Long Lines

February 2011

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www.cvdrivingclub.com

Club Photo Album:
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DUE DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE NEXT LONG LINES: February 15th.

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February 5th CVDC Meeting
World Equestrian Games
With Maureen Pach
East Haddam Grange
6:30 Potluck

Maureen Pach is a knowledgeable horse woman. She is a respected Pony Club judge and a past President of our own Connecticut Valley Driving Club. Maureen will be bringing with her a DVD of the World Equestrian Games 4-in-Hand Marathon Section. It is an unedited version.

She observed the warm up area for the Marathon, and the vet check as well as the hazards. She will comment on what she observed from the spectator point of view. Maureen's knowledge of this sport starts from the 'very beginning of time' when the CVDC held its first CDE at Clarence Russell's farm in Chester. Back then, a "Hazard" was a water crossing or perhaps a grove of trees!

Maureen, as a judge is an excellent observer, and she has lots to say about what was really happening behind the scenes at the WEG 4-in Hand Marathon.

Please come, watch, listen and enjoy----and don't forget your pot luck. (submitted by Randy)

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT…..

Well the snow is here, and I hope that many of you have been able to take advantage of your sleighs this season. It's wonderful when the weather cooperates in a big, really big way. The roads have looked like scenes from Currier & Ives. If however you like the indoors this time of year, I do hope that you joined in on Saturday, January 8th for CVDC's first ever webinar on Navigating 101 conducted by Marc Johnson of ADS. It was unfortunate that our CVDC monthly meeting had to be cancelled last minute that day due to illness, as Pat McNamee had volunteered to host our meeting at her home. We all hope that you are feeling much better now Pat. Although it would have been fun to be together for the webinar and our potluck, many of us signed on for the session and got first hand pointers from Marc about the elements of navigating. Many thanks to Jaye Winkler who spearheaded the arrangements for the webinar. If you attended the webinar, then please be sure to take a few minutes to provide feedback to your CVDC officers and/or to Susie Koos-Acker of ADS via the email follow-up that was sent to webinar participants. In looking forward to February, I do hope that you'll plan on attending the meeting. Maureen Pach will show us clips from the 2010 WEG Marathons. See the write-up elsewhere in the newsletter.

June HDT Sponsor Volunteer Needed

Our June HDT event is closer than we all may realize, and we really need a person who would be willing to serve as our Sponsor Chair. Last month, I suggested that if each of us could ask a local merchant for a $25 sponsor donation, that we could raise $2,500 with just 100 sponsors. This would be wonderful, and it can add up quickly, but we need everyone to help out. Most importantly, though, I'm asking if someone or even two members could collaborate to handle this critical activity for our event. Please contact me and/or Bill and Nancy Lawson if you are interested or have any questions

Jan Frick

Volunteers Make Great Navigators

If our club-wide webinar (Navigating 101 with Marc Johnson) has inspired you, now you can get more familiar with the details. One of the best ways to get a good feel for what a navigator needs to know is to volunteer at an event. AND WE HAVE JUST THE EVENT!

If you haven't volunteered before, now's the time. If you think you will want to compete, just not this year, you can't beat this for a dry run. If you are planning on competing, you can still help in other ways. Send an email to volunteer@cvdrivingclub.com to get your name on the list!

Check our website, www.cvdrivingclub.com , for additional details.

CT VALLEY DRIVING CLUB
2011 SPRING CLINIC

LARRY POULIN

Sunday, April 10, 2011 ~ High Hopes, Lyme, CT

Internationally renowned driver **Larry Poulin** will bring his experience and insights for CVDC's 2011 spring clinic. Best known for his success in combined driving, Larry competed an unprecedented 10 times at the World Championships, and won 8 USET Pairs Championships here in the US. He teaches all levels of drivers and all types of turnout. His focus on training the horse and developing the whip will enhance your driving experience, whether for show or for pleasure. Larry will conduct individual 45-minute sessions, beginning at 8 am.

