

MnDRA NEWS

Winter..Fall..Spring..Winter; All in one month

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Winter Meeting Date

We are returning to Captains on Long Lake for this winter's annual meeting. The date will be Saturday, Feb. 23rd, 2019. There will be more information in the next newsletter. (I know, I said that on the last newsletter. I mean it this time.)

Wanted: Endurance News

As you do your winter cleaning, keep your old Endurance News for our booth at the MN Horse Expo. You can bring them to the winter meeting



The only worthy FB post this month from Diane Merz.

Hi everybody,

What a weird month. I hunted in my shirtsleeves one day and Carhartts the next. Then I thought about riding my motorcycle a few days, and this week we got a March rain. It has to be stressing the horses.

Don't forget the winter meeting. While I implied that I'd like the meeting to be a shorter one so we can have time for the speakers, it is also important that if anyone wants something to change with the club, it should come up now. The winter meeting is our only official time that we have enough members around to fairly discuss and vote on any proposals for change. Things brought up during the year often either get ignored, or the board makes a decision. Since this is a riders' organization, everyone should have a say.

President's Rant Continued

That said, it makes for a more efficient meeting if the board knows what we are discussing beforehand. Sometimes a concern is just something that needs a clarification of our rules; that requires looking at the rule and figuring out how to best explain it and whether the concern requires a change in the rule. An example from a couple years back was when there was a question about retro-active points when someone joins MnDRA after the season starts. While the spirit of the rule said no, a couple added words to the rule clarified the question. But that took time for the board to research. Also, when we are trying to propose motions during the meeting, its confusing and often incomplete. Many times we have had to go back and clear up the motion. If we know the topic beforehand, I can contact the member who has the question or concern and we can have a motion ready if one will be needed. If it's just a clarification, we can schedule time for the person to speak at the meeting.

So, if you have anything you feel we should discuss, please let me know. I'm retired and have time to talk to you all.

In this issue there is a summary of the change in the LD rules, a reprint of my article in the UMECRA newsletter, the rational and link for a rider survey, news about a ride clinic, an UMECRA convention update and rule clarification on time to complete in LD and endurance.

Stay warm and happy trails

Ken

Rider Survey

With a new ride coming in the NW part of the state bringing our total to ten MN rides, some of the ride managers (RMs) have wondered what determines which rides members choose to attend. They are wondering due to the narrow profitability of running a ride and how to balance a great experience for members and feasibility for the ride managers.

I am not going to put the link onto FB due to the huge number of non-members on the MnDRA page. I'd prefer to have member only results to be able to give the best information to the RMs. You are their customers and the most likely to actually do what your survey results say you'll do. If you have juniors who ride but are not on the email list,

give them the link. If any of the questions don't fit them because Mom decides, tell them to skip those questions.

Some of the questions come from comments I see on FB and others are suggestions from the RMs and some from my brain storming. Please do not think any of the questions reflect what RMs are thinking of doing. We just want an idea on what drives you. Results will be presented at the meeting.

Here is the link: <https://goo.gl/forms/oV6jlre6Vb3iE8pE2>

Technology Isn't Always Our Friend

There was a discussion of a time issue at the AHA National CTR event on Facebook. I don't wish to go into the issue of who was right and who was wrong, but it revolved around a rider's clock not agreeing with the timer's clock and the rider not making their window for placing.

In our age of technology, we all seem to put unfounded trust in it. I taught water quality testing techniques in a college level class. While I had most of the latest equipment to get results of water quality electronically, I always taught students how to do the tests manually. I referred to all of our sensors as voodoo boxes. When asked why, I always told the students that unless you calibrated the equipment with a standard just before the field test, you had no idea if it was right. It was not unusual for groups to get widely varying results on the same sample using the sensors.

In our sport, the big three technology voodoo boxes are the heart monitor, the GPS, and the satellite clock. I have been volunteering to take pulses for almost two decades at rides. I use a good stethoscope. I have had a number of riders watching their heart monitor displays as I take pulse, saying the pulse out loud. It is very rare they are ever right. They are higher as often as they are lower than the actual pulse. Usually, within five - ten seconds of a horse entering the pulse lane, the pulse is steady; that is why I pause before I start taking the pulse and why I give the time they entered the lane if they are down.

