



Paddock Paper

Northern New Mexico Horsemen's Association

April 2016

Riding and Writing

General membership meeting, April 27
Old Pecos Trail Inn
6 p.m. for dinner; meeting begins at 7 p.m.



Come meet trail rider, author, and publisher of the bi-monthly magazine *Horse Around New Mexico* Cecilia Kayano at our next meeting.

She will describe some of the beautiful wilderness areas around the West where she has ridden, her articles appearing in *The Trail Rider Magazine*, and the background story of starting *Horse Around New Mexico* in 2013.

For aspiring writers, she'll also talk about what it takes to get published in today's world. Read more about *Horse Around New Mexico* at <http://horsearoundnm.com/>

Quiz question: As coffee was a rare commodity for the South, Confederate Civil War cavalry troops drank a great deal of tea or concocted coffee substitutes. Where did they get their milk for tea? Answer later in the newsletter.

Seven Year Trail

Karen Denison

Although the previous day had snow, April 2nd dawned clear and crisp for a Santa Fe National Forest project day. Ten volunteers, three of whom were taking a training course to become work crew leaders, turned out for improving a section of Dead Dog Trail on the Caja del Rio. We were well supervised by an SFNF archaeologist and SFNF Volunteer Coordinator Jennifer Sublette.



Working a rock jigsaw puzzle

Dead Dog Well (an old, historic name) and Trailhead is located on the west side of Old Buckman Road (on the way to Diablo Canyon) three miles north of the junction with Caja del Rio Road. The trail begins at the USFS boundary fence and serves to connect Buckman Road with the top of the mesa due west of Ortiz Mountain where Forest Road 24 and many two-tracks



already exist. It replaces an old, very badly eroded stock trail.

Although only a mile long, this trail has been a bear to build. Deirdre Monroe, an endurance rider and the cartographer of a popular Caja del Rio map, made the suggestion to SFNF to build a real equestrian trail in 2009. Choosing an acceptable route was difficult because of the unforgiving terrain and the number of historical and archaeological features in the area. The trail passes several small petroglyph panels (USFS has identified 21 panels in the immediate area) and actually criss-crosses an old wagon road near the top of the escarpment.

Quick progress was made on building the trail until reaching the climbing sections, then hundreds of hours went in to constructing switchbacks, equine-friendly steps and retaining walls using the heavy volcanic rock of the mesa. Because of the pitch, erosion is the number one enemy of this trail. Saturday's project was an extension of one of the walled areas which had shown signs of erosion from last year's moisture. And to install the first signage marking the trail route.

This trail is unlikely to be used by mountain bikers (because of the soft sand in the arroyo crossings) and only the occasional hiker. It was built to give equestrian access at equestrian request. The shame is that so few equestrians helped volunteer or seem to know about the new access. I was the only one in attendance Saturday and I helped represent riders a bit by offering suggestions about where to place signs so they would be seen but not interfere with a rider.



After two hours, the stable, finished product!
Photo courtesy of Jennifer Sublette



Signing!

Another new trail is being planned as a multi-agency project roughly following the route of the Camino Real. It will connect Headquarters Well (an equestrian-friendly trailhead to the south) and Dead Dog Trail. The current proposed route will be at the base of the escarpment, so eventually riders might be able to complete a long-ish loop ride (around eight miles) basing out of either Headquarters or Dead Dog. A longer-term goal is to continue the trail from Dead Dog to Diablo Canyon. If you can donate a little time, please consider attending some of the planning meetings or volunteering a little elbow grease when the time comes. Contact Karen Denison redmule@kdt.net for more information or read the article from The Santa Fe New Mexican (with map) which appeared last month: http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/downtown-to-rio-grande-trail-planned-along-el-camino-real/article_afa23795-52b5-56db-b963-86642283e47c.html

The horse you get off of is not the same as the horse you got on. It is your job as a rider to ensure that as often as possible, the change is for the better. — Source Unknown



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Minutes of the March 30, 2016 General membership meeting

Pecos Trail Inn Karen Denison

Called to order at 7:30 p.m. following dinner by President Rocco Fancellu. Three potential new members were welcomed to the evening's meeting.

Treasurer Helen Newton was absent, but sent word that our accounts are up-to-date with the exception of the \$250 still owed by the Rodeo de Santa Fe. We have approximately \$10,000 in funds. She is still also pursuing a listing of the Horsemen's grounds as an available overnighting location on HorseMotel.com.

Minutes from last month's meeting were read and approved.

