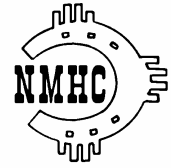


New Mexico Horse Council
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MAY – JUNE 2007

“I reckon just about every human in the world that was raised on a cow ranch, worked as a cowboy, or just plain rode for pleasure knew and loved a horse like Old Snip. In the memory of us all there is one old pony that comes to mind more often than all the others. A horse to do a little braggin’ about. That’s the kind of horse Old Snip was.” For the Love of a Horse, Max Evans, UNM Press, Albuquerque, NM 2007.

Calendar

May 5 – 6: NMHC Horse Fair and General Membership meeting(see reports)

May 16 – 17: BPE: Governor’s Bicycle, Pedestrian, Equestrian Meeting, Gallup (See report.)

May 17: Bachechi Open Space Master Plan Public meeting. 6:00 – 8:00 PM, Alameda, NM. (See report.)

June 1: Regional Trails Summit, 9:00 AM, Santa Fe. (See report.)

June 3: National Trails Day; Corrales Crosswalk Awareness Event. (See report.)

June 4: NMHC Board of Directors meeting, Village Pizza in Corrales, 7 PM (See report.)

June 5: Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District Election. (See report.)

June 9 – 10, NMHC Trail Ride in McKinley County, hosted by Baca Chica Ranch and co-chairs Mary Jo and Dick Wallen and Annette Gonzales (See report.)

June 17 – 20, American Horse Council Annual Issues Forum, Washington, D.C. (NMHC is a state horse council member of the AHC)

June 25, 7:00 PM, Ad Hoc NMHC Horse Fair Task Force meeting, Nancy Searles’ house, 112 Entrada de Martinez, Corrales. Open.

July 9: Comments due for Air Quality Control Board Agricultural Rules draft revision.

July 9: NMHC Board of Directors meeting, open, location TBA (see web site).

August 6: NMHC Board of Directors meeting, 7:00 PM, Location TBA.

August 15 – 16: BPE: Governor’s Bicycle, Pedestrian, Equestrian Meeting, Santa Fe. Quarterly meeting is open.

August 18: NMHC Flea Market, Tack Swap & Meet & Greet, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM, Sandia Trailer Sales, Edgewood.

September 7 – 23: New Mexico State Fair (and State Fair Horse Shows), State Fairgrounds, Albuquerque.

Table of Contents

Horse Fair Weekend.....2-3
Horse Fair Task Force.....3
General Membership Vote: Bylaws Revisions.....2
Bachechi Open Space Master Plan.....4
MRGCD Election.....4
Regional Trails Summit.....5
NMHC Trail Ride.....5-6
NMHC Board Meetings.....6
Air Quality Control Board Regulations.....6
Expo New Mexico.....6-7
BPE.....7
Open Space, Agriculture in the Urban Envelope.....7
Flea Market, Tack Swap, SF Tent.....7
Crosswalk Event, Corrales.....8
American Horse Council updates.....8-10
Equine Liability Signs.....10
Equestrian Injury Study.....10
British Judges Hardheaded.....10
New Mexico Helmet Law passed.....10



2007 Horse Fair Weekend

Clinicians. “The best darn party I’ve been to in a long time to which nobody came” – one of the 2007 clinicians. The weekend began with a reception for Richard Shrake, hosted by Sandia Trailer Sales, to which anyone and everyone was invited. Saturday and Sunday showcased some terrific clinicians – in addition to Richard Shrake (Sunriver, Oregon), we welcomed Bob Blackwell of Big Timber, Montana; Karen Scholl of Cave Creek, Arizona; Randall Davis of Crown Point, NM and Katrin Silva of Santa Fe, NM. And who could forget those huge mules, the eight-hitch of Belgian crosses from Diamond JK Ranch of Kentucky? *(I must admit that I was one of the people who didn’t come – a once-in-a-lifetime chance to join four old friends on a photo safari to Africa came up, and off we went. Had guilty thoughts about the Horse Fair while in Zambia, Botswana and South Africa, though – Val)*

Shopping and other activities. In addition to the clinicians, NMHC offered vendors, vendors, vendors; a terrific kids corral; a huge silent auction and lots more. The New Mexico Quarter Horse members not only provided the immensely popular “test ride an American Quarter Horse” but sponsored an all Novice and Amateur Quarter Horse and All Breed one day show on Saturday.

