

Behind the Scenes in Region Six

During the “down” months, after the rides of one season are over and before the new ride season starts, things aren’t really dormant at all. There is a great deal going on behind the scenes. In this issue, the goal is to show our members some of the things that go on behind the scenes; things that are important, amusing, amazing, and will ultimately affect the rides we all love.

First, in this issue is a report on some proposed changes in the language of our rule book and proposed actual rule changes. By publishing this information, all members have a responsibility to be thinking about what they want for our organization. See the report from our president, Cheri Jeffcoat and board members to find out what went on behind the scenes at the convention.

If any of our honored workers think a Gold Worker Bar is insignificant, think again as you read the behind the scene story of the Quest for the Gold Worker Bars. You’ll never take one for granted . . . assuming the region ever gets our replacement supplies.

Find out in our behind the scenes report how Dr. Dave and Dr. Ty chose the unique profession of “Trailer Physician”. Also in this issue hear what is going on behind in scenes in planning the 2006 rides.

Remember to please, please, contact me with any leads for future stories, ads, information, suggestions, comments or general news. See you all on the trail REAL SOON.... Marsha Hayes mhkansas@kancom.net or 620-331-3541.

President’s Message

By Cheri Jeffcoat

By the time you read this, I will be off in China or somewhere on my new adventure. I will be thinking of you, and of course, fretting about missing the ride at Kanopolis.

I do want to note that the National Board of Directors voted to bring to the membership a number of rule change proposals and/or corrections. Although the Rules Committee is still editing the final wording, I want to share some of the new proposals. Our two National Board Members, Ruth Mesimer and Ty McCullough, will be visiting with you one-to-one to get your input. We have lots of time to think through these proposals.

A few of the most interesting proposal are:

1. Change the names of the divisions from Novice, Competitive Pleasure and Open to Division I, II, and III.
2. Change the classification of Heavyweight, Lightweight, and Junior to classification A, B, and C.
3. Changing the word obstacle to observation.
4. Change the wording of the obstacles section. One change would be to delete the word native because that means untouched by human hands and our rides are often conducted on groomed, marked, debris cleared trails which are touched by human hands. The new wording would be “common to the trail”. This could allow judges to simulate trail obstacles, a practice that has, in reality, been going on for many years. Lastly, there would be a reinforcement in the wording to emphasize safety is a paramount concern in all obstacles.
5. There is a proposal to completely delete any Championship Challenge Ride.
6. There is a proposal to add a Competitive Pleasure/Limited Distance division to the Championship Challenge. This would be a 60 mile ride for horses 5 years old or older with the pacing the same as the existing Open requirement. And, 1,000 horse miles required.
7. There is a proposal to change the rule for the Bev Tibbets, Polly Bridges and Junior Grand Championships that would no longer require riders to nominate themselves. Previously this was a very onerous task with many calculations required. It was so complicated it cut down on the number of competitors but with data basing, it is now possible for ALL open riders to compete for these awards without requiring the complicated nomination process.

There are even more proposed changes, but these are the most interesting and would impact many of us. You will receive more information in the next couple of months.

The next Region 6 Board meeting will be at Cedar Creek. The meeting is open to all members! I hope to see you there! I will see you all at Rendezvous. Have a great start to the ride season and greet new challenges with enthusiasm and laughter and be safe.

Important! Proposed New Rule Changes **Submitted by Ruth Mesimer**

The 2006 National Convention "Riders on a Mission" in San Antonio was terrific! Region 4 folks (Convention Co-Chairs: Shirley Parker, Sue Singletary and Carla Jo Bass) did a great job from hotel and meeting room arrangements, to convention topics and awards banquet.

Thursday the NATRC Board of Directors met. A thorough review of income and expenses for 2005 was presented by Treasurer, Connie Driskell; we were about \$7500 in the red for the year, but still very much in the black overall.

