



HOOFBEATS

EDITED BY HEIDI YOUNG, ENTRIES FROM CLUB MEMBERS ...

Membership forms and previous newsletters and articles and an expanded calendar are all on our website at: www.gaitedhorseclub.com

Facebook: Search for "SCGHC" or click <https://www.facebook.com/groups/636027703108388/> and request to be added. Here, club members can post pictures or share quickly and easily. This is a PRIVATE group, for members only. We have a public page as well, where anyone interested can see postings: "Southern Comfort Gaited Horse Club Public Group"

Lifelight Insurance: Club members get a discounted rate of \$10 off the \$60/year rate for a family. We all renew together in the early summer for a policy date of July 1. www.lifelight.org

2017 Calendar of Events

- November 13 Club meeting (at Sue Baughman's 10882 Onodaga, Boise)
- December 11 Club meeting AND Christmas party
- January 8 Club meeting: election of new officers

From the editor: Sorry its has been so long between newsletters. We seem to be busy preparing for our club events or are off riding. Here are a few stories I've gathered for you. Heidi

Castle Rocks camp out

from Anne Martin

Even though it rained the day of arrival, we stayed dry the rest of the weekend of unseasonably cool weather. Temperatures were mainly in the high 40s. We enjoyed hanging around the firepit each night, enjoying beverages and conversation.

The views were fabulous and the day of departure showed typically perfect fall weather. One of my friends that came but did not have a heated living quarters trailer, brought electric blankets since each site had shore power and she managed to stay toasty at night.

Pictures follow



EPM in Horses

from Louise Pratt

Any of you who have ridden with Mike and I (or should I say any of you who have ridden behind Mike and I) might have noticed Kobe unusual hindquarter movement. He has had the odd gait since I began riding him nearly 10 years ago. We just thought it unique because he never had any difficulties with any type of trail riding; over rocks, around trees, bridges, through water. He just did / does it all. He was sometimes a little sloppy or lazy footed and tended to trip in the front occasionally, but no biggie – and he's such a good boy. We thought maybe he had a little bit of Wobblers syndrome.

Last summer we did some work with Nya, her insight and tips always get the horses moving better and help us improve as well. She'd just begun riding Kobe when she suggested a soundness check. Kobe was tripping for no apparent reason. Respecting Nya's insight as we do we scheduled a visit to Idaho Equine Hospital (IEH). About a week later learned Kobe had Equine Protozal Myeloencephalitis (EPM). WHAT THE HECK??

Heidi asked if I's share a little information about this little known equine disease with the club. First let me assure you that it is NOT contagious. It cannot be passed from horse to horse.

EPM is caused by the parasite *Sarcocystis* (*S. neurona*), which attacks the central nervous system of horses. Opossums are the primary host of this parasite, horses are exposed to the parasite while grazing or by contaminated feed. EPM can be difficult to diagnose and if left untreated can cause serious damage to a horse and may even lead to death.

Kobe was diagnosed after he failed a neurological test then had a positive blood test. We believe he was exposed to the parasite in California where he used to live, there were many opossums in the area.

Clinical signs of EPM may be mistaken for other equine diseases such as West Nile virus, wobbler syndrome and rabies. They range from subtle (mild gait abnormalities, depression, irregular upper airway function) to severe (seizures, ataxia, muscle atrophy, and stumbling). There is no vaccine for EPM, so the best way to protect horses is to keep opossums and other unwanted animal away from horses when possible and keep grain and other feed covered.

Treatment consists of antiprotozoal drugs such as Marquis, a paste which has proven to effectively kill *S. neurona*, the parasite in opossums. If treated quickly horses can recover from EPM. The earlier treatment begins the better horses do. Not surprisingly young and old horses are more vulnerable to EPM.

Kobe was treated for two months starting back in August with Marquis Paste – which is very expensive, along with vitamin E mixed with a little senior feed and vegetable oil to help the medications absorb. After that regime we followed up with the vet back at Idaho Equine Hospital. She was very impressed with his recovery / improvement. We elected to continue treatment with Rebalance (a liquid antiprotozoal) for another two months because his blood test levels were still very high. Additionally, Nya recommended some simple exercise routines for Kobe which have really helped him pay more attention to where his feet are.

We love Kobe and are grateful for his recovery. We've ridden him on simple rides, around the property and in the arena and he has done great.