

Marin Horse Council

2011 WINTER EQUINOX NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 109

Marin Horse Council | 171 Bel Marin Keys Blvd. | Novato, CA 94949 | 415.259.5783 | www.MarinHorseCouncil.org

From the Saddle

The Marin Horse Council is a central coalition of horse-oriented individuals, groups, businesses, and professionals striving to protect and preserve the equestrian presence in Marin County. The viability of our sport, our stables and trails, is on the line. This has been a busy year for MHC as we deal with various zoning, planning, environmental, open space and land use issues.

Just last month your Board unanimously approved a pledge of \$5,000 to the Marin Open Space Trust to help fund Marin County Open Space District's purchase of the Morrison property on Geronimo Ridge (see Delos Putz's story in our Fall Newsletter). The money is already in hand in MHC's "Save Our Trails Fund" and will be made available when it is clear that the purchase will be concluded. If the County is able to complete this purchase, the property would be added to the Giacomini Preserve and permanent public access to the Manzanita Fire Road would be assured.

When you ask people what they seek on a trail ride, most will sum it up as tranquility or serenity. Some will say they also like the exhilaration of an occasional gallop, but regardless you want a safe trail environment. MHC is committed to finding solutions that will reduce user conflicts on trails and provide a safe environment for all recreational users. To paraphrase Mrs. Patrick Campbell: "It doesn't matter what people do – so long as they don't do it on the trails and frighten the horses!"

On October 29, several on your Board attended the County of Marin's Road and Trail Management Plan workshop, the third in a series. Preliminary information from an ongoing user survey of County parks and preserves was presented. The Marin County Open Space District is developing a comprehensive Road and Trail Management Plan and Environmental Impact Report to direct future use and management of roads and trails on MCOSSD's 34 preserves. They are doing this through the process of community input, coupled with due diligence of regulatory requirements.

Your board also commented on the Marin Equestrian Stables Plan Environmental Assessment. This plan presents and evaluates alternatives to locate and improve the equestrian stables on lands administered by the National Park Service within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. We are especially glad that the draft preferred alternative chosen for public comment intends to keep horses at Miwok Stables, Presidio Riding Club and the Golden Gate Dairy Stables at Muir Beach.

New Website: Check out our web site, marinhorsecouncil.org. It has been completely redesigned and gives you current information about what is happening in the horse community.

Annual Horse Course: Mark your calendars for February 18, 2012 for this annual teaching and networking event held at the Marin Humane Society. Details to follow.

We Need You: Note the membership application inside the last page. If you are not already a member, please consider joining. Your membership is the horsepower that drives our organization.

We're just about to pop the cork on a new year. Go out, breathe deeply, and refresh yourself on nature. Keep in mind that we are a part of nature and not separate from it.

Make it a great 2012! - Joel Bartlett | *President, MHC*



Members enjoying MHC's Fall Ride & BBQ at Willow Tree Stables.

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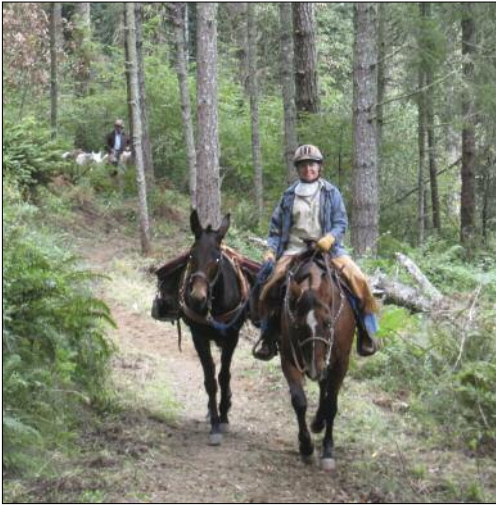
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OUT ON THE TRAIL



North Bay Back Country Horsemen getting the job done at Point Reyes National Park. Thank you BCHC!

Back Country Horsemen of America to the Rescue!

