

Southeast Endurance Riders Association

# SERA NEWSLETTER

October  
Volume 1, issue 7

Looking Back, Can YOU identify these riders?



## **NEW Inside this Issue**

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Looking back

A look back at  
being a good pit  
crew from 1974

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## **A Word from our President~ Dr. Ike Nelson**

First let me say that your newsletter is late this month because the editor has been waiting on this message! Sorry, Jody!! And let me next say how great a job Jody has been doing with the newsletter. I hope all of you have been enjoying them like I have.

I am late this time because I have been preparing for the Skymont Ride. I really have empathy with other ride managers when I get into the short rows with this project each year. Complicating this has been the minor surgeries I have had in the last couple of months, and having spent a lot of time in the hospital with my mother, who broke her leg when she came to visit while I was recuperating. She spent 17 days in the hospital here before they transferred her back to her local hospital in KY. I found out that you don't get much accomplished when you are sitting with someone in the hospital!

The government problems have impacted a number of rides this fall. The Yellowhammer was cut short due to the shutdown, and other rides in other regions were cancelled due to this problem. Makes you appreciate when things run smoothly and as planned! I know we all hope they will get things worked out, SOON!!

We still have some SERA rides coming up. The Right Lead, Fort Valley II, Skymont, Broxton Bridge, Blackwater Boogie, KY Diehards, and the Carolina Ride all happen during this ride year. So there is plenty of opportunity to get out there and get more points for the year end SERA awards. This is also a beautiful time of year to go to a ride. Hope you will take advantage of it! Don't forget the AERC is coming to Atlanta!! We are partnering with them and GERA and SEDRA to make this a great meeting! If you want to help call Laurie Underwood who is coordinating volunteers. We need volunteers but we also need you to come to the meeting in large numbers!!

That's all for this time. Hope you will be at all the rides we have left! See you down the trail!!



Sometimes it can be fun to look back and remember some of what the older endurance crowd, fondly referred to as the “old timers”, tell us of the good ole days and old endurance stories. Most of the modern day rides and riders are not quite aware of the differences between then and now. I as an “old timer” can tell you that it is different, very different. Not to get into the argument that then was better than now, we are more comfortable now, more intense vetting now, more informed riders, and tons of more support team volunteers. Do I want to go back to the old days??? Not really, I do enjoy the ride photographers (I don’t remember one until the ROC in 1990). Do I enjoy my homemade living quarters and nice slant load horse trailer, do I enjoy the plethora of volunteers, timers, and vets, do I like having better awards???? Heck yeah !!!! But, when we improve things, sometimes we lose things.

When I attended my first endurance ride it was 1973. The biggest difference I can remember was the camping. Today we have sprawling campgrounds, many with “real” camping facilities. Today we may have electrical hookups, water, bathhouses with real toilets and sometimes a store or even a restaurant !!!! Even if we don’t have any of the above and are in a primitive field camp, low and behold we have port-a-lets. I swear I am not telling a story, but we didn’t have port-a-lets. We had the “woods” and at one ride (actually held in Bankhead National Forest, home of the Raptor Run) we had a primitive port-a-let. I bet you didn’t know there was such a thing. Picture this: It was black plastic, stretched around four small trees, out in the woods, with a folding toilet seat chair. There was a little hole dug under it and a bag of lime setting there waiting for the next customer. Directions for use were simple, go in, sit down, do your business, cover with a little dirt and lime and exit. If I remember correctly, I chose the woods. While on the subject of bathrooms, there was one ride, the Shockaloe, held in Mississippi that I remember was uptown because IT had a permanent outhouse. It was really like sitting on a throne, a real elevated throne. It was a concrete pit chemical flush toilet. The funny thing was you had to

walk up two steps to get to the seat, and you were literally sitting UP on a stainless steel throne.

