



RIDE & TIE

EQUATHON NEWSLETTER



Start of the Old Dominion night ride. Story on page 9

Photo by Lauren Booher

Ride and Tie 2021 Late Summer/Fall Calendar As of 8/9/21

8/10-8/14	Pine Tree Pioneer	Fryeburg, ME
8/27-8/28	Iron Mountain	Cripple Creek, VA
9/4-9/5	Crazy Daze	Nine Miles Falls, WA
9/11	Hector Half 100	Hector, NY
9/10-9/11	East Coast Regional Championship	Oneida, TN
9/17-19	Chesapeake Fall	Elkton, MD
9/24-25	Sauratown Mountain	Pinnacle, NC
9/25	Cooler	Cool, CA
10/1-10/2	Skymont	Altamont, TN
10/22-10/23	Fort Valley R&T	Fort Valley, VA
10/23	Seabrook Farm	Ocala, FL
11/11-11/13	Trace the Trails	Athens, TX
11/13	Spin Around the Rim	Jamestown, TN
11/27	JD's Carolina	Patrick, SC
12/30-1/1	Gallop on the Greenway	Ocala, FL

BIG SOUTH FORK RIDE AND TIE

EAST COAST REGIONAL RIDE AND TIE CHAMPIONSHIP

Sanctioned by the Ride and Tie Association

September 10, 11 & 12, 2021

See Website For Details

Pine Tree Ride and Tie in Maine



Rhonda Venable on Dakota. Carrie Baris in the water. Photographer Wanda Clowater.



Dave Venable

The Ride and Tie Association is organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

As a member of the Ride and Tie Association, you will receive newsletters which cover upcoming events, ride results, annual point standings and informative articles to improve your abilities as rider and runner as well as the abilities and health of your horse. **Membership runs from January 1st to December 31st.**

For anyone joining on or after September 1, the following year will be included.

Competitor Member: (\$25)

Will receive Ride & Tie Newsletter and Handbook, information and entry form for the Ride & Tie Championship, one vote on Association general membership issues, eligibility for all sanctioned Ride & Ties held during membership year and inclusion and eligibility for the national point system.

Family Membership: (\$40)

Immediate Family living at same address. List all names to be included. Same benefits as Competitor Member, two votes per family.

Lifetime Member: (\$500)

Same benefits as Competitor member with no more annual membership fees.

Supporting Member: (\$100 or more)

Same benefits as Member with special thanks from the Ride and Tie Association.

Friend of Ride & Tie: (\$20 or more)

Non-competitive member showing support for Ride & Tie. No voting privileges. Will receive Newsletter.

Upgrade to Family: (\$15)

Mentors are a group of people dedicated to growing the sport of Ride & Tie by introducing (or re-introducing) people to the sport. Located throughout the country, mentors are the Association's "local experts." They are available to answer questions, give advice about what to wear, how to prepare to successfully finish a race, provide opportunities to practice ride & tie, and help team newcomers with experienced people.

California:

K.S. Swigart, katswig@att.net

Bay Area: Victoria Ordway, victoriamosser@yahoo.com, (415) 381-3426

Sierra Foothills: Susan Smyth, susansmythjackson@gmail.com, 916-316-2096

San Diego: Rufus Schneider, rufusschneider1@gmail.com, (619) 244-1488

North San Diego County: Gunilla Pratt, gunillapratt@gmail.com, (858) 735-1373

Santa Cruz: George Hall, georgehalldvm@gmail.com, (831) 426-0131

Idaho:

Tom Noll, tomnoll@q.com

Illinois:

Amy Betzelberger, betzelbe@illinois.edu

Vera Betzelberger, verabetzelberger@yahoo.com

Amy Kerrigan, amy.kerrigan@yahoo.com

Maryland:

Cate Peloquin, cpenguin57@aol.com

North Carolina: Sara Boelt, lighterrat@gmail.com

Oklahoma: Susan Young Mock, glenn218@yahoo.com

Oregon:

Southern Oregon: Annette Parsons & Jim Clover, a88gunther@gmail.com

NW Oregon & Portland: Kirsten Seyferth, kirstenseyferth@gmail.com

Tennessee:

Joanne Mitchell, jfgmhorse@gmail.com

Courtney Krueger, ck@firstcumberland.com

Texas:

Sherrie Reimers, skreimers@aol.com

Utah:

Dave and Debbie Wagner, ddwags@redrock.net, (435) 658-3065

Virginia:

Hampton Roads: Alison Zeytoonian, azeytoonian@solsolutions.net, (757) 947-6244

Northern VA: Lani Newcomb, give2bute@aol.com

Washington:

Southwest WA: Kirsten Seyferth, kirstenseyferth@gmail.com

Western Washington: Lisa Preston, lisa@lisapreston.com

Eastern Washington: Rachel Toor, racheltoor@gmail.com

Veterinary Scholarship

The Ride and Tie Association is pleased to announce the return of the Jim Steere Memorial Veterinary Student Scholarship. All currently enrolled veterinary students are invited to apply. A total award of \$3000 will be dispersed for this year's scholarship. The outstanding essay that is suitable for publishing in the Ride and Tie Association's monthly newsletter will be awarded up to \$2000 with runner-ups eligible for the remaining award amount.

Ride and Tie is a sport of strategy and requires athleticism from both the equine and human partners. This unique sport was created by Bud Johns. Johns worked for the Levis Strauss & Company as a public relations director. He was seeking a rugged sport to promote its similar reputed line of outdoor clothing. Johns had read of historic accounts where out of necessity two people had covered vast distances using one horse between them. One would proceed on horseback while the other continued on foot. Eventually the rider would tie the horse to a tree and proceed on foot, the horse waiting for the partner on foot to catch up. "What a concept for a race!" thought Johns and the sport of Ride & Tie was born. Johns organized the first Levi's Ride & Tie in 1971 at St. Helena, California.

Dr. Jim Steere served as the Head Veterinarian for the Ride and Tie Association for more than 25 years. He helped develop and implement the veterinary examination guidelines for this unique sport, adapted from the sport of endurance racing. Dr. Steere was also an avid participant of Ride and Tie. Less than one year before his passing in 2010 Steere and his son competed in the World Ride and Tie Championships. The Association is proud to offer this scholarship in his memory.

The essay is limited to 1000 words and must be accompanied by a list of references used in the essay. The topic is at the discretion of the veterinary student. Examples of winning past essays can be requested from Dr. Melinda Newton at m.newtondvm@gmail.com. A cover letter may be submitted in conjunction with the essay, but is not required. All essays must be received by Dr. Newton by 1/15/2022.

Board of Directors

Officers

President: Sara Boelt (2021)
Vice President: Gunilla Pratt (2022)
Secretary: Carrie Baris (2023)
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Lani Newcomb (2022)
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Courtney Krueger (2023)
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Steve Shaw (lifetime)
Mary Tiscornia (lifetime)

Head Veterinarian
Greg Fellers



Ride and Tie horses staying busy when not doing ride and ties.

TBopp as a disco dancer and
Astro as a cowboy.

Picture by Sara Boelt


Echo Valley Ranch, Inc.
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Veterinary scholarship winner. Mikayla Swirski

Thank you so much! I feel so fortunate to be recognized. The horse in the picture with me is Hank, my horse from the article.

I was born and raised in British Columbia, Canada. I started riding in a lesson program when I was 11. I volunteered at the barn and leased a few horses until I eventually got a horse when I was 14.

I obtained a biology degree and then started vet school at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVN) in 2017. I finished my veterinary degree in April 2021.

I am currently completing a field service internship and once completed I would like to pursue a career as an equine practitioner in general practice with a focus on lameness and rehabilitation. I enjoy reading, gardening, and spending time with my husband and 2 dogs.

Cheers. Mikayla Swirski



Essay by Mikayla Swirski on page 6

50 Years of Madness

Rules of the Race

An Updated History of Ride & Tie Championships 1971-2020

Compiled by Annette Parsons

1. This event of historical significance is being revived to challenge the endurance and... The second place award will be over a course of about 25 miles from St. Helena to Sonoma, California, on the... all of the listed cash prizes.

2. Each entry will consist of two teammates with a single horse. One person rides ahead, dismounts, ties the horse and continues on foot. When the team member who began on foot reaches the horse he mounts and rides past his partner. The pair repeat the process, continuing forward over the course with no rest, getting a rest-grazing break between.

3. First team to finish takes a prize of \$1,000 added to challenge the endurance and... The second place award will be over a course of about 25 miles from St. Helena to Sonoma, California, on the... all of the listed cash prizes.