Most readers will recall an effort that commenced about three years ago involving raising about \$9000 to fund the purchase and placement of many new redwood picnic tables and tie rails throughout the Point Reyes National Seashore.

Installations were completed at Palo Marin, Coast Camp, Divide Meadow, the Estero Trailhead just to name a few, plus a new redwood picnic table installed in the parking and staging area in Taylor Park.

Much of the work was completed only with the assistance of BCHC/North Bay and Shawn Maloney, Trail Maintenance Supervisor at PRNS and my pals Garrett Jernigan and Steve Maass.

BCHC/North Bay recently worked with Shawn and his crew to bring pack rock to many areas of the Horse Trail that were wearing thin, using stock and demonstrating to the Park that horses and mules are viable for many uses aside from riding for sport.

Thanks to all at BCHC; especially to Dan Horn, Thor Bodker and Donna Meier.

- Sandy Greenblat

“God forbid that I should go to any heaven in which there are no horses.” - R.B. Cunningham-Graham letter to Theodore Roosevelt.

Pt. Reyes National Park Gravel Project

This fall, we were invited to demonstrate the use of Pack Stock in hauling some gravel to do trail repair work in the Wilderness Area of Point Reyes National Park. Donna Meier, Thor Bodtker and I went out on a Wednesday and met up with Shawn Maloney, trail maintenance supervisor for PT. Reyes NPS.

Donna and I brought only one saddle mount and one pack stock each. After a short orientation and the fitting, with laughter of a required helmet, we headed up to the work site.

Donna and I rode up the trail, while Thor, Shawn and the trail crew drove to a location that provided them a down hill walk to the gravel pile.

The gravel pile had been dumped there many years before that area was added to the Wilderness. Shawn brought some 3 gallon buckets to get the gravel on trail so it could easily be loaded in dump bags.

Thor and one of the trail crew stayed to load bags as we shuttled the loads on down the hill to Shawn and the rest of the crew.

After a little on the job training of the Ranger crew, they got the hang of dumping the bags between the legs of stock. One of the boys was a bit nervous having never worked with stock before. The mule was a real show on the first bag {didn't have the camera ready}.

After only a few hours, we had moved around two yards of gravel and repaired 3 sections of trail with very little human effort. As one of the NPS crew stated, "Much easier than pushing a wheel barrow up and down the hill".

Shawn has been trying to restore the horse program at Point Reyes and this was a step in that direction by showing how easily working stock can be used in maintaining trails.

We are trying to schedule a much larger stock crew with more dump bags for a future date, so stay tuned for details if you want to get involved. We not only need pack stock, but also more ground crew. We are working on setting up a week-end camp over work party some time soon.

Thanks to the crew - Donna Meier, Thor Bodtker And Shawn Maloney and his crew.

- Dan Horn

Tales of the Slovene Ride aboard Prina, a Lipizzaner Mare

Prior to booking our trip to Slovenia, my ancestral homeland, I found an adventure travel agency in Bled offering horseback rides. After careful and exhausting research lasting approximately 3 seconds I asked them to book me a 2.5 hour ride on a specific date while I was staying in Bled. The requisition form also asked level of horsemanship and I indicated I was experienced English hunt seat for approximately one year and also Western trail ride over many years. The manager confirmed my ride and requested I arrive at their store at 0900 where I would be picked up and driven to the Zima Stables in the hamlet of Zirovnica.

That day arrived and so I sauntered from our hotel to 3Glav Travel awaiting my ride. Zima, who is the wife of Dusan and the stable owner, arrived and we sped towards the stables at breakneck speeds. (Slovenes do not drive like they do here in Marin!) As I approached the stable there were three horses tied up on the rail. Dusan introduced himself and brought out a pair of English chaps to strap around my Levis. Asking if I preferred to wear a helmet I unequivocally answered in the affirmative. My horse was Prina, a Lipizzaner mare and the other two horses were crossbred Lipizzaner and Slovene horses. Our third rider was a young boy who rode several times weekly so here were three riders on board and ready to go. (I smartly left my fanny pack and camera at the stables after carefully analyzing potential hazards while attempting to remain in the irons.)

