

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

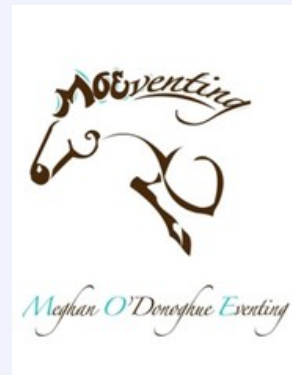
APRIL 2015

MI-SHO Announcements

MEGHAN O'DONOGHUE CLINIC ANNOUNCED

MI-SHO and Cornerstone Riding Academy in St Jacob IL are hosting a Clinic with local International Four Star Eventer, Meghan O'Donoghue. Meghan and her OTTB, Pirate, have competed at the FEI level competitions such as two Rolex Kentucky 3 Day Events and international competitions at Blenheim and Burghley. Meghan was an alternate on the 2014 US WEG Team.

All proceeds from this clinic will be donated to her travel fund for her return to Burghley in 2015! Come out for some great training and help support our local international rider! Clinic registration form can be found on the MI-SHO web page.



GRANT PROGRAM

Yes we still have grant money available. Any current MISHO member is eligible for \$50 toward any clinic in which they are riding. Your only requirement is to volunteer 2 hours at any not-for profit organization and write an article for this newsletter about what you learned.

See the MISHO Web page for further details and a grant application.

2015 MI-SHO BOARD MEMBERS ANNOUNCED

President: Whitney Hopkins

Vice President: Julie Simmons

Secretary: Kerry Warren-Couch

Treasurer: Lynn Coehoorn

Board Members: Lori Zackrie, Jessica Hasemann, Macy Kuhl

Junior Board Member: Rowan Sandbothe

Looking for a fun group to enjoy your passion for horses with. The MI-SHO board meets monthly to discuss the future of MI-SHO and plan events and activities. We still need more board members. Join us!

Junior MI-SHO members: looking for a way to plump up your college applications. Become a Junior Board member and help shape the future of MI-SHO

Contact any current board member for details.



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GETTING FIT FOR SPRING

Both you and your horse need to get moving before show season starts back up. Practice yoga to help your body gain strength, flexibility, and endurance to assist your partner (horse) through the challenging courses that you are about to endure! Start simple. If you don't have much free time in your schedule try to set aside 20 minutes to start dedicating your time to fitness. Add an extra 5-10 minutes each week to your practice to help you gradually build up your healthy habit and your stamina for the show season. When practicing yoga you are focusing on your breath while practicing the postures. By focusing on your breathwork you will enhance your

abilities to control any nerves that may build up prior to that challenging dressage test or the lengthy jump course that you need to memorize.

Try this fun sequence to get you started!

By Erin Ahlfield, RYT

Erin is owner of Zen and Teas Yoga Studio

She will be holding yoga classes specifically for equestrians on Weds starting Apr 15th, 5:30-6:30

Zen and Teas is located at 5411F Godfrey Rd, Godfrey IL

5 SETS OF SUN SALUTATIONS



Warrior I



Warrior II



Triangle



Wide Legged

Forward Fold



Plank



Child's Pose

JUDGING HUNTERS OVER FENCES

By Kerry Warren-Couch

You are so excited because you will be a competitor in your very first horse show! The show is only a few weeks away. You have been devoted to caring for and working with your horse and trainer to be ready for the show season. The appropriate hunter division has been selected but you are now wondering just what the hunter judge might be looking for when you are in the arena. “Is judging based on how my horse looks; how I look on my horse? Will I win if my horse gets over all of the jumps without refusing? What happens when there are large and small horses in the same class? How does the judge pick who wins?”

Judging a hunter division may seem very confusing and rather a mystery for many competitors; especially for those just beginning to participate in hunter shows. There are several levels of judging hunter divisions. As riders move up the hierarchy of difficulty to compete at the national level, the judging does get very technical and complex. At the local level, however, most hunter judges apply a more simplified format. Judges at non-rated, local shows are typically a little more flexible when assigning each and every possible fault.

