



July, 2013

2013 Officers

President – Shawnda Kasma
Vice President – Phil Carroll
Secretary – Deb Haake
Treasurer – Margaret Carroll

Committees

Trail Rides –John Franden
Sunshine – Sue Harwell
Membership – Jan Gibson
Education and Clinics – Nya Bates, Sandy Young
Ways and Means – Shawnda Kasma
Newsletter– Margaret Carroll
Website, Calendar–Margaret Carroll, Barb Recla
Liability Insurance – Nya Bates



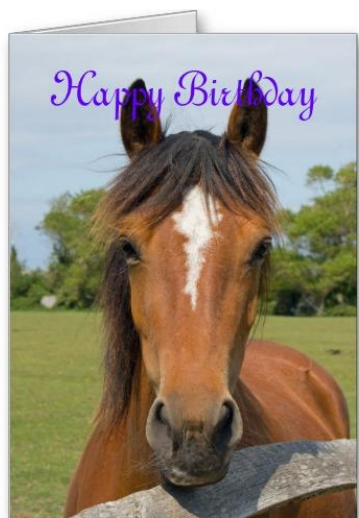
- ❖ July Meeting, Saturday July 6, IMO Ride and Potluck at Horseshoe Bend
- ❖ Spotlight – , Nya Bates, Sandy Young
- ❖ Gait Recognition
- ❖ Spanish Drill Team Exhibition at Idaho Center, Saturday July 13, Time to be announced – will be in aft
- ❖ Burgdorf camping trip - **Cancelled**

Next Meeting



Lois & Bill's Murphy's home in Horseshoe Bend, 3.5 miles down OLD hwy 55/Summit Ridge Road. They have a big red ranch house with lots of room to park trailers on the left side of their driveway. Note: Summit Ridge Road/old Hwy 55 branches off regular Hwy 55 at the top of the hill overlooking Horseshoe Bend near mile marker 57. This is 12 miles from State St and Hwy 55 in Eagle.

The ride will begin about 9:00 when it will still be cool. Please bring a dish to share and a chair for yourself. The potluck and July meeting will be after the ride.



WOW

Happy Birthday

July 1 – Sharon Prindel
 July 2 – Judie Daniels
 July 3 – Deb Haake
 July 8 – Kathy Johnson
 July 8 – John Franden
 July 11 – Jan Gibson
 July 15 – Lawrance Valdez
 July 17 – Sue Harwell
 July 24 – Tim Johnson
 July 25 -- Sandie Strickland
 July 26 – Greg Schneider
 July 31 – Kristi Adams
 July 31 – Dale Haynes

**July 6th Gait-MO Ride
at Lois & Bill Murphy's ranch**

This will be about an hour ride to learn what the sport of mounted orienteering is about. You will need a compass (normally a real one but a digital/smart phone is OK this time) and your reading glasses. Folks can start the course anytime from 9 to 11ish. Then we will have a potluck around noon, followed by the club meeting around 1 pm.

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We will all find the first marker, located right near the ranch. Friendly folks will be around to help you learn the process. At the formal orienteering events, a team picks a starting time, staggered 15 minutes from other teams. But we won't worry about this for our ride. Once you are ready to head out, your measured time will begin when you receive the topographic map with several marked spots for each team to find. Times stops when your team returns and checks in.

Using the map and noting anything that seems particular (road intersections, sharp curves, dead ends, rivers or creeks, canyons and hills); navigate to the one of the marked spots. Topo maps show contour lines to show changes in elevation. The closer the lines are, the steeper the terrain is, up or down.

Each marked spot will have two recognizable landmarks with directions to take a specific compass bearing from each one. A team member walks each bearing line and where they intersect, a marker can be found on the ground. It may be at the base of a sage brush or next to a rock -- so look around.

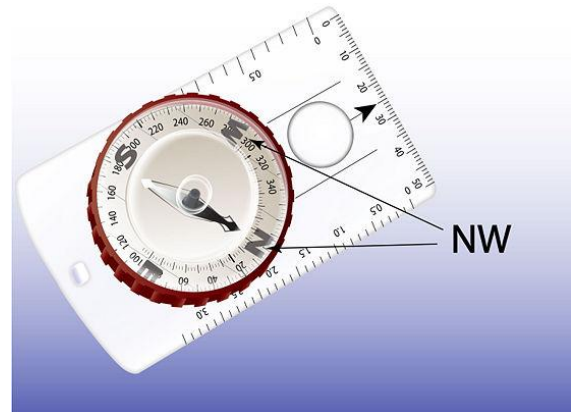
Once you find the marker, note the letters or words from it onto your map to show you found it. Ride to another area shown on the map and repeat. (This is where it would be helpful to know how fast your horse travels so you can estimate when to start looking for the next noteworthy topographic feature on the map.)