4. Entry fee of \$50 per team (all entry fees added to prize money).

5. Entries must be postmarked no later than midnight Friday, May 28, 1971, and mailed to Levi's Ride & Tie, 98 Battery St., San Francisco, Calif. 94106. Any requests for refunds must be made in writing prior to that deadline.

Annette Parsons became addicted to the sport of Ride & Tie after she completed the 1983 Levi's Ride & Tie in Eureka, California. That year had the largest field of competitors ever, and the adrenaline rush was too good to let slide. She continued to Ride & Tie for the next 30+ years, competing in 17 championships and dozens of other races. She met her husband, Jim Clover, through Ride & Tie, and he was her partner in eleven championships, having 19 championship buckles under his own belt. They are retired and are avid trail advocates and volunteers. They live in the mountains of southwest Oregon where they manage their forest lands they share with two horses, a mule, and a cat.

Fifty years ago, in 1970, Bud Johns, then a public relations director for Levi Strauss & Company, sought a rough and tumble event to promote the company's line of rugged outdoor clothing. Little did he know that his idea of turning an historic means of transportation into a race would beget a sport that changed the lives of the thousands of people who competed.

Bud's idea for a ride & tie race began after he had read several accounts from the 1900s and early 1900s in this country and in Europe, where two men had only one horse between them and needed to cover some distance. They opted to trade off riding and walking (or running), in order to optimize their ability to go the distance, as well as the horse's. One would ride the horse ahead to an agreed upon distance and then tie the horse to a tree or post and continue on foot. The other would reach the now-rested horse, mount up, and continue on to reach and pass the other man and repeat the process. In this manner, the two people and one horse eventually reached their destination quicker and in better shape than if they had both ridden the horse, or one or both walked (or ran) the entire distance.

The first Levi's Ride & Tie race in St. Helena, California, 1971 became an annual event that spawned hundreds of ride & tie competitions all over the United States as well as in other countries. Considered one of the original and most challenging and grueling of extreme sports, ride & tie continues today as the Annual World Championship Ride & Tie.

The first compilation of race results, posters, photos, and anecdotes was published for the 40th anniversary of Ride & Tie, ten years ago. In 2020, the sport celebrates its 50th anniversary. This updated edition contains additional stories, photos, race results, and updated statistics to reflect the continued popularity of the sport among the bold and adventurous runners and equestrians who dare to try it and become hooked. Ride & tie is a race like no other, where people of all ages and backgrounds and gender are pitted against themselves and each other as they tackle the challenges they never thought they could endure. The passion invoked by the sport is reflected in the stories and photos throughout this book.

The Ride and Tie Association and the ride & tie community at large is grateful for the generous support of Godfrey Sullivan over the years, and for making it possible for us to provide a copy of this updated 50th Anniversary edition to all participants in the 2020 World Championship 50th Anniversary event at Humboldt Redwoods State Park, Weott, California.



Rest and Rehabilitation: A New Outlook on Recovery

"Call in and schedule his first recheck in 4 weeks. We can assess how he is doing and adjust his rehab program then." These were the words that signalled the beginning of my horse's rehabilitation journey. Unfortunately, like many horse owners before me, my horse had suffered an injury that would require rest and a slow return to work. I remember feeling focused, but slightly anxious as I anticipated the ups and downs I would face in the months ahead.

My horse, Hank, had injured his right front leg. While Hank's comfort level on his right front limb was important, my veterinarian explained that we would also focus on developing strength in other areas. My horse's injury required a period of rest prior to beginning the bulk of his rehabilitation program so he lacked balance, had reduced core strength, and showed poor muscling over his topline. To give Hank the best chance of recovery we had to work on improving these deficits while also keeping him comfortable on his right front leg. The goal wasn't just to get Hank back into work after this injury, it was to see how we could affect his long-term soundness as well.

While there are world-class rehabilitation centres that have access to equipment such as underwater treadmills and salt water spas, my horse's rehabilitation took place at home. While this limited my access to some tools it also allowed us to develop a creative approach to Hank's rehab. Most of the components of Hank's program did not require significant equipment, it only required my own time and commitment. We looked at the work done by Dr. Hilary Clayton, a veterinarian who has extensively studied equine lameness, biomechanics, and rehabilitation, and started Hank's rehab with groundwork exercise that have shown to have a beneficial effect on balance, and core strength.

