

SOUNDS OF STIRRUPS 'N STRIDES
Quarterly Newsletter April 2009
Volume 1 Issue 6

A Chat with Betty Gray

Everything is going well, but has everyone racing to keep up as we finish the final weeks of the Fall/Winter riding season. We hosted the Region 5 Challenge Cup in January and had a wonderful show. Riders came from all over Florida and as far away as Georgia. We had a total of 63 riders. In February 21st, it was a beautiful day at Florida's Carriage Museum and Resort & thanks to all of our wonderful volunteers we managed to make \$525 from the bake sale and the next day took what was left to HITS and made another \$155.

We went to the Gasparilla Charity Horse Show in March and Kathy Gray doing demonstrations along with a silent auction helped us raise \$1340, this money will help our riders to go to Kansas City in November for the Exceptional Challenge Cup.

We hosted the Area Special Olympics on April 4, the weather was perfect and all the classes went very well. We wish to thank Tommy's Country Market and Bar-B-Que for generously donating pork sandwiches and baked beans for our riders. Coca Cola and Golden Flake also stepped up to complete the meal with drinks and chips. Twelve of our riders qualified for State Special Olympics at Tampa in May. Donations from the crowd for their lunch and the bake sale enabled us to pay for the extra insurance and porta - potty. We also owe a special thank you to Andy Filmore who did a great story about the day that appeared in both the Ocala Star Banner and Gainesville Sun.

The Citrus Cup was April 17th. We took 4 riders and they all qualified for the UPHA Exceptional Challenge Cup finals at Kansas City in November. Krista Koch, Megan Cyr, & Kenai Hatt are all eligible. Kathy Gray took first and second in introductory level dressage riding with able bodied riders. Now, we will start doing some fund raising to help our riders make the trip in November.

In January eleven of our volunteers took CPR and First Aid classes from Susan Ravenscraft. Susan donated her time to teach our instructors and volunteers. Susan works at Hickcock CPR Agency. Thank you Susan.

We have some rather sad news. Since December two of our wonderful therapeutic horses, Brook and Vicki have passed away and are now riding the clouds in horse heaven. Both of them will be terribly missed. Wendell, a 19 year old Hanovarian/Thoroughbred cross has joined the program. He is a big horse and should provide many good rides for our students.

The last day of riding for the summer will be June 6th & on June 13th will be our year end party at Stirrups 'n Strides, everyone is invited, volunteers, riders and families. We will have a pot luck lunch & swim party.

Let me remind you and urge you to attend "From Seats to Saddles" fund raiser at the Paddock Mall. It is currently going on and the big day is May 2nd. You can read more about it later in this newsletter.

Josh Wikstrom and his Boy Scout Troop Members built over 1200 feet of fencing for our horses as his Eagle Scout project. Josh also donated a \$100 check he had been given so we could buy some boards. The ones used for the 1200 feet were donated by Fences R Us and we are most grateful. Later in the Newsletter we list some of our other terrific sponsors. When you can, please patronize our sponsors and tell your friends about them, we are so blessed to have such great supporters.

We are happy and proud that beginning in July we will be a United Way Partner. This money will go a long way to assist us in being an even better Center.

We will be doing a few lessons this summer and we will need some volunteers to help. Volunteers please let me know if Tuesday or Wednesday would be better for you, and remember, we have lots of work to do around the farm so let me know when you can come to help. Don't forget we are having a volunteer ride on May 8th and our year end party on June 13th.

Betty

A VERY SPECIAL VOLUNTEER MADDY GRAHAM

Anyone who has ever been to the farm knows Maddy Graham. She is the lady who is always there to lend a helping hand be it as a side walker, leader, horse groomer, feeder or pooper scooper. When we decided to have a Halloween Adventure Ride, Maddy stepped up and said she'd do a haunted house. It was a wonderful haunted house and took hours to put together. Getting personal information from Maddy isn't easy. She prefers to talk about the horses and the students. She came to Florida 7 years ago from Long Island, New York. She happened to see an ad about volunteering at a Therapeutic Riding Center, met Betty Gray and fell in love with the horses and students. When Betty has to be away from the farm, Maddy and her husband of 20 years come and stay at the farm to see that all runs smoothly. Maddy has 3 children from a previous marriage and her husband has 4. And as hard as it might be to believe Maddy has never owned horses and was not even an equestrian until she started with therapeutic riding. She at times has high blood pressure and she says working with the children drops it immediately. She spoke of the joy of hearing them laugh and seeing them progress as they become more confident. Maddy said, "You know the parents thank us for what we do, but we are the ones who should thank them for sharing their children with us." So whether it is a stroke victim regaining movement, or a blind person riding unassisted for the first time, therapeutic riding is indeed a wonderful addiction. When Maddy was asked what her fondest wish would be for Stirrups 'n Strides she said, "A covered arena and a new barn".

