

## 2010 June Ride Recap: OD Tough

by Beth Leichti Johnson

On Saturday, June 12, temperatures in Orkney Springs, Virginia broke a 26-year record, soaring to 93F. For those who competed in the 36th Old Dominion Endurance Ride that day in the George Washington National Forest, the hot weather coupled with the mountain trails made for a challenging, yet truly memorable, ride.

Record breaking heat, humidity, and a difficult course that featured trails with steep climbs affirmed the tradition of the 'OD' adventure. To meet the challenge, ride strategies had to change and riders had to adapt. And adapt they did. As a result, many riders gained a new appreciation for the sport of endurance and for the stamina of their horses.

Despite the tough conditions, completion rates were high among competitors who traveled from throughout the east coast and as far away as Texas to participate. Veteran OD ride manager Joe Selden remarked, "This year's ride was a very technical ride, made more so by the heat and high humidity. That there were no serious problems shows that most riders 'rode smart' and took really good care of their horses."

This year's OD, sanctioned by AERC, ECTRA and AHA, offered 25, 55, and 100 mile distances and again served as the AHA Region 15 55- and 100-Mile Championship rides.

John Crandell III and his 12 year old gelding Heraldic won the 100-mile distance in a ride time of 13 hours and 32 minutes, scoring Best Condition and top vet score. On Sunday, they also won the distinguished Old Dominion Trophy, which requires that the horse does not use any leg protection during the ride.

Pete Fields, one of the founders of the OD who last completed the OD 100 in 1980, finished this year's 100 miler on his 12 year old gelding WPTR SureFire. Fields has watched the sport grow and change over several decades and remarked that all who completed this OD ride, 25, 55 or 100 miles, ought to be proud of their achievement.

At 6 a.m., 25 horses and riders started the 100 mile ride. Twenty-four hours later, 17 had crossed the finish line, a 68% completion rate. In the 55-mile distance, 69 riders and horses started and 46 finished, for a 67% completion rate. Two intrepid, young competitors and their mounts tied for first in the 55 mile distance. Daryl Downs aboard 10 year old Sheik (owned by Bob Walsh) and Ashton Katz riding 9 year old TEF Sunflash (owned by Tracy Reynolds) crossed the finish line in 7 hours and 29 minutes.

Sandra Fretelliere on Tiki's Twistyr earned the 55 mile Best Condition and high vet score awards. In a noteworthy accomplishment, Wendy Mancini rode her 29 year old quarter horse Old Meadow



**John and Ann Crandell finished 1st and 3rd in this year's OD 100 on their horses Heraldic (left) and Sunny (right).**

Jim to a 36th place completion.

In the 25-mile limited distance, 44 riders and horses started and 38 finished, for an exceptional 86% completion rate. The Old Dominion promotes limited distance rides as training and learning, and so does not recognize placings in limited distance. Instead, the OD presents an optimum time award, which this year was awarded to Kim Nennstiehl on KGN Desert Angel.

While the elevation changes were many and the footing, from road and grass to rocks and dirt was varied, this year's trail revealed an incredibly scenic panorama of the Shenandoah countryside. Trailmaster Diane Hypes' goal was to move riders off the forest service roads and into those gorgeous Virginia hills. OD member Bob Walsh, with assistance from Pete Fields and Bonnie Snodgrass, designed and cleared the 'new' section of trail located at the second stage of the 55 and 100 mile courses. The climbs in this new section tested the training of many horses and riders.

Throughout the 100 miles, view after magnificent view resulted in a breathtaking trail that many riders said they look forward to riding again next year.

