet checks. We get everything ready and I'm feeling pretty good about things. My friend, Sudi Lenhart, and her friend Susan Wilson (now my new friend too) ask me if I would like to do a warm up ride with them, and I agree. It's hard to make myself do a warm up ride, but I have never regretted doing one. It seems to settle the horse. We rode the 6-mile loop that would be the final loop for the 100, I felt like it would be good to be familiar with that stretch of the course. When we were finished riding, Hilary and I had dinner. When it came time for the ride meeting, both Hilary and I realized we were really tired, and asked Sudi if she minded getting all the info from the meeting for us, so we could go ahead and go to bed. It was only 630! I should have realized something was up, because this was certainly not normal for either of us! Both Hilary and I woke up around midnight with terrible headaches. We took Tylenol and went back to bed. My alarm went off at 430 am, and I got up and started the coffee. Gotta have coffee. When the coffee was ready, Hilary got up to join me. Then she says, "Gwen I don't think I feel good!" then follows with, "I have to go back to bed, do you have a bucket I think I will be sick." And sick she was, she was white as a sheet! I was thinking uh-oh, this is bad. I tell her not to worry and to get some rest, hopefully she would feel better soon!

Now it's time to tack up. It's still dark, the sun won't be up for a while. I talk to my horse, Dako, and he nuzzles me. He is calm. Me- not so much. I decide to walk him around to calm myself, and I check in with Nancy Gooch. She gives me a cheerful "Good morning Gwen!" which makes me smile. I take Dako over to my handy dandy mounting block, which happens to be a stump, and mount up. After a few minutes warm up, the trail is open. I fall in behind Sudi and Susan and we are off! After about 17 miles we come into the first stop and go. Hilary is there! I was so happy to see her! She still didn't look so good though. Dako got a snack, some electrolytes, and a quick scratch, and we were off again. Dako was doing amazing; sailing through the vet checks with CRI's of 48/52, pulsing in as soon as his tack was off. Through all of this, Hilary was there. She took care of everything. She took care of that horse as if he were her own. She knew what she was doing, and I trusted her completely. After about 84 miles we came into the last stop and go. Only 16 miles left! I got off of my horse to make a pit stop, and all of a sudden, I realized my arms wouldn't quite work right, and my knees started bobbing up and down shaking uncontrollably. Oh no, the dreaded bonk! I give Hilary the heads up, and she tells me I don't look so good. I tell her it's a good thing it's just 16 more miles! At this point I still had a sense of humor. I spent the next few miles trying to breathe deeply and tell myself "I can do this" over and over. When we got to camp for the last vet hold, Hilary is there. She tells me to go straight to the trailer and rest. Unfortunately, I could not make it there! I just folded up with my head down, trying not to pass out. Every muscle was trembling, and nothing was working right. Someone (I think it was Nancy Gooch) brought

me a chair and some water. I sat with my head between my knees until I felt like I could make it to the trailer. Hilary told me she'd give a 10-minute warning for my out time. I said, "he vetted through?" She says, "of course!". I moaned. I spent the next 30 minutes trying to figure out if I needed to puke, crap, or pass out, or all three. Then it was time to get on. It was like a death march; my mantra over and over was "please don't puke, please don't crap". I got up on the handy dandy mounting block for the eighth time and wobbled. Hilary reached out and steadied me. I got on. Hilary led me to the out timer. She says if she has to lead me the last 6 miles she will. I'm touched. I look down at my horse's mane in the moonlight, and I say it might come to that.

