



# SERA NEWSLETTER

Southeastern Endurance Riders Association

## President's Message

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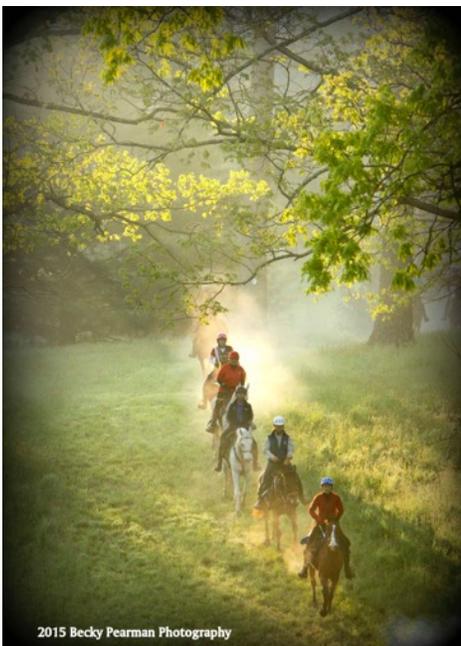
I don't know about the rest of you but I am so happy to dry and warm again!! Winter lasted plenty long in north AL this year. And all of the mud hasn't completely gone yet!

SERA has had a bang up start to the ride year. Up to this point we have had a total of 22 ride days that count toward your SERA points and awards. I hope all of you have had an opportunity to get to a fair number of those. And before we get to July we have 16 more coming up!!

Our state reps have been doing a good job talking about SERA at the ride meetings and answering questions about SERA. The new blood analyzer has been getting quite a workout and has helped quite a few riders understand what is going on with their horses. Remember if you have bloodwork done at a ride (unless it is because your horse is being treated) we can't give you the results until after you have completed the ride. If you have any questions about the results and what they mean, you may get your answers from the ride vets. If not you can call me anytime and I will be happy to talk with you about them.

I would also like to remind everyone that it is a good idea to check your equipment about this time to make sure it is all in good repair and working properly. This goes for your tack and your truck and trailer. There is nothing worse than being stranded on the side of the road with horses, or getting to a ride only to find that your saddle or bridle has a problem.

I hope everyone enjoys a ride with the improved weather and I hope to see you down the trail!!! Ike



2015 Becky Pearman Photography

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Nancy Sluys

## Editors Message by Nancy Sluys

Hi Folks,

Sorry for the lateness of this newsletter but my time has been suddenly taken up completely by a very intense trail issue in the Mount Rogers National Recreational Area in SW Virginia.



The Readers Digest version of the story is that there is a proposed trail plan that the Forest Service is implementing to improve the designated trail system but will also close undesigned, user created trails. Some of these trails are good and some have issues. We are trying to get as many of the good trails in the plan as possible.

I am the president of the Iron Mountain Back Country Horsemen, a chapter of a national group who partners with the Forest Service and other land management agencies to maintain and improve trails on public land. At this point as the word is getting out (escalated by social media) correct information has been spotty and the public has risen up in opposition to the plan. The Iron Mountain Back Country Horsemen have been working in collaboration with the Forest Service to affect a positive change in the plan and make sure as many of sustainable user created trails are added to the plan.

The lack of understanding of how the public can (and is required bylaw) be involved has caused a lot of confusion in the community and hard feelings towards folks like us who are working through the process instead of fighting the process.

Needless to say my time has not been my own this past month and probably won't be for a long time. The take away message from this situation is that if you ride on public land it will really serve you well to become informed and involved with your trails, land managers and trail and forest plans. Things can happen when people aren't paying attention that are hard, if not impossible, to undo. If there is not a Back Country Horsemen chapter or other trail advocacy group in your forest please consider starting one. The trails might be our playground but the managers of said playground can take their toys and go home! If you want to stay informed of the issues in the Mount Rogers NRA please join the Iron Mountain Back Country Horsemen Facebook page and if you ride those trails please consider becoming a member. A membership form can be found on our web site <http://www.ironmountainbch.org>

This trail issue will **not** affect the Iron Mountain Jubilee Endurance Ride in August as we are required to use designated trails.

## My First 50 by Maddie Whisnant

As I opened the trailer door there was a crispness in the air. I could hear soft little nickers to my left and to my right. I felt anxious as it was the day of my first 50, but I will never forget it thanks to the kind men and women who helped make this extraordinary ride possible.

