



Carriage Tracks

Official Publication of the Northern California Driving Club
Established in 1992

*To Perpetuate and Promote the Safe Use of the Equine in
Harness for Pleasure, Recreation and Sport*

October/November 2004

NCDC Meeting

Sat Nov. 13th at 1pm
Mountain Mike's Pizza in Lodi
550-E So. Cherokee Lane
(209) 333-0173

Reservation in Pat Scholderer's name.

This is a week before the Meeting of the Minds, at which most of next year's calendar will be planned. We need to put together a list of activities we want to do next year, so that can be figured into the plans.

We don't need to have details of the activities (that can be done at the January planning meeting), but we need an idea of what and when.

If you can't make it to the meeting, please send any event ideas and plans to Pat beforehand.

Agenda items for Nov. 13th meeting

1. Discussion of proposed events for 2005 with eye on reserving our dates at MOM.
2. Committee reports - Bylaws etc.
3. Proposal for a NCDC education committee
4. Proposal to supply safety/educational pamphlets to all new members as part of a new members packet.
5. Treasurer & Chairman position nominations.



Directions:

Rte 99 to the Rte 12 exit. Head west on Rte 12. Turn right onto Cherokee Lane.

Per NCDC bylaws, elections should have been held in July for the Chair and Treasurer positions. However, to date, there have been no nominations. The September newsletter contained a description of the Treasurer position. The primary duties of the Chair are to prepare meeting agendas and preside over meetings. The club now has 93 members (many of which are family members, so the total membership is considerably higher). So, let's get some new faces involved - consider nominating yourself!

Remember the January Planning Meeting
Sat Jan 8th at Shady Oaks

Calendar of Events

- Nov 5-6 California Draft Horse & Equipment Sale at the International Agri Center Inc. Tulare, CA
Carlson Sales 209.668.1011 Sales office 209.581.2687
- Nov 6-7 Dressage Festival Sponsored by the Central Valley Harness Association Fresno, CA
Gene Hagberg 559.689.3289 Ghagberg_93653@yahoo.com
- Nov 19-21 Old Pueblo CDE (pending ADS) At the Pima County Fairgrounds Tucson, AZ
Sally Henry 520.883.1818 azoldpueblocde@aol.com
- Nov 20 5th Annual Meeting of the Minds for event organizers, club officials and others TBA In CA
Celine Rickards and Linda Fairbanks (209) 966-4499 celine@carriagedriving.com
- Dec 4 9th Annual High Tea & Drive at WSS Woodland, CA
Shelly Chavoor 530.753.6761 wsstea@scrubjay.nu

2005

- Jan 8 NCDC Planning Meeting at Shady Oaks in the Club house. 12:00pm potluck, meeting at 1:30
- Feb 12-13 Driving Playday at Ram Tap sponsored by Central Valley Harness Association
Janet McAfee kmcafee@webtv.net
- Mar 5-6 Miniature Horse "Spring Fling" at Wiffletree Ranch Madera, CA
Jack & Marie McKee jak-mar@sti.net
- April 1-3, 2005 Ram Tap CDE
- May 7 Central Coast Draft Horse & Driving Show at the San Benito County Fairgrounds, Tres Pinos, CA
Suzy Caston drafts4us@aol.com
- May 20-22 Trinity CDE, Hayfork, CA
- Jun 9-12 "Wine Country Carriage Classic" Pleasure Driving Show, Kelseyville, CA
tentative John Van Eck josieBV@aol.com
- Aug 5-7 The Dr. Henry Boyd Memorial CDE, Woodside, CA
Tentative Gerald Fisher

Officers

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Heavy Horses - A Cowboy Story