For the past year, ride management coordinated a diverse management team which provided supplies, food, water, veterinary care, horseshoeing, parking, and manpower at base camp and five different vet checks set up throughout the continu-

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## 2010 OD Rider Feedback

A number of riders were good enough to send us their feedback and evaluations of the 2010 Old Dominion Ride. Reactions to the new section of trail (on the 2nd loop for the 100s and 55s), were mixed, with most people finding it tough but up to traditional Old Dominion standards, and others finding it, in the word of one rider, "inhumane." Most of the problems were reported by the back of the pack 55s, who got to the first vet check, Bird Haven, only to find it had run out of water, and then found the second v-c, Laurel Run, low on people food and water, and out of grain. Fortunately, these are readily fixable problems which will be fixed for 2011!

There was near universal praise for the volunteers, particularly those at Laurel Run, who served as pit crews for all riders. Typical comments: "Incredible volunteers! Wow, what a

group!" "Awesome vets and volunteers." "The volunteers at Laurel Run were absolutely terrific....If I hadn't been so gross and sweaty, I'd have hugged a couple of them." However, once again some back-of-the-pack 55s reported problems with "unwilling" volunteers at Laurel Run, which came as a major, and unwelcome, surprise. Another problem which will be fixed.

Generally, trail markings received high marks, although some 55s got off trail on the way back from Laurel Run to Bird Haven. We'll be sure to have better signs there next year. All three 100 milers who sent feedback asked for more glow sticks for the night trail, and one even offered to contribute to a glow stick fund – an offer we will accept! We got some good suggestions for where we could put water tanks, such as at the

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## 2010 Old Dominion Meetings & Events

*Old Dominion Members are welcome to attend monthly meetings, which are normally held at 6:30 pm on the second Saturday of each month at the M.A.R.E. Center in Middleburg. Upcoming events:*

**August 14** - board meeting at the M.A.R.E. Center

**September 11** - board meeting at the M.A.R.E. Center

**October 9** - board meeting at the M.A.R.E. Center

**October 22/23** - Fort Valley 25/50 2-day Endurance Ride

**November 20** - board meeting at the M.A.R.E. Center

**December 11** - OD Holiday Party, Holiday Inn Front Royal

### Silent Auction Items Needed for the December 11th Holiday Party!

**F**or a number of years, generous OD members have provided goods and services for our annual silent auction, held during the holiday party in December. If you have something a horse-oriented person might enjoy -- such as a massage or vacation accommodations, the OD needs and appreciates YOUR donations. Please e-mail longevityfarm@verizon.net with details. ♦

## OD MEMBER PROFILE: Anne Buteau



**How did you get involved with the Old Dominion Endurance Rides?** In 2003, I showed up at the June ride only to find out it was cancelled. I ended up going on a 30 mile training ride with Nancy Smart and two others and had not had so much fun in years. My daughter Elizabeth was born 6 months later, so I postponed my dreams of endurance riding for a few years. I did attend the OD's spring educational seminars which were well worth it, especially the one Judi Ricci gave a few of years ago. In 2008, I completed my 1st two LD rides (Virginia Highlands and Fort Valley) and also the 2009 No Frills LD and Fort Valley LD rides, coming in 3rd place at Fort Valley last fall! When I could not compete at OD rides, I volunteered and watched, listened and learned! This year I finally tackled a longer distance ride - the photo shows me at the finish of the OD's June 55 mile ride..we completed!

**Where do you live?** I live in Nelson County, Va, which is between Charlottesville and Lynchburg.

**What do you do for a living?** I trim feet..horses feet! I am a member of the American Hoof Association, and Pacific Hoof Care Professionals member and mentor. I have been trimming for 10 years and have a busy practice in Central Virginia, with clients as far north as Warrenton and Unison. There is more to "natural hoofcare" than just pulling the shoes. It is a holistic approach to hoofcare, considering the many factors that can affect the feet for better or worse: diet and nutrition, living environment, weather, saddling, rider's ability, type of work etc etc. I am an eternal student, since knowledge and science are ever-evolving. Not all trimmers trim the same, just as not all traditional farriers trim and shoe the same

way. If needed, we have hoof protection like pads, boots, and casts, to keep a horse comfortable while it is growing in a healthier new foot, or being ridden in a situation that would be outside its comfort zone. It wasn't till 10yrs ago that I realised what a healthy foot was supposed to look like..until then if it had no cracks in it and the horse was not limping it must be healthy? right? wrong!

