

Perfect Weather Marked Another Great OD Ride

June 8-10, 2012 marked another very successful Old Dominion ride! We had perfect weather, with excellent trail conditions, well-marked turns and lots of water. Our “old timers” seemed to really like the change in the first part of the trail as well as the new, shady crewing area at the Bird Haven vet check, and we had a great completion rate. Vets and volunteers were all wonderful and got many plaudits on the rider evaluations. Even the food drew praise!

The weekend was capped by the Sunday awards ceremony, at which we started a new tradition. As many know, the Old Dominion Board voted this year to stop awarding buckles to 100 and 50 mile finishers. It was a change in a policy that had been in effect since the OD was founded, back in 1974, and resulted from the difficult economic times that most rides, including ours, are facing.

Undaunted, our intrepid awards coordinator, Jennifer Alexander, immediately put an idea proposed by Emily Richardson into action. She asked people with multiple 100 and/or 50 mile buckles to donate their extras so that first time finishers would all receive one. Many people responded, including Lynne Gilbert, who donated several 100 and 50 mile buckles. Jennifer and her husband John also donated several 100 mile



Jennifer Alexander presents Jeannie Waldron, first to finish in the 100, with the Old Dominion Trophy, given to the horse judged in best condition on Sunday morning, as long time friend Lynne Gilbert looks on.



Long time OD ride managers Joe Selden and Nancy Smart.

buckles and a 50, and Karen Wade, Nick Irianni, Lu Dooley, Kim Lyttle, Mary Murphy, Emily Matthews and Nancy Smart all donated several 50s. The result was that all of our first-time finishers could receive a buckle! Thank you everyone! (If you were a first time finishers and DIDN'T get a buckle, please email Jennifer at kabet1@mac.com and she'll send you one)

However, we don't intend to rest on our laurels (so to speak – wasn't Laurel Run beautiful this year?) We've already begun planning for next year, and will do our best to work out the remaining bugs – although we're sure to find some new ones as we do every year. We look forward to seeing everyone back in Orkney Springs next June for another wonderful ride – and please bring your friends!

-Joe Selden & Nancy Smart

Reflections on the 2012 Old Dominion Ride

First, and most important, a BIG THANK YOU to any and all who work to make this ride happen: ride managers Nancy Smart and Joe Selden; trailmaster and Forest Service liaison Diane Hypes; all the station heads, vets and scribes; the fabulous and unequalled waterboy Pete Godwin and the Orkney Springs Fire Rescue Dept; the dedicated drag riders; treatment vet Lynn Johnson and all the others who make all those things happen, like the yard sale and organizing the many supplies and food that go out to the vet checks. I'd also like to thank the vendors; Sandy Sanders and the all-important radio guys; our Hall of Fame timer, Henry Muhlbauer; Asgard Arabians for the raffle horse; the folks who work on all the awards; the offroad motocyclists who point ride, clear, mark and unmark 100 miles of trail no matter what the conditions; the farriers who are there for the horses; the landowners who make this ride possible; the OD board members for all the meetings that they attend to make this happen, and to ALL THE COMPETITORS WHO ENTER, I give three big hip hip hoorays to all!



Sandy Sanders
HAM radio wizard

Nordisk 2012 Raffle horse,
courtesy of Asgard Arabians



It is a miracle that it all comes together, so one should not think that making it happen is a piece of cake. The Old Dominion ride is in its 38th year (but was cancelled one year because of the depth of the uncooperative Shenandoah River) and it has been a premier event from its beginnings in 1974 when 19 one hundred mile buckles were awarded.

As one member mentioned to me, we are in about the third generation of participants and many who are riding today are not even aware of a lot of the old guard (not old goats!) who are still working for this event. I was pleased to see Dixie Engelhaupt receive the Hall of Fame Award this year. Dixie was one of the five original folk who went to the Western States (Tevis) Ride in 1973 and returned home to help start the Old Dominion Ride.

Few today even know Alex Bigler's name and he was the main force behind getting the Old Dominion Ride off the ground! Alex is to the OD what Wendell Robie is to the Tevis. How many knew that?



Diane Doll drove all the way from KY to ride!

