

Two Novembers

In the November 1991 and 2005 issues, there are no striking contrasts or historical peaks, but somehow there seems to be a special richness of news and pictures in these two. The '91 cover gave us that memorable picture of four wonderful chestnuts going abreast, knees high, as Jeff Priebe and It's Time To Go win the Juvenile Five-Gaited World's Championship. The 2005 issue gave us, inside, what is surely one of the loveliest portraits ever made of pure Saddlebred essence. Trust Fund moves smartly away from us, reins floating free around him, along with his ribboned mane and heavy tail. His powerful muscles are bunched under glowing hair that proves both radiant health and loving care. This photograph is a piece of art.

So what's inside these two magazines that makes them worth a digging out of your files for another look?

In November 1991, Helen Crabtree's monthly column gives us the first installment of Legal Tender's life story. She included there the details of a most disillusioning sale transaction with the revered Bill Cunningham of Mexico, Mo. She and her husband, Charlie, just starting their career as trainers, had been promised a certain commission for a certain horse and Cunningham shorted by \$100, declaring that that had been the understanding in the beginning. She said that their soul-seaching after this experience resulted in their resolving never to buy from the famous trainer again, to share their lesson with other beginners. She said that most of all, it taught them to be scrupulously honest with everyone. She said they realized that their success would probably have given Cunningham thousands of dollars in profit, had he not turned them off permanently by this first encounter.

But the cute turn to this story was that Cunningham, years later, wrote, saying he knew they'd vowed never to buy from him again, but he had to tell her about a wonderful gelding he had that would "win every ladies class in America." She threw the note away, but at Tattersalls in

the summer of 1962, she saw the animal in question; it was Legal Tender. If you're new to Saddlebred history, and can find her book, *Hold Your Horses*, you'll find one of the most fascinating horse histories of all time. The pivot was the confidence her clients had in her. When she asked the limit that she could offer



King's High Spirit and Carol Greenwell.

for Legal Tender, the answer was "Just buy him." She got him for \$30,000, and then assured the parents of a 13-year-old rider Randi Stuart (now Wightman) that she would make him suitable for the girl to show. That pair became legend. Anyone who wants to gain some background on Saddlebreds and their shows needs *Hold Your Horses*.

Some other offerings of this *Saddle & Bridle* issue: two very well-known trainers, R.S. Palmer and Wyatt DeHart profiled; Carol Greenwell and King's High Spirit shown winning the three-year-old Five-Gaited Championship at the Southeastern Charity Show in Georgia; two classic books offered for sale through *Saddle & Bridle* — *Tom Bass Black Horseman*, and *The Saddlebred: America's Horse of Distinction*.

Words of wisdom from DeHart, include his explanation as to why he one time made a solo victory pass of a fine mare who had not even placed in the ribbons, and his take of the way to improve show attendance: "we need more publicity shows need to be publicized as exciting events ... we need to make the music in a the background a little more exciting and most of all, we must have exciting horses. When there

are no exciting horses in the ring, our business will die. That's what it's all about."

And about the solo victory pass on Royal Memories? It was his last time to ride her because she had been sold and he felt that she deserved to at least be in the good ribbons, having won the World's Championship Five-Gaited Mare in 1990 and behaved like a champion ever since. He acknowledged his great love for the mare and cited how good, but misunderstood, she had been. In the process, he dropped insights that could help many riders. The deciding factor in his impulse, he said, was 50 to 100 spectators who stood up and "screamed and hollered, 'make a pass!'"

Palmer, whose story was written by Naida Garrett, said that it would be difficult at any show in the last 40 odd years, not to run across a Palmer-trained horse or Palmer-taught rider and that in Missouri and Illinois, this would be literally impossible. One of Palmer's beliefs was that one must "find" the bit and shoeing that a particular horse wants and will work nicely in. To this end, he had a collection of almost 200 bits. His daughter,

Rhonda Sue, told Garrett of how she often found her dad standing in the tack room, looking at the bits, then carrying several into a stall and trying them, one after the other, "letting the horse tell him which one it likes the best." And that choice was not necessarily the last bit a Palmer horse would ever taste. R.S. remarked to Garrett that Sunflower Denmark, consistent winner of five-gaited amateur awards, was the only individual who wore the same bit throughout her entire time with him.

One trait of Palmer's was his insistence that he really did have fun with his work. For instance, there was a time when 20 of his riders were in the same class at the same time; one can imagine what a nightmare that would have been for on-the-rail encouragement and admonitions. His tactic, Garrett said, was to keep them all rooting for each other in what Garret described as "A camaraderie seldom seen in today's sometimes cut-throat competition."