No warm up, no cautionary advice, no releases to sign, no wimpy whining so off we trotted immediately down the trail to the main road. At this point I knew I was in for one hell of a ride well worth the 44 Euro price tag. I mentioned to Dusan at the intersection my irons were too long so he adjusted same and off we trotted on the road towards a roundabout a few meters ahead. Cars zooming by, trucks zooming by and nary a peep from our three steeds who were obviously well schooled. Did we go around the roundabout? Hell no! Full trot over the top of the roundabout to hang an immediate right turn down another road then under the autobahn to another frontage road hidden by a high hedge. Dusan took one look and signaled for us to cross, so off we went following his lead. (I had thoughts of being struck by a truck that failed to heed our crossing but that did not occur.)

Dusan was in the lead, I was second, and our young rider was third most likely placed there to ensure I remained safely aboard, and not merely road kill along the way. Dusan said, 'Lets canter!' and off we sped alongside the autobahn, as some of the vehicles slowed to watch us as we approached land speed records. Suddenly I realized we had progressed from a canter to a gallop but this was not communicated to me either in English or in Slovene. For a full 15 minutes we galloped and then cantered to the next road where we turned right over the ramp approaching another hamlet in the hills. Whew! Yes, as fate would have it this rider along with the other two were still in their irons while our steeds performed with perfection.

Up on the narrow roads thru hamlets and alongside the river we walked, then trotted, passing *{continued on page 4}*

Do you Ride Alone? Do you Carry ID?

What if you came upon a nest of yellow jackets, were bucked off and knocked unconscious? Or any number of scenarios, and we all know there are many! Who would find you and know who you are? Valuable time can be saved by having identification on you that's easy to find.

We've often talked about getting some sort of ID "just in case" and then last month I ran into my friend, Judy, and noticed her ID necklace and it got me on track again. Other riding friends, and myself, now sport ID bracelets with emergency contact information engraved on them. They come on a stretchy wrist band and cost \$15 at RoadID.COM.

Check it out -- they have several choices to choose from.

Safe Riding! - Linda Albion

2nd Edition!

MARIN COUNTY EQUESTRIAN TRAIL GUIDE

Updated April, 2009

This Equestrian Trail Guide covers all trails within approximately 200,000 acres located in the Point Reyes National Seashore, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) including the Marin Headlands, various California State Parks, the Mt. Tamalpais Watershed and lands of the Marin County Open Space District. It contains all the trail updates available as of the end of April, 2009.

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Seasonal Trail Closures

GARY GIACOMINI PRESERVE

The *Willis Evans Trail* closes to bicyclists and equestrians, for Coho salmon habitat protection. Current status: Closed.

INDIAN TREE PRESERVE

The *Upper Meadow Trail* closes to equestrians, for soil conservation. Current status: Closed.

The *Deer Camp Cutoff Trail* closes to equestrians, for soil conservation. Current status: Closed.

ROY'S REDWOODS PRESERVE

The *Roy's Redwoods Loop Trail* closes to equestrians, for soil conservation. Current status: Closed.

- www.maringov.org

Marin County's Public Riding Arena!

Did you know that the Civic Center Arena in San Rafael is open free to the public year round? It is and these are the rules. We hope to see you there!

- May be used by the public on an informal/shared basis during daylight hours if it has not been rented;
- Dogs are only allowed in the arena on leash; and
- Horses are only allowed in the arena with a bridle or halter and lead.
- The arena may not be reserved and/or used by groups on a single or regular basis for an activity on particular day(s) and time(s) without a rental contract, fee and insurance.

HAPPY TRAILS--(and of course fun arena work!)

