



SERA NEWSLETTER

SOUTHEAST ENDURANCE RIDERS ASSOCIATION

Winter's Coming!

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Hunker Down or Head South!!



President's Message

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Newsletter editor-

Nancy Sluys

As the year wraps up it seems a good time for self reflection which also includes reflecting on our horse's year. Here's a list of possible headlines that came to mind.....



1. I had a goal to step up in distance but this just wasn't meant to be this year.
2. I thought I could campaign more than one horse and I did!
3. I was tortured by tack problems that I am still trying to unravel.
4. My horse had ulcers for the first (or repeated) time.
5. I met my goal to top ten this year!
6. I completed more rides than ever before.
7. I stepped up to a longer distance and all my training and planning paid off.
8. I found an awesome new riding buddy that has energized me.
9. I have a new horse and am starting over.
10. My horse had an injury this year so I have been rehabbing him/her.

Any of these sound familiar? One thing is constant in our sport: nothing is constant. We are all in a continuous process of evaluating many variables every week, sometimes every day. Is our horse carrying enough weight? Too much weight? Is our electrolyte protocol adequate? How do we need to tweak our conditioning program? What would be the next appropriate race? How many races at what distance can I hope to complete?

At the end of the day, I think all we can do is listen to that sometimes small, quiet voice inside us that hears our gut instincts. That is where any wisdom we hope to tune into lives. For the wrap up of this year, I applaud every one of you. For the start of next year, I wish each of you the best season ever!
 Sudi



EDITORS LETTER -

Instead of my usual commentary I am going to reprint an article by SERA past president Dr. Ike Nelson DVM.

Why Should I Join SERA?

In the Southeast region of 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 Multidays. While the opportunities for riders to participate in the historical foundation of endurance - the one day 100 mile ride – have declined to an alarmingly low level in the rest of the country, the Southeast has maintained a steady number of 6-8 per year over the past 10-12 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, speaker system, flood lights and blood analyzer, **SERA** will have at many rides the projector and screen available to display whatever the ride manager wants the riders to see. This could be pre-ride (trail maps, ride schedule, etc.) and post-ride (awards, etc). If there are pictures (from previous rides, of ride site facilities, or significant trail intersections, for example), there can be a slide show playing during registration or a meal. It is simple to contact the board and send the data via e-mail or have it on a thumb drive to use at the ride. Document can even be scanned into a display at the ride site. And the projector can be hooked up to the ride manager's laptop directly. Please contact the board for more information. 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 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**.

It's membership renewal time!

Please take a moment to renew or become a member!

You can renew online at

Seraonline.org

Individual membership is \$25 Family is \$30

Thank you!

Get Ready for the SERA Convention- January 13-15, 2017!!!

A couple of reminders:

- Don't forget to review the SERA awards and nominate yourself for any award you qualify for. **You must self-nominate for some of the awards.**
- Send your nominations to Laurie Underwood no later than December 15th. Laurie's email address is: Laurie.a.underwood@gmail.com
- The link to see information on awards is here: <http://www.seraonline.org/SERAAwardsList.php>

Secondly, please consider joining us for the **SERA Convention January 13-14, 2017** at beautiful Amicalola Falls Lodge in Dawsonville Georgia.

- Lodging provided by Amicalola State Park Lodge.
 - Lodge reservations can be made for a discounted rate through www.amicalolafallslodge.com or by calling 706.334.1500
 - **The deadline for discounted rate for lodge reservations is December 31, 2016**
- Banquet dinner reservations (\$25 per person) for Saturday night can be made here:
 - tschoech@bellouth.net or 404.580.5442
 - **The deadline for dinner reservations is January 7, 2017**



January 13-15, 2017 SERA Convention at Amicalola Falls Lodge

Friday:

- 2:00 pm-3:15 pm - Ike Nelson "Chiropractic for endurance equines"
 3:30-4-45 pm - Kathy Tow "Massage for endurance equines"
 5:00 pm - Appetizers/open bar
 Dinner on your own

Saturday

- 8:00 am - GERA meeting
 9:00 am - SERA members meeting
 10:30 am - AERC meeting
 12-1 pm - Lunch on your own
 1:00-2:00 pm - Missy Hamilton. " New treatments for our injured athletes"
 2:15 -3:15 pm - Lara Worden."Nutrition for the Endurance Horse: Reviewing old and new Wisdom"
 3:30-4:30 pm - Dan Hallman/Elysse Rogers. " Our Tevis experience"
 6:00 pm - Banquet buffet
 6:30 pm - SERA awards
 8:00 pm - Men of Soul dance party

Sunday

- 8:00 - 9:00 am - Board of Directors meeting

PLEASE MAKE AN EFFORT TO ATTEND!!!!!!

