

**SPECIAL
BULLETIN!**

Region 6 Rally

A Time to Reflect and Prepare

We are all facing new challenges with the current COVID-19 situation. Obviously, the safety and well-being of all of us is of most importance. The rescheduling and cancellations of all kinds of events is secondary to everyone's health.

With our ride season on hold for the time being, we have reached out to all of you to submit a short story about one of your NATRC experiences. This "special edition" Region 6 Rally newsletter is the first issue that will focus on these stories. How many of these shorter bulletin type newsletters there will be is going to depend on your response. We want to hear from all of you. There are some wonderful stories out there. Send us your story!

This special issue of the Region 6 Rally provides an opportunity for us to reflect back on many special memories of our sport. We can use these past experiences to help guide us as we identify those partnership goals with our horse. Now is the time to put together a plan that will assist you in successfully accomplishing your goals.

There has never been a better time EVER to be growing and getting better while we are stuck at home. Now is the time to prepare! You don't want to be that person that just sits back and waits until things get back on track. Now is the time to be proactive!

Learn new obstacles with your horse. NECTRA has a great list of homework suggestions on their webpage. nectra.info/homework.html

Get those conditioning miles in as always but challenge yourself to accomplish something new with your horse partner. Log your miles. Set a goal and then compare how you are doing each time after you ride.

Step up and plan a ride that you could manage for Region 6! Additional and/or new rides are always encouraged, welcomed, and very appreciated by our members. Identify a location and put together a plan!

Can't ride? No worries. Learn something new about horses. There are lots and lots of resources out there on the web. YouTube has many horse related channels with a plethora of information!

You have this opportunity to get further than your competitors during this downtime! Right now is YOUR time!

Be safe, take care, and most of all be proactive!
John Zeliff, Missouri
Region 6 President

#NATRCregion6family #NATRCregion6reflect
#NATRCregion6prepare



Homework

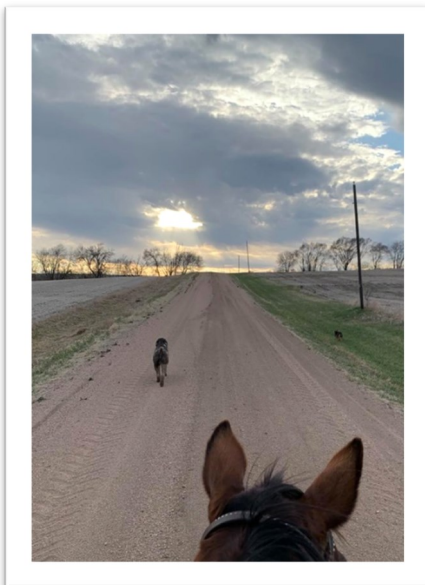
The Best-Laid Plans

I had Vision. I had Focus. *I had camping reservations!* 2020 was going to be my comeback year! I missed competing and was determined to get Windy and my 1,000 competition miles. And if we practiced really hard, maybe we could have some successes in what will be a new class for me—the Competitive Pleasure Heavyweights! And while I am racking up those miles, I may as well try for the 100% Club. Why not?

And then came the Coronavirus. *Son-of-a-gun!* Sure, it's still a possibility to get those 1,000 competition miles, but already I have conflicts with the updated schedule, so the 100% Club is out. The cancelation of the first two NATRC events certainly damped my enthusiasm, but there is a silver lining....

My employer closed our physical buildings and I am now working from home for a time yet-to-be-determined. We live in the country and have my horses at home. We have had some lovely weather so, when my workday is over, I just slip on my boots (and the necessary undergarment which is no longer part of my working day) and walk out the door and catch a horse!

I have some of the best county roads. All pea gravel with huge grassy shoulders running along both sides. There is plenty of room to pull over if there is unyielding traffic, but for the most part, they are traveled very little. I can shake things up a bit going cross country until the fields are fertilized and planted. While I plan to compete Windy, I have two younger horses that need saddle time, so I've been rotating between the three.



Making good use of this off time isn't just about conditioning miles. Remember what the horsemanship judge always says when your obstacle is less than stellar? *"Something for you to work on at home."* And while many of you are good little students and rush home to do just that, I evidently think it will work its own self out, because at the next competition time, evidently the dog ate my home work. I'm no better off than the last time.

While the miles are my first goal—and that's usually the easy part for me—I would like my rides to be somewhat successful or at best, not make a fool of myself. While Windy easily checks out sound and rarely loses points for conditioning, for me those darn observations can turn a good ride into a frustrating ride.



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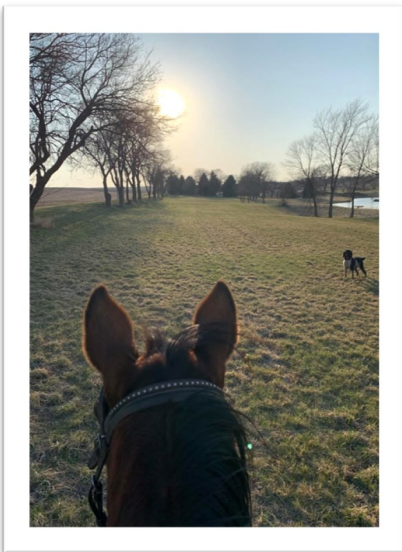
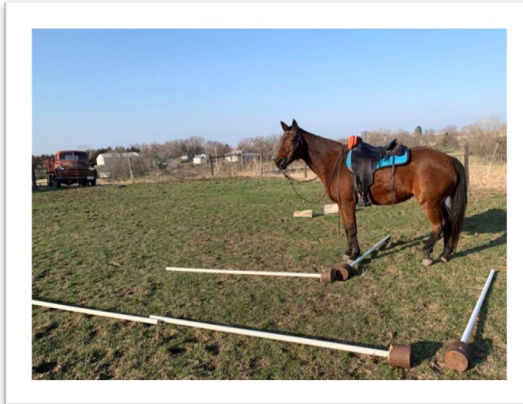
System

