



Old Dominion News

33715 Snickersville Turnpike Bluemont, VA 20135 • www.olddominionrides.org

July 2011

The OD Hall of Fame Award

by Bob Walsh

It was my pleasure to present this year's Old Dominion Hall of Fame Award to longtime June OD ride managers Joe Selden and Nancy Smart of Bumpy Oak, Maryland. Past recipients are listed below:

1997 - Frank Farmer	2005 - Paul Semmler
1998 - Matthew McKay Smith, DVM	2006 - Jeannie Waldron, DVM
1999 - Mary Ann Wates	2007 - Bob Walsh
2000 - The Crandell Family	2008 - Sandy Sanders
2001 - Henry Mulbauer	2009 - Pete Fields
2002 - Teddy Lancaster	2010 - Lynn Goleman
2004 - Art King, DVM	2011 - Joe Selden & Nancy Smart

(note: June OD ride was not held in 2003 due to flooding - award not given)

In the beginning, the Hall of Fame Award was given to those who had done well riding the 100-mile ride. It became apparent that there was more involved with the spirit of the Old Dominion than just riding, including a significant investment of volunteer time, so those who worked with club details and ride management, as well as sustained years of dedicated service, all became the factors in considering new recipients.

Past Hall of Fame Award recipients include many who have made invaluable contributions to Old Dominion organization over the years. Art King has worked at every OD ride since the move to Front Royal nearly 30 years ago. Think of all those drives down from his home in Canada! "Radio Guy" Sandy Sanders has also worked every OD event since the move and provides an important service to the club. Our timer, Henry Mulbauer, has been the only timer the OD has ever had right from the start in Leesburg. Not only has Henry never missed a ride, he provides split-second timing using atomic clocks that keep all our vet checks synchronized and also the lighting for our night-time vet checks and base camp.

Another Hall of Fame recipient, Pete Fields, is one of the founders of the OD and originator of the OD cavalry award. I had the pleasure of riding (and finishing!) last year's OD 100 with Pete. Dr. Jeannie Waldron, and her sister Lynn Goldman are both past OD 100 winners and international riders. Both have spent many years giving of their time and service to the OD. These are some examples of what the award is all about. To sum it up, "Someone who has made the OD better through their time and dedication." ♦

Riders Share Their Experiences with "The Beast of the East"

April Dobson: After two strong spring completions I decided to sign up for Old Dominion's June ride, 55 miles of the toughest trail on the East Coast as I've been constantly reminded! This was to be Piper's first endurance ride other than an LD. Temperatures were predicted to end up in the upper 80's with serious humidity. Rain brought some relief Friday night, and an early afternoon shower on ride day cooled us out for a little bit, until it became steamy again. Piper finished sound and healthy with an overall "A" on his ride card, in a ride time of 10 hours, 5 minutes. His attitude impressed me even more than his athleticism. It's not easy to keep up a chipper mood for that many hours!

I actually really liked the trail. It's funny to hear everyone's opinions. Some think the old OD trail was harder, some think that the new OD is harder - I guess it's all in what your horse's strengths and weaknesses might be and what your preference of trail is.

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June OD Ride Recap

by Nancy Smart

The 37th running of the Old Dominion 100 Mile Ride on June 11 was a huge success. Feedback from riders has been positive, with people saying the trails were wonderfully well marked, food was good and it was great to have all activities at base camp.

Our ride management team did a splendid job ironing out wrinkles from last year, as well as continuing what worked really well (like hospitality). Our volunteers received high marks for helpfulness (especially at Laurel Run, where no crews were allowed), cheerfulness and being generally encouraging.

We had a large turnout - 145 horses started the three rides, including 35 100s, of which a record six were cavalry riders (all of whom finished!), with 72 in the 55 and 38 in the 25 mile limited distance ride. Finishing rates were also terrific: 77.1% in the 100, 76.4% in the 55 and an astounding 92.1% in the 25.

Ann Mebane, riding HH Saba Shams, won the 100 and best condition with a time of 13:23.44. Lynne Gilbert, riding Mercuric, was awarded the Old Dominion Trophy, which is judged by the same criteria as BC, but on Sunday morning. Eva Kucerova-Leisner, riding ALA Thor, won the 55 in a time of 6:14.58. Best condition in the 55 went to Tracy Reynolds, riding TEF Sunflash, who finished third. In the 25, the optimum time award went to Paulita Neff, riding GM Sherman, who finished in 3:48.

We still have some problems to work out, but we did fix two of the main ones this year: we rented a large tent where we had all meetings and meals rather than having to leave base camp for them, and there were no water shortages. With the help and encouragement of the landowners of Bird Haven, we used a fire hydrant to keep those troughs filled so we never had problems there, and our water maven placed a trough on the road before the big climb up Falls Ridge on the second loops (for the 55s and 100s), which was greatly appreciated by riders (and their horses).

