

Georgia Equine Rescue League, Ltd.

With Your Help ...
We Will Make A Difference

Volume #164

www.gerlltd.org

March 2009

Banjo Needs a Permanent Home

By: Patty Livingston, President

I would like to tell you about Banjo in hopes that one of you might find room in your pasture and in your heart for this lovely mare. We are told that she is 16 years old and her breeding is obviously part, if not all, Arabian. Impounded by GDA Inspectors some time ago, with a body score of one, Banjo has remained at the Impound in Mansfield. Over the months, she has been lovingly rehabilitated, along with her yearling filly, who was impounded at the same time. The filly was adopted. Their former owner, was charged with animal cruelty, and found guilty.



The term "Sweeny" refers to an injury of the supraspinatus and infraspinatus muscles on both sides of the spine at the scapula. Denervation of these muscles produces atrophy. Loss of muscle volume and shrinkage of tissue results in a characteristic prominence of the ridge-like spine.



Not many people are familiar with this term. I have been around horses most of my life and I have never heard of it until I met Banjo. The veterinarians have diagnosed her physical limitations as being due to "sweeny". Fortunately, her symptoms are slight and she requires no medication.

**Photos - Banjo upon arrival at
the GDA Impound.**

(continued on page 9)

**Who's Who
Georgia Equine Rescue League, Ltd.**

Board Members

Patty Livingston, President

(770) 867-0760 / gerlpatty@yahoo.com

Ken Archer, Vice President

(770) 554-1381 / gerlken@bellsouth.net

Diana DeMoss / Treasurer

(770) 267-0867 / gerlnaners@windstream.net

Anne Ensminger / Secretary

(770) 464-3348 / missanne612@bellsouth.net

Steven Neal / Alternate

(706) 342-3422 / gerlsteven@bellsouth.net

Area Coordinator Director

Ronnie Pesserilo

(770) 466-4515 / gerlrone@bellsouth.net

Foster / Adoption Coordinator

Donna Pieper

(404) 797-3333 / gerldonna@bellsouth.net

Events Coordinator

Susan Archer

(770) 554-1381 / susangerl3@bellsouth.net

Volunteer Coordinator

Kelly Lockerman

(706) 353-0413 / gerl_volunteers@yahoo.com

***If you are interested in becoming an
Area Coordinator for a county not listed here,
please contact Ronnie Pesserillo
(770) 466-4515 or gerlrone@bellsouth.net.**

GERL Advisory Board

Billy Myers, DVM

Kenneth Marcella, DVM

Michael Chisolm, Esquire

**To report a case of equine abuse, call the
Georgia Department
of Agriculture's Equine Division
Monday - Friday / 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
(404) 656-3713 or (800) 282-5852**

**If you would like GERL to assist with an
Equine Abuse case call
(770) 464-0138**

Area Coordinators

Rebecca Kilgore - Dawson, Lumpkin, Hall Counties

(706) 429-5075 / rkilgore@acs-ebiz.com

Rita Benfield - Douglas, Haralson, Carroll Counties

(770) 489-0212 / ritabenfield@yahoo.com

Juli Williams - Chatham, Bryan, Effingham Counties

(912) 234-8458 / reins2go@aol.com

Annette Raybon - Paulding, Cobb, Bartow Counties

(770) 445-8655 / raybonta@bellsouth.net

Susan Wrensen - Cherokee County

(770) 331-6947 / swrensen@comcast.net

**LeighAnn Holton - Glynn, McIntosh, Wayne,
Brantley & Camden Counties**

(912) 267-0912 / jtj_associates@comcast.net

Jan & Buddy Williams - Meriwether County

(706) 846-8277 / jan@buddyscompanies.com

Anne Ensminger - Newton County

(770) 464-3348 / missanne612@bellsouth.net

Robin White - Pulaski County

(478) 783-1156 / robin@cerakko.com

Lynn McMinn - Gwinnett, Walton, Oconee Counties

(404) 372-9245 / lynn.mcminn@yahoo.com

Joanne Hitman - Jackson County

(770) 536-4858 / (404) 697-9226

jhitman@mindspring.com

Tanya Kingsley - Jasper County

(706) 468-0794 / twkings@bellsouth.net

Susie Bond - Morgan & Green Counties

(770) 464-4353 / gerlsusie@att.net

Kriston Glushko - Polk & Floyd Counties

(678) 757-1138 / krgs@earthlink.net

Newsletter Editor - Betty Evenson

(706) 265-5045 / gerlbetty@aol.com

***Please submit all newsletter materials
by the 10th of each month for submission
in the following month's newsletter.**

LET ME SAY THIS ... ABOUT THAT

By: Patty Livingston, President

It has just been a little over one month since I took over as President of GERL and I compare it to starting a new job. In the beginning, I knew very little about the rescue business, and I'm not professing to be an expert, by any means, but, I have learned so much in just a short time.

I've learned that some people won't call until it's too late and the horse suffers and dies. This seems unusually cruel to me, but ignorance abounds. I am continually reminded that education must be one of our roles as a rescue organization. I've also learned about people who plea for help and when it is offered they become stubborn and unwilling to cooperate, not necessarily with their horses' best interest in mind. I have learned not to panic and get anxious when I receive an email describing skinny horses until I have a reliable source check it out. I've learned that there are other rescue organizations out there willing to help with the load of never-ending calls and emails reporting horses that need new homes.

We are getting a large number of calls from families who can no longer afford to take care of their horses because of the ailing economy or health issues. And, I'm sure you have all heard about people who go to one of the local riding parks for a day ride and come back to find new horses tied to their trailer with nobody in sight. Things are getting tough and this is just the beginning.

So far this year we have:

- Delivered 600 bales of alfalfa hay to the Mansfield Impound
- Upgraded and mailed out our first newsletter
- Updated the GERL Web site
- Paid \$1300 for building materials for a turn-out shed for the horses at the Pulaski Prison Impound
- Paid to have the JD Gator and tractor fixed at Mansfield
- Approved the purchase of panels and enclosed metal carport for the Dawson County Animal Control's new equine facility
- Taken in 3 new horses who need permanent homes

I have some pretty big goals for GERL and intend to set some records to raise more money to help more horses, provide education and expand membership, just to name a few. Another major goal is to revamp our Area Coordinator program and to ensure that they have the proper training and tools that they'll need to do their jobs.

My little brain is continuously turning, making notes on areas that need attention and adding new goals that I'd like to set for GERL. Yes, so much has happened in just one month, but with your help, we Will make a difference!

GERL Adoptables

Banjo a 16 year old Arabian-type mare. See pages 1 and 9 for additional information

Rusty a 2 year old Arab-cross colt. See page 9 for additional information.

Nadia a 3 year old Arab-cross filly. See page 16 for additional information.

Spice a 10 year old Quarter Horse mare. See page 17 for additional details.

For adoption fees and additional information please contact

Donna Pieper
GERL Adoption & Foster Coordinator
(404) 797-3333
gerldonna@bellsouth.net

Look Who Tied The Knot

Long time GERL members Diana Kelsey and Steve DeMoss were married on Saturday, February 7th.

Congratulations
Diana and Steve!



A Note from the Secretary's Desk
By: Anne Ensminger, GERL Secretary

Phone calls. Oh boy, does GERL get phone calls! If you call the GERL phone number (770) 464-0138 you will hear a nice recording inviting you to leave a message. GERL volunteers that are part of a roster for the entire year, check these messages several times each day, each volunteer for a one-week period. These volunteers return EVERY call, answer questions, help with reporting cases of abuse to the Georgia Department of Agriculture, and give advice to people who have a wide variety of problems involving their horses or horses they know about. If the person who answers the call cannot take care of the problem, they call one, or all of the GERL Board of Directors for help.

GERL wants to help every horse in need, but we sometimes have to dig deep into presented situations, to find the whole truth. Recent example (and a heart breaker)... Last week, a woman called to say that her home had burned to the ground and her family lost everything they owned. They were living with a relative and the children's dear, very gentle riding horse had to be left at the original home place. It was a fourteen mile, round trip, each day to water the mare and they did not always have access to a vehicle. They wanted to know if we could help. Of course, we wanted to help. We immediately started to arrange for a foster home and to have a Coggins test drawn by a veterinarian in the area. GERL cannot legally move a horse without a current negative Coggins.