More Homework

“Stop, Settle and Slow”

I’ve been coached many times on the SSS method—Stop, Settle and Slow. I get the concept, but maybe I am putting too much of it on my horse rather than applying it to me. As a rider, here is how I can take the reins of responsibility:

- ◆ Approaching the obstacle, **stop** movement in the saddle and keep quiet hands. Breathe deep and let it out slowly. If I remain calm, maybe my horse will, too. Feel my shoulders drop. Relax my body.
- ◆ Once **settled**, visualize how to negotiate the obstacle before I ask my horse. Where will my hands be? How will I use my legs to direct my horse? Make a plan and run it through my mind.



- ◆ Ask **slowly**, one step at a time. Don’t be afraid to stop and settle during the obstacle if I find it is falling apart. Do not rush!

I’ve set up some PVC pipe in my arena for practicing. I’ll practice backing between two pipes or sidepassing one side or another. Laying timbers into an “L” helps me work on hindquarters and forehand turns. Some judges ask for “in-hand” obstacles, so I have practiced both saddled and from the ground. I am careful not to school Windy too much or we both end up frustrated.

I have always failed backing around a tree. It must be telepathy! I see people barely touching their reins but the movement of their legs or seat must be all their horse needs. (Or they have done their homework AND studied for the test!) I try to use leg and she walks right

through my hands. Or she won’t stop backing! The struggle is real.

Tonight I took Windy out to the pasture and found a tree. I tried the SSS. I tried visualization. I tried treats. No go. Finally I decided to take the tree out of the equation. Can I just back my dang horse in a circle? Well.... Not a circle entirely. Maybe more of a kidney. A big kidney from the jolly green giant. If there were a tree in the middle, it would be a redwood. The kind you drive a car through. The point is, I did start at point A and after going “over the river and through the woods”, I ended up at point A. It’s a good thing we have time on our hands!

Riding It Out!

Tammy Vasa, Nebraska

Newsletter Editor



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Lessons From a 1st Ride

SoCal Gal on the Farm

Hey there, fellow horse owners, are you snoring in your saddle, fed up with your riding routine? That was me, so I joined the North American Trail Riding Conference (NATRC), which holds competitive trail riding events all over the United States and Canada. I was tired of the familiar trails at home, poking along looking at the same old trees and rocks. Preparing for a competitive trail ride seemed like just the thing to give me and my horses something new to think about. It is not a horse race, but rather a paced ride in which the rider's horsemanship and the horse's manners and trail ability are judged. The distance of the ride and the difficulty of obstacles and terrain increase through four levels: Leisure, Novice, Competitive Pleasure, and Open.

I knew that the upper levels might require more preparation, but I arrogantly assumed that the Leisure division would be a piece of cake for me and my experienced trail horse. I planned to ride Stymie, well-known in Reynolds County as the trusty who carries beginners for miles through any terrain without twitching an ear. After learning the rules in the clinic before the ride, I figured Stymie and I would crush the competition in an easy eight mile ride. Boy, was I wrong; I found out before the competition even started that there are many more aspects to the sport than I had anticipated.

LESSON ONE: Practice Traveling Before the Competition. The horse you leave home with is not necessarily the animal who emerges from the trailer after ten hours on the road. A sweet and quiet older horse calmly stepped on to my trailer in Missouri. In Nebraska, a wild bronc bounced backwards down the ramp, neighing, throwing his head around and plunging on his lead. Yikes! Who are you, and what have you done with my horse?? I popped Stymie into a corral near some other horses and hoped he would come to his senses.

LESSON TWO: Tie Your Horse Securely. Even after unloading a kangaroo boxer and knowing him to be freaking out when his new best friends of twenty minutes standing left on a ride, I idiotically failed to tie Stymie to my trailer while grooming him. I kept treating him like the horse I knew and loved at home right up to the minute that I saw the sun glinting off his shoes as he galloped into the distance over a low rise, off to find his new buddies.

LESSON THREE: Identify Your Horse. Stunned, I ran after him, thinking about hitting him with a frying pan and hoping he wouldn't mow down a toddler in another campsite or get hit by a car. Even if he slowed down, he could be miles away in a matter of minutes. Why, oh why, did it not occur to me to have him micro chipped, or at least put my name and number on his halter? How would I ever find him?

LESSON FOUR: Sometimes You Don't Want to Claim Your Horse. Ten minutes later, winded and worried, I trudged disconsolately through a parking lot and stopped to catch my breath. Hearing hoof beats, I looked up to see a couple of riders...was it two, or three?... emerging from a wooded area some distance away. I hardly dared to hope, but sure enough, two riders came trotting towards me, ponying my naughty boy alongside. My relief at seeing him alive, well, and captured was quickly eclipsed by the sickening mortification of realizing that his savior was none other than Helen Smith, the ride manager. Gee, I sure made a good impression on her; how fabulous to be nine hundred points in the hole before the competition even starts!

LESSON FIVE: Pride Goes Before a Fall. After behaving like an angel in the mounted clinic before the ride, Stymie reverted to his kangaroo act during the actual competition, hopping and bopping his way down the trail. He wasn't the only horse acting a little wild. None of them appreciated the thunder, lightning, and torrential rain that poured down on them the night before. Strangely, Stymie did great at the things he is normally terrible about at home, and I blew it on easy beginner skills.