I hear the out timer say you're clear to go. My horse's head comes up, his ears give a little twitch. I feel his body come alive under me, he gives a snort and he asks me "can we go?". Sudi and her horse are disappearing around the corner. And then a little tiny dragon in my chest wakes up and breathes out a little puff of smoke, which travels up the back of my neck, making all the tiny hairs stand up. I let out a growl as this little dragon grew, and all the hairs on my head stood straight up as I told Dako, "Yes! Yes, you can go!" and go he did! We came up on Sudi and she says "I thought you weren't gonna make it!" to which I replied, "Yes ma'am I'm gonna make it!" Then we proceeded to ride the longest 6 miles of my life! Sudi tells me singing sometimes helps. I start to feel panicky because I can't remember the words to ANY songs. Then suddenly, I can remember the words to 'Amazing Grace' which I sing softly under my breath over and over. Dako flicks his ear back; he's listening. After a time, Sudi says we are about a mile and a half from the finish. I ask, "can we canter?" she replies, "what? really?". So, we cantered in! Once we could see the lights, I just started yelling! "We made it!" Hilary was there to take my horse. She also had arranged transport back to the trailer. I could not walk. I had to sit in the truck for 30 minutes before I could even get to the trailer. Once I got in the trailer, I laid on the floor for I don't know how long. Then I crawled into bed. I had absolutely nothing left. Nothing. Done.

Why? Well, for me, it's about love. True love. You find out when you push yourself to your limits about love. How much you love your horse. How a friend can love you enough to do everything in her power to help you succeed. How other people can help you, and how much you can love someone just for giving you a chair and some water; or driving you to your trailer and patting you on the back. This is what endurance is to me, so this is why when my sister asked me if it was out of my system now, I said "heck no" and started planning my next ride!





# Gator Run by Nancy Sluys

After enduring the coldest January we can remember in North Carolina we decided to have a well deserved midwinter Florida getaway. We packed the trailer and loaded up a horse, dog, kayaks, motorcycle for the hubby and hooked up with a few friends (one of which was endurance buddy, Holly Schenk) for a caravan to the tropics! We planned a two week adventure of camping, paddling and riding with the Gator Run Endurance Ride at the end.

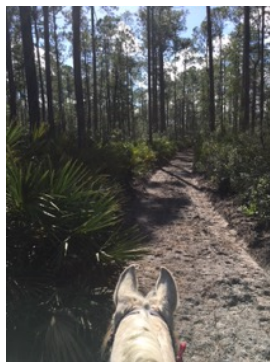
Our first stop was River Rise Horse Camp at Oleno State Park in High Springs, Florida which is a fabulous camp right on the Santa Fe River with a fabulous trail system as well. Th riders spent the morning on the trail and then we would all get on the river for the rest of the day. We were also visited by Bill’s sisters who live further south. They stayed at a B&B in town and that was the perfect situation.

After about 5 days we headed further south to the Cross Florida greenway where we stayed at the Shangra-la Horse Camp. We really enjoyed the trails at the Greenway with the interesting, hilly terrain and loved crossing the land bridge over I-75. We also enjoyed kayaking on the Silver River although we encountered the only rain on our whole trip. Somehow rain doesn’t seem so bad when you are on the river and we had a beautiful paddle, even spotting a manatee.

By the time we made it to the ride site we felt that our horses were getting pretty used to the sand. Sand is something that I just cannot train for in the mountains of NC and it always worries me. It’s hard for me to judge when and how much to walk since there is nothing in the way to slow you down. I was recovering from a back injury and still had a good bit of sciatica that I was dealing with. Being a head strong endurance rider I brushed it aside and entered the 50 mile ride.

It was here that I had to learn a lesson that I should have already learned from past experience but like I said, I’m hard headed sometimes!! As the ride started I felt pretty good but as the long (21 mile) first loop wore on my back and hip started to hurt pretty bad and I’m sure it was affecting my riding. We came into the first vet check and Snap vetted through just fine but when I started out on my second loop I could feel that he was a little stiff in the rear. My back was screaming at that point so I turned around and pulled from the ride. I feel like my compromised riding was compromising my horse as well. I need to put a little sign in my trailer that says “if you ain’t right, don’t ride!” or at least drop down to an easier distance! Lesson earned once again!

