

~Gaited Gatherings~

Official Newsletter ~~~ Midwest TrailGaiters ~~~ Fall 2006

www.midwesttrailgaiters.com

FINALLY, a newsletter reporting all the fun activities (a/k/a antics) of the Midwest TrailGaiters from the last hot days of the summer through our final scheduled campout in October (brrrrr!) I apologize for such a lapse of time in between newsletters, but I'll spare you the details of all our family traumas that got in the way of production. I hope you'll all enjoy reading about what you and your fellow Gaiters have been up to. We'll be planning a date for our upcoming annual Holiday get-together where we'll eat, drink, socialize and plan our ride schedule for 2007 (date to be announced).
Sharon Bailey

LAKE LE-AQUA-NA - Lena, IL - August 4-6

by Deb Dietz

The TrailGaiters gathered on August 4, 5 and 6 to ride at Lake Le Aqua Na in Lena, IL. Since I was slow to write the report... hope I am at least slightly accurate! We had a good sized group consisting of both Sharon's D and B, Mary Feldt, Gina, Kim and Steve, Jackie came horseless, but Laurel came in riding Roman style so she had one to share with Jackie, Jan and Rob, and Bill and I. Did I forget anyone? John and Cheryl Douglas, gaited riders from Lena, joined us along with their friend Cheryl - who is a quarter horse person but she was surrounded and did surrender for the day! We did some Friday riding, and had a good day on Saturday. We had faster movers and slower ones just as is normal for our group. Everything went well except for a few minor things which is also "normal" when you have a group of horses doing their thing! We had a great potluck on Saturday night. Sunday morning brought rain and after we went to church with Gina, Mary, and Sharon B., we returned to a soggy campground and everyone decided to head for home and drier clothes. So horses were loaded and everyone broke camp and headed out. Bill and I had a very good time hosting the weekend.



Lake Le-Aqua-Na riders!

YELLOW RIVER STATE FOREST - Iowa - August 25-27

by Sharon Bailey

It was a great weekend at Yellow River. We all got in lots of riding and lots of socializing. We were joined by new member Kris Blacklock and her family. On Friday night we gathered around a campfire for the usual merriment and were hoping that we weren't bothering the neighboring-campers by being too loud. Not know us, the "neighbors", the Blacklocks didn't identify themselves and join in. We were all thankful on Saturday that they introduced themselves and joined in the group - - I guess we hadn't scared them off.

Sometime on Saturday the "Bad Girls" and the "Easy Sisters" were seen having a joint meeting (where was Jackie Moore?) What could they have been talking about? Who knows with that bunch. But since then rumor has it that, by popular demand, we are accepting applications to join our groups. Are some of those other "Soiled Doves" interested? Saturday night found all at the pot luck. Come dessert time, Jan Francois realized that a slice of the cake she brought was already missing. No one would admit to dipping into the sweets early. We're still wondering which TrailGaiter did it! Yellow River is always a favorite with the TrailGaiters, and this year was no exception.



Bad Girls / Easy Sisters meet at Yellow River

BREMER CREEK a "no-go" but . . .

CASTLE ROCK TRAILS, UKARYDEE - Adams, WI - September 9 *by Jackie Moore*

It was down to Mary Feldt, Laurel, and I because Mike Scott had to work. Then the weather forecast was cold and wet, and Mary had to haul Connie's horse Hummer, to the UW-Clinic. Because of this we cancelled the Bremer Creek ride and then Laurel, Mary, and I went to Ukarydee because it was close. Mike and Lori Scott pulled in around dark because Mike's weekend work got cancelled. We did get a ride in Friday afternoon, Saturday, and Sunday morning. We were caught in the rain on Sunday and pulled out as soon as we got back. Hopefully we can try Bremer Creek next year.

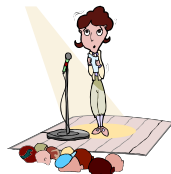
UNDERDOWN RECREATION AREA - Merrill, WI - September 23 *by Del Parkinson*

The Underdown Ride was kinda disappointing as only 6 members showed up and that included Gwen and I. Gwen and I rode Friday for about 5 hours in a light mist, but never needed our rain gear. We were the only MWTG people there. Saturday morning Gwen and I got up and went riding about 10:00 and no other MWTG's were there yet. When we came back about 3 P.M. we were going to

pack up and go home, but then two other couples showed up at the campground. Sunday morning we had to leave for another commitment, so we weren't able to ride with the others. The weather forecast was for rain all weekend so I think everyone just stayed home!
(Looks like Del and Gwen got to spend some quality alone time . . .)