A number of rule changes were presented to the BOD. I was very impressed with the work that went into the document prepared for the BOD and the presentation of these rule changes by the By-laws and Rules Committee Chair, Lory Walls. I have included the proposed rule changes to the 2006 rule book. I need your input! These proposed rule changes will be discussed by the NBOD at the July meeting and rule changes tweaked depending on feedback from the general membership. Then the NBOD will vote on the rule changes at their November meeting. I have also included a survey form (thank you Jean Green, R4) so I can record your comments. Let your voice be heard and let me know your thoughts on these topics so I can represent you at the July 8 NBOD meeting in Denver.

The first ride of 2006 for me will be the Region 6 Benefit Ride at Big Hill. I will have the proposed rule changes and survey form with me and hope to visit with everyone concerning these rule changes and any other questions or concerns you have regarding our sport.

Note A word or words lined through means that word or words will be removed from the rule book; ie. ~~division~~. A word or words enclosed in [] means that word or words will be added to the rule book; ie. [class].

RULE CHANGES FOR CONSIDERATION, 2006 – as presented at Feb., 2006 NBOD Meeting

1. Section IX– Awards – Subsection B. Annual Awards, 2. National Awards, c. Bev Tibbits Grand Champion Award and d. Polly Bridges Memorial awards

In Bev Tibbits (high average horse), Polly Bridges (high average horsemanship) Junior Grand Champion Horse and Horsemanship the wording correctly indicates these awards are presented to the Open Division horse or rider.

Purpose: When originally written the word "class" was not used to identify Heavyweight, etc. and therefore the word "division" is now incorrectly used in multiple places.

Rule change B.2.b.(3)(b) "The following information must be included: name, breed and age of the horse, name address and ~~division~~ [class] of the rider.

Rule change B.2.b.(4) " Every ride which the horse officially start during the year shall count, regardless of placing or finishing, provided it is entered in the declared ~~division~~ [class]."

2. Section VII - Championship Challenge Ride – Delete this section from rule book and retire the trophy to the Horse Park.

Purpose: It is difficult for this to be a national competition because of distance and finances.

3. Section V – The Ride – I. Trail Conduct – Subsection I.5. This paragraph discusses the 2 mile point from the rider stand point, but does not prevent judges or management from interfering with the rider.

What is currently written as 5. will become 5.a. and the following will be added as 5.b. ["No one shall interfere with the rider's forward progress and/or pacing except when necessary for the safety of the horse/rider.]"

Purpose: To prevent interference with the rider's pacing except when necessary for safety.

4. Section V – The Ride – Stabling, Subsection B 1.

1. Horses shall be kept in a designated area to permit proper supervision at night. ~~All horses must be kept under similar conditions from preliminary check in until the presentation of awards.~~

2. ~~Stalls or paddocks if available for all competitors may be used. All horses must be free or tied as instructed.~~

3. ~~Stationary Tie: If horses are . . . the rider's discretion unless prohibited by management.~~

[2. Stabling options (at the discretion of the CTR management):

a. Stationary Tie: Horses shall be kept tied to stationary objects] (trailer, fence post, tree, tie stall, etc.) [unless prohibited by Ride Management] or (the paragraph remains the same as B.3.)

[b. Stalls or paddocks: If available for all competitors stalls or paddocks may be used]

or

[c. Sliding tethers: Horses may be tied to a trailer or between trailers via a sliding tether.

If trees are used, stops and tree savers must be used.]

Purpose: to clarify. As the Rule Book presently reads the conditions are to be similar in B 1., but then 2 through 4 gives three different stabling conditions.

5. Section VII - Championship Challenge Ride – Subsections C and E

Purpose: Add CP Division to CC

C. Eligibility of Horses

1. same

2. same

a. Placed first thru sixth (Open [or CP] Division[s] only), in the NATRC national annual high score award.

b. Placed first thru sixth (Open [or CP] Division[s] only), in the NATRC regional annual high score award. This is awarded by the individual regions. This placing may have been won in the year of this ride but not yet awarded.

3. same

[4. Horses must be at least 5 years of age.]

E. Ride Requirements

1. General

a. This ride will be for Open [and CP] Division[s] only.