Frankenboots Take Skymont!

 by Joe Ford

I've always had a love hate relationship with boots. Basically I love to hate them. Smiling happy people and ever so enthusiastic manufacturers make them sound super duper. However, for us mere mortals out here plodding along on our own, the learning curve is a bit steep. Lots of trial, lots of error.

Due to issues with farriers, I finally started taking matters into my own hands. I haven't gotten to nails yet but am getting decent with trims. After more laps around Broxton barefoot than I care to mention, I decided that if I was going to expand my ride venues I needed to give boots another go. After some trial and error I settled on Easyboot Gloves. Going through a few pairs mine were getting a bit long in the tooth so figured it was time for an upgrade.

Easyboot has come out with a couple new designs this year and are worth looking at. For Skymont I went with a combination of home pieced together boots and the new style harder rubber gaiters. If you are familiar with the older neoprene gaiters, these are much sturdier, and more like the material of renegade captiators. Although same basic design. My boots were assembled with some basic T nuts, pieces of dog collars for power straps. New gaiters and a pair of complete boots from Distance depot. One of the boots was actually a glue on shell left over from earlier experiments that didn't go so well... I am not much of a gluer.

Ever seen a horse running around with a boot glued to his tail ?
Holes in the Easyboots and biothane are easily made with a soldering iron. One dog leash is about \$10 and can make a bunch of power straps.

About the new gaiters. Lesson learned at an earlier ride. Although the shells are the same, the new stiffer gaiters are quite a bit harder to get on. Something I discovered at 4am, while my horse was dancing around wondering what all the commotion was. For Skymont I decided to boot the night before the ride. People leave the glue ons on for multiple days and these are about the same thing. So figured couldn't hurt anything.

I have to say this worked way better, horse was relaxed, I was relaxed, It wasn't dark and I took my time. My technique I picked up from a neighbor at Leatherwood and involves wrapping the hoof a few wraps with cotton sport tape, then putting the boots on with a big rubber mallet.. The heat from the hooves bleed through the tape and basically glue the boots on. I had been using CVS and target store brand tape, figuring tape was tape and that brand had serrated edges making it easy for my nerve damaged fingers to tear. Nope, tape isnt tape. EC recommends Mueller brand, I haven't tried it yet but did end up with a roll of Johnson's "COACH" Sports tape. I now have a case of it. After the ride, it was all I could do to get the boots off. I had to use an 8 inch pry bar I fabricated from a tack puller for just this issue.

I am about 12 hours away from this ride So I arrived Wed. afternoon for the Friday ride. I think this worked very well for us and will be my plan from now on.

Just so much less stressful not having to cram in camp setup, vet in, ride meeting, ride prep all in one evening. Plus better for the horse. Sunny was happy pigging out all day.

The ride itself, consisted of gentle hills, over all about 2k feet of up, 2k feet of down, 4 pretty even loops. Although IMO a wise decision by Doc Otis, there was only a trot by and no hold after the first loop. So basically 25- 13-12 mile loops. Trails were a mix of single track trails, cross country non trails in the woods, a bit of dirt roads and some pipeline clearings. One area I was glad to be on a 14.2 hand horse as there were some tunnels of tree branches to traverse. Last couple miles of last loop had some really nice green grass we took advantage of. Having dialed in foot gear, an in shape mentally and physically horse, and non brutal weather and trail conditions, all contributed to this being my most enjoyable relaxed ride ever. Trails weren't brutally rocky, but don't think I'd want to do a 50 barefoot. Probably wouldn't stress over trail riding bare there though. We were just off the "midpack" time and all and all had a great time at a great ride. See you next year Skymont.

Joe's Frankenboots!



SERA Members Pitch in to Keep JD's Carolina Ride Going Strong!!