I contacted the woman the very next day to let her know what progress we were making and to ask her to meet us where the horse was housed to sign the necessary papers. That is when she revealed to us that the mare was very old and that she was extremely "sway backed", which had always prevented the use of a saddle. I'm thinking, "Oh dear, how will we ever find a home for this poor horse"? No problem. We go forward.

Just before daylight the next morning, my phone was ringing. It was the woman with the sway-backed mare (sadly named "Camel", by the way). She said that they had gone out the evening before and found that Camel had died. I was stunned. There was nothing more to say.

How could this have happened? Was the mare so old that her time had simply come? Did she starve to death or go without water for too long? What kind of life had she had? We will never know the answers to these questions but I will never get Camel off my mind. I had even begun to think that she might be very cute with her deeply dipped little back.

There are so many stories about the calls we receive and I plan to write about others from time to time. Many have happy conclusions. ALL teach us about human nature. Over the years, we have seen unbelievable kindnesses, as well as, unbelievable cruelty toward horses. We treasure the pure goodness of people who just want to help and we endure the lies and half-truths we are told in other situations. Still, we press on. Our burning desire is to help just one more horse. GERL will keep trying to sort it all out if you will continue to care, and let us know you are with us.



A
Horse Lover's
Catalog

(800) 332-9251
thebarndoor.com

We Need Your Help! Auction Items Are Needed

We have two upcoming events that will include auctions - the Gene Ensminger Benefit ride and Fall Fest, 2009.

We need you to help by donating auction items. These items can include new or used tack, home décor items, gift certificates, etc. Remember ... our auctions are only as successful as the items that we have to offer.

Do you have a beach house? A cabin rental? Do you have a timeshare that you do not use? Perhaps you would consider donating a few nights or a week for one of our upcoming auctions. It's tax deductible and benefits a great cause.

Thank You In Advance For Your Support!

If you have items to donate
or have additional questions please contact

Susan Archer, Event Coordinator
(770) 554-1381
susangerl3@bellsouth.net

Check Out The GERL Website

Steven Neal has taken on the monumental task of reworking and updating the GERL website.

Take a look!
www.gerlltd.org

You will find an updated Calendar of Events, Who's Who, info on Membership, Foster Care and Adoption, and most impressive ... the current GERL Newsletter in PDF form!

The GERL website is a very important tool and it's very time consuming to keep it current.

Thank you Steven for your hard work and dedication. We appreciate it!



Foster and Adoptive Homes Desperately Needed By : Anne Ensminger, Secretary

As everyone has seen by now, we have a new Board of Directors, a new address, and a new newsletter editor, which has led to a new look for our newsletter. These things are just the beginning. We also have a new Foster and Adoption Coordinator. Donna Pieper has taken on this monumental task and is anxious to get to work making a difference for horses in need.

Never has the need been greater in these two areas. Horses are being abandoned and given up because of job losses or other financial hardships that are the result of the present economy in our country. GERL is now frequently called upon to help these horses, therefore, we are in need of help from our membership as never before.

Can you offer a horse a temporary home until a permanent home can be found? Are you interested in adopting a GERL horse?

If you have answered yes to either of these questions please contact Donna Pieper at (404) 797-3333 or gerl-donna@bellsouth.net. Let Donna know what you are able to foster and if you are looking to adopt, what sort of horse would work for you (mare, gelding, young horse, old horse, pet, or riding horse). If you have made such an offer in the past and have not been contacted, rest assured that you WILL get a response from Donna. The need is great. Please help us meet this need and help these horses!

Welcome New GERL Members

Peggy Giddens
Jean Long
Jim & Andrea O'Connor
Dr. Sheila J. Smith
Bob & Dorothy Thomas
Jill Williams
Pamela Wright

Murphy, NC
Macon, GA
Ellijay, GA
Lawrenceville, GA
Dawsonville, GA
Bostwick, FL
Clarkdale, GA

Referred By:

Patty Livingston
Patty Livingston
GERL
Lynn McMinn
Anne Ensminger
Patty Livingston
GERL

Thank You For Renewing Your GERL Membership

Rita Benefield & Mike Wade
Judy Berringer
Amelia & Wayne Bolton
Judy Bradberry
Tom & Shirley Brady & Family
William & Janet Bryan
Jack Cashin
Judy Close
Margaret & Jeffrey Clower & Family
Laura Crump
Christine Garrett
Chrstina Gilham
Kriston Glushko
Bob & Shirley Guhl
Lee Hager
Jeff Hetsko
Sherry & Dennis Irwin
Diana DeMoss
Julie Kuni
Patty Livingston
Betsy Malcolm
Shannon & Jason Marler & Family
Marshia Milan-Medford
Nancy & Dick Mittendorf
Debbie & Lamar Mullinax
Mrs. Beulah Newton
Donna Pieper & Keith Flemming
Debbie Powell
Jackie Sawyer
Larry & Sherry Shogren
Butch & Sheryl Slate
Hoyt "Slick" Tatum
Thomas Threatt
Bob & Margaret Wallace

Douglasville, GA
Waverly Hall, GA
Barnesville, GA
Auburn, GA
Warrenton, GA
Alpharetta, GA
Alpharetta, GA
McDonough, GA
Loganville, GA
Franklin Springs, GA
Kennesaw, GA
Carrollton, GA
Rockmart, GA
Social Circle, GA
Marietta, GA
Atlanta, GA
Canton, GA
Good Hope, GA
Loganville, GA
Bethlehem, GA
Atlanta, GA
Loganville, GA
Covington, GA
Greensboro, GA
Oxford, GA
Silver Creek, GA
Loganville, GA
Cordele, GA
Cartersville, GA
Marietta, GA
Temple, GA
Cartersville, GA
Hoschton, GA
Shady Dale, GA



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

With Your Help ... We Will Make A Difference

14th Annual

POKER RIDE

TO BENEFIT THE
GEORGIA EQUINE RESCUE LEAGUE, LTD.



**Draw The Lucky
Hand and Win
A \$100.00 Prize...**



Lots of Prizes Awarded!

A donation of \$20.00 includes lunch and one poker hand. **GERL MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE 1 EXTRA HAND AT NO ADDITIONAL COST (JUST SHOW US YOUR GERL MEMBERSHIP CARD TO DRAW YOUR EXTRA HAND).** Additional poker hands are available to all for a donation of \$5.00 per hand. **You must show us your horse's negative coggins test (yellow original or certified copy only)** at the time of registration. Water is available on the trail, but not at the trailer area. **WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU BRING WATER FOR YOUR HORSE!** Pre-registration is greatly appreciated, but not required.

Please call (770) 554-1381 or e-mail: susangerl3@bellsouth.net for registration and further information. Come ride against horse abuse and help us raise money for the starved and abused horses in Georgia. **ALL PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED AT 2 PM!!!** *Dawson Forest has a \$5 trail fee. If you do not have an annual pass you will be required to pay an additional \$5 for this ride. GERL will collect this fee and forward it appropriately.

*Directions traveling Hwy 400 North from Cumming. Go through lights at Hwy 369 / Hwy 306 and Jot Em Down Road. Go left on Dawson Forest Road at Dawson Premium Outlet Mall. Cross Hwy 9 and follow signs. Go through gate and turn left into Dawson Forest parking lot.

Twinkie & Nabisco

By: Robin Easley, GDA Inspector

Twinkie, a grey Arabian type mare, was impounded in October, along with Cupcake and Nutter Butter. The impoundment was due to the owner's refusal, after many warnings from GDA, to provide adequate feed for them. Twinkie and her companions were kept in a dirt lot with only weeds to munch on and trash to rummage through. She was very shy, but on the day of impoundment, was eager to join the others on the trailer as if she knew the Department of Agriculture was there to save her.

Since Nutter Butter was a stud, it was suspected that both mares were in foal. However, due to their poor body conditions at the time of impound, the Department was unsure if they were actually pregnant until they were palpated and confirmed in foal by Dr. Lowder of UGA.

