



Texas Trail Challenge Club Newsletter

September/October

Tuesday,
June 4, 2024
Volume 67, Number 54
1 Section, 12 Pages
\$1.00



The Highlander



Highlighting the Heart of the Hill Country

Founded in 1959

Hometown newspaper of Vicki Kinsey

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UPCOMING EVENTS

September 7 & 8

Hog Wild, Wood Rock Ranch, Bluffdale

September 21 & 22

Lost Concho, Inks Ranch, Llano

October 5 & 6

Wild West Wrangle, Fort Griffin State Park, Albany

October 25

Rider Clinic, Four Sisters Ranch, Utopia

October 26 & 27

Monster Mash, Four Sisters Ranch, Utopia



Horsing Around

Photo by Martelle Luedecke/Luedecke Photography
Vivian Johnson peeked around Tobijah as she dismounted for obstacle 5 June 2, during the Texas Trail Challenge at Reveille Peak Ranch northwest of Burnet. Find more photos on Page 11.

Texas trail riders love the challenges



Becky Cash on Skipper and Jaxson Monroe, age 10, on Bluebell competed on obstacle 1 which mimicked red light green light, start and stop, to the judge's commands June 2, during the Texas Trail Challenge in northwest of Burnet at Reveille Peak Ranch.

Photos by Martelle Luedecke/Luedecke Photography

Special to The Highlander

The Texas Trail Challenge Club held its inaugural challenge at Reveille Peak Ranch June 1-2. Fifty-five riders and horses competed Saturday while 31 teams competed Sunday. The club typically hosts 20 trail challenges annually throughout Texas.

Each Texas Trail Challenge is a one-day trail riding event that features 10 obstacles placed along a 7- to 10-mile trail. Judges are posted at each obstacle to evaluate the riders' performances.

The obstacles are designed to mimic natural

and real-world trail conditions. They can include navigating through creeks, opening gates, and tackling uphill or downhill terrain. Participants might also face tasks such as side-passing over logs, or could involve sending the horse into a pond or over a small jump.

Riders and their horses are judged on their ability to successfully negotiate each obstacle. Emphasis is placed on teamwork, safety, and the willingness and calmness of the horse, as well as the rider's cues and balance, to ensure smooth and effective completion of the challenges.



Leah Lynch on Stella and Katherine Mason on Delilah reached the top June 2, during the Texas Trail Challenge at Reveille Peak Ranch in East Lake Buchanan.



Katherine Mason on Delliah navigated the rocky trail June 2, during the Texas Trail Challenge northwest of Burnet.



Joan Wilson on Renegade easily maneuvered the metal bridge crossing a creek June 2 at Reveille Peak Ranch in East Lake Buchanan, during the Texas Trail Challenge.



Karen Pantel on Windy traversed the tilting bridge June 2, at Reveille Peak Ranch during the Texas Trail Challenge.



Annika Sweir on Sophie and Crista Sweir on Prince dismounted to rest their horses before the next obstacle June 2, during the Texas Trail Challenge at Reveille Peak Ranch in Burnet County.

Camp Reveille - October 4-5th, 2025 @ River Ranch County Park, Liberty Hill, TX.

Attention, Happy Campers!

Camp Reveille is BACK for 2025! And WE HEARD YOU!! The overwhelming feedback we got was that June was just way too hot, so we moved our date to October 4-5th, 2025! However, with the date change, Reveille Peak Ranch was no longer available to us as a ride location. So, your trusty Camp Managers have scoured high and low, crossed mountains and rivers, and ended up in our very own backyard at River Ranch County Park in Liberty Hill!!!

Williamson County Parks and TTCC are teaming up to allow overnight horse camping at River Ranch County Park FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME!!! Our group will help set a precedent to hopefully allow for overnight camping with horses moving forward, so let's show them how awesome we can be by making this a good experience for them!

And also, guess what? We will have 15 RV spots up for grabs at Camp Reveille! That's right, just 15! If you're ready to enjoy nature, s'mores, and the sweet sound of crickets - all while having your very own electric and water hookups, now's your chance - we have to pay for our spots 1 year in advance to reserve them, so we need to act now!

So, here's the deal: Be one of the first 15 people to email us at TTCCCampReveille@gmail.com and you could snag a spot for just \$24/night (\$48 for the weekend)! But don't hit that snooze button—once you get the green light email, you've got 24 hours to seal the deal, or it's back to the campfire for you.