Among the problems: there was some disorganization about getting crew bags out to the 100 mile vet checks (easily fixed next year), there were ROCKS - can you believe that? on the OD trail (not fixable), and several people asked that we provide more corral space for people with multiple horses - a good suggestion. Difficult to deal with, but we'll work with our Basecamp Manager and try. We also had some requests for more glow sticks. We thought we had a lot out there, but you can never have too many, so we'll try to get more hung next year.

Finally, we'd like to share with you some reflections on the ride from cavalry rider Juliette Cannon. She and her horse M Beau (Bo) finished the 100 with only 30 minutes to spare - but finish they did.

Juliette had traded a bottle of whiskey for Bo at the 2009 Biltmore ride after watching him act a perfect terror with his then owner. As she describes it, "He was tough, stubborn and easily irritated. So when it came to OD 100, Bo was an obvious choice. On the day of the ride, I was doing my routine of waiting for the rest of the 100 milers to start while Bo was still in his corral. Once they disappeared, with that excitement evaporating into the morning mist, we were off to a good start. Bo had no idea it was a race until a group of 50 mile riders zoomed by us (on the second loop). Did I mention that Bo is a crazy horse? Bo has an amazing ability to gallop sideways up the ten grade hills, and if you try to stop him he will gallop backwards... Here I was, in my perfectly planned race, looking at the strong possibility that Bo will actually be riding in the trailer down this hill after next vet check. ... So, I did what every woman would do in such situation, saying - "I can't believe you would do this to me after all these years!"

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April Dobson, continued

The current trail has some very long climbs. And lots of rocks of course! But blooming mountain laurel was everywhere, as well as some spectacular views. I honestly thought the ratio of trail to road was about even, but it's all or nothing. You ride over rocky trail for so long that you beg for a road. Then you are on the road for so long that you beg for a trail. Back and forth and back and forth. The roads were soft and dust free from the rain, but that meant more mud on trail. They put water out in key places and marked spots a little off the trail for water that you could get into. The pond at the top of the climb was a wonderful thing – Piper was up to his belly!

On the super long climb on the second loop Piper asked me to compose a letter to Bob Walsh, original designer of the new OD trail: “Dear Bob, You Suck. Sincerely, Piper.” We got everyone laughing on that one! The follow up was his Christmas card to Bob: “Dear Bob, I’ve had some time to reflect upon the trails at this year’s Old Dominion. You still suck. Happy Holidays! Piper.” Laughter will keep you going down the trails.

This may have been a record year for lost shoes and boots. They were everywhere. One Top 10 finisher’s words of wisdom were to never use glue on boots on this trail – she claimed that the rocks would just eat them! I saw lots of booted people having to stop to retrieve a boot and put it back on only to have it fly off again in 5 minutes. There were parts of the trail where they didn’t even need ribbons as you could just follow the path of lost boots and pulled shoes. Jack [Weber] said that they are going to put all the recovered shoes/boots in the OD store for repurchase. I must say that Joe Selden and Nancy Smart, the ride managers, the vet staff and volunteers all do an EXCELLENT job.

This ride is in the middle of nowhere so it’s a true commitment to donate time for the enjoyment of the riders. I also have to send out a very special thanks to farrier Steve Heishman who recently took on my horse as a client this past winter. I’m not sure what magic that man has, but he returned my horse to soundness and shod him so beautifully that we kept all four of our shoes on down that trail! I will never be able to thank him enough for that. And a huge thank you to my husband, Mikey, who stayed at the vet check all day to help me and Piper get thru the ride. There’s nothing quite like having your own personal cheerleader to greet you with a smile and hand grazes your horse. Now we have Fort Valley to look forward to!

Nancy Sluys: I went to the Old Dominion with my 7 year old Zanie intending to do the 55 but decided at the last minute to bump up to the 100. I’m not sure what came over me but I just couldn’t bear the thought that I would be missing the best part of the trail. Zanie had finished the Biltmore 75 mile ride easily 5 weeks earlier and a slow NATRC ride 2 weeks later where she had a perfect vet score and had been resting for 3 weeks since then. I felt like the time could be right for our 1st 100.

I came by myself and had no crew. I contemplated riding in the cavalry division but being Zanie’s 1st 100 and not knowing what all she would need I decided to send my crew bags to the vet checks instead, as management had offered to take a separate bag to each vet check if you would pile it in a certain location. In hindsight I should have ridden cavalry (where I would have all my stuff with me on my saddle) as there was a mix up with my bags and I ended up with no supplies for most of the ride.

We got started in the dark and by the time we reached the first peak the sun was just coming up, offering spectacular views of the sunrise over the Shenandoah valley and foothills to the right and the peaks on the WV border to the left. It was pleasantly cool as we made our way to the first vet check at Bird Haven 17 miles into the ride. When I arrived I found all my crew bags had been delivered there. Being a bit nervous about that I went ahead and sent the 3rd vet check bag with a friends crew just in case.

