

Hoopprints of

SPRING 2021

REGION 5



Gary Clayton
1936 - 2021

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NATRC @ the Georgia Horse Fair

A Message from the President

I start with sad news that most of you by now know. Our long time friend and shining example of dedication to competition and to Region 5, Gary Clayton has passed away. Most of you have your own favorite Gary story, and as we go forward missing his presence at every ride I look forward to hearing all of those stories. Gary loved the sport and devoted untold hours to assuring that this region was on a sound business foundation while providing an unexcelled environment for competitive trail rides. We'll miss him.

For happier news, which Gary would prefer we focus on, the Benefit Ride was a wonderful grand re-opening. Cindy Keen did her predictable outstanding job of opening our ride season with 44 competitors, a clown costume competition that highlighted children with horses (and ponies), a 2019 awards presentation put together by Tanya Kingsley, and protocols to keep us all safe. We're off to a good start with Spring in Dixie up next and almost 40 riders pre-registered. Then come two new rides (H. Cooper Black and Tennessee Trail Scamper) later in April and May. After a long, trying year everyone was thankful to be back together at the Benefit Ride and every expectation is that the next up and later rides in the region will be equally welcomed. It was wonderful to have family reunion!

As could be expected, our membership numbers are a little down right now, but as folks attend the rides and remember to renew, every indication is that we will quickly get back up on that front. If you haven't renewed, please go ahead and do so. National is back on an annual renewal with all renewals due at January 1, and your renewal now will help everyone plan for the year.

While we are not out of the woods yet on COVID, R5 has weathered that storm and we're thankful to be able to compete safely again. Come join us for the spring rides and get your conditioning done to finish out strong when we get to the fall rides.

Bill Moore
President, Region 5

Save the Date:

Tennessee Trail Scamper CTR 2021
May 21, 2021 - May 23, 2021

Circle E Guest Ranch, Cir E Ln, Belvidere, TN 37306, USA

Ride Managers:
Marsha Howard: 615-513-9371 mrhmail00@gmail.com
Sherry Garnes: 828-400-7402 sherrymgarnes@gmail.com

More Information: <https://natrc5.org/events/>

Visit natrc5.org for
information on all
upcoming events!



Endurance and Trail Riding Supplies



Until We Meet Again...

Gary L. Clayton
May 7, 1936 – March 9, 2021

Gary Clayton, 84, a resident of Montgomery, AL, passed on March 9, 2021. Gary was born in Reedsport, Oregon and attended Oregon State University. He moved to the Montgomery area from Louisiana in 1994. He served his country in the United States Marine Corps and was a member of the North American Trail Ride Conference (NATRC), and a member of Vaughn Park Church of Christ. He worked in forestry and enjoyed competing in trail horseback riding.

He is survived by his loving wife of 24 years, Linda V. Clayton; three sons, Eric Gregory (Linda) Clayton, Todd (Shari) Clayton, Mickey(Sarah) Clayton; daughter, Melissa Clayton (Mike) Easterbrooks ; a brother Gordon (Barb) Clayton; and grandchildren, Clayton Easterbrooks, Bethany Easterbrooks, Tate Easterbrooks, Rachel Easterbrooks, Lily Easterbrooks, Thomas Easterbrooks, Asher Easterbrooks Jeffrey Clayton, Ashley Clayton, Reed Clayton, Katherine Clayton, Adelaide Clayton, Michael Clayton, Tyler Presnell, Molly Beth Presnell, Grant Casey, Sarah Elizabeth Casey, Emily Kathryn Casey, Weston Burgess.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Melvin Clayton, Mable Heath Clayton; and grandchildren, Kimberly Anne Clayton and Katie Marie Clayton.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 14, 2021 at Vaughn Park Church of Christ. The family will received friends at the church 30 minutes prior to the service. A graveside service will follow at Forest Hills Cemetery, Snowdoun, AL.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to Vaughn Park Church of Christ Missions, or Mt. Dora Children's Home.



Tales from Toombsboro

Shannan Hearne

1st time Competitor and New R5 Member

Region 5 Benefit Ride

Mingo Trails

Toombsboro, GA

As riders and owners of horses we get plenty of opportunities to do something new with our equine friends. New trails present a change of scenery and pace both for us and for the equines. As an avid trail rider for the better part of the last 40 years when I heard about a sport that combined trail riding with good horse care that would offer me the opportunity to ride new places, experience new challenges, and make new friends I was all in.