**Tell us about your horses.** As my husband Dan, would say "We have too many!" There are six at home right now, and one in Bluemont! They are all 14.2hh or under! My endurance horse, a 12 year old bay Arab mare, is "Luna," who I have had since she was three. I didn't give her the registered name "Comedy of Manners" but it's appropriate at the start of a ride. We also have a wonderful 18 yr old connemara, Gandi, who I adopted as "he just kept foundering" and they were going to put him down. He is bombproof and carries my daughter down the trail at the walk..that is as fast as she wants to go right now. We also have a miniature horse we were given and three Dartmoor ponies who are for sale or lease to suitable homes.

**What do you do when you are not riding?** Most of the time I am working it seems, or driving to and from my daughter's school! I also spend a lot of time feeding my family, and caring for the animals that feed us!! We have a milk cow, pigs, chickens, and vegetable garden which keeps me extra busy this time of year. I preserve a lot as it's good to know what's in the food you eat. As current Secretary of VICFA(Virginia Independent Consumers and Farmers Association) who's mission is to "promote and preserve direct unregulated trade between farmers and consumers," I believe that a person should be able to buy what they want from their neighboring farmer if they want to, without the farmer having to jump through all kinds of hoops to be able to sell to them legally. My family also likes to camp out "down by the brook" on our property. With so many animals it is hard to get away! ♦

**Want to be featured in an upcoming issue? E-mail your photo and answers to the above questions to countshiloh@gmail.com. We are also looking for great ride stories - please share your experience at OD rides!**



I just returned from the Tevis ride out in California, and want to reflect on that ride and how it compares to our Old Dominion rides. My going back to the Tevis this year was extremely last minute; the Crandells called to say they had room in their trailer, and

in less than 24 hours, two of my horses, Ahmose and Mercury, were loaded and heading west. Last year, my husband, Pete, had taken more than three weeks to do the cross country trek and return. This was an opportunity I couldn't pass up!

After five days of John Crandell's driving, the horses arrived in good shape and spent ten days lounging at the home of Linda Glazier and Roger Yohe, in the foothills where it was cool. The Crandells' horses, Heraldic and Greyson, also traveled well and looked great. The rest of us flew in a few days before the ride.

Lisa Downs agreed to ride Merc and I was to ride Ahmose. Lisa had never attempted a 100 mile ride, but was game to try, and knew that Merc had completed the Tevis well, last year, carrying another first-time 100-mile rider, SueAnn Adams. We rode the last six miles on Thursday to check out the finish, and then headed up to Robie Park where the ride starts.

At the Tevis, you have to designate a crew member to move your trailer from the start to the finish, during the course of the ride day, in addition to trying to get crew to the two, hour-long holds that are the only places that you're likely to see them, Robinson Flats and Foresthill. The rest of the day, your horse's welfare is up to you, and to the veterinarians at the several gate-and-go's and trot by's. A big part of the strategy of riding the Tevis is figuring out how long to stay at the gate-and-go's to

allow your horse to refuel.

In addition to Pete, Ashley Kemerer had flown out to help crew for Lisa and me. Ann Crandell and a bloke from Australia named Marty crewed for John and the rider he procured for Greyson out there, a delightful Californian named Shannon Constanti. Shannon's folks are on the governor's board of the Tevis.

My goal this year was to approximate the same time that had given Reveille a 12th place finish last year, but Ahmose and Merc felt great all day and we wound up finishing an hour and a half earlier than Rev had done, to place 5th and 6th. Of course, Heraldic and Greyson finished first and second, nearly two hours ahead of the rest of the pack, and all four of our horses looked good the next day.

I am having the Tevis historians confirm my preliminary search, but I think that Merc, at 19 ½ years old, may be the oldest horse ever to top ten the Tevis. And he's just a 14 hand pony!

