

APRIL 2004 NEWS

Hi all! The time is marching by and I know that all of you have your club programs in full swing. We have already had 1 rally and 1 prep clinic and will have our second rally of the year tomorrow at Green Hill Park in Salem. Good luck to all who are going to that rally.

Dressage and Show Jumping Rally information and all forms for entry are now posted on the website, [click here](#) to see this information or use the link from the home page for Rally Entries.

Championships: Please remind your members that they must complete a Championships Intent packet and send it along with the \$25 intent fee to Lyn Ungvarsky by the closing date of the first rally on their list of 3. This reminder brings me to the topic of qualifying for Championships. Going to the USPC Championships is a privilege, not a given right just because one files an intent. It disturbs me very much to hear people say things such as, "They are a shoo in because they are the only ones who filed an intent to qualify in that discipline. In some respects that is true BUT it does not guarantee that anyone will get to go to Championships. Although our goal is to get as many members of the region to Championships as possible, we do not want to send competitors who are unprepared to go and compete with some sense of feeling pride. We do want the Championships experience to be a positive one for the kids, not to end up being an embarrassment for them or leaving them with a sense of failure. Jan C and I truly do not care if the kids come home with anything more than a participation ribbon, the sense of pride and accomplishment when a team does its best and works well together as a team and a pleasant life long memory. At the same time, neither of us want to send kids who are totally unprepared, so out of the realm with skills far below the others that are in attendance at Championships. This has happened on several different occasions in the past and it ended up being a not so good experience for the kids and the parents alike. One year we had a Junior Games team that ended up with finger pointing as to which member of the team was cause for them to be eliminated for the use of a "cuss word" making some members of the team feel that they were solely responsible. The team completely dissolved, had no sense of teamwork, showed very poor sportsmanship and friendships amongst club members were lost. This went so far as to have a near physical confrontation amongst the parents of the team members. Now, some of you may be chuckling at this little story, but it is a true story and it was very sad. The whole situation and the events that occurred were due to the fact that the kids were not well prepared and they were put into a situation that caused them great frustration and some of the team members were embarrassed because they were not up to the level of many of the other teams (most of the other teams).

I vowed that we would not let this happen again, but we did!! And I vowed again that I would not let it happen a third time. So, just because a member has filed an intent to qualify for Championships and they are the only one or one of only 4 who filed an intent, that does not mean that they definitely get to go to Championships. If at our qualifying rally there is any concern that they are not up to taking care of their mounts independently for 4 very long days, if they demonstrate that they do not work well as a member of a team, if there is any concern as to the safety, they may not be allowed to attend Championships. I will repeat, representing our region at Championships is a privilege that is earned, it is not a given right. Our oldest son was an avid soccer player from a very young age. He had a wonderful coach when he started playing Select Soccer at the age of 10 (things could be very cut throat in this league, the parents were often the worst). He handed out a wonderful Code on Conduct that the kids had to sign and were expected to abide by but before he asked any to sign it he handed out a great checklist on Good Sportsmanship with explanations for each item on the checklist. I was so impressed with this coach and the impact on the kids that played for him that I saved that list. I dug that out of my desk so that I could share this with all of you. It is all just as appropriate for Pony Club team competition as it was for the soccer league. Please share this with your members and their parents. I wish I knew where he got this so that I could give proper credit, I do remember him saying that he took it from a book so it is not his original work. Sportsmanship Checklist, [click here](#).

I have had several emails recently asking me to explain the process for selection when there are more members hoping to qualify than can fill a team. We take the top 4 best scores at our rally and they are the riding members of the team. The 5th individual is given the opportunity to go as the team HM (every must have a HM at champs). It is possible to send the 5th individual in as an individual to be placed on a scramble team if there is one but that individual may not get to go and will not know until after the closing

date, very close to the date of Champs. It also means this individual gives up the opportunity to go to champs as a riding member of any other team in a different discipline.

Festival: The USPC Festival happens every 3 years and will take place this year July 20-27th in Lexington, Ky. I always encourage pony club families to take advantage of this opportunity. It makes a great family vacation and is a wonderful experience for the kids. Even if not participating in Championships there are 3 days of clinics, both mounted and unmounted. By now you all have received the USPC News with the Gold Book which gives more detail on Festival.

Bragging time again: I have learned that Genevieve G, Cape Henry, will be going to Homer, Alaska as a Visiting Instructor to do a pony club camp. What an exciting opportunity this is for her. Homer is in that part of Alaska that so many cruise ships go through with the beauty of the water, snow/ice capped mountains and wild life abundant. I have asked that she take lots of photos and write us a little article on this experience. Little do they know that they are the ones that are getting the bargain in this deal by having a wonderful, enthusiastic pony club instructor who will set a great role model for their pony club members.

Graduation and end of the school year: Many of our members will be graduation from high school this year. It is Prom time, graduation and end of year party time. I would like to remind you all to be very careful, wear your seat belts and use good judgement at all times. We care about you!!

I look forward to seeing you all at rally in the next few weeks, be safe in your travels,

Happy Trails,
Jan G