2. Mileage

a. [Open] mileage for this ride will be 40 miles per day for a total of 80 miles. [CP mileage for this ride will be for 30 miles per day for a total of 60 miles.] **In steep and rugged terrain this distance may be shortened.**

b. A total of 80 miles will be awarded toward cumulative mileage awards for open. [A total of 60 miles will be awarded toward cumulative mileage awards for CP.]

3. Pace

a. same

b. same

4. Classes

a. This ride will offer Heavyweight, Lightweight Open [and CP] classes, as defined in Section IV – Divisions, Classes and Eligibility. A Junior [Open] class, as defined in Section IV – Divisions, Classes and Eligibility, may be offered, if desired, by the ride sponsor, but is not required. If no Junior [Open] class is offered, Juniors may ride either Heavyweight or Lightweight provided they maintain weight requirements of Section IV – Divisions, Classes and Eligibility. [CP will not have any weight divisions.]

b. same

6. Section IX – Awards – Subsection B. Annual Awards, 2. National Awards, c. Bev Tibbits Grand Champion Award, d. Polly Bridges Memorial awards, e. Junior Grand Champion and f. Junior High Average Horsemanship

Purpose: Eliminate the self declaration requirement for these awards as described in each section (3)(a) through (c). Computer program to track points earned and requirements for each award no longer make this rule necessary.

Reads: ~~(3) The owner or rider of a horse must declare his intention of competing for this award.~~

~~(a) Scores will not be ...~~

~~(b) The following information ...~~

~~(c) This information shall be ...~~

In each case, delete (3)(a) through (c) and change for following numbering appropriately.

7. Throughout Rule Book the terms Novice, Competitive Pleasure, and Open are used.

Change to read: [Division I] **Novice**, [Division II] **Competitive Pleasure**, and [Division III] **Open**.

Purpose: Make the Divisions more user friendly. Might want to consider [A] for Lightweight, [B] for Heavyweight and [C] for Junior class.

8. Section VI – Judging - Subsection A.7. – Obstacles

Option A. Judging ~~obstacles~~ [observations] must be natural and native to the local terrain and the use of artificial or unsafe obstacles is prohibited.

Option B. Observations

- a. Observations should be natural and common to the terrain.
- b. Observations should be appropriate for the skill level expected in a given division.
- c. Artificial observations may be used if constrains beyond the control of management prevent the use of natural observations and if they:
 - (1) Simulate observations that a horse and rider may reasonable expect to encounter
 - (2) Determine the proficiency of skills that a horse and rider should possess.
- d. Observation safety shall be paramount.

Purpose: To clarify.

9. Section VIII – Complaints, Protests and Drug Violations

Purpose: to provide a way to deal with letters of concern, within the Rule Book.

Addition of A. through B. to Section VIII of the rule book. Current Subsections A through C will become C through D.

A. [Informal Concerns, Inquiries, and/or Suggestions

1. Most concerns, inquiries, and/or suggestions are questions of a general nature and are most appropriately directed to ride management, judges or Regional Board members. They should be handled diplomatically and informatively on a case by case basis. This can usually be done at the ride where a question arises and without triggering a “formal process.”
2. Concerns, inquiries, and/or suggestions that cannot be answered satisfactorily in this manner may be referred to the NATRC Executive Administrator (NEA) for possible referral to the appropriate NATRC Committee.

B. Letters of Concern

1. **Letters of Concern** addressing issues, other than those which are appropriately handled as either Complaints or Protests per Rule Book Section VIII, **may be submitted in writing by any member, competitor, judge, ride management or ride official** within 30 days of an occurrence at a NATRC sanctioned event to the NATRC Executive Administrator (NEA).
2. The NEA shall send by mail a copy of the Letter of Concern to the individual(s) involved. If necessary, others involved will be contacted and will have thirty (30) days in which to reply to the NEA who shall then forward the information received to the appropriate Chair/ Co-Chair of the Committee if he/she deems it appropriate. The NEA shall track the official communications.

