

Best of America Trail Club

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Issue 16, October 2011

2011 Ride Schedule

October 21-23 - 3rd Annual Fall
Colors Trail Ride @ Leatherwood
Mtns, Ferguson, NC

Oct 29-30 - Trail Ride at the
Anita-Alta BRHA Horsecamp,
Lenoir, NC

Tom's Words of Wisdom

I have a confession to make.....maybe an apology. It probably violates Rule # 3 with Gibbs on the television show, NCIS. When we first formed the Best of America by Horseback Trail Club, I was happy and proud of the 37 members that formed the club. I had no idea, just in the last year we would add thousands of members. The good news is, it has given me a voice to actually help create trails, save trails and work for your interest and trail riding everywhere. The good news continues with sponsors and advertisers in the last few months wanting your attention for their products by offering valuable coupons and discounts for the products you use

for your equine, barn, trailer, or home. The bad news is, I had no idea of the complexity involved for our offices in Virginia and North Carolina to coordinate with our partner office in New York to gather these discounts from sponsors and to have letters/brochures printed, sorted, stuffed and then shipped all over the country. Literally hundreds of our members signed up for the club to receive the email newsletter with simply their email address and name, but not with their physical mailing address, therefore these members didn't receive the recent packet in the mail. If you did not receive this packet, please log onto the member's website to ensure we have your correct mailing address. By the way, we do not share your name or address with anyone else, so mailings are from our offices only. I will be asking our current and upcoming new sponsors to create coupons and discounts that can be placed on our Trail Club website for you to quickly and easily download. I appreciate every member and their suggestions with the Trail Club. Many of you have received telephone calls from me on your birthday, special occasions or Christmas.

Continued on page 4...

On the Trail w/ Mark Laney

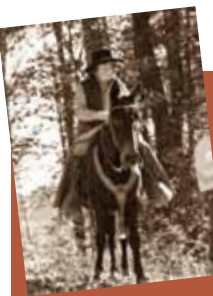
While they love our show, we hear on occasion from time to time a few folks saying "I have not joined any of your rides because I do not like a big ride". *Big ride?* We have found that most of the riders on our rides do not feel lost in the shuffle of a big ride, reporting that the networking and the long lasting friendships that come from the rides far outweigh any concern for riding with a 'big group' and/or for the distance that they travel to the ride. When there are gaited horses, we also offer a fast group and a normal group, so the gaited folks can go their pace and not feel they have to wait, and the other group does not feel they have to keep up. *Ride numbers:*

The size of the ride is mostly governed by the accommodations available at the ride venue location. Some ride locations simply do not have sufficient space for more than a few trailers. While our rides vary in numbers of riders (mostly, again depending on the accommodations available) from 35-40 to 75-85, we try to make the larger rides not feel like a big ride. Safety is our number one concern. Where needed, we ask our venues to provide enough lead and drag wranglers, with radios, in sufficient numbers that the riders can go out in smaller groups of 25-30 riders. While we are not perfect, we make every effort to see that every rider is filmed and shown in our feature show of the venue. *Where do our riders come from?* In the beginning, our riders came from within a 250-300 mile radius of the ride venue. Today, we have riders coming from out of state and some several states away, and some that even fly across the continent and rent a horse at the ride venue. The riders that come a long distances are, for the most part, but not limited to, riders who have ridden with us at other ride venues.

We invite all our trail club members to join us and "be on TV"!!

Happy Trails!

Life's a Journey, Enjoy the Ride! -Mark



**Dutch Henry
Howdy Folks!**

Dalton Garner, Cadillac and BOABH

Here in the horse world we understand the healing, comforting and motivating skills of our equine friends. Dalton and Connie Garner know and understand their magic, too. They've felt it.

The Garner's live on a working farm in Boonville, MS that was first settled by Dalton's grandfather in 1899. Their grandchildren are the fifth generation to live in the original home. Horses have always been a part of Dalton's life and he rode his first horse by the age of 5. Over the years Dalton has raised beef cows, had dairy cows, worked as a Soil Conservation specialist and retired in 2004 from his position as County Agent. There have always been horses in his life. Cadillac, a stunning paint Tennessee Walker is one of those horses who used his spirit and magic to help Dalton deal with a life challenge.

In 2006 Dalton had a few health setbacks, namely a heart bypass surgery followed by a go-round with cancer. Cadillac had come into his life a little before that and things were not going as smoothly as one likes when sitting a fine looking walker. In fact, Cadillac had tossed Dalton a few times, and friends told him to sell the high headed horse. But something prevented Dalton from taking that step. Instead together Cadillac and he focused on the challenges before them. "Horses can sometimes give us a challenge to overcome," Dalton laughed. "And I used that philosophy to understand Cadillac and to overcome and rebound from my personal health set-back. Sometimes I think Cadillac tested me just to make me focus outside myself." Working together over the next months Cadillac grew to become a trusting and trustworthy partner and Dalton's health grew ever stronger. In fact he found himself telling Cadillac they needed to go on a few adventures together. If you ask Dalton he will tell you that Cadillac's attitude and connection played a huge part in his recovery.

