

RIDE & TIE  
and EQUATHON  
DECEMBER 2024



*52nd World Championship Race Manager Susan Smyth starts the race  
photo: Calla Gold*





James Taylor is famous for singing, “I’ve seen fire and I’ve seen rain.” This year’s Ride & Tie Season has seen wildfires (on the East Coast this time), hurricane rains, intense heat (which forced the World Championship to move from summer to fall), and snow (at Giddy Up & Run in April). You will read in this newsletter accounts from some of our wonderful Race Managers and volunteers about having to reorganize, postpone, and even cancel races due to the elements. As you read those narratives, be aware of how fortunate we are to have Race Managers and volunteers who will go to almost any length to make sure we get to compete. Next time you are at a race, remember to thank the Race Manager profusely.

This issue also contains stories from the 52nd World Championship and the East Coast Regional Championship, both of which featured their share of elemental challenges. I hope this issue will inspire you to renew your membership and compete in many races next year!

  
Courtney Krueger  
Newsletter Editor



Hi Courtney,

I just wanted to write a little note to thank you for putting together the newsletter. I especially enjoyed the Archive article with the section from the 1971 “*The Western Horseman*.” It brought me back to my roots. Not many people will remember me, but I attended R&T in the early days, as a kid, mostly crewing, but sometimes competing. I knew Bud Johns, and Mary Tiscornia, Jim Steere, Warren Hellman, Dawn Damas, and John Osterweis. I taught my dad, Dale Roush, how to ride so he could compete in Ride & Tie. Jon Root and I were M/W champs in 1995.

When I looked at the page facing the 1971 article, there was the old picture of Bud, Mary, Jim, and they are holding their finishing awards from that year: ceramic steins made by my dad!

The article comes at a time when I am dipping my toe back into the waters of running, after being too lame to run for 12 years. I am inspired, and hope to do some Ride & Tie next year!

Stay healthy

Michele Roush Rowe

*“I also believe that horses are the closest to God in the animal world.” ~Dominique Barbier*

## The 52nd World Championship, A Volunteer's Tale

story and pictures by Calla Gold

Last year, I was doomscrolling Facebook when it offered up the Coolest Ride and Tie Group. Wow, that beat conspiracy theories, people I don't know, and opposing political rants. Yay, Facebook. I joined up. When I found out the date conflicted with a family vacay I was bummed. But the next year's Championship date had no conflict, beyond choir, pickleball, mountain biking, and like that. I signed up.

Slight problem, I live in Southern California and this was happening in Cool California, up North by many a mile. My hubster, not one to indulge in my passion for horses, was a hard "Nope," to accompanying me. Well, I needed to learn this solo travel thing one of these days, so planned to stay a night on the way up and back down with family, so I was set. Susan Smyth the organizer, fixer of all things, and doer of three people's worth of jobs in one, was quite helpful in sorting out my stay.



*photo of the author*

I counted the days until the sweet scent of the stable yard would light up my limbic system. I arrived on Friday afternoon. My first walk through horse trailers, fifth wheels, easy-ups, and seeing the horses pricking their ears at me in the staging area was gas in my tank. I forgot my normal life and jumped into hanging vendor posters, grease marking hip numbers on horses as they passed the vet check, and megaphoning announcements to call the entrants to attend the potluck and race meeting. The friendly hellos from my new tribe of horse lovers and friends I hadn't met yet, filled my bucket of love.



Saturday dawned early with dogs running, horses whinnying, riders shouting for a missing piece of tack, and laughter at horses knocking over buckets with their hooves and nudging their riders to fix it, then doing it again.

When I'd arrived, it was too early to contemplate food. But I found out that burritos would arrive mid-morning. After easy and interesting tasks were done, I drove out to meet my fellow volunteer, Michelle Pagel at the race aid station I was assigned to. She clued me in as to how we note the hip numbers of horses and runner numbers to ensure that we know where everyone on the team is and leave no one behind.

At our station, the temporary water troughs had already been brought and filled by the time we arrived. We assembled the Easy-Up, a collapsable table, and Michelle brought out a bowl of fresh cut melon. As I called to the incoming riders, “We have water, electrolytes, melon,” and the rest of our treats, I felt a part of the race.



Happiest Volunteers ever



Michelle organizing our aid station

I loved watching the horse and the runners run across a high trail and that curved down to our station. The horses were so beautiful with their flaring nostrils, tails lifted, necks arched and hooves floating just a moment more than necessary to fly before their earthbound touch.



Between the excited hellos, refilling collapsable water bottles, and holding horses when riders stretched their legs and selected snacks, the time flew. I saw mother daughter teams, siblings, friends, and husbands and their wives. When I saw an older woman like me, jog into the station with a smile, I thought maybe I could do this one day.



When all the teams had passed our station, we broke it down. It wasn't hard. Then back to the staging area, where I had time to photograph teams coming in and pinch hit with little duties as they arose.

Campers trickled back to check their horses, kids played on a nearby set of play equipment, and people found the chairs by the vendors area and hunkered down to debrief their experiences of the day and tell tales of past races. Susan pointed out to me some champions of endurance, just walking around like they were no big deal. I introduced myself to one named Ken. He and his endurance riding wife were full of stories.

Cool California celebrated with us, giving us a long, fiery sunset, above rolling hills, and turning the oak trees into dreamy, dancing silhouettes.



Sunday morning, I arrived in the pre-dawn's soft light. As the sun pinked the treetops and lit tossing forelocks, and haloed rider's morning-hair, I dived into taking pictures again, loving capturing the horses in all their beauty. It was easy to see that the horses knew their jobs and couldn't wait to get started.

My Sunday morning job was calling hip numbers to the time trackers. Later that afternoon, I worked a station for the kid's parade ride. Costumed children rode atop their steed with their mom or dad leading it. There were grandmas, siblings, ponies, and smiles on the three-mile course for Ride & Tiers of the future. The cuteness on display made me smile until my cheeks hurt. It was a wonderful way to cap the final day of volunteering.

As Sunday rolled to a close, I got to ride a horse and it was frosting on the cake. I've done a lot of volunteering in my day, but this was a highlight. The community feeling among the volunteers, organizers, and participants, was really nice. I've already marked my calendar for next year!