All the foregoing seems to encroach on the space we have for the 2005 November in *Saddle & Bridle*, but the Indigo Acres ad we mentioned earlier really does merit careful photocopying and framing. (We'd never advocate

ripping anything out of a *Saddle & Bridle* because their future resale value will be so much better if they are pristine). Also memorable are two Indigo Acres pages filled with pictures of a charming little exhibitor, Jordyn Broten, and her mount, Gospel Song, undefeated in 10 And Under classes in the year just passing.

One inspiring page told of the retirement of a Virginia champion, Visa Gold, who had competed in less than 45 shows, but had won 17 stake championships, with seven reserves, and two ASHAV championships and two reserves, and was among the top ribbons in the Junior League and World Championship shows. His list of other awards and championships is too long to give here. His owner/ring partner for the past nine years had been Shannon Harris, and his trainer, from the first, Joy Bowman. In the words of David Owens, who wrote

and delivered his retirement tribute, Visa Gold had been noticed first for his unusual golden champagne coloring and for "his old-fashioned slow-gait and a high-stepping rack that was bigger than he was."

The obituary pages in November, 2005, told us of Pres Oder, of Macomb, Ill., a prominent figure in the Saddlebred world for several decades. He had begun in Kentucky, learning from legendary Lloyd Teter. Later, working with his brother, Gene, in a stable they opened in Peoria, Ill., he took many gaited horses to championships and his interest in and work with Standardbreds deepened until he was legend in that discipline too. He was remembered for his fiercely competitive spirit and Brenden Heintz paying tribute to that visualized him "upping the ante on the highway to heaven, it just increased in speed with his passing."

Another well-known figure in the horse world whose obit appeared in November 2005 was Sondra Moll, who had been prominent in Missouri, before taking her Emerald View Stable to Florida to become the Emerald Pointe Stable at Boca Raton. She was known for her generosity, going to great lengths to further the opportunity of young people



Trust Fund was showcased at the 2005 All American Cup.

to ride, and she often donated Saddlebreds in places where they could demonstrate their beauty and lovability. Perhaps most of all, she should be remembered for what she did for the horses themselves, creating for them, her obit writer said, "a heaven-like haven."

Perhaps the most touching of all the obits was that to Prowler's First Star, first born of the famous Night Prowler. He had passed away at the age of 30, looking, all agreed, no more than 15. Though never a top show horse, and for this reason, fated to have many owners, he spent the last 13 years of his life as the treasure of Erica Rae Faulkner. She was only seven years old when they met and her family had been warned that he was "tough and not suitable for a child." Erica and Prowler developed a much envied rapport, his carrying her to many wins in smaller shows. His finest gift was serving her as pleasure horse who went dependably over all terrains with no tack but a halter and lead rope. The writer of his obit said that "to Erica, he was her teacher, her companion, her other half."

To the rest of us, he was, obviously, one of those Saddlebreds who show the world the true sweetness of the breed. What could be a better closing thought for another exercise in nostalgia?

Boysen continued from page 18

down in their seat in an effort to stop their incessant pacing and offer words of comfort.

The Wanna be show mom. No discussion of show moms would be complete without the Wanna be show mom. We all know one. This is a mom who lives vicariously through their rider and loves all the accoutrements of the equestrian world. They have the boots—complete with spurs—the jods, and carry a crop with them at all times even while doing mundane things like grocery shopping or going to the post office. While their own riding efforts perhaps ended with a lead line class gone bad back in their childhood they aspire much, much more for their rider.

Regardless of what type of show mom you happen to be the only thing that really matters is that you are supportive of your rider—no matter what—and that you have taken the Show Mom Pledge. Of course handing over your bank pin number to your trainer, with no questions asked, is also a very nice gesture and certainly will be seen as a sign of your unwavering support. Because at the end of the day, that's what show moms do best.

Note: The views expressed by the author are her reflections and hers alone and should not be seen as a reflection on anyone, anywhere at any time, lest she not be offered any more decorative lace doilies. The publishers of Saddle & Bridle magazine do not necessarily share the same views as the author and are content in knowing that should she decide to do a similar article on Show Dads she will never make her word count. As everyone knows, being a show Dad boils down to two simple steps: Step One—sign the check. Step Two—Repeat Step One. It is however, their sincere hope that the reader takes the tongue in cheek musings of a nervous show mom with the humor in which it was intended. You can email the author at Patti@Adistudio.com.

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