

Garvin E. Tankersley, Jr.

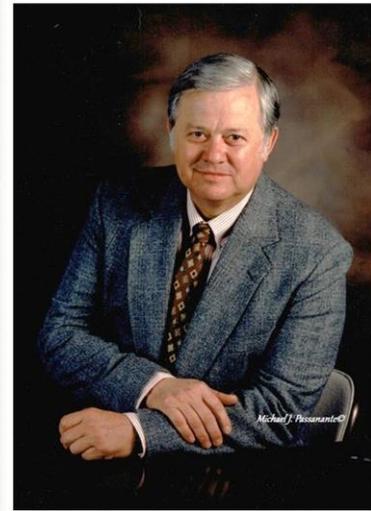
By Garvin & Lee Tankersley

I can't recall when, where or why, at a very young age, I developed an interest in horses and farm life. There was no "Walter Farley" moment, no real life cowboy present. My family tells me that I always got excited as we traveled rural Maryland and Virginia. Perhaps it was an "Old MacDonald" moment.

My interest in horses was strengthened when my father married Bazy. Then five years after that my mother bought a cattle ranch in Montana, where horses were an integral part of the operation. Both gave me welcome exposure to farm and ranch life. Al-Marah was busting with daily activity. Visitors were constant. The many foals had to be halter trained, young horses had to be started under saddle, and the stalls needed mucking out daily. These chores and more were what I helped with during my two-week summer visit. Many of you recall how de-worming was done before oral paste wormers came into use—imagine 100 or so horses being tubed. The vet and the farrier seemed to come every day. No surprise about the many hands that were needed to complete chores each day.

In my teen years Bazy presented me with two unique opportunities. In the mid-1950s, she purchased the R. B. Field Arabian herd. This herd included Rapture, Hanraff, Collette, Cassandra and the first black Arabian that I recall, Jemima. To move the herd to Maryland, a "barn on rails" was made by converting a box car into a center isle barn. Wilson Magaha and I, along with another person, brought the horses to Maryland on a trip of about five to seven days. The trip was highlighted by a quick stop in Chicago where Collette was to be delivered to Bill Munson. As the train slowed to a stop, Bill, Al Ehnle, perhaps John Dornfeld and several others ran beside the train with a home-made ramp to place at the train door when the train stopped. I held Collette at the open door and as soon as the train stopped, the ramp was put in place and I handed Collette's lead over and she walked down the ramp. Immediately the train began moving again. In early 1957 Bazy purchased Lady Wentworth's herd, which included Count Dorsaz. I was given the task of flying to England to accompany the Count home on a flight to the U.S. The airline would not permit him to travel without a groom. My job was to keep him happy and calm. If needed, I was prepared to administer a sedative. Thankfully, that was never needed.

As years passed, my involvement with horses grew. After six months of basic training in the Army, I moved to Maryland where I have continued to live. In 1972, I purchased River Dale Farm in Keymar, MD, where Lee and I live. Lee and I first met when she contacted me about buying a horse trailer. At that time I was a dealer for Stidham. We raised many purebred Arabians and two wonderful children (Blythe and Garvin III) who between them have given us five beautiful grandchildren (Sarah,





GT Gallatin romping with "Bear", a border collie we rescued. Bear would lay down in the pasture with new foals to guard them.

time to come in for the night, he usually let you lead him in. But there were times when he said "no, I can put myself in the stall." We would just open the paddock gate and he would walk into his stall in the barn. Gallatin and Immy were foaled here and lived their whole lives here. They were both shown some as young stallions.

Gallatin became Lee's trail horse and she has fond memories of the times they rode 'over the river and through the woods.' We also stood Don Bey Ronava until he was sold to Dean Scoggins and Basksand, who we acquired after his show career was over. Our farm has not been a horse farm, but a farm with horses. We plant row crops, have had cattle off and on (on now because part of our son Gar's herd is here) and raise hay and alfalfa. In addition to breeding Arabians, we had two Thoroughbred mares, who produced some lovely Anglo Arabians for us. Also, because of my interest in reining, I sent a couple of Arabians to "reining" trainers. GT Tokay (Baske Tu x GT Maarsaala) did quite well in reining. GT Astarte was shown

in reining by Dean Scoggins. We also acquired a few QH mares who became broodmares after their show careers in reining were finished. We bred these mares to reining QH stallions and had some successes with them. I was mentored over the