By the time we made it to the second check at Laurel Run we had already had a number of fierce ascents and the temperatures were climbing as well as the humidity. I was using Easyboot glue ons and had been having great luck with that at other rides but had lost 1 of them on the way to this vet check. I replaced it with an Easyboot Glove that I had in my saddle bag. I now had no replacements if I lost another but miraculously there was a lady there who was an Easycare dealer and had a whole truck full of boots

who would sell me one, what good fortune!! Laurel Run was a “no Crew” check and they had hay and grain there for the horses. I still had one dose of electrolytes that would get me to the next check. It wasn’t a big issue then but we would be returning to this same location in the middle of the night and I was hoping that my crew bag would make it there.

We left Laurel Run and began a long climb in the heat of the day. I had been riding primarily by myself all morning but was now hooked up with Karen Bell on her horse Sammy. Karen’s friends Shannon and her daughter Morgan had caught up to us and we headed down the narrow trail single file. By now it started raining and it cooled the horses off immensely! The weird thing was that it was the exact spot in the trail where it started raining on my 1st OD in 2008.

This part of the trail is absolutely beautiful with profusely blooming laurels on either side. Sometimes they were so lush that it seemed like you were traveling through a flowery tunnel! The going was slow at first but after a while there were places to move out a bit, you just had to play the terrain. We made into the Bucktail Vet Check and I looked around for Robby Doll who had my vet bag. I was really glad to see it as it had my people food in it (I couldn’t eat the sandwiches at the last check because I am allergic to wheat and was getting pretty hungry.)

Bucktail was our long hold at one hour and I was glad for the chance to relax a bit. I went ahead and sent the remainder of my crew bag stuff with Robby in case I needed it later and we went on our way.

The next section of trail went pretty fast comparatively as it was a wide sweeping grassy forest service road that you could really move out on well. I was still with Karen and company and we saw several other riders on the trail as well. By now we were well past the 50 mile mark and Zanie was getting hungry. We grazed a little and she also got really good at snatching grass as we were walking and sometimes even at the trot! The Wates Run Check, at the furthest point out on the trail, was just a gate and go so as soon as we pulsed down I let Zanie eat some grain that was provided and we continued on our way. We now made the turn towards camp (40 miles away!) and I could feel Zanie’s energy pick up as she trotted down the mountain as if she was on a mission. I discovered on this ride that she is very good at downhill trotting and it seemed easy for her. We passed several riders and she just kept on going over rocks and everything, it felt like she was just floating over all that bad footing. Down and down we went eventually passing another group of riders one of who was Diane Doll who came along with us. When we hit another gravel road I had my “why did I just do that” moment when Zanie suddenly snorted and started shaking her head. I thought she had sucked up a bee or something but then she humped up like she was going to buck. Diane, who was watching all this, called for me to get off my horse, which I did. She humped up then buckled and tried to roll. We were both scared that something was really wrong with her. I walked her for a few minutes and she seemed to calm down but when I tried to get back on she started to go down again. At this point Diane took off to the vet check, which was about 2 or 3 miles away, to notify them that there may be something wrong with my horse. In the mean time I tried to figure out what was going on, her eye didn’t look especially bad and she wasn’t sucked or cramped up or anything but she was clearly uncomfortable in some way. Her neck felt pretty hot so I thought maybe she had become overheated coming down that mountain fast so I stopped and sponged her with water in the ditch next to the road. That seemed to do the trick and she started to calm down. I was nervous but we continued on foot. She drank from the water and ate grass voraciously and seemed to come back to normal so I eventually mounted up again and continued down the road and she acted like nothing had happened. About this time one of the vets came driving up in a truck to check on me but Zanie was fine. We walked and slow trotted into the Big 92 Vet Check much to everyone’s relief!! She got all A’s on her vet card except that her back was sensitive. I was puzzled at that because she has never had a single back issue to date. I started to put some things together in my mind about the incident. I think Zanie got overheated on the trip down the mountain and when we hit the gravel road it was the hottest, stillest part of the late afternoon and the blood rushed to her head and also her back due to friction of the downhill trotting. She just went crazy with itchiness and tried to roll. The sponging cooled her and

Nancy Sluys, continued

stopped the tingly feeling. In hindsight I should have not let her trot down that whole mountain but she felt so good!

Once I vetted through and she was fine I looked around hoping that my crew bag for that check had made it but alas it was not to be. At this point I just about lost it, I felt like I was working at such a disadvantage not having my supplies. If I had only ridden cavalry I would have had what I needed with me. By now the bag of food I sent out with Robby was depleted and all my night time stuff was in the missing bag. I was starting feeling a bit weak and sick to my stomach from not having quite enough of the right food and came really close to pulling, but Zanie had recovered so well from the incident I sucked it up and got back on my horse.

I had bummed some feed, electrolytes and a head lamp and found an old energy bar I had stashed in my canteen pack plus a banana someone gave me and headed out for our return trip to Laurel Run 8 miles away. I was still pretty nervous about Zanie so we just walked and walked the gravel road. By this time everyone was well ahead of me and we were alone again. It was an incredibly beautiful evening with a 3/4 moon shining bright and the whip-or-wills calling loud as can be. I kept the head lamp off to conserve the batteries and had no problem seeing in the moonlight. At one point I became very sleepy as I had not slept well for days before the ride. I got off and walked on foot for about 2 miles and found myself napping while walking. I didn't know I was so talented! This gave me some energy and I got back on and I felt purpose in Zanie's step, she was getting stronger too.

