

## Keeping Your Horse and Tack Happy and Healthy

By Carolyn Mains

Whether getting ready for the trail or heading into the show ring, during the summer months, we all love to be out *riding* our horses. So naturally, some of the basic details that go into caring for our horses and equipment may fall by the wayside. By taking a few moments out of each day to keep everything in good working order, it will ensure that we ultimately have more time to enjoy with our equine partners.

First and foremost we need to be sure that our horses are in good condition. Warm weather riding creates some obstacles that are easy to overcome when caring for the equine. Sweat on a horse can create skin issues. Be sure to sponge your horse's face after exercise to avoid fungal hair loss. If sweat is left on a horse's coat, not only can it lead to irritation, but it can also cause the coat to fade. Rinsing your horse will cool your horse off and remove the left behind residue that causes problems. (But avoid shampooing too often; you may actually dry out the horse's skin) Remove any excess water once you are finished, and if possible, use a light sheet or fly sheet to shade the coat and keep flies at bay.

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## Rockie Mountain Saddle Club Provides family fun Horse Shows

Submitted by: RMSC

The Rockie Mountain Saddle Club (RMSC) invites horse enthusiasts of all ages and abilities to join us for another fun-filled, affordable, family-oriented horse show season!

Riders may compete in any or all of the three divisions: English, Western, and/or Gymkhana. The contestant's age on January 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year determines the age division in which he or she will compete (6 and Under, 7 - 10, 11 - 13, 14 - 18, and 19 and Over). A separate Lead-Line Division, open to any rider, is also offered during the Gymkhana Division. English classes begin at 8:00 a.m. sharp, Western not before 11:00 a.m., and Gymkhana not before 4:00 p.m.

Ribbons will be awarded for 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> place and prizes given to the first place exhibitor in each class. Daily highpoint awards are presented to the contestant who earns the most points in his or her age division for each discipline. Members' yearly point totals are then tallied and highpoint champions are awarded at the Year End Awards Banquet. You do not have to be a member to participate in RMSC shows or to earn daily highpoint awards, however, the incredible year end awards may entice you to join!

Nine shows have been scheduled for the 2008 season: April 5<sup>th</sup>, April 26<sup>th</sup>, May 10<sup>th</sup>, May 31<sup>st</sup>, June 7<sup>th</sup>, June 21<sup>st</sup>, July 12<sup>th</sup>, August 16<sup>th</sup>, and September 6<sup>th</sup>. The Year End Awards Banquet will be held on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

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To maintain a long, thick tail, remove any large tangles and debris daily by picking through the tail with your fingers. You may want to apply a leave-in conditioner to keep the tail moist and avoid breakage. Fly spray and a fly sheet can often help with minimizing tail breakage as your horse will need to swish less at pesky insects.

Feet are always important, and it can be a delicate balance between too dry and too wet depending on your climate. For wet areas, you may need to use a sealer to keep the natural hoof moisture in and excess moisture out. For drier climates, a hoof moisturizer is a must to keep hooves from cracking. Your farrier will often have advice as to what products he/she prefers to maintain good hoof health. Of course, a normal trimming/shoeing schedule should be kept because horses in work or on green pasture tend to grow hooves faster than in the winter months.

Now that we have our horses clean and conditioned, it's time to look at our tack. Tack that is not maintained can actually be a hazard, leading to faulty equipment that can break when in use. Again, depending on where you live, your leather may tend to dry out and crack or to get wet and moldy. No matter where you live it is important to inspect your tack and keep it in good working order.

Between deep cleanings, give your tack a rinse to remove dirt and sweat that may irritate your horse and age your leather. Keep a small, damp sponge handy to give leather a quick once over, but keep it from becoming overly saturated. A small bucket of clean water can be kept in the tack room for dunking your bits after each use. Your horse will appreciate this, and so will your hands when it comes time for a deep clean.

Because your tack has remained in fairly good condition from daily cleaning, your deep cleaning and conditioning sessions will become much easier. Always be sure to thoroughly clean your saddles, bridles, and girths with leather cleaner before applying conditioner. Remove any built up grime and don't forget the hard to reach places. A soft toothbrush can help you get the stitched areas. Use a quality cleaner; your local tack shop may be able to recommend a good product. Once clean, let your leather dry.

