



Arabian Sport Horse Chronicle

A publication
Of the California-Nevada Arabian Sport Horse Association

Board of Directors 2009

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Beverly Stevens, Vice President
Margie Pope, Treas./Membership
Shannon LaDay, Director
Crystal Alatalo, Director
Lisa Stapleton, Director
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Corrections: Every effort will be made to ensure correctness of newsletter content. In the event of an error, a correction will be printed in the next issue after we are made aware of the error.

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Report on 2009 Horse Show

At the general membership/BOD meeting held at Bright Future Farms in unincorporated Walnut Creek on October 24th, the board discussed the June show. Although we had as many horses as last year, overall entries per horse were down. This is probably a reflection of the continuing recession, since exhibitors seemed to be happy with the show. Although most exhibitors seem to like the Starr Vaughn's amenities—the lovely arenas, the berms, which are very spectator-friendly, and the food concession—there are continuing complaints about the condition of the portable stalls provided by the venue. A number of exhibitors do not think those stalls are sturdy enough and believe they are not as safe as they could be.

Treasurer Margie Pope reported that as of the meeting date, the show had shown a net loss of \$3,548.90. There are still two checks outstanding, so that amount will increase somewhat when they clear. While this may seem to be a big loss, it is not unprecedented in our club history, and the club still has over \$10,000 in the bank.

A number of suggestions were offered to attract more entries for 2010. These included: discounting stalls (although the club would lose money by doing so); discounting class fees for multiple entries to encourage more entries by the same horse; and offering more High Point awards. Offering a discount for a fourth class when a horse was entered in three classes at the regular fee seemed the most popular option, but all of these suggestions will be explored more thoroughly at the next BOD meeting.

Slate of Candidates for 2010 Board

It is time to hold elections for next year's Board of Directors, and for the first time in a number of years, we actually have more than the minimum number of candidates required to fill the board. Please note that our Bylaws allow a member to run simultaneously for an office and for director, although if elected, that member will fill only the position for which he/she received the most votes. Our candidates are:

President: Rita Mason; Beverly Stevens

Vice President: Margie Pope; Kat Walden

Treasurer: Michael Bowling

Director: Crystal Alatalo; Michael Bowling; Johanna Constance; Shannon LaDay; Margie Pope; Jens Richter; Beverly Stevens; and Linda Walsh

Brief descriptions of each candidate's qualifications are listing in the following pages. Please review them if you are not familiar with these candidates.

Meet the Candidates

Crystal Alatalo

Incumbent Director, on board for two years. Accomplished horsewoman and competitor in many divisions. Has been concentrating on sport horse disciplines with her purebred gelding for several years.

Michael Bowling

Served on board previously for six years, two as Director, two as President and two as Immediate Past President. Geneticist and Arabian horse breeder since mid-1960's. In-hand exhibitor as handler of his own horses. Has been a regular volunteer at annual show.

Johanna Constance

Accomplished horsewoman and amateur handler/rider. Has organized and run the Saturday evening exhibition performance at annual show at least twice.

Shannon LaDay

Incumbent Director, on board for one year. Organized and prepared the Patron Sponsor gifts for this year's show. An enthusiastic newcomer learning dressage with her first horse.

Rita Mason

Incumbent President, on board for seven years, six as Treasurer & Membership, one as President. Has trained and competed her own mare to Intermediare II and has been very active on the Region III Sport Horse Show Committee. Will be one of this year's delegates to AHA Convention.

Margie Pope

Incumbent Treasurer & Membership, on board for four years, one as Director, one as Vice President, and one as President. Part of the well-known multi-generational family of Jack Tone Ranch and a lifelong horsewoman and exhibitor. Has served as a delegate at AHA convention.

Jens Richter

Professional in-hand handler, German trained stud and breeding manager, owner and breeder with an international perspective. Very well known in American sport horse world.

Beverly Stevens

Incumbent Vice President, has served on board for nine years, one as Treasurer and Secretary, six as Director, two as Vice President. A founding member of the club who has been the Show Manager for a number of years. Breeder and exhibitor in sport horse disciplines.

Kat Walden

Served on board previously for four years, two as Secretary, two as Director. Editor of club newsletter. Originated Patron Sponsor baskets. Lifelong horsewoman who rarely competes. Regular volunteer at annual show (every year but two).

Linda Walsh

New CNASHA member but long-term small breeder of purebred Arabians. In recent years has exhibited her horses in Sport Horse In-Hand and Dressage.

CNASHA History: SPARKY AND JANE

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[Author's note: This was originally written as a member profile for the ASHA newsletter, and it was reprinted in *Arabian Visions* magazine.]



Jane Mendelsohn schooling Sparky in dressage at Bright Future Farms, Walnut Creek, California. Photo by Kat Walden.

Combined Training, with its tests of dressage, endurance-cross country and stadium jumping, forges an intense bond between horse and rider. In order to move up through the competition levels of the USCTA (United States Combined Training Association), each must develop deep trust in the other along with strength, agility, stamina and the ability to solve ever more complex riding problems.

