



Newsletter

AMWELL VALLEY TRAIL ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2012



Happy Holidays to all AVTA Members!

This has been a busy year for the Amwell Valley Trail Association. The hunter pace which is our main fund raiser unfortunately had unfavorable weather, which resulted in a poor turn out. We were however, able to give money to our rescue squad and the fire company.

The trails have been in very good shape due to the work of a few dedicated people. Please be respectful of land owner's property. As you know, almost all our trails are on private property. This means if the trails are closed for any reason and you use them, you will be trespassing, and will be dealt with accordingly. The land owner has every right to call the police.

Our summer party was very well attended. A thank to the Gardners for once again opening their home to us. The party is also our annual meeting. It is here, that you, the members have a voice in what the Association can accomplish.

The winter party is coming up soon. We would like suggestions on how to make it better this year. If some one would like to take over the planning it would be greatly appreciated.

The speed of cars on our roads has been a contention. We have been in contact with the state and county road departments and hopefully will have more signs on the roads in the future. We do have T-shirts with the 25 mile an hour sign printed on them, to make people aware of the speed limits, when in the presences of horse and rider.

We would like to wish everyone a happy and healthy new year. —Trish

WINTER DOLDRUMS PARTY!! We Want Your Ideas!

For the 2013 Winter Doldrums Party we would like members to participate and have a say in what YOU would like for a party. We are looking for new ideas so please let us know! This years party is set for February/March. Some possible thoughts are:

1. **A pot luck cocktail party at Hillsborough Country Club**, with a pay bar and bring-your-own hors d'ouvres. This venue has plenty of parking but we would have to pay bar staff.
2. **A pot luck cocktail party and B-Y-O-B at Jenny McGarrin's** heated "Party Barn". Parking could be limited if snowy.
3. **A private room at the Metro Diner**, seating 60 with full regular menu at and B-Y-O-B (Metro Diner on Route 31)

E-mail Gael regarding any of these suggestions or to send in one of your own! Gael@thegardners.org

TRAIL MAINTENANCE: Since the storm, the trails have been well cleared in places and need a great deal of work in others. The Amwell Valley Hounds members have had five trail clearing days, but there are many areas that need attention. Members are asked to contact Trish tbuckwalter@embarqmail.com and Mary mrmurrin1@verizon.net with details of blocked trails and the severity of the blockage, so that we can prioritize clearing and maintenance, but possibly not until Spring. Some of the bigger trees may have to be cleared professionally.

For those of you who cross the middle of the Valley, The Centre Ridge Woods upper trail is totally destroyed. We will get a crew out to clear it as soon as possible. If you can trail blaze, the lower trail closer to Rose Ridge is passable. If you would like to post other areas, please do so on our facebook page.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Amwell-Valley-Trail-Association/147593779701>

TRAIL NEWS: Deer Hunting Gun Season started Monday, Nov. 26 until Feb. 9, 2013. Deer Hunting Bow Season runs until Feb. 16, 2013 on Sundays too! The AirPark is open to riders and hikers week days and Sundays only, no riding on Saturdays. Please avoid riding behind the shooting range. If the trails are conducive for riding meaning good footing, Riders may ONLY be on the AVTA trails between 10 A.M. and 2 P.M.

Winter riding conditions can be very tricky with partially frozen ground that can be very slippery. Stay away from the muddy areas. Ride only when it is dry, frozen or snow covered.

“Just because the sun is shining after a period of rain, doesn’t mean the trails are rideable” It takes several days (or weeks) to dry them up after significant rainfall.

As a reminder, our Code of Conduct, <http://www.avta.net/Conduct.html> states to stay on marked trails, do not ride across fields, planted or seemingly unplanted, do not jump landowner’s jumps and no loose dogs on the trails. Please use common sense and be respectful of land owners properties since we are guests on their land. The Trail Association depends on the generosity of the Landowners.

OUR 2012 PACE RIDE: Thanks go to Di for her work on running the administrative side of this year’s Pace. Grateful thanks to Steve Farrin, who did such a sterling job of marking this year’s course, along with the Amwell Valley Hounds for helping in clearing trails and co-advertising our Fall Paces. To Jessica Servis for taking the pictures and posting them on facebook. And to all the participants that showed up in spite of the bad weather.