Orienteering 101:

An orienteering compass has:

- a rotatable *housing* with marked degrees (or bearings)
- a base marked with a *direction of travel* arrow
- the very important *red points to North* arrow

The red compass arrow points to North. On your particular compass, the other half could be black or white -- but the red portion always points to North.



1. Hold the compass level in front of you, but near your body so you can look down at the itty-bitty numbers. (reading glasses on a lanyard are helpful)
2. If you want to walk a bearing of 318 degrees (generally northwest), rotate the *housing* so that the 318 lines up with the *direction of travel* arrow.
3. Now turn your body so the *red arrow* and the **N** line up. If they do not, you will travel away from your desired bearing. Look around; does the general direction make sense to you?
4. Walk in the *direction of travel* on the base of the compass. Keep the red compass pointer on the N as you walk.

Spotlight - Nya Bates

1. Tell us about your first horse? Breed? Age? Your Age? (Child, Preteen, Teen, Young Adult, Mature,). I was born a horse fanatic. Never played with dolls or dress-up, I would build barn complexes with my brother's wood building blocks. My first horse, Airplane, was a 3 yo Thoroughbred from Santa Anita race track which I trained to be a steeplechaser when I was 12. Although I had ponies and rode friend's horses since I was a little tyke I actually learned how to ride on the family Boxer, Punam.

2. How did you get involved with gaited horses? I spent 5 years as an Army Nurse and, while stationed in Alabama, I bought my first TWH. Since 1974 I have been involved with TWHs in exhibitions and horse shows, breeding flat shod pleasure TWHs, Judging, clinics and am an active USDA/FOSH Designated Qualified Person (DQP) for gaited horse shows (THW, MFTs, Mountain Horses and Spanish gaited breeds). I am also an examiner for the Kentucky Mountain Horse Assn/Registry).

3. What are your favorite types of riding? What is your favorite event to participate in with your horse? Your favorite Southern Comfort Event? I am now primarily a trainer specializing in gait repair and starting young stock. I stand a TWH stallion and raise foals for pleasure, hunting and field trails. I travel doing clinics and am active with Friends of Sound Horses as well as working behind the scenes to obliterate soring with several national organizations.

4. How long have you been a southern Comfort Member? Why did you join? I have been a SCGHC member since its inception and joined to aid in education of gaited horses.

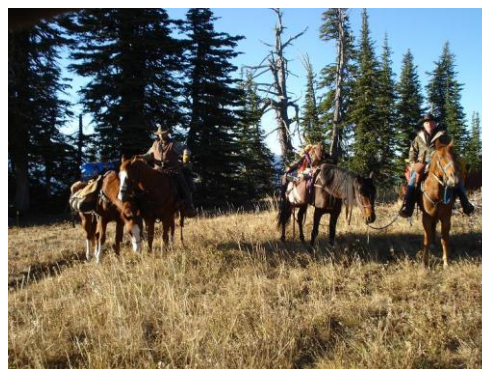
5. How many horses own you? Tell us something about them we have not heard before. We breed and raise Tennessee Walking horses and stand a Heritage stallion, have several broodmares (6), saddle mounts (4) and youngsters.

6. Tell about one of your favorite horses. What makes him or her special. Describe the horse. Size? Color? Age? Breed? Sex? What does the horse do well? Go Boy's Windwalker was my elder stallion that was my 'once-in-a-lifetime-horse'. He was a 5 time NPWHA (National Plantation Walking Horse

Assn) and a West Coast High Point Champion that was retired from showing at age 4. Since that time he was used for breed expos, parades, lessons, trail, field trial, educational videos and promoting the TWH breed all over the West. His get have been used as pleasure, flat shod show horses, field trail and hunting mounts. He had perfect gaits, conformation and disposition which exemplified the breed as the original founders intended it to be. He was euthanized just before his 30th birthday (12/11) and had been used as a lesson horse for new or fearful riders as well as our very young granddaughter's favorite ride. I miss him still.

7. If your horse could describe you what would (s)he say? What makes you a good human? What would your horse want you to do more? Less? My horses would probably say that I am a firm taskmaster but kind and patient. If they could communicate they would most likely say that they would like more riding time.

