



Gaited Gatherings



Official Newsletter ~~ Midwest TrailGaiters ~~ July 2008

www.midwesttrailgaiters.com

Hello Gaiters!

Here's a list of our continuing ride schedule for 2008. Please check the Events page of our website for information on each ride.

AUG. 2 ND	*WILDCAT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK, Ontario, WI
AUG. 23 RD	*OUTBACK RANCH, Houston, MN
SEPT. 13 TH	*PALMYRA - S. KETTLE
SEPT. 27 TH	HAY MEADOWS FLOWAGE
OCT. 11 TH	LAKE LE AQUA NA / TAMARACK HORSE CAMP, MN
OCT. 25 TH	LA RIVIERE PARK, Prairie du Chien
NOV. 8 TH	*UKARYDEE/CASTLE ROCK TRAILS
DATE OPEN	FRANKLIN CREEK, Dixon, IL - Check with Bill & Deb Dietz
DATE OPEN	ZUMBRO BOTTOMS, MN - Check with Ruth Thompson & Roger Swansen

Year to date in review:

April 18-20 - Gaiters Get-Together at Midwest Horse Fair

The Gaiters had their traditional get-together on Saturday during the Midwest Horse Fair. This year we weren't assigned a meeting room and met in the lower level of the Coliseum by the café area. There really wasn't a designated area for us so we ended up going behind some divider curtains and dragging in folding chairs. Not a good spot at all, but at least we were able to join up in one place. We didn't have our usual good turnout for the meeting, but some people may have gotten "lost" trying to find us in a different place.

Members Bill & Deb Dietz participated in the Kentucky Mountain Horse breed demonstration again this year and had a lot of fun showing off everything their calm, willing horses would do. Bill sure likes cracking that whip and getting his horse to rear up. It's a real crowd-pleaser!

Castle Rock Trails, Ukarydee Campground, April 25-27, 2008

Remember how much fun the riders had at the last Club ride of 2007? Well, so much that we had to go to Castle Rock trails again for the first Club ride of 2008!

Several members attended the trail work day at Castle Rock and helped cut up fallen trees, trim back brush and pick up trash along the trail. The local trail club organizing the event had over 40 volunteers to help that weekend. The weather was cold and dreary with a share of rain, but some of us managed to get in about 20 miles of riding in addition to working on the trails. It was a good chance to get in some Spring riding before the State Park trails opened. It was also a "trial run" with our campers to get the season started and find out what we forgot to pack. Gaiters learned some new things about some of our members - - *Real Women Run Chain Saws!*



Cheryl Terzen with her own chainsaw



Karla Perkins hauls brush



Ted Bailey & Klaus Perkins



A cold but sunny ride at Castle Rock Trails

Endless Valley Stables, Spring Green, May 9-11, 2008

With Gaited Clinician Jennifer Bauer by Ronda Stewart

I'm kind of new to the Midwest TrailGaiters and to the horse world in general. In fact, I joined the TrailGaiters when they were having a Larry Whitesell clinic in Palmyra just over a year ago. I was impressed with the training I saw and very impressed watching Jennifer ride the horses and getting them sorted out in such a quick amount of time. So it's no surprise that I'm the one who bugged Sharon Darrow to get Jennifer Bauer or Larry back to do a clinic this Spring. By the way, this was a low cost clinic compared to many clinics out there - thanks Sharon D, I had a great time. And finally, it should also be no surprise that Sharon Bailey now wants me to write about this clinic for the newsletter.

It's amazing that the most common comment from gaited people seems to be "My horse won't gait." At this clinic, it was no different except for when it came my turn to tell everyone why Indy and I were there. My comment was. . . I think my horse gaits ok, but I've been riding him for 3 years and I don't think he's broke! Many folks are looking for a quick fix to get the horses to gait better and it just can't happen overnight. Jennifer gave us exercises both on the ground and in the saddle to help us better engage the horse from the rear end and the front end. We worked on riding the horse into the bit and not pulling the bit to the horse because the latter makes the horses back sore and causes resistance and braces. We did many small breakdowns of things that will come into a much larger play when we can put them together to make a larger more fluid move like opening a gate, sidepassing, etc. I'd like to think we were working on getting our horses softer and more pliant. There is a lot to this horse training stuff, I myself have a very long road ahead. I think

with quality clinics like this one, maybe those who continue will "get their horses to gait better" and I may someday reach my goal with Indy and "Get him broke!"

Ronda Stewart



Clinic participants work with Jennifer

Trail Riding at Endless Valley

Some Gaiters also audited the clinic that weekend and many enjoyed riding the Endless Valley trails. We had an excellent turnout despite the weather. Saturday night's potluck get-together saw a lot of rain, but thanks to trailer awnings and 2 canopies set up, we didn't get too wet. Sunday however was a "wash out." Most members left Sunday morning when it was *still* raining but others involved in the clinic stayed for the day. The campground area got *really* soggy making it *very* difficult for some Gaiters to leave for home. . .



Do you recognize this horseman?



"Hey, Lori was driving!"