FOR 2013 RIDE: Gael proposed a new venue (Weathertop Farm) and a new format. In light of the increased number of competitive Hunter Paces, ours should be a non-competitive ride with a 4 mile and 8 mile option. There would be no road crossings, no ideal time and no ribbons, just an opportunity for riders to enjoy our beautiful Valley. Parking would need to be carefully organized, and a suggestion that we should do a light lunch of soup, rolls and cookies for the participants and workers. It will be the first Sunday in October as usual. There will most likely be no rain date.

THINKING OVER 2012

Last winter was relatively mild after a bit of snow early on. It was also quite wet. Not much time for riding. However the spring was almost perfect. Everything dried out early and was dry enough to be able to mow trails early and then as it happened with just enough rain keep mowing them week after week until I at last gave up for a while.

Spring was warm early and that made for an awfully full tree canopy for the world series of birding in May. The Amwell Valley Trailfeathers had a good group and found some new birds for us. A least seeing the Sandpiper at Amwell Lake was great, tiny as it is (4 inches). But the numbers were not what we had in past years. It’s a fun day; why not try it next year?

While the summer was hot and dry, it was not as hot as 2010 or 2011. For some reason I don’t think I remember a lot of flies. The green heads were around off an on, but I certainly didn’t use as much swat as usual. Gnats were a problem, but not for long. And because it was dry there weren’t a lot of mosquitoes either. But this is, of course, my memory and not altogether reliable.

Trail repair after the October 2011 snow storm wasn’t really complete until this October when the Amwell Valley hunt and the AVTA finally got trails opened from North Hill Rd to the airpark. We had a good turn out for that. I have to mention here that over half of all members sign up for clearing trails and only a small fraction ever show up to do their share. This puts a large burden on those who faithfully show up. We are thinking of now keeping a record of all members who work so that we can tap some who haven’t. If you do your share by yourself, as the boarders from my barn do, you can let me or Mary Murrin know what you have done so we can mark you off.

The Annual Hunter Pace which was canceled last year due to awful ground conditions was sort of a bust this year too. The day started out grey, but not too cold or windy and the trails were in excellent condition. BUT then around 10 a.m. it began to drizzle and drizzle and drizzle. It never actually poured, but it did cut our riders down to a very few who all said they had a wonderful time despite the dampness.

The national weather people are saying that we are going to have a mild winter. Please remember that you must not ride if the trails are wet. Generally we close the trails in Jan to around the middle of April due to poor ground conditions so please check our web site if you are unsure if they are open.

I would like to thank a few people who are doing wonderful jobs and making life easier for the rest of us. Tory Januik who is our webmaster and sees that announcements get out to us in a timely manner, Mary Murrin our trail clearing co-ordinator, Di Huns (who recently moved to East Amwell) for her organization of the Hunter Pace and Heidi Jensen who edits the newsletter are among others who make the AVTA possible. If you change e-mail addresses please e-mail Tory at tj801@aol.com or me at Gael@thegardners.org. We like to keep you up to date and need our mail lists accurate.

Don’t forget to check our web site www.avta.net and facebook page. If anyone is interested in joining they can get our rules and regulations and a membership application there.

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Happy and Safe New Year! —Gael Gardner



The Story of Prudence

By Tory Januik

If you look up Prudence in the Dictionary it means “the ability to govern and discipline oneself by the use of reason.” I would soon learn why this would be a good name for a Mule, a Mule that you may all know. Prudence has lived at a home on Amwell Road in Ringoes for 25 years. You could see her from the road; she is a cross between a Belgian mare and a large donkey stallion. She was brought to the farm when she was only 4 months old and was loved and pampered as a pet by her owner Jack Horn. Jack died suddenly at home on Nov. 16, 2012 leaving the family to decide how Prudence would best like to live out her golden years.



A friend of the family knew of a kind woman, Kim, from Ringoes, who cares for an assorted menagerie of animals. Kim then contacted the family to let them know that she had always wanted a mule and offered her a wonderful retirement home.

Mr. Horn's son, John called Cindy from my barn, Centre Ridge, and I to assist him in moving her. So, off I go to the Internet to see what I could find out about how Mules behave differently than horses. “Mules have a tendency to assess situations and act according to their views. A mule will trust its own judgment before it trusts yours. Mules are smart enough to not do things they think are dangerous. The key to handling mules is to do things simply, calmly, and firmly.”