8. If you could ride anywhere in the world, where would you ride? Why . Although I have ridden horses in several countries (Ireland, Israel and Jordan) I would most like to ride in Spain as I have always wanted to go there for the Andalusians and the country appears gorgeous. BUT, I rode Yosemite as a kid and I would really love to take my husband (who has not yet seen Yosemite) and our two mares there for a Fall vacation.



Gait Recognition

All gaited horses are born with a natural gait tendency that can and will vary through the gait spectrum regardless of their specific breeds. There are many different names for the gaits that these horses are able to do which, although they will reflect the language of their country of origin, they are basically the same gaits. Most gaited horses will have a natural gait thread in which they are able to perform an easy gait at a certain speed and, when they can no longer travel in that gait (or gear), will alter their gait.

In defining the intermediate gaits one must use footfall sequence, footfall timing, hoof support sequence and weight transfer.



The ordinary Walk (which all horses perform) is an even timed four beat gait as each hoof lifts and sets down at even and separate intervals and is the basic gait for all of the easy gaits. The footfall sequence is right hind, right fore, left hind, left fore. Even pick up and set down of hooves. Walking step front and rear.



The Flat Walk is identical to the ordinary Walk but is faster and has a longer stride. The flat foot walk is a bold four beat gait with reach in every stride from both front and rear legs. There is an over stride

of the front track with the rear legs with no sense of cramped motion or laboring from the hocks. The footfall sequence is right hind, right fore, left hind, left fore. Even pick up and set down of hooves.



The Running Walk has the same footfall and timing as the Flat and ordinary Walk with more over stride and speed. To create the proper timing, a hind foot is always one half stride behind the front foot. The rear legs track straight over the tracks of the front feet and must appear to move effortlessly. The horse appears to pull with the front legs and drive from his rear legs. The footfall sequence is left hind, left front, right hind, right front. Even pick up and set down of hooves. Running step in front and walking step behind.



The Rack has the same footfall and timing as do the ordinary, Flat and Running Walks with more speed and a shorter length of stride. The rack is often referred to as a Single Foot as it has a four beat gait where each foot hits the ground in a moment of individual action. The footfall is one foot down and three feet in various stages of elevation. Leaping step with weight transfer in mid-air, front and hind.

Diagonal Gaits

The Trot is a two beat gait in which the diagonal legs lift off and set down at the same time. Even diagonal pick up and set down. Weight transfer in mid-air.

The Foxtrot is a broken diagonal gait in which the hooves set down at separate intervals. The horse should appear to be walking with the front legs and trotting with the rear legs with a sliding action. The foxtrot is a two-foot, three-foot support sequence. Diagonal uneven pick up and set down of hooves.

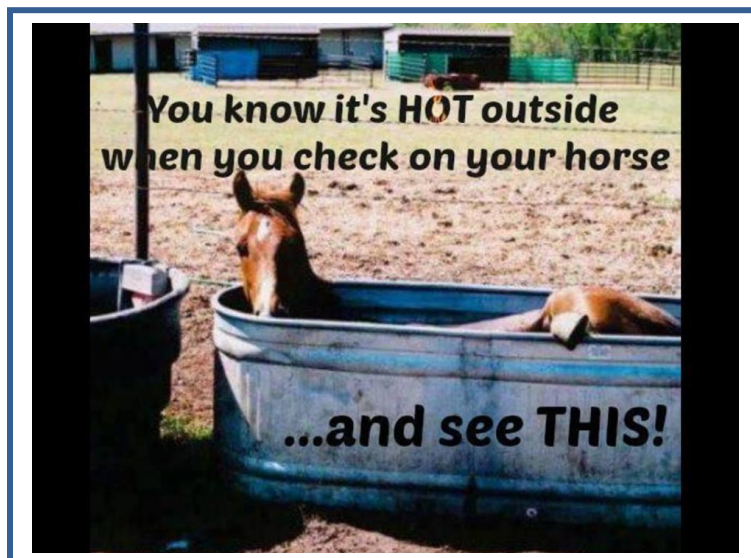
The Lateral Gaits



The Pace is a two beat gait in which the lateral legs lift off and set down at the same time.



The Step-Pace is a broken lateral gait in which the hooves on one side of the horse lift off at the same time but the hind feet set down just ahead of the fore feet. This is a two-foot, three-foot support gait.



Spotlight - Sandy Young

I grew up in a western suburb of Chicago called Glen Ellyn. There were still open fields, farm land, forest preserves and the Prairie Path (rails to trails) to ride on. A few people had small acreages in town and were able to keep horses.