Humor me for a moment while I set the scene. When it comes to camping with or without horses I can do primitive with the best of them – for a couple of nights. When it comes to trail riding my motto is point the horse's head and follow the trail. So long as someone has gone there before I'm game to try anything once. I purchased my first truck and horse trailer less than 3 years ago – so I'm neither the most inexperienced hauler nor the most adept. (For example, I don't park anywhere I might have to back up to get out again.) Finally, I didn't know a single soul who had ever attempted a NATRC ride and had never been to Mingo Trails in Georgia.

After seeing an advertisement on a Facebook trail riding group for a NATRC ride in Georgia and verifying that I could sign up and compete with my half-Arabian mare, I blindly became a member of NATRC and registered for not one but three rides in Region 5. I paid my entry fee. I watched a few webinars on what to expect, what to pack, how to follow the supplied map, how

to tie a horse at the trailer for the night, and how to prepare for vet check ins. I emailed about a dozen questions to the ride organizers and got helpful answers. I researched electrolytes and started shopping for my trip to Toombsboro, Georgia ensuring I had enough buckets and ties and equipment to survive the weekend. Note to

With ten days to go before leaving for the ride, I worked my mare a couple of miles a day at a nice easy jog to ensure she would be sound and comfortable. We often ride 10-15 miles at a time so while conditioning wasn't a concern knowing the ride had a time window in which to be completed I made the accurate guess I wouldn't just be meandering down the trails enjoying the scenery and stopping whenever I thought we needed a rest. Finally I asked Rosa (*pictured tied to my 2 horse bumper pull trailer*) to spend time every day tied at the trailer to become accustomed to being there longer than just to get tacked up and ride out.

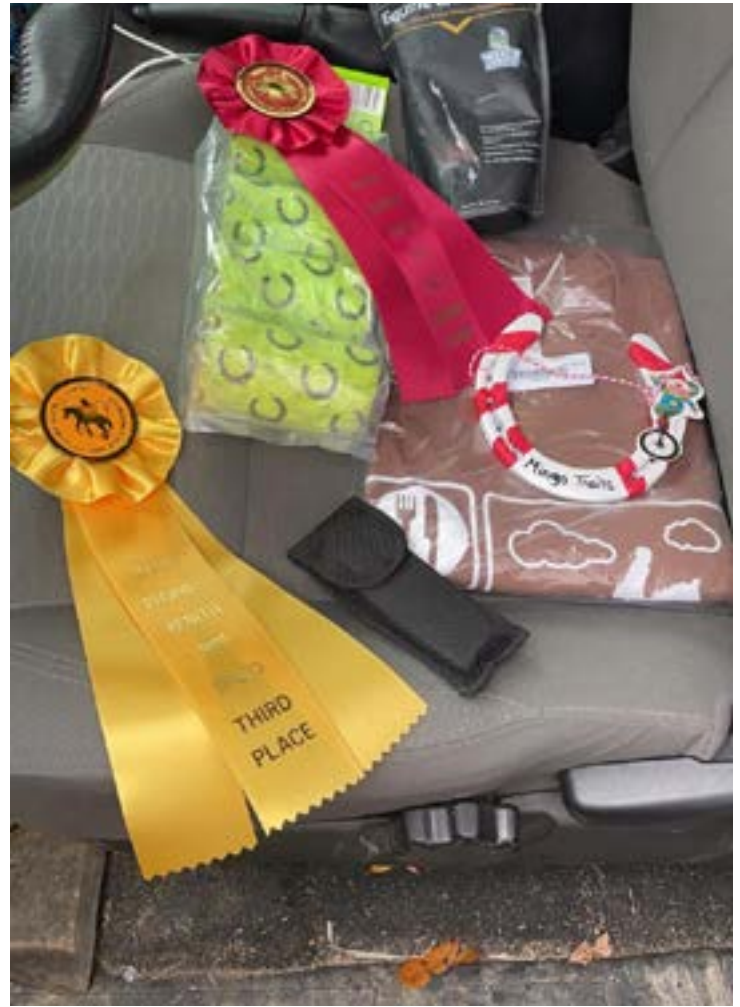
Friday morning broke beautiful with chances of storms, I finished loading the truck and trailer, put my freshly bathed horse on board, grabbed a cup of coffee, and took off. We drove through rain and traffic and arrived at Mingo Trails about five hours after check in and vet in had started. And with that, a totally inexperienced NATRC newbie sat in the driveway looking at the horses and riders all confidently preparing to meet the vet for their first assessment and tried to figure out what to do first.



