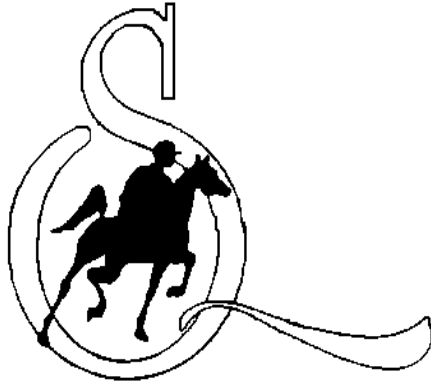


QUICKSILVER QUIPS

February 2003



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President's Message

The ride season is well under way. Many members have already completed the Death Valley Encounter and SASO I. I know that Judy needs stories for the Quips. When you attend a ride, take a moment to write down your thoughts and experiences. Judy would really appreciate the input and the rest of the club would enjoy reading it.

February 8th is our annual awards banquet at Harry's Hofbrau. Maryben has been busy gathering awards and Steve has once again put together our calendar/yearbook. I hope to see everyone there.

A draft of the by-laws will be included in the envelope with your calendar, which will be distributed at the awards banquet. The changes will be discussed the March general meeting.

Scott and his ride committee are already hard at work preparing for our spring Ride. The ride will take place May 17th at Henry Coe State Park. With the winter rains, come green grass and lots of wildflowers. This ride will be beautiful. If you would like to help with the organization of the ride, give Scott a call. I'm sure he can find a job for anyone willing.

The winter rains have given us a fairly dry January, so enjoy it while it lasts.

Lori

Silver State 2002 & 2003 Ride Season

By Karen Chaton

One of the great things about this ride being over Thanksgiving weekend is that it lets you look back over the previous year and think of all the things that you have to be Thankful for. On the 9-hour drive to Jean, Nevada this year I thought of all of those things. Weaver and Rocky, I am sure, don't realize how much I appreciate them, nor do they understand all of the great and wonderful experiences that they have given me. I can shut my eyes (not while I'm driving tho), and think back to any of the various places we have been over the last year and I am magically transformed to that moment. I remember sponsoring a junior on her first 100, while she slept with her arms around Rocky's neck in the last couple of miles to the finish. I remember Weaver drinking out of the Snake River, and of the blisters he put on my hands trying to slow him down after leaving the vet check on the last day at that ride. I remember the how the air smelled from the soft rain and Weaver's warm breath on my neck when I got off to get a gate. Everything I think of makes me smile. I am truly Thankful this Thanksgiving. As time goes on I think I have learned to appreciate each ride a lot more. I am not in any hurry to finish, because then it is over. I rode with John Bass on the first day, and we finished last. We had the most amazing ride. There was a storm, and the sky filled the desert with the most incredible colors. The contrast between the brown desert and the rainbow of colors in the sky is something that is just so special to get to experience. The weather was just perfect - no wind, it didn't rain and we were comfortable. As John and I went over the Rocky Pass for what may well be the last time anybody rides over it on an endurance ride, I collected one of the trail markers to keep as a souvenir. We were in last place---the first time we went thru Rocky Pass we were getting lapped by the front runners. The second time thru was pretty peaceful! As I was leading Weaver down the steepest part of the pass, he stopped and turned his head, letting me know that we were getting too far ahead of John and Boomer. I looked back and saw that John was indeed quite a ways back, he looked like he was trying out for a role in Night of the Living Dead, or the Mummy, by how he was moving. This gave me more opportunity to snap photos of the spectacular colors. The days are short, so we rode the last couple of miles in the dark. Lights from the Nevada Landing casino blinded us and so we just let the horses find the way. They

knew better than we did where the trail went. This day's trail does a loop back into the same camp. We finished at 5:30 P.M., went to the ride meeting at 6:00 P.M. then headed over to the casino to eat dinner. What a day!

