

A Note to My Beloved Family Horse: Sym Sym Serene Nominated by: Jennifer Calabro



Dear Symie,

We have been together for 16 years and think it is time to reflect on the time we have had together. First of all, thank you for humoring me through my teenage years. I laughed and cried and you were always there to wrap your head around me and feel my joy or wipe my tears. Thank you for packing me around, (along with other teenage friends and horses) on numerous 8 mile rides down to Taco Bell for lunch. Thank you for making me feel special because my horse could drink a can of Mountain Dew in no time and finish off with tortilla chips. Oh my. Thank you for being the excellent bareback tag horse! I think you enjoyed tag as much as I. Thank you for being a wonderful, willing, strong trail horse and winning almost every trail horse competition I could enter you in. Thank you for tolerating me on those long camp-out nights, where I would lay on you till it was absolutely time to go to bed. I love you!

I know it was awful losing your eye when you were 8 years old but we became so much closer because of it. With every tragedy there is a silver lining. That night in the UC Davis horse emergency room, I heard your sweet, sweet knickers when I returned from calling my mother. Thank you. That meant more than you will ever know. I can still feel the warmth in my heart. I am so proud of the way you adjusted from your injury. You had fearless strength. You acted like it didn't even happen. Around the barn you were called "Sym the wonder horse". See how amazing you are? That same summer we had a great time on that 10 day ride up in the back country of Yosemite where you did not miss a step- thank god! Thank you for making an awesome "Bronco" (The Northgate High School's mascot) at the Homecoming football game my senior year. That was fun to hear the crowd go wild as we galloped by the stands, covered head to toe in school colors, sparkles and streamers!

My dear friend you were even by my side and saw me through 6 ½ years of college- I know it took me a while! Pasadena was incredible. What a memory we shared walking in the Rose Bowl Parade that first college winter break and then rode around the 165 miles of the Tahoe Rim Trail that summer. Again, thank you for all the careful steps! Thank you for teaching my love, Jeremy

how to ride. You made our 1st date go really smoothly! And sorry about all those midnight rides but thank you for always taking care of me! You have to admit they were a lot of fun!

It is heart warming to see you bringing the same experiences I had growing-up to another little girl, Kasey. You have given her so much confidence no to mention bringing her riding skills to all new levels. She loves you as much as I do. I know if she could curl up in your stall at night and sleep, she would. I bet you would just lay down next to her and keep her warm. That's who you are. You and Kasey have done so well and you are now making your debut as a true show horse! I love watching the two of you together. Best of luck for 2010 show season. I will be there watching my beloved family horse...Sym Sym Serene.

Again...I love you "Symer, Nimmer, Nimmers". – Cookies are always in our back pocket.
Jenn



BUCKAROO MA +//

Nominated by the Englehart Family



We are nominating our horse Buckaroo for Family Arabian of the year for the most simplest and obvious reasons. Buckaroo personifies the term “family Arabian”. While he has been part of our family for only about 7 years, he has been part of the Summit Ranch family for so much longer.

Buckaroo is 16 years old now and has many awards and titles to his name. He has done reining, pleasure, endurance and showmanship. But his greatest achievements have been in competitive trail. He will go over around or through anything asked of him. But even with all of his achievements, what makes him special is his kind, patient and gentle personality. He allows riders of all ages and experience levels to ride without fear or worry. Hence, he is the barn’s favorite lesson horse. It is unlikely that one has not ridden Buckaroo if they have had lessons with Jill Mitchell. She and he together have taught so many to ride!

Buckaroo may not be the most beautiful Arabian or take you for the smoothest ride, but his love and concern for his passenger shows in the enjoyment he has brought to so many kids and trainers. He is just so kind-natured and sweet. He is a wonderful companion.



Diamond Sureyn L - (Neero Sureyn x Cara Flame)

AHA # 01377704

By Marijanne Nichols



In January of 2009 we picked up a skinny, unkempt stallion from a person about 450 miles north of us who was going to sell him to a kill buyer... He had the horse in his trailer and unless we got him before Friday, would be going to slaughter. On the way home we stopped to weigh our trailer with the horse in it...