The United States Equestrian Federation in conjunction with the United States Hunter Jumper Association, have a long history of providing training and guidelines for judging hunter shows. Judges at smaller, local shows may not have completed the formal USEF training but these judges ought to have many years of experience competing in and training riders for the upper level, rated hunter divisions so are well versed in USEF guidelines.

Not only do different levels of hunter shows require lesser or greater judging skills, but there are also classes within a hunter division that require different judging criteria. There are over fences classes and under saddle classes. You may also be riding in an equitation division, again with over fences and under saddle. There

may be a medals class, or a classic hunter class. You may be thinking about participating in a hunter derby, which has two different classes; the classic and the handy. Each of these hunter divisions/classes has varied judging criteria. Whew- so much to know!

So, let’s keep it simple for this article and focus only on basic judging for the over fences portion of the more entry-level hunter divisions; not equitation or any of the other specialty divisions. At our local, non-rated shows, entry level divisions may include Short Stirrup, some of the pony hunter divisions, Beginner Rider, Baby Green hunter, Low Hunter. (Cross Rails is a very entry level division with different judging criteria that are not addressed here.)

Overall, the hunter judge is looking for smoothness, rhythm and style of the horse. The judge will assess the horse’s performance during the entire time the horse is in the arena for the over fences class. A judge will determine if a horse and rider are well suited to one another, communicate well with each other and are successful as a team. The horse receives any faults in terms of points, but the judge will also note if the fault was due to a rider error. So, in essence both horse and rider are being judged although the focus is predominantly on the horse.

As you will be riding in a *hunter* division, your horse is expected to present an even hunting pace. A pace that is too fast or too slow is to be penalized. A pace that is erratic, with speed ups and slow downs, is to be penalized. Smaller horses with a shorter stride are not to be penalized compared to a large horse, with a floating stride, IF the small horse presents with even pace and rhythm throughout the course. Let’s say the large horse speeds up and slows down on course but does get the right number of strides for related distances over fences. The small horse consistently adds a stride but is very even and smooth in

pace. The smaller horse ought to not be penalized, where the larger horse with the more erratic pace ought to receive penalty points.

Your judge will be assessing how your horse behaves or presents himself. This may include if the horse is a “forward” thinking horse, a “willing horse” versus if the horse is “stubborn”, “resistant”, “dishonest” or “disobedient”. Each of these terms has criteria that determine if the horse is “resistant” vs. “dishonest”, for example. All of these latter, more negative behaviors are to be penalized according to severity. A very important difference from all of the above is an unsafe horse. The judge has the option to excuse a horse and rider from the arena even if the horse is getting over all of the jumps, if the judge determines the horse presents as “unsafe”. Not all unsafe actions result in being excused from the class. Those that do not result in being excused, however, are very highly penalized and these horses should never be in the ribbons.

Other aspects of “way of going” will include how you and your horse approach a fence, what is the line, where does the horse leave the ground, where does he land in relation to the jump. Once again, there are specific criteria the judge uses to determine if a penalty is warranted for an approach line, for the take-off spot, and so on. This is an area where judges are a little more lenient for entry level hunter classes.

Judges do not expect horses or riders to fully understand how to read a line, find the distance, adjust between related distances, etc. However, if there happens to be a horse/rider combination who successfully achieves lines, distances and form, they obviously will be pinned above another entry level horse/rider that misses a spot, flubs a landing, or incorrectly rides a line.

Another area the judge will assess is the horse’s form over the jump. This includes the front legs, the front fetlock joint, the poll, the neck, the back, the hocks and the hind fetlock joints. The judge uses certain standard angles and lines for correct form and compares your horse over the jump to these standards.

Judging Hunters Over Fences cont.

A caveat here is the fence height for entry level jumps is typically too low for a horse to actually achieve proper bascule with the standard lines and angles. So, your judge will likely be looking only for “a tidy jumper” who is consistent and safe while still using the standards as a guideline and not specific criteria. That said, a horse with a consistently hanging leg, a twist or other less safe form presentation will be penalized at the entry level. Safety assessment is very important at all levels of competition.

