



December, 2018

Official Publication of the American Mule Association
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www.americanmuleassociation.org

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President's Message

Hello All,

Merry Christmas! I love this time of year so much, I have been Hallmark movie binge watching!! And in this moment I am traveling to vegas to see the city covered in cowboys! We do have some business to finish up this year with though. Please vote for the board before the end of the year and get those rule changes in to me. Also, be thinking about our year end awards banquet!! I am so excited. I love seeing you all and getting to hang out. It completes my whole holiday season!! All the information you need is on the website and in this newsletter. I need to give Maggie Moore and Chris Lowery

a shout out for keeping us informed!! You both are awesome and I appreciate you so so much!! I wish you all a Happy Healthy Holidays and a prosperous New Year!!

Much Love,

Casie Fairbanks



Things to Remember



- ◆ Send in your election ballot by December 31. Please include your AMA membership number on the form so we can verify current membership.
- ◆ All memberships expire December 31, renewals can be made through the AMA website either online or by downloading the form.
- ◆ Rule change proposals are due by December 31. It is so easy to do, an online form is available on the website, just go the *Home* page and let us know what you would like to see changed or added to the rules.
- ◆ AMA Banquet and general meeting is February 16 at Harris Ranch in Coalinga. All members and guests are welcome to attend the general meeting.

American Mule Association Mission Statement

A California non-profit benefit corporation that was founded in 1976. Since its inception, the AMA has been dedicated to building the reputation and integrity of mules throughout the United States.

MULES is published 6x per year, February, April, June, August, October, December

Advertising Rates

Full page \$110.00

½ page \$75.00

¼ page \$50.00

Business card \$18.00

Classified \$6.00

\$10/ photo includes up to 30 words, .25/word thereafter

Deadlines: Advertising and articles are due by the 10th of the month prior to publication.

Disclaimer: MULES does not accept any responsibility for any and all advertisements submitted to us.

Old time photos of mules and donkeys



4 mule team "escort wagon" heading west



Farmer with his mule team, 1915



Postcard, riding side saddle in France



Donkeys looking for refreshment in a saloon, 1880's

Easy and delicious recipe...

Turtle Poke Cake

30 minutes to prepare serves 8-10

INGREDIENTS

1 package chocolate cake mix, plus ingredients listed on box

1 tub (16 oz) chocolate frosting

12 oz caramel sauce

3/4 cup pecans, chopped

1/2 cup mini chocolate chips

PREPARATION

In a 9x13-inch baking pan, prepare cake mix according to package instructions. Let cool for 10 minutes.

Using the handle of a wooden spoon, make small holes all over the surface of the cake. Pour 8 ounces of the caramel sauce over the cake, spreading to cover.

In a small bowl, mix together the chocolate frosting and remaining caramel sauce. Spread evenly over cake. Top with chocolate chips and pecans and drizzle with additional caramel sauce, if desired.

Calendar of Events

February 16, 2019	AMA BOARD MEETING —General board meeting to be held at Harris Ranch (prior to AMA Banquet) . All members are welcome to attend. If you have an agenda item, contact Jody Lowrey at smokymules555@gmail.com .
February 16, 2019	AMA AWARDS BANQUET at HARRIS RANCH Doors open at 5:00 PM and dinner will start at 6:00 PM with a board/members meeting in the morning (time TBA). We will be doing a plated dinner priced at \$50 for adults and \$22 for children. For adults there will be a choice of a 8 oz. Prime Rib with Sautéed mushrooms & twice baked potatoes or a Grilled Chicken Breast with Lemon herb sauce & Rice pilaf and a choice of desserts being Chocolate Mousse Cake or Berry Fruit Cobbler. The kids dinner will be a Tri-Tip dinner with mashed potatoes and seasonal vegetables along with a dessert choice of Chocolate Mousse Cake or Berry Fruit Cobbler. The cut off date for paying for your dinner is on February 2nd . Pay online on the AMA website. For hotel reservations please call 800-942-2333 (Discount Code: #2T692A) to make your room reservations. Cut-off date for the AMA hotel discount rate is on January 27th with room rates start at \$129.00. They do allow for pets upon request.
	Contact Becky Santucci at 916-947-6619 for more information, special arrangements or questions.