3. The Committee to which the Letter of Concern has been referred shall endeavor to determine if the concern is true, valid, and requires resolution, and will inform the NEA. The concern shall be handled by the Committee in a discreet and professional manner to assure appropriate confidentiality
 - a. The appropriate Committee Chair or Co-Chair shall exercise due diligence in communicating with the individual(s) involved -- preferably in person or by telephone -- to ascertain the complete facts and all pertinent aspects of the situation. Use of e-mail and other mails may be used when personal contact is difficult to accomplish or cannot be made in a timely manner. No action should be recommended by the Chair/Co-Chair prior to communicating with involved individuals. A record should be kept of all attempts to contact involved individuals and of any who decline to respond or otherwise participate in the process.
 - b. The full Committee will be convened within 10 days of the issue being referred to it by the NEA (following the initial 30-day response period) and will begin deliberations using the existing responses and information.
 - c. Affected individuals shall be advised in a timely manner as to the outcome of the deliberations of the Committee. A brief summary of the issues and outcomes shall be included in the appropriate Committee's report to the NBOD at the next regular meeting. If necessary, the Committee shall advise and make recommendations to the NBOD regarding any appropriate actions beyond the scope and authority of the Committee in response to the Letter of Concern.]
- [C.] Complaints as per Rule Book.
- [D.] Protest as per Rule Book
- [E.] Drug Violations as per Rule Book.

10. Section V – The Ride, Subsection A.3.

Change to read: “The horse and rider shall remain in the Division and Class in which they officially started. [The horse and rider may elevate from a Type “B” ride to a Type “A” ride provided the change is made immediately after crossing the finish line on the first day’s ride. And the same judges judge both the “B” ride and “A” ride equally (same trail and observations). Riders who elevate are not eligible for completion of the “B” ride.]

Purpose: Move from the Guidelines to the Rule Book.

11. Section III – Management of Rides, Subsection B.6.

The Rules Interpreter will not be . . . familiar with the NATRC rules. [Ride Management may use separate individuals for each division. Ride Management should introduce the Rules Interpreter at all ride briefings. Ride Management should avoid using the Rules Interpreter to perform other duties (for example, secretary, timer, etc.)] Upon request by a rider or ride official, . . . and mail it to the nARC office within 72 hours.

Purpose: Move from the Guidelines to the Rule Book.

12. Section IV – Division, Classes and Eligibility, Subsection C. - Hors de concours (HDC)

Add [1. The use of portable corrals is allowed, with the following restrictions (requirements): no electrical tap or wire (hot), must be maximum of 12x12ft., available space and approved by management, securely attached to rider’s trailer.]

Add [2. The rider has the option to only ride the first day of the CTR.]

(Current 1 through 10 will become 3 through 12)

Change 6. HDC horses/riders will not count as a competitor in the Class. ~~In limited rides, regular entries will be allowed to displace DO entries provided that the regular entry is received at least 5 days prior to the day of check in for the ride. Ride management must make an effort to notify any HDC/DO entries that they might not be able to participate in the ride.~~

13. Section VIII – Complaints, Protests and Drug Violations – Subsection B.3.7.

Increase protest fee from \$50 to \$100.

Region Six is a Virtual Diamond Mine

Unique among all regions, Region Six sponsors the Diamond of the Year Award to personalize and recognize members who shine with the spirit of NATRC. Some are nominated for actual tasks performed, and others are chosen for examples they set by their behavior towards others and their horses.

This issue of The Rally is offering two more of the 2005 submissions for those who were not at the convention to enjoy and for those at the convention to enjoy and contemplate again. The final two submissions will be printed in the next newsletter.

Letter of Support for Lucie Hess

By Juliette Ritzman

June of '04 we moved back to MO after an absence of 7 years. Our new home consisted of acreage and a horse barn, replete with 4 stalls. All it needed was a horse, or two. Six months later, we purchased our first horse. Some of my equestrian neighbors were more than eager to help with advice, but they all said, "You need to meet Lucie Hess. You'd really like her."