My first real live horse that was all mine, was a 27 yr old TB/Qtr Hrs mare named Lady. I was in Junior High, 8th grade 1972, and couldn't stand it any longer. I asked my parents if I could have a horse. And I was surprised when they said YES !!!! They said "you figure out how to pay for it and it's upkeep and we'll help you get out to the stable to be with it." I had Lady within a week. I paid \$50 for her, and \$50 a month for full board at a really nice place. Being from a family of entrepreneurs and willing to do what ever I needed to get a horse, I really got rolling. I raised mice and gerbils & bred tropical fish for local pet stores. Bless my parent's and siblings hearts that they put up with 300 rodents in aquariums in the basement and aquariums all over the house with fish in them. I also babysat, mowed lawns, raked leaves, shoveled snow, cleaned houses, helped at our appliance store, anything to make a buck so that I could have my horse. Lady came from an Arabian breeder who had been using her as a wet nurse for orphan foals. She loved babies and would take care of any of them. When I bought her, I knew she would not be with me for very long, because she had a tumor at the end of her tail. But it didn't matter. Lady and I had the best 9 months I could have ever hoped for. Once she was mine I had her tail docked to try to slow down the spread of the cancer. It worked for awhile, but it eventually worked it's way up her spine and got to the point that I knew it was time to put her down and say goodbye. But until that day arrived, Lady and I went on all sorts of adventures. She took such good care of me. I would ride her up town to my house and give her a bath and let her graze on the lawn. We would go to a local sand bottom pond that was about 4-5 ft deep and we'd swim. Now that was fun! She freaked me out one day by deciding to do the side stroke instead of just walking on the bottom. I thought something bad had happened, but she just wanted to float and swim.

She had done everything in her lifetime (from racing on a track, barrel racing/games, jumping, pulling a cart to trail riding.) It was so wonderful to have her share her last months with me. I felt very privileged.

My next horse was one of the loves of my life, my soul mate. Comet was a "mutt"stang, as I called him. He was the name sake for my horse cartoons, Comet Strips. A mix of Appy, QH, Standardbred, etc. He looked solid white till you got up close or saw him wet. Then you could see the leopard app spots all over his skin. I met Comet as an orphan foal at my cousin's in Iowa the year before. The town vet was raising him and was going to send him to the sale as soon as he was weaned. Well that spelled certain dog food status for him, so my cousin adopted him and finished raising him. Then I come along again during spring break of 1973 to spend the week on the farm, and of course the first thing I do is go say hello to the horses when we arrive. I was sitting on top of the fence loving on this horse when my cousin saw me and told me to be careful with him because he bites. Well, he never bit me. Don't know why, but I am glad he didn't. After spending that week with him, my cousin offered him to me, for FREE. Can you say EXCITED !!!!!!!!! and then some!! Well, it made sense since he was a yearling, to let him grow up at my cousin's farm for a year or two before I brought him to live with me in Illinois. It was a god send to have my cousin's help caring for him as he grew up. I had her start him under saddle for me and she did a really wonderful job. She was one of those "real" natural horsemen that could do just about anything with a horse. Our Great Grandfather was a true horseman, so maybe something came thru in the genes for us to have the love of horses like we do. Comet and I were a real pair. We did everything together. He was pretty full of himself at times. But we had a blast pushing cattle around, or trail riding down the country roads and thru pastures. The year I brought him back to Illinois, I was a senior in high school and our choir always had the best float in our Homecoming Parade. That year, 1975, was no different, but as an added bonus, they asked me to dress up as an Indian and ride behind the float. The

float was a TeePee and the theme said "Wampum" or something like that.

I rode Comet in many parades, on trail and around town. I took him running with me down the Prairie Path (*I was a competitive runner, from sprints to long distance, and trained hard and for many miles. I took my horse with me. Many times people would comment that I should be riding him instead of running with him. I had hoped to some day be able to do one of the ride and tie races held out west.*) During the winter when we had enough snow, I'd ride him into town and pull around a toboggan sled and give people rides and help them get around. Comet LOVED to play crack the whip. He would take off pulling someone in the saucer sled, then turn sharply to watch that sled go flying around him and it usually spelled disaster for the sled rider. What a hoot! So once I graduated high school, I took a year off before college and took a job at Libertyville Saddle Shop. It was a dream job for a horse crazy person. It was quite a commute (gas was only \$.45 a gallon at that time), so after a few months I moved to be closer and took Comet with me. What a great time I had doing any horsey thing I could with him. And because of the connections I was making at the saddle shop (the biggest in the US at that time and they literally had everything), I also got to do A LOT of other horsey things too that included working polo ponies, helping with the race horses at local training barns, and so on. But Comet and I would head out to the local shows and ride in pleasure and equitation classes and run the timed events. I usually won the speed events. Comet was VERY FAST, knew the patterns and loved to GO !!! Good thing I liked to go fast too. High Oh Silver Away!!!! That's what people would say when we entered the arena as he reared and took off running. Our favorite timed event was the flag race. But we ran them all. Of course trail riding was what I did the most of and he would take me on some awesome rides. I loved letting him pick the trail. I had some especially amazing rides when we lived in WA state. One area we loved to go to had a resident pair of coyotes (big enough I thought they were wolves). Every time we rode thru, they would come and trot along side us for at least a mile. It was soooo cool. Nothing about them was threatening. It was like taking my dogs riding with me.

