

May 2009

# UPPER MIDWEST ENDURANCE AND COMPETITIVE RIDES ASSOCIATION



## Ride Schedule!

Dates	Ride	State
May 15-17	Run for the Border	WI
May 16-17	Dead Dog Creek	IL
May 23-24	Grand Island	MI
May 30-31	Maplewood West	MN
May 30-31	AHDRA I	IL
June 6-7	ApDRA	WI
June 13-14	White River Summer	MI
June 19-21	S.E. Minnesota	MN
June 27-28	Hopkins Creek	MN
July 3-5	Endless Valley	WI
July 3-5	Mosquito Run	MN
July 11-12	Endure for a Cure	IL
July 24-26	Wildcat	WI
July 25-26	Saolmie Sizzler	IN
August 2	Warm Up	MI
August 3-7	Shore to Shore	MI
August 8	Cool Down	MI
August 8-9	Louise Riedel Memorial	WI
August 15-16	Thistle Down	MN
August 22-23	Rock River Charity	IL
August 29-30	Northern Highland	WI
September 5	White River Fall	MI
September 6-7	White River Labor Day	MI
September 12-13	Charity Cup	MN
September 12-13	Keweenaw	MI
September 12-13	Lincoln Trails	IL
September 19-20	Colorama Classic	WI
September 19-20	Tin Cup Springs	MI
September 26-27	Run for the Ridge	MN
October 1-4	DRAW-arama	WI
October 3-4	Pine Martin Run	MI
October 9-11	Brighton Competitive	MI
October 16-18	Point Chaser	MN
October 24-25	AHDRA III	IL

## GOING THE DISTANCE

The UMECRA Membership Committee needs your help!

Every organization must retain current members and attract new members in order to survive and thrive. The UMECRA membership committee needs your suggestions on how to best accomplish these important tasks. Send any and all suggestions – even if it might seem silly or impossible to achieve – to one of the committee members listed below.

Julie Jackson-Biegert [jujacks@fuse.net](mailto:jujacks@fuse.net)  
Pam Cotton [hellsnellsfarm@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hellsnellsfarm@sbcglobal.net)  
Linda Mower [ridedeaddog@hotmail.com](mailto:ridedeaddog@hotmail.com)  
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Marty Power [power@dtnspeed.net](mailto:power@dtnspeed.net)

Thanks so much for your help with this important matter.

*Marty Power,*

Membership committee chair

## Letter to the editor – Response

In regards to the scratches article, I have something that seems to be helping in prevention of scratches. My 17 year old Arab gelding Chewy had been prone to scratches every spring as the pasture where he is boarded was plagued with mud. I have been squirting a ring of MTG (Mane and Tail Growth--Fleet Farm) around his pasterns during damp weather and muddy conditions in the spring. I think it keeps his skin moisturized and from drying and cracking, letting the bacteria in. So far so good for two years!

Karen Kersten  
[kkersten@uslink.net](mailto:kkersten@uslink.net)

# Remembering Sparks

Some UMECRA members may remember my Morab Windmere Sparkler, with whom I did Competitive Trail Rides from 1990 through 2001. He was a 16.1 hand, dapple grey gelding that attracted a lot of attention. We had a terrific time at these rides, and I'm especially proud of the "Veterinarian's Choice" award we received at Gun Run in 1992.

It all came to a stunning end in 2002 when Sparks contracted laminitis. After a full recovery and prevention efforts, he got it again in 2003. I can only afford to board one horse, and wished to continue competing, so I needed to find a home for my good friend. I gave Sparks to a friend in Ohio who runs a therapeutic riding stable, and who has much experience with laminitic horses. Sparks thrived in the environment. The emails kept coming with accounts of the kids and adults he was helping, even if in the beginning all he was able to do was to stand still for hours and let the kids groom him. But the best email came in the summer of 2008 from the mother of a 9 year old boy with cerebral palsy. Tommy had shown Sparks at a 4H show against able-bodied kids, and won a first place ribbon. Here is an excerpt from June's moving email to me:

"My eyes keep watering as I type. Karen, thank you so much for sharing this beautiful animal with us. His heart and spirit are beyond any other horse I have ever known. He helped to make my son's dream come true. In a world where he has many challenges and obstacles to overcome, Sparks gives him wings to fly. I'm not sure how much longer Sparks will be with us, but he has already given us some moments to treasure forever."

