



the Stirrup

Newsletter of NATRC Region 3

Kerry Bingham - Editor

630 CR 3000

Aztec, NM 87410

the Stirrup

Region III Newsletter Sept.-Oct. 2009



The Region III Newsletter is a bi-monthly publication in January, March, May, July, September, and November. It is available by subscription to non-Region III members for \$10 per year.

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Non-members - Full page \$50, half page \$30, quarter page \$18, business card size \$10

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members \$5 per ad

non-members \$10 per ad

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President's Message:

I hope all of you have had a great summer and have been able to spend a lot of time with family, friends, and your horses. I have certainly enjoyed my summer but it has sure gone fast!

The majority of our Region 3 rides have filled or at least come close enough to filling so that ride managers have avoided losing money. Many thanks are due to our members, competitors, and volunteers, who, even in this time of recession, have continued to support Region 3. We are very grateful for your participation.

As I write, we have only two rides left this ride season: Caja del Rio over Labor Day Weekend and Chokecherry CTR the weekend of September 25. I hope that you will continue to show the same support for these rides as you have for the others. Caja del Rio is a new ride in Santa Fe that is being managed by a very enthusiastic and relatively new member, Shelley Green. We need to show her that we appreciate her efforts by attending this ride. It's not very often that we have a novice rider willing to jump in and take the risk of putting on a ride. Shelley needs riders as well as volunteers to work the ride. So please contact her at showdoggal@msn.com if you can help out at or call her at (505) 793-5417. She would really appreciate it.

Chokecherry is under new management as it was in danger of being cancelled. Jenny Smith and Beth Sims and other volunteers from the San Juan Valley Trail Riders are determined that we will conclude the Region 3 ride season with a great ride and a fun time for all.

Please, please, send in your entries for both these rides. Fuel prices have been blessedly low this summer and remain so. I know that these rides can count on our support.

Chuck Smith, our Region 3 Treasurer, has volunteered to manage our year-end convention this year and is planning to hold it in Taos, New Mexico, the weekend of March 19-20, 2010. This may seem a long way off, but, at least for those of us who are "getting older," we know how time flies. So please mark that weekend down for your 2010 calendars so you don't forget.

I had a good time the weekend of August 15/16 helping an endurance friend put on a ride out of Meeker and near the Flat Tops Wilderness. I also called a couple of my NATRC friends, Wendy Brooks and Lori Boardman, and they came up to camp and lent a hand. (That's a slight understatement; they worked their hinnies off!) Wendy and another Region 3 member, Nancy Frank, also rode their horses on the limited distance ride, and a friend of Nancy's, Maggie McNally, whom I met at Purgatory, completed her first 50-miler and was in the top ten to boot! Our National Director Carla Richardson also rode her horse Khid there. I'm pretty sure that Maggie is going to join NATRC and Region 3 next year. My husband Ken rode Sir both days on the 50's and the first day he took best condition and finished in the top ten both days. Just goes to show that CTR and endurance can offer something for both groups.

I hope to see a lot of you at the Caja and Chokecherry rides. They really need our support, so pack up those horses and go! All your NATRC friends are waiting to see you!

Happy Trails,

Betty Wolgram, President, Region 3

E-Mail: bkwranch@hughes.net (970) 824-8359



Notice of Final Region 3 Board of Directors Meeting

Date: Friday, September 25, 2009

Location: Chokecherry CTR, Farmington, NM

Time: Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Please feel free to attend and give your input during open discussions.

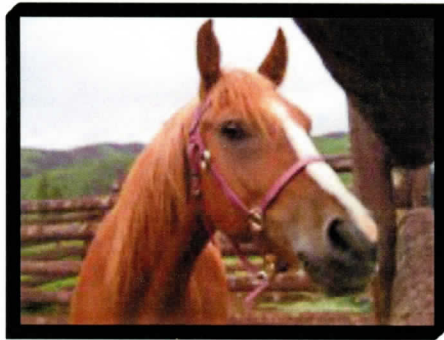
Thank you.

Betty Wolgram, President

Any member who would be interested in running for a Region 3 director's position, please contact Linell Miller-Inman at millerinman@esrta.com or (303) 655-5895 or Betty Wolgram at bkwranch@hughes.net or (970) 824-8359 by September 15, 2009.

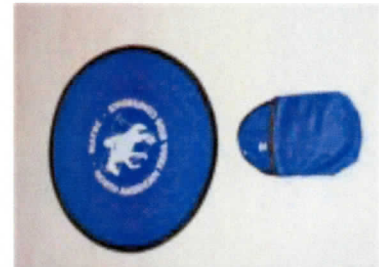
Barn Sales & News Bits

Hi my name is Indie, I am a 6 year old Arabian gelding looking for a NATRC home, lease or sale, with a loving light weight rider, due to my smaller size 14.2h. I have a great mind and desire to please. I have 200 NATRC miles on me and have even worked as a lesson horse. I prefer english style saddles due to my very short back. GOOD home a must. If interested contact Olga at 970-318-1417 ospanhoff@msn.com



P&R Fan
10" Fan
folds to 4"
fits in your pocket
\$5 plus s&h

raymond.brezina@verizon.net



Congratulations Diane Wingle and Eduardo!

Congratulations for being the top trail horse of the 2009 season for the PFHA (Paso Fino Horse Assoc.)! We'll be looking forward to seeing your pictures and reading your accomplishments in the PFHA magazine!

4y/o mare, Arab/QH cross, registered 1/2 Arab. Registered name "KA BeyBerry Belle", a.k.a. "Annie". Her mom has TB in her background. She's approximately 15.1hh right now and will likely get a little taller. Built like an Arab in the head, neck, body; the legs of a TB; rear end of a QH. Started under saddle, ridden in the mountains of Colorado. Started under Pack Saddle. Ground drives, loads into stock, slant, or side-by-side trailers, stands well for farrier and vet, bathes, clips, and generally does about anything asked of her. She has a BOLD personality and will take someone that knows how to finish training -- no novices because she'll take advantage of them. She can be the lead mare, but also knows her limitations and can be quite humble in the pasture. Easy to catch in the pasture, very friendly. She wants a job to do! I will entertain all offers on her. She was bred specifically to replace my competition horse, but I am no longer competing and I do not need her. For someone willing to put her into competition and use her, the price is very reasonable. She will not be sold to someone that tells me they just want a backyard trail horse and will let her stand without competition.