After a while I noticed her flicking her ear back a few times and knew someone was catching up to us. It would be good to have some company for the final journey to camp. In a few minutes Jennifer Sapira and Linda Carangia joined us. The coolest thing was that they were our fellow team members (OD has a team competition). Our 4th team member was Juliette Cannon who was riding Cavalry and was behind us somewhere. At that point we were all still in the game.

With renewed energy we made our way to Laurel Run for the second time. The pickings were meager for me and Zanie as others were running low on supplies as well but there was good grass there and we took advantage of that. I knew my pile of vet bags were all (hopefully) at the 1st and our last vet check so if I could just make it to there I would have some things to help me out. Someone did give me a half a dose of Lyte Now to help us make the tough 13 miles to the last vet check at Bird Haven. Jennifer, Linda and I traveled together and kept each other company, I even sang a song I wrote called "the 100 Mile Ride". This part of the trail was really slow going and we wondered if we would make the cut off time. Suddenly we came up a little hill and it looked like a landing strip as we came into Bird Haven Vet Check. A surreal sight after miles in the dark with shadows dancing!

I vetted Zanie through as soon as we arrived and once again all A's except for her back which had gotten no worse but no better either. Cat Carter had come out after the 55 to help the 100 milers and I was so glad to see her! She held Zanie while I looked for my bags. The place looked so different in the dark and I got pretty disoriented but finally I located them and found some feed for Zanie and a bunch of stuff for me. My shirt was wet and I had been wearing my rain coat to keep warm as it had become chilly but it was damp too so I was catching a chill. I was able to change into a wonderfully dry long sleeve shirt and it felt like heaven. I replaced the head lamp I had borrowed and downed some yogurt and energy drink and a swig of green tea and I was revved and ready for the last 6 miles. Our team forged ahead into the night.

Six miles, "piece of cake" you say. That was the hardest, longest, muddiest, rockiest, darkest six miles you will ever travel! We came into a clearing with a big radio tower and knew we were close, sniffing around for that turkey poop odor that would signal our return to the road to camp. Sure enough, we caught the whiff and before we knew it we dropped down onto the gravel road. Our horses picked up a strong trot as they knew where they were too. A small but hearty group of folks were there to welcome us at the finish. We did it, with 45 minutes to spare! I went right over to vet out and Zanie looked really great, bright eyed and animated. She got a completion and I have another 100 mile horse!

Shannon and Morgan Loomis: Our saga started when my 11 year old daughter expressed an interest in trying 100 miles. She finally has a horse that might be capable of this, her little Morgan mare, Angel, who finished all 250 miles of Shore to Shore in 2010. Old Dominion is our closest 100, only 140 miles directly east, and my Morgan gelding and I completed the OD 100 in 2009. So, months ago, when it summer seemed forever away, I said, sure, why not! And I talked a friend of a friend, Karen Bell of NC, into joining us.

Unfortunately, as soon as my truck heard we wanted to go over the mountains, it started to act up. The check engine light came on and my radiator sprung a leak. Various valves and doo-hickeys cracked. So it has been in the shop. Repeatedly. Finally, I asked the mechanic if it would hurt to drive it if the light came on while towing my trailer to VA. He said no, just take it slow. I picked it up from the shop on Wednesday, forked over more wads of money, and it was running great. No warning lights, zooming along fine.

After a few really hot, frantic days of packing, we were finally ready to go. The horses were freshly shod and sported strange new haircuts. My husband was shanghied into pit crew service with only a few token protests and the threat of being bound and tied to the hay rack on top of the trailer.

Thursday night boasted a thunderstorm that dumped almost 2 inches of rain on our house and Friday dawned so muggy that you felt like you were drowning just walking to the barn. But the weatherman said it was going to cool off over the weekend so we loaded up and headed East. Two hours into the journey, the check engine light came on. I ignored it. The campground was already packed by the time we pulled in at 1 pm. Luckily, Karen had arrived late the night before (really late, she blew a tire on her rig that tore the fender off of her trailer) and saved me a spot not too terribly far from the vet check.

We passed the vet check with flying colors, although my gelding was not appreciating the humidity - did I mention we ride Morgans? Karen and her giant Arab, Sammie, also passed and we unhooked the trucks and packed like we were going across the Sahara. Her husband, Mike, was crewing for her and being from the Southeast, he is very experienced in cooling horses in heat and humidity. We love Mike.

The rest of Friday passed in a blur of heat and bugs, followed by the world's longest ride meeting, with the trail guy saying things like - "now this climb is really steep, but then you get here and you can make some time" and "these switchbacks are really long, but you get here and then you can make some time" and "there might be a few rocks on this trail..." (I waited for the reassuring part of that statement but that was it).

