



Paddock Paper

Northern New Mexico Horsemen's Association

November 2016

Membership Meeting

Wednesday, November 16, 6 p.m./7 p.m.
Pecos Trail Café, 2239 Old Pecos Trail, Santa Fe

It was great to chat with everyone last month and looking forward to more of the same! Our short meeting (to begin about 7 p.m.) will include a recap of some of this year's events and news, plans for the Christmas party, as well as elections for 2017 officers and voting on proposed bylaw amendments.

And bring your ideas for 2017 speakers and activities. We had some good ideas tossed around last month and we'll probably continue the conversation. Please arrive early if you plan on dining, or come later for the meeting.

Looking forward to seeing everyone! 

Why I Ride a Mule

Karen Denison

When I was a little girl, I was horse-crazy. Some of my first riding experiences were on staid, placid donkeys and I loved their ears. Yet they were not the magical creatures that I believed horses to be.

Fast forward about forty years, camps and lessons, and exposure to a bunch of horses: I was a volunteer paired at a local therapeutic riding program with a mule named Jim Dandy, about 14.2hh, 28 years old, and in excellent shape. He'd enjoyed a long career and had been fox-hunted, ridden over fences, and used as a school "horse" for dressage students. He was a kind, old soul with a quick mind and a bagful of tricks to pull if he felt he was being treated unfairly. Since his job at the center was focused on the clients, I was there to make his "free time" a little more

2016 Officers and Board

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Remember, you may contact any Board member with questions or comments about activities. Board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month, usually at the NNMHA office. Members are welcome to attend; please contact a Board member to confirm the time and place.



about what he might need. I came to love his physical and mental capabilities, and his quirky nature.

I spent quite a bit of time with Jimmy until he passed suddenly a little over a year later. And in my grief, I began to question how much of what I admired was Jimmy as an individual and how much was “mule”. Turns out, it was largely mule.

I took to studying mules. Scoured the internet, read books, joined the Rio Grande Mule and Donkey Association, traveled to regional shows. I learned that mules are different than horses and so are mule people. To be happy with mules, you’d better have a sense of humor, confidence, physical self-awareness, some solid equine skills and it’s best to have a consistent sense of what’s fair—because that’s certainly true of the mule. They

seem to be strong Libertarians and if you’ve entered into a bargain about how things are done, you’d better keep your end of the bargain. But if you can fulfill those requirements, they are smart, quick learners, exceptionally strong, thrifty, thoughtful and some can be quite affectionate. In some deep-seated recognition of their expressive personalities, it seems mules more often than horses sport “people” names.

In 2013, I bought a 12-year-old molly mule named Lulu, originally from Missouri, who has been both a joy and a real challenge. She is a “resistant” mule rather than a “reactive” mule, meaning that if she is pressured, then her first impulse is to say “no” and stand firm. But pressure her too far beyond her comfort zone and she may spin, run, or crow-hop. In the mule spectrum, she is not an easy-going mule. We’ve both suffered cuts and bruises, fear and doubts, and (on my part) questions about whether this relationship was worth pursuing. My farrier, a mule man, declared that we were a bad pairing and I should sell.

However, I might be just a touch stubborn myself and as luck would have it, I found a local trainer who had the perfect approach and skill set to help us both through the worst of our issues and give me the skills (and the confidence that goes along with them) to help Lulu be a better mule. I am a far, far better “horseman” than I was before because of Lulu.

We now go out on trails every chance we get and I’m happy with my careful, sure-footed mount. We step over downed trees without touching them, walk carefully down the steepest embankments, hop onto or off rocks without slipping (her barefoot feet are tough) and very, very seldom stub a toe. Her self balance is superb and she’s thoughtful about her path. I sometimes forget her capability if I’m in the lead until I hear a horse behind me clattering and stumbling.

As our trust in each other continues to develop, I want to become an even better handler for my mule because she so clearly expresses her appreciation for a lighter, more subtle touch while doing what I must to clearly remain the leader. And although I suspect that she’s got far wider experience than I, we still have many “firsts” ahead of us as a team. Why a mule? In the long run, perhaps because they are stricter, more challenging teachers—mirrors for who we wish to become.



