

MY TIME WITH THE POSSE

Submitted by Allen Dilg

We met with business friends Jim Ferguson and Clyde Filmore at Vern Smith's Gurnee Pizza on Grand Avenue in 1969. That is where it all started.

My job in the early days was to keep the women warm and the beer cold, mostly because we didn't have enough horses and I didn't know how to ride anyway. One of the first trail rides was at Ruby Holmquist's place on Edwards Road. I think there were about 30 members but even so we had a quarter barrel of beer and it had to be finished. Back then most trail rides were on private property. Bob Park hosted many rides. Some were overnight with a lamb barbeque.

Fall Rides started on Eric Road, now Hunt Club, south of Stearns School before Gurnee Mills. I remember one pre-ride went sooo easy crossing Mill Creek but on Sunday the lead horse got to the creek, turned around and seemed to say, "Nobody goes through the water!" How do you get 100 horses moving? Remember Linda Skow? She has a 2 year old Appaloosa that totally refused to go. I gave her my black and white paint and told her, "Ride across". 5 of us Cowboys put a shipping halter on each side and a butt rope. I got on the ropes and we slid her into the creek waiting for the horse to explode! Didn't happen.... We waited a minute and rode her through. After the ride Linda said she now looked forward to water crossings.

One of the rides when my son John was 8 or 9 the trail bosses told him he was too young to lead. Then they got lost. John brought the ride in, after that he was a trail boss.

There were times that the effort keeping the BEER cold, GRILLS hot, and TRAILERS working was the easiest part of the ride. One such ride was when a woman fell off her horse and cut the tip of her nose off. That was very traumatic! I looked for the vice president so I could resign but that too, would pass.

The good times were the banquets, Halloween rides and meetings. We met at The Rustic Manor. Once there was a moose head in the hallway. I will always remember Linda Brock blowing smoke up its nose. The Rustic Manor is now Pederson Park. The floods were bad enough but a fire did the restaurant in.

Pearl and I were married February 1, 1969. When we got home from our honeymoon there were 5 faces at our breakfast table; Pearl, Sandra, Sharon, Patrick and me. Pearl was 41 and I was 29. People gave us about 6 months together. This February it we celebrate 48 years together.

All the children went to 4H. Pat moved off the farm when his father was killed on farm machinery. He then worked for Hadley Campbell riding horses and cleaning stalls. He loved cleaning stalls since he got to drive tractors. Sandra didn't get as good of a vehicle as the others. She had an old GMC pickup with a homemade box for horses. Sharon got to use the motor home and trailer when she turned 16. That was so I didn't have to drive. She drove to the paint horse show in Beloit, Wisconsin, 2 hours and 75 miles away. I worried those two hours. Checking time of departure and having her call me as soon as she arrived. She had to use a payphone on the building. Remember those? Coming home she had to call and tell me

when she was leaving and I worried for 2 hours, again. She had to take someone responsible with her so we sent her 8 year old brother John.

I have so many memories. 15 years of trail rides in Missouri. Rides like Shawnee, Governor Dodge, and Park Falls. Friends like Ruby, Dr. Mann, and Gordon Turnbull. On one ride back from Missouri, the Posse had a ride at Chain of Lakes. We made the ride, had lunch and rode it again. It felt good. But, that was a long time ago. In 1994 Pearl was sitting on her horse behind River Tree Plaza in Libertyville. Another horse walking by turned and kicked breaking Pearl's leg and tearing the diaphragm of the horse she was on. In 1995 my knees were bad and riding wasn't fun anymore. That year I bought my first tractor. A 1929 Allis Chalmers model E 20 35. Since then John and I have collected about 75 (give or take) tractors and memorabilia. We sell sweet corn, fruits and vegetables in the summer but we are always open to visit. Stop by!!!

Allen and Pearl Dilg