It was at this point, I learned that these competitors are as friendly and helpful as anyone I've ever met! I was given advice on where to park, what to do first at check in, and how to present my horse to the vet judge. Check first concern off my list – I won't be wandering around aimlessly confused all weekend.

After parking the trailer and unloading Rosa, I went to rider check in. I was given a rider packet, and had a dozen more questions were answered. I was welcomed warmly and offered a mentor for the ride so I didn't get hopelessly lost and learned how to navigate the course within time limits. I was weighed in and assigned my official heavyweight class for the Novice division in which I had registered. I was made to feel both welcome and appreciated. I was even given a first time rider ribbon to wear on my competition penny so judges and safety riders and competitors would know I didn't have a clue what I was doing.

Returning to the trailer I gave Rosa one last brushing and headed to vet check in with a brand new leather halter and lead line. The judges and secretaries guided me through the vet check. The judge scored me fairly but took the extra time to also explain what I was doing correctly and what I was doing wrong. Rosa danced excitedly with no more idea what to expect than I had. She moved when I needed her to stand still and walked when I asked her to trot in hand. My beautiful painted Arabian cross presented better than I would have expected and we returned to the trailer with about an hour to set up camp before the pre-ride rider meeting where we would receive our maps for day one and I would meet my mentor.



Understand, I am a primitive camper. I brought water and beer and protein bars. I hung a hammock between two trees and set up a folding chair. Camp was made. I figured out how to set up a sliding tie line on the trailer so Rosa would be able to lay down and move around while tied overnight. I set up a hay bag, filled a large bucket for water, made her dinner, grabbed a protein bar and had about 15 minutes to look around before the rider meeting. I saw rigs with living quarters that were as large as my entire truck and trailer. Horses were highlined to trees. Camp kitchens were set up. I could smell aromatic meals being cooked over fires. And I thought to myself, "I am totally unprepared for this."

Rider check in was exciting. Old friends greeted each other clapping shoulders and chatting about their off seasons. I was welcomed and encouraged as a new rider by competitor after competitor. The judges talked about what to expect at vet ins and obstacles. The ride organizers distributed the maps for Saturday's 17.1 mile ride and my mentor assured me we would do fine. I am pretty sure what I heard him say was he would do fine and I would manage to tag along. I'm also pretty sure that isn't what he said at all, just what I heard. I headed back to the trailer and gave Rosa more hay, topped off her water, added a dose of electrolytes to her dinner, and crawled into my hammock. The long drive and excitement of the day clearly caught right up to me because I slept like a log.

Up at 5:30 AM to get ready for 7:30 ride out I tacked up in the dark. Made a note to pack more flashlights for the next ride. Double checked my saddle bags had necessities like water, a sponge to cool Rosa down at water stops, a protein bar, phone was charged and my newly downloaded trail mapping app was ready to start. Remembered I never purchased a wristwatch for tracking time. Figured I would just wing it. Headed to ride out to find my mentor. This gentleman has been riding NATRC for over 4 years. His beautiful gelding stood quietly waiting for our numbers to be called to time out and start the course. Rosa paced in circles and fretted because other horses were leaving and we were standing. Before I knew it we were off.



My mentor helped me keep pace, navigate the map, rein in when I needed to rein in and move out when I needed to make up time. The ride was beautiful. Water stations were set up in addition to ponds and creek crossings where the horses could drink. Safety riders seemed to be around every other corner to help if we needed it. Pulse and respiration stops went great and Rosa vetted in and out with flying colors. Thank goodness they weren't doing pulse and respirations on me or I might have gotten pulled. Over the course of the 171 mile journey (with an extra mile or so added for one missed turn) I went from energetic and nervous to plumb exhausted. In the first miles I felt like I was fighting my horse to stay under control and not be chasing the horses in front of us. In the last few miles my dependable, loyal Arabian probably took far better care of me than I did of her.