Jim Dandy, 2006



Ridge Riders October Report

Sue Murphy

The grasses in Valles Caldera National Preserve were almost knee high and golden brown as we saddled up for a tour of the western end of The Grande. The Aspens had turned their perfect shade of gold peeking out from between the evergreens along the western rim of The Grande. We had a full group of 12 riders for the magnificent Valles Caldera under a cloudless sky, October 16th.



The plan was to do some movie history while we rode, so we first started off to visit the old cabin where “The Missing” was filmed. Horseback was the perfect way to access this since you can’t get there by car. The place is as creepy up close as it is in the movie.

After a ride over a hill and around a meadow, we stopped close to the tree line where Trailmaster Julie had scouted out a perfect place for lunch with several large boulders to serve as seats and later as mounting blocks. Finishing lunch, we proceeded on to the historic cabins where Julie told us about the filming of the popular TV show “Longmire”, for which she has worked as an extra several times.

October is a perfect time to ride the Grande as the ground has dried out from the summer monsoons. Still, the day provided plenty of opportunities to work on water crossings. The water crossings came in two varieties: either the horses had to step down off a small ledge to enter the water, or the stream was less defined which meant sinky mud leading into the stream and sinky mud out the other side.

The Grande itself provides inspiration for many photo ops – especially so today with the tour of the Valles Caldera buildings.



Ridge Riders

Julie Belt

October 16th was a picture-perfect day for the NNMHA Ridge Riders ride in the Valles Caldera. It was a large and happy group that rode the La Jara Trail and around the base of South Mountain, fording the East Fork of the Jemez River several times and enjoying the tranquility of the Valle Grande.

The last NNMHA Ridge Riders ride for 2016 will be held on **Saturday, November 12th**, at Cerrillos Hills State Park. THIS IS A CHANGE OF DATE FROM THE PREVIOUS NOTICE. A sign-up sheet was available at the October 26th meeting, but if you were not there to get your name on the list of riders, please contact Julie Belt as soon as possible. The ride will be limited to 12 members and at this time there are only a few spots left.

The Association's organized group trail rides are open to members only and operate by guidelines designed to keep everyone safe while having a good time. Guidelines are found on the Association's website at <http://www.nnmha.net/ridge-riders.html>

October 26, 2016 Minutes of the Annual membership meeting

Pecos Trail Café

Casual discussion over dinner was lively and included lots of news about recent trail planning meetings, group rides, and what-I-did-last-summer stories. Karen Reyer commented that it was delightful to hear about so much energy in the equestrian community.

The official meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by President Rocco Fancellu.

Treasurer's report was delivered by Treasurer Helen Newton. A categorized handout of the year's income and expenses (from November of last year) was distributed. Our account balances are approximately \$10,000 in all accounts. Our recurring monthly expenses are mostly insurance and PNM bills, but the significant expenses as expected involve maintenance on the grounds, tractor, and preparations for Rodeo stall rentals—which also comprise our biggest fund-raising by far. This accounting should help us plan a budget for next year.

Secretary Karen Denison gave a summary of the last general meeting featuring equine massage therapist Ed Lamb, the last meeting outdoors this year, and items discussed at the members' meeting afterward.

Rocco brought up maintenance items for immediate attention. The comfort stations need to be winterized and Rocco will buy small heaters / extension cords at discount to use until we can engineer a more elegant solution. The current plumbing cannot be sufficiently drained to withstand freezing. Karen D. reported that member and roofing contractor Nick Martinez is taking care of the office leak which he attributes to a missing cover for the air conditioner. He will order one made to fit the unit. A thorough inspection and sealing of edges, seams, and trim areas was also done. Nick is donating materials



and service at no charge.

Joyce Davis announced that the Marlow Morrison longeing clinic this weekend has one space left.

Helen will host this year's member Christmas party on December 4, 1 p.m. With active discussion, the club will provide either a ham or turkey, the rest will be potluck/BYOB. There will be a gift exchange with a limit of \$20.

The next meeting will be at Pecos Trail Café on November 16, not the usual date because of Thanksgiving.