She and I tagged-team phone calls, and finally we met. Getting to know Lucie has been such a boost of confidence to someone who is relatively confident in most arenas of her life. But owning a horse was completely new and exciting and I was afraid I might be overconfident. Learning that Lucie was an endurance and competitive trail rider was thrilling because I relish things that challenge me physically and mentally.

Being a smart woman, Lucie invited me to crew for her Memorial Day weekend, at a ride in the SW part of Missouri. Just to ride in her F-550 pulling her sweet horse trailer was sheer excitement for me. I learned much that weekend as she also had me working at the vet checks. Watching the riders and horses solidified the fact that I wanted to do this with my horse. Because I had been riding him throughout the spring, I had a better focus for training in the summer. Lucie suggested the Smithville Ride for us; close to home (within three hours), so it wouldn't be such a long weekend.

I'm amazed she took such a newbie with her! I was so green it wasn't even funny! Yet, through the Friday night thunderstorm, the humidity on Saturday and the long day on Sunday, Lucie was a constant coach. Never did she exhibit any frustration with me; she was always very matter of fact; and she ensured that my horse and I completed our first CTR safely and enjoyably.

Were it not for her on that ride, and on our second ride at the David Smith Fall Fiesta, I am sure I would have been overwhelmed by it all. I know I showed up in Lucie's life and neighborhood uninvited, but she has been so encouraging and honest. Many people know Lucie (she'll tell me for good and bad), but as soon as I mention I'm her neighbor, they all treat me as if I know something about horses!

Through Lucie I have met people whose names I can't recall, but I'm sure the longer I stay in NATRC, the easier it will be to remember. It is truly a great organization and it feels right for me and for my horse. Thank you, Lucie, for "leading me" through this new door in my life.

Editor's Note: What I really liked about this submission was the ring of truth with references to being "overwhelmed" and the acknowledgment that a mentor can make the sport "feel right" and it shows the importance of taking the time to introduce our sport properly. The writer shows great self-awareness and insight into Lucie, our sport and herself. Thank you Juliette.

Trish Cleveland for Diamond

By Wayne Tolbert

I would like to nominate Trish Cleveland for the Diamond of the Year Award. For the past two years, Trish has ridden with me and Sienna numerous times, providing invaluable insights on many trails which I had never ridden before. She even borrowed a horse at Hill and Dale this year and rode with me when Dolly had been injured. When she reluctantly decided to retire Dolly from Open competition, she made every effort to find someone else who I could ride with.

She and her husband Gary have opened their home and their pasture to me and Sienna on several occasions. The peace of mind when staying over with friends is always a welcome relief at the end of a long day.

Trish always helps anyone in need. At the Indian Cave CTR in 2004 we encountered a group of ten or twelve adolescent girls crying and shouting for help. One child in the group was suffering a severe asthma attack. There were no adults with the children and the child did not have her respirator with her. While I rode ahead to find Chuck Edwards and get the safety riders who did not ride this particular trail loop, Trish stayed with this group of nearly hysterical kids, calming them and rendering assistance as best she could to the stricken child.

Getting the whole group quiet and relatively calm served to lessen the anxiety and thus the severity of the problem for the sick child until professional help could arrive (one of our NATRC safety riders was a registered nurse and had a respirator in her emergency supplies). At the time Trish could not know for certain if she would get her time lost (about twenty minutes) back or not. She did and went on to get the placing necessary for Dolly to receive her National Championship. Indian Cave was her last chance to do this for 2004.

I am proud to nominate Trish Cleveland for this year's Diamond Award.

Martha Kunkle Is Definitely Riding This Year **Deb McCullough Plans To Park**

As part of the fund raising auction at the Regional Convention in Manhattan this past January, generous ride managers donated ride entries and preferred parking spots to be auctioned. Martha Kunkle topped the bidding for four separate ride entries, telling us this is a rider who plans her rides and supports Region 6. Deb McCullough was the top bidder for two of the preferred parking spots, telling us this is a member who values her parking time and location.

Thanks to all the donors and bidders. Attention all ride managers and secretaries: this is your official notification that these entries and privileges are paid in full. The following is a complete list of the winning bidders.