Julie Belt passed around a flyer and sign-up sheet for the Ridge Riders trip to Rowe Mesa scheduled for April 23.

Secretary Karen Denison reported that the member list for 2016 numbers between 50-60 members. The mailing list now has been pared to those members, and a member directory has been sent. We may get a trickle of late renewals and new members. The latest Paddock Paper was handed around and when asked, no one at the meeting reported problems receiving club emails. Anyone may submit articles or ideas for the newsletter and is welcome to contact Karen.

Rocco presented a list of important dates & events:

4/2 Santa Fe National Forest, Repair Dead Dog Trail
4/16 Work day at the NNMHA grounds, 10 am
4/23 Ridge Riders, sign up tonight with Julie Belt
5/21-22 Trainer showcase, 4 Winds Equestrian Center, Estancia
6/11-12 Endurance ride in the Caja Del Rio to benefit Listening Horse Therapeutic Riding
6/18, 7/16, 9/24 Rails to Trails Show Series, NNMHA Arena [CHANGE: June 4th, not 18th -ed.]
7/9 Gimme Shelter Trainers' Challenge, Rodeo grounds, to benefit The Horse Shelter
There will be a Google Calendar set up for members to consult; Rocco is working on that.



Rocco has emailed Christina Turner at the County Extension Service regarding partnering more with 4-H this year.

A “thank you” was extended to Mark Boutilier, our grounds manager, for doing a great job on keeping the arena and parking areas in good shape.

If we intend to have a “horse expo” in the fall as proposed at earlier meetings, we’ll need volunteers to help. The general idea is to have trainers, demonstrations by other groups, and vendors. In order for insurance coverage, vendors may be required to become members for our regular fee of \$20.

A contract for hosting Listening Horse Therapeutic Riding at the NNMHA grounds is being negotiated now and one issue under consideration concerns dogs. The unofficial NNMHA policy for the grounds had been “no dogs” although it was never enforced and was widely disregarded. However, wandering dogs are not acceptable for safety and insurance considerations. Some discussion was had and there was strong consensus on “no wandering dogs” although feeling was not unanimous on whether this meant “no dogs” or “leashed dogs”. The exception would be “qualified service animals” as described under New Mexico and federal ADA statutes, but even then, there are strict requirements for the animal to be with the handler whether leashed or not.

A board contact list appears in each newsletter and will be posted at the grounds. Anyone who sees something on the grounds which needs attention is asked to report it to a board member.

Evening Program: Cavalry During the Civil War, John McKenna



John McKenna explains McClellan saddle rigging

John McKenna has lived in Santa Fe for twenty years and through his love of history has become an avid Civil War re-enactor. He arrived in “uniform” and described the Confederate Texas cavalry character he assumes with his unit for events. (Although he admitted that he’s not quite right: the average age of Texan soldiers during the period would have been 18-25, and they would have been skinny, less than 150 pounds.) His clothing and equipment, although very authentic in construction and appearance, are all modern reproductions.

He brought several weapons including period pistols and a reproduction Enfield carbine which would have been the favored weapon of Texas cavalry. Carbines have lightly-grooved (rifled) but shorter barrels than that of a true rifle making it less cumbersome on horseback. This gun would have been manufactured

in England and smuggled through the Union blockade to reach Texan troops. John demonstrated how it would have been carried on horseback and pantomimed the motions necessary to prepare the muzzle-loading carbine for firing.



John brought three saddles, as well. The Confederate-style 1859 McClellan saddle is his favorite for comfort—it is well-contoured, fits close to the horse, and consists of a simple, lightweight tree with enough straps and rigging to hold gear and saddle in place. No special saddle pads would have been used, but blankets or tarp which served as bedding for the soldier. He also brought a 1908 McClellan for comparison and showed the differences in rigging (center fire cinch) and the more uncomfortable, flatter seat. The third saddle was an 1850's Texas Hope saddle which clearly showed the influence of Mexican saddle designs and was used extensively by those working cattle.

The clothing worn by soldiers would have been an eclectic mix of pieces issued by the army, home-tailored to make more comfortable, and “captures”: pieces taken from captured or killed soldiers from the opposing forces. John’s wardrobe included a Union vest but standard Confederate Texas cavalry coat (brown) sewn by hand using a historic reproduction fabric. Wool, being in short supply in the South, was blended with cotton and woven into a twill fabric which was known as “jean cloth”. Of course after the war, that tough cloth became all cotton and was used to create work pants called “dungarees”—which we know today as simply “jeans”.