When we got home he was so thin we had to use a couple of leather belts and straps just to fit a blanket on him. His halter was embedded in his face so we had to cut it off his head... it was so sad to see/do and the stallion just stood there. It took over an hour to cut this halter off and when we were done he was bleeding on his nose, along his cheekbone and under his chin, it had also made a very deep impression on his poll. The stallion sensed we were helping him

and stood shock still even though we knew we were hurting him especially when we took that halter off his nose.

My husband took the trailer over to the local truck stop to weigh it the next morning... We gasped in disbelief thinking we must have read it wrong but when our vet came out to check him over; he said that it was an accurate reading... The stallion weighed 467 lbs... he was literally a rack of bones with skin draped over his skeletal structure. His eyes were dull and even though he whinnied at the other horses his interest was downcast. We kept him in our round pen the first few days because if he did go down there was a way to get him out of there without a lot of trouble and we needed to put up a paddock for him if he did make it through the week. The vet gave us a grim prognosis, said we would be lucky if he made it through the week. We gave him the barn name of Sureyn...

Sureyn made it through the first week, we were free feeding him alfalfa and A&M it was slowly increasing his energy and getting him used to eating. He was starting to show interest in the other horses but had little to do with us. We did not put a halter or anything on his face for a good 2 weeks or so because we wanted his nose to heal... At the end of those weeks it took me almost an hour to get a light rope halter on him, he was head shy and obviously remembering the pain the last one caused him. Leading him was a feat too; both my husband and myself on each side of him because he wanted to run off to see the mares but also because seemingly he had no concept of leading in general. To watch him trot the first time in the arena was agonizing. He had no concept of where his feet were going... it looked like his hind end was going in a different direction from his front end. He took several laps around the arena and with each stride

got better, he was licking and chewing and trotting... liking what he was feeling. He didn't try to move out any faster until almost 3 weeks later and then he fell the first time he went into a canter. He got up though, looked at me as if saying, "I can do this"...



The first month we had him

Sureyn still didn't trust us so we did a lot of things like sit beside his paddock and talk to him while he ate, also going inside his paddock and waiting for him to settle down so we could catch him... We left a short leather strap around his neck at first, not a halter because of his nose but he didn't care for us trying to grab him so we had to let him come to us... patience prevailed of course and I celebrated the first day he actually came up to me to be caught... he knew he would get to go out to play. I took a lot of time to stay with him, brushing him... at first it was hard because for one his coat was so rough but also because he didn't know what it was to be groomed... it took me a good month before I could take a brush down his legs. Within a month of good feed you could see the difference in his coat and the weight he was putting on... Sureyn started whinnying at us when we came out of the house... and got to the point where when it was a 2 person chore to put a blanket or halter him at first to where he would come up readily when he saw me with a halter and no longer acting as if he

was going to be eaten alive by that blanket. We took pictures as he progressed in weight... my family and friends were amazed at the transformations and the transitions of his life as he progressed to looking like a horse rather than a skeleton. By the time we had him 4 plus months he had gained back a good 250 lbs and was looking nice... it was always a desire to allow him lots of space so it was time to see what he would do in pasture... we had turned him loose in the arena a few times but he hadn't really been able to stretch his legs... that first run was so exhilarating to watch... he started cantering a bit, slowly because he wasn't used to doing much and then it was as if the sky burst... he let loose and ran all the way out to the end of the 6 acre pasture we had let him loose in... it was like watching a kid who had never had been in a candy store before.... I cried and laughed at the same time... because he would run as if there was no end and then would put his head down and stop seemingly in mid air to eat a particular blade of grass... We left him out for a good hour b himself and when I walked into the pasture he came running up to me, stopped and put his head into my chest, giving one very deep, deep sigh... we stood like that for a good 15 minutes and tears were streaming down my face because here was this stallion who was at death's door when I first saw him, one who didn't want anything to do with humans... and here he was, had come running up to me to bond in a very special place... I wrapped my arms around his neck and he nickered at me... I realized then, how very much this horse meant to me. He wasn't out of the woods yet weight wise, still had a ways to go... but he was on his way most definitely. My husband came over and put his arm around me and around Sureyn and he just stayed there, very content to be with us... it was one of those moments in life where everything comes together and one

you remember forever because of its impact on your heart.