Horses are also assessed for over or under jumping a fence. A horse that leaps over a 2’3” jump as if it were a 3’ jump is actually penalized for over jumping. A horse that barely skims the top of the jump with very little effort, will also be penalized for under jumping. Judges may again be rather lenient for over jumping with baby green divisions in particular. Baby Green refers to a very novice horse who may not yet have learned how to be efficient over a jump. The Beginner Rider Division, in contrast, is for a beginner rider and NOT necessarily a beginner horse. Many beginner riders may be riding a well-schooled, seasoned show horse. Thus over or under jumping penalties in these divisions may actually differ.

Your judge will be assessing the horse’s ability to achieve and maintain the correct lead for the direction on course. There are criteria for when the correct lead is to be achieved, when and if a break to a trot is accepted for a simple change and when and if swapping leads in a line may or may not be penalized. Again, the higher the fence height, the more advanced the division or rated show, the more stringent is the criteria. Many judges are lenient with horses/riders who do not achieve the proper lead on course at entry level classes. Again, if a horse/rider combo nails all of the leads, that combo is pinned above those who do not. But in many cases, horses in the entry levels are not heavily penalized for missing a lead, particularly Beginner Rider and Baby Green.

Straightness and balance are also assessed however at the entry levels in hunters, this

is not so technically applied. If a horse/rider combination does exhibit great straightness and balance, all other things being equal with the other competitors, this horse/rider should be pinned ahead of the others.

Lastly, the judge will evaluate basic manners of horse and of rider. Does the horse pin his ears, wring his tail, and kick out, as he goes around the course? Does the horse give a buck or a crow hop at any time in the arena? Most judges will allow for a “feel good” little, one-time buck for entry level classes and green horses. There is a difference between an “I feel good” buck and a mean buck. The latter is penalized and the former is only penalized at the judge’s discretion. The judge will also assess if a rider is respectful of her mount. Does she abusively spur the horse or use her crop? Does she yell at the horse or jerk the horse’s mouth in anger?

Judges do have some leeway in determining certain types of penalties but for the most part, there are criteria for application as outlined by USEF for judging hunters. One area that falls under judge’s discretion is if a judge happens to like a more forward horse versus a more passive horse, or vice versa. If both of these horses exhibit a smooth, even pace, just one more forward and the other more passive, then it will come down to judge’s personal preference for a hunter. Even this area, though, has miles per hour acceptable range for a hunter. So if a horse races around a course, beyond the allowable miles per hour range for hunters, even IF the judge personally likes a “blaster”, this horse ought not to be pinned above a more passive horse who IS moving within the miles per hour range allowable for hunters. So the leeway applies only when horses fall within acceptable ranges for that category. Then, judge’s preference comes into play.

Another example of preference is when all things are equal between horses but the judge likes a long & low way of going versus a more collected way of going, then the former horse will pin above the latter one. This is a judge preference. Further, if all things are equal, a judge may pin a

horse/rider combo whose rider is the “softer” rider or a rider who used her seat more effectively on course, or a horse with a “brighter eye”, and so on. These are all judges’ preferences and are completely allowable when determining first, second, third... when all of the aspects judged are equal between horses. Sometimes, there is only a “hare’s breath” of a difference between first and second place, at times, even going to third place.

It’s helpful to understand this as you might place second in a class you felt you won and are scratching your head to figure out what happened. You may be feeling a bit down because you were second. When in reality, you were SO close to perfect with the other competitor, it took a minute detail to separate the ribbon placing.

Now you have an idea of some of the basics of judging hunters and what you might expect when going to a local show. It is important to have a knowledgeable judge who understands how to apply criteria, when to assess a penalty, which penalties carry more weight than others and when to be lenient. A great judge can help you become a better rider and enable you to develop your horse’s skills along with your trainer. Some judges will allow you to talk with them after the show with a question or two. Their feedback can be quite valuable.