Banquet Doors Open: 5:00 pm Dinner
6:00 pm

AMA Awards Banquet 2018

February 16, 2019
Harris Ranch Inn & Restaurant
24505 West Dorris Avenue, Coalinga, CA 93210

Adult - Choice of Entrée:

8 oz. Prime Rib with Sautéed mushrooms & twice baked potatoes or Grilled Chicken Breast with Lemon Herb Sauce & Rice pilaf

Spinach Salad
Seasonal Vegetable

Dessert: Choice of Chocolate Mousse Cake or Berry Cobbler

Cost: \$50.00

Child Meal:

Tri-Tip
Mashed potatoes
Season Vegetable

Dessert: Choice of Chocolate Mousse Cake or Berry Cobbler

Cost: \$22.00

****Deadline for Dinner reservations: February 2, 2019****

Room Reservations:

Call: 800-942-2333

AMA Discount Code: **#2T692A**

Rooms start at \$129.00**
***They do allow for pets upon request.*

****Deadline for discount room rates: January 27, 2019****

Contact Becky Santucci at 916-947-6619 for more information, special arrangements or questions.



2017 AMA Top Ten

2017 AMA Youth



6th Annual Donkey Welfare Symposium

submitted by Loni Langdon

The Donkey Welfare Symposium, celebrated its sixth year during the last weekend of October at the University of California Davis. This gathering has become the premier meeting for the science, welfare and future of the donkey. Over 200 people came from all over the globe to share and learn from one another. The theme of the conference: Donkey Psychology and Behavior, a Celebration of the Thoughtful and Loyal.

I've known about the Donkey Welfare Symposium for a number of years and wanted to attend since I first learned of it. My motivation was that gaining a better understanding of donkeys, I'd learn more about mules. This year I finally made it and I was not disappointed.

The folks in attendance were friendly, caring, and passionate about donkeys (some even asked questions about mules). I tried to absorb an incredible amount of information regarding the history of donkeys, donkey behavior and donkey training. I also gained a broader perspective of how donkeys are still the working class citizens in many developing countries, how the donkey trade in China is affecting worldwide donkey populations and economies, and how the sensitive nature of donkeys affects the success or failure of modern day breeding practices.

The conference offered two tracks: one for Donkey Enthusiast and another for Veterinarians including researchers and academics with a broad range of backgrounds. My registration was \$106 and included coffee and lunch each day and dinner Friday & Saturday nights, a real value in my opinion.

On Friday a gent named Ben Hart representing The Donkey Sanctuary in the United Kingdom spoke about and demonstrated his experience and expertise on shaping behavior. Now granted, his main focus was on shaping donkey behavior but I also realized that his message was equally about shaping human behavior. Ben was entertaining and he spoke very respectfully about his role as a global educator and spokesperson for the humane and positive treatment of donkeys. I found a quote from his website Hart Horsemanship that gives a nice perspective:

"Favouring positive reinforcement and shaping behaviour wherever possible, I always look for the best solution based on the unique mix of owner, equine and environment. I don't use a single method as my work is based on scientific research; my job is to translate that research into practical applications, to find the right tools for each situation."



One of the most valuable references for me that Mr. Hart presented was a slide depicting the equine panic scale. The donkey cannot be evaluated on the same scale as a horse because their behavior is much more subtle and self-preserving. Thus it's much harder to recognize the flight response of a donkey and perhaps that's one reason mules can be tricky too. When a question was asked about how to assess where a mule may fall on the panic scale (I'm sure you know the answer to this), the answer was that mules land somewhere in between. From my notes: a tiny bit of tension in a muscle equals panic in a donkey. Here's a copy of the scale that puts things into perspective, look to the right and you'll see the donkey scale comparison:

To learn more about Ben Hart or his work with the Donkey Sanctuary UK go to the following websites. The Donkey Sanctuary also has a Facebook page:

<https://www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk>

<http://www.hartshorsemanship.com>

On Saturday the symposium split into it's two tracks. I went to a couple of the "Veterinary" lectures and was able to follow most of what was presented. Some of the topics included: Developing Veterinary Care in Underserved Communities, Donkey Ophthalmology, Hoof Conformation, Reproductive Technologies. On the "Enthusiast" line up were topics on: Transforming Attitudes Towards Responsible Donkey Ownership, Mule Behavior and Aggression, The Death Valley Burro Project, The Donkey in Chinese Culture.