Over the many years we were together, Comet traveled anywhere that I went, which included

Oklahoma where we rode the prairies, Arizona where we got to ride thru some amazing saguaro cactus forests, California thru the redwoods, Washington in the western mountains, and then back to the east coast to Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains and North Carolina around Raleigh. I have a lot of stories I can tell about all we got to do during his 26 years with me. He taught me a lot and was my "best friend forever."

Of course there have been several other horses (about 40) that have been VERY IMPORTANT to me and I'd love to go on and on about them too. But that'll have to be something that you read about in my "book". (When I get some free time to write it. Hey, it could happen.)

2. How did you get involved with gaited horses?

My very first exposure to a gaited horse was as a kid watching Walt Disney. They showed a movie about a palomino Paso Fino from Puerto Rico named **Cristo Bolito, the Calypso Colt** and the story about him and his boy and their adventure to America. Little did I know I'd have paso finos later in my life. And, about 5-6 years ago I also had the pleasure of meeting the woman who wrote the true story about this horse that the movie was based on.

My first gaited horse was actually one of my cartoon horses. I was in high school at this point and doing cartooning for a 4-H project. I used to read about them in my horse magazines, catalogs and books and would draw them doing all that fancy high stepping stuff. I had no idea what was being done to those horses to make them move like that, so to me it was all very fancy, proud looking high stepping horses. Had I known about "soring" I am sure I would have never given it any attention in my cartoons. But that is my first exposure to a gaited horse.

Then in 1976 I started to work at Libertyville saddle Shop, a HUGE saddle shop in northern Illinois with EVERYTHING you could ever want and then some for a horse and rider. I loved walking into the store each day and breathing in the smell of the leather. I got to be around a lot of horse people from every discipline and that included gaited horse people. So at this point I am still clueless as to what the horses are going thru, but I got a chance to see all the "stuff" up close, like tail sets and biting harnesses, big bits, colorful headbands and ginger salve and so on. In 1984 I moved to Roanoke, VA and had an

opportunity to work at Deer Haven Farm, a huge saddlebred farm (250 horses). I was there to help with what ever needed to be done, from barn chores to handling mares and foals during breeding season, to grooming and saddling for the trainer and so on. The 2nd year I was there, I was given the job of halter breaking all 150 or so of their 2 yr olds, yearlings and weanlings that had never been handled, and getting them to the point that they could be tied, lunged, loaded in a trailer, clipped, and worked on by the farrier and vet. Now that was a real marathon summer working with all of those young horses and quite an education. And as I found out later, I was really lucky to be on one of the only "clean farms" (they didn't sore their horses) in the saddlebred world. I would never have been able to stand by and watch the abuse of horses. This farm was full of happy horses !!!

But it was also in Roanoke, Virginia where I was first exposed to "soring". I had gone to a farm to look at some hay, and I had arrived early. As I walked into the barn to find the person I needed to speak to, I saw them working a TWH. The horse was wearing these huge stacks, chains and tail set and they had it hooked up to a heavy sled with a lot of weight on it and were asking it to pull it as they made it drop it's hind end to pull and lift it's front legs and reach. And I about got sick watching it. There was no kindness in anything that they were doing to this horse. There were other horses in dark stalls that were all trussed up with stacked shoes and tail sets (*from having their tails broken, muscles cut and then set in these things that would make their tails heal in such a way that they always looked like they were carried high. They would never be able to use their tails naturally again, EVER.*) Most horses that had to wear them were not cared for properly, so they lost all their own natural hair, sometimes they were just shaved bald, and had sores on the docks of their tails from wearing these sets all the time that weren't kept clean or padded. Then when they were shown, they would attach a fake tail and usually used some ginger salve in their anus to make them carry that tail high. Can you imagine what this would feel like!!!! Talk about a burning hemorrhoid. But that is when I first started to ask what all that stuff was for. And I didn't know what to do to help. I'd watch the walkers doing the "big lick" at the Roanoke Horse Show and my knees would literally hurt as I'd see them shoot their legs out and see their joints shifting as they performed. And all