Today size matters. Well, back in the day it didn't. Meaning, we had much smaller camps. Lots of times we parked on the sides of gravel roads. No field at all. True, rides were smaller back then, but still, we just pulled over to the side as much as possible and tied to the side of the trailer. While on the topic of size, one reason the camps could be smaller, was that the rigs were not houses on wheels. I remember thinking that someone really had a fancy trailer if it was a gooseneck. A plain, steel gooseneck and most of the time it was a stock trailer. The Carraways from Mississippi had one of those "fancy" trailers, but then again, their daddy was a horse trainer at an Arabian horse farm !!! The rest of us were in two horse bumper pulls, steel again, no such thing as aluminum trailers. Half ton pickups with camper shells pulling two horse bumper pulls was the common way of traveling and camping with your horse. Of course there were some in tents, some that slept in the back of the trailer, and some had the modern conveniences of an over the cab truck camper. After a day of riding in our blue jeans and T-shirts, without helmets, body vests, Ariat riding boots, we took bucket baths and tried to get

somewhat clean and not so stinky. As for our horses, no biothane, beta, endurance saddles, woolback pads, rump rugs or protective boots, our horses competed with the barest of comforts as well. Leather was the material of all tack, but then again, there wasn't another option. They didn't have electric pens to rest in, pipe corrals or Hi-Ties, but stood tied to the horse trailer all night or maybe a picket line. Come to think of it, we really didn't have many loose horses either. I remember at a ride in Mississippi, the Chickasaw County Sheriffs Mounted Posse ride (YES, that was the name of the ride) a man had a stallion, and he secured it with a logging chain to a tree.

Today, we all retreat back to our mobile house, sit in the comfort of our gas heated living Quarters, watch cable TV, talk to friends/family on our cell phones, check out the news on social media, all of course after we have had that nice hot shower and dried our hair with an electric blow dryer powered by a generator.

Back in the 70's and 80's, our "main" event was the after ride fire. I fondly remember those rides, how much I looked forward to the fire after the awards. It was a big fire, plenty of room for folks to gather around. There would be several conversations going on or sometimes one person would tell tales of horse experiences or the

ride itself. Most every rider would be present and partake of this special gathering. I wish that I could go back to that, to sitting under that night sky full of stars, a big fire, friends, vets, and competitors all sharing the love of this newly born sport. We could be so fierce toward one another during the race, but then we would be best of buds later that night.

The rules have changed, the rides have changed, the camps, the markings, the tools. Shoeing has improved greatly, our attire is more comfortable, we have the luxury of our homes with us and so do our horses. Today, we enter this sport with more knowledge, our horses with the advantages that our horses years ago broke the ground for them to compete on. New riders today have the ability to have mentors, to have the experiences written in books, articles and videos for them to learn from riders all over the world. Veterinarians have a network of others to consult with and bring new tools to the judging of our rides. All and all, for the sake of the horses and riders competing our beloved sport has improved. But, we have also lost much.

If I could do one thing, it would be to bring back the spirit of the “old days”. It was just as competitive as today, if not more so, it was a bare bones kinship of people that didn’t fit into the show world, didn’t

have the money to compete in most areas of the horse world. But, they did have a desire to ride their horses. It didn't matter what the horse was, how you looked, or what you camped in. We were the people that were building this sport of endurance in the SE region. We were, as we still are, a family. One that supports one another and helps when they are needed, but as all modern day families go, we now have our lives very busy, and too many times too much so to stop and enjoy life. I have raised my daughter in the sport, just as I was raised in it. But if there was one thing that I would like to be able to pass on to her, it would be the spirit of the old days. I am afraid it has been long since gone. But there is truly nothing better than that big ole sky of stars, youth, camp fires, good horses after a great day of racing and going to bed smelling of fire smoke and being just a little bit cold because that horse trailer has no insulation.



# Crewing on Endurance Rides

Reprinted with permission from the 1974 AERC Yearbook~ Betty Robie

What do you need to take with you when you get talked into driving the rig and crewing for your friend on their first endurance ride?

Well, first of all let me assure you that you don't need to take everything but the kitchen sink? The most crucial requirements are few, but important: buckets for the horses to drink from, a flake or two of hay (in case the hay truck doesn't show up), grain or whatever your rider feels is the fuel his horse will go best on, a small satchel or zipper bag to hold the necessary medicines for the horse (every rider has his favorite medication and won't be without them)., a sponge or old terry cloth towels for the horse if the weather is chilly or the wind comes up.