I was surprised when I walked into a packed room for a talk presented by Mark Myers titled the Death Valley Burro Project. Mr. Meyers is a self-proclaimed fund raiser and problem solver. His goal is to alleviate the burro "problem" on public lands with money raised outside of the US tax system. He and his wife founded the Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue and the goal is to "provide a safe and loving environment to all donkeys that have been abused, neglected or abandoned and wild burros under threat of destruction." His model is one that includes working with the Federal Government, privately acquired funds, Ranch Facilities and Satellite Training/Adoption Centers so donkeys can find forever homes over a larger geographical area in the US. Current projects are underway in the following areas: The Mojave National Preserve, Death Valley National Park, NASA Goldstone Deep Space Communication, US Army Fort Irwin, Chine Lake Naval Weapons

Center, BLM Sale Burro Project and private ranches along the Mexican Border. Learn more on Facebook or: <https://donkeyrescue.org/projects/the-wild-burro-project/>

There were several lectures on donkey reproduction and to my surprise even talk of donkeys becoming endangered as a species. "Catalan Donkeys: Reproductive technologies as an instrument to avoid donkey breed extinction" was presented by Jordi Miro, a professor from Barcelona, Spain. One slide I captured a photo of notes that: Donkey frozen/thawed semen artificial insemination produces good results inseminating mares yet very bad results inseminating jennies!!" Mr. Miro's research sited that artificial insemination with jennies is much less successful due to several reasons one of them being the anatomical factors such as the vulva is below the pelvic floor and differing shape of a jennie's cervix which he described as "long and winding" compared to a mare. Another presentation was titled "The Vanishing of the American Mammoth Donkey in the USA" given by Marco Oviedo which I was not able to attend.

JoDe Collins and Jessica Bishop arrived on Sunday with 3 lovely donkeys and did an outstanding job showcasing the trainability of donkeys as riding companions. "Peaceful and refreshing" were JoDe's description of a good minded and well-trained riding donkey. She discussed saddle fit, donkey behavior, the use of pressure and release as foundational training elements. One thing she said I have never heard anyone mention before caught my attention, "donkeys don't have the horse's adrenaline". I find that so interesting! Well there you have it, perhaps there's one more reason donkeys (and mules) are becoming more popular these days.



As much as I don't like to think about bigger global issues pertaining to donkeys and their welfare, this article would not be complete without offering some mention of the complex human and equine relationships that affect our society and global economy.

Our survival as a species has largely benefitted from having equines in our lives. I imagine that if each of us looked back in our family history, horses, mules or donkeys had a role in making our lives better. For example, my grandfather was a cotton and tobacco farmer in Missouri in the late 1800's and used mules on the farm to plow fields.

Current issues that surround donkey welfare are vast and complex. Donkeys are still a very needed and used resource for human survival. Some donkeys live in harsh environments where their basic needs for food, water, shelter, proper care and handling are not met. In some cultures, ways of alleviating saddle sores create greater injury. In some parts of the world the average lifespan of a working donkey is 4 years old! In other parts of the world donkeys are used in industrial farming, or slaughtered as food. In China their skins have increased in

value and are a much sought after commodity, which in turn, creates a global economical drive for donkey skins. But here in the United States the population of feral and unwanted donkeys/burros threatens natural resources with over population. Is this the fault of the donkey? No, their nature is simply to survive regardless of conditions.

I find the juxtaposition of balance and imbalance very interesting. In some parts of the world there's strong evidence that donkeys may become threatened while in the US we have a surplus. As technology gets faster, bigger and more consuming where will our long ear equine friends find themselves? In our backyards, at the slaughter house, roaming the open range searching for food and water? It is not my intention at this moment to take a stand or choose a side but to be educated about worldwide donkey welfare issues with compassion and knowledge for both humans and equines.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for the organizers, presenters, audience and donkeys that were in attendance at the 2018 Donkey Welfare Symposium. All in all, this little article does not adequately communicate the diversity and appreciation for donkeys that I felt during this weekend. This conference made my heart sad on some levels but also very hopeful that folks who love donkeys can come together to talk about challenging topics with the goal of making this world a more humane and understanding place for humans and equines. For those of you working to create positive outcomes for working donkeys, mules and horses worldwide, I applaud you!

Us donkey folk should be given reason to herd up every so often. If you have a chance to attend a future Donkey Welfare Symposium, I would encourage you to do so, it was really a worthwhile weekend.



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AMA

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Talented AMA Couple



My sister Ann and I went to Parkfield in October to attend the annual art and craft show. I heard some great live music when we arrived so I wandered over to listen. Much to my surprise it was Rick Clark on stage singing and playing guitar! Besides being a tough competitor on his good mule, Paddy O'Mule, and a top notch leather maker, he is a musician. The talent for the Clarks doesn't stop there, Penny runs her booth "Lazy Penny" at many of our shows as well as events such as the one in Parkfield. Penny is anything but lazy, she does incredible embroidery, sewing and makes the best pomegranate jam ever. She has saddle blankets, purses, jewelry, scarves and much more in her booth. Rick also crafts

beautiful custom headstalls (I have 2!) reins and all types of leather goods. Be sure to visit their booth if you get the chance! ~Maggie Moore