Upon arriving at the impound facility, Twinkie and the others were fed good quality grain and hay and their condition quickly improved. Her belly kept growing and growing and the impound workers began to wonder if she was ever going to foal! Finally, on the morning of December 18, Twinkie gave birth to a healthy and beautiful black colt, which we named "Nabisco". Momma and baby prance around their paddock, tails up, waving in the air, proud to be alive and thankful for their second chance for a good life! Both mare and foal continue to flourish and were sold at the GDA Impound Auction Sale on February 21st.



Photo above - Twinkie upon arrival at the Impound



Photo Left & Right

Mama & baby doing great!



Rusty
By: Anne Ensminger, Secretary

Sue Vetch wrote about Rusty for our newsletter last month. She and her daughter, Danelle, did a great job of rehabilitating this colt after he was almost starved to death when he was very young. They taught Rusty to lead, load in a trailer, stand for foot trimming, love people and to enjoy a good brushing.

What more does a two-year-old colt need to know? Rusty now lives with me and will be here until a permanent home can be found. He is quite a character and I am enjoying taking care of him. It makes me chuckle to watch him carry a small rubber pan around in his mouth and throw it over his back. As you can see from his picture, he loves to run. Fortunately, there is plenty of room here for him to do that as often as he wants.



My friend, Sylvia Mooney, says Rusty is “lanky”. I have to agree. That is a good word to describe most two-year-olds. He is now in full winter coat and looks like a tall, skinny bear. I will be anxious to see the lovely liver chestnut coat that Sue Vetch promises will emerge in the spring.

Rusty is a healthy, energetic Arabian cross colt with a good mind. I can only imagine the satisfaction which will come from continuing his education and making him into a willing partner. If you are interested in meeting Rusty, please contact Donna Pieper at (404) 797-3333 or gerldonna@bellsouth.net.

Banjo
(continued from the front cover)

The name, “Banjo” assigned by GDA personnel, just like the names of hundreds of other horses that have passed through their pastures, is perfect.

We feel that Banjo would do well as an only horse as she seems to enjoy being a loner. She keeps herself apart from the others, perhaps because of her physical limitations. She is unable to move quickly enough to avoid aggressive behavior of other horses. However, when she finds herself in a herd, she is near the top of the pecking order and is quick to let the others know that she is “boss mare”. Although Banjo is no longer a riding horse, she has excellent ground manners, is otherwise healthy, and deserves the chance to live the rest of her life in peace. She is a favorite with Inspectors and volunteers at the GDA Mansfield Impound and they are desperate to find a loving home for her.



If interested in Banjo, please contact Donna Pieper at (404) 797-3333 or gerldonna@bellsouth.net.

Donations Made to GERL In Memory Of Gene Ensminger

Thomas Threatt
Hoschton, GA

Diane & Robert Caruso
Blythe, GA

Julia Kuni
Loganville, GA

Bob & Shirley Guhl
Social Circle, GA

Marge Mabey & Family
Alpharetta, GA

Linda Gumble
Atlanta, GA



GERL BOARD APPROVES REQUEST FOR FUNDS TO HELP WITH DAWSON COUNTY ANIMAL CONTROL EQUINE FACILITY

By: Patty Livingston, President

The GERL Board of Directors recently approved a request from Dawson County Animal Control for funds to purchase panels and an enclosed metal carport building that will serve as a temporary equine impound. Dawson County Animal Control has had many calls to help capture "at large" horses – horses that have escaped or been turned loose by their owners. The problem for Animal Control was that they had no safe place to take these horses after their capture.

The Dawson County Sheriff's office will grade out an area near the landfill to set up this new equine holding area, intended to be a temporary facility, capable of housing several horses. After every possible effort to find the owners of these horses is unsuccessful, a Coggins test will be obtained and, if negative, new homes will be sought.

The worsening economy, coupled with a two-year draught that has influenced hay prices and availability, many horse owners find that they are unable to take care of their animals. It is sad to think that someone would actually turn a horse free to roam the woods and highways, but this goes to show the desperate situation some horse owners are facing. We anticipate the situation will get worse before it gets better, making it necessary for more Animal Control facilities to get involved in equine rescue.

GERL is committed to supporting this pilot project to help relieve the burden of "at large" horses in Dawson and surrounding counties. Look for more updates and pictures of this new equine facility in future newsletters.



Long time GERL foster caregiver, Emily Harpster (left) poses with GERL President, Patty Livingston.

Emily has fostered several horses and ponies for GERL over the years and will soon say goodbye to "Nadia" when the mare goes to a permanent home. Emily has already let us know that she will take another foster horse when needed.

Thank you, Emily!

Lady Needs A Home

"Lady" needs a loving home. 17 year old Quarter Horse mare, chestnut with blaze and 4 socks.

Very gentle, and in good health. Approx. 15hh Will give to the right home.

Call Monique at (678) 732-4214 Ellenwood, GA.

**If Your Name Is Listed Here, Your Membership Is Due For Renewal!
This Will Be Your Last Newsletter Unless You Renew.**

Hank Bell
Allison J. Bennett
Heidi Buchan
Theresa Camp
Michael Chisolm
Andrea Elmore
Nancy Fitzgibbons
Sandra Freeman
Emily Harpster
Rachel Helmbold
Sarah Hill
LeAnn Householder
Bonnie Kirschling
Ron & Nancy
Chuck & Carol Mackey
Donna & Walter
Jennifer Meza
Krista Pezold

Madison, GA
Canon, GA
Waynesville, GA
Canton, GA
Waleska, GA
McDonough, GA
Mableton, GA
Statham, GA
Snellville, GA
Athens, GA
Hazelhurst, GA
Canton, GA
Milledgeville, GA
Lupori, GA
Jefferson, GA
Thomson, GA
Griffin, GA
Marietta, GA

Ruth & Doug Sarrett
Virginia Scarritt
Bill Simpson
Kathy Smith
Deborah Stewart
Mary Ann Topper
Lauren Turner
Althea Walker
Carole Wilson
Krista & Mac Wright
George & Charlotte Zubowicz

Madison, GA
Atlanta, GA
Monroe, GA
Richmond Hill, GA
Cartersville, GA
Dawsonville, GA
Atlanta, GA
Lawrenceville, GA
Douglasville, GA
Loganville, GA
Warm Springs, GA

Please continue to support GERL ...

**Junior Membership \$15 (12 and under)
Single Membership \$25
Family Membership \$35
Business, Club, etc. \$50**

***Membership form is on the last page of this newsletter**



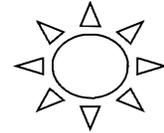
**Happy
St Patrick's Day!!!**



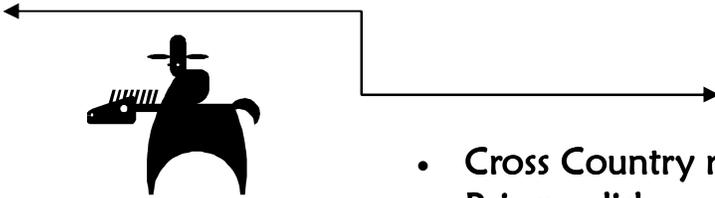
GENE ENSMINGER MEMORIAL RIDE

TO BENEFIT THE GEORGIA EQUINE RESCUE LEAGUE

May 1 - 3



**Fundraiser to be held at Ron & Adrian Cook's place
Round Oak, GA - near Monticello & Hillsboro**



- Cross Country riding in the Oconee National Forest
- Bring a dish and join us for Pot Luck Dinner Friday Night
- Dinner and Dance on Saturday Night
- Breakfast Saturday & Sunday Morning
- Live Auction Saturday Night
Mickey Farmer - Famous Auctioneer!
- Limited power and water hook-ups available
- Plenty of primitive camping
- High ties provided with power sites, pens o.k.
- GERL Merchandise will be for sale on site

I wouldn't think of missing this!

*DOWNLOAD
RIDE
REGISTRATION
FORM AT
GERLLTD.ORG



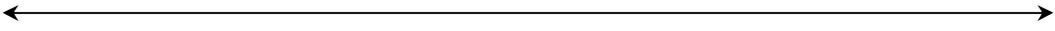
Start packin' up,
honey! We're gonna
have a blast!