On the second day we ride point to point, from Jean out to Blue Diamond. I really like this trail because it is so much fun to ride. The trail winds and dips and turns and goes up and down. I was sponsoring Heather, a junior, and her horse Marc. Heather's older sister Miranda was moving my rig and Rocky for me to Blue Diamond. I rode Weaver and waited for most everybody to start and leave camp until we left. This resulted in a nice easy relaxed day. On some of the last rides Weaver has become really difficult when he doesn't get to go at a pace that he wants. I much prefer to avoid that kind of situation. Anybody who thinks a young horse is difficult at the start---an experienced *strong* and opinionated horse isn't a whole lot easier! +D On this day, same as the one before, I often felt as if I was riding a ballet - as the horse just glided thru the trail with such ease and grace. I feel so safe and secure on Weaver, he has never fallen with me and he loves following those narrow single-track trails with as much enthusiasm as ever. We did get rained on a little bit this day, but the temperature was warm and it was nice. The night before it rained for hours. Weaver's neck and head had been wet for a full day and he was still in a good mood. Ordinarily, he hates bad weather. But, this was just rain, no wind, and warm -so he was pretty content. Because it was warm, humid and raining - the horses just never did dry. My Gore-Tex raingear kept me dry and warm, and Weaver had a polar fleece rump rug. The rain from the night before made the desert even more beautiful than ever. The barrel cactus was vivid red in color, the moss had turned bright turquoise and green and the Joshua trees stood out against the brown earth in their new shiny green colors. Add to this the colored rocks as we head up towards Cave Canyon and the clouds in the sky and you've got nearly every color imaginable. Heather decided to pull at the lunch stop, so I continued on and rode the rest of the day with Tracy and her stallion Dragon. The trail markings had been tampered with, but we managed to find our way without too much trouble. It was about 3:30 P.M. when we finished---7:00 A.M. starts. RM provided a really nice hot dinner to us that night (the other nights

we had the casino restaurants to choose from), and completion awards were polar fleece throws.

On the third day I rode Rocky. This day was the 1st ride day of the new ride season. We started last and stayed behind Trilby for several miles out. I spent a lot of time working on getting him to walk and trying to keep him calm and from getting too wound up. Knowing he'd already spent 2 days not being ridden to get wound up (he hates being not-ride!) He likes to try and use every excuse in the book to break into a gallop. I found that morning, the only two gears Rocky had were "neutral" - which is when he was standing still and "faster", which is what he tried to achieve no matter what gait we were in. It went something like this (from the horse's perspective) "I want to gallop, if I can't gallop, I will trip. When I trip I will save myself by going into a gallop. If you try and control my speed I will run thru a cholla cactus". Yet, I never got mad at him, instead I talked to him and patiently kept working with him until he understood. When I started to feel him responding to my leg aids and he was staying in a trot, I let him go a little more. When he tried to get going too fast we would go back to a walk. During the lunch vet check he probably tossed his head up in the air at least 100 times -all the while eating, drinking, peeing on his food, and dragging me around. Apparently Chill Out wasn't in Rocky's vocabulary on this day. He gets like this sometimes. After lunch I let him go a little more and that made him really happy, though I still had to bring him down to a walk if he saw riders ahead. This was a great training day for us, because at the end of it I felt that I had accomplished something. We still have a long way to go. I still don't know how many cholla cactuses we knocked into.

Well, all three days went by too fast. Just like that, it is over. The casino is there, and we ate dinner in it one last time. It is nice to have good friends. We had a great time, talking about the magic we have from riding our horses on such a fun trail. I will miss this ride. Weaver and Rocky, between them, have completed the last 21 days, or - 7 years - of Silver State. We've had a lot of great times here, and will really miss this trail. It is a real treasure! Thanks to LVDR, Claire, Fred, Peggy and all of their wonderful helpers on all of their hard work. We really appreciate you. -)

Karen

& Weaver

& Rockylooking forward to wherever we end up next year -)

First Year Death Valley Experience

By Peggy Bullock

Just a note to say that the DVE ride was so great! It was well worth the drive to be able to be with all those great people with the gorgeous (and dry) desert scenery! It was my first year at the ride and I can definitely say I'll be back next year! The weather was great, except for some howling, freezing head winds on the last day, as we rode to the lunch vet check – definitely a test of endurance there! The ride appeared well organized to me and there was lots of help and moral support from various people – some riders who just came to help Jackie, and some locals who had some interesting stories to tell about the area. Oh, and it fun getting “buzzed” by those fighter jets overhead as we rode back to camp along that big long valley on the 3rd day!

I rode my Foxtrotter, Lucky, to “victory”, completing the 3rd and 4th days of the ride...a 30 and a 50. Still had loads of horse left at the end...he wanted more miles, but I was glad to be back in camp where I was greeted by with a margarita and a bag of popcorn by my fiancé, Bob Eaton.