PLUS: Larry will end the day at 6 pm with a special presentation, including DVD, and discussion!

Don't miss this opportunity!

Details:
- CVDC Members $90, first come, first serve. Register by March 1 to secure your spot!
- Non-members $100, registrations accepted after March 1.
- Auditors: $10. Excellent sound system, you won't miss a thing.

High Hopes has a spacious indoor arena with non-dusty footing and a heated viewing lounge with seating. Bathrooms, vending machines, and wide barn aisles. Easy in-and-out and parking for trailers. Stalls available @ $35/day if needed.

Some refreshments (coffee, etc.) will be provided. Please bring a light lunch for yourself.

We expect the sessions to fill up quickly, so reserve your spot early!

New for 2011: Pay online with Paypal! See link at www.cvdrivingclub.com .

Or: send check made out to CVDC, Coggins and Rabies Certificate to Marguerite Hayber, 109 Chittenden Rd., Amston, CT 06231 / 860-267-6552 / marguerite@hayber.us -- requesting AM or PM slot.

Directions and additional instructions will be supplied upon registration.

Letter from the Editor:

A One Horse Open Sleigh…….the CVDC way!

Now that I have a Standardbred, after the first snow storm I couldn't help but wish I had a sleigh. Well, careful what you wish for with CVDC members! No sooner had I mentioned my wish to some members, the calls and emails started. One member sent me an ad for a 2 seater Portland Cutter that sounded not only unique, but was reported to be light enough for a single horse to pull. Club member Dick Mangino agreed to make the ride with me to check it out. I really appreciated having his experienced opinion to determine the structural safety and if the sleigh was size appropriate and light enough for me and my horse to maneuver. We were pleasantly surprised that it was in fact nicer in person than in the pictures and the owner had recently had custom shafts made and painted by the Amish for her horse that was the same height measurements of my horse, Connor. The sleigh is an original antique dating back to 1890.

Dan Abbate and his wife Joan invited Connor and I to ride with them to the Colonial Carriage and Sleigh Rally at Orleton Farm. My thought was just to take Connor for the experience, maybe hook up and walk around if he felt comfortable. But when we got there, Connor was so relaxed, we actually entered some classes and even placed above some of the more experienced competitors. This was Connor's first time hooked to a sleigh, first time competing in a crowded ring with everything from miniature horses (which can be very scary to larger horses) to Friesians galloping by, not to mention all those jingle bells! Connor's favorite part seemed to be when the announcer called for a "strong trot", Standardbreds really love to move out!

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Rita Bellinger driving passenger Roxanna Quirino

Kathie and Dana Rindge

Kathie's newly restored Portland Cutter

Dana's daughter Sarah's 1st sleigh ride

SLEIGHING SAFETY - ESPECIALLY FOR THE FIRST TIME

By Jeff Morse

Sleighing looks very much like pulling a wheeled vehicle but there are crucial differences. It's not unusual to find this out a little too late!

~ Have experienced help with you the 1st time you hook a horse to a sleigh! ~

Not necessarily in order of importance:
1. Use a kicking strap. Wear a helmet. Self explanatory!

2. A Horse's metabolism functions most efficiently at about 23 degrees, so all systems are firing well when you are sleighing. This translates into quicker reaction time on their part. The horse you drive calmly and relaxed in July may be a lot sharper and fresher in December. For the first time hooking, if possible, drive or ride your horse indoors or ride them outside before you hook them to a sleigh and assess their energy level and focus. Best for the 1st time that they be a little tired and the session rather short and uneventful.

3. The drivers and handlers will not be as nimble dressed in heavy boots, thick gloves, and heavy clothing as they would be in July, dressed in shorts, a T-shirt, sneakers and regular driving gloves. Think about this when you dress for hooking the first time. Reins tend to get a little slipperier when your gloves are cold and may have a little snow on them. I like to use Zilco textured reins for sleighing to improve my grip. I find Beta reins get quite slippery with a little snow in the air. Leather reins work well too. Your regular driving reins may be a little short for the sleigh as you will tend to sit further and lower behind your horse.