## The Royal Heirs Take the Throne!

Nick and Alyssa Gonzelez win the 52<sup>nd</sup> World Championship  
by Courtney Krueger

Alyssa Stalley Gonzalez is part of Ride & Tie Royalty. Her father is Chuck Stalley who, among many other notable Ride & Tie achievements, has 27 starts and 26 completions in Ride & Tie World Championships. He is currently the Tevis Cup director. Chuck initially got involved in riding horses in order to compete in Ride & Tie having no idea how much horses would eventually come to dominate his life! Alyssa almost had no choice but to get involved in both Ride & Tie and Endurance. She now has both Tevis and Ride & Tie World Championship completions under her belt.

When she met her husband Nick, he didn't run or ride. The Stalleys told him that when they went out to condition horses, he had three choices: stay in the truck and wait for them to return, run, or ride. He decided that running sounded like the best option and so he did. This led to him competing in a marathon and then in 2023 competing in and finishing the Western States 100 Trail Run. So now, both Alyssa and Nick are 2/3 of the way to a Triple Crown of Running and Riding.

Alyssa and Nick competed as a team in the 50<sup>th</sup> championship two years ago on their horse Jackson. They finished third and Jackson won Best Conditioned. This year Nick planned to compete with Tim, a friend of his. Unfortunately Tim broke his ankle and was unable to compete. Even though Alyssa was still recovering from giving birth to their daughter Rory ten months before, she agreed to partner with Nick again. It was a fruitful partnership as they won the race and their horse Kona earned Best Conditioned. The royal heirs have ascended to the throne!

Congratulations Nick, Alyssa, and Kona!



To see a “*Tongue Tied Ride & Tie Interview*”  
with Nick and Alyssa, use this QR Code:





**25 mile Long Championship Course**

Partner 1	Partner 2	Horse	Time	Place
Alyssa Stalley Gonzalez	Nick Gonzalez	Kona Tiki	3:39:00	1
Jim Howard	Thomas Gey	Peter Sam	3:44:00	2
Rufus Schneider	Gunilla Pratt	Mika	3:50:00	3
Andrew Gerhard	Curtis Ullerich	Pegasus	4:11:00	4
Sabrina Van Horn	Debbie Glasgow	Momma Mia	4:20:00	5
Drew Buechley	Marie Smidstrup	Jobi	4:30:00	6
Tom Lewis	Clifford Lewis	Sherri	4:47:00	7
Diana Triscell	Meghan Randal	Dixie	5:15:00	8
Bob Crowley	Hal Hall	K man	5:19:00	9
Ken Campbell	Makenna Jentgen	MM Cody	5:21:00	10
Agathe Papillaud	Diana Lammer	Fancy Pants	5:21:00	11
Rachel Miura	Katie Hull	Shagya	5:55:00	12
Phoebe Cowlin	Tristan Bunderson	Badger	6:28:00	13
Shelly Stewart	Karen Henderson	Pete	7:20:00	14
Erin McChesney	Alice Falkenstein	Memory	7:45:00	15
Peyton Robinett	Melissa Harris	Solar	8:03:00	16
Kirsten Kanarr	Kaylie Bartel	Barkley		DNF
Trinette Gilbert	Alyssa Agnes	Billys Arizing Moon		DNF
Rob Lydon, DVM	Courtney Knoch	Zahi		DNF

**15 Mile Short Championship Course**

Brenna Sullivan	Brandon Kennedy	M Fancy and Armed	3:03:00	1
Mia Clegg	Audrey Evans	MV audacious	3:46:00	2

**6 Mile Short Championship Course**

Quincy Esteves	Haley Esteves	Sass	1:04:00	1
Benji Zavala	Manny Villagomez	Chisme	1:05:00	2
Bernadette Grismer	Margaret Manion	PSF Wiktory	1:07:00	3
Ciara Donohue	James Esteves	Alli Teke	1:08:00	4
Meaghan Shaffer	Julie Best	Afira	1:10:00	5
Stella Stilwell	Aspen Siebold	DeeDee	1:18:00	6
Annie Erwin	Christine Lundy	Luca	1:27:00	7
Tracy Wheeler	Kelly D. McCrary	Jack Thorg	1:28:00	8
Anne Williams	Kailey Williams	Ferdinand	1:28:00	9
Karen Stilwell	Ava Stilwell	Remi	1:31:00	10
Megan Zimmermann	Eric Pulver	Luca	1:44:00	11
Carrie Holben	Annette Phillips	Mighty Quinn	1:48:00	12
Elizabeth Harris	Anne Harris	Finding Nemo	2:12:00	13
Katie M Harris	Beverly Vreeland	Qfmarzio	2:12:00	14



photos: Calla Gold



## Ken Campbell becomes the 41<sup>st</sup> member of the Triple Crown of Running and Riding by Courtney Krueger

At the 52<sup>nd</sup> World Championship Ken Campbell became just the 41<sup>st</sup> member of the Triple Crown of Running and Riding also known as the Triple Cripple or the Grand Three. Ken has completed the Western States Endurance Ride (Tevis), the Western States Endurance Run (Western States 100) and a Ride & Tie World Championship. Everyone who joins this club has a story to tell, but Ken's is more dramatic and inspiring than most.

In 1983 Ken was a senior in Dental School. He was driving home from a basketball game when a flatbed truck rear ended the gasoline tanker truck sitting next to him at a stop light. The tanker truck exploded engulfing Ken's car in flames. Ken spent four months in the hospital and was told he would never run again.

Through faith and determination, Ken ran again completing a marathon. Looking for another challenge, he entered and completed the 1987 Iron Man race in Hawaii. Once that goal was met, he decided to try for the Western States 100. He completed it having no idea he was now on his way to the Triple Crown.

He spent a number of years running various races. In 2016 he ran the Chicago Marathon but finished with lots of pain in his hips. His doctor told him that his hips were worn out and that he would not be able to run long distances again.

