



Gaited Gatherings



Official Newsletter ~~ Midwest TrailGaiters ~~ February 2008

www.midwesttrailgaiters.com

Hello Gaiters!

It's been a l-o-n-g winter already. Not much riding - well none actually - for us, but we're sure looking forward to April and the start of the new trail riding season. Below is the list of rides that the TrailGaiters have planned for 2008. An asterisk (*) appears next to those that will require you to make a camping reservation. We've already started making some reservations ourselves. Check the website for ride details and Coordinator contacts.

APRIL 26 TH	*UKARYDEE-CASTLE ROCK RIDE/WORK
MAY 10 TH	*ENDLESS VALLEY - WHITESELL CLINIC
MAY 31 ST	UNDERDOWN RECREATIONAL AREA
JUNE 21 ST	YELLOW RIVER STATE FOREST
JULY 12 TH	*HAPPY BARN - MT. HOREB
AUG. 2 ND	*WILDCAT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
AUG. 23 RD	*OUTBACK RANCH, HOUSTON MN
SEPT. 13 TH	HAY MEADOWS FLOWAGE
SEPT. 27 TH	*PALMYRA - S. KETTLE
OCT. 11 TH	LAKE LE AQUA NA
OCT. 25 TH	LA RIVIERE PARK
NOV. 8 TH	*UKARYDEE/CASTLE ROCK
DATE OPEN	FRANKLIN CREK, DIXON ILLINOIS
DATE OPEN	ZUMBRO BOTTOMS

Midwest Horse Fair will be **April 18-20**, and once again there will be a club get-together in the Expo building on that Saturday (time and room number to be announced). Here is some news about what's been going on with your fellow trailriders. I'm sure it will get you thinking about warmer weather and shedding horses.

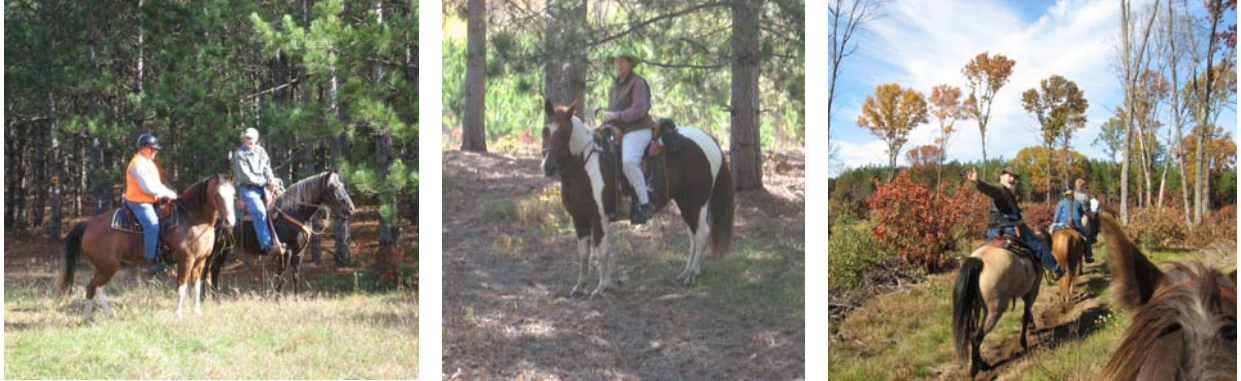
Sharon B.

Remember how much fun the riders had at the last Club ride of 2007 ?

Castle Rock Trails, Ukarydee Campground, October 19-21, 2007

We saved this report to get you excited about the 2008 riding season.

From our Coordinators, Kathy and Dave Bleskey, here it is!



The beautiful Castle Rock horse trails !

The 2007 Trailgaiter riding season wound down with a wonderful campout and ride at Ukarydee, near Necedah, WI, on October 19-21, 2007. It was the largest turnout of the year with approximately 40 members in attendance. The organizers arranged for perfect fall weather and they also got the DNR to suspend hunting (yeah right - who can get the DNR to do anything?).

The TGerers are the best campfire cooks and once again surpassed themselves at the potluck. TGer campfires are always memorable, but this one had lots of fine entertainment. Bill Dietz and Kevin Moore passed the guitar back and forth and sang. Bill shared the songs he had written for his grandchildren - including one for the new baby. Among Kevin's songs was the one he wrote about the TGer Soiled Doves/Bad Girls. And we never tire of Ted Bailey's poem, "Cherokee, the Wonder Horse".

