

POOP SCOOP

Rusty Stirrups Riding Club Newsletter

January 2009

View From the Grandstand

Happy New Year to all the Rusties! 2008 had its ups and downs and many will be happy to see it pass, but we still had some very fun times this past year. Consider the trail rides you participated in, the Pennmerryl trips, the Spring Fling, the Rally, the Bomb-proofing Clinics.....where we all had an opportunity to spend some time with each other and our horses. It wasn't all that bad, was it?

Now we have a blank slate in front of us for 2009 and it's up to us to start filling in those blanks and planning for some more good times. The new Board is in place and we will be holding our first meeting on January 6th. Our new President, Wanda Branson, is enthusiastic about the possibilities for this year, so stay tuned.

Typically when January 1st rolls around, people make all kinds of resolutions. We hear about diets, exercise plans, making more time for friends and family and a host of other promises that somehow fade as the days pass. I am not good at making or keeping resolutions so each year, would feel guilty when faced with my failures. I decided that focusing on failure was just not an option....so instead, decided that EACH DAY, I would just TRY to be a better person. I will sheepishly admit, that I didn't always succeed, but as long as I try, I focus on the positive. That is my goal for this year as well. Each day we have an opportunity to make a difference in someone's life and we should seize that opportunity and make the most of it. It doesn't have to be a monumental deed....sometimes just a smile and a thank you....holding the door open for someone....putting your neighbor's newspaper by their front door....delivering the best customer service you can when at your job.....these are all small ways that we can make a difference. Give it a try and see how it works for you. I promise that one good deed leads to another. If nothing else, you will feel good about yourself and focus on the positives in your life.

This is going to be a hard economic year for the U. S. and each of us will no doubt be watching expenses. Think of ways to do that sensibly. We have lots of talent in our membership. I am all for bringing back the barter system. Can you clean stalls for someone in exchange for lessons? Trailer someone's horse in exchange for some animal sitting time? Can you trade that extra bridle for something you might need? I encourage each of you to explore the possibilities. Let's try to help each other cope in 2009, so we can still enjoy our horse outings. Our classified section on the website is a good place to start. Offer your goods and/or services. Think about what talents you have and see if someone else might put them to good use in exchange for something you might have or do.

Let's face 2009 head-on and vow to make it a fun horse year, no matter what! If you are in a position to help someone else---financially or otherwise---do it! Lots of horses are being abandoned and are in need of homes. Animal Rescue groups are overwhelmed and your donations of time, money or goods can really make a difference in the lives of the animals they rescue.

Happy New Year Everyone!

Geri



UPCOMING EVENTS

January 2009

Summerhill Winter Series

When: January 10

Where: Summerhill Farm, Powhatan

Email: shairf3182@aol.com

Dressage Clinic with Catherine Sutton in indoor arena

When: January 11

Where: Oakdale Farm, Powhatan

Website: <http://www.oakdalehorsefarm.com>

Dressage Clinic with Michael Schaffer in indoor arena

When: January 17-18

Where: Oakdale Farm, Powhatan

Website: <http://www.oakdalehorsefarm.com>

CVACTA CT and Dressage Show

When: January 17

Where: Campbell Springs Farm, Chesterfield

Website: <http://www.campbellspringsfarm.com> or <http://www.cvacta.org>

Fox Horn Stables Hunter Show

When: January 17

Where: Fox Horn Stables, Chesterfield

Email: summerhillstable@aol.com

Summerhill Winter Series

When: January 24

Where: Summerhill Farm, Powhatan

Email: shairf3182@aol.com

Cross Country Jumping Clinic with Nancy Covert

When: January 25

Where: Oakdale Farm, Powhatan

Website: <http://www.oakdalehorsefarm.com>

Fox Horn Stables Hunter Show

When: January 31

Where: Fox Horn Stables, Chesterfield

Email: summerhillstable@aol.com



TIP OF THE MONTH

Grooming your horse in the winter is essential for good health. Daily grooming helps a horse build a healthy coat, fight off fungus and make weight loss and wounds easier to spot. It also helps to build a strong bond between humans and horses.