He lives near Auburn, CA and his horse riding daughter told him that since he couldn't run those trails he loved so much, it was time to start riding. He did and they rode Tevis together in 2018. Unfortunately he didn't complete, but he also didn't give up. He made adjustments including buying Cody who is a mustang who had already completed Tevis and won the Haggin Cup. The next year Ken completed Tevis on Cody and the second leg of the Triple Crown. To date Cody has completed Tevis 8 times, five times with Ken.

Ken knew about Ride & Tie for many years. In 2022 he partnered with Makenna Jergen and Cody at Coolest for an 8 mile Ride & Tie. When 2024 rolled around he, Makenna, and Cody pit the Championship in their sights.

Cody is a very forward horse and loves to be at the front of the pack. The goal, however, wasn't to win, but to complete. After a few miles, Cody settled into the rhythm and the team got their completion and Ken joined the Triple Crown club!

Congratulations Ken, Makenna, and Cody!



To see a "Tongue Tied Ride & Tie Interview" with Ken use this QR Code:





# EQUATHON

2024 World Championship  
Cool, CA

## 24 Mile Long Championship Equathon Course

Partner 1	Partner 2	Horse	Time	Place
Alex Finston	Verna Falk	Fancy Pants	2:47:00	1
Andrew Gerhard	Pablo delAguila	Chando	2:51:00	2
Robert Finston	Karon Dutcher	Mojave Blace	3:14:00	3
Lori Oleson	Marlon Torio	Legacy XP	3:29:00	4
Rachel Miura	Katie Hull	Shagya	3:30:00	5
Agathe Papillaud	Ry Johnson	Badger	3:30:00	6
Alissa (Ali) M. Ware	IRON	Hawk	3:35:00	7
Jenna Chandler	IRON	Frankie	4:23:00	8
Suzanne Amsbaugh	Pam Peace	Electrick Manzarek	5:32:00	9



Photos: Calla Gold

Be Willing to Change Strategies  
How an 11 year old completed the 52<sup>nd</sup> World Championship  
by Courtney Krueger

When Peyton Robinett was 8 years old, she and her mother saw Melissa Harris' ranch as they were driving down the road. Melissa was giving riding lessons at the time and that sparked Peyton's interest. Before long she was one of Melissa's riding students.

Peyton was pretty athletic even at a young age and got a little bit bored with showing horses. Demonstrating her skill and dedication as a teacher, Melissa challenged her to try a Ride & Tie with her. In 2022 they trained for and completed the 8 mile course at the Fall Coolest Ride & Tie. The following year they competed and completed the 9 mile courses at both the Spring and Fall Coolest Ride & Ties.

This year at 11 years of age, Peyton was ready for more. She and Melissa entered the 22 mile race at the Spring Coolest and completed. The stage was set for an 11 year old to compete in a World Championship. The Championship got postponed due to excessive heat, but that just gave Melissa and Peyton the chance to train harder and longer.

Finally, the championship arrived. Melissa's horse Solar was pretty hyped at the beginning. Peyton was on board, but Solar was determined to head to the front of the pack. Melissa had to quickly change strategies and they made their first switch right after the start. After a few miles, Solar settled down and they settled into a rhythm. By the 12<sup>th</sup> mile, they were doing OK, but knew they could pick up the pace. Once again they changed strategies so they could make better time. All three worked together as a team and Peyton and Melissa went home with Championship Belt Buckles.

Peyton hopes to eventually compete in Tevis. When asked if she thought she might also want to tackle the Western States 100 and go for a Triple Crown of Running and Riding, she said, "NO." Here's hoping that she might change her mind and join that special club one day. Regardless of whether she does or not, she is already inspiring with her accomplishments and her goals.

Congratulations Peyton, Melissa, and Solar!



To see a "Tongue Tied Ride & Tie Interview" with Peyton and Melissa, use this QR code:



East Coast Regional Championship  
by Janice Heltibridle

What a year we had with all the challenges and changes leading up to the main event! The Old Dominion Equestrian Endurance Organization (ODEEO) when asked, agreed to include the Ride & Tie East Coast Regional Championship with their regular fall endurance ride at Fort Valley, Virginia on October 18-19. First hurdle down – a location and date!

Colors and scenery are usually spectacular in October, but weather can be iffy. Couple that with the wildfires and hurricanes earlier this year and it made you wonder what the trails were going to be like. The forest fires in March/April forced ODEEO to cancel their spring No Frills ride which is a good early season wake-up to the terrain one is likely to traverse in Shenandoah Valley.

Then in August, hurricanes prompted the last-minute cancelling of the Ride & Tie weekend in Orkney Springs, VA. Of course, the hurricane season wasn't over with yet! With what seemed like constant rain and winds, plans for a trail work day for Fort Valley on September 28<sup>th</sup> didn't look too favorable. Thankfully, we had a break in the weather; the rain stopped and the sun poked through

to brighten our work day. A group of us wielding chain saws and loppers, along with Dave Franklin on his tractor and bush hog, as well as Valerie Kanavey, her girls and their ORVs, we managed to clear a good 8 miles (if not more) worth of trail. Several sections of trail run fairly close to the Shenandoah River and while it was up from all the rain, it wasn't over the trail when we headed in. Not so, by the time we turned around and headed back. Four to six inches of water was now covering our path back out and the river hadn't even crested yet! We weren't sure what all that water would do to the trail but hoped it wouldn't ruin what we had already done.



*Flooded Shenandoah. Photo: ODEEO*

As both ride manager for the ECRC and as a competitor, hiccups are to be expected but for some reason it seemed like it was worse than usual this time: a pinched nerve; a huge influx of last minute R&T membership joins or renewals for the World Championship happening the week before the Regional championship that needed to be added into the system; entries to keep track of/spreadsheets to update; then the cancellations, inquiries for equine partners, or switching events due to injured horses, bent axle on trailer, etc.) After several emails and Facebook posts, several potential replacement horses and/or partners were identified thanks to the generosity of endurance riders and other R&T participants.