Trailer Tails by Dan Catherman

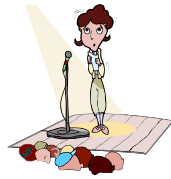
As many of you are aware, early this Spring, we bought a new trailer in Minnesota. We started out early on a Saturday morning to deliver our trade in and pick up the new trailer. We stopped outside of LaCrosse for a potty break. When we returned to the truck, it wouldn't start. Nothing. All of the electrical systems worked, it just wouldn't turn over. After several calls to Dodge dealers seeking advice, we were forced to call the Roadside Assistance number. An important point to remember is that these services cover only the vehicle, not anything being towed. We disconnected the trailer in the Rest Area parking lot and loaded the truck onto a flatbed. I went with the truck, while Linda stayed with the trailer. We went from garage to garage in LaCrosse looking for someone that could fix the problem. The local Dodge dealer could only change the oil on Saturdays. I suspected that that was not the problem. After 4 or 5 hours of running around, we ended up leaving the truck at the Dodge dealer. One of the garages we stopped at knew someone who knew someone that had a truck with a gooseneck hitch that was willing to help us out (Thank God for the kindness of other horse people). We made arrangements for this gentleman to meet us at the Rest Area. I rented a car and went back to get Linda. She had been stuck at the Rest Area for about 6 hours with the trailer. This normally wouldn't have been so bad, but we had cleaned all of the food and reading material out in order to make the trade. (If anyone has questions about Minnesota tourism, Linda is now an expert after spending so much time at the Visitor Center.) We got the trailer into LaCrosse and secured, then took the rental car home.

On Monday morning, we struck out for LaCrosse again. We were almost there when I received a call from the dealer. The problem was in the security module and the truck did not recognize us as its rightful owners. They said they could get the part and have it fixed on Tuesday. After some negotiation (bitching), I found that the part could be found in New Richmond. I told the dealer that I would go get the part and bring it to them. For the geographically challenged, New Richmond is Northwest of Eau Claire, about 3 hours from LaCrosse. In a snow storm, we drove the rental car to New Richmond and back to LaCrosse. A couple of hours later, the truck was running and back on the road.

The trailer dealership closed at 6:00. They graciously offered to stay as late as 6:45 for us. We pulled in at 6:30, unhooked, hooked up, exchanged keys and were out in 15 minutes. I nervously turned the ignition off in Rochester while we grabbed something to eat, thankfully the truck started and we made it home by 11:00. A very long day. The next morning, Linda went to start the truck to go to work. Nothing. We then tried my keys and it started. Apparently when the security module is replaced, both keys are needed for reprogramming

We learned a lot from this experience. I think the most important thing is that roadside assistance will not deal with the trailer. If we had horses on this trip we would have been in a world of hurt. I really don't know what we would have done. Since then, (actually the next day) we have signed up for USRider protection (www.usrider.com). This is basically AAA for horse trailers. If you are stranded or in an accident, not only will they take care of you and your vehicle, they will also make arrangements for the trailer and the horses. I hope we never need it, but after this nightmare, the peace of mind is worth it.

Dan & Linda



MEMBER 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!

Update on member **Iris Cooley**.



Mounting oh-so-carefully. . .



Look at that smile!!

Just a quick update on Iris as she recovers from her terrible car accident. She has been making a lot of progress since she was first able to get on her horse in early Spring. She's been doing riding therapy at Three Gaits Therapeutic Riding program and has high hopes to be back in the saddle soon! From all the Gaiters, good luck Iris!

Underdown Recreation Area, Merrill, WI - May 30-June 1 by Dan Catherman

The weather may have kept members away from the club ride at the Underdown. Attendees were Terry and Kathy McCaughey, Gail Seator, Dan and Linda Catherman, Mike and Lori Scott, and of course mother-in-law Maryann Hahn - in case they needed someone to help push the truck and trailer (*see above*).

Friday was a humid and buggy day. We had a small campfire that evening, but the bugs pretty much chased everyone inside. Saturday and Sunday were better weather and the bugs weren't as bad. We're a little unsure about taking advice from Gail on the trail. During a ride that weekend we approached a large puddle across the trail. Gail said, "It doesn't look too deep. Go ahead Linda." It turned out to be just a little shy of belly deep.

Sorry - too busy swatting bugs to get any photos.

Dan

Yellow River State Forest, McGregor, Iowa - June 20-22

Sorry Gaiters, no report yet on the Yellow River weekend. The Editor will keep pestering to find out if there was something wild that no one wants us to know about. Stay tuned.

Gaiters Attend O.V.E.T.S. Conference - Shawnee National Forest by Ted Bailey

The third week of June, Sharon & I mixed some great trail riding in the Shawnee with an educational experience, along with fellow TrailGaiters Dan & Linda Catherman (OVETS Planning Committee members), Gail Seator and Kathy McCaughey. We attended the OVETS conference (Ohio Valley Equestrian Trail Symposium) which was held at the Little Lusk Campground in Eddyville, Illinois. There were folks from about a dozen states in attendance.