Bob did great too...almost completed all 4 days...his horse was slightly off near the middle of the last day – he walked him in (on the ground), the last 7 miles to the lunch vet check. Thankfully Yahoo was completely sound (and still is) when he got back to camp and checked with the vet.

The New Year's party was fun, though we didn't quite make it to midnight...I think we may have made it longer than any of the QS members though...we danced as much as we could to stay and, and talked to many of the new friends we had made during the ride.

Hats off to Jackie, “the Duck” (I can finally put a face to the name!), and Charlie (the other vet whose last name I didn't get – he was great!). Happy New Year!

Trails Update

It looks like construction will begin this year on the staging areas at the entrances to Almaden Quicksilver and to Sierra Azul from Hicks Road. When the staging areas open there will be an official connection from AQ to Lexington Reservoir—a very challenging trail will be added to the many in Santa Clara County.

I have made several inquiries to the Santa Clara County Valley Water District about the

proposed dams in Henry Coe and have received no reply. However the Pine Ridge Association is keeping us informed so stay tuned!

QSER General Meeting Minutes January 15, 2003

President Lori Oleson called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Minutes: no minutes from the December party.

Correspondence: several items were returned.

Treasurers report:

Balance as of January 1, 2003 \$ 6,185.21

Deposits

Membership dues	1,145.00
Subtotal	<u>7,330.21</u>

Expenses

Newsletter	87.01
New Almaden	
Community Center	260.00
Harry's Hofbrau	200.00
Hallmark Equine Insurance	621.20
Service charge	20.00

New Balance \$ 6,142.00

Trails Account	<u>848.60</u>
Junior Account	<u>766.40</u>

Committee Reports:

- Membership: Maryben not present.
- Newsletter: the editor would like items before the first so newsletter can go out by then.
- Awards: Maryben is assembling the awards. The first QS Senior and Junior awards need sponsors. Awards still outstanding are the Horse of the Year, the Rider of the Year and the Eleanor Norton Award.
- Trails: We need someone to step forward to be the trails advocate representing the club. There are a lot of things happening that we need to be aware of.

Unfinished Business:

- The Awards Banquet at Harry's Hofbrau is set for February 8, 2003 at 6:30 P. M.
- By-Law Revision: a copy of the revised by-laws will be put in the 2003 calendar packet. Members are requested to study it carefully and at the March meeting they will be reviewed and voted on. So if you care and want your vote to count be at the March meeting.

Spring endurance ride:

Scott Sansom will manage the spring ride, which will be held at Henry Coe State Park. He is looking into new trails and a new campsite. He needs help so volunteer your time for your RIDE. Scott is also compiling guidelines for future rides as he works on the spring ride to make things easier for future ride managers.

Fall endurance ride:

Jill is thinking about managing the Fall ride. Scott will sanction it with Maryben to get it on the fall calendar.

New business:

Do we want an easier name for our website? What is the cost?

Programs:

Lori is interested in getting a program chairperson and some ideas what we want to learn about or hear from this year. Be involved with your club; give us some ideas.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Submitted by secretary, Carla Ambriz.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Thanks to all the members who sent me stories and articles—there are so many that I have material for future Quips.

Our neighbor who is a bit of a wag has an idea for a new Quips column, *The Eqwhine*, which will feature, well, whining. He thought of this while riding his obstinate mare. If I get some good ones I will sponsor an unofficial, appropriate annual award for the most interesting whine.

WANT ADS

Room for rent: \$675. Call Steve at (408) 377-0611.

For Sale: 1997 Featherlite Horse Trailer. Model # 8546, 2 horse aluminum slantload gooseneck trailer. Belly length, 16 feet. LQ area includes: large fridge/freezer, heater, sink w/water hand-pump and 5 gallon water storage under sink. Twenty-five gallon water storage in corner with spigot to outside, large closet, counter, storage for port-a-potty which doubles a seat, small fold-up table, queen-size mattress. Interior light switches for exterior lights. Battery is supplied from top-mounted solar panels. Propane tank and 20 gallon water storage mounted under front of gooseneck. Hayrack on top, 2 nearly new hi-ties, 3-tier saddle rack, 2 large tack organizers. Extra horse ties and bucket holders. Asking \$13,500. Also have a 1976 2 horse Miley, \$1000 OBO. Both trailers are located 50

miles south of Reno. For more information, e-mail Karen Chaton at nvrider@charter.net.