It is time to load up your horse and get going! The most important thing of all is to go to the show to have fun, be safe, respect your horse, exhibit good sportsmanship and be courteous to others. Have a fantastic show season and Good Luck!



Tori Colvin, 2014 Maclay Winner

Dr. Tami Eggleston Seminar: Personality, Perfectionism and Performance

*Use a Sports Psychologist?
Not me, I don't need that
kind of help. But do you; what
can you learn?*

If you asked those that attended the Feb 26 seminar at McKendree University you might be surprised by their enthusiasm. Tami is a great motivational speaker that approaches sports psychology in a humorous and light hearted way. Everyone that attended came away understanding just what we contribute to the success or failure of our performance in competition.

"If your horse could talk, he/she would know exactly what your weakness is." Do you? Participants took a brief assessment given to current US Olympic athletes on the Nine Mental Skills of Successful Athletes. According to Dr. Eggleston, the purpose of the assessment was to identify "what you are good at and what you need to work on."

Tami led an animated discussion among the participants about their results. Many shared that they scored high in People Skills, Attitude and Motivation. Many shared they scored low on Self-Talk, Dealing With Emotions and Concentration.

What is bad about wanting things to be perfect? Fear of failure, disap-

pointment, being paralyzed by focusing on mistakes. Are you carrying around the weight of every mistake you've ever made. If a ball represents a single error you've made, how realistic would it be if you carried a bag of balls around with you while you were riding your course? Tami's advice: focus on just one thing and drop the rest.

Dr. Eggleston's strategies for success: Own your personality: the good, the bad, the ugly. What is your #1 personality strength and how could you lead with this. What is your #1 personality challenge and how could you work on this? Set goals. Mentally practice for every possible situation including the failures. Have you thought through how you would respond when it all goes very wrong while on course? Having a plan in mind will help you respond with less stress/emotion. Use routines, positive self-talk and visualization to properly prepare for competition.



*Self proclaimed "perfectionists" participate in an exercise.
"Catch the balls, but do not catch any purple balls."*

For more information about the 9 Mental Skills:
www.sportpsych.org/nine-mental-skills-overview
or contact Dr Eggleston at 618-537-6859
tegglest@mckendree.edu

The Nine Mental Skills:

(written by De Jack Lesyk, Survey Copyright 1998 Ohio Center for Sport Psychology)

Attitude: Do you view competing as an opportunity to compete against yourself and learn from your success?

Motivation: Can you persist through difficult tasks and difficult times, even when these rewards and benefits are not immediately forthcoming?

Goals and Commitment: Do you set long-term and short-term goals that are realistic, measurable and time oriented?

People Skills: Can you appropriately communicate your thoughts, feelings and needs to family, friends, teammates, coaches?

Self-Talk: Do you use self-talk to regulate thoughts, feelings and behaviors during competition?

Mental Imagery: Do you prepare for competition by imagining yourself performing well in competition?

Dealing with Anxiety: Do you realize that some amount of anxiety can help you perform well?

Dealing with Emotions: Are you able to use strong emotions such as excitement, anger and disappointment to improve your level of performance?

Concentration: During competition can you maintain focus and resist distractions?



Dr Eggleston with Allysa and Catherine Hunter



2015

SHOW SCHEDULE

Check the MI-SHO Web page for updated Show Schedules. Shows could be added throughout the year!

