

PRESIDENTIAL PRATTLINGS

March / April (mostly April)

HALLELUJAH!!!!!! I just mailed the last of my Skills Sheets for my Veterinary Technician Practicum!! Now I just wait with bated breath and crossed fingers to see if I have to re-do any of them before I pass. For four months all my computer energy has gone to researching information and typing up papers for the practicum. The rest of my energy has been expended at the clinic working on physical skills I was required to master. Finally, I can sit at the computer and write something fun!!

Where do I begin?? Well, horseback-riding season is upon us. Or at least almost upon us. Within the last month we've had winter (more snow in the last month than we did all 'winter') AND our monsoon season (more rain than we get all year). The monsoon season still persists; as I look outside, it is monsooning as I write. Ah well, look at all that grass coming up green! My alfalfa field is well watered, and I haven't had to start my pump yet. Gotta love that. I did manage to triple-K my alfalfa field during a lull in the rains, so hopefully it will help keep the cheat grass at bay.

But let's get back to the horseback-riding season part! We have an awesome, fun-filled, work-packed summer planned for us, thanks to our illustrious, on-the-ball Project Leaders. Without going to the calendar and activities page on our website, I can't begin to name dates and places, but you can all go look that up and mark your calendars. The important thing is to mark your calendars. I think we have at least one, if not two, activities planned for each month from April through September. Yes, once a month it's a work project, but you know you can participate as much or as little as you want, and you know we always have fun at our work projects just like we do at our Fun Activities. Whoever says Squaw Butte works too much just ain't Squaw Butte material!

We've already started with a couple activities; back in February the Chicks started putting on the Arena Nights with a 'get ready for the trail' theme, but sadly, there was not enough participation to continue with the structured arena nights. However, Chick & Lorraine still go to the arena on those Thursday nights, so if you choose to you can still take advantage of their expertise and join them to start getting your ponies ready for the trail. We also had the Celebration Park ride scheduled for February, but alas, that's about the time winter showed up and brought hurricane force winds down through the valley, so...no Celebration Park ride. Well, a couple of us brave (aka goofy) souls tried it, but promptly high-tailed it for home when the campers pert-near capsized.

So, here we are in March. Had the first ever Jump Creek Ride! Too bad our illustrious (aka goofy) leaders did not know where they were going. Consequently, Destination: Unreached. Ah well, we wandered around the Owyhees for a sufficient length of time and enjoyed a day with beautiful weather and good company, and did manage to find our way back to the trucks and trailers, so we counted it as a success. For being early in the season, and some of our mounts not having been out yet this year, I think there was enough strenuous up-hills and down-hills that the ponies were glad we didn't spend any more time and miles looking around. Next time maybe we'll do a little more research and asking-of-questions, and even find out where Sands Basin IS, so we can get there next time. There's supposed to be bands of wild horses that hang out in there. Moosely might see his grandpa.

We've got another Fun Ride and BBQ in April, at Charles and Ellen's. It will be another good one to go on to get the equines ready for the big country. The 'hill' C & E live on is an excellent first-of-the-season ride, with great views of the Emmett valley from the top of said hill. It's not Squaw Butte we ride up, but it's close. And a splendid deck to lounge on and soak up the sun while we EAT! Mmmmm.

I'm very much looking forward to our Pack Clinic the first weekend in May. I SO want to learn all this packing stuff so I can head off into the wild blue mountains towing my mule. If you haven't signed

up for this clinic yet, do so soon. It was filling up fast, and you'll be too late, if you aren't already. We have some excellent, experienced teachers, and some great people coming to share their knowledge with us. Even if you don't intend to do any packing, there will be information that will be helpful to everyone and their horses.

It's going to be a great summer! And I'm looking forward to spending it on the trail and around the campfire with everybody. See you on all those switchbacks!

Safe and Happy Trails. Janine