Fully expecting Stymie to whiz through the "brush crossing" without hesitation, I was amazed when he stopped short right in front of the judges, pretending to be frightened by a few sticks on the ground. What? Are you kid-

More Lessons

ding? We go through brush up to your belly just to *get* to the trail at home, you goober! He scored a "needs work" and I squeaked by with "satisfactory."

The next thing we managed to screw up was the judged mount using a mounting block. For once in his life, Stymie stood like a statue. Determined to get a perfect score, I carefully gathered my reins, climbed the block, placed my foot in the stirrup, threw my leg over, and settled quietly and lightly into the saddle right on top of my offside stirrup, which I had forgotten to pull down after an adjustment to the girth. Jeepers, what a fool I looked in front of the judge and thirty other interested observers! Stymie scored a well-deserved "excellent," and I received an embarrassing "needs work."

Even though Stymie pulled some really nutty high jinx, he is not to blame for our failure to shine. It was my choice to drag him hundreds of miles away from home to perform unexpected stunts in unfamiliar country. He was a good sport about the whole thing. It was my responsibility to make him feel safe and confident; any mistakes he made were my fault.

Did we win? Well, no, of course we didn't. Out of eighteen riders, we didn't even place in the top ten, but next time, we will. Oh, yes, there is going to be a next time! Despite the terrible weather and really stupid mistakes I made, I had a wonderful time. Competitive trail riders aren't...well, competitive. They are friendly and fun, caring more about camaraderie and sharing knowledge and good times than cutting throats.

Cross-training is a great way to increase performance in any riding discipline. If your barrel racer needs a break from the pattern, your gaited ribbon-winner is ring sour, or dressage is dragging you down, then banish the boredom, accept the challenge and join the fun of competitive trail riding. The first year of membership in NATRC is free!

Sarah Tolliver, Missouri

A Warm Welcome

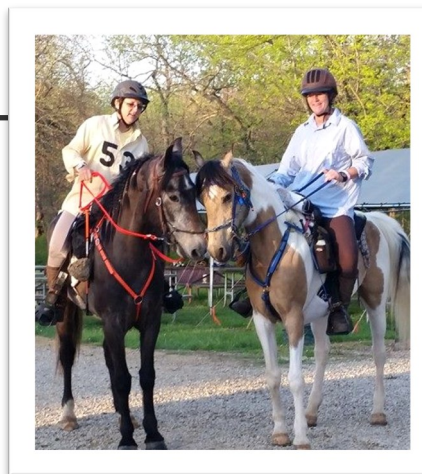
My sister Marla Stuckey and I were introduced to NATRC by Ty and Debbie McCullough. Our first experience was in the fall of 2005 when we volunteered at Kanopolis and were on the pulse and respiration team. We were introduced to Chuck Edwards and he was our chauffeur for the day. Wow! Did we learn a lot from Chuck. We heard a lot of stories from the other P&R team. Everyone made us feel welcomed.

In April of 2006, we entered our first ride at Kanopolis. We checked in on Friday in pouring down rain. What were we thinking? The McCulloughs invited us to their trailer for supper and introduced to Dave and Maggie Spilker. They all made us feel like we were part of the family.

At this time we were staying in the back of a stock trailer. On Saturday, we woke to a beautiful morning! As we had rode the trails before, Marla and I chose to ride by ourselves. We felt really good and decided we wanted to do a little cantering, unknown to us the first P&R was over the hill we were cantering up. Oops we're bad! We got into the P&R with 2 horses that were breathing very hard. My horse Zip had no clue what we were doing and she would not stand still. We were placed beside Becki Jackson who was very kind and giving us pointers on what we needed to do. We did make it through the P&R and we completed day 1.

On Sunday we decided to ride and follow Kay Stitch and her lovely mother Donna Keller. Sunday was a much better day. Kay and Donna gave us lots of information that was very valuable. We continued to ride with Kay and Donna that year, completing over 9 rides in 2006. You might say we were hooked and still are!

It's wonderful to be a part of the NATRC family. ~Marilyn Marston, Kansas



Notes from a 1st Ride

2015 NATRC ride at VonHolten Ranch

John Zeliff

I loaded up Festus and left home at 8:00 am.
I got a mile and a half down the road and realized I forgot my check book. Turned around and went back to get it.
I got eleven miles to Mound City and had to stop to plug in my trailer lights and brakes again. It was loose.
I took highway 36 to avoid going through Kansas City.
Fueled up at Hamilton.
Arrived around 12:30 to VonHolten Ranch to a smiling Brandy meeting me right outside the office.
A few minutes later Erin and her family came into the office.
Parked trailer,
Put horse away and then fed and watered him.
Plugged trailer into AC and unloaded cab of pickup.
I didn't know what to do then.
I stood outside my trailer until I saw someone I thought was there for the NATRC ride.
I went over and met Mike and visited with him for several minutes.
My first question was if it was ok to feed my horse hay on the ground in the stall.
Told Mike about riding the Mule Skinner ride back in 1979. I rode while in college and really enjoyed it.
This is the first ride since that I have been able to do.
All these years I have paid my NATRC and Region 6 dues as I had such a positive experience.
While talking to Mike, Sarah R came over to say hi and asked if I was riding.
She was glad I am riding.
The vet judge came over to visit with Mike and I and then another guy stopped by.
I met Mike's wife Mary.
Sarah invited me over to look at her new trailer.
Went back to my trailer and fixed a little lunch.
Watered my horse again.
Mike came by my trailer to let me know where registration was going to be at.
Took my horse papers and checkbook over to registration and waited in line.
Everyone waiting there was very nice and very helpful.
They were all letting me know things I needed to know for competing.
The ladies waiting in line asked if I was going to ride in jeans.
I was like, what else would I wear?
They said I needed to wear some kind of riding tights. I blushed.
Oh wow. No way! I can't even imagine wearing something like that. I ride almost every day on the farm. My whole life I have only ridden in jeans. I can't imagine anything else.
I got registered but had to go get my saddle and blanket to weigh in even though I weigh way past the minimum weight for heavy-weight class without my saddle and tack.
My rider vest is pink. That is motivation enough to move up in class.