One exercise involved asking Hank to shift his weight and maintain his balance. This was achieved by gently pulling on Hank's withers or tail, which required him to activate the stabilizing muscles in his forelimbs and hind limbs. We wanted him to work on his abdominal strength so we included an exercise to help him lift through his lumbosacral area. By running my hands in the groove between his semitendinosus and biceps femoris muscles I encouraged Hank to round through his back, working his core muscles. Hank's favourite exercise was carrot stretches. During this exercise I used a treat to entice him to stretch his neck into different positions. We asked him to round through his neck and back by putting his chin to his chest, carpus, or fetlocks and we asked him to stretch laterally by bringing his chin to his girth, flank, and eventually his hind fetlock. These stretches helped Hank increase the size of his multifidus muscles, a group of muscles that acts as vertebral stabilizers.

As Hank progressed we added in more difficult exercises to increase the range of motion in his forelimbs and hind limbs. Using cat collars and small, light pieces of chain we made tactile bracelets for Hank's pasterns. When these bracelets are placed around the pastern and move against the skin the horse's proprioceptive system interprets the bracelets as an obstacle in the limb's path. This causes the horse to temporarily increase flexion in different parts of the legs until the horse becomes accustomed to the sensation. As Hank's rehab progressed we added in ground poles in-hand and under saddle to further increase Hank's range of motion and muscle strength. As Hank gained strength we could adjust the spacing, height, and frequency of the pole sessions to further his progress. These exercises helped strengthen him while also adding mental stimulation and variety to his work sessions.

When I started Hank back under saddle my veterinarian introduced me to the equine ridden ethogram. This ethogram contains a list of behaviours that can indicate musculoskeletal pain if the horse performs them while under saddle. The ethogram was generated after extensively studying the behaviour of sound and lame horses under saddle. If a horse displays eight or more of these behaviours under saddle, the horse is most likely suffering from musculoskeletal pain while being ridden. While some of the behaviours are more obvious signs of discomfort, like bucking and rearing, other behaviours on the list are more subtle, like repeatedly opening and closing the mouth, repeated changes of head position, or a constantly swishing tail. With this ethogram in mind I could better tailor my rehabilitation rides to make sure I was strengthening my horse, but not working too far past his comfort limit.

My horse's rehabilitation was a constant oscillation of highs and lows. Every day I carefully wrote down how each rehab session went so I could track patterns in my horse's progress. On a disappointing day it was easy to feel like I made no headway since the beginning of the program, but when I looked back through my notes at where we started it was easier to see the largely positive outcome. Overall my horse's rehabilitation program made me more in tune with my horse, and provided me the exciting opportunity to learn more about equine rehabilitation. It has affected how I will approach equine lameness as a practicing veterinarian, and it has shown me that through proper rehabilitation a horse can come back stronger and better able to do his job.

References:

Clayton H. Core training and rehabilitation in horses. *Veterinary Clinic of North America: Equine Practice*. 2016;32(1):49-71. doi: 10.1016/j.cveq.2015.12.009.

Ellis, K., King, M. Relationship between postural stability and paraspinal muscle adaptation in lame horses undergoing rehabilitation. *Journal of Equine Veterinary Science*. 2020;91. doi: 10.1016/j.jevs.2020.103108

Dyson S., Berger J., Ellis A.D., Mullard J. Development of an ethogram for a pain scoring system in ridden horses and its application to determine the presence of musculoskeletal pain. *J. Vet. Behav*. 2018;23:47-57. doi: 10.1016/j.jveb.2017.10.008.



Bandit Springs R&T
Eliza Murray Davis (58) and Dena Draxton (67)
Riding BuBu.

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Hi everyone,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and you are enjoying riding and running.

Lots of great things are going on within our association. As you all know, we have formed an affiliation with AERC to help promote ride and tie and offer more rides. It has been a giant success!!! With lots of hard work from several folks, we have lots of new rides on the calendar and a ride is happening each month of the year somewhere in the USA!!

We also have the ride and tie store on our website where you can purchase ride and tie goods. It's easy, so check it out. rideandtie.org/store

The year 2020 was hard for all of us and in 2021, we are still coming out of it. As a result, we once again postponed the World Championship Ride and Tie, which is to honor 50 years of Ride and Tie (Woohoo!!). However, we are planning on 2022 for the world. We are working hard to make it happen. Stay tuned and fingers crossed!