Not for the rider and crew: an Ice-chest and plenty of ice, sandwich makings, sweet rolls, soft drinks, Gatorade, orange juice, beer and for you, the crew, YOUR favorite, mine is scotch. Most rides have a deli truck at the stops but if not, a thermos of hot coffee is most welcome in the early morning hours. Also, necessary are: warm

coats and sleeping bags, asperin, salt tablets, bandaids, safety pins, extra socks, extra riding jeans, underwear and good clothes for the banquet. Pack everything ahead of time. Make a list, it is too easy to forget something and there just isn't time to "run to the store". A light weight folding chair is a must. The comfort it affords far outweighs the small amount of space it takes up( worth the effort even if you have to tie it on top of your vehicle). Crewing is a series of hurry up and wait, so it can be nice to have a place to rest.

At the Pre-Ride vet check and meeting, help unload the gear and set up camp. Find the ride officials and get a map of the trail. Get a detailed directions for getting to the vet checks !!!! If you have time, drive around and see if you can find them. If you are not sure you can find your way, follow someone who has been on the ride before. It is very embarrassing to arrive at the check point just in time to see your rider leaving on the next lap. Pack your vehicle so that in the morning, all you will have to do is throw in the buckets, blankets, and take off. Then, eat a good dinner (it may be a long time before you eat again), relax and join the fun.

On the day of the ride, be ready to accept the "hurry up and wait" syndrome because that is what you will be doing the rest of the day. Just remember that your job is to get to the vet checks before the

rider and then do what you can to make both rider and horse comfortable. The following is a system that works best for me.: 1. Be ready to leave right after the horses. 2. Drive as fast as you can to the first vet check. Don't stop for breakfast, bathroom breaks, etc. 3. Get a good spot at the vet check, shady area if possible, near vets, feed, and water. 4. Fill buckets with water and put in sun to warm. Set out feed near the truck or where the rider can tie the horse. Have hay and grain available but let your rider pour out what she wants the horse to have. Have blankets ready, lay out sponges and electrolytes, 5. Get out your chair and your book....and wait. 6. When the rider comes in, be ready to follow her instructions in caring for the horse, Do what you are told. A) If it is hot, you bathe the horse, B) If it is cold, you blanket the horse and walk it. C) If the horse is not stressed, he may want to eat and drink with just enough walking to keep him limber. 7. Offer drinks and clean socks to the rider. A clean cloth for the face is usually appreciated. Try to get your rider to eat something. Know who the leaders are and how far ahead they are. How many are in front and any other ride information you can obtain, ask for information by rider number. 8. Don't tarry at the vet check- be ready to leave for the next check point when the rider leaves. Don't stop for lunch. 9. Sometimes

there are places on the ride where the crew can get into offer water in the middle of a dry stretch or just before a hard climb. Water spills out of buckets, so use a 5 gallon can with a lid. (Don't carry water in a leaky ice chest in the back of your brand new station wagon!) 10.

When it gets late, have a jacket available for your cold rider. Even if it is warm out on the trail where they are exercising, they cool off fast in the vet check and shivering uses up energy. Try to get sugar and fluids in them fast, a sandwich will give them fuel and they will feel better for it when they get back on the trail. You will find yourself doing more horse walking as the day goes on so remember to be careful and not let the horse drink too much water all at once or stand so long that it stiffens up. When it gets cool or if there is a breeze, try pouring water into the mouth with a cup or squeezing it in from a sponge. No matter how cold it is, the legs always need washing from the knees down and the horse really likes it if the sweat can be wiped off his face. 11. Clean the cinch covers and saddle blankets. Try to make sure the saddle is put in a safe, clean place during the check—a good place is the hood of the truck. If you only have one change of cinch covers and saddle blanket, you can sponge off the old one(don't get it too wet) and put it on top of your gear (out of the dust) to dry on the way to the next vet check. 12.

Clap and smile when your rider crosses the finish line even if it is 4:59 in the morning. Everyone who finishes is a winner and the ones who come in late usually worked a lot harder than the ones who finished in the daylight. It is a lot harder on the crew too.

After the ride, if the rider is in bad shape, you may be called upon to stay up walking the horse all night. Usually the horse is walked until cooled out, blanketed warmly, legs taken care of and plenty of food and water made available. Then the next morning while the rider takes care of the horse, either Top Ten judging or limbering up for the long ride home, the crew helper can pack up and break camp so everything will be ready for an early start after the banquet.

