



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY RICH GOMEZ

### GETTIN' READY...ALWAYS PRACTICIN'

Well the rains probably about done and the weeds are just about all cut so it must be getting' close to that time of year when we get out on our horses even more. Now I'm not sayin' you're not all out there ridin' – just that it's that time when we seem to have more chances to ride...and that means it's time to make sure your horse is supple and bendable. There are lots of reasons why it's important to have control over all of your horse's body parts and his/her mind, but balanced horses make trail rides much more fun, safe and comfortable. Most importantly, it improves the communication between you and your four-legged buddy.

Brent Graef, Professional Horseman, has four exercises he recommends to help build a more supple horse and a stronger relationship between horse and rider, and they can be done anywhere – in the arena or out on the trail or anywhere else you might be...and don't forget to do these exercises in both directions...

**One Rein, One Leg** To move the hindquarters to the right, pick up softly on the left rein and bend your horse's neck slightly to the left – keeping the head vertical (not cocked sideways). Then use your left leg to step the hindquarters over. One of the keys to look for is for the inside hind (left leg in this example) to step in front of and across the outside hind leg.

**Soft Feel, One Leg** In this exercise, Brent says to start by picking up a soft feel – gently taking the slack out of both reins and asking your horse to flex vertically and get soft in the poll. Then holding that soft feel, use your hips and left leg to ask

your horse to step over behind. Again, you want to inside hind leg to step across and in front of the outside hind.

**No Rein, One Leg** In this one you want to make sure your reins are loose (even hold the horn to make sure you don't use your reins). Use just your left leg and see if your horse responds by stepping the hindquarters to the right. If your horse walks off, Brent says just stop him/her, back up to where you started, wait until your horse is soft, release your reins to give him slack and start over.

**One Rein, No Leg** Reach down the left rein asking for a lateral flex, but instead of releasing after your horse flexes, hold that light pressure and do nothing with your legs or hips. Hold the rein and wait; let your horse search for the answer. Your horse might bend his head around or try to pull his head away, but just stay the same. Before long, your horse will start to shift and then release. Then, ask again and wait for the inside hind foot to step over and across, then release.

What I like about these exercises is they're more about asking your horse to think, they help get both of you in tune with each other, and they help you work to get your horse to feel your intent. Have a mental picture of your horse stepping his/her hindquarters across, and release when s/he gets there, and then give back and say, "Yeah, that's what I'm looking for." It all about how well you can communicate your intentions, and how you help your horse search for the right answer. I like that...I hope you do too...

So, as always, until we get together next, here's to all of us helpin' together and ridin' together...

See you on the trail...

## IMPORTANT DATES

MARK YOUR CALENDAR TODAY (SEE WEBSITE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION)

Board Meeting: Wednesday, May 12th

Play Day: Saturday, June 5th



## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

BY SHEILA SEGIEN

**Very Expired (Sorry, last newsletter):** Dalynn Zampino 11/09

**Expired:** , Fiona Nelson 1/10, Patti Williams 1/10, Leslie Ingham 2/10, Jacqui Moreland 2/10, Helen & Fred Bruns 2/10, Karen Peyser 3/10, Roy & Melba Slavin 3/10, Cheryl Segien 4/10,

Kim Tillinghast-DeBellis 4/10

**Expiring:** Sue Baldwin 5/10, Connie Presley 5/10, Beverly Warren 5/10

**Annual Dues:** Individual \$45; Family \$70 for the first two members, add \$8 for each additional family member.



## MAU ERT REPORT

BY DEBBIE KELLY

The Red Cross Emergency planning meeting hosted at O'Neill park in April was very informative. The presentation was offered as the ETI April meeting and we were privileged to have some folks from Trabuco and Modjeska Canyons, along with visitors from Rancho Santa Margarita. With emergency preparedness a well advertised must; some of us are just a little over informed. But for everyone in attendance that night the message was clear- we need to be ready for an earthquake or other emergency that promises to immobilize resources, cut off communications, and cause damage that could seriously impact our family, our beloved pets, and our survival. There is no dis-

pute that advance preparation increases our chance of survival, both during and after an event. ETI has been promoting and offering emergency preparedness now for the better part of five years. We have done that through equine evacuation drills, classroom education, guest speakers, and now with an educational presentation offered by the Red Cross. The Mounted Assistance Unit and Emergency Response Team (MAU/ERT) continues to fulfill its mission of training and preparedness. You can visit the Red Cross, FEMA, OC Fire Authority, and countless other websites for emergency preparedness information. It's all about the horse-and safety! Have a wonderful May.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

