



News Letter

AMWELL VALLEY TRAIL ASSOCIATION

JULY 2011

DOG DAYS OF SUMMER PARTY & ANNUAL MEETING

**Weathertop Farm - 46 North Hill Rd.
August 20th, 2011 5pm - 8pm**

Annual meeting & elections of officers will at 4 PM.
The party begins at 5PM, right after the meeting.
The pool is great! Don't forget your chairs
AVTA provides hamburgers, hotdogs and drinks

Call Gail Cahill (609) 466-4210 or e-mail Gailcahill@verizon.net
Gael Gardner (609) 466-9472 or e-mailgael@thegardners.org
with # of people _____ and food you would like to bring
(Appetizers, salads, or desserts are needed!!)



This month is the first one where we are going to send out newsletter only to members who do not have email addresses or who have asked to have hard copies. I am always willing to put you on that list if in the future if you change your mind.

GO GREEN!!

We would like to send the newsletter by snail mail only to people who would prefer it that way. So if you do please email Gael at gael@thegardners.org so that she can put you on her mail to list.

Spring Cleaning

Thanks to all of the intrepid AVTA members who turned out on June 5, 9, and 16 to work on the trails and, of course, those who have been busy mowing and clipping on their own. The long winter and wet spring left plenty of downed trees and overgrown patches of multiflora rose, wild grape, and other obnoxious plants on our beautiful trails. The work parties concentrated on trails off Van Lieus and Back Brook Rd. Landowners and other members working independently focused on the Cedar Ridge area, Pine Twig, North Hill Rd., the Air Park, Riding Mill and Garretts. Kudos to all. There will be more trimming days scheduled in the fall in advance of our pace/ride fundraiser. In the meantime, kudos to all those listed below. If I've left anyone out, my apologies and please let me know who you are and where you worked.

Trish Buckwalter
Steve Buxton
Nancy Cunningham
Tony D'Alimecco
Nancy Derrico
Michelle Doherty

Patty Doyle
Tom and Lynn Ebeling
Buz Foley
Gael Gardner
Earl Hartman
Dave Henderson

Tory Januik
Jennifer Jamieson
Terry Kaciorek
Mary Murrin
Bonnie O'Boyle
Bob Petrolino

Observations of the Dead Horse Guy *By David Heidt*

Since 2003, I have operated a removal and burial service for large animals, mostly horses, in the southern Willamette Valley. During this time I have helped people with nearly 1000 horses. We keep a record of each horse with their name, age, breed, sex, and how or why they died if it is known. After recently reviewing our records I would like to share some thoughts on how you might keep your equine friend around a little bit longer, or at least save yourself some stress and vet bills.

Thirty-five percent of the horses lived to at least 25 years of age; they died naturally or were euthanized because of disease or old age. In other words this means that if you are an average horse owner your horse has a one in three chance of living to the ripe old age of 25. One Chincoteague

pony was documented to be 47-years-old! In my opinion these are the fortunate ones.

Twenty-five percent of the horses under 25-years-old died of colic or had colic-like symptoms. I have no medical training so my percentage is based on veterinary diagnosis or the owner's observations.

Most horses recover from colic with prompt treatment, but obviously some don't. I have noticed that certain times of the year I see more horses dying from colic. Spring seems to be pretty tough on horses. I think the warm days and cold nights along with the lush new growth of grass sometimes triggers an impaction. Some people don't realize that this can also happen in the fall when early rain again causes the grass to grow lush and is accompanied by wide temperature swings.

Continued on page 3.



RULES AND REGULATIONS REVISITED

Two of our rules and regulations that are very important have been ignored by people recently and I thought I should go over them and the reasons we have them.

7 B. DOGS ARE ALLOWED ON TRAILS ONLY WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY A HIKER, AND MUST BE LEASHED

We do not permit dogs off leash because when riding or hiking you have less control over your dogs. Our trails often go near properties which have dogs or other animals who take exception to strange dogs entering their territory. There has been one incident recently which ended up with both the homeowner's dog and the homeowner being bitten. Please do not take dogs with you when riding and make sure they are leashed when you are hiking.

10. DO NOT RIDE OFF YOUR OWN PROPERTY AFTER SUNSET

This rule was put in place many years ago when two incidents happened. The first was when a rider spooked two foals in a paddock with their mothers behind a barn. They ran into a fence and both had serious injuries. The rider was very responsible and went to the house and alerted the owners, but it needn't have happened. The second incident involved a riderless horse arriving at his barn after dark. Search parties finally found the rider with a badly injured leg.