Fifty mile rides are much easier than 100 milers since the finish is in daylight and you can be all packed up and headed for home the night of the ride. But watch your rider carefully. After a good dinner at the banquet, they tend to want to sleep on the way home, so be ready for a long drive.

Though there are no buckles or plaques for the endurance ride crews, it does give an opportunity for a non-rider to be an active participant in a very active sport. A good helper is an asset to a winning team and makes it a lot easier for the finisher who must ride slowly.

Crewing is also a good way for someone who plans to try an endurance ride to learn how to care for his horse under these circumstances. When you are waiting for your rider, there is a lot of time to watch what other people are doing for their horses. Above all, it is a great way to meet wonderful people and to have a good time.



**IMPORTANT:** Try to insure that you have not employed a “clown crew”.  
Such playing around at holds is not very productive. 😊

# Out of the Woods and into the Wilderness

By Jody Rogers-Buttram

How many times do we hear about people that get lost in the woods? We think, "Oh, that can't happen to me". I for one, NEVER get lost. I never worry about trail markings, missing turns, riding too far....that's because I am a cartographer by trade, and have what I call a "built in GPS". Well, this is a story of adventure in the largest wilderness east of the Mississippi river. So as the Castaways on Gilligan's Island went, so did our story, so sit right back and hear a tell, a tale of fateful ride.

A local trail rider and friend, Kari Kirby and I went for what Joni and I have dubbed, "Kari Kirby rides". Kari refers to them as "Wednesday Rides".

That is because she is off work on Wednesdays and it is when she and her friends get together and go riding. She and her group of buddies all ride gaited horses, very tough, FAST gaited horses that can go all day. These rides are usually great conditioning. So, it turned out it was just us two, and since all the other horses that were going to Talladega had been tuned up, Cash was the only one left to be worked. So, I loaded up the little monster into the "little white box", a two horse bumper pull that we use for running

around locally to ride. So, I met up with Kari at around 9am.

Now, we set off riding the nice horse trails, and after about 5 miles (I had taken Joni's GPS) we get to a spot that we have to turn around and head back in the direction we just came. This part of the forest doesn't have loops to ride, just out and backs. BUT, there was a hiking trail. Now, this is a people HIKING trail, and it goes to a site now as the Big Tree. The Big Tree is the largest Popular tree in the state of Alabama. Having lived close to Bankhead all my life, I have yet to see the Big Tree. So, I said to Kari, "Hey, why don't we try to ride to the Big Tree". "Sure !!!!" Kari answered, so off at a walk we go.

Now, hiking trails are just that, they are made for people, not horses. So we hadn't gone too far when of course we run into road blocks. As in LARGE DOWNED trees, now keep in mind, this is the Wilderness, and that means it hasn't had any work, burning, clearing or anything for oh...about 30+ years. Major undergrowth. It also has very rugged terrain, bluffs, deep hollows and waterfalls....and lot of wild hogs too. So as we are climbing up and around some huge trees, fully expecting to pop right back out on the trail, for some strange reason....it was gone. I mean totally gone. Not a problem for ME, so I start to lead us in the direction of where the trail

should be. Still no trail. Now, not let the woods get the best of me, I say to Kari, "Oh, if we keep going this way, we will find the trail again. About 45 minutes later, still no trail, the woods are terribly thick, briars, vines, more big trees down to maneuver over and around. I look at the GPS, and we have gone another 1.8 miles....away from the civilized world. So, at this point, I can sense that Kari is getting a little frustrated and worried. So, I tell her that if we keep going in this general direction, we will come out on the trail where the crooked bridge is located.

So, we climb over more big trees, Cash is getting sick of stepping over trees that are up to his little belly. Sheena, Kari's horse is handling it all in style, not her first rodeo in the woods either.

What we come to find is that: There are very steep hollows here, with bluffs, no way to get across them on a horse, or foot for that matter. So, we climb back up to the top again, and again, but on the tops of the ridges the trees are down and the vines are worse. It was a lose-lose situation for us. At one point we found a beautiful, deep waterfall, with about a 100 foot drop....straight down. Cash was literally sliding toward the edge because the hillside was so steep. I made a fast exit to left.

