



Piedmont Driving Club Newsletter

Dedicated to the sport of carriage driving in Northern Virginia

March 2007



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Advertising, articles, show reports, and information relating to driving and carriages are welcome for inclusion in the newsletter free of charge. Please use e-mail contact above and on the PDC website on the "Newsletter" webpage to send information. Photographs of members are welcome.

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Picnic Drive and Event Schedule ~ 2007

Saturday, 21 April - Watkins

Sunday, 6 May - Morven Park

Saturday, 26 May - Maryalice Matheson's (Barn Tour day)

Saturday, June 2 - PRDA Annual Show, Morven Park

Sunday, June 10 - Upperville Horse Show, cones course

Saturday, 23 June - Carl and Caroline Cox

Saturday, 7 July - Patrick's Well?

21/22 July? - Ayreshire/Llangollen?

Saturday/Sunday, September 22/23 - Piedmont Driving Club Pleasure Show

Notes:

1. Items in bold are either PDC events or PDC is participating jointly with another organization.
2. Items with a question mark will be firmed up at a later date. Watch the newsletter for further info.
3. Phone numbers for directions to the event will be added to the schedule in the coming months.

Show Committee Volunteers Still Needed!

We need members for the following committees.

- ~ Volunteers
- ~ Publicity
- ~ Donations
- ~ Prizes
- ~ Setup
- ~ Breakdown

Please contact Marcia West (the show secretary) at 434-971-8272 to discuss how you can help.



2007 Resolutions...

...we'd like to see our horses make (better late than never)
Submitted by Marcia West

-
- ~ I can walk and poop at the same time. (I can, I can, I can...)
 - ~ I will not stop and poop or urinate every time I pass the same spot in the arena.
 - ~ I will not leave when my rider falls off.
 - ~ My stall is not a litter box. When I have free access to my paddock, I will not go back into my stall to pee.
 - ~ I will not try to roll when my human is on my back (especially while we're standing in a stream.)
 - ~ I will not leap over large, nonexistant obstacles whenever the whim strikes.
 - ~ I will not walk faster on the way home than I did on the way out.
 - ~ I will not swish my tail or answer nature's call while my human is cleaning my back feet.
 - ~ I will not bite my farrier's butt just because it's there.
 - ~ I will not wipe green slime down the back of my human's white shirt.
 - ~ I will not blow my nose on my human.
 - ~ I will not try to mooch goodies off every human within a one mile radius.
 - ~ I will not lie flat out in my stall with my eyes open and glazed over while my human says repeatedly, "Are you asleep?"
 - ~ I will not chase the ponies into the electric fence just to see if it's on.
 - ~ I will never dump the wheelbarrow over while my human is cleaning my stall.
 - ~ I will not grab my leadline in my mouth and attempt to lead myself.
 - ~ I will not have an attitude problem (I won't, I won't, I won't...)
 - ~ I will not pull off my new shoes the very next day just to prove I can.
 - ~ I am not a beaver or a carpenter. I do not need to remodel the barn or the fences.
 - ~ I will forgive my human for the really bad haircut even though I look like a complete freak.
 - ~ I will accept that not every carrot is for me.
 - ~ I will not jump in the air and do a 180 every time I see a bicycle. I will accept the fact that bicycles are not carnivorous.
 - ~ I will not shy at familiar objects just for fun.
 - ~ I will not bite the butt of the horse in front of me during the trail ride just to say hi.
 - ~ I will put my ears forward and cooperate when it's photo op time.

Spring Tune-up for Harness

By David Freeman
Freedman Harness (www.freedmanharness.com)



Step 1: Dismantle all harness parts. Make up a solution of 3 parts lukewarm water to 1 part baking soda or Mr. Clean. Wipe down all the harness and buckles using a damp sponge. Dirt under the buckles acts like sandpaper, so be thorough. Do a complete safety check while removing soil. All stress points should be checked for excessive wear. The parts that wear most are usually bridle billets and rein billets, both due to contact with the acid in the saliva. Also look for broken loops or keepers, cut straps, cracked leather, bent tongues, broken stitching, and worn buckles.

Step 2: Leather dries out and you may have to feed it to restore its suppleness. Use a product both you and your harness maker trust. Stay away from heavy oils and linseed products. They do not let the leather breathe and will rot the stitches. If the leather does not need treating, saddle soap will make the harness more pliable and give you a fresh base to put on a nice shine with soft cream shoe polish. Black saddle soap is really the best for black harness.

Step 3: Clean all the brass buckles meticulously. This will probably be the only time during the coming driving season that you won't be under pressure so try and do a really great job. Take a lot of time. The more elbow grease you put into it now, the easier it will be to maintain later on. Do every nook and cranny with the brass polish you like the best and then buff up with a soft cloth to a brighter lustre. Check out your polishing. If the job's not great, do it again! End off with a light coating of polish on all the buckles and LEAVE IT ON.

Step 4: Apply black or neutral creamy shoe polish sparingly on leather being careful not to pack it into the stitching. This is only a finishing coat. Penetration of the polish color is so minimal that the shine is strictly cosmetic and cannot harm or imbalance the PH level of the leather. Buff, buff, buff until you puff, puff, puff, and your harness will make you proud.