Registration Form - Gene Ensminger Memorial Ride

If registered before April 19th:
 GERL Members: Adults \$55 / Children 12 & under \$ 25
 Non-Members: Adults \$65 / Children 12 & under \$30
If registered April 19th or after:
 GERL Members: Adults \$65 / Children 12 & under \$30
 Non-Members: Adults \$75 / Children 12 & under \$35

There are a limited amount of power and water hook-ups.
 Campsites will be assigned as registration forms are received.
 All reservations must be made on this form through GERL.
Please do not call Ron & Adrian Cook!

For further information please contact Anne Ensminger
 770-464-3348 or email - missanne612@bellsouth.net



All attendees must register, riders and non-riders alike!
Single & non-family members please register separately.
See website for additional forms: gerlltd.org

GERL MEMBER? Yes No Single Family

No. of Adult Campers/GERL Members _____	X \$55 ea. =	
No. of Adult Campers/ Non-Members _____	X \$65 ea. =	
No. of Children/GERL Members _____	X \$25 ea. =	
No. of Children/Non-Members _____	X \$30 ea. =	
No. of Nights/Power & Water Site _____	X \$20 per night =	
Primitive Camping (total fee - not nightly) _____	X \$10 =	
Total Amount Due		
After April 19th: Late registration fees: Add \$10/adult and \$5/child =		
Total Amount Due =		

If you can only attend Saturday night - Dinner, Auction & Dance the fee is \$25 per person

Please make checks payable to: GERL

Mail to: Anne Ensminger 3662 Dally Road, SE Covington, GA 30014



Dear Betty

It wasn't hard to tell that you were back doing the newsletter for GERL ... it was great and such a tribute to Gene! It brought tears to me eyes with the picture of Anne and Gene dancing. It was like he didn't leave this world.

I realized how long it has been since I have been able to be active with GERL! I didn't even recognize some of the new officers and there was Ronnie's hair turning the color of mine! That gave me quite a chuckle.

I had one of my cataracts removed three weeks ago and what a difference ... I love it! The only problem is noticing the wrinkles on my face.

Thanks for including me in the "thoughts" in the newsletter. So far ... so good with the chemo. Gene was my cancer fighting hero ... so I will carry the torch for him cuz I want to see more grandchildren in the future and enjoy the baseball season with my sweetie, Christopher.

Thanks again for such a great newsletter ... take care and enjoy!

Love Ya

Marty

P.S. Thank you so much for your wonderful note! We are so glad that you are doing well and we wish you continued success with your chemo and surgeries. We sure hope you will be able to make an appearance at one of our upcoming events. We would ALL love to see you! We miss you Marty!

Thank You Steven Neal

for your incredible work on the GERL website GERL website.

Check it out!
www.gerlltd.org

Get Well Soon Mike Medlock

Sincere wishes for a speedy and complete recovery! A long time member and supporter of GERL, Mike underwent major surgery in January.

Hurry back, Mike. We need you!

Below - Mike and Spud enjoying Fall Fest



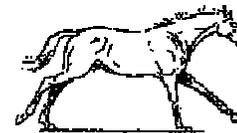
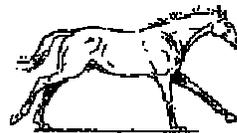
Our Thoughts And Prayers Are With You

Marty Paulk
as you continue your
battle with cancer

Dr. Kenneth Fortson, DVM
By Anne Ensminger, Secretary

The horse community in Middle Eastern Georgia lost a great veterinarian and trusted friend on January 7, 2009. The sudden death of Dr. Kenneth Fortson shocked and saddened many in the Social Circle/Madison area where he practiced for over 20 years.

Any time one of our horses was ill, I recall the wave of relief felt when Dr. Fortson's truck arrived at the barn. His calm demeanor and extensive knowledge of veterinary medicine were always a great comfort.



2008 MEMBERSHIP CHALLENGE

Take the challenge ...
help GERL and win great prizes!

Attention all GERL Supporters ...
A GERL Membership Drive is about to begin
and we need YOUR help!

Don't get left out!
This is a great way to get involved and help to grow GERL's membership.
Ask everyone you know if they will join GERL and support a wonderful cause!

So you want to know how a Membership Drive works ...

Make plenty of copies of the GERL membership application that is on the back of this newsletter or visit GERL's website for a downloadable PDF. Where you see "referred to" - write your name very legibly. Give a membership form to everyone that you can think of - co-workers, boarders at your barn, folks around the show grounds, your riding clubs, your vet, your farrier, etc. When your friends fill out the form that you have given them and return it to GERL with their check, we will be able to see that you referred the membership and you will be given "credit" for that new member.

1st Prize - \$100 CASH

2nd Prize - \$25 Gift Certificate from The Barn Door, Inc.

3rd Prize - \$15 Gift Certificate from The Barn Door, Inc.

Winners Will Be Announced
at the
Gene Ensminger Memorial Ride
the weekend of May 1st

*CONTEST RULES ... Contest will run from March 1 - April 30, 2009. Referrals must not have been a GERL member for anytime during the past 12 months. Membership fees must accompany the membership forms when returned to GERL. The GERL board has the final say in all contest rules, etc.

“Nadia” Needs a Home

As occasionally happens, the GDA’s Equine Division asked GERL to help find a place for several horses a little over a year ago. These horses were starving and living in terrible conditions. Both GDA Impounds were full and, I believe, quarantined because of a Strangles outbreak.

GERL is always willing to help the GDA when possible, so arrangements were made to place a mare, her foal, a young colt, and a long yearling filly. The mare and foal were quickly adopted but the filly and the colt, both in very poor condition, went to separate GERL foster homes. Both of these young horses were wild and could never have been transported if not for the help of GDA Inspectors to get them loaded onto stock trailers.



After a year of foster care and rehabilitation by some wonderful, caring, GERL members, these two horses are now ready for adoption. Sue Vetch wrote about “Rusty” (see page 9 for more information on Rusty) in last month’s GERL newsletter. He is gentle and loves attention.

Lovingly called, “Nadia”, the filly, now about three years old, is a bit of a different story. I saw her for the first time last week and was amazed at her beauty. She is obviously of Arab decent. She is fully rehabilitated but remains shy as she has not been handled. For this reason, GERL has made arrangement with Ed Huey, a fine horse trainer in middle Georgia, to work with Nadia for about 30 days and get her gentled so that she can be adopted and begin her training. This is a great opportunity for someone interested in natural horsemanship to adopt a beautiful young mare and make her into a true partner.

If interested in giving Rusty or Nadia a home and a job, please contact Donna Pieper, GERL Adoption Coordinator, at (404) 797-3333 or gerldonna@bellsouth.net.

Saving Ms. Greenway

On December 22nd, a plea for help came to us from Officer Mobley with Hall County Animal Control. They had just picked up two horses that they had been monitoring for starvation. One was a paint gelding, approximately 18 years old, and the other a bay mare, approximately 12 years old. They were both malnourished and would need to go to a Foster Home for rehabilitation before they could be adopted out.

Ronnie Pesserilo contacted Officer Mobley and offered assistance. He said that they had one foster prospective and that he would contact us if that did not work out.

(continued on the following page)

Photo at Right

Ms. Greenway at time of impoundment



Saving Ms. Greenway (continued from the previous page)

The next day Officer Mobley called to tell Ronnie that the paint gelding had died and they needed our help placing the mare.

Ronnie called Dr. Ken Marcella, one of many vets that contribute their services to us. He went out and pulled a Coggins, did a cursory float on her teeth and gave her a check up. Her body score was 4.5. We were happy to hear that, as most of our rescues have a much lower body score.