The Crandells have a long history of building remarkable endurance horses, and with the Asgard and Bold Soldier bloodstock, they have proven once again the superiority of their program. But I have to think it's more than coincidence that four out of the top six horses finishing at the Tevis went out on that trailer together, from here in the Northeast. What is it, then, that made the difference?

The heat and humidity to which our horses acclimate, here in the Northeast builds a cardiovascular base that the western horses aren't able to attain, conditioning in their dry heat. Especially this year, the brutally high temperatures we had in Virginia and Maryland in June and early July prepared these horses to sweat copiously and cool themselves down in the hot canyons of the Tevis. Unlike Tevis, which starts at 7200 ft and finishes at 1200 ft, the Old Dominion ride starts and finishes at the same elevation, and includes several major climbs during the ride. A great deal more of the elevation change at the OD is uphill, as compared to the Tevis.

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## Member Classifieds

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**For Sale:** Bowman Horse Treadmill, kept indoors, \$3000. E-mail Judie Ricci at meadowspringsranch@earthlink.net

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provided by Kentucky Performance Products

**F**ructan is a type of sugar found in cool-season grasses. Instead of being digested in the foregut, it passes into the horse's hindgut, where it ferments and causes the production of lactic acid. If too many fructans are consumed at one time, high levels of lactic acid can affect the delicate microflora that live in the hindgut and aid in digestion. Disruptions to these microflora can lead to colic and laminitis.

In plants, a process known as photosynthesis produces fructan. Photosynthesis occurs only during daylight hours and the sunnier the day, the more fructan is produced in a plant. At night, fructan is available to the plant as an energy source. Temperature dictates how plants utilize fructan during the nighttime hours. If the temperatures are 40°F or higher, plants use fructan to fuel growth in leaves and stems. However, if the nighttime temperature drops below 40° F, the plant will not grow and fructan remains in the leaves in high concentrations.

The lifecycle stage of a cool-season grass affects its fructan levels. New growth grass, the first 3 to 6 inches of growth, is low in fructan and indigestible fiber. This makes spring grass extra tasty and horses can easily consume high levels of fructan by eating too much grass.

On the other hand, mature grasses, 8 to 10 inches in height and going to seed, are high in both fructan and indigestible fiber. The indigestible fiber makes the grass less appealing so horses tend to eat less of it, but the fructan levels are higher so it takes less grass to cause fructan overload.

It is best to limit grazing time or stop it completely when daytime temperatures are warm and nights are below 40° F. When days are sunny and nights are warm, it is safest to allow grazing in the early morning when fructan levels are still low. Grazing in the late afternoon or evening on a sunny day is risky. Pasture management also can minimize fructan levels. Clip your pasture between four and eight inches in height. Don't allow pastures to become overgrazed since stress can increase fructan levels in grasses. If possible, rest each pasture every two months.

If your climate allows, consider seeding with warm-season grasses that are lower in fructan, such as Bermuda grass, bluestem, or switchgrass. Contact your local cooperative extension office for help in determining which types of grasses are suitable for your area and how to incorporate them into your pasture. ♦

## June OD Ride Recap, cont.

ous 100 mile course – a logistical challenge in the best of weather, but doubly so in this year's heat.

Plenty of help is crucial to running the OD ride with its multiple vet checks. Volunteers made a difference. All of the riders interviewed for this article expressed their grateful appreciation for the more than 50 volunteers, managed by Volunteer Coordinator (and OD board member) Bonnie Snodgrass, who hauled water, timed, scribed, took pulses, held horses, and offered help without being asked. Among this devoted ensemble, many new to the sport of endurance, were 3-day eventers, trail riders, vet students, and even a few experienced endurance riders giving back to the sport they love.

Thirteen veterinarians led by head vet Nick Kohut, DVM, vetted horses. Ride treatment veterinarian Lynne Johnson, DVM, the treatment vet for five years, was pleased with the way riders and crews managed their horses. Even so, she called two additional treatment vets to assist her in triaging the numerous horses pulled for overheating and dehydration. Her mobile hospital, complete with full laboratory, enabled her to assist all the horses in recovering.