I had abandoned making up the ride packets ahead of time because of all the changes happening. After arriving at ride camp late Thursday morning, with Mary Gibbs' expert...okay AND my husband Bob's help too, we managed to put the rider packets together and update the entry list as participants checked in. No pressure there, HA! The head timer and ride manager for the endurance ride had been breathing down our necks for a list of entrants almost as soon as we arrived. They share the list with the vets, in/out timers, ham radio operators, etc. so everyone can track who needs to be vetted in, what event they are doing, if they start, where they are on trail or if someone needs to go looking for them.

*Except where otherwise noted, photos in this story: Becky Pearman*

Now on to the main event! This year the colors weren't quite as vibrant as other years, but other



than some very chilly nights (freezing temps, ice in the water buckets), the days were beautiful maybe just a tad warm. On the 30-mile championship course on Friday, there was some major competition underway. We were a pretty tight group as we headed up the mountain to Milford Gap, but then the climb started spacing everyone out. Ellen, Bobby and I were playing leap frog with Lessie Skiba and Tiffany Dunkelbeck who were riding the Venable's horse Miccah (aka Ray) most of the first loop. I had to chuckle when Tiffany informed Ray that I was "cool" and cautioned him not to run over me when they passed me at one point.

*Lessie Skiba and Tiffany Dunkelbeck*

Lauren Bilsky and Jamie Martines were right up there with us for a while, but unfortunately Jamie sprained her ankle amid all the rocks early on and then rolled it again a little later, so she ended up catching a ride back with the ambulance trailer while Lauren rode Argo the rest of the way back to camp. Still fairly new to Ride & Tie, the Pittsburgh crew with their polo ponies that Lauren has recruited are forces to be reckoned with...not only do they ride, a bunch of them are also ultra runners!



*Jaime Martines*



*Lauren Bilsky*



*Ellen Hart and Lessie Skiba*



*Janice Heltibridle*

I'm not sure who was first into the vet check, but as I came running in, Lessie waved to me as she headed out on the next loop. Ellen was just a couple of minutes behind her. I was going to hit the porta-potty first, but it was occupied, so I headed back over and asked Bob to check Bobby's pulse. He was down, so I took him on over and politely butted in line in front of several endurance riders to get him vetted. He passed with flying colors and we headed back to our crew. Bobby had already chowed down on his mash, carrots, sweet potatoes and whatever else he could snatch, so I quickly replenished both his and my packs. I was just tightening his girth when Tiffany headed out on Ray. I gave Bobby his electrolytes and we headed out after them. Bobby can be a little less than enthusiastic at times leaving out of the vet check, not today. He was all GO!

It was probably about 20 minutes later when I caught up to Lessie on the ground. She asked me if I'd seen her partner. I told her Tiffany had left out right ahead of me, but I hadn't seen her on trail. Hmm, interesting. Not sure where we had missed her. Bobby and I had overshot several turns ourselves, but in a matter of 2-3 strides, recognized our (maybe just my) mistake and turned around to get back on course.

It was probably another 10 minutes after passing Lessie, that I caught up to Ellen where a ham radio operator was taking down our letters. About half-way through that loop, I got so hot that I stripped down to my bra top thereby confusing Ellen who didn't recognize me coming up behind her and Bobby. She can get a "little" competitive, and I suspect that when she thought another team was gaining on us, kicked it into high gear, not that she wasn't already beating feet. I saw those little puffs of dust she was raising when she was running through some of the recently tilled/seeded areas! Other than several other endurance riders, we didn't see any of the other R&T teams on that loop and we ended up winning the long course championship.

I didn't get all the particulars, but understand that several Ride & Tie horses got loose out on the course. One belonged to a first-time husband and wife team of Suzy and Bo Willetts who were entered in the 15-mile course. The horse ran about a mile back to camp when Suzy got off to tighten the girth, so she had to run back and get him. Her husband kept running in the meantime, and it was almost 8 miles before Suzy managed to catch back up to him. Another team entered in the 30-mile course faired a little better when their horse came untied but then ran right into their partner's waiting arms! It was a Championship to remember...and to recover from! *Editor's Note: Janice, Ellen, and Bobby "celebrated" their championship victory by doing a 50 mile R&T the next day!-see Janice's account of that race elsewhere in this newsletter*



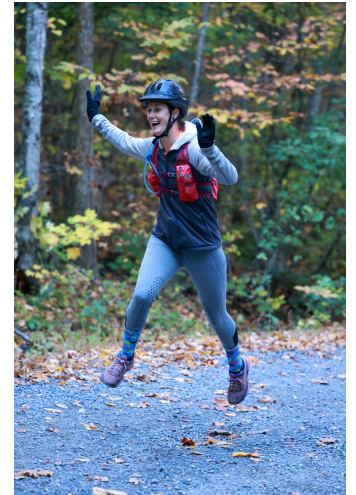
Alison Zeytoonian



Renee Brachfeld



Rhonda Venable



Carrie Baris



Bo and Suzy Willetts



Elizabeth Farina



Ashley Bear



**RIDE & TIE**  
**2024 East Coast Regional Championship**  
**Fort Valley, VA**

**30 Mile Long Course Championship**

Partner 1	Partner 2	Horse	Time	Place
Janice Heltibridle	Ellen Hart	Rush Creek Bobby	4:59:00	1
Lessie Skiba	Tiffany Dunkelbeck	Ray	5:47:00	2
Carrie Baris	Alison Zeytoonian	Lily Creek Piper	6:04:00	3
Chris Lang	Nora Jodrey	Speedy Blue	6:19:00	4
Barbara Mathews	Martha Nelson	Riding Under The Influence	6:19:00	4
Rhonda Venable	Renee Brachfeld	Moonlyte El Legato (Legacy)	8:03:00	6
Lauren Bilsky	Jamie Martines	Argo		DNF
Amelia Young	Alayna Hay	Maverick (Mac)		DNF

**15 Mile Short Course**

Partner 1	Partner 2	Horse	Time	Place
Susy Willetts	Bo Willetts	Scout	3:23:00	1



Chris Lang



Kelly Pults



L-R standing: Lauren Bilsky, Ellen Hart  
 L-R Mounted: Jamie Martines, Jordan Helmick,  
 Janice Heltibridle

photo: Bob Heltibridle

**50 Mile Long Course Championship**

Partner 1	Partner 2	Horse	Time	Place
Janice Heltibridle	Ellen Hart	Rush Creek Bobby	10:24:00	1