Once the cleaning process is complete, you'll need to restore its condition. Again, use a good quality product, and work it in to the leather. Allow the product to soak in and buff to create that show ring shine. Check buckles, stirrups, and other pieces of non-

leather to be sure they are in working order, and polish any silver or brass with a cloth and/or toothbrush to bring out its sparkle.

Keeping your horse and tack happy and healthy takes a little bit of time, but daily maintenance can make this process part of your routine. Before you know it you'll have more quality hours in the saddle and less elbow grease spent in the tack barn. ■

*Have anything you would like to share? We are always looking for short educational pieces to place in our newsletter. Please submit your short article to us via mail or email to: [info@associationresource.net](mailto:info@associationresource.net)*



## Just 4 Laughs

Q: *WHEN DOES A HORSE TALK?*

A: *Whinny wants to!*



**\*ARG WOULD LIKE TO FEATURE ONE OR TWO OF OUR MEMBER CLUBS IN EACH NEWSLETTER. TO BE FEATURED IN A FUTURE EDITION, PLEASE SEND US AN ARTICLE TELLING US ABOUT YOUR CLUB, WHAT MAKES IT UNIQUE, AND HOW IT HAS BECOME SUCCESSFUL. YOU MAY ALSO INCLUDE PHOTOS OF MEMBERS PARTICIPATING AT A SHOW, EVENT, OR FUNCTION.**



Launches:

# New National Rally Program!

**Anne Arundel County, MD (July 18, 2008)** The Old Peoples Riding Club (OPRC) is launching a new National Rally Program for the first time this year. This is a very unique structure for a rally in that we will be hosting a selection of events that appeal to a variety of riding disciplines: Stadium jumping (2', 2'3", 2'6"), Dressage (Intro, Training, 1<sup>st</sup> Level), Barrel Racing, Pole Bending, Trail Class, and Stable Management. The OPRC has always been known for its open invitation to adult riders of all disciplines, so we designed this rally so that it would appeal to both jumping and non-jumping English riders, as well as Western riders. Western riders are welcome to take dressage tests in Western saddles, and English riders can try barrel racing and pole bending in English saddles. (For jumping, we do insist that an English saddle be used as it is best suited for the comfort and safety of rider and horse.)

Each chapter of the OPRC is invited to host a rally in their own area of the country, featuring the same six classes during the month of October. The jumper courses are to be set with the exact same elements in specifically outlined courses and distances. The dressage tests to be ridden are identical. And the barrel racing and pole bending events are to be set at the same distances as well. Following each chapter's rally, members' scores will be submitted to the national office and tallied. Overall national winners (1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> place) in each event will be announced in November.

Most of OPRC members are amateur or pleasure riders who do not have the time and resources to travel to another state, stable their horses, stay overnight, and compete in a rally like those of the United States Pony Club. This type of rally system is well suited to the busy lives of our adult members. They can compete locally, but be compared on a level playing field to OPRC competitors nationally.

This is the first time the OPRC has attempted to host a National Rally. They know there will be great successes along with a few learning curves. And of course, that's why members love the OPRC: Those "Old People" never want to stop learning.

If you are over the age of 21 and would like to learn more about the OPRC, please visit our website at [www.OPRC.us](http://www.OPRC.us). There's probably a chapter near you. If not, consider starting one and join the fun. ■

# What's Going On?

## Upcoming events

September 6: Rockie Mountain Saddle Club  
Show  
Folley's Arena  
Wellington, CO

September 7: Dancing With Horses  
Winterchill Farm  
Port Townsend, WA  
Kim McGuire: 360-379-6681  
Jefferson Equine Association Fundraiser

September 27: National Luncheon at The  
Capital Challenge  
Prince Georges Equestrian Center  
Upper Marlboro, MD

October 18-19: NACMO Ride  
Middlefork St. Park  
Danville, IL

October 19: Jog in Natchoug  
Natchaug State Forest  
Eastford, CT  
All proceeds after expenses go to the  
Cleveland Bay Horse Society of North  
America

To Find out more about these and  
other events, visit the links page on  
our website at:

[www.associationresource.net](http://www.associationresource.net)

Here you will have access to all ARG's  
member horse councils and clubs!

All RMSC shows/events are held at Folley's Arena  
in Wellington, Colorado, located just north of  
Larimer County Road 70 (Exit 281 off of I-25/Owl  
Canyon) on County Road 11.

For more information, please contact Krista  
Moreshead at (970) 484-1233 or Joyce Kelley at  
(970) 221-1518. Saddle up and ride! We look  
forward to seeing you there! ■



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