SASO Ride & Tie

Who remembers the last time a January Shine and Shine Only ride occurred, besides Becky and Judith? Well 2003 is starting off as a grand year for the Shine and Shine Only series with a spectacular, no...beyond spectacular, day on January 18. This is also the third year that Ride & Tie races are being held in conjunction with the Endurance Rides, and nobody is more ecstatic about that than me! Since I managed so many R & T's last year, I only got to race twice (Mocha, just once!) so I am committed to racing as much as possible this year. Starting the year with a January R & T was perfect.

Our team included Katie Alton, Mocha Brown and me. It was Katie's first Ride & Tie and Mocha and I were thrilled to have her as a partner for the following reasons:

1. At age 13, she and I still can use the same stirrup lengths; although since I saw Katie last, she has surpassed me in height!
2. She runs the mile in 5 minutes and 34 seconds. I had to keep reminding her to slow down though, because she would be running quite a few miles.
3. She weighs less than I do, so Mocha occasionally forgot she was there.
4. She never ceases smiling and is full of energy.

The race started at Mockingbird and Katie's first major concern was who was going to run up Cardiac. Although I started on Mocha, I ended

up running most of Cardiac, but beyond that Katie did her fair share of running. We rode and ran into the vet check at McAbee right in the middle of the R & T pack, which I thought was pretty awesome. I took off running after the vet check and let Katie vet Mocha through. Katie came flying past me near the Gaudalupe Reservoir and said, "If your OK, I'll keep riding". I said I was fine and she and Mocha took off. It was about then that I realized Katie was on Cloud 9. She was riding really fast and it was without a sponsor! You gotta love Ride & Tie! Ties are limited climbing the back side of Mine Hill, so Katie and I only made a couple of transitions and she spent most of the time riding (fast). I only had to remind her to take care of Mocha once.

After we came down through English Camp and hit the powerline trail (Hacienda), Katie said she was done running. I told her no problem, ride Mocha in to the finish, but of course I had a lot of uphill to run yet again. Katie and I had both been sick with colds for the two weeks prior to the race, and I thought we had done fantastic up to the powerline trail. But she and I were both beat after about 18 miles, so I slowed down quite a bit while running and teams started passing. Mocha was, by far, our strongest link for the day. He did not slow down for a minute. Even though I told Katie to ride Mocha in to the finish, I told her not to get too far ahead, because part of the fun of R & T is finishing as a team. I am sure she was bummed about not being able to go fast and furious to the finish, but she dealt with it like a true champion Ride & Tier.

I think all three of us had a great day, but when I asked Katie if she wanted to race again with Mocha and me at the February SASO, she said, no way, she was riding the 50. Teenagers, they are so fickle!

Hoping for sun on February 22!!!!

Cheryl Domnitch

Memories of the Good Old Days - by Jeri Ayers-Scott

"Those were the days my friend. I thought they'd never end."

Memories of Pistol - Owing Pistol was a childhood dream come true. Discovering endurance riding was the icing on a perfect cake. The twenty-three years I owned Pistol were the happiest years of my life. Those years cannot be re-lived or re-invented. Those years can only be remembered with love and joy. The sweet special bond that Pistol and I shared can never be replaced or duplicated.

Memories of endurance riding - For me endurance riding was sheer fun and excitement combined with freedom and the companionship of Pistol and my many endurance friends. Each ride was a personal victory. "To Finish Is To Win" meant something to me and my friends.

The AERC motto is "To Finish Is To Win" and that was a motto that I lived by and believed in and fought for. Others would say "John Doe won the ride". I would say, "No, John Doe crossed the finish line first but we all finished and we all won the ride."

Memories of the award system - I rode from 1978 through 1986. When I first started riding the AERC awards system was very different and I think better. There was a national top 25 in mileage and in points and a top 10 in each region in mileage and in points. There were no weight divisions. There was no championship ride. There were no international events. I could easily write an entire article on the awards system but I will save that for another day.

We had 12 hours to complete a 50 mile ride. If the weather conditions were bad, such as a very bad trail or extreme heat or the 50 mile ride turned out to be 60 miles, the vets had the authority to extend the 12 hours by an hour or two. That was a kinder and gentler way to conduct a ride in my opinion. Riders could slow down and take better care of their horses instead of fighting an unforgiving deadline where 1 minute over 12 hours and you do not get a completion.

