

POOP SCOOP

Rusty Stirrups Riding Club Newsletter

March 2009

View From the Grandstand

Just when we thought Spring was around the corner, Mother Nature showed us who was REALLY in charge! How about all this snow!?!?!? As Sam and I drove home from the barn last night down Rt. 33, it looked like a winter wonderland. I forgot how beautiful snow makes the trees look and how silent it sounds as it is falling. All we could think of was taking pictures of the boys in the snow. Just like horse people!! Playing in the snow with the horses can be so much fun... and they are so energized by the weather. It's too bad we have to work today or we would surely be at the barn playing with them.

For the last few weeks, all I have been thinking of was spring and getting Timmy into shape for the upcoming season. Those 60 degree days inspired me to ride more and I felt good about starting a solid training regimen. Looks like the best laid plans can go awry. Fortunately we have the indoor arena to work in, but even that isn't attractive when it's 11 degrees outside. Guess I will have to fall back on "Plan B". As Charles Wendt suggests in his *Muck Bucket* article this month, it's a good time to go over our gear and equipment to do the obligatory safety check. So while you are snowbound, check out his suggestions and get a jump on the season!

The Rusty Stirrups are off to a great start in 2009. We have several committees in place, working on some outstanding events. If you want to get to know more people in the Club, think about volunteering for one of these committees. You will get a double benefit.....meeting new people AND making sure we have lots of fun things to do this year.

I want to acknowledge the work of the United States Equine Rescue League in our area. In January, they assisted the Animal Control folks in Isle of Wight county when 23 severely neglected horses were removed from a property in Zuni. Ten were brought to USERL facilities in the Richmond region and are being cared for by this amazing group of volunteers. In February, they were called on once again to help ten more horses that were seized in Prince Edward County. If anyone can donate time or money to this group, I know they would appreciate it. The economy is tough and we all struggle to keep up with our own horses. The USERL struggles as well—feed, hay, vet care, blankets---all these things cost

money. Every donation helps....no matter how small. The horse community is proud of the work of the USERL....so to all of you who volunteer there---THANKS for your work and dedication.

For the rest of us, spring is around the corner. Hold on! It really IS going to get warm soon!

Geri



First Things First

I hope everyone has been wintering well and I know I am more than ready for spring and the 2009 equestrian season. But before things get crazy busy (i.e. warm), I'd like to encourage everyone to spend a little bit of time going over gear and equipment. Remember the safer we are, the less we get hurt. And that means more time in the saddle whether it is dancing dressage, running down fences, or trail riding through the spring blossoms.

First, give that horse trailer a good going over before you start hauling everywhere. It has probably sat all winter. You can almost guess that tire pressure will be low (which can lead to instability, poor braking, etc.). Hinges may need lubricating to not squeak like a horse eating banshee (nothing like starting the year getting body slammed by 1200 lbs of spooking horse as you open a trailer door for the first time in months). Electrical connections may have corroded—do you have lights and brakes? Finally, remember that the state inspections are designed to keep you road legal. That's not necessarily the same as being horse safe (and the junior mechanic doing the inspection probably doesn't know anything about horses anyway—they just think they do). Look under the mats at the floorboards, wash away the winter mold, and remove any old hay left over from last year. It only takes a little bit of time on one of those yucky muddy days that it's not worth going somewhere anyway. Finally, check that emergency equipment that hopefully you haven't had to use in a while (and make sure it hasn't gone walking off). Have your first aid kit items expired? Do the batteries in the flashlight still work? Did you ever replace the road flares that you borrowed to get a bonfire going on the farm last fall? With the economy we have all been putting some things off. Revisit those things and make sure they are good choices, and not penny wise/pound foolish.

Second, what is the shape of your barn? With both bugs and grass gone, my horses spend a lot of time outside over the late fall through winter—only coming in when the weather is really bad. Which means a lot of farm equipment, old jumps, dressage arena pieces, lawn mowing equipment, etc. seems to slowly migrate into the shelter of the barn over a period of a few months. Perhaps that's okay to protect it from the weather over the off season when barn traffic is light. But with traffic in the barn soon to pick up, don't risk tripping overstuff—its time to clear away the clutter (especially things that aren't good for animals like oil/gas or sharp edges and narrow spaces). It's also a great time to do a barn fire safety inspection. I believe we got some tips coming up at a future RSRC meeting, but if you can't be there at least inspect the fire extinguishers, make sure the evacuation plan is still good, and that the "no smoking signs" haven't worn away. Also, have an

electrician check any electrical outlets that show signs of overload (such as brown scorching/sootiness on the face plate) or if any blown fuses/tripping circuit breakers have been replaced with an improper size (NEVER EVER USE A PENNY IN A FUSE PANEL—you will burn down the barn for the price of a new fuse).