March

28 - ~~Avalon Horse Farm Dressage/jumper show~~ to be rescheduled

APRIL

11 – Dublin Farm H/J Show

25-26 – Ridgefield H/J Show

24-26 ROLEX 3 Day Event

MAY

2 – Dublin Farm H/J Show

2-3 - Penny Oaks HT

9 – Meghan O'Donoghue Clinic

9 – Grand Paradise Ranch Dressage/Hunter show

16 – Cornerstone H/J Show

17 - Phancy Pharm H/J Show

22-24 - Mays Daze HT

30-31 – Ridgefield H/J Show

JUNE

6 - Brier Bank Dressage Show

13 – East Lake Farm H/J Show

13-14 – Queenie Park HT

20 – Devinwood Farm Dressage/Hunter Show

21 – Phancy Pharm H/J Show

JULY

11 – Cornerstone H/J Show

18 – Phancy Pharm H/J Show

18 – Dublin Farm H/J Show

18- 19 – Hunter Oaks HT

AUGUST

1 – Brier Bank Dressage Show

1-2 – Catalpa HT

8 – Phancy Pharm H/J Show

SEPTEMBER

12-13 – Dunnabeck HT

19-20 – Ridgefield H/J Show

26 – MISHO Annual Show

27 – Phancy Pharm H/J Show

OCTOBER

3 – Cornerstone H/J Show

4 – QP Mini Event

10 – Dublin Farm H/J Show

9-11 Heritage Park HT

31 - Devinwood Farm H/J/Dressage Show



BODY CONDITION SCORE

It's been a long winter and now that spring is finally here and the blankets are off, how does your horse look? Have you ever evaluated your horse using "Body Condition Score"? Well roll up your sleeves because BCS is all about feeling for the fat deposits on your horse.

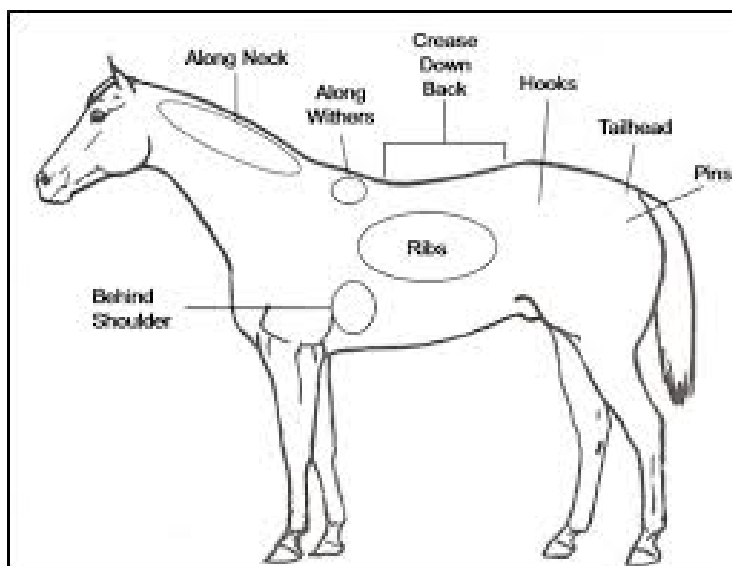
This numerical condition scoring system, developed by Henneke et al, provides a consistent measure of the degree of body fat in horses. A score of 1 to 10, 1 being emaciated and 10 being obese. Ideal score is 5-6 and is described as: Back level. Ribs cannot be visually distinguished but can be easily felt. Fat around the tailhead beginning to feel spongy. Withers appear rounded over spinous processes. Shoulders and neck blended smoothly into the body.

What's a fat horse? Crease down the back. Difficult to feel ribs. Fat around the tailhead very soft. Fat deposit along withers, behind the shoulders and along the neck.

A thin horse? Ribs easily discernible. Tailhead prominent. Spine protrudes above the back.

You will notice there is no mention of belly size. That's because the "hay belly" most people assume is a sign of being fat is really only a sign of lack of physical conditioning. Horses that have been sitting around all winter will soon lose their hay belly once they are started back into work.

Now that you have your horse's BCS you can evaluate what you are feeding your horse. Perhaps it's time for a change?



Nutrena has an excellent chart on their website explaining what to look for and how to assess your horse.

Check it out at <http://www.nutrenaworld.com/wcm/groups/public/documents/document/na3022832.pdf>

*“Roll up your sleeves
because Body Condition Score is all about
feeling your horse”*

TIP: How to estimate your horses weight:

$$\frac{(\text{Heartgirth} \times \text{Heartgirth} \times \text{Body length})}{330} = \text{Wt (lbs)}$$

Heartgirth is a measure of the circumference in inches, taken by running the tape measure all the way around the horse, using the highest part of the withers. Body length is measured from the point of the shoulder, straight back along the horse's side, and to the point of the buttock.