Donna Soroka (719) 351-3611 donnasoroka@yahoo.com

E-Mail from a Grateful Participant at the Bear Basin Clinic and CTR sent to management Jim and Lin Ward:

Jim and Lin,

First let me thank you both for all your unbelievable time and effort to prepare and carry out this ride. I am one of the lazy ones who doesn't like to fill our forms, so decided to e-mail you before time got away from me.

This was my first time to ride in such an event and I can't tell you how great it was. Yes, my horse was the one that took out a window and a tie ring on my trailer in two separate instances. Yes, I was the one who cannot mount from the ground and accepted the offer of someone's cooler as a mounting block. Yes, I caused my friend to be late for the clinic ride, to miss the practice P & R, to get somewhat lost and come in late. Even with all those mistakes, your group welcomed me with open arms and were more helpful than I could believe. This experience has made me interested in my horse and riding again. I don't think I can put the value of that into words.

The food was spectacular. Your trails were very well marked and the map reviews at night were most helpful. Any time we got off the path we could usually attribute it to our having the ride of our lives, talking, or getting caught up in the spectacular views.

I learned so much on these rides and will continue to because I plan to attend every one I can in the future.

As for ways you could improve the process, as an outsider looking in, I don't see anything that could make this experience better other than doing it again. I have been in the hunter/jumper and dressage worlds (as I found several of the other riders had) and compared to it, your rides, riders, judges, organizers and volunteers are unsurpassed in their efforts to make things run smoothly and make people happy and safe.

By the way, I was really impressed with your judges, they gave me some very helpful critiques and I could tell they just wanted me to become a better horse person for the sake of me and my horse. I learned so much from them and their attitudes were very much appreciated. If you hear of a clinic given by the horsemanship judge, would you please shoot me an e-mail about it?

It's quite a group and I consider myself very fortunate to be included in it. Hope to see you soon on the trail.

Thanks again,
Janie Lowe
Roswell, NM

Barn Sales & News Bits

1999 Sierra Trails West

3 horse slant, 4600 lbs., 3/4 LQ, Y2 bath, microwave, full bed, dinette/bed, satellite dish, hay rack, holding tanks, canopy, AC/heater, lots of storage, self watering in each stall, tack area with water tank, pull out saddle racks, bucket holders outside, storage under each stall, very clean and in excellent condition.

\$20,000 obo

Contact Mary Vaughan @

505-793-6471 or email

mvaughan80@msn.com



GET WELL WISHES...

Ginger Snip; horse related

Kerry Bingham; horse related

Terri Smith had a tangle with her spurs and horse trailer. Note: it was cat related, not horse related! Terri asked me to post this:

And get the word out to our group that all their well-wishes and support is keeping me off suicide watch! What wonderful friends I have in my NATRC family!

Terri



WANTED: Horse trainer for 4 year old registered Appendix AQHA mare, she's halter broke and is used to having hooves trimmed, but needs everything else! I am looking for a kind, gentle and savvy trainer who will make her into a good, safe trail horse, teach her to stand tied safely, hobble, load in a straight load trailer, and basically be educated for novice-level ctr's. Please contact Carla Richardson at richardson.carla@gmail.com or 970-986-2677.

Region 3 Membership Directory 2009

The 2009 Membership Directory for the Region has been sent by e-mail to all members who have furnished us with an e-mail address. If you do not have an e-mail address and would like a hard copy, please write Linell Miller (39664 E. Colorado Avenue, Bennett, CO 80102) and enclose \$2.00 to pay or printing and postage.

Our deep thanks go out to Linell for spending the hours and hours necessary to put together our membership directory.

Homemade Fly Spray



-2 Cups of Water

-1/4 Cup of Cider Vinegar

-1/4 Tsp. of Citronella Oil

-1/2 Tsp. Lavender Oil

Running for National Board...

Dear Members o Region III,

I am running for the position of director on the NATRC National Board to represent Region 3. I have been a member of NATRC for over twelve years and I am also a lifetime member. I have served in a number of positions on the regional board of directors, including secretary, sanctioning liaison, ride book editor, newsletter editor, and, most recently, president of Region 3. I have also served as ride manager, ride secretary, judge's secretary, and trail master for a number of rides, helped new ride managers, and assisted at rides with p&r's and other volunteer jobs. I have earned over 6,500 volunteer points in Region 3. Region 3 has many members who have devoted their time and efforts to giving back to the sport they love, and I feel honored to know them and to learn from them. We also have, I know, many newer members who, I believe, are interested in contributing and would become more involved if they can be given even more encouragement for their efforts and ideas.

I have over 7,000 NATRC competitive miles, and I believe that the membership of NATRC can be best served when its representatives are active competitors in the sport of distance riding. I also believe that it is necessary to be a competitor to gain a better understanding of what our members and riders really need and want.

I believe in the overall mission and traditions of NATRC; however, I also feel that an organization must be flexible and open to change and to the use of modern methods for the betterment of the welfare of the horse. An organization must serve its members, not the other way around. Lastly, I feel that a board representative should do everything in his or her power to really communicate with the general membership. If elected, I promise to do the best job I can possibly do to represent both Region 3 and the NATRC membership as a whole and to do all that I can to help grow our sport. I will appreciate your vote. Thank you.

Betty Wolgram

Dear Region III Members,

Do I have the experience to understand how NATRC functions as an organization?

*Rider in Open, CP and Novice Divisions

*Horsemanship judge for 15 years

*Over 4,000 volunteer hours being a Ride Manager, Rules Interpreter, P and R Captain, Timer, Regional Board Member and National Board member, and secretary for numerous horsemanship and veterinary judges.

*Currently, I am NATRC'S Trail Advocate and have been involved in various activities regarding the developing and preservation of trails for equine use. A new consortium is being formed of national equine groups which are interested in trail use by equestrians. NATRC has been invited to join this prestigious group. I am representing NATRC in this effort. (See current Hoof Print article.) Additionally I have regularly written educational articles related to equine use of trails for Hoof Print.

*I have spearheaded sale of merchandise to help fund trail projects. Several grants for trail improvement have been provided by this fund.