NMQHA All Novice QH & All Breed Show. Show manager **Julie Wilson** reports: “The Novice show was in our view a success – didn’t make any money but reached out and snagged some new competitors. Our costs were increased from the previous show at Santa Fe and attendance was not significantly increased. We did have some from the Eastern side of the state show with us. And, new faces from the Albuquerque area, including a lovely Morgan that showed in the All-Breed classes. Chris Hardcastle, the judge, answered questions after the classes and really seemed to connect with the competitors. AQHA is actively encouraging its judges for these shows to be “approachable and constructive”, which Chris certainly was. The weather was not great – cold for the first weekend of May, which may have affected the turnout. Richard Shrake gave an excellent clinic during the lunch break which really tied our event to the Horse Fair. The NMQHA Test Ride Booth was

well attended and also successful from our point of view. We did get spectators wandering over from the Test Ride in the Dairy Barn to watch the Horse Show in the Horse Arena. Who knows, they might be our future Amateur and Select competitors or trail riders.”

NMHC General Membership Meeting. This meeting was called during the Horse Fair to vote on two revisions to the Horse Council Bylaws.

Article III Membership, Section C, Voting, Part 2, would be changed to read “proxies are not allowed.”

Article VI Meetings, Section C, Board of Directors, Part 2, Quorum for Board of Directors Meeting, would read “At any meeting of the Board of Directors, the members of the Board of Directors attending that meeting shall constitute a quorum for all purposes.” Both revisions passed.

Some shining stars. We will have more complete reports, but everyone said that **Nancy Searles** stepped up and did the work of ten. At least. She had already been managing the Hospitality, and ended up taking on so much else as well. **Carolyn Burdick** said of the silent auction, “things just kept coming and coming and coming”, but her team kept things running like clockwork. **Kristin Darnell-Schmitt** took on the kid’s corral. There can never be enough help, and she did have dedicated people part of the time, but two exhausting days without a break are tough. They made gajillions of stick horses, but the real hit was the button machine. Kristin, an artist, had produced several designs, then turned the kids loose with coloring materials and other “stuff” – then their productions were laminated into a big button to take home. **Dick Hensleigh** made the commitment to manage the Test Ride without realizing the conflict with his granddaughter’s 21st birthday out of state. There were more – let us know so we can feature them in the next newsletter.

Finances. Early in the season, NMHC decided to try free admission to the Horse Fair as a gift to the Horse Community. (This also would mitigate the increased parking charge imposed in March by Expo New Mexico, and reduce the number of volunteers necessary to watch the many doorways into the Dairy Barn.) The optimistic assumption





was that increased efforts would produce more and larger sponsorships to offset the gate receipts. Also, the vendors and clinicians would prefer a larger crowd. Unfortunately, we finished up with many fewer sponsor dollars, and coupled with the loss of the gate receipts the Horse Fair Bank Account is wiped out. We appreciate our loyal 2007 sponsors more than ever – without you, we would be looking for a quick way out of town!

Sponsors

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Susan Seligman

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John L. Roberts

Wayne Williams

Drawings Prizes

Dreamcatcher Ranchito Bed and Breakfast, a weekend in Santa Fe

Rancho Nambe Bed and Breakfast. a weekend in Pojoaque

Kathy O'Neal of the Livery Training Stable in Corrales, Riding Lessons

Horse Fair Task Force.