As I drove into Leatherwood I was absolutely stunned by its beauty. There were horses everywhere (which in my world is what I would call heaven). The people were nice and always willing to chat about anything you wished. The first thing we did on the day before the ride was sit down and have a nice dinner. The barn/dinner was put together very nicely for all of us endurance riders. The food was superb as well, thanks to all of the volunteers who put their hands on deck to give us the dinner that we (or me) definitely needed for the workout that was to come the following day. At the dinner, we also received loads of information to help us guide our way through the trails safely. I perceived that this ride was definitely going to be a tough one according to the trail meeting, but I was excited for the adventure that was coming my way.

7:15 a.m. and we were off on our way down the first loop of my first 50. There were tons of people who were friendly and always willing to have cordial small talk even though you are their competition. The volunteers were outrageously kind and willing to do anything it took to help you in any time of need. They were also there at certain spots on the trail to give you words of encouragement which definitely helped me push myself to keep going. At every checkpoint all of the volunteers made sure there was plenty of water and hay for the horse. Even though it was very chilly and windy on that day they were out there doing all they could to make this ride great. Throughout the ride there were lots of hills and turns, but the ride managers and volunteers made sure this trail was marked to the best of their ability. My mentor and I had no trouble finding our way across the elephantine mountain. Then at the end there was a group of people that was there to cheer you on and say congratulations. Even though the trail was tough and strenuous the people there that helped, made sure to give you a little pep in your step all the way to the end.

If you are looking for a ride to make you “oooh” and “ahh” this is the one for you. I traveled through land that I didn’t even know existed. Even the cold and wind were bearable because the view made everything worth the while. The trails are mountainous and made me pay close attention to how my horse was going and how I was riding. This is something I have been needing to work on and Leatherwood gave me the opportunity to really focus on it. If you are looking for a ride to step you up to a new distance this one is tough, but after this ride I felt like I could tackle any 50 in the world. Everything else

seems easy after you ride at Leatherwood. So, if you go, be prepared to admire the beautiful and rustic stable, visit with the kind people, eat amazing food, ride your heart out, look at the breathtaking views (along with pretty, almost domestic deer), and connect with your horse in a way you thought you never could. You never know what you’ll see at Leatherwood. With what I experienced and saw, this is one ride that will stay in my calendar for many years to come.



## Leatherwood with Maddie by Nancy Sluys

About a year and a half ago I got connected with Maddie Whisnant through Facebook. She was 15 and wanted to get into endurance. I noticed that she did not live too far from me and so we planned some trail riding time to get her ready for her first goal, the LD at Spring Fling at Sand Hills (2014). She was already an experienced equestrian and her horse, Cash, an Appaloosa/Thoroughbred cross had the right stuff too. Their main sport was eventing so they were pretty fit already. Her mom or dad would drop her and Cash off and come back after we had done 15 or 20 miles. They made it to Spring Fling where Alison Bailey sponsored her for the 25 mile ride. They finished looking good in the middle of the pack. Maddie was hooked!

The summer went by and when fall came Maddie contacted me again for riding. Cash was recovering from a pasture injury so she showed up with a feisty Haflinger pony, this time driving herself since she was now 16. The pony was tough and fun but probably wasn't endurance material so I decided to offer one of my horses to her if she wanted to try a 50. Maddie jumped at the chance and since she is pretty tall I decided Able would be best for her. We decided that the 50 at Leatherwood would be our goal since it was pretty close and a good challenge. It was only the second time I had ever let someone else ride one of my horses in a ride but I knew Able would be in good hands and it would be great to watch him go.

Able and Maddie got along well and she did a wonderful job riding him. The day was perfect with cool weather for the horses. They both felt great and we made very good time as they were at home in the mountain terrain. Maddie's mom, little brother and boyfriend crewed for us but they got off easy as the horse's pulses recovered immediately each check. Although we didn't pass many folks on the trail the horse's quick recoveries allowed us to move up throughout the day. By the last loop I had a feeling we were probably in the top 10 but I kept it to myself as I didn't want it to change the way we were riding. Part way through we hooked up with 2 other riders who came from behind us and the horse's picked up the pace, sensing we were near the finish. At one point we hit a hill where Able asked to walk, he's very opinionated when he needs a break. I mentioned to Maddie that we should tell the other folks to go on since Able needed a breather. She understood that we needed to listen to the horse. After a few minutes he picked up the trot again and we were on our way to the finish. As we crossed the line hand in hand the timer told us that we had just tied for 12th place. Maddie's grin was priceless! It was a great day and a great lesson for a new rider. We listened to the horse and did what he needed and he looked great at the finish and vetted out with all As. Had we gotten caught up and pushed him on for the better placing something could have gone wrong, just not worth the risk! To finish is to win!



