

Marin Horse Council

2013 WINTER EQUINOX NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 117

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

From the Saddle

As this year comes to an end, I am amazed at how fast time goes by. Were we not just at the Civic Center putting on the Horse Course? Didn't we just ride at Five Brooks in the spring and wasn't it yesterday that we all came together at Dickson Ranch to honor Anne Burke and ride in Roy's Redwoods? Yet here we are again planning for 2014 with much more on our plate than we had even last year. Why "more" you may ask? Well listen up and get involved cause it is your duty to speak up for the industry you all enjoy.



MHC Fall Ride: Riders ready for the trail!

The Marin Horse Council has proudly joined forces with the Marin Conservation League and the Marin County Bicycle Coalition to form "Trail Partners." The mission of "Trail Partners" is to "Create a county-wide initiative in Marin that will engage all trail users in the safe and responsible use of trails. Through a multi-year campaign as a part of this initiative, educate trail users about the responsible use of trails and resource protection as well as help shift the culture of trail users from one that is largely adversarial to one that is mutually aligned and cooperative." Some of you may scoff at the idea, but let me tell you, there are some real mover and shakers behind this effort. Personally, I hope it will work and will make all our public lands safer for all users.

In a similar vein, please read further in this edition of our newsletter for a piece written by Linda Novy that covers the importance of the Marin County Open Space District's release of the RTMP. Also note the letter sent by MHC to MCOSD voicing our concerns about the RTMP. The process that will be followed to assess the 34 open space preserves has been launched. The first site visit was conducted at Cascade Canyon last week. It was a lively debate which included neighbors, the MHC, MCBC, and hikers. Elise Holland, representing MCOSD, was facilitating and taking in the myriad of ideas and concerns that were being floated. It was very beneficial to attend. The next preserve review will be in January and in Southern Marin. The MHC will send out a Constant Contact e-mail with details as they are made available. Remember that the RTMP has been created as a guideline to manage the County's Open Space preserves. This document is a draft and our input can affect the outcome. Learn how you can get involved to help determine this outcome that will affect our use of our Open Space trails. Contact the MHC or MCOSD to receive invitations to attend the many public opportunities for user input. More public comment will be welcomed by MCOSD so keep your ears pricked.

The Marin Horse Council will be holding our annual "Horse Course" but not at its usual early spring date. We are looking at late fall, when the show season is over, and the weather is beautiful so we can be outside to witness demonstrations by youth equestrians which will be the theme of our "Horse Course" next year: "Youth Riders in Marin". We will be highlighting jumpers, vaulters, pony clubbers, 4Hers, barrel racers, cowboy dressage riders & trail riders. The Marin Horse Council wants to promote our youth as they are the future of horses in Marin.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Marin Horse Council board of directors for an outstanding year of service to our horseback riding community. Thanks to {continued on page 2}

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OUT ON THE TRAIL



Mike Willin who put on those great trail rides. Lauren Terk who has taken our minutes and doesn't miss a trick, plus managing our booth at the Marin County Fair, and our Face Book Page. Thanks to Kim Kouri who manages our membership, helps with Constant Contact plus coordinates volunteers. Thank you to Constanza Perry who is our marketing guru and Constant Contact expert. Huge thanks goes to Curt Kruger who heads up our Trails committee, "Trail Partners", "Tails and Tires" and as treasurer, keeps our finances in order. Thank you to Marina Eisenzimmer who is the creative genius behind our newsletter; Rick Holland who heads up the government affairs committee; Jessica Lashbrook who brings a historic perspective to the board; Pat Duffy who takes care of our youth involvement committee and will be the point person for our horse course; and of course, Connie Berto, Linda Novy, and Homer Osgood who serve as advisors to our board. Thank you all, for without your help and guidance we couldn't achieve nearly what we are able to achieve. My hope for 2014 is that more of you will get involved. Let's grow and have a positive and productive 2014. Thanks! Happy New Year! Monte Kruger | *President, MHC*

Multi-Days on the XP Trail!

If you are intrigued by the idea of riding through spectacular scenery, horse camping in an easily accessible place, creating an even stronger bond with your horse and taking a real vacation from the fast-paced world, here is my solution! Try a multi-day XP ride. The XP stands for Pony Express, and the rides are traditionally held on or near historic trails and in gorgeous country on both public lands and private ranches throughout the western and southwestern states, and even from St. Joseph, MO to Virginia City, NV!

The rides are 2, 3, 4, or 5 days long and you may ride any or all of the days, your choice.

But, you think, "these are endurance rides and I don't do endurance." Do not despair! The multi-day XPs are not your typical one day 50-miler with all the hurry and competition. Most riders go to XPs for the relaxed pace, gorgeous scenery, comradeship and enjoyment of seeing the country from the backs of their horses. There are both 50-mile and "Luxury Distance" (limited distances of 25-35 miles) events and all are sanctioned by AERC (the American Endurance Ride Conference). Free lunches are provided by ride management (yes! FREE!) and dinners are available for a reasonable price. The rides are organized by Dave Nicholson, DVM, and his wife, Annie. Trails are well marked and maps are provided with written instructions and GPS waypoints. You have to really work at it to get lost! A large "extended family" of XP riders and friends help with trail clearing, marking, vet stops, cooking, pulling ribbons and camp clean-up.