By Allyn Carman

It's funny that someone should ask about riding drafts. I want to share a story. Hank is a Clydesdale, well, sorta - he's a PMU foal straight out of penlot of slaughter colts so we don't really know. He sure looks like Clydesdale, but he sure thinks like a Quarter Horse. Anyway, Hank came home here to the ranch as a baby, and as time went on we started him the way we know how - as a ranch horse. He got sacked out, hobble broke, turned out with the calvey heifers - the usual ranch routine. Hank packed a western saddle around the round pen long before he was harnessed up the first time. When it comes to training horses, it's best to do what you know works, and cowhorse is what we know. Anyway, our horses have to be useful. He's my primary show horse and a regular ranch horse. Hank may be 17+ hands and 1,800 lbs., but I'm pretty sure I'm the only person in my driving classes that can rope and drag a full-grown bull with my carriage horse. And when you're shoving cows down the chute, Hank's the best. He's darn handy on the ranch, and he cleans up really nicely on the weekends, too (he earned a 94 for horse in presentation the first time I showed him under an ADS judge). On to the story - We started him in the fall of his 3-year-old year, and the following spring the perfect opportunity came up for his first real ranch outing. We were off to gather cows at the old Viscia ranch where three generations of Carmans have run cows for about 70 years. The day and the setting were perfect - a gorgeous spring day, sunny and warm, with rolling hills of green with patches of bright yellow buttercups, and giant old oak trees scattered about. It was glorious. Well, I'm a simple ranchwife, but don't think for a minute that I'm oblivious to the fact that a Clydesdale ranch horse is, well, a bit different. I saddled up a really good broke horse, tied my digital camera on, and set off to gather up the girls and their calves. Meanwhile, Norman (those of you who don't know him, just think of John Wayne at 46, with a moustache) saddled up his newest cowhorse and set about to find something to stand on to get up in the saddle. Now Norman's just a rancher with a job to do, so without thinking much he set off to find cows leading quite a parade of cowboy help on horseback, five or six cowdogs, and me happily trailing along in the back. When we gathered up the girls and the babies and headed for the corral, I decided to go on ahead with my camera. I picked a spot up on a knoll where I could see the herd coming and strategically block any old hide who dared make a break for it. It was such a beautiful day and there's nothing like spring on a cattle ranch. Pretty soon about 60 or so cows and their calves ambled around the hill with old Carl on his good paint horse on the right swing and Orren on his good paint horse on the left, and Norman, Hank and the cowdogs driving from the rear. Well, you don't always know what makes a cow do the things they do, and a whole herd actually only has one brain - all of a sudden the herd was moving. The cowboys broke into a nice gentle lope to maintain position, and everybody stayed on course for the corral. Then I saw it. It's hard to put into words - Hank was, well, technically he was trotting, but if you know draft horses, he was STOMPING. His head was up, and there were knees and hocks

and feathers everywhere. Budweiser, eat your heart out! Meanwhile, let me explain that Norman is a real cowboy - his saddle is one of these big custom jobs that can withstand the jerk and drag of a 1,600 lb. bovine hitting the end of a rope. There's an amazing assortment of ropes, saddle bags, fence pliers, doctoring kit, baling twine and assorted cowboy stuff attached anywhere that a strip of leather will hold it on - there's barely room for Norman. Then I saw another thing that's hard to put into words. Norman was, well, technically he was posting, but if you know cowboys, he was rhythmically FLOPPING. He was leaned forward, head up, and there were elbows, ropes, and cowboy paraphernalia everywhere. John Wayne, eat your heart out. This is quite a scene - rolling green hills full of spring flowers, a colorful herd of cows and their babies moving along with cowboys on paint horses and red border collies - and this flopping, flapping, feathered thing stomping along. Now I swear the next part is true - I'm sure I heard Rogers and Hammerstein music. The hills are alive...

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CDE Camp at Eventful Acres (Hiskens), Oregon House, CA

Oct 16-17

We were blessed with lovely weather on Saturday, there were horses and carriages criss-crossing the property, doing cones, schooling through water, weaving through trees. One of the treats of the day was Joe Kasza's pair of Lippizans - lovely horses, we all stopped what we were doing to watch.