In January, Sparks had been awarded the International Morab Horse Assoc. Horse of the Year award, so the barn had one last party for him. The kids drew pictures to hang on his stall alongside the cards they gave him, and Sparks enjoyed special cookies and all the attention. I got the news in February that Sparks had been put down after he was found in his stall paralyzed from an apparent stroke. Still makes me cry when I think of it today. So for everyone who reads this, please consider donating your horse when that difficult time comes to retire them and you don't have the means to do this yourself. And please, everyone, kiss your old horses on their soft noses for me and Sparks.

Karen Tellef



**FOR SALE:** Nikken magnetic horse blanket, size 76. Like new. Asking \$250. Email me at 80minus50@gmail.com or call Mike at 608-386-1114.

## **An Update from Bonnie Tobias...**

Just a note to inform all my UMECRA friends that so far I am doing fine. As some of you might have heard, on March 31, 2009 I was told I have stage 3 non-small cell lung cancer. (bet no one seen that one coming LOL) Anyway, I have completed one round of Cemo, and have 4 more weeks left of radiation treatment. So far all is going well. Have not lost any hair as of yet, and it depends on which nurse I talk to as to if or when I might loose hair. So, I promise, if I see you on the trail and I've lost my hair, I'll either have a hat on or a wig. Wouldn't want to scare anyone's mount. At the moment, I've been told to stay off Mercury until my platelet count goes back up, (you'd almost think maybe the doctor's have seen me on Mercury at the start of a ride) because, if I were to fall, I could possibly bleed to death internally. But believe me, as soon as they give me the OK we will be out on the trail again. We finally moved into the new house in August 2008 so I'm not living in the horse trailer any more. But I am ready to start camping again and riding with my friends. Watch out Linda and Dancer, we're coming to get you. Hope to see all of you on the trail soon.

Love to all,  
Bonnie Tobias

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*Line = (65 Characters per line including spaces)					

Please send your ad to [UMECRAnews@gmail.com](mailto:UMECRAnews@gmail.com). We can handle most common formats, such as Word, .pdf, or .jpg. The deadline for each issue is the last day of the previous month – newsletters are generally mailed by the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Please send payment for your ad to:  
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**Checks should be made payable to UMECRA.**

## RISE CHANGES AND NOTICES

Change: **Endless Valley Pioneer Ride** (July 3-5) will be adding AHA Endurance and Competitive rides all 50/55/100 mile Endurance rides and 25 mile Competitive rides. The correct phone number for more information is 608 843-7334.

### COLORAMA RIDE REMINDER:

Reservations are **REQUIRED** for Colorama as the campground has limited space. DRAW has reserved all of the group sites; there are three sites with limited space. If you are planning to attend the COLORAMA ride in September, contact Jill Feller at: [jfeller@nconnect.net](mailto:jfeller@nconnect.net) or 920.948.9502 to

reserve a site. If you come to the ride without a reservation, you may be turned away due to lack of camping space. **ALSO:** Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times while in the campground: loose dogs will result in a disqualification of the rider.

## LAMINITIS SYMPTOMS

Some things to look for...

- Your horse is reluctant to move
- Stands with the front feet stretched out to the front
- The horse rocks weight towards the back feet to keep weight off the front
- Sweating without cause
- Blowing out (exhales) in pain
- The feet are hot with a strong digital pulse

These symptoms can be confused with tying-up, colic or other severe hoof pain.

Here are some other factors that can cause laminitis...

- Black walnut trees (shavings or eaten)
- Red oak
- Hoary alyssum
- Black locust
- Clover, alfalfa
- Avocado
- Selenium in selenium accumulating plants or through accidental supplement overdose
- Rattlesnake bite (yes – they do exist in the Midwest!)
- Excessive grain – horse got into the grain bin

From Horse Journal – March 2009

## RAISING THE BAR BEFORE IT'S RAISED FOR US

*Susan Garlinghouse, DVM*

If you reach a few years back into AERC's history, many of us remember when a finish line criteria of 72 beats per minute and sound at the walk was considered good enough to complete. The concept "fit to continue" was a new and potentially radical notion and Grade 3 lame horses were routinely given completions. The process to eventually lower finish line criteria to 68 took years of debate, not all of it friendly. About the same era, many legendary horses and rider teams considered themselves racing at blazing speeds if

they completed a one hundred mile course in ten to twelve hours. To refresh everyone's memory, the event held in the UAE this January was won in 6:49.