CNASHA member Jane Mendelsohn of San Francisco and her purebred Arabian gelding, Starsearch SMA—known to everyone as Sparky—are an up and coming team that are meeting this challenge. Jane has loved horses for as long as she can remember, and her passion for riding was so strong when she was a child that even the family Beagle was not safe. Her earliest training at Red

Raider Farm in Ohio consisted of a kind of private Pony Club-type education in horsemanship and hunt seat equitation. Later, she began showing and training hunter/jumper at the Hunt Club in Hunting Valley, Ohio.

Her first exposure to the Arab breed occurred when her family attended an exhibition and sale at Locust Farms in Kirtland, Ohio. Several years later, as a working student at San-Ray Stables, she was assigned to ride an Arab-Quarter horse mare named Faela. Faela did everything from jumping picnic tables in the park to barrel racing to egg and spoon. Jane rode her in Open Hunter shows and 4-H.

After San-Ray closed, Jane and her older sister Debbie began riding Thoroughbreds for neighbors who wanted to recycle their unsuccessful racers into hunters and pleasure mounts. Then in college, Jane rode on the Northwestern University Equestrian Team. After graduation, she moved west and learned eventing while riding at Half-Halt Farms in Martinez, California. She met Teresa Trull, and in the summer of 1992, formed a partnership with her to work for Sierra Moun Arabians training their young horses. It was here that Jane met Sparky, a four year-old gelding who attracted her immediately. Sparky was foaled on May 13, 1988, a light bay with a star, strip, snip and sock on the right front who matured to 14.3 hands. His dam was Inca Magic (Bakk Talk x Halali Inca Gold by Gdansk), a mostly Polish-bred mare linebred to Ofir PASB through Witraz and *Witez II. Inca Magic was a bold jumper and outstanding Pony Club mount. His sire, Starbounde+/- (Spellbounde x Elkontessa by SX El Kobarh), is currently training Prix St. Georges and Intermediare I levels in dressage, competing successfully through Fourth, has regional and national honors as a hunter over fences and placed well at CTETA Horse Trials, Novice Division in his only venture into C.T.. He also performs Musical Freestyle exhibitions with well-known West Coast rider-instructor-judge Creeky Routson, most recently at the 15th Annual Dressage In The Wine Country in Santa Rosa, California. (Starbounde's younger full brother, Edict—owned by member Debbie Mendelsohn—competes very successfully in hunter, 1st and 2nd Level dressage, sport horse breeding classes and Novice Division events.) Sparky's blend of Polish, Crabbet, CMK and Rogers desert import bloodlines obviously includes the athletic talents requisite for good sport horses. Both Sparky and Starbounde survived emergency colic surgery and recovered well enough to compete at high levels of performance. Starbounde still has recurring bouts of gas colic, but Sparky's colic was caused by ingestion of a foreign object (unknown until Jane can convince someone to dissect the thing) which ultimately encrusted into a seven pound tummy-ache. Although Sparky never quite showed the physical bloom his diet and conditioning should have produced, he never showed any other signs of distress and continued to compete successfully until he colicked in February, 1995.

Veterinarians at UC Davis were surprised that he had shown so few symptoms and that such a large enterolith did not rupture his intestine.

Jane and Teresa recognized Sparky's potential very soon after starting him under saddle in 1994. They encouraged owner Nancy Getman to event him, with his first competition being an AHSA/USCTA recognized event at Milfleur Farms in Livermore, California, that same year, where he took a 2nd in the Open Novice Division with Jane riding. He followed up with a 7th in Novice Horse Division at the CTETA recognized Horse Trials (near San Francisco) the same summer. CTETA is popular with world-class eventers, so competition there is never easy in any division. When Nancy Getman dispersed most of her horses in the Fall of 1994, Jane and Teresa, doing business first as Equine Grammar School and later as Tandem Training, moved on to Carol DiMaggio's Bright Future Farms in Walnut Creek, California. Through Nancy's generosity, Sparky went too, with his teacher and friend now a half-owner. After Sparky colicked, Jane assumed full financial responsibility for him, and Nancy transferred sole ownership to her.

During a long rehabilitation period, Sparky developed a roundness and muscling that he had never shown before—as well as a mirror-shine to his coat. He and Jane returned to eventing in the summer and fall of 1996. They won their Open Training Division at the AHSA/USCTA recognized American Valley Horse Trials at Quincy, California, which earned them ASHAI Year-End Combined Training Fifth place. Memorial Day Weekend, 1997, Sparky and Jane placed 4th at the CTETA Horse Trials, again in Training Division. Both times, Sparky was the only purebred Arabian competing in his division.