We all know how challenging it can be to load a horse into a trailer, so how do you convince a 1500 lb. Mule to leave the only home they have ever known for a quarter of a century?

We met at the house on Sunday November 25 to evaluate the situation. There she was proud as she could be, a big red fawn colored Mule with the most remarkable expressive long ears. She appeared to be somewhat of a character and the son warned us that she bites. But after one carrot, we quickly found her favorite spots to scratch. Of course, the minute you stopped paying attention to her, she was pawing the ground for more.

On Wednesday November 28, John borrowed an oversized two horse trailer to work with and we knew this was a go. Prudence was in a totally different inquisitive, friendly frame of mind that day and was watching everything we did to ready the trailer for an easy departure. We had no intentions of forcing her to do anything, like we could do that any way ... stubborn as a mule or kicks like a mule got their saying from past history !! Here was a girl that was set in her routine, very opinionated and in all her years wouldn't even walk into the gorgeous turnout shed that her owner built for her. But somehow, I knew everything would be fine today.

John simply slipped the lead rope onto her halter and walked her over to the trailer. We talked to her and let her scope it out and she took a few steps up the ramp. Good Girl !! and a piece of carrot as a reward. She looked around and we coaxed her forward with another carrot. OMG, she is actually in the trailer, calm as can be and we can close the door. We took a nice easy ride to her new home with her acting like a seasoned champ all the way. As we drove, I was hopeful that we were doing the right thing for Prudence and that she would be happy with the change. Kim was there to greet us not believing that we had arrived so soon. Prudence backed out of the trailer to view her new picturesque surroundings and all her new friends, two legged and four legged. All her life, she had lived at home without any other animal companionship, so this was quite exciting to have such a variety of animal friends in all shapes and sizes, goats, ponies and horses oh my!

John had been very anxious that this would not have happened as smoothly as it did, but very much relieved that we had all arrived safely at our destination. So, how did we do it? I believe that we had help from her “Caretaker - Dad” using his invisible hands to soothe her and let her know that it was alright to go with us. Knowing that his “girl” was happily at her new home, he can be at peace now.

I was quite touched by this experience, and felt honored that I had been a part of such a wonderful event. Enjoy your new life Prudence.

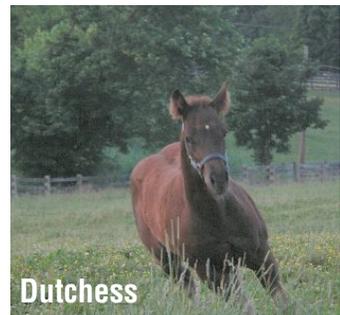
**2013
MEMBERSHIP:**
After the first of
the year, look for
your renewal forms
in the mail.

Babies!

Who doesn't love to look at little foals?! Congratulations to Jane and Bob Petrolino on the addition of 3 new gorgeous babies to the Valley this past spring.



Loola



Dutchess



Otis

Classifieds

FOR LEASE:

1/2 lease available at our barn in the Amwell Valley. Velocity, aka "Dee", a young 18 YO, mare, 14.2H, chestnut, QH/App. Perfect Pony. Does it all. 100% bombproof, reliable, and fun. Plenty of energy but also has great brakes. Point and shoot at the jumps, competing at 2'9". Always sound and in the ribbons. National Tetrathlon Champion (US Pony Club), has evented, polo and polocross, endurance, fox hunt, hunter paces, hunter/jumper, auto lead changes, safe in every situation. Beyond fun on the trails. Excellent ground manners. Perfect for child, early teen, or small woman. Dee has taught countless lucky kids the joy of riding and still has plenty to go. Must be compatible with our schedule and riders. 908-421-3344 or jennifer.bryson@comcast.net.



FOR SALE OR LEASE: Full or half lease available. Possible sale. Remington Steele. 16 YO QH, G, 15.3H, registered. Bay roan. Perfect for pony clubber or youth rider looking to move up or ladies horse. Remi has done it all, hunter/jumper, eventing, fox hunting, hunt paces, beach rides, trail rides, 3rd place winner at National Championships. Perfect for lessons. Point and shoot at the jumps. Lead changes. Self loads, bathes, clips, UTD on everything. Remi has taught many kids to ride, always safe and in the ribbons. Available for lease (our barn in the Amwell Valley or yours if close) or possible sale. Call 908-421-3344 or e-mail jennifer.bryson@comcast.net



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