

~Gaited Gatherings~

Official Newsletter ~~ Midwest TrailGaiters ~~ May 2007(A)

www.midwesttrailgaiters.com

Hello Gaiters!

Trail riding and camping are now in full swing! The Gaiters started off the season with an awesome clinic at Black Horse Equestrian Center and camping at Southern Kettle Moraine State Forest. Enjoy the newsletter's report of this and more!

Meeting at Midwest Horse Fair

A large group of old, new and prospective members gathered in the Expo Center on Saturday, April 21, at the Midwest Horse Fair to talk about the upcoming TrailGaiters riding season. Attendees introduced themselves and shared a little about their horses and experiences. A highlight of the get-together was a preview of some of the new club shirts available. Some members found shirts available that day while others placed their orders. It was great to touch base with old friends from last year's trail rides, meet new ones, and look forward to the upcoming events. If you're interested in ordering a shirt with the club's logo or need more information, please contact Karla Hurd at khurd@gemplers.com.

Larry Whitesell Gaited Horse Clinic - April 27-29

The TrailGaiters were sponsors of a clinic for gaited horses with noted trainer and clinician Larry Whitesell. The clinic was held at the Black Horse Equestrian Center in Palmyra, just minutes from Horsemen's Campground. Clinic Participants share their thoughts about Larry's clinic:

EZ Sister Karla Perkins - The Palmyra weekend was great!! I was so excited about attending the Larry Whitesell clinic. I've never attended a clinic with a horse and really didn't know what to expect. I couldn't have been happier with all that I learned. Larry and Jennifer were so helpful and are truly what I would call natural horse trainers, it was exhausting. For those of you who know me, you might find this hard to believe, but I was speechless. Not because I didn't have anything to say, just that I was too tired to talk. Now that IS a first. Klaus said I should attend horse clinics 8 hours a day.

Jennifer took the time to ride each horse, showing us with just a few softening techniques, how it can change their attitudes and gait. A soft horse is a happy horse and a happy rider. You should never use fancy shanks, weighted shoes or harsh bits to control your horse's temperament or gait. What you need is patients and the willingness to practice what he teaches. He asked for help in bringing back what the gaited world has lost. He wants to see a natural gait; one that is developed and nurtured with patience's not with "tools"

So many of us really enjoyed our three days of professional trainer that we are hoping he is invited to attend The Mid-West Horse Fair in 2008. If you were unable to attend the clinic but would like

to see him there, please email the Wisconsin State Horse Council. Encourage them to invite Larry Whitesell; I know you won't be disappointed.

Andrea Kahn - I enjoyed every minute of the Larry and Jennifer clinic. Very informative.

I learned how to back my horse without pulling the reins back! And riding back to the campground with my shank bit, I was very conscious of how I used my hands. I'm sure Indy was VERY happy I went.



Terry Link - Hi, I am the one with the loudest horse there. Because of a migraine, I was not able to complete the weekend, but I really enjoyed what we will able to do. Larry is a gifted horseman and I look forward to learning from his tapes.

Dapper Dan Catherman - Although most had left before my horse took the ring, my Walker has the infamy of inducting Jennifer into the Soiled Doves. After Jennifer climbed on board, Larry decided he was going to demonstrate the use of a plastic bag in his handy stick. Caine had a different idea and unloaded Jennifer. I really felt bad. I can say that I learned that I don't know much about horses, but got some good direction on learning more.

Linda Catherman - I learned a lot about Gaited Horses from Larry and Jennifer at the Clinic. I thought three days was too long though.

(Editorial: I guess Linda didn't have much to add after Dan's horse managed to embarrass her!)

Bad Girl Gina Barden - I thought it was a very good clinic and I'm sure Red would agree. He loves the minimal pressure on his mouth. It is a very humane way to ride and now if I can just retrain myself we'll be doing great. I need to do lots of bending with Red for more suppleness. But it is "so simple" as Larry Whitesell said many times. It's just a matter of working at it daily.

Dana Tautz - I am glad that somebody is teaching gaited riders to engage and balance their horses. Good clinic, I learned a lot. Cheers!

Kim Jaye - It is hard to put into words all I learned about myself and my horse at this clinic but I will try. I learned what I need to work on is my self which will help my horse be the best horse he has the ability to be. As long as I get off his face and ride him up into the bit and help him with his balance and mine. Gaiting will become natural easy plus we will enjoy a lot more great rides together.