**Scenes from Gator Run**  
**photos by Nancy Sluys**





**Southeast Endurance Riders Association, Inc.**  
**Members' Meeting Minutes**  
**Amicalola Falls State Park, Dawsonville, Georgia**  
**January 13, 2018**

Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President, Sudi Lenhart, at 9:02 a.m.

State of the Organization – Sudi Lenhart

- The Southeast is the best region. We have the best riders, vets and timers.
- Special thanks to the Southeast region's ride managers
- Sudi announces a door prize drawing, with the prize being a rope halter. Maddie Rogers does the honors - Erika Noble is the winner.
- SERA is having a silent auction fundraiser which will be both onsite and online.
- Our membership
  - In 2016 we had 197 members
  - In 2017, our membership was down a bit at 176 members
  - As of 12/30/2017, we have 68 members for 2018
  - SERA would like its membership to grow, and a key to that is for current members to encourage and welcome new people to join.
- We had 29 SERA sanctioned rides in 2017
  - The breakdown of rides per state:
    - Florida = 7
    - South Carolina = 6
    - North Carolina = 5
    - Tennessee = 2
    - Virginia = 4
    - Georgia = 1
    - Mississippi = 1
    - Alabama = 3
  - The breakdown of rides per distance or type:
    - LD = 28
    - 50s = 27
    - 75s = 8
    - 100s = 6
    - 2-Day 100s = 1
    - Pioneer- 1

- There were 2,650 AERC riders in the Southeast with a 79.4% completion rate
- AERC recognized the following SERA horse and rider teams as Decade Teams:
  - Nelia Rueter and Cherwona
  - Shana Hall and Thorn
  - Kim Williams and Mystiq Temptation (Temp)
  - Trish Harrop and LT Bright Patch Joker (Joker)
  - Patsy Gowen and PW September Hero+/ (Hero)
  - Claire Godwin and PL Mercury (Merc)
- SERA member Jane Moss and Streak Afire TTF (Boz) have been named to the Irish National Team for the 2018 WEG.

### Old Business

- Bandana Program
  - Sudi Lenhart- thinks the green bandanas are working well and make a difference.
  - Sudi - seeks input regarding the orange bandanas, and asks the membership if they agree that the orange bandana program is not productive.
    - The majority of the members present agree that the orange bandana program is not productive.
    - The orange bandana program will be discontinued.
    - Vance Stine - asks how long a rider should wear a green bandana.
    - Sudi Lenhart - as long as that person thinks they are a new rider.
    - Nolan Whitesell - a green bandana indicates that a rider is seeking additional advice.
- SERA Promotion Speech - SERA sanctioned rides
  - Sudi Lenhart - it is important to advertise SERA at rides, and thanks anyone who has given "the speech".
- New Locations for Convention
  - Sudi Lenhart - we have explored new locations for the SERA Convention, to include Nashville, Knoxville, Chattanooga and South Carolina.
  - We are unable to find anything comparable to the Georgia State parks.
  - The hotel rooms are reasonable at most venues, but the meeting rooms and food costs are not.
  - SERA conducted a survey after the Convention which was held in 2017 and determined that the respondents fell into two categories: those who are happy with the Amicalola venue and those who are unable to attend Convention no matter where it is located.

### New Business

- SERA has a new Facebook page
  - Sudi Lenhart thanks Laurie Underwood for launching the page.