If you would like to come in a day early and/or stay a day late please include that information and payment in your email as well. You are welcome to transfer your spot prior to the ride and we will keep a waitlist if you decide to drop your spot we can give it to the next person on the list and refund your money.

Don't miss out—email us now and get ready for a weekend of epic camping tales!

Are you ready for Hog Wild?

"Summertime and the livin' is easy" are the opening lines of a very famous song from *Porgy and Bess*. I trust that you have had an easy and relaxing summer and that you and your pony have each had a little break. Our first ride of the fall, Hog Wild, is right around the corner so hopefully you have



been riding in anticipation of this ride. August has been really hot, and September is usually hot as well, so please make sure you and your horse are conditioned and used to the heat. Wood Rock Ranch also has some rocks and hills, so shoes or boots are recommended for your horse. You might be in the saddle for four or five hours, so think about extra steps to deal with the heat. Perhaps put a frozen water bottle beside your cool one in your saddle bag and take extra bottles of water on trail with you. Even if you don't use them, one of your riding buddies might need some water. Consider a refreshing snack for your horse, carrots soaked in water or apple slices, and a sponge on a string. If there is a water source, sponging your horse's neck can help him cool off. A long sleeved but light weight shirt can keep the sun off your arms and light-colored denim jeans are better than a dark wash. Neck wraps, a spray bottle, and cool vests are other options.

The week before you leave home check your rig thoroughly. The heat is brutal for equipment too! Run the generator and the AC, restock your pantry, examine the hitch, lights, and trailer floor. Make sure your rig is filled with gas, check oil and coolant, and drive your tow vehicle around if it has been sitting. Check every tire on your trailer and tow vehicle, including the spares, and if the tires are several years old consider new ones. Make sure you can change a tire and have all the equipment to do so. Fill your rig with water for people and horses. Load your tack, hay, feed, first aid kits, and your pen. Pack boots and clothes, check your flashlight batteries, and don't forget your knife and paint to put your competition number on your horse. Start the fridge cooling a couple days before you leave, adding food the day before. Try not to wait until the last minute to pack because sometimes you forget things or find an issue with your rig and have no time for repairs.

Everybody must eat, so try to bring prepared food as much as possible. I load multiple hay nets at home and sometime put my horse's feed and supplements in Ziploc bags for each meal, plus a couple of extra. I also try to clean my horse's pen early in the morning and add fresh hay and water so when I ride back into camp I can just unsaddle and turn him out. Sometimes I soak alfalfa cubes for "alfalfa soup" for the return to camp. It's especially helpful on Sunday when the extra forage and moisture are in your horse's stomach for the trailer ride home. Set your pen in shade if all possible, a tree or tarp, or try to park your rig to block the afternoon sun. I bring electrolytes for both myself and my horse and cold prepared salads or leftovers for an easy meal. Don't forget your potluck item and be sure to eat breakfast and take a snack for yourself when you ride out.

When you arrive at the first obstacle and hear the instructions, take a minute to study the surroundings. Then think through each step to complete the obstacle and rehearse it mentally. Decide if one approach is better than another. If you have questions, ask before you start. Sometimes there is a diagram which can be helpful. Don't forget to praise your horse, take a deep breath, and relax. If one obstacle doesn't go well, don't let it spoil the rest of the ride. And remember that the rider in front of you completing the obstacle might be in another division with different directions, or they may be making mistakes that you don't want to repeat. Study the map carefully and be sure to stay on trail, you don't want to add extra miles by missing a turn like I did at the last ride. Most of all smile and have fun!

If possible, trailer early or late. Be especially careful if you are stuck in traffic or your rig has issues because moving air is what keeps your horse from overheating. Some people wire a fan into their trailer to help keep their horse cool. When you do stop for gas, try to pull under the awning for shade, and offer your horse water or soaked snacks. Shavings in your trailer can also help insulate your horse from heat radiating up from the pavement. I have even heard of people adding a bag of ice to their shavings for the cooling effect, but I have not tried that.

When the ride is over, and you are at home, study your score card. Pick out a few things you need to practice and a couple of things that went well. Even if it is not at an obstacle, it is important to recognize your accomplishments. And hug your pony because they did a good job too!