ZUMBRO BOTTOMS, MN - October 7 *By Linda Catherman*

Zumbro Bottoms was a nice surprise! Only Dan and I plus Gail came. The campground itself was big and really nice. The weather and fall color was great! The trails went from easy to hard, whatever your pleasure, plus three places to water your horses out on the trails. It was not recommended to cross any of the river because of quick sand. Some of the trails are double track while others are single track with a lot of up and down. I know we plan to go back again next season!!



MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A Note: In this column we would like to highlight our members, especially those who are new to MWTGs or aren't able to make it to many of the rides. This way we will already know you when you are able to join us! Wendy Wolfe



Hi! I'm Kim Jaye. I became interested in horses at a very young age. I remember bugging my dad for horsey back rides. Plus they had a tough time getting me off the pony rides at fairs. If there was a horse or dog close by, Kim was over there petting and talking to the animal. My first horse was not a real one. One year my dad bought me a horse statue (which I still have on my dresser). He made such a big deal out of it I thought for sure he got me a real one. I even had to go out to the back yard at Xmas and look for it! There was the box. Even though it wasn't real I loved the gift anyway.

I got to ride horses that belonged to my friends when I was in high school. One ride went like this:

My mount was a little shetland pony. My friends thought it was funny because this horse had a problem when heading back to the barn. Full out was the only speed it knew when heading back home. I remember one minute I was looking up at my friend on her horse and the next thing I was hanging on for a ride of my life. I could have just put my feet down and slid off the back side, but I was not going to come off this horse. It came to a sliding halt at the barn wall. I went sliding over it's head and found my self looking up at the horse from the ground.

Many of my horse rides have tales like this one and they make great camp fire stories. No matter what happened I never stopped wanting a horse. I pretty much had given up the idea of owning a horse of my own some day. I came close to having one at the age of 14 but that is a campfire story. Then about 1999 I volunteered at a therapeutic riding stable and fell madly back in love with horses. Got to meet Monty Roberts. Also took some riding lessons on a couple of different horses there, from which more campfire stories came to be.

I thought for sure I would get a Morgan horse if I got one at all. I even had a friend offer me one of her quarter horses for a great price but I didn't really want a 6 year old who had hardly any ride time and had a problem being separated from her pasture buddy. I guess God had another horse in mind for me. One day a young client told me about her horse which was gaited. (Missouri Foxtrotter). I went to meet him. This was the first gaited horse I have ever seen. Then about 6 months later I saw her at the local bowling alley. She told me she was moving to Las Vegas and needed to sell her horse - would I be interested. NO was the first answer, but for some reason I decided to have my friend who is a trainer look at him. He suggested he could find me a good quiet horse for the money she was asking. I did a vet check anyway. \$500.00 later I turned her down again. He checked out to be in good health for the most part but had some handling issues. She was adamant that she wanted me to have him. I bought Chance in Feb 2005.

Well here we are today... almost 1.5 yrs later. I have a Ford 450 dually with a slide in camper (I bought from a club member) and a KB stock trailer. I've been out riding as often as I can since our first ride on Memorial Day weekend this year. Matter of fact I just got back this morning from the Palmyra ride with the club. We went to sleep to pouring rain and woke up to 1/2 of snow. I guess Chance and I have joined the "are you nuts chapter" of the club.

I have to say that most of my dreams have come true. I have earned the title massage therapist and have had my own practice for 6 years. I live in a wonderful home with a very supportive and loving husband (who told me he would have nothing to do with horses) but he rode one of Dietz's horses for the very first time in his life at the Illinois ride. I am very proud of him for that. He also has taken to working a little with Chance. The biggest thing is he doesn't give me a hard time when I want to go do horsey things. Matter of fact, when Life gets stressful he tells me to go visit our boy Chance. By the way he was also with me this weekend. What a guy....

The only thing that could make life better than this is to not have to worry about how to pay for this hobby. Plus to be wealthier to make it possible to ride more often. Winter is coming... Way too soon as of this morning -- yuk!!!

So whenever I hear of people who think their wildest dreams will never come true I say "How about we grab something to drink and have a seat by the fire. I want to share a story with you."