Today Sureyn is in excellent health... and is the stallion of my dreams... We had done some research into his background and got him certified for foundation breeding, he is 83% foundation lineage. He is one of the gentlest horses I have ever worked with. His disposition is that of an old aged gelding... we recently used him as a demo for a trimming clinic and the guy who was trimming happened to look up to his belly.. He put his foot down and said... "he is a stallion huh"... we laughed... yup... a big "little" stallion.



Running with the dog is his first time in pasture

Sureyn has taken to training as if it was his passion; he carries a saddle, wears a bridle and does anything I ask of him... I haven't gotten on him but I think that will happen very soon... Sureyn loves to work so will take to riding with a zest for going anywhere I point his nose. It is my desire to show Sureyn in sport-horse classes, and hope that both he and I will be ready this spring. We plan on breeding him to two of our mares, a Bey Oro daughter and a black Nite Deceiver daughter. He is also booked to one outside mare. This will be his first foal crop. Sureyn will be 15 years old this spring... it will be awesome to see what he can do in the showing and in the breeding arena. His life certainly deserves recognition for what he

has endured. As a family horse, he has rallied every member into his corner... my youngest granddaughter has claimed him as her fairy horse, our oldest daughter wants to ride him and show him, my son just loves to hang out with him and talk about life. He continues to amaze all of us with his willingness to trust... everyone that sees him loves him and no one who has seen his pictures believes that the magnificent animal before them is the same scraggly skinny horse...

Khutty Sark
Nominated by Mary Christopherson



I don't know if this is a family horse but he has a pretty special story. His name is Khutty Sark (Khemosabi X Endless Summer), he is **29 years old** this year and I have one mare in foal to him for April. He was 1980 Region 2 Champion English Pleasure and region 3 Reserve Champion Stallion. I bought him in 1994 and showed him myself in 1995 (he was 15). He was beginning to have some side bone issues at that time so he had trouble competing against 6 year olds, but when I put him in Classic head classes, he won almost every time. I guess the judges wanted to use him, but his uneven feet hurt him.

When DAHA started to have Older Horse classes at the May show, I would get him out of the stall to go to the class and he would start out lame, but as he got closer to the arena the pain seemed to leave him and he would put on quite a show for the crowd. He won his class several times and even won the Senior Championship once.

I have attached pictures from 1995. I will take more pictures when the sun comes out so you can see how well he is doing.

Thanks for listening to my story.



Montaz

Nominated by Sarena Ben-Zeev

I met Montaz when I first went to Cindy's barn and rode him. Mike taught me how to teach him and we became buddies.

Montaz is special to me because he helps out by doing things like sometimes putting his head down when I put his halter on and things like not moving when I get off. Sometime he moves when I get on him, but not all the time.

Montaz makes me laugh by doing things like farting when I'm loping on him and things like tripping – which sort of scares me. But the best thing of all is riding him. He is great for me and riding him is better than great, it's excellent for me.

Montaz is excellent for me because I love loping, but it's scary at night because the horse could get spooked and you could fall off. I did on 12.01.09 and I was scared. But trotting is too bouncy that why I like loping more.

Montaz really makes me feel happy because I love him and he loves me and that's what horses are for – loving!

Pocket Rocket

Nominated by Janet Seager



I have a 12 year old Arabian mare, Gold N Pocahontas (Gold n Ali x SP Magicbounde) that I have owned since she was 3 years old. It has been a tempestuous relationship at times and she aptly earned her nickname "Pocket Rocket." Very light, sensitive, does not suffer fools. I have heard of the legendary bond between Arabians and their owners, esp. the mares. It was tested on one cold November day.

It was right after Thanksgiving Day. My husband Mark, his father Dave, and myself were all looking forward to a trail ride to clear our heads and get out of the house. Mark was on his 5 year old gelding Atlas, and Dave was riding our 23 year old steady mare, Celebration. I was on Pocahontas.