*I feel my greatest strength in serving on the national Board of Directors and Region 3 is my work in Trail Advocacy. Since access to adequate trails is essential for our sport and there is no question about the fact that they are disappearing at as rapid rate, it is important to have a Trail Advocate for NATRC who is close to the NBOD and has its support. Since I feel this is essential for the existence of long distance competitive trail riding, and I have made numerous national contacts, I would like to continue with the development of NATRC'S involvement. I have found it more effective to interact personally with the Board than with an impersonal e-mail or written report.

*It would be an honor to represent Region 3 at the National Board meetings and to represent NATRC nationally particularly with regard to trail issues. I will be available at any time by e-mail or phone to Region members to answer questions and discuss members' concerns. My phone number is in Hoof Print. My e-mail is dgportner@gmail.com.

Best regards,

Doreen Portner

The National Board has been working very hard to simplify and clarify the Stabling rule, and, after much discussion, the rule below is up for vote at the meeting in November. I would appreciate it if our members would let me know if they feel it is OK or if you have any concerns or questions, let me know and I will communicate them to our National Board representatives.

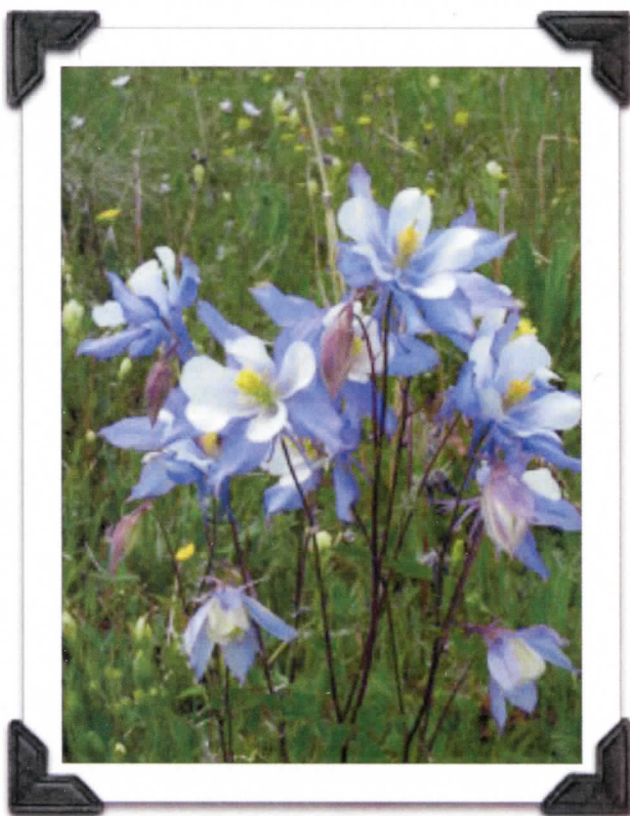
Thank you.

Betty Wolgram

(Proposed re-write of Stabling Rule)

Stabling

1. All horses shall be kept in a designated area from preliminary check in until after the final examination.
2. The Stabling Options used **are** at the discretion or requirements of CTR management and/or the CTR facility.
3. The Stabling Options used by CTR management and/or the CTR facility must be available to all competitors.
4. Stabling Options **Not Allowed** during competition as primary containment.
 - a. Hobbling of any type
 - b. Portable pens/corrals
 - c. Staking out in any manner
5. Stallions: Stallions must be double tied whenever tied. The primary and secondary rope will not be tied to the same tie spot.
 - a. Stallion double tying requirements are:
The primary rope is tied in the normal manner, but the secondary restraint method must be secured around the stallion's neck and tied in the normal manner. If a rope around the neck is secured with a knot, it must be a bowline and run through the halter.
 - b. Other secondary restraint methods may be acceptable (check with horsemanship judge).
Two halters are unacceptable.
 - c. Failure to comply constitutes a major rule violation. (See Rulebook Section 4 E 2 d)



A note from National:

Jim Menefee Honorary Lifetime membership (HLM)

Each region may nominate one member of NATRC for HLM. The award will be selected by the national board and presented at the following national convention. The recipient of the award is expected to attend the convention, if possible, and have a brief presentation speech ready.

In addition to the high honor, the Lifetime Membership includes all the benefits of being a current member but without any assessed, annual dues. A plaque is sponsored by Betty Menefee in memory of her husband, Jim Menefee, whom the award honors. Jim was a favorite judge and was especially encouraging to novice and first time riders.

(This is not to be confused with the competitive award titled the "Jim Menefee Memorial Combined Horse/Horsemanship" award)

Nomination letter to be limited to 400 words.

Nomination due by 16 October and can either be sent via email or regular mail.

Workers Hall of Fame

Each region may nominate one member of NATRC for the Workers Hall of Fame. The national board selects one or more at their discretion. Recipients may be an individual or pairs. The award is presented at national convention.

Nomination letter to be limited to 400 words.

Nomination due by 16 October and can either be sent via email or regular mail.

National Appreciation Awards

Each region may nominate one member for a National Appreciation Award. The national board will select three (3) individuals to be presented at national convention. A recipient can be eligible only once every three years.

Nomination letter to be limited to 200 words.

Nomination due by 16 October and can either be sent via email or regular mail.

Regional Appreciation Awards for National Recognition

Each region may select up to three (3) recipients for recognition. Recipients may be individuals or pairs or groups such as ride sponsors or clubs. Appreciation certificates will be presented at national convention.

Nomination letter to be limited to 200 words.

Nomination due by 16 October and can either be sent via email or regular mail.

Please send letters to:

Christine Abbott

14611 W. 91st Place

Lenexa, KS 66215

Email: cabbott2@kc.rr.com

Colorado West -Trail Horse Trials

September 19, 2009 **NEW DATE** Check in & Ride Out 9-11 AM

US Route 50 Escalante Exit (10 miles west of Delta, 25 miles east of Grand Junction)

Sponsored by the Women's Surface Creek Saddle Club of Cedaredge, CO.

Area use permitted by the Bureau of Land Management

Show off your wonderful trail horse and help your partnership improve. This 8 mile ride on a marked trail will have some different obstacles to challenge you this year. These are obstacles like those you might expect to encounter during a trail ride. All riders are invited to try all the obstacles but this is for fun rather than serious competition so if there's something you'd rather not ask your horse to do, simply skip it. There are lots of different classes so lots of chances to have you and your horse's effort be recognized. The trail is in the beautiful Escalante area with spectacular views of the Gunnison River, scenic rock formations, and canyons. The footing is good but slightly rocky. Bring a friend, come out, enjoy the gorgeous fall weather and have a fun ride!