Photo by Becky Pearman

## Using LDs as a Tool to Train for 100 Miles by Lara Worden

During the spring of 2006 I purchased a yearling colt to get him out of a terrible situation and hopefully be a babysitter for my weanling colt back home. Almost immediately, I realized that this youngster was an old soul in a youngster's body and wise beyond his years. He also had a good head on his shoulders and being a rescue he had a very strong sense of self-preservation. I had no intentions of keeping him long term, but as I spent more time with him, I realized that this one was going to be special. So I started to think that this might be the one. The problem I struggled with was how do I take this youngster from virtually no training (we couldn't even catch him) to hopefully competing and finishing a one-day 100-mile endurance race.

**The Start of a Journey** - Unbeknownst to us at the time, this colt had not only survived a barn fire shortly after birth but had been mishandled by humans and had a serious mistrust of people all together. I remember spending the first two weeks in a round pen with him, sitting in a lawn chair and reading a newspaper, just to let him get used to my presence. Eventually, his curiosity got the best of him and we became fast friends and he learned to trust humans again. He was a quick learner and wanting to please, always asking for more. Unfortunately, we also discovered in his early days of with us that this colt was smarter than most. He had a real knack for getting out of any pen or pasture you put him in and we found ourselves calling him Slick Willy and eventually just shortened it to Slick.

**Fast Forward One Year Later** - I was hosting a Technical Large Animal Rescue training in my area for work and some of the rescue scenarios were conducted on the farm where I boarded my horses. One of the scenarios involved taking heavy duty ropes and devising a sling of sorts to pretend like we were going to lift a horse up with a crane. They needed a very quiet and sensible horse for this and for some reason I just knew that Slick would be the best horse for the job. When I led this 2 year old gangly arab colt into the arena the instructor looked confused and restated that we needed a horse with training and a quiet demeanor. I looked at the instructor and said "trust Me" and she did. Slick handled the event like he had done it all his life and again I kept thinking "there is something special about this guy."

A year and a half later we had Slick under saddle and we had the opportunity to participate in a Mounted Search and Rescue training. Slick was the youngest horse in the two-day training and was exposed to gun fire, fireworks, sirens and all kinds of crazy obstacles. Again, he amazed me with his level of maturity and his willingness to please. So the real endurance training began! We spent the summer of 2009 riding Slick on our home trails and gearing him up for trying at least one LD later in the fall.

Slick's opportunity came at the Alabama Yellowhammer ride in early October. I had high hopes of riding my then 50 mile horse several days and only brought Slick to get him used to camping and the endurance atmosphere. Unfortunately, my 50 mile horse developed really bad girth galls on the first day, so I gave it some thought and decided to enter Slick in the LD the very next day. He finished the LD in such fine form that the head vet, Dr. Otis Schmitt, convinced me that I should go again the next day. So we did and finished with a sound and happy horse and I officially had a new endurance pony.

That winter (2009/2010) I started to think about how to prepare Slick to be a long distance endurance horse and I got this hair-brain, crazy idea to do as many LD's as possible in the upcoming ride season and treat every LD ride like a training ride and not a true race. Instead of racing, we worked on developing a strong, but steady pace of 6-8 mph. Slick and I did 17 LD rides and we were 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Southeast for Senior LD mileage at the end of the 2010 ride season. We spent the full season working on pace (ideally right around 6.5-7 mph), eating and drinking on trail and just accumulating training miles with the hopes of developing a 100-mile horse. Honestly, I rarely rode him between competitions, except when I had the opportunity to go to more Mounted Search and Rescue trainings and when I was asked by the local Sheriff Department to help search for a dead body on horseback (that is a whole other story and quite the adventure).

Lara & Slick continued.....

I am not saying that this is what everybody should do for training a future 100-mile horse. It was honestly an experiment on my part and most do not need to ride 530 LD miles before doing their first 50. We did top ten 5 out of the 17 LD rides that year, but never because we were racing, just maintaining a steady pace.