Third, get after that tack. The dry winters can be hard on leather—get rid of the mold and oil it for new life. Far better to get some more meat sewn on to that fraying elastic girth now than in the middle of summer (where you will put it off another a year so you don't miss rides and maybe have it part on you). Make sure mice didn't gnaw away at the stitching. Has last year's fly-spray rotted down your rubber reins to the breaking point? Take the time to take the bridle completely apart. You will never have the time for anything but a quick wipe down once the season gets underway. The tack room is a great place to avoid the 40 mph windy day and still satisfy some horse fever. Cognac fumes blend sweetly with saddle soap aroma—make a party of it.

And finally, get reacquainted with your horse. Don't neglect spring shots and your Coggin's test. Any dental issues before you put that bit back in his mouth? Are his hooves balanced or do they need some attention? Feel up and down each of his legs. Are there any hot spots, scars, swelling, etc.? Any signs of injury sustained while out at pasture that may need a quick look when the vet is out for shots anyway? Give him a chance to get back in shape. Take extra time to warm up slowly and softly. Don't press for too much in the beginning—work back gradually. It may help to mark out a plan on the calendar about how much walking, trotting, and cantering you do each ride as he is getting back into work. Stick to it and resist the urge to rush ahead—we haven't gotten to ride much in the cold dark days of winter. No sense pulling a muscle or ligament just as we can get going again.

This time of year the weather is pretty squirrely—some days are great to ride, some days you fail to convince yourself it is spring and not winter. Don't despair—there is plenty to do for your riding even on days when it is not great to ride. It is not the most fun stuff, but it is the right stuff to have a safe and enjoyable riding season. And if you put that stuff first now, you won't be giving up a nice riding day to do it later.



Just recently, after years of research, I have finally been able to give a name to what my friends and I have been living with for years. It's an affliction, for sure, which when undiagnosed and misunderstood can devastate and literally tear a family apart. Very little is known about O.C.E.A.N. Syndrome. But it is my hope this article will generate interest from researchers involved in the equine and psychological sciences. You will, no doubt, begin to identify similar symptoms in your own family and hopefully now be able to cope.

Obsessive Compulsive Equine Attachment Neurosis Syndrome (O.C.E.A.N.) is usually found in the female and can manifest itself anytime from birth to the golden years. Symptoms may appear any time and may even go dormant in the late teens, but the syndrome frequently re-emerges in later years.

Symptoms vary widely in both number and degree of severity. Allow me to share some examples which are most prominent in my circle.

The afflicted individual:

- 1. Can smell moldy hay at ten paces, but can't tell whether milk has gone bad until it turns chunky.**
- 2. Finds the occasional "Buck and Fart" session hugely entertaining, but severely chastises her husband for similar antics.**
- 3. Will spend hours cleaning and conditioning her tack, but wants to eat on paper plates so there are no dishes.**
- 4. Considers equine gaseous excretions a fragrance.**
- 5. Enjoys mucking out four stalls twice a day, but insists on having a housekeeper mop the kitchen floor once a week.**
- 6. Will spend an hour combing and trimming an equine mane, but wears a baseball cap so she doesn't waste time brushing her own hair.**
- 7. Will dig through manure piles daily looking for worms, but does not fish.**
- 8. Will not hesitate to administer a rectal exam up to her shoulder, but finds cleaning out the Thanksgiving turkey cavity for dressing quite repulsive.**
- 9. By memory can mix eight different supplements in the correct proportions, but can't make macaroni and cheese that isn't soupy.**
- 10. Twice a week will spend an hour scrubbing algae from the water tanks, but has a problem cleaning lasagna out of the casserole dish.**
- 11. Will pick a horse's nose, and calls it cleaning, but becomes verbally violent when her husband picks his.**
- 12. Can sit through a four-hour session of a ground work clinic, but is unable to make it through a half-hour episode of Cops.**

The spouse/partner of an afflicted victim:

- 1. Must come to terms with the fact there is no cure, and only slightly effective treatments. The syndrome may be genetic or caused by the inhaling of manure particles which, I propose, have an adverse effect on female hormones.**
- 2. Must adjust the family budget to include equine items - hay, veterinarian services, farrier services, riding boots, and clothes, supplements, tack, equine masseuse and acupuncturist - as well as the**

(mandatory) equine spiritual guide, etc. Once you have identified a monthly figure, never look at it again. Doing so will cause tightness in your chest, nausea, and occasional diarrhea.