Fifteen members of the Old Dominion Drag (ODD) riders, led by OD member Zoe Sollenberger, ensured that all riders and horses found their way safely back to the OD's base camp in Orkney Springs. Members of the Orkney Springs Volunteer Fire Department pumped thousands of gallons of water for horses and served hundreds of tasty spaghetti and grilled chicken dinners at the pre- and post-ride dinners, as well as a bountiful brunch at the Awards ceremony on Sunday morning.

The Shenandoah Emergency Response team was on call throughout the event, though thankfully were not required. Ten amateur radio operators provided communications between the ride managers, station heads, drag riders, and vets. Four motorcyclists from the Northern Virginia Trail Riders motorcycle club, coordinated by Pete Godwin, served as point riders, riding ahead of the competitors to check for vandalism and place ribbons. And every ride depends on accurate paperwork. Veteran Ride Secretary (and OD member) Lenora Keener employed her expertise in administration and organization to ensure that

all riders and horses were registered, accounted for, checked in, paid up, and credited with completing the ride. And finally, the indomitable Henry Mulbauer, timer of the OD since its' inception 36 years ago, was on duty from the start at 6 a.m. on Saturday until almost twenty-four hours later when the last four 100 milers crossed the finish line.

A rookie rider, who traveled from Florida to do the 55 miler and was pulled at the first vet check, remarked, "This is a humbling sport... and may I add, rewarding. Truly, 'to finish is to win.'... We want to come back and we want to 'win'!"

*-Beth Liechti Johnson, an OD member who completed this year's 25 mile ride on her Appaloosa gelding, Living Waters Cody (his first AERC ride). ♦*

## OD Rider Feedback, continued

road crossing before starting up Fall's Ridge.

There were a number of complaints about the Friday night ride briefing, which was hard to hear because of an inadequate sound system. Also, several people asked that we never again say the "trail is like last year's" since many people had no idea what last year's trail was like. So that's one phrase we will drop. We will also insure an adequate sound system for next year.

A lot of people thought we started the ride too late, and we agree. Next year, the 100s will start at 5am, the 55s at 6:30 (we have to start them that far apart so as to avoid a huge crush at Laurel Run) and the 25s at 7:30. Hopefully, that will mean cooler weather for at least part of the ride.

Almost everyone liked the food, although several remarked on the crush at the Friday night dinner. That's a problem we're already working on, and in fact, have several ideas for alleviating it.

To sum up, I offer you two riders' comments, which are typical of the great majority of the feedback we received: "Great ride management and volunteers. Great vets. Well organized. Good base camp." And: "All volunteers were great and a big help...The trails were great, technical and expected for the OD. The views on the mountain were awesome! Food was good. Grounds were very nice..."

Thank you all for coming and for your comments. We hope to see everyone next year, when we expect we will have found solutions to all this year's problems – and no doubt face others that we hadn't predicted! ♦

by Bob Walsh

The 2010 Old Dominion was special for me for several reasons. First I have never ridden the new 100 mile trail. Second and more important it was the dream of a good friend, Pete Fields, to finish this ride one more time. Pete, founder of the Old Dominion Ride and member of the OD Hall of Fame, finished the OD 100 several times on the original trail, including winning the first Calvary award. This was accomplished more than 30 years ago. He and I ride together from time to time and it was decided that this would be the year to get it done.

It was my plan to have two horses ready for the Old Dominion. Sheik, my younger horse, would be entered in the 55 and ridden by Daryl Downs. Leading up to the ride Sheik would be conditioned by my daughter Teri while I was working with my veteran horse Lojic. With all the snow we had this year our training schedule was way off. We did a lot of indoor ring work and rode outside when we could. Pete would meet us at least once a week and train with us. We all decided to enter the Foxcatcher 50 to judge the condition of our horses and ourselves.