- Member Renewals
  - Sudi Lenhart - postcards to each member to remind them to renew.
  - Cheryl Newman - suggests that postcards be mailed after the SERA Convention.
  - Tamra Williams - snail mail of reminders is important.
  - Nina Barnett - people need to be reminded that they must renew by March 1 in order to for their rides from December 1 - February 28 to count.
- Officer Elections
  - The current officers are:
    - President - Sudi Lenhart
    - Vice President - Jane Moss
    - Secretary - Laurie Underwood
    - Treasurer - Tamra Williams
  - A motion was made by Larry Mitchell that all the current officers be nominated for their present positions. Nina Barnett seconded the motion, which was passed by unanimous vote of the members present.
- Financial Report - given by Tamra Williams
  - Financial reports were distributed to the members.
- SERA Silent Auction Fundraiser
  - Sudi Lenhart - thanks Jana Smith, Laurie Underwood and Stephanie Langefeld for organizing the silent auction, and thanks to all for their generous donations of items to be auctioned.
- Kings Mountain State Park - Trails Grant - Vance Stine
  - The Friends of Kings Mountain hold a trails workday every third Saturday.
  - Getting power and water to the equestrian campground sites is on the agenda.
  - SERA's grant to The Friends of Kings Mountain helped clear and clean up the existing camp sites.
  - They are adding picnic tables to the Apple Road parking area.
  - A 17-mile loop was built with volunteer labor; SERA funds also helped to pay for renting a stump grinder.
- Door Prize Drawing
  - Maddie Rogers does the honors - Lauren Irwin wins the Chaffhaye, and Jane Larrimore wins the riding crop.
- 2018 National Championship Ride - Biltmore Estate
  - SERA donated funds for the volunteer t-shirts for the 2010 and 2012 National Championship rides
  - Cheryl Newman - requests SERA make a similar donation for the 2018 National Championship ride, which is good advertising for SERA
  - A motion was made by Bonni Hannah that SERA donate the funds for the volunteer t-shirts for the 2018 National Championship ride. Nina Barnett seconded the motion, which was passed by unanimous vote of the members present.
- WEG Volunteers
  - Sudi Lenhart - has submitted her application to volunteer on behalf of SERA, and encourages everyone to volunteer
  -



- Joe Schoech
  - The volunteer coordinator at Tryon has limited knowledge of the 8 disciplines involved
  - Joe talks to the volunteer coordinator about SERA volunteers on a regular basis
  - If you volunteer, you may or may not work in the endurance event
  - Joe and others will review the list and try to steer the placement of people but they have no say or control over the process
  - 
  - Susan Kasemeyer
  - Volunteered for endurance and other disciplines
  - She received a response that they were interested in her experience in eventing
  - Sudi had a similar experience
- AERC has formally adopted the Green Bean Program
  - Sudi Lenhart - describes the program and how it works
  - Elise Rogers - the GB program encourages mentoring
- SERA Newsletter.
  - Nancy Sluys has repeatedly asked for members to contribute content
  - Sudi Lenhart - would like the State Directors to contribute to the newsletter
  - Laurie Underwood - Nancy is going to run out of steam unless we help her. Please contribute!!!
- Sudi Lenhart - AERC Convention
  - SERA typically helps the SE Directors with a donation in the amount of \$750 per Director to help with their costs in attending the AERC Convention which the Directors personally pay for.
  - Duane Barnett - is stepping down this year as a SE Director, and Vance Stine is taking his place
  - Duane Barnett - is still on the Board until the end of convention, so we have three directors traveling
  - Duane Barnett - they discussed it amongst themselves and decided to split the total donation amount three ways
  - Larry Mitchell made a motion that SERA give \$750 each to Susan Kasemeyer, Duane Barnett and Vance Stine to help with their costs of attending the AERC Convention.
  - Cheryl Newman seconded the motion.
  - Patsy Gowen asks if SERA has the funds to follow through with Larry's motion; Tamra Williams confirms that we do
  - A vote of the members was taken and the motion passed.
- Eric Rueter - AHA Distance Nationals
  -