The ideas that founded OVETS are to promote conservation education, encourage shared trail use and trail etiquette, practice volunteerism, and work to develop and enhance positive relationships among equestrians, other trail users, and landowners/managers. Also to help influence administrative and legislative decisions that affect the equestrian trail community, and to enhance opportunities for trail development, while serving as a resource for information on equestrian trail values, uses and needs.

OVETS guiding principles are to unite the American Equestrian Trail Community in the preservation of our cultural heritage of the use of horses and packstock on public lands. They are committed to the stewardship of lands we use, and to the practice of conservation of our natural and cultural resources, while committed to fostering land ethics that harmonize the relationship between equestrians and the lands on which we ride.

We experienced first hand the kind of effort that actually goes into developing and maintaining trails. A prime example is a Wilderness Area in the Shawnee National Forest where litigation was brought forward to totally ban horses. The result was horses were allowed, but any horse trails developed and built had to be accomplished with the use of hand tools only. Put another way, nothing with a wheel or a gear could be used. Not even a wheel barrow. The managers of the area accomplished some fantastic feats in repairing and re-establishing trails. When they were finished with a project, it appeared as though the trail had just been "dropped" into the landscape, with absolutely no evidence of recent construction work.



Wilderness Crew explain trail construction

We had a chance to talk with the crews that did the work, and hear exactly how they accomplished their work, entirely by hand. That included hauling 5 and 600 pound rocks in chain baskets to their resting place in the trail construction. We also heard from folks who developed and rescued trails in urban areas. There exists in the Chicago Suburbs 20 miles of multi use trails that include equestrians!

The one thing that rang true to me through the entire conference is that all the accomplishments that we saw and heard about were achieved by people getting involved. Participating. Volunteering. It very much reminded me of the efforts that created the trails at Donald Park (Mt. Vernon, WI), only on a regional scale.

The keynote speaker was Tom Seay, host of "BEST OF AMERICA BY HORSEBACK". Tom's a pretty low key guy, but he delivered a very inspiring message. Pure and simple, it was that the development and preservation of equestrian trails in this country depends entirely on equestrians getting involved in the process.

As you all know, there exists constant and extreme pressure to eliminate horse trails, and ban horses from many public recreational areas. The one thing that will keep trails out there for us is each of us caring enough to get involved and volunteer. There's not enough money in the Bureaucracy to foot the bill for developing and maintaining trails. Trail preservation is only going to happen thru each of us participating in it.

I gathered a lot of great trail building information while there, and will be more than happy to share it with anyone interested in learning more about the actual building of trails.

Happy Trails
Ted



Ted, Sharon, Gail, Kathy, Linda & Dan riding the Shawnee

A Hero



Meet Molly. She's a gray speckled pony who was abandoned by her owners when Katrina hit southern Louisiana , USA . She spent weeks on her own before finally being rescued and taken to a farm where abandoned animals were stockpiled. While there, she was attacked by a pit bull terrier, and almost died. Her gnawed right front leg became infected and her vet went to LSU for help. But LSU was overwhelmed, and this pony was a welfare case. You know how that goes.

But after surgeon Rustin Moore met Molly, he changed his mind. He saw how the pony was careful to lie down on different sides so she didn't seem to get sores, and how she allowed people to handle her. She protected her injured leg. She constantly shifted her weight, and didn't overload her good leg. She was a smart pony with a serious survival ethic.

Moore agreed to remove her leg below the knee and a temporary artificial limb was built. Molly walked out of the clinic and her story really begins there.

"This was the right horse and the right owner," Moore insists. Molly happened to be a one-in-a-million patient. She's tough as nails, but sweet, and she was willing to cope with pain. She made it obvious she understood (that) she was in trouble. The other important factor, according to Moore , is having a truly committed and compliant owner who is dedicated to providing the daily care required over the lifetime of the horse.

Molly's story turns into a parable for life in post-Katrina Louisiana . The little pony gained weight, her mane felt a comb. A human prosthesis designer built her a leg.

The prosthetic has given Molly a whole new life, Allison Barca DVM, Molly's regular vet, reports. And she asks for it! She will put her little limb out, and come to you and let you know that she wants you to put it on. Sometimes she wants you to take it off too." And sometimes, Molly gets away from Barca. "It can be pretty bad when you can't catch a three-legged horse", she laughs.

Most important of all, Molly has a job now. Kay, the rescue farm owner, started taking Molly to shelters, hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers. Anywhere she thought that people needed hope. Wherever Molly went, she showed people her pluck. She inspired people. And she had a good time doing it.

"It's obvious to me that Molly had a bigger role to play in life", Moore said, "She survived the hurricane, she survived a horrible injury, and now she is giving hope to others."

"She's not back to normal," Barca concluded, "but she's going to be better. To me, she could be a symbol for New Orleans itself."



This is Molly's most recent prosthesis. The bottom photo shows the ground surface that she stands on, which has a smiley face embossed in it. Wherever Molly goes, she leaves a smiley hoof print behind!

**"Horse, thou art truly a creature without equal, for thou
fliest without wings and conquerest without sword."**

- The Koran