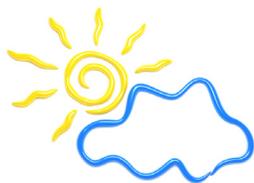


News Letter

AMWELL VALLEY TRAIL ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 2010



DOG DAY'S OF SUMMER PARTY IS TENTITIVELY

SET FOR SATURDAY AUGUST 14TH

at the Gardners.

Post cards and email notices will be sent.



Wertsville Rd will be closing for about 6 months on June 28th, 2010 to replace the bridge by Totten's at Dutch Lane. The official detour is down Old York Rd. to Manners Rd to Wertsville Rd by Holcomb's. Riders be alert to extra traffic on the side roads also.



© Marie Read

Many thanks to everyone who participated in the annual AVTA WSB fundraiser!

The final count was 80 different species of birds, and I've appended a PDF file of them, in alphabetical order as requested by Gael :). The count was a little lower than in some previous years. This might be attributed to the fact that there was a lot of leaf cover (in most years the WSB is scheduled a week earlier) and it was somewhat windy later in the morning, making finding the warblers that like to feed in the canopy rather hard to spot. For reasons unknown, some species that have reliably been found in certain spots and/or are widespread in the township year after year were absent or scarce, like the blue-winged warbler, field sparrow, Blackburnian warbler, Canada warbler and rose-breasted grosbeak. Other birds which I saw and/or heard the day before while scouting for the 6 - 8 am segment, like the Cape May warbler, Kentucky warbler and the pileated

woodpecker, refused to grace us with an appearance on the day. On the plus side, bobolinks were back on the list again, and a new bird for us, the elusive sora, was spotted at Amwell Lake! Gael Gardner wins the Virtual Blue Birding Ribbon award for spotting this odd-looking bird as it emerged from the rushes onto a little mud flat. Look for the final, more comprehensive report on the AVTA website in a couple of days, along with the total money raised for the NJ Audubon Society when I have collected all pledges.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| American Crow (aka Common Crow) | Chimney Swift | Indigo Bunting | Scarlet Tanager |
| American Goldfinch | Chipping Sparrow | Killdeer | Solitary Sandpiper |
| American Kestrel | Common Grackle | Lesser Yellowlegs | Song Sparrow |
| American Redstart | Common Yellowthroat | Mallard | Sora |
| Baltimore Oriole | Downy Woodpecker | Mourning Dove | Spotted Sandpiper |
| Barn Swallow | Eastern Bluebird | Northern Cardinal | Tree Swallow |
| Black Vulture | Eastern Kingbird | Northern Flicker | Tufted Titmouse |
| Black-and-white Warbler | Eastern Phoebe | Northern Mockingbird | Turkey Vulture |
| Black-throated Blue | Eastern Towhee | Northern Parula | Veery |
| Black-throated Green | Eastern Wood Pee-wee | Ovenbird | Warbling Vireo |
| Blue Jay | European Starling | Pheasant | White-breasted Nuthatch |
| Blue-winged Warbler | Gray Catbird | Prairie Warbler | White-eyed Vireo |
| Bobolink | Great Blue Heron | Purple Martin | White-throated Sparrow |
| Brown Thrasher | Great Crested Flycatcher | Red-bellied Woodpecker | Willow Flycatcher |
| Brown-headed Cowbird | Greater Yellowlegs | Red-eyed Vireo | Wood Thrush |
| Canada Goose | Green Heron | Red-tailed Hawk | Worm-eating Warbler |
| Carolina Chickadee | Hairy Woodpecker | Red-winged Blackbird | Yellow Warbler |
| Carolina Wren | Hooded Warbler | Robin | Yellow-throated Vireo |
| Cedar Waxwing | House Finch | Rock Pigeon | |
| Chestnut-sided Warbler | House Sparrow | Rough-winged Swallow | |
| | House Wren | Ruby-throated Hummingbird | |



The Eclectic Equestrian Barn Owing: Are we having fun yet?

By Susan R.G. Lax

Yes, I am. Whether Howard is, I am not sure. Or perhaps I am delusional and want to ignore all the signs – big and small.

Over the course of my equestrian life, I have gone from barn help to boarder to barn owner. Thank goodness I had a very versatile education working in barns or I would have been at a major loss when it came to owning my own facility. Even as a boarder, I was one of those that always helped out with stalls when someone quit unexpectedly or helped dig fence post holes when a storm knocked down the fence.

As a result, I know every which way of mucking out: banking, not banking and my own method which new boarders find puzzling at first but then realize I'm on to something. I know how to medicate, teach ground manners after being dragged one too many times by a willful horse or two...or three. I know the look and smell of good hay and how to drag an arena so the footing stays safe and comfortable.