3. Must realize that your spouse has no control over this affliction. More often than not, she will deny a problem even exists as denial is common.

4. Must form a support group. You need to know you're not alone - and there's no shame in admitting your wife/partner has a problem.

My friend's support group, for instance, involves men who truly enjoy Harley Davidsons, four-day weekends, and lots of scotch. Most times his wife is unaware that he is even gone, until the precise moment she needs help getting a 50 pound bag of grain out of the truck.

Recognize anyone YOU know!?!?!?!?



CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS.....

This is the time of the year when committees are forming and meeting, to make sure the Rusties have plenty to do in 2009. Listed below are the Committees that have come together so far. If you have some time and are willing to help, please contact the Chairperson for that committee and offer your time. We are always looking for volunteers....and NEW volunteers are always welcome. It's a great way to make friends in the club. Please give it a try. If you have any ideas for events, let Paula Steindler know.

Events Committee
Sunshine Committee
Monthly Trail Ride Committee
Judged Trail Ride
Annual Rally
Prix Caprilli Summer Program
Vendor Fair/Tack Exchange
Ashland Christmas Parade
Christmas Party

Paula Steindler, Chair
Sue Carrieri, Chair
Ellen Miles and Debby Clark, Co Chairs
Cindie Willoughby, Chair
IN NEED OF CHAIRPERSON
Samantha Silver, Chair
Rick Linas, Chair
Barb Robertson, Chair
Patty Michalak, Chair

For an explanation of what each of these committees is all about, see our website at www.rustystirrups.com and click on "Membership", then "Committees".



Trivia Quiz

We have just elected a new President, so I thought this set of trivia questions would be appropriate. See how many you know, or can guess. I have to admit, I didn't do too well when I took the quiz. Answers appear later in the newsletter.

1. Which president rode 90 miles in one day on horseback in a heavy ice-and-snow storm to prove that the test ride required for Army officers at the time was not too difficult?
 - a. Abraham Lincoln
 - b. Theodore Roosevelt
 - c. George Washington
 - d. James Monroe
2. Who was the first president to use automobiles rather than horses for transportation?
 - a. Franklin Roosevelt
 - b. Theodore Roosevelt
 - c. Herbert Hoover
 - d. William Howard Taft
3. Which president raced horses under his nephew's name to avoid negative public opinion?
 - a. Andrew Jackson
 - b. Andrew Johnson
 - c. Zachary Taylor
 - d. Thomas Jefferson
4. Which president had a mechanical horse installed in the White House so that he could get some exercise on his busiest days or when weather would not allow him to go out?
 - a. Theodore Roosevelt
 - b. Woodrow Wilson
 - c. Grover Cleveland
 - d. Calvin Coolidge
5. Who was the first president to attend the Kentucky Derby?
 - a. John F. Kennedy
 - b. Richard Nixon

- c. George H. W. Bush
- d. Dwight Eisenhower

6. What was the name of the horse that served in the state funerals of Presidents Kennedy, Hoover and Johnson?
- a. Traveller
 - b. General
 - c. Ole Hickory
 - d. Black Jack



UPCOMING EVENTS

March, 2009

Hidden Haven Hunter Show

When: March 1

Where: Hidden Haven, Mechanicsville

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

First Annual Fire Sale to benefit USERL

When: March 7

Where: Old Eastern Hanover Volunteer Fire Department, Mechanicsville

Phone: 804-746-9865

More information: [Flyer](#)

Virginia Horse Council Annual Meeting and Educational Seminar

When: March 7

Where: Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave

Website: <http://www.virginiahorsecouncil.org>

More information: [Flyer](#)