Brushed horse and combed out mane and tail.

A couple ladies hollered at me while I was grooming horse to let me know I should wear my numbered vest anytime I am doing something with my horse. I thanked them.
I went and watched a few other riders do the vet check in so I knew what to expect.
It is very hot outside and my horse was sweaty just from standing in the heat. I thought about hosing him off but just got horse and did the vet check.
He did fair as he was a little hesitant to trot out in hand. We had practiced that many times before at home and was doing great until this time.
I put horse away and came in my trailer to cool off.
Ride meeting will be at 7:30
My first impression of the other riders is very positive.

Ride meeting.

Ride out open riders at 6:00.
Take time on vet check with horse.
Make circle big enough.
Be sure to clean horse stall.
Ride safe and courteous.
Body position.
Keep hands on reins at all times.
17 and 18 hold and go
BBQ at 6:00 on Saturday.

Day One

Woke up at 4:30 and fed horse.
Fixed breakfast.
Waited until other people started getting their horse and then got mine out.
Saddled horse.
Waited for judges and the open riders to head out.
Was not much of a staggered start. Went quick. Just had to remember what time they wrote down for me as my start time.
Started my GPS program.
Started the stopwatch on my new watch. Found out later it only counts up to an hour.
Left the starting line and four of us missed the very first turn.

More Notes

Like just a few feet from the start. No worries though. A couple riders were quick to let us all know. No big deal as we just went back and did it right. Best part of that was getting to ride in the creek again. Lost ten minutes through right off the bat with that mistake.

Started riding with another first timer and two nice ladies that said we could follow them to get the feel for the pace. That was very helpful.

Trails were mostly in the trees. Very limited opportunities for open riding. Made it difficult if one needed to make up time. Trails were muddy in most places.

I saw a rider carrying a feed scoop, another carrying a dust pan, and saw two or three with frisbees.

Need to figure out something so I can put my rider number on my horse. I was thinking it would be provided but it wasn't. No big deal. Will figure something out for the next ride.

Rode a little over 15 miles first day.

Made it through both P&Rs without being held back.

Horse didn't want to trot during the vet check at the end of day one.

Rider Meeting

Location of head crossing logs

Uphill – leg position

Flanking

Looking at how you handle your horse

Reins too long

Offside mount.

Inside the two mile marker the judge observed us.

Keep two horse length distance between horses.

Need ID on horse

17 and 18 are holds again

Trot out in the morning

Leave at 6:30 Sunday

After meeting I cleaned stall.

Took horse out to walk a little then put back in stall and fed horse.

Then reluctantly went to visit with judge to go over first day score card. I didn't know for sure if that would be good to do or not but I want to learn as much as I can.

A couple things I can remember from 36 years ago that seem different.

Before riders couldn't be around their horse after around 10 PM each night.

I don't remember a second ride meeting after the first days ride but I'm sure there was one.

We didn't have any organized meals, everyone just took care of their own food.

I have been trying to ask as many questions as I can to try and learn as much as I can.

Everyone is very very helpful.

Day one turned out a lot better than I thought it would. I am

hoping horse has another good day tomorrow.

I am really glad I came down here over the 4th of July to ride down here. That has made me feel a lot more comfortable.

Listening to the Kansas City Royals game and then I'm going to watch a movie and get some sleep.

Day Two

Woke up at 5:00 am and fed horse.

Fixed and ate breakfast.

I waited around after I ate until others started getting their horses out.

Saddled horse and waited for the trot out.

Trot out went ok. Started a little crooked but then went straight.

Vet was looking for soundness with horse and judge was judging rider in trot.

Got held once at both P&R stops.

Erin gave very helpful advice at first P&R when I got held.

That was a new experience for me.

Everyone so nice on the trail.

Other riders helpful.

Judges were great and so nice. Great feedback.

Last obstacle my horse would not go down the hill as he could see the judges about halfway down the hill. It took me a long time to make my horse go. He was soooooo tired. That was right before the last P&R.

Got held again at P&R. This time I pulled the saddle off.

Made it back to camp!

Completed ride but worried I was late getting back in to camp and it didn't count??? Fingers crossed.

Today's ride seemed very hot. Humidity was high.

Today's ride seemed harder than yesterday even though it was at a little slower pace at 3.5 mph vs yesterday 4.0 mph.

Rode a little over 15 miles again today.

Washed horse off with hose and put back in stall to rest. Got to do the last vet check. I'm sure he won't trot again but hoping he might.

Did vet check out. Used a stick this time and he did the best he had all weekend! Yay!

Alan helped me with getting horse to trot in hand before the vet check.

I was randomly selected for a drug test so they pulled blood from my horse.

Put horse back in stall and waited for post ride meeting.

My goal for the weekend was to complete the ride and I did!

I was very nervous about the second P&R as I didn't want to get pulled and not have a chance to finish. So happy I got to finish!

I learned lots.

Today was a hard ride but worth it. A few of the other riders talked about how hard a ride it was. One rider said it was the hardest ride they had done in ten years. Guess that is especially good we finished.