Ride season 2011 was definitely a learning curve for me. Slick and I finally started doing 50 mile rides. The ride season started out good, but at our third 50-miler at Sandhills, I changed his tack at the last minute (something you should never do), my friend Dody Sutton and I got lost and did 10 additional miles on the first loop and Slick was simply miserable in the sand. Slick & I were both defeated and I ended up Rider Optioning after the first loop. The rest of the 2011 ride season was like riding a roller coaster - there were major highs and there were major lows. The high was finishing two very tough mountain rides - Virginia Highlands and Big South Fork - and discovering that my horse preferred mountains over sand or flat courses. The low was Slick crashing an hour after the Virginia Highlands ride and having to be treated and then having to deal with a very nasty stone bruise later that fall that just did not want to heal and resulted in several lameness pulls.

**New Beginnings** - We took time off during the winter of 2011/2012 and just did some fun training rides. Then in the 2012 ride season we did 8 50-mile rides never finishing faster than 6 ½ hours, with our longest ride just under 10 hours at the Blue Ridge Ride in June. At that ride, I realized that this horse loved the mountains! We could have gone faster, but I was riding conservative due to the heat and I had a ton of horse at the end of the ride. Five months later, we completed our first 75-mile ride and tied for 1<sup>st</sup> place at the Alabama Yellowhammer ride.

Again in 2013, we started the season by starting and finishing a 75 at Broxton Bridge. And even though we finished mid-pack and Slick looked good, I knew he was unhappy all day long. He never settled in and his gait had changed drastically and had me worried all day long, but I still hadn't learned to really listen to my horse and just focused on the fact that we finished. The rest of the 2013 ride season was pretty uneventful with several more solid 50 mile completions and I was thinking we were ready to finally try our first 100.

**The Big Mistake** - In my haste to try a 100 mile ride, I failed to listen to my horse and pick a suitable first 100 mile ride. I knew he preferred mountain trails, but I was cocky to think that he could also be successful in sand, since he had just finished a 75 at Broxton Bridge the previous fall. So I signed him up for the 100 at Broxton Bridge in January of 2014. It was a complete disaster! Slick was unhappy from the start and was pulled at 40 miles for a muscle cramp. Fortunately this is where the light bulb finally turned on! I have a mountain horse, NOT a sand horse!

**Redemption** - Even though we went home defeated from Broxton Bridge, I had finally learned to read my horse and truly listen to what he was telling me, so it was not a total loss. We regrouped and went back to training where Slick was happiest - the mountains. Then I made the most difficult decision of my riding career, I set my sights on the Old Dominion 100 in June - the Beast of the East. We did not do another competition between Broxton Bridge and Old Dominion, but instead worked on developing speed and fine tuning Slick's strengths (his steady pace, his ability to climb a steep hill and keep on trucking and his sense of self-preservation).

Before we knew it, June arrived and we were on our way to Orkney Springs, Virginia. This ride was very similar to my whole riding career with Slick to this point. It had its highs and it had its lows. The low was at approximately 42 miles when Slick decided to stop eating with virtually no gut sounds. Fortunately, the vets allowed me to work on it and Claire Godwin was kind enough to give me encouragement that 100 mile horses often check out for a while, only to return stronger. Boy was she right! We stayed 30 minutes longer at that hold and Slick's gut sounds returned and we never looked back. The high of course was finishing in a four way tie for 10<sup>th</sup> place with a horse that was literally pulling my arms out the last 30 miles and the vet at the completion exam saying that he looked fantastic. I finally had a 100-mile horse!!!

As of May 2015, Slick and I have 555 LD miles and 1475 endurance miles. Incidentally, at the completion of the Old Dominion 100, I surpassed 2000 endurance miles and Slick had earned his 1000 mile badge. Our future looks bright and I look forward to many more amazing miles with Slick.

What I have learned along the way:

- **Take advantage of every opportunity to expose your horse to as many things as possible early on in their training.** I took an unconventional approach with Slick. We tried to expose him to everything we could possibly think of. The best experience for both of us was participating and joining the local Mounted Search & Rescue team. The trainings were intense, to say the least, but it helped me discover Slick's strengths (strong sense of self-preservation and desire to please) and weaknesses (he will always have a fear of fire and he will always be a big chicken). I was also unconventional in riding 19 consecutive LDs before even trying our first 50. In my honest opinion, this approach worked for him, but it may not work for every horse.
- **Learn to read your horse - what's normal and what's not.** I will share with you a story a few years back where I was gearing up to do the Biltmore 100 (which was to be Slick's first hundred) and we did a 10 mile training/tune-up ride the week before and when I returned home I realized my horse "was not doing right." I called my vet and told him, "Slick is eating, drinking, peeing, pooping, and moving freely, but his heart rate is 52 bpm (his heart rate should have been around 40-44 bpm an hour after riding)." My vet actually laughed at me and said, "So what do you think is wrong?" Turned out he had a viral infection that resulted in colic and he ended up at a treatment center for three days. Needless to say, we did not start that 100 mile ride, but we eventually did go on to complete a tough 100 mile ride a year later. In hind sight, if I had not learned what I have from this great sport and the people in it about how to read my horse, our outcome might not have been a happy one.
- **Don't be afraid to tell the vets if you think there is something not quite right with your horse.** The vets are there to help you, not pull you! In my personal experience, when I have told them that there was something not quite right with Slick, they gave me every opportunity to work through it and supported me and many times we were still able to get a completion. Again, this goes back to being able to read your horse and knowing what's normal and what's not!
- **Ride to your horse's strengths.** My horse Slick is not fast, but he is steady and he will keep a 6.5 to 7 mph pace, eating and drinking all day long. Slick is very opinionated and is very good about telling you when he is not happy. Ask anybody who rides with him on a regular basis! If he is not happy, we generally do not have a good ride. He also prefers mountains over flat or sandy courses. So we strategically try to pick rides like Leatherwood, Biltmore, Yellowhammer and Old Dominion, which he definitely prefers.
- **If you have every intention of moving up to the longer distances (50-100 miles), don't race in LDs.** Instead, work on developing a strong, but steady pace of 6-8 mph and treat them as training rides, NOT races. As mentioned above, in 2010, Slick and I did 17 LD rides and were 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Southeast for LD mileage. As also mentioned above, I am not saying that this is what everybody should do for training a future 100-mile horse. It was simply an experiment with this horse. However, I now have a horse that gets stronger with the longer distances. As a matter of fact, Slick often comes alive at around 65-70 miles and always finishes strong if we make it that far. Do I attribute this to all the LD miles? Well, it definitely didn't hurt!

- **Don't over train your horse!** A very famous ultra runner by the name of Bruce Fordyce once said the following: "It's better to arrive at the starting line overweight and under trained than over trained and underweight." This is assuming that you don't go hellbent-for-leather down the trail with your overweight pony. This has become my mantra and motto when it comes to training our horses. My husband and I both have full time jobs and only train on weekends. We rarely ride more than 30 miles in a weekend, often less than 20 miles, and we focus on long, slow distances (LSD). Our horses are on pasture 24/7 and do some conditioning of their own. We also feed high quality feeds and all four of our competition horses have a body condition score of 5 to 6.
- **Don't forget to take care of yourself!** This becomes more critical as you increase the distance traveled. The fact is humans need electrolytes too! Branched Chain Amino Acids (BCAA) also helps with muscle soreness. My husband (who is an ultra runner) discovered a great product for runners called Tailwind Nutrition. It is an electrolyte powder that you add to your drinking water. It comes in several flavors and is the one flavored electrolyte that I can stomach drinking. Before discovering this amazing product, I would often get dehydrated and sick to my stomach. We also, use Hammer Nutrition Enduralyte pills or Succeed S Caps electrolyte pills throughout the longer rides. I also take BCAAs before, during and after a competition and it does seem to help with my muscle soreness on the longer rides.
- **Applesauce pouches, ginger chews and chocolate milk are my new best friends on 50, 75 and 100 mile rides.** All three have helped me when I start feeling sick and allowed me to go on and finish rides. Also, ice cold chocolate milk is very refreshing at about 60-75 miles and is just enough to rejuvenate me.



**Lara and Slick at the 2014 Old Dominion 100 mile ride**

## HARLEY by Jody Buttram

We've all heard the saying, "Hard work breeds success". Endurance is the embodiment of that saying. Success may be measured differently by different people. We all have different goals, different styles, and yes, different horses. We have long since credited the Arabian horse the King of endurance riding. He has earned that title because of many things that the Arabian brings to the trail. But there are horses of different breeds that have also be successful on the trail.