For more than 30 years, east coast endurance riders wanting to avoid Black Friday shopping and enjoy one last AERC ride before season's end have traveled from near and far to JD's ride. In recent years, JD Fountain has provided use of his property along Hartsville-Ruby Road outside Patrick, SC for basecamp, and cooked up some amazing BBQ for the pre-ride meal. Recognized that he'd welcome some additional help, Carol Thompson drove eight hours each way from Florida to serve as both ride manager and ride secretary, with help from head control judge Amy Spies, timer Laurie Underwood and many other volunteers. To help crewless riders & horses through JD's 25+ mile loop that the 50s do once and the 100s twice, Tim & Lara Worden made the trip to JDs to host a

mid-point hospitality stop with buckets of water and soaked mash plus plenty of hay. All of us who rode are so grateful to these folks for helping keep what may be our region's long-running AERC ride alive and well! - Mary Howell



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photos by Becky Pearman



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JD's Carolina Ride

I am so grateful to all the folks who showed up to help, it was just wonderful! Thanks to all the riders who showed up and took great care of their horses. Job well done! And thanks for all the kind comments.

Laurie Underwood, Nina Barnett, Tim & Lara Worden, Mayona Austin, Lily, Theresa Valliant, Penny Markle, JD Fountain, Junior the Trail Master, Jeremy, Shane, Dr Amy Spies, Dr Heather Brass, and Dr Nate Hoyt, Lucie Hancock all helped with trails, food, great vetting, pulse and timing help, sitting at the finish line, scribing, and all the things that help the ride run smoothly.

I'm so sorry if I've left anyone out. Several wonderful people I didn't get a chance to meet pitched in as well.

Thank you all!
Carol Thompson



photos by **Becky Pearman**



GERL Rescue Colt Reaches the Ultimate Endurance Goal

By Anne Ensminger

He certainly wasn't much to look at. He might have been 6 or 7 months old. Just a scraggly, skinny, long legged, red colt in obvious need of care. It was evident that his dam had provided the only attention and nourishment he had ever known. Now she was no longer able to provide for his needs. Her body condition was even more depleted than his. She was pushing him away. He didn't understand.

The colt had been born and spent the only life he had known to that point, in a debris strewn, muddy lot behind what can only be described as a very poorly maintained shanty house. The house was no more suited for human habitation than was the small, barb wire fenced back yard, a place suitable for horses. Yet there was found a stallion and several mares, which of course, were all in foal. The people who lived there never paid much attention to the horses other than to occasionally throw a few flakes of poor quality hay over the fence.

Finally, just before it was too late for these animals, the Georgia Department of Agriculture became aware of the situation and stepped in on behalf of the horses. I must apologize as I do not remember the details concerning the dispersal of the rest of the horses which were impounded by GDA, but I know that GERL agreed to take the extremely thin young colt into our program. Sue Vetch of Covington and her family were gracious enough to foster the pitiful young colt, which they named Rusty. Rusty, just plain Rusty. No doubt they chose that name because of his color. Before long, as Rusty progressed in his rehabilitation and his body began to fill out, it became evident that he was certainly not 'just plain' Rusty. He began to develop muscles in all of the right places, those long legs seemed to get even longer, and his hair coat developed a beautiful shine. Even though Rusty probably missed his mother, he soon began to look forward to the attention and regular care provided by the Vetch family. He thrived and grew.

One of life's indisputable truths is that change in the lives of all creatures is a certainty. And so it was, once again, with Rusty. The Vetch family moved to another farm and regretfully had to give up caring for him. I believe Rusty was a long yearling at that time. That is when he came to live "temporarily" with me.

I both enjoyed and hated caring for him for about the next year. I say that because, even though my fences have always been adequate to contain the many horses that I have kept on my farm over the years, they were not adequate to insure that Rusty would be where I left him the night before. He would either jump or push down any fence that kept him from socializing with another horse on the property that was not where he was. Other than that, he was a pleasure. I tried to look on the bright side by appreciating my new skills involving fence repair. It has come in handy since I lost my sweet husband, Gene.

Although Rusty was pretty good for the farrier, I was never able to convince him that he should accept a tube of wormer administered by my hands. Our vet, Billy Myers, came by a couple of times and took care of that for me. It was Dr. Myers' opinion that Rusty was a Saddlebred/Arabian cross. His long, beautiful neck and his spirit made it easy to accept that assessment of his heritage. It will become even more evident as the story progresses.