As your president, my line is always open. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. lighterrat@gmail.com

Let's keep moving forward and ride, run, and have fun!
Sara



September 25, 2021 Back By Popular Demand!

Distances: Pick your fun!

Short RAT - 8 miler Long course -20 miles Equathon: Ride 8, Run 8

Course: Transverse throughout the many beautiful Olmstead trails. Enjoy both fire roads and single tract trails. Relish the beautiful hidden ponds at any distance you chose. Make this a challenge or fun! Two choices: Ride & Tie or Equathon. Great trail, prizes and just a group having fun riding and running. Various distances offered and same great fun! Long and short courses. **Location:** Olmstead staging area. Cool, CA Behind firehouse. All proceeds are donated.

Ride and tie: One horse, two persons switch pony express style.

Equathon: One rides, one runs. Team or ironman. Time of Horse pulse down and runner time combined for finish time.

- **ENTRY:** Includes Vet check, participate awards and all that goes into putting on an event! Get entry at www.rideandtie.org schedule tab. Sept 25, 2021 Coolest **entry**.
- All horses required vet check: Short 8-mile distances and equathon pulse check and trot out before and after.
- Long distance: 13 miles and 20 miles require full vet check before and after.
- Juniors must wear helmets.
- Dogs on leash.
- Parking permits displayed required. \$10.00 at Kiosk or Poppy pass. Overnight participants contact Ride manager prior.
- Pre-enter. Limited entries based on parking.

Send entries to: Susan Smyth 211 Gold crest ct. Newcastle, Ca 95658

Email: susansmythjackson@gmail.com PayPal accepted

If you would like to submit a story or a picture for the newsletter, send to gunillapratt@gmail.com. Make sure pictures come with the name of the photographer and names of everyone in the picture.

In late December 2020 Ride and Tie and AERC entered into an Affiliate relationship. Part of the implications of that are that if your Ride and Tie Race is held in conjunction with an AERC race you MAY be able to receive a stipend of \$250-\$750. The Ride and Tie Association will be giving up to ten stipends during the year. The Board of Directors will determine which rides/races receive a stipend. The greatest qualifying factor will be that the Board wants as wide a geographical diversity as possible. In order to apply for a stipend you need to fill out the sanctioning forms (on the website) at least 60 days before your race. The updated form has a section that will allow you to apply if you choose.

Regardless of whether you plan to apply for the stipend, if you are planning on a Ride and Tie race, please fill out the form as soon as you can. www.rideandtie.org



1972

Mary Tiscornia and Dawn Damas



1980

Steve Shaw and Emmet Ross



1976

Butch Alexander and Chuck Stalley

Pictures from the past.

Share your old pictures. Send to
gunillapratt@gmail.com

I was 14 in 1971, when the very first Ride and Tie race was run! The chosen route went over our acreage, so my Dad and Mom got to be part of the event. It began from the base of the mountain on Whitehall Lane and ended at the Park in Sonoma, where there was a fantastic dinner and more, as I remember! I even worked the event as I did check offs from where I was positioned! I'm 65 years old now, and my parents have passed, but I still have the Silver Belt-Buckles they received. I was given a pair of 501's and a Western Shirt! Here is a picture of my late Parents Buckles.

By Dave Hayes



Racing from Dusk to Dawn and Dusk Again

By

Courtney Krueger

My favorite race of the year is the Old Dominion Ride and Tie Weekend held at Orkney Springs in July. The course is the infamous “Beast of the East” and on this weekend they throw in the additional challenge of racing at night. Saturday around dusk the twenty mile race begins. It ends in full dark. Then, at 7:30 the next morning, you are off again on the twenty mile course, but this time following the course in reverse! I love the night race. I love having a short recovery time before tackling the tough course again. Clearly, I have lost my mind!

For 2021, there were only seven teams in each of the twenty mile races, but it was some of the most competitive racing I have experienced. Out of the gate on Saturday evening my partner Mark Landers’ horse Kevlar was insistent that he vault to the front. This is somewhat uncharacteristic for this rather laid back, but very powerful horse. I let him go and we ran hard for the first mile. Dave Venable and Chris Lang have proven over the last couple of years to be a formidable team and they quickly established themselves as the front runners. Alison Zeytoonian and Carrie Baris were challenging us hard on Carrie’s horse Comet. Our friendly but fierce competition is doubled because both Comet and Kevlar live at our farm near Chattanooga. Neither one of those horses wants to be bested by the other, not to mention their owners!