We plan to close out the 2008 riding season at Ukarydee on the weekend of November 8th. See you then! -- We are working on the entertainment already!

Hosts, Dave and Kathy Bleskey



Ukarydee campground activity - - Do you recognize these horsemen??



Gaiters' gathering at Ukarydee!

January 12, 2008 - Gaiters Holiday Party

The annual holiday get-together was fun and a great success. The entire 2008 Gaiters riding season was planned while eating, drinking and practicing our talking smart for the year's campfires. The party was held at Ted and Sharon Bailey's place and, as you can see from the photos, we were all squeezed in to the family room for the planning. (We noted that some members were shooting the breeze in another room, and declared that their wives would just tell them where they'd be going this year!) Sharon Darrow led the group in the planning activity and Sharon Bailey dutifully wrote the results on a big easel. Members were entering the dates in their calendars hoping they could get their horses in shape for the ambitious schedule. A tiny bit of other business was discussed as the Gaiters don't like to spend a lot of time on that sort of thing. There was as usual a great amount of food, heavy on the dessert side. We heard that Ted was upset because people "left with the leftovers."

Our traveling "Boob" award was passed to Kim Jaye, who had a challenging '07 riding season. She had an especially fun time at End of the Trail campground sliding down muddy trails with her horse Chance. And then there were the bees that stung her. Kim really went out of her comfort zone last year and made great strides as a rider. It's been rumored that she's working her way up to being a Bad Girl?



TGers planning the 2008 riding schedule

December 15, 2007 Fundraising Benefit Report Mary Semerak

The Midwest TrailGaiters, Oregon Horse Association, and many other individuals and friends pitched in to make the fundraising benefit a great success for Iris Cooley and Jeff Golberg. Many people donated their time and gave items to the benefit held on Saturday, December 15, at Aspenhill Ranch in Oregon, WI. Iris was released from the nursing home Dec 28th and Jeff is home healing with a few setbacks but doing better. It was a blizzard type weather day with I believe a 4' accumulation but we still had a large turnout (only 2 minivans got stuck in the driveway) and the silent auction was a great success as many wonderful items were sold including beautiful handmade quilts and even a new saddle! There were pony rides in the indoor arena. A thank you to Jill for the use of her Trakaener gelding Max, and Mary Semerak for the use of her walking pony Sender. The kids loved the horses wearing their santa hats and the many rides they gave without a fuss.

For those of you who do not know the beneficiaries of this benefit - -

Jeff Golberg is a horseman from the Janesville area, and has been struggling with many battles against cancer. Due to numerous surgeries he has had many financial challenges as well.

Iris Cooley, is a long-time TrailGaiter member, and her friends would like to share some personal things about her and what has happened to her from an automobile accident in October. Iris is a good friend and fellow horseback rider to many in the Madison area and beyond. Iris is also a dedicated Speech Therapist to young people in the Cambridge School District. She has her own horse property outside of Oregon which she cares for totally by herself. She currently has 3 horses, 2 of which are older and retiring from trail riding.

On October 29 Iris was in a very serious auto accident. She was transported by Med Flight to UW Hospital. She suffered severe injuries - head bleed, broken jaw, broken bones in her neck, ribs and arm, and a broken pelvis. She had to have her jaw wired shut, but that has healed and Iris is chattering away again. Iris received physical and occupational therapy in a Madison nursing home. She is continuing in rehab but it will be a long road before she is able to go back to work - - and even longer before she will be able to care for her home or animals by herself. A neighbor and friends helped in doing her horse chores, and Iris won't be able to take over that until at least Spring. Good friend Darwin Frye has pitched in to take care of many things around the farm and transport Iris to therapy.

Although Iris is in good spirits and working extra hard with her therapists, she will have many financial difficulties ahead of her. Her car was totaled, she has very little sick leave, and only part of her animal feed in for the winter. We are hoping that this benefit will relieve a little of the stress that she is going through, emotionally and financially, so that she can concentrate on healing.



In addition to crafts, donated items and a silent auction, hot dogs, soda and popcorn were for sale.