Equine Insurance

Understanding the what, how and why to protect you and your horse

By Laura Rix

It is a fact- horses are not cheap; however, there are things that can help to lessen the blow - namely equine insurance. As most horse owners know, a sick or hurt horse can cost a fortune in vet bills. The amount of these vet bills have no correlation to how much was paid to purchase the horse; therefore the vet bill is the same for a \$1,000 horse or \$100,000 horse. Then, if the worst should hap-

pen and the horse doesn't make it, to add to the emotional strain there is the loss of financial investment to tend to. If the horse is stolen and not recovered, you will be without a horse and without the funds to buy another. Additionally, anyone can be sued for their horse's actions, even if they were meant with no malice (think of your horse playfully nipping or kicking at a fly and having a person get in the way or even wandering out of the fence into the road and causing an accident) - meaning insurance is very beneficial to everyone who owns a horse.

Below are some of the types of insurance a horse owner should consider purchasing.

Major Medical/Surgical: Major medical insurance for horses is similar to medical insurance for people. Equine medical/surgical insurance covers veterinary costs such as, but not limited to surgery, medication and veterinary visits resulting from an illness or injury. All policies include a limit of insurance they will cover for major medical as well as a deductible that is typically on a per incident basis. To purchase major medical/surgical insurance, a brief questionnaire will need to be completed and in the case that the horse has had prior injuries, illnesses or surgeries, further documentation will usually be requested.

Mortality: Mortality policies usually accompany the major medical/surgical policy on a horse. Should your horse die from an illness or accident, or has to be humanly euthanized, or if he is stolen and not recovered, full mortality insurance is designed to reimburse you for the value of your horse which was determined at the time of issuing the policy.

Personal Equine Liability (PEL): A personal equine liability policy is designed to protect the owner in the case that their horse injures someone or something. This can be somewhat of a relief because as any horse owner knows, horses are instinctively "mischief makers" at times, anyway.



For "A leg up on your equine related insurance needs" visit Mid States Equine at www.MyHorsesInsurance.com or call us today (314) 919-2040. We can provide a quick quote in just a few minutes. Even if you are on the way to buy a horse, you can call us from the road and we will do our best to accommodate your needs. We also offer coverages for farm owners, equine professionals, events, horse clubs and more.

STRANGLES

Every year we hear of a Strangles outbreak in our area. What is it and should you be concerned?

According to the American Association of Equine Practitioners: Strangles is a respiratory infection of horses caused by *Streptococcus equi*. It is highly contagious and the most common bacterial infection of horses. Horses of all ages are susceptible, though strangles is most common in animals less than 5 years of age.

With onset, the horse appears depressed, dull and stops eating. Typically, the temperature rises to 106 degrees and after a few days, lymph nodes around the throat swell, forming abscesses in the back of the throat or externally between the jaw bones. The horse can have difficulty breathing and swallowing. Nasal discharge is at first clear and then becomes thick with signs of pus, after the abscesses have ruptured in the nasal passages. Abscesses that

rupture shed highly infective pus.

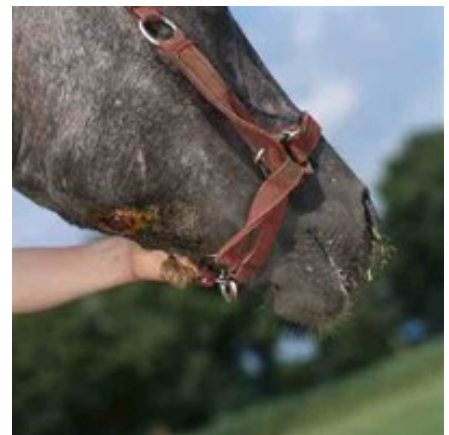
Fever, depression, loss of appetite, nasal discharge and swollen lymph nodes make clinical diagnosis generally straightforward. Swabs from the nasopharynx and from abscesses confirms the clinical diagnosis.