Memories of rides in the past - Trails were not always well marked back when I rode. Some were not marked at all. When I went to my first Nevada ride there was only a very brief ride meeting and all they said was that the ride would start about 6:00 AM and what hotel the banquet would be at the next evening. When I asked about trail markings I was told that if I was not familiar with the trail then I should ride with a local. That was good advice. Nevada rides were different but I learned from them, self-reliance if nothing else.

Sometimes there was no pre-ride vet check or ride meeting or anything. At one ride I went to in Nevada there was a small building about the size of an outhouse that had a sign on it "Sign in here." Inside was a small table with a notebook and a pencil and you wrote down your name. That completed the sign in. The pre-ride vet check the next morning consisted of a vet standing around at the start line. As you rode by he looked at your horse. If your horse looked okay you kept going on down the trail. There did not seem to be any official start. When I left I had no idea who was ahead of me or behind me. At the first vet check, about 15 miles into the ride, the ride secretary took your name, compared it to her sign in list, and assigned each rider a number and marked the horses. Then she handed you a vet card with your name and number on it and you continued the ride.

Compared to Nevada rides California rides, especially in the Bay Area, were very civilized. I will never forget the Castle Rock Ride. Complete with rider packets, pre-ride vet checks, pre-ride meetings, well marked trails, hot showers and good meals. I remember so well taking a hot shower and looking up to see blue sky through lacey green treetops. What a great experience after a fantastic day on the trail with Pistol riding through meadows and trees and bare ridge tops with views of the ocean. I remember the excitement and the peacefulness of the beautiful meadows we camped in at Castle Rock.

I can't talk about rides without mentioning Tevis. Tevis was not a fun ride for me. It was a beautiful ride; the scenery was stunning. The ride was well organized. Every inch of trail was a challenge. Pistol and I completed the Tevis on our first attempt. When I was handed the buckle that Pistol and I won it was the proudest moment of my life. When you finish Tevis you know you have done something very special. But I decided that I only needed one buckle to hold up my pants and I

never went back. We won over the Tevis. We finished. And we finished well. But once was enough for me.

In those days, as well as I can remember, no ride was ever cancelled due to bad weather. Once a ride date was set it didn't matter about the weather. Of course there were no environmentalists in those days protecting the trails from the horses. If it was 28 degrees or 115 degrees you rode anyway. If a trail was knee deep in mud you rode through it or around it but you went forward. I remember coming home from rides when my saddle was so caked in mud there was nothing to do but throw it in the driveway and turn the hose on it. Let it dry and then spend the next week oiling it so I could go and do it all over again. I still have that saddle. It is a very old Stubben jumping saddle. It is well oiled and in storage along with some wonderful memories. By the way, they didn't have endurance saddles in those days. Endurance saddles were invented later. When I first started riding endurance all the horses were skinny. And I mean a bag of bones and a hank of hair skinny. When I bought Pistol off of a rent string here in San Jose he was skin and bones. He fit right in. I had no trouble getting him through a vet check. Under my care it wasn't long till he gained some weight. Still, no problem. Then he gained more weight. He was part quarter horse so when he gained weight he started looking pretty chunky. And my problems with vets started. The vets in that day simply did not want to let a heavy horse start an endurance ride. It did not matter that he was sound and fit. He was heavy. In the end the vets always let me start the ride, because they simply could not find any reason to not let him start, but it was always with dire warnings.

Once when I drove all the way down to a ride in southern California the vet took one look at Pistol and told me to go home and put him on a diet and come back next year. I immediately got into an argument with the vet because by this time Pistol and I had almost 4,000 career miles and that was back when almost 4,000 career miles was impressive. Finally the ride manager, who knew me, talked to the vet and convinced him that Pistol should start the ride. That he would personally guarantee the vet that Pistol would not only finish but he would be the best looking horse at the ride when he crossed the finish line. When we arrived at the 47-mile vet check I was delighted to see that particular vet standing there. And he was impressed with how good Pistol looked and told me so. I never saw that vet again but I'll never forget the incident.

Vets were always amazed at how really good Pistol always looked at the end of a ride. I always felt that he did well because of his weight. He had a reserve that the skinny horses didn't have. And that reserve kept him going and looking good. Not to mention that fat cells hold water and he never got dehydrated. Pistol was my wonder horse. He had all the spirit of the Arabian and all the common sense of the quarter horse. And he was blessed with good health. In 4,160 miles there were only two rides that he did not finish.