My amazing mentor got me to the finish line and explained I should untack, clean up my horse, and get ready for the next day. The vet judge was to come by the trailers to check horses so all I really had to do was wash Rosa down and get ready for the evening's festivities. If that hadn't required walking my trail weary body around it would have been easy as pie. But let me tell you I was tired. **T**IR**E**D with all capital letters. Rosa was settled back in at the trailer freshly bathed and with hay and water and a nice soaked mash for early dinner.

The ride hosted a circus themed costume contest and it was amazing! Horses and riders dressed as everything imaginable from a circus. It was a lot of fun and got us all in a great mood for Saturday night's rider meeting.

Everyone – riders and staff alike – checked on me. Questions like how was your ride and how is your horse and how was it going were common. While this is a competitive sport I never felt like anyone wanted to be anything but helpful whether they were competing in my division or another. I was loaned fly spray, had help getting a storage door closed on the trailer, and offered advice on everything a newbie might not know.

After Saturday night's ride meeting I fell into my hammock and had the sleep of the dead. The one time I woke up and looked over to check on Rosa she was also laying down contentedly munching hay. All was good with the world.

Sunday morning felt a little bit like wash, rinse, repeat. I was physically tired but not near as sore as I was afraid I'd be. Rosa was as fresh and excited to ride out as she had been the day before. Again, riders offered everything from advice and coffee to relaxation tips and compliments on how well Rosa was holding up. We trotted out for the judge and were checked sound and then timed off with our mentor again. Bobby, my mentor, kept up a good pace and our horses had learned to match stride even though his good boy jogged out calm and steady and Rosa was jogging and jiggling and ready to explore another 16.1 miles of trails. The first day jitters were gone and I rode down some trails I knew we had traversed the day before but barely remembered seeing. I was much more relaxed and really enjoyed myself. With the exception of one small saddle sore I was feeling fit and excited.

I should probably have told you that on Thursday afternoon before the Mingo Trails ride my first grandchild was born. In strict defiance of taking on the title of Grandma I was out living the life and riding the trail and while not setting any records at least holding my own in the competition. Despite being 52 years old and green as the newborn grandchild in so many ways, I was riding the same distance and pace as teenagers. So long as I completed the full 2 day ride and didn't get lost or tossed I figured I was doing pretty darn well for a Granny!

We arrived at time out well within our time window. We had attempted every obstacle and for the most part completed each one without embarrassing ourselves. Rosa vet checked out sound. I bathed her one last time, tethered up to the trailer, and broke down my meager campground. In the background judges and secretaries were tabulating scores. Riders were congratulating each other and celebrating completion of the ride and making preparations to head home.

With barely enough time to really gather my thoughts on the weekend it was time for the awards ceremony. I joined the competitors back at the pavilion prepared to congratulate everyone and feel great about completing the weekend and load up for the long haul back to North Carolina to start another week of work. Imagine my shock when Rosa placed 2nd in our division and I placed 3rd! Not only had I maneuvered the maps, completed the obstacle challenges, endured the miles, and stayed in my time each day but I had done it all well enough to be in the ribbons!

What a weekend! When I arrived home I registered for what will be my fourth ride of the season and did some more shopping to be a little better equipped at camp and on the trails. This grandma is so excited to have found a competitive trail riding organization that is welcoming, exciting, organized, and FUN! I sure hope to see all of you on other Region 5 rides. I'll still be riding Novice all season but I won't feel like a newbie. If you enjoy trail riding, if you like to challenge your horse and have fun and ride with people who are happy to put in the miles with smiles and congratulations and encouragement for all, NATRC may be the group for you, too.



Article photos submitted by Shannan Hearne

Benefit Ride photos submitted by Courtney Keen





Bama Bound for Round 2

Spring in Dixie with Shannan Hearne

Region 5 Spring in Dixie
Shoal Creek
Talladega National Forest

My Second NATRC Ride

The last thought I had as I pulled out of the farm for the Spring in Dixie Ride was how much more organized I was than my first ride and how much more confident I was for the weekend. Is confidence one of the deadly sins?

Well, I was wrong on both accounts! During the long drive to Alabama I apparently forgot everything I learned from my mentor and remembered a plethora of things that I hadn't packed or hadn't organized. *Note to self:* Do not throw things in to the truck and trailer and assume you will have time to organize them when you get to the ride. Never going to happen.