**15 Mile Short Course Championship**

Partner 1	Partner 2	Horse	Time	Place
Kelly Pults	Chris Lang	Speedy Blue	2:07:00	1
Jordan Helmick	Lauren Bilsky	Argo	2:12:00	2
Carrie Baris	Elizabeth Farina	Estrella	3:03:00	3
Larry Tumblin	Kathy Tumblin	Lester	4:23:00	4
Heather Wilkerson	Mattie Compton	Nevada	4:25:00	5
Kimberly Stephens	Erin Teigen	Crockett	4:32:00	6

Except where otherwise noted, photos on this and the following page: Becky Pearman



# EQUATHON

2024 East Coast Regional Championship  
Fort Valley, VA  
Friday, October 15

15/5 mile long course - 20 mi

Partner 1	Partner 2	Horse	Time	Place
Ilyssa McLaughlin	Ilyssa McLaughlin	SSF Murrels Chole	4:10:00	1
Richard Noer	Richard Noer	Rumor has it	4:12:00	2
Mary Gibbs	Mary Gibbs	Shawnee Sail Away	4:12:00	2
Ashley Bear	Mike Christopher	Levi Stoltzfus	4:15:00	4



Ilyssa McLaughlin  
Photo: Ilyssa McLaughlin



Richard Noer



Mary Gibbs

## From the R&T Archives

In the early 80s Robert Redford competed in a Ride & Tie with his friend Ted Wilson. Ever the promoter, Ride & Tie founder Bud Johns invited Redford to another Ride & Tie. This letter is Redford's response to Bud's letter.

To read about the very memorable race that Redford did participate in, you can find it in the May 2023 Newsletter which can be found by accessing this QR code:



ROBERT REDFORD

June 4, 1984

Mr. Bud Johns  
Levi Strauss & Co.  
1155 Battery Street  
San Francisco, CA 94106

Dear Bud,

Thanks for your letter and the words of encouragement.

I do think it sounds like you'll have a great event this year, but I just can't schedule anything right now. I'm really hoping and expecting to be back into production or pre-production with a project by then, so I'm not making any other plans. I hope you'll understand.

All the best to everyone for a great time, and thanks for thinking of me.

Sincerely,





# EQUATHON

2024 East Coast Regional Championship  
Fort Valley, VA  
Saturday, October 16, 2024

## 15/15 Long Course - 30 mi

Partner 1	Partner 2	Horse	Time	Place
Richard Noer	Hayden Harrison	Rumor has it	4:45:00	1
Kira Osborne	Iron	Lady of the Chesapeake	5:22:00	2

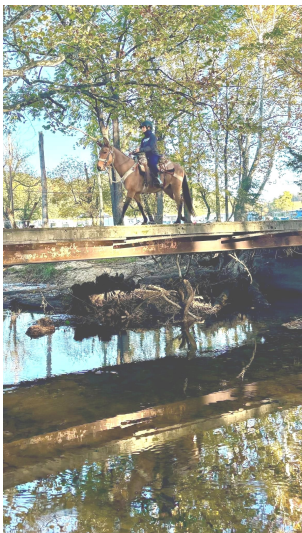
## 15/5 Long Course - 20 mi

Partner 1	Partner 2	Horse	Time	Place
Renee Brachfeld	Iron	Moonlyte El Legato (Legacy)	3:28:00	1
Rhonda Venable	Iron	Ray	3:28:00	1
Christina Bailey	Iron	Ellie	3:38:00	3
Ana-Elisa (Isa) Bryant	Iron	Ziggy	3:48:00	4
Connie Nicholson-Price	Iron	Cayna	4:19:00	5

## Facebook report on the East Coast Championship Equathon

By Christina Bailey

Yesterday we did a thing. We competed in our second Equathon. My mule Ellie would appreciate me finding a different mule to do this with, but she's a trooper nonetheless. She was tuckered out at the end. For the 15 mile riding portion, we came in dead last. I made up time in my 5 mile run, but I was not able to catch the two lovely ladies about 3 miles ahead of me. Those lovely ladies tied for 1st putting me at 2nd aka 1st place loser. It was a great weekend, and we will be back in full force for 2025! (I need a faster mule!)



Christina and Ellie at the start and after the Equathon  
photos: Christina Bailey

Christina tells her story of getting involved in Equathon in a recent episode of *"Tongue Tied: Ride & Tie Interviews."* Use the QR code to see how she went from not knowing about Equathon to competing in six weeks!



She is also working on a Facebook page for people, especially women, who want to participate in Equathon. We will promote it on the Ride & Tie Facebook page and in our other media when it goes live.

**Janice Heltibridle, Ellen Hart, and Rushcreek Bobby celebrated their Regional Championship Victory on Friday with a 50 Mile Ride & Tie on Saturday!**

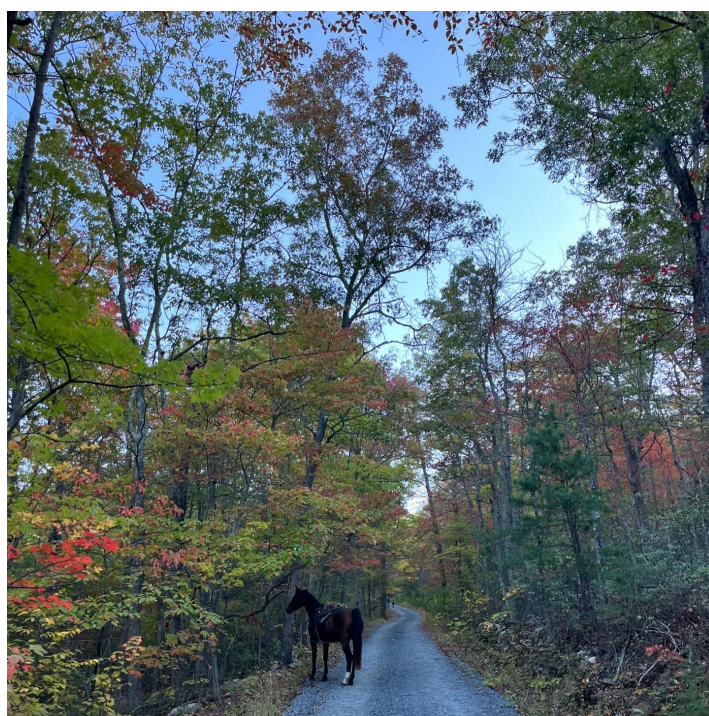
***This is Janice's account of their day.***