Winter arrived at 2:30am Sunday - rain. It rained off and on through the rest of the night, and was coming down pretty steadily between about 7 and 10 am. Most folks waited around, and finally gave up and went home. But it quit by about 11 and there were at least a couple of hours without rain. 6 of 8 people went ahead with lessons, and Denise was a trooper, standing out in the rain, with no shortage of enthusiasm. Everyone seemed very pleased with their lessons, and several requested that we have her again.

This event is structured so each participant helps out with the work - setting

up and dismantling the cones course, setting up the dressage arena, planning meals, buying food, preparing meals, cleaning up after, etc. Many thanks to everyone for pitching in. It would not be manageable without the help. The jobs were assigned in advance, and everything just happened - I didn't need to "remind" anyone, the work all just got done.



Nancy Durham driving her Hackney/Arab cross pony at CDE Camp.
Note Jud Wright on the backstep!

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On Sun afternoon, as I was settling up with Rod, he commented on what a nice bunch of people this was, he had not heard one complaint about anything.

Thanks, everybody!

Treasurer's Report

CDE Camp finances

Income:	Expenses:
Lesson fees: \$400	Clinician: \$400
Use fees: \$1,370	Use fees:
Meal fees: \$595	Kitchen rental: \$80
Total income: \$2,385	Food: \$536
	Total expenses: \$2,416
Net loss of \$88	

Recent activity:

\$1,345 received in dues
\$84.55 newsletter expenses
\$51.60 insurance for Sept 18th clinic

Current balance: \$8,120.23

New Members

Vernon “Leroy” Ray, Oakley

Leroy drives a mini stallion named Geronimo. He came to watch the Traditional Day and is very interested in similar activities.

Rebecca Final, Redding

“I recently purchased a 17 month old dun registered Quarter Pony gelding. My plan is to begin his driving training this fall. I found Carriage Tracks on line—love the articles, stories, etc. The calendar of events has provided me with some destinations in the next few months. I hope to meet some of you at Lodi, Oregon House or Woodland—I have so much to learn!!”

Dean and Sheri Lacey, Garden Valley

“Since 1998, we have been operating as Lacey’s Arabian Ranch, where we raise, breed, train, show and sell horses (not just Arabians!). We mainly breed Arabians and half-Arabians and are looking forward to driving and competing with our Arab/Friesian crosses. We have 2- and 4-wheel fine harness show carts, as well as a road cart, Bellcrown, and we’re looking very forward to the arrival of our new Glinkowski!! We have trained and driven horses for show and pleasure for years and are excited to join in the fun of Combined Driving. The past couple of years have been very educational for us as volunteers at events, and Sheri has had great fun navigating for Harriet Merritt (She got us into this...!!) We look forward to driving next year and seeing all our new friends in CDEs!”

Welcome back to Moire Creek, finally getting back to driving with a new Morgan bred by Jill Wickander.

Member News

The McDermotts report they have a 4 month old Morgan colt out of their lovely mare Allison. His name is Cinco de Mayo—guess when he was born!

Joe Daehling’s annual Ranch Drive (Oct 10th) was the largest ever. No one actually got an accurate carriage count, but lunch was served to more than 120 hungry mouths! We meandered in groups around fields, down forest trails and along the river for about 2-1/2 hours.

Fritz Grupe placed 2nd in Advanced Pair Horses at Gladstone and Live Oak CDEs. Fritz, we want to hear about the European Adventure!

Colleen Balarsky has been on the road with her German Riding Pony, Filou B, for the last 2 months. Competing in Preliminary Single Pony, they placed 2nd at the Colorado Horse Park CDE, 7th at the Laurels and 3rd at Gladstone. As a fitting finale, they won Intermediate Single Pony at the Oklahoma Cowboy CDE.

Leslie Berndl won Preliminary Single Horse at Woodside (Henry Boyd CDE), Parker, CO (Colorado Horse Park CDE), and Shady Oaks (Leslie, this is getting awfully repetitive, don’t you think?!). Leslie also made the trek out east for the Laurels CDE. A skid that wound up in a turnover in the first hazard kept them out of the ribbons, but they continued, and turned in top scores in the other hazards.

Debra Smith won Intermediate Single Pony at Shady Oaks, first time at this level.