Carol Hayden - Although I had the most unpredictable scared horse in the group Larry was a breath of fresh air. It was wonderful to finally hear a gaited horse trainer talk about the use of leverage bits, keeping a horse in a false frame and the damage that can be done by a bad rider. Larry confirmed my worst fears about Tre. Who for years had been ridden with a heavy leverage bit by his previous owner. She probably hollowed out his back and brought his head up to keep his gait nice. Look at the damage that was done to him. When another gait horse clinician told me to do that to Patch to bring back his gait I instinctually knew that was a bad idea. I have had my Patch in training with a dressage trainer for six weeks not because I want a Dressage horse but because I want him to stop riding through the bit and pulling on my hands. I literally cannot believe the difference in this horse. He doesn't pull on my hands anymore. He is soft and supple and working off his back end. Tre will also be enrolled in school with a Dressage teacher. I am only hoping I can undo the damage that has been done to him. As Larry said he really has a nice disposition but obviously he feels at a disadvantage and all his issues may be stemming from that. My only complaint would be I felt the arena was too small for 15 horses.

Diana Albrecht - I had a great time at the clinic last weekend and would recommend/and do one again. There were several things that I learned over the weekend one being ground work drills and saddle drills. I now have moves to practice from the ground and from the saddle. The other thing that really clicked for me was how important it was to stay out of their mouth. My first tendency is to pull up on the reins when Ebay spooks or starts to go to fast. However I now know that I am just adding to his anxiety. I need to relax and redirect not add to the hype. I also want to thank Sharon Darrow again for taking the time to get this clinic organized and the dinner was great.

Deb Becker - Am very happy I attended as a rider, it was a great opportunity with a couple of very good teachers. Two things that top my list are realizing the key to stop the panicking of them locking their front and wanting to fight the bit, which is to re-train them by totally dropping the hold on the reins and let them forward with a redirect. Not all that easy, but I saw and felt it work. Also I had an "a ha" moment when I could ride forward, and turn my mare so very easily with just the correct shoulder/body position Larry was teaching. It took barely a touch on the reins! A great weekend !



Karla Hurd - I thought Larry and Jennifer did a great job. They are both very good at explaining things in a way even I can understand (and remember.) I learned the importance of keeping your

horse in balance and how to allow them to move in their natural gait. I also learned that even after 40+ years riding horses, I still have plenty to learn. A few highlights clinic highlights for me are - I enjoyed learning how to queue your horse to do a roll back at a walk then at a gait. This exercise helps your horse learn how to use their "backend" which is ultimately where true collection originates. I also enjoyed watching Jennifer ride everyone's horse the last afternoon of the clinic. As she rode each horse, she and Larry gave an honest assessment of the horse's movement. I think the only downside to the clinic was that I felt the arena was a little too small for the number of horses we had. The last day, Larry divided us into 2 groups-7 riders in the morning and 7 in the afternoon. Having only half the horses in the arena made practicing the exercises so much easier. It was also beneficial for me to watch the other group of riders and to be able to ask Larry questions on some of his training concepts.

Sharon Darrow - I learned a lot from this clinic. Although I was already doing some natural horsemanship exercises with my horses, Larry explained the reasons why, and what I should be looking for in my horse's body language. The riding exercises made you really focus on yourself first, and then your horse - getting the horse soft, supple and round. There were a few tips to help the rider get the correct bend in the horse, or a good side pass etc. I'm looking forward to him coming back this way again.

Kris Blacklock - This is what I sent to the Midwest Horse Fair Mon Apr 30, 2007 as my experience & recommendation for a Larry Whitesell Clinic.

"How does one recommend and request a clinician for the Midwest Horse Fair? I wish to request Larry Whitesell be added to the venue of clinicians for the Midwest Horse Fair. He was a clinician at the 2006 Minnesota Horse Expo but has not been part of the WI Midwest Horse Fair.

I attended a 3 day Larry Whitesell Gaited Horsemanship Clinic @ Palmyra WI Apr 27-28-29, 2007 and WOW! What a difference it has made in both myself as a rider in both understanding the horse & my preparatory ground work, riding skills & hand/leg cues in handling, training & riding in balance. I am new to horses (purchased a Rocky Mtn gelding 4 yrs ago and now a 2nd horse so my husband can join me & had absolutely no horse sense/knowledge or riding experience prior to buying my first horse). I have learned by trial & error....however am eager to learn & understand how to improve myself & my horse.