Finally, bed! We had to be up early early for a 5:15 am start. And the rain started around 2 am and stopped just before 4. We headed off in the gloom and fog of predawn and promptly took a wrong turn. Fortunately, we figured it out quickly, but it did not seem to bode well! The first loop took us through the woods and up a very steep pipeline trail. I will now say that there were rocks. Just to get that said. Pretty much, if you weren't on a gravel road, you were on rocks. The first loop was 17.2 miles to the Bird Haven vet check. My gelding's brain was fried because he thought we were heading back to camp (this vet check is also the last of the day, so we have to backtrack slightly towards camp). He took about 15 minutes to pulse down, which is unusually long for him, but we all three passed the vet check and waited 45 minutes to go out again. And the sun came out with a vengeance, heating everything up to broil.

Back out on trail, the second loop consisted of 19.1 miles or so of hell. We went up. And up. And up. Over rocks that make the videos of Cougar Rock look very inviting. We were riding with Paul, a Calvary rider from Missouri, who regaled us with stories from Tevis and the Ozark ride this spring. (He thought I was a junior rider all day and that Karen was sponsoring both Morgan and me. Every time he saw Karen alone, he would ask if her juniors had been pulled. I like Paul.) And then the real rocks came out. And we went up some more. A few 55 milers went past us, I am not sure how they made time up the mountain, but I later heard they were pulled at Laurel Run, the second check.... Management provided water troughs at the top of the mountain, thank the endurance gods, and we went downhill over some more rocks into Laurel Run. By this time, my gelding, Quest, was panting in the heat but no crews were allowed into this check. Fortunately, volunteers

Shannon Loomis, continued

descended on us like locusts and even had a bag of ice! Morgan's mare, Angel, came down quickly, but Quest couldn't stop panting. I had Morgan wait for me but I was starting to panic that Quest wouldn't pulse down and Karen and Sammie had already passed the check, so would have to wait for Morgan if she was going to have to go on without me. The vets had held our card for an inverted CRI, so we had to go back for a recheck before we went out. Karen graciously offered to wait for Morgan but Quest passed when I took him back to the vets - he just had to chill out in the shade for 10 minutes or so. We heard rumors that the trail out of this check consisted of 6 miles of gravel road straight up. Sammie, Karen's big Arab, is a flatlander horse, so she planned to walk the steepest parts and headed out without us.

The rumors turned out to be true but fortunately, our Morgans are not flatlanders and maintained a steady trot up the gravel road as the sky darkened and thunder rumbled in the distance. We caught up with Sammie (and another horse whose name I do not know but she was ridden by Nancy from NC and we rode with her off and on all day) before he hit the water troughs at the top of the road and we all headed into some beautiful woods together as the rain started to fall. As we negotiated the rocks and slid our way downhill in the rain, we hoped it would stay overcast the rest of the day, but the rain stopped and the sun came out just as we hit the 3rd check at Bucktail. Quest was still panting but with Karen's husband Mike's help, we got him down and pulsed through and back on the trail. And then it got really hot.

We all boogied to the Wates Run gate and go. The trail was really fast and went by easily, the best section of the day. The hold was on the top of the ridge, with shade, but the air was so still and hot, and the water fairly warm from sitting in the sun all day. We pulled saddles and stuck the horses in the woods and Quest managed to pant off his heat enough to pulse down, thanks to help from Karen and volunteers. We headed out again, swapping back and forth with Paul and Nancy and a couple of Calvary riders.

The trail into Big 92 (vet check 4) was only supposed to be 11.2 miles, but it went on forever and ever and ever. We finally passed the two Calvary ladies for good and picked up another lady on a nice gray Arab as we headed down the switchbacks. I was told the switchbacks ended in a gravel road, and then only a mile into the hold. We trotted about 3 miles on that gravel road. I must admit I was very cranky and tired by the time we finally made it into the hold. I was fried. I was done. Send for the trailer and put me in air-conditioning done. My husband, Jeremy, talked me down as Mike helped attack my horses with ice water (we love Mike). The sun was going down. It had to cool off eventually. We were 3/4 of the way. Both horses were sound and passed the vets easily. So I put on my big girl panties and got back on my horse. Sammie headed off without us again but we wouldn't catch him until the next hold. Now it was dark, but we had a nice moon and the trail was mostly more of that gravel road that I was cursing as we came in but thanking the endurance gods for as we were able to cruise along it in the moonlight. I did have one moment of panic as we hit a section of road without seeing a glowstick for what seemed like forever, but Morgan was able to talk me down and on we went.

Coming into Laurel Run for the second time, the sky was lit by generator powered pole-lights. This time, Quest pulsed down right away but the horses were eating so well we delayed 5 minutes to give them time to pack more feed in their bellies before we set off for the last hold. The section was not quite as conducive to trotting after dark but we picked our way along, trotting where we could, walking where we had to until we hit the glowstick runway guiding us into Bird Haven. I have seen less lighting on aircraft carriers!

