



Gaited Gatherings



Official Newsletter ~~ Midwest TrailGaiters ~~ December 2008

www.midwesttrailgaiters.com

Hello Gaiters! from Sharon B.

It seems it was a strange riding year for most of us. Weather and the fuel prices kept a lot of us away from our scheduled rides. I got only a few reports on TrailGaiter outings, but I hope this doesn't mean nobody did any riding! I have to confess that Ted and I didn't make as many of the rides as we usually do, but we still managed to put 600 miles on our horses again this year. The July newsletter told of our trip to Shawnee National Forest, and I'll report on the awesome riding we did in Smoky Mountain National Park this fall that I hope will entice you all to venture out with your horses.

2009 Holiday Get-Together Planned !

Back to the Gaiter news - - First of all, mark your calendars for the annual Holiday get-together and 2009 season ride planning party. It will be held on **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 11 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.** at **MOOSE JAW** Pizza & Dells Brewing Co., 110 Wisconsin Dells Parkway S, Wisconsin Dells. For details about the place and directions, just go to their website at www.DellsMoosejaw.com. To give us more space to spread out, and make the location more central, it was decided to hold the event at Moose Jaw in a private room. We will be able to order from their menu and there will be a bar available just outside our room. Dan Catherman has offered to bring his laptop to show photos that anyone would like to bring on disk, and it can also be used to project the trails and dates during our planning session. Everyone - please bring your 2009 calendars and think positive thoughts for good weather and low fuel prices.

Other Gaiter Rides this year:

Wildcat Mountain State Park, Ontario, August 1-3, 2008

There was a good member turnout at Wildcat Mountain with pleasant weather. The campground had recovered from the flooding earlier in the season and almost all of the campsites were taken. Riders went out in small groups, running into each other at favorite rest stops and picnic areas on the trails. The Saturday night potluck was held at Mike & Jeanne Fox's camper down at the far end of the campground. Joanie Bartz brought 2 horses (in case she wore out one) and Linda Catherman brought her brand new young Rocky Mountain. It's rumored that a few of the Bad Girls took Jeanne Fox out on the trails, and Jeanne worked hard at showing them she was deserving of being one of them by venturing off onto some of the "renegade" trails she knew. It looks like membership in that group is highly sought after and growing!



Jeanne Fox, Bad Girl ??



Karla Hurd



Joan Bartz & her *other* horse



Linda Catherman's new Rocky Mt.

A sad event did occur on that weekend. One of our newer members, Cindy Hubanks, was camping at Wildcat with her young Foxtrotter, Willie. He suddenly took off running and crashed down to the ground. He was gone that instant, a presumed heart attack or aneurysm. He is now buried in the valley past the campground at Wildcat. This was a sad day for Cindy who had such high hopes for Willie as her new trail horse. She has succeeded in finding another Foxtrotter, and we hope to see her on the trails with him in 2009.

So. Kettle Moraine, Palmyra, September 12-14, 2008 *by Gail Seacor*

This weekend brought a lot of rain, so on Saturday morning some of the riders went to West Twenty to do some horsey shopping, arriving back to the campground around noon. After lunch they headed out for a 3-1/2 hour ride - with no rain. Just before the 6:30 p.m. planned pot luck it began to rain, so the meal was held in the shelter. Although they weren't camping and riding, members Andrea and Pauline showed up for the potluck. Not a lot of riding, but everyone had a good time.

Hay Meadow Flowage, September 26-28, 2008 *by Jeanne Fox*

Although the fall colors were not quite peak, the forest was beautiful. We had great weather and everyone had fun gaiting around the forest with their maps and clues looking for the "cans" for the Poker Run. Once again, the Poker run was a huge success with everyone finding all the cans. Cheryl Terzen won first place, Terry McCaughey second and Gina Barden third with their poker hands. Thanks to everyone for playing, and also for the donations for Hay Meadow. Work starts next week on the muddy part of the Joli trail.