Ellen, Bobby and myself were the only ones entered in the 50-mile R&T on Saturday and started 10 minutes after the 50-mile endurance riders. We quickly caught up and passed several of them going up or coming down Milford on the other side, and played leapfrog for a while until we got on the road headed towards Golden Cliffs down along the river. The first loop was 20 miles and the trails can be a little gnarly in places with a number of very steep ups and down. Then there's the 2 mile climb up Indian Graves and along the ridge back to Milford Gap. For the record, I MUCH prefer going UP Indian Graves versus down it regardless of whether I'm on foot or horseback! I've done both, but if on horseback have always opted to get off and lead. For this loop, we didn't retrace our steps back down Milford to camp, but wove around down the mountain and across private land. It can be quite challenging as the trails are still fairly new and you really have to keep your eyes peeled looking for markings to make sure you stay on course.

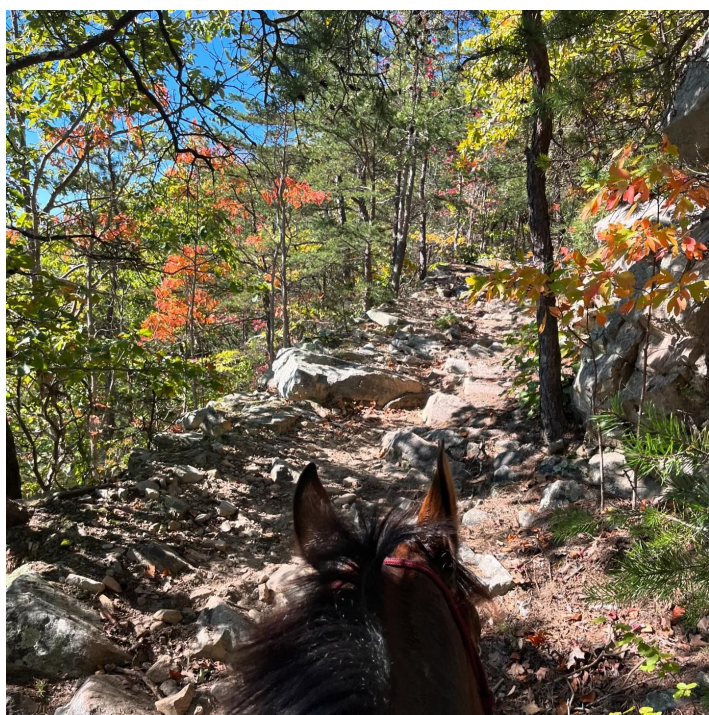
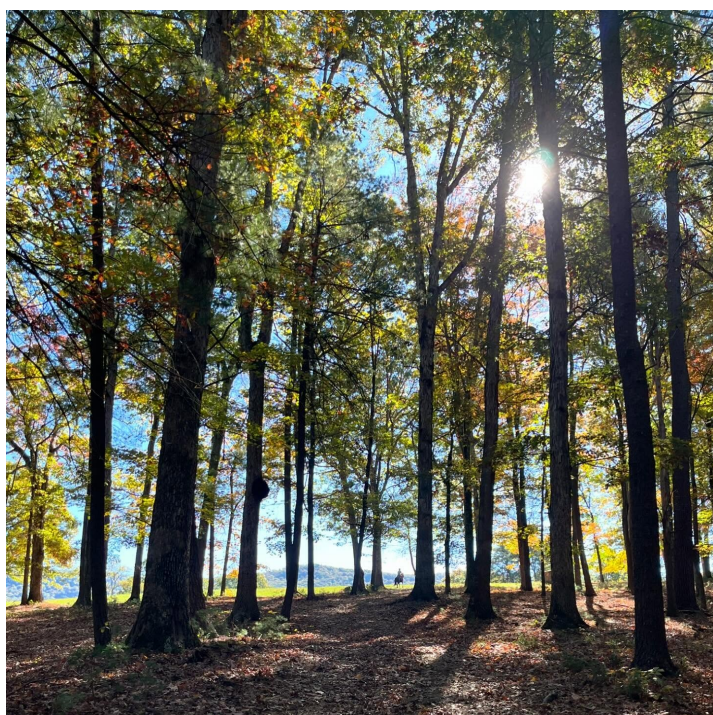


I rode Bobby in, hit the porta-potty (gotta take advantage of it when one is available!), grabbed a drink and a sandwich, and headed back out on the second loop back up the mountain. Ellen caught me fairly quickly and we started making our exchanges. I gave her Bobby at the top of the mountain and told her to take him all the way down to the water troughs at the bottom. Because of the rocks (and downhill), I was able to pass them and beat them to the bottom, so I kept going. And going, and going, AND going. I think I was on the ground for about 45 minutes when Ellen finally caught up to me and exclaimed that she was an idiot! Instead of going straight down the mountain, she and Bobby had taken the left hand turn half-way down like we did on the first loop. I didn't bother asking her how far she went before realizing her mistake, I knew it had to be a way.... I think she really just wanted more saddle time and I KNOW how much she loves riding DOWN mountains. NOT! Bob always accuses me of never letting her ride and thinks the pictures with her on Bobby out on course are all just staged! After we finished the loop on the other side of the mountain and were headed back towards camp up Milford, I told Ellen to take Bobby and ride down the other side to where she had first tied him earlier that morning. She must have misunderstood me, because she tied him a lot closer to the top. You can really make up a lot of time on foot running down Milford. On horseback, I try to take it easier due to all the concussion on the front legs. By the time Bobby and I caught up to Ellen, we were probably less than a 1/2 mile from the vet check, so I told her I would take him on in. She was right behind me when I got there! I gave my hydration pack to PJ (Ellen's significant other) and asked him to dump what was in it and refill with straight water. PJ's an extreme ultrarunner and definitely knows how to crew for the humans, he likes to leave the horse to Bob though. PJ makes the best burgers, brats and hot dogs too...if Ellen doesn't eat all of them before he can cook them! Bob is the ultimate when it comes to crewing, but he usually has his hands full attending to the horse when we are at the vet check. A second set of hands to focus on the two-legged team members is sheer luxury!