Horses/Riders not entered will not be allowed to do the obstacles.

No pre-riding the obstacles.

Jr. Riders are not allowed to compete on stallions

Jr. Riders must be accompanied by an adult

Horses not under control will be asked to leave

Abusive riders will be asked to leave

Entry Fees: Individual adults \$20.00 in advance, \$25.00 at the gate

Family (max. 4 riders) \$30.00 in advance, \$40.00 at gate

Junior rider (17 and under) \$10 in advance \$15 at the gate

For more information call: Lorie Molitor 970-856-4680 or Email lor2mol@aol.com

For advance pricing, complete the form on the next page for **EACH rider** and send or e-mail entry to be received by Sept 15 to:

Lorie Molitor, 18667 Surface Creek Rd., Cedaredge CO 81413

Make checks payable to: WSCSC Refunds only for cancellations received before Sept. 12.

NOTE: THERE IS NO WATER AVAILABLE AT THE SITE. RIDERS NEED TO PROVIDE WATER FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR HORSES.

A CONCESSION STAND WILL BE OPEN FOR PURCHASE OF REFRESHMENTS AND LUNCH FROM 9:00 AM UNTIL 2:00 PM.

Awards will be made immediately after scoring is complete after the last rider completes the course or 3 PM.

Rider or his/her representative must be present to receive award. Awards/prizes will not be mailed.

Complete the following for each rider:

Please print legibly.

Rider Name _____ Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Home phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-mail _____

Emergency contact: _____ Phone _____

Rider Age group (check one)

Junior rider 17 & under _____ Adult rider: 18 - 39 _____ ; 40 - 52 _____ ; 53 - 59 _____ ; Senior rider (60 and over) _____

Statement of Rider and Liability Waiver

Must be signed for entry to be valid.

I wish to enter and participate in the Colorado West Trail Horse Trials to be held on Saturday Sept 19, 2009. I will comply with the rules, conditions, and regulations of the event. As a participant in the Colorado West Trail Horse Trials I understand that this event involves being in remote areas for extended periods of time, far from communications, transportation, and medical facilities; that these areas have many natural and man-made hazards which ride management cannot anticipate, identify, modify, or eliminate; that horses can be excitable, difficult to control, and unpredictable; and that accidents can happen to anyone at any time. I agree to take full responsibility for myself and the animal I am riding. I will hold the Woman's Surface Creek Saddle Club, its officers and all individual members thereof, ride management, sponsors, all ride personnel, the U.S. Government and U.S. BLM and all property owners over whose land the ride crosses blameless for any accident, injury, or loss that might occur due to my participation in the trail trial and free from all liability for such accident, injury, or loss. As a rider I expect to use good judgment, practice common courtesy, and pay close attention to safety details throughout this event.

Signature(s) below constitute(s) acceptance of the above terms and conditions.

Rider's Signature _____ Date _____

Horse's Name _____

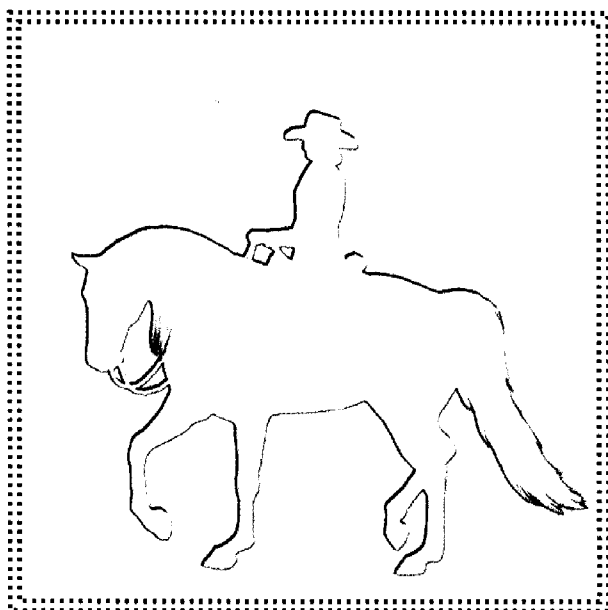
Signature of Horse Owner (If different from rider) _____

NOTE: Junior rider (under 18 years of age) must be accompanied by adult.

Birth date of Junior Rider _____

Signature of parent or legal guardian _____ Date _____

Name of adult responsible for Junior Rider during event: _____



Bear Basin Ranch CTR

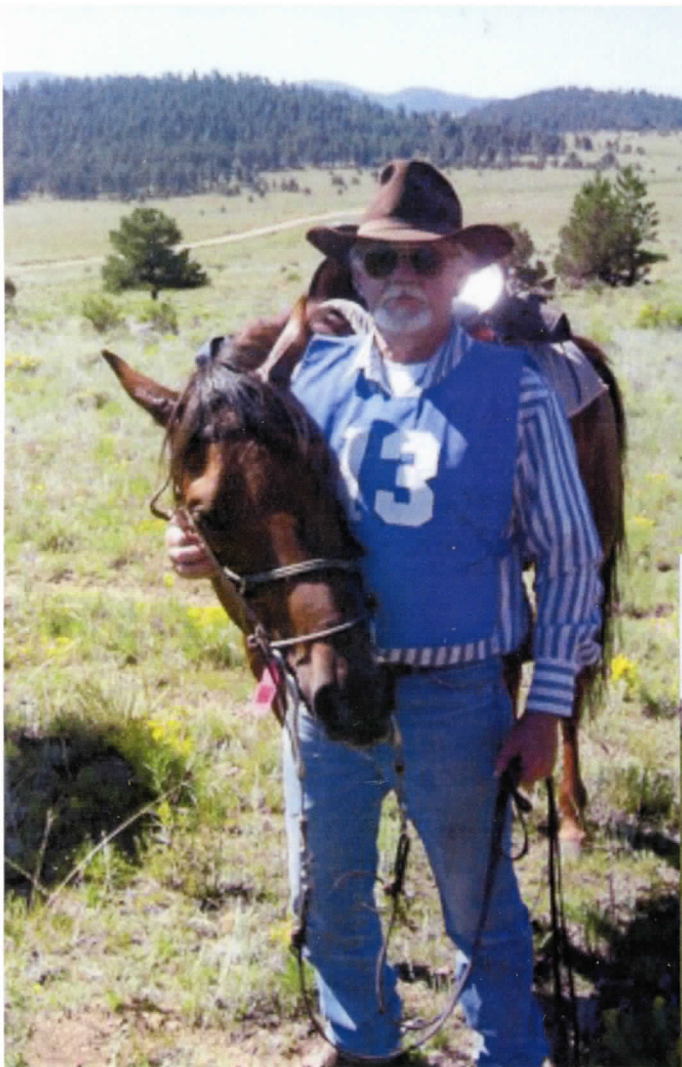
Sixty- three competitors competed in one of the most beautiful rides in Region 3, August 1st and 2nd. There were 25 first time competitors, some competing in the A ride and some competing in the B ride on Sunday that followed the Clinic on Saturday. Everyone enjoyed a beautiful ride, with spectacular views of the Wet and Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