As luck would have it Pete took a bad fall at this ride and wound up with a trip to the hospital. He was fine but his training was set back several weeks while he was mending. But he refused to give up on the plan and we continued to get together and work the horses. Two weeks before the ride we traveled to the base camp and spent the weekend working the horses on the climbs they would face come ride day.

Pete's wife Beverly and daughter Lara would crew for him while my daughter Teri and grandson Riley (age 8) would help me. The plan was to ride together but just in case we got split up, we had two crews. Daryl arrived at camp on Friday with his own crew so he was all set. The forecast for ride day had been for highs in the 80's to low 90's, and this seemed doable.

We were up at 4:30 to get everything ready for the 6:00 am start. Twenty-five horse and rider teams started off on what would be a long, hot day. Pete and I had put together a wish list showing what time we wanted to get into each vet check. The first 17 miles went right on schedule and the horses went through the vetting and into our 30 minute hold with no problems. We left on the next 19 mile leg knowing that we would not see our crews until mile 50, since vet check 2 at Laurel Run was crewless.

We moved along, with Lojic setting the pace as planned. Then came the new section of trail that was introduced this year for the 55's and 100's. Even though Pete and I had trained on this climb it seemed longer and steeper than we remembered, maybe it because the temperature was already in the high 80's and the humidity was awful. We worked our way to the top and across the Great North Mountain trail. It was rocky in places and slow but it was also beautiful. We arrived at the turn to take us down again and let the horses drink at a wonderful little pond set right at the top of this trail.

When we reached the bottom it was about four miles to the vet check and the horses were eager to move out. We arrived at vet check 2 almost

on schedule and after passing the vets, settled in the shade for our 45 minute hold. Management had lots of folks there to help feed us, feed the horses and just look after all the teams while they were there.

Our out time came all too soon and we were off again, this time on the dreaded Devils Hole climb, five miles of dirt road with little if any shade. It was getting hotter and as we neared the top I could tell my horse was over it. Management had stationed water tubs at the turnoff and Lojic and Pete's horse buried their heads in the tubs. Drag riders had arrived by trailer and were unloading here to follow the last horses over to vet check 3. It was at this point that we gave up on our wish list; it was survival from here on in. We were about an hour off our estimated arrival time at VC3 but we were all glad to see our crews.

The horses were very hot but we vetted through and Lojic really ate well

here. A change of shirt and socks was a good pick me up but the heat was just horrible. Out time came and we said good bye to the crews. Next time we would see them was at Big 92, vet check 4. We had a gate and go on this leg and Lojic was really hot when we arrived, so I removed his saddle which helped him recover.

We wanted to get to Big 92 before dark and we caught some riders on our way. This section of trail had a lot of loose rock and wet muddy sections which made the going slow at times. We arrived at dusk and vetted in. Both horses were doing fine and again Lojic ate well during the entire hold.

It was now dark and time to turn on

the lights. This section of trail is all road so we were able to keep a good pace going and rolled into vet check 5 Laurel Run.

It was here we were joined by Daryl, who told us that he and my horse Sheik, had tied for first in the 55. Daryl trotted Lojic out, while daughter Teri got food and drink into me. This was a 30 minute hold and crews were allowed in this time around. My grandson and crew chief, Riley, informed me he was getting very tired and we would need to ride faster so he could see us finish. Easy for him to say! It was still warm and both horses were feeling the miles. Even so, we had a good trip over to vet check 6, Bird Haven. The horses took turns leading on this section and they were eager because they knew they were headed home. Again Daryl was there with the crews and trotted Lojic out for me. At this point this was a big help as the day was starting to catch up to me. I ate a sandwich plus knowing we only had six miles to the finish took a lot of pressure off and we left at a good pace. Lojic got his second wind going through the woods trail to the finish and we arrived before our crews could get parked and see us cross the finish line.