Beautiful and half price, this property backs on the National forest, that fabulous view will NEVER go away! On a private road with only about 10 neighbors this slice of heaven is 20 min from the 15 / 215 junction and 10 min from the slopes. 5 min to downtown Wrightwood. An easy drive both ways. This has all utilities to the lot,

Lot is mostly level along a knoll that overlooks the Natl. Forest and the desert.

Address is 7325 Wildhorse Canyon Road.

This parcel is just a hair short of an acre but with a backyard that goes on forever. Ride horses, bikes whatever in your own private playground.

Was listed at \$85k, now \$45,000. Great investment, Great place for a retreat. Watch the deer and other wildlife out your back door.  
(714) 649-3331



## TRAIL BOSS REPORT

BY JEFF KELLY

Fortunately we had a break in the rain for two fun events in April. We had a great Play Day on the tenth and in anticipation of that special day; we had Trail Maintenance at the equestrian arena on the third. You should have been there.

We had five folks from ETI (see the honors below) and as a special treat; it was the Disney “give a day get a day” at the park so we had twelve additional volunteers earning a free day at Disneyland. (Who said volunteering is non compensated)? I did the math and that was a total of 68 hours of arena work in just four hours. Hard to beat. The park ranger had asked us to clear the area of as many rocks as possible, including the arena, and that is what we did. I think we surprised some of the Disney day volunteers, what with given’ them all a wheel barrow and tellin’ em to fill it up with rocks. What would you think? But no one complained and after four hours of rock dig-

gin’ they were mostly happy to have visited the park and felt they had a really good time.

Now I know you are askin’ what did we do with all those rocks removed from the arena, round pens, and the common area? Next time you are at O’Neill, take a look at equestrian campsite there. You will see the beginning of a walk path to the trail along the creek bed. Compliments of Jeff Kelly, Debbie Kelly, Rich Gomez, Dave Seroski, and Jim Iacono. Oh, and the Disney day volunteers. But that did not end our work day. We moved the party over to the Wilks, where Dave, Bob, Rich, and ye ole trail boss spent the remainder of the work day puttin’ some wheels on that new arena drag that was so graciously donated to us. It should work just fine now. Our next Trail Maintenance will be June 12th-so watch for more information on that. The May “Month End Event” (formerly known as the month end ride) will be at Casper’s Park on May 22nd. Watch for details on that, too.



## TIRES

BY RALPH CHANDOS, R.S.G.

Tires! Not generally considered the subject matter of memorable dinner party conversations, but for someone who trailers horses they represent a critical and largely neglected component of the trailering process. Understanding a few basic concepts and performing some simple maintenance procedures can help ensure a safe trailering experience for you and your animals.

While the tires on your tow vehicle are every bit as important, trailer tires can present some problematic idiosyncrasies particular to the application. Unless you are the rare exception, most horse trailers do a fair bit of just “sitting around”. The implication here is that trailer tires often “die” of old age long before they run out of tread. The common misconception...“it’s got plenty of tread-it must be safe” is a difficult mind set to overcome but the reality is that the integrity of a tire deteriorates with age.

Heat, sunlight, ozone exposure and a number of other factors inevitably contribute to the process, often manifested in sidewall cracking exposing the cord reinforcements of the tire to moisture and other elements. Over time the process

can lead to sudden tire failure and provide an untimely and potentially expensive contribution to the shredded rubber commonly observed on our roadways. So how do we know the age of a tire and what are some reasonable guidelines? Every tire sold for “on highway” use must by law display an alpha-numeric “DOT” number on one sidewall (so it might be on the inside). This number with the DOT prefix when properly interpreted provides a wealth of information including the manufacturer, the plant where the tire was produced and many other bits, but for our concerns, let’s look at the last four digits because they will indicate the week and year that the tire was made. Ex. a DOT number ending in 2607 would indicate that the tire was manufactured in the 26th week of 2007...1308...the 13th week of 2008 etc.