SAVE THE DATE
Marin Horse Council's
HORSE COURSE
February 18, 2012



Prina, the Lipizzaner mare

{continued from page 3} World War II headstones and monuments to those fallen warriors, as folks waved us through to the eventual countryside. (By this time I would happily have paid \$50 Euros for a bottle of water!). As we passed a pasture, Dusan commented on the horses and I asked if they were his and did he use them for riding. His reply was they were not his and they were for eventual consumption at dining room tables. (Gag!) Yes, Europeans eat horse meat! It's a viable industry there. We passed more cows and hikers and then crossed a stream so our mounts could have a sip to cool down.

Our next stop was at a small cottage hidden in the woods where the mistress of the house came out to greet us holding a tray of schnapps which we three cheerfully consumed, shouting, "Courage!" which I later discovered was a tradition. Even our young lad quaffed his down along with us. Off we rode, indeed full of courage, to a lovely lake where families were picnicking and enjoying this local park. After a brief pause, we then struck out to a hofbrau cottage where they kept two brown bears in cages -- One brother and one sister who were found abandoned -- hence their new home was at the hofbrau where they became a tourist attraction. We fed them leaves off the surrounding trees while catching our breaths (at least that is what I was doing!)

Back in the saddle we trotted down the path to return to the stables taking another route through more hamlets with folks greeting us with "Dober Dan" (good day) and smiles and some with frowns as to why anyone would want to ride a horse through a town on a road that fast!

Approaching the stables we walked the horses to cool down both them and us. Upon dismounting, Dusan handed me what was perhaps the best cool drink on the planet: a tall Lasko Beer infused with grapefruit. A new concoction that was taking the country by storm, and after guzzling it down, I could understand why.

Reaching for my camera I captured our horses and a new young rider from England whose horse was being tacked Western since she was inexperienced. Photo above.

Zima (I believe is Slovene for Zoom!) loaded me back into the car and off we rode back to Bled. I had now discovered why Slovenia is considered one of the major horse countries in Europe. Folks there know how to ride and how to breed horses for both pleasure and consumption. Remember the Lipizzaners all originated in Lipica, Slovenia.

The absolute end. - Hank Miller

Fundraising to Preserve the Manzanita Fire Road

The Marin Open Space Trust (MOST) has launched a campaign to raise \$100,000 from the public to enable Marin County Parks (the new name for the Marin Open Space District and Marin Parks) to complete the purchase of the 20+ acre property on San Geronimo Ridge that straddles the Manzanita Fire Road immediately north of the Giacomini Open Space. As reported in the Fall issue of the Newsletter, the California Coastal Conservancy approved a grant of \$450,000 toward the \$650,000 purchase price and the County has committed \$100,000, leaving a balance of \$100,000 to be raised from private sources.

More than \$50,000 has already been raised from private organizations and individual donors. At its meeting on November 15, the Marin Horse Council Board pledged \$5000 and the Tamalpais Conservation Club has also pledged \$5000. MOST has also received a \$10,000 contribution from an anonymous donor and a \$25,000 "challenge grant" from another anonymous donor, both donors being residents of the San Geronimo Valley. All "new money" coming in will count toward meeting the \$25,000 challenge grant.

In addition to MOST, organizations supporting this acquisition include the San Geronimo Valley Planning Group, the San Geronimo Valley Land Trust, the Marin Conservation League, the Bay Area Ridge Trail Foundation, the Sierra Club (Marin Chapter), the San Geronimo Valley Lions Club, the Marin County Bicycle Coalition and the Forest Knolls Freewheelers.

This property is uniquely valuable to Marin County Parks, to the public and especially to equestrians because it controls public access to the Giacomini Open Space Preserve over the Manzanita Fire Road. This fire road, unlike some other access routes to San Geronimo Ridge, is open to equestrians all year. If the money can be raised to complete this acquisition, the property will become part of the Giacomini Open Space Preserve and continued public access over the Manzanita Fire Road will be ensured.