As you can see Skeeter had to hold on point so I could find the can . . .



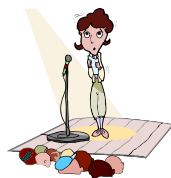
Mike, Jeanne, Lori & Maryann

Attendees at Hay Meadow were: Brenda Erickson, Karla Hurd, Sharon Darrow, Gail Season, Gina Barden, Dan & Linda Catherman, Cheryl Terzen, Terry & Kathy McCaughey, Mike & Lori Scott and Maryann Hahn.

P.S. *Special Bulletin*: Congratulations to Mike & Lori Scott who finally found the Bert & Ernie rock!

Lake Le-Aqua-Na State Park, Lena, IL, October 10-12, 2008

There was a good turnout at Lake Le-Aqua-Na and Bill & Deb Dietz were great coordinators as usual. Due to wet weather some trails were closed, but there was still plenty of riding. Some members joined the group for a day ride and the potluck. There were some unpleasant visitors though - those pesty Japanese beetles were plastered all along the sides of horse trailers, and making the horses crazy.



MEMBERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Note: In this column we highlight some of our members - new Gaiters, those unable to make it to many of the rides, and those with special news!

Road Trip to Smoky Mountain National Park, Townsend, Tennessee Ted & Sharon Bailey, Dan & Linda Catherman, Mike & Jeanne Fox, Mike & Lori Scott, Gail Season and Kathy McCaughey

The Baileys had made three previous trips to ride in Smoky Mountain National Park (our favorite place to trailride) and were looking forward to traveling there again. We thought it would be fun to have some friends go along and see why we love it there so much. We got together with some other hearty trail riders and planned the trip. We left Wisconsin on October 29 and headed for the Hoosier National Forest in Indiana, camping at The Mane Trail. It's a nice place with electric sites and covered stalls for the horses. A day of riding in between trailering let the horses stretch out and broke up the trip. We spent the next day riding the beautiful Spring Valley trail system

there. Everyone was fully decked out with trick-or-treat costuming to celebrate Halloween around the campfire that night. We even had up Halloween lights, scary music and an extra companion that Jeanne brought along for "company." On Oct. 31 we finished the drive to Townsend, Tennessee and set up camp at Orchard Cove.



On Bote Mountain Trail, Smoky Mt. National park

The next day the weather was beautiful - as it was for the entire week there - and we rode from the camp right onto the national park trails. We did a big loop of School House Gap trail, Bote Mountain, Anthony Creek trail, Crib Gap, Turkeypen Ridge and back to School House Gap - almost 20 miles (a very Bad Girl planned that long ride!). The views were spectacular on Bote Mountain trail and the creek crossings were terrific. The horses got a well-deserved night in the deluxe stalls at Orchard Cove. We had electric and water hook-ups for all our rigs which made it just like home.

Sunday we were joined by friends formerly from Wisconsin, now living in Virginia - Ronda and her mom, Bev. They stayed at a cabin nearby but kept their horses at Orchard Cove. That evening Mike & Lori Scott arrived to join us too since the Love Birds had been riding the week before at Land Between the Lakes for their 25th anniversary.



Orchard Cove Campground



Sharon & Kopi on Gregory Bald

During the week we repeated some of our favorite trails and also took the horses on 3 different days to other trailheads in the park. Orchard Cove has 3 different sizes of stock trailers that you can rent (\$15/day) and trailer wherever you want to start. Ted and I rode a total of 113 miles on this trip (that would be Sharon consulting her GPS daily). A very spectacular ride was to Gregory Bald. We drove the stock trailers to the end of Cades Cove to start the ride. It was 6 hours round

trip and the view was definitely worth it. Our horses had already grown a good coat of winter hair and looked pretty mangy not far into the ride. We had split up into smaller groups but all ran into each other up at the Bald. The elevation there was 4949 ft. and the view was awesome! Our group took different days to give our horses breaks (and us too).