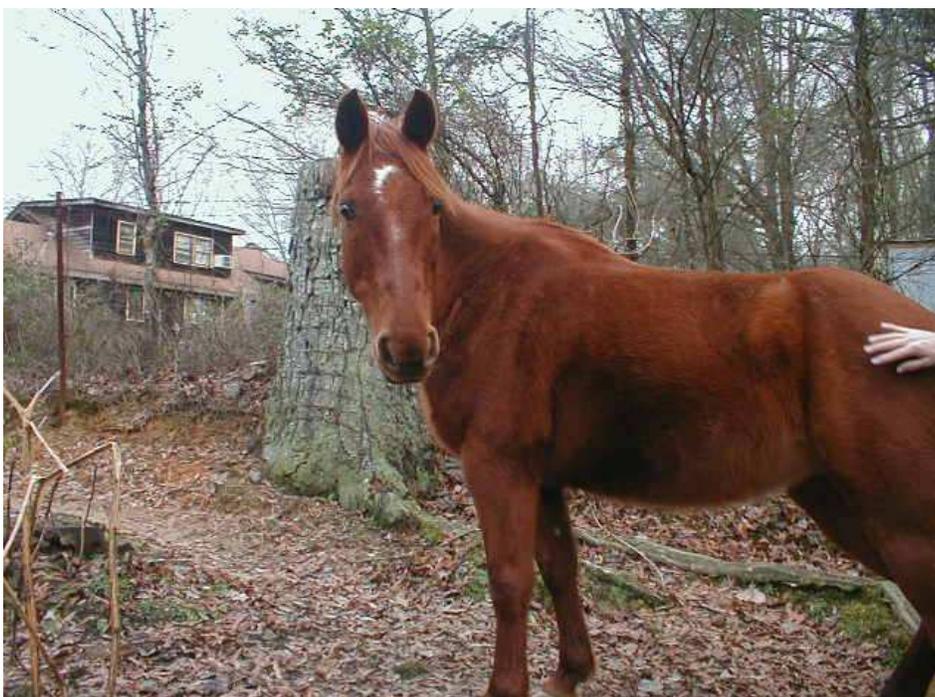
Robin White – our foster coordinator, jumped on the phone and after many calls, found Ms. Greenway a foster home with Steve and Harriet O’Rear. I’ll tell you more about them in a minute! (cont on page 18)



Spice Needs a Home By: Patty Livingston, President

As humans, we are all very aware of how life situations can change for the worst in just a blink of an eye. It is the same for horses but, sadly, they are helpless to find their own solutions. This certainly applies to “Spice”. She is a 10 year old Quarter Horse mare, which has been, more or less, a pet for most of her life. That is, until her owner began her struggle with terminal cancer.

First, Spice’s long time pasture mate left to go to a new home. Now alone, Spice must wonder where her friend was and why she rarely saw her owner. Hay quickly thrown over the fence and her water tank filled each day, was adequate to keep her alive, but what had happened to the frequent brushing and kind words from her owner? How could Spice possibly understand?



After months of this new way of living, her owner’s brother realized that a new home must be found for the mare. This very caring man had no knowledge of horses, knew no “horse people”, and had no way to transport a horse. Thankfully, he called GERL.

When I first saw Spice, I thought that I would have died 10 times over to have an opportunity to work with a horse like this when I was a teenager. I found her in good flesh and the examining veterinarian pronounced her in good health. How rewarding it would be for someone to see this mare respond to some kind, human interaction.

We are told that Spice has probably never been ridden but it is obvious that she is very curious and starved for companionship. That seems like a good start for any approach to training a horse. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in taking on this wonderful project and giving Spice a home, please contact Donna Pieper at (404) 797-3333 or gerldonna@bellsouth.net.

Saving Ms. Greenway (continued from the previous page)

Now, a lot of you may hear about the horses we rescue and place, either in a foster home if they need rehabilitation, or in an adoptive home if they are fit and need a permanent home – but you really don't have any idea what the processes are to get a horse where it needs to be. I have to tell you that it takes a tremendous amount of **TEAMWORK!** Everyone involved has to work expeditiously, as at times, a horse's life depends on it.

So – to start the process Robin lets the Board of Directors know that a foster home has been located. Now, someone has to pick up this mare and take her to her new home to start her recovery. I don't know how it happened, but Ken Archer and I volunteered for this adventure. It has been said that Ken cannot find his way out of a paper bag, with a GPS, and I am here to verify that this is **NOT** a rumor!



Ken and I got moving early on January 8th. First stop – Chicopee Woods Agriculture Center, where Ms. Greenway is being housed and cared for by Officer Dwight Mobley and Officer David Jones - both Hall County Animal Control officers. She had been in this stall since she was first picked up and has had very little exercise since, so her hocks were a bit swollen, but other than that, she seems fine. She loaded up with no problem and we were off to Lookout Mountain to her new home.

The only way to make a long trip like this is to stop at Krystal and get a “sack full” of hamburgers. Ken insisted he could eat them all – even though we had no clue how many were in a “sack”! It was a beautiful drive and we only got lost seven times – and I was thankful for that, because I know it could have been worse! We saw some neat places and met some great folks along the way – so I did not complain that the trip took five hours longer than it should have! Thanks, Ken! I love you!

As we were sitting at a stop sign trying to call the O'Rears and find out where we were, we looked over and saw a gate with beautiful iron animal scenes on it. Guess what? We were sitting right in front of Harriet and Steve's driveway! What a wonderful new home Ms. Greenway has! Rolling hills of grass, plenty of company (goats!) and a loving, caring Ms. Harriet to watch over her!

(continued on the following page)

**Photo At Top
Officer Mobley, Hall Cty Animal Control
& Ken Archer, GERL Vice President
preparing to load Ms. Greenway for her
ride to her foster home**



Photo Above - Ken Archer, GERL Vice President & Ms. Greenway

Saving Ms. Greenway (continued from the previous page)

Ken and I decided that “Driving Ms. Greenway” was a wonderful experience! We will definitely do it again, and again – as many times as we need to – for the horses!

We cannot thank the O’Rears enough for reaching out to starved and abused horses. This is a perfect example of our motto: With *YOUR* help, we *WILL* make a difference!

At this point, we are looking for an adoptive home for Ms. Greenway. Hopefully, she will be ready to place at the beginning of the summer. If you are interested in adopting her, please call Donna Pieper, our Adoption Coordinator.



Here are some excerpts from emails that Harriet sent on Ms. Greenway:

1-11-09: Ms. Greenway is settled, an understatement. I never saw such a low key horse. I opened the gate to the pasture. She looks, smells, walks a few steps and repeats. Then nibbles. Not scared of pigs, goats, dogs. Shows up for hay and feed. Gets out of the rain. Either she has a metabolism of two, or she is depressed, or is happy. Will let you know which one is the case. Anyway, she does not waste calories on frivolity.

1-22-09: We took the blanket off after five days of extreme cold and voila, a fattening horse. She is really catching up fast.

1-23-09: Ms. Greenway is very low key. She is doing fine. She has the gates open to 60 acres of pasture, but she stays within about 100 yards of the barn. I bet she has never had a pen bigger than a tiny lot.



(continued on the following page)

Photo at Top - Ms. Greenway admiring the scenery around her new foster home

Photo Above - Ms. Greenway and her “room mates”

Saving Ms. Greenway (continued from the previous page)

She whinnies when breakfast and dinner arrive, and trotted a little.. She seemed disappointed in our hay after the alfalfa, but has given in and eats it. Smoozes with goats and pigs. Unaffected.

1-28-09: She is coming along slowly, actually cantered to supper once. Sort of rickety, as if I were sprinting. Sure will be nice when spring comes.

Doesn't like to be messed with when she is eating, but I don't either. Pig does not go into the stall until after she has finished

2-11-09: She is not lonely. Her roommates are a herd of goats which twine about her legs and graze beneath her tail. The swelling is gone from her hocks, and she is putting on weight. She is still covered with rain rot remnants, but Spring and a new coat will eliminate the evidence. She has a stall for feeding time and about 60 acres for grazing. For the first several weeks, she stayed right by the barn, either because she had never been out of a pen or because she didn't want to miss feeding time. Her scope is widening.

Ms. Greenway is very low key. Nothing frazzles her, neither cars, tractors, deer, 250 lb. hogs, nor noises. She looks like a standard bred horse, a tall bay with only a star of white. She loads, halters, and loves to be gently groomed. At 12 years, she should come along quickly and will probably be suited for someone who wants a gentle mount. We suspect she is broke to ride, but will wait for a few months to try her.

Yesterday she got an equine roommate - a horse from the Department of Agriculture. This one from a lot that contained one dead horse in a pond, four dead horses in the lot, and two live ones. Ms. Greenway seemed thrilled (in her own low key way) with the company and they should be grazing together by the end of the day.