This Alabama ride was a bit more of a hike for me coming from North Carolina so the weekend started off being late to check in and vet in. My high levels of anxiety definitely conveyed to my horse; Rosa was ready to leap off the launching pad by the time we got to vet in. Good news! That led to a much better trot in hand but not so useful for getting her to stand still and let the vet do an examination. By the time we finished vet check I was ready to hog tie her to the trailer. Fortunately, I found my camping buddy at vet check so I did load the horse back on the trailer and move my entire campsite to get down to overflow parking. Rosa was quite a good sport about getting back on the trailer after a 7 hour trip and my camping buddy had done a much better job of packing so everything I couldn't find she had!

If you like to primitive camp this location and the overflow parking are awesome. We never heard a generator, our neighbors or anything. It was quiet and peaceful. We were in a small meadow surrounded by trees so the horses could graze some, there were plenty of places to tie up, hang hammocks, and get shade when needed. On the flip side if you aren't a seasoned primitive camper be prepared to rough it a bit more than at a camping facility with full bath houses and all the amenities. Pack accordingly.

Friday night was incredibly quiet and relaxing. The horses behaved well and Lael and I enjoyed a campfire and pleasant evening. I should have been organizing my truck and trailer but I was just too worn out from the trip. I am getting very envious of the competitors who haul in a day or two early. I think retirement is moving rapidly up my to do list so I, too, can arrive early and get acclimated before the competition begins. In the world of NATRC competition begins the moment you get through rider check in and receive your competition penny. From that point on you and your horse (and your horse care/stalling area) are open to be judged. Unlike a horse show where what you do at the trailer stays at the trailer.

Saturday morning arrived with a line of thunder storms that sent me scurrying from my hammock to my truck hours before the sun came up. Being in Alabama there was a time change, my body had no idea what time it was. Rosa was soaking wet by the time ride management announced a three hour ride out delay to allow the storms to pass and keep us all safe. Even though the weather created some soupy spots on the trail the extra three hours was a real blessing; I was pleased to know that NATRC is dedicated to keeping us all safe out on the trails. We rode out at ten AM with damp saddles, damp horses, and high hopes for a great day!

Somehow, I forgot to secure my maps to my saddle and they disappeared early in the ride. Fortunately the trails were well marked and my mentor didn't lose his map so we never actually rode off trail. This ride I really focused on Rosa's behavior and that led to a lot of battles along the way trying to control her speed and forward motion. We both learned a lot and my list of things to work on at home before the next ride was getting pretty long by the time we got to our first P and R. Rosa, being an Arab cross, was built and bred for all day rides so P and R's go pretty well. She relaxed much more quickly when I dismounted allowing me a bit of room to catch my breath and get her nice and cooled down by the time her pulse and respiration were taken. *For new competitors with horses who aren't super conditioned yet... a hand fan, some water, loosening your girth or removing your saddle, and lowering your own anxiety levels all help to get your horse calm, cool, and collected.*

Saturday's ride went very well all in all. I was pleased with how we handled the wet spots on the trail. The obstacles were new and different but not so challenging that I was overwhelmed. I must say that April in Alabama is beautiful. There were so many great blooms along the trails. The creek crossings were cool and crisp and refreshing for the horses. The trails were very well marked and I enjoyed myself thoroughly.

Sunday the sun came up and the trails were much more dry and I was far less sore than the previous ride when I rolled out of my hammock. A quick tack up and we were ready to ride out. Rosa was still fresh as a daisy but a little more controlled than Saturday. The ride again went very well. The trails were dryer. And we rode the exact same track as Saturday so I was less worried about time and pacing and better able to focus on training my horse and enjoying the ride.

In many ways I was disappointed overall by my scores and my judges comments but I have to say I earned what I got. I am still struggling with getting Rosa to settle down and that reflects in my control scores. If I am fighting my horse the judge sees a less than sound seat. If my horse won't stand still to mount and dismount the judge sees a lack of horsemanship and a lack of respect from my mount. If the vet advises sponging your horses legs to prevent swelling at final vet check and I don't do it the points lost for post-ride swelling really hurt.

One of the most beneficial things for me personally at this second ride was camping with another novice rider. We compared notes and advice we had each gotten from our mentors and both learned a lot more than if we had only learned from a single experienced rider. Everyone who rides/judges/competes/volunteers within NATRC is extremely helpful. Having a first ride under my belt I was much more attentive to the words of wisdom people were sharing.