Jim and Lin Ward did an outstanding job getting the entire trail in the Bear Basin 4000 acre working ranch. Check out the web site of the ranch at www.adventurespecialist.org. The co-founders, Gary Zigler and Amy Finger are wonderful people, who can fulfill your horse back adventures at the Bear Basin Ranch, Argentina, Peru or Spain. Gary is full of the rich history of the ranch and you could listen to him for hours.

We had wonderful food, entertainment, and great judges with natural obstacles! All the workers were top notch and very friendly and helpful.

Many friends and I will support and return to the ride again in the future.
From your many friends, thank you Jim and Lin for a great successful ride.

Jerry Sims



Colorado Trail

6/6-7/09 Region Three-CO

A-O/N/CP Total Riders: 54

Chairman: Sue McKelvy

Judges: Linda Mackinnon DVM, Kathy Budd, Natalie Gold-berger DVM (Apprentice)

Novice Sweepstakes: Moose/Dunkelberger, Donna-98.5

Open Sweepstakes: Hasty's Blossom/Peters, Susan-98.5

Open Heavyweight

- 1/2 Rock'N E.Z. Rey/Sims, Jerry
- 2/5 Dee Bar/Westmoreland, Cheryl
- 3/4 Rock'n E.Z. Ruby/Smith, Jenny
- 4/3 Touch's Yeller Gold/Inman, Gary
- 5/1 Talk Til Midnight/Gunckel, Kay
- 6/6 Peanut 2/Baker, Matt

Open Lightweight

- 1/4 Hasty's Blossom/Peters, Susan
- 2/5 Brown R Dawud/Mason, Judy Wise
- 3/3 Phantom's Masquerade/Lane, Roxann
- 4/1 Fawn Creek Thor/Ferganchick, Brandy
- 5/6 Bryanna/Andrews, Jill
- 6/2 Fraidy Cat/Smith, Terri
- P Keelee Shay/Montgomery, Erikka
- P MKS Shamal Nejma/Shanor, Kathy

Open Junior

- 1/1 Dillon 2/Gunckel, JJ

Open DO

- DO 2 Sierra Blue/Shanor, Marc

Novice Heavyweight

- 1/2 ESA Pro Temp/Chamberlain, Alden
- 2/ Sherekhan/Delerme, Gabriele
- 3/4 Gerna Mor/Woodhead, Cindy
- 4/3 Mariah 3/Wingle, Bill
- 5/1 Dixie 4/Westmoreland, Edward
- 6/5 Lite Foot Slow Poke/Arnett, Leona
- /6 Lefty/Guthrie, Jan
- P Christine/Von Tilius, Fay

Novice Lightweight

- 1/3 Moose 4/Dunkelberger, Donna
- 2/ Marley 2/Attick, Barbara
- 3/5 Pure Country Windsong/Goscha, Cathy

NATRC Student Scholarship Program

Student scholarships are available for individuals planning a career in equine related fields. Up to \$5,000 will be available annually with distribution at the discretion of the NATRC National Board of Directors.

Applicants need to complete the **Bev Tibbitts Memorial Scholarship** form as well as submit three (3) letters of support for your scholarship candidacy. Letters may be written by a teacher, NATRC judge, ride chairperson, regional or national board member, veterinarian, or any other person involved in the horse industry.

For an *application*, contact the NATRC Executive Administrator at natrc@natrc.org Please use Word 2003 if sending via email.

Deadline for the application is January 15th for the following Fall semester.

NATRC Student Loan Program

Student loans are available up to \$5,000 per person /year, at the discretion of the NATRC National Board of Directors, after proper application has been submitted.

Preference will be given to a full-time student who has been a member of NATRC or whose family has been an active member for at least three years. Consideration will also be given to a student or a student's family who has been an active member of NATRC for less than three years but more than six months.

A loan will be made based upon financial need, scholastic achievement, and character of the applicant as determined by the Student Loan/Scholarship Committee.

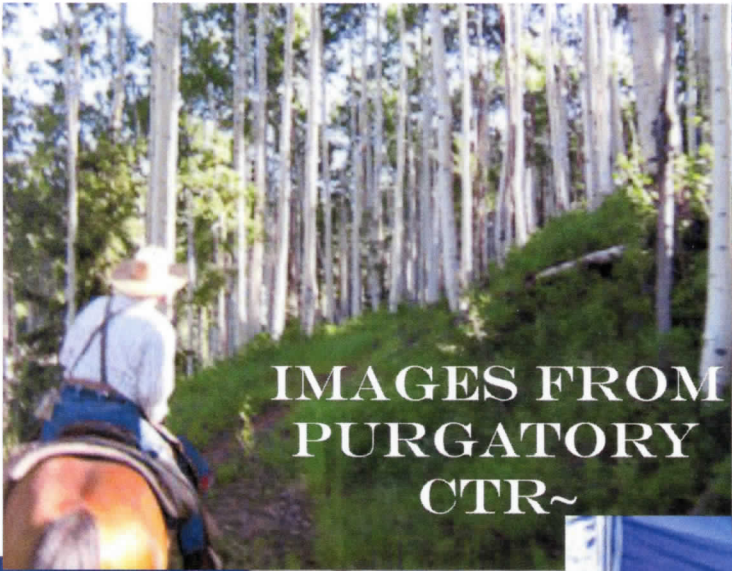
A loan is to be repaid in monthly installments, with an annual interest rate of 3% charged on that loan, beginning not later than six months following graduation or when the recipient ceases to be a full-time student.