Larry Whitesell's method of teaching is very informative, easy to understand and easy to implement. I appreciated the honest insight in controlling the feet controls the horse and that just the slightest hand squeeze communicates to the bit which sends the signal command to control the feet. All too often I see horse owners constantly in the horse's face by yanking on the bit. When the rider understands the bit is to guide the feet along with leg cues, understand the horse's feet are his balance & when a horse & rider are in balance, the gait will improve. The horse needs to have his feet in balance before s/he can offer/maintain a smooth gait. Also the rider's seat & frame also control the horse's ability to perform.

Larry Whitesell is light years above clinics I have attended in the past. I appreciate both Larry & his assistant Jennifer Bauer in how they can break down the principles & help horse owners implement & see immediate results. After the clinic ended, arriving home Sun Apr 29 & putting horse & everything away, I practiced the techniques on my other horse who was left behind. What an improvement! Now that I have the knowledge & skills, I am a firm believer in building softness both on the ground & under saddle & using warmup as a means of preparatory riding as well as developing/maintaining softness. So much to

learn but lots of time to practice since the skills are integral in everyday handling and trail riding & are practiced each time I ride - no matter if it's in an arena, road riding along the ditch or hitting the trail!

How can Larry Whitesell be invited/included as a clinician at the Midwest Horse Fair? Please advise how one goes about requesting this? Larry's style of teaching is easy to understand for riders at all levels - novice to professional and would be an asset to the Midwest Horse Fair. For more info, please check out his website www.whitesellgaitedhorsemanship.com. "

Cindy Hubanks - Having attended several natural horsemanship clinics, some of Larry's information was not new to me. What was new, was his teaching style and his focus on forward movement. He has the ability to break things down into such simple terms that learning was much easier. Two things that really stood out for me were how my hands and legs directly communicate with my horses corresponding feet, and NOT to grab up my reins when I get afraid. (That one's going to take some undoing!) I thoroughly enjoyed the clinic.

Faithful Auditor Joanie Bartz - I really appreciated being a part of all of this. I have been to only a few clinics, and I missed the session on Friday but from what I did observe, I was extremely impressed and really did learn a lot just by watching and listening. I've bought a snaffle bit for my racking horse and have been practicing the forward motion, circles, and using my legs and hands, as best I can remember from what I observed, and am really pleased with the results. I was especially impressed when I entered my gaited horse in the fun show pole bending competition in Eminence last week and we got 4th place. He weaved through those poles like he'd been doing it forever. Just goes to show you that your body movements really do affect your horse's performance.

Ride and Campout at Horserider's Campground, Southern Kettle Moraine S.F.

The first campout of the year had a great turnout of old and new members, some of whom spent all or some of their time at the Larry Whitesell Clinic. Most of us were in one loop of the Palmyra campground and Friday and Saturday night group campfires were held there. Klaus Perkins and Chris Becker were seen going out of the campground together at a good clip for a long ride since their wives were both participants in the clinic. The weather was really great and we got in quite a bit of riding.



Laurel Schwartz on Dakota and Ted Bailey on Chance at the "Pop Stop" on the So. Kettle Moraine trails

On Saturday night the usual potluck was replaced by a catered dinner of beef tips, green beans, mashed potatoes, rolls and some scrumptious desserts. The dinner was held at the large shelter near the campground entrance. Guests were Larry Whitesell and his fellow clinicians as well as the Parkers, owners of Black Horse Equestrian Center. There were some tired riders there, particularly those that had been in Larry's clinic for two days! Our ride coordinator, Andrea Kahn, did a great job of providing information for our ride *prior* to the weekend! Good thing because we barely saw her unless we audited the clinic because she was hard at work with her horse and Larry Whitesell!

Part B2



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!

Hello from Mike and Jeanne Fox from Jim Falls, WI

We currently own 3 Missouri Fox Trotter geldings and one Tennessee Walker mare. Dillon is 12 years old and the perfect babysitter. Our grandchildren (ages 6 & 4) are just learning to ride on Dillon. Reno is Jeanne's riding partner - 6 years old and Patch is Mike's horse - 7 years old. We also have Josie the 4 year TWH. We bought her in Missouri this spring and brought her home to play with and probably sell later this summer.



