

MARCH NEWS

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Musical Ride/ Quadrille Report</i>	2
<i>So, What's the Plan?</i>	3
<i>Lunging Clinic</i>	4
<i>Sandi Deisterhoft joins Instructors Team</i>	5
<i>Lesson Policies</i>	5
<i>Bravo!!</i>	6
<i>Upcoming Events</i>	6

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FROM SUSAN KNOX



Are my eyes deceiving me?
Is it really a Robin??? Oh
my, it IS a Robin!

Welcome to Spring—or the
teaser that's promising
Spring. Cody had been shed-
ding since early February but
still looks straggly and un-
kempt—no matter what I do.
So, if your horse looks the
same, you are in good com-
pany! I think we all can re-
late—even the clipped horses
look like an old toothbrush.
To make yourself feel better,
get out those clippers and
scissors and clip their muzzle
and bridle path. Maybe a
little off under his jaw and
throatlatch. Taking some
scissors or clippers to that

long hair on the back of their
pasterns will help prevent the
mud from having something
to glob onto and will also pre-
vent scalded heels/mud
scald/scratches. Finally, pull
a little mane, trim a little tail!
What a difference that made
to my now handsome looking
fellow!

Next step—take some advice
from our columnists within!
Lots of good advice, and les-
son reviews...

Finally —take advantage of
our lessons! Many are com-
ing up quickly - details con-
tained in this issue. I said
this same thing last time—and
it is to the point and worth

repeating:

**Don't be shy! Jump right in
and participate in our sched-
uled activities this year. Our
lessons will make us better
able to compete in the OPRC
Rally this fall! TAKE ADVAN-
TAGE OF OUR INSTRUCTORS
and LESSONS!!! That's what
they're for! Besides, your
horse deserves a more edu-
cated YOU!**

Cheers,

Sue

MUSICAL RIDE/QUADRILLE REPORT

Laurie Counts

*“A great way to learn
without taxing the
horses...”*

The Musical Riders were very active in January and February despite the weather. It seems to be a good way to get in some stress-less riding when both rider and horse are not quite a fit as we wish we were. We even worked Musical into our Dressage Lessons on January 9th ! Sue Knox, Susan Lester, Laurie Counts and Miranda Kettlewell had a Musical lesson with Danielle where we learned two new patterns to add to our repertoires. Unfortunately, our regular January ride with Sue was cancelled due to the snowy weather, but we had 13 thirteen members ready to go.

In our Dressage lesson with Danielle Geoffrion on February 13 , we practiced again some new musical patterns to work on at our monthly rides with Sue Knox. Deirdre Howard came with her well behaved pony, who had to work very hard to keep up with the other long legged horses in the lesson. Despite the disparity in the sizes of the horses, Danielle was able to pull us together and we felt very accomplished by the end of the hour.

Finally, on February 19 we had our first regular Musical Ride. We had nine riders participate, enough for two groups for our lesson with Sue. Despite the howling winds, we were snug in Sue’s indoor. We just had to turn the music up a little louder!! Karen Keith and Kelly Noe joined the musical group for the first time and we welcomed back Debbie Purcell, Shirley Bonner and Susan Lester. Laurie and Taylor were the volunteer lead when we had an unexpected cancellation. The group worked

on serpentines and did a lot of trotting exercises. After noting the huffing and puffing from both horses and riders, we backed off to practicing movements at the walk. It was a great way to learn without taxing the winterized horses still dressed in full coat! In the second group, Miranda, Molly, Robin and Laurie rode. Taylor went from being the biggest horse in the first group to the smallest in the second! With help from the white board and Sue’s capable direction we mastered one of the new moves we had learned from Danielle. There were high fives at the end. Sue is noting that it works best with only four horses! Any more in the ring and we’d all be wallpaper!

2011 promises to be a very good year for the Musical folks. We ARE going to have to come up with a name! Suggestions anyone?

Take care, you!

Laurie Counts



SO, WHAT'S THE PLAN?