**Story By: Diana Kelsey, Treasurer
and Harriet O'Rear, GERL Foster Home**

Photo - Harriet O'Rear and Ms. Greenway



**Please Make Note of
GERL's NEW ADDRESS**

**GERL
PO Box 328
Bethlehem, GA 30620**



**Thank You For Your Donations
And Continued Support**

J. M. Horvath
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Jeff Hetsko
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Bob & Margaret Wallace
Beulah Newton

**Thank You For
Your Change Jars**

Tack's Fifth Avenue
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The Stock Market
Conyers, GA

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Cumming, GA

GA Farm & Ranch Supply
Fayetteville, GA

Our Heartfelt Condolences to

Jim McGarvey on the loss of
his wife, and long-time
GERL member, Ruth McGarvey

Thank You To Our Foster Homes

Emily Harpster
for fostering Nadia

Anne Ensminger
for fostering Rusty

Harriet O'Rear
for fostering Miss Greenway

Jean Long
for fostering Lucky

Donations in Honor Of

Isabella Middleton
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Mallory Cashillberry & Christho
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Donations in Memory Of

Big Horse by Anne Salter

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Please Help

Please send proof of purchase seals from bags of any Southern States feed to
Ginny Scarritt - 4835 Kendall Court - Atlanta, GA 30342.

Ginny is collecting them for GERL,
and we will receive money for every one she sends to Southern States.

The View From My Saddle - Fall, 2008

By: John Hutchinson

It was dusk dark. I thought about turning the two Morgan mares loose, as I had on so many nights, with just a horse bell. We were camped on the only water on top of Pryor Mountain and the grass was good. I walked over to where they were finishing the last of the weed-free hay I had packed in, and I spied a red roan stud driving 13 mares in front of him, sliding down a steep slope toward the water. So instead, I tied the mares up short, brewed a cup of tea and turned in. It snowed again that night and the wind got up. I was 62 years old and alone but with two solid, four-legged partners.

I had always wanted to take my own horses West to ride in big country. My high school classmate of 1965, Jim Hallman, called one day and said he was now living in Big Horn County, Wyoming, and he and I planned a trip to do just that. I agreed to bring good, solid-minded, legged-up saddle horses if he would provide the pack string. The Arabs of antiquity chose their Desert-bred mares to ride into battle, so I took a page from their book and selected two 12- and 13-year-old Morgan mares, Gab Creek Gay Mashanta (Primavera Valdez x Rose Hill La-Papillon) and Althea Moro (Cameron of Quietude x Misty Morning Dew). I began to leg them up by riding one and ponying the other in the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia. I shod them both with Borium cleats. I spent hours working and reworking the equipment list for horse packing.



I left Georgia in mid-August and horse-camped and explored in the Black Elk Wilderness in the Black Hills of South Dakota. It was another day's drive on to Basin, Wyoming, to link up with Jim. Once there, we got familiar with our pack stock, worked on our equipment and let our saddle horses adjust to the altitude.

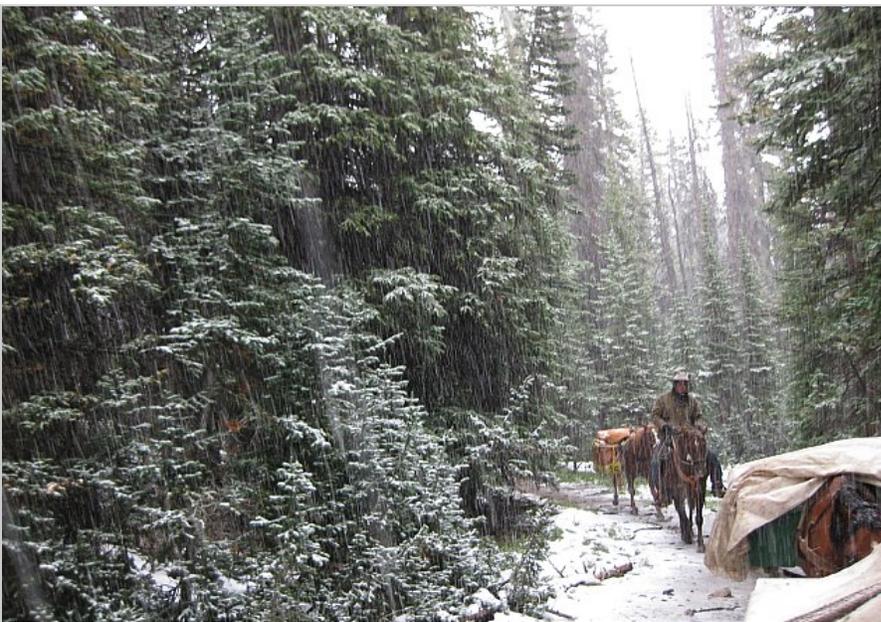
On August the 28th we loaded five horses and pulled to the trailhead at Ranger Creek on the north side of the Cloud Peak Wilderness in the Big Horn Mountains. We planned to ride all the way through to the trailhead at West Ten Sleep in the south. Our friend and owner of the pack stock, Ed Stidolph, took our rig back to Basin and would pick us up at West Ten Sleep.

We started off in shirt-sleeve weather at 7,500 feet elevation and began to climb into the high country for what we expected to be a summer pack trip, with visions of catching and releasing a hundred trout a day on the dry fly. We let the horses graze for three hours before dark, highlined them for the night and grazed them another couple of hours the next morning. We were packing 100 lbs. of complete horse feed and had trained all five to come to a nose bag twice a day. We spent the first two nights under the heavens and were able by the second day to bell the mares and turn all the horses loose at night. (continued on the following page)



The View From My Saddle (continued from the previous page)

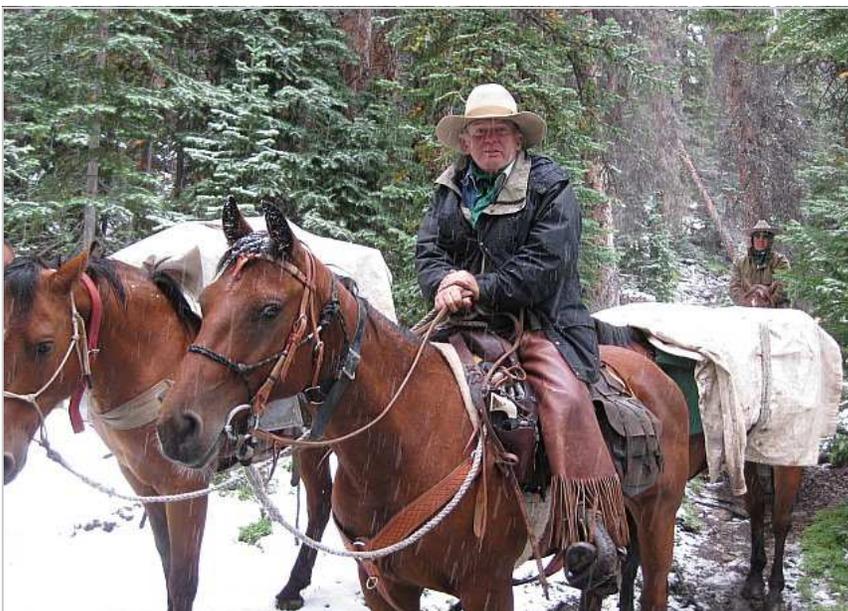
But on the third morning, everything began to change. It rained, sleeted, snowed and hailed, and over the next 24 hours the temperature dropped 60 degrees. We called that night "Camp Misery." There was a foot of snow on the ground by the next morning and Althea colicked. Drastic change of temperature, extreme work, high altitude, change of diet - we'll never know, but after two shots of Banamine and some rest, she became a pack horse with a light load. Jim was reduced to riding a pack horse that did not neck rein. We had heavy packer coats but no rubber foot gear, so we stayed wet, and thus frozen, from the knee down for the next five days.



We never did put a fly rod together, as the trip had become a survival experience. At our age and being above 10,000 feet, the horses were a serious lifeline for us. Althea recovered and proved herself a superb pack horse, and Shanta got tougher every day, always walking out big.

There was humor, too. One night I heard what I thought had to be a bear in the kitchen. I shook Jim and said, "Get your gun, Jim, there's a bear in the kitchen!" Jim came out of a dead sleep, listened and said, "Well, if it is, it's wearing a horse bell!" . . . and he went back to sleep!! Jim was right - it was my mare being her opportunist Morgan self, plundering. We eventually rode out of there--our only choice was to "sit up and ride."