in the name of getting a ribbon and a title. Ahhhhhhh!!!!!! And I had no way to help those horses. I'd talk to people and stuff would get brushed aside and under a rug. People turned their heads and pretended it didn't exist. Knowing what I know now and thinking back on my early experiences, makes it even worse. It is time to stop the abuse once and for all. Don't turn your head. Get involved. Write a letter or make a call to our representatives and be heard. Join FOSH! The horses need us to speak up. What can we do to make the horse world aware of this and stop it? Lots of voices is the first thing. Every little bit will help shift the awareness. Sorry, but this is a big deal to me. No horse of any breed should have to suffer abuse and mutilation just so some human can win something in a show ring. The TWH has taken the hardest hit of all, but the saddlebreds, morgans, hackneys, etc have also been subjected to this approach to creating animated gaits. There are a whole myriad of things that have been done to non-gaited and gaited horses just so people can win. Get informed and spread the word so people who have and don't have horses know about this issue, then ask them to say something to their state representatives so they know to support the legislation that will strengthen and changed the horse protection act to outlaw the use of all those action devises. Support showing horses that perform naturally and with natural tails. I am so glad our club supports this.

So fast forward to 1992 and a friend of ours asked me to come and look at some paso finos that he'd found and he wanted to get one of them to use as a field trial horse. He'd never had a horse and knew nothing about horses. He wanted someone with some experience to evaluate the horse for him. Well, the horse he wanted was a green broke 4 yr old, high spirited gelding, very sensitive, very forward horse. It was a nice horse, but totally not appropriate for a totally green rider. You've heard the saying, "Green on green makes black and blue." I told him not to get the horse and let's look for one with a calmer disposition and more training. So we left. Next thing I knew he was calling me to help him find a trailer to haul the horse. He had bought him. He asked me to give him lessons. What could I say? Of course I'll help you and I prayed I could keep him safe and in one piece. The other paso fino was a red roan dun yearling. The owner was going thru a divorce and was trying to sell these horses. I had some extra cash and a place to keep him so I bought my first paso fino

gelding. **Roberto** is still with me today. He is one of the smoothest pasos I've ever ridden. He is now 22 yrs old. As far as the other horse goes, the guy gave it a good shot and really tried hard, but after a year he ended up calling us and asking if we would be interested in buying his paso fino. And of course we did. **Lucky** was my husband's horse and carried him thru all sorts of stuff over the years. He is now 26 and retired and lives in Middleton as a companion horse in a wonderful home. But of course, once you have one, you have to have another. So now I have 10 paso finos, and at one time had a herd of over 30 when I was actively breeding.

3. What are your favorite types of riding?

If you are asking what style of riding I like best, I don't have one. As long as it's on a horse, I am good with it. And I tend to ride in my Yancey (a modified McClellan saddle made with paso finos in mind), or my English, or a Western saddle.

What is your favorite event to participate in with your horse?

The activity I like the best is trail riding. I also like to do demos, exhibitions, parades, and teach/educating. I love the Natural Horsemanship stuff. At some point I might like to do a little bit of the trail competition that is all the rage right now. I used to do very well in them, but just got to where I didn't care about what a judge thought about me or my horse in any competitive event. So showing is sort of low on my list. I'll do it for fun, but just don't care about winning anymore. If I end up getting something, great. The trail events sort of level the playing field for everyone, because it shouldn't matter what kind or color of horse you have. It's just about if your horse can do what you are asking them to do. It's performance based. Yes I know that it's not perfect either, but.....

Your favorite Southern Comfort Event? I have enjoyed being a part of putting together things that create opportunities for our members to learn and have fun with their horses.

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4. How long have you been a southern Comfort Member? Why did you join?