I think I will do this again.

Got lots I can work on at home now.

Traveling

The great thing about CTRs is you always come away learning a lot. And sometimes not just on aspects of effective riding and horsemanship!

The Indian Cave CTR was a very rainy but wonderfully managed ride that unfortunately, due to thunderstorms and continuing rain, had to be cut short on Sunday. Saturday's ride became a one-day "B-ride". However, a major "lesson learned" on this ride, was to use Google Maps instead of Mapquest in the future. Apparently, Google Maps will show you which roads are closed whereas Mapquest does not.

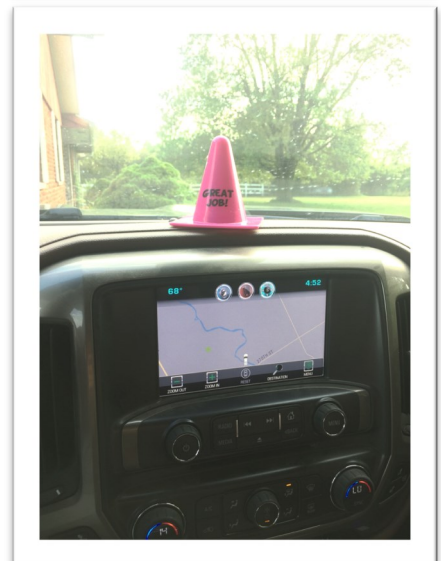
The terrible flooding in that area had resulted in many, many road closures. I plotted my route to Indian Cave from Iowa and Mapquest routed me off I-29 onto MO-D. That highway had been reopened despite a short section down to one-lane, since the other lane had been washed out. But when I got five miles down to where I should have turned on US 136, Jersey barriers blocked my path and there was no place to turn around!

I learned another thing this weekend: I am still terrified of backing up a horse trailer in a straight line! It is just not in my wheelhouse! I tried at first but started getting seriously traumatized at the prospect of going off one side or the other into the flooded ditches. The prospect of having to do that for 5 miles terrified me!

I called US Rider (basically a AAA for horse trailers) but apparently they don't send out expert backers to back you out of such situations!! Instead, they said it sounded like a traffic control situation and I should call 911 and get the police out, which I did. After 45 minutes of waiting and starting to worry that if it got dark, I would really be in trouble, I decided to summon my courage. I reminded myself that "I am a proud graduate of the Iowa Horse Council backing clinic that I had fortunately signed up for earlier in the summer. I pulled out the handy little 4"-traffic cone souvenir that says, "Great Job!" for having completed the clinic and remembered their advice to "just go slowly", make slight corrections and continue on.

There was a deserted farm house about 1.5 miles back down the road (truly it was sad seeing the devastation the flooding has caused in this area) and I hoped maybe they would have a driveway I could back into. For some reason backing into a 90-degree turn is something I *can* do! I went about 1/2 mile an hour, always trying to keep the trailer wheels parallel to the side of the road, occasionally having to pull forward to straighten out. And lo and behold! After about a 1/2 mile, I came to a dirt road I hadn't noticed on the way out! And the footing was good, so I could do my 90-degree trick to back into it, and then pull out so I could go forward the rest of the way. Just at that time the policeman arrived, which turned out to be a good thing since he informed me that my new plan to go south on I-29 to US 136 would not work since US 136 is closed. He radioed in to find the best alternative route.

Eventually I made it to the campground where the wonderful NECTRA people helped me find a spot in the dark and shined their headlights, so I could get my tent put up. Phew!



More Travels

I think straight backing of a trailer would be my "Room 101" if I were a character in the novel 1984 (as opposed to rats for Winston). But, hopefully each of these experiences will improve my confidence and ability, although it'd be just fine with me to not repeat such an experience. Yep, Google Maps for me in the future! And I strongly urge everyone to sign up for a trailer backing clinic, if the opportunity ever presents itself.

Kristen Johansen - Iowa

One National Convention was held in Denver. My wife, Jeanne and I decided to fly to the convention on Friday and then return to Missouri by a Sunday flight. We had a farmer convention to attend the beginning of that week in Jefferson City. To our dismay, a snow storm came in and it was impossible to get a return flight due to airports being closed. Things got worse when the motel had overbooked our rooms and we could not stay there any longer. The airline was helpful in that they offered another motel that we could stay in and provided transportation to that motel.



Our room was a three-room suite and the cost was a good bargain at \$50.00 per night. We were walking distance to several good restaurants. We found out that we now have a roof over our heads and could get food into our stomachs. We would contact the airlines daily and eventually were told that we would fly to St. Louis instead of to Kansas City because by this time the airport in Kansas City was totally snowed in. After a day or so we were able to get on a flight back to Kansas City but we had to move fast because the storm was heading to St. Louis. When we landed in Kansas City we drove to Chillicothe only to find that our driveway was totally snowed in. I headed to the barn and took the tractor and bladed the driveway so we could drive the car up to the house and into the garage. What was supposed to be a weekend trip turn into a week long trip.

Jeanne and I decided to drive to another National Convention in Denver. The convention was a lot of fun, including a bus trip to a casino in which all passengers were given \$10.00 in gambling money. My wife ended up being the third highest winner having increased her \$10.00 to over \$50.00. My \$10.00 stayed with the casino.