If you see us out on the trails be sure to say Hi. Thank you for letting me share this story . We (Chance, Steve, and I) are looking forward to seeing you around the camp fire. Happy safe trails to all. *Kim*

SO. KETTLE MORaine STATE FOREST - Palmyra - October 20-22 *by Andrea Kahn*



Linda & Dan - - Kevin, Jackie, Laurel, Ted - -at Palmyra

Wearing bright colors and jingle bells, the TrailGaiters made the best of what Mother Nature handed us. Even if we had to share the woods with the deer hunters. We were riding! Friday afternoon was a good, dry ride. Friday night, the rain chased us to early retirement into our campers. Saturday's ride was a tad damp, but the temps felt warmer. It was a great ride. That night, the potluck was held under the Bailey's awning, where we watched the campfire that Ted nurtured into quite the blaze. But the rain only persisted, chasing us into the comfort of the Bailey's camper. Yes - all 8 of us! We were warm and dry, sharing stories and Gail's pictures. I think we all had a feeling that Sunday, we would be just packing up to head home due to the rain. But I was in total disbelief that it could actually snow! It was just too warm! Its only Oct! Well, We woke up to snow! I think we all made record time clearing out and heading home. I can now say, Camping in the snow... BEEN THERE - DONE THAT!



Dan Catherman at the potluck!



Kim Jaye, Bill Dietz, Andrea Kahn dressed for the weather at Palmyra

WINNER OF "TRAILER UPGRADE OF THE YEAR" AWARD



Can anyone name the lucky members who have added this lovely new bathroom to their camper? In addition to the "running water" in the blue holding tank, they won't have to make any more trips to a smelly outhouse!

RIDING the SNOWY RANGE

by Bill and Deb Dietz

Growing up as child we would go to the movies or watch on TV the good old westerns, about the great migration to the west, about the adventures of the fur trappers, the survival of the native American Indians. As the scenes would go to the Rocky Mountains, I would imagine myself riding my horse through the snow covered rocks, the thick green pines, and crossing the clear rippling streams. I told Deb this was a dream of mine and she agreed. This September it came to pass. Several years ago we traveled through Laramie to Saratoga on Rt. 130 called Snowy Range Pass, it was so beautiful we never forgot it. This is where we headed out on Wed. Sept. 27, 06, We left home 5:30 am. We made it to Lexington NB. in 10 hours and held up at Shane & Cyndi Huxoll Horse Motel, right along I-80, Only \$10 per horse and we camped there in our trailer. The next day Sept. 28 we took off and in 5 1/5 Hr. we were through Centennial for a 7 mile, and 8% climb. Be prepared to shift down and watch your heat gauge. It was exciting to pull in to Dave McIlrath's Snowy Mountain Lodge with cabins, restaurant, and a place to park our trailer.

It was around 2 pm so we got settled and took out Cody, a four yr. old gelding and Silky, a four year old mare who we just started. I thought when we got done here she would be close to a finished trail horse. Due to the 10,000 ft. altitude the air is thin. We went out for just a hour or two. Dave said this is open range so we could ride anywhere, so we just took off up the hill through the pines. Walking and stopping whenever the horses showed any signs of breathing hard. Be prepared - many of the trails are not marked. A GPS is helpful, and you can get maps from the Forest Service in Laramie. It was not long and the excitement began as a mule deer crossed our path, then we came to our first lake, it was crystal clear. What a sight. We crossed over the main road and followed the descending river and often came upon a primitive cabin. These are privately owned but the ground is leased from the government on 30 year contracts. What a pleasant view to walk out on your little porch and look down on the rustling water as you have your morning cup of coffee and listen to the water as it tumbles past the large granite boulders. By one cabin we saw a large swing directly over the water. We made it back to camp, put our horses away, and went to the lodge for supper.



Fri. Sept. 29 Our trailer is too big to haul around the mountains and what a hassle to tear down and set up camp each day . Dave let us use his trailer to get to the trail heads. Some are close by but others are about 3 or 4 miles away. When we do it again I think we will rent a cabin and bring a small trailer. The fuel saving would go a long way toward the cabin rent. We started at Brooklyn Lake and headed north on a trail that was easy to follow and not at all hard. We passed one lake then two lakes, a small glacial area, and past North Twin Lake. Not many trees now and a lot of rock as we are above the tree line. Since they did have snow a week ago many of the rocks were covered, and where the snow was deep the horses would break through up to their knees. The trail was hard to find and with the fierce wind and cold we decided to turn back downhill to the protection of the pines. What an experience. In a few minutes we went from wind and cold to warm and pleasant. On the way back we came upon a senior couple who were hiking back a couple of miles to go fishing. I was more out of wind sitting on my horse then they were walking, but they said they were used to the thin air.