With the trail and the heat and humidity, it was the toughest 100 I have ever finished. Pete and I gave each other a big hug, and proclaimed, "Mission Accomplished." It is always a good feeling to finish a 100 mile ride. It is a special feeling when it is the Old Dominion 100. Those who have done it know what I mean -- and of you who have not should at least give it a try, for the Old Dominion is a one-of-a-kind ride and to finish it is very special accomplishment. ♦



*Riders at the start of the 2010 Old Dominion Ride*

## July 24-25 Ride & Tie Results

### Saturday night 20 mile "scary woods ride":

1st: Rhonda and David Venable on Tanner (3:21)  
Tie for 2nd: Jenny Jones and Carol Federighi on Beryl (3:26)  
Janice Heltibridle and Mark Trader on Bubba (3:26)  
Susan and Theresa Trader on Little Man (3:26)

### Sunday 6 mile:

1st: Katie Mercer and Claire Livesay on Charlie Brown (1:21)  
2nd: Jacob and Larry Tumblin on Echo (1:40)

### Sunday 12 mile:

1st: Sandra Abe and Theresa Trader on Eboni Cognac (2:14)

### Sunday 20 mile:

1st: Janice Heltibridle and Megan Keyes on Frisky (2:29)  
2nd: Rhonda and Dave Venable on Tanner (2:59)  
3rd: Lani Newcomb and Kathy Broaddus on TF Red McIntosh (3:02)

We had 7 new members join the Ride & Tie Association at this event!  
Ride & Tie will be offered at the Fort Valley Rides on October 22-23.  
For more information about this sport, visit [www.rideandtie.org](http://www.rideandtie.org).



Above: Jacob and Larry Tumblin.  
Below: Katie Mercer and Claire Livesay.



Above: Start of the 20 mile ride & tie.



At left: Hot runners and riders made use of the horse water tank to cool off afterwards.

## President's Column, continued

In order to do well in downhill rides, your horse must be trained to move in a collected frame traveling at a trot down fairly steep downhill trails. The rider must be able to maintain this collection while keeping a light seat; you can't collect the horse by using excessive driving force with your seat and then expect him to round up and be light on his feet, avoiding rocks and lightening his front end to protect his front legs from concussion. The rider's hands have to be sensitive and giving enough to release the horse's head if he stumbles while traveling downhill; if he can't dip his head at will, he will fall.

As would be expected from the evaluation of the elevation changes and the heat/humidity index, I found that Mercury, who I rode to finish 6th in the OD 100 this year, endured significantly more stress than he endured while completing the Tevis with LIsa in 6th place. He was slow to pulse down during the heat of the day at the OD, and was sluggish during the late afternoon on trail. At OD, his total ride time was 16:59, excluding holds, whereas at Tevis his total ride time was 17:29. While you could make the conclusion that the OD is a faster ride, remember that the 30 minutes longer "on trail" that Merc took on Tevis was at least in part that time spent "refueling" at the gate-and-go's, while he was still on the clock!

So, in essence, the Old Dominion 100 mile ride, I believe is the more physically demanding of the two rides, both for the horse and for the rider. However, the Tevis requires something else of the rider, in order to finish

competitively. It requires guts. The trail cuts so narrowly along the cliffs that one false step can have significant, even fatal consequences. Riding these trails at speed at night requires a well-trained horse and a significant level of trust in one's horse.

Riding these two great, historic rides has been an unbelievably enriching experience, and I hope that any of you that want to try to do them will start planning for next year. We will be working with the Tevis ride management over the course of the year to find ways to facilitate exchange of horses from east to west coast so that more of our members can have the experience of riding both the Tevis and the Old Dominion.

Lastly, I want to again publicly thank Cia Reis for breeding Ahmose and for letting me steal him away from her. He is an amazing athlete and I am so grateful to have him. See you on the trails!

*Claire Godwin, DVM*

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Dana Abernathy, 2935 N. Mt Pleasant Rd, Greenbrier, TN 37073. ♦