A QUESTION FOR JIM OLSON

In each Newsletter we are going to feature a Q & A column with Jim. Jim as most of you know is a "Horse Whisperer" so we thought we'd start the column by asking him about the definition of a Horse Whisperer.

A: Horse Whisperer's rely on the instincts, language and social structure of the horse. That is the base for our then advancing into training techniques.

FROM SEATS TO SADDLES

Theresa Grimes has done the impossible. She has managed to get 50 wooden chairs repaired and painted by some of the best artists in the area. The chairs are now on display in front of Macy's at the Paddock Mall. Stop by see the chairs and enter a bid or two. Phone bids can be started beginning April 29th by calling 352-209-9073. Cash or checks will be accepted for all bids. You can get a "bid number" either at the Mall or by calling 352-209-9073. All you have to do is enter your bid number and the amount of your bid. The final bids will be taken from 12 noon until 3PM on May 2nd at the Mall. We are most grateful to the Ocala Star Banner and the Paddock Mall for offering to be our community sponsors.

CHALLENGE SHOW SPONSORS

This was a big undertaking and requires the help of many generous people. First of all we wish to thank Gloria Austin for donating the facility, Florida's Carriage Museum and Resort, for us to hold this event. Others who helped either with equipment or money include: Publix, Marion Saddle Club, Marion County Horseman's Association, Tracy Schumer, J & H Home Incorporated, Ocala Equine Hospital, Puckett Family, Markel Insurance, Grimes Girls, Robert Bloomer DVM, Dunkin Donuts, BJ Trophies, and Jacqui De Merc. Thank you all for making it a huge success.

JANUARY CRUISE—JOIN US!

We are staging a fund raising cruise in January of 2010. We need you to reserve your room now. It is 5 nights on the Grandeur of the Seas in the Western Caribbean. The ship leaves on January 23rd and returns January 28th. Each stateroom reserved will give Stirrups 'n Strides \$50. The ship will be stopping in Key West and Cozumel, Mexico. You can travel with us for as little as \$440. For additional information call Betty Gray for a flyer or call Ridgemont Travel 757-345-3335. Let's have fun and help raise funds for the Center at the same time.

WELCOME SANDY BROWN

Stirrups 'n Strides has a new board member—Sandy Brown. Sandy was elected recently to serve on the Board. We are delighted to have her with us and to be able to utilize her expertise not only in horses but in office management and organization. Sandy raises Missouri Fox Trotters.

SPONSORS WE LOVE

During the last few weeks since we had a newsletter the following people have donated items needed for the farm, equipment or food needed for the horses or cash. We thank you for caring: John and Barbara Musich (equipment), Melanie Underbrink (20 round bales of hay), Dale Moffett (saddle), Quail Roost Foundation (\$4000), Jody Schaible (a jeep), Ardis Clark (sponsor) and Richard and Teresa Greiner (sponsor).

OUR WISH LIST

It is absolutely essential that we find a used construction trailer, portable or shed that can be used as a business office and additional storage for tack. We have totally outgrown the little office which will be used just for a volunteer and student lounge & tack room once we have a new building. We need something that is at least 16 by 24. So spread the word and see if we can't get one donated or for a very little money. Meanwhile remember whenever you are in the grocery store to pick up an extra roll of paper towels or toilet paper and bring it to us. We also of course always need paper and ink for the computer and fly spray for the horses.

A QUESTION FOR JODY SCHAIBLE

In this newsletter we are also going to begin a column from Farrier and Blacksmith Jody Schaible. As you learned in our last newsletter he is the resident Farrier for the University of Florida .

Q: What is the best way to care for your horses hooves?

A: Horses's feet are an issue of the environment. You have to take not only the environment of the particular area in which you live but of the pastures where your horse spends most of his time. Look at the property if it is grassy and dry chances are you don't have to do anything to assist the horse. On the other hand if it is very dry and a sand pit or if you notice the hoof cracking you need to use a moisturizer. Keep the horse out of the sand for a day or two. If the horse is standing in the wet daily you must move it. A good moisturizer that is sold over the counter is Rainmaker. Put the horse in the cross ties and rub it in well. In addition to this it is important that your animal is getting the proper nutrition. You must be sure it is being fed supplements for proper hoof growth. Go to Seminole Feed or other supplier and take them a soil sample. They will test it for you and suggest the proper course. Remember bad hooves can be a sign of poor nutrition. Ask the feed store for help.

IMPORTANT DATES

April 7th thru May 2nd – From Seats to Saddles silent auction

May 3rd – Marion Saddle Club Show

May 29-30 – State Special Olympics in Tampa

May 8th—Day of Riding for Volunteers

June 6th – Last day of Riding

June 13th – Year end party

June 28th – Marion Saddle Club Show

January 23rd – S n S Fund Raising Cruise **REGISTER NOW**

Important Numbers to Have:

Betty Gray - 352-427-3569

Anita Gossett - 352-817-6446

Theresa Grimes - 352-209-9073

Stirrups 'n Strides - 352-591-1042