

Alberta Donkey and Mule Club News, August, 2010

As always there is so much to cover in the news for the summer months. Much will have to wait for later when everyone has more time to devote to reading and reminiscing! However, having just come from spending 6 days at our club sponsored Jerry Tindell Clinics, plus spending several days prior to the clinics with Jerry at our home, it's impossible for me not to make a few comments to you, our readership, of the golden opportunity many of you missed! To quote Jerry " These clinics are not expensive, they are priceless!" Trainers and teachers abound, but few excel at both. Jerry's life's passion is to train and teach! His approach to both is respectful, honest, and sincere. Top this off with a great sense of humor and you have a perfect learning environment.

Over 20 participants at the clinics received lots of individual attention on a variety of issues with Jerry's impeccable understanding, talent and timing working wonders with horses and mules, turning them into quiet, soft and flexible partners. His pay off he says is seeing the change in the animals and being able to teach the owner how to get the same results. Jerry's techniques are fascinating to watch and experience. You'll hear more from me on these life changing clinics in later newsletters.



This month we need to give our attention to our "one and only" mule and donkey show, the 21st annual TEES LONGEARS DAYS, August 21 - 22 at the Rodeo Grounds at Tees, AB. 25 km east of Lacombe on Hwy 12. Your entries should be sent in by now, but if you missed the deadline, you can still enter at the grounds for a few bucks more.

Please join us, whether as a participant or a spectator for one of the most fun weekends you will have this summer! Horses are most welcome at *all* our other events, but this one is *just for the longears!* There is so much to enjoy, where do I begin? First of all, remember that the admission to watch the show is free and so is the camping. [No hook ups available] The whole show is geared for old-fashioned good family valued fun! There will be a few vendors on the grounds and everyone is invited to join in a Tack Swap and Sale Saturday afternoon. We have a weekend concession with a Saturday evening catered supper, which requires tickets, ordered in advance. Please call Ethel at 403 783-3083.

After that stay for an evening of fun and entertainment with a Fun Auction. Donations are gratefully accepted right up until the auction and monies raised are used to keep the show running. Then join with us for visiting, a sing-a-long and campfire. Our special guest, Bonnie Shields, the "Tennessee Mule Artist" will be joining us for the whole weekend and you never know what Bonnie will have up her sleeve to "wow" us with! Sunday morning kicks off with Cowboy church and away we go again for our second day of classes. Remember, while we do have regular type show classes, for the most part, we specialize in fun classes including gymkhana, driving and even free stick donkey classes for the little ones. We hope to have the big hitches of mules or donkeys join us for some classes and demos too. Just mark those dates August 21 – 22 on your calendar and load up the family and join us for the weekend. Call Colleen at 780 672-6105 for more information or look up the show booklet on our website www.albertadonkeyandmule.com for all the details.

As I write this Team Mule will be preparing to compete once again at the Telus Battle of the Breeds at Spruce Meadows, September, 8 –12 and we will need volunteers to man the booth at Equi Fair and to bring suitable animals for demos. Please call Vicki or Paul Barrow at 780 987-3746 to lend your assistance.

In light of showing our critters to the public, the following is a very timely article written by our own Donna Quack to give us all a "brushing up" on some good grooming tips...

This summer many of our members will be involved in a busy schedule of parades, demos, and shows. This is just a reminder that every time we present our mules and donkeys to the public, both our animals and ourselves should be groomed and outfitted to the best of our ability.

Mules still have to overcome their former reputation as an animal the farmer rides into town after plowing fields all day. Donkeys are often expected to be nothing more than “cute.” These are not the images we want to promote.

Almost all longears have very unkempt, unattractive manes. Shaving the mane or roaching to a height of 1” or 2” can improve the appearance of most animals. If you look through magazines like *Mules and More* or *The Brayer*, you’ll see very few longears with manes that haven’t been shaved or roached – donkeys as well as mules. And don’t they look sharp!

A full body clip isn’t necessary, but fetlocks, long belly hair, and hair under the jaw should always be neatly trimmed. Scissors will do an adequate job, even for manes. Hoof black always looks great and can last through a weekend.

All riders, drivers, and handlers should wear appropriate show clothes. A western hat is a must – no ball caps, please. Riding boots with heels are also a must, both for safety and appearance. Of course for gymkhana and fun classes with an element of risk, a helmet instead of a hat is always acceptable.

Long-sleeved western shirts look much better to an audience than T-shirts. English riders can find inexpensive black blazers that look like the real thing at Value Village. For cold weather riding, if you don’t have a western-style jacket, a Value Village sport coat or blazer can look very professional on both men and women.

Teamsters and drivers have their own sets of traditions and rules to follow regarding grooming and outfits. Check books and magazines.

There’s no reason longears and their owners can’t look just as spruced up as the Quarter Horse or Morgan crowd. And once you start assembling a show outfit, you’ll probably find it’s fun!

See you all at the show.....Marlene Quiring