High on the Board agenda at the June 4 meeting was: shall the NMHC attempt to present another Horse Fair, given the zero balance in the Horse Fair account? Interestingly enough, members were more interested in ways and means, and improving the Fair, than in deciding whether or not to hold one. The energy was channeled into a short discussion, eventually resulting in a decision to create a Horse Fair Task Force, meet on June 25 at secretary Nancy Searles' house in Corrales, and present a decision and a plan structure to the Board on July 9. This meeting is open, and if you want to submit your ideas beforehand they are very welcome. Nancy's e-mail is nansearl@swcp.com; President Rusty Cook can be reached at RustyCook4412@msn.com. Some of the ideas bounced around at the Board meeting were: more breed demos, people come to see





horses; possibly fewer clinicians (an informal survey on Saturday revealed that four out of five attendees were not horse owners, just came to see horses); more hands on activities for all ages; make things FUN!; find the major horse people in other parts of the state and specifically invite them; have some activities leading up to the Fair; make it realistic financially for clubs to participate; approach more schools, libraries and so forth for supplementary horse related activities; drop the Albuquerque Journal advertising in favor of radio – what are your ideas? And how do we finance them? At this meeting EVERYTHING is up for discussion, including the date and place. It would be nice to keep the horses in, though – it is a Horse Fair. **112 Entrada de Martinez, Corrales, 7:00 PM Monday July 25.** Directions: call Nancy at 239-6143.

Bachechi Open Space Master Plan

On May 17, a public meeting was held to receive comments on possible uses of the Bachechi Open Space at the corner of Rio Grande Boulevard and Alameda Road in Alameda. Horse operations of various sorts have been located at the property for a number of years, culminating with the North Valley Stables owned by Melanie Omer. When the property was donated as open space to Bernalillo County, its preservation as open space was assured but continued equestrian use was not in the written guidelines (even though assumed by many). The county’s establishment of a water treatment plant on part of the acreage was the subject of a lawsuit which they eventually won – otherwise the property would have reverted to the original owners. A “charette” or working group with the members representing multiple interests functioned for a while, but was eventually abandoned by the County.

North Valley Equestrian Center’s lease was terminated, and the property was empty except for the water plant under construction. A local therapy group, Cloud Dancers, did an engineering survey and presented a plan to relocate to and rebuild the better of the two existing barns; without comment, the barn was pulled down by the county shortly thereafter.

When the public hearing was announced, along with the information that all previous plans were

discarded in favor of a fresh start, area horse groups vowed to get concerned people to the meeting, and it worked. One planner told me “we had horse people from the East Side, from the West Side, from the North, from the South – I believe we even had horse people from San Francisco!” The group divided into subgroups to chart ideas for the property. Some are not workable, and there are no guarantees from here on in – but the planners do know that we are active, are concerned and will follow up forcefully. Because of infill, this is one of the very few properties reasonably close to Albuquerque with trail access and some space. (According to one NMHC director, the property owners on the east side of Rio Grande Boulevard, who moved in when there was a very active horse operation and who counted on eventually getting rid of every vestige of horses, have said they will assemble attorneys.)

Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District Election

In prior days, the MRGCD has run its operations (which include managing irrigation and flood control for hundreds of miles of farmland adjacent to the Rio Grande) with little public scrutiny. Most directors were farmers, whose primary interest was maintaining the ditches for their constituency. In more recent years, other users and admirers of the adjoining system of trails and roads have become more active. All nearby property owners pay MRGCD taxes, whether or not they benefit from the irrigation water. Also, the federal government stepped in to ensure enough water remained in the river to protect endangered species.

Fast forward to the present. MRGCD actually mentions “recreation” on its website, and its recreation policy is now a step forward from posting and then ignoring “no trespassing” signs. Passage of SB 486, allowing the possibility shifting liability for recreational trails to another public entity, may reconcile Board members to other uses. And the National Park Service has formulated a “Ditches with Trails” pilot program, which will also be concerned with “Safe Routes to School”. All of us who moved close to the river for the trails, but not the irrigation water, now have a better chance to protect this irreplaceable





network. All the candidates for the recent election supported the trails program, so perhaps even more progress is coming. **Janet Jarratt** won the Valencia County position, **Cecil “Eugene” Abeita** the at-large spot, and **Augusta Meyers** (who finished a term as an at-large director to run for the Bernalillo County position), won her race. The turnout increases for each election, and this time the turnout from the Pueblos increased almost tenfold.

Regional Trails Summit

According to NMHC director Maura Lewiecki, this summit brought together “stakeholders” from counties, cities, the BLM, the Forest Service and others to implement cooperation in the completion of several projects. Each entity listed its current projects, prioritized them, and brainstormed on ways to work together to complete some of them. Those horse-high tunnels under Highway 599 may finally have some trails to connect with them! Maura said the determination to cooperate was very, very impressive. More meetings are in the works when the final reports are completed from this first trails summit.