Happy Trails,

Jean Wilson

UPDATE ON 2024 BUCKLE SERIES



Smiley Ride: April 13-14
Camp Reveille: June 1-2
Hog Wild: September 7-8
WWW: October 5-6
Salute to Troops: November 9-10

Since Equifest was canceled, you must ride 7 out of the 10 rides above to qualify for the buckle series. One buckle will be awarded to the highest cumulative score in Tenderfoot, Maverick, and Horseman, and a Wildcard buckle will be drawn from all of the remaining qualifiers.

From Interim President Bill Phillips September 2024

I hope your summer has gone well and that you have gotten some rain. Here in the Killeen area, we still have green grass, though it is fading. Of course, we also had a record-breaking flood that filled our nearly dry Stillhouse Hollow Lake. Summer in Texas....

There are three things I would like to write to you about.

First – The New Reservation Process:

A few weeks ago, I spoke with Ride Managers for Hog Wild, Lost Concho, Wild West Wrangle, and Monster Mash to see how the change in the system has affected their rides. They all reported that opening the website reservation from 65 to 100 has virtually eliminated the pressure to be on the website at 6:00 AM on the first day of the month. Hog Wild was full at 65 paid riders and there was a wait list. Our next ride, Lost Concho had 48 paid riders with 65 signed up on the website. Under the old process of registering, many rides were closed the first day and it was nearly impossible for someone to sign up if they missed the window. Now, ten weeks after it opened, there is still space to sign up for Lost Concho. I think it is safe to say the new registration process has been a positive change for both riders and Ride Managers.

Second - The Refund Policy Change / Rule Book (2025):

Thank you for all your feedback on changing the refund policy. The BOD appreciates each of you who took the time to provide suggestions. As a board we want to support each member, which includes our Ride Managers. The Ride Managers make plans months in advance of their rides and can be left with out-of-pocket expenses if riders cancel late in the process. Therefore, as a Board we feel that a change to the Refund Policy is needed to benefit all members. Members will have the opportunity to vote on a new Refund Policy for 2025 via the fall ballot. Please review the current rule book and send any comments to bill.phillips02@gmail.com.

Third – The Presidential Election:

I will be stepping down as President at the end of the year, so if you are interested in serving as the next TTCC President please contact Tiffany Janke (TTCC Treasurer) for an application. I will be glad to

talk with you about what is involved. (Hey! If I can do this it can't be that hard!) The election to fill the position will take place this fall via electronic ballot.

Bill Phillips
Interim President

Election for TTCC President

It's time to choose a new President for TTCC. Bill Phillips has served as the Interim President for the 2024 ride season and will be turning over the reins to a new leader in January 2025. Board Positions are 3 years in length and are chosen by an on-line ballot. The position description and requirements are listed on page 4 of the 2024 Member Handbook (see below).

Applications for the position of President can be requested from the Treasurer tiffany.jankettcc@gmail.com beginning on **September 1st** and must be submitted by **October 10th**. Applications will be publicized in mid-October so members can familiarize themselves with candidates

The ballots will be emailed out on **Sunday October 27th** and must be received no later than **Wednesday November 6th** so that the results can be announced at the Semi-Annual General Meeting on **November 8th** at Salute To The Troops. Each TTCC member will have one vote. (Family Memberships only have one vote). The new President will take office on January 1, 2025.

If you have any questions, please contact any of the Board Members. We are all available to help.

2024 By-Laws Page 4

1. POSITION IDENTIFICATION:

Title: President

Reports to: Board of Directors/TTCC Membership

2. POSITION OBJECTIVE:

To serve the TTCC organization as the Chief Volunteer, providing leadership to the Board of Directors (BOD) and membership at large.

3. KEY PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES:

- a. Ensure BOD matters are handled properly.
- b. Ensure designated/delegated BOD work is executed properly.
- c. Guide and mediate BOD actions with respect to organizational priorities and governance concerns.
- d. Provide notification of meetings and items for the BOD agenda.
- e. Manage website correspondence.
- f. Monitor financial planning and financial reports.
- g. Act as the BOD representative to all TTCC membership, ensuring timely and appropriate reporting of BOD decisions and actions to members.
- h. Ensure the organization maintains positive and productive relationships with media, funders, donors, members, and other organizations.
- i. Evaluate annually the organization's performance in achieving its mission.
- j. Develop agenda and preside over all regular and special BOD and membership meetings,

encouraging all members to participate in discussion and ensuring decisions are reached in an orderly, timely, and democratic manner.