- Big South Fork 2017 was supposed to be an SERA benefit ride, but the ride made no money.
  - The Knoxville Arabian Horse Club and June and Lawrence Finchum have always been a big part of the Big South Fork Ride, and the members of the KAHC voted to donate \$2,000 to SERA in memory of Lawrence Finchum.
  - In 2018, Saturday's ride at Big South Fork will be the Region 12 Championship ride.
    - AHA recently made a massive payout. There have been changes to the Sweepstakes program and the payouts have almost tripled. The payout for Half Arabs is also separate from Arabs.
  - 2018 AHA Distance Nationals
    - The ride is being held on the Spook Run trails
    - Breeds currently represented are Arabian, Appaloosa, Paso Fino, Morgan, and Shagya
  - Cheryl Newman - The Standardbred breed association asked if they could be represented at the AERC National Championship ride; she believes the AHA Distance Nationals is the right venue.
  - They are also considering a limited distance championship ride with the following criteria:
    - The ride is a 3-day challenge
    - The horse and rider team must complete all three days
    - The pulse criteria will be 56 instead of 60
    - Points will be awarded
    - BC will use points instead of time
  - Eric Rueter - is no longer on the AHA Distance Commission
  - Sudi Lenhart - asks Eric if the ride would consider sanctioning with SERA. Eric will check.
- Fire at Anna Ayers' House
    - Sudi Lenhart - there was a fire at Anna Ayers' house. Anna, her dogs and her horses survived without injury. Anna lost her cat in the fire.
  - Vance Stine - Ideas on Growing our Membership
    - We need to tell SERA's story.
    - We should get a list of AERC members in the Southeast region and try to reach out to them.
    - Tamra Williams - we should do this by mid February since the renewal date deadline is March 1
    - Stephanie Langefeld - We could add new members to the newsletter, and spotlight them there.
    - Cheryl Newman - suggests creating poster boards that the State reps can take to the rides, along with member applications.
      - Lara Worden - we can purchase folding boards and attach displays with velcro
      - Stephanie Langefeld - will put boards together if someone sends the content to her.
      - Lara Worden - can order the boards and laminate.
      - Lara Worden and Stephanie Langefeld will work together on this.

- Blood Analyzer and Scales
  - Susan Kasemeyer
    - One of the benefits SERA offers to ride managers are the blood analyzer and the scales.
    - Nancy Gooch usually transports both scales and the blood analyzer to rides, and Susan has been helping get them to rides in Florida.
    - Susan Kasemeyer - asks the membership to step up and help with transporting the scales and blood analyzer to rides.
    - Thanks Jody Buttram for putting Facebook pressure on Leah Greenleaf to sanction her rides.
    - If Susan brings the blood analyzer to a ride, the vets or ride manager will need to arrange for someone else to operate it.
  - Terry Price - who can show people how to use the blood analyzer?
    - Tamra, Ike or Duane
  - Duane Barnett - it is not difficult to run. He tries to save used rotors to use for training. New rotors run \$25 - \$30 each.
  - Theresa Valliant
    - She isn't a veterinarian. She wants the treatment vet to run the blood analyzer instead of a non-vet.
  - Susan Kasemeyer - vets are the only ones permitted to draw blood, and they usually run what they draw. She knows of three vets with their own blood analyzers.
  - Nolan Whitesell
    - Does a blood analysis run by a vet with their own machine cost more? Do vets feel like they are competing with SERA's machine?
  - Eric Rueter - the blood sample can sit until needed if it is properly refrigerated and not an emergency.
- Door Prize Drawing
  - Maddie Rogers does the honors - Jana Smith wins the Himalayan salt on a rope.

The meeting was adjourned at 1010:01 a.m. by President Sudi Lenhart.

Submitted by Laurie Underwood, Secretary



## The Adventures of Danny & April

by Nancy Sluys

Back in the fall I set out on a journey with Danny the mule to ride the Big South Fork with an old friend and then pick up Danny's full sister April from Jody Buttram & Joni Burden in Alabama who had decided to sell her. A long time endurance rider, Jody bred had these two mules out of her good 100 mile mare Jets Gaelic Storme. She searched for two years to find a jack with the qualities she was looking for and the result was these two beautiful animals, born a year apart.