Dalton and Connie had been big fans of Best of America by Horseback for a few years already by then, never missing a show. "I'd often said when they do a ride close enough to us we're going to join up!" Dalton said. Then 4 years ago Tom Seay and the BOABH gang came to "Stinking Jim's Ranch" in Houston, MS. As soon as it was announced Dalton signed up and told Cadillac they were adventure bound. "That ride was a true adventure and getting to ride with Tom was dream come true. Tom's the real deal and as soon as you meet him you feel like you've been friends forever."

Dutch's latest novel *"We'll Have The Summer"* (recommended by Tom Seay) is available on Amazon or his website, www.dutchhenryauthor.com

Cadillac and Dalton joined the BOABH family again 2 years later at the Whittemore farm in Jasper, AL and had such a wonderful time they planned on joining the Mexico to Canada ride last summer. Sadly Dalton's health prevented Cadillac and him from being part of that quest. "But Tom wrote a

letter to me as he rode along, and he carried it in his saddle bag on the entire ride to Canada filling in little details. I keep that letter right here by my chair all the time." Dalton told me. "I truly feel as if I'd made that ride along with them."

Health issues have kept Dalton from riding recently, but he has high hopes that him and Cadillac will be joining Tom and the BOABH family real soon. He said Cadillac has been asking,



Gitty Up, *Dutch Henry*

www.dutchhenryauthor.com • dutchhenry@hughes.net
If you'd like Dutch to write your story, email or call him!



Check out the **NEW** Best of America by Horseback Grand Tour 2011 buckle!

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Monthly Member Spotlight

DON & MARIE TORGET

My husband Don and I have been involved with horses for over thirty years. We both grew up in the city and did not start riding until our mid thirties. What led us to horses was a a larger piece of land that we bought to live on. I had ridden a few rental horses as a youngster and I suggested to Don that we might investigate owning horses since we had enough land to keep them on. Don has always loved animals and the outdoors so agreed to investigate horses by taking a few riding lessons. After the second lesson we began to look for horses of our own to buy. We have owned horses ever since. Over the years, Don has attended many horse training clinics and has trained most of our horses himself. He has also learned how to properly trim hooves and does that himself also. Before we bought our first horse we discussed the fact that this would be a significant commitment that would change our lives in a major way. This is because when we buy any animal (mostly dogs), they become part of the family and are not for sale.

Well we were right and horses have changed our lives in a major way. We have had countless "Happy Trails" and priceless experiences with our horses over the years that we will always treasure. Our love for horses is greater than ever and we are looking forward to many more!!



Leatherwood Mountains - The Reasons Why...

There is a reason Best of America by Horseback choose Leatherwood Mountains as our Headquarters. There is a reason that we have an annual Fall Colors Ride at Leatherwood Mountains EVERY year. There is a reason that we want you to join us... Leatherwood Mountains is a special place. Ask anyone who has ever been there and you will most likely hear tell of good times and happy horseback riding. The folks that Leatherwood employees are some of the friendliest and most knowledgeable staff around. They will spend 5 minutes with you or 5 hours with you to make you feel comfortable and secure about riding their trail system. They have extensive trail maps that are pre-highlighted with self-guided loops for riding. You can use their guide service if you would like a private guide to show you around, pony-up to one of their guided hack-line trail rides, or rent one of their horses for a 1 or 2-hour guided trail ride. Other fun activities include fishing in stocked ponds, trout fishing in NC state stocked waters, tennis, swimming, hiking, volleyball, a children's playground, bike rentals, a restaurant and bar, and many fun organized activities throughout the year.

We sincerely hope that you join us at the end of this month for the 3rd Annual Fall Colors Ride at Leatherwood Mountains! Each year is a wonderful time and you owe it to yourself to experience this slice of heaven in the Blue Ridge Mountains of NC!

Better Horses Radio

Come In & Listen to the "Better Horses Radio Show" where Host Ernie Rodina & co-host Dawn Dawson talk with Top level clinicians, veterinarians, trainers, and competitors.