NMHC Annual Trail Ride **Mary Jo Wallen**

The third Annual Trail Ride unofficially began Friday evening with a cookout at the home of Dick and Mary Jo Wallen of Ramah. Base camp was at the Baca Chica Ranch, owned by our gracious hosts Virginia and Joty Baca. Their daughter Annette Gonzales was co-chair of the event with Mary Jo, but was unable to attend due to illness.

Saturday was a casual day where some people rode to Ramah Lake and others rode up into the Cibola National Forest. Unfortunately, the group that was going on the five hour ride to the waterfall separated (several people arrived late). The second group encountered a rattlesnake at the lower falls area but after some “spooking” were able to continue.

Mary Jo, Jackie Bouker and David Bushmire were the only three to end up at the “surprise destination”. After riding through some rain and hail for over an hour they reached the lunch spot and sat on a thirteen foot petrified log, unearthed

by a rancher over fifty years ago. Other petrified logs in the area remain buried. The afternoon ride had to be cancelled due to worsening weather.

Virginia and Joty Baca (the family is known for its multi-generation work in preserving the Spanish Colonial mustang in New Mexico) hosted the Saturday night barbecue, with over 45 people attending and enjoying Dick Wallen’s justly famed brisket and smoked turkey. Horse people really know how to put together a pitch-in dinner and we enjoyed many favorites. Special thanks go to Richard Riedy and Gary Blum (trail guides), Hazel Clawson (Clawson Leatherworks) and Dave Bushmire, who sang and played some great old Western tunes on his guitar. Dawn Lashley won the “Horse, Follow Closely” book and CD donated by Mary Jo and Dick Wallen and Tim Martinez won a leather barrette donated by Hazel Clawson. Although all agreed it looked stunning in Tim’s hair, he gave it to his new wife, Linda.

On Sunday morning we all trailered our horses about four miles away and 18 riders started to ride over the Ramah Land and Cattle Company ranch and the Davis ranch. Anita Davis and her husband, Bob, were our special hosts and guides on this ride. Our first sight, other than the constant beautiful scenery, was the old Clawson homestead and then a herd of fifteen horses, including two beautiful foals, approached. The stallion was very protective and had to be discouraged for the safety of our trail riders. We then crossed an area with volcanic rock and cactus, not appreciated by some of the horses. We ate lunch in the shade underneath the most spectacular sandstone monoliths, mesas and ridges. It is hard to imagine that 240 to 290 million years ago, an arm of the sea was in this area. The stallion again came with his family to check us out. (I had actually met him the day before, while surveying the trail from a pickup. He is a Foundation Quarter Horse tracing back to Wimpy, the first registered Quarter Horse, and these horses are raised, trained and then sold by the Clawsons.) By 3 PM we were back to our trailers and everyone said goodbye, shared phone numbers of new friends and talked about our next adventure.

(Note: putting a trail ride together is a tremendous amount of work, and NMHC is





extremely fortunate in its wonderful members. Also, the ranch owners are amazingly kind to let us ride across their land. Thanks again to: Mary Jo and Dick Wallen [“MJ” was actually our first lifetime member, coming here from Indiana where she was also a lifetime member of the Indiana HC]; Annette Gonzales [Annette co-chaired the Horse Fair last year and has served as director, officer and go-to Spanish colonial mustang resource for NMHC]; Virginia and Joty Baca [after working for so many years to preserve the quality of the original Spanish horse, they now have the pleasure of nationwide recognition of the horses they produce] and ranch owners Anita Davis and family, and Roger Clawson and family. We cannot thank you enough for your efforts. – Val)

NMHC Board Meetings

Regular Board meetings are held the first Monday of the month, unless a national holiday is within a day or so. Scheduled meetings for the balance of this year are: **July 9, August 6, October 1 and November 5**. Traditionally we do not meet in September because so many Board members are involved, one way or another, at the State Fair. The November meeting is followed later in the month or in December by the **Annual Meeting and Elections**, with a date still to be chosen. We welcome new director **Lori Walton**, who accepted an appointment to one of our vacancies.