- k. Maintain year TTCC ride records as completed and post to website.
- l. Maintain finalized year-end totals to include ride scores and year-end placings with Chief of Staff or Appointed Chair.
- m. Work with Webmaster and Web Event Coordinator to keep current.
- n. Work with Ride Director to have tentative upcoming year's Ride Calendar to Judges Director by September 1 of current year
- o. Performs other responsibilities as the BOD assigns.

4. QUALIFICATIONS/KNOWLEDGE/EXPERIENCE:

The President must be:

- a. A current TTCC member with at least two years experience as a rider and a worker or a volunteer.
- b. Knowledgeable of TTCC rules and practices

Getting to know you!

Tooter Smith



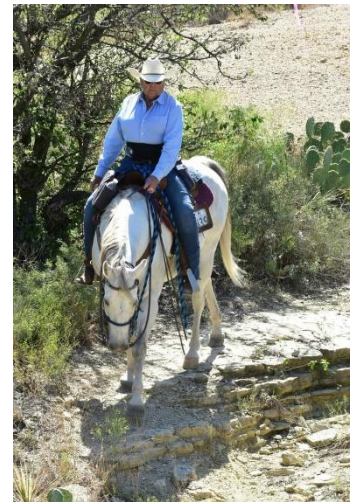
EXCA Competition

I am Tooter Smith from Rocksprings, Texas. I have been married to Carroll Smith for 52 years and we have one daughter Kit Shadrock and grandchildren, Emily Ramzinski Kurzejeski and Lane Ramzinski along with great granddaughter Adeline "Addie" Grace Kurzejeski. I once told a preacher that if "I keep a horse between my daughter's legs, she will stay out of trouble," and it worked. In addition to being a ride secretary and working with the club website, Kit has ridden with me at a half dozen TTCC rides.

I have had horses and been involved with ranching all my life. At the age of seven a friend needed their Shetland pony broke so I took the job. From that time on I have always started my own horses. I started rodeoing when I was seven and was able to win the all-around buckle over the boys at a junior rodeo when I was seventeen. The next year they wouldn't let me enter the boys' events. When I was nine, I traded for my first horse, a little quarter mare that I named DeeDee who

was two and green broke. The guy I got her from told my dad not to let me ride her until he had ridden her first, but my dad never rode her. I could do all the rodeo events on her except goat tying. Before I got her, I rode my dad's pickup horse barrel racing.

I got Socks after I graduated from high school and he and DeeDee were the ones that I rodeoed on in college while I attended Southwest Texas Junior College in Uvalde, Texas. I won the all-around buckle for the girls in the Southern Region which included Louisiana. I was able to go to the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association Finals three years in a row, once to Deadwood, SD, and twice to Bozeman, MT. My third year I was able to place fourth in goat tying in the United States. I also won Miss Congeniality in Bozeman in 1971 in the queens contest for colleges in the United States. That was a big shock because I am not queen material!



*Cactus Two-Step
Photo by Scott Butcher*

The last horse I broke was a little paint named Dan when I was forty-six. I trained him as a goat roping horse and he was great. In 1994 and 1998 I was the World Ladies Goat Roping Champion. I trained many horses before Dan for barrel, team roping, calf roping, goat roping, pole bending, goat tying and break-a-way. I rodeoed until 2011 with the West Texas Rodeo Association when I



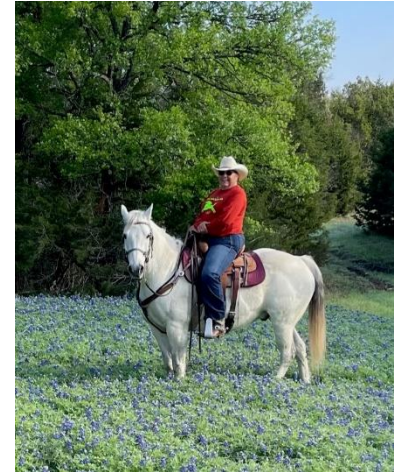
Riding at Bandera

decided to do something different. I won the twenty and over break-a-way and forty and over and the next year they would not let me rope in the twenty and over. In 2016 I joined EXCA and in that year won fourth and then was crowned Reserve Champion in the Novice Division in 2017. Then, I lost my black horse Jess in 2018 before EXCA started that year.

I competed in ACTHA and ETS and started with TTCC in 2019. I was thrilled to win the Iron Rider award in 2022 and 2023 and I wear my buckle all the time.

Carroll and I try to ride as often as we can going to New Mexico and places in North Texas to ride. On our fiftieth wedding anniversary instead of a big party, we camped and rode at Parrie Haynes and had a great time.

