

Join us for the Fort Valley Rides!

Come revel in the beautiful fall foliage as part of the Friday, October 26th and Saturday, October 27th Fort Valley Rides. This is the third leg of the Old Dominion's Triple Crown. Completion of the No Frills ride in April, the Old Dominion Ride in June, and the Fort Valley ride in October all on the same horse distinguishes our Old Dominion Triple Crown Winners. Basecamp will again be at Fitchett's Field just outside

the town of Detrick, and the trail is challenging but a great experience for the prepared horse and rider. Since the pace is slower than many flat-terrain rides, the Fort Valley Rides are excellent event in which help a novice horse learn to rate his pace, since there typically aren't horses galloping by you. The rocky footing is also good for novice horses, because it makes them concentrate on the task at

hand, instead of the boogie man in the woods. In addition to two days of 50 and 30 mile rides, there will be 15, 30 & 50 mile Ride & Ties, and a special Introduction to Distance Riding 15 mile ride. So come out and try out this crazy, addictive sport! Our veterinarians will be on hand to help you get through. OD members are welcome to ride the Intro Ride at no cost, and there will be a nominal fee for nonmembers. On Saturday night, we will draw the winner of the 2012 Asgard Arabian Raffle Horse. This lovely four-year old gelding, donated by Dr. Tom and Holly Sayvetz from Asgard Arabians, is named Nordisk. Tickets will be for sale at the ride, and the lucky winner can take Nordisk home on Sunday.



Donations Needed for the OD Holiday Party!

Get ready for this year's Holiday Party & Silent Auction on December 8— we are working to make it the best ever! Once again, we'll be holding our year-end celebration at the Holiday Inn Blue Ridge Shadows in Front Royal.

Join us to celebrate this year's Triple Crown winners, elect new (or returning) officers and members of the board of directors, buy Christmas presents

(for yourself or others) at the Silent Auction, enjoy a delicious dinner, and party with old and new friends — who clean up pretty well!

We also need donations for our auction, and they don't need to be horse-related. Please email Nancy Smart at longevityfarm@verizon.net with details and we can organize to get your items or you can bring with you to the party.

For those who want to keep celebrating after the official party ends, or just don't want to drive home that late, rooms will be available at the Holiday Inn at a discounted rate. If you stay, come join us for our big Sunday breakfast get together at Houlihan's — the more the merrier!

Look for your invitation in the mail in a few weeks, and we look forward to seeing everyone there!

Old Dominion Board of Directors

Jack Weber -
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Board meetings are held on the 2nd Saturday of each month, usually at the M.A.R.E. Center in Middleburg beginning at 6pm, and guests are welcome. Please contact

Lani Newcomb at
540.554.2004 or
give2bute@aol.com for
more information.

A Former Competitor's Thoughts on Crewing

by Nancy Smart

"Find a good location to work on the horse to get his pulse down before going to the vets, and get your needed gear there."



Photo by
Dominika Nawro

Use Southern States Feeds?

Please cut and save the proof of purchase seals ("POPS") on each bag. The OD participates in Southern States' "SHOW" program and each POP is earns us 15 to 25 cents, depending on the type of feed. Either bring your POPS to an OD event and drop off at registration or mail to Dana Abernathy, 2395 N. Mt. Pleasant Rd., Greenbrier, TN 37073. The OD has received over \$1000 from this program!

So, you've never crewed before? Or you have, but didn't really know what to do, or why? In that case, here are a few things you should know:

The first is that it's a lot harder to crew than to ride.

The second is that crewing involves an hour or so of intense, often stressful, activity when your rider gets to a vet check, then maybe moving to another vet check, followed by several hours of boredom while you await your rider's arrival. So bring a comfortable chair and a book!

The third is that riders under the stress of competition may not be nice. So don't expect hugs and thanks – at least during the ride.

The fourth is that the hugs and thanks will come the day after the ride, when things have calmed down and the rider realizes just how critical you've been to her success. That's because a good crew can make all the difference between not finishing a ride and meeting the rider's goal – whether it's to finish at the end, middle or top ten or even win! So remember – you're important.

These things said, here's my list of what I needed from my crew – my long-suffering husband Joe (without whom I never would have competed as long or as hard and successfully as I did):

We always (or almost always, and it was ALWAYS a disaster when we didn't) packed everything we needed for the ride the afternoon before (after the horse vetted in – we weren't superstitious, you understand, just cautious).

So we had our packing list all written out: blankets, buckets, sponges, sweat scraper, stethoscope, thermometer (horse, not human), working lights for night riding when I was doing 100s, beet pulp, grain, carrots, apples, hay, electrolytes, a clean saddle pad, a rain sheet, spare parts, halter, lead rope, full water tank on the truck, plus food, drink a comfortable chair, and a set of dry clothes and rain gear for me. I oversaw, but Joe packed – he's good at it and it was he who had to know where everything was.