After 36 years of endurance competition, I have managed to ride 30 one-day 100's, countless multi-day rides, the Race of Champions, and have won national and regional awards, all on an Arabian or Arabian cross. I am turning 50 this year, and frankly, I am a bit bored with riding Arabians. Don't get me wrong, I don't see me giving them up anytime in the near future, but I am hungry for something different. I have been interested in the upswing of the Tennessee Walking horse in the sport for awhile now. I have loved the Arab/TWH cross for years and consider it the "golden cross" of the sport, including Cash Bonus+/12, our rescue and very successful golden cross. When you cross the Arabian with the Tennessee Walking Horse, you have great potential to get the best of the endurance traits of the Arabian and the Tennessee Walking horse. Tennessee Walking Horses have to be tough to endure the show world, they are smart, like to move out and have tons of heart. Great bone, nice big feet and a balanced build, sounds like a good endurance horse right? Right !!!!

So with Keith Kibler - a successful 100 mile endurance rider who breeds and competes on Tennessee Walking Horses -- as my guide, I went to my first gaited horse sale. We traveled up to Kentucky on March the 15<sup>th</sup> to get my first purebred Tennessee Walking Horse.



Heart Throb Hotel aka "Harley" Getting ready to load up to go home on March 15, 2015.

Harley continued.....

I am partial to mares in this sport because I feel that they have more heart or at least a better work ethic than stallions or geldings. I insisted that if I were to get a non-Arabian for the sport, it MUST be a mare. There weren't many mares in the 119 horses consigned at the auction, but there were a few gems to be plucked from the herd. I sat on my money until very late into the auction with Keith reprimanding me for not bidding. I told him I had to be careful to purchase just the right mare in my price range. Finally, near the end, a substitute mare came into the arena. She was a light chestnut with a dull hairy coat and had obviously not been well cared for over this past rough winter we had just all gone through. But according to Keith, she moved right. She had a lanky build and seemed to want to move, in the end I won the bid and that mare was mine!!!

After the sale, when we were hunting for our horses I couldn't find mine. It turned out she had simply been dumped in the holding area. She was a bit scared and distrustful but she was obedient. I paid for my prize, loaded her and another mare I had purchased up and headed back to Alabama.

Now the real work began, the starting of a Walking horse in conditioning to get her to the competition level for a 50-mile ride. I am now faced with a real challenge. Can I take the knowledge I have acquired from years of endurance experience with Arabians and create a successful endurance horse with a Tennessee Walking Horse? I believe I can, and anyone who knows me knows that I love a good challenge.

My new project is named Heart Throb Hotel, but we call her Harley. Even though she is not yet the sleek, shiny athlete I hope to make her, she does have the heart of a winner. Harley is very linebred Midnight Sun, has tons of Pride's Generator and her sire is World Grand Champion, He's Puttin On The Ritz. As a 7 year old, she is just the perfect age to start. Harley's straight legs, nice feet, sloped shoulder and clean legs are all plusses.



Harley after one of her very first short training rides.

We began her work almost immediately. We started slowly, going 4-5 miles at a very slow pace. Keith Kibler told me that you must work a gaited horse differently than an Arabian, and advised me to use a GPS along with heart rate monitors EVERY ride to learn what gaits are best for the horse. For years, I have just done my conditioning with my standard program and my use of the heart rate monitor has been spotty, but I have had to dust it off for daily use for Harley.

On only our fourth ride, I took Harley's pulse to see just where things were with her after the ride. She had just completed a 7.5 mile ride with a few hills at a slow pace, but she still had a full winter coat and it was 76 degrees. By the time we pulled her saddle, Harley's pulse was 64 and dropping. Within about five minutes she had dropped all the way to 44. I was more than a bit tickled with Harley's recoveries and anticipate that she will great recoveries with more conditioning. Heck, most of my Arabs won't hit 44 in the vet check.

Harley had a small setback two weeks of her arrival at the farm. She came down with a slight cold. Because Harley came from an auction, I suspected she would come home with



Big day for Harley. Climbing hills and walking rocks ledges and crossing creeks.

some sort of illness and I started her on some antibiotics for one week after she arrived to try and ward that off, but it didn't work. So Harley was rested for a week or so and placed on a second round of stronger antibiotics. After the rest period, Harley seemed to be fine, and we took her out for her first real outing with other horses - not a long ride, but just with three other gaited horses on some very challenging trails. I had not ridden Harley on trails at all other than a bit of very limited hill work, but it turned out that she is a beast on some very technical and even hairy footing. She climbed steep hills, crossed ditches, creeks, walked rock ledges behind a waterfall and went bush whacking, and she did it all in grand 11 style, never stumbling, bobbling, slipping or complaining.