Bobby was deep into his feed pan, when I grabbed a headlamp, stuffed it in my pack along with some more cookies for Bobby and headed out for our last 15-mile loop. When Ellen caught me, I let her know I was now in survival mode and was hiking ALL the inclines, however slight. She would ride ahead for 3-4 minutes, tie and dance on down the trail. Bobby, still full of energy, was happily trotting and galloping around the fields. Several of the 50-mile endurance riders caught up and passed us around the second creek crossing, about two-thirds of the way through the loop. It was nice to have their company if even briefly. I did the first two crossings on foot and after the initial shock, discovered that the cold water had help re-energize my legs. Several more exchanges and then we were done, a few minutes behind the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> place 50-mile endurance riders with still well over an hour of daylight remaining! Yay! Now all that remained was the final vetting. We pulled tack, threw a cooler on Bobby, let him eat for a couple of minutes, then headed on over to the vet. All As and pluses! His trot outs all weekend were the best ever too! Happy, happy! Now to focus on Tevis 2025.



*2024 East Coast Championship course scenes captured by Carrie Baris*



Reorganizing Mother Nature's Disorganizing  
by Becky Pearman

The Broxton Fall Ride was my 33rd time photographing the Broxton Bridge Endurance ride and Ride & Tie. In January 2021 my hubby John and I took over marking and lighting the trails for the Broxton Bridge ride. This year was super challenging, but once again, the ride must go on, and so we did what we had to do to make the ride happen. That's the job of a volunteer, right?

Broxton experienced torrential rains Wednesday evening into nearly all day Thursday before the event was to begin on Friday. Over the years we have seen some flooding rains at Broxton, but they'd had no rain in 42 days, (since the flooding rains from Hurricanes Milton and Helene). Something about this 9.5-10.5 inches in less than 15 hours caused three ponds north of Broxton to breach. This caused millions of gallons of water heading Broxton way and caused their dams to break in a big way.

As the rain stopped about 2-3 pm Thursday, Gerhard Varn, one of the property owners, noticed their pond about to breach. He dug a drainage ditch with the backhoe to let the pond overflow go into the swamp without busting the access road over the pond. This caused re-route number one. Easy trail fix for us, but potentially thousands of dollars in damage to their culverts already was underway.

Then about 4pm (an hour before dark), he noticed where their irrigation dam was about to bust out and he dug excess soil out & around the culvert to help it flow. Eventually this was to no avail and they had multiple huge breaks in not only that dam, but the other one they call "three rivers" about 400 yards below the first one. At this point, about three miles of our black and white and green and white trails got severed from ANY and ALL access by way of the plantation service roads.