Jane Merritt and Nifty were 4th in Advanced Single Pony, and Nona Bales was 4th in Advanced Single Horse.

Grace Adams won Training Pair Pony at Lincoln Creek CDE and was second at Happ’s, both in Washington.

(This is undoubtedly not a complete list - my apologies to those I missed!)

Gator Hubby Speaks

By Terry Merrit (written in 2002)

When Jane Anne and I began our married life together some thirteen years ago I was aware that she had been involved with horses while growing up. I enjoyed seeing some of her old gymkhana pictures and listening to her stories. I, on the other hand, had been on a horse maybe twice in my life. We led a normal life at that time, working all week and enjoying weekends and vacations.

It all seemed to change when our tax accountant said it did not make sense for Jane Anne to be working as most of her earnings were just going to taxes, so she quit her job. This of course freed up time for Jane Anne, which she filled by spending more time out at her friend Barbara's ranch in Bethel Island helping her tend to the horses.

The next life altering event was when Jane Anne called me at work to tell me Barbara was in a bind and wanted us to buy her favorite pony or she was going to lose him. It wasn't a great deal of money and after all he was just a pony, so to make them both happy I said "sure, go ahead and buy him".

Well, now we had a pony which Jane Anne could ride, but not in shows as she was well over eighteen years old. This was fine with me because I did not enjoy horse shows at all! Then a friend of Jane Anne's suggested she look into driving rather than riding as there were several venues for competing, the most fun of which was combined driving. That sounded OK, so now we needed a carriage and harness. The EZ Entry Cart was not too pricey, but the Smuckers harness about gave me a heart attack. When it arrived at home, we took it out of the box and tried to figure out where it all went on a horse. As I recall, I played the part of the horse. Failing at this, we went to our first clinic, so to speak, on how to harness a horse.

Now we have a carriage, a pony, and harness, but neither the pony nor the whip know how to drive. The next logical step was training, so we haul Nifty up into the Sierra Foothills to Tom Simmons for training. Before the training is complete, Tom moves to the East Coast so we haul Nifty back home. Shortly thereafter, we send him back to the foothills to Jill Wickander for continued training. About this time, Jane Anne convinces me that we need to buy our own trailer and stop borrowing Barbara's. She finds a small, very used two-horse trailer at a very reasonable price, so we make another purchase.

By this time I've got what I feel is a substantial investment for a hobby and I'm beginning to question my tax accountant's advice. Little did I realize the dollar and time investment was just getting started. Jane Anne is spending more and more time at Barbara's, and I find myself there most weekends cleaning stalls, making barn repairs and just watching. Eventually though, we go to our first event. We do it camping-style which is my favorite thing to do, though usually near a high mountain lake. The whole event was fun, but I loved the marathon because I was part of it, not just a spectator. We were both convinced that the object of the marathon was not to get lost on the course and to figure a way through the mazes they called hazards. I had my little maps with lines and arrows all over them, turning them around and around as we'd negotiate our way through each hazard. We were pooped out when we got home, but I was looking forward to doing it again, even though it ate up my precious vacation days.

A year or so later were at the Turlock Auction with some friends when Jane Anne runs into a couple of her driving buddies admiring a Milton Carriage on display (Jay Hubert) It does not take her much time to convince me that we need a sturdier, metal-wheeled carriage if we are to compete at higher level than training some day. I agree to the purchase, even though it cost five times as much as the EZ Entry.

This puts us in pretty good shape for a couple of years, and we go to more events always further away and I became resigned to the fact that these will be my vacations for the foreseeable future. But what the heck, I'm having as much fun at them as she is, and the people we have come to know at events are the best there are.

Another year or so later were at the first Shady Oaks event, where I spot an ECC Batmobile. "Now this is a BADASS vehicle". This time I pretty much convince myself that we really need this vehicle.