Dressage Clinic with Catherine Sutton in indoor arena

When: March 7

Where: Oakdale Farm, Powhatan

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

Fox Horn Hunter Show

When: March 7

Where: Fox Horn Farm, Chestnerfield

Email: summerhillstable@aol.com

Cornerstone Horsemanship presents Cowboy Camp for Beginners

When: March 13-15 (rain date March 20-25)

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

Phone: 540-292-5213

CVACTA CT and Dressage Show

When: March 14

Where: Campbell Springs Farm, Chesterfield

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

RSRC Trail Ride

When: March 21

Where: Sandy Point National Forest, King William

Hunter Mini Schooling Show Series

When: March 21

Where: Coventry Farm, Ashland

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

Reining Horse Association Show

When: March 21-22

Where: Campbell Springs Farm, Chesterfield

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

Dressage Clinic with Catherine Sutton in indoor arena

When: March 22

Where: Oakdale Farm, Powhatan

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

Shrine Trail Ride- also Randy Abernathy will be there from 5-7pm

When: March 28

Where: Red Oak and Avention, NC

Double A Farms Spring Trail Ride

When: March 28

Where: Double A Farms, Kenbridge

Phone: 434-676-2934

VA Starter Horse Trials XC Schooling Day

When: March 28

Where: VA Horse Center, Lexington

Website: <http://www.horsecenter.org>

VA Starter Horse Trials

When: March 29

Where: VA Horse Center, Lexington

Website: <http://www.horsecenter.org>

TIP OF THE MONTH

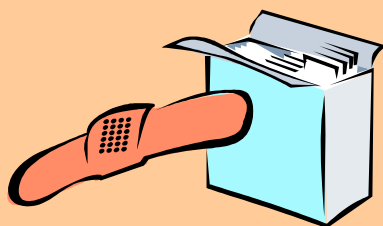
Spring brings wet weather (April Showers?) and that often leads to a case of scratches (pastern dermatitis)...also called dew poisoning, greasy heel or mud fever. Scratches is not a condition itself, it's a description of a problem commonly seen on a horse's lower limbs. It is caused by a variety of conditions including viral, bacterial, fungal or parasitic infections. The condition is a chronic dermatitis characterized by enlargement of the skin cells and oozing on the rear surface of the pastern and fetlock.

Heavy horses are particularly susceptible (potentially because their feathered legs can trap dirt and moisture) and the hind limbs are affected more commonly. Horses with light-colored legs or white socks are also more susceptible to getting scratches.

So how do you treat it? The Horse.com says the first step in treatment is removing the horse from the wet or muddy environment and then clip the hair surrounding the affected area. This will help keep it clean and dry and allow you to apply medication to the skin. Wash the area thoroughly using an antibacterial soap, such as a Betadine scrub. Be careful when doing this because the area is likely to be sensitive and if you scrub too hard, you could cause pain and potentially be kicked. Towel dry the cleaned area.

If scabs are present, try to soak or sweat these off rather than picking them, which seems to aggravate the inflammation. Limit your washing sessions to only once a day, as additional moisture could further inflame the area. Some folks apply Vaseline as a softener. A vet from the University of Minnesota, Dr. Christie Ward, recommends applying Corona ointment. Don't use ointment if the horse is turned out in a dry lot or muddy area, because it will attract dirt.

Dr. Ward also says, "severe cases often require topical treatment with cream that contains both antibiotics and antifungal agents and dexamethasone (a steroid) to reduce inflammation. Really severe cases can often benefit from a course of treatment with oral broad-spectrum antibiotics."



REMINDER---2009 DUES

As the new year begins, this is a reminder that it's time to pay your 2009 dues. Allyn Linas is serving as Membership Chair, so you can get your payment to her. The dues are \$35. if paid timely. Similar to last year, there will be a late fee of \$5. if payment is made after the deadline of March 1st, 2009. Info will be on the website shortly regarding dues, so keep an eye out at <http://rustystirrups.com>

Trivia Answers—Presidential Trivia Quiz

1. b
2. d
3. a
4. d
5. b
6. d

How did you do???? I don't know about you, but I need to bone up on my history!! I think I only answered 2 correctly!



Well that's it for another edition of the Poop Scoop. If you have any news for future editions, please feel free to send them to me at ghollander@markelcorp.com If you would like to write an article for the Poop Scoop, we are always looking for contributors.

Our next regular meeting is on March 17th at the Markel Plaza Building at 4600 Cox Rd. in Innsbrook at 7PM. We hope to see you there.

The End