Current agendas include: any final planning on the **August Flea Market**; planning for the **State Fair Booth**; work on finalizing a **Trails Design Brochure**; planning the **Annual Meeting** including nominations for the **Horse Person of the Year**. Of course the **Horse Fair** is the elephant in the room – almost everyone wants it, almost no one knows the work that goes into it, and everyone, not just the Board members, needs to help it work. The Board must also consider NMHC response to various zoning, planning and regulatory efforts by our governing officials, and plan for continued and improved climate for horse owners. There are still vacancies and partial terms available, and elections are coming up sooner than you think! (If you have a possible venue for the Annual Meeting, please let a Board member know.)

“Fugitive Dust” Blows In Again

We have just received a notice about, and have ordered, a “Stakeholder Review Draft” concerning air quality regulations on agricultural (and other) operations. You may remember that the Air Quality Control Board proposed a few years ago that producers of “fugitive dust” (dust that is produced on your property and then blows elsewhere) be regulated, fined and otherwise forced to mitigate that dust in order to improve the air quality for all. Many agricultural operations and horse operations felt targeted; it is easy to drive past a riding ring and see the horses shuffling up the dust. The original permit costs and other measures were extremely expensive and difficult to install, and of doubtful usefulness. At that time, Jay Koch headed the group of horsemen and horsewomen working on the regulations, and succeeded in getting some amended, and some deferred.

That three year deferral is now over, and the regulations have been reviewed. Comments are due by July 9; we will attempt to have an NMHC member go through the full draft when we receive it, as the list of changes is incomprehensible. The Air Quality Control Board has been busy in the interim, attempting to reduce the amounts of particulate matter and “de-haze” the clear air. It must be discouraging when a landspout, such as last Saturday’s on La Bajada hill during the Belmont Stakes, sucks up so much dirt and throws it everywhere. Meanwhile, tell your horses to pick up their feet.

Expo New Mexico

It has been rumored for years, but recently Paul Blanchard announced plans to move the Downs at Albuquerque to a new location east of here, where the proposed racetrack will also contain barns, and equestrian center, and a hotel – and slots. Blanchard said he would buy out the remainder of his lease with Expo. Approval is needed from the Racing Commission and the Gaming Commission and is said not to be automatic. However, if the Downs does move in time for racing dates in 2008, and if the Arabian Nationals spends its final October here in 2007, that leaves a large horse facility empty. Knowing nothing of any plans for the space, here might be a possibility: in





neighboring states, some trainers have access to and can rent stall and arena space and hired labor from a public facility. Might this be a good use for the barns at the Fairgrounds? Trainers cannot all afford to buy land to develop their own facilities, and wealthy patrons are rarer than they used to be. Several years ago when we had a very bad spell of wet weather and private facilities everywhere were flooded, local horse people attempted to set up a plan to rent temporary space at the Fairgrounds, or have the Fairgrounds allow riders to come up for a daily rental fee. We presented statistics from other states, but really achieved little progress. As I remember, the legal staff offered obstacles until the weather eventually improved and the ground dried up. Perhaps it is time to revisit, as stables close everywhere. State Fair Commission meetings are listed on their web site, exponm.com, and the state fair premium should be up soon as well.

BPE

Forty-nine states have (federally mandated) Bicycle-Pedestrian Committees. New Mexico's is a **Bicycle-Pedestrian-Equestrian Committee**. Stories attribute the "Equestrian" to Bruce King, governor at that time, or to a horseman on the highway commission. In any case, the committee meets quarterly under the auspices of the NM Department of Transportation, each meeting being held in a different highway district. Chair Bob Perry describes the public meetings as networking and a "bucket of paint" approach to simplify needed infrastructure so more can be accomplished with fewer dollars. The Executive meetings are devoted currently to updating the state Bicycle/Pedestrian/Equestrian Advisory Plan, presented periodically to the secretary of the DOT. Just completed are new brochures on Pedestrian Awareness, Bicycle Awareness and Equestrian Awareness, which will be produced in English and in Spanish and distributed by the DOT. Although the committee consists primarily of staffers from the DOT and from MPO's (Metropolitan Planning Organizations) and RPO's (Regional Planning Organizations) there are members of the public representing Pedestrians, Bicyclists and Equestrians (me). And two of the highway department people are horse people. The August Santa Fe meeting may have an evening

session to allow more of the public to attend. Watch the website.