So it was a few years ago that we were having our gaited horse Holiday luncheon with all the people who had been a part of our expo demos and our gaited horse friends, and then it was suggested by Eva Harper from SCGHDTCTC that we all consider taking the Southern Comfort Gaited Horse Drill Team Club

and turn it into a gaited horse club. It was about ready to die off and disband, but they had the non-profit status and a little money in the bank and some members who wanted to see if they could breath some life back into it. Seemed like a no brainer to me and several others, so we all said yes. What's the worst that could have happened. It would die anyway and then we'd all still be getting together to do things. But what a wonderful journey to be on with the club as it evolves and becomes a viable and healthy horse club in Idaho offering gaited horse lovers, a chance to do some wonderful things with one another, and learn more about their gaited horses, and help promote the breeds and support naturalness in the breeds. And to become a "force of many" to help stop the abuse and soring of the gaited horses as well as any other.

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5. How many horses own you? Tell us something about them we have not heard before. I currently have 10 paso finos that I serve. When I am doing the feeding and cleaning, I always keep a plastic curry hanging on the handle of the wheelbarrow so that I have a way to grab it anytime I want to groom or scratch the horses as I move around them. Well, they have all gotten to know what it is and will literally follow me around, try to take it off the handle and indicate it's time for me to get busy and do my duty. They will line up in their pecking order impatiently waiting their turn.

*

6. Tell about one of your favorite horses. What makes him or her special. Describe the horse. Size? Color? Age? Breed? Sex? What does the horse do well? "El Mejor DLM (De Los Mejores)" is my paso fino stallion. He is 22 yrs old, is 14.2 hands and is a sooty buckskin with a metallic sheen to his coat. It's a stunning and unusual color. Mejor (pronounced May-hor) is a show off and a showman. He loves being in front of a crowd and strutting his "stuff". He definitely has the paso fino "brio" that they talk about. He did the whole "show thing" with his previous owners and earned everything you could earn; Champion, National Champion, Legion of Merit, and so on. But what I think is great about all the titles he's earned, is that he did it across the US in different venues, at big shows and little shows, against all the major competition, and in all major divisions of Bella Forma, Fino, Performance and Pleasure. To me that makes his titles mean

something and it shows his versatility within the breed. Since I have had him, I have only shown once and we did very well considering I didn't know anything about showing a paso fino at the time. Good thing he was experienced. But since I prefer trail riding to showing, he has gotten to cover lots of miles on trails. And I am once again impressed with his ability and willingness on trail. We have had some moments when he gets a bit full of himself and just wants to GO GO GO. But it's a real treat to be on a horse like him. He has made me very aware that I have a lot more to learn in order to get to the same level of skill & training that he's got. It's been very fun to experiment with things I learn, cause when I get it right, he let's me know immediately. And bless his heart, he puts up with me when I don't get it. I love this horse. What a guy.



As a sire, he was just a hair away from being on the top ten sire list for the breed back around 2000. His offspring have got a lot of talent, are very versatile, wonderful temperaments, intelligence, brio, great conformation, naturally gaited. He sires about 50% buckskin or duns, and the rest are black or bay. The next part of this story will include one of our other club members, Jan Gibson. She is the one who I have to thank for introducing me to El Mejor. She had purchased a breeding to him thru the PFHA Stallion Service Auction. She'd seen him at many shows and was smitten with him and wanted to breed one of her fine mares to him. Jan has an eye for a nice paso fino. She'd purchased a couple of nice mares to add to her brood mare band (which included Chenille, the horse that Lawrance Valdez now has and who has had 3 foals by Mejor), and was determined to breed them to Mejor. At the time, Mejor was in Colorado Springs, CO and the gal who owned him had been inactive for a year or two while she dealt with some family issues. But when Jan called to have the service contract filled and semen shipped, the owner

had no ability to follow thru. OK, so keep in mind this is 2002, I had just met Jan that spring at the Horse Expo in Caldwell and shared with her that some day I'd like to be able to breed paso finos once we got our lodge up and going, someday. I was not ready to do it at that time. We'd just built our home and invested everything we had in it and we were tapped out. We were not set up to be a breeding facility. So, that said, Jan would not be denied her breeding to Mejor. She had a light bulb come on and she went to work. She contacted the owner and mentioned she'd just met some people who she knew were really into the breed and who's dream it was to be breeding paso finos and so on and on. She asked if Mejor was for sale or lease. The owner said she would consider it to the right people. So do any of you know how good Jan is at sales? She must be pretty darn good, because by the time all was said and done it had pretty much been arranged and all we needed to do was go pick up Mejor, get the stamp of approval from the owner and we were on our way. Talk about TRUST !!! Oh my gosh, we drove off with Mejor and a top brood mare and ended up going back in a year and getting another brood mare and 3 of his offspring that were 2-3 yrs old so we could get things rolling in Idaho and keep this lady's breeding program alive. She had invested A LOT of money getting her herd together to produce top quality paso finos. She knew what she was doing. Initially we were just going to do a lease of Mejor, but ended up buying him and all the others. When they steal your heart it's hard to let them go and you can't have just one. So I always tease Jan about getting me into the mess I'm in, but I wouldn't trade it for anything. The only thing I'd change is how the economy hit the horse market right at the time my babies were at the right age to sell and help me with my investment in these horses. Which then leads to how I ended up meeting Lawrance Valdez as he stepped up to help me out with a couple of horses. And because I have been promoting the paso fino to help with my breeding program, and now promoting the other gaited breeds and getting to know the people involved with them, I have now gotten to know all of you. What a wonderful chain of events.