At the time of proposed lower pulses, it was argued that no scientific data existed to support a theory that stricter criterion was likely to reduce treatments or save equine lives. As pull codes had yet to be well-defined, and no formal tracking system to monitor treatments or deaths yet existed, it was indeed true that hard evidence was lacking. Yet few of us would still argue that tightening up criteria was an unnecessary or unwise move in the evolution of endurance. Indeed, extremely few AERC vets still routinely utilize the 'default' finish criteria of 68 beats within sixty minutes as allowed by Rule 6.2.1.2. set in place over twenty years ago. Even though AERC regulations state that riders should be notified in advance in written form if a stricter finish criteria is to be set, in reality, such notification is rarely provided except as an informal announcement at the ride meeting, or as a notice at check-in. Few riders object to informal notification, and many riders are (falsely) under the impression that the head control judge can arbitrarily set any criteria they see fit, including at the finish line.

However, it is also a reality that as the sport has evolved over the past several decades, so too has the "status quo" at many rides. In the current AERC regulations, Rule 6.2.1 states in part, "Because an equine at the finish line is not, in actuality, going on---and not going into the wilderness far from veterinary aid---the standards for completion need not be as strict as those on the trail..." This logic makes sense when you consider typical conditions at the time---most riders camped (in the truest sense of the word) next to their horse, and living quarter trailers were few and far between. Most riders stayed overnight after completion, allowing the horse time to recover from the day's ride. A well-populated base camp meant many eyes available to notice a horse that wasn't right, and veterinary help was close by.

Compare that with a current typical base camp. In the PS region, at least half of the riders are on the road soon after their final vet check rather than staying and allowing their horse additional time to rest, rehydrate and manifest signs of brewing problems. Many more will depart right after awards, leaving base camp pretty lonely by midnight. In my experience, relatively few riders are aware that horses typically require several days to replace fluid, electrolyte and glycogen losses, even after a conservative and relatively "easy" ride. Few also fully understand the continuous effort required by horses to balance in a moving trailer, or appreciate that horses being transported cannot move and stretch tired muscles, generally do not eat optimally and rarely have access to water. Should trouble occur, many problems will go unobserved in the back of the trailer---or if they are noticed, qualified veterinary help familiar with endurance horses may not be readily available.

As such, perhaps we cannot still convincingly argue that finish line criteria should be less stringent than criteria utilized during the ride itself, given that in many cases, stress and effort on the part of the horse far from veterinary help is likely to continue for some time---perhaps even more so than during the ride itself.

It is also an unfortunate fact that as a growing and increasingly visible sport, endurance is more likely to come under the future scrutiny of animal activist groups. Should we become the specific target of animal-rights proponents who rarely value logic over emotion (as witnessed by the ongoing debates regarding equine slaughter facilities in North America), it is unlikely that AERC will escape unscathed. Based on the adage that the best defense is a good offense, it is in our own best interest to proactively demonstrate that our standards and interest in the well-being of our horses continues to evolve.

It has also been argued that tightening criteria any further holds no guarantees of improving equine welfare. It is as true now as it was twenty years ago that there is no objective data to demonstrate stricter criteria will produce fewer veterinary treatments or equine deaths. However---no data existed when the original pulse criteria of "72 beats per minute, no inversion and sound at the walk" was instigated. Presumably, the original standards were based largely on the professional opinions of veterinarians at the time. No peer-reviewed data existed when criteria was tightened in the late eighties and early nineties to reflect current standards. Is it reasonable to now insist that peer-reviewed data be presented before further efforts are made to increase equine safety? Or is it reasonable to still assume that the judgment of experienced endurance veterinarians is a valid impetus for tighter criteria?

Although not a statistically valid project by any stretch, I recently reviewed results from one Pacific Southwest ride held the same weekend each fall. Entries are typically between 125-150 horses and include 50, 25 and "fun ride" distance. For the past several years, criteria during the day was set at 56 beats per minute (which by AERC rules, must be met within thirty minutes) and finish line criteria was set at 68 beats per minute within one hour for 50 milers; and 60 beats within 30 minutes for limited distance. The head control judge is an experienced veterinarian and holds welfare of the horse in high regard, but is of the firm opinion that he is constrained to set finish line criteria at 68 within sixty minutes according to Rule 6.2.1. Criteria of 56 throughout the day was an attempt to reduce overriding---however, by allowing a far more lenient finish line criteria, ambitious riders were, in effect if not by intention, given permission to "drop the hammer" during the last loop of the ride, knowing they had a full hour at the finish to reach a pulse of 68. Coincidentally or not, multiple horses needed treatment every year, usually including at least one horse on IV fluids and referral to a regional clinic. In almost all cases, treatment was instigated after the horse had already passed a final completion check, but then later exhibited metabolic symptoms. At least one equine death occurred sometime subsequent to, and potentially as a result of, the exhausted horse syndrome which occurred at this ride.