Open Space/Agriculture/Urban Space

"Open Space and Agriculture in the Urban Envelope" was an intriguing panel created by Chris Weller and presented under the auspices of the North Valley Coalition. The intent was to inform the public, and local political entities, about the options available to (1) keep local farmable land local and farmable; to (2) keep water flowing in the acequias; to (3) keep the green canopy alive and the wildlife in it flourishing; and (4) to get more non-farming neighbors interested in water quality, in the ecosystem of the ditches, in land preservation and in the local agribusiness that lives off the land in the greater Albuquerque area – the urban envelope. Chris is a realtor and a member of the horse council, and she brought together representatives from all groups interested in the concepts above. I spoke for "horses and recreation"; others represented farmers' markets, several land preservation trusts, the middle rio grande conservancy district, county and city open space and recreational trails, acequia farming, food co-ops, land use planners, historians and community activists. Over 100 people attended, including the senator, representative and city councilor for the area, and all stayed until the end (one hour after the scheduled end). The interest is there.

Flea Market, Tack Swap, SF Tent

Morey and Rita Liebling of Sandia Trailer Sales have offered to host the 2007 New Mexico Horse Council Flea Market and Tack Swap. Let's grow it up in the cool Sandia mountains in August! It will be **Saturday, August 18, from 10 AM to 2 PM**. Bring your booths, (umbrellas, canopies) as shade is limited to the first ten or so to arrive. Morey promises to grill hot dogs, and there may be a radio station; there will surely be good deals on trailers should you want to pick one up. **Booth prices are \$15.00 each and the cost helps defray the tent rental for the state fair booth.** Suggestion: Clubs - rent booths and allow your members to sell things as well. This is a super opportunity to get your message across to people. Sandia Trailer Sales is located 12 minutes east of





Albuquerque on Old Highway 66 (address: 1435 Route 66, Edgewood. Telephone: 281-9860.) To indicate your desire to participate, send a check to NMHC, P.O. Box 10206, Albuquerque 87184 and tell me (valcole@flash.net) and/or Cathy Chapel (cathy@SandiaTrailer.com).

This tack swap will be fun, and big, and lively, and there will be something for everyone to buy. Remember our motto: Get Rid Of Your Old Stuff So You Can Buy Some NEW Old Stuff. The State Fair tent rental is a large chunk of change, but every little bit helps.

To recap, the New Mexico Horse Council rents a tent and tables and erects the tent, stall and tables in front of the Horse Arena during the State Fair. Any horse group may sign up to appear in the tent. We do like to have a horse on display – it brings in an amazing number of people, and they may just come on in to the Horse Arena to see what we might be up to in there. The tent has been underutilized, and the Board strongly considered discontinuing it for 2007 – but the knowledge that once lost, the space would never be regained, persuaded members to try for one more year. Clubs may sign up for any time; it does not have to be “your” horse show day. In fact, a strong case could be presented for having your booth people there the day before your show.

Or, groups that do not show can use the space. In the past, we have hosted horse therapy groups, The Foundation for the Pure Spanish Horse, back country horsemen and others.

Corrales Crosswalk Event

The Corrales Equestrian Advisory Commission, in conjunction with C.H.A.M.P. (Corrales Horse and Mule People) celebrated National Trails Day in a way unique to Corrales. Concerned that drivers were not stopping for horses and riders (pedestrians, strollers, llamas) they created maps and informational packets showing all the crosswalks in Corrales and also containing information on horses, the NMDOT Equestrian Awareness brochure and the draft of the NMHC trails design brochure. As many riders as could assemble stood at the crosswalks to educate drivers. (Corrales already has signs at each end of the village: **STOP FOR EQUESTRIANS IN CROSSWALKS NEXT FIVE MILES**) but more

information, and a horse presence, is always useful. They also had booths at the growers’ market, and the NM State University Equestrian Team appeared as well. Many NMHC members participated and all enjoyed the event.