Ride Entry

Kanopolis – Hope White	Brushy Creek – Angela Wagner
Big Hill – Martha Kunkle	NE National Forest – Kristi Chapman
Rendezvous – Cheri Jeffcoat	Dave Smith – Martha Kunkle
MO Waltz – Cheri Jeffcoat	Flint Hills – Martha Kunkle
Hill & Dale – Hope White	Indian Cave – Angela Wagner
Cedar Creek – Mike Ries	Whispering Pines – Martha Kunkle

Preferred Parking Spot

Hill & Dale – Cheri Jeffcoat	Dave Smith – Rhonda Levinson
Cedar Creek – Mike Ries	Indian Cave – Deb McCullough
Brushy Creek – Deb McCullough	

For Sale:

1992 Turnbow 2 horse slant, aluminum/steel frame. Cowboy shower in first stall, lots of counter space with sink and great cabinet storage. Air conditioner with heat strip. Queen size mattress. Walk thru to horse area. New tires. \$14,000. Becki Jackson BeckiJ@cox.net or 316-722-1363

Foxtrotter wins!. Great Balls of Fire received 12 points for his third place with nine in the class. Miss Underage received 8 points for first place with two in the class.

Belated Fantastic Worker

I recently received Chuck Edwards' worker point sheet for 2005. This man had 450 worker points in 2005 alone and this brought his total to 17,215 points. I am sorry to have missed recognizing him at the convention because he did everything from Trail Master to driver to P & R worker. Chuck doesn't even get points for all the miles he drives hauling our rolling NATRC "store" of merchandise.

Thank you Chuck! I will be mailing Mr. Edwards his TWELFTH blue worker bar. Fortunately he has not gotten caught in the Gold Worker Bar saga. He is WAY beyond that. Congratulations! Marsha Hayes

Welcome to the Following New Region 6 Members!

Illinois

Patricia Macleod-Welsh
John White

Iowa

Brooke Calkins
Doreen Davis
Cierra Hildebrand
Kristi Schaaf

Nebraska

Margo Bailey
Sarah Garcia
Hannah Winemiller

Kansas

Kimberly Boyda
Peggy Hayes
Melanie Hoover
Kathy Jackson
Cheryl James
Marilyn Marston
Cookie Nonken
Marla Stucky
Daniel Saubers
Patrice Thomsen

Missouri

Sally Adams
Harry Amann
Cynthia Amelong
Bill Scriven
Sabrina Sparks
Jerri Marie Swank
Debbie Trimble
Jill Woodruff

Wisconsin

Vanessa White

Behind the Scene with Dr. Ty and Dr. Dave

Region Six Rally caught up with the famed Drs and their spouses recently and was allowed to ask five questions. Here is the story about the careers of NATRC's trailer doctors.

RSR: Everyone at the convention (well, actually three people) wanted to know if your official looking Dr. outfits were the real thing. Were they?

Dr. Ty: Of course. They came from the Beatrice Community Hospital, an institution known for its quality care and lax inventory system.

RSR: How did you become Trailer Doctors?

Spouse Debbie: A couple of glasses of wine, who knows how it happened.

RSR: Was their a motive behind the madness?

Dr. Ty: I really wanted to empower the female truck drivers and trailer owners by telling them more about their equipment. I know this group and they are not dumb, non-mechanical women. They want and need good, basic, and clear information to safely maintain their equipment.

RSR: We heard that Dr. Dave was the first to obtain his medical/mechanical degree.

Dr. Ty: That is true also. He started out as a general mechanical Doctor. The company he worked for actually ran a series of radio commercials featuring Dr. Dave.

RSR: Can NATRC members contact you with more questions?

Dr. Ty: Certainly. Debbie has become rather adept at fielding calls from women (and men, too, I suppose) asking about ball hitches. It seemed strange at first, but we need to bring all this out in the open and speak clearly and honestly about our hitches, balls, lubrication and sleeves. This isn't even a 900 call. To all you out there, you can contact the Drs at ms529@navix.net or call 402-223-4008 or 402-228-4351

FOR SALE:

An Impressive Rocket - Registered APHA gelding - 16 years old. WONDERFUL temperament. Nicely trained. Would make a great beginner horse for someone needing a reliable partner. \$2,000.00.