Sat. Sept. 30 One of the most exciting rides of our life. We trailered again to Brooklyn Lake. We found a small trail heading up to East Glacier lake. We could tell at the start that it was going to be a beautiful ride. Scenic view after scenic view along this narrow trail, high enough and on a steep enough mountain that every few feet you could look over top of the trees on to the lakes below and to the snow capped mountains beyond. When we got to the top we found Glacier Lake and a small weather station. We checked out several small trails to no avail to continue around the mountain. We found out later that only the loose rocks on a steep hill side is where the hikers continue on, the horses have to turn back. Well, we didn't know that, so we started zig zagging down the mountain all the way to Brooklyn Lake . We were very disappointed as we came out on a trail we had

ridden the day before around the lake. As we went around the lake we came to an old trail blocked by a huge log . What a stroke of luck. We were to embark on the highlight of our vacation. We didn't know for sure where it would end up but because of our little map and my GPS we had a idea. We traded horses this day, so Deb had little Silky and I had Cody, an appropriate name for a horse riding in Wyoming. Through the dense pines, over the logs, passing low areas a couple acres square laden with granite boulders, crossing small streams lined with snow, with small patches of ice in the still areas. At one stream we ran on to a family of something that looked like our ground hogs. We stopped our horses and just watched for a moment as they were carrying grass to there burrow. We would trade off leading as every trail adventure is also a training session. Since Silky was just getting started on trail she was a little cautious about crossing the streams, so Cody occasionally had to cross first to show her there are no alligators in the water. When we were planning this trip my hope was to find a couple of mountain lakes. It was unbelievable, about every 30 minutes was another beautiful clear lake, with tall pine trees and granite rocks outlining the lake and snow capped mountains as a back drop. Welcome to Snowy Ridge pass at the end of Sept. We came to a high, clear area with great views but the wind was pretty strong. It was around noon so we rode off the high ridge down toward a pair of lakes. Protected by the thick pines and a rock bluff it was very still. We put halters on our horses. Deb tied Silky to a log and I tied Cody to a small log that he could drag around and graze. He loves to eat like a pig, whereas Silky is a dainty lady and just picks gently. Deb and I took off our coats and ate our lunch and enjoyed the pristine view of God's handy art work. We laid down in the still of the sun only ten feet from patches of snow. With our cowboy hats over our eyes we soon found the power of the sun was too much. So we bridled up and headed toward the south return loop, finding a rare opportunity to gait 'em up. As we rode I got to flopping around playing with my GPS. Not paying attention to partial snow covered boulders, Cody stepped deep into a hole. He stood still for a second. My saddle slid forward. I tried to step off as he escaped backwards. I fell to the ground knocking the wind out of me. At least Deb waited till she knew I was ok before she chewed me out for playing with my GPS when I should have been guiding my horse around the rocks. That was sweet of her. It must have been because we were celebrating our 37th wedding anniversary. We finished our loop, had a big ole pork chop and a camp fire. We will never forget this day.



Sun. Oct. 1, We over slept. We found in the thin air it takes more rest. Deb went to bed at 8:30 last night and didn't get up till 7:30. We got up ate our breakfast and had our own little Sunday school. Without God's creation and his blessing's on us, this trip would not have been possible. We

rode the horses downhill on Rt. 130. They both did good with the traffic we encountered. We came to Libby Creek trail head. A very nice moderate 4 mi. trail except for one tough creek crossing. It was more of a pine forest ride with parts along a nice rapid stream. Now it is decision time. Do we head out on another longer trail or do we pack up camp and try to save a day of travel. With the thin air we thought it might be too hard on the horses to make it a long day so we headed home.

On the way down the 7 mile and 8% road to Centennial I told Deb I am sure glad these brakes work good but part way down I could smell them heating up so we pulled over and let things cool down. I resumed in second gear and let the traffic go around me. So make sure your brakes, tires, oil, belts and everything else is in good shape for this trip. Plan ahead and get PH. #s. Here's a few.

Snowy Mountain Lodge 307-742-7669

Horse and puppy motel Lexington, NE 308-324-6303, cell 325-7650

Forest Service Laramie, 307-745-2300 for maps etc.

The Feed Store, Laramie, 307-745-7775 For certified hay, it's the law.

A few notes from Deb: Pack with the realization that everything expands in the thin air. A full shampoo bottle leaked all over. All the plastic food containers were rounded and puffy. The potato chip bag blew the end open. I accused Bill of getting into the chips but he said he hadn't. Always ride with a coat tied on your saddle, a hat with ear flops, and gloves. You can take 1 turn and go from warm and sunny to cold and brutal.

For more info you can contact:

Bill and Deb Dietz, Apple Ridge Mt. Horses Lena IL. 815-369-4334 - email gatn@jisp.net

BRAGGIN' RIGHTS



Mike Scott proudly presents his new Peruvian saddle !



Gail Seator shows off her new mount, 8 year old RMH gelding RAIN MAN