

Blue Spruce Riding Club  
644 Dogwood Dr.  
Alburtis, PA 18011  
www.bluespruceridingclub.com

Summer 2023

# The Trail News



## Letter from the Editor

This Sunday is our second Trail Obstacle practice of 2023, join us for a fun day with the horses trying out the obstacles. Did you know that this type of an event is even good for bringing green horses to? Gets them off the farm to see strange things, walk past obstacles and maybe go over them. We will have a couple new configurations—you must join us to see what they are. We always have at least 20 obstacles available to work on, some are simple, others more complex.

The Kitchen will be open for lite breakfast and lunch items. Members—we can use some donations.

We are doing setup at 9:00 am on Saturday to 12:00 noon if you wish to help.

**Note:** If you currently are not on our email list, please send the editor your email address, will be glad to add you to our distribution list. Email [cropeter@dejazzd.com](mailto:cropeter@dejazzd.com)

## Upcoming Events:

**2ND Saturdays of the Month**—The ring at the club grounds will be open for use—only in good weather. We ask that if you use the ring, please clean up after yourself.

**July Trail Obstacle Practice**—July 23 starting at 9:00 am to 2: 00 pm — see enclosed flyer

**August Trail Obstacle Practice**—August 20 starting at 9:00 am see enclosed Flyer

**Reminder to follow along with our events on FACEBOOK and check out our website at <http://www.bluespruceridingclub.com/>**



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Treasury Report:	
Checking: \$2339.21	



Fundraiser—Bags For Sale at the Clubhouse—\$5.00 each



Thank you to our members who faithfully mail in their dues each year. Membership dues are due in the beginning of each year. If you joined in Nov or Dec, of the previous year, no dues are required till the following year. The price is: \$20.00 for a Single Membership and \$25.00 for a Family Membership. If you need a membership application, it is posted on our website.

**Mail Dues to:**

Charmaine Ropeter  
535 Fagleysville Rd  
Perkiomenville, PA 18074

Is Your Horse A Stumblebum? Here's What You Need To Know To Address Dangerous Stumbling. A horse that minds well how he places his feet is safer and more fun to ride than a stumbler. You can help by how you ride and train him. Alana Harrison

A horse prone to stumbling is a nuisance at best and a health hazard at worst. It's normal for a horse to trip or stumble every once in a while, but if tripping on the trail is becoming a regular thing for your horse, that means he's in need of help.

I'm going to tell you how to address this problem. I'll discuss the importance of ruling out physical causes, then give you a practical approach that will encourage him to mind how he steps.

**Why Address Stumbling?**

Just like us, horses sometimes take a misstep, especially if the ground is rough or uneven. It's when stumbling becomes a common occurrence that you must address it. If it's not a health-related issue (more on that in a moment), then the culprit is usually a lazy horse that's not paying attention, a shortcoming that can be extremely dangerous to you and him both.

Stumbling can cause your horse to fall down on the trail, go over a steep drop-off, or jolt you suddenly out of the saddle. And, as with everything we do with our horses, the more you let one trip, the better he gets at it. Before long, it's an ingrained habit.

So take action promptly once you notice a genuine issue.

Your first priority with a horse that stumbles is to work with your vet and farrier to eliminate any physical or health causes of his tripping, such as improperly shod feet. Alana Harrison

**Consult Your Vet, Farrier**

Your first job is to rule out physical or health problems that could be making your horse trip.

Start with his feet. Do you allow him to go too long between trimmings or shoeings, resulting in over-long hooves? Is your farrier skilled at providing a correct, balanced trim that allows for an easy breakover of the foot?

Also work with your vet to rule out lameness, as even a subtle issue can cause stumbling. Is your horse sore on one or more of his feet? Anything from sole bruising to navicular issues could be to blame.

Finally, is he suffering a neurological issue that could cause him to stumble? EPM (equine protozoal myeloencephalitis) is one example of a disease that can lead to persistent stumbling.

If there are no physical or health problems at the root of your horse's behavior, move on to training him away from it.

With health reasons ruled out, discourage stum-

bling by hustling your horse's feet every time he gets careless. Bend him on a circle in one direction, and then the other. Alana Harrison

**Make Him Pay Attention**

Frequent stumbling without cause is a sure sign your horse is letting his mind wander rather than concentrating on the task at hand. Remember, no matter what you're doing with your horse, he's responsible for his feet—where he places them and how fast he moves them. If he's not paying attention to his feet, you're going to have to give him a reason to do so.

When he stumbles, immediately pick up on one rein and cue him with your leg on the same side to bend him around in a circle. You might thump his belly with the heel of your boot, or roll your spur up his side—whatever it takes to hustle his feet as you turn him in a circle. If he ignores your leg, spank his hindquarters with the end of your mecate or a dressage whip. Move him vigorously in one direction, then reverse all cues to move him in a circle the other way.