As I look back on the weekend and am only four days out from my next ride I already see areas I need to work on. I haven't finished unloading my truck from the last trip. So of course I haven't started getting organized for the next one. The next ride is much closer to home and I rented a corral so travel time and set up time will be much simpler. Looking forward to that. I am still struggling to teach my horse to side pass and that is very much a component of obstacles so I have something to do in the saddle this week. And I've been to two rides now with minimal grocery shopping to get ready. I am definitely going to the store for more than protein bars and bottled water before I pull out of here on Friday.

Kudos to the ride organizers for Spring in Dixie! I am sure that a facility without running water and Mother Nature sending in the rain increased the challenges of organizing and running a smooth event. It went great and everyone was on top of the weather and the challenges the location presented. Water was delivered to campsites. Schedule changes were communicated clearly. The judges' score cards gave me great insight into what I still need to work on and where I had improved over the previous event. I would encourage new competitors to keep them and refer back to them regularly as you learn and progress in the sport.

Finally, if you have friends who enjoy trail riding, invite them to come check out NATRC. They can ride in a one day novice class to see what it is all about or just come along with you to meet other competitors, volunteer, and decide if NATRC might be a good fit for them to develop their horse and get out and ride! The free first year's membership and reasonably priced entry fees make NATRC a great way to get out and explore trails. Truth be told, I found NATRC and joined as much to ride new places as anything. But once I got here I was all in! Now I, too, need to get friends and boarders to come with me to help the sport we all love grow!

See you all at the next event!



Photos courtesy of Facebook - NATRC Region 5 Discussion Group



Spring in Dixie 2021 2-day Ride Results

NOVICE JUNIOR HORSEMANSHIP

Anna Beth Lawrence

NOVICE LTWT HORSEMANSHIP

Kathi Wiggins
Mackie Rader
Jess Wright
Patricia Bowden
Tina Anderson

NOVICE HVYWT HORSEMANSHIP

Lael-Ruth S. Feist
Carlee Meadows
Shannan Hearne
Lisa Johnson

CP JUNIOR HORSEMANSHIP

Kinsley Edelstein

CP LTWT HORSEMANSHIP

Leigh Riley
Paula Ann Riley

CP HVYWT HORSEMANSHIP

Cindy Keen
Carolyn Chapman
Marsha Howard
Bobby Fields
Donna Hajek

OPEN LTWT HORSEMANSHIP

Esther Diaguila
Sherry Morgan Garnes
Sierra Si Patisaul
Halia Lehr

OPEN HVWT HORSEMANSHIP

Tommy Mitchell
William Moore
Jennifer Mulligan

NOVICE JUNIOR HORSE

Timber Jac Joe

NOVICE LTWT HORSE

YOLO
Starlight's Masterpiece
Pilgrim
A Priceless Picasso
BeBe

NOVICE HVYWT HORSE

1. Spirit's Pretty Boy
2. Jada Angel
3. LW An-La-Rosa Silk
4. Luca

CP JUNIOR HORSE

1. Sir Percival

CP LTWT HORSE

1. Om El Bastian
2. Impressive Red Rebel

CP HVYWT HORSE

1. Spirit of Spotted Alen
2. Oakies Roanwood 10
3. Mandella Bey
4. DLC Roxies Peponita
5. Sundancers Comanchero

OPEN LTWT HORSE

1. Danamyte
2. Beau 11
3. Mick Jagger
4. Papa's Alabama Express

OPEN HVWT HORSE

1. Windstorm Clay
2. Jiminy Cricket
3. Norman

NOVICE SWEEPSTAKES

Spirit's Pretty Boy

CP SWEEPSTAKES

Sir Percival

OPEN SWEEPSTAKES

Windstorm Clay

NOVICE COMBO

Kathi Wiggins and YOLO

CP COMBO

Cindy Keen and Spirit of Spotted Alen

Thanks to all the riders and volunteers that came to support Spring in Dixie!! Special thanks to all my team members and to the Judges Stephanie Ostrowski and Kathy Shanor!! Loved having Vet Apprentice Linda Galbraith there!

Glad the weather turned out to be a non event! Spring rides can definitely be unpredictable.

As usual, ride fell on my birthday. Celebrating with cookies at the ride briefing was a great end to the ride!

Thanks again for supporting R5, so excited we are getting to have rides. Thanks to Halia Lehr for taking such great care of my special horse, Honeybun.

See you soon!

Patty