The OD had its start in Leesburg, Virginia. The event moved to Front Royal VA in 1981 and to this Orkney Springs/Bryce Resort location just five years ago. We have stood the test of time and moving and now have a "world class trail" (according to John Crandall). We are so fortunate to have the George Washington National Forest in our backyard and on our side!

Becky Pearman, ride photographer and Mathew Mackay-Smith, OD legend.



The trails are a challenge and gorgeous. As Mathew MacKay-Smith once said "The Old Dominion welds the works of nature to those of man in a special way, some would say a demonic way! The ups and downs of the course match the highs and lows I have known upon it."

Tom Sites said once that the OD "is a masochist's dream." I personally cannot find anything more lovely than the blooming laurel, the cool creeks and the vistas from atop the ridges. If you have never been up there...you cannot imagine the beauty.

For the past several years, I've helped out at the Bucktail vet check, which is about mile 50 on the 100 mile ride. Martha Ann and Bill Romoser run that stop like a well-oiled machine.



**Martha Ann
Bucktail
Station Head**

In 2011, the thermometer read 105 during the approximate noon to 6 pm that Bucktail operates...whew. This year, the high temperature was a blessed 82 degrees and the weather worked in everyone's favor, most especially the horses. I was grateful for that. This year we had 100% completion at the 50 mile mark! Yeah.



**Mary Howell
Wates Run Gate & Go**

When the last two horses departed Bucktail, Lynn Golemon and I rode drag on the most beautiful section of the entire 100 mile trail - Oh, I was going to keep that a secret! It is a mostly inaccessible part of the trail by road and except for one gate & go (thank you Mary Howell and staff) for support, the riders are on their own.

We drag riders are there if you need us, but with little or no communication along this section, it is a true test of horse and horseman. Unless you are a front runner, it gets dark on you before you reach Big 92 at 75 miles and it is really fun (not!), to come down off the ridge in the dark.

There were plenty of glow sticks to mark the way (thank you bikers!). I had left my trailer along the road about 3-4 miles before the Big 92 VC, so I used the highly perfected "drag-driving" to make sure all the horses got into the VC, while mine got to ride in a trailer! The evening was perfect and Lynn and I enjoyed the ride. I love these trails.



**Lynn Golemon
Drag Rider**

Lynn and I were up on the ridge when we heard over the sporadic radio that Lynne Gilbert had been pulled at the last vet check at Bird Haven. We figured that Claire Godwin, riding cavalry, would win. Lynn and I do not get anywhere near base camp at any time on Saturday, so it was not until I got to the base camp at 10 am on Sunday that I learned that Claire had also been pulled at Bird Haven and that Jeannie Waldron had won! Wow. You just never know.

I was delighted to learn at the awards ceremony that 16 of the 21 starters had completed the 100 and most remarkable, six of those were rookies! Hooray for them and for all who gave it a go. I am envious.

One person who was not present this year was our intrepid drag rider leader, Zoel! We missed her. She organized and set us up and trusted that we would get 'er done. And we did. Many riders may not be aware that the drag riders are very prepared to lend aid, boots, electrolytes, first aid and support, being trained in both horse and rider first aid. We are there for you and hope that you do not need us. I cannot address the 25 and 50 milers but I have no less respect for them. I just never get to see you until you get brave and try the 100 mile trail. I hope to see you all in 2013 and maybe at the National Championship in 2014.



**Jeannie Waldron and
Trisha Juerling
coming into Bucktail.**

"The Mystery Clue"

Completes the 2012 OD 100 Endurance Ride

Since the day "The Mystery Clue" aka Smokey and I started riding at Endurance Events back in August 2009, I wanted to ride the OD 100 and Tevis one day! Well, I got one marked off my bucket list. Smokey and I just completed the OD100! Keep in mind that he is a Tennessee Walking horse and this was the first 100 mile ride for both of us!

My idea to compete Smokey in the OD100 came last year when we rode the OD55 and he finished so very strong. I was wishing they had a 75 we could have tried. So, after that, I started riding some multi-days with him and finishing strong on all of them.

I missed riding Leatherwood last year so really wanted to go to it this year. I went and rode the 50 on Friday (finishing 10th) and then the 25 on Saturday with a friend riding her first LD. Since Leatherwood was only 3 weeks before OD, I only signed up for the 25 at OD. I didn't think Smokey had enough rest to do anything longer.