Riding on trails after sunset is a danger because deer and other animals are more active then and because of the dim light more likely to startle horses. It is also much more difficult to see holes or other obstructions in the trails. It is very tempting this time of year to ride late because there are fewer bugs and the light goes on later.

The other reason is that it is very hard to find someone who has been thrown from their horse in the dark. Imagine the owner of a stable having a riderless horse arrive in their barn. One: they might not know the horse, and two: they certainly won't know where the rider and horse parted company. Where do you start looking? Even if the rider had a cell phone with them they might not be in a condition to use it or to describe where they are.

Please review at our code of conduct on our web site, www.avta.net. We believe that these are reasonable requirements for the benefit of landowners and riders.

Don't Be Cruel! Keep Your Horse Cool!

- Provide ample fresh, clean water. Check daily that buckets or troughs are not contaminated with bird droppings, insect larvae, chaff, or algae growth. Try to keep the water cool. Horses may not want to drink warm water. Ponies and foals may have trouble reaching to the bottom of a shallowly filled trough.
- Sponge or hose down the large blood vessels along the inside of the legs, belly, and neck. Don't spray the horse's face or get water in its ears—sponge them down gently.
- If you must work your horses hard, try to schedule your session for early morning or late evening when it is cooler.
- After riding or driving in hot weather, cool your horse down slowly. Loosen girths or belly bands immediately after a work out. Offer sips

of cool—not cold—water and walk the horse slowly. Muscles are more apt to stiffen if the horse is allowed to stand, and moving muscles dissipate heat better than stationary ones.

- Consider using electrolytes if your horse is sweating hard, such as when the combined humidity and air temperature exceeds 104°F or your horse will be working hard (a long trail ride or competition). Electrolytes replace salts lost in sweating.
- Make sure there is a place for your horse to avoid the sun, either a building or a shade tree.
- Clip horses with heavy coats. Be careful not to clip too close however, since exposed skin can sunburn.
- Apply zinc oxide cream to horses with pink noses to prevent and treat sunburn.

- Horses need energy to stay warm and cool. Adjust your feed mixture if your horse begins to lose condition in hot weather.
 - During very hot weather, consider keeping your horses stabled during the day, and let them out at night.
 - If your barn becomes hot and stuffy, consider setting up a fan. Make sure the horse cannot reach the cord or fan itself, it can't be tipped, and that it is plugged into a ground fault interrupt electrical receptacle if there is any chance of electrical wiring coming into contact with moisture, such as a spilled water bucket or a curious horse's mouth.
- <http://horses.about.com>

August 27-28 - Whitehouse Station, NJ - 2 Day clinic with FREE Private Lesson and BONUS Saddle Savvy Saturday 7 p.m.!



Level 1 - Sat & Sun 9a-1p

Level 2 & 3 - Sat & Sun 2p-6p

Everyone interested in the saddle fixing and clinic must register online at www.equitina.com

For questions Contact:

Lydia Moyer clinics@equitina.com

678-458-9521

Stonebridge Stables

1 Brookview Road

Whitehouse Station NJ 08889



Observations of the Dead Horse Guy

Continued from page 1.

A 50 degree daily temperature swing is hard on some horses. I have picked up several horses that have pigged out on fresh grass clippings some-well meaning soul decided to feed them. I know some of you are saying, "duh," but it happens every spring. In winter there are horses that colic because of dehydration. Does drinking ice-cold water ever hurt your teeth? Supplying warm water in the winter may save your old boy. In the summer months I look at our water trough and think, "how thirsty would I have to be to drink that?" If the answer is "really thirsty," then I clean the trough. If something just doesn't seem right when you look at your horse then take some notes: is he breathing fast? Is he sweaty or in pain? Is his belly sucked up? Is he laying down a lot or biting at his side? If the answer to any of these is yes, then call your vet and ask for advice. I've never heard of a vet refusing service in an emergency, but I know that I am much more willing to help people if they don't owe me money, so please try to keep your account current. We always have some Banamine on hand that we can give them while the vet is in route if he or she advises it. Finally, although it is just an observation, I have noticed that many horses that die of colic are very overweight, so if your horses' butt looks fat to you, pay attention. There are many potential causes for colic, please educate yourself on them.

The rest of this article is about accidents. About 10% of the horses under 25 that I have picked up have died from accidents. Many accidents are not preventable, such as a frisky horse kicking up its heels only to come down in a gopher hole and break its leg. A stray kick by a playful pasture mate placed in exactly the right (wrong) place can shatter a knee or tear ligaments. This is heartbreaking, but part of life with horses.