For an *application*, contact the NATRC Executive Administrator at natrc@natrc.org Please complete the form in Word and submit via email to the NATRC Executive Administrator at natrc@natrc.org

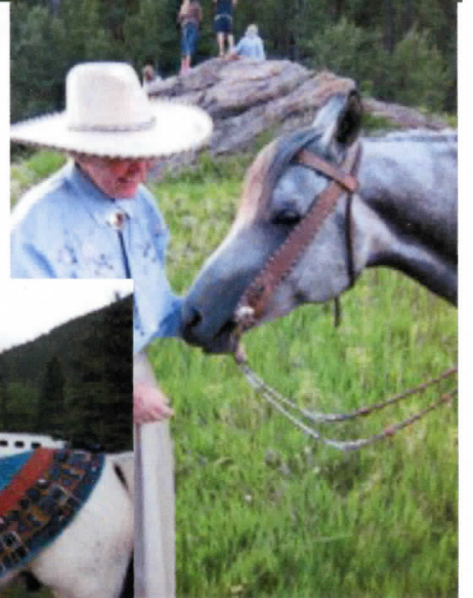
Purgatory CTR July 10-12, 2009

It's Sat. evening...what a wonderful, wonderful day. The kind of day we yearn for in our ctr endeavors. The trails were absolutely gorgeous today....old aspen groves with towering white trunks as far as the eye could see....bald peaks with specks of snow with lush green valleys filled with multitudes of wild flowers. The weather threatened rain, but didn't....and kept it cool enough to be enjoyable. Mountain streams were filled with cool clear water, all meals were provided. The obstacles were challenging yet enjoyable. Manager Jenny Smith and her entourage made sure that everyone was well fed and taken care of. Everyone truly enjoyed the Purgatory Saloon complete with a poker room compliments of the Bakers and Browns. Managing this ride is particularly difficult with the rugged terrain that is always in need of clearing with chainsaws, the remoteness of the location and the unpredictable weather. Thank you Jenny, you are the hostess with the mostest! ~Kerry Bingham





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CTR~



CREWING TEVIS 2009

...through the eyes of Pam Galchutt

This was a good year for the 54th annual Tevis Cup endurance ride, dedicated to Julie Suhr. The temperature dropped into the low 90's and a quick rain dampened the fine volcanic trail dust two days before the ride. Last year, the ride had to be canceled at the last minute due to the horrid California forest fires raging in the area. This year 169 riders left Robie Park horse camp near Lake Tahoe at 5:15 AM, and 87 finished at the Auburn Fairgrounds by 5:15 AM the next morning:

The "100 miles In One Day" award buckles awaiting finishers were presented by Julie Suhr, undisputed Grand Dame of Tevis (22 completions). Her daughter, Barbara White was going for a record 29 completions and completed successfully. Four of 6 juniors completed, and 7 of 8 riders from other countries made it (Canada, Great Britain, Japan and Australia)... a better than usual 51% completion.

The logistics of Tevis are daunting! Over 800 volunteers (in matching aqua Tevis t-shirts) and 17 vets were involved. Hundreds of crew people came to support 'their riders'- many sporting colorful matching t-shirts, declaring "Team So and So". Most of the horses were Arabs or Arab crosses, but several mules made it as did a couple of gaited horses, Mustang and Quarter Horse crosses.

The trail is maybe the most difficult on the planet- across the rocky spine of the Sierra Nevada mountains, over rugged granite, through boggy high country meadows, and down through sweltering canyons and along narrow trails with treacherously sheer drop offs into the American River hundreds of feet below and a bunch of it to be done in the dark. Oh, yes, and across several narrow bridges, plus Swinging Bridge and No Hands Bridge. A total of roughly 19,000 feet of ascent and 22,000 feet of descent, at elevations ranging from 8,200 to 700 feet. Two one-hour 'gate to hold' rest stops (where crews had access) and 7 'gate and go' vet checks along the remote wilderness trail, following old pioneer and pony express routes.

An area rich in the history of immigration, pioneering and gold mining, with exotic landmarks like Squaw Valley, Red Star Ridge, High Camp, Immigrant Pass, Cougar Rock (inspiration for the NATRC logo and famous 'Kodak moment' site), Elephant Trunk, Pucker Point, Last Chance, Deadwood, Murders' Bar, Devil's Thumb, Chicken Hawk Ridge, Volcano Creek, Poverty Bar, and, of course, those aptly named bridges. Someone with a good sense of humor summed it up with a welcoming, large red "pantie" banner at Robie Park: "You've got to put on your big girl panties to ride Tevis". Of course, there are also a lot of 'real men' who do this ride, and even they smiled at the banner!

Although Tevis has always represented the Holy Grail of trail riding for me, this was my first experience there. Originally, I planned to crew for my friend, NATRC member Carla Richardson and my mare's full brother, "Khid", but Carla (wisely, in my opinion!) opted to withdraw her entry, feeling it just was not her kind of ride (intimidating start chaos, heat, speed requirements, and steep drop offs to overcome). And she and Khid have over 1500 endurance miles under their belt/ girth- that's how tough this is!

However, my daughter Kara, a self-proclaimed endurance addict in the Pacific Northwest, was asked to crew again for a friend from Oregon who had already completed 2 of 4 previous Tevis rides, so I got to tag along as a "crew apprentice." I've heard it said that 'crewing Tevis is as hard as riding Tevis', but after seeing parts of that trail, I think not. But prior crewing experience there is extremely beneficial. So, I flew to Oregon, then we drove the 10 hours to Robie Park to join our other crew members. I've decided that it almost 'takes a village' to crew Tevis, and definitely a whole village to run it! I was so impressed with the organization and orderliness of this ride! And the condition and caliber of the horses (and riders!) were awesome. There was also a great vendor area- fun candy stores for trail riders!