Another day we rode a very scenic trail along water - the Middle Prong loop. We trailered to Middle Prong trail, riding that to Panther Creek, Jakes Creek trail, Gap trail, Miry Ridge, Lynn Camp Prong and back on Middle Prong - another 6 hour ride.



Riding the trail on the Middle Prong loop



Ted & Sharon on the AT

We all looked forward to a ride up to the Appalachian Trail. We were joined that day by new friends Sam and Debby who lived an hour+ from the area. Our hosts at Orchard Cove had contacted them and they had brought a horse for Foxes since Reno had come up lame. Real southern hospitality, although they said it was a good excuse for them to go for a trail ride. We met Sam and Debby at the Anthony Creek trailhead to start the ride. That was more like a 7 hour day, visiting a back country shelter on the AT (that's what the locals call it). On the AT you alternate between riding in Tennessee and North Carolina - kind of neat.

On Friday the 7th, we traveled to Brown County State Park in Indiana. It sure was *colder* there! We bundled up and had a great ride on Sat. to the little town of Story, lunching at the quaint Story Inn. Another long day in the saddle - we were making the most of the end of our riding season. The rest of the ride home on Sunday was very gloomy and we were all sorry to see our trip end. We all agreed that we had great weather, with great riding, and wonderful friends. A memorable trip!



In front of the Story Inn



Gail & Rainman at Gregory Bald

Gail Seasor I was extremely impressed with Orchard Cove campground. The owners were extremely helpful and friendly. The camp ground and facilities were spotless. And they had stock trailers that we could rent. My favorite place to ride to was Gregory Bald. The view was unquestionably the most spectacular.



Mike & Jeanne Fox - We truly appreciated the opportunity to travel with some of the Trail Gaiter members to the Great Smoky Mountain National Park near Townsend, TN for a wonderful week of trail riding. We departed WI on Oct. 29 traveling as far as French Lick, IN for a layover day and to enjoy the trails at The MANE Trail in the Hoosier National Forest. We departed IN on October 31 traveling to our destination - Orchard Cove Horse Camp in the Smoky Mountains. We had wonderful weather and great trails the entire week. The trails are not dangerous cliffhangers, but long climbs. Most days we climbed up all morning and descended the trails in the afternoons. We were able to rent a stock trailer and venture to other areas of the GSMNP. About the 3rd day, Jeanne's horse, Reno, came up lame so while trying to locate another horse to ride, we made contact with Sam & Debby Gerhardt from Dandridge, TN who brought along a spare horse to ride. Just ask Mike sometime how he likes Bling Bling. Sam & Debby led us on a ride up to the Appalachian Trail where we crossed over the Tennessee state line into North Carolina. At least some of us did, not sure about Mike & Lori Scott - no one actually knows for sure if they ever made it to North Carolina.

Our trip came to an end too soon because someone got mixed up on which day we were supposed to leave. So Dan got out his trusty computer and Sharon a copy of Trail Rider magazine and started looking for a place to stay on the way back. We ended up at Horseman's Park in Brown County Indiana. The weather was cold, but we all had a great ride to the Story Inn for lunch. This was our first time at Brown County and we will surely go back. We had a great time and look forward to sharing the trails again with this group. Thanks for the invite.



Crossing the creek next to the footbridge



Dan with Tucker & Able at Gregory Bald

Dan and Linda Catherman The trip to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was the highlight of the year for us. This was the largest group that we have traveled with and the journey was mostly uneventful (except Ted's tire). While traveling with 4 or 5 trailers adds a feeling of security, we notice that pit stops tended to take a lot longer. They sure don't make it easy to get fuel in some places. The stop over (on the way down) at the Hoosier National Forest was a nice

ride. There is probably no more than 2 days of riding at the Mane Trail, but one could move to other sites in the forest pretty easily.