Finishing all 5 consecutive days of a multi-day XP is an achievement of which to be proud, but so is riding a couple of days and helping make sandwiches at a vet check or pulling ribbons or crewing for a new friend. There are opportunities for everyone of any age and experience to participate in what has become known as the XP Club. Over the years since I began riding XP multi-days in 1987, my horses and I have seen the Pony Express Trail from St. Joseph, MO to Virginia City, NV. We have carefully traversed narrow ledges of sandstone, waded stirrup deep across rivers, scrambled up granite slopes, cantered across sagebrush flats and enjoyed sweeping vistas from the tops of snowy ridges at 10,000 feet. I can't wait to go out there again!

Go to xprides.com, Riders of the Lost Duck, for details. - Anne Sands

MHC Fall Ride

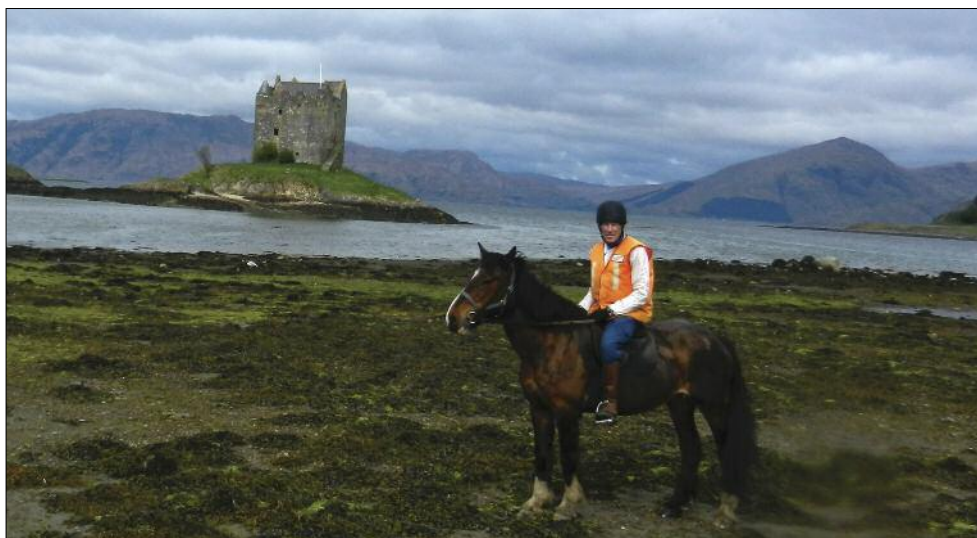
The Marin Horse Council held their fall ride on October 20th at Dickson Ranch. At 8am there was morning frost all around and the air was crisp and cool. It was going to be a good day to ride.

Christy, Kendra and Rosella from the Presidio Riding Club greeted and checked everyone in. They kept busy as we had 76 riders that checked in to ride. There were plenty of places to ride, and riders took to the trails in Roy's Redwoods, Giacomini Open Space and MMWD San Geronimo Ridge. We had many young riders come out and enjoy the day. It was good to see our future riders out in force.

The day was dedicated to Ann Burke who has spent so many volunteer hours preserving our way of the horse in Marin County. Thank you, Ann. At lunch everyone had a special treat of being served by Pat Duffy's 4H Children. They were dressed so proper in their whites. The 4Hers did a terrific job

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OUT ON THE TRAIL



A Wee Ride in Scotland

While traveling through the Highlands of Scotland my husband, Marty, and I took a few hours and went on the most delightful ride on the beach by Castle Stalker, through some farmlands with cows and sheep and beautiful flowers, then through the village, back to the beach through the water to the stables. Letter-Shuna Riding Center is near Oban in the Argyll area of Scotland.

Our guide (and owner) has competed in several equine disciplines and was friendly and very easygoing. They have horses for all levels from "leading around" to more experienced riders.

We did a 2+ hour ride, which wasn't nearly enough yet so spectacular that we were very happy. I can't recommend this center enough.

For more information, contact <http://www.lettershunaridingcentre.com>
- Linda Albion

TALLY HO!

If you were driving on Nicasio Valley Road by the Lafranchi dairy on Saturday, November 23rd, you may have seen a splendid sight of horses, fox hounds, and riders in red coats galloping over the hills. That was the Los Altos Hounds, a California fox-hunting club. In Marin, as elsewhere, no foxes are hunted; instead a scent is dragged in advance over hill and dale by a rider on horseback. Controlled by the huntsman, hounds later attempt to pick up the scent and follow the "fox". The other riders keep up as best they can without getting in the way.

On this occasion thirty riders, including seven enthusiastic guests, enjoyed the chase in lovely weather on the Lafranchi ranch. As one fox-hunter, Jeannette Rettig said, "Hounds, heifers and hills, on a beautiful sunny day". Before taking off, the riders were all offered a traditional stirrup cup of port, served by Catherine Barnes and Nancy Glenn.