As these rides usually do, it began quiet enough. We headed out towards a trail which runs by a creek to a park staging area. This trail is perhaps two horses wide,

with a ravine to the creek below on one side, and high bank on the other. Not a scary trail, but one where you'd prefer to get through without incident. The horses were quietly moving in line with Mark in the lead and I brought up the rear. There was one difficult gate located on a narrow incline which we had to get through before we got to the park. Mark positioned his horse to hold the gate open for us to go through. Atlas was fussing and wouldn't stand calmly. At this point Celebration's saddle started to slip. Calamity struck. Celebration wheeled which caused Dave to slip further down her side. Pocahontas was beside herself and it was all I could do to stay on her. Celebration bolted towards home, and Dave fell off and struck his head on a rock and was unconscious. Mark was stunned-I quickly slipped off my mare, handed him the reins and said calmly, "Look at me. I need you to hold her. I have to go for help". I had to repeat myself several times before it reached him. I ran up the trail, through the gate and into the staging area where there was an emergency phone. I explained the circumstances and perhaps 10 minutes elapsed before first responders were on the scene.

In the meantime, cars and bicyclists had stopped to help. Mark was having difficulty holding my mare and I was summoned to go back down the trail and hold her, rather than wait for the paramedics. Atlas was extremely upset as well, and as the paramedics and fire department arrived the sirens added to the horses' anxiety. Mark elected to take his horse back to the barn as well and return to assist. I answered questions as best I could re Dave's age, history and medical condition. Pocahontas was anxious and calling out to her herd mates, and I was shaking with fear for Dave. At this time two helicopters arrived, flying closely overhead

looking for a place to land to medi-vac Dave to John Muir Hospital. I felt impending disaster as the air pulsed with the turning rotors. It was at this moment everything seemed to slow down. I took Pocahontas' head, looked into her beautiful dark eyes, and said quietly, "I need you to be very very good right now".

If there was ever a heart connection it was now. She quieted, looked around at the paramedics and people just a few feet away, and at the helicopters circling overhead. The trail was narrow, and people had to run past us to assist Dave onto a litter for transport. Pocahontas gave a big sigh, looked at me, and then put her head down to graze on the few grass blades that have sprung up in the cold November sun. I do not know what shifted between us, but I knew at that moment I could trust her with my life.

Dave was in ICU for a week. He suffered a concussion (thank goodness for helmets-his was completely cracked), some cracked ribs, and brain trauma which required rehabilitative care.

I thank my blessings every day for this beautiful creature which shares her life with me.



The Little Horse That Could and the girl that believed in her -Kristen and Taylor Made – Make it together!

Nominated by Nancy Dupont, Owner
Castle Rock Arabians.



Look at that thing! It looks just like a cow-- Maybe a Yak! As the wet, slithery creature emerged from its' mother's birth canal, the faces of those awaiting the blessed event were not lit up with joy. A filly! Surely the purebred Arabian horse, a true "Drinker of the Wind" should not look like this. With a blaze on her face as wide as a Hereford cow ending in a fat, pink nose. So fat and so pink it wrapped around her mouth giving her a permanently etched grin.

And so it came to pass that Taylor Made entered the world completely unconcerned about human opinion. She snuggled up to

the world's best mother, KJ Enjoli (A Kardjordje daughter) and received all the love and caring she needed to start her life on her strong, four-square legs. She spent her first four years happily romping around beautiful pastures at Lacey's Arabian Ranch growing into a fine equine specimen with a large pink nose.

When asked how she received her name, her owner, Carol Kenning said: "I won a breeding at an auction. So we bred KJ Enjoli to a famous stallion on the auction list. It seemed natural to call her after my granddaughter—Taylor. Thus she was named: Taylor Made."

The Arabian horse is centuries old and the Bedouins paid careful attention to breeding only the best to the best, keeping pedigrees pure. This random breeding planned by Carol and named after her 2 month old granddaughter did not take into account that this breeding was not a good mix to produce the refinement needed for breed standard. But since the dam produces 60% of what the foal will be, Little Taylor Made inherited the physical attributes of the Karadjordje line through KJ Enjoli that included stamina, soundness and intelligence.