Step 5: Use a little soap and water on a damp sponge on the patent leather. Wipe off all excess water. Use a non-silicone spray product like D.C.W., Endust, or Pledge to shine the patent. Do NOT use Armorall, Vaseline, or brass polish on patent leather.

Step 6: Now you can wipe off the last layer of brass polish you put on the buckles and store your harness until ready for use. Hanging it up is really the best method of storage but you can wrap it up and keep it in a trunk as long as it is away from ammonia fumes.

I have listed the following items that will be of great help to you in preparation for this season's show or pleasure use. You may find your own little gadgets to work with other than the ones I have listed. Try to have these items around when you start:



1. Brass Polish (whatever kind you prefer)
2. Soft cloths
3. Saddle soap (black if possible for black harness)
4. Glycerin saddle soap (good for russet harness and reins)
5. Shoe polish (I like cake style)
6. Mr. Clean or baking soda
7. Leather dressing (Lexol, Williams, NO One-step!)
8. Patent Leather polish
9. Castile soap
10. Old white bed sheet (great to work on)
11. Harness hook
12. Steel wool (cleans rusty tongs)
13. Cotton swabs (for nooks and crannies)
14. Tooth brush
15. Shoe brushes
16. Bucket or pail
17. Plastic container
18. Harness blacking (for black harness)
19. Tack sponges
20. Rubber gloves
21. Work apron

(Article reprinted with permission of David Freeman.)

President's Corner

Woopsie! Weather, technical glitches, and everything in between caused a bit of confusion with the annual meeting, which in turn has caused a conflict in scheduling. So... bending some rules slightly, the elections have been postponed until our next meeting attempt on 1 June. As you will all see in the report of the last meeting's minutes, we did not have a quorum (needed for elections.) We did, however, have a very productive meeting with a few old and new members in attendance. Even with the mild winter we had (comparatively), I for one, am over the cold and snow and am quite ready for the first bit of spring to appear. I'm especially looking forward to our opening drive at the Watkins (see the drive schedule on the front page for dates!) I may get really ambitious and see if I can put together a new pair of Clevelands! A list of drives has been compiled and we hope for excellent attendance this year, as the picnic drives are what we are all about. Perhaps we can get creative with the food themes? I have scheduled a drive at my barn to occur during the Stable Tour. According to the Stable Tour Committee, my operation was a very big hit last year among those curious enough to trek over. We included some driving demonstrations, a talk about hunting livery, some basics about foxhunting, and the types of horses used, as well as having two of the Cleveland Bay stallions and several offspring on display. This year I would like to incorporate a picnic drive to add to the "flavor" so to speak. We can really do a bang up picnic and turn out to the nines! No worries about traffic -- the route will go right-handed out the drive and make a lovely loop through the Lamb's Ardarra Farm. There are no other farms on the route and I saw narry a tour bus the whole weekend last year.

Regarding the Driving Show, I'd like our members to be prepared to see their names on a volunteer list this year. I am not sure everyone is aware how popular this show is with east coast competitors. It takes a huge effort to put it on. Plans for the next year's show actually start the day after the show closes, believe it or not. Marcia has been a real trooper, as has Sam, myself, Mary Jo, Pat McCann, and a few others that dutifully show up every year to help. Marcia has taken the majority of the burden over recent years and we can't afford to loose her to burnout! The categories of volunteerism are listed at the top of page two of this newsletter, so I won't repeat them, but if you have a special interest, please step up, otherwise... I will be in contact shortly. I HAVE the members list. Thanks so much to Peggy Pence, new member, for taking over the task of the newsletter!! We would like to do a member profile so please fill out the form Peggy will be sending out. It's always fun to know about the interesting lives of the members! Send in your news, whether it be a new acquisition of horse, carriage, harness, recent driving activities, trips, whatever. It makes for a great newsletter. Don't forget we have a Classified section that is absolutely free. You never know, that dream horse or perfect used harness or some other treasure may be amongst us available to change hands. [Editor's note: We *would* have a Classified section, but no one has requested any ads. You can be the first!]

Whether we look upon driving
from the point of view of
business or of pleasure, it is
certain that no man who has
had much of it but feels his
pulse quicken, and a sense of
enjoyment pervade him,
when sitting behind one, two
or four quick and well put
together horses.

The Duke of Beaufort, 1889



Get those dues and release forms in!

In addition to your dues, both renewing and new members must sign a release form. Both a membership application and the release form can be downloaded at:

[http://piedmontdrivingclub.8mcom/
NewMemberApplication.pdf](http://piedmontdrivingclub.8mcom/NewMemberApplication.pdf)

Piedmont Driving Club Meeting

March 4, 2007

Attendance: Mary Jo Beckman, Maryalice Matheson, Peggy Pence, Marcia West, Jean Clagett, Anne and Bill Watkins

Maryalice called the meeting to order at 11:20. It was acknowledged that there was not a quorum, so no voting was allowed.