Master of Fox Hounds Jef Graham presented a silver hound cup to Randy Lafranchi and his mother, Mary, in honor of the 50 years the hunt has ridden on this ranch, among others in Marin.

After the hunt, the group may have been seen enjoying a hunt "breakfast". It's called "breakfast" when it follows the hunt, even if it's in the afternoon!

- Linda Albion & Catherine Barnes

assuring everyone was helped as we served 118 lunches.

What a fantastic turnout it was! It was so great to see old friends and make new ones. Thank you to all our volunteers and to all of you that came out to ride and eat. It was truly a special day. I would like to give a special thank you to Grace and Chuck Tolson for allowing us hold our ride and lunch at their special Ranch and home. I look forward to our spring ride date and location still to be decided. If you have any input on future or past rides contact us at marinhorsecouncil.org.

- Michael Willin, Ride Honcho

How is Your Helmet?

Have you checked your helmet lately?

It is time to replace it if:

- Your white helmet is now greenish or yellow and has cracks or dents...
- Any color helmet with cracks or dents...
- The chin strap is frayed or has broken teeth...
- The inside is missing pieces, or the harness is loose from its fasteners...

If so, think of all those after Christmas sales you can check out!



LAH Huntsman with some of his pack.



Bill Michaels and the PRNS Trails

I worked with Bill Michaels involving several programs. Most recent was the MHC fund raiser that bought all the redwood picnic tables that we installed in various places throughout PRNS. We also bought and installed tie rails at the same time. All the work channeled through Bill Michaels' office and was implemented by his crew chief, Shawn Maloney. I worked for years with them and also brought in the Back Country Horsemen who helped transport some of the tie rails that had to go in via pack animals and one water trough as well.

While none of this would have happened without volunteer labor including a few of my riding pals (Steve Maass, Garrett Jernigan), without BCHC or Shawn Maloney, surely none would have gained approval at the top level without Bill Michaels' support.

I was shocked by the news of his passing as he was a relatively young man.

- Sandy Greenblat

.....

It's with a heavy heart I write to tell you that Bill Michaels passed away in the first week of November. We have little information at this point, but he apparently passed of natural causes at his home in Novato. Bill worked at the Seashore for 31 years, starting as a seasonal in 1982, the year of the big floods. He became a permanent soon after and advanced to Trails Foreman in 1989- a position he held until his retirement this past March. He was key in establishing the Youth Conservation Corps trails program and the Adopt-A-Trail program. Bill carried on these excellent traditions for the duration of his career. We have estimated that Bill

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Marin County Parks' RTMP

ROAD AND TRAILS MANAGEMENT PLAN (RTMP), AND THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (DEIR)

Why is this plan important to the horse community? Members of the horse community have been participating in the Road and Trails Management Plan, which has included a series of public workshops and public meetings, over the last couple of years. Our focus has been on the fairness of the process, protection and restoration of the environment, and maintaining safe equestrian access to narrow trails (footpaths to us, "single tracks" to mountain bikes). The horse community sees a model for mountain bike use that is similar to how the horse community differentiates between high action riding (jumping, cattle penning, roping, etc.), which is done on private property at private expense, and slower trail riding, which is done on public lands. Equestrian and hiker safety is threatened by fast moving mountain bike riders who flaunt the rules – rules meant to ensure everyone's safety, including that of wildlife! The Marin Horse Council also has concerns regarding illegal trail building which not only degrades the environment, but also adds an expensive cost layer to the Parks Department's budget. In the new RTMP there will be decommissioning of trails, too. While there is a quality process in place to determine which trails are redundant and unsustainable to the trail system, we are very interested in the impacts of these trail closures on the rest of the trail system. The DEIR was presented at a Parks and Open Space Commission meeting in November. The audience was a mixture of mountain bikers and hikers – all pressing for more trail access and expressing fear that trails might be eliminated from the preserves, and that "off trail" activity was becoming illegal (a concern from hikers.) There was one equestrian representative there, as the MHC and Novato Horsemen's Inc. both had board meetings that night.

There are key points in both the RTMP (80 new policies, many of them are positive to the horse community as they stress trail safety and enforcement), and in the DEIR (protection of the natural resources, limited access to certain areas). Missing from both are safety best management practices, or BMPs, and safety standards. For a review of the MHC comment letter, please go to our web site to read it in full.

Going forward, the plan and DEIR are under review by the Board of Supervisors, the Parks Staff, and the general public (although the official public comment period ended). There will be a series of meetings at individual preserves where Parks Staff and the general public can express their input regarding

What can you do? Listen and learn about the proposed changes to our trail system. Speak up through letters and e-mails, and personal comments at this meeting. You can still write or call your County Supervisor to share your thoughts and experiences about trail safety, possible displacement from trail use because you perceive them to be unsafe, and any environmental impacts you have seen such as illegal trail building. Remember to copy the Parks and Open Space Commission, attention Greg Zitney, Chair. (See the marincounty.org web site for contact information for your Supervisor's email address or mail to: 3501 Civic Center Drive, San Rafael, CA 94903). A potential solution that is being considered is creating separate trails for mountain bikes. Some considerations on this approach include the possibility of increased environmental degradation of the trails (such as at China Camp) with mountain bike-only use. Should this happen, how will speed limits be enforced? What impacts could exclusive mountain bike "tracks" have on wildlife? Will separate bike trails increase the mountain bike community's compliance with rules? Many of us have concerns that it won't. This is based upon mountain bikers' long record of non-compliance, along with *{continued on page 5}*

NEWS & UPDATES

continued illegal bike use on foot paths throughout the county, even though separate accommodations have been made for them. This proposed "solution" won't work until there is increased enforcement with serious consequences, and the mountain bike leadership takes a much stronger position on zero tolerance for illegal trail behavior.

