

The 2008 BCHA Annual Meeting

BY ALLISON SCHULTZ

On Wednesday, February 6, 2008, 60 local horsepersons gathered at the Spice of Life Event Center for the 37th Annual Meeting of the Boulder County Horse Association, emceed by Jacqueline Lee, BCHA President. Cherry Hill, award winning author of all things horse – from training to horsekeeping – was the featured speaker of the evening. She signed books before her presentation on "Effective Horsekeeping," as attendees milled around snacking on the delicious Spice of Life hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Members caught up with old friends, met new ones, and visited many of the information tables at the back of the room.

Cherry's presentation emphasized the difference between effective horsekeeping and efficient horsekeeping, while highlighting how things work on her ranch in Livermore, CO, at 7000 ft elevation in the Rockies. Cherry and her husband Richard split the tasks involved in taking care of their horses and their property based on each other's strengths and keep their operations running smoothly by utilizing some very commonsense and innovative solutions and systems.

Cherry broke horsekeeping down into 3 categories: land and facilities management; daily chores and care; and breeding, training and riding. "Successful horsekeeping is characterized by effectiveness, not efficiency," she stressed.

You can see the difference between effectiveness and efficiency by looking at the process of deworming your horse. Efficient deworming involves being able to insert the dewormer tube in the right spot in your horse's mouth and squirt it all in there with out losing a drop. Being effective is more than speed and skill in deworming, although that is certainly one part of it. Effective deworming is part of a complete deworming program that involves knowing what brand to use at what time of year, sticking to a deworming schedule, and keeping records of what was used on what horse at a scheduled deworming. It also encompasses competent manure management and pasture management practices.



ANNUAL MEETING GUEST SPEAKER

Cherry and Richard Hill. Photos by Pat Jarvis.

The benefits of effective horsekeeping are:

1. Your horses stay fit and healthy
2. Your land stays healthy
3. Your facilities stay properly maintained
4. Your budget stays on the mark
5. You have more time to ride

When it comes to your horse property, Cherry suggested planning your space around your horses, not you, by making choices based on what works best for the horse's natural way of living. This would include feeding on clean ground, ensuring ample pasture, social time and exercise, and feeding quality, unconcentrated feeds (primarily grass hay) based on each horse's weight and need.

Horsekeeping management styles such as stalls, pasture, and individual sheltered pens all have their pros and cons when used exclusively, but you can reap the benefit of all of these equine dwellings by utilizing each at the right time.



ANNUAL MEETING

Above: BCHA President Jacque Lee (right) presents Cherry and Richard Hill with BCHA goodies. Below right: Jacque Lee (left) and Hildy Armor (right) present Terri Snyder with the 2007 BCHA Achievement Award. Photos by Pat Jarvis.

"If you take care of your land, it will take care of you," said Cherry. Effective land management involves following stringent grazing guidelines to protect the longevity of your pastures, protection of riparian zones on your property, and habitually participating in effective manure management. Cherry talked highly about composting your over grown manure piles.

The same level of care should go into facilities management. "If you take care of your facilities, not only will they will be safe for your horses, but they will appreciate in value," noted Cherry. Chewed wood is the biggest cause of loss in property value. But, the good news is that cribbing can be prevented by covering all wooden edges (such as in stalls and barns) with substantial and sturdy steel edging (not the unsubstantial corner edging used for sheetrock, for it is too flimsy and poses more of a hazard than a help), and by diligently applying anti-chewing products where necessary.

For saving money, Cherry suggested thinking ahead and being innovative. She noted that buying hay in bulk versus by pickup loads at the feed store can save a lot of money over the years. Feeding by weight and not by volume also contributes to savings by not wasting unnecessary feed. For example, for supplemental feeding in winter, follow this guideline: for every 10 degrees below freezing, feed 10% more hay by weight.

Staying on time with routine appointments and being organized will ultimately save you time. Cherry puts together an annual to-do list that documents the years worth of tasks and scheduled equine servicings, like farrier, vet and dentist appointments, as well as deworming schedules, castrations, etc. Organization around your property, barn, and tack rooms limits misplaced items, keeps your tack clean and handy, and enhances the lifespan of your equipment. There should be "A place for everything, and everything in its place," says Cherry.

At various points in the talk, Richard drew a series of tickets for door prizes, giving away a variety of Cherry's books or DVDs. Cherry's talk was followed by a brief round of questions and a hearty round of applause. For more information on any horse-related matter, visit their website at www.horsekeeping.com. It is stocked full of references on a variety of topics.

BCHA President, Jacqueline Lee, led the business portion of the meeting. Terri Snyder, one of the Animal Control Officers of the Boulder County Sheriff was presented with BCHA's 2007 Achievement Award. Hildy Armour in presenting the Award, emphasized her importance to the BCHA community, and to any county's quality of equine (and other animal) life of having someone as dedicated as Terri enforcing humane conditions.

Jacque Lee introduced the new and old Boards of Directors, and concluded the meeting by listing some of BCHA's 2008 Goals & 2007 Accomplishments, in particular the wildly successful Fun Show, Public Lands Appreciation Day, and Horse Lovers' Fling, and each of the organizers of these events were given a much deserved round of applause.