So it came to pass that in the year 2003 Taylor Made had reached her 4th year of life and Carol needed to give her a job. Loving the horse as she did, she envisioned some young girl falling in love with her and keeping her for a pet. So she called Nancy Dupont to see if among her young family of riders there was such a little girl longing for a horse.

On July 1, 2003 Kristen Wheeler was celebrating her 12th birthday and her parents decided to surprise her with a horse. They approached Nancy Dupont for a suggestion for a nice pet. Since they knew nothing

about horses, Nancy explained that she knew of a lovely horse for them that had a Big Pink Nose and therefore they could buy it at a very good price. So the deal was made and Taylor Made was hauled in and hidden until her birthday party. Taylor -the perfect gift-was presented with all the regalia and roses befitting a birthday girl. All her friends surrounded her and through tears of joy, Kristen and Taylor Made began their lives together.

On July 2 Taylor got her first shoes and Kristen saddled Taylor and headed up Mt. Diablo on the first Annual Explorer's Ride with four riders. Led by Jennifer Jelich, Nancy's top girl, they Camped overnight at the Concord-Mt. Diablo Trail Ride Association grounds in Clayton, the remaining riders rode down the Mountain to the town of Clayton on the 4th of July, donned Spanish uniforms and rode in the Clayton parade in over 100 degrees. Kristen's get acquainted week with Taylor included a 40 mile round trip ride, a parade through a town of 3,000 onlookers, fire engines, blaring, deafening music and bicycles riding in and out of the crowd. It also included a safe arrival home.

A couple of weeks later, California's famous trailblazer, George Cardinet decided to lead Kristen and her friends at Castle Rock Arabians on a Yosemite Adventure starting at the top of Glacier Point and riding down the treacherous, 18 inch wide four mile trail that winds down the face of the cliff to the Valley Floor. While Nancy had ridden this trail three times before, doing it again had its special terror. She said, between clenched teeth that it was:

"Four miles down or if your horses' foot slipped, just eight seconds to the Ahwahnee Hotel in the Valley!"

But the little horse prevailed and again - Another safe arrival home!

Nancy and Kristen decided to take on the challenge of the **NATRC** competition ride on Mt. Diablo. Riding Novice on her first go (Novice required for horses only 4 years old). Taylor left the starting line galloping sideways, like a crab. Her Pink Nose flashed in the lead like a beacon. After finishing 25 miles, Kristen took third place youth rider but Taylor got first place for youth horse. Taylor was quickly becoming "The little horse that could!"

On the next Trail Horse Trials competition Kristen and three girls from Castle Rock Arabians signed up to compete as a team but secretly signed up an older rider with a more experienced horse to compete with them. They felt Taylor was "too spooky" and they wanted to win. They told Kristen to find a group of beginners to ride with and form her own group. Kristen was heartbroken.

Another dark moment for Kristen happened when a disgruntled boarder and self acclaimed horsewoman said to Kristen's mother, Anne, that Kristen was "ruining" Taylor because she did not know how to ride that well. The comment was intended to be mean spirited and shocked Anne who thought her daughter and the horse had done so much together. Anne decided to get Kristen some lessons. This was another turning point for Kristen and Taylor.

Now George, eager to showcase his newly formed Amigos de Anza Drill Team at the Cow Palace Grand National Rodeo in San Francisco, told Kristen to mount her 4 year old Taylor and when she did, he placed a flag in her hand. Both Kristen and Taylor's eyes grew huge! Taylor's ears pinned flat to the back of her head, she spun like a Top! Somehow that day, Taylor was broke to flags. The team rode well and was featured in the Arabian Horse Magazine. George was proud of them, knowing that Arabians

rarely do drill teams, kind of like trying to do syncro with Siamese Cats.

The next year, Kristen was riding again with the Amigos Drill team in the Grand National Rodeo at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. This time the drill coach had her ride Taylor in the new Quadrille performance. It was beautifully performed with six top riders. Like a ballet on horseback. Kristen even got Taylor to master two tracking for the crossovers in a very short time. They placed 2nd at the Cow Palace over six experienced teams.