Memories of conditioning - When I started riding people usually only went to a ride about once a month. And they conditioned like crazy in between rides, and rode many miles. It was like a science. So many fast miles. So many slow miles. Trot up hill. Walk down hill. But riders usually only entered one ride per month. If they wanted to attend more rides they took different horses. I only had one horse and I didn't know any better and I didn't have a lot of time to condition. So I went to rides every two to three weeks. And I did not do any serious conditioning. I rode in between events but I rode mostly for my own pleasure and usually at a walk. I never did any serious conditioning, not ever. Disclaimer - Please do not try this at home. I firmly believe in conditioning. I just didn't do it.

Eventually the time came during my first summer of endurance riding when there were four rides in one month and I wanted to go to all of them. So I attended the first one, and then the second one. But when I showed up at the third ride in three weeks with the same horse one of my fellow club members took me aside and explained to me, and she was totally serious and troubled by what I was doing, that I simply could not ride the same horse every weekend for 50 miles. I was so impressed by her concern that I considered withdrawing my entry. But Pistol passed the vet check with flying colors and certainly seemed sound and ready to go so the next morning off we went for the third weekend in a row. We went on and did the fourth weekend in a row also and I continued my crazy schedule of not conditioning and my riding lots of rides for many years. My fellow club member continued to frown and shake her head. Eventually she gave up worrying about me. And in my defense I always had Pistol in very, very large pastures. I mean acres and acres of pasture, with hills, and valleys, and plenty of room to self-exercise. In twenty-three years I

always managed to find huge pastures for him with other horses for companionship and summer or winter he was allowed to be a free spirit. He was almost never in a stall or paddock. I think this contributed to his good health.

Memories of QS and AERC - I loved my years of being an active Quicksilver and AERC member. I feel that I contributed a lot to both clubs. My friends in both clubs are dear to me. I am sorry it is over. The only thing I regret is that I spent too much time with the politics of the clubs I belonged to and not enough time with Pistol. I should have spent more time with my horse soul mate.

But I have my memories, so many beautiful wonderful memories. My favorite memories of Pistol were when I drove out to the ranch to take care of him. Usually he would be in the pasture watching my car come up the driveway. I would call to him and he would answer me back with a nicker. I would open the pasture gate and he would walk out and walk up to the car. The trunk of the car was my tack room. I would feed and groom him and we had our special quality time together. Pistol passed on at age 28 two years ago.

"Those were the days my friend. I thought they'd never end."

There is no Quicksilver Endurance Riders meeting in
February

INSTEAD we party hearty at the 2003 Annual
Awards Banquet!

Join us at Harry's Hofbrau on February 8 at 6:30
PM

for a no host dinner in the banquet room.

Harry's Hofbrau is located at 390 Saratoga Avenue, San Jose. (408) 243-
0434

Maryben has been hard at work assembling the best prizes ever. Steve and the calendar committee will distribute the 2003 QS calendar full of member pictures and activities.

Even if you didn't win anything this year come to visit and catch up on all the stories.



QS member and busy, busy vet Michele Shaw took the time to send the following thought-provoking article.

EVALUATING LAMENESS, FROM A RACE VET'S PERSPECTIVE

For AERC, there is an old standard, that a horse must be “fit to continue”, in order to pass a vet exam and either continue on the trail, or receive a completion award. This means that in part, a horse must be functionally sound. While this seems quite straightforward, there are some gray zones, as well as some opportunities for controversy, especially when the stakes are high, or when the rider is a the mercy of an adrenaline rush.

Many riders have probably seen or heard that vets use a grading system to describe degrees of lameness, and while most do likely know the meaning of such a grading system, it is well worth clarification. The system is based on five different levels of lameness, demarcated by Roman numerals, with a grade I being the least lame and a grade V being the most. Form the Veterinary guidelines for Judging AERC Endurance Competitions (rev 10/99), and approved by the American Association of Equine Practitioners 10/81:

Grade I – Difficult to observe. Not consistently apparent regardless of circumstances (i.e., weight-carrying, circling, inclines, hard surfaces, etc.).