When we pulled up to Jody's farm to the field where April and her mother were, Danny recognized them immediately and started jumping around in the trailer as soon as he saw them from across the pasture. It had been at least 6 years since they had last been all together! I didn't let him out for fear of not getting him back on. When Jody went out in the pasture with a halter April ran off, suspecting something unusual, and she would not be caught. Finally Jody got Storme (April & Danny's mother) and led her out of the pasture with April following along behind. She led Storme into a small paddock and got April easily. On to the trailer she went and she and Danny were reunited. April's life was about to change. She was leaving the only home she had ever known for 10 years and her mother as well. I was glad she had Danny so she wouldn't be so homesick.

Once in her new home in North Carolina, she worked her way into the herd easily with her non-confrontational style. It was not so easy for me, though. She was sweet but aloof when I was brushing her and just hanging out but she was not willing to have me direct her. I started ground work as soon as we got home as I wanted her to understand that I was to be her new partner and that she had a job to do. She didn't take to kindly to it, being that she has just been ripped from her pastoral home on 30 acres of Alabama grass, living an easy life with her blood family. She had not been in use for the past couple of years and was happy and fat. Our first day in the round pen she tried to jump out crushing the old rusty gate. I put her on the rope and tried to longe her instead. She went ok for a few circles in one direction but when I turned her she put her head down and ran off like a bull, ripping the rope out of my hand and running back to the barn.



This was not going to be as easy as I thought. Even though she had been handled since birth, ridden extensively, completed 2 50s and had been Joni Burden's future Tevis mule, I realized I was going to have to go back to square one with her to win her trust. I went to the barn and put her back on the rope but lowered my energy and did my work closer to the barn. I quickened my timing to anticipate when she might try and break away and changed her direction often. After a while I felt her soften to it a bit and we called it a day. That first month she spent a lot of time trying to run off but we worked really hard and as my timing got better and I learned to listen to her, she started listening to me and every day things got a little better. She began to trust me to move her and our partnership began to build.

After about two weeks on the ground I went ahead and got on her back in the ring and rode her around and she was awesome under saddle. When I felt like she was starting to trust me on her back I took her out on the home trails with my neighbor and her horse along for company. All was fine and we had a wonderful ride around the neighborhood trails until we got to the place where my friend turned off towards her home. April spun and reared a few times trying to follow. I just kept with her and kept turning her towards home and she finally made the right decision and went forward. Mules can be challenging but it's fun to try and figure them out!

I tried to work with her in some way every day, even if I just got her out and brushed her. Soon she began looking for me when I came to the barn. I rode her more often, mostly in the ring but also out in the woods if I had a buddy to go along with me. We continued working on the ground and I invented all kinds of ways to keep her interested.

One day we set out on the trail just by ourselves for the first time but she was fearful and jumpy and tried to spin and get light in the front end at every turn towards the barn. I realized that she was quite barn sour and not used to being ridden alone so that's what we did, we just kept riding. The second time I went out in the woods with just April we went a few miles but then unexpectedly came upon my neighbor in the woods on her horse and we decided to ride together for a while. She had her blue heeler with her and the dog came running out of the brush suddenly. April shot forward and humped up, almost running into my friend's horse before she suddenly put on the brakes sending me to the ground on my butt! April still didn't quite trust me and that didn't help things at all!

They say that it takes a year for a mule to fully bond with you and I'm starting to believe it. When I ride Danny now he feels so solid and then I think back to a year ago and realize how far we have come together. April and I are just beginning to get to know each other so I am in no hurry. That is what the mules are teaching me, to take the time it takes. For now we are just riding and figuring each other out. Every day we get better together. I'll take her to the mountains this summer to condition and maybe you'll see us on the endurance trail come fall. If April says so!

Meanwhile Danny and I are getting ready for his first 50 this spring. We will probably start with an LD at Leatherwood then make his endurance debut at the Old Dominion No Frills ride. Now that is mule country!

Happy Mule Trails!





# Scenes from SERA Country

Dunns Creek



Photos by Becky Pearman



Photos 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](mailto:minglewood@surry.net)**

**Deadline for the next issue**

**April 15, 2018**

**Thank You, Nancy Sluys**

