



# Valentine Ride

The Sat. before Valentine day was a real jewel of a day, warm, sunny, no wind, and the roads were good to ride on. We, myself and all the folks riding with me (about six) felt this was about the best day for riding we had had for several months. Even the dog, Sassy, enjoyed it.

On this Saturday, things were almost perfect. Even the horses, or some of them, seem to want to get out and ride. We actually rode every horse on the place and ponyed the one that was too young to ride. Myself and two of other riders actually rode 5 times that day. Now you might think that we would get bored for there is only one area/ trail that we could ride on. Due to the high snow levels, icy roads and too much traffic on the main roads we ride on a 2 ½ mile circle around my neighborhood. We never get bored for each ride is slight different. Horses, personalities, moose, they are all different on every ride.

On the first ride, my horse, Cali was going along just fine when all of a sudden she smelled Moose Turds!!! A moose had crossed the rode sometime in the early morning and left a trail of poop. Cali stopped suddenly (we were only walking), smelled the poop and instantly wanted to turn around and head home! I told her she had to keep going and she did, but after that she was nervous! She trotted real rough and by the time we got home, had a pretty good sweat all from smelling where the moose had been! She was lucky, or maybe we were, that there hadn't been any moose in the woods that time. Wait!, we did see one about ¼ mile from the house on the way home, it moved away from us nicely however and I'm not even sure Cali saw it, but I bet she smell it! The other horses on this ride were Riko and Libby. They did fine.

On the second ride, we took out Johnny, Willow and Blue. Johnny has been doing well with me. He can be kind of excitable and likes to act up with a rider sometimes however. I suspect it's a confident problem. Willow is high energy and doesn't like to leave her baby (who is weaned) so she can throw a fit sometimes too. Blue can be good but sometimes gets upset and wants her own way too. Well, Kris wanted to ride Johnny, I rode Willow and Charity rode Blue. We started down the road and Johnny had this worried expression and this scared look about him. When we got to the place the moose had been (a Place we have seen moose for the past 3 day) he thought about rearing but Kris calmed him down and we went on. When we got to where we have to cross some deep snow, Johnny just went goofy and started rearing and having a hissy fit, along with both of the other horses. We all three jumped off so



Kris and I could switch horse, for safety and training factors. We got back on, started across the snow path and Blue decided she wasn't going to be left behind and tried to take a short cut across, but the snow was up to her belly so she lunged and struggled until she made it back to the trail we had broken earlier. The other two horses just stopped and watched, their fear was totally gone. After Blue got in behind the other two horses, we started across the wooded trail and had no issues the rest of the way home.

I think the third ride when without any strange issues. We were all riding fat-so (horses that need to lose a little fat) and we had gained one rider. I was riding Dreamin. We went the same way around the circle as the last ride but when we came out of the wooded trail, we turned right and canter up the small hill. At the top we turned around, now Dreamin was in the lead and we went back down. When we got to the trail we and crossed over, Dreaming turned left and really wanted to go back the



way we had come. The second horse went straight and Jack was third. I had kept walking down the trail, so Jack was confused and didn't know what to do! Follow me and Dreamin or Follow Juka and Charity. He stopped and just kept looking at both of us. Well we laughed and then decided to go back through the wood so Dreamin got to lead us back. I think she was enjoying that. Normally she's a follower for she walks slower than the others but on this trail, there was no passing so everybody had to go her speed! The rest of the way was uneventful and peaceful. Horses got home, got a roll and some lunch.

Dreamin was so tired, she laid on her back and rested her feet on a bale of hay! Just kidding, she was just rolling, she actually got up and laid down and rolled 5 times!

After both the horse and us had lunch, we were ready for our Next ride. The fun for this ride started before we even got halters on our horses! You see a few of the horses were getting upset that they were not getting picked. A couple of the horses that normally get rode first ride had STILL not gone out and they were getting worried. Monet was one of them. She was really ready to go. When Ashley finally walked over towards her, Monet came up to Ashley and stuck her head into the halter, as if saying, you just got to take ME! Kit and CC were also more than willing to be haltered and taken out. Dusty went on this ride and he's harder to read. Sassy, Jo's mare, however said "I'll Pass, thanks" but she didn't get to, Jo made her go and she showed us attitude on the whole ride. I decided to take Shelby and I think she was a bit surprised, she didn't mind standing around and eating the round bale while we got everybody ready. After I jumped on and asked her to head down the drive way, she was all ready and eager to go for a walk. The entire ride



when fairly well until I decided I should try and blaze a new trail out of the woods. You probably guest it, the snow was a bit too deep, poor Shelby was up to her belly so I told everybody else to go on the packed trail way and we would meet them. I jumped off and the snow was hard enough to hold me up but not Shelby, she had to struggle the whole 15-20 feet until we got to the edge of the woods and back to a normal packed trail. Shelby was a trooper however and didn't seem to mind. We came back together with the other horse and all the horses were happy. They were even happier when we were back on the road and totally out of the snow drafts. We asked for a flat-walk and a few of them decided to take off and do a running walk, (or just run) up a hill and probably on to the house but we got them stopped, actually without too much trouble. After that little outbreak, instead of just walking home, we did an exercise where the lead horse turns and goes to the back of the group and we continue to circle all the way home. When it was Sassy's time to lead, she refused to step forward. She would side pass so that what she got to do. Eventually we made it back to the house and everybody was doing what they were supposed to be and doing it in a calm manner.



It was now time to feed the horses their grain and supplements and do a little work around the barn. With the warmer weather, we were able to clean the barn out some and it needed it. When the horses were finished, we took our last bunch out for the day, this bunch included Pathfinder, Max, the colt, Luna, Grace and Catlin. We had a couple of little instances where the horses were acting up but after about a half mile of walk 5 steps and stop, they finally started staying relaxed and enjoying the ride. I think we were all glad. Of course the girls wouldn't admit to it but we were all getting tired, we had probably ridden

close to 15 miles on this one day and that was more than we had ridden in over 3 months!!! The horses all seemed happy to settle down and eat hay for the night and we all retired to our own respectful homes to rest and get ready for the next day excitement. Around here one never knows what the next day will bring, its' always a mystery.