4. The footing is slippery and may be deep....for both horse and handlers. This affects your ability to move around the horse if things start to escalate towards trouble. Best to have traction devices on your horse's feet for sleighing. Discuss this with your farrier as this is one of the biggest compromise situations in shoeing. You want extra traction for your horse when you sleigh, but you may only sleigh once or twice a month. Do you want your horse to wear traction 24/7 just for this one time work? OTOH, you don't want him slipping and hurting himself when he does work. Screw calks may help with the flexibility of your options. Snowball pads really help.

5. Seating in sleighs is generally lower for everyone than wheeled vehicles. This reduces your field of vision and makes getting OUT of the vehicle quickly a little more difficult. HOWEVER: the 1st time you hook, it is best to get in the sleigh before moving off than it is to try to walk beside/behind the horse while he is hooked. If he starts to run off, you will not be able to run with him in your heavy boots thru deep and slippery snow.

6. Runners will often stick to the ground before you get into the sleigh after you have your horse hooked. He may not be used to the extra effort required to break it lose, or to the sounds the runners will make on ice and snow. After you have him hooked, before you get in, have a header holding the horse and break the runners free by moving the sleigh, then get in. Start off slightly on the diagonal; this will also help break the runners free. A little candle wax on the runners helps with this. Rust tends to form on them when not being used. Best to get this off first. Dragging it for a short distance on pavement or thru road sand will do this pretty quickly.

7. Sleighs don't go backwards very well. Carry a whip. For the 1st hooking, put a halter on over the bridle and have a helper up front with a lead on the horse.

8. Turning is different and generally requires bigger, sweeping arcs than with a wheeled vehicle. Crusty snow is more hazardous when turning. For 1st hooking, don't try it in a small enclosed area where you have to be constantly turning. I like to use a more or less level field, although I once hooked Morgan mare that I later found out had gone over a waterfall in a cart. She took off with me in the sleigh and I just pointed her up a big hill in about a foot and a half of powder snow...about half way up the hill she started to tire out but I pushed her on all they way to the top...she never bolted off with me again. I got lucky.

9. Sleigh bells are fun but your horse first needs to get used to wearing them. Hang them on his stall door for a while so he gets used to the sound. Ask him to wear them while being ridden or driven before you hook him to a sleigh. And keep it simple: don't use them the 1st time you hook to a sleigh.

10. Plan your route in advance. There are things hidden under the snow and the uneven footing can affect the confidence of the horse. Traction devices on the horse obviously improve his traction but don't help when they stumble over something buried in the snow. The first few times you hook a horse new to sleighing, know for sure what lies underneath in your way. You can't turn 180 degrees very easily in a narrow road. Don't get trapped having to cross areas without any snow, like plowed pavement or plowed dirt roads. If your horse is experienced he may cross these short distances ok, but don't try it the first time out

11. Snow conditions are not always the best for sleighing. Deep powder is wonderful, but a little tiring on the horse; packed but not icy snow makes the job a lot easier. Ice crusted, deeper footing is dangerous when it comes to turning the runners and very hard on the horse breaking thru and working against the crust; heavy wet snow makes pulling harder than light fluffy snow. The first time you hook, try for several inches of light snow or nicely packed but not icy footing.

12. Your horse may get tired faster than he did in July. Depending on what you do with your horse, he *may* have lost some fitness from his peak competition condition by the time sleighing conditions arrive; the job of pulling may just be physically more demanding because of weather/footing conditions.