If you know the “beast of the East” you know that there is a brutal gas line you must climb for about a mile around 6 miles into the race. At the top of the gas line is a nice ridgeline that runs along the VA/WVA border. This ridgeline however, has rocks galore and most of them are sticking out of the ground like shark’s fins. Human runners can navigate it fairly well, but only a very foolish equestrian would push their horses on this three or so mile section. Alison and I found ourselves on foot for most of this section as Carrie/Comet and Mark/Kevlar simply couldn’t make the time we were making. Alison has really been working hard lately and has become quite speedy, so after a while she outpaced me and disappeared up ahead. The ridgeline ends with a long gravel road that runs down the backside of the Great North Mountain we just climbed. Mark/Kevlar and Carrie/Comet caught me on the road. Mark and I began making our exchanges and working out way down. Carrie didn’t catch speedy Alison for more than four miles!

So now Mark and I are in solid third place. We are pretty sure we aren’t catching the front runners, but as I am cantering down a wonderfully fast section at the bottom of the mountain, I hear a horse GALLOPING behind me. It is Lisa Broyles on Gator. She has to stop and tie and when I catch Mark I tell him we are only half a tie ahead of Lisa and Barb Mathews. This sets up a LONG six mile stretch where Barb and Lisa keep nipping at our heels. The strategy for the night ride is often to stay together once the sun goes down to avoid running past a tied horse in the dark. That was simply not an option for Mark and me. Fortunately, I had attached a set of battery operated Christmas tree lights to Kevlar’s saddle. Lisa told me later that it was crazy to be charging through the woods following Christmas tree lights! My perspective was the fear of looking backwards and seeing glow sticks hanging in the tree and bobbing lights moving among them – Lisa, Barb, and Gator on our heels!

About four tenths of a mile from the end, we were still ahead. We decided to make one last switch. I got on the horse and Mark started running. I reminded him that he didn’t have to beat the horse, only the runner, to the finish. It was my and Kevlar’s job to beat the horse. With that “plan” in place we all kept moving as fast as we could. We managed to finish not far at all ahead of them, but far enough ahead to claim a hard fought third place.

Next morning we were all back at it again. At mile 10 (halfway into the race), I ran past two of the three front runners’ horses. Shortly thereafter I saw Kevlar and rode him to catch Mark. When I caught him, I told him, “Believe it or not, we are in second place right now.” By mile 11 the rest of the field had roared past us and we were in fifth place. We hung on to fifth and came in tired and happy, though wishing we had been able to have a little more in the tank at the half way point!

I wouldn’t want to do back-to-back races in under ten hours every race, but one a year makes for lots of competition and lots of fun!

To see a fun video compilation I made of the weekend and lots of other video content, go find the Ride and Tie Association’s YouTube Channel.

Voting results for the Ride and Tie board of directors

Congratulations to:

Janice Heltibridge

Sara Boelt

Steve Anderson

How Ride and Tie Literally Changed My Life

By

Courtney Krueger

Earlier this year I ran through my 2,000th competitive mile in Ride and Tie. Yet I had only been on horseback twice before 2011! Around 2002 my daughter was given a horse by a friend (cue the “don’t look a gift horse in the mouth” comments). She was 6 years old and had been taking riding lessons for a year or so. One horse became two (anyone with horses know how this works) and both Sarah (my daughter) and Lea (my wife) discovered and began competing in Endurance. I was deep into mountain biking at the time and was beginning to also run in order to ramp up for a marathon. We were living near Clemson, SC whose university has the largest experimental forest completely open to the public in the United States. All of the trails there are multi-use, so for more than 7 years I rode a mountain bike, they rode horses, but we did it together.

In 2011, Sarah heard about Ride and Tie. She was 14 years old at the time. She came to me and said, “Dad, if you learn to ride, I will start running and we can be a Ride and Tie team.” When your fourteen year old asks you to be on a team with them, you only have one answer available to you!

Lea began the rather daunting process of teaching a 44 year old man to ride a horse! By May of 2012, we were both ready to give it a try. We went to the Biltmore Ride and Tie and met now life-long friends Sara Boelt, and Dave and Rhonda Venable. We came in second of three teams in the very competitive 15 mile race and we were hooked.