The trails in the Smokeys were incredible. The thing that impressed us the most was the climbs. On some trails, you would do nothing but climb for 2 or 3 hours to get to the top. Of course that also means that you have 2 or 3 hours of decent to get back. The trails were well maintained and well marked. The most memorable trails were the one to Gregory Bald and the climb to the Appalachian Trail (the "AT" to those initiated folks). As the trails hug the mountain side, there were usually trees and brush on the downside of the slope, but occasionally there would be nothing between you and 500 feet down except a narrow trail. All of us would agree that these moments had a HPF (high pucker factor). Someone commented that the park was like Wildcat Mountain on steroids. It was always worth going the extra little bit further because the view around the next bend always seemed better than the last. On the way to Gregory bald, we almost stopped and turned around near the top because we had been climbing for 3 hours. That last 1/4 mile up to the bald was definitely worth it. A bald is a grassy area on the top of a mountain. Gregory Bald is about 40 acres of grass on what seemed like the top of the world. It was about 5,000 feet in elevation (about 4,000 feet from the trailers) and the view was unbelievable.

The folks at the campground (Orchard Cove) were very friendly and helpful. They had stock trailers available to rent (\$15.00 for the day) that made it possible to trailer out to different sites to see more of the park. If you were simply riding out of the camp each day, you would have to cover a lot of ground over and over. The camp was clean and spacious, the stalls were very nice, and the people were wonderful. Orchard Cove and the Great Smoky Mountains are definitely on our list for a return trip.

The stop on the way back at Brown County State Park in Indiana was a welcome break. It sure helps make the trip more bearable when you can take a day long break. Brown County is only a day's trip from Wisconsin and there are enough trails there to keep a gaited horse busy for 4 or 5 days. The stop over for us was a bit of a chance to get acclimatized back to Wisconsin weather. The weather in Tennessee was warm, 70's at camp level and 50's higher in the mountains. At Brown County we were treated to wind and temperatures in 40's. By the time we got back home, we had snow flurries. A trip to the south is a great way to extend the riding season. Their weather is good earlier and later than ours. However, a trip to the Smokys would be hard on a horse that has been fat and lazy all winter. It would also be tough on a rider that has been fat and lazy all winter.

A special thanks goes out to our fellow travelers for their friendship. We really enjoyed the trip and the company and look forward to future weekends and trips.

Mike & Lori Scott On October 24th we headed to the Land Between the Lakes in Kentucky to celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary. We met new friends there that showed us the most beautiful unmarked trails around the lakes. We enjoyed riding our horses there for ten days, the Land Between the Lakes offers great opportunity for gaiting! From there we headed to Tennessee to join the Trail Gaiters riding in the Smoky Mountains for a week. It was so beautiful riding there, the weather was perfect, the company was great and we have many wonderful memories of our trip!



Mike & Lori at Miry Ridge-Lynn Camp Junction



Kathy McCaughey - *THE END*

You learn something everyday...here's your lesson courtesy of Irene Petrik

Manure: In the 16th and 17th centuries, everything had to be transported by ship and it was also before commercial fertilizer's invention, so large shipments of manure were common.

It was shipped dry, because in dry form it weighed a lot less than when wet, but once water (at sea) hit it, it not only became heavier, but the process of fermentation began again, of which a by product is methane gas. As the stuff was stored below decks in bundles you can see what could (and did) happen.

Methane began to build up below decks and the first time someone came below at night with a lantern, BOOOOM! Several ships were destroyed in this manner before it was determined just what was happening.

After that, the bundles of manure were always stamped with the term 'Ship High In Transit' on them, which meant for the sailors to stow it high enough off of the lower decks so that any water that came into the hold would not touch this volatile cargo and start the production of methane. Thus evolved the term ' S.H.I.T ' , (Ship High In Transport) which has come down through the centuries and is in use to this very day.

You probably did not know the true history of this word. Neither did I. I had always thought it was a golfing term.

When you are on a great horse, you have the best seat you will ever have.