The kids loved the pony rides, everyone loved the baked goods sale, & the high bidder on the quilt was pleased!

New Horse Website

Check out this new website for horsemment: www.fourcornerstrails.com.

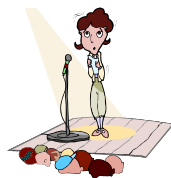
Submitted by member Jeanne Fox.

TG Member Works for Three Gaits Award

The AT&T Telecom Pioneers recently awarded Three Gaits Inc., with a \$5000 "AT&T Cares" grant award. Presenting the award to Chris Ziembra , Executive Director at Three Gaits, are (from left) Pam Clapper, Bob Christensen, Linda Malinowski, Lynda Weihert, Ziembra, **Jim Barden**, **Gina Barden** (TGers) and Kathy Mallach. Volunteers from both active and retired Telecom Pioneers contribute over 250 hours each year at this facility located outside of Stoughton, Wisconsin.



Three Gaits, Inc. provides therapeutic riding and equine assisted activities for children, youth, and adults with disabilities and special needs. Therapeutic riding uses equine oriented activities to promote and enhance the development of each rider's cognitive, physical, and communicative abilities, and positive self-esteem. Its volunteers and staff provide therapy, special education and interpersonal skill development to more than 275 participants each year.



MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Note: In this column we'd like to highlight our members, especially those new to MWTGs or who aren't able to make it to many of the rides. This way we'll know a bit about you when you join us!

Hi, my name is **Sharie Buskager**. I, like probably most of you, can't remember when I didn't love horses. I rode whenever I had the chance as a child, but never owned my own until I was an adult.

A friend of mine had owned my horse, Buck, since he was two years old and he was 23 when I bought him. She had just become a new mom and knew she wouldn't have time for him. I was such a novice to horse ownership and had him at a family stable across the street from our home. It was convenient but nobody rode, and he was kept in a stall for most of the day. He wasn't happy, and we needed someone to ride with. We then moved him about a mile and a half from our house to another family-run stable with an indoor arena and trails to ride on. The best part of all, I had someone to ride with. Jessi McMillan and I have enjoyed many hours riding on her property! My husband, Jerry, and I have had three daughters; Megan, Kari and Abby, to raise and enjoy. They liked Buck too, but I was really the one who enjoyed riding the most. As they grew older, I had more time to ride; and I loved it. I always say that Buck helped me raise our girls. They were good kids, but I believe that every parent needs to step out of the "real world" for a while. Just put the long "to do" list on hold for a bit, and there's no better place to do that than on the back of a good horse.

Don't get me wrong, I loved the busyness of everything the girls were involved in, but I knew I needed to have something just for me too. It was so nice to be able to go to the barn for a few hours and come back centered and relaxed. There's something about a good trail ride to put yourself, body and mind, at peace. I also knew that someday soon those little girls would grow up, and I'd better have a hobby to fill the void.

When I lost my Buck at age 30 to colic, I wasn't prepared for how I'd feel. I'd lost special dogs before, but only someone who loves horses would understand that losing your horse hits right to your soul. Buck and I had a relationship unlike any I'd had before, it was like he understood me. He literally carried me, and I automatically felt better whether I'd had a great day before our ride or a crummy one. I also thought that maybe that part of my life was over, and perhaps I'd never have the opportunity to have another horse. With two girls in college and another a senior in high school, I wasn't sure how long it would take to get back into it. A couple months later, my friend, Mary Ann, called and asked me to exercise her horse, Foxy, for six weeks because she'd broken her leg. I ended up riding her for about two years while Mary Ann fought complications from her injury. Last summer we were together when she put her dear Foxy down, and when she bought her new horse, Jazz.

Then another friend at the barn, Sharon Darrow, allowed me to ride her horse, Buster. She opened up my horse world again by taking me to Magnolia to ride the trails and I loved it! A group of us from the barn were able to go camping at Ukarydee last fall and we had an amazing time together. I was even able to go with Sharon and the Trailgater group one more time before the fall faded away. What a wonderful experience it all was for me!!