Mountain bikes fell by the wayside for me. I had to spend too much time keeping both my body and our horse in shape for Ride and Tie! Sarah and I were partners for several years. Our high mark was 2014 when we finished as the 5th Man/Woman team.

By now this was, however, way beyond a father/daughter event. This was starting to take over my life in wonderful ways. In 2013 Biltmore got flooded out. The Krueger family agreed to help Sara Boelt move the event at the last moment to Clemson. Now we were not only competitors, but one year in we are helping to put on rides!

Sarah went to college and I went in search of other partners. I had the great opportunity to partner with a number of people (including bringing several friends into the sport), but kind of settled on Carrie Baris and Mark Landers. Since then, Carrie and I have won a Year End National Points Championship and Mark and I have won five Year End National Points Championships. While always close to my family, Ride and Tie has brought both Lea and I closer and Mark and Aleta (Mark’s wife) and I SO much closer.

But merely sponsoring races and winning awards doesn’t do justice to how much Ride and Tie has changed my life. Remember that less than ten years ago, I had almost no experience on horseback. Today, I live on a small horse farm. I basically live and breathe horses and Ride and Tie. I use our horses in an urban ministry sponsored by our church. I frequently host people who need a break or some encouragement on a trail ride. I spend more time talking about horses than just about anything else (just take a peek at my Facebook page or my personal YouTube channel).

I have been serving on the Ride and Tie Association Board of Directors for five years now and have spent the last four years as the national sanctioning officer. That means I get to interact with EVERY race manager! I get to help promote and encourage folk (especially AERC Ride Managers) to give managing or offering Ride and Tie a chance.

Best of all, I have friends who are obviously going to be life-long friends that I wouldn’t have had were it not for Ride and Tie. We are fierce competitors out on the course and best friends back at camp. It truly doesn’t get any better than that.

My life is TOTALLY different than it was just a decade ago. And it is TOTALLY due to Ride and Tie.



Photos from the Pine Tree Ride and Tie. They offered five days of ride and tie along with endurance. The team of Dave Venable and Chris Lang completed all five days! They did 25 miles each day. Rhonda Venable and Carrie Baris did two days together.

Photo 1 - Rhonda and Chris crossing the Saco River.

Photo 2 - Dave on Rumor and Rhonda on Dakota crossing the Saco River

Photo 3 - Rhonda on Dakota

Crazy Runner Pictures: a new Ride and Tie trend?

Back in 2019, Carrie Baris and Courtney Krueger were competing against each other at Big South Fork. While on foot, they saw the very familiar sign, “Space out, Becky Pearman photographer ahead.” Becky is a wonderful photographer who has been taking both Ride and Tie and AERC pictures all over the country for more than twenty years. Courtney told Carrie, “If I am on the horse, I ALWAYS canter for Becky. Let’s canter on foot!” Carrie agreed to his harebrained scheme and the first of the crazy Ride and Tie runner pictures was born.

This is obviously becoming an East Coast Trend. This year at the Sugarloaf Ride and Tie in South Carolina Liara Gonzalez, and Carrie Baris did “solo” crazy runner poses for Becky.

At Yellowhammer in Alabama Courtney talked Alison Zeytoonian into giving it a try and Becky also caught Mark Landers in a great crazy runner shot.

The best yet may be from the August Ride Between the Rivers Ride and Tie in West Virginia when both Ellen Hart and Lori Lyttle offered their take on the crazy runner pose. Their take is part running, part yoga! As usual, Becky did a great job, especially catching Ellen and her reflection in the water.

So now the gauntlet has been tossed. When you are on foot and approaching a photographer, how can you make the image memorable? We hope to see great pictures on our Facebook and Instagram pages. The best ones will also be posted in our newsletter!

Ride and Tie can and should be incredibly competitive, but it also can and should be fun!



Mark Landers at
Yellowhammer



Ellen Hart at
Ride between the rivers.



Lori Lyttle at
Ride Between The Rivers



Courtney Krueger and Alison Zeytoonian at
Yellow Hammer



Carrie Baris at Sugar Loaf



Liara Gonzalez at
Sugar Loaf

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TRAIL
RUNNER



“Better to die fighting for freedom than be a prisoner all the days of your life.”
— Bob Marley