SDR Alimah Curia - Registered Arabian Mare - 11 years old. Khemosabi Great-granddaughter. Very well trained in the arena and has shown successfully. Needs a confident partner on trail obstacles. \$3,000.00.

Proceeds from the sale of these 2 horses go to Rainbow Meadows Equine Rescue and Retirement, Inc in support of the 11 rescued and retired horses at the ranch. For info please contact Karen Everhart at President@rainbowmeadowsranch.com

To see a photo of Rocket or Curi, go to www.rainbowmeadowsranch.com/Rescue_HomePage.htm and meet "Our Residents".

Brent Graef Clinic in Iowa

By Kristi Schaaf

Harmony between a horse and rider is demonstrated during the flawless completion of an obstacle at a NATRC ride. Many of us are continually trying to find ways to improve that harmony, for obstacles and also for the pure pleasure of being 'as one' with our horse in whatever we do together.

You have the opportunity to attend a clinic that can help you fulfill that harmony! Last year, I quite by accident stumbled across a clinician whom I now spend ALL my 'clinic allotted' money on. He teaches people how to recognize (and fix) brace in their horses, how to use feel and timing when asking the horse to do something, and of course, how to see things from the horse's point of view. His name is Brent Graef; his mentors include Buck Brannaman, Ronnie Willis and Ray Hunt. Brent will be in central Iowa on June 23-25. If you have any questions about Brent or the Iowa clinic, go to his website at www.brentgraef.com, or feel free to contact me: Kristi Schaaf at iluvdez@yahoo.com or 515-432-6403.

NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

In an attempt to enter the real world, I am going to attempt to offer this Region 6 Newsletter via e-mail. To start my list, please submit your request and address to: mhkansas@kancom.net. Don't worry, if it doesn't work, you can go back to a hard copy, but if you can enjoy this format it will save money and trees. I wish I had more of both.

The Search for the Elusive Gold Worker Bars

By Marsha Hayes

To those honored workers anxiously awaiting the arrival of their hard earned gold worker bar, or bars, this is the behind the scenes story of the elusive pursuit of said bars. It is a search fraught with the perils of unstable embroidery workers, lost records, lost patches, lost phone numbers, and the pressures of matching shades of yellow from years past.

In the beginning, there was Carol Roberts and an organized bag of records and an adequate supply of worker bars: red ones, blue ones, and yellow ones. When the bag was passed to me early in 2005, things seemed reasonable and good. How hard could it be, I asked, to compile points, total to ascertain awards, and hand them out? And it wasn't hard, it was fun, that is, until we ran out of gold worker bars.

The reason we ran low of the gold bars lies in the wonderful fact that for 2005 we had many people turn in their worker points that had not done so in years past. It was a good thing, but after filling the needs, I ran out of the gold bars. I still have several bags, two unopened, of red and blue bars and I had a small tag from inside the now empty gold bar bag with the name and phone number of the St. Louis Embroidery Company in St. Charles, Missouri.

In December of 2005 I called the company to order more bars. The lady I spoke with, who turned out to be the owner, asked the name of my organization and I told her. She then assured me there was NO WAY the patches could have come from her company as she had ruthlessly organized the records and there was no record of NATRC, Carol Roberts, The North American Trail Ride Conference, Trail, Worker, Gold Bars, or anything resembling my request.

"How did you get my number?" the lady suspiciously asked.

"It was on a piece of paper inside the empty patch bag," I replied.

"Someone must have put it there," she insisted.

"Do you seriously think someone broke into my house and planted your phone number in the closet in the worker bar bag?" I asked.

"Perhaps not, but we will not be able to make your patches because we don't know what they look like," she pointed out.

"I'll mail you a sample," was my solution. She reluctantly agreed to consider this possibility.

Two weeks after mailing the sample, I called to inquire about the status of the project. The bar had arrived, but apparently there was a new problem.