Equestrians need to follow the rules, too, to maintain our stellar reputation for compliance. We might also reduce any concerns about horse manure on the trail by pointing our horses off trail when they pass manure, or jump off and kick it off trail!

You can also report any unsafe condition you may experience or witness on a trail ride on public lands. See the newsletter's contact list and keep it handy on the trail. The Marin County Parks' (Marin County Open Space Preserves) contact number is: 415-473-2816. Other public land managers welcome and need to hear from us when unsafe situations are encountered. Please, see the new emergency numbers listed in this edition.

Horses, hikers, and dog walkers share trails safely – and we are the majority of trail users (76%). We can share fire roads with rule-abiding mountain bike riders. Come, join with others, and demonstrate for safe trail use by slower-moving and rule-abiding trail partners. We hope to see you at the individual preserve meetings, and the MHC will keep you informed by email regarding locations, dates, and times.

PLEASE ATTEND THE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION ON JANUARY 23, 3:00 PM in the Planning Commission Chambers, Marin County Civic Center.

- Linda Novy

Ocean Riders Needs Your Support!

I am the President of the Board of Directors of Ocean Riders of Marin and a life-time member of Marin Horse Council. We are in the process of responding to the Request for Proposal (RPF) from the National Park Service (NPS).

In November 2013, the National Park Service announced a RFP for the lease of three historic equestrian stables in the Marin Headlands GGNRA. Proposals for the lease are due on January 30, 2014.

Our small barn is being asked to do somewhere in the neighborhood of \$150,000 (their estimate) of work on the premises in the next five years. We hope to get this ten year lease but need to be able to show strong financial capability to the NPS. To that end we are working at raising funds before the end of January.

The stable's ability to remain, and implement long-term program goals, is dependent on obtaining a ten-year lease. Future operations will include improving the facilities and growing public programs.

OCEAN RIDERS is developing educational Outreach Programs that will offer opportunities for the public to connect with horses, nature, and the history of the Golden Gate Dairy while raising awareness about the strong need for land stewardship. Another focus will be historic building restoration.

Your generous support with a tax-deductible donation to Ocean Riders of Marin will help develop these programs and demonstrate financial viability and the support of the community. All donations will be recorded so they may be returned should we not be awarded the lease.

Thank you for supporting the future of Ocean Riders of Marin at the Golden Gate Dairy! **To learn more about Ocean Riders' future vision and to make a donation, please visit their website at: www.OceanRidersofMarin.org** - Leida Schoggen

supervised over 270 YCC participants, countless seasonals and thousands of volunteers over the years, imbuing them with a love of the Pt. Reyes National Seashore and hard work. He will be missed by all who knew him.

- Shawn Maloney
YCC-1986 and Bill's student ever since.

Reporting Information for Public Lands

The MHC recommends that you carry these numbers with you when you ride in public lands. You may find yourself in an emergency situation requiring help. Also, be aware of unsafe conditions and unsafe behavior in other public land visitors, and be a good public land partner by reporting these to the proper contact person. It is important that as equestrians, we demonstrate our active participation in supporting these land managers and the important role they play in stewardship of natural resources.

Mount Tamalpais, China Camp and Olompali State Parks: Ryen Goering (415) 388-2952
E: Ryen.Goering@parks.ca.gov

S.P. Taylor and Tomales Bay State Parks:
Rosemary Blackburn (415) 488-0291
E: Rosemary.Blackburn@parks.ca.gov

If there is an ongoing Emergency, the State Parks Dispatch Number is: (916)358-1300. The quickest way to report an emergency or crime in progress.

Marin County Open Space District:
Ranger Station (415)-473-2618
Charlie Schonwasser
E: CSchonwasser@marincounty.org

Marin Municipal Water District:
Ranger Bill Hogan
Non-emergency (415) 945-1187

Active visitor misconduct (Non emergency)
(415) 945-1500 E: bhogan@marinwater.org

Pt. Reyes National Seashore* (415)-464-5137
*Follow the prompts; working on contact info

Golden Gate Recreation Area:
Park Police Non emergency: (415) 561-5656
Emergency (415) 561-5656

Emergency: 911; cell phone: (415) 472-0911

Sheriff Dispatch (Comm Center) number:
(415)-400-7234 This number can be used to initiate a request for Search and Rescue or Large Animal Rescue. It can also be used to dispatch sheriff deputies.