Disciplines of rodeo, grand prix jumping, dressage, cutting, reining, barrel racing, roping and more! We talk about God, family, horses, dogs, training advice, breed information, area events, Roy Rogers & even cattle! Better Horses Radio is one of the most popular equine related radio programs in the Midwest and is aired on stations throughout the country! www.betterhorsesradio.com

Clay Center/Salina/Wichita, KS
KFRM 550-AM - Sunday 4:00pm

Coffeyville, KS
KGGF 690-AM - Saturday 10:00am

Fort Scott, KS
KMDO 1600-AM and KMOB 1039-FM
Saturday 8:30am

Garden City/Scott City KS
KIUL 1240 and 1310-AM - Sat. 8:00am

Ottawa, KS - KOFO 1220-AM - Sun. 4:00pm

Pittsburg, KS
KKOW 860-AM - Sat. & Sun. @ 6:00pm

Pratt/Medicine Lodge, KS
"Coyote Country" KQZQ 98.3 FM
Saturday 7:00am

Topeka, KS - KTPK 106.9-FM
(Country Legends) - Sunday 7:00am

Wichita, KS - TRUE OLDIES 1070-AM
Sat. 11:30am

Shenandoah, IA - KMA 960-AM
and KMA 993-FM - Sunday 5:05am

Boise, Idaho - Classic Country
KTRP 1260-AM - Saturday 8:00am

Bethany, MO - Farm/Oldies Station 870-AM
and 103.7-FM KAAK - Saturday 7:00am

Cameron, MO - US Country -
KMRN-1360-AM - Saturday 7:00am

Clinton, MO - KDKD 95.3-FM - Sun. 9:00am

Farmington, MO -
KTJJ 98.5-FM(The Boot) - Sunday 7:00am

St. Joseph, MO - KFEQ 680-AM
Sunday 6:30 am

Union, MO - KLPW 1220-AM - Sun 12:00pm

Guyton, OK - US Country
KGYN 1210-AM - Saturday 7:00am

Stillwater, OK - KGFY 105.5-FM
Saturday 7:00 am

Augusta, GA - WNRR 1380-AM
Saturday 7:00 am

Marianna, FL - WTYS 1340-AM
Saturday 7:00 am

Zephyrhills, FL -
Inspiration Radio 1400-AM
Saturday 7:00 am

Fargo, ND - AG NEWS
890-AM KQLX - Sunday 4:00 pm

Navasota, TX - 1550-AM KWBC
Sunday 6:00 am



Del Shields

GREETINGS my Friends...I love this this time of year when the air gets crisp, the horses get frisky and you can't get too close to the camp-fire. Speaking of frisky horses, a little lunge time or warm-up may be a good idea so that you can get some of the edge off those ponies before climbing on. A few minutes of precaution sure beats a few weeks or months of nursing a broken bone. Well, October is sure going to be exciting as I travel to Brushy Creek in Black Mo, where I'll be bringing along my mother, my daughter Kimberly, and my "Little Buckaroo" grand-son Wyatt who is the star character in my much requested song "Grandpa's Bucharoo. After that its off to Pierre, SD for few days, then back to Leatherwood Mountains in North Carolina. If you can join us for any of these, we would love to see you. I have a request of you. I would love to hear what your favorite cowboy songs are and why you like those particular numbers. E-mail me at singingpoet_1@hotmail.com and lets talk about it. I am always looking to enhance my shows and include the material you all like best. Feel free to mention some of my originals in there as well so my feelings aren't hurt (kidding). Also, if you have song ideas that you would like for me to write about, I would welcome those ideas as well. Til our trails cross again - ride safe, ride often...

Keep Safe, Smile Often, Trust the Lord and

"Always Ride the High Trail"

Del Shields
Son of the Prairie Wind
Humboldt, Kansas 66748
(620) 433-1819
www.delshieldsmusic.com

Del

Tom's Words...continued

I truly enjoy doing this, but I've also come to realize that our computer programs were not set up to handle such numbers. Therefore, we are also revamping these programs so we can strive to get it right every time. I want each of you to ride with us this coming year. We start our Spring Tour in mid-March in Florida and travel up through the Southeast states to help you overcome your "cabin fever." More details will be forthcoming. As a Trail Club Member, you will receive a greater discount on our rides in addition to receiving advance notice of these rides before they are announced to the general public. Later this month, we are looking forward to hosting our 3rd Annual Fall Colors Trail Ride at Leatherwood Mountains. Earlier in the year, during one of our big giveaways, Jodie Bingham was drawn as the winner of the ride giveaway! She, along with three of her friends will be joining us at the end of the month for some fantastic trail riding with fellow equestrians at Leatherwood Mountains! We still have the upcoming drawing for a brand-new Tucker saddle!! In November a lucky trail-club member will have a brand new saddle to enjoy on their favorite trail. Something new to the Trail Club will be a monthly prize giveaway! Members will have the opportunity to win these great prizes that will range from trail rides to quality products!! More details to come! There are many other benefits we will announce, but the bottom line is this...I truly appreciate each member and continue to invite your suggestions. Please email me anytime at tom@bestofamericabyhorseback.com But most of all, I want the opportunity to ride with you this coming year. *All the best, Tom*