Our horses are never tied up unless I am confident in their training to give to pressure, and I almost always use a Blocker tie ring when I do tie them. I have picked up several horses with broken necks because they pulled back so hard that they either broke the equipment and flipped over backwards or the equipment held, but caused irreparable damage to their neck. Don't ever tie your horse to a stall door, gate, fence board, or anything that can move if they pull back. The movement may spook them and the next thing you know your horse is being "chased" through the barn by a board or stall door.

Walking the horse pasture to check for dangers is a habit I try to make routine. After a heavy rain is a good time to check for holes. I have seen broken legs with jagged bone shards sticking out as a result of a horse running through the field and stepping in a hole. I remember one whose hind leg went down about 2 feet into a hole and as he tried to get up he flipped over sideways and dislocated his hip. How does a hole suddenly appear in your pasture? Many years ago most of the pastures in western Oregon were forest land. After the trees were logged, the land was cleared and leveled, but during this process some of the stumps and logs were buried. As the wood rots, rainwater follows these tunnels and makes them larger. Eventually the ground caves in which sometimes results in a shallow depression, but other times it looks like a post hole. We had a small hole appear that took an entire tractor bucket of gravel to fill - one shovel full at a time! Gravel is better than dirt for filling holes, especially if they are full of water.

I never ignore anything that poses an entanglement threat. This includes, but is not limited to twine, wire, rope, clothes line, fencing, and cable. Try taking a piece of twine and wrap-

ping it tightly around your arm just below the elbow and then pull on it. If you were to pull hard enough it would cut through your arm and peel your flesh away leaving only the bone. The vet calls this "de-gloving" and I have seen it more than once on a horse's leg. I hope you never see it.

If your horse gets out, wanders onto the road, and gets hit by a car, you may be found negligent and therefore responsible for any damages and injuries. I have been called to the aftermath of three auto-horse accidents and can say that a horse has an incredible amount of blood which makes for a gruesome sight. Thankfully no people were seriously injured in those particular collisions, although the vehicles sustained major damage.

Keeping fences safely maintained is another priority. I don't know if there really is such a thing as a horse-safe fence, but I do know that loose fences, leaning fences, and those overgrown with berry vines or weeds are all hazardous to horses for multiple obvious reasons.

If you have a fence with loose wire and leaning metal t-posts please fix it today. On three occasions I have picked up horses that were impaled and eviscerated when they became entangled, chased, or were spooked near a leaning t-post. The horse does not just lie down and die quietly; it is an awful sight to see. We have t-posts on our property, and I do not believe they are inherently dangerous if they are property maintained. I have never picked up a horse from a fence accident where the fences were well maintained with a visual barrier such as white electric tape at chest height.

I have picked up several horses as a result of blood poisoning caused by an abscess or a puncture wound. Nails sticking out of boards, fence posts, or the side of the barn can cause this. If promptly treated they almost always get better. We are fortunate to have some wonderful, dedicated veterinarians here so when you are in doubt, call them out!

Don't leave loose equipment on your horse that should be snug. I have seen several horses become entangled in turnout blankets that became loose. They freaked out, mortally injuring themselves. If you ride western and use a back cinch, keep it snug. A loose back cinch not only looks dorky, it isn't doing its job and it is dangerous. Imagine you are walking down a trail, your horse steps on a short, stout branch with his front foot and the branch kicks up and goes between the cinch and his belly. He is startled so he jumps which causes the branch to impale him and start stirring up his insides. I've only seen this once, but that was enough.

One parting piece of advice: if you are lounging your young horse while riding a 4-wheeler, stay very alert! She might get scared and jump in front of you. If you don't stop fast enough you might hit her front leg and break it. Yes, sadly, this really happened.

In the past eight years I have seen more tears and been around more grieving people than I thought I would ever see in a lifetime. If you read this and follow some of these suggestions you will never know if they saved you and your horse some pain, but if you don't bother to follow this advice and your horse has one of these "accidents" you can probably add the guilt of knowing that you knew better to your grief and tears. If by writing this I help one young filly to become an old grey mare, it was worth my time.

Classifieds

TO SEE MORE CLASSIFIEDS GO TO WWW.AVTA.NET

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HORSE FOR SALE: 4 yr. old Oldenberg spotted draft cross. green broke, big strides, beautiful suspension. Very calm and willing. Asking \$8,500.00 OBO Call Janet (908) 303-1428



Our Next AVTA Hunter Pace Sunday Oct 2, 2011 Big Sky Farm Van Lies Road Ringoes

9 AM to 1 PM Rain or Shine

Ribbons in all Divisions: Open, Family, Junior, Senior & Western

Entry Fees: Adults: \$40 Juniors: \$30

Course is 8 to 10 miles with optional fences.

Please bring water for your horses.

For More Information: Di Huns PLANTERSRO@aol.com
609-466-7473

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