When he's fully alert, moving with energy, and focused on you, put him on a loose rein and go back to what you were doing. The loose rein is important not only because it rewards his response, but also because it dares him to make a mistake. Get out of the habit of babysitting your horse and trying to micromanage his every step. Put him on a loose rein and let him be responsible for his feet. If he trips again, repeat the same steps. By doing so, you're making the right thing easy and the wrong thing difficult. In other words, as long as he's paying attention to where he's placing his feet, you're leaving him alone on a nice, long rein. But whenever he gets lazy and lets his mind wander, you're waking him up and making him feel uncomfortable by hustling his feet.

After circling, put him on a loose rein and invite him to be responsible for his own feet. If he stumbles again, repeat the circling. He'll learn careful stepping means less work. Alana Harrison

**Keep Him Interested**  
Another good strategy is to alleviate boredom (which can exacerbate stumbling) by keeping things interesting. Challenge your horse by incorporating more variety into your lessons and trail rides. Yes, consistency and repetition are keys to teaching your horse, but you also must be sure to add "variations on the theme" to help command your horse's attention.

The key is "just the right amount." If you include too much variety, your horse will never learn anything because he'll never get to practice a lesson consistently enough to get good at it. But if you have too much consistency (you practice the same things in the same way and the same order every day), your horse will get bored and resentful.

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**Maintenance:** Open Office

**Show Chairman:**

Sue Moss—570-345-0754

**Newsletter Editor & Trail**

**Boss—**

Charmaine Ropeter—610-310-7984

**Webmaster:**

Theresa Reabold— 610-826-5309

**Board of Directors 2022:**

**Chairman of the Board:**

Pat Zentner—610-845-2205

**2022 Board Members:**

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# Reading Your Horse From the Saddle

Reading your horse from up in the saddle is one of the most valuable skills you could ever learn. So many times, riders often just hop on and go for a ride, opting to be merely a passenger. While there are many instances where “enjoying the ride” is completely ok, it is far better for both you and your horse if you decide to be the driver and *drive according to the ‘road conditions.’*

## Why Reading Your Horse in the Saddle is Such a Valuable Tool

1. Safety – Being able to detect, and then prevent, dangerous behavior in your horse is crucial. A rider who can sense a buck or rear and then prevent it from ever happening is a far more skilled rider than one who rides through it.

Focus – Being able to tell when your horse is not focusing on you is a great tool to improve your schooling. The quicker you can get your horse’s mind back on you, the faster you can move on and work on your schooling. Learn how to tell if your horse is paying attention to you here.

Partnership – Your overall relationship with your horse in the saddle will change. You can better serve your horse’s needs when you can read him well, and he will be happier to work harder for you as a result. If you can tell he’s becoming annoyed with you, you might want to check yourself to see what you are doing to get that reaction. And then change something. Pushing a horse through something against his will is not a long term fix, and it will often create more problems in the future. Getting your horse to actually want to do something on his own is a far better choice.

## Reading Your Horse – How to Do It

All horses are different and one particular symptom might be true for some and not for all. So it’s important to really practice paying attention to your own horse and taking note of patterns. But there are some classic signs to look out for.

### The Ears

The horse’s ears are quite possibly the best tool to be able to read your horse. The horse often uses his ears to broadcast loud and clear what he is feeling or thinking.

- Soft, floppy ears – This is what you want. The horse is relaxed and going with the flow. His mind is not preoccupied, so he will most likely respond quickly to your aids or requests.
- Stiff, pricked forward – The horse is alert and has no idea about the rider on top of him. He will most likely not respond if you give an aid. The horse might be ready to spook or bolt. You need to get his attention ASAP. Turn him into a circle or leg yield to get his mind back on you.
- Pinned ears – The horse is angry and could do anything at that moment. Figure out what caused him to suddenly pin his ears back and change it.

Ears constantly moving around – The horse is most likely checking everything out. Give him a ‘check’ and say something to him to make sure he readily puts an ear back toward you. It’s ok for him to check out a new environment as long as he doesn’t forget that he has a rider on top.

The most important thing about the ears is that the horse does not have BOTH ears stiffly pricked up and forward, and that he always has at least one ear checking in on the rider. An ideal situation would be where the horse has soft floppy ears that settle somewhat off to the sides and immediately flick back toward the rider anytime the rider makes some sort of communication.

### The Body

A stiff body is a telltale sign that there is a problem. An experience rider can feel this. But you can learn to feel this on your own horse through time. He might be more difficult to bend or he may feel like a block between your legs when you put your legs around his barrel. Something that works for me is a spur test. If I put a spur gently into the horse’s side I can tell how stiff his body is. If my spur easily pushes in, he’s probably ok. But if my spur resists going into the horse or if it bounces back outward, the horse is stiff in the body. *Note; I don’t just poke the horse for no reason. It’s only when I’m using the spur already and notice how the spur affects the horse.*

Typically a high neck is a sign of uneasiness or inattention. A low neck is most likely a relaxed horse. A horse who rushes, who normally does not rush, would also be a sign that he’s not comfortable with something.