Julie Belt gave a report on the last Ridge Riders outing at the Valles Caldera. It was a full trip, enjoyed by 12 members. One note: the RR rides are member events because of insurance and permitting requirements. The VCNP trip required last-minute explaining to officials there since it had gotten posted on social media as if it might be a public event. Open public events on public land (NPS, USFS, State Parks, etc.) require a different category of permit. The next ride is an easy ride at Cerrillos Hills State Park, nearby in case the weather turns bad (which it can in November). Because of a schedule conflict, it is now Saturday, Nov. 12th. A sign-up sheet was passed around.

Nominations were made for 2017 officers and all current officers have been coerced into accepting nomination for the same posts next year. A call was made for nominations from the floor and none were offered. Nominations were closed. Karen D. will prepared an official ballot and post it on the website. Mail-in ballots will be accepted until the November 16 meeting by the double-envelope method outlined by Karen Reyer; Helen will pick up mail on the afternoon of the meeting. Copies will also be on hand at the November meeting when ballots will be counted.

Also on the ballot, Karen D. described the proposed Bylaw changes and offered handouts to anyone interested. The original and proposed changes are also available for examination on the website. It was noted that the changes would reflect a more inclusive mission (not just showing/competition), a board of directors comprised solely of positions elected by members (not appointees), and bring us into compliance with state regulations regarding the dissolution or sale of property (which requires a member referendum). The Bylaws have not been officially updated since 1989.

Karen D. shared that our grounds manager of a couple years, Mark Boutelier, has resigned. His diligence at keeping tabs on the grounds and the Board informed of needed work was praised as well as being point-of-contact for stall rentals. We will need to find replacement volunteers for those duties. There was discussion of the stall rental contact, in particular, since Reyers are still receiving calls.

Volunteerism in general was discussed; the board is trying to find ways to foster more participation by members. Joyce described the effort and number of folks it requires to run stall rentals during Rodeo de Santa Fe, our major source of income.

Helen announced that plans are in the works for a repeat of the independent (non-NNMHA) Winter Woolly shows, probably January-February-March.

Meeting adjourned approximately 8:00 p.m.



Longeing Clinic Report

The longe line clinic taught by Marlow Morrison of Longe Forward Equestrian Training on October 29-30 could not have asked for better weather, people or horses to have participated. A variety of levels attended, both horses and handlers; each had different challenges to tackle to do the work at hand. From horses that did not move away from pressure to horses doing trot/canter transitions and pole work to increase strength, it proved to be a good reminder to learn to enjoy the process and to meet our equine friends where they are in their training. Marlow Morrison had a great time and there are plans for another clinic in spring for members to participate or audit. This clinic was offered at a discount for NNMHA. See more about this business at <http://www.longeforward.com>

Thornton Ranch Open Space Plans

There is a public comment period until Nov. 30 for proposed plans to develop the 2400+ acres of county open space near Galisteo. Horses are now allowed on trails following public involvement in an earlier meeting. However other issues may require your comment for practical usage by equestrians. It's a dense document, but please read it and comment.

http://www.santafecountynm.gov/open_space_and_trails_program/thornton_ranch

2017 New Mexico State Fair

MNSF Horse Show Manager Dauane Elkins has requested input to improve horse shows for the 2017 Fair. Meetings are scheduled for Dec. 2 and 3. We've posted his original email on our website at <http://www.nnmha.net/uploads/2/6/2/0/26200067/2017statefair.pdf>.

"The horsey life is an unending journey to the limits of the human mind. It is an attempt to understand, not an alien culture or an alien religion or an alien race, but an alien species. The extraordinary and thrilling affinity between the radically different minds of humans and horses has rewarded both humans and horses for thousands of years.

Even in the twenty-first century, we turn to horses. No, let me rephrase that. Especially in the twenty-first century, we turn to horses. Our world is too tame, too comfortable, and our children grow up in shopping malls with childhoods circumscribed by paedophilia-phobia and the laws of health and safety. We are becoming a species cut off from all others and it doesn't feel good.

But when we associate with horses, we claim back something of our lost wildness, our lost wilderness. With horses, we are back in touch with our fellow animals. With horses, we become more truly human."

—Simon Barnes, The Horsey Life, 2010