Sparky and Jane cross country at CETA.
Kat Walden Photo



He is now schooling Preliminary, but Jane wants to give him more experience competing Training before she moves him up. At the CDS East Bay Chapter Annual Freestyle Dressage Exhibition at Walnut Creek, California, in November, 1996, Sparky and Jane took part in a unique presentation. With Jane's sister Debbie on her "Uncle Red," they performed a musical pas de deux at speed over jumps, which was enthusiastically received by the audience. As a change of pace, at the 2nd Annual Pacific Coast Arabian Sport Horse Classic held in Vallejo, California, June 6-8, 1997, Sparky won the Purebred Regular Working Hunter Under Saddle class. He also won the Purebred & Half-Arabian Training Jumpers, 2'9"-3'3" and Purebred Jumpers, Open 3'3"-3'6" with the fastest clean rounds.

In the Purebred Jumper Stake, 3'3"-3'6", Jane let him get flat to one fence, and they had a rail down, dropping them to 4th. Although jumper is more to Sparky's liking than hunter, they also took a 4th in Purebred Regular Working Hunter Stake, 3'-3'3". The best eventers have strong personalities, and Sparky is no exception. He has a mischievous streak, and he likes to throw in the odd buck from time to time, but he cheerfully carries Jane around the flanks of Mt. Diablo on his days off from other training, often bareback. They share a special friendship that is readily seen in the way they respond to one another. To her strong jumping experience, Jane has worked diligently to add good dressage skills. She rides horses for Creeky Routson in return for lessons and has taken clinics from the likes of Charles de Kunffy. One can no longer have a bad dressage test and expect to place at horse trials or 3-day events. Jane has no rich patron or corporate sponsor. Also, Sparky's training and showing has had to take a back seat to that of clients' horses. So Jane and Sparky probably will not move up in the world of Combined Training as fast as their solid background and developing potential would predict. Nevertheless, they are already respected ambassadors for Arabian sport horses in the West Coast eventing world and a pair to watch for in coming years!

Update (2006)

Sparky, now 18 years old, is retired from eventing, although since the profile was first written, he and Jane did indeed fly higher in eventing. Jane and her husband, Neil Williams, moved from Northern California to Florida at the end of 1999 to be closer to her parents. Among the horses they took with them were Sparky and his sire Starbounde. [Note: Jane had kept Sparky's enterolith in her freezer, but Neil said there was no way it was going to Florida with them, so she thawed it out. Author was present and aided in dissection of it at Bright Future Farms shortly before the move—at the center was a length of rope, heavier than baling twine but lighter than a leadrope. When and why Sparky ingested it remain a mystery!]

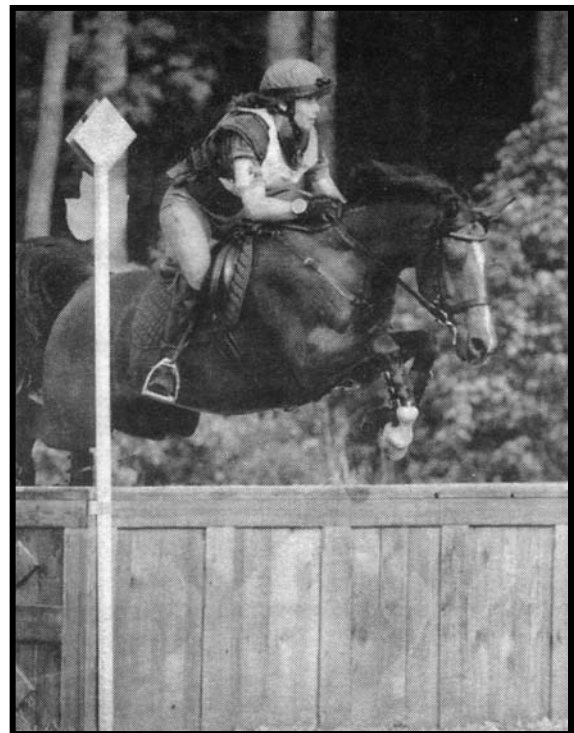
The Florida Winter eventing circuit is tough at all levels, because the top event riders in the country follow the warm weather south to keep their experienced event horses fit and tuned up and to start young event horses as the older horses' eventual replacements. At any given horse trial or 3-day event, one may find oneself riding against Olympians with decades of experience. To place well in such company is a real accomplishment, one that Sparky and Jane achieved repeatedly in the years after they left California.



Jane with Sparky and her son Evan at her Sunset Valley Farm near Brooksville, Florida, in 2004. Neil Williams photo.

Between January of 2001 and May of 2002, Sparky and Jane placed in the top five in Preliminary Division at horse trials nine times. They won five of the horse trials: Canterbury International H.T. & C.T.; Basingstoke Farms H.T. & C.T.; Pine Top April H.T.; Poplar Place H.T.; and Flat Creek H.T.

Sparky and Jane winning the Poplar Place Horse Trials Preliminary Division on May 10, 2002. Note their harmony in balance and confidence. Shannon Brinkman photo.



See the next page for some additional photographs.



Kat Walden photo taken during a schooling session at Bright Future Farms in Walnut Creek, California. In preparation for the move from Training up to Preliminary Division, Sparky needed practice in jumping taller and wider fences. Photo date approximately 1998.

A jump-off for time at an early Pacific Coast Arabian Sport Horse Classic show at the county fairgrounds in Vallejo, California. Kat Walden photo.





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