

## MAKING PONY CLUB FUN

What you mean it isn't? The fact that they put a session into the National meeting that is called "Making Pony Club Fun" says A LOT! What do we do about this? Well... here are some ideas.

### 1. Make pony club a real and tangible process.

- **Make the instruction make sense to the kids.** How many times have you heard people say that they have to do something the PC way. They say that because no one has made the rule make any sense to them in their daily life.

The movie *Mary Poppins* made a silly word understandable to everyone who saw the movie. Well if we can understand a word that most of us can't spell, then surely we should be able to make horsemanship words, phrases, theory and safety understandable to our PC'ers.

Examples: Driving a car is similar to drive your horse around an arena.  
Bad conformation can be related to a poorly built house or structure.

- **To do the above, the region needs to hire a good, experienced teachers for your Pony Club instructional program. These teachers will:**
  - engages the kids (and the adults, also if you can do it), teach – not instruct your kids, explain terms and theory to your parents and PC'ers, encourage everyone to learn, ask questions and make the Pony Clubbers want to return the next week to learn more.

*Don't hire someone that doesn't want to work with D's to teach the D's and don't hire someone that doesn't have the ability or the desire to teach teenagers – teach your C's, B's and A's..*

### 2. Offer more opportunities throughout your region that will be helpful most of the regions members and clubs.

- Offer them clinics on multiple subjects with GOOD TEACHERS in various disciplines and subjects. Clinics: Dressage, SJ, Eventing, lunging, teaching, HM that is engaging and hands on – (parts of the horse by a Vet with real horse parts!
- Camps for the region – mounted or unmounted. Unmounted camps can be fun and can be done over a long weekend in the winter when the kids are all missing each other and it is too cold to ride – they still get a Pony Club fix.
- Tours of different training facilities, tours of Vet schools, breeding stables, etc.
- Trips to big horse shows, jumper shows, Rolex, etc. Offer things that the kids can't get anywhere else.
- Offer opportunities for the upper level Pony Clubbers to organize, schedule and run: horsemangement clinics for the D's regionally, D1 & D2 rallies, drag hunts, or upper level PC'ers helping D's at a horse show or small event.

**3. Make time for Social Events for the Pony Clubbers and their families.**

- If you are putting on a prep clinic, find homes for families to stay in.
- Have someone organize a BBQ or meals where everyone shares in the meals and gets to know each other. Plan a fun activity for the group (bowling, crochet in the horse pasture, volleyball).
- Have things for everyone to do so that they all share in the responsibility at regional functions. This makes people feel involved, but not overworked (including the RS), they take more responsibility in making things happen smoothly, kids and parents all look forward to seeing each other and share stories, thoughts and experience.
- The more you involve the families/parents, the more they come to see the rationale and the goals that ARE PONY CLUB! (involvement, fun, problem solving, life skills, life experiences).
- Invite your parents to be involved in a family night where they are taught (at the walk – some on lead lines) by their child. Or that they participate in Halloween games with all the other PC parents and kids. Everyone is now having a silly, wonderful time.
- Make Rallies/Quiz/camps fun and enjoyable – offer a break in the schedule for kids to blow off some steam! (or they will find their own time and it might not fit into your schedule!)

**4. Have someone that understands the USPC philosophy and educational system be in charge of instruction for your region (and then get them a good secretary).**

- Find out what the calendars are for your region: school, USEA, USDF, Jumper Assoc., etc. and plan the regional instructional calendar to work as best as possible for the kids and the parents. This will ease tensions at home.

**SHOW YOUR REGION ALL THAT PONY CLUB AND YOUR REGION HAVE TO OFFER:**

- **FRIENDSHIPS, SUPPORT, LIFE SKILLS, JOB SKILLS, ETC. - BOTH IN AND OUT OF THE HORSE WORLD.**

**SOME OF MY VERY FAVORITE PEOPLE, BEST FRIENDS,  
AND FUN THAT I EVER HAD GROWING UP AND GROWING OLDER,  
HAVE COME THROUGH MY PONY CLUB EXPERIENCES.**