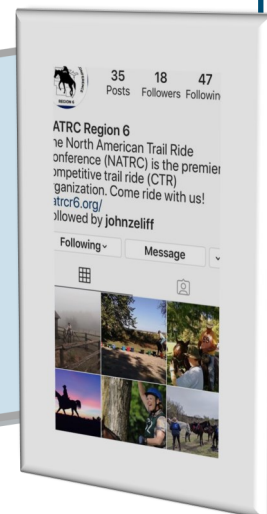
We left after the banquet and awards on Saturday evening and headed east towards Kansas. We did this because both of us had to be at work on Monday morning. On the Colorado/Kansas border, we stayed at a nice bed and breakfast for the night and then headed on the next morning. It always seems like it takes forever to get across Kansas but the miles went by fast as we were listening to the University of Missouri play the University of Kansas in a men's basketball game.

The University of Missouri was in an undefeated season but this game would be one of the hardest. As the miles were going by the game was definitely seesawing back and forth. As the last half of the game was coming to an end, my wife was driving and to our delight Missouri won! I told Jeanne to speed up a little so we could get home. A short time later we saw the red lights of a Kansas Highway Patrol car come on.

Now my wife was not happy, but she pulled over. She proceeded to tell the officer about our weekend trip and how we were listening to the Missouri/Kansas basketball game and were very tired and wanted to get home. The officer said "Yes, I know about that game and we LOST." Then with a smile, he said to slow it down and get home safely which we did.

Bill Hinklebein, Missouri

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A picture
added
each day!



THANK YOU

What a great time at the Region 6 convention in Kansas City. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make it fun & interesting!

A History Lesson

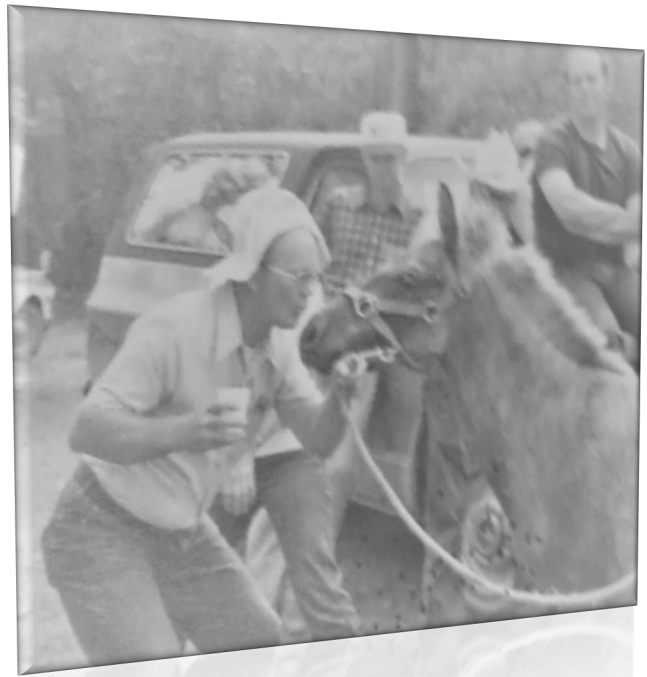
A Short History of Region 6

By D.E. Jackson DVM

In a recent conversation with John Zeliff, he indicated he would like to come up with some way to keep in touch with current riders during this time of cancellation of all sports. Now I know this is a very unusual situation and we have never seen anything like this virus before, however, we in the horse world have been through epidemics before. For example, the Venezuelan encephalitis outbreak of the early 1970s, the West Nile epidemic in the late 70s and the EPM outbreak of the early 80s. Now I am not trying to say that we experienced anything like what we are seeing today but we have as horse people had a little experience and as we came through these other problems, we will come through this, too. There will be baseball again, there will be basketball again, there will be football again and yes, there will be trail rides. So, let's get on with it.

I had given a speech at one of the Region 6 meetings entitled "A Funny Thing Happened at the Trail Ride" and John asked if I would be interested in writing some stories up for a newsletter. I thought it was a great idea and was anxious to get started. So, the question arose, "where should I start?" and the obvious answer is "at the beginning."

The beginning for most of us in Missouri and Kansas began at a meeting of the Greater Kansas City Arabian Horse Association. Someone suggested the club sponsor a competitive trail ride. Apparently after some discussion, it was agreed that they would do this if a couple of their members would volunteer to do most of the work. Those people turned out to be Victoria Chick and Patricia Drury. These two gals



organized the whole thing and deserve a lot of credit. This was the first NATRC competitive trail ride to be held in the state of Missouri.

The trail was established on land near Lake Jacomo in Jackson County, Missouri. They had contacted NATRC for guidance. One of the people who helped out the most in guiding Vicki and Pat was a veterinarian by the name of Bill Throckmorton. (More on Bill later.) I got involved when Vicki, a client of mine, asked me if I would become their emergency on-call veterinarian. I said "Sure, what's a competitive trail ride." I had no idea what I was getting into but as it turned out, it was a great experience for me and a great value to me as I developed my own equine practice later on.

Dr. Throckmorton judged that first ride and I'm sorry, I do not remember the horsemanship judge's name. Vicki invited several veterinarians to attend. Dr. Throckmorton

More History

asked several of us if we would like to apprentice. He made sure we understood that he wanted trail riding to be fun. He didn't want trail rides to be judged by "stuffed shirt horse show judges." He wanted things light. The first day he showed up wearing a sweat-shirt with "Follow me to the woods" written on the front and on the back it said "Catch me if you can". He was once heard making a remark to one of the lady riders, "Try to trot your horse straight down and back and make two circles one each direction." When she accomplished this, he asked her to repeat the process, and this time he would watch the horse! Now in this day and age of "Me, too", a remark like that would get you in serious trouble, but he did in jest and I never knew of any of our female competitors who were offended by that. And I hope those of us who were influenced in our judging by Dr. Throckmorton were able to keep it fun for the riders.