This hold went easily and 20 minutes later we were back out. The night had finally cooled enough to need light jackets and the moon was starting to hide behind the ridges. We walked the last 6 miles into camp. Quest knew he was heading back to camp and was walking at Tennessee Walking Horse speeds, picking his way through the rocks and trees. We found out that they must have used their glow stick allotment at the last hold, but Quest knew where he was going and lack of glows was not a hinderance to him! The woods spit us out onto Happy Valley Road, about a mile from camp, right on top of a turkey farm. We finished around 4 AM, 15 or 20

minutes behind Karen and Paul (who were appalled that Karen abandoned her juniors!). We woke up the out timer and smiled for the camera as Jeremy walked us back to the vet check, where Karen and Mike waited for us. We pulled our tack and vetted out within minutes.... Done. Finished. Over.

The vets all day were patient, calm and smiling all day for us back-of-the-packers, encouraging and willing to wait for a pulse to come down for a few minutes if necessary, joking and talking us up as much as they could.

Five riders finished behind us, Nancy had hooked up with two other riders to finish around 4:45 and then the two Calvary riders we passed after Big 92 finished at 5 AM, with 15 minutes to finish.

So we did it. Me and Quest, Morgan and Angel, Karen and Sammie. Thanks to Jeremy and Mike (we love Mike!). My fingers and toes are numb. My legs bruised because I never did find any half chaps before the ride. I think my brain shut down and has never quite recovered. Morgan was 1st Junior and 1st Rookie. We all got shiny buckles and a nice photo from Becky Pearman, the ride photographer. ♦

June Ride Recap, continued

I doubt it was the words rather the pitch of my voice that grabbed his attention. He turned his head all the way to my leg and fired back-" I can't believe you gained 20 LBS over one night!"

-I did what? You know all this food is just for you! I even brought carrots and apples just for you!

-Don't lie!, Bo said-

-You got this all wrong Bo - I replied - the food is for you, ... Now you go and drink some water! This conversation is over!"

Bo spin on his hind legs and argued back- " it's over when I say it's over!" Surprisingly enough Bo pulsed down fast at the vet check. But the battle was visible to the vet.

- He looks tired, she said.

- Really?!, I replied "If you could see him just ten minutes ago you would never think so. We had a slight argument... this is his frown face.

There is a point on those rides when you ask yourself why? There are some scientists who try to compare ultra enthusiasts to drug addicts but I think for me it is a challenge of self reliance. The partnership of the horse is my security blanket. Here, in the woods, away from civilization I try to recreate the feeling of self worth. This isn't a survival, this isn't about the horse. It is about reaching my own soul, depths of my athletic and intellectual potential. It hardly ever really happens, unless, you bring yourself to the edge of exhaustion, and I had. The horse, domesticated by ancestors for ability to connect with humans on many levels, speaks to me through movement, eyes, agility, awareness. Then comes the darkness and you can feel how deep that bond is. When I ride through the darkness, Bo is speaking to me with his body language. I cannot see but I can feel the terrain with his feet. I feel the struggle, I feel each rock he slips on or trips on. There is more life in dark forest than you can ever imagine....

And then you are finally at the last leg of the race. Forget that mud, and rock, and darkness, and anticipation of each turn to be the last turn. The last leg is still up the hill! Now, you would think that after climbing all day you could safely assume what goes up must come down. And then it all came to this last downhill, turn and the turkey farm. Riding a sound horse to the finish line with another rider as the last competing soul on the trail wasn't such bad thing after all. Bo perked up and trotted like a champ crossing the finish line with 30 minutes to spare. I got off and kiss his nose, and said 'Good Job Bo', he licked my salty face and I think he said 'Good Job Juliette.'"

In closing, we want to thank all of you riders, volunteers, crews and staff. We're already looking forward to next year and hope you'll join us again. ♦

Want to view scenes from the Old Dominion trail in words as well as pictures? Visit ride photographer Becky Pearman's website at beckypearman.smugmug.com

News & Notes

Old Dominion Board of Directors

Board meetings are generally held on the 2nd Saturday of each month at the Va Tech M.A.R.E. Center in Middleburg beginning at 6:30pm. Guests are welcome!

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Ride Entry Raffle Being Held to Benefit East Coast Young Riders

Earlier this year, the AERC International Committee split the USA East Zone into Northeast and Southeast zones that correspond to AERC's NE and SE regions. Between now and the Young Riders FEI Championship in Kentucky on July 29, both new zones are selling \$10 raffle tickets for a chance to win free entries to upcoming rides in each region. Ride managers have donated a baker's dozen of rides being held between August 2011 and June 2012, and each region is hoping to sell a total of 250 tickets. The raffle drawings will be held July 29 at the Young Riders event and you need not be present to win.

Proceeds will help fund the costs for veterinary staff and other needed for Young Riders and/or the North American Endurance Team Challenge in California on September 24.

For more about NE region rides & tickets, please contact Steven Hay, stevenshay2002@yahoo.com or Barb Horstmeier at batalrose@gmail.com.