Corrales has a rich history of horse ownership – the very name means “a place for livestock” and at one time the Village passed a Right to Farm Act that was distributed nationwide. Simply, it said that agricultural activities were permitted and valued, and a copy of the act had to be distributed to prospective property owners. Later, the act lapsed as new populations moved in and elected new members of the Village Council. However, recently we have heard that the act may be reintroduced or reinstated. Trails in the village are also being evaluated, and the TopForm community arena recently hosted (along with Dan’s Boots and Saddles and others) the annual Ditch Pony Promenade, a free horse show intended for those who are not “career” competitors.

American Horse Council Updates

“The HIPAA Recreational Injury Technical Correction Act”, HR 1076, was introduced this spring. Similar legislation was passed by the Senate last year, and the identical bill S 616 was introduced this year. The bill would bar employers from discriminating against those who take part in legal recreational activities such as horseback riding, motorcycling, ATV riding and snowmobiling in the insurance programs they offer their workers. The American Horse Council is working with a coalition of recreational groups to see that this legislation is finally passed.

The House Agriculture Committee will soon be considering the 2007 Farm Bill. This will be an opportunity to put the horse industry on equal footing with other livestock industries with respect to **federal disaster assistance** by including “equine” within the definition of livestock eligible for federal disaster relief. The AHC supports this legislation and staff has been meeting with staff members of the House Agricultural Committee working on proposed language. AHC requests support for the legislation in the form of letters to NM representatives.





Two bills have been introduced in this Congress dealing with animal ID, says Kathie Luedeke of the American Horse Council in a memo dated May 18. The **Livestock Identification and Marketing Opportunities (LIMO) Act**, HR 2301, calls for implementation of a national livestock identification system by 2009. Under this bill, participation is mandatory for “livestock”, defined to mean “cattle, sheep, swine, goats and poultry”. Horses are not included except on a voluntary basis. However, HR 1018 calls for the **Prohibition on Mandatory Animal Identification** by amending the Animal Health Protection Act to prohibit the Secretary of Agriculture from implementing a National Animal Identification System, or using federal funds to implement a system that requires mandatory participation by livestock owners. It also requires the Secretary to protect any information received in a voluntary system.

On May 1, the **Equine Equity Act** (S 1251) was reintroduced. It would end the disparate treatment of the horse industry versus other businesses under the federal tax code. Specifics: horses would be eligible for long term capital gains treatment after 12 months rather than the current 24 months. And all race horses would be eligible for depreciation over three years, instead of the current three or seven years, depending on when the horse was placed in service. According to sponsors, it would provide a more equitable depreciation schedule which “matches reality” that many horses begin training at the end of their yearling year.

On May 4, the **Jockeys Insurance Fairness Act** (HR 2175) was reintroduced in the House of Representatives. It would amend the Interstate Horseracing Act by requiring that the written agreement a track must have with a horsemen’s group prior to entering a contract to simulcast races out of state include a provision that “not less than 50%” of the amount received by the horsemen’s group would be paid to the state racing commission, which would in turn use the funds to offer health and injury insurance to jockeys, exercise riders, backside personnel and trainers. It also includes a federal provision against entering a horse in any race subject to an interstate off-track wager if the horse has been given “anabolic steroids of any kind”.



National Issues Forum. The National Issues Forum and Annual Meeting of the American Horse Council will be held in Washington, D.C. June 17 – 20. After registration, the event will kick off with a reception sponsored by the State Horse Councils Advisory Committee. (NMHC cannot of course co-sponsor this year, but many of the larger councils do contribute to the success of this opening event.)

Monday, the State Horse Councils Advisory Committee (of which I am the immediate past chair) meets from 8:30 to 4:00 PM. This is one of two meetings per year of the SHCAC; the other is held the first weekend in November and is hosted by a state horse council. In 2007 the Kentucky Horse Council will be our hosts. The November meeting is generally better attended because the State Horse Councils work with sponsors to lower costs; in Washington, D.C. there is no way to make it affordable. Over half of the delegates to the SHCAC meetings pay their own expenses, as do I.