The Amigos team was asked to perform as part of an evening performance with an audience of over 60,000. This invitation was an honor and privilege bestowed on uniquely qualified riders. In the silence before the evening opening performance, the girls quietly moved into position at the gate. Poised, they waited. When the gates flung open, Kristen and Taylor, in the lead with the American Flag galloped full steam into the arena. The fans were screaming, strobe lights blazing, Announcer booming and their faces flashed on the "Jumbotron," and their hearts were pounding. The music volume went up and their horses-- ears up, tails flagging, flew around the arena their hoof beats pounding in time with their racing hearts. Kristen and Taylor in were in the lead with the American Flag. Then, Kristen's flag pole began to collapse. Kristen had to move her hand up to keep it the *highest flag. Then her stirrup came undone. Now she had to keep the flagpole balanced on top of her boot- riding without the stirrup or flag boot. Now she and Taylor were riding as one, completing the drill with extremely nuanced moves with only balance remaining to guide the horse. So much, she thought, for a too spooky horse!

In the spring competition in Turlock they were told by the judges that they were on track to be national champions. By June, the team was invited to perform at Cal Expo to a night performance to wild applause.

Kristen had always thought jumping would be interesting so she wanted to see if Taylor could learn to jump. They asked an accomplished eventer for help. She said that they were not ready to jump. First she had to correct the horse and fix Kristen's equitation. They progressed rapidly. Unfortunately, Kristen was already growing rapidly. From 4 foot 11 when she got Taylor, Kristen was closing in on 5 foot 11 and becoming too tall for Taylor. As Kristen grew, her coach gave a hard look at Kristen and finally said: "Your feet practically drag on the ground." Even Anne slipped one day and said: "You look like you are on a coin operated supermarket horse." Each dig at Kristen was designed to encourage her to consider a change of mounts to something more her size.

Kristen said: "I'd like to breed Taylor with a large horse so I'd have a half Arab to compete in the Arabian show arena." Her parents thought that was ridiculous. Her instructor dealt the crushing blow: "Why would you breed such poor conformation?" In spite of the negative comments, Kristen's equitation grew stronger, as did her love for Taylor. Taylor was fearless with a flag, so she and Taylor moved to the front for all Drills and Anza Ceremonies. They were always selected to carry the American Flag.

Finally, the big horse did come. Kristen's parents invested in a tall warmblood that Kristen took on the jumper circuit for the next two years. She never stopped loving and working Taylor. Anne and Bill were living a dream through Kristen and her talent in the show arena jumping.

One show circuit was more than enough of an expense for the family. Her parents would not let Kristen take Taylor into the Arabian horse show ring (she doesn't have a chance!) Her dad suggested she sell Taylor. Kristen told her dad: "You would never give up Max (his beloved Golden Retriever.) It is the same thing! Taylor is my pet and friend." Taylor could be her drill horse, trail horse and friend but she needed to find a way to support Taylor. So Kristen worked off her board at Castle Rock Arabians by teaching summer and holiday camps, conducting birthday parties and Trail Team and Horsemanship. Sometimes, just to be with Taylor she would use her in one of her classes.

Kristen tearfully sold Chief, her jumper in the spring of 2008. She wanted to jump over four feet which her horse could not do. She was finishing her junior year in High School and her parents were not going to invest in another jumper for only a year. Kristen begged to be given the opportunity to give Taylor a chance in the Arabian Show ring.

Kristen took Taylor to the DAHA show in May, 2008. Taylor wasn't doing well. The judges would not even look at her. On the last day, she entered a class that had an individual equitation test. She came in 2nd out of 17 riders. People were saying should have been first at that! By beating that many contestants it qualified her for the Youth Nationals. Kristen asked her mom, hopefully: "May I take Taylor to the Nationals?" Anne looked at Kristen and said: "Are you nuts? Taylor doesn't have a chance!"