Betsy Burnett

This winters been tough. All winters are tough. "What the heck, it's nice today but here comes 20degree weather so why bother". This is a very old song sung since the year dot. The chance of better weather and longer days in March is a fact so what's your plan?

A word here about your attitude: I suggest clearing your mind of all extraneous thoughts before working with horses. They are sensitive so slow your thoughts. NEVER ride without a plan for that day's work. Each day should be a pleasurable learning experience built on the previous day's work. Be aware of his attitude and *not* your surroundings. Listen to him and guide him sympathetically but firmly. I promise you will gain his respect. There is nothing more dangerous than a spoiled, misguided animal – two or four legged!

If you think that's your horse moving in the field like a large mud ball, you need to start from the beginning. The most important thing you can do with your horse is to be *consistent*, repeat *consistent*. Perhaps you need to start with groundwork

and grooming to regaining a connection. Start with a couple of days walking him on a lead: halt, walk, back, and praise. Reestablish the connection. Next, walk and trot on the lunge line. Do not canter, make small circles, sharp halts or let him loose in the arena to run and buck unless you are inordinately fond of cold hosing!

All goes well? Super. Now mount up and walk and trot *six days a week*. It's not saddle time as much as consistency. Stay in an enclosed area but don't stress the joints and tendons with sharp corners. Stay away from greasy areas unless you are equipped with studs and borium. You are his benevolent leader and never let him forget it. You need to respect him and he you. Your job is to train him and implement a plan, not to sit in the saddle like a sack of grain. If you do not concentrate on your job, neither will he. Do not think about the wind, the leaves, the other horses, your love life or your mean boss. This is the time to leave all that behind and concentrate on your horses' rhythm, speed, and attention with

every step he takes. Is he tracking straight? Is he shortening in the corners? Is he speeding up on the long side? If you are concentrating on all this, trust me, so will he and the distractions will disappear becoming unimportant. Change speeds, do transitions, shoulder fore, turns on the forehand and hind-quarters. If you do all this, you won't have time to think fearful thoughts. When the ground is better, take him out and work him up and down hills to strengthen his muscles, tendons and ligaments. After a suitable amount of time, you may start to canter.

What about me? Can you walk a twenty- minute mile? Can you hold a "ski squat" for twenty seconds? Can you hold your two- point for ten minutes? What about lifting those weights? Hummmm. After all, this is an athletic endeavor. You and your horse must be in shape to avoid injury. It all boils down to priorities and organization of your time.

Next time: Help, it's not working - How to review your plan.

"The most important thing you can do with your horse is to be consistent."

Repeat—consistent"

LUNGING CLINIC—FEBRUARY 27

*“Lunging & In-hand
Clinic with Michelle
Campbell”*

About 15 OPRC members gathered at Blue Moon Farm in Markham Virginia to watch Michelle Campbell give a lunging and in hand training demonstration. Lunging and in-hand work can be a great benefit provided it is done correctly. A great way to start getting them safely back in shape!



LUNGING TIPS—FROM MICHELLE CAMPBELL

SAFETY & THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN LUNGING

Correct equipment – gloves, boots (no spurs) lunge line, lunge whip

Footing – make sure footing is good and not too deep, hard or slippery

Be aware of other riders, people and objects in the area

Keep your horse under control

Keep your lunge line off the ground and **DO NOT** wrap around your hand

REASONS TO LUNGE

Young horses – teaches them voice commands, getting used to tack & relaxing them before you add a rider.

Teaches a horse to be rhythmic, straight and balanced before adding a rider or riding.

Showing - Helps loosen the horse up and relax in a new place.

When you are tired or don't feel like riding you can exercise your horse, working all the correct muscles and stay consistent in their work.

Lunging a rider –the horse knows how to lunge when the time comes that you have to be lunged perhaps in a lesson.