Top: Dickson Ranch riders on Bald Hill.
Bottom: Typical BBQ party at "Lulu's Lounge".

Dickson Ranch – How we love you so!

I moved to Dickson Ranch with my horse Kokomo five years ago, and I can't see myself ever leaving. Dickson Ranch, run by the Dickson Family, is more than a horse stable. To me, and most of my barn friends, it's a well-worn, patched-together paradise, an event, a gathering place, a second home.

There are many things to love about Dickson Ranch. The large paddocks are great for the horses. I hated the small 12 X 12 stall and 12 X 12 outdoor run offered at my previous stables. Horses are big and need to move! In addition, there are three arenas, that we are allowed to use all year. One of them is covered and one is an upgraded round pen. Sure, things are a little worn, but they don't mind you personalizing your space, they always assist with maintenance, and offer gravel and Fibar.

There is also a variety of trainers, (Dawn Ellen, Erin King, and Steven Pleasant) to choose from, who offer lessons in English, Dressage and Western disciplines. My girlfriends and I have recently signed on to a group lesson of five with Stephen Pleasant and are having a blast! This ranch is relaxed, has few pretensions, and offers an in-between place to the show barns and private, no frills, stables. *{continued on page 7}*

Winterizing Your Horse

Horses are one of the most weather adaptable animals on earth. Horses evolved in the harsh climate of North America and migrated over the entire world from the frozen tundra of the Arctic to the fierce heat of the Sahara. Our job is to help them stay as healthy as possible given the restrictions and constraints of domestication.

ENVIRONMENT

Horses do fine outside during the winter provided they are in an appropriate environment. They need a natural or artificial shelter to break the wind and rain. They do not seem to mind the rain, wind or cold unless in combination. If no shelter is available, they turn their tail to the wind, and lower their head, often shivering to keep their body temperature up. Shivering is their normal adaptation to survive and not as significant a sign as humans shivering. They also need an environment that allows them to exercise to stay warm and one that has an elevated place to stand out of the mud, manure and urine.

FEED

With cold weather, exercise usually diminishes but your horse actually needs more feed to stay warm. In some extreme weather, horses require fifty percent more calories than normal to maintain weight and fat insulation. One thing that generates heat is digesting roughage in their large colon.

Feed your horse larger meals of hay in the evening to help keep them warmer at night. Feed in a clean, dry, sheltered place to reduce hay loss.

BLANKETING

Most horses in California are over blanketed. If your horse has his natural coat, or most of it, he is far better off without a blanket. Blankets flatten out the hair coat and eliminates the natural insulating effect. If your horse is mostly body clipped then we need to blanket but only if very cold and/or rainy and windy. Raining and warm is OK. I see many blankets doing harm. Blankets put on for cold nights but left on in the morning when the sun comes out, results in horses sweating under the blanket potentially inducing skin disease. Wet blankets are far worse than no blanket. They can make the horse colder than would be otherwise, can induce skin disease and can create pressure sores over the withers. Most blankets are not truly waterproof so diligent care is needed if blanketing.

COMMON WINTER PROBLEMS AND AILMENTS

Hoof Abscesses. Winter is prime time for hoof abscesses. There are multiple causes including: 1) Standing for long periods in mud containing feces and urine. Feces are bacteria laden and urine has hoof degenerating properties. Hoofs soften and degenerate and bacteria make their way in through natural defects and "set up house" resulting in an abscess. 2) Decreased exercise (necessary for good hoof health) and decreased hoof care. The best defense against abscesses is continued regular exercise and care and getting them out of the mud and waste.

Scratches/Mud Fever. This usually starts with the lower legs, especially the pastern area, being chronically wet. The skin devitalizes resulting in inflammation (scratches), cracked skin and decreased ability to fight infection (mud fever). This is usually the result of standing in high wetness but can result from just not really drying out well. For instance, riding in the evening and hosing off. Your horse may go back to a dry environment but his pasterns remain wet for a long period into the night, especially in winter.

It is important to dry well and keep your horse from being chronically wet. If wet pasterns are unavoidable, apply Desitin or similar diaper rash medicine to help with the symptoms. *{continued on page 7}*

Rain Rot. A disease caused by a common bacteria but most people think it looks like a fungal disease.

It takes advantage of devitalized skin (from being chronically wet) especially on the top line. It appears as loss of hair that comes off easily and has large flakes of skin with it. It is less likely if a horse is able to roll to stimulate the skin and keep the hair from matting. Keeping the horse dry and vigorous grooming to stimulate the skin are key.

Colic. There is an increased risk of colic in winter due to decreased exercise and drinking. Your horse may not drink as much water due to the water being cold or not wanting to go across a muddy paddock to get it, etc. In winter there is also an increased likelihood of spoiled food and often less consistent feeding schedules kept. Make sure clean and easily accessible water is available at all times. Even add some warm water to their source on very cold nights. Be diligent about exercise and checking the quality of your feed.