Jim went back to work, and I ventured north to pursue another of my longtime interests, to ride among the Mustangs of Pryor Mountain, Montana. It was an incredible experience to be among the wild horses. Over the next two days I rode and photographed more than a dozen bands, to include Cloud himself and his look-alike 2008 foal.



Pryor Mountain is like an island in the Hawaiian chain - it rises abruptly out of the BLM-controlled red Wyoming desert, at around 4,000 ft. elevation, and is around 9,000 ft. at the top. It is bounded by more than 1.3 million acres of the Custer National Forest to the west, by the Crowe Indian Reservation to the north and by the Big Horn National Recreation Area and the Big Horn Reservoir to the east. There are many ways to climb the mountain. There is the rugged Sage Creek Road from the north, the equally rough Burnt Timber Ridge Road from the southwest, and the attention-getting Sykes Ridge Road from the southeast. Not only is the mountain isolated and big (39,500 acres), it is also compartmented by the impassible *Big Coulee* which is riddled with caves and early man sites and separates several of the horse herds from each other. I chose the Burnt Timber Ridge route. (continued on the following page)

The View From My Saddle (continued from the previous page)

The juniper and scrub brush gave way to evergreens as we went up, and I began to see wild horses. I regretted not having a telephoto lens, so I just eased along and photographed those that would oblige. My mares were by now well conditioned, but they were really drawing in that pungent air as we climbed. Somewhere above the transition line to an alpine environment, I saw a pale palomino foal and thought: "I'll bet I know who your daddy could be."

Like many of you who are happiest when you can have your hands on a horse, I had watched all of Ginger

Kathrens' Emmy award-winning PBS series *Cloud: Wild Stallion of the Rockies*. I have a genuine, profound respect for this lady. I was confident that since I was well mounted and willing to ride the remote parts of the mountain, I would see wild horses; but I really had no reasonable expectation that I would find Cloud. The incredible thing is that professional film crews have gone up there for a week and never found him (or any of his

band), yet on two Morgan mares I rode right up on him. It was a tremendous thrill.

As I began to approach this group, stop and photograph them, and ease a bit closer, *Cloud* emerged and finally came front and center. It was like being in the presence of royalty. I once attended the *Queen's [of England] Own Birthday Parade* and went through the receiving line to meet Her Majesty when I was stationed in Berlin, Germany. That was a true privilege, but for a horseman like me, *this was better!*

(continued on the following page)



2nds Photo - Cloud himself walks out to get a good look at the two mares I was riding.

The View From My Saddle (continued from the previous page)

I finally just rode around the Mustangs to the left and went on up the mountain for four more hours to reach the top. It was important to find water, and I knew where it was thanks to the 1:24,000 USGS maps I had bought. We made it and got the horses watered just before dark. I cooked chili in my coffee pot because I could not find the stew pot. I found it when I tried to get into the sleeping bag - right where I had cleverly packed it ... so it wouldn't rattle.

It was a long night with very high wind. There were lots of dead trees and tree tops in the grove where we sought shelter. To quote the famous packer Smoke Elser: "always look up when you tie your horse to a tree." More than one old cowboy has lost his life or his favorite pony to a dead fall.

The next morning it was colder and the wind was still up. Snow was blowing and more bad weather was coming. I got loaded and stepped into the saddle, rode a mile to the east and began to count the wild horses on top of the mountain. They were running in multiple bands, but in the same area. I counted them three times to be sure, and there were 33 head. One band stood together silhouetted by the rising sun. It was the perfect "photo op," but the wind was blowing sideways to the ground and Shanta was feeling good enough to pitch. I decided to leave the camera sheathed and just revel in the glory of all the horses and tend to controlling my own stock. Five hours later I was back down at the trailer.

For the record, all the wild horses I saw were in good flesh and sound. We know by DNA that the Pryor Mountain horses are descended from the pure Spanish horses. They are not horses that ranchers just "turned out." The mountain's namesake is Sergeant Richard Pryor of *the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, from which, according to one theory, on the Expedition's



return east, the horses escaped.

The Pryor Mountain herd has been managed by Nature for some 200 years before Federal agencies came into existence. There have been years when no foals have survived. Mountain lion depredation, severe weather, lightning strikes, an extreme environment... cold, wind, minimum water... all insure that natural selection is at work to the "nth" degree. And on more than one occasion, foals have been trampled and died in the BLM "roundup" when the bands are forced off the mountain by helicopter. My personal view is that, at least on Pryor Mountain, the BLM should leave the horses alone, regardless of what their EIS studies indicate about carrying capacity.

The next week I went south to LaPorte, Colorado, and picked up Jim White, the brother of a longtime friend, and his saddle horse. I rode Shanta, and we used Althea as the pack horse to go into the Platte River Wilderness west of Laramie, Wyoming, up Douglas Creek. We had perfect weather, and I finally got to catch and release Brookies on the dry fly while wearing my spurs, with my own Morgans looking on.

Four long hauling days, and I was back in Georgia with two very fit Morgan mares, having ridden in four different wilderness areas and driven a 6,000-mile loop. As I write this, the mares are doing their best to get as fat as possible.

John M. Hutcheson is a retired Colonel of Infantry with 30 years active federal service. He grew up as an exercise rider in an operation that had several hundred horses for sale at any one time. John has on several occasions made solo trips into wilderness areas, to include the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). John has been a Morgan breeder since 1996 when he acquired the Primavera Valdez son Primavera Brio. He enjoys starting stud colts and is currently looking forward to riding a colt for Polly Smith this spring. John says, "The happiest hours of my life have been with horses, as they are such good judges of character. Like soldiers, they recognize good leadership when they see it....and they can size you up quickly. One of my favorite sayings is 'The Horse Knows If You Know.'"

Editor's Note: We thought you would enjoy John's adventure as many of us have dreamed of a pack trip out west, although most of us would not want to endure the conditions that John endured. Most of us will only ever see Cloud in books and on TV - how incredible that sighting must have been! Thank you John for sharing this wonderful adventure with us.

A Rider's Prayer

Dearest Creator in Heaven,
Give me strength to guide my horse.
Make my hands soft and my head clear.
Let my horse understand me and I him.

My heart you have blessed with a special love of these animals.
Let me never lose sight of it.
My soul you have gifted with a deep need for them.
Let that need never lessen.

Always let my breath catch as the sun gleams on an elegant head.
Always may my throat tighten at the sound of a gentle nicker.
Let the scent of fresh hay and a new bag of grain be sweet to me.
Let the touch of a warm nose on my hand always bring a smile.

I adore the joy of a warm day on the farm.
The grace and splendor of a running horse, The thunder of its
hooves makes my eyes burn and my heart soar.
Let it always be so.

Dearest Creator grant me patience, For horses are harnessed wind,
and wind can be flighty.
Let me not frighten or harm them.
Instead show me ways to understand them.

Above all, dear Creator, fill my life with them.
For this love you have given me graces my existence And I shall
cherish it and praise You for it for all time.

Author Unknown



Phantom, owned by long-time GERL foster mom, Emily Harpster, wanted to help GERL Vice President, Ken Archer when he arrived to move Nadia to Ed Huey's for training. This is what you call "in your pocket"!



As The Worm Turns The Future Of Equine Internal Parasite Control

By: Kenneth L. Marcella, DVM

For a long time the control of equine intestinal parasites has been relatively easy. The stomach tube and the use of organophosphate dewormers passed away in the late 1970's when newly developed oral paste anthelmintics (anti-parasite drugs) called Benzimidazoles exploded on the market and made tube deworming obsolete. Owners were told to deworm their horses by mouth every eight weeks with Panacur, Safe-Guard, Benzelmin or Anthelcide and this new strategy "resulted in a dramatic reduction in morbidity (sickness) and mortality (death) from parasitic disease", says Dr. Ray Kaplan from the Department of Infectious Diseases at the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Georgia.