MyHorse.com offered the following advice:

As the weather cools and in some climates dampens, you will need to pay particular attention to your horse's hooves. Horses that stand in damp paddocks develop thrush and scratches, both of which can be easily prevented with a little daily maintenance.

If you want to give your horse a bath when the weather is cool, you still can---provided you have a few of the right tools. The following is a brief guide to cool weather grooming and bathing techniques:

- 1. Curry (using a circular motion to lift the dirt) and brush your horse every day. Use a rubber curry comb and a longer bristled brush to lift off the dirt. Use a soft brush around his face. After you have given him a good rubdown, you can spray him with a non-silicone grooming solution to keep further dirt at bay and rub him down with a clean towel.*
- 2. Pick his hooves daily. Apply a dilution of Lysol disinfectant (2 oz to 1 gal of water), a dilution of bleach, or a commercial thrush product, every week.*
- 3. To give a horse a winter bath, work in sections and with the hottest water available that your horse can stand. A stock tank heater and a bucket work well for this purpose. As you finish each section of your horse, rub off the excess water and cover with a towel. When you are totally finished, cover the horse (and the towels) with a fleece cooler and walk him in a warm place until he's dry. A good rule of thumb is not to bathe a horse if it's cooler than 55 degrees.*

With this crazy weather, it's hard to figure out when it will be warm or cold, but windows of opportunity do open from time to time. When a bath isn't possible, a good grooming is always in order.



More about Happy Horses.....

Myhorse.com featured another article entitled “10 Ways To Keep Your Horse Happy”. Without reproducing the entire article, I am offering the 10 tips and some paraphrasing in the interest of space...to give you something to think about. We all want happy horses. Consider these suggestions:

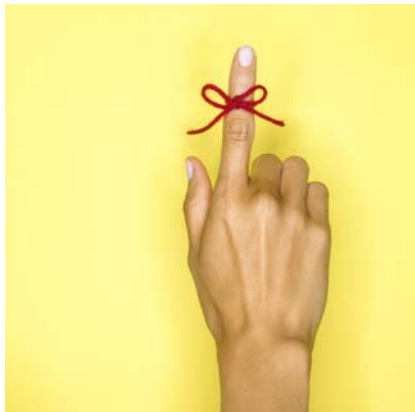
1. **Adequate Roughage**—Food, in the form of hay or grass, is your horse’s primary need. Though he may kick his bucket demanding grain, keeping roughage working through his gut is instrumental to his happiness. It takes him about 2 days to process what he eats, so the grass he ate yesterday is still with him today.
2. **Fresh Water**---Now that he’s eaten all that grass, he needs enough water to make soup in that fermentation vat we call his hindgut. Without enough water, that hay or grass begins to compact and trouble follows. Give your horse good quality hay and plenty of fresh water.
3. **Routine**—Horses have a clock in their heads. Ask anyone who has to explain daylight savings time to their horses. The better you can stick to a routine, the happier the horses are. That’s just not referring to time, either. Make any other changes gradually too, such as feed, water and turnout times.
4. **Buddies**---Horses need friends. They’re happier in a group situation and if you see a horse who is a loner, he probably had some problem. The buddy doesn’t have to be another horse, although that’s preferable.
5. **Visual Stimulation and Ventilation**---If you have to keep your horses in a barn, find some way to let him see other horses—perhaps using a stall guard instead of a solid door, when appropriate. Let cats live in the barn, so at least the horse can see cats playing in the aisle. Be sure plenty of air flows through the barn, so he can breathe free and enjoy all the natural smells of the season.
6. **Exercise**---Movement not only keeps their bodies in shape, but each step helps their feet get a good blood supply. Movement also helps the digestion process. If you have to keep your horse inside due to terrible weather or some other reason, see if you can let him walk—at least up and down the barn aisle.
7. **Down Time**---Horses seem to need down time, just to be themselves and let down mentally...or maybe to kick up their heels. After a stressful period, perhaps following a show or racing season, you will find that many professionals turn their horses out for a few weeks. If your horse lives in a busy barn with limited turnout time, putting him on the longe line or working him in a round pen may give him exercise, but not the down time he craves. See if you can schedule some down time for him, or at a minimum, hand-walk him and let him graze on the lead rope, a distance from the barn.
8. **Vet and Farrier Care**—This is a no-brainer. Regular farrier care will keep your horse’s feet trimmed and balanced. Regular de-worming will keep his immune system functioning well and keep parasites at bay. Don’t forget your horse’s teeth. If he has sharp points, eating is not much fun because each bite can irritate his cheeks.