So now that we know the actual age, what constitutes old? It’s difficult to establish a hard number when it would be prudent to remove a tire from service because there are many factors that can influence longevity. A trailer parked inside a barn or the cheap investment of tire covers can greatly extend a tires useful life relative to one stored outside exposed to weather and direct sunlight. While I would not necessarily advocate (*Continued on Page 6*)

# 2010 APRIL PLAYDAY



# 2010 APRIL PLAYDAY



## TIRES (CONTINUED)

discarding a tire that is 6 or even 7 years old, it might be a good time for added scrutiny. Visually inspecting tires for sidewall cracking or other signs of deterioration becomes more critical as they become older and a few minute inspection might avoid an unscheduled roadside tire change or potential trailer damage.

The valve stems where air is added to the tires are most likely the same age as the tires and they may also exhibit signs of age so it is a good time to look at them as well. Maintaining proper inflation is a major factor in maximizing a tires useful life. Running a tire even 5 or 10 lbs. below the recommendation on the sidewall will dramatically increase wear and more importantly cause excessive heat build up. Tire manufactures universally agree that the leading cause of tire failure is under inflation and while it's always important to maintain correct air pressure, running an old tire low is asking for a failure. Most tires will exhibit a certain amount of "porosity" so even with the absence of a nail or other leak source they will typically lose pressure and over time this can become significant. This loss is usually fairly consistent tire to tire so if three tires indicate a 5lb. loss and the fourth is 15lbs. low we could probably discount the first three as normal air loss but the fourth most likely has another issue.

So a few quick thoughts in closing. When you have new tires installed on your trailer you can ask your dealer to mount the tires such that the DOT numbers are on the outside so that you can more easily reference it. He will know full well what this number means but might hope that you do not. Remember that knowing the significance of this number can prevent him from selling you tires that might already be several years old when you buy them. Also make sure that the tires you are being sold have the proper weight capacity for your trailer. Even if they are the same size as the ones coming off they might not have the correct weight rating. Always ask for new valve stems and request steel valve caps if they do not already have them. The plastic caps that usually come with them will keep dirt out of the valve stem but will not always provide an air seal if the core inside the stem fails...the steel ones though slightly more expensive will provide a secondary seal. If you record the DOT numbers and pressure recommendations somewhere handy when you purchase your tires...inside tack room etc. you will have a convenient reminder of the tires age and filling guidelines without having to crawl around the tires to find them. And remember, maintaining proper inflation is key in maximizing longevity and preventing premature failure.

## BECAUSE OF LOVE SUBMITTED BY LORRETTA ZUPANCIC

A brother and sister had made their usual hurried, obligatory pre- Christmas visit to the little farm where dwelt their elderly parents with their small herd of horses. The farm was where they had grown up and had been named Lone Pine Farm because of the huge pine, which topped the hill behind the farm. Through the years the tree had become a talisman to the old man and his wife, and a landmark in the countryside. The young siblings had fond memories of their childhood here, but the city hustle and bustle added more excitement to their lives, and called them away to a different life.

The old folks no longer showed their horses, for the years had taken their toll, and getting out to the barn on those frosty mornings was getting harder, but it gave them a reason to get up in the mornings and a reason to live. They sold a few foals each year, and the horses were their reason for joy in the morning and

contentment at day's end.

Angry, as they prepared to leave, the young couple confronted the old folks "Why do you not at least dispose of The Old One." She is no longer of use to you. It's been years since you've had foals from her. You should cut corners and save so you can have more for yourselves. How can this old worn out horse bring you anything but expense and work? Why do you keep her anyway?"

The old man looked down at his worn boots, holes in the toes, scuffed at the barn floor and replied, "Yes, I could use a pair of new boots.

His arm slid defensively about the Old One's neck as he drew her near with gentle caressing he rubbed her softly behind her ears. He replied softly, "We keep her because of love. (Continued on Page 7)

## BECAUSE OF LOVE (CONTINUED)

Nothing else, just love.”

Baffled and irritated, the young folks wished the old man and his wife a Merry Christmas and headed back toward the city as darkness stole through the valley.