Soon they did consider taking her to the Regional's, Anne sewed them an Arabian native Costume. Anne, an accomplished seamstress frugally took pieces of drapery, place mats, gathered tassels and notions, --

and for good luck, white satin that had come from her "grandfather" George Cardinet's estate. Anne thought that with all that fabric, their lack of proportion wouldn't look so bad. Also Taylor, a high spirited horse would be happy going fast and maybe there would be less emphasis on the horse. Taylor did not possess the high stepping action — but in Native costume classes are usually small so her parents said she could continue to go to Arabian shows.

Kristen always dreamed of showing at Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show. When she learned that Castle Rock Arabians was sending a little bunch of youth riders, she begged to be allowed to take Taylor. Bill said that since she was a senior, it would be OK. The Wheelers had lived in Arizona and had friends to stay with. Since he thought it was crazy and probably pointless to put her up against so many prize horses, we said we'd haul her down on a Thursday, get one day's rest, compete three days, and haul out early Tuesday. She could only miss three days of school. The first afternoon was going to cause a conflict. Her two equitation classes were going to be delayed and overlap her Novice Native costume class. In Native Costume, only three were competing so she would be guaranteed a 1st, 2nd or 3rd. She would have to choose. She wanted Taylor to prove herself more than just take home a 1st 2nd or 3rd. She chose to ride the two Equitation classes that had between 20 to 30 riders listed on the schedule. Anne tells the story this way: "In the first class, there was no test. So Kristen and Taylor were not noticed and did not make the top 12. We wondered what she was trying to prove. A class later she rode in with the herd. After the group performed around the arena, they all had to do an individual test. Kristen and Taylor got second place! All from the Castle Rock team

were shocked and the family took great pictures.”

The next day was the Equitation championship. Everyone from the barn was with the other three CRA riders at a show ring so Kristen, with minimal help from Anne, was trying to get Taylor ready. Corinna, the Wheeler’s German exchange student rushed back to the barn to try to help by braiding Taylor’s tail in the Arabian show style while Kristen did everything else for Taylor and was getting herself ready. At the last minute a Castle Rock trainer arrived and corrected the braid. Then they raced to the warm up arena. Hurry up and wait! The riders were lined up at the gate. Three riders were not there yet when the class was supposed to start. Holding an arena is far from normal but the riders were from big name barns so the other 20+ riders had to sit and wait until they were located and arrived, almost a half an hour delay.

Ann said: “At first we were disappointed that she hadn’t made the top twelve after the group elimination round at the rail. The Announcer read off the rider numbers which should have been in order. He read off a number after hers and then went back called her number: “2099.” Only the top 12 rode the individual test. Kristen rode the individual test without a flaw—you could hear the crowd cheering louder. She and Taylor were one. “We crossed our fingers in hopes that she would be in the top ten.” Ann said. “We still felt she had no chance to win.” What chance would she have to win with the small horse, with the short neck and with the big pink nose? These competitors were top equestrian coaches, great riders and beautiful horses.

When the Announcer called out her name that she and Taylor won the Championship, Kristen just hugged and hugged Taylor

Made. Anne and Bill were elated. Anne said proudly: “They won the roses, ribbons, plaques and a \$2000 scholarship—the title 2009 Hunter seat Equitation Champion 14 to 17 at the Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show – and an invitation to the parade of champions on Sunday the 22 (which we apologized we could not stay for – time to go back to school!)”



So this is the story of the “Little Horse That could” and the girl who never gave up on her friend. In spite of ridicule In spite of ridicule and predictions of failure, every negative became to Kristen a challenge for a positive.

Murrel Lacey used to say: “We will sell you our best, and make Champions out of the rest.” Murrel never gave up on his horses.

Kristen remembers the words of Matt Archer (a horse trainer who got through college hauling horses to shows and has never owned a prize horse) at a show, when everyone was complaining about the success of, lusting over, and wishing for prize horses, he said: “Ride the horse your on.”

Kristen did.