Howard didn't have that education. When he met me, it was "gee, always wanted to have a pony. 'Told my parents they could keep it in the basement of our apartment building.'" He liked helping out at the places we boarded too, getting *A Weekend Guide To Barn Maintenance* by assisting the barn owner. Quite an education for someone who could barely hang a picture on the wall at the time. After all, he was used to calling the building superintendent for repairs.

But nothing really prepared us for the real thing.

There was the time I walked into our wash stall during the winter and the pipe had burst. Water was gushing like a fountain. The wash stall walls were encased in ice as was the floor. I tried to turn the water off but nothing was working. Thirty minutes later, Howard showed up with his friend from work, a much handier guy who offered to come to the rescue.

There they were sliding on the ice, trying to stop the water. A trip to Home Depot and, thanks to Howard's friend, the problem was fixed, Howard got an education in plumbing and we were prepared a level higher on the Do-It-Your-Self Scale for the next problem.

Actually, if Howard has learned anything, plumbing seems to be his forte. He has mastered the pipe system into and out of the stalls, and throughout the barn and even comes up with solutions to my "hmmm, that would be easier if I had this..." musings.

My biggest learning curve was all animals are not created equally. Yes, I will kill what gets in the way my barn animal's health. Ground hogs, fox, rats, look out! My "oohs and ahhs and oh how cutes" are a thing of the past! I will have a pest free environment, if I have to kill myself trying.

I also have learned that providing great service to my boarders cost money. Howard keeps reminding me that this is not a profitable business. We especially know this during the current economy. Barn owners have had to get out of the business and those remaining are facing higher costs on everything (I won't even touch the topic of labor) while trying not to increase board so people can keep their horses.

But I have learned that I can do things for my boarders that I liked as a boarder and find a happy medium. Of course it helps to have wonderful boarders who also will chip in and don't stand around when it's storming and horses need to come in or throw an extra flake if the horses need more when we are not around.

We both have learned that, at least here in the Valley, it's not competitive among the barn owners. More than once other barn owners have come to the rescue or sent prospective boarders our way.

So, Howard is definitely handier. I have incorporated what I have learned in the past and modify or improve it when necessary. Even just trying to subsidize your own horses by being in this business requires good business, maintenance and care sense. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" goes a really long way in the horse business.

And humor. If we can remember to add that to the recipe, boarders and barn owners will form good partnerships and husbands with horse crazy wives will be able to go through the bills each month and still find time to enjoy the beauty of their farm together.

Because it really was very funny when Gen, a 16-hand grey TB slipped out past Howard one morning. He went trotting down Van Lieus Road to meet some friends at SonBob Farm with Howard running after him on foot in dress shoes and business attire. Thanks to the Ditzels and everyone at SonBob for saving the day and not laughing too hard!

Update on Lexy's Story

Lexy was so inspired by her experience at Toy Box that she decided to write a book. She asked me to be her editor and I agreed, having no idea what I was in for. She would send me the chapters on email as she finished them, I would read them and make suggestions for changes, clarifications, additions and deletions. It took hours and hours, and as I finished each chapter, I found myself anxiously awaiting the arrival of the next one to see how the story would progress. I fell in love with the characters, and they became almost real to me as I spent so much time with them.

The story is about Alex, a young girl whose family owns a horse farm in Pennsylvania, which has a remarkable resemblance to Toy Box. The story is amazingly involved. It begins by introducing us to Alex and her friends and family when she was in sixth grade, then moves on to delight us with all the adventures that Alex experienced in her 16th summer...with her horses, her friends, her first boyfriend. It ended up being eleven chapters, almost 200 pages, long. It took two years to complete, and Lexy just sent it to a publisher in December. Lexy is, of course, very hopeful, but says she's prepared for any decision on the publisher's part. She's just amazing for a twelve-year-old!!

—Lynn Ebeling



Are you looking for a boarding facility?

By Gail Cahill

Shopping for the perfect boarding facility for our four legged buddies can be stressful. The truth is you will probably not find the “perfect” facility. Even if you own your place you will most likely be tweaking the way things are run. We all have different priorities and needs when it comes to our horses. Here is a list of some of the questions and concerns one might have while on their quest. Before you go make sure that the barn allows or caters to the riding discipline you are interested in pursuing.

Questions to ask farm manager/owner:

- Board cost (*obvious*)
- Boarding options (*full, partial, pasture*)
- Stall size
- What is included in the board?
- What are the barn hours?
- How often are the horses fed?
- What do you feed (*grain*) and what if my horse needs something different?
- What type of hay (*orchard, grass/timothy/alfalfa*) (*ask your vet what would be appropriate for your horse*)?
- What if I feel my horse needs more hay than what is included with board?
- Are the boarders mainly adults/children?
- Can I put up a fan for my horse?
- Are stalls cleaned every day?
- Can I install a salt block if needed?
- Do I bring my own buckets? If so, how many?
- Can I bring my trailer and store it?
- Can I bring in any instructor, vet, and farrier?
- What are the helmet requirements?
- What are the turnout policies? how long each day? how many horses in a field?