Jeanne & Reno
Chippewa County Forest 10/06



Mike & Patch -Lake Wissota State Park 5/06



Picture of our farm - Jim Falls, WI



Firebox Canyon - Big Horn Mts., Wyoming 7/2006

We began our journey with gaited horses about 9 years ago while on a trail riding trip to Missouri. Jeanne was riding a mule at the time and Mike a (shhhhh) Quarter Horse. The QH ended up with a sore back about the third day into the trip, so Mike ended up renting a MFT from a nearby riding stable. Needless to say, that was the end of the QH. He bought the fox trotter and that's how our story with gaited horses began.

Trail riding is our passion and we take several trips each summer to ride in different parts of the country. We have been to Missouri, South Dakota, North Dakota, Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, Minnesota and of course Wisconsin.

In 2004, along with friends, Ruth Thompson and Roger Swansen we went on a 6-day pack trip into the Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana. Mike rode his fox trotter gelding and we used Dillon as a packhorse. This trip was our most challenging riding adventure - we did all the planning, packing, and navigating without a guide - just us! What a trip! - ask us about it some time.

We are looking forward to meeting other Midwest TrailGaiters at the 2007 rides.

Happy Trails,
Jeanne & Mike

Dillon & Grandson Luke



Upcoming Ride and Campout !!

Hope many of you can attend - -

May 18-20

Lake Le Aqua Na, Lena, IL- Coordinators: Deb & Bill Dietz

Lake Le Aqua Na has no reservations - and no marked sites, they just let you roll in and tie up. They have no rules about picketing or portable corrals. Anything goes. No cost for day rides - there is a camping fee for overnights. The horse camp has a hand pump for water, and newer pit toilets. You can drive to the people camp for bath houses. Besides the larger well marked trails there are lots of spider trails. There are a number of water crossings, but also a series of trails where you can avoid water. I think there is about 15 miles of trails max - but with lots of nice challenges on the spider trails and lots of variety. The park will close if there is a lot of rain - we will keep tabs on that aspect and mass email if there is a rain problem. The park has a No Alcohol rule, so if you bring any- bring a glass or cup so it is not visible.

Health papers and destination papers: The head ranger assures me he has never asked for any papers even a Coggins. He said he is more likely to ask for a drivers license of a rider that is causing a problem in the park or on the trails. You make the call!

We live 2 miles from the park and have room for campers and horses at our farm if needed. The ride over is on back roads, or you trailer over in minutes. We will get the trail maps and up date them to include the spider trails. If you have a horse problem, we may be able to find a mount for you, let us know.

Bill & Deb Dietz

Upcoming Clinics

Horseman and Camping Clinic Shawano Wisconsin June 2nd and 3rd

Presented by
North Star Gaited Horse Club
And the local 4H club

This clinic will enhance your knowledge of your horse. Identifying your horse's total conformation from body type, to legs, tendons, and hoofs. Flexing for soundness.

Learn from two of the best – Susan Untiedt and Cathy Tauer

DAY 1

Susan Untiedt is a gait annalist for all gaited breeds, also a certified examiner for the Rocky Mountain Horse Assoc. For the past 30 years Susan has been in raising, training and breeding both gaited and non-gaited horses. She will explain what a gait is and how the gaits differ in the different breeds as they gait in the arena in front of you. Have your own horse evaluated by Susan. She will help you get the best out of your horse.



Cathy Tauer is living her dream. She loves horses and has developed a business entirely related to helping the horse owner. Hill View Farms "Proven Products for Horse and Rider". Cathy camps and trails rides over 1000 miles a year from April to October. She is a certified ESMT Equine Sports Massage Therapist, has her Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science and for the past 30 years immersed herself in raising, training and breeding both gaited and non-gaited horses. Cathy will instruct everyone on how to get the best out of your horse. Learn what to look for when buying a horse and proper saddle and tack fitting. Learn what your horse is telling you through their muscles by palpating and massaging your horse. She

DAY 2

Day two will focus on camping with your horse. Dealing with a nervous horse on the trail. Setting up a camp, securing your horses safely, trail etiquette, trail emergencies and what is needed for rider and horse. Learn how to trailer safely, load and unload your horse.

Join us on a trail ride on the Mountain Bay Trail with Susan and Cathy. They will be able to observe both you and your horse and can provide valuable suggestions to improve your riding skills.

**Each of the 15 participants will receive a packet of handouts, worksheets and an informational DVD/VHS related to the clinic topics. All attendants will receive handouts and be eligible for the door prizes.