

2007 YEAR END EDUCATION SUMMARY

This was my first year as Education Chair and several changes were implemented. This year all the members met at the same time, but were split into 3 groups. The members were given education sessions, twice monthly and stable management, once monthly. The stable management lessons were to take place at various local barns. The 3 groups were split according to Pony Club Level and, with discretion, age. Group 1 was made up of all new members, except for one 8 year old, who had been a member for 2 years. Group 2 was made up of all old members who were D1 level and below, except for a 17 year old who was new. Group 3 included all members that were D2 and above. Initially these divisions created some concerns for some of our Group 2 members, who were concerned that they would not be challenged enough. I believe that these members became comfortable with their placement throughout the year; however, I believe that it was a mistake to place one of our newer and younger D2 members in Group 3, because the subject matter was too challenging and the member had not had enough background. I think more than the member's level should be used to determine placement in the group.

Having the groups meet all together promoted a sense of club unity and simplified the schedule. It was difficult, at times, to operate 3 groups at once with the resulting competing noise levels and if a Group 3 member was asked to instruct they missed out on their own education or stable management lecture. The lectures and demonstrations were either taught by a local professional, pony clubber or myself. In an attempt to give Group 3 a bit of a change I implemented some different assignments and emphasized a subject they all felt was difficult - veterinary medicine. Dr Tom Van Dyke did an excellent job covering lameness and dentistry. The assignments were only semi-successful as many of the members did not complete them and attendance was low. Those who completed the work, before the lecture, said they found the assignments useful and effective. The assignments were voluntary, so it was not possible to require the members to complete them, and attendance was low. I have included a copy of the assignments with this memo. The members who taught the other members did an excellent job and I feel benefited from the experience. Quizzes (prepared by myself) were also given to each group at the end of the session (some examples are included). The quizzes helped me determine if the material was being understood and taught. They also provided study material. I think they were effective and would continue to give them.

This year we also attempted to prepare our members for Quiz. Tables were covered with items related to the last lecture and members were asked to identify them according to their level. This activity took place at the beginning of the session. I found the Quiz prep to have mixed success. It was disorganized; confusing for the new members; time consuming; and without follow-up, it had limited educational value. Separate tables for each group; less objects per group; and review of the results may make this a more beneficial activity.

Stable management varied in its success. The younger groups did not really have enough time to cover their needs. Group 2 seemed to have the best education experience. They were often combined with either Group 1 or 3 and benefited from the varied education. It was difficult to find instructors for Group 3 and when an instructor was found, difficult to get the group together. Some of the stable management was taught at camp and I found that, since camp is voluntary, those who did not attend were left out. During testing, the testers suggested that our members are generally weak in stable management. This year I have recommended that we hold 4 stable management sessions throughout the year. The lessons would be run like a clinic - with only 2 or 3 members per 1 hr session. The lessons would be taught to all but the higher level students, by one instructor. I have recommended Peggy Adzich-Prichard and the board as approved the decision. She has enthusiastically agreed to come on board. She will teach very specifically the "Pony Club way". I am still trying to work out the best method for the more advanced members. Regional clinics and hiring other regional members to teach may work, but only if the members can agree to be present.

Our older members have expressed that their busy schedules make it difficult for them to attend the education sessions. In an effort to address this problem I have suggested, that in place of attendance, an assignment be given. The assignments would be made up and marked by myself. This would allow for the 60% attendance to be completed, if the assignments are completed adequately. I also believe that, in some cases, it may be a more effective way for the more difficult material to be learned. Though, it would remain mandatory that some of the Stable Management be attended.

It is difficult to meet everyone's needs at the education sessions. Many of the girls are very studious and serious about testing. Others just love to be part of the club and are less concerned with testing up. I have tried to make information available and learning possible and still maintain a fun atmosphere. Hopefully this year will be even more successful.