- What is your worming schedule?
- What are the costs of any extras? (blanketing, holding the horse for Vet or farrier, grooming, injury care etc.)
- How many horses are turned out together?
- Do I sign a release?
- Do leave a security deposit or what is the policy if my horse causes any damage?
- My tack trunk is large is that OK?
- Can I bring my dog to the barn?
- Do you send a bill?
- How much notice do I give when I move from the facility?

Questions to ask yourself when visiting facility:

- What type of bedding?
- Is there a shed in the pasture?
- Does the barn seem fairly clean and safe (*i.e. Aisle not cluttered, no protruding nails*)
- Does the facility have hot water?
- Are there any indications of excessive rodents or insects?
- Is there a riding arena?
- How is the footing in the arena?
- Is the fencing safe?
- Are trails close?
- Are there any jumps?
- Notice the horses that are currently boarded at the facility; make sure they look healthy (look at weight, coat, and stable vices)

What a prospective boarding facility might ask you:

- Does your horse get along with others?
- Does your horse require any special food or supplements?
- Does your horse have any vices?
- Why are you looking for a new facility?
- May we get in touch with your former barn owners?

Busting Arabian Horse Myths!



Myth1: Arabian horses are flighty!

Not true-they are easily bored. If you want a horse that isn't easily bored go get a stock horse-and leave Arabians alone. They are busy trying to figure out how to amuse themselves.

Myth 2: Arabian horses are crazy

Absolutely not true!! They are not crazy just really, really smart. (*wait I have a better idea!*) They like to think outside the box. They learn what you want very quickly and then they learn how to get around what

you want, or try their version of what you want, or see if you are paying attention today and if you want the same thing you wanted yesterday.

Every day for an Arabian is a opportunity to explore a new idea with you, their most loved and best (but not quite as smart) friend.—*Loretta Reynolds*

Pictured on right: Benson who always has good ideas! Owned by Heidi Jensen (who apparently is not as smart as her Arab and continues to learn from him!)

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Classifieds

TO SEE MORE CLASSIFIEDS GO TO WWW.AVTA.NET

HAY/GRAIN EXTENDER AVAILABLE LOCALLY:

Laine Farms at 865 Amwell Road in Clover Hill has recently added hay pellets to their line of feeds. This is a long time family run farm making a variety of feeds from rabbit pellets, chicken feed, 10% horse pellets, sweet feed and now hay pellets. It can be used as a grain extender for easy keepers who get only a hand full of grain and also for part of the feed for older horses who have trouble eating hay. (908) 369-4967

STUDIO FOR RENT

Available July 1, 2010 - Studio room for rent in East Amwell in private home on small horse farm, horse stalls also available. Private entrance, private bath, parking, utilities included, references and security required. \$650/month call (908)797-3104 or email webperson@avta.net

HORSE FOR SALE

Elegant, Athletic TB Cross

Noble Heart (aka Noah) wants to please, and he has an endless amount of potential in any discipline. He has experience as a Jumper, as well as a low-level Eventer. He is a beautiful mover, and he has consistently progressed in his training. His ground manners are excellent. I am leaving for college, and I will be unable to give him the attention he needs. Noah is best suited to a confident, intermediate/advanced rider. We board and train Noah at Toy BoxFarm in Ringoes. Please call Liz @ 609-915-0589 for more information. Find Noble Heart (Noah) on Dreamhorse.com

TRAILER FOR SALE

2 horse, extra high, bumper pull, step up Large dressing room 4 new & 4 spare tires and white wheels Trailer running lights all work. Great condition \$8750.00 or Best Offer. Call Linda at 609-466-1767 or Lindamfox@aol.com

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STALL AVAILABLE

Crosswinds Farm Rileyville Road East Amwell 1 stall available \$600 plus tax amenities include indoor and outdoor rings, daily turnout and direct access to AVTA trails. Call Trishka Waterbury (609) 466-1717

STALLS AVAILABLE

TOY BOX FARM East Amwell 3 stalls available includes daily turnout, newly renovated and expanded indoor ring, outside dressage ring, outside jumping ring, cross country jumps and trail access just outside door. Lessons available for all levels. Call Carol Blackman (609) 466-0720 or (609) 466-0629

EQUINE ATHLETE

Equine Sports Massage Therapy Denise Gonsiewski C.E.S.M.T. 973-650-1975 or denise@equineathleteusa.com Call to set up a consult and 10 point check of your equine friend at no charge. Canine massage is also available.



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