We continued to wander, much like the people did in the Bible. We come

upon a pink helium balloon that had landed in the middle of nowhere. Kari being Kari, of course had her camera out to document it. (you will see later that this was very important) The only manna that we found however was muscadines. Kari stopped to pick a few, stating that they would keep her from starving to death before we got out of our wilderness. I don't think she much wanted to stay there for 40 years. Again, she was having visions of a helicopter rescue, only we didn't know where we were, so how was anyone going to find us. I picked a few, popped them into my mouth and walked, well, pushed through the brush forward, leaving Kari and Sheena to eat. All of a sudden, I hear a thrashing and wailing coming from her. BEES !!!!!!! She and her horse were standing on a nest of yellow jackets. I was at a safe distance with Cash Pony, but couldn't do anything to help. When one is in a thicket, you can't run, Sheena then went on the ground trying to roll them off, both horse and rider were entangled in the vines and couldn't get away from them. Kari however, was doing a very good play by play of the situation. (In a calm voice) *"They are stinging my left leg, now they are in my hair, oh, now they are on Sheena's tail, she is rolling to get them off, etc."* Very calm, and informative. When she did get free of the vines, I picked bees off of her for the next 2 miserable miles.

Good think she wasn't allergic to them, if so, she would have swollen up like a Macy's Day Parade animal and died right there. But, she did suffer some nasty, stinging, burning bites the rest of the week. As we continue our "adventure" me remaining calm, and not letting Kari think that even I was starting to have doubts of getting out before the next day, we traveled another mile or so.....and found something very familiar....the balloon. It had more air in it at that time than we did. All of our hopes deflated. Trying to keep the subject positive, I told Kari, well, maybe now we can back track. Cash Pony took off like he knew how we had come in the hell hole of wilderness. We climbed over and through more logs, trees, briars, jungle, quick sand, anacondas, ...oh, no, but it felt that way. We normally see tons of wild hog wallers, but even the hogs didn't want to go where we were. We came upon a PATH, a real hiking path !!!! WHOOO HOOO, glory to be God, we are saved !!! I take the lead and as I was following a dry creek bed, Cash (by this time is really sick of stepping over logs) does something that the little horse never does. He JUMPED the log. Fine, only there wasn't room on the other side to land. He landed on the very edge of the creek bank, the ground caved in under his weight, and WE dropped about 3 feet into the creek bed. He flipped, dragging me through a mass of saw

briars, and I flipped off of him and landed perfectly on top of a log....at the small of my back. Kari, who is a nurse practitioner was bailing off her horse just knowing that I had broken my back. Me, I wasn't so sure I didn't either. I did NOT however let go of the Evil One. I rolled over and off the log, and sat there for a bit while the tingling went up and down my "has been broken spine before". But, I was able to stand, get back on and the wandering continued.

Finally, we happened onto an old road bed. We both agreed to follow it come hell or high water to wherever it went. After trudging over, under, and through more downed trees, briars, vines and rocks, it did come to something we knew.....the trail that goes to the crooked bridge !!!!! Let the rejoicing begin !!! We hit that road, knowing it was only 2 miles back to the trailer. Our Wednesday's ride turned into a 5 hour tromp through the Jungle book. We, both had war scars, she had tons of welts from the bees, I had saw briar cuts on my arms, neck and face. But no helicopter or rescue teams had to be called in to get us. Two women, two good horses, maybe a little common sense and lesson learned. Stay on the trails, they are called trails for a reason.

Oh, and one other thing...remember that GPS that we had taken with us?

Well, Kari asked me if it had a mapping feature, and it does, but it is Joni's and I wasn't sure about how to use it. I remembered after we were back safe at the trailer, it has a feature called "breadcrumbs". Gee, we could have gone right back out the way we came so easily, but then again, look at the fun we would have missed out on. 😊



**This was our little friend, the helium balloon.**

# The Endurance Adventures of Ms. Sera

By Jody Rogers-Buttram



# SERA AWARDS

## **THANK YOU to our SERA Year end Awards Sponsors**

SERA would like to thank the following for their generous sponsorships of our awards:

### **New Sponsors**

Jana Smith - in Memory of Steffanie Waddington - sponsor of the LD Mileage Champion