13. Very very cold air may be detrimental to your horse's lungs....not so such because of its temperature, but because it is so dry. Horses work hard pulling a sleigh and are apt to breathe very deeply, pulling very dry cold air deep into their lungs. I have never had a problem with this that I am aware of but I can see how a horse could get hurt. OTOH, when it’s very very cold, it's not the best time to be out there sleighing anyway. Don't pick the coldest day of the year to hook your horse for the first time. For more on airway damage from cold dry air see: http://www.ivis.org/special_books/Lekeux/davis/chapter_frm.asp?LA=1 "Airway Injury by Cold Air" is down the page a bit. I thought this was particularly interesting about horses that survive at minus 53 degrees Celsius: http://www.arcticphoto.co.uk/stories/horses/horses.htm

14. You are right to be concerned about the condition of your old sleigh. Dry rot can hide in critical places, especially under shaft wraps. Have someone who knows what they are doing look your sleigh over. You don't want to discover a weak spot while driving.

Note from the Author: If you have *any* questions, suggestions or comments on this material, please do not hesitate to contact me. Jeffrey B. Morse Green Meads Farm 236 Perry Peak Road Richmond, MA 01254 413.698.3804 green@meads.com www.green.meads.com

Dan Abbate and Doublebill ready for Currier & Ives class
At Colonial Carriage and Sleigh Rally

DRIVING CALENDAR 2011

(always verify information before leaving home!)

Jan 25 - Equine Liability & Insurance, Middletown Vo-Ag, e-mail Megan Nesci at nescim@mps1.org.
Jan 29-30 - NE SkiJoring Assn. at New London Winter Carnival. New London, NH. www.nesja.com
Jan 30- Mary Gray Driving: Fireside Clinic - Fitting Harness, Danville NH. www.wayfarerfarm.net
Jan/Feb (Sundays) Carriage Barn: Sleighing Lessons, Merrimack, MA. Call 603-378-0140 for conditions.

Feb 5 – CVDC: WEG videos with Maureen Pach, Location: East Haddam Grange. 6:30 pm, potluck.
Feb 5 - Sleigh Rally at Old Sturbridge Village. MGraves@wilbraham-ma.gov or 413-596-2800, ext 119.
Feb 12-13 - NE SkiJoring Assn. at Newport Winter Carnival. Newport, NH. www.nesja.com
Feb 13 - Mary Gray Fireside Clinic: Driving Dressage Tests, Danville NH. www.wayfarerfarm.net
Feb 18 - LHDC: CT State Animal Response Team. Plymouth, CT. www.litchfieldhillsdrivingclub.org
Feb 19 - Saratoga Driving Soc Mid-Winter Driving Conference, Latham NY. www.saratogadriving.com
Feb 20 - Granby Regional Horse Council Sleigh Rally, Granby, MA. Call Mark at 413-527-9532
Feb 27 - Mary Gray Driving Fireside Clinic - Learn how to Scurry, Danville NH. www.wayfarerfarm.net

Mar 5 - CVDC: Program TBD, East Haddam Grange. 6:30 pm, potluck.
Mar 13 - Mary Gray Fireside Clinic: Conditioning Your Horse, Danville NH. www.wayfarerfarm.net
Mar 18 - LHDC: Dick Lahey. Plymouth, CT. www.litchfieldhillsdrivingclub.com
Mar 27 - Mary Gray Driving: Presentation Critique & Flea Market, Danville NH. www.wayfarerfarm.net
Mar/Apr/May (Sundays) Carriage Barn: Intro to Driving Lessons, Merrimack, MA.

Apr 2 - CVDC: Driving Multiples, Peter Von Halem's farm. 6:30 pm, potluck.
Apr 10 - CVDC: SPRING CLINIC W/ LARRY POULIN, RESERVE YOUR SPOT NOW!! (see page 3)

For a complete regional calendar of events for the full year, please go to www.cvdrivingclub.com.

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February 2010

www.cvdrivingclub.com

CVDC Photo Album!
www.flickr.com/cvdc

See front page of newsletter for login and password!

c/o Rita Bellinger
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