SANDI DEISTERHOFT JOINS THE OPRC INSTRUCTOR'S TEAM

I am happy to introduce a very good friend and exceptional Riding Instructor—Sandi Deisterhoft. Some of you remember our Snowflake Series here at Wooduff with Sandi D. She is an incredible and gifted teacher and has trained and mentored many, many other instructors and teachers—myself included. Sandi founded Bay Ridge Equestrian Center in Centreville, VA—one of the largest and most reputable Equestrian Centers in the area with 50 school horses and over 400 students. She now is semi-retired and resides in Warrenton, VA.

Sandi was a student of Katie Monahan Prudent and both were followers of George Morris' principals of Equitation.

Sandi's gift is being able to take these Horsemaster's concepts and relate them to her students and their horses. Her focus is on the building blocks of Hunt Seat Equitation—which is what gives you the foundation needed to leap small and then tall fences!

I am so excited to be able to share her with you!

Lessons will be held at Wood-

ruff Riding School and will be geared for those of us dusting off our horses. No one is expecting you to be in peak form just yet! The lessons consist of flatwork, rider exercises, and jumping exercises that will be tailored to the skill of the riders.

**OPRC Jumping Lesson:
Sunday, March 20, 2011**

Woodruff Riding School,
Jeffersonton, VA.
Contact Sue Knox for more information or to sign up.

*“Over Fences Lesson
Sunday, March 20,
2011”*

LESSON POLICIES—A REMINDER

Our instructors and facility owners are taking time to prepare for you and teach you at a “below average” rate. Please show respect for your instructor by arriving on time (early is better) and properly dressed. As for all mounted activities, an ASTM certified helmet is required. Riders must also wear an Emergency Medical Armband (see our website for the form). All horses are also required to be current on their vaccinations

and have a valid EIA/Coggins test in hand for review.

The club's Cancellation policy is simple and will be enforced. If you cancel less than 48 hours before your lesson, you are required to pay the full tuition unless your spot can be filled from the waiting list.

Park in designated areas and remember to pick up after your horse. Absolutely no manure should be left on the

premises—including the arena. Don't be an ungracious guest!

If you need special assistance or some encouragement, call your lesson organizer. We are all happy to help—it's what we love to do! All of us have been the one needing the help at one time or another—So—get your self in gear and come RIDE!

OPRC VOLUNTEERS:

Members at Large for 2011:

Christine Lambdin
Paula Payne

Classified Ads:

Katherine Hedrick
jhedrick@erols.com

Ratings:

Sharon Sweeney

We are looking for volunteers to take photographs at our various events. If you are able to do so, and get some good shots, please let one of the board members know. We would like to have pictures for both the newsletter and for our website.





www.oprcpiedmont.org

Contact:

Questions or Comments
Susan Knox, President OPRC
Piedmont
woodruffshires@hughes.net
540-937-4741

Contact:

Events
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OPRC Piedmont
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Membership & Renewals
Betsy Burnett
Membership Coordinator
ebburnett@earthlink.net

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Our next Dressage /Flatwork Lesson is scheduled for

Sunday, March 13 at Woodruff Riding School (Sue Knox's Indoor)

With Danielle Geoffrion, Instructor.

Our next Jumping Lesson is scheduled for

Sunday, March 20 at Woodruff Riding School (Sue Knox's Indoor)

With Sandi Deisterhofs, Instructor.

Our Next Musical Ride is scheduled for

Sunday, March 27 at Woodruff Riding School with Susan Knox, Instructor

Next Rating Date Saturday March 12, 2011

at the Knox Indoor—4255 Jefferson Road, Jefferson VA

You must be rated before participating in any mounted activity.

Susan Knox is available most Saturday's through the months of Feb & March.

Call 540-937-4741 or email Susan to schedule your rating.

BRAVO!!

To our most Recently Rated
new members:

February 12, 2011

Kelly Noe

Karen Randall

Danielle Matthews

Karen Keith

February 13, 2011

Lori Blankenship

March 5, 2011

Amy Beard

If you know anyone who has
overcome a hurdle or has
gone above and beyond to
help another member—this is
the place to recognize them.

Please forward your nomina-
tions and a very short descrip-
tion of the accomplishment to
me for inclusion in the next
newsletter.

Great Job All!