Newer drugs continued to be added to this arsenal and, by the 80's, rotation between different classes of anthelmintics was fairly common. Horse owners could now choose between Benzimidazoles, Macrolytic Lactones (ivermectins and later-moxidectin), and Pyrantel pamoate (Strongid). Keeping a horse safe from internal parasites was reduced to looking at the calendar, picking up a tube of the specified deworming drug for that 8 week period and giving it to the horse. Nothing could be easier so horses have been treated in this way for the last 30 years. As the longevity of horses has increased and death from internal parasites has decreased it was generally assumed that things were going along fairly well. But "Not so", says Dr. Kaplan.

A large study was recently completed looking at the current state of internal parasite infection and the prevalence or resistance throughout Georgia, South Carolina, Florida, Kentucky and Louisiana. Based on what was learned in that study, Dr. Kaplan concludes that "today most horse owners continue to follow (parasite deworming) recommendations that are based on knowledge that is 30 - 40 years old and frequently use anthelmintics that have become totally ineffective due to the presence of drug-resistant parasites". In that southern study, 44 large stables were used and nearly 1,300 horses were tested. Horses were tested for the number and types of parasites present and then a fecal worm egg reduction test (FECRT) was also done. A FECRT is simply done by counting the number of parasite eggs in a manure sample, deworming the horse and then repeating the fecal

egg count 10 - 14 days later. "If the percent reduction is not 90% or greater", says Dr. Kaplan, "then parasite resistance is a possibility and the animals in question should be monitored regularly until negative counts are achieved". Horses in this recent study were found to contain surprisingly large numbers of parasites and that many of the drugs being used to treat these parasites were no longer capable of killing them. 98% of these farms contained worms resistant to fenbendazole and 74% contained worms resistant to oxbendazole - both drugs from the Benzimidazole class. 40% of the farms harbored parasites resistant to parantel pamoate (strongid) though, encouragingly, no farms were found with ivermectin resistant worms.

Dr. Kaplan feels that the problem of drug resistance is reaching an alarming point. "The commonly-used rotational program, where all horses are treated on the same schedule with the same drug at frequent intervals may be easy to manage," says Dr. Kaplan, "but it does not properly address the health needs of the horse or the issue of resistance". Many veterinarians and researchers now feel that deworming programs of the future should be designed with the most up to date medical and scientific knowledge - "evidence-based, not convention or tradition based", says Dr. Kaplan.

Internal parasite problems can cause conditions ranging from poor hair coats, poor weight gain, poor performance and lost training time all the way to severe weight loss, chronic diarrhea, colic and death. If a veterinarian is examining a horse and looking for a cause for a subtle decrease in performance or conditioning it is common to ask about the status of that horse's deworming program. Most trainers and owners have been following the recommended rotational paste program and the tendency was to assume that parasites were not involved with mild clinical problems if such a "good" program had been in place.

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As The Worm Turns The Future Of Equine Internal Parasite Control

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Now we are finding out that even previously excellent programs are no longer working and there may be more parasite problems out there than we think. Over the last 30 years a shift has occurred in that large strongyles have become less important parasites for horses and Cyathostomes (small strongyles) have become dominant. This is crucial because the most destructive stage of cyathostomes is the larval worms that live in the intestinal mucosa. Most anthelmintics (except for Moxidectin) only kill the adult parasites when they are in the lumen or the inside of the intestine. So after a deworming the larval forms simple emerge, repopulate the infection in the horse and continue their life cycles.

Parasitologists are stressing that we need to take what we have learned about the life of worms and their reaction to their host horses and to the environment and use this information to change how we do battle with these organisms. In order to set up an effective program Dr Kaplan feels that it is important to combine the following: Epidemiological principles of parasite control (knowing when worms reproduce and when they shed eggs), determination of which drugs are effective on each farm (best done with a FECRT), use of the right drug for the correct parasite at the optimal time of the year, and a determination of which horses require less or more frequent treatments (best done by doing fecal egg count (FEC) examinations).

The best way to reduce worm infection is to limit the passage of eggs and the best way to do that is to kill female worms before they reproduce. If we can keep the eggs off of pastures then horses will not become as infected. "To accomplish this, treatments must be administered at concentrated intervals for limited "high transmission" times of the year," advises Dr. Kaplan. This also means that the times of the year when the survival or transmission of eggs and larvae on pasture is minimal can be handled with little to no needed for deworming. When northern pastures are very cold or frozen from November/December to February/March or later, there is no need to deworm most horses. In the south, with temperatures well over 85 degrees from May until late September, the need for summer deworming is also greatly decreased. Parasite life stages simply do not survive well enough in either extreme to warrant intense parasite control.

"We will be recommending fecal egg testing in the late winter to early spring for the majority of our cli-

ent's horses," says Dr. James Nash DVM of Horner and Nash Associates in Alpharetta, Georgia. "Based on those results we will determine which farms have horses that will need additional deworming through the hot summer and which farms can refrain from deworming until the early fall when temperatures start to cool off" adds Dr. Nash. Dr. Kaplan agrees and suggests that, in those states involved in the southern study, from May to September there may be no need to deworm most horses depending on how particular farms and horses scored on prior testing.

Dr. Kaplan's program (assume that you are beginning a new regimen in January) requires fecal testing on all horses on a farm initially followed by deworming with an ivermectin or moxidectin product containing praziquantel for the control of tapeworms. In March/April horses should again be tested. This will tell you which horses have carried high egg counts from the last deworming and which horses have good immune systems and naturally carry only a few parasites. Newer information implies that many horses naturally carry only a few parasites that serve to prime the horse's immune system and that this situation is in fact quite healthy for the horse. Other horses in the exact same environment and treatment programs are quickly overwhelmed by intestinal parasites and these horses are the animals that will experience parasite problems and the horses that should receive aggressive deworming. All horses are not equal so all deworming programs should not be the same

Horses that have high fecal egg counts should be treated at this time. The drugs of choice are either a 5-day double dose of fenbendazole or moxidectin since a good larval kill is important at this time. If fenbendazole has been shown to be ineffective against parasites at farms in your area (as determined by FECRT testing) then its use may lead to "super resistant" parasites and it should be avoided. Since temperatures are warming at this time of the year, Dr. Kaplan states, "a few eggs shed by the low and moderate shedders will not survive and accumulate on pasture". The reduction in need to deworm all horses (since only high shedders need to be treated going into the summer or winter depending on your location) offsets the cost of fecal egg testing and more intense deworming of affected horses. "A recent cost analysis performed by veterinary students at the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine found that the cost of deworming every horse six times a year is about the same or more than treating based on this schedule and performing FEC as suggested", says Dr. Kaplan, adding, "And this way you know whether your worm control program is working".

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After the summer/winter horses should be tested for parasites again and dewormed with ivermectin/moxidectin. If this is done in September/October then you should treat again in December. Any horses scoring high to moderate (greater than 500 on FEC or in the 200 to 500 range) should be treated. To reduce the resistance to ivermectin or moxidectin you might use oxbendazole and pyrantel together for this deworming unless these drugs have been shown to not be effective on your farm. If two dewormers are being used together then a full dose of each is used. This then gets you to the New Year and the program begins again.

“This program is very different from what most horse owners are doing now (and from what most veterinarians are recommending) and admittedly is much more complicated”, acknowledges Dr. Kaplan. Most horse owners would rather just consult the calendar and give a tube of paste to their horse. As for testing - the standard thought has been that if the test costs as much as a dewormer then one might just as well deworm more often and spend the money on paste. “The program designed more than 40 years ago when the parasites of importance were much different than they are today, when parasite drug resistance was not an important concern will simply not work for much longer”, stresses Dr. Kaplan. We have to come up with new programs because the intestinal parasites of the horse have adapted to new conditions. They have developed new survival strategies and evolved during this time period. We should be at least as intelligent as our enemies in this parasite control battle and we need to adapt and evolve as well. The time for a new deworming strategy is here.

Submitted to Thoroughbred Times



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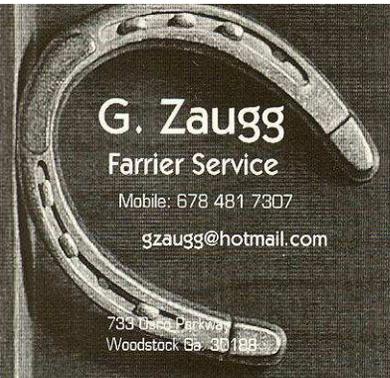
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