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*The American Flag bows to no other

Zara El Bataa – AHR *396098

Nominated by Meghan Johnson



I would like to nominate Zara El Bataa (Prince Shiko x Sudans Mayet), aka “Zara”. Zara is a 26 year old grey Egyptian Arabian mare owned by Donna and the late Paul Tims. Zara was a part of my life for 6 of my teenage years as her care taker or “Pony Au Pair” along with companion Polish Arabian “George”. Zara was a wonderful horse. She loved to trail ride on Mt Diablo and helped introduce me to the wonderful world of Arabians, horse care, dressage and horse showing. What makes Zara deserving of the Family Arabian of the Year award was her willing yet independent attitude, patience, athleticism and her striking beauty.

Zara and George taught me all about horse care and responsibility. My horse trainer at the time found me Zara and George through some friends of hers’ that were looking for someone to care for and ride their horses. I became responsible for afternoon feeding, stall/pen/water trough cleaning, blanketing and riding as well as financially taking care of Zara’s shoes, vet bills and arena fees. That’s quite a responsibility for a 13 - 18 year old girl but I took care of them every

day after school and worked many hours babysitting, house sitting, pet sitting, tutoring and house cleaning to pay for my horse passion. I think caring for George and Zara helped me be a better student because I had to be organized to fit in school, working, riding, and caring for them. I learned that horses were a big responsibility and more important than silly school drama, boys and mean girls.

I loved Zara for her eagerness to please and be loved. She and George were always excited to see me. When I ride my bike up after school she was happy to take me on a relaxing trail ride on the Mt Diablo regional trails whether a quiet trail ride alone or with friends. The boarders of the former Driscollville/Sugarloaf Stables across the street thought it was funny to see George and Zara waiting for me at the gate for my arrival, pawing the ground and screaming in their pen. There is nothing more heartwarming to see them so happy to see me. I even won a photo contest with a photo of them in their stall sticking their heads out the window of the old red barn. On Thursday afternoons, we would have our dressage lesson with my old horse trainer. Zara would always challenge me to do my best and become the rider I am today.

I rode Zara in my first dressage shows. I would spend hours getting her perfectly white, clipped and braided the night before the show and then I would wrap her like a mummy in blankets, hoods and leg wraps and despite my effort, she would manage to get herself muddy and green wherever she wasn’t covered before the show. I remember trying to wash the green and brown stains off her at 5am in the morning. Once at the show grounds, fellow competitors would look down their nose at us from atop their fancy warmbloods because Zara was an Arabian, not a typical

dressage horse. Zara was an amazing show horse; the second we entered the show ring she would arch her neck and pick up a floating trot, she knew she was being judged. Often she would memorize our dressage test which would make it look like we were telepathic. We always got good dressage scores and often awarded ribbons.

Zara loved to trail ride. She just loved being out in the open and especially loved to canter the hills. Zara actually introduced me to the Mt Diablo regional trails and helped me discover my lifelong love of trail riding. I loved to explore the trails with her and friends. Often we would get lost or travel down trails that we shouldn't have rode down but we learned. I'm often told that I'm a great trail guide but the praise should go to Zara for helping me learn the trails and helping me become a good trail rider. I remember riding through Pine Canyon as a 14 or 15 year old and stopping to eat blackberries along the creek with Zara, sharing them with her and then wiping my hands on her saddle pad. I look back fondly of our rides as some of the best summers of my childhood.

Unfortunately, I had to leave George and Zara. The Sugarloaf Stables across the street from their pen was sold to a developer right out from under us which meant we would not have an arena to ride in, only trails. This was ok until the winter and I realized that this wasn't going to work so I followed some friends to Summit Ranch where I ride today. My riding lessons on Zara awarded me with other horses to ride and care for at Summit Ranch. It completely devastated me to leave George and Zara but I couldn't afford to care for them and not be able to ride half the year. The property they lived on was eventually sold and a home is currently being built on it. After George's owner Paul died, George

was given to a family to be a companion horse and Zara was moved out to a ranch in Brentwood where she lives today in retirement.

Zara deserves to be given the Family Arabian of the Year Award. She was a very special horse to a young woman. She and George taught me most of what I know today about the care of horses. Zara taught me so much but more than anything let me love her and share her life. Zara should receive recognition for her bright spirit, patience, and love of life, beauty and intelligence. Zara is the ideal family Arabian.