One thing is for sure, I wasn't disappointed in the "go" gear of this girl. Harley has simple gaits as of right now. She can do a plain ole walk with a huge stride that is 5 mph. Harley is totally relaxed at this walk and it is what she does in the pasture. She starts her running walk at 5.5 mph, and that goes up to 6.5 mph. Next comes Harley's very smooth rack and without any conditioning she hits close to 10 mph. This is all base information, and with the use of the GPS and heart monitor, we can build her from here and increase her endurance at these gaits. As far as the canter, well, let's just say it is awkward and is definitely something we will have to work on since all endurance horses need to be able to change up gaits and muscle groups. Our goals for Harley this year are simple: get her legged up, and ready to do a 50 this fall. She may go to an LD in late May in Mississippi as a test ride. Wish me and Harley luck, she's a handful and I know very little about the gaited horse. But I am learning as quickly as possible, and having fun working with this horse. I believe that any well-built individual can do this sport, and hope to prove it with Harley. Stay tuned to the next episode of "Harley, the Tennessee Walking Horse comes to Endurance".



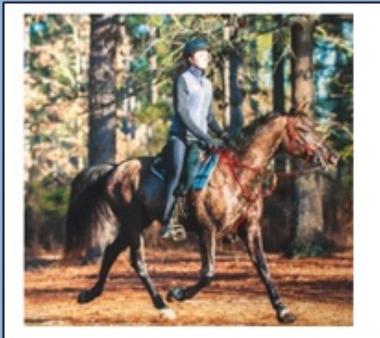
Harley's showing Her GO gear.

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**Unknown Rider at Dawn - Spring Fling at Sand Hills Photo by Becky Pearman**

# Combined Endurance 101 and 201 Clinic

**Saturday, July 11, 2015 9:00 till 4:00 pm Sunday, July 12, 2015 9:00 till 2:00 PM**

**South Mountains State Park**

**3001 South Mountain Park Ave. Connelly Springs, NC 28612**

An indoor and outdoor clinic through lecture, power point, and hands on demos, will cover the basics of the sport of endurance riding. Some of the topics will include what the rider needs to know about saddle fit, conditioning, setting up your camp, horse nutrition, presenting your horse to the vet, taking your horse's pulse, what to expect at your first competition, and what to do after the ride. This will benefit seasoned endurance riders as well as those interested in taking the "mysteries" out of endurance riding. There will be an open forum with an opportunity to ask questions that participants may have. Bring your horse if you choose because we will have a horse vet in and ride Saturday afternoon. Sunday will be an opportunity for riders to participate in a "mock" endurance ride, following a marked course on two loops on trails with a vet check between the loops and a completions exam. Loop lengths and groups will be determined by experience.

The clinic will be hosted by Mike and Ruth Anne Everett with other presenters with over 30,000 miles combined endurance completions and over 100 years combined experience.

The cost of the two day clinic is \$ 50.00. Those that register and pay their \$ 50.00 before June 1st will get a "Full Refund" upon completion of the clinic. No refunds for no shows.

Make checks payable to Mike Everett and mail to Mike Everett at 950 35th Ave. Ct. N.E Hickory, N.C. 28601

Reservations need to be made for camping and horse stall with South Mountain State Park at 1-877-722-6762 or online at <http://ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/somo/main.php>. Camping and stalls are at your expense.

The horse camp is limited to 15 spaces and 24- 10 x 10 stalls. You need to make reservations quick because they are open to the public and this a busy time for the park. If you do not bring your horse you can make reservation at the other campground. All spots are electric and there is a very nice and clean bath house.

Come enjoy this event and

Let's Learn..... Really Learn and Let's Ride ..... Really Ride !!!!! You can message me on Facebook or call my cell 828-781-2274 or email [mikeeverett@embarqmail.com](mailto:mikeeverett@embarqmail.com)

# SCENES FROM SERA COUNTRY!!



Photo by Becky Pearman



Photo by Becky Pearman



Photo by Nancy Sluys



Photo by Nancy Sluys



Photo by John Pearman



**Please be a contributor!!**  
**Everyone has a tip or a story.**  
**Please send me yours!!**  
**email- [minglewood@surry.net](mailto:minglewood@surry.net)**

**Deadline for the next issue**  
**June 15**  
**Thank You, Nancy Sluys**

Photo by Nancy Sluys



**Happy Trails!!!**