Older horse. Remember, the older horse may not be alive if in "the wild". Everything hits them harder so we have to care for them more. They will tend to move around even less than a younger horse in winter so are even more prone to ailments of decreased activity. Their immune defenses are less efficient so they are more prone to infections. Their teeth and intestines are less efficient so they are more prone to digestive disorders. A good clean dry shelter with room to exercise is key. Plenty of high quality feed (hay or soaked pellets depending on dental health) can't be stressed enough along with easily accessible fresh, not too cold, clean water.

TAKE HOME

Horses are tougher than their owners when it comes to weather. However, due to captivity they are less able to cope with weather in their natural way. We need to try to minimize our interfering effects. Provide them a reasonable mud free shelter. Continue to exercise and groom them vigorously in winter even if you do not want to. Feed them plenty of good quality food on a regular schedule. If you must blanket, take it off at every opportunity even if you do not want to.

- Robert W. Steere, D.V.M.

The Frugal Horsekeeper

Horses are expensive. But, you already knew that! However, with a little forethought and planning you can save some money on your equine family member, and maybe even make some money on your "mistakes" or items you are no longer using.

While shopping locally can be a wonderful experience, for a variety of your "year-long" needs, such as wormer, fly spray, fly masks, VetWrap, and supplements, purchasing through the internet and stocking up can save you as much as 75%, and many merchants offer free shipping.

Consider purchasing your horse's wormer for the entire upcoming year. In the recent **Jeffers Equine** catalog, (www.Jeffers.com) you can order Ivermectin wormer for as little as \$2.59 each or \$2.29 in lots of 12 or more. You can purchase an entire one-year deworming kit (which includes three chemical class rotations) for as little as \$21.50. Combine your order with other folks at your barn and you can save even more!

SMARTPak (www.SmartPakEquine.com) offers supplements in stay fresh, easy open, daily packages for the same, or lower cost than {continued on page 8}

Every year, June through October the Ranch offers a Schooling Show series that includes four English/Western shows, two Dressage shows and two Western Playdays. These events are open to everyone, not only Dickson Ranch boarders, the more participants the better. The classes are inexpensive, as they are not looking to make money, but to offer a learning experience and a goal for kids and adults who are learning to ride.

My daughter grew up taking lessons at the ranch and participating in the English and Dressage portion of the show series. We both tried out the Playdays together, which are fun and relaxed. She and I have a collection of great memories, photographs and ribbons. Now that my daughter has left for college, I have participated in a few shows last year, and plan on participating in the English/Western show series next year. I can't wait.

I don't have room to offer a complete description of the all other events Dickson Ranch participates in, since they are very community oriented. One I must mention is the Fourth of July. This starts with the Woodacre 4th of July parade, then moves on to Dickson Ranch for pony rides, kids' games, live music, drinks, BBQ and a flea market. My daughter rides in the parade, I provide pony rides to kids, then enjoy a drink and the flea market in the afternoon.

More than anything, what I love most is the friends I have made at the ranch. Among my Dickson Ranch friends, there is no financial hierarchy, everyone hangs together as equals. When I rescued a starving mare, my friends all chipped in to feed, board and care for her. Their support meant the world to me. We regularly schedule trail rides together, both from the ranch and out to various locales. We often meet on weekends around the ranch at areas fondly named "The Hollow" or "Lulu's Lounge" for potluck events, just because, or to celebrate horse and human birthdays. Everyone provides a small offering for all to enjoy. Anyone who can't provide an offering can just step up the next time.

For all the reasons above, I will never leave Dickson Ranch. I have everything I could want; the Dickson family, a great horse stable, horse shows, events, friends and community.

- Kristin Teiche

AT THE BARN

Pleasant Riding

NEW TRAINER IN MARIN

"Down in the west Texas town of El Paso, came a young cowboy, Steven by name..."

Remember that old Marty Robbins song? OK, we changed the words a bit because we have our own west Texas cowboy living right here in Fairfax! Steven Pleasant is his name and he hails from Texas, but has been in Fairfax since he was 10 years old.

Steven is the newest trainer at Dickson Ranch in Woodacre.

Horses became a way of life for Steven early on. He lived just down the street from Marin Stables and found himself there as much as possible, learning to ride. In order to afford lessons he cleaned stalls, prepared horses to be ridden and just plain "hung around" and learned everything he could. That was the beginning of a life-long passion and a room full of trophies and ribbons.

He even started teaching the lessons when he was a freshman in high school!

For many years Steven has owned his own house cleaning business although horses have always stayed in the forefront of his life.

Over the years he has trained with several local trainers including Marion Nelson and Cara Mia Clark (CKMC Farms). For Cara, he was the assistant trainer for many years, taking kids to A shows around the state. He also taught Western riding at Edgewood in Nicasio.

His latest endeavor is at Dickson Ranch where he teaches beginners to advanced riders in most disciplines - western pleasure, hunt seat, jumpers. You name it, Steven has done it.

He's very proud of this year's accomplishments by his students at the Dickson Ranch

{continued on page 9}

purchasing a five pound or larger container of the same supplement. SMARTPak also offers a wide range of tack and equipment and offers free shipping.