John shared much more information on bridles, canteens, horse care and condition which is omitted here. Since these are not historic museum pieces, everyone was invited to handle everything and ask questions. If you missed the meeting, you missed an excellent presentation. Program was concluded and meeting adjourned approximately 9 p.m.

Ridge Riders

The first NNMHA Ridge Riders ride of 2016 is scheduled (conditions permitting) for Saturday, April 23rd at Rowe Mesa. Registration required. The ride is limited to 12 members -- there are only a few spots left at this time, so contact Julie Belt at 850-621-6811 to get on the list quickly if you are interested.

Directions to Trailer Parking:

Take Exit 307 off I-25 North. Merge right onto Frontage Road. Turn left at Stop Sign; go 1.2 mi. Turn right onto NM 34. NM 34 is paved to the top of the Mesa. Trailer parking will be at the gate marked 124DE on the right side of the road, shortly after Mile Marker 2 on NM 34.

The next Ridge Riders Ride will be held on Sunday, June 12th. The location of the ride will be announced at the April meeting of the NNMHA.



Quiz answer: Re-mount horses for the cavalry were always in short supply. There was nearly always a lactating mare, although milking her might be a challenge.





Grounds Clean-up Saturday, April 16, 10 a.m.

Please put on your boots, bring your gloves, and help do some general cleaning and repair of the grounds so we're ready for our summer season. There are some loose boards on stalls to nail down, some weeds to rake, and some bleachers to paint. Bring tools if you wish, or use what we have.



RAIN: Please check the club website or the Facebook page before you head over. If we cancel due to weather, we'll post it there. Or call Karen Denison, 505-469-2698.

Why I Ride Long Distances

Aura Rose Jensen-Curtis

Aura grew up riding horses in the mountains and high desert of Northern New Mexico and currently lives in Santa Fe. She has been competing in endurance rides since 2000, and is an active trail rider and backpacker. Aura was kind enough to write the following article at the request of the newsletter editor; more of her writing can be found on her blog, www.adragontattoo.com.

There is a moment of perfect clarity that comes when I ride, when everything is exactly right, and my horse moves so perfectly beneath me that I can feel her every muscle, stretching effortlessly to swallow the ground. I can feel her heartbeat as though it is my own, pounding through her chest and into mine, setting its cadence to the rhythm of her hoof beats on the ground. I can feel all the boundless exuberance of her being flowing out of her and into me and back again, as though for this one perfect moment, she and I are one and the same. A great joy fills me, a boundless energy that bubbles up through me, until I feel as though it would take only one more step, one more breath, for us to become airborne, letting the wind fly past as we soar into the sky. And I think in this moment that everything makes sense; everything is right, everything is in its place, and I feel as though I could envision the whole pattern of the world, past and future, stemming from this single, perfect moment.



Aura and Fairy Photo credit: Paul Dreyfuss



Every rider knows that moment in some way or another, the connection that is born of knowing your horse better than you know yourself. And every rider finds that connection in a different way, a different moment.

I have been asked many times why I love to ride endurance, and I think the answer requires one to delve into the very heart of the sport. Endurance is not about the race, and it's not about the distance. Endurance is about that moment, because there is no more profound way to develop a true and lasting partnership with one's horse than to ride long distances.

I was riding endurance long before I knew endurance riding existed as a sport. For me, there was never a question of how I wanted to ride—I just wanted to ride. And when I was eighteen years old, my friend and I packed up our mule, saddled up, and rode our horses across New Mexico and into Colorado. This was just the first of many long backcountry trips for me, most of which I completed with just my horse, my mule, and my dog for company. I learn something new on each of these trips, and I have never regretted a single one. For I found myself in the wilderness, found a connection to the world around me that came, ironically, with a disconnection from the rest of the world. I found a relationship with my horse that I never would have found at home, for we became uniquely reliant upon one another, and every moment of every day on the trail was spent in the seamless symbiosis of interdependence.

I ride long distances to build that connection with my horse, a bond so deep that we know one another inside and out. I do it to challenge myself, to push the limits of what I think I'm capable of doing, and I do it because I am perpetually surprised by both myself and my horse. I do it because I am forever seeking that perfect moment, and I know no better way to find it than to endure together. 



Arena Fun Night

Friday, May 6

6 - 8 p.m.

Celebrate the longer days of spring and bring your favorite pony for a little arena fun. Or bring a picnic for yourself and come chit-chat with your friends. Save the date and we'll send an email with details at the end of the month.

DATE CHANGE: Due a conflict, the first "RAILS TO TRAILS" show will be June 4th, not June 18th. More to come in next month's newsletter.