The old couple shook their heads in sorrow that it had not been a happy visit. A tear fell upon their cheeks. How is it that these young folks do not understand the peace of the love that filled their hearts?

So it was, that because of the unhappy leave-taking, no one noticed the insulation smoldering on the frayed wires in the old barn. None saw the first spark fall. None but the “Old One”.

In a matter of minutes, the whole barn was ablaze and the hungry flames were licking at the loft full of hay. With a cry of horror and despair, the old man shouted to his wife to call for help as he raced to the barn to save their beloved horses. But the flames were roaring now, and the blazing heat drove him back. He sank sobbing to the ground, helpless before the fire’s fury. His wife back from calling for help cradled him in her arms, clinging to each other, they wept at their loss.

By the time the fire department arrived, only smoking, glowing ruins were left, and the old man and his wife, exhausted from their grief, huddled together before the barn. They were speechless as they rose from the cold snow covered ground. They nodded thanks to the firemen as there was nothing anyone could do now. The old man turned to his wife, resting her white head upon his shoulders as his shaking old hands clumsily dried her tears with a frayed red bandana. Brokenly he whispered, “We have lost much, but God has spared our home on this eve of Christmas. Let us gather strength and climb the hill to the old pine where we have sought comfort in times of despair. We will look down upon our home and give thanks to God that it has been spared and pray for our beloved most precious gifts that have been taken from us.

And so, he took her by the hand and slowly helped her up the snowy hill as he brushed aside his own tears with the back of his old and withered hand.

The journey up the hill was hard for their old bodies in the steep snow. As they stepped over the little knoll at the crest of the hill, they paused to rest, looking up to the top of the hill the old couple gasped and fell to their knees in amazement at the incredible beauty before them.

Seemingly, every glorious, brilliant star in the heavens was caught up in the glittering, snow-frosted branches of their beloved pine, and it was aglow with heavenly candles. And poised on its top most bough, a crystal crescent moon glistened like spun glass. Never had a mere mortal created a Christmas tree such as this. They were breathless as the old man held his wife tighter in his arms.

Suddenly, the old man gave a cry of wonder and incredible joy. Amazed and mystified, he took his wife by the hand and pulled her forward. There, beneath the tree, in resplendent glory, a mist hovering over and glowing in the darkness was their Christmas gift. Shadows glistening in the night light.

Bedded down about the “Old One” close to the trunk of the tree, was the entire herd, safe.

At the first hint of smoke, she had pushed the door ajar with her muzzle and had led the horses through it. Slowly and with great dignity, never looking back, she had led them up the hill, stepping cautiously through the snow. The foals were frightened and dashed about. The skittish yearlings looked back at the crackling, hungry flames, and tucked their tails under them as they licked their lips and hopped like rabbits. The mares that were in foal with a new year’s crop of babies, pressed uneasily against the “Old One” as she moved calmly up the hill and to safety beneath the pine. And now she lay among them and gazed at the faces of the old man and his wife.

Those she loved she had not disappointed. Her body was brittle with years, tired from the climb, but the golden eyes were filled with devotion as she offered her gift--- Because of love. Only Because of love.

Tears flowed as the old couple shouted their praise and joy... And again the peace of love filled their hearts.



## **WHO ARE THE SADDLEBACK CANYON RIDERS?**

The Saddleback Canyon Riders are ETI Corral 357. Established in 1991, we are one of the largest ETI corrals in California with members from South Orange County and points beyond. We are a family-friendly equestrian group based in Trabuco Canyon at the foot of the majestic Saddleback Mountains. Our Corral is committed to supporting and helping maintain O'Neill Regional Park and other local riding trails.

## **WHAT IS ETI?**

Equestrian Trails, Incorporated is a family oriented riding club established as a nonprofit corporation in 1944 with the Charter to be "Dedicated to the Acquisition and Preservation of Trails, Good Horsemanship, and Equine Legislation."

With its combined membership, ETI has successfully worked to keep our trails open and add more equestrian facilities. The more members we have backing equine legislation and trail preservation, the more likely the State, County and City Officials will be to comply with our needs.

ETI Corral 357  
PO Box 1026  
Trabuco Canyon, CA 92678-1026