Another wonderful equine fund-saving technique is to purchase "out of season". If you know what size blanket or sheet your horse wears, purchasing these items out of season can save you money. An example of this is last year's summer sheets and fly sheets are now on sale at a tremendous savings, sometimes as much as 50% to 75% or more. In spring, winter blankets and waterproof sheets will be discounted. As your horse's clothing is not as trend setting as show clothing, save yourself some money and purchase out of season! A good website to check out is <https://www.horseloverz.com/>

When clearing out your tack room, there are several ways to cash in on no-longer-used items or "mistakes" to bring in some extra cash, and they don't necessarily need to be eBay, Craig's list or Bay Area Equestrian Network!

While all of these avenues are great resources, there are several local tack shops and services in the Marin and East Bay which will consign saddles and other goods and take the headache of on-line selling.

I have included several on-line consignment shops that are one-stop selling for your saddles! They will send you the box, packing materials and the UPS label. Their commission is 20% and they have a massive client base, so saddles move quickly.

First, let's cover shops close to home that offer consignment of saddles and related goods.

For people in Marin and Sonoma, there are two tack shops that offer consignment. They are: **Marin Tack and Feed** in Forest Knolls, and **Saddles to Boots** in Sebastopol. Both take saddles, tack and clothing. The percentage varies depending on the item.

If you would like to travel a bit further afield, the East Bay offers saddle and tack consignment at **Happy Trails Company**. They are located at 3724 Stanley Blvd., Pleasanton 925.417.0848. www.HappyTrailsCo.com

If you want to further widen your saddle-selling net, here are two very reputable companies which have both a store front and internet presence:

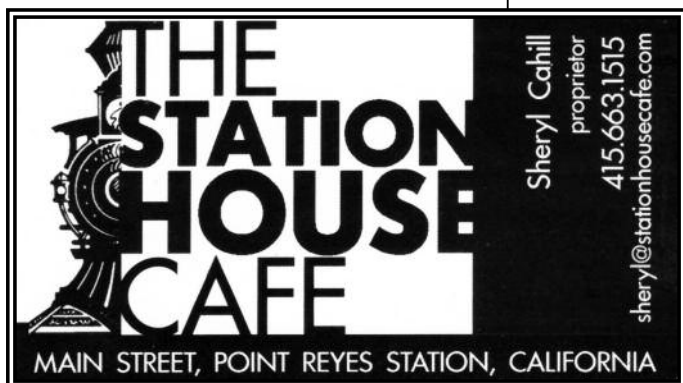
The **Horse Saddle Shop** will consign your Western or English saddle and will provide you with a box, shipping label and saddle-wrapping material. They have an on-line form for you to fill out before shipping your saddle to them, as well as testimonials. Visit <http://www.horsesaddleshop.com/> to get an idea of the different saddles that they sell and the price range.

Another option for those with English saddles is **Diva Tack**. They are located in Mesa, Arizona, and have a massive English following. Unlike Horse Saddle Shop, you would need to find your own box and be responsible for shipping. Diva Tack also consigns English strap goods and clothing. <http://www.divatack.com/>

These are just a few of the many businesses in today's equestrian market that are a fabulous resource for "re-homing" horse equipment and clothing that you no longer need or use and to turn into cash while cleaning out your tack room.

For more ideas, or to take a workshop visit my website "Turning Trash Into Cash" at: www.TurningTrashIntoCash.com

- Terri Thornton



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Cowboy Dressage

By now, many riders have heard of the establishment of the new western riding discipline called Cowboy Dressage. (If you go to the Cowboy Dressage World web site, you will learn all you need to know to get started.) The essential belief is to do what is best for the horse, to ride with a soft feel, and to seek to ride with harmony and partnership with your horse.

With a western saddle, boots, safety helmet or western hat, and western style tack, you add the horse and you have enough to get started. I know that this is a bit simplistic, but you get the idea. This article is to answer a few common questions.

Is there a difference between Cowboy Dressage and Western Dressage? Yes, there is. To answer this question well, please take the time to read an article that does an excellent job of sorting out the two. You can find the article, printed in a recent, local horse magazine, on the home page of TomasiniTrainingCenter.com.

Do I need a quarter horse to be western? No. CD honors and endorses all breeds of horses that are ridden. And it does not penalize a horse for moving according to his conformation. The quarter horse may not carry his head as upright as an Arabian. The strides of the warmblood may be longer than that of the Morgan. Every one of them is acceptable as long as the soft feel and harmony and partnership are present in a well ridden test.

What do the three gaits need to look like as the horse moves? The CD horse should reflect the natural gaits - a 4 beat walk, a 2 beat jog and a 3 beat lope. The 2 beat jog of a working western (Cowboy Dressage) horse is not a hybrid of a walk and a jog. Neither the working cowboy nor the classical dressage rider would tolerate a jog that resembles a shuffle. The balance needed to be useful and athletic at the lope must be of 3 beats.

How should the CD horse carry his head? The CD horse should carry his head so he can see where he is going while, at the same time, he is responding with soft contact to the signals through the reins from the riders. Soft Feel of Cowboy Dressage means just that - Soft Feel, soft contact. Neither of these can exist if the tension on the reins is as tight as your belt after Thanksgiving dinner or as loopy as the bungee cord before the jumper hits the end.