Following detailed crew meetings and rider meetings, all turned in early, but I doubt there was much sleeping. Riders were up around 3:45 AM to tack up under head lamps for the 4:45 AM assembling into two 'pens'...depending on their expected ride speed. We watched the orderly (surprisingly!) controlled start, wishing all a good trip, and "see you in Auburn". We then loaded up the crew bag, water cart, and cooler needed for our crew tasks at the first hold- Robinson Flat, mile 36- which was a 2.5 hour drive away.



Robinson is a remote area with a single lane entrance road, so a military-like orderliness was required, using a pilot car to lead us into the Flat, two minutes to unload, then continue around and out to find parking back down the road about a mile. Kara stayed at Robinson to find a good crew spot in the shade near the vetting area while I shuttled the vehicle. There were water trucks, porta-potties, and large 'leader boards' fed by short wave radio relays set up to inform us of the rider's status through the earlier vet checks. Once set up, we wheeled the saddle rack and water cart with sponges to a spot along the trail designated for crew, where we could meet our rider, strip tack, sponge, and offer water about 1/4 mile before they reached the vet check in.

After meeting criteria of 60 and vetting in, our horse and rider were able to relax for the rest of the hour while sharing the story of the trail with us eager crew. Most of the vet checks have an "in" cut off time, and the two vet-to-hold areas also have an "out" cut off time, so time monitoring was critical. Robinson's was "in by noon" and "out by 1:30". We were able to watch the front runners come in to much cheering and photo taking. Our rider was running a bit later than her planned time of "in by around 10:00," but was still doing fine by arriving at 10:58 and out at 12:14. She was also on a personal mission to carry her deceased father's ashes into the high country to scatter along his favorite parts of the trail, as he had been a huge Tevis figure in the past, completing 7 rides himself and mentoring many a Tevis aspirant. It was a very emotional ride for her. Robinson Flat was a picture of excitement and organized chaos! It was so awesome to be there.

Once our rider was off again, with our cheering and encouragement for the canyons ahead, we packed up and hauled all the stuff down the road to the car. Now we had a good 6 hours before meeting her at the next vet-to-hold crew area at Foresthill, Tevis mile 68. She would be navigating the super hot canyons while we 'toured' the quaint high mountain village of Michigan Bluff. Michigan Bluff is a one-street residential area of 'maybe' a dozen homes, through which passes the Western States (Tevis) Trail...remnants of the gold rush era, and at one time a 'vet and go' check on the Tevis ride. Now the vet check is another mile or so down the trail at Chicken Hawk, but the residents still put out water tanks for the horses and offer cool drinks for the riders, then sit in their chairs along the street to watch the riders come through... big time parade for them!

It was probably the highlight of our trip, because as we were hiking down the half mile of hot asphalt road (we were required to park up on the main road, and the shuttle bus was not yet running), we were offered a ride by a charming older couple. It only took us a few minutes to realize... HOLY COW!! We're riding with Julie and Bob Suhr! What a warm and gracious couple. Julie, now in her mid 80's, is a true inspiration. She last completed Tevis in 2000 at age 76 and has tallied over 27,000 endurance miles!! As we chatted, she told us that she had known and ridden with our rider's father. What an honor for us to meet her!

We were able to watch the front runners pass through the serene setting of Michigan Bluff, before continuing on to Foresthill, another small community with a large mill parking area, which was almost big enough to accommodate all the rigs and crew vehicles. Talk about 'organized chaos!' But our other crew members had brought the rig down from Robie and found a way to park it which created a shaded spot for our horse to rest, yet was not too far from the vet check... good thinking! We were again able to watch the front runners come in, then grab some food and get the rig set up for the one hour rest hold.

Foresthill also has the leader boards set up with radio relay station to track the riders. However, apparently the radios weren't transmitting out of Michigan Bluff and Chicken Hawk, so the information wasn't current, particularly on our rider. We estimated her arrival to be sometime after 6:30. The 'in' cut off was 8:30. She requested that we meet her about half a mile down the trail (and it was DOWN), so we packed the saddle cart and all the crew decided to go down to greet her.

Many riders coming in were looking pretty tired and grim, worried about making the cut off time. At 8:00, we were still waiting and getting worried. We realized she'd be rushing to get up to the vet check and wouldn't have time to strip tack, so half of us traipsed back up to the vet check area to check the leader boards again for updates. Guess who was already there? Our rider, wondering where we all were. Luckily she found the trailer and got the horse set up. She had decided that since she was running behind her own schedule and the horse was pulsing down slower than expected, she would have to push too hard to finish, so opted to 'rider option' and pulled at Chicken Hawk/mile 64, at 6:52PM, thereby getting a trailer ride to Foresthill and saving her horse from having to do that last canyon. Good horsemanship prevailed, despite the disappointment of not finishing, and I was proud of her.

Also, a tragic incident back on the trail had demoralized her and explained the long faces on many of the riders coming in. While being led up a trail, a mare had misstepped for some reason and gone over backwards off the trail, hitting her head and dying instantly. Just a freak thing that could have happened at any ride. All the following riders had to view her on the side of the trail, which, needless to say, was a very upsetting thing for all to experience and put a damper on the rest of the ride. The plus side of our rider pulling was now we all wouldn't have to stay awake until 5:30 AM! So, we packed everyone up and said our good byes, hope to see you another year. Tevis is quite addicting.

Kara and I headed for the Auburn Fairgrounds and were in luck to see the first 3 finishers arrive, the first at 10:20 PM, 14 hours and 20 minutes after the start. The winner was K-Zar Emmanuel, a 15 yr old, 15.2 hand, gray Arab gelding, whose owner had passed away unexpectedly earlier this year, leaving a wish that his friend, Sarah Engsburg from Georgia, take K-Zar to the Tevis. Reportedly, she arrived a week early to Auburn to familiarize K-Zar with the last part of the trail that they would face in the dark. They were running close to the front group most of the day, but when they reached that last couple of miles, she said that he just took off with her, headed for 'barn and food and rest.' How is that for applied

horse psychology! She finished 11 minutes ahead of Dr. Melissa Ribley and her 7 yr old, 15.0 hand bay Arabian mare, LD Monique, with third place Marcia Smith and AM Sands of Time a minute behind her. There were over 69 minutes back to 4th place. The rider from the UK finished 7th, best of the foreign competitors.