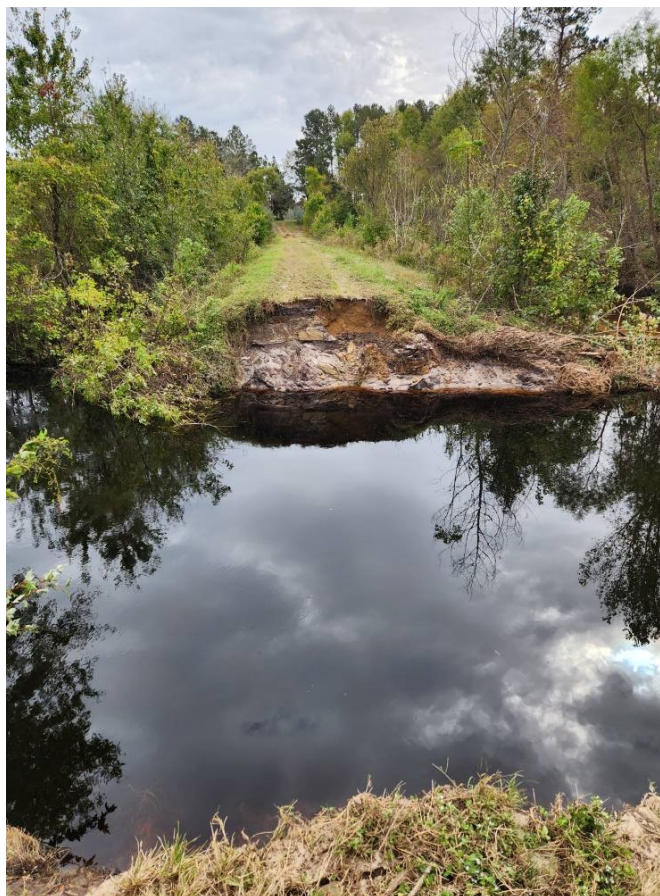


photo: Becky Pearman

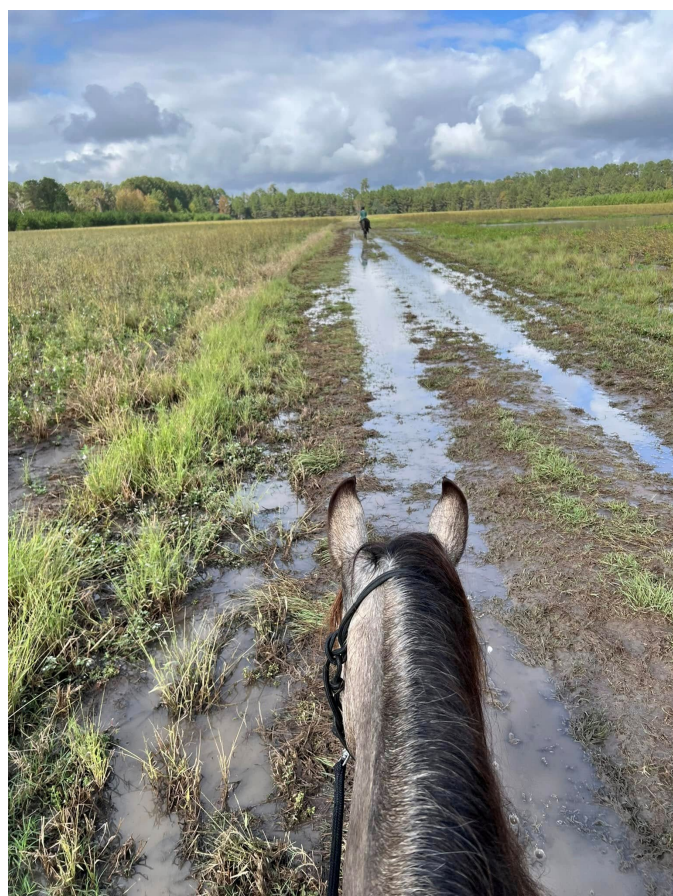


photo: Kimberly Little

Yes, I suppose at this point most managers would cry "uncle" and say this is impossible to do anything about in less than 14 hrs before the start of multiple distance events -including Ride & Tie and a 100 mile endurance ride. The loops, mileages and mapping had already been prepared for the ride briefing to take place only two hours from then.

But this wasn't the first crisis this 10th generation of Broxton owners has had to jump through hoops for, and a quick pow wow on trail had us putting a reroute plan in place so the 60 or so riders could hit the trails in the morning. With so much at stake for the riders, cancelation just wasn't an option. Was it potentially going to be a muddy mess on trail? Well yes, but this IS endurance riding isn't it?

The ride briefing was a "tad" bit dis-organized as the officials scrambled behind the scenes to work out the mathematical loop mileages. The accumulative mileage had to work within parameters for FOUR different ride distances, and two loops had been shortened approximately 2.5 to 3 miles each!

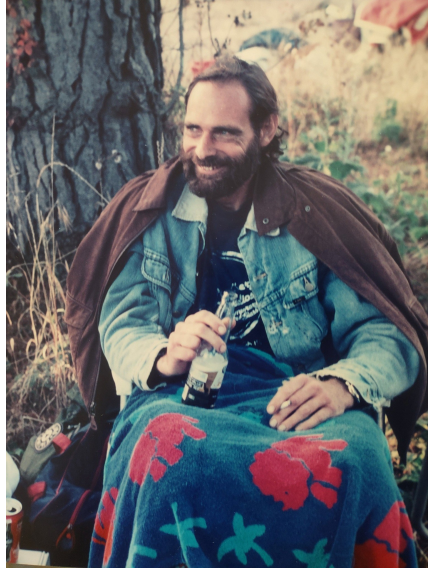
With all the destruction on the north side of the road trails, we wrongly assumed that the newly worked south side trails in Bear Bay would be in good shape, and we missed a washed out place on the black and gold trail. As I was taking photos not too far from there at the start of the 50 & 25 Friday morning, I noticed riders/horses scrambling through what appeared to be a boggy ditch. "YIKES, that doesn't look right" I thought. I hollered across the way to that first rider and she said "Yes, it is a wash out and kinda mucky and tricky". I immediately got Jerry Varn on the phone and he got Gerhard out there to asses it. We decided it immediately needed to be re-routed. I just kept thinking "can this possibly get any worse?" Well yes it did! I got the 4-wheeler stuck and Gerhard's backhoe sunk up to it's hubs on trail! After taking out a chunk of black and gold on the re-route (about two miles worth), the officials once again had to re-calculate and figure out a way to add mileage (which was done by routing a mile through the sacred Broxton battlefield which is off-limits to all riders except during the battle re-enactment in March - THANK YOU for the permission Jerry Varn!

Saturday went much smoother and overall the ride went well all things considered. So please folks, in this instance and in the future - before ride bashing begins, please take in all that you just read and put yourselves in the shoes of everyone involved in just how stressful a situation like this was. Every single management person, veterinarian, official etc. had YOUR best interest and safety in mind and tried to do the best we all could. Ride management may have seemed disorganized, but that was due to Mother Nature disorganizing the course! It will always be a challenge to reorganize what Mother Nature disorganizes!



*Jeanette Henderson rerouting the course*

## Smoke 'em if you got 'em by Steve Shaw



This is George Hall in the 80 mile vet check of the Swanton Pacific 100 Mile Ride & Tie in 1996. Nothing like a beer and a cigarette to get you through the last 20 miles! He teamed up with me on Cougar's Clown. We came in 2nd place in 18:02. Those were the days! Thanks to Allison Herfindahl for the photo.

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### **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:**

Our board made changes to our season which affects the way we score points:

In 2025, our season will only be 11 months long: January 1, 2025 to November 30, 2025.

Our 2026 season will be from December 1, 2025 - November 30, 2026.

This will more closely align us with our partner organizations.

Use this QR code to see this season's race results and standings for annual awards:



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Use this QR code to see how annual awards are calculated:





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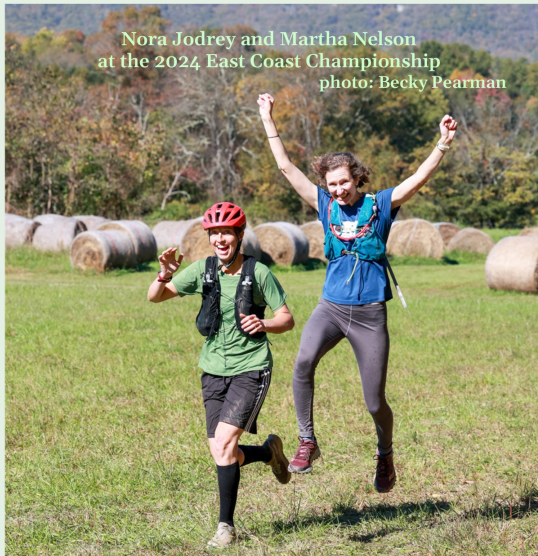
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*If you don't come back dirty and smiling, you ain't been Ride & Tying!*  
Three year old Remi Jean Oliver at the 52nd World Championship  
*photo: Calla Gold*