Grade II – Difficult to observe at a walk or trotting on a straight line, consistently apparent under certain circumstances, (i.e., weight-carrying, circling, inclines, hard surfaces, etc.).

Grade III – Consistently observable at a trot under all circumstances.

Grade IV – Obvious lameness at a walk: marked nodding, hitching, or shortened stride.

Grade V – Minimal weight-bearing in motion and/or at rest: inability to move.

The more popular definitions for grades I-IV from vet school are as follows:

Grade I – a vet can see it

Grade II – a vet student can see it

Grade III – a trainer can see it

Grade IV – an owner can see it

While I include these tongue-in-cheek definitions for fun, they do bring up a good point. While quite a few experienced endurance riders are better at picking up lamenesses than some vets; many endurance riders are beginners, or relatively self-taught individuals. The latter are not always as skilled in horse management as they could be, and this can lead to shocked surprise when a horse they are riding turns up lame at a vet check. Occasionally this surprise is followed by denial and subsequent disbelief, and this can lead to an argumentative attitude. Hard to believe, I know, but it does happen! Welfare of the horse flies right out the window as the rider grapples with the implications of a pull in his or her record, and the loss of the T-shirt that is most surely the completion award.

Another factor to throw into the mix is the horse's own adrenaline, which courses through the bloodstream at a fairly good rate while the horse is moving down the trail. This can do an excellent job of masking lameness while the horse is being ridden. The rider, who has been assiduously monitoring every step the horse takes while under saddle, is blissfully unaware of impending disaster. Once the horse is allowed to rest a bit in a vet check or at the

end of the ride, it begins to feel the ache and pain, and exhibits this with a head bob when trotting in front of the vet. Once again, the rider is caught by surprise, with potentially nasty side effects.

A relatively easy way to curtail these troublesome surprises is to trot your horse before coming to the vet for an exam. If you are not confident in your own ability to see a lameness, ask a friend who is competent. Not only will you have advance warning of a possible problem this way, but you will also have an opportunity to fix the problem, if it solvable. If it is as simple as a lost shoe, you can have one put back on before the vet exam, and this will often make a difference. Of course, the problem is not always something you can fix with a shoe or an Easyboot,

but I know that whatever vet you see will appreciate your awareness that there is a problem. It is much easier to work with a rider who is prepared and knowledgeable than one who is shocked and emotional. It just takes a little extra time and effort on your part to be cognizant of the condition of your horse, but in the long run, it can spare everyone a truckload of grief.

I hope this article will encourage other QS vet members to contribute their thoughts from time to time—hint, hint!

Thanks to all members who are current with their dues but if you're not...

It's That Time of Year!!!!

**Your QUICKSILVER Riders membership fee was due on January 1, 2003.
You need to join by March 31, 2003 to avoid being a DELINQUENT member.**

We need your name _____

And then your address _____

And your phone number, Fax, e-mail _____

And last we need the names of the other members of your family.

And then we need your money! Individual membership is \$ 25 _____

Family membership is \$ 35 _____

Why join the Quicksilver Endurance Riders? You will have the opportunity to participate in poker rides, moonlight rides, endurance rides, trail projects as well as attend monthly

meetings, the Christmas party and the annual awards ceremony and saving the best for last, you will meet the best friends you will ever have!

How are our dues spent? Annual Yearbook/Calendar; monthly Newsletter; a representative voice in horse politics locally; trail maintenance and improvement projects; year-end awards and monthly meetings.

Send your 2003 dues, checks made out to: Quicksilver Endurance Riders, Inc.

Mail to Membership Chairperson: Maryben Stover
1299 Sandra Drive
San Jose, CA 95125-3535

May your and your horse have wonderful Year 2003 riding together as members of the
QUICKSILVER ENDURANCE RIDERS.

2003 February Rides

Date	Region	Ride Name	Distance	Manager	Phone #
02/15	PS	20 Mule Team	35/65/100	Jackie Bumgardner	760-375-8915
02/22	W	SASO	25/50	Becky Hart	408-997-0814

NO CLUB MEETING IN
FEBRUARY
BECAUSE WE WANT EVERYONE TO
COME TO THE

2003 AWARDS
BANQUET

**FEBRUARY 8 at HARRY'S
HOFBRAU
6:30 P. M.
390 Saratoga Ave., San Jose**

Quicksilver Endurance Riders, Inc.
P. O. Box 71
New Almaden, CA 95042