The other standing committees of AHC – Health & Regulatory, Recreation, Animal Welfare, Horse Show and Racing Advisory hold Monday meetings as well. And the two coalitions folded under the AHC, the Equine Species Working Group (Animal ID) and the Unwanted Horse Coalition have three hour meetings as well. Later, all committee chairs summarize their last six months of work and their current meeting and report to the Government Affairs Advisory Committee; that is followed by an evening reception.

On Tuesday, all meet for sessions on current national issues. After a legislative briefing by AHC staff, the first talk is titled “Own Responsibly” and covers the work done by the Unwanted Horse Coalition since its formation two years ago. That is followed by “Equine Identification – Is There Life Left” and “World Equestrian Games 2010: Opportunities.” After an awards luncheon, the afternoon topics are “Disease Control”, “State Horse Parks” and “Partnership Programs to Maintain Trails”. In the evening, a Congressional reception is held in the Russell Senate Office Building. Delegates staying until Wednesday were urged to set up conferences with their Congresspeople or staffs, and the AHC





staff was able to make appointments for me with all five from New Mexico – I will be visiting the offices of Senator Pete Domenici, Senator Jeff Bingaman, Representative Heather Wilson, Representative Tom Udall and Representative Steve Pearce before returning home.

Equine Liability Signs

Although there has been a delay in getting our latest batch of signs, they should be ready very soon and, for a wonder, this time the price of the metal blanks was not increased. Postage is another matter. New parcel post rates, and particularly new parcel post zones, are extremely difficult to anticipate and seem to vary with the phase of the moon or the mood of the postal worker – or perhaps there is a gram more tape on a certain package. At this time, with the consent of those ordering signs, I am charging the parcel post as mailed plus a small amount for handling, and invoicing after I mail the packages. The Board may direct otherwise at the next meeting.

Equestrian Injury Study

TheHorse.com, the online guide to equine health care, recently (6/14/07) published an article summarizing a retrospective study performed by doctors at an Alberta, Canada trauma center. It presents some conclusions that run counter to widely held ideas; for instance, experienced riders are more likely to sustain injuries than previously reported. Of almost 2000 trauma patients studied, 2% were injured while participating in equestrian activity. Doctors used questionnaires to assemble more information.

- The average patient was male, age 47, had 27 years of riding experience and was riding in western tack.
- The average horse was a 7-year-old quarter horse, ridden on a daily (36%) or weekly (36%) basis
- Most owned the horse on which they were injured and rode for work or recreational purposes.
- Almost half had been previously injured on a horse.
- Most common injuries were chest (54%) and head (48%) and 45% of the patients required surgery.

- Doctors were surprised at the percentage of chest injuries, and the low number of injuries on horses that were categorized as “rarely ridden”.
- 60% of riders were thrown or fell off a horse; 35% said their horses were spooked by something.
- The majority of riders did not wear either helmets or other protective equipment.
- 87% returned to riding.

Doctors suggested that riders strongly consider wearing helmets and body protectors (as now required for jockeys and children riding in US Pony Club Eventing competitions).

British Judges Hardheaded

Late last year, a new rule required judges of traditional hunter classes in Great Britain to wear helmets that meet the British equivalent of our US ASTM/SEI safety standards, instead of their traditional bowlers and silk hats.

In these classes, judges ride dozens of strange horses every day, to determine which is the best field hunter. The classes can last for hours as the judges try various horses. The arguments sound familiar:

The judges reserve the right to choose for themselves as adults;

The helmets are uncomfortable and do not fit correctly;

And one judge told “Horse and Hound” magazine that she could not wear anything without extreme pain because of a previous head injury.

For now, judges may be allowed to sign a disclaimer. However, some shows are requiring all riders to wear approved helmets while on the show grounds.

New Mexico Helmet Law Passed

Youth in New Mexico are now required to wear helmets while operating wheeled vehicles – bicycles, tricycles, scooters and skateboards. Riders are not included at this time, because they “do not ride on the public roads” according to the main proponent of the legislation. Also, he said, the rodeo competitors would not like it.