That first ride was enough of a success that other rides began to be planned. According to American tradition, when you get a group of five or more people together, first thing they do is elect a president, vice president and secretary-treasurer and now you have a club. The Show Me Trail Riders put on their first ride on land located south of Versailles, Missouri and just north of the Lake of the Ozarks. Dr. Throckmorton judges the ride and again, I can't remember the horsemanship judge's name. And then "a funny thing happened at the trail ride". Seems that the club had been given a miniature mule to raffle off for the club's benefit. When it came time for the raffle, Dr. Throckmorton was asked if he would

do the drawing. The first name he pulled out was "Bill Throckmorton". He had a good laugh and drew again and again and again, and the winner was always Dr. Bill. He thanked us again and explained he couldn't take the mule home on the plane so as a consolation prize, he got a kiss from the mule right on the lips with everybody's camera clicking.

Other rides began to spring up. One in Fairfax, Missouri north of St. Joseph was called the "Mule Skinner Ride". Over in Kansas there was a ride on land north of Manhattan. That ride still survives clear today. It's called "No, Kansas Isn't Flat." I had the privilege of riding that ride one year and at the Friday night briefing, we were told that an albino buffalo calf had been born that spring. If we happen to see the calf, it is okay to watch at a distance; even take pictures, but do not approach it. Seems the calf was sacred to the Native American population in that area and they "didn't want to get anybody scalped". True or just joking, I never found out. At this time, there was no Region 6. We were incorporated into Region 4 and Region 6 didn't come along until the 1981-1982 competition year.

Well, I think I've taken up too much space as it is, so I will bring this to a close. I hope you enjoyed this little history and hope you will let me write more articles in the near future.

Editors Note: Thank you, Dr. Jackson. We'd be honored to have more of your memories shared in our newsletter.

Stay Active

With rides being canceled or postponed, your membership dues will continue to help our organization get through this rough time. If you haven't sent in your membership dues, visit our website and Join NATRC Today! <https://natrc.org/join>

Welcome New and Returning Region 6 Members!*

New

Alex Braun, Lincoln, NE
Christina Deaton, North Loup, NE
Carrie Shaw, Oquawka, IL

Returning

Noreen Altwegg, Junction City, KS
Alan Bouska, Junction City, KS
Mary Alice Braun, Lincoln, NE
Sheila Carroll, Lincoln, NE
Shannon Chastain, Rock Port, MO
Maggie Childs, Lawrence, KS
Trish Cleveland, Wamego, KS
Denise Farris, Stillwell, KS
Mary Fettes, Sibley, IA
Lucie Hess, Columbia, MO
Janis Hester, Bucyrus, KS
William Hinkebein, Chillicothe, MO
Kathryn Jackson, Wichita, KS
Kristen Johansen, Boone, IA
Liz Klamm, Hutchinson, KS
Karri Koelling, West Plains, MO
Gina Kollars, Arlington, NE
Rhonda Levinson, Tonganoxie, KS
Patricia Lysinger, Oakley, KS
Marilyn Marston, Abilene, KS
Brenda Messick, Ceresco, NE
Randi Paradiso, Trimble, MO
Margaret Reynolds, Blue Springs, MO
Kay and Violet Stich, Independence, KS
Leeza Struwe, Adams, NE
Sarah and Randy Tolliver, Ellington, MO
Tammy Vasa, Weston, NE
Kris Wech, Independence, KS
Hope White, Basehor, KS
John Zelif, Skidmore, MO

*Membership 12/2019—2/2020

Changing Goals *Helen Smith*

In our new normal that is social distancing, cancelled competitions, and when it is cool to be a virologist, my goals have dramatically re-focused. For 2019, I had definite goals for Jessie and I, and we achieved all of them and more, despite a hectic travel schedule for both work and personal reasons.



I had not yet fully determined my competition goals for this year. There were changes happening at work, I wanted to go to England in September, and I wasn't sure that my goals should be the same two years in a row! And then COVID-19 arrived in the US. What is important now is suddenly much different, and schedules in the last half of the year will be very condensed. But the lack of clarity in our everyday world conversely helped coalesce my riding goals.

- ⇒ Instead of making sure Jessie is very fit, he now has a schedule to keep him moderately fit, and we are working on a fun new skill learned from Esther ("come to me"), turn on the haunches and going downhill with less body sway. We hope to get in at least 3 rides in Region 6, and 2 rides in each of Regions 3 & 4.
- ⇒ Phoebe (my gaited horse bought in a literal fire sale) will be 3 this year, and now is the perfect time to get her doing more complex groundwork and going very lightly under saddle. She is loving and thriving on the increased attention.
- ⇒ Frontier is still a little green and iffy over fences. The goal is to knock off the last of the green and teach her to love to fly, so that she can become my number 1 choice for foxhunting in the Fall!
- ⇒ Sasha is still very slowly coming back from her long time off. The chance to ride her 5 – 10 miles every week will hopefully rebuild her muscles, so that she can get back to foxhunting.

So, I am staying connected with family. Working the horses at home. And, being thoroughly grateful to work for a company that encourages social responsibility, and living out in the country where day to day life goes on.

Stay safe my friends.