"We have seven different gold/yellow threads and I am not sure which will perfectly match the old worker patch," she seemed agitated as she spoke. "There could be all kinds of problems here. The new patches could fade at a different rate as the old ones and in certain types of light, if two patches were displayed together there could be variances in shades."

"As long as it looks yellow, it will be fine," I assured her. "These are not worn in a formal setting. These are horse people out in the wilderness, just make the patches."

At this point she launched into such a lengthy discussion of the patch making process I found myself watching an infomercial about a juicer for only \$19.99 plus shipping and handling. After the commercial was over I realized she was still on the phone and had not noticed my nonparticipation in the conversation. I heard her say, "Of course with a tighter thread count and a retensioning system on the Walbart machine, it would be possible to adjust the caliber of the twitching so that . . ." and then I watched part of a Rosanne rerun from the late 1990s.

Finally, when I realized I was contemplating falling on a sharp object to end this phone call, I asked, "How much is this going to cost?" I had already decided to order the maximum quantity to make it pretty much assured I would never have to order again. I told her I wanted 300 patches and would confirm the order after I received formal approval from our Regional Board at the January convention. I thanked her and hung up. She may have been still talking.

Although I can't imagine why, I put off calling and then things got strange. I came home one day to find a message on the answering machine from J.R. Kendall saying the embroidery lady had called and left a message on his answering machine looking for ME . . . hoping he at least knew me. J.R. had never had any dealings with the company, but remembered the board meeting had covered and approved the ordering of the patches.

I called the lady. I told her I was Marsha Hayes calling about the gold/yellow worker patches. This was her reply: "I have never heard of you. I have no idea what you are talking about. You must have the wrong number."

I felt like I was caught in a bad movie. The prospect of starting over again was daunting. I decided to try and jog her memory. "We have spoken several times about the worker patches. You were concerned about the yellow color matching. I sent you a sample patch."

"Well," she said, "You must understand I have been skiing and haven't had my coffee." I had no idea what this meant. Did she go skiing that morning in St. Louis? Did she have a long hard weekend, from which she had not recovered? Could coffee possibly fix this situation?

"Yes, I remember you now, but we can't make the patches. I lost your sample. I lost your name. I lost your phone number. Sorry."

At this point it became a quest for me. A quest to actually obtain those worker bars. "I'll send you another one."

"Oh, and do you remember how much I told you they would cost? Could you write it down for me?"

I am going to stop right here. Believe it or not, this is the condensed version, so far. As of today, March 21, 2006, I do not have the worker bars. I have a letter from the company on my desk asking me to call them. I am going to make that call when I feel strong. Possibly soon. What is the point of this tale? I want every worker who earns a gold bar to appreciate this award for it is a hard fought prize. I want those awaiting their bars to understand Region Six is temporarily out of bars. When I'm really strong, I will try and explain how she got J.R. Kendall's phone number.

Help Wanted:

Region Six is looking for an Awards Chairperson. The job requires checking final year end points, ordering ribbons and awards and working with the convention chairperson to provide the program at the Regional Convention. Serious inquires and light hearted ones, too. Contact Cheri Jeffcoat or Ruth Mesimer or Marsha Hayes for more information. Get Involved. Help.

TRACK YOUR POINTS QUIZ FOR APRIL

In our continuing effort to educate our members about how to figure their own points, take this monthly quiz and see if you can correctly answer the question. Answer somewhere in the newsletter . . .

Jerry Lee Lewis rides a Missouri Fox Trotter called Great Balls of Fire. His wife rides an Arab named Miss Underage. They have a fierce battle going over which breed is better. To settle the issue they decided the horse that ended the year with the most horse points would be declared the winner. The horses are tied going into the last ride of the year. Here is how they placed. Who won? The Fox Trotter or the Arab?

Great Balls of Fire placed 3rd in the Open Heavyweight Division and the class had 9 entries. Miss Underage had to ride in Open Junior since she was only 13. Although Miss Underage won the class, there were only two entries. Which horse came out the winner? Neither horse won sweepstakes.