This past season, a different AERC head control judge was asked to stand in for the previous veterinarian, who was unavailable. Criterion was set at 60 beats within thirty minutes throughout the day for all distances, and 60 beats within sixty minutes at the finish line for fifty milers. Based on superficial review, there appears to be no highly significant difference in the average Top Ten or overall

finishing times, or in completion rate. ***Yet this past year, not one horse required even minimal treatment and no horses were referred to the local equine hospital.***

It remains conjecture whether the significant decrease in treatments was due solely to stricter finish line criteria. It is also conjecture or to predict whether the treated horses in previous years would still have been judged metabolically stable had they been asked to meet tighter criteria. Clearly, had they in fact continued back out onto the trail as is implied by "fit to continue", several of these horses would soon have been in deep metabolic trouble.

At this particular ride, riders were informed of stricter criteria at the pre-ride meeting and there were no objections made. Yet at a more recent ride in Northern California, similar criteria provided in writing at the pre-ride meeting (and thus technically meeting the standards provided by Rule 6.2.1) was met by strident vocal objection and threats of a formal protest. Similar objections have been raised in the past by riders who claimed that notification during the check-in process, even if in writing, was insufficient. While such protests are unlikely to be upheld by the Protest and Grievance Committee, it is in nobody's best interest to expend scarce resources in processing such issues. To further compound the problem, the specific wording of Rules 6.2.1, 6.2.1.1 and 6.2.1.2 might appear to be ambiguous and open to differing interpretations. An informal survey recently posted online on the AERC Member's Forum resulted in surprisingly divergent opinions interpreting these rules--most of which were offered with complete confidence in their individual conclusions. While clarification of these rules may be justified in the future, good communication between veterinary staff and ride management is imperative in the meantime to allow appropriate criteria leeway and minimize disputes.

Setting more stringent finish line criteria *in terms of both pulse and time limitations* should be seriously considered by head control judges for each ride specifically in context of how the sport has changed over time. Consider whether the current pulse and time standards are likely to identify the truly metabolically stable horses from those which squeak by a completion check, but may soon, in effect, be continuing on the most stressful "loop" of all as they are trailered homeward. Consider why LD riders are *routinely* required to meet a maximum criteria of 60 beats within 30 minutes at ALL checks, including the finish, without apparent issue and yet longer distances continue to be granted significantly more lenient finish criteria. Evaluate whether ride logistics might feasibly allow stricter criteria, including distance between the finish line and base camp, water availability, crew access and sufficient pulse staff. While final criteria should never be set more than 24 hours in advance of the event, riders can be informed of *potentially* stricter criteria in ride entry flyers--which also negates protests of perceived insufficient advance notification. Good communication with ride management well in advance of the ride is critical in avoiding last-minute strife--most ride managers generate entry flyers months in advance and won't appreciate last-minute changes or additions to rider packets. Use the rider meeting as an opportunity to educate riders about justification for evolving criteria---that while ultimate responsibility for the horse rests

with the rider, additional tools to identify the at-risk horse places little or no additional burden on the well-managed horse, but provides an improved safety margin not only for the individual competitor, but for the ever-changing sport itself.

*Submitted by Dr Wes Elford*

## UMECRA BOD MEETING

UMECRA Convention 2008 -- overview by Dianne Schmidt, meeting hostess

The UMECRA Annual Meeting and 2008 Awards Banquet was held on the weekend of January 23, 2009, at the Quality Inn in the Wisconsin Dells.

I chose this motel because we have held our convention here in the past, and the accommodations were more than adequate. Also, the hotel room fees were \$59.99/night. While I would not use this facility in the future, I would like to let the membership that did not attend the meeting know what they missed.

On Friday night Arabian Horse Distance Riding Association hosted and funded the "Welcome Reception". The hors de oeuvres were good and plentiful. Dr. Robert Beecher's talk on the history of our sport was educational, humorous, and thought-provoking. For those of you that are new to UMECRA, Dr. Beecher has been an active member for close to 40 years.

The Saturday morning speaker, Dr. Alice Stack, an Equine Internal Medicine Resident from the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University shared a plethora of information on colic and muscle fatigue in the endurance horse. Dr. Stack's talk was only clouded by the fact that she ran out of time.

A sandwich bar was set up by the caterer for lunch.

The minutes of the Annual Meeting on Saturday afternoon have been published.