We found it was important for Joe, as well as me, to go to the ride briefing (usually held after dinner). When you go, if there's something you don't understand but need to know, ask until you do understand. If it's a loop ride, with all vet checks back in camp or in one away location, make sure you write down and know the order the loops are to be ridden – yellow, blue, red, green, whatever – because you can bet your rider will forget. And know how long each loop is, so you'll have an idea when to expect your rider.

Getting the horse and rider safely started will be your first challenge the next day. You should have packed the saddle bag the day before with whatever your rider thinks she needs. In the morning, make sure her water bottles are full, her vet card is where she can get at it when she arrives at vet checks, all her tack is on correctly and her girth is tightened.

Whether all the vet checks are at base camp, at one away spot, or at a number of different locations (as at the

Old Dominion), the first thing to do when you get there is scope out the layout. Find out where the in and out timers and vets are and the progression from the in timer to the vets, and make sure you know what to do with all the funny slips of colored paper some rides use for in, out and pulse times. If you have questions, find the station chief – the person in charge of the vet check – and ask until you understand the answers.

Find a good location to work on the horse to get his pulse down before going to the vets, and get your needed gear there. Set up the rest of the gear and food at your truck or your chosen crewing spot – hopefully close to the portajons, in the shade or under a pop-up.

When I came into vet checks, Joe would meet me at the in gate with either buckets of water for drinking and sponging, sponges and a sweat scraper OR blankets and a bucket of drinking water, depending on the weather. If the weather was hot, we generally took the saddle off, even if it wasn't required, to help cool the horse and get his pulse down. Joe found it was often easier to leave the saddle and the crewing stuff there until the horse was through the vets, back at the crewing spot, and both horse and rider were eating and drinking, then go back and get them.

Some horses have an easier time pulsing down if they're allowed to graze or eat hay, or have a buddy standing by, while others can't be allowed to eat or don't care about the buddy.

Crewing, continued

So it's important that your rider let you know what works for that horse. If your rider wants you to trot the horse for the vets, practice before the ride so you're comfortable with it and know how to make him look his best.

Once the horse pulses down and vets through, take him and the rider back to your crewing spot, where you already have food and drink for both horse and rider laid out. Joe always had a beet pulp mash with some grain, carrots and apples mixed in, hay (sometimes two kinds – alfalfa and grass, for instance) and a bucket of water for the horse, and a smorgasbord of food laid out on the truck tailgate with a chair immediately beside it for me, so I could pick and choose and graze and rest. Everyone has things they crave at that point – the important thing is to have choices – and it's up to the crew to make sure the rider eats and drinks.

Once horse and rider are doing both, take the rider's vet card (or the funny slip of paper) to the out timer for

an out time, and pick up the saddle and crewing gear (unless it's a loop ride, in which case leave the crewing stuff in your spot). The rider can eat, drink and hold the horse while you are gone. When you get back, lay the saddle pad upside down in the sun to dry (unless it's raining, in which case put it and the rest of the tack in the trunk cab to keep dry), refill water bottles, replenish any supplies the rider carries in her saddle pack, make sure the rider card is wherever your rider carries it, check the horse's shoes, and clean his feet and back if need be. If the horse wants to continue to eat or to sleep, fine. But if he's restless and bored with his food, you might take him for a little walk, check out other horses' hay (it's amazing how most horses much prefer someone else's hay to their own) and generally let him move around so he doesn't stiffen up.

About 15 minutes before the rider's out time, you should start getting rider and horse ready to leave. Send the rider off to the portajon one last time and begin to re-saddle the horse, but if your rider is picky, as I was, make her check her

tack so that everything is as she likes it. If night is coming, make sure she has her lights. The last thing Joe did before the bit went back in the horse's mouth was electrolyte him, because we found that if we electrolyted too early he'd stop eating. But whenever you do it, don't forget to electrolyte – it's really important, particularly on hot days. Don't expect effusive thanks from your rider as she leaves – Joe sometimes got no more than a "thank you for your help" between gritted teeth from me, and I understand that's a lot more than some crews get.

Once they're safely gone, you can breathe a huge sign of relief, clean up, pack up and head for the next check – and get ready to do it all over again – or, if they're coming back to the same check, sit down, relax, visit with friends, read your book and get something to eat.

Remember – crewing is critically important to an endurance team's success. And, it even can be fun!

"...you may want to take (the horse) for a little walk, check out other horses' hay (it's amazing how much horses prefer someone else's hay to their own) and generally let him move around so he doesn't stiffen up."