For more about SE region tickets, please contact Mary Howell at countshiloh@gmail.com or 434.906.1778. ♦

Member Classifieds

For sale -- 6-acre horse farmette on Boyer Rd in Fort Valley, \$189K! Easy access to miles of forest trails, plus riding arena, four-board fenced paddocks with water and electric, barn. Ranch home has 3+ bedrooms, 2 baths, finished basement. Call Pam at 540.459.3790 days or 540.234.8208 evenings.

For sale -- Horse training facility in Sumerduck. Four stall barn and riding ring, with access to miles of trails at Phelps Wildlife Refuge. Contact Judie Ricci at 540.270.1682.

For sale -- Ranch Hand Gooseneck horse trailer, all aluminum frame and body, 1986, very well kept. Two horse step-up with removable divider. Can be used as larger stock trailer if tack room partition is removed. \$4,000 firm. Call Zoe Sollenberger, 703.447.0643 for details.

For Sale -- Registered Arabian gelding Silver Ash. "Smokey" is 15 years old, about 15 hands, has great feet and legs, and is a powerful, forward mover who loves to go. He has had professional dressage training, done some endurance, and is a certified search and rescue horse with lifetime USEF horse registration. All reasonable offers considered. Call John Proudman, 540.933.6514 for details.

Affordable Horse Blanket Cleaning, Waterproofing & Repair We offer effective and inexpensive work on horse blankets; repair, cleaning, replacing of hardware and waterproofing. Pickup and delivery is available for multiple blankets. We also repair halters and lead ropes and some tack. Average blanket repairs cost to \$10 to \$15. Contact Jenner Brunk at Checkertree Farm, 158 Wayside Dr, Weyers Cave, VA 24486 at 540.421.5053 or jennerbrunk@gmail.com.
Three cute, smart, registered Dartmoor pony crosses (13.1-13.2)

and one purebred. All started under saddle and have been out on the trail. They easily carry adults up to 140lbs. Also posted under Starlet, Beauty and Dandy on www.virginiaequestrian.com. Price negotiable to very special long term homes! Free lease with option to buy may be a possibility in the right situation. Contact annebuteau@yahoo.com or 434.263.4946

HORSE BOARDING - Give your horse personal loving care at a private barn that is less than five miles west of Leesburg (right behind the Shell Station on Route 9). We have one stall available on our 20-acre farm for either a horse or a pony, geldings preferred to equal out the gelding/mare ratio. \$300 a month. We offer full-care field board with barn access and stall. Board includes sweet feed and hay. We have a lighted ring and a round pen. We also have easy access to the W&OD Bridle Trail, which starts at Purcellville and goes east for 40+ miles. Give us a call at 540-882-9721.

Ford front end replacement bumper/brush guard by Ranch Hand. Fits 2005-2007, F250, 350, 450 and 550. Heavy duty, 2" receiver hitch. No welding for installation; \$1200 OBO. Jenny Jones 703-989-1889 or jenjones7068@yahoo.com.

Cadence Farm: Providing supplements and equipment for the trail horse and distance rider. We cater to the novice, and have the experience to provide experts with the services they need. Allow us to infuse rhythm into your riding! www.cadencefarm.us

To have your classified ad included in upcoming issues, please e-mail countshiloh@gmail.com or call 804.932.9328.

Also let us know when your item sells so we can update our list! ♦

My Kind Lady

by Marie Weber, as told by her palomino Missouri Foxtrotter "Goldie,"
who competed in distance riding from 1978-1990 and passed away in 2008 (part 3 of 5)

Oh my, is that a Vet I see? I hope she clues this lady in ... I could perish shut up in this stall with no fresh air! The Vet did indeed clue her in, giving specific instructions for my feed and care. She also examined the paddock where I would spend my free time, finding it small, but acceptable.

There were more big changes in my life in my new home: I only got out of my stall three times a week, for an hour or so. The man who worked me from the ground reminded me a bit of the old man, he had good hands and knew a lot more than I did ... he knew about everything! He wanted what he wanted and he would not settle short of his goal for the day ... that's how he reminded me of the old man.

I began to look forward to the training sessions, and once again heard the command: trot. For weeks, the exercise rider ran me around the indoor arena, bobbing up and down until I got sick of the pounding and the racing around the arena in a circle, and changed my gait to go with her bumping. Everyone cheered, and after a few more turns, I was patted and bathed and taken outside for a walk in the sun. I had learned to trot on command. Little did I know that I would find great use for this gait in the future.

My kind lady visited me every week during my incarceration, bringing carrots for me and the other horses. She always groomed me, taking great care of my flowing white mane and tail. She did not ride me for a long time, but took lessons on another horse until it was time for her to learn what I had been taught.