While the food and service at the banquet on Saturday evening was not entirely what I had ordered, the behavior of a couple of our members was inexcusable.

The awards banquet was highlighted by the smiles on the faces of the Novice Division award winners in their jackets that were donated by the Purina Company.

Receipts from the Annual Meeting were	6500.00
Paid to Quality Inn up front for meeting	5000.00
Paid to DJ	350.00
Travel Expenses for speaker	215.00

Petty cash, pencils, markers at registration desk. 12.00  
 Gratuity to speaker 500.00

The caterer refunded \$250 to the hotel and the hotel reworked the price of our meals. On paper, this amounts to a bit more than a \$500 refund on our bill. In dollars, the hotel has promised me a \$312 credit on my Visa. The \$312 hasn't showed up yet (despite many promises), but I am asking attorney Art Priesz to contact the hotel on our behalf.

Have a safe ride season.  
 Dianne

**SCRATCHES - MEMBER UPDATE**

My 17 year old Arab gelding Chewy had been prone to scratches every spring as the pasture where he is boarded was plagued with mud. I have been squirting a ring of MTG (Mane and Tail Growth--Fleet Farm) around his pasterns during damp weather and muddy conditions in the spring. I think it keeps his skin moisturized and from drying and cracking, letting the bacteria in. So far so good for two years!

Karen Kersten  
[kkersten@uslink.net](mailto:kkersten@uslink.net)

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**ARE YOU A NOVICE?**

**Are You a Novice?**

Rule changes adopted at the annual meeting resulted to changes in eligibility to ride in the novice division. This applies to both year-end awards and individual placings at rides.

**RIDERS**, please use the chart below to figure out if you are a novice and inform the ride manager to mark your sheet MO if you are competing for mileage only.

**RIDE MANAGERS**, please ask novice ride entrants whether they are competing as novices or riding for mileage only. It may be helpful to keep this page available at the ride secretary table as a reminder and in case of questions.

<p>1. Have you (the rider) <b>completed</b> more than 3 competitive rides of 25 miles or more?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. You are not a novice. You can ride in novice rides for mileage only*  <input type="checkbox"/> No. Move to next question.</p>
<p>2. Have you (the rider) <b>entered</b> more than 2 Limited Distance rides?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. You are not a novice. You can ride in novice rides for mileage only*  <input type="checkbox"/> No. Move to next question.</p>
<p>3. Have you (the rider) <b>entered</b> more than 2 Endurance rides?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. You are not a novice. You can ride in novice rides for mileage only*  <input type="checkbox"/> No. If the answer to questions 1-3 is no, you may compete in novice rides for placings. Move to next question to see if you are eligible for year-end awards in novice.</p>
<p>4. Have you (horse &amp; rider <b>team</b>) <b>entered</b> in any event <b>this season</b> other than novice rides and one 25 or 30 mile competitive ride?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes. You may compete in novice rides for placing if you answered no to questions 1-3, but you are ineligible for year-end novice awards.  <input type="checkbox"/> No. You are a novice and can compete for ride placings and year-end novice awards if you answered no to questions 1-4.</p>

\* Ride managers, please mark these riders as MO when submitting ride results, not as a completion.

You can give them completion awards but they do not get completion points.

Relevant actual UMECRA Novice Division rule wording:

2. The Novice division must be a one horse/rider team. To enter this division for year-end awards and individual placings, the rider must not have completed more than 3 competitive rides of 25 miles or more. They must not have entered more than 2 Limited Distance rides or more than 2 Endurance rides. Horse/rider teams not meeting this criteria may enter novice rides for mileage only.
3. The horse/rider team must not be entered during the official ride season in any other ride distances other than the novice division, with the exception of one 25 or 30 mile competitive ride.

### **SPEEDY RECOVERIES TO...**

Donny Hamrick had a bad auto accident the last week of April.  
Larry Allen (Jen Allen's father) had a heart attack on Wednesday, 5-6-09 and had three stints put in and seems to be doing well.

### **FAST FACT!**

Most of the time, wherever a horse's ear points is where the horse is looking. If the ears are pointing 2 different directions the horse is looking at two different things at the same time. There are exceptions to this. For example, if a horse has its ears pinned back against its neck in anger, it does not mean it's looking backwards with both eyes. A horse can see better at night than a human. However, it takes a horse's eyes longer to adjust than human eyes.

### **CONDOLENCES**

Julie Roe's husband Don passed away due to a heart attack on Monday 5-4-09.

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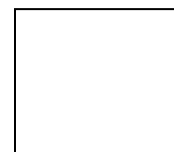
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