As far as my favorite horse is concerned, it's hard to say because each horse has its own abilities. My black horse Jess was sure a great one, and then Fly came along in my older age and he's a good one too. I sure could have used Fly and his athleticism in my younger years, but God has put me where I am today. I would like to ride as long as I am able, or God takes me home. God has given me a great life, husband, daughter and grandchildren. I would not change growing up with the dad I had. He taught me all I know because back then there were no clinics or schools to go to, to learn how to train a horse. Dad and I did it the cowboy way by snubbing horses to another horse and riding until you had the buck out of them, and you could ride alone. Round pens were not really used in those days. God put majestic horses on this earth for us to enjoy, and I am truly blessed to have been able to have fine horses to ride.



Spring ride in bluebonnets

Kella and Tyson Staller



Kella and Tyson at home in China Spring

My husband Tyson and I grew up owning and riding horses, but like so many others, we gave them up while we were raising our family of four children, who are now all grown. We also have 12 grandchildren ranging in age from 11 months to 23 years. We bought a place in China Spring in 2013 and so began our life with horses once again.

We started off with just a few horses and began trail riding in the area. We met Dennis and Tashia Ellington and became great friends. The 4 of us started trail riding together and over the past 7 years, we have traveled across the US to trail ride in some of the most remote and beautiful places you can imagine.

We currently have 7 quarter horses that range from 4 years to 28 years old. We are picking up an unhandled quarter horse yearling in the next few weeks from Arkansas, so we will certainly have our hands full for a while.

My husband and I, along with Dennis and Tashia, joined TTCC this year. We have had such a great time at the events and have learned so much! The members are very kind and helpful. We look forward to continuing with the events and getting to know the rest of the members better.

One of our favorite places to ride is in the Gila National Forest in New Mexico which has over three million acres. The scenery is breathtaking and the wildlife abundant. It's remote and full of rivers, canyons and mountains. It's one of the



Riding at Lake Waco



Riding at Robber's Cave, Oklahoma

best places to take a young horse. After a week of riding there, they blossom into totally different horses. Your relationship with your horse, no matter the age, becomes much deeper when you ride in a place like that. You and your horse must depend on each other to make good decisions and take care of each other.

Becoming a member of TTCC and going to the events and clinic have been very helpful, honing both my own and my horses' skills. We are learning to trust each other and help each other, ultimately becoming a better partnership.

One of my favorite quotes:

“At its finest, rider and horse are joined not by tack, but by trust.

Each is totally reliant upon the other. Each is the selfless guardian of the other's well-being.” – Author unknown.



Kella Staller, Cindy Davis, and Tashia Ellington at Mount Rushmore

Are you Going for IRON RIDER?

If you are trying for Iron Rider this year, please email Karen Pantel at dkpantel@gvec.net . Give her your name and whether this is your first, second, third, etc., Iron Rider. To qualify for Iron Rider you must ride OR work as a Judge, Secretary, Ride Manager, or volunteer at every 2024 ride (one day of the two day weekend counts). In addition, you must have competed in 40% of the rides for 2024 which is 9 rides. If you begin a ride and have to pull after the first obstacle it counts, and riding in the Scout division also counts.

1st Iron Rider



2nd Iron Rider



3rd Iron Rider

June 2024 BOD Meeting Summary

- Bill Phillips ran some comparison numbers for registrants at the Spring Rides of 2023 to 2024 and reported that the number of riders is down. But, since implementing the "trial" period of increasing the number of allowed registrants when a ride opens, the number of riders has increased for the Fall 2024 rides. The 2025 TTCC patch has been ordered.
- Ideas were discussed about implementing a platform that will allow a member to go ahead and pay for a ride when he/she registers. This process will not work with the structure of our club because the Ride Managers are independent contractors and the money is sent directly to the Ride Managers, not to the Treasurer of the Club. The Christmas Fund Raiser event – trail will be 6.2 miles long and all obstacles have been designed and are ready to set up.
- Karen - Ride Director, reported the forms for 2025 rides are being returned and it looks like we will have at least one new ride in 2025.
- In order to lessen the burden on those striving for Iron Rider in 2025, the BOD agreed to limit the number of ride weekends to 10 for 2025.

The BOD did not meet in July.



Don't forget the Costume Contest at Monster Mash!!

DEADLINE FOR NOVEMBER/DECEMBER NEWSLETTER IS **OCTOBER1st**!