Maryalice mentioned that a new member, Bill Cooper, was asking about his check for membership. Pat McGann checks the post office box and deposits the checks. Several people turned in checks for membership at the meeting. They will be mailed to Pat.

The newsletter was discussed. Peggy provided several copies and it is great. She was unaware that an email message was sent to members with a link to the website where the newsletter is located. Peggy does not have a membership listing. Marcia will make copies of her list and send them to Maryalice and Peggy. In the future, Peggy will send an email when the newsletter is completed. Peggy wants to include a member profile every month to include talents and hobbies. Anyone having a suggestion about someone that should be profiled should contact Peggy.

Anne asked that ADS and Carriage Association receive copies of the newsletter. There was a discussion that ADS should receive it electronically and Carriage Association in print. Jean recommended we send a copy to the northwest representative, Ann Davis, who might share her excellent newsletter with our club.

Picnic Drives were discussed and the following tentative schedule is provided: (See front page for schedule)

Anne agreed to write articles for the newsletter concerning picnic drives.

The Driving Club Show was discussed. Maryalice will be responsible for show set-up, publicity (including a banner for Middleburg), Driving Digest, Carriage Driving, VA Horse Journal, Horse Country, Horsesense, and Equiry. It was determined an advertisement is not needed in Whip and Omnibus. Jean said she would help with designing ads with Maryalice. Posters are being considered.

Every year, it seems like a very small group makes the show happen. Maryalice will go through the membership listing and request specific people to volunteer so we can get more participation.

Fundraising - Marcia needs someone to take responsibility. This will include class sponsors and donations. Pleasure Time has agreed to do a cheese and champagne social gathering. It was great to have the mule transportation vehicle for the show. Maryalice will see if she can get the mule for this year's horse show.

Jean Clagett is a new member who is also a sculptor. All those present were impressed with her talents which can be seen at <http://www.atelierwest.com>. She and Marcia will discuss her making some of the awards for the show.

The next meeting of the Piedmont Driving Club will be June 1, Friday evening at Maryalice's new home. It will be a potluck, so bring something to share. For directions, call Maryalice's barn at 540-253-9896.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.

Member Profile ~ Mary Jo Beckman

This month's profiled member is Mary Jo Beckman, vice-president of the Piedmont Driving Club.

Mary Jo and her husband, Bob, live in Falls Church, VA. Apparently they are happy there, as they are in the process of buying another home in the same neighborhood in preparation for retirement. Since it has a finished basement, Mary Jo's mother-in-law will be moving in with them. Those big changes should be complete by fall.

She's been a member of the Piedmont Driving Club for four or five years, but started driving a few years before that in December, 2000. She hasn't wasted her time since then. She's earned the North American Riding for the Handicapped (NARHA) certification as an instructor for individuals with disabilities.

She describes her decision to learn to drive as an attempt to deal with a "mid-life crisis" and continues to drive with the goal of starting a therapeutic driving program at Morven Park with the Loudoun Therapeutic Riding Foundation.

She says the two most important things she's learned from driving are:

1. Think about safety all the time, and
2. Have confidence in your equine and your driving ability because the horse knows if you are uncomfortable or hesitant.

Most of her current driving activity revolves around helping Maryalice with training (horses, ponies, whatever needs the work!), and going on picnic drives when she gets an opportunity to ride/drive, as she doesn't have her own horse.

She's been around horses since she was born. She showed hunters in high school, and after that was mostly a pleasure rider until she started working on her NARHA certification in 1997. Her pleasure mount was a quarter horse, which she had for 20 years. He did plenty of traveling (Texas to Hawaii to California and back to Texas!) since Mary Jo was in the military. In the course of their many moves, her husband built two barns!

She retired from the military at Navy Commander in 1994, volunteered at the National Center for Therapeutic Riding, Rock Creek Park from 1994 - 96, was certified as a therapeutic riding instructor in 1997, and as a certified therapeutic driving instructor in 2005. Last month, she earned her recognition as a Red Cross volunteer at Walter Reed Army Medical Center so she can be in the Physical Therapy clinic assisting the amputees.

One of the things she can be very proud of is her involvement with a therapeutic riding program for the wounded service members at Walter Reed. She and Peggy Pence's husband, Larry, co-founded the program, which they managed to take from idea to pilot program in less than six months. The results (both physical and psychological) were so impressive that the program was made a permanent part of the Physical Therapy program at Walter Reed. Mary Jo volunteers her time as the instructor, with the soldiers of the Caisson Platoon of the Army's Old Guard working as leaders, side-walkers, etc. The horses used for the program are the Caisson Platoon horses, whose primary duties include military and state funerals.

Mary Jo is currently employed part-time at the Loudoun Therapeutic Riding Foundation to teach riders with disabilities. She also is hired from time to time to go to therapeutic riding centers to be a faculty/evaluator for the NARHA Registered-level Instructor Workshop/Certifications.

Her hobbies include walking her Australian shepherd and traveling with her husband and two adult children.

In next month's newsletter ~

- ... Carriage maintenance**
- ... Another member profile**
- ... Got something to sell?**
- ... *Whatever you want!***