Once inside the barn or pasture, strangles can spread quickly through direct contact between horses or indirect contact through tack, equipment, water troughs, pastures, feed troughs, clothing or even your hands. Once transmitted, signs of disease usually occur after 3-14 days, with abscesses forming up to 2 weeks following infection.

With Strangles it's all about controlling the spread. Infected animals must be physically separated from the herd. Caretakers must wear protective clothing and all equipment/clothing should be cleaned with detergent and disinfectant. Infected horses continue to shed *Streptococcus equi* for approximately 1 month after recovery. Three negative na-

sopharyngeal swabs should be obtained before release from quarantine and the minimal isolation period should be 1 month.

What can you do to protect yourself? Do not share equipment, tack or water buckets. When you are at a show, do not handle other horses or allow others to contact yours. Watch your horse for any signs of illness and get them checked before you travel with your horse. A vaccine is available: live vaccine given intranasal or killed vaccine as an injection. Check with your vet for recommendations.



DID YOU KNOW:

Most auto or travel insurance policies (like AAA) will not tow your trailer if you break down on the side of the road. Many will not even change your tire unless you unhook your trailer. Check your policy to see if you are covered or purchase an equine friendly policy that will not strand you or your horse on the side of the highway.

Please don't unload your horse on the side of the highway or ever unhook your trailer with your horses on it!



TRAIL RIDING IN OUR AREA

by Lori Zackrie and Jane Netzler

Have you ever thought about cross training for your competition horse. Don't you think they get tired of riding in an arena all the time? Well the season for trail riding is upon us and what a joy that is. Time to start cleaning up that tack and getting that trailer ready for those day, weekend or longer trail rides. The area around the metro east and southern Illinois has some of the finest riding around. You can find trails that have rolling hills or even the ones with steep hills that when you look at them from a distance they look like they go straight up.

For a pleasant, short introduction to trail riding, consider Queeny Park, right off of Manchester Road, west of I-270. This is home of the Queeny Park Horse Trials and hunter paces. The 569 acre park offers 7 miles of easy trails, a small section of woods, and experienced riders can school the XC fences. No camping is allowed. There are two large parking areas both suitable for equestrians: 550 Weideman Rd and 1675 S Mason Rd in Baldwin. Parking is easy and the terrain doesn't make horse shoes necessary.

Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park in Chesterfield has a six-mile trail that takes riders by the historic stables, an outstanding example of the beautiful stonework done by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The trail head is approx 1 mile from the main park entrance on the south side of the road.

As you head west out of St Louis on I44 to Valley Park, you'll find Lone Elk Park with 10 miles of gentle trails some of which do not require shoes for

your horse.

Greensfelder Equestrian Park, at the Six Flags exit, is very popular destination for trail riders. Greensfelder is located in the foothills of the Ozark Mountain range. The park offers 30 miles of multi-use trails on 1734 acres. Trail heads leave directly from the equestrian camp. This park has a little bit for every type of rider. If you like to jump there are jumps set up in the valley and if you do endurance, it's a great place to train on the many hills the park has to offer. And if you just want to trail ride it's a great place to relax, ride and have fun taking breaks at scenic overlook or any of the other rest areas along the trail. Terrain is rocky, so shoes are recommended. Greensfelder also has a large pavilion and a barn with tie stalls, for riders who wish to camp overnight. Campsites with water and electricity are available for riders wishing to spend the night. For more information, call (314) 615-7275.

For Trail Riding in St Louis County Parks (trail maps and descriptions listed by park):

<http://www.stlouisco.com/ParksandRecreation/Trails>

Two local Illinois parks are Ramsey State Park (Ramsey IL) and Forbes State Park (east of Salem). Ramsey has a 13-mile horse trail located in the north end of the park along with a small campground for horse enthusiasts. This area is 1 mile north of the park entrance. Ramsey's equestrian campground does not have electric hook-ups. The trails are dirt and no shoes are required. For more information, call 618-423-2215. Forbes State Park occasionally offers endur-

ance rides and last fall held an "Intro to Endurance Riding" clinic/ride and the weekend was a big success. Forbes Park has a 15 mile horse trail that circles the lake, offering horse and rider a panorama of natural beauty. Also available for the equestrian is a 21 site campground with electricity, located one mile east of Omega. You jump right onto the horse trails from there. The horse trail is open from May 1 to Nov 1st. The trails are dirt and no shoes are required. For more information, call 618-547-3381.