The Marin Open Space Trust is a tax-exempt organization and your contribution is tax deductible. MOST has established four levels of giving: Foot of the Trail, \$1 to \$99; Owl's Nest, \$100 to \$499; Spiral Circle, \$500 to \$999; and Top of the Ridge, \$1000 and more. Please make your check payable to MOST, and mail it to Marin Open Space Trust, PO Box 4133, San Rafael, CA 94913. Please note on the check "Preserve Manzanita Fire Road". You can also make your online donations at www.marinopensespacetrust.org

- Delos Putz



Fall Ride 2011

A big, bright, beautiful blue day greeted the thirty-three riders at Willow Tree Stables in Novato on October 8th for the MHC Fall Ride and BBQ. Mike Radest, an avid trail rider familiar with the local trails, led a group of about 15 on a ride through part of the adjoining 3,000 acre Indian Trees Open Space Preserve. Most of the other riders headed out in groups of about three or four. My wife, Sahar, and I set out on our own. Pretty soon we were lost. Actually, not lost, we just didn't know where the trail we were on would take us... and we really didn't care so long as we got back in time for lunch. All turned out well, though, as we eventually ended up back at Willow Tree in time for the BBQ. Robert Weems, our chef extraordinaire, did his usual great job of providing us with a hearty and mighty tasty meal. Lunch also provided a chance for everyone to relax, renew acquaintances, spread rumors, tell a few lies, and meet some new horsey friends. Our thanks go out to Willow Tree Stables for hosting the event and to the Marin County Open Space District.

As a footnote, I'll say that sometimes it is nice to be lost, but next time I'm riding in unfamiliar territory, I'll be sure to have a map with me. - Joel Bartlett

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AT THE BARN



Halloween at Halleck Creek, student volunteers turned horses into skeletons, dinosaurs and unicorns!

Barbara Hill, Executive Director

Halleck Creek Halloween Party

Goblins and skeletons rode into the West Marin hills at Halleck Creek Ranch's Halloween Spooktacular and Open House. Student volunteers from Marin Country Day, San Domenico, St. Marks, Marin Catholic and Drake arrived early to turn HCR horses into dinosaurs, skeletons and unicorns. Riders competed for best costume as race car drivers, nuns, ballerinas and puppies. Nearly 100 folks attended and enjoyed a scrumptious pot-luck lunch, live music, roping and riding demonstrations. Executive Director Barbara Hill also kicked off the HCR Year-End Challenge Campaign by announcing a \$15,000 grant issued by the HCR board and an anonymous donor. Every donation made by December 31st will be matched dollar-for-dollar to raise \$30,000 by year-end. Please make a gift today.

More information on their website, www.halleckcreekranch.org.

Warren Hellman, 1934-2011

"Hellman completed the Tevis Cup, a 100-mile horse race over the same course (the Western States Trail through the Sierras), five times. He is also a five-time age group National Champion in ride and tie, a combination of cross-country running and endurance horseback riding."

- www.baycitizen.org

Mr. Hellman often rode at Pt. Reyes National Seashore from the 5 Brooks trailhead. He was very much a part of the Marin equestrian community.

New Director at Halleck Creek Ranch

Barbara Hill, Executive Director, joined the staff of Halleck Creek Ranch in August 2011. An experienced equestrian with many miles logged on West Marin trails and beaches she has extensive experience in non-profit management and fundraising. While working at the California State Parks Foundation she raised \$13 million for a wetland restoration at Candlestick Point State Park and \$3.2 million for the Marine Education Center at Año Nuevo State Reserve.

When speaking with Barbara about the ranch she gushes about how beautiful it is and how moving it is to see the participants on horseback and well as how supportive and wonderful the families all are.

It's more than just a handicapped riding school -- it's a chance for the kids and their families to network, share and spend relaxing time in a ranch setting. Barbara obviously enjoys being there and there is no doubt she's got the experience. Prior positions have included VP of the California State Parks Foundation, Associate Director at Sierra Club and Executive Director at the California Wilderness Coalition as well as principal of her own consulting firm.

She has a certificate in Strategic Planning for Non-Profits from Stanford University Graduate School of Business and a Masters in Fine Arts from the San Francisco Art Institute. She is a Member of P.A.T.H International (Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International).