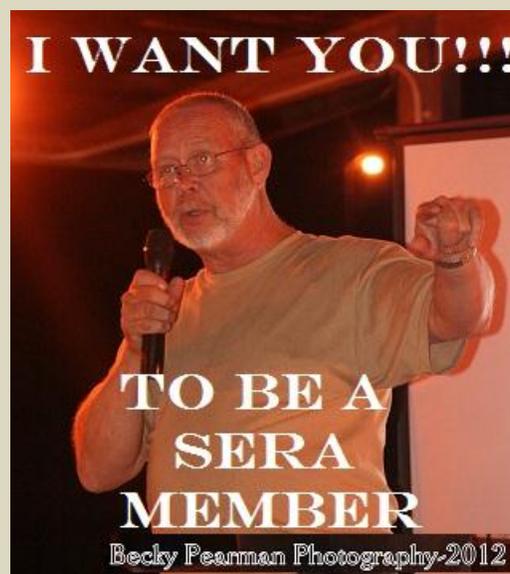
Foster Olson and Lela Nielsen - sponsor of the Freshman Rider of the Year  
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LBL endurance Ride-LD Best Condition

### **Current Sponsors**

Running Bear/Teddy Lancaster - Consistent Condition

Christo and Lori Dinkelman - Grand Champion Junior

Please remember that some SERA awards require nomination by December 15th for more details, see SERA's website at: [www.seraonline.org](http://www.seraonline.org)



# WHY SHOULD I JOIN SERA?

Remember we are on  
the Web:  
[www.seraonline.or](http://www.seraonline.or)

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In the Southeast region of the **AERC**, teamwork is synonymous with **SERA**. The Southeast Endurance Riders Association was founded when endurance riding in the Southeast was in its infancy. Today endurance riding in the Southeast is only behind the West region in number of opportunities for our members to participate in the sport. In the Southeast there are riding opportunities for riders interested in all aspects of our sport from LD to Multi-days. While the opportunities for riders to participate in the historically foundation of endurance -the one-day one hundred mile ride - have declined to an alarming low level in the rest of the country, **BUT** the Southeast has maintained a steady number of eight over the last 10 years. **SERA** has been a big factor. **SERA** promotes endurance riding, supports riders and ride managers. The **SERA** team is the members that ride the rides and the managers that sanction their rides through SERA. In addition to the horse scales, a speaker system, flood lights and blood analyzer, SERA will have at many rides their projector and screen available to display whatever you want the riders to see pre- ride (trail maps, ride schedule, etc.) and/or post-ride (awards, etc.). If you have pictures (from previous years, or of the ride-site facilities or of significant trail intersections, or photographer), we can put up a slide show during registration and/or the meals, for example. You can email Joe Schoech what you want to display beforehand or put the data on a thumb(zip)-drive at the ride. Documents can even be scanned directly into a display at the ride site. We can also hook the projector up directly to your laptop, if you wish. If you want to show movies, just provide the DVD (no Blu-ray) and we can have a "night at the movies", if you like. We just need a little setup time and then we can make all or any of this happen. Please contact Joe Schoech for the A/V availability. If you want to be a part of the team that promotes the growth of endurance riding opportunities - you should join **SERA**. If you want to have the access of resources, scales to monitor your horse's weight and a blood analysis machine to help you understand the metabolic capabilities of your horse so you can better manage your horse you should join **SERA**. If you want a stable system of quality trails for not only running endurance rides but also for training and just hacking around you should join **SERA**. **SERA's** goal is to make endurance riding in the Southeast region the best it can be. If this is what you want you should join **SERA**.

# SERA Classifieds

## 3JFarm Training/Conditioning Services

Let us do your conditioning for you. Put over 20,000 competition miles of experience with endurance horses, and 40+ one day 100 mile ride experience to work for you.



We have private turn out paddocks/run in sheds. Varied terrain for training from hills/rocks to flat speed work. Will have openings (2 per month) through winter months. Email [3Jfarm@earthlink.net](mailto:3Jfarm@earthlink.net) for more info.



# **Please be sure to make THIS newsletter YOUR newsletter !!!!**

Send in any pictures, articles about upcoming rides, best way to get the word out about your rides guys!!! Stories of rides in the past that are informative and fun. Advertise you items, such as horses, tack, etc. that you have for sale free.

**Send to: [3jfarm@earthlink.net](mailto:3jfarm@earthlink.net)**



**Outta here till Next time !!!!**