7. If your horse could describe you what would (s)he say?

They would say that I am kind, sensitive, thoughtful, trustworthy, confident, a good leader. That I am trying really hard to become the best horseman I can be.

What makes you a good human? My overall goal is to make the world a better place for horses & other critters and humans. The only way I can do that is to make sure that humans are having a good life, cause when they do, all the things around them tend to have a good life too. I am a good human for horses because I consider a horse's life from their perspective and do my best with what I have, to provide them with a good life and keep them happy, healthy, and terrific. And it's really a soul searching question to have to come up with an answer to this question myself. I am not done thinking about this one.

What would your horse want you to do more? Less? My horses like it when I spend time with them, whether I am riding or not. I like to just hang out with them and they like to hang out with me. Riding is a bonus for me, but I think they enjoy it too, most of the time. I think they really like to use me as a scratching post that can scratch anywhere they want. And they tell me right where to go too.

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8. If you could ride anywhere in the world, where would you ride? Why?

Hmmmmmmmmmm, now that's a loaded question because I'd like to ride anywhere I could. If there were no limits and I could just ride anywhere at all: Well, there are many places in the US which would interest me. I love the west and being in the western mountains. I have been able to enjoy rides in Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oklahoma, Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, & Florida. But the west has always won my heart. That said, the forests of the east are amazingly beautiful, so I'd

like to explore them more. Maybe on the Appalachian Trail. Outside of the US, I'd like to ride in Australia and New Zealand and in the European countries with mountains like Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Germany, Austria, etc. And in the countryside & mountains of Ireland and Scotland and England. And oh my gosh Hawaii is so gorgeous. I'd love to do a beach rides on each of our coasts. I have even thought it'd be a great adventure to ride across our country. And being involved with the Paso Finos, I'd love to go to the countries where they originated and experience the breed in those cultures.

Why? Because we live in a beautiful world and I will get to "see" & feel more of it from the back of a horse than from a car. I love to hear the sounds and smell the smells and see things up close and personal. You have a better chance of seeing wildlife when riding (and getting away when one chases you).

Wilson Creek



Horse Affair
Evening
Performance

Calendar

July

- 6 Southern Comfort Orienteering Ride, Horseshoe Bend, Info, Lois Murphy
 July Meeting
- 9-14 Southern Comfort Trail and Camping, McCall, **Cancelled**
- 12-13 Eagle Fun Days
- 13 Spanish Breed Demo, Southern Comfort, Idaho Center
- 13 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD
- 16 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD
- 20 IMO Banner Creek, TBD
- 25 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD

August

- 6-10 City of Rocks, SWITandDR
- 12 Club Meeting 6:30 Social and 7:00 Meeting, Sunrise Café, Middleton
- 16-18 Southern Comfort Trail and Camping, Cowboy Campground, Idaho City
- 17 IMO Dry Buck Sweet Area TBD
- 20 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD
- 29 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD

September

- Aug 31-1 Old Selam, SWITand DR, Centerville, ID
- 7 IMO TBD
- 9 Club Meeting 6:30 Social and 7:00 Meeting, Sunrise Café, Middleton
- 14 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD
- 17 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD
- 21 IMO TBD
- 26 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD
- 28-29 Natural Horsemanship Clinic with Lawrance Valdez, Al Birt Arena

October

- Roughriders Poker Ride TBD
- Blazer Poker Ride TBD
- 6 Southern Comfort Poker Ride
- 14 Club Meeting 6:30 Social and 7:00 Meeting, Sunrise Café, Middleton
- 19 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD
- 22 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD
- 31 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD

November

- 2 Playday, Al Birt Arena
- 11 Club Meeting 6:30 Social and 7:00 Meeting, Sunrise Café, Middleton
- 16 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD
- 19 Southern Comfort Trail Ride TBD

- December Christmas Party, TBD