My plan for OD was to set up my tack shop, ride the 25 mile Limited Distance ride, then help Allison Schott crew for Julie Bullock so I could see what goes on during the crewing of a 100. Well, my plan didn't last -- a week before the ride, Julie called me and told me that I wouldn't be helping Allison because I would be riding the 100 instead of crewing. She assured me that since I hadn't ridden Smokey since Leatherwood, he should be fine. So, I sent in the 100 mile entry instead of the 25 miles.

I arrived at Base Camp on Thursday to give him plenty of rest and rehydration time.

Spent time with friends and getting crewing items ready. By the way....I asked a friend who had never been to an



endurance ride to crew for me. She did an awesome job; thanks Denise Matthews! Went to the ride dinner and briefing on Friday night then got ready for the am and tried to get some sleep. Back up at midnight to feed then back for a couple of hours sleep.

Got up at 3:30 am to get ready to ride; Trail opened at 5:15 am, we were on our way. There were 3 first time 100 mile riders with 3 first time 100 mile horses riding with Julie on the first loop. Julie made sure we didn't go to fast and wear down our horses. We all came into the first vet check in fine shape. Vetted through, ate and rested then back out on trail.

At the second vet check, I didn't have any help cooling Smokey down, must keep his head up, so I was 7 minutes behind the other 3 heading back out on trail. Carol Federighi stayed back with me so we could keep riding together. All was going well.

Got to the 3rd vet check and the vets thought they might have seen something in Smokey's rear end. They gave me my card back, but wanted to see him on the way out. Luckily, all was good and we were back on trail.

2012

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This went on for another 5 stops. All was going great!! Couldn't think of anything else to make it any better. When Carol and I left the last vet check, we were in 9th and 10th. We ambled on down the trail for the last 6 ½ miles to the finish line. Along the way Carol asked me what I was going to do if the 2 riders behind us catch up... I told her that if they caught up to us while we were still on the loose rocky part of the trail, I would not run for it. I would let

them pass. But...if they caught up while we were on the gravel dust road at the end...the Race was on!!! Well, they didn't catch up and we didn't have to go any faster than we felt comfortable going. When we got to the road, Smokey hit high gear. He knew the trailers were just down the road and he wasn't going to let me make any more turns!! Carol and I came across the finish line tying for 9th place!!

Smokey passed the final vet check with flying colors. Denise and I took care of him and put him and us to bed for some well deserved shut eye. I didn't want to stand for BC. Melody Jamison came to take Smokey for a walk, eat some grass, and get a good roll in while Denise and I slept some more. I got back up at 8 am to take a shower and start feeling like a human again to go to the brunch-awards. Smokey looked like he could have gone back out for another 50. He was in Super Fine Shape!! I was so excited. He looked just as good on Monday too; never stiff or sore acting. He only got one little tiny nick on his back leg for all 100 miles.

Challenges: My biggest challenge was at Laurel Run, the 2nd vet check where you are not allowed to bring your crew but instead rely on volunteers. When I got there all the volunteers were already holding other horses so I didn't have anyone to help hold his head up while I put water on him. If you don't hold his head up and not allow him to eat, his pulse won't come down. After about 10 minutes, I did get help and within 2 minutes his pulse came right down. Another stressful moment was at the third hold, when the vets thought they had seen something in his trot out. It got me worried and I didn't want to do anything to hurt him. But, he was fine and it made me feel better.

Memorable Moments: MANY times on the trail things would happen and all I could think of was God and the many Spirits riding with us were helping us out. Leaving one of the vet checks is a long road climb that is mostly in the sun. When we went out, it got a little cloudy so that we ended up having some shade for our climb! Also wonderful was the help we received from other crews who jump in and help when needed. I enjoyed sharing the trail with so many wonderful horses and riders. While riding in the dark, I heard a growl type noise. Asked Carol in front of me if it was her horse and she said it was! For a moment I thought I had a bear behind me and was going to have to get on down the trail. Finally, the great feeling of coming across the finish line with a happy and strong horse under me!!!

Ride On,

Roberta Young and Smokey