I had begun to feel peevish with the arrangements. My kind lady rode me only once a week. I wanted to go home and back to the woods trails. I wanted to stop going round and round in this indoor arena. On a lovely spring day, when the big sliding doors were open, I took advantage of a gust of wind that picked up a stray feed sack to do my old drop the shoulder and whirl bit as we approached the end curve. My kind lady took a tumble. I could never have anticipated the consequences of this bit of horseplay. The trainer made sure my kind lady was not hurt, and then HE climbed up in the saddle, all 450 pounds of him. Inside of five minutes, I was doing everything short of talking to let him know I had learned my lesson and would never play with my rider again, but he was merciless and kept me going until I was soaked from my exertions. When my kind lady was back in the saddle, I was letter perfect!

Not long after that, my kind lady took me home in a little white horse trailer towed by a white van. I loaded nicely, now that I knew I could get out of the box once I got in there! Little did I know that a new and wondrous life was just beginning for me. I was now nine – or maybe ten years old.

Because my kind lady now had a horse trailer, we no longer had to go down the roads to go to the park. We trailered over to ride in the park, often in the company of friends – one in particular, who rode a big Thoroughbred named Rovin. When I was out in front, Rovin gave his rider a hard time. He wanted to be out in front and when he was out in front, he just piddled along. We weren't really suited as trail buddies. I loved the park near home, but now, we often went to other State Parks and woods to ride. We went on in this casual way until my kind lady stopped using the trailer, and we were back on the roads again. I don't really like roads, they made my legs sore when I was young, and now we weren't walking like before, she was asking for a slow trot uphill, so I was lethargic and pokey.

We started doing this three days a week, and I realized from the repetition that we were conditioning, not pleasure riding. (I knew about conditioning from the old man; it had always led to something.) I began to take an interest in the work, for we rode to the wooded trails in the park for the fast work, using the roads to warm-up and cool-out. On weekends, we took long rides, going to New Jersey to get used to working in the sand, where I now appreciated being able to trot. In sand, two feet down for stability and push are much better than just one.

In the wee hours, long before I was ready to start my day, my kind

lady came out to feed me, and to my surprise, the helper was also up and hitching the trailer to the van. She covered me with a blanket since the early April air was cold and the back of the trailer had no drape. I could see through my little window that we were headed to New Jersey again, so I went back to sleep. I had a big surprise when we finally stopped. There were trailers and horses all over the place. It was exciting; just like the outings with the old man to the parades and shows ... and best of all, there was no riding ring in sight!

After the usual hours of preliminary fuss, I was tacked up and went to stand in line with my kind lady leading me. As I waited, I saw the riders in front of me, mount up and take off into the woods. One after another they did this until it was my turn. My kind lady mounted and then we were off. I raced ahead, forgetting it was best to trot in sand, going back to my ground-eating gait of single-footing. In a few miles, my legs were tiring for much of the way was soft sugar sand. My kind lady asked me for a flat walk.

When we picked up the pace again, she insisted that I trot, and if I didn't get it together, she pushed me into a canter. I soon settled, but I was too excited to be concerned with pacing myself ... I didn't know we were doing a 30 mile ride. My longest day in the sand had probably been 20 miles, for my kind lady had not yet learned to measure mileage by the speed of my gaits, although we had put in long hours. I felt good for 20 miles, by 25 miles, I had lost my edge; I was beyond tired and definitely wanting rest by twenty seven miles, which is when the helper caught up to us on the trail riding a tiny motorbike. I wasn't the only one that was approaching the limit of their endurance that day. My kind lady had become a 150 pound sack of grain in the saddle. She pressed me on mostly in a canter, for I was too tired to gait or trot, switching leads to cover the ground at 10 miles an hour, to make our time. At the end, I was really pooped!

Back at our trailer, my kind lady began cleaning me up and I went to sleep. I did not notice that my kind lady was taken away by friends for treatment, for she was in serious physical denial too. She did not eat breakfast, did not eat lunch, had eschewed the oranges on the trail for fear of drawing bees, and did not yet know about GatorAde for electrolytes. Her friends gave her a glass of orange juice with Vodka, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and salty chips. Along with a bit of a nap, it worked wonders for her.

I, too, had napped, but even so, I was outraged when my kind lady came back in too short a time and dragged me over to the Vets for examination ... where they ... can you believe it! wanted me to trot out for them! An hour ago, I felt certain that I would never, ever be able to trot again! A bunch of people tried shoeing me on, but I wasn't going to wake up long enough to do it, I was too dad-blamed tired! My kind lady took me back to the trailer and gave me some hay and nice, clear well water from home. I was just beginning to feel myself again when my kind lady came back and started packing up to leave. Not just them, but others had loaded up their horses and were driving away. Wait, why are we leaving? I'm not ready to go. My kind lady led me to enter the trailer, when somebody yelled, "Heads Up!" My kind lady looked up to see me rearing up in the air, my way of saying: I'm not ready to leave! Not at all perturbed, she said, "What are you doing up there? Come down here!" When the last trailer, but ours, had gone, I sadly loaded to go home. On the trailer I had my grain with a bute in it to ease my aches and pains form a lack of conditioning my kind lady would make sure never happened again (to be continued) ♦