As GERL hopes for all of their foster horses, an application to adopt Rusty was received. The potential adopter's farm was inspected and the adopter was interviewed. I delivered Rusty to his new home and felt positive about his situation. After a time, I learned that he was no longer where I had taken him and was again re-homed and adopted by someone else. Fingers crossed, it seemed to go well for a while but then came the news that the, now over three year old Rusty, had changed hands once again. It made me sad.

Dan Hallman of Ridge Spring, S.C., an excellent horseman and endurance enthusiast, and his friend, Larry, had visited Rusty to consider his suitability as an endurance mount. Larry advised Dan not to adopt Rusty because of the “swirls” in his forehead. It has long been believed that the swirls or whorls, (tufts of hair growing in an unalterable pattern, usually on the forehead), can predict temperament. Rusty’s swirls predicted that he would be reactive, unpredictable, and athletic. Dan did not feel threatened by any of that. And then there were those eyes. Rusty’s eyes spoke to Dan. Those eyes caused Dan to feel that here was a horse with a heart that would not quit.

Thus, Dan took Rusty home and they began the long process of conditioning and training together. It was then that Dan realized that Rusty was gaited! Dr. Meyers must have been spot on concerning Rusty’s heritage. As the conditioning progressed, Dan felt that it was time for them to enter an endurance competition. Thus, they began to enter endurance competitions all over the southeast. Dan was pleased with the results and became more and more proud of their accomplishments. He began to hold a dream in his heart that he and Rusty might eventually accomplish a finish in the well-known and grueling Tevis Cup Ride.

The oldest and most prestigious modern day United States endurance competition, the Western States, or Tevis Cup Ride, has been held annually since 1955. The rugged 100 mile trail runs from Lake Tahoe to Auburn California and must be completed within 24 hours. There are required short rest stops and vet checks along the way to ensure that each horse is fit to continue. To win the Tevis is comparable to winning an Olympic gold medal but just to finish the race with both horse and rider in good condition is more than enough to satisfy any endurance rider.

This year the top award went to Karen Donley riding her Arabian, Royal Patron. They finished in 16 hours and 33 minutes. It was Karen’s 6th. Tevis and her 1st. title. This shows the determination of these athletes.

Dan and Rusty crossed the finish line at 4 AM on July 24th. to place 67th. out of 87 riders. They are now safely back home in South Carolina and already training for their next endurance ride with an eye toward another Tevis finish in the future. But it will always be their first Tevis adventure that will forever be remembered as the realization of a man’s dream which could have only been possible because of one rescue horse’s heart that would not quit.



The Continuing Adventures of Danny the Mule by Nancy Sluys

In the last issue I introduced you to Danny and my plan for him as an endurance mount. The journey will be long but one filled with fun and education and hopefully not to many busted butts! In my work with Danny I discovered that he is very smart but has been used to having his own way in the pasture for a few years so had his own ideas about working, like not so much! I developed a habit of working him a little every day I could, even if it was just getting him out and brushing him. He was starting to develop a little bit of a work ethic but it became apparent that I just did not have the time to be with him as much as I would have liked with the other horses I was riding and just life in general. I felt like he needed some consistency so I decided to find a trainer who could work him for a while. I knew a fellow named Trent Benton who had helped me when I had trouble with a previous horse so gave him a call and asked if he had ever trained any mules. He said that he had and that he would be happy to take Danny. He lives about an hour away so I would have to plan days when I could come and watch him train and eventually work up to lessons on Danny until he was ready to come home.

Trent specializes in foundation training and western dressage so I knew Danny would gain the skills to become not just a safe trail mount but a versatile mule who would be ready for any job. Since neither of us really knew the extent of Danny's past training he decided to just start at the very beginning and work up from there. The next week I went to see Danny and to watch a training session on the ground. At first he was a little resistant and stiff on the longe line with his head turned to the outside. Trent kept it interesting, working Danny over and around obstacles and changing direction a lot and after a while Danny's ear and then his head turned towards Trent and he had a nice bend in his body. By the end of the session I could really tell the difference. The next week he worked on line driving and Danny's body was much softer right from the beginning. Progress was being made.

A few more weeks went by and I didn't get to see Danny because I was out of town so it was at the four week point that I went to see him again. Trent had been continuing ground work in the form of free longeing and on the rope and line driving with lots of obstacles and just working towards making things the mule's idea.