On December 21, 2007, our girls and future son-in-law, Paul, met at our house in the morning so we could make cookies before we went to my parents for our family Christmas celebration. When I said we'd better start making the cookies so we could get to Grandpa and Grandma's on time, my husband said that he and Paul had a surprise for the girls and I first. They made us all get in our van and put blindfolds on. I had no idea that as soon as I had my blindfold on, my girls took theirs off. Little did I know that they were all in on the surprise!



Sharie & Tucker

Jerry drove us around for about a half an hour. He went in circles, stopped where there were no stop signs and soon I had no clue where we were. When he finally stopped, Paul got out of the front seat, opened up the side door to the van, helped me out of my seat and pulled the blindfold off my head so fast that I couldn't even take a breath to get a hint of where we were. When I opened my

eyes, there stood Buster all saddled up with a big red bow and Sharon holding his lead rope. Mary Ann was next to her and Jessi with her youngest daughter, Kassidy holding a big, special poster she'd made just for me. I was surrounded by my wonderful, sneaky family, and my favorite horse friends in the whole world all in the indoor arena to share in the surprise. I was totally blown away with their surprise, and that moment will be a memory I'll cherish forever.

I have changed Buster's name to *Tucker*. He'll be seven years old in March, and I look forward to making memories with him for a very long time.

Happy Trails,
Sharie

Nicker Network To Launch November 10, 2007, with 26 Equestrian Channels:

What You Want to Watch, When you Want to Watch, How you Want to Watch

Houston, TX - On November 10th, NickerTV charges out of the gate with an initial offering of 26 different equestrian channels all dedicated to a variety of horse-oriented themes and subjects. Nicker Network will be the first Internet-based, on-demand *multi-channel* television network targeted to the horse world.

Each channel will have its own selection of programs, with new ones being added to the rosters on a regular basis. Programs will be available for viewing at no cost, with additional options for viewers to download programs to buy or rent, as well as to purchase DVDs.

Channels dedicated to news, shows and events, veterinary medicine, entertainment-oriented documentaries, magazine programs, children and youth, and training channels specific to disciplines and/or individual trainers or clinicians will be part of the launch offerings. The channel line up will grow substantially during 2008 as the network expands into its own original series production, and establishes home shopping and real estate channels and other horse-oriented channel offerings.

Sally Lasater, founder and Managing Director of Nicker Communications, said, "Everyone working on this project is truly excited, not only for those people who will enjoy and use the network as a source for knowledge and entertainment, but also for the equestrian industry itself. Organizations and associations will soon start to take advantage of the free channels we've set aside for their use as broadcast outlets for meetings and member functions and events of all kinds."

She continued, "While driving enthusiasts will find "Blinkers&TugsTV" right up their alley, "PiaffeTV" will be there for the dressage folks and "VetBarnTV" will cover all sorts of health and maintenance subjects. "Stick&BallTV" is obviously for polo people, but "PegasusTV" will have documentaries and magazine shows for everyone. I think that people will be amazed at what's been created and we all can't wait for the feedback. Obviously we'll have to adapt and modify as the network and its technology expands, but Nicker's right there on the cutting edge and intends to be there quite a while. Truly, it's what you want to watch, when you want to watch, how you want to watch. "

Jim Matison, former Executive Director of the HorseTV Industry Council and long-time advocate for equestrian television, is currently heading up all marketing and sponsorship development for Nicker Communications. He explained the unique way that companies within the industry were also going to benefit from Nicker Network:

"The free streaming aspect of Nicker Network is ad-supported, and companies provide us with short video or multi-media ads for insertion at the head of program segments. The best news is that there is absolutely no cost to companies for these ads unless someone actually watches the ad. Accompanying banners and "click-throughs" are completely free and thrown in as a bonus to advertisers. It's a totally "win-win" situation. No long-term commitments, no upfront charges, and companies will know exactly how many people saw their ad. It's a great program and completely different from print or the traditional Internet banner ad structure. Current data about video ads on the Internet indicates that the documented response is going through the roof. Companies part of the Nicker Network family will actually get what they pay for!"

Nicker Network will be available to anyone with a broadband connection *anywhere in the world*. Content providers, including producers specializing in all areas of equestrian lifestyles and disciplines, are invited to contact the company for program submission information.

Content provider and advertising information is now available on the [Nicker website](#), as well as the list of initial channels scheduled for launch.

Courtesy of Don Woods