### Sounds

- A blow out – this is music to my ears, because it usually indicates that the horse is relaxing.
- A squeal – he probably didn’t like whatever you just did and this could be a warning sound. Or he’s full of energy and wants to play. Either way, a buck is about to come.

A neigh – the horse is not paying attention to you at all. He is most likely trying to communicate to one of his friends. You need to get his attention ASAP!

## The Take Away Message – Keep Your Horse’s Attention on YOU

A horse who is not paying any attention to the rider could quite possibly create a dangerous situation. It depends on the horse, of course, but you must remember that horses have one-track minds. Wherever they are in each moment, that is where they are 100%, full heartedly. So if a horse’s mind is on the deer that just jumped out of the bush, then the horse’s mind is 100% on the deer, period. So in turn, that means that the horse’s mind is not on the rider, and some horses may totally forget that there’s a rider on top!

So if a horse is scared of a deer, and he also totally forgets that he’s carrying a rider, a horse might go into flight mode without any regard to the safety of the rider. And that is no fun!

That is why you need to pay attention to ensure that your horse is paying attention. But isn’t that fair anyway? If we fully expect our horse to engage and pay attention to us, shouldn’t we do the same? So when you are with your horse, *really be with your horse.* Forget about the bills, or whatever your evening plans are. Be in the moment with your horse, and he will learn to do the same.



**Blue Spruce Riding Club**  
**644 Dogwood Dr Alburdis, PA 18011**  
Our Website: <http://www.bluespruceridingclub.com>

## Trail Obstacle Practice Series

### Trail Obstacle Practice Dates:

June 11, 2023 - 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

July 23, 2023 - 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

August 20, 2023 - 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Sept 10, 2023 - 9:00 am to 2:00 pm—Club Picnic

**Cost is \$10.00 for club members and \$15.00 for non-members per horse.**

Contact Charmaine for more info: [cropeter@dejazzd.com](mailto:cropeter@dejazzd.com) or 610-310-7984 or check our Facebook page—Blue Spruce Riding Club, Alburdis, PA. You can see some of the pictures from last year's Trail obstacles.

For the Practice: Practice on 20 plus different obstacles. Great way to get your horse used to new obstacles. Examples: Bridges, pool noodles, mailbox, teeter-totter, pin-wheel, back through and trot overs, gate, drag, ball push, side-pass, etc. Kitchen—We will have the kitchen open for breakfast and lunch items to purchase.

All riders must wear a shoe with a heel. Riders 18 years and under must wear a helmet.  
Clubhouse Café will be open all day.  
Please clean up around your trailer.  
Follow signs to show grounds.  
All Dogs on club grounds must be on a leash.



## BSRC ADVERTISEMENT

Reminder: As a club member you can have your business card or advertisement included in the monthly newsletter.



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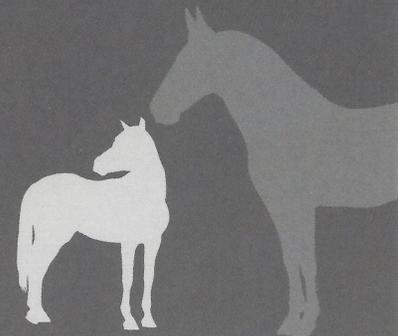
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# 10 Tips to Beat the Summer Heat!

## 2023 BSRC Schedule

Rising temps can be hard on horses and change the way you feed them, turn them out or exercise them. Here are some tips to help your horses during the hot summer days.

### Keeping Horses Cool at Home

- Be sure horses kept outside have shaded areas and water available at all times.
- When turning out horses, early morning or evening turnout is ideal.
- Ensure that stabled horses have fans or free flowing airways.
- Supplementing 1-3 tbsp of salt or using electrolytes may be beneficial to your horse's feed program, helping to replenish key electrolytes.

### Staying Safe While Riding

- Ride in the early morning or evening with cooler temps.
- Keep riding sessions short and allow for more breaks when having longer rides.
- Make sure both horse and rider are fully hydrated before exercising.
- Riders should wear clothes that are light and airy, don't forget sunscreen!
- Hose down your horse after exercising until they feel cool to the touch.
- Trailering? Trailer horses at night/early morning when possible. Ensure trailers have adequate airflow, stop for water and rest breaks during longer trailer rides.

**General Meetings: 7:00 PM  
at the clubhouse**

**July 23—Obstacle Practice  
August 6**

**Aug 20—Obstacle Practice  
Sept 10—Club Picnic and  
Obstacle Practice**

**October 1**

**November 5**

**December 3**

**\*\*Note - if inclement  
weather check with a club  
officer for meeting status, on  
our Facebook Page or email.  
Trail Rides are usually the  
Third Sunday of the Month.**

**BLUE SPRUCE RIDING CLUB Editor:**

**Charmaine Ropeter**

**535 Fagleysville Rd.**

**Perkiomenville, PA 18074**

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