Emma and Cooper Belenky, Eli and Ruby Lee Tankersley). We stood a number of stallions at stud. Asil Ecliptic, (Rafferty x Rafleetah) purchased from Alice Payne; GT Gallatin (Rafferty x Harmony Hill Gala by Garaff and out of the beautiful Shalimar Regalia) and GT Immarouge (Lea Rouge x Lewisfield Imafay) were the most memorable to us. Ecliptic was a grand old gentleman. He was one of four full brothers, the others were Orbit, Syzygy and Apogee. He could be a funny duck sometimes. When it was

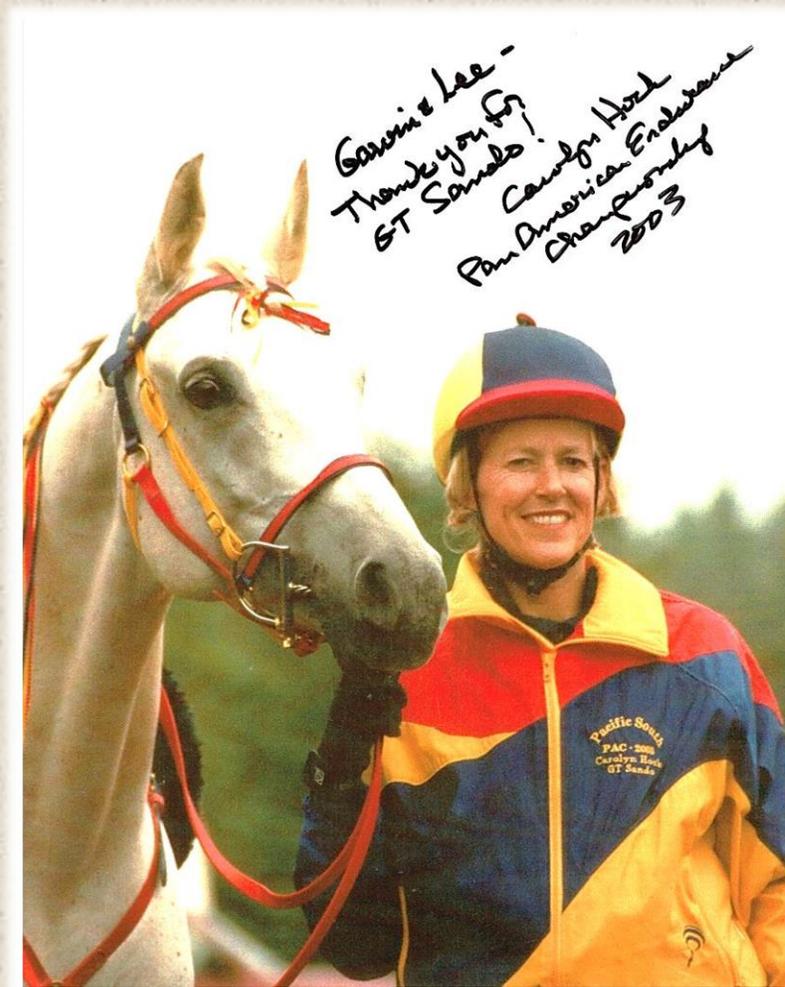


GT ToKay, ridden by trainer Lynn Stephenson, showing off his sliding stop.

years by some wonderful people, some of whom this organization has honored in past years.

In the late 1970s/early 1980s, I was invited to join the Governing Board of the AHR and was appointed to the Importation Committee; eventually I became Chairman of that committee. As a member, I traveled to Germany and the then East Germany with Ralph Clark—AHR Registrar, North Africa (Tunisia and Morocco) with Jim Harlan—AHR Staff member and South America (Argentina, Uruguay, Chili, Brazil) with Ralph and Willis Flick—AHR Director. These trips were made to meet with the Registry officials of these countries, breeders, owners and to look at the horses. We also reviewed their stud book rules, policies and records. In my absence, Lee managed the farm and our two young children.

We have many wonderful memories of our life here on the farm—many horses, many dogs, people we have gotten to know, and last but certainly not least, two children fortunate to have lived in a rural farm environment.



GT Sando (Basksand X GT Galicia) with owner Carolyn Hock.
This pair also went to the WEC in Dubai in January 2005.