Upcoming Show Schedule

October 11 - Lajitas Equestrian Center, Texas

October 18 - White Stallion Ranch, Arizona

October 25 - Mule Days at Mammoth Cave,
Kentucky

November 1 - Norco, California

November 8 - Tombstone, Arizona

Steve Edwards The Mule Man with Answers

CONTINUED FROM LAST MONTH'S ARTICLE



We are in an information age. There are many clinicians, videos, books and internet websites on mule and donkey tack. Not all of this information is going to work for every individual. My suggestion is to go to a training clinic or meet individually with a professional and actually see the bit being used by a professional. I believe our number one thought should be, "How can I best communicate with my mule or donkey? How can I communicate with the least amount of resistance?" It is also very important to realize that it is not the bit alone that will communicate crisp and cleanly with a mule/donkey. Our hands are important communication tools that must work in conjunction with the bit. Consider this, every time we move our hands, we are communicating with our mule/donkey. What the mule/donkey wants is to simply be let go. When our hands are down the mule/donkey has a chance to relax and make a mistake. It is then that we can raise our hands and correctly communicate with the mule or donkey.

Going back to comfortable or uncomfortable, when we continually hold pressure on the reins, this holds pressure on the bit and the mule/donkey will hold on to the bit. By this, we are teaching the mule or donkey to brace. He will try to take control of the bit so you cannot pull on him/her. This is often incorrectly labeled "hard mouthed". It is not just the mouth that becomes a problem. A mule or donkey that has been communicated with poorly will not only resist the bit but also the reins. As he is pulled on, he learns to tighten the five major neck muscles and throat latch. Your goal should be correctly communicating 80% with your legs and 20% with your hands. This will make the mule/donkey comfortable enough to stop resisting and start softening up. A mule/donkey can also become "hard mouthed" by having the bit improperly placed in the mouth. I have asked many equine owners about proper bit placement. The answer is usually to create one or two wrinkles in the corners of the mouth. For my training programs, I have the mule/donkey show me where he prefers to carry the bit. For instance in foundation training we use a snaffle bit. I have found that lowering the bit in the mouth, so as to bump the front teeth, will make the mule/donkey uncomfortable. He will move the bit around, pick it up and pack it (carry the bit where he likes it). Over a six-month period, the mule/donkey will place the bit in different parts of his mouth. You will soon see a pattern of location and movement as the mule/donkey finds a comfortable spot for the bit.

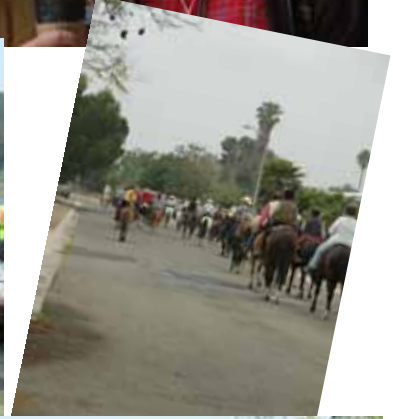
I firmly believe that any mule or donkey can be trained to do what a horse can do. They can have a nice neck rein, turn on a forehand, side-pass and turn on the hindquarters. A mule/donkey can do dressage, work cattle, and become a fine animal for the trail. Each of these requires hand and leg communication. As a trail rider you may be wondering, "Why would my mule or donkey need to know these things?" Just as you want other riders to consider your safety, you must consider theirs. Imagine you are on a trail that is six feet wide. You must consider that an average rider is three feet wide from toe to toe. If you only move your hands to move the mule/donkey over, the equine's nose may move over but the hindquarter is still in the same place. If you correctly move your stirrup backwards four inches and add leg communication, the mule/donkey's hindquarter will move out of the way. This allows the other riders to pass you safely. This is not only good communication skills between you and the mule/donkey but it is a lot easier on the mule/donkey than solely depending on the bit to communicate.

If your mule/donkey is gapping his mouth, if you have to put a cavesson on his muzzle to keep him quiet, or if he is not responding to a light touch, the problem may be your bit. If you have a biting question, please give me a call 602-999-MULE or drop me an email steve@muleranch.com.

More Suggestions on Trailer Packing from Keith

A couple of months ago, Keith Reynolds gave some advice on trailer packing tips. Here are a few more from him...

- Spare plug and socket for their 7 way electric hook up for the trailer lites and brakes. - \$15 from tractor supply
- Awning Strap - If your out and this strap breaks or blows off you are out of luck to easily use your awning for the rest of the trip - \$15 dollars from your trailer supply dealer
- Spare stop/turn lite unit for the rear of your trailer, these are sealed units on newer trailer and you cannot just change the bulb - \$12-\$15 and it may save you a ticket from the police.
- I also suggest people do an inventory on their clearance lites and interior lites, write down the number and pick up some spares at Walmart. It may keep you out of the dark and your dressing room lit up.



Grand Tour Trail Ride at Horsetown USA in Norco, CA