

Meet the Riders

Leadline 2004

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For me, one of the most appealing aspects of NATRC riding is the fellowship with other equine enthusiasts. Quickly we come to recognize familiar faces and learn about each other's horses. But as a novice participant, I often find myself wondering who my fellow riders are in their "other lives," so I'm setting out to interview some of them and share my findings with you.

It's been suggested to me that I start with myself, so here goes . . .

As an eight-year-old I climbed Mt. Fuji on horseback, and I can still remember the thrill at the end of the ride when the horse raced back to the barn. Later, I learned to ride hunt-seat as a kid living in Virginia and owned horses for a few years in my early twenties. Over the decades I earned a masters degree in social work and a teaching credential; had two careers—first as a hospital social worker and then as a K-8 teacher in a one-room school; raised a daughter and a son and saw them through college; and bought and developed our 500-acre Red Mountain Ranch, which included building with my husband Mike a house of rock gathered from the creekbeds of our property. We lived for over 25 years at Lick Observatory on Mt. Hamilton, where Mike worked in telescope operations, before retiring full-time to the ranch several years ago. Somehow thirty years flew by without my ever riding a horse!

Two years ago I was inspired to change that, and I bought a green-broke mustang mare and—for Mike and guests to ride—a quarter horse retired from ranch work. Now our land provides grazing for Gypsy and Toby; those creekbeds are crossings for our trail rides; and

the social work and teaching experience inform my training methods. When a friend shepherded me to my first NATRC ride last year, I was instantly hooked! My other riding emphasis is dressage. I trailer three hours round-trip weekly from our remote home into town for lessons, and I find the two disciplines complement each other beautifully. I also enjoy cattle work, which Gypsy and I have learned a little about through a partnership with mentors in a small cow-calf operation, and of course from Toby.

Our ranch is also home to 26 bantam chickens—all of whom have names—and a large flower and vegetable garden I tend in my spare time.

Sometime in the future, I may ask permission to write about *you* for The Leadline. I plan to concentrate on novices, because we new riders haven't had as much chance to get acquainted as the senior riders have. Hopefully this will help us all get to know each other a little better and make our NATRC experiences even more fun!

Happy trails!