The cost of this vehicle is nearly four times what the Milton cost, but by now I'm somewhat numb, Nifty is paying a lot of his own way through stud fees, and I can't help but see myself on the back of the Batmobile

sliding this thing around through hazards. Of course, the pretty Smuckers is no longer the right harness so we buy a ZILCO, which I am all for, after watching someone clean one with a hose. No more midnight shifts the night before a CDE cleaning and polishing. This is GOOD!

So Jane Anne takes the pick-up which is now a 3/4 ton Diesel, Long Bed, King Cab (did not have to talk me into that purchase) up to Washington to pick up our new marathon carriage. That trip was quite another story in itself. Just remember, the cheapest way to ship may not be the best. Anyway, she calls me from somewhere in Washington to tell me about this great price she saw on a new, three-horse, slant-load, Morgan Built trailer. She explains to me how Nifty hates our trailer, which I was aware of through the fights to get him into it, and how the carriage and the pony will both fit in the back and she could haul three youngsters to a halter show and so on. Well, needless to say, she comes home with a new carriage and a new trailer in our new-to-us truck.

Putting my foot down, (gently) I force her to sell the Milton, and we start our first year at preliminary with the Batmobile. We traveled to Coolidge Arizona, Beaver Creek, Oregon, Happs at Ethel Washington, Ram Tap in Fresno, Shady Oaks nearby in Lodi and volunteered at Trinity and the Garlic Classic in Hollister.

This eats up most of my vacation time of course, but we had a lot of fun and Team Nifty did well enough that Jane Anne decides to move up to intermediate this year.

Knowing dressage is her weakest component, she sends Nifty to David Ventura for dressage training for a couple of months. Even I can see the difference and that's really saying something.

Our first competition is at Ram Tap where Nifty acts like he never had a harness on, at least in dressage. We did well in marathon, but not well enough to make up twenty points behind from dressage so Jane Anne uses cones as a schooling and goes clean, but way over in time. She vows to do better next time.

Next time is Temecula, she drives down Wednesday. I fly down Thursday night to save a couple vacation days. Nifty gives by far his best dressage test still being in last place, but only by seven points this time. We study each hazard discussing various routes and memorizing them. For some reason, we always go with her routes. I just "go where I'm towed". We do very well in marathon with a very tired pony who dragged us through 10 kilometers of deep sand. I'm drenched in mud from the water hazards and loving it!

Cones comes with Team Nifty in first with a margin that would allow one ball down with and in time run to stay in first place. David Ketscher and Jeremiah went before Jane Anne and went clean and with 1.2 time faults. Seems everyone's getting time faults so I rush down and tell Jane Anne that she can knock down one ball, but that she needs to make the time and go quickly. Things start out ok then Jane Anne and Nifty have an argument about something and she knocked down a ball and took big time penalties. David and Jeremiah take first place by 7/10th of one point. David and Jeremiah are a great team but I am very disappointed. Jane Anne figures to do better in cones next time. She is signed up to take Jay Hubert's Cones Clinic this month and plans to start driving cones at about 8:00 am for a 2:00pm cones time, to burn some of the excess testosterone and energy.

We are now looking for a new dressage and cones vehicle as the Batmobile is not exactly appropriate for dressage. Luckily, my sister Karen in N. Carolina has unexpectedly offered to purchase this vehicle for Team Nifty. I would have to say that I have a pretty great sister. I just hope that Jane Anne and Nifty can reward her with better scores.

For a guy that a few years ago that didn't know the difference between a halter and a bridle (and didn't care), I've really come around. This is a great sport filled with great people and a lot of fun. I think we'll be doing this as long as our bodies and my pocket book hold up.

I liken this sport to a strange nomadic tribe whose members are cast to the four winds, but travel great distances several times a year to gather at sacred tribal meeting grounds for three days where they renew human and equine kinships, (although not able to recognize a fellow tribe member unless accompanied by his or her horse, pony or mule), discuss the events of the past tribal meetings, speculate on those of the future, then participate in ritualistic equine games judged by the tribes' most revered members, and then suddenly disperse again to the four winds awaiting the next tribal meeting. Weird, but good weird.

Terry Merritt, AKA Gator Hubby, Member in good standing of the Gator Union