Before pitching our tent for the night, we drove to the trail to No Hands Bridge, a very high and scary structure! We were happy to see (almost... it was pretty dark) three riders crossing, one sporting glow lights on the breast collar, and two of whom rode abreast at a good trot across the long span.. yeeoow. The next morning, we stayed for the best condition judging for the prestigious Haggin Cup. Our pick, Melissa and Monique, did win that, but we passed up attending the awards ceremony Sunday afternoon, instead heading back up I-5 on our continued 'endurance trip' back to Oregon. A 29-hour 'stand by' marathon, including an overnigher in a chair in the Las Vegas Airport still awaited me on my return to Denver. Tevis and sleep deprivation seem to be joined at the hip, but what a fantastic experience. Lots of 'choke up' moments!

The Tevis web site is great fun to check out, and the live webcast makes it easy to keep track of each rider throughout the ride each year. Go to www.tevisride.org/webcast to see all the details about this ride. Plus, Julie's book, "Ten Feet Tall Still" is a wonderfully inspiring read, and I am looking forward to re-reading my copy, now with new appreciation. The Tevis is definitely a "put on your big girl panties" event!... for ALL involved!



Commentary from a NATRC Member.

Competitive Trail Riding has been invaluable to me. When I bought my first horse, my friends described me as "an accident waiting to happen". I didn't know anything; how to tie a horse to a trailer safely, if my saddle fit or how to be mannerly on the trail. Competitive Trail riding teaches you these things.

I would like to see the sport take progressive steps to make it a "training ground" for riders who also want to ride Endurance. Endurance riding is growing on an international level at a rapid rate, while our sport of Competitive Trail is fading. Why? Because the sport of CTR is still operating on rules from its inception in the 1950s. Technology has changed the sport of riding a horse. It used to be that you packed a boot in case your horse lost a shoe. There was only one company that manufactured hoof boots. Now there are a wide array of hoof boots available for barefoot horses. Saddles are treeless and lighter, and bridles are bitless.

Eventually I widened my experience by going to some endurance rides. There I met acquaintances from NATRC and it was an immediate, "hey, what are you doing here?"

Endurance was refreshing; you simply went out and rode your miles. Because of the knowledge I gained in CTR, I was able to pace my horse; I understood his metabolics, I could moderate his performance allowing him to finish fit and sound.

Endurance riders and Competitive Trail riders have traditionally butted heads, each sneering at the other; "CTR is prissy", "endurance riders don't know what they are doing, they ride their horses to death".

Recently I traveled with my summer Corral Mate to an Endurance ride in the White National Forest in Colorado. Immediately I greeted 3 fellow NATRC members who were volunteering, riding or managing the ride (Betty Wolgram=co manager!)

I have been "mentoring" my friend and her lovely 8 year old arab/saddlebred. She bought the long legged youngster as a 7 year old with only one month's training. It's been a joy watching her bring along a young, insecure adolescent to become a confident, conditioned, well trained horse.

Last summer when I suggested we go to a Competitive Trail Ride, my friend's first reaction was, "No, I want to do endurance". I explained that CTR was an excellent step towards training for endurance.

Her first CTR was a "wake up call". Her horse would not trot out let alone lunge, nor would he allow the vet to look in his mouth. My Corral Mate realized she had some work to do and found some trainers and techniques to solve these problems. You should witness her perfect presentation to the judges at check in now!

When we recently traveled together to the White National Forest, she felt she and her horse were ready to try 50 miles. Not only did she complete, but finished in the top ten; a HUGE accomplishment. Her horse was fit and fine at the end of the day. On the drive home, she commented that she couldn't have accomplished her personal victory without her exposure to Competitive Trail.

For example, when she went to remount her horse during the ride, she led her horse to a "natural mounting block". Her companions remarked, "Yeah, sometimes we cheat too". Her response was that it is much better for the horse than hauling yourself onto him". She reported that it was as if a light bulb had switched on. "Hey, ya know, you're right".

Unfortunately, my Corral Mate will not continue in Competitive Trail for long because she uses hoof boots, so can only compete in D.O. Eventually, it won't be worth the price of hauling and entries without being able to compete formally.

At that same Endurance ride I met a young rider who had competed in her first CTR this summer, and had swept! I asked if she would try another NATRC ride and she responded "NO WAY!; Too many limitations and rules and they don't allow you to care for your horse in the best possible way."

At the endurance ride I witnessed people who high tied their horses and the horses managed to get into a wreck, wrapping their legs in ropes, falling down and getting loose. They tied multiple horses to the side of the trailer a foot from each other, had their water buckets on the ground, and then loaded their horses into the trailer at night. A few of their horse couldn't compete because they had been allowed to hurt themselves.

My Corral Mate made these comments from her limited experience with both the sports of Endurance and CTR: "like apples and oranges! One difference observed is the atmosphere of congeniality and "fun"; in CTR I felt very scrutinized at my first ride. Everyone was friendly but I felt as if there was an element of competitive judgment. At my first Endurance ride (LD) there was no air of expectation of performance, but a much warmer, casual feeling. Obviously part of that atmosphere in CTR is a by product of the judging that occurs in every aspect of CTR. You are being judged at every moment. But, there is value in requiring horse care and safety, starting at the trailer and carrying through to the trail. That is a shining aspect of the sport; teaching and fostering a real life skill in developing a relationship with your horse that is beneficial to both the rider and the horse. However, there seems to be a blindness at high level in CTR regarding the more nuanced aspects of horse care. My understanding is that the earnest cause of the limitations in horse care in CTR is that the "playing field should be level". That is simply not realistic. I believe that if you are really going to judge the care and safety of a rider/horse, let them really care for their horses; if they need to ice or poultice their horse's legs, they should be allowed because it shows a level of aptitude and foresight that may be indispensable in the future in a real life situation. Teach them how to assess if this is a need and how to properly wrap, set, brace or poultice. I think CTR is a wonderful sport that needs to catch up to the current trends and expectations of the horse world; to refuse to change is to refuse to grow and without growth it will shrivel and die. What a shame that would be, it is a valuable sport."

We need to bring Competitive Trail Riding into the 21st century! We need to look ahead and try to find ways to make the sport appealing to young people whose goals perhaps are to ride a horse in the Tevis someday. NATRC could be marketed not only as a complete "care for their horse in the best possible way".

Not a "level playing field"? I believe the best horse would still win. If the motto for Endurance is "to finish is to win", perhaps a motto for NATRC? "The goal is the journey".