Volunteers Needed for January Horse Expo



www.horseworldexpo.com

The Old Dominion and ECTRA are once again going to share a booth at the 2013 Maryland Horse World Expo. <http://www.horseworldexpo.com> Cate Peloquin, ECTRA President, and I are the booth wranglers once again and will be creating a volunteer schedule. We will be asking OD and ECTRA members to volunteer to man the booth and promote the organizations and distance riding in general. Last year everything booth-related went really smoothly for all the volunteers and we had a lot of booth visitors. I know everyone enjoyed themselves.

The dates for next year's Expo are Jan 18-20, 2013. Shifts will be two or three hours long. If possible we prefer that people volunteer as a pair but we always have "single" volunteers that we can pair together.

Volunteers can contact me, Bonnie Snodgrass, at chicamuxen@hughes.net or Cate Peloquin at cpenguin57@aol.com.

CLASSIFIEDS

Barefoot Cheyenne saddle, 16" with both sets of trees/ girth \$250

Specialized Saddle, 18" International model; includes girth, pad, cantlebag with two waterbottle holders and bottles, \$900

"S" Hackamore Bridle by Carol Hought/ beta biothane, stainless hardware \$150

Passier Saddle 15.5" with leathers, irons \$100

Contact Jennifer Alexander
[540-675-3307](tel:540-675-3307)
kabet1@mac.com

OD Hosts “Endurance Riding 101” Clinic

by Karen Wade

On Saturday October 6th, I hosted a clinic for aspiring endurance riders at my farm in Frederick County, Virginia. We ended up with 12 individual mounted participants (6 on horses provided by the clinic organizers), 15 enthusiastic young riders who shared five horses as part of the Melwood Therapeutic Riding program (supervised by Bob Walsh and Teri Carroll) and five unmounted auditors. Two participants came all the way from New York City and one from Florida (OK, so she works in DC and commutes).

OD member volunteers included co-organizer Kim Lyttle, OD President Jack Weber, Nancy Smart, Joe Selden, Kate Geier, Lani Newcomb DVM, and Lenora Keener (accompanied by her husband Carl). My friend, Val Van Meter, shared her crewing expertise, as well as providing one of the loaner horses.



Each participant received an information packet containing a back issue of *Endurance News*, an AERC handbook, rulebook and informational pamphlet (all courtesy of Troy Smith in the AERC office), a list of endurance related websites compiled by Kim Lyttle, a guide to crewing written by Nancy Smart (see article in this issue), and a sample checklist to use when preparing for a ride.

The clinic got underway with a panel discussion that covered such topics as "What is Endurance Riding and Who Can Do It?" "Training and Conditioning," "Camping With Your Horse," "Tack And Equipment," "Crewing for an Endurance Ride," "How Does a Vet Check Work?" and "The Importance of Volunteers," followed by a question and answer session while lunch was being set out. Participants could also browse the OD yard sale set up by Lenora and Carl.

The wind came up about that time, and the skies looked threatening, so everyone welcomed the hot lunch, served by my son, Nick Irianni, and one of his classmates from culinary school. Just like at a real endurance ride, we conduct a ride briefing as everybody was eating. I went over the trail description, and then Lani (sorry, I mean Dr. Newcomb!) explained what she would be looking for in the vet exam.

We then held our mini-endurance ride. Fortunately the weather cooperated and the sun came back out. Nick, Kim and Kate rode along to help out on the trail as needed. Jack served as the in/out timer, Nancy was the pulse checker, Joe was the official photographer, and Lani of course served as our vet.

Bob and Teri rode with the Melwood group, which was quite self-sufficient. The first loop was about 2 miles long, with a couple of stream crossings and some little hills (I understand that the people walking with the Melwood riders didn't think that they were so little!). After completing that loop, riders got to practice the vet check routine, learning about in-time/pulse time/out-time and the vet exam procedure. Things got a bit crowded and disorganized at times, just like at a real ride, but everybody figured it out. The auditors helped with timing, scribing and crewing. Riders then set out on the second loop which was longer, with easy, medium, and hard options including steeper climbs, more rocks, and a little bridge. At the finish, each rider was awarded a completion ribbon.



We've received lots of positive feedback from the participants and some suggestions for ways to do even better the next time. At least two participants are planning to attempt the 30 mile ride at Fort Valley, several are considering the 15 mile introductory ride, and other participants plan to come as volunteers. Our rider from New York had filled out her application to join AERC even before she left the clinic! (We did tell her that she could probably find some rides closer to home.) So we managed to recruit at least a few new converts to this sport that we all love, and hope that we can do it all again next year!