<http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/Landmgt/PDF%27s/ramsey.pdf>

<http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/Landmgt/parks/sitemaps/forbes.gif>

Many MI-SHO members enjoy trail riding and we are fortunate to have a variety of opportunities for trail riding locally.



Of course for the serious trail riding enthusiast, Shawnee National Forest in southern IL is a place to ride where you can get a little bit of everything.

www.theshawneenationalforest.com

Shawnee draws riders from all over the country and features 285,000 acres of beautiful scenery, rolling landscape and rugged bluffs through hundreds of miles of horse trails. Many of the trails are extremely steep and rocky, so do your research before going and make sure you and your horse are prepared. Trail guides are available. Contact your campground host for information. You will see sites most people never realize are in Illinois....waterfalls, caves, rock formations, and scenic overlooks. There are so many destinations to ride to that you can never get tired of riding there. Terrain is rocky and shoes are definitely recommended.

There are many horse friendly campgrounds that feature electric sites and safe stalls or pens, or you can choose to picket your horses. Some even rent cabins if you are not a camper. In addition to riding, there are many hiking and biking trails in Shawnee.

There are a lot of places to ride with in a 3 hour distance. Each one has something different to offer and the scenery riding out of each one is unique. But at the end of the

day it really doesn't matter what the scenery was like as long as it was spent riding. And as Winston Churchill said, "No hour of life is wasted that is spent in the saddle." Maybe 2015 will be the year for you and your horse to experience some of the wonderful opportunities we have locally. Happy trails!

If you are interested in going riding to places you have never gone before, here are a couple of links to places that may be of interest.

Trail Riding in Missouri: <http://www.visitmo.com/missouri-travel/horseback-riding-in-missouri.aspx?gclid=C1bj09rwqsQCFQpk7AodxCwADA>

<http://mostateparks.com/activity/horseback-riding>

Trail Riding in Illinois: http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/landmgt/programs/camping/equestrian_camptrails.htm

PRIVATE CAMPGROUNDS that cater to Equestrians

Double M(Shawnee): <http://www.doublemcampground.com/>

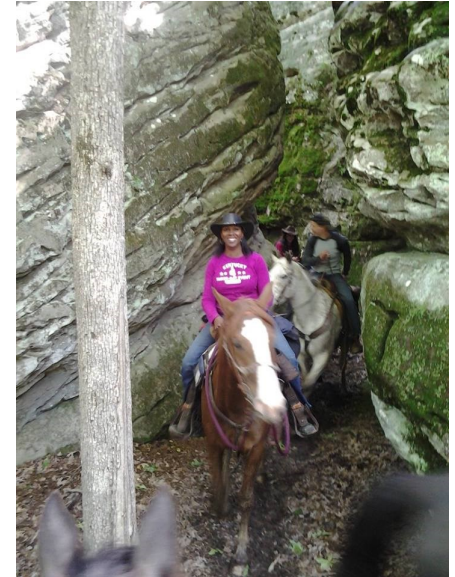
High Knob(Shawnee): <http://www.highknobcampground.net/>

Hayes Canyon (Shawnee): <http://www.hayescanyon.com/>

Bear Branch(Shawnee): <http://www.bearbranch.com/>

Brushy Creek: <http://www.brushycreeklodge.com/>

Flying R Ranch: <http://flying-r-ranch.com/>



Lori at Shawnee National Forest

Many areas of the country are experiencing rapid loss of open space, including the midwest. Equestrians must be proactive and help keep public lands available for trail riding.



Jane at Shawnee National Forest

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Catherine Hunter Massage

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