Halleck Creek Ranch is lucky to have someone so qualified and enthusiastic.....and Barbara is lucky to be with such a great place!

Oh yes, and so Barbara doesn't have to say it THIS time: Support Halleck Creek! Support their fundraisers and volunteer! She always has time to talk to those interested.

Thrush

"Thrush is a discharge of offensive matter from the cleft of the frog." Youatt's History, Treatment and Diseases of The Horse, 1870.

"...results for the most part from foul stables,-the horses being forced to stand in mortar of dung and urine,-or from working in muddy and filthy places, without having his feet and legs well cleansed when he is unharnessed for the night." The Illustrated Stock Doctor, 1882.

What is thrush? Thrush is a degenerative condition of the hoof material of the frog and surrounding tissues. As the material degenerates, the necrotic tissue encourages a myriad of bacteria and sometimes fungi to become established. As described above, it results in foul smelling, usually black and sometimes semi liquid material in the sulci of the frogs. If left untreated or conditions persist, it can result in deep involvement, erosion to sensitive tissue, abscessing, soreness and lameness.

{continued on page 7}

AT THE BARN

Cause. A combination of some of the following conditions results in thrush:

- 1) (See above)...Dirty conditions especially mud/water, manure and urine (urine has properties that actually degrades hoof material) in which the horse is forced or chooses to stand.
- 2) Lack of or decreased exercise (another winter malady).
- 3) Long or inadequately trimmed hoofs (or purposely created deep hoofs as in some gaited horses).
- 4) Pre-existing lameness especially one in which the horse does not want to bear full weight down through heels or put pressure on frogs.
- 5) Pads or other situations that hold moisture in the frogs.

Diagnosis. Most often thrush is diagnosed by your farrier telling you or one day while picking out your horse's hoofs you find a foul smelling black discharge in the frogs. It is not all or nothing. Most thrush is very mild but it can get severe over time.

Treatment. 1) Treat the symptoms by cleaning the hoofs well (need to get deep in the frogs if they are not too eroded, also use a wire brush or tooth brush to get deep and clean) and apply antiseptic solution...dilute chorine (1:10 chlorine:water), betadine, commercially available products. If fairly bad, sometimes veterinarians will prescribe topical antibiotics or iodine / formaldehyde treatments.

2) Address the cause. Provide as clean and dry an environment as possible. Trim hoofs well especially removing redundant hoof material that traps material and debris in sulci of the frogs. Remove pads (and shoes) if possible to try to get more frog contact with the ground. Exercise!

Thrush is an annoying disease and can become serious. It is multi causal and has no simple treatment. As with lots of horse problems, getting back to the basics of good horse care and putting in some hard work for your friend is often the cure.
- Robert W. Steere, DVM



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Marin Horse Council Membership Application

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Help MHC to better serve you -- tell us about yourself. The MHC never shares or sells its members' information.

Occupation _____ Affiliations _____

- Own a horse?** Yes No
- Your interests:** English Western Trail Riding Endurance Show Jumping Dressage
 Rodeo Eventing Driving Breeding Animal Welfare Other _____

MHC needs volunteers! Please indicate if you can help us with: Finance, Communication, Membership, Barn Liaisons,
 Government Affairs, Horse Course, Eq Evac, Events committee, Marin County Fair, Volunteer Co-coordinating

Your membership in the Marin Horse Council helps support the Council's many activities on behalf of Marin's equestrians and equines. Donations are also welcome. Fees and donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Thanks for joining! Mail your check to Marin Horse Council | 171 Bel Marin Keyes Blvd. | Novato, CA 94949-6183

12/11

Thank You!

The Marin Horse Council depends on the continued generous support of Marin's horse lovers. Thanks to all members, and in particular, thanks to those who join or renew at Lifetime, Golden Horseshoe, or Silver Buckle membership levels.

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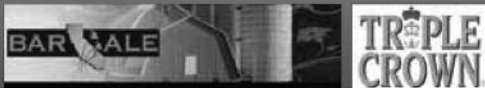
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