Making Plans

Life goes on. Make plans to support our Region 6 rides. Ride Schedules are subject to change. Refer to the website for current information. <https://natrc.org/ride-and-clinic-schedules>

Date	Event	Saturday	Sunday	Limit	Contact
May 16-17	Clinic & B Ride Honey Creek Conservation Area Amazonia, MO	B - L	B - L	30	John Zelifff Ph. 660.562.8878 John@springvalleycarriages.com
May 30 - 31	Hoofbeats in the Hills Region 6 Benefit Hillsdale Lake Paola, KS	A - O/N/CP		60	Rhonda Levinson 913.909.2025 Rhndlev@msn.com Mary Licata 913.302.2644 Maryel777@swbell.net
June 20 - 21	The PonyExpress at Rock Creek Station Fairbury, NE	A - O/N/CP B - L	B - O/N/CP	60	Helen Smith 402.944.7321 or 402.298.1411 hsmithtmoran@gmail.com
July 11 - 12	Branching Out Clinic & B Ride Branched Oak Lake SRA Raymond, NE	Clinic B - L	B - L	30	Helen Smith 402.944.7321 or 402.298.1411 hsmithtmoran@gmail.com
Aug. 8-9	Danish Alps Clinic & B Ride Danish Alps SRA Hubbard, NE	Clinic B - L	B - L	30	Shari Parys 402.830.5769 katbalu96@aol.com
Sept. 5 - 6	El Dorado El Dorado Lake El Dorado, KS	A - O/N/CP B - O/N/CP/L	B - O/N/CP/L	60 (20 L)	Liz Klamm 620.694.9336 lizandyk@att.net
Sept. 12 - 13	Jesse James Rideout Smithfield Lake Smithfield, MO	A - O/N/CP B - O/N/CP/L	B - O/N/CP/L	60	John Zelifff Ph. 660.562.8878 John@springvalleycarriages.com David Nore 402.499.3940 dnore1@windstream.net
Sept. 26 - 27	Indian Cave Indian Cave State Park Shubert, NE	A - O/N/CP B - O/N/CP/L	B - O/N/CP/L	60 (40 L)	Sarah Rinne / Shari Parys 402.830.5769 katbalu96@aol.com
Oct. 3-4	Exploring Sand Hills Sand Hills State Park Hutchinson, KS	A - O/N/CP B - O/N/CP/L	B - O/N/CP/L	60 (20 L)	Liz Klamm 620.694.9336 lizandyk@att.net
Oct. 10	Salt Creek Salt Creek Ranch Lyndon, KS	B - L		20	Carol Retzer 785.215.2296 info@yourequineadventure.com

Ride type: A = 2 day ride (Saturday and Sunday) B = 1 day ride Check in afternoon before except for L Division

Divisions:

- O = Open (● horses 5 years of age and older ● mileage - 25-30 miles/day ● pace - 4-6 mph)
- N = Novice (● horses 4 years of age and older ● mileage - 15-20 miles/day ● pace - 3.5-5 mph)
- CP = Competitive Pleasure (● horses 4 years of age and older ● mileage - 15-20 miles/day ● pace - 3.5-5 mph)
- L = Leisure (● horses 4 years of age and older ● mileage - 8-12 miles/day ● pace - 3-4.5 mph)

Looking to the Future

National Convention 2021 Update *Helen Smith*

Planning for the National Convention for next year continues despite the ongoing pandemic. Holly Jones, Region 4, has graciously volunteered to be the sponsor chair for us. She did this, and organized vendors, last year and is happy to help us again for 2021. Gina Kollars has volunteered to be the Vendor chair, and Margaret Reynolds and Liz Klamm are our Silent Auction gurus. If you have a donation, want a vendor booth or willing to provide sponsorship, please contact me or one of these ladies.

The team are also working on a line-up of interesting and knowledgeable speakers. More to come on these as we confirm speaking contracts.

Save the Date!

February 25-28, 2021
Omaha, Nebraska



the good life

Your NATRC 2021 National Convention will be held
February 25-28 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton
Omaha's Downtown/Old Market Area

Places of interest include the World Famous Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium,
Union Pacific Railroad Museum, Lauritzen Gardens, and
TD Ameritrade Park home of the College World Series

For updates check at natrcr6.org
or on Facebook at REGION 6 NATRC Riders

We'll see you in 2021 in Nebraska, "the good life".



NORTH AMERICAN TRAIL RIDE CONFERENCE
REGION 6



Staying Safe

NORTH AMERICAN
TRAIL RIDE CONFERENCE
www.natrc.org



An Update from us on COVID-19

Greetings Members and Friends,

We hope our NATRC family is staying safe! The National Board of Directors wanted to update you – our members – on where we are in this uncertain time. Because we don't know when the COVID-19 directives are going to be lifted and many rides have had to reschedule to the fall or completely cancel, the board is looking at other opportunities to offer our NATRC members.

Very soon you will see some fun virtual competitions involving things you can do at home with your horse. Watch for information and registration!

For added learning experiences, we are planning some inclusive webinars. One planned is learning how to use a GPS tracker system. Another is "Ask the Judge" sessions where you can get answers to some of those questions you always wondered about from our ride judges. And still another is a panel session with some of our most experienced riders where you can learn some new tricks of the trade.

Thirdly, realizing the potential that there may be way fewer competitive trail rides this year we are also looking at options for year-end awards and next year's National convention. No decisions have been made at this time, but we wanted to keep you updated on our thoughts while we continue to monitor the situation and how it affects our sport and our members across the nation.

Remember family is important and we are all family. Thank you all for your continued support!

National Board of Directors
North American Trail Ride Conference



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Let's Do It Again!

I hope our readers enjoyed the stories as much as John and I did. As you can see, anything goes.

Let's do it again! Send your stories and/or pictures to jtvasa@gmail.com by May 4 to be published in our next Special Bulletin!

Consider printing and sending to a friend who has an interest in our sport or who might have stepped away. Let them know we are waiting for the green light & ready to ride!