I once did an informal GPS check at our ride, asking riders to measure a loop and tell me their distance. No two people had the same distance and it varied by a couple miles. Finally, in my class room, I had three identical satellite clocks for timing labs. None of them had the same time, but we just needed the second hand so it didn't matter.

My reason for writing is to offer advice both for riders and ride managers. At every ride, there should be a designated official clock that is visible to everyone and clearly measures seconds. I would suggest this clock is at the

timer's table. It is important for every rider and volunteer pulse taker to sync their clocks to that official time. It was pointed out in the Facebook discussion that you can not change a satellite clock such as a cell phone. Therefore, every rider should buy a decent watch that you can set. Usually a twenty dollar watch will keep accurate time to the second over the course of a ride. This should save you any conflicts with time on a ride.

I would also suggest you use your heart monitor realizing that it usually is displaying the average pulse from the previous thirty seconds. If you really want to know if your horse is down, a \$40-60 stethoscope is a great investment. Not only do you know the pulse rate, but you can hear if the rhythm is regular or irregular, rising, or slowing, and if there are any issues with the beat: triple beats, skipped beats, etc. Equally important, you now have a tool to listen to your horse's gut sounds. As a horse person, that alone is a reason everyone should have a decent stethoscope. It should be one of the first things you check when your horse 'just isn't itself'. If your hearing is bad, buy a top-of-the-line scope; you'll be able to hear with that.

Finally, use your GPS to primarily gauge miles traveled on the trail. Remember that they are often off due to leaf cover, hills, turns and even where you are carrying the GPS on your tack. This is also true of distance measuring apps on your phone. If the ride manager hands out maps, use those instead to figure out where you are and how far you have to go. Ride managers should make every effort to have accurate, to-scale maps if they handing out maps. In terms of milage of the trail, trust the ride manager. They really do try to get the milage right. They are very careful not to have the trail be long. However, we need to remember that unless you are going to run a surveying wheel the length of the course, there is going to be some error. Also, at some venues, the trails available might make it hard to get the milage exact.

So, use the technology to enhance your riding experience, but rely on it at your own peril. In our sport, old school is maybe better on race day

UMECRA Convention

Date: Jan 18 - 19, 2019

Location: [Terrace Bay Hotel, 7146 P Road, Gladstone, MI 49837](#). Call the hotel for reservations at: (906) 786-7554. A block of rooms is reserved for the nights of January 18 and 19 under the name UMECRA. Rooms are available both lake-side and street-side. Cost is \$84 per night plus taxes..

The silent auction is being headed by Diane Meinders, email and phone if you have questions dmeinders@optiodata.com and 616.706.6478. Remember to bring your donated items and checkbooks/cash!

We need volunteers to help man the registration booth Friday evening and Saturday. Please contact Kathy Macki if you can help with this. She can be reached by email at k_macki@yahoo.com

Deadline for registration is Dec 31st, but discounted rate rooms are first come/first serve so get your reservations in early! No pets are allowed, the hotel is non-smoking. Continental breakfast is available from 7 to 11am. The Freshwater Tavern is the on-site dinner restaurant and is open from 5pm – 9pm only.

Meals must be reserved no later than January 11! Lunch and banquet choices, along with registration fees should be mailed with payment.

More info found at <http://www.umecra.com/convention.html>.

Schedule:

Friday Jan 18
4 PM Registration Opens
Evening - AHDRA activities

Saturday Jan 19
7 AM - Board Meeting
9:30 AM - Dr Jane Manfredi - Saddle Fit - Michigan State University
11:00 AM - Lynette Miller - Feeding the performance horse - Purina Animal Nutrition
12:30 PM - Lunch - meal ticket required
2:00 PM - UMECRA General Meeting
5:00 PM - Downtime
6:15 PM - Silent Auction Bidding Begins
6:30 PM - Dinner - meal ticket required
7:30 PM - Awards

MN Distance Clinic

Save the date: Sat., April 20th, 2019

Host: Peggy Pasillas

Where: Peggy's barn

What: An informational clinic for beginning riders and experienced riders wishing to do different distances. The morning is tentatively more for intro riders and the afternoon for the different disciplines. More info will be coming as we get nearer to the date.

