

Winnies and Nickers

Pretty Pony Pastures

February 2009

Volume 4 Issue 2

State of the Farm

We had the State of the Union, the State of the State, the State of the County, and now, the State of the Farm address.

Some of you are aware that the position that I held with Mopar, that made this program possible, was eliminated last September. Like everyone else, we need to look at what we can do to keep the services that we offer *without* raising our rates.

We have reviewed the other therapeutic riding facilities in the area and have learned that we have the lowest rate in this area, and, quite possibly, in most of the nation. Except for those facilities that do not charge and rely heavily on donations, we are at least \$5/session lower than the others. Some charge \$20 for a 30 minute session.

In addition, the hay that cost us \$3.50 last June, and \$5.50 in October is now costing us \$7.00 a bale. We know that hay costs more in the winter, but this is *double* our summer rate. We do not have a definitive price for this year's hay, but are expecting \$4.50 or \$5.00 out of the field, with rate hikes in the fall and winter. Our farrier is also increasing his rates by \$5.00 per horse trim. Our horses are trimmed every eight weeks.

In an effort to *not* raise our rates this year, we are looking at additional ways to increase our revenue. This includes:

- Increasing the number of riders to 100. We are asking you to distribute our flyers to anyone you know that could benefit from our riding classes. As a *bonus*, anyone who recruits a rider **and** that rider stays for three months will receive their choice of a free riding lesson or a 2009 Pretty Pony Pastures t-shirt.
- Increase the number of Scout troops that utilize our facility for the badge workshops. I have a brochure that explains all the workshops. Take a few and hand them out to the Scout leaders that you know.
- Add Horse Days, clinics, and riding "camps" to our list of services. Our first is *Hug A Horse Day* that will take place on Valentine Day. We will also have *Horse Fever* Days during spring break, and plan to add similar activities during the summer.
- Encourage more schools to use our facility for field trips or classes. We were very successful with the five week session that we held with Patterson Elementary School in Holly. If you know any Special Education teachers that would be interested in our program...we have a brochure.
- We plan to hold a *barn sale* this spring. We will call it a barn sale because we have tack that we can sell as well as household goods. You can help or rent a table. Date and time to be announced.
- Add *advertising* in our *Giddy-Up Go* show bill. Businesses or individuals who take out an ad will get the bonus of being listed on our Website as well as the show bill.

Thank you for your support. If you have any other suggestions, please let me know.

Calendar of Events

Feb. 7—4-H Horse Benefit Clinic *There will be riding classes.* See me for more information if you want to attend.

Feb. 14—Hug-a-Horse Invite your horsy friends who do not ride, but would *love* to, for an hour of horse activities. See article in this newsletter. Take a flyer for your friend's daughter.

Feb. 13—15—Mid-Michigan Horse Expo Featuring Stacey Westfall. (\$8.00/ under 12 free). Schedule in Saddle Up! Magazine.

Feb. 21—PLHA Square Dance Usually held around 8:00 pm to midnight. Lazy J Ranch. See flyer posted at the Sign-in table for details or visit www.plha.info.

March 13—15—Michigan Horse Council Horse Expo 2009 (\$12/ 15 & over; \$6/ 14-6; under 6 free). Dollar off coupon and schedule in Saddle Up! Magazine.

March 28—Educational Day—no classes Sponsored by the Midwest Dressage Association at McPhail Equine Performance Center—MSU—cost is \$10 in advance or \$20 at the door. See flyer at the Sign-in table for more information.

New Riders and Volunteers

In spite of the cold January, we still had new riders and volunteers join our Pretty Pony Pastures family.

Welcome to riders Marcus and Matt Wiel, and volunteers Jim and Mya Tweston.

We would also like to thank Dave Sims for the showcase for our horse skull. This will help preserve the skull while making it viewable. Dave got the magazine racks for us, too. Thanks, Dave!





Pretty Pony Pastures

P. O. Box 86
Davisburg, MI 48350
Phone: 248.634.7276
Hot line: 248.245.0014
Email: Linda@prettyponypastures.org

I LOVE HORSES



Valentines Day—Spend an hour with the one you love most—a horse!

Designed for new riders or youngsters who have not ridden in a while, the hour long session will include:

- Grooming a horse
- Weighing and measuring a horse
- Riding lesson

Sessions will begin every half hour starting at 2:00pm. The last session will start at 4:00pm.

Cost is \$10 if payment is made online or by check, \$12 if payment is made on the day of the session.

The patch in the upper left corner will be given to every participant.

Online registration accepts Pay Pal - www.prettyponypastures.org/Hug-A-Horse.htm

Or print out the form and mail it in with a check.

Reservations can be made online and payment (\$12) will be taken on the day of the session.

In case of extremely (20 degrees or less) cold weather, the session will take place on February 21st.

February Birthdays

The following riders and volunteers have birthdays this month.

- Robbie Ragnone
- Gloria Donal
- Brett Henick
- Eva Aguilar
- Quinn Mollenhour
- Regan Tackett



Wishing you a happy birthday and a great year.

Weather Reminder

If this is winter, than spring has to be just around the corner! Please be aware that the weather at our farm may be a lot different than the weather in your neighborhood. We are closed if:

- Temperature or wind chill is 20⁰ or less.
- Traveler's advisory is in effect
- Snowfall of 4 inches or more (call to check if our drive is plowed)
- Winds gusting to more than 30 mph
- **Severe** weather warning (snow, ice, wind, temp, storm)

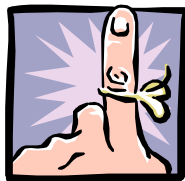


If you are using weather.com to check the weather, be sure to enter our zip code **48350**. Weather patterns change from area to area and our temperature can be as much as 10 degrees colder than the city.

If in doubt, please call our hot line at **248 245-0014**. We try to post closings as early in the day as possible usually by 8:00 am on weekends and 4:00 pm on weekdays.

If your roads are bad, if your area is not safe for travel, just call and let us know that you are not coming. It's always wise to play it safe.

Reminders



2009 Rider Release Forms **must** be on file *before* your rider can participate in classes.

Rider's weight must be listed on the form. Use the scale if you don't know.

Pick up your rider's **New Rider and Parent Guide**, even if this is your fifth year riding here. There are changes and new items added.

Return the **Acknowledgement** sheet that let's me know that you received and **read** the **Parent Guide**.

Use the Sign-out calendar when you know your rider will not be attending a class.

Call the *hot line* (248 245-0014) at least two hours before class when your rider is sick. You **will** be charged for the class if we do not get the call within that time frame. Your rider **will** risk loosing their riding spot if three consecutive classes or missed *or* the rider does not ride at least **75%** of time in each quarter.

Dress the rider according to the weather. Gloves, knit hats, boots, socks, all help keep the warmth in during the cold riding sessions.

Enter through the **side door** during the cold months to help keep the wind out of the arena.

Let us know your choice for our Giddy-Up Go Horse Show. Dates to choose from are July 25, August 8, or August 29. We will set the date in March so that we can make the arrangements for ribbons, judge, and other amenities. Let me know by February 25th for your vote to count.