The day started with ground exercises and I could really see the improvement. Danny was working all tacked up and at one point Trent got on and rode him around for the first time since he had been there. He was a different mule from when I had tried to ride him before at home. He had a nice roundness to his body and I could clearly see that he was now responding to the bit with understanding. He was well on his way but I my plan is to leave him there until his training is really solid. I have no timeframe, that will be for the mule to decide. I will go and participate as much as I can. In the mean time I am dreaming of the day that Danny and I are floating down the endurance trail safely as a team!



First week- Danny resistant at beginning of lesson



Trent giving Danny lots of love!



First week- Danny softening by the end of the lesson



Forth week- Danny under saddle

Charting your way into 2017 by Jody Buttram

I have been asked many times on social media, “How do you track your miles?” Really, it isn’t that hard. We are at the beginning of a brand new ride year, it’s time to plan out your ride season. You may have a new endurance prospect, or you may have one that is coming back from injury, or time off from producing your next champion. Charting your miles is a fun, informative way to keep a record of your conditioning rides. Plus, it can be an invaluable tool when trouble does come along.

Keeping good records of your miles can help you stay on track. It will show you at a glance if you have ridden a horse enough, or are doing too much. It will help you in knowing exactly where you are in building a base, how many long rides you’ve done, what terrain, and weather conditions. It can be completely personalized to suit you and what details are important to your goals and horse.

I can’t take full credit for this method of tracking miles. Angie McGhee introduced me to tracking them on paper. I have added a dual method using the free app for my smartphone called Endomondo. The best part of charting your miles, is it is one of the few things about getting started in our great sport that is 100% FREE.

There are a couple ways to create your charts. You can use the McGhee method of using a graph paper notebook. I have tried that type of tracking this past year. The one notebook allows you to keep many years in one book. That way it is easy to flip back through the years to see how many miles each horse completed. And if you are like me, you would just forget where you put the years if not kept in a single notebook.

I have also tried to keep them in an excel template. The best way to accomplish this method is NOT to use the computer to enter the data. I suppose you could, but this could complicate the logging of miles. The main goal with logging miles is to make it EASY to track. IF every time you came in from riding you had to fire up the computer, you would likely find it a chore and say, “oh, I’ll do it later”. Then you may end up forgetting to log them and lose them all together.

So, what I did was create the template, then printed them out. Punched holes in the print outs and stored in a 3-ring binder. My thought process was that since I ride so many horses, it would be easier to edit the columns of horse names. But, I found the constant printing out (I do ride a lot) of pages was a pain. So after only one year of tracking this way, I quickly abandoned it.

So, with all this said, lets talk charts. Like I said before, I am using the graph paper notebook. It is a bit messy compared to the computer printouts. But only if you change horses before any miles are put on that individual. I only have one complete year in my graph notebook so far, and just started charting miles for 2017. I keep my miles on the AERC ride year, not the calendar year. So, I start my chart on December 1 of each year, and end it on the last day of the AERC ride season, the end of November.

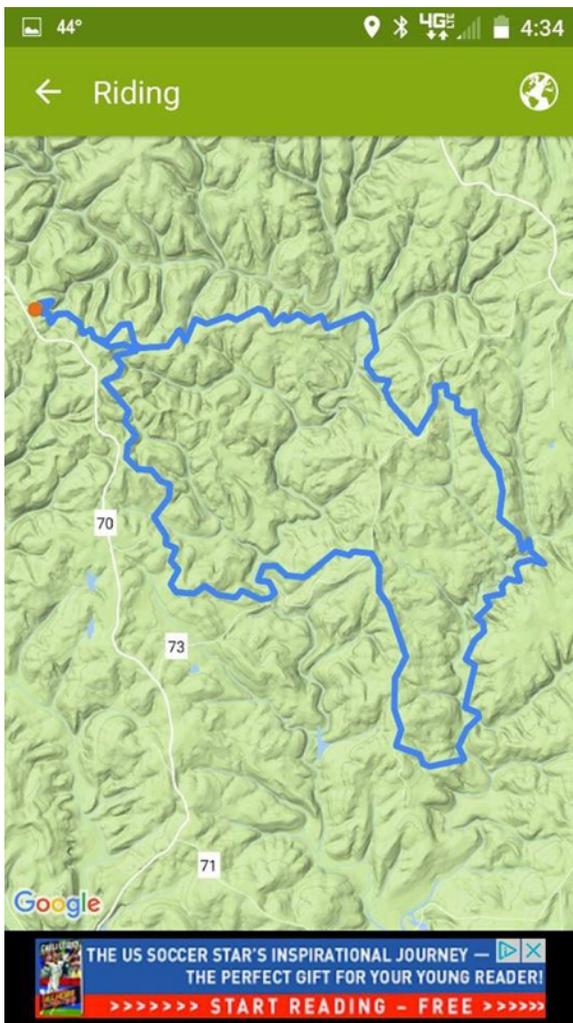
DATE	FANCY	STORME	CASH	SOPHIE	DEMI
5	10 miles Frisky	6 miles		6 miles	
10		10 miles	B miles Kaseband		
15	10 miles			17 miles	10 miles wilderness
20	3 miles	5 miles	10 miles		
25	3 miles	5 miles			
30	8 miles		14 miles RBC		
35	14 miles			10 miles wilderness	10 miles wilderness
40		19 miles	10 miles		