9. **Grooming**---Groom him so that his skin is clean. That will also give you an opportunity to notice any bites or injuries. Also take the time to find those special spots that he likes to have scratched. He'll think pleasant thoughts of you, even when you are not at the barn.
10. **Give Him a Job**---Horses love to have a purpose and it's exciting for an owner to have a horse who knows his job. Horses don't have to have a "jazzy" job to feel worthwhile. The retiree may see his job as coming for his carrot and having his feet picked out. And lack of focus in an untrained horse may be the result of him not having found his place in the world. Simple things like telling a yearling where to stand, and praising him when he stands there (not scolding him when he's in the wrong place) probably gives him a sense that all is right with the world. When we see that look come over our horse's face, it makes us happy too.

Should you have any doubts about the best methods for managing your horse and keeping him content, consult your veterinarian or trainer for further suggestions. If you sense that your horse is unhappy, don't ignore that intuition, especially if he's usually upbeat. Changes in your horse's happiness often are the first signs that a health or lameness problem is brewing, just as you often feel less chipper the day before you start to fight off a cold.

Making your horse happy will not only benefit him, it will enrich your life. Although we may be attributing human emotions to horses, most of us want to feel that our horses love us, and we will go to great lengths to ensure their happiness and comfort....and well we should.

---reproduced, in part, from MyHorse.com



REMINDER---2009 DUES

As the new year begins, this is a reminder that it's time to pay your 2009 dues. The first meeting for the year will be on January 20th at Markel, beginning at 7PM. It will be a purely business meeting, with no speaker, so come with your ideas and your dues! Once again, Allyn Linas is serving as Membership Chair, so you can get your payment to her. The dues will likely remain at \$35. if paid timely. Similar to last year, there will be a late fee if payment is made after the deadline. Info will be on the website shortly regarding dues, so keep an eye out at <http://rustystirrups.com> We are looking for a good turnout at the January meeting, so hope to see you there.

Horse Madness

Why do I like horses?
I reckon I must be mad.
My mother wasn't horsey
And neither was my dad.

But the madness hit me early
And it hit me like a curse.
And I've never gotten better
In fact I've gotten worse.

My stables are immaculate.
My house is like a hovel.
Last year for my birthday
I got a brand new shovel.

I hardly read a paper
But I know who's sold their horse
And I wouldn't watch the news
If Mr. Ed was on, of course.

One eye's always on the heavens
But my washing waves in vain
As I rush to get the horses in
In case it's gonna rain.

And though they're wearing 15 rugs,
The best that you can get,
I bring them in to keep them dry
While I get soaking wet.

I spend up every cent I've got
On horsey stuff for sure.
I buy fancy rugs and fancy rugs,
And then I buy some more.

I should have had my hair cut
Or bought that nice blue shirt
At least it wouldn't be now
Ripped to shreds and in the dirt.

I can't make a bloody sponge cake
I don't even try
But I can back a car and trailer
In the twinkling of an eye.

It's pants and R.M. boots
That I live in night and day
And that smell of sweaty horses
Just doesn't wash away.

Once in every pancake day
I can dress up for a ball.
Make up and a hairdo
With high heel shoes and all.

I ache from long forgotten falls.
My knees have got no skin.
My toes have gone a funny shape.
From being squashed again.

But late at night, when all is still
And I've gone to give them hay,
I touch their velvet softness
And my worries float away.

They give a gentle nicker
And they nuzzle through my hair
And I know it's where my heart is
More than anywhere.

---Author Unknown



That's it for another issue of the Poop Scoop! Sorry it was late, but the holidays left me behind in a lot of things. Nevertheless, Happy New Year to all of you!

Peace.....

Health.....

Happiness.....

Great horsey adventures.....

Lots of saddle time.....

Good friends.....

HEALTHY HORSES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