Change in LD Rules

This fall, AERC changed the completion rules for LD that dealt with maximum time allowed to complete the ride. Starting with our new season, LD riders have the full amount of time based on the ride distance (see table) to complete the course, which means crossing the finish line. I would assume most ride managers will not want to find a volunteer to sit at the finish line for the LD ride as well as for the Endurance and will make the finish line for LD the timer, but make sure you know what the official finish line is before you leave on the final loop. Ride managers should declare what the finish line for LD is at the ride meeting.

They will then have 30 minutes after crossing the finish line to meet the maximum pulse criteria set by the vets, usually 60 BPM but it could be lower. The ride time is still the time it took to meet the pulse criteria. So some riders may have a ride time well over five hours.

Riders have 60 minutes after crossing the finish line to successfully complete their final vet examination. The actual wording is “...meet the established criteria...” Remember, it is an hour after finishing the course, not thirty minutes after you pulse down. This usually gives you a lot more time.

An example of what this means: If a rider takes five hours and fifty-five minutes (which includes a forty minute hold) to finish the 25 mile course, and they meet pulse criteria twenty minutes later, their ride time is six hours, fifteen minutes minus the forty minute hold giving us five hours, thirty-five minutes ride time. The rider in this case still has forty minutes to complete and pass their final examination. While this rule change primarily affects riders who are either shooting for the

turtle award or had a problem on the trail such as getting lost, it could also have implications for all riders.

Where all of this could affect the faster riders is if you come in fast and are in a pulse race with another rider and both of you take fifteen minutes to pulse down, you both now have forty-five minutes to complete your final vet check. If you take fifty minutes because you went back to the trailer and forgot to watch the time, you could be disqualified based on the rule, especially if someone challenges. While I would be surprised if any challenge would happen in MN knowing our riders and ride managers, I can't say other states or regions may not have riders who would challenge the above scenario. Most horses are fine five to ten minutes after they have pulsed down. It would be a good habit to watch the vet area and get your final done shortly after you pulse down.

Part of the reason I'm making sure we know the 'letter of the rule' is I am hoping more MnDRA riders will be thinking about competing in the national competitions after hearing our speakers, and at those, there is no gray; everything is black and white. But for the most part you just need to remember, pulse in 30 minutes and vet in 60.

Limited Distance Maximum Times Hours: Minutes

Rider must be off the marked course, including all checks and holds

Ride Length Miles	25	30	35
Maximum Time	6:00	7:15	8:30

Endurance Time Rule

While we are discussing completion and times, we should clarify the endurance time rules. (5.5 and 6.2.1 - 6.2.1.2) AERC has not changed the rules for endurance but some of the riders have been confused about the rules. The good thing is with AERC changing the LD rules, both races are the same for the time issue. Endurance horses must meet final pulse criteria, usually 64, within a half hour of crossing the finish line, and must complete the final vet exam within an hour of crossing the finish line.

Where MN has been a bit off on this is the half hour pulse. There seems to be confusion about the final pulse. If you are riding endurance, you can come to the pulse lanes if your half hour is getting close and there is a line waiting for the vets or if you just want your horse's pulse checked. If you

have plenty of time and the vets are free, you can just go to them and skip the pulse lane. Just remember to get your pulse recorded within that first half hour.

Finally, a note for ride managers. Sometimes for the safety of the rider or the horse, a ride manager may wish to limit how late you can start certain loops, usually the last loop. This may ensure that the rider isn't going to go too fast for the conditions of the trail on the last loop. Due to heat, humidity, light conditions, etc. a ride manager may want to ensure that the rider has enough time to be able to go at a slower, safer pace. If a ride manager wishes to do this, it needs to be written where riders can see it by the pre-ride meeting. Where the start times are posted would work.

Photo by Bob Zimmerman