Do I need silver on my saddle or bridle? No. Since most cowboys can't be bothered with toting silver polish in their saddlebags, it is not necessary. A clean, well fitting western saddle and bridle or hackamore are great.

Is there a required order that I must ride the tests? No. You can enter riding the most difficult test, for example Walk Jog Lope 4, at your first Cowboy Dressage experience if you wish. However, supreme confidence in your riding skills might be a good thing to have to do WJL 4 on your first test.

Do I have to memorize my patterns? No. You can have a caller that will read the test to you as you ride it. The caller can use a microphone, which is usually provided by Cowboy Dressage World. It is highly advisable that the rider be very familiar with the test they are doing. Sometimes the caller makes a mistake!

Do you have tests for the gaited horses? Yes. 2014 should have these ready to add to the list of test options.

Do I have to lope (canter) in every test? No. There are about 10 tests that do not require the lope.

Can I ride in a hackamore? Yes. The hackamore is defined as a rawhide bosal, with mecate reins. No mechanical hackamore types are allowed. A horse of any age may be ridden with the hackamore. How romantic. *{continued on page 10}*

Horse Shows where they won "Reserve Equitation" for the series, "English High Point Jumper" trophy for the Season, and the "Most Improved Rider of the Year."

The most improved rider was Dr. Lisa Capaldini who says the following about Steven: "He's given me a book of instructions to help me make the horse perform. He's specific, unyielding, and patient. Lots of learning to ride is trial and error and the teacher has to stick with you until you get it right - Steven does that. He comes prepared to the lesson with a plan that reflects his thoughtful approach to training. He's very enthusiastic and helps me care about my lesson and care about my horse."

When asked, Steven says his biggest issue is a green rider who buys a green horse! When buying a horse, buy a horse you can ride. Take an experienced person with you to help make that decision and get the horse on trial to make sure he is a good match for you. "Horses are all individuals and should be ridden as such. I believe green riders should NOT be allowed to use heavy bits and spurs - they need to learn to ride first." Steven is very happy working at Dickson Ranch with Grace and Chuck Tolson. "It's a wonderful ranch."

SO, if you'd like to experience a "pleasant ride", contact Steven at Pleasant Riding. 415 459-3615.

- Linda Albion and Vicki Englert



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Contact Marian Nelson 707 766 9066

TOMASINI TRAINING CENTER

January 18-19: First Cowboy Dressage World Show in Rancho Murieta

Contact Susan Tomasini at
susan@tomasini-trainingcenter.com

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Whatever is best for the horse.

Can I use a snaffle bit on a horse older than 5 years? Yes. You can use whatever western style bit is best for your horse at any age. Whatever is best for the horse. I don't mind repeating myself. The horse wants us to remember this.

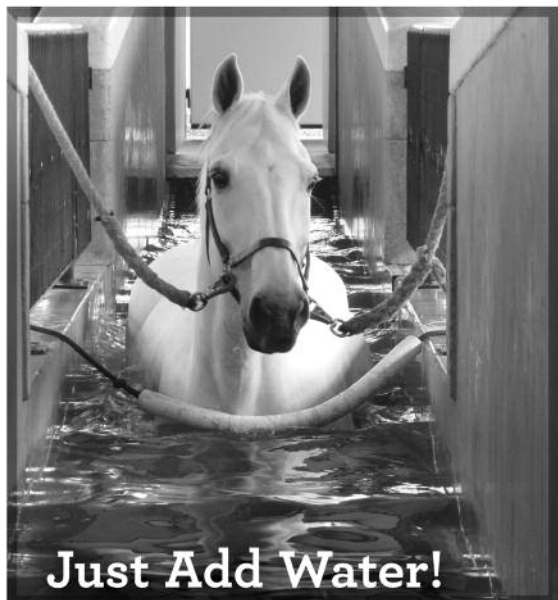
Where can I get the riding tests and all the rules? Go to Cowboy Dressage World on the internet. All the information is free for you to download and print out as often as you like. The colors are marvelous and the tests are plotted out, step by step. Eitan did all this just for you and me. Tell him "Thank you," sometime.

Is there membership to Cowboy Dressage? Yes. It costs nothing. You will be asked to endorse and support the mission and goals of Cowboy Dressage by doing a virtual handshake and signing your name. There was a time when a handshake was as solid as a contract. We, of Cowboy Dressage World, want believe that your handshake is enough to support what Cowboy Dressage stands for. This is available on the Cowboy Dressage World web site.

The practice of Cowboy Dressage brings the horse and rider together in harmony and partnership as the horse would hope for. I hope that these few answers made you want to be part of Cowboy Dressage World. There are 4 great shows scheduled at Rancho Murieta for 2014. We are so very fortunate to have these opportunities in our back yard. The reality of Cowboy Dressage is history in the horse industry and you are here. I hope to see you there.

If you have any other questions, feel free to email me at
susan@tomasini-trainingcenter.com

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Thanks for joining! Mail your check to Marin Horse Council | 171 Bel Marin Keyes Blvd. | Novato, CA 94949-6183 12/13



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