Across the top I have a column for each horse. I assign each horse a color, usually the tack color, but not always. Then I color each ride as they are entered. Sometimes I get in a hurry and the color of the blocks may change. But that OK, like I said, this is YOUR chart, have fun with it. This year I plan on only keeping miles on four horses. But I will allow some blank columns for more horses if I add one during the year. Down the left side are miles in increments of 5. Now, the customizing comes in with other columns. If you have room (which usually I don't) you can add a column for "Notes", "Weather" or "Location". Or whatever other information you wish to track.



So, lets say you rode your horse 10 miles, the temp was 80 degrees/humidity 56% and you did your ride at a local trail called

"Rock Hill". Perhaps you had a great ride, but your horse took a couple bad steps. Maybe it was a rock, but whatever it was, you should note it. This could be very important info. Be SURE to denote which leg. IF your horse has a lameness that pops up, you can go and look back through your chart and see the notes. You may say, "I remember Flash being off after I rode him back a month ago, but I don't remember which leg". Now, you can go see if there was a pattern of "off", and which leg. A very valuable tool in diagnosing mystery lamenesses. Plus, the information packed charts are great if you end up taking a horse to the vet. They LOVE it when you can provide such detailed background when trying to sort out a lameness that is "hiding".



Like I said earlier, I also pair my hand written mile charting with the free app Endomondo. This app lets me GPS my mileage, it tracks elevation, average mph for the entire ride, and for each mile, PLUS, you get a really cool map of your ride. It will store all of your rides, and you can add a note to each ride stored. I usually put which horses were worked and where I rode. But unlike the handy dandy hand written notebook, it isn't easy to "flip" through your rides and see how many miles, OR on which horse. It strictly just logs each ride. There are other free apps out there, but I prefer Endomondo.

With some of these apps, challenges can be set up for riders all over the country. Nothing makes you get out and ride in crappy weather than the chance of bragging rights. This years Endomondo challenge is almost over, and not to brag, but I am in second place.

One of the interesting things that you will find, is that you may see that it doesn't take as many miles of conditioning to get a horse ready for their first ride that you may think. Lots of time on social media, we see discussions and arguments to follow over how long to prepare for the horse's first ride. Sometimes one year, or two years are suggested. But if done correctly, and by charting careful miles, you can see the progress of your horse move along a lot faster than you ever thought that they could. SPEED is the enemy, slow, easy miles are your friend.

So, go buy a yourself a graph notebook, get out the colored pencils and start charting some miles !!!! It's fun, it's free, it's informative and it's a great way to stay on top of your conditioning for your horse.



SPORT Riding
Saturday, 10 Dec 2016 12:09

Summary

DURATION 3:01:36	DISTANCE 16.39miles
AVG. SPEED 5.42mph	MAX SPEED 12.78mph
CALORIES 1517kcal	HYDRATION 14fl oz
MIN. ALTITUDE 509.0ft	MAX. ALTITUDE 922.0ft
TOTAL ASCENT 2005.0ft	TOTAL DESCENT 1998.0ft

Social sharing

HIGH-QUALITY BCAAs!
Supports Muscle Growth & Recovery!

It's membership renewal time!
Please take a moment to renew or become a member!
 You can renew online at
Seraonline.org
Individual membership is \$25 Family is \$30
Thank you!

Please be a contributor!!

If you don't see a story about your favorite ride it's because you didn't write one!

Please send me yours!!

email- minglewood@surry.net

Deadline for the